

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For HCRS use only  
received MAY 11 1981  
date entered JUN 11 1981

**1. Name**

historic B.M.C., Durfee High School  
and/or common Durfee Education Center

**2. Location**

street & number 289 Rock Street \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication  
city, town Fall River \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ congressional district \_\_\_\_\_ tenth \_\_\_\_\_  
state Massachusetts code 025 county Bristol code 005

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name City of Fall River  
street & number 1 Government Center  
city, town Fall River \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state Massachusetts

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Bristol County Registry of Deeds

street & number 441 North Main Street

city, town Fall River \_\_\_\_\_ state Massachusetts

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

Inventory of the Historic Assets of the Commonwealth  
has this property been determined eligible? \_\_\_\_\_ yes  no

date 1977 \_\_\_\_\_ federal  state \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ local

depository for survey records Massachusetts Historical Commission

City, town Boston \_\_\_\_\_ state Massachusetts

## 7. Description

### Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

### Check one

unaltered  
 altered

### Check one

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

B.M.C Durfee High School is an imposing three and a half story granite building occupying an entire city block bounded by Rock, Cherry, High, and Locust Streets. Erected in 1886 from designs by George A. Clough, Durfee High School is prominently situated near the proposed Highlands Historic District overlooking Mt. Hope Bay, just north of downtown Fall River. Its setting, together with a steep hipped roof and five story clock-tower, make the structure a dominant element in the landscape and a key Fall River landmark.

The most concise description of the building was that written by the architect upon its opening and published three years later in B.M.C. Durfee High School, Fall River, MA, Fall River, 1889. It is still remarkably accurate.

The building occupies a commanding position, with spacious grounds about it. The area of the building is 20,500 feet. The exterior walls of all four elevations are built of granite, surmounted with steep plated roofs, and the whole treated in a modern renaissance style. The principal features of the architecture are brought out in a clock-tower an observatory tower, and a central pavilion with steep roofs. The main features (two towers and central pavilion) are arranged across the front, between heavy projecting end pavilions, and are tied together at the bottom, from one to the other, with a massive stone arcade. The clock tower at the south end is mainly of granite, terminating with a copper spire or finial. The clock dial is 114 feet above the grade; below, and yet above the roofs, is an open belfry with a chime of bells. The north tower occupies a symmetrical position with that of the south, but is of less height and is surmounted with an astronomical cupola, fitted with telescope. The central pavilion between these two towers comprise the monumental features of the building. It is all of stone, with a broad base and massive piers, each side terminating with certain ornamental finials, and a large tablet between, bearing this inscription in raised letters, "B.M.C. Durfee High School." At the left of the table, at the base of one of the finials, is "A.D." and at the right "1886."

The plan of the building is somewhat irregular with a length of 253 feet, the greatest width being 90 feet, and the least 60 feet, and is laid out upon the German principle of gaining the best results in introducing light and air, obtaining free and constant circulation and preventing one schoolroom from contaminating another. To aid in making this principle more effective, the system of indirect steam heating is introduced.

The building is equivalent to 4 stories in height beside a subterranean story used for a boiler room. Much of this subterranean part was blasted out of solid rock. The floor surfaces are constructed of iron and masonry so as to be fireproof as are the many mills in the city. The corridor floors are tiled in marble while the schoolroom floors are finished in pine boards sawn so that the grain is at a right angle with the plane of the surface.

The general finish of the interior is of oak. The walls are wainscotted throughout to the height of about 4 feet and in the corridors, where the floors are tiled, a black marble strip frons the plinth to the wainscot.

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The architecture of the interior is quite simple in character, and is confined to bringing out the constructional parts in slight simple stucco details, showing the arches of the brick masonry, the beams being covered and protected against fire by the stucco work, the same being finished with a beaded edge.

The building, although in constant use as a high school until 1978 is virtually intact. The exterior remains unchanged. On the interior, several classrooms have been divided in half, but at such an early date that the woodwork and plasterwork have been matched exactly. The original gas lighting fixtures and the original school-room clocks have long disappeared. The bath-rooms have been remodelled. The only intrusion is a temporary storage shed closet built into a hallway on the second floor. A telescope is the only important feature that has been removed--it was removed from the observatory tower, restored and was installed at the new Durfee High School in January 1981. Although the building has, remarkably never been substantially altered or renovated, it has suffered from lack of funds and maintenance. Recently a water pipe burst and water cascaded through all three stories and froze, causing serious damage.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

<b>Specific dates</b>	1886	<b>Builder/Architect</b>	George A. Clough, architect Norcross Brothers, builders
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### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The B.M.C. Durfee High School, designed by Boston architect George Clough, possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, and workmanship. In the quality of its design and materials, it is emblematic of late nineteenth century Fall River's wealth and civic pride and reflects the city's commitment to meet the educational needs of its rapidly expanding population. In addition to its civic and architectural significance, the school also has strong associations with one of Fall River's most important families; the Durfee's. Thus the school meets criteria A, B, and C of the National Register of Historic Places.

The building was given by Mary Brayton Durfee Young in memory of her son, Bradford Mathew Chaloner Durfee. Durfee, a native of Fall River and area resident, died in 1872, at the age of twenty-nine. The Durfee family was prominent in the establishment of Fall River's industrial base with the establishment of the Fall River Iron Works in 1821. In giving the building, Mrs. Young was responding both to the needs of the city, whose thirty-year old high school was overcrowded and about to be enlarged, and to the desires of her son, who hoped that his estate might assist the youth of the city to be instructed in the "chemical, physical, and mechanical sciences, which enter so largely into the industries of Fall River." Thus, the school was endowed by Mrs. Young with \$50,000 for these purposes. The principal orator at the dedication on June 15, 1887 (the 44th anniversary of Durfee's birth) was Reverend Roswell D. Hitchcock, President of the Union Theological Seminary in New York, who summed up the special role that Durfee High School would play in the life of Fall River. "In this metropolis of mechanical industry, in which so many thousands have found lucrative employment and such handsome fortunes have been made, it was felt to be wise and proper that special opportunities should be provided for these branches of science that underlie all this mechanical industry."

Mrs. Young selected and acquired the site and offered it and a future school building to the City Council in February 1883. A joint committee of the school committee and the special committee on the high school building unanimously selected George A. Clough of Boston to be the architect of the new building. Clough, who was Boston's first city architect, was a prolific designer of schools, having completed 83 of them before receiving this commission. His most well-known structures in Boston were the Boston Latin School and the Marcella Street Home for Vagrant Boys, both of which displayed the symmetry, steep roofline, and paired towers that are so vividly expressed in the Durfee High School. Originally the building was to have been constructed of brick. The more costly (and more typical of Fall River) granite was substituted. The stone for the first floor came from a local quarry, William Beattie's; the stone for the other stories was supplied by Alexander McDonald from his quarry in Mason, New Hampshire. The foundations were laid by a local mason, Tillinghast Records; the remainder of the stone and the entire building was erected by Norcross Brothers of Worcester, Massachusetts, who had built Boston High School.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

B.M.C. Durfee High School Building, Fall River, MA Fall River 1889  
Pelton, W.J. Durfee Quo Vadis: Biography of a High School, 1970  
Phillips History of Fall River, Volume II pp.81-96.

# 10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Acreage of nominated property 66,465 sq. ft.

Quadrangle name Fall River

Quadrangle scale 1:25,000

### UMT References

A 19 320930 4619100  
Zone Easting Northing

B                    
Zone Easting Northing

C                  

D                  

E                  

F                  

G                  

H                  

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Full city block bounded by Rock, High, Cherry, and Locust Streets.  
Also please refer to the attached map.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Candace Jenkins, Registration Director with Vivienne Lasky, Preservation Planner Fall River Office of Historic Preservation

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date January, 1981

street & number 294 Washington Street telephone (617) 727-8470

city or town Boston state Massachusetts

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Pattina L. Weslowksi

title Executive Director, Massachusetts Historical Commission date 5/1/81

**For HCRS use only**

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the National Register date 6.11.81

for Nelson Lynn  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_  
Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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received

MAY 11 1981

date entered

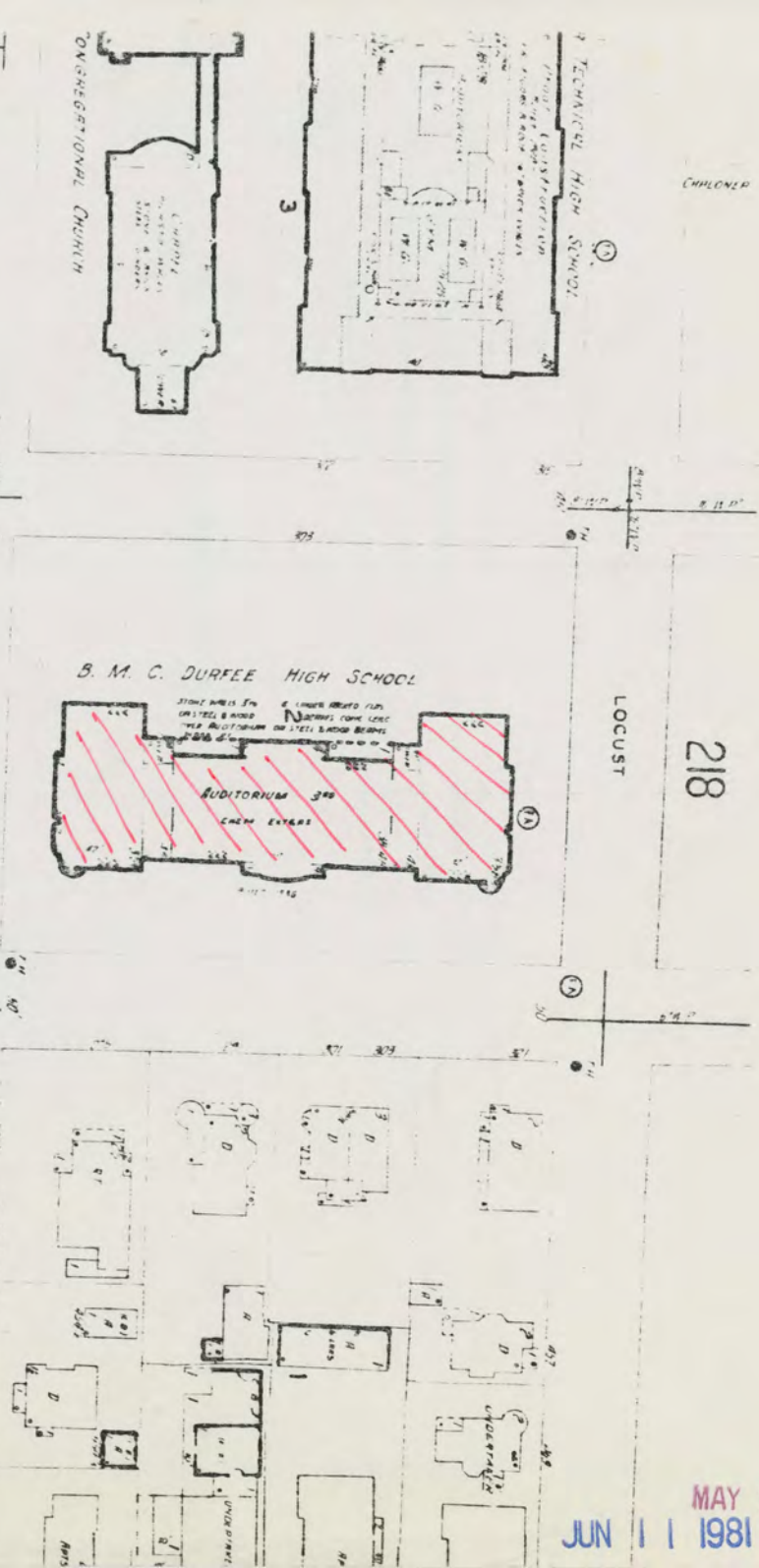
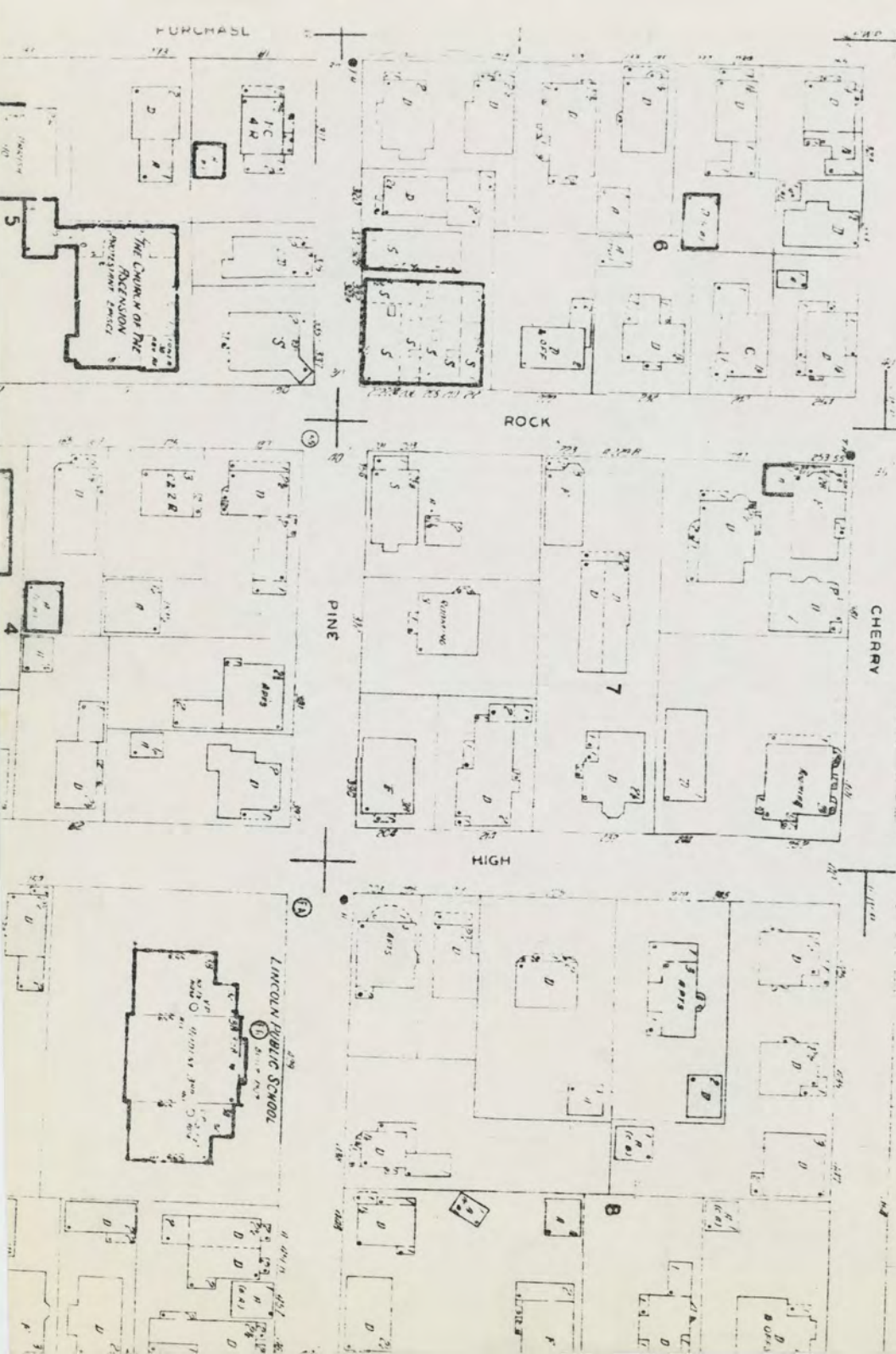
JUN 11 1981

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 2

Few of George Clough's building remain and Durfee High School is an important example of the scholastic building that occurred in Massachusetts, following the 1848 enactment of a law calling for high schools in the communities throughout the state. Although unusual in its source, Durfee High School is typical of the late 19th century belief in the democratic value of education, and the social benefits of technology. The Secretary of the State Board of Education summarized the prevailing sentiments: "The civilization (and patriotism) of a modern Massachusetts community is expressed in no insignificant degree in the character and condition of its schoolhouses." Barely altered since its opening, Durfee High School remains a powerful architectural statement of the optimism and civic purpose of Fall River and the entire state a century ago.



CHILDRER

218

MAY 11 1981  
JUN 11 1981

DUE 6/10/81 — 6/25/81  
dnr-3

Name Surfee, B.M.C. High School

State, County MA Bristol

Fed Nom or Request—Agency \_\_\_\_\_

Working Number 5.11.81.152

Federal Register Date 2-2-82

Nomination  
 Determination of Eligibility  
 On Nomination Form

Bldg(s)  
 Site  
 Object  
 Structure  
 District

Within:  
 Multiple Resource Area  
 Thematic Group

Maps 4/  
Photos 1/

Nomination prepared by:  
 State Staff  
 Local  
 Other

Entered in the  
Action: National Register  
 ACCEPT 6/11/81  
 RETURN \_\_\_\_\_  
 REJECT \_\_\_\_\_

Check if Appropriate:  
 State Request for Review  
 Keeper's Decision to Review  
 2nd Return

I. Evaluation of Resource (cont. on back if necessary)

II. Evaluation of Nomination

	Good	Adequate	Poor	Comments
1. Descriptive Statement Short Format <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				
2. Significance Statement Short Format <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				
3. Concepts/Integrity				
4. Concepts/Criteria				
5. Concepts/Boundaries				
6. Contextual Evaluation				

General Comments (cont. on back if necessary):

Reviewer/Date \_\_\_\_\_

See Attached \_\_\_\_\_



MAY 11 1981

B.M.C. Durfee High School  
289 Rock Street  
Fall River, Mass.

Three quarter view looking south-east on  
Rock Street.

Date: March 9, 1981

Photographer: Denise Donatelli

Negative Location: Fall River Office of  
Historic Preservation  
One Government Center  
Fall River, Mass.

*Bristol County*

JUN 11 1981



Fall River MA, Ma

Special Roll 3/9/81

#2 B.M.C. Durfee High School



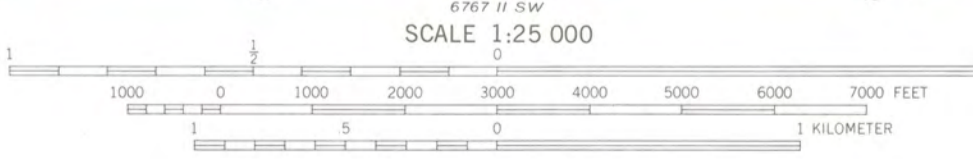
B.M.C. Durfee High School  
Fall River, Mass.

UTM REFERENCES:  
19/320930/4619100



JUN 11 1981

Maped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey  
Topography by planetable surveys 1938-1939. Revised from  
aerial photographs taken 1966. Field checked 1967  
Selected hydrographic data compiled from USC&GS Charts 350 (1966)  
and 353 (1967). This information is not intended for navigational purposes  
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grids based on Massachusetts coordinate system,  
mainland zone, and Rhode Island coordinate system  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid,  
zone 19  
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where  
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked  
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown  
Boundaries in tidewater areas in Massachusetts from information furnished  
by Massachusetts Department of Public Works



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET  
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929  
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER  
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUMS IS VARIABLE  
SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE APPROXIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER  
THE AVERAGE RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 4.4 FEET

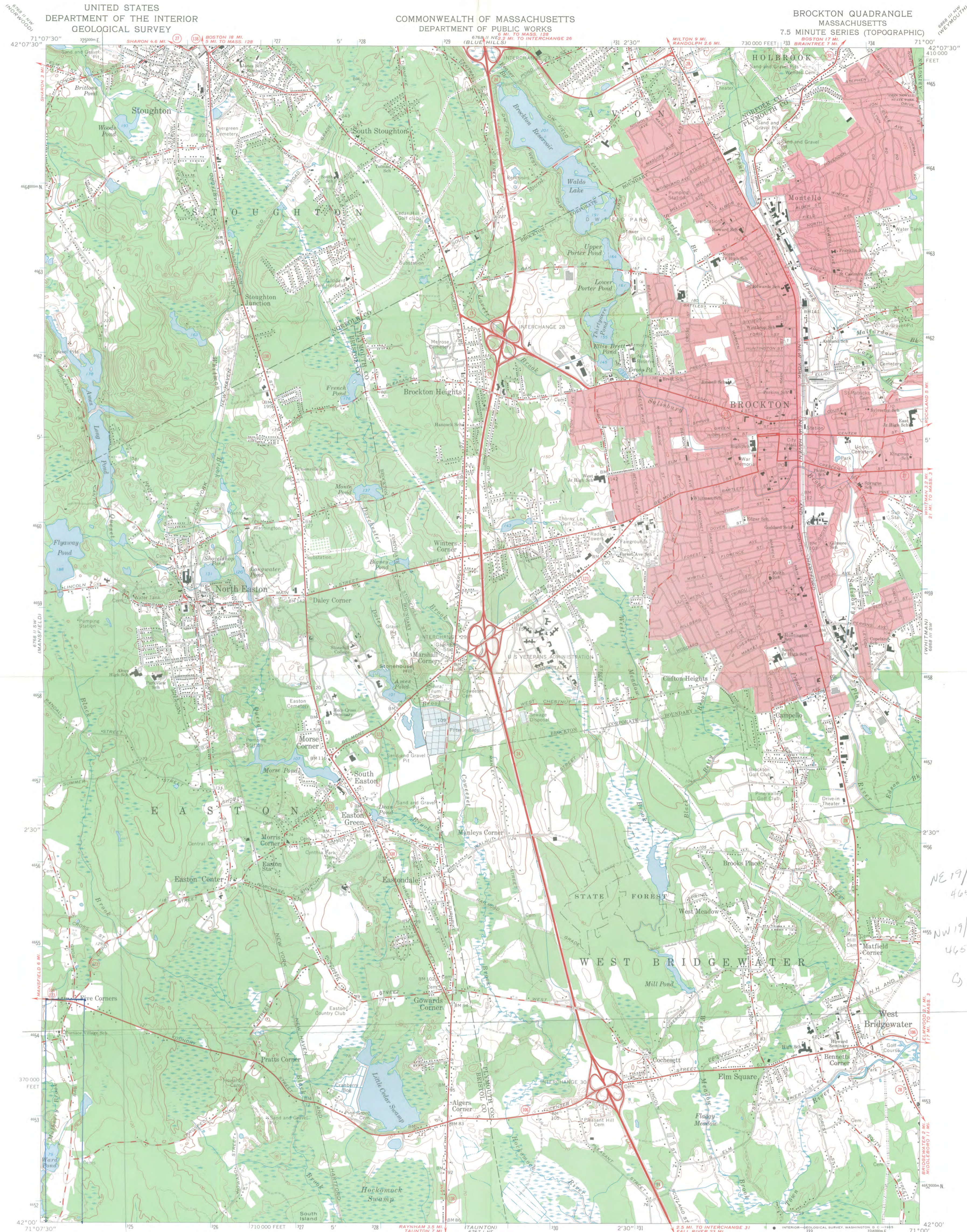
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FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

ROAD CLASSIFICATION  
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hard surface  
Secondary highway, all weather, Unimproved road, fair or dry  
hard surface  
Interstate Route U. S. Route State Route



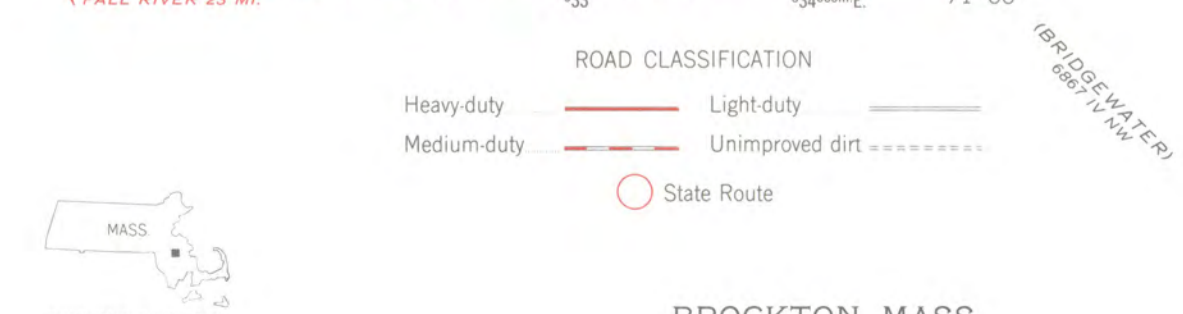
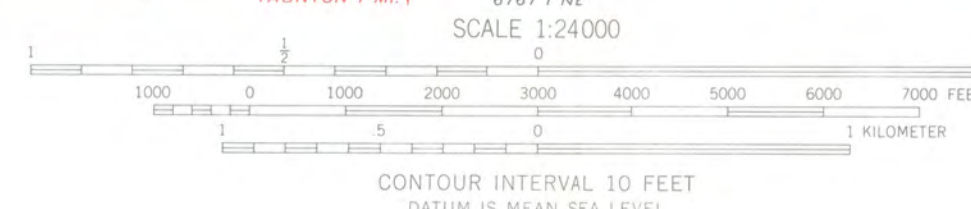
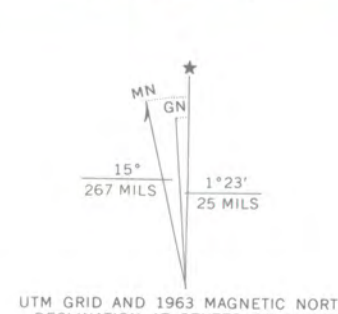
FALL RIVER, MASS.—R.I.  
N4137.5—W7107.5/7.5

1967  
PHOTOREVISED 1979  
AMS 6767 II NW—SERIES V814



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4654 370  
NW 19/324 100  
4654 380  
G

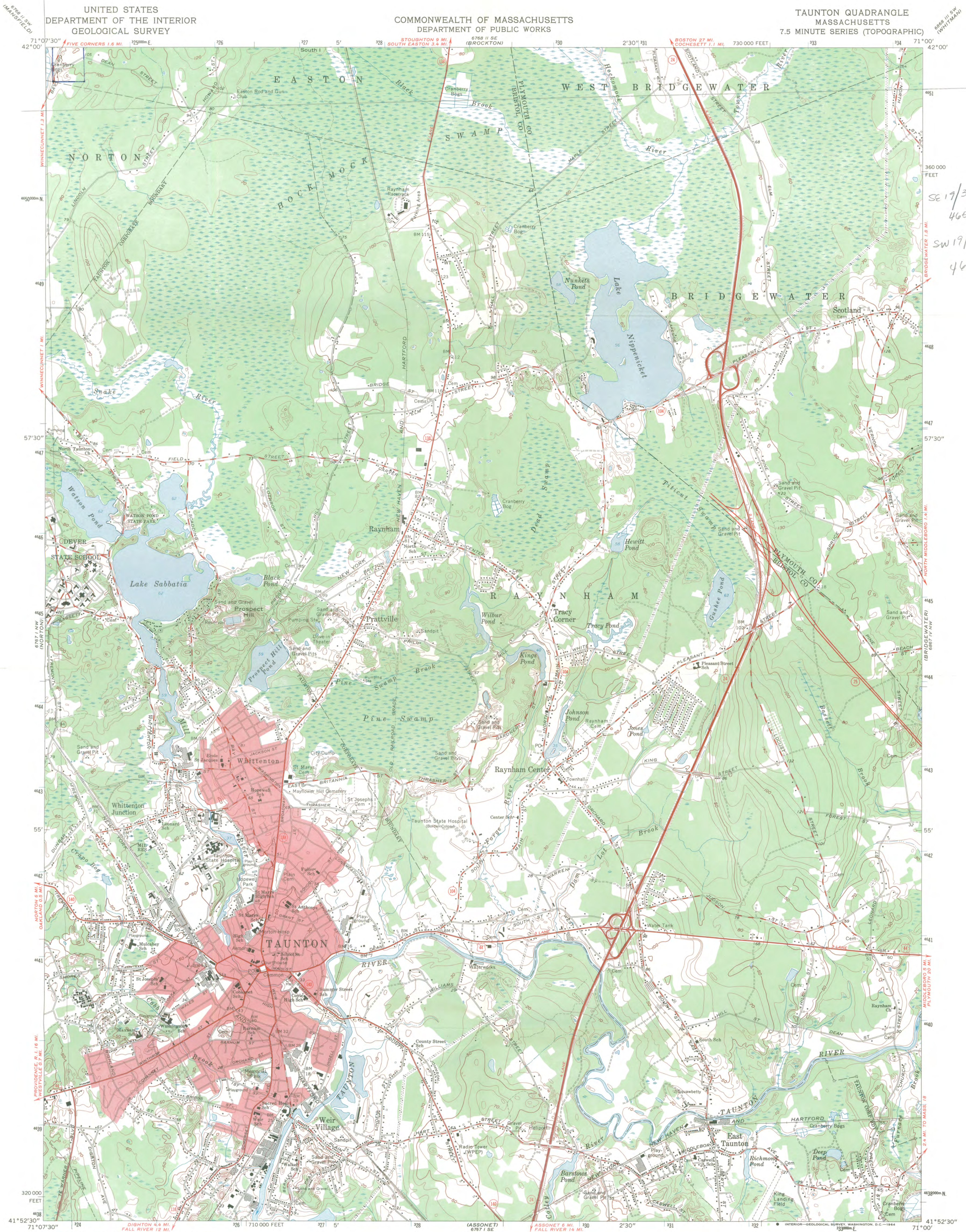
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Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey  
Planimetry by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs  
Topography by planetable surveys 1936. Revised 1963  
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system,  
mainland zone  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
zone 19, shown in blue  
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

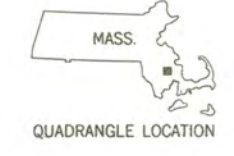
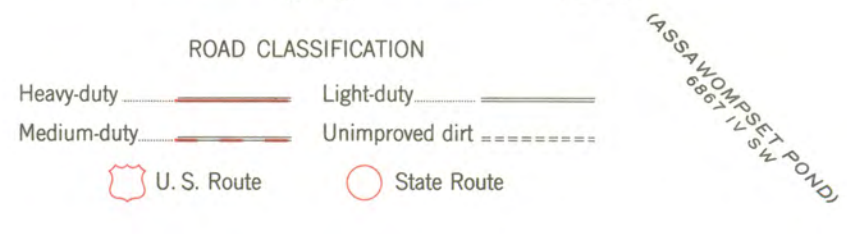
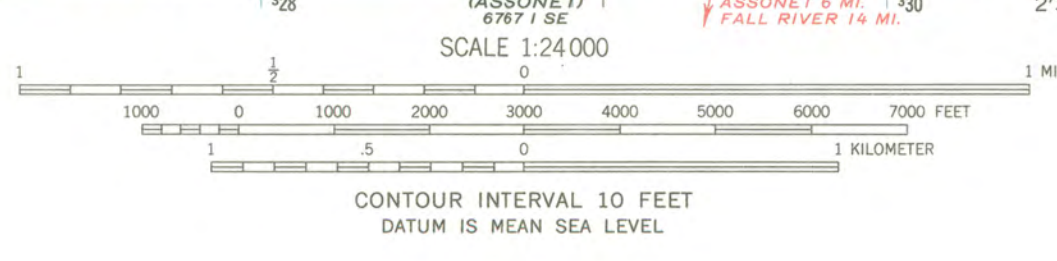
BROCKTON, MASS.  
N4200-W7100/7.5  
1963

AMS 6768 II SE-SERIES V814



SE 19/324 460  
4651 330  
SW 19/324 090  
4651 340

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey  
Planimetry in part by photogrammetric methods from aerial  
photographs. Topography by planimetric surveys 1942  
Revised 1962  
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system,  
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A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

TAUNTON, MASS.  
N4152.5—W7100/7.5  
1962  
AMS 6767 1 NE—SERIES V814

MAY 11 1981



**MASSACHUSETTS  
HISTORICAL  
COMMISSION**

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
Office of the Secretary of State**

294 Washington Street  
Boston, Massachusetts  
02108  
617-727-8470

MICHAEL JOSEPH CONNOLLY  
Secretary of State

May 4, 1981

Mr. Jerry Rogers, Acting Keeper  
Registration Branch  
Heritage, Conservation & Recreation  
Service  
DOI, W434  
Washington D.C. 20243

Dear Mr. Rogers:

Enclosed you will find the following nomination forms for publicly owned buildings:

- Barnstable-Barnstable County Courthouse (state)
- (Fall River-B.M.C. Durfee High School (local)
- Hull-Point Allerton Lifesaving Station (state)
- Lynn-Old Post Office (local)
- Weymouth-Fogg Library (local)

All have been voted eligible by the State Review Board and have been signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer.

Sincerely,

*Candace Jenkins*  
Candace Jenkins  
Registration Director



ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE MASSACHUSETTS

JUN 11 1981

Date Entered

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Durfee, B. M. C., High School	Fall River Bristol County
Fogg Library	Weymouth Norfolk County
Barnstable County Courthouse	Barnstable Barnstable County
Point Allerton Lifesaving Station	Hull Plymouth County

Also Notified

Honorable Paul E. Tsongas

Honorable Edward M. Kennedy  
Honorable Margaret M. Heckler  
Honorable Gerry E. Studds

Northeast Region, HCRS

State Historic Preservation Officer  
Mrs. Patricia L. Weslowski  
Executive Director  
Massachusetts Historical Commission  
294 Washington Street  
Boston, Massachusetts 02108

NR

Eady/bjr/6/15/81

For further information, please call the National Register at (202)343-6401.