

**PART B - CULTURAL RESOURCES****SECTION I INTRODUCTION****A. Brief History of West Greenwich<sup>1</sup>**

Occupying a fifty-one square-mile rectangle approximately twenty-five miles southwest of Providence, West Greenwich is one of the largest in area and the least densely populated municipality in the state. Granite bedrock and stony, unstratified glacial till define the topography of the rolling, sometimes rugged, wooded landscape. Small brooks, tributaries of the Wood and Big Rivers, flow south and northeast through the town. Routes 3, 102, and Interstate Highway 95 pass through West Greenwich, but most of the town's roads remain narrow and unimproved.

**PREHISTORIC OCCUPATION**

The earliest inhabitants of this area were the Narragansett Indians during the Woodland Period (2500-200 BC). The Narragansetts were seasonal people who hunted and fished, migrating inland from coastal areas for the winter season. In West Greenwich, they occupied granite rock shelters, such as Rattlesnake Ledge in Wickabonet State Forest, which served as temporary winter campsites. The Town's rocky terrain poorly accommodated the summer cultivation of crops, but the Indians occupied the granite rock shelters as temporary winter quarters.

**COLONIZATION**

The area remained uninhabited by English colonists for much of the first century following Roger Williams' settlement of Providence in 1636. West Greenwich was originally a part of the territory once known as the "Vacant Land Tracts" which included land in the towns of East and West Greenwich. In 1709, in an effort to combine all remaining Narragansett Indian territory under control of the Colony, these lands were accepted by the Rhode Island General Assembly from Ninigret, Sachem of the Narragansetts, in payment for military defense, as well as other services. Subsequently, in June, 1709, 35,000 acres of land, territory then known as East Greenwich, was sold to a group of thirteen men for 1,100 pounds. With the threat of Indian rule

---

<sup>1</sup>This section is largely based on and drawn from "West Greenwich - A Context for Understanding Historic Resources," by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission.

over the forests removed, settlement occurred into the western portion of East Greenwich and by 1740 the population had increased enough to warrant the creation of a new town. Population grew rapidly, and the area by 1741 had inhabitants equal in number to those in East Greenwich. That year, it was separated from East Greenwich and incorporated as the Town of West Greenwich.

## **INCORPORATION**

In October, 1740, a petition was submitted, to Governor Richard Ward requesting that the area be set off as a separate town. In 1741, the General Assembly for the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, at the request of freemen of this area incorporated West Greenwich as a separate town.

The petition requesting that the west end of the Town of East Greenwich into a separate township indicates the reason for separation as follows:

"Whereas, several of the inhabitants of the aforesaid Town of East Greenwich by petition in this Assembly did set forth the great disadvantage they labour under on account of the great extent of said town; and as it is conceived, it will be more for the ease and benefit of all its inhabitants in transacting and negotiating the prudential affairs there to have a division made. Be it therefore enacted by the General Assembly, and by the authority thereof it is enacted, that from the westerly line of the old Township as unto the Colony Line be set off and incorporated a township, and the same to be distinguished and known by the name of West Greenwich. And that the inhabitants thereof from time to time shall have and enjoy the like benefits, liberties, privileges and immunities with other towns in this colony according to our Charter."

## **EARLY SETTLEMENT PATTERNS**

New settlement occurred rapidly; the population in 1748 was 760 and by 1790, it was 2,054 (the highest until very recent history). Long roads into the interior encouraged settlement - roads like Division Street (the old Pequot Indian Trail) and Sharpe Street which connected West Greenwich with the coastal areas of Narragansett Bay and the maritime trading resources of East Greenwich, the nearest market town.

Early settlement patterns consisted of a family farmhouse, on large tracts of land, built along the main roads but set back on a long driveway. Good farm land was scarce and the colonial farmers found few fertile areas of sandy loam, well drained by rivers and brooks. Most farming was at or just above the subsistence level and very few cash crops were or could be

produced. The thinner soils could only support livestock, which produced meat and dairy products. The average farmer in West Greenwich had to turn to other natural resources to augment his agricultural efforts. One such industry was quarrying by working the scattered deposits of bedrock granite. However, the most important natural resource available was forestland. The early inhabitants undertook lumbering as their major source of livelihood and soon local saw mills and shingle mills flourished.

### **EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY LIFE**

Eighteenth-century use of the land varied. Good farm land was scarce, and farms operated at or just above subsistence with few cash crops produced. The land supported modest numbers of livestock, which produced meat and dairy products. Others turned to quarrying, working the scattered deposits of bedrock granite. The most important natural resource exploited in the eighteenth century was the forest land. Ample forests of red and white pine, maple, chestnut, and oak were cut and processed in local sawmills for building supplies, maritime use, barrels, bridges, carts, and furniture.

The lone farmhouse, accompanied by outbuildings and stone walls, typified the early settlement pattern. The earliest buildings were vernacular, utilitarian structures following accustomed, repeated forms and post-and-beam construction. Most were one-and-a-half stories high and employed the center-chimney, two-room house plan. The small, early houses were usually expanded, and later houses included the two-and-a-half-story form.

West Greenwich's early roads were Indian paths. The first trails cut through the forests were by the 1730s post roads, like Division and Sharpe Streets, which linked the hinterland with the civic, commercial, and maritime center at East Greenwich. They transported passengers and mail, and drovers took herds of livestock to market.

### **NINETEENTH CENTURY LIFE**

In 1821, the New London Turnpike (originally the Providence and Pawcatuck Turnpike) opened. In West Greenwich, it runs from the East Greenwich-Coventry town line convergence diagonally southwest to Exeter. Developed late in the turnpike era, "the greatest improvement that was ever made in this state" proved far too expensive for shipping freight and far less convenient than the rail service introduced in the 1830's. It fell largely into disuse by the 1840's and remains largely abandoned for most of

its length. Unlike most early turnpikes, the West Greenwich section of the New London Turnpike never developed into a major thoroughfare. It therefore retains a strong sense of its original character. Because it had such a brief flourishing and was so completely abandoned, it remains as a kind of time capsule with the archeological remains of at least one tollgate, one tavern, and several houses.

While industry transformed the state of Rhode Island from a largely rural, agrarian landscape to a largely industrial, urban landscape, it did so elsewhere. West Greenwich had an abundance of water power, but its isolation and lack of rail service inhibited industrial development. Industry in West Greenwich remained limited to traditional, local activity saw mills, blacksmith shops, grist mills. Development for the most part remained scattered and rural.

Only a few small villages developed: Nooseneck, West Greenwich Centre, and Escoheag. Located on a neck between two streams which unite as a tributary of the Pawtuxet, Nooseneck thrived principally between the 1830's and 1860s. It had a mill as early as 1800, and the Hopkins Mill (ca. 1867) is the only mill remaining in town. A handful of eighteenth and early nineteenth-century houses remain. West Greenwich Centre, never large, retains only its modest Baptist church (ca. 1825). Escoheag, in the southwest part of town near the Connecticut border, was a modest settlement with a tavern, local mills, post office, and church.

By 1890, West Greenwich was the poorest and most desolate town in the state. The population was half of what it had been in 1790. Manufacturing ceased, farming declined, and reforestation progressed.

#### **TRANSPORTATION & ROADS - 19TH CENTURY**

Indian paths served as the earliest overland routes in West Greenwich. By the 1730's, the "post roads" such as Division and Sharpe Streets, linked West Greenwich with the commercial and maritime center at East Greenwich. These roads served multiple purposes with stage lines operating over them; transporting of passengers, mail and other goods; were used for taking herds of livestock to market.

The New London Turnpike, built in 1815 as a route for stage coach travel between Boston and New York, played a major role in the early growth of the community. At that time, it was the only

private toll road in West Greenwich and was manned by toll houses at regular intervals. The Turnpike shortened the trip from Providence to New York, by taking passengers on a more direct overland route connecting with the New York steamer at New London, Connecticut.

The Turnpike was considered an important communications and commercial link between the southwestern parts of the state and Providence. Several taverns and inns developed along the Turnpike where horses were changed. Some establishments were respectable, however, many had less than savory reputations. One especially notorious section in West Greenwich was known as "Hell's Half Acre", located at the intersection with Congdon Mill Road.

The introduction of railroad and steamboat service soon rendered the Turnpike obsolete and its owners were forced to abandon the enterprise. By the late 19th century, the road had fallen into disuse as had the taverns. The loss of access to a primary transportation route struck a severe blow to the town's industrial and residential growth.

#### **THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY & SETTLEMENT - 19TH CENTURY**

A major factor in the early growth of the textile industry in the United States was Thomas Jefferson's Embargo Act of 1807, which cut off supplies of imported fabric. As a result, small textile mills, many producing cotton yarn, were established in Rhode Island. Several small mills and other industrial activities including grist mills, cotton cloth and yarn factories and acid works began to locate within West Greenwich. The town had an abundance of sites able to utilize available water privileges. However, because of its isolation and the high cost of transporting raw materials and the finished products, West Greenwich never fully realized the full industrial potential of its waterways.

Several widely separated hamlets grew up around these industrial activities.

At Liberty, located a mile northwest of West Greenwich Center, as early as 1790, John Hall had a shop that produced axes, hoes, shovels and other farm implements as well as operating a blacksmithing business. About 1808, John Manchester built a cotton mill at Liberty where he spun cotton, dyed wool and fullered cloth until the mill was destroyed by fire in 1822. Another mill at Liberty was owned by Albert Wells which built wagons and carriages.

Another settlement was at Escoheag located in the southwestern corner of the town, near the Connecticut and Exeter borders. This area was settled in the late 18th century by the Tillinghast family. A tavern was established at the Tillinghast-Hazard farm as a coach stop for the East Greenwich to Hartford Stage. In addition to the working farm and tavern, a sawmill, gristmill and stone quarry were also located on the property. John Hazard also established a molasses factory on the farm, but it did not prove profitable and was abandoned. A post office was located at Escoheag in 1848, run by Benjamin Tillinghast. A church was built in 1870 when Jason Hazard, a deacon of the West Greenwich Centre Baptist Church, broke with the congregation to establish the Advent Church at Escoheag.

An acid factory was built and operated by Bela Clapp roughly between 1866 and 1883. This was not the first acid factory in West Greenwich as William Pike had operated in the western part of town in 1863. Increasing demand from Rhode Island's then fast growing textile industry for acetic acid, used in the manufacture of dyes. All that was needed by way of raw materials to produce acetic acid was a plentiful supply of wood, preferably small sized hardwood. The second growth oak and ash with which West Greenwich then abounded made the town a logical site for acid factory. No power and very little labor was needed but a supply of running water was required and supplied in the form of Acid Factory Brook. Employed mostly woodcutters, teamsters, men to stoke the fires and general laborers. The product was hauled by team from the Acid Factory over the "New Road" to West Greenwich Center, to Greene, where it was loaded on freight cars of the Hartford, Providence, and Fishkill-on-the-Hudson Railroad for shipment to the textile mills. In 1907, the great fire of that year swept from the northwest and burnt the factory buildings to the ground.

#### **NOOSENECK VILLAGE - 19TH CENTURY**

Nooseneck, located on the plateau of Nooseneck Hill above the Nooseneck River, was the only settlement in West Greenwich that ever reached village status. The origin of the name "nooseneck", lies in the local folklore that the Indians used hanging nooses to trap deer in the valley. The Nooseneck area had an abundance of available water power to fuel the early mills which were built here as early as 1800. A succession of mills were built for manufacturing cotton yarn, wool and later braided sash cord, rope and twine. The years of greatest prosperity occurred here in the years from the 1830 - the 1860's.

The Nooseneck Valley Mill built around 1858, was located along the banks of Big River. It was operated as a grist mill and later as a spinning mill where twine and yarns were manufactured. Following discontinuance of yarn manufacturing, a general store was operated in the building and around 1900 was sold to Representative James Fish. The upper part of the building was used for many years as the meeting place of the Town Council and at times a place of worship on Sundays. For many years the annual financial town meetings were held in the rear room of the old mill building.

Around 1867, David Hopkins built the Hopkins Mill and operated a cotton textile mill. The Hopkins Mill building was listed in the National Register in 1979, but later burned down and was demolished during the Big River Reservoir condemnation. Very little remains of what was once the industrial, commercial and civic center of the town as all of the buildings in the Nooseneck area are slated for demolition as part of the condemnation process.

Also adjacent to Big River, Tripp and Tillinghast built a cotton factory around 1858, which was in operation for many years. This building was also used for a general store and was later condemned as part of the Big River Reservoir property and demolished.

It is interesting to note that nineteenth century West Greenwich had far more industrial and commercial enterprises than the present day. This did not carry into the twentieth century.

#### **EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY LIFE**

In the twentieth century, decline continued. By 1920 West Greenwich counted only 367 residents. The Town's population declined as people in search of a livelihood and better job opportunities migrated away from the community. Extreme topography, particularly in the western portion of the community; lack of public water; and the distance from the industrialized areas of the state are some of the factors that have limited the growth of the town.

The construction of the Victory Highway (Route 102) in the 1920s and Interstate Highway 95 in the 1960s encouraged new development. Mid-twentieth-century development was largely seasonal, like the summer cottages around Lake Mishnock or the hunting camp of W. Alton Jones, on the property of an earlier

farm, off Victory Highway. Later development is characteristically suburban, year-round residences.

The legacy of West Greenwich lies in its largely undeveloped character. Here more than most other places are isolated early farm houses and complexes, stone walls, small mill sites, and extraordinary archaeological potential. The New London Turnpike is an extremely rare, remarkable resource. These properties should be carefully considered in the planning process to ensure that West Greenwich continues to retain its strong sense of time and place.

The 1930 U.S. Census reported that West Greenwich's population had risen to 402. It was about this time, and the decades following World War II after 1945 that many rural and suburban towns began to grow as a result of easier transportation routes and the migration of people away from central cities.

## **SECTION II - INVENTORY OF CULTURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES**

### **A. HISTORIC PRESERVATION EFFORTS**

#### **1. West Greenwich Historical Preservation Society**

Preservation and management of the Town's historic resources are monitored primarily by the West Greenwich Historical Preservation Society. The Historical Society is a volunteer organization which has sought grant funds in the past for a variety of functions including a historic plaque marker program and a photo history project.

Society members have been active for many years in documenting historic buildings and homesteads, the first step in protecting and preserving these resources. In addition, many members played a vital role in organizing the Town's 250th anniversary celebration in 1991.



## **2. Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission**

The Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission (RIHP&HC) is the statewide historic preservation program which identifies and protects historic and prehistoric sites, buildings and districts.

The RIHP&HC is responsible for developing a state historical preservation plan; conducting a statewide survey of historical sites and buildings, and from the survey, nominating significant properties to the National Register of Historic Places and the State Register; administering programs of financial aid including grants, loans and tax credits; reviewing federal, state and local projects to assess their effect on cultural resources; and regulating archaeological exploration on state land and under state territorial waters.

## **B. INVENTORY OF CULTURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES**

### **1. National Register of Historic Places**

The National Register of Historic Places is the U.S. Department of the Interior's official list of significant historic properties worthy of protection. A record is maintained of buildings, sites, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archeology and culture. All properties selected for the National Register are also placed on the Rhode Island State Register. A nomination process must be completed before a property may be placed on the National and State Registers. Preliminary steps include identifying, inventorying and documenting properties of historic and architectural significance in the Town.

Placement in the National Register provides a limited form of protection as state and federal laws require that RIHP&HC review and comment on any project receiving government financial assistance which could potentially damage historic properties. The review requirements do not apply to projects financed privately. However, the main benefit of the National Register listing is it qualifies the property for certain tax credits and low interest loans for rehabilitation and restoration.

A description of the two properties in West Greenwich listed in the National Register of Historic Places follows. These sites

can be noted on the previously-cited Open Space and Other Sensitive Areas Map (Map 5).

**a. West Greenwich Baptist Church & Cemetery (c.1750)**

Located at the intersection of Plain Meeting House Road and Plain Road, it is often referred to as the "Plain Meeting House" because of its location on the "plain" at what was once West Greenwich Center. (See Map 5, Open Space and Other Sensitive Areas). Built about 1822 - 1825, the church is a modest, rectangular, one story, clapboarded structure, without a belfry or steeple. It was built by "The Independent and Union Society" as a meetinghouse for the use by all christian congregations. The precise date of the Church's construction is not known, but the property on which it and the large cemetery was placed was purchased December 1, 1823.

During its over 160 year history, the structure has been used by two organized church groups. When the building was opened, the Maple Root Six-Principle Baptist Church of Coventry established services there for its West Greenwich membership. This branch church used the structure until about 1868, when they merged with the West Greenwich Baptist Church organization. The West Greenwich Baptist Church, founded in 1750, has had sole custody of the church since the 1868 merger. The W.G. Baptist Church, organized only nine years after the Town was incorporated, may have originally been, like many of its sister churches in Rhode Island, Six-Principle Baptist in sentiment. By the end of the century, however, the congregation, along with many other Rhode Island Baptist churches, had become thoroughly Calvinistic.

The Church served a large area including the western section of West Greenwich and Exeter and parts of Hopkinton and Richmond. In the first part of the 19th century, the congregation served was so extensive that services were held in several locations including a meetinghouse at Nooseneck Hill, in private homes and the Plain Meeting House. In 1859-60, the congregation erected a branch meetinghouse known as the West Exeter Baptist Church due to the increased population of the area.

However, with the gradual decline of the population in this rural region in the early 20th century, regular Sunday services at the Plain Meeting House Church ceased. A Sunday school, kept in operation after the suspension of regular services, was also finally discontinued. The Church membership (now numbering about

fifteen) however, has made valiant efforts over the years to keep the Church alive. An annual service, started before 1920 and continuing to present day, is held on the second Sunday in June. Since the late 1950's, a second service has been held on the first Sunday in October. Both services are well attended, many of the worshippers travelling long distances to attend the event.

The West Greenwich Baptist Church Plain Meeting House possesses statewide importance as one of the earliest church structures of its type still standing in rural western Rhode Island. It is of regional significance as a rare survivor of a once numerous class of early 19th century churches of modest size and unpretentious design erected by smaller congregations. Of all the early 19th century churches remaining in southeastern New England, the Plain Meeting House is probably the most modest and primitive extant, with the exception of the stark Quaker meetinghouses. The Church also bears great local significance as an historical landmark and former focal point of community religious observances.

**b. Stephen Allen House (c. 1761)**

The Stephen Allen House stands in the corner of a six acre pastoral, wooded property of what was once a 120 acre farm originally purchased from Thomas Joslin in 1787. Allen, a physician from East Greenwich, built his home and located his family in West Greenwich in 1787, only 45 years after West Greenwich had split off from East Greenwich and incorporated in 1741. The farm was located on Sharpe Street, an early important east-west road link between the coastal areas and western Rhode Island towns. Like other inland western towns, West Greenwich was primarily an agricultural town, being geographically isolated from the trade of Narragansett Bay, which was the focus of Rhode Island's economy in the 18th century. (See Map 5, Open Space and Other Sensitive Areas).

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, several widely separated hamlets existed in West Greenwich and settlement occurred mostly along the roads which crossed the rural town. There was no major town center and few public buildings. The nearest village to Stephen Allen's house was West Greenwich Center, but even this had no church until 1825 and no post office was established there until the 1840's. Many of the townspeople worked at the small mills that established in the town but most were subsistence farmers. In 1810, records indicate that there were 122 farms in West Greenwich occupied by single families, most of which probably produced for their own family needs and operated on a small cash surplus. It seems likely that Allen was

the only doctor in the community and was probably more affluent than his neighbors, for the Census of 1800 lists not only his family of four, but also three "free persons" who were probably black servants.

In 1811, the farm was inherited by the doctor's daughter, Sally, and her husband George Weaver, who farmed the land until 1828. In 1831, the farm was sold to William Nichols and the Nichols family owned and operated the farm into the 1860's. During this time, a small parcel of land was donated by the Nichols to the town for construction of a schoolhouse. In 1829, West Greenwich was divided into twelve school districts. The Sharpe Street School was constructed adjacent to the house some time between 1834 and 1855 as the school for District #9. Like most rural schoolhouses, it was a small one room structure in which ungraded classes were taught during the farming off-seasons. Unfortunately, the school burned in 1929.

A map drawn in 1862, when the farm was owned by Albert and Susan Nichols, indicates a store at or near the farmhouse. The design of the small shed suggests that this may have housed a local store. Although census records indicate the occupation of Albert Nichols as farmer, not a merchant or storekeeper, it is possible that the census taker recorded only his major trade and not a secondary interest or that the shed was leased to an unknown proprietor. If the shed did serve as a store, it would have been a rarity in rural West Greenwich as even a decade later there were only four stores in the entire town, illustrating the minimal commercial activity in rural farming areas in the 19th century.

In 1867, the Allen farmstead was sold to the Reverend Benedict Johnson, the newly arrived clergyman from Connecticut, who had come to lead the nearby First Baptist Church. The property was purchased seven years later, in 1874, by Stephen Capwell, who with his wife and seven children operated the farm for the next forty years. Norman Capwell, Stephen's son, retained possession of the farm (after his father's death in 1914) until 1952. The Capwell family was a large and many-branched clan and from the mid 19th century well into the 20th, various members of the family owned farms in this area and were prominent in local affairs, especially politics. Norman Capwell himself served several terms in the Rhode Island General Assembly as a representative of West Greenwich.

The Stephen Allen farmstead with its modest house, shed, barn foundation, privy, fenced pasture and stone walls is a well

preserved example of a late 18th century farmstead representative of the type of family farm which dominated the rural landscape in Rhode Island. Its significance to the Town of West Greenwich lies primarily in its association with a number of locally important individuals and families and typifies life in the rural areas of the state in the late 18th and 19th centuries, an important aspect of Rhode Island's agricultural history. Such farmsteads were once common in the state, however, most have been extensively altered or encroached upon by modern development. The present day owners of the Stephen Allen House have preserved the historic integrity of the structures and the orientation to its rural agricultural heritage.

## **2. Sites Eligible for National Register Nomination**

The following sites are recommended for National Register consideration in the Historical Preservation Commission survey publication:

- New London Turnpike Historic District - West Greenwich, Exeter, and Richmond
- Kit Matteson Tavern - Weaver Hill Road
- Squire Oliver Matteson House - off Weaver Hill Road

The following sites are requested or suggested for National Register nomination by the owner or other party. This category includes properties for which the State agency found did not appear eligible for the National Register list.

- Goodenough (John Matteson) House Archaeological site
- Nooseneck Hill Baptist Church - Nooseneck Hill Road
- Stephen Allen Schoolhouse - Sharpe Street
- Tillinghast-Hazard House - Hazard Road

## **3. Preliminary Inventory of Cultural & Historic Resources**

A Preliminary Report of Historic and Architectural Resources of West Greenwich was completed in 1978. This document will be updated as part of this element of the Comprehensive Plan.

### **HISTORIC HOMESTEADS & IMPORTANT BUILDINGS**

The West Greenwich Historical Preservation Society has compiled this list of homesteads and important buildings. Plaques and markers have been awarded to the current owners of the homes noting their historical significance. The current owners are listed in parenthesis.

1. Whitford - Fish Farm, Weaver Hill Road c. 1800 (John & Sue Searle)
2. Benjamin W. Greene Homestead, Plain Meeting House Road c. 1800 (David Heanue)
3. Jacob Weaver Farm, Weaver Hill Road & Sharpe Street c. 1840 (Joseph & Charlotte Jolls)
4. Free Will Baptist Church, Sharpe Street c. 1860 (James & Cheryl Loudermilk)
5. Eleanor Burlingame House, Weaver Hill Road c. 1787 (Timothy & Donna Schwartz)
6. Ambrose Nichols House, Plain Meeting House Road c. 1800 (Norman & Madeleine Briggs)
7. Silas Matteson Homestead, Weaver Hill Road c. 1770 (Mary Studley)
8. Peleg Matteson Farm, Plain Meeting House Road c. 1790 (Now called Millstone Farm owned by Robert & Charlene Butler)
9. Kitt's Tavern, Weaver Hill Road c. 1740 (Dale & Lucille Harter)
10. George B. Vaughn House, Robin Hollow Road c. 1850 (Fred & Maggie Read)
11. George R. Fiske Homestead, Victory Highway c. 1820 (Edwin Phelps & Andrew Scalvi)
12. Merikoski Family Home, Weaver Hill Road c. 1868 (Kristen Tikkanen)
13. Nellie (Capwell) Brown House, Sharpe Street c. 1850 (Richard & Deborah Richmond)
14. William Gallup House, Escoheag Hill Road c. 1808 (Robert & Helen Maine)
15. Wilko Koivisto House, Plain Meeting House Road c. 1830 (Lillian Regnaiere)
16. Charles Capwell House, Sharpe Street c. 1870 (Edward & Dorothy Carpenter)
17. Henry Aldrich House, Eschoeag Hill Road c. 1832 (Ethel Palmer)
18. George Dawley Homestead, Congdon Mill Road c. 1800 (Gary & Kathleen Hanning)
19. Clark R. Franklin Homestead, Robin Hollow Road c. 1870 (Kenneth & Janice Lonngren)

20. Breakheart School, Breakheart Hill Road c. 1880 (Richard & Margaret Gartelman)
21. Plain School (Red School House), Plain Meeting House Road c. 1878 (Roger & Dorothy Prive)
22. Sprout Mill School, Hazard Road c. 1870 (Robert & Ruth Lambert)
23. Gideon Reynolds Farm, Hazard Road c. 18? (Earl & Dolores Lambert)
24. West Greenwich Baptist Church, Plain Meeting House Road c. 1820

#### **4. Historical Cemeteries**

The following is a list of historical cemeteries located in the Town of West Greenwich which identifies the name of the cemetery and the road location. This list has been compiled by the Town Historian, Blanche Albro, and is based on extensive research and documentation. On file at the Town Hall is the complete listing of the cemeteries describing the location, the names on each gravestone, dates of birth and death, and other historical background information regarding the family. Approximately forty sites out of 100-plus sites have been mapped to date.

##### **MARKER**

<u>#</u>	<u>FAMILY NAME OR CEMETERY NAME</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
1	Waite, Tillinghast	Sand Hill Road (Plain Road)
2	Plain Meeting House Cemetery	Plain Meeting House Road (West Greenwich Center)
3	Stone, Wilcox	Corner Hazard Road & Bailey Pond Road
4	Morris Tomb	Hazard Road
5	Hazard	Molasses Hill Road
6	Perkins, Palmer, Rathbun, Wilcox	Escoheag Hill Road - near Church
7	Brown, Pratt, Slocum	Escoheag Hill Road - opposite Church
8	Matteson	On URI W. Alton Jones land
9	Reynolds	Stubblebrook Road
10	Allen Lot	Alton Jones property
11	Capwell, Brown, Greene	Sharpe Street
12	Arnold, Brown	Sharpe Street
13	Greene	Fry Pond Road
14	Greene	Plain Meeting House Road
15	Greene, Lillibridge, Sheldon, Waite, Wood	Victory Highway
16	Brown	Victory Highway
17	Carpenter	Victory Highway
18	Lewis, Sheldon	Breakheart Hill Road
19	Capwell, Weaver	Weaver Hill Road
20	Matteson	Weaver Hill Road
21	Whitford	Weaver Hill Road
22	Matteson	Weaver Hill Road at Kitts Corner
23	Hall	Off of Nooseneck Hill Road
24	Warner	Breakheart Hill Road

**Town of West Greenwich      Natural and Cultural Resources      Comprehensive Plan**

25	Andrews	Division Street
26	Matteson	Weaver Hill Road across from Kitts Corner
27	Whitford	Burnt Sawmill Road
28	Hopkins	New London Turnpike
29	Tarbox, Whitford	Carrs Pond Road
30	Barbour, Hopkins, Potter, Rathbun	Hopkins Hill Road
31	Kettelle (Kettle)	Carrs Pond Road
32	Bates, Binns	Bates Trail
33	Whale (Whaley), Hopkins, Kettelle, Brown	Hopkins Hill Road
34	Tillinghast, Wilcox	Hazard Road
35	Allen, Gorton, Tillinghast	Alton Jones property
36	Greene	Corner of Division Street & Hopkins Hill Road
37	King, Howard	Division Street
38	Matteson, Shippee	Division Street
39	Johnson	Carrs Pond Road
40	Watson	Escoheag Hill Road
41	St. Joseph's Cemetary	Nooseneck Hill Road
42	Ellis	Nooseneck Hill Road - Within St. Joseph's Cemetary
43	Strait, Wood	Mishnock Road
44	Whitford, Hopkins	Henry Brown Road
45	Hopkins, Tibbets	Henry Brown Road
46	Matteson, Whitman, Woodward	Division Street
47	Harrington	Division Street (sand bank area)
48	Bentley	Hopkins Hill Road
49	Ellis	Victory Highway
50	James, Lewis	Hazard Road

LIST DOES NOT INDICATE MARKER NUMBER

51	Andrew, Edwards	Nooseneck Hill Road
52	Bailey	Robin Hollow Road
53	Baton, Bennett	Sand Hill Road (Plain Road)
54	Bates	Plain Meeting House Road
55	Briggs, Franklin, Woodmansee	Welch Hollow Road
56	Franklin	Robin Hollow Road
57	Brown	Off Weaver Hill Road
58	Brown	Off Victory Highway
59	Carr	New London Turnpike
60	Congdon, Nichols	Burnt Sawmill Road
61	Ellis	Plain Meeting House Road
62	Fry	Off Sharpe Street
63	Gates	Molasses Hill Road
64	Greene	Old Raccoon Hill Road
65	Hall, Sweet	Robin Hollow Road
66	Hall	Nooseneck Hill Road
67	Harrington, Howard	Corner of New London Turnpike & Congdon Mill Road
68	Harrington	Between Division Street & Hopkins Hill Road
69	Hopkins	New London Turnpike
70	Howard	Congdon Mill Road
71	Hoxsie	Nooseneck Hill area - Behind Lineham School & Robin Hollow Road



***Town of West Greenwich      Natural and Cultural Resources      Comprehensive Plan***

72	James	Plain Meeting House Road
73	James, Perkins, Tillinghast, Hathaway	Alton Jones property
74	Johnson	Nooseneck Hill Road (at site of Old Town Hall)
75	Kettle	Burnt Sawmill Road
76	Kettle	New London Turnpike
77	Ladd	Sand Hill Road (Plain Road)
78	Letson	Between Narrow Lane & Welch Hollow Road
79	Lewis	Breakheart Hill Road
80	Matteson (John)	Nooseneck Hill Road (between Weaver Hill Road & Old Town Hall Road)
81	Matteson	Burnt Sawmill Road
82	Matteson	Welch Hollow Road
83	Matteson	Nooseneck Hill Road (Near Elks Home)
84	Matteson (Ezra)	Robin Hollow Road (off Route 95)
85	Matteson	Division Street
86	Morris	Plain Meeting House Road
87	Newton	Path off Weaver Hill Road
88	Olin	Off Weaver Hill Road
89	Nichols	Off Robin Hollow Road (left of Stark Drive)
90	Nichols	Corner of Division Street & New London Turnpike
91	Nichols, Knight, Potter	Sharpe Street
92	Potter	Hopkins Hill Road
93	Pulman	Seth Brown Road
94	Rouse, Weaver	Weaver Hill Road
95	Spencer	Off Route 102
96	Sweet	Sweet Sawmill Road
97	Tanner	Sand Hill Road (Plain Road)
98	Tanner	Tanner Washout Road
99	Tarbox, Jackson	Carr's Pond Road
100	Whitford	Congdon Mill Road
101	Tennant	Hazard Road (On RI/CT Line)
102	Tillinghast	Off Hopkins Hill Road
103	Tillinghast	Molasses Hill Road
104	Wilcox, Gates, Tanner	Liberty Hill Road
105	Wilcox	Escoheag Hill Road
106	Whitford	Burnt Sawmill Road
107	Wilcox	In Wickaboxet State Forest near Rattle Snake Ledge

The following small historical cemeteries are listed by roads on which they are located. They are listed separately because the family name may not be recorded on the grave stones but other sources have identified the family name.

Breakheart Hill Road	Family name: Reynolds, Moon, Clemens, Ballou
John Potter Road	Family name: Thayer
Fry Pond Road	Family name: Fry, Unknown
Sharpe Street	Family name: Unknown
Widow Sweet Road	Family name: Briggs, Sweet, Unknown
Henry Brown Road	Family name: Casey
Hopkins Hill Road	Family name: Albro, Barton, Spenk

Carrs Pond Road	Family name: Carr
Brant Trail	Family name: Unknown
Mishnock Road	"Hangman's Hill" - Area where criminals were buried.

## **5. Archeological Resources**

Known archeological sites in the Town of West Greenwich are mapped by the R.I. Historical Preservation Commission and descriptions of sites are on-file at RIHP&HC offices. Approximate location of archaeological sites not situated on state-owned property have been mapped and are on-file in the West Greenwich Planning Office. (See Map 5, Open Space and Other Sensitive Areas in this Element for general reference). The major threats to archaeological resources are vandalism, theft of artifacts and disturbance of land by excavation for buildings, roadways or other construction. As such, precise locations of said archaeological sites shall not be disclosed.

**SECTION III - HISTORIC & CULTURAL RESOURCES  
GOALS & POLICIES**

**A. CULTURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES**

**GOALS:**

- G#1** Protect and preserve historic/cultural resources in order to promote an understanding and appreciation of the Town's unique history in terms of the people, places, and events that have influenced its identity
- G#2** The scenic and historic character of West Greenwich is a vital resource that enhances the quality of life. These resources need to be preserved to ensure that the Town retains its sense of place and distinctiveness
- G#3** Continue to improve educational activities designed to inform and enhance local citizen awareness of existing cultural/historic resources

**POLICIES:**

- P.1** Local support shall be granted the continuous efforts of the West Greenwich Historical Preservation Society in identifying, documenting, and protecting important historic sites in the Town
- P.2** Ensure that an inventory of significant historic resources are identified and mapped in order to protect, preserve, and enhance awareness of said resources
- P.3** Increase citizen awareness of historic preservation efforts and the regulatory process which oversees and influences local preservation activity
- P.4** Enact local regulatory measures designed to promote preservation (e.g., land use controls, site plan/subdivision review, grant proposals, purchase of development rights, scenic roads).

**SECTION IV - ACTION & IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM**

**G=GOAL**

**P=POLICY**

**I=ACTION/IMPLEMENTATION**

**PRESERVATION OF HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

**G#1** Protect and preserve historic/cultural resources in order to promote an understanding and appreciation of the Town's unique history in terms of the people, places, and events that have influenced its identity

**P.1** Local support shall be provided for the continuous efforts of the West Greenwich Historical Preservation Society in identifying, documenting, and protecting important historic sites in the Town

**I#1** Support the efforts of the Historical Society to obtain grant monies for specific projects including education to foster community awareness of historic preservation efforts

**P.2** Ensure that an inventory of significant historic resources are identified and mapped in order to protect, preserve, and enhance awareness of said resources

**I#2** The local Historical Preservation Society should complete, maintain, and update the existing inventory of historic resources contained in this plan

**I#3** The Historical Society should prepare the following:

- a. List of recommended sites for National Register designation
- b. Mapping and data compilation of "Historic Resources" (archeological sites and existing and eligible historic sites)
- c. Mapping of list of 24-significant homesteads and buildings (combine with Historic Resources Map)
- d. Mapping of designated cemeteries

**I#4** The Town Planner shall be responsible for maintaining maps and records of each locally-designated historic site to utilize in the

development review process and to promote educational awareness

- I#5 The West Greenwich Historical Preservation Society should conduct an annual study of historic resources deemed worthy for potential eligibility for National Register designation
- I#6 The Historical Preservation Society should compile and update the existing list of historic cemeteries with the assistance of local experts. Said list and corresponding map shall be made available to the Town Planner for evaluation of development proposals
- I#7 The Historical Preservation Society should publish a revised inventory of archeological resources inclusive of prehistoric sites, post-colonial historic sites, and Indian burial grounds
- I#8 The West Greenwich Planning Board and Town Council shall adopt zoning and subdivision controls to protect cultural resources by requiring archeological surveys in the Site Plan and Subdivision review process--for projects cited as likely to contain archeological sites as identified on the local "Historic Resources" Map and by the RIHP&HC
- I#9 Archeological sites and other Historic Resources shall be considered constraints to development. The Planning Board should consider adopting criteria and/or measures necessary to identify, evaluate, protect, and/or safely move/remove said artifacts from areas in close proximity to proposed development

#### **SCENIC CHARACTER**

**G#2** The scenic and historic character of West Greenwich is a vital resource that enhances the quality of life. These resources need to be preserved to ensure that the Town retains its sense of place and distinctiveness

**P.4** Enact local regulatory measures designed to promote preservation of scenic and rural character (e.g.,

zoning, subdivision & development plan review, grant proposals, purchase of development rights, designation of scenic roads)

**I#1** The State Water Resources Board shall be consulted and encouraged to develop an active management plan for the Big River Reservoir to include pedestrian and bicycling traffic circulation on the New London Turnpike--recommended for National Register designation and possible Scenic Road designation

**I#2** Work with the Scenic Highway Board to designate scenic roads in the Town

#### **EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS**

**G#3** Continue to improve educational activities designed to inform and enhance local citizen awareness of existing cultural/historic resources

**P.3** Increase citizen awareness of historic preservation efforts and the regulatory process which oversees and influences local preservation activity

**I#1** The Town shall subsidize the updating of the 1978 local publication enumerating local historical buildings entitled, "Historic and Architectural Resources of West Greenwich"

**I#2** Support the efforts of the West Greenwich Historical Preservation Society to obtain grant monies for specific projects--including education--to foster community awareness of historic preservation efforts

**I#3** Seminars and public meetings should be promoted by the Historical Society as a means of increasing community awareness. Assistance from the local library, town officials, and the school system may be in order. Coordination with Exeter/ West Greenwich High School representatives should be pursued to discuss potential student involvement in Historical Society activities.