

FORM A - AREA SURVEY

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, State House, Boston

Form numbers in this area	Area no.
485-493	NR-5

2. Photo (3x3" or 3x5")  
Staple to left side of form  
Photo number \_\_\_\_\_

1. Town Taunton

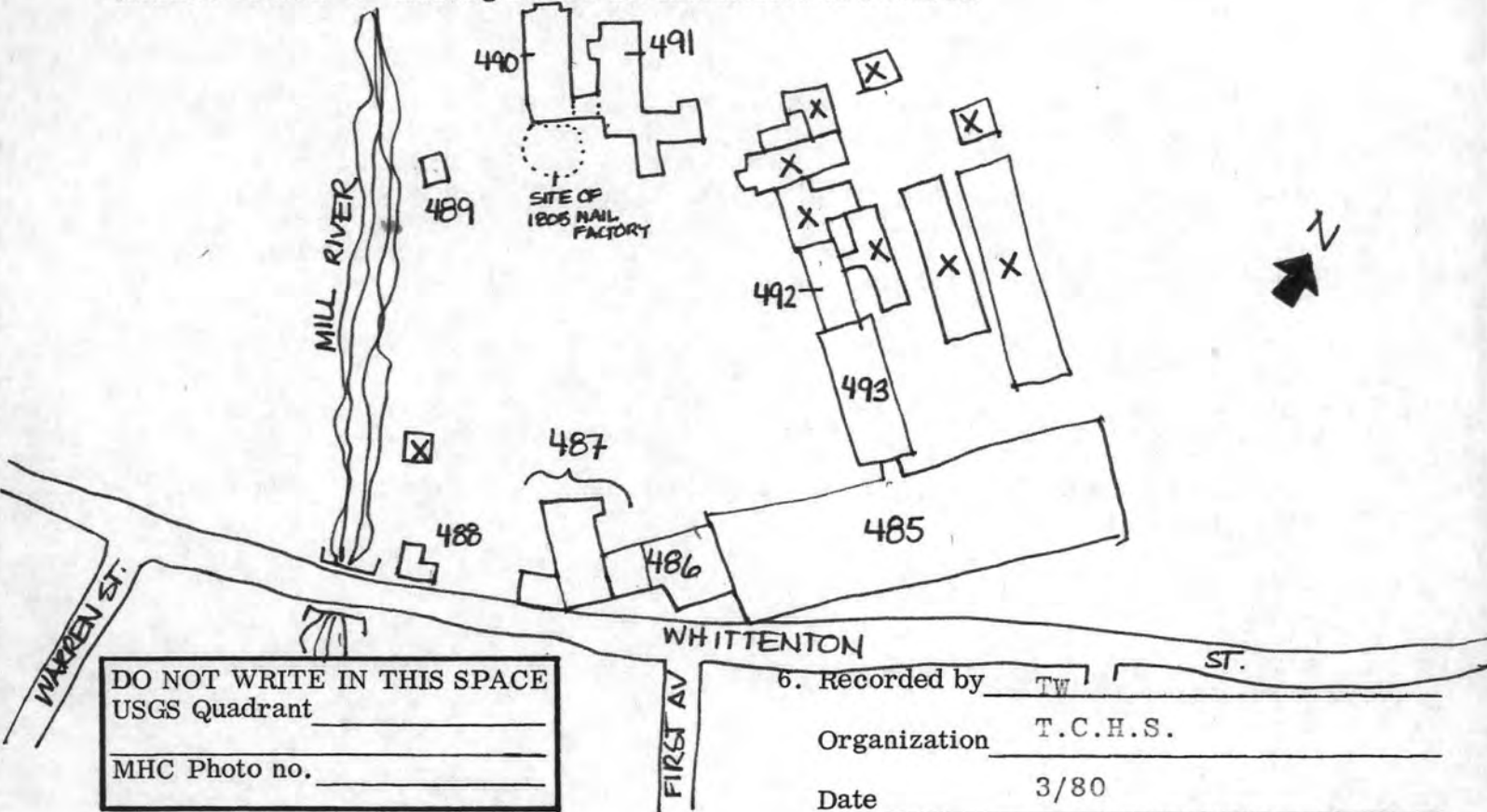
Name of area (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

Whittenton Mills Complex  
Mill River and Whittenton St

3. General date or period 1805-c. 1895

4. Is area uniform (explain):  
in style? \_\_\_\_\_  
in condition? Yes - Good  
in type of ownership? Yes - Private Corporate  
in use? Yes - Industrial, Commercial

5. Map. Use space below to draw a general map of the area involved. Indicate any historic properties for which individual reports are completed on Forms B thru F, using corresponding numbers. Show street names (including route numbers, if any) and indicate north. Indicate with an "x" existing houses not inventoried on Form B.



6. Recorded by TW  
Organization T.C.H.S.  
Date 3/80

(over)

7. Historical data. Explain the historical/architectural importance of this area.

The Whittenton Mills Complex is significant for its contribution to Taunton's industrial history as the largest and longest-lived textile manufacturing concern in the city, associated with leading local industrial pioneers, Samuel Crocker and Willard Lovering. The Mills' activity spans a period of widespread industrial growth, settlement and immigration in Taunton that is still expressed in adjacent workers' housing and stores that comprise the large "village" surrounding the complex. Employing large numbers of French Canadian immigrants, Whittenton Mills determined the ethnic composition of Whittenton's present day community.

Physically, the mill complex is composed of 10 major brick and frame factories and a number of smaller specialized structures, grouped around a rectangular millyard that abuts the Mill River. Workers' housing, ranging from 1½-story frame duplexes to late 19th century multi-family tenements, lines First through Fifth Avenues, a series of planned streets, intersecting Whittenton Street, the major corridor of the area. While this surrounding village is thematically related to the development of the Mills, gap sites left by moved structures and demolition, recent alterations, and the ununified nature of commercial development in the Whittenton and Bay Street area, prevents one from perceiving the area as a well-meshed entity. Because of these problems in visual cohesiveness, only the immediate factory complex itself is being submitted for nomination.

Whittenton, (Formerly named "Ancient Whittington"), was the seat of a small iron manufacturing settlement, begun in the mid-17th century. James Leonard built a dam on the Mill River in 1669 and began operation of the "Whittington Forge" on the approximate site of the current mill complex. Iron, used extensively for currency in the 17th and early 18th century, was produced by this iron works by Leonard's descendants for 150 years.

In 1805, Samueal Crocker, Thomas Bush and Charles Richmond financed the construction of a nail factory on the Mill River and enlarged it subsequently to house spinning machines. (The archaeological remains of this factory are present within the

8. Bibliography and/or references such as local histories, deeds, assessor's records, early maps, etc.

Beers, 1871  
Walker, 1881  
Sanborn, 1888  
Bristol Co. Atlas of Surveys, 1895  
Sanborn, 1937  
Emery, 1893

## 7. Historical Data, NR-5 (cont.):

millyard today.) Here, with the spinning of cotton yarn, textile manufacturing was begun as a cottage industry, the yarn then sent to neighboring farmers' homes to be woven into cloth on domestic hand looms. With the importation of Slater looms by 1817, weaving of high quality cloth was done on the mill premises, announcing the beginnings of full-scale textile manufacturing.

As in other New England communities entering into the industrial age, Taunton experimented with the formation of a large corporation, designed to join several ongoing industries into one large profit-sharing enterprise. The "Taunton Manufacturing Company" was formed in 1823 under the tutelage of Samueal Crocker, Charles Richmond and others, "...for the purpose of rolling copper and iron and for the manufacturing of cotton and wool in Taunton." The property of the corporation included the Whittenton Mills, Hopewell Mills, and several other textile and metal factories along the Mill River. In 1836, Willard Lovering (1801-1875) brought his experience in textile manufacturing gained in Providence and Woonsocket, R.I. to Taunton, where he became partial owner and manager of the Whittenton Mills. With the dissolution of the Taunton Manufacturing Co. in 1845, Lovering and his three sons-- William C., Charles L., and Henry Morton-- bought the mills in 1858, and invested large amounts of capital in their developmnet. Under the Loverings, the complex expanded to 20 brick buildings of 2 to 4 story height, and 10 to 12 smaller structures. The main weaving house alone held over 1,000 looms. Powered by both water wheels and Corliss steam engines, the mill complex produced gingham, dress goods, tickings, shirtings, cotton flannels and other cotton and wool textiles.

At the height of its production in the 1880's and '90's, the company employed 1,100 people, many of whom were French Canadian weavers and dyers. This population lived in over 200 company-owned tenements on the 80-acre territory surrounding the complex. One of the Loverings' most considerable administrative achievements was the installation of a horse-drawn street railway system in the 1860's and '70's, that formed a large loop linking Taunton Green to Broadway, Bay, Whittenton, Warren, and West Brittonia Streets. The placement of this railway system accounts for the eventual expansion of the Whittenton working class community into more remote residential neighborhoods along the route.

After Willard Lovering's death in 1878, his sons took over the business until 1910, when it was sold to the Lynne Family of Boston, under whom textiles were continually produced. Company-owned housing was sold at auction in the 1920's. The complex is currently owned by Dyecraftsmen, Inc. who operate out of a large portion of the buildings and who lease out remaining space to tenant industries.

Description: NR-5

Major Components of Complex:

- Inventory #485: c. 1880, 2-story common bond brick factory, constructed to house weaving machinery. Its Whittenton St. facade incorporates 41 bays, defined by large, 15/15 sash windows.
- Inventory #486: c. 1880, 3-story brick factory shares the same construction and fenestration as the main weaving mill, which it abuts, and was probably constructed at the same time. Housed picker rooms. Ells to the rear were used as carpenter shops and for general storage.
- Inventory #487: c.1858, consists of peaked gabled central section flanked by 5-bay wings that conform to angled lot contour. One of the earliest standing structures in the complex, its westernmost portion was used as a meeting hall and church for the mill community.
- Inventory #488: c.1858. While not distinguished architecturally, this 1-story, asbestos-sided building was built as a company office for the Whittenton Mills.
- Inventory #489: c.1880, 1-story brick storage and water house.
- Inventory #490: c.1878, 4-story brick factory was built to house pickers. Northernmost section added in 1924.
- Inventory #491: c.1878, now connected via a frame passageway to the picker building (#490), the 4-story factory is one of the architecturally outstanding elements of the complex. Addition to north end made in 1921.
- Inventory #492: c.1857, 2-story frame building with 12/12 windows, clerestory projections on roof is the only frame structure to have survived (with alterations) from the earliest period of Whittenton Mills' organization. Housed looms and dye processing machinery.
- Inventory #493: c.1895, 5-story brick structure has squat, segmental-arched window openings. The earliest constructed of 3 storehouses in the complex.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: Taunton	Form No: NR-5
Property Name: Whittenton Mills Complex	

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

9. Historical Significance (continued)

The Whittenton Mills Complex possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and derives significance for its historical association with the development of Taunton as a major manufacturing center during the 19th century. The Whittenton Mill Complex is the essence of the planned industrial village and an ongoing testament to the city's proud manufacturing heritage. The Whittenton Mills meets criteria A, B and C of the National Register of Historic Places.

Boundaries were selected to encompass the historic extent of the Mill property which remains intact; boundary lines conform to current lot lines.

Owner: David Olken & Willaim Lace, Trustees  
% Dyecraftsmen, Inc.  
Whittenton Mills  
Whittenton Street  
Taunton, MA

Acreage: Approximately 20; large assessor's maps (3)

UTMS:           A 19/325300/4643135  
                  B 19/325300/4643530  
                  C 19/325530/4643160

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received MAY 21 1984  
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

Page 1 of 9

Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Taunton Multiple Resource Area  
State Bristol County, MASSACHUSETTS

Corn 7/5/84

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

- 50 1. Roseland Substantive Review Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ - Reject  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Old Colony Iron Works-Nemasket Mills Complex Entered in the National Register for Keeper Melora Byers 7/5/84  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Reed and Barton Complex Entered in the National Register for Keeper Melora Byers 7/5/84  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. 'St. Mary's Complex Entered in the National Register for Keeper Melora Byers 7/5/84  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Whittenton Mills Complex Entered in the National Register for Keeper Melora Byers 7/5/84  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Hopewell Mills District Entered in the National Register for Keeper Melora Byers 7/5/84  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. Taunton Green Historic District Substantive Review for Keeper Bruce M. Dwyer 3/1/85  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. Atwood, Charles R., House Entered in the National Register for Keeper Melora Byers 7/5/84  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. Barnum School Entered in the National Register for Keeper Melora Byers 7/5/84  
Attest \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. Bartlett, J. C., House Substantive Review for Keeper Bruce M. Dwyer  
Attest 7/5/84

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Whittenton Mills Complex (Taunton MRA)  
Bristol County  
MASSACHUSETTS

Working No. MAY 21 1984  
Fed. Reg. Date: 2.5.85  
Date Due: 6/21/84 - 7/5/84  
Action:  ACCEPT 7/5/84  
 RETURN  
 REJECT  
Federal Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Entered in the  
National Register

- resubmission
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Substantive Review:  sample  request  appeal  NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria \_\_\_\_\_  
Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_  
Discipline \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: \_\_\_\_\_ technical corrections cited below  
\_\_\_\_\_ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection

**8. Significance**

Period \_\_\_\_\_ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below \_\_\_\_\_

Specific dates \_\_\_\_\_ Builder/Architect \_\_\_\_\_

Statement of Significance *(in one paragraph)*

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- applicable criteria
- justification of areas checked
- relating significance to the resource
- context
- relationship of integrity to significance
- justification of exception
- other

WHEELER HILL COMPLEX (TANFORD H.W.)  
 State Historic Site  
 STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal boundary description and justification \_\_\_\_\_

**11. Form Prepared By**

**12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification**

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

\_\_\_\_\_ national \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature \_\_\_\_\_

title \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

**13. Other**

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



WHITTENTON MILLS COMPLEX

LOOKING NORTH

Whittenton Mills Complex  
Taunton MA, Ma

APR 1980



Prestige Prints

by Berkey

APR 1980



Prestige Prints

by Berkey



THE MILL RIVER STORE

#487, 486

Whittenton Mills Complex

Taunton MRA, Ma

MAY 1980



by Berkeley

W



# 485

Whittenton Mills Complex  
Taunton MRA, Ma



by Berkey

MAY 1980



by Berkey



BICKS

093219

27814

# 489

Whittester Mills complex

Taunton MRA, Ma

MAY 1980



by Berkey

MAY 1980



by Berkey



#493

Wick, Hester Mills Complex  
Taunton MA, Ma

MAY 1980

Prestige Prints

by Berkey

MAY 1980

Prestige Prints



REAR OF # 491

Whittenton Mills Complex

Taunton MRA, Ma

MAY 1980



by Berkey

MAY 1980



by Berkey



#492

Whittester Mills Complex

Taunton MRA, Ma

MAY 1980



by Berkey

WJ

MAY 1980

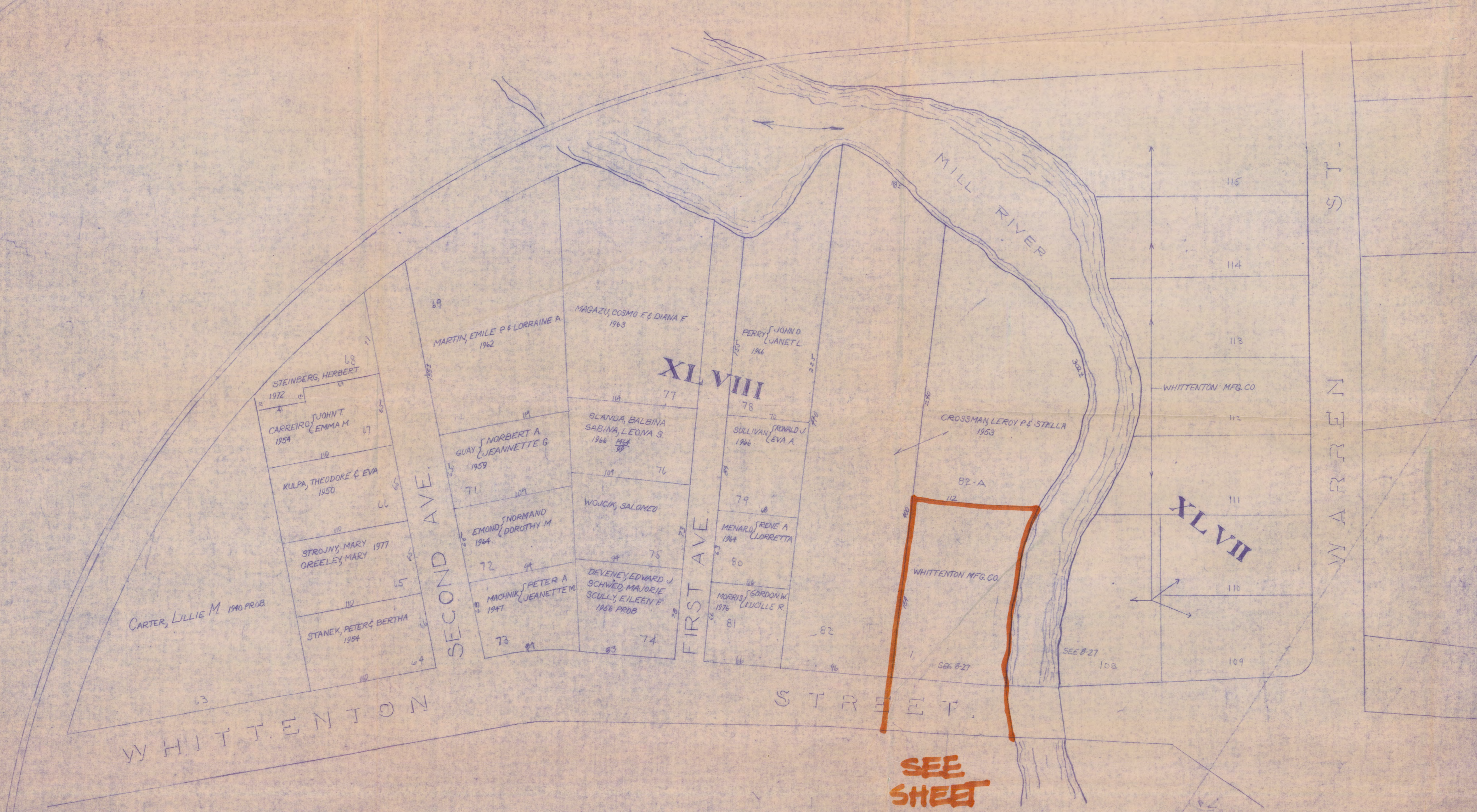


by Berkey



AREA NR-2





WHITTENTON

SECOND AVE.

FIRST AVE.

STREET

WARREN ST.

MILL RIVER

XLVIII

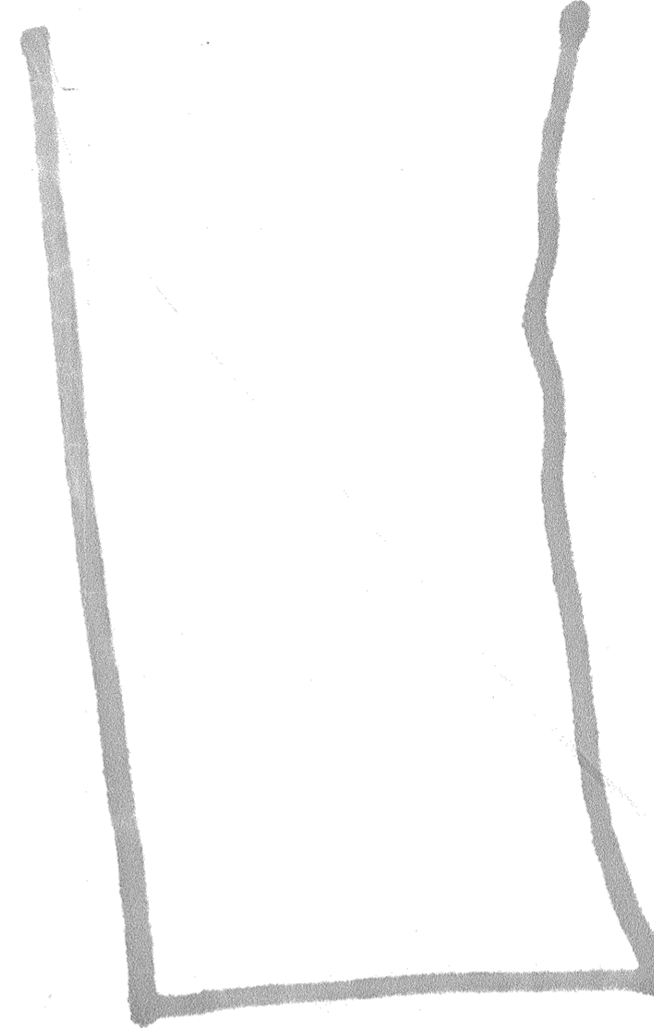
XLVII

SEE SHEET 8-28

AREA NR-2

8-28

FOR  
SHEETS



Taunton, Mass. MRA  
NR-5  
Whitenton Mills



Please refer to the map in the  
Multiple Property Cover Sheet  
for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000297