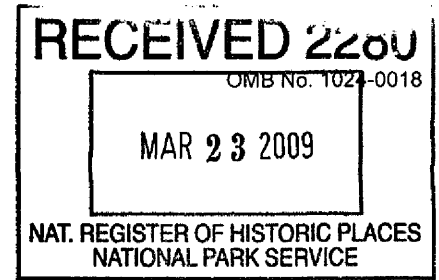


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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 Manville Company Worker Housing Historic District

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

Area bounded by Chestnut St., Angle St., Railroad St., Winter St., Fall street & number St., Spring St., Park Way, Almeida Drive, and Main Street.  not for publication

city or town Lincoln  vicinity

state Rhode Island code RI county Providence code 007 zip code 02838

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.)

Edward Sanderson 2/17/2009  
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 of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action  
4/2/09

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	
52	2	buildings
1		sites
4	18	structures
1		objects
58	19	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.)

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

RELIGION: religious facility

EDUCATION: school

RECREATION: park

SOCIAL: civic

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

VACANT: not in use

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

RECREATION: park

SOCIAL: civic

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: 19th-century vernacular

MID 19TH CENTURY: Greek Revival

EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY: No Style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation BRICK, STONE: granite

walls WOOD: shingle, WOOD: weatherboard, BRICK, SYNTHETICS: vinyl siding; ASBESTOS

roof ASPHALT: shingle

other

Narrative Description

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

Manville Company Worker Housing Historic District  
Name of Property

Providence County, Rhode Island  
County and State

**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

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY \_\_\_\_\_  
 ARCHITECTURE \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

ca. 1812–1936 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

ca. 1812, ca. 1825, ca.1835, ca.1846, 1874, 1890, 1912 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

Name of repository

RI Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission

Manville Company Worker Housing Historic District  
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10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 50 acres

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1 | 1 | 9 | 2 | 9 | 5 | 0 | 4 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 9 | 5 | 6 | 8 |  
Zone Easting Northing  
2 | 1 | 9 | 2 | 9 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 6 |

3 | 1 | 9 | 2 | 9 | 5 | 3 | 7 | 8 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 8 | 9 | 4 | 5 |  
Zone Easting Northing  
4 | 1 | 9 | 2 | 9 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 9 | 4 | 2 | 3 |

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 Edward Connors

organization Edward Connors and Associates date April 2008

street & number 39 Dyer Avenue telephone 401 595-0699

city or town Riverside state Rhode Island zip code 02915

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

street & number telephone

city or town state zip code

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 20503

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Manville Company Worker Housing Historic District	Lincoln	Providence County, RI
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DESCRIPTION

General

Located in Lincoln, Rhode Island, the Manville Company Worker Housing Historic District comprises 49 units of factory housing built by the Manville Company over an 80-year period from ca. 1812 to ca. 1890.<sup>1</sup> These 1- to 2½-story detached frame buildings and brick rowhouses are sited within a densely settled, roughly 50-acre, crescent-shaped swath of land that rises from the west bank of the Blackstone River. The district also comprises a mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century Episcopal church, an early 20<sup>th</sup>-century school building, a one-acre park honoring Manville's WWI veterans and a community center built in 1936 as the company was divesting itself of the worker village.

The earliest industrial exploitation of this area dates to a group of early 18<sup>th</sup>-century enterprises that included a blast furnace, saw mill, and grist mill on the east (Cumberland) bank of the river. Textile manufacture began at the site in 1812 with the establishment of the Unity Cotton Manufacturing Company. By 1900 this waterpowered complex comprised a massive brick mill with associated hydraulic structures and buildings for textile finishing. Expansion of the works included a late 19<sup>th</sup>-century, single-story, brick store house on the Lincoln side and a bleachery built on concrete footings over the Blackstone River in the 1920s. After the twin ravages of flood and fire in the mid-1950s, all that survives of the massive Manville Company mill complex are significant remains of the hydraulic power system, concrete piers in the river associated with the former bleachery, and one standing brick building, the abovementioned store house along the river south of the Manville Bridge.

After a reorganization in 1923, the Manville Company experienced mid-decade labor unrest. A huge decline in sales a year into the Great Depression forced the company into receivership in 1931. The two-year period of receivership resulted in the formation of a new Delaware-based corporation. By 1934 the company's *Annual Report* spoke of the likelihood of selling off its factory housing, which was carried out in 1935–1936. Of the 55 units of company-owned housing recorded on the 1935 plat associated with the sale of these houses, 51 survive. Despite the common - and reversible - application of vinyl siding and replacement windows, 52 contributing buildings, sited in a well-defined, near-contiguous pattern, reflect the unity and cohesion of a factory village comprising several 19<sup>th</sup>-century building campaigns. Post-1936 construction within the district is limited, including a single c. 1960 ranch house and seventeen wood frame garages built on

<sup>1</sup> Although the mills referred to here were organized under several names between 1812 and 1933, for simplicity's sake they will be called the Manville Company, rather than the various names under which the mills were organized over a century of textile manufacture.

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individual house lots, mostly on Chestnut and Main Streets. As such, these Manville Company factory houses possess integrity of location, setting, basic design, feeling and association.

### Typology

Contributing buildings include housing built by the Manville Company between ca. 1812 and 1890 as well as a company-built church, a former school, one-acre park and a community center built on company-donated land. Fifty-two contributing buildings, four structures, one site and one object are inventoried below. Worker housing are largely composed of six main types. The typology below describes each building type in general terms. Certain houses inventoried below do not conform to any type. All of the houses rest on brick foundations.

**Type A** (ca.1825): Associated with the first and second mills, these seven tenement houses are among the earliest examples of Manville Company housing. They are 2½-story, wood frame, five-bay, flank gable houses with central entrance and chimney, and some surviving Federal-era trim. These early mill houses were little different from any vernacular farm, town, or city house of the day in outward appearance, but inside they were originally divided into two apartments on each floor. These houses conform in general terms to buildings depicted in "Mansville" on the 1828 Edward Phelps map associated with the construction of the Blackstone Canal. An eighth house of this type at the north end of the row on the east side of the street was removed between 1931 and 1943. See *Additional Information* Figures 1 and 2, 19<sup>th</sup>-century views along Main Street showing these houses.

**Type B** (before 1847): Originally associated with the Type A houses, these three surviving single-story, wood frame, flank gable cottages appear on the 1847 map set behind the larger Type A houses on both sides of Main Street and serving as outbuildings. Between 1911 and 1921, three of the larger Type A lots on the north side of Main Street were subdivided and the outbuildings were converted to residences on their own lots now fronting on Almeida Drive, Park Way, or Railroad Street. Outbuildings of this type that were not converted to dwellings remain behind 40 Main Street and the Cottage Street duplexes. See *Additional Information* Figures 4 and 5.

**Type C** (ca. 1835): Representing the second campaign of company housing, Type C houses are 1½-story, six-bay, wood frame, flank gable, double houses with entrances at each end of the façade. The 1838 Newell Nelson map shows two of the three houses of this type, all of which survive. See *Additional Information* Figure 14.

**Type D** (ca.1812 - ca.1838): 1½ -story, wood frame, three-bay capes in the vicinity of Almeida Drive, Park Way and Church Lane. There were originally four houses of this type in a row along Simmons, now Almeida Drive. The house at the southern end is no longer extant and the house at the northern end was moved to 12

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Church Lane (q.v.) for the development of the World War I Memorial Park. See *Additional Information* Figure 7.

**Type E (1874):** A form that is considered rare in Rhode Island mill housing, the eight Type E houses are brick, 2-story, 175' x 28' rowhouses of ten units each, sited on a steep incline along Spring, Winter, and Summer Streets. These structures are contemporaneous with the construction of the third Manville Mill, a massive pier and spandrel brick mill with segmental arch windows. The use of brick and the segmental arch window form in these multi-unit houses suggests that this housing campaign was closely linked, both stylistically and financially, to the corporate expansion represented by the construction of the third mill. Although seven of the eight rowhouses were "modernized" in the 1970s, the building at 15 Spring Street (altered in less obvious ways) avoided the fate of the remaining buildings of this type and provides a good sense of the original appearance of this factory rowhouse. The gable roof is of a uniform pitch but for the two bays at each end of the building, where its slope is lowered. Another break in the roofline occurs on the rear elevation of the rowhouses at 15 and 19 Summer Street. This differentiation, occurring over three sets of double doors, matches the end slope. This roof design appears in a historical photograph and is likely original to all Type E buildings. Originally built without bathrooms, four outhouses serving twenty units (two buildings) each, were sited in the present-day parking areas. Indoor bathrooms were built between 1903 and 1911. See *Additional Information* Figures 8–11.

**Type F (1890):** Sited along Main and Chestnut Streets and representing the final campaign of company housing, these are 1½-story, 5-bay, double houses with paired central entrances. Two low windows are placed below the roof line and above the central entrances. Although there were no original porches or hoods, evidence found on a few of the surviving houses of this type suggests significant architectural detail in the original door trim and surrounds. This detail included transomed doors, paneled pilasters, and a shallow overhanging roof with cornice. The Main Street houses of this type front on a historical right-of-way and a green space identified on the 1921 Sanborn Map as Washington Park. This building campaign was likely associated with the Manville Company's return to financial security after the overextension associated with construction of the 3rd Mill coupled with the economic depression of the 1870s.

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**Inventory**

*Note: The number assigned to each unit of factory housing on the Manville Company's 1935 plat appears in italics at the end of each inventoried item. A reproduction of this map is submitted with this nomination.*

**Contributing buildings:**

**ALMEIDA DRIVE** (formerly School Street, Simmons Street)

- 6 MANVILLE SCHOOL (1912): Replacing an earlier school built by the Mann family in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, this 2-story, flat-roofed, brick schoolhouse was built by the Town of Lincoln on land donated by the Manville Company. A severe brick block trimmed with granite, it has a Romanesque stair tower with a corbelled cornice. Modifications related to its conversion to apartments in 1975 included window replacement.
- 11 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (before 1847): A Type B house serving originally as an outbuilding for the large mill house at 25 Main Street. By the 1920s the larger lot comprising both buildings had been subdivided. This house is sheathed in a combination of vinyl clapboard and asbestos shingles. (39)

**ANGLE STREET** (formerly Albion Road, also formerly called Cottage Street)

- 5-7 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (ca. 1890): a 1½-story, flank gable, double house sheathed in clapboard (one of the few Manville factory houses with surviving wood clapboard). Central doors are surmounted by a hood with consoles. The comparatively ornate architectural detail of this double house and its paired rear ells suggest that this house was occupied by persons of relatively higher status within the industrial life of the village. Surviving detail includes paneled corner boards, a wide cornice, sidelights, and paneled pilasters corresponding to the consoles. In the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, the likely 6-bay original façade configuration was altered to accommodate two symmetrically-placed bay windows. There are two interior brick chimneys with modest corbelling. The brick foundation has been stuccoed. (14) *This building formerly had the address 39-40 Angle Street.*

**CHESTNUT STREET**

- 66-68 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (1890): A Type F house sheathed in vinyl clapboard. An added shed-roofed front porch is supported by timber columns. (36)
- GARAGE (after 1935): Non-contributing.



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**CHESTNUT STREET, cont.**

70-72 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (1890): A Type F house sheathed in vinyl clapboard. An added shed-roofed front porch is supported by steel rod. (35)

GARAGE (after 1935): Non-contributing.

74-76 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (1890): A Type F house sheathed in vinyl clapboard. An added gabled front porch is supported by metal columns. (34)

GARAGE (after 1935): Non-contributing.

77-79 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (1890): A Type F house sheathed in vinyl clapboard. A vestige of original door trim appears in the form of an overhang with cornice surmounting the central doors. (30)

78-80 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (1890): Similar to 77-79 Chestnut, a Type F house sheathed in vinyl clapboard; some surviving original door trim. (33)

GARAGE (after 1935): Non-contributing.

81-83 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (1890): A Type F house sheathed in vinyl with an added enclosed front porch. (29)

GARAGE (after 1935): Non-contributing.

85-87 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (1890): A Type F house sheathed in vinyl clapboard. An added shed-roofed front porch is supported by metal columns. (28)

GARAGE (after 1935): Non-contributing.

86-88 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (1890): A Type F house sheathed in vinyl clapboard. An added, full front porch is supported by metal columns. (32)

89-91 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (1890): A Type F house sheathed in vinyl clapboard. (27)

GARAGE (after 1935): Non-contributing.

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**CHESTNUT STREET, cont.**

90–92 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (1890): A Type F house sheathed in asbestos shingle. This house may provide the best evidence of surviving original door trim, including an overhang surmounting the central doors, paneled pilasters in the door surround, and evidence of filled transoms. (31)

GARAGE (after 1935): Non-contributing.

**CHURCH LANE**

- 6 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (ca. 1812 - ca. 1838): A Type D house sheathed in vinyl clapboard with an added shed-roofed front porch supported by timber framing. (49)
- 12 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (ca. 1812-ca. 1838): A Type D house moved to this location between 1921 and 1931 from the area that is now WWI Memorial Park. This house is sheathed in painted cedar shingle. See *Additional Information*, Figure 8. (50)
- 14 EMANUEL EPISCOPAL CHURCH (between 1846-1851): A weatherboard-clad, 1-story Greek Revival church on granite foundations. Set on a slight rise at the foot of Church Lane, the church has a rudimentary temple front, with channeled corner pilasters and a full cornice return in the gable end. A bracketed hood added in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century shelters the front door. The original square belfry was removed and the congregation moved in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. It is now vacant.

**COTTAGE STREET (formerly Monument Street)**

- 2–4 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (ca. 1835): A Type C house sheathed in stained clapboard. Four gabled dormers set symmetrically along the roof appear to be an original configuration. Significant alterations include vinyl windows and a west side wing (11).  
Outbuilding (by 1849): A 1-story, gable-roof frame structure of the same type as those converted to Type B houses.
- 6–8 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (ca. 1835): A Type C house sheathed in natural shingles. The space between two original gable dormers has been infilled to create a dormer that bears elements of both shed and gable dormers. End doors have mid-20<sup>th</sup> century metallic hoods supported by extruded columns. A mid-20<sup>th</sup> century ell extends from the rear to the original back building. (12)

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**COTTAGE STREET , cont.**

OUTBUILDING (by 1849): A 1-story, gable-roof frame structure of the same type as those converted to Type B houses.

- 10–12 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (ca. 1835): A Type C house sheathed in a combination of vinyl siding on the front with some exposed areas of earlier clapboard on the west elevation. Dormers are configured similar to those of neighboring 6–8 Cottage St. End doors are surmounted by semicircular hoods that appear to date to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. (13)

OUTBUILDING (by 1849): A 1-story, gable-roof frame structure of the same type as those converted to Type B houses.

**MAIN STREET**

- 3 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (by 1847): Similar in scale and siting to Type A houses, this 2½-story tenement was originally a flank gable, clapboarded building with Greek Revival detail that included paneled corner boards, door entablature, and four pedimented dormers set symmetrically on the roof. Entrances placed at each end of the front elevation were flanked by sidelights. Original windows were double-hung, 6/6 sash. By 1911 a single story extension had been added to the front of the house extending it to the Main Street sidewalk. For a period, this extension housed the Manville post office; it now houses a convenience store and the Harmony Café on the Main Street elevation and a salon accessible from Railroad Street. See *Additional Information*, Figure 12. (1)
- 13 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (ca. 1825): A Type A house sheathed in vinyl clapboard, with a single gable-roofed dormer, and a late 20<sup>th</sup>-century metal hood over the central entrance. A ca. 1900 photograph of this house suggests that the central entrance had sidelights; possibly covered over in the application of vinyl, there is no exterior evidence of those sidelights now. (2)
- 25 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (ca. 1825): Similar to 13 Main Street, a Type A house sheathed in vinyl clapboard. Despite the application of vinyl, Federal-era sidelights survive. (3)
- 30 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (ca. 1825): Similar to 13 Main Street, a Type A house sheathed in vinyl clapboard. (7)

GARAGE (after 1935): Non-contributing.

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**MAIN STREET, cont.**

- 35 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (ca. 1825 et seq.): A Type A variant that exhibits evidence of a mid-19<sup>th</sup> century remodeling. It is one of the few inventoried houses with surviving clapboard. A side wing with its own internal chimney and a higher level of architectural detail suggest that this house was occupied by a mill agent or owner. Anecdotally, it is said that this may have been the residence of mill superintendent Aaron Mann.<sup>2</sup> Detail includes paneled corner boards, second-story window trim with cornice and consoles, pedimented dormers, and pilastered door trim with fluted consoles. The proximity of the consoles to the height of the front porch roof suggests that this porch was an early alteration. (4)  
Garage(after 1935): Non-contributing.
- 40 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (ca. 1825): Similar to 13 Main Street, a Type A house sheathed in vinyl clapboard. (8)  
  
OUTBUILDING (by 1849): A 1-story, gable-roof frame structure of the same type as those converted to Type B houses.  
  
GARAGE (after 1935): Non-contributing.
- 45 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (ca. 1825): Similar to 13 Main Street, a Type A house sheathed in vinyl clapboard. Despite the application of vinyl, Federal-era sidelights survive. Two of the original front elevation window openings have been filled and replaced with a late 20<sup>th</sup>-century replacement window. (5)  
  
GARAGE (after 1935): Non-contributing
- 52 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (ca. 1825): A Type A house with large 20<sup>th</sup>-century side wing. (9)  
  
GARAGE: Non-contributing
- 70-72 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (1890): A Type F house sheathed in vinyl clapboard. (18)
- 74-76 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (1890): A Type F house sheathed in vinyl clapboard with an enclosed front porch. (19)

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Roger Gladu, March 2008.

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**MAIN STREET, cont.**

GARAGE (after 1935): Non-contributing

78–80 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (1890): A Type F house sheathed in vinyl clapboard with a full front porch. (20)

82–84 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (1890): A Type F house sheathed in asbestos shingle. (21)

86–88 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (1890): A Type F house sheathed in vinyl clapboard. (22)

**PARK WAY**

WORLD WAR I MEMORIAL PARK (between 1919 and 1931): A roughly one-acre park set along the north side of Park Way. This land, formerly owned by the Manville Company, was the site of the Federal-era mill house now sited at 12 Church Lane. The core of this park dates to 1919. At that time, the house at 12 Church Lane coexisted with a neighboring park and playground. The focus of the park is the World War I monument, erected in 1919 to recognize Manville's veterans and reputed at the time to be the first of its kind in the country. The monument is composed of a Doric column set on a classical plinth and bearing a globe, all executed in gray Westerly granite. The park also contains an octagonal wooden gazebo of recent construction.

3 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (by 1847): A Type B house built as an outbuilding for the mill house at 13 Main Street. This house has an enclosed, added front porch and is sheathed in vinyl clapboard. (40)

6 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (ca. 1838): A Type D house sheathed in white asbestos shingle. (48)

14–16 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (ca. 1875): A 1½-story, nine-bay, triple house, one of two flank gable houses of this type.<sup>3</sup> Despite its vinyl clapboard sheathing, this is the better preserved of the two examples of this type (see 54–56 Spring Street). Four gabled dormers break the roofline; entrances are placed asymmetrically along the facade. A full front porch appears to be a mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century addition. Three interior chimneys are corbelled. See *Additional Information*, Figure 11, a view of this house in context. (46)

<sup>3</sup> Although the 1895 Everts and Richards map depicts this and 54–56 Spring St. as double houses, they are significantly longer than other double houses in the village and clearly indicated on the 1903 Sanborn as having three dwellings.

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**PARK WAY, cont.**

17-19 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (ca. 1875): A 1½-story, eight-bay double house with paired central doors and two interior chimneys. Sheathing is vinyl clapboard. (45)

**RAILROAD STREET**

6 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (by 1847): This Type B building, originally an outbuilding (labeled as a shed in 1911) behind 3 Main Street (q.v.), is a three-bay cape sheathed in vinyl clapboard with an enclosed front porch. Now a private residence, this building served in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century as an American Legion Hall. See *Additional Information*, Figure 5. (41)

30 MANVILLE COMMUNITY CENTER/POST OFFICE (1936): A 2½-story, 5-bay main block with wings. Erected by the Manville Company shortly after the decision to sell its factory housing, this building originally housed offices of the American Legion, Visiting Nurses Association and the Red Cross. Since 1954, a left rear side wing has been the Manville post office. Interior oak trim was removed from the former 19th-century post office on Main Street and reinstalled in this office.

38-40 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (between 1838 and 1847): A 2½-story, six-bay tenement house with two entries, two gabled dormers and a center chimney. This house has an added, two-tiered, full front porch with a single-story front extension toward Railroad Street. It is sheathed in vinyl clapboard. (51)

GARAGE (after 1935): Non-contributing.

50 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (between 1838 and 1847): A 2½-story house similar to 38-40 Railroad Street. A two-tiered, full front porch has been enclosed. Although this house was built as a multi-family tenement, it was converted to a single residence in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. (52)

GARAGE (after 1935): Non-contributing.

**SPRING STREET**

9 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (between 1838 and 1847, modified early 20<sup>th</sup> century): A 1½-story double house. This house and the house at 8 Summer Street appear to originally have been rear outbuildings associated with the larger houses at 38-40 and 50 Railroad Street respectively, later

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**SPRING STREET, cont.**

converted and enlarged. The likely ca. 1911 six-bay configuration has been modified to the present one of two entrances flanking a central pair of small windows and full porch. Cladding is vinyl clapboard. The 1903 Sanborn map shows a relatively narrow building in this location, not indicated as a dwelling. By 1911, the footprint of the building had expanded and it appears as a two-story tenement. (53)

- 12-14 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (ca 1875): A 1½-story, eight-bay double house similar in scale to the neighboring triple house at 14-16-18 Park Way. This house has a row of small windows placed immediately below the roofline, two central doors and two interior chimneys. (44)
- 15 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (1874): A Type E rowhouse, the only one of the eight buildings of this type that did not undergo a thorough "modernization" in the 1970s. As a result, the unadorned brick surface of this building is unchanged from its original construction. It should be noted, however, that the roof of this building has been rationalized to eliminate the north elevation slope change that survives on two of the middle units of other rowhouses of this type. In order to do this, a panel was inserted above paired doors to allow the upper roofline to continue unbroken. In some cases, the segmental arch space (originally for a transom) above the doors has been brick-filled. A few of the original 6/6, double-hung windows also survive on this building. (59)
- 21 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (1874): A Type E rowhouse modernized in the 1970s. Along with replacement windows and doors, this project included a differentiation of the original brick surface to produce a pattern of two stuccoed end units flanked by two plain brick interior units and two stuccoed central units surmounted by a vinyl-sheathed, pedimented porch with fluted metal columns. (58)
- 23 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (1874): A Type E rowhouse similar to 21 Spring Street. (57)
- 25 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (1874): A Type E rowhouse similar to 21 Spring Street. (56)
- 54-56 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (ca. 1875): A 1½-story double house sheathed in vinyl clapboard with three interior chimneys and a row of small windows placed immediately below the cornice. This is a former triple house converted to a duplex sometime after 1943. See 14-16-18 Park Way. (47)

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**SUMMER STREET**

8 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (between 1838 and 1847, modified early 20<sup>th</sup> century): A 1½-story double house converted to single family sometime after 1943. The ca. 1911 six-bay original configuration with separate entrances has been modified to the present configuration of a single central door with flanking bay windows and full porch. Sheathing is vinyl clapboard. Between 1921 and 1931 this house, originally sited directly behind and serving as an outbuilding for the house at 50 Railroad Street, appears to have been moved to its present location at the sidewalk edge of Summer Street. See description of similar house at 9 Spring Street. (54)

GARAGE (after 1935): Non-contributing.

19 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (1874): A Type E rowhouse similar to 21 Spring Street. The rear elevation of this building (and that of 25 Summer Street) has a change in roof slope not only on the outer units but above each set of double doors on the interior units as well. This appears to be the original roof configuration for all of the eight Type E houses. (60)

21 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (1874): A Type E rowhouse similar to 21 Spring Street. (61)

23 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (1874): A Type E rowhouse similar to 21 Spring Street. (62)

25 MANVILLE COMPANY HOUSE (1874): A Type E rowhouse similar to 19 Summer Street. (63)

**Non-contributing buildings:**

**RAILROAD STREET**

14 LAUNDROMAT (by 1962) A one-story, end-gable-roof, concrete block building.

**PARK WAY**

10 HOUSE (ca 1960): A 1-story ranch-style house sheathed in wood shingle.



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**LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS**

Items 2 through 5 are the same for each photograph, as follows:

All photographs are of the Manville Company Worker Housing Historic District

2. Providence County, Rhode Island

3. Edward Connors, photographer

4. Summer 2008

5. Original digital files stored at: Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission

150 Benefit Street

Providence, Rhode Island

Items 1, 6, and 7 for each photograph are listed below:

1. 35 Main Street, Manville Company Worker Housing Historic District

6. 35 Main Street - view facing southwest

7. Photograph #1

1. 25 Main Street, Manville Company Worker Housing Historic District

6. 25 Main Street, Type A house – view facing west

7. Photograph #2

1. 11 Almeida Drive, Manville Company Worker Housing Historic District

6. 11 Almeida Drive, Type B converted shed - view facing east. This former outbuilding was associated with the house at 25 Main Street.

7. Photograph #3

1. 2-4 Cottage Street, Manville Company Worker Housing Historic District

6. 2-4 Cottage Street, Type C house – view facing southwest

7. Photograph #4

1. 12 Church Lane, Manville Company Worker Housing Historic District

6. 12 Church Lane, Type D house – View facing southwest

7. Photograph #5

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**SIGNIFICANCE**

Located in the village of Manville in the town of Lincoln, Rhode Island, the worker housing built by the Manville Company during its 19<sup>th</sup>-century expansion exemplifies the ways that textile manufacturers working in isolated waterpower sites addressed the problem of attracting and securing a stable labor force in the first century of the American industrial revolution. From 1812 to its post-Civil War rise to national prominence with one of the largest cotton mills in the country, the Manville Company constructed several forms of worker housing. Examples of each survive in the village. Although most of the factory complex, which was located on the Cumberland side of the Blackstone River, was demolished in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the factory's residential village on the Lincoln side of the river remains largely intact. Built from ca. 1812 to 1890 and sold off in 1935-6, it consists of a crescent-shaped swath of fifty-eight contributing resources, primarily worker houses with a central cluster of institutional properties including a church, a school, a memorial park and a community center, all built under the sponsorship of the mill owners.<sup>4</sup> The housing types range chronologically from Federal-era frame houses along Main Street to ten-unit brick rowhouses associated with the massive expansion of the mill in the early 1870s, and a concentrated group of 1890 frame double-houses representing the final campaign of worker housing.

The Manville Company corporate village is highly significant for its ability to illustrate the New England industrial village and the evolution of its worker housing in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As such, it meets National Register **Criterion A** (Industry) as the architectural expression of the rise of a 19<sup>th</sup>-century factory village and **Criterion C** (Architecture) as an exemplification of the evolution of factory housing in the first century of American industrialization.

This district comprises the residential village built under the sponsorship of the Manville Company. If a larger Manville Historic District encompassing a wider range of resources is considered, these properties would be re-evaluated in light of more broadly-defined areas and/or period of significance.

**History**

Although textile manufacture in the village that came to be known as Manville dates to 1812, the securing of a water privilege and the subsequent industrial exploitation of this Blackstone River site dates to the mid-18<sup>th</sup>-century establishment of Unity Furnace and a cluster of country mills on the Cumberland side of the river. The original hydraulic power system comprised a dam in the general location of the present mid-19<sup>th</sup> century

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<sup>4</sup> A number of Manville Company factory houses survive on the Cumberland side of the river. Because they are relatively few in number, outside of the concentrated development of the village of Manville, and not included on the 1935 plat map accompanying the sale of the Manville Company houses, they are not inventoried in this nomination.

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structure, a headrace (also on the Cumberland side) to a riverfront site just south of present-day Manville Hill Road providing power to the blast furnace and its associated operations (which included a foundry), as well as neighboring saw-, grist- and fulling mills.

Unity Furnace's location in the area that came to be known later as Manville was based on access to Cumberland iron ore, a nearby source of lime from the kilns of Lime Rock and Martin's Wading Place, and a substantial waterpower privilege for operation of a bellows. The success of Samuel Slater's experiments in waterpowered cotton spinning, the decline of Unity Furnace by ca. 1800, and the consequent availability of a water privilege encouraged a group of investors,<sup>5</sup> among them Thomas Man,<sup>6</sup> to form a cotton spinning enterprise and erect a frame mill along the headrace that for a period continued to serve the existing country mills. Maintaining the name of the earlier iron furnace, this enterprise was christened the Unity Cotton Manufacturing Company. The textile mill erected was a 33' x 92', 3½ -story frame building housing 1000 spindles. Although refurbished to accommodate new equipment and 6000 spindles in 1870, late in the century this mill was converted to serve as a boarding house.<sup>7</sup>

In 1821 ownership of Unity Cotton Manufacturing Company passed to Jenkins and Mann, a partnership of William Jenkins and Aaron Mann and they erected a second mill in 1826. This mill, a 4½-story brick building containing 8000 spindles, reflected confidence in the new industrial order, confidence that was partially influenced by the combined transportation and hydraulic power opportunities made possible by the construction of the Blackstone Canal between 1824 and 1828. Extending southerly from Worcester along a 45-mile path that combined manmade sections with natural waterways, the Blackstone Canal passed along the west bank of the river in Manville on its way to Providence.<sup>8</sup>

Although the canal was recognized as an engineering feat, periods of low water, winter ice, and frequent

<sup>5</sup> The investors were Thomas Man, Stephen Clark, George Hill, David Hill, Jesse Brown, George Aldrich, Otis Capron, David Wilkinson, Alpheus Ammidon, Stephen Whipple and Asa Bartlett. The Unity Cotton Manufacturing Company was capitalized at \$32,000. Thomas Man owned five shares in the company at \$1000/share.

<sup>6</sup> Different members of the family at this time spelled the name with one or two Ns.

<sup>7</sup> Two two-story rear extensions of this mill were removed, relocated to other locations, and (at least in one case) refitted to serve as worker housing. A 1912 reference to a removal of the mill additions to the "old road," suggests that one of these pieces of the first mill was relocated to Boyle Avenue on the Cumberland side of the river. Boyle Avenue is secondarily named "old road" in early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Sanborn maps. The main block of the mill served as a store house in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and likely stood in its original location until sometime around 1950.

<sup>8</sup> A number of the investors, including Edward Carrington at the Hamlet privilege in Woonsocket, were industrialists drawn to the canal enterprise because of the potential availability of industrial hydraulic power made possible by the height differential between the canal and the river.

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litigation between the canal company and neighboring mill owners made long term profitability impossible. As pointed out by Richard Greenwood in his 1991 article, "Natural Run and Artificial Falls,"

Technical limitations and, finally, obsolescence [the rise of practical rail transportation] kept the canal from reaching its full potential. Yet at the same time that its inadequacies as a transportation system were hampering its commercial success, the Blackstone Canal acted as a great hydraulic engineering system, a major force in the industrial development of the Blackstone River as the "hardest working river in America." In fact, long after the canal company ceased operations, elements of the canal remained in productive industrial use, exploited for both power and water.<sup>9</sup>

While enjoying ample waterpower, the managers of isolated textile factories sited at water privileges distant from population centers needed to attract and provide for workers. The Manville mill owners followed the Blackstone River Valley pattern of providing housing for workers in the form of one and two-story houses in the prevalent vernacular style. In 1821, the factory estate acquired by Jenkins and Mann included "four dwelling houses."<sup>10</sup> The 1826 expansion of the Jenkins and Mann works prompted the construction of additional worker housing. According to the Edward Phelps map of the Blackstone Canal, by 1828 there was a compact settlement of twelve buildings in the vicinity of what is now lower Main Street, directly across the river from the mills. These early dwellings included both 1½- and 2½-story houses with flank gable roofs and center chimneys. In the typical style of the early mill villages, these were divided into two and four tenements, respectively. At least one representative of the one-story style stands at 12 Church Lane. Seven of the two-story houses survive on the north end of Main Street, though one, 35 Main Street, was remodeled in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, reportedly when it was the residence of the mill superintendent.

Although available maps<sup>11</sup> of Manville predating 1847 were not drawn to a scale that permitted the accurate rendering of building footprints, many of the houses, including those on either side of Main Street had rear outbuildings, measuring approximately 35 feet in length, that were depicted accurately on the Cushing and Walling 1847 plat of Manville. These structures, which may have contained privies and woodsheds, remain as outbuildings behind 40 Main Street and the three double houses on Cottage Street. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the outbuildings behind 3, 13 and 25 Main Street were converted to dwellings on their own subdivided parcels. Three converted dwellings of this type survive on Almeida Drive, Park Way and Railroad Street.

<sup>9</sup> *Rhode Island History* 49 (May 1991): 52.

<sup>10</sup> Smithfield Land Evidence Book 14:337.

<sup>11</sup> E.g., the 1831 James Stevens map and the 1838 Newell Nelson map.

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In 1831 William Jenkins and Samuel Mann sold  $\frac{1}{4}$  interest in the factory estate to Aaron Mann, the brother of Samuel. In recognition of the rising influence of the Mann family in the affairs of the village, it came to be known as Manville during this period. The next two decades saw a general prospering of the factory enterprise under the principal ownership of the Mann family, the expansion of the village on the Lincoln side to more than twenty houses by the mid-1840s, and the construction of a new bridge linking the factory and village over the canal and river. Coincident with the failure of the Blackstone Canal in 1848, Manville saw the arrival of the Providence and Worcester Railroad in the place of the former towpath. The street bordering the former towpath was appropriately renamed Railroad Street.

Samuel Mann as mill superintendent exercised a rigid paternalistic influence in the village. Under his sponsorship, Emmanuel Episcopal Church<sup>12</sup> and the first schoolhouse were built on the northern edge of the existing village on land donated by the family. Pathways extending from Main Street to the entrances of the church and the school acquired the names Church Lane and School Lane respectively.

During this period four  $1\frac{1}{2}$ -story double houses were built on a new road (subsequently called Cottage Street) south of and parallel to Main Street. Three of these houses survive. Another row of six tenement houses was built along Railroad Street, two of which survive at 38-40 and 50 Railroad Street. These  $2\frac{1}{2}$ -story tenement dwellings have two entries, located in the end bays of the front elevation. A similar but larger house of this type at 3 Main Street retains some of its Greek Revival trim, but an early 20<sup>th</sup>-century addition that once housed the local post office and a store now obscures much of its façade. (Figure 12)

By 1850 the textile works at Manville were among the largest in Rhode Island. In 1854, seven years after Samuel Mann's death, the heirs of Jenkins and Mann sold the mill estate to the Valley Falls Company. This new parent company, founded by the Chace family at Valley Falls in 1842, had been involved in a waterpower dispute with Mann over the height of the Valley Falls Company dam at their mill at Albion, the next privilege a short distance downstream from Manville. Samuel Mann had sued the Valley Falls Company over backwater and prevailed, forcing the Chaces to lower their dam two feet. Upon purchase of the works at Manville in 1859, the Valley Falls Company immediately raised the dam to its former height. The new ownership at Manville made significant improvements to the factory complex during this period, including the construction of a new wing on the 1826 second mill and the installation of turbines to replace the less efficient and maintenance-intensive waterwheels.

Civil War-era prosperity brought new corporate ownership to the works at Manville. In 1863 a new corporation, linked to the Valley Falls Company ownership, was formed. This corporation, combining the textile interests of

<sup>12</sup> Although Mann was a Quaker, he built an Episcopal church for the many English members of his workforce.

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the Lippitt and Chace families under the name of the Manville Company, soon considered a massive—and ultimately troublesome—expansion of the company. By 1870, the works at Manville housed 20,000 spindles and 348 looms, employing some 300 male, female and child operatives, a growing number of these representing the wave of French-Canadian immigration that commenced during the war. Despite this expansion, company housing in the neighboring village had not increased significantly since ca. 1850.

Planning for the construction of a third mill, following expansions of the second mill in 1859 and 1862, began in 1865. This original plan called for a mill of 35–40 thousand spindle capacity, an effective doubling of the capacity of the existing works. In the seven years between this original plan and groundbreaking for the third mill in 1872, the company made significant hydraulic improvements<sup>13</sup> constructing the present Manville dam, and concurrently raised the mortgage on the mill estate to finance a far more ambitious project. The new five-story mansarded mill, located between the third mill and river, would measure 800' x 97' with a capacity of 125,000 spindles and 2500 narrow looms--described in 1877 as the “largest mill under one roof in the United States.”<sup>14</sup> The Panic of 1873, a severe, five-year economic depression that profoundly affected the textile industry of the northeastern United States, occurred just as the plant began operation.<sup>15</sup>

Economic insecurity notwithstanding, the Manville Company proceeded with an ambitious expansion of worker housing on a westward extension of the village’s street grid. A year into the depression, the company began construction of eight brick rowhouse blocks, each providing ten dwelling units. These buildings, which run across the hillside between Spring, Summer and Winter Streets, were arranged in four groups of two with their front entries on the outer elevations and their rear elevations facing a shared back courtyard with common outdoor privies. The design of these buildings echoed basic stylistic elements of the third mill — brick construction with segmental arch window and door openings.

This form of factory housing is rare in Rhode Island, though it is not a singular occurrence.<sup>16</sup> The rowhouses of Manville, however, are much larger than other extant examples, having ten units, while the largest of the others contains six units. In his *Buildings of Rhode Island*, William Jordy made special mention of how the alternating

<sup>13</sup> This new dam provided a head of 19', furnishing 250 HP.

<sup>14</sup> Hoag and Wade, p. 116.

<sup>15</sup> Among the casualties of this downturn was the demise of the huge Sprague textile holdings in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Connecticut.

<sup>16</sup> Brick rowhouses exist in the village of Lonsdale in the town of Cumberland, and frame rows were built in the villages of Saxonville/Pascoag in the town of Burrillville, Lonsdale in the town of Cumberland, and Ashton in the town of Lincoln. There were most likely others as well that have been demolished.

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roof heights of units help break up the mass of each row and give it a more lively appearance than a simple row, a format which he found unique in Rhode Island.<sup>17</sup>

According to the 1875 census schedule for Manville, the overwhelming majority of the eighty families living in these rowhouses were of Canadian birth and French-Canadian extraction, clear evidence of the ethnic reshaping of the village in the decade after the Civil War.<sup>18</sup>

By 1880 the mill owned 1,000 acres of property on both sides of the river and provided employment to some 1,500 operatives. The newly expanded works now could also rely on a 1,600 HP steam engine installed in 1878 to supplement waterpower during periods of low water flow. The company was content to operate at this level of production through the 1880s, but embarked on another expansion in the 1890s. In 1892, the company installed new turbines and reconfigured their hydraulic system for a gain of 600 HP over the roughly 1,700 HP available before the improvements.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, the company undertook the construction of a massive weave shed. Housing 4,000 narrow looms, the footprint of this 650' x 250' sawtooth roofed building dwarfed that of the neighboring third mill.

As before, an expansion of the factory complex was accompanied by an enlargement of the village. In 1890 the Manville Company began what was to be its final campaign of factory housing along two newly surveyed streets on the east side of Main Street.<sup>20</sup> Instead of the rowhouse type used fifteen years earlier, the company built sixteen 1½-story, frame, double houses, all of which survive.<sup>21</sup>

By this time, the village of Manville, numbering over 5,000 people, was enjoying a rise in private investment in the construction of triple-deckers as well as other forms of housing.

In 1901 the factory complex at Manville came under new corporate ownership. The Manville Company, incorporated in New Jersey, united the works at Manville with the mills and associated company housing of the Social, Nourse, and Globe Mills in Woonsocket. The last significant physical expansion of the mill, an

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<sup>17</sup> William Jordy, *Buildings of Rhode Island* (NY: Oxford, 2004), p. 202.  
<sup>18</sup> Source: 1875 Manuscript State Census Population Schedule for Manville. Among the names documented are Tessier, Archambault, Drolette, Pothier, and DesRosiers. Living among these predominantly French-Canadian families were a few families of Irish descent (e.g., McCabe, Larkin, Bailey, Malone).  
<sup>19</sup> *Board of Trade Journal* 1 (1 May 1892): 386.  
<sup>20</sup> One of the two streets, Hawk Street, has been abandoned and survives as a common driveway. The houses on this drive now have Main Street addresses. The other, Chestnut Street, remains a municipal street.  
<sup>21</sup> One of these Type F double houses, located at 1 Locust Street, has undergone extensive alteration and is not inventoried in this nomination.

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enlargement of the 1900 weave shed, was carried out in 1910. Confidence was high in the viability of this early 20<sup>th</sup>-century manufacturing community. Just as Woonsocket's town fathers had formed an independent municipality out of a cluster of mill villages a few decades earlier, Manville's boosters in 1909 envisioned the creation of an independent Manville.<sup>22</sup> The other major physical change in the village was the creation of World War One Memorial Park on company land between Railroad Street and Church Lane.

In the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a constellation of economic and political forces accounted for some degree of prosperity and stability in New England textile towns. The late 'teens saw a rise in textile orders as the federal government looked to the northeast as a source of fabric for military use. With the end of war prosperity and the decline of military orders, many companies reorganized in the economic downturn of the early 1920s. In this troubled context a new company, the Manville-Jenckes Spinning Company, was formed in 1923. In the early years of this corporation, a huge strike erupted with the state militia called in to quell violence in the village in 1926. This decade saw increasing relocation of New England mills to the south, closer to sources of cotton and—up to that time—a workforce resistant to unionization. For the mills that remained open, these twin forces combined to deplete the New England job market even as southern competition made northern cotton manufacture less profitable. A year into the Great Depression, Manville-Jenckes suffered a huge decline in sales. The company sought bankruptcy protection in 1931 and made a final effort at reorganization in the form of a new Delaware-based corporation after two years of receivership.

By 1934 Manville-Jenckes had begun internal discussion of the necessity of selling off its real estate holdings in the village of Manville. As pointed out by superintendent Henry F. Lippitt in 1936,

At Manville, while the mill continued in operation, the village was partially necessary and it was not feasible to relinquish control of it entirely or suddenly. The plan was made to dispose of it gradually on individual offers as the occasion for obtaining reasonable prices for the property occurred.<sup>23</sup>

It would appear that the occasion for such reasonable offers never arose. Within a year Manville-Jenckes had formed a group of sub-corporations to dispose of the villages in Bernon and Social in Woonsocket and Manville in Lincoln. In the same year, a plat map was prepared depicting each parcel and building to be sold. This map has been reproduced with this document. During the next year, the various company properties throughout the town were sold to private owners—including the eighty separate rowhouse units.

<sup>22</sup> "Is Manville to be Rhode Island's Next City?" *Providence Journal* (12 September 1909): S4 p4.

<sup>23</sup> Henry F. Lippitt, *Financial History of the Manville-Jenckes Company*, p. 95.



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It is notable that the new corporation, despite a stated desire to divest itself of factory housing, built a new community center for the town in the same year that it privatized the village. This two-story building at 30 Railroad Street, on the site of a worker tenement house, originally housed offices of the American Legion, Visiting Nurses Association and the Red Cross. In 1936, the company deeded the building to the Manville Community Center, the non-profit organization that still owns and operates it as a community center. The Manville Fabrics division of Textron acquired Manville-Jenckes in 1946, refitting the mill complex for silk and rayon, and shutting down the plant in 1948. More than two thousand mill operatives—most of them living in Manville—lost their jobs. Despite some cautious optimism in the village that the new owner, Crescent Corp. of Fall River, Massachusetts, would reverse Manville's economic fortunes, the mill remained an underutilized shell into the 1950s. A ruinous flood on the Blackstone River seriously damaged the mill complex in August of 1955. A few months later, what began as an electrical fire spread rapidly, destroying the whole complex along with the rhythms of life of a community long sustained by textile manufacture.

Some upstream masonry hydraulic features, including the post Civil War dam and pond, a brick storehouse on the Lincoln side of the river, and the concrete footings of a bleach house built over the river, are all that remain of this massive complex. Future research may suggest the existence of additional archaeological resources along the river in the vicinity of the mills, raceways and mill yards. Of the 52 company houses inventoried in 1935, 49 of these buildings, extending in a swath from Winter Street to Chestnut Street, bear witness to the changing fortunes of this 19<sup>th</sup>-century industrial village.

While this National Register nomination arises out of research particular to the Manville Company's worker village, it does not preclude the possibility of a larger nomination for the Village of Manville. Were such a nomination to be prepared, it would likely include the existing company store house on the Lincoln side of the river, privately-built tenements, religious, commercial, and civic buildings, as well as identification and documentation of surviving hydraulic features.

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**GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundaries of the Manville Company Worker Housing Historic District are contiguous with those of Lincoln Tax Assessor's Plat No. 35, Lots 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49 and 50 and Assessor's Plat No. 37, Lots 90, 92, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 105, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 144, 145, 237, 238 and 267.

**Boundary Justification**

These boundaries, comprising approximately 50 acres, define most of the land historically associated with the Manville Company's worker village from ca. 1812 to 1935.



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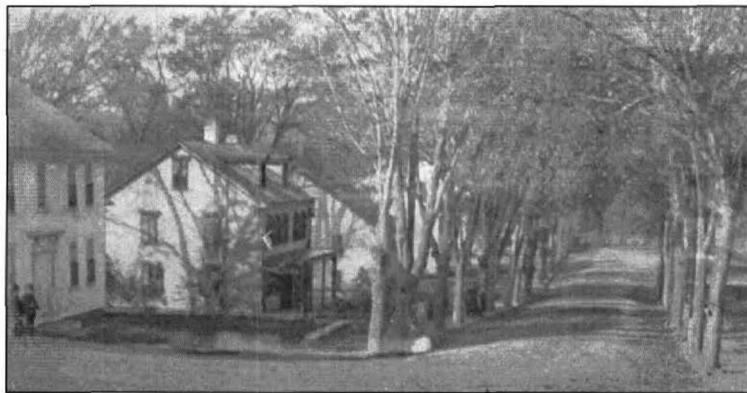


Figure 1  
Late 19<sup>th</sup>-century view along Main Street toward Blackstone River  
Showing (l-r) houses at 45, 35, 25, 13 and 3 Main Street  
Tree canopy is rendered similarly on an 1847 plat map  
*Roger Gladu collection*



Figure 2  
19<sup>th</sup>-century view up Main Street from Blackstone River  
Greek Revival double house at 3 Main St. (now Harmony Café) at right  
*Roger Gladu collection*

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Figure 3  
View from Cumberland side of river to village



Figure 4  
Detail from above showing Type A houses on Main Street  
Although the rear outbuildings at left of frame do not survive, they show the original appearance  
of three surviving converted Type B cottages located behind houses on opposite side of street.

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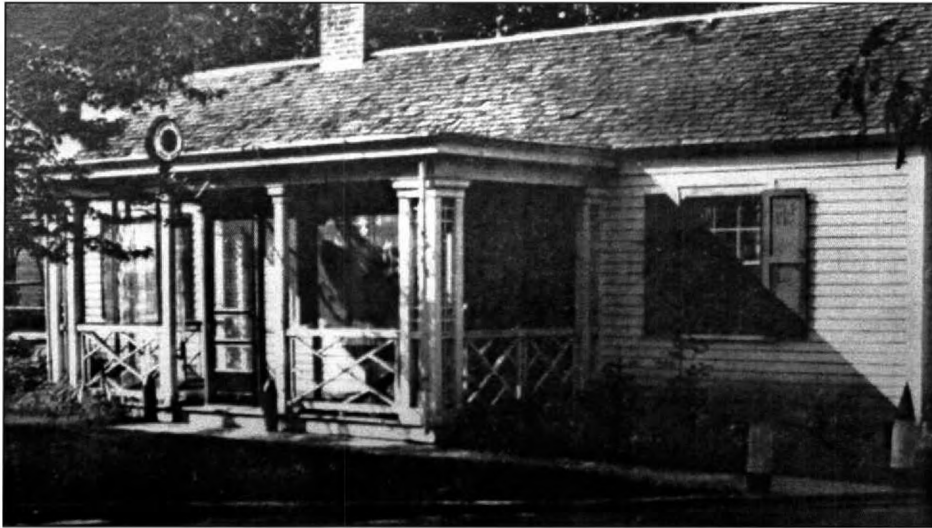


Figure 5

Former American Legion Hall at 6 Railroad Street, now a residence converted from  
the outbuilding originally associated with the tenement at 3 Main Street  
*Roger Gladu collection*

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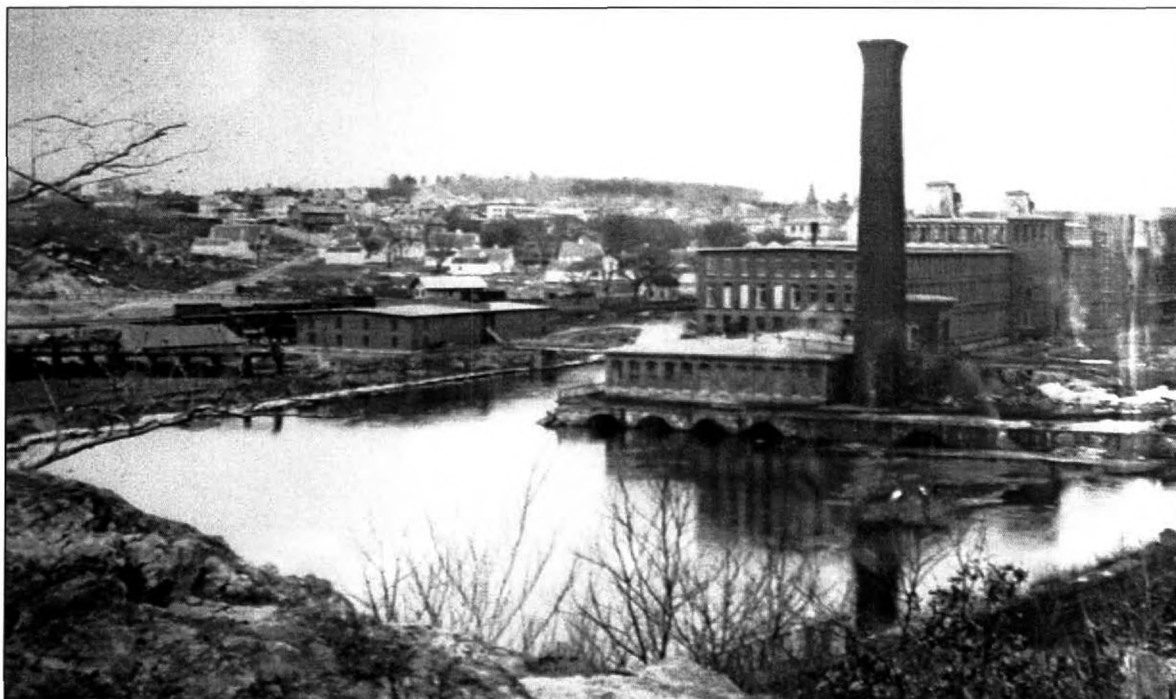


Figure 6

Detail from a late 19<sup>th</sup>-century view from below mills over surviving Store House on Lincoln side of river  
*Reproduced from photo hanging in Lincoln Town Council chambers*



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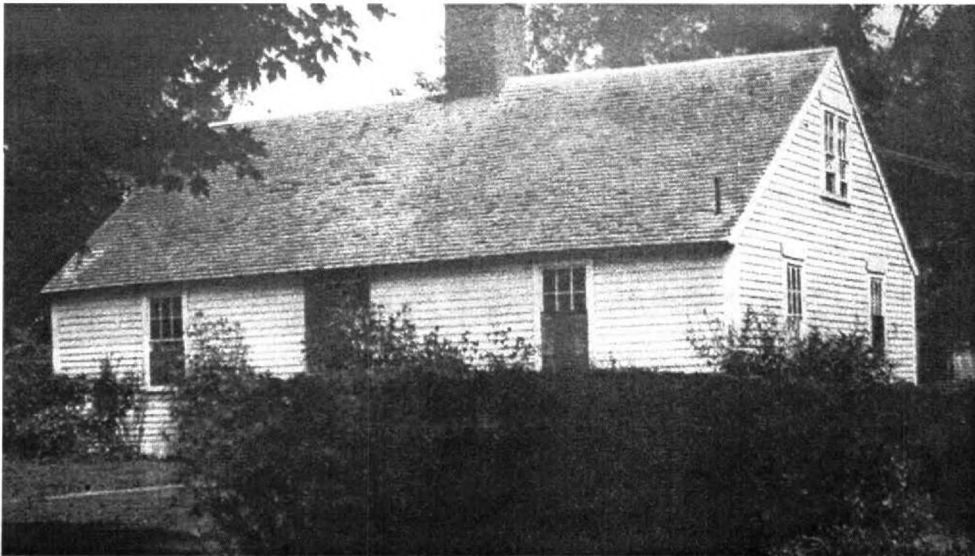


Figure 7  
Type D Cape in its original location within present-day WW1 Memorial Park  
Moved to 12 Church Lane in 1920s  
*Roger Gladu collection*

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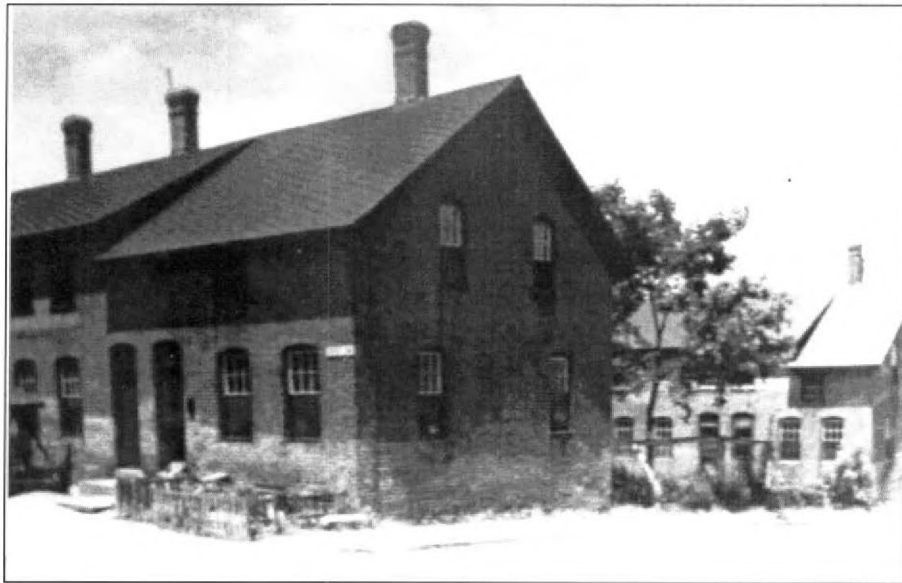


Figure 8  
Early 20<sup>th</sup> century view of end units of 1874 rowhouses  
*McCarthy (Images of Rhode Island) collection, Providence Public Library*

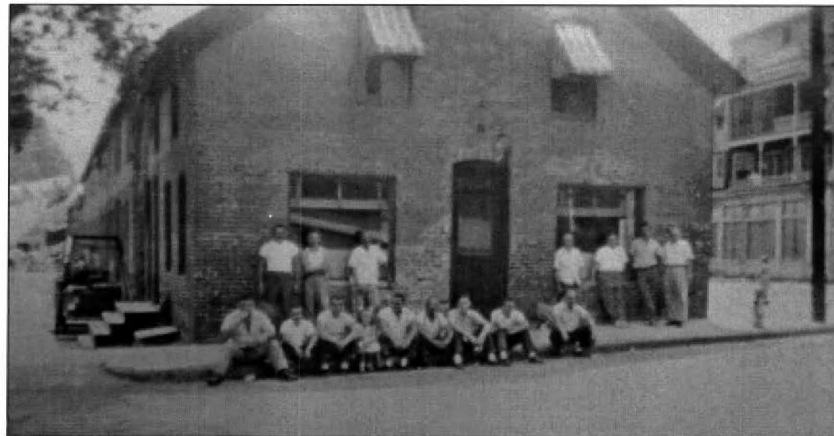


Figure 9  
Early 20<sup>th</sup> century view of Dupre's Barber Shop in end unit of Spring Street rowhouse  
*Roger Gladu collection*

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Figure 10

View down Spring Street to River near intersection of Spring and Park Way (1939)  
*Roger Gladu collection*



Figure 11

Late 19<sup>th</sup>-century view over village to 3<sup>rd</sup> Mill and Cumberland factory housing  
Note two triple houses at 14-16-18 Park Way and 54-56 Spring Street opposite Type E rowhouses  
*Roger Gladu collection*

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Figure 12

Late 19<sup>th</sup>-century view of Greek Revival two-family house at 3 Main Street  
*Roger Gladu collection*

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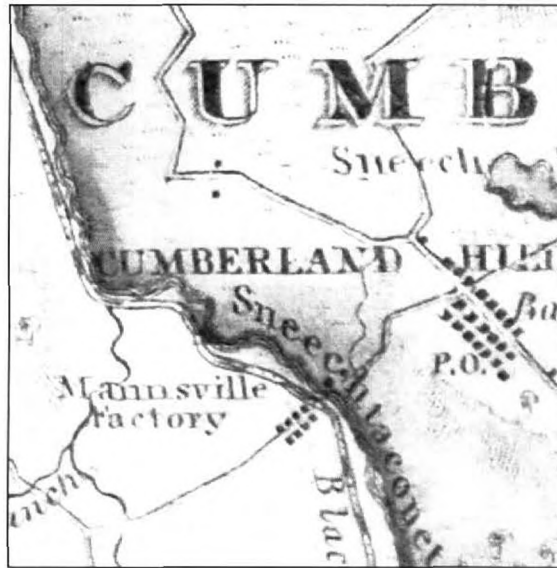


Figure 13  
Detail from  
*A Topographical Map of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations*, James Stephens' (1831)  
Showing Type A houses along Main Street

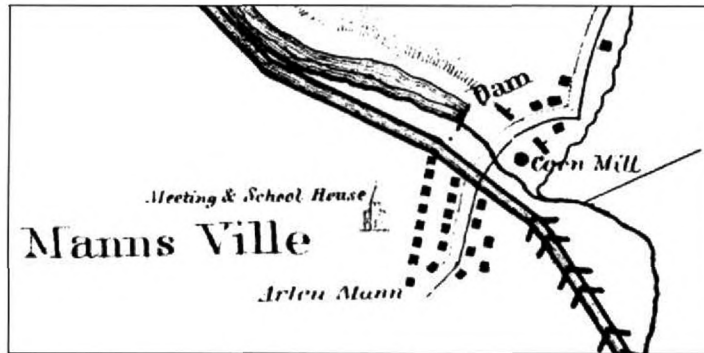


Figure 14  
Detail from *Map of the Town of Cumberland*, Newell Nelson (1838)  
Showing expansion of village on either side of Main Street

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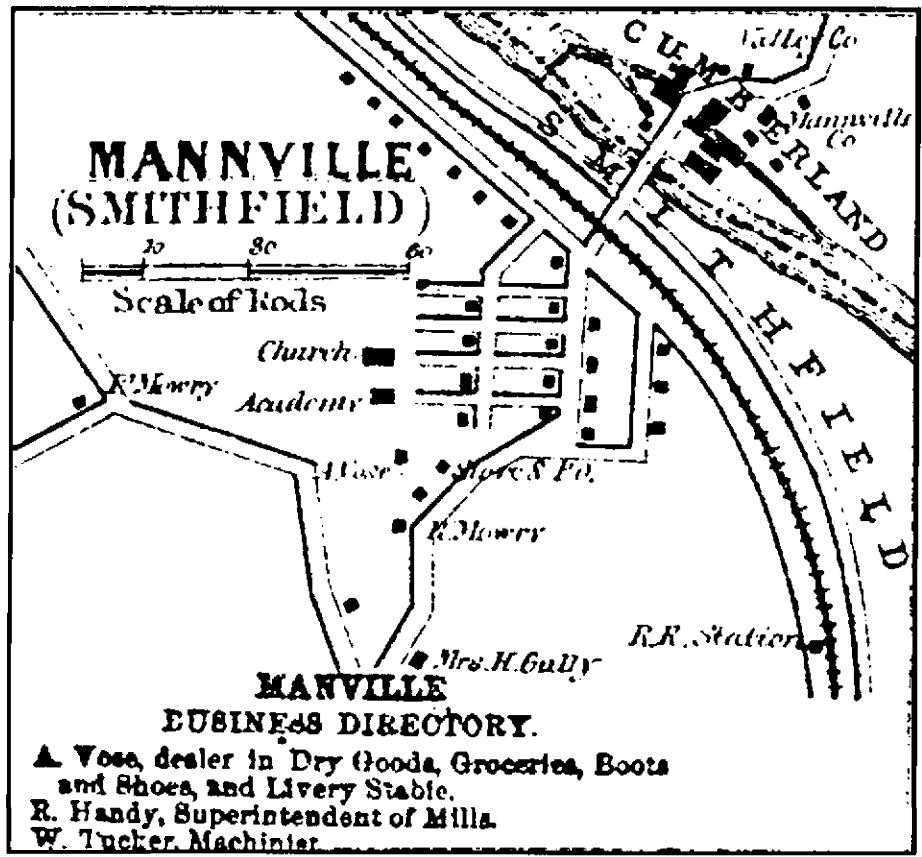


Figure 15  
Detail from *Map of Rhode Island*, Henry F. Walling (1862)  
Showing Type A, C and D houses and development along Railroad Street

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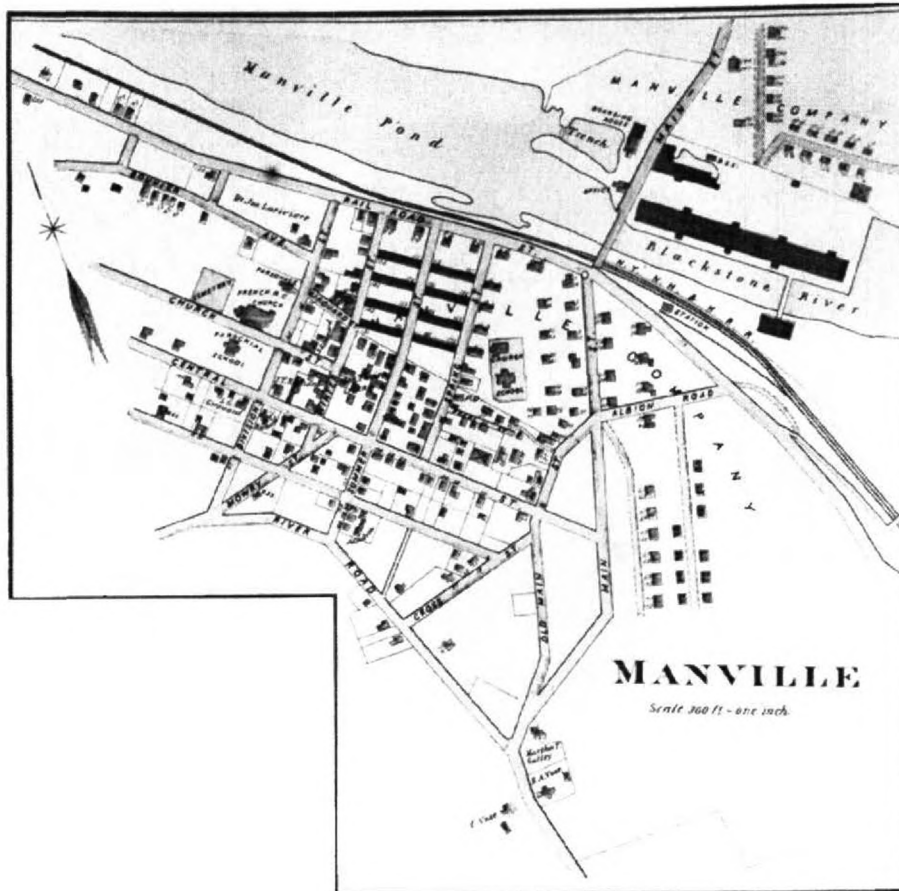


Figure 16  
Detail from *New Topographical Atlas of Surveys Providence County, Rhode Island*,  
Everts and Richards (1895)  
Showing full development of mill and village



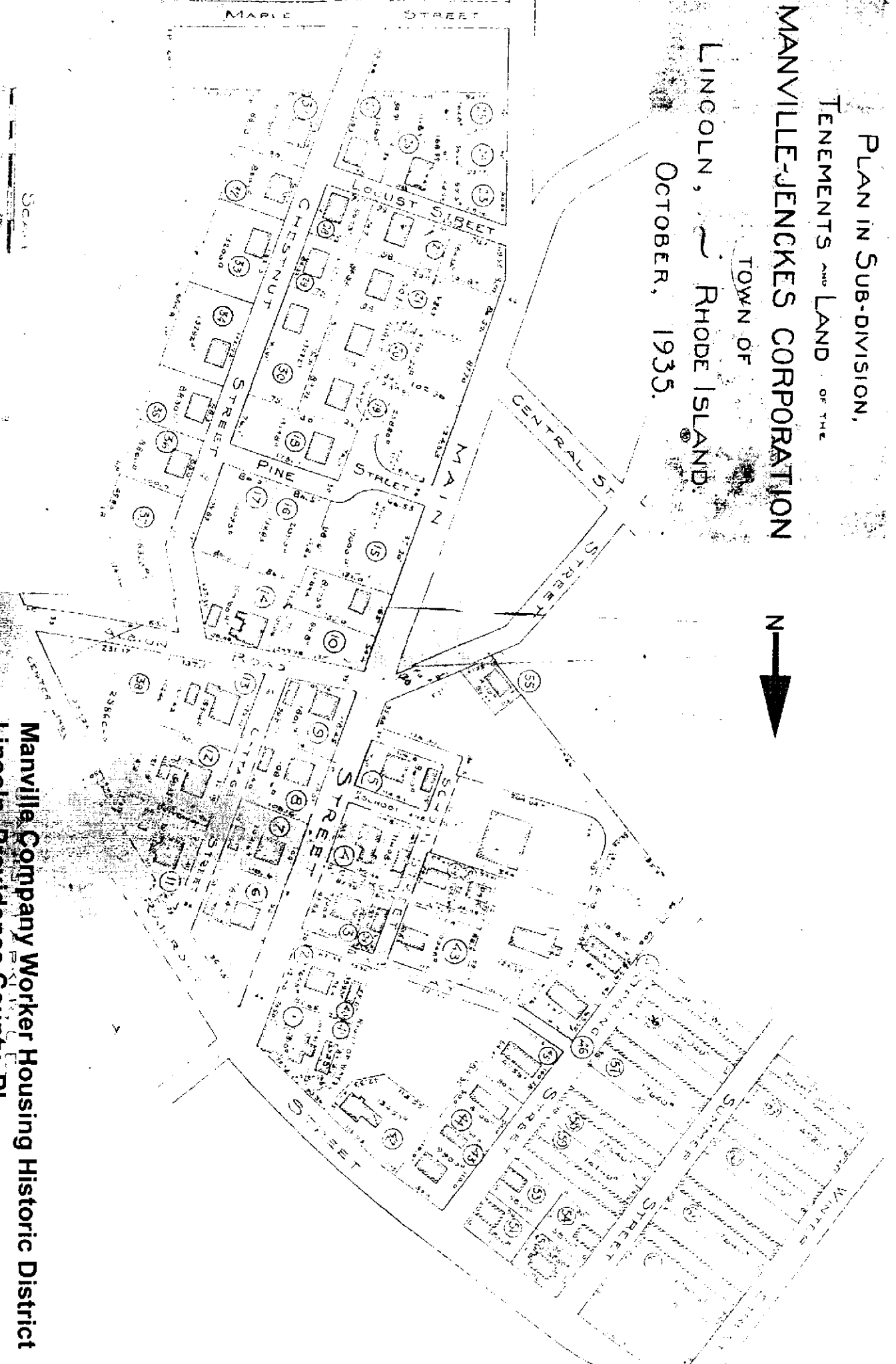
PLAN IN SUB-DIVISION,  
TENEMENTS AND LAND OF THE

MANVILLE-JENCKES CORPORATION

TOWN OF

LINCOLN, RHODE ISLAND.

OCTOBER, 1935.



Manville Company Worker Housing Historic District  
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