

CHAPTER VI

PROGRESS SINCE 1880

Population More Than Doubles. Continued Mill Building. Public Improvements and New City Charter

Since 1880 the city has grown rapidly in wealth and population, more than doubling the valuation in the quarter century, while the number of inhabitants has jumped from 47,883 to 110,000, a gain of 130 per cent., with an average yearly increase of 2,400 souls. Mill building has gone on without serious interruption, and with a marked tendency toward plants for the manufacture of fine goods, while various other large industries have been started and flourished. Streets and sewers have been greatly improved, the schools have reached a much higher efficiency, a modern city charter has been adopted, the purity of the water supply protected and the parks greatly improved. The City Hall has been burned and remodelled,

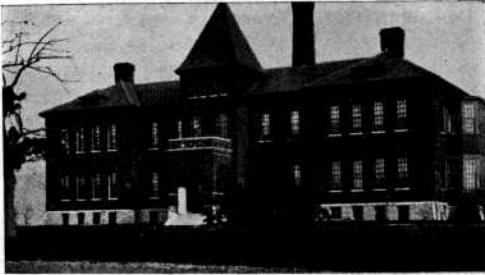
the present city a far better one than the Fall River of 1880.

William S. Greene was the Mayor in 1880 and 1881, but was appointed postmaster in the latter year, and Robert Henry was elected to fill out his term. During Mayor Greene's first year in office, the first paving was laid—a small section at the corner of South Main and Pleasant streets; \$61,500 was expended on highways and the erection of the city stables begun. A draft of a new city charter, which had been urged for years, was made and forwarded to the Legislature, but opposition developed and the matter was dropped. The office of city engineer was established, and Philip D. Borden, the present incumbent, appointed March 7, 1881, having been in the city's service since 1873. New school buildings were erected on Stafford Road and Locust streets in 1881, and nearly two miles of curbing laid.

Henry K. Braley, now a member of the Supreme Court, was the head of the government in 1882 and 1883. In his first year Rock street was opened from Prospect to French, South Main paved from Pleasant to Morgan, and nearly a mile of sewers built, including one in Pleasant street from Twelfth to the Merchants mill. In his second term, 1883, electric street lighting was begun, street and sewer work continued, including the paving of North Main from Central to Locust, and the North Park set aside for park purposes.

Hon. Milton Reed, who was the city's Chief Executive the following year, 1884, continued the paving of North Main from Locust to Cedar, and Franklin from North Main to Winter. The number of electric lights was increased to 22, and three new schools, each of four rooms, erected on Covell and Brownell streets and Mount Hope avenue.

John W. Cummings was elected Mayor in 1885, succeeded by William S. Greene in



Fall River Hospital

the Armory, Public Library, Court House, textile school and B. M. C. Durfee high school, as well as many modern grammar school buildings erected, and the grade crossings abolished.

Semi-public institutions have flourished and the Children's Home, the Boys' Club, the Y. M. C. A., Ste. Anne's Hospital and the Home for the Aged have occupied new and commodious quarters. Numerous churches, hospitals, orphanages and business blocks, have been erected and combined to make

1886 and returned to the Mayor's chair in 1887 and 1888. During this time City Hall was burned, with heavy loss, and reconstructed, Bedford street paved easterly from Main, in 1886; the first police matrons appointed, in 1887, and South Main street widened to 60 feet, from Pocasset to Anawan. Large amounts were also expended on the extension of sewers, including \$174,378 in 1885 alone. James F. Jackson succeeded Mr. Cummings in 1889 and 1890, and under his administration the police signal system was established, Pleasant street paved from Second to Tenth; the Third street bridge constructed; a Board of Overseers of the Poor established, and an inspector of plumbing appointed.

Meantime mill building had gone on and the city's population increased from 47,883 in 1870 to 74,918 in 1890, while the valuation had advanced from \$39,171,264 to \$53,395,908. The street railroad had been built and numerous new corporations formed, including the Barnaby, Bourne, Conanicut, Cornell, Hargraves, Laurel Lake, Seaconnet, Massasoit, Globe Yarn and Kerr Thread.

The first of the great mills of the Fall River Iron Works had been built in 1889, the Border City Manufacturing Company had built a third mill, the Richard Borden a second and the Wampanoag a large weave shed. The imposing high school building had been erected and dedicated to its noble purpose.

Dr. John W. Coughlin became Mayor in 1891 and served four years. In his first term the fire district ordinance was amended; \$100,000 expended on highways, including large sums for macadamizing, \$25,000 on paving and \$50,000 on sewers. The next year—1892—the highways received \$141,927, Rodman street was paved from South Main to Second, Davol and Pleasant from Fourteenth to Stafford Square. The police force was also largely increased. Further paving was done in Davol street in 1893, the Davol and Osborn schools completed and a number of other school buildings enlarged during his administration. The new city hospital was opened July 1, 1894, and a city dispensary established on November 30. Highways, paving and sewers continued to receive generous attention.

William S. Greene, who had already been thrice elected mayor, returned for a fourth term in 1895 and was in office till 1898. In his first year, 1895, the public library and the armory buildings were authorized, the placing of wires underground in the center

of the city begun, and the sale of six street car tickets for 25 cents secured from the street railroad as a condition on which it was allowed to cross Slade's Ferry bridge. This period was also notable for the opening of Durfee from Pine to Central and of Bank from North Main to Green. The houses were renumbered, the Coughlin and William Connell schools built and a reservoir commission established to protect the purity of the water supply. \$140,000 was appropriated for highways, \$25,000 for paving and \$85,000 for sewers. In 1898 highways received \$131,503, and sewers \$171,500. The new police building on Granite street was occupied, allowing a renovation of the old Central station. In 1897 a main sewer was built in Globe street and seven miles of macadam constructed, including a long stretch on Highland avenue. Amos M. Jackson, mayor in 1898 and 1899, and John H. Abbott in 1900 and 1901, pushed forward similar public works along all lines. They were particularly active in urging the greatly-needed abolition of the grade crossings, and their efforts were rewarded by the filing of the commissioner's report on January 1, 1902. The movement for this work had been started under the administration of Mayor Greene, who spared no pains in working for it.

Meantime mill building had gone on steadily, and with it the population had advanced from 74,918 in 1890 to 89,203 in 1895 and to 104,863 in 1900. In the same time the valuation had increased from \$53,395,908 in 1890 to \$65,238,178 in 1895 and \$73,511,614 in 1900. Three more mills had been built by the Iron Works Co. in 1892, 1893 and 1895. The Stevens Mfg. Co. had been organized in 1892, the Sanford Spinning in 1891, the Parker in 1894 and the Arkwright in 1897, and existing corporations had made large additions to their plants. The Granite, Tecumseh, Hargraves and Richard Borden had built new mills, and the King Philip, Chace, Shove, Seaconnet, Laurel Lake, Narragansett, Stafford, Hargraves and Barnard had either extended existing buildings or erected large weave sheds. The end of the century saw 3,042,472 spindles in operation here, nearly a million more than a decade before. The Algonquin Print Works had also been successfully established and the hat making industry, begun in a small way in 1887, had grown to large dimensions.

In spite of business depressions and labor troubles the number of inhabitants had in-

creased 20 per cent. during the decade, and in many other ways the city had progressed. Electric street car service had been installed, lines built to Taunton, New Bedford and Newport and three handsome public buildings erected, the court house, library and armory. The Boys' Club and the Home For Aged People had moved into new and commodious quarters and new churches and society buildings had risen in various sections.

On August 4, 1892, the city had been shocked by the news that Andrew J. Borden, an aged and wealthy citizen, and his wife, had been found murdered during the forenoon in their home on Second street near the center of the community. The prominence of the parties and the mystery that surrounded their death caused widespread alarm, and subsequent developments made the case one of the most notable of its time and gave the city an undesired notoriety. The inquest was begun August 8, and three days later, Lizzie A. Borden, a daughter by a former wife, was arrested, charged with the murder. She was arraigned August 12 and her case continued to Aug. 22, when it was again adjourned till the 25th. The hearing was concluded Sept. 1, and the prisoner remanded to Taunton jail to await the action of the grand jury. That body began its investigation at Taunton, Nov. 15, and adjourned six days later, without reporting, to Dec. 1, when it voted on the matter and on the following day returned three indictments against Lizzie A. Borden for murder. She was arraigned in New Bedford May 8, and the trial begun in that city on June 5. It was concluded June 20, when the jury, after being out a little over an hour, returned a verdict of not guilty. District Attorney Knowlton and William H. Moody, now a member of the President's cabinet, conducted the prosecution, and Ex-Gov. Robinson, Andrew J. Jennings and Arthur S. Phillips the defense.

George Grime was mayor from 1902 to 1904, inclusive, and under his administration marked improvements were made. Most of the grade crossing work was accomplished during this period, a park commission established and the South and Ruggles parks greatly improved from the proceeds of special loans. Electric street car sprinkling was begun, in 1902, a franchise granted for the carrying of freight on the Dartmouth & Westport Street Railway and the city's interests cared for in numerous hearings on the proposed new bridge across the Taunton

river. Highway and sewer work was continued and other public improvements carried forward.

A most important change during this administration was the adoption of a new city charter in 1902 to take the place of the 1854 charter, which while it had worked well for a community of 12,000, had long been outgrown. Between 1870 and 1900 a new charter had been repeatedly urged but without success, and the only changes had been by amendments of the original document. In 1901, however, a new charter along the lines of the present instrument, was drawn up by a committee of thirty citizens representing various political parties, occupations and races, of which Simeon B. Chase was chairman and J. S. B. Clarke secretary. It was passed by the Legislature at its next session, with some amendments, approved May 13, 1902, and accepted by the voters of this city at the state election Nov. 4, 1902, by a vote of 6,835 to 3,689. It went into effect at the beginning of the municipal year the following January with George Grime, who had already served one term, the first mayor under the new instrument.

The most important change was the abolishing of the double form of government, with aldermen and common council, and the giving of their powers to a new board of 27 aldermen, three from each ward, two to be elected by the voters of the ward and one by all the voters of the city. The terms of the aldermen, like that of the mayor, were made two years instead of one, and provision was made for the election of a part of the board each year. The mayor was relieved from presiding at the meetings of the aldermen and was made strictly an executive officer, with control over the various city departments, except the schools and police. A fire commission was established and practically all the city officials were to be nominated by the mayor and approved by the aldermen. The terms of office of the city clerk, auditor, treasurer, collector, superintendent of buildings, engineer, solicitor, surveyor of highways and superintendent of streets were made two years each; of the fire commissioners and board of health, three years.

The city suffered severely through the six months' textile strike against a reduction in wages which began July 25, 1904, and threw about 30,000 operatives into idleness. The loss of wages and consequent depression in trade here seriously affected the community,

and the census of May, 1905, showed a decrease, through removal, of 7,000 inhabitants during the year. The best of order was maintained throughout the struggle. Since the end of the difficulty steady employment has been offered, wages have been twice advanced, restoring the old scale, and many of those who left the city have returned, so that a census to-day should show at least 10,000 inhabitants.

Four new mills have been built here since 1900, the Davis, Stevens No. 2, and Iron Works Nos. 5 and 7, the latter replacing the old Anawan, while the No. 6, the old Metacommet, has been remodelled and enlarged and other plants have made considerable additions, and the Algonquin Printing Co. has erected the most important of the several buildings which compose its plant. The Y. M. C. A. building has been completed, Ste. Anne's hospital and the Textile school erected, the churches of Ste. Anne's and Notre Dame parishes practically finished, and several modern business blocks erected about the centre, including the Bennett and Dunn buildings and the new home of the Daily Globe. A good amount of building is now under way, and includes the Sacred Heart Academy, Ste. Anne's rectory, the large addition to the Boys' Club, St. Mary's and St. Joseph's parochial schools, the storehouse of the Iron Works Co. and the new power plant of the Electric Light Co.

The Rhode Island boundary line, which had been indefinite on account of its following for part of its distance the uncertain high water line of South Watuppa and Sawdy ponds, and the connecting streams, was adjusted on straight lines in 1899, following a survey of boundaries by commissioners ap-

pointed by the two States. The uncertainty of the line had offered opportunities for perplexing difficulties, in case of a crime near it, and a straight line was run, giving an equal division of territory. On the Tiverton line 140 acres were taken by Massachusetts, which were annexed to Fall River by a legislative act in 1902.

The abolition of the grade crossings on the main line of the Old Colony railroad within the city limits and the Providence branch, which had been begun June 28, 1902, was completed June 16, 1905, when the viaduct connecting Central and Anawan streets was opened and the Pond street crossing closed. The petition of the aldermen for the work was signed July 16, 1894, and the first hearing before the commissioners held April 6, 1895. The total cost to Jan. 1, 1906, which will be materially increased when payments for property damages not yet adjusted are made, was \$1,443,430.15, shared by the railroad, state and city in the proportion of 65, 25 and 10 per cent. respectively. Nine crossings were abolished, two at Brownell street and one each at Lindsey and Ballard, Davol, Turner, Danforth, Ferry, Pond and Water streets. As a rule the streets were depressed and the tracks raised from nothing to eight feet. The Fall River station was elevated eight feet to meet the new conditions. The old Central street tunnel, built when the road was first constructed, was torn down and rebuilt in enlarged form. Seven railroad bridges, counting one replaced, were erected, and five highway bridges, including the viaduct, which is 637 feet long. The work was accomplished without the interruption of train service, and resulted in the removal of death-traps that had already cost a number of lives.

