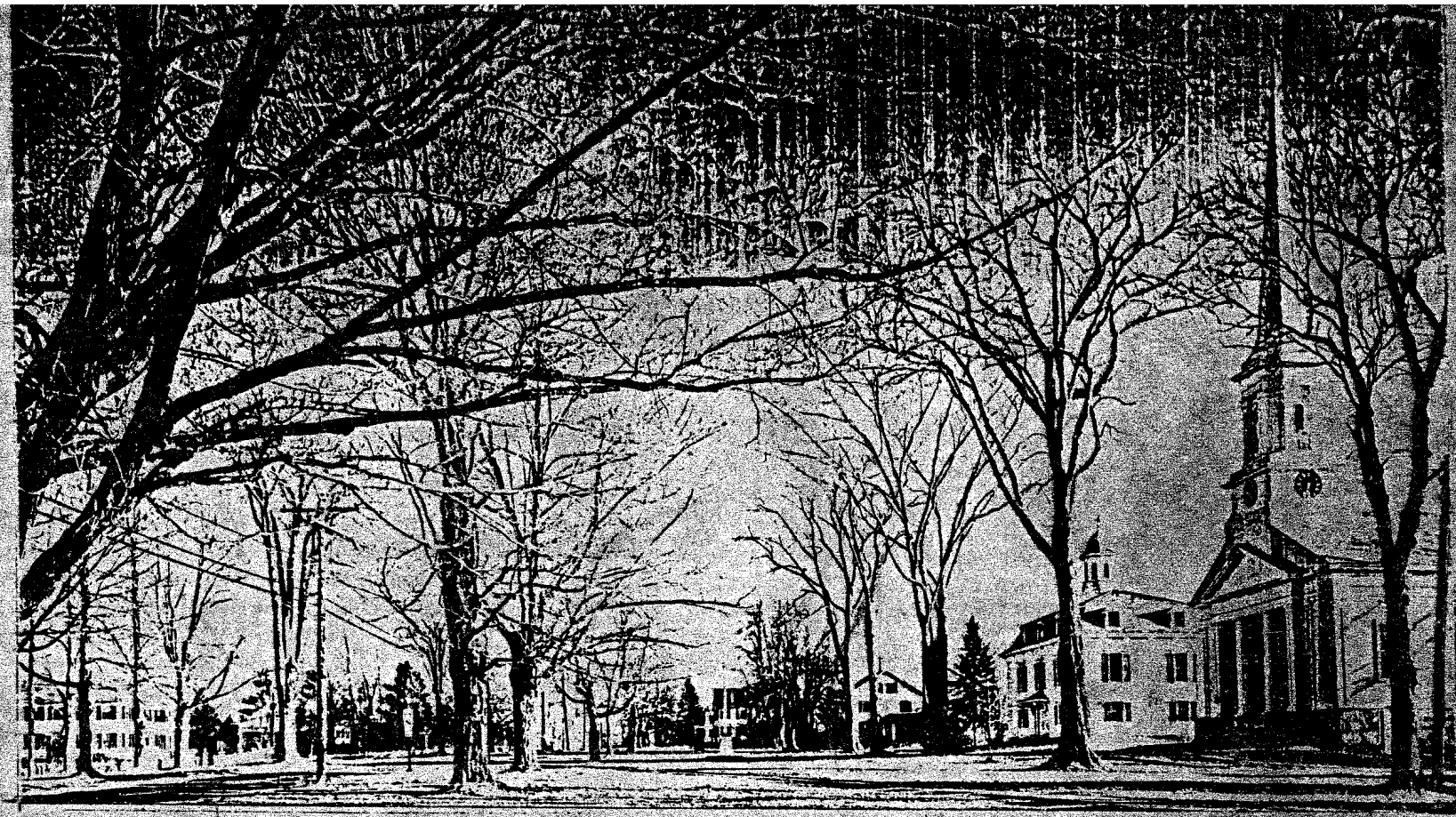

ROYALSTON COMMON

And A Plan For Preservation

Prepared By
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in association with
SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF NEW ENGLAND ANTIQUITIES
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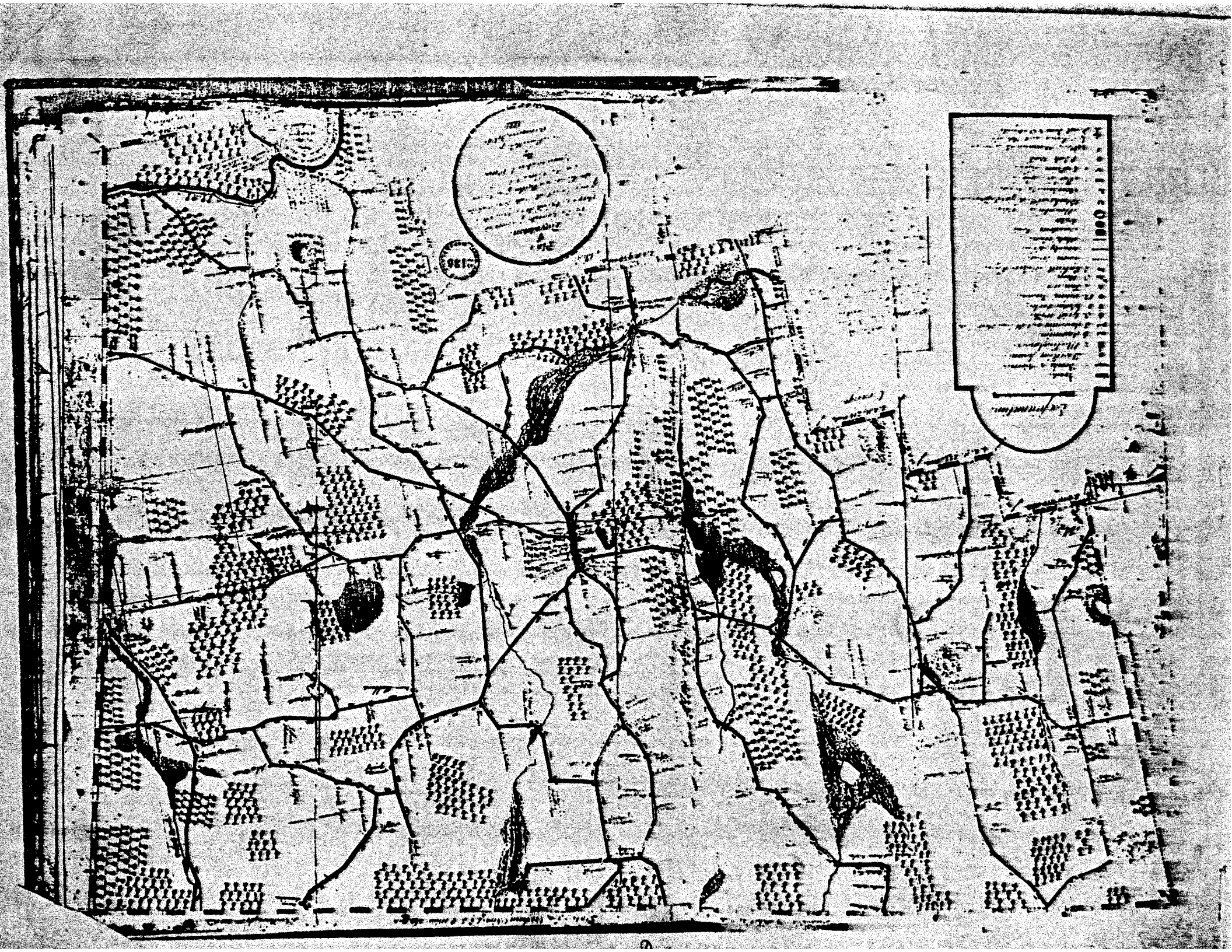

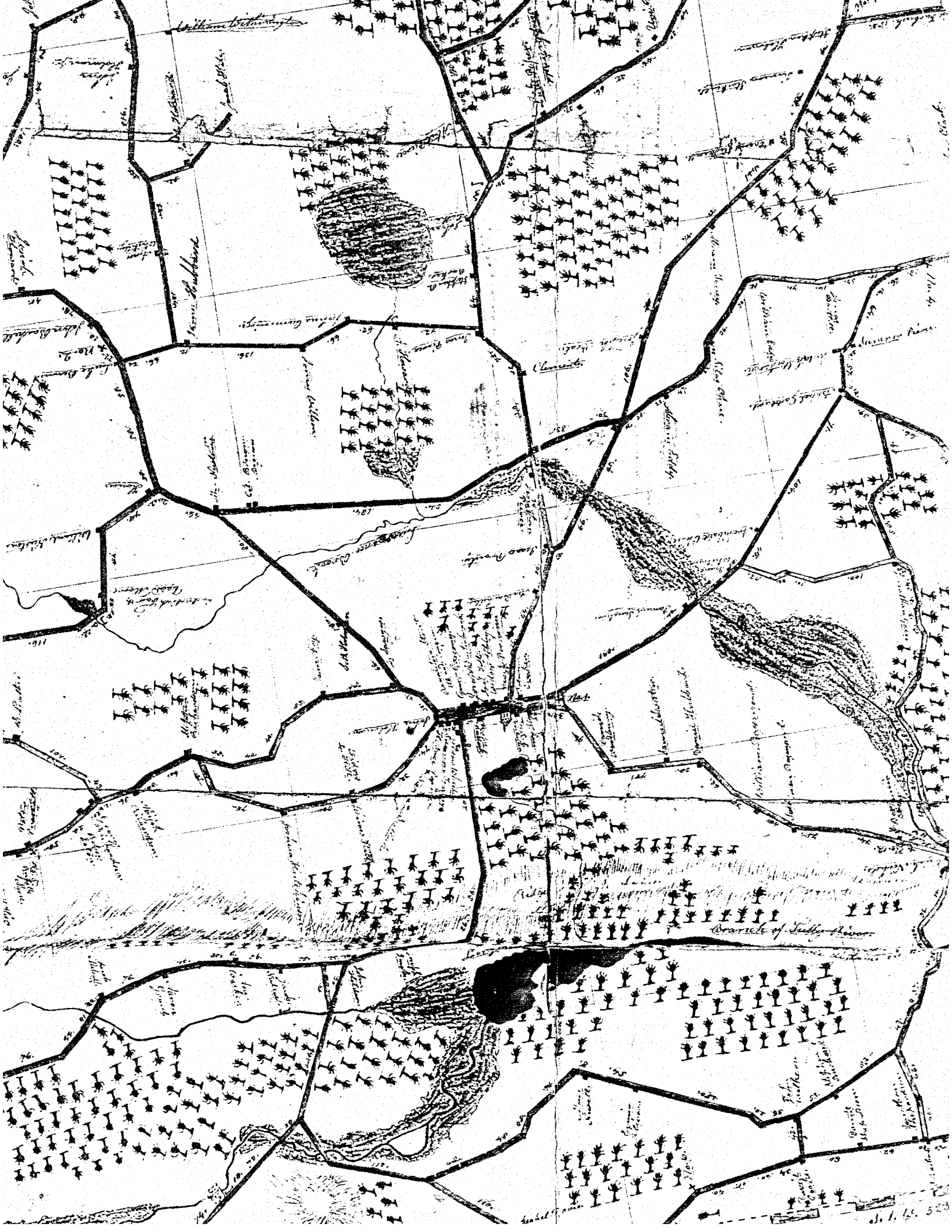
Clements
Branch of Tully River

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Anderson Notter Associates Inc. and SPNEA are sincerely grateful to the many people who facilitated the writing of this report through their enthusiasm and freely given time and consideration.

In Royalston, Suzanne Bosco located all of the available material about the Common and opened the Historical Society's and the library's archives especially for us. Katherine Cole helped initiate the report, supported its writing and ably criticized its final draft. A local resident of the Common helped to match the grant from the National Trust. And Maxine Wilcox, along with her enthusiasm, lent us her turn-of-the-century photographs of the Common.

At the Massachusetts Archives, Mr. and Mrs. Flaherty graciously helped us find the documents and maps concerning Royalston. At the Boston Athenaeum, Jack Jackson and Donald Kelly facilitated our research with their knowledge and moral support.

Randolph Langenbach willingly donated his time and considerable skill in photographing the Common. All of the photographs in this report are credited to him.

Finally, we must thank the people who make up the Anderson Notter Associates Inc. and SPNEA staffs for their interest in and support of the writing of this report, with special gratitude to Jean Ayres who spent many hours typing and editing our work.

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LOCATION

The Town of Royalston, population 747, is located in the northwest section of Worcester County. It is bordered by Winchendon on the east, Athol to the south, Warwick to the west, and the Massachusetts-New Hampshire border to the north. It offers a true rural setting with its housing limited primarily to the major highways and backed with its abundance of heavily forested terrain. Highly populated areas lie within definite neighborhood areas such as West and South Royalston and Royalston proper. There is a calmness and peace of mind present wherever you travel in Royalston. Spectacular vistas down the valleys and the rush of water over great falls also adds to this calmness; the general setting is free from the normal hustle-bustle generated in most towns of today. The only sounds are those of an occasional automobile or chainsaw, and wildlife of the forests and fields such as the chickadee and the red and gray squirrels.

TOPOGRAPHY

Royalston Center is approximately 1,100 feet above sea level, located on the eastern edge of a north-south ridge called "Jacob Hill". Generally the whole area of the town is a mixture of uplands and lowlands carved out by the receding glacier of 10,000 years ago. The uplands have been rounded and worn down by glaciation. The area is pockmarked with marshes and swamps. Major streams are the Millers River, the Tully River, the Lawrence Brook area and Priest Brook. There is one pond called Little Pond which is located near Royalston Center, a good fire protection pond. Open fields are gradually disappearing and being replaced by forest land. Ninety percent of the forest cover is in second and third stage trees in the pole to small saw log size. The town has many logging and secondary roads for access to all areas.

INTRODUCTION

Royalston Common is an indigenous early nineteenth century prototype of a rural common that has evolved steadily from its original colonial form. In 1752, a ten acre square was laid out by absentee proprietors to straddle a ridge near the center of the township. By 1840, the common had conformed to the ridge and has remained unchanged to the present time. As such it is recognized by architectural historians and historical surveys as the best example of an early nineteenth century town common in Massachusetts.

Royalston Common's exemplary status is based on three parameters. First, the shape and the appearance of the common has not changed in over a hundred years. The buildings, with four exceptions, were built in the early nineteenth century and have a purity of architectural style. Moreover, the setting of the common - the approaches to the town, the vistas from the town, and the encircling hills, forests and open fields - is unchanged. As a result, the common appears as it did in the 1840's in its architecture, form, and character. Second, Royalston Common was unhampered in its growth. No unusual internal or external forces influenced its shape. Thus, continuity of development makes Royalston's Common prototypical of an early nineteenth century rural common that has grown from a colonial form. Third, the appearance of the common is indigenous. All parts are natural and uncontrived, and they developed in response to one another. All buildings were designed and constructed by the local people; their style and locations reflect the interaction with the other buildings and their owners and the topography. Both the parts and the whole are uncontrived - Royalston is not an assimilated museum village, but a natural example still intact. Royalston Common is paradoxically both a prototype and a town with a distinct rural charm of its own.

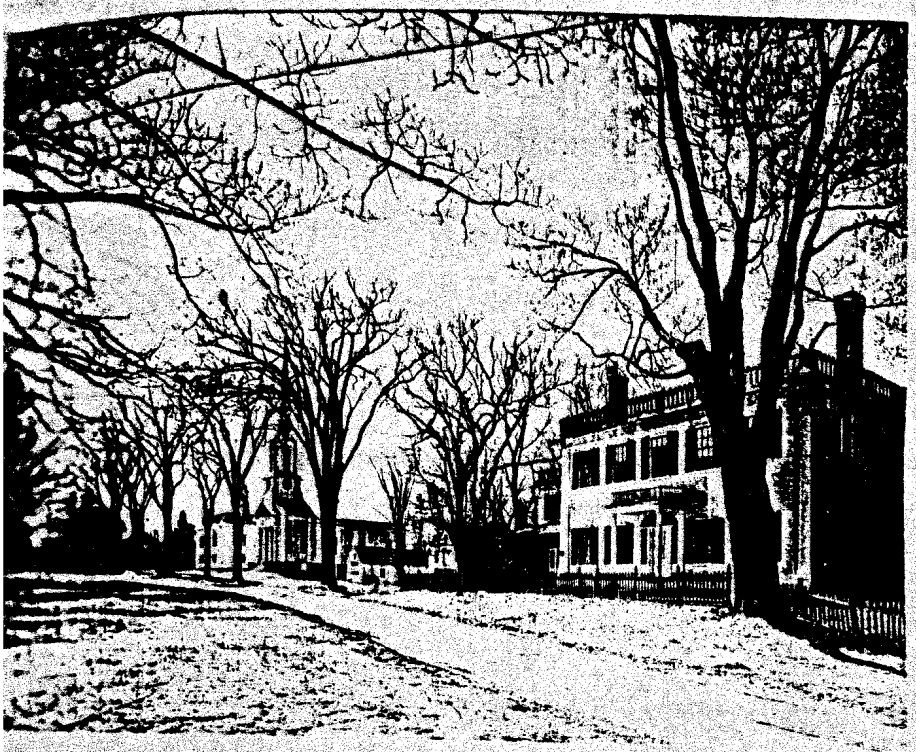
The future of Royalston Common is currently in abeyance. It is intact; however, the loss of a building or the addition of an intrusion would greatly endanger the integrity of the common. Royalston Common could be irretrievably altered and thus lost to future generations. It is ironic that passivity for a hundred years could have preserved Royalston Common, but on reaching a subtle point in time, has turned potentially destructive.

Interest in the preservation of Royalston has been active since 1946 in the form of the Village Improvement and Historical Society. In the spring of 1973, concern for the vitality of the common prompted the society and the town to investigate the establishment of an historic district by forming an Historic District Study Committee. In organizing, the committee came into contact with Anderson Notter Associates Inc., architects and land planners, and this resulted in an application for a consultant service grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation through the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA). This grant has been used to assist the local Historic District Study Committee in developing a preservation plan for the Town Common.

The study and analysis were developed by Anderson Notter Associates Inc. with participation by SPNEA's technical staff and in close collaboration with the Royalston Historic District Study Committee. The study developed an adaptive reuse plan "for structures that may become vacant" to ensure their improvement and preservation, and a preservation plan for the overall town center, encompassing an historic district and preservation covenants to preserve the town center. In addition, it is intended that the study will serve as a demonstration to assist other communities with similar problems.

During August, 1973, the National Trust approved a consultant service grant for this study. The consultant service grant program, administered by the Department of Field Services of the National Trust, was initiated in 1969. Consultant service grants are available to any private or public organization or preservation group for assistance in securing the services of qualified professional consultants to advise on the development and execution of preservation projects.

Application for consultant service grants and further information on the program can be obtained from the National Trust's Department of Field Services, 740-748 Jackson Place, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006.



HISTORIC ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

Historic analysis and evaluation of Royalston Common determined the proposed methods of preservation. Royalston was examined at several stages, during its growth and stagnation, in order to determine the inter-relationship of buildings with each other and the form of the common.

1752

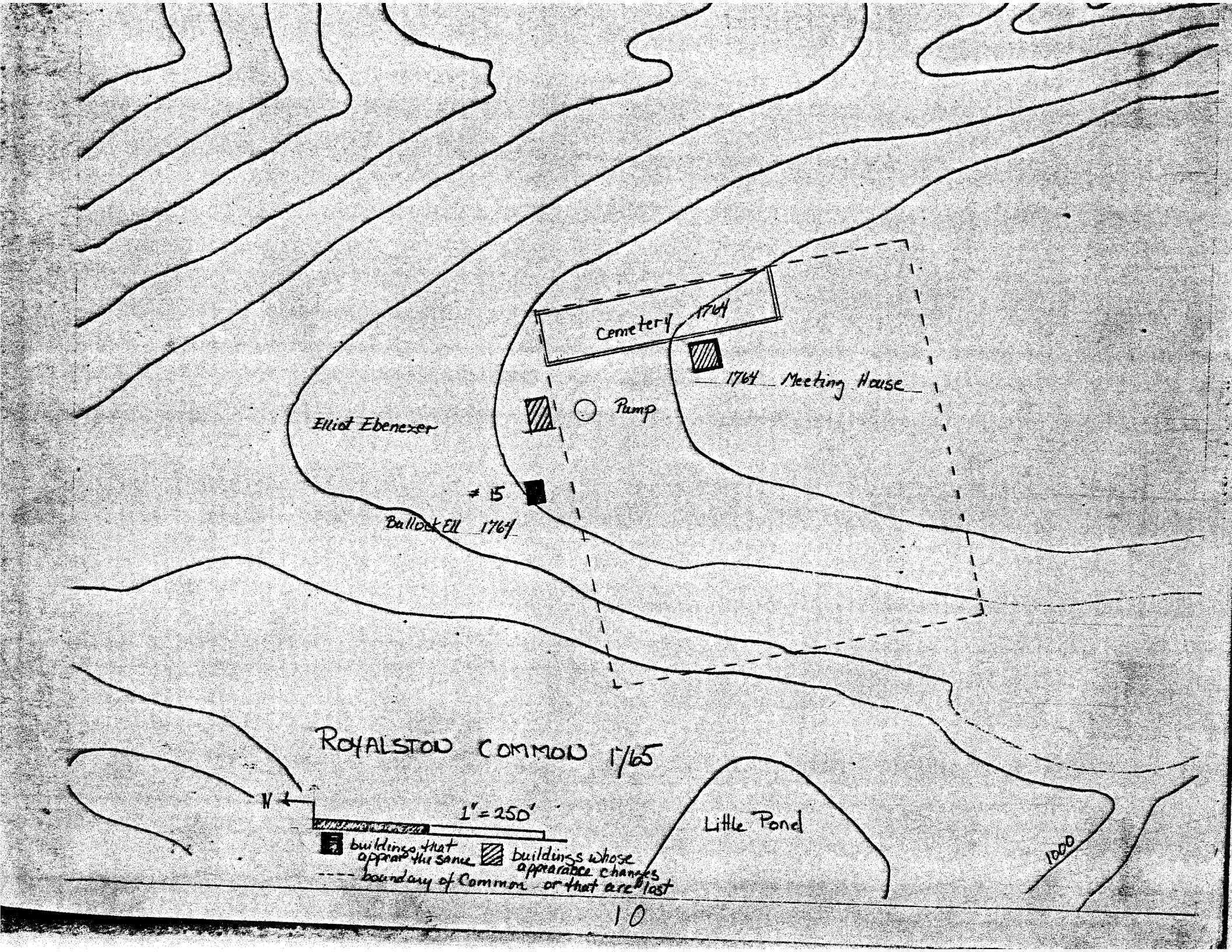
Toward the middle of the eighteenth century, Worcester County auctioned off unsettled areas to proprietors who would be responsible for their settlement. In 1752, a group of Bostonians bought 28,357 acres for 1,348 pounds. They were required to lay out a common "for to build a meeting house, training field and burying ground," to build a mill, set aside lands whose revenue would support a school, the meeting house and a minister, and to settle sixty families with a house and a clearing. The remaining lands were the property of the proprietors. (1)

The proprietors governed the settlement of the township from Boston; they had monthly meetings at the Bunch of Grapes Tavern on Long Wharf. Their numbers included James Otis, Thomas and John Hancock, James Bowdoin and Issac Royal, for whom the town was named. Poorer members earned their share through surveying the property. They surveyed Royalston in the 1750's and divided it into lots according to meadow and forest. They also located the common - a ten acre square - in the near center of the township, on the back of a ridge.

1765

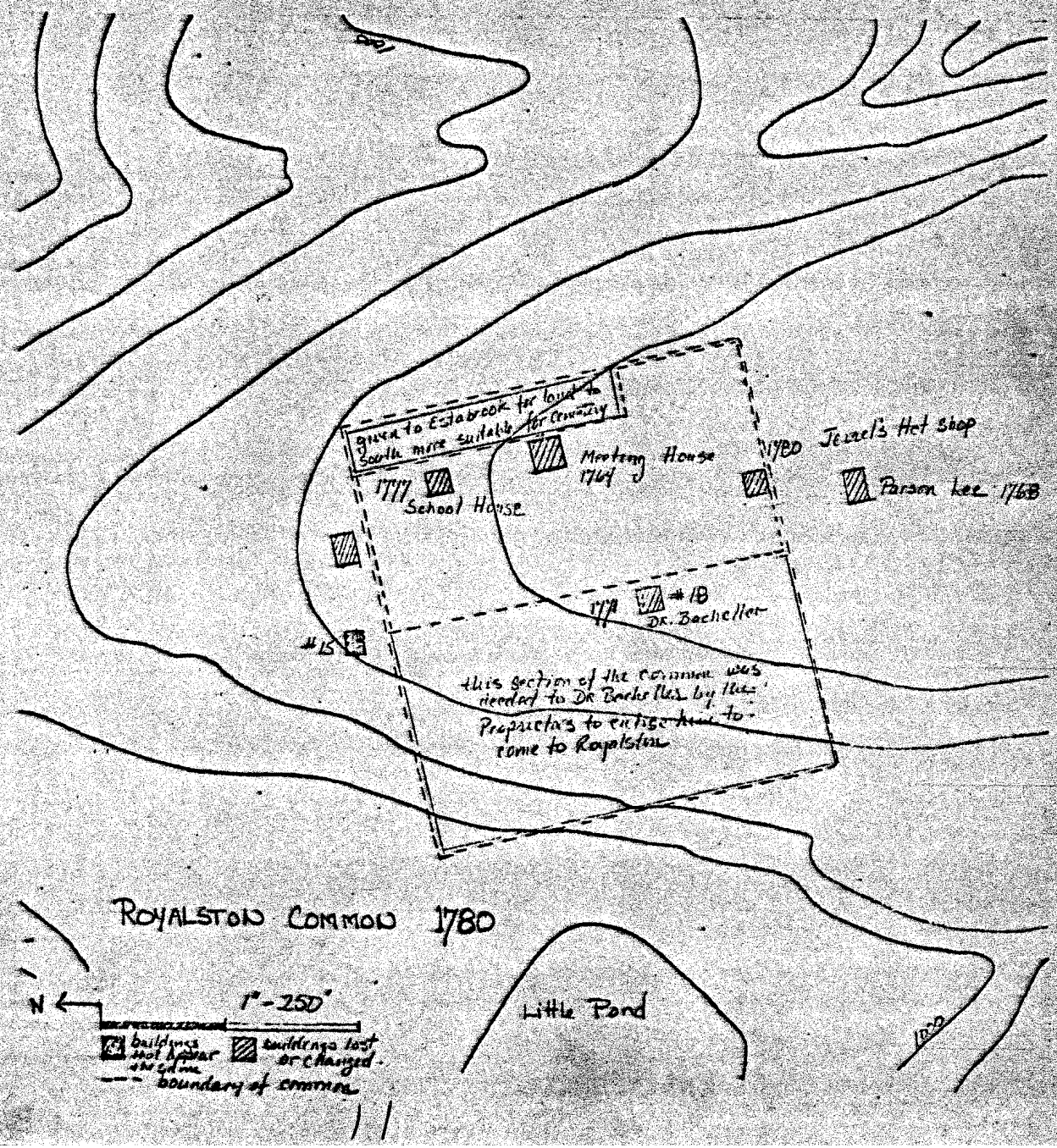
Thirteen years later, the square common had a narrow cemetery and a crude meeting house in the north-northeast corner. There was also a pump and two modest houses to the north of the common and on the top of the ridge. The development of the common had been delayed by the French and Indian War; the first 21 families arrived in 1762. They consecrated the common. Also, the terms of sale discouraged a centralized settlement around the common by requiring each family to be settled on a 100 acre farm. (2) In spite of the delay, the settlement was viable; in 1765, Royalston was incorporated.

(1) Worcester District Registry of Deeds, Book 32, pages 124, 125.
(2) Ibid.


Cemetery 1764
1764 Meeting House
Pump
Elliot Ebenezer
#15
Bullock Ell 1764
ROYALSTON COMMON 1765
N
1" = 250'
buildings that appear the same
buildings whose appearance changes or that are lost
boundary of Common
Little Pond
1000

780

ifteen years later, the common had been estab-
ished as a town, and signs of its mature oblong
orm were appearing. The population of the town-
hip had grown to 1,130. The common had grown by
our houses. In 1768, Dr. Lee, the minister,
uilt his home on the lot to the south of the com-
on, which had been designated for him in the pro-
rietor plan. Three years later, four acres were
ubtracted from the west side of the common in
rder to attract a doctor to the town. In 1771,
he citizens combined their resources and, with
rmission, built a school house north of the
eeting house. The first shop was allowed on the
mmon in 1780 - Jerrel's Hat and Fur Shop. The
metery had been moved south because its origi-
l site was unsuitable; Estabrook obtained that
ice of the common. The shape of the common was
ghly responsive to the needs of the people.



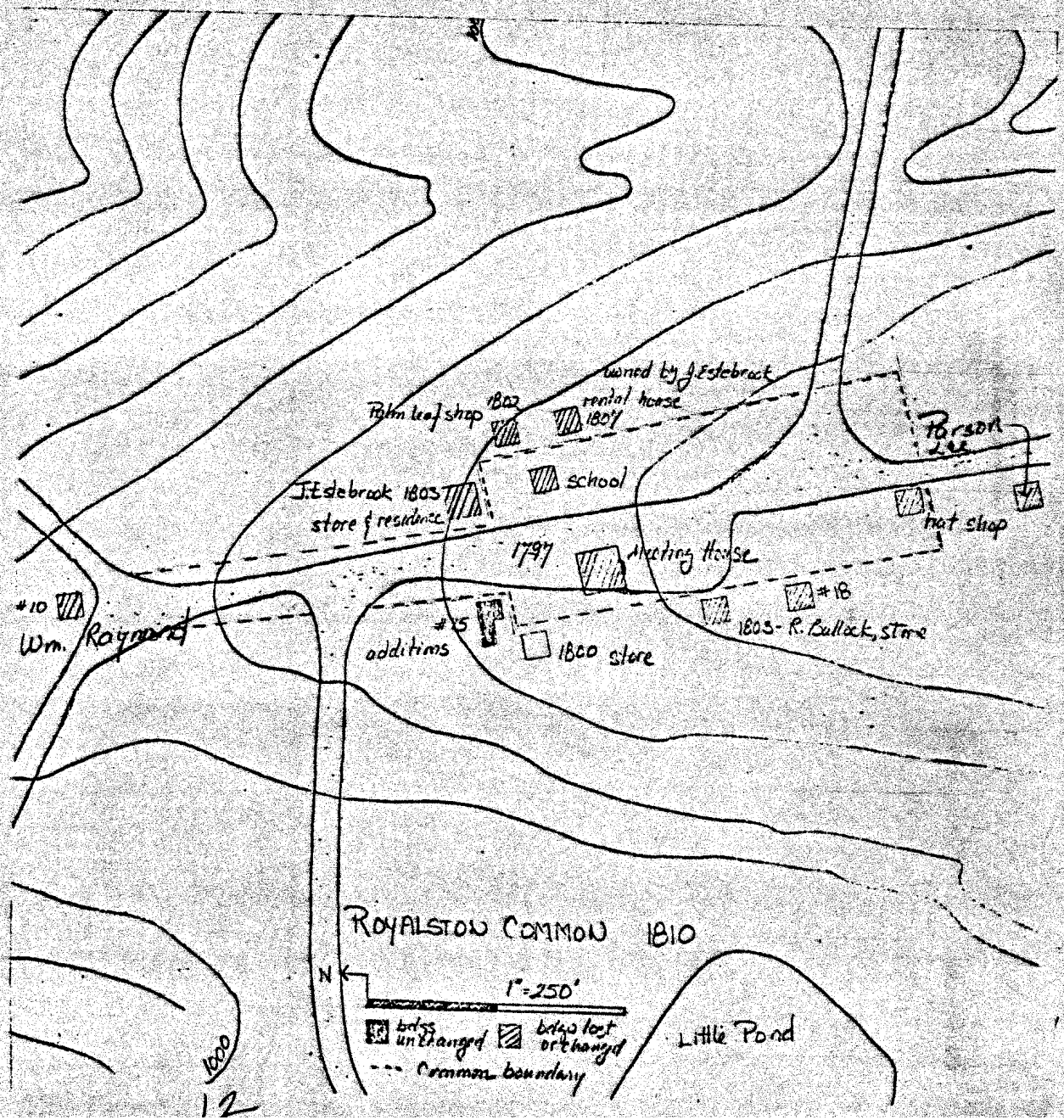
Thirty years later, Royalston had expanded northwards along the ridge and the core's edge of the original common had been reinforced by several stores and a new meeting house. Royalston was growing.

The first major step in the common's growth was the erection of a new, more refined meeting house in 1797. Built on a new site on the crest of the ridge and in the center of the original common, the meeting house symbolically dominated the town. It was oriented toward the south and the minister's house.

After 1800, general stores began to appear around the common, and Royalston gained a livelihood as the market place for the surrounding towns and farms. On the west, there were three stores. One begun in 1800, which passed through several hands; Rufus Bullock started a small store in 1805; and Lemuel Fales bought one of the earliest buildings on the common in 1807, remodeled it and is believed to have added a three-story mansion, which he ran as a tavern and a store. It was a short-lived enterprise, since by 1810, Rufus Bullock owned the house. From him, the house gained its present appearance. On the eastern side, Joseph Estabrook controlled the commercial activity. In 1803, he built a home and a store next door to his shop for palm leaf preparation. (Palm leaves were treated with chemicals, including brimestone, for several weeks to render them pliant. Then the leaves were cut into strips and distributed to the women in the surrounding area to be woven into Shaker bonnets and other objects.) In 1807, he built a house south of his palm leaf factory for renting. In 1812, he added a post office to his activities. This growth in retail trade was responsible for Royalston's vitality.

However, Royalston Common was never self-sustaining; it relied on outside income to develop the town. Topographically, it was unsuitable for industry, and already that role had been assumed by a small industrial community on the Miller River by 1797. It became known as South Royalston. Men who lived on the common often owned, or had interest in, the South Royalston mills.

The northern extension of the common was accomplished by one man, William Raymond. In 1794, the house built by Ebenezer Elliot on the northern edge of the common in the 1760's, and his long narrow lot down the crest of the ridge, were bought by William Raymond of Athol. He built a house for himself at the end of the ridge and gave the narrow lot, up to the common, to the town as an extension of the common. His house still punctuates the northern end of the common.

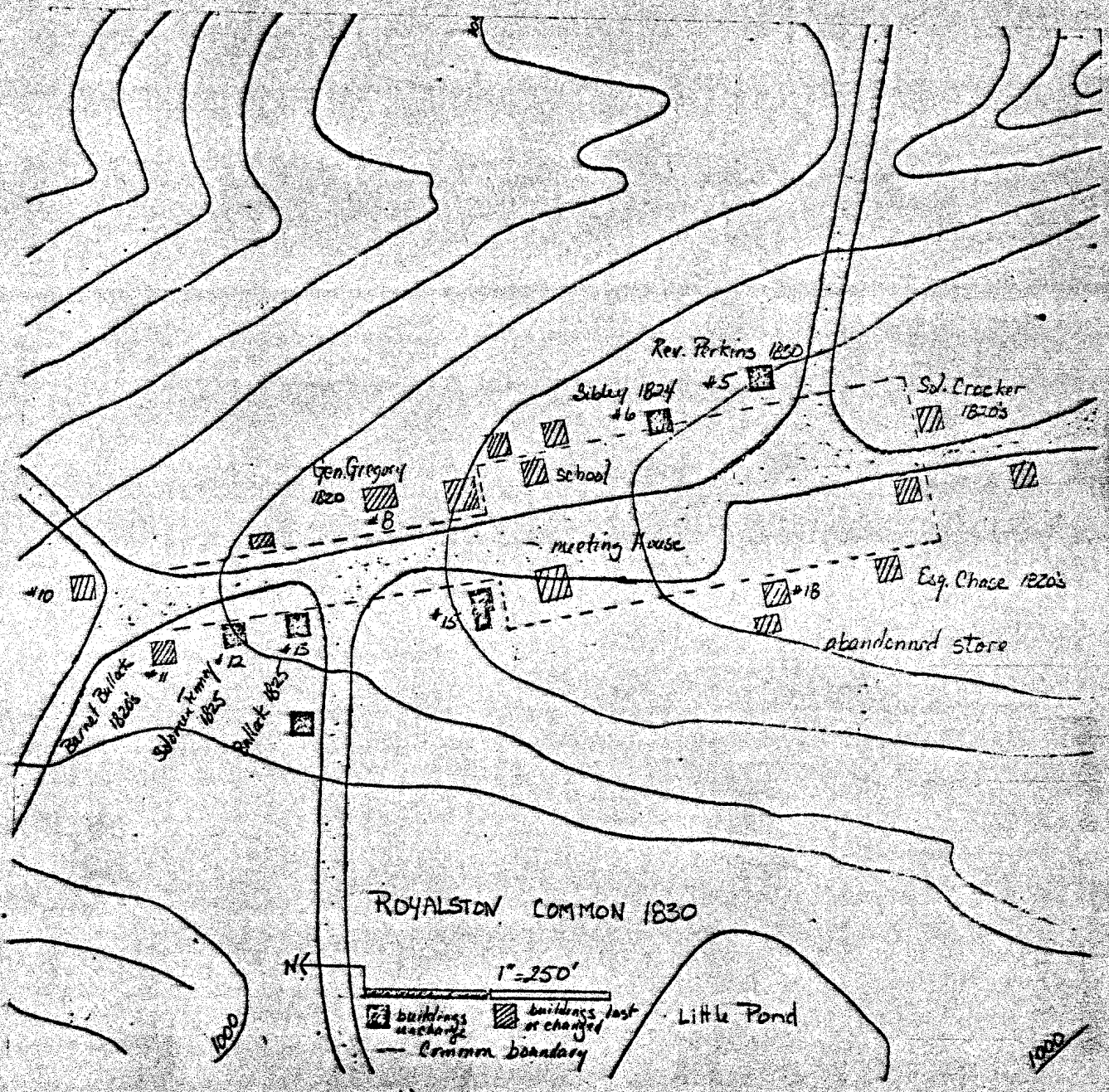


1830

Twenty years later, Royalston's vitality was manifest in the consolidation of the common, for although there were fewer stores, the perimeter of the common had filled in with additional houses. Royalston Common was a prestigeous place to live. The inhabitants had further dignified their town by purchasing a Paul Revere bell in 1811; they were proud of their town. The population of the whole township had risen to 1,493, and the mills in South Royalston were gathering momentum.

Four modest federal houses had been built along the northern extension. General Gregory built first, in 1820, on the eastern side of the extension. Then, in 1825, Solomon Tenney and Raymond built on the western side. Their houses remain. Next to them, Barnet Bullock built a house circa 1830. Four federal houses were also built around the core of the common. In 1819, Widow Sibley built a simple house next to Estabrook's rental house; it is still there. Next to her house, the second minister, Reverend Perkins, erected a more imposing federal mansion, called the "Bastille," in 1830. This house nobly holds down the eastern side of the central common. Only the addition of the balustrade in 1927 has changed its appearance. Solomon Crocker and Esquire Chase built houses on the common around 1830, which have now disappeared.

These additional houses reinforced the growing form of the common and demonstrate the viability of the common as a community. But, in spite of the building activity, the number of stores decreased. The one behind the doctor's house was abandoned, and the 1800 store had burned.



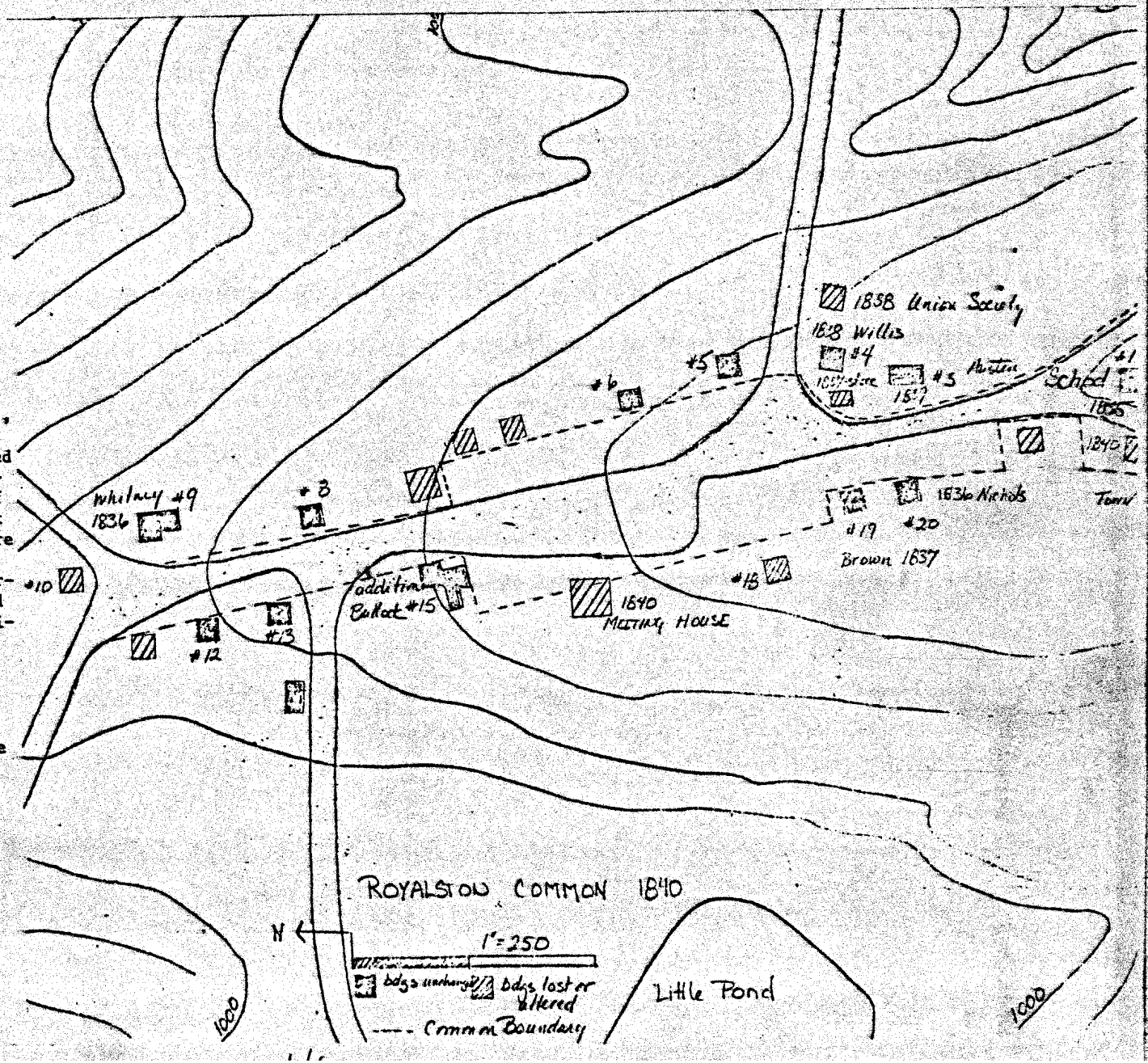
In the ten years between 1830 and 1840, Royalston experienced a burst of energy and expanded rapidly. The population of the township reached its peak at 1,667 and was stimulated by the Vermont and Massachusetts Railroad, which ran through the mill town of South Royalston. The common extended along the southern end of the ridge, gaining its mature form. It was a time for building elegant houses and dignified public buildings. The inhabitants were sensitive to the development of the form of their town.

Building activity began in 1835 with the creation of a Greek Revival school house. The school was built at the southern end of the ridge, and the heirs of Dr. Lee, the first minister of Royalston, donated their father's garden to the town so the school house could punctuate the southern end of an elongated common. In 1860, the school house was turned around; originally, the belfry rose at the rear of the school rooms and was surrounded by an all containing ante rooms, stairs and an east and west entrance. The erection of this building symbolizes the pride the citizens had in their town and the education they provided for their children.

In the five years following the building of the school house, four houses, a store, a church and a town meeting house were built around the southern end of the elongated common. In 1836 and 1837, two federal houses were built on the western edge of the southern extension. In 1837, Austin started a store on the eastern side of the southern extension and two years later built a house for himself nearby, called the "Lightning Rods." This elegant house is a modified Greek Revival with eight square pillars. A year earlier, Dr. Willis built a very pure Greek Revival mansion on the southeastern corner of the original common. In the same year, and next door to Dr. Willis' "Columns," the Union Society erected their church.

In 1831, the town government legally separated from the church. However, it was not until 1840 that separate buildings were built. West of the school house, a large one-story town meeting house was erected. At the same time, on center of the western edge of the common, a large Greek Revival church was erected. With the new church and school house, the center of the common became uninterrupted open space, and the new buildings clearly delineated the outline of the common.

The north end of the common was not neglected. George Whitney built a large Greek Revival home, and the Bullocks embellished their mansion. Within a decade, Royalston's common was fully realized in form and its profusion of Greek Revival houses and symbolic public architecture.



1860

In the following twenty years, Royalston Common stabilized its form through alterations and rebuilding. Only one entirely new building was erected, a factory. General Gregory's house burned and was rebuilt in 1845. Reverend Lee's house was enlarged and converted into a tavern and a store in 1844. The Nichols and Brown homes were probably altered at this time. In 1849, Chauncey Chase remodeled his 1771 doctor's house to its present appearance. Several years later, Jerrel's hat and fur shop was integrated into a federal house built by Harold Newitch. Finally, in 1847, William Raymond rebuilt the Holman House, which delineated the northern end point of the common.

The most significant rebuilding in Royalston was that of the church and town hall. In 1851, the church burned. Chauncey Chase, a local architect, designed and supervised its rebuilding the next year. It was erected on the same site and, again, in Greek Revival style. It was recognized as a "model of what a rural sanctuary should be - beautiful for its situation, beautiful in itself and sustained in all its parts and appointments." Then, five years later, Chauncey Chase designed a new mansard town hall adjacent to the church, on land which he donated to the town. These buildings strongly expressed the heart of the common.

Although not many new structures were built during this time, Royalston's vitality expressed itself in a profusion of short-lived industries that developed immediately north of the common. Between 1802 and 1870, there was a palm leaf preparation station and collection point in Royalston. Between 1842 and 1852, a carriage maker operated just north of the common. He was joined, between 1843 and circa 1860, by a shoe maker and a blacksmith, and in 1854, by a small furniture factory. Neighboring houses rented rooms to the workers. All of these businesses were small, short-lived and when they died, they left no trace of their existence.

The largest industrial venture near the common was the erection, in 1857, of a large steam mill with a brick boiler house to the east of the common. There was a financial panic that year; the factory never operated. Several years later, it was sold and moved to Fitchburg.

1865

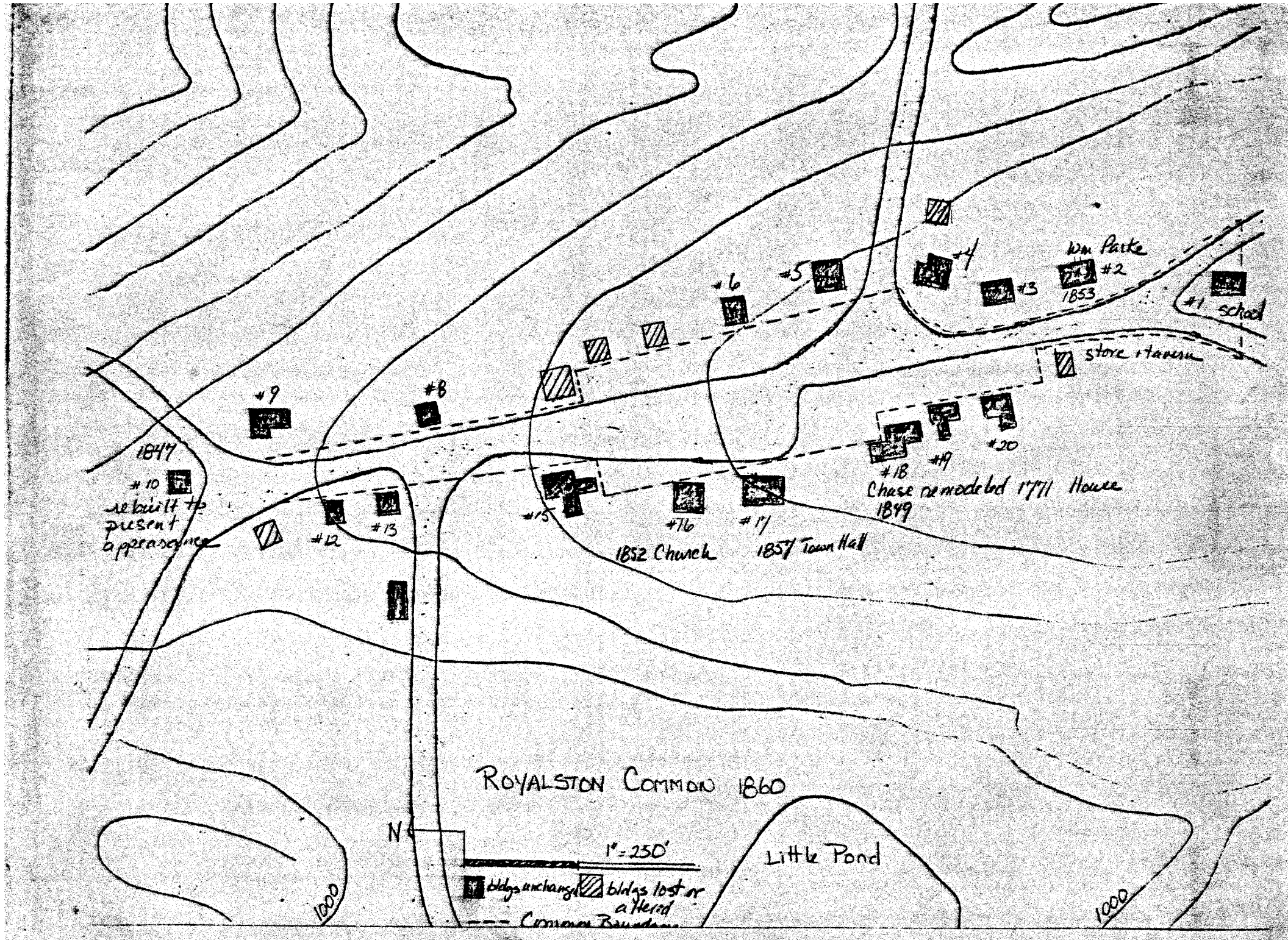
The hundred year period between 1765 and 1865 was a time of growth and development for Royalston Common. Indians never attacked the town. There were two epidemics in the eighteenth century resulting in the loss of 138 lives. There were only a few fires in the town. The citizens never saw a battle on their lands, although they sent their men and money to fight in the Revolution, the War of 1812, and the Civil War.

Internally, there were few factions. In one hundred years, they had four ministers, four doctors and no lawyers. The population increased steadily until it reached 1,667 in 1840; then it slowly declined until now there are approximately 800 people in Royalston Township. Throughout its growth and decline, Royalston always had a problem with its sons moving away. Even during the Civil War, there was difficulty in filling the draft. However, the sons and daughters often returned to their birthplace to build retirement homes after they had made a fortune elsewhere. The main income in Royalston came from lumber and farming, and the mills of South Royalston. The light industries and stores left little mark on the composition of the town, for they were usually incorporated into a residence, and when they ceased, the space was taken over by domestic functions.

The Honorable A.H. Bullock, in his address to the citizens of Royalston on the hundredth anniversary of the town's incorporation, could already sense impending change in the township.

'But since then, times have changed, and Royalston has changed with them. Farming is no longer regnant; ... and we must drive off to "centers" of business out of town for the supply of almost every earthly want.' (3)

(3) Bullock, Hm. A.H., A Commemorative Address at Royalston, August 23rd, 1865, The One Hundredth Anniversary of Its Incorporation, 1865 Winchenden, Mass., printed by Frank W. Ward.

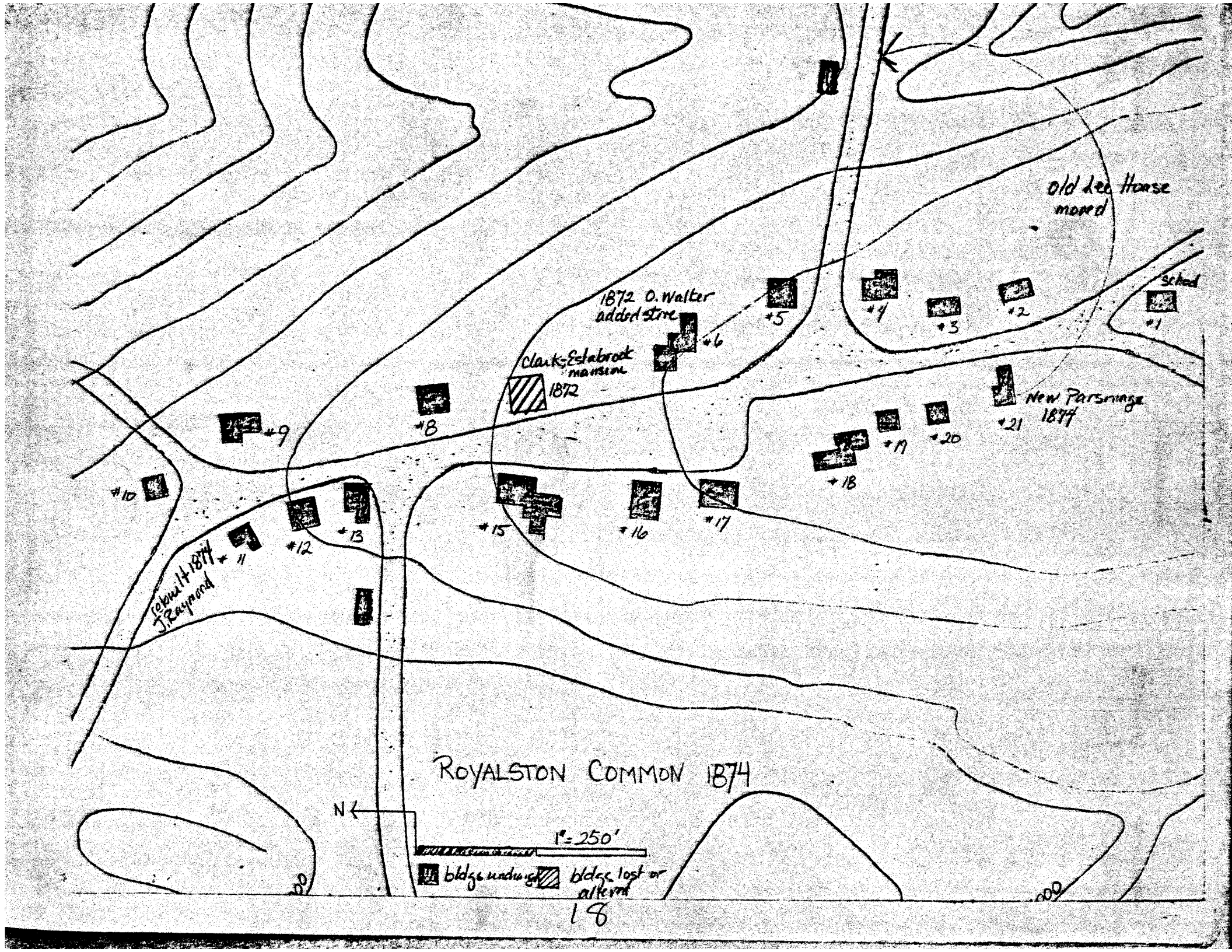

ROYALSTON COMMON 1860
Little Pond
1" = 250'
N
bldgs unchanged
bldgs lost or altered
Common Boundary
1000
1000
#1 school
#2 Wm Parke 1853
#3
#4
#5
#6
#8
#9
1847
#10 rebuilt to present appearance
#12
#13
#15
#16 1852 Church
#17 1857 Town Hall
#18 Chase remodeled 1771 House 1849
#19
#20
store + tavern

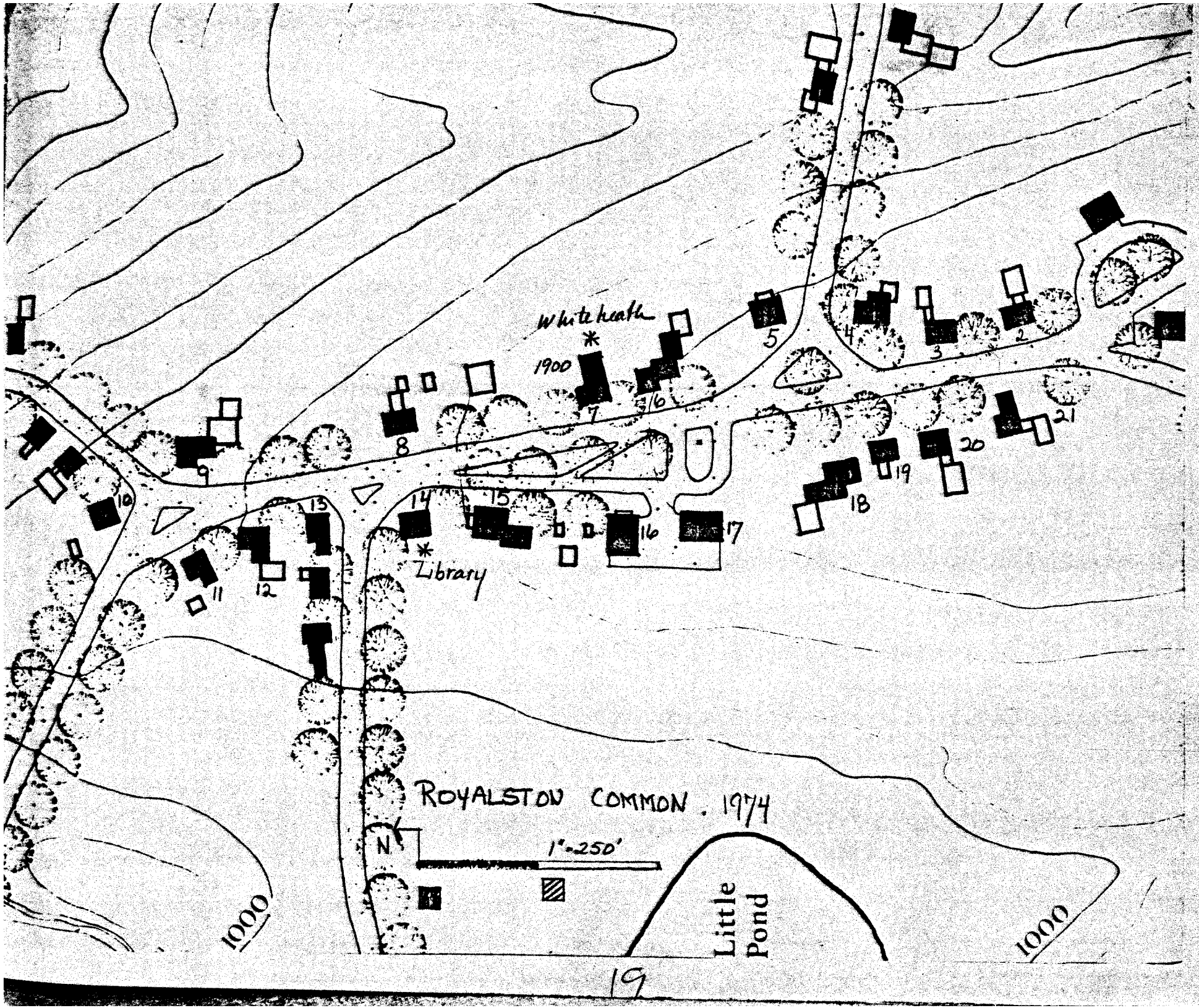
1874

In the years following the Civil War, Royalston did not change greatly. Three new buildings were erected, all to replace existing buildings. In 1872, Joseph Estabrook and his wealthy sister-in-law built an elegant three-story mansion on the site of his former store and residence. This Victorian mansard dwelling, opposite the equally imposing Bullock mansion, must have strengthened the visual impact of the core of the common. Estabrook moved his old house to the rear of his lot and converted it to a barn. The Union Society building was also moved around and used as a barn and fire house when the Society collapsed. In 1874, the 1771 Lee house, which had been a store for three decades, was moved to a new site on the road to South Royalston, near the edge of the common. In the place of the Lee house, the Congregational Ladies Benevolent Society erected a late Greek Revival residence for the minister. In the same year, J. Raymond rebuilt the federal Nash house (1830) as it stands today. To compensate for the loss of the Estabrook store and that in the Lee house, an addition was built onto the 1819 Sibley house, and a store and post office established. These minor building activities did not greatly affect the appearance of the common. They were manifestations settling into the final form of the common through consolidation and centralization.

1974

In the subsequent century, the number of buildings around the common has not changed; four were built and four were removed. Around the turn of the century, the eastern side of the common attained its present appearance. In 1900, the Pierce house (1845) was rebuilt and is known now as the Waters house, and Howard Lee, owner of the Estabrook mansion, removed the palm leaf shop and the 1807 rental house to build Whiteheath as a summer house for his daughter. But in 1923, the mansion was torn down because of high taxes, and the large gap in the side of the common was created. The other two buildings of the twentieth century are a Greek Revival library (1911) in brick, built on the western edge of the Bullock mansion lot and a brick school house (1935) built slightly off the common to the east of the 1835 school house.


ROYALSTON COMMON 1874
N
1" = 250'
bldgs unchanged
bldgs lost or altered
old Lee House moved
School
#1
#2
#3
#4
#5
1872 O. Walter added store
#6
Clark & Estabrook mansion 1872
#8
#9
#10
#11
#12
#13
#15
#16
#17
#18
#19
#20
#21
New Parsonage 1874
rebuilt 1874 J. Raymond


Whiteheath
1900
Library
ROYALSTON COMMON . 1974
N
1"=250'
Little Pond
1000
1000
2
3
4
5
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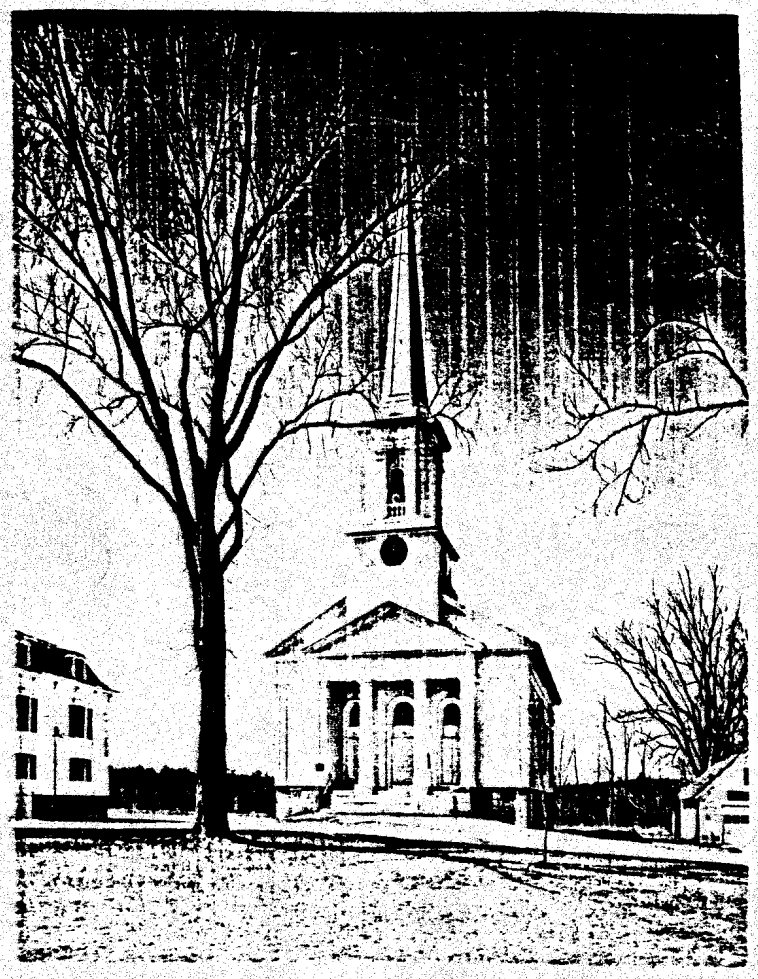
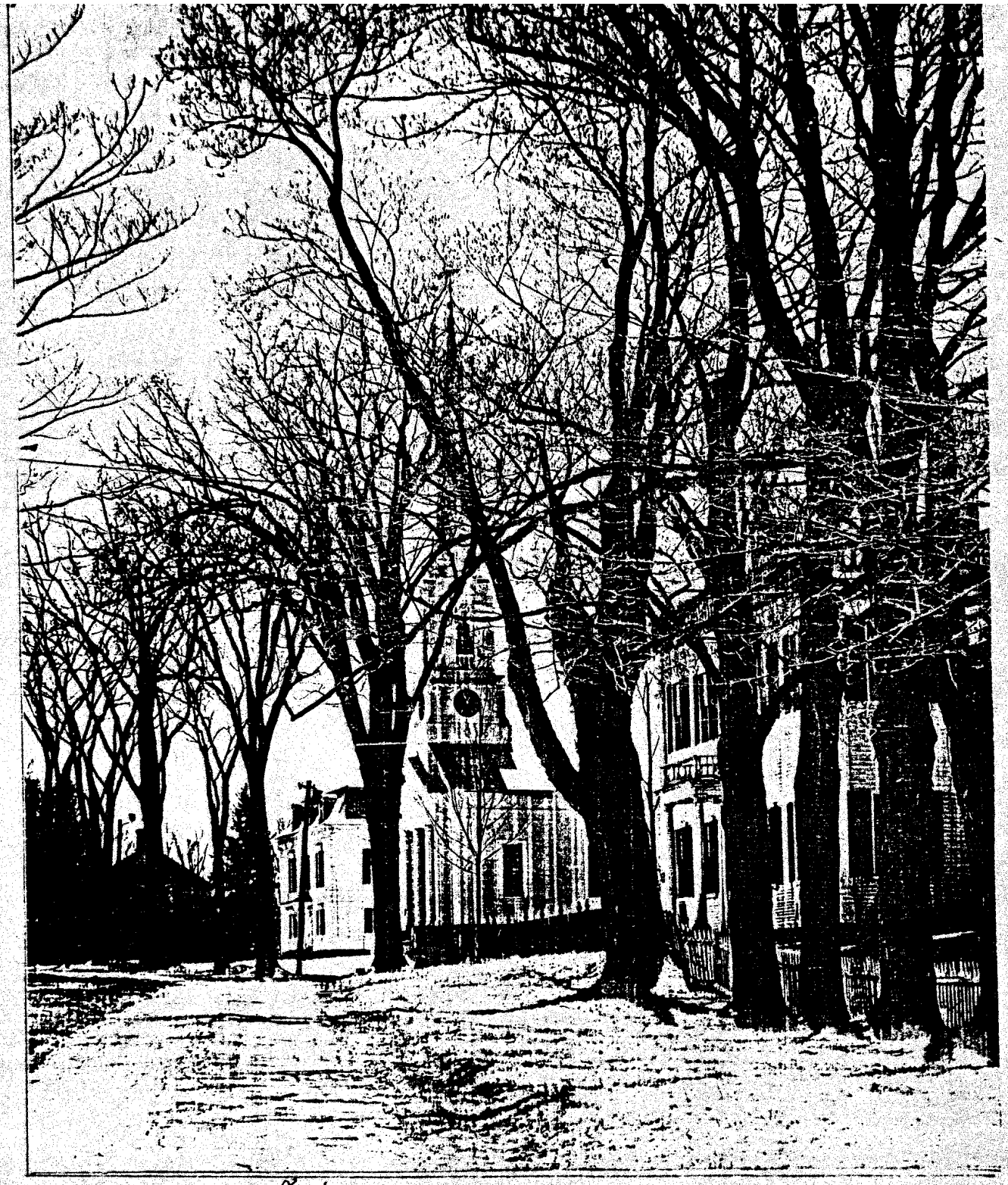


SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

All significant building on Royalston Common was accomplished by the 1840's, and thus the form of the common was established and reinforced by the 1840's. All building activity after the mid-century was minor; it involved modifications, alterations for new uses or rebuilding. The conservative nature of the citizens prevented the common from spreading and continually made for the consolidation and articulation of the common. The site of the common has remained intact over two hundred years. Royalston Common evolved to this form because nothing hampered its development and because the impetus for growth and change came entirely from its citizens. Royalston is a natually evolved prototype of a rural early nineteenth century town.

Royalston stopped changing after the Civil War. From that time on, her sons left the township for better opportunities in farming, lumbering and business. As a result, Royalston did not prosper and grow. The money that built the town came predominantly from the stores, whose patrons came from neighboring towns and from Royalston's successful sons with business interests outside of town. When those disappeared, the town ceased to grow.



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Methods of Preservation

The methods used in preserving an historic district depend directly on the specific qualities of an area. Legislation is a tool in obtaining and promoting preservation goals. Presently, there is a variety of laws that directly or obliquely pertain to preservation needs. As a district is made up of several elements and their interactions which create the unique sense of place that is the object of the preservation efforts, it is often necessary to compile a comprehensive plan for preservation that draws on several laws in order to ensure the preservation of a district.

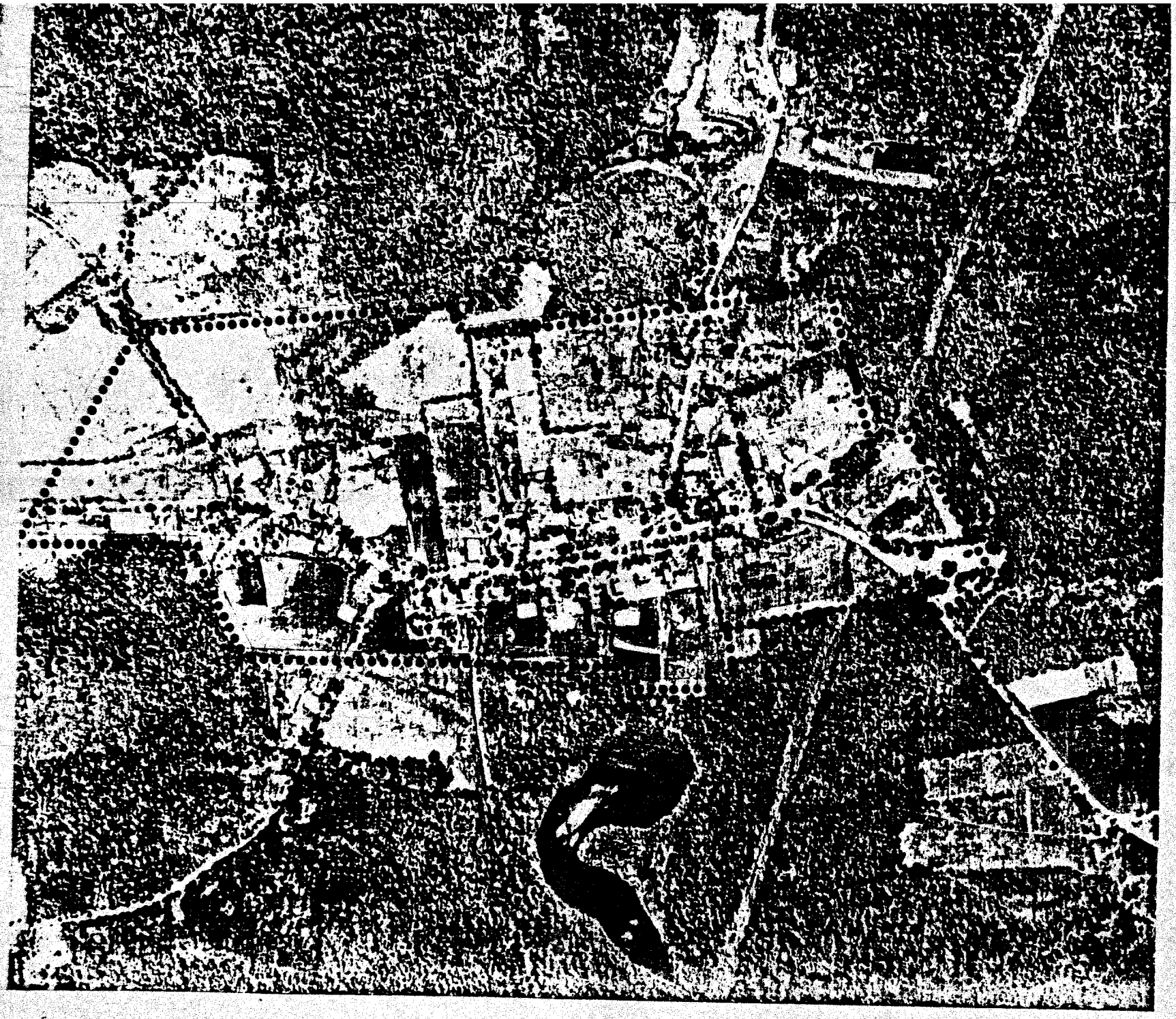
Often, available legislation focuses on one aspect of a district. The Shade Tree Act is a case in point. The presence of trees on Royalston Common is integral to the atmosphere of the common, but it is not sufficient to just protect the trees in order to preserve the atmosphere of the common. Another instance lies in the facades of the buildings around the common; if easements were obtained that restricted the owners from altering their facades, then one step toward conserving the appearance of the common would have been achieved. But what would prevent intrusive buildings from springing up between the protected facades and destroying the continuity of the common?

In the following charts, the three major elements that combine in a special chemistry to create a unique district are isolated and paired with the existing legislation that will promote their preservation. Note how the laws sometimes overlap the elements and how there are several approaches toward conserving an element. The multiplicity and overlaps both enable and require that a plan be tailored to meet the exact needs of an historic district. A further consideration in compiling a plan should be what the inhabitants of the area would find compatible.

The three elements of a district are its setting and environment, its siting and organization of its buildings, and the buildings themselves. Royalston Common is unusual in having all three elements intact, and the chemical interaction is still producing atmosphere which is unobtainable in the urban and suburban developments of the twentieth century. This is a major exciting element about the preservation of Royalston Common. Royalston's peace and harmony of place are a treasurable experience, a balm to the soul and a real experience to those who have never encountered anything but a noisey, unevenly conceived and executed city. Royalston can communicate its sense of place, its sense of self.

PRESERVATION OBJECTIVE	PROBLEMS & FUTURE IMPACT	POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS (see appendix)
To maintain and preserve the Common intact	1. Enlarging roads that approach and traverse Common; visually bisect Common, bring traffic and noise. 2. Public or private encroachment on Common. 3. Loss of trees through blight or vandalism.	1. Scenic Roads Act (G.L., Ch. 67, Sec. 15c) 2. Town commons are now defined as parks (Ch. 45, Sec. 1a) may not be alienated for another purpose. 3. Shade Tree Act (G.L., Ch.87, Sec. 1-13) 4. Items 1, 2 and 5 below.
To preserve the external appearance of the buildings and the integrity of the Common	1. Irretrievable loss of buildings through disintegration and disuse which would result in loss of integrity and continuity of town center.	1. Establishment of a local Historic District under Chapter 40c, as amended. By-law passed by Town Meeting and controlled locally by town's Historical Commission. 2. National Register of Historic Places. Listing in National Register ensures power of review over federally funded projects that would affect the district and provides recognition of architectural and historical merit - U.S. Park Service. 3. National Historic Preservation Act 1966. System of grants-in-aid to states for furthering preservation, plans, and specific preservation projects - U.S. Park Service. 4. Covenants. Obtained by town or historical society over the facades of buildings. 5. Local zoning. Control over use, number of stories, set back from road. 6. Historic American Building Survey (HABS). Architectural documentation of buildings on share-fund basis - U.S. Park Service. 7. Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities. Technical aid and consultant service to provide restoration-technical advice.

PRESERVATION OBJECTIVE	PROBLEMS & FUTURE IMPACT	POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS (see appendix)
To preserve Royalston's rural setting	Intrusions:	
	Roads	Scenic Roads Act. Limits use of conservation of historic lands by highways (G.L., Ch. 67, Sec. 15c).
	Signs	Billboard and Sign Control. (G.L., Ch. 93, Sec. 29).
	Defacing natural scenery	(G.L., Ch. 226, Sec. 126).
	Junk cars	(G.L., Ch. 90, Sec. 22b).
	Loss of or intrusions (buildings) on:	
	Marshes and wet lands	(G.L., Ch. 131, Sec. 40a).
	Streams	(G.L., Ch. 21, Sec. 17b).
	Great ponds	(G.L., Ch. 21, Sec. 17a).
	Shade trees	(G.L., Ch. 87, Sec. 1b).
	Air and water pollution:	Water Pollution Program - State Division of Water Pollution Control provides grants for sewerage treatment facilities. Refuse Act of 1899 - no wastes in navigable waters.
	Overall control of vistas from being built-up:	Town Conservation Commission buys land and establishes a conservation area. Town Conservation Commission acquires conservation easements over vistas and other lands.



RECOMMENDATIONS

"The basic purpose of preservation is not to arrest time but to mediate sensitively with the forces of change. It is to understand the present as a product of the past and modifier of the future."

John W. Lawrence, Dean
School of Architecture, Tulane University
April 27, 1970

The following actions are recommended to preserve Royalston:

- Nomination of the Town Common and surrounding areas to the National Register.
- Establishment of a local Historic District.
- Collection of scenic easements over the surrounding open spaces.
- Encouragement for the compatible active use of all buildings within the district.

- Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places would ensure review of any federally funded projects that would affect Royalston's and would ensure national recognition of Royalston's outstanding historical and architectural merit. This study has prepared the necessary documentation for a National Register Historic District. The forms are ready for submission to the National Park Service through the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

- Establishment of a local Historic District would protect the external appearance of the buildings and the common through an Historic District Commission, a local town body. Local control over the district is advantageous because it would allow for good communications between the owners of buildings within the district and the local commission and should result in a more effective district. This study has recommended the boundaries of an Historic District to the Historic District Study Committee. This report, as supplemented with survey forms, will constitute the necessary documentation for the Massachusetts Historical Commission. In the event that the Royalston Town Meeting does not pass an Historic District, a local group that is interested in historic preservation should collect preservation covenants over the external appearance of each building. In the event that a building with a restriction over it changes hands, the restriction is still binding over the property. This is a more piecemeal method, and it has the added disadvantage that the owners of the buildings on the common may require monetary compensation in exchange for the covenants over their houses. In spite of these drawbacks, this method has the potential for being effective if a local Historic District is not adopted. A sample preservation covenant has been submitted to the Historic District Study Committee.

- The collection of scenic easements over the surrounding open space and forests, although not the simplest method, is most important. The objective is to preserve and control all open spaces and vistas surrounding the overall Town Common area. This method would facilitate control and ensure harmony with the goals of the district around the Town Common as discussed throughout this report.

Scenic easements have similar advantages and drawbacks as covenants have over the appearance of buildings. They must be collected and administered by a public or non-profit group. There will always be certain innate complexities in dealing with many individual property owners and in legally drafting the easements. However, easements are more flexible and adaptible to specific preservation goals than acquisition of the full fee of the property. Scenic easements should also be used in conjunction with the enforcement of existing conservation legislation, such as the Scenic Roads Act and the Wetlands Act.

- Encouragement of active use of the buildings around the Town Common is essential to the long term preservation of Royalston. Most buildings on the common are residential, and their active use and character should be retained and strengthened. All uses must be compatible and supportive of the preservation goal of maintaining the integrity of the common. Any incompatible building or use would destroy the rural atmosphere of the Town Common.

Active uses are encouraged for all buildings. Buildings which are vacant for any extended time are increasingly endangered to vandalism, fire and accelerated natural deterioration. The most appropriate use for the buildings around the Town Common is residential use with adequate maintenance of structures.

PENDIX: PRESERVATION LAWS, ORGANIZATIONS AND PROGRAMS

DERAL

e National Register of Historic Places was tablished by the Historic Preservation Act of 66 (P.L. 89-665), which is also administered the Office of Archeology and Historic Pre-rvation in the National Park Service. It tablished a "national register of districts, tes, buildings, structures and objects sig-ificant in American history, architecture, rcheology and culture" that merit preservation. e register is published biennially.

o safeguard National Register properties in ome measure from Federal highways, dams and ther projects, Congress established an Advi-ory Council on Historic Preservation and gave t the power of review, "to take into account he effect of the undertaking on any district ite, building, structure or object that is ncluded in the National Register." It does ot have the injunctive power to halt any Fed-ral undertaking. This Council also advises he President and Congress and coordinates the istoric preservation activities of Federal epartments and agencies.

The law also set up a system of matching grants-in-aid to states for furthering preservation surveys, plans and specific preservation pro-jects. This program is coordinated by State liaison officers who are appointed by each governor to supervise the National Register program in each state.

Presently, in Massachusetts, John X. Davoren, Chairman of the Massachusetts Historic Commis-sion, is the appointee.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States was chartered by Congress in 1949 as a charitable, educational and non-profit corporation to further the policy enunciated in the Historic Sites Act of 1935; to facilitate public participation in the preservation of sites, buildings and objects of national significance or interest; and to provide a national trust to re-ceive and administer for public benefit properties significant in American history and culture. The National Trust is under the general direction of a board of thirty-three trustees, including, ex-officio, the Secretary of the Interior, the Dir-ector of the National Gallery of Art and the Attorney General of the United States. The Trust is financed primarily by gifts and grants from members, friends and foundations, and for certain programs receives matching and other grants from federal and state agencies. Presently, there are over 50,000 members of the National Trust. Its main office is at 740-748 Jackson Place, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20006.

The Department of Education's responsibility is to increase the public awareness and appreciation of our heritage through educational programs. It sponsors programs for professional preservation-ists as well as the general public. The depart-ment maintains the archives, library and visual aids collections, assists researchers working in the preservation fields, and directs the summer interns and research fellows.

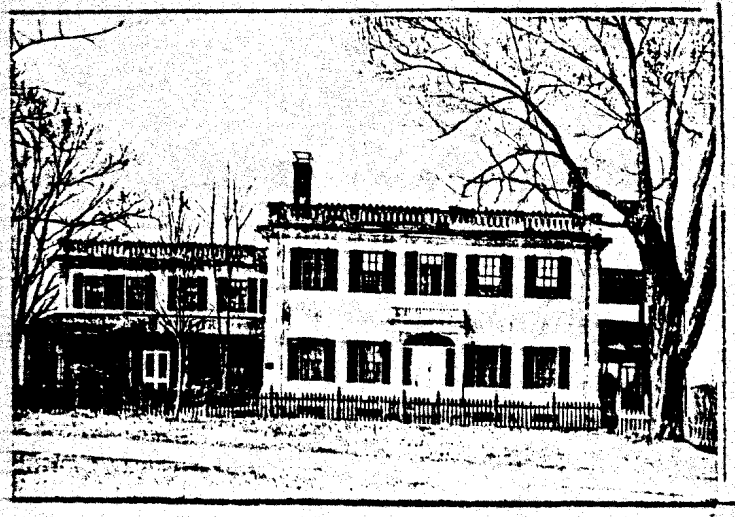
The Department of Field Services provides a profes-sional advisory service on preservation problems. It also conducts technical conferences and pro-grams, develops research projects with the staff and consultants, and administers the consultant service grant program, which has supported this report. Consultant service grants are available for such areas as architecture, city planning, economics, landscape architecture, law and museum curatorship. The department maintains a card file of over 200 professional consultants. Several of the resulting consultant reports have been pub-lished as well as other pamphlets that provide preservation information or guidance to preserva-tion programs. To make the advisory services more available, the field service department has begun to set up regional offices. It also has a Board of Advisors made up of two volunteer rep-resentatives from each state and territory, and the District of Columbia. The board provides an important communications link from the local and state levels to the national level and the re-verse.

In 1971, the National Trust established the National Historic Preservation Fund to provide low-interest loans to assist preservation organizations in the acquisition of historic properties. It especially encourages the establishment of revolving funds systems.

The Department of Historic Properties administers the historic properties program, including the interpretation, acquisition, maintainance and development of its historic properties. The Department of Publications is responsible for the "Historic Preservation", a scholarly magazine, "Preservation News", a newspaper that reports on current preservation issues and battles of national significance, and the publications of the other departments through assistance in writing, editing and producing materials in their areas of concern.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation jointly with the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities have recently opened a National Trust Field Services Office for the New England area. This office is located in the Harrison Gray Otis House at 141 Cambridge Street, Boston which is also the headquarters of SPNEA. Expanded and coordinated services of both SPNEA and the National Trust are now available to communities, groups and individuals interested in historic preservation matters.

Historic American Building Survey (HABS) is the national architectural archive. It was begun in 1933 and is administered by the National Park Service in cooperation with the American Institute of Architects and the Library of Congress, where the records are kept. They consist of drawings, photographs and historical documentation. Today there is a large national program for intensive surveys on a share-fund basis in cooperation with State and local governments, preservation and historical societies.



STATE

The Massachusetts Historical Commission was established under the Acts of 1963, Section 26, of the General Laws. The Historic District Act, Chapter 40c of the General Laws now amended by Chapter 359, Acts of 1971, provides procedures for establishing and administering local historic districts. The purpose of establishing an historic district is three-fold:

1) "to preserve and protect the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places significant in the history of the Commonwealth and its cities and towns;
2) to maintain and improve the settings of those buildings and places;
3) to encourage new designs compatible with existing buildings in the district."

An area significant to the local development and history should be made an historic district for protection.

An historic district may be established when "the relationship to each other of a sufficient number of buildings creates a whole which is greater than the sum of its parts." Since architecture is visible evidence of the historical importance of such an area, historic district controls are designed to preserve the outward appearance and the harmonious exterior relationships of groups of buildings, structures and sites without changing their ownership or curtailing their use. These controls aim only at preventing the intrusion of incongruous structures which would detract from the aesthetic and historical values of the district. Such controls do not prevent new construction. They apply only to exterior architectural features publicly visible, and they may be further limited under the options provided in the Historic Districts Act.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission also keeps an inventory of historical surveys of districts in the state, regardless of whether or not they are legally "historic districts." This inventory can be called upon as evidence of merit in case of environment threats to the district.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission is presently located at 40 Beacon Street, Boston, Massachusetts, 02108. The commission has issued "Guidelines for Establishment of Historic Districts," which includes a detailed check list of the steps to establish a district under the Historic Districts Act.

ssachusetts Constitution, Article XLIX. "The nservation, development and utilization of agri-ltural, mineral, forest, water and other natural sources of the Commonwealth are public uses, and e general court shall have power to provide for e taking, upon payment of just compensation erefor, of lands and easements or interests erein, including water and mineral rights, for e purpose of securing and promotion the proper nservation, development, utilization and control ereof and to enact legislation necessary or ex-dient therefor."

The people shall have the right to clean air and ter, freedon from excessive and unnecessary ise, and the natural, scenic, historic, and aes-etic qualities of their environment; and the otection of the people in their right to the nservation, development and utilization of the gricultural, mineral, forest, water, air and ther natural resources is hereby declared to be public purpose."

The general court shall have the power to enact egislation necessary or expedient to protect uch rights."

In the furtherance of the foregoing powers, the eneral court shall have the power to provide r the taking, upon payment of just compensation erefor, or for the acquisition by purchase or therwise, of lands and easements of such other terests therein as may be deemed necessary to complish these purposes."

ands and easements taken or acquired for such rposes shall not be used for other purposes or therwise disposed of except by laws enacted by two-thirds vote, taken by yeas and nays, of ch branch of the general court."

e Massachusetts Association of Conservation mmissions has written a hand book describing isting legislation and indicating how it can used. It is called the Massachusetts Conser-tion Commission Handbook and is available from e Association at its office at 506 Statler fice Building, Park Square, Boston, Massachu-tts, 02116, or from the Department of Natural sources. They also offer legal aid to conser-tion commissions.

Of special interest to preservationists concerned with safeguarding the environment of an historic site are the following methods of land control:

- The purchase in fee of the land necessary to preserve the site. Land can be owned by the town, the conservation commission, an historical commission, or a private corporation or trust, such as an historical society. There are state and federal self-help funds available to aid the purchase.

- The purchase of covenants over the use of the land is also an important preservation tool. With the need to preserve open space throughout the Commonwealth growing yearly, increasing use will be made of conservation and preservation easements or covenants. They have played a major role in protecting the beauty of the landscape in Great Britain and Scotland. With recent legislation, their use is beginning to expand here. Restricting the use and development of land and maintaining the architectural integrity of structures while still allowing the fee title to remain in private ownership, easements or covenants offer landowners and environmental organizations, such as the Trustees of Reservations, new opportunities in the area of conservation. A covenant may prohibit building but allow the owner to farm, fish, hunt or run an orchard, golf club or ski resort as long as the vista remains intact. A covenant may prohibit or allow public access. The benefits of covenants are that they usually cost less than buying in full, the land is still taxed and the owner may continue to use and maintain his land. The new laws controling conservation covenants are in Chapter 666 of the Acts of 1969.

It is also possible to purchase covenants over the facade of a building and the adjacent land, under Chapter 184 of the General Laws.

The laws that protect the appearance and uses of the natural environment need to be recognized and enforced. The town, its conservation commission, or any body of ten citizens, under the Citizens Right to Action law, have the authority to see that laws are observed.

- Wet lands that are prone to flooding by either tidal or fresh waters (General Laws, Chapter 131, Sections 40 and 40a) and those rivers or streams (General Laws, Chapter 21, Section 17b) deemed scenic by the local conservation commission are protected from filling, dredging, polluting or in any way altering their appearance, up to 100 yards for each side of the natural bank of a stream. A 1971 statute enables municipalities to regulate or prohibit the operation of internal combustion engines on great ponds in their jurisdiction.

- The Scenic Roads Act (General Laws, Chapter 67, Section 15c) requires that such roads are maintained as they are by the town. Their twists and bends, stone walls, fences and trees are protected. The U.S. Supreme Court recently put teeth into two federal laws which had long required that the Secretary of Transportation should not approve projects for federal highways through park, recreation, wildlife, or historical areas of national, state, or local significance, unless there was "no feasible or prudent alternative." (49 U.S.C. s. 1653, 23 U.S.C. s. 138.)

- The Shade Tree Act (General Laws, Chapter 87, Sections 1-113) deems all trees within a public way in cities or towns are shade trees. "No trees may be cut, trimmed or removed by any person without permission of the tree warden even if he be the owner in fee in the land on which the tree is situated." Money may also be appropriated to plant such trees in public ways or on adjoining land, up to 20 feet from a public way, upon the owner's written consent. Criminal penalties are enacted for placing signs on trees or defacing them. There is also a law prohibiting defacement of natural scenery by painting or posting signs (General Laws, Chapter 40, Section 5 (59)) or leaving junked cars (Chapter 90, Section 22b) on another's property without his consent.

Other legislations that have potential applicability are the Billboard and Sign Control Act (General Laws, Chapter 93, Section 29), the Soil and Gravel Laws (under the Zoning Act (General Laws, Chapter 40A, Section 2) or as a bylaw or ordinance (General Laws, Chapter 40, Section 21 (17)), the regulation of recreational vehicles, now under control of the Division of Marine and Recreational Vehicles (General Laws, Chapter 90B), and the common law relating to nuisance. On a bill in equity, bought by one or several of the abuttors who are directly affected, any condition which is clearly objectionable may be abated as a court order as a private nuisance if it damages property or health.

The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA) is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and protection of our New England heritage. Founded in 1910, SPNEA headquarters are located at the Harrison Gray Otis House, 141 Cambridge Street, Boston, Massachusetts, 02114, which also contains an extensive museum and resource center of New England history, architecture and culture.

SPNEA has been the leading private historic preservation organization in this region. It maintains numerous historic properties and provides advice and technical assistance to local preservation groups and individuals on preservation matters. SPNEA also conducts research, publishes materials and sponsors educational forums on items of historical and architectural interest.

At the present time, SPNEA and the National Trust for Historic Preservation have jointly opened a National Trust Field Services Office for the New England area. This office is also located in the Harrison Gray Otis House. Expanded and coordinated services of both SPNEA and the National Trust are now available to communities, groups and individuals interested in historic preservation.

THE TRUSTEES OF RESERVATIONS

A Massachusetts charitable corporation, founded for conservation purposes. The Trustees of Reservations is an independently administered, non-profit corporation which operates state-wide. It relies for support entirely on voluntary subscriptions, income from endowments and limited admission fees.

The Trustees of Reservations acquires land for open space, natural areas or historic preservation either by deed or by legacy from the donor. When property is purchased, The Trustees of Reservations depends upon contributions to help defray costs. Gifts of either land (at fair market value) or money qualify for Federal income tax deduction up to 50 percent of the donor's adjusted gross income. The Trustees of Reservations may also acquire conservation or preservation easements or restrictions. Presently, they own a large tract of forest land in the northwestern corner of Royalston. They are also acknowledging the unique natural beauty of Jacob's Hill to the west of the common by trying to buy land or the restrictions over the land on its steep slope.

The Trustees of Reservations is located in Milton, Massachusetts (02186) at 224 Adams Street.

APPENDIX B: LIST OF BUILDINGS ON ROYALSTON COMMON WHICH ARE KEYED TO MAPS

1. The Old School House, built in 1835, Greek Revival style. Now the Historical Society building and Post Office.

2. Harold Newton's House, built in 1853 by William Parke from a hat factory owned by William Jerrel in 1780. Federal style.

3. The Lightning Rods, built in 1839, probably by J.E.P. Austin. Modified Greek Revival style with 8 square pillars.

4. The Columns, built in 1838 by Moses Nicols. Very pure Greek Revival style with four columns.

5. The Bastille, built in 1830 by the Reverend Ebenezer Perkins, Federal style. Chippendale balustrade added in 1927.

6. The Jonathan Sibley House with Old Store attached. The house, Federal style, was built in 1819 by Jonathan Sibley, Jr.. The store was built in 1872 by Obadiah Walker.

7. White Heather, built about 1900 by J. Howard Lee, Federal style. Lovely fan over door.

8. Alfred Waters' House. Original built in 1820. This house burned and was rebuilt.

9. The Whitney House, built about 1836 by George F. Whitney. Greek Revival style.

0. The Goddard House, built in 1847 by Captain William Raymond. Federal style.

1. The Margaret Nash House, built about 1874, probably by Joseph Raymond. Federal style, with bay windows.

2. The Raymond House, built in 1825 by Solomon Tenney. Federal style.

3. The Barnet Bullock House, built about 1825 by Barnet Bullock. Federal style.

4. The Phinehas Newton Library, built in 1911 by Boutwell and Damon of Fitchburg. The architect was H.M. Francis and Sons of Fitchburg. Modified Greek Revival style in brick.

15. The Rufus Bullock Mansion, built in 1807 by Lemuel Fales. Federal style. Other house attached to rear probably built in 1764. Birthplace of Alexander Hamilton Bullock, Governor of Massachusetts, 1868-88.

16. First Congregational Church, built in 1852 by Chauncey Chase. Greek Revival style.

17. Town Hall, built in 1857 by Chauncey Chase. Mansard style.

18. The Bacheller-Chase House, built in 1849 by Chauncey Chase. Federal style. Original house probably built in 1771.

19. The Pierce-Stow House, built about 1837 by William O. Brown. Federal style. Beautiful curving bannisters.

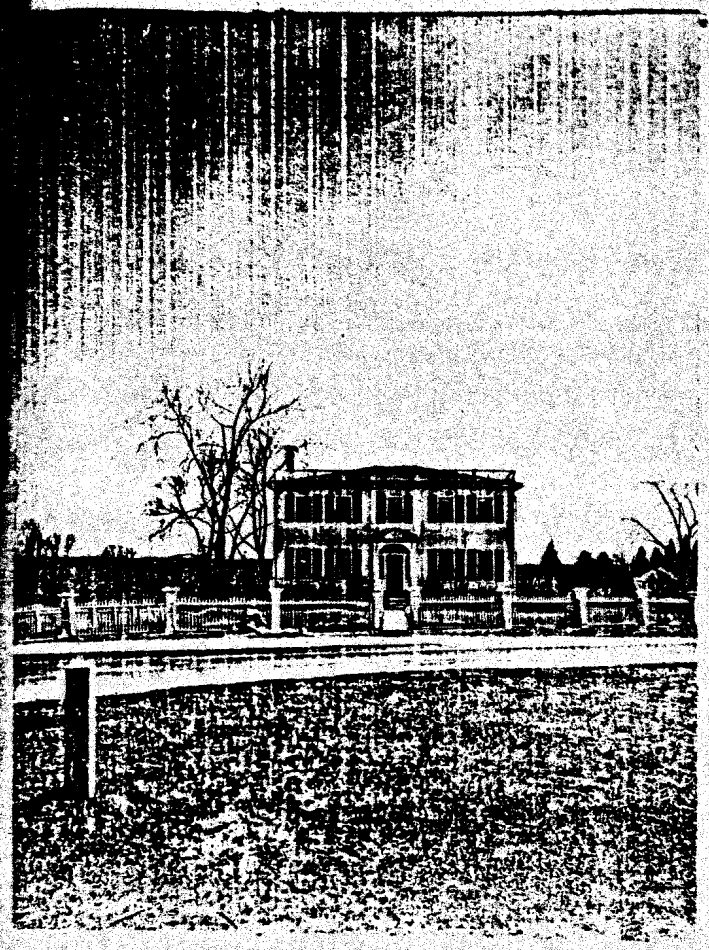
20. The Adams-Burr House, built about 1837 by Elijah Nicols, Federal style with a little Victorian bay window, 2nd floor.

21. The Parsonage, built shortly after 1874 when old building was removed. Late Greek Revival.

Jan 3.
Tuesday
1:30

8 acres - 16 acres
Austin House

301



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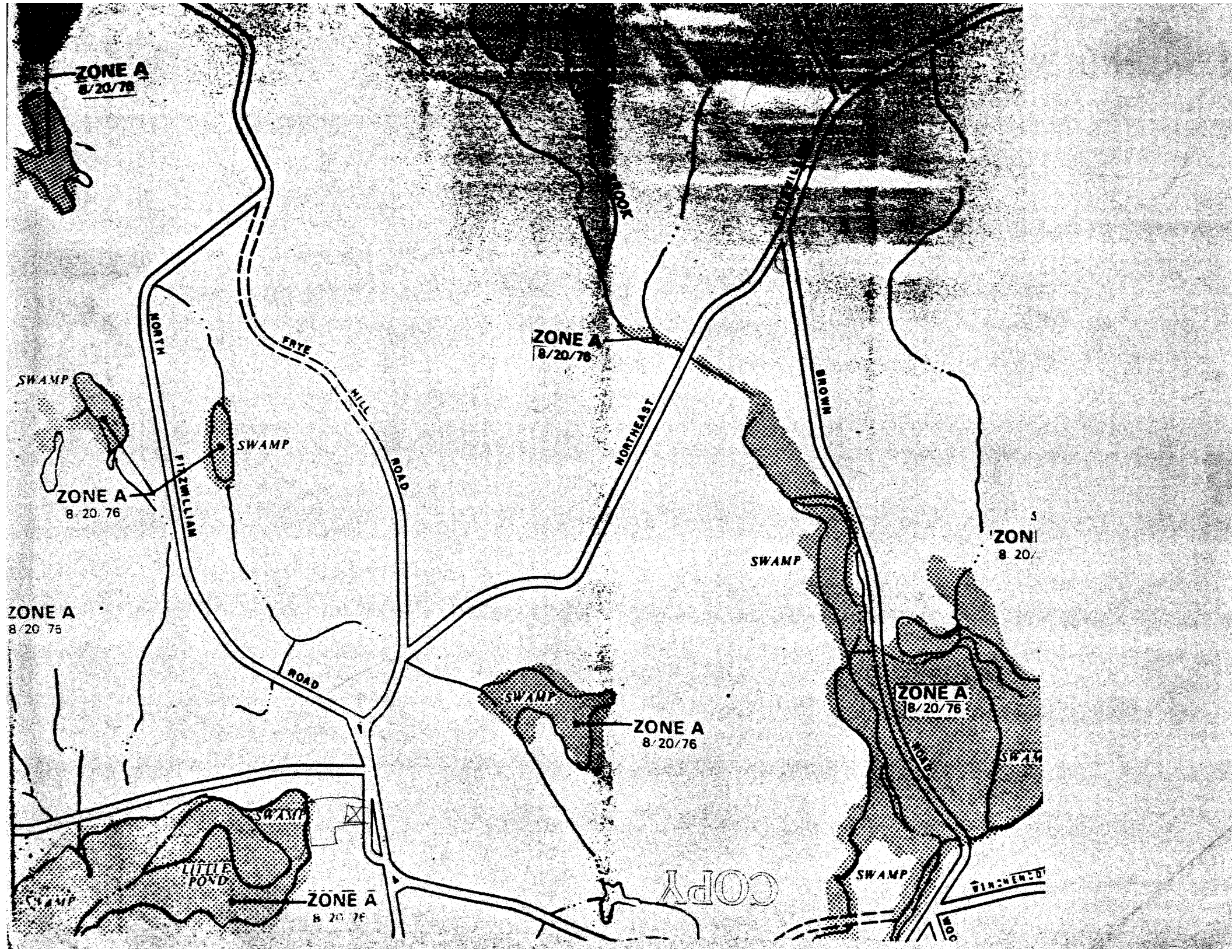
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