

FORM A - AREA

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
294 Washington Street, Boston, MA. 02108

Form numbers in this area

K-3-1

Area letter

474

Photo (3x3" or 3x5")
Staple to left side of form

Photo number MP II-19

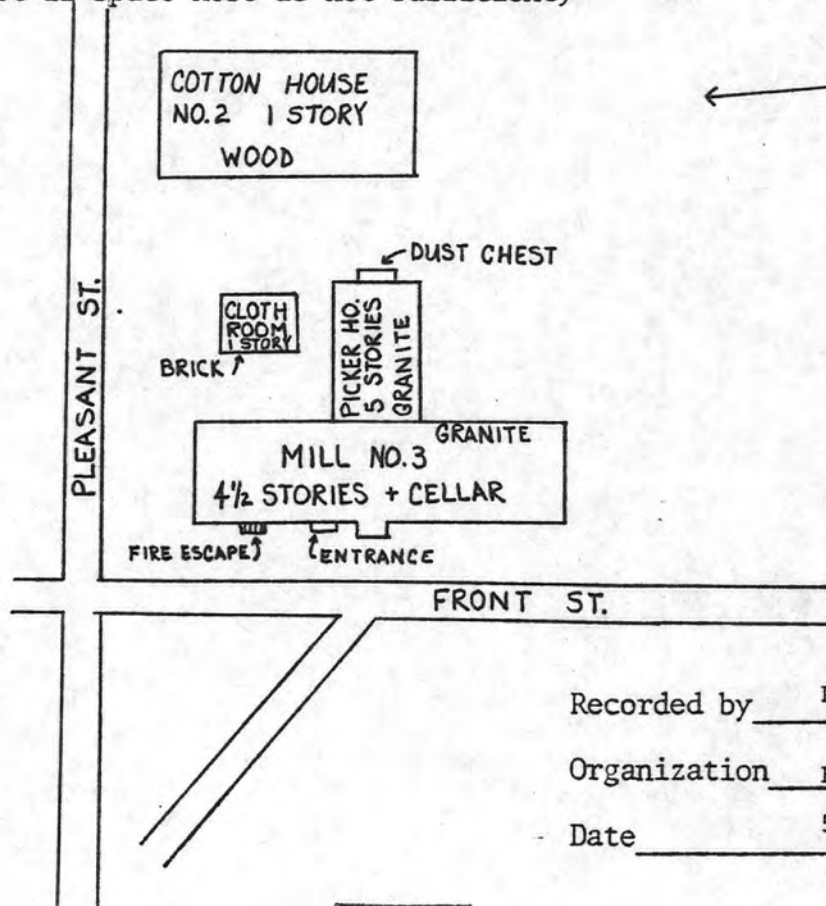
Town Fall River, Mass.

Name of area (if any) Crescent Mill

30 Front Street

General date or period 1872

Sketch map. Draw a general map of the area indicating properties within it. Number each property for which individual inventory forms have been completed. Label streets (including route numbers, if any) and indicate north. (Attach a separate sheet if space here is not sufficient)



Recorded by Pereira/Vielmetti/Fox

Organization FROHP

Date 5/7/81

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE of area. (Describe physical setting, general character, and architecturally significant structures).

The 1872 Crescent Mill (later Merchants Mill #3) exemplifies the best features of Fall River mill architecture of the late 1860's and early 1870's expansion period. The single 4½-story granite mill is located above the dam on the north shore of the Quequechan River at the intersection of two main commercial streets close to downtown. According to early histories, the original site of 25 acres was in the center of a circle of 18 large mills "and was chosen on account of the valuable water-front, its proximity to so many large corporations, and its consequent prospective value as an investment." A spur of the Fall River Railroad runs just behind the complex. The design has been credited to its treasurer, Lafayette Nichols. Characteristic of factory architecture of the time are the steeply pitched roof with skylights, irregular ashlar masonry walls, narrow rectangular plan (339' X 74'), 12/12 sash, overhanging wooden bracketed cornice and rear granite picker house and engine rooms, also dating from 1872. What makes the Crescent particularly noteworthy is the monumental 6-level center stair tower carefully constructed of finished ashlar blocks. The paired open arches (CONTINUE)

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE of area. (Explain development of area, what caused it, and how it affected community; be specific).

Although often referred to as Merchants Mill #3, the building at Front and Pleasant Streets was constructed for the Crescent Mills Corporation, which was organized in 1871. During the two years 1871 and 1872, 14 other textile manufacturing corporations were formed in Fall River and some 20 new mills constructed in an unprecedented surge of growth. Original officers included Benjamin Covell, president, and Lafayette Nichols, treasurer. The original capital stock totalled \$500,000. The 1872 mill contained 33,280 spindles and 744 looms manufacturing 4/4 fine brown sheetings and special styles of fine goods for printing and converting. In 1877, 6 million yards of cloth was being produced annually. The plant was powered by a steam engine from the Foundry and Machine Co. of Taunton, and textile machinery was both English and American-made. Across Pleasant Street was the Merchants Mill #1, which had been erected in 1867 and enlarged in 1872 into the largest mill under one roof in Fall River. (The Merchants #1 was distinguished by its mansard roof and two mansard stair towers dividing the mass into three sections.) In 1893 the Merchants Manufacturing Co. purchased the Crescent Mill, which became its Mill #3. A 1901 trade publication gives the capacity of the three mills as 128,000 spindles and 3,270 looms, a number which grew to over 136,104 during the prosperous post-war period. The plant closed in 1931. The original Merchants Mills #1 and #2 were both destroyed by fire in 1934. The Crescent is presently used for light industry.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

- Phillips' History of Fall River, Fascicle II, p. 127-128
History of Bristol County, p. 318, 320
Fall River and Its Industries, p. 127-128, 138-139
Barlow Insurance Plans, 1880
Fenner, Henry History of Fall River (1906), p. 85
"Mill Architecture in Fall River," p. 185-203

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: Fall River, Mass.	Form No: K-3-1
Property Name: Crescent Mill	

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

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (Continuation)

and chamfered corners at the upper level and the low hipped roof make this tower one of the city's finest examples of the Italian villa style adapted for industrial use. Also of interest is the engineering of the interior, where the attic ceiling is suspended from the trussed roof by iron rods in order to create a mule-spinning area free of columns. The Crescent Mill remains largely intact; however, poorly-designed later commercial buildings located in front of the main mill detract from its overall appearance.

The 1872 Crescent Mill, with its fine Italianate center stair tower exemplifies the best of Fall River granite mill architecture of the 1870s textile expansion period; it meets Criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places individually.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received 4/5/83

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

Page 4 of 10

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic GroupName Fall River Multiple Resource Area
State MA

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

31. Coughlin School

~~Substantive Review~~

Keeper

2/16/83 Deloris Byers

Attest

32. Crescent Mill

Entered in the
National Register

Keeper

2/16/83 Deloris Byers

Attest

33. Davol School

Entered in the
National Register

Keeper

2/16/83 Deloris Byers

Attest

34. Davol, William C., Jr., House

Entered in the
National Register

Keeper

2/16/83 Deloris Byers

Attest

35. Downtown Fall River Historic District

Entered in the
National Register

Keeper

2/16/83 Deloris Byers

Attest

36. Durfee Mills

Entered in the
National Register

Keeper

2/16/83 Deloris Byers

Attest

37. Earle, John M., House

Entered in the
National Register

Keeper

2/16/83 Deloris Byers

Attest

38. Fall River Bleachery

Entered in the
National Register

Keeper

2/16/83 Deloris Byers

Attest

39. First Baptist Church

Entered in the
National Register

Keeper

2/16/83 Deloris Byers

Attest

40. Flint Mills

Entered in the
National Register

Keeper

2/16/83 Deloris Byers

Attest

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Crescent Mill (Fall River MRA)
Bristol County
MASSACHUSETTS

Working No. 115/83-15
Fed. Reg. Date: 2.7.84
Date Due: 2/3/83 - 2/19/83
Action: ☒ ACCEPT 2/16/83
☐ RETURN
Entered in the National Register ☐ REJECT
Federal Agency: _____

☐ 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
☐ excellent	☐ deteriorated	☐ original site
☐ good	☐ ruins	☐ moved date _____
☐ fair	☐ 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

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acres of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UMT 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: 202 272 - 3504

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet



MP II-19

Crescent Mill
w/facade w/central
tower

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

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000279