

Norfolk & New Brunswick Hosiery Company
On Hamilton Street, between George Street
and Raritan River
New Brunswick
Middlesex County
New Jersey

HABS No. NJ-721

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

NORFOLK & NEW BRUNSWICK HOSIERY COMPANY

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Address: George and Hamilton Sts., New Brunswick,
Middlesex County, New Jersey

Present Owner
and Occupant: Johnson and Johnson

Present Use: Offices and storage

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: Original owner probably James Neilson, cotton mill operator, 1853-1863. Norfolk and New Brunswick Hosiery Company 1863-1911. Johnson and Johnson 1911 - .
2. Date of erection: 1853
3. Important old views: 1887 - "Quarter Century's Progress of New Jersey's Leading Manufacturing Centers," p. 247. 1908 - "The City of New Brunswick, New Jersey," presented by the Daily Times, 1909, p. 125. Old photographs in the files of Johnson and Johnson.
4. Measured drawings: Floor plans in the Johnson and Johnson Engineering Department.

- B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure: This building, No. 35 on Johnson and Johnson plat plan, is the oldest remaining building of the Johnson and Johnson complex that has not been materially altered in its exterior appearance. Fire insurance maps indicate that the building was built in 1853, or 10 years before being acquired by the Norfolk and New Brunswick Hosiery Company, and, therefore, presumably built by James Neilson as part of his Cotton Mill started in 1845-1846. A distinction can be claimed in that this is the only building still standing, that was originally built to utilize the water power of the Delaware and Raritan Canal; and an old rusty water turbine is still under the present concrete floor at the Hamilton Street end of the building.

Johnson and Johnson, incorporated in 1887, started manufacturing in New Brunswick in 1886 in a rented four story building called The Parson Mill on the West side of Neilson Street, just back of the old George Street depot of the Pennsylvania Railroad. This was before the railroad elevation was constructed in 1902-1903. In 1891 Johnson and Johnson acquired the property of the defunct Mural Decorating Company - "on the water power" - formerly the property of the Novelty Rubber Company.

In 1911 Johnson and Johnson acquired the Norfolk and New Brunswick Hosiery Company property - including this building No. 35 - located North of Hamilton Street from the main raceway to the Delaware and Raritan Canal, and thus were in possession of all the lots on block No. 95 on the city tax map.

Prepared by L. W. Hinrichsen
For the New Jersey Historical
Sites Evaluation
February 1960.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: This is a massive, rectangular brick building with gable roof and ornamental tower at one corner. The building is very plain with a continuous run of evenly spaced windows on each of its four floors but with a wood cornice returned at the ends and continuing up the rake of the gables.
2. Condition of fabric: The building is in good condition. The stair tower with wood stairs and landings had originally in its center a small dumbwaiter elevator for carrying textiles from floor to floor. The stair tower had originally a steeple probably with a mill bell; the steeple was removed after 1912.

The adjoining building No. 34 was torn down in 1959. The present entrance towards the main raceway is a new addition and was built when the second floor was renovated into office spaces.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: This building No. 35 on Johnson and Johnson plat plan is a typical mid-nineteenth century mill building; approximately 50 feet wide by 120 feet long; 4 stories high; original slate roof now covered with built up roofing; red brick walls; interior is of mill construction, that is, wooden posts with wooden beams spaced 8 feet apart, wooden plank floors finished with maple flooring.
2. Windows: There are fifteen twelve over twelve double hung wood sash in each tier of the side elevations and five in each tier of the ends with one circle-headed window in each gable. In some cases the center windows at the ends have been converted into shipping doors.

3. Roof: The gable roof is set at about a forty-five degree angle pitch, covered with rolled asphalt.
4. Tower: Attached to the building at one corner but exposed on four sides is a square brick stair tower with a door at grade on one side. Attached to one side of the tower is a one-story, flat roofed wing, about the same width and with the same architectural treatment as the main tower. The door and windows at the ground floor are capped with segmental brick heads which drop just below the masonry opening to a broad ornamental brick band which surrounds the tower and the little wing. The second and third floors have two two-story high windows on each facade. These windows have been coupled, one above another, with wood spandrels between floors. The tops of the windows have round heads which drop to a horizontal brick band, similar to that on the first floor. The fourth and fifth floor section of the tower diminishes in width by means of a reverse corbel. On the center of each facade of the fourth floor is a single, circle-head window. These heads do not terminate on a band as below, but stop in the form of flat, brick brackets which corbel back to the sides of the masonry opening. Tower windows have six over six double hung wood sash. At the base of the fifth floor is a broad brick band, horizontal at the corners and arching up at the center of each facade in a pointed arch over a blind circular window. These circular windows are framed with a broad brick trim. Capping the flat topped tower is a high brick parapet, wider than the tower and supported by a series of brick corbels.

Prepared by George Brokaw Howell
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New Brunswick, New Jersey
December 1960