

Determination of Eligibility (DOE)

Inventory #: WIN0042

DOE Review Date: 9/11/2024

Date Received: 9/4/2024

Final DOE Approved: Yes

Property Name: Ashuelot Manufacturing Co. Boarding House

Area:

Address: 32 Ashuelot Main Street

Town: Winchester

County: Cheshire

Reviewed For: SR

DOE Program(s):

State Register

Determination of Eligibility:

National Register eligible, individually	Integrity: Yes	Level: Local
State Register eligible, individually		
Criteria:	A: Yes	B:
	C: Yes	D:
		E:

Areas of Significance(s):

Industry

Ethnic Heritage, European

Architecture

Period of Significance: 1830 to 1920

Boundary:

The State Register boundary is the property boundary as identified on Town of Winchester Tax Map 18, Lot 1, consisting of 0.27 acres.

Statement of Significance:

The Ashuelot Manufacturing Company (AMC) Boarding House is significant for its connections to the industrial and social history of Winchester and for its architecture. Since the older brick dwelling was constructed in c.1830, the property has been owned and lived in by various mill owners and mill workers, from the earliest seasonal farm workers and local women, to Irish and English immigrants, to French Canadians, to Poles and Russians by the turn of the 20th century. Architecturally, the AMC Boarding House reflects two distinct architectures: the older c.1830 dwelling is an example of a late Federal/early Greek Revival brick house. The attached c.1861 boarding house ell is a rare and intact brick structure with Greek Revival and Italianate influences. Both buildings retain many of these respective architectural details, including doors, windows, trim and casing, and brickwork.

Comments:

Follow Up:

Notify appropriate parties

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Name, Location, Ownership

Historic name Ashuelot Manufacturing Co.
Boarding House
Street and number 32 Ashuelot Main St.
City or town Winchester
County Cheshire
Current owner The Guild at 32 Main, llc

Function or Use

Current use(s) vacant
Historic use(s) boarding house

Architectural Information

Style Late Federal and Greek Revival
Architect/builder _____
Source _____
Construction date c.1825 and c.1868
Source research, physical inspection
Alterations, with dates renovations c.1900

Moved? no yes date: _____

Exterior Features

Foundation granite
Cladding brick
Roof material slate
Chimney material brick
Type of roof gable
Chimney location multiple interior
Number of stories 2 1/2
Entry location multiple
Windows various (2/2, 6/6)
Replacement? no yes date: _____

Site Features

Setting small town village
Outbuildings N/A



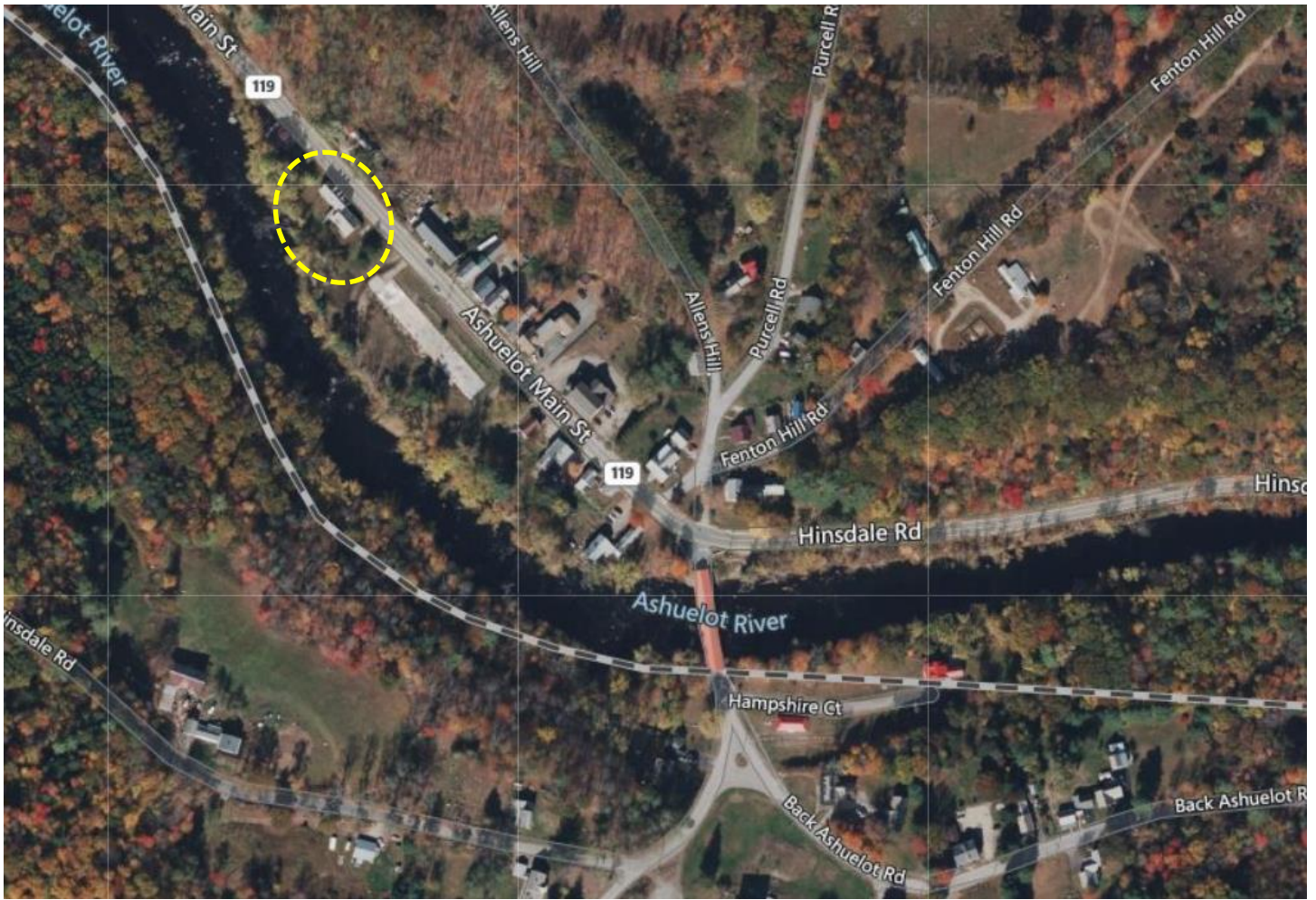
Photo #1 Direction: _____
Date _____

Landscape features N/A
Tax Map Map 18, Lot 1
Acreage less than one (0.27 acres)
State Plane Feet (NAD83) X: 780466.6, Y: 102642

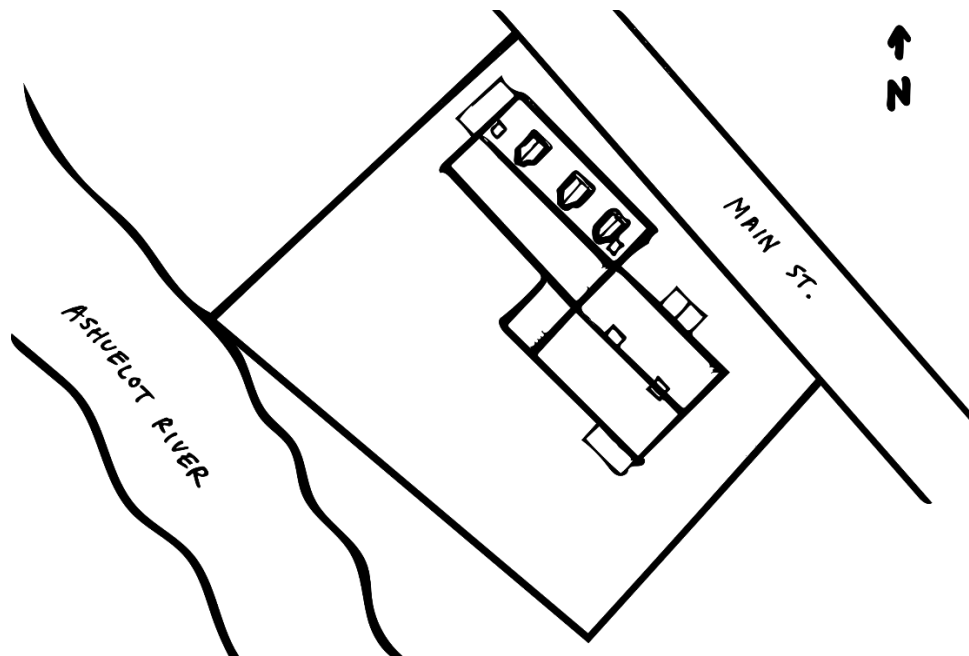
Form prepared by

Name Andrew Cushing, Abby Milonas
Organization NH Preservation Alliance
Date of Survey June 2024

Location Map



Property Map (Photo Key and Floor Plans on last page)



Historical Background and Role in the Town or City's Development

Summary

The boarding house at 32 Main Street in Ashuelot was built in two phases, roughly thirty years apart. In c.1825 the southeast volume was built, probably for Luther Rixford, whose partnership owned and managed a woolen mill next door. The second volume was likely constructed in c.1868, purposefully for a boarding house. At this point, the older house was renovated to also serve as boarding rooms. The building was owned by the mill owners from 1836 through 1916: Ashuelot Manufacturing Company (William Lamson et al, 1836-1853); Joshua, Thomas, and Andrew Ward (1853-1892, doing business as the Ashuelot Manufacturing Company between 1859-1876); Edward Thayer (1876-1900); James Gill (1900-1901); and Hugh Sheridan (Sheridan Woolen Mills, 1901-1916). For much of the 20th century, the boarding house was owned by several families of Polish descent.

Development of Ashuelot Village

Winchester was originally granted by Massachusetts, but had become New Hampshire territory in 1741 and incorporated in 1753. The Ashuelot River, a 64-mile tributary of the Connecticut, runs through much of the town, aiding its early development of agriculture and industry. Winchester village prospered as the town's center of civic and religious life, mostly due to the location of the town's meetinghouse there in 1760. But by the turn of the 19th century, early industrialists had harnessed the water power on the Ashuelot River and Broad Brook several miles west of the main village. This area came to be known as Furnace Village, due to an early iron ore industry, then West Winchester, then Ashuelot in 1854.¹

In 1802 the Sixth NH Turnpike connected Brattleboro to Warwick, MA and traveled the banks of the Ashuelot through Hinsdale and Winchester. The 1805 survey done to comply with the 1803 state law to provide the Secretary of State with accurate maps of each town shows the banks of the Ashuelot River and nearby tributary Broad Brook as a node of houses and various mills.² By 1823 Furnace Village had "21 dwelling houses, 1 cotton factory, 1 small woolen factory, 1 nail factory, 1 scythe factory, 1 large oil mill, 1 furnace, 1 tavern, [and] 1 store."³ Several men were responsible for the early industrialization of the village, including various members of the Hawkins family, Luther Rixford, David Ball, William Pulsifer, and John Capron. These men were mostly early investors and speculators who steadily acquired large tracts of land that either they developed themselves, sold to entrepreneurs, or sold amongst themselves.

Central among these mills was the oil mill, located just southeast of the subject property, which converted flax seed into linseed oil, a necessary component of oil paints and glazing putties. References to the oil mill can be found as far back as 1799 and 1817, when shares of it were sold to John Capron.⁴ Other shareholders of the oil mill sold their portion to David Ball (1801-1864) and William Pulsifer (1787-1838) in 1829.⁵ In 1833 Elijah Alexander sold his stake in the oil mill to Pulsifer and Ball, "merchants and copartners in trade."⁶ Ball and Pulsifer were often in partnership with John Capron, whose daughter, Fanny, married David Ball.⁷ (Ball was also involved in other industries and was instrumental in bringing the Ashuelot Railroad to town in 1845.⁸)

¹ D. Hamilton Hurd, *History of Cheshire and Sullivan Counties* (Philadelphia : J. W. Lewis, 1886), 578.

² D. Hawkins, "Plat of the Town of Winchester," 1805. See *Early Maps of Winchester, New Hampshire, 1733-1892*.

³ Jacob Farmer and JB Moore, eds. *A Gazetteer of the State of New Hampshire* (Concord, NH: 1823), 254.

⁴ Cheshire County Deeds, Book 75, Page 393.

⁵ Cheshire County Deeds, Book 111, Page 208 and Book 110, Page 520.

⁶ Cheshire County Deeds, Book 119, Pages 202-3.

⁷ Julia, the daughter of David and Fanny Capron Ball, would marry Edward Thayer of Keene and go on to become a major philanthropist in the area, including leaving money for Thayer High School in Winchester and donating her grandmother's house (Persis Hawkins Capron) to the town to create the Thayer Public Library. Edward Thayer owned the mill property between 1892 and 1900.

⁸ D. Hamilton Hurd, *History of Cheshire and Sullivan Counties*, 583.

Meanwhile, Luther Rixford (1779-1859) and Samuel Fairbanks (1788-1863) invested in “the Winchester Factory” and developed a cotton mill to spin yarn. This cotton mill started small; the product was “woven in hand-loom by the wives of farmers.”⁹ They built their mill just northwest of the oil mill between the Ashuelot River and the turnpike. Rixford was a blacksmith and a scythe maker, too. After some inheritance in the 1820s, it is possible that Rixford built a brick house on land adjacent to the mill yard. According to journals kept by John Lock Alexander in the 1820s, Rixford built and occupied a two-story brick house and had a small backyard shop near the mill yard.¹⁰ After a shop fire, Rixford moved to Highgate, VT in 1837 and started a successful manufactory there. His partner, Fairbanks, remained in Winchester, with the 1850 census recording him as a farmer.

Between 1835 and 1836, both parties – Pulsifer, Ball, and Capron and Rixford and Fairbanks – sold their properties to a group of Keene investors and manufacturers led by William Lamson.¹¹ In the 1836 transfer between Rixford and Lamson for \$4,500, the deed listed multiple buildings including two dwelling houses (one of them a white house), outhouses (including a barn), coal house, and blacksmith shop/scythe shop.¹² The sale included all the scythe shop machinery and water power rights. This property is possibly the one purchased by the “Winchester Factory” in 1824 from Daniel Hawkins (1740-1825), which only mentions a barn, but otherwise has similar boundary lengths.¹³ The brick house was most likely built c.1825 during Rixford and Fairbanks’ ownership, a supposition supported by the architectural features of the building, notably the common rafters, granite splitting techniques of the capstones, and the distinctive $\frac{3}{4}$ bead at the exterior window casing and bed molding – as depicted in Asher Benjamin’s seminal guide, *The American Builder’s Companion* (1816).¹⁴

Lamson and Ashuelot Manufacturing Company

Little is known about Lamson’s tenure between 1836 and 1853. In 1837 Lamson and his fellow investors (Franklin Cutting, Benjamin Adams, Oliver Holman, John Fuller, and Thomas Edwards) transferred their ownership to the Ashuelot Manufacturing Company of Keene, an entity of which they were all proprietors.¹⁵ The 1858 Fagan Map of Cheshire County suggests that no structures were built between the former Rixford and Fairbanks cotton mill and the brick house (Figure 5).

In 1850 the Ashuelot Railroad was constructed on the south banks of the Ashuelot River. The addition of a railroad depot in the village aided business interests in the area and attracted the next buyers for the woolen mill and its affiliated properties.

In 1853 Benjamin Adams – agent for the Ashuelot Manufacturing Company – sold the property to Joshua Ward, of Winchester, for \$12,000.¹⁶ Joshua Ward (1819-c.1865) was born in England and was naturalized in 1857. He and his brother, Thomas (1820-1876) had formed a partnership in Gilsum in 1857 when they purchased a clothing mill. (That operation failed and the men sold the mill to other relatives.¹⁷) It seems that Joshua and Thomas instead put their energy into Ashuelot; in 1857 the State of New Hampshire approved the creation of a new Ashuelot Manufacturing Company. That list of proprietors included some familiar names: Joshua Ward, David Ball, Stephen Raymond, William Allen, William Felch, Willard Owen, Daniel Emerson,

⁹ Hamilton Child, *Gazetteer of Cheshire County, N.H., 1736-1885* (Syracuse, N.Y., 1885), 542.

¹⁰ John Locke Alexander journals, 1826-1832. Transcribed by the Winchester Women’s Club.

¹¹ For Pulsifer et al, see Cheshire County Deeds, Book 125, Page 522. For Rixford and Fairbanks, see Cheshire County Deeds, Book 127, Page 67 and Book 129, Page 585.

¹² This barn is the one potentially referred to in a neighboring property’s deed – since demolished. That deed (Roach to Dickinson, Book 291, Page 65) uses the Rixford barn as a starting point in the property boundary description. That barn is likely the building seen in Sanborn Fire Insurance maps from 1902, see Figure 8.

¹³ Cheshire County Deeds, Book 94, Page 92.

¹⁴ “Plate 9,” in Asher Benjamin, *The American Builder’s Companion* (Boston, MA: 1816).

¹⁵ Cheshire County Deeds, Book 131, Pages 270-271.

¹⁶ Cheshire County Deeds, Book 178, Page 76.

¹⁷ Silvanus Hayward, *History of the Town of Gilsum, New Hampshire from 1752 to 1879* (Manchester, NH: John B. Clarke, 1881), 140.

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Joseph Emerson, and Alvin Ball. However, this approved charter never materialized and Boston-based David Henshaw Ward (1830-1906) bought them out the following year. (The relation between the Wards is not clear, but genealogical research suggests they were not closely related.)

The property bounced between the Wards for several more decades. In 1858 David Henshaw's father, Andrew Ward (1784-1864) of Newton, MA acquired the property. The Wards (Andrew, Joshua, and David Henshaw) then transferred the property to the Ashuelot Manufacturing Company in 1859 for \$25,000. That deed described a property with a "brick woolen mill, dwelling houses, and other buildings thereon."¹⁸

The 1860 census shows both Thomas and Joshua Ward listed as woolen manufacturers living with their families, domestic servants, and several factory laborers at the same address (possibly the Rixford House). Specifically, there was Joshua and his wife, Caroline, three children, three factory workers, and a domestic servant from Ireland; and Thomas and his wife, Charlotte, their five children, a factory laborer (45-year-old James Whittle from England), and a domestic servant (23-year-old Mary Fleming from Ireland). The 1858 Fagan map (Figure 5) shows many properties owned by the Wards and their company, but it is possible the Rixford House was the largest or best appointed of the residences. Nearby residences included several factory laborers, suggesting that the boarding of workers was necessary, lucrative, and indicative of a fast-growing woolen industry.

On May 31, 1861 a fire claimed the Wards' large factory, including outbuildings, two boarding houses, and the Ball Oil Mill. In total, eleven buildings were lost.¹⁹ The Rixford House survived the fire, possibly due to the distance between it and the nearby woolen mill. Insurance covered less than half the loss and resulted in the unemployment of 170 workers who were making blankets for the Civil War effort. The *New Hampshire Sentinel* called it a "severe blow to the proprietors, as well as to the village of Ashuelot."²⁰ Residents of the village banded together and lent David Henshaw Ward \$10,000 to construct a new brick mill in 1862.²¹

Despite this act of community munificence, the 1860s proved to be a turbulent era for the woolen mill. Joshua Ward died in c.1865 and the Ashuelot Manufacturing Company had to seek new investors, including David Henshaw's wealthy wife, Julia Frances *Noble* Ward. In 1867 the mill had half a million unsold yards in stock and in 1869 the company filed bankruptcy. Bankruptcy records between 1869 and 1875 describe the mill and dams in poor condition, despite being less than a decade old.²²

It was during this uncertain time that the boarding house wing was constructed at the Rixford House, c.1868, and the older house was renovated. This construction project was probably done with Julia Frances Ward's investment as an attempt to attract new workers for the imperiled mill. The new boarding house could house up to 50 boarders. An 1868 advertisement in the *Springfield Republican* (MA) sought a "responsible man to take charge of the Boarding House for the Ashuelot Woolen Mill." It stated that the house was new and the manager's unit could be furnished or not, "as desired."²³ In the 1870 census, Louis and Abbie Carpenter were running the boarding house with their 1-year-old son and about 32 residents, all of whom worked in the woolen mill. These boarders were mostly from Ireland, neighboring states, England, Canada, and one from Prussia.

The Wards advertised the mill's sale for months starting in 1871. Newspapers around New England detailed the equipment, brick construction, slate roofs, and water power. The ads also included "a large brick boarding house...4 brick and 10 wooden tenements...[and] a superior dwelling house, containing bathroom with hot and cold water, and all modern conveniences."²⁴

¹⁸ Cheshire County Deeds, Book 196, Pages 254-255.

¹⁹ *New Hampshire Patriot*, June 12, 1861.

²⁰ "Great Fire in Ashuelot," *New Hampshire Sentinel*, June 6, 1861.

²¹ Cheshire County Deeds, Book 202, Pages 456-458.

²² Bankruptcy records were found by Ashuelot historian, Gene Piurkowski.

²³ Advertisement in *Springfield Republican*, July 14, 1868.

²⁴ *Manufacturers and Farmers Journal*, February 2, 1871.

Edward Thayer

In October 1871 the mill was leased by Edward Thayer (1827-1898) of Uxbridge, MA. Thayer's testimony can be found in several bankruptcy records through 1875, noting the mill's poor and unsafe conditions. In 1873, while leasing the mill and its associated properties, Thayer married Julia Ball (1835-1905), an Ashuelot native and daughter of David Ball (the previous mill owner). He also became a director and later owner of the Winchester National Bank.

Starting in 1879, Thayer invested heavily in the Ashuelot Manufacturing Company. The *New Hampshire Sentinel* reported that entire mill building rooftops were removed and heightened, new flooring installed, and new equipment purchased.²⁵ After the renovations, the complex included multi-story brick buildings, wooden outbuildings, raceways, boarding houses, manager's houses, and stores (See Figures 3,4,7,8).

In 1880 Susan Schnell managed the boarding house and lived in the apartment with her three children (two of whom worked in the mill). The number of boarders was fewer, at only 14, with most coming from Ireland, New Hampshire (second generation), and England. Some boarders who worked in the mills were as young as 11, 14, and 15 years old. In the 1880s, the company employed 250 people and produced 400,000 yards of cloth each year, specializing in Union and Moscow beaver fabric.²⁶ Progress came to Ashuelot in 1891 with the arrival of electricity thanks to the formation of the Ashuelot Valley Electric Heat, Light, and Power Company.

Edward Thayer bought out his partners in the Ashuelot Manufacturing Company in 1892 for \$60,000.²⁷ But the 1890s saw another wave of instability and the mills were intermittently closed in 1894 and 1895. But an 1895 newspaper clipping suggested the boarding house remained active, with Mrs. George Ward taking over the manager responsibilities from Mrs. Emery Fuller.²⁸ Edward Thayer died in 1898. The couple had no children and instead devoted their lives to business and philanthropy. Between the two of them, the couple donated funds to build and operate three libraries (Keene, Ashuelot, and Uxbridge, MA), several hospitals, schools, and various beautification projects.²⁹

After Edward Thayer's death in 1898, his widow and niece sold the mill to James Gill of Boston, MA in 1900. Gill did not own the property long, however. In March 1900, Gill slipped on his front steps and cracked his skull, dying from the injury. His heirs then sold the mill properties to Hugh Sheridan from Great Barrington, MA in 1901 for \$15,000.³⁰ During this time of transition, the mills were mostly silent.

Hugh Sheridan

Hugh Sheridan (1855-1917) was born in Scotland and immigrated to America in 1872. Before coming to Ashuelot, the 1900 census shows Hugh and his two sons, Ralph (b.1881) and William (b.1882) living in Dalton, MA. It is not known where Mary Sheridan and daughter, Irene, were living at the time. The Sheridan's arrival was much celebrated in the village and the family invested immediately in the mills and community. The family attended church, hosted parties with fireworks on their lawn at their home at 391 Back Ashuelot Road (today, the home of the Winchester Historical Society), sang in concerts, purchased street lights for Main Street, and all three children married local partners.³¹

In the 1900 census, only a small number of boarders were listed in the village, suggesting the mills and boarding house were effectively shuttered. After the Sheridans arrived, Mrs. Fred Ross ran the boarding house

²⁵ "Ashuelot News," *New Hampshire Sentinel*, May 29, 1879.

²⁶ D. Hamilton Hurd, *History of Cheshire and Sullivan Counties*, 579-580.

²⁷ Cheshire County Deeds, Book 302, Pages 458-464.

²⁸ *Keene Evening Sentinel*, April 24, 1895.

²⁹ See Julia Ferrari, State Register Nomination for Thayer Library, 2009.

³⁰ Cheshire County Deeds, Book 323, Page 208 (Thayer to Gill) and Book 328, Page 363 (Gill to Sheridan).

³¹ Edith Atkins, *Walking Back Through Time: 50 Historical Sketches of Winchester, NH* (Winchester, NH, 1997), 149-152.

in 1901. By the 1910 census, the majority of Ashuelot's residents were Polish or French-Canadian. No more than six boarders resided at a single address, illustrating a leaner mill operation before WWI and foreshadowing the difficult economic realities for New England woolen mills during the 20th century.

By 1916 Hugh Sheridan had developed health problems and decided to retire. He produced an elaborate sales catalog for his mill properties and hosted an auction in September of that year. The catalog went into detail about the water power, hardworking residents, and the attributes of Ashuelot. "It is excellently located in an active well-to-do village of cheerful atmosphere; a village of modern sidewalks, electrically lighted streets, good fire protection, low rates of insurance, without need of police protection," the catalog promoted. "All houses are well painted, are well kept up, and many have slated roofs, the lawns and premises generally are tidy – in fact the village at once shows its many thrifty New England traits," the pitch continued. The catalog also promised that the village was "...composed largely of native-born English-speaking peoples" – a fact that was not supported by the census records. Another selling feature, according to Sheridan's agents, was that "...there is not a licensed saloon within fifteen miles of the plant."³²

In total, Sheridan sold 26 lots, subdividing the amassed holdings of generations of mill owners before him. The brick boarding house was Lot 8, described as a "substantial two and one-half story slated roof brick structure with a two and one-half story slated roof brick ell." (See Figures 10 and 11.) The description stated that the building was full occupied, despite the mill closure, and normally held 30-35 boarders.³³

The auction winner for the boarding house was Winchester resident, Roch Badura, at \$1,375.³⁴ The mill complex, Lot 1, had five bidders and went to agent John McCloskey of Philadelphia for \$18,287.50.³⁵

20th Century

Ashuelot struggled through the 20th century. The woolen mill continued as the Hampshire Woolen Mill, which went bankrupt, then Walker Woolen Mill until 1922 when the business also went bankrupt. The mill property eventually transferred to the New England Public Service Company and was demolished in c.1935. Nearby industry also slowly succumbed to changing economic forces, with the Great Depression shuttering several other smaller industries.

The boarding house continued to provide lodging for the remaining workers, however. Many of them were Polish and worked in the nearby paper mill or box shop. In the 1920 census the boarding house was occupied by Roch (aged 32) and Mary Badura (aged 27), two children, and a lodger – all from Poland. Helen Zelent (1890-1931), also a Polish immigrant, then purchased the property in 1921.³⁶ She and her box-making husband, Fred (c.1867-1933), lived in the house until 1934. In the 1930 census, the Zelents and their three NH-born children lived in the house with their step-daughter from Poland. When Helen died, her possessions were auctioned off and the property was purchased by Frank Hmielewski (later changed to Meleski).³⁷ Meleski was also Polish and the son of a box maker. The property remained in the Meleski family until 2020.

In November 2020 the property was purchased by the neighbor, Julia Ferrari, in hopes of rehabilitating the building.³⁸

³² 1916 Sales Catalogue for Sheridan Woolen Mills, 21. Winchester Historical Society collection.

³³ 1916 Sales Catalogue for Sheridan Woolen Mills, 49. Census records in 1910 do not substantiate 30+ boarders at the address, but it is possible that the snapshot in time (1910) was an off year, or even off month.

³⁴ Cheshire County Deeds, Book 378, Page 379.

³⁵ Edith Atkins, *Walking Back Through Time*, 152.

³⁶ Cheshire County Deeds, Book 402, Page 9.

³⁷ Cheshire County Deeds, Book 460, Page 216.

³⁸ Cheshire County Deeds, Book 3136, Page 224.

Applicable NHDHR Historic Contexts (please list names from appendix C):

- 400. Locally capitalized textile mills in NH, 1720-1920.
- 401. NH textile mills capitalized by out-of-state interests, 1826-1920.
- 1405. European and Middle Eastern immigration to New Hampshire.
- 1501. Commerce, industry and trade in New Hampshire village and town centers, 1630-present.

Architectural Description and Comparative Evaluation:

The former Ashuelot Manufacturing Company boarding house is located on the southwest side of Route 119/Main Street in the village of Ashuelot, Winchester, NH. The building is oriented on a NW-SE axis and the quarter-acre lot is bordered by the street to the NE, vacant lots to the NW and SE (the latter of which is the former woolen mill property), and the Ashuelot River to the SW. It is comprised of two distinct but conjoined volumes, built in c.1825 and c.1868. The SE volume (the Rixford House) is the older of the two and sits several yards back from the street, while the NW volume (the newer boarding house wing) is flush with the sidewalk.

The Rixford House is a two-story, five bay wide, two pile deep, brick building built in c.1825 and reflects the late Federal/early Greek Revival transition period. The building measures roughly 40' wide by 32' deep. It has a side gable roof, finished in slate, and two interior chimneys at the ridge. The NW chimney has a later decorative cap with corbelling and sawtooth pattern while the SE chimney's cap is unornamented. The foundation is cut granite atop rubble fieldstone (though the granite is less visible at the façade where it is below or at grade). The granite capstones have flat wedge markings visible in the basement of the c.1868 wing, indicative of a pre-1830 technology (see Photo #25). The brick is laid in common bond with red-tinted mortar. The gable ends are treated with flush horizontal boards within an enclosed tympanum.

The primary (NE) facade of the Rixford House contains five evenly spaced window bays on each of the two stories, with a slightly arched entrance occupying the central bay of the ground floor. All the windows are 2/2 double-hung with jack arches above; each window is covered with an aluminum storm. The central doorway has a blind elliptical wooden fanlight, four-pane sidelights with panels beneath, and a granite sill. The door itself is four-paneled with applied molding, protected by an aluminum storm door. The house's main entrance is accessed by a concrete slab and a mid-20th century porch roof supported by two metal columns. The door surround, window units, and bed molding all include a 3/4 bead molding, with the bed molding being more substantial in size. At some point in the 20th century, the second story's original window sills were replaced with poured concrete – likely as a solution to the wooden sills that were deteriorated by the since-removed wrap-around porch. Ghosting illustrates where that porch once was.

On the SE elevation, the gable end facing the former woolen mill, there are three bays each on the first and second stories and two bays in the attic. The first story contains two windows with a door in the center bay, the second story contains three windows, and the attic contains two windows. The windows on the first two stories are 2/2 double-hung with jack arches. The windows set in the closed/pedimented gable end are 6/6 double-hung. At the first story entrance, a metal storm door with 1/1 window covers the wooden exterior door that has two panels in the lower third and two vertical three-pane windows in the upper two thirds. Above the door is a two-pane transom storm in front of a four-lite transom. The doorway includes a granite sill and jack arch lintel. Like the façade, all window and door units and bed molding have a 3/4 bead. Also like the façade, ghosting below the second-floor windows indicate the former porch.

The back yard slopes down toward the Ashuelot River, exposing a full-height foundation under 2/3 of the house at the rear (SW) elevation. Originally, the house likely had three interior bays of windows on each story, but later 19th century alterations were made. Historic photographs and maps also show a rear gabled ell projecting off the southwesternmost corner of the house, but today only ghosting remains. On the first story are three windows and a door. The northwesternmost window, a 6/6 unit, was likely added in the mid-to-late 19th century (its casing does not match the original windows). The two other 2/2 windows were possibly widened

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around the same time, but retain the 3/4 bead casing. A doorway with a modern door and aluminum storm exits under a primitive shed roofed porch where the ell formerly stood. On the second floor, two 2/2 windows remain, located above the wider windows below. The southernmost window is infilled, and likely has been since the rear ell was constructed in the mid-19th century. The soffit, fascia, cornice, and bed molding continue at the rear elevation.

The NW elevation of the Rixford House is half obscured by the newer boarding house addition. A one-story shed roofed addition built of brick, measuring 13' x 17' connects the two buildings at the west corner. This addition includes two 6/6 windows on the NW elevation and a doorway on the SW elevation, leading out onto a wooden deck. On the second story are two 2/2 windows, and in the attic is a single 2/2 window. The gable end is treated similarly to the opposite end of the house, but the addition necessitated the removal of the other window and the truncation of the continuous eave.

The c.1868 boarding house wing stands to the northwest of the Rixford House; its position closer to the road and its larger size (53' long and 28' wide) makes it the more prominent of the two volumes. The building is also brick, has a side gable roof covered in slate, and rests on a cut granite foundation atop stone. Two interior brick chimneys extend from the NE roof slope, a plane that also includes three gabled dormers. No wood elements exist on the wing; instead, the eaves are treated with a brick periscoping corbeled frieze, cornice, and rake. All window headers are jack arches and all window sills are tooled cut granite.

The NE elevation/façade has five evenly-spaced bays on the first and second stories. On the first story, the main entrance is in the southeasternmost bay. This wide entrance is framed by a finely tooled granite lintel and sill and four-light sidelights. The four paneled door's upper panels were likely replaced with glass at some point in the 20th century. The balance of the bays includes 2/2 double-hung windows, each with aluminum storm windows. The dormer windows are 6/6, likely the original sash configuration for the entire building when it was constructed. A central lintel, seen at sidewalk height and now encased by the sidewalk, was likely a window well or coal delivery chute.

On the NW elevation, there is a central bay on each of the three stories. The first story contains an exterior wooden door with a storm door. The door is covered by a wooden porch with shed roof accessed from the sidewalk or a set of concrete steps from the back yard. The porch is modern but research shows an historic wooden porch at this location. The second story and gable end each contain a 2/2 double-hung window. The brick corbelling at the eaves continues along the rake, meeting at a partial return.

The SE gable end is mostly obscured by the Rixford House. There are no doors or windows at this elevation and the gable ends are treated identically to the opposite end. Ghosting at the ground floor reveals the depth and post detail of the former porch.

The rear elevation reads nearly as three full stories thanks to the full height basement built of rough cut granite blocks. At the basement level are four bays with granite lintels, with the extreme bays occupied by doorways and the central two bays occupied by window openings (with no wood sash, just aluminum storms). The northwesternmost door is a partial door, likely used for deliveries; the southeasternmost door is a modern fiberglass door with a half-lite. Both the first and second story are five bays wide with 2/2 windows in each bay. The southeasternmost bay of the first story is obscured by the one-story shed roofed addition that connects the two buildings. Here, the window bay is an interior door. The roof slope lacks dormers like the front, but a hatch or former skylight or vent is located in the center of the roof, located closer to the eaves than the ridge.

Interior (Refer to floor plans at the end of this nomination)

The Rixford House may have started out with a center hallway floorplan that was later altered when the entire property became a boarding house after 1868. Today, a truncated central hallway leads to the large central

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kitchen/dining room at the rear and the front rooms/parlors at the front corners. The kitchen/dining room at the rear leads to a bathroom (former side anteroom) and pantry at the southern corner of the house and one room at the western corner, which now serves as an anteroom to the one-story addition between the two buildings. Typical finishes include banded window and door casing, baseboard capped with molding, four paneled doors, plaster walls, and wood flooring. No evidence of fireplaces remains, though it is possible that by the mid-1820s a modern house may have omitted fireplaces entirely and relied only on stoves. The kitchen/dining room trim is mostly flat stock, supporting the hypothesis of a later renovation that altered the floor plan and interior details.

The second floor mostly mirrors the first-floor layout. Here, the main room above the kitchen/dining room has a stamped tin ceiling and flat stock trim (the northern front chamber also has a tin ceiling). Original doors and door and window banded casing exist in many of the rooms. A stairwell directly above the first-floor side anteroom leads to the attic. Here, one can see the original split-board lath. The attic space was likely converted into lodging rooms in the c.1868 renovation. Though much of the interior wall partitions are now gone, evidence of later circular sawn lath can be seen on the common rafters. Extant partitions are built of vertical boards, with simple board doors dividing the spaces and one remaining closet.

The boarding house ell is arranged around a central hallway running longitudinally from the NW gable end to a stairwell at the SE end. On the ground floor, the manager's apartment was located in the corner by the stairwell and the road – these rooms are differentiated with compound molding around the doors and windows, molding with more of an Italianate profile. The first floor rooms were renovated in the 20th century to serve as a larger living space, but mostly retain evidence of the former layout. The stair treads exhibit signs of tremendous wear, a testament to the high traffic that once traveled up and down the stairwell (Photo #17).

The second and third floors are almost perfectly intact. On the second floor are eight rooms: six individual and two conjoined (most likely for families). Each room has a door to the hallway, one window, and a closet. Finishes include softwood flooring, plaster walls with wallpaper, four panel doors with latches, and splayed casing. No heating system remains, but large grates in the floor suggest that most rooms relied on passive heat from some coal stoves. The attic has just four rooms along the streetside and at the NW end, with closets on the other side of the hallway under the SE roof slope. These rooms are finished similarly to the rooms on the second floor but contain a plethora of graffiti and signatures near the dormers. Most signatures date to the 1870s and 1880s, when dated, and include hometowns (like Claremont) and some illustrations. (See Photos 22-24.)

Changes

The Rixford House was heavily renovated when the boarding house wing was constructed in c.1868. Those changes likely included re-arranging the floorplan, constructing the wrap-around porch, replacing the wood shingle roof with slate, rebuilding a chimney, and converting the attic into lodging rooms. After the construction of the c.1868 wing, the earlier house appears to have housed the kitchen and dining room for the connected boarding house. The rear ell may have also been added at this time for outhouses. That ell was truncated in c.1910 and demolished entirely later in the 1970s. The barn was removed in c.1905 and blacksmith/scythe shop remained until at least the 1970s. These changes can be traced in Sanborn maps and historic aerial photography. (See Figures 2 and 7-11.)

The entire property was renovated again around the turn of the 20th century, likely during the tenure of Thayer in 1892 or Sheridan in 1901. At this time, most of the windows were replaced with 2/2 sash and at least two rooms in the Rixford House received stamped metal ceilings. The 1916 catalog photograph shows that the windows were 6/6, except for the attic (which were 2/2 at the time and are now 6/6).

Later in the 20th century, the wrap around porch was removed, the ground floor of the boarding house was renovated to be a more traditional apartment, and the front porch/canopy was installed at the Rixford House.

Comparisons

The village of Ashuelot has several buildings that date to the 1830s-1850s, including two brick buildings. The most obvious comparison is with the four-unit residential brick block across the street. This building was likely built by the Ashuelot Manufacturing Company before 1870 and includes similar features like wooden gable ends, jack arches above the windows, and entrances with sidelights and blind elliptical fanlights.

A front gabled brick house at 19 Main Street also shares some architectural similarities. The brickwork, wooden gable end with flush boards, 3/4 bead molding around the windows and door, and jack arches above the windows suggest a similar date of construction and even carpenter. Instead of the distinctive 3/4 bead bed molding of the Rixford House, though, the house at 19 Main Street has an ovolo shape.

5 bay wide houses of the late federal era also exist at 7 Main St (Thayer Public Library), 3 Allen Hill Road, and 10 Main St. but each of these properties have received renovations that have altered the original appearance. 3 Allen Hill Rd. was renovated in the Victorian era to include bay windows and bracketing, Thayer Public Library was renovated before its donation to the town in 1906 and again more recently (its windows are vinyl replacement and its window trim is all flat stock), and the multi-family at 10 Main Street – which is actually a broad front-gabled house – has received bay windows and other changes to fenestration. However, all of these properties contain enough original material like 3/4 bed molding, high style door surrounds, or elliptical fanlights, to suggest that a team of local carpenters was very busy constructing several residences with the newfound wealth of the various investors and entrepreneurs of Ashuelot.

National or State Register Criteria Statement of Significance:

The Ashuelot Manufacturing Company (AMC) Boarding House is significant for its connections to New Hampshire's history of capitalized industry and the state's history of immigration. The building is also significant for its architecture.

The AMC Boarding House is significant for its connections to the industrial and social history of New Hampshire. Since the older brick dwelling was constructed in c.1825, the property has been owned and lived in by various mill owners and mill workers, from the earliest seasonal farm workers and local women, to Irish and English immigrants, to French Canadians and Poles by the turn of the 20th century. These waves of boarders represent broader economic narratives of industrialization, even in rural New Hampshire, as mill owners attempted to find profits and solutions to changing demographics and broadening competitive markets. Its back-and-forth ownership by local investors and large property-holding firms from Boston and Philadelphia speaks to the boom-and-bust cycles of operating large woolen and textile mills during the 19th century.

The AMC Boarding House reflects two distinct architectures: the older c.1825 dwelling is a fine example of a late Federal/early Greek Revival brick house that bears similarities to several extant buildings in the village. The attached c.1868 boarding house ell is a rare and intact brick structure with Greek Revival and Italianate influences. Both buildings retain an impressive amount of these respective architectural details, including doors, windows, trim and casing, and brickwork, but also the floor plan and village setting.

Period of Significance:

c.1868, construction of boarding house wing and renovation of c.1825 house
c.1868-c.1920, operation as boarding house

Statement of Integrity:

The AMC Boarding House retains nearly all aspects of integrity to an incredibly high degree. Its location in the village of Ashuelot remains unchanged, though its setting was dramatically altered since the 1930s with the

demolition and loss of the rear ell and porch, adjacent woolen mill, and multi-family house to the northwest. The village does retain several other properties from the early to mid-19th century, however. Its architectural design spanning the late Federal through early Italianate styles remains intact, with particularly fine detailing exhibited in the c.1825 volume's moldings and central doorway, as well as the c.1868 wing's floorplan and brickwork. Original and historic materials like windows, doors, trim, slate roof, brick envelope, plaster walls, and wood flooring remain intact and reflect talented craftsmanship. The interior especially provides a strong sense of feeling and association, perhaps best portrayed by the worn wooden treads of the boarding house's main staircase.

Boundary Description and Justification:

The property is identified on Town of Winchester Tax Map 18, as Lot 1, consisting of 0.27 acres. The boundaries are shown on page 3.

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"Sales Catalogue for Sheridan Woolen Mills." 1916. Winchester Historical Society collection.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, 1892-1913.

US Census Records, 1830-1930.

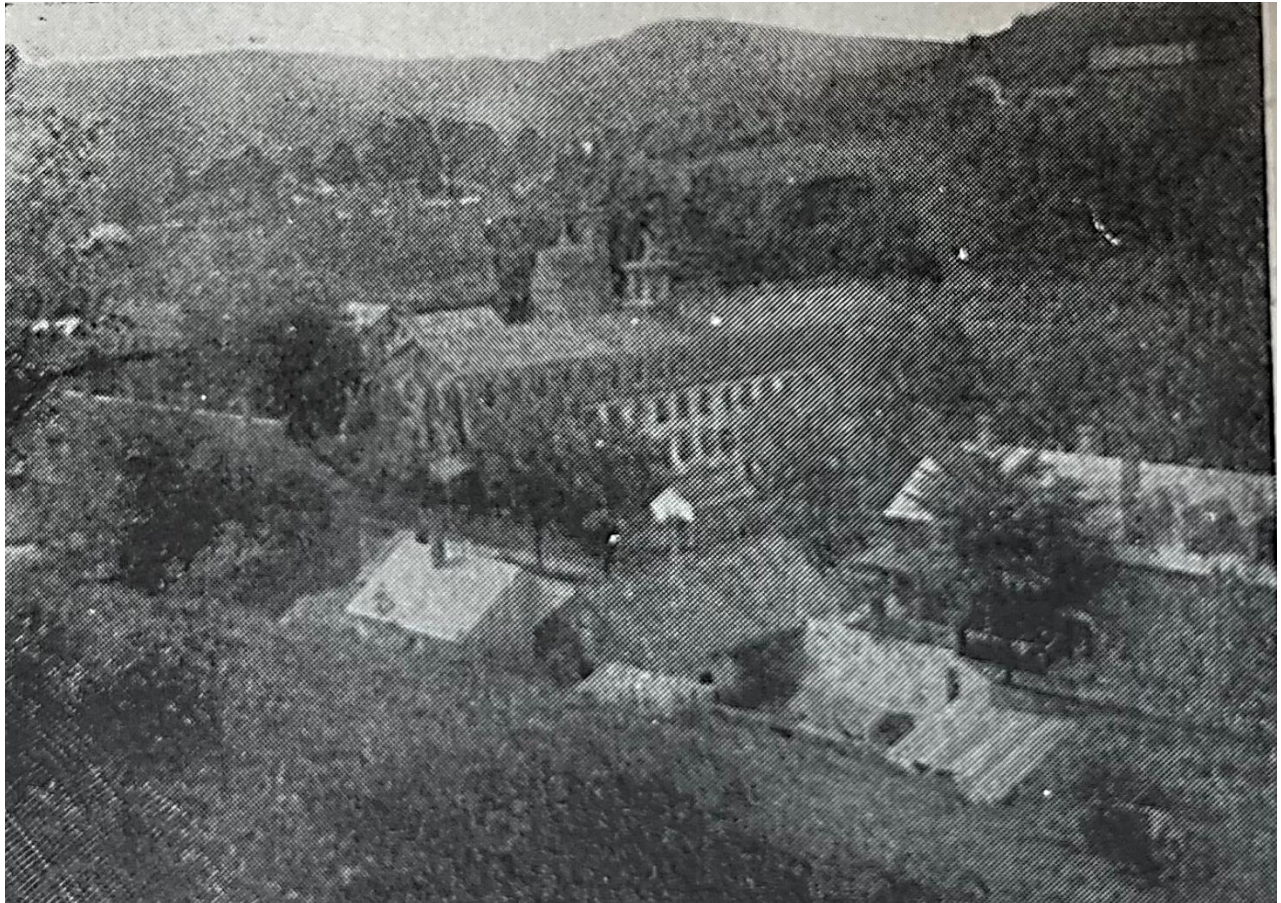


Figure 1. AMC Boarding House seen on the right with the AMC Woolen Mill in the center (with the cupola).
Granite Monthly Vol. 21, 1896, page 280.

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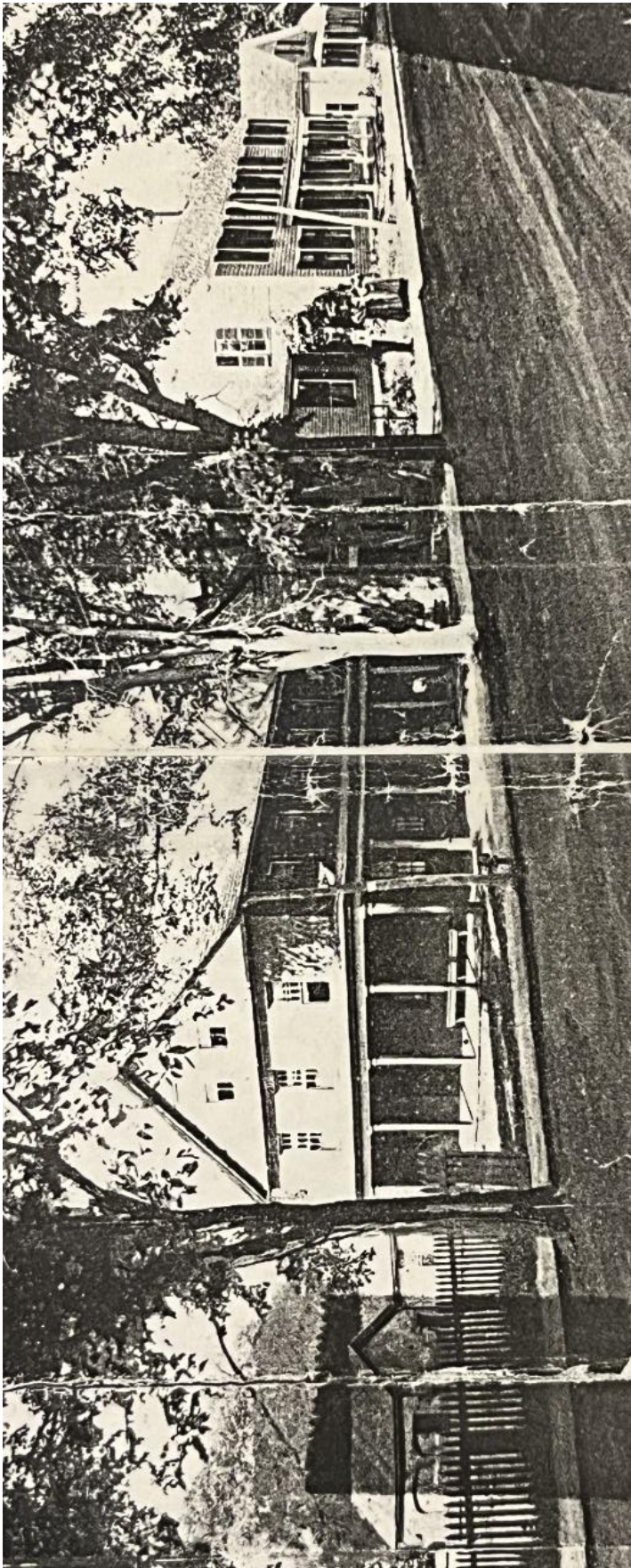


Figure 2. 1916 sales brochure. Note the rear buildings (possibly Rixford blacksmith/scythe shop), wrap-around porch, and multi-family house to the right (since demolished). Also note the 6/6 windows except for the attic – 2/2 – which are now 6/6.

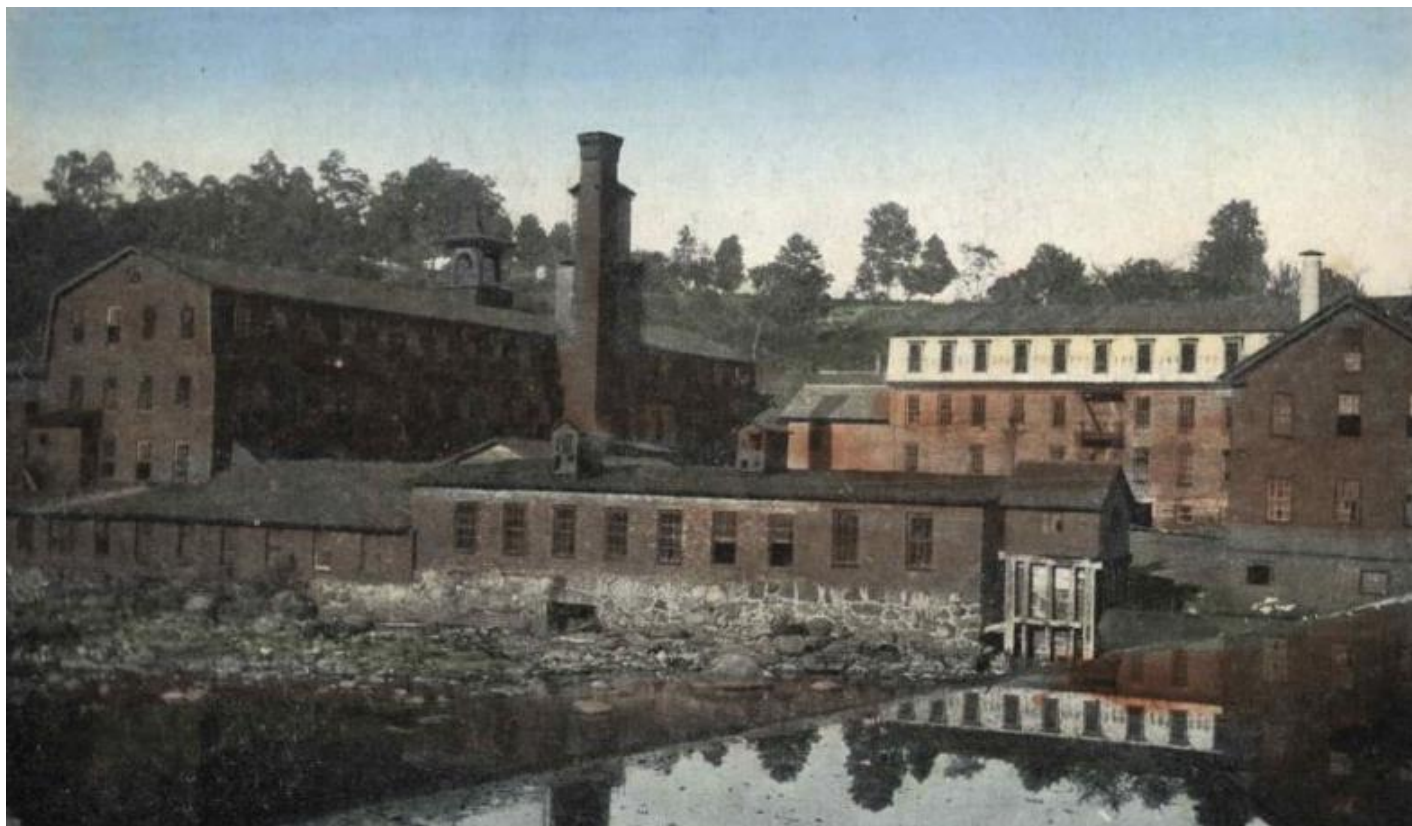


Figure 3. Sheridan's Woolen Mill, colorized postcard, c.1910.

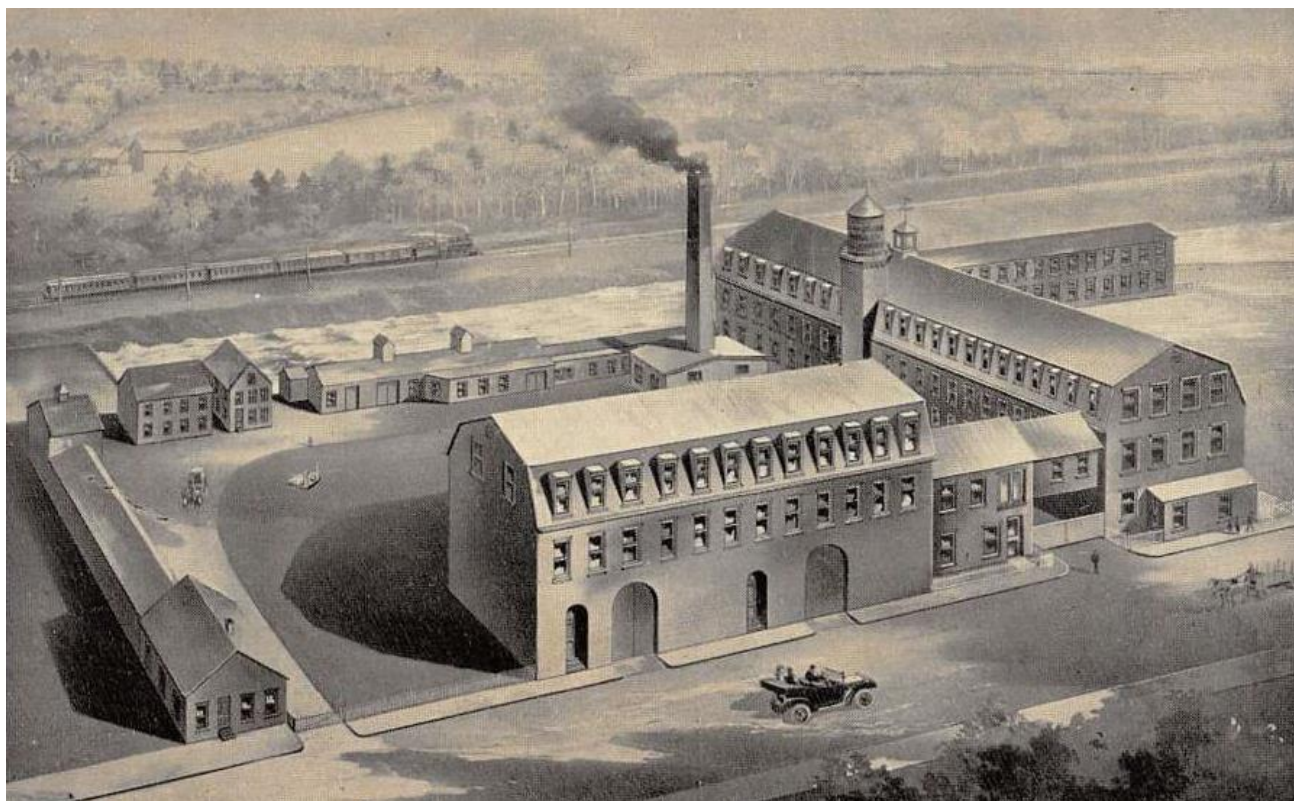


Figure 4. Lithograph of "Hampshire Woolen Mill," c.1920 (Boarding house not illustrated – located at far right)

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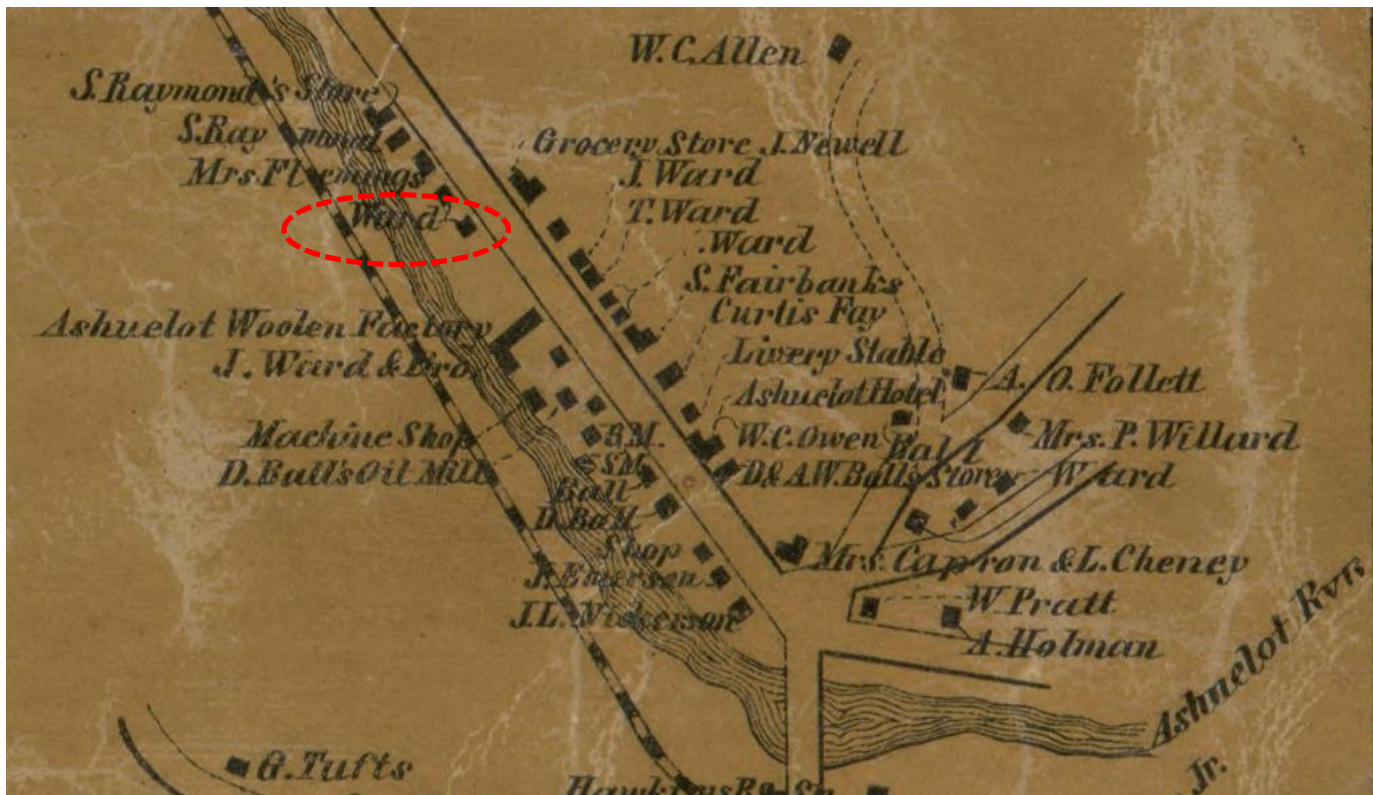


Figure 5. 1858 Smith and Morley Map, before the 1861 fire.

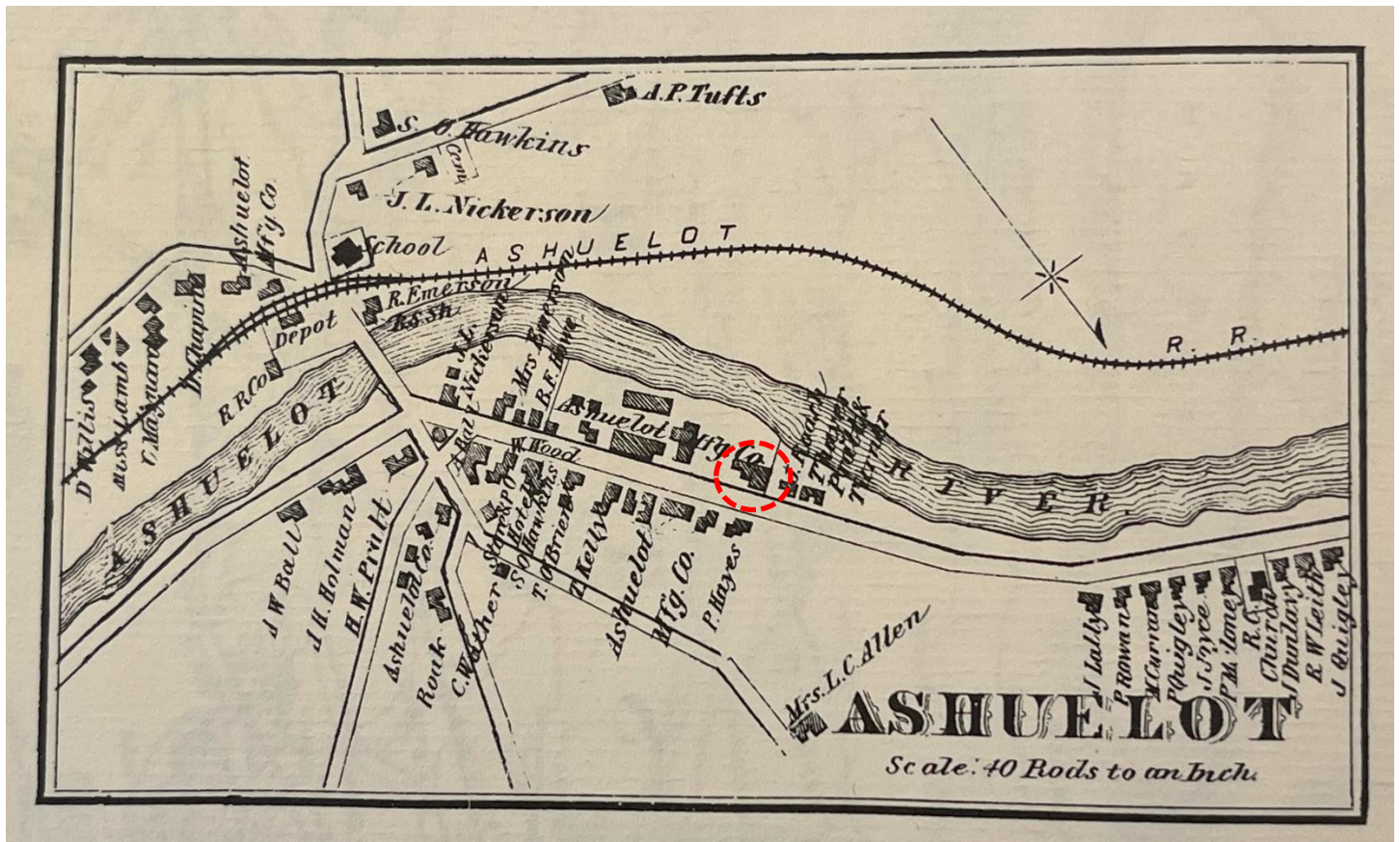


Figure 6. 1877 Rockwood Map, showing the new mill complex and boarding house addition.

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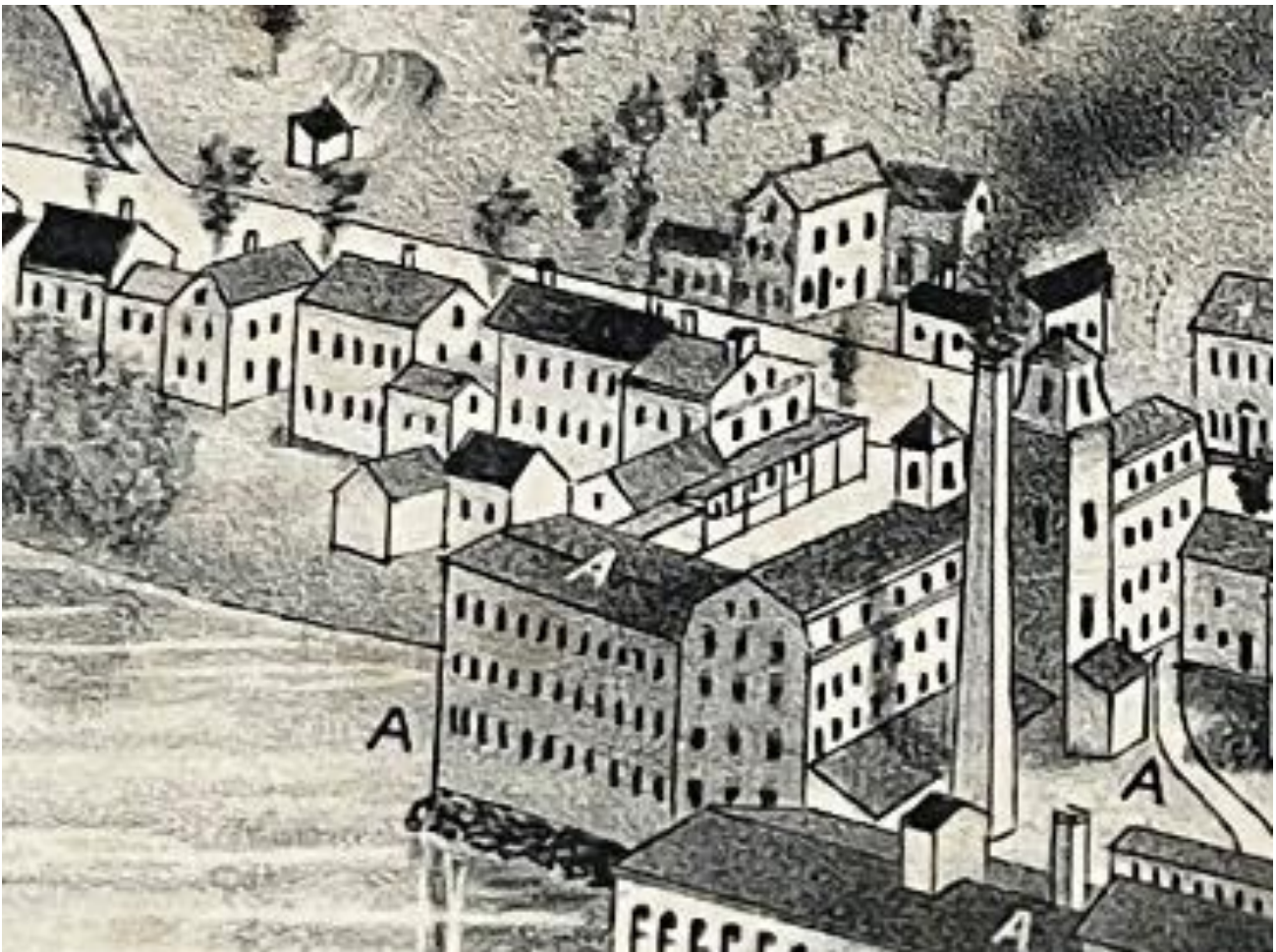
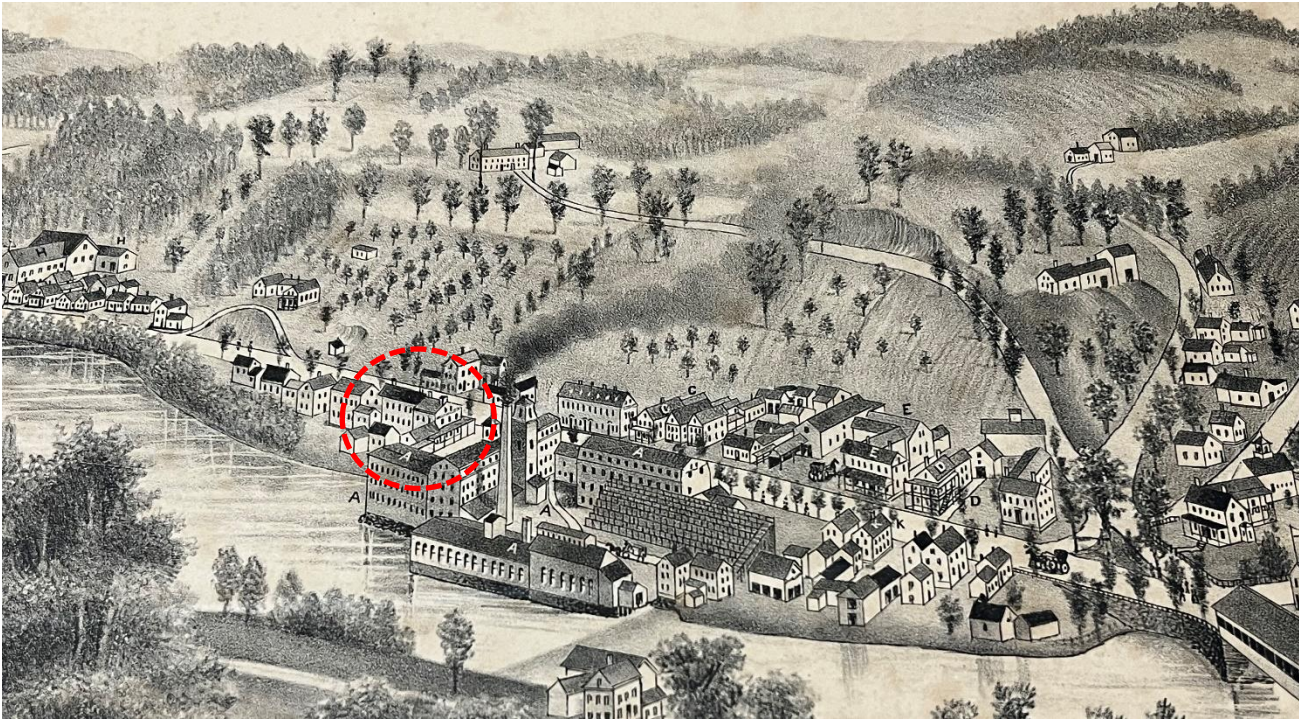


Figure 7. 1887 Birds Eye Map of Ashuelot, including magnified detail showing rear ell and outbuildings.

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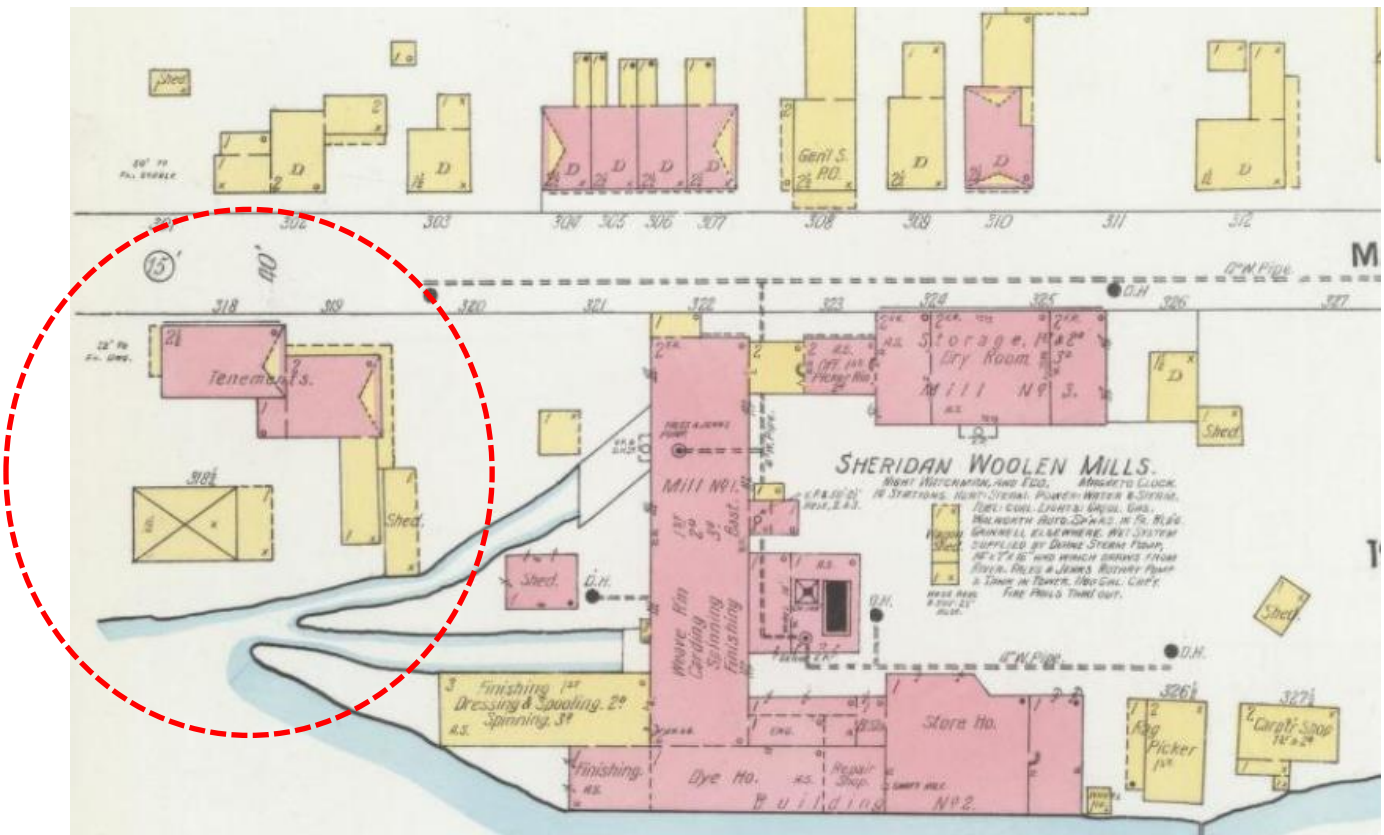


Figure 8. 1902 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, showing rear barn and ell/sheds.

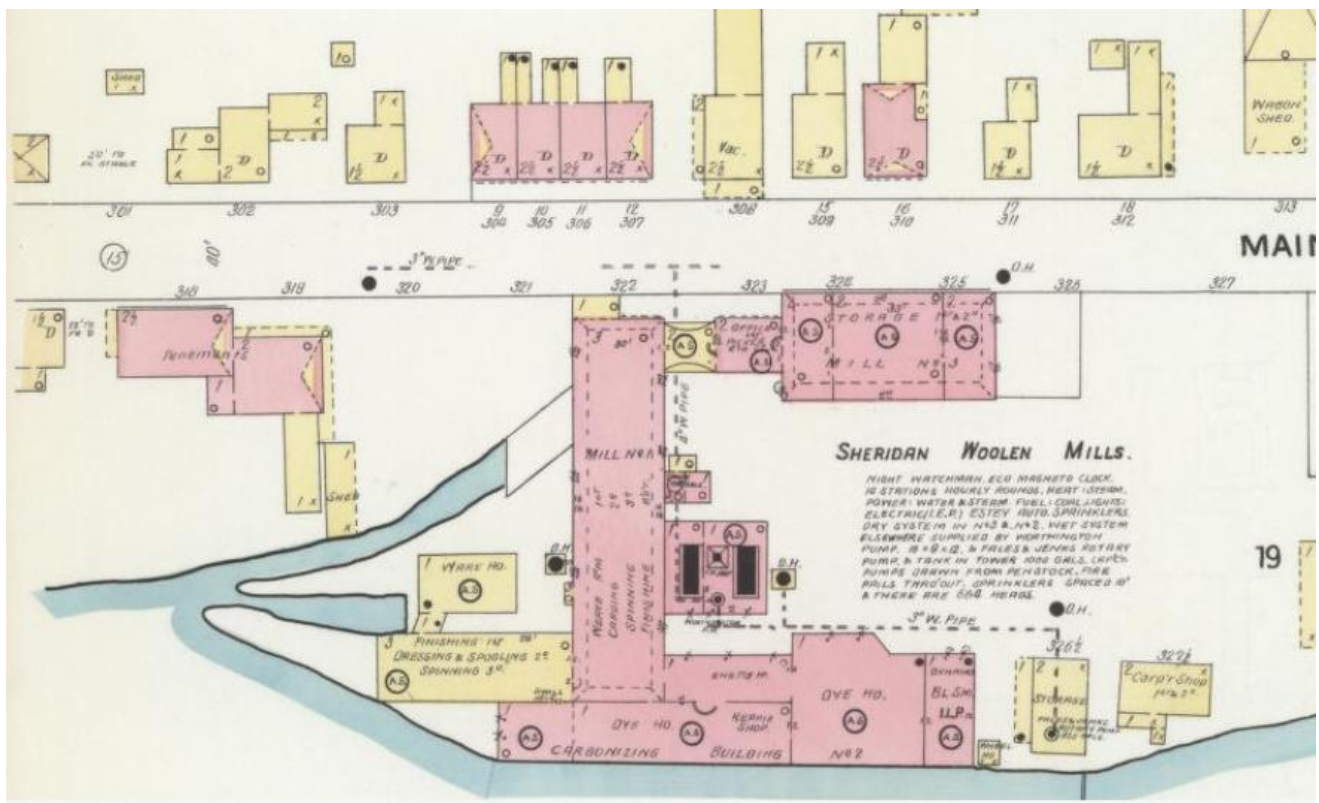


Figure 9. 1907 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Note loss of rear barn.

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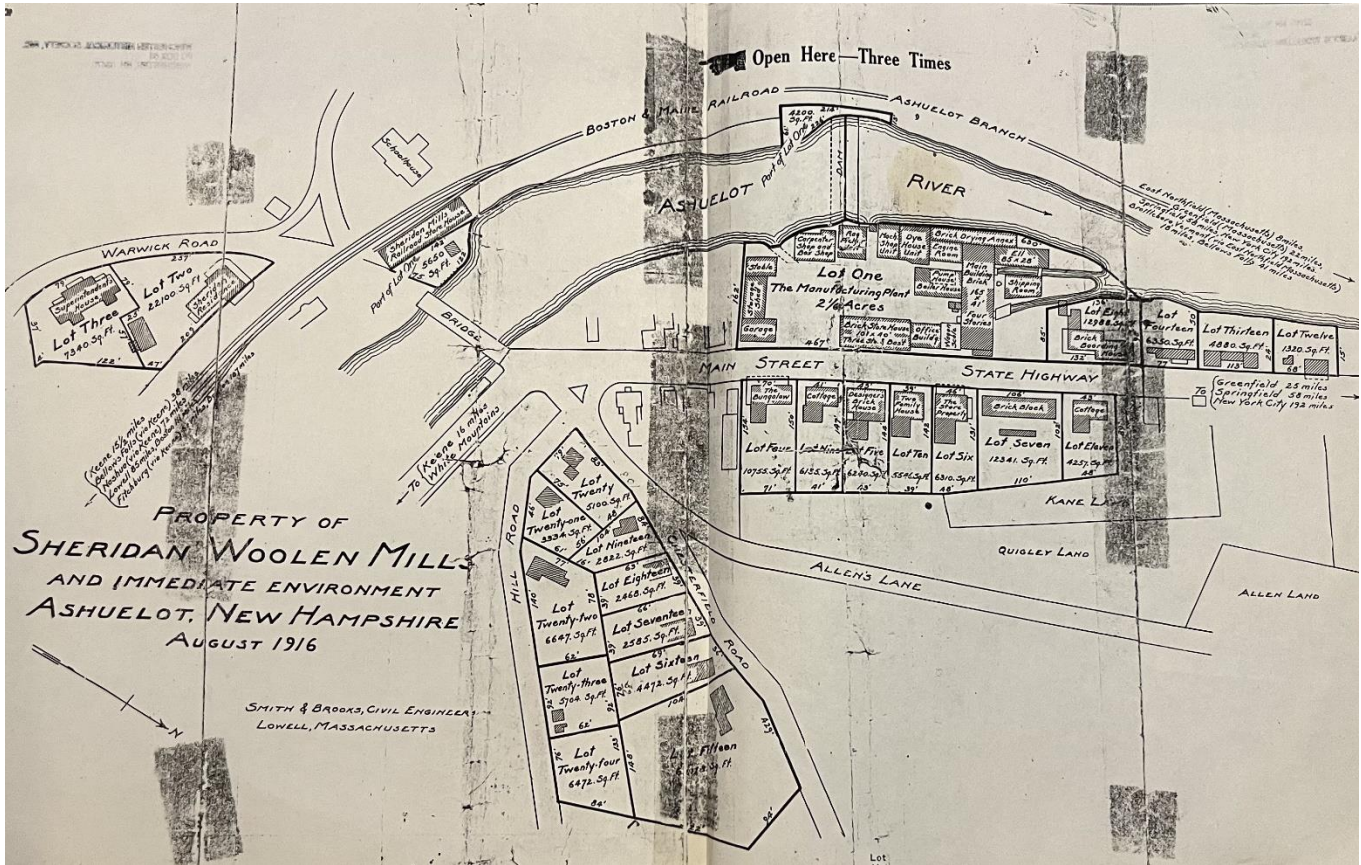


Figure 10. 1916 survey for Sheridan sale.

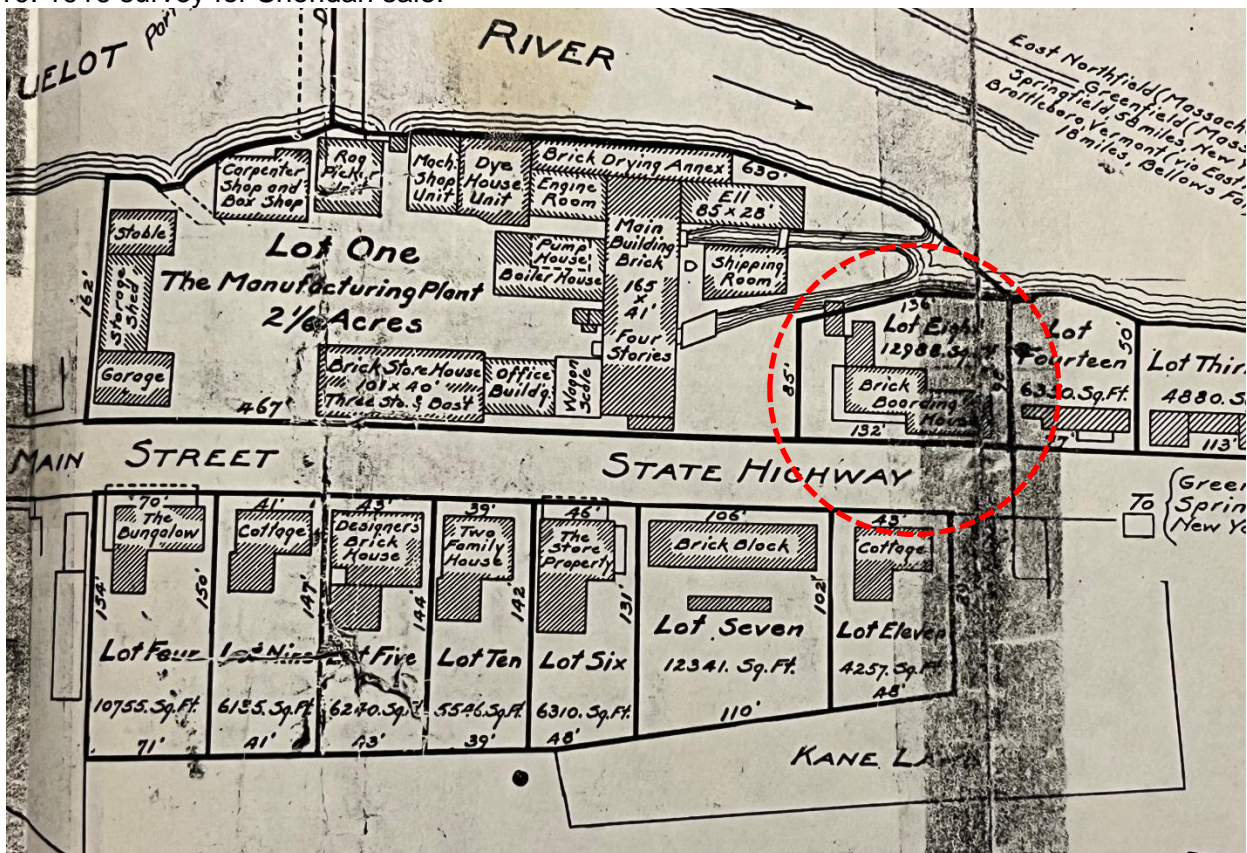


Figure 11. Detail, showing "Lot 8."

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Photo # 2: Façade of Rixford House, looking SW.



Photo # 3: Façade of boarding house wing, looking SW.

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Photo # 4: Looking W.



Photo # 5: Northern end of boarding house wing, looking south.



Photo # 6: Context, showing village setting. Looking SE.



Photo # 7: Rear of boarding house wing, looking E.



Photo # 8: Conjoining addition, looking E.



Photo # 9: Rear elevation of Rixford House. Note ghosting of ell gable and infilled window. Looking N.



Photo # 10: Rear elevation of Rixford House, looking NE. Note widened windows on the first floor.



Photo # 11: Detail of periscoping cornice at the boarding house wing. Looking NW.



Photo # 12: Detail of bed molding, window casing, and brickwork of Rixford House, eastern corner. Note the concrete window sills. Looking SW.



Photo # 13: Rixford House door, looking SW.



Photo # 14: Boarding house entrance, showing finely tooled granite header. Looking SW.



Photo # 15: Interior, Rixford House, showing typical door casing. Main staircase and newel post in background. Looking NW.



Photo # 16: Rixford House, upstairs bedroom. Note tin ceiling. Looking SE.



Photo # 17: Worn stair treads in boarding house wing. Looking W.



Photo # 18: Detail of trim in boarding house manager's apartment.

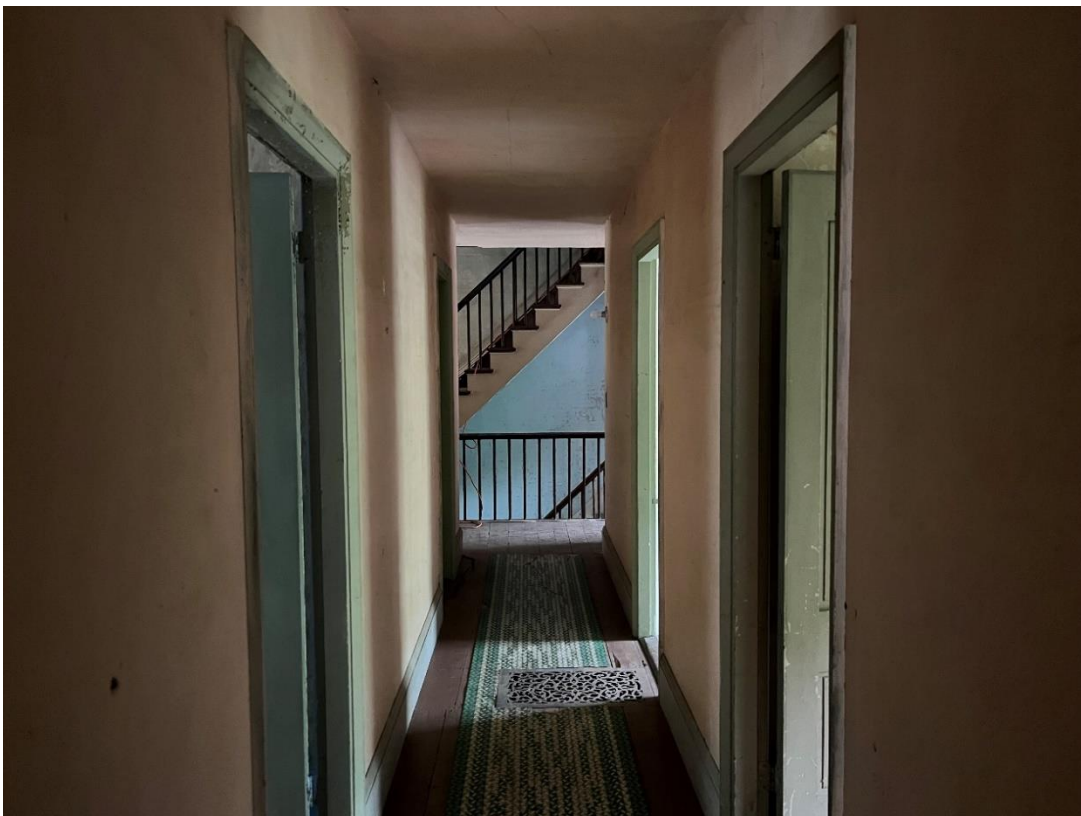


Photo # 19: Second floor hallway of boarding house. Looking SE toward stairwell.

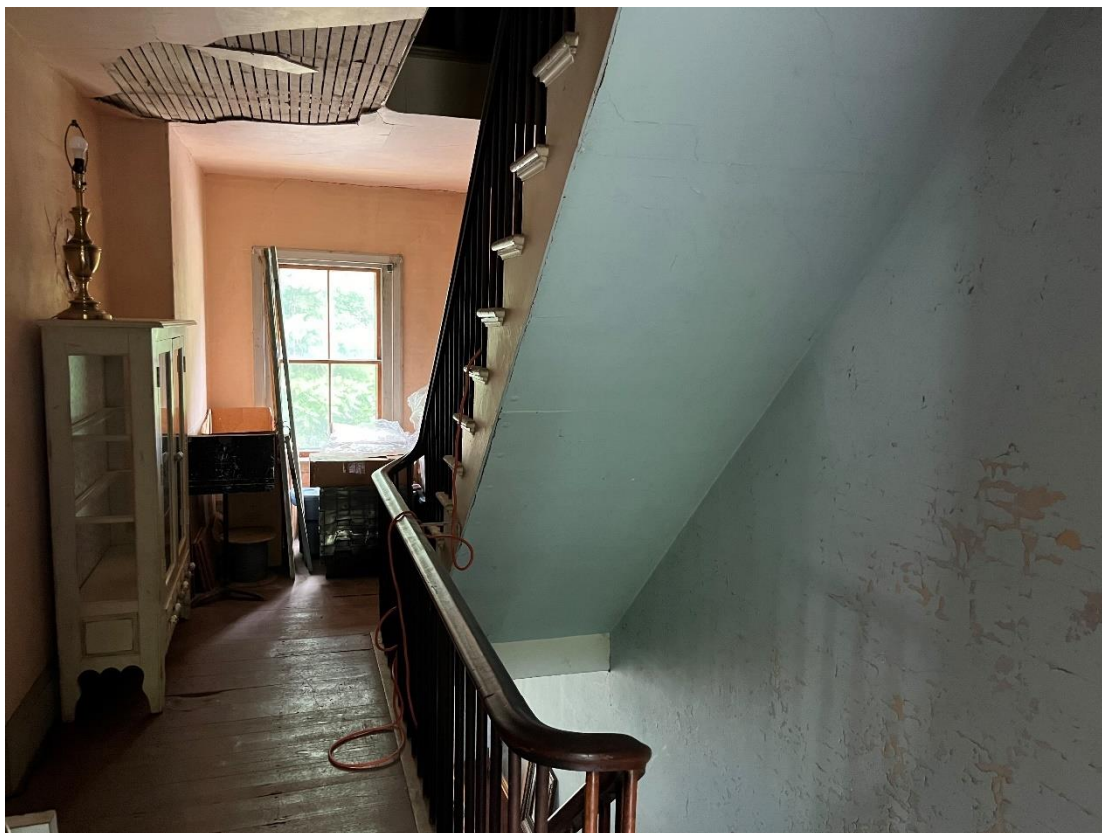


Photo # 20: Boarding house stairwell, second floor, looking NE.



Photo # 21: Second floor hallway of boarding house, showing typical room and door casing. Looking SE.



Photo # 22: Third floor hallway of boarding house, looking NW toward gable end room. Closets on left.

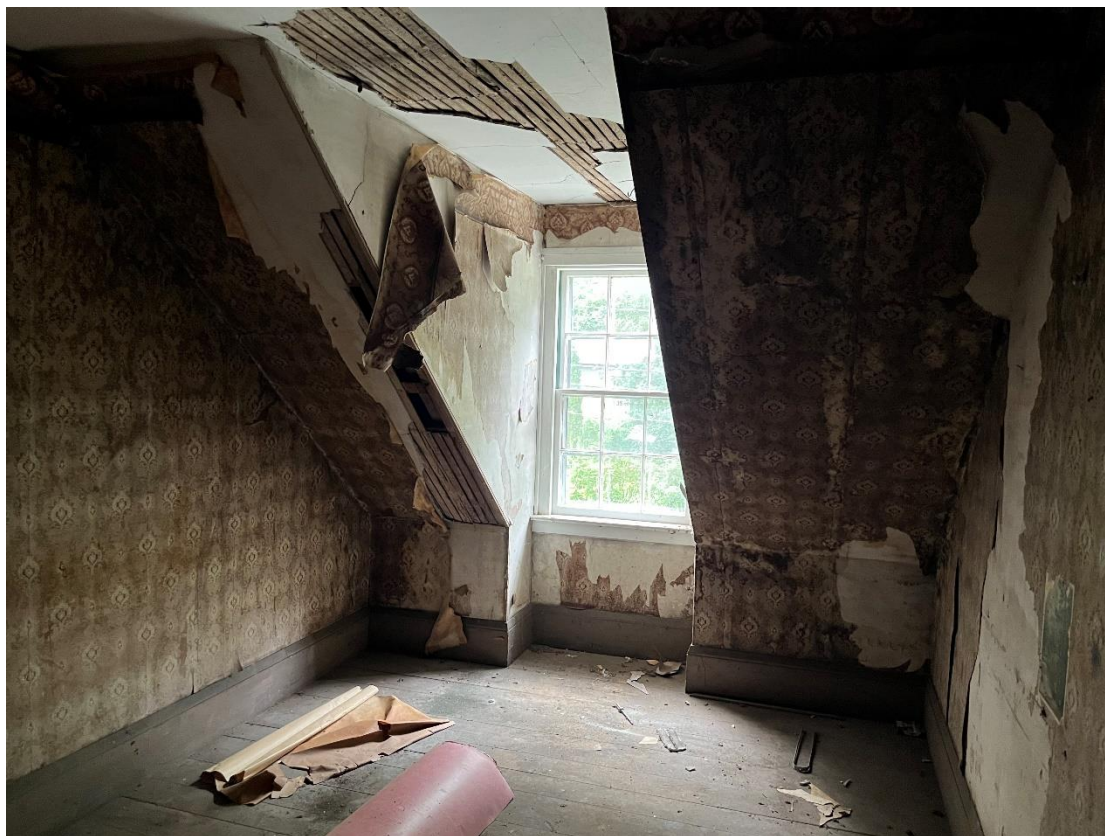


Photo # 23: Typical third floor room, looking NE.

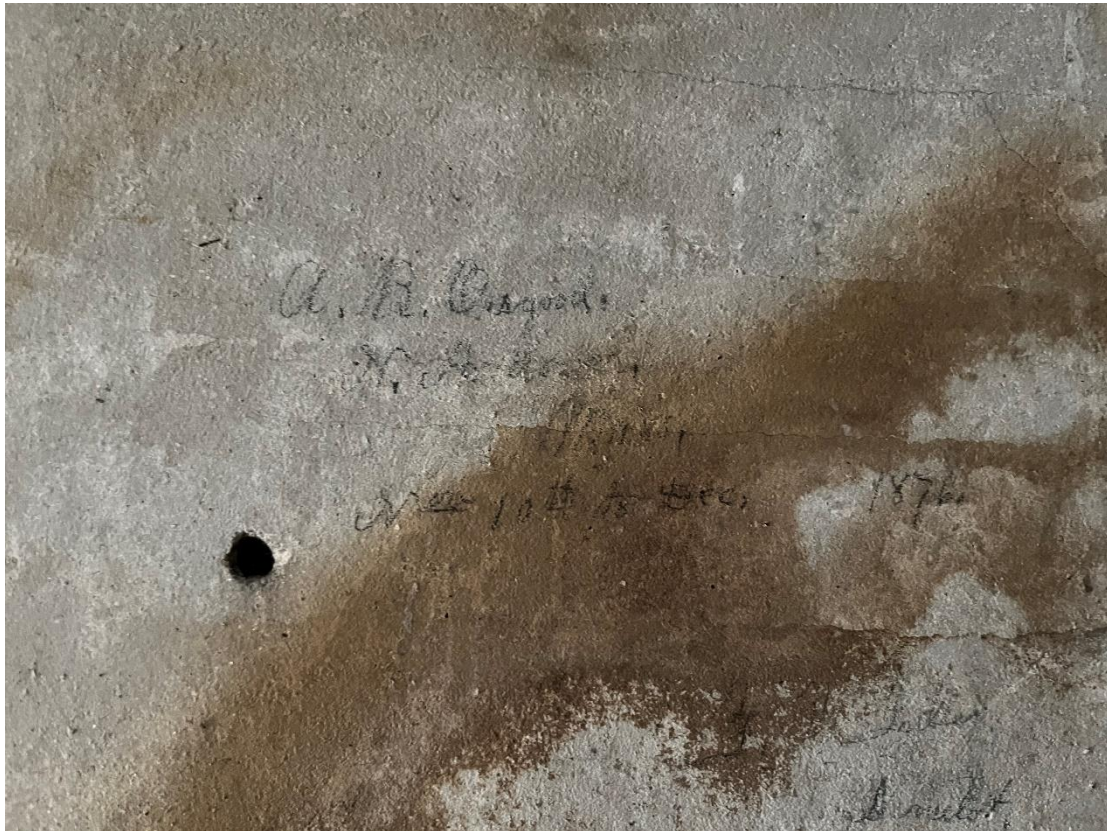


Photo # 24: Detail of graffiti and signatures, third floor. "A.R. Osgood / indecipherable / Nov. 10th to Dec. 1876."

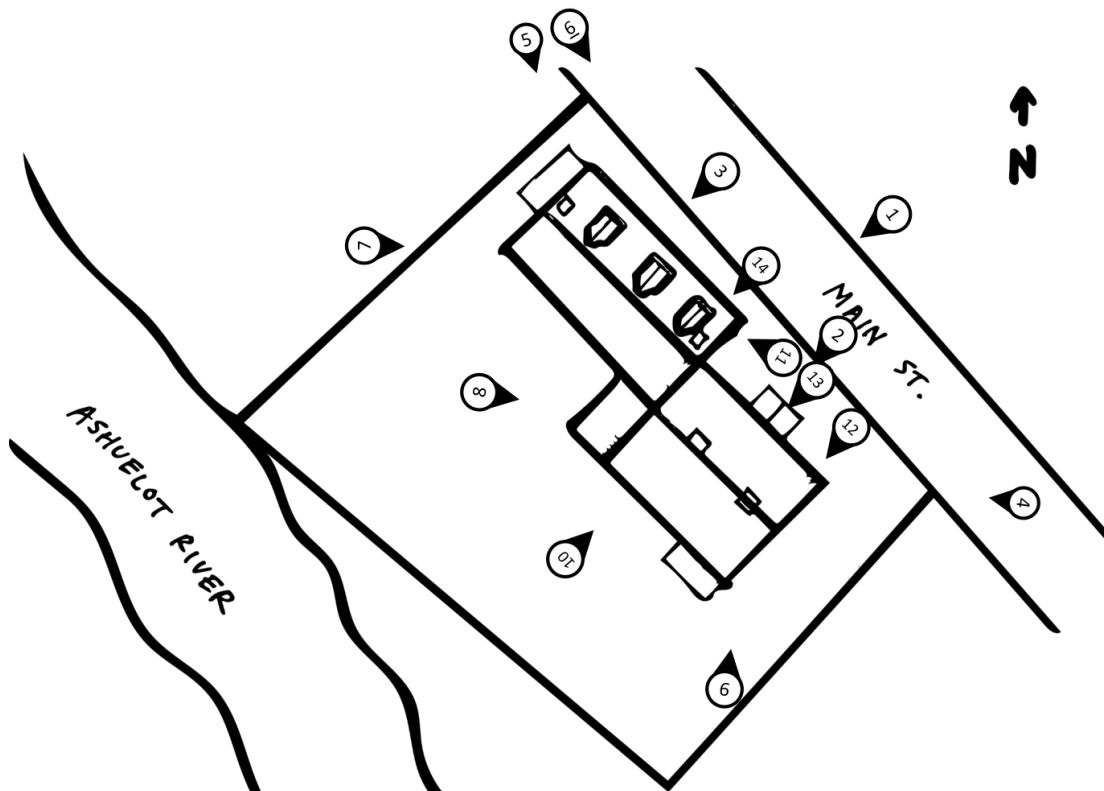


Photo # 25: c.1825 split marks on the Rixford House granite capstones.



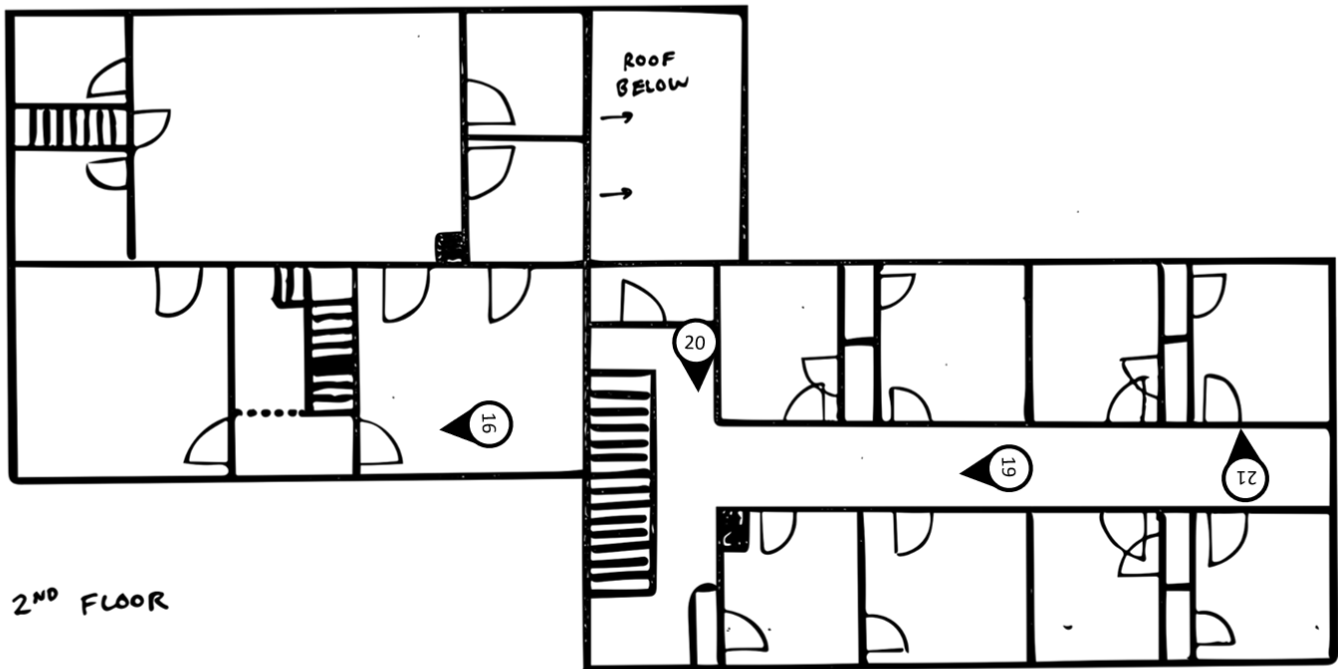
Photo # 26: Brick residential block across the street (comparison).

PHOTO KEYS



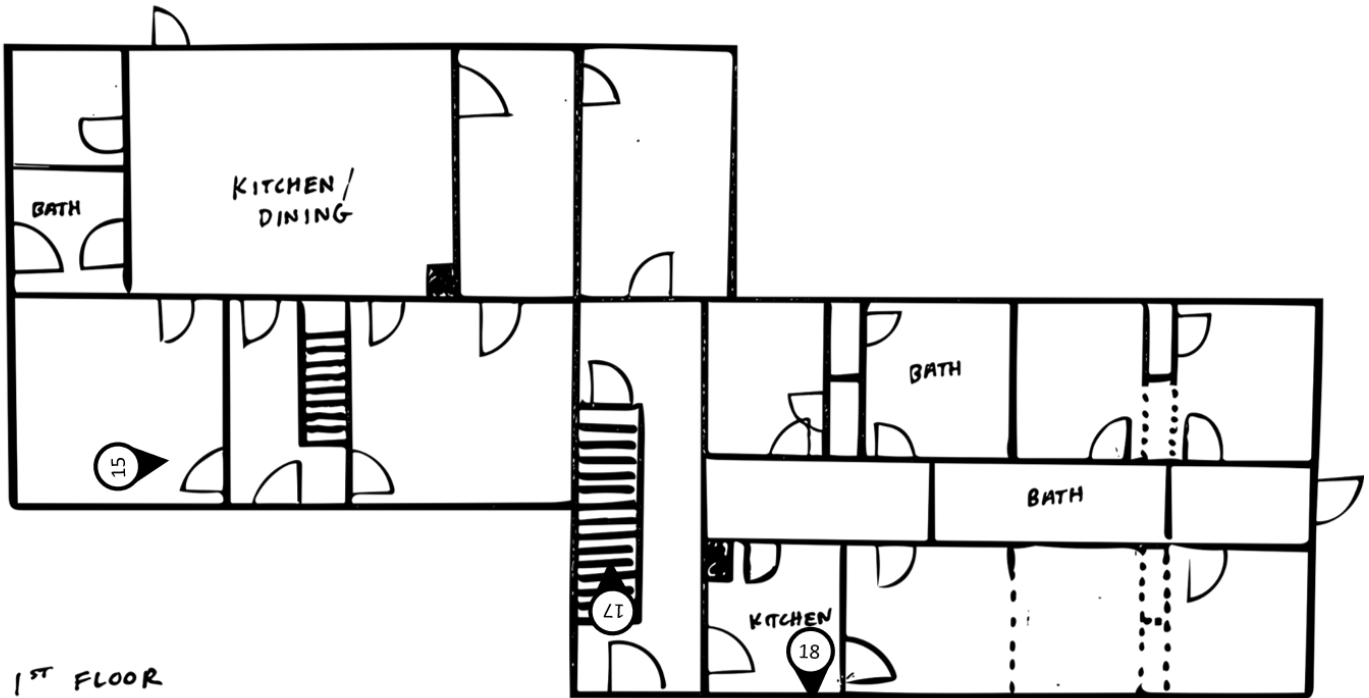
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2ND FLOOR

FAMILY /
CONNECTED
ROOMS



1ST FLOOR

MANAGER'S
ROOM/SUITE

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