

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination FormSee instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic Town of Uxbridge MRA  
Uxbridge Multiple Resource Area (partial inventory: historic  
and/or common and architectural) (preferred)

## 2. Location

street & number Multiple - see attached list N/A not for publication  
city, town Uxbridge N/A vicinity of ~~Congressional district~~  
state Massachusetts code 025 county Worcester code 027

## 3. Classification

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

## 4. Owner of Property

name Multiple - see individual forms

street &amp; number

city, town N/A vicinity of  state 

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Worcester County Courthousestreet & number 2 Main Streetcity, town Worcester state Massachusetts

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

a) Inventory of the Historic Assets of the Commonwealth  
title b) National Register of Historic Places  
has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no  
date a) 1981; b) 1971, 1973, 1974, 1980 ☒ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ localdepository for survey records Massachusetts Historical Commissioncity, town Boston state Massachusetts

## 7. Description Uxbridge Multiple Resource Area, Uxbridge, Massachusetts

### Condition

☒ excellent  
☒ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check one

☒ unaltered  
☐ altered

### Check one

☒ original site  
☐ moved date N/A

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

#### Introduction

The Town of Uxbridge is located in the southeast corner of Worcester County, approximately 42 miles southwest of Boston, 18 miles southeast of the City of Worcester and 23 miles northwest of Providence, Rhode Island. Bounded by Mendon and Millville on the east, Northbridge and Sutton on the north, Sutton and Douglas on the west, and the Rhode Island state line on the south, Uxbridge is basically rectangular in shape; it occupies an area of 30 square miles and possesses a current population of approximately 8,500.

#### Topography

Uxbridge contains two contrasting landscapes: a large series of slow-flowing rivers which proceed southeastwardly from the central and north sections of the town into Millville and hilly uplands which flank these rivers on the east and west. Principal rivers are the Mumford, the Blackstone and West Rivers, which converge southeast of Uxbridge Center and thereafter are known as the Blackstone River, which eventually empties into Narragansett Bay. These three rivers occupy broad flood-plains. Although their sources exist outside of the town, within Uxbridge they are fed by numerous brooks and ponds that flow from the town's western uplands. Some of the more important of these brooks (which provided easily harnessed water power for early milling) are the Rivulet Brook (fed by Cold Spring and Farrell Brooks), Emerson Brook (fed by an extensive series of ponds in southwest Uxbridge) and Ironstone Brook (fed by brooks diverted into the Ironstone Reservoir in the southeast corner of town). In addition to the broad grassy/swampy plains that surround the main rivers, the town also possesses several cedar swamps, the largest of which is located in an upland area of ponds in the town's southwest corner. Additional small cedar swamps exist near the town's northeast corner.

The hilly uplands which flank the Blackstone Valley consist of a base of granitic gneiss. Areas west of the Blackstone River Valley rise to higher elevations than those found in the eastern portion of the town; further, much of this area (particularly central and southwestern portions) is characterized by the presence of many small steep hills scattered around ponds and brooks. The highest elevations exist at the town's northwest corner (Castle Hill, 572') and along a ridge near Taft, Aldrich, and King Streets (550-570'). Rock outcroppings and stony soils including some sand and gravel deposits exist in western upland areas.

During the 19th century, building stone (gneiss) was quarried from at least two sites: Hartford Avenue west of its junction with Sutton Street and Linwood Street near the Northbridge town line. As late as 1918, stone quarried here was used in the construction of retaining walls

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at Ellis Island in New York. Iron deposits, presumably in the form of bog iron, exist in the town's southwest corner where a forge was in operation as early as the 1730s. An iron mine, utilized c.1830, is reported to have existed in the southwest corner of the town, although sources do not cite a precise location. In at least one location on the west bank of the Blackstone River near the village of Ironstone, clay deposits were used for brickmaking during the Colonial and Federal periods. Silver deposits exist off Chockalog Street near the Douglas town line and were the subject of an unsuccessful mining venture by "New York capitalists" in 1839.

Although 19th century views show that extensive portions of Uxbridge had been cleared for pastures and planting fields near rivers and for pastures and orchards in upland areas, much of this former agricultural land is now covered with second-growth forests. Pastures and meadowlands remain along the West and Blackstone Rivers, on the slopes of Castle Hill in the town's northwest corner, and along sections of Chockalog Street, Richardson Street, Hartford Avenue (east of the West River) and West River Road.

#### Historic Overview

The town of Uxbridge is an industrial/residential/agricultural community on the Blackstone River corridor characterized by a varied topography which has greatly influenced the town's historical development and cultural landscape character. A primary focus of settlement has long been the confluence of the Blackstone, Mumford and West Rivers. Most likely utilized by prehistoric populations, it was the site of a Christian Indian settlement in the 17th century and has historically served as the institutional/commercial center of town. Following the establishment of the Town of Uxbridge from part of Mendon in 1727, initial early 18th century colonial settlement probably occurred in the adjoining eastern upland meadows and the central valley lowlands. By 1728, a Congregational meetinghouse was established just west of the Mumford River; an early Quaker settlement to the south erected a second meetinghouse in 1770 (Form 10-1; NR 1974). During the 18th and 19th centuries, town residents enjoyed a dispersed settlement pattern and a prosperous agricultural economy which was increasingly supplemented by industrial clusters that provided additional employment opportunities and a broadened economic base for the town.

The town's location on the Blackstone Canal (1828-1829) and Providence-Worcester Railroad (1847) corridor further stimulated widespread early 19th century textile manufacturing which remains active to the present. Most notable of the many small industrial villages is the 1820s Rogerson Village complex on the Mumford River in northern Uxbridge (Form 47-B, NR 1971). By the mid 19th century, Uxbridge Center was firmly established as the town's primary institutional and commercial core,

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while a secondary focus emerged at northern Uxbridge in the latter part of the century. Surrounding these concentrated settlement and activity nodes existed numerous dispersed farms which participated in market gardening and dairying.

Development within Uxbridge today consists of scattered vernacular and high style houses of the 18th and 19th centuries, several small villages built near former water power sites, a main village at Uxbridge Center which dates from the Federal and subsequent Industrial periods, and some free-standing suburban houses built individually since World War II throughout the town. With the exception of a small number of brick commercial blocks at Uxbridge Center and individual brick houses, the largest number of buildings are free-standing, wood-framed structures.

The current economy of the town is partially based on textile and yarn manufacturing which remains active in at least two of the town's mills. Other former mills are in use as textile/yarn outlets and factories for the production of non-textile goods. Some farming remains active in the northern and western portions of town; however, the sources of much of the town's employment exist outside its immediate boundaries in the nearby industrial cities of Woonsocket, Rhode Island and Worcester, Massachusetts. Also important to the growth of the town's commuter population are the industries (principally technological) that have developed along Interstate Highway 495 and Route 128. Despite the presence of a commuter population, much of the town's area remains rural in appearance.

First Settlement 1659-1775

Known initially by its Indian name of Wacatuck (also spelled Waentuck), Uxbridge was the southwestern part of a much larger tract of land that was granted to the Proprietors of Mendon in 1659. Local tradition reports that the first farmsteads in Uxbridge were occupied in the 1690s; however, it seems unlikely that any major organized settlement took place prior to 1713, when the conclusion of Queen Anne's War brought about the rapid settlement of Worcester County. The Native population, some of whom had been converted to Christianity in the mid 1600s, seem to have largely dissipated following King Philip's War in 1675. As early as 1716, the inhabitants of Uxbridge petitioned to be set off from Mendon as a separate town. By 1727, the area had become sufficiently populous that the General Court allowed Uxbridge to be incorporated, granting to it the western portion of Mendon bounded by the Province line on the south, Mendon's existing boundary on the west, a new line parallel to the western boundary on the east, and on the north by an irregular line following topography. Included in this was the present town of Northbridge, which was set off from Uxbridge in 1772.

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A number of other minor boundary fluctuations occurred, primarily along the northern boundaries, during the 18th century. Much of this fluctuation was probably due in part to a situation noted for Northbridge by a surveyor on the 1830 map of Uxbridge: "Some persons here with their farms and outlands belong to Uxbridge, of course every sale and purchase changes the [town] line and it is today here and tomorrow there and when it stops, I will log it on the map." Since 1772, Uxbridge's boundaries have remained essentially unchanged; for the most part, boundaries result from surveyed lines and do not (except the northern line) follow topographical features.

Prior to the harnessing of water power for industrial uses in the early 19th century, Uxbridge contained no villages and consisted of farmsteads evenly distributed across much of the town. Unlike earlier communities that made conditional grants of land in different divisions to settlers, Uxbridge seems not to have been settled in this manner. As an outlying area to Mendon, much of Uxbridge was granted in large tracts to prominent citizens of Mendon prior to the area's settlement. Of these, Robert Taft and his numerous descendents became both the largest landholders in Uxbridge and the town's most influential citizens throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. Another important group of early settlers in the southern section of Uxbridge consisted of Quakers who came north from Rhode Island.

In addition to farms, the town contained a forge, built by Benjamin Taft on Ironstone (formerly Forge) Brook around 1739 and several small saw and grist mills located on Emerson, Rivulet and Drabble Tail Brooks. Little information exists regarding these early mills; however, it is likely that they were contained in small, timber-frame structures and that they represented a part-time occupation for their owners who were probably engaged in farming as a principal livelihood. During this period, the Mumford, Blackstone and West Rivers were not used for water power, presumably because of their widths and lack of a dramatic fall.

Commercial activity in the town was limited to several taverns along Hartford Avenue and, possibly, several small stores kept in the houses of part-time merchants such as Moses Farnum (Form #15-12). Institutional development was restricted to the construction of a meeting house at Uxbridge Center in 1729; this choice was dictated more by the centrality of the location (with Northbridge) and the donation of a site for the building than by the presence of any existing village. Once completed, however, the meeting house attracted a small population including the town doctor and blacksmith who built houses in the vicinity late in the period and provided the beginnings of a village. The town's Quaker community met with the Smithfield Society of Friends in Rhode Island until the establishment of a local meeting house within the boundaries

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of modern Northbridge in 1766. Subsequently, in 1770, a Quaker meeting house was built in Uxbridge (Form 10-1; NR 1974) near the southwest portion of the town where much of the Quaker population had settled.

Although the English settlement of Uxbridge occurred during the Colonial period, it is likely that a portion of the town's roads pre-date the Colonial period and are derived from former Indian paths. Tradition asserts that Hartford Avenue and Sutton Street were part of the Middle Road between Boston and Hartford that was derived from pre-existing Indian trails. Although this road was an important transportation corridor during the 18th century, its presence within Uxbridge seems to have had little direct influence on patterns of development within the town, except that several taverns were built along its route. More immediately important to the town's development and connection with neighboring centers was the Worcester to Providence Road that extended along the path of Rivulet Street to Main Street and thence southeastward along Ironstone Street to the Village of Ironstone, after which its original path followed Elmwood Avenue eastward into Millville along a route that has been by-passed by Route 146. Following the west bank of the Blackstone River, this road probably originated as an Indian path.

Other known early roads include Linwood Street and possibly portions of Mendon Street and West River Road, which may have been the roads laid out in 1830 to provide a route over the "Great River" to the meeting house. While much of Uxbridge's network of roads probably date from the Colonial period, information to support this assertion is scant, except for circumstantial evidence such as the presence of early 18th century farmsteads on Hazel, West Albee, and Blackstone Streets.

Industrial Beginnings 1775-1830

Until the early 19th century, Uxbridge experienced few changes from the patterns of settlement and land use that had been established during the Colonial period and which were derived from a predominantly agricultural economic base. However, beginning in 1810 with the opening of the Day Woolen Mill on a small water privilege south of Hecla (Centerville) and the Clapp Cotton Mill at North Uxbridge (1810-1811), Uxbridge's population expanded and began to cluster in villages. For the most part, new population was drawn from surrounding towns (both Massachusetts and Rhode Island) and consisted of a mixture of Congregationalists and Quakers that was similar to Uxbridge's existing population.

Early mills tended to be situated on small secondary brooks where water power was easily harnessed; similarly, the scale of manufacturing was small with individual mills employing between 10 and 20 operatives prior to 1823. As a result, villages surrounding the town's earliest

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mills often consisted of only four or five houses and cottages, often built by the mill owners. Such was the case at Ironstone (Ironstone Manufacturing Company - 1814-1815), Rivulet (Rivulet Manufacturing Company - 1816) and the Capron Mills at Uxbridge Center (ca. 1821-1825).

In 1823-1827, the Crown and Eagle Mills were developed at North Uxbridge by Robert Rogerson, a Boston merchant. Included in this development was a model village of workers' housing consisting of free-standing brick houses, cottages, double cottages and a store with a meeting hall (Form 47-B; NR 1971). Although far grander and more carefully planned, the Rogerson's Village provided a model that was repeated with wood-frame buildings constructed in a linear development along Hecla Street during the construction of the Hecla Mill and Village (Centerville) after 1825.

Although relatively sparsely populated, Uxbridge Center emerged in all respects as the town's major village during this period. The presence of the meeting house was important to the area, although proximity to major transportation routes was probably the most decisive factor. During the last two decades of the period, this area was built up with the town's finest Federalist style houses, including one that possessed a formal boxwood parterre (removed 1890). In the town center, development was confined to irregular sized parcels with frontage on the main roads; no side streets or planned subdivisions existed.

Improvements in transportation began to be made locally in the early 19th century when a new stage line was established over the Middle Road (Hartford Avenue) between Boston and Hartford in 1894 and augmented in 1814 by the introduction of a second stage line. Following this example, stage service between Providence and Worcester was established in 1812 and remained in service until the late 1820s. Minor additions were made to the town's roads, most notably the extension of Main Street northward from its junction with Rivulet Street across Hartford Avenue and on to Linwood.

The principal transportation improvement of the period, however, was the construction of the Blackstone Canal from Providence to Worcester in 1824-1828 (Form 800; NR 1973). Local construction on the canal began in 1825. Within Uxbridge, the canal contained four locks and paralleled the west bank of the Blackstone River from the Northbridge town line to a point near the junction of Main and Blackstone Streets, south of which the canal and the river merged. Financed in part by at least one local merchant, the canal enlarged the town's commercial importance, making it a small center for neighboring towns and attracting at least one Rhode Island merchant to settle here in the mid 1820s. Although located somewhat eastward of Uxbridge Center, the canal served to strengthen that area's importance by providing convenient transportation to an already established town center.

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Industrial Expansion 1830-1870

This period was dominated by the growth of the town's industrial enterprises and their related villages. This growth is displayed in the increase in the number of mill operatives from 414 in 1830 to 655 in 1870; of these numbers, a higher proportion were women and girls in 1830 than in 1870. In addition to previously established settlements, new mill villages emerged at Wheelockville (around the Waucantuck Mill after 1838) and on Mendon Street (at the Central Woolen Mill after 1852). The basic pattern of the villages (i.e., free-standing wood-frame cottages, double cottages and double houses built along main roads) remained basically the same with the addition of a small number of row houses and several possible boardinghouses. Outlying agricultural areas seem to have been unchanged during much of the period, except that the raising of sheep (for wool) and dairying increased.

Within Uxbridge Center, there began to be some separation of different land uses with commercial and institutional building clustered around the junction of Main and Mendon Streets and the houses of the town's leading citizens built in the vicinity of the Common, North Main Street and the north end of South Main Street. As the population of the area increased, house lots near the center of the village became smaller and more regular in size. Features such as granite curbing and retaining walls at property boundaries seem to have come into more general use at this time. Few commercial buildings existed outside of Uxbridge Center with the exception of Company stores at Rogerson's Village and Hecla Village. One of the town's earliest extant commercial blocks, Butler Block (Form 57-137), stands somewhat alone on Linwood Street at the south edge of the village of Linwood which is part of the town of Northbridge.

Population growth was continuous throughout the period. Congregationalist and Quaker Yankees continued to be the dominant group in the town's agricultural areas and in its business life; nonetheless foreign immigration began with the importation of Irish workmen to build the Providence and Worcester Railroad in the 1840s. Following the completion of the railroad, many of the workers remained in Uxbridge. By 1850, Irish Catholics were sufficiently numerous to allow Catholic services to be held, and by 1855, St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church had been established on North Main Street.

Additional road improvements continued to be carried out, such as the creation of Douglas Street in the 1830s, and the Blackstone Canal continued in operation until 1848, after which it was converted in part to a raceway for the Central Woolen Mill (Form 46-D). However, the major change of the period came with the construction of the Providence and Worcester Railroad in 1847-1848. Built along the same north-south corridor as

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Colonial roads and the Blackstone Canal, the Providence and Worcester Railroad helped to reinforce social and business connections that had already existed for several generations between Uxbridge, Providence and Worcester. The success of the railroad and its freight trains was so immediate that travel on the Blackstone Canal virtually ceased as soon as the railroad was opened. In addition, the location of passenger and freight stations at Uxbridge Center permanently secured for this area its role as the town's commercial and residential center. Although the Boston, Hartford and Erie Railroad was built through the southwest corner of the town during this period, it maintained no local stations and had little influence on the town's development. Today, its major remnant is its graded railroad bed that passes through second-growth forests.

While stage lines had failed on major transportation routes by the late 1830s and 1840s, some stage coaches continued to serve less heavily travelled routes between Uxbridge and towns east and west of it. Of these, the stage to Milford, which remained in operation from 1848 to 1866, was probably the most important.

Community Stabilization 1870-1930

The period following the Civil War varied between booming prosperity and several severe depressions. However, mill output and employment expanded during much of the period, with employment in the town's textile mills rising from 655 in 1870 to 2,340 by 1930. Much of this expansion followed the reorganization of the Waucautuck Mills under the Uxbridge Worsted Company in 1905 and the success of local manufacturers in gaining contracts to supply various cloths to the Army during World War I. Manufacturing remained the primary employment, while trade employment expanded and farming stabilized. Immigration of mill workers continued with a large influx of French Canadians as well as significant numbers of English, Swedes, Turks, Poles and Italians.

As in the preceding period, new residential construction focused on Uxbridge Center and North Uxbridge (Rivulet Village and Rogerson's Village). At Uxbridge Center, institutional, residential and commercial growth continued. A residential subdivision was laid out north of Mendon Street and west of Oak Street; free-standing Victorian style houses and cottages were constructed in this area as well as on Mendon and Main Streets. At North Uxbridge, sections of Hartford Avenue and several newly laid out side streets, including several off of Linwood Street, became built up with free-standing houses during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This area also emerged as a second institutional and commercial focus with the erection of the Uxbridge Town Hall in 1879 and several brick commercial blocks on Main Street.

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Overall, the degree of new construction and population growth for the period do not match the increase in employment, however, suggesting that the street railroads may have played an important role in transporting mill workers from other towns and rural areas of Uxbridge to the major mills at Uxbridge Center and Wheelocksville.

After the introduction of local railroads, virtually no changes occurred in the town's transportation until the early 20th century, when an electric streetcar was established between Uxbridge and Milford by way of Hartford Avenue in 1901. A second streetcar line (Uxbridge and Blackstone Street Railroad) was extended from Balckstone to Whitin's Depot (Northbridge) in 1903. Although these lines did not influence patterns of settlement within the town, their presence seems to have encouraged a number of property owners to prepare residential subdivision plans for parcels around Uxbridge Center and North Uxbridge. For the most part, these proposed subdivisions remain unbuilt.

As elsewhere, the rising popularity of automobile travel in the 1920s and 1930s brought about the decline and closing of the town's street railways. Automobiles did, however, result in the improvement of Ironstone Road as the town's first (and only) divided highway, Route 146, by the 1930s. As with previous transportation improvements, this road reinforces a transportation corridor that has been important since the 18th century.

More recent highway development, most notably the Massachusetts Turnpike and Interstate Route 495, have affected Uxbridge by creating easier access to Boston and other areas of eastern Massachusetts, thereby drawing Uxbridge within the range, albeit at the periphery, of suburban development.

ARCHITECTUREIntroduction

Reflecting Uxbridge's settlement in the 18th century and its steady growth throughout most of the 19th century, the town's building stock retains good examples of all the major architectural styles that have been popular since its development. The largest number of these examples are traditional or vernacular in design; however, individual high-style buildings were constructed and survive, especially from the Federal and Early Industrial periods.

By far the largest numbers of buildings are free-standing wood frame houses, built for individual owners rather than as part of planned developments, although one notable planned mill village remains. In rural areas, houses tend to stand alone on their farmsteads or in small

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groupings of two or three, reflecting original ownership by the same family. Barns and sheds are usually unattached to houses and stand either at the rear or on the opposite side of roads in front of houses to which they belong. Most rural buildings date from the 18th and first half of the 19th century; Victorian style farmhouses and barns are rare.

Architectural distinctions exist within the town's villages, although most villages are laid out in the same way, namely along main roads with few or no side streets. Outside of Uxbridge Center (Uxbridge Common District, Form 48-C) villages contain mostly mid and late 19th century cottages, double houses, boarding houses (rare) and a few individual houses, most of simple traditional designs. Uxbridge Center, being the largest of the town's villages, preserves a wider range of buildings from all periods, including many of the town's major examples of high-style Federalist and Victorian residential architecture.

While the town retains important architectural examples of institutional, commercial and industrial buildings from a period of 1770 to 1900, the number of buildings of these types is sufficiently small that they will be described individually, by building type, below:

Plantation and Colonial Periods ca. 1700-1775

Residential: As in neighboring towns, Uxbridge's earliest houses were built in the vernacular, timber-frame tradition that had been brought to New England and adapted to the region by English settlers in the 17th century. Although two of the town's farmhouses are traditionally ascribed construction dates in the 1690s, both have been so extensively remodelled in the early and mid 19th century that their present appearances do not preserve any exterior evidence of 17th century origins.

The earliest houses for which some documentation and physical evidence remains appear to date from the first half of the 18th century; all are one-story cottages with central chimneys. Characteristic of a house type that is traditionally associated with the early 18th century settlement of Worcester County, the Cornet Farnum House (Form 47-93; NR 1980) is a central chimney gambrel roofed cottage that may have been built as early as 1707-1710 when Farnum was first reported as living in Uxbridge (then Mendon). A similar structure is the Aaron Taft House (Form 50-21), believed to have been built in 1749, but possessing a 3/4 facade instead of the full center-entry facade of the Farnum House. Other well preserved buildings of this type include the Samuel Taft House (Form 56-53) and the E. Albee House (Form 49-21). Similar in scale and construction, but with a pitched instead of a gambrel roof, is the A. E. Cook House (Form 10-30). In addition to details of construction and design, all of these houses remain in rural settings and, characteristically, have facades on their south elevations.

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A unique house of the period and one which displays some awareness of high style architecture is the Moses Farnum House of 1769 (Form 15-12). Built of locally produced brick, this house possesses a symmetrical center-entry facade, laid up in Flemish bond with blackened headers. Although the scale of the building resembles that of the A. E. Cook House, the building's plan is arranged around a central hallway and end chimneys rather than the more common central chimney.

Related to the Farnum House and preserved as the town's only non-residential structure extant from the 18th century, the Quaker Meeting House (Form 10-1; NR 1974) of 1770 is a two-story brick structure with an added entry porch of the early 19th century. In addition to its brick construction, the building preserves a galleried interior.

Federal Period 1776-1830

Residential: With the coming of textile mills after 1810, residential house types became more varied; however, timber-frame construction (one and two stories) with a central chimney plan continued to be the most common single-family residence at least as late as 1810-1820. Unaltered examples of this type are relatively rare, particularly for former farmhouses; however, the W. Aldrich House of 1786 (Form 45-48) preserves many important elements of the type, including an original date plaque and what appear to be original window openings. More pretentious houses of the same basic type were occasionally decorated with late Georgian details of splayed (wood) window lintels and pedimented entries as are found on the Dexter Richardson House of ca. 1800-1810 (Form 3-1) and the Sylvanus Holbrook House of ca. 1780 (Form 31-17).

Perhaps the most fully developed example of Georgian architecture in Uxbridge is the Bazaleel Taft House of ca. 1780-1790 (Form 33-53). Although reputedly built after the Revolution, the house preserves elements that were introduced in the Boston area as early as the 1740-1750s: twin chimney plan with a central hallway, hip-on-hip roof with pedimented dormers, and pilastered entries with pediments set on pulvinated friezes.

While Georgian style details may have remained in use as late as the 1820s, several sources began to popularize Federalist style designs. An important influence was the Bazaleel Taft, Jr. House of 1807 (Form 35-51), which was built for one of the town's most prominent citizens. This house is a twin-chimney structure with a central hallway based on Georgian precedent; however, its pilastered

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entry with a broken pedimented and decorated fanlight and its channelled cornice are among the earliest Federalist details used in Uxbridge. A second source of Federalist design were architectural pattern books; these are presumably the source of an ornate Adamesque doorway, pilasters and cornice on the E. Brown House of ca.1805-1820 (Form 56-42) which is otherwise a simple central chimney, timber-frame house.

Finally, the increasing contact with Worcester, Providence and Boston that resulted from the formation of stock companies for textile manufacturing (1810-1816) may have increased local awareness of Federalist architecture elsewhere and created a new demand for more up-to-date designs. Whatever the source, local builders began after 1815 to build a large number of exceptionally fine two-story brick houses with hipped roofs and granite trimmings. Typically, these houses have symmetrical facades with central entries framed by elliptical arches. Major elevations are usually laid up in Flemish bond and cornices are frequently decorated with modillions, beading or other individual elements. Characteristic of the finest of these houses are the George Carpenter House of 1815-1825 (Form 41-41) and the William Capron House of 1821-1827 (Uxbridge Common District, Form 48-C). Simpler examples of this type, but with pitched instead of hipped roofs exist along Aldrich Street in the southern section of town and along Hartford Avenue near North Uxbridge.

Local interest in masonry construction during the Federal period resulted in two unique houses. Built around 1820, the Richard Sayles House (Form 46-45) is a two-story hip-roofed structure that is set on a terraced site with granite steps set into the terraces. The building's exterior is faced with finely hammered granite ashlar, a unique local use of this material. Also unique in its use of building materials is the J. Aldrich House (ca.1825-1835, Form 18-3), which is constructed of bricks laid entirely in stretcher bond, an achievement that has been accomplished by the use of locally made bricks that are square rather than rectangular.

Cottages of the period tend to be more traditional in their designs, and less ornate than two-story houses of similar plan; they also tend to be less numerous and, frequently, more altered. The best remaining examples include central-chimney wood-frame cottages such as the Elisha Southwick House of ca.1820-1830 (Form 25-4) with its channelled cornice, and several brick buildings such as the J. Kensley House of ca.1820 (Form 10-33) with its fine dressed granite trimmings.

With the exception of single-family houses shared by two or more branches of the same family, multiple-family housing was unknown in Uxbridge prior to the mid 1820s, when Robert Rogerson, a Boston merchant, built Rogerson's Village (Form 47-B; NR 1971) to serve as workers' housing for his nearby mills (Crown and Eagle). Within the village, overseers and foremen were housed in double houses and double cottages, built of brick trimmed with granite. Designs for these buildings resembled those used for high-style houses built at Uxbridge Center, but at a smaller scale and without

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decorative details. Also built as part of the village were several two-story wood-frame row houses that were used as boarding houses for female operatives. Details of these buildings were simple, consisting of moulded window and door casings.

Institutional: Other than the town's two meeting houses (Quaker and Congregational), institutional building was limited to schoolhouses. Several wood-frame and brick one-story schoolhouses were built in various school districts; however, most have been demolished or severely altered by conversion to residences. A notable exception is the former Uxbridge Academy (1819) that stands in the Uxbridge Common District (Form 48-C). Built by private subscription from the town's residents, this building is a two-story brick structure that was designed to have a high school lecture room at the first story and a Masonic meeting hall at the second story, an arrangement that was common in Massachusetts prior to the advent of town-supported high schools.

Commercial: It is likely that no more than a dozen commercial buildings existed in the town during this period. Local histories report that several warehouses were built between Uxbridge Center and the Blackstone Canal; photographs show at least one and possibly two, two-story brick store buildings near the junction of Main and Mendon Streets; however, none of these buildings remain.

Although it may post-date 1830, Rogerson's Block at Rogerson's Village (Form 47-B; NR 1971) preserves an excellent Federalist style design, one which is characteristic of 19th century commercial buildings in its provision of a store at the first story and a meeting hall at the upper stories. The Bazaleel Taft, Jr. Law Office of ca.1807 (Form 34-51a) preserves in brick a design that was more frequently built in wood for offices throughout the region prior to the widespread construction of commercial row buildings and blocks in the second quarter of the 19th century.

Between 1810 and 1830, seven water power sites in Uxbridge were developed for textile manufacturing. The first group of mills, built between 1810 and 1816 were small, wood-frame structures, usually two stories high and domestic in scale. As a result of technological changes, fire and increased production, most of these early mills were soon replaced with two- and three-story masonry structures, most of which had monitor roof and projecting stair/bell towers. At least five mills of the latter type were built between 1820 and 1827; only the shells of the Crown and Eagle Mills (1823 and 1827), together with their outbuildings and extensive water remain as examples of the period (Rogerson's Village, Form 47-B; NR 1971).

Early Industrial Period 1830-1870

Although this was a period of local prosperity, one during which existing mills expanded and new mills were established, architectural taste remained

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surprisingly conservative. In part, this conservation may have grown out of local Quakerism as many of the town's leading businessmen were either Quakers or of Quaker descent. In part, it may have been influenced by the small scale of local water power sites which (prior to the local introduction of steam power) restricted the growth of mills and thereby hindered the large scale accumulation of capital by individual mill owners.

Residential: Houses designed in the Greek Revival style (1832-1860) seem to be evenly divided between one- and two-story structures. Some sidehall plan houses and cottages exist, although symmetrical center entry facades predominate. In rural areas, many earlier houses such as the Zadock Taft House (18th century and 1845-1855) (Form 35-42) were extensively remodelled with corner pilasters, pilastered entries, 6/6 sash and other details of the style. At the same time, entirely new farmhouses such as the N. Williams House of 1845-1855 (Form 54-18) were built with conservative floorplans designed around central hallways and twin interior chimneys. Rare exceptions to this conservatism exist in the Judson-Taft House of 1845-1855 (Form 41-26) with its Doric portico, double parlors and stable with trefoliate door arches and in the Charles Wheelock Cottage of 1845-1855 (Wheelockville, Form 43-F) with its Ionic porch, floor-to-ceiling windows, steeply pitched gable and other details.

Of the multiple-family housing built in the Early Industrial period, nearly all is in the Greek Revival style. Details generally consist of pilastered entries, wide cornices and corner pilasters. Most common are double cottages such as several found in Wheelockville (Form 43-F). Wood-frame rowhouses and boardinghouses exist in the vicinity of the Central and Rivulet Mill; however, none are included in this nomination, due to their loss of architectural integrity.

Less numerous than Greek Revival style houses, Italianate style houses display much of the same conservatism. The picturesque massing of villas with flat-top towers, cupolas and "T" shaped floor plans that characterize the style's fullest development are completely absent in Uxbridge. The most elaborate local houses of the period consist of center hall, twin-chimney plan structures with symmetrical center entrance facades. Details consist mostly of deep cornices with brackets and bracketed window hoods; however, the most lavish examples of the period (located at Uxbridge Center; Form 48-C) preserve more individual decorative elements such as the modified Palladian window of the Israel Southwick House of 1860-1865; Form 47-70). At Uxbridge Center (Form 48-C), several large houses of the period retain stables, of which the former Robert Taft Stable of 1855-1865 is the finest. Smaller scale Italianate style houses share the same scale and plans as their Greek Revival style counterparts. Typical of the best of these is the sidehall plan Arthur Wheelock House of ca.1873 in Wheelockville. No multiple-family housing seems to have been built in this style.

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Fewer than a dozen buildings were built in the Second Empire style; most of these post-date 1870 and stand in the Uxbridge Common District (Form 48-C). One noteworthy example is the Robert Taft House of 1820 and 1865, a brick Federalist style house that was extensively remodelled in the 1860s by the addition of a bell-cast mansard roof with an engaged balustrade and arched dormers.

With the exception of two Gothic cottages, now severely altered, no examples exist of the lesser styles of the period such as the Gothic Revival, Norman Romanesque, Egyptian Revival and Octagon styles.

Institutional: Despite the separation of the town government and the Congregational Church during this period and despite the growth of local population, new institutional construction was limited to a handful of structures. Of these, the First Congregational Church (Unitarian) of 1834 and the First Evangelical Congregational Church of 1833 (both in Uxbridge Common District, Form 48-C) preserve the town's best examples of Gothic Revival and Greek Revival architecture. In addition, they illustrate the changes from meeting house to church plans that occurred in the 19th century. Designed around a large, nearly square, meeting hall, the First Evangelical Church with its Ionic portico, panelled parapet, matched boarding and other details possesses the town's only monumental Greek Revival facade. In marked contrast, the First Congregational Church (Unitarian) was designed around a rectangular meeting hall with a center and side aisles; intended to be a copy of the First Parish Church in Cambridge (Isaiah Rogers, 1833), this building preserves an abundance of Gothic style decorative details.

Schoolhouses of the period were mostly wood-frame, one-room structures built in the Greek Revival style. Remaining examples have been severely altered by conversion to residences and workshops. None are included in this nomination.

Commercial: Commercial development focused in the Uxbridge Common District (Form 48-C) where two-story wood-frame and brick blocks were built near the junction of Douglas, Main and Mendon Streets. Subsequent fires and alterations have left this area devoid of important examples of this period; however, individual buildings at Linwood and Hecla Villages preserve the scale and plan that were typical of the period, and which were derived from earlier buildings such as Rogerson's Block. In the case of the Butler Block, 210 Linwood Street (1845-1855, Form 57-137), this plan was overlaid with Greek Revival style details, while the Granite Store, 112-116 Hecla Street (1850-1860, Form 43-65), bears minor elements of the Italianate style.

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Industrial: Mill building was active throughout the period, both at textile manufacturing sites and at smaller sawmill sites. While the former are represented by several important complexes, the latter are represented only by the Aldrich Sawmill of 1835 (Form 8-4a), a utilitarian, timber-frame structure built on a high granite base.

Following the Federalist period enthusiasm for masonry mill construction, local mill owners returned to wood construction, beginning with the rebuilding of the Waucantuck Mill in 1838 (Form 43-G). Typical of subsequent mill development, this building was a three-story wood-frame structure (34' x 60') with a combined bell and stair tower set near the center of its long elevation. The structure was enclosed by a pitched roof and was trimmed with simple Greek Revival style details. This same basic plan was used subsequently at the Central Woolen Mill in 1852 (Form 46-D) and at the Rivulet Mill in 1872 (Form 56-A).

With the full utilization of available water power and the availability of reliable steam power in the 1850s, most local mills installed boilers and steam engines together with new picker houses and storehouses, virtually all of which were one- and two-story brick buildings with Italianate style details, such as those seen at both the Rivulet Mill (1866-1870s) and Central Woolen Mill (1860s).

Late Industrial Period 1870-1930)

Although a period of industrial growth and increasing population, the Late Industrial period brought about generalized growth across the town's villages, but did not result in the creation of new villages, suburban subdivisions or estate districts which characterized its growth in larger communities. These circumstances are due in part to the gradual purchase of local mills by corporations, such as the American Woolen Company, which diminished local control of capital and profits. In addition, most of the increase in population was confined to industrial workers, many of whom lacked the financial resources to build their own homes.

Residential: As in the preceding period, major examples of contemporary architectural styles exist mostly in and around Uxbridge Common District (Form 48-C). While the largest single group of residential structures consisted of double cottages with gabled facades and decorative turnings, a limited number of architect-designed houses were built for local merchants and manufacturers. Of these, the Vicotrian Gothic style Charles Capran House of 1874-1879 (Form 47-92) was by far the most lavish. As the house now stands, it retains virtually all of its decorative trimmings, an original stable, and some original plantings.

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A simpler example of the same style, but one which is still among the best local examples of its period is the R. Farnum House, 20 Oak Street, of 1875-1880 (Form 47-66). Examples of the Queen Anne style are relatively rare and are best represented by the Albert Sprague House of 1885 (Form 47-47) and the S. A. Hall House of 1890, Form 48-95). Both of these are substantial suburban houses that display the asymmetrical massing and decorative wood trimmings characteristic of the style. While other local buildings possess elements of the Queen Anne style, these elements are generally restricted to single decorative details.

Other popular late Victorian and early 20th century styles are poorly represented in Uxbridge. Although workers' cottages, several two-deckers, and several small apartment houses were built during the period (particularly at North Uxbridge), no individually outstanding examples or well-preserved districts remain.

Institutional: The presence of new religious societies and the growth of town government resulted in the construction of three new churches, a city hall, a high school, a library and at least two grammar schools during this period, all of which were architect-designed. Construction of the Victorian Gothic style Town Hall of 1878-1879, Amos Cutting, architect (Form 41-31) marked an important change in local architectural development both by introducing the idea of public buildings as an aesthetically important element in the town, and by making use of a design competition to select an architect. In 1893-1894, the donation of a finely detailed Gothic Revival style library (Form 48-C) by one of the town's leading citizens, advanced the use of public buildings as an important monument in the town's center.

Of the school buildings of the period, none remain with the exception of the Italianate and Colonial Revival style North Uxbridge School of 1870-1875; 1900, Cutting, Carleton and Cutting, architects (Form 47-124).

Commercial: To a greater degree than in preceding periods, commercial development focused in Uxbridge Common District (Form 48-C), where fires in 1895 and 1896 encouraged the construction of the town's first three-story brick commercial blocks. Of these, the Bank Building of 1895-1896 (Form 42-6) and the Farnum Block of 1895 (Form 41-10A) are the most fully developed examples of late Victorian commercial architecture.

As with town-owned buildings, the replacement of a utilitarian train depot at the town center with a new and finely detailed Romanesque/Queen Anne style depot in 1895 (Form 42-4) provided a major building that served an important function and was also a source of civic pride.

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Industrial: Except for the enlargement of boiler rooms, picker houses and other service buildings, there was little new construction at the town's mill complexes until the early 20th century when several existing mills were purchased, reorganized and enlarged by capitalists from outside of Uxbridge. Both the Uxbridge Woolen Company and the C. A. Root Company enjoyed spectacular financial success, particularly at the time of World War I. This success resulted in the enlargement, but not the replacement, of existing mills, especially the Waucantuck Mill (Form 43-G) and Central Woolen Mill (Form 46-D). New construction was utilitarian in design and consisted of wood-frame and steel frame/reinforced concrete additions.

Archaeology

No archaeological sites were surveyed as part of the inventory on which this nomination is based. However, several historic and prehistoric archaeological sites are known in Uxbridge which have yielded or may be expected to yield information significant to our past. It should be considered that other potentially important sites also exist within the town and that these may yield potentially important information for our understanding of the past.

Recent survey work in this and nearby inland areas has demonstrated that the density of prehistoric sites is far greater than predicted in the literature. In a survey of the Rte 146 corridor, 29 prehistoric sites were identified; twelve are located in Uxbridge (Thorbahn and Cox, 1983). The sites were characterized by small size, low density of cultural material and few diagnostic artifacts. Four additional sites along the Blackstone River are noted in MHC files. These sites have not been professionally investigated and little information is known. However, the collection from one site, some of which are deposited at the Bronson Museum, Attleboro, MA is said to include at least four red ochre burials; as well as small triangular, corner-notched, leaf-shaped and small quartz points; or over 1,000 artifacts. A contact period village site is also known to have existed east of present-day Uxbridge Center. The sum of this information indicates that Uxbridge, with its many rivers, ponds, and uplands is sensitive for the presence of prehistoric sites from the Terminal Late archaic through Contact periods. The identification and differentiation of these predominantly small upland sites begins the process of outlining the local settlement and subsistence system, in contrast to the better known coastal and riverine systems in the Northeast.

Two historic properties, both already listed on the National Register, have been the subject of reconnaissance archaeological surveys which have demonstrated the integrity and significance of each property: Crown and Eagle Mills (Rogerson's Village) and Blackstone Canal.

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The Crown and Eagle Mills and Rogerson's Village have remained remarkably intact since their initial construction in the 1820s. The archaeological study demonstrated the property's integrity, identified sensitive areas and revealed a range of categories of information including: "early structural remnants; past patterns of space utilization for early functions; the landscape alterations produced by Rogerson's prodigious effort in farming the complex, as well as evidences of its predecessors and its subsequent re-ordering to accommodate industrial changes and expansion; and even stratified artifact scatters testifying to sequences of use in respective areas of present archaeological consequence." (Moriece and Gary, Inc., 1980).

The Blackstone Canal study located a series of undisturbed industrial and canal-related structural remains and topographic features along the length of the canal system in Uxbridge, recommending sensitive areas for future archaeological work.

In addition to these specific resources which have been examined, many of Uxbridge's other industrial, commercial, residential and agricultural properties should be considered to contain undisturbed archaeological components from the mid 18th through early 20th centuries. Identification excavation and analysis of these components may provide an important supplement to the standing building stock and to Uxbridge's history as known through documentary materials.

### Methodology

This nomination is the result of a town-wide architectural survey conducted by the Uxbridge Historical Commission with a grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission in 1981. Brian Pfeiffer of ACT for Massachusetts was the consultant. The survey was conducted by beginning with the preparation of a bibliography and initial reading of local histories, maps, photographs, newspapers, pamphlets and other secondary sources. Following bibliographic research, a field survey was conducted using a U.S.G.S. Map (1:25,000) to assure that all roads and structures within the town were viewed.

Identified during the field survey were all churches, schools, commercial blocks, mills, and other public buildings constructed before 1930. Individual houses and districts were identified both for their architectural qualities and for known historical associations with individuals and events.

Following the field survey, all recorded buildings were researched in greater depth to identify precise dates of construction, and additional historical associations. Approximately 25% of properties initially surveyed were

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dropped from further consideration, as lacking both historical associations and sufficient architectural integrity. The balance were recorded on standard survey forms and submitted to the Massachusetts Historical Commission. These properties were then evaluated for their National Register eligibility in consultation with Massachusetts Historical Commission staff. Properties were selected for inclusion which retain integrity and appear to meet National Register criteria of significance, both historically and architecturally. These properties represent the major building types and design styles of Uxbridge's architecture, as well as reflecting the historical development of the town.

Due to the lack of detailed secondary sources, many rural buildings which possess some architectural integrity but lack identified historical associations have been excluded from this nomination. Some of these buildings may possess historical associations that would render them eligible for National Register listing; however, further research into primary sources will be required to identify any such associations.

#### Preservation Activities

The general conservatism which characterizes Uxbridge's population and its relatively isolated location have served as major preservation factors in the town. Local residential, industrial, agricultural and commercial property owners have demonstrated a long-standing commitment to preservation on a private basis; however, little organized preservation occurred until the 1960s, with the founding of the Uxbridge Historical Society in 1964 and the Uxbridge Historical Commission in 1966. An exception was the purchase of the Simeon Wheelock House, 43 North Main Street, by the D.A.R. in 1911. Both the Commission and the Society initially focussed on single properties of outstanding architectural and historical merit. An early project by the town was the purchase and restoration of the Cornet John Farnum House (NR 1980) which is now in the care of the Historical Commission.

Other efforts included listing on the National Register of the Rogerson's Village Historic District (Crown and Eagle Mills) (1971), Blackstone Canal (1973) and Quaker Meeting House (1974); these properties had been identified as important resources by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. The former two had also generated the interest of industrial historians and have recently been the subject of historical-archaeological studies which have identified important features and made recommendations for preservation and reuse. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management is currently working on plans for the Blackstone Canal heritage park; the Crown and Eagle Mills, badly burned in 1975, are being converted to low-income housing by a private developer with great sensitivity to their architectural character.

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Public commitment within the town for preservation and participation in ongoing State and Federal programs is evidenced in the initiation in 1978 of a volunteer-conducted inventory of Uxbridge's historic and cultural resources. However, although this attracted a moderately large number of volunteers, lack of professional expertise and a full-time coordinator resulted in limited progress. Consequently, the Uxbridge Historical Commission applied for a Survey and Planning Grant through the Massachusetts Historical Commission to complete the architectural and historic inventory, which was granted in 1980 and completed in 1981. This multiple resource nomination is based on the results of that survey; both were prepared by Brian Pfeiffer, a professional consultant in historic preservation. It is hoped that the Multiple Resource National Register Nomination will initiate greater awareness of and involvement in preservation activities in the town.

Uxbridge is included in the Worcester County study unit currently being surveyed by the Massachusetts Historical Commission reconnaissance survey team as part of the MHC's implementation of the recommendations set forth in Cultural Resources Management in Massachusetts, a Model for Management (MHC 1979). This ongoing project will eventually provide a statewide historic and archaeological data base which will allow preservation decisions to be made in a consistent and defensible manner.

## 8. Significance Uxbridge Multiple Resource Area, Uxbridge, Mass.

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1930	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
				Community Development

**Specific dates** see individual forms **Builder/Architect** see individual forms

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Uxbridge Multiple Resource Area includes 50 major individual properties, 4 districts and 2 mill complexes, which represent the Colonial settlement and 19th century industrial development of Uxbridge. One district and three individual properties are already listed on the National Register of Historic Places (see Item 6). Together with other small towns along the Blackstone River Valley, Uxbridge enjoys the distinction of having been a prosperous agricultural town and an early center of textile manufacturing and textile-machine production. As such, the town saw an important period of prosperity between 1810 and approximately 1840, after which its relative importance was eclipsed by emerging regional industrial cities, particularly Worcester. While subsequent periods brought prosperity and growth, none left as large and unique a group of buildings as this initial period of industrialization. Important exceptions to this general pattern are the relatively large number of wood-frame mills (ca. 1838-1872) which remain at four of the town's water power sites. Taken as a whole, the Uxbridge Multiple Resource Area possesses integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association; it thus meets criteria A, B and C of the National Register of Historic Places.

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

#### First Settlement and Initial Growth 1700-1775

Located at the western edge of the 8-mile Mendon town grant of 1659, Uxbridge stood on the frontier of the Massachusetts Bay Colony (later Province of Massachusetts) in an area that was attacked during King Philip's War (1675-76) and that was not completely safe from further attack until the conclusion of Queen Anne's War in 1713, after which settlement was rapid. Although the area's remoteness from Boston and the provincial theocracy, as well as its proximity to religious tolerant Rhode Island may have made the area attractive to non-Puritans, such as John Farnum, a former Presbyterian turned Quaker, who settled here perhaps as early as 1707 (Form 47-93, NR 1980). By the 1720s, numerous Quakers had settled here and, although they did not form a voting majority and could not persuade Town Meeting to release them from church taxes, they nonetheless became large landholders, particularly in the southern part of Uxbridge where Moses Farnum, John Farnum's son, established extensive holdings on which farming was conducted (Form 15-12), bricks were made, and in 1770, a Quaker Meetinghouse was built (Form 10-1, NR 1974).

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Many other early settlers came from Mendon and Mendon-related families, particularly the Taft Family, which received and occupied extensive grants of land here as early as 1709. Initial grants were made to Joseph Taft (1680-1747) who subsequently divided his property among his four sons, all of whom showed a marked ability at enlarging their land holdings (Forms 50-21 and 56-53). Throughout the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the Taft family, which included many Quakers, remained the town's largest land holders. One branch of the family, descended from Daniel Taft (1677-1761), produced three successive generations -- Josiah (1709-1756), Bazaleel (1750-1839) (Form 33-53) and Bazaleel, Jr. (1780-1846) (Form 35-51) -- who were all the town's wealthiest citizens of their time. In addition, this branch of the family received educations at Harvard College and held positions in the County Court, circumstances which brought them into contact with the ruling classes of colonial government.

In 1716, the settlers of Uxbridge made a request to be considered for incorporation as a separate town; however, this request was not acted upon until 1727, when the inhabitants petitioned the General Court and received the right to incorporate as a separate town. The earliest meetings of town government were held in the home of John Farnum until 1729-1730, when a meeting house (40' x 35' x 18') was completed on the approximate site of the present First Congregational Church (Unitarian) at Uxbridge Common. The first settled minister of the meeting house remained until 1772; he was a member of the New Light Mendon Association.

Exact population statistics do not exist for the period, although estimates suggest that the town's population at the time of incorporation was c.1,000, including the area that was subsequently incorporated as the town of Northbridge in 1772. By the end of the period, Uxbridge's population had risen to 1,110 and dispersed settlement had spread to all areas of the town. With the exception of an iron forge near Ironstone Village after 1739 and several small gristmills and sawmills, economic activity continued to consist primarily of farming.

Industrial Beginnings 1776-1830

As in many other New England towns, the period immediately following the Revolution in Uxbridge was one of slow recovery from the high taxation and disruption of farming life that accompanied the war. However, population (with Northbridge) grew steadily, nearly doubling from 1,110 in 1776 to 2,086 in 1830. By the 1790s, Uxbridge's location on a major north-south route between Worcester and Providence and a major east-west route between Boston and Hartford brought it in contact with individuals and events that affected the region. While George Washington's visit in 1789 attracted a great deal of local notice, the establishment of stage lines (ca. 1802-1816), a public house/inn and Academy and Masonic

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Lodge (1819, Form 47-124) at the Common (1800), a notably early subscription library (1775) and regular local session of the district court (1797) were more important in creating a small class of local merchants, doctors and lawyers, some of whom subsequently financed manufacturing enterprises. Further, this contact with neighboring areas where industrial experiments were beginning may have encouraged local artisans, such as Richard Mowry to begin building looms (ca. 1778-1790s?) and later to design and build textile machinery. Among those involved in the latter activity were Jerry Wheelock and John and George Carpenter (Form 41-41) between 1810 and 1834. These early machine makers equipped most of the town's early mills and served an important role until the 1830s, when they could no longer compete with the highly capitalized machine shops of Worcester.

Following the construction of the town's first two mills in 1810 by Daniel Day (woolens) and in 1811 by Benjamin Clapp (cotton), numerous manufacturing companies were formed by local merchants and mechanics who established six additional textile mills prior to 1830: Capron Mills (ca. 1821); Wheelockville (ca. 1810, Form 43-F); Hecla Village (ca. 1825); Rivulet Mill (ca. 1820, Form 56-A); Crown and Eagle Mills (1823, 1827; NR 1971; Form 47-B). For the most part, these ventures were small and the early buildings have been replaced. They employed between 20 and 40 operatives, most of whom came from nearby farms and were listed as "boys under 16 years of age," and "women and girls" in industrial censuses. Only one venture, the Crown and Eagle Mills (1823-1827) possessed the scale of industrial enterprises in Worcester, Lowell and other emerging manufacturing centers. Financed and owned by Robert Rogerson, a Boston merchant, these two mills were built as part of a single complex that employed 30 men, 10 boys and 220 women and girls by 1831. In addition to the mills and storehouses, the complex included a large-scale water power system, boarding houses, overseers houses, an agent's house, a company store and other elements that were adopted in Uxbridge's other mill villages during the 1830s-1850s (Form 47-D; NR 1971).

By the end of the Federal Period, local textile manufacturing produced \$319,940 worth of goods (principally sheetings and satinets), provided employment to 414 people, and was capitalized at a value of \$306,000. Principal markets for Uxbridge's satinets were New York and Philadelphia, while cotton sheetings were sold primarily in Boston and New York.

Other businesses conducted during the period consisted of leather tanning (Jonathan and E. Southwick), boot and shoe making (Moses Chapin and Co.), shuttle manufacturing (John White) and cabinet making. Together these enterprises provided employment to 36 people, probably on a seasonal basis. Agriculture also remained important for a large section of the community. In 1784, Uxbridge, still incorporating Northbridge, utilized 3% of its acreage in tillage, 11% in pasturage, 13% in mowing and

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meadowlands, while 60% remained unimproved or as woodlots.

Transportation for the town's manufactured goods was originally provided by its two major roads and horse and ox-drawn wagons. With the construction of the Blackstone Canal between Providence and Worcester in 1824-1828 (Form 800 ; NR 1973), the transport of finished goods and raw materials was greatly improved. In addition, the town's position as a small commercial center for neighboring agricultural areas was enhanced.

Industrial Expansion 1830-1870

Building upon the industrial successes of the Federal period, Uxbridge experienced no major changes in its pattern of development during this period. The Financial Panic of 1837 brought about the financial ruin of Robert Rogerson and caused the stock of the Uxbridge Woolen Company (Hecla Village) to drop in value from \$500.00 per share in 1825 to \$50.00 per share in 1837; however, this and the subsequent panics of the 1840s and 1857 did not have lasting effects beyond the years in which they occurred. By the period's end, industrial employment had risen to 655 operatives who produced \$1,340,170 worth of goods, including satinets, cassimeres, shoddy, cotton goods and weaving yarns. In addition, the capital invested in local textile manufacturing rose to \$625,000, reflecting investments in new machinery and in steam power which allowed the expansion of mills that would otherwise have been limited by their small water power sites.

Industrial development of the period is most characteristically represented by the Central Woolen Mill, which occupies the last water power site to be developed in Uxbridge. Begun in 1852 and planned to use portions of the recently abandoned Blackstone Canal for its raceway, it preserves its original wood-frame mill building together with the various storehouses, machine shops, engine rooms and other outbuildings dating from its initial construction (Form 46-D).

Although manufacturing eclipsed agriculture in economic importance during the 19th century, Uxbridge was an important supplier of meat, produce and dairy products for the town's industrial and commercial population. In 1865, 165 dairy farms were in operation, producing 23,636 gallons of milk and 10,205 pounds of butter per annum. Other important products were corn, potatoes, barley, beef, pork, veal, and poultry. A portion of these may have been exported to regional urban centers such as Worcester and Providence.

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Population growth continued to be steady, rising from 2,086 in 1830 to 3,058 in 1870. At least a portion of this growth can be attributed to expansion in the manufacturing sector: in 1820 accounting for 20% of employment and increasing to 68% in 1875. According to local tradition, the construction of the Providence and Worcester Railroad in 1846 - 1848 brought the town's first permanent population of foreign-born workers, nearly all of whom were Irish. By 1855, Uxbridge had an Irish population of 722 people and a Catholic Church had been established by 1852. Because of the small size of the town (3,058 inhabitants in 1870) no distinctly Irish section emerged. It is likely that the immigrant population was distributed among several villages, with the largest numbers at Uxbridge Center.

By 1870, Uxbridge's basic plan of settlement (mill villages and rural farmsteads), its millsites and its transportation routes had all been firmly established in ways that remained essentially unchanged until the mid-twentieth century.

Community Stabilization 1870-1930

Following the Civil War, Uxbridge experienced a period of little growth until 1890, after which its population and industrial output grew in occasional leaps that were caused by the reorganization of individual enterprises. As in the preceding period, the various business panics and depressions of the 1870s, 1893 and early 20th century had little lasting impact on the community. More important events were World War I, which caused the rapid expansion of local mills, and the industrial depression that began slowly throughout New England in the mid 1920s, preceding the Great Depression of the 1930s.

In civic and social affairs, the period was one in which the town sought to establish many of the institutions and symbols that accompanied industrial prosperity elsewhere. In 1879, the Town Hall was constructed following a limited design competition (Form 41-31); three years later concrete sidewalks began to be installed at the town's center and in 1894, a public library building was constructed and given to the town by one of its wealthiest citizens, Edward Thayer. In a similar vein, public pressure was brought to bear against the Providence and Worcester Railroad Company to replace its original dilapidated depot (1848) with a new passenger depot (1895; Form 42-4), built in a manner that could arouse civic pride. At the same time, more up-to-date utilities were promoted by citizens who formed the Uxbridge Water Company in 1881, the Uxbridge and Northbridge Electric Light Company in 1888, and at least two street railways to Milford (1901) and to Northbridge and Blackstone (1902). Established at a time when the reorganization of several mills was resulting in rapid increases in population, these street railways had a limited effect in creating linear suburban areas along their paths;

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although several subdivisions were laid out, none were fully developed.

In addition to the physical changes that were being made to the town, its social life became more structured and public. Following the completion of the Town Hall in 1879, its auditorium was used for a series of "operas" (1883), roller-skating socials (1885) and dances. Organizations such as the G.A.R. and Father Matthew's Total Abstinence Society were formed, in addition to the less formal bicycle clubs (1896) and baseball teams (1906).

Industrial development focused on existing woolen mills, particularly the Waucantuck Mill (Form 43-G) which was first occupied by the firm of Charles A. Root around 1900. By 1905, the Mill had been purchased by Root and reorganized as the Waucantuck Mills, Inc. During the subsequent 25 years, employment in this mill alone grew from approximately 70 operatives to 500. In 1909, Root formed a partnership with Louis Bachman of New York; operating under the name of the Uxbridge Worsted Company, the two men purchased part of the former Capron Mill yard at Uxbridge Center (Form 48-C) from which they produced large quantities of cloth for the United States Army during World War I. Similar changes took place at the former Hecla Mill and Central Woolen Mill (Form 46-D), both of which were owned by the Wheelock family and operated under the name of the Stanley Woolen Company; production included cassimeres and coatings that were used by the United States and French armies during World War I. Cotton manufacturing remained stable throughout much of the period, while former small-scale businesses such as leather-tanning, shoemaking and cabinet making disappeared as competition from mechanized producers of these goods made hand production less profitable.

This period saw the peak and eventual decline of Uxbridge's agricultural economy. Ranking fourth in Worcester County in 1875, Uxbridge was most notable for its dairy products, valued at \$49,982; approximately 200 males were employed in dairying and market gardening. By 1905, the value of dairy products accounted for 34% of the town's agricultural output and had more than doubled in value to \$106,430. However, the sliding and erratic economic situation in the second two decades of the 20th century which devastated so many southern New England farms also affected Uxbridge; by 1940, only 61 males were involved in agricultural employment and only a handful of farms survive today.

Immigration in this period added significantly to Uxbridge's population, particularly during the 1880s and 1890s and early 1900s, when French Canadians settled here to work in the mills. The early 20th century saw the arrival of small numbers of Dutch and Polish immigrants; however, the social effects of foreign immigration were less important in Uxbridge than in industrial cities, both because the absolute numbers were small (431 Irish in 1875, 486 French Canadians in 1915, and 227 Poles in 1915) and

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because the number of immigrants never exceeded 27% of the entire population. In addition, the scattered locations and small scale of the town's mill villages precluded the formation of distinct ethnic neighborhoods. The physical evidence of immigration is most readily observed in the town's two Catholic churches (1852 and 1904), which were formed mainly to serve the town's Irish, French and Central European populations.

Although still a small town at the end of this period, Uxbridge had retained some of its regional industrial importance and was referred to by Orra Stone in his History of Massachusetts Industries as "by far the busiest manufacturing town in the Blackstone Valley." Possessing its own local economy and located away from any manufacturing cities, Uxbridge retained an independent identity throughout the Industrial period of its development and into the mid 20th century when nearby highways brought it closer, but not into direct contact with suburban growth from Boston and Worcester. At present, the town possesses a strong identity from both its agrarian and industrial pasts.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property multiple - see individual forms

Quadrangle name Uxbridge, Mass; Blackstone, Mass. Quadrangle scale 1:25000

UMT References Multiple - see individual forms

A 

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Zone Easting Northing

B 

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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D 

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H 

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

The Multiple Resource Area includes the incorporated limits of Uxbridge. See individual forms for individual properties and districts.

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Virginia A. Fitch, Preservation Planner with Brian Pfeiffer, ACT for Massachusetts and Uxbridge Historical Commission

organization Massachusetts Historical Commission date April, 1983

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

city or town Boston state Massachusetts 02108

## 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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Peter L. Weslowski

title State Historic Preservation Officer  
Massachusetts Historical Commission

date 8/2/83

For NPS use only

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

See Continuation Sheet for listing  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Uxbridge Multiple Resource Area  
State MA

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

- |     |                                         |                                     |               |                             |
|-----|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| 1.  | Adams, Benjamin, House                  | Entered in the<br>National Register | for<br>Keeper | <u>Melora Byers 10/7/83</u> |
|     |                                         |                                     | Attest        |                             |
| 2.  | Albee, E., House                        | Entered in the<br>National Register | for<br>Keeper | <u>Melora Byers 10/7/83</u> |
|     |                                         |                                     | Attest        |                             |
| 3.  | Aldrich, Daniel, Cottage and<br>Sawmill | Entered in the<br>National Register | for<br>Keeper | <u>Melora Byers 10/7/83</u> |
|     |                                         |                                     | Attest        |                             |
| 4.  | Aldrich, J., House                      | Substantive Review                  | f<br>Keeper   | <u>Mark Van Dine 1/2/84</u> |
|     |                                         |                                     | Attest        |                             |
| 5.  | Aldrich, W., House                      | Entered in the<br>National Register | for<br>Keeper | <u>Melora Byers 10/7/83</u> |
|     |                                         |                                     | Attest        |                             |
| 6.  | Aldrich, S., House                      | Entered in the<br>National Register | for<br>Keeper | <u>Melora Byers 10/7/83</u> |
|     |                                         |                                     | Attest        |                             |
| 7.  | Bank Building                           | Entered in the<br>National Register | for<br>Keeper | <u>Melora Byers 10/7/83</u> |
|     |                                         |                                     | Attest        |                             |
| 8.  | Brown, E., House                        | Entered in the<br>National Register | for<br>Keeper | <u>Melora Byers 10/7/83</u> |
|     |                                         |                                     | Attest        |                             |
| 9.  | Butler Block                            | Entered in the<br>National Register | for<br>Keeper | <u>Melora Byers 10/7/83</u> |
|     |                                         |                                     | Attest        |                             |
| 10. | Carpenter, George, House                | Entered in the<br>National Register | for<br>Keeper | <u>Melora Byers 10/7/83</u> |
|     |                                         |                                     | Attest        |                             |

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State MA

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

11. Capron, Charles, House Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper Melvyn Byers 10/7/83

Attest

12. Chapin, A., House Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper Melvyn Byers 10/7/83

Attest

13. Cook, A. E., House Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper Melvyn Byers 10/7/83

Attest

14. Central Woolen Mills  
District Substantive Review

for Keeper Bruce Lee Boyd 1/20/84

Attest

15. Deane, Francis, Cottage Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper Melvyn Byers 10/7/83

Attest

16. Farnum Block Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper Melvyn Byers 10/7/83

Attest

17. Farnum, Moses, House Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper Melvyn Byers 10/7/83

Attest

18. Farnum, R., House Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper Melvyn Byers 10/7/83

Attest

19. Granite Store Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper Melvyn Byers 10/7/83

Attest

20. Hall, S. A., House Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper Melvyn Byers 10/7/83

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Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

21. Hayward, William, House Entered in the  
National Register

*for*  
Keeper

*Delores Byers* 10/7/83

Attest

22. Holbrook, Sylvanus, House Entered in the  
National Register

*for*  
Keeper

*Delores Byers* 10/7/83

Attest

23. Ironstone Mill Housing and  
Cellar Hole Entered in the  
National Register

*for*  
Keeper

*Delores Byers* 10/7/83

Attest

221 24. Judson-Taft House ~~Entered in the~~ Review

*for*  
Keeper

accept Patrick Andrews 10/7/83

Attest

25. Kensley, J., House Entered in the  
National Register

*for*  
Keeper

*Delores Byers* 10/7/83

Attest

26. North Uxbridge School Entered in the  
National Register

*for*  
Keeper

*Delores Byers* 10/7/83

Attest

27. Richardson, Dexter, House Entered in the  
National Register

*for*  
Keeper

*Delores Byers* 10/7/83

Attest

28. Richardson, Joseph, House Entered in the  
National Register

*for*  
Keeper

*Delores Byers* 10/7/83

Attest

29. Rivulet Mill Complex Entered in the  
National Register

*for*  
Keeper

*Delores Byers* 10/7/83

Attest

30. Sayles, Richard, House Entered in the  
National Register

*for*  
Keeper

*Delores Byers* 10/7/83

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Name Uxbridge Multiple Resource Area  
State MA

Nomination/Type of Review

Substantive Review

Date/Signature

31. Sprague, Albert, House

DOE/OWNER OBJECTION

Eligible Patrick Andrews 10/7/83

Attest

32. Southwick, Elisha, House

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper Melvina Byers 10/7/83

Attest

33. Southwick, Israel, House

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper Melvina Byers 10/7/83

Attest

231 34. Farnum, William and Mary,  
House

Substantive Review

for Keeper Bruce Lee Boyd 1/20/84

Attest

35. Thomson, C. R., House  
and Barn

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper Melvina Byers 10/7/83

Attest

36. Uxbridge Common District

Keeper Bruce Lee Boyd 1/20/84

Attest

37. Uxbridge Passenger Depot

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper Melvina Byers 10/7/83

Attest

38. Uxbridge Town Hall

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper Melvina Byers 10/7/83

Attest

39. Waucantuck Mill Complex

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper Melvina Byers 1/20/84

Attest

40. Wheelockville District

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper Melvina Byers 1/20/84

Attest

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State MA

## Nomination/Type of Review

## Date/Signature

41. Whipple, A., House Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper

Melrose Byers 10/7/83

Attest

42. Williams, N., House Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper

Melrose Byers 10/7/83

Attest

43. Taft, Aaron, House Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper

Melrose Byers 10/7/83

Attest

44. Taft, Bazaleel, Jr., House  
and Law Office Substantive Review

for Keeper

accept Patrick Andrews 10/7/83

Attest

45. Taft, Hon. Bazaleel, House Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper

Melrose Byers 10/7/83

Attest

46. Taft Brothers Block Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper

Melrose Byers 10/7/83

Attest

47. Taft, George, House Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper

Melrose Byers 10/7/83

Attest

48. Taft, Moses, House Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper

Melrose Byers 10/7/83

Attest

49. Taft, Samuel, House Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper

Melrose Byers 10/7/83

Attest

50. Taft, Zadock, House Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper

Melrose Byers 10/7/83

Attest