



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Upper Rockville Mill

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 332 Canonchet Road

not for publication

city or town Hopkinton

vicinity

state Rhode Island

code RI

county Washington

code 009

zip code 02873

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 5/18/2006
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- removed from the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- other (explain)

[Signature] 7.5.06
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Upper Rockville Mill
Name of Property

Washington County, Rhode Island
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box.)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing
2	buildings
1	sites
3	structures
	objects
6	total

Name of related multiple property listings
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION: manufacturing
facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT: post office
COMMERCE/TRADE: business

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

MID-19TH CENTURY: Greek Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation STONE: granite

walls STONE: granite

WOOD: weatherboard

roof ASPHALT

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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DESCRIPTION

The Upper Rockville Mill is a moderate-size factory complex, encompassing: two mill buildings, the site of a third building, and three mill-related hydraulic features (partial head race with raceway gates, tail race, and dam with spillway).

The two Greek Revival-style industrial buildings are the 3½-story main mill, built 1844–1845, and an adjacent 2-story auxiliary building, built between 1863 and 1870. Both buildings are constructed of granite - foundations, exterior walls, and simple trim. Both have flank gable asphalt roofs; slow-burning, heavy timber structures; and numerous window openings to allow as much natural light into the interiors as possible. The main mill (102 feet long by 52 feet wide) has a full-length clerestory monitor on its roof, clapboard siding at the 3rd floor and clerestory levels, and a projecting stair tower containing the main entrance centered on the south façade; its interior has been somewhat modified for non-industrial uses, but generally retains the original open plan that characterizes 19th century mill architecture. The auxiliary building (52 feet long by 21 feet wide) stands about 25 feet east of the main mill and also faces south; it, too, has an open interior plan, slightly modified on the 2nd floor. The main mill is generally in good condition, but the auxiliary building has been vacant for almost 20 years and is in fair to poor condition.

The mill complex stands near the south side of a sloping, wooded, overgrown 3.5 acre lot located at the southeast corner of Canonchet Road and Wincheck Pond Road in the heart of the 19th-century mill village of Rockville; this lot also contains the mill's tail race, a granite-block-lined channel that runs downhill from the main mill northeast to Moscow Brook, which runs from west to east through the property. Other related hydraulic features are located on two adjacent lots west of the mill site: the Wincheck Pond Dam and spillway, and portions of the head race with raceway gates; one of these adjacent lots also contains granite foundation stones that appear to belong to another, small mill building no longer extant. Despite some alterations, the Upper Rockville Mill still embodies the distinctive characteristics of mid-19th-century industrial architecture.

Rockville is at the western end of a string of four mill villages – the others are Hope Valley, Moscow, and Centerville – situated along a three-mile length of Spring Street (R.I. Route 138) in the northern part of Hopkinton, Rhode Island. A rural township of approximately 43 square miles in western Washington County, 34 miles southwest of Providence, Hopkinton is bordered by the Rhode Island towns of Exeter on the north, Richmond and Charlestown on the east, and Westerly on the south, and by the Connecticut towns of Voluntown and North Stonington on the west. Hopkinton's landscape is hilly and forested, with abundant ponds, brooks and streams; the Wood and Pawcatuck Rivers form the eastern and southern boundaries of the town.

In the 19th century, this topography readily accommodated numerous mill sites as well as over a dozen mill

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villages. For the mills in the four villages along Spring Street in northern Hopkinton, the initial sources of water power were Yawgoog Pond, which lies about a mile west of Rockville, and Grassy Pond, about a mile north of Yawgoog Pond; these fed a series of other waterways running downstream to the east, including Wincheck Pond, Moscow Brook, Rockville Pond, Moscow Pond, Brushy Brook, and Locustville Pond. (Both Moscow and Bushy Brooks are tributaries of the Wood River.) Wincheck Pond provided water power directly to the Upper Rockville Mill, and via Moscow Brook to the Lower Rockville Mill.¹

The village of Rockville is centered on a triangle formed by three roadways: Wincheck Pond Road, whose L-shaped alignment lies southwest of (and connects at both ends with) Spring Street/Route 138; Canonchet Road, which curves southwest from Wincheck Pond Road; and Wincheck Pond Road Extension, a short lane connecting the two primary roads. About 200 feet west of Wincheck Pond Road Extension is Wincheck Pond itself, which is now part of a protected conservation area of more than 800 acres. Rockville contains about two dozen, wood-framed, mostly single-family houses, perhaps half of which were built for mill workers, as well as a cemetery, a diminutive former store and post office, a small church, and a former school. Largely built up in the mid- to late-19th century, during which time much of its land area was in possession of the mill owners, the village may be eligible for National Register listing as a historic district.

The Upper Rockville Mill stands on a rise above (southeast of) the intersection of Canonchet and Wincheck Pond Roads. Its lot slopes down to the north and east, with an overall grade change of approximately 30 feet. While technically the mill does not “overlook” the village, since its buildings face away from the village center, it has been Rockville’s most visually prominent and distinctive architectural feature since its construction, though now a screen of new-growth trees obscures the mill buildings from many vantage points. (*Photo #1*) As seen on an 1895 map, the Upper Rockville Mill once included as many as six buildings, of which the 3½-story main mill and one freestanding two-story auxiliary building remain. Like the auxiliary building, the other buildings had substantially smaller footprints than the main mill, and likely also had subordinate functions.

Although the mill’s address is on Canonchet Road, which runs along the western edge of the lot, the two surviving buildings stand close to the south property line and face south toward a neighboring residential property (once, purportedly, the mill overseer’s house); a granite retaining wall along the south property line contains two sets of stone steps leading up to that house lot, which is about six feet above the grade of the main mill. A large, asphalt-paved parking lot (underneath which are partial remains of the mill’s head race) is sited west of the main mill; a gravel and dirt driveway circles tightly around both buildings and loops back to the parking lot.

¹ The Lower Rockville Mill, built in 1851 on the north side of Spring Street about a quarter mile downstream of the Upper Mill, burned in the 1970s and was demolished.

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Both the main mill and the auxiliary building are set into a hillside; a granite retaining wall about six feet tall and 25 feet long runs between the south facades of the two buildings, with about 10 steps leading down to the basement level of the main mill and the ground floor of the auxiliary building. (These steps, made of wood with open risers, are neither original nor historic.) North and east of the mill buildings is a heavily overgrown area of open space containing the mill's tail race (further described below), which proceeds northeast and downhill to intersect with Moscow Brook, running along the north edge of the property some 10 feet below the grade of, but parallel with, Wincheck Pond Road. The amount of vegetation presently on the site limits views of the tail race from within the property and from surrounding streets, especially in the warmer months.

The stone main mill building, built 1844-1845, is 3½ stories tall and measures 52 feet wide by 102 feet long: by far the largest and most imposing building in Rockville. It has 13 bays across the south façade, with a projecting stair tower in the center bay, and seven bays along the side elevations. Set into the slope of a hill, its basement level is entirely exposed on the east and part of the north elevations. The foundation, exterior walls, and trim up to and including the 2nd floor level are all constructed of granite block with a rough-textured finish; a belt course divides the 1st and 2nd floors, and all doorways have simple surrounds that evoke a Greek Revival feeling. The side gable, asphalt-shingled roof has brick chimneys at its east and west ends, and a clerestory monitor running the entire length of the ridge; the 3rd floor level and monitor are clad in clapboards, with heavy wood trim outlining the gable ends and deep cornice, and simple wood trim around the windows (again, a simplified Greek Revival character). (*Photos #2, 3, 4, 5*)

The south stair tower is two stories tall, one bay wide and one bay deep, with a front gable asphalt roof. The main entrance at the ground floor of the tower has been modified from the original: the door is now a modern, single-leaf, aluminum-framed, glass door, recessed several inches into the entranceway; and a concrete wheelchair ramp with simple metal railing now extends along the western half of the south façade. (The ramp, which was installed after the village post office relocated to this building in the late 1980s, is only about a foot tall at its highest end and quite unobtrusive.) A wooden wall sign indicating the "Rockville Post Office" is mounted on the west elevation of the stair tower, above a ground floor window. Above the main entrance in the stair tower is a deeply recessed, double-leaf, solid-panel wood loading door that appears to be original; at the peak of the gable is a cantilevered wood brace for a pulley mechanism to facilitate loading and unloading. A belfry that once stood on top of the stair tower (seen in historic photos as late as 1940) was removed at an unknown date. The main mill also has four secondary entrances: two on the south façade at the 1st floor level, at the southeast and southwest corners, each with a couple of granite steps; and two on the east side elevation in the basement level, in the 2nd and 5th bays. All secondary entrances have historic, single-leaf, solid wood panel doors. There are also three additional loading doors at the 2nd floor level: one centered in the west side elevation, and two centered in the north (rear) elevation; all retain historic, double-leaf, solid-panel, wood doors,

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but lack any sort of pulley structures above their lintels.

Windows on the 1st and 2nd floor levels are metal, replacement, double-hung sash installed in the late 20th century: 12/12 on the 1st floor and 6/6 on the 2nd, all with exterior muntin grids; these configurations match those shown in historic photographs. (One window on the east elevation, at the northeast corner of the 2nd floor level, was formerly a doorway to an enclosed catwalk that connected to the auxiliary building. That catwalk, seen in historic photographs, was removed after 1953 and the door opening was modified to fit a window using granite block infill; this infill was so carefully done that it is barely noticeable.) Windows in the clerestory are widely spaced pairs of wood casements, which were installed in the late 20th century to replace the original, contiguous, wood, 3/3, double-hung sash. (Many of the historic clerestory windows are stored on the mill's top floor.) At the 3rd floor level, windows in the west gable are wood: three 6/6 sash at the 3rd floor and two nine-light fixed sash in the peak of the gable; while on the east side are two 3rd floor window openings, one of which is covered with plywood (that window now opens into a storage closet) while the other has a 1/1 wood replacement sash; these alterations also date from the late 20th century.

The main mill has a one-story addition at the center of the north elevation, with a raised concrete foundation, shed roof, clapboard siding, and wood-and-glass overhead garage door; this was constructed in the late 1980s to serve as a loading dock for the post office. (*Photo #5*) Historic photos indicate that there once was a narrow, two-story, projecting tower, possibly containing toilet facilities, in this location; the date of its removal is not known. A large one-to-two-story, wood-frame addition near the northeast corner of the north elevation (also seen in historic photos) marks the location where the headrace and tailrace met, as it apparently once housed the turbine that powered the mill's machinery. This horizontal turbine, reputedly a very early (mid-19th century) example of its type, was connected to the power train in the mill's basement by a shaft that passed through an opening in the north wall, and the turbine pit extended inside the basement. When the turbine house was taken down in the 1960s, the opening in the north wall was carefully infilled with granite block, and the turbine itself was buried underground.

Inside, the main mill has undergone some alterations since the late 1980s, when textile manufacturing functions ceased and the building became a mixed use commercial and light industrial facility. The wooden stairs within the stair tower were replaced, in wood but with open risers; a new wooden central stairway (with closed risers) was also built from the 2nd to the 3rd floor. Modern finishes – partition walls of sheetrock and skimcoat plaster; vinyl tile flooring and wall-to-wall carpeting; ceilings of various non-historic materials; interior doors of metal, wood, or metal-framed or wood-framed glass – have been installed for a business office in the southwest corner of the 1st floor (*Photo #6*), for the village post office just east of the main entrance corridor, for a light-manufacturing tenant in the southeast corner of the 2nd floor, for a former retail space on the 3rd floor west of the stairway (*Photo #8*), and for some related storage closets and restrooms. (The jewelry manufacturing business

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of the current owners, located in the basement that occupies the eastern third of the building, has had little or no impact on interior architectural features or finishes.) In terms of total floor area, however, these alterations have affected less than 50 percent of the interior; the remaining spaces are relatively intact, exhibiting the character-defining open plan of a 19th-century textile mill (*Photo #7*), with exposed, heavy timber beams, regularly-spaced, wooden columns (on the 3rd floor, metal tie rods reinforced the floors against vibrations from heavy machinery), and wood plank floors and ceilings; the stone perimeter walls are typically whitewashed or painted. On the 3rd floor level, east of the stairway, most of the historic wood plank ceiling has been removed (but is still stored on site), exposing the original chestnut timber roof framing with its wooden pegs and mortise-and-tenon joints.

The main mill is generally in good condition, although some repairs are needed to the clapboard siding, trim at the roofline, and the roof itself.

The auxiliary building, built sometime between 1863 and 1870 according to historic maps, is two stories tall and measures 52 feet long by 21 feet wide. (*Photos #9 and 10*) No records were found to confirm its original or historic use, but given its similarity in form, plan, design, and materials to the main mill, this building clearly served a manufacturing function (as opposed to offices, a power plant, or storage), and historic photos show the presence of what may have been a dust collector tower on the north elevation, indicating that it was used as a picker house. In the early to mid-20th century, when the Rockville Mills made rope and fishing line, the auxiliary building held the large spools for winding cotton yarn, which passed from the 2nd floor of the main mill to the 2nd floor of this building via an enclosed catwalk (seen in historic photos, removed after 1953 once line and twine manufacture had ceased here).

The auxiliary building stands about 25 feet east of and perpendicular to the main mill, and is exactly as long as the larger building is wide, so it is largely out of view from Canonchet Road. Its south end is set into a hillside, so that its main entrance is at the 2nd floor level, and its ground floor is at the same grade as the main mill's basement. This building has three bays across the south façade, two on the north, seven bays along the west side elevation, and five on the east. The foundation, exterior walls and trim are all constructed of granite block with a rough-textured finish; a belt course divides the 1st and 2nd floors, and all doorways are trimmed with simple surrounds evoking a Greek Revival character. The front gable, asphalt-shingled roof, which was rebuilt within the past 30 years, has a simple wood cornice and deep eaves at the gable ends; a brick chimney is located near the north end of the roof. The main entrance is centered between two window openings on the south façade and accessed by three granite steps; the deeply recessed, double-leaf, solid-panel, wood doors appear to be original, and the granite lintel over the doorway mimics the peak of the gable roof above. Two secondary entrances on the east side elevation, in the 1st and 3rd bays of the ground floor, contain doors that match those in the main entrance, although the doorway in the 1st bay is unusually wide and may have been used for loading.

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On the 2nd floor of the west elevation, at the northwest corner, is a former doorway that once connected to the enclosed catwalk leading to the 2nd floor of the main mill. As in the main mill, window proportions are taller on the ground floor than on the 2nd floor, and historic photos indicate that the windows were 12/12 and 6/6 double hung sash, respectively. Most of the windows in this building have been removed due to their deteriorated condition, but are stored on site in expectation of a forthcoming rehabilitation project; surviving sash at the ground floor level of the north end of the building are wood 12/12. Where windows were removed, some openings have been boarded up, and the rest covered with plastic sheeting to protect the building from the weather.

The interior of the auxiliary building has experienced very little alteration. The ground floor has an open plan, with a dirt floor, whitewashed or painted stone perimeter walls, unfinished wood ceiling with exposed beams and joists, and slender metal columns supporting the floor structure above. The 2nd floor (*Photo #11*) has two, modern, wood partition walls in the middle, bisecting the space from east to west; the floor is wood, but otherwise interior finishes are the same as downstairs. There is no basement.

The auxiliary building has been vacant for over 20 years, and is in fair to poor condition, although still structurally sound.

Mill-related hydraulic features are found on all three lots included in this nomination. All of these hydraulic features utilized the waters of Wincheck Pond, which lies about a tenth of a mile west of the mill site, and are believed to originally date to ca. 1844, contemporary with construction of the Upper Rockville Mill; however, some alterations in the course of repairs and improvements made in the 20th century can be seen. Due to the extensive growth of trees and other vegetation on all three lots, the hydraulic features can be difficult to see and access.

The mill property also contains a tail race (*Photo #12*), running northeast from the main mill an estimated 200 feet to end at Moscow Brook, which flows from west to east along the northern edge of the lot. At least a third of the tail race (closest to the mill) is buried underground; the place where it emerges is marked by a structure of granite block, with three vertical pillars topped by a horizontal capstone. From there, the exposed length of the tail race is a granite-block-lined channel about six feet wide and approximately three-to-four feet deep to the waterline. The tail race generally appears to be in fair to good condition.

On the west side of Canonchet Road is an approximately one-acre, triangular lot (Assessor's Plat 30, Lot 58) that is also bounded by Wincheck Pond Road on the north and by Wincheck Pond Road Extension on the west; Moscow Brook runs through the lot near its northern edge. This property, which the 1870 map identifies as a park, has an approximately 75 foot length of the mill's head race traversing its southern end (this raceway

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continued eastward under Canonchet Road; that portion of the head race on the mill property itself is now buried under the parking lot). The head race is similar in dimensions and materials to the tail race described above: approximately six feet wide and three-to-four feet deep to the waterline, and contained by granite block retaining walls. *(Photo #13)* The street edges of the raceway are marked with granite blocks approximately the same width as the channel itself. This section of the head race generally appears to be in fair to good condition. A concrete structure that appears to have contained gates of its own was built on the north side of the raceway sometime in the 20th century; this structure is a perhaps a foot or two taller than the raceway wall, and projects about 10 feet to the north. This may have replaced an older, stone gate structure that once provided water power to another mill building, for what appear to be the remains of a small granite block foundation lie just north of the concrete structure. One can only speculate when this building, which would have stood approximately 250 feet east of Wincheck Pond, was constructed: the 1862, 1870, or 1895 historic maps show no building in this location, and deeds specific to this particular lot, which was first subdivided from the larger mill property in the mid-1950s, do not mention a mill building. It may have been built as part of the Upper Rockville Mill sometime between 1844 and 1862 (or, less likely, between 1895 and 1956); alternatively, the foundation stones may relate to an even older mill building that pre-dates the Upper Rockville Mill.²

On the west side of Wincheck Pond Road Extension is another approximately one-acre irregularly shaped lot (Assessor's Plat 30, Lot 3), which is bounded by Wincheck Pond on the west and by residential properties on the north and south. This lot contains the Wincheck Pond Dam (identified by the R.I. Dept. of Environmental Management as Dam #225), built ca. 1844 by the Rockville Manufacturing Company (possibly replacing an earlier dam in or near this location) to impound the 153-acre pond. The dam consists of a granite embankment approximately 50 feet wide that curves with the shoreline; its center section, about 25 feet wide, is topped with earth and grass. *(Photo #14)* On the north side of this center section is a stepped spillway of concrete and granite block, about 21 feet wide and 2.5 feet deep; this spillway drops the water level about 10 feet into Moscow Brook. *(Photo #15)* The spillway has been repaired and improved over the years, with some of its original granite materials either covered or replaced by concrete at some point in the 20th century. It is presently in good condition, although some of the stonework needs repair and repointing. On the south side of the center embankment are the former raceway gates for the Upper Rockville Mill; the gate structure is approximately 10 feet wide and eight feet tall (most of that height is below the grade of the pond), and is made of concrete, clearly a mid- to late-20th-century replacement for the original ca. 1844 structure. The gates are no longer functional, although the pipes are still visible on the east side of the structure and one wooden gate mechanism remains in place. *(Photo #14)* The gates directed water from the pond into a granite-lined head race that eventually carried

² Lot 58 also contains a small one-story wood-frame building built in the mid-19th century as the village store and post office (currently vacant). Since this building is not functionally related to the mill complex or its raceway, it has been excluded from this nomination, but it may be eligible for NR listing as part of an historic district in Rockville Village.

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water to the mill some 500 feet to the east; the section of raceway on this lot is also approximately six feet wide and three-to-four feet deep to the waterline, and contained by granite block retaining walls; it runs about 150 feet in length. This part of the raceway is in fair to poor condition, and some of the granite block walls are missing.

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LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

For the photographs listed below, reference information numbers 1-5 are the same, as follows:

1. Upper Rockville Mill
2. Washington County, Rhode Island
3. Kathryn J. Cavanaugh, photographer
4. September – November 2005
5. Negatives on file at: Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission
150 Benefit Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Reference information numbers 6 and 7 for each photograph are as follows:

6. Main Mill, north (rear) and west (side) elevations, looking southeast from Canonchet Road;
Moscow Brook in foreground.
7. Photograph 1
- 6: Main Mill, west (side) elevation, looking east from Canonchet Road.
7. Photograph 2
- 6: Main Mill, south façade, looking northeast from neighboring property to the south; Auxiliary
Building in background.
7. Photograph 3
- 6: Main Mill, partial south façade and east elevation, looking northwest from driveway; Auxiliary
Building at right.
7. Photograph 4
- 6: Main Mill, partial north (rear) elevation, looking southeast from parking lot.
7. Photograph 5
- 6: Main Mill, interior, 1st floor, southwest corner office, looking southwest.
7. Photograph 6
- 6: Main Mill, interior, 2nd floor, northwest corner, looking northwest.
7. Photograph 7

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6: Main Mill, interior, 3rd floor, southwest corner, looking northwest.

7. Photograph 8

6: Auxiliary Building, west (side) elevation and south façade, looking northeast.

7. Photograph 9

6: Auxiliary Building, north (rear) and west (side) elevations, looking southeast.

7. Photograph 10

6: Auxiliary Building, interior, 2nd floor, looking south from north end of building.

7. Photograph 11

6: Tail Race, near northeast corner of mill property (AP 30, Lot 43), looking northeast.

7. Photograph 12

6: Head Race, portion on AP 30, Lot 58, looking northeast from near west end of raceway

7. Photograph 13

6: Wincheck Pond Dam, on AP 30, Lot 3, looking north from south end of dam: raceway gates at bottom right foreground, center embankment at middle, spillway at top.

7. Photograph 14

6: Wincheck Pond Dam spillway feeding into Moscow Brook, on AP 30, Lot 3, looking northwest from adjacent footpath.

7. Photograph 15

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 36) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY

ARCHITECTURE

COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Period of Significance

1844-1845

1851

between 1863 and 1870

Significant Dates

1844-1845

1851

between 1863 and 1870

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository

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SIGNIFICANCE

The Upper Rockville Mill is associated with two important historical trends in Hopkinton, and in Rhode Island as a whole, during the 19th century: the rise of the textile industry as a major component of the local and regional economies, and the influence of that industry on the development of numerous mill villages in rural towns. The Upper Rockville Mill variously produced cotton yarn, cloth, fishing line, twine, and cord; its ongoing reliance on water power kept its production capabilities small, but textile manufacturing persisted at Rockville (albeit on an increasingly limited basis) long after many other Rhode Island mills had closed. Within the first three decades of the mill's construction, the adjacent village took shape: by 1875 Rockville had a church, a school, a post office, two stores, and about 40 houses, many occupied by mill workers and about a dozen built by the Rockville Manufacturing Company. The mill was Rockville's largest landowner, business, and employer for over a century, and dominated village life for several generations. The two surviving Greek Revival-style mill buildings (1844–1845, between 1863 and 1870) are good examples of Rhode Island textile mills of the period. The main mill, with its clerestory monitor, is the only survivor of its type in Hopkinton.

Incorporated in 1757, Hopkinton's first permanent settlement was Hopkinton City, approximately six miles south of Rockville; this became the town's civic and commercial center after the New London Turnpike (now R.I. Route 3) was built through it in 1815. Hopkinton remained sparsely populated for most of its first century, with an agricultural economy supplemented by a number of small water-powered mills that provided goods like flour, lumber, oil, and woven cloth to the local citizenry; by the 1770s residential hamlets had developed adjacent to some of these mills, such as at Ashaway in the southern end of town, and at Hope Valley in the north. This set the stage for larger-scale manufacturing and further community development as the Industrial Revolution took hold in Rhode Island in the early 19th century.

Samuel Slater first introduced water-powered cotton spinning at Pawtucket's Slater Mill in 1790, a development that allowed American manufacturers to begin to produce high-quality yarn and cloth on a par with goods imported from Britain. Over the next several decades, a significant increase in the availability (and related drop in price) of raw cotton, technological innovations in machinery for spinning and weaving, the Embargo Act of 1807, the War of 1812, subsequent protective tariffs, and improvements in transportation systems all combined to expand cotton manufacturing – and other industries – throughout Rhode Island. In Hopkinton, mills and factories were built along the Wood and Pawcatuck Rivers at the eastern and southern edges of town, as well as near some of the smaller interior waterways, producing cotton yarn and cloth, rope and twine, woolen cloth, and machine parts and tools. Two of Hopkinton's manufacturers achieved national prominence in the 19th century: the Ashaway Line & Twine Company, established ca. 1825 to make fishing line from cotton yarn; and the Nichols & Langworthy Machine Company, founded in Hope Valley in 1835 to make textile machinery, later renowned for steam engines, boilers, and printing presses. By 1850 Hopkinton had over a dozen mill villages,

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including Alton, Ashaway, Barberville, Bethel, Burdickville, Canonchet, Centerville, Hope Valley, Laureldale, Locustville, Moscow, Potter Hill, Rockville, Woodville, and Wyoming; several of these straddled the rivers and lay partly in adjacent towns.

It is not certain exactly when Rockville was first established. The Reverend S.S. Griswold, in an early history of Hopkinton published in 1876, observed that “further back than the memory of the oldest inhabitant runneth... antedating any known records,” the waters of Yawgoog, Grassy, and Wincheck Ponds were used to power a number of small mills in northern Hopkinton.³ At various times, several sawmills, a gristmill, an oil mill, a shingle mill, and a carding and fulling mill stood near the outlet of Wincheck Pond, and limited residential development occurred in the vicinity. Sometime prior to 1830, Lewis Kenyon built a small textile mill at Rockville to manufacture satinets, carded wool, and dressed cloth; another manufacturer, O.M. Stillman of Westerly, leased some space in Kenyon’s mill to make textile machinery.⁴ Kenyon’s mill went through several changes of ownership and eventually burned down. In 1844, construction began on a new “upper stone factory,” sited on a rise above Moscow Brook about a tenth of a mile east of Wincheck Pond. The Upper Rockville Mill began spinning cotton to produce yarn in the summer of 1845; by fall, it had 32 looms installed and was making cloth as well. In 1851, a second mill building, called the Lower Mill (no longer extant), was constructed nearby; the entire complex collectively became known as the Rockville Mills.

Although the development of steam engines in the early decades of the 19th century allowed some mill owners to escape both the geographical limitations of dependence on water power and the practical problem of acquiring water rights (a particular saving grace at a time when the better locations near water resources in Rhode Island had already been claimed), steam power was relatively slow to reach rural areas, and meanwhile, new mills that needed water privileges continued to be built, as was the case at Rockville. While lacking the most modern technology in its power plant, the Upper Rockville Mill nonetheless was architecturally current, reflecting several design trends for Rhode Island cotton mills in the first half of the 19th century. Its dimensions (52 by 102 feet, 3½-stories tall) are consistent with the typical size and scale of water-powered mills of the 1840s. The slow-burning structure of heavy wood beams and posts, plank flooring and ceilings, and load-bearing stone walls had been the preferred method of construction since the late 1820s. The clerestory monitor on the gable roof had evolved after 1810 as a means of increasing the amount of natural light and usable work space in the attic level of a mill; the Upper Rockville Mill is a good example of this type of mill design, and the

3 Griswold, p. 64. The exact language of this quote was repeated (without attribution) in Cole’s 1889 history of Washington and Kent Counties, and in the Hopkinton Bicentennial Commission’s 1976 history of Hopkinton.

4 Kulik mistakenly indicates that the present Upper Rockville Mill hosted Lewis Kenyon’s and O.M. Stillman’s manufacturing enterprises, but a close reading of his sources (Chase, Griswold, and Cole) refutes that conclusion.

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only one known to have been built in Hopkinton: others were found at the Carolina Mill in Richmond, Quidnick Mill in Coventry, and the Peace Dale and Rocky Brook Mills in South Kingstown.⁵ The use of clapboards instead of stone for exterior wall material on the top floor was an economical solution to accommodating the complex roofline resulting from placing a clerestory monitor on top of a gable roof. The projecting stair tower centered on the primary façade, also innovated around 1810, accommodated access/egress and vertical circulation needs while maximizing efficiencies in the layout of work spaces on each floor of the mill; typically a belfry would be mounted on top of the stair tower to signal the start and end of the work day (such a belfry existed at the Upper Rockville Mill until after 1940). Finally, the predominant style for architectural details of Rhode Island textile mills in the 1840s was a simplified variant of the Greek Revival, seen here in the heavy wood trim at the cornice and gable ends of the roof, stone doorway surrounds, and multi-light, double-hung sash windows. The Upper Rockville Mill retains most of these character-defining features today.

The surviving hydraulic features on the Upper Rockville Mill site and two adjacent lots – Wincheck Pond Dam, a spillway that drops the pond’s waters into Moscow Brook, and parts of the mill’s head race and tail race – were originally made of large, granite blocks and appear to be contemporary with the mill; one source dates them to 1848–1853, and hydraulic features (“dams, flumes, canals...”) are mentioned in an 1861 deed of sale from the original mill owners.⁶ Although some of these hydraulic features have been altered in the course of repairs and improvements over the years, their historic character is still evident.

The Upper and Lower Rockville Mills were built by the Rockville Manufacturing Company, a joint venture with three partners: Oliver D. Wells, John Clark Harris, and Harris Lanphear. Of these, Harris Lanphear (1815-1888) had the longest association with the mills. He was active in the operation and management of the mill business until 1857, when failing health forced him to retire to a nearby farm. In 1861 the three original partners sold the Rockville Mills to the Washington National Bank of Westerly, but in 1864 the bank brought Lanphear back (his health apparently restored) as mill superintendent, a position he held for at least another decade.⁷ When the Rockville Manufacturing Company formally incorporated in 1866 and leased the mills back from the bank, Lanphear became a stockholder and director in the corporation. By that time, he was also involved in building a new textile mill at Centerville, about a mile east of Rockville (replacing an earlier 1846

⁵ Sande, in Olde Time New England (1975), p. 30; also McCarthy and Green, p. 15.

⁶ Williams, The Yawgoog Story, Vol. 1, p. 2, gives the earlier date; see also Deed Book 12, Pages 663-665, dated December 26, 1861.

⁷ Cole (p.834), in a biographical sketch of Harris Lanphear, says that Lanphear “sold his interest” in the Rockville Mills in 1857. However, deeds indicate that Lanphear was still part owner of the mills when he, Wells, and Harris sold them to the bank in 1861. Thus it appears that in 1857 Lanphear gave up his role in the day-to-day operation of the mills, but not all financial interest in the mill property.

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structure which had burned down). When the Rockville Manufacturing Company bought the Centerville Mill in 1873, Lanphear took charge of that as well; he later formed his own company, Harris Lanphear & Company, which purchased the Centerville Mill outright shortly prior to his death. Meanwhile, in addition to his manufacturing interests, Lanphear also held various local and state political offices, was the first president of the Hopkinton Savings Bank (a position he held for 16 years), and was president of the Wood River Branch Railroad from 1873 to 1887, so his importance and influence in Hopkinton extended well beyond the Rockville Mills.

While limited residential development had previously occurred in Rockville, the opening of the Upper Rockville Mill in 1845 sparked the evolution of a true mill village over the next 25 years. To accommodate at least some of its work force, the Rockville Manufacturing Company built approximately a dozen houses in the village, while other homes were built by private owners (some of them also mill workers). In 1846–1847 Hopkinton's third Seventh Day Baptist Church was built just north of Rockville; in 1869 it was moved to its present location on the south side of Spring Street, east of the Upper Mill, where it remained the hub of Rockville's religious and social life for much of the next century. ("The whole town of Rockville was all Seventh Day Baptists ... the mills were owned by Seventh Day Baptists and everybody who worked there was Seventh Day Baptists. It was almost mandatory that you went to church." The mills would have been closed on Saturday, the seventh day of the week, to observe the Sabbath.⁸) Shortly after the church was first constructed, in 1849, a small post office and store was erected in the village center, diagonally across today's Canonchet Road from the mill. (It is likely that the Rockville Manufacturing Company built this commercial building, as it still belonged to the mill owners as late as 1953.) As noted above, in 1851 the mill company expanded, constructing a two-story stone dye house and beaming room, later used as a weave shed, called the Lower Mill, located about a half-mile downstream on Moscow Brook on the north side of Spring Street (destroyed by fire in 1977). In response to the increasing number of families living in the area, a schoolhouse was built on the south side of Spring Street between Rockville and Centerville in 1868; the church was moved next door to the schoolhouse the following year.⁹

The 1870 map indicates that the Rockville Manufacturing Company owned most of the land east of today's Canonchet Road, and north and south of today's Wincheck Pond Road and Spring Street (none of these roads were named until well into the 20th century, and their present names are not the original names). The company's property included the Upper and Lower Mills, as well as seven houses on Wincheck Pond Road and another four north of those (on today's News Street). Adjacent to the intersection of Canonchet and Wincheck Pond Roads stood eight other, privately owned houses, and the post office/store with a small park next to it. A

⁸ "A Tiny Church in Rockville Clings to Life," Providence Journal/Evening Bulletin, December 26, 1995.

⁹ Deed Book 15, pages 161 and 297.

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bit further east on Spring Street were a grist mill, the school house, the church, a parsonage, another store, and four more private homes; and on today's Dye Hill Road, heading northeast from Spring Street, stood five additional private homes.¹⁰ This map shows a total of 28 houses in Rockville, but contemporary census data indicates that the village contained as many as 12 more houses in the period 1865–1875 than are depicted here in 1870, so the actual land area of the village, at least as understood by local residents, was apparently larger than shown on this map.

The 1865 and 1875 Rhode Island State censuses not only listed Hopkinton residents by name and occupation, but also noted where they lived, making it possible to identify how many people in general, and how many mill workers specifically, lived in Rockville at those times. This seems to have been the major period of growth for both the Rockville Mills and the surrounding village, although the village grew at a much slower rate than Hopkinton as a whole.¹¹ In 1865 Rockville had 36 houses occupied by 39 families, with a total of 168 residents. Twenty-two of these people (13 percent of Rockville's overall population) were "operatives at the cotton mill" (by far the most common occupation): 18 women and 14 men, fully half of them teenagers (aged 15-19). Ten years later, Rockville had 42 houses (several vacant), 40 families, and 214 people, about a 27 percent increase in population and a 16percent increase in number of dwelling houses. (Note that the vast majority of homes were single-family, including those of mill workers.) But both the percentage and the actual number of Rockville residents employed at the mill almost doubled in that same timeframe, indicating that business was quite good: 50 Rockville residents (23 percent of the village population) in 1875 had occupations such as weaver, spinner, spooler, spooler tender, warper tender, dresser tender, machinist, cloth trimmer, measurer and packer of cloth, mill watchman, overseer of spinning, overseer of carding, and superintendent of the cotton mill. Of the 50 mill workers, 22 were female and 28 male, and again nearly half were teenagers or children (the youngest was 9 years old). Several villagers had multiple family members working at the mill: for example, the mill watchman, William A. Boss, and his children William W. (age 19), a spinner, Lillian C. (17), a spooler, and Charles H. (15), a spinner; or the five Daly siblings: Edward (22), a weaver; Mary (21), also a weaver; Margaret (19), a warper tender; Anne (15), a spooler tender; and William (13), a doffer.

Immigrant labor was not drawn to Rockville in any significant numbers. In 1865 all but one of the mill's workers was American-born; the lone Irish female mill operative was married to a Hopkinton native. By 1875

¹⁰ That Dye Hill Road was considered part of the eastern boundary of Rockville is borne out by an 1878 deed describing the sale of the "Rockville Mill Estate" to Ira G. Briggs and others (Deed Book 18, Pages 605-618).

¹¹ The Federal Censuses of 1860-1880, which do not specify the locations of residents' homes, indicate that Hopkinton had 577 families in 1860, 603 families in 1870, and 1,243 families in 1880 – an increase of just over 100 percent in the 20 years after the Civil War.

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the number of foreign-born workers had increased to only three: two English and one Canadian. The vast majority of Rockville's mill workers and general population came from Hopkinton or other Rhode Island towns, with a handful from neighboring New England states, including Connecticut, Vermont, and New Hampshire.

A ca. 1870 photograph shows about 25 workers, half of them women and children, lined up outside the Upper Mill, representing approximately half of the total workforce at the Rockville Mills at that time.¹² The workers appear dwarfed by the building behind them, which raises the question of whether, when the Upper Mill was first constructed, the Rockville Manufacturing Company had ambitions for larger-scale production than they were realistically able to accomplish. While the mill owners were the village's largest business, employer, and landowner for more than a century, Rockville Mills always remained a minor player among Rhode Island textile concerns, and the small size of the village itself reflects the company's modest success. This may have been due to a combination of factors. First, and perhaps most significantly, Wincheck Pond could generate only a limited amount of water power for the Rockville Mills, which curtailed production capacity and precluded any possibility of employing more than a few dozen workers. Secondly, the Rockville Mills continued to run on water power until well into the 20th century, perhaps because limited production meant limited profits to reinvest in capital improvements, which in turn kept the company small-scale. Third, the Rockville Manufacturing Company was originally organized as a joint ownership company, which meant that each of the three owners had to rely on their own individual financial resources plus any profit to support the business, and if it failed the owners would be personally responsible for any debts: a situation that might have inclined them more towards caution than risk. (Rhode Island first allowed manufacturing companies to organize as corporations in 1847, which provided the twin advantages of selling stock to raise capital, and protecting stockholders from personal liability in times of corporate financial distress. The Rockville Manufacturing Company, however, did not incorporate until 1866, several years after the original owners had sold the mills.) Finally, the regional cotton industry as a whole suffered a series of economic blows in the latter half of the 19th century, precipitated by the Civil War, which cut New England mills off from their major source of raw materials for five years. Many northern cotton mills did not survive the war, and those that did faced increasing production and labor costs along with rising competition from southern states, which would eventually force some of them out of business altogether.

In the beginning, the future of the Rockville Manufacturing Company seemed bright: as noted earlier, an initial flush of success encouraged the construction of the Lower Mill in 1851. But in the late 1850s the company's fortunes declined, as did those of many Rhode Island manufacturers during a national economic downturn prompted by the Panic of 1857. The Civil War revived woolen and base metals manufacturing across Rhode Island, but not the cotton industry, and in December 1861, Harris Lanphear, Oliver Wells, and John C. Harris

12 Photo in Segar and Salomon, p. 9.

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sold the Rockville Mills, along with associated dwelling houses, hydraulic features, water rights, and equipment, to the Washington National Bank of Westerly (Deed Book 12, Pages 663-665). It is not known whether – or how – the bank kept the mills open during the war, but once the war ended, in 1866, a group of businessmen from Hopkinton and Westerly (among them, Harris Lanphear) formally incorporated as the Rockville Manufacturing Company, which apparently operated the mills on lease from the bank for the next eight years.

As noted above, business was good for much of the decade after the Civil War ended, and the mill's workforce more than doubled during that time. More housing was constructed in Rockville, a new schoolhouse was built, and the village church was relocated to a more convenient site on a main road. (The bank had sold two small parcels from the original mill property: one to the Hopkinton School District #11 in 1868, the other to the Seventh Day Baptist Church in 1869.) The Rockville Manufacturing Company was likely affected by the Panic of 1873 and the resulting economic decline, but in October 1874 the company was able to purchase the mills back from the bank, for \$70,000. The deed describes "several tracts and parcels of land together with the dwelling houses, stores, mills, barns, and buildings of every description upon the premises hereby conveyed, with all the dams, flumes, canals, reservoirs, water and water power and privileges, ponds and water rights and privileges, and rights of flowing, also all the machinery in the mills" (Deed Book 17, Pages 510-512). The company directors almost immediately mortgaged the property back to the bank for \$30,000, with two separate tracts as collateral: the "Rockville Mill Estate" of an unspecified size, and the 16.5 acre "Centerville Mill Estate" in the adjacent village (that mill had been acquired in 1873). The two tracts were partly divided by "the road running southwest by Jerome Weeks' house," which is seen on the 1870 map and corresponds to today's Dye Hill Road. But the brief period of post-war good fortune was about to end: only four years after recovering title to its property, the Rockville Manufacturing Company sold the "Rockville Estate" to a large textile manufacturer from out of state.

In March 1878, Ira G. Briggs of Griswold, Connecticut, and eight other investors paid \$29,025 to acquire the Rockville Estate with all of its associated land, mills, dwellings, hydraulic features, water rights, and equipment (Deed Book 18, Pages 605-618; includes a two-page list of machinery then in place at the Upper Rockville Mill).¹³ Ira G. Briggs had been a superintendent at the Rockville Mills from 1852-1856, after which he went

¹³ The deed specifically reserved to the Rockville Manufacturing Company the "right to hold back all water at the Upper Rockville Mill," for a total of 39 consecutive hours per week beginning either Friday or Saturday at 4 o'clock p.m. (depending on whether Briggs Manufacturing would observe the Sabbath on Saturday or Sunday), to benefit the Centerville Estate. Rockville Manufacturing also agreed to pay about half of the maintenance costs for all of the hydraulic features that served both the Rockville and the Centerville Mills, including reservoirs at Yawgoog and Grassy Ponds.

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into business for himself by purchasing the Beachdale Mills in Voluntown, Connecticut, a few miles northwest of Rockville. Over the next 18 years he acquired four other Voluntown mill properties, meanwhile incorporating as Ira G. Briggs & Company in 1868; and, in 1874, he became a director and general manager of the Rockville Mills. Seven of Briggs' fellow buyers of the Rockville Mills were also stockholders and/or members of the board of Rockville Manufacturing, so it seems logical to surmise that the Rockville Manufacturing Company sought a way to shore up its operations by joining forces with another company whose management was both familiar to them and also familiar with the Rockville Mills itself. In this Rockville Manufacturing mirrored a trend among a number of Rhode Island industries in the latter half of the 19th century: consolidate, streamline, and merge in order to stay in business.

In 1889, Ira G. Briggs & Company changed its name to Briggs Manufacturing Company. The company leased out some of the Rockville Mills' space to other manufacturers, but also continued to produce cotton textiles there, off and on, for the next quarter century. The last quarter of the 19th century was a period of booming growth for all of Rhode Island's major industries, including textiles: by 1896 there were 74 cotton manufacturers, 50 woolen manufacturers, and 57 yarn manufacturers across the state, along with numerous companies making textile machinery.¹⁴ For some reason the Rockville Mills did not experience the same level of growth and prosperity enjoyed by the industry as a whole. The 1895 map of Rockville illustrates much the same conditions as in 1870, with the mill buildings and mill workers' homes now owned by the Briggs Manufacturing Company; there were no new buildings at the mills, and the village likewise remained basically unchanged. This indicates that being a subsidiary of the Briggs Manufacturing Company did not notably increase either production capabilities or the workforce at the Rockville Mills. The mills also continued to be run on water power, so clearly Briggs chose not to make significant capital improvements at Rockville. During its tenure as owner of the Rockville Mills, Briggs Manufacturing also began to reduce the amount of land it owned in the village, selling off a total of 11 individual lots.

Just after the turn of the 20th century, another, even larger company acquired the Rockville Mills. The January 1903 issue of the Providence Board of Trade Journal reported (p. 15) that "Osmond and Oscar Edwards of Canonchet, and George Langworthy and Frank Hill of Ashaway, are to buy the Rockville Cotton Mill in Hopkinton. It has not been in operation for a year or more." (A directory of cotton textile mills in five successive issues of this journal, from January through May 1903, indicated that the Rockville Mills, owned by Briggs Manufacturing, possessed 5,888 ring spinners and 2,400 mule spinners, among other assets – a lot of machinery to be sitting idle.) And indeed, in March that year the Briggs Manufacturing Company sold the entire "Rockville Estate," minus the 11 lots previously sold, but including "water rights, waterways, easements, privileges and appurtenances, all machinery and articles of personal property on and around said real estate," to

¹⁴ Rhode Island 1636-1896: A Brief Sketch of the State ..., p. 61.

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George B. Langworthy of Hopkinton (Deed Book 26, Page 423). A month later, in April 1903, Langworthy sold the Rockville Estate to the Ashaway Line & Twine Company, one of Hopkinton's largest manufacturers (Deed Book 26, Page 428). This inaugurated a change in use at the Rockville Mills, which for the next 50 years would produce cotton fishing line, rope, cord, and twine; the Upper Mill continued to make yarns that would be braided or twisted at the Lower Mill, which was converted to a line walk. Ashaway Line & Twine lost little time getting the Rockville Mills fitted out for this new use: the directory of cotton mills in the June 1903 issue of the Board of Trade Journal indicated that Ashaway Line & Twine had 3,200 spindles operating at the Rockville Mills.

Ashaway Line & Twine had originally been founded in 1824 or 1825 (sources vary) by a fishing boat captain, Lester Crandall, who built an outdoor line walk near his home on the Ashaway River to custom-make his own fishing line; Crandall is credited with initiating this industry in New England, and he also invented several pieces of line-making machinery. The business grew (soon requiring an enclosed, one-story line walk some 480 feet long), and in 1854 adopted the name L. Crandall & Son; almost 30 years later, in 1883, it incorporated as the Ashaway Line & Twine Manufacturing Company. By 1896 it was the largest fishing line manufacturer in Rhode Island: its physical plant in Ashaway had more than doubled, and it was selling superior-quality braided and twisted fishing line, twine, and ropes of silk, linen, metal, and cotton to international markets.¹⁵ In 1939 Ashaway Line & Twine became the first U.S. manufacturer to make fishing line out of nylon, which proved key to its continued success, as the company innovated and diversified its product line using other synthetic materials. Today Ashaway Line & Twine is Rhode Island's oldest family-owned business (6th generation) and a world leader in manufacturing string for all racquet sports, surgical sutures, custom-braided lines for medical and industrial uses, and (of course) fishing line.

Ashaway Line & Twine was on the verge of exponential growth when it acquired the Rockville Mills as a satellite plant in 1903 - its volume of business increased fifty times between 1910 and 1930¹⁶ - which may explain why the company only held on to the relatively antiquated Rockville Mills (still running on water power) for a decade. Meanwhile, Rockville's brief association with one of the most successful and longest-lived manufacturers in Rhode Island (much less in Hopkinton) did not result in any substantive change either to the mill's physical plant, its workforce, or to the village itself. No new structures are known to have been built at the Rockville Mills during this time; a few new houses were constructed (likely not by Ashaway Line & Twine, although deed research would need to be done to try to confirm this), but apparently no new stores, churches, or other civic buildings. The 1915 State Census of Hopkinton mentions six roads with "Rockville" in

¹⁵ Rhode Island 1636-1896: A Brief Sketch of the State..., p. 90.

¹⁶ Book of Rhode Island, p. 126.

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their names: Old Rockville Road, New Rockville Road, Main Street through Rockville, Rockville-Voluntown Road, Side Road in Rockville, and Rockville-Canonchet Road, altogether holding 56 houses occupied by 58 families, for a total of 199 residents. No historic maps of this period were found (although some of these street names are consistent with those listed in the 1917 Hopkinton town directory¹⁷), but even if portions of some of these roadways lay outside the village proper, it is clear that Rockville hardly grew at all in the 40 years since the 1875 state census: there were 14 more houses, but 15 fewer people living in them. This is the last census to mention residents' occupations, indicating that 51 people were employed by local mills. Of these, 31 worked at the cotton mill and six at the line walk, for a total of 37 at Rockville Mills, down from 51 employees in 1875. Another 14 people worked at the "cotton and silk mill," which was not in fact Rockville Mills: the 1917 Hopkinton town directory lists only one manufacturer of cotton and silk goods, the J.J. Taylor Company on Main Street in Moscow, a mile or two east of Rockville. So even though Rockville Mills' workforce had declined, the village's total number of mill workers had essentially not changed in the past four decades. Nor was there any surge of foreign-born residents in Rockville, despite the fact that Rhode Island experienced its greatest influx of immigration during the early 20th century: in 1915 Rockville had a grand total of one Irish, three English, and three Canadian mill workers.

In April 1913 Ashaway Line & Twine Company sold the Rockville Estate, including land, mills, dwelling houses, other buildings, hydraulic features, equipment, and all of its water rights and privileges, to Yawgo Line & Twine Manufacturing Company of Hopkinton, for \$15,000 (Deed Book 29, Page 123; note that the company name is spelled differently from Yawgoog Pond). Yawgo was a brand new company (the Board of Trade Journal announced its incorporation in the April 1913 issue), one of at least three small manufacturers in this industry in Hopkinton to operate in the shadow of Ashaway Line & Twine during the early- to mid-20th century. (The other firms were Union Line & Twine and Bayou Line & Twine, both in the village of Canonchet.¹⁸). Yawgo Line & Twine made cotton fishing line (coated with tar) and cord at the Rockville Mills for the next 40 years, albeit on a continued small and increasingly less profitable scale. During the first decade of Yawgo's operations in Rockville, the village grew a little – adding another 21 houses and 49 residents, according to the 1925 State Census – but since professions were no longer listed in the census, there is no way to know whether

17 Only three town directories were found for Hopkinton: 1917, 1922-1923, and 1924-1925. The 1917 directory lists the following roadways in Rockville: "High [Street], Rockville, from Main at Post Office to Canonchet Road" (today's Wincheck Pond Road Extension? Canonchet Road is not separately listed); "Main [Street] ... from Spring [Street], Moscow, through Centerville, to Post Office, Rockville," (part of today's Wincheck Pond Road); "Maple [Street], Rockville, from Main, near Post Office" and "Voluntown Road, Rockville, continuation of Maple, to Exeter town line" (portions of Wincheck Pond Road and Spring Street proceeding northwest from Rockville); "Pleasant [Street], Rockville, from Main to Four Corners (current location unknown); and "Rockville Road, from Main Hopkinton City to Rockville" (today's Canonchet Road).

18 Hopkinton Land Evidence Records, Plat Book 1, shows a plat of both Bayou Line & Twine and Union Line & Twine on Canonchet Road.

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the manufacturer's presence in Rockville directly influenced this small growth spurt. (Note: Rockville had 248 residents in 1925, just under 10 percent of Hopkinton's total population of 2,710.) Meanwhile, as Yawgo Line & Twine established itself in Rockville, another major new landowner entered the community and asserted a competing claim to local waterways: the Boy Scouts.

The Rhode Island Boy Scouts, founded in Providence in 1910, proved immediately and hugely popular: by the time the organization formally incorporated in 1911, one thousand boys had already joined up. Over the next dozen years or so, scouting troops formed all over the state under the auspices of four Councils, in Greater Providence, Pawtucket-Central Falls, Woonsocket, and Newport. The Rhode Island Boy Scouts affiliated with the Boy Scouts of America in 1917, and in 1930 the separate local Councils merged to form the statewide Narragansett Council, which grew to be the largest scouting organization in New England. Outdoor recreation was an important component of scouting from the very beginning, and the Rhode Island Boy Scouts rented various locations for their summer camps for several years until finally settling on Yawgoog Pond in northwestern Hopkinton, about a mile west of Rockville. In 1916 the Boy Scouts purchased 130 acres abutting the pond to establish Camp Yawgoog as a permanent, year-round camp and training facility. Over the next 12 years the Boy Scouts continuously added to the camp's land area, which eventually reached a total of 800 acres completely surrounding Yawgoog Pond and abutting part of Wincheck Pond, and stretching all the way north and west to the Connecticut border. In 1928 Camp Yawgoog was dedicated "as a Scout Adventureland forever."¹⁹ Today this is the largest Boy Scout camp in New England.

The Boy Scouts very quickly learned that fishing, boating, and swimming at Camp Yawgoog could be severely curtailed by the Rockville and Centerville Mills drawing water off of Yawgood and Wincheck Ponds; at times, especially in a dry summer, the water level could drop as much as 18 feet. So the Boy Scouts almost immediately began to pursue the acquisition of water rights from the Yawgo Line & Twine Company, an effort that persisted for nearly 40 years and may only have succeeded because the company eventually went out of business. Twelve years after Camp Yawgoog was founded, in 1928, Yawgo Line & Twine and the Rhode Island Boy Scouts filed a covenant in Hopkinton land evidence records, agreeing that the Yawgo Company and the Centerville Mills would restrict the use of the waters of Yawgoog Pond to benefit the Boy Scouts' activities thereon (Deed Book 35, Page 674), but apparently this did not solve the Boy Scouts' problem. Finally, 25 years later, the Boy Scouts took the rather unique step of buying a controlling interest in the Yawgo Line & Twine Company, and in that way acquired all of the water rights to both Yawgoog and Wincheck Ponds, as well as the company's other assets, including the Rockville Mills and all of their equipment (the most recent machinery had been installed in 1919), 14 mill houses, a store, and approximately 200 acres of unimproved land. The Westerly

¹⁹ Williams, The Yawgoog Story, p. 7.

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Sun newspaper reported that by 1953, Yawgo Line & Twine had been operating on a part time basis for several years, and had only four employees; the company officially shut down in June of that year “with no business in sight and no plans for reopening ... if it is found impossible to secure business for the line company, the mill buildings and equipment will be put up for sale for manufacturing or commercial use, and the store, houses, and land will be offered to the present occupants.”²⁰

Within the next three years, that is exactly what happened. The Providence Journal, in a 1994 article about the history of Rockville, states that various homeowners in the village bought their houses from the Boy Scouts, which is not technically true: the Boy Scouts may have owned the company, but all deeds relating to the disposition of the real estate are in the name of Yawgo Line & Twine Company. In 1954 the Yawgo Company platted ten house lots in Rockville, located along “Old Route 138” (Wincheck Pond Road) and “New Street” (indeed a brand new street, given that name on the plat map), and began to sell off these and other holdings in the village. All ten house lots plus the store property and the Upper and Lower Mills were sold between 1954 and 1956; the last two lots of the former mill property were finally disposed of in 1972 and 1973. The Boy Scouts still have all of the water rights to Yawgoog and Wincheck Ponds.

In 1956 the Yawgo Line & Twine Company sold a 3.51 acre parcel of land containing the Upper Rockville Mill to A. Frank DeCiantis of Stonington, Connecticut and Eugene A. Eddy of East Greenwich (Deed Book 47, Page 189). This sale marked the first time that the mill property in its present size was subdivided from the larger Rockville Estate. The deed specified that the Yawgo Line & Twine Company and its successors would retain the right to use and maintain “the canal now running through said premises,” together with associated features such as “water gates, dams, flumes, splash boards, spillways, culverts, ditches or other structures for the purpose of drawing down, draining off, diverting or increasing the height of any of the waters on said premises.” The Upper Rockville Mill, which changed hands several times over the next half century, returned to manufacturing textiles, albeit on a limited basis; a company called Kay Dee Handprints made towels there. After textile manufacturing ceased for good in the late 1980s or early 1990s, the tiny Rockville post office relocated to the Upper Rockville Mill, where it remains today. The building presently houses several small businesses, some of which do limited manufacturing: the current owners make one-of-a-kind jewelry, as well as the models for figurines and other collectibles that are mass-produced by larger companies.

The Upper Rockville Mill and its related hydraulic features merit listing on the National Register for several reasons. The mill represents a specific type of mid-19th century textile mill construction, one that is unique in Hopkinton, and it remains relatively intact, due in part to the limitations that its power source placed on production capacity. The fact that the mill continued to utilize water power for at least a century is unusual, and

²⁰ “Scouts Secure Water Rights at Rockville ...,” Westerly Sun, August 26, 1953.

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makes its surviving hydraulic features all the more significant; the issue of water rights to Wincheck Pond and Moscow Brook, and the diversification of water uses over time, is an important part of the history of Rockville and all of northern Hopkinton. The mill persevered in cotton textile manufacturing, despite several economic setbacks over the years, for nearly a century and a half, long after the larger industry had lost its prominence in Rhode Island. Finally, although the mill played only a minor role in its industry during the entire period of significance, it nonetheless completely dominated the surrounding village of Rockville: physically, from its perch above Moscow Brook and the village center, as well as in its ownership of land and development of housing stock; economically, being the only manufacturer and largest employer in the village; and socially, since a substantial percentage of village residents either worked at the mill or had family members who did.

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately 0.5 acres

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	9	2	6	9	7	0	0	4	6	0	0	2	0	0
Zone	Easting			Northing											
2															

3															
Zone	Easting			Northing											
4															

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kathryn J. Cavanaugh

organization _____ date November 30, 2005

street & number 197 6th Street telephone 401.273.4715

city or town Providence state Rhode Island zip code 02906

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Matt Hopkins and Marek Zamjorski

street & number 332 Canonchet Road, P.O. Box 43 telephone 401.539.1118

city or town Rockville state Rhode Island zip code 02873

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and amend listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 2050

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GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property covers all or part of three lots within Assessor's Plat 30, as defined by the Town of Hopkinton Assessor's Maps, containing a total of approximately 5 acres of land. The general boundaries of the nominated property are described as follows: beginning on the south side of Wincheck Pond Road at the northeast corner of Lot 43 (the mill site), then proceeding southwest along Wincheck Pond Road to Canonchet Road; then turning south-southwest and proceeding along Canonchet Road to a point approximately 10 feet south of Moscow Brook as it runs through Lot 58 on the west side of Canonchet Road; then turning west and, maintaining a 10-foot buffer parallel to the south side of the brook, proceeding westward across Lot 58 to Wincheck Pond Road Extension; then turning northwest and proceeding along Wincheck Pond Road Extension to the northern boundary of Lot 3 on the west side of that street; then turning west and following the boundary lines of Lot 3 as those lines proceed westward to Wincheck Pond, then southward along the pond's shoreline, then eastward back to Wincheck Pond Road Extension; then turning southeast and proceeding along Wincheck Pond Road Extension to a point just south of its intersection with Canonchet Road; then turning eastward and proceeding across Canonchet Road, following the southern and eastern boundaries of Lot 43 back to the point of beginning.

Specifically, this nomination covers:

All of Assessor's Plat 30, Lot 43, an approximately 3.51-acre lot with the address 332 Canonchet Road, bounded by Canonchet Road on the west, Wincheck Pond Road on the north, and residential lots on the east and south. This lot contains the Upper Rockville Mill and remnants of the mill's tail race.

A portion of Assessor's Plat 30, Lot 58, an approximately 1-acre triangular lot bounded by Canonchet Road on the east, Wincheck Pond Road on the north, and Wincheck Pond Road Extension on the west. The nominated portion of this lot is roughly its southern half, which contains a section of the mill's head race, as well as the remains of a foundation of a former mill building. The north boundary of the nominated portion is an imaginary line running east to west 10 feet south of Moscow Brook, the east boundary is Canonchet Road, and the west boundary is Wincheck Pond Road Extension.

All of Assessor's Plat 30, Lot 3, an approximately 1-acre lot bounded by Wincheck Pond Road Extension on the east, Wincheck Pond on the west, and residential lots on the north and south. This lot contains the Wincheck Pond Dam and spillway, mill raceway gates, and a section of the head race.

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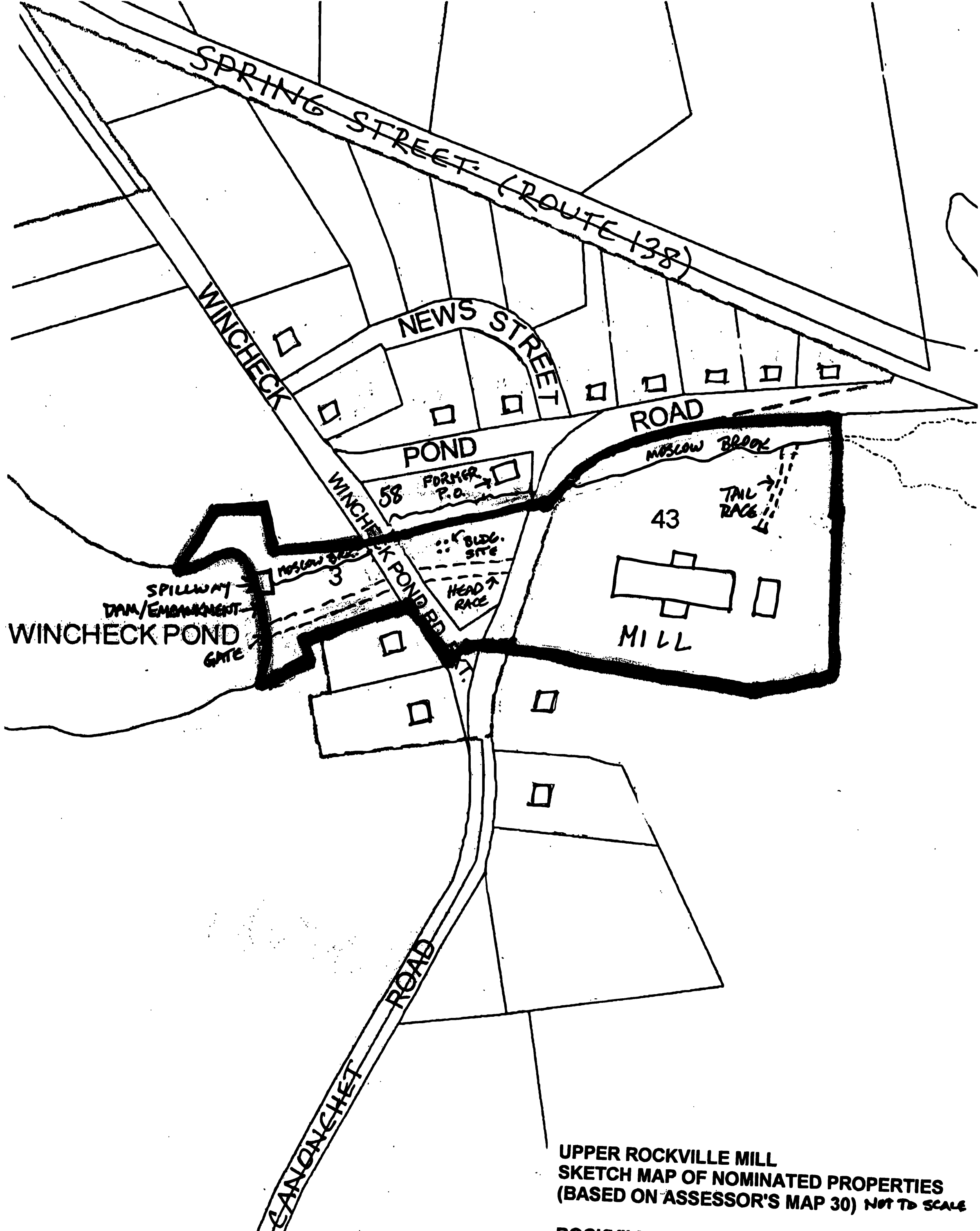
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VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated lots contain all of the surviving historic industrial buildings and hydraulic features associated with the Upper Rockville Mill. The entire village of Rockville may be eligible for National Register listing as a historic district, but this nomination was specifically prepared at the behest of the mill owners to facilitate an application for historic tax credits for a rehabilitation project at the Upper Rockville Mill, and so does not include adjacent buildings owned by others. Some of those adjacent buildings, including the former village post office and store (on that portion of Plat 30, Lot 58 excluded from this nomination) and perhaps a dozen houses on the north side of Wincheck Pond Road and on both sides of New Street, were built by the Rockville Manufacturing Company in the mid-19th century, but are not functionally related to the mill itself and therefore are excluded from a nomination for the Upper Rockville Mill as an individual historic resource.



UPPER ROCKVILLE MILL
SKETCH MAP OF NOMINATED PROPERTIES
(BASED ON ASSESSOR'S MAP 30) NOT TO SCALE

ROCKVILLE, HOPKINTON, R.I.