

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
80 BOYLSTON STREET
BOSTON, MA 02116

AREA	FORM NO.
	259½

Town North Adams MRA

Address 65 Brown Street

Historic Name Johnson Manufacturing Company

Use: Present light industry

Original mill

Photo (3"x3" or 3"x5", black and white) Indicate address of property on back of photo. Staple to left side of form.

DESCRIPTION

Date 1872 (main section); ca. 1872-1876, ca. 1888, ca. 1908, ca. 1930 (additions)

Source Insurance maps, company records

Style Italianate Industrial

Architect Unknown

Exterior Wall Fabric Brick

Outbuildings Brown Street office (ca. 1880)

see attached sketch map, Appendix A

Major Alterations (with dates) additions to building ca. 1872-1876, 1888, 1908, 1930; upper section of tower removed, mid 20th c.

Condition Excellent

Moved No Date N/A

Acreage 4.6 acres

Setting The mill complex is situated on the south side of the Hoosac River. Across the river to the north are tenement houses. On the south side of the mill are railroad tracks on an embankment, and Hillside Cemetery.

UTM REFERENCE (A)18/653850/4229330 (C)18/653740/4229200
(B)18/653940/4229190 (D)18/653740/4229330

USGS QUADRANGLE North Adams

SCALE 1:25,000

Recorded by Betsy Friedberg

Organization Massachusetts Historical Comm.

Date August 1985

OCT 25 1985

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA STATEMENT (if applicable)

The Johnson Manufacturing Company retains integrity of setting, design, location, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association with the height of North Adams' industrial past. A well-preserved example of late 19th century industrial architecture and a central textile manufacturer in North Adams, Johnson Manufacturing Company thus fulfills Criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.

This mill complex, begun in 1872, is architecturally intact with the exception (see sketch map, A), of a clock tower in the central section, removed in the mid 20th century. The earliest part of the mill (1872) four small ca. 1872-1876 additions, and three turn-of-the-century wings (D) retain decorative detailing common to Italianate-style, post Civil War industrial architecture: segmental-arch windows (which contain original sash), corbelled brick cornice, and low-pitched gable roof.

The complex also includes the original office building, a 1½-story freestanding structure located in the middle of the complex, facing Brown Street. This ca. 1880 structure was

(continued)

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.

The Johnson Manufacturing C. was formed in 1850 by Sylvander Johnson, Nathaniel G. Hathaway, George W. Bly, and Peter Blackinton. They bought a print mill on the site and operated it as a warp mill. In 1871, unsurpassed profit margins in print cloth caused an expansion in the New England cotton textiles industry that dwarfed any other period. Johnson closed down his profitable-woolen manufacturing operations elsewhere, rebuilt the cotton mill after a fire in that year, fitted it for gingham, and introduced early mass production methods, with entry of raw materials at one end and exit of finished products at the other.

Upon Sylvander Johnson's death in 1882, his son and treasurer, W. S. Johnson, became president and treasurer, then was bought out and succeeded by Duncan D. Parmly on New York. They built and incorporated in 1892 the adjoining Dunbar mill for fancy dress goods. In that year, 400 hands operated spindles and 486 looms in the entire plant.

Production was switched from cotton print cloth to woolen worsteds when the plan was sold by its then-owner, Charles M. Hough of N.Y., to the Hoosac Worsted Company in 1912. Technically the worsted process was similar to cotton manufacture and the average number of employees per plant was similar in the two lines of textiles. But the demand for worsted cloth had climbed in the decades since 1890 far more rapidly than demand for print cloth or ordinary wools. Massachusetts lost much of its share of the nation's

(continued)

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

- History of Berkshire County, Mass., F. W. Beers, N.Y., 1885.
- Insurance Maps of North Adams, Sanborn Insurance Company, Pelham, N.Y., 188, 1908, 1914, 1929.
- County Atlas of Berkshire County, Mass., F. W. Beers, N.Y., 1876.
- Atlas of the Towns of Adams, North Adams, & Williamstown, D. L. Miller, N.Y., 1894.
- North Adams and Vicinity, H.G. Rowe, North Adams, 1898.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: North Adams	Form No: 259 ½
Property Name: Johnson Manufacturing Company	

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

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (CONTINUATION)

designed by Marcus Fayette Cummings, a Troy, New York, architect who was responsible for many important buildings of the same period in North Adams. The ornate dormer over the main entryway, its gable peak adorned with punchwork vergeboard and its tripartite window framed by a bullseye pattern is especially noteworthy. Sandstone beltcourses define the buildings watertable and first story and embellish the chimney. The roof is hipped, with deeply overhanging bracketed eaves.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (CONTINUATION)

print cloth production, the percentage dropping from 64% in 1890 to 47% in 1910, while comparable figures for Southern production climbed from 2.4% to 36% of the national total by 1910.

The plant remained of moderate size. In 1913, it employ 250, larger than two thirds of the plants in the country, but below the Massachusetts average for worsted plants, which peaked before WWI at approximately 550 hands. The mill was bought by the Arlington Mills in 1919, and was used to produce serges from worsted yarn on 144 plain and 92 dobby looms. 285 employees in 1921 made this mill small compared to others belonging to Arlington Mills, which combined standarized and high quality goods, but comparable to many factories of moderate size whose success depended upon careful quality control.

The plant was sold to Sprague Specialities Co. in 1937 and then to Sprague Electric Co. on December 28, 1967; it continues to be used for light industrial purposes.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community: North Adams	Form No: 259½
Property Name: Johnson Manufacturing Co.	

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

Verbal Boundary Justification

The bounds of the Johnson Manufacturing Company includes a lot of 4.6 acres. Specifically, Deed 254, November 24, 1911, describes the boundaries as follows: easterly by Brown Street 580.89 feet; southerly by Fitchburg Railroad Company 70.32 feet; westerly by the same 29.39 feet; southerly by same railroad land 813.90 feet; southwesterly 885.77 feet; westerly 278.65 feet; and northly by River Street 1740.02 feet.

See attached sketch map, Appendix A.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community:

North Adams MRA

Form No:

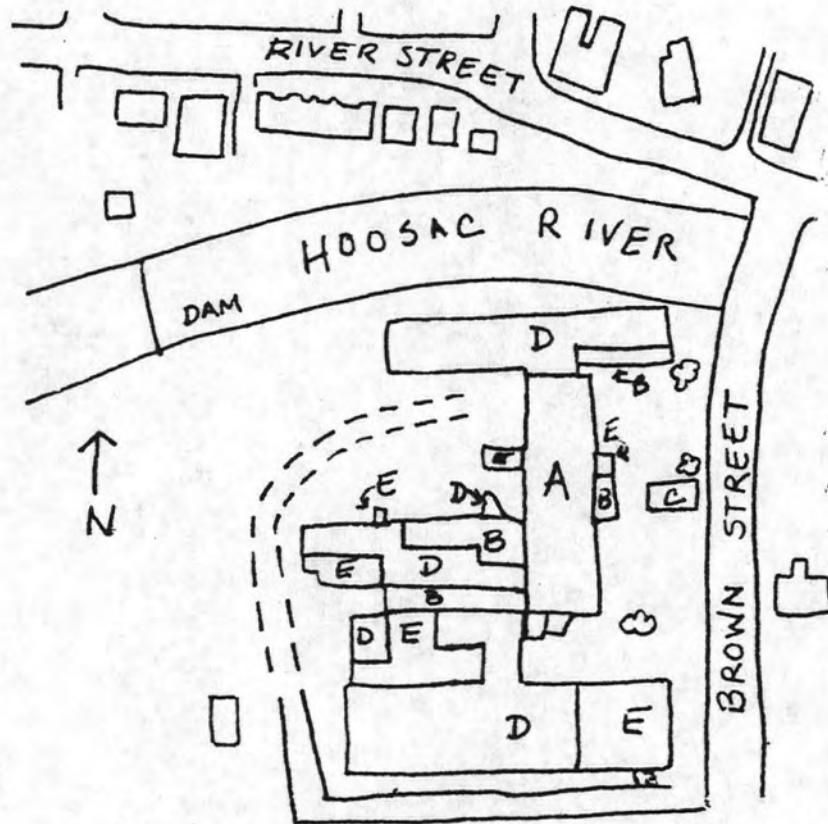
259½

Property Name: Johnson Manufacturing

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

APPENDIX A

Sketch Map,
Johnson Manufacturing
Company
(not drawn to scale)



KEY

- A. ca. 1872
- B. ca. 1872-1876
- C. ca. 1888
- D. ca. 1890-1908
- E. ca. 1930

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received 9/12/85
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

Page 2 of 2

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

Name North Adams MRA
State Bershire County, MASSACHUSETTS

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

11. Hathaway Tenement

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Delores Byers 10/25/85

Attest

12. Johnson School

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Delores Byers 10/25/85

Attest

13. Johnson Manufacturing
Company

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Delores Byers 10/25/85

Attest

14. Norad Mill

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Delores Byers 10/25/85

Attest

15. Sherman, William B.,
Farm

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Delores Byers 10/25/85

Attest

16. Sykes House

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Delores Byers 10/25/85

Attest

17. Wells House

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

Delores Byers 10/25/85

Attest

18. Phelps House

S. Review

Keeper

Attest

19.

Keeper

Attest

20.

Keeper

Attest

85003418

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Johnson Manufacturing Company (North Adams
MRA)
Bershire County
MASSACHUSETTS

Working No. SEP 12 1985
Fed. Reg. Date: 2/3/87
Date Due: 10/10/85 — 10/27/85
Action: ACCEPT 10-25-85
 RETURN
 REJECT
Federal Agency: _____

Entered in the
National Register

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

Substantive Review: sample request appeal NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria _____
Reviewer _____
Discipline _____
Date _____
_____ see continuation sheet

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

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership Public Acquisition	Status Accessible	Present Use

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? yes no

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

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

8. Significance

Period _____ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates _____ Builder/Architect _____
Statement of Significance (*in one paragraph*)

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____
Quadrangle name _____
UTM References _____

Verbal boundary description and justification

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

____ national ____ state ____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title _____ date _____

13. Other

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: _____



Johnson Manufacturing Co.
(Sprague Electric)
Brown Street
North Adams, ^{MA} Mass.
Office building.
Photo by R.Reed, 1981.
Negative at NAHC



Johnson Manufacturing Co.
(Spague Electric)
Brown Street
North Adams, ^{MA} Mass.
Northeast view.
Photo by R.Reed, 1981.
Negative at NAHC

Missing Core Documentation

Property Name County, State	Multiple Property Name	Reference Number
Johnson Manufacturing Company Berkshire County, Massachusetts	North Adams MRA	85003418

The following Core Documentation is missing from this entry:

Nomination Form

Photographs

USGS Map