A Topographical History of Watertown

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The original boundaries of Watertown
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Archeological evidence at the old Arsenal grounds indicates the presence of a settlement there at least 3500 years ago. More recently, Watertown is one of the many places which have been identified as the site of the Norse settlement of Vinland. At a meeting of the American Geographical Society, held for that purpose in Watertown Town Hall in 1890 Professor Eben Horsford presented his paper matching the Charles River with the descriptions in the Norse Sagas. He asserted that the Watertown dam and nearby canal were built by Norse settlers, as well as the terraces behind Perkins Institute on the river. Ancient foundations near Gerry's Landing were also identified as Norse. He located the legendary city of Norembega up the river a few miles, where he built a commemorative tower. An amusement park later bore the name. Horsford is not taken seriously today.

Sometime in the middle 1620's, John Oldham settled ten families on his Watertown claim, probably on the river bank near the Perkins Institute location, perhaps on both banks. They were soon warned out by the Massachusetts Bay Company to whom the land from Massachusetts Bay to the Pacific Ocean had been awarded by Royal Charter. No known trace of their occupation remains, but it is possible that the mill of which traces remained some years ago on the stream which enters the river on the south side about a half mile below the falls was built by then. Oldham himself remained as settler of Watertown, and his claim was across the river from that point.
The next arrivals did not stay long either. They landed near the present location of the Perkins Institute, and met some Indians who were friendly. Here the transaction memorialized on the town seal, the exchange of a fish for bread took place. The Bay Company was less friendly than the Indians, for these settlers were not of their number, and had no grant. They were soon expelled, settling in Dorchester. The site of their brief settlement was known for years as Dorchester Fields (now Riverton).

It is curious that the town seal commemorates this group who were not permitted to settle here.

Next on the scene was a party of planters under the patronage of Sir Richard Salstonstall, who had a grant from the Bay Company. They made their landing where the banks of the river started to rise from a marshy area. (behind Mt Auburn Hospital). North of the river there was a fertile plain, protected on the north by a range of hills, with a large fresh water pond nearby. The land was probably not heavily forested, for penalties for the unauthorized felling of trees on common land were among the earliest town ordinances. The landing was several miles by river below the falls which marked the head of tidewater. It seems certain that those who chose this location for the settlement saw it through the eyes of farmers rather than of merchants. In doing so they set up an antagonism which was to last for hundreds of years between the farming part of the community and those who were attracted to the falls by the opportunities for trade and manufacture.

The area was well watered. A brook wandered through the meadows in the eastern part and entered the river about a mile below the landing. Another brook (Treadway) which ran between Mt. Auburn and Spring Sts. was
Enshrined in literature in Lowell's "Vision of Sir Launfal". Joined by another brook from the it entered the river below the falls, and troubled the town for years with floods. Further west, Beaver brook joined the river in what is now Waltham. On the south side of the river there were springs of renowned purity, which in time were discovered by a discriminating distiller, but in later years supported a starch factory. In addition to Fresh Pond near the landing place there were several smaller ponds.

This abundance of water was no doubt the origin of the town's name. Several early settlements had found water scarce, and the Charlestown settlement had moved across the river to Boston, attracted by Blaxton's spring. Such a name would be a help in attracting prospective settlers.

The first settlement was between the landing and Fresh Pond. The location of the church is unknown, but it was not far from the intersection of Mt. Auburn St. and Elmwood Ave. As a result of later changes in boundaries, none of the area of the original settlement is now in Watertown.

The original boundaries of Watertown embraced a vast territory. Starting on the river at Sparks St. in Cambridge, the line ran north about to Brattle St, then northwest in a straight line to a point near where Route 2 crosses route 125 in Concord, then slightly east of south nine miles to the present Wellesley-Weston line, along that line to the river, and by the river to the starting point. The part of town south of the river near the falls was added in the early years to protect the fishery, and in compensation for the release of a claim in the Brighton area. The original limits included most of Walden and Fresh ponds, and a large part of Sandy Pond. Successive divisions reduced the town to its present limits, one of the smallest in the state. This discussion will be limited to the present boundaries of the town.
Paths through the forest along the river developed into roads in both directions—east by the present Brattle St. to Charlestown where a ferry connected with Boston, west along the course of Mt. Auburn St. to the falls. A mill was in existence at the falls in 1635, and another settlement which in time became a factory village formed here. The civic center was drawn steadily in this direction, though it was two hundred years before it became established in its present location.

The westward pull began almost immediately, and for more than two centuries the location of the meeting house was bitterly contested. The several moves explain why Watertown, unlike many of the old towns, has no village green dominated by an ancient steepled meeting house. Its common was not set aside until the late 1890s.

The first location of the center within the present town limits was at the corner of Arlington and Mt. Auburn Streets. The ancient graveyard where the founders rest marks the area. The pastor's house was across Mt. Auburn St. The common originally included all the area between Mt Auburn and Belmont streets from their intersection about to Hillside road, which did not exist until much later. The location of the meeting house is in some dispute, but it seems that the marker on Hillside Rd. identifies the most likely location. The meeting house would have faced east, overlooking an impressive common.

This location in the eastern part of town was objected to by those who were taking up farms in Waltham and beyond. Another church was built at Knowles Delta, and presently another at Beaver and Forests streets. Within a few years this congregation formed the new town of Waltham. Bitter controversy continued among the several churches, since the General Court had never divided the town into several parishes. After appeals to Cotton Mather and to the General Court, the question was settled about 1720 when the General Court divided the town into two precincts, and ordered
that a new meeting house for the east precinct be built on Strawberry hill, which became Meeting House hill. This location was east of Common St. at the top of the hill. The meeting house was built here about 1723. There was a large common, and a windmill nearby.

The last move of the meeting house, to the Common St. site, produced another dispute and a strange series of events which smells, even after two hundred years, of political chicanery. The meeting house was reported in bad repair needing glass among other things, but several town meetings refused to appropriate money for it. Then the town accepted the offer of a committee which agreed, under bond to take down the meeting house and erect a new one "with sash windows" on a lot which was donated on Common St. near Mt Auburn st. The building was quickly torn down, and the next town meeting was held in a tavern. The want of a place of public worship was deplored. Presumably a tavern was considered inappropriate. There was delay in the building of the new meeting house, and the timbers of the old which were to have been used were burned in a fire believed to have been incendiary. Several suspects were tried, but none convicted.

A meeting house there must be, and the next town meeting was asked to appropriate money for it. The bonded committee seems to have faded from sight. This produced an indignant petition from a group of taxpayers in the north part of town (which included Belmont) charging foul play, and a packed town meeting, and demanding the the committee of public spirited citizens be required to carry out their agreement. In conclusion they vowed that they would pay nothing toward the new building. Despite the protest, the money was appropriated for a new meeting house, and according to practice still common, there was another appropriation
the following year to cover the deficiency in the original estimate. Then the meeting voted to release the committee from their bond. So in 1754 the town had a new meeting house near the corner of Mt. Auburn and Common Streets, a building which sheltered the government of Massachusetts for more than a year during the siege of Boston. In winning a battle the southern group may have lost a war. A hundred years the farmers beyond the hill seceded and formed the new town of Belmont, where they would not be outvoted by the commercial element.

Other roads were opened as the western portions of town were settled. A road to Weston (Belmont St.) branched off from the road to the mill, and beyond the mill, a road along the river (Main St.) extended each year farther to the west. For many years Main street was the only road connecting Boston with the colonies to the west and south. The road from the Charlestown ferry and the road across the neck met at Watertown. This was the road of the Connecticut emigration. When King Philip attacked Sudbury, Captain Hugh Mason led the Watertown train band over it to drive the Indians back across the river. Abraham Browne built his house, which still stands by the road in the 1690's. In 1759, Lord Jeffrey Amherst, and his army passed by, going to do memorable things to the Frenchman and the Indian. It was a familiar road to Paul Revere, and John and Samuel Adams travelled it to the Congress at Philadelphia, after dining at the Coolidge tavern. Israel Bissel's famous ride to Philadelphia with word of the incident at Lexington started here, the dispatch datelined "Watertown, April 19 Wednesday morning near 11 o'clock." The Congress responded by adopting the army and sending it a general. George Washington and his escort rode in from the west on July 2, followed
In December by his wife. A postoffice was established by the Congress in the summer of 1775, to serve the routes to Philadelphia and to Crown Point. It was located on Main St., near the bridge. Knox brought the cannon from Ticonderoga over Main St. to Cambridge and Dorchester, and Washington led his army by this way to New York after the British left Boston. For the third time, an army travelled the road when Burgoyne came with his surrendered force to the prisoner barracks at Cambridge and Somerville. Until the railroad was built Main St. was an important artery of commerce, travelled daily by mail and stage coaches, country wagons and droves of cattle. This traffic brought trade to Watertown, and developed a commercial and manufacturing village near the river. Three taverns served trade in the vicinity of square, and a fourth at Mt. Auburn, helped those who chose to go by the Charlestown ferry on their way.

It was Galen St. that connected with the road out over Boston neck and the bridge over Muddy River. There was apparently a foot bridge across the Charles at the Galen St. location before 1640. It was made passable for horses in 1648. It was improved for the passage of heavy wagons in 1719. It was the first, and for years the only bridge across the Charles. Secondary streets also appeared. One led from the landing along Coolidge Hill Rd. and Walnut St. to join the mill road. Another (Arlington St.) led from the river across Mt. Auburn and Belmont streets to Fresh Pond. School St. was an early way, as were Common, Orchard, and Lexington Sts. The latter extended to Lexington. A cartway followed the course of Pleasant St. Warren St. existed before 1700, as did Howard St., known anciently as the way to Dirty Green. This network of roads served the town with few additions up to the time of the Revolution. "Dirty
Green was a patch of meadow on the river bank west of Howard St. The name is ancient. There is no hint as to its origin. An ancient tradition says that Lord Jeffrey Amherst camped on Dirty green on his way to Lake George in 1758. His army landed in Boston, and after three months on shipboard, they quickly became a problem. They might well have been moved to this place just above the falls, exposed to the fewer temptations of Watertown, where their heavy equipment and guns could be brought by water to the falls. Lord Jeffry himself no doubt stayed at the tavern which stood on Main St. near Howard, or perhaps at the famous establishment of Mrs. Coolidge near the bridge. From Watertown to Lake George, it was walking all the way, out Main St., and many weary miles beyond.

The river had an importance in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that has changed with changing times. It represented food, energy, and transportation. The Indians no doubt had a fishery at the falls when the first settlers came, but were soon disposessed. In 1632, Governor Winthrop granted Watertown the right to erect a weir in the river below the falls to catch the herring which came up to spawn in Boyd's and Cook's ponds. An area of 150 acres south of the river was granted to the town to protect the fishery. The town seems to have owned the weir at first, but ownership soon passed to Thomas Mayhew, and after a period back to the town. An application of the Indians to be permitted the right to fish here was rejected by the Town Meeting of 1671 "as one man". It was said that 100,000 fish were taken here on two tides in the 17th century. So important was the fishery that when Waltham and Weston were set off from Watertown they retained a share in it. However they also had to share in the maintainance of the "great bridge" at Watertown which was a constant
source of expense. Early in the 19th century this arrangement was
terminated, and Watertown assumed responsibility for the bridge, and
received all income from the fishery, which equalled the school budget at
the time. In 1860 there were no bids for the fishing privilege. The man
who had held it for some years reported that pollution had lowered the
fish population so much that fishing was no longer profitable. The
recently (1850) established gas works were blamed for the pollution.

A mill at the falls is mentioned as existing in records of 1638.
It was first a grist mill, and grain was ground at the falls until 1890.
A sawmill was soon added, and a factory settlement grew here. The dam was
built, and a canal to supply mills between it and the river. Thus the
delta formed an industrial island. Here by 1800 there were grist mills,
sawmills, a fulling mill, a chocolate mill, paper and cotton mills.
Nearby was a shipyard and a sugar refinery, with a distillery a short
distance down river.

The Watertown falls marked the head of navigation on a tidal river
which was navigable for small vessels. Since it was a long time before
passable roads were available, heavy goods were moved by water whenever
possible, and Watertown was an important transfer point for the towns
lying inland. Timber was floated down the river, and Watertown found it
necessary several times to seek relief from the General Court from the
piles of lumber on the riverbank and along the roads near the river which
impeded passage. (1738) Water transportation was a governing factor in
the selection of the Watertown site for the location of the Arsenal.
Coal barges came to wharves in Brighton and to the gas works in the
present century. Now the river transports only sewage.
The river was an obstacle to travel as well as a thoroughfare, and traffic was concentrated at the river crossings. A village grew up about the bridge and mills as workers homes were built between Main Street and the river and the river and on Galen Street. The manufacturing village had little in common with the farms whose civic center was the wandering meeting house. Since three of the town's four taverns were nearby, it seems that the social center was at the bridge.

In a census of 1764, Watertown reported 103 houses, 117 families, 179 white males over 16, 195 white females over 16, 172 white males under 16, 136 white females under 16, 5 male negroes, and 6 female negroes, who were listed as slaves—total 693. The slaves were not included in the total. The first federal census of 1790 reported a total population of 1091. The rather large growth in twenty-five years must have chiefly in the village rather than the farm population, for the family subsistence farms were becoming fewer.

When Watertown became the capital of Massachusetts during the siege of Boston, while the Assembly and Council met at Common Street, the bridge was the center of activity. The Coolidge Tavern nearby was the refreshment place of officialdom, and the shelter of visiting notables, including George Washington. Paul Revere set up his press nearby to print the currency. Henry Knox and Joseph Palmer, a member of the Committee of Public Safety, lived on Galen Street. Edes brought his press out of Boston at night, by way of the river, and set it up near the bridge on the north side of the river. Here he published the "Boston Gazette" during the siege. The first post office established by the Provincial Congress was also in this neighborhood.
The Middle Years.

The early settlers had held farms of modest size, four to ten acres for the most part, in the settled part of town but held grazing rights on common lands which extended to Concord. Most of the common land was in areas later set off into other towns. In 1775 there were slightly fewer freeholders than there were founders in 1630, but the area of the town had been greatly reduced. Only about a fifth of the founder names are among those who answered the call to Lexington, so the exodus from Watertown had already begun, but many of the missing names would no doubt be found in Waltham, Weston, and Lincoln. On the other hand, two thirds of those on the Lexington list bore names that were among the founders, indicating a very stable population. By the early 1800's, many of the small holdings had been gathered into larger farms and gentleman's estates.

One of the early large holdings, which existed at the time of the Revolution was that of several related Whitneys, who owned the area bounded by Main, Lexington, Orchard, Common, and Mt Auburn St. except for strips along Main and Mt. Auburn Sts. Whitney's hill was included in the family holdings. A large portion of this land became the estate of Abijah White a wealthy cattle dealer, about 1810. His mansion, the Elms, stood until recently at the corner of White's ave and Main St. His holding included the hill, which became White's Hill, and extended to Palfrey and Mt. Auburn Sts. Another estate established at the same time (1800-1810) was that of Governor Gore. While the mansion, still standing, was in Waltham, the estate included many Watertown acres, extending from Main St. to the river. Harrison Gray Otis built Oakley at this time and provided extensive grounds. The house burned some years ago.
but the extensive estate remains, serving as a golf club, the sole relic of this era in Watertown.

Shortly after these mansions were built, a large tract in East Watertown was bought by the United States government, and the first buildings of the Arsenal were built. In the report recommending the purchase of this site, the availability of water transport by the river was stressed as a major consideration.

In the 1830’s another large part of East Watertown became the Mt. Auburn Cemetery. Established by a group connected with the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, it was the pioneer garden cemetery, artfully landscaped, and planted with rare horticultural specimens.

The attractions of Watertown as a country residence continued to be appreciated by the wealthy of Boston, and great country estates as well as more modest second homes appeared among the remaining farms.

Cushing, a millionaire China merchant, attempted to buy White’s hill to establish an estate, but he was told that he did not have money enough to buy it. Mr. White valued his hill highly, for Mr Cushing had a great deal of money, perhaps more than any other American of the time. Cushing went north of Belmont St. and developed a luxurious estate in the part of Watertown which later became Belmont.

Nathaniel Whiting had an elegant mansion on the eastern slope of White’s Hill, about the corner of Mapshall and Church Sts. Here he entertained Charles Dickens during the latter’s American tour.

Another great estate, developed a little later, was that of Alvin Adams, founder of one of the early express companies. The mansion stood at about the corner of Clyde and Carver Aves., surrounded by lawns
trees, and fountains. The estate included a deer park, and a herd of blooded dairy cattle. It extended on the north side of Mt. Auburn St. from the Oakley property to Hillside Rd., from Belmont St. to Mt. Auburn St., and included the land on Adams Ave and Shattuck Rd.

South of Mt. Auburn St., the estate included all the land between Spruce St. and Adams St., as far south as the line of Spruce and Laurel Sts. In this area was built one of the first golf links in America.

Josiah Stickney, banker and sugar magnate, had a great estate near the river which was later purchased by the Perkins Institute for Their new school. Adjoining to the west was the Ladd estate of equal size. South of the river most of the land west of Galen St. was the property of Dr. Morse.

Other Boston Merchants had less pretentious homes where they fled the heat of Boston in the summer months, returning to the city in the winter. One such was the Templeton place at Templeton Parkway and Mt. Auburn St. Its owner left a trust fund for the poor of the town.

Much of the land not taken up in estates was gathered into a few large commercial farms, supplying the Boston market, and the family farms of the early days disappeared.

The industrial development which followed the Revolution, and accelerated during the embargo and the war of 1812 was reflected along the Charles. New and larger mills were built at the lower falls, and houses for workmen multiplied. Further upriver the falls at Bemis had been used by Governor for a paper mill (his estate extended this far).

This property was acquired early in the 1800's by the Bemis brothers who built cotton mills there. A village of mill workers developed in
the vicinity. Still further up, at the Waltham falls, Francis Lowell established, in a building still standing, the first mill in the world where cotton was processed from the bale to cloth under one roof. His first model village was built along the river below the Waltham falls, and Waltham common was the garden of the superintendent, Patrick Tracy Jackson. Their operations soon outgrew the feeble power of the Charles and they transferred their works to the new mill town of Lowell on the Merrimac.

Hale's "Survey of Boston and its Vicinity" (1821) describes Watertown of the time: "The compact part of the town of Watertown is built principally on the north bank of Charles River, which is navigable for small sloops (there being full seven feet of water at high spring tides) up to the bridge; about forty rods above the bridge there is a dam built across the bed of the river which terminates the the tide water; This dam furnishes water for the supply of several paper and other mills as well as the Watertown Cotton Factory. There is a small portion of the town south of Charles River, on which is situated the Boston Hat Factory, a distillery and mills. The United Stated Arsenal is built on the north bank of the river about one mile and a quarter below Watertown bridge.

"The road leading to Watertown from Cambridge is sandy and rather heavy for travelling, and the one from Brighton has objectionable inclivities. At present I should presume the easiest road to travel is the one north of the late Governor Gerry's seat, but the contemplated one from the mill dam will be far the most preferable if it should be made. The soil is generally dry and healthy, and the country swelling agreeably into small eminences whose sides are ornamented with clusters of trees,
country seats, farm houses and fruit trees.

"Nearly the whole town is under cultivation, and is bounded easterly on Cambridge, northerly on West Cambridge, westerly on Waltham and southerly on the towns of Newton and Brighton."

Hales published a map of Watertown in 1830 which showed little change in the street system in a hundred years except that Arsenal and North Beacon Streets with their connecting bridges had been added. North Beacon St was the highway by the milldam which Hales had felt would be the best access from Boston. Both roads connected with Main St, the western outlet at Watertown square, indicating the continuing importance of this route in the 1820's when both these roads were built.

The river continued as a channel of transportation. There was a passenger from Boston to Watertown landing in the 1820's. In 1824 the Selectmen noted that descending business on the river (the timber which had been a nuisance seventy five years before) had quite ceased. "ascending business from the capital into the country is now very considerable and hereafter may become very great." As the head of navigation, Watertown was the transfer point for all this traffic.

Watertown in the 1820's was a busy traffic center. Three direct roads from Boston and the Charlestown road giving access to the north country met at Watertown Square, and all goods passing up the river destined for the country had to be transferred here. The only alternative route, the Worcester Turnpike, opened in 1809 was a toll road until 1835. Stage lines from Waltham, Worcester, and Framingham passed through as well as mail coaches from New York and Albany. A constant stream of wagons in summer and punts in winter passed to and fro with country produce for Boston, and all types of manufactured and imported goods for
the country towns. Stabling, feeding and caring for the hundreds of horses required for this traffic was an important industry, offering considerable employment. By 1830 the increased traffic supported six taverns and ten retail establishments. Business in the mill district was increasing also, and about this time Lewando started to spread his dyed yarns on the riverbank to dry.

Main St. still retained the charm of a country town. Years later, an old man recalling his first view of Watertown, about 1840, said that early morning view of Main St. from the corner of Howard as he approached from the west was a picture "I shall never forget—the sun was well up, for it was early morning, and as I looked down the avenue the grand old elms that were then in their prime arched the street. With the sunlight struggling through the thick foliage, the clean morning air, and the houses that lined each side of the street—not such houses as you will now find on many of our streets, but good old fashioned dwellings such as the times called for, with their owners or occupants just starting out on their daily business, made to me one of the finest views I had ever seen, and which I shall never forget."

But the author of "A Glimpse of Watertown" writing only ten years later had a different impression:

"Many a flimsy old hovel, sunk deep in the mud
That perchance may have stood since the age of the flood
Greets the eye as you enter the village
Where young and old topers swallow their drink
Seeking the foulest of ruins the brink
And miserly men, hands pocketed, wink
With selfishness plain on their visage."
He must have entered town by a different road.

The civic center finally came to Main St. as the result of a change in the Massachusetts Constitution (1835) which ended the support of the church by the town. The First Parish and the Town had come to the parting of the ways. Apparently neither wished to retain the old meeting house on Common St., and it was torn down. For ten years the town had no place for meetings.

Some meetings at least were held in the vestry of the new Baptist Church at Baptist walk. In 1846 a Town Hall was built on Main St. at Church.

Unfortunately it was placed on a small lot. The building was in the then popular Greek Revival style. It provided a hall for meetings, and space for town offices and a jail. At first the first floor was let for stores.

The Free Public Library replaced one of these in 1866. At last the civic center had finished its long migration of more than two hundred years and joined the commercial center at the falls.

Watertown was sufficiently remote from Boston in those days to support entertainments and lectures, and the Town Hall was extensively used as the only theatre in town. No doubt bloodhounds chased Eliza across its stage many times. Perhaps drawn by the residence in town of a number of leaders in the reform movements of the day such figures as Emerson, Phillips, Garrison, Parker, Beecher, Dana, Holmes and Lowell appeared on its platform. Father Mathew, the famous Irish temperance leader was a William house guest of Abijah White and no doubt appeared in the Town Hall.

Perhaps the old Town Hall's greatest moment was the night it opened its doors to Wendell Phillips, who had been denied the use of Samuel Hall for an abolition speech. Posters in Boston urged a march on Watertown to prevent his speaking there, and a band of abolitionists girded for his
The evening passed calmly, and the thirty stalwart citizens of Watertown sworn in by the Town Clerk to keep order (there was no regular police force) had nothing to do.

While the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780 gave the Congregational Church preferred status, and tax support, it did not forbid other religious groups. Watertown seems to have had a tendency to conformity in religion, for no other churches appeared until 1828 when a Universalist Church was built on Galen St. at Water. This congregation was drawn largely from Newton. In 1830 a group withdrew from the First Parish and formed a Baptist Church. Their building was at Baptist Walk and Mt. Auburn St. A second church was built at the same location in 1858. The present building at Common St. was built in 1900.

When the meeting house on Common St. was pulled down, the First Parish which was now becoming Unitarian in doctrine, built a new church on a large lot near the center on Church and Summer St. This building burnt in a great fire which swept from Main St. to Summer St. (1840). The fire was finally contained by a bucket brigade of "females" as a Boston paper of the day reported. Another building was raised in 1842. The congregation chose to build in Victorian Gothic rather than in the classic style of their tradition. This building succumbed to changing times in 1975. The ancient First Parish no longer had enough members to support so large a church.

The next church formed, also from members of the First Parish, was St. John Methodist. They first met in a building formerly used by the Wellington Academy on Church Hill. They built a new church on Main St. where the fire station now stands in 1847. Their present church on
Mt. Auburn St. was completed in 1870.

These churches had all grown out of the old First Parish. The next congregation had quite a different origin, which foretold a great change in the town’s population. St. Patrick’s congregation which had met for short time in the Town Hall, acquired the old Academy building abandoned by the Methodists. It is said that the purchase was made through a straw, who professed to be acting for a hat factory. There is supposed to have been consternation among the Methodists when they found that they had inadvertently given popery a nest to hatch in. A brick church was immediately started nearby which still stands, used by the school. The present building on Main St. was consecrated in 1900.

Still another church was formed from the First Parish in 1855. Called for years the Orthodox Church, it erected its house on Mt. Auburn St. at Philips. Perhaps reflecting the orthodoxy of their doctrines, they built in the classic colonial style.

Four new congregations had become established in twenty years where one had sufficed for two hundred, reflecting a widening perspective in the town. The Episcopal Church at Russell Ave., built in 1883, completed the town’s original quota of churches. The builders of these churches along Mt. Auburn St. showed no tendency to group them about a common center.

The original surveys for the Worcester Railroad, later the Boston and Albany, projected a route through Watertown, following the ancient highway. The objections of the environmentalists and large property owners prevailed, and the line passed through Newton. The opposition was led by Abijah White, squire of “The Elms”, a wealthy cattle dealer and the town’s first citizen, rivalled only by Nathaniel Whiting who did not often concern
himself with local affairs. White exercised an influence difficult to imagine in our times. He foresaw with prophetic vision that the railroad was a passing thing, and predicted that "your grandchildren will see the tracks torn up." The line through Newton was completed to Worcester in 1833.

Watertown went into a decline. No longer was its position as head of navigation on the Charles important. No longer was it on the main line from Boston to the interior. The mail coaches from New York and Albany no stopped at the Watertown postoffice. The streets were no longer busy with stage-coaches and wagons, its taverns no longer crowded with travelers and teamsters.

The railroad age finally came to Watertown in 1846 when the branch line from Cambridge to Waltham was completed. Abijah White did not live to suffer the indignity of having his mansion cut off from his beloved hill by the hated rails. The railroad brought a revival to Watertown, by bringing transportation to its growing industries and a new industrial zone developed along its tracks, merging at places with that along the river. Passenger service to Boston augmented by a horse car line started in 1857 began Watertown's development as a bedroom town.

By the middle of the 19th century the town had changed completely from a settlement of small farms centered on a church. Continuous development was making it one of the leading industrial towns in the state, though the industrial village was surrounded by gentlemen's estates and market gardens. The more rural northern section after a long struggle persuaded the Legislature to set it off as a new town in 1859. This renewed evidence of the old spirit of disunity may have been the final result of the bad feeling resulting from the kidnapping of the
The industrial development and improved access to Boston brought an increasing demand for residential property, and Watertown's final phase, a residential suburb, began. Abijah White's was the first of the great estates to be broken up (1832). Streets were laid out between Palfrey and Main streets and they soon filled with houses. Another development was attempted by a Mr. Boyd at the Newton line about the time of the Civil War. Boyd and Morse Streets were built up at this time. It is said that the venture was not successful financially, and that banks and individuals lost heavily.

The population, which had been 1091 in the first Federal census in 1790, grew in 1830 to 1640, and in 1850 to 2837. In 1859 Watertown had lost about one fifth of its population (600) and one third of its
valuation to the new town of Belmont. The lost citizens were the more wealthy, reflecting the growing working class population of Watertown.

By 1865, the loss had been more than made up, and the population had grown to 3779, reflecting probably the war time activities of the Arsenal, Walker & Pratt and the textile mills.

The population was changing. The stability of the population before the Revolution has been remarked upon. In 1865, while most of the inhabitants were native born, a quarter were not. A more significant statistic with portent for the future appeared in 1878, when native born inhabitants produced 34 births, while Irish born parents produced 50. The handwriting was on the wall for Yankee Watertown.

The changing character of the population is also evident in a list of men eligible for the draft in 1864. A wide variety of trades is listed, as well as laborers, but of 440 men there were but 17 farmers...
The Last Hundred Years.

Watertown's entry into the modern age began in the 1880's. As the decade began, in spite of growing factories, the village aspect remained. Farmers still brought their grain to be ground at the grist mill near the bridge. There was no water system, and of course no sewers. The old town pump stood in the middle of Main St. opposite Galen, though the more prosperous had their own wells (and their own sewers, often in close proximity). A fire main had been laid in Main St. as far as White's Ave. Water was supplied from the river, under pressure from the steam pumps at Walker & Pratt and Hollingsworth & Whitney. Steam was by now supplementing the river for powering the growing demands of the factories. Several underground reservoirs about the town served by a horse drawn steam pump provided for fire service beyond the center.

The Stock Yards (1872) were the railroad's greatest contribution to Watertown commerce. The Union Market Stockyards extended from Franklin and Walnut streets to the railroad. Cattle from the West, and from northern New England were unloaded here for the Tuesday morning cattle market and held in pens for later delivery to the Brighton slaughter houses. Hordes of cattle were herded down Arsenal St. to their final destiny. Five tracks accommodated the arriving trains, and the area between the tracks and Walnut St. was covered with pens. So much business was done at the yards that a new bank, the Union Market National was chartered (1873) to handle it.

Another adjunct to the yards was the Union Market House on Walnut St. which served the cattle dealers and drovers, and was Watertown's Dodge City. The live cattle trade in the east dwindled with the
development of refrigeration, and Texas longhorns were seldom seen in Watertown streets after 1900. Trade in north country cattle continued into this century, and the Tuesday morning arrival of the cattle trains was an event, at least for the younger part of the population. The yards, continually complained of a nuisance had their last use in 1914-1918 when horses and mules were held there waiting shipment to Europe.

A map of 1875 shows great expanses of open space about the center. Streets had been laid out as far as Spruce on the south side of Mt. Auburn St. and to Russell Ave on the north, but there were few houses beyond the cemetery on either side. Opposite the cemetery, the Lemmon estate still extended to the railroad. The great estates of Ladd and Stickney, Adams and Pratt (Oakley) and the Coolidge farms still dominated East Watertown, while great farms covered most of West and North Watertown.

Mt. Auburn St. terminated at Main. The mill canal ran just behind Main St. and rejoined the river opposite Riverside. The whole area of the island thus formed was closely built with factories. Watertown Square was the intersection of Main and Galen streets. Here stood the flag pole and the town pump.

Beyond the central area there were open fields. On the north side of Mt. Auburn St toward East Watertown there only three side streets east of Common: Russell Ave, just opened but not built upon, School, and Arlington. Only seven houses faced Mt. Auburn St. between Common St. and the old Richardson Tavern.

South of Mt. Auburn St. beyond Walnut the situation was much the same. Lincoln and Spruce streets had been laid out, but no houses had been built. The streets between Nichols Ave and Mt. Auburn St. were
being developed but there were few houses. Ten houses faced Mt. Auburn St. on this side between Walnut St. and the Cambridge line.

Orchard St. ran between farms, Locke's on the north filling the south slope of the hill. The Town Farm and Almshouse were located on the present town property, with the pest house across Orchard St., on the present school house lot. The Lovell farm was beyond on Waverly Ave. Several streets had been built up about the delta, where the meetinghouse of 1720 had stood.

Palfrey St. was the boundary of the built up area north of the center. Beyond White's Ave., north of the railroad, streets had been laid out to Waverly Avenue, which ended at Fayette Street. This was a new development, and few houses had been built. The names of their owners forecast that this district, when fully built twenty years later, would be called "Limerick". The Irish were not welcome in the settled areas of the town and there were two other detached Irish settlements. The older was at the end of cottage Street, between the railroad and the old Catholic cemetery. This was called the "Sand Banks". The other was at Grenville Road, near the top of the hill, which became widely known as "Brennan's Hill" in honor of the pioneer settler in this remote outpost.

Belmont, Warren, Main, and Waltham streets ran to the Waltham with a few scattered houses as they had before 1700. South of Main Street, west of the center farm land stretched to the river. The last street off Main on this side was Howard, the old "Way to Dirty Green".

South of the river the Page (formerly Morse) estate still occupied most of the west side of Galen Street. The Boyd development was now completely built to the Newton line. Two large ponds, Boyd's and Cook's
were east of Watertown Street, with an ice house on Watertown Street.

Opposite the end of Mt. Auburn Street, foundry buildings and several small shops were built partly over the canal. From here to the square at Galen Street there were several stores and shops, between the canal and Main St. Beyond the square, several stores, the savings bank, and the Union Market National opposite the Town Hall completed the business district on that side of Main Street. The horse car line had its terminal on this side, about halfway between Church and Cross Streets. The rest of Main Street was residential on this side. The Catholic rectory occupied part of the lot where the church now stands. St. Patrick’s church stood on the hill where the building is still used by the school. The area between Main Street and the river was mostly built up as far as Howard Street. There was a school on the west corner of Howard Street, beyond there were but five houses to the Waltham line.

The Otis Brothers store was at the corner of Main and Spring Streets. The block behind it to the railroad was largely taken up with the express station and livery stables. Between Spring and Church Streets stood a line of stores, one of which contained the Post Office, the Spring Hotel, and on the corner of Church Street, the Town Hall. The Library was on the lower floor of the Town Hall. The engine house was behind the Town Hall, and the lockup in the Town Hall basement. A coal yard and freight docks spread along the railroad in this block. The yards widened to seven tracks. The Watertown passenger depot was at Church Street, the building now used partly as a restaurant, and until recently partly as a branch bank. The western corner of Church Street held a block of stores. Beyond the north side of Main Street was
residential except for the Methodist church which stood on the fire
property
station lot. The large Titcombe later became Salstonstall Park.

Beyond White's avenue the "Elms" still stood, the last remnant of Abijah
White's great estate. Residences with rather large grounds continued as
far as the railroad, but from here to the Waltham line there were only
four houses on this side of Main Street.

Between Arsenal Street and the river, was another great open space.
Beyond Irving and Ladd Streets were the Ladd, Stickney, and Cassidy estates,
as well as several smaller places.

Much of the open land not included in gentlemen's estates was
devoted to commercial market gardens and dairy and stock farms. The market
gardens were highly developed commercial enterprises supplying the Boston
market with fruits and vegetables. It was before the days of refrigerator
cars, canned goods, and frozen foods, and the farms in the surrounding towns
were the only source of fresh produce for the cities. The fields were
intensively cultivated, using to a great extent the plentiful organic
product from the many stables of Boston, but some chemical fertilizers were
coming into use. Most of the farms had large areas under glass, and they
were extensively irrigated, using artesian wells developed on the property.

In addition to the usual products there was a specialist in strawberries,
and a florist. The farms were extensive employers of labor, and an
important addition to the economy. One farm processed 1000 barrels of
pickles annually from its crop.

Some of the estates also farmed, and the Adams estate supported
a herd of prize cattle, housed in a barn with each cow's name above its stall.
The most attractive area in town was the hollow between Coolidge Hill and the river, in recent years used for the town dump and incinerator. A brook rising near School and Mt. Auburn Streets made its way through the meadows between wooded banks and a series of ponds to the river just below Arsenal Street. The banks were remembered in later years for their profusion of wild flowers. The pure waters provided ice in winter and an ice house stood between the two ponds where the brook crossed Arlington Street. Glen Road, now Clarendon Street, ran along the shore of the lower pond. In the 1880's a resort hotel, the Glen house, was built on the shore to take advantage of the charming location. The area is much changed, tho some traces of the brook and ponds can be seen in the oozing swamp under the overflow from the town dump.

The hotel had a brief but interesting history. In its upstairs ballroom Jake Kilrain defeated Joe Lennon in 11 rounds (1888). It was operated by Sadie Dow who the Watertown "Enterprise" described as "a woman well known on the streets of Watertown". The hotel was luxuriously furnished, and contained many expensive paintings which the "Enterprise" reporter did not consider suitable for a family parlor. It was in frequent trouble with the law for liquor violations, and was closed when it was burned down in 1890.

Another pleasant area was the Arsenal grounds. At this period shortly after the Civil War, there was little activity there. Its wide grounds, mostly open land with many trees were a pleasant interval near the river. Its military garrison for guard duty, with their morning and evening guns, and national salutes on Memorial Day and Fourth of July lent a martial note to the town well into the present century. Fireworks displays on July Fourth were much admired.
The town's first step toward modern times was a water system. The town pump and private wells had become inadequate for a population of 5000 (1875). A dry summer found many people, their wells dry, hauling water in carts from the river which fish had considered unfit for use for twenty years. Tests of wells by the new Board of Health produced some results which should have been alarming. After a long and heated discussion as whether a water supply was needed, and then over what type, action was voted in 1880. Mains were gradually extended through the town, reaching the remotest streets by 1884. The town pump was removed in 1886. After an unsatisfactory experience with a private company, the town purchased the system in 1896. Water was supplied from wells near the river just below the Waltham line. This supply source was discontinued when Watertown joined the Metropolitan system (1900).

Sewers soon followed, their advent hastened by a secession movement south of the river, where the people petitioned the Legislature in 1884 to be separated from Watertown and joined to Newton. They claimed among things inferior municipal services from Watertown. The sewer system was therefore started south of the river. The appeal was renewed every year until 1891 when it was abandoned. Possibly a tribute to the new sewer system. This was the last effort so far of a portion of the town to secede. The sewer system reached all over town in 1892, and in 1897 all houses were required to connect to it. The Odorless Excavator was seen no more on the streets.

An electric car line appeared on Mt. Auburn St. in 1894, and soon other lines extended along Main Street to Waltham, and by connecting lines to Worcester and beyond. A line up Galen Street gave another connection with Boston, and there were soon lines on Arsenal and North
Beacon Streets. The new electric railway took over the property of the horse car company at Mt. Auburn, and constructed large car barns there which became the Star Market in later years.

With the improvement of transportation facilities to Boston, which now included four street car lines, and a steam railroad providing good commuter service, Watertown entered its bedroom town phase—a place of residence for people working in Boston, and the large estates and farms began to be broken up for residential development. Many of the new residents had little interest in the town. The first large development, the Russell estate, between Bailey Road and Barnard avenue, extending up the hill to the Oakley Club (1882-4), was followed by that of the Leamon estate, Chester and Otis Streets (1888). A portion of the Ladd estate, Ladd Street was developed in the same years.

The Nathaniel Whiting Estate was broken up in the early 1890's. The mansion house was torn down, and house lots laid out on Oliver Street, Marion Road, and upper Marshall St. It was an affluent, upper middle class neighborhood known for years as Whiting Park.

South of the river, the Page estate, west of Galen Street became Union, Eliot, and Capitol Streets (1897). With the settlement of Bates Road (1899) the last open space in the central portion of the town was gone with the passing century, but large unsettled areas remained in North, West, and East Watertown.

The industrial area also changed and grew. The importance of the river declined. It was no longer a source of food or an important source of power after the midcentury, tho the old grist mill ground on until nearly 1900. The other mills became increasingly dependent
upon steam, and later electricity as they outgrew the rather limited power developed by the falls of the Charles. Some importance as a transportation route remained until the Metropolitan District Commission developments in the early 1900's, which included damming the river at Boston, so that tidewater no longer came to Watertown (1908). Up to that time coal barges came upriver to the gas works, the Arsenal, and to several coal yards in Brighton. The last ship was built on the river by John Cassidy, at his estate above the Arsenal. She was especially designed for operation in rivers, and there was a brief agitation for dredging of the river so that Watertown might be a port again. The S.S. "Watertown" as she was called, was launched in 1891. She burned about two years later, and the damming of the river which soon followed ended the talk of development for transportation.

A new industrial district grew up in East Watertown. At about the same time that the Walker & Pratt foundry was moved to Union Market the Hood Rubber Company started its plant on Nichols Avenue and Arlington Street. It grew in a few years across the railroad to Arsenal Street, and the Walker & Pratt property. These plants with the Arsenal made up the town's largest concentrated industrial area.

The development of the Metropolitan Park system beginning about 1900 brought great changes to the riverbanks, and to the center of Watertown. The river was dammed, and parks and boulevards replaced the coal wharves along its banks. The old draw-bridges were replaced by modern highway bridges, and the river now carries only pleasure craft and sewage. The town was relieved of the burden of the "Great Bridge" which had been such a heavy charge in the early days, and the state built a
modern stone bridge at Galen Street (1907-8).

The Metropolitan Commission acquired the river banks as far up as Galen Street on the north, and to the falls on the south. The area near the bridge was greatly changed. Mt. Auburn Street was extended across Main to meet Galen at the bridge. The mill canal was largely filled, and many of the buildings along its banks, including the grist mill, removed, although a row of buildings remained on Main Street. A park was built on the river bank below Mt. Auburn Street where the mill canal had rejoined the river. The area beyond Galen Street was unchanged, and remains today much as it was one hundred years ago.

Possibly inspired by the general interest in parks at the time, an urge for community improvement seems to have seized the town about 1890. The soldiers monument had been dedicated in 1889. A Park Department was formed in 1895, and in the initial enthusiasm Salstonstall Park and Whitney Hill Park were purchased, and several smaller areas around town were designated as parks. At last the town had a central common. The interest did not last long enough for any proper development, or indeed maintenance of the park areas, and a portion of Salstonstall Park was soon used for a school, and later a larger portion was taken for a municipal office building. One product of this period were the watering troughs for horses which were placed in a number of locations about the town. They were built of granite “to last a long time” said the Town Report.

An evidence of this impulse was the effort of the “Young Men’s Assembly”. Their publication “The Ideal Watertown” (February 1898) contained many illustrations and plans of the future town as they
visioned it. The mills in the Delta area were to be removed and Mt. Auburn Street continued to the bridge. The triangle is shown covered with trees. The Lowendo building is replaced by a bath house and casino on the bank of a river presumably clean enough to swim in. Beacon Square is dominated by a monumental Town Hall in the space between Arsenal and Mt. Auburn Streets, where the gasoline stations now are, dominating the approach over the bridge from the south. This building was to include town offices in one wing, and a large hall with a stage suitable for theatrical and concert performances in another.

Saltonstall Park was to be developed, using the stream, now covered, behind the Library to feed a lagoon where the fire station now stands. There were walks, plantings, and a music pavilion for band concerts. Near the railroad was to be a playground and outdoor gymnasium and dressing rooms. A new firehouse which looks very much like the present one was to take the place of the old Town Hall.

New railroad stations were to built at Church Street and at Union Market. Grade crossings are to be eliminated, and the freight yard removed from the center of town. The stockyards are replaced by a charming residential district.

Of all these plans the clearing of the delta was the only fruit, the the freight yard and the grade crossings disappeared with the railroad. The riverbank was partially cleared by the M.D.C. developments, but the land between Mt. Auburn Street and Galen Street was not included in the park and its final disposition provided material for an unbelievably bitter political war which lasted for twenty years. After the extension of Mt. Auburn Street and the clearing of the river bank there was a row
of old buildings along the Main Street side of the space, with a nondescript vacant lot behind them. A group, some of whose leaders were unfortunately leaders of one of the town's political factions, sought to have the buildings removed and the area improved. The town showed no interest in the project. The only embellishment of the delta was a drinking fountain which was placed near the corner of Galen and Main streets by the Women's Christian Temperance union in 1908. When the town did not act, the interested group bought the buildings to hold until the town was ready with a plan. Finally (1924) the town bought the property, but the arguments continued over whether the space should be kept open or used for a shelter for street car patrons. As the Tercentenary approached by a proposal to erect a memorial to the Founders in the space. There was also the problem of what to do with the W.C.T.U. fountain, which some thought did not lend itself to a beautification project. Finally the issue was resolved in favor of an open space. The Founders monument was banished to the riverbank. The W.C.T.U. fountain vanished to an unknown destination just as prohibition was repealed. The delta was grassed over and some shrubbery planted. The "Shelter in the Delta" faction persisted, and a shelter for street car patrons was eventually built in 1947, and lasted about twenty years.

The population reached about 10,000 in 1900. In the next twenty years most of the growth was in East Watertown, stimulated by the industries there and, after 1912, by the extension of the subway to Harvard Square. A large part of the Adams estate, north of Mt. Auburn Street, and east of School, as far as the top of the hill, was developed as a unit in the years following 1901. It was an early example of community development, and included the amenity of a neighborhood clubhouse with tennis courts.
available to the purchasers of houses. This was a single house development intended to attract an upper middle class group of commuters to Boston.

That part of the Adams estate between the Oakley club and School Street, which had included the mansion house and grounds, had passed to another owner when the rest of the estate was sold. He replaced the Adams mansion with another when it burned, but about 1900 the property came into the possession of the Metropolitan Riding and Driving Club, a resort for Boston devotees of the new automobiles fad. The club was a convenient drive from Boston over the new M.D.C. boulevards. The members' interest were not confined to driving. Like the earlier Glenn House, it thrived for some years in spite of the fact that Watertown was a no license town, and that gambling was also illegal, but in 1909 a reform board of Selectmen was elected which enforced the laws, and the club was harassed by police raids. Like the Glenn House, it soon succumbed to fire, and soon after, this portion of the Adams estate was developed (1915-1928). At about the same time the last section of that vast property north of Mt. Auburn Street, the land between the crest of the hill and Belmont Street was built up, as well as as a large part of the adjoining Joshua Coolidge farm on Belmont Street.

The remaining portion of the Adams estate, lying south of Mt. Auburn Street was purchased by former Governor Eugene Foss, who gave the town the land for its new High School (East Junior) and the land between it and Mt. Auburn Street. The new streets laid out in this area were largely built upon by 1918.

The Lincoln-Spruce Street area had been built up between 1900 and 1915, lower Spruce Street, Cypress, and part of Walnut (Fullerville)
about 1910. Multiple residences appeared for the first time in this development, but the timely adoption by the town of a new tenement law put a stop to the building of "three deckers" which proliferated in some Boston suburbs at that time.

The war (1914-1918) brought great industrial expansion in East Watertown, especially at the rubber factory and the Arsenal. Employment at the rubber factory expanded so greatly, drawing employees from all over greater Boston in an era when working people did not own automobiles, that a loop was constructed south of Mt. Auburn Street, between Bieglov Avenue and Arlington Street so that street-cars could be run between Harvard Square and Hood's Loop to accommodate them. A side track on Arsenal Street permitted similar service between Central Square and the Arsenal. After the war the tracks were removed and a new trading center, Coolidge Square developed.

With the residential growth of East Watertown came a changing population attracted by the factories there. It was largely a resident working population, unlike the commuters who had come to other parts of town. The Irish influx of the late 19th century gave way to those of Armenian, Italian, and Greek origin, and these races now form an important part of the town's population. New churches were built in East Watertown. Sacred Heart, Roman Catholic, had been built in 1895, near the junction of Belmont and Mt. Auburn Streets, serving at that time a congregation principally from Belmont and Cambridge, since the neighboring part of Watertown was not settled. As the east end filled in a third Roman Catholic church, St. Theresa, was built at School Street (1935-49). St. James soon joined it on the opposite corner. In the 1950's three new
churches were built in the Coolidge Square area, St. Stephen, the Armenian Memorial Church, and the Greek Orthodox Church.

North of Mt. Auburn Street, the Keenan property, which had once been a part of the town Common, was developed about 1922. Paentiss, Keenan, Brimmer, and St. Mary Streets were solidly built within a few years. The Kimball place, on the other side of Arlington, the rest of the one time Common where the church and training field had been followed (1925), giving Watertown its second moving picture theatre. With the opening of the Stearns estate—Stearns Road to Adams Avenue (1927) the last open land in East Watertown except the Oakley club and the decaying area near Sawin's pond which became the town dump, was gone.

On the river bank the Perkins Institute for the Blind had bought the Stickney estate for their new school, moved from South Boston (1910). The development of the adjoining Cassidy estate soon followed (Riverton 1913).

The farms in North and West Watertown fell to the developers in quick succession during the 1920's and 30's. The great Locke farm on the slope of Brennans Hill, west of Common St. was filling with single houses in the late 1920's. The Lovell and Whitney farms on Waverly avenue and Orchard Streets, the Westminster Avenue section, and the streets north of Main Street to the Waltham line, were all built up about this time. Fairfield Gardens came a little later. The Town farm and poor house gave way to the James Russell Lowell School in the 1930's.

South of Main Street near the Waltham line, building was going on in the 1930's. About 1950, Watertown's last farm, Iodice's, gave way to apartments.
Most of the residential buildings in Watertown prior to 1915 were single houses. Between 1915 and 1925, most were two family with a few three family. A zoning by-law passed in 1926 reserved sections of the town for single house construction, and from 1930 to 1950 most construction was of that type. In the 1950's and 60's a series of zoning law changes paved the way for apartments and later high-rise apartments in many parts of town.

The industrial area between Pleasant Street and the river to the Waltham line continued to grow, embracing and overrunning the old Bemis district. The old district along the south side of the river underwent many changes. The lumber yard became the electric car yards (1900) which spread until they engulfed Madame Coolidge’s tavern. The starch factory became the Stanley Dry Plate, and later the Stanley Steam motor works. The site is now occupied by Bachrach. The soap factory became Sterling Elliot’s bicycle factory, to be followed by his addressograph, and later factories. The gas works with its great tank went in 1935, and several industrial establishments occupy the location.

After the war (1918) the stockyards were sold and several industries located here. In East Watertown the New England Telephone Co. erected a plant on the old Coolidge farm. The period between the wars was Watertown’s most thriving as an industrial town.

After the second war (1945) Watertown started a long decline as an industrial town which accelerated in the sixties. The Walker and Pratt foundry had closed years before, its property absorbed by b.f.p. Goodrich who had bought the Hood Rubber Co. Goodrich in turn closed its plant and moved away from Watertown. Shortly before, the Arsenal had
ceased manufacturing operations in Watertown and placed about half its property on the market, retaining the rest as a materials testing laboratory. In addition to these, the town's largest industries, several of the companies who had located in the stockyards also left town. These losses were not made up by a few small industries which came to town in those years.

The closing of the Goodrich plant and of the Arsenal left nearly 100 acres of land in East Watertown derelict, and they so remained for years. At this time (1975) a shopping center is planned for the Goodrich land. The fate of the Arsenal land remains uncertain. The town purchased it with the idea of controlling its future. The townspeople have displayed the same inability to agree on plans for its disposal as those of an earlier day who quarrelled over the meeting house location. It would be a bold man who would predict the future of this land.

The population had grown in 1915 to 16,600 and in 1940 to 35,500. A projection made in 1897 had forecast a population for 1940 of 37,000. In 1945 it had reached 37,500, and has grown little in the last thirty years. 1975- 40,000

Watertown seems to have lain from its earliest days under some malign influence, fatal to civic pride and community feeling. Rent from the time of its foundation with quarrels over the location of the meetinghouse, it was split again and again. It lost its very birthplace to another town, and never developed a civic center. Its citizens have chosen in each generation to move away if they became successful. Of the families of the settlement or revolutionary periods no representative is prominent in town.
Many fortunes have been made in Watertown, but they have not been spent here. Other men who passed their early years here have won great fortunes elsewhere, but unlike those nurtured in many towns, none have remembered the place of their birth. No substantial civic foundation perpetuates the memories of these forgotten men. They have suffered the fate predicted by the poet for the man "who never to himself has said 'this is my own my native land'". The town mined out by its absentee landlords is barren, the wealth it has generated spent elsewhere.
Watertown
1720

A scale of five rods; the last extract is forty rods.