

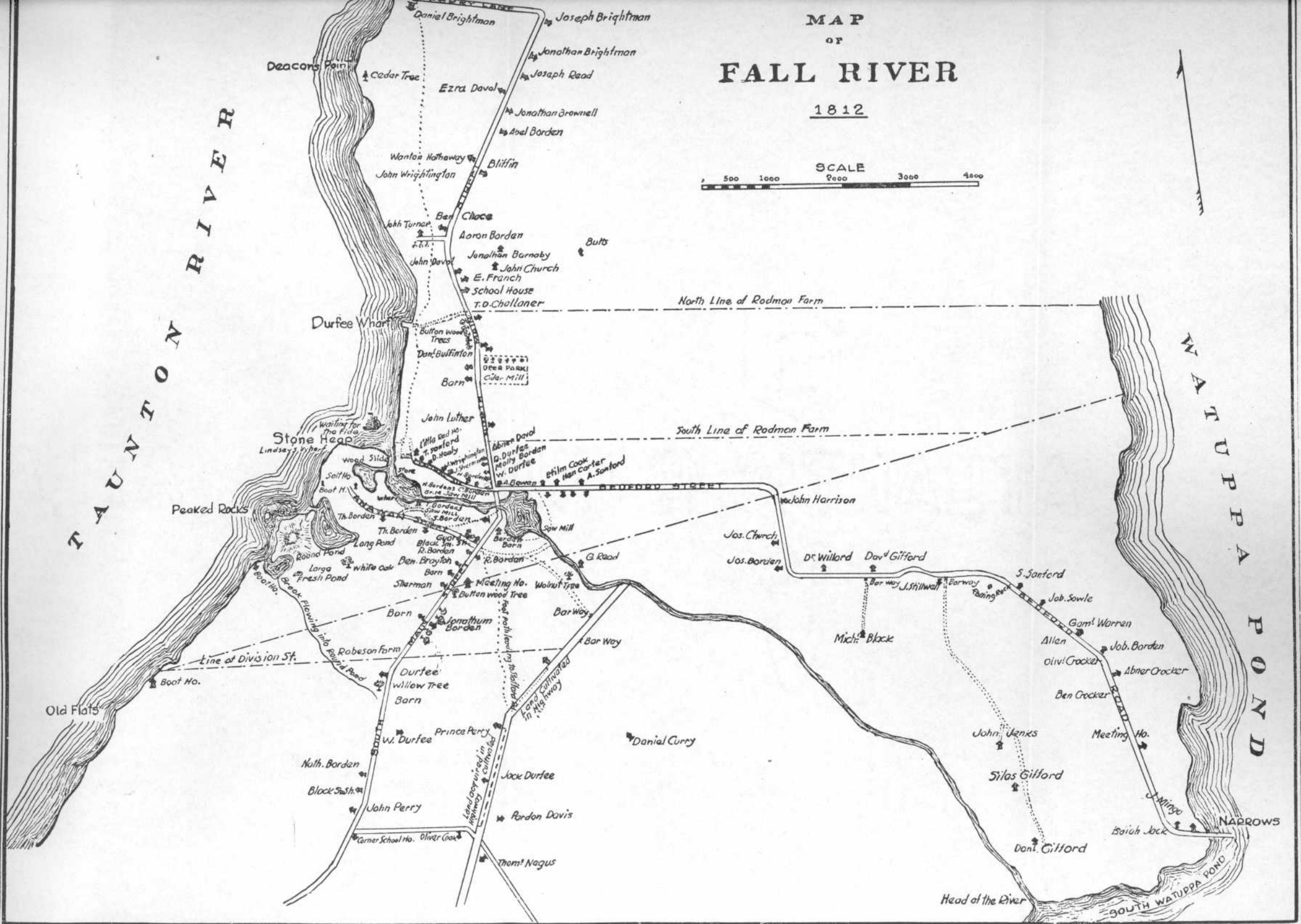
MAP
OF
FALL RIVER

1812



TAUNTON RIVER

WATUPPA POND



Chapter III

A RECAPITULATION
ORIGINAL AND PRESENT BOUNDARIES
FALL RIVER, RHODE ISLAND

It will be advisable, before considering the corporate development of Fall River, to review briefly the dates and events leading up to the establishment of our present boundary lines with those of our neighboring cities and towns.

When, in 1685, Plymouth, Barnstable and Bristol Counties were established and in 1692 became united with the Massachusetts Bay Colonies, what is now the town of Bristol, Rhode Island was the shire town of Bristol County, Massachusetts and so remained until 1747, when it became a part of Rhode Island, and Taunton became the shire town of Bristol County, Massachusetts. It was on September 14, 1680 that Bristol was deeded to four merchants of Boston for 1100 pounds and described under the names of Mt. Hope and Poppasquash Neck. Bristol was incorporated in 1681.

Little Compton incorporated June 6, 1682 and Tiverton incorporated March 2, 1692, both included in the Pocasset Purchase (Fascicle I, p. 109), also became a part of Rhode Island in 1747. Only that part of the Pocasset Purchase north of the "Buttonwood Line" remained in Massachusetts. See 1812 map of Fall River.

Fall River, Rhode Island

In May, 1856, the General Assembly of Rhode Island passed an act dividing the town of Tiverton and incorporating the northerly portion as the town of Fall River, Rhode Island. This act became effective in October, 1856. This new town was bounded northerly by Fall River, Massachusetts; westerly by Mt. Hope Bay and southerly by what is now State Avenue, that being the line which separated the eleventh from the twelfth great lot in the first division of the Pocasset purchase. This line extended easterly across the south Watuppa Pond until it met the old Dartmouth town line.

This division was brought about by two separate causes, — first because the northerly portion of the town of Tiverton had grown so rapidly and the expense of maintaining its streets and buildings was so great that unfair taxation on those who lived in the southern portion of the town was imminent; secondly because those who lived at Globe Corners wished to be separated from the parent town.

The first town meeting of Fall River, Rhode Island was held in the hall of the Cascade Engine house on October 21, 1856, with one hundred and fifty-five voters present. Frederic A. Boomer was the moderator and the town council and probate court were a single body composed of Gardner T. Dean, Ucal Woodman and Jirah B. Pettey. Elihu Grant was the town clerk, treasurer and collector, and the town sergeant was Joseph R. Plummer. The school committee was composed of Elihu Grant, Nathan N. Buffinton and Frederic A. Boomer. Prelet D. Conant became the justice of the peace.

A listing of the property owned by the new town showed that its real estate consisted of the town farm, the town house and the engine house, which included the engine and the lock-up. There were six school buildings owned by the town; — The Jenck's School, a one room building afterwards known as the Turnpike School (Fascicle II, p. 60) where Thomas A. Francis taught; the Third Street School where William Williams taught the grammar pupils. George W. Locke (Fascicle II, p. 75) was first employed by Fall River, R. I. to be principal of the Osborn Street School with Mary S. Osborn as his assistant. Ariadne J. Borden taught District School No. 3 and Angeretta Schemerhorn District School No. 6 in Globe Village. At the time these schools were incorporated in the Fall River, Massachusetts system, William Connell, Jr., later to be elected Superintendent of Schools was principal of the Mt. Hope Village School in District No. 5. Susan A. Waterman was his assistant.

At the first town meeting, money was appropriated for the support of the engine and Cascade Hall and a separate committee was authorized to purchase a town farm and to put the farm and buildings in suitable repair, the cost not to exceed \$2,000.

In 1858 an appropriation to construct sidewalks on Main Street from state line to Cascade Hall and on South Bank Street from Main Street to Fourth Street was defeated. In 1859, a single street light was authorized at the corner of Main and Tasker Streets. The members of the school committee were voted \$25.00 a year and the salary of each assessor was increased from \$10.00 to \$15.00 a year. There were forty members of the

Cascade Hand-engine Company and these were to receive \$5.00 each per year.

At the beginning of the Civil War in April 1861, the town voted a bounty of \$10.00 per month to such residents as would voluntarily enlist for service but seven months later (in November), the monthly allowance was withdrawn and a flat bounty of \$20.00 was substituted.

The last town meeting of the town of Fall River, Rhode Island was held November 2, 1861. The town was in existence for practically five years and much trouble arose from the fact that the two Fall River towns were closely allied and the boundary line so confused that separate policing of the two towns was ineffective.

There had been some industrial developments, along or near the outlet stream of Cook Pond (Fascicle II, pp. 151-153) in those sections of Fall River, Rhode Island known as Globe Village and Mt. Hope Village. The Bay State Print Works was located in Globe Village and in Mt. Hope Village there were three small thread mills; — the Fall River Thread Company, Oliver Chace's Thread Mill and one operated by Joseph M. Davis. Chace and Trafford operated a mill manufacturing cotton batting, yarn and twine, James Winward's glue factory and A. G. Thurston's machine shop were in the same neighborhood. Jephtha Walon kept the general store.

There was in 1872 when the author first moved to Fall River, no physical point of separation of these two municipalities, except the old buttonwood tree which stood in a narrow lot of vacant land on the easterly side of South Main Street, just north of the head of Columbia Street. At that time the structures on each side of South Main Street were mostly single dwellings with stores underneath and rented tenements above. None of the buildings seemed less than ten years old and therefore must have been in existence at the time the two towns were consolidated. At the northeast corner of Rodman and South Main Streets was the Philander Borden Building, a brick structure with an outside stairway on the south side. In a corner store, one Fearnley conducted a stationery and newspaper store which was much frequented.

The largest store in this locality was that of John D. Flint, later known as "Flint's Exchange". It was a furniture store carrying general equipment, situate on the westerly side of South Main Street diagonally across from the boundary tree. Flint's tin-peddler carts journeyed throughout the suburbs and adjoining towns and for miles around were signs, on fences, old buildings and trees calling upon the public to trade at "Flint's".

Adjoining the line tree was a liquor store kept by Jeremiah Brown in an old building which had formerly been the "Old Line Meeting House",¹ with a covered veranda reaching from the store front to the sidewalk.

Fall River, Mass. and Fall River, R. I. were united on March 1, 1862 which was the effective date on which the southerly line of Massachusetts was moved from Columbia Street to State Avenue at the southerly line of the town of Fall River, R. I. Fall River, R. I. added a population of 593, an area of nine square miles and a value in taxable property of \$1,948,378 to Fall River, Massachusetts. Acts which were necessary to adjust the government of Fall River, Rhode Island to its new surroundings included a revision of the lot lines, provision for the care of the Cascade engine and engine house, a transfer of schoolhouses and school obligations and the taking over of the town farm. The acquisition of new territory was hailed with deep gratification on both sides of the line. A record indicates that it "meant the protection of moral and social improvement and the enhancing of material interests".

A celebration to commemorate the union was held in Fall River on Saturday, March 1, 1862, to begin when the city hall bell struck the noon hour. In spite of the distractions due to the Civil War, there was an enthusiastic assemblage in the city hall in the evening. A general committee in charge of this celebration was Robert Adams, Weaver Osborn and George O. Fairbanks, to which each town added a committee. A procession was formed on the former Rhode Island side of the line, in front of National Hall, which was a building erected by the town on land leased for school purposes from private owners, at the northeasterly corner of South Main and Morgan Streets. National Hall was maintained by the city of Fall River as a primary school after the union.

The procession was escorted by the National Guard and this contingent and a large concourse of other people occupied every seat in the city hall auditorium. The assembly was addressed by Mayor Edward P. Buffinton. During the service, patriotic songs were rendered under the direction of Parker Borden, with the members of his singing classes. At this assembly there was a formal presentation to the city of Fall River of all the records of the Rhode Island town by Joseph Healy, then town clerk. The records were received by Frederick A. Boomer on behalf of the city. An address was made by Rev. Elihu Grant in behalf of Rhode Island to which Hon. Foster Hooper responded for Fall River. He stated that the

¹ See illustration, Fascicle II.

union of the towns was the fruit of his labors for the "last seventeen years". A written communication was read from State Senator Robert T. Davis. Congratulatory addresses were made by Prelet D. Conant, J. G. Sargent² and C. R. Goodman all of whom were prominent men.

It was in honor of this event that the city authorized a new map to be prepared and the issue of a second edition of Fowler's History of Fall River, with special reference to the boundary controversy (Fascicle I, Chapter XIV) which was now at an end.

The city government directed that the committee having charge of the town farm in Fall River should assume charge of the town farm formerly in Rhode Island and that the fire engineers take charge of the Cascade engine and engine house. At that time the city had begun to purchase steam fire engines and the "Old Cascade" was the last hand engine to see service in the department. There was evidently no post office in Fall River, Rhode Island.

Readjustments to the North

Concerning the settlements of Pilgrim families southward, the Massachusetts Historical Society (Coll. Mass. Hist. Soc., Vol. III) reports that "Nemasket is that part of Middleborough where the English began their plantation and increased to about sixteen families before Philip began his war, in June, 1675".

The first acquisition of land from the Indians in Taunton, known as the Titiquet Purchase (Titiquet being the Indian name for Taunton River) was made in 1637. Dighton and Berkley were formerly a part of Taunton. Dighton was incorporated in 1712 and Berkley became a township in 1735.

Somerset previous to its incorporation in 1790 was a part of Swansea incorporated in 1667, after its separation from Rehoboth established in 1645, which included at first, Swansea, Seekonk, Attleboro and all or parts of Pawtucket, Warren, Barrington and Cumberland.

Westport, previous to 1787 a part of Dartmouth, was set apart in 1664. Dartmouth then also included New Bedford and Fairhaven. "The Indian name for New Bedford was Acchusnutt or Achusnet." It became a separate town in 1787.

Freetown, which at first included that part of Fall River north of Bedford Street and the lower reaches of the "Quequechan" was settled in

² Mr. Sargent kept a store at No. 4, Granite Block for many years where the finest dress goods were sold. The Sargent Building built by his brother Frank for their increased business is still standing on North Main Street.

1659 and incorporated in 1683. Fall River was set off from Freetown in 1803.

Before, and for a time after Fall River or Troy became a town, there were three localities of special interest, Assonet, now a part of Freetown, Steep Brook and the village of Fallsriver, near the falls of the "Quequechan". The neighborhood where the dwelling of the first settler, Matthew Boomer (1675) was located, assumed some importance. (Fascicle I, pp. 85 and 86.) Assonet Village continued to be of importance and steadily increased in population until about 1830 but when rail transportation opened, freight traffic was diverted from the small rivers and the exports from Freetown became very small. The Steep Brook and Brownell Street neighborhoods became overshadowed by the development of industry in the village of Fallsriver.