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NPS Form 10-900 (Rev. 8-86)	OMB NO. 1024-0018 RECEIVED 2280
United States Department of the Interior National Park Service NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES	JUN 1 9 1996
	NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1. Name of Property	
historic name:YANTIC WOOLEN COMPANY	MILL
other name/site number: <u>Hale Company Yantic Mi</u>	11
2. Location	
street & number: <u>6 Franklin Road</u>	
city/town: <u>Norwich</u>	not for publication: <u>N/A</u> vicinity: <u>N/A</u>
state: <u>CT</u> county: <u>New London</u> code	: <u>011</u> zip code: <u>06389</u>
<pre>3. Classification</pre>	
Ownership of Property: <u>private</u>	
Category of Property: <u>building</u>	
Number of Resources within Property:	
Contributing Noncontributing	
2  buildings     sites     structures     objects     Total	
Number of contributing resources previously li Register:	sted in the National

Name of related multiple property listing: <u>N/A</u>

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of 1966, a request fo standards Historic F set forth	signated authority under the as amended, I hereby certify or determination of eligibili for registering properties i places and meets the procedur in 36 CFR Part 60. In my op not meet the National Regist	that t ty mee n the al and inion, er Cri	his <u>X</u> nomination <u></u> ts the documentation National Register of professional requirement the property <u>X</u> meet teria. <u>See cont.</u>	on Act — ents ts
	Ma in Manna		6/13/96	
Signature John W. Shar	of certifying official nnahan, Director, Connecticut Histo	orical (	Date Commission	
State or F	ederal agency and bureau			
In my opin Register c	ion, the property meets riteria See continuati	on she	does not meet the Natio	onal
Signature	of commenting or other offic	ial	Date	
State or F	ederal agency and bureau			
<pre>====================================</pre>	l Park Service Certification	=====		
enter deter Nati deter Nati remov	certify that this property i red in the National Register See continuation sheet. mined eligible for the onal Register See continuation sheet. mined not eligible for the onal Register red from the National Registe	r	Maria Maria	<u>&gt;. 25 .</u> 
			gnature of Keeper Da of A	ate Action
6. Functio	n or Use			
	INDUSTRY			
Current:	NOT IN USE	Sub:		

No style

Other Description: <u>N/A</u>\_\_\_\_\_

Materials: foundationSTONE: graniteroofASPHALTwallsSTONE: graniteotherBRICK

Describe present and historic physical appearance.  $\underline{X}$  See continuation sheet.

8. Statement of Significance Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Applicable National Register Criteria: <u>A,C</u>

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : <u>N/A</u>

Areas of Significance: <u>INDUSTRY</u> ARCHITECTURE

Period(s) of Significance: <u>1865-c.1930</u>

Significant Dates: <u>See item 7</u>

Significant Person(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder: <u>Not known</u>\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above. <u>X</u> See continuation sheet.

9. Major Bibliographical References	
<u>X</u> See continuation sheet.	
Previous documentation on file (NPS):	
<pre>_ preliminary determination of individual li requested. _ previously listed in the National Register</pre>	
_ previously determined eligible by the Nati	onal Register
_ designated a National Historic Landmark _ recorded by Historic American Buildings Su	
_ recorded by Historic American Engineering	Record #
Primary Location of Additional Data:	
Other state agency 59	onnecticut Historical Commission 9 South Prospect Street artford, Connecticut 06106
_ Local government	
_ University	
_ Other Specify Repository:	
10. Geographical Data	
Acreage of Property: <u>approx. 7 acres</u>	
UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone	e Easting Northing
A <u>18</u> <u>739740</u> <u>4604780</u> B	
C D	
See continuation sheet.	
Verbal Boundary Description: See contin	nuation sheet.
The nominated property includes the par Block 4 on Norwich Assessor Map 263; it	cel of land shown as Lot 1, is part of the property
conveyed in a deed (1988) recorded in V Norwich Land Records.	olume 877, page 193 of the
Boundary Justification: See continuation The boundary includes all historic mill land that was directly associated with	buildings and the surrounding
11. Form Prepared By	
Name/Title: <u>Bruce Clouette, reviewed by J</u>	John Herzan,
Organization: <u>Historic Resource Consultants</u>	Conn. Hist. Commission Date: <u>December 27, 1995</u>
Street & Number: <u>55 Van Dyke Avenue</u>	Telephone: <u>860-54</u> 7-0268
City or Town: <u>Hartford</u>	State: <u>CT</u> Zip: <u>06106</u>

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### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Description	Yantic Woolen Company Mill	7-1
-	Norwich, New London County, CT	

The Yantic Woolen Company Mill is a large stone factory dating from The complex consists of a 4 1/2-story main mill building set 1865. with its broad side facing the intersection of Franklin Road and Chapel Hill Road (Photograph 1); a row of three interconnected buildings, three, two, and one story in height (Photograph 2), arrayed along Franklin Road, where they join a 3 1/2-story mill building set with its gable end facing Franklin Road (Photograph 3); two wings added in 1887 and 1892 to the rear or north elevation of the main mill; and a small free-standing building that formerly served as the mill's blacksmith shop, to which is appended a brick boiler house and tall brick chimney added in 1946 (Photograph 4). Except for the boiler house and two other small brick additions, all parts of the complex have stone exterior walls consisting of an ashlar of rough-hewn granite blocks, with alternating wide and narrow courses. Behind the granite surface, the walls are either stone rubble or brick.

The mill is surrounded by the village of Yantic, a settlement that includes several 19th-century former worker tenements, a stone-arch bridge, a church, and a firehouse, all built by the company that ran the mill. The owner's mansion, which stood on a hill to the east overlooking the village, is no longer in existence, and much of the worker housing was demolished to make way for the highway (Routes 2 and 32) that runs along the western edge of the village.

The main mill building (shown as #1 on the accompanying sketch plan) measures 170 feet by 50 feet in plan. Centered on the south elevation is a large five-story square-plan tower. The main entrance to the mill is in the base of the tower, where there is a set of double paneled doors. A tablet bearing the date 1865 appears below the tower's uppermost story, which is set off by a simple beltcourse and has small circular windows. The tower was formerly surmounted by an octagonal open belfry, the base of which has been capped off above the tower's flared roof. Another, shorter tower on the rear (north) elevation accommodated water closets on each floor. A small two-story hip-roofed office wing, measuring 27 feet by 20 feet in plan, is appended to the main mill's southeast corner, and there is a one-story appendage on the west end, 13 feet by 42 feet in plan, located at the point where the mill's headrace flows under the building. The headrace, which runs along the west side of the property, formerly carried the waters of the Yantic River to the mill. Most of the mill's dam, located half a mile north of the complex, is no longer standing and its site is not included in the nominated property. The mill's tailrace runs underground to the river.

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#### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Description	Yantic Woolen Company Mill	7-2
_	Norwich, New London County, CT	

After the main mill, the next largest portion is the 3 1/2-story building at the north end of the complex (Photograph 3, sketch map #6); it measures 84 feet by 44 feet in plan. It was last used for rawmaterial storage, shipping, and receiving. Because its south elevation is nearly devoid of window openings, it seems likely that this was its historic use as well.

The 1882 addition (sketch map #5) is two stories in height and has a shallow-pitched gable roof. It measures 95 feet by 40 feet and is connected to the main mill by a wooden infill portion, to the east of which is a large brick chimney. Adjoining it is the 1892 dye house, 135 feet by 60 feet in plan and one story in height. The dye house roof has a large monitor extending for most of its length. The northwest corner of the dyehouse, which served as the head dyer's office, and the south end, which accommodated soap storage, are of brick construction.

Throughout the complex, window openings have stone lintels, and sills are fitted with 12-over-12 wooden double-hung sash. The windows are of various ages, the result of continuous replacement in kind over the mill's 125 years of operation. The buildings have molded wooden cornices that form partial returns at the gables, below which there is a plain fascia board.

The small forge building, the shipping and storage building, and the three portions ranged along Franklin Road may pre-date the main mill itself. Although the exterior stonework is identical, the interior walls are of stucco over stone rubble, rather than the painted brick interior walls found in the main mill and its additions. The earlier mill on this site, destroyed by fire in 1865, was primarily brick, but an old daguerreotype shows there was at least one large wing built of stone masonry very similar to that used for the later mill.

The interior is very plainly finished and almost entirely open, except for partitions between the various parts of the complex. The interior framing (Photograph 5) features large oak or chestnut transverse beams supported by turned wooden columns and square chamfered posts. The floors are of thick tongue and grove planks, over which is applied a wearing surface of narrow boards. The interior wall surfaces are painted brick or, in the case of rubble interior walls, stucco. The top stories are generally entirely clear, since wooden roof trusses above provide support for the ceiling and attic floor; the 1882 addition's second story is open to the roof trusses (Photograph 6).

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## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Description Yantic Woolen Company Mill 7-3 Norwich, New London County, CT

The various parts of the mill interior are separated from each other by sliding doors clad in sheet metal.

There is very little interior woodwork. The stairway within the main tower is curved at the top and bottom of each flight of stairs, curves that are repeated by wainscot railing (Photograph 7). The office portion has a dado of narrow boards partway up its plastered walls, simple doorway and window surrounds, and an Eastlake-inspired stairway with carved newels, turned balusters, and grooved handrails (Photograph 8).

Although the complex retains its historical appearance substantially intact, there have been a number of changes over time. In addition to the removal of the belfry and weathervane, relatively modern alterations include the enlargement of one side of the monitor so as to create a loft story along the east side of the dyehouse; loading doors cut into the south elevation of the main mill near the east end (Photograph 1); metal fire escapes at the ends of the main mill and at the rear of the complex; machinery housings added when elevators were installed at the northeast corner of the main mill and the east end of the shipping and storage building; a c.1970 corrugated-metal storage building appended to the north end; c.1960 loading docks added in the rear; and c.1970 removal of part of the storage building's floors so as to accommodate tall storage bins. Discontinuities in the rooflines of the portion along Franklin Road (Photograph 3) suggest that there may have been other modifications of which there is no record. No historic machinery or other artifacts of manufacturing remain inside in the mill.

The building appears to be in relatively good condition. Water leaking in has buckled a few floors, some window glass is broken, and a few window openings have been boarded up. For the most part, however, there appears to be very little deterioration of stone, mortar, or wooden elements.

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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

#### Significance Yantic Woolen Company Mill Norwich, New London County, CT

8-1

#### Summary

The Yantic Woolen Company Mill is significant because it is associated with one of the major themes in the historical development of eastern Connecticut, the growth of the textile industry (Criterion A); it also has architectural significance because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of the mid-19th-century textile mill (Criterion C). The mill was built in 1865 by E. Winslow Williams as a replacement for an earlier mill on the site that had been started by his father, Captain Erastus Williams. The first mill was almost completely consumed by fire on May 26, 1865. Both mills produced flannel, a highquality napped woolen cloth. The mill prospered well into the 20th century, forming the economic base for the village of Yantic, which at its height was home to some 400 inhabitants. The mill's impressive stone exterior symbolized its importance in the community, but it also had a practical purpose: such massive masonry construction was wellsuited to withstand the weight and vibration of the broadlooms within, and it also made the mill somewhat more resistant to fire. Other characteristics typical of the industrial architecture of the period include the mill's multi-story height and long, narrow shape; the isolation of the main stairway in a separate tower; and the "slow-burn" floor construction, in which thick planking was laid directly on the interior beams, eliminating the need for intermediate joists.

#### <u>Historic Context</u>

The textile industry played a major role in transforming eastern Connecticut. Even before the War of 1812, entrepreneurial energy seeping over the Rhode Island border had resulted in a few small cotton and woolen mills, and by 1819 there were more than 200 mills scattered along the region's fast-flowing streams. Although much of the early capital came from Rhode Island, by the 1820s well-to-do local residents were heavily involved as well, viewing manufacturing as a way of extending already sizeable fortunes made in the West Indies trade and other mercantile activities. The mills were often accompanied by houses for workers, a company store, and sometimes a church and other buildings, and over time, depending on the fortunes of the mill, the settlements evolved into villages with a distinct identity.

By the time the first Yantic mill burned, eastern Connecticut was dotted with mill-related settlements, and although farming continued to play a role in the local economies, increasingly the region's wealth

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Significance	Yantic Woolen Company Mill	8-2
-	Norwich, New London County, CT	

was built upon profits and wages provided by the textile industry. While the rural population of the region remained stagnant or declined, the numerous mill villages continued to grow in number and size well into the 20th century.

The largest villages were those that grew up around cotton mills, of which many employed 1,000 workers or more. Woolen mills were generally smaller, for a variety of reasons. Wool was inherently harder to work than cotton, and the broadlooms on which it was woven required more worker attention. The end product of woolen mills had a higher value than cotton fabrics, going into suits, uniforms, coats, and highquality trousers, and so smaller operations could find a place producing such high-margin goods. Woolen mill workers tended to be more highly paid, and more predominantly male, than the work force of the typical cotton mill. Thus, a mill like that at Yantic, employing 150 people at its height, could support a village of 400 residents.

Woolen manufacture was started in the region in the 1790s in nearby Montville and soon spread to Norwich and other towns in the area. Many of the earliest mills produced satinet, a wool-cotton blend, and were small family-owned affairs. Most did not survive the triple blows of the economic depression of 1837, the introduction of capital-intensive machine-weaving around 1840, and an ongoing shift in fashion away from satinets and cassimeres to a market characterized by inexpensive cotton fabrics at one end of the spectrum and high-quality woolens and worsteds on the other. The woolen mills that survived were those whose owners had chosen to specialize in high-value fabrics and who had the necessary financial reserves to continually invest in mechanization. Although none grew physically to the size of the largest cotton mills, the region's woolen mills generally prospered (with many periods of ups and downs) throughout the 19th century. Woolen mills formed the core of numerous eastern Connecticut villages, such as Wilsonville in Thompson; Hydeville and Stafford Hollow in Stafford; Central Village, Almyville, and Glen Falls in Plainfield; and Occum and Yantic in Norwich.

In the 20th century the woolen industry entered a period of consolidation. The American Woolen Company, headquartered in North Andover, Massachusetts, acquired a large portion of the nation's productive capacity in the first two decades of the 20th century. Many of the area's independent producers either were acquired by the American Woolen Company or else were unable to compete in an increasingly monopolized industry. The Great Depression brought on

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#### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Significance Yantic Woolen Company Mill 8-3 Norwich, New London County, CT

further difficulties, leaving only a few companies to wrestle with the post-World War II challenges of synthetics and a global economy.

#### History of the Yantic Woolen Company Mill

There had been some manufacturing at this site, including a grist, saw, and carding mill operation and a short-lived cotton mill, prior to 1827, the year the property was acquired by Captain Erastus Williams (1793-1867). Williams, a wealthy former sea captain who had retired at an early age to live in Norwich, enlarged the cotton mill and converted it to the production of woolens. Early views show the mill to be a long 3 1/2-story brick structure, with a clerestory roof and a small belfry at one end surmounted by a weathervane in the shape of a sheep, undoubtedly intended to honor the source of merino wool. At least one wing was built of stone. It was a relatively large woolen mill for its day, employing 75 males and 35 females in the period just before the Civil War. Captain Williams was assisted in running the mill by his son, E. Winslow Williams (1830-1888), who assumed sole control following the diastrous fire of 1865.

Within three months, E. Winslow Williams had laid the cornerstone for a new, larger main mill, while apparently salvaging the forge shop and the 3 1/2-story rear portion that had been a storehouse; a sheep weathervane also appears in early photos of the rebuilt mill, so it too may have been rescued. Williams's faith in the future was rewarded. Buoyed by rising demand for the mill's flannels, the number of looms went from 32 in 1870 to 88 in 1900, allowing the mill's production to grow from 1,000,000 yards to 2,250,000 yards a year. Additional manufacturing space was added in 1887 and again in 1892. The legal structure of the mill changed in 1877, when the Yantic Manufacturing Company was created as a stock corporation, though the Williams family continued to own the majority of shares and to exercise a direct managerial role. E. Winslow Williams was succeeded after his death in 1888 by his son, Winslow Tracy Williams (1863-1930).

In the 20th century the mill entered a period in which numerous successive changes occurred in ownership and operation. Following a period of financial difficulty, Winslow Tracy Williams reorganized the company as the Admore Woolen Company. The mill ran two shifts producing blankets and overcoat cloth for the government during World War I, at which time Williams sold the mill to Louis and Ira Kaplan, who operated it as the Liberty Woolen Company. In 1921 it was acquired

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## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Significance	Yantic Woolen Company Mill
	Norwich, New London County, CT

by the American Woolen Company, which idled the mill after consolidating production in another facility in Norwich. During the Depression, the mill was operated by four different entities and was idle part of the time. After a brief resurgence during World War II, weaving was suspended and it became a spinning mill only, providing yarn for other mills to weave. In 1968 it was acquired by Hale Manufacturing Company of Putnam, Connecticut. The Hale managers were able to modify the plant's methods and machinery so as to process rayon and other synthetics, which extended the life of the old mill another two decades. By the time production ceased in 1989, the entire United States textile industry had become enmeshed in a global economy that no longer favored the small scale and ancient machinery that characterized mills such as Yantic.

Today the Yantic Woolen Company Mill stands as a reminder of the central role that textiles played in the development of eastern Connecticut. Although there remain numerous former cotton and woolen mills throughout the area, each year fire and development take their toll. Yantic Mill and its fine masonry recall the industry in its healthiest days, when an owner such as the Williams family could expect textile production to amply repay the costs of rebuilding following the fire of 1865.

#### Architectural Significance

The Yantic Woolen Company Mill epitomizes the typical textile mill of the second half of the 19th century. In its material, form, and architectural features, it reveals the constraints posed by the type of power and machinery used, available light, and concerns for fire-safety that caused the type to evolve. The shape of the mill and its multistory height, for example, conserved power losses associated with the method of powering the mill from a single source (water turbines supplemented by a steam engine) that in turn drove line shafting running down the center of the building. Also, the reliance on natural light coming in from the large windows put an effective limit on the width of the building. Good light was especially crucial in woolen manufacture, since the cloth was of very high value. Mistakes were also hard to see. Wool was often worked after the wool or yarn was dyed a dark color, whereas in the cotton industry the white fabric was usually dyed or printed after being woven.

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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Significance	Yantic Woolen Company Mill
-	Norwich, New London County, CT

Other features found in the Yantic mill reflect the period's ongoing search for greater fire resistance. In addition to the use of masonry for the walls, the heavy timber interior framing and the thick floors built up of solid layers of wood were intended to minimize damage from Unlike the domestic architecture of the period, in which floors fire. were supported on numerous small joists, this method exposed only the minimum number of very large pieces of wood to combustion. Timbers of this size and solid floors were very slow to catch fire and burned slowly once combustion began; mill engineers even calculated how much section of wood could be destroyed in a small fire without requiring a Timber also performed better in a fire than iron beam's replacement. or steel framing, which was tried in a few factories; although the metal did not catch fire, it deformed so much in extreme heat that it actually could be more destructive.

The Yantic Woolen Company Mill's gable roof also places it in a particular period. Earlier mills tried to use the floor space within the roof by having clerestories, monitors, or rows of dormers lighting the top story; the first Yantic Mill had such a clerestory roof. Such complex roof framing, however, itself represented a fire hazard, and the use of attics was soon abandoned in favor of the greater safety of a plain gable roof. Often, as at Yantic, the roof trusses were used to to create a clear span on the floor below, but otherwise the attic was superfluous, and roof pitches became ever shallower. Eventually, waterproofing techniques reached the point where a flat or nearly flat roof became possible, and so early 20th century textile mills often have no attic space whatsoever. Monitor roofs remained in use for single-story buildings associated with heat and noxious fumes, such as the Yantic mill's 1892 dye house, where the monitor functioned as a ventilator as well as a source of light.

Another typical characteristic evident at Yantic is the use of a tower to contain the main stairway. Earlier mills had the stairs within the building, as can be seen in the earlier part of the complex. Such an arrangement allowed fire to spread from floor to floor and made it difficult for people to escape the flames. With the stairs in a separate tower, isolated from the manufacturing space by heavy sliding metal-clad doors, a fire could be confined to a single floor, and the employees had a chance of escaping the smoke and flames. Towers also functioned in many mills as a support for a water reservoir that pressurized fire hydrants within the building, and made a handy base upon which to mount the mill's belfry, which in earlier factories had been placed directly on the roof.

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### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Significance	Yantic Woolen Company Mill
	Norwich, New London County, CT

Finally, attention must be given to the mill's fine granite exterior. This type of stonework, in which slabs of cut stone some four to eight inches thick are laid in alternating narrow and wide courses, is a vernacular technique found throughout the region, where it was employed for mills, academies, meetinghouse basements, and homes of the wealthy at least as early as the 1820s. The narrow courses serve to tie the exterior stonework into the masonry of the bulk of the wall, which was usually rubble stonework plastered on the interior.<sup>1</sup> Similar gray granite and granitic gneiss is found throughout the region, and although there is no explicit mention of the source of the stone, it may well have been quarried in the vicinity.<sup>2</sup> Similar stonework can be found in early mills built in Windham and Putnam, and a portion of the first mill at Yantic was built in this manner. However, virtually all of the region's post-Civil War textile mills eschewed this timeconsuming and costly technique in favor of brick. By re-building the Yantic mill in expensive stonework similar to that employed in parts of his father's mill, E. Winslow Williams appears to have been making a clear statement about continuity with the village's past and expressing confidence for a prosperous future.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>The substitution of brick for rubble found in the 1865 portions of the Yantic mill may represent an unusual modification of the method.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>On the other hand, E. Winslow Williams is known to have purchased gray granite for another project in Yantic from a quarry in Monson, Massachusetts.

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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Bibliography	Yantic Woolen Company Mill	9-1
	Norwich, New London County, CT	

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- "E. Winslow Williams," <u>Genealogical and Biographical Record of New</u> London County. Chicago: J. H. Beers, 1900.
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## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Photographs	Yantic Woolen Company Mill	Photos-1
	Norwich, New London County, CT	

#### All photographs:

- 1. Yantic Woolen Company Mill
- 2. Norwich, New London County, Connecticut
- 3. Photo Credit: HRC, Hartford, CT
- 4. June, 1995
- 5. Negative filed with Connecticut Historical Commission

Hartford, CT

#### Captions:

Overview of mill property, camera facing north Photograph 1 of 8

View of buildings along Franklin Road, with office on far left, threestory mill with gable end facing road on far right, camera facing southwest Photograph 2 of 8

Three-story mill at north end of complex, camera facing northwest Photograph 3 of 8

Powerhouse, 1946, attached to north end of stone blacksmith shop, camera facing southwest Photograph 4 of 8

Typical interior, second floor of main mill, camera facing west Photograph 5 of 8

Typical interior, second floor of 1887 ell, showing roof trusses, camera facing northwest Photograph 6 of 8

Stairway inside front tower, camera facing south Photograph 7 of 8

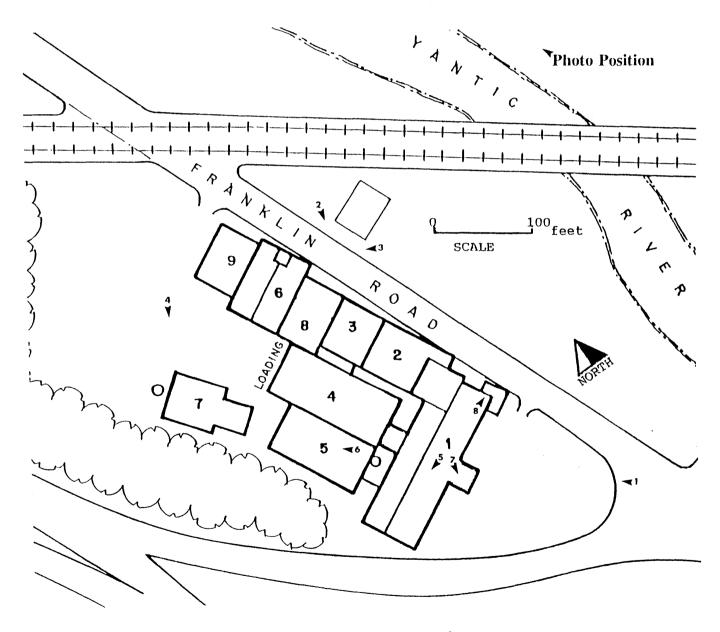
Stairway inside office, camera facing northeast Photograph 8 of 8

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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Geographical Data Yantic Woolen Company Mill 10-1 Norwich, New London County, CT



Sketch Map of Site

Source: The Historic Mills of Norwich (Historic Neighborhood Preservation Program, Inc., 1992)