



TOWN of
THOMPSON

MILL SITES REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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Gene Wala
TOWN CLERK

**MILL SITES REDEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING**

Thompson Public Library/Community Center – Room 2

Wednesday, January 25, 2017
6:30 PM

***The Potential Future of 929 Riverside Drive (aka The River Mill)
Revitalization? Demolition?***

MINUTES

PRESENT: J. Blanchette, Chairperson
N. O'Leary
J. Hall
R. Faucher
B. Davis (arrived at 7PM)

ABSENT: S. Lewis

ALSO PRESENT: S. Donohoe, Property Owner Liaison, K. Beausoleil, First Selectman, W. Bugden, CME Associates, M. Lewis, CT DEEP, Brad Schide, CTHP, M. A. Chinatti, Director of Planning & Development, Senator M. Flexer, Representative D. Rovero, Members of the Public (sign in sheet attached)

1. CALL TO ORDER

J. Blanchette called the meeting to order at 6:35PM.

2. PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING:

- a. J. Blanchette, Chairman, MSRAC: Introduction/Statement of Meeting Purpose – J. Blanchette welcomed all to the meeting and explained the Committee's assigned Charge. She stated the Board of Selectmen and this Committee adopted resolutions opposing demolition of 929 Riverside Drive for the purpose of salvage, and that the Committee is looking for more community support. She then outlined the agenda and the format for the meeting.

MUNICIPAL BUILDING

815 RIVERSIDE DRIVE, P.O. Box 899 NO. GROSVENORDALE, CONNECTICUT 06255
TELEPHONE (860) 923-9475 x130 · FAX (860) 923-9897



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- b. J. Iamartino, Historical Society: Summary of History 1872 – 1980 – Mr. Iamartino presented a powerpoint history (attached to these minutes) of the mill and elaborated and provided detail of that powerpoint.
- c. S. Donohoe, Property Owner Liaison: Summary of History 1980 – Present and Demolition/Development Possibilities – S. Donohoe provided an ownership history from 1980 – present and gave an outline of former tenants. He stated new windows had been installed on the upper floors (3rd and 4th) and the roof had been redone, noting that new windows could not be put in the lower floors because they were then occupied by Sanitary Dash. He stated there are currently 13 businesses that lease space at the mill. He noted that there were, in the past, big tenants, and that those tenants moved on for various reasons, including but not limited to the need for more loading docks and tenants moving into their own buildings. He noted that the building is 750,000 sq. ft. in size and that there are things that need to be addressed on a daily basis. He discussed the 2010 WINN development that did not come to fruition. He stated that he's brought many interested parties through the building, all with different ideas, but that none of those ideas have moved forward.
- d. K. Beausoleil, First Selectman – Recent Town Efforts to Encourage Redevelopment

K. Beausoleil stated the need for interest of the Townspeople, and he discussed the brownfield grant work done at the Belding site. He then discussed the brownfield grant for the subject property, and cited some of the work being done as part of that grant. He stated he was on the Board of Selectmen in 2010 when the housing proposal came up, and there was a lot of resistance for a lot of reasons. He noted the process dragged on, there was limited support and the economy took a downturn during that time. He stated we are now coming out of that downturn, and that if the mill is going to go anywhere we have opportunities; he stated that the support of the Town is critical to getting some of the funding that's available. He stated that, with support and the brownfield study, there is a great opportunity to find out what can be done with the mill. He stated the next step is to get input from the public, get ideas, get support, hear where the public envisions the mill going. He noted that the Board of Selectmen/Board of Finance provided some funding for economic development, and he talked about the branding study.

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e. W. Bugden, CME Engineers – Ongoing Brownfield Work

W. Bugden explained the grant, its purpose, and talked about the objective of the grant work. He discussed the work GZA Environmental has done at the Sanitary Dash portion of the site over the past 19 years. He stated the preliminary information discovered from the brownfield work isn't "scary", noting that the site is not clean, but the types of things found are no different than what would be expected.

f. Public Comments/Questions

S. Moskowicz noted the residents didn't support the venture a number of years ago, their support is again being solicited, and asked what that support would entail.

K. Beausoleil talked about the issues during the 2010 WINN development proposal. He noted that representatives from CT DEEP and CTHP are in attendance and can elaborate on the funding availabilities.

H. O'Rourke stated her grandparents worked in the mill, and that it is important to her to at least have a say about something. She stated her concern, and hope, that the Town learned what not to do if a similar proposal comes up again. She stated her opinion that the more people the Town can get on board, the better.

K. Beausoleil stated that the newspapers are involved, and the Town is trying to get as much information out as it can. He stated the 2010 proposal had to do with financing/historic tax credits/moving liens around, and that it is his belief that we are past that now.

D. Faucher asked how restrictive the Town can be due to the grants for the property.

M. A. Chinatti stated there are no restrictions re the brownfield, or previous grants, and that restrictions, if any, would be dependent on the type of grant being applied for. She also explained that whatever is proposed for the property must comply with the zoning regulations for the Neighborhood Commercial zone it is located in.

C. Obert stated his concern about the history S. Donohoe provided, and asked when the windows and roof were put in. S. Donohoe responded they do new windows all the time, and roofing work is done as needed.

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D. Morin asked if it was the P&Z process that bogs projects down. M. A. Chinatti then explained the P&Z process, and the developers are encouraged to meet with Staff prior to formally submitting applications, with the goal of getting applications as ready as possible for action before the Commission sees them.

K. Beausoleil stated a lot of the time is because of the time it takes to go through the grant/tax credits/other programs process.

C. Hoffman asked if the grants were state or federal grants, to which M. A. Chinatti responded the 1998 Small Cities loan was from a CT DECD grant, and the current brownfield grant is also through CT DECD.

W. Bugden discussed the financing avenues developers would go after (tax credits, brownfield clean up funds, etc.), and that grants applied for would depend on the type of development being proposed.

B. Schide, CTHP, talked about that the roll of the Connecticut Trust is, and that the Trust wants to help. He stated what is needed is a developer, and that all kinds of financing is available. He stated WINN is still out there doing a lot of development, and he is not sure if they are interested in the mill. He said that State historic credits could bring \$4.5M just being on the Federal Register. He continued, stating there is also \$5M - \$6M from State tax credits that could be requested. He then asked those in attendance what they would like to see there, and responses included: housing, commercial, senior housing, artist colonies/work-live, restaurant, park. He asked who wanted to see it stay, and all indicated they did; he then asked who wanted to see it be demolished, and there was no response.

M. Desrosier asked what one needs to do to get a developer here, and M. A. Chinatti talked about the developers the Town has been talking to already, and she noted that the developer-seeking process would have come at the completion of the grant work, but that it was moved up due to the discussions re demolition.

S. Wheeler stated her concern re so little municipal sewerage, to which K. Beausoleil responded that there is more than enough capacity to handle additional sewerage from mill development.

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D. Morin stated that the WPCA is only at 25% capacity now, and it's very inefficient. He continued, stating the more users to get hooked up, the more efficient it would be.

D. Very stated the Town has such supportive people at this meeting who never come to public hearings. She stated she can't believe how many people are in attendance, and that there is great opportunity in redevelopment of the mill, noting that success breeds success.

E. McQue asked how much time/life expectancy is left in the mill before the owner walks away from it.

S. Donohoe stated the owner owes a substantial amount in taxes. He continued, stating they are reviewing all opportunities. He stated there's someone "kicking the tires" now and, after sitting at this meeting, if that falls through they will be on to the next one ASAP. He stated the owner isn't in a position to walk away.

E. McQue asked if there has been a "wish list" put together, including a plan in addition to what the owner wants to do. He stated the Town hasn't had, in his experience, good luck in getting economic development in town. He asked if something like a "wish list" has been presented to the Town. S. Donohoe responded that he hasn't sat down and made a list but that it's a great idea and will now do that. He stated what the Town has done is the Mill Reuse Committee that's going in the right direction. He stated possibly it's more in the forefront now because someone talked about demo it's pushed everybody along at different levels. He stated there is now momentum and it should be kept going, and making a list is a great idea.

In response to a question by C. Hoffman re what parts of the building would be demolished, S. Donohoe stated what's in use now won't be taken down. He stated the vacant portions of the building would be demolished first, and that he does know that buildings 4, 5 and 6 have tenants and are pretty full and occupied. He continued, stating building 2 has 70' long beams and there are several other beams throughout each floor that are that long, noting they are 14" x 14" beams, mostly wooden. C. Hoffman responded, saying that area has the most potential to be attractive.

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C. Langlois stated the owner's representative wants it demoed, but the owner is dealing with a company now that's got demo and rehab possibility, and that the rehab part of the company is working on a study now. She stated the property may be sold with no indication of which way "they" are going, and if it's not sold then discussions will be held with developers who want to save it. She stated if this group doesn't buy it (the company with the current contract), then the owner should be entertaining other possibilities with other developers.

M. Flexer stated that this dialogue is really impressive, and the Town has a real opportunity here to talk about housing. She then discussed affordable housing, and brownfield programs. She stated there are a lot of programs available to accomplish redevelopment. She noted that the tax credits are disbursed very quickly, and questioned whether the Town can be ready to have an application in for July 1. B. Schide responded, noting that tax credits now are being weighed on public support, which is critical to a successful application.

S. Bodreau pointed out that the mill, a signature building to the Town, is the most desirable for demolition, which is a shame.

B. Schide then asked if people wanted the mill demolished, to which everyone answered they do not. He then talked about the mill being on the National Register and it won't be allowed to be demolished.

D. Morin stated he lives a few houses from the Belding site, which is a pile of rubble. He stated he'll do whatever it takes to stop that for the River Mill.

M. Lewis, CT DEEP, talked about the work DEEP has done with GZA and the clean up work that's been done to date. He also talked about all DEEP and DECD can do, and programs they have available to help with development.

D. Rovero stated that if a project comes up that people are in favor of, people should not stay home, but they should go to the meeting(s) and show their support.

B. Davis stated that the Mill Committee could use help, and urged people to come to the meetings. He stated there are a few people who are on the Committee who don't attend on a regular basis.

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J. Blanchette stated, to "piggy-back" on what B. Davis said, the Economic Development Commission is also active in the town.

K. Beausoleil stated the Economic Development Commission has a Branding Committee that meets at the library, with the next meeting scheduled for February 7. He stated more public participation is important.

W. Holder stated the old mill beams are solid chestnut, the old mills were built by immigrants, noting the solid architecture. He said that the old mills need to be saved for future generations, and that they can't be built today. He stated the buildings, the landmarks, have been up for 100 – 200 years, and that they will no longer exist, and no longer be able to be appreciated, if they continue to be torn down.

R. Waldron gave an example of what can be done with an old mill, citing Thompson Common. She stated the time is now right for the River Mill.

C. Sloate stated she'd been inside the River Mill, and that it would be a wonderful place to move to because it's absolutely beautiful on the inside as well as the outside.

K. Beausoleil thanked everyone for coming. He stated things will keep moving forward, and that he will keep people apprised of what's going on. He stated the more the word gets out that Thompson is interested in economic development and revitalization, the better.

3. ADJOURNMENT

(M/S/C Hall/Davis) to adjourn at 8:24PM. Carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Ann Chinatti
Director of Planning & Development

1-25-17 MSTRAC SPECIAL MEETING

SIGN IN SHEET
(VOLUNTARY)

NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

Joe LA MARTINO 603 657 6205

MARK SWAY

Cushie Slat

Wallace V Holder 560-923-9218

Burt Rhodes

Missy Desrochers

Rick Desrochers

Sean Kallason (CME)

Paul Hankins

David Hankins

Robert L. Lawrence

Alan Douthal

Norman O'Leary

Carol Smith

Charlie Obert

Lawrence J. LeBoeuf

JANET BLANCHETTE

ALAN & SUSAN HILL

Steve Veilux

Don & Elaine (Lester)

Kathy + Donald Mouri

Beth + Ed Goldsmith

STEVEN BODREAU

Jason Bleau (Villager News Papers)

Lisa Paulauskas

HEATHER O'ROURKE 923-9618

Andy LaFortune

~~Judy Bondan~~

Meymanz Bondan

Hinda Jarmolowicz

Kathleen Herbert

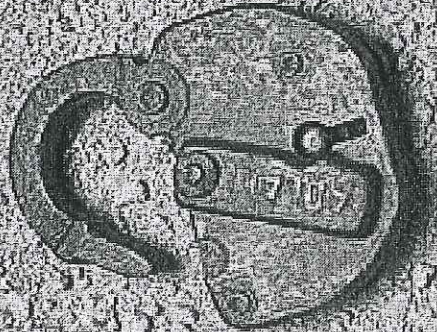
A Short History of the Mill in North Grosvenordale CT

The Only Constant is Change

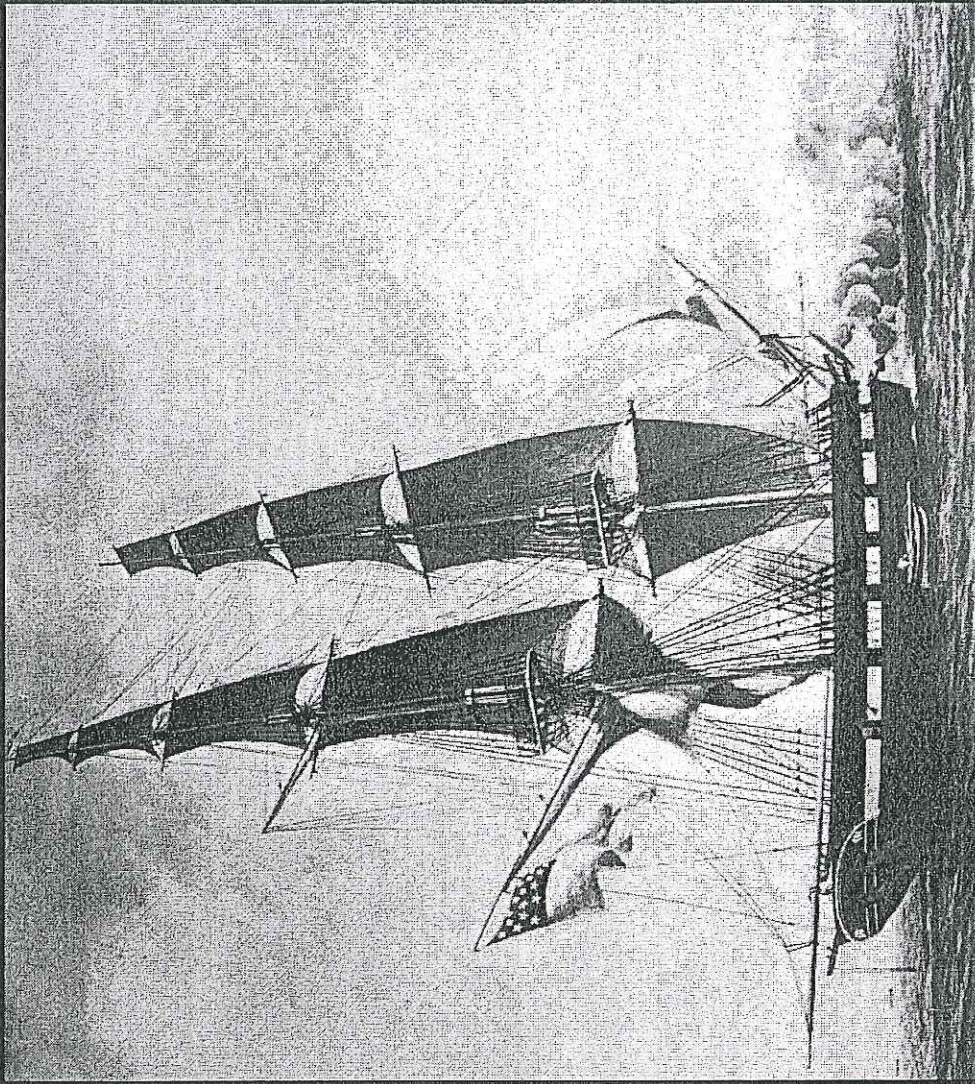
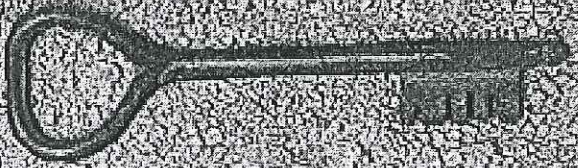
Joseph Iamartino

Thompson Historical Society Inc.

January 2017



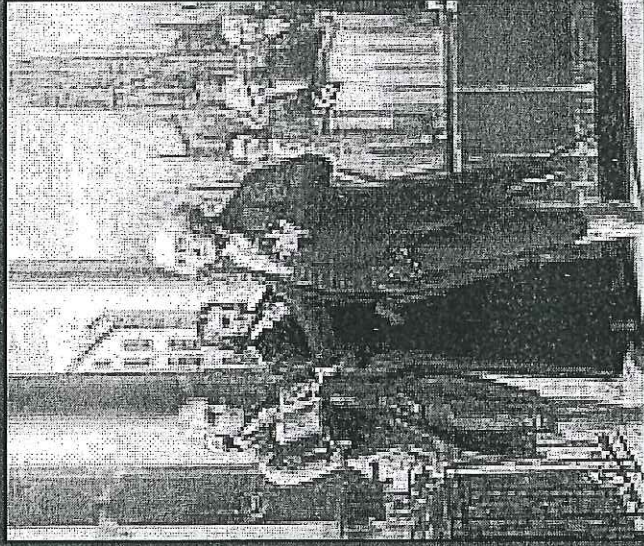
The 'America' Revolution



The British plan had been for the colonies to supply raw cotton to British factories that, in turn, would create finished cloth for the colonies, at very high prices.

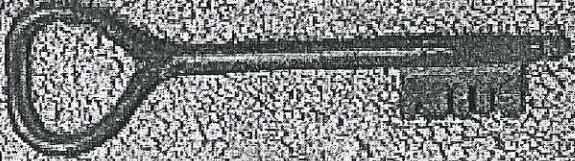
Americans didn't like this plan.

Inauguration of George Washington - 1789



- ◆ To encourage American women to use locally-produced cloth, George Washington and John Adams wore “home-spun” suits at the 1789 inauguration.

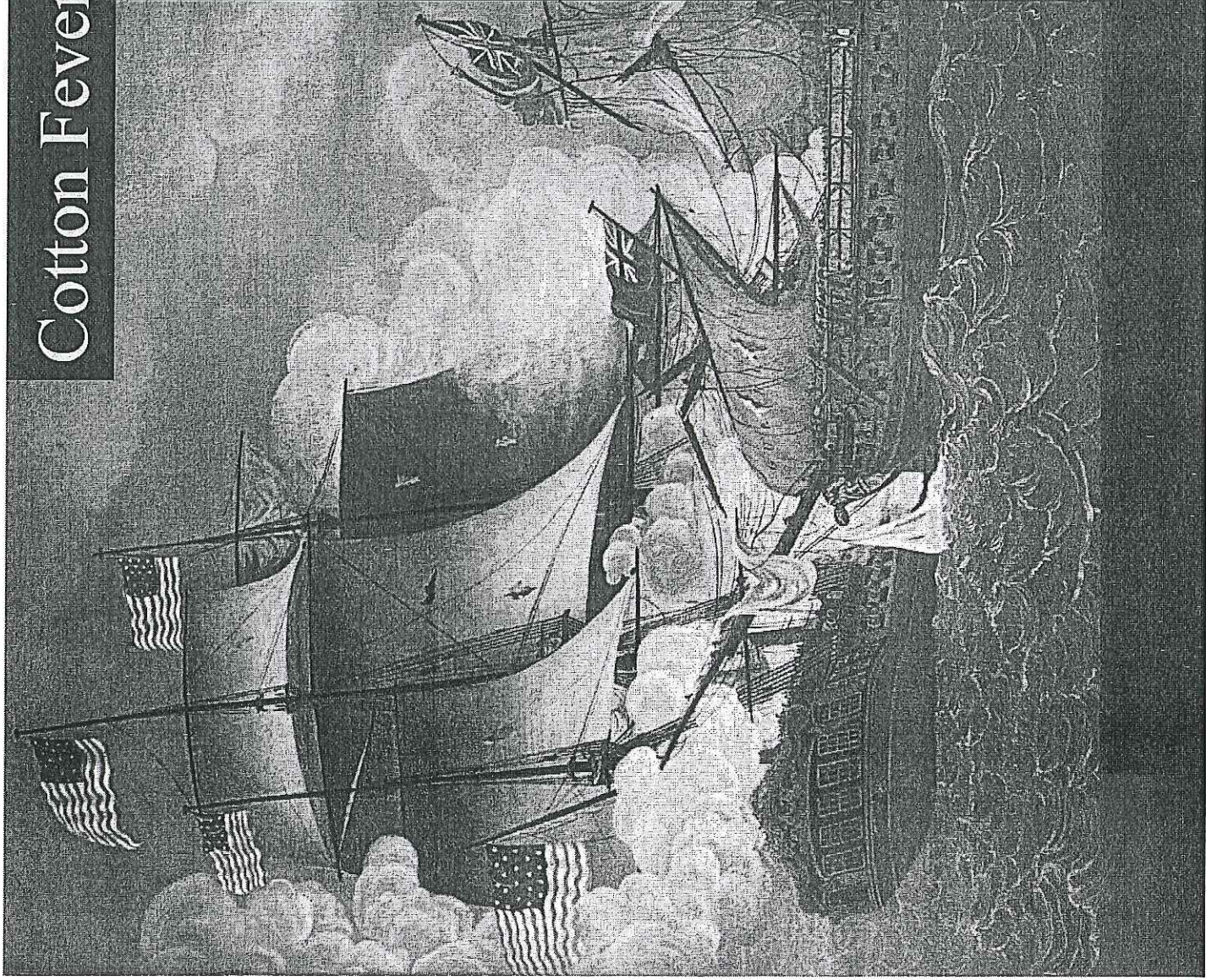
It didn't work.



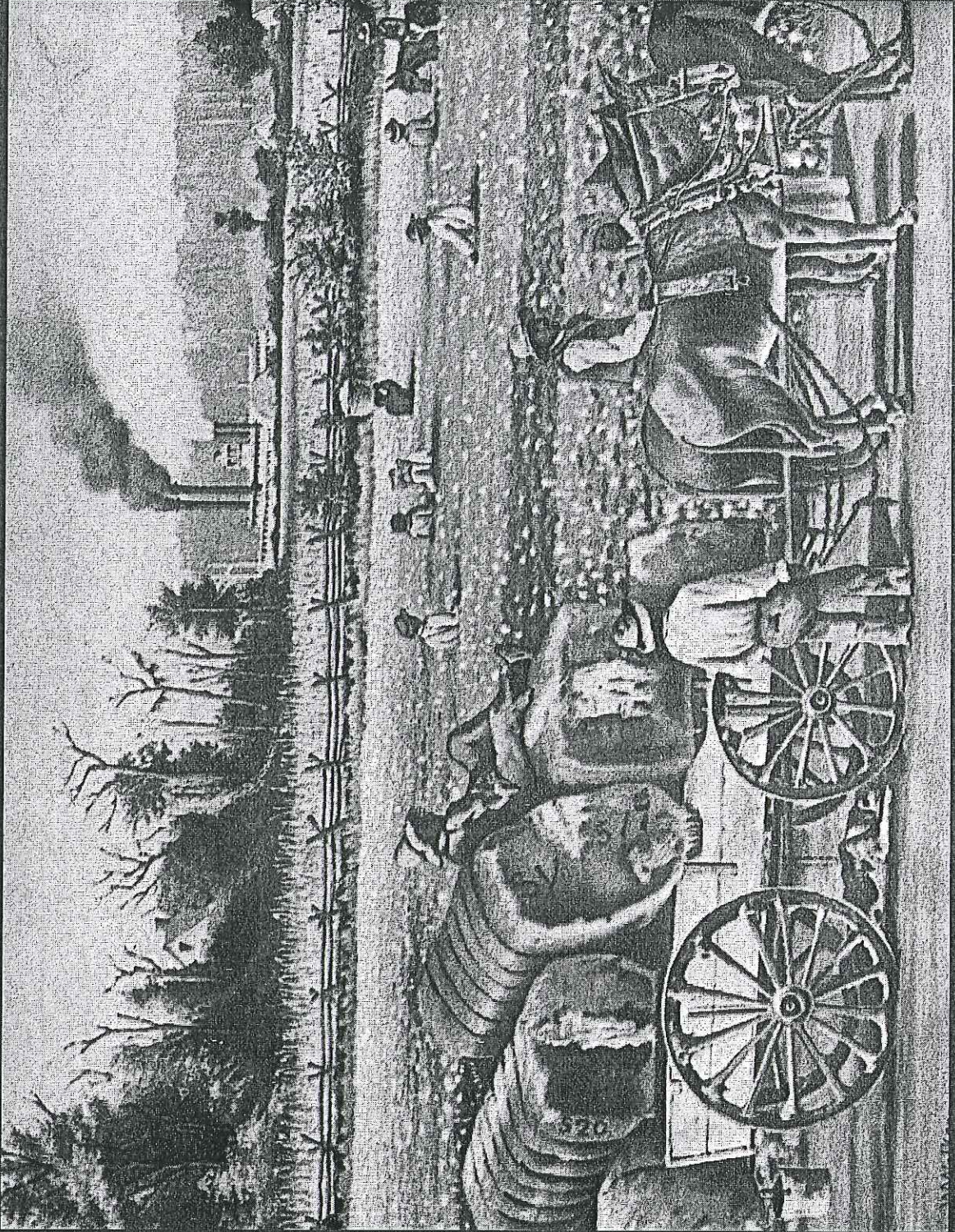
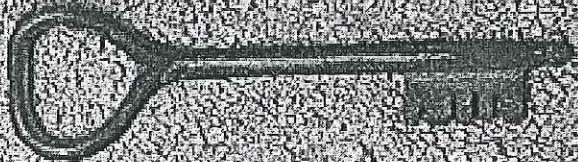
Cotton Fever & the War of 1812

When the War of 1812 broke out, American women began to buy the U.S.-made textiles, mainly from Samuel Slater's mills.

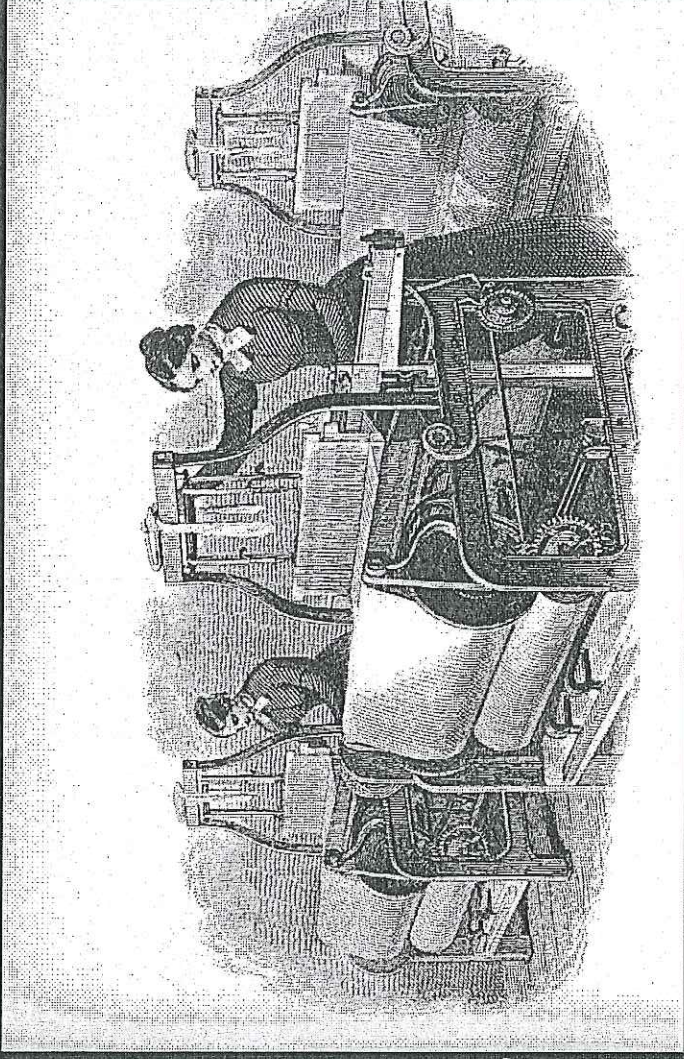
Cotton consumption jumped from 1,000 bales to 90,000 bales annually in just a few years.



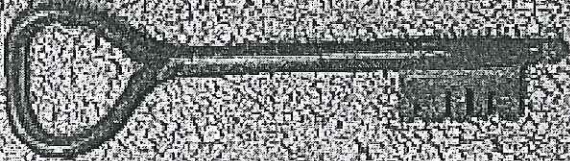
Better roads are built to haul wagon loads of cotton to and from the fields and the mills



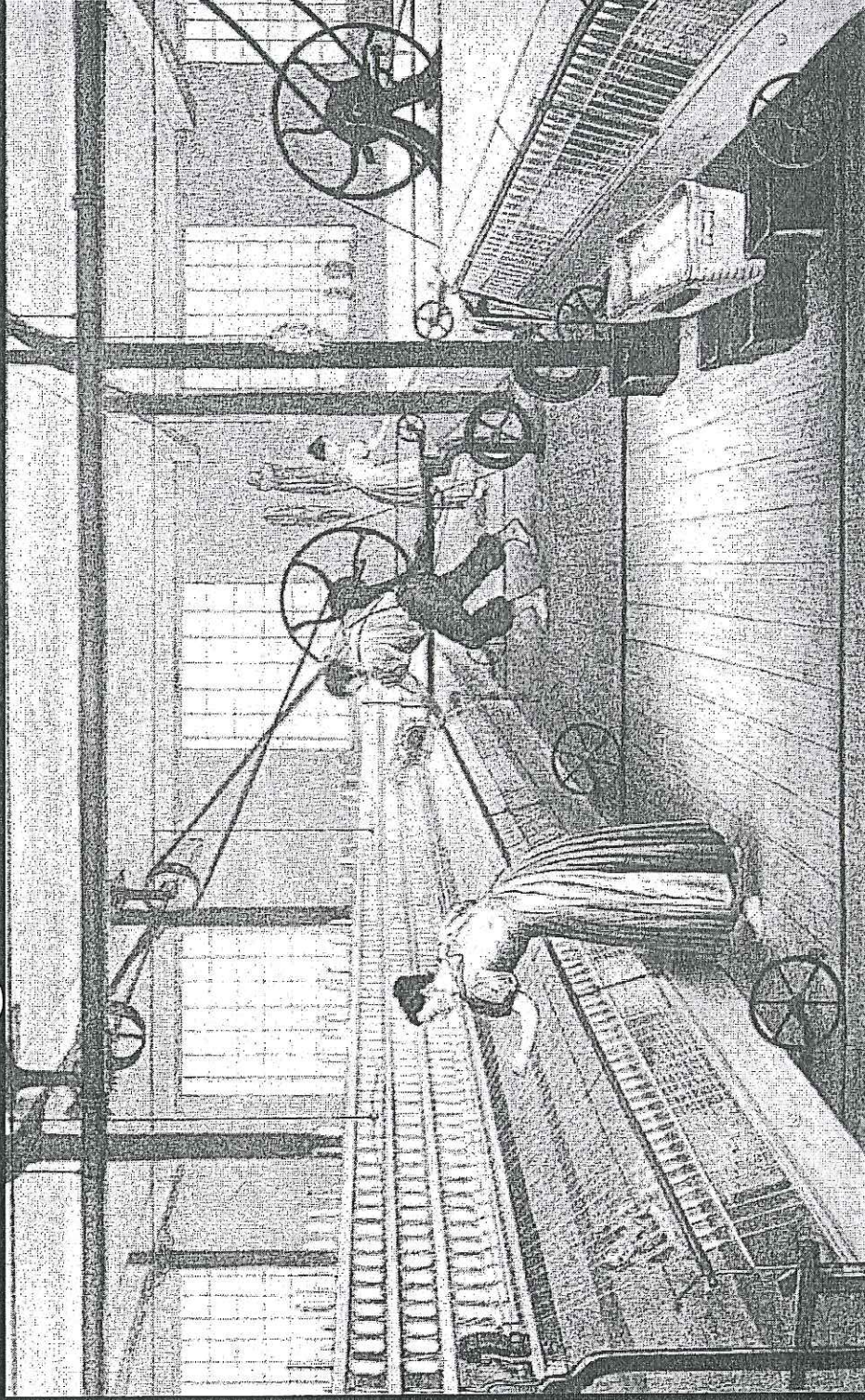
Women's Independence



For the first time in American life, women found a means of working outside of their traditional domestic roles. Mill work allowed young women to earn their own money before marrying or to live independently of their families.

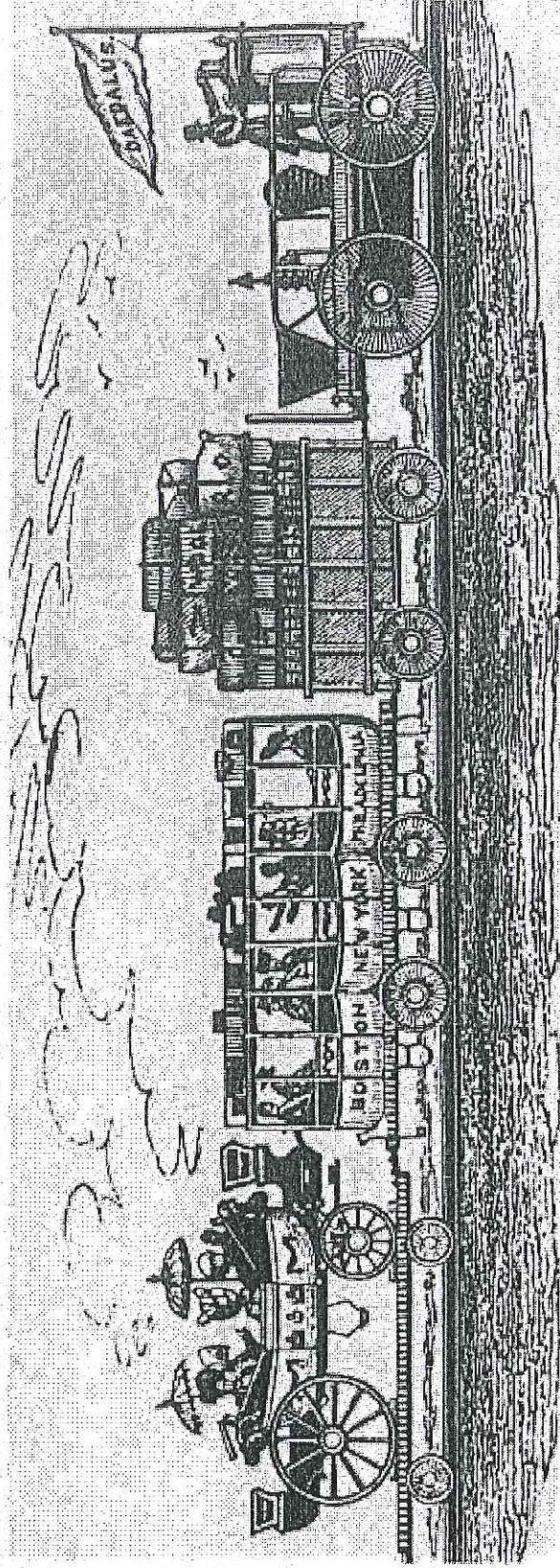


Working Conditions



Working only by sunlight to prevent fire, many workers walked barefoot on the oily floors. Young children worked under the equipment in some cases! Long hours (at least in the summer), at least 5 ½ days per week, 10 hour days.

The early trains replaced the wagonloads of cotton & wool. The turnpike era ends.



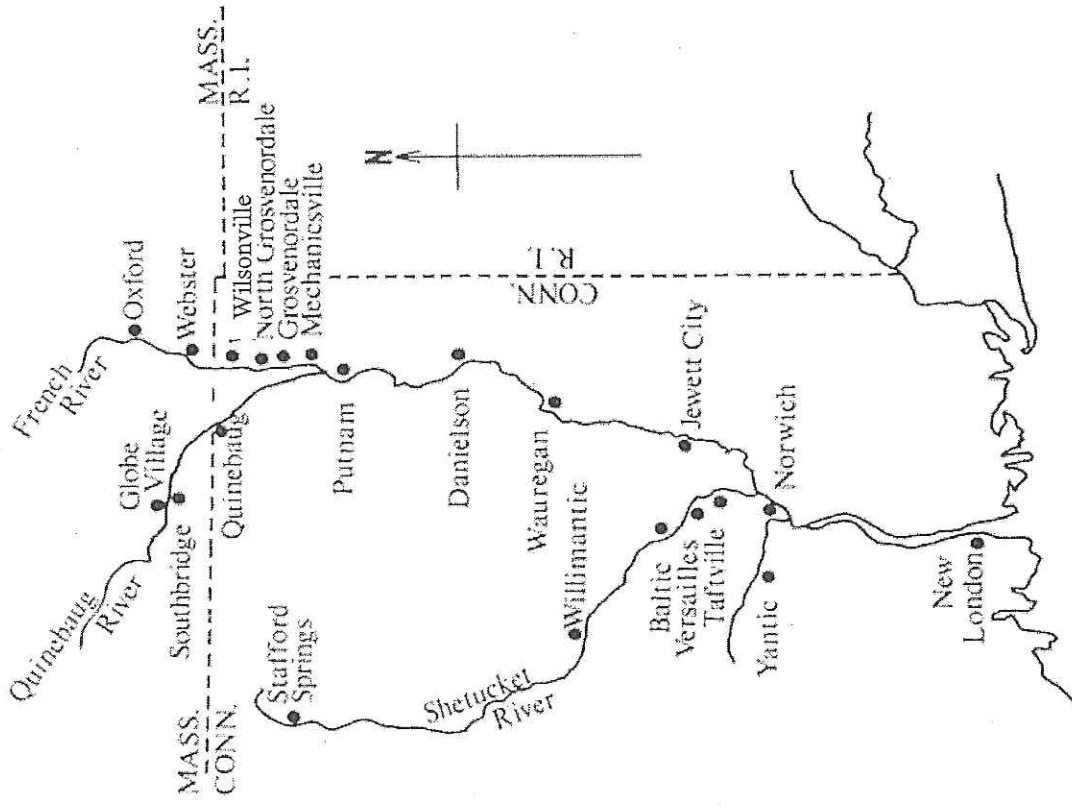
PRIMITIVE RAILROADING is shown in an early engraving. Passengers, some of whom sat in a carriage atop a flatcar, were protected against explosion by cotton bales behind the engine.

The revenue from cotton and wool transportation was a major factor in the growth of the rail lines. Lines were established linking the major mill villages with steam boat ports.

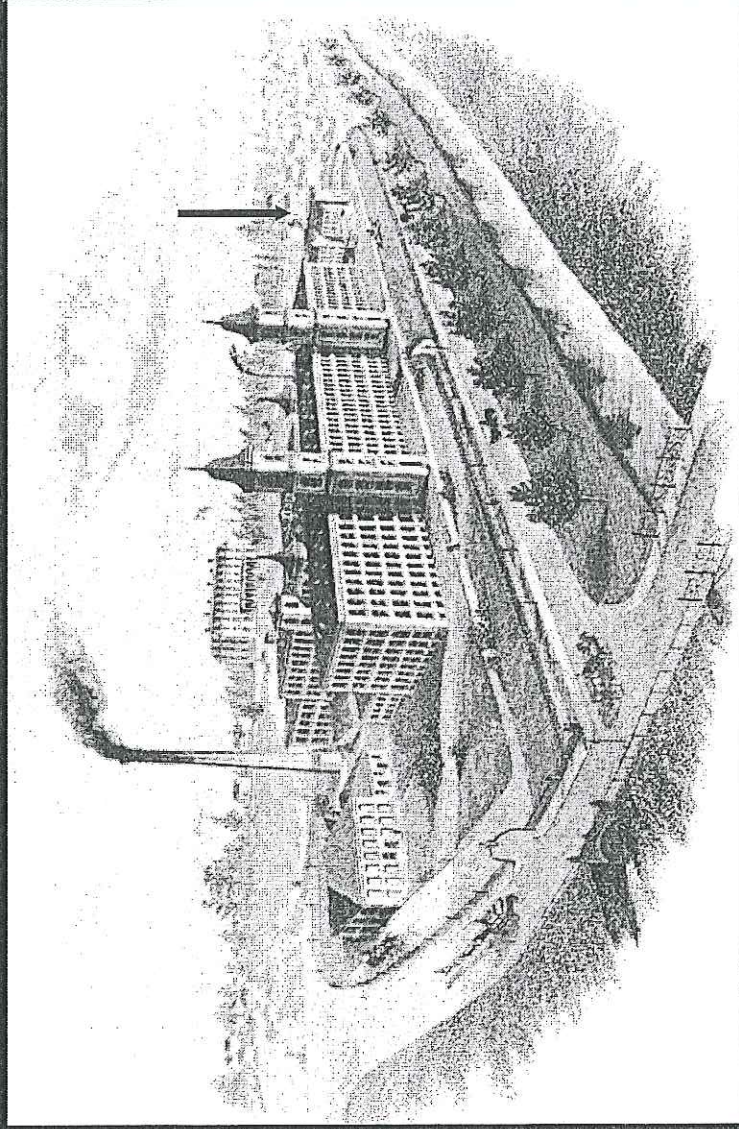
The impact of Samuel Slater (the Founder of the American Textile Industry) & his Family on Eastern CT in the years after the War of 1812

(Note: some of the names of these mill villages were changed).

Significant mill towns in the Quinebaug River watershed.



Before No. Grosvenordale, there was Fisherville



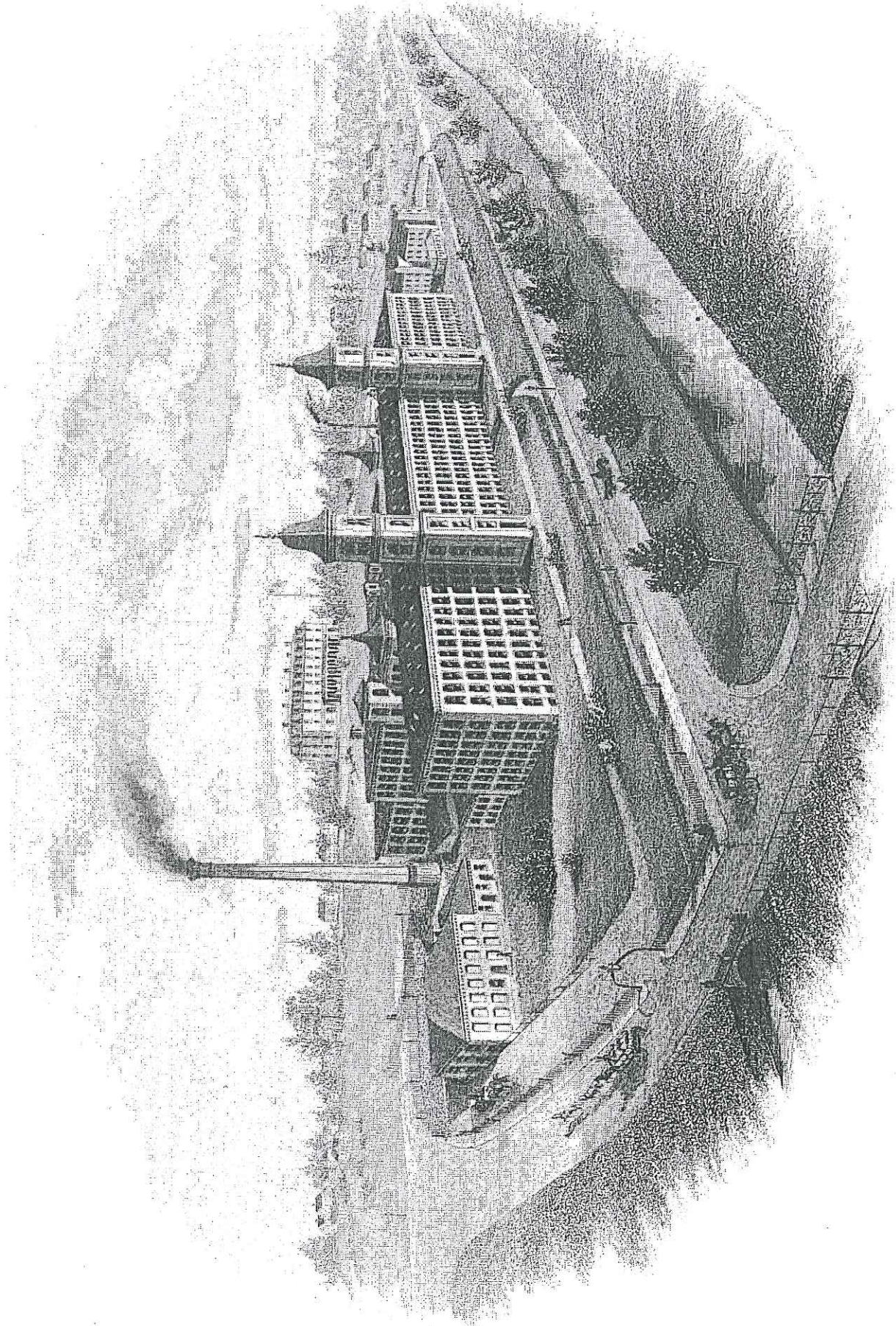
The earliest mills were dwarfed by the later 2nd and 3rd generation mills

Most mills remaining today are 2nd/3rd generation designs.

The red arrow is pointing to the original Fisherville Mill. Call this Phase 1.

The bigger mill is Phase 2.

By 1870s, mills were 4X or 5X bigger than 30 years before.



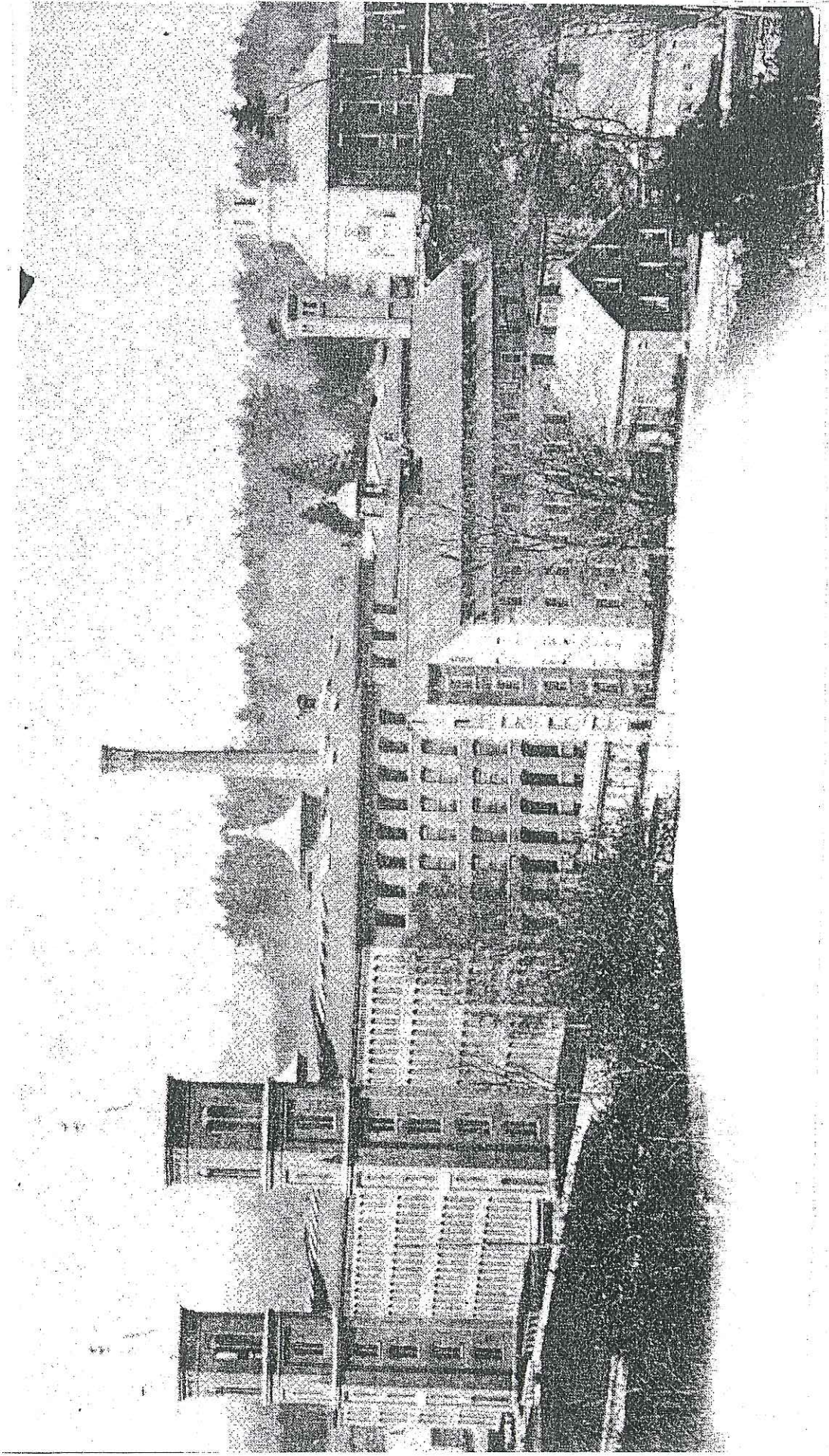
GROSVENOR-DALE CO.

Mills No. 1 & No. 2

NORTH GROSVENOR-DALE, CONN.

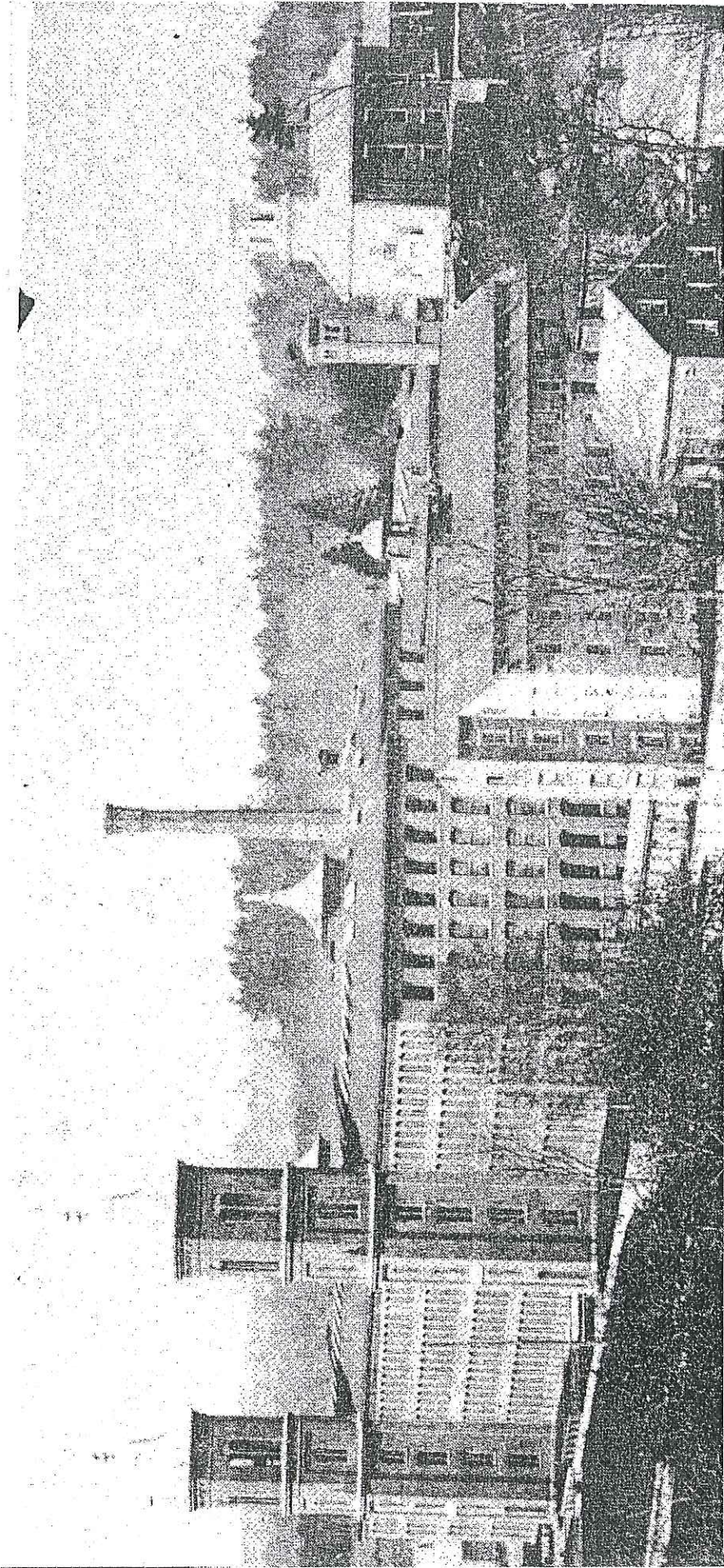
cut

1872-1896

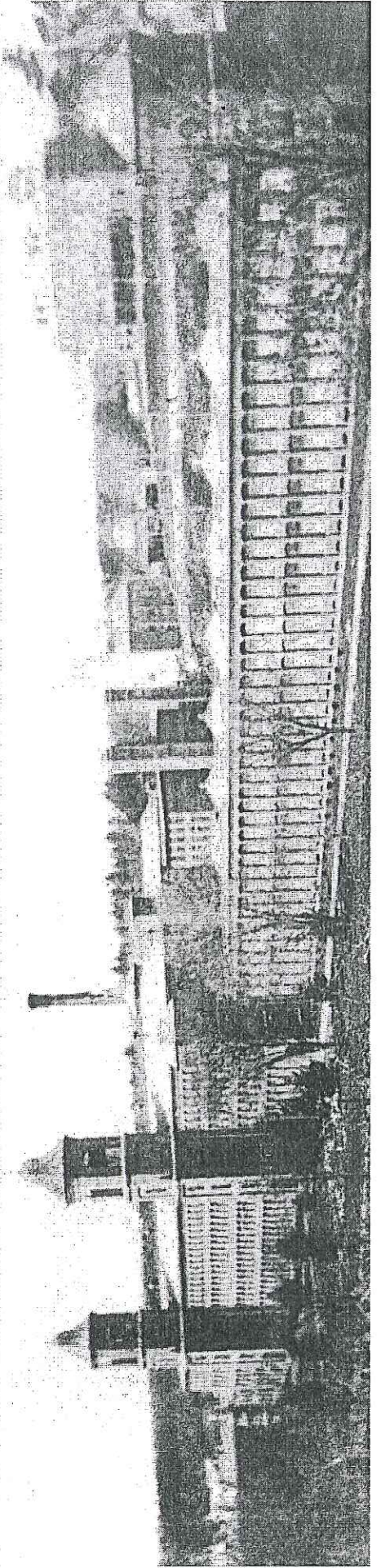


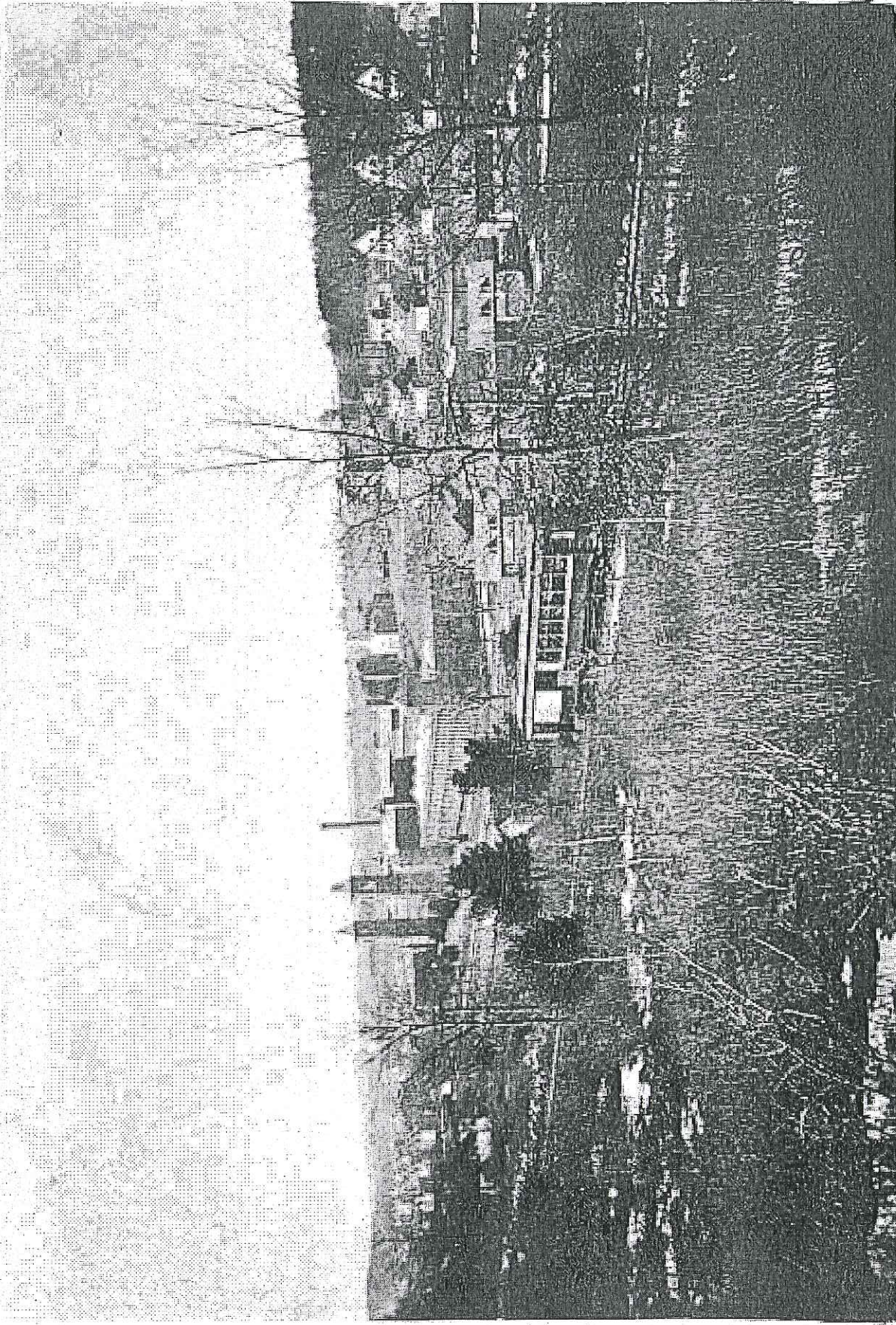
The original Fisherville Mill, built ~1828, was made of stone. Dr. Grosvenor bought the little mill in 1864. The name Fisherville was changed to No. Grosvenordale in 1866; Sister village Masonville was renamed Grosvenordale.

The Grosvenordale Company mill shown above on left was built ~1872



In 1897, the Fisherville Mill is taken down and the large Weave Shed built

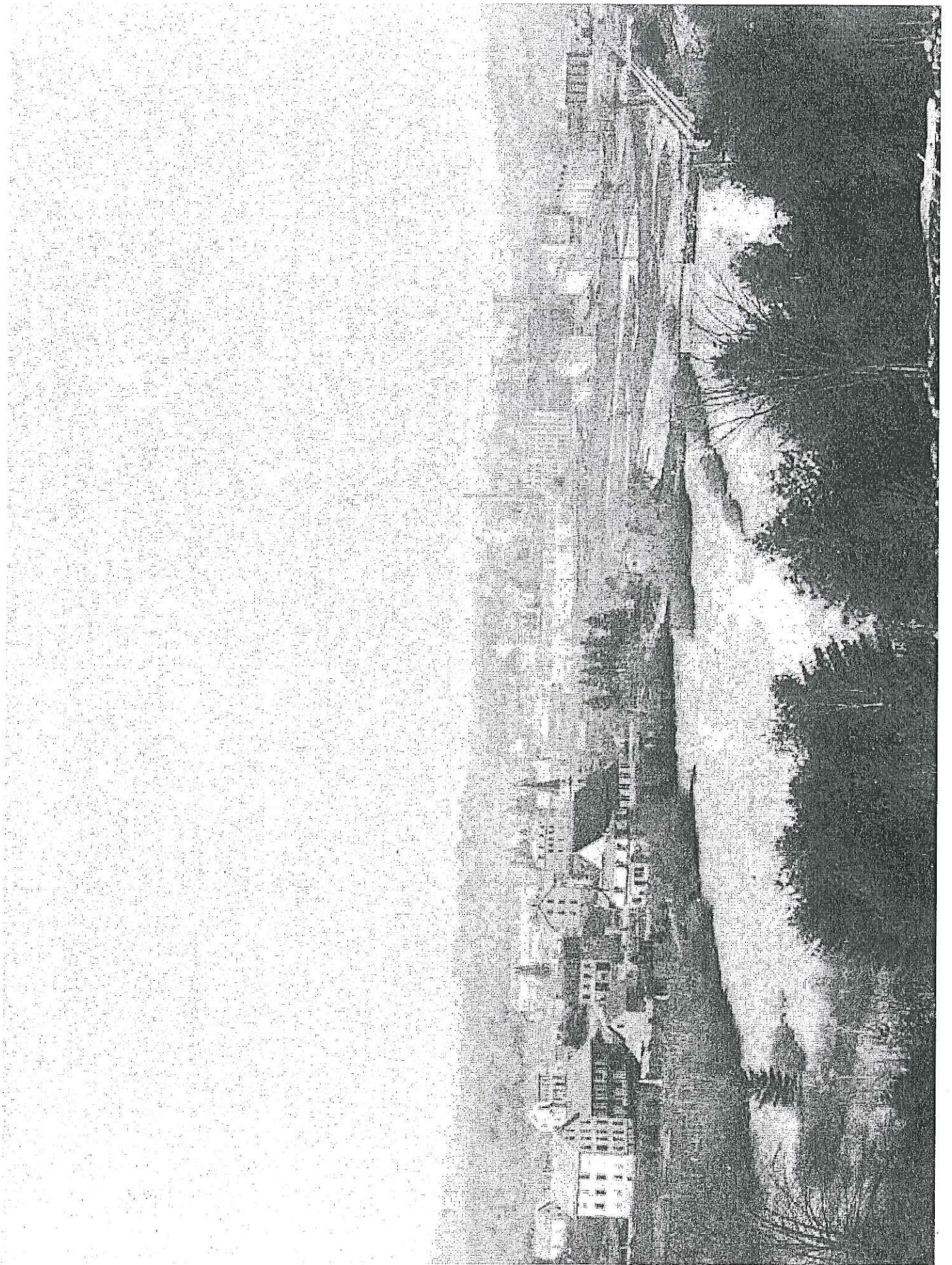




The trolley operated prior to 1925



The Village of North Grosvenordale rapidly expands as immigrants are settled in the housing sections now known as Three Rows, Swede Village, Greek Village, and the Long Blocks. *From 1887 Bailey of Boston print.*

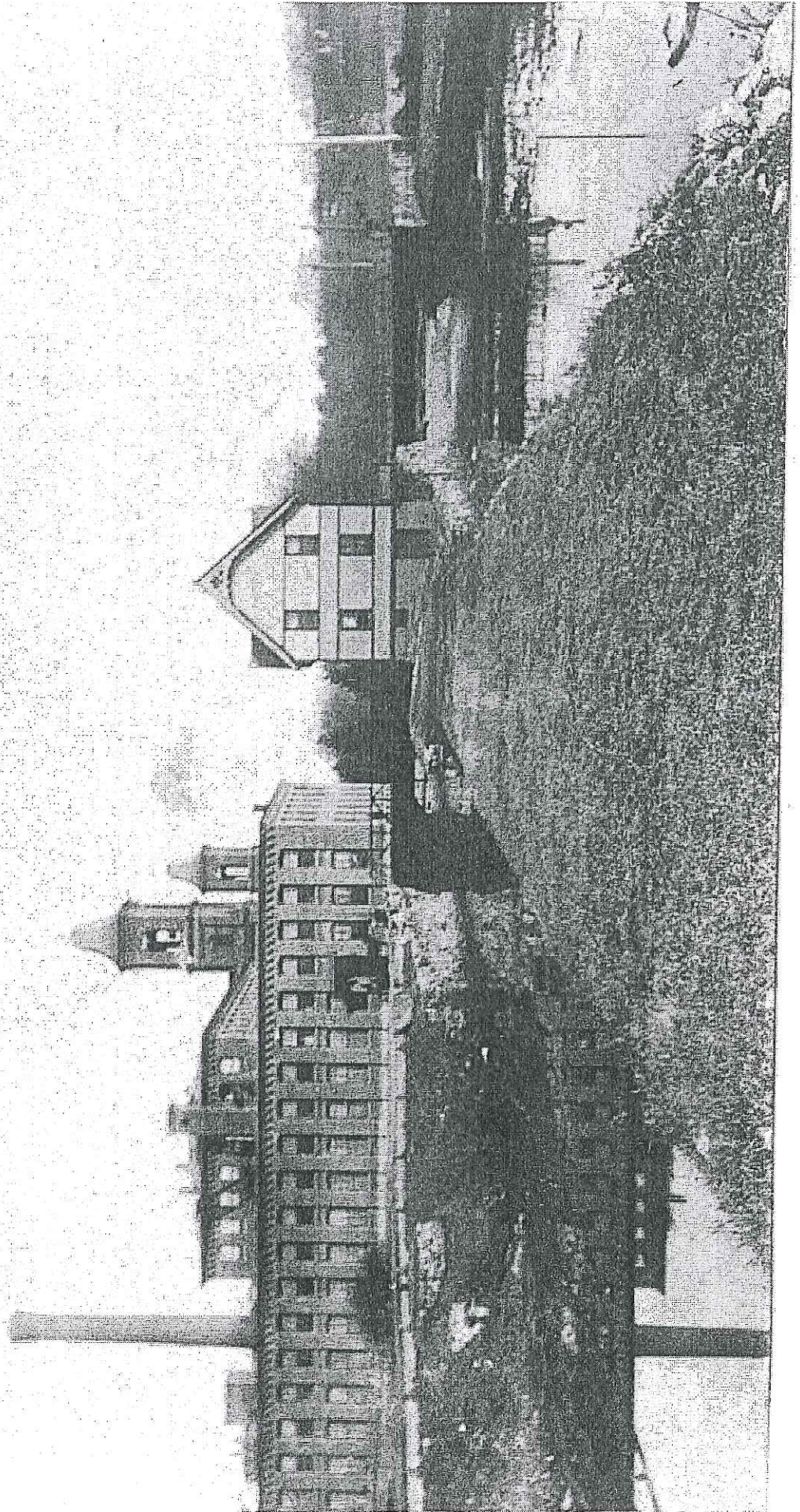


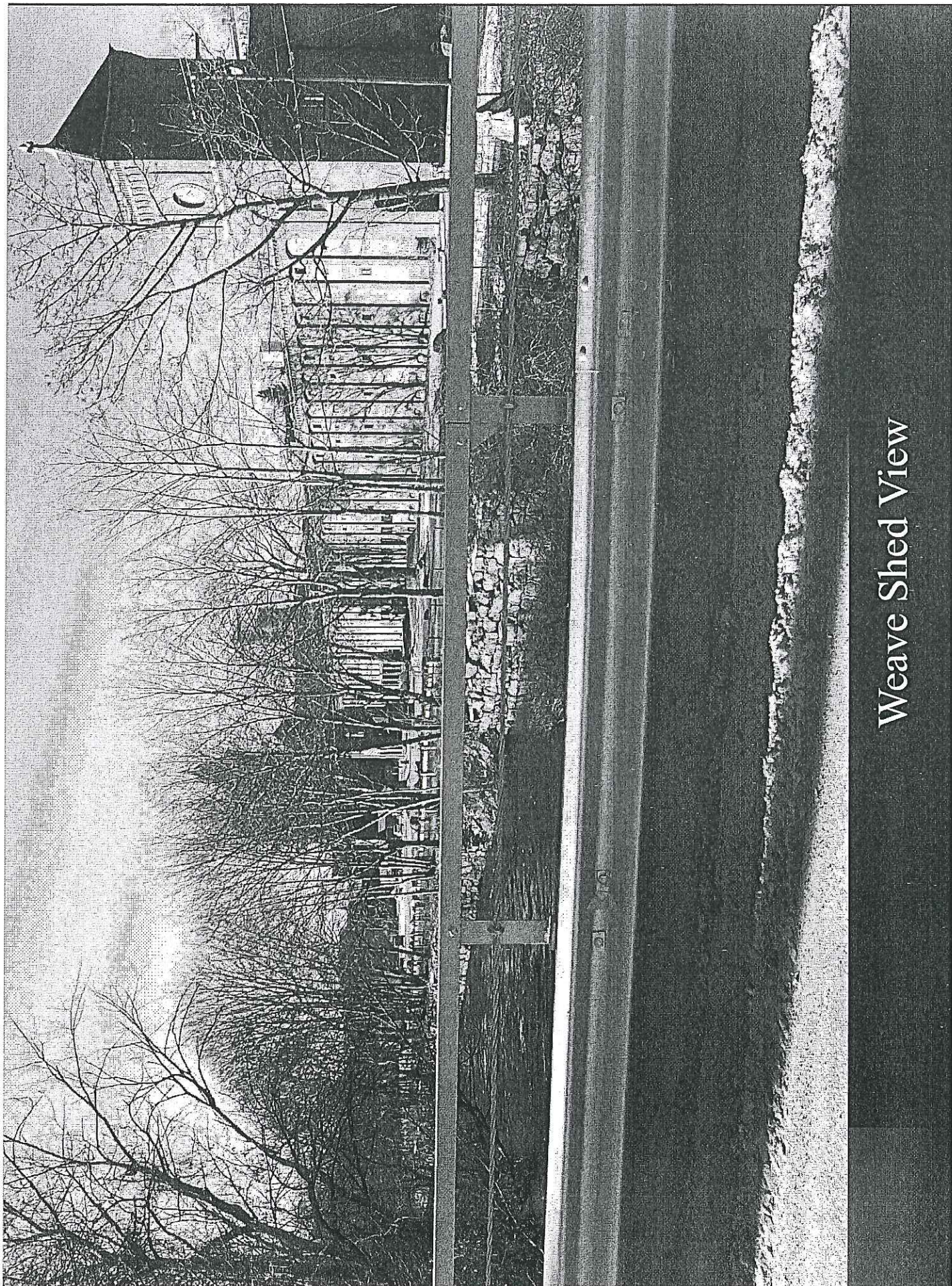


ERECTED AD 1872

2

Hose
House

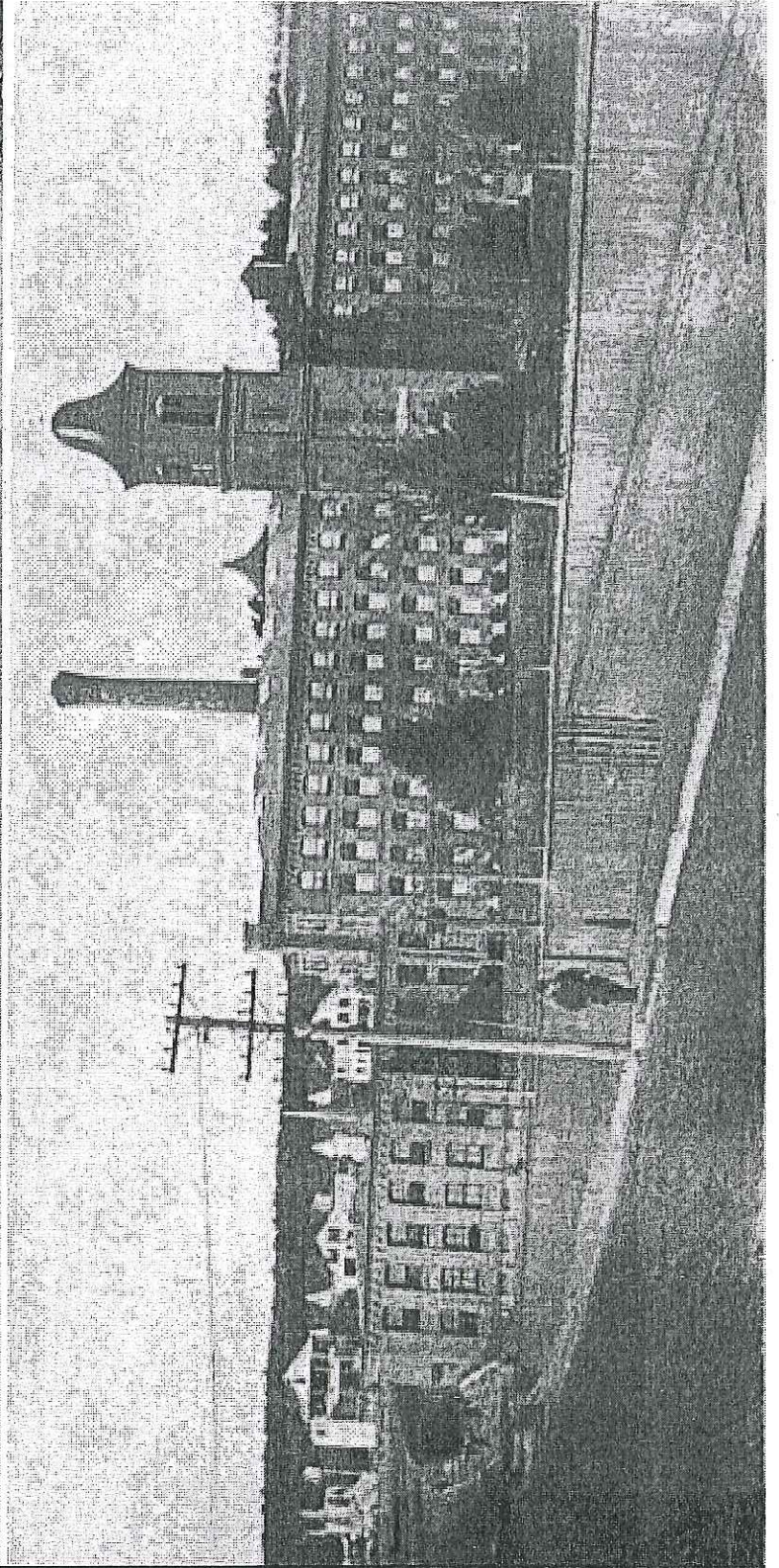


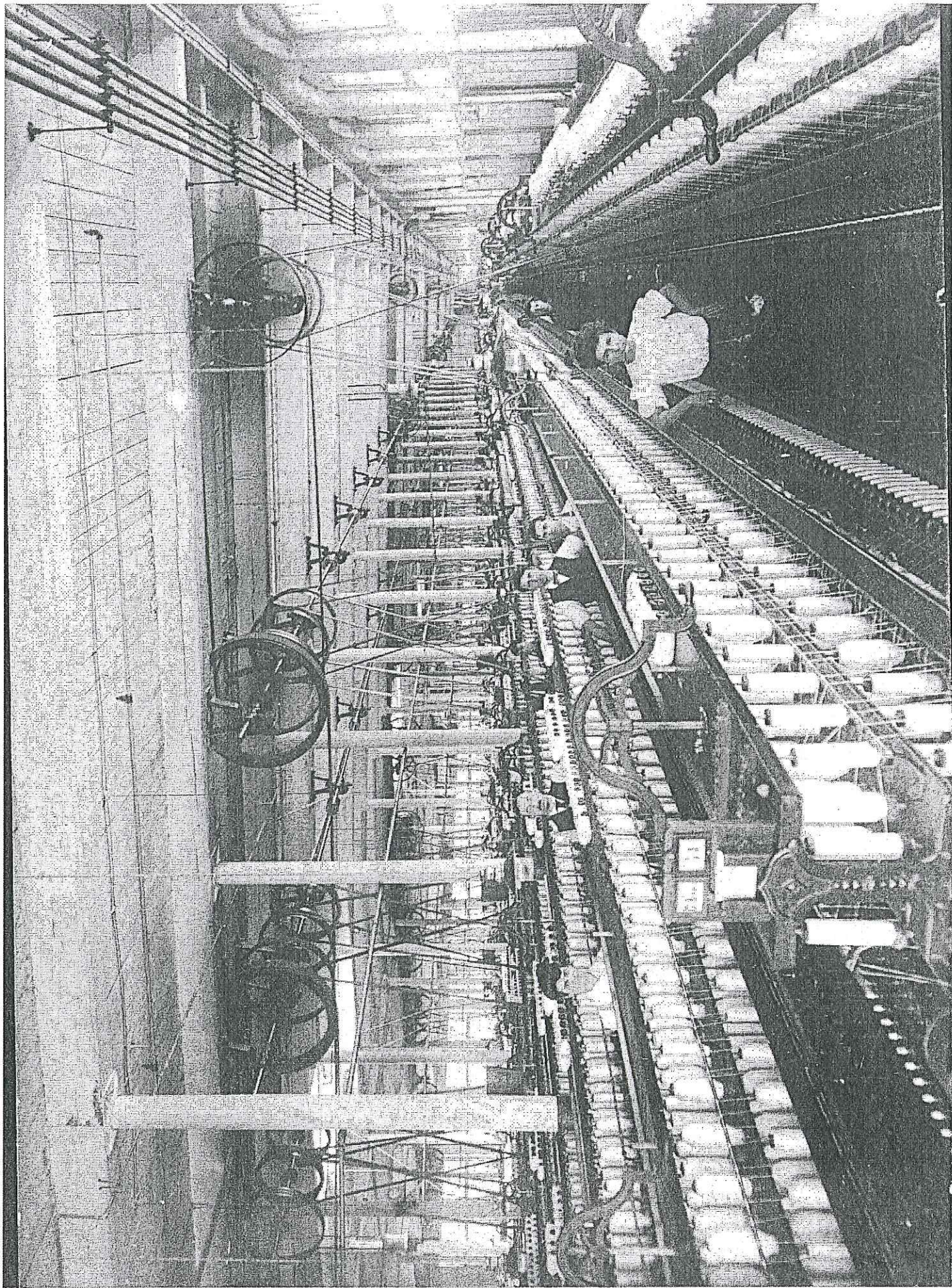


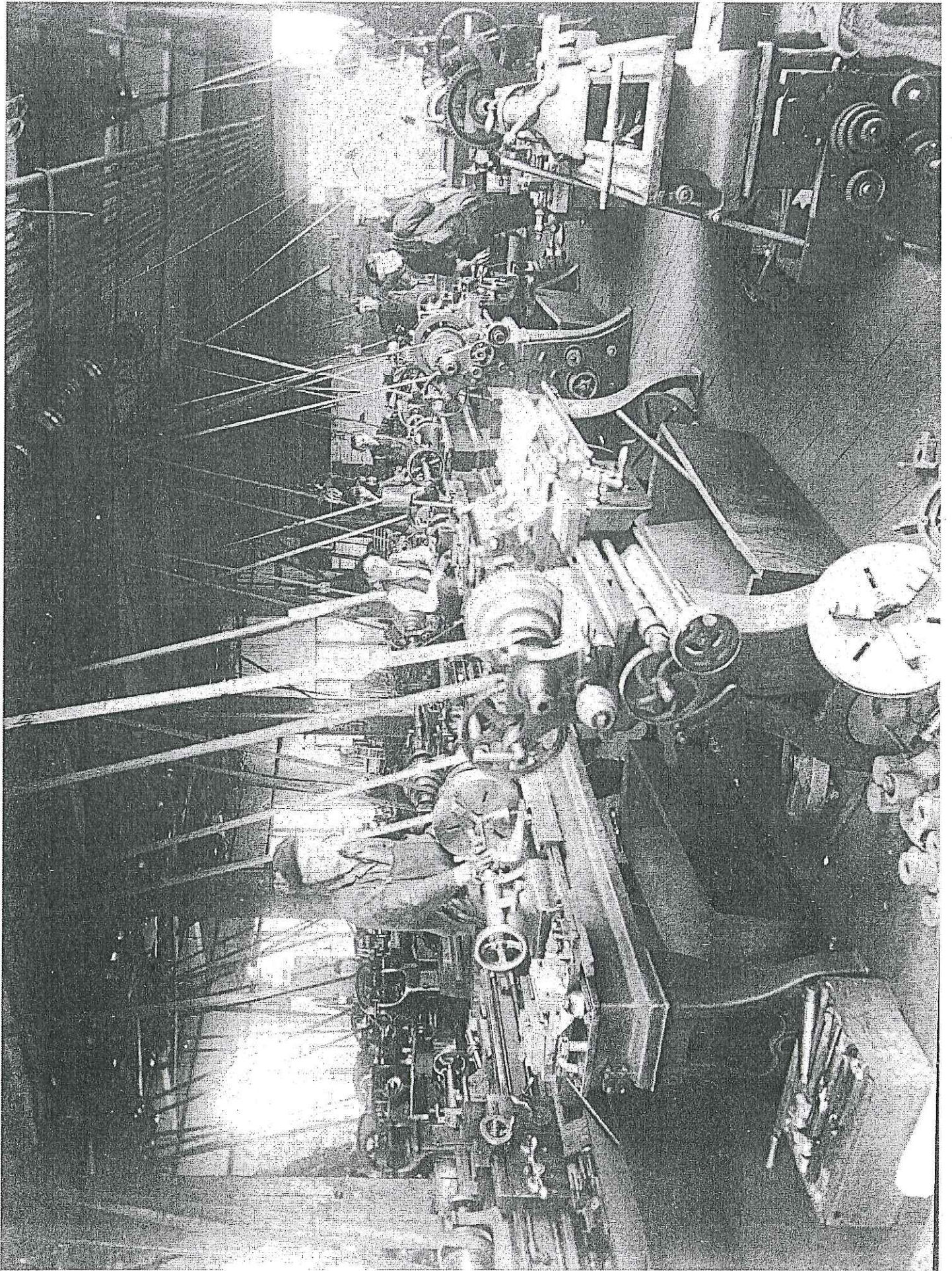
Weave Shed View

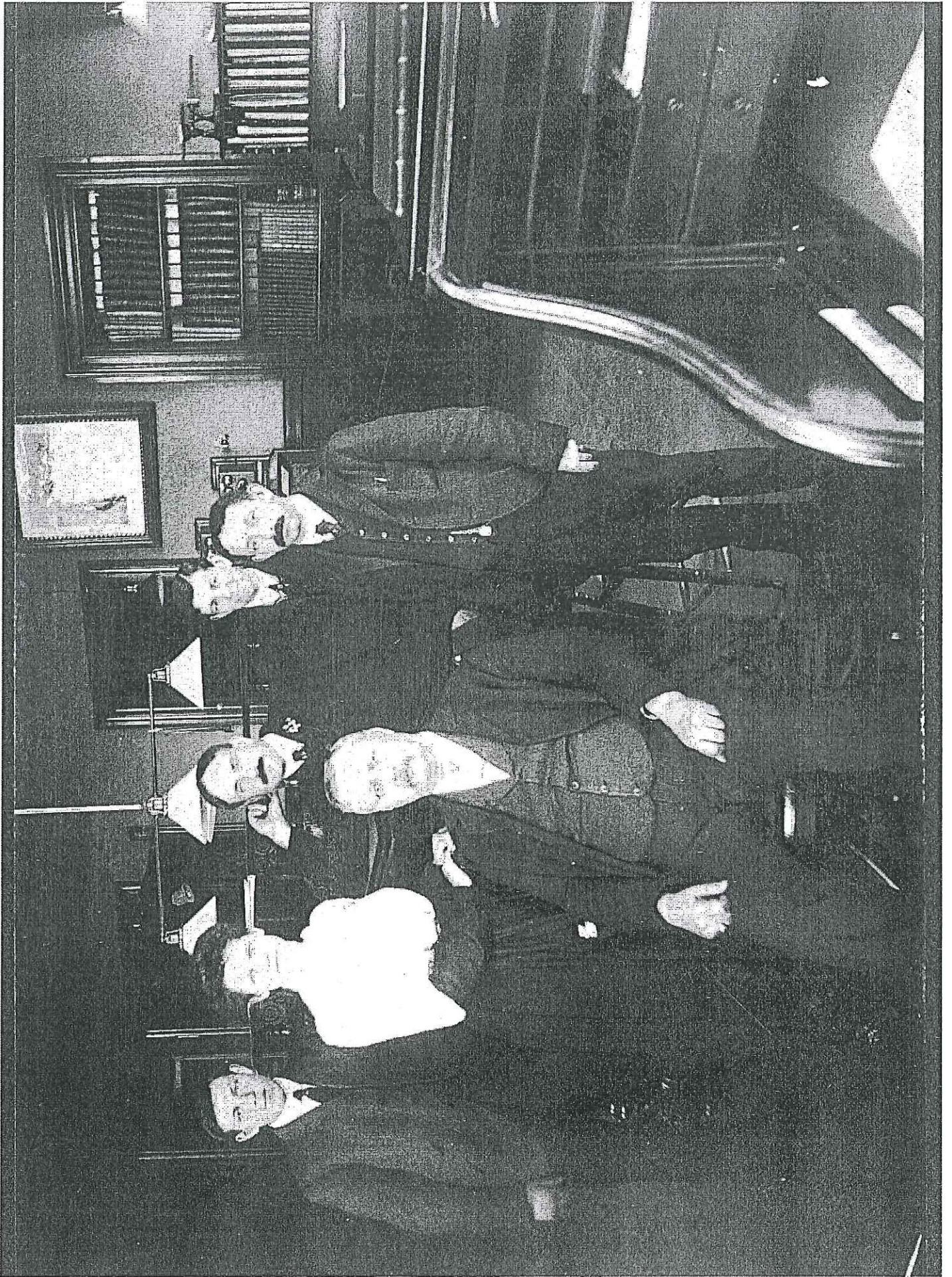


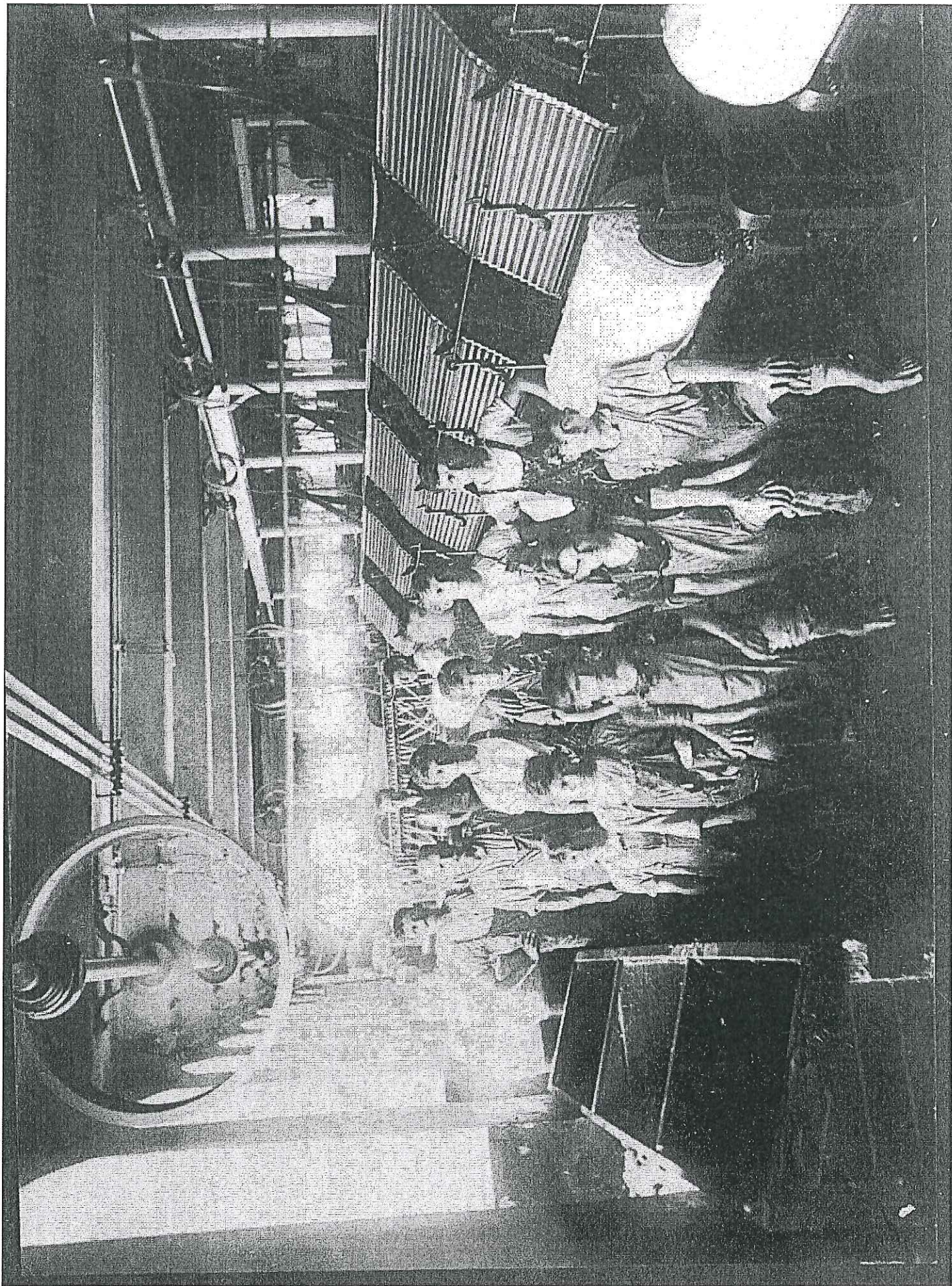
Final phase
of
expansion
seen on the
left hand
side of the
mill. WWII
drew much
work to the
village.

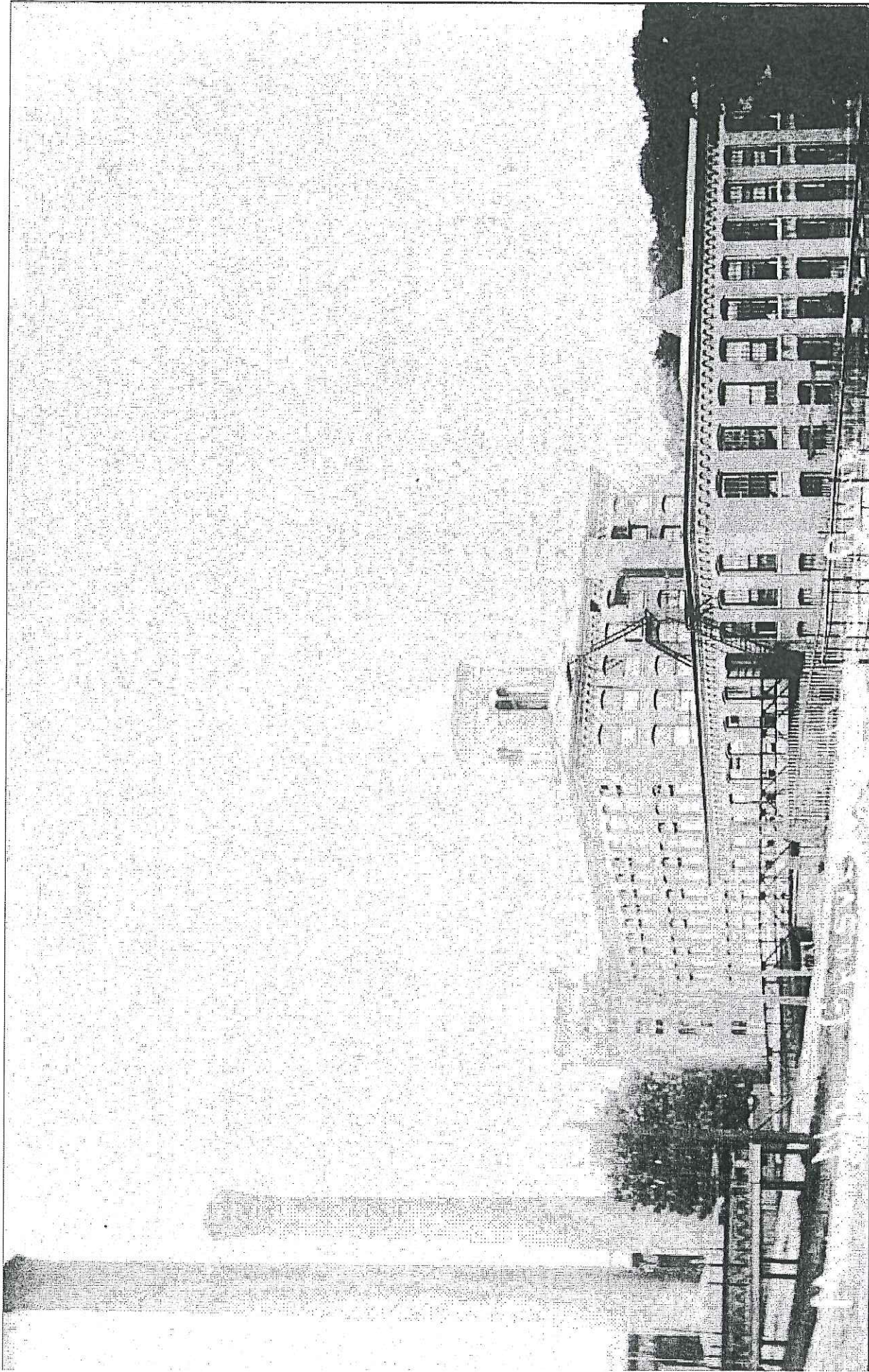






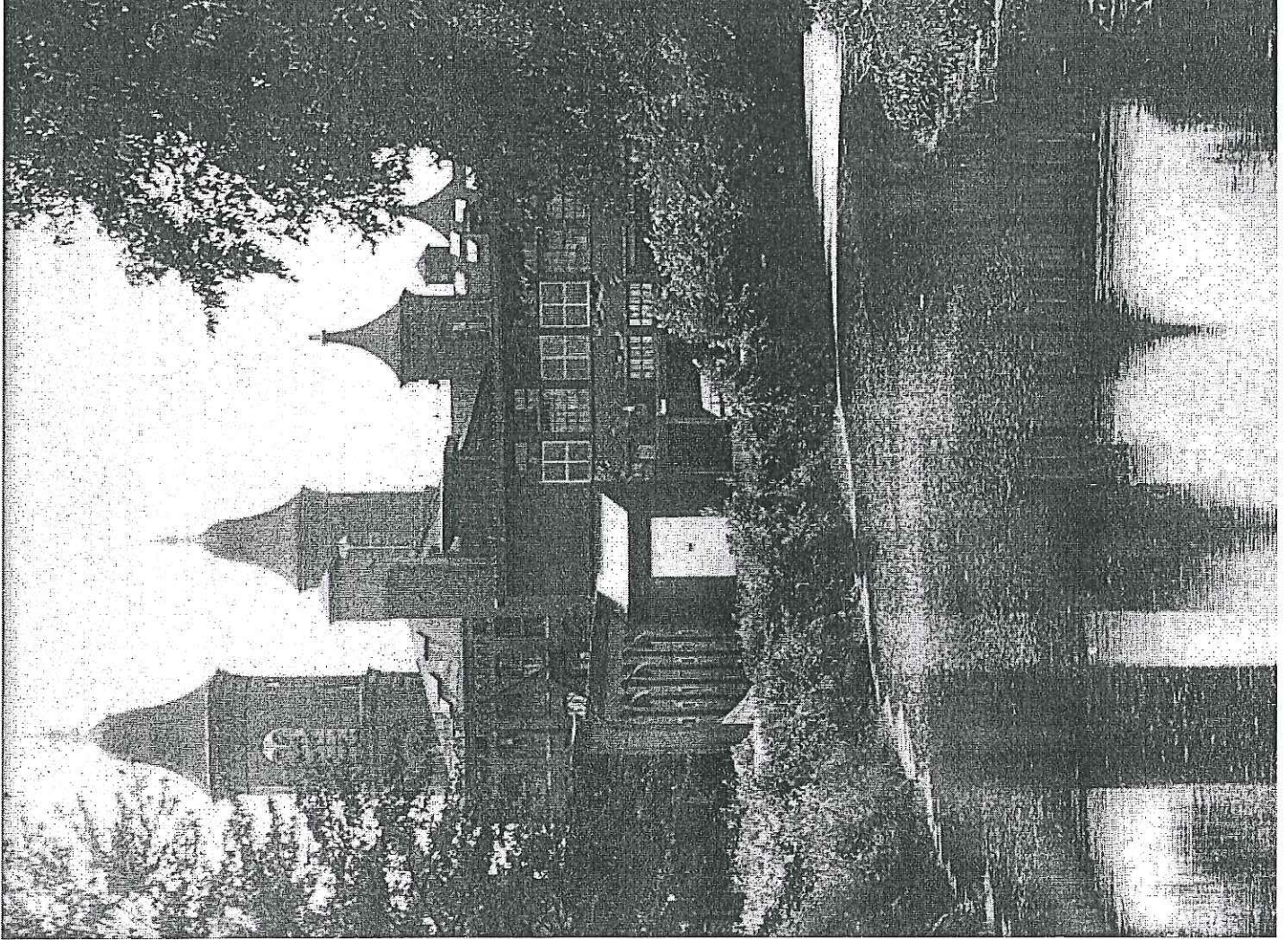
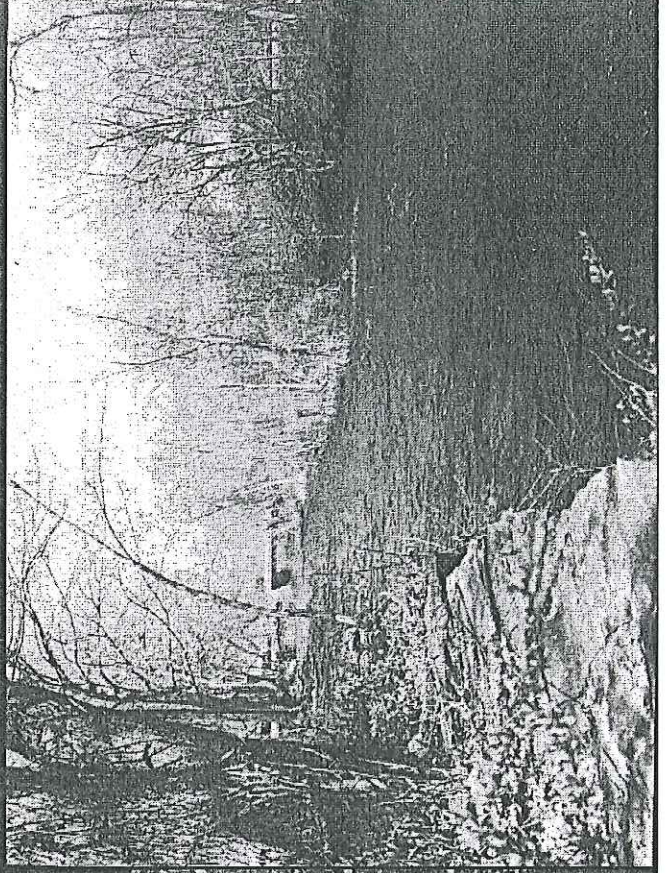






Rumors of two smoke-stacks are true! Trying to compete with lower cost producers in the south, the Grosvenor-Dale Co. expanded production, added modern equipment after WWI.

The canal is raised above the level of the river. The weight of the water, falling from the height of the canal to the river through the spinning turbine, powers the mill.



AT PUBLIC AUCTION

111 Desirable Dwellings

TO BE SOLD — ON THE PREMISES AT

**NORTH GROSVENOR-DALE — GROSVENOR-DALE
AND MECHANICSVILLE, CONNECTICUT**

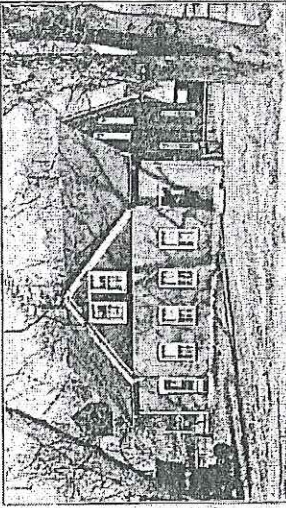
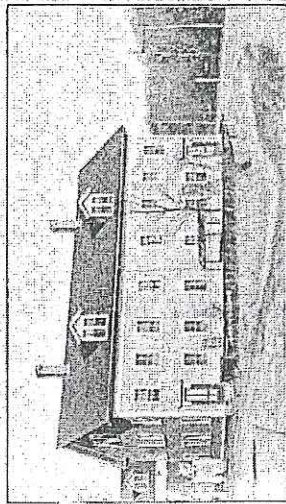
Friday, April 29, 1938, Starting at 1 o'clock P.M.

D. S. T.

AND CONTINUING

Saturday, April 30, 1938, at 10 o'clock A.M.

D. S. T.



By Order of
**THE
GROSVENOR-DALE
COMPANY**

75% of the Purchase Price May Remain on Mortgage

THE SALE INCLUDES:

- 13 Cottages
- 35 Two-Family Dwellings
- 8 Three-Family Dwellings
- 40 Four-Family Dwellings
- 13 Multi-Family Blocks
- 2 Commercial Properties

SAMUEL T. FREEMAN & CO.

Established November 12, 1869
80 FEDERAL STREET
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Auctioneers

HENRY W. COOKE CO.

HOSPITAL TRUST BUILDING
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

LOCAL OFFICE: FIRE STATION, NORTH GROSVENOR-DALE

LOOK FOR THE SIGN

NOTE: This sale has no connection whatever with the manufacturing policies of the Grosvenor-Dale Co. The company considers (in common with many other manufacturers) that the ownership of dwellings for its employees is no longer necessary to the operation of its mills and has decided to place on the open market at public sale the 111 dwelling properties listed herein, giving to its employees, as well as the public generally, an opportunity to buy at their own price houses not heretofore available for purchase.



-The company recovered after the 1936 flood, selloff of properties, and the 1938 storm & flood.

-It served our country well during WWII with maximum output. This was a temporary reprieve.

-The factory, like many in New England, faded as a textile force after the war, closing in '54.

-Following the 1955 flood, the mill & outbuildings reopened as a multi-tenant industrial facility.

-To the present day, it hosts a variety of small manufacturing, services & logistics companies.

Thank you for your attention!

Consider the past when
changing your future!

