



**CRANSTON, RHODE ISLAND**

This report is published by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission as part of the program set forth in Rhode Island's Historic Preservation Plan, first edition, which was issued in 1970. Commission activities are supported by state and local funds and by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, Department of the Interior, under provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Preparation of this report was in part financed through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, through the Cranston Planning Department as part of the city's Community Development Block Grant program.

The participation, review, and guidance of the Cranston Planning Department has been essential to the conduct of the survey. This report is the result of a productive partnership between city and state agencies.

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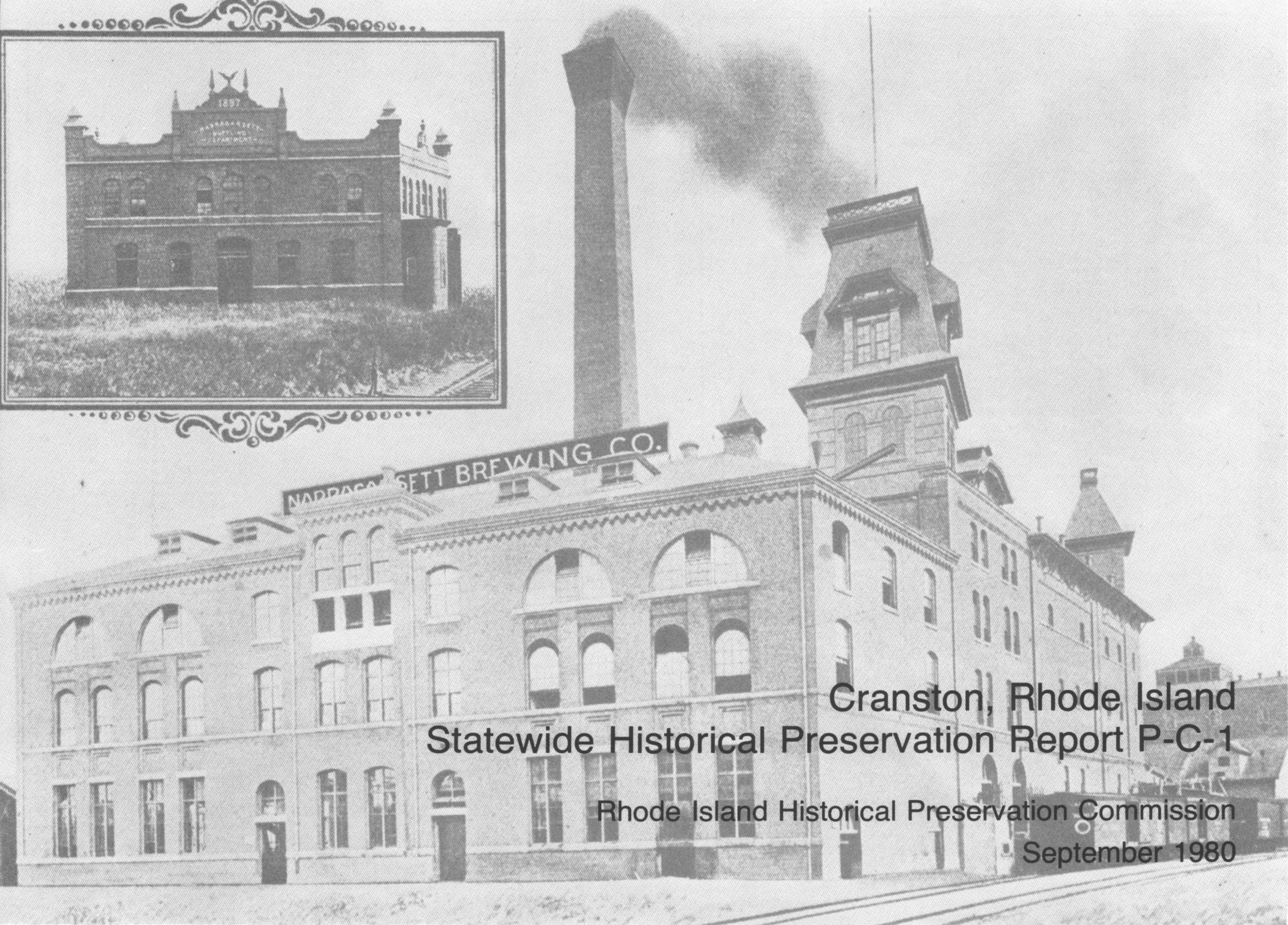
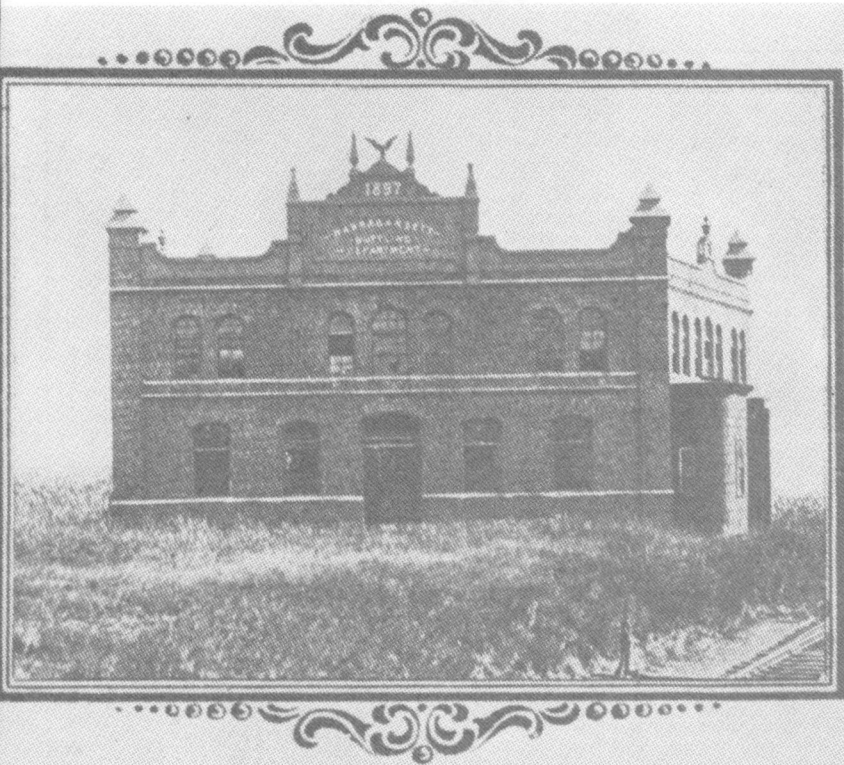
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The Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission is your state agency for historical preservation. The Commission identifies and protects historic buildings, districts, landscapes, structures, and archaeological sites throughout the State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

**Cover:** View of Stillhouse Cove (1915); photograph, November 1915.

**Title Page:** The Narragansett Brewing Company (1909); photograph, December 1909.



Cranston, Rhode Island  
Statewide Historical Preservation Report P-C-1

Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission  
September 1980



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

HISTORICAL PRESERVATION COMMISSION

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

September 15, 1980

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 Cranston, Rhode Island--Statewide Historical Preservation Report P-CR-1, the sixteenth in-depth publication in the Statewide Historical Preservation series; in addition, the Commission has published fourteen preliminary reports.

This report provides an analysis of the historical and architectural growth of Cranston and recommends a preservation program which should be considered for incorporation into the city's planning effort.

With the publication of this report, the Commission is well on its way to fulfilling its responsibility to record the rich cultural resources of Rhode Island. Ten additional reports are now being prepared; their completion will contribute significantly toward the achievement of our goal of producing reports on all thirty-nine cities and towns in the state.

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

Very sincerely,

*Antoinette F. Downing*

Mrs. George E. Downing  
Chairman

/dn



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

HISTORICAL PRESERVATION COMMISSION

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

September 15, 1980

Mayor Edward D. DiPrete  
Mayor's Office  
Cranston City Hall  
Park Avenue  
Cranston, R.I. 02910

Dear Mayor DiPrete:

The Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission is pleased to submit in final published form this survey of Cranston's cultural resources. The product of over a year's work, the report has been truly a joint effort. Researched and written by a member of the Commission's staff, Robert Freeman, the material reflects the assistance of numerous city officials and individual citizens. Moreover, the City's Community Development funds contributed significant financial support for the project.

It is the Commission's hope that this Report will prove of lasting value to the entire Cranston community, serving an educational and planning function and portraying the city's history and rich cultural heritage, from Pawtuxet Village to Lippitt Hill and represented by such different buildings as Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet and the Cranston Print Works. The City has consistently supported the community's preservation activities through the allocation of Community Development funds to the Cranston Historical Society, the Pawtuxet Village Association, and the Print Works Village.

It is our hope that this report will stimulate increased awareness in the community of the continuing need for both public and private support for historic preservation efforts in Cranston.

Sincerely yours,

*Antoinette F. Downing*

Mrs. George E. Downing  
Chairman

## PREFACE

The Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission was established in 1968 by an act of the General Assembly to develop a state preservation program under the aegis of the Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, United States Department of the Interior. Citizen members of the Commission are appointed by the Governor; serving as ex-officio members are the Director of the Department of Economic Development, the Director of the Department of Environmental Management, the Chief of the Division of Statewide Planning, the State Building Code Commissioner, and the chairmen of the House and Senate Finance Committees of the General Assembly. The Director of the Department of Community Affairs has been appointed by the Governor as the State Historic Preservation Officer for Rhode Island.

The Historical Preservation Commission is charged with the responsibilities of: conducting a statewide survey of historic sites and places and, 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 to National Register properties for acquisition or development; and developing a state historic preservation plan. Additional duties include: compiling and maintaining a State Register of Historic Places; assisting state and municipal agencies in the area of historic preservation, by undertaking special-project-review studies; the certification of rehabilitation projects under the Tax Reform Act of 1976; the review of federal, state, and municipal projects which may affect cultural resources; and regulating archeological exploration on state lands and under waters of state jurisdiction.

The Rhode Island statewide historical survey, inaugurated in 1969, has been designed to locate, identify, map, and report on buildings, sites, areas, and objects of historical and architectural value. During the survey, consideration is given to the total environment of the area being studied. In addition to outstanding structures and historical sites, buildings of all periods and styles, which constitute the fabric of a community, are recorded and evaluated.

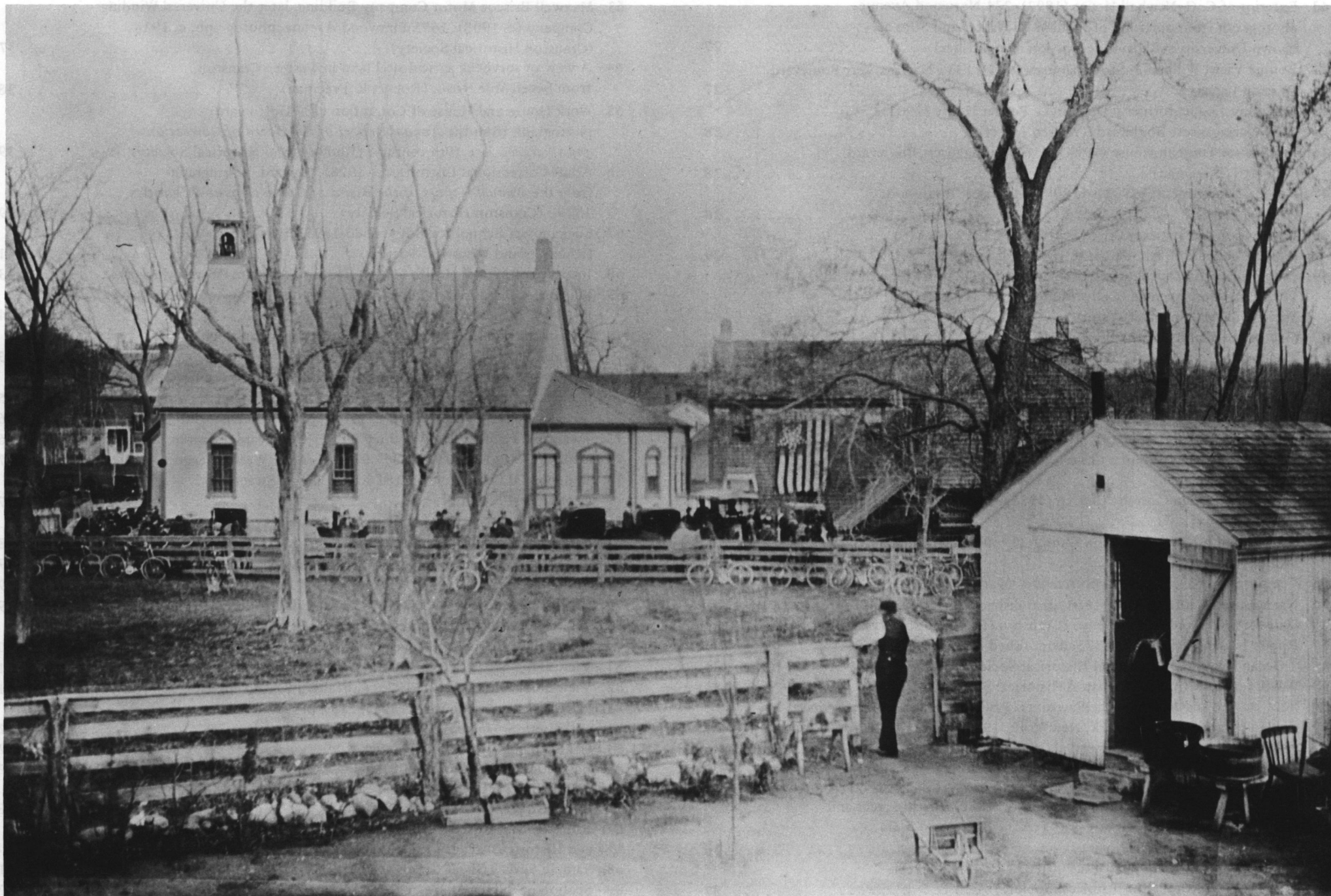
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface . . . . .	iii
I. Introduction . . . . .	1
II. Physical and Social Setting . . . . .	3
III. Historical Development . . . . .	4
Evolution of Cranston's Political Boundaries . . . . .	4
Original Inhabitants . . . . .	4
European Settlement . . . . .	7
Incorporation . . . . .	11
Cranston in the Revolution . . . . .	12
A New Town in a New Republic . . . . .	14
Agriculture . . . . .	15
Knightsville . . . . .	16
Early Industrial Development . . . . .	16
The Spragues . . . . .	19
A Town Divided . . . . .	22
The Transformation of Cranston: 1865-1910 . . . . .	22
Oaklawn . . . . .	23
Auburn . . . . .	24
Arlington . . . . .	26
Edgewood . . . . .	26
Meshanticut and Eden Park . . . . .	29
Ethnic Diversity . . . . .	30
Recreation . . . . .	34
Industry and Agriculture: 1865-1910 . . . . .	37
The State Institutions at Howard . . . . .	38
Cranston in the Twentieth Century . . . . .	44
A Twentieth-Century Suburb . . . . .	46
Cranston in the Depression . . . . .	47
The Postwar Boom . . . . .	48
IV. Summary . . . . .	51
V. Recommendations . . . . .	52
National Register Nominations . . . . .	52
Public Policy . . . . .	53
Education . . . . .	53
Appendix A: Cranston Architecture . . . . .	54
Appendix B: Pawtuxet Village Since 1973 . . . . .	58
Appendix C: National Register Program . . . . .	59
Appendix D: Tax Reform Act of 1976 . . . . .	59
Appendix E: Grants-In-Aid Program . . . . .	60
Appendix F: Historic Zoning . . . . .	60
Appendix G: Survey Form . . . . .	61
Appendix H: Inventory . . . . .	63
Bibliography . . . . .	77

## LIST OF FIGURES

Stillhouse Cove (1915); photograph in <i>Providence Magazine</i> , November 1915 . . . . .	Cover
The Narragansett Brewing Company (1909); photograph in <i>Board of Trade Journal</i> , December 1909 . . . . .	Title Page
Oaklawn Community Baptist Church (1879) and old Quaker Meeting House (1729; demolished, 1956); 229 Wilbur Avenue. (Gladys Brayton Collection, Cranston Historical Society) . . . . .	vi
1. Map of Rhode Island, showing location of Cranston. . . . .	2
2. Map of Cranston, showing principal roads and physical features . . . . .	2
3. Section of Map showing Cranston's political evolution; from John Hutchins Cady, <i>The Civic and Architectural Development of Providence</i> , 1957. . . . .	4
4. Diorama of Oaklawn (n.d.). (Bronson Museum, Attleboro) . . . . .	5
5. Oaklawn Quarry, Stone Bowl and Pipe Making; <i>Bulletin of the Massachusetts Archeological Society</i> , Vol. 29, No. 1, 1967; (Rhode Island Historical Society) . . . . .	6
6. Map of Pawtuxet (1661). (Rhode Island Historical Society). . . . .	7
7. Old photograph of Thomas Fenner House (1677); 1580 Plainfield Pike. (Rhode Island Historical Society) . . . . .	8
8. Floor plan of Thomas Fenner House (1677); drawing by Norman M. Isham, 1890s. (Rhode Island Historical Society) . . . . .	8
9. Original fireplace, Thomas Fenner House (1677); 1580 Plainfield Pike; drawing by Norman M. Isham, 1890s. (Rhode Island Historical Society) . . . . .	8
10. The Middle Farm (1715; demolished); Reservoir Avenue; photograph, 1872. (Cranston Historical Society) . . . . .	9
11. Edwin Searle House (1677); 109 Wilbur Avenue. (Robert E. Freeman) . . . . .	9
12. Thomas Ralph House (c. 1708 et seq.); 492 Oaklawn Avenue. (Robert E. Freeman) . . . . .	9
13. Remington Arnold House (c. 1730); 12 Bridge Street, Pawtuxet. (Warren Jagger) . . . . .	10
14. Elisha Smith House (c. 1740); 2154 Broad Street. (Warren Jagger) . . . . .	10
15. John Burton House (c. 1743); 421 Comstock Parkway. (Cranston Historical Society) . . . . .	10
16. Quaker Meeting House (1729); Wilbur Avenue, Oaklawn. (Gladys Brayton collection, Cranston Historical Society) . . . . .	10
17. Squire William Burton's House, Rose Cottage (c. 1720; demolished); Oaklawn. (Cranston Historical Society) . . . . .	11
18. Rochambeau's march (1780, 1781, 1782, 1783); engraving from Anne K. Brown and Howard C. Rice, <i>The American Campaigns of Rochambeau's Army: 1780, 1781, 1782, 1783</i> , Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1972. (Rhode Island Historical Society) . . . . .	12
19. Scituate Avenue; Knightsville Corner; photograph, 1910. (Cranston Historical Society) . . . . .	13
20. "Falls at Pawtuxet"; mid-19th-century engraving. (Courtesy, Hazel Wade Kennedy) . . . . .	14
21. William Lippitt House (c. 1798); 1281 Hope Road. (Robert E. Freeman) . . . . .	15
22. Detail, William Lippitt House (c. 1798); 1281 Hope Road. (Elizabeth S. Warren) . . . . .	15
23. Mantle of the Potter Remington House (c. 1795); 571 Natick Avenue. (Warren Jagger) . . . . .	15
24. Gorton Arnold Stand (c. 1860; demolished, mid-1920s); Oaklawn. (Cranston Historical Society) . . . . .	15
25. Knightsville-Franklin Church (1807); 67 Phenix Avenue. (Warren Jagger) . . . . .	16
26. Black Village: Bellefonte Mill (early 19th century). (Cranston Historical Society) . . . . .	17
27. Rhode Island Print Works, later the Vigorine Manufacturing Company (c. 1829; demolished, c. 1950); Scituate Avenue; advertisement. (Cranston Historical Society) . . . . .	18
28. Turner Wadding Mill, now the Rathbun Organ Company (1813); 463 Oaklawn Avenue. (Robert E. Freeman) . . . . .	18
29. Cranston Print Works Houses (1844); Dyer Avenue. (Robert E. Freeman) . . . . .	19
30. Map of Cranston Print Works; section from the D. G. Beers' <i>Atlas of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations</i> , 1870 . . . . .	19
31. Governor Sprague Mansion (c. 1790; 1864); 1351 Cranston Street. (Robert E. Freeman) . . . . .	20
32. Brick Store (c. 1860); Cranston Street. (Cranston Historical Society) . . . . .	20
33. Cranston Print Works (1890s; Cranston Street; drawing, Barlow's Insurance survey. (Merrimack Valley Textile Museum) . . . . .	21
34. Old Town Hall (1886); Knightsville; postcard view, c. 1905. (Cranston Historical Society) . . . . .	22
35. Oaklawn Community Baptist Church (1879); 229 Wilbur Avenue. (Gladys Brayton Collection, Cranston Historical Society) . . . . .	23
36. George M. Saurin House (1888); 18 Searle Avenue. (Robert E. Freeman) . . . . .	23
37. Arad Wood House (c. 1858); 421 Pontiac Avenue. (Robert E. Freeman) . . . . .	24
38. Park Avenue, Auburn; postcard view, turn-of-the-century. (Cranston Historical Society) . . . . .	24
39. Auburn, Rhode Island (late 19th century); bird's-eye view. (Providence Public Library) . . . . .	25
40. Oneida Street Row Houses (c. 1930). (Warren Jagger) . . . . .	26
41. Zenas W. Bliss House (c. 1883); 246 Armington Street. (Warren Jagger) . . . . .	26
42. Interior of center hall, C. C. Newhall House (1892); 234 Norwood Avenue; photograph from portfolio of William R. Walker and Sons at Brown University. (Reprint permission of publisher) . . . . .	27

43. Exterior of C. C. Newhall House (1892); 234 Norwood Avenue; photograph from portfolio of William R. Walker and Sons at Brown University. (Reprint permission of publisher) . . . . .	27	63. Maxwell Briscoe Motor Company Building, later the Universal Winding Company (c. 1908); 1655 Elmwood Avenue; photograph, c. 1918. (Cranston Historical Society). . . . .	37
44. Bonnie View, William P. Stowe House (1905); 1312 Narragansett Boulevard. (Warren Jagger). . . . .	27	64. A view of surviving agricultural land in western Cranston, from Seven Mile Road. (Robert E. Freeman) . . . . .	38
45. Harmony Lodge, formerly Herman G. Posner House (1901); 1332 Narragansett Boulevard. (Warren Jagger) . . . . .	28	65. Work House and House of Correction (1873); Howard; photograph from the <i>Annual Report of the Board of Corrections and Charities</i> , late 19th century. (Rhode Island Historical Society) . . . . .	39
46. Evangeliste Turgeon House (1924); 1363 Narragansett Boulevard. (Robert E. Freeman) . . . . .	28	66. Adult Correctional Institutions (1878); Howard; photograph from the <i>Annual Report of the Board of Corrections and Charities</i> , 1879. (Cranston Historical Society) . . . . .	39
47. Rosedale Apartments (1902); 1180 Narragansett Boulevard. (Warren Jagger). . . . .	28	67. Sockanosset School for Boys (1880-1895); Howard. (Rhode Island Historical Society) . . . . .	41
48. Destruction at Pawtuxet Cove (September 22, 1938). (Special collection, Rhode Island Historical Society) . . . . .	29	68. Institute of Mental Health (1960); Howard Avenue. (Warren Jagger) . . . . .	43
49. People's Baptist Church, formerly Auburn Free Baptist Church (1889); 1275 Elmwood Avenue. (Collection of Robert Christensen, Michigan Department of History) . . . . .	30	69. William A. Briggs School, formerly Cranston High School (1904); 865 Park Avenue. (Cranston Historical Society) . . . . .	44
50. Map of the vicinity of the Print Works of A. & W. Sprague, 1844; illustration from "The Trial of John Gordon and William Gordon, Charged with the Murder of Amasa Sprague"; pamphlet; Signey S. Rider, Providence, 1906 . . . . .	31	70. William H. Hall Free Library (1927); 1825 Broad Street. (Warren Jagger). . . . .	45
51. Immigrant Farm Workers; photograph, c. 1900. (Cranston Historical Society). . . . .	32	71. Parade in Knightsville at the end of World War I (November 28, 1918); Phenix Avenue and Scituate Avenue. (Cranston Historical Society) . . . . .	45
52. St. Anne's Roman Catholic Church (1927); 1493 Cranston Street. (Robert E. Freeman) . . . . .	32	72. Natick Avenue Construction (c. 1903). (Cranston Historical Society) . . . . .	46
53. St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church (1935); 1525 Cranston Street. (Warren Jagger). . . . .	33	73. Twentieth-Century Houses along Shirley Boulevard. (Warren Jagger). . . . .	46
54. Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church (1966); 175 Oaklawn Avenue. (Warren Jagger). . . . .	33	74. Cranston City Hall (1936); 869 Park Avenue. (Warren Jagger) . . . . .	47
55. Temple Sinai (1961); 30 Hagen Avenue. (Warren Jagger). . . . .	33	75. Commercial Block (1930); 1816-1820 Broad Street. (Robert E. Freeman) . . . . .	47
56. Narragansett Trotting Park (1863; demolished); on land bordered by Gansett Street and Park Avenue. (Cranston Historical Society). . . . .	34	76. Aerial view of Garden City (1965); Reservoir Avenue. (Cranston Historical Society) . . . . .	48
57. Rhode Island Yacht Club (1875; demolished in 1938 hurricane); 1 Ocean Drive. (Rhode Island Historical Society). . . . .	34	77. Benedetto Cerilli House (1955); 50 East Hill Drive. . . . .	49
58. Pawtuxet Neck (n. d.). (Cranston Historical Society) . . . . .	35	78. Samuel Forte House (1969); 135 East Hill Drive . . . . .	49
59. Boat Houses at Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet; Pawtuxet River; postcard view; the Holograph Co., New York, New York, 1905. (Rhode Island Historical Society) . . . . .	36	79. Gene Abbruzzi House (1971); 185 East Hill Drive . . . . .	49
60. Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet; 60 Rhodes Place; postcard view, 1915. (Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission) . . . . .	36	80. Interchange between Routes I-295 and 37 (1980). (Dieter Hammerchlag, University of Rhode Island) . . . . .	50
61. The Gazebo at Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet (c. 1880); Broad Street and Rhodes Place; postcard view, c. 1915; A. C. Bosselman & Co. (Rhode Island Historical Society) . . . . .	36	81. View along Broad Street, 1948. ( <i>Providence Journal-Bulletin</i> ) . . . . .	51
62. United Traction Trolley Barn (1900); 833 Cranston Street; view, c. 1920. (Cranston Historical Society) . . . . .	37	82. View along Broad Street, 1973. (Elizabeth S. Warren) . . . . .	51
		83. Pawtuxet Baptist Church (1895); 2157 Broad Street. (Elizabeth S. Warren) . . . . .	52
		84. Oaklawn Village Historic District . . . . .	52
		85. Edgewood Yacht Club (1908); Shaw Avenue. (Robert E. Freeman) . . . . .	52
		86. Odd Fellows Hall, now Lindsay's Market (1893); 2178-2184 Broad Street. (Elizabeth S. Warren) . . . . .	58
		87. Ruins of Richardson Pewtery; Furnace Hill Brook Archeological and Historic District. . . . .	59
		88. Sample Survey Sheet . . . . .	61
		89. Section of Survey Map . . . . .	62



Frontispiece: Late nineteenth-century view of Oaklawn Community Baptist Church (1879) and old Quaker Meeting House (1729; demolished, 1956) at rear, displaying flag; 229 Wilbur Avenue.



## I. INTRODUCTION

Cranston is a city of contrasts. Heavily populated in the east, it remains largely rural in the west. Although a city for over sixty-five years, Cranston does not have an urban character. Primarily agricultural throughout its history, it was nonetheless the hub of Rhode Island's greatest nineteenth-century industrial empire. Cranston also contains the state institutions of mental health and adult corrections.

One of the most dramatic contrasts is that between the general perception of Cranston—solely as a twentieth-century suburban satellite to the City of Providence—and the wealth of historical sites and interesting architecture that exists in the city. But the legacy of the past plays an important role in the community's everyday life, and a knowledge of that past can enhance our understanding of the city.

From its inception, the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission has worked to assist and strengthen local preservation efforts. The Pawtuxet report (the Commission's first report), published in 1973 in response to a request by the Edgewood-Pawtuxet Preservation Society, documented the architectural heritage of Pawtuxet Village; this report includes an update of that study as well as a developmental history of the city as a whole.

As part of its state-mandated responsibility to safeguard Rhode Island's heritage and under provisions of the Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission has undertaken a statewide survey in order to identify and record all sites of historical and architectural significance in each city. Moreover, an inventory of local cultural resources is a basic part of each town's responsibility to assess the impact of projects funded by the Community Development Act of 1974. Thus, funding for this survey of Cranston's cultural resources was provided by the City of Cranston from a Community Development Block Grant and by the Historical Preservation Commission through its survey and planning grant from the National Register Program administered by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

The Commission has chosen to survey the state on a

town-by-town, city-by-city basis. To accomplish the goals of the survey program four stages are necessary for each project: field investigation and research, preparation of maps and survey sheets, evaluation of the properties identified to determine their significance, and preparation of a final report.

A standard survey form, the "Historic Building Data sheet," is used throughout the state. This incorporates both architectural and historical information and a photograph of each building or site. Historical information is obtained through the use of maps, published histories, newspapers, directories, census records, town records, manuscript and graphics collections, and the knowledge of local residents. Data from the survey forms is transferred to maps and, to a limited extent, to the Statewide Planning Program's computer system. This method allows information pertaining to cultural resources to be readily available for planning purposes. An explanation of the survey methodology together with a copy of the "Historic Building Data Sheet" and a sample detail from a Cranston survey map can be found in Appendix F.

Upon completion of the survey, which is reviewed by local residents, historians, planners, and city officials (as well as by the Preservation Commission), copies of the material are placed in appropriate local repositories—the City Plan Commission and the William Hall Free Library, as well as at the Commission's office. Each set of materials consists of the completed survey forms, maps, and final report.

The Cranston survey was begun in September 1976 and completed in June 1977. Approximately 800 buildings, sites, and open spaces of historical, architectural, or visual interest have been included. The period covered extends from the seventeenth century to the present. A property's selection for the Inventory (Appendix G) was determined on the basis of individual significance or its value as an indicator of the city's physical, social, or economic development. The Inventory includes some sites containing particularly valuable archeological resources which both illustrate and explain the city's prehistory. By and large, the present report concentrates on above-ground resources; extensive archeological investigations are beyond the scope of this survey.

This report presents a concise yet comprehensive history of Cranston, focusing on extant historic properties, followed by recommendations for preservation planning. The appendices include an explanation of the survey procedure and the National Register, Tax Reform Act, and Grants-In-Aid programs of the Historical Preservation Commission as well as an inventory of structures, sites, and monuments worthy of inclusion in the state inventory. Emphasis is placed on the whole spectrum of the city's past as revealed in its present morphology—its topography, settlement pattern, buildings, and landmarks. The impact of modern development—including such factors as zoning, industrial growth, traffic demands, building demolition, deterioration, and alteration of structures, has been taken into account.

The objectives of this endeavor are five-fold: to provide a catalog of Cranston's nonrenewable cultural resources for local and statewide preservation planning; to recognize districts, individual structures, and sites eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places; to establish priorities based on problems and potentials discovered as part of the survey process; to serve as an academic and educational resource; and to stimulate civic pride, making residents aware of the historic and visual environment in which they live and encouraging them to take a positive interest in the future of their community. To these ends this effort is dedicated.

The Commission would like to thank the following organizations and individuals for their aid in completing the Cranston Survey: Mayor Edward DiPrete, former Mayor James Taft, Mr. Anthony DelSesto and the staff of the City Plan Commission, Mr. Eric Palazzo and Mr. Michael Doyle of the Community Development Program, Mr. Robert Drew and the members of the Cranston Historic District Commission, Mr. Carlo DelBonis and the staff of the city Assessor's Office, Mr. Albert T. Klyberg and the staff of the Rhode Island Historical Society, Mr. and Mrs. William Baxter, Mr. and Mrs. C. Edwin Lewis, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Lynch, and, in particular, Mrs. Gladys W. Brayton, who has served continuously and ably as unofficial historian of Cranston. In addition, a special thanks is due to all those generous citizens who opened their homes for the survey.

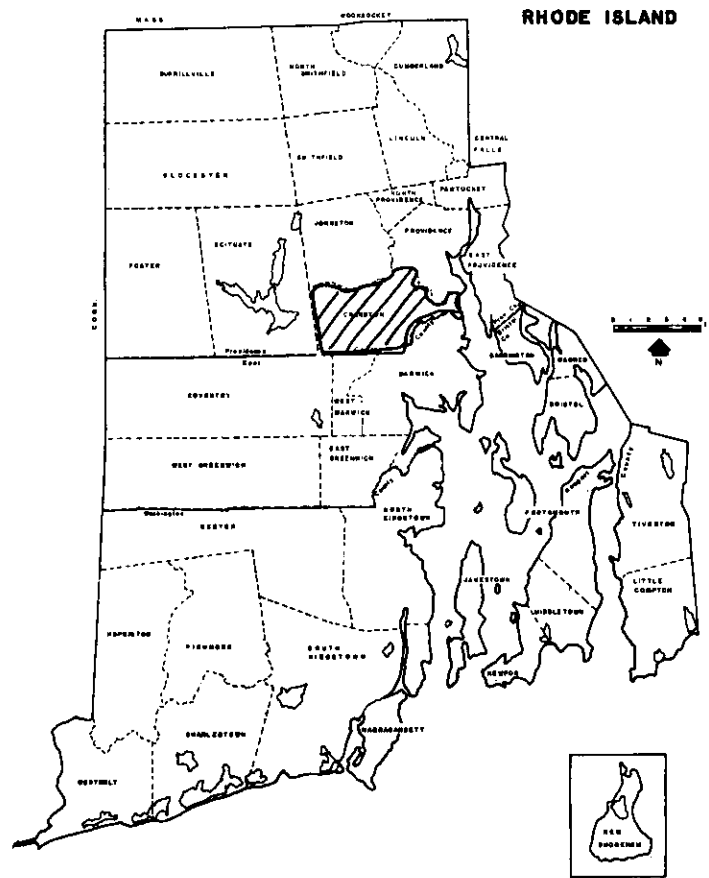


Fig. 1: Map of Rhode Island highlighting Cranston.

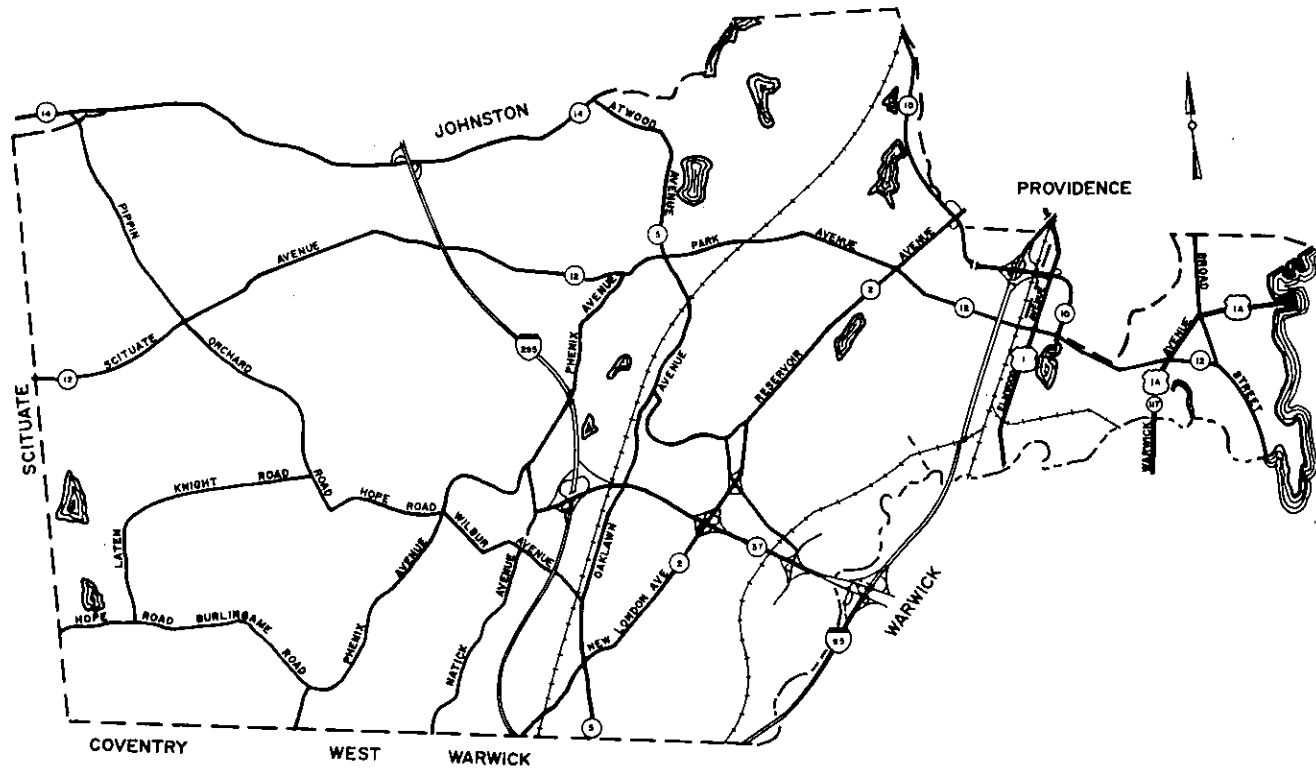


Fig. 2: Map of Cranston showing principal roads and physical features.

## II. PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL SETTING

Located just south of Providence, the city of Cranston consists of approximately thirty square miles stretching from Narragansett Bay on the east to the Town of Scituate on the west. It is bounded on the north by Providence and Johnston, and by Warwick, West Warwick, and part of Coventry on the south. Routes I-95 and I-295 run north-south through the city, the former providing direct access to Providence and other major east-coast cities, the latter dividing Cranston approximately in half. State Route 37 links the two interstate highways, and Route 10 runs northeast from Route 95 following the boundary with Providence. Two railroad lines remain in Cranston; the original Pawtuxet Valley line which is now part of Amtrak's North-east Corridor parallels Route 95, and the old Providence, Hartford and Fishkill line follows Cranston Street and Oaklawn Avenue.

Physiographically, Cranston is characterized by flat outwash plains in the east and rolling glaciated uplands in the west. Between the two a granitic scarp forms a distinct north-south division running through the middle of the city. The area east of the scarp, with the exception of Sockanossett Hill and Rocky Hill, is generally quite flat, while the upland plateau to the west of the scarp contains a series of hills, the highest of which, Bald Hill, has an elevation of about five hundred feet.

Geography has played an important role in shaping the city's history. With good topsoil throughout, Cranston was predominantly an agricultural community for two-and-a-half centuries. Only after the Civil War did the character of the landscape begin to change, as farms in western Cranston became reforested and those in eastern Cranston were platted. In addition minor deposits of iron ore, coal, gravel, and granite all exist beneath the surface of the land

and each has been mined or quarried over the years.

The Pawtuxet River, which forms much of the boundary between Cranston and Warwick, flows east, arriving by a waterfall at protected Pawtuxet Cove, where the first English settlement in Cranston occurred. The Meshanticut Brook in central Cranston and the Pocasset River further east flow into the Pawtuxet, and the falls along them accounted for the location of several early Cranston industries. The city is dotted with ponds as well as many natural springs. The former contributed to the large ice industry throughout the nineteenth century; the latter provided water for the city's breweries.

Proximity to Providence and relatively flat topography made eastern Cranston especially attractive for settlement and fostered rapid development in the mid-nineteenth century of those parts of Cranston which were eventually annexed to the capital city. By the end of the nineteenth century, Cranston became a suburb and support town for the central city, holding its reservoir, prison, recreation facilities, and truck farms.

Late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century development in what is today eastern Cranston has resulted in a relatively dense residential environment composed largely of two-story frame houses fanning out along the old roads that traversed Cranston to link Providence to the state's outlying towns and points beyond. Although this development formed a variety of villages within the city, Cranston has no true town center; neighboring Providence has always served that function.

The advent of the automobile and post-World War II highway construction combined to transform central Cranston from a broad green swath of truck farms into a classic mid-twentieth-century suburb. Numerous one-story ranch houses are set back from winding roads of

subdivisions laid out to emphasize the suburban environment. Apartment clusters now line old roads that have become dominated by automobile-oriented strip architecture.

Only that part of Cranston west of Route 295 retains its traditional rural character. Farm buildings set well back from narrow roads serve as the center of large farm complexes. Bounded by stone walls two hundred years old, these farms have been protected only by their distance from Providence and by their relatively hilly topography from the homogenization of recent development.

Cranston's physical development was paralleled by the evolution of the social composition of its residents. Originally settled by English farmers, by the mid-nineteenth century the area attracted a large number of Irishmen to work in its mills. Later Italians and Swedes worked the truck farms of central Cranston and settled in Knightsville and Eden Park, respectively. A Welsh community grew up around the pumping station at Pettaconsett, and Germans founded the breweries in Arlington. In the twentieth century, the city became the home of many Jewish and Italian residents who had left Providence but often still commuted to work there.

Cranston has Rhode Island' third highest per-capita income and one of the best educational systems in the state. It has well maintained housing stock, modern recreational facilities, and active civic organizations; and its location is convenient to all the state's major points of interest. With both light industry and considerable open space, numerous churches and room for new development, Cranston is perceived to be a comfortable, prosperous city, the model to be emulated by many other cities and towns.

### III. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

#### EVOLUTION OF CRANSTON'S POLITICAL BOUNDARIES

The city's history as a political entity is interrelated with the early development of the Massachusetts and Plymouth colonies, Providence, and Warwick and reflects early rivalries among those settlements. Moreover, its present boundaries were shaped by statewide political reactions to nineteenth-century social and political changes.

In 1638, two years after Roger Williams made the "grand purchase" of Providence from the Indians for himself and twelve other "proprietors," he made a second purchase further south for the same group. This was the "Pawtuxet Purchase" incorporating into Providence the "South Woods," now the eastern part of present-day Cranston, including Pawtuxet Village.

In 1662, a group of Warwick men speculated in the "Meshanicut Purchase," land immediately west of the Providence Purchase which included the remainder of present-day Cranston. The precise boundaries of the Pawtuxet Purchase were a source of continuing controversy throughout the seventeenth century—pitting the "Pawtuxet men" against Roger Williams, the Providence Proprietors, and the settlers of adjacent Warwick—and were resolved only in 1714. The present southern and western borders of Cranston were established at that time.

When, in 1754, the town of Cranston was set off from Providence, it contained large portions of what are now the South Providence, Elmwood, and Washington Park sections of the City of Providence, Cranston's northern border being far straighter than it is today. Most of these portions were ceded to the capital city in 1868—the first such annexations made of Providence—as part of an effort

by local and state politicians to maintain Republican control of the General Assembly in the face of the growing Irish Democratic population. Further cessions of land occurred in 1873, 1887, and 1892, as Cranston turned over to Providence the land that became Roger Williams Park.

#### ORIGINAL INHABITANTS

In prehistoric times, Cranston's physical setting made it a congenial place for habitation. The presence of man in Cranston probably stretches back 10,000 years before the Pawtuxet Purchase was concluded. The Narragansett Indian inhabitants of Cranston who greeted the European colonists followed a way of life remarkably different from the earliest human inhabitants of the area that is today Cranston. The archeological record is our only source of information about those inhabitants and the vast time span of human activity and cultural adaptation preceding our own relatively short historical period.

In the ten millennia before colonial settlement, there were three distinct cultural adaptations, each making varying use of the diverse inland and coastal resources of the area. The Paleolithic cultural period (8500-7000 B.C.) represented the earliest human adaptation to an environment unrecognizably harsh to us today. The retreating glacier was still in northern New England, and small bands of nomadic hunters had apparently followed herds of mastodon and caribou into the bleak subarctic landscape of southeastern New England. Because Paleo-Indian populations were both small and mobile, little evidence of them remains. Although no Paleo-Indian sites have been found in Cranston (the only known Rhode Island site is Lincoln), it is likely that these small groups of big-game hunters stalked their exotic prey in a thinly wooded spruce and birch landscape similar to northern Canada today.

As the climate gradually grew warmer and herds of large game animals disappeared, human populations of the area were forced to make significant adaptations to the new environment. As a temperate environment returned, a wider variety of plants and animals were utilized, and by 6000 B.C. the Archaic cultural period had developed. It is marked by a much more diversified pattern of food gathering and subsistence. For this

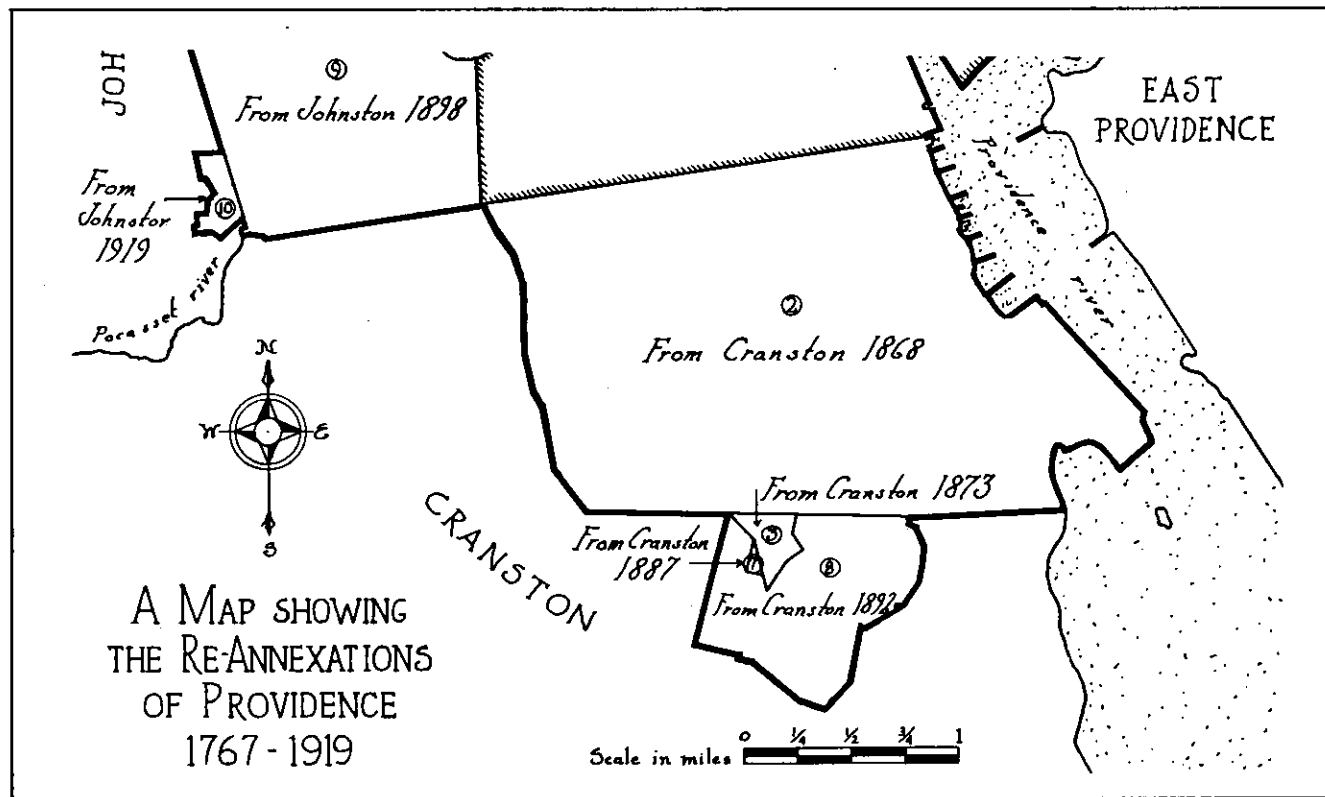


Fig. 3: Map of Cranston's political evolution, showing the reclamations by Providence.

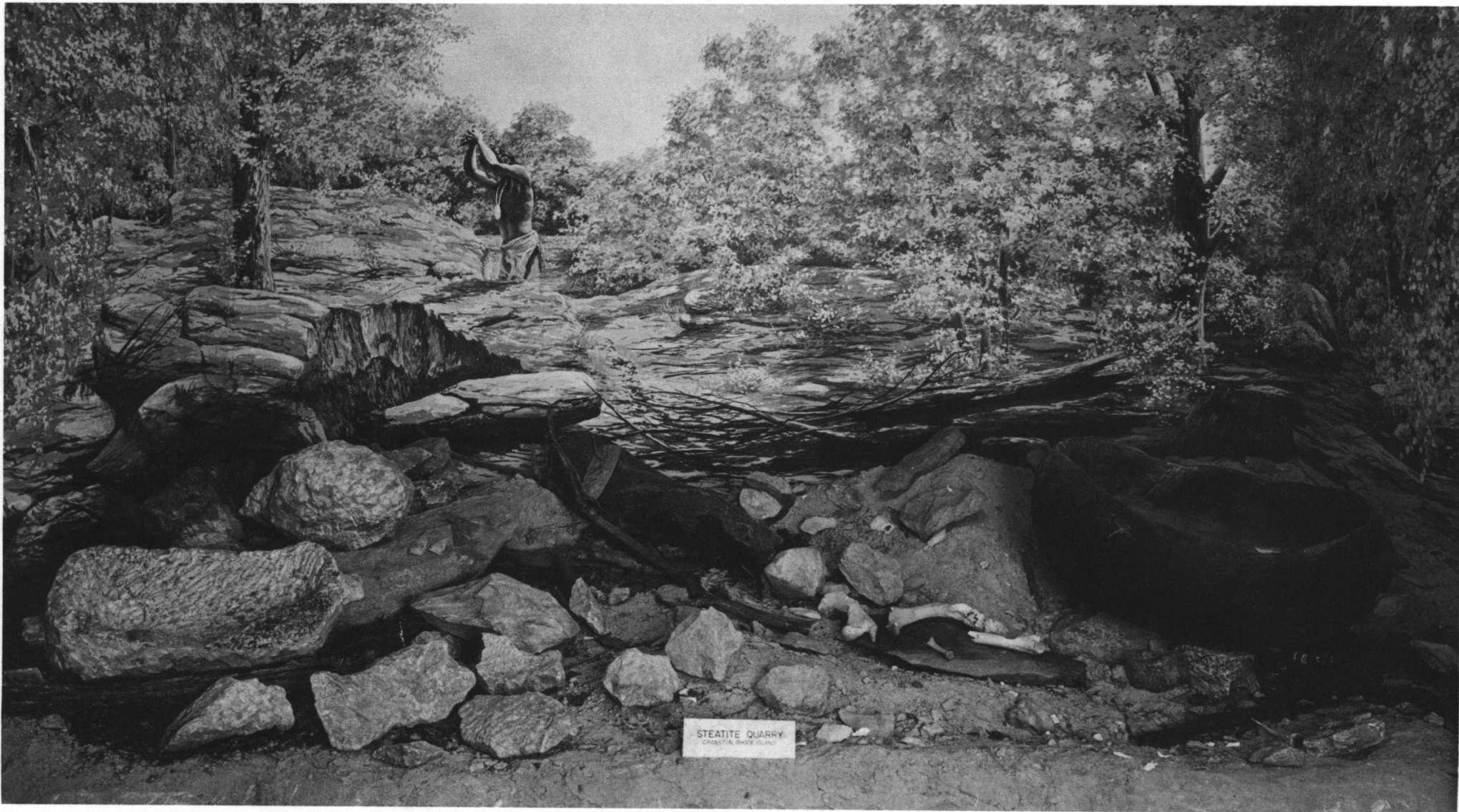


Fig. 4: Diorama of the Oaklawn Steatite Quarry. A visual representation of pre-historic man in Cranston.

period the archeological record becomes richer and more informative, reflecting increasing populations which utilized a wider variety of tools for hunting deer, birds, and small mammals; for preparing nuts and other wild-plant foods; or for working wooden objects. Different projectile points, including the first arrowheads, were fashioned at this time; scrapers and drills were used to prepare hides

or materials for clothing. Ground stone gouges and axes were introduced, indicating the importance of wooden objects, while grinding stones (or mortar and pestles) marked the appearance of seeds and nuts in the diet.

Because the people of this era moved about to exploit seasonally abundant food sources, there is consider-

able variety in Archaic-period sites. There are two common locations for Archaic sites: freshwater streams running into salt water and salt-water inlets, the former permitting the harvest of spring runs of herring or salmon, the latter allowing the gathering of shellfish. Although modern historical development in eastern Cranston has destroyed most pre-historic sites, some traces of Archaic-period occupation may survive along the Pawtuxet and Pocasset Rivers.

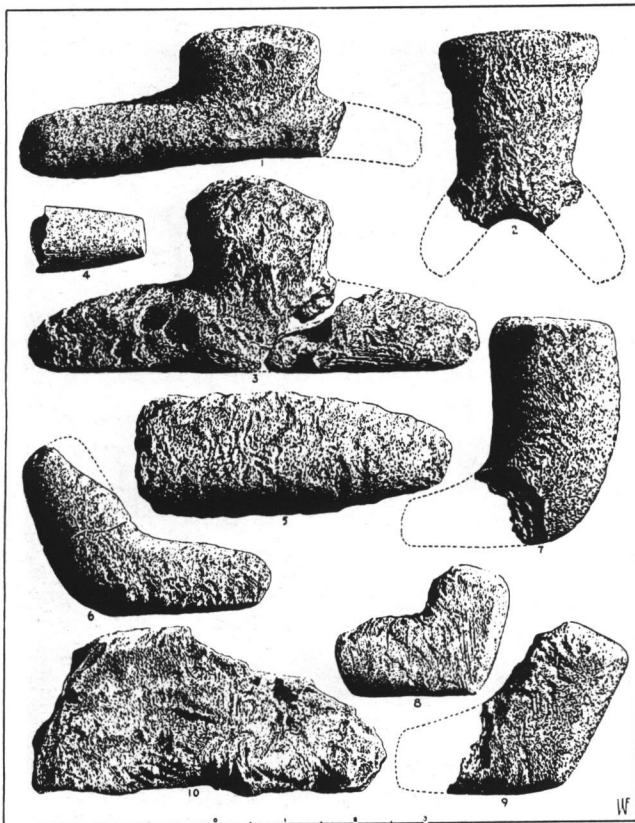


Fig. 5: Stone pipe forms from the Oaklawn Quarry.

Western Cranston, however, remains rich in archeological sites. A major site from the Archaic period existed along Furnance Hill Brook. Excavated in 1966 and 1967 by the Narragansett Archaeological Society before being destroyed by the construction of Route 295, this habitation area, ideally located on a knoll above the confluence of Meshanticut Brook, Furnance Hill Brook, and Church Brook, revealed many projectile points and other tools from the Late Archaic and Early Woodland periods with fragments of semifinished soapstone or steatite bowls from a nearby quarry. The Oaklawn Quarry, located less than a mile to the west, is one of the two known Rhode Island soapstone or steatite quarries from which Late Archaic peoples extracted this workable stone for fashioning bowls and other vessels. Excavations by the Narragansett Society have revealed numerous examples of broken or partially formed objects at the site. Numerous finely finished bowls (and pipes dating from the later Woodland

period) have been excavated at local sites, and several examples are on display at the Bronson Museum in Attleboro, Massachusetts. As important as the finished products are the abraders, picks, reamers, and other tools (located at the Furnace Hill Brook and Quarry sites) used by peoples as much as two thousand years ago.

Rock shelters were another site location favored during all periods when prehistoric hunters traveled widely in search of game. There, small groups could spend a night or set up a base camp and find shelter from the weather. An example of such a site used during both the Late Archaic and Woodland periods is found at the Church Brook Rock Shelter. The absence of the usual habitation-site litter in conjunction with the large number of blades and points indicates periods of short-lived visitation by transient hunters rather than family groups.

To a considerable extent, the Woodland period, beginning about 500 B.C. and extending to the colonial period, represents a degree of cultural continuity with the Archaic period which did not exist between the latter period and the Paleolithic before it. The major cultural changes appear as additions introduced from more advanced Indian cultures to the south, in the form of pottery and horticulture.

There is no dramatic shift apparent in the archeological record. The steatite or soapstone bowls of the late Archaic and Early Woodland periods are simply replaced by pottery made from local clays and tempered with grit or shell. However, the Oaklawn Quarry continued to be utilized as a source of raw materials for pipe manufacture. Numerous examples of incomplete or broken platform, elbow, and straight pipes have been uncovered at this site, and bear testimony to the importance of the cultivation of a tobacco, as well as the newly introduced foodstuffs.

The cultivation of maize, beans, and squash supplemented a subsistence diet that remained heavily dependent on wild plant and animal life. This new subsistence element led to the development of larger and more permanent villages along the coastal plain and fertile terraces inland along rivers. Examples of such sites could be found along the Pawtuxet River. Many other Woodland village sites have undoubtedly been destroyed during the recent

historical era, since colonial farmers favored the same locations for their settlements. Nevertheless, Woodland Indians also had their seasonal camps for spring fishing, summer shellfish harvesting, and winter hunting.

The plague of 1616-1617 struck the coastal tribes of southeastern New England with great severity, depopulating whole villages and upsetting traditional tribal boundaries and alliances. Both the open fields and tribal instability were inviting for colonial settlement and eventual domination. Fort Ninigret in Charlestown and Queens Fort in nearby Exeter represent examples of a new settlement pattern adopted by the surviving Narragansetts for purposes of trade and defense.

At the time the first European settlers arrived, the Narragansett Indians lived in large, semi-permanent coastal villages surrounded by extensive fields which had been cleared for cultivation. The Narragansetts, members of the large Algonquin nation, were the most populous Indian tribe in southern New England. When the first white settlers arrived, it is said that there were at least six Indian villages in Cranston. One was in the Washington Park region, no longer a part of Cranston; one in Pettaconsett; one by Randall's Pond near today's Thornton; and another, called Pontiac, near Hope and Pippin Orchard Roads. Mashpaug, in what is now Roger Williams Park, was one of the region's largest Indian villages and was referred to as a town by Roger Williams. Bellefonte was known as Obbatmue's corn fields, named for the sachem or tribal leader of Mashpaug. The village at Pawtuxet was led by the sachem Socanancos.

Today, Cranston's Indian heritage is reflected in the many place names with Indian origins and in the oldest local highway, the old Pequot Path that now corresponds to Broad Street. Besides Pawtuxet, which means "falls," familiar names deriving from the Indians include Pettaconsett, referring to the bottom lands at the confluence of the Pocasset and Pawtuxet Rivers; Pocasset meaning "river" or "brook"; and Sockanosset, which derives either from the name of the Indian sachem or from the Indian word "black" referring to coal in the Sockanosset area. Meshanticut means "well wooded region" and was the name by which the second purchase from the Indians was known.

## EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT

William Arnold, one of the original Providence Proprietors, was the first Englishman to settle in what is now Cranston. He built a home in the wilderness about a mile north of the Pawtuxet Falls near what is today Warwick Avenue—in 1638. Soon thereafter, three other of Roger Williams' followers—William Harris, William Carpenter, and Zachariah Rhodes—settled along the fertile meadows of the Pawtuxet River. By 1638, Rhodes and Arnold's brother-in-law, Stephen Arnold, had built a gristmill near the falls and laid out the "Arnold Road" northward to join the Pequot Trail which led south to Connecticut. This road today is Broad Street. William Arnold's son Benedict became the first governor of Rhode Island under the charter of 1663.

Throughout the seventeenth century, the inhabitants of the small village that grew up around Pawtuxet Cove gained a reputation for independence and political troublemaking. In 1643, some of Pawtuxet's leading men placed themselves and their lands under the jurisdiction of Massachusetts. That colony had a royal charter (which Providence lacked) and was anxious to gain a foothold on Narragansett Bay. The Pawtuxet men worked with Massachusetts in its attempt to deny the claims of Samuel Gorton and his followers to the adjoining Shawomet Purchase in what is today Warwick. In 1646, one of Gorton's disciples returned from London with explicit assurances of protection, and the Gortonians began their permanent occupation of the land surrounding Warwick Cove. The Pawtuxet men persisted in their affiliation with Massachusetts until a show of force by the Rhode Island government in 1658 made them lose interest in alliance with the neighboring colony.

Rival claims by Massachusetts touched off another even more long-standing conflict centering on Pawtuxet. In order to counter Massachusetts' expansion into the area around modern-day Woonsocket, William Harris, one of the original Providence Proprietors, claimed that the original Providence Purchase extended far into the interior. Roger Williams bitterly objected to what he considered a selfish landgrab, defrauding the Indians. The quarrel focused not on Providence but on Pawtuxet, because its boundaries had never been clearly defined and its extension was what Harris really sought. These considerations resulted in con-

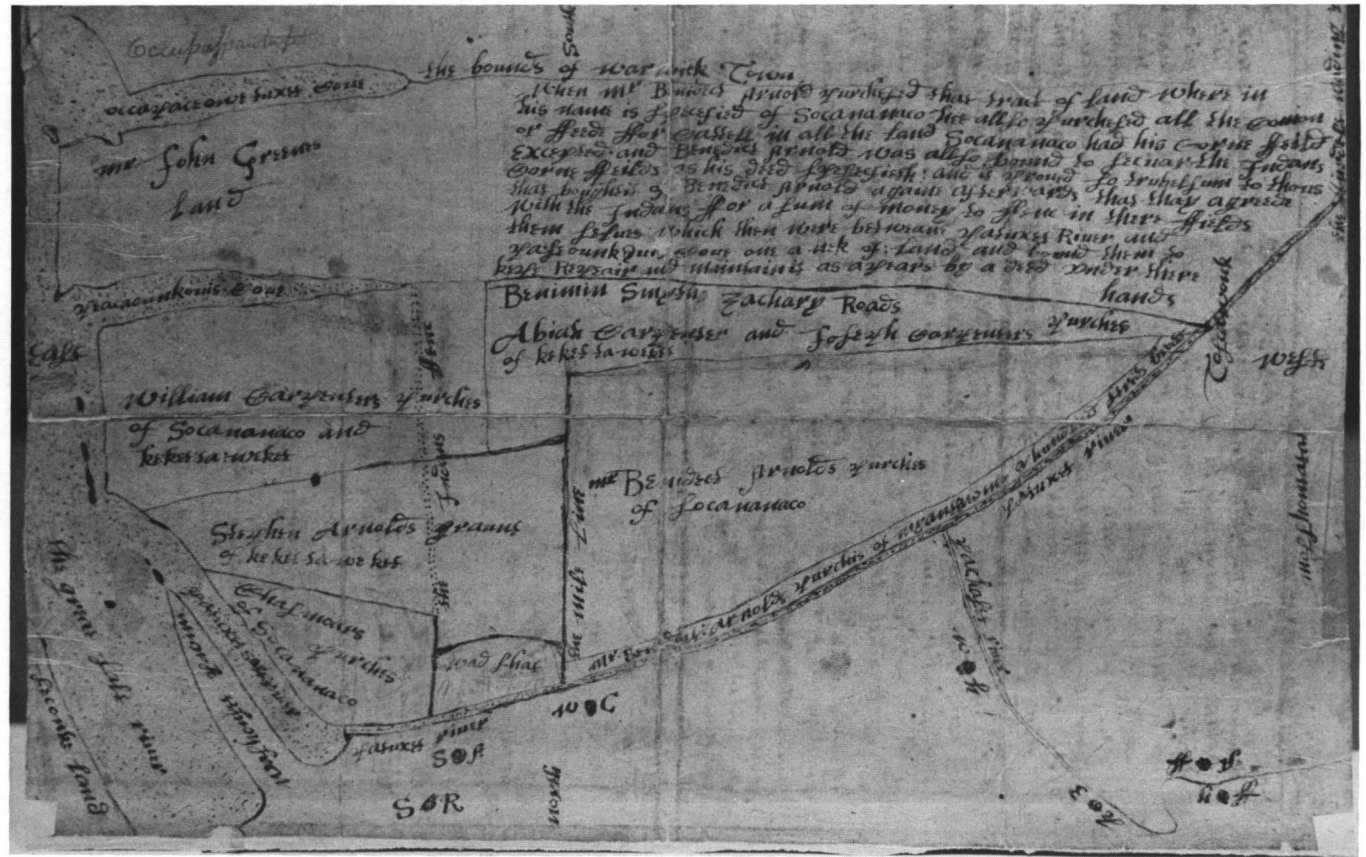


Fig. 6: Map of Pawtuxet (1661).

flict between the Pawtuxet men and Warwick, which automatically became Williams' ally.

Although Roger Williams held that Pawtuxet included only a few square miles, Harris contended that it extended twenty miles inland like the rest of the original purchase. He also insisted that the stream used to define the boundary was the south branch of the Pawtuxet, the Flat River, and so his definition of Pawtuxet included all of modern Cranston, most of Johnston, Scituate, and Foster; plus half of Coventry and part of West Warwick. The reason for the passions that underlay the controversy are evident. If the original purchase was as vast as Harris insisted, he and others of the original thirteen who had bought up additional rights would hold tremendous duchies, while Williams had intended that land to be set aside as reserve for new refugees from religious persecution.

The conflict, as complex as it was bitter, lasted half a century, being resolved piecemeal after the two protagonists' deaths in the 1680s. It was not until 1714 that the issue was finally concluded; the Pawtuxet claimants settled for a large tract comprising what is now the western half of Cranston and the southern part of Johnston.

Little physical evidence of the early settlers survives. Their homes were undoubtedly small and crudely built by later standards. Each probably consisted of one room, perhaps two or three at the most, framed with heavy timbers, enclosed by rough vertical planking, and centered around a stone chimney. These spaces were low and dark, natural light coming from only a few tiny windows of cloth or oiled paper.



Fig. 7: Thomas Fenner House (1677); 1580 Plainfield Pike; turn-of-the-century view; photograph c. 1900.

The conflict between the Indians and the English known as King Philip's War destroyed almost all of the buildings west of Narragansett Bay. Although Rhode Island was not initially involved, due to its long-standing good relations with the Indians, the war spread south into the colony, especially after the Narragansetts agreed to aid the Wampanoags. Most of the settlers fled to Aquidneck Island, abandoning their homesites. All but one building in Cranston was burned to the ground. William Harris' son Toleration, who remained in Cranston, was traveling to his gristmill when he was killed by an Indian war party. In another incident, the entire Budlong family was wiped out, except three-year-old John who was kidnapped and later ransomed. The only structure in Cranston to survive King Philip's War was the long, low, one-and-a-half-story building above Oaklawn known as the Long House, which survived until the middle of this century.

Arthur Fenner's house west of Thornton, built in 1655, was one of thirteen "garrison houses" located throughout Rhode Island during the confrontation with the Indians. Burned in 1676 and rebuilt the following

year, it had diamond-shaped panes of glass, one of which is now at the Rhode Island Historical Society. In 1887, the building collapsed from neglect.

Still standing on the Plainfield Pike is the house that Arthur Fenner built for his son Thomas in 1677 immediately following the suspension of the war with the Indians. Although later enlarged, this house originally had only one room on the ground floor, one on the second floor and an unfinished garret. It was built with a pilastered stone chimney at the north end; its top has since been rebuilt in brick following the original pilastered form. Despite the changes, the system of framing in the original part of the house is intact. The accompanying drawing removes the alterations to present the "loer" floor as Thomas Fenner knew it. Antoinette Downing, commenting in *The Early Homes of Rhode Island* in 1937, declared that "the Thomas Fenner House is the best example of a one-room two story stone-end house remaining in the state." As such it is an unusual and valuable part not only of Cranston's heritage but of the history of early construction in New England.

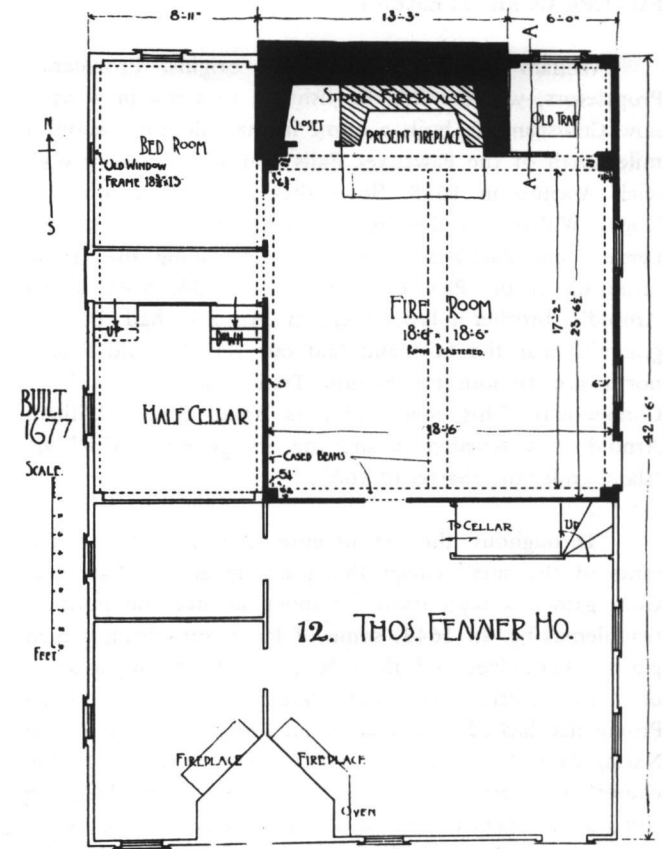


Fig. 8: Floor plan of the Thomas Fenner House (1677); drawing, 1890.

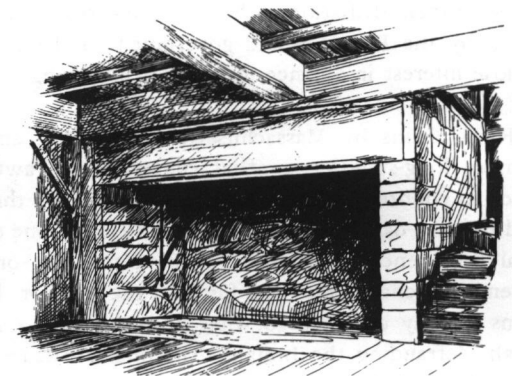


Fig. 9: Original fireplace of Thomas Fenner House (1677); 1580 Plainfield Pike; drawing, 1890s.



Cranston's other remaining seventeenth-century "stone-ender" is the Edward Searle House in Oaklawn Village, known originally as Searle's Corners. Edward Searle was the son-in-law of Thomas Ralph, one of the Meshanticut Purchasers, and acquired land within the Purchase in 1671. Like all the residents of Cranston, Searle had to rebuild after King Philip's War, and in 1677 he constructed a one-and-a-half-story gable-roofed "stone-ender" at what is now 109 Wilbur Avenue and today stands on the ell on the larger eighteenth-century house built by 1722.

The end of the seventeenth century saw settlement all across present-day Cranston. Nicholas Sheldon owned 3000 acres in the north-central part of town, while Stukeley Westcott's holdings stretched from Sockanosset to present-day Knightsville. The Knight family owned land in the northwestern corner of Cranston as it does today, while the Potters settled in the south-central area near Meshanticut Brook. A marker erected during the Civil War near 115 Lyndon Road, opposite Roger Williams Park, marks the site of the Carpenter farm. The Stone family in 1696 purchased thirty acres off present-day Pontiac Road from the Potter family and began settlement of the area that eventually became known as Stoneville. John Herrod settled near the brook that would bear his name throughout most of the eighteenth century until it became known as the Furnace Hill Brook.

By 1708, the Randalls had erected a "mansion house" at the site of the present Saint Mary's Church, and at about that time the small Ralph House, still standing at 492 Oaklawn Avenue, was built. In 1715, Andrew Harris, grandson of William, established his "middle farm" in what is now the Woodbridge section of Cranston. By 1718, Roger Burlingame had erected a large house, thirty-by-sixty feet, two-and-a-half stories high, on Phenix Avenue, which was destroyed in 1855. Its chimney remained until 1912. Another early chimney, that of the old 1700 King homestead, survived as a landmark on Oaklawn Avenue until 1938. The house erected by Fidelio Fenner just above Thornton between 1718 and 1725 fared better, surviving until 1957.



Fig. 10: A 19th-century view of Middle Farm, established by Andrew Harris in 1715 in what is now the Woodbridge section; demolished.



Fig. 11: Edward Searle House (1677); 109 Wilbur Avenue. Two-story portion added to "stone-ender" by 1727.

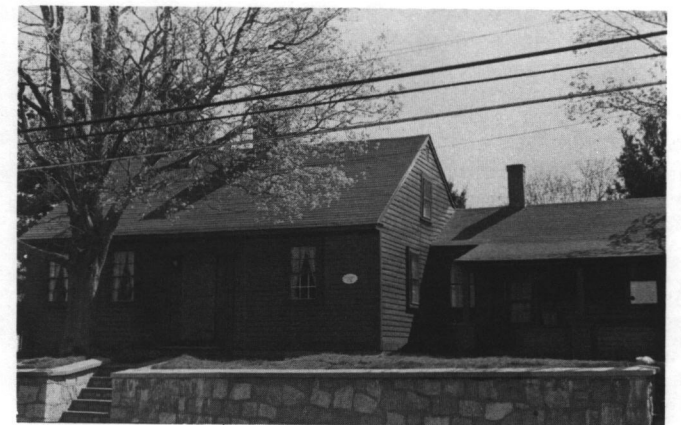


Fig. 12: Thomas Ralph House (c. 1708 et seq.); 492 Oaklawn Avenue.

Almost every part of Cranston has one house still standing from the first half of the eighteenth century. In Pawtuxet two two-and-a-half-story, gable-roofed frame structures, the Remington Arnold House at 12 Bridge Street and the Elisha Smith House at 2154 Broad Street, date from c. 1740. The John Burton House, a small gambrel-roofed house at 421 Comstock Parkway, was built around 1743, perhaps originally as a "stone-ender." Still standing, though altered, is the two-and-a-half-story Dyer House (1732) at the Pocasset Cemetery on Dyer Avenue.

The eighteenth century also witnessed the organization of a number of religious congregations and the erection of churches to house them. A large number of Cranston residents were Quakers. Their meeting centered around the Burlingame House and the Potter family homestead (Rivulet Farm, which stood on Natick Avenue just south of Oaklawn) where gatherings were held from 1711 to 1729. The famous Quaker leader George Fox spoke to this meeting in 1672; in 1729, a meetinghouse was erected on the site of the present Oaklawn Community Baptist Church. Of very simple design and barn-like frame construction, it was the sixth built in Rhode Island. The meetinghouse made Searle's Corners the center of religious and social life in western Cranston. Anna Jenkins, a noted Quaker, lived in Cranston from 1816 to 1823 and often visited the building which, though moved back to make way for the present church, survived until 1956.

At least three other churches existed in Cranston in the eighteenth century. The Pawtuxet Baptist Church, Cranston's oldest on-going congregation, was founded in 1764. A Baptist church was built in 1764 at the corner of Pontiac and Sockanosset Roads, and another, a small one-room structure, gave its name to Church Brook near what is now Gammino's asphalt and crushed-stone plant in central Cranston.

With increased settlement, improvements to local roads became necessary. A bridge over the falls at Pawtuxet was voted by the Providence town council in 1711 and erected in 1714. Also between 1711 and 1714, a road from Providence to Norwich, Connecticut, was laid out. This road, which became the Providence and Norwich Turnpike in 1794, is now known as Plainfield Pike. In 1717, the road "towards Meshanituct" (present Cranston Street) was begun



Fig. 13: Remington Arnold House (c. 1730); 12 Bridge Street, Pawtuxet.



Fig. 14: Elisha Smith House (c. 1740); 2154 Broad Street; 20th-century storefront.



Fig. 15: John Burton House (c. 1743); 421 Comstock Parkway.



Fig. 16: Quaker Meeting House (1729); behind the Oaklawn Community Baptist Church (1879); Wilbur Avenue, Oaklawn; late 19th-century view.

from Providence. This road became the Monkeytown Road because from the early eighteenth century Knightsville was inexplicably referred to as Monkeytown. In 1731, Peter Burl-

ingame laid out the Middle Road, now Pontiac Road, and, in 1747, the town council of Providence appointed Burlingame, John Gorton, and William Burton to lay out Scituate Avenue.

## INCORPORATION

Despite improved roads, it remained a tremendous inconvenience for Cranston residents to travel all the way into Providence for town meetings, to attend court, or to record land sales or wills with the town clerk. Efforts at separation began as early as 1660 when the first petition was presented to set off the area as a new town, separate from Providence, which at that time included all of present-day Providence County. Such petitions failed again and again. One reason for repeated failure was the apparent lack of unanimity among the residents. Reflecting the geographic divisions within the area, some wanted to call the town Mashpaug, others Meshanticut, and still others wanted to take part of Warwick and name the new town Pawtuxet.

In 1732, several new townships were being carved out of Providence, reflecting the general development of the hinterland. At that time an attempt to set off Cranston almost succeeded, but those who opposed it were again able to manipulate the dissent over what name to give the new town and once more forestall the separation. Yet the growth of the area and its institutions made separation almost inevitable, and, in 1752, the issue of division was renewed. In 1753-1754, a petition was laid before the General Assembly. A way out of the morass of name selection was found when an English name, Lynn, was chosen. It was apparently selected because many of the original settlers of Cranston had come from Lynn, Massachusetts. The name was thus a neutral, or perhaps even unifying, factor in the effort to establish a new town.

Even more important, it seems, were the ministrations of the Speaker of the House of Representatives at that time, Thomas Cranston. The original document of incorporation has a line drawn through Lynn and the name Cranston substituted in its place. The history books have assumed that the town was named for Samuel Cranston, who served as Governor of the colony for twenty-nine years and who was instrumental in establishing the final boundaries of the Pawtuxet Purchase in 1714. It seems more likely that it was Samuel's son Thomas whom the town was honoring. There is ample evidence for this revision. The Cranston family was from Newport and in 1754 Samuel had been dead twenty-seven years. So it seems unlikely his name would have been picked at the last min-

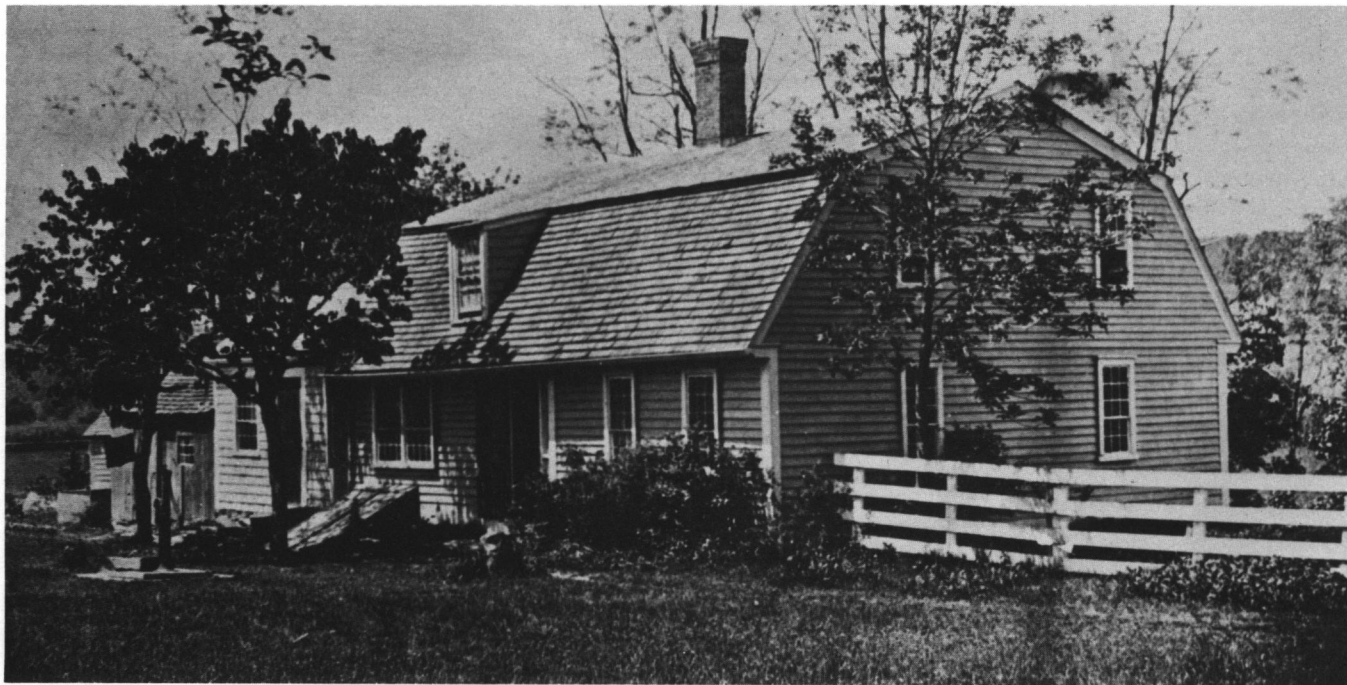


Fig. 17: Squire William Burton House, or the Rose Cottage (c. 1720); Wilbur Avenue, Oaklawn; demolished for construction of Route 295.

ute, while it seems highly probable that in the course of political give and take the role of the current Speaker of the House would have been very important. On the first page of Cranston's first town Record Book, there is the inscription "the gift of Thomas Cranston to the town called Cranston in the county of Providence, 1754." The towns of Foster, Johnston, Burrillville and Hopkinton were named for local politicians and, like Thomas Cranston, Theodore Foster also presented a record book to the town bearing his name.

There were 1,460 inhabitants in Cranston at the time of its incorporation, fully one third the total population of Providence. The first town meeting took place on June 25, 1754, in the meadow behind William Burton's house, the Rose Cottage, which stood in the center of Oaklawn until its recent destruction for the construction of Route 295.

Town records indicate that early town meetings were concerned largely with taxes, discipline, health, and the care of the poor. In 1755 a pair of stocks was built by Jonathon King behind Caleb Arnold's house at the

expense of the town. Arnold's tavern, on Phenix Road beyond the present Atwood Avenue, was one of several used throughout the eighteenth century for town meetings. The others included Nehemiah Knight's Tavern, at the junction of the Monkeytown Road and the road to Pawtuxet, and Jeremiah Williams' tavern at the site of the present William A. Briggs School. The use of various buildings for town meetings was natural in a town of separate villages clustered without a central focal point.

The town council reimbursed those inhabitants who cared for the poor on behalf of the community—Jeremiah Field, for example, received four shillings for caring for an indigent Indian child. When, in 1760, Abraham Lockwood came down with smallpox at the house of Jeremiah Westcott (at 200 Sockanosset Cross Road), the town council decided to isolate both men and their families at the home of Samuel Ralph. In a spirit of humanitarianism, on August 22, 1767, the town obtained a Black slave named Jack and gave him his freedom a week later, an act of which late nineteenth-century historians writing just after the Civil War were understandably proud.

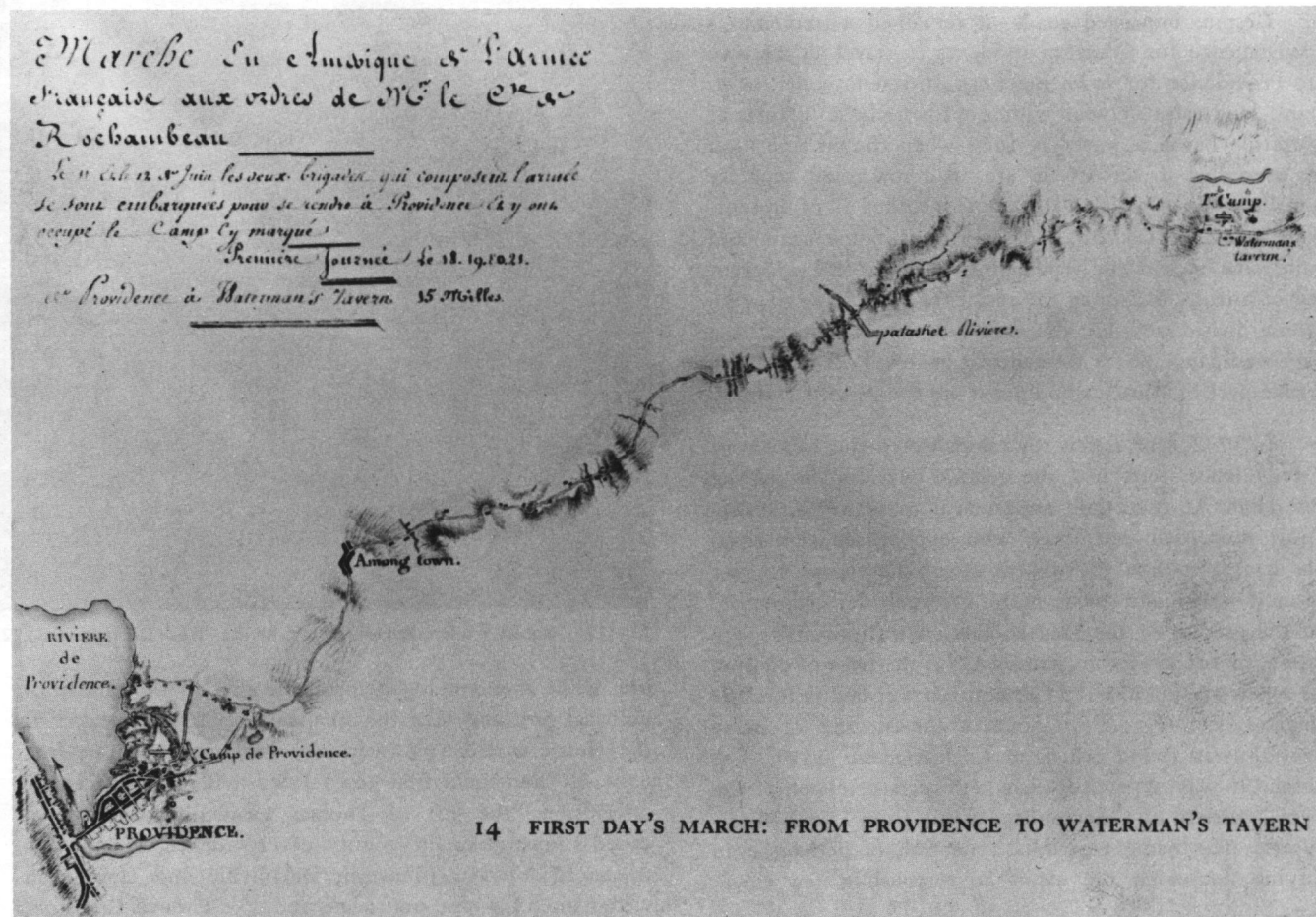
## CRANSTON IN THE REVOLUTION

As elsewhere in America, dramatic and far-reaching events soon began to attract the attention of Cranston's townspeople. After the June, 1772, burning of the *Gaspee* off Namquit Point (now Gaspee Point in the Warwick section of Pawtuxet) the ship's wounded captain, Lieutenant Dudingston, was brought to the Joseph Rhodes House which stood on Stillwater Avenue (now Ocean Avenue) in Pawtuxet.

This prelude to revolution was followed by a series of acts against British sovereignty. In June, 1774, Cranston's town council adopted a resolution concerning the "distressed state of America," caused by the British blockade of the port of Boston. That September a committee was established to collect donations for the poor of Boston "now suffering in the glorious cause of liberty"; fat cattle were later sent. In March, 1775, the town placed itself in the hands of the Continental Congress.

After the bombardment of Bristol on October 7, 1775, forts were ordered built on the west side of the Providence River, and a watchhouse, eight feet by twelve feet, was built on Long Neck in Pawtuxet near number 52 Fort Avenue. The small gambrel-roofed house at 69 Fort Avenue was reconstructed in 1865 from timbers taken from the old guardhouse. In December of 1776, the Pawtuxet Rangers, who had been chartered in 1774, went on duty at the fort manning two eight-pound cannon; two nine-pound guns were added in 1778. The Rangers went on to serve at the battle of Rhode Island in 1778 and probably fought at Saratoga as well. Two British cannon, retrieved by the Rangers at Saratoga, are presently on display at the Newport Artillery Company.

Christopher Lippitt, whose handsome house still stands at 1231 Hope Road on Lippitt Hill in western Cranston, served as Major-General of the Rhode Island militia. In addition to the role the townsmen played in the Revolution, Cranston's natural resources constituted an important part of Rhode Island's contribution to the war effort. In 1767, Jeremiah Burlingame had contracted with a group of men including Stephen Hopkins and the Brown family of Providence to work the iron bed on his property. The ore from the Cranston bed was transported



14 FIRST DAY'S MARCH: FROM PROVIDENCE TO WATERMAN'S TAVERN

Fig. 18: Map by Anne K. Brown and Howard C. Rice of Rochambeau's march from Providence to Waterman's Tavern in Coventry en route to Yorktown. The troops left Providence via present-day Cranston Street, turning onto Scituate Avenue at Knightsville which is indicated on the map as "Among town," a corruption of "Monkey town," an early description of Knightsville.

to the Hope Furnace in Scituate and used to manufacture cannonballs throughout the Revolutionary War.

Despite the patriotic fervor of the majority of the townspeople, there was in Cranston, as elsewhere, a segment of the population which resisted the Revolution. Deacon Anthony Potter closed his church on Church Brook above Oaklawn because the congregation insisted

on praying for the king of England. Recruiting was difficult and constant. The town council provided a bounty for volunteers, and citizens were encouraged to enlist any mulattos, Indians, or Blacks they owned. Christopher Lippitt himself was offered immunity from further expense in raising troops if his slave, Prince, enlisted and passed muster.

The difficulty of recruiting in Cranston derived from two sources. Cranston had many Quakers who opposed fighting on principle and many farmers who hesitated for pragmatic reasons. Leaving the farm was a real hardship, despite the formation of a committee to ensure that soldiers' families did not lack necessities.

In fact, the Revolution affected the daily lives of the people more than any war since. During the summer of 1776, committees were established to regulate the price of commodities, and rationing was in effect for much of the war. A test of loyalty was composed which decreed that anyone not subscribing to the loyalty oath would be deprived of his share of the salt belonging to the town. Cranston was obliged by the council of war to supply the army at Providence and Pawtuxet with sixteen cords of wood weekly. A heavy burden, ninety-five men had to be appointed to furnish the wood and seventeen were necessary to cart it to the army.

Although the impact of the war was felt daily in Cranston, probably the most dramatic single event was the march of Rochambeau's army on June 18, 1781, through the town en route to what proved to be the decisive battle at Yorktown. Rochambeau and six thousand French troops had occupied Newport for almost a year, waiting for an opportunity to assist George Washington. The British had blockaded the mouth of Narragansett Bay, allowing the French only occasional opportunities to attack.

When the decision was made to join Washington's troops by an overland march, the orders were recorded thus:

Coming out of Providence, take the Monkey town (Moncheytown, Mount Kitown, Amoungtown) Road leaving on the road to Hartford via Angell's Tavern. Reaching Monkey town which is a cluster of a few houses, first pass on the left a road going to Pawtuxet. Leaving the one you are on which goes to Greenwich, you turn right.

One mile from Monkey town you leave the Cranston farm on the left, then continue about five miles over level but stony grounds.

In present-day terms, the troops marched from Providence along Cranston Street to Knightsville, where they headed west on Phenix Avenue to Scituate Avenue. Five houses remain that witnessed that historic march—all small gambrel-roofed houses standing on the south side of Scituate Avenue west of its intersection with Phenix Avenue.

With repeated outbreaks of smallpox in 1776, 1777, and 1778, the war years were difficult ones indeed. The town council met frequently during the Revolution, usually to deal with the particular crises and their financial ramifications. By the close of hostilities the town was bankrupt.

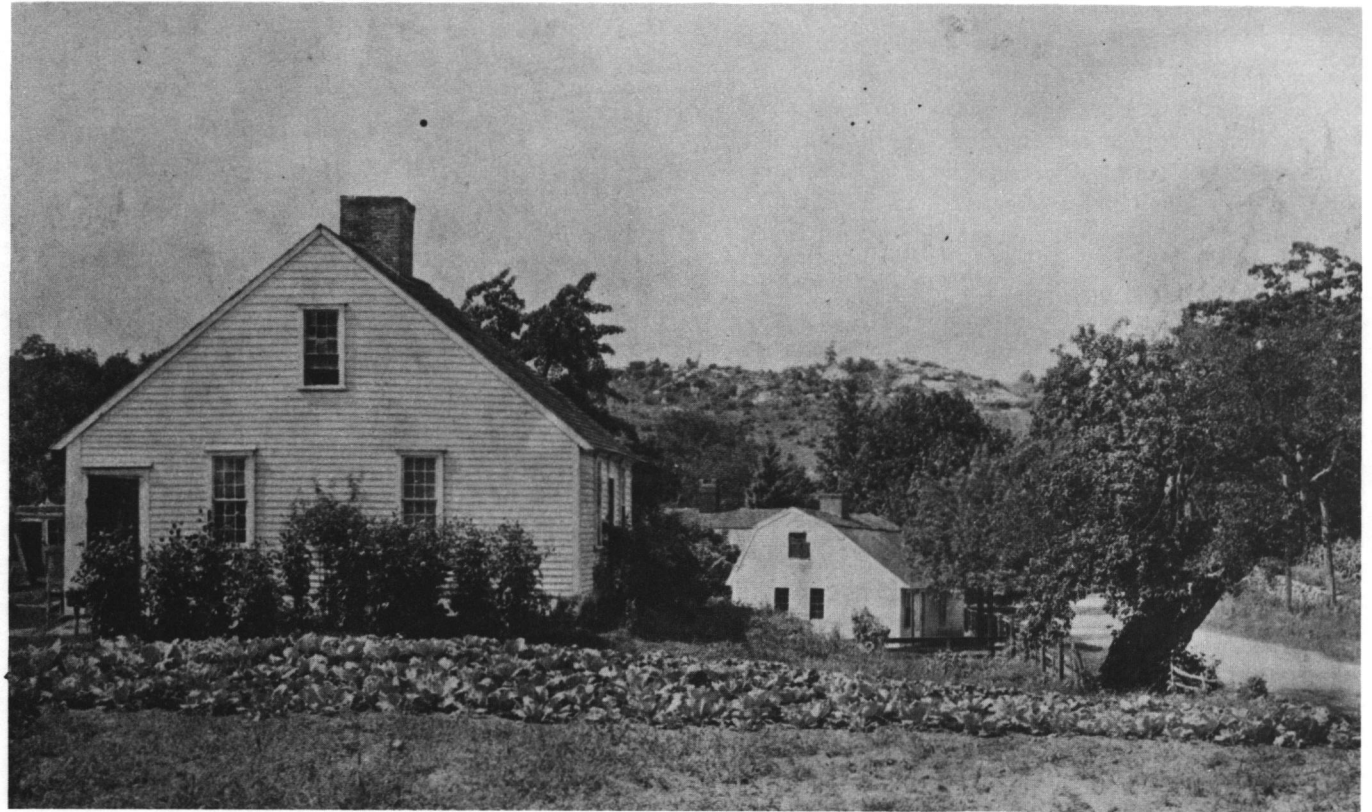


Fig. 19: Scituate Avenue; Knightsville Corner; photograph, 1910. A late 19th-century view of two of the houses that still remain along Rochambeau's march route. The two most popular building types from the early- and mid-18th-century are illustrated: a broad-pitched gable-roofed house in the foreground and the gambrel-roofed Nathan Westcott House beyond it. Just behind the Westcott House is the roof of the Joy Homestead. These houses were among the collection of 18th-century houses that came to be known as Joytown.

## A NEW TOWN IN A NEW REPUBLIC

After the Revolution, the people of Cranston lost no time demonstrating their steadfast independence. In November of 1782 they had voted against the proposed impost on imports and exports that Congress had advanced as a way to raise badly needed funds. In 1784, Pawtuxet repeated its effort to separate from the town and was again defeated. The town voted unanimously against the federal Constitution in 1787, and in 1796 the town's state representatives refused for a month to go to Providence to join the state legislature in apportioning new taxes.

The years following the Revolution were ones of change in Cranston. Many of the town's young residents moved west to New York and Pennsylvania, and as a result the population had actually declined at the time of the 1800 census. For those who remained, the postwar years were ones of significant prosperity both for Cranston's agricultural majority and the mercantile port of Pawtuxet.

From early in the eighteenth century, Pawtuxet Village had thrived as both a trading and manufacturing center and served as a popular stop on the old Post Road running south into Connecticut. Over thirty-five houses from before 1820 remain on both sides of the falls at Pawtuxet. Four- or five-bay frame structures usually two-and-a-half stories high with gable roofs and central chimneys line Broad Street and Post Road as well as the few smaller streets off them. Their similar massing, scale, and material, as well as their uniform setback from the street and compact relationship to one another, suggest the early nineteenth-century quality and form of the village. On the Cranston side of the bridge, the Remington Arnold House (c. 1740, 12 Bridge Street) exhibits a fine pedimented doorway with a pierced fanlight which characterized many Pawtuxet entrances from 1785 to 1810. A good example from the Federal period is the G. S. Tucker House (c. 1790, 27 Tucker Street) which was



Fig. 20: "The Falls at Pawtuxet"; a mid-19th century engraving illustrating the C. and W. Rhodes Mill and the steeple of the second Pawtuxet Baptist Church, demolished in 1895 for the present structure.

originally built on Broad Street and moved to its present location in the late 1890s. The Tucker House is one of two in the entire city with a central-hall plan and end chimneys. It is unique in being Cranston's only brick-ender, the end walls constructed of brick which incorporate the chimneys.

The Cranston side of Pawtuxet has suffered most from modern development—"rapidly erasing the vestiges of the village's visual character," as the 1973 historical report commented. Unfortunately, commercial pressures remain high, resulting in continuing deterioration.

## AGRICULTURE

In contrast, western Cranston still contains a number of individual houses and entire farmsteads that evoke the quality of the landscape as it looked in the early years of the nineteenth century. Some of Cranston's finest Federal houses were built as farmhouses. The Henry Baker House at 651 Natick Road, built in 1809, the Sheldon House at 358 Scituate Avenue, built in 1804, and the Pryor House at 755 Scituate Avenue, built in 1800, were each the focus of large farms. These farms and others like them on Phenix Avenue, Hope Road, Pippin Orchard Road, and the Plainfield Pike consisted of acres of cultivated fields. Numerous outbuildings were clustered around the farmhouse. Barns (often built into the side of a hill), wagon sheds, chicken coops, wood sheds, occasionally a milkhouse or icehouse and sometimes a root cellar, defined the heart of the farmstead just as the dry-laid field-stone walls defined the boundaries of the property. Silos, introduced in the late nineteenth century, complete the picturesque quality of rural Cranston. Today the gently rolling hills of western Cranston remained dotted by clusters of frame structures enclosed by stone walls and bisected by winding roads, many of which retain their original contours and widths. The landscape of western Cranston not only reflects the agricultural origins of the city; it represents a variety and quality not found in most suburbs.

Ornament in buildings became more elaborate in the Federal period, and builders turned to "pattern books" which gave practical information as well as plates of doorways and mantels that were often included in rural dwellings. Exemplifying this is the house (1281 Hope Road) Christopher Lippitt built for his son William in 1798, which has an elegant fanlight typical of the Federal style—the finest in the city. The Potter-Remington House at 571 Natick Avenue (1796), owned in the early nineteenth century by Thomas Remington, one of the town's wealthiest citizens, provides a good example of vernacular interpretation of high-style idioms; the parlor mantel includes a row of panels imitating fluted pilasters.

Post-Revolutionary prosperity stimulated a wave of new road improvements throughout New England, most especially in the construction of privately financed toll roads. In Cranston, the Coventry and Cranston Turnpike

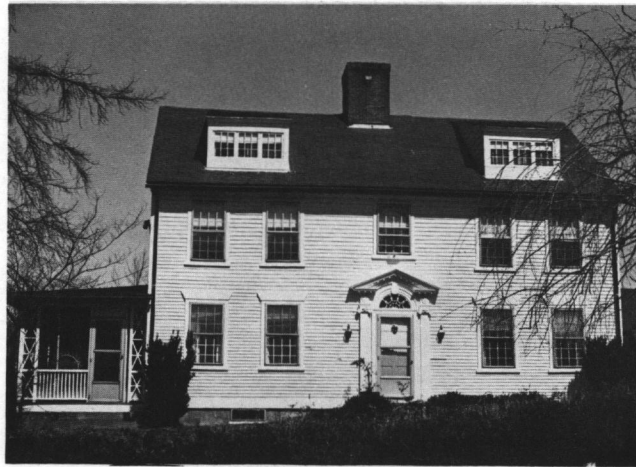


Fig. 21: William Lippitt House (c. 1798); 1281 Hope Road.

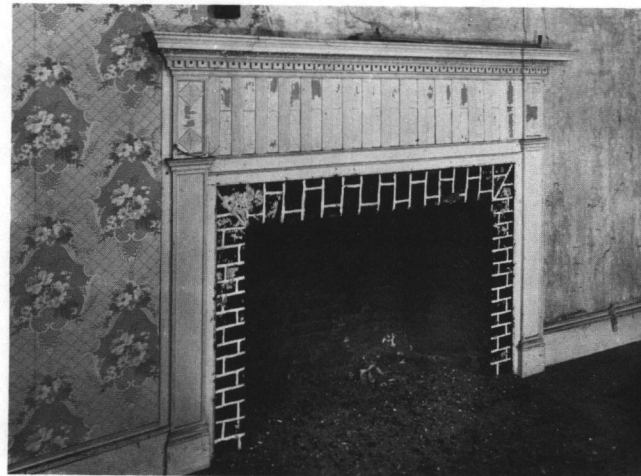


Fig. 23: Mantle of the Potter-Remington House (c. 1795); 571 Natick Avenue; note colloquial handling of classical detailing.

was founded in 1813 to link the mills at Anthony and Washington in Coventry to Phenix Avenue. In 1819, a road, now Park Avenue, was laid out to connect the Monkeytown Road to the Pawtuxet Highway. The following year, the New London Turnpike began operations along what is today Reservoir Avenue. One of the last initiatives in the region, the New London Turnpike was chartered to construct a direct through highway from Providence to New London. One coach a day made the trip from 1820 to 1828; two coaches a day departed from 1828 to 1837.



Fig. 22: Detail, William Lippitt House (c. 1798); 1281 Hope Road.



Fig. 24: Gorton Arnold Stand (c. 1860); Reservoir Avenue, Oaklawn; demolished mid-1920s.

In exchange for constructing the road, the turnpike company was entitled to charge tolls at regular intervals along the way. Tolls were collected in Cranston at the Sandy Fenner Hotel at the corner of Park Avenue and Reservoir Avenue, as well as at the Andrews-Barney Tavern and the original Gorton Arnold stand, both located near the intersection of present-day Routes 2 and 5 (until they were demolished in the middle of this century). The coming of railroads in the 1830s meant the end of this turnpike, which was eventually turned over to the towns it ran through.

## KNIGHTSVILLE

Set at the approximate center of Cranston, by the intersection of several main roads, Knightsville began to emerge as the town's civic center shortly after the turn of the nineteenth century. The use of Nehemiah Knight's Tavern for town meetings and the importance of his family's role in town and state government made Knightsville a natural political center. Knight served as town clerk from 1773 to 1800, and as U.S. Congressman from 1803 to 1808; his son Nehemiah R. Knight was governor of Rhode Island (1817-1821) and served in the U.S. Senate from 1821 to 1841. Jeremiah Knight, Jr., succeeded his uncle, serving as town clerk from 1803 to 1821.

Although the historic character of Knightsville is gone, a few key early structures remain. In 1807, the members of the Cranston Benevolent Baptist Society petitioned

the legislature to organize a lottery for the erection of a meetinghouse in Knightsville to serve as the society's church and the town meeting place. The two-and-a-half-story frame building, which still stands as the Knightsville-Franklin Church at 67 Phenix Avenue, was built in the fall and winter of 1807 by Joseph Searle, a member of the congregation who owned a sawmill on Hope Road. Altered in 1841 with the addition of Greek Revival detailing to its two entrances, the building remained Cranston's town meeting place for almost fifty years.

Cranston's first bank was established in the Knightsville home of Jeremiah Knight in 1818. Though somewhat altered, this two-and-a-half-story central-chimney building remains at 275 Phenix Avenue, at the corner of Scituate Road. Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, Knightsville continued to grow, due both to its role as civic center and its proximity to the emerging industrial centers at Spragueville and Dugaway Hill.



Fig. 25: Knightsville-Franklin Church, formerly Knightsville Meeting House (1807); 67 Phenix Avenue.

## EARLY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Cranston's earliest industries were those traditionally associated with agriculture. Gristmills and sawmills dotted the countryside. Cuffy, a former slave of Edward Searle, operated a gristmill along the Meshanticut Brook; a stone from that mill lies beside the Oaklawn Public Library. In the second quarter of the nineteenth century, Henry Jordan operated a large sawmill, the stone ruins of which remain at the northeast corner of Scituate Avenue and Pippin Orchard Road. A distillery existed in the seventeenth century in Pawtuxet, giving its name to Stillhouse Cove. Descendants of William Harris operated a potash lot from 1780 to 1860 on the west side of the Pocasset River opposite where the Cranston Print Works stands today. The Joy family, living at the foot of Dugaway Hill, were tanners for many generations.

Early nonagricultural industry consisted primarily of the extraction of natural resources. The granite on Richard Fenner's farm in Arlington was excellent for paving blocks, and quarrying began there in 1820. For the remainder of the nineteenth century, stone from Arlington was used in construction and for paving blocks in Providence and other nearby communities. The site of Fenner's ledge is today marked by the Arlington Housing for the Elderly.

The extraction of iron ore remained a major activity until the middle of the nineteenth century, and a small village of workers' houses grew up around Ore Bed Four Corners—the intersection of Phenix Avenue and Hope Road. Only two of these modest houses, constructed by c. 1830, remain—at 1398 and 1402 Phenix Avenue.

All these early, small-scale, industrial and quasi-industrial activities were overshadowed in the early nineteenth century by the coming of the textile industry. Based on the factory system, the American textile industry—which was born in Rhode Island—sparked the beginning of the American Industrial Revolution. Rhode Island became the nation's most industrialized state. Even an agricultural town like Cranston became the site of important mills; in 1820 there were already seven cotton factories and three woolen-goods mills in operation. The reason was simple: early textile mills, like gristmills and sawmills, utilized waterpower sites on small rivers and streams; Cranston,





**Fig. 26:** Bellefonte Mill Village, known as the Black Village (early 19th century); originally part of the C. and W. Rhodes textile empire, much of the complex was burned in 1870. It was acquired the following year by the Turkey Red Dye Company. In 1911 the Imperial Printing and Finishing Company was established here.

like other rural towns, attracted these new enterprises. Many, of course, replaced or were located beside pre-existing gristmills or sawmills.

There were four main sites of textile manufacture in Cranston, each located beside a waterfall—Pawtuxet, Fiskeville, Dugaway Hill, and the famous Cranston Print Works.

Christopher and William Rhodes had built a textile mill south of the Pawtuxet Bridge in Warwick by 1800; it was one of the earliest in the state. A three-story mill constructed by the new C. and W. Manufacturing Company was erected in 1810 on the northwest side of the bridge, overhanging the banks of the Pawtuxet; it burned in 1875. This company was the first to loom broadcloth in America. It later extended its operations to Natick, Albion, Wickford, and Connecticut. In Cranston, the firm expanded naturally into the Bellefonte section, where it was bought in 1871 by the Turkey Red Dye Company, which reputedly made the only dye of its kind in the world. Although an entire village of workers' housing once served the Bellefonte mill complex, the only reminder of that establishment today is an early twentieth-century brick mill and a road named Mill Street.

Industry also came early to Fiskeville. In 1812, Dr. Caleb Fiske built a long, wooden-frame cotton mill on the Scituate side of the river. Two years later, what is today Hog Pen Brook was dammed to form a pond around which the village grew. The two finest homes of Fiskeville—one built for Dr. Fiske, the other for Doctor Daniel Baker in 1815—are no longer standing, but the small workers' houses on both Hope Road and Main Street, frequently disguised behind tar paper or aluminum siding, indicate the evolution of the village. The earliest and smallest houses stand along Hope Road in Cranston and along the river in Scituate. The latter are particularly unusual stone structures. A pair of one-and-a-half-story, frame double houses, seven-bays wide, remain at 221-225 and 369-371 Main Street and represent the more typical approach to workers' housing. Those in the Greek Revival style further north on Main Street probably date from the 1840s.

A stone mill was constructed at Dugaway Hill by 1829; in the 1850s it was called the Rhode Island Print

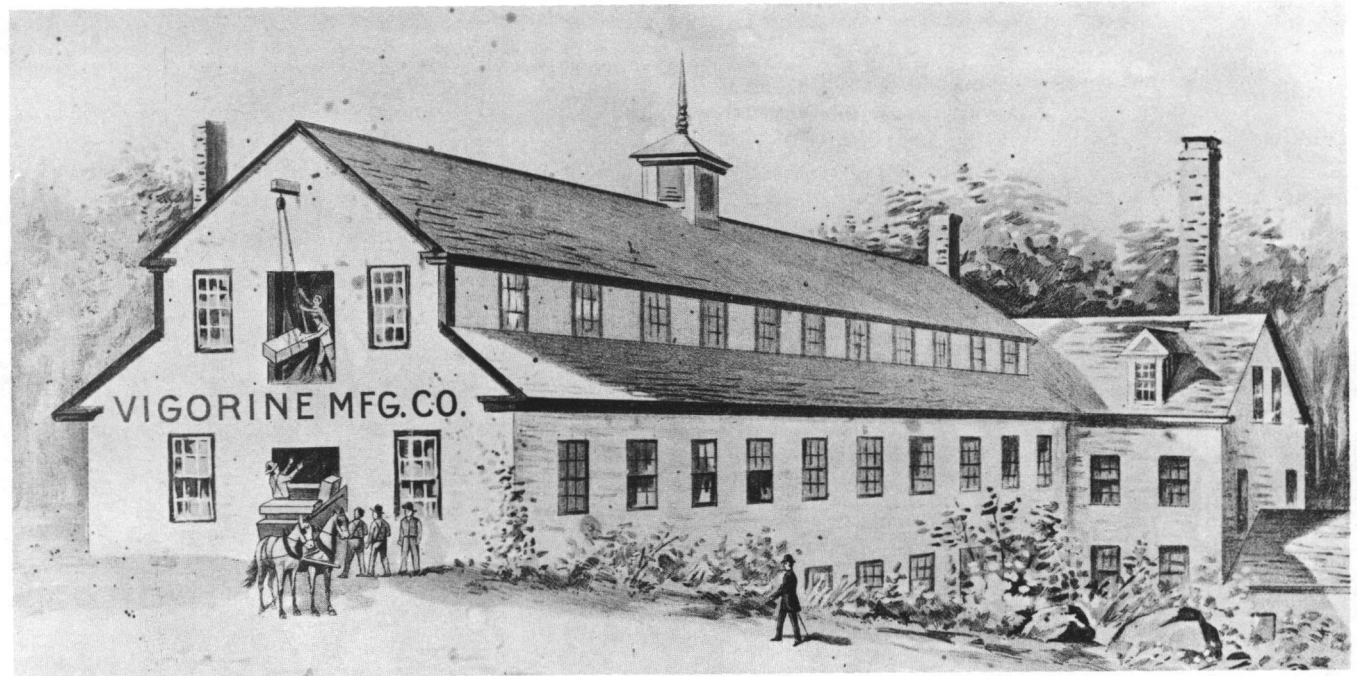


Fig. 27: Rhode Island Print Works, later Vigorine Manufacturing Company (c. 1829); Scituate Avenue; demolished, c. 1950. The print works flourished from 1855 to 1865; later the building was used as a pickle factory, hat factory, and cider press.

Works. Far less well known than the Cranston Print Works three miles away, the Rhode Island Print Works flourished from 1855 to 1865. It declined thereafter as the result of fires and stiff competition, and was used variously as a pickle factory, hat factory, and cider press. It was demolished about 1950.

Other smaller buildings were constructed to house processes related to textiles. An early fulling mill was built in Fiskeville where the hand cloth of neighborhood women was pulled, shrunk, and dressed. The wadding mill constructed in Meshanticut in 1813 by Stephen and Stuckley Turner still stands as the Potter-Rathbun Organ Company at 463 Oaklawn Avenue. Stuckley Turner later moved the company to Olneyville in Providence where he continued the business as S. & S. Turner. The old furnace at Phenix and Natick Avenues was converted into a dye-house in the 1820s. It served briefly as the workshop of the well-known Cranston pewterer George Richardson, in the 1840s. In 1855, it was called the Cranston Furnace and in 1862 the Cranston Foundry. By the 1890s the entire complex had fallen into disrepair.

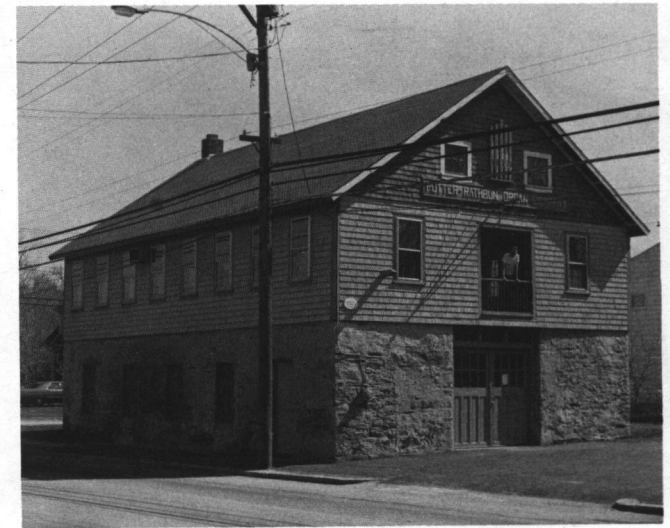


Fig. 28: Turner Wadding Mill, now the Potter-Rathbun Organ Company (1813); 463 Oaklawn Avenue.

## THE SPRAGUES

By far the most famous and most important of Cranston's industries was the Cranston Print Works, owned by the Sprague family. It was the hub of an industrial empire that, by the 1860s, reached from Maine to North Carolina. The Print Works began in 1807 when William Sprague decided, like many others, to convert his gristmill on the banks of the Pocasset River into a small cotton mill for carding and spinning cotton yarn. It contained no sophisticated machinery; the cotton was spun into coarse yarn and woven on home looms by women in the area. A fire in 1813 destroyed this first structure, and it was replaced by a larger stone mill. Several factors contributed to its success. Sprague had an extraordinary ability with machinery as did his son William, who utilized water-driven power looms on a large scale. That innovation meant lowered production costs and increased output and signaled the extension of the factory system to all aspects of textile production.

The Sprague family was also the first in the nation to print calico, and they pioneered in chemical bleaching. Thus, in addition to producing cotton, the Spragues, trailblazers in the industry, also printed it. The result was enormous financial success. In 1821, Sprague was able to purchase half the waterpower at Natick Falls (the other half belonging to Christopher and William Rhodes) where over the next fourteen years he built five mills with almost 450 looms. William Sprague quickly became one of the leading men of Rhode Island. He ran for governor in 1832 on a strong anti-Masonic plank, but was defeated.

Upon William's death in 1836, his two sons, Amasa and William II, took over the business, retitling it the A. & W. Sprague Company. Amasa was the senior partner and supervised the Print Works, where he improved the old indigo blues for which the company was famous. Stimulated by the protective tariff of 1828, the firm continued to prosper. Each brother was elected to the state legislature. Amasa, however, concentrated on running the family business while William II devoted most of his efforts to politics and elective office. William II served as a U.S. Representative in 1837, Governor in 1838, and United States Senator during 1842-1843. His career was cut short by Amasa's murder on December 31, 1843. William II re-

signed the Senate, returned to Cranston, and took on management of the company.

Under William Sprague II's leadership, the company of A. & W. Sprague expanded to include the villages of Quidnick in Coventry and Centerville, River Point, Crompton, and Arctic in West Warwick. After his death in 1856, William II's son Byron sold his shares in the business to Amasa's two sons, another pair named William and Amasa, and they controlled the operation. It was under their tenure that the company reached its apex. The years 1858-1864 saw the biggest changes at the Print Works, which by then was so well known that when Cranston was referred to, it more often meant the village at the Print Works, sometimes also called Spragueville, than the town proper.

The original buildings of the Cranston Print Works were erected furthest north and closest to the millpond and waterfall. The earliest remaining industrial building is a flat-roofed, three-story, rubble-stone structure on the western side of Dyer Avenue near the pond, likely dating from the 1840s. In 1825, a church, now the Cranston Historical Society meetinghouse, was constructed for workers, and in 1844 a row of workers' double houses was built in the Greek Revival style on both sides of Dyer Avenue. These houses, virtually identical, are articulated by pilasters, pronounced door entablatures, and shed dor-



Fig. 29: Cranston Print Works Houses (1844); Dyer Avenue.

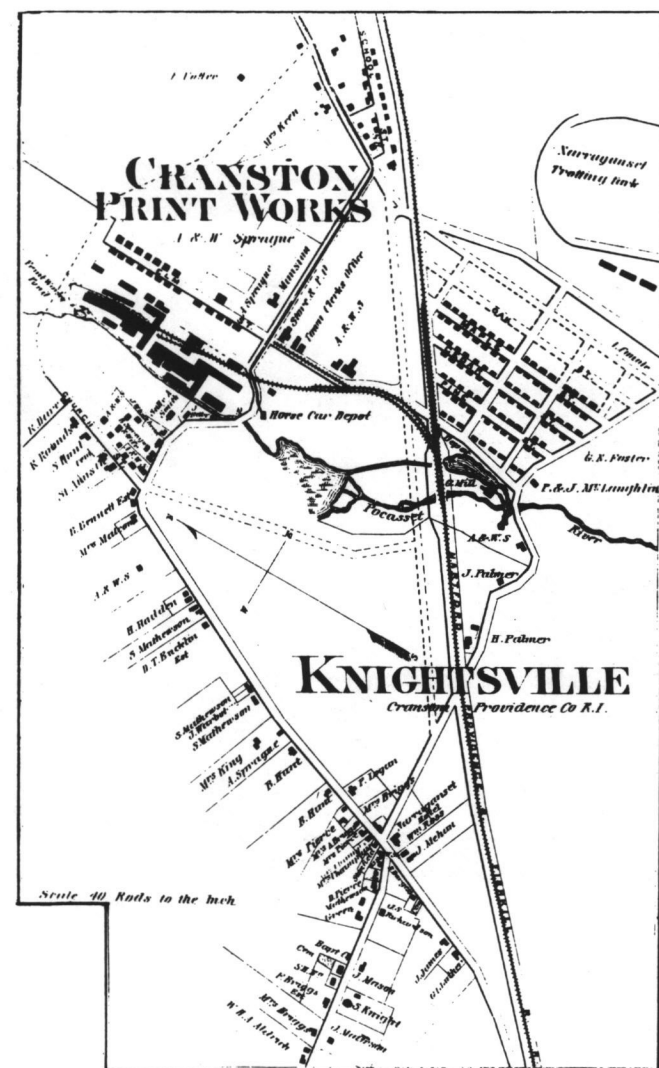


Fig. 30: Map illustrating Cranston Print Works in 1870 after 1864 expansion; map, 1870.

mers and, taken together, create one of the city's most impressive streetscapes. Other Sprague operatives lived in the cluster of mill houses on Howard Street in what was called Bull Town, in reference to the English ancestry of the supervisors who resided there. In 1863-1864, the large four-story mill with its bell tower ninety feet high was built, as was the company "brick store" opposite the mansion. A fifty-by-one-hundred-foot reservoir was constructed on Laurel Hill and a mile-and-a-half of pipes brought water to every point in the plant.



**Fig. 31: Governor Sprague Mansion (c. 1790; 1864); 1351 Cranston Street.**

At the heart of the Print Works Village was the Sprague family's mansion. Originally built c. 1790, the original house was expanded east in the early nineteenth century. The present doorway, with its segmental transom and sidelights, probably dates from this enlargement. In 1864, at the height of their fortunes, the Sprague family erected the two-and-a-half-story three-bay addition to the south. The addition, with its deck-on-gable roof, surmounted by a belvedere, is higher than the old house, and entry to the original building is through the landings of the new stairway. The addition includes two large reception rooms with Italianate marble fireplaces and a handsome mahogany stair rail. At the time of the addition, the large, brick carriage house was erected on Dyer Avenue, and formal gardens were laid out behind the mansion.

The mansion now serves as the headquarters of the Cranston Historical Society.

Two new family residences were built as summer houses, north and west of the print works on land now owned by Saint Anne's Cemetery. Although in a state of ruin now, these two brick houses, with their brownstone quoins, lintels, and arched doorways and their handsome fireplaces, reveal the height of Italianate elegance to which only the wealthiest citizens in Cranston could aspire.

The expansion of the Print Works necessitated more housing, and Amasa Sprague II laid out a whole new village in 1864 which became known as the White Village, due to the color the houses were painted, and to distinguish it

from the Black Village at Bellefonte. The Print Works Church was moved as Dyer Avenue was straightened to lead to the new housing. Today the streetscape along Dyer Avenue and Pine, Oak, Maple, and Cedar Streets remains much as it was when built. Rows of closely placed, one-and-a-half-story, gable-roofed structures, each with the clean square lines of the Greek Revival style, present the picture of a classic mill village, with only the Brick Store missing to complete the picture.

The Print Works Village was indeed a classical nineteenth-century company town. By 1869, over 2000 employees worked at the twelve color machines and thirty-six additional machines printing and finishing 50,000 pieces of cloth a week. There were six engines on the premises consuming one hundred tons of coal a day. Twenty-five head of cattle were slaughtered each week for sale at the company store, which also offered lamb and pork at four or five cents a pound cheaper than the Providence market. In 1869, the store did \$400,000 worth of business in the customary fashion of deducting the cost of purchases, along with rent, from the workers' paychecks.

William Sprague III was rapidly becoming as well known as he was wealthy. Elected governor at the age of thirty-one in April of 1861 as a fusion candidate of the moderate pro-Union Republicans and Democrats, he was the first man in the state to answer President Lincoln's



**Fig. 32: The Brick Store (c. 1860); Cranston Street; demolished.**

call for volunteers at the start of the Civil War. He arrived in Washington on May 2 in full uniform with the Marine Flying Artillery of Rhode Island and returned home to recruit the second Rhode Island regiment of volunteers. That summer he took an active part in the first Battle of Bull Run, where his horse was shot out from under him.

Sprague cut a dashing figure as a young military hero known throughout the North, and he became so popular that the election of April, 1862, was uncontested and he won all but 65 of the 11,264 votes cast. The General Assembly that year sent him to Washington as Senator with 92 of the 103 votes. Although he registered in the Congressional Record as a Democrat, Sprague was considered a Republican because he so often voted with the Republicans, supporting both the Emancipation Proclamation and the raising of Black troops. In fact, he spent much of his first term of office overseeing the family business and appeared in Washington only for the most important votes. He was in Washington often enough, however, to meet and court the daughter of the Chief Justice of the U. S. Supreme Court, Catherine Chase. Their wedding was the social event of the decade, costing a reported \$250,000 and was attended by President Lincoln, his cabinet, and many foreign ministers.

If the Civil War represented the zenith of the Sprague family's social, economic, and political fortunes, the Depression of 1873 proved its undoing. Having overextended themselves, the Spragues were forced in October, 1873, to suspend payments on their debts, and the business, worth nineteen million dollars, collapsed. It was the largest business failure in the nation's history. Because the business had been so successful for so long, it had been extended considerable credit, and dozens of local business concerns, including the Cranston Savings Bank and the Franklin Institute for Savings, crashed with the Spragues. Moreover, the collapse of the Sprague empire triggered a wave of bankruptcies; in New York several banking houses closed, including that of Jay Cooke.

In Rhode Island, a trustee, Zechariah Chafee, was appointed by the courts to manage the company's business. He issued new notes, known as Sprague paper, to meet all previous debts, but the poor economic climate made re-

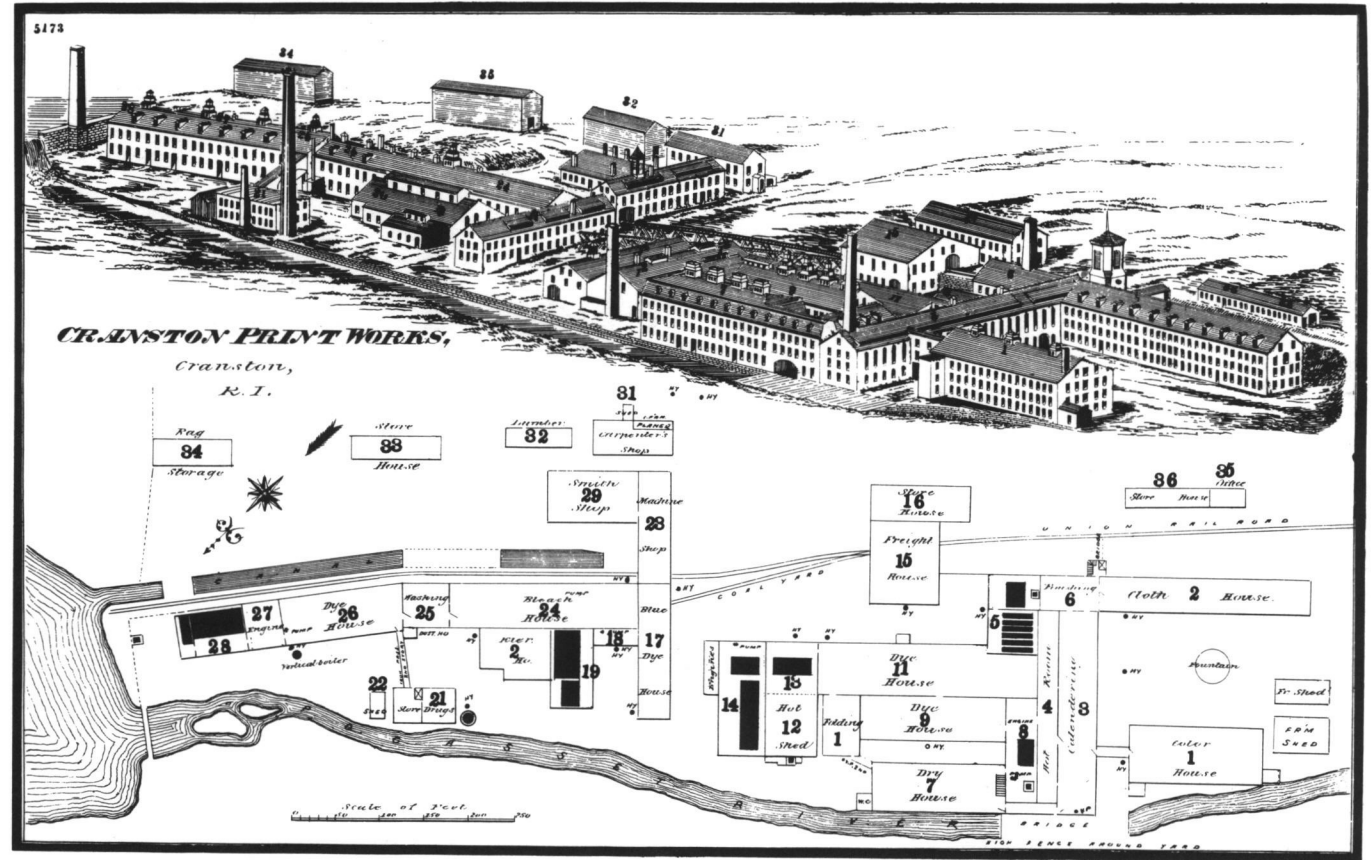


Fig. 33: Cranston Print Works (1890s); drawing by Barlow's Insurance Co., 1890s.

living the company impossible, and even the interest on the Sprague notes was not paid. As a result, the creditors took Chafee to court, and it took years of litigation to settle the many suits arising from the business's collapse. The Sprague family lost control of its vast empire; the Print Works and all their other mill villages were eventually sold.

The Print Works was finally acquired in 1888 by B. B. and R. Knight, the enormous Warwick-based late nineteenth-century firm headed by descendants of Colonel Christopher Lippitt. In 1920, Friedlander and Tate acquired the Cranston Print Works. The relationship between the company and the workers remained paternal well into the twentieth century. In 1931, steam heat and indoor plumbing were introduced. With the coming of

World War II, the traditional arrangement ended; the "white village" was sold, mostly to residents, in 1942. The sale signaled the end of over a century of a paternalistic relationship between company and employees, and the residents of the mill village "rejoined" the city, finally receiving municipal services like water and road repair.

The Spragues are the best known family Cranston has produced. Neither before nor since was there such an accumulation of wealth, power, and influence in Cranston. A dominant force in the development of Rhode Island for three generations, the Spragues' economic, political, and social positions were of national consequence. The physical evidence of their empire is impressive in size, scope, and quality. Cranston is fortunate to retain so much of this nationally important legacy.

## A TOWN DIVIDED

From its initial settlement, Cranston has been divided by tension between its eastern and western halves. The tension flared up regularly throughout the eighteenth century; it continues today. At no time were the strains between east and west more visible than in the mid-nineteenth century.

Throughout the second quarter of the nineteenth century, the Elmwood section of Cranston grew and prospered due to its proximity to rapidly expanding Providence. The most important Providence industry in the area that was Cranston (all of present South Providence below Dudley Street) was the provisions trade. A cluster of slaughterhouses was built there in the early 1850s. The first concentrated Irish settlement in what is today South Providence occurred near the slaughterhouses and became known as Dogtown in the mid-nineteenth century. The commercial hub of the area was at the corner of Dora Street, Comstock Avenue, and Prairie Avenue (named for the route followed by the animals bound for the slaughterhouses).

The urbanization of the area caused rural native-born Cranstonians to desire its annexation by Providence, and for several years a political juggling act took place in Cranston, trying to balance the competing desires of the two halves of the town. An 1854 effort to annex Elmwood to Providence was defeated and, to assuage the more urban population, Cranston's town hall was moved from the Knightsville Meeting House to a new building on Prairie Avenue. An attempt to move the town hall back to Knightsville was defeated the next year, but the following year the motion carried and the hall was moved once more. In an attempt to make the government more workable, two voting districts were created in 1858, one in Knightsville, the other at the new town clerk's office at Elmwood and Potters Avenues. The former represented the traditional native agrarian Republican stronghold, the latter the emerging Irish community which supported the Democratic Party. By 1868, the size of the Irish community developing in Dogtown presented the Republican politicians of Cranston



Fig. 34: Old Town Hall (1886); Knightsville; postcard view, c. 1905; demolished.

with the spectre of a Democrat being elected as the town's only senator in the state legislature, as had already happened in Providence. With the blessing of the Republican-dominated state government, Cranston ceded what are now Providence, South Providence, Elmwood, and Washington Park sections back to the city of Providence; this act was the first in a series of similar moves that simultaneously enlarged the capital city and reinforced Republican predominance in state politics and the surrounding rural towns.

Both the east and west districts voted for the annexation, the residents of the eastern sector wanting the advantages of association with the city, the voters in the west being tired of financing improvements in the other half of town. Almost half the residents of Cranston suddenly became residents of Providence; the property ceded was worth over three million dollars. The annexation left Cranston in the awkward position of having its town hall in another city. The offer by the Spragues to use the Brick Store remedied the situation, and because the different sections of town still could not agree on a new site, the town house remained in this "temporary" quarters until a town house was built in Knightsville in 1886.

## THE TRANSFORMATION OF CRANSTON: 1865-1910

The years following the Civil War were indeed critical in Cranston's history. Despite the political attempt to remain isolated from the changes taking place in Providence, the era witnessed the end of Cranston's traditional role and the birth of its present one: a suburban haven for the middle classes who worked in Providence.

As in so many communities throughout the country, it was the introduction of mass transportation that definitively altered Cranston's history. In 1837, the Providence and Stonington Railroad was constructed through eastern Cranston, and in 1852 the Hartford, Providence and Fish-kill Railroad came through the central section of town. Both provided commuter service to Providence. In 1865, the Spragues organized the Union Railroad Company which operated horsecar lines along Cranston Street to the Print Works. A similar line was installed along Broad Street to Pawtuxet in 1870. The old Potter homestead, Rivulet Farm, became a stable; Green Meadow Farm, which still exists on Hope Road, served as a pasture and stable for horses between work periods. In 1892, electric streetcars—which were cleaner, faster, and more efficient than horse-drawn cars—were introduced on Broad Street. Soon thereafter, they were running down Elmwood Avenue and Pontiac Avenue; the electric cars came to Oaklawn via Cranston Street and Oaklawn Avenue in 1904.

The increased and simplified communication between Providence and Cranston gradually changed the town's character from that of a rural farm community to an integral part of the emerging metropolitan area. In the decades following the Civil War, such neighborhoods as Oaklawn, Auburn, Arlington, Edgewood, Eden Park, and Meshanticut all developed as suburban residential enclaves for people working in Providence. The town's population jumped from 4,311 in 1850 to 13,349 in 1900. Cranston was also the site of the region's reservoir, pumping station, and penal institutions. The town provided numerous recreation facilities for the diversion of the Providence population and vast truck farms for their sustenance.

## OAKLAWN

Because of their proximity to the rail lines, Oaklawn and Auburn were the first two villages to take on the character of residential suburbs. In 1872, Oaklawn was still known as Searle's Corners, a farm hamlet composed of a church and eight houses. The village's name was changed to "Oak Lawn" as part of the development efforts of Job Wilbur—whose house stands (much altered) at 104 Wilbur Avenue—and Francis Turner—who had bought the old Searle farm in 1849. Both men platted their land in 1872; Wilbur calling his plot "Oak Lawn," a name he was able to convince railroad officials to give to the train stop and, hence, the village. An advertisement announcing the opening of the plat conveys its attraction for commuters:

Oaklawn in Cranston is centrally located on the Hartford Railroad, sixteen to eighteen minutes ride from the (Providence city) depot. It can be reached quickly by steam cars and the communication (commute) or quarterly fares for residents are very low, being about the same as horse car fares. The tract of land is high pleasant table land about fifteen feet above the railroad, is almost level, and its soil is excellent. . . . The need for such a site for suburban residences, easy of access, somewhat similar to Hyde Park near Boston, has long been felt by the citizens of Providence.



Fig. 35: Oaklawn Community Baptist Church (1879); 229 Wilbur Avenue.



Fig. 36: George M. Saurin House (1888); 18 Searle Avenue.

The area grew into a small suburban village, expanding along Wilbur Avenue from the focus of the railroad station at Exchange Street to the cluster of three eighteenth-century gambrel houses at the intersection of Natick Road. The community was soon able to support a new church housing the Oak Lawn Benevolent Baptist Society. This group had acquired the old Quaker meetinghouse in 1864 after the Quakers in Cranston, as elsewhere in the state, declined. It was to support the new congregation that Roby Wilbur, Job's wife, had in 1868 originated the idea of a May breakfast. This tradition has since been adopted across the country and remains especially strong in Rhode Island. Each year, on the first of May, up to one thousand people journey to Oaklawn to participate in this traditional springtime event.

The village continued to grow in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, becoming a small tree-lined suburban hamlet with attractive Late Victorian houses standing behind picket fences. Many of these houses, including the most picturesque, 18 Searle Avenue, were built by a local carpenter, Henry Pratt, whose workshop still stands at the corner of Vinton and Searle Avenues. Despite the loss of its elm trees and many of the fences, Oaklawn today retains much of the history and charm it had in the late nineteenth century.

## AUBURN

Far more pretentious were the early houses of the Providence merchants who chose to dwell in Auburn. While only eight houses stood in Auburn in 1851, by the Civil War a few large houses had been built near the intersection of Pontiac and Park Avenues. The earliest of these—known today as the old Red Cross Building, built by Arad Wood, c. 1858—is still standing at 407 Pontiac Avenue. Only two bays wide and with its gable facing the street, this structure is one of Cranston's best examples of the Italianate style. Its roof, surmounted by a belvedere, imitates a Tuscan villa, and the quoins, bracketed trim, and triple-arch windows are all characteristically Italianate, as are the handsome black-marble fireplaces on the interior. Well maintained by the Barton Insurance Company, the Wood House remains one of Cranston's finest nineteenth-century domestic buildings.

It was the construction of a railroad roundhouse that confirmed Auburn as a major stop on the rail line and spurred its early growth along Park Avenue. In 1869 and 1871, William H. Dyer and Henry Potter platted their lands to form what became the nucleus of Auburn. The James



Fig. 37: Arad Wood House (c. 1858); 407 Pontiac Avenue.

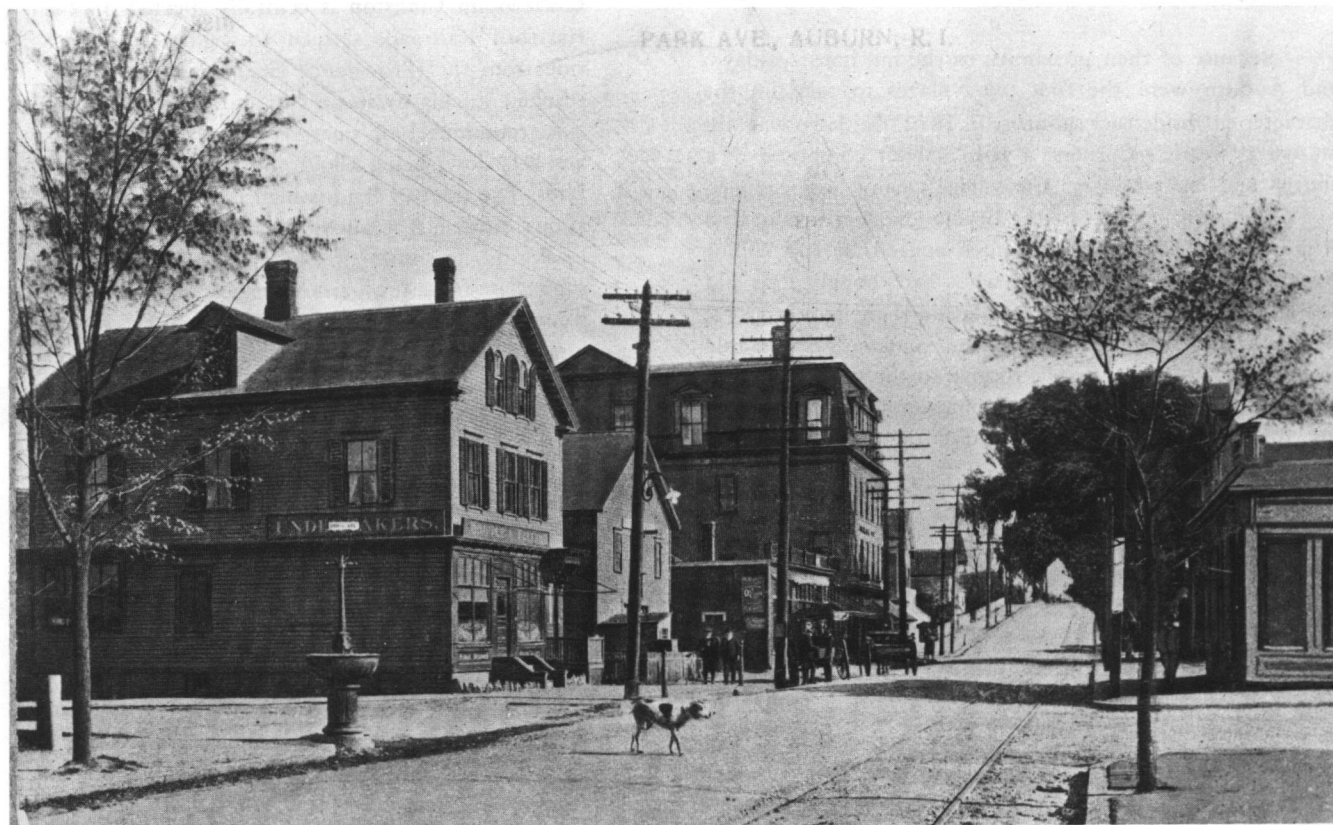


Fig. 38: Turn-of-the-century view of Park Avenue in Auburn; postcard, c. 1900.

Donohue House (1875) at 729 Park Avenue, though a two-family house since 1903, has Italianate brackets and pendants, an elaborate bay window, and finely worked porches—still attesting to the elegance that marked the first concentrated settlements in Auburn.

Although early building in Auburn was largely limited to Park Avenue, additional streets were platted in the final decades of the century. Robert Windsor built the houses on Prospect Street and Caleb Street. Doric Avenue ran through a mud hole and Magnolia Street followed the contours of an old brook. The houses built along these streets were

more humble than the earlier ones on Park Avenue. Often they were one-and-a-half stories high with a mansard roof or a gable roof set facing the street. Later, simple Queen Anne houses were constructed, ornamented with mass-produced brackets, bay windows, or shingles put on in different surface patterns. Even the houses built after the turn-of-the-century, often two-and-a-half story two-family houses, occasionally retain elaborate gable screens, pendants, or well worked porches. These details, together with an overriding uniformity of material and setback, give many of the tree-shaded old streets of Auburn typical prewar New England suburban streetscapes.





## ARLINGTON

Arlington's proximity to Providence also provided a spurt of residential construction designed for those who commuted to Providence. In 1869-1871, William H. Dyer and Henry Potter platted the land that became the nucleus of Arlington, promoting it as a "modern suburban hamlet." Today the cluster of Italianate houses along Laurel Hill Avenue, originally Rocky Hill Avenue, are among the finest dwellings in the city. The Grafton Willey House (c. 1870) and the Steere House (c. 1870) at 389 and 411 Laurel Hill Avenue, both built for Providence businessmen, are strikingly large and elaborate, with belvederes, bracketed cornices, bay windows, and fine porches. The cluster of large well ornamented structures, on large lots set back from the road at the top of the hill, contrasts with the remainder of Arlington, much of which is filled with two-family houses from the turn-of-the-century, when Archie Blair was developing several tracts in the neighborhood. These structures are set closer to the street and to each other; they housed workers at nearby industrial centers. The south side of Oneida Street, with several identical three-family houses, illustrates the attractiveness of uniform setback, size, scale, and material, even on a street of modest dwellings.



Fig. 40: Oneida Street Row Houses (c. 1930); Arlington.

## EDGEWOOD

At the opposite end of the social spectrum, Edgewood became one of the most fashionable residential areas in the metropolitan region at the turn-of-the-century. The construction of the first horse railroad from Providence to Pawtuxet in 1870 improved the area's accessibility. Originally farm land rather separate from Pawtuxet, Edgewood contained but twenty houses and two hotels in 1870. Its character began to change in the late 1870s after the purchase by William Hall of the Joseph Sweet estate, where the Hall Library stands today. Hall was a realtor who began to develop the area for residential use. His wife is credited with giving the neighborhood its name, selecting Edgewood over Lockwood or Melrose. Both the Shaw and Arnold farms were eventually platted, and the development increased rapidly in the 1880s and 1890s.

From the first, Edgewood attracted wealthy businessmen from Providence who were drawn by its convenience to the city, the natural beauty of the bay, and its proximity to Roger Williams Park—the latter a gift to the city of Providence of the Joseph Williams Farm by Williams' descendant, Betsy Williams, in 1871.

Development evolved linearly along the streetcar lines down Broad Street and Allens Avenue; the Cranston portion of Allens Avenue was renamed Narragansett Boulevard about 1898. Lateral expansion followed as settlement increased, stimulated by the installation of electric streetcars in 1892, which made the trip quicker and cleaner. One of the major new streets was Shaw Avenue where Albert Arnold, a descendant of Nicholas Arnold, had erected the area's first summer cottage in 1870. The Edgewood Casino was constructed on Shaw Avenue in about 1890, and the building erected in 1908 by the Edgewood Yacht Club, founded in 1889, still stands at the foot of the street.

Typical of the people who settled in Edgewood were William S. Cherry of Cherry and Webb, who acquired the



Fig. 41: Zenas W. Bliss House (c. 1883); 246 Armington Street.

Home Society grounds, the present site of the Rosedale Apartments; George L. Vose, a jewelry manufacturer who built his home at 1895 Broad Street; and George R. Babbitt, President of the American Oil Company of Providence, who resided at 130 Shaw Avenue.

Families like these could afford architects, and Edgewood today has the largest concentration of architect-designed domestic architecture in Cranston; unfortunately information identifying specific architects for individual structures is sparse. Nonetheless, the area includes handsome examples of all the styles popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The home of Zenas W. Bliss (c. 1878, 264 Armington Street), a Providence realtor who served as the President of the Cranston Town Council, is the city's best example of the Eastlake style.

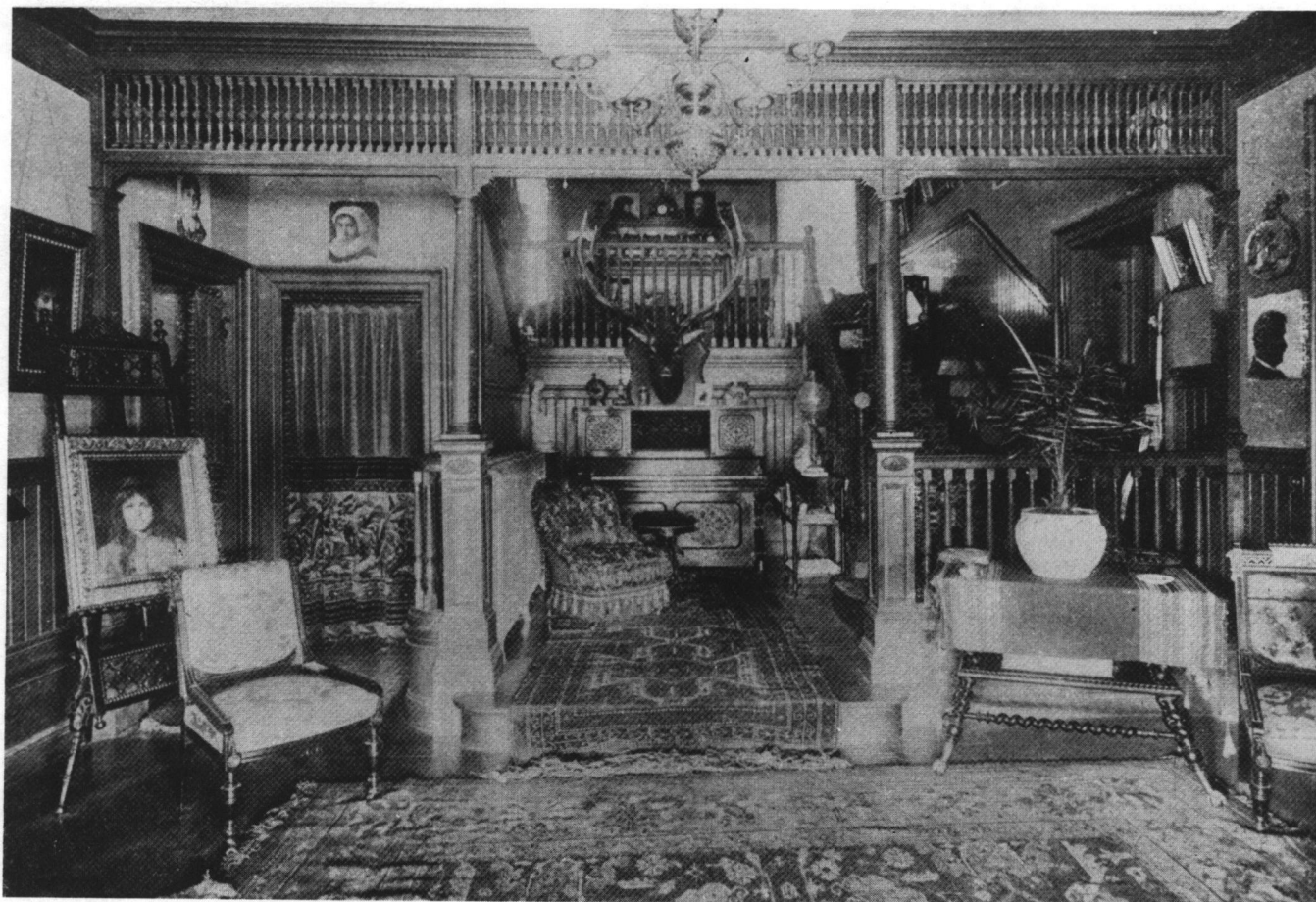


Fig. 42: C. C. Newhall House (1892); 234 Norwood Avenue. Interior of center hall.

The C. C. Newhall House (1892) at 234 Norwood Avenue is typical of many of the homes in Edgewood, incorporating as it does the irregular massing of the Queen Anne style, the continuous porch and porte cochere of the Shingle Style, and colonettes and elaborately detailed pediments of the Colonial Revival. Eclectic in its style, imposing in its massing, and stately in its siting, the house was well suited for the upper class life of its owner, another

Providence developer who platted Norwood Avenue. Bonnie View, at 1312 Narragansett Boulevard, is one of Cranston's most pretentious homes. Built for William P. Stowe, a Providence jewelry manufacturer, this imposing and slightly eccentric Colonial Revival house sits on a bluff overlooking Narragansett Bay and is articulated by two colossal Ionic porticoes.



Fig. 43: C. C. Newhall House (1892); 234 Norwood Avenue.



Fig. 44: Bonnie View, William P. Stowe House (1905); 1312 Narragansett Boulevard.

The stone “castle” at 1332 Narragansett Boulevard, built in 1901 by Herman Posner, president of the Providence-based Sure-lock Paper Clip Company, is perhaps the most unusual building in Edgewood. A massive stone structure set back from the Boulevard behind stone walls on grounds designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., the house has a huge stone porte cochere supporting a crenellated turret. Today the home of the Harmony Lodge AFAM, the structure was owned in the 1920s by Dutee Flint, the proprietor of the largest Ford dealership in the nation.

Particularly striking about Edgewood architecture is the large number of gambrel-roofed houses located there. This roof type was very popular among architects working in the Colonial Revival idiom at the turn-of-the-century. In Edgewood it appears with the gable both parallel and perpendicular to the street (151 Albert Avenue and 1291 Narragansett Boulevard), on single-family homes (100 Shaw Avenue), and on unusually large double houses (120-122 Columbia Avenue).

Development of individual dwellings continued in Edgewood into the 1920s resulting in a number of elegant homes, which reflect that era’s concept of “colonial” domestic architecture. The Evangeliste Turgeon House at 1363 Narragansett Boulevard (1924) is a fine example of a symmetrical, two-story, brick dwelling articulated by a pedimented central doorway and large first-story windows and set back on a terraced front yard.

In the 1930s, the attractions of Edgewood remained, but empty land did not. As a result the decade witnessed construction of apartment buildings, an innovation in the city which anticipated much of today’s recent residential construction. Tudor Arms at 1683-1691 Broad Street was completed in 1930, and the Rosedale Apartments at 1180 Narragansett Boulevard in 1939. The latter contain unusually large apartments with excellent views of the Bay indicating that although the building type may have changed, the social character of the residents did not. With setbacks, stepped parapets, and streamlined metal canopies, the Rosedale Apartments is the best example of the Art Deco style in Cranston today.



Fig. 45: Harmony Lodge, formerly Herman G. Posner House (1901); 1332 Narragansett Boulevard.



Fig. 46: Evangeliste Turgeon House (1924); 1363 Narragansett Boulevard.



Fig. 47: Rosedale Apartments (1902); 1180 Narragansett Boulevard.

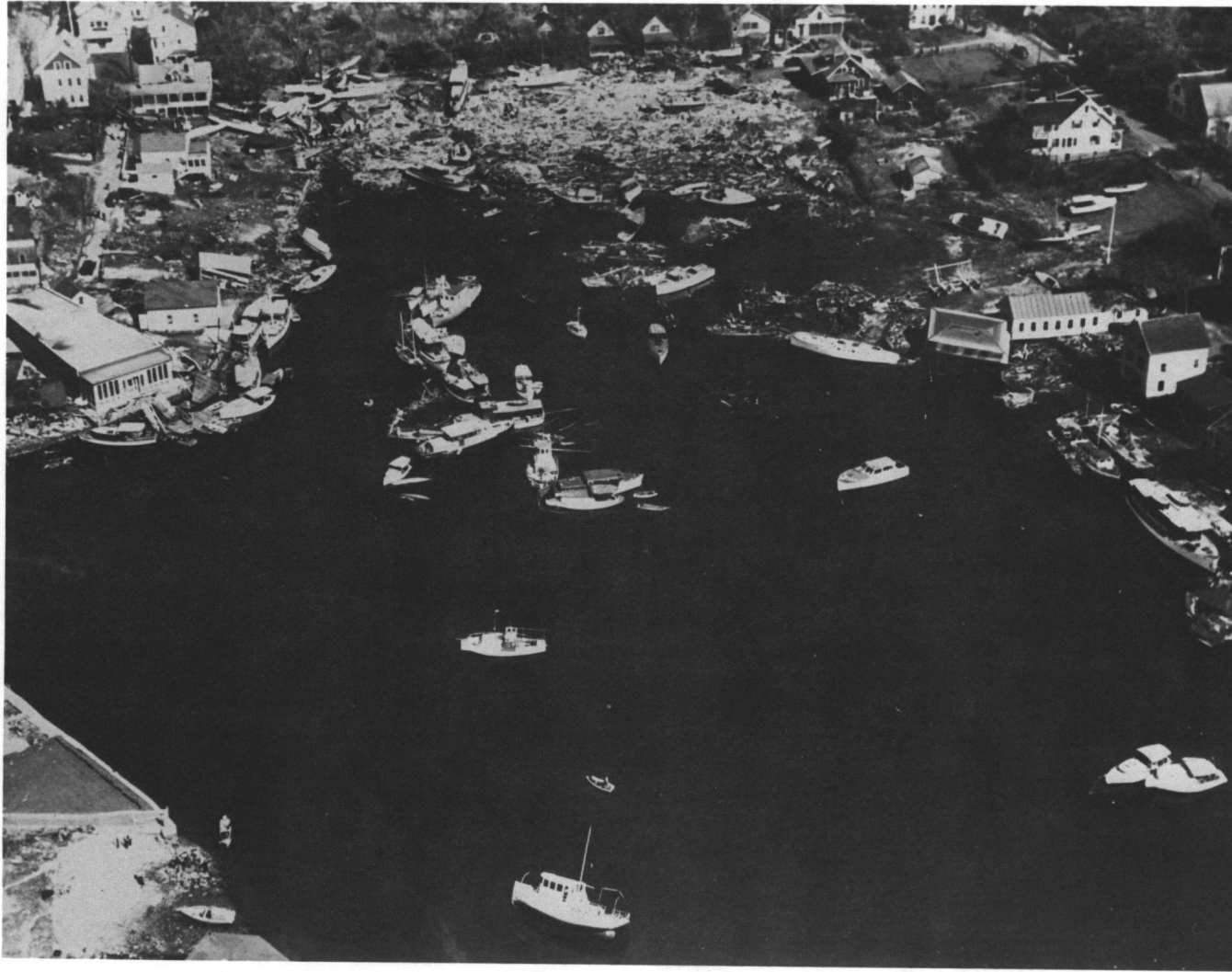


Fig. 48: Destruction at Pawtuxet Cove following the 1938 Hurricane; photograph, September 22, 1938.

Although the hurricane of 1938 claimed many of the fine old trees along the Boulevard and changing living patterns have diminished Edgewood's prestige, in physical form the area remains one of Cranston's most impressive. Set between Roger Williams Park and Narragansett Bay, and marked by wide streets and good-sized lots, Edgewood has a more open feeling than most suburban neighbor-

hoods, providing excellent vistas of the large, well designed Queen Anne, Shingle Style, and Colonial Revival houses that line the streets. The uniformity of scale and setback, together with well landscaped front lawns, makes Edgewood a classic, turn-of-the-century, upper-middle-class, streetcar suburb.

## MESHANTICUT AND EDEN PARK

In 1894, John M. Dean, a member of the council and a prosperous merchant in Providence, platted 250 acres of the old King farm he had acquired in 1886 as Meshanticut Park. Located west of Oaklawn Avenue, this plat was designed with a series of amenities to enhance its development. A twenty-acre park was laid out, with a man-made pond, bridges, and landscaped walks; it was given to the State of Rhode Island as part of its emerging metropolitan park system in 1910. Dean gave land for the Wayland station on the railroad so residents in his subdivision would have easy commuting access to Providence. He gave another lot to the Meshanticut Community Church in 1900, and three years later laid out Cranston's first golf course, just west of the plat—all to promote the new plat.

At the same time Dean was platting Meshanticut, Frank L. Budlong, the other leading member of Cranston's Town Council, was selling off the part of his family's farm west of Pontiac Avenue to form the Eden Park Plat. Although the houses in Eden Park were more likely to be two-family dwellings on smaller lots than those in Meshanticut, both plats contained modest houses (typical of pre-World War I development in Cranston) and shared a common plan. An abbreviated grid ran many short streets perpendicular to the major existing thoroughfare and then terminated at a pond.

In sum, development in the fifty years after the Civil War transformed the landscape of Cranston from a primarily agriculture one, with an occasional industrial village, to a metropolitan one dotted with suburban hamlets linked by streetcar lines to the capital city. Both distance and the radial organization of public transportation made the new villages closer in many ways to Providence than to each other. Indeed Fiskeville and Arlington retained village "town halls"—assembly rooms used for local meetings and voting—into the twentieth century.

## ETHNIC DIVERSITY

Throughout the nineteenth century, the overwhelming majority of Cranston's population was old Yankee stock, descendents of the earliest English settlers of Rhode Island. Like most of the state's residents, many were Baptist and some of the city's most handsome structures were built for its Baptist congregations. In 1764, Peleg Arnold donated land for the first Pawtuxet Baptist Church; the present structure is the third on that site. Erected in 1895 from designs by Frank W. Angell, the imposing Colonial Revival building, with its belfry-capped tower, has become a Pawtuxet landmark. The Mashpaug Free Will Baptist Church was organized in Auburn in 1851, and in 1882 construction began on what is today the People's Baptist

Church on Elmwood Avenue. Completed in 1889 from designs by the prominent architectural firm of Gould and Angell, it is a good example of the simple Shingle Style popular for Baptist churches at that time and creates a handsome and human-scale corner at the busy intersection of Elmwood and Park Avenues. On Pontiac Avenue the original Phillips Memorial Baptist Church (now used by the Cranston Day Care Center) is another of the religious structures erected at the turn-of-the-century from designs by Angell.

Over the course of the nineteenth century, Irish, Swede, German, Welsh, and Italian immigrant groups settled in Cranston and contributed additional distinctiveness to the character of the town's villages. As recently as 1970,

over one third of the city's population was comprised of people born abroad or whose parents were born abroad.

The first large influx of immigrants were the Irish who settled around the Cranston Print Works. Although Irishmen who had immigrated to America long before the nineteenth century and had been successfully assimilated, the vast numbers of newcomers and their status as ill-educated laborers and mill hands provoked a new and hostile reaction among natives. This was true in Cranston, as in almost every community throughout the United States. Indeed, the famous murder of Amasa Sprague near the Print Works on December 31, 1843, and the subsequent trials of three accused Irish immigrants, have attained notoriety as the most graphic expression of ethnic hostility at that time.

### AUBURN FREE BAPTIST CHURCH, AUBURN, R. I.

GOULD & ANGELL, ARCHITECTS, PROVIDENCE, R. I.

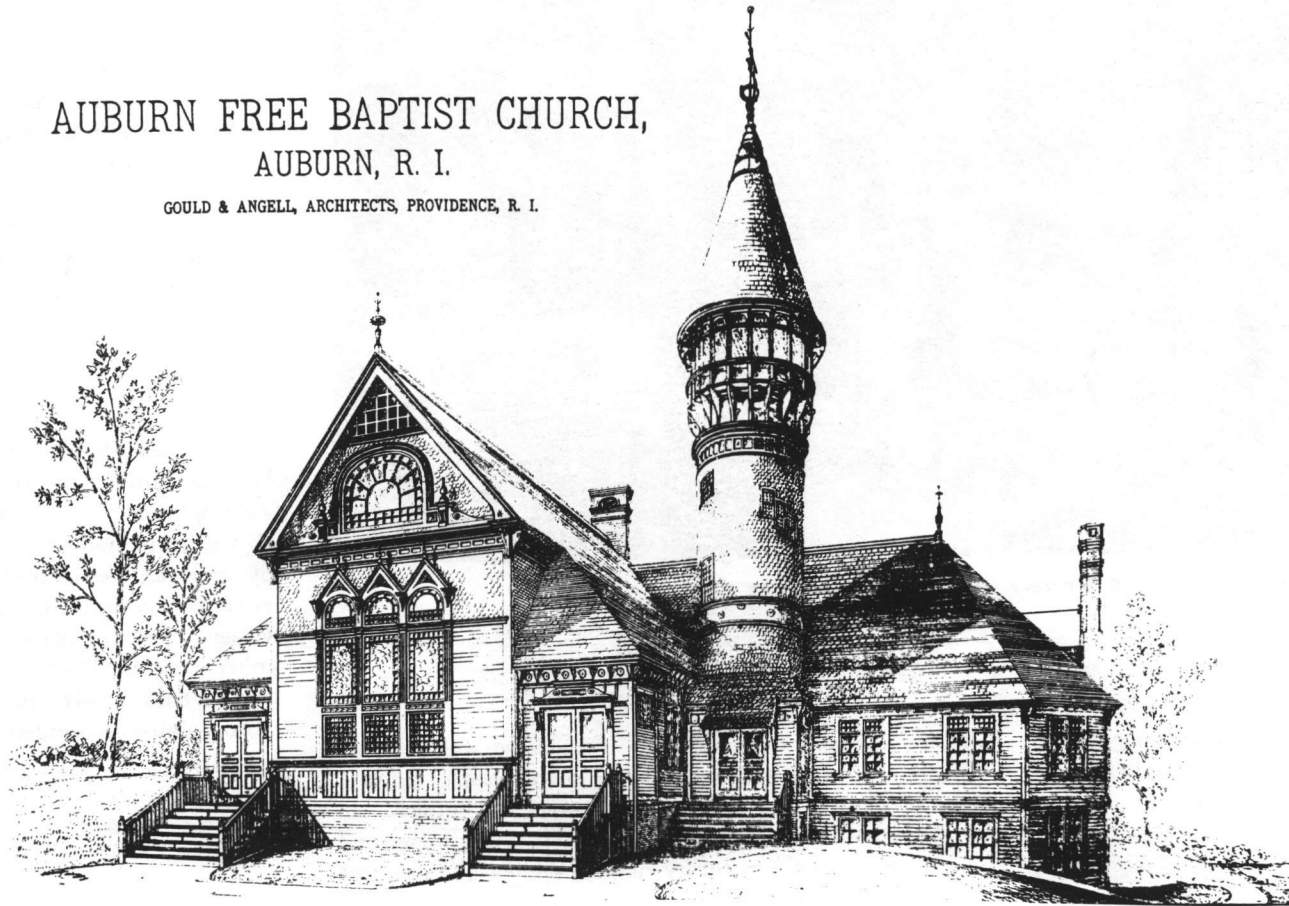


Fig. 49: People's Baptist Church, formerly Auburn Free Baptist Church (1889); 1275 Elmwood Avenue.

Nicholas, William, and John Gordon were three immigrant Irishmen who lived near where Saint Anne's Church stands today. Nicholas, who had immigrated seven years previously, owned a small general store; his brothers had arrived in America only six months before the murder. William was a tailor and John a common laborer. Because Nicholas was observed to have quarreled with Sprague when Sprague had successfully opposed the renewal of Nicholas' liquor license the previous June, he was an immediate suspect. When he was able to prove his whereabouts outside of Cranston at the time of the murder, he was indicted as a conspirator and the state's Attorney General brought his two brothers to trial in March of 1844. The prosecution argued that Nicholas had instigated his two brothers to commit the crime, and used as proof the facts that the murder weapon had been registered to Nicholas, that a coat of John's was found near the body, that the footsteps in the snow went by the Gordon residence, and that John had not joined his friends to view the body at the mansion.

The much publicized trial was laden with references to the defendants' foreign birth, and the prosecution emphasized the difference between New England's morality and that of other countries. Chief Justice Durfee, who presided at the trial, instructed the jury to distinguish between the testimony of native-born witnesses and that of the Gordons' countrymen. The brothers were defended by Thomas F. Carpenter, a major figure in the Rhode Island bar who had rejected appointment as Collector of the Port of Providence and offers to run for governor because he preferred to practice law. He had recently defended Thomas Dorr, leader of the 1842 insurrection which attempted to institute a broader charter, broaden suffrage, and reapportion the General Assembly. Carpenter based his defense of the Gordons on the fact that the state's evidence was entirely circumstantial, that prosecution witnesses' identification of the defendants was weak and easily confused, and on the premise that if the brothers were instigated by Nicholas, their trial should be held after his, not before.

Although Carpenter was able to prove William Gordon's presence elsewhere at the time of the murder, he could not for John Gordon. The latter was convicted and sentenced to be hanged. He appealed first to the courts and then to the General Assembly, which rejected his appeal by

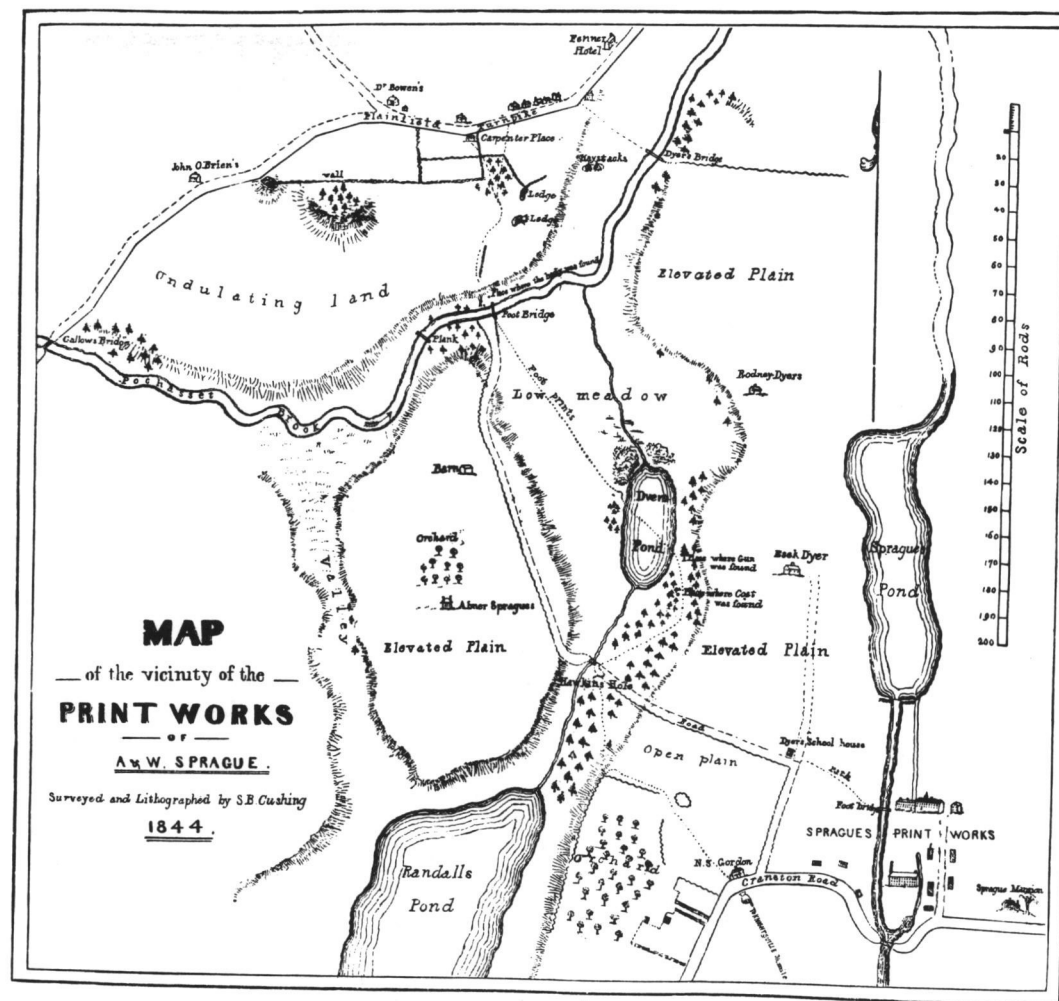


Fig. 50: A correct plat of all the localities described in the testimony prepared for the trial of John and William Gordon, charged with the murder of Amasa Sprague; pamphlet, March, 1844.

a vote of 36 to 27, a tally sufficiently close to indicate growing doubt among the public as to the justice of his conviction. In fact, Nicholas was never convicted; two trials held later both ended in a hung jury. The only appeal remaining for John Gordon was to Governor James Fenner, Thomas Dorr's arch rival. The appeal was rejected and John Gordon was hanged in the old state prison in Providence on February 14, 1845. Gordon's funeral was attended by Irishmen from miles around, including some from Massachusetts and Connecticut. When the death penalty was abolished in Rhode Island in 1852, it was in reaction to this controversial episode.

The local environment was still filled with the bitter memory of the execution of John Gordon in 1853, when Father John Quinn arrived to serve the 147 Irish families at the Cranston Print Works. As the Print Works expanded, so too did the Irish population. In 1858, a parish was organized, and in 1860 the original Saint Anne's Church was erected. A simple frame structure, it was razed in 1936. The new Saint Anne's Church was completed in 1927. It is a handsome example of contemporary Tuscan design and, located on the site of the Gordon's store, can be seen as a symbol of the distance the Irish community traveled in its first century.



Fig. 51: Turn-of-the-century immigrant workers at Budlong farm; Pontiac Avenue; photograph, c. 1900.

After the Civil War, a small group of Welsh families settled in Pettaconsett to operate the huge pumping station that was erected there to service the Sockanossett Reservoir for the City of Providence, and a number of Germans came to work at the breweries in Arlington. The next large group of immigrants were the Swedes who arrived from the Vastergotland region of Sweden in the mid-1880s to work on the Budlong Farm in what has now become known as Eden Park. The center of their community was the Swedish Lutheran Church. In 1892, a church parish was established and in 1894 their first church, now the First Pentecostal

Church, was erected at the corner of Magnolia and Laurens Streets. Two years later a burial ground was consecrated and a full-time pastor assigned to the congregation. The same year, the Swedish Sick and Burial-help Association Bethesda was formed in Auburn. It functioned as an insurance association and in addition to ensuring a proper burial for isolated immigrants, served as a fraternal organization. In 1901, a local Vasa Lodge was established in Auburn; in 1905, the Vasa Music Hall Association, still in existence, was organized to raise funds for a meeting place in Auburn. Instead, in 1909 the former Odd Fellows Hall on Park Ave-

nue was acquired and renamed Vasa Hall, a major landmark in Auburn for decades until its demolition in 1952. In 1911, the old church was rebuilt and enlarged, and by 1915 the congregation included 900 members, most of whom worked in factories in Providence; only twenty still worked the farm.

Their place was taken in the closing years of the century by a wave of Italians, emigrating from the village of Itri to the Knightsville section in Cranston. Although some attended services at the old Saint Rocco's Church at 50 Clemence Street, now the Scott-Tusin Company, most of the Italians went to services at the predominantly Irish Saint

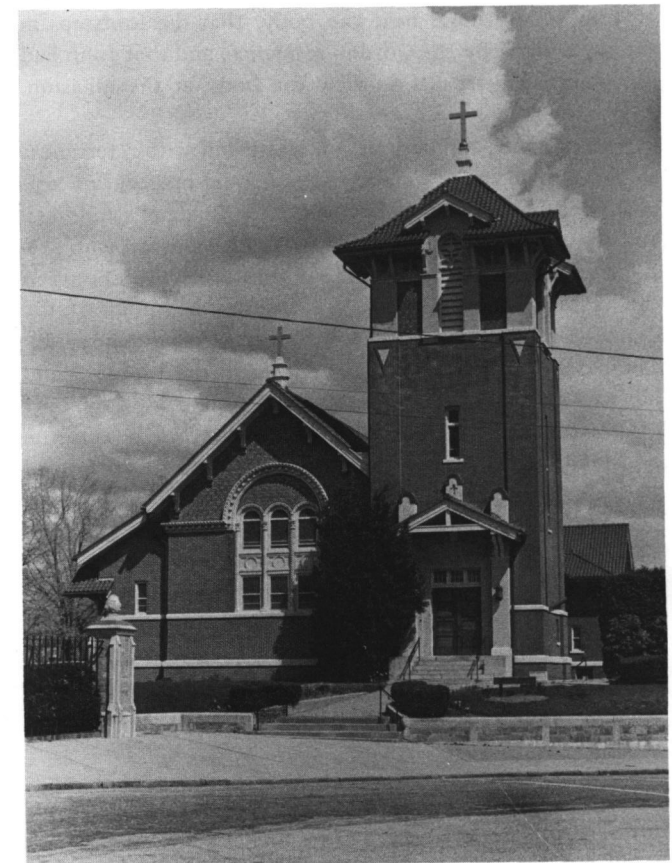


Fig. 52: St. Ann's Roman Catholic Church (1927); 1493 Cranston Street.



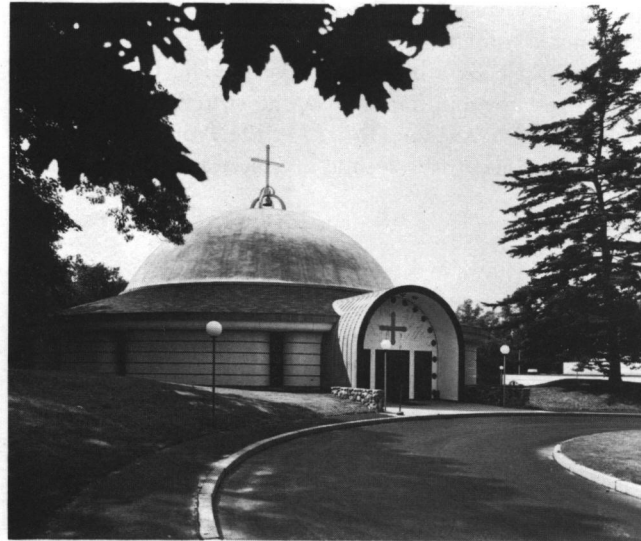
Ann's Church. By 1921, the Italian population numbered more than 3,500 people, more than the Irish, and an "Italian Committee of Cranston" was formed to petition the Diocese to establish their own parish. The response was to assign an Italian priest, Reverend Cesare Schettini, to the area. Finally, in 1925, a new parish (SS Maria della Civita) was created, and in 1935 construction began on Saint Mary's Church on Cranston Street. The parish and the church were named for the Madonna della Civita, a picture originally painted by Saint Luke and lost until 796 when discovered by a deaf mute on Mount Civita in Itri who was miraculously cured. Before designing the church, the congregation sent a local architect to study the church in Itri that houses the Madonna, and every July since 1905 the



**Fig. 53:** St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church (1935); 1525 Cranston Street.

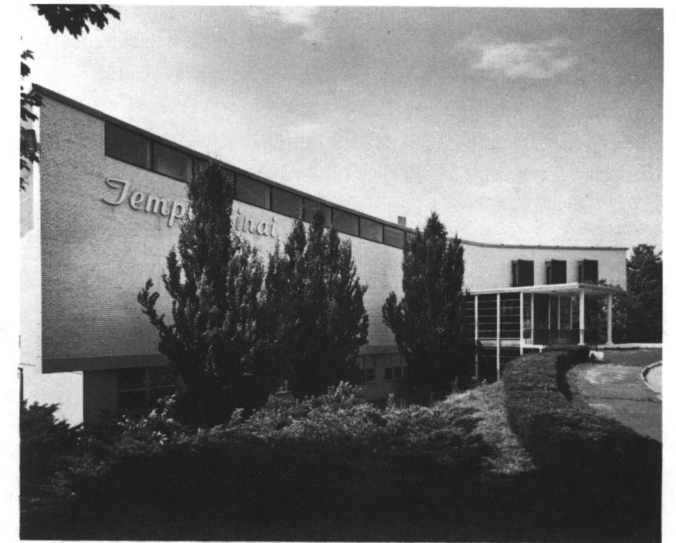
Festival of the Madonna della Civita has been celebrated in Knightsville just as it is in Itri. Although the Italian population today is spread across the city, its spiritual home is Knightsville, and the celebration has become as much a part of Cranston's heritage as the May Breakfast.

The early years of the century also saw the immigration of a number of Portuguese-speaking people into Cranston. Many of them settled along Elmwood Avenue. The Portuguese Social Club, now located at 20 Second Avenue, was organized in 1923 and has served as the social and fraternal center of the Portuguese community in both Providence and Cranston.



**Fig. 54:** Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church (1966); 175 Oaklawn Avenue.

The major transformation brought by the expansion of Cranston's population after World War II included a significant number of Jewish and later Greek families. Although the Jewish population never concentrated in one particular area, the location of the city's two congregations followed the generally westward trend of postwar development. In 1949, a conservative congregation, Temple Beth-Torah, was organized in Cranston and in 1953 its present building erected on Park Avenue. In 1959, Temple Sinai, a Reform congregation, was established, and, after meeting briefly at Cranston West High School and then in Warwick, in 1961 a synagogue was constructed off Oaklawn Avenue, from designs by Isidor Richmond and Cary Goldberg.



**Fig. 55:** Temple Sinai (1961); 30 Hagen Avenue.

## RECREATION

Though largely forgotten today, Cranston contained many important recreational facilities in the nineteenth century. By 1843, Daniel Smith operated a public house and resort on a large plot of land where the Rosedale Apartments are today on Narragansett Boulevard. Smith's Palace was frequented by Providence residents traveling by boat or carriage. Clambakes were held twice a day, and a bathhouse could be rented for five cents. Despite a fire in 1858, Smith's Palace continued into the 1870s, later being used as the Home Society grounds in the 1880s and 1890s but still hosting bakes, carnivals, and other social activities.

By 1851, the Washington Trotting Park was established at Broad and Eddy Streets in what is now the Washington Park neighborhood in Providence. In 1867, Amasa Sprague, miffed at the directors of Washington Park, founded his own more fashionable track, the Narragansett Trotting Park, on land bordered by Gansett Street and Park Avenue, and Washington Trotting Park never regained its popularity. The new park cost \$100,000 and had elaborate entrance gates and a grandstand that hosted Cornelius

Vanderbilt and J. P. Morgan on opening day. It gave new life to the old taverns in Knightsville, one of which changed its name to the Narragansett Hotel. After the Sprague's financial collapse, several unsuccessful attempts were made to revivify Narragansett Park. In 1886 the Rhode Island Society for the Encouragement of Domestic Animals acquired it, but five years later the Rhode Island State Fair Association took charge, and for a generation it was the state fair grounds. It was the site of the first automobile speed race in the state (in 1896) and the first airplane race (in 1907). The land was sold and platted in 1925 as the Speedway Plat, a few street names like Packard and Fiat gave quiet testimony to the excitement that once was there.

Across town, the advent of the first horse railroad from Providence to Pawtuxet in 1870 stimulated development along Narragansett Bay. In that year Albert Arnold, a descendant of Nicholas Arnold, erected the first local summer cottage on a bluff on Shaw Avenue. Later moved and enlarged for multifamily use, the structure still stands at 74 Norwood Avenue. In 1875, the Providence Yacht Club was organized, the second in America, with a building

at the foot of Ocean Avenue. Known today as the Rhode Island Yacht Club, the club has occupied three buildings on the same site—the first two victims of the hurricanes of 1938 and 1954. The present structure, erected in 1956, is cantilevered above eight reinforced-concrete stilts. It is one of the city's most distinctive modern buildings.

Because its members came from Providence, not Cranston, the "Providence Yacht Club" signifies the transformation of both the social character and built environment of the town at the turn-of-the-century. Pawtuxet, in particular, became a suburban resort community. The village's transformation was signaled by the burning of the old C. and W. Rhodes mill in 1875; it was never replaced. In the late 1880s and 1890s, Pawtuxet Neck was developed with summer homes built in the Queen Anne style or Shingle Style. A tightly developed cohesive neighborhood, it offered on a small scale the visual richness usually associated with the summer resorts of Newport and Narragansett. On the east side of the Neck most structures are sited to take full advantage of the sweeping view of Narragansett Bay.

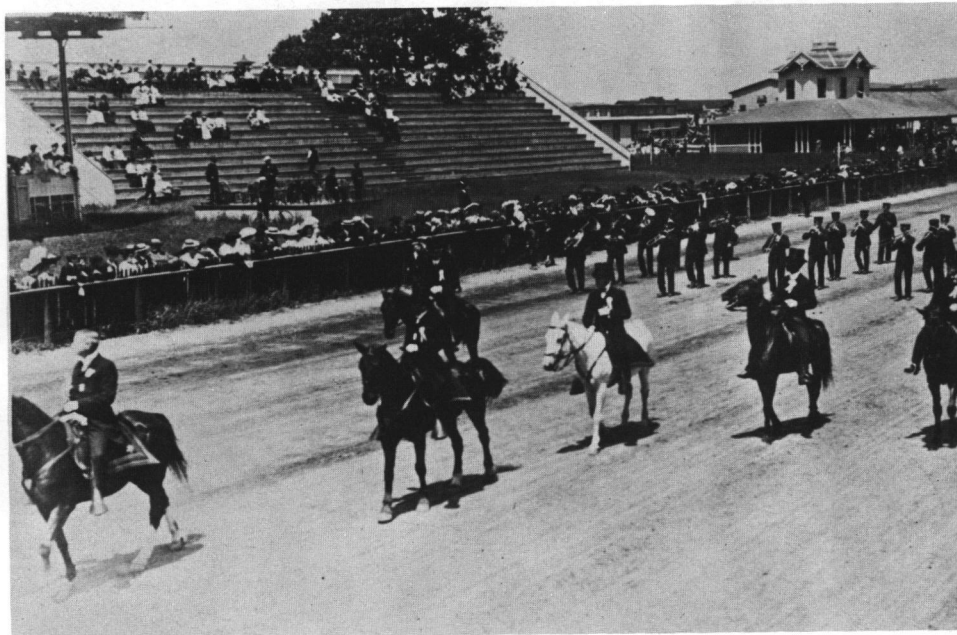


Fig. 56: Narragansett Trotting Park (1867; demolished); Cranston's 150th- anniversary celebration, 1904.



Fig. 57: Rhode Island Yacht Club (1875); 1 Ocean Avenue; demolished in the 1938 hurricane.



Fig. 58: Pawtuxet Neck (post-1950).

Many less wealthy city dwellers were able to enjoy Pawtuxet's natural amenities after Thomas Rhodes, who had previously worked as a bake master, opened a boat-rental and clambake pavilion by the Pawtuxet River. The enterprise was successful from the first, and various alterations and expansions of the original building were necessitated by its increasing popularity. In 1898, the newly incorporated Rhodes Brothers enlarged the grounds and built a new casino for dancing, and another pavilion in 1901. Several different canoe clubs were organized at Rhodes, and by 1914 the popularity of canoeing there was so great that a photo caption in the *Providence Board of Trade Journal* of August, 1914, stated that "next to the Charles River in Boston, it is quite probable that there are more canoes on the Pawtuxet River than any other American River of comparable size."

A fire in February, 1915 destroyed most of the Rhodes complex. The present dance hall was built in four months and opened on August 14, 1915, as the "Palais du Dance" with 10,000 in attendance. Rhodes has been a major part of Rhode Island's social life since its construction, Paul Whiteman, Glenn Miller, Guy Lombardo, and other big bands played there regularly, and entertainment included popular performers like Hildegard and Victor Borge. In addition to weekly dances, the hall hosted innumerable political fund raisers and antique shows and served as the home of the Shriners' Circus. A recent fire destroyed the Rhodes State Room, and changing social customs have significantly diminished the number of patrons who experience the handsome ballroom of the "Palais du Dance." As the oldest and most famous dance hall in the state, Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet deserves special protection.

Just to the northeast at the foot of Shaw Avenue stands the venerable Edgewood Yacht Club, a large Shingle Style structure erected in 1980, which has survived both major hurricanes. The Edgewood Yacht Club was founded by twelve local families in 1885 as the Edgewood Boat Club. With its two-story wrap-around porch, graceful hipped roof, and prominent cupola, the structure blends well with the domestic character of Edgewood and yet makes a strong and dignified statement of its own, reflecting the elegant leisure life that attracted people to Edgewood and Pawtuxet.



Fig. 59: A view of the boathouses at Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet; Pawtuxet River; postcard, 1915; center building no longer standing.



Fig. 60: Palais de Dance, Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet (1915); 60 Rhodes Place; postcard, 1915.



Fig. 61: The Gazebo at Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet (c. 1880); Broad Street and Rhodes Place; postcard, c. 1915.

## INDUSTRY AND AGRICULTURE: 1865-1910

Just as much of eastern Cranston began to serve the residential needs of the metropolitan area, so in this era did Cranston's agriculture and industry reflect a growing integration with the regional economy.

In 1890, the Narragansett Brewery was constructed just over the city line in Cranston, and, as it expanded, housing was built to accommodate those who worked there. In 1909, the plant, which had two sub-basements for cold storage, was producing 180,000 barrels of lager and 100,000 barrels of ale every year.

Another source of employment in Arlington was the streetcar line that ran down Cranston Street to the Print Works and out to Oaklawn. A stable had been built in 1876. When electric streetcars were installed, a huge trolley barn was constructed in 1900. Now used for storage by Narragansett Brewery, the building was constructed with vast steel trusses spanning a huge interior space. Today, the old trolley barn, with its corbeled brick cornice and heavy granite lintels, represents not only a bygone era in transportation, but also the transition of industrial buildings from Victorian to modern construction. The "new" trolley barn (1912), now housing Taco, Inc. at 1160 Cranston Street, is another of Cranston's valuable early twentieth-century industrial structures, its clock tower an important visual landmark along Cranston Street.

Although Arlington and the Print Works remained the most clearly industrial sections of Cranston, Samuel Priest founded the Imperial Print Works in the Bellefonte section in 1911, and the British Manufacturing Company acquired mills in Thornton. The presence of the railroad attracted industry to Auburn, especially after a 1913 referendum approved a tax exemption on new businesses locating in Cranston. The intended beneficiaries of the vote, the United Wire and Supply Company and the Universal Winding Company, moved to Elmwood Avenue in 1914. Universal Winding located in the old Maxwell Briscoe Motor Company building, where automobiles had been produced since 1909. The Universal Winding Building—by its size, siting, and attractive brick and wrought-iron detailing—has also become a Cranston landmark.



Fig. 62: United Traction Trolley Barn, now warehouse of Narragansett Brewery (1900); 833 Cranston Street.

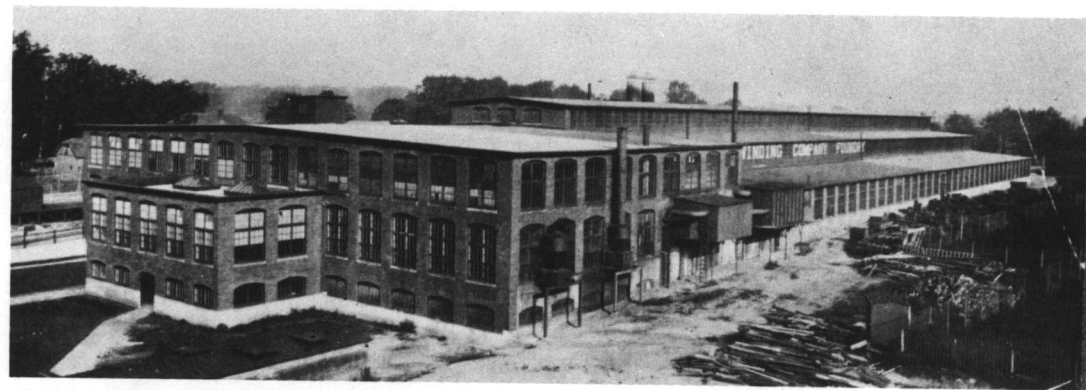


Fig. 63: Maxwell Briscoe Motor Company Building, later the Universal Winding Company (c. 1908); 1655 Elmwood Avenue; photograph, c. 1918.

Two traditional local "industries" reached their heyday in the decades bracketing the turn-of-the-century. The coal mine at Sockanosset had been reported as early as 1839. In 1875, the Seekonk Facing Company mined graphite there, and the New York Carbon Company of Pittsburg raised as much as thirty tons of coal a day in 1885. Despite seven different business failures at the mine

between 1887 and 1913, the Graphite Mines Corporation was able to make it successful until a fire in 1922. The mine was used intermittently until March of 1959 when the first fatal accident there closed it down for good.

Ice cutting and storage was also a major business in Cranston especially in the years of the local building boom



Fig. 64: A view of surviving agricultural land in Western Cranston, from Seven Mile Road; April, 1980.

that immediately preceded domestic electricity. Huge icehouses stood on almost every pond in the town, including Mashpaug and Fenner's Ponds. The 100-by-200-foot Blackmore icehouse stood at the edge of that lake until 1929. A new icehouse measuring 125-by-154 feet was erected on Randall's Pond. With walls eighteen inches thick, it held 13,500 tons of ice. Because the structures were frequently unattended and contained much sawdust for insulation, they often burned; none remain today.

Despite increased suburban development in eastern Cranston, most of the town remained largely agricultural into the twentieth century. According to the 1875 census, the cash value of the town's farms, \$1,854,000, was the second highest in the state. The value of the products of its market gardens represented a quarter of Rhode's total in that category. Indeed, there were 158 farms in Cranston, producing 262,000 gallons of milk and 36,000 bushels of potatoes a year, and more strawberries, string beans, and green peas than any other town in Providence County. Despite some reforestation in the west, those farms in central Cranston thrived as truck farms. William Patt and James Donahue had successful farms in Auburn, but the

foremost truck farm in Cranston was the Budlong Farm along Pontiac Avenue. By 1880, 480 acres were under cultivation at the original farm, and Budlong was also working the old Sprague Farm. This business was bringing more than \$100,000 annually from the sale of every kind of vegetable, which were shipped to Boston, Worcester, and New York, as well as to Providence. The farm, managed at the turn-of-the-century by Frank L. Budlong, son of founder James A. Budlong, included the largest pickle plant and vinegar factory in Rhode Island until 1916 when a blight ruined the farm's cucumbers. By that time, however, the farm was equally well known for its roses, which had been raised there since 1901. Budlong roses were famous throughout New England until the hurricane of 1938 destroyed the greenhouses that held them.

Today, a small part of the farm remains under cultivation on the east side of Pontiac Avenue. The original James A. Budlong House and the Frank L. Budlong House still stand on Pontiac Avenue. Much of the farm was sold off by Frank L. Budlong in the first two decades of this century to form the Eden Park Plat.

## THE STATE INSTITUTIONS AT HOWARD

A different kind of development—not recreational, recreational, or industrial—also marked Cranston's inclusion in the matrix of the emerging metropolitan political economy. On a hill that rolls gradually up from the Pawtuxet River across Pontiac Avenue stands the Howard Reservation, a campus-like setting that includes Victorian stone structures, numerous early twentieth-century Colonial Revival brick buildings, and assorted new facilities. Its story is part of the social history of all of Rhode Island, not just Cranston. The development of Howard was Rhode Island's first attempt to provide social services statewide through publicly supported and publicly administered institutions. As such, the Howard Reservation signals both a significant change in the role of the state and a major alteration in the treatment of the poor, the mentally ill, and the criminal.

In the early years of the country's history, poverty, crime, and mental illness were considered matters manageable by and within each town. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, need was considered to be a natural part of the order of things, an inevitable element of the human condition. Social theory and theology, both assuming a hierarchical view, acknowledged the needy as integral parts of the community to be pitied and helped. In Rhode Island communities, as in other colonial towns, vagrants and others who did not belong were "warned out" and summarily driven from the town line, but those who did belong were accommodated either by public humiliation or imprisonment, in the case of culprits, or charity, in the case of the impoverished and diseased.

In practice, individual towns paid a fixed sum for the maintenance of each indigent person, with the town supplying the necessary clothing and medical care. Frequently, the needy were auctioned off to the lowest bidder.

In sum, for the first 150 years of American history, poverty, crime, and insanity were regarded as natural components of human society; the local approach to providing social services reflected the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century view of the town as the basic unit of social organization.

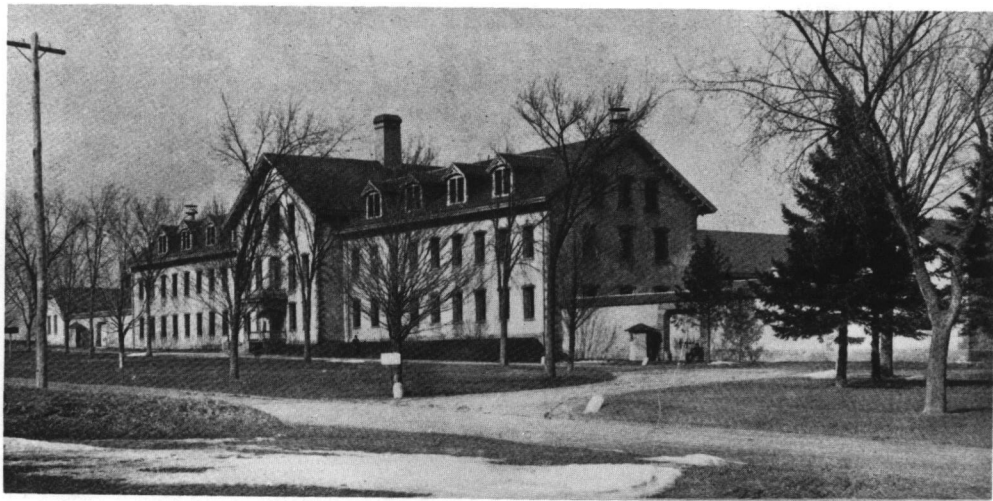


Fig. 65: Late 19th-century view of Work House and House of Correction (1873); Howard Avenue.

With the coming of the American Revolution and the nineteenth century, a new philosophy evolved. It held that deviance and poverty were not inevitable but simply the result of a poor environment. The solution was believed to be the isolation of the poor, the mentally ill, and the criminal in an environment that eliminated the tensions and chaos engendering deviant behavior.

Poor farms and asylums sprang up around the country. In Providence, the Dexter Asylum opened in 1828 to care for the sick and feeble, and, in 1847, Butler Hospital was opened—one of the most progressive institutions for the treatment of the mentally ill in the nation. In 1839, Cranston's Town Council voted to purchase the Rebecca Jenckes estate in what is today Wayland Park, at the foot of the present Meshanticut Valley Parkway, and use it as a poor farm.

Although by 1850 fifteen of Rhode Island's thirty-one towns had established town asylums or poor farms, their operation did not reflect the kind of progressive thinking that was embodied at Dexter and Butler. The situation of the poor and the insane poor was not only scandalous, as revealed in Thomas Hazard's 1851 *Report on the Poor and Insane in Rhode Island*, which graphically delineated the miserable living conditions of most of the state's poor, it also reflected a continuation of the local approach to social problems. Following Hazard's report,

the legislature abolished the chains and sealed, dark rooms that had characterized the treatment of the insane in many towns.

Legislative attention did not return to the poor and insane until 1864, when the General Assembly appointed a committee to inquire into the expediency of erecting a state asylum. Two years later, a state Board of Charities and Corrections was established similar to that in Massachusetts, to "devise a better system of caring for the unfortunate unlawful classes of the state." The act that created the Board provided for the establishment of a state workhouse, a house of correction, a state asylum for the incurable insane, and a state almshouse. The board moved to consolidate facilities by establishing a "state farm" that would simultaneously raise standards for the indigent and—a key development—relieve the localities of their responsibilities. Two adjacent Cranston farms were acquired—the old Stukeley Westcott farm belonging to Thomas Brayton and the William A. Howard farm further west.

Plans for a state farm reflect the adoption by the state of Rhode Island of some of the current thinking affecting social services. The selection of a pastoral site far from the city is indicative of the prevailing philosophy that many of the nineteenth-century's social ills derived from the chaos of the urban industrial environment. Institutionalization, to create a new, controlled and ameliorative envi-

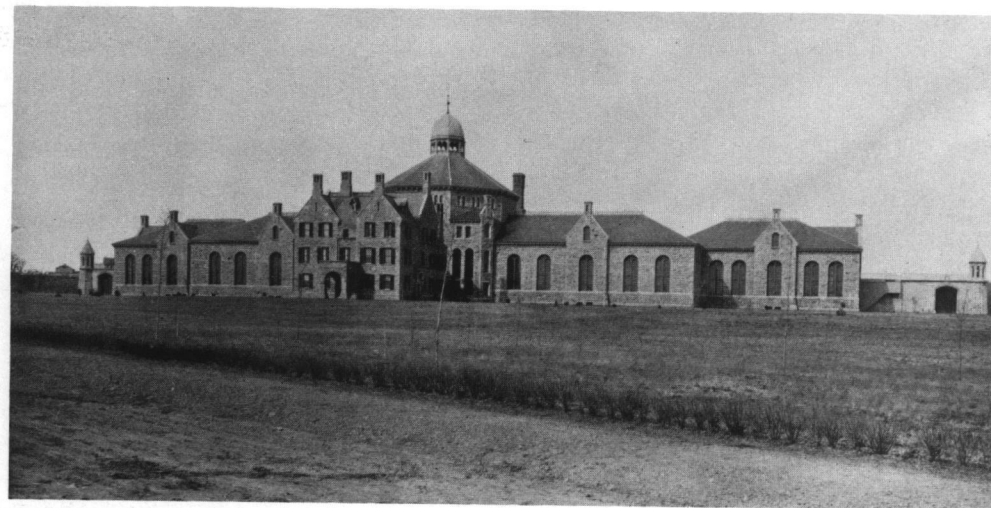


Fig. 66: Adult Correctional Institution, formerly Providence County Jail and State Prison (1878); Pontiac Avenue; photograph, 1879; architect, Stone and Carpenter.

ronment replaced assignment of the destitute to local families. Almshouses would care for the "worthy" or hard-core poor, the permanently disabled, and others who clearly could not care for themselves. The able-bodied or "unworthy" poor who sought public aid would be institutionalized in workhouses where their behavior could be controlled and where, away from the temptations of society, they would develop new habits of industry to prepare themselves for more productive lives and less dependence.

The creation of a state asylum for the insane signaled a significant change in public policy toward the mentally ill. Unlike the earlier optimistic era in the 1840s when Butler Hospital opened, the newer prevailing philosophy assumed that many of the insane were incurable, and therefore there was little justification for providing expensive hospitals for them.

Thus, in planning the State Asylum, therapy was the last of the goals listed. The Asylum would offer "every facility for economical, comfortable, and perhaps even to a degree, curative care. . . ." The commissioners chose as their model the Asylum on Blackwell's Island in New York City which had one of the worst reputations in the nation for patient care but also had the lowest annual cost per patient. They wrote that the frame buildings at Blackwell's Island were "far better in every respect for the accommodation of the insane than costly buildings of brick or stone."

Eighteen frame buildings were constructed in 1870, and that November 118 mental patients were admitted — 65 charity cases from Butler Asylum, 25 from town poor-houses and 28 from asylums in Vermont and Massachusetts where the state had sent them. The patients at the State Asylum were poor and believed beyond help, as is reflected in the evolution of names for the asylum. Initially it was to be called the State Insane Asylum; in 1869 the Asylum for the Pauper Insane; and in 1870 the State Asylum for the Incurable Insane. In 1885, to relieve the cities and towns from the burden of supporting their insane poor, the General Assembly adopted a resolution that the State Asylum for the Insane should serve as a receiving hospital for all types of mental disorder, acute as well as chronic, thereby merging the two. By giving over the Asylum to “undesirable” elements, the poor, the incurable, and the foreign-born, the upper and middle classes thus restricted their own ability to use it. Therapy was second to custody.

In 1872, work began on the oldest remaining institutional building on the Howard Reservation — the workhouse and house of correction, until recently the minimum security prison. The three-story building was the first of many built from stone quarried on the farm by inmates and constructed by Horace Foster, the master mason who had worked on many of the Sprague families' Pawtuxet Valley mills. To avoid all unnecessary expense, plaster was applied directly to the stone. Completed in 1873, the building cost almost \$100,000 and was heated by steam. The philosophy behind the design of the building was clearly stated:

We have endeavored to combine convenience with strength, durability, and safety, and depend upon proportions alone for the appearance of the structure.

The construction of the workhouse and house of correction as different halves of the same building reflects in a literal sense the late nineteenth-century perception of how closely idleness and lawlessness were intertwined. As the Board of Charities declared in 1873:

The greater number of persons sent to the work-house and house of correction are not naturally vicious but the victims of habit, or disease, call it what you will, of intemperance. These are in many cases susceptible to reformatory influences, and by forcibly restraining

them for a time from temptation, supplying them with new trains of thought, breaking up their old associates and bringing them within the sphere of religious and moral influences, an opportunity to say the least, is given them to change their ways.

The statewide statistics of offenses for which people were sentenced to the workhouse apparently bears out this belief. The largest numbers in 1872 were for common drunkenness, 309; vagrancy, 50; prostitution, 13; begging, 3, and neglect to support family, 8. These statistics reveal problems that were social ills in an expanding industrial metropolis. Of the 4,364 people committed to the workhouse and house of correction in its first five years, 2,844 came from Providence; North Providence, Pawtucket, and Woonsocket totaled 676; 56 came from Cranston.

In attempting to explain the origins of these problems the State Board of Charities and Corrections repeated the prevailing philosophy that society was changing too rapidly, and that traditional values were being undermined by the large influx of foreigners. The percentage of inmates of foreign birth was a regular feature of the Board's annual reports. The Board's explanation for the rise in mental illness agreed with the views of Dr. Edward Mann, Medical Supervisor of New York City's Ward's Island, who was quoted in the annual report for 1877:

Next to hereditary pre-disposition, which is the first and predisposing cause of insanity, comes the great mental activity and strain upon the nervous system that appertains to the present age and state of civilization. This feverish haste and unrest, which characterize us as people, and the want of proper recreation and sleep, tend to a rapid decay of the nervous system and to insanity as a necessary consequence.

Beginning in the late 1870s and the 1880s the original wooden structures at the state farm were gradually replaced by stone ones, many of which remain today. The Adult Correctional Institute was completed in 1878 as the State Prison and Providence County Jail. A massive stone structure designed by the noted Providence architectural firm of Stone and Carpenter, the prison incorporated the

most up-to-date penological philosophy and technology. The building contained two wings of three-tiered cell blocks flanking an octagonal central administration building. The 250 cells were arranged fronting either east or west for unobstructed sunlight and had corridors on two sides so that both sides of each cell were accessible to guards. Each floor of the prison was formed of a plate of cast-iron ribbed cross-wire on top and covered with a coat of cement. It was opened under the supervision of Warden General Nelson Viall who oversaw the prisoners as they walked in chains from the old prison, which stood near the site of the present State House in Providence. Commander of a Black regiment in the Civil War, General Viall personally landscaped the prison grounds as memorials to his troops.

By 1894 the Prison and Jail housed almost 150 more inmates than it was intended to; \$300,000 was appropriated for construction of a new jail, but while bids were being solicited the appropriation was rescinded. Finally in 1924, when the facility held twice its capacity, a new wing designed by George F. Hall was added to the north. Built in the same style of random-ashlar construction, it blends well with the original structure and the warden's house immediately in front of the prison entrance. Today, standing high and isolated, the Adult Correctional Institution, with its massive central cupola and small towers along the walls of the prison yard, remains an imposing statement of the Victorian conception of prisons as fortresses.

In contrast to this fortress built to house hardened criminals, the cottage system was employed to give wayward young people a sense of homelife. In 1880, eighteen acres were purchased from Job Wilbur to build the Oak Lawn Girls School on the New London Turnpike at what is now Brayton Avenue. This spot was picked because of its distance from the other institutions; alone among the inmates at Howard's several facilities the girls and their visitors used the Oak Lawn Railroad station.

The Sockanosset Boys School was also located at a distance from the other institutions and also used a different train station, the small one called “Sockanosset” near the foot of Sockanosset Road. The extant but largely unused cottages at Sockanosset, at once institutional and domestic, were built between 1881-1895 and combine solid rubblestone walls, brownstone quoins, and arched windows



with Stick Style porches in a handsome fashion. They are sited around a circular driveway in the center of which used to stand a large administration building that housed a chapel and industrial shops. A new chapel and infirmary structure was built in 1891 from designs by Stone, Carpenter and Willson. Built of stone with a shingled porch, it is one of the most handsome buildings at Howard. A new hospital and gym were built in 1898 and an additional industrial building in 1912-1914.

Although in disrepair, the buildings at Sockanosset, beautifully sited on spacious grounds behind a stone wall, are among the finest nineteenth-century institutional buildings in the state.

In 1888, the General Assembly appropriated funds for a new almshouse to replace the frame building that had been originally built for the insane. Known now as the Center Building, the Almshouse was also designed by Stone, Carpenter and Willson. Its name acknowledges the prevailing trend in institutional design, as evidenced in the House of Correction and State Prison, as well: the installation of a large central administration building with office and residential facilities for the staff and public eating and worship spaces for the inmates who were segregated in wings flanking the central structure. In this case, the wings housed 150 men and 150 women and included an additional wing, the children's "cottage" for sixty children. Opened in 1890, the three-and-a-half-story stone building stands as a series of long buildings running north-south and interrupted regularly by octagonal stair towers. Its handsome stone work and red-brick trim and its site behind copper beach trees on a bluff overlooking Pontiac Avenue make the Center Building one of the most visually striking structures in Rhode Island.

Taken in sum, the Minimum Security Prison, the Adult Correctional Institution, the Sockanosset School, and the Center Building, together with the two houses built for the Supervisor and Assistant Supervisor of the State Farm (Eastman and Keene Houses, built in 1870 and 1875, respectively) represent the Howard Reservation as it looked in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Although the environment is more developed today, the presence of large, stone, institutional buildings on the hill rising up from the Pawtuxet River, lining Pontiac and Reservoir Avenues, and surrounded by acres of farmland indicates

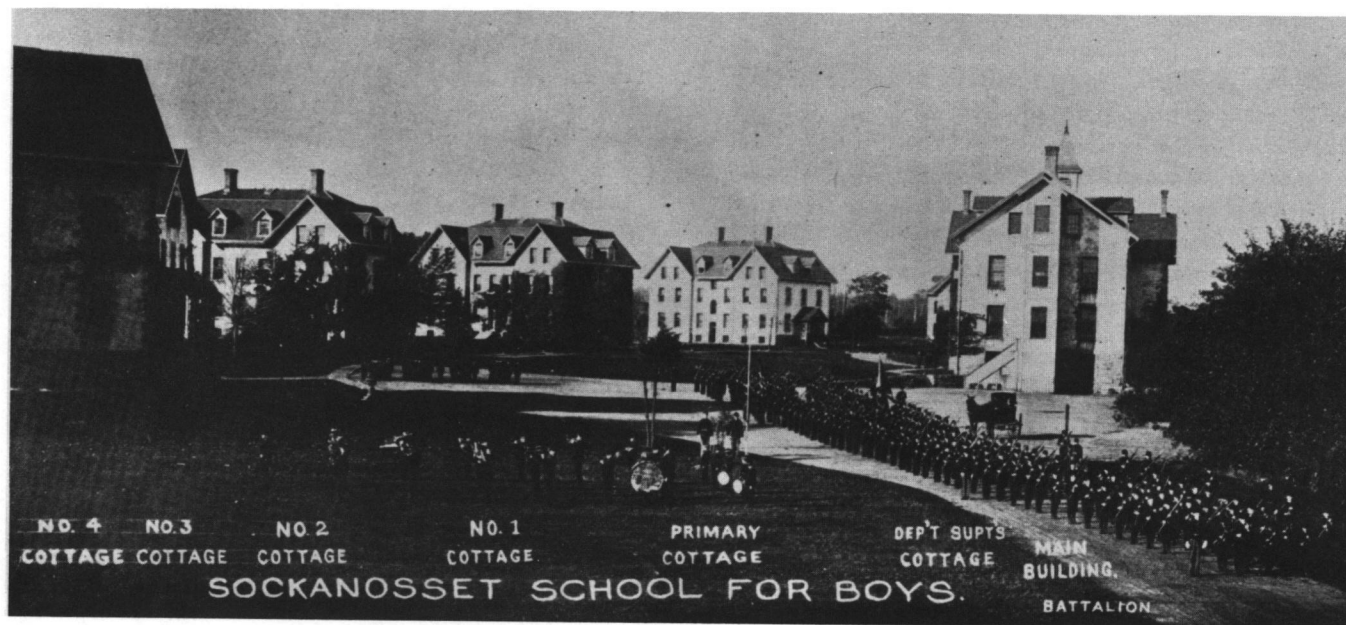


Fig. 67: Late 19th-century view of Sockanosset School for Boys (1880-1895); Howard.

both the configuration and general impact of the state institutions at Howard on the Cranston landscape.

The major improvement of the decade before the turn-of-the-century was the appointment of Howard's first full-time medical superintendent, Dr. George F. Keene, which signaled the introduction of professionally trained, therapy-oriented administrators at the State Farm. The new orientation manifested itself in the building plan for the Hospital for the Insane created in 1900 from designs by the prominent Providence architectural firm of Martin and Hall. Based on the contemporary practice of constructing hospitals for the insane on the cottage or ward plan, "thereby establishing small communities in separate buildings that are more easily taken care of and administered," the plan was the first at Howard to establish a campus-like quadrangle arrangement of buildings in place of one large self-contained structure. A key part of the new plan was a communal dining room, modeled after the one in the hospital at Danvers, Massachusetts. As a result of Martin and Hall's recommendations, the Service Building was constructed in 1903 and included a dining room measuring 195 feet by 104 feet, which could seat 1,400 people.

The master plan outlined by Martin and Hall was slow in being realized. In 1912, the Reception Hospital (A Building) was opened. With 184 beds, it was intended to permit appropriate diagnosis and classification of patients as they entered the institution. This effort became a reality with the assignment in 1916 of psychiatric social workers to the state hospital. The Training School for Nurses was opened in conjunction with the Reception Building, and when the Rhode Island Medical Society held its annual meeting there, it recorded its approval. Nonetheless, the new facility did not relieve overcrowding, and in 1913, 200 people were sleeping on the floor at the State Hospital for the Insane. The completion of B Ward in 1916 and C Ward in 1918 responded to the population increase and at last fulfilled Martin and Hall's plan for "simple and dignified" buildings and "plain red brick walls with pitched roofs, without any attempt at ornamentation." Standing just west of Howard Avenue and opposite the old House of Correction, the Martin and Hall quadrangle signals the beginning of a new mode of construction at Howard—red brick buildings in a simple Colonial Revival style grouped around a quadrangle and containing dormitories, single rooms, and porches as well as treatment facilities.

The concern for professionalism at the staff level soon affected the administration as well. In 1918, the General Assembly unified the Board of State Charities with the Board of Control and Supply, which controlled state expenditure and formed the Penal and Charitable Commission. Until this time there had been considerable tension between the two Boards, the Board of Supply frequently imposing fiscal restraints on the Board of State Charities' efforts at reform. Although some proposed plans to relieve overcrowding were postponed due to shortages caused by the First World War, the new Commission constructed a new building for the criminally insane and additional dormitories.

The old twelve foot high solid fence which shut off patients from the outside world was replaced in 1919 by a lower lattice one with a view of the surrounding countryside. This change alone symbolized the change in attitude which was articulated in the 1920 Annual Report:

The commission tries to save dollars, but it would rather save a man or a woman. It wants to see the plants in Cranston, Providence, and Exeter a credit to Rhode Island, standing like so many Temples of Reform, Education, and Philanthropy. But it is even more desirable that its work should be represented in reconstructed Living Temples in the morals, minds and bodies of those who have been ministered to by these public administrators. For it is better to minister than administer.

These efforts at reform in the treatment of the insane were paralleled by a new attitude towards the infirm. The Almshouse became the State Infirmary and attention was focused on the medical, not the social, disabilities of the inmates.

Other changes at the institutions reflected changes in society and the institutions themselves. With postwar prosperity and prohibition, the number of residents at the House of Corrections fell dramatically, so that there were only thirty-one inmates living there in 1921. In 1923, the House of Corrections was abolished by the General Assembly and the building soon converted into a Women's Reformatory. A new Public Welfare Commission was established, and under its supervision a new dormitory and

men's hospital were constructed, several older buildings renovated, and sprinklers installed to maximize safety. An innovation initiated by the Commission was a rehabilitation work program begun in 1928. This program permitted patients to live with families and work in the community. Nonetheless, most of the patients at the state institutions worked the 225 acres of state farmland, harvesting far in excess of the needs of the reservation. As late as 1941, 750,000 quarts of milk, 400,000 eggs, and 14,000 tons of beef were being produced on the farm.

Although they resulted in fewer new structures, parallel reforms were taking place in the philosophy and management of the criminal population at Howard. In the 1910s, social workers were regularly involved in the treatment of delinquent youths, and the Annual Reports are filled with examples of how the younger sisters of girls at Oaklawn were dissuaded from their sisters' footsteps by the intercession of uplifting social workers. For adults, new attitudes in penology called for "intermediate sentences" to permit authorities to reward improved behaviour with early parole. The law enabling parole was passed in 1915, and, by 1918, 1,800 prisoners were on parole.

In the 1920s the "New Penology," as it was known, believed that people were sent to prison for treatment not retribution. Classification of prisoners was made more precise in order to assess their capabilities so they could be properly trained in preparation for release. The state developed an industrial training program that was netting the state \$90,000 a year by selling prison-manufactured textile goods in 1930, when a federal law prohibited interstate traffic of prison-made goods. "Reformatories" were erected across the country to house first offenders and segregate them from hardened criminals. Rhode Island's (now Medium Security) was completed in 1933. The Reformatory never lived up to its promise. Because of overcrowding in the Providence County Jail, ninety-eight inmates from that institution were transferred to the new facility, thereby undermining the planned separation of new and recidivist offenders.

It was the infusion of large amounts of federal Works Progress Administration (WPA) funds that dramatically altered the appearance of the Howard complex and permitted, if briefly, appropriate physical accommodation for

patients, inmates, and attendants. Overcrowding has been a chronic problem at Howard and only the large-scale construction program of the WPA could solve it. Despite the building effort of the 1920s, in 1933 the State Hospital, with accommodations for 1,550, housed 2,235 and was labeled the most overcrowded mental hospital in the northeast.

Governor Theodore Francis Green, a long-time advocate of improving conditions at Howard, called a special referendum on August 6 of 1935 to secure voter approval of a list of projects to be constructed with federal aid. In September, however, the Public Works Administration in Washington warned that Rhode Island and several other states were in danger of losing their public-works programs due to local delays. Green went immediately to Washington and received the concession that Rhode Island's projects would be accepted if the plans for the buildings were submitted not later than October 20 and contracts for construction signed on December 15. This astounding deadline was met by asking architects from all over the state to prepare the drawings with the understanding that if the project were rejected, payment would be sacrificed. In fact, sixteen different architectural and engineering firms completed the drawings and specifications in just twenty-five days. In the years 1935-1938 twenty-five buildings were erected for the State Hospital for Mental Diseases, three for the State Infirmary, and three for the Sockanosset School. The appearance of Howard was dramatically altered by this construction which went up so fast the *Providence Journal* declared a "new skyline rises at Howard."

Built in a uniform, red-brick, Georgian Revival style, the structures comprising the State Hospital and State Infirmary are grouped in campus fashion on either side of Howard Avenue. Among the most interesting are the Benjamin Rush Building, with an ogee gable inspired by the Joseph Brown House in Providence, and the cluster of Physicians' Cottages which finally permitted the hospital staff improved residential accommodations. Taken in total, the buildings constructed at Howard by the W.P.A. incorporate a uniformity of style, scale, material, and siting that is striking. Historically they represent the coming together of national policy and local initiative. Architecturally, they

present one of the most lucid statements of the Georgian Revival in Rhode Island.

But despite the tremendous improvement made possible by the WPA, by 1947 conditions at Howard had once again deteriorated due to overcrowding. The infirmary, with a capacity of 815, housed 1,059 people. The Hospital for the Insane, built for 2,700 beds, held over 3,000 patients. Increased salaries were approved to help recruit additional staff, and it was proposed that a master plan be developed. In 1947, the "Hospital Survey and Construction Act of Rhode Island," stemming from the federal Hospital Survey and Construction Act of that year, was passed. Through it, the governor was authorized to appoint an advisory hospital council to advise and consult with the Department of Health in implementing the Survey and Construction Act. However, no immediate action was taken, and in 1949 the population at Howard reached its highest in history without significant new construction. Interestingly, in 1959 an expert from Boston declared that the conditions at Howard were shameful and yet "relatively good" compared with mental hospitals in the country. The problem stemmed not from a lack in the annual budget (Rhode Island ranked twelfth nationwide in the amount spent per patient) but in the inability to raise capital funds to match federal programs.

Finally in 1954, an active public-relations effort, including pamphlets detailing the overcrowding, articles in the *Journal*, and radio spots, resulted in passage of a bond issue. As a result, the J. Varley Female Geriatric Clinic was completed in 1956 and the Manuel F. Mathias Male Geriatrics Hospital in 1960. That same year Rhode Island's first state-operated General Hospital was created by uniting the responsibilities of the State Infirmary and Almshouse. In 1962, the General Hospital and State Hospital for Mental Diseases merged to become the Rhode Island Medical Center. The former became the Center General Hospital and the latter the Institute of Mental Health. In so doing, Rhode Island was the first state to create therapy units for its mentally ill, an approach pioneered at the Center General Hospital. As a result, four buildings housing elderly patients were transferred to the jurisdiction of the Cranston General Hospital in order to remove the stigma of residing in a mental hospital.



**Fig. 68:** Institute of Mental Health (1960); Howard Avenue.

In 1967, the Medical Center was divided. The Center General Hospital was designated to serve as an infirmary for the prison and the Institute of Mental Health. Both hospitals are administered by a new Department of Mental Health, Retardation, and Hospitals. In 1977, the IMH was divided into nine units to deal with specific categories and

regions of patients. The Institute is presently undergoing another philosophical re-orientation, encouraging group homes away from the environment of Howard. The extent of this change will very likely depend on federal support, but if carried out extensively, it will help to redefine the role of Howard just as previous changes in attitude have.

## CRANSTON IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The large-scale suburbanization of the eastern parts of Cranston inevitably had an impact on the political life of the town. The population, which had jumped from 6,000 to 8,100 between 1880 and 1890, increased by a similar amount in the next five years, and accelerated in ever increasing increments to 21,000 by 1910, a 350 per cent rise in thirty years. Primarily middle-class merchants, the new arrivals saw themselves as living in a fashionable and up-to-date suburb. Running such a suburb through the vehicle of a town meeting was considered archaic, and a movement began in the 1890s to alter the town's form of government and become a city. As a result of the Bourn Amendment passed in 1888, the alteration would benefit those with real property at the expense of those without it. So certain did the change seem in 1895 that a new local newspaper was entitled the *Cranston City Times*. Both the paper's editor and the town's politicians were surprised to discover that the referendum to become a city was defeated at the polls (on May 7, 1895) by thirty votes.

The conversion effort failed because of the overconfidence of its backers, many of whom did not bother to vote, and an unusual alliance between the propertyless "registry" votes centered around Knightsville and the farmers of western Cranston who voted at Fiskeville. The former feared disenfranchisement under a new form of government because the Bourn Amendment included real property qualifications for council elections, the latter did not benefit from the improvements their increased taxes were paying for and saw no advantage in the change.

A second attempt to adopt a city form of government was rejected by a two-to-one margin in 1904. Nonetheless, as the town continued to grow, town meetings became steadily more unworkable. The Republican politicians who then controlled Cranston's political affairs found the meetings particularly unproductive because the Democrats always managed to muster a larger showing at the town meetings—held then in Pocasset Hall, 1680 Cranston Street, Knightsville—and so dominate them. Frustrated by this dilemma, the Republicans in 1910 initiated a petition to the state legislature to make the town a city, hoping that representation by wards would guarantee Republican



Fig. 69: William A. Briggs School, formerly Cranston High School (1904); 865 Park Avenue; architect, Edward Thomas Banning.

control of the new city. The legislature complied and John M. Dean ran confidently for mayor on the Republican ticket. His opponent, an aggressive Democratic outsider named Edward M. Sullivan, born at the Cranston Print Works Village, capitalized on local anger against the Republicans for not consulting the voters about the change in government. In a stunning upset, Sullivan was elected mayor by a margin of just thirty-one votes. Ironically, Sullivan scored most strongly in the two districts least interested in the mayoral race. Many residents of the first district (Edgewood and Pawtuxet) hoped and expected to be annexed to Providence. Those voting in the fourth district (centered at Fiskeville) resented having to vote for mayor at all.

The alteration of the city's form of government was paralleled by analogous physical improvements and cultural undertakings. Cranston had always been a leader in

the state's education system, and building in the ten school districts expanded to match the increase in population. A number of new schools were built in the decades bracketing the turn-of-the-century, culminating in the construction in 1904 of a high school, presently the William A. Briggs School. Only two other schools from that era remain, many of them having been torn down in the school-building boom of the 1950s. The Pettaconsett School, erected in 1888, was remodeled at the time of the First World War, when the Greene Street School was built in Knightsville.

The close of the nineteenth century saw the incorporation of library associations in the different villages of Cranston-Arlington in 1894, Auburn in 1888, Edgewood in 1896, Knightsville in 1895, and Oak Lawn in 1889. These societies often occupied old houses, relocating as the collections grew larger. Today the Arlington Library uses the building erected as its home in 1917,

although a 1975 addition and modernization obscure it. The William H. Hall Free Library, was constructed in 1926 from the bequest of the Edgewood realtor, and occupies the site once filled by his home. Built of limestone, the Hall Library is the finest example of Beaux-Arts Classicism in Cranston.

Although a writer in 1870 had declared that Cranston had one of the best road systems in the state, by the end of the nineteenth century there was considerable agitation to improve the conditions of the town's roads, almost all of which remained unpaved. In 1890, a bond of \$40,000 was raised to rebuild Cranston Street to Knightsville. Two years later, Broad Street and Narragansett Boulevard were resurfaced. The transformation to city government accelerated paving efforts, and under the direction of the city's first highway Commissioner, Phineas A. Conley, roads in every section of Cranston were covered with macadam or asphalt in the 1910s.

After several years of trying, including court action, the City of Cranston finally forced the Union Electric Railroad to construct a crosstown streetcar along Park Avenue, at last making it possible for "easterners" to get to City Hall with only one transfer, instead of having to go into Providence and then back out to Knightsville. An equally valued civic improvement was the transformation to electric streetlights along Cranston's main thoroughfares. These were coveted because the increased speed of the new electric street cars, capable of traveling at fifteen miles per hour, made the streets more dangerous. All-night lighting was finally secured and commemorated by "Illumination Week" in September, 1912.

Cranston's next major city-wide celebration came at the end of the first World War, when a victory parade was organized on November 28, 1918, and a line of automobiles over a mile long drove from Edgewood and Pawtuxet through Auburn and across western Cranston. The parade reflected respect for those Cranstonians who had died in Europe, joy at the return of the others, and a general sense of relief following a virulent epidemic of Spanish influenza which had closed the schools the previous month. Its long-term significance lay in the fact that this was the first time in Cranston's history that automobiles, rather than marchers, formed the center of a parade.



Fig. 70: William H. Hall Free Library (1927); 1825 Broad Street; architect, George Martin Hall.



Fig. 71: Parade celebrating end of World War I (November 28, 1918); scene in front of Jeremiah Knight House (c. 1790); 275 Phenix Avenue.

## A Twentieth-Century Suburb

If the transformation to city government, the construction of a new high school, and the installation of electricity signaled Cranston's coming of age as a modern turn-of-the-century suburb, it was the proliferation of the automobile which indelibly created the city's present twentieth-century character. Just as the railroad had three generations earlier, the new means of transportation brought about dramatic changes in Cranston's physical and social composition, changes which continue to this day.

In addition to local street-improvement efforts, the state of Rhode Island in 1903 began a statewide program to upgrade major roadways. The program was expanded following the first World War to include substantial widening, straightening of roadbeds, and laying of concrete surfaces. Many of these roads were in turn enlarged to four-lane motorways in the 1930s. The widespread use of the automobile greatly enhanced Cranston's desirability as a residential community. Within the metropolitan area, it was the easiest city to get to from Providence—without the bottleneck at Olneyville towards Johnston or the bridges across the river to East Providence; and Cranston's population more than doubled, jumping between 1910 and 1930 from 21,000 to 43,000. While nineteenth-century suburban development centered in villages around the



Fig. 72: Road construction on Natick Avenue; photograph, c. 1903.



Fig. 73: Twentieth-century houses along Shirley Boulevard; Auburn.

primary railroad and streetcar lines, automobile-oriented development occurred in seemingly random fashion close by or adjacent to the new highways, and in effect filled in much of the open space remaining between earlier settlements in eastern Cranston.

Although many of the new houses were built individually, some small-scale speculative subdivisions occurred in the 1920s. Friendly Community (1924), on the Patt Farm; the Speedway Plat (1925); Forest Hills (1924), south of it off Reservoir Avenue; and Eden Court (1935), south of Eden Park were among those developments whose names attempted to evoke a sense of the suburban picturesque—just as Auburn, Oaklawn and Edgewood had for previous generations of suburbanites. The majority of new houses looked back to the imagery of eighteenth-century American architecture, translating it into contemporary styles. The most common variations were the “colonial” (two stories with gable or hip roof), “garrison”

(two stories, the second of which projects slightly on the facade, with gable roof), and “cape” (one-and-one-half stories with gable roof). Knollwood Avenue in Forest Hills displays examples of each. Other, more rare, attempts at the picturesque included endowing the popular turn-of-the-century bungalow with Mediterranean or Swiss Chalet details or compressing the picturesque qualities of English or French cottages in tiny dimensions.

Most of the subdivisions maintained the small scale of earlier development, using cul-de-sac or tight-grid patterns and small lot sizes; most of the homes were constructed by developer-builders. Shirley Boulevard, platted in 1928 in Auburn, on the other hand, demonstrates the use of larger lot sizes and regularized setbacks; various architects and builders were involved here, each selected by the purchaser of an individual lot. The result is one of the most striking statements of mid-twentieth-century, middle-class, residential design in the city.

Early, automobile-related, commercial building was spotty and unfocused; most of the new facilities were highway-oriented businesses—such as small stores, diners, and gasoline stations. Frequently, these outlets clustered at major intersections, but because the automobile made intermittent stops easy, many such facilities were simply located on property available alongside the road. Examples of such commercial buildings are still visible along Cranston's major thoroughfares. Number 1816-1820 Broad Street with its Art Deco parapet and 1271 Cranston Street with its Tudor ornamentation represent the two extremes, in both scale and decor, of the roadside commercial structure of that era. Two early filling stations remain, although altered, at 208 Gansett Avenue and 811 Park Avenue. Cranston's most famous diner, the Miami Diner, still stands on Warwick Avenue as the 3 G's Restaurant—through shorn of its palm trees and original interior. The status of the automobile is reflected in the design skill demonstrated in the original Art Deco facade of Hurd Chrysler at 540 Reservoir Avenue.

#### Cranston In The Depression

The Depression affected even a wealthy suburb like Cranston both socially and physically. The local chapter of the American Red Cross increased its relief efforts considerably, distributing flour to the needy and expanding its Thanksgiving and Christmas basket program. The industrial parts of the city were most severely affected; in July of



Fig. 75: Commercial Block (1930); 1816-1820 Broad Street.



Fig. 74: Cranston City Hall (1936); 869 Park Avenue; architect, Wallace Eastburn Howe.

1933, fifty families went to the Brick Store at the Print Works to receive clothing collected by the Edgewood Civic Association in its "Share Your Clothes" drive.

Although the pace of residential construction slowed, the city's population continued to grow and with it the number of new homes. Public-building construction was stimulated by the Works Progress Administration, which made federal funds available for municipal projects generating local employment. As a result, many of the City's sidewalks date from this era. City Hall, erected in 1936 from designs by Howe and Church, was built with WPA

funds. Its location in Auburn represented a switch from the geographical center of the city to the center of population at that time. It also reflected the continued political dominance of the Republican Party, whose caucus had selected the site over the advice of both the City Plan Commission, which preferred Oaklawn, and the Democratic caucus, which wanted to remain in Knightsville. The construction of City Hall, together with that of the new high school in 1927 and later the Post Office in 1949, elevated Auburn to the position of nominal civic center of Cranston, an event presaged in 1924 by the construction of the large war memorial at Pontiac and Park Avenues.

## The Postwar Boom

No military bases or war-related new industries were started in Cranston during the Second World War, and because virtually all construction was related to the military effort, this time was one of little physical change for the city. However, in the thirty-five years since the war, Cranston has experienced its greatest period of growth. The population jumped by over 50 per cent to over 74,000 by 1970. Indeed, Cranston's postwar development epitomizes a national trend: renewed economic prosperity, an abundance of young married couples, easy mortgage terms offered by the Federal Housing Administration and the Veterans' Administration, and the spread of the highway system combined to generate an enormous surge in home construction. Most of the building occurred in contractors' developments, occupying substantial tracts of land, which in total completed the transformation of the flat eastern half of Cranston from agricultural to suburban. These new developments differed from their predecessors in two key ways. Rather than forming rectangular blocks, most were laid out along new gently curving streets; in addition, the developer was generally also the builder, who built on speculation instead of for individual clients.

The most famous of these developments was Garden City, a 233-acre community established in 1947 by Nazarene Meloccaro, a Warwick-based contractor who had earlier worked in Friendly Community. In addition to easy access to Providence via Reservoir Avenue, homes in Garden City offered a variety of styles, from the traditional two-story colonial and one-and-a-half-story cape to more contemporary ranch houses combining traditional imagery with such new components as picture windows and glass bricks. In contrast to earlier developments, all the homes placed new emphasis on the garage, which was now integrated into the facade of the house. Garden City was unique in being a totally planned community, including a cluster of apartment buildings, a school whose site had been donated to the city by the developer, and the large Garden City Shopping Center, the state's first suburban shopping center. These public facilities are striking for their up-to-date contemporary designs in contrast to the more



**Fig. 76:** A 1965 aerial view of Garden City, illustrating shopping center in foreground, apartments at center, and individual residences at right. Containing 233 acres, Garden City was developed by 1948 as a "city within a city" by Nazarene Meloccaro in cooperation with the Local Planning Division of the Federal Housing Administration. This well known postwar subdivision exemplifies the suburban ideal of the late 1940s and 1950s.

traditional styles of the private residences. The people who moved to Garden City were generally middle-class families, owners of small businesses, with school-age children, who wanted to share in the suburban experience and benefit from the area's open space, school system, and convenience. By luring prestigious Providence stores to the suburb, the shopping center revolutionized shopping habits in Cranston, served as the prototype for other shopping centers and identified a distinct new retail market; in so

doing the Garden City Shopping Center had a profound effect on the social and economic life of the metropolitan area.

Almost all development in Cranston in the 1950s and 1960s was modeled after Garden City. Oak Hill, Glen Hills, and Garden Hills—all along Oaklawn Avenue—are small-scale imitations of the Garden City concept without the commercial components.



The most prestigious residential development of the postwar era was Dean Estates, developed on John Dean's old farm. It was to the mid-twentieth century what Edgewood was to the turn-of-the-century. Owned by successful businessmen and professionals, most of these houses are distinguished more by their size, settings, and landscaping than by any conspicuous architectural statement. More recent buildings on East Hill Drive, usually architect designed for wealthy executives from the jewelry and real-estate industries, display current stylistic revivals, including large-scale examples of Mediterranean, French, Tudor, and Colonial styles.

Between Garden City and Dean Estates is Reservoir Avenue, whose name has become just as symbolic of postwar developments as the two subdivisions. Originally laid out in 1870 along the former New London Turnpike,

the road led to the old reservoir that was established at the top of Sockanosset Hill to serve the City of Providence. At the time, it was the longest stretch of straight road in the state. Long after the reservoir and Pettaconsett pumping station which serviced it were gone, Reservoir Avenue became Route 2, the main road south from Providence. At its peak in 1965, an average of 43,000 vehicles a day traveled Reservoir Avenue. Although developed as a residential area along the bus route in the late 1920s, zoning variances were regularly permitted to allow for facilities to service the increased traffic. In 1955, for example, the historic Gorton Arnold Tavern at the corner of Oaklawn Avenue was demolished to make way for a service station. In 1966, a strip commercial zone was adopted along Reservoir Avenue, encouraging additional commercial uses. In fact, in the eleven years from 1963 to 1974 almost two parcels a year along the street changed from residential to

commercial use. The result has been the kind of visual pollution that defines the modern American "strip." Service stations and fast-food spots compete with each other by means of highway-scaled signs in a kaleidoscopic array of colors and shapes.

In recent years, as land and construction costs and mortgage rates have increased, construction of large-scale apartment buildings has provided the primary alternative to single-family dwellings. Most of these are located along the city's main axial streets and have been designed as either oversize houses or motels, two or three stories high, and set along the side of the road with large parking lots. Although frequently well landscaped, their commercial origins are clear; only Meshanticut Manor built in 1969 from designs by Millman and Sturges reveals real design skill.



Fig. 77: Benedetto Cerilli House (1955); 50 East Hill Drive.



Fig. 78: Samuel Forte House (1969); 135 East Hill Drive.



Fig. 79: Gene Abbruzzi House (1971); 185 East Hill Drive.

The growth in population in the postwar era necessitated additional schools, particularly in the central part of the city, and culminated in the construction of a second high school, Cranston West, in 1966. Just as the new influx of suburbanities in the late nineteenth century had provoked political changes, so too did the population increase of the 1950s. An effort was begun in 1954 to institute a

new city charter providing for home rule and a strong-mayor form of government. Following a lengthy campaign, those changes were instituted by a two-to-one vote in 1962.

A 1961 study by Blair Associates and the City Plan Commission recommended improvement in the city's recreation facilities, use of land on or near the state in-

stitutions for industrial purposes, the establishment of a redevelopment authority, and construction of major highways to cut down local traffic congestion. These recommendations have been implemented and will have a significant long-range effect on Cranston's physical appearance.

The spread of major limited-access highways has created the most pronounced intrusion into the landscape. Route I-95 is the major north-south east-coast highway, I-295 the principal beltway around Providence, and Route 37 links the two. Route 10 predates them as a major effort to relieve congestion in the western part of the capital city. In general, the highways have diminished the volume of traffic on local roads and expanded opportunities for residential and industrial expansion in the city. Wellington Industrial Park, Howard Industrial Park, and the industrial development along Pontiac Avenue near Route 37 and along Plainfield Pike near Route 295 are all beneficiaries of the improved highway system. If the strip was the main street of the mid-twentieth century, the limited-access highway may well become that for the last decades of the century. The highways are a mixed blessing, as the history of the Friendly Interchange illustrates. The intersection of Route 95 and 10 was so named because of its location in the heart of the Friendly Community. Originally proposed as a forty-acre clover leaf, it would have taken one-hundred-and-forty-four homes and a four-acre playground, isolating another forty homes and leaving eleven on the fringe of a major highway junction. A compromise design diminished the size of the interchange and the number of homes demolished, but nonetheless destroyed the physical and social fabric of the neighborhood.

The presence of the highways provides the potential for a major population increase in Cranston. The City Plan Commission's projected population for the year 2000 ranges from 94,558 to 101,446, a jump of 25 to 35 per cent. Such projections indicate a tremendously increased demand for services and a crossing of the topographical barrier between east and west Cranston. Recent zoning changes and plans for installing sewers in large segments of western Cranston present an image of major change in the city in the not-too-distant future.

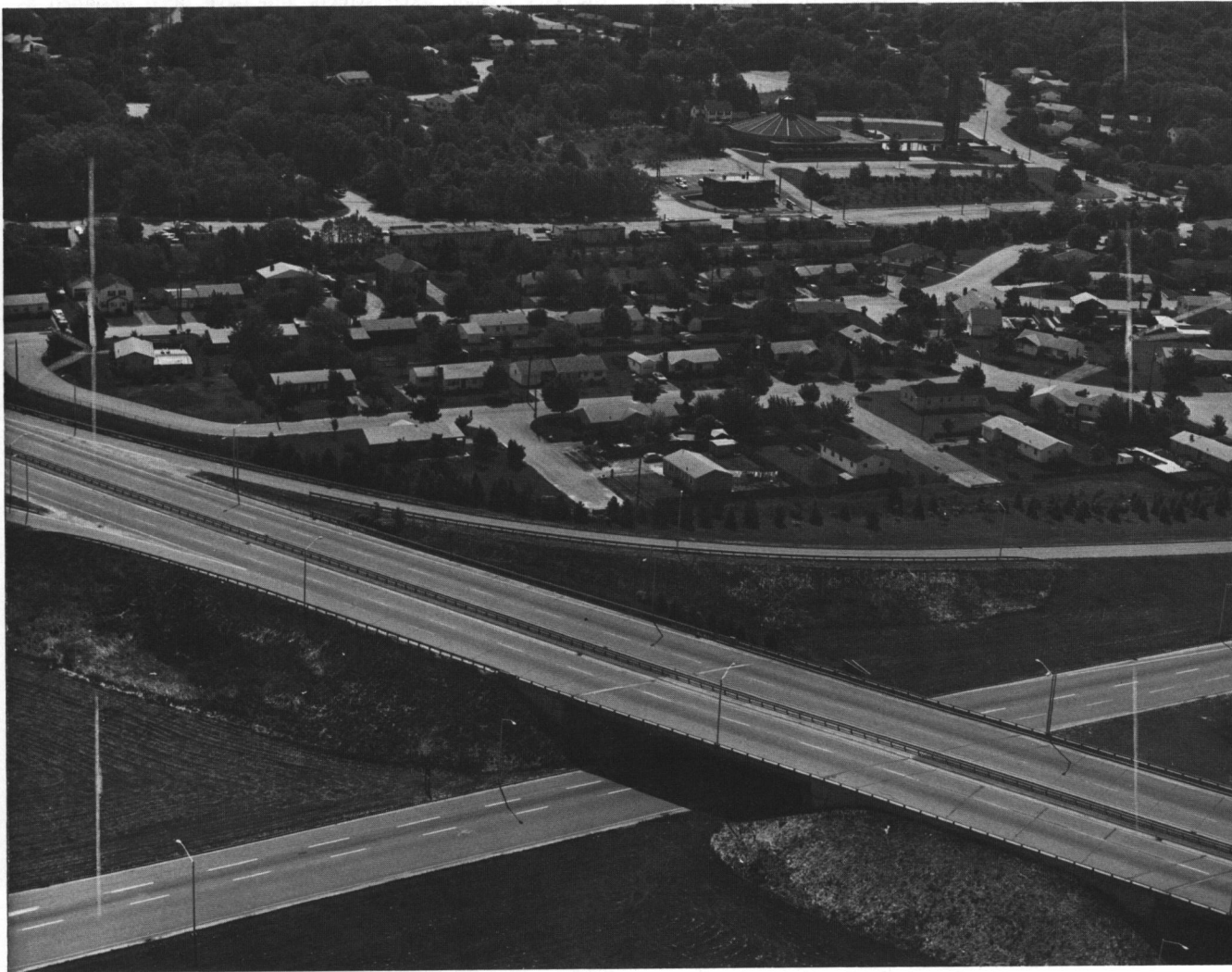


Fig. 80: Interchange between Routes I-295 and 37; Oaklawn Avenue and Church of the Immaculate Conception in background.



Fig. 81: View along Broad Street, 1948.



Fig. 82: View along Broad Street, 1973.

#### IV. SUMMARY

The casual observer—the non-resident speeding down Route 95 or the native Cranstonian following Route 2 or 5 to his comfortable subdivision—is very likely unaware of the city's architectural heritage and cultural resources. He will be surprised to learn of the twelve structures and seven historic districts in Cranston that have been declared eligible for entry in the National Register of Historic Places. The city merits closer investigation. Within its boundaries are one of the most important archeological sites in the state, two seventeenth-century "stone-enders," the road Rochambeau marched enroute to Yorktown, the home and mill village of one of the nation's most prominent nineteenth-century manufacturers, and the region's only active brewery. Cranston has unique examples of early twentieth-century buildings, which reflect the social evolution of the community as well: a yacht club that withstood two major hurricanes, a dance hall that remains popular, and a trolley barn which is one of the most impressive of its type.

A wealthy city, Cranston also has a wealth of valuable cultural resources. What is more, the city is graced with an unusual combination of physical attributes. The variety of physical and architectural features—from the three-and-a-half-mile coastline on the Providence River to the rolling hills of western Cranston, from the grand turn-of-the-century homes in Edgewood to the eighteenth-century farms

of Lippit Hill—makes Cranston a surprisingly picturesque and visually exciting city.

As in many communities, the quality of the built environment in Cranston is threatened in numerous ways. Individual homeowners frequently mask the details of their houses with artificial siding which obliterates the craftsmanship of earlier eras. On the other hand, recent highway construction threatened Pawtuxet Village and cut through historic Oaklawn, destroying the building where Cranston's first town meeting was held. The highways shatter both the traditional scale and patterns of growth of the city. Local commercial zoning erodes the village identities which resulted from the city's historical growth pattern, and strip and apartment development along major thoroughfares undermine a neighborhood's sense of place and, almost inevitably, of pride.

Beyond the built environment, open space is primary among Cranston's assets. The shoreline, proximity to Roger Williams Park, and the hundreds of acres of farmland in western Cranston give the city a variety of visual experience rarely found in a suburb. Preservation of the rural landscape of western Cranston is as crucial to the city's future as it is challenging. A uniform landscape of subdivisions or garden apartments with only an occasional farm not only denies the city's history but presents the vision of a monotonous, homogenized future, eroding just those characteristics that originally attracted development.

Increasingly, people in Cranston are becoming more aware of their heritage and the threats to it. The successful effort to save the Sprague Mansion in 1968 represented a fusion of public and private organizations and corporate and governmental contributions joining to save the city's most well known home. The popularity of Gaspee Days and the continuing energy of neighborhood associations throughout the city illustrates the broad public interest and support for preservation activities.

Nonetheless precisely because of those characteristics preservationists hope to maintain, Cranston is faced with relentless development pressures. A conscious public policy must be established to maintain those qualities that have made it desirable and special throughout its history.

The following recommendations are made on the premise that broad-based community action along with energetic municipal coordination and direction are necessary to implement an effective preservation program. Agencies exist at the state and federal levels which can assist in various capacities, but long-lasting results will only occur with community initiative and determination. This report should be used and incorporated into future planning efforts.

## V. RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATIONS

A number of properties in Cranston merit nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. Entry on the National Register affords limited protection to historic properties from potentially damaging or disruptive federally funded projects. In addition, properties on the Register, either individually or as part of a district, are eligible for 50-50 matching restoration grants and other forms of federal financial assistance (see Appendices C and D).

Four individual buildings and two districts in Cranston have already been entered in the National

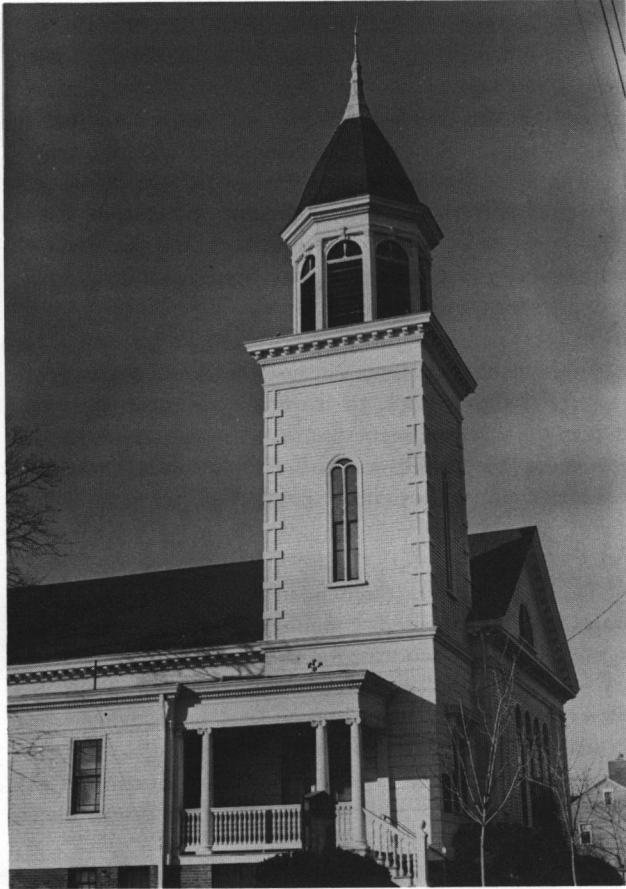


Fig. 83: Pawtuxet Baptist Church (1895); 2157 Broad Street.

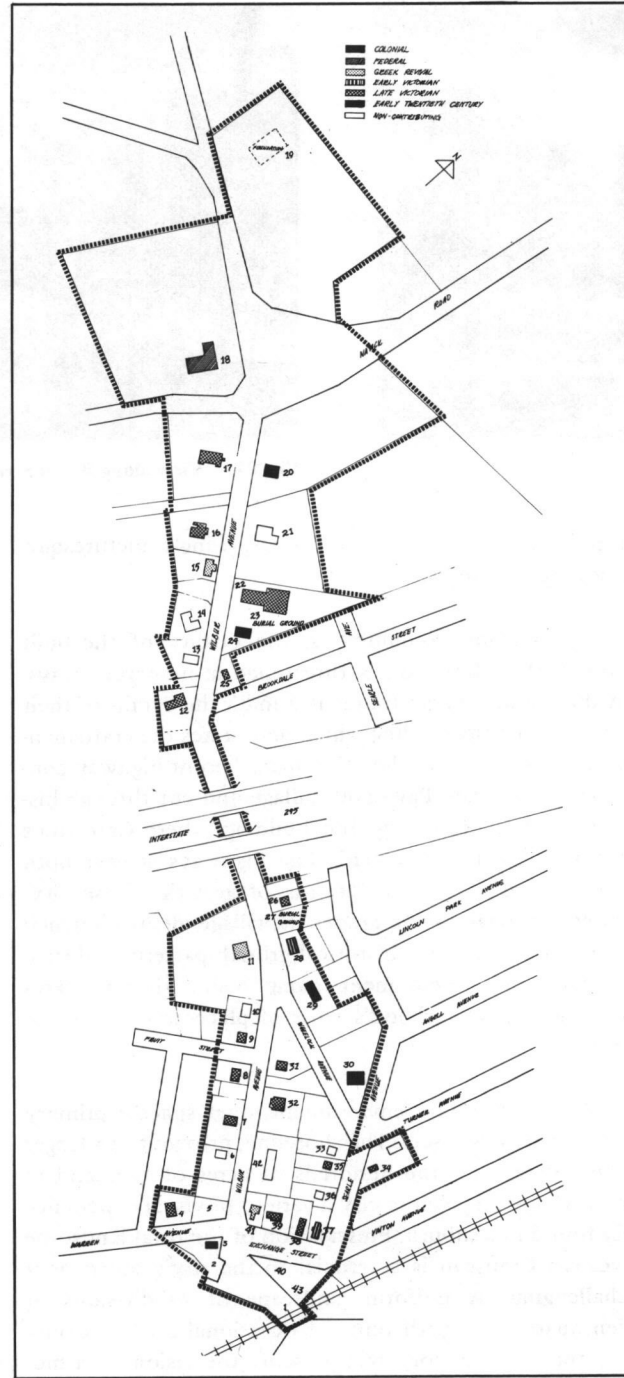


Fig. 84: Oaklawn Village Historic District; not to scale.

Register: the Sprague Mansion, the Knightsville-Franklin Church, Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet, Joy Homestead, as well as the Pawtuxet and Oak Lawn Village Historic Districts.

The following districts have been declared eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

- The Furnace Hill Brook Archeological and Historic District
- The Cranston Print Works Historic District
- The Lippitt Hill Historic District
- The Edgewood Yacht Club Historic District
- The Howard Reservation Historic District

The following individual buildings have also been declared eligible for the National Register.

- Thomas Fenner House, 1580 Plainfield Pike
- Nathan Westcott House, 150 Scituate Avenue
- Potter-Remington House, 571 Natick Avenue
- Nicholas Arnold House, 458 Scituate Avenue
- Westcote, 101 Mountain Laurel Drive
- Arad Wood House, 865 Pontiac Avenue
- Narragansett Brewery, New Depot Road
- United Traction Depot, 833 Cranston Street

This list should not be considered final and absolute. As new research is conducted, as the city changes physically, and as the community's perspective on its history and cultural resources evolves, other potential candidates for registration may be identified.



Fig. 85: Edgewood Yacht Club (1908); Shaw Avenue.

## B. PUBLIC POLICY

The role of the Cranston Historic District Commission should be expanded in conjunction with implementation of the historic-zoning law passed in 1969. Those historic districts on or eligible for the National Register should receive increased protection from local-historic-district designation. The Historic District Commission could then act as a design-review board for all proposed major exterior alterations, repairs, moving, or demolition within the districts, thereby enhancing their stability and visual character.

A firm master plan must be agreed upon that both preserves significant agricultural acreage in western Cranston and also acknowledges the potential impact of future development on already designated historic districts and sites. The information in this report should become one basis of the master plan.

Proposed development off Phenix Avenue and Natick and Hope Roads cannot help but impact Oak Lawn and the Furnace Hill Brook Historic District. Special attention must be given to these historic roads; widening them or permitting spot zoning will detract from the attractiveness and value of both old and new structures. In particular, the city should use its resources to increase its holdings along Furnace Hill Brook.

Similarly, the question of continued commercial expansion along Broad and Cranston Streets and Park Avenue must be studied for the implications for livability, not just historic preservation, in these areas. Specific measures like sidewalks and street-furniture improvements, as well as tree planting and reconstruction of fences which define public and private spaces, can improve the visual environment significantly, but they must be incorporated into long-range preservation planning.

One simple administrative device can add significantly to the awareness of individual property owners and the monitoring ability of local preservationists. The Office of Inspection should incorporate into its files the findings of this survey of cultural resources. Thus, when a building or alteration permit is requested, the owner can be advised of the building's special value and the Historic District Commission can offer its advice regarding the proposed change.

A tree-planting program should be inaugurated. This effort can prove an extremely effective way in which to improve the quality of many residential areas throughout the city. First emphasis should be given to the streets comprising the Cranston Print Works Historic District, where the presence and spacing of the trees is easily documented. Dozens of similar programs were instituted in New England towns during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and are a major reason for the widely admired character of these communities today.

## C. EDUCATION

This report should be incorporated into the local history programs of both high schools. The present marker program directed by the Cranston Historic District Commission should be expanded. At present only a few structures each year receive markers. Increased funding or a joint venture with the Cranston Historical Society could significantly add to the number of buildings receiving this valuable public recognition. An additional historic-site-marker program, erecting markers that include old photographs of demolished buildings or altered streetscapes, will enhance the public's awareness of Cranston's past and underscore the need for increased attention to those significant properties which remain.

General guidelines for private rehabilitation should be provided by the Plan Commission or the Historic District Commission and published as a booklet. Such a guide

would explain easy and inexpensive ways to retain the character of the original fabric while accommodating present-day needs. Basic ground rules would recommend: replacing elements only when necessary; having new work (including additions) conform to the building's size, scale, and materials wherever possible; and retaining clapboarding, porches, and ornament. The publication should be widely distributed to those planning renovation in conjunction with city-sponsored programs, to the owners of older buildings, and to civic groups. Many communities all around the country have published such material and have found it an effective means of retaining the historic visual integrity of their neighborhoods.

The preservation of materials which provide a better understanding of Cranston's history can be enhanced by:

a) Establishing procedures whereby city records including building permits and plans no longer needed by their respective agencies are deposited in the State Archives; in the past irreplaceable documents have been lost through routine housecleaning projects;

b) Encouraging individuals to donate old letters, personal or business records, scrapbooks, photographs, architectural drawings, and other pertinent papers to an appropriate archive: at present, the Rhode Island Historical Society has the finest facilities in the region for the care of such material and is easily accessible from Cranston;

c) Establishing a local museum, perhaps organized by the Cranston Historical Society in the carriage house at the Sprague Mansion, where artifacts could be arranged in order to display valuable items discarded or saved by private collectors.

Finally, the City Council or the Cranston Historical Society should consider adopting a program of historic easements, whereby the owner of an historic property literally sells his right to make significant alterations. An investment of this kind can ensure the long-term integrity of valuable structures while at the same time providing tax advantages to the donor of the easement.

## APPENDIX A: CRANSTON ARCHITECTURE

The following illustrative glossary presents Cranston houses—representing the bulk of the city’s historic building stock—from the seventeenth century through to the present. Buildings are arrayed in approximate chronological order. Focusing on the architecture itself, they are identified by address and date only. This appendix should be used as an adjunct to both the text and inventory.



Fig. 1: 1580 Plainfield Pike (c. 1677): A late seventeenth-century 2-story, “stone-ender,” built on a one-room ground plan.

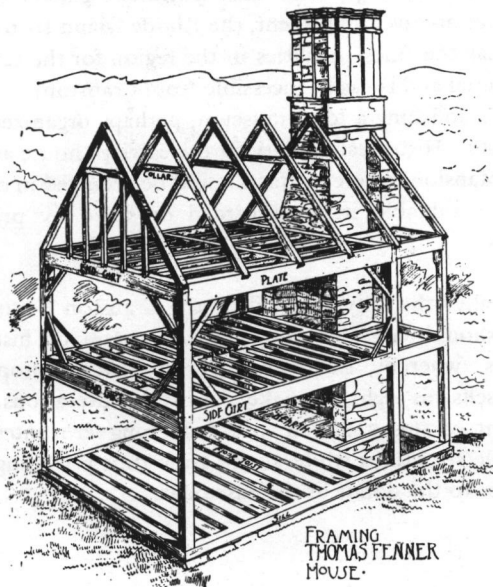


Fig. 2: Typical 17th-century “stone-ender” construction (c. 1680): One-room plan, two-story, end-chimney house.



Fig. 3: 1231 Hope Road (1735, 1790): The classic, center-chimney, gable-roofed, central-entrance, 4-bay facade, 18th-century house. The type persisted for a century.

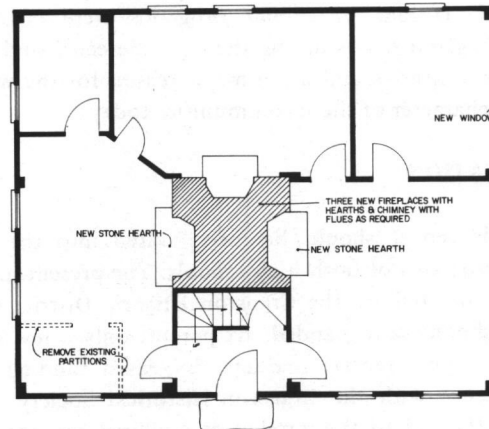


Fig. 4: A typical, center-chimney, 5-room, 18th-century floor plan.



Fig. 5: 156 Scituate Avenue (c. 1764): A common, Cranston 18th-century hometype; one-and-one-half-story, gambrel-roofed, 5-bay facade, center-chimney dwelling.



Fig. 6: 156 Scituate Avenue (c. 1764): Mid-18th-century entrance containing a simple 5-pane transom.



Fig. 7: 1231 Hope Road (c. 1790): A fine Late Georgian doorway with Ionic pilasters; compare with Fig. 6.



Fig. 8: 1281 Hope Road (c. 1798): The classic, center-chimney, gable-roofed, 5 bay-facade, Federal house with pedimented fanlight doorway; dormers added.



Fig. 9: 17 Howard Street (c. 1845): Greek Revival house; compare with Fig. 5.



Fig. 12: 407 Pontiac Avenue (c. 1858): The same basic house as Fig. 11, but with Bracketed Style detail and corner quoins.



Fig. 15: 24-26 Whipple Avenue (c. 1875): A typically urban house with mansard roof, side-hall entry and 2-story bay window.



Fig. 10: 38-40 Oak Street (c. 1864): A late Greek Revival, two-family mill house built by the Cranston Print Works.



Fig. 13: 12 Talbot Manor (c. 1864): An elaborate Bracketed cottage with a cross gable, bay windows and entrance hood.



Fig. 11: 1230 Cranston Street (c. 1845): Greek Revival, end-gable, 3-bay house with corner and entrance pilasters.



Fig. 14: 23 Fort Avenue (c. 1868): An early mansard-roofed cottage.



Fig. 16: 329 Webster Avenue (c. 1890): The same house as Fig. 15, but with gable roof and late Bracketed detail.



Fig. 17: 15-17 Bain Street (c. 1900): The same house as Figs. 15 and 16, but with Queen Anne trim.



Fig. 18: 171 Shaw Avenue (c. 1885): A big, suburban, Queen Anne house; there are many in eastern Cranston.



Fig. 21: 1895 Broad Street (c. 1896): A large, hip-roof, Colonial Revival house; note symmetry and elegant detail.



Fig. 24: 1420 Narragansett Boulevard (1904): A simplified, shingled, gambrel-roof house, typical in Cranston.



Fig. 19: 240 Pawtuxet Avenue (c. 1890): A typical Queen Anne cottage with patterned shingling and bargeboard.



Fig. 22: 14 Glen Avenue (1904): A typical, Queen Anne-Colonial Revival with complex gambrel roof and multiple dormers.



Fig. 25: 25 Seaview Avenue (1923): An example of the full-blown Georgian Revival.



Fig. 20: 141 Wheeler Avenue (c. 1900): A typical Queen Anne with octagonal corner tower and wrap-around porch.



Fig. 23: 1871-1873 Broad Street (1902): A late Queen Anne-Colonial Revival, cross-gable dwelling.



Fig. 26: 77 Edgewood Avenue (c. 1927): A bungalow with characteristic intersecting roof planes and recessed porch.





Fig. 27: 280 Norwood Avenue (1930-1931): An archetypal, early 20th-century middle-class house—with 1-story porch wings.



Fig. 28: 24 Harbour Terrace (c. 1938): A pseudo-Tudor house with "garrison" overhang and half-timbering.



Fig. 29: 35 Calaman Road (c. 1934): An early 20th-century "English Cottage" with heavy, steep gables.



Fig. 30: 93 Edencrest Drive (c. 1953): A characteristic, modest, Garden City "colonial."



Fig. 31: 81 Edencrest Drive (c. 1953): A characteristic, inexpensive, "ranch." Compare with Fig. 30.

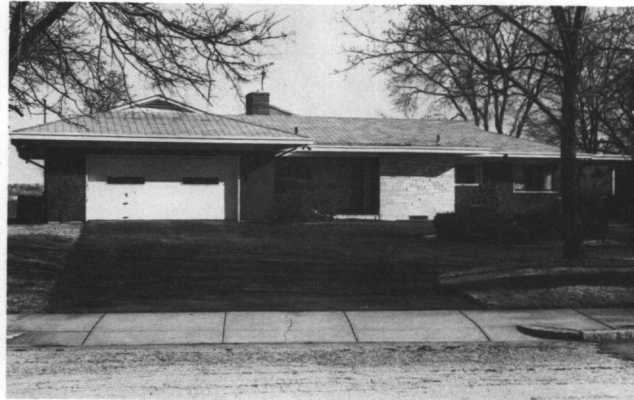


Fig. 32: 38 Selkirk Road (c. 1960): A large and elaborate ranch house with characteristic emphasis given to the garage.



Fig. 33: 116 East Hill Drive (1956): A large "garrison colonial" with typical breezeway and attached garage.



Fig. 34: 180 East Hill Drive (1968): A large "chateausque" house, typical of recent revival-style dwellings.



Fig. 35: 40 Fales Street (1974): An example of the still-rare, informal, rustic contemporary house with unpainted vertical siding.

## APPENDIX B: PAWTUXET VILLAGE SINCE 1973

The 1973 Pawtuxet Village report published by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission with community participation included a number of recommendations, some physical and some political, for enhancing the historical character of Pawtuxet. Since that time there have been significant accomplishments and major disappointments in both areas.

Located in Cranston and Warwick, the village has been listed in the National Register of Historic Places since 1973. The Cranston Historic District Commission has given out plaques to eighteen structures, thereby honoring both buildings and owners, and educating the public as well. Signs marking the boundaries of the historic district inform even casual passersby of its significance. Citywide awareness of Pawtuxet's special character is indicated by the allocation of Community Development funds to install gas street lamps. Gaspee Days continue to bring attention, appreciation, and visitors to the Village, and the life of the harbor remains vital.

Perhaps most important, people are beginning to come to Pawtuxet, both to live and to do business, precisely because of its historic character. The Captain Orrin

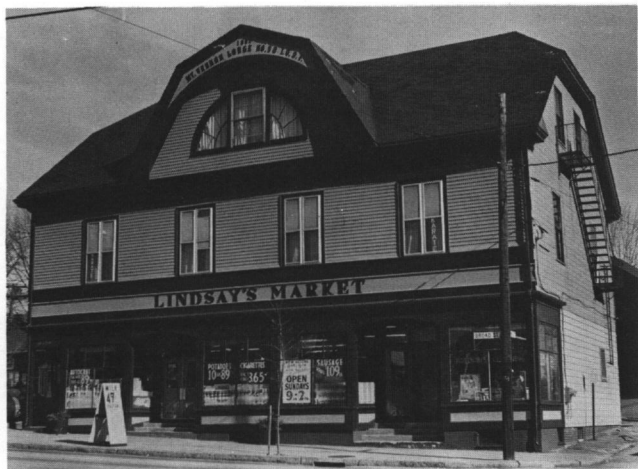


Fig. 86: Odd Fellows Hall (1893); Lindsay's Market; 2178-2184 Broad Street, photograph, 1973.

Baker House (c. 1850) at 151 Ocean Avenue, a handsome Italianate structure, once boarded up and a candidate for demolition, has been effectively rehabilitated as a multi-family residence, as has the G. W. Chase House (c. 1800) at 32-34 Tucker Avenue. Salem House and Associates, Inc. has restored the exterior of the Dr. Comfort A. Carpenter House (c. 1790) at 2139 Broad Street and has erected a new fence around it; this rehabilitation is particularly notable because it illustrates the compatibility of preservation and new uses. Following the lead of Lindsay's Market, other commercial properties have been spruced up, and the commercial zone along Broad Street displays significant vitality. In addition to traditional service shops, fully eight antique stores and a bistro are presently operating, creating a new ambience appropriate to an historic district. This development is an exciting one for Pawtuxet, lending a new identity to the area and demonstrating the compatibility of small-scale commerce and historic structures.

Illustrative of this new vitality is the energy of the Pawtuxet Village Association, a community group composed of both Cranston and Warwick citizens and founded at the time of the Commission's survey. The existence of the Association provides the neighborhood with a focal point for action and ensures that the village is well represented in public forums.

Despite positive developments, however, there have been a number of deleterious alterations to the architectural and historical integrity of Pawtuxet since the 1973 report. Fires have claimed two of the area's most significant structures. The Lila Rhodes House (c. 1897) at 2127 Broad Street, an imposing Queen Anne style dwelling, was owned by a member of the original Rhodes family and served as an important visual transition into the historic district until its destruction in 1977. The Rhodes State Room (c. 1890) was the oldest remaining structure at the Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet complex until it succumbed to Fourth of July arson in 1977.

The recent construction of two unsympathetic structures, the Scottish Rite Temple and the Palestine Temple, at the corner of Rhodes Place and Broad Street, has had an equally devastating effect on the character of Pawtuxet. Built of concrete blocks and without windows, these two

large buildings are of a scale, mass, and material that clash with and undermine the local human scale and sense of place.

Historic zoning, the most certain way to ensure the physical quality of Pawtuxet's future, was attempted in Cranston in 1973, but was defeated by merchant and property-owner fears of outside control. Hopefully, events have since shown that in a special area like Pawtuxet Village historic preservation is not only compatible with good business, it enhances it. Passage of historic-district zoning for Pawtuxet will permit the orderly growth of the village without undermining the distinct character that has stimulated its recent popularity.

There are other challenges remaining. The presence of over-sized billboards throughout the Village represents a major intrusion of automobile-oriented graphics in a pedestrian-scaled environment. The historic gazebo at the corner of Broad Street and Rhodes Place has suffered serious deterioration. The need for its restoration is urgent, especially because of its key role in defining the boundaries of the Village's historic district. Changes in management appear to have secured the future of Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet, but continued vigilance is necessary to safeguard that invaluable structure.

Some discussion has occurred regarding reinstating canoeing on the Pawtuxet River and erecting the necessary support facilities. In addition to restoring one of the original uses of the Rhodes complex, such actions can only enhance the desirability of the Village as a place to live while simultaneously attracting new visitors to the commercial area.

Pawtuxet has several of the key components necessary for successful revitalization: a fine setting on the water, good building stock, an active citizens' group, and citywide recognition of its historical importance. Its residents have a choice; they can continue to witness the checkered pattern of intermittent success and scattered losses or they can bind together to make some of the physical and political improvements indicated above. No outsider, no matter how expert or well funded, can safeguard what remains of Pawtuxet's history; the future of the Village's past is in the hands of its residents today.

## APPENDIX C: NATIONAL REGISTER PROGRAM

The National Register of Historic Places, maintained by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, United States Department of the Interior, is a record of structures, sites, areas, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archeology, and culture. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as the official inventory of the cultural and historic resources of the nation, it includes historical areas within the National Park System, National Historic Landmarks, federal properties nominated by federal agencies, and properties of state and local significance nominated by each state and ap-



Fig. 87: Ruins of Richardson Pewtery; Furnace Hill Brook Archeological and Historic District.

proved by the Service. It is an authoritative guide for federal, state, and local governments and private groups and individuals everywhere, identifying those properties which are particularly worthy of preservation throughout the nation. Registered properties are protected from federally funded and licensed activities by a state and federal review process. Listing on the National Register is a prerequisite for eligibility for federal matching grants-in-aid funds which are administered within the state by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission.

### The following districts have been declared eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

The Furnace Hill Brook Archeological and Historic District  
The Cranston Print Works Historic District  
The Lippitt Hill Historic District  
The Edgewood Yacht Club Historic District  
The Howard Reservation Historic District

### The following individual buildings have also been declared eligible for the National Register.

Thomas Fenner House, 1580 Plainfield Pike  
Nathan Westcott House, 150 Scituate Avenue  
Potter-Remington House, 571 Natick Avenue  
Nicholas Arnold House, 458 Scituate Avenue  
Westcote, 101 Mountain Laurel Drive  
Arad Wood House, 865 Pontiac Avenue  
Narragansett Brewery, New Depot Road  
United Traction Depot, 833 Cranston Street

This list should not be considered final and absolute. As new research is conducted, as the city changes physically, and as the community's perspective on its history and cultural resources evolves, other potential candidates for registration may be identified.

## APPENDIX D: TAX REFORM ACT OF 1976

The Tax Reform Act of 1976 contains important new tax incentives for preserving historic income-producing properties and alters provisions in the federal tax code which have worked against historical preservation. Commercial, industrial, or rental residential properties that qualify as "certified historic structures" are entitled to tax advantages under the new act. A "certified historic structure" 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 is 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 and rehabilitating buildings of historical significance.

One provision of the Act permits the owner of a certified historic structure to write off, over a five-year period, expenditures which are part of a certified rehabilitation of the property. Before passage of the Tax Reform Act, property owners were required to spread deductions over the life of the property. The new law allows larger tax savings in shorter time, thus encouraging owners to rehabilitate historic commercial properties. Another provision allows taxpayers to depreciate "substantially rehabilitated historic property," as though they were the original users of the property, entitling them to use accelerated depreciation which could previously only be used for new buildings.

The code discourages demolition of certified historic properties in two ways. Demolition costs can no longer be deducted, and any new building replacing a demolished historic structure is denied accelerated depreciation.

Although the Tax Reform Act of 1976 needs further analysis and clarification, it will certainly make the preservation of historic buildings more economically feasible. Any property owner interested in learning more about the historical preservation provisions of the Act should contact a tax analyst or the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission.

## APPENDIX E: 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 in the National Register of Historic Places. Once a year, the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission accepts applications from individuals, public and private organizations, and state and local governmental units which own properties listed in the National Register.

Matching grants-in-aid can be used to acquire, protect, stabilize, rehabilitate, restore, or reconstruct National Register properties. Allowable work under the program includes exterior and interior restoration, structural repairs, installation or updating of utility systems, architectural fees, archeology, historical research, and the installation of protective systems. New construction, furnishings, and modern landscaping are not allowable costs.

The Commission receives many more applications each year than it is able to fund. The applications are evaluated according to the following criteria: the architectural and historical significance of the property; the degree to which the proposed use and treatment respect the historical and architectural values of the building; the urgency of the proposed work; the public benefit of the project, both educational and economic; the degree to which the property is threatened; and the geographical location of the property. The Commission may fund up to half the cost of a project. The grants awarded by the Commission have generally ranged in size from \$3,000 to \$50,000.

Once the Commission has selected the projects to be funded, the grantees must submit professionally prepared specifications and drawings developed in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation Projects. The Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service in the Department of the Interior must review and approve the individual projects before any work can begin.

Financial assistance for the acquisition and development of National Register properties is provided for the benefit of the general public. Therefore, upon accepting a grant, the property owner must sign a preservation ease-

ment 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 is in effect depends on the amount of funds received. Unless the grant-supported work is visible from a public right-of-way, the property must be open for public view twelve days a year.

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. Grant applicants are urged to submit requests for the amount for which they can actually match and realistically complete in one year.

Applications will be accepted by the Commission during March and April each year. The applications are reviewed during May and June, and the Commission selects the projects in July, after Rhode Island is notified of its annual federal appropriation for the grants-in-aid program. Those selected are first awarded funds to have the necessary specifications and drawings prepared. Development grants are officially awarded once the specifications have been accepted by the Commission. Project work may begin when the project has been approved by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service after the start of the federal fiscal year in October. Project work must be completed within a year.

## APPENDIX F: HISTORIC ZONING

The term "Historic District" in this report refers to National Register Historic Districts, as defined by the United States Department of the Interior, Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service. Such historic districts do not provide controls over private development, nor design review in historic areas. In no sense is placement on the National Register a form of zoning.

Before the National Register was created in 1966, the State of Rhode Island passed enabling legislation, in 1959, which allows communities to create historic zones. This is a form of zoning, and, for that reason, must be initiated locally. Historic zones provide for local commissions which review proposed changes to buildings within the zone and disallow changes which would have a poor effect on the historic fabric of the zone. As with all zoning control, there is an appeal process available to property owners who disagree with a decision of the local historic zoning commission. Only locally mandated historic zones offer such strong protection of historic structures in a community.

Information contained in the narrative and inventory sections of this report and the additional material on the survey sheets could be applied to the creation of such zones. Spot zoning, in which individual houses of historic value, scattered about the town and not grouped into continuous areas to be defined as zones, is another possibility for a tighter, community-based control than that provided by the National Register of Historic Places.

## APPENDIX G: SURVEY FORM

A standard survey form, the "Historic Building Data Sheet," has been prepared by the Preservation Commission for use throughout the state. On the form a property is identified by plat and lot numbers, street number, ownership at the time the survey was conducted, present use, neighborhood land use, and a photograph.

Each property is also identified by one or more, broad, period-time frames (which denote the original construction date) and date(s) of major additions or alterations: P=Prehistoric (before 1636); E=Early (1636-1715); C=Colonial (1700-1800); F=Federal (1775-1840); GR=Greek Revival (1825-1865); EV=Early Victorian (1840-1870); LV=Late Victorian (1865-1910); ET=Early Twentieth Century (1900-1940); MT=Mid Twentieth Century (1940-1975); and LT=Late Twentieth Century (1975-present).

The "COMMENTS" section is used for brief notations regarding a building's style, structure, details, and architectural significance. The "HISTORY & SOURCES" section includes notes on individuals, organizations, and events associated with the building; dates and nature of significant additions or alterations; selected bibliographical and pictorial references; and identification of the building on historical maps and in street directories.

The four "EVALUATION" sections are intended as tools for quick reference to appraise various aspects of a property's preservation value. In general, the key factors that indicate the reason for preserving structures have to do with their visual significance—that is, "Architectural value" and "Importance to neighborhood." Other factors, such as condition, should be seen as pluses. Nor should a low historical rating be allowed to militate against the preservation of buildings deemed of architectural significance or those important in the neighborhood context.

The evaluation of a structure's exterior physical condition is rated on a 1, 2, 3, 5 scale, without regard to its architectural merits. Buildings assigned "5" are in excellent physical condition (original or altered). Those rated "3" are in good condition, with only slight evidence of the need for improvements, such as repainting or minor repairs. Structures

rated "2" are in fair condition, and may require substantial work, such as resheathing, or repairs to porches, fenestration, and so on. Buildings rated "1" are in poor physical condition and probably require extensive work if they are to be retained. These ratings are based upon observation of the exterior only and do not reflect interior appearance or structural, electrical, and mechanical conditions.

The evaluation of the grounds, either of a building or a site, is rated on a 0, 1, 2 scale. Those that are in good

condition and are a visual asset to the environment are assigned "2." The "1" rating indicates that the grounds do not detract from the surrounding area. The "0" rating applies to grounds that have a negative impact on the environs.

The evaluation of the neighborhood's physical condition is based on a 0, 2, 3 scale. "Neighborhood," in this context, denotes the immediate area surrounding a surveyed property and does not necessarily reflect physical features such as street blocks or demographic boundaries.

HISTORIC BUILDING DATA SHEET RHODE ISLAND STATEWIDE SURVEY		COUNTY	
FILE NO. <u>PLAT 8-1 LOT 853 LUS</u>		PROVIDENCE	
ADDRESS <u>1536 Cranston Street</u>		CITY/TOWN	
OWNER <u>Catherine A. Palmer</u>		CRANSTON	
942-2669		ROAD	
PRESENT USE: 1 fam _____ 2 fam <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> multi _____ pub _____ comm _____ Indus _____ reil _____ agr _____ mixed _____ other _____		NEGATIVE NO. <u>21-1</u>	
NEIGHBORHOOD LAND USE: res <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> comm _____ Indus _____ pub _____ agr _____ woods _____ other _____		KNOWN AS _____	
PERIOD/STYLE: P C F GR EV LV (ET) MT LT Colonial Revival		ARCHITECT _____	
DESCRIPTION: Stories: <u>2½</u> Roof: gable (flank end cross) _____ gambrel (flank end cross) hlp <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> monitor mansard flat _____ other with gabled dormers/slightly kicked out roof-line.		DATE & SOURCES <u>1904</u>	
Walls: clapboard <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> brick _____ stone _____ shingle _____ modern comp _____ other _____		ORIGINAL USE <u>one-family</u>	
Foundation: height <u>2½'</u> stone _____ brick <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other _____		ORIGINAL OWNER _____	
Alterations: good _____ poor _____ none _____ Rare bldg. _____ Typical of its area _____ <u>Good example for its area</u>		HISTORY & SOURCES: 1870 - not on map 1882 - not on map - Sarah Ann Smith (land) 1895 - not on map 1917 - on map	
COMMENTS: Detailing includes dentil cornice over bay window; balustrade over porch and bracketed cornices.		EVALUATION: Physical Condition structure (5) 3 2 0 grounds (2) 1 0 neighborhood 3 (2) 0	
SURVEYOR REF X AV Checked SUPERVISOR DC X HV Checked		ARCHITECTURAL value 38 30 (20) 10 0 2-A 20	
DATE: <u>3/77</u>		IMPORTANCE TO neighborhood (14) 10 5 0 14	
		Historical value 38 30 20 (10) 0 1-A 10	
		Total Score 53	

Fig. 88: Sample Survey Sheet.

Neighborhoods rated "3" are characterized by a uniformly high standard of maintenance of both buildings and grounds. Those assigned a "2" have well kept properties in much of the area but also have sections where the need for improvement is readily apparent. The "0" rating is used for areas which, for the most part, detract from the visual quality of the community as a whole.

A property's importance to its neighborhood is rated on a 0, 5, 10, 14 scale, with "neighborhood" used according to the above definition. The "14" rating denotes a property that is a key visual landmark, of the utmost importance to the visual integrity of its environs. Those rated "10" make an important visual contribution either by virtue of individually distinguished qualities, or due to characteristics of form, scale, and massing which help maintain the visual continuity of the surrounding area. The "5" rating indicates a minor, but positive, contribution in either of the above respects; or a property which may be of visual interest unto itself, but one which is not especially compatible with its physical context. The "0" rating applies to properties which have a decisively negative effect on the neighborhood.

Architectural ratings are assigned on a 0, 10, 20, 30, 38 scale. The "38" rating is reserved for a generally small number of buildings deemed of outstanding importance to the community and which in most cases, are also of at least regional significance. The "30" rating indicates a structure of meritorious architectural quality, well above the local norm. The "20's" and "10's" constitute the majority of buildings surveyed. They are of local value by virtue of interesting or unusual architectural features, or because they are good representatives of building types which afford an index to the community's physical development and define the visual character of its building stock. Structures rated "20" and "30" are essential to an area's historic character. They provide a visual context which defines the historic quality of Cranston and creates an important background to the key structures rated "38." Buildings rated "0" are undistinguished architecturally and make no positive contribution to the physical environment. Structures that have been extensively and unsympathetically altered are given lower ratings than similar buildings in their original state. Monuments, markers, and civic sculpture are assigned ratings on the basis of general visual and

associative qualities which do not necessarily reflect artistic integrity.

"Historical value" is rated on a 0, 10, 20, 30, 38 scale. The "38" rating is assigned to properties associated with individuals, organizations or events which are of historical significance on the national level. Those of regional importance are rated "30". The "20" rating applies to entries related to important local developments and also includes buildings about which little is known at present, but which, by virtue of their age, are considered to make a major contribution to the community's historic environment. The "10" rating denotes limited local historical

value. The "0" rating is used to designate properties of no known historic interest at the time the survey was completed.

All surveyed properties are shown on a city map (scale: 1" = 1000'), each identified by an assigned map number. Inventoried properties are indicated by an open circle; surveyed properties which were not included in the inventory are indicated by a filled circle. The map legend includes a brief listing of the inventoried properties, giving street address, name, date, period-style and architectural and historical ratings for each. This map will make information pertaining to cultural resources available for all planning purposes.

#### LEGEND:

- 12 INVENTORIED PROPERTY WITH ASSIGNED MAP NO.
- 23 ● SURVEYED PROPERTY
- ▲ SITE S-3

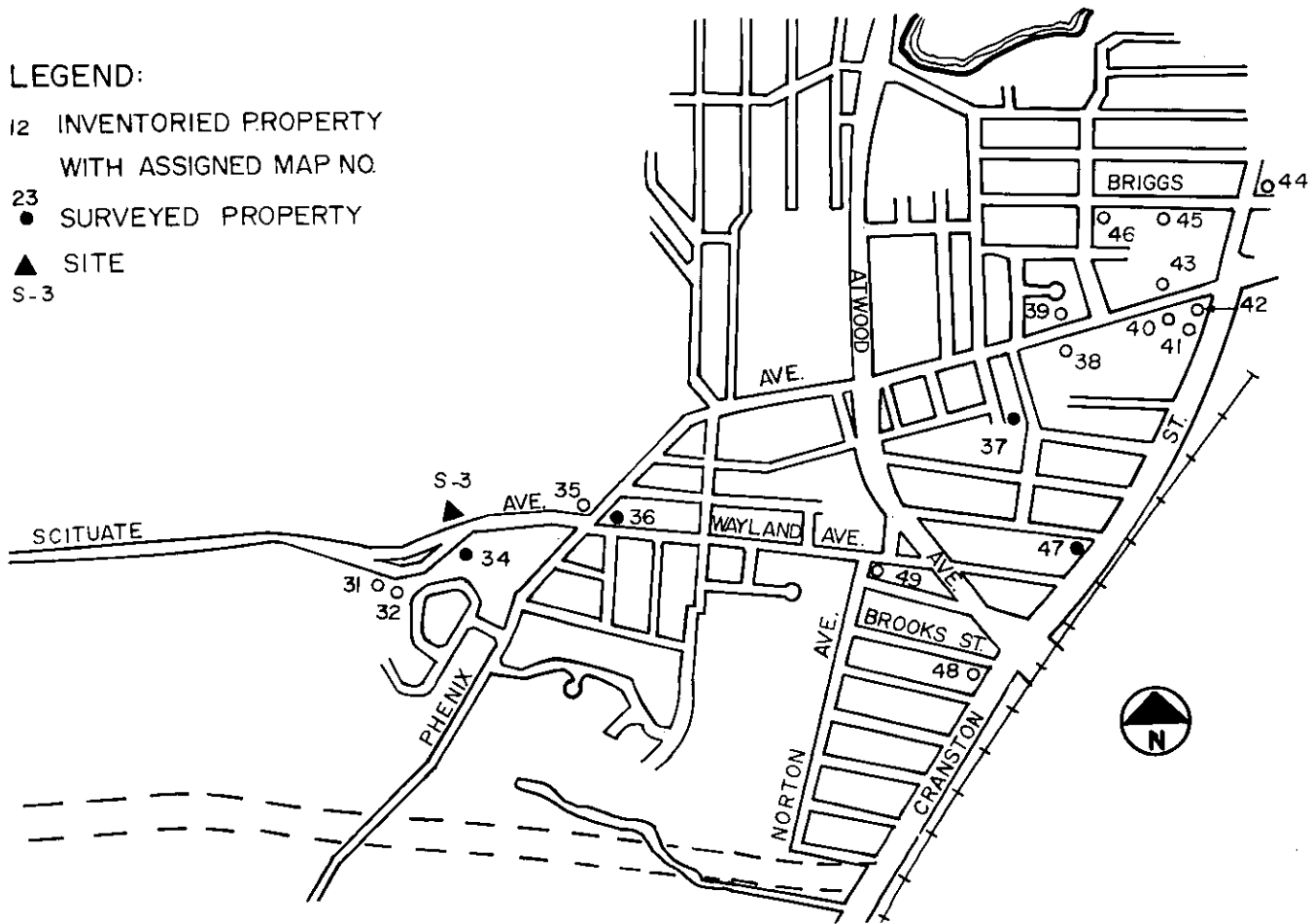


Fig. 89: Section of Survey Map.

## APPENDIX H: INVENTORY

The inventory is a list of sites and structures of cultural significance in Cranston. Each of these entries has historical or architectural significance, either in itself, by association with an important person or group, or as a representative example of a common architectural type.

In reviewing this list of important structures, it should be recognized that they represent those properties most essential to Cranston's historical and architectural identity. Surrounding and supporting these properties are many other buildings which enhance the overall historic and visual character of the city and contribute to understanding its growth and development.

The name associated with each building is either its current name or the name of the earliest known owner or occupant, taken from the street directories. More extensive research may indicate that another name would be more suitable. Most buildings' dates are based on stylistic analysis, map histories, deed research, and street directories.

Entries are listed alphabetically by street and then in numerical order by street number. Entries having no street number (parks, sites, and so on) have been included in their normal sequence. All buildings are of clapboard, frame construction unless otherwise specified.

### KEY:

Buildings located in villages or important plats are identified by letters:

- A: Auburn
- AR: Arlington
- C: Cranston Print Works Village
- D: Dean Estates
- E: Edgewood
- EP: Eden Park
- F: Fiskeville
- G: Garden City
- H: Howard
- K: Knightsville
- M: Meshanticut
- O: Oaklawn
- P: Pawtuxet
- S: Site of Former Structure

\* Presently in the National Register of Historic Places

† Eligible for inclusion in the National Register

## ALBERT AVENUE

- E151 -153** George W. Wool House (c. 1896): This large, 2½-story house has a typical Colonial Revival style cross-gambrel roof, so popular in Edgewood. Its massing, with an additional gambrel over the garage and numerous gable dormers of various sizes, makes the house a rather unusual pile. Wool was a manufacturer who was part of the second wave of suburban settlement in Edgewood, which occurred after the installation of electric streetcars along Broad Street in 1892.

## ARLINGTON

Arlington, which is located along Cranston Street just south of the Providence line, has always had a more industrial character than the remainder of the city. Originally the site of a granite quarry at Fenner's Ledge, Arlington became an important part of the metropolitan transportation network, servicing first the horse railroad and then trolleys that traveled Cranston Street. From 1869, breweries near Spectacle Pond were a major source of employment, generating the kind of dense residential urban fabric that characterizes most of the area.

## ARMINGTON STREET

- E246** Zenas W. Bliss House (c. 1883): A substantial, 3-story, mansard-roofed house with an exceptionally handsome, 3-story, stick-work entrance porch composed of well-turned posts and considerable latticework. The porch, the 2nd-story shingles, the denticulated cornice, and the asymmetrical window placement combine to give the building a variety of texture and 3-dimensional quality characteristic of Late Victorian architecture. Bliss was a Providence realtor and an active member of Cranston's town council.

## AUBURN

Following the construction of a railroad roundhouse, Auburn emerged as a typical late 19th-century suburban hamlet. Although the human scale and village ambience of Auburn has been largely shattered by the intrusion of the automobile, a few buildings on Park and Pontiac Avenues still convey the quality of life and architecture there a century ago.

## BARTLETT AVENUE

- E10** Edgewood Casino (1910): A shingled, 1½-story structure designed by Charles P. Dodge, the Casino replaced the earlier Shaw Avenue Casino, erected c. 1890 and which burned in 1910. It functioned as a social and political meeting place for community residents until its dissolution in 1939. It now serves as headquarters for St. Paul's Council Home Association. Alterations have diminished much of the Shingle Style effect of the original building.
- E113** Harold Nuttall House (c. 1917): A stucco-walled, tile-roofed, Mediterranean-style bungalow, this structure is one of very

few of its type in Cranston.

## BIRCH STREET

- AR50** Arlington Manor (1968): Constructed of reinforced concrete with brick curtain walls and designed by Robinson Green Beretta and Gilbert & Maloney, this is the tallest building in Cranston, rising 125 feet above Fenner's Ledge, the 19th-century quarry which was a source of stone paving blocks used throughout the Providence metropolitan area. The building was the first large-scale structure erected by the Cranston Housing Authority and is used as housing for the elderly.

## BLUFF AVENUE

- E104** Horace Allenson House (1912): This unusually large, shingle-clad bungalow shelters two upper stories beneath a broad beetling gable roof; its clean line is broken on the front by a large shed dormer, a characteristic bungalow motif. The roof is carried out over a front porch which is partially enclosed by a shingled parapet—a continuation of the wall surface; this treatment clearly expresses the porch as a void cut into the volume of the home rather than as a discreet, added-on element. The house was built for Horace Allenson, a plumbing-supply foreman, and from an architectural standpoint it is a classic of its type.
- E137** Townsend House (c. 1880): A Late Victorian mansard cottage with a 2-bay facade containing a hooded entrance flanked by a large bay window. This was one of the first dwellings erected in the Edgewood plat when the street was still known as Anstis Street.

## BRIDGE STREET

- P12\*** Remington Arnold House (c. 1740): This 2½-story, 4-bay dwelling with a central-chimney plan has an extraordinarily handsome pedimented doorway with a blocked fanlight and projecting keystone. Arnold was a prominent early trader when Pawtuxet was an active small seaport.

## BROAD STREET

- E1525** Former Palace Theater, now St. Stephen's Chapel (1916): This 1-story brick structure was the second movie theater in Cranston (the first having been the Auburn, built in 1912 and destroyed by fire in 1918). Easily accessible by trolley, for many years the Palace provided silent movies and then talkies for the Washington Park, Edgewood, and Pawtuxet sections of Cranston. It was acquired by St. Paul's Parish in 1963.
- E[1569]** Oakland Cemetery (1848) and Mausoleum (1927): George N. Briggs purchased this farmland from Elizabeth Jenkes in 1847 and formed the cemetery corporation the following year. Its location—outside the central city—and site—extending to Cunliff's Pond—were typical of the first generation of suburban burying grounds following the style of Cam-

- bridge's Mt. Auburn Cemetery (1831). Although Oakland Cemetery never achieved the prominence of these, its design shared the same inspiration as Laurel Hill in Philadelphia (1836), Greenwood in Brooklyn (1838), and Forest Hills in Roxbury (which was laid out in 1848). Curving roadways named for trees and footpaths were designed to conform to the contours of the land and create scenic vistas. The island in Cunliff's Pond was to house the administrative office and chapel.
- In 1927 the granite mausoleum, a 1-story flat-roofed structure with a projecting 2-story central tower, was erected at a cost of \$150,000 by T. F. Cullinan after considerable opposition from neighbors. The first such structure in the state, it was built from designs by Franklin Hindle of steel-frame construction and accommodates 1,200 burial sites.
- E1604** **D. A. Smith House, now the Remington Funeral Home (c. 1868):** Although altered for its present use, the paired brackets of the cornice, the bay window and the projecting pediments above the second-story windows make the building one of the best examples of the type in Cranston. This was one of the earliest suburban houses this far out on Broad Street.
- E1612** **House (c. 1880):** A large 2½-story house, with a projecting center pavilion and broad front porch. The veranda has extraordinary turned posts and elaborate open-work balustrades—hallmarks of the Eastlake style—which are among the finest in Cranston. This impressive structure illustrates the transformation of Broad Street in the late 19th century. Originally part of the Pequot Trail south from Providence, Broad Street early became the primary post road linking Providence, Pawtuxet, and towns to the south. The introduction of the horse railroad in 1870 transformed Broad Street into a posh residential boulevard, dotted with houses of the pretension and scale embodied here.
- E1665** **Church of the Transfiguration (1911):** This Episcopal church was designed by Gorham Henshaw and replaced a chapel erected in 1894. A fieldstone imitation of an English country church, with a rear ell housing the rectory, the building is well sited and well landscaped. Its low height and massing make the structure an effective transition from the commercial buildings on Broad Street to the residences along Wheeler Road. The chancel window is a memorial to Bishop McVickar, the south window a World War I Memorial. Mrs. William Hall donated the chimes.
- E1683-1691** **Tudor Arms Apartments (1930):** This well sited apartment complex contains forty-nine units. The brick facade is treated as a series of individual Tudor houses, unified vertically with occasional half-timbering and repeated gables. The brick outline of a label lintel surmounts each window. This was the second apartment building erected in Cranston and was a precursor of later developments on the city's other major arteries.
- E1796** **Edgewood Congregational Church (1954):** This brick, Georgian Revival church, fronted by a rather Jeffersonian colossal Tuscan portico, was built to designs by Kent, Cruise and incorporates the basement of the 1901 church which burned in 1946. In the 1960s, the chancel was widened and the narthex,
- tower, and connector added. The congregation was officially organized in 1894 and first met at the old Edgewood Casino on Shaw Avenue.
- E1816-1820** **Commercial Block (1930):** This unassuming, 1-story, brick building is notable for its stepped parapet which incorporates an abstract Art Deco design, an unusual elaboration for such a modest structure. Built to house three small stores, the original tenants included a tailor and a barbershop. In size and location, it is a typical example of the small commercial blocks which spring up in the 1920s and 1930s along major arterial roads.
- E1825** **William Hall Free Library (1927):** Designed by prolific Providence architect George Martin Hall, this limestone-faced structure is the only Renaissance Revival public building in Cranston. It was built on the site of the residence of William Hall, a successful Providence realtor, who pioneered the development of Edgewood and left a bequest to the Edgewood Library Civic Club for the purpose of erecting a permanent home for the library. The club was founded in 1896 and located at the old schoolhouse at the corner of Park and Warwick Avenues and then at 207 Norwood Avenue before moving to this structure. The library has served as one of the neighborhood's primary civic organizations and functions as the main reference library in the city's system. The main reading room is a large vaulted space; its primary ornamentation is a series of stained-glass medallions, each illustrating the printer's mark of famous early Old World printers.
- E1871** **Sallie A. Pearce House (1902):** This ample, 2½-story house with wide cross gables and a bracketed cornice represents the transition from the Queen Anne to the Colonial Revival style, incorporating festoons in the cornice of the wrap-around porch and elaborate ornamentation in the front gable.
- E1895** **The Jones-Walton-Sheridan Funeral Home, formerly the George L. Vose House (1896):** This early example of the Colonial Revival in Edgewood was owned by a Providence jewelry manufacturer. Its 3-bay facade features an elaborate portico surmounted by a balustrade. The site was previously occupied by the Green Tavern, which dated back to the 18th century.
- E1908** **Valentine Almy House (c. 1895):** A 2½-story, cross-gambrel house with a broad front porch and octagonal 2nd-story tower. It was the home of Cranston's first Superintendent of Schools.
- E1921** **John Williams House (1811):** A 5-bay, 2½-story gable-roofed structure. A handsome example of a Federal-style house, the building is one of only two in Cranston to have a central hall plan with two end chimneys, a fairly common arrangement in more sophisticated urban areas.
- P2139\*** **Dr. Comfort A. Carpenter House (c. 1790):** A 2½-story, 4-bay, gable-roofed structure with a large, brick, interior chimney and very plain trim. The house was built by Pawtuxet's village doctor who resided here until his death in 1830; his residence stood at the northern limits of the village.
- P2154\*** **Elisha Smith House (c. 1740):** A 2½-story, 4-bay, gable-

roofed structure with a massive brick interior chimney it has been largely altered by the installation of vertical siding and bow windows. This is the oldest surviving building on Broad Street—one of the earliest and most important roads in Rhode Island—linking the early 17th-century settlements at Pawtuxet and Providence.

**P2157\*** **Pawtuxet Baptist Church (1895):** This large Colonial Revival style, frame building is one of the City's handsomest churches. Its most prominent feature is the quoined entrance tower surmounted by an over-sized octagonal cupola, which makes the structure a major landmark in Pawtuxet. Erected from designs by Frank W. Angell, this building is the third structure on the site. In 1764, land for a church was donated by Pel Arnold, and the following year Abraham Sheldon gave an adjoining lot. A church was apparently built in 1803 and a second in 1857. In 1895, with the widening of Broad Street, the second edifice was demolished and the present church built.

**P2178-2184\*** **Odd Fellows Hall, now Lindsay's Market (1893):** This 2½-story, frame building has a jerkinhead roof. A large, central gambrel cross-gable incorporates an arched window which is surmounted by the three chain links symbolic of Odd Fellowship. The structure was constructed by Mount Vernon Lodge Number Fifty of the Odd Fellows, a fraternal organization still in existence. As a practical matter, many such lodge halls built in the 19th century incorporated commercial space at the street level which was rented out and helped cover the cost of maintaining the building. In 1973, Lindsay's Market gave the building a thorough exterior renovation, complete with an appropriate Victorian color scheme of olive and mustard. This work is a model for sympathetic renovation of commercial property and deserves to be emulated elsewhere in the city.

**P** **Edward P. Taft House (c. 1894):** This large, 2½-story, cross-gambrel-roofed house with a 5-story tower displays detail of both the Shingle Style and Colonial Revival style. At one time the center of a large estate, the building today occupies a much reduced lot, yet is still barely visible from the street. It was erected by Taft, treasurer of the Ponemah Mills, as a summer home. Now apartments, the house reflects the fashionable character Pawtuxet enjoyed around the turn of-the-century as a resort.

**P** **Broad Street Bridge (1883-1884):** This small, double-arch stone bridge spans the Pawtuxet River at Broad Street between Cranston and Warwick. The engineer was J. A. Lathar and the builders Garvey Brothers and H. C. Macomber. Originally about half as wide as it is now, the bridge was extended on its west side in 1932. An additional arch opening, which helps prevent flooding and reduces water flow stress on the center piling and northwest abutment was built at that time. The water entering near the northwest abutment is carried under the main arch in a curve sluice. This is the ninth bridge on the site. The first was built in 1711. Before that the river had been forded upstream where Warwick Avenue runs today. The site of the bridge was the key to Pawtuxet's history, linking the two sides that frame the cove and providing water power for the



C. & W. Rhodes textile mill which operated here from 1810 to 1874. Here are linked Pawtuxet's triple economic virtues: node on a major overland route, sheltered salt-water port, and water power site.

#### CLEMENCE STREET

- 50 **Scott-Tusin Pharmaceutical Company, formerly Saint Rocco's Church (1903):** A 1½-story, end-gable-roofed building set on a high basement and divided into three bays, including a central-entrance pavilion. The main stairway has been removed and replaced by a street-level entry. Originally there was a central bell tower and stained-glass windows in the sanctuary. The church was erected by a large group of Italian immigrants who settled in the Thornton section of Cranston and Johnston. It was replaced by the present Saint Rocco's, located nearby in Johnston, in 1951. The original church then served as a Knights of Columbus Hall and day-care center until its acquisition by the present owners in the mid-1960s.

#### COLONIAL AVENUE

- 35 **House (c. 1900):** A 2½-story house with paired front gables. The pendants under the 2nd-story bay and the trusswork of the gables are typical of the 2-family houses built in Eden Park before World War I.

#### COLUMBIA AVENUE

- 87 **Thomas F. Wilson House (1910):** The detailing on the eaves, gables, and gable-roofed dormer of this shingled bungalow suggest a Swiss chalet. Wilson sold automobile accessories in Providence.
- 20 **George Thomas House (c. 1896):** This large, Colonial Revival, 2½-story house has an unusual roof form composed of a pair of linked gambrel roofs oriented gable end to the street, with gambrel cross gables on the side elevations. Each surmounts a large bay window. The building combines the juxtaposition of shapes and masses typical of the Queen Anne style with the central-entry portico and ornamental window lintels indicative of the Colonial Revival style. Thomas owned the Thomas and Lowe machinery company in Providence.

#### COMSTOCK PARKWAY

- 21 **John Burton House (c. 1705?, 1743):** A 1½-story, 5-bay, gambrel-roofed structure with an attached garage and a small front porch. The building originated as a 1-room house (perhaps a "stone-ender") and was added to in 1743. The central chimney was rebuilt in 1865; some of the 1743 interior ornamentation survives. John Burton's son John was President of Cranston's first town council after the town was formed in 1754. The property, also known as Chochiquit or Chestnut Hill, was farmed by the Brown family throughout much of the 19th century. In 1928 the house

and surrounding farm were acquired by local real-estate developer Jonathan F. Comstock who established the Cranston Golf Club on the site. The house served as club house for the nine-hole course. In recent years, the house has been restored and rehabilitated and has gained new importance as a dramatic local example of historic preservation. In fact, much of the present ornamentation has been created by using materials from other houses.

#### COMMERCIAL STREET

- P34\* **Pawtuxet Volunteer Fire Station (1835-1840; 1891):** The oldest part of the firehouse, the second floor, was built in the late 1830s as a 1-room school. Located originally on the opposite side of Commercial Street, it served Pawtuxet in this capacity until 1891. That was the year the volunteer fire company was organized and the school was moved across the street to the company's property. It was raised and a station built underneath it, with a hallway and stairs added at the end.

#### CRANSTON PRINT WORKS VILLAGE, ALSO KNOWN AS THE WHITE VILLAGE

The workers' houses lining Dyer Avenue, Pine, Oak, Maple and Cedar Streets were all built as residences for the operatives employed by the A. & W. Sprague Company. The structures along Dyer Street were erected in 1844. The expansion of the Print Works during the Civil War necessitated more housing and Amasa Sprague II laid out a whole new village in 1864. Almost 100 new double houses were erected just south of the Sprague Mansion. Identical to the original Dyer Avenue houses, these rows of 1½-story gable-roofed structures, each with simple Greek Revival detailing were painted white, as was typical of the Greek Revival style. Hence the name the White Village. Today, although no longer all white and despite some alterations, the houses of the White Village, with their uniform setbacks, building heights, and massing, constitute handsome streetscapes evocative of classic 19th-century mill villages.

#### CEDAR, MAPLE, OAK, PINE STREETS

**Cedar Street:** Numbers 1 to 16†: Greek Revival workers' houses (1864). See Cranston Print Works Village.

**Maple Street:** Numbers 1 to 58†: Greek Revival workers' houses (1864). See Cranston Print Works Village.

**Oak Street:** Numbers 25 and 26†: Greek Revival workers' houses (1864). See Cranston Print Works Village.

**Pine Street:** Numbers 1 to 42†: Greek Revival workers' houses (1864). See Cranston Print Works Village.

#### CRANSTON STREET

- 833 **United Traction Car Barn and Repair Shop (1900):** This vast, 2-story, brick building is surmounted by a monitor roof. The exterior is articulated with a severe but quite handsome decorative program combining large blind arches in the brick work, heavy granite lintels, and intricate corbeling. The interior, by contrast, is strictly functional, a vast open space formerly filled with trolley tracks. United Traction, chartered in New Jersey in 1893, bought out three smaller companies—the Pawtucket Street Railway, the Providence Cable Tramway, and the Union Railroad which had been originally organized by the Sprague family in 1864. The structure replaced a horse barn built by the Union Railroad in 1875. Nelson Aldrich, United States Senator from Rhode Island, played a key role in the consolidation of the companies. Part of the capital was supplied by the American Sugar Refining Company, and, since Senator Aldrich had previously sponsored legislation to benefit American Sugar, the press raised serious questions about the propriety of the transaction. Two years later, an even larger monopoly was created. The newly formed Rhode Island Company not only owned the city's trolley lines, but controlled as well the Providence Gas Company and the Narragansett Electric Lighting Company. In 1906, following the pattern of increasing monopoly control especially evident in this period, J. P. Morgan's New Haven Railroad bought out the Rhode Island Company. With the national demise of urban trolley lines, the Narragansett Brewery bought the depot about 1938 and converted it to use as a warehouse. Some streetcar tracks are still in place inside, though most of the original equipment and fittings have been removed.
- 1160 **Taco, Inc., formerly the Rhode Island Company Trolley Barn (1912):** This trolley barn was built by William H. Hamlyn & Son of Providence from designs by H. H. Bronsdon, chief engineer of the Rhode Island Company. It was built to supplement the company's 1900 depot and repair shop at 833 Cranston Street. It is a 2-story, brick building, 400-by-200 feet, constructed on a concrete foundation. Originally serving as an operating trolley barn and light-repair shop, it had a capacity for ninety-six 40-foot trolley cars on twelve tracks. The cars entered the barn through huge openings in the southern wall. The pit room, 150-by-200 feet, was constructed to allow repair crews to work under the cars. The repair shop, 120-by-20 feet, housed a traveling crane, the tracks of which are still in place. The original repair pits have been covered and the south facade sheathed in aluminum. The building is now used by Taco which manufactures centrifugal pumps and heating equipment.
- 1230 **Print Works Supervisor's House (c. 1840):** This large structure is a well preserved example of a 2½-story, Greek Revival, end-gable house. The facade has paneled corner pilasters echoed in the entablature and pilasters framing the entrance. This house and four others like it along Cranston Street were used as residences by supervisors from the Cranston Print Works. The cluster was called Bull Town,

- in reference to the English origins of the inhabitants.
- 1240-1242 House (c. 1909):** This informal 2½-story house, enveloped by a broad gable roof set end to the street and with corner porches supported by paired columns on stone pedestals, is one of the best examples of the Shingle Style in Cranston.
- 1275 Shiel Block (1928):** This 2-story, brick-faced, commercial block in the Tudor Revival style, complete with mock half-timbering, follows the curve of Cranston Street, and is a fine example of the better town-scale commercial architecture of the 1920s and 1930s. The building contains five stores and two apartments.
- 1351\* Sprague Mansion (c. 1790, 1864):** The original, 2½-story, 5-bay, gable-roofed house was expanded eastward by two bays in the early 19th century, likely after the family's first success with textile manufacturing. The original window caps were copied on this addition, and all the sash in the house was changed. The doorway, with its segmental transom and sidelights, probably dates from this enlargement; the entrance porch is 20th century. In 1864, at the height of their fortunes, the Sprague family erected the 2½-story, 3-bay addition to the south. The addition, surmounted by a belvedere, is higher than the old house, and entry to the original building is through the landings of the new stairway. The addition includes a double parlour and dining room on the first floor and two bedrooms on the floors above. The new stairway has a handsome mahogany railing and each principal room has a simple Italianate marble fireplace. At the time of the addition, the large brick carriage house was erected on Dyer Avenue, and formal gardens laid out behind the mansion. After the collapse of the Sprague empire, the mansion was sold and used variously as a boarding house or foreman's residence. The threat of demolition in 1967 activated the Cranston Historical Society to acquire the property and it is now open to the public. The building houses furniture from the Carrington Collection of the Rhode Island Historical Society. As the center of one of the largest 19th-century industrial empires in America and the residence of Cranston's most famous family, the Sprague Mansion is the best known historic structure in the city.
- C1381\* Cranston Print Works (1844, 1852, 1864, 1921):** A sprawling mill complex of over a dozen buildings just east of the Pocasset River. The main buildings, 3-story, gable-roofed structures of stuccoed stone rubble with a tall bell tower, were erected in 1864 by mason Horace Foster and form a "U" facing Cranston Street. They were used for machine printing, calendering, engraving, and aging. The printing building has a characteristically high ceiling to permit the operation of the tall calico printing machines. Six outbuildings, one of cut-stone, the others of rubble, survive at the north end of the site, nearer to the mill pond and the remains of the earliest mill structures. These buildings were used to house a blacksmith shop, a carpenter shop, a machine shop and a bleach house. William Sprague built a spinning mill on this site in 1807. The mill burned in 1815 and was immediately rebuilt. Hand-printed calico cloth, the first in the nation, was produced here as early as 1824 and machine printing began in 1837. The northernmost structure nearest to Dyer Avenue is probably the earliest building remaining. The most visible part of the Print Works today dates from the mid-Civil War expansion when the Sprague empire was at its height. Other buildings that constituted the Print Works complex include the Sprague Mansion and Print Works Church (1351 and 1390 Cranston Street) and the workers' houses on Dyer Avenue as well as the White Village; all described separately in the Inventory. Following the failure of the Sprague company in 1873, the complex remained idle until 1888 when it was bought by the large textile firm of B. B. & R. Knight, which formed the Cranston Print Works Company at that time. In 1920 the plant was bought by the William G. Rockefeller interests, which continue to operate it. The 3-story, red-brick, corporate office building was erected in 1911 after the company was sold to Friedlander and Tate, when the boiler house was rebuilt. Until recently it contained a Harris-Corliss steam engine from c. 1890.
- C1390† Cranston Historical Society Meeting House, formerly St. Bartholomew's Church (1825):** A simple Greek Revival building constructed with contributions from local residents on land donated by William Sprague. In 1845, the General Assembly chartered the Cranston Congregational Society and a year later the Society sold the structure to the Print Works for \$2,355. Around 1849, it was deeded to the Rhode Island Episcopal Convention and acquired the name of St. Bartholomew's. The building was moved to its present site in 1864 when Dyer Avenue was straightened to accommodate the expansion of the Print Works. A fire heavily damaged the meetinghouse in 1924; it was rebuilt by the Print Works in 1927, when the present belfry was added. In 1970, the congregation joined the larger Church of the Ascension in Auburn, and in 1971 the structure was acquired by the Historical Society.
- K1493 St. Ann's Church (1907, 1927):** Designed by Murphy, Hindle, and Wright, this attractive Italian Romanesque brick church has a striking, red, pantile roof and bracketed eaves. The asymmetrically placed campanile is a major local landmark. When Father John Quinn arrived in 1853 to serve the 147 Irish families at the Cranston Print Works, the environment was still filled with the bitter memory of the execution of John Gordon, whose brother operated a store on this site. Father Quinn established a mission church of Providence's St. Mary's, Broadway; by 1858 a frame structure was erected, serving 500 parishioners. In 1863 this became Cranston's first parish, the mother church to all Cranston Catholic parishes. The first mass in this structure was held in the basement in 1909. Following the assignment of Father Schettini in 1922, separate sets of masses were held in this building, for the Italian and Irish communities in the parish. Following the completion of this church in 1927 and its dedication by Father Thomas Tierman, old St. Ann's was used for the Italian congregation's service. St. Ann's interior is dominated by stained-glass windows, including representations in the choir gallery of Popes Gregory and Pius X as well as St. Cecilia and St. Peter baptising Eunuch, Christ in Jordan, and St. Boniface baptising Clovis above the font. The pulpit, donated in 1934, is constructed of Botticino marble.
- K1525 St. Mary's Church (1935):** This handsome brick church was designed by Ambrose Jerome Murphy and is loosely modeled after Palladio's San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice of 1565. The limestone detailing includes paired Corinthian pilasters framing the pedimented projecting entrance pavilion, a broken-scroll pediment above the main doorway, a heavily denticulated cornice, and a balustraded parapet. A tall campanile completes the composition. Just before the turn-of-the-century, a group of immigrants from the Italian town of Itri settled in the Knightsville section of Cranston. Although some attended St. Rocco's in Thornton, most went to services at the predominantly Irish old St. Ann's Church. By 1921, the Italian population numbered more than 3,500 people and they petitioned the Diocese to form their own parish. In 1935, there was sufficient money to start construction on the church.
- K1615 Stephen Mathewson House (1846):** This is Cranston's finest example of the 2½-story, 5-bay, Greek Revival house type with heavy cornerboards and window casings and a broad entablature over the door. A late kitchen ell and porch addition do not detract from the integrity of this house. Mathewson operated an omnibus business between the Cranston Print Works and Providence from 1843 to 1863, when he sold out to the Union Horse Railroad Company. In 1877 he established an icehouse and by the 1890s, his buildings had a capacity of 15,000 tons, and his annual business totaled \$20,000.
- K1680 Pocasset Hall (1897):** This 2-story, hip-roofed building later known as Jerry's Market and Century Hall, was constructed as headquarters for the volunteer Pocasset Hose Company organized in November, 1895. The building originally had a bell tower which enclosed the fire alarm. The first floor was used for storing fire apparatus, the second floor was a single large hall. The hall made this the social center of western Cranston, hosting dancing classes, bazaars, and balls. Proximity to the old town house also gave the building an important political role. Financial town meetings were often held here because of its greater capacity than the town house, and the 2nd-floor hall was the scene of considerable political battles in the years 1894-1910 when the issue of becoming a city was constantly and hotly debated. In 1916, the Pocasset Fire Alarm system was transferred from the Company to the city and was operated from a battery located in City Hall. In 1924, the Pocasset Hose Company moved its quarters further south on Cranston Street nearer the members' homes. Today the Pocasset Company has become the Meshanticut Volunteer Fire Company. Hallowell and Hyde bought the old structure and moved their shoestrung and braid factory there.
- K[1725] Bandstand (1968):** A raised hexagonal structure with a hip-roof and simple railing. On this site stood the original Nehemiah Knight Tavern, where town meetings were held in the 18th century. The Cranston Town House was erected here in 1886; it served as the city hall until 1936.
- M1921 Edward M. Sullivan House (c. 1911):** This 3-bay, 2½-story hip-roofed house was built for Cranston's first mayor after

his marriage, when he moved from his former residence around the corner at 42 Nichols Street. Sullivan was a lawyer who had made his career as a gadfly to the established Republican power structure in Cranston. His election was the political upset of the decade. Sullivan ran for governor of Rhode Island in 1920 and was soundly defeated in one of the last elections in the state before the political realignments of the 1920s shattered the dominant Republic coalition.

**Meshanticut Park Community Church, now Faith Lutheran Church (1900):** A small church, set gable-end to the street. Originally a wooden "Hand of God" stood at the top of the gable; now on exhibit at the Meshanticut Baptist Church, it was one of three in the U.S. The Ecclesiastical Society of Meshanticut was organized in 1900 by Reverend Cyrus Harp, who came from Oberlin, Ohio, where another "Hand of God" is located. The church served the Meshanticut Park community then being developed by John M. Dean.

**Olin P. Taylor House (1904):** The distinctive feature of this vaguely "colonial" house is its narrow, 3-story, entrance-porch pavilion which terminates in an enclosed, gabled loggia. Taylor was a realtor, initially working with John M. Dean in the development of Meshanticut; later he had offices in Providence.

**Railroad Culvert (1852):** Carved into the culvert are the initials JEK and the date 1852, the year the Providence, Hartford and Fishkill Railroad was constructed through western Cranston. The initials were probably those of John E. King, born 1828, whose family had lived in the area since 1700. The coming of the railroad permitted the development of Oaklawn as a suburban village for commuters to Providence.

#### DEAN ESTATES

Dean Estates is the name of the residential development of the 250 acres north of Dean Parkway between Reservoir and Oaklawn Avenues which once constituted the home and farm of John M. Dean. Dean was a successful Providence merchant who was for many years a member of Cranston's Town Council and the first Republican candidate for Mayor. Although Dean's large gambrel-roofed Colonial Revival house burned in 1933, three modern roads developed from the original estate. Tupelo Hill Road follows the main drive to the house. Applegate Drive the side drive, and Greening Lane, the straightest of the three, the working entrance to the farm. Dean Estates was established in 1936 by John M. Dean Suesman, Dean's grandson, and T. Dawson Brown, then Treasurer and later President of the Industrial National Bank. Working with John E. Orton, Jr., who served as both contractor and architect-designer, the streets previously mentioned and Highgate Drive and South Hill Road were laid out and approximately a dozen houses constructed to sell for \$10,000 each. Although a few lots were acquired individually and custom-built houses erected, the Depression market necessitated lower priced alternatives. Thus the 30-acre Colonial Homes was established at the north end of the estate. There Meredith Drive, Sagamore Road, Brenton Woods Drive, Franconia Drive and Kearsage Drive were de-

veloped by Louis Heinhold. Houses designed in the "colonial" style by local architect T. Frederick Norton were priced to sell for \$6,000 apiece. Following the general halt to residential construction during World War II, the balance of the Dean property was sold to John and Samuel Montaquilla who also bought the name Dean Estates. Development continued to the present day under their management, which established design control through deed restrictions; setback requirements were patterned after the well known Van Swearingen Brothers' efforts around Cleveland, including Shaker Heights. The suburban image was evoked by prohibiting sidewalks, which created a landscape of low-rise cottages on lawns running down to the street.

#### DEAN STREET

**Railroad Bridge (1893):** This picturesque wooden bridge is constructed of trusses permitting two spans across the railroad. It dates from the original division of the old Cranston poor farm into the Meshanticut Plat by John M. Dean.

#### DEAN PARKWAY

A curving, wooded road crossing Sockanosset Hill; it was constructed c. 1910. The tapered, fluted bases of the original metal lampposts remain, giving an indication of the attractive fixtures that lined the parkway. The road was donated by John M. Dean in 1910 to the state as part of its Metropolitan Park System.

#### DYER AVENUE

**C683† Print Works Foreman's House (1844):** This 5-bay, 1½-story, single-family house was built in the same style as the 2-family cottages adjoining it which housed lower-ranking workers.

**C683-769† Print Works Workers' Houses (1844):** Lining both sides of Dyer Avenue between Cranston and Governor Streets, these twenty-one double cottages were erected by the Spragues to house some of their Cranston Print Works employees. The 1½-story dwellings were built in the Greek Revival style, with a broad fascia board, deep returns, and corner boards. The doors were surmounted by 4-light transoms and thin projecting lintels. Each residence had six small rooms, including three bedrooms. There was a water pump and privy for every three houses (six families); central heating was installed in Dyer Avenue houses before any others. In the early 20th century, the dwellings were occupied by dyers, printers, and bleachers. Some of the women worked as stenographers; most worked in the packing room. Rents in the 1920s ranged from \$5.00 to \$7.50 per month. These buildings were owned by the Print Works until 1942, when the highest price paid was \$2,900 for one building.

**417 Dyer Homestead (before 1732, 1800, 1874):** This early, 2½-story, gable-roofed house was built by Charles Dyer. It may have been a "stone-ender." In 1800, the house was greatly enlarged and the original chimney removed. The

home was altered and expanded again, probably in the late 19th century. The structure has a large central cross gable and a broad Victorian front porch. The Dyers were among the earliest settlers of Cranston. In 1823, a nursery was started on this farm which, tradition has it, furnished ornamental and fruit trees for the Boston Common, many Newport estates, and Providence's East Side. When the "silk craze" hit Rhode Island in 1836 the farm became known as Mulberry Grove, a name it kept until 1874 when the Pocasset Cemetery corporation founded by William H. Dyer took over the farm. The house today is surrounded by the cemetery.

**D108 Thomas DiStefano House (1977):** This large Tudor Revival house has repeated gables, half-timbering, a 2-story bay window, a 2nd-story bay window with copper flashing, and a paneled brick chimney. In contrast to the Arden House (118 East Hill Drive), this building, adapted from stock plans by Alden Robbins, reflects a trend away from contemporary design for larger suburban homes in Rhode Island in favor of a return to any one of several now popular revival styles.

#### EAST HILL DRIVE

**D80 Edmund and Janet Mauro House (1956):** This sprawling, shingled "ranch house," designed by Alden Robbins, has a low pitched-gable roof that projects far over the gable ends. With its attached garage incorporated into the informally organized facade, the house, well sited behind tall trees, is typical of the most substantial and advanced contemporary suburban homes built in the 1950s.

**D116 Frank and Ella Sarra House (1956):** This large 2½-story, 5-bay "garrison" house designed by Thomas Rusillo, has a wealth of "colonial" detailing, including "period" shutters, a saltbox garage with hayloft, and a recessed "Federal" doorway flanked by antique lanterns.

**D118 Raymond Arden House (1962):** A 1-story house of contemporary design treated as two, broad end-gabled pavilions, one of field stone, the other incorporating a garage. Paneled with stained weatherboards, well sited, and beautifully landscaped, this building, from designs by Mario Di Benedetto, is one of the finest examples of its style in Cranston.

**D135 Samuel and Lena Forte House (1969):** A 1½-story, brick, "Chateausque" house with a hip roof. Designed by Thomas Rusillo, it consists of two projecting pavilions connected by a central entrance bay with a recessed doorway surmounted by an arched dormer ornamented with flanking scrolls. The windows and door are surmounted by narrow keystones and flanked by shutters reaching the ground. The formality of the main elevation is reinforced by the symmetry of the landscaping and oval driveway.

**D180 Frank A. Ronci House (1968):** A 1½-story brick "French Chateau" or "French Provincial" home with a steep hip roof and a symmetrical 5-bay facade focusing on a large central entrance with massive double front doors featuring ornate, overscale hardware.

## ELMWOOD AVENUE

- 1275 **People's Baptist Church (1889):** This attractive, 1½-story, shingled, Queen Anne church has an unusual polygonal nave; the windows are paired and have transoms separating a top row of leaded glass. A tower and belfry were removed after being struck by lightning. In 1829, a simple rectangular addition was constructed. This congregation originated in 1851 in Auburn as the Mashpaug Free Will Baptist Church. The construction of this church began in 1882 under the urging of the pastor, Dr. Arthur Guen, who mortgaged his house to pay for it. The architects, Gould and Angell, were prominent at the time and designed a great many similar buildings including the Phillips Memorial Baptist Church at 565 Pontiac Avenue.
- 1655 **Maxwell Briscoe Motor Company, later the Universal Winding Company (c. 1908):** Although built for the Atlantic Rubber Shoe Company, this vast, 3-story brick building was acquired soon after its construction by the Maxwell Briscoe Motor Company which moved here from Pawtucket; their well known car, the Maxwell, was produced here for less than five years. In 1914, the Universal Winding Company, which specialized in making winding machines for the textile and electrical coil industries, took over the building. The Universal Winder, one of which is on display at the Slater Mill Historic site, operated without a revolving drum, winding instead on a tube placed on a positively driven spindle. At its peak the company employed 1,200 to 1,500 workers and was said to be the largest firm in the world exclusively devoted to building winding machinery. In 1959 the company changed its name to Leesona, after its founder and long-time owner, Joseph Leeson. The firm moved to Warwick in 1962. The building is now divided among many tenants. The structure remains a handsome example of early 20th-century corbeled brick industrial architecture.
- Elmwood Avenue Bridge (1918-1931):** Designed by C. L. Hussey, state bridge engineer, this is a 3-span, concrete, continuous-arch deck bridge. 153 feet long, it was widened to 53 feet in 1931 and has concrete balustrades and four light standards. It is one of the more monumental and better preserved early state-built highway bridges surviving in Rhode Island.

## EXCHANGE STREET

- 05 **Old Post Office (1879):** A small, 1-story, shingled building with a flat roof and "boom-town" front. Standing opposite the Oaklawn railroad station (now demolished), this structure was a village focal point where Oaklawn residents gathered and chatted while waiting for the mail brought by train and sorted here.

## EDEN PARK

In the late 19th century this area along Pontiac Avenue just south of Auburn was part of the vast farm owned by James A. Budlong and his son Frank, who platted it in the 1890s.

Eden Park became the location of an active community of Swedish immigrants from the Vastergotland region of Sweden.

## EDGEWOOD

Encompassing the easternmost part of Cranston south of the Washington Park area of Providence and north of Pawtuxet, Edgewood is bounded by the Providence River and Roger Williams Park. Stimulated by the construction of a horse railroad from Providence in 1870 and electric streetcars in 1892, development in Edgewood resulted in a classic streetcar suburb. One of the most fashionable residential areas in the metropolitan area at the turn-of-the-century, Edgewood contains the city's finest collection of Late Victorian domestic architecture.

## FALES STREET

- 40 **Robert Romeo House (1974):** A multilevel contemporary structure sided with vertical weather boards and with a complex roofline. It is Cranston's best example of what might be called the shed or farm-building vernacular idiom made fashionable in the mid-1960s by such influential projects as Charles Moore's Sea Ranch vacation condominiums in California.

## FISKEVILLE

One of Rhode Island's earliest textile mill villages, Fiskeville was founded by Dr. Caleb Fiske in 1812. Although the mills were claimed by fire almost a century ago, and the village's most pretentious dwellings are no longer standing, Main Street, with its early small stone workers' houses on the Scituate side and frame double houses in Cranston, still bears witness to the widespread impact of the Industrial Revolution in rural Rhode Island.

## FLINT AVENUE

- 35 **Stebbins Field (1935-1939):** This poured-concrete structure, designed by F. P. Sheldon and Sons and constructed by the Works Progress Administration, has a long arcade fronting the bleachers on one side and a triple-arch entrance between colossal paneled pilasters. The ten-acre site includes a football and track field that seats 10,000 and a baseball field with a 4,000-seat capacity. In addition to regular high school athletic events, the stadium has been used for public occasions including celebrations marking the end of World War II and the bicentennial of the city's separation from Providence. In 1968 the field was named for the long-time football coach of Cranston High School, Edward C. Stebbins.

## FORT AVENUE

- P\* **Fort Avenue runs south from Ocean Avenue and, together with Seaview Avenue, forms the spine of Pawtuxet Neck,**

which both shelters and defines Pawtuxet Cove. The street derives its name from the fort constructed in the fall of 1775, immediately before the outbreak of the American Revolution. It was one of a series of forts erected to protect Rhode Island coastal towns from marauding British forces. Following the British seizure of Newport, it was manned by the Pawtuxet Rangers in December, 1776. It was also occupied during the War of 1812 when the Rangers became the Pawtuxet Artillery. The fort had disappeared by 1896; a memorial plaque erected by the Cranston Historic District Commission in 1972 marks the site today. In 1870, the street was still referred to as West Street and Seaview Avenue was not yet laid out. Stimulated by the presence of the horse railroad on Broad Street, the character of Pawtuxet Neck changed by the turn-of-the-century. It was a well developed resort community, offering on a small scale the visual richness usually associated with the summer resorts of Newport and Narragansett. These Queen Anne and Shingle Style houses are characterized by the use of a variety of wall covers and porches trimmed with balusters, brackets, and struts. On the east side of the Neck most structures are sited to take full advantage of the sweeping view of Narragansett Bay, while carriage houses were built closer to the road. On the west side stand a group of five houses at 73, 75, 77, 89, and 95 Fort Avenue, built from 1892 to 1900, and crowded onto narrow lots overlooking the busy cove.

- P6\* **Charles Brown House (1921):** A large 2½-story, hip-roof Colonial Revival brick structure with stone lintels and a Doric portico. The house is set far back from the road behind a high fence.
- P50\* **William Chambers House (1895):** This 2½-story, gable-roofed house is an interesting variant of the Shingle Style with fieldstone end chimneys, bay windows, and a central porte cochere.
- P62\* **Allen Greene House (1898):** This large, 2½-story, Colonial Revival, gambrel-roofed house has a 2-story octagonal pavilion and is sited well back from the road to take advantage of a bay view. A double, end-gable carriage house stands near the road. Greene was a minister.
- P66-72\* **Eudora Banyon House (1894):** This large 2½-story Queen Anne style frame house has an octagonal tower on one side and a 2-story bay window on the other. Behind the house is an especially attractive double carriage house with a large central gable breaking the hipped roof of the wings. Paired doors articulate the center bay; they are surmounted by a loft opening shielded by an eyebrow dormer containing two hoists. Such elaborate Queen Anne style carriage houses were frequently erected adjacent to the imposing summer houses located on Pawtuxet Neck at the turn-of-the-century.
- P69\* **Captain Alonzo Crandall House (c. 1775):** A 5-bay, 1½ story gambrel-roofed structure. About 1865 an ell was added built from timbers of the old guardhouse which stood opposite the fort. Captain Crandall occupied the house at this time and operated a boatyard below the house on the bay.

## FRANCIS AVENUE

- A5 **White-McInerney House (ca. 1888):** This apparently simple, 2½-story, cross-gable house has elaborate fireplace tiles and overmantels and unusual, painted, porcelain sinks. It was acquired in 1891 from William F. White by John McInerney who, in addition to being local stationmaster and coal merchant, also served on the town council for many years.

## FURNACE BROOK ROAD

- S-1† **Cranston Furnace (c. 1768):** Only one, 2-story, stone wall of the old furnace remains. It retains openings for windows and gives a good sense of the original size of the building as well as its relationship to the brook. Adjoining the furnace ruins are the remains of three associated dams. The first spanned a narrow point of the brook just above the site. There is no remaining evidence of a raceway or gates. The second dam is upstream, standing twenty feet high. It is built of large rubblestone with a top course of concrete, evidently added later. Only the abutments remain of a third rubble dam further upstream. The furnace was initially (and only briefly) used to treat the ore retrieved from the nearby iron-ore mine which had been established by a group of Providence entrepreneurs, including members of the Brown family and Governor Stephen Hopkins (see entry for Hope Road). That operation was moved to the larger Hope Furnace in Scituate, which had a more ample water supply, by 1769. The Cranston structure was used during the early and middle 19th century for a variety of purposes: in 1831 it was the Union Dye House; in the 1840s the renowned pewterer George Richardson worked here; in 1855 it was referred to as the Cranston Furnace; and in 1862 as the Cranston Foundry. By the late 19th century, however, the building was in ruins.

## GARDEN CITY

One of the largest planned communities in New England, Garden City was developed by 1948 as a "city within a city" by Nazarene Meloccaro, who had begun as a contractor in Friendly Community in the 1920s and then developed subdivisions in Warwick and Cranston, including the Roger Williams Terrace, Brightside Terrace, and Community Drive plats. Consisting of 233 acres, Garden City was laid out in cooperation with the land-planning division of the Federal Housing Administration, under the direction of Peter Cipolla, to incorporate apartment units, single-family houses, a school, a church, and a shopping center. The master plan consciously sited the shopping center as a buffer to Reservoir Avenue, then the major road south from Providence, and created a boulevard to separate the commercial zone from the residential. The single-family houses were sited on "winding streets with a layout emphasizing and preserving natural features." All of the houses, over 700 in number, were built by the developer, most on speculation, but some to owners' specifications. Rigid design guide-

lines were imposed. Most dwellings were traditional and the "contemporary" look was discouraged, although the development followed popular trends, evolving from capes and colonials to ranch houses and split levels. Eighty percent of the houses were financed through the Old Colony Cooperative Bank: 70 per cent were conventionally financed, the remainder being VA or FHA insured loans. The 2-story brick garden apartments, arranged in seven buildings totaling ninety-four units, were financed under the FHA's Section 608 program, and designed by Adolph O. Kurze, former City Inspector, in the "modern," glass-block and picture-window idiom overlaid with "colonial" motifs—pedimented doorways, hipped roof, and so on. Three- and four-room apartments, they rented initially for 75 and 100 dollars per month, respectively. Kurze was the architect for most of the buildings at the shopping center (the first planned shopping center in Rhode Island) erected in stages until 1962. Naturally enough, the first two commercial structures erected after the company's office were a filling station and supermarket. Consciously designed as the antithesis of everything that was perceived to be negative in urban residential neighborhoods, Garden City is Rhode Island's most well known subdivision of the post-war era and exemplifies the characteristics, physically and socially, of the suburban ideal of the late 1940s and 1950s. In 1956, in fact, it was cited as an outstanding example of a completely integrated community by the U.S. Savings and Loan League.

## GREENE AVENUE

- K142 **Cranston Maintenance Department, formerly Briggs Street School (1916):** A 2-story, flat-roof, frame structure with a parapet; broad, denticulated cornices; and colossal, paneled, corner pilasters. The building replaced the small Knightsville School that stood next to the Knightsville. Meeting House, and is the last remaining Cranston example of this typical early 20th-century type of schoolhouse.

## HAGEN AVENUE

- 30 **Temple Sinai (1961):** This 1-story building designed by Isidor Richmond and Carry Goldberg, is constructed of poured concrete in a manner reminiscent of the United Nations General Assembly Building in New York. It measures 146-by-57 feet and is divided into a sanctuary area and a religious school. The congregation, the second Jewish one in Cranston, was founded in 1957. A Reform synagogue, its establishment reflected the westward expansion of postwar suburbanization in general, and of the Jewish community in particular.

## HARBOUR TERRACE

- E24 **G. William Schmid House (1938):** This 2½-story, brick house with three, oversized, half-timber gable dormers is a typical example of the Tudor Revival residential style in

Cranston. Schmid was a salesman.

## HERSEY ROAD

- EP **Old Swedish Cemetery (1896):** This small burying ground, on a knoll above the Pawtuxet River, was consecrated on May 28, 1896, as the burial ground for the small Swedish community in South Auburn which had erected its first church two years earlier. Swedes had begun immigrating to work on the Budlong farm in 1885; the church and the burial ground were the first physical manifestations of their growing numbers.

## HOPE ROAD FROM PIPPIN ORCHARD ROAD TO SEVEN MILE ROAD

This stretch of Hope Road, laid-out in 1767 to link the furnace in Hope (Scituate) to the ore beds in Cranston, retains much of its 18th-century character, including its contour, narrow winding course, and dry-laid stone boundary walls. It is one of the best preserved roads in Cranston. Hope Road traverses the center of still-rural western Cranston. Throughout its length one encounters farmland, some of it still cultivated, and a series of historic farm complexes, the most striking of which are the two Lippitt farms on Lippitt Hill.

## HOPE ROAD

- S2† **Cranston Ore Beds (worked c. 1757-c. 1855):** The site includes the remains of one structure, a foundation for another, the ruins of at least two dams, a mineshaft and mine tailings. The ore beds were opened in 1767 by a group of Providence entrepreneurs including members of the Brown family and Governor Stephen Hopkins who also erected the stone furnace on nearby Furnace Hill Brook. The production of iron in the colony at this time reflected not only the extraordinary entrepreneurial energies of the Brown family, but also the growing desire for nonimportation of British goods and the creation of home industries after the passage of the Stamp Act, which both hamstrung local commerce and threatened greater external controls. In fact, Cranston ore was used for cannon balls during the American Revolution and was mined here until the middle of the 19th century. In 1780, a Newcomen engine was built by Colonel Ephraim Bowen for James Brown at the ore beds, the first use of steam power in Rhode Island; such engines had only recently been introduced into English mines, and this was probably one of the first two successful Newcomen engines built in America. The engine pumped water from a well eighty feet deep and twenty-three feet wide. According to one description, the engine had a cylinder two feet in diameter and a beam four feet wide and twenty feet long "constructed of two very large oak timbers nicely forged together." The ore was dug in part by slaves and raised in one-ton buckets by means of an ox-turned capstan. A 1787 account related that "the immense weight of the beam,

the case-iron wheels, large chains, and other weighty parts of the works, occasion a most tremendous noise and trembling of the large building in which it is erected, when the machine is in motion." Although the post-Revolutionary trend away from pig iron induced the Browns to sell their interest in the mine in 1806, mining operations continued at the ore beds until about 1855.

- 140 **Dr. Rowland Greene Farmhouse (c. 1850):** Also known as the William Elsbree House, this 2½-story, 5-bay, gable-roofed structure has an unusual, 3-story, central projecting tower. The hip-roofed tower has narrow, paired windows; a bracketed cornice; and an elaborate Victorian door hood. Born in 1770, Greene was a physician who had studied with Dr. Fiske of Scituate, and became a noted preacher at the Quaker meeting in nearby Oaklawn after moving to Cranston in 1838. Greene died in 1859, and the farm was acquired by Elsbree in 1863. A successful contractor, Elsbree built a section of the Providence and Worcester Railroad and worked on other railroad projects. He was responsible for the widening of Broad Street in Providence. While still living in Providence, Elsbree helped Governor Sprague organize the first Rhode Island Battery in the Civil War by furnishing all the horses necessary for its equipment. In Cranston, he served as a member of the Town Council for ten years and represented the town in the state Senate and House of Representatives. Following Elsbree's death in 1880, the house was purchased by Phineas Conley, who became Cranston's first Commissioner of Roads.
- 840 **Hudson Farm (c. 1860):** The irregularly massed and somewhat altered, 2-story farmhouse has cross gables above 2nd-story windows, bargeboards, and a bracketed cornice. This "modern Gothic" house was part of the Green Meadow Farm that (as the Exchange Stable which is still standing adjacent to it) served the horses from the Union Horse Railroad. Today much of the farm is under cultivation as a nursery.
- 1231† **Lippitt Hill Farm (1735; c. 1790):** This vast farm is focused on a cluster of buildings at the crest of Lippitt Hill. Most prominent are a large barn and the farm office as well as several outbuildings and the Christopher Lippitt House. The handsome, 2½-story, gable-roofed house has a 2-story rear addition probably dating from the late 18th century. Characteristically, the chief embellishment of the 4-bay facade is the pedimented Ionic doorway. Much of the original interior trim, including overmantels and paneling, remains. Built by Christopher Congdon in the early 18th century, the house was owned for many years by Christopher Lippitt who was a Major General in the Rhode Island militia during the Revolution. His regiment constituted more than one third of the continental troops at Crosswicks, New Jersey, before the march from Trenton to the crucial victory at Princeton. After the war he retired to Lippitt Hill, and became active in the local Methodist movement. In the late 19th century, the farm was occupied by Robert Knight, a descendant of Christopher Lippitt, who headed the enormous Warwick-based textile manufacturing firm of B. B. and

R. Knight which operated over 400,000 spindles and employed over 17,000 people. Still a working farm owned by the Knight family, Lippitt Farm stands much as it always has, bordered by 18th-century stone walls and framing some of the city's most handsome structures. Although some of its thousand acres have been acquired for public use, the Lippitt Farm defines much of the landscape of westernmost Cranston and so serves as a living landmark for the city.

- 1281† **William Lippitt Farm (c. 1798):** A much smaller farm set off on a corner of the Lippitt Hill Farm. This property centers on the 2½-story, gable-roofed house built by Christopher Lippitt for his son William. Its finest feature is an outstanding Federal-style doorway with an exquisitely worked fanlight. Symmetrical, 4-petal flowers are located in the frieze of the pilasters supporting the pediment. This building is one of the finest examples of the Federal style in the entire city. The farm, which includes a barn and a few additional outbuildings, has remained in the hands of descendants of William Lippitt, just as the larger Lippitt Hill farm has. Thus, in addition to serving as excellent examples of early farmhouses, these two properties also illustrate the lingering concept of the family farm, where the next generation was accommodated by a smaller adjacent farm and a new house, and possession has remained within the family for over two centuries.

**Lippitt Hill School (c. 1858):** This triple, 7-bay, 1-story, frame structure has a Victorian door hood. One of the oldest surviving schools in Cranston, it served both historic communities of Lippitt Hill and Fiskeville.

**Brayton Farm (c. 1840):** The 2½-story, gable-roofed house has a 5-bay facade, broad cornice, and a heavy entablature above its central entrance. Stylistically it represents the transition from Federal to Greek Revival. Sited at the intersection of Hope Road and the Seven Mile Road, the house is at the edge of a 60-acre farm immediately north of Fiskeville. Israel Brayton, who occupied the house for much of the 19th century, was a descendant of Dr. Fiske who founded the nearby mill village in 1812. Brayton established a freight and express business between Hope and Providence, and owned an additional 150 acres off Pippin Orchard Road. The building is still owned by the Brayton family.

## HOWARD

- H **The State Institutions at Howard:** Occupying the old Stukelley Westcott and William S. Howard Farms, the state institutions at Howard represent, in architecture and physical layout, the evolution of the state's role as agent of public welfare for its citizens. The oldest building, the 18th-century Westcott Farmhouse, predates state acquisition; it is separately listed on Sockanosset Cross Road. Originally a 416-acre farm stretching south from Reservoir Avenue to the Pawtuxet River, the institutions today are limited to the area between Reservoir Avenue and Pontiac Road, except for the red, brick, Georgian Revival Medium Security Building

which overlooks Route 95; it signals to passersby the presence of the physical manifestation of the power of the state. The Howard Reservation is comprised of a number of individual landmark structures like the granite Victorian Adult Correctional Institutions, the sprawling brick and stone Center Building, and the dramatically modern Aime Forand Building, as well as clusters of buildings of different architectural styles from different periods which in total give the area its varied and yet uniformly institutional character. The individual structures mentioned above all relate to the peripheral roads encircling the area. Howard's character, in fact, is more clearly defined by the structures along or radiating from Howard Avenue, which bisects the Reservation. The buildings there date from four distinct periods. The pair of 2½-story Italianate frame houses flanking the avenue were built in 1870 and 1875 and form a handsome domestic-scale entrance to the institutions. The stuccoed Work House and House of Correction, erected in 1873, is the oldest institutional building remaining at Howard. In the eighteen years after 1900, six large red-brick structures, many of them from designs by Martin and Hall, were constructed on the west side of Howard Avenue. Now all part of the Institute of Mental Health, these buildings are large-scale examples of the Colonial Revival style applied to institutional building: organized by pavilions with gable or hip roofs, details typically include entrance porticos, stone belt courses, and keystones over windows and cupolas. The A, B, and C Buildings are each sited perpendicular to Howard Avenue, thereby creating a pair of open quadrangles facing the avenue. The twenty-eight buildings erected by the WPA during the 1930s expanded the campus-like environment of Howard Avenue. Large red-brick Georgian Revival structures further north on the avenue and on two streets parallel to it, these too were sited to create quadrangles and were also articulated by classically inspired doorways, stone belt courses and cupolas. The most outstanding among them is the Benjamin Rush Building with an ogee gable over the entrance pavilion, a distinct reference to the Joseph Brown House on South Main Street in Providence. Five hip-roofed physicians' cottages erected in 1935 line parallel streets near the north end of Howard Avenue, thereby creating a small residential scale square, a mid-20th century parallel to the two Victorian supervisors' cottages at the south and a striking counterpoint to the institutional scale of the remainder of Howard. Two 1-story brick buildings erected in the late 1950 for the elderly patients were consciously designed to blend in with, or even hide behind, the more imposing buildings of the earlier construction periods. Set further east along service road through the middle of the Reservation are the Girls' and Boys' Training Schools. This road leads to the Sockanosset Boys' School, a group of eleven small 2-story structures clustered around a circular drive at the northeast corner of the Howard Reservation. Six of these buildings are 2½-story stuccoed dormitories erected from 1880-1895. The most striking and architecturally valuable of the Sockanosset buildings is the Chapel and Hospital, designed by Stone, Carpenter and Willson and erected in 1891. Other

buildings in the Sockanosset compound include a hospital and gymnasium, an industrial building and two, large, red-brick WPA buildings.

- H1 Providence County Jail and State Prison, now the Adult Correctional Institution (1878):** A 3- and 4-story, gable-roofed structure built of random ashlar; entered through the 2½-story former warden's house, also of stone, into the large octagonal central core which is topped with a cupola. As originally built to designs by Stone and Carpenter, the north wing housed the state prison, the south the Providence County jail. The central octagonal building originally accommodated a reception room on the first floor, a guard room on the second, and a chapel above both. On axis behind the central building were the mess room, kitchen and boiler room. A 2-story workshop over 200 feet long stands parallel to the main prison building. A stone wall with turreted guard posts encloses the rear of the building. Mandated in 1874, the building took four years to complete. Inmates of the state farm helped lay the foundations under the supervision of Isaac Walker of Riverpoint. The cost of the structure totaled approximately \$450,000. In November of 1878 the Prison Commission transferred its properties and duties to the State Board of Charities and Corrections, and on December 31 of that year ninety-five men and three women entered the prison.
- H2 Center Building (1888-1890):** This 3½-story, hip-roofed building by Stone, Carpenter and Willson is constructed of random ashlar with brick trim at the windows, doors, and corners, and has multiple, brick chimneys. Entered by a small, 1-story, Doric portico, the structure is composed of a center unit with three connected wings along the north-south axis, interrupted regularly by octagonal stair towers. Built on the site of an earlier, frame almshouse, this handsome building stands behind copper beech trees on a hill paralleling Pontiac Avenue. In May of 1888 the General Assembly appropriated \$50,000 for the construction of a new almshouse to hold 300 adults and 60 children. The central building contained offices and quarters for both male and female attendants on the first floor and a chapel on the second. Each wing could hold 150 men or women housed in dormitories of twelve or twenty-four beds, with special facilities for expectant or nursing mothers and the "sick with loathsome or contagious diseases." In 1908 a 110-by-28-foot additional building was erected at the almshouse. The first floor contained a smoking room and a morgue; the second beds for fifty men. In 1916 a small Gothic Revival chapel was added to the west of the building; the following year the building became the State Infirmary.
- H3 James H. Eastman House (1870):** Christopher Dexter was the architect-builder of this large, 2½-story, 3-bay, gable-roofed Italianate house with a 2-story ell and a 2-story porch. A handsome structure, it is sited on a slight rise set back from Pontiac Avenue. Eastman served as director of the Sockanosset School from 1884 to 1886, when he became Superintendent of the State Farm, a position he held until his death in 1907.
- H4 George F. Keene House (1875):** Also by builder-architect

Christopher Dexter, this 2½-story, gable-roofed, Italianate dwelling has a 3-bay facade composed of paired windows with flat lintels. The house has a bracketed cornice and two rear extensions. Keene was the first physician on the staff of the State Farm and was named Medical Superintendent in 1897. It was only at that time that regular physical examinations and record keeping became systematically incorporated into procedures at Howard.

- H5 State Workhouse and House of Correction (1873):** Minimum Security Prison, Christopher Dexter, architect. A 2½-story gable-roofed stone structure covered with stucco. Articulated by quoins and gabled dormers, the building has a gabled central-entrance pavilion entered through a 2-story projecting porch. A stone wall encompasses an exercise yard at the rear of the building. This is the oldest remaining building at Howard, constructed from designs by Christopher Dexter under the supervision of Horace Foster, master mason for many of the Sprague mills, and completed at a cost of \$94,620. C. Moxson and Company of Westerly supplied the woodwork and the Builder's Iron Foundry of Providence the iron work. A separate laundry and 1-story hospital adjoined the building. Initially, one large room on the second floor of the House of Correction was used as a chapel and schoolroom. Bowditch and Copland of Boston designed the original plans for the grounds. In 1879 an addition nineteen by fifty feet was erected for women; included were five cells for troublesome women. In 1923 the General Assembly abolished the workhouse, and in 1924 the building was converted for use as a women's reformatory. In 1931 the interior of the southern wing was removed and reconstructed for use as a ward for the criminal insane.
- H6 L Building (1915):** A 3-story, flat-roofed, yellow-brick building of little architectural pretention. A long building with three asymmetrically placed wings, each entered by a small, projecting, gabled, enclosed porch. Articulation is limited to belt courses above the entrance level and below the parapet. The structure incorporated two wards built in 1885 as well as a building that had originally served as a boiler house and later a laundry. When occupied in August of 1917, the building housed 29 employees and 418 patients. A Late Victorian gazebo stands nearby, a relic from the earlier period of the hospital's history when most construction was frame.
- H7 Reception Hospital, A Building (1912):** A large, 3½-story, brick structure with a gable-roofed, central-entrance pavilion and projecting end wings connected by partially glazed hyphens. Sited perpendicular to Howard Avenue and approached by a semicircular drive, the building is articulated by quoins, a small Doric entrance portico, a denticulated cornice, and keystones over the windows; it was designed by Martin and Hall. Architecturally, "the exterior treatment of the building is simple, following classical lines, and will result in a dignified, well proportioned structure, expressing the occupation for which it is designed." David J. Barry was the general contractor, and the building cost \$216,000 upon completion. The Reception Hospital—designed in consultation with Dr. Charles P. Bancroft, Superintendent

of the New Hampshire State Hospital, and built upon the stone foundations of older structures—was hailed by the State Board of Charities and Corrections as enabling "us to . . . receive each and every patient committed to our care into a structure which is practically a unit by itself . . . it will present the features of a general hospital, as far as is practicable, for the care of people suffering from mental disease."

- H8 Benjamin Rush Building (1936):** Built as a tubercular hospital, this 3½-story, gable-roofed brick structure designed by Franklin R. Hindle is most interesting for its ogee gable over the entrance pavilion, a distinct Colonial Revival reference to the Joseph Brown House on South Main Street in Providence. Rush (1745-1813) was the first American to make a serious contribution to the study of psychosis. He rejected the current explanations for mental derangement in favor of linking mental diseases to other arterial disorders. The first American physician to advocate institutionalization for wealthy as well as indigent patients, Rush was a professor at the new University of Pennsylvania, which became the leading medical school in America.
- H9 Physicians' Cottages (1935):** Each of the five dwellings is a 2½-story, 5-bay structure with a hip-roofed and single-story enclosed porch. The buildings' only articulation consists of simple entrance porticos and a balustrade surmounting the porches. The houses line parallel streets facing each other—three on the north side, two on the south—thereby forming a small residential-scale square in the midst of the institution.
- H10 Aime Forand Building (1971):** A 2-story, flat-roofed building constructed of glass, pre-rusted steel, and stone. Built around a large interior courtyard, the building's entrance is across a concrete bridge; interior bridges cross the courtyard to connect the different sides. Millman and Sturges were the architects, MacLellan and Associates, the designers. A resident of Cumberland, Forand served from 1941 to 1961 as a Representative in Congress, where he sponsored health legislation.
- H11 Sockanosset Chapel and Hospital (1891):** A 1½-story structure, built of random ashlar; constructed in a Latin Cross plan with a cross-gabled roof and steeple at the crossing; designed by Stone, Carpenter and Willson. The building is entered through a shingled porch which extends across the front of an ell built as an infirmary. The interior of the church is handsome, especially the Stick Style bracing of the tower, the stenciling on the walls, and the five elaborate wrought-iron chandeliers. The Sockanosset complex was originally built with a 100-by-64-foot building in the center of the cluster which served as industrial instruction shops and housed the school's first chapel. In 1890 the General Assembly appropriated \$25,000 for a new chapel so that additional industrial construction could occur at the original building. The new building was completed for \$22,000 the next year, and included the old pews moved in from the first chapel. The adjoining hospital contained fifteen beds on the first floor, six on the second.
- H12 Sockanosset Boys' School Dormitories (1880-1895):** Each

of the six, gable-roofed buildings is two-and-a-half stories high and constructed of stone covered with stucco, and stands on the perimeter of the loop that circles through the school. Articulation is limited to rustication of the window surrounds and corners and Stick Style dormers and entrance porches; many of the latter have been lost. The first floor usually consisted of a dining room, library, and supervisors' quarters while the upper floors contained dormitory space for thirty to fifty boys. The first buildings of the Boys' School were built in 1880-1882, and the Providence Reform School on Tockwotten Street was moved to Sockanosset on December 28, 1882. The original buildings cost \$115,000, with a typical cottage costing about \$13,000; building was under the supervision of Allen and Bowne, masons, and French and MacKenzie for carpentry. In 1884 a forty-eight bed cottage was erected by Isaac Walker.

### HOWARD STREET

- 2, 3-4 **Print Works Boarding Houses (c. 1840s):** These two, similar, large, 2½-story, Greek Revival structures were erected by the Spragues to house workers employed at their print-works. Each structure is five bays wide and has a double-plank cornice, a heavy entablature above the doorway, and colossal, corner, parallel pilasters.
- 8-16 and 18 **Print Works Cottages (1840s):** These eight workers' cottages—originally identical with plank cornices, paneled corner pilasters, and entranceway pilasters—were constructed as housing for the Spragues' Cranston Print Works. Number 17 is the least altered of the group.

### KNIGHTSVILLE

Set at the geographic center of Cranston, Knightsville became the town's civic center in the early 19th century. Town meetings were held first at Nehemiah Knight's Tavern and after 1807 at the Knightsville Meeting House; the town's first bank and library were also organized here shortly thereafter. Although Knightsville's historic character is gone, a few of these buildings remain on Phenix Avenue.

### LATEN KNIGHT ROAD

**Byron Lawton House (c. 1785):** Typical 18th-century, 5-bay, 2½-story, gable-roofed house with a large central chimney. Although the entrance is very plain, the splayed window caps suggest a late 18th-century date. The house was built by Byron Lawton and was the focus of a 75-acre farm. Set well back from the road at the end of a long drive; still surrounded by acres of fields, the farm is evocative of the agricultural character of Cranston throughout most of its history.

### LAUREL HILL AVENUE

- 389 **Grafton Willey House (c. 1875):** An unusually handsome, bracketed, 5-bay, 2½-story, gable-roofed house with a 2-

story side ell, central entrance, a large belvedere on the roof, and a bracketed porch across the facade. The house is located on the site of the Governor Stephen Randall Homestead, and was raised and an additional level added c. 1900 when Willey acquired the property. Originally there were additional balustrades above the porch. Willey was a pawnbroker on Dorrance Street in Providence who, as part of his modernization of the house, installed one of Buckley and Scott's first oil burners.

- 411 **Steere House (1885):** This large, 3-bay, 3-story house has a mansard roof and bracketed cornice. The primary facade is articulated by a 2-story, bracketed, entrance porch, surmounted by a wide pedimented dormer with a triple-arch window. The central bay of the side facade is articulated by 1st- and 2nd-story balconies with elaborate balustrades and hoods and pendants.

### LEGION WAY

- 279 **Leon Keknut House (1948):** Though much altered, this brick house—originally one story with a stepped parapet and large industrial sash windows, and extensively ornamented with glass-block insets—was a unique and rather naive attempt at Art Deco design.

### LYNDON STREET

- Next to 119 **Carpenter Family Monument (1860):** A granite obelisk erected by Earl Carpenter facing, according to tradition, the William Carpenter homestead which stood to the north. In 1638 William Carpenter, together with William Arnold, Zachariah Rhodes, and William Harris, settled in Pawtuxet and became the first settler of what is today Cranston. His descendant was interested in genealogy and erected this monument in the old family burial ground.

### MAIN STREET

- F195 **House (c. 1830):** A 5-bay Greek Revival cottage with flank-gable roof and a recent shed dormer. This house has a handsome doorway with sidelights, paneled pilasters, a dentil course between architrave and frieze; and a projecting cornice.
- F221-225 and 369-371 **Fiskeville Workers' Houses (c. 1812):** These are 1½-story, 7-bay, double houses with gable roofs and shed dormers. Although the entrance transoms have been filled in and the sash replaced, the buildings stand very much as built. The remains of a granite post fence stand near the street. Fiskeville was one of the earliest industrial villages in Rhode Island, established in 1812 when Dr. Caleb Fiske erected a frame cotton mill on the Scituate side of the river.
- F241 **House (c. 1812):** A 2½-story, 5-bay, Federal house with a wooden elliptical fan over the central sidelight doorway.

### MAGNOLIA STREET

- EP251 **First Pentecostal Church (1894; 1899; 1911):** A 1½-story frame structure composed of two end-gable-roofed wings

joined to form a T. The link is marked by a simple bell tower. This building was the first home of the Bethany Lutheran Church, now located at 116 Rolfe Street. In the mid-1800s a large group of Swedes arrived from the Vastergotland region of Sweden and settled in what is now the Eden Park section of Cranston. A parish was established in 1892 and this building erected two years later. In 1896 a burial ground was consecrated and a full-time pastor assigned to the congregation. Alterations occurred in 1899, and the western wing was added in 1911. By 1915 the congregation included 900 members.

### MARDEN STREET

- A44 **Winsor Gardens (c. 1918):** Robert P. Winsor was the head of the Winsor and Gerry Manufacturing Company; on a business trip to Japan he determined to ship 125 azaleas back to his home. Today, some 80 of those bushes survive, planted along a steep bank dropping forty-five feet down from Marden Street and overlooking Fenner's Pond. Organized around a waterfall and fish pond, the site, which used to be the neighborhood coal-ash dump, today is visited by 2500-3000 people annually, and is regularly used as a site for fund-raising events by the Cranston Historical Society—continuing a tradition initiated by the Auburn Public Library in 1959.

### MAYFIELD ROAD

- 205 **Arnold Homestead (c. 1779):** Altered, late 18th-century, 2½-story, 4-bay, gable-roofed house with a handsome early 20th-century reproduction fan above the doorway. For much of the 20th century, the house was owned by Chester Durfee, a well known clockmaker. He discovered a plate of metal on the door sill bearing the date 1779 and the name Thomas Brayton, who had married into the Arnold family.

### MESHANTICUT

Platted in 1894, Meshanticut occupies the sites of the old King farm and the former town poor farm. Located off Cranston Street, the development was designed with a series of amenities to enhance its attractiveness, including a 20-acre park and lots for a train station and community church.

### METROPOLITAN AVENUE

- 80 **Cranston West High School (1957):** Designed by Cull, Robinson and Green, this modern, brick-faced, concrete-block, 2-story structure originally measured 273 by 67 feet, with a projecting cafeteria wing 160 by 104 feet. The facade treatment is simple and functional, composed of 2-story window walls under a flat roof. Built at a cost of just over \$1,000,000, the school was a response both to the increase in the city's population following World War II and to the shift of development westward in Cranston. A gymnasium and auditorium, designed by Robinson Green Berretta (the successor



firm to the original architects), were added in 1962. The school complex and playing field occupy the site of the Cornell farm, first settled c. 1848 by James Cornell.

#### MILL STREET

- 169 Imperial Printing and Finishing Company, now the Atlantic Tubing and Rubber Company (c. 1915): This 3-story, rectangular, brick mill may incorporate elements of earlier industrial complexes which existed on this site. C. & W. Rhodes built the first mill here in 1810. That textile mill was destroyed by fire in 1870 and replaced by another mill. The Turkey Red Dyeing Company operated here in 1895 and in 1901 the Whittle Dye Works used the building. It was acquired at auction by Samuel Priest, a Lithuanian immigrant who formed the Imperial Printing and Finishing Company which he operated until his death in 1926. Since 1944, the mill has been owned by a manufacturer of plastic and rubber products.

#### MOUNTAIN LAUREL DRIVE

- 91 John O. Pastore House (1959): This split-level house was built by Rhode Island's first Italian-American governor. Pastore moved here from the Federal Hill section of Providence. Son of an immigrant tailor, Pastore was born in 1907 and attended Classical High School in Providence; he worked as a delivery boy and studied law at the Providence YMCA through Northeastern University's extension course. Elected a State Representative in 1934, Pastore was appointed assistant Attorney General in 1937. He was elected Lieutenant Governor in 1944 and Governor in 1946. Pastore was elected to the U.S. Senate by a plurality of 70,000 in 1950. The first Italian-American elected to the Senate, Pastore quickly became known as one of that body's most able orators and legislators. His special interests included the peaceful uses of atomic energy and the regulation of the developing television industry. Active in the campaign to elect President John F. Kennedy, Pastore was mentioned as a possible Vice-Presidential candidate in 1964 when he delivered the keynote address at the Democratic National Convention—it was a memorable speech, witnessed by millions of television viewers.
- 101† Niles Westcott House (c. 1843): A 5-bay Greek Revival cottage with a simple doorway, this is one of the best examples of the type in Cranston. Niles Westcott erected the dwelling (also known as Westcote) shortly after his marriage, on property that had been deeded to his grandfather by his great-grandfather in 1748. The land was part of the huge Westcott family farm that stretched from Sockanosset Road over the hill to Oaklawn. A later Niles Westcott was an attending physician at Butler Hospital and the local doctor for Oaklawn village from the turn-of-the-century until 1941.

#### NARRAGANSETT BOULEVARD

- E Originally an extension of Allens Avenue leading south

from Providence, the street was renamed in about 1898 to reflect the pretensions of the wealthy Providence businessmen who were settling there and the aspirations of real-estate developers who were platting the old farms between Broad Street and Narragansett Bay. Still known as "The Boulevard," the broad thoroughfare is lined with some of Cranston's finest residential buildings. Excellent examples of the Queen Anne, Shingle Style, Colonial, and Georgian Revival styles are shown to advantage because of large lots and deep setbacks. The presence of the Rhode Island and Edgewood Yacht Clubs, just off the Boulevard, indicates some of the attraction of the area for successful late 19th- and early 20th-century commercial leaders. Although the hurricane of 1938 destroyed many of the beautiful old trees along the road, the well maintained landscaping and broad vistas of the Boulevard retain Edgewood's character as a prosperous turn-of-the-century residential community.

E1150 Cranston Hilton, formerly the Colonial Motor Inn (1959): A 4-story structure of reinforced and precast concrete, the building, designed by L. B. Herbst and Company, architects, has a projecting carport typical of the period. The 129-unit building cost \$1,000,000 and was constructed by a consortium of local businessmen headed by Melvin Berry. In 1970 the hotel was acquired by the Hilton chain. The Cranston Hilton, the first unionized hotel in Rhode Island, is the frequent location of major political gatherings.

E1157 William S. Cherry Carriage House (c. 1905): A picturesque, little, octagonal, entrance tower is the focus of this rambling, 1-story, shingled building (now a residence) built as a carriage house for William S. Cherry, the founder of Cherry and Webb. His home stood across the Boulevard; that site is now occupied by the Cranston Hilton.

E1230 House (1904): A 1½-story, shingled house, its broad gable set end to the street and incorporating both a 1st-story, wrap-around porch and a recessed, 2nd-story loggia. The interplay of different textures and volumes makes this an interesting example of the late Shingle Style.

E1243 John P. Mourin House (1924): A 3-bay, 2½-story, yellow-brick Georgian Revival house with a hipped roof and two arched dormers. The building includes a symmetrically placed, 2-story, glassed-in porch on one side and a 1-story open porch on the other. Set back from the street and well sited in symmetrically landscaped grounds surrounded by an iron fence, the house is a good example of Georgian Revival architecture, with an overscaled, mid-18th-century-style, "pattern-book" doorway. Mourin owned a ladies-clothing store in Providence.

E1291-1293 House (c. 1900): The facade of this large Colonial Revival residence is treated as an enormously over scaled, gambrel-roofed end gable, four bays wide and three-and-a-half stories tall. An elliptical Doric entrance porch is the focus of this elevation; the trim consists of a denticulated cornice and 2nd-story balustrade.

E1295-1297 and Abram Schreiber and Harry Mays House (c. 1911): A 2½-story, late Shingle Style house with a cross-gable roof and a broad front porch. The unusual extent of the roof, its slight

- 1299-1301 kick, the relationship of recessed space in the cross gable to projecting bays under it, as well as the broad eaves and exposed rafters, all make this house and its neighboring twin, 1299-1301, among the best examples of the Shingle Style in Cranston.
- E1312† Bonnie View, The William P. Stowe House (c. 1905): One of Cranston's most pretentious houses, this large Colonial Revival dwelling is set on a bluff overlooking Narragansett Bay and was very likely constructed from designs by Martin and Hall. It has two colossal pedimented Ionic porticos, one on the primary elevation serving as a porte cochere, another overlooking the Bay. The fan windows of the pediments are repeated in the elaborate 3-bay carriage house. Stowe was a Providence jewelry manufacturer. The second owner of the property was William G. James, treasurer of the Elizabeth Mills in Hillsgrove.
- E1332† Herman G. Possner House, The Castle (1901): Designed by Thomas J. Gould, this large, 2½-story, stone and shingle structure has a massive 3-story tower above the central porte cochere finished with mock crenelations and a corresponding 1-story porch at the rear overlooking the bay. Possner was the president of the Providence-based Sure-Lock Paper Clip Company. In 1920, Dutee W. Flint, the largest Ford dealer in the country, acquired the house. In 1921 he started radio broadcasting from the building and in 1924 erected two transmitting towers 105 feet high; two broadcasting studios were installed. In 1931 Cherry and Webb took over the operation and changed the name to WPRO. This structure is now the home of the Harmony Lodge AFAM.
- E1347 House (c. 1894): The principal elevation of this Colonial Revival residence is treated as an overscaled, gambrel-roofed end gable, three bays wide and three-and-a-half stories tall.
- E1362 House (c. 1900): A 2½-story, L-shaped house composed of two large perpendicular gable-roofed wings that appear almost as separate structures. The complexity of detail is counterbalanced by the severity of the overall form and the clarity given to the design by the horizontal banding.
- E1363 Evangeliste Turgeon House (1922): An impressive, symmetrical, 2½-story, hip-roofed, brick-structure with recessed side pavilions. The form of the segmental-head, pedimented portico—imitating an 18th-century, pattern-book doorway—is repeated in the broad central dormer. This substantial Georgian Revival house is impressively positioned on a terraced site behind a long low balustrade. Turgeon owned the construction company, still in operation, that built City Hall, Cranston East High School, and the Cranston Hilton.
- E1438 Frank Remington House (1927): An unusual, 1½-story bungalow with extensive trussing in the flank gables, a central gabled dormer, and a pediment over the entrance. The interplay of light and shadow from this trusswork and the rafters over the porch, together with the building's siting on a hill at a curve in the boulevard, make it a prominent house in the streetscape of Narragansett Boulevard. Remington operated the funeral home that bears his name on Broad Street.

## NATICK AVENUE

- 0191** **Jeremiah Wilbur House (1810):** The farmhouse is a 1½-story, 5-bay, gambrel-roofed structure. Originally a 5-room, central-chimney plan, it was altered in the 19th century by the replacement of the chimney by two end chimneys. A 1-story gable-roofed milk house, formerly separate, was added to a 1½-story, 19th-century ell in the early 20th century. The house was once the center of a 90-acre farm. A large, 2-story, gable-roofed barn stands west of the house and probably dates to the mid-19th century, replacing an earlier one, whose stone foundation was incorporated and expanded. The farm's fields were worked by lessees from early in the century until the time of the Second World War. Presently the only form of activity is the breeding of roosters.
- 571+** **Potter-Remington Farmhouse (1795):** The farmhouse is a 2½-story, 5-bay, central-chimney-plan house set back from the road atop a gentle rise. The house was built by Caleb Potter, whose family had settled at the nearby Rivulet Farm a century earlier, and sold to Benjamin Remington in 1804. In 1812, Benjamin's son Jonathon acquired the house and twelve acres of the 160-acre farm. He was among the wealthiest farmers in western Cranston and was one of only three Cranston men recorded in the c. 1820 list of *Principal Men of Rhode Island*. The dwelling reflects the country-builder's attempts to achieve elegance, working within a broad tradition with colloquially interpreted high-style architectural motifs. The mantels here illustrate the idiomatic quality of country building, the parlor mantel being an outstanding example of how the builder created his own design by his colloquial reworking of a Doric frieze. The house is thus an important example of the vernacular interpretation of the Federal style in Cranston. The farm remained in the family until 1885, having been sold in 1867 with an additional fifty-six acres by Jonathan's son to his sister-in-law's father, Pardon Tillinghast. Tillinghast added a kitchen ell which was enlarged twice, once around the turn-of-the-century and once again in the 1920s by the last occupants of the house.
- 651** **Henry Baker Farmhouse (c. 1809):** A 5-bay, 2½-story house with a gable roof and central chimney. The hipped-roof portico has two unusual columns terminating in feathered capitals. Set on a hill behind an attractive picket fence, the house is a handsome example of Federal architecture. Originally part of the Baker family farm, this property west of Natick Avenue was given to Thomas Baker's son Henry in exchange for his brother's rights to their father's farm. The structure is also known as the Squire Baker House, named for Henry's son, Henry V. Baker, who lived here from his birth in 1812 until his death in 1886.
- 684** **Thomas Baker Farmhouse (c. 1790):** The farm is dominated by a 5-bay, 2½-story, central-chimney house with a gable roof and handsome Federal doorway. An attractive barn of pegged construction adjoins the house. The Baker family settled this part of Cranston in the early 18th century, and Natick Avenue was initially known as Baker Road. The Bakers were originally Quakers, and an earlier Thomas Baker served on a committee to build the Quaker Meeting House in Oaklawn in 1729. The Thomas Baker who erected this

structure had served in the Revolutionary War. The steps of the present house are said to be millstones from one of two mills operated on the property. Even after being divided between Baker's two sons c. 1809, this farm stretched from Natick Avenue to Reservoir Avenue for most of the 19th century. By 1917 it included just seventy-eight acres and has not been worked as a commercial farm since about that time.

## NEW DEPOT AVENUE

- AR1+** **Narragansett Brewery Complex (1890):** The plant today is an amalgam of over a dozen buildings located on fourteen acres along a railroad siding south of Cranston Street. The most modern structures, including a long 4-story bottling plant and a 7-story tower, obscure the oldest 3- and 4-story brick buildings. The company was organized in 1888 by a group of German immigrants who hired a Berlin brewmaster to oversee production which began in 1890. The original 1890 brick building, capable of processing 50,000 barrels per year, has been incorporated into the brewing house. In 1898 an ale house was added with a capacity of 70,000 barrels. A handsome, 2-story brick building with paired pilasters and extensive corbeling, it remains in the southwest corner of the complex, near Whipple Avenue. In 1902, a 2-story monitor-roofed boiler room was erected and in 1910 a storage building for 250,000 barrels built and another for 200,000 barrels the following year; the latter is a 4-story, brick structure with small windows and a hip-roofed tower on its northwest corner. In 1914, the "largest and most hygienic" bottling plant in New England was completed at the brewery. Now used as a warehouse, the 200-by-300-foot structure was an early and impressive example of the use of the conveyor belt. At this time, tours of the plant were inaugurated, which became a Cranston tradition until their recent termination. Probably most memorable to the tour goers was the statue of King Grambino, a jolly bronze tribute to the pleasures of drink. Also included in the complex is a 2-story frame structure which served as the rail station and is one of Cranston's only examples of a Swiss Chalet style building. Across Cranston Street, the brewery owns the former United Traction Company Depot, listed separately in this inventory. During prohibition, the brewery turned to ginger ale, near-beer, and other beverages and almost closed down. It was acquired by the Haffenraeffler family in 1933, when it produced 175,000 bottles per year. By the end of World War II that number had increased to 600,000 and in 1952, 1,250,000, making Narragansett more than twice as large as its closest New England competitor. Sold in 1965 to the Falstaff Brewing Company for \$19.5 million, the brewery continues as the largest in New England and the only operating in Rhode Island.

## NORTON AVENUE

- 97-99** **William A. Downes House (1939):** Built originally as a single-family dwelling, this 1-story, flat-roofed structure is one of very few in Cranston to show the influence of the Bauhaus

movement in Germany, whose impact was just beginning to be felt in America at this time. Downes taught science at the Briggs Junior High School and his wife was an artist; together they designed and built this house to take advantage of a site overlooking Angell's Pond. They oriented the primary elevation away from the street, using plywood for both exterior and interior sheathing, and did without a basement or visible roof. The house is a vernacular interpretation of the "modernistic" styles which Americans saw for the first time in demonstration dwellings erected at the Chicago World's Fair of 1933: flat roofs, corner windows, metal deck railings, and a conscious suppression of conventional ornamentation.

## NORWOOD AVENUE

- E74** **Albert Arnold House (c. 1870):** This simple 1½-story, cross-gable-roofed, Late Victorian structure was the first summer cottage built in Edgewood. It originally stood on a bluff on Shaw Avenue overlooking the bay. Arnold had been a missionary in Greece, a professor in Chicago, and a minister in several Massachusetts and New York towns before returning to the Providence area and constructing this house. He was a descendant of Nicholas Arnold whose farm was platted to form the center of Edgewood; nearby Albert Avenue is named for him.
- E135** **Sophia Little Home (1900):** This large 3-story shingled structure is the third home for the Sophia Little House, founded in 1881 at 881 Broad Street, Providence. Sophia Little was a poet and a supporter of the Anti-Slavery Movement, the Peace Society, Women's Suffrage, Temperance, and the Woman's Christian Union. In 1881, she founded the Prisoners' Aid Association of Rhode Island and the Women's Society for Aiding Released Female Prisoners, both of which used the house on Broad Street. The two organizations were merged in 1882. In 1883 the Home moved to a house on Norwood Avenue. Because it soon proved too small, the present site was acquired in 1896, and dedicated by the Right Reverend Bishop McVickar in 1900; an endowment of \$10,000 was contributed by Aide Astor Cary. In 1915, the home began accepting delinquent girls instead of released prisoners, and in 1918 a maternity hospital opened. From its founding the home cared for 2,350 women, 81 children, and 560 infants.
- E232** **Samuel Priest House (c. 1910):** A 2½-story, 3-bay, Colonial Revival house with a hipped roof and pedimented dormers. The central bay is articulated by a portico with a broken scroll pediment, while the side bays are bowed and contain Palladian windows in the second story. The richness of the detailing here make this structure the most elaborate of Cranston's Colonial Revival buildings. Priest was a Lithuanian-born Jewish immigrant who founded the Imperial Printing and Finishing Company at Bellefonte; he was quite successful and became an active philanthropist.
- E234** **C. C. Newhall House (1892):** Designed by William Walker and Sons, this is one of the finest Queen Anne houses in the city—a 2½-story, shingled, cross-gable-roofed structure with a subsidiary cross-gable, a pedimented porte cochere,

and a wide pedimented entrance porch. Both pediments are filled with elaborate ornament and are supported by Tuscan colonettes. Newhall was a realtor who owned considerable land between Broad Street and Roger Williams Park and platted Norwood Avenue.

- 2237 Edward A. Carr House (1930): A typical, fairly expensive version of the English country-cottage revival made popular in the 1920s and 1930s, this ivy-clad brick house has slate jerkinhead cross gables. The gable facing the street is truncated at one side and extends over the doorway on another, with stone voussoirs surrounding the door. More modest versions of this style are common in most early 20th-century east-coast suburbs, including a small number in Cranston. Carr sold baker's supplies.
- 259-261 Former Barnaby Carriage House (c. 1898): A 2½-story, gambrel-roofed, shingled structure with a 1st-story brick facade. The building has been converted for apartment use and has a central picture window in the location of the original carriage door. A large cupola surmounts the roof and a central dormer with a broken-scroll pediment is flanked by a pedimented dormer on each side. Barnaby owned a well known clothing store at the corner of Dorrance and Westminster Streets, where Kennedys later located, in Providence.
- 272 Henry A. Carpenter House (1907): A 2½-story, loosely Colonial Revival house with a steep hip roof, cross gable, and bracketed cornices. A curved front porch creates a tiered, "wedding-cake" effect which is reinforced by a 2nd-story bay window and a hip-roof dormer. The handsome balustrade above the front porch continues over the side porch and porte cochere. Carpenter was a manager in downtown Providence.
- 299 Walter E. Williams House (c. 1905): Williams was an engineer. His 2½-story, cross-gable-roofed house is sheathed with brick on the first story and shingles above. The front gable projects over a pair of bay windows and there is a glass side porch and tower overlooking Roger Williams Park.

#### OAKLAWN AVENUE

- 175 Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church (1966): The congregation was first organized in 1905 in a building on Smith Street in Providence; in 1935 it moved to Pine Street. This structure, a 1-story, circular, brick building with a large gold dome, was built in response to the shift of the congregation's members out of Providence to the suburbs. One of the last of Knight D. Robinson's designs, the structure represents a free interpretation of the traditional Greek Orthodox Church, in this case emphasizing the dome over the cross. The sanctuary includes a contemporary version of the traditional iconostasis, designed by Constantine Yousis, as well as an elaborately carved epitaphios brought from Pine Street. To the north stands the rectory—a smaller square 1-story white-brick building with rounded corners and a flat roof. It is named for Peter G. Mihailides, the priest of the parish from 1921 to 1956.
- 282 James and Dolores Lombardi House (1949): A 1-story,

ranch house with symmetrical gable-roofed end pavilions. The principal facade is faced with dressed fieldstone; the gables are covered with scalloped, vertical weatherboards. An unusual feature is the inclusion of the front doorway apparently under a stepped chimney.

- 315 King-Dean-Roberts House (1814, 1880, 1897): This 2½-story house with a substantial stone foundation and entrance stairs was built by the King family following a fire which destroyed an earlier homestead. It was acquired in 1880 by John M. Dean, real-estate entrepreneur and developer of Meshanticut. He added dormers, the 1½-story southern wing, and the front porch. In 1893, a Providence confectioner, John H. Roberts, bought the house. After a fire in 1897, he enlarged the building with a 3-story rear wing.
- 492 Samuel Ralph House (c. 1708): A small 4-bay, 1½-story, gable-roofed house with an altered central chimney and a kitchen ell added c. 1800. Ralph was the son of Thomas Ralph, one of the original Meshanticut Purchasers who acquired western Cranston from the Indians in 1662. In 1767 the house was used as a smallpox infirmary; later records indicate a huge cow barn, corncrib, and blacksmith shop all adjoined the house.
- 520 Turner Wadding Mill, now the Rathbun Organ Company (c. 1813): A 2½-story, gable-roofed structure, the stone first story may predate the frame second story. The mill was used in the early 19th century by Stephen and Stuckley Turner. Stuckley moved the operation to the Olneyville section of Providence in the mid-19th century, where it continued as the S. & S. Turner Company.
- 700 Church of the Immaculate Conception (1966): A 1-story, red-brick, 16-sided structure with a low roof terminating in a modern central cupola. The building, from designs by Oresto DiSaia, is located on a rise 50 feet above Oaklawn Avenue. The site is divided into three plateaus with sloped banks and bank walls effecting the transition between the upper and lower parking areas and the central plaza where the church and a 90-foot bell tower stand. The tower, the tallest structure in western Cranston, is composed of four, thin, free-standing, brick piers linked by steel rods which are crossed to support electrically activated bronze bells. The church interior is ornamented by fourteen bronze bas-relief depictions of the Stations of the Cross and a huge modern sculpture, designed by the architect, entitled Jacob's Ladder, which descends from the cupola into the sanctuary. Reflecting the westward movement of Cranston's population, in 1958 the Parish of the Immaculate Conception was established in the Garden Hills section of the city. The parish met originally at the Alpine Club; its growth from 275 families in 1959 to over 900 families in 1966, necessitated the construction of the new structure.
- 1500 Restaurant (1977): The large, 2-story restaurant is constructed of concrete blocks with a dramatic, slanted, steel-and-glass entrance facade. The interior, designed by Morris Nathanson Design, is a classic statement of 1970s interior decor: the entrance ceiling is covered with mirrors, there is a 2-story atrium with balcony bar, and trees potted in straw baskets abound. The vinyl-suede banquettes, quarry tiles,

light oak tables, neon tube lighting, and hanging plants are all arranged with finesse and create a variety of atmospheres, from the brassy bar to the sedate dining room, that reveal the best of the ubiquitous Providence-based Nathanson design firm.

#### OAKLAWN MANOR ROAD

- 18 John M. Dean House, Oaklawn Manor (1893): This complex, vaguely Colonial, 2½-story house with an end-gambrel roof, has a corner tower with a conical roof and a glassed-in, circular, front porch. Dean was a Providence realtor who successfully initiated the practice of "buying on time" and subsequently became the real-estate investor who developed Meshanticut, creating Meshanticut Park and other amenities to promote the plat. He sold this house c. 1902 to move to a Colonial Revival mansion near where Tupelo Hill Road is today. He lived there, surrounded by acres of orchards, until that house burned in 1933. Always active in local government, Dean led the Republican Town Council for many years and was expected to be Cranston's first mayor, but was upset in the city's first mayoral election in 1910.

#### OAKLAWN VILLAGE HISTORIC DISTRICT

The Oaklawn Village Historic District comprises some thirty-five buildings clustered along Wilbur Avenue from its intersection with Natick Road to the railroad bridge which separates the village from Oaklawn Avenue. The district boundaries are marked visually by the stone railroad bridge at the east and two gambrel-roofed structures, the Thomas Brayton and Jeremiah Wilbur Houses, at the west. The center of the village is defined by two public buildings, the Oaklawn Baptist Church and the former Proprietor's School, now the Oaklawn Library. Unified by material, scale, and set-back, the district is essentially residential, containing but three public buildings and one commercial structure. The district is composed of an amalgam of vernacular building types, which can be differentiated generally as 18th-century, rural Greek Revival, Queen Anne, and simplified Shingle Style. The majority of houses are modest, one-and-a-half stories high, faced with either clapboards or shingles, and once had picket fences and elm trees lining the road. Despite the loss of the latter elements, the early 20th-century character of the village has been retained because of the lack of encroaching subdivisions and because of the winding character of Wilbur Avenue itself, which presents limited vistas of architecturally unified buildings. (For individual entries of Oaklawn buildings, see listings under Natick, Searle and Wilbur Avenues.)

#### OCEAN AVENUE

- P1\* Rhode Island Yacht Club (1956): The club was founded in 1895, by Addison J. White, Henry J. Steere, William S.

Beckwith, and Harvey Flint as the Providence Yacht Club, the second in the nation. It was reorganized in 1887 as the Rhode Island Yacht Club by Sayer Hasbrock, Howard Wright, and Dr. R. Herbert Carver. The original building was destroyed in the hurricane of 1938, and its replacement was lost in the hurricane of 1954. From designs by Knight D. Robinson, the present structure was designed to be "hurricane proof." It is a 1-story structure built twelve feet in the air on eight reinforced-concrete stilts supporting double cantilevers.

- P151\*** **Captain Orrin Baker House (c. 1850):** This handsome, 3-story, Italianate house has a low hip roof surmounted by a belvedere. Complicating its simple box-like form are 2-story bay windows and a small entrance porch. Captain Baker ran this as a boarding house, presumably for the workers at the C. and W. Rhodes textile mill, the nearby jewelry-soldering plant, or boat-building companies that supplied Pawtuxet's chief source of employment in the mid-19th century.

## PARK AVENUE

- A682** **Deming House, now the Sorority Shop (c. 1875):** A 1½-story, L-shaped house with a steep mansard roof and gable dormers. The entrance porch, which squares the "L," and the bay windows on the front are beautifully worked with paired brackets and pendants. Although not the original owner, Daniel S. Latham, a local doctor and Superintendent of Health in the 1920s, was the best known resident of this house.
- A727-729** **James Donahue House (1875):** Although a 2-family house since 1903, the Italianate detailing of this dwelling make it one of the finest in Auburn. Donahue arrived from Ireland in 1856 and became a truck farmer whose 25-acre farm extended north of the house. Seven acres were given to the cultivation of peas and an equal area to tomatoes. In winter, lettuce was grown in large greenhouses.
- A[844]** **Veterans Memorial Park (1924):** A triangular piece of land between Rolfe Street and Park and Pontiac Avenues is the site of a 3-sided monument located on a circular granite base, twenty-two feet in diameter. The monument was designed by Robert F. Hill of 182 Garden Street and Frank Ziegler of Providence. The main panel reads "In Honor and Memory of the Citizens of Cranston who Served Their Country During the Revolution, War of 1812, Mexican, Civil War, Spanish War and World War." It is surmounted by the seal of Cranston and capped with an American eagle. The other tablets have bas-reliefs of a World War soldier and sailor. Although the cannon were planned to have been World War pieces, they date from the Civil War. In 1972, a larger memorial, consisting of three field pieces from the First World War raised upon a fieldstone base, was dedicated in memory of those who died in World War II, the Korean conflict, and the war in Vietnam.
- A850-858** **Park Theatre (1924):** This flat-roofed, white-brick complex occupies the corner of Park and Pontiac Avenues. The auditorium is clearly visible along Pontiac Avenue, while the lobby faces the intersection and is the terminus of a row of

shops fronting Park Avenue. Constructed from designs by William Walker and Sons, the building is articulated by the regular bays of the stores, and a stepped parapet above the theatre entrances. The interior was converted into a twin cinema in 1971 and a triple cinema in 1978 but the exterior remains an excellent example of an early suburban commercial block and presents a unified visual anchor in the variegated streetscape of Auburn.

- A865** **William A. Briggs School (1904):** A 3-story, flat-roofed brick structure with a 1st-story limestone basement and a heavily denticulated cornice. The upper stories are articulated by triple windows and colossal pilasters. In the 18th century the site was occupied by the Jeremiah Williams Tavern. After Cranston's first high school burned, the Town Council decided to erect this structure. Designed by Edward Thomas Banning, it was used as the city's high school until 1927 when it became a junior high school. Briggs was the Baptist minister in Natick and Oaklawn (1881-1898) who organized the Oaklawn Library and became superintendent of schools.
- A869** **Cranston City Hall (1936):** A 3-story, brick, Georgian Revival building with a low, hip roof and a large central cross gable surmounted by a cupola. The first story and entire 3-bay entrance pavilion are sheathed in limestone. Colossal arches unify the 1st- and 2nd-story apertures of the pavilion. Designed by Wallis Eastburn Howe, an important practitioner of the Colonial Revival style (who also worked on the Federal Building in Providence), the building ties the old high school and Cranston East together visually, asserting Auburn's role as the city's civic center. The site was selected by the Republican caucus, over the advice of the City Plan Commission, which suggested a location near Oaklawn, and against the wishes of the Democratic Caucus, which preferred its traditional stronghold, Knightsville. Replacing a string of modest, frame town halls, this large structure represented the city's transformation from town to city and acknowledged the rapid population growth which continued through the Depression era.
- A899** **Cranston High School (1927):** A 3-story, brick building designed by William Walker and Sons. It has a raised foundation and flat roof. Stepped parapets surmount the projecting central entrance pavilion and the two, blank, end pavilions. A large 4-story addition to the south was erected in 1956. In height, scale, and color, the High School combines with City Hall and the Briggs School to give the blocks of Park Avenue between Pontiac and Reservoir Avenues the institutional character which defines the area as Cranston's civic center.

## PAWTUXET VILLAGE

Pawtuxet Village extends south from Ocean Avenue in Cranston to Bayside Avenue in Warwick. Its name derives from the Indian word for waterfall. Acquired as part of Roger Williams' 1636 "Grand Purchase" from the Indians, Pawtuxet grew up around the falls and its deep-water sheltered cove. A lively seaport in the 18th century, the village

became a small textile center in the early 19th century and a popular summer resort in the late 19th century. Tucker Avenue, Broad, Bridge, and George Streets retain valuable examples of late 18th- and early 19th-century residential architecture, while Fort and Seaview Avenues display a fine collection of Late Victorian summer homes as well as early 20th-century suburban dwellings.

## PHENIX AVENUE

- K67\*** **The Knightsville Meeting House, now the Knightsville-Franklin Church (1807):** The 5-bay, 2-story structure was built for the congregation by Joseph Searle and paid for with the proceeds of a lottery. Repaired after the gale of 1815, it was renovated and reconsecrated in 1841. The Greek Revival details of the centrally placed entrance doors date from that change, while the colored glass of the windows dates from the 1890s. The Benevolent Baptist Society, which erected the building, was organized in 1806. In 1812 Andrew Knight died and in his will recommended that his heir, Earl, set aside land behind the meetinghouse as a church burial ground; and Andrew Knight was the first person buried there. The congregation underwent a series of reorganizations in the course of the 19th century. It was reorganized in 1816 and later split in 1838. In 1864, three men from the old Richmond Street Church in Providence organized the Knightsville Mission Sabbath School, the direct ancestor of the present congregation. The Knightsville Meeting House is the oldest public building in Cranston and one of a small number of such meetinghouse structures built to serve both civic and religious purposes still surviving in Rhode Island. The Meeting House is one of the few remaining early structures in the Knightsville section, which served as the civic center of Cranston almost continuously from the early 19th century until the 1930s.
- K80** **Battey Octagonal House (c. 1854):** In 1848 Orson Squire Fowler published a book entitled *A House For All or the Gravel Wall and Octagon Mode of Building* in which he advocated the construction of octagonal homes as the most healthy form of habitation. The vogue for octagonal houses spread in the 1850s and 1860s, and was especially popular in Rhode Island. Cranston at one time had three octagons; only this one survives, and it, unfortunately, has been much altered. Although little is known of the first owner, in 1870, the house was owned by Judge Sheldon Knight, the judge of the Probate Court. Today the house serves as a reminder of the strong 19th-century interest in applying science to domestic matters, that is the design of homes—the focal point of Victorian, family-centered society.
- 1030** **Lodowick Brayton House (1800):** This 2-story, 5-bay, flank-gable shingled structure originally faced east rather than west. The roof was blown off during the gale of 1815 and the house re-oriented to its present direction during the subsequent rebuilding. The kitchen ell and an entrance porch with an attractive Italianate iron balustrade were added in the mid-19th century. Lodowick Brayton II, the son of the first owner of the building, maintained this house despite

being an active citizen of Providence, where he served as City Water Commissioner from 1876-1880. A successful entrepreneur, Brayton was the President of the New England Butt Company, served as the second president of the Union Horse Railway, and directed the L. Brayton Company at Riverpoint. Brayton remained a leading resident of Oaklawn; he put forward the \$400 necessary to acquire the old Quaker Meeting House for the Oak Lawn Benevolent Baptist Society in 1864.

S3† **Furnace Hill Brook Archeological District:** The district, which includes the Oaklawn Soap Stone Quarry, the Cranston Furnace and the Cranston iron-ore beds, follows Furnace Hill Brook for about one-and-a-half miles. The brook cuts through a picturesque ravine which divides the flat, outwash plain of eastern Cranston from the glaciated hilly uplands of western Cranston. The juxtaposition of these two environments, and the combination within the area of mineral riverine and agricultural resources, has contributed to a pattern of human utilization that has included both habitation and industrial activities for at least four thousand years, and probably longer. Anadromous fish such as shad, alewives, and perhaps salmon could have been taken with ease at the falls and rapids in the steep ravine. The proximity of campsites in the district to the soapstone quarry may afford the opportunity for significant new anthropological understanding of prehistoric group interaction, intra-group task specialization, and analysis of the pattern and rates of material diffusion. In fact, no other inland area of Rhode Island, yet reported includes such a concentration of prehistoric and historic archeological sites.

K275 **Jeremiah Knight House (c. 1790):** Also known as the Bank House, this 5-bay, 2½-story, gable-roofed house was built for a member of the Knight family which figured so prominently in the early 19th-century history of Cranston and Rhode Island. In 1818, the Cranston Bank was chartered by the General Assembly, and Jeremiah Knight was chosen as cashier. Following Knight's death in 1821 and until 1845, the bank retained rented space in the structure. The Cranston Bank survived until the Panic of 1873.

S4† **Oaklawn Soapstone Quarry (2500 BC-AD1200):** In the late Archaic-Early Woodland period, soapstone was quarried here, near the crest of the hill to the west of Phenix Avenue, for the manufacture of tools, bowls, and pipes. This steatite deposit was a soft, easily carved material which made it particularly useful for the aborigines' needs. The quarry retains considerable integrity, despite several investigations resulting in pockets of exposed ledges and piles of tailings from both prehistoric quarries and more recent archeologists. Cavities from which bowl forms have been extracted survive in several places. This quarry is one of only two known in Rhode Island. It is particularly unusual in that it reveals a change of function from the production of bowls and utilitarian objects to the production of pipes. A number of examples of finished artifacts from both periods of industrial activity at the quarry have been excavated and are on display in the Bronson Museum of the Massachusetts Archaeological Society in Attleboro.

1097† **Frederick Fuller House (c. 1836):** A 5-bay, 2-story Greek Revival house with end chimneys. The house has a handsome Greek Revival doorway with sidelights. Fuller was the foreman for the old Cranston Furnace, located just to the east on Phenix Avenue, when it was operated by the Braytons.

1308† **Hillside Farms (c. 1770, 1950):** A large, 2-story, hip-roofed barn picturesquely sited on the side of a hill and a 1-story flat-roofed "moderne" style processing plant constitute the center of this large farm, which once contained over 100 acres. The development of dairying was a typical response to the growth of the metropolitan area. In recent years this operation has ceased, leaving only one dairy distribution operation in the city.

#### PIPPIN ORCHARD ROAD

S5 **Ruins of Henry Jordan's Sawmill (1823):** At the northeast corner of the intersection of Pippin Orchard Road and Scituate Avenue stand the stone ruins of the sawmill built by Henry Jordan and operated into the 1870s, serving the needs of the agricultural economy of rural western Cranston.

#### PLAINFIELD PIKE

1580† **Thomas Fenner House (1677):** One of the oldest structures in the state and built originally as a 1-room, 2-story "stone-ender" by Arthur Fenner for his son Thomas, this is among the city's most important landmarks. The original interior framing of the house is still visible. The top of the stone chimney has been rebuilt with brick, but repeats the pilasters of the original. The house was expanded in 1834 and used as a tavern for most of the 19th century. The Fenners were an early Cranston family, and Arthur's house, which stood nearby, was used as a garrison during King Philip's War. With only about a dozen "stone-enders" remaining in the state, this house is an important example of the 2-story variation of this unusual building type.

#### PONTIAC AVENUE

A128 **The Colvin-Patt Farmhouse (c. 1866):** This 2-story bracketed farmhouse was acquired by Charles W. Patt, who had a 20-acre farm here from the 1870s. In the 1890s, the produce raised brought in over \$15,000 annually. A large greenhouse stood nearby, where lettuce grew in the winter and cucumbers were cultivated in the spring. The farm was platted in the 1920s as "Friendly Community."

A407† **Arad Wood House (c. 1858):** This structure, best known as the "Old Red Cross Building," is an excellent example of the Italianate style. Its roof, surmounted by a beveledere, imitates a Tuscan Villa and the quoins, bracketed trim, and triple-arch windows are all characteristically Italianate, as are the handsome black marble fireplaces on the interior. The house is well maintained by the Barton Insurance Agency and remains one of Cranston's finest 19th-century domestic buildings.

EP565 **Phillips Memorial Baptist Church (1901; 1948, 1956):** The church consists of the original 1901 frame building; a large, brick, Colonial Revival structure completed in 1956; and a connecting unit of offices erected in 1948. The original building, designed by Frank W. Angell, has two corner towers and a series of arched windows. It was built on land donated by James A. Budlong, who was developing the Eden Park plat. In 1930 the old bell from the Chestnut Avenue School was installed in the bell tower. This bell was cast in 1838 by G. H. Holbrook, a former apprentice to Paul Revere; it had been used in the old Pine Street Baptist Church in Providence. Designed by Howe and Prout, the 1956 white-trimmed brick Colonial Revival structure has a handsome tower and steeple. Well sited at a bend in Pontiac Avenue, it functions as a neighborhood landmark. Having first assembled in 1897, the congregation was organized in 1900 at a meeting held in People's Church, with fourteen of the original fifteen members coming from that church. The congregation is named in memory of the Reverend James L. Phillips (1840-1895), a medical missionary in India, who served as interim pastor of People's Church in 1886. There is also a church in India named in his memory. Today the church has the largest congregation of its denomination in Rhode Island.

EP570-572 **James A. Budlong Company (c. 1850):** This 5-bay, central entrance, bracketed cottage was the Budlong home in the mid-19th century as the family's farm and wealth grew. Although Pontiac Avenue was the Budlong family homestead, their farm expanded significantly in the mid-19th century as a truck garden to supply the growing population in Providence. By 1875 the Budlongs were harvesting over \$100,000 of produce annually; over 200 people worked the fields in the 1890s. In the 20th century the farm became well known for its roses which were raised there between 1901 and 1938. Today the company produces elastic braids.

EP600 **Frank L. Budlong House (1874):** Now the Woodlawn Funeral Home, this large 2½-story, cross-gable-roofed house has an extraordinary bracketed cornice with pendants. The entrance is surmounted by an elaborate pressed-tin pediment. Despite substantial alterations, the house retains much of its original beauty. Frank L. Budlong was the son of James A. Budlong, who established the huge truck farm which covered both sides of Pontiac Avenue at the turn-of-the-century. Frank Budlong served as a member of the Town Council for over twenty years; he also developed Eden Park, the early plat north of Pontiac Avenue. Originally a similar house stood to the east of this one. Even larger and more elaborate, it was destroyed by the family to establish an elegantly landscaped memorial garden in memory of Mrs. Budlong.

1078 **Pettaconsett Chapel (1872):** A 1½-story, end-gable frame structure with a small central window, and corner entrance and bell tower. The entrance and bell tower were originally in the center of the facade. The congregation began as a Sunday School in 1847; it was organized as the Franklin Congregational Church in 1862 to serve the southern part of Cranston. In 1967, the congregation merged with the Knightsville Church. Today the building is used as an art gallery.

- 1081 Sited on a hill at a bend in the road, the structure still provides the visual focus for the small Pettaconsett community. **Pettaconsett School, formerly the Howard School (1888):** This 1-story, T-plan, Queen Anne structure has a gable breaking its hipped roof and a cross-gable incorporating arched entrance porches on either side. Enlarged in 1919, the school replaced an earlier structure on the site and was initially known as the Franklin School, the entire village of Pettaconsett also being known as Franklin. Around the turn-of-the-century the school's name was changed to the Howard School, and in 1951 it was changed once more to its present name. For many years the 3-room structure housed a kindergarten and six grades. In 1977, students were transferred from the one room still in use. The building is Cranston's only remaining small, wood-frame, late 19th-century grade school; once there were a number of such schools in the city.
- 1171 **Budlong Homestead (mid-18th-century):** A 5-bay, 2½-story structure with Late Victorian sash. Set back from the road and surrounded by old stone walls, this house was the Budlong family homestead before the mid-19th century expansion of their farming operation into a produce-oriented truck farm.

#### RESERVOIR AVENUE

- 540 **Hurd Chrysler-Plymouth (1928):** A long, low 1-story structure, this building, as originally constructed, was the city's best Moderne commercial structure, with curved corner windows and a streamlined parapet with classic Art Deco metal lettering. The Moderne style, with its connotations of glamour and progress, was believed especially appropriate for the marketing of automobiles. Although the shape of the showroom windows remain, alterations have removed the letters and covered the parapet with plastic signs. The site was the location of a blacksmith shop, which remained even after construction of this structure began.

#### RHODES PLACE

- P60\* **Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet Ballroom (1915) and Gazebo (c. 1880):** The Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet Ballroom and Gazebo are the only remaining buildings of the small but active complex of recreational and social facilities located just north of Pawtuxet Village on the north bank of the Pawtuxet River. Begun in 1872, when Thomas H. Rhodes built a pavilion for serving clambakes and renting boats along the riverside, "Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet" quickly expanded to include facilities for dancing, rowing, and canoeing as well. All of these buildings except the Stateroom (c. 1890) were destroyed by fire on February 12, 1915. The Ballroom was erected immediately after the 1915 fire and opened as the "Palais de Dance" on August 14th of that year with 10,000 in attendance. The Stateroom itself burned to the ground in July, 1977. The Gazebo is a 1-story, gable-roofed frame structure built in the late 1870s or early 1880s as a "waiting room" for horse-drawn streetcars bearing merrymakers traveling to and from Providence. The Gazebo retains much of its original simple Queen Anne detailing,

including scrolled brackets; heavy, turned, corner posts; and open railings. The Ballroom was designed by architects John F. O'Malley and Henry F. Lewis in what contemporary accounts termed a "modernized Renaissance" style. The large hip-roofed structure is entered through a central 2-story, tetrastyle, pedimented, Ionic portico and crowned by a statue of Terpsichore, the Muse of the Dance. A low-relief plaster frieze depicting the Spirit of the Dance adorned the entablature until its removal in the 1970s. Designed to include a 2-story public dance area (with a dance floor accommodating 1,000) above a basement with a canoe livery housing 750 boats, the structure is of heavy wood framing covered with concrete stucco designed to be fireproof, and was originally provided with an automatic sprinkler system. Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet embodies the change of Pawtuxet from a shipbuilding and textile producing village to a major focus of recreation in the state, a change made possible by the growth of transportation systems which linked Providence with outlying areas and facilitated suburban residential development in the village. By 1907 three canoe clubs had built their boat houses along the river nearby, the Swastika, Pawtuxet, and Saskatchewan; they were later joined by the Matapan, Chattanooga, Coyuga, and Ilkiyma clubs as well. Although the popularity of canoeing declined with the Depression (the last clubhouse burned in 1941), Rhodes remained a center of the region's social life. The scene of once-weekly dance contests, political announcements, the Shrine Circus, or big-band dancing, Rhodes is one of the last of its type in Rhode Island and one of the city's most valuable resources.

#### SCITUATE AVENUE

- 150 **Nathan Westcott House (c. 1770):** A 1½-story, center-chimney, gambrel-roofed house facing south away from the road. The roofline has been modified in saltbox fashion in the rear to enlarge the structure.
- 156\* **Joy Homestead (c. 1778):** Built by Job Joy, perhaps as early as 1764, this 4-bay, 1½-story, gambrel-roofed house has a central chimney; a kitchen ell was added to the south. There are three rooms on the first floor and four on the second. Ornamentation is very simple; the parlor has a china cupboard and denticulated mantle over the fireplace. Joy was a shoemaker and his descendants continued as tanners. In the early 19th century they dammed the nearby stream and erected a mill which flourished briefly as the Rhode Island Print Works. Income from the water rights increased the value of the property, and the area, which included a cluster of gambrel-roofed houses near the intersection of Phenix Avenue, became known as Joy Town. In 1959, the homestead was acquired by the Cranston Historical Society, which has recently undertaken major rehabilitation work, and maintains the house as a museum.
- 358 **Sheldon Farmhouse (1804):** A 2½-story, 5-bay, center-chimney, gable-roofed house. Although somewhat altered, the house retains its excellent Federal style doorway.
- 458+ **Sheldon Homestead (c. 1728):** This gambrel-roofed house is typical of the many early 18th-century structures built in

Cranston. It has three large corner fireplaces including an unusual, stone, bake oven. The Sheldons were early settlers of Cranston and the homestead remained in the family until the late 19th century when it was acquired by a member of the Gladding family which owned the department store downtown. It was probably he who added the gingerbread trim that adorned the house until the 1950s.

- 755 **Horace Pryor Farmhouse (c. 1822):** A 2½-story, 5-bay, center-chimney, gable-roofed Federal house with splayed lintels and a delicately detailed, pedimented doorway incorporating a glazed fanlight. Although the fenestration and interior spaces have been altered, the siting of the house, far back on a curving driveway, makes it a distinctive example of the Federal-style farmhouses built in Cranston. A barn and a few small greenhouses remain. Horace Pryor came to Cranston as a teacher and married Orra Knight, whose family farmed much of this part of the town. The farm was acquired in the 20th century by Albert Judge, an Italian immigrant who perfected the Judge Number 3 tomato; a well-known cross of three different varieties.
- 1900 **Knight Farm (c. 1760):** This small, 1½-story, 5-bay, gambrel-roofed house has remained in the Knight family for over two centuries. Its front door faces the old route of Scituate Avenue. Opposite the house is a shingled barn, c. 1880, with an uneven roofline and a cross-gable loft hoist. Other small outbuildings surround these two structures to form a low cluster of frame farm buildings standing isolated among hundreds of acres of farmland—the typical landscape in western Cranston a century ago.

#### SEARLE AVENUE

- O18\* **George M. Saurin House (1888):** A 1½-story dwelling with a cross-gabled roof. The structure is clapboarded and has imbricated-pattern shingling and a diamond window in the cross gables. The balusters of the front porch match those of an unusually elaborate fence enclosing the property. The house was probably built by Henry Pratt, a local carpenter, whose workshop was nearby, and who was responsible for a number of similar Queen Anne style dwellings in Oaklawn. Searle Avenue was named for the family which first settled Oaklawn in the 17th century and whose farm was acquired and platted in the mid-19th century by Francis Turner. Saurin was a silversmith who worked on Steeple Street in downtown Providence.

#### SEAVIEW AVENUE

- P82\* **Robert Pettis House (c. 1900):** A large, 2½-story, cross-gable-roofed Shingle Style house. Second-story porches are inserted under the saltbox-like gables. The interplay of projecting and recessed volumes makes this an excellent example of the Shingle Style. The Pettis family founded the Oyster House on the point of Pawtuxet Neck in 1850 which remained for over a century. A large prominent house, this structure is a landmark at the southern end of Pawtuxet Neck.

**P32\*** **Fred L. Smith House (1900):** This 2½-story, 3-bay gambrel-roofed Colonial Revival house has a central entrance porch between two bay windows, and an elaborate rear porch overlooking the water. An exceptionally attractive cross-gambrel-roofed carriage house stands by the road; its cornice includes a dentil course around the entire building. Consoles support the 2nd-story loft which is composed of double doors surmounted by a broken-scroll pediment.

**P69\*** **Canfield Carriage House (c. 1900):** This shingled structure has been converted for residential use. It contains an octagonal central tower with a castellated parapet. Wide paneled double doors and a multiplicity of diamond-paned windows are intended to create an Elizabethan effect. The carriage house was originally part of the property of Richard A. Canfield who erected the house at 76 Seaview Avenue in 1894.

### SEVEN MILE ROAD

In 1660, the Providence Proprietors set a boundary seven miles west from the settlement, determining that all the land within that line would be divided as individual farms, while all that beyond would be held in common. Today only this portion of the line, constituting the boundary between Cranston and Scituate, remains clearly visible.

### SHAW AVENUE

**E3†** **Edgewood Yacht Club (1908):** A 2½-story, shingled structure, designed by Harvey Flint, built on pilings in the bay. A 2-story porch surrounds the building and is sheltered by the building's low hip roof, accented by triangular dormers and a central cupola. Having survived two major hurricanes, the building remains a handsome and rare example of its type. The club was founded in 1889 as a neighborhood organization, as opposed to the earlier Rhode Island Yacht Club which served Providence residents.

**184-86** **Double House (c. 1905):** A huge double house composed of two projecting flank gables separated by a central cross gable. In bungalow-like fashion, each flank gable incorporates a 1st-story glass porch surmounted by a 2nd-story terrace entered from a shed dormer.

**E130** **George R. Babbitt House (c. 1900):** A 2½-story dwelling with a cross-gable roof and Stick Style front porch. The round-butt shingles in the second story and the curved-stick pattern in the gables make this house an unusual variant of a standard form. Babbitt was the president and treasurer of the American Oil Company of Providence and served as President of the Cranston Town Council from 1896-1901.

**E161 and 165** **Houses (c. 1880s):** A pair of 1½-story, 5-bay, Queen Anne houses with a cross-gabled roof and a central, 3-bay entrance porch. Attractive gable screens and bargeboards pierced by a row of circles fill each gable. They are handsome examples of the first consciously suburban building

**E200** **Nicholas Arnold House (1795):** This 1½-story, gambrel-roofed house, with a later kitchen ell, was built by one of the descendants of William Arnold, who settled in Pawtuxet in 1638. It replaced an earlier house that had burned, and it was the center of a farm that stretched to Narragansett Bay and from present-day Bluff Avenue to Norwood Avenue.

### SOCKANOSSET CROSS ROAD

**200†** **Stukely Westcott House (c. 1757):** A 5-bay, 2½-story, gable-roofed, mid-18th-century house with a central chimney and a handsome pedimented Federal doorway with a fanlight, dating probably from the early 19th century. A kitchen ell and porch were added in the late 19th century. Built by a member of one of Cranston's earliest families, which had large holdings in this area, the house was used as a pest house when smallpox broke out in 1772. In the 19th century the house was owned by Thomas Brayton when it was acquired as part of the consolidation of the State Farm in 1870 and later served as the homes for ministers and wardens at the state institutions. It remains state property, as part of the Howard Reservation.

**E12** **James H. Armington House (1868):** A 1½-story, 3-bay bracketed brick house with a low cross-gabled roof. This handsome Italianate dwelling was originally erected on Broad Street and was moved to its present location in 1925. Armington began his career as a supervisor for Zachariah Allen. Later he was in charge of the Polk and Steere mills at Greenville and the Wanton Vaughn mills.

### TUCKER AVENUE

**P27\*** **James Tucker House (1804):** This 2½-story, 5-bay, gable-roofed house is one of Cranston's few central-hall-plan houses and the only one remaining with flanking chimneys incorporated into end-brick walls. It originally stood on Broad Street where Tucker Avenue is now. In the late 19th century it was occupied by Dr. George Tucker, a dentist. He lived in the house in 1896 when Broad Street was widened and the house moved.

**P32-34\*** **Gilford William Chace House (c. 1800):** This 2½-story, 5-bay, gable-roofed house was reportedly built in Fall River, Massachusetts, and moved to Broad Street in Pawtuxet Village in 1812. Chace was born in the house in 1812 and it was his parents who are said to have moved the house to Pawtuxet. One of the original Forty-Niners, Chace lived in the village for most of his eighty-five years. The house was moved to its present location during the 1896 widening of Broad Street.

### TURNER AVENUE

**5\*** **Henry Pratt Workshop (c. 1880):** A 1-story shingled struc-

ture that appears to be a garage, but is surmounted by a broad tapering high tower. Pratt was a local carpenter who built several of the houses in Oaklawn.

**50** **Stephen Turner House (c. 1879):** A small 1½-story dwelling set gable-end to the street with a corner bay window and simple front porch. Built for the son of Francis Turner, whose farm was platted to create this street, the house is typical of the simple Queen Anne style dwellings erected in Oaklawn.

### VERMONT AVENUE

**K31** **Garzilli's Bakery (1908):** This unassuming, 1-story structure houses two brick bake ovens built as replicas of those the founder, Enrico Garzilli, had used in Italy. Originally heated by firewood, the ovens are still in use and are topped by an 8-inch layer of sand and ashes that serves as insulation. Garzilli was part of the large wave of Italian immigrants who arrived in Cranston at the turn-of-the-century, transforming Knightsville into a center of the Italian community.

### WARWICK AVENUE

**E24** **St. Paul's Church (1930):** This handsome "Collegiate Gothic" church of Weymouth granite designed by Samuel M. Morino, is entered through a central tower 120 feet high. Over each window of the nave, transept, and sanctuary is a sculptured panel portraying the seven deadly sins and their corresponding virtues. The cartouches contain the bishop's crest and coat of arms. The stained-glass windows were created by Earl Edward Sanborn. The congregation was founded in 1907 and initially met at the Edgewood Casino on Shaw Avenue. Until erection of this building the congregation met in a small frame structure on this site.

**Warwick Avenue Bridge (1921-1922):** A 3-span, concrete-arch deck bridge set on concrete piers. Designed by Theodore I. Ellis for the State Board of Public Roads and employing a modified barrel arch, the bridge incorporated the granite masonry abutments of a previous bridge on the site. This site is where Madam Knight, the Englishwoman who kept a diary of her journey from Boston to Philadelphia in 1743, crossed the Pawtuxet. At that time a gravel bank made a shoal that permitted easy wading across the river.

### WHEELER AVENUE

**E134-136** **Willard Newell House (c. 1904):** A large 3½-story double house with perpendicular jerkinhead roofs and a broad front porch terminating in a 2-story octagonal corner pavilion. Occupied by the son of the developer of Wheeler Avenue, Lorenzo D. Newell, this structure is an excellent example of the elaborate 2-family house occasionally constructed in Edgewood in the early years of the 20th century. The house is one of four projected for this side of

the street, each identical in plan. Newell was a woolen goods manufacturer.

- E142-144 **Richard Stanford House (1904):** A large 3¼-story cross-gable-roofed double house with a broad front porch terminating in a 2-story octagonal corner pavilion. Virtually identical in massing and plan to 134-136, this house demonstrates the different finishes that could be given the same building. Such variations give Wheeler Avenue a sense of order and cohesiveness without any monotony. Stanford was a Providence toolmaker.
- E179 **George B. Cote House (1901):** A 2½-story Colonial Revival house with a broad end-gambrel roof, a small 1-story room on one side, and a stuccoed porte cochere. The variety of surface covering, together with the variety of window shapes under the gable, give the house considerable visual interest.

#### WHEELOCK AVENUE

- O24\* **Oaklawn Grange (1914):** A 1-story, shingled structure, five bays deep with a simple enclosed and pedimented entrance vestibule. The Oaklawn Grange, a local branch of the nation-wide Order of Patrons of Husbandry, was established in 1909 at the old meetinghouse behind the Oaklawn Baptist Church. By 1911 there were 80 members and by 1912 sufficient funds to purchase a lot for construction of a meeting place. In 1927 total membership reached 251; it is presently 168. As part of the most important American farmers' organization, which in the late 19th century helped to establish national policies regarding railroad regulation and to initiate rural free delivery, the Oaklawn Grange is a reminder of both the rural character of western Cranston and the important social role Oaklawn Village has played in the city's history.

#### WILBUR AVENUE

- O108\* **Job and Roby Wilbur House (c. 1840):** Originally a simple 1¼-story Greek Revival structure, the building was raised to its present 2½ stories c. 1910. Outbuildings include a large carriage house, converted into a residence, and an attractive gazebo. Job Wilbur was the real-estate entrepreneur who platted his farm and renamed the village of Searle's Corners "Oak Lawn." His wife Roby initiated the first May breakfast in America, held at the old Quaker Meeting House in 1868 to benefit the newly formed Oaklawn Benevolent Baptist Society.
- O109\* **Edward Searle House (1677):** The original, 1½-story, stone-end dwelling stands today as an ell on the 5-bay, 2¼-story main building of the house which was built by 1720, perhaps in two stages. Searle was the son-in-law of Thomas Ralph, one of the original Meshanticut Purchasers. The family prospered so that by the time of the Revolutionary War it owned six slaves and over 200 acres. This area was known as Searle's Corners. The family burial ground stands

further west between number 103 and 127 Wilbur Avenue. In the mid-19th century the house and the farm were acquired by Francis Turner who platted the area north of Wilbur Avenue.

- O229\* **Oaklawn Community Baptist Church (1879):** A simple clapboarded structure three bays deep, erected on the site of the old Quaker Meeting House (1729) which was moved behind it and demolished in 1956 to make way for a cinder-block addition to the church. The building is ornamented with wooden lancet arches having broadfoot crosses above the windows and entrance door; the arch motif is continued in the belfry. Originally the trim and body of the building were painted in contrasting tones to good effect. The Oaklawn Benevolent Baptist Society was organized in 1864. After the old Quaker Meeting declined, the old Meeting House was purchased by Lodowick Brayton in 1864. It was to support this new Baptist Congregation that Roby Wilbur, whose house still stands at 109 Wilbur Avenue, organized the first May breakfast in America in 1868. The practice of holding a huge public breakfast prepared by members of the congregation to support the church became the social event of the year for most of the town. The tradition has continued to the present and has been adopted elsewhere across America, but it remains a particularly strong Rhode Island institution.
- O230\* **Proprietors School, now Oaklawn Library (c. 1830):** A 1-story Greek Revival structure originally built near the Gorton Arnold stand (near the intersection of present-day Routes 2 and 5), the building was cut in half and moved to its present location c. 1840. The structure served as the village school until 1895. Since then it has been the Oaklawn Public Library. A rear addition was constructed in 1966.
- O271\* **Thomas Brayton House (1767):** A 1½-story gambrel-roofed structure with a Late Victorian cross-gable addition supported by the front entrance porch. Originally one of three gambrel-roofed houses at the intersection with Natick Road, the building still defines the entrance to the Oaklawn Village Historic District; the picket fence, a number of small outbuildings, and a prominent shingled barn all recall the rural character of Oaklawn.

#### ADDENDUM

#### NARRAGANSETT BOULEVARD

- 1180 **Rosedale Apartments (1939):** Cranston's best example of the Art Deco style, this 3-story flat roofed building, from designs by Herbert Hunt, is stuccoed and forms a U-shaped courtyard facing the Narragansett River. Although a restrained example of the type, the complex includes the streamlined aluminum door-hoods, glass brick panels, and stepped parapets that are the hall-marks of the moderne style. This building continued, in a new form, the tradition of spacious, elegant residential construction in Edgewood.



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