Im No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74) INTED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES **INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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CONDITION

CHECK ONE

CHECK ONE

__EXCELLENT __GOOD _X_FAJR __DETERIORATED

__UNEXPOSED

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X ORIGINAL SITE

__MOVED DATE____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Valley Falls Mill occupies a long, narrow site parallel to the Blackstone River and east of Broad Street, in the Central Falls section of the village of Valley Falls. The village, divided by the Blackstone River, now lies partly in Central Falls and partly in Cumberland. A major fall of the Blackstone occurs at this point and has been used for power since the early nineteenth century. Just north of the falls is a bridge carrying Broad Street -- a major north south state highway. The river has been bridged here since the early nineteenth century. The mill site includes three structures dating from the mid-nineteenth century -- a large brick mill, a smaller stone mill, and a small boiler house. In addition, much of the water power system remains, including a hewn-stone dam (1853), which provided fourteen feet of head (the difference in elevation between the water in reserve and the river's surface below the dam), the gate and its house, and portions of a once-extensive canal system. (See sketch map)

The Valley Falls Mill (1849) is a long, narrow, rectangular building, four stories tall with a rubble foundation and a hip roof (whose east end is in serious disrepair). To meet the requirements of fire resistance, the mill was constructed with load-bearing brick walls and heavy timber columns, 12" by 12", spaced about 8' apart and arranged in two rows about 12' apart on the second and third floors; on the first floor the columns are arranged in a single central row and are supplemented by two rows of iron posts. The fourth floor of the mill is designed without posts -- the roof is supported by king post trusses with diagonal struts and vertical tie rods. The floors of the mill are constructed of several layers; the bottom layer consists of heavy wood planks, 12" wide. The flooring is said to be about 6" thick and to consist of several layers of planking sandwiched between thin layers of cement, which may have been added later for additional fire protection.

The mill is 156 feet by 44 feet, twenty bays long, with rectangular, double-hung, multi-paned windows (8/8 on the first and second stories, 12/8 on the third and fourth), and flush granite sills and lintels. The choice of brick for the mill's walls was an unusual one; in the 1840s and 50s, most Rhode Island textile mills were built of stone.

The mass of the building is interrupted at the center of its south elevation by a five-level, projecting, Italianate tower. The freight doors on the front of the tower are flanked by narrow, round-headed windows in the belfry (which once housed a bell cast in 1836 by George Howard of Boston), there is an oculus on each

See continutation sheet 1

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

2

side and, above, a trio of roundheaded windows of graduated size. The tower is capped by a helm roof with wide eaves and a central finial. The original wind vane in the shape of a jagged arrow no longer exists.

Joined to the mill by a wooden passageway (now seriously deteriorated) is a smaller, three-story, gable-roofed rubble mill (1860s), with granite sills, lintels, and corner quoins, lying between the river and the east end of the main mill. Adjacent to this smaller mill (and connected to it and the main mill by wooden passageways) is a shed-roofed boiler house (1860s), also of rubble, with a brick stack on its west side. The boiler house at one time supplied steam for mills on the opposite side of the Blackstone, via a pipeline under the river.

The main power trench, whose walls are built of rubble, enters the mill site just below the Broad Street bridge and, as it passed the present mill, was originally divided into two branches, one flowing under the 1849 mill, the other under a later mill (which no longer stands) before rejoining the Blackstone. The second branch has been filled in. A gable-roofed, wood frame gatehouse is built over the trench adjacent to the bridge; it rests on a series of round stone arches and still contains the gate which regulated the flow of water into the trench.

PERIOD

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

PREHISTORIC	ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	COMMUNITY PLANNING	LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	RELIGION
1400-1499	ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	CONSERVATION	LAW	SCIENCE
1500-1599	AGRICULTURE	ECONOMICS	LITERATURE	SCULPTURE
_1600-1699	XARCHITECTURE	EDUCATION	MILITARY	SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1700-1799	_ART ·	XENGINEERING .	MUSIC	THEATER
X_1800-1899	COMMERCE	EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	PHILOSOPHY	TRANSPORTATION
1900-	communications	XINDUSTRY	POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	_OTHER (SPECIFY)

_INVENTION

SPECIFIC DATES 1849, 1860s

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Valley Falls Mill is a major industrial building, located on a key site in the tiny but heavily-industrialized city of Central Falls. Its significance lies in its architectural quality, its history as an early and continuing element in the industrial life of Central Falls, its location on a major fall of the Blackstone River, and its presence as the most important remaining element of a large industrial complex built by the Chace family of Rhode Island.

Though not incorporated until 1895, the city of Central Falls is largely the product of mid-nineteenth century development. The most important factor in this development was the presence of the Blackstone River which makes up over one half of the city's boundary. As the river flows southward through Valley Falls Pond toward Narragansett Bay, it passes between steep banks and over two falls -- the Valley Falls and the middle (or central) falls, the source of the city's name. These waterfalls provided power for industry, and it was industrialization which spacked the development of two manufacturing villages -- Valley Falls and Central Falls -- in the first half of the nineteenth century, and which fired their rapid growth into a densely developed urban center later in the century.

The Wilkinson family, known in the late eighteenth century for their mechanical and inventive enterprise, were the first known to have used the water power of the Valley Falls. Oziel Wilkinson had operated a furnace in Smithfield, R. I., but in the 1780s he moved his family and business to Pawtucket where, with his five sons, he became the principal ironworker of the regions. Oziel was succeeded by his son David who, with his brothers Abraham and Isaac, acquired land on both sides of the Blackstone at Valley Falls in 1812. In the same year, the Valley Falls Turnpike (now Broad Street), built by Isaac Wilkinson, was opened, allowing for an easier flow of goods and materials from the area to its major markets. Their mill, built in 1823, was later dismantled.

See continuation sheet 2

Form No. 10-300a !Hev. 10=741

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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CONTINUATION SHEET

2

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Extensive development of the Valley Falls area, however, dates from the arrival of the Chace family, leading industrialists in the Blackstone Valley. Samuel B. and Harvey Chace, sons of Fall River mill owner Oliver Chace, built the present mill in 1849; in their choice of site, they were no doubt influenced not only by the availability of water power, but also by the completion the same year of the Providence & Worcester Railroad, which passes by the mill on its east side. The mill was designed for the manufacture of a variety of cotton products and was the site of the first use of the American-made, Sharp & Roberts, self-actor, mule spinning frames. The long-mules, installed on the top floor of the mill, were designed by James Brown of Pawtucket, a noted machinist. In 1853, the Chaces built a new stone dam and gatehouse at the Valley Falls. This new dam replaced two earlier wooden dams upstream.

In 1853, the Chaces incorporated as the Valley Falls Company; they later owned and operated mills on both sides of the Blackstone here and at Albion. Over the next five decades, several additional buildings were constructed near the mill, expanding it into a major mill complex. These included a stone picker house and two additional brick mills, each almost equal in size to the 1849 mill. Later owners added other small buildings and a complex similar in size grew up on the opposite side of the river as well.

The expansion of the Chaces' mill was instrumental in the development of the village of Valley Falls which in the mid-nineteenth century grew up around their enterprise on both sides of the river. The company was the major employer in the village and one of the largest in Central Falls. In 1860, for example, when the average textile mill in Central Falls employed 106 workers, 280 were employed at the Valley Falls Mill (150 men and 130 women) and 800,000 pounds of raw cotton were consumed in the production of yarns and fabric. The presence of so large a mill led to a concentration of population (largely Irish in the 1850s and 1860s, later French Canadians), trade, and building activity in the vicinity.

The original village is today divided by a city boundary (so that half of it is in the city of Central Falls and half in the town of Cumberland) and it is now virtually indistinguishable from the rest of Central Falls, and little evidence of its origins as a

See continuation sheet 3

Form No. 19-300a

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE

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Though historically only a remnant, the mill itself is visually still a whole. Impressive in its solidity, size, and scale, its symmetrical and regular facade set behind a tall projecting tower, the Valley Falls Mill is a landmark in the city; its distinctive tower can be seen from much of the surrounding area. One of the largest and handsomest mills in region, it enjoys the advantages of an unusually attractive site on the river.

Long vacant, the Valley Falls Mill will be converted into a major housing complex this fall, a recycling effort which has the full support of the municipal administration. Its original power system will be restored and used to provide heat and hot water.

As a handsome example of textile mill architecture, as an important reminder of the role of industry in the growth of the area, as the remaining core of a once-extensive industrial complex, and as a notable example of the opportunities availabe for the preservation and re-use of older buildings, it deserves the protection and recognition of entry on the National Register.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Curley, Thomas J. "Friends and Ne Central Falls, Rhode Island,	ighbors: Diamond Jubilee Souvenir." 1970.
Grieve, Robert. History of Pawtuc	cket, Central Falls and Vicinity.
Pawtucket: 1897.	See continuation sheet 4
10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2.8 acres UTM REFERENCES	
A 1 9 3 01 83 0 4 64 1 08 0 ZONE EASTING NORTHING C VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION	ZONE EASTING NORTHING D 1
Plat 3, lots 37, 178A, 181, and by a line from High Street (68.8 -37' -31" W to lot 181.	that portion of lot 178-B formed 30' from lot 37); running 108.5' at N 45°
LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPE	ERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES
STATE CODE	COUNTY
STATE CODE	COUNTY CODE
II FORM PREPARED BY	
Pamela Kennedy, Histor	rical Survey Specialist
Rhode Island Historical Preserva	ation Commission July, 1977 TELEPHONE
150 Benefit Street	401-277-2678
Providence	STATE Rhode Island
12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATI	
· ·	OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:
NATIONAL S	TATE X LOCAL
	ne National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665). It all Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the item.
FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE	te Ca Illianson
TITLE State Historic Preservati	on Officer DATE September 27, 1977
FOR NPS USE ONLY HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUD	ED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER
	DATE
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC	
ATTEST:	C PRESERVATION DATE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES **INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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Steere, Thomas. History of the Town of Smithfield from its Organization in 1730-1, to its Division in 1871. Van Slyck, J. New England Manufacturers and Manufactories.

Boston: 1879.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

150 Benefit Street

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS NAME HISTORIC Valley Falls Mill AND/OR COMMON 2 LOCATION STREET & NUMBER 1363 Broad Street NOT FOR PUBLICATION CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT CITY TOWN Central Falls Fernand St. Germain Rep. VICINITY OF CODE COUNTY Rhode Island 02863 Providence $\Omega \Omega Z$ 3 CLASSIFICATION CATEGORY OWNERSHIP **STATUS** PRESENT USE __DISTRICT __PUBLIC __OCCUPIED ...MUSEUM __AGRICULTURE XBUILDING(S) X.PRIVATE **ICUNOCCUPIED** __COMMERCIAL __STRUCTURE _вотнWORK IN PROGRESS __EDUÇATIONAL __PRIVATE RESIDENCE __SITE **PUBLIC ACQUISITION** ACCESSIBLE _ENTERTAINMENT __RELIGIOUS __OBJECT _IN PROCESS __YES: RESTRICTED _GOVERNMENT __SCIENTIFIC __BEING CONSIDERED YES: UNRESTRICTED _INDUSTRIAL __TRANSPORTATION __MILITARY X_{other:} vacant X.NO OWNER OF PROPERTY Blackstone Falls Associates Jizin Manekofsky c/o Gelardin/Brumer/Cott, Inc. STREET & NUMBER 543 a Green Street Box-165-STATE Central Falis Cambridge Massachusetts Atode Island 02139 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION COURTHOUSE. REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Central Falls City Hall STREET & NUMBER 580 Broad Street CITY, TOWN Central Falls Rhode Island 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS Central Falls. Statewide Historic Preservation Report, P-CF-1 Rhode Island DATE 1977 _.FEDERAL X_STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL DEPOSITORY FOR Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission SURVEY RECORDS

Providence,

Rhode Island

CONDITION

CHECK ONE

CHECK ONE

__EXCELLENT

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__DETERIORATED

__RUINS
__UNEXPOSED

XUNALTERED __ALTERED

, X. ORIGINAL SITE

__MOVED DATE____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

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See continutation sheet 1

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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CONTINUATION SHEET 1 ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

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PERIOD

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

ARCHEOLOGY PREHISTORIC ___PREHISTORIC __ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC __1400-1499

__CONSERVATION

_LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE __LAW

_RELIGION SCIENCE.

__AGRICULTURE .__1500-1599 X.ARCHITECTURE __1600-1699

__ECONOMICS __EDUCATION

__LITERATURE __MILITARY

__SCULPTURE __SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN

__1700-1799 __ART X_1800-1899

__1900-

XENGINEERING.

__MUSIC

THEATER

· __COMMERCECOMMUNICATIONS EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT XINDUSTRY

__COMMUNITY PLANNING

__PHILOSOPHY __POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

__TRANSPORTATION _OTHER (SPECIFY)

__INVENTION

SPECIFIC DATES 1849, 1860s BUILDER/ARCHITECT -

unknown.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Valley Falls Mill is a major industrial building, located on a key site in the tiny but heavily-industrialized city of Central Falls. Its significance lies in its architectural quality, its history as an early and continuing element in the industrial life of Central Falls, its location on a major fall of the Blackstone River, and its presence as the most important remaining element of a large industrial complex built by the Chace family of Rhode Island.

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The expansion of the Chaces' mill was instrumental in the development of the village of Valley Falls which in the mid-nineteenth century grew up around their enterprise on both sides of the river. The company was the major employer in the village and one of the largest in Central Falls. In 1860, for example, when the average textile mill in Central Falls employed 106 workers, 280 were employed at the Valley Falls Mill (150 men and 130 women) and 800,000 pounds of raw cotton were consumed in the production of yarns and fabric. The presence of so large a mill led to a concentration of population (largely Irish in the 1850s and 1860s, later French Canadians), trade, and building activity in the vicinity.

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See continuation sheet 3

Form No. 40-300a (Hev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE.

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As a handsome example of textile mill architecture, as an important reminder of the role of industry in the growth of the area, as the remaining core of a once-extensive industrial complex, and as a notable example of the opportunities availabe for the preservation and re-use of older buildings, it deserves the protection and recognition of entry on the National Register.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Central Falls, Rhode Island, 1970. Grieve, Robert. History of Pawtucket, Central Falls and Vicinity. Pawtucket: See continuation sheet 4 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY **UTM REFERENCES** NORTHING ZONE VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION Plat 3, lots 37, 178A, 181, and that portion of lot 178-B formed by a line from High Street (68.80' from lot 37); running 108.5' at N 45° -37' -31" W to lot 181. LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES CODE STATE CODE COUNTY CODE CODE COUNTY STATE FORM PREPARED BY NAME / TITLE Pamela Kennedy, Historical Survey Specialist Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission TELEPHONE STREET & NUMBER 150 Benefit Street 401-277-2678 CITY OR TOWN Rhode Island Providence 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS: STATE X NATIONAL ___ As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665). hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE DATE September 27, 1977 TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer FOR NPS USE ONLY THEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER DATE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION DATE KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Curley, Thomas J. "Friends and Neighbors: Diamond Jubilee Souvenir."

Form No. 10-300a (Hev. 10-74)

> UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES **INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

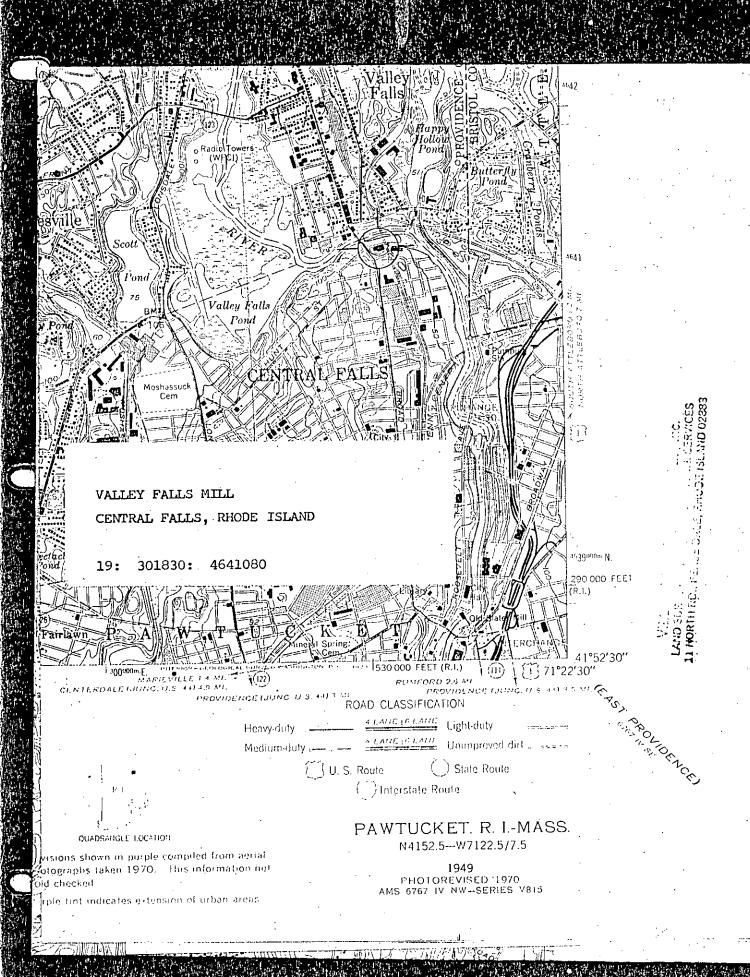
CONTINUATION SHEET

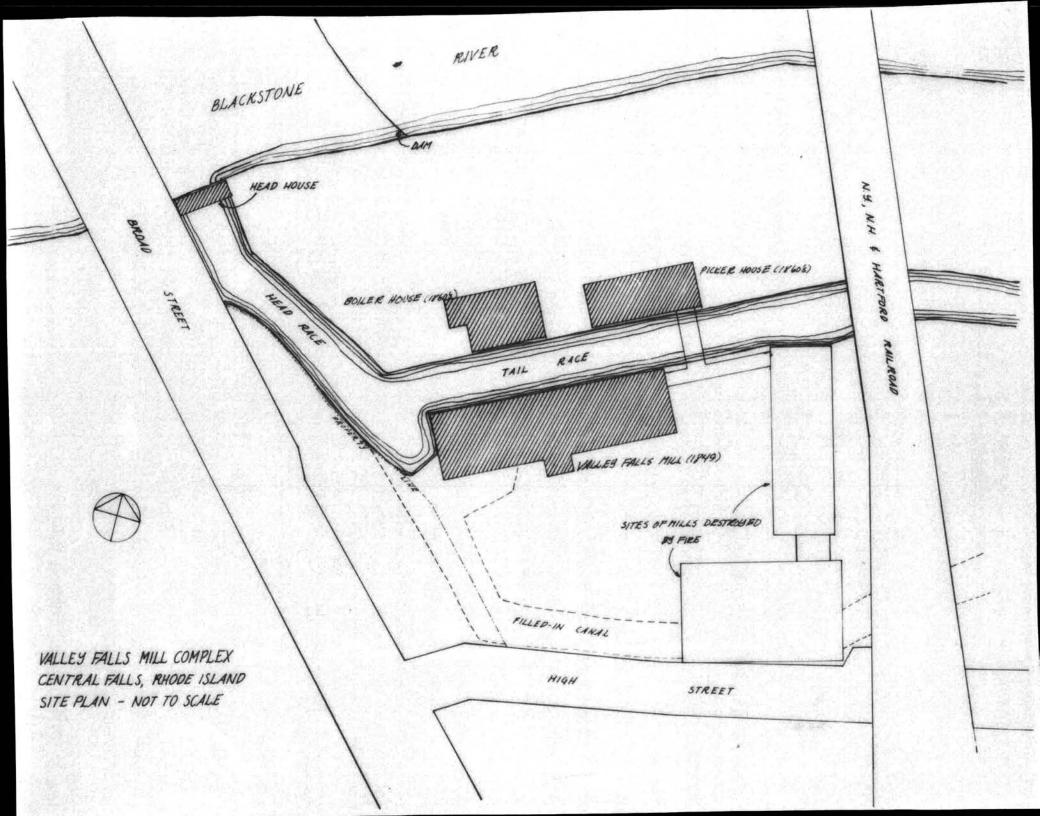
Boston: 1879.

ITEM NUMBER

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Haley, John William. The Lower Blackstone Valley: The Story of Pawtucket, Central Falls, Lincoln, and Cumberland. Pawtucket: 1936 HAER Inventory Card RI 19.301840.4641040 Pawt., January, 1977. Steere, Thomas. History of the Town of Smithfield from its Organization in 1730-1, to its Division in 1871. Van Slyck, J. New England Manufacturers and Manufactories.







Central Falls, Rhode Island

Photographer: Warren Jagger

July, 1977

Negative at Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission 150 Benefit Street, Providence, Rhode Island

Valley Falls Mill: Southern facade



Central Falls, Rhode Island

Photographer: Warren Jagger

July, 1977

Negative at Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission 150 Benefit Street, Providence, Rhode Island

Valley Falls Mill: Interior, fourth floor



Central Falls, Rhode Island

Photographer: Warren Jagger

July, 1977

Negative at Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission 150 Benefit Street, Providence, Rhode Island

Gatehouse from southeast



Central Falls, Rhode Island

Photographer: Warren Jagger

July, 1977

Negative at Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission 150 Benefit Street, Providence, Rhode Island

Picker house, southern facade, and Valley Falls Mill, north east corner



Central Falls, Rhode Island

Photographer: Warren Jagger

July, 1977

Negative at Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission 150 Benefit Street, Providence, Rhode Island

Main power trench from west; Valley Falls Mill on right; boiler house and picker house on left

