

SECTION 5 HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

	Page
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5-1
5.1 Historical Context	5-2
Carver Timeline	5-3
5.2 Historical Resources	5-4
Cemeteries	5-4
Prehistoric Sites	5-4
Historic Sites	5-4
Scenic/Historic Roads	5-5
5.3 Opportunities/Analysis	5-7
5.4 Goals/Policies	5-9
5.5 Recommendations	

V. HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Historical and cultural resources are an important element in the town's fabric. These resources include structures, archeological sites, historic sites, cemeteries, and scenic roads. Their framework provides a hedge against rapid change, preserving the town's quality of life. In most cases, on the other hand, these resources are hidden from the public. The citizens of Carver need to support a public effort to protect and enhance their historic and cultural resources. A number of simple actions identified in the recommendations would leverage substantial benefits to the town.

Historical Context

Carver's rolling landscape of cranberry bogs and uplands, pine forests, rivers, wetlands, and ponds provide a backdrop to historic village centers, scenic views, and historic sites of residential industrial, and pre-historic settlements. These unique environments, scenic views, and special places define the towns character. Only in the last 30 years with the extension of Routes 3 and 495 and the commuter rail line, has new development begun to threaten this identity.

Opportunities

The preservation of historic resources reinforces the opportunities for the town to protect its natural environment and promote its agricultural heritage. Historic and prehistoric sites, scenic views, and scenic roads have been identified on Maps 5-1 through 5-3. Broad consensus must be achieved around these assets. The protection of these assets will provide a substantial economic benefit to the town while supporting other related objectives for economic development, resource protection, and transportation.

How much public oversight is appropriate for Carver? And who should provide this?

Often a local Historic Commission is granted a role in a review of building demolition and development activities which impact historic qualities. Is this appropriate for Carver? Design guidelines would assist a number of Boards including Planning, Earth Removal, Conservation Commission, Historic, in a review of development projects. Protection of resources needs to be a joint effort.

Goals and Policies

The identification and protection of historic and scenic areas considered important by a broad based constituency is an important component of the Town's growth management strategy.

Recommendations:

Public education, regulatory and organizational reforms will enable the Town to address historic preservation issues as a part of growth management. A number of suggestions have been made including:

1. Publicize list of scenic, historic and special places
2. Promote Historic Tourism
3. Formalize role of Historic Commission in review of impacts on local historic, cultural and scenic resources in site plan review, Earth Removal By-law, subdivision review
4. Consider new zoning by-law amendments to protect building demolition and scenic views, historic site protection

5.1 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Carver was originally inhabited by the Wampanoags or Pokonokets, a Native American people who traveled along several trails in the area. The Native people in this area were among the first to encounter English people after they arrived in Plymouth and began exploring the surroundings; at the time the Pokonokets had been decimated by plagues, and their leaders, including the sachem Massasoit, sought to build relations with the English to protect their people against attacks by the Narraganset people from the south.

One of the more common routes used by the Pokonokets was the Nemasket Trail, which ran east to west in the area of present-day Route 44. A separate section of the trail is believed to have run from Middleboro into Carver along sections of Purchase and Forest streets, joining the trail's lower section where Routes 44 and 58 now meet. An archaeological dig has suggested that Annasnappet Pond, located in North Carver along the path of the proposed extension of Route 44, was a central gathering spot for the Native people. The pond offered sandy soils that could be easily excavated for food storage, and a natural spring flowed at the pond's northeast end.

Another east-west trail used by the Pokonokets ran along the south-east side of Sampson's Pond where the historic Ridge Road is located. Archeological artifacts show that the shore of Sampson's Pond was used as a campground for thousands of years.

European settlers in the area gave the names Colchester and Lakenham to what is now North Carver; they also settled in the area known as South Meadow. Carver was formed from the older town of Plympton; Carver was incorporated in 1790 on the heels of the country's independence from England. As in many New England towns, the reason for the town's creation was that many residents lived too far away to attend church in Plympton. They built the South Meeting House in 1772, later renamed Bay State Hall, a building that in the 19th century hosted Town Meetings. The town was named for John Carver, the first Governor of Plymouth Colony.

In its earliest years, Carver was an agricultural community, but by the 1730s the town had become known for the iron ore that could be dug from its swamp lands, or bogs, and used to make cooking tools. The first iron works, Pope's Point Furnace, was built in 1732 and operated for a century using the resources of the bogs as well as Sampson's Pond. Other important businesses in Carver over the next 150 years were lumber mills, which took advantage of good timber on the town's hills, and sheep-shearing. Local farmers cut trees to make charcoal for the iron works, while the mills cut timber for construction.

Most people lived during this period in the villages of South and North Carver and Wenham, later called East Carver. Each village supported at least one schoolhouse. As the market for iron ore declined in the latter part of the 19th century, Carver identified cranberry farming as a new use for the bogs that dotted the town. Farmers began growing the crop in the 1870s; by 1900 the town raised a fifth of all cranberries grown in the United States. A railroad line between New York and Boston was connected to Carver in 1890, helping establish the town's place on the map.

The town grew slowly for most of its first two centuries, but the population grew more quickly with the development of the cranberry industry near the turn of the century. The number of residents grew from 995 in 1840 to 1,410 by 1905. By this time the town's racial mix had changed slightly as more black residents joined the largely white population. New immigrants came from Cape Verde as well as Finland to work in the cranberry industry, and many settled in the town.

Houses were built throughout Carver during the 20th century, but the town did not experience rapid suburban development like that experienced in many Eastern Massachusetts communities. Commercial development did occur on a significant scale along Route 58, the north-south road between Wareham and Plympton. Route 44, a major east-west road running across the southeastern part of the state, became a back road when it reached Carver and so did not develop at the same pace. A master plan for the town was drawn up in 1977, when new homes were appearing in town at a rapid pace. The town continued to expand its housing stock by leaps and bounds until the end of the 1980s; since then development has been more moderate.

The town's population reached 11,000 by the late 1990s, when hard times in the local cranberry industry and the arrival of a commuter rail line in nearby Plymouth suggested new changes were coming to Carver. Recognizing the importance of historic and cultural resources can have an impact on shaping these projected changes.

Carver History Timeline

From prehistoric times to 1620s

- Settlements of Native people
- 1660 - First permanent white resident of Carver has house at Lakenham, now North Carver
- 1723 - First lumber mill in Carver built by John Cole
- 1732 - Pope's Point Furnace, iron works, begins operation
- 1760 - Charlotte's Furnace begins construction in present-day South Carver
- 1772 - Carver's first church, South Meeting House, is established
- 1790 - Carver set off from Plympton as separate town; takes name from Massachusetts governor John Carver
- 1823 - Second church built in North Carver, later King Phillip's Hall
- 1824 - Baptist Church built
- 1849 - Construction of second school building for Lakenham
- 1859 - Congregational Church built
- 1892 - Railroad completed from Middleboro to Plymouth, with a stop in North Carver
- 1895 - Carver Public Library established.
- 1897 - First high school classes in Carver held at Town Hall
- 1905 - Population of town reaches 1,410
- 1912 - Some 2,400 acres in Carver are used to grow cranberries
- 1913 - Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church begins construction
- 1930 - Passenger service discontinued on railroad line
- 1970s - Route 3 extended to Plymouth
- 1977 - Carver Master Plan completed
- 1980 - Lakenham Historic District established
- 1981 - Subdivision by-law updated
- 1982 - Savery Historic District established
- 1983 - Interstate 495 extended to Wareham, providing access to and from Carver
- 1988 - Carver High School opens; town is no longer part of regional school district in Plymouth
- 1990s - Commuter rail stations built in Middleboro and Kingston to provide transportation to Boston

5.2 Historical Resources

Historic and Prehistoric Sites are shown on Map 5-1.

Cemeteries

Carver has several historical cemeteries, including Lakenham Cemetery on Forest Street in North Carver; Center Cemetery on Cranberry Road in South Carver; Wenham Cemetery; and the picturesque Union Cemetery next to Union Church on Route 58. Lakenham Cemetery contains the gravestones of many of the earliest settlers of the community.

Prehistoric Sites

Dating back as far as 10,000 years to the Archaic Period, Carver's unique natural environment of rivers, streams and wetlands attracted some of the earliest nomadic peoples in this region. People passed through during the spring and fall seasons on their travels to and from Plymouth, the Cape and Rhode Island.

The Annasnappet Burial Ground was the site of an extensive archaeological dig during the 1980s in advance of the expected new Route 44 roadway through North Carver. Investigators found evidence that Native Americans used the areas around the pond fairly intensively.

The Nemasket Trail, running east to west roughly along the present route of Route 44, was an important byway for Native Americans living in the area as well as early white settlers. Another Native American path was the Pilgrim Trail, which ran along the present route of South Meadow Road and continued south along what is now Route 58.

Historic Sites

Early historic sites include the various lumber mills and iron furnaces which were established in the area, primarily during the 18th century. Few of these industrial structures are still standing. One of the most important contributors to Carver's industrial history was Cole's Mill in North Carver. The grist and saw mills and dam built at the site off High Street were key contributors to the early development of Lakenham, now North Carver. As the mill expanded in the 19th century, it provided the industrial focus for the area. The grist mill was a place for farmers to have their grain milled, while the saw mill provided lumber for houses in the village center. The family-run business made shoe shipping boxes in the 1850s, supporting a local cottage industry, and began making cranberry shipping barrels in the 1890s to support the burgeoning cranberry business in the town. In the 1950s, the mill moved into production of gift-sized cranberry boxes when plastic barrels took the place of the traditional wooden ones.

Another important contributor to local industry was Charlotte Furnace, which was so important to the development of South Carver that until the 1850s it was called Furnace Village. Bartlett Murdock built the iron furnace on the edge of Sampson's Pond and built a house nearby for himself. The house, which dates to about 1760, still stands at 1728 Tremont Street. In 1986 the Massachusetts Historical Commission suggested that South Carver could be a historic district because of the various landmarks in the immediate area related to the furnace. These include the Benjamin Ellis School, Mt. Carmel Church, the Atwood House, and Crane Brook Tea Room.

While Carver was the site of many business ventures, few grand houses were built by the entrepreneurs who worked here to establish their legacy. Still, a number of important houses dating from the 18th and 19th centuries can be found in the town. Among them is the Marcus Atwood House in South Carver, built in 1845, and the Murdock house, as well as the George Bowers Home and Savery Homestead, both on Route 58 near South Carver village. Each of these

houses was built by local people who had prominent roles in the local iron or cranberry businesses. In the latter half of the 19th century, the Greek Revival style of architecture was enormously popular; many older houses, including the Atwood and Murdock houses, were renovated to display this style. There are few surviving Colonial era houses in Carver.

Between the 1840s and 1870s, there was great economic prosperity in Carver, so that in addition to many houses, several schools and churches were built. The churches included the Methodist Episcopal, Union, Congregational and Advent churches. A number of additional historic sites have also been located.

The site now used by Edaville Railroad, off Rochester Road in South Carver, was formerly the Ellis Atwood Company, which built rent-free housing for 50 year-round employees who worked in Atwood's cranberry bogs. The 8-mile narrow-gauge railroad that later drew tourists to the area was originally built as a hobby of Atwood's.

Other important locations in the development of the cranberry industry include the Wankinco bogs near Cranberry Road and Federal Street, which were built in 1879 by Abel D. Makepeace of West Barnstable. This became the largest bog tract in the state. Also of importance were the East Head Bogs near the Plymouth town line; built in 1878 by George Bowers, the success of these bogs led to the industry's expansion in the town.

**Historic Sites and Districts:
(numbers correspond with Map 5-1)**

Middleborough-Plymouth Railroad (1)	Benjamin Ellis School/Mt. Carmel Church (12)
Lakenham Historic District (2)	Huckleberry Corner (old meeting house) (13)
North Carver Green (3)	Cole's Mill, old train station by Cole's Mill
Lakenham Cemetery (4)	Former Advent Church
John Savery Homestead (5)	King Philip Hall
Savery Historic District (6)	Cross Paths
George Bowers Home (7)	Old house and winery at South Meadow and Ward
Union Church (8)	Pope's Point Furnace
Edaville Railroad (9)	Federal Furnace
Crane Brook Tea Room (10)	Methodist Church
Atwood House (11)	Charlotte Furnace

Scenic/Historic Resources

The town's landscape of bogs, ponds, and rivers and the dominant agricultural activity of cranberry production has given the town its infrastructure of narrow, winding roads whose primary purpose was to permit the farmers to access and bring their product to market. The following scenic roads have been identified: Meadow, Holmes, Pond, France, Fosdick, Purchase, High, Center, Wenham, Plymouth, Wareham, Federal, Tremont, Cranberry, Mayflower. Some of these roads are identified on Map 5-2.

In the town's 1996 Open Space Survey, respondents were asked to name the prettiest views or spots in town. The hands-down favorite view was Sampson's Pond as seen from Lakeview Street. Next most popular were Carver's bog views, with special mention given to those on Plymouth Street, Purchase Street, Pond Street, Cranberry Road, Old Main Street and Federal Road. (Carver's cranberry views are especially important during harvest season, when they attract tourists from around the world. This tourism presents a financial opportunity that the town

has never fully exploited.) Savery Avenue, with its tunnel of 100-year-old pines, is also a favorite spot for its peaceful beauty as well as its historical significance. The historic North Carver Green, the site of the former Edaville Railroad, and the Union Church and cemetery on South Main Street also received many votes. Altogether, survey respondents listed more than 30 sites as “prettiest spot or best view.” These are shown generally in order of location (north to south) on Map 5-3.

Unique Environments, Scenic Views, and Special Places in Carver

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) High Street | 14) Meadow Street |
| 2) North Carver Green | 15) Union Church and Cemetery |
| 3) Plymouth Street | 16) Site of Edaville Railroad |
| 4) Purchase Street cranberry bogs | 17) Sampson's Pond as seen from Lakeview Street |
| 5) Route 44 cranberry bogs | 18) Cranberry Road cranberry bogs |
| 6) Pond Street cranberry bogs | 19) Federal Road |
| 7) Old Main Street cranberry bogs | 20) Wareham Street |
| 8) South Meadow Brook | 21) Indian Street |
| 9) Shurtleff Park | 22) Tremont Street |
| 10) Town Hall | 23) South Carver Town Line |
| 11) Weweantic River | 24) East Carver Town Line |
| 12) Cross Streets and Popes Point Road | 25) Winnetuxet River |
| 13) Savery Avenue | 26) Wankinco River |

As stated in the 1996 Open Space Plan prepared by town leaders:

One of Carver’s urgent needs is to figure out how to protect and improve the visual character of its roads – particularly in the commercial areas. Community leaders have begun to recognize that visual clutter and ugly or abandoned buildings on the main street of town not only look bad, but they also turn off potential new businesses and affect the town’s bottom line.

5.3 OPPORTUNITIES/ANALYSIS

The scenic and rural agricultural heritage of Carver is one of the Town's strongest assets. With development, these resources can easily be lost. A number of opportunities exist to address the preservation and protection of these resources from development.

Unique environments and scenic protection

The list of unique environments consists of a broad range of features; both natural such as ponds and rivers, and man made such as cranberry bogs and facilities. These features provide the town with its identity. The expansion of tourism in Carver can draw upon this rich heritage. *Does this list include the priority features which should be protected in Town?*

Country Tourism

As identified in the Economic Development section of the Master Plan, tourism is one of several economic development strategies for the town to pursue. *As listed below, a number of activities are greatly dependent upon preserving the Town's rich historic heritage and connection to agriculture and the scenic landscape.*

To preserve and enhance those characteristics that make a community interesting, memorable, and attractive, the tourism industry should adhere to the following standards and recommendations:

- Identify all of those places, both natural and man-made, that give a community its special character and identity.
- Make every effort to preserve the authentic aspects of local culture including handicrafts, art, music, language, dress, architecture, traditions, and history.
- Preserve and maintain existing historic buildings, neighborhoods, towns and areas.
- Insure that tourism support facilities - hotels, motels, restaurants, and shops - are architecturally compatible with their natural and man-made surroundings.
- Protect the gateways and entryways into a community and identify and protect streets and roads with outstanding scenic or historic significance.
- Protect scenic views and vistas. Wherever possible install underground utility wires and screen unsightly intrusions on scenic viewsheds or historic settings.
- Preserve trees and existing landscape character. Wherever possible plant street trees and use native vegetation to landscape and buffer parking lots.
- Prohibit billboards and strictly limit the size, height and number of other outdoor signs. Encourage the use of natural materials - not plastic - in sign design.

"Community Appearance and Tourism: What's the Link?" Edward T. McMahon, The Conservation Fund

- Heritage Tourism: visiting historical sites which would be properly identified
- Country Tourism featuring farmers markets, antique shops, orchards, vineyards, festivals, inns and b& b and recreation
- Identify historic structures with plaques to enhance their visibility for tourists
- Specialty Retail: crafts, black-smithing, garden supplies, cranberry products, gourmet food items by undertaking activities such as:
 - Protect scenic views and entry-ways into the community
 - Preserving aspects of local culture
 - Protect historic resources
 - Ensure visual compatibility of tourism support facilities
 - Undertake a program of public signage for tourist attractions which is consistent with a uniform system and theme of town signage (shape, material, size of signs, color).

Identification of scenic roads and bike routes

The Transportation element of the Master Plan has identified scenic roads and bike routes. These routes could provide a foundation for organizing a protection strategy for the town. Roads, views, historic sites would all be identified.

How much public oversight is appropriate for Carver?

In order for the Town to truly protect its resources and allow development which will be consistent with the town's rural heritage and character, there needs to be more of a consensus as to what type and degree of architectural control is appropriate for these scenic areas as well as the commercial districts. Should the Commission provide the Planning Board input during the Site Plan review process with issues of historic and cultural importance? Or should new architectural districts such as South Carver, be organized which would give over-sight authority directly to the District Commission? Most towns, especially when there is a shortage of volunteers, have avoided granting the District independent review authority.

Role of town Historic Committee in Site Plan Review

The Site Plan Review Bylaw, which allows the town some oversight on new commercial and industrial projects, could be modified to include the review of historic preservation issues in site plan review. As distinct from the Historic District Commission, the Historic Committee is concerned with the general issue of historic preservation and public education. Would the town want and would this Committee which has a broader mandate for public education, be interested in participating in development review of historic issues?

If site plan review is adopted for large scale residential projects, there might be a significant amount of in-put which the Committee could provide.

Establishing new protection districts.

Should the town be establishing new protection districts? The Town currently has two designated historic districts; the Lakenham and Savery Districts. These districts are managed by the town's Historic District Commission. No design standards have been adopted for these districts. To date, the Committee has limited volunteer support for taking on new responsibilities. Nevertheless, a suggestions has been made to designate South Carver as a third Historic District. This would afford some protection from building demolition as the town pursues possibly increasing the density of development in the historic villages.

Design guidelines for protection of scenic areas

As Carver continues to court industry, it needs to consider how that industry will affect the visual flavor of town. Unlike many surrounding towns, Carver does not have a town-owned industrial park, located down a long driveway and hidden by trees. New industry in Carver will most likely be highly visible – especially in South Carver. Lots with frontage along the main road will be in especially high demand. Without some forethought, the push for economic development could lead to the further degradation of the Carver landscape.

5.4 GOALS AND POLICIES

Vision Concept Plan

By identifying linkages between a variety of important historic and landscape resources including unique environments and views, historic sites, scenic roads, and existing and proposed bike routes, the town will be able to preserve its unique village and rural character.

A Historic Resources Concept Plan is shown on map 5-4

Goal:

Identify and protect historical places and scenic areas of importance to Carver

Policies:

1. Confirm list of unique environments, scenic views, and historic places
2. Identify appropriate protection strategies for village centers, scenic areas and sites.
3. Get support of town for pursuing appropriate preservation strategies
4. Work with Planning Board to assist in the review of activities which would impact landmarks, scenic roads, prehistoric sites, and natural features
5. Incorporate historical/cultural resource education into the public schools and Town Boards

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Publicize list of scenic, historic and special places
2. Promote Historic Tourism by:
 - Protecting scenic views and entry-ways into the community
 - Preserving aspects of local culture
 - Protecting historic resources
 - Ensuring visual compatibility of tourism support facilities
 - Undertaking a program of public signage for tourist attractions which is consistent with a uniform system and theme of town signage (shape, material, size of signs, color).
3. Formalize role of Historic Committee in review of impacts on local historic, cultural and scenic resources:
 - In site plan review
 - Earth Removal By-law
 - Subdivision review
 - Special Permit review
5. Consider new zoning by-law amendments
 - Demolition by-law
 - Protection of scenic roads, views, natural features, historical and archeological sites
5. Consider Historic District designation of South Carver.
 - Prepare application for designation in concert with developing plan to allow this village center to grow as part of a higher density sub-area.
 - Prepare design guidelines for village center expansion