

POPULATION

Sterling is located about equidistant between the population centers of Worcester with 186,587 and Fitchburg with 43,021 people. While it is true that both of these cities have not grown, the towns between them (figure 1) have grown by 26%. This is faster than the state average 9.8%, but not as fast as some of the other suburban areas in the state particularly those around Boston. The decade 1950-60 was one of migration from the crowded cities to the suburban and rural towns surrounding them. Fitchburg and Clinton grew only slightly while Worcester actually lost population. None of these places plus Leominster and Lancaster were able to maintain their increase and therefore lost some of their population to other towns. Sterling and the other towns in the area not only grew by natural increase, but also attracted new people to move into their towns. The towns immediately north of Worcester grew the fastest, West Boylston 115% and Holden 69.3%. Sterling, the next town removed, grew 47.4%, and added over 1,000 people to the 2,166 it had in 1950. Two-thirds of this increase can be attributed to new people moving into the town.

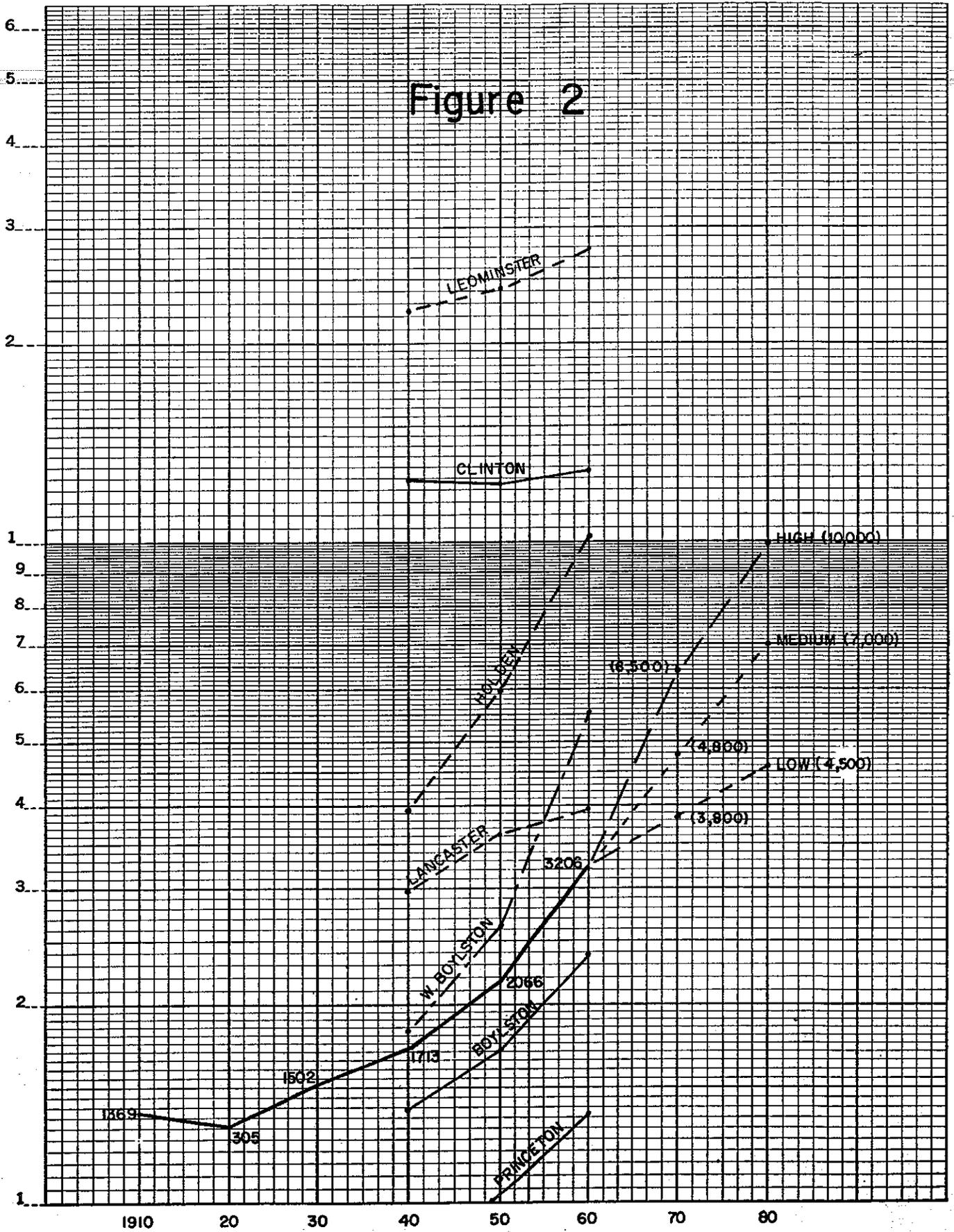
This growth in the town has come largely from Worcester, but can also be attributed to the other centers of Fitchburg-Leominster and Clinton.

FIGURE 1

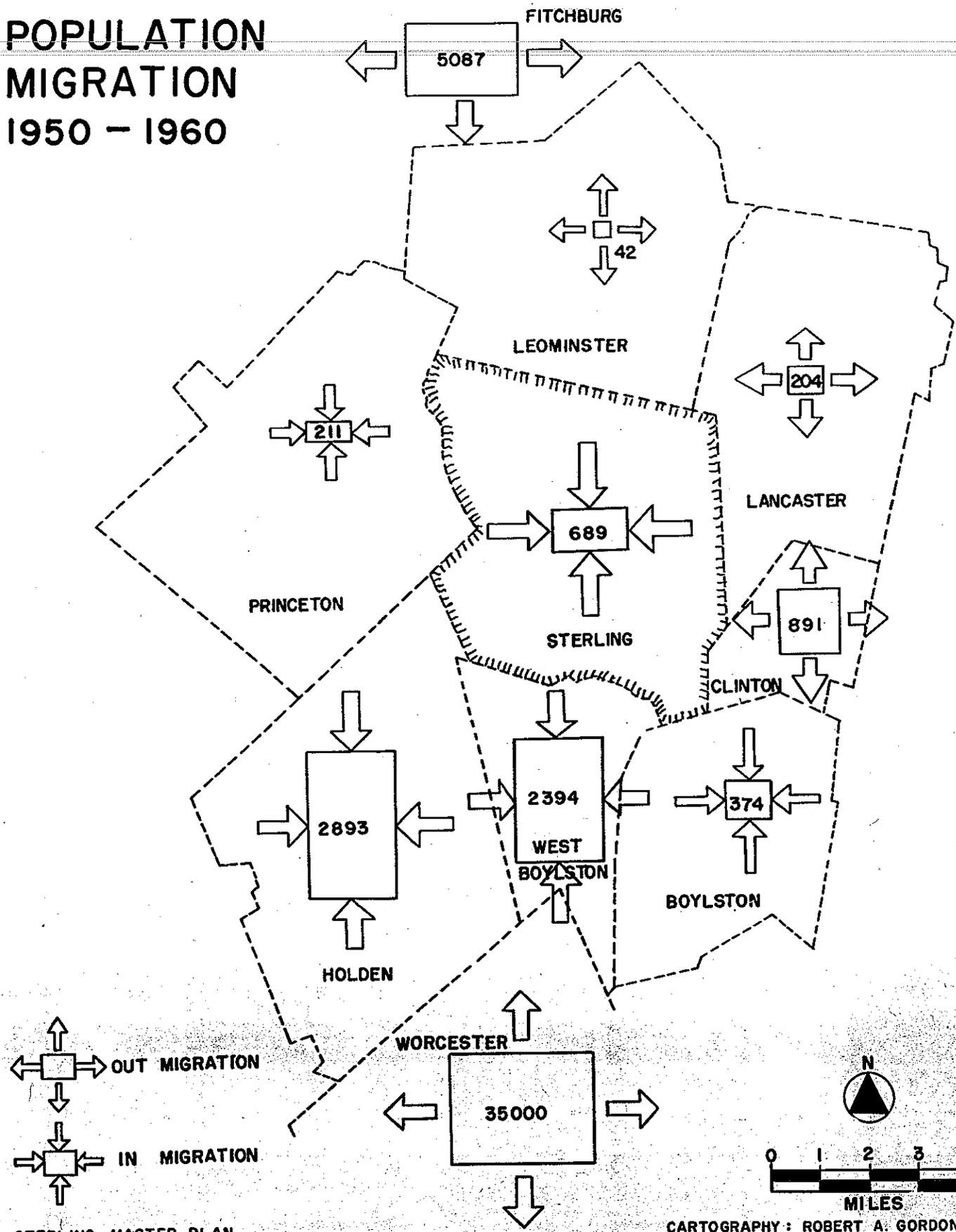
Population Change 1940 - 1960 Sterling Area

TOWN	1940	POPULATION 1950	1960	NATURAL INCREASE	IN MIGRATION	TOTAL INCREASE	% CHANGE
Sterling	1,713	2,166	3,193	338	689	1,027	47.4
Holden	3,924	5,975	10,117	1,249	2,893	4,142	69.3
Princeton	713	1,032	1,360	117	211	328	31.8
Leominster	22,226	24,075	27,927	3,896	-42	3,854	16.0
Lancaster	2,963	3,601	3,958	561	-204	357	9.9
Clinton	12,440	12,287	12,848	1,452	-891	561	4.6
Boylston	1,388	1,700	2,367	293	374	667	39.2
West Boylston	1,822	2,570	5,526	562	2,394	2,956	
Worcester	193,694	203,486	186,587	-18,136	-35,035	-16,899	-8.3
Fitchburg	41,824	42,691	43,021	5,417	- 5,078	330	0.8

# Figure 2



# POPULATION MIGRATION 1950 - 1960



STERLING MASTER PLAN

CARTOGRAPHY : ROBERT A. GORDON

What growth can we expect in the next 20 years? Figure 3 shows us that Sterling had a population of 1,369 in 1910. By 1940 it had grown slowly to 1,713, and in the next ten years it jumped to 2,166. The town's fastest growth, however, occurred during the last ten years giving the town a total of 3,193 inhabitants in 1960. If Sterling should continue to grow at this same rate for the next twenty years, it would have a population of 7,000 by 1980. On the other hand the next ten years could see the largest population growth occurring even further out from Worcester than it did during the last decade. If this should happen, Sterling could easily attain population totals close to 6,500 in 1970 and 10,000 by 1980. On the other hand, the trend to the suburbs could reverse itself as the area as a whole might not grow as fast and Sterling might only grow at its average rate of the last fifty years. This would give the town a population of about 4,500 in 1980.

This then gives us three projections for 1980, a high of 10,000, a medium figure of 7,000 and a low of 4,500. All indications are that the town will definitely grow. How much is a matter of conjuncture, but it is a good guess that it will reach at least the medium figure, and might go to the 10,000 high figure by 1980.

The master plan will have to make provision for this expected growth. New schools, new services, added fire and police protection will be needed.

# POPULATION DISTRIBUTION

1960 CENSUS ONE DOT = 5 PERSONS

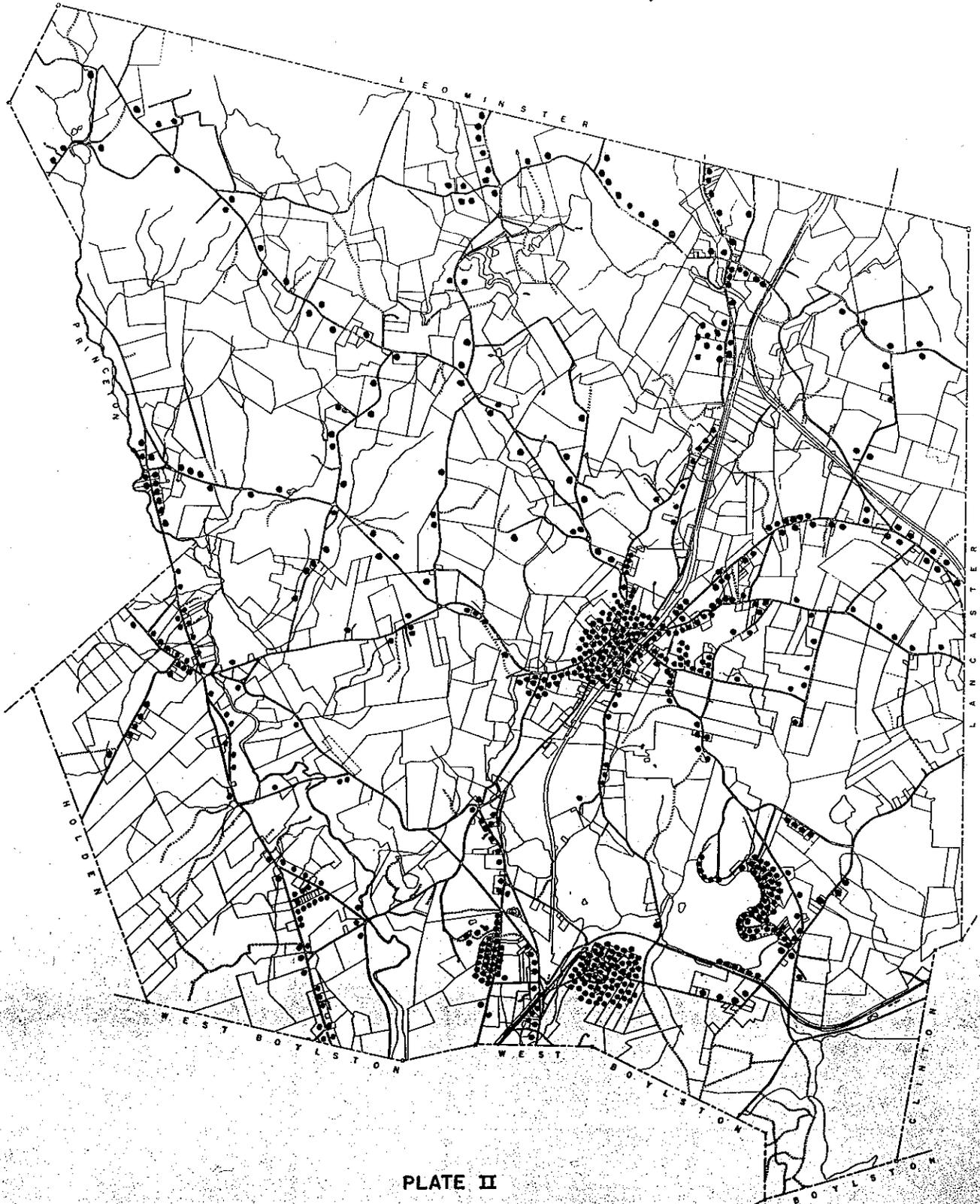
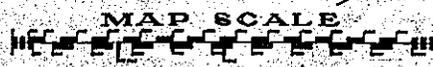


PLATE II



STERLING PLANNING BOARD

