

*Returned by  
M. Scanlon*

# REPORT

## LOWELL NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK AND PRESERVATION DISTRICT

### CULTURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY

prepared for

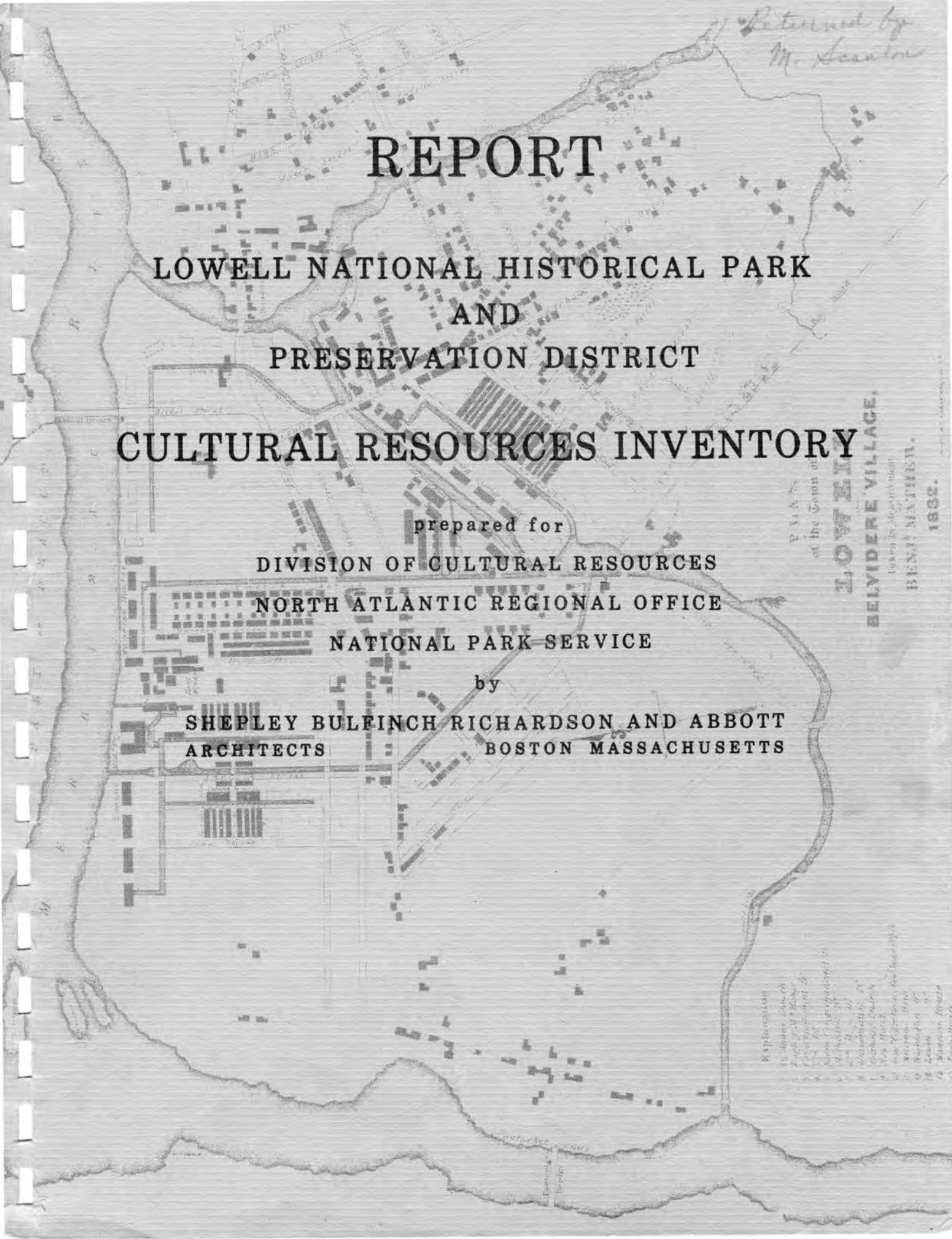
DIVISION OF CULTURAL RESOURCES  
NORTH ATLANTIC REGIONAL OFFICE  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

by

SHEPLEY BULFINCH RICHARDSON AND ABBOTT  
ARCHITECTS  
BOSTON MASSACHUSETTS

P. A. N. S.  
of the Town of  
**LOWELL**  
BELVIDERE VILLAGE,  
Taken by Mr. J. W. ...  
BENJ. NATHAN.  
1832.

Exploration  
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AND

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Architects            Boston, Massachusetts

PROPERTY OF  
LOWELL NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

1980

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### PATTERNS OF RESOURCES, PATTERNS OF USE: THE PARK AND THE DISTRICT TODAY

The task of coalescing the information on the 895 properties recorded by the inventory into a comprehensive picture of the Park and the District resembles the challenge Humpty Dumpty presented "all the king's horses and all the king's men." The preceding chapter adopted a chronological approach to that task. This chapter focuses on the present-day Park and District and describes how the historical resources relate to one another and to current patterns of land use and activity in Lowell.

Twelve more or less discrete areas within the LHPD can be identified. These do not necessarily correspond to neighborhoods within the city as a whole, since the Park and District boundaries apply their own organization, based largely on the canal system, to the city. The factors which determine these twelve areas are geographic divisions, patterns of activity and land use, and concentrations of historic resources. Fewer, larger areas could have been described, but a "finer grained" approach was chosen to permit discussion both of major concentrations of resources in central areas, and of historical features important to lesser-known parts of Lowell. The twelve areas are outlined on a fold-out map at the end of this chapter.

#### AREA 1--CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

The Central Business District (CBD) is pre-eminent within the Park and the District for its present-day vitality and its rich historic fabric. This area extends from the Memorial Auditorium on the east, along Merrimack Street to City Hall and the Memorial Library on the west, and from French Street on the north to Market Street on the South. Middle, Palmer, and Shattuck Streets south of Merrimack, and



John, Paige, Lee, and Kirk Streets north of Merrimack are within the CBD. It is a busy area of stores, banks, restaurants, and private and governmental offices but also includes numerous underutilized structures. There is an encouraging trend in the area toward rehabilitation and fuller occupancy rates. In addition, a number of buildings are undergoing conversion to subsidized housing, under the auspices of the Section 8 Program of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The heart of the CBD and the heart of the city is Merrimack Street, Lowell's "Main Street." It is lined by a varied collection of commercial and institutional structures, dating primarily from the nineteenth century. Red brick is the predominant material, but granite, yellow brick and Lowell's characteristic rubblestone construction are also represented along the street.

The most prominent landmark on Merrimack Street is the "New" City Hall, which with its companion Memorial Library was completed in 1893 (407 and 415 Merrimack Street, respectively). When City Hall was built, Monument Square was a fitting forecourt to the impressive granite building (Figure 4-1). Among the buildings enclosing the Square in 1893 were a leading hotel, a train station, a large new office building, and some handsome houses owned by the Merrimack Manufacturing Company. Of those buildings only a single house still stands, and the modern Square is primarily a wide traffic intersection (Figure 4-2), flanked by open lots or low buildings including a self-service gas station and a tire store and automobile repair shop. The City Hall and the Library are by no means without neighboring historic structures, however. Across Merrimack Street are the Bank Block of 1826 (#350-376), the First Congregational Church of 1884 (#400, now the Smith Baker Center), and the Green School of 1870 (#408). This diverse row of buildings is characteristic of the variety that is a delight and a strength of the CBD.



Figure 4-1 View of Monument Square from the east, ca. 1895.



Figure 4-2 View of Monument Square from the east, 1979.

Across the Square from City Hall a pair of mid-nineteenth century structures beside the Merrimack Canal serve as reminders of the industrial foundation on which the city was built, as does the canal itself. It was dug in 1822 to power the mills of the Merrimack Manufacturing Company. A restaurant now occupies the brick structure that same company built ca. 1860 as housing for employees (91 Dutton Street). In front of the restaurant is the Merrimack Gatehouse on the bank of the canal. Since 1848 the gatehouse has controlled the flow of water into the Merrimack Canal from the Moody Street Feeder, an underground tunnel off the Western Canal.

On the other side of the canal, a pair of major Lowell landmarks face one another across Merrimack Street. On one side are St. Anne's Church and Rectory (237 Merrimack Street and 8 Kirk Street, respectively), built in the mid-1820s. St. Anne's is distinctive on predominantly commercial Merrimack Street for its clearly ecclesiastical form, gray rubblestone material, and spacious, fenced lawns. Adding to the openness of the churchyard is the adjacent Lucy Larcon Park and the Merrimack Canal. Across Merrimack Street from St. Anne's Old City Hall (#226) retains its original Greek Revival scale and basic form. The 1829-30 building underwent a Colonial Revival remodeling in the mid-1890s which changed the windows and applied considerable new decoration to the building.

East of St. Anne's and the Old City Hall Merrimack Street is walled in by solid ranks of commercial structures. On three key intersections there are early buildings with rounded corners, a favorite Lowell motif. The Wentworth Block (#256) of ca. 1844 stands on the Shattuck Street corner, modified by the addition of a mansard roof. The Welles Block (#175) of 1846 occupies the corner of Kirk and Merrimack Streets, and the Nesmith Block (#83) has stood at Merrimack and John Streets since the mid-1830s. A sample of the eclectic group of buildings on Merrimack Street also includes structures of the 1850s--the "New" Nesmith Building of ca. 1850-56 (#65); the 1860s--the Robbins Building occupied by Prince's Books (#102-110); the 1870s--the Masonic Temple of 1872, now called the Hosford



Building (#134 and Figures 3-28, 3-29, and 3-30); the 1880s--the Hildreth Building of 1882-4 (#45) and Wyman's Exchange of ca. 1880 (#60); and the 1890s--the Runels/Fairburn Building of ca. 1892 and the Howe Building of ca. 1894 (both on Kearney Square at the foot of Merrimack Street). Early twentieth century buildings important to the streetscape are the Colonial Building of 1906 (#24) and the ten-story tall Sun Building of 1910 (#8 and Figure 3-35), the first Lowell skyscraper and the only one in the CBD. No other Lowell street has so many historic structures representing such a comprehensive range of styles and dates.

Merrimack Street's greatest strength lies not in its individual structures, however, but rather in the vibrant streetscape they form as a group. The long block between Central and Palmer Streets is particularly well composed, with the granite facade of the Hosford Building near its center flanked by ranges of brick buildings. The cohesiveness of the block could be considerably enhanced by a sympathetic rehabilitation or refacing of the Executive Building at #100 (Figure 4-3). Its present blue and pink metal and glass facing was installed in the early 1960s over two nineteenth century buildings. A re-exposure of these structures, if possible, or else a more compatible new facing would constitute a substantial contribution to the whole CBD.

Another significant Merrimack Street group wraps around the corner of John Street, and extends east towards Bridge Street (Figure 4-4). The corner Nesmith Block presents a curved facade to the John and Merrimack Streets intersection. Two other structures with twin facades on Merrimack and John Streets wrap around the ca. 1836 Nesmith Block. The "New" Nesmith Building has lost half of its Merrimack Street facade (#65, built ca. 1850-56), but retains all of its oddly asymmetrical John Street front (#35-35, built ca. 1841-50). On the John Street side one of the original arched storefronts is still visible and others may survive beneath the glass and metal panels. The other "wrap-around" building was constructed for the Union National Bank in 1924, and displays Neo-Classical granite facades on John Street (#39)





Figure 4-3 View from John Street to the south side of Merrimack Street, 1979.



Figure 4-4 View of the Nesmith Buildings at the corner of John (left) and Merrimack (right) Streets, 1979.

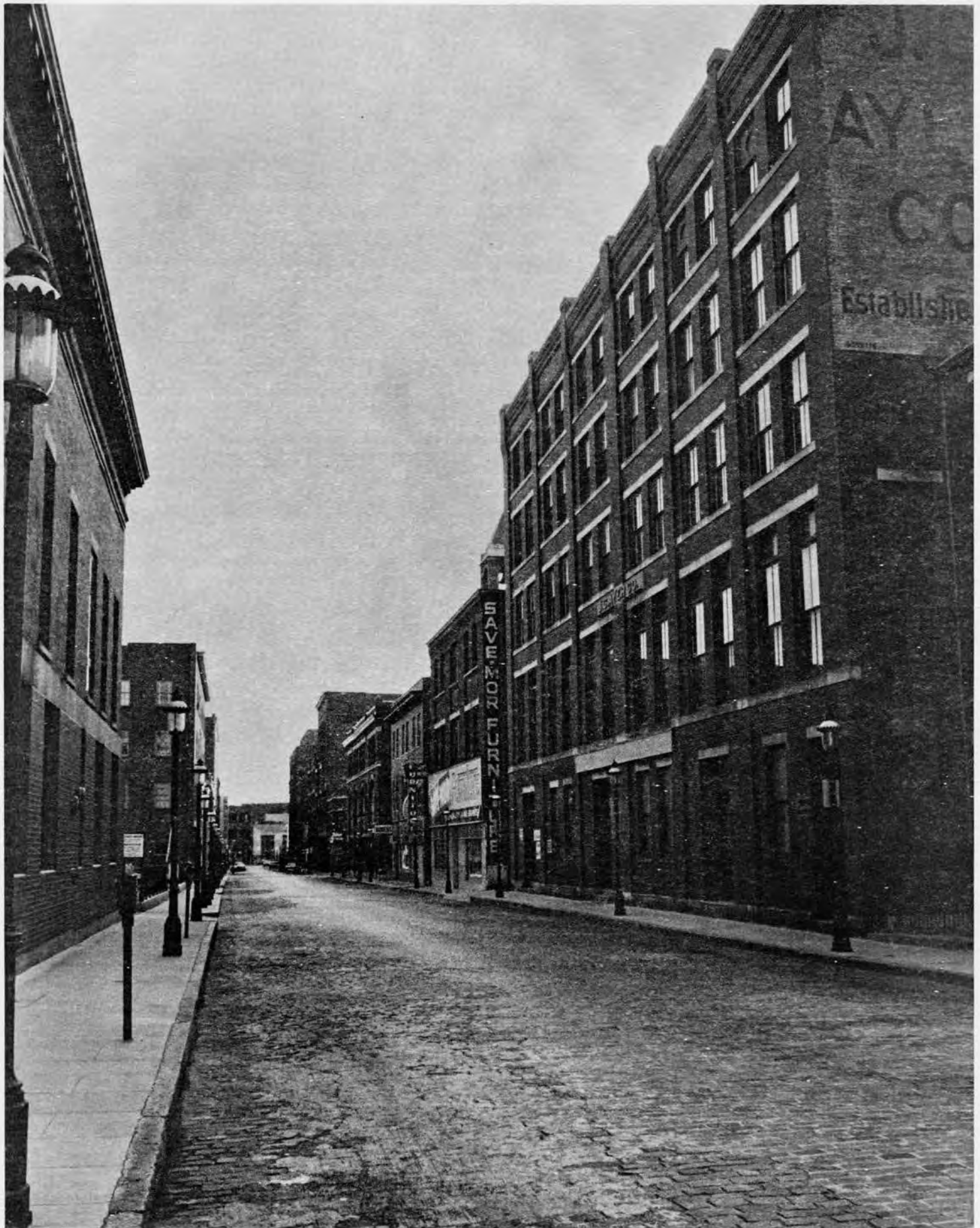


Figure 4-5 View east on Middle Street, 1979.

and Merrimack Street (#61). Completing this Merrimack Street group is the Hildreth Building (on the far right in Figure 4-4). In scale and materials it is a fitting culmination to this diverse collection of buildings. This group would be enhanced by a re-exposure of the red brick and granite trim of the corner Nesmith Block and a restoration of the stuccoed facades and John Street storefronts of the wrap-around Nesmith Building. Two one-story storefronts and a vacant lot separate the Hildreth Building from the corner Simpson Block (1-5 Merrimack Street) at Bridge Street. Sensitive new construction of three or four-story height could bridge the gap between the Hildreth and the corner building and make of the whole block a richly varied, cohesive urban design.

Even some of the discordant notes along Merrimack Street are nineteenth century in origin. The block between Kirk and John Streets has three and four-story buildings at either end, then steps down to one-story storefronts at mid-block. Historic views of the street show that the present jagged profile of this block replicates the late nineteenth century outline, and many of the modern-looking buildings may have older cores.

Not all the historical buildings in the CBD are located on Merrimack Street. Middle Street was largely redeveloped in the 1880s and 1890s, and since that date has retained most of its four and five-story brick structures. These now comprise the most homogenous and concentrated street of nineteenth century commercial structures in the city (Figure 4-5).

Other streets in the CBD have suffered more recent redevelopment and more extensive demolition, and only scattered historic structures survive. On the north side of Market Street, between Central and Dummer Streets, the key historic buildings are three industrial structures-- the Father John's Medicine Building at #91, a 1920 reworking of three earlier structures; the J. C. Ayer and Company patent medicine factory at #165, built ca. 1858-9; and the Gates Block at #307, a leather belting factory built in 1881.



North of Merrimack Street, important institutional structures and fragments of mid-nineteenth century residential development are the major historical features of the underutilized northern edge of the CBD. The old portion of the Lowell High School on Kirk Street (#30, built in 1892), the Shrine of St. Joseph the Worker on Lee Street (#37, built in 1850 and enlarged in the 1870s), the former Kirk Street Primary School (#31, built in 1881, now the AHEPA Center), and the old Trade High School at the corner of Paige and John Streets (64 John Street, built in 1900), are the major structures in that area. They all remain in institutional use. The smaller residences along Kirk and Paige Streets are less well-preserved, but serve as important reminders of the original residential component in this neighborhood. The most significant of the houses on these streets is the double house built in 1846 for the agents of the Boott and Massachusetts Mills (Figure 4-6), but that structure is more properly included with the industrial area north and east of the CBD.

#### AREA TWO--BOOTT AND MASSACHUSETTS COTTON MILLS

The Boott and Massachusetts millyards north and east of the CBD comprise a distinct area of historic importance and future promise for the city. The agents' house at 63-67 Kirk Street (1846) and the Massachusetts Mills boarding house at 28-56 Bridge Street (ca. 1840) can properly be included in this area. Lowell has lost almost all of its company-owned housing, increasing the significance of these remaining structures.

The feature that historically linked and still joins the Boott and Massachusetts millyards is the Eastern Canal. The mills retain their historical relationship to this canal, drawing its water to drive electrical generating turbines. The massive granite blocks of the wall of that canal in front of the Boott yard, and the swiftly flowing waters themselves are conspicuous historical assets of the Boott/Massachusetts area.

Both millyards are among Lowell's most intact, retaining major original buildings and typical later structures and alterations (Figures 4-7 and 4-8). The four original mills in each yard



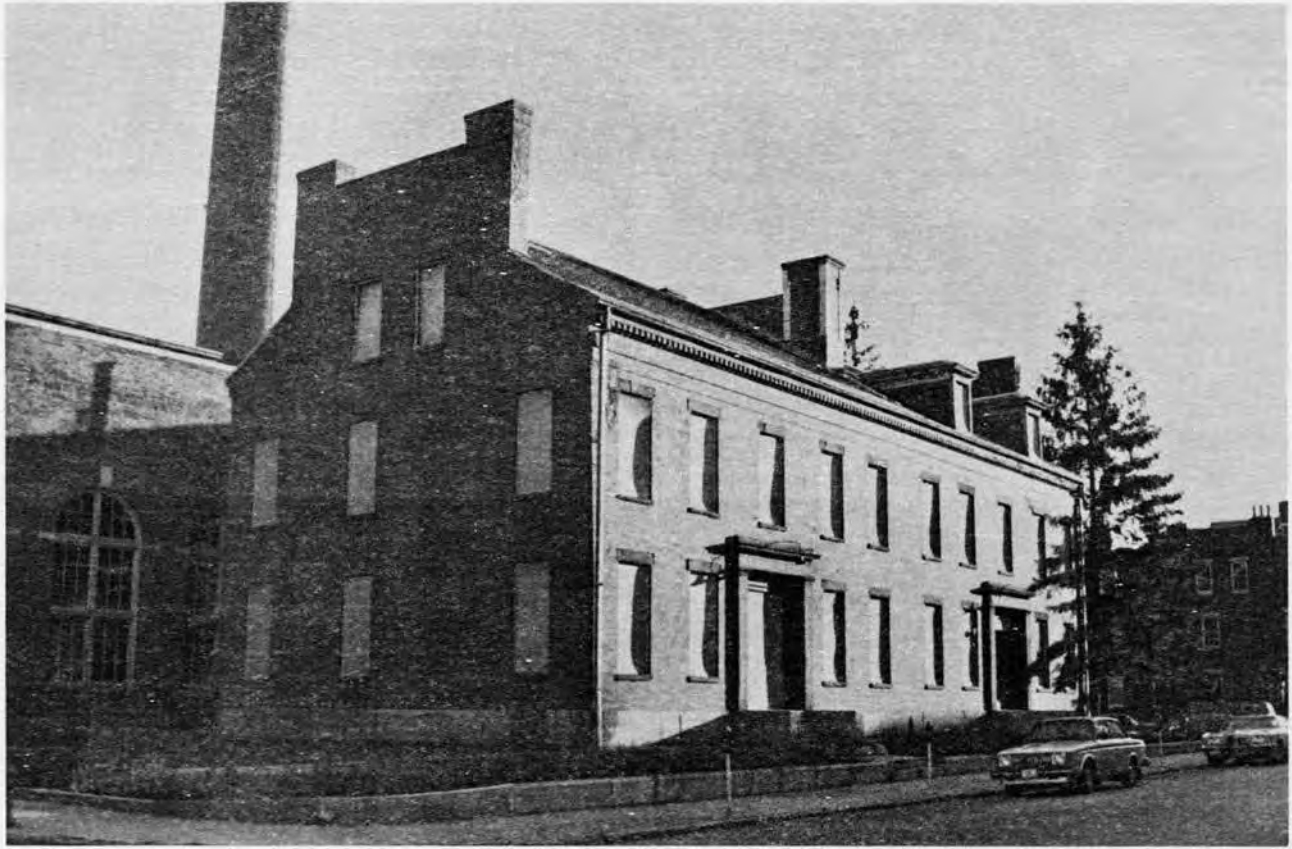


Figure 4-6 Massachusetts and Boott Cotton Mills Agents' House, 63-67 Kirk Street. Built 1846, photographed November 1979.



Figure 4-7 View of Boott Mills from the west, 1979.

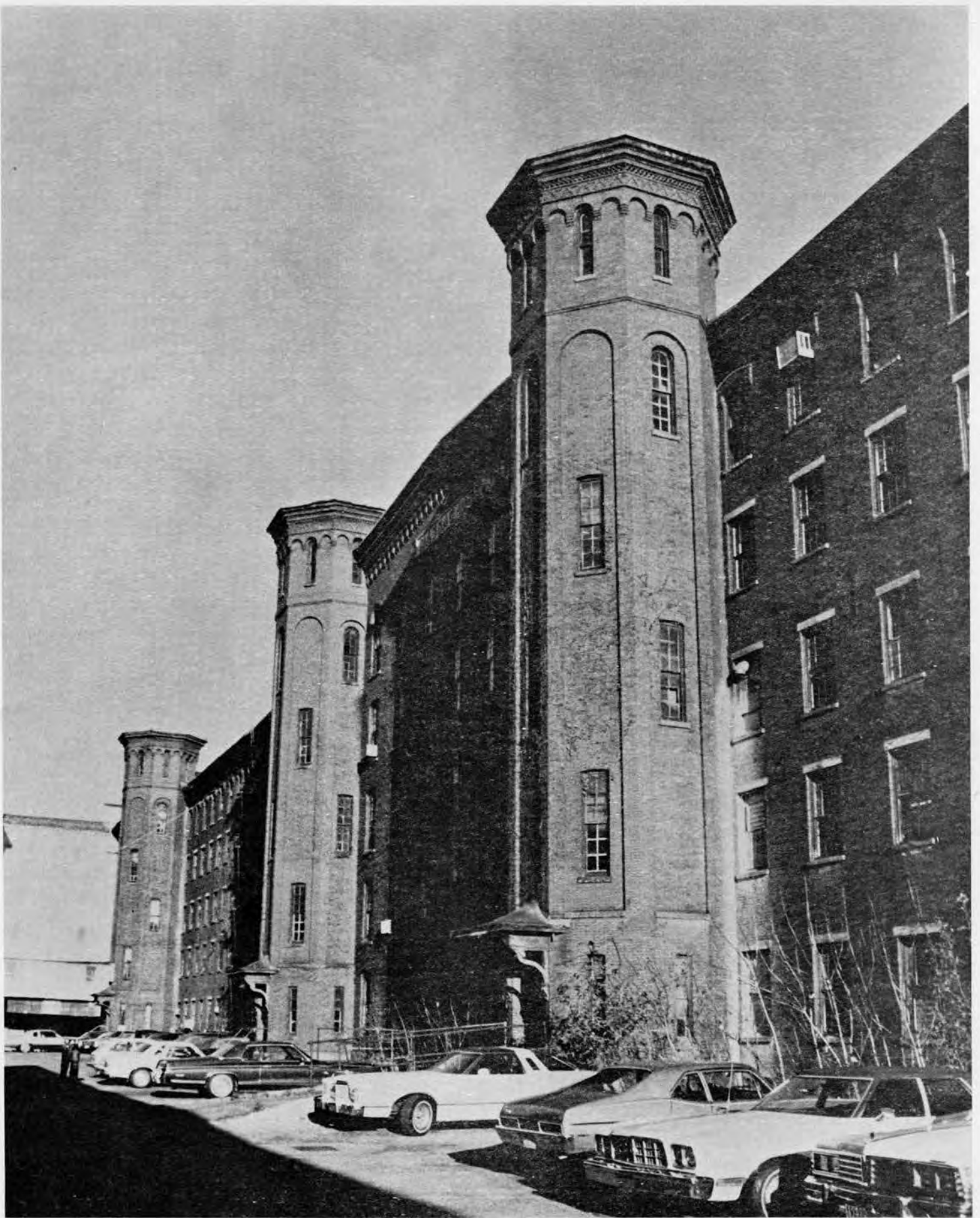


Figure 4-8 View of Mill No. 1, Massachusetts Cotton Mills, 1979. Right and left sections built 1839-40, center section 1862, left stair tower 1872.

have been linked into longer units and increased in height, but are still clearly discernable (Figures 3-9, 3-10, 3-16, and 3-20). These additions to the first mills, and the extensive later construction surviving in both yards testify clearly to the continuous growth and increasing scale of the Lowell mills in the nineteenth century. The millyards are still busy places, with a variety of industrial and commercial tenants occupying nearly all the habitable space, but both also have empty buildings in need of rehabilitation.

Due to the size of their structures and their riverbank locations, these two mills are major visual landmarks of central Lowell when seen from the north, east, and southeast. Their clock and stair towers and chimneys are particularly prominent and positive contributors to the Lowell skyline.

#### AREA THREE--LAWRENCE AND SUFFOLK MILLS

Northwest of the Boott Mills, beyond the former site of the Merrimack Manufacturing Company, is another major industrial area of the Park and the District. It includes the razed Tremont millyard and the Lawrence and Suffolk mills. The Northern Canal runs through this area, and South of the canal there is a handful of houses within the LHPD. The character of this area both north and south of the canal is determined by a combination of significant historic structures, vacant lots disrupting the historic development patterns, and new construction which is generally incompatible with the older buildings in material and scale.

The most important historical features of the area are the broad Northern Canal and the Western Canal into which it flows, and the Suffolk and Lawrence millyards. Most of the Suffolk structures date to rebuilding projects of the Civil War period and later (Figure 4-9), although three important earlier buildings do survive. The Counting House, 561 Suffolk Street at the entrance to the yard was built in 1831 and extended in 1844, and is little changed since then,



except for the loss of its dormers. To the rear of the yard off Cabot Street (#199) is one of the very few extant Lowell boarding houses, built in 1831-2, and converted to industrial uses in 1904 (Figure 4-10). Across the Northern Canal from the main millyard, another row of formerly Suffolk-owned housing still stands at 111-131 Cabot Street. This two-and-one-half story brick row was built ca. 1845-50, probably to accommodate skilled workers and their families in separate "tenements" or apartments.

Two modern-day occupants lend further importance to the main portion of the Suffolk millyard. The nascent Lowell Museum uses Suffolk mill buildings to house its interpretive displays on the history of the city. Elsewhere in the yard, Wannalancit Textile Company represents living history, producing textiles with the most traditional equipment of any mill in the city. This operation is a significant asset to the Park, and its continuation should be a LNHP goal.

The other major millyard in the area, that of the Lawrence Manufacturing Company, is the largest of the standing millyards (Figure 4-11). It retains structures dating from the 1830s to the early twentieth century in a complex pattern indicative of the almost unceasing growth of the Lowell mills in their first century. Like all of the major millyards, Lawrence now contains underutilized buildings, but the mills are by no means idle and the yard can still count textile manufacturers among its occupants.

The most unique structure of the Lawrence Manufacturing Company buildings is the Agent's House, standing outside the main yard at 119-121 Hall Street (Figure 4-12). Built in 1833, its construction of rubblestone with granite trim is not unusual in Lowell, but these materials were infrequently used by the major corporations. Its scale, even as a double house, is also grander than most of the known agents' houses in Lowell. The house has served as the Lowell Day Nursery since the 1920s.





Figure 4-9 View inside the Suffolk Manufacturing Company millyard, 1979.

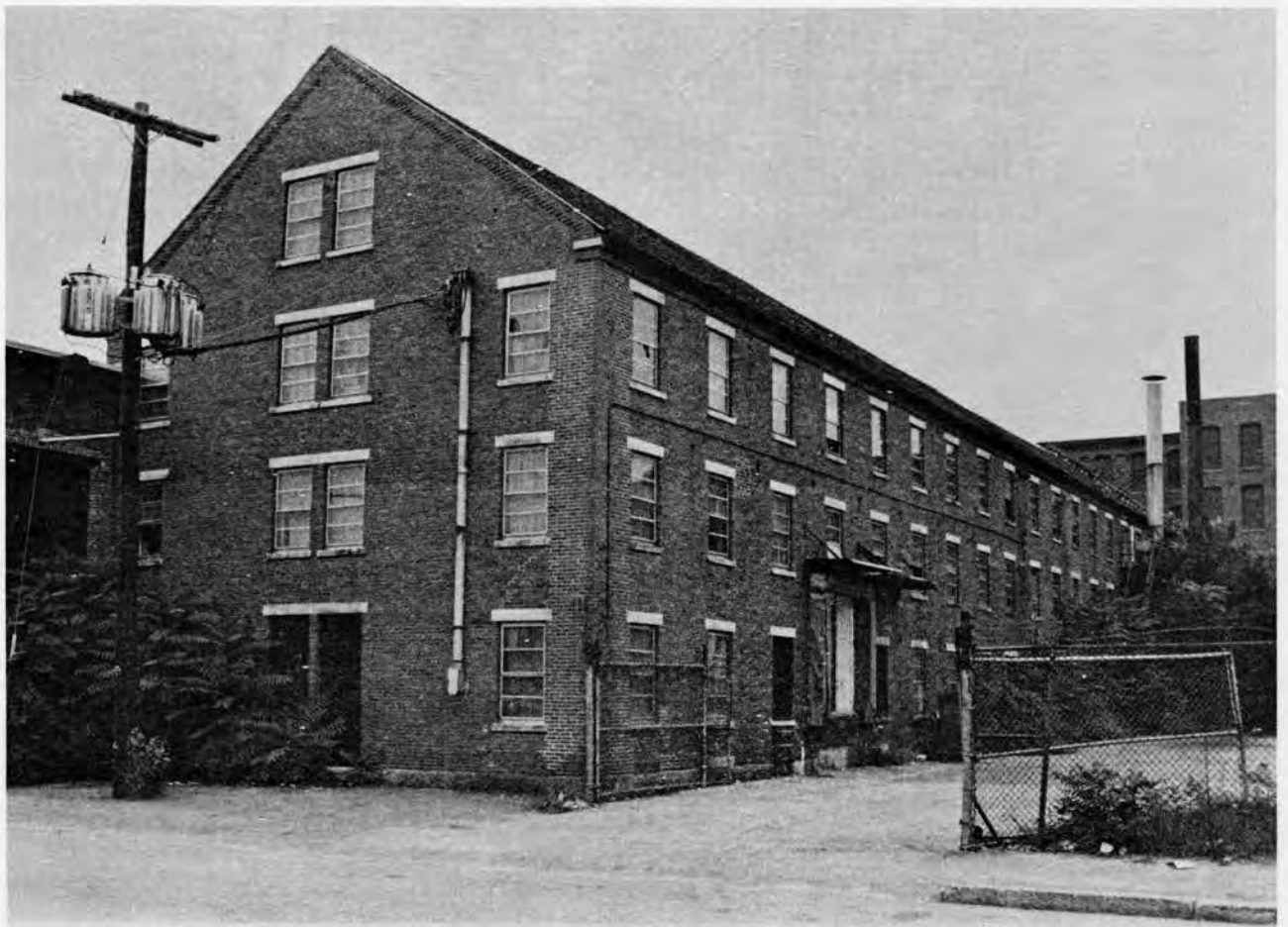


Figure 4-10 View of the Suffolk boarding house on Cabot Street, built 1831-32, photographed 1979.

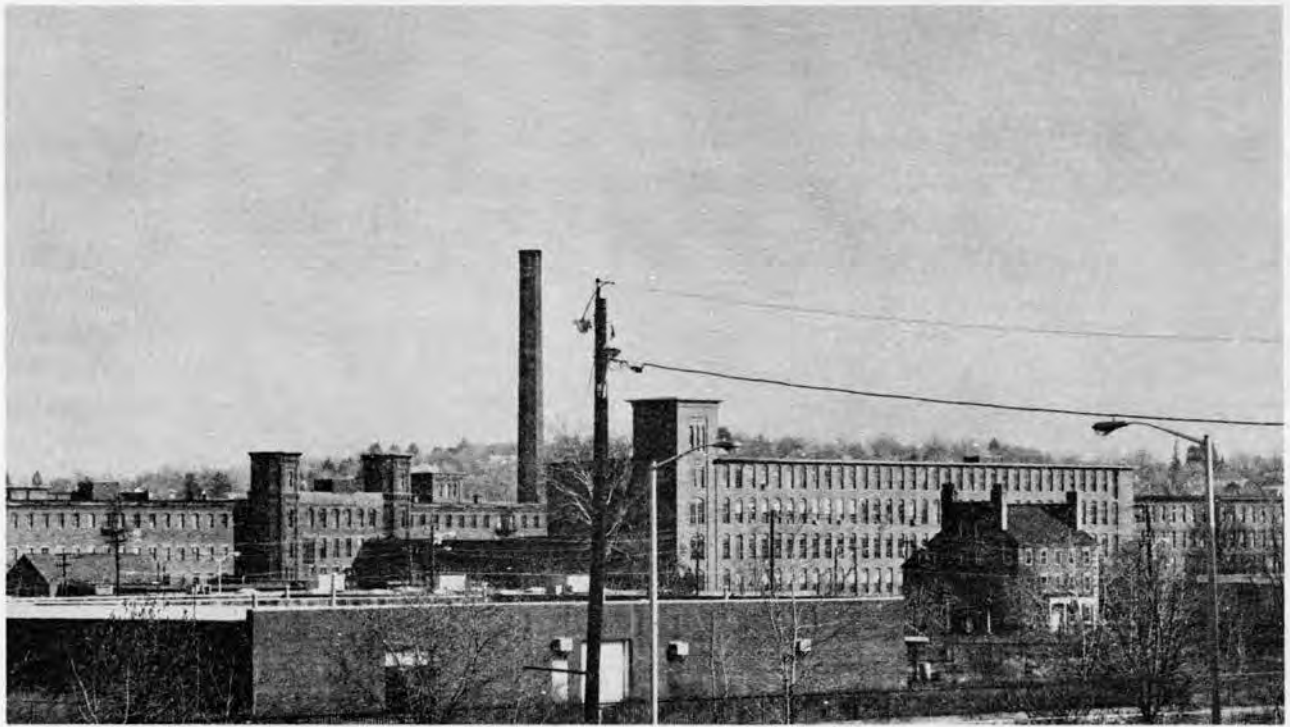


Figure 4-11 View of the Lawrence Manufacturing Company from the west, 1979.



Figure 4-12 Lawrence Agent's House, 119-121 Hall Street, built 1833, photographed 1979.

The Tremont millyard is a potential resource of the Lawrence/Suffolk area. Razed in the 1930s, the yard has not been redeveloped and could provide a site for an interpretive excavation of a major millyard, exposing foundations, waterways and other features of a water-powered textile factory not visible in the intact millyards.

Relatively recent events have altered the way the Lawrence/Suffolk area relates to the city. The replacement in the 1960s of narrow Ford Street with the wide French Street Extension has isolated this industrial district. In addition, the demolition of the Merrimack yard and of the secondary Lawrence yard that stood southeast of the Western Canal removed the middle from Lowell's "Mile of Mills", creating a wide gap between Massachusetts and Boott on the southeast and Lawrence on the northwest. Viewed from the Centralville side of the river, however, even this broken "Mile" is an awesome expression of the scale of Lowell's industrial enterprise.

#### AREA FOUR--THE ACRE

The Acre neighborhood is south of the Lawrence-Suffolk industrial area and west of the Central Business District. It is one of the very few areas included within the LHPD primarily for its historic importance as a residential section. Irish laborers pitched their tents and built their huts here in the first decades of Lowell's development. By mid-century more substantial houses accommodated a predominantly Irish populace. Towards the end of the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth, Lowell's growing Greek population settled in the Acre, eventually gaining ownership of most of the houses. In recent years, Hispanic immigrants have perpetuated the Acre's traditional function as Lowell's entry neighborhood.

The Acre historically included lands south of Market Street and north of Broadway on both sides of the Western Canal, and the area south of Broadway to Fletcher Street. Most of the northern portion of the Acre was redeveloped in the late



1930s as the North Common Public Housing Project. A few of the structures of that early public housing project are included in the LHPD, bordering the Western Canal. Adjoining the project buildings and facing each other across the canal are two monumental churches, symbolic of the two major historic groups to settle in the Acre and testaments to their deep religious faiths. The Irish Catholic community built St. Patrick's between 1853 and 1874, replacing with stone their original wooden church. Greek immigrants built Holy Trinity on the east bank of the canal between 1906 and 1908, less than a decade after the first substantial influx of that group into Lowell.

The southern portion of the Acre was not included in the North Common project. That area bounded by Cross, Fletcher, and Suffolk Streets is one of the most historically important and currently endangered residential areas in the LHPD. None of the original settlers' huts still stand, but the small houses that replaced them are represented (77 Adams Street, ca. 1845 and One Marion Street, c. 1851), along with much larger multi-family residences built in the later nineteenth century (236-246 Broadway and 28-30 Marion, both ca. 1870) and the still larger buildings constructed to house Greek immigrants in the early twentieth century (172-178 Adams Street, ca. 1900-05). Figure 3-37 illustrates a group of late nineteenth and early twentieth century houses in the Acre, while Figure 4-13 includes houses dating to the mid-nineteenth century.

Historic accounts of living conditions in the Acre in the 1830s, 1850s, and 1900s sound warnings of overcrowding and poor health conditions that still apply today. The combined forces of neglect, vandalism, and arson are now solving the problem of the Acre in a fashion that serves neither the residents nor the historic character of the city. During the time in which this inventory was conducted, at least seven nineteenth or early twentieth century structures were demolished in the Acre, and those removed in the last few years bring the recent total to well over a dozen. As long as abandoned buildings represent a fire





Figure 4-13 View of the east side of Adams Street between Lagrange and Broadway Streets, in the Acre, 1979.

hazard that threatens neighboring, occupied structures, this aggressive demolition must continue, but without a general reversal of the current trend there will soon be no Acre.

AREA FIVE--GREATER DUTTON STREET

The roughly triangular area framed by the Western Canal, the Pawtucket Canal, and Market Street was originally developed with major industrial complexes and related housing northwest of Dutton Street. The area retains some of its historic industrial structures and is still an important industrial center of Lowell. Some historic houses survive along Worthen Street, and Dutton Street has a fine row of nineteenth century commercial buildings.

The canals which enclose this area are some of its most important historic resources (Figure 4-14). The canals fan out from the main Pawtucket Canal to the scattered mill sites, and at the center of the fan is the Swamp Locks, the heart of Lowell's two-tiered waterpower system.

Within the spreading fan were key industrial complexes. The most important among these, the Lowell Machine Shop yard at the junction of the Merrimack and Pawtucket Canals, was demolished in the 1930s. Most of its yard is now used for parking, or as sites for low, modern industrial buildings. A few late Machine Shop structures still stand, and one, the large reinforced concrete structure at 305 Dutton Street, has certain symbolic importance. Built by the Machine Shop (then the Saco-Lowell Shops) in 1923, it is the last major building erected by one of the eleven, main-line Lowell corporations.

A far more intact complex of late nineteenth and early twentieth century industrial buildings stands at 491 Dutton Street. It housed the Kitson Machine Shop, once the world's largest producer of cotton-picking machinery. The buildings are now occupied by the Pellon Corporation, which also has modern buildings in the former Machine Shop yard.

The most historically important of the extant industrial complexes in the Dutton Street area is the millyard of the Lowell Manufacturing Company, located off Market Street between the Merrimack Canal and Pawtucket Canals. Lowell Manufacturing originally produced both cloth and carpets. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Bigelow Carpet Company owned and operated these mills. The Lowell Canal which supplied waterpower to the millyard was an open channel until ca. 1910, when it was covered over. Several buildings have been removed along Market Street, and all of the surviving structures date from the post-Civil War period through the early twentieth century. Most notable among these are the Brussels Weave Mill of 1882 (Figure 4-15), and the #2 Weave Mill (1902) along Market Street. The latter constitutes a major industrial presence along one side of the Central Business District, and terminates the important Shattuck Street vista from Merrimack Street.

Along Dutton Street opposite the Lowell Manufacturing Company is a fine group of late-nineteenth century brick structures. The earliest among them is the Italianate Richardson Block, built as a grocery store and residential block in 1870. Most of the rest of these two, three and four-story buildings were constructed in the late 1880s and early 1890s to house stores or small manufacturing establishments. They provide a useful comparison to the larger structures of similar purpose and style along Middle Street.

At the north end of this block, separated by a wide vacant lot from the nineteenth century structures, is Haffner's Gas Station and Lubritorium (215 Dutton Street). Built in 1935 and since diluted in impact by the loss of its matching canopy over the pump area, the gas station is incompatible with its neighbors in style or scale, but nevertheless is an interesting representative of its own period. The same firm operates another "period" gas station just outside the LHPD, on Appleton at South Street.

Paralleling Dutton Street to the northwest is Worthen Street, which contains a small, diverse



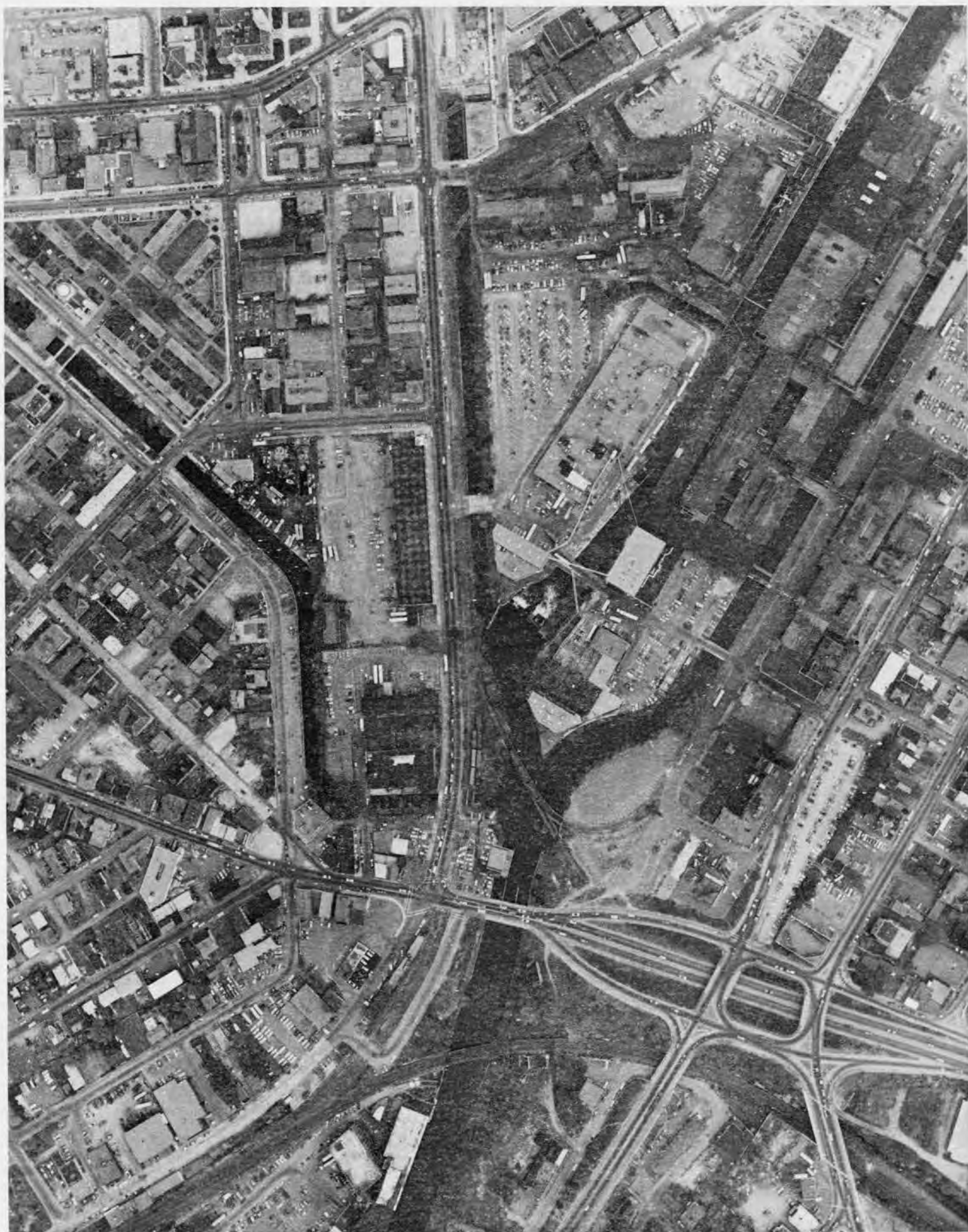


Figure 4-14 Aerial view of the central portion of the Lowell canal system, 1979. Swamp Locks are at center, and Pawtucket Canal extends from bottom center to upper right. Hamilton Canal branches to the right, Western to the left. Merrimack Canal is at top center.

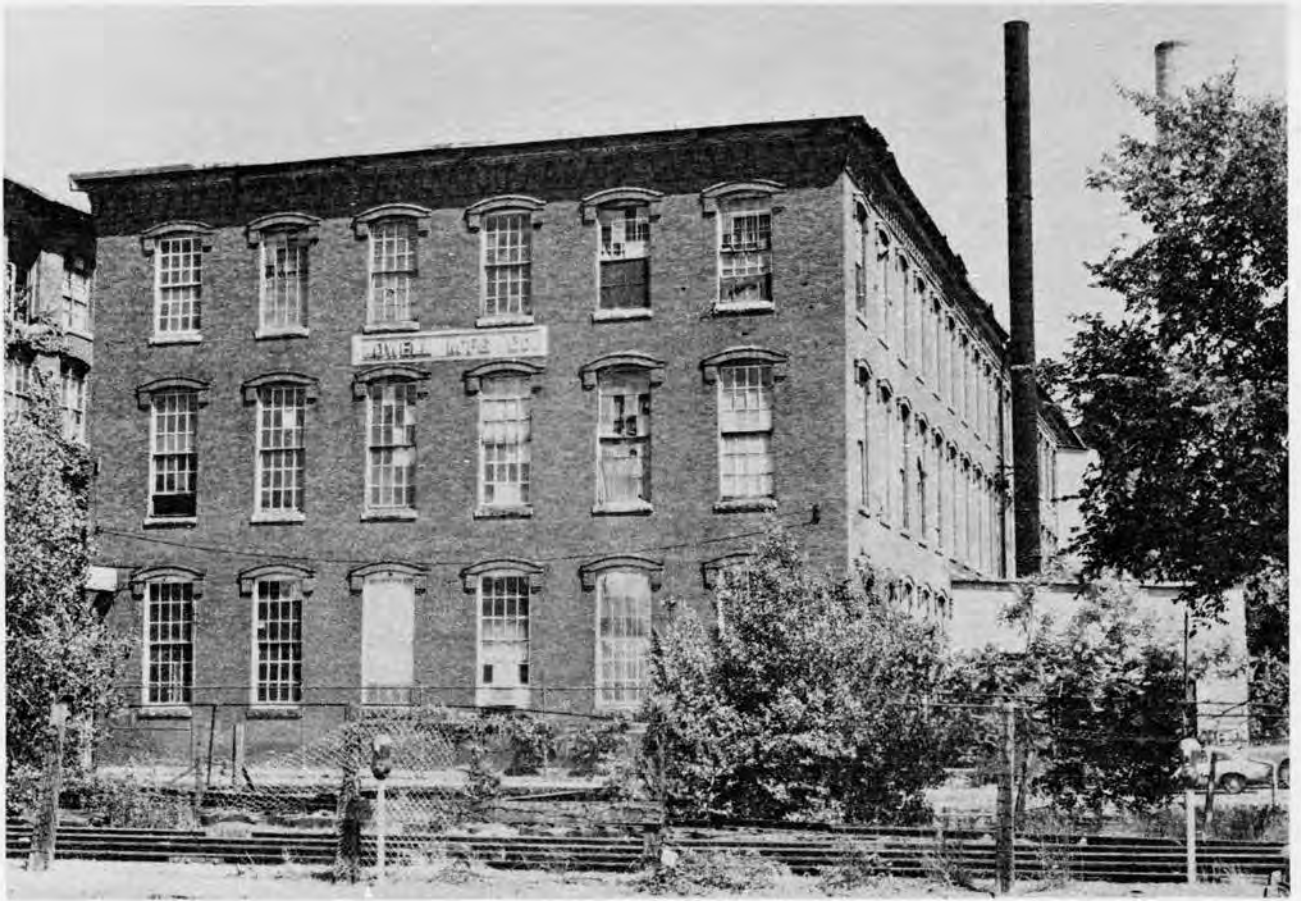


Figure 4-15 Brussels Weave Mill #1 of the Lowell Manufacturing Company, facing Dutton Street. Built 1882, photographed 1979.



Figure 4-16 Douglass House at 284 Worthen Street. Built ca. 1840, photographed 1979.

group of residences related to the nearby industrial sites. Pre-eminent among these is the wood-frame Moody-Whistler House, built in the mid-1820s for Paul Moody, the first superintendent of the Machine Shop. Now the headquarters of the Lowell Art Association, the house is best-known as the birthplace of James McNeil Whistler, the avant-garde nineteenth century artist. His father, Captain George Whistler, was more important in Lowell's history. He was the Chief Engineer who directed the Lowell Machine Shop's production of locomotives during the infancy of railroads in America. Across the street from the Moody-Whistler House are two wood-frame Greek Revival buildings, one originally the Worthen Street Methodist Episcopal Church (#200, built in 1842 and now the Lowell Girls' Club) and the other a double house (#222-224, built ca. 1850). Contrasting with that pair in style and materials is the brick double house at 284 Worthen Street, built in 1840 for a Machine Shop employee (Figure 4-16).

#### AREA SIX--GREATER CENTRAL STREET

The roughly counter-clockwise course of this discussion leads next to the Greater Central Street area. The portion of Central Street within the LHPD is a commercial area closely related to the Central Business District, but historically and in its present character it asserts a distinct identity. The short length of Prescott Street is part of this area on the north, as is Gorham Street on the south and the Old Market House on Market Street on the west.

The historic structures of this area are fewer in number than those of the CBD, and Central Street shows more intrusions and losses than Merrimack Street, but among the area's historic buildings are some of great interest. On Prescott Street, the adjoining Southwick Block and Claflin Building (#58 and #66, respectively, both erected ca. 1880) are among the city's most conspicuous and intact commercial blocks of that period, retaining even their cast iron storefronts. Both are only partially occupied and are in need of the most careful kind of rehabilitation.



Similarly, the Old Market House, just off Central at 40 Market Street, has the least altered exterior of Lowell's major institutional structures of the 1830s, and should be rehabilitated and returned to productive use. The vacant Strand Theatre's Central Street facade (#128, built in 1917) is mostly hidden behind a metal screen, but the extravagance of the visible terra cotta ornament is more than matched by the interior decoration.

The Old Mansur Block at 101 Central Street (Figure 3-12) and the New Mansur Building at #91 (now McQuade's) provide a clear illustration of the changes in style and scale commercial structures underwent between the 1830s and 1880s. If the proposal is carried out to open up the Central Street views of the Pawtucket Canal by the removal of #111 and of the building south of 104 Central, the view of the south end wall of the Old Mansur Building with its characteristic double, parapet-linked chimneys will also be enhanced. However, in evaluating that proposal careful consideration should be given to maintaining the visual continuity of the wall of facades along Central, since the street has been flanked with solid rows of buildings since the 1840s, when the first shops were built on platforms over the canal. Replacement of the buildings over the canal with elements which suggest a continuous opacity, such as heavy, cast iron fences, might achieve the dual purpose of providing a canal view and maintaining the integrity of the block faces when viewed in perspective up and down the street.

Two High Victorian Gothic buildings on Central Street were once among the finest examples of that style in Lowell. Both are now in need of assistance. The Appleton Block of 1879 (#166) has lost its original storefronts and the pinnacles, pediments, and cresting that enriched its roofline. However, the decorative brickwork and polychromatic trim that remain on the body of the building are arguments for removal of the metal screen and paint which conceal the main facade of the structure. The Boston and Maine Depot of 1876 at 238-254 Central Street has also lost towers and cresting that originally enlivened



Figure 4-17 View of the Central Street block between Middlesex and Jackson Streets, 1979.



Figure 4-18 Sketch of Central Street, suggesting a new building at #241.

its roofline, but it is unique as Lowell's only surviving historic train station. Both the structure and the street would profit by a more sympathetic display of its surviving features.

The west side of Central Street opposite the old B. & M. Depot contains one of the city's architecturally richest and most diverse commercial groups (Figure 4-17). At the Middlesex Street end is the Union Building (1-5 Middlesex Street and 249 Central Street), a curved corner building erected ca. 1830. It was originally about twice as long on Central Street and the remaining portion has undergone numerous evolutionary changes, including the installation of a cast iron storefront and alteration of the gable roof to a mansard. The Union Building retains its essential simplicity, however, especially when compared to the Fiske Building of ca. 1877 (#219) at the other end of the block. Like the Appleton Block and B. & M. Depot, this High Victorian Italianate structure has lost its original storefronts and roofline cresting, but with its cast iron cornice and window trim, it is still the most exuberant Victorian building in the city. Adjacent to the Fiske Building, Cook and Taylor's Building (Gray Furniture, #231) of 1884 demonstrates the rapidity of changes in architectural fashion in late nineteenth century Lowell, countering Fiske's highly decorated style with more restrained brownstone and copper ornament in the Queen Anne style.

The adjacent structures on Middlesex and Jackson Streets add to the visual and historic richness of this block. The Union Building is abutted by a small handsome Italianate building (9 Middlesex Street) constructed of brick in 1877 for Eli Hoyt, manufacturer of Hoyt's German Cologne. The Fiske Building abutts 28 Jackson Street the first factory James C. Ayer built (in 1852) to manufacture patent medicine, which in turn adjoins the small, brick, Greek Revival building (#32) which housed David Dana's brass foundry as early as 1832.



The universal use of red brick and the gradualness of the shifts in scale maintain the compatibility of this stylistically diverse concentration of historic buildings. The block does suffer one severe intrusion, however, the Saab Annex at 241 Central Street. In style, scale, and materials, the Annex clashes sharply with the rest of the block. That property is an excellent example of an appropriate site for new construction in an historic streetscape. Figure 4-18 illustrates how a sensitively designed new building could mend this block.

The individual and group strengths of the Central Street area do not end with the Union-Fiske block. The much altered J. J. Turner's Hotel at #278 is the oldest building in the area, dating to 1825, and recalls the early concentration of hotels on Central and nearby streets. Further south on Central Street, the Queen Anne-style Shedd Block of 1883-84 (#295) looms over the small shop beside it, built ca. 1830 (now Helen's Hair Haven, #289-291). On Gorham Street, which continues the line of Central Street where the latter curves slightly eastward in front of the B. & M. Depot, a visual terminus to the LHPD is provided by the Old Post Office at the corner of Appleton Street. That gray granite, Richardsonian Romanesque building (89 Appleton Street) is similar in material and style to the City Hall and Memorial Library, and opened the same year, 1893.

The Old Post Office does not quite complete the list of major historic resources scattered throughout the Greater Central Street area. Cater-cornered across the intersection from the Post Office is a trio of masonry buildings, all constructed ca. 1830 (Figure 4-19). The northernmost, a two-story brick building, was originally a tailor's house (#62). The central building, highly unusual in Lowell for its early construction of ashlar granite, was built as a double house (#72-76). The blocks of its facade are finely dressed, while the side walls are rock-faced. The southernmost brick structure, a full three stories tall, was built as the Lowell Hotel (#80). Nowhere else in the LHPD is there such a concentration of commercial/residential structures from Lowell's earliest period of



Figure 4-19 View of 62, 72, and 80 Gorham Street (left to right), all built ca. 1830, photographed 1979.



Figure 4-20 View of  
Appleton mills along  
the Hamilton Canal,  
1979.

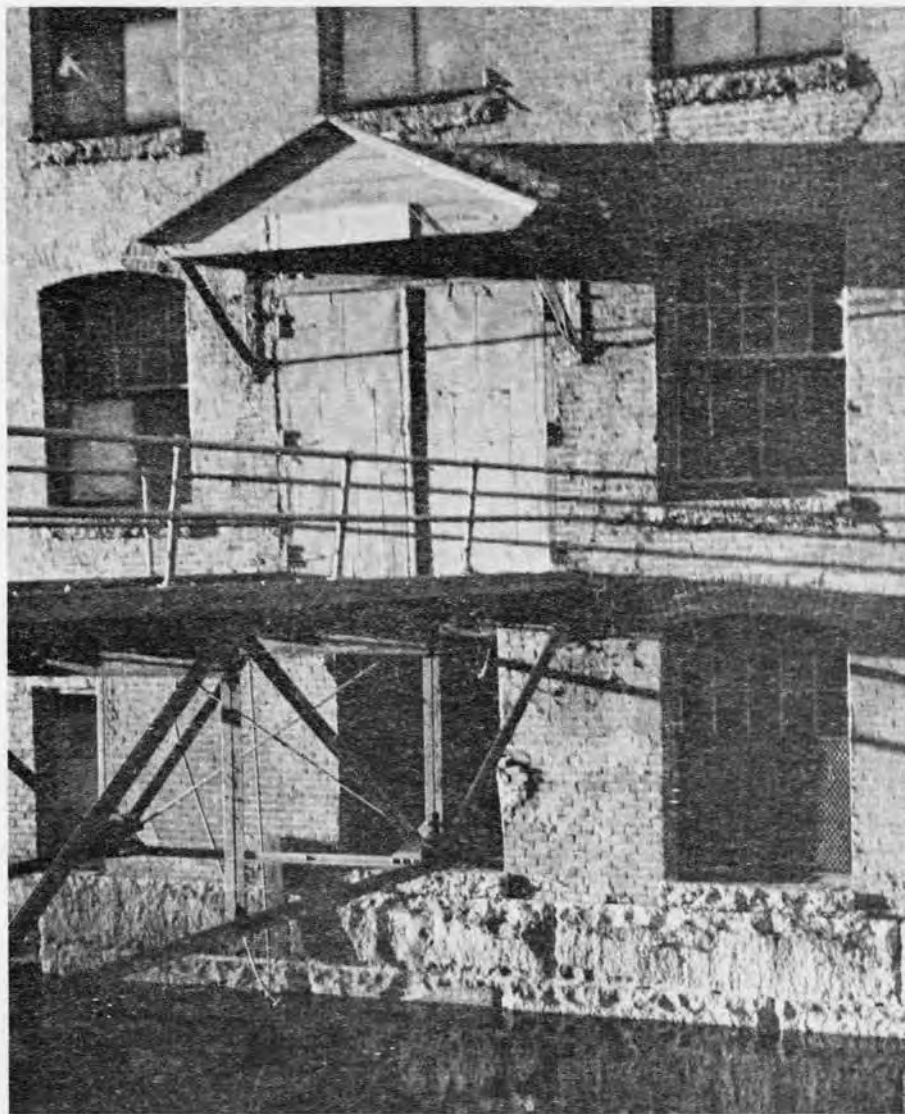


Figure 4-21 Detail of  
Mill #4, Appleton  
Manufacturing Company,  
1979.



development. All three retain most of their original exterior fabric, providing a unique opportunity within the District to preserve and rehabilitate a mutually reinforcing group of very early structures.

The Greater Central Street area has close ties to two other portions of the LHPD not yet discussed--the Middlesex and Jackson Streets area to the west, and the lands along the Concord River to the east and the south. The former area is physically and historically more closely related to the Central Street commercial area, and will be discussed first.

#### AREA SEVEN--MIDDLESEX-JACKSON STREETS

The Middlesex-Jackson Streets area contains industrial, commercial and residential structures plus important elements of the canal system and a few important examples of institutional buildings. The area is bounded on the north by the Pawtucket Canal, on the west by Thorndike Street, on the south by the edge of the district between Middlesex and Appleton Streets, and on the east by Central Street. The LHPD boundaries quite properly make an excursion along the south side of Appleton to include an important early row house there (Figure 3-11).

Forming the foundation of this area, historically and visually, are the Appleton and Hamilton Manufacturing Company mills on the power island between the Pawtucket and Hamilton Canals. These parallel canals form the purest manifestation of the ideal power island arrangement in the city. The 473-foot length of the ca. 1868 Hamilton storehouse (Figure 3-26) dominates the eastern end of Jackson Street, and Appleton buildings line both sides of that street toward its western end (Figures 4-20 and 4-21).

Both yards have lost their early buildings and all of their housing, but the remaining buildings include some of the best examples of Lowell industrial structures from certain periods. Hamilton's Mill #4 is the most intact mill of the mid-1840s surviving in the city, and that company's Counting

House and long storehouse on Jackson Street typify the wave of construction following the Civil War. The Appleton yard was almost entirely rebuilt in the first two decades of the twentieth century, but the company's "New Mill" of 1873 on the south side of Jackson Street was retained, and is a sterling example of a steam powered mill of the 1870s (Figure 3-25). The two long bridges that link the Appleton buildings on Jackson Street to the main millyard across the canal are particularly prominent features of this industrial landscape.

The north side of Middlesex Street originally was lined with the boarding houses of the nearby mills. Industrial expansion and sale to commercial developers eventually eliminated the boarding houses, and now that side of the street is a mix of parking lots and commercial/residential structures, mostly of late nineteenth century vintage.

The south side of the street has a similar blend, except for the central block between Elliot and South Streets, where three significant earlier structures fill the block. At the center is the Free Chapel (#150), long the home of the Ministry-at-Large, which attended to the secular as well as religious needs of Lowell's poor for nearly a century from the 1840s through the 1930s. The Queen Anne-style facade was added to the building in 1882 (Figure 4-22). From the sides and rear, the main body of the 1829 brick structure remains visible (Figure 4-23). It was originally constructed by the Hamilton and Appleton Companies to provide a schoolhouse for the children of their employees. East of the Free Chapel is the Elliot School (#140), built by the city in 1846 as a primary school. The small brick structure is now somewhat hidden by side wings and changes to the facade (Figure 4-22). At the west end of this group is a structure with a brick ground floor and wood-frame second floor (#160-170) built ca. 1848. It was occupied by grocers and a brewery through most of the nineteenth century. These three buildings are reminders of the boarding houses now gone from Middlesex Street, for all three provided services to the residents of the houses.



Figure 4-22 View of 140 Middlesex Street (the Elliot School, center) and 150 Middlesex Street (the Free Chapel, right) from the northeast.



Figure 4-23 Rear view of the Free Chapel and the Elliot School.



The Coburn Block on Appleton Street (#100-126) was not company-owned when it was built ca. 1832-34, but the Hamilton Company bought the whole row in the mid-1840s for employee housing. It was sold back into private ownership during the Civil War. Two of the original eight units of the two-and-one-half story row were lost behind a new facade in 1921, and a third received a mansard roof sometime earlier, but the majority of the row is still intact (Figure 3-11). It presents a fascinating combination of materials and styles with its brick facade, rubblestone side and rear walls, Federal-style elliptical-roofed dormers and rather bold use of granite trim, suggesting Greek Revival influence. A portion of the row is vacant, and prompt action should be taken in support of this unique early residence.

Just east of the Coburn Block, the Bancroft Block (90 Appleton Street) illustrates a multi-unit residence built fifty years later (ca. 1881-85). Only in its use of red brick does it identify with the earlier row, differing sharply in scale and style.

#### AREA EIGHT--CONCORD RIVERBANKS

The last five areas of the LHPD described in this chapter are primarily buffer zones for waterways important to Lowell's development. In some of these areas, the waterpower features are the principal historical resources, but several include additional assets. The largest and most varied of these areas extends south along both sides of the Concord River, and contains notable examples of industrial establishments that developed separately from the main Lowell corporations. The area also adds a few important residential, institutional, and commercial structures to the LHPD.

The east bank of the Concord is in the Belvidere neighborhood, but the LHPD boundaries do not extend into the historically prestigious residential sections traditionally associated with Belvidere. Aside from some developer's houses of the 1890s on Perry Street (#54-68) and some fragments of industrial complexes, especially tanneries, on the same street, that portion of the area adds

little to the visible historic fabric of the LHPD. Of greater historical interest are various structures on the west bank of the river, and the two nineteenth century stone-arch bridges that span the Concord at Church and Rogers Streets (built 1857-8 and 1884, respectively). Just north of the Church Street Bridge is the rubblestone factory D. C. Brown built in the 1840s. He manufactured reeds, heedles, and other power loom accessories for sale to the textile corporations.

There is a larger and more autonomous industrial zone at the southern extremity of the Concord River area. Just south of Hale's Brook, Oliver Whipple established in ca. 1821 a gunpowder mill off what is now Lawrence Street. He powered the mill with his own canal off the Concord River. In the 1840s, he expanded the canal to provide waterpower to a number of industrial tenants. In the 1860s, the Wamesit Power Company further expanded the canal to power larger factories that manufactured woolen goods, carpets, gunpowder, and other products. One of Whipple's early stone buildings and all or parts of four other factory complexes stand within the LHPD. More importantly, the Wamesit Canal itself, the heart of Whipple's alternative to the main Lowell canal system, still exists (Figure 4-25). It parallels the Concord for over 1,500 feet, then turns westward under Lawrence Street and empties into Hale's Brook, using the stream as its tail-race. This whole complex of river, stream, canal, and mills is of major importance, particularly for the contrast it provides to the main Lowell system.

Among the complex's individual components, the rubblestone powder mill building is probably the earliest industrial structure surviving in the city (Figure 3-3). Abandoned and open to the elements, it warrants prompt protective action. Two complete woolen mill complexes survive along the canal. The Stirling Mills (576 Lawrence St.) stand behind the powder mill on the bank of the river, a site of considerable natural beauty (Figures 4-24 and 4-25). The main mill building dates to ca. 1880. Considerably earlier and more visible to the passerby on Lawrence Street is Belvidere Woolen Mill No. 2 on the banks of Hale's



Figure 4-24 Stirling Mills, built ca. 1880, photographed 1979.



Figure 4-25 View of the Wamesit Canal behind Stirling Mills, 1979.



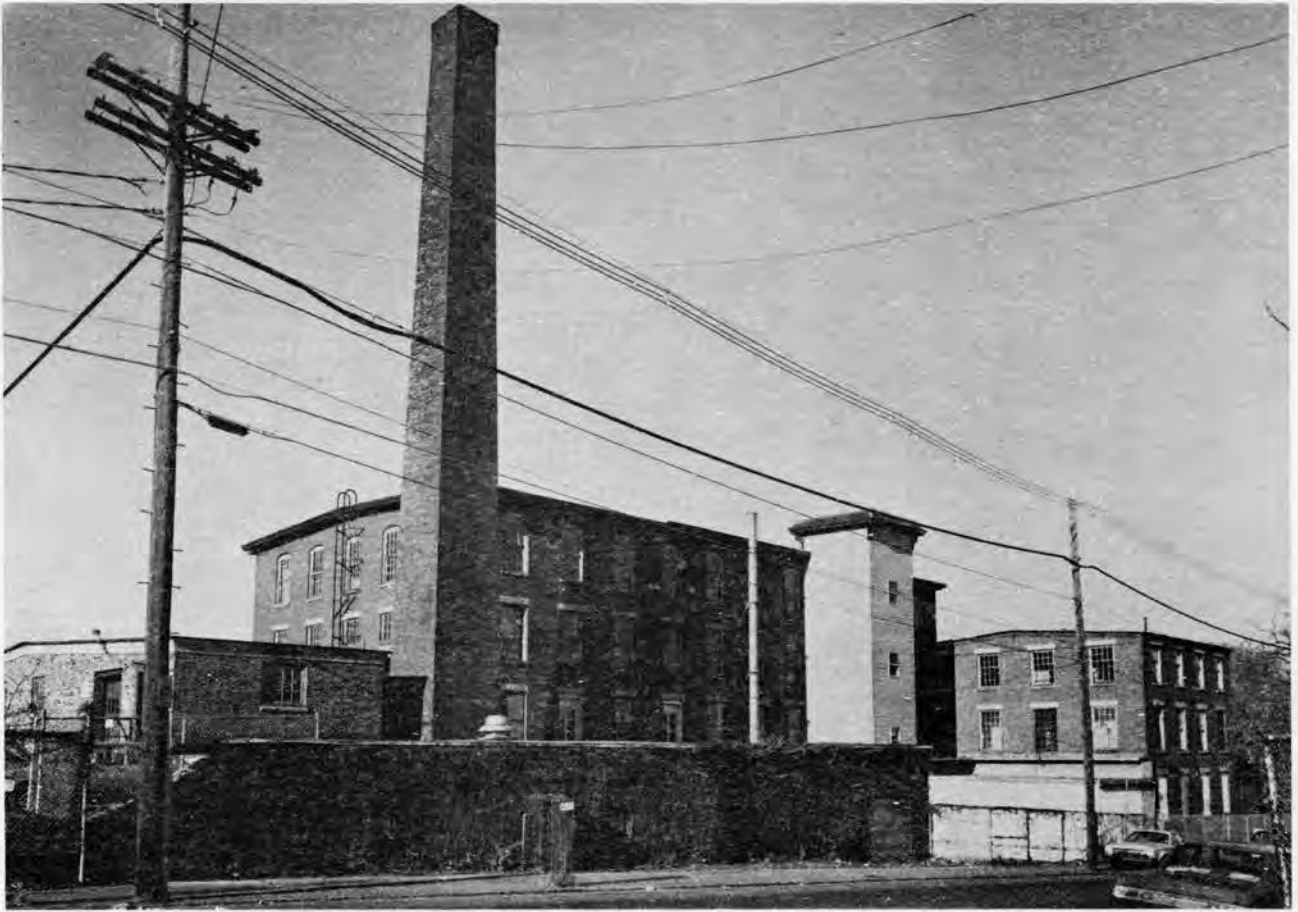


Figure 4-26 Belvidere No. 2 Mill, 645 Lawrence Street, built ca. 1863, photographed 1979.

## ***BELVIDERE NO 2 MILL***

*Torrell,  
Mass*

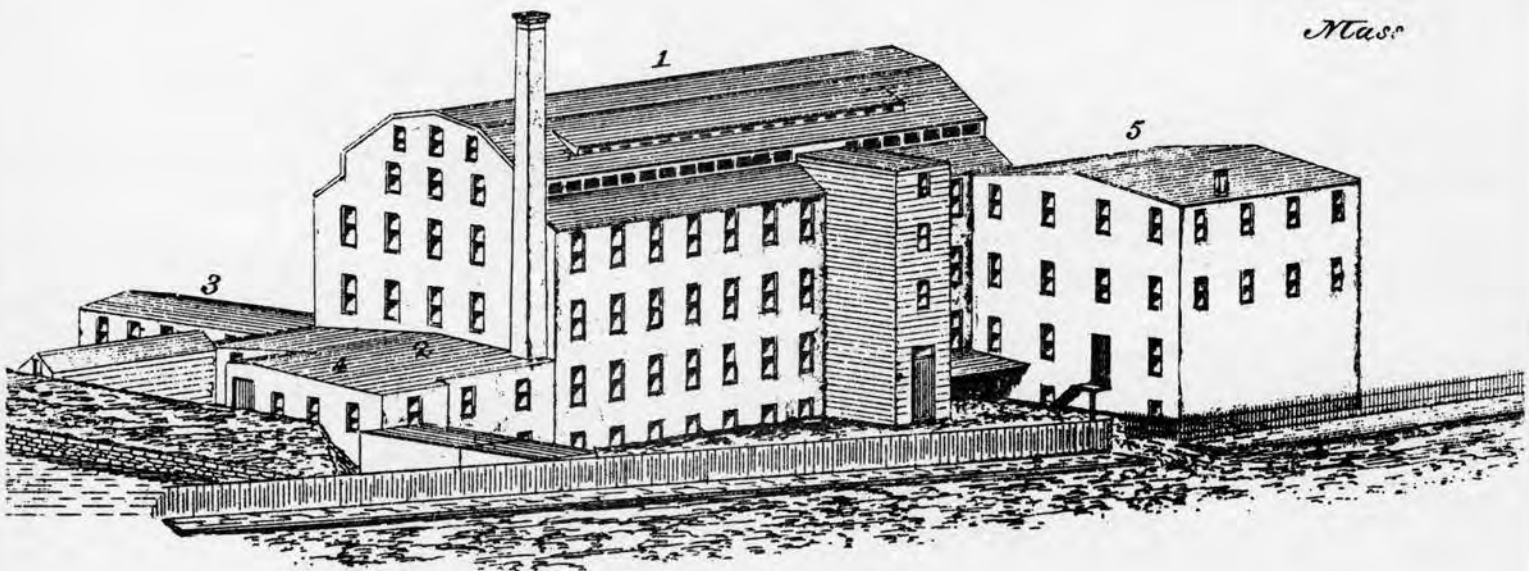


Figure 4-27 Detail of an 1880 insurance survey of Belvidere No. 2 Mill.

Brook (#645). Built ca. 1862, this complex retains its original mill, storehouse and stair tower, and its early power house (Figures 4-26 and 4-27) Inexplicably, the last three structures are within the LHPD boundaries, while the mill itself is just outside the line. Also excluded from the LHPD is the northern end of the Wamesit Canal, where it enters Hale's Brook.

Two other partial mill complexes off the Wamesit Canal are notable as examples of early twentieth century masonry construction techniques. Just south of Belvidere No. 2 at 685 Lawrence Street are two structures built ca. 1910 by the U. S. Cartridge Company. Although reduced in length by a recent fire, they remain Lowell's best demonstration of brick-pier industrial construction. The walls between the piers are given over almost entirely to wide, segmental-arched windows. The Waterhead Mills at the south end of the Wamesit Canal power island were also built ca. 1910. The main structure (900 Lawrence Street, rear) is also of brick-pier construction, but the use of English bond brickwork may be unique in Lowell.

The historic houses of the Concord River area serve as representatives of the greater wealth of such houses in Lowell outside the District. Some of these are as close as the west side of Lawrence Street, and others are not much further away in the Chapel Hill neighborhood and around the South Common. Within the District, the house at 48 Lawrence Street is more interesting for its historic occupants than for its present appearance. Luther Lawrence, the second mayor of Lowell and brother of the textile magnates Amos and Abbott Lawrence, built the house ca. 1831, and resided there until his death in 1837. From 1842 until 1875, Tappan Wentworth lived in the house, and his alterations probably brought it close to its present form. Wentworth was prominent in Lowell as a lawyer, investor, and politician, and served a term in Congress.

South of the Lawrence-Wentworth House, the Colburn School of 1848 (122 Lawrence Street) is a far less altered structure. It continues to serve its original function, and is the oldest schoolhouse in the city to do so. The historic houses further south on Lawrence Street more often sheltered workers from the various Concord River factories than employees of the factories and stores in central Lowell. 202 Lawrence Street is a Greek Revival cottage, built ca. 1840. 224-228 Lawrence (ca. 1870) links together two small, mansard-roofed cottages into a double house with U-shaped plan. 310-326 Lawrence, a five-unit wood-frame row house, was built ca. 1870, and like #224-228, it accommodated workers from the adjacent mill at Massic Falls. An anachronistic house at 8 Clarks Court was built ca. 1834-7 by and for a carpenter who worked at Whipple's Powder Mills.

The Concord River area also contains one of the LHPD's most unique and intact small commercial buildings, the Greenwood Bros. Store at 573 Lawrence Street (Figure 4-28). Located near the Wamesit Canal and its factories, it was built as a grocery store in 1872. The store retains its cast iron storefront and cast concrete trim, a decorative material seldom seen in the LHPD.

Before discussing the other areas, another historical building related to the Concord River area deserves mention, even though it is a few hundred feet outside the District, west of its southernmost end. Oliver Whipple's own house still stands on Moore Street at the corner of South Whipple Street. Whipple was the main developer of the industrial complex in that area and a major manufacturer of gunpowder in his own right. He was also a substantial figure in Lowell's civic affairs. His house dates from the 1820s, and is particularly interesting for its long rear wing. That feature, shown on maps as early as 1832, appears to have been built as a series of tenements, presumably for some of Whipple's employees. If so, this arrangement is in sharp contrast to the hierarchical separation practiced by the major Lowell corporations in housing the various industrial classes.





Figure 4-28 Greenwood Brothers Store, 573 Lawrence Street,  
built 1872, photographed 1979.

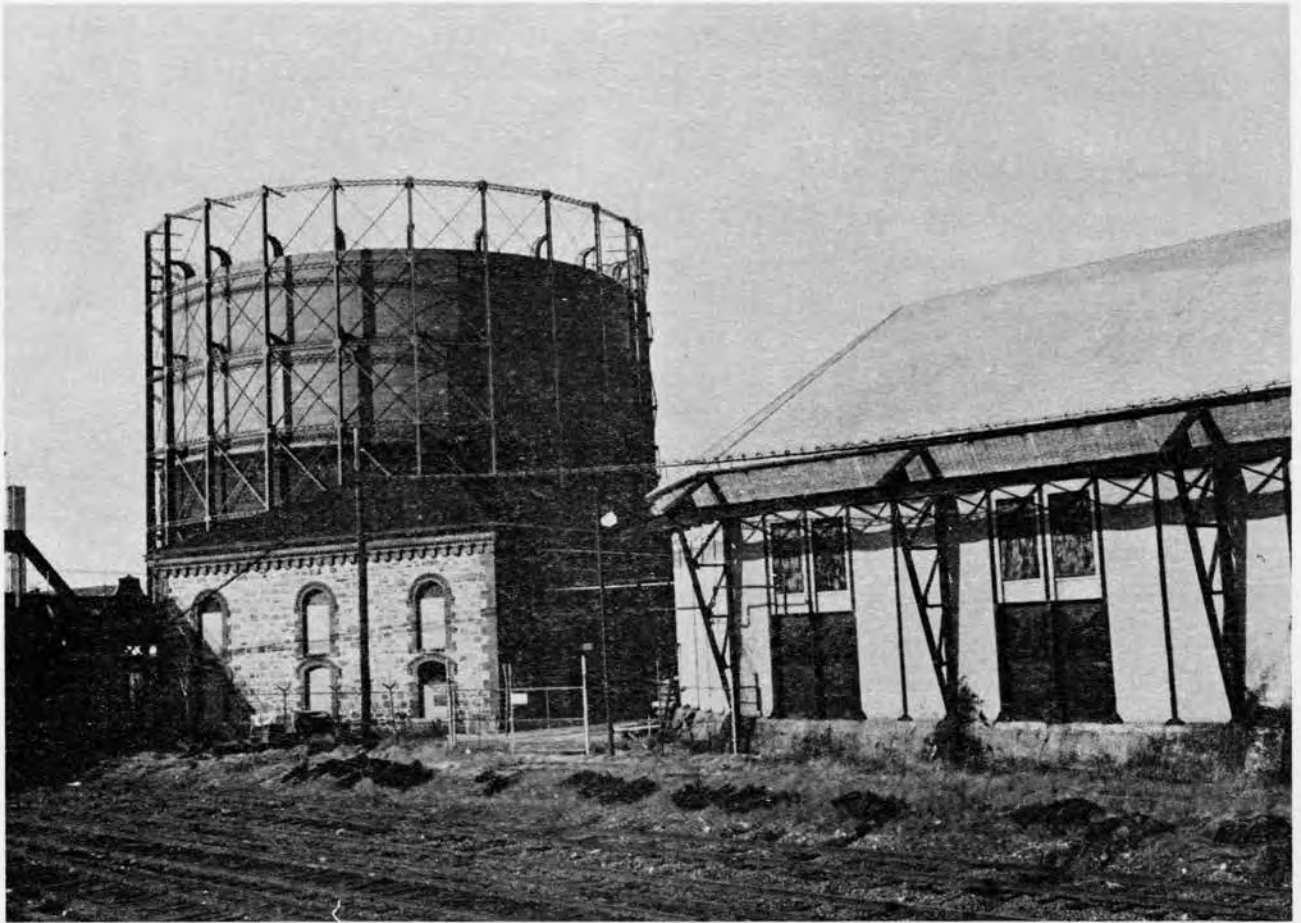


Figure 4-29 View of the gasworks of the Lowell Gas Light Company, 1979. The Coal Pocket (right) was built ca. 1901, the Purifying House (left) ca. 1870.

AREA NINE--MID-PAWTUCKET AREA

The Pawtucket Canal curves south, east, and north from Broadway Street toward the Swamp Locks, and that portion of the canal and the sections of the LHPD bordering it constitute the ninth area in this discussion. The broad canal itself is the major cultural resource of this area, but a few historical structures are scattered along its banks. On the south side, two former hotels stand in the shadow of the ramp that carries Middlesex Street over Thorndike Street. The Howard House at 533 Middlesex dates to the 1830s, and is similar to the Lowell Hotel at 80 Gorham Street in Area Six (Figure 4-19). Adjoining the Howard House is the old St. James Hotel (#543), an Italianate structure of the 1880s. It accommodated travelers from the railroad station which stood just across Middlesex Street.

On the north bank of the canal, Joan Fabric Company operates a plant in a group of late nineteenth and early twentieth century mill buildings on Western Avenue near Thorndike. From the start, operations in these buildings ran on steam rather than waterpower from the Pawtucket Canal, for they stand above the canal's first fall at Swamp Locks. The long, low structure at 275-285 Western Avenue was built by the Lowell and Nashua Railroad as a freight depot in the 1870s. At Western Avenue and School Street, the gasworks of the Lowell Gas Light Company include a pair of very handsome stone buildings trimmed with red brick. This combination of materials reverses the standard order of nineteenth century Lowell construction. One was built ca. 1865 as a machine shop, the other ca. 1870-75 as a purifying house. Beside them is the gaswork's Coal Pocket, an unusual building in plan and structure. The narrow, oval-shaped structure is over 400 feet long, and was constructed ca. 1901-05 in a manner that leaves much of the steel frame exposed.

Like the Concord River area, the mid-Pawtucket area stands close to some notable historical resources that are just beyond the LHPD boundaries. The triangular area north of Dutton Street and west of Fletcher Street contains several small nineteenth century industrial establishments, some



built of Lowell's characteristic rubblestone. They represent the broadened industrial opportunities steam power, and later electricity, brought to the city.

Also north of Dutton Street is a potential historical resource of quite a different kind. Six wooden cottages line a small street called Wamesit Court, each a mere story-and-one-half tall. The three cottages on each side of the court are linked together by lateral wings between the houses. Circumstantial evidence suggests that these cottages were early workers' houses moved to this site in the mid-nineteenth century from the Lowell Manufacturing Company's millyard. If that hypothesis is correct, Wamesit Court contains workers' housing of a type rare in Lowell even when they were built ca. 1828.

#### AREA TEN--FRANCIS GATE

Like the preceding area, the major historical resources of the Francis Gate area relate to the canal system, but here the most significant resources of the area are fairly concentrated rather than diffuse. This tenth area includes the canal and its adjacent lands from Broadway to Pawtucket Street.

The area is generally residential in character, but its two most prominent features are the Francis Gate complex on the canal, and the adjacent John Pilling Shoe Factory, which was recently converted to housing. The Gate complex includes a navigational lock, a gatehouse to regulate the normal flow of water (Figure 4-31) and James B. Francis' ingenious Guard Gate (Figure 4-30), designed to protect the heart of the city from floods. Ridiculed as unnecessary when completed in 1850, it successfully contained a record flood just two years later. The area around the Francis Gate complex and along the canal of the river is now a state park, but the dilemma of providing access while restraining vandalism has not yet been solved.

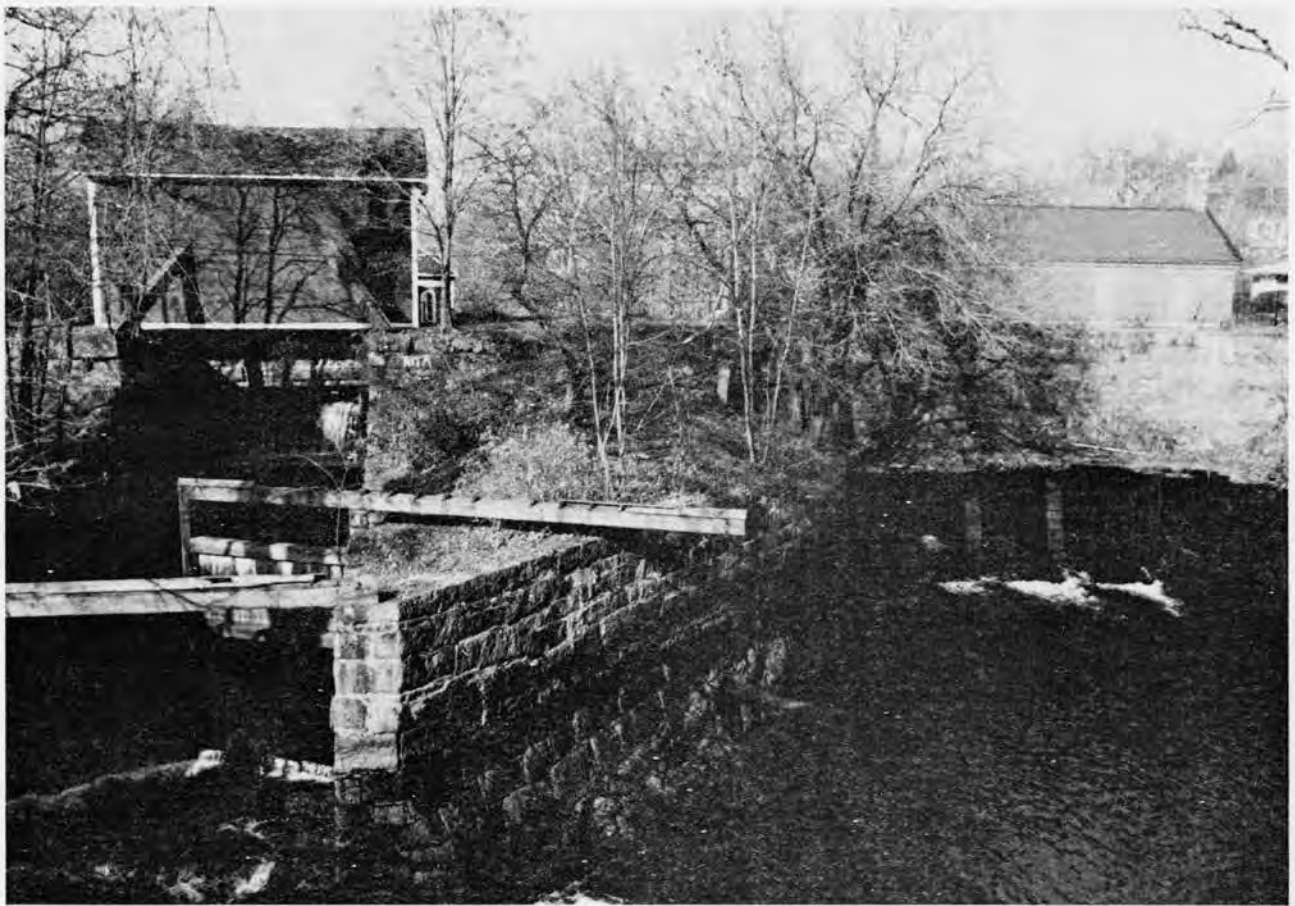


Figure 4-30 View from the south of the Francis Gate complex, 1979. At left is the navigational lock and the Francis Gate, at right the Guard Dam and its gatehouse.



Figure 4-31 View of the Francis Gate complex from the northwest, 1979. At left is the gatehouse to the Guard Dam, at right the lock gatehouse.



Figure 4-32 View up Clare Street from the south, 1979.



The Francis Gate area also contains some of the LHPD's best examples of certain periods and forms of residential development. The short stretch of Broadway Street within this area contains a half dozen small frame houses characteristic of the expansion of Lowell's residential areas in the 1870s. Clare Street was uniformly built with frame houses between 1895 and 1905 (Figure 4-32). Most were first owned and occupied by Irish-American working men and their families. Litchfield Terrace on the west side of the canal is a much smaller residential development of even more modest frame houses, built ca. 1910.

#### AREA ELEVEN--PAWTUCKET FALLS

The Pawtucket Falls on the Merrimack River, the natural feature that drew prehistoric and industrial man to Lowell, dominates the eleventh area of the LHPD. This area includes both banks of the river from the head of the Pawtucket Canal on the west to Textile Avenue on the east. The man-made structures that harness the falls--the Pawtucket Dam and Northern and Pawtucket Canals--are the most prominent historical features of this area, along with the Northern Canal Gatehouse (Figure 4-33) and the Great River Wall that carries that canal along the falls (Figure 3-17). The area also contains several significant historic houses, since the land around the falls on both sides of the river has traditionally been favored as a residential district. Among these houses are both the oldest and the grandest in the LHPD.

The oldest house in the District is the Spalding House of 1761 (383 Pawtucket Street). Indisputably the grandest is the Frederick Ayer Mansion of 1876 (335 Pawtucket Street). Both are on the south bank of the river, and like many of the houses along Pawtucket Street, both now serve institutional purposes. The Spalding House is a house museum and the headquarters of a D.A.R. chapter. The Ayer Mansion, along with substantial rear additions, houses the Franco American School. The Second Empire house at 295 Pawtucket Street, built ca. 1873 for a banker and his family, has been converted into a mortuary, as have several

other large houses along this street. The Old Stone House (267 Pawtucket Street), built of rubblestone in 1824, has been a tavern and hotel, mansion (of James C. Ayer, Frederick's brother), charitable home for young women and children, and is currently a residential hall for nuns from the nearby St. Joseph's Hospital (Figure 4-34).

The north bank of the Merrimack River remains residential in character. Three brick houses on Riverside Street (#22, #26-28, and #52) are the most notable ones in that section. They were built in the 1820s and 1830s, when that area was still West Dracut.

Further east, on a fine site on Colonial Avenue overlooking the falls, a half dozen houses (#22-92) built in the early twentieth century provide a middle class comparison to the more modest houses of Litchfield Terrace in Area Ten.

#### AREA TWELVE--CENTRALVILLE

The final area within the LHPD to be discussed extends between the Aiken Street Bridge and the Hunts Falls Bridge on the north bank of the Merrimack River, in the Centralville neighborhood. Centralville is rich in nineteenth century houses of various styles and dates. However, only a single side of a single street (Lakeview Avenue) is included in the LHPD, along with the V.F.W. Highway which blocks this neighborhood from the riverbank. Nonetheless, the street does contain a sampling of modest frame houses dating from most decades of the nineteenth century after 1840.

The key resource of this area, however, is not what is contained within it, but rather what can be seen from it. Lowell's nineteenth century "Mile of Mills" on the south bank of the Merrimack (Figure 4-35) was broken by the demolition of the Merrimack Manufacturing Company's mills and of the secondary Lawrence millyard (Figure 4-36). Nevertheless, the view from Centralville of the Massachusetts, Boott, and Lawrence yards and the city behind them remains the clearest comprehensive image of Lowell as the "City of Spindles."



Figure 4-33 View from the southwest of the Pawtucket Falls and the Northern Canal Gatehouse, 1979.

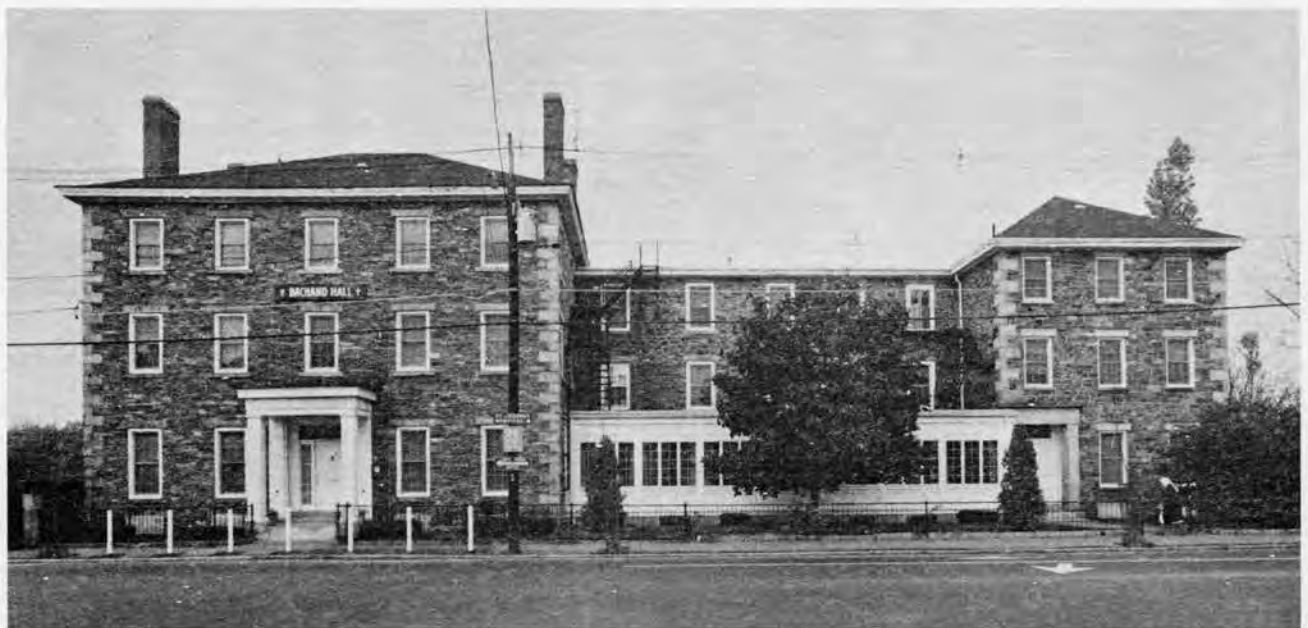


Figure 4-34 Old Stone House, 267 Pawtucket Street, built 1824, photographed 1979.





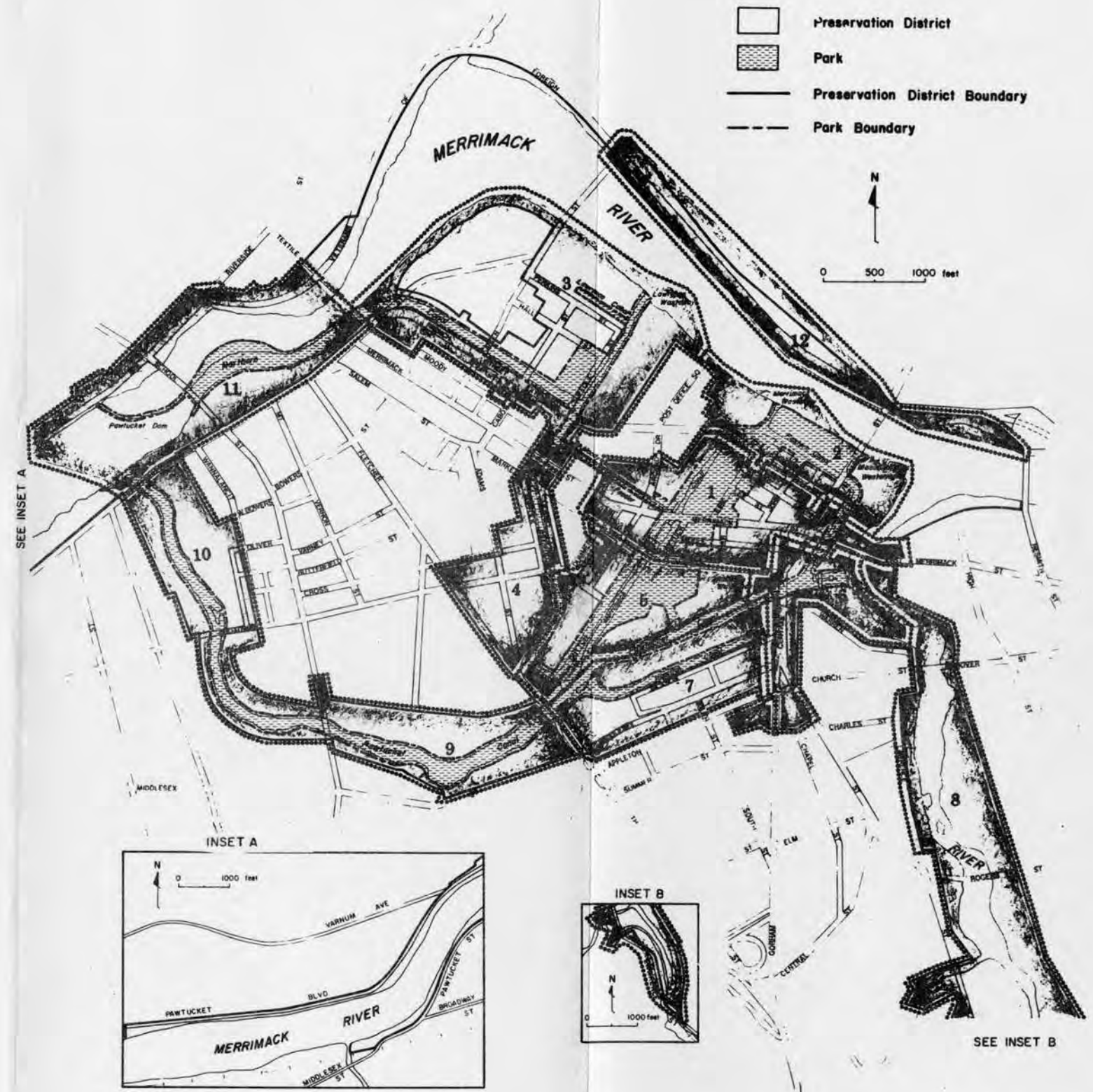
Figure 4-35 View from east across the Merrimack River to the Merrimack Manufacturing Company (left) and the Lawrence Manufacturing Company (center and right), ca. 1895.



Figure 4-36 View from the east of the Boott Mills (left and center) and of the apartment towers on the site of the Merrimack Manufacturing Company (right), 1979.

The Park and the District encompass most of Lowell's historic waterpower features, large industrial complexes, and commercial center. The majority of these historic resources is concentrated in the central areas identified as One through Seven in this discussion, but the far-flung portions of the LHPD make substantial contributions. Lowell is fortunate to retain not only the main elements of its nationally significant industrial development, but also much of the nineteenth century city-- inside and outside the Park and the District-- that supported and was supported by the mills. Each enriches and provides context for the other. The magnitude of the Lowell Cultural Resources Inventory gives testimony to the scale of the Park and the District and to their wealth of resources, but the fourteen volumes should not obscure the truth that it is the city as a whole that is Lowell's real historical resource.

MAP OUTLINING TWELVE AREAS DISCUSSED IN CHAPTER FOUR.





## SOURCES FOR THE INVENTORY

Lowell is a richly documented city. The inventory project drew upon historic data in over a dozen collections, but by no means exhausted the available sources. Much more can and should be learned about Lowell's built environment, and hopefully the inventory will provide a reliable foundation for that work. The following list of sources is arranged in the approximate order of the frequency with which they were used in preparing the inventory.

### SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, ALUMNI-LYDON LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF LOWELL

Special Collections is the broadest-based repository of information on the history of Lowell. The comprehensive collection of maps and atlases, city directories, illustrated handbooks and guides, and other published materials gathered there was the most important source of historic information in carrying out the inventory. The maps and atlases provided the basic historic information on every property, and the directories were almost as frequently consulted.

Of similar importance is Special Collection's picture file of prints, photographs and other graphic materials related to Lowell, including many images on deposit from the Lowell Historical Society and the Lowell Museum. Filed separately are approximately four-thousand photographic negatives (and prints) exposed for the Proprietors of Locks and Canals, primarily showing canal and industrial features in the first half of the twentieth century. Together with the well-illustrated histories, guidebooks, yearbooks, and the like published in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a remarkably complete composite picture of Lowell's historic appearance, particularly in the late nineteenth century, can be formed.

Other Special Collections resources valuable to the inventory were the document file on Lowell people, places, corporations, and buildings; architectural and engineering drawings and millyard insurance surveys, mostly deposited by Locks and Canals; and

the collection of manuscripts, dissertations, and other research works on Lowell topics. The cooperation and active assistance of the Special Collections staff made these extensive holdings all the more useful.

PROPRIETORS OF LOCKS AND CANALS ARCHIVE,  
BOOTT MILLS, LOWELL

The Proprietors of Locks and Canals private archive at the Boott Mills is the best source of historic plans and drawings related to Lowell's power canal system and to the major industrial enterprises that used it. The archive also contains some Locks and Canals Directors' records and other invaluable documents. Lowell was initially a city built for industry, and this industrial archive contains unique sources related to the development of the town and city as a whole, particularly manuscript maps.

The broad scope of the inventory prevented an in-depth analysis of most of the very specific information available in the Proprietors of Locks and Canals archive. That repository should be an important point for further research on the canals and the major industrial sites.

Boott Mills is an active business, yet its staff was consistently generous in assisting the inventory team.

Memorial Library, City of Lowell

The city library's reference collection of Lowell histories, directories, maps, and atlases is very extensive, and includes a copy of the 1936 atlas of the city not found at Special Collections. A unique strength of this library is its exhaustive microfilm collection of Lowell newspapers, accompanied by a WPA-prepared index. The Memorial Library staff frequently advised the inventory team on specific research questions.

Registry of Deeds for the Northern District of  
Middlesex County

Lowell researchers are fortunate to have county registry of deeds records available locally.

The breadth and time frame of the inventory effort prohibited investigation of the title history of most properties, but the registry was consulted on many key parcels. Of particular interest were several detailed building contracts discovered in the course of title research, dating from the 1830s through the 1850s. A focused search for and analysis of such documents would tell much about early building practices in Lowell.

#### City of Lowell, Various Departments

The records of at least four city departments were consulted in the preparation of the inventory. The City Engineer's plates were used to determine current ownership of property. Other records and plans related to public works were not utilized, and represent a source for further research.

The Buildings Office has an index of permit applications dating from 1906 to the present, and the documents themselves are available from 1924 to the present. These records can be very informative as to date, cost, materials, and other particulars on new construction, alterations, and demolition projects. The index is arranged by street name and date of application, but not by numerical address. Locating a permit of unknown date for a property on a long and active street (e.g., Merrimack Street) can be quite time consuming, and could only be done for a few particularly important buildings which raised questions that could not be answered from other sources.

The Assessor's Office assisted in determining the tax status of various properties. Other resources, such as annual property valuation books arranged by owner and address, were not used on the inventory, but could be useful in tracing alterations to specific properties.

The files of Division of Planning and Development's Neighborhood Analysis Project provided photographs of several properties demolished recently, particularly in the Acre neighborhood. Another resource is the Division's collection of photographs of areas affected by urban renewal projects.



### Other Sources

The inventory team's less extensive use of other repositories of historic Lowell information more accurately reflects the constraints of the project than the potential usefulness of those sources. The Manuscript Collection at Baker Library of the Harvard Business School has an extremely extensive collection of business records from many of the major Lowell corporations. A brief examination of the material on a single company confirmed that detailed information on the construction and operation of the mills can be uncovered in these records. Like the Proprietors of Locks and Canals' archive, the Baker Library represents a major source for further research on industrial Lowell.

The Merrimack Valley Textile Museum in North Andover includes considerable Lowell material in its library. This is a particularly useful source on the many industrial enterprises in Lowell other than the major corporations, such as the mills on the Concord River. The inventory team was able to devote few hours to the Museum's library, but the very helpful staff there made it time very well spent.

The Lowell Museum's files were consulted on several subjects, particularly concerning immigrant groups. In the course of the inventory, the Museum deposited its photographic file with Special Collections at Alumni-Lydon Library, and several images in that file contained information important to the project.

The Boston Athenaeum's collections include several architectural drawings for Lowell buildings, and an exquisitely detailed manuscript map of Lowell dated 1835. Both the drawings and the map warrant further examination.

The library of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities has the largest and broadest collection anywhere of historic photographs related to New England architecture. The material in the collection on Lowell is extensive. Particularly useful to the inventory were the many stereographs of nineteenth century Lowell scenes.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission's records of archeological sites was consulted for the inventory

and this report. The Commission also provided the National Register of Historic Places nomination forms prepared for the Middle-Merrimack Streets, the Locks and Canals, and the City Hall Historic Districts. The Massachusetts State Archives provided some maps consulted in the course of the project. The State Department of Corporations and Taxation has a useful index to the charters and charter changes of all Massachusetts corporations.

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