

## I. INTRODUCTION

The survey of Warren, Rhode Island, was begun by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission following a request from the Warren Preservation Association, Inc. The project was initially funded with a 701 grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to the Rhode Island Statewide Comprehensive Transportation and Land Use Planning Program on a one-third state and two-thirds federal matching basis. Subsequent funding was provided on a 50% state, 50% federal basis by the Historical Preservation Commission through the survey planning and development program administered for the National Park Service.

To accomplish the goals of the statewide survey program three stages are necessary: field survey, preparation of maps, and preparation of a final report (this document) on each area surveyed. A standard survey form, the "Historic Building Data Sheet" is used throughout the state. This incorporates both architectural and historical information and a photograph of each building or site. Historical information is obtained through the use of local maps, state atlases, published and unpublished histories, and guidebooks or manuscripts which are readily available. Deed research is not undertaken by the Commission staff but is incorporated into the study as it becomes available from local sources. Data from the survey forms is ultimately transferred to maps and to the Statewide Planning Program's computer system so that information pertaining to historic preservation is readily available for planning purposes. A detailed explanation of methodology together with a copy of the "Historic Building Data Sheet" and a sample detail from the Warren survey map will be found in Appendix B.

Upon completion of the survey, and review by the Commission, one copy of all material is filed at the Commission's central office and others are placed in appropriate local repositories: city/town hall, historical society, or library. Each set of materials consists of the completed survey forms, maps, and final report.

The Warren survey was divided into two separate phases. The first phase, begun in the fall of 1969, was undertaken by members of the Warren Preservation Association, Inc. Preliminary mapping by architectural style and period of over 200 structures in the compact waterfront area was accomplished and included wood and brick

residences from the Colonial and Federal periods, mansions from the Federal, Greek Revival, and Victorian periods, stone mills from the whaling era, early brick textile factories, and three historic churches. All of these structures were identified on the 1870 map, "Warren, Bristol Co., R. I." by D. G. Beers (see map Plate A).

Based on the preliminary findings, the staff of the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission defined the Warren Waterfront Survey area as follows:

Beginning north at the bridge leading to Barrington south along Main Street, including North Cemetery, then continuing along Main to Wood Street, east along Wood to Federal Street, south to Market Street, then west to the line of the old Bristol/Warren Railroad, south along the arc of the tracks to Franklin, Water and Wheaton Streets which are diagonally traversed by the original town line between Warren and Bristol, then west along this line to the Warren River and north following the shoreline to the point of beginning.

Survey forms were prepared for significant buildings. Modern and commercial buildings of no architectural value were not surveyed since compiling of data necessary to identify an historic district was deemed the prime objective. The standard Rhode Island Statewide Survey map at the scale of 1" = 100' was then prepared for the survey area.

The second phase, undertaken in the fall of 1973 and early spring of 1974, completed the townwide survey of Warren. This phase included modern and commercial structures along Main Street within the Central Business District, the outlying districts identified as East Warren (settled in the early 1650's), Touisset Point, and South Warren (a part of Bristol until 1873). Approximately 200 additional significant buildings were surveyed and added to the previously prepared map with rural structures identified on a larger scale United States Geodetic Survey map.

This final report is based on the field survey, research material, and maps. It attempts to present a concise yet comprehensive history of Warren, followed by recommendations for preservation planning and, in the Appendices, references to pertinent preservation agencies, the survey procedure and grant-in-aid program of the Historical Preservation

Commission, and a complete inventory of structures, sites, and monuments in Warren worthy of inclusion in the state inventory. Emphasis is placed on the whole spectrum of the town's past as revealed in its present morphology — its topography, settlement pattern, buildings, mills, landmarks, etc. The impact of modern development including such factors as new roads and construction, zoning, industrial growth, traffic demands, demolition for parking, visual pollution, and conversion of residential structures to commercial use which individually or in combination can significantly and permanently alter the character of an historic area have been taken into account. The objectives of this report are threefold: to provide a planning tool for a community-wide preservation program; to serve as an academic and educational resource, useful in the study of state and local history; and to stimulate civic pride, making residents aware of the historical and architectural environment in which they live, and encouraging them to take a positive interest in the future of their community. To the end that the current process of demolition and decay will be checked in Warren, this effort is dedicated.

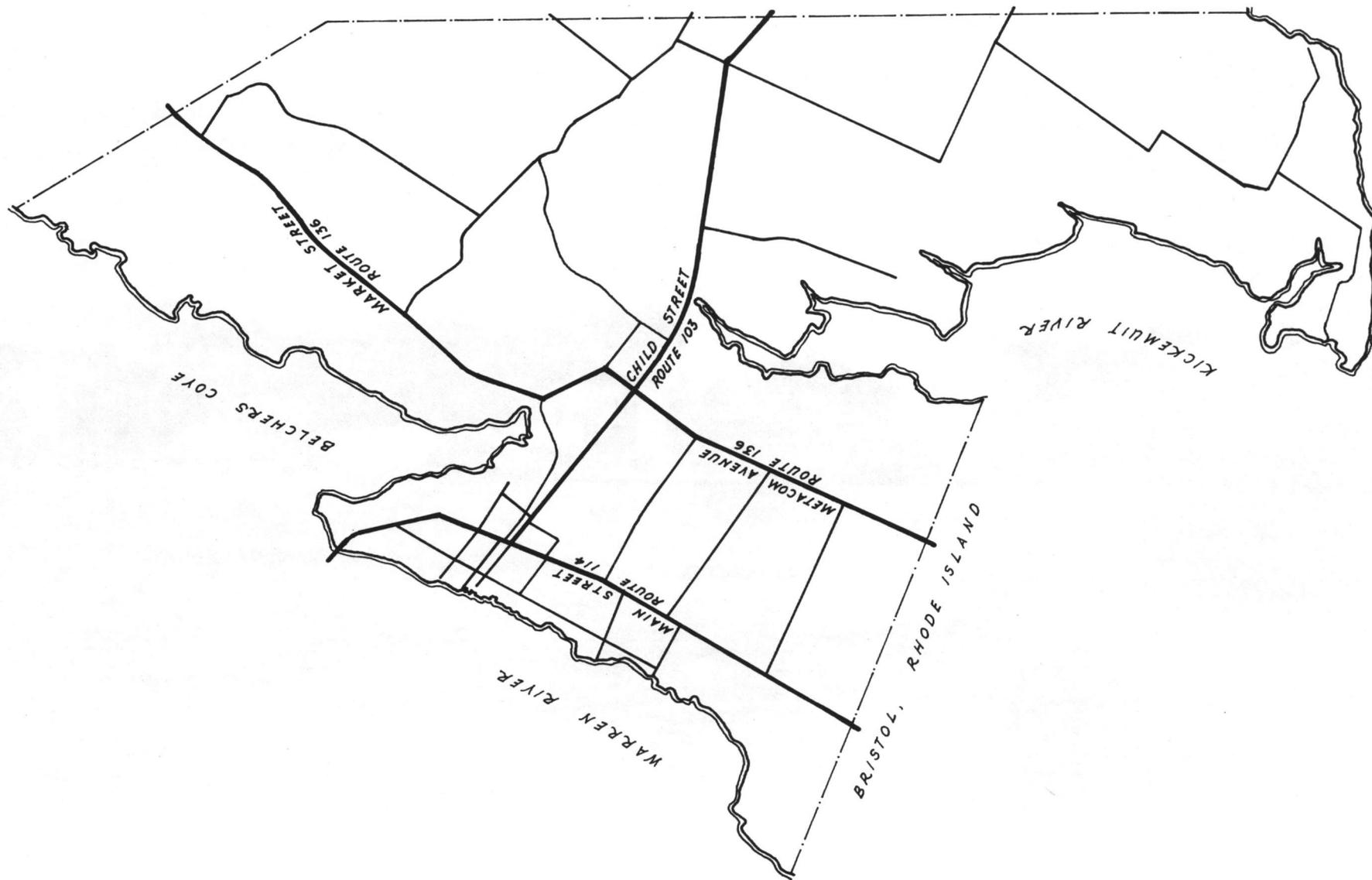
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The Commission would like to thank the following individuals who have contributed their time and advice to the Warren survey: Mr. Albert Klyberg, Director of the Rhode Island Historical Society; Mr. William E. L. Sutton, Principal Planner for the Rhode Island Department of Community Affairs; Mr. Charles H. Alfred, Warren Town Clerk; and Mr. Arthur E. Burke, Miss Madeleine Cady, Mr. and Mrs. Laurent Dionne, Mrs. William F. Jackson, Mrs. Edna MacGovern, Mr. and Mrs. William W. Manchester, Mr. William M. O'Rourke, Mrs. Hendry C. White and the late Mr. Hendry C. White.



Fig. 1: Water Front, postcard, c. 1900

SWANSEA, MASSACHUSETTS



Map Plate B: Warren today

## II. PHYSICAL SETTING

The town of Warren is located in Bristol County on the east side of Narragansett Bay. It is bounded on the north and east by Massachusetts, on the south by Mount Hope Bay and the town of Bristol, and on the west by the Warren River which opens southerly into Narragansett Bay. Warren is approximately twelve miles southeast from Providence and nineteen miles from Newport. Roughly triangular in shape, with approximately half of its boundaries on shoreline, the town contains an area of 6.4 square miles.

At present, two primary arteries, Route 114 (Main Street) and Route 136 (Market Street-Metacom Avenue), traverse Warren from north to south connecting Interstate Route 195 with the Mount Hope Bridge in Bristol. Route 103 (Child Street), beginning in East Providence, connects the East Bay area with Fall River and southeastern Massachusetts and traverses Warren from east to west (see map Plate B).

Warren contains within its boundaries four areas which constitute separate districts: the compact *Warren Waterfront* within the original "Warren Village"; the rural *Windmill Hill-Market Street area*; *Touisset Neck*; and the *South Warren-Main Street* corridor. These four areas are well defined by natural and man-made features.

### Warren Waterfront

The waterfront section is bounded by the Barrington Bridge and Belchers Cove on the north, properties fronting on the east side of Main Street, Campbell Street on the south, and the Warren River to the west. Proximity to a deep river channel has determined intense development of this narrow strip of land from pre-colonial times. In 1855 the opening of the Providence-Warren-Bristol Railroad cut a north-south arc through the main part of the built-up town. This arc still defines the eastern edge of the old seaport village with its narrow east-west "ways" thrown off the main north-south axis of Main Street to Water Street and the river. This original street pattern, a modified gridiron imposed on a relatively flat terrain, and the concentration of houses and commercial structures reflecting the architectural economic and social growth of Warren, gives this section its unique character. Belchers Cove is an important undeveloped conservation recreation area.



Rhode Island

### Windmill Hill-Market Street

This area contains farm land bounded on the north and east by the Massachusetts-Rhode Island border, on the south by Child Street, and on the west by Belchers Cove. The Kickemuit River flows from the Massachusetts border southwesterly through this sparsely settled section. The land rises gently from the Kickemuit on the east and Belchers Cove on the west to the top of Windmill Hill near the corner of School House and Birch Swamp Roads. Predominantly agricultural in use with some large dairy farms, this section of Warren is now designated for future industrial expansion and faces an uncertain future. Of possible archaeological interest are two unusual rock formations, "King's Rock" and "Margaret's Cave," near the Massachusetts border related to the aboriginal period.

### Touisset Neck

Touisset Neck is bounded on the north by Child Street, the east by Cole's River, south by Touisset Point and Bristol Narrows, and west by the Kickemuit River. Surrounded on three sides by water, Touisset Neck still contains several large dairy farms and a tree nursery, with two heavily developed twentieth-century summer communities found at Touisset Point and Touisset Highlands.

Truck farming, popular from the last quarter of the nineteenth century, has largely disappeared with the abandonment of the Providence, Warren and Fall River Railroad. Beautiful stone walls lining the old roads attest to the rocky character of this neck. The Kickemuit River is classified SA and A throughout its entire length.<sup>1</sup> Along the Kickemuit are several important tidal marsh areas including Chase's Cove.

### South Warren-Main Street

This area comprises the strip bordered on the north by Franklin Street (the original boundary between Bristol and Warren prior to 1873), on the east by the Kickemuit River, on the south by the Bristol town line, and the west by the Warren River. The land rises gently from the Warren and Kickemuit Rivers to a ridge extending from north to south along Mount Hope Neck. Excellent views of Narragansett Bay or the Kickemuit River are found from sites along either shoreline. This section of Warren has developed piece-meal as old farm lots running east-west off Main Street and Metacom Avenue have been sub-divided for residential or commercial uses. Metacom Avenue is developing into a congested, uncoordinated commercial strip. At the Warren-Bristol border the recent and continuing development of multi-family housing may change the social-economic-architectural character of South Warren.

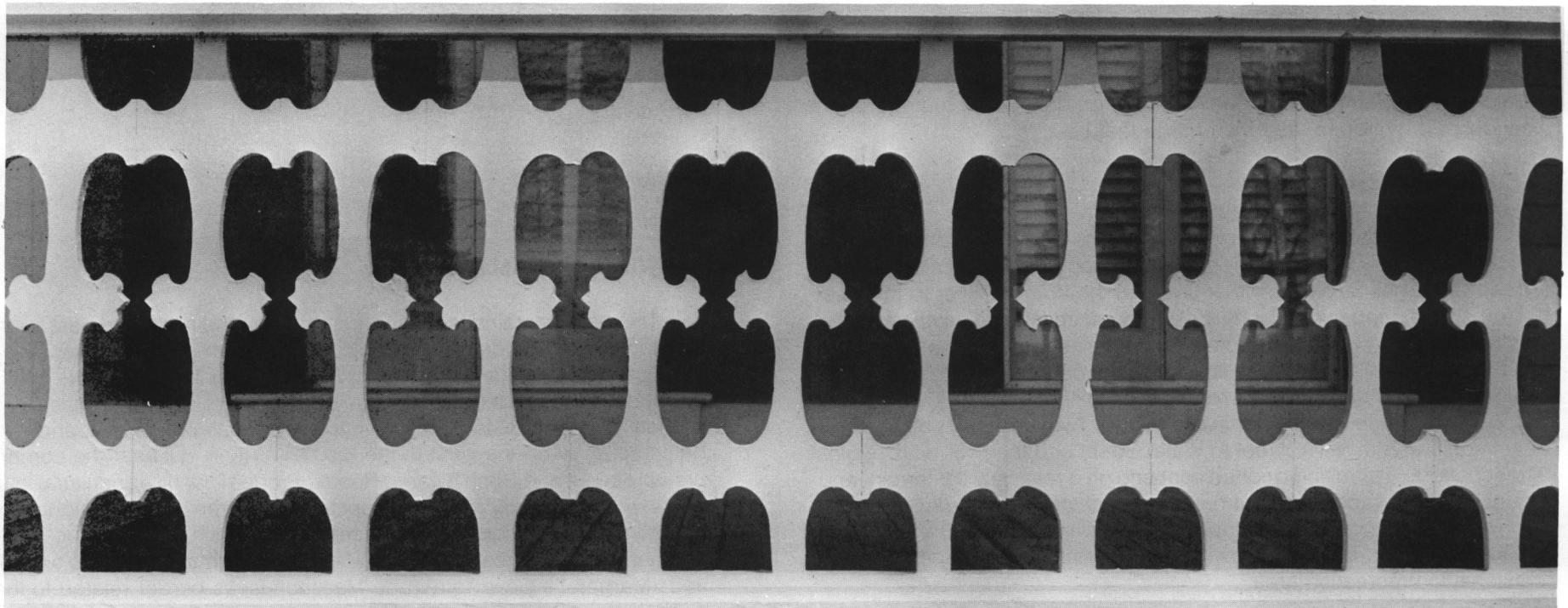


Fig. 2: Mason Farmhouse, Touisset, William Cole's pattern