

Union Mills  
Pleasant Street and I-195, Interchange #12  
Fall River  
Bristol County  
Massachusetts

HABS No. MASS-981

HABS  
MASS  
3-FALL  
3-

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

## UNION MILLS

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MASS  
3-FALL  
3 -

Location: Pleasant Street and I-195, Interchange #12, Fall River, Bristol County, Massachusetts.  
Geographic Location Code: 20 - 0320 - 005  
Latitude: 41° 41' 57" Longitude: 71° 09' 03"  
(Approximate corner of Pleasant Street and I-195, Interchange #12.)

Present Owner: The Hull Co., 75 Sabine Street, Pawtucket, Rhode Island.

Present Occupant: The buildings currently have several tenants.

Present Use: Sale, light manufacturing and storage.

Statement of Significance: The Union Mill was the first Fall River textile company to be financed by stock subscriptions. No. 1 Mill was built in 1859 and No. 2 Mill in 1865.

PART 1. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History:

1. Dates of erection: 1859, 1865, 1877-1895.
2. Architect: Josiah Brown.
3. Builder or contractor, suppliers: Unknown.
4. Original plan and construction: No. 1 Mill (1859); No. 2 Mill (1865). Original gable roofs removed and additional stories added after 1876.

## B. Sources of Information:

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Prepared by Robert M. Vogel and  
Ted Sande  
National Park Service  
June 12-18, 1968; July 1971

PART 11. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Union Mills were the first textile mills to be built in the city by a capitalized corporation, and they were a highly successful enterprise. The corporation was formed in 1859. Josiah Brown was the architect.
2. Existing buildings: Until recently there were fourteen buildings and additions on the site; the following are still standing:

No. 1 Mill	6 stories	erected 1859
No. 1 Picker House	3 stories	
No. 1 Engine House	1 story	
No. 2 Mill	6 stories	erected 1865
No. 2 Picker House	4 stories	
No. 2 Boiler House	1 story	
No. 2 Engine House	1 story	
No. 2 Waste House	2 stories	
Office Building	2½ stories	

B. Building Materials:

1. Exterior walls, major buildings: The exterior walls of all major buildings, with one exception, were of locally-quarried granite. No. 1 and No. 2 Mills had gable roofs, wood shingles; the 7 to 12 pitch was altered after 1876 to a very low pitched roof covered with built-up composition roofing.
2. Exterior walls, Office Building: The exterior walls of the Office Building are red brick; the gable roof has a 10 to 12 pitch, now covered with asphalt shingles.

C. No. 1 Mill:

1. General statement: Originally very well constructed, No. 1 Mill is still generally sound, but there is some evidence

of decay in the major wood beams and the roof and floor planking. The building is now poorly maintained.

2. The exteriors:

- a. Dimensions: The dimensions of No. 1 Mill are as follows: six stories; 70' x 105' with a three story addition (repair shop).
- b. Foundations: Foundations are mortared granite down to bedrock.
- c. Structural system, framing: Exterior walls are of locally-quarried gray granite, 3'-2" (first) to 1'-10" (sixth) wall thicknesses. Interior of major walls are irregular mortared rubble; exterior faces are irregular ashlar with wide parged joints. The corner stones are neatly-shaped squared ashlar, hammered finish on the edges.

The interior structural framing consists of splined heavy plank sub-floor (10" x 3" or 4"), on heavy wood beams (12" x 14"), supported on regularly spaced cast iron columns (6½" to 4" in diameter).

- d. Openings: Exterior door openings have heavy lintels of granite. Wood doors are not original.

Typical window openings have granite lintels; double-hung wood sash, twelve lights each sash. Size of openings: 3'-2" wide, 6'-3" to 7'-2" high.

- e. Roof: As originally constructed there was a gable roof covered with shingles. The 7 to 12 pitch was altered after 1876; the roof was raised to a very low pitch and a full sixth story replaced the attic. The roof is now covered with built-up composition gravel roofing.

The roof framing consists of heavy beams supporting planking, quite similar to the typical floor construction.

A heavy projecting beam at the roof at the center of the north end of the building enabled the hoisting of machinery to the large doors on each of the floors.

3. The interiors:

- a. Floor plans: The large rectangular space on each of the six floors is undivided. The floors are supported by two rows of regularly-spaced cast iron columns on each of the floors. There are open wood stairs at

each end of the building, and a freight elevator at the south end. The stairs, 4'-2" to 4'-6" in width, usually have 19 risers between floors.

- b. Flooring: One inch maple flooring, 4" in width, is laid over the structural planking.
- c. Wall and ceiling finish: Granite walls are plastered on the interior face. Ceilings are 1" x 6" boards nailed to the underside of the structural planks. Large structural wood beams are exposed. Cast iron columns are smooth-shafted, tapered, with moulded bases and caps.
- d. Doorways and doors: Panelled wood doors are not original.
- e. Mechanical equipment: Fluorescent electrical fixtures have replaced earlier gas lighting.

Open steam pipe coils for heating are still in use in the building. A toilet addition, has facilities which are inadequate for the present employees.

D. No. 2 Mill:

1. General statement: Originally very well constructed, No. 2 Mill is still generally sound, but there is some evidence of decay in the major wood beams and the planking of the roof and floors. The building is poorly maintained.
2. The exteriors:
  - a. Dimensions: The dimensions of No. 2 Mill are as follows: six stories; 72' x 280' with a four story wing (picker house).
  - b. Foundations: Foundations are mortared granite down to bedrock.
  - c. Structural system, framing: Exterior walls are locally-quarried gray granite, 3'-2" (first) to 1'-10" (sixth) wall thicknesses. Interior of major walls are irregular mortared rubble; exterior faces are irregular ashlar with wide parged joints. Corner stones are neatly-squared ashlar, hammer finished on the edges.
  - d. Openings: Exterior door openings have heavy lintels of granite. Wood doors are not original.

Window openings have granite lintels; double-hung wood sash, twelve lights each sash. Typical size of openings: 3'-2" wide, 6'-3" to 7'-2" high.

- e. Roof: As originally constructed there was a gable roof, covered with shingles. The 7 to 12 pitch was altered after 1876; the roof was raised to a very low pitch, and a full sixth story replaced the attic. The roof is now covered with built-up composition gravel roofing.

The roof framing consists of heavy beams supporting planking, quite similar to the typical floor construction.

The roof overhang is 3'-6" with boxed cornice of wood and decorative brackets of solid wood.

3. The interiors:

- a. Floor plans: The large rectangular space on each of the six floors is undivided. On each story the floors are supported by two rows of regularly-spaced cast iron columns. There are open wood stairs at each end of the building; the stairs, 4'-2" to 4'-6" in width, usually have 19 risers between floors.
- b. Flooring: One inch maple flooring, 4" in width, is laid over the structural planking.
- c. Wall and ceiling finish: Granite walls are plastered on the interior face. Ceilings are 1" x 6" boards nailed to the underside of the structural planks. Large structural wood beams are exposed. Cast iron columns are smooth-shafted, tapered, with moulded bases and caps.
- d. Doorways and doors: Panelled wood doors are not original.
- e. Mechanical equipment: Fluorescent electrical fixtures have replaced those of the earlier gas lighting.

Open steam pipe coils for heating are still in use in the building. The toilet facilities in the water closet tower are now inadequate for the number of employees.

E. Site and Surroundings:

- 1. General setting and orientation: No. 1 Mill was built near the north bank of the Quequechan River, on the south

side of Pleasant Street, set at an angle of 86 degrees to the street. No. 2 Mill was built parallel to and close to Pleasant Street, opposite Seventh and Eighth Streets.

2. Landscaping: There are large, hard-surfaced areas available for employee parking. Other areas are neglected.

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.