

Metacomet Mill
(American Print Works No. 6 Mill)
Northeast corner Davol and Anawan Streets
Fall River
Bristol County
Massachusetts

HABS No. MASS-983

HABS
MASS
3-FALL
5-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

METACOMET MILL
(AMERICAN PRINT WORKS NO. 6 MILL)HABS
MASS
3-FALL

Location: Northeast corner Davol and Anawan Streets, Fall River, Bristol County, Massachusetts.
Geographic Location Code: 20 - 0320 - 005
Latitude: 41° 42' 10" Longitude: 71° 09' 40"
(Approximate location: Northwest corner of Mill Building.)

Present Owner: Manufacturers Realty Corp., 18 Pocasset Street, Fall River, Mass.

Present Occupant: The building is currently occupied by several tenants.

Present Use: Light manufacturing and storage.

Statement of Significance: This building is the oldest existing mill in Fall River. It was built in 1847 by the Fall River Iron Works, and patterned on the English mills in its ample width. This mill is also significant as the only one remaining on the original site of the city's textile factories, along the lower falls of the Quequechan River.

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PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1847.
2. Architect: Unknown.
3. Builder, suppliers: Unknown.
4. Original plan and construction: The mill was built in 1847 in the English manner, having a width of approximately 70'. Originally it had a gable roof and consisted of five and one-half stories. Later the roof was made flat and the building increased to six stories.
5. Alterations and additions: Boiler house, n.d.; speeder room, n.d.; picker house and arched passageways, n.d.; south mill, n.d.

B. Sources of Information:

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Prepared by Robert M. Vogel and
Ted Sande
National Park Service
July 18-23, 1968; July 1971

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The major six story portion of the Metacomet Mill (also known as the No. 6 Mill of the American Printing Company) was built in 1847 and is the oldest existing textile mill in Fall River. Following that date there were numerous additions to the original structure. In 1905-06 the larger No. 7 Mill of the American Printing Company was constructed to the east.

Placed on the west bank of the Quequechan River below the lower falls, the Metacomet Mill was the lowest of the mills to make use of the water power. The turbine furnished the power of the early mill; later a 375 hp Corliss engine furnished two-thirds of the power for the enlarged mill.

2. Condition of fabric: Originally very well constructed, the Metacomet Mill is still generally sound, but there is some evidence of decay in the major wood beams and in the roof and floor planking. The building and surroundings are poorly maintained.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The dimensions of the original portion of the Metacomet Mill were: five and one-half stories, 70'-4" x 218'-3" (later extended 30'-4"). This portion had a gable roof, approximately 7 to 12. Later the roof was raised to a low pitch providing six full stories. Originally, there appears to have been a central stair tower. A two and one-half story addition was soon built and this was later raised to six stories. A two story entrance, office and waste room building was constructed early, and later a third story was added. A picker house and repair shop (two and one-half stories, later two story) completed the courtyard. A water closet tower (six stories) was subsequently added adjacent to the stair tower.
2. Foundations: Foundations are mortared granite down to bedrock. Granite piers, 3'-0" x 3'-0" in size, carry 12" x 15" wood beams and 4" planking. The underside of the wood members are coated with tar for damp-proofing.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: The exterior walls of the older structures are of rubble fieldstone, quarried from the nearby granite cliff. The wall thicknesses: 3'-0" (ground floor) to 1'-8" (fifth floor). The exterior faces are parged; interiors are smoothly plastered. The corner stones and the face of the stair tower and the office wing are neatly-shaped, squared ashlar granite.

The interior framing consists of splined heavy structural plank floor (10" x 3"), on heavy wood beams (11- $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 15" usual). Beams for the ground, first, second, third and fourth floors are supported by cast iron columns (4- $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 5- $\frac{1}{2}$ " in diameter). The roof beams are supported by wood columns (6- $\frac{3}{8}$ " in diameter).

4. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Exterior door openings have heavy granite lintels. Most of the wood doors are not original.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Typical window openings have granite lintels and granite sub-sills. Double-hung wood sash, nine lights each, 3'-6" wide, 5'-6" (fourth floor) to 7'-6" (fifth floor) high.

5. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: As originally constructed almost all of the buildings and wings had gable roofs, about 7 to 12 pitch, covered with wood shingles. Near the end of the 19th Century the roofs were modified to low pitches, covered with composition and gravel; the attic of the early mill building was rebuilt into a full story.
- b. Framing: The roof framing consists of heavy beams supporting planking, quite similar to the typical floor construction.
- c. Cornice, eaves: The roof overhang is 3'-0" with boxed wood cornice, and solid wood decorative brackets.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The large original building is an undivided rectangular space on each of the six floors. The floors are supported with two rows of regularly-spaced columns. There is a stair tower in the middle of the south side of the building.
2. Flooring: One inch maple flooring, 4" in width, is laid over the structural planking.
3. Wall and ceiling finish: Granite walls are plastered on the interior face. The large structural wood beams are exposed. There are cast iron columns on each of the five lower floors; on the sixth floor there are round wood columns. The cast iron columns are smooth-shafted, tapered, with moulded bases and caps.
4. Doorways and doors: Panelled wood doors are not original.
5. Mechanical equipment: Fluorescent electrical fixtures have replaced earlier gas fixtures. Open steam pipe coils for heating are still in use in the building. Toilet facilities are contained in an addition adjacent to the stair tower, south elevation.

D. Site and Surroundings:

General setting and orientation: Built on a sloping site around an open courtyard, the irregularly-shaped units form an eccentric composition. The mill is in the lower valley of the Quequechan River with the stream flowing under the east portion of the main structure. It is now crowded between

railroad tracks, Viaduct Street and recent highway construction.

Prepared by Melvin M. Rotsch
Architect
Texas A & M University
August 1968

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This building was recorded as part of the New England Textile Mill Survey II; which was sponsored by the Historic American Buildings Survey of the Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation of the National Park Service, and the Smithsonian Institution. The project was assisted by the Merrimack Valley Textile Museum, North Andover, Mass.; the Fall River Historical Society; and the Bristol Community College, Fall River, Mass. It was the second of two summer surveys whose purpose was to record representative examples of the buildings of the New England textile industry.

The field work, historical research and record drawings were done in the summer of 1968 under the direction of Robert M. Vogel (Curator of Mechanical and Civil Engineering, Museum of History and Technology, Smithsonian Institution), Project Director; Professor Melvin M. Rotsch (Architect, Texas A & M University), Project Supervisor; and David L. Bouse (University of Nebraska), Peter S. Conrad (Yale University), Eric N. DeLony (Ohio State University), and Dennis W. Jacobs (University of Kansas), Student Assistant Architects.

Historic documentation and editing of the project data were done in the summer of 1971 by Ted Sande (Architect, University of Pennsylvania), under the auspices of the Historic American Engineering Record of the Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation of the National Park Service.

Addendum to
Metacomet Mill
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