Form No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74)

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY SHEET,
RECEIVED NOV 2 2 1977

DATE ENTERED

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CONDITION

CHECK ONE

CHECK ONE

__EXCELLENT __GOOD X_FAIR __DETERIORATED
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XORIGINAL SITE
__MOVED DATE__

__UNEXPOSED

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Valley Falls Mill occupies a long, narrow site parallel to the Blackstone River and east of Broad Street, in the Central Falls section of the village of Valley Falls. The village, divided by the Blackstone River, now lies partly in Central Falls and partly in Cumberland. A major fall of the Blackstone occurs at this point and has been used for power since the early nineteenth century. Just north of the falls is a bridge carrying Broad Street -- a major north south state highway. The river has been bridged here since the early nineteenth century. The mill site includes three structures dating from the mid-nineteenth century -- a large brick mill, a smaller stone mill, and a small boiler house. In addition, much of the water power system remains, including a hewn-stone dam (1853), which provided fourteen feet of head (the difference in elevation between the water in reserve and the river's surface below the dam), the gate and its house, and portions of a once-extensive canal system. (See sketch map)

The Valley Falls Mill (1849) is a long, narrow, rectangular building, four stories tall with a rubble foundation and a hip roof (whose east end is in serious disrepair). To meet the requirements of fire resistance, the mill was constructed with load-bearing brick walls and heavy timber columns, 12" by 12", spaced about 8' apart and arranged in two rows about 12' apart on the second and third floors; on the first floor the columns are arranged in a single central row and are supplemented by two rows of iron posts. The fourth floor of the mill is designed without posts -- the roof is supported by king post trusses with diagonal struts and vertical tie rods. The floors of the mill are constructed of several layers; the bottom layer consists of heavy wood planks, 12" wide. The flooring is said to be about 6" thick and to consist of several layers of planking sandwiched between thin layers of cement, which may have been added later for additional fire protection.

The mill is 156 feet by 44 feet, twenty bays long, with rectangular, double-hung, multi-paned windows (8/8 on the first and second stories, 12/8 on the third and fourth), and flush granite sills and lintels. The choice of brick for the mill's walls was an unusual one; in the 1840s and 50s, most Rhode Island textile mills were built of stone.

The mass of the building is interrupted at the center of its south elevation by a five-level, projecting, Italianate tower. The freight doors on the front of the tower are flanked by narrow, round-headed windows in the belfry (which once housed a bell cast in 1836 by George Howard of Boston), there is an oculus on each

See continutation sheet 1

Form No. 10-300a (Hev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM



CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

2

side and, above, a trio of roundheaded windows of graduated size. The tower is capped by a helm roof with wide eaves and a central finial. The original wind vane in the shape of a jagged arrow no longer exists.

Joined to the mill by a wooden passageway (now seriously deteriorated) is a smaller, three-story, gable-roofed rubble mill (1860s), with granite sills, lintels, and corner quoins, lying between the river and the east end of the main mill. Adjacent to this smaller mill (and connected to it and the main mill by wooden passageways) is a shed-roofed boiler house (1860s), also of rubble, with a brick stack on its west side. The boiler house at one time supplied steam for mills on the opposite side of the Blackstone, via a pipeline under the river.

The main power trench, whose walls are built of rubble, enters the mill site just below the Broad Street bridge and, as it passed the present mill, was originally divided into two branches, one flowing under the 1849 mill, the other under a later mill (which no longer stands) before rejoining the Blackstone. The second branch has been filled in. A gable-roofed, wood frame gatehouse is built over the trench adjacent to the bridge; it rests on a series of round stone arches and still contains the gate which regulated the flow of water into the trench.

PERIOD AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELO

PREHISTORIC	ARCHEULUGY-PREHISTORIC	COMMUNITY PLANNING	LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	RELIGION
1400-1499	_ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	CONSERVATION	_LAW	SCIENCE
1500-1599	AGRICULTURE	ECONOMICS	LITERATURE	SCULPTURE
1600-1699	XARCHITECTURE	EDUCATION	MILITARY	_SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1700-1799	ART	XENGINEERING	MUSIC	THEATER
X _1800-1899	COMMERCE	EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	PHILOSOPHY	TRANSPORTATION
1900-	COMMUNICATIONS	X INDUSTRY	POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	_OTHER (SPECIFY)

_INVENTION

SPECIFIC DATES 1849, 1860s

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Valley Falls Mill is a major industrial building, located on a key site in the tiny but heavily industrialized city of Central Falls. Its significance lies in its architectural quality, its history as an early and continuing element in the industrial life of Central Falls, its location on a major fall of the Blackstone River, and its presence as the most important remaining element of a large industrial complex built by the Chace family of Rhode Island.

Though not incorporated until 1895, the city of Central Falls is largely the product of mid-nineteenth century development. The most important factor in this development was the presence of the Blackstone River which makes up over one half of the city's boundary. As the river flows southward through Valley Falls Pond toward Narragansett Bay, it passes between steep banks and over two falls -- the Valley Falls and the middle (or central) falls, the source of the city's name. These waterfalls provided power for industry, and it was industrialization which sparked the development of two manufacturing villages -- Valley Falls and Central Falls -- in the first half of the nineteenth century, and which fired their rapid growth into a densely developed urban center later in the century.

The Wilkinson family, known in the late eighteenth century for their mechanical and inventive enterprise, were the first known to have used the water power of the Valley Falls. Oziel Wilkinson had operated a furnace in Smithfield, R. I., but in the 1780s he moved his family and business to Pawtucket where, with his five sons, he became the principal ironworker of the regions. Oziel was succeeded by his son David who, with his brothers Abraham and Isaac, acquired land on both sides of the Blackstone at Valley Falls in 1812. In the same year, the Valley Falls Turnpike (now Broad Street), built by Isaac Wilkinson, was opened, allowing for an easier flow of goods and materials from the area to its major markets. Their mill, built in 1823, was later dismantled.

See continuation sheet 2

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Central Falls, Rho	ends and Neigh	bors: Diam	ond Jubilee S	ouvenir."
Grieve, Robert. Histo	rv of Pawtucke	u. t Cantral	Falls and Was	·
Pawtucket: 1897.	1) OI TAWCUCKC	c, central	rails and vic	inity.
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM



CONTINUATION SHEET 2 ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

Extensive development of the Valley Falls area, however, dates from the arrival of the Chace family, leading industrialists in the Blackstone Valley. Samuel B. and Harvey Chace, sons of Fall River mill owner Oliver Chace, built the present mill in 1849; in their choice of site, they were no doubt influenced not only by the availability of water power, but also by the completion the same year of the Providence & Worcester Railroad, which passes by the mill on its east side. The mill was designed for the manufacture of a variety of cotton products and was the site of the first use of the American-made, Sharp & Roberts, self-actor, mule spinning frames. The long-mules, installed on the top floor of the mill, were designed by James Brown of Pawtucket, a noted machinist. In 1853, the Chaces built a new stone dam and gatehouse at the Valley Falls. This new dam replaced two earlier wooden dams upstream.

In 1853, the Chaces incorporated as the Valley Falls Company; they later owned and operated mills on both sides of the Blackstone here and at Albion. Over the next five decades, several additional buildings were constructed near the mill, expanding it into a major mill complex. These included a stone picker house and two additional brick mills, each almost equal in size to the 1849 mill. Later owners added other small buildings and a complex similar in size grew up on the opposite side of the river as well.

The expansion of the Chaces' mill was instrumental in the development of the village of Valley Falls which in the mid-nineteenth century grew up around their enterprise on both sides of the river. The company was the major employer in the village and one of the largest in Central Falls. In 1860, for example, when the average textile mill in Central Falls employed 106 workers, 280 were employed at the Valley Falls Mill (150 men and 130 women) and 800,000 pounds of raw cotton were consumed in the production of yarns and fabric. The presence of so large a mill led to a concentration of population (largely Irish in the 1850s and 1860s, later French Canadians), trade, and building activity in the vicinity.

The original village is today divided by a city boundary (so that half of it is in the city of Central Falls and half in the town of Cumberland) and it is now virtually indistinguishable from the rest of Central Falls, and little evidence of its origins as a

See continuation sheet 3

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM



CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

2

Haley, John William. The Lower Blackstone Valley: The Story of Pawtucket, Central Falls, Lincoln, and Cumberland.

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Steere, Thomas. History of the Town of Smithfield from its Organization in 1730-1, to its Division in 1871.

Van Slyck, J. New England Manufacturers and Manufactories.

Boston: 1879.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM DATEENTERED SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS **TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS NAME** HISTORIC Valley Falls Mill Complex Amendment: Office and Bath House AND/OR COMMON 13591 1361-13Broad St. **2 LOCATION** STREET & NUMBER 1359 and 1361 Broad Street NOT FOR PUBLICATION CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT CITY, TOWN Central Falls St. Germain #1 Hon. Fernand O. **VICINITY OF** CODE COUNTY STATE CODE Providence Rhode Island 44. 007 **3 CLASSIFICATION** CATEGORY **STATUS OWNERSHIP** PRESENT USE XOCCUPIED. DISTRICT __AGRICULTURE PUBLIC __MUSEUM X BUILDING(S) APRIVATE X_COMMERCIAL _UNOCCUPIED __PARK __STRUCTURE _BOTH __WORK IN PROGRESS __EDUCATIONAL **__PRIVATE RESIDENCE** __SITE **PUBLIC ACQUISITION ACCESSIBLE** __ENTERTAINMENT __RELIGIOUS XYES: RESTRICTED __OBJECT _IN PROCESS __GOVERNMENT __SCIENTIFIC __YES: UNRESTRICTED __BEING CONSIDERED _INDUSTRIAL _TRANSPORTATION _NO __MILITARY _OTHER: OWNER OF PROPERTY Bookale (Jalla) NAME Mr. Irwin Manekofsky STREET & NUMBER Box 1/63 STATE CITY, TOWN Rhode Island Central Falls **VICINITY OF** LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION COURTHOUSE, Central Falls City Hall REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. STREET & NUMBER 580 Broad Street CITY, TOWN <u>Central Falls</u> Rhode Island 02863 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS TITLE Central Falls Statewide Historical Preservation Report P-CF-1 DATE _FEDERAL XSTATE _COUNTY _LOCAL 1978 **DEPOSITORY FOR** Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission **SURVEY RECORDS** CITY, TOWN Providence Rhode Island 02903



__EXCELLENT

 X_{GOOD}

__FAIR

CONDITION

__DETERIORATED __RUINS __UNEXPOSED __UNALTERED
X_ALTERED

CHECK ONE

CHECK ONE

X ORIGINAL SITE

__MOVED DATE______

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Valley Falls Mill Complex Amendment includes two buildings which were formerly part of the mill complex: the office and the bath house. Both buildings are located on Broad Street on the opposite side of the head race from the main mill building. Due to their precipitous hillside location, both buildings are one story high on the street side and two stories on the mill side.

The Valley Falls Company office, built c. 1855, is a one-story Italianate structure of rubble construction with a stucco cover. The generously overhanging low gable roof, with exposed purlin ends, and the floors are original. The interior partitions, however, were removed in 1938 when the building ceased to function as the mill office. It is presently used to house the Imperial Textile Company.

The bath house, which housed steam baths used by both mill workers and the public, stands north of the office building. Steam for the baths was brought in by pipe under the power trench from the boiler house. The small brick and wood building, which dates from about 1870, has a steep hipped roof of polychrome slate and a small cupola containing the steam exhaust vent. According to the present owner of the building, Mr. Irwin Manekofsky, the baths were open for female mill workers two days a week, for male workers two days a week, and for the general public two days a week. The building is now occupied by Beau Monte Press.

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
PREHISTORIC	_ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	COMMUNITY PLANNING	LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	RELIGION
1400-1499	_ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	CONSERVATION	LAW	SCIENCE
1500-1599	AGRICULTURE	ECONOMICS	LITERATURE	SCULPTURE
1600-1699	XARCHITECTURE	EDUCATION	MILITARY	_SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1700-1799	ART	ENGINEERING	MUSIC	THEATER
<u>X</u> 1800-1899	COMMERCE	EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	PHILOSOPHY	_TRANSPORTATION
1900-	COMMUNICATIONS	XINDUSTRY LINVENTION	POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	OTHER (SPECIFY)
				<u> </u>

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

c. 1855, c. 1870

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The main office building and the bath house add new dimensions to the complex of Valley Falls Company buildings already entered on the National Register of Historic Places.

The buildings already nominated are the power system and the actual mills where the manufacturing processes took place. The mill office was the managerial center of the complex, from which all operations of the company were overseen. At the other end of the scale, the bath house provided a more humble, but still useful, service. Because of the adhesive nature of textile fibers, many textile mills provided bathing facilities for their workers.

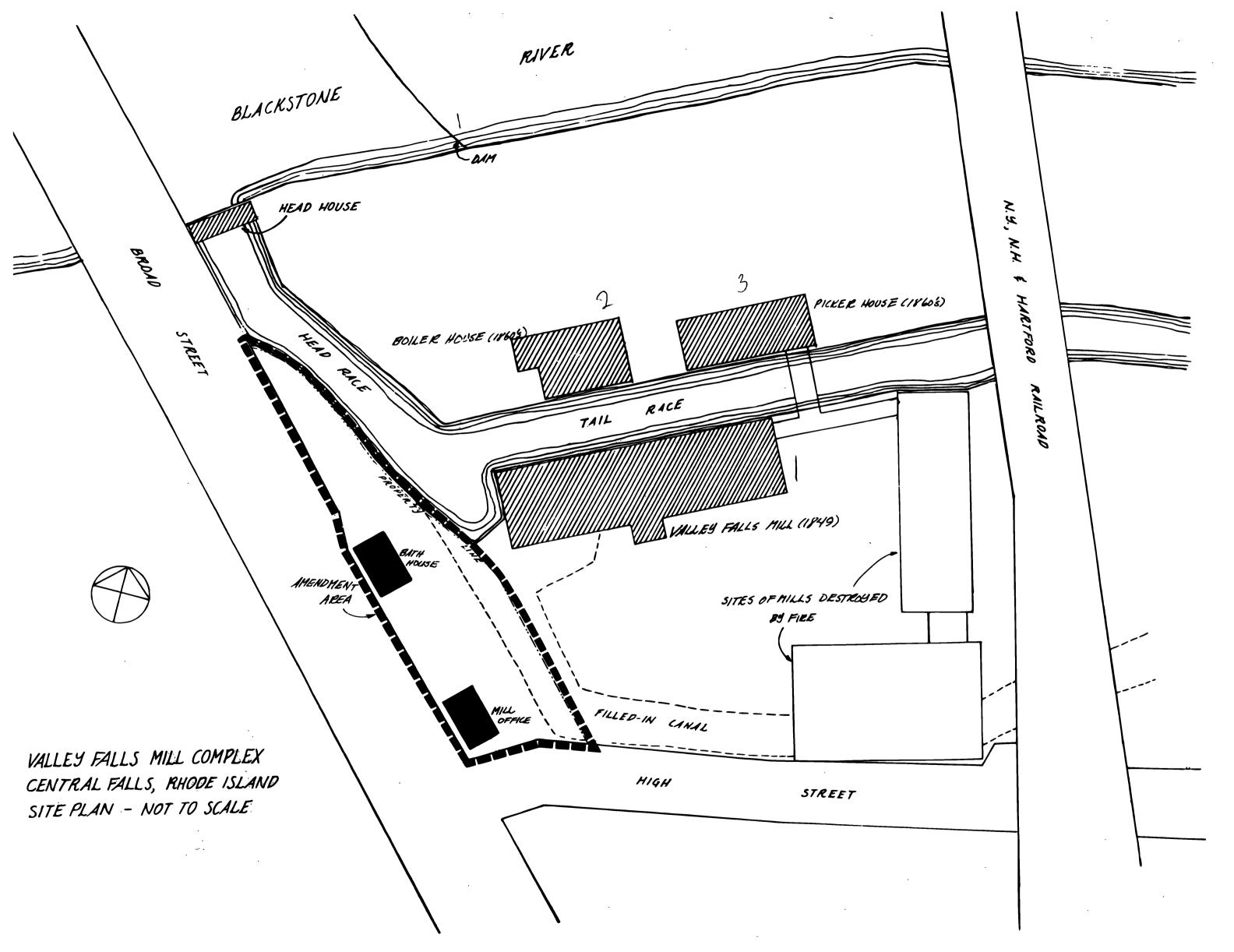
Until 1977, when the property was divided and the mills were sold to Blackstone Falls Associates, the office and bath house had always been an integral part of the Valley Falls complex. In 1977, Blackstone Falls Associates requested an expedited nomination for their property alone. Blackstone Falls Associates are presently planning to acquire the office and bath house buildings, to repair and use them as part of their housing project conversion of the entire mill complex.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Beers, D. C. and Co. "Atlas of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations," 1870

Interview with Mr. Irwin Manekofsky, September, 1978.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROP	DATA ERTY 10,800 square	<u>e</u> feet	
UTM REFERENCES			
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12 STATE HISTORIC	PRESERVATION	N OFFICER CEF	RTIFICATION
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	1		has been evaluated according to the
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM



CONTINUATION SHEET 3L

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE 34

virtually indistinguishable from the rest of Central Falls. Apart from its historic interest, the mill is an architectural landmark, its distinctive tower visible in much of the city.

- 7. Acreage: 2.8 acres
- 8. Plat 3, lots 37, 178a, 181, and that portion of lot 178B formed by a line if from High Street (68.80' from lot 37) running 108.5' at 45 -37'3'W to lot 81.
- 9. UTM Reference: 19. 301830 4641080
- 10. Entered on the National Register, September 27, 1977.
- 1. Valley Falls Mill Complex Amendment: Office and Bath House
- 2. Location: 1359 and 1361 Broad Street, Central Falls, RI
- 3. Owner: Blackstone Falls Associates, 534a Green Street, Cambridge, MA
- 4. Description: This amendment includes two buildings constructed as part of the mill complex. The company office is a 1-story Italianate structure, of stone rubble with a stucco cover, low overhanging roof and exposed purlin ends. The bath house is a 1-story brick and wood building, with a steep hip roof and cupola.
- 5. Dates: c. 1855, c. 1870.
- 6. Significance: The company office, which served as the administrative center of the mill complex, and the bath house, which served both mill workers and the community, have been added to the nomination; together, they enhance the visual quality of the mills and historically they add a new dimension to the complex.
- 7. Acreage: less than one acre
- 8. Plat 2, lot 192, formerly part of lot 178B.
- 9. UTM Reference: 19. 301790 4641030