

CHAPTER 3

BATH'S HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING

INTRODUCTION

Shaped by historical and geological events, Bath, Maine is a slim needle of a city, pulled north and south along the western bank of the Kennebec River. This needle—about 5 miles long and 1 mile wide—formed of homes, farms, businesses and industries has sewn the inhabitants of Bath into centuries of American history with the threads of the many ships built here. This chapter examines the historical and geographical setting of the City of Ships. But any examination of this history that numbers so few pages cannot possibly present all the important events, individuals and groups. The following provides illustrative examples and aspects, but does not do justice to the rich history of this community and those that have peopled it.

THE GEOLOGIC SETTING OF THE CITY

Bath's suitability as a shipbuilding port was, in a sense, created by the ancient geologic forces that molded the entire east coast of the United States. The folding, faulting, and crumpling of the earth's crust formed the Appalachian Mountains and its associated chains. Two-hundred million years of uplift and river erosion, followed by two-million years of glacial erosion, shaped the New England landscape. During the glacial epoch the weight of the ice depressed the crust, allowing flooding of the valleys upon the melting of the glacial ice. The valleys of the drowned coastline became bays and inlets; the higher ridges producing the peninsulas and islands of the midcoast region. Through eons the geologic landscape evolved into local topography that encouraged our maritime industry.

The glacier left many lakes in New England; the largest in the area is Moosehead Lake, the source of the Kennebec River. In Bath about 12 miles upstream from Popham and the river's mouth, the channel of the Kennebec flows wide and straight from Thorne Head to Fiddler's Reach and Winnegance, almost five miles of what would be known as Long Reach. This maneuverable half-mile-wide stretch of tidal river was made accessible by the low and gentle relief of the area, particularly at water's edge where land

slopes gradually, allowing the easy use of shore for maritime industries. The Kennebec here, despite troublesome currents, also possesses a soft, sandy bottom that provided good anchorage.

On the western bank of Long Reach, a series of granite-supported ridges generally parallels the line of the river, successive ridges rising like steps away from the river. Three of these ridges hold the major north-south streets that emphasize the elongated shape of Bath—Washington, Middle, and High Streets. The subdivision of early land holdings would create long, slender parcels that stretched across these ridges to the all-important water. These property lines often determined the placement of the east-west cross streets in the young community. To the south and west, the land rises more sharply to heights that strongly influenced and contained the location of initial settlement and continued development. The settlement focused on the river, the major road of its time and the source of much industry. As time progressed, development even reached out into the water as wharves were extended, creeks diverted, and low and near-shore areas artificially filled. And so, the coastline of Long Reach was rewritten, not by geological forces, but by human action into Bath, the City of Ships.

PREHISTORY AND EARLY CONTACT IN THE MIDCOAST REGION

That human imprint on the landscape began with the Native-American presence in the region some twelve thousand or more years ago—before the state was completely ice-free from the glacier. Approximately one thousand years prior to European contact, this part of North America was the home of the Eastern Algonquian who typically organized in small local bands with seasonal residences. For some of those bands, the Kennebec River provided an important transportation route, providing a path between the subsistence-lifestyle resources of the interior lakes, the tidal estuaries, and the offshore islands. Just before contact with the Europeans, the patterns of life in the Northeast for the Native Americans were evolving rapidly in response to technological innovations within agricultural practices, ceramic use, and canoe construction. The rhythms of this well-rooted but developing life were interrupted by the arrival of the European explorer and trader.

European interest in this portion of the so-called “New World” was intermittent. The contact between European fishermen and the natives of Maine was limited in the sixteenth century. The shifting fashionable and

political desires of a European population, however, drove more explorers to the coast and inland in their search for both beaver pelts and areas for colonization. The Kennebec River in the immediate vicinity of Bath was investigated by Samuel de Champlain in 1605 and John Smith in 1616. With this intensification of interest in the area of Maine and the resulting visits came the epidemics that left a coastline of New England described in 1619 as dotted with "ancient Plantations, not long since populous now utterly void; other places a remnant remains but not free of sickness" (quoted in Bourque: 119). No permanent Native-American settlements have been identified in Bath, but in the shoreland zone some archaeological sites associated with seasonal or hunting camps of pre-contact and early post-contact populations have been located.

POPHAM COLONY AND EARLY SETTLEMENT: 1607-1750

English colonization began famously and briefly on the doorstep of Bath at the failed Popham Colony in 1607. That temporary settlement contributed to the general knowledge of the Kennebec River and the neighboring region. More serious resettlement slowly began in 1630 in the area labeled as Sagadahock that included Bath, West Bath, Woolwich, Arrowsic, Georgetown, Phippsburg, and even portions of Brunswick. Trading posts and budding settlements by adventurous individuals sprang up along the Kennebec in the middle of the seventeenth century. In the current limits of the city, settlements by Christopher Lawson and Alexander Thwaite were significant. Within a dozen years they were joined by a handful of others. In 1665 as the number of colonists rose, the town of Kennebec was acknowledged formally although bounds were not specifically defined. This town of Kennebec separated Bath, Phippsburg, and Brunswick on the western bank of the river from the more populated eastern portions of the Sagadahock area. Much of what was the central portion of Bath was owned by Robert Gutch. When he died in 1667, the land that he had obtained from Robinhood, Terrumquin, Weasomonasco, Scawque, and Abumhamen, representatives of the Kennebec tribe, was left to his eight children, although it would not be divided and sold for nearly ninety years by the remaining descendants of four of his daughters.

The pattern of settlement, including the process of purchasing parcels, establishing homes and businesses, and creating local governments, was disrupted in the third quarter of the seventeenth century. The generally

good relations between the indigenous people and the newer residents of New England were torn apart by a series of wars that may have been inevitable, considering the differing world views of these groups and the competitive nature of the European powers. The first of these wars, known as King Philip's War, began in Massachusetts in 1675. The turmoil spread to Maine, culminating in this region in the raids the next year on both the Hammond Trading Post at the Narrows across from Chops Point on the eastern shore of the Kennebec and the Clarke and Lake Post in Arrowsic, from which only five colonists escaped death or capture. Although some colonists persevered in the coming years, additional wars, attacks and counter-incursions soon persuaded virtually all that the towns of Sagadahock and Kennebec were best abandoned at this time.

After the resolution of Queen Anne's War in 1714, English settlers returned to this region, at least temporarily, beginning with Arrowsic Island. Here in 1716 the township of *Georgetown* was established. In Bath, repopulation dragged; only three families lived within the current limits of the city between the resolution of Queen Anne's War and the beginning of Dummer's War in 1722.¹ At that time, apparently all three lost their homes to the fires of Indian raids. In North Bath at the Chops, Joseph Maynes established his ferry where Merrymeeting Bay and the Kennebec meet during the first part of the eighteenth century (Dearborn Lovetere). Rebuilding began once again in 1725. By 1738 five families had created homesteads in Long Reach, as Bath was known at that time. This time the foothold was permanent, despite skirmishes with Indians in the coming years. In that same year *Georgetown* was organized and enlarged to encompass the current towns of Bath, West Bath, Phippsburg, Arrowsic, Woolwich, and *Georgetown*.

THE SECOND PARISH BEGINS: 1753-1760

In 1753 the forty families north of Winnegance Creek successfully petitioned the legislature of the Massachusetts Colony for permission to incorporate the second parish of *Georgetown*. Noting the difficulty, particularly in winter, of travel to the Meetinghouse in *Georgetown*, the inhabitants wished to establish their own place of worship, but not to separate from the town or its governance. The residents had already set

¹ A map dating from 1718 indicates the pioneering homestead of the cooper Christopher Lawson from some fifty years earlier, noting "Mr. Lawson's Cellar" in North Bath (Dearborn Lovetere).

aside small parcels as private cemeteries.² The first meetinghouse, Bath's first public building, finished in 1762, was on the current Berry's Mill Road in West Bath, where the town road (corresponding to today's Western Avenue which was a continuation of High Street) intersected the old military road. This military road that extended through North Bath connected the Scots-Irish settlement on Merrymeeting Bay to other parts of the mid-coast (Dearborn Lovetere).

As the Province of Maine grew, Lincoln and Cumberland counties were carved from York in 1760. Bath would remain part of Lincoln County until the mid-nineteenth century. The Gutch parcel now became a saleable asset as the frontier was gradually domesticated. New families joined the community of Long Reach. The names of these early inhabitants, such as Lemont, Marshall, Philbrook, Purington, Crooker, Coombs, Donnell, Trufant, Rogers, Sewall, Lambert, and Turner among others, have echoed through the decades of the city's development, naming the streets and geographic features, still appearing among the residents more than two hundred and fifty years later. The cemetery of that early meetinghouse and much of the existing street pattern remain as evocative inscriptions of that time. So too, historic archaeological sites, such as the Henry and Dummer Sewall mill of 1763 on Whiskeag Creek, located on or near a mill site that itself may date from the Gutch occupation of a hundred years earlier, survive as relicts of the past (Dearborn Lovetere).

LONG REACH BECOMES THE TOWN OF BATH: 1760-1800

During this time the natural resources of mixed forest and hospitable river sparked the shipbuilding activity that still dominates Bath's economic profile. Initially, locally built vessels were in the service of other businesses. Not until William Swanton arrived in Long Reach in the early 1760s did the shipbuilding industry truly begin. His yard and the first wharf in town are believed to have been at the foot of Federal Street, an area now covered by BIW, north of Russell Street. The reported first launching of 1762 saw the

² The Trufant Burying Ground found at the corner of Middle and Springs Street was said to have been established before the 1730s, possessing more than 90 graves. As Owen noted, this was likely an exaggeration, at least of the founding-date estimate. No markers have been standing for over 70 years to document these claims. The earliest extant marker at the Witch Springs Cemetery, next to the first meeting house, belongs to Mrs. Abigail Gleason who died in 1766 (Owen:434). In North Bath, the oldest gravestone dates to a death in 1749 in the Welch-Wise Burial Ground (Dearborn Lovetere).

Earle of Bute slide into the *Kennebec*, built for a Scottish merchant. Swanton continued until the *Black Prince*, a privateer, was constructed in 1776, during the American Revolution, for a Salem company.

The year before that latter launch, Dummer Sewall and several armed Bath residents had stopped the loading of masts and timber by the British at the King's dock at the foot of Harward Street. Later numerous Bath men joined the Continental Army. A 1777 summary of the 169 male inhabitants of military age demonstrates the growth of the Second Parish since its separation from *Georgetown*. No doubt, it was with great pride, that Long Reach, now rechristened Bath, became the first town incorporated under the new state constitution of Massachusetts in 1781 and the forty-first town in the province of Maine. Approximately ten structures or portions of buildings in the current city limits may stand as testaments of that period from the mid-eighteenth century to the time of the town's incorporation.

Local economic growth included many occupations other than shipbuilding as the settlers within North Bath and elsewhere practiced subsistence farming. A land deposition of 1763 acknowledged still other ways of making a living in the area, listing tanners and weavers besides those who were farming. Period maps also indicate the presence in North Bath of mills and ferries that contributed to the increasing expansion of the larger settlement (Dearborn Lovetere).

Development continued as the town grew sufficiently to support stores and an embryonic infrastructure. In the early 1780s, the second wharf in town was built at the foot of South Street. Its owner, Jonathan Davis, also constructed a store that was joined in the next decade by others. Not surprisingly, the street was known initially as Davis's Lane and became the first central business district of the community. Bath was connected to other communities not only by the *Kennebec*, but also by the post road that led from Boston, via Portland and Brunswick, down High Street to Thorne Head where the ferry crossed the river at the Narrows. Traces of a canal that joined the *Kennebec* and *New Meadows River* can still be found in North Bath.³ The customs district of Bath was established in 1789. All of these

³ Captain John Peterson, a transplant from Massachusetts, conceived of the canal and began petitioning the courts for permission to construct it. Likely opened by 1792, the canal ran from the *New Meadows River* to the *Kennebec* via a waterway called *Welch's Creek* [Also identified by Nancy Dearborn Lovetere as a stream known variously as the *Little Whiskeag*, *Whittam's* or *Crawford Creek*]

developments attracted more people, such as the Petersons, Tallmans, and the notable William King.

THE ENDURING SKELETON OF THE CITY DEVELOPS: 1800-1815

By 1800, as Henry Owen noted in his history of Bath, the underlying form of the modern city was in place. Two roads ran much of the city's length - the Town Road/High Street and the County Road/Washington Street. The latter's route curved its way up present-day Winship and Whiskeag Roads toward Brunswick. Another path, still visible in Thorne Head today, continued north to the ferry that had been operating since the early 1760s across the river to Pownalboro, the seat of Lincoln County. These two major roads were crossed by three streets—North, Centre, and South Streets. Western Road still moved off the town road toward the meetinghouse and parts east. The foot of Davis Lane remained the central business district.

Joshua Shaw, however, had purchased "The Point" to the north, dividing his property into lots. This peninsula of slightly higher land was approachable through a narrow neck in the vicinity of Vine Street. Shaw appears to have offered more reasonably priced parcels than were available in the South End, thereby diverting development and rewriting the face of the city. Nevertheless, the coves, creeks, and tidal flats that surrounded the Point created a problematic landscape where several bridges were needed to extend Centre Street, to create Front Street, to connect Elm Street, to bridge the waters of Water Street, and so on. Throughout the nineteenth century, fill changed the landscape of downtown as construction eliminated the obviously low places, and crept out into the river. The basements of several commercial establishments still demonstrate daily at high tide the river's tenacity.

The growth of the city is illustrated by the 1800 population of 1225 residents. More shipyards and wharves began to line the waterfront from one end of the community to the other. Their primary market was the West

. Only economically viable for a little more than a decade, the hours of operation were limited to three hours of each tidal cycle since the times of high tides at each end differed. Without sufficient depth and flow control with locks or tidal gates, the canal could not remain a workable and profitable concern. After the canal's demise, Peterson and his son Levi moved into town where they operated a saw and gristmill (Dearborn Lovetere, referencing William E. Gerber's article "Twice-A-Day-Island" from *The Best from American Canals*, number II, page 11.).

Indies where they sold the natural resources of sea and shore. Bath ships also carried goods for both France and Great Britain, to great profit. As William Baker writes, "Frequently a vessel earned her entire cost on one voyage. Bath had never seen such prosperity as in those early years of the nineteenth century" (Baker: 166). That money started the creation of a civic fabric that showed the pride of the inhabitants. The first church in the town, North Church, was built in 1802 at the northeastern corner of High and Centre Streets, neighboring the first public school, "Erudition," constructed in 1794. It was this church that received, in 1803, the Paul Revere Bell that is now housed in Davenport Memorial City Hall. The next year, South Church, the result of a disagreement within the congregation, was built where only the place name "Old South Place" remains to testify to its presence and the accompanying common where the Bath City Grays, the local militia, once drilled. The fire department was organized that same year.

Another school, the Female Academy, went up the next year in 1805. Another educational institution, variously known as the North Bath Mixed School or the Ireland School, was built in North Bath in the year 1808 (Dearborn Lovetere). The first brick structure, the Bath Bank, on Shaw's Point, was constructed for William King on the southwestern corner of Front and Center. Residential construction kept pace with these developments, including the notable Stone House of Ann and William King - believed to be the first Gothic-Revival structure in Maine. This was the centerpiece of King's substantial farm with extensive orchards. But this burgeoning settlement hesitated, as did many in New England, because of national events - the Embargo of 1807 through 1809, and the War of 1812.

BOOM TIMES FOR THE CITY OF SHIPS: 1815-1860

When the news of peace reached the United States in February of 1815, a new era began not only for the country, but also for Bath - an extended period of expansion of the maritime fleets. This boom time truly cemented Bath's reputation as a shipbuilding community, increasing the population and the architectural fabric of the town. The dense neighborhoods of Greek-Revival detailed capes and two-story homes were largely constructed in the two decades before the Civil War. The visual character of Bath was established at that time, remaining remarkably intact to this day.

The extensive family-owned fleets were a significant portion of this growth. As discussed in Baker's *Maritime History of the Kennebec Region*, three generations of McLellans built or managed 51 vessels between 1807 and 1865. Their fleet measured over 21,000 tons. Two generations of Houghtons began their shipbuilding at the foot of South Street. The senior Levi Houghton had some twenty-six vessels constructed between 1819 and 1858. John and George Ferguson Patten moved to Bath where they began another great family fleet in 1821. In their yard on Front Street just south of Cedar/Holly Street they built one or two ships a year for almost the next 40 years. Since the Pattens built for their own commercial use and not for sale, their fleet became one of the largest of its time under the American flag. Owning shares in other locally built vessels, it is estimated that they owned all or part of 65 vessels at one time. As Baker noted, the Patten house flag, which featured a blue anchor on a white field, was known around the world.

The remaining notable family fleet is that of the Sewalls whose yard was begun by William D. Sewall, grandson of Dummer Sewall. Working at the yard that was established on Front Street, just north of Cedar Street, William D. Sewall began building about 1827 and continued for the next fifty years. Before the beginning of the Civil War approximately 35 vessels were associated with the Sewalls. As the firm and its successors continued until 1903, the total number grew to over one hundred, including both the *Rappahannock* of 1841, the largest ship in the world at the time at 1133 tons, and the *Roanoke* of 1892, the largest square-rigged ship to fly the American flag in commercial service. It is the latter's silhouette that graces the weathervane of our city hall. Besides contributing significantly to the city's economic growth, each of these families also left its mark on her architectural heritage, having a constellation of homes built by the different generations. Many other families and individuals contributed to the vitality of the shipbuilding industry within the city, too many to be discussed here, but mention must be made of the master builder Johnson Rideout. Among his feats was the construction of the 240-ton steamer that was carried by the bark *Emma* in 1849 around the Horn to the California Gold Rush.

Other businesses found in North Bath were also water-dependent. They ranged from the Sewall mill, located near where the railroad tracks now cross Old Brunswick Road, to those mills associated with the Peterson, Lemont, and Rogers families on the Lower Mill Pond where Whiskeag Road intersects Whiskeag Creek. Some small shipbuilding enterprises were

conducted in this area and other manufacturing ventures like a blacksmith shop and the Crooker cooperage contributed to the urban and rural shipyards. The Crooker manufactory created other products of wood including sleighs. The shallow waters of Butler Cove on Merrymeeting Bay offered opportunities for rich harvests by fish weir. Thomas Stetson ran the ferry from North Washington Street across the Kennebec River to Day's Ferry (Dearborn Lovetere).

The population of the town in 1830 more than tripled from the census of 1800 to over 3700; in the coming decade another 1400 individuals would be added. This growth in numbers, and the catastrophic Front Street fire of 1837 that destroyed 30 buildings, produced a new central business district of brick buildings beginning in the late 1830s. A brick town hall was begun in 1837 at the intersection of Centre and Water Streets. Only two structures in the current downtown date from before that time. 106 Front Street is a commercial building that was constructed in 1832 not long before the fire. Its simple Greek Revival lines of brick with granite sill and lintel were repeated from 1832 to 1841 throughout "Merchant's Row," the downtown stores ranging from 100 to 136 Front Street. The second survivor of that time period before the fire, the residence near the south-west corner of Centre and Water streets reminds the current-day observer of the mix of dwellings, commercial and manufacturing establishments that created nineteenth-century downtowns.

More elaborate structures joined these in the 1850s and 60s to form closely the modern reach of the downtown. While some families, like Oliver and William Moses and their descendants, could be hailed for their achievements in the maritime arena, they should also be remembered for their role in shaping a central business district of architectural merit. William King not only influenced the face of the city in his backing the construction of the South Church and the Bank Block, but also campaigned for the separation of the province from Massachusetts, serving as the first Governor of Maine in 1820.

The boom era of the pre Civil-War period molded other aspects of Bath's landscape as the population jumped from five thousand in 1840 to eight thousand, with an additional 600 non-resident seamen, in 1850. Many of the extant architectural artifacts still speak to the prosperity of that time, for example, these grand new churches: the Swedenborgian (1843), Winter

Street Church (1844) and the Central Congregational/Chocolate Church (1847). In his maritime history, Baker quoted a traveler to the Kennebec in the early 1850s:

Woolwich had an inhospitable appearance, being hardly more than a town of granite ledges, and it is said that the farmers were accustomed to file the noses of their sheep to make them sharp enough to obtain sustenance. ... On the western bank of the river [in Bath] it was a never-to-be forgotten scene. As far as the eye could extend there was nothing else to be seen but ships on the stocks, some with their bare ribs, others nearly completed—often 20 or 30 in number (423).

These operations were overseen by the new elaborate Italianate Customs House, begun in 1852 with the most technically advanced fireproof construction of the time.

The city was laced in new ways to the outside world by new means of transportation. The Portland & Kennebec Railroad, presided over by a Patten began operations in 1849 and joined the land stages and ferries that brought travelers to the city.

The largest changes to the community's landscape, however, were lines drawn on maps. Bath lost part of its western holdings as the New Meadows River residents incorporated in 1844 as West Bath. These citizens of West Bath objected to the growing expenditures in the increasingly urban portion of Bath.⁴ The remaining portion, with dreams of its metropolitan future, was incorporated as a city in 1847, the third city in the state after Portland and Bangor. A few years later in 1854 when Sagadahoc County was formed from a portion of Lincoln County, Bath was made the county seat.

The statistics of the 1850s paint an evocative picture of that quickly arriving future. In 1854, the biggest shipbuilding year of that decade, nineteen major firms were building ships in Bath. It has been written by P. L. Pert that Bath was third nationally in 1854 in wooden-hull production and the fifth leading port in 1857 in registered tonnage. Reportedly the strip of Kennebec frontage from North Street to Drummond has had more ships built upon it than any other equal area in the world (Pert:2). This explosion in shipbuilding was accompanied by growth in all the associated industries such as chandleries and ropewalks, but also in those that supported the resulting

⁴ This left some residents like Samuel Foote, who worked both as a farmer and the toll-keeper at the Merrymeeting Bay Bridge, wondering just where they lived. His home, still on Old Brunswick Road just over the West Bath line, stood on a parcel that was suddenly divided by both towns (Dearborn Lovetere).

population. A city of shipbuilders still needed dressmakers, grocers, shoemakers, and so on.⁵ Six more churches were constructed; three new banks joined the existing three. Bath High School of 1860, designed by Bath native Francis J. Fassett, joined the nearly dozen small neighborhood schools constructed since 1840. Of all of these schools only the former Weeks Street Grammar School still exists as part of the Corliss Street Church holdings. The Trufant Historic District documents the virtual frenzy of construction. Of the sixty-one structures in the district, thirty were built in the nine-year period between the city's incorporation and 1856. These homes are just some of the wooden survivors throughout Bath, the domestic counterparts to the golden age of wooden shipbuilding. The economic depression that began in the late 1850s, deepened by the hardships of the Civil War, changed all that activity and probably changed the nature of the city's future forever.⁶

THE CIVIL WAR AND ECONOMIC DISRUPTIONS: 1860-1880

The Civil War disrupted the shipbuilding industry of the city in numerous ways. Young men went to war and many didn't come home; others came home disabled by their experiences. It is estimated that some 800 Bath residents served in the armed services during the conflict, ten percent of the city's population, and over 100 died in that service to the Union. The fleets were hamstrung by the disruption in trade and actual destruction or capture by Confederate destroyers. Large numbers of Bath vessels unable to come home, were sold in foreign ports. The deep-sea fleet never recovered. The economic downswing resulted in a citywide reassessment of real estate, reflecting the depressed values in the early 1860s.

⁵ It should be noted that the editor of the *Weekly Mirror* in February of 1853 stated that there was a clear need for the city to encourage greater diversification in the city's economy (Baker: 427).

⁶ As discussed at more length in Pert's *A Summary History of Bath, Maine 1850 to 1990*, the 1850s were not years of unmitigated progress for all in the community. Civic efforts were made to find aid for the poor, some of whom occupied the poorhouse that had been initially constructed in 1808 and expanded in 1837. [A portion of the Alms House still stands.] The spasmodic tensions concerning race, religion and ethnicity that gripped the nation, erupted in Bath in 1854. In early July, a mob of anti-immigrant, anti-Catholic members of the "Know-Nothing Party" set fire to the Old South Meetinghouse on High Street that had been leased to the Roman Catholics in 1847. A painting of the church's fiery end can be seen in the Reading Room of the Patten Free Library. They also attempted to drag a home rented by a Catholic family into the river, after stoning several other such homes. The municipal authorities, as noted by Owen, were remarkably understated in their efforts to contain the rioting.

The Confederacy rebellion, however, brought the first government contract for naval vessels to the city. Two wooden steamships were constructed for the Union Navy by the partnership of Stephen Larrabee and Amos L. Allen. As Pert details in his history, the firm was ruined when penalties ate more than the profit realized, penalties levied because of the delays of an out-of-state supplier (Pert: 5). That pattern of unanticipated expenses spoiling investments continued with the expansion of city interests into several railroads and the running of the Merrymeeting Bay Bridge between Topsham and Brunswick, a piece of infrastructure seen as instrumental in facilitating additional traffic to Bath. Those civic debts, notably the railroad bonds, would shackle the city's budget and ability to invest in other pieces of infrastructure for a century to come.

The economic climate of the 1870s remained depressed as a result of local and national factors. One winter brought twelve feet of snow to an underemployed city and the number of people requiring aid more than doubled from 1872 to 1877. The city's responsibilities were spiraling out of control as the per-capita debt increased from \$2.10 in 1850 to \$53 in 1870. This later figure doesn't include the issuing of bonds for the railroads that further increased the city's obligations. Attempts to bring additional industry to the city sometimes failed, as did the Patten Car Works that built luxurious cars for the railroads that stretched their tracks from coast to coast. That local business ended in 1877 when a national depression cut the market. Nevertheless, the size of Bath's combined sea-going fleet of the 1870s was still impressive. In 1877 it numbered more than 200. But rather than retaining ownership and keeping the subsequent profits from voyages, Bath shipyards now made their income simply from the contractual construction and sale of vessels, many of which were smaller and engaged in the coastal trade.

Despite the financial difficulties of these two decades, improvements were made to the city and to individual fortunes. Sarah Sampson and other Bath women, sensitive to the devastation of family life by the Civil War, were instrumental in the creation of the Bath Military and Naval Orphan Asylum in 1866.⁷ Another charitable institution was begun in the "Old Ladies' Home," sparked by the bequest of Mrs. Mary J. Ledyard and further funded by

⁷ Sampson, one of numerous Maine women who served as nurses in the Civil War, was unusual in her stubborn devotion to the orphans and veterans, ending her working career in the Pension Bureau in Washington D. C. She was buried in Arlington Cemetery in recognition of her decades-long service.

private citizens of Bath. The Patten Library Association, formed in 1847, was given a house and lot to occupy on lower Centre Street by Captain John Patten in the late 1870s. The Sagadahoc Historical Association was formed in 1877 when residents began to see the need to save artifacts and document the stories of Bath's past. Additional commercial and government buildings were constructed within the downtown, including the Church Block, the neighboring Lincoln Block [44-56 Front Street], the Hyde Block [Bath Savings Institution]⁸ and the Sagadahoc Country Courthouse - all designs of Francis Fassett. The Church Block featured iron architectural elements made by the Bath Iron Foundry, one of the incarnations of the foundry begun by William and Oliver Moses in the 1820s. After a series of owners it was this foundry that was purchased by Thomas Worcester Hyde, the son of a successful chandler, upon his return to his hometown after the war, eventually becoming Bath Iron Works.

RECOVERY AND NEW DIRECTIONS: 1880-1900

The last two decades of the nineteenth century brought a level of economic recovery to the city. The population that had dropped in 1870 to 7371, recovered to 8723 in 1890, and popped to 10,477 in 1900. This increase produced a housing shortage and then, a small building boom in modest dwellings at the end of the century. Many of these residents were still working in the shipbuilding industry as Bath continued to construct schooners for the coastal ice and coal trade, albeit in fewer yards. Pert's history states "in 1882, Bath was turning out more wooden vessels every year than any other place in the world. And by 1890, the tonnage output would exceed that of any other decade in the city's history" (Pert:7). Since many skilled laborers had left during the bad times, new hands had to be hired. Many were Canadian immigrants, some of whom traveled down the well-established Chaudiere Trail that included that one great constant highway, the Kennebec River. The river also provided jobs as the Bath-based Knickerbocker Towing Company, owned by the Charles Wyman Morse family,

⁸ The south side of the Hyde Block on Broad Street was the scene of an 1883 murder, the killing of a policeman, "Uncle Billy" Lawrence, by a robber surprised in the act of breaking into the chandlery here at that time. The city government, having a small police force, called on the services of a private investigator. He was able to identify and track down the guilty party, arresting Daniel Wilkinson in Bangor. The public followed the event, the investigation, the confession, and the trial avidly in newspaper stories. Wilkinson's execution by hanging in 1885 did not go as planned, and the rope strangled him slowly, horrifying Mainers. Before two years passed, the state legislature had abolished the death penalty in Maine.

provided the ocean tugs that guided first the schooners, and then the barges of ice bound for parts south.

North Bath continued to develop, gaining new services for those who lived and worked in the mills, farms, small factories, ferries, and fishing operations of the area. The construction of Union Chapel, located near the North Bath School, provided another reason to avoid the trip into the urban heart of the community. Although the establishment of a public post office was requested and refused by the federal government, farmer John Grace Rogers maintained a private post office from 1890 to 1898. Other changes were about to begin in this rural portion of the city. In the last years of the nineteenth century, an existing industry began to burgeon throughout the state. Tourism, particularly for the summer visitors or rusticators, expanded dramatically, both inland and along the coast. North Bath saw its version of this expansion when camps for children were constructed on Thorne Island and at the Chops in Woolwich in the early twentieth century. These camps, just part of a growing summer-home movement, continued into the 1950s and 60s. Increasingly, the waterways like Whiskeag Creek were not just routes of transportation or power for mills, but locations for recreational activities (Dearborn Lovetere).

The 1880s saw the expansion of Thomas Hyde's foundry. He expanded the ship-machinery products of the manufactory, including his patented steam windlass. In 1884, the business was incorporated as Bath Iron Works, Limited. In 1889 Hyde purchased the Goss Marine Iron Works, a business begun seven years earlier to produce marine engines in Bath. Hyde understood that despite the profitable past of wooden ships, a new era had come. He pursued new technology and contracts from the U.S. Navy. In 1889, President Benjamin Harrison and his Secretary of the Navy inspected the company, later speaking to Bath citizens from the steps of the Customs House. With Hyde's successful bid to build two gunboats for the Navy, Bath Iron Works both constructed the first steel vessels to be built in the state and began an association that has survived for more than 125 years. In the coming decade BIW would construct 30 more vessels, including the "largest and fastest steel steam yacht ever built in the U.S. up to that time, the first composite, electrically lighted lightship, the first ocean-going American tramp steamship, and two of the fastest torpedo boats of the U.S. Navy for that time" (Pert:8).

Additional accomplishments in the industry were achieved by other Bath yards in the 1890s. As mentioned earlier, Arthur Sewall & Company produced a series of sizeable, square-rigged ships, including the *Dirigo*, the first steel sailing ship built in America. Other yards pursued the five and six-masted schooners. The latter was first produced in Bath by the Percy & Small Shipyard, established in the mid-1890s, where the largest schooner ever built in Bath was constructed. This property now houses the Maine Maritime Museum with its collections documenting both local and state maritime history, as well as the sculpture evoking that huge ship, the six-masted *Wyoming* built in 1909.

This prosperity and the urge to modernize brought improvements to the city's infrastructure. The establishment of a public water supply (1887), a local electric company (1887), a city trolley system (1893), and the eventual connection to the Lewiston and Brunswick inter-urban system (1898) must have brought a sense of optimism and progress to the community. The first appropriation for streetlights in 1888 brought a new illumination to the night - even if there were just 20 lights that operated only on moonless nights for the 35 miles of streets. That confidence was also reflected in the construction of new structures for the entertainment and edification of Bath residents. Alameda Hall (1882), on the present-day parcel of the BIW Credit Union, was initially built to take advantage of one of the wildly fashionable trends of the late nineteenth century - roller skating. While the large structure housed the games of the award-winning local roller polo teams, the galleries there also allowed an audience for theatrical events, dances, political gatherings, and fairs of assorted types. The Kennebec Yacht Club was constructed late in the century, an example of the numerous other social clubs and organizations formed. The Patten Free Library, through the generosity of Galen Moses gained its first new building in 1891, a structure designed by George Harding—a New York architect born and raised in Bath across the street from the library's site. This was his only building in Maine.⁹

⁹ Another Bath native came to national attention when Arthur Sewall became the running mate of the Democratic presidential nominee William Jennings Bryan who campaigned unsuccessfully in 1896. Sewall's wife Emma Duncan Crooker Sewall was also known internationally, albeit to a much more select group. Learning photography in her fifties and largely practicing the art between 1884 and 1899, she became the first woman to be invited to join the Boston Camera Club, winning awards there and in France.

This last decade of the century also saw a profound change in the business district as a series of fires ravaged establishments on Front Street and nearby properties. The first fire in 1893 destroyed the Columbian Hall and Columbian Hotel at the northern end of the downtown between Summer and Elm Streets. These structures were being replaced by a new Columbia Theatre and YMCA building, under the auspices of Galen Moses, when another fire in January of 1894 started in the stables of the Sagadahock House, behind that grand hotel at the corner of Front and Centre Streets. This blaze devoured the hotel, the Granite Block beside it on Front Street, additional buildings on Centre Street, and then jumped the streets to damage multiple buildings on the east side of Front Street and the south side of Centre, despite the efforts of firefighters from Bath, and those contacted by telegram from neighboring communities. The situation was badly exacerbated by the break in a water line from the New Meadows River that fed the city's water system. Not a month later, plans for the construction of new retail and office spaces in this part of the city were being formulated when a fire in the joiner shop of Bath Iron Works spread, virtually destroying the shipyard of the Works in the far northern portion of what continues to be BIW property today. Again, the lack of water pressure played a major role. While Thomas Hyde decided in the long run to stay in Bath and rebuild fireproof buildings, his anger at the situation nearly moved the entire business to New London, Connecticut.

The new downtown buildings, one designed by Francis Fassett and several by John Calvin Stevens, the leading architect of the state in this period and a former apprentice to Francis Fassett, again demonstrated the community's belief in itself. The destruction from the fire was used as an opportunity to widen Front Street. Here was also a chance to construct "modern" buildings with large expanses of plate glass to entice the window shopper, fancy mosaic entrances to lead them into the retail establishments, embossed metal ceilings and columns to emphasize the safe fireproof conditions, and fashionable architectural details to echo the classical and colonial inspirations of the day. These buildings showed Bath as an up-to-date city, quick to recover from catastrophe.

A NEW CENTURY, NEW CHALLENGES, AND A NEW WAR: 1900-1918

Although the twentieth century began with great activity in the social and economic spheres of the city, things changed because of the difficulties in the shipbuilding industry. As Pert's history summarizes "shipyard activity was at a peak in the city between 1899 and 1902, but by 1910 all shipyards would be idle except for BIW, Ltd." (Pert:11). Yet, improvements in the city continued. Beginning in 1904 the generosity of Charles Wyman Morse, a successful entrepreneur in steamboats and ice, financed the construction of Morse High School, named after his mother Anna E. J. Morse. In 1909 the former Winship Street residence of James Jones was renovated as the Bath City Hospital, gaining a three-story brick addition shortly after the facility opened. A portion of the city farm was set aside the same year for recreational purposes to become Kelley Field. In 1913 the Alameda was torn down and replaced by the Bath Opera House. As in the 1870s, the private citizens of the community did not allow the economic situation to preclude social progress they felt the city needed.

Of course, that industrial slowdown was about to change in a completely unanticipated way to an unfathomable level of construction and population. Despite America's initial reluctance to join the Great War, the shipbuilding industry was drawn into the maelstrom as soon as war broke out abroad. The European merchant marines had been carrying 90 percent of America's foreign commerce. Their immediate conversion to military purposes meant a shortage in cargo-carrying ships. Locally one response was the purchase of the New England Shipyard and the lease of the Sewall shipyard by The Texas Oil Company for its Texas Steamship Company. Bath Iron Works also capitalized on these opportunities. Workers in the thousands came flooding into the city for these companies, in particular, and the four yards still producing wooden ships. And while the stereotypical figure of "Rosie, the Riveter" is associated with World War II, young women were helping in both the yards and the offices of the shipyards during this industrial push of World War I.

Despite a residential project begun before the war on Snow Park between Centre and Academy Streets, additional, immediate actions had to be taken to house the new arrivals. Temporary measures ranged from a tent city on North Street, houseboats on the river, one-family homes converted to multi-family, to temporarily transformed garages and camps. The Texas Steamship

Company began constructing homes in northern portions of the city, including the streets of Edward, North, Washington above Winship, Park, Oak west of High, and so forth. But, by 1918 the population was unmanageable, swelling to 14,000 and perhaps as much as 20,000 during the workday.

Once war was declared in the United States, the new Emergency Fleet Corporation requisitioned all steel ships under construction in the country. One of the corporation's responsibilities was the housing of workers for the war effort. They facilitated the efforts of the local companies and the city to create additional housing, infrastructure, and public utilities such as schools for these workers. One project aimed at the workers of the Texas Steamship Workers was the development of brick homes with slate roofs in the area bordered by Oliver, Winship and High Streets. Construction of the sixty-eight homes that would house 122 families began in August of 1918. The 700-plus laborers would finish 95 percent of them, sixty-five homes in ninety-seven days.¹⁰ Another development pursued at the same time, the so-called "White Project" for BIW workers, consisted of seventy-eight modest wooden structures finished in the spring of 1919. These houses have created their own small neighborhood with shared architectural elements, streetscape details, and common beginnings. Together, these infill and housing projects moved northward and westward the boundaries of the denser portion of Bath's urban sections, while maintaining a walkable city.

Complicating the worldwide crisis was the onset of the deadly influenza epidemic. The population of Bath, already dense, and made more so by the war industry, was a fertile breeding ground in September of 1918. By mid-October there were more than 1800 cases, and forty deaths. Mayor J. Edward Drake had established several emergency hospitals—at the Kennebec Yacht Club, the Grace Church Parish House, the Elks Home, and the Winter Street Church. Nurses and doctors came from Augusta and Bangor to help with the onslaught. By the end of 1919 sixty-four had died from some 2300 cases, including three nurses.

¹⁰ It speaks well to Bath's stability and housing stock that not only are there homes of nearly two-hundred years that have the same family occupying them, but the granddaughter of one of the original builders of the Brick Project lived until 2007 in one of the homes her grandfather built nearly ninety years ago and bought as soon as they were no longer needed for shipyard workers.

DEPRESSION AND DETERMINATION: 1918-1940

The formal end of hostilities at eleven minutes past eleven o'clock on November 11, 1918 cut short the federal shipbuilding effort. Existing contracts were completed. The Texas Steamship Company finished its vessels in 1921: 35 cargo carriers, 10 large steam tankers, 9 tank barges, 4 small and 2 large freighters, and 1 steamship while Bath Iron Works had by 1920 constructed 11 new destroyers and 2 cargo steamships. The population melted away in the next few years as the complete shift in technology tolled the end of large-scale wooden vessels for the City of Ships. Even steamboat construction decreased as the automobile increasingly became the preferred mode of transportation. As Denise Larson notes in her introductory history for the book celebrating the city's sesquicentennial, "No launchings were recorded in 1922, 1926, and 1927, and all the shipyards closed down" (Bath Historical Society:13).

And on a different economic front, the 1920 census for Bath listed fewer farms as the rural hinterland began its evolution away from agriculture and toward homes for individuals like teachers, nurses, machinists, and the like working in the city. In 1931 a chunk of North Bath farmland was purchased by Hyde Windlass Co. for the construction of a nine-hole golf course. The existing farmhouse was converted into a clubhouse. Still another portion of land was acquired by the Sagadahoc Rod, Gun, and Skeet Club. This organization formed in 1934, purchasing the land in 1942. North Bath demolished its schoolhouse in 1935, suggesting that the automobile had brought the rural area closer to the public services of the urban portion of Bath (Dearborn Lovetere).

The Great Depression came early to this city. The Texas yard closed shortly after its contractual obligations were met. With that closing three thousand jobs left. Bath Iron Works, which had employed more than 1900 at the height of the war efforts, was down to 650 employees in 1925. That same year the company went into receivership, sold at public auction to an out-of-state concern that dismantled the facility for its salvage value. In the 1920s, the city's population dropped more than 33percent to just over 9100 people.

As the car gained popularity, more changes were made to accommodate the increasingly prevalent mode of transportation. The efforts of Luther

Maddock of Boothbay Harbor and State Senator Frank Carlton of Woolwich pushed through a three-million-dollar bond issue for the construction of a new double-decked train and automobile bridge across the Kennebec River. If its construction, finished in 1927, brought a new accessibility to the city and connection to the region, it also resulted in the demolition of the King Tavern, once the home of the state's first governor and the compact neighborhood of residences and businesses that anchored the south end of the central business district. With its six gasoline-filling stations, the resulting Route 1, only a tenth of a mile long in that small part of Bath, almost instantly took on a new character that reflected the growing car culture.

Perhaps because of William S. Newell's persistence in creating a new BIW on the old plant property in 1927 and his success in obtaining contracts to build steel yachts, fishing trawlers, Coast Guard patrol boats, tugboats, and utility vessels, other business ventures came to Bath as the financial situation worsened elsewhere. Oakhurst Dairy opened a plant at Centre and Middle while two new department stores opened in 1931 on Front Street. City improvements kept apace because of the generosity of private citizens once again. George Patten Davenport left two sizeable bequests to the city: one providing for the construction of a new city hall to be named Davenport Memorial in honor of his father whose home was once on that parcel; and the other for the creation of the Davenport Fund for various charitable causes that continues to ease the hardships of citizens and to facilitate the missions of non-profit organizations in the city today.

The Boston architect, Charles Loring, designed the 1929 City Hall in the popular Classical Revival style, contrasting strongly with the streamlined and pragmatic lines of the new gas stations nearby. The new structure inherited the Revere Bell that had been moved from the North Meetinghouse to the 1837 town hall on Centre Street. In Bath's cultural landscape the light-colored City Hall provides an interesting visual tension with the dark mid-nineteenth-century Sagadahoc County Courthouse designed by Francis Fassett at the other end of Centre Street. Two seats of government, local and regional, gaze steadfastly at each other over filled-in land where water once isolated Shaw's Point.

That steadfastness was needed on the part of the citizens when Morse High School burned in 1928. It was replaced by another, built on the same spot

and financed largely by a \$150,000 bond issue. Although concerted and partially successful efforts had been made to reduce the city's debt since the 1870s, the fiscal outlook continued to be problematic. Not surprisingly, the need to provide jobs and public assistance in the early 1930s added to the city's financial problems.

Some work was found through federal programs, such as the Civil Works Administration, with employment for some 200 people in local projects. For example, the upgrading of Kelley Field and the conversion of the Goddard Pond area into a playground offered some employment. Additional improvements to the road system as increasing automobile traffic demanded more access and more space also provided jobs. Vine Street was widened to provide a four-lane approach to the Carlton Bridge. A new road was constructed from Cook's Corner to Bath in 1938, following the path of King's Turnpike, a toll road built by William King and other Bath investors in the first years of the nineteenth century. As Pert noted, the key to many of these improvements was the accessibility that the Carlton Bridge created in the midcoast region. He indicated that "almost a million vehicles crossed the Carlton Bridge in 1937"(Pert: 17). The increased automobile traffic led to Bath's first traffic light in 1938 at the intersection of Washington and Centre Streets. The growing reliance on the car led to the demise of the intercity trolley system, although a local bus service started in 1937.

Private employers also made modest gains in the 1930s as BIW gained a Navy contract to build a destroyer in 1931. By 1940 the shipyard would build seven more destroyers and thirteen additional vessels, allowing the company to move beyond the lease it possessed and buy the property of the Works outright. The yard's increasing employment, combined with the growing through-traffic, probably encouraged the construction of the W. T. Grant department store on the site of the old city hall on Centre Street and the renovation of Albert Shaw's mansion as the Sedgwick Hotel in the mid 1930s. The Congress Shirt Company, on Middle and Centre Streets, expanded its factory at the same time. This facility, built in 1895 as the doomed Bath Shoe Manufacturing Company, had changed to shirt production in 1898.

Once more, the Columbia block was hit by fire in 1937. The gutted theatre and several of the neighboring damaged businesses were reorganized into a hall, a new motion picture theatre, and the first self-serve grocery store in Bath, run by the Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company. The salvaged

exterior walls made these adaptive reuses not as apparent from the outside as the results of earlier fires. Another catastrophe happened on March 1, 1938, when gasoline fumes ignited in Plant's garage at 737 Washington Street. The resulting explosion, the largest in Bath history, killed two men and injured seven others, besides destroying the structure and shattering windows in the neighborhood.

WORLD WAR II: PREPARATION AND EXECUTION: 1940-1950

As was the case in World War I, Bath's shipbuilding industry and its major employer, the federal government, determined well before the formal pronouncement of war in 1941 that additional destroyers were needed. The work force at BIW was above 2800 in mid-1940, above 4600 in mid-1941, and above 12,000 - working in three shifts—in 1943. As Pert, with justifiable pride, wrote in his summary history:

BIW would launch 4 destroyers by the end of 1940, 3 destroyers and 4 cargo ships in 1941, 15 destroyers in 1942, 21 destroyers each in 1943 and 1944, and 19 destroyers in 1945. During peak production in 1943-44, the shipyard was turning over a destroyer to the U. S. Navy every 17 days—each produced in fewer man hours, and with fewer defects, and at a cost 10 to 25 percent less than the same ships built elsewhere. By war's end, production of destroyers by BIW exceeded not only that of any other United States shipyard, but more than all the shipyards in either Germany or Japan. (Pert:18)

This remarkable production was accomplished by hard work and the improvement of the facility by acquiring land in Brunswick, expanding the Bath shipyard to the south, relocating the Bath railroad tracks and demolishing the nineteenth-century railroad station, to be replaced by a new one in 1941.¹¹

Unlike the last war, there were no efforts to house all of the new workers within the city, since regional transportation had changed so dramatically. Thirty-seven buses were purchased for commuting within a sixty-mile radius and ride-sharing was organized. Cities like Rockland saw buses to and from Bath, several times a day for each of the three shifts. Nevertheless, two housing developments were constructed in the city at federal expense. Hyde Park Terrace, built in 1941, was to house 200 families in 56 brick structures that, curiously to local residents, rested on cement slabs rather than cellars. Lambert Park of 1942, between High and Oak Grove Streets, was a combination of permanent and temporary modular housing for 400 families.

¹¹ This station has been recently renovated.

But, as in World War I, these various provisions didn't negate the need for additional single-home construction or the conversion of larger homes into multi-family units. As the largest contributor to new housing within the twentieth century in Bath, the federal government also paid for the public-works improvements necessary to service these developments, make improvements to the high school, and build a new elementary school. At this time, as it became clear that the old city dump on the extension of North Street was insufficient and dangerous, the municipal dump was moved to the north end of Bath, just west of High Street.

Again the growing concentration of a busy and employed population in Bath, and the rural North Bath area that the city served, produced a healthy business economy. The downtown possessed four major anchors in J.J. Newberry, F. W. Woolworth, W.T. Grant and Sears Roebuck that were accompanied by six grocery stores, two local department stores, seven men's clothing stores, twelve beauty parlors, 4 jewelry stores, and 9 restaurants, among a host of other establishments.

Once again, the pattern of retrenchment occurred after the end of the war, although with much less severe effects. From August 1945 to a year later, the work force at the shipyard and Hyde Windlass would be reduced from more than 10,250 to fewer than 1400. However, the company was in a firm enough financial position in 1948 that it was able to purchase, from the federal government, the improvements made in Bath and Brunswick during the war years. In the later portion of the decade, the yard built 32 fishing trawlers for the French government.

Other shifts in the business and social landscape occurred in this period. The city lost a major business when the Bath Box Company, on Trufant's Point in the South End, burned in 1946, although it had gained a sardine cannery where the Texas Steamship Company had once operated on Clapp's Point in the North End. A local landmark, Elmhurst, the 1914 mansion designed by John Calvin Stevens for John Sedgwick Hyde, the son of Thomas Worcester Hyde, was given by Hyde heirs to the Pine Tree Society for Crippled Children and Adults in 1947.¹²

¹²This twentieth-century home replaced one built in the 1840s by Zina Hyde, father to Thomas Worcester Hyde. Zina had also called his home Elmhurst.

THE RAMIFICATIONS OF THE AUTOMOBILE REVOLUTION: 1950-1970

Other changes in the post-war years and into the 1950s and 60s revolved around the automobile, the most influential factor in the rewriting of the twentieth-century American landscape. In the late forties, a new four-lane highway was constructed at the cost of \$695,000, literally cutting deep into the granite bedrock between Granite and Centre Streets to create Leeman Highway. This highway, while relieving congestion, began a trend of encouraging traffic to move quickly through Bath, without stopping to engage with the city. In 1957 ten years after this step, a high-level approach or viaduct to the Carlton Bridge was begun to carry traffic over Washington Street and the railroad tracks. The viaduct was followed less than ten years later by a new stretch of four-lane highway connecting Leeman Highway to Cooks Corner in Brunswick.

As the general prosperity of the period allowed even more families to purchase automobiles, parking became a problem in the downtown area. The solution seemed to be the installation of parking meters. In the mid-1950s a newly created three-man Bath Parking District decided to act decisively to create additional space. The district acquired properties on both sides of Water Street and, in 1959, purchased a 400-foot parcel on the waterfront on Commercial Street. In 1967 the city acquired the assorted properties held by the Bath Parking District, estimated to hold off-street parking for 545 cars. The city then chose to eliminate the parking meters.

The post-war desire for modernity found in the new uncluttered design of many aspects of objects such as cars, televisions, and architecture, may have figured in the way that Bath residents examined their post-war city. The citizens saw the bulging school enrollments of the baby boom hampered by aging schools. They saw a downtown of historic buildings with historic problems—a mixture of deteriorating industrial sites, poorly maintained residences, and well-worn retail establishments. Those structures seemed to reflect an age and a technology long gone. This led to a protracted reconsideration of the downtown, in particular, a citywide conversation of what should be altered, demolished, and salvaged. How would Bath define urban renewal?

There were also changes in rural North Bath. The dairy farms that had once dotted the landscape were nearly gone. Small businesses that had made bricks or stored ice had disappeared. There, nevertheless, remained an attitude of rural life where eggs were delivered door-to-door and professional men made house calls. The rural center still had its chapel, until its demolition in 1965, and also a small country store run by Sam London by the Whiskeag Bridge. Like today, smelt shanties still stood on the frozen waters. A developer proposed in 1960 an intensive development of Lines Island, off North Bath, once used primarily for the grazing of animals. The plan with its 345 lots, pool, restaurant, and marina was approved but never came to pass. Rather the island eventually passed to the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (Dearborn Lovetere).

There seemed little controversy over the solution for the aging schools. The two decades saw the destruction of nineteenth-century schools and a fire station, parallel with the construction of new schools—three in the 1950s, and one in the 1960s with several additions to the schools in the latter decade. A new private secondary school also opened, as the Hyde mansion Elmhurst found new life as a boarding school. The demolition of the nineteenth-century Bath High School provided land reused for a new central fire station. Also in the 1960s, the Patten Free Library doubled in size through the gift of Mrs. Mildred C. Wright. It was also in this decade that William Zorach's sculpture, "The Spirit of the Sea," became the new fountain in Library Park.

VISIONS OF THE DOWNTOWN: RENEWAL OR RENOVATION

The downtown provided a less easily solved problem. In 1947 Bath citizens had decided to replace their mayoral-bicameral form of city government with a system that divided responsibilities between a city manager and city council. Eight years later the council decided to create a Planning Board to assist with the reconfiguration of the city and formulate a development plan for the city. That board's efforts to plan, in conjunction with the Boston planning firm hired to create a comprehensive plan, were complicated by the comings and goings of services, businesses, and buildings within the downtown and neighboring properties.

Among those departures was passenger train service, to and from Bath, in 1959. The Uptown Theatre closed the same year. Also disappearing from the

downtown were the weekly *Bath Independent*, the home offices of the *Bath Daily Times* when it merged with the *Brunswick Record* to be published in Brunswick, and the closing of Ferry Street. Among the buildings torn down in the 1960s were the Park Bowling Alley, the Bath Iron Works Recreational Hall (former People's Baptist Church), the Universalist Church, the Centre Street fire station and school, the Desmond Clothing Store, the Hotel Phoenix, the Commercial Street Sail Loft, Torrey Roller Bushing Works, several dilapidated businesses at the corner of Washington and Centre Streets, Redlon Plumbing Supply on Front Street, the Elks Lodge, and another Front Street building at the corner of Arch.

A new grocery store was built for the A & P on Front Street. The former Uptown Theatre was converted to a swimming pool for the YMCA. Congress Sportswear moved from its old factory on Middle Street to a new facility on Centre Street near the extension of North Street, now named for the company—Congress Avenue. Additional construction on Front Street included the addition to the Praver warehouse and a new bank.

The proposal formulated by the Boston planners was both supported and dismissed passionately by different well-meaning segments of Bath's leadership. It called for additional demolition, a pedestrian walkway, the construction of modern buildings that would serve as offices, homes, and various public institutions, all to be funded by a \$625,000 bond. The voters decided decisively in the summer of 1965 that they did not want this definition of downtown Bath as a renovated shopping mall. Businesses left the downtown as their buildings were torn down or as they sought "greener pastures" in the developing shopping areas of other communities. In 1965 after the referendum was defeated, Grant's and Sears left for Cooks Corner. Newberry's went to a new structure in Brunswick's downtown Maine Street.

As a parallel study in contrasts Bath's debt reached an all-time high of 2.1 million dollars at the end of the 1960s, while in 1961, with a band's fanfare, the city finally retired the ninety-two-year debt incurred in 1869 with the Knox & Lincoln railroad bonds.

A sea change for the City of Ships came when one shipping era truly ended in 1962 as the last transport of coal was delivered to the Coal Pocket.

HISTORY REVISITED AND APPRECIATED

The defeat of the urban-renewal referendum and the accompanying debates forced many citizens to re-examine the relevance of the city's past and architectural heritage. One integral part of local history, the maritime history, had intrigued several key individuals for decades: Mark Hennessy, a Bath reporter for the Portland newspapers, Harry Webber, editor of the *Bath Daily Times*, and Sumner Sewall, descendant of the early settler Dummer Sewall, World War I Ace, and governor of Maine during World War II. Their efforts and that of other Bath residents resulted in the Marine Research Society of Bath in 1962. The society opened a display space in the old Ledyard/Stetson building on Centre Street. Later the collection moved to the Sewall House on Washington Street. In 1971 the society leased the former Percy & Small shipyard, birthplace of the *Wyoming*, later obtaining the property in 1975.

At the same time, awareness of the city's architectural fabric was being raised by the possibility of losing some of the landmarks on Washington Street—the Winter Street Church and the Central Congregational Church. The Winter Street Church property, specifically, had caught the eye of several developers who thought it an excellent parcel for high-rise housing. Several residents, energized by this dismaying prospect, incorporated Sagadahoc Preservation Inc. and moved to purchase the building from the congregation. In 1973, SPI deeded Winter Street Church to the Bath Marine Society. That same year the society published *A Maritime History of Bath* by William Avery Baker, a project that had begun with the detailed research of Mark Hennessey, and a publication that increased the understanding of the region's historical significance. The Central Congregational Church, sold to SPI rather than to the city for a parking lot, was eventually deeded to the Chocolate Church Arts Center. The city and its citizens, wrestling through the ideas together, undertook one part of the Boston plan to recreate a historic atmosphere. Funds to upgrade storefronts and add brick sidewalks lined with period electrical lamps were raised from the general fund and a bond issue. As Bath celebrated its historic identity, the city's work and historic landscape were recognized by the National Trust for Historic Preservation with the prestigious President's Award in 1977.

1970S AND 1980S: CHANGES ABOVE AND BELOW GROUND

P. L. Pert captured the events of the 1970s in a jam-packed sentence that noted the continuation of trends of the 1960s and saw:

the YMCA enlarge by not as much as it would have liked, three long-time businesses leave town, the former railroad station change owners again, a landmark downtown building come down, underwater pipe problems interrupt the city's water supply, a fatal fire destroy a landmark building, two nursing homes merge, a waterfront park emerge, a hospital expand, the downtown traffic pattern change, fire severely damage the Hyde School, and considerable new construction take place in the form of a sewage treatment facility, waterfront business building, nursing home, post office building, housing for the elderly, medical building, shopping center, and building extension by the Bath Iron Works (Pert:30).

Mr. Pert found housing construction and capital improvements to the municipal infrastructure, trends begun in the seventies, continued into the 1980s.

Public improvements were both chosen and forced upon the City of Bath in this time period. Problems with the breaking of pipes forced the upgrading of the water system by the Bath Water District in 1970, while construction of a new sewage treatment and interceptor plant in the north end of the city was underway. That plant, costing 5.5 million dollars, was substantially built with federal and state funds. It, however, did not separate waste from storm water, causing overflow problems in parts of the city at times of heavy runoff. That continuing problem has been addressed repeatedly as the Public Works Department has included separation projects whenever opportunities presented in other roadwork or water-system projects allowed. Voters agreed to bonds numerous times in the 1980s and 1990s to facilitate this process.

Other bonds were required to update the public infrastructure, such as capping portions of the landfill and opening new cells for use. Still other bonds were used to improve other public facilities, including the replacement and duplication of water-supply lines from Woolwich's Nequasset Lake under the Kennebec River to Bath. On the corner of Elm and Water Streets stood the infamous American House. Before the structure could be demolished, arson gutted the building. The city sold the lot to a developer and a State Motor Vehicle Office was constructed. In 1986 the city reacquired the land, vacant for 6 years, to build a two-story structure devoted to the police

department. Previously that department had been housed in different portions of City Hall, subject to a constant press for space.

Another significant change was the razing of the hundred-year-old downtown sail loft in 1964. As Pert remarked this "provided a clear, 400-foot view of the Kennebec River not seen from downtown Bath since the 1700s" (Pert: 25). In 1973 a portion of this land, sold to private interests by the city, was developed for various commercial purposes in a large building called Bathport, which pulled from both vernacular and modern architectural inspirations. The following year a waterfront park became a reality, named after Linwood Temple who had worked to bring it into reality. This window onto the Kennebec River has become an important component of the downtown landscape with its welcoming green space, space for public events, and docks for local and visiting boaters. Another development scheme for an 11-acre retail complex within the historic district and on the waterfront was proposed in 1979. Although projections suggested that 345 jobs and \$192,000 would be added to the tax rolls, public opinion and the city councilors reviewed the project skeptically, not acting on the proposal.

Other changes with the central business district included experimentation with one-way streets. The idea, first tried in 1957 and abandoned because of the vociferous complaints of a large retailer, was revisited in 1974. During the 1980s the traffic pattern was finalized and remains largely in effect today except for tweaking required by the construction of the Sagadahoc Bridge in 2000.

Within the downtown and the outskirts of the city, businesses and buildings came and went. Herbert Douglas's photo studio had been on Broad Street since 1940. After his retirement and the structure's use by still another photographer, the space was cleared for the expansion of Bath Savings Institution. 1973 witnessed the removal of some older structures on Vine Street for the expansion of the Canal National Bank, now Key Bank, opposite the Customs House. In 1989 the Bath Iron Works Credit Union was constructed approximately on the site of the Bath Opera House, which had been torn down in 1971. Also in the 1980s the last operating gas station of the six that once serviced Vine Street in the 1930s was demolished. The sole survivor from those days of early "car culture" on the northeast corner of Vine and Water Streets has been used as a sandwich shop since 1977. Another remnant of the past was lost in 1973, when Albert Shaw's mansion

burned after years of use as the Hotel Sedgwick at Centre and High Streets.

Other businesses simply left the downtown or stopped operations. In 1971, McFadden's Drugstore closed on Front Street after 55 years in a space now used by Maxwell's restaurant. In 1974, Oakhurst Dairy decided to consolidate its processing in Portland, shutting down the plant it had built in 1929 on Centre Street. The A & P grocery store closed its Bath Branch the following year after being part of the central business district since 1938. Further north on Front Street, the S. Praver and Co., wholesale food distributor at that site since 1944, also choose to relocate its operations to Portland. That structure had originally been constructed around 1920 for the Watson-Frye foundry.

In 1977, the first stores opened in a new 35,000 sq. ft. retail shopping center next to Route 1, in the former Chandler's Field, the site of seasonal circuses and carnivals (Longley: 315). The Shaw Supermarket anchor for the site opened the following year. Associated with this shopping center was the beginning of Route 1 fast-food restaurants with a strip appearance, starting with McDonald's in 1977, which was joined in 1990 by Burger King. The character of the southern entrance to Bath changed dramatically.

Bath Iron Works found itself either reeling or rejoicing with the decisions of the Navy. In 1970 the Navy initially awarded all of the contracts for the 30 ships of a then new class of DX destroyers to the Ingalls Shipyard in Mississippi, which delivered the ships late and over-budget. In 1971, BIW, paring properties and costs, gave the 1941 railroad station to the City on the condition it be used as a non-profit dental clinic for children of low-income families from the region. Then in 1972, the BIW shipyard received a contract for the design of a new FFG class destroyer. The design work required new workspace, so BIW acquired a lease on the former W.T. Grant building at Centre and Water Streets. Additional office space was also acquired in the 1980s by the use of the supermarket building between State Road and Route 1.

BIW was then awarded construction contracts for 21 FFG vessels that were completed between 1972 and 1981, both ahead of schedule and under initial cost estimates. The yard also worked on diversifying its contracts, building several container ships in the 1970s. An assembly building was needed and

built in 1972, doubled in 1978 and expanded once again in 1982, creating the 1,280 feet of corrugated green metal that dominates this portion of Washington Street. This space was utilized, not just by the 24 FFG class destroyers finally constructed, but also by the work done on the Arleigh Burke class of Aegis destroyers begun in the early 1980s. As Pert reports, "this work pushed the company's employment level by 1990 (including the Portland drydock facility) to a new peace-time high of approximately 12,000" (Pert:37). The last of the Aegis vessels will be launched in 2010. In the 1980s, Prudential Insurance acquired Bath Iron Works.

Housing projects for senior citizens came in a variety of forms during the seventies and eighties—a level of construction activity that had not been seen since the war years. In April 1973, a 54-unit high-rise was constructed on the corner of Washington and Centre Streets that had held the Sears Roebuck store and the First National Grocery Store. Construction issues arose with the Washington House as it rests partially on Crooker's Creek, part of that "made" land that winds throughout the once watery central business district. Other developments specific to the older midcoast resident include the 1973 consolidation of the Old Ladies Home and the 1917 Plant Memorial Home, the creation of the 1974 nursing home now known as Winship Green, as well as the construction of two 40-unit senior housing, the Anchorage in 1977 and the Moorings in 1979. These were joined in the early 1980s by Seacliff, another 40-unit complex, on Congress Street and the adaptive reuse and expansion of Dike School into Dike's Landing. Still another 30-unit housing complex for the elderly was added in 1991, Oak Ridge on Oak Grove Avenue. The Bath Area Senior Citizens organization had a building built in 1985 on Floral Street. Here a great variety of services are offered from bingo, bridge, and bocce to more serious eldercare and informational assistance.

Those various developments were just part of the housing expansion in the city at this time. The largest housing complex since the 1942 construction of Lambert Park came in 1972 with the 200 pre-fabricated apartments, now known as Northwood Court on the east side of Oak Grove Avenue. In the mid to late 1980s several apartment and condominium complexes were added to the city, 35 apartments and 106 condos at Oak Grove Commons, Pine Hill, Schooner Ridge, Springview, and Conifer Woods. More than twenty private homes have also been constructed in the West Chops Point area since the mid 1980s.

Other notable changes in these two decades include the 1974 renovation and 1983 expansion of Bath Memorial Hospital. The institution, begun in 1909, had seen many changes since its original 36-bed capacity of 1910. But changes would be coming shortly with the 1991 merging of the Bath Memorial Hospital with its Brunswick counterpart and the decisions to build anew.

These varied changes and improvements, mentioned by Pert in his more detailed history, parallel some changes in the cultural resources of the community. The Maine Maritime Museum gained space and property by the acquisition of the Percy & Small shipyard and neighboring properties that included structures, such as the mold loft and the Donnell house that would expand the Museum's ability to interpret the maritime history of the state. The museum also began a construction program that would bloom into a true museum campus in the coming decades. Bath Historical Society (BHS) was founded in 1989, in the words of Pert, "for a principal purpose of helping to defray funding of the position of Historian in the Maine History and Genealogy Room of Patten Free Library" (Pert: 37). The society's other activities revolved around ways to educate the community about its past and provide reference services to the public. This history room houses many original sources of information about regional history and research produced by BHS, SPI, and assorted individuals in their efforts to preserve the rich stories and material culture of the area.¹³ In the early 1970s, the Bath Area YMCA also upgraded and expanded its facilities, but like the alterations at the hospital and the museum, these changes were just a hint of bigger transformations to come.

The city finances in the latter part of this period were in good order; the last eight years (1982-1990) saw both the city and school budgets ending with surpluses. Despite largely responsible local spending, the taxpayers in the last years of the decade railed against the burden of the "ever-increasing, regressive local property taxes" as described by Peter A. Garland in his City Manager report within the 1987-1988 City of Bath Annual report.

¹³ The collections of the History Room hold many documents important to the writing of this piece, including government records, civic documents, original journals, historic photographs, to name just a sampling, and the useful secondary sources of previous city histories. These are further detailed in the attached annotated bibliography. Also of note, there are also numerous monographs on various Bath topics by P. L. Pert done under the auspices of Bath Historical Society.

In response to the lack of action by the state legislature to address the problem on a statewide basis, Bath voters in November of 1988 "imposed an annual municipal spending cap based upon the previous year's Consumer Price Index increase, on all future and School budgets" (Annual Report 1987-88:2). This same action was approved in several other communities in the state. While Garland sympathized with the property-tax burden and the voter's discontent, he felt that a cap was problematic, in the long run hamstringing the local government's ability to provide services. He hoped it would be repealed soon, after legislative action at the state level to alleviate the underlying cause.

THE ENDING OF ONE CENTURY, THE BEGINNING OF ANOTHER

In the years since the last comprehensive plan and summary history have been written Bath has grown and developed. In some ways, one might say that the city's existing characteristics—its reliance on BIW, its sense of history, its need to correct past problems of infrastructure, and its vibrant, if small, downtown—have strengthened rather than changed. BIW has fared well in general, implementing new methods of construction, although the work force has diminished significantly. The industrial economy of the city has diversified, although not to the desired extent, while a significant business on the working waterfront closed its doors. An architectural survey of properties in the South End produced the nomination of one historic district, the likely eligibility of another, and a new sensitivity to the historic nature of Bath. Individual structures and neighborhoods have been revitalized by the restoration and, sometimes, gentrification of buildings. These improvements often are the product of new residents of Bath, who were drawn by the city's sense of place. The establishment of the National Trust's Main Street Program here has reminded many of the value of Bath's central business district and helped to instigate projects that protect and promote the marketable qualities of a small, historic downtown. Along the waterfront, within formally protected Thorne Head and Sewall Woods, in both a new YMCA and an adaptively reused old one, through renovated public facilities, and on an expanded golf course, recreational spaces have increased for residents and visitors. The city infrastructure has also improved as the repeated passage of bonds has allowed modifications of the landfill, the wastewater treatment plant, the separation of sewer and storm water, and the modernization of existing schools. Traffic congestion has been greatly alleviated by the construction of the 4-lane Sagadahoc Bridge,

while other more localized issues of speeding and other problems have remained. In all these wide-ranging developments, however, the essential nature and appeal of the community has not been altered.

Opening in the late summer of 2000, the Sagadahoc Bridge brought a new ease to Bath's traffic problems, breaking a bridge-span record in the process of construction. At the time, the 420-foot bridge created the "longest balanced-cantilever, precast-concrete segmental span in the United States" (Phipps: 35).¹⁴ The steel-truss Carlton Bridge of 1927, with its two lanes, and central lift for river traffic, could no longer serve the traffic of more than 25,000 vehicles per day. As early as 1981, the replacement of the bridge was planned. The tourists of summer and the afternoon shift of BIW snarled the free flow through the city. But it was in 1996 that Maine State Department of Transportation began the formal process of soliciting bids for the design/build project. While the Sagadahoc Bridge has facilitated traffic locally and in the mid-coast region, it does not permit passage to tall ships bound north on the Kennebec River. The reworking of the Carlton Bridge to remove the roadbed and renovate portions of the aging structure continues to this day, as that 80-year-old truss bridge remains as the only way for trains to cross the river. Although the replacement of the viaduct approach was the subject of a lengthy feasibility study, financial constraints on the Maine Department of Transportation budget dictated that the viaduct be resurfaced with substantial repair in the late spring of 2007. With careful planning, the detour through the commercial district moved smoothly without the congestion many residents and merchants feared.

Although the bridge has eased shift change for residents and workers, Bath Iron Works has seen another kind of roller-coaster ride in the last two decades. General Dynamics acquired BIW in 1995. The 1990 high of 12,000 employees dropped to 8500 within five years. Today employment stands around 5100. Part of that decrease in employment stems from an increase in efficiency, as new manufacturing methods have allowed fewer employees to be more productive. The construction of the land-level facility (1998-2001) moved the shipyard away from the traditional method of assembling a vessel, launched through the inclined ways, toward a new manner of assembling modules that was less vulnerable to the vagaries of weather and more cost-

¹⁴ The March 2000 issue of *Civil Engineering* discussed the construction of the four-lane bridge with precast-concrete segments by the Colorado companies Figg Bridge Engineers, Inc. and Flatiron Structures, LLC.

efficient. To that same end, of putting together more and larger components of a vessel in controlled conditions, the mega-unit building was completed in 2006, and is currently being further expanded. As the shipyard finishes up the last Arleigh Burke-class destroyers, a class of vessels begun more than twenty years ago, BIW gained the contract in September 2007 to build the first DDG-1000 Elmo Zumwalt-class destroyer, the next generation of destroyers for the U.S. Navy.

The most substantial of these improvements, the land-level facility, was constructed on several conditions. Bath Iron Works requested and received a Tax Increment Financing District that reduced its tax burden on the new business infrastructure, but returned a portion of those savings to the City of Bath for a special development fund. The Iron Works was also responsible for the financing of the removal of Edwards Dam on the Kennebec River; the restoration of wetlands in Woolwich, to compensate for the alteration of wetlands at the site of the project; and the gift of ten acres for a park in the City of Bath, near the land-level facility. This "park," as defined by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, was created in two stages. The larger parcel, once capped and covered with soil by the company because of the underlying hazardous materials, was given to the city in early 2004; the smaller portion was accepted in late 2005. The plans for this park are still in flux at this time, although a walking path, a small parking area, and a bocce court have been constructed while the existing pier has been repaired.

This was not the only expansion of recreational opportunities since 1990. Early in this period, the private Burgess Marina was purchased by the city, becoming the South End Boat Launch. In the late 1990s, Lambert Park's Varnum Field was graded and seeded, adding almost another 6 acres to the community's playing fields. More recently, Lambert Park gained a community center, built with the help of the Vocational School here in Bath. 1997 saw the installation of a new, all-weather track at considerable cost while McMann Field was rehabilitated and Tainter Field expanded. Other aspects of various facilities have been improved, including the refurbishing of the shelter at Goddard's Pond in 2004 and the construction of dugouts and a new fence at Kimball's field in 2006-7. The waterfront park has gained a marine pump-out station, new light fixtures, and new benches in an ongoing effort to spruce up Bath's gateway from the Kennebec River. Druid Park, a small park planned, but never executed, in the late nineteenth-century for the Five Corners Area as a green entry to the city's public cemeteries, has begun to

take shape in the last couple of years through the work of the Bath Forestry Committee, the City Arborist, and public donations.

Of particular note are the building of a new YMCA and the reuse of the old Y building in the central business district. The local chapter of the YMCA began in 1856, making it one of the oldest in the country. Not until 1894 did it gain a building of its own, which gathered assorted additions through the 1970s. In 1998 the organization began raising funds for the larger, popular facilities on Centre Street that opened in April 2001. An important source of money was the \$500,000 bond endorsed by Bath voters that contributed to the construction costs, in turn for the City receiving the old building. In early 2002 the City Council agreed to develop a skateboard park and youth meetinghouse in this space. This largest indoor-skateboard park in the state opened in late 2002 as a private-municipal partnership, created by city personnel, business leaders, assorted residents, and committed young skaters, working together. Within the private sector, another expansion was seen when the Bath Country Club added another nine holes to its course in 1994.

An important piece of Bath's long-established green space was formally preserved by the Lower Kennebec Regional Land Trust when the organization began raising money for the purchase of the 96-acre Thorne Head in the late 1990s. With the help of the state program, Land For Maine's Future, the land trust acquired the area, long used by locals for walking, hunting, and admiring the view of Merrymeeting Bay, opening the preserve officially in 2000. This significant open space, noted as an important natural habitat by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, was enhanced by William D. Sewall's gift of over 60 neighboring acres in 2004. This area, known as Sewall Woods, was augmented in 2006 by the purchase of 26 acres from the Bath Housing Authority. The preserve was ceremonially opened in 2006 by the Lower Kennebec Regional Land Trust.

Another important dedication occurred in September of 1998, when a substantial addition of Patten Free Library was opened to the public. This expansion had been part of a building program considered by the Board of Trustees initially in 1993. The project called for an expanded children's and young adults' areas, nonfiction stacks, and a new climate-controlled History Room. This architecturally sympathetic addition, whose ramps and elevator made the facility more accessible, was balanced by the restoration of the

original 1890s Richardsonian Romanesque building. Also preserved were the murals painted by Dahlov Ipcar, the daughter of William Zorach, sculptor of the Spirit of the Sea, for the Children's Room in the late 1970s. During construction the former Children's Home housed the library's collection and welcomed patrons.

The setting of the library has also seen improvement. In 1989-90, the nineteenth-century gazebo, torn down in the 1950s, was reconstructed by volunteers led by James Stilphen. The bridge over the pond was built in 1994. A new non-profit group was formed, Friends of the Zorach Fountain, after a 2002 grant awarded to the Bath Garden Club, found the "Spirit of the Sea" in need of conservation. The efforts of the Friends and their friends resulted in a widely-attended celebration in August of 2005 where the restored sculpture, pond, new landscaped setting and benches were admired. The library and its park serve the communities of Arrowsic, Phippsburg, Georgetown, Woolwich, West Bath, as well as Bath. This regional role makes Patten Free Library with its enhanced facilities a strong anchor of the city's downtown.

Since 1990, the downtown itself has seen some changes. Some have been physical, while others have been more of a shift in attitude. Although the citizens of Bath rejected urban renewal in the 1960s, the central business district continued to face the problems encountered by historic downtowns nationally, such as deteriorating infrastructure, convenience, and competition with malls and the new "big boxes". In the early 1990s, William F. King and other local merchants formed the Bath Business Association (BBA), a multi-function group to consider these problems and possible solutions. Working together to revitalize the downtown, promote the unique qualities of a small historic commercial district, and demonstrate the special opportunities within the welcoming space, the BBA found a large degree of success in their collective and individual efforts. The organization also learned that many of its ideas dovetailed with the work of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's National Main Street Program. Once that program came to the State of Maine, Bath was one of the first communities chosen to participate in 2001. The BBA was dissolved as its functions were taken on by the new Main Street Bath organization (for more information, see the Inventory of Historical and Archaeological Resources in the Appendix). The BBA's efforts in conjunction with many other city-wide cultural and economic resources, and the rich reserve of the generous

citizens themselves, probably accounted for Bath's appearance twice on the list of the 100 Best Small Cities in America, the second time at the seventeenth position. Recognized in 2005 by the National Trust of Historic Preservation as one of a "Dozen Distinctive Destinations," Bath has garnered a reputation for the appeal of the city and the downtown, but also has gained self-confidence and knowledge by being labeled a "jewel hidden in plain sight," by Richard Moe, the president of the National Trust.

There have been physical changes, enhancing the downtown through the efforts of the City of Bath, Main Street Bath, and individual property owners. In the mid 1990s, the Farmers' Market was re-established along Commercial Street. New benches replaced deteriorating ones along Front and Centre Streets, as well as in Waterfront Park, an important component of downtown. A community bulletin board and new directories were constructed to help visitors orient themselves and find local attractions and businesses. The archway, from Front Street to the city-owned parking lot on Water Street, was transformed in 2006 by paint, new lights, and the hanging of restored large, dramatic murals on various historic Bath subjects, painted by James Stilphen. Several downtown structures were renewed or restored by property owners, some with the assistance of a new façade-improvement program started by the city. A new variety of businesses now exists in the downtown, businesses that are both mindful of the nineteenth century in their sale of shoes, cooking pots, sweets, or weaving materials, and modern in their promotion of new technologies as the essence of their business or facilitating the enjoyment of their products. In a 2002 move to the former Rite-Aid Store, a structure initially built by the A & P Company for a grocery store in 1961, Brackett's Market brought the family-owned grocery store closer to the center of downtown. Some long-existing establishments, such as Wilson's Drugstore and Bath Savings Institution, both tenants of downtown for a hundred or more years, remain alongside new ventures.

One controversial new downtown venture was the New Bathport Condominium project, first brought before the Planning Board in 2005. The developers hoped to build a multi-storied, high-end condominium structure that would exceed the height restrictions in place. This application was possible because of the use of an incentive development tool, Contract Rezoning. The community, Planning Board, and City Council were divided on the merits and shortcomings of the project, which would bring wealthy residents, but little

space for retail businesses, into the heart of Bath's waterfront downtown. After several redesigns and eventual approval by both Board and Council, a citizens' petition brought the item to voters for their opinion, and the project was approved. During this time, the economic downturns and softening of the housing market changed the perspective of the prospective developers, who, in November of 2007, decided not to continue with the project, but to renovate the existing Bathport, a mix of business and residential space in its existing, vernacular style of the 1970s.

This was one of several housing initiatives in the last fifteen years. Washington Heights, a nine-lot subdivision, was approved by the Planning Board in 2003. This was the first subdivision of any size brought to the Planning Board since the late 1980s. It was followed by two others on the north end of Front Street. Although approved, one subdivision has not been built; the other is currently in the early stages of construction. This latter project, "The Old Shipyard," which rests on land once part of the Sewall shipyard on the Kennebec River, will feature a three-structure plan that houses nineteen units. Being within the National Register of Historic Places and the locally designated Historic District, like the proposed New Bathport, the design of this development was scrutinized for its ability to fit into the historic neighborhood and the existing patterns of scale, detailing, materials, and massing. Approval was granted in the last weeks of 2006.

Another multi-family development was constructed in 2007 on an extension of Edgett Street by Tedford Housing to provide housing for 6 chronically homeless families. In 1999 and 2000, a multi-million dollar project renovated the Maritime Apartments. Beginning in 2002, the Plant Memorial Home, established in 1917 by the generosity of former Bath native and successful shoe manufacturer Thomas Plant, undertook a substantial addition and reworking of the existing room arrangements to create more modern apartment-like assisted-living opportunities. While each year has seen the construction of a few single-family homes, there have been no spikes in such residential development or in subsequent population numbers.

While the population of Bath has dropped in the last twenty years, the services required by the residents, and by visitors to this service center, continue to need updating. As seen in earlier decades, bonds were repeatedly brought to the voters to improve various aspects of the city's infrastructure. The voters approved many of these projects: in 1989 and

1998, the separation of storm and sewer water; in 1992 and 1994, the wastewater treatment plant; in 1991 and 2006, a landfill cell closure, cell opening, and gas mitigation; in 1998, streets and sidewalks; in 1993, 1995, 1999, and 2006, the Vocational School addition, renovations to Morse High School, Bath Middle School, and other repairs needed to local schools. (The aging of Bath Schools, as the city's school-age population appears to diminish, presents problems and possible regional solutions that are discussed in the Education Inventory.) In 1988, Bath was one of several communities statewide that received spending and tax caps through voter initiatives. Although most have rescinded these restrictions, Bath continues to operate under such a cap. This cap may constrain the Council's budget decisions on capital improvement and maintenance needs, forcing it to choose bonds as a method of financing.

The separation of sewer and storm water has diminished, but not eliminated, the overflows that occur most often at the Harward Pump Station. A secondary treatment plant has been finished, adding considerably to the efficiency and capacity of the system. The landfill has been expanded, and monies voted to open still another cell. The gas mitigation system, being put in place in the late 2007, has not yet demonstrated its efficacy to counteract the unpleasant and possibly unhealthy effects of the landfill. In November 2007 voters turned down a bond for funds to close the landfill permanently although many North End residents felt that it was time for closure. Curbside recycling of limited items started in the early 1990s, but changed substantially in 2007 when single-stream recycling of many more materials began. This push to reduce the material going to the landfill was underlined by the city's change to a "Pay as You Throw" program where only garbage placed in purchased city-endorsed bags would be picked up curbside.

Some public services once found in Bath departed, while others expanded and new ones arrived. The closing of Bath Hospital, as services were gradually discontinued throughout the 1990s, was anticipated when the merger with Brunswick's Hospital took shape. The newly constructed Mid Coast Hospital opened in 2001 near Cooks' Corner and is already planned for expansion. But, this consolidation left the city with a large building, formed over almost 100 years of service, only part of which was still needed for medical offices. Out of the debate on how best to use this space for the betterment of the community and the region came a great answer. Here was a space for a community college. In January 2003, the Mid Coast Center for

Higher Education opened with classrooms and other educational facilities for the Senior College, the University College, and Southern Maine Community College. Each year has seen increasing enrollments as this local resource opens educational doors for many regional residents.

In a similar manner, when the Jesse Albert Dental Clinic moved from the former railroad station downtown to a larger and modern facility on Congress Avenue in 2001, the train station was left empty, but full of local hopes. The restoration of the 1941 structure, last used as a railroad station in 1959, was completed in the summer of 2007. Now it offers tickets, visitor information, and Maine-made products to those who enjoy the seasonal train rides in the Mid Coast area. As the numbers of train riders increase on the Boston to Portland run, plans continue to extend the line up the coast.

Bath Community TV, a public service begun in May of 2000, now is part of the fabric of everyday life, broadcasting live and recorded programs. Many locally-produced shows from the traditional MOHIBA performances to Morse High School basketball, to religious services and local-history talks are offered. The live broadcast and reruns of City Council, Planning Board, and Board of Education meetings have brought a new transparency to the process of local governance.

Many of the businesses that have come to Bath in the last fifteen years have been directly or indirectly impacted by the decisions of the council or planning board. One such significant development was the creation of the Industrial Park at Wing Farm. The idea of a local industrial park was around for quite awhile before it took form. A 1997 grant of \$400,000 allowed work on the necessary public infrastructure. In the fall of 1999 the first phase of development began when Coastal Economic Development and The Kennebec Company began their buildings. Others followed with manufacturing facilities, which varied from composite to biscuit production, alongside dance studios and warehouses, until nearly all the parcels have been developed. In 2006, an expansion feasibility study suggested that Wing Farm could be expanded, both within Bath and, possibly, with a cooperative regional effort, into West Bath. The City Council decided to begin that expansion in early 2008. Other successful efforts to find additional space for small businesses resulted in the rehabilitation of 2 Town Landing near the Water Treatment Plant, beginning in 2004.

Other developments, with the use of incentive zoning, have modified the face of Bath's gateway, including the expansion of Shaw's alongside the construction of other commercial spaces at the Bath Shopping Center, and the building of the Big Apple Service Station. Approved by the Planning Board in early 2001, the use of Contract Rezoning encouraged the developers of the Bath Shopping Center to incorporate a facelift of the existing buildings, design approval on the new construction, an upgraded parking lot made more attractive and safer, and new decorative streetlights along the revamped access road with its added sidewalks. The attractiveness of an application was also part of the 2006 approval of the Big Apple Service Station on Route One. The developer allowed the Board design approval of the brick structure, extensive landscaping including street trees and a new sidewalk along Route One and Western Avenue, and a decorative fence—all a great improvement over the abandoned car dealership with its broken windows along the city's gateway.

But there have been losses too during this time period. Stinson's Seafood, established as Stinson's Canning Co. in 1927 for the production of canned sardines, closed in 2005. Located on Bowery Street on a parcel that was once part of the Texas Steamship Company in the early twentieth century and several other shipyards before that time, the property was purchased by a developer who has unsuccessfully, at this time, sought to have the land rezoned as residential, rather than waterfront industrial. In May of 2006, arson destroyed all of the buildings on the site in a fire that called upon the services of a dozen fire departments. This was the largest fire in Bath for more than thirty years. Fortunately the effects of the fire were contained with relatively little damage to neighboring structures. In August 2007, another costly fire destroyed one of the two condominium buildings of Schooner Ridge in the South End. There was no loss of life, but the ten-unit structure was destroyed. The owners intend to rebuild the apartment-like condominiums.

A portion of the South End from Lehman Highway to Marshall Street was surveyed by Sagadahoc Preservation Inc volunteers beginning in 2000. The recording and photography of more than 600 structures for information on the architectural style and integrity were combined with searches in the Sagadahoc History and Genealogy Room at Patten Free Library for background on the structures and their assorted residents. The survey report recommended the nomination of two historic districts and the

extension of the local historic district. At this time one historic district, the Trufant Historic District along Pine, Corliss, Middle, Highland, and Washington Streets has been added to the National Register of Historic Places. The publicity around this nomination and survey appears to have reminded many long-term residents and informed new ones about the rich historic nature of the city. Brochures produced by Main Street Bath, yearly house tours, the newsletters of SPI and Bath Historical Society, the enlarged presence of the Maine Maritime Museum, the local history talks, and other resources at the library have all built on the work of the residents who rejected urban renewal and embraced their history in the 1960s and 1970s. Bath, that slim needle of a city keyed to north and south, knows that much must be done to prepare for the future in order to draw new businesses and new residents, but also recognizes that much of that future rests in honoring and preserving her past.