

Hopkins Mill
Nooseneck (southeast side of
R. I. Route 3 and Nooseneck River)
West Greenwich
Kent County
Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-303

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. RI-303

HOPKINS MILL

Location: Nooseneck (southeast side of R. I. Route 3 and Nooseneck River), West Greenwich, Kent County, Rhode Island.
Geographic Location Code: 38 - 0154 - 003
Latitude: 41° 37' 36" N Longitude: 71° 37' 45" W

Present Owner: State of Rhode Island, State House, Providence, Rhode Island.

Present Occupant: Unoccupied.

Present Use: Vacant (the building has been acquired and condemned by the State of Rhode Island in order to clear the site for a planned reservoir).

Statement of Significance: The Hopkins Mill is an extremely rare example of the once common smaller cotton textile mills of modest capitalization that proliferated along the lesser streams of the state during the mid-19th century.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners:

David Hopkins et al, c. 1867-c. 1915; used building for textile manufacturing until c. 1906, when machinery was removed.

Henry Lippitt, c. 1915-c. 1931 (?); converted to cattle barn.

William Russell Halliwell, c. 1931 (?)-1968; used building for storage.

State of Rhode Island, 1968-present; condemned to make way for state reservoir.

2. Date of erection: c. 1867.

3. Architect: Probably David Hopkins.

4. Builder or contractor, suppliers: David Hopkins.

5. Original plan and construction: The original building was one story plus attic and partial basement. The plan is significant because it incorporates features common to the much larger mills of the time, i.e.: separate stair and water closet towers, clerestory attic windows and slow-burning timber construction (modified).
6. Alterations and additions: Office addition; south end, west facade; one story plus attic, n.d. Stone outbuilding (probably for storage and picking of cotton).

B. Sources of Information:

Cole, J. R. History of Washington and Kent Counties, R. I. New York: 1889. p. 1169.

Providence Journal. June 18, 1926. p. 26.

Rhode Island Atlas. 1870. pl. 75.

Textile World. October, 1895. p. 119.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: An extremely rare example of the once common smaller cotton textile mills of modest capitalization that proliferated along the lesser streams of the state during the mid-19th century. The construction is typical of 1840's mills even though the building dates from c. 1867.
2. Condition of fabric: Generally good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: 152' x 32'; twenty-two bays; one story plus attic and partial basement; rectangular in shape.
2. Foundations: Stone.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: Frame, sheathed in wood shingles (except south and west walls, west monitor end panels and stair tower which have clapboards). Shingled surfaces have natural weathered finish, grey-brown color. Clapboard surfaces are painted white.
4. Structural system, framing: Slow-burning (modified) heavy timber construction.

5. Porches, stoops, bulkheads: None.
6. Chimneys: One (1) west elevation, office addition.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: All doors wood, set in wood frames. Double machinery service doors, first floor and attic west stair tower. Double sliding doors, west elevation (added later for cattle access). Pedestrian doors, east and west elevations.
 - b. Windows and shutters: First floor and gable ends of attic: wood double-hung 6/6. Clerestory windows: 3/3 double-hung wood sash.
8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Gable, with continuous clerestory windows on east and west elevations.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: Wood, projects about 12" from exterior wall surface, first floor.
 - c. Dormers, cupolas towers: Stair tower, west elevation, gable roof. Water closet (privy) tower, east elevation, gable roof. Four (4) sheet metal ventilators mounted along main roof ridge (added when building was converted to a cattle barn c. 1915).

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plan: The first and attic floors are rectangular with a privy tower about mid-way along the east elevation and a stair tower opposite it on the west. Originally there was a central row of wood columns running the length of the first floor. These were removed apparently when the building was converted to a cattle barn. An office addition is at the southwest portion of the building.
2. Stairways: One (1), west stair tower.
3. Flooring: Wood plank.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Exposed framing and board sheathing.
5. Doorways and doors: Wood frame.
6. Special decorative features: None.

7. Notable hardware: None.
8. Mechanical equipment: No evidence of wheel pit in building, but a stone-lined pit to the south of the mill, on axis with outfall for small dam, undoubtedly held a breast-wheel. No evidence of conversion to water turbine although there is a report that a turbine was later used. Power apparently taken directly to picker house and then by flatbelt into mill through side wall at southeast corner.

No evidence of sprinkler system. No evidence of boiler, but there are several hangers for two or three pipe (steam) heating around periphery of first floor at ceiling.

No evidence of electric service for mill, but office addition was wired for lighting.

No water or other utilities services present or apparently ever applied.

D. Site and Surroundings:

1. General setting and orientation: The building is located on a plateau of Nooseneck Hill, above the Nooseneck River. The site is lawn and meadow to the west and north and wooded on the other two sides. The Nooseneck River is south of the mill and there is a dam southwest of the office addition.
2. Outbuildings: One stone store house and picker house (probably), southeast of mill.

Prepared by Robert M. Vogel
Smithsonian Institution
August 1968; May 1971

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.