

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

Form numbers in this area	Area letter
	A

✓ MA  
✓ Essex County

Town Methuen

Name of area (if any) Spicket Falls

Historic District (Methuen MA)

General date or period 1826-1920

Roughly bounded by Spicket River  
Railroad, Pelham, Hampshire, Brown  
and Osgood Sts.

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

Photo number \_\_\_\_\_

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

Verbal Boundary Justification

Selection of boundaries for the Spicket Falls Historic District was based on topographical features, historic development patterns and extent of modern development. In general, the boundaries include the core of Methuen's commercial/industrial center which developed between 1876-1920. Specifically, the eastern boundary dovetails with the western boundary of the residential Pleasant-High Street Historic District. The northern and eastern boundaries exclude adjacent residential construction as well as recent commercial construction on Hampshire Street. The southern boundary excludes open space and new commercial construction.

UTM References: Lawrence Quad 1:25,000

- A 19 320980 4732680
- B 19 320760 4732340
- C 19 320600 4732540
- D 19 320640 4732700

Recorded by Carole Zellie

Organization Landscape Research

Date May, 1983

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

The Spicket Falls Historic District is situated between Gaunt Square, the commercial center of Methuen, and the 1909 Railroad Station on River Street. At the center of the district are the falls of the Spicket River and the Methuen Cotton Mills complex. The mills have been described as the "best preserved textile mill site in the Lower Merrimack Valley." (HAER, 1978; The Lower Merrimack River Valley (1978), p.84). The location of the present-day industrial and commercial center of Methuen was determined by the cataract of the Spicket River, which provided water power for a 1709 grist mill and an 1806 fulling mill. The construction of the Essex Turnpike in 1804-1806 along the route of Broadway secured the future potential of the center. Within the next half-century, new churches, schools, and homes - which were previously scattered across the settlement - would be built near the falls.

See Historical Significance section for further detail.

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

The Spicket Falls Historic District possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and association. Taking its name from the cataract at its center, the district has known industrial activities since the early 18th century. However, it was not until the early 19th century that it began to take on the characteristics of a town center. In 1806, the Boston-Essex Turnpike was laid out through the area; a few years later, larger scale industrialization began; and throughout the century, previously scattered institutional and commercial activities became concentrated here as well. The district, which includes a variety of 19th and early 20th century structures, meets criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places.

In 1825, the first buildings of the Methuen Cotton Mills were constructed at the south edge of the falls, on the site of an earlier (1814) cotton mill owned by Stephen Minot. The brick Methuen "A" Mill was constructed in 1826; a frame cotton mill and brick storehouse ca. 1845-1850 (1826:23). All of the early buildings are extant; the four-story A mill retains its original clerestory roof; the original pitched roof of the three-story cotton mill has been removed (1840; 25). The brick storehouse, located along the Boston and Maine tracks to the west of the mill complex, retains the original features of its Greek Revival design. Pilastered walls and globe windows in the gable ends distinguish the one-and-one-half-story pitched roof structure (1850;28). Local businessman David Nevins purchased the Methuen Mills in 1864; Nevins added six new brick

(CONTINUED)

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: Methuen	Form No: Area A
Property Name: Spicket Falls Historic District	

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

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (CONTINUED)

mills between 1879 and 1882, and the 15-foot Methuen Company Dam (1870-1880), which appears to be approximately 30 feet south of an earlier dam (1870;24). The Merrimack Mills were established in former Methuen Company buildings along Osgood Street in the 1890s. The original frame buildings were bricked over in 1921 (ca. 1890; 23A).

A variety of housing was built west of the mills to house Methuen Company workers, but little if any appears to have been company-owned. 30 River Street (1865;26) was owned by David Nevins, and may have housed supervisors or managers at the mill. The building is distinguished by an ogee-arch window in the front gable; an octagonal bay with mullioned windows and a bracketed porch may be later additions to the clapboard-clad building.

The Town Hall (1853;21) was built of red brick in 1853 after designs by H. D. Clement, who was paid \$30 for his plan. An overscaled glazed fan-light lights the center bay of the front facade; a triangular light is set into the rear facade. The corbelled cornice of the pitched roof building is the prominent decorative feature. A full basement is executed in rough-cut granite. An excellent view of the Spicket River dam and falls, and the Methuen Mill Complex is seen from the rear of this building, currently a parking lot. The Town of Methuen built the Renaissance Revival style Central Fire Station in 1899. The two-story, flat-roofed brick building designed by Lawrence architect John Ashton has a tall Tuscan hose-drying tower. This building replaced an earlier fire station on the same site (1899;29).

By mid-century, a number of hotels and stores were constructed along the 1804-1806 turnpike, now Broadway. The Exchange Hotel, now the Masonic Temple, occupies the site of a ca. 1807 building which served as a hostelry along the stage route (1851-1906;19). Destroyed in an 1849 fire, it was rebuilt to its present eclectic exterior. Across Osgood Street, the Turnpike, built ca. 1865 as a store and hotel, retains its glazed, shingled monitor atop the original mansard roof (1865;20). A handsome frame Greek Revival style store known as Castle's has been razed, but other pitched-roof commercial structures from the 1850s and 1860s survive, including the "1859 House" which was previously owned by the Methuen Mill Company (1859;17).

The granite trimmed Oddfellow's Hall (1904;18), built ca. 1904, was the last major building in the commercial district of Methuen. Of Renaissance Revival design, the central pavilion contains arcaded windows, and a pedimented gable with a prominent Palladian window. The red brick building rests on a full basement of granite.

(CONTINUED)

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: Methuen	Form No: Area A
Property Name: Spicket Falls Historic District	

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

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (CONTINUED) page 2

The one-and-one-half-story granite-trimmed brick railroad station was built in 1909 with donations of local philanthropist Edward Searles (1909;27). The building replaced an earlier station of frame construction. Although the building suffers from neglect, many of the original features are intact, including the long attached train-waiting sheds. The Boston and Maine Railroad provided passenger and freight services.

There are approximately 30 buildings in the district, including 9 intrusions. The impact of intrusions is generally minimized by small scale. Most are new structures or heavily altered earlier buildings such as the early 19th century structure on Osgood Street (J) which retains its 6/6 double hung sash. There are excellent views of the river and falls from the Broadway/Osgood intersection and from the Lowell Street bridge over the mill pond and dam. The Methuen Mills complex, with its relatively unaltered buildings (1826-1890) and undisturbed setting, is in a remarkable state of preservation.

Revitalization plans for this area call for new development and renovation of existing buildings. In new development plans, the scenic features of the river at the town center should be preserved. Views of the falls from Osgood Street and the Lowell Bridge should not be obstructed. The vacant lot behind the Town Hall should be left open or only partially built to preserve that area's key view. New building heights should respect the existing one- to four-story scale of historic buildings, and the excellent view of the Merrimack River Valley provided by the steep ridge above the commercial district.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

METHUEN, MASSACHUSETTS  
 SPICKET FALLS HISTORIC DISTRICT  
 DISTRICT DATA SHEET

BLOCK/ LOT	INVENTORY NUMBER	HISTORIC NAME	ADDRESS	DATE	STYLE
<u>Contributing Buildings</u>					
121-4	17	1859 House	12 Hampshire Street	1859	Italianate
122-19	18	Oddfellows Buildings	7 Hampshire Street	ca. 1904	Renaissance Revival
121-3	n/a	Store	6 Hampshire Street	ca. 1880	Italianate
55-6	19	Exchange Hotel	275 Broadway	1851/1906	Georgian Revival
54-1	20	The Turnpike	271 Broadway	1865	Second Empire
121-1	21	Old Town Hall	290 Broadway	1853	Greek Revival
54-2	22	Corliss Building	Osgood Street	1860	Italianate
121-19	23	Methuen Mills	47-55 Osgood Street		
		-- Mill A		ca. 1826-27	industrial vernacular
		-- Mill B		ca. 1870	industrial vernacular
		-- Mill C		ca. 1882	industrial vernacular-mansard
120-24A	23A	Merrimac Mills	50 Osgood Street	ca.1890s/ 1920/1940	industrial vernacular
120-26D	23B	Merrimac Mills	River Street	ca. 1890	industrial vernacular
121-20	23C	Methuen Mills - jute mill	Osgood Street, north side of river	ca. 1890	industrial vernacular
n/a	24	Spicket River Falls Dam	Spicket River, south of Lowell Street, north of Osgood Street	1870-1880	

METHUEN, MASSACHUSETTS  
 SPICKET FALLS HISTORIC DISTRICT  
 DISTRICT DATA SHEET

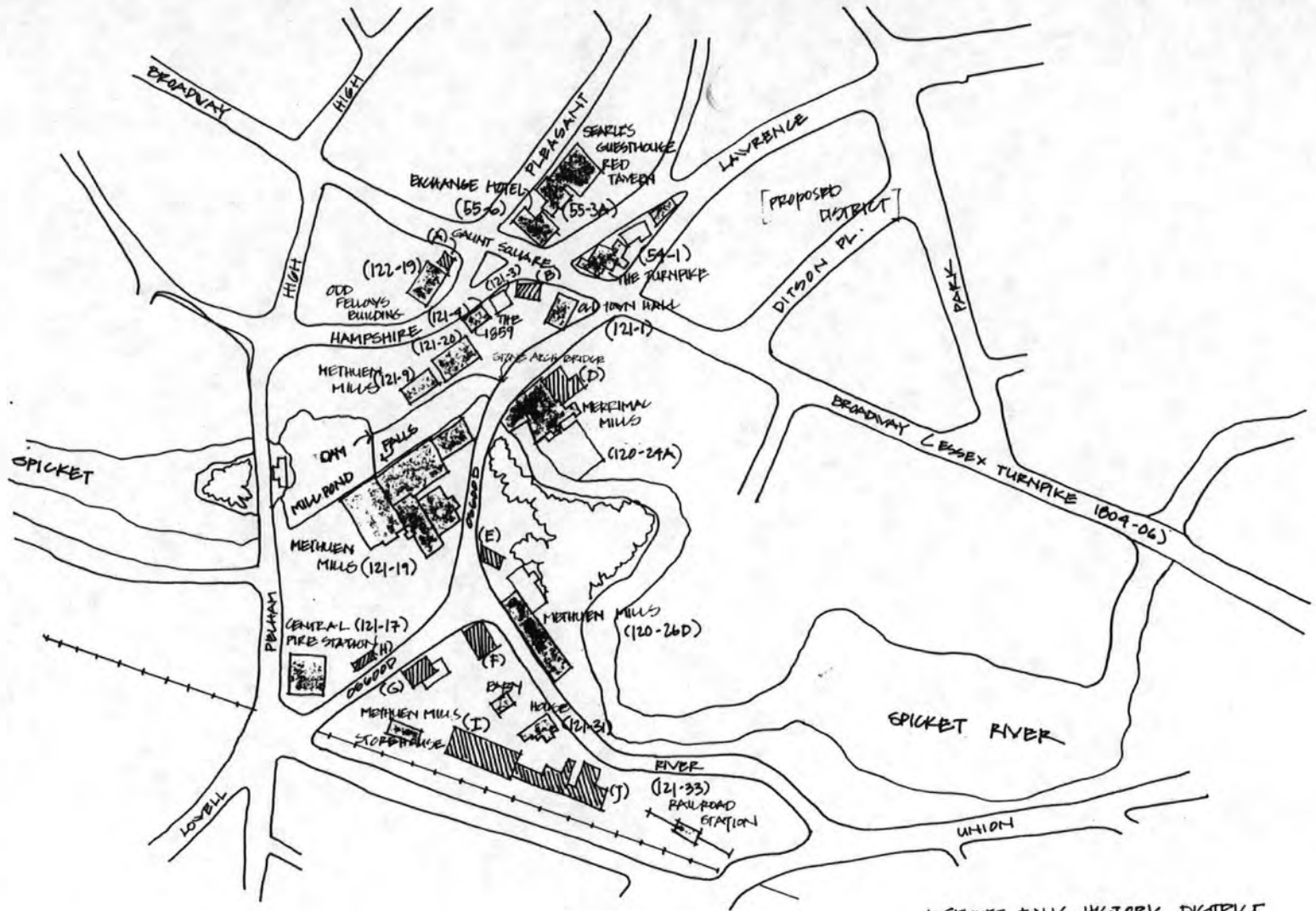
BLOCK/ LOT	INVENTORY NUMBER	HISTORIC NAME	ADDRESS	DATE	STYLE
121-9	25	Methuen Mills - spinning mill	Rear, 34 Hampshire Street	ca. 1840	industrial vernacular
121-31	26	House	30 River Street	ca. 1865	Italianate
121-33	27	Methuen Railroad Station (Boston and Maine)	10 River Street	1909	Queen Anne
121-27	28	Methuen Mill Storehouse	66 Osgood Street	1840-50	Greek Revival
121-17	29	Central Fire Station	24 Lowell Street	1899	Renaissance Revival
55-3A	53	Edward Searles Guesthouse (Red Tavern)	5 Pleasant Street	1900	Jacobethan

Vacant Lots



121-18	V1	Osgood Street	Osgood Street		
121-1	V2	290 Broadway - rear Block 121, Lot	290 Broadway-rear Block 121, Lot 1		

Intrusions (marked in red on attached map)

122-20	n/a		A		
121-2	n/a		B		
121-3	n/a		C		
121-23	n/a		D		
121-26A	n/a		E		
121-29	n/a		F		
121-28	n/a		G		
121-17	n/a		H		
121-30	n/a		I		



SPICKET FALLS HISTORIC DISTRICT

-  INTRUSION
-  KEY BUILDING

PREPARED FROM ASSESSOR'S MAPS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Spicket Falls Historic District (Methuen MRA)

Essex County

MASSACHUSETTS

Working No. DEC - 7 1983

Fed. Reg. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Due: 1/5/84 - 1/21/84

Action: ACCEPT

RETURN 1/20/84

REJECT

Federal Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Substantive Review:  sample  request  appeal  NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_

Discipline \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ see continuation sheet

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

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

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



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received 12/7/83  
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

Page 4 of 5

Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group

Name Methuen Multiple Resource Area  
State Essex County, Massachusetts

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

31. Old Town Farm

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper Melrose Byers 1/20/84

Attest

32. Park Lodge

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper Melrose Byers 1/20/84

Attest

33. Perkins, Joseph, House

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper Melrose Byers 1/20/84

Attest

34. Pine Lodge

Substantive Review

DOE/OWNER OBJECTION

Keeper 5 2 7 1

Attest

35. Searles High School

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper Melrose Byers 1/20/84

Attest

36. Simpson, James E., House

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper Melrose Byers 1/20/84

Attest

37. Spicket Falls Historic District

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper Melrose Byers 1/20/84

Attest

38. Swan, Asie, House

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper Melrose Byers 1/20/84

Attest

39. Tenny Castle Gatehouse

Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper Melrose Byers 1/20/84

Attest

61 - 40. Turnpike House

Substantive Review

Keeper Barbara Ann Orszag 1/20/84

Attest

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Spicket Falls Historic District (Methuen MRA)  
Essex County  
MASSACHUSETTS

Working No. 12/7/83

Fed. Reg. Date: 2.5.85

Date Due: 6/22/84

Action:  ACCEPT 6/20/84

RETURN

REJECT

Federal Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Entered in the  
National Register

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

Substantive Review:  sample  request  appeal  NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria Accept ATC

Reviewer Mr. [Signature]

Discipline A.H.

Date 6-20-84

\_\_\_\_\_ see continuation sheet

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

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership Public Acquisition	Status Accessible	Present Use
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4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

7. Description

Condition

- excellent
- good
- fair
- deteriorated
- ruins
- unexposed

Check one

- unaltered
- altered

Check one

- original site
- moved date \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

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

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**8. Significance**

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

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

Statement of Significance (*in one paragraph*)

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

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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**10. Geographical Data**

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

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

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

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Verbal boundary description and justification

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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**12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification**

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title

date

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**13. Other**

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

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

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



SPICKET FALLS HISTORIC DISTRICT  
BROADWAY - LOOKING NORTH  
OLD TOWN HALL AT LEFT

①



SPICKET FALLS HISTORIC DISTRICT

(2)

SPICKET FALLS FROM OSGOOD STREET - LOOKING WEST

Melham Mills Spinning Mill (1840; 121-9) at right



METHUEN MILLS - BLDG. A - 1826 (FROM OSBOOD ST.)  
SPICKET FALLS HISTORIC DISTRICT 1882 ADDITION

③



SPICKET FAUS HISTORIC DISTRICT  
CENTRAL FIRE STATION 1899  
REAR - FROM OSBOOD STREET



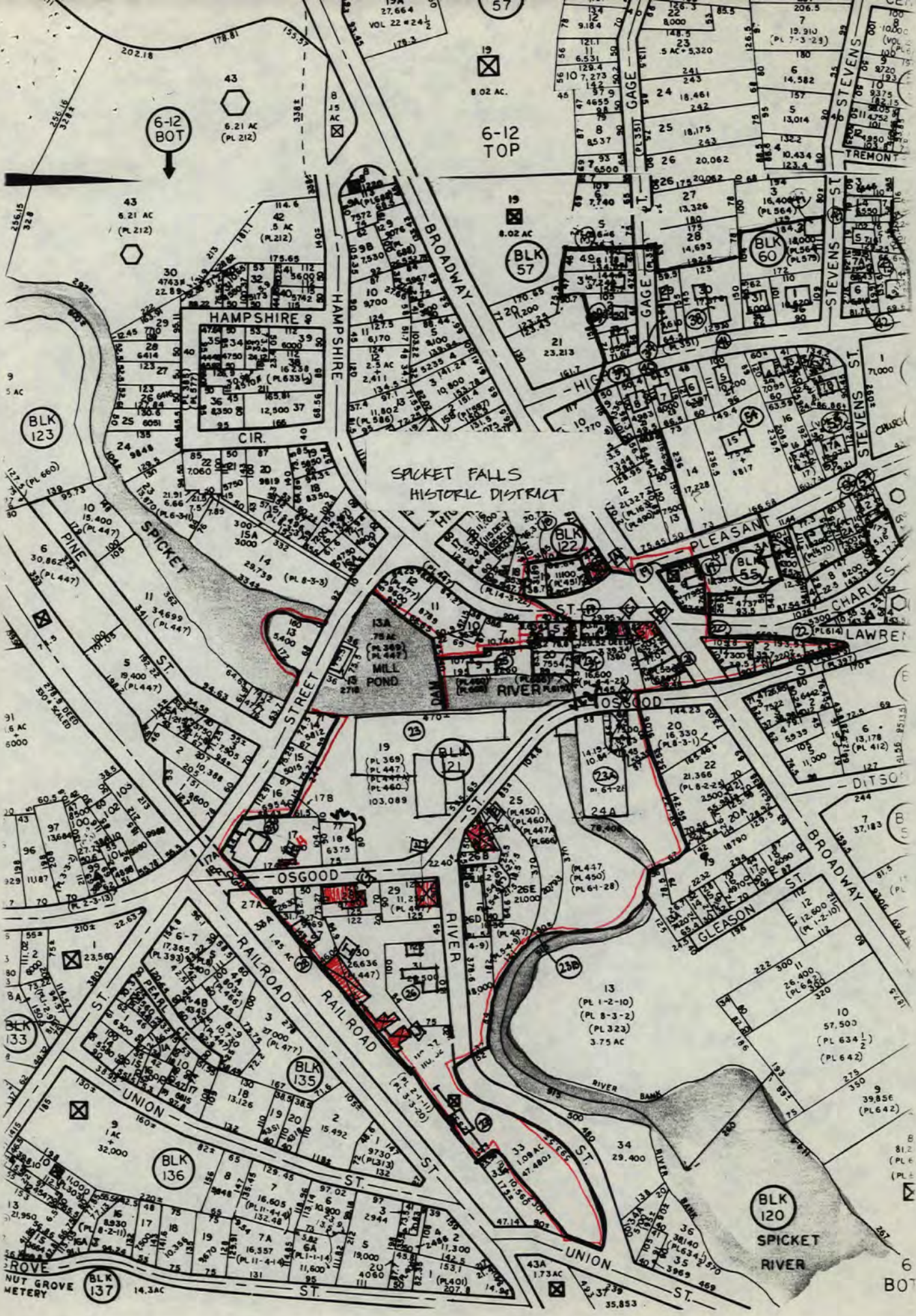
⑤

SPICKET FALLS HISTORIC DISTRICT  
MERRIMAC MILLS (ORIG. METHUEN COTTON MILLS)  
OSBOOD STREET



BUCKET FALLS HISTORIC DISTRICT  
RAILROAD STATION, RIVER STREET

6



6-12 BOT

6-12 TOP

BLK 57

BLK 60

BLK 123

SPICKET FALLS HISTORIC DISTRICT

BLK 122

BLK 55

BLK 121

BLK 133

BLK 135

BLK 136

BLK 120

BLK 137

6 BOT

NUT GROVE METERY

SPICKET RIVER



**16.73  
Acres**

**BLK  
121**

**BLK  
122**

**BLK  
55**

**BLK  
135**

**BLK  
120**

13A  
.75 AC  
(PL 369)  
(PL 447)  
**MILL  
POND**

**RIVER**

**OSGOOD**

**GLEASON**

**RAILROAD**

**RIVER**

**RIVER  
BANK**

**RIVER  
BANK**

14  
29,739  
3344  
(PL 8-3-3)

13  
400  
68  
75.5  
75.5  
2718

17  
19,200  
6375  
174.4  
75

19  
(PL 369)  
(PL 447)  
(PL 447A)  
(PL 460)  
103,089

29  
125  
11,250  
(PL 447)  
125

30  
26,636  
(PL 447)

2  
15,492

7  
16,605  
(PL 11-4-14)  
132.48

12  
(PL 477)  
3,960  
932

10  
386  
10,740

25  
(PL 450)  
(PL 460)  
(PL 447A)  
(PL 666)

26  
18,000  
(PL 5-4-9)  
(PL 447)  
(PL 5-4-9)

31  
20,500

33  
0.9 AC  
7,480

3  
2944

18  
(PL 14-3-25)

20  
16,600  
(PL 4-4-22)

26A  
18,500

26E  
21,000

26D  
18,000

33  
0.9 AC  
7,480

3  
2944

19  
11,100  
(PL 451)  
15,071

21  
16,600  
(PL 4-4-22)

24A  
78,408

13  
(PL 1-2-10)  
(PL 8-3-2)  
(PL 323)  
3.75 AC

34  
29,400

34  
29,400

3  
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21  
16,600  
(PL 4-4-22)

21  
16,600  
(PL 4-4-22)

24A  
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(PL 1-2-10)  
(PL 8-3-2)  
(PL 323)  
3.75 AC

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(PL 4-4-22)

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(PL 323)  
3.75 AC

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(PL 1-2-10)  
(PL 8-3-2)  
(PL 323)  
3.75 AC

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93.5

24A  
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(PL 1-2-10)  
(PL 8-3-2)  
(PL 323)  
3.75 AC

34  
29,400

34  
29,400

3  
2944

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

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000284