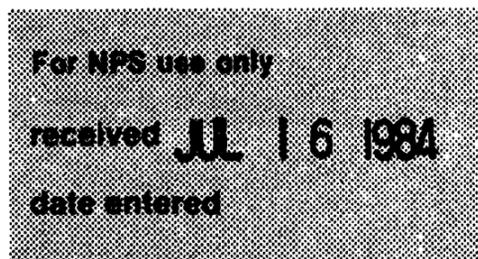


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Name: Saylesville Historic District

Location: ~~Portions of~~ Smithfield Avenue, East Avenue, ~~Brunswick Avenue~~,
Orchard Avenue, Whittle Avenue, Branch Avenue, Woodland Street
and Court, Walker Street, Industrial Circle, Chapel Street,
Sayles Avenue, Walker Avenue, Slater Avenue and Memorial Avenue

Classification: District; Private; Occupied; Accessible--restricted;
Commercial, Industrial; Private Residence

Owner: Multiple (see list on file at Rhode Island Historical Preservation
Commission)

Condition: Excellent, Good, Fair; Altered, Unaltered; Original site

Description:

The Saylesville Historic District is a large factory village, set in the southeast corner of Lincoln, where the Moshassuck and Blackstone Rivers join. Two large ponds are located in the village: Scott Pond (fed by the Blackstone) and Saylesville Pond (fed by the Moshassuck). The Blackstone Canal flows out of Saylesville Pond and threads its way through the industrial area of Saylesville, which includes the largest concentration of historic factories in Lincoln. Most are large, red brick buildings constructed on a curving drive south of Walker Street; of special note are the Main Building (incorporating the oldest Sayles Mill), a large Victorian office building, and the dye house, constructed over several decades and now almost six hundred feet long. All three are arranged around a small mill pond. There are in addition several large brick warehouses and other utilitarian buildings.

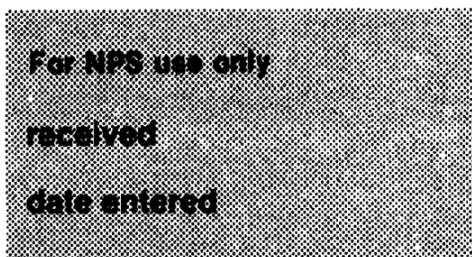
Walker Street runs roughly east-west just north of the mill complex and is the location of most of the public buildings of the village: the fire station, post office and club house are set here; the community center, Fireman's Hall, is nearby on Chapel Street; the cooperative store operated by Sayleses once stood nearby on Smithfield Avenue. Only the village church, Sayles Memorial Chapel, is set apart from this cluster; it is located several blocks north on Chapel Street.

The houses of Saylesville are set on two north-south streets, Smithfield Avenue and Chapel Street, and their side roads, west and north of the mill complex. Most of the houses are simple late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century structures. Of wood frame and brick, they are for the most part, one- and two-story structures; about one half are single-family houses, the rest are two-, three-, and four-family structures. Unlike the housing of other Lincoln mill villages, Saylesville's company-built houses are a heterogeneous lot--identical buildings are rarely set on adjacent lots and, in addition, they are interspersed among houses built by private contractors.

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INVENTORY OF CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES

Contributing structures are defined as those which retain their integrity and which were built during the period of significance, 1854-1933. This near-century-long span includes the years during which the Sayles Company constructed the greatest number of its mills, mill houses, and community buildings. While the company continued to operate after the early 1930s, it was not in later years so great an economic and social presence in Lincoln as it had been in the previous decades.

Structures not built by the company are common in Saylesville where mill houses were interspersed among houses constructed by private contractors. As this heterogeneous mix is particularly characteristic of the Saylesville Historic District, non-company-built structures are defined as contributing if they retain integrity and date from the period of significance.

BRANCH AVENUE

- 4 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1905): A small, 2-story, end-gable, 3-bay house; 1-story porch across facade.
- 8 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1905): Same as 4 Branch Avenue, except that porch is now enclosed and 1-story ell added to side.
- 9 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1890): A 2-story, L-shaped, cross-gabled house; 1-story enclosed porch across entrance facade.

BRUNSWICK AVENUE

- 5-7 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1910): A 2-story, 4-bay, gabled house, brick on the first floor, shingles above. Two entrances are set in gabled extensions of the facade, with doors under porches with stickwork detail; single-story porches on each end of the house.
- 9 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1910): A 2-story, flank-gable house; bay window over door.
- 10 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1910): A 2½-story, 3-bay, hip-roofed house; 1-story porch over center entrance.

CHAPEL STREET

- Map #1 Saylesville Post Office (c. 1921): A 1-story, brick, postal office with Georgian Revival details, at the corner of Walker and Chapel

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Chapel Street (cont.)

Streets; this small building now serves as professional offices.

- Map #2 Saylesville Fire Station (c. 1931): A 1½-story, T-shaped, brick station.
- 20-22 Sayles Company Mill House (between 1882 and 1895): A double, 1½-story, 6-bay house; doors set under Italianate hoods at each end of facade.
- 28-30 Sayles Company Mill House (between 1882 and 1895): Same as 20-22 Chapel Street.
- 32 Sayles Company Mill House (between 1882 and 1895): A 1½-story, 3-bay, shingled house.
- 40 Firemens' Hall (between 1882 and 1895): A long, 2-story, gable-roof building on a high basement; once covered with clapboards and patterned shingles, it now has aluminum siding. The doors (paired at the north end) are set under small porches.
- 58-60 Sayles Company Mill House (between 1882 and 1895): A 1½-story, 6-bay, double house, center doors under Italianate hood.
- 63 House (between 1882 and 1895): A 2-story, end-gable, 3-bay house; 1-story, flat roofed addition, south side.
- 67 House (between 1882 and 1895): A 2-story, 3-bay, flank-gable house with center door.
- 70-72 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1908): A double, 2-story, shingled house, gable-roofed with 2 large cross gables; center doors are set under gabled porch.
- 71-73 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1900): A 2½-story, cross-gable, shingled house; paired doors at side of facade; 2-story bay windows on facade and north side.
- 80-82 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1908): A double, 2-story house, with cross-gabled roof; center door under gabled porch.
- 88 Sayles Company Mill House (between 1882 and 1895): A 2-story, flank-gable, 5-bay house; 1-story porch across facade.

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Chapel Street (cont.)

- 90-92 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1919): A 2-story, gabled, double house; brick on the first floor, shingles above. Doors are set at the ends of the facades, under gabled extensions of the facade.
- 94-96 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1908): A 2-story, gabled, double house, brick on the first floor, shingles above; three large dormers. Doors are set at the ends of the facade, under gable-roofed porches.
- 119 House (c. 1906): A 2-story, end-gable, clapboard house with door under gabled porch and 1-story bay.
- 123 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1900): A 2-story, end-gable, clapboard house, 2-bays wide with a bracketed porch.
- 129 Sayles Company Mill House (1920): A 2-story, hip-roof house; 3-bays wide with center door under small porch.
- 130 House (c. 1900): A 2-story, end-gable, clapboard house; the door is set under a bracketed porch.
- 132 Sayles Company Mill House (C. 1900): A 2-story, end-gable, 3-bay house with bracketed porch across front and south side.
- 136-138 House (c. 1910): A 2½-story, 2-family, end-gable house; the entrance porch has been removed.
- 142-144 House (c. 1910): A 2-story, hip-roofed, double house, 3-bays wide; the entrances are set under porches at the ends of the facade.
- 148 House (c. 1920): A 2-story, flank-gable house, 5-bays wide with center door and 1-story porch across facade.
- 150 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1915): A 2-story, gambrel-roof house; wide shed dormer; first floor bay window and entrance porch.
- 153 House (c. 1920): A 2½-story, 3-bay, flank-gable house with center door and 1-story porch on the north side.
- 154 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1919): A 2-story, 3-bay, clapboarded, hip-roofed house; center door under hip-roofed hood.

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Chapel Street (cont.)

- 158 House (c. 1900): A 2½-story, gambrel-roof house with a large gabled former; the center door is set under a hip-roof porch.
- 159 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1900): A 2-story, 3-bay, flank-gable, shingled house; center door under recessed porch.
- 160 Sayles Company Mill (c. 1915): A 2½-story, clapboard, cross-gable house, with porch across facade.
- 161 Sayles Chapel Parish House (c. 1875): A 2½-story, 5-bay, center door, clapboarded house; 1-story addition on east side.
- Map #3 Sayles Memorial Chapel (1873): A Victorian Gothic stone church, designed by Clark Sayles; a corner tower was added in 1876; it has been removed. There is a modern addition on the north side.*
- 184 Sayles Company Mill House (between 1882 and 1895): A 2-story, end-gable, clapboard house with a 3-level mansard tower on south side.
- 196-198 Sayles Company Mill House (between 1882 and 1895): A 2-story, hip-roofed, 3-bay house; 1-story wing on south side.

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*See note on photos, Continuation Sheet #55

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INDUSTRIAL CIRCLE

- Map #5 Main Building (1854, 1880, 1894, 1902, 1933): A 1-, 2-, and 3-story brick mill, about 300 feet long, oriented roughly north-south along the east side of the mill pond. The 1854 southern section is the oldest factory at Saylesville; 1-story, with bracketed gable-roof, tall round arched windows, with end tower (whose cyma-curved roof has been removed). At the turn of the century, this mill housed the tenter department, the kier rooms, engine rooms, and storage facilities. The Blackstone Canal flows out of the mill pond under the building.
- Map #6 Boiler House (c. 1890): A brick industrial building, built on edge of Blackstone Canal.
- Map #7 Dye House (1882, 1889, 1899, 1905, 1907, 1913, 1914, 1915, 1917): A large industrial building, about 600 feet by 200 feet, built over several decades, 2-, 3-, and 4-stories. The building contained dye and kettle rooms, tenter room, yarn splitting room, calendar room, scouring and mangle rooms, and housed the Saylesville Division of the Glenlyon Dye Works, owned by the Sayles Company.
- Map #8 Store House and Packing Building (1860, 1912): A 2-story brick building with an attached 1-story wing.
- Map #9 Supply House (1898): A small 1-story, brick building.
- Map #10 Sayles Warehouse (1905): A long (400' X 100'), 4-story brick warehouse.
- Map #11 Boiler House (1891): A 2-story brick building set on the east side of the Blackstone Canal.
- Map #12 Carpenter and Repair Shop (c. 1900): A 1- and 2-story brick

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Industrial Circle (cont.)

building, set over the Blackstone Canal. The crates required for shipping Sayles goods were constructed here.

Map #13 Mill Office (c. 1875): A 2½-story, brick, Italianate office building with cross-gable roof; the interior is handsomely furnished with oak staircase, marble fireplaces, and panelled offices.

Map #14 Finishing and Bleaching Mills (c. 1900): A 1- and 3-story brick mill at the south end of the complex; originally 2 separate buildings, now joined by a modern addition.

Map #15 White Goods Bleach House (1894, 1974): A long red brick mill; the east wall is built on the edge of the Blackstone Canal.

MEMORIAL AVENUE

11 House (between 1882 and 1895): A 2-story, gambrel-end, 3-bay house; the door is set under a gabled porch.

14 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1920): A 2½-story, gambrel-roofed, shingled house, large gambrel dormer in front; entrance and bay window recessed under porch running across facade.

15 Sayles Company Mill House (between 1882 and 1895): A 2-story, end-gable house; 1-story porch across facade.

18 House (between 1870 and 1882): A 2-story, clapboarded, end-gable house with 1-story porch across facade.

19 Sayles Company Mill House (between 1882 and 1895): A 2-story, end-gable, clapboard house, 3-bays wide; entrance at side of facade.

ORCHARD AVENUE

10 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1905): A 2½-story, end-gable, 2-bay house; bay window on second floor and turret-roofed porch at corner.

POND AVENUE

5-7 Sayles Company Mill House (between 1882 and 1895): A double, 1½-story, 6-bay, flank-gable, clapboarded house; doors are set at each end of facade, under bracketed hoods.

9 Sayles Company Mill House (between 1882 and 1895): A double, 1½-story, flank-gable house; 1-story enclosed porch across facade.

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Pond Avenue (cont.)

- 13-15 Sayles Company Mill House (between 1882 and 1895): A double, 1½-story, 6-bay house; center doors set under bracketed hood.

READ AVENUE

- 57-59 Garage (c. 1920): A long, 10-bay automobile garage with living quarters built in a second story atop the garage. Both 57-59 and 85-87 Read Avenue were constructed by the Sayles Company.
- 61-63 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1919): A long, 2½-story, hip-roof, double house with center entrance.
- 65 House (1930): A 2-story, cross-gable, "English Cottage" built of rough-laid brick.
- 68 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1920): A plain, shingled, gambrel-end house, its center door set under a small porch.
- 69 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1920): A 2-story, 3-bay, Colonial Revival house, with Palladian window over center porch and corner quoins.
- 71-73 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1925): A long, 2-story, double house, the entrances set at each end of the facade under 1-story porches.
- 75 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1925): A 2-story, cross-gable, stuccoed house.
- 85-87 Garage (c. 1920): Like 57-59 Read Avenue, this is a multi-bay garage with living quarters above.

SAYLES AVENUE

- 4 House (c. 1920): A 2-story, shingled, gambrel-roofed house; the center door is set under a gabled porch.
- 5-7 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1908): A large, 2-family, hip-roof house, 2½-stories, clapboard on the first floor, shingled above. Entrances under porches at corners of facade.
- 6-8 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1908): A large, T-shaped, cross-gable, 2-family house; 2½-stories, clapboard on the first floor, shingled above; single-story porches over entrances in the angles of the T.

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Sayles Avenue (cont.)

- 9-11 House (c. 1917): A large, 2-story, shingled, cross-gambrel house; 1-story porch across facade.
- 14-16 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1908): A 2½-story, double, hip-roofed house; clapboard on the first floor, shingles above. Entrances are set under 1-story porches at each corner of facade.
- 15 House (c. 1920): A 2½-story, 3-bay, flank-gable house.
- 17 House (c. 1925): A 2-story, cross-gabled, pseudo-Tudor house, with half-timbering in gables.
- 19 House (c. 1925): A 2-story, cross-gabled, pseudo-Tudor house, with half-timbering in gables.
- 20 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1910): A 2-story, hip-roofed, shingled house, 3-bays wide with center door.
- 22 House (c. 1910): A 2-story, shingled, hip-roofed house.

SLATER AVENUE

- 1-3 House (between 1895 and 1911): A plain, 2-story, flank-gable house with 1-story porch across facade.
- 10 Sayles Company Mill House (between 1895 and 1910): A 1½-story, end-gable, clapboard house; porch across facade.

SMITHFIELD AVENUE

- 1043- House (c. 1915): A 2-story, 2-family, double house, clapboarded
1045 on the first floor, shingled on the second.
- 1049 House (c. 1920): A 1-story house with recessed front porch and large dormer.
- 1061 House (c. 1930): A 2-story, 3-bay, hip-roofed house, the center door set under columned porch.
- 1071 House (c. 1929): A 2-story, suburban "colonial" house.
- 1077 House (1930): A 2½-story, cross-gable house.

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Smithfield Avenue (cont.)

- 1107 House (c. 1930): A 2-story, hip-roofed house, with center door set under columned porch.
- 1113 House (c. 1920): A 2½-story, cross-gable house with 1-story porch across facade and "half-timbering" in gables.
- 1125 House (c. 1920): A 1½-story, hip-roofed house; entrance recessed under porch.
- 1137 House (c. 1910): A 2-story, hip-roofed house with corner tower and closed porch across facade.
- 1157 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1870): Same as 1159-1161 Smithfield Avenue.
- 1159- Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1870): A plain, 1½-story, 6-bay,
1161 flank-gable mill house; the paired doors are set at the center of the facade under a small, gabled porch.
- 1165 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1870): Same as 1167-1169 Smithfield Avenue, except that door is set at center of facade and 1-story porch has been added across front.
- 1167- Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1870): A plain, 1½-story, 6-bay,
1169 flank-gable mill house; the doors are set at each end of the facade; row of small windows lights the attic.
- 1171- Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1870): Same as 1167-1169 Smithfield
1173 Avenue.
- 1175- Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1870): Same as 1167-1169 Smithfield
1177 Avenue, except for a 1-story porch added across facade.
- 1179- Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1870): Same as 1167-1169 Smithfield
1181 Avenue.

WALKER AVENUE

- 11 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1910): A 2-story, end-gable, 3-bay house, with 1-story porch across facade.
- 12 House (between 1882 and 1895): A 2-story, clapboarded, flank-gable house with bracketed cornice and bay.

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Walker Avenue (cont.)

- 14 Sayles Company Mill House (between 1882 and 1895): A 2-story, end-gable, 3-bay house.
- 15-17 House (c. 1917): Large, shingled, 2-story, cross-gambrel house with 2-story porch across facade.
- 16 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1920): A 2-story, gambrel-roofed, clapboard house, 4-bays wide, with center door under gabled porch and wide shed dormer.
- 19-21 House (c. 1917): Same as 15-17 Walker Avenue
- 23-25 House (c. 1917): Large, 2-story, gambrel-end house, 3-bays wide with center door under gabled porch.
- 27-29 House (c. 1920): A 2½-story, hip-roofed house, brick on the first floor, shingled on the second.
- 31 House (1920): A 2-story, shingled bungalow with large front dormer and recessed porch.

WALKER STREET

- Map #4 Sayles Company Club House (c. 1904): A 2-story, flank-gable, brick building; built as social center for Sayles Company's managers.
- 179 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1875): A 1½-story, 3-bay, end-gable house, with bracketed hood over door.
- 183-185 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1875): A double, 1½-story, flank-gable house; center doors set under bracketed hood.
- 191 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1875): A 1½-story, 3-bay, end-gable house; 1-story porch across facade.
- 193-195 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1875): A 1½-story, 5-bay, flank-gable house; 1-story porch over center door.

WHITTLE AVENUE

- 7 Whittle Barn (c. 1880): A T-shaped, 2-story, cross-gable building; originally a barn for the farmhouse at 8 Whittle Avenue, now used as a residence.

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Whittle Avenue (cont.)

- 8 Whittle House (c. 1860): A 2-story, flank-gable, 5-bay house with porch across facade and a 1-story ell. This is one of Saylesville's earlier houses, built by the Whittle family who owned a small farm on the west side of Smithfield Avenue.

WOODLAND COURT

- 1-3 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1920): A double, 2-story, 4-bay cross-gambrel, shingled house; 1-story porch over center doors.
- 2-4 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1920): A double, 2-story, 4-bay, hip-roof house; 1-story enclosed porch over center doors. Now covered with aluminum siding.
- 5-7 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1920): A double, 2-story, 4-bay, hip-roof house; 1-story porch over center doors. Now covered with aluminum siding.
- 6-8 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1920): A double, 2½-story, 4-bay, flank-gable house; 1-story, enclosed porch over center doors. Now covered with aluminum siding.
- 9-11 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1920): A double, 2-story, 4-bay, flank-gable house; 1-story hip-roof porch over center doors. Now covered with aluminum siding.
- 10-12 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1920): A double, 2-story, 4-bay, hip-roof house; 1-story enclosed porch over center doors. Now covered with aluminum siding.
- 13-15-
17-19 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1920): A 4-family, 2-story, 6-bay, hip-roof, shingled house, 1-story, hip-roof porches over center doors.
- 14-16 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1920): A double, 2½-story, 4-bay, flank-gable house; 1-story porches over doors at each end of facade. Now covered with aluminum siding.
- 18-20 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1920): A double, 2-story, 4-bay, cross-gambrel house; 1-story porch over center doors. Now covered with aluminum siding.
- 21-23 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1920): A double, 2½-story, 4-bay, gambrel-roof house, shed dormer; 1-story gabled porches over doors at ends of facade.

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Woodland Court

- 22-24- Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1920): A 4-family, 2-story, 8-bay,
26-28 hip-roof house; 1-story porches over doors. Now covered with
aluminum siding.
- 30 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1920): A double, 2-story, 4-bay, hip-
roof house; 1-story porches over center door and on side. Now
covered with aluminum siding.
- 34-36 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1920): A double, 2-story, 4-bay, cross-
gambrel, shingled house; 1-story porch over center doors.
- 38 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1920): A 2½-story, end-gable house;
1-story, gable-roof porch over door. Now covered with aluminum
siding.
- 42 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1920): A 2-story, 4-bay, gambrel-
roof house; 1-story gable roof porches over doors at ends of facades;
shed dormer.
- 44 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1920): A 2½-story, 2-bay, flank-gable,
shingled house; 1-story, shed-roofed porch across facade.
- 46-48 Sayles Company Mill House (c. 1920): A double, 2½-story, 4-bay,
flank-gable house; 1-story porch over center doors.

INVENTORY OF NON-CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES

CHAPEL STREET

- 61 House (c. 1950): A plain, shingled, 1-story, flank-gable house.
- 95 House (c. 1955): Modern, split-level house.
- 100 House (c. 1955): Small ranch house.

EAST AVENUE

- 11-13 House (c. 1955): A 2-story, hip-roofed house, center door set under
porch.

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East Avenue (cont.)

12 House (c. 1940): A 2½-story, gable-end, shingle house.

INDUSTRIAL CIRCLE

Map #16 Hunt Chemical Storage Building (1975): A concrete block storage building, constructed by a major chemical supplier, one of the largest occupants of the Sayles complex.

Map #17 Bermic Building (c. 1970): A modern, 1-story, concrete block building.

Map #18 Mill Building (c. 1970): A modern, 1-story, concrete block building.

READ AVENUE

77-79 House (c. 1967): A 2-story, flank-gable house with full-height porch across the facade.

81-83 House (c. 1967): Same as 77-79 Read Avenue, except for the porch which is here a small, 1-story gabled version.

SMITHFIELD AVENUE

1111 House (c. 1950): A 2-story, suburban, "colonial" house, 3-bays wide, with a recessed entry.

WOODLAND COURT

Map #19 Elderly Housing (c. 1980): Low, rambling, multi-unit housing project; wood frame with gable roofs.

Period: 1800-1899, 1900-present

Areas of Significance: Architecture, Industry, Religion

Specific Dates: 1854-1933

Significance:

The Saylesville Historic District is significant as the principal location of a nationally important textile firm, a leader in the technology of fabric finishing. Saylesville was the last of Lincoln's several textile villages--the village has its origins in the 1840s, decades later than most in Lincoln, and achieved national prominence in the early twentieth century.

In 1847, William F. Sayles purchased the small wooden mill building and water rights of the moribund Pimbley Print Works at the Saylesville site and set up the Moshassuck Bleachery to treat the cloth produced at

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other Rhode Island mills. By the mid-1850s William Sayles was bleaching about four tons of cloth daily and had hired his brother Frederick (he became a partner in 1864). Additions were made to the Pimbley buildings in the early 1850s, but in 1854 the entire bleachery burned. Within only a few months, the Sayles brothers had begun to replace the destroyed plant with a red brick mill building--now known as the Main Building and much added to over the next 50 years. Originally built to handle six tons of cloth daily, the Main Building was expanded within a year. Though first limited to bleaching sheetings and shirtings, the Sayleses had expanded their operations to lawns and dress goods before the Civil War. In the 1860s the Sayles plant employed about sixty people and finished an average of 100,000 yards every day.

Operating as W.F. and F.C. Sayles, the company expanded through the second half of the nineteenth century, with expansion of the mill plant continuing steadily until floor area of about 25 acres in the 40-acre site was available. In addition, the Sayles brothers operated major plants at Philipsdale, Rhode Island (the Glenlyon Print Works) and at Biltmore, North Carolina. In 1894, Frank Sayles, son of William, succeeded to his father's place in the partnership; in 1896 he purchased his uncle's interest. It was Frank Sayles who brought the Sayles' operation into the national leadership it held in the first decades of the twentieth century. By 1920 when Frank Sayles died and the firm was incorporated, the plant employed 3,000 workers, finished seven-and-a-half million yards of cotton goods each year, and was one of the largest cloth finishers in the United States.

Through the early twentieth century, the company achieved prominence as a cloth finisher, not only as a result of its scale of operations, but also because a research department was created to design new chemical processes for cloth treatment. Set up as a separate function from the manufacturing component, the Sayles research operation patented a number of brand-name processes which became well-known through labels and stickers supplied by Sayles to clothing manufacturers for attachment to the retail product. The Sayles Company was among the first in the U.S. to mercerize cotton thread (in 1895); fast color dyeing was provided after 1919. Its "Saylerized" permanent cotton finish was soil resistant and reduced lint. The Sayl-A-Set finish controlled shrinkage as did the Sayl-A-Shrunk finish. Their water repellent finish was known as Storm King.

The industrial complex built by the Sayles family over the course of the seven decades between 1854 and 1924 is by far the largest in Lincoln and surely one of the largest in Rhode Island. Though there has been some demolition in recent decades, it has been for the most part the smaller, less vital buildings on the fringe of the complex which have been lost.

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While only the core of the Main Building, a handsome Italianate structure, may be properly said to have architectural significance, the rest of the complex is noteworthy for its size, for the number of buildings which survive to document the presence here of a major textile finishing firm, and for the unusual number and accretive quality of the additions made on most of the buildings over their decades of operation. Especially notable in this respect is the dye house--built over thirty years and now nearly six hundred feet long, the structure documents in its physical form the numerous and technically complex processes involved in the finishing of cloth and the speed which textile chemistry (and the space required for new processes) developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Like other mill operators in the Blackstone Valley, the Sayleses provided housing for their operatives and managers in the village which grew up north and east of their mills. In the early 1880s, mill housing was constructed along Smithfield Avenue, Chapel Street and Walker Avenue--plain, simple, wood-frame buildings similar to those constructed in villages forty years earlier. Unlike most other textile operations, the Sayles Company continued to build housing well into the twentieth century. Again, in contrast with other operators, the Sayles Company (under Frank Sayles) made a conscious effort to avoid the homogeneity characteristic of mill villages. The houses built throughout Saylesville between 1880 and 1933 are of various types (for the most part very simplified versions of current styles) and identical houses were only rarely constructed on adjacent sites. As a result Saylesville is not immediately recognizable as a mill village but instead has much of the aspect of a pleasant suburban neighborhood. Frank Sayles had traveled in Europe and had been impressed by the efforts of manufacturers (particularly at the Krupp Works in Germany) there to avoid what was perceived as the dullness, the utilitarian aspect, and the dinginess of industrial settlements.

The personal involvement of the Sayles family in their village extended to its institutional and social life as well--many of the functions ordinarily the province of town government or private institutions were carried on here by the company. The company store on Smithfield Avenue has unfortunately been demolished. The Memorial Chapel, built by the Sayles brothers as a memorial to their children still stands on Chapel Street--a simple, granite Gothic church. Several other structures document the Sayleses involvement in their village. The fire station is a later replacement for the one built (and equipped and manned) by company personnel. Fireman's Hall, a simple frame building on Chapel Street, has seen long service as the social center of the village--it was the busy site of community events and civic activities. The Saylesville Post Office (now housing private professional offices) was also constructed by

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the Sayles Company. The Sayles Club House at Walker Street and Smithfield Avenue, provided accommodations for managerial staff who lived far from Saylesville in Providence and Pawtucket. As a group, these buildings attest that the operation of its community was an important aspect of the company business.

Saylesville was the scene of one of the nation's most bitter textile strikes in 1934 when the United Textile Workers (in an attempt to unionize southern workers) called a nation-wide strike. The violence which characterized the strike in Rhode Island was concentrated at Saylesville in early September. On the seventh, windows of the mill were broken when striking and non-striking workers clashed in the mill yard. On successive nights, crowds gathered at the mills and, on September 11th, strikers fought with the local police and the National Guard called up by Governor Theodore F. Green. The workers retreated before tear gas and fire hoses and scattered through the mill complex and across nearby Moshassuck Cemetery. The strike was finally settled by a presidential mediation board.

The mills at Saylesville continued functioning long after most in Lincoln had ceased to operate. The Sayles Company survived the Depression of the 1930s by cutting production and employment and remained open until 1960, though sales of the mill houses had been taking place throughout the decades since the 1930s. The mill plant is now occupied by a variety of manufacturing concerns. As the seat of a nationally prominent cloth finishing company, for its handsome and unusually expansive mill complex, and for its unusual mill housing, the Saylesville Historic District merits entry on the National Register.

Acreage: c. 47 acres

UTM Reference:	A	19	300580	4640880
	B	19	300260	4639780
	C	19	299480	4639990
	D	19	299820	4641100

Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundaries of the Saylesville Historic District have been drawn to encompass the most significant concentration of the village's historic buildings as they were built from 1854 to 1933. Most of the structures are associated with the development of the area as a semi-rural manufacturing center; they include industrial, residential, religious and community buildings.

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The Saylesville Historic District does not have readily apparent visual "edges." The north end of the village blends into Lincoln's Great Road neighborhood and, on the southern boundary, there is no clearly discernible break between Saylesville and the Pawtucket neighborhood of Fairlawn.

Unlike other factory villages, the houses of Saylesville are not a homogeneous group; identical houses are rare and are even more rarely sited adjacent to one another--the result of Frank Sayles' conscious decision to avoid what he perceived as the "dullness" of factory villages. In addition, company-built houses are intermixed with contractor-built houses; for the most part, only land evidence records and the Sayles Company's tenants lists allow the observer to distinguish between mill houses and others.

As drawn, the boundaries include the greatest concentration of company-built housing, but they do not include all of the Sayles houses; others are scattered among the houses of adjacent neighborhoods. A boundary designed to include all of the company-built housing would have necessitated the inclusion of unusually significant numbers of non-contributing buildings; hence, the boundary given here is not based principally on visual character but on the historic origins of a relative concentration of houses, and the boundary line represents a decline in the density of contributing properties.

The boundary of the Saylesville Historic District begins at the SW corner of lot 101, plat 7, passes along its south line, proceeds north along its east line, passes west along the north lines of lot 102, plat 7 and lot 83, plat 1, across Read Avenue to the east line of lot 114, plat 1; then south along the east line, east along its south line, north along the east lines of lots 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 62, and 64, plat 2, then east along the south line of lot 89, plat 2, crossing Industrial Circle to the west line of lot 110, plat 2, passing south along its west line, then east along the south lines of lots 110, 83, and 78, plat 2,*north along the east lines of lots 80, 17, and 76, plat 2, crossing Industrial Circle to the boundary between Lincoln and the city of Central Falls, following the town line north to the NE corner of lot 86, plat 2, then west and north around the line of lot 86, plat 2, north and west along the bounds of lot 84, plat 2, crossing Walker Street to the SE corner of lot 177, plat 3, north along its east line and roughly north along the east lines of lots 177, 164, 92, 91, 169, and 168, plat 3, crossing Highland Avenue, to the SE corner of lot 81, plat 3, passing north along its east line, then east along the south lines of lots 77, 78, 79, 80, and 178, plat 3, north along the east lines of lots 178, 74, and 70, plat 3, then west along the north lines of lots 70, 69, 68, and 67, plat 3, turning north across Walker Avenue and passing north along the east line of lot 50, plat 3, west along the north lines of lots 50 and 49, plat 3, north along the east lines of lots 48, 43, 40, and 37, plat 3, crossing

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*line missing:

south along the west lines of lots 106 and 80, plat 2,

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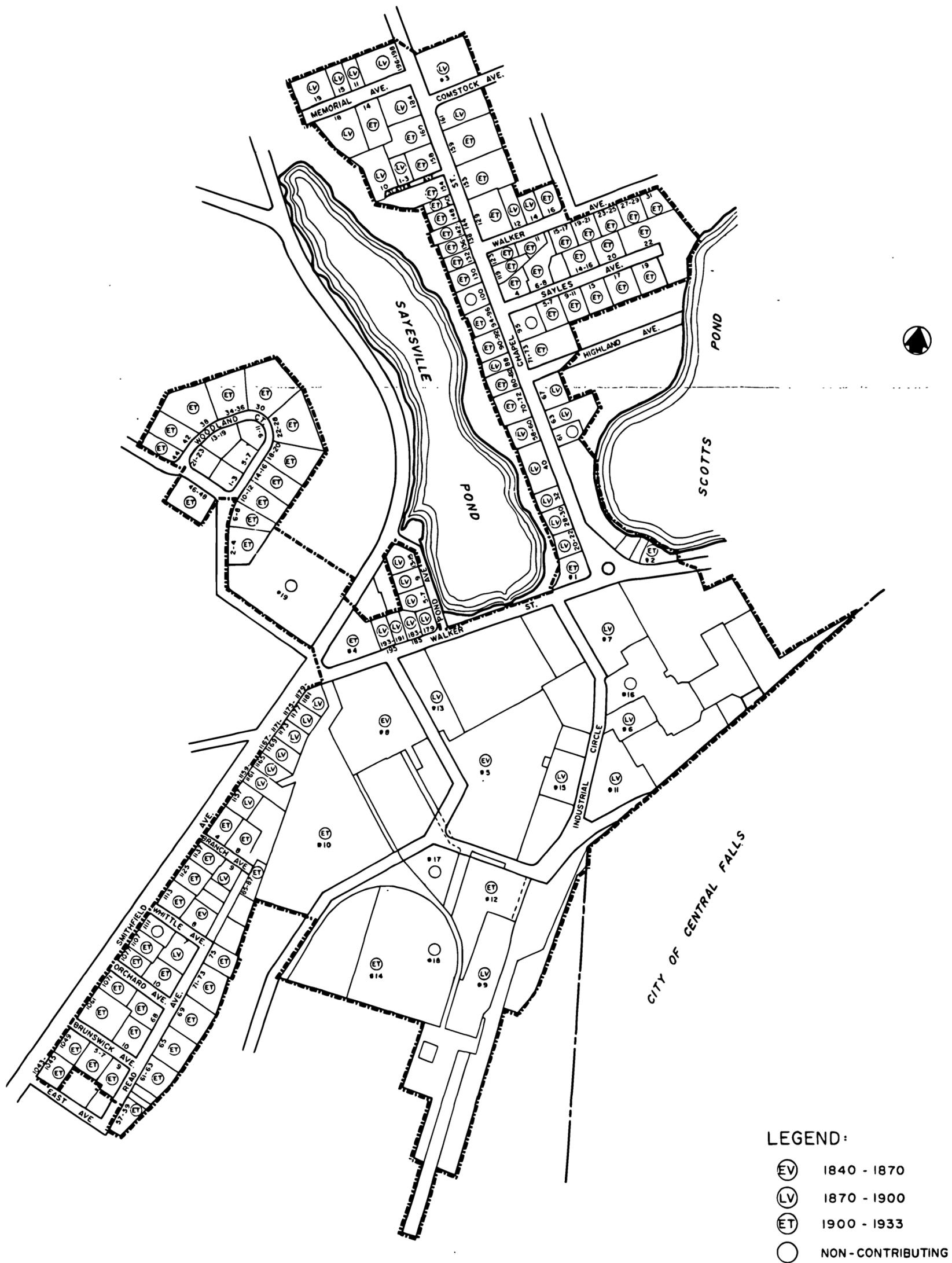
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Comstock Avenue to the SE corner of lot 302, plat 10, passing north along its east line and and west along its north line, crossing Chapel Street to the NW corner of lot 126, plat 9; then west along the north line of lots 126, 127, 128, and 129, plat 9, then south along the east lines of lots 2, 6, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 172, 173, 17, 18, 163, 19, 20, 21, 176, 22, 23, 24, and 25, plat 3, then west along the north curblineline of Walker Street to the SE corner of lot 36, plat 3, then north along the east lines of lots 36, 32, 31, and 30, plat 3; then passing south and west along the east and south lines of lots 29 and 28, plat 3, crossing Smithfield Avenue to a point on the west line of lot 133, plat 8, directly opposite the NW corner of lot 108, plat 8, passing through lot 133 to the NW corner of lot 108, plat 8, and west along its north line to the east line of lot 100, plat 8, then north along the east lines of lots 99, 98, and 97, plat 8, west along the north lines of lots 96, 95, 94, and 93, plat 8, south along the west lines of lots 93, 92, and 91, plat 8, crossing Woodland Street to the NW corner of lot 110, plat 7, then south, east, and north, along its west, south, and east lines, crossing Woodland Street again to the west lines of lot 100, plat 8, south along the west lines of lots 100, 101, 135, and 136, plat 8, east along the south line of lot 108, plat 8, crossing Smithfield Avenue to the west line of lot 28, plat 2, then south along the west lines of lots 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 38, 39, 40, 43, 44, 46, and 47, plat 2, continuing south along the west line of lots 99, 100, and 101, plat 7, to the SW corner of lot 101, plat 7, the point of beginning.

Level of Significance: State



Saylesville Historic District - Lincoln, R. I.

RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL PRESERVATION COMMISSION

JUNE, 1984
SCALE 1"=160'