



# ROUTE 122 ~ LOST VILLAGES SCENIC BYWAY

## Welcome to Paxton

### Home of the Lost Mill Village at Major Willard Moore Memorial State Park



MASSACHUSETTS  
SCENIC  
BYWAYS

ROUTE  
122

#### Discover Paxton

#### Places of Interest

##### COMMUNITY SERVICE

- American Legion Post No. 306**  
885 Pleasant Street, 508-753-9252
- Council on Aging**  
17 West Street, 508-756-2833
- Highway & Water Dept.**  
107 Holden Street, 508-753-9077
- Municipal Light Dept.**  
578 Pleasant Street, 508-756-9508
- Public Safety Building (Police/Fire)**  
576 Pleasant Street, 508-755-1104 (non-emergency)
- Paxton Town Hall**  
697 Pleasant Street, 508-754-7638
- Richards Memorial Library**  
44 Richards Avenue, 508-754-0793
- U.S. Post Office**  
707 Pleasant Street

##### HISTORICAL INTEREST

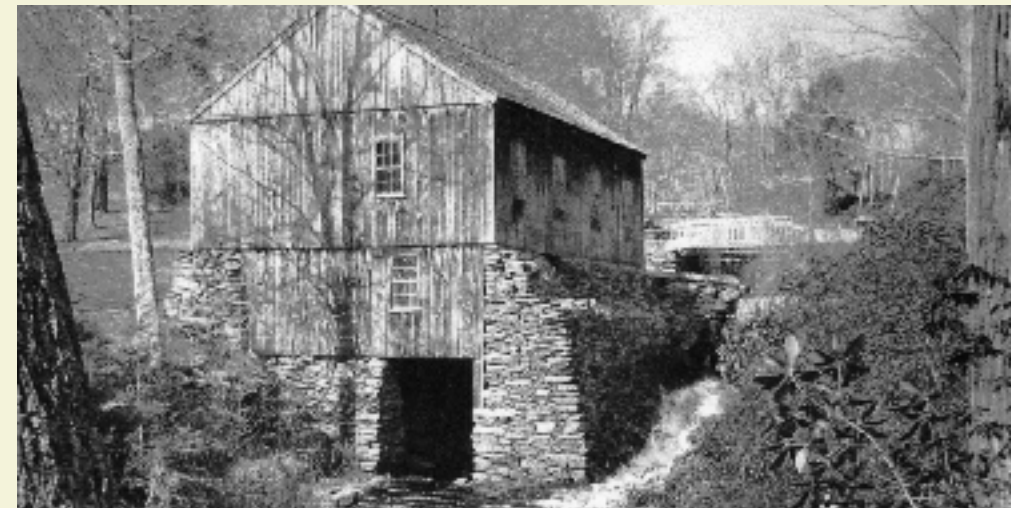
- Historical Commission Museum**  
17 West Street
- Moore State Park** (old mill village/hiking)
- Moreland Cemetery**
- Paxton Center Cemetery**
- Worcester County Memorial Cemetery**

##### RECREATION

- Boynton Park** (hiking, picnicking)
- Illig's Pond Trail** (hiking, fishing)  
West Street, behind Paxton Center School
- Muir Meadow** (hiking)
- Paxton Recreation Facilities**  
(bandstand, baseball, ice skating)
- Klinge Field** (soccer)

##### WORSHIP/EDUCATION

- Anna Maria College**  
Sunset Lane, 508-849-3300
- First Congregational Church**  
1 Church Street, 508-756-2818
- Paxton Center School**  
19 West Street, 508-798-8576
- St. Columba Church (Catholic)**  
10 Richards Avenue, 508-755-0408



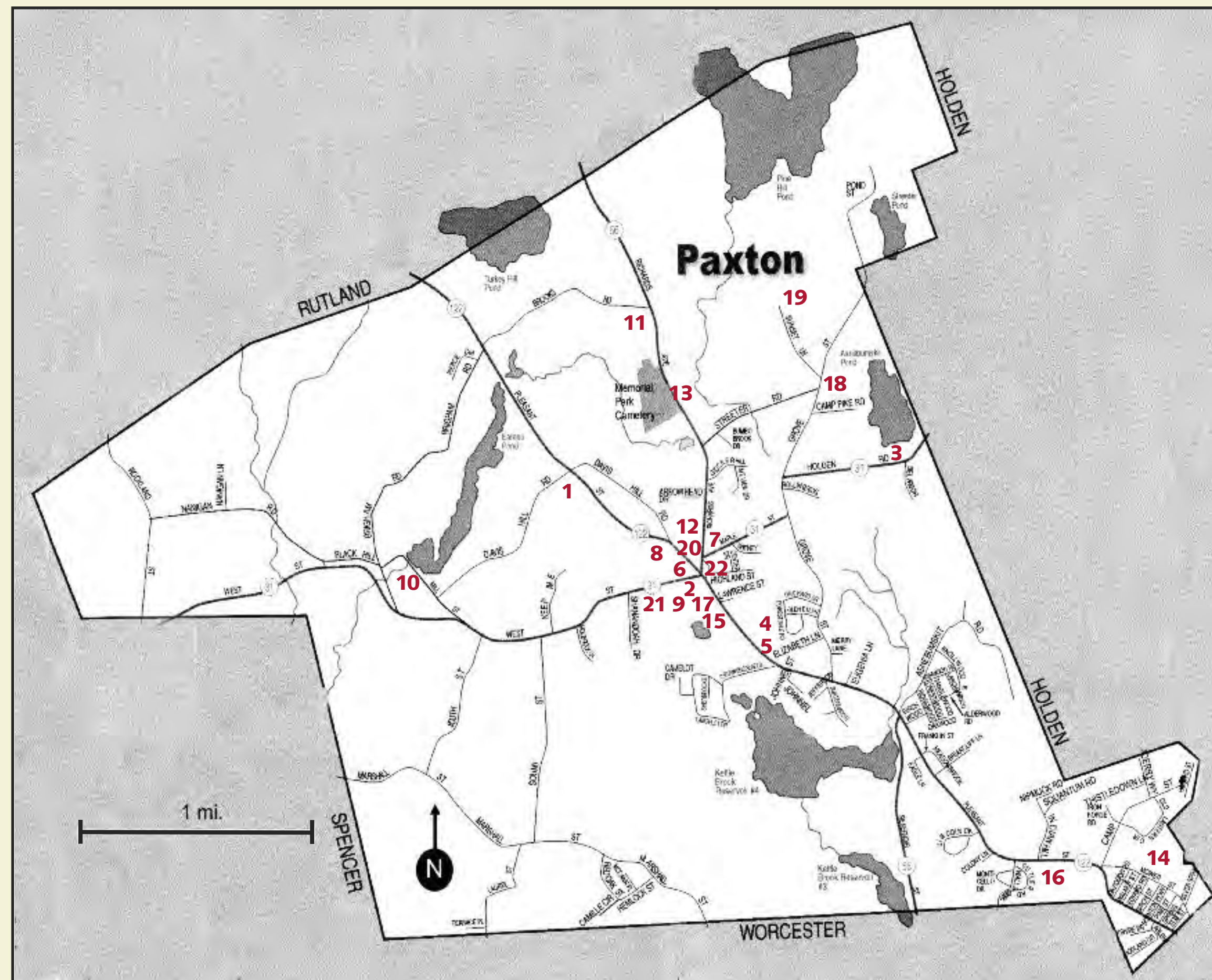
Using water power from Turkey Hill Brook, the Mill Village was established in 1745.



Paxton Center School was established in 1899, replacing five district schools.



Center Cemetery was established in 1765 together with a town common and meeting house, later to become the First Congregational Church. The first minister Rev. Silas Biglow was buried in 1769.



St. Columba Catholic Church was completed in 1952 to accommodate parishioners who had previously met in the Town Hall.



The town common as it appeared looking west from Richards Avenue in 1908.



Richards Memorial Library was constructed in 1926 to house the literary collection previously present in the Town Hall. It was enlarged in 1976.

#### Community Events Join Us!

#### A BRIEF HISTORY OF PAXTON

Paxton came into being as a result of the need for religious worship. Inhabitants of Rutland and Leicester found it difficult to travel long distances to attend worship. This difficulty resulted in multiple petitions to form a new town. These attempts were successful with the founding of Paxton on February 12, 1765.

By October 1767, a meeting house was constructed and Rev. Silas Bigelow was ordained as the first settled pastor. Because the name of the town was left blank on the petition, the honor was given to Charles Paxton, Boston Customs Commissioner and a friend of the Governor.

#### REVOLUTION IS IN THE AIR

Charles Paxton was a strong supporter of the Townsend Revenue Acts and repeatedly requested British troops to be sent to Boston to enforce them. This and many other actions antagonized the colonials and, after repeated burnings in effigy, Charles Paxton eventually escaped to Britain. Attempts to change the name of the town were unsuccessful. The residents of the town participated in the closing of the Royal Courts in Worcester on September 6, 1774 and sent 33 Minutemen to the Battle of Lexington/Concord on April 19, 1775. The namesake of the Major Willard Moore Memorial State Park was lost in this battle and he was buried on Bunker Hill.

#### OPTIMISM AND NEW GROWTH

A period of optimism and growth occurred in the 1790s with the building of many Federal and Greek Revival style homes.

The Congregationalist meeting house was moved to its present site in 1835 with an added steeple, clock and bell. In the early 1800s, the boot and shoe industry joined agriculture as a major employer. "Brogans" were made for Southern slaves, Union Army soldiers, and westward bound settlers. With the post-war collapse of the boot industry, Paxton joined other rural hill towns as places of retreat from urban life.

In 1888, Town Hall replaced use of the Congregational Meeting House for town business. The Center School, now the Senior Center (or White Building), in 1899 consolidated the five school districts ("squadrons") which were first established in 1769. The Paxton Free Library, founded by Ledyard Bill and sited in the Town Hall, was moved to the Richards Memorial Library building in 1926. Paxton today is more a suburb than farm community. Still, it possesses much of the architecture of the 18th and 19th centuries and strives to maintain a "small town charm."

