

JEROEN VAN DEN HURK

## Forgotten Textile Mills of North Kingstown, Rhode Island

### The Sanford Brothers' Mills

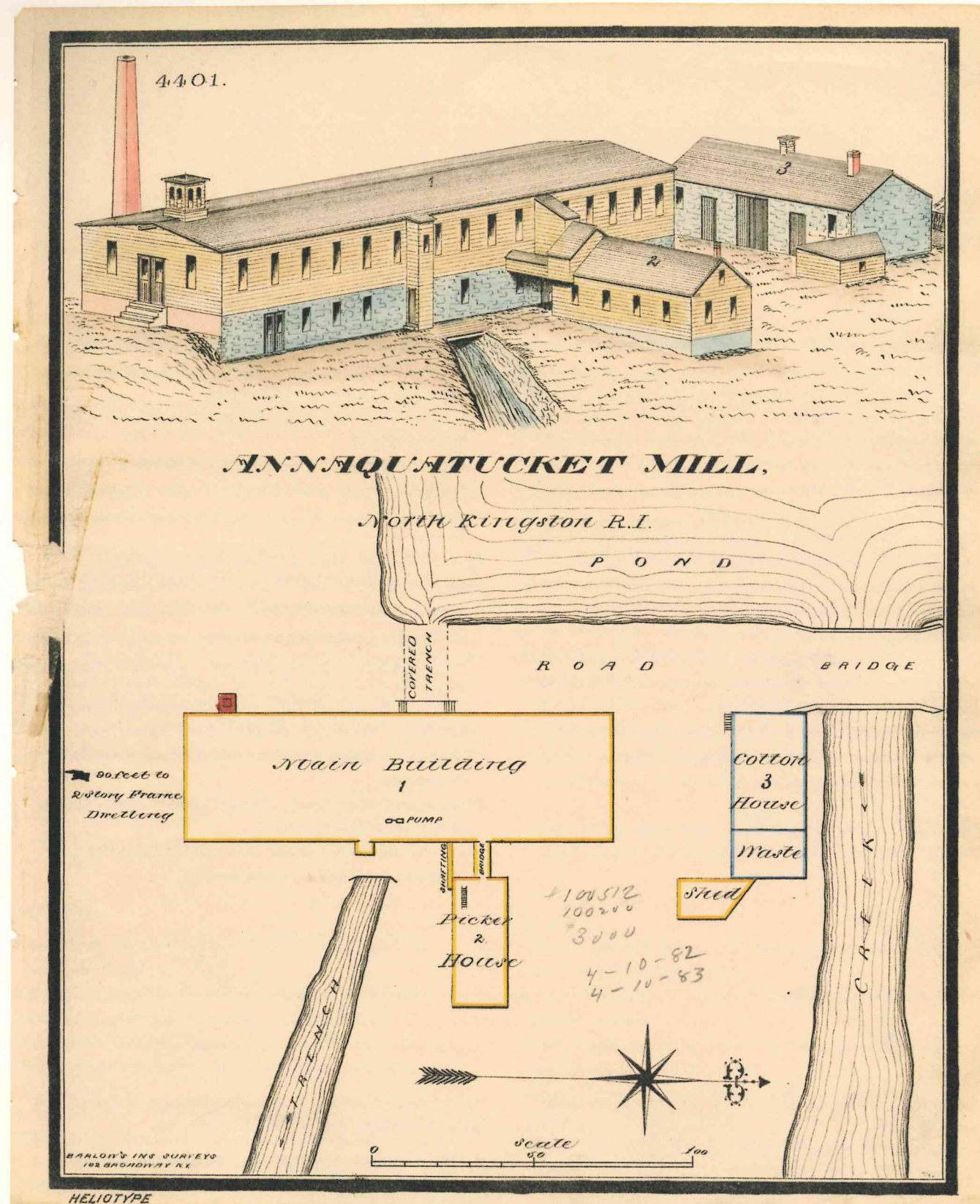
AS YOU DRIVE AROUND North Kingstown, Rhode Island, you still come across some of the mills that were once part of its vibrant nineteenth-century textile industry. Local place names remind us of former mill towns, such as Belleville, Davisville, Hamilton, and Lafayette. The industry is no longer, and the buildings that survive have been turned into apartments, offices, or artists' studios.<sup>1</sup> In some cases, the only reminders are the former millponds or the ruins of mill buildings. This essay starts with the remnants of two of these mills once owned and operated by brothers Joseph C. Sanford and Ezbon Sanford. The mills can give an insight into the role the textile industry played in the brothers' lives and that of their neighbors during the nineteenth century and how we can uncover these oft-forgotten histories. Placing the mills within the context of the other nineteenth-century textile mills in North Kingstown, and Rhode Island as a whole, allows us not only to gauge their success and commitment to the industry but also to draw attention to the duplicitous nature of the textile industry in nineteenth-century Rhode Island. It was Northern industry that for a long time thrived by producing textiles to clothe enslaved people in the South. Whereas the Sanford brothers did not rise to the fame of, for instance, the members of the Hazard family in neighboring South Kingstown, a historical narrative that understands that these phenomena occurred at multiple levels in society can be reconstructed around these men.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Joseph Congdon Sanford (1788–1856) and his younger brother

Ezbon (alternatively spelled Esbon) Sanford Jr. (1798–1864) of North Kingstown, Washington County, Rhode Island, were drawn into the emerging textile industry like numerous others in Rhode Island. The scarcity of information can make it hard to paint a clear picture at times, but this study shows that this was about more than the traditional monuments of history, such as the Slater Mill in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. The textile industry dominated Rhode Island's economic life from 1790 to the early 1950s.<sup>2</sup> The mills the Sanford brothers bought, built, leased, and sold; the variety of technologies they adopted; and how they moved beyond their business lives to take on civic and political roles in their communities highlight the complex nature of this part of the Industrial Revolution in the United States.

Milling long played a pivotal role in Rhode Island's economy. During the seventeenth and much of the eighteenth centuries, commercial agriculture and maritime trade drove the state's economy. However, water-powered sawmills and gristmills and the wind-powered grain mills that processed the raw materials were what created the building materials and produced the export goods that these industries relied upon. Samuel Slater built the nation's first commercially successful, water-powered cotton-spinning machinery in 1790 in Pawtucket, using innovative technology developed in Britain.<sup>3</sup> His success inspired other entrepreneurs to copy his model and open similar mills, thereby transforming industrial life in Rhode Island and across the United States.

Despite Slater's introduction of a more efficient



Barlow Insurance Survey of the Annaquatucket Mill, 1876. Image courtesy of the Osher Map Library and Smith Center for Cartographic Education, University of Southern Maine.



means of carding and spinning cotton in 1790, only twenty-five spinning mills were erected in Rhode Island between 1790 and 1809.<sup>4</sup> A labor shortage and the slow rate of population growth initially held the industry back. However, the construction of textile mills saw a rapid increase after 1810. Between 1810 and 1815, approximately seventy-five new cotton mills were built in Rhode Island.<sup>5</sup> The introduction of the power loom in 1817 stabilized the industry, and by 1831, there were 119 cotton mills in the state, employing 8,595 workers.<sup>6</sup> Initial production was located in the northern part of the state, in the Blackstone and Pawtucket River Valleys, but it gradually spread south reaching Washington County and North and South Kingstown. For their workforce, Rhode Island textile mills relied on family and child labor as Slater had, unlike the much larger and better-organized textile mills in Massachusetts.<sup>7</sup> Transportation improvements also assisted the growth of the textile industry. Turnpikes and steamship lines allowed for the easier supply of raw materials and the distribution of finished products. The growth of the textile industry continued to go hand in hand with the development of textile machinery and modes of transportation.<sup>8</sup> The introduction of the railroad to Rhode Island in 1835 meant an increase of shipments between Boston and New York made over land instead of water. However, the coastal trade with the South remained important to those involved in the textile industry in Rhode Island. By 1849, only 7 percent of total expenditures of transportation was made up of railway revenues, and by 1852, the tonnage of rail freight transportation was less than 20 percent of that carried on canals and in the coastal trade.<sup>9</sup>

Cotton was an important source of raw material for the textile industry. However, improvements in technology dealing with wool and an increase in sheep farms in Rhode Island raised the status of the woolen industry. Other contributing factors that stimulated the woolen industry in the Northeast were the Embargo Act of 1807, the War of 1812, and the tariff legislation of 1816 and 1824.<sup>10</sup> With the decrease in the supply of cotton due to the Civil War, wool gained an even more prominent position. By the early 1830s, North and South Kingstown had become the centers of woolen production in Rhode Island. This later shifted north and northwest to places such as Burrillville and Olneyville.<sup>11</sup>

The research makes it clear that owning a textile mill in the nineteenth century was not necessarily rare, a lifelong vocation, or even a family tradition that was passed on from one generation to the next. For some, owning a mill was part of a broader investment strategy, a means to diversify but not to identify oneself solely as a "manufacturer," a term used to describe textile mill owners in the nineteenth-century federal census records. Mill sites could be home to a variety of mills that could be operated during different seasons depending on the supply of raw materials.<sup>12</sup> The textile mills were one of several sources of income, at times to be managed and at other times to be leased to others or sold.

The built environment associated with this industry—the mills and the mill villages—remains a visual reminder of its importance to local economies. This exists not only at the large scale, as seen in the Blackstone River Valley north of Providence, but also

at smaller scales across Rhode Island and the Northeast. Mills that survived often have been reappropriated as apartments, artists' studios, or office spaces. In some cases, however, there are few tangible reminders, most often a millpond, the fragments of a raceway, or the ruins of a mill building. The remnants of two mills on the Annaquatucket River in North Kingstown provide an example of this. No historic markers tell us who built and owned the two mills. Research reveals that they were once owned by Joseph C. and Ezbon Sanford. The only part to survive from Joseph C.'s mill, at one point known as the Narragansett Mill, is a stone, arched culvert, which was part of the raceway that channeled the Annaquatucket River underneath the Post Road leading up to Providence and Boston. Only the ruins of Ezbon's mill, also located on the Annaquatucket River, about a mile downstream from Joseph C.'s mill, remain visible in the winter, on Featherbed Lane. It was known as the Annaquatucket Mill. Here we can see the foundations of the mill itself and the ruins of the cotton and waste house.

A starting point to learn more about mill history can be the parcels associated with the mill sites. Deeds allow us to trace the ownership of a property. They predominantly record the size and location of a parcel and the transfer from one owner (the grantor) to the next (the grantee). Starting with the present owners allows us to work our way back. In some cases, deeds do mention buildings or other features. Whereas deed traces can be vexing and at times incomplete, we can discover that Joseph C. purchased an approximately 121-acre tract from Jesse Gardner for \$2,950 in 1818.<sup>13</sup> The deed mentioned the Post Road and the

Annaquatucket River as well as the owners of the surrounding parcels and that there was a dwelling house and "other buildings" on the property. This would become the site of the Narragansett Mill. Around 1831/2 Joseph C. and Ezbon joined forces to buy a 100-acre parcel directly to the south of Joseph C.'s land on the Annaquatucket River that used to belong to Nicholas C. Northup, and this would become the site of the Annaquatucket Mill.<sup>14</sup>

Despite the lack of physical evidence, and at times scarcity of other information, these mill sites can provide an insight into the industry and the lives and business practices of Joseph C. and Ezbon, and mill owners like them, at that place and in that time frame. No commemorative plaques or biographies provide us with all the answers. The names found in deeds allow us to look for the landowners in the census records, historic newspapers, books on local history, and other archival records. These historic records can tell us when and where they were born, what their families were like, and how they identified themselves.<sup>15</sup> They make it possible to reconstruct parts of their lives and the history of the mills and to contribute to the historical narrative of not only North Kingstown but also of Rhode Island and the United States.

Joseph C. and Ezbon were two of thirteen children born of Ezbon Sanford, Sr. (1765–1846) and Abigail Congdon (1777–1841). Ezbon Sr. was a cabinetmaker by trade, but he also was heavily involved in state politics.<sup>16</sup> In 1820, he was listed as representing North Kingstown as a Republican on the roll of House of Representatives for the State of Rhode Island.<sup>17</sup> The following year, he was the president of the General



Republican Convention of Delegates, which was held in East Greenwich.<sup>18</sup> That same year, he was nominated for lieutenant governor, a position he ended up declining.<sup>19</sup>

Joseph C. was their oldest son. He married Frances Northup (1793–1886) on September 13, 1814. Frances was from Preston, Connecticut. They had ten children, eight of whom lived to adulthood. Like many of his upper-middle-class contemporaries, Joseph C. practiced various professions and was involved in multiple business enterprises. He was not only a mill owner but also an active member of the local civic community. In 1824, Joseph C. was elected to the board of directors of the North Kingstown Bank, together with his father and 19 other men. He would hold this position for almost two decades.<sup>20</sup> In 1833, Joseph C. was listed as the treasurer of the Washington Academy, a school located in Wickford at the south end of what is still known as Academy Cove.<sup>21</sup> His varied business activities continued, and in the 1835 and 1836 records, Joseph C. was listed as one of the owners of the sloop *Lucy Emeline*.<sup>22</sup> The sloop had been built in North Kingstown in 1826 and was involved in coastal trade, operating out of Wickford. Joseph C. also followed in his father's political footsteps and in 1839 was elected as a delegate for the Whigs of North Kingstown, together with eight other men, to a convention to be held in Kingston.<sup>23</sup> After 31 years as a mill owner, Joseph C. put his mill property on the Annaquatucket River up for sale in November 1849.<sup>24</sup> Despite the sale of his mill, and identifying as a farmer in the 1850 federal census, it appears that Joseph C. did not completely abandon the textile industry; in 1851, he began

to spin yarn at a small factory in Kettle Hole.<sup>25</sup> By 1853, however, the mill was operated by James and Benjamin Sweet, and in 1861, it was converted into a grist mill.<sup>26</sup>

The career of Joseph C.'s younger brother Ezbon, the seventh child of Ezbon Sr. and Abigail, followed a somewhat similar path. Born in 1798, Ezbon became active in local civic life, like his father and oldest brother. He was elected to the board of directors of the North Kingstown Bank in 1827, joining his father and brother.<sup>27</sup> In 1828, he joined a school committee with fifteen other "substantial citizens" to help develop the district system in North Kingstown.<sup>28</sup> Ezbon married Mary Stockman (1805–1849) in 1833, and four of their seven children lived to adulthood. After Mary passed away in 1849, Ezbon married Esther Chappell (1812–1885) the following year.<sup>29</sup> Like Joseph C., Ezbon identified himself as a farmer in the 1850 federal census.<sup>30</sup>

The textile milling world in North Kingstown was a close-knit community. The historic records suggest that a small number of people owned or operated one or more mills in North Kingstown. Before 1850, information on the textile industry in North Kingstown is fragmentary. A report by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission suggests that by 1832, there were nine textile mills in North Kingstown, six woolen mills, and three cotton mills.<sup>31</sup> Besides Joseph C.'s mill from ca. 1818 and Ezbon's Annaquatucket Mill from 1832, the records indicate that there were seven other textile mills. One of the oldest mills was the woolen mill at Davisville, which dated to at least 1811 when it was operated by members of the Davis family.<sup>32</sup> The North Kingstown Cotton

Factory operated a cotton mill at Lafayette as early as 1815.<sup>33</sup> After Robert Rodman (1818–1903) purchased the mill in 1847, he changed it into a woolen mill.<sup>34</sup> By 1815, there was also a woolen mill at Sand Hill, and by 1824, one at Silver Spring.<sup>35</sup> Records show that the Wickford Manufacturing Company operated a cotton mill at Belleville as early as 1826.<sup>36</sup> The woolen mill at Shady Lea dated to before 1832 when Ezbon sold the mill to Edward Tillinghast.<sup>37</sup> One of the earliest official records on textile mills in Rhode Island comes in the form of the so-called McLane Report, which was published in 1833.<sup>38</sup> The information for the report, regarding American manufacturers and including 39 mills in Rhode Island, was gathered in 1832. The goal of the report was the adjustment of the tariff for the textile industry. The report collected information for four mills in Washington County: Wakefield, Burtonville, and Rocky Brook in South Kingstown and Belleville Mill in North Kingstown.

Although Joseph C.'s and Ezbon's dealings were relatively small enterprises, they paint a picture of the textile industry during the nineteenth century in North Kingstown. The historic records are incomplete, but they show that, by age 30, Joseph C. made his first foray into the world of small textile mill ownership. The mill was alternately known as the Sanford Mill or the Narragansett Mill on the Annaquatucket River. Initially, Joseph C. and his family lived in a house on Brown Street in nearby Wickford, but by 1828, he had an almost identical house built a stone's throw away from his mill on the Post Road. The two-story, hip-roofed building on Brown Street would have been one of the more imposing buildings at the time, with its

low cupola surmounted by a baluster surrounding a central chimney stack.<sup>39</sup> Joseph C. came to include his oldest son, Albert (1817/18–1899) in his business dealings, and on May 31, 1847, they bought a tract of land known as the Bissell Mill Estate.<sup>40</sup> In September of that same year, Joseph C. conveyed his share to Albert, who in turn sold the property in 1849 to Perez Peck, Asa Sisson Jr., and Isaac Peck. The estate consisted of 22 acres of land with "a cotton manufactory, machine shop, and four dwelling houses."<sup>41</sup> The three new owners together with Owen Vaughn (1808–1865) had formed the Hamilton Company the previous year.<sup>42</sup> This company would ultimately become the Hamilton Web Company, one of the largest and longest operating textile mills in North Kingstown.

The mill site that Joseph C. bought on the Annaquatucket River in 1818 already contained a sawmill and gristmill. He added a textile mill and a general store, underscoring the diversified nature of these operations. The store would have catered not only to the millworkers but also to the local farmers. It became known as the Allenton Store and at some point also housed the local post office. The store burned down in 1896.<sup>43</sup> Joseph C.'s mill initially operated about 500 spindles and produced cotton warps.<sup>44</sup> There is little information as to what happened in the intervening years and how Joseph C.'s business fared with the protective tariffs that were enacted in 1824, 1828, and 1832.<sup>45</sup> The McLane Report only mentioned the Belleville Mill in North Kingstown, which at the time was probably the largest mill in the area.<sup>46</sup> The Belleville Mill was located just upstream from Joseph C.'s mill, and he may have been producing yarn for it. Other



records show that Joseph C. produced yarn for the Davis mill in 1834.<sup>47</sup>

On November 19, 1849, Joseph C. placed an advertisement in the *Manufacturers' and Farmers' Journal* announcing the sale of his mill at a public auction to take place in May of the following year.<sup>48</sup> The property consisted of four parcels and included water privileges. It contained a cotton mill and a dresser house, with all the fixtures and machinery recently repaired. The mill continued to produce cotton warps, but by then Joseph C. had more than tripled the number of spindles to 1,620, and there was room to add looms. The advertisement also stated that the property was located conveniently between Wickford and the depot of the Providence and Stonington Railroad. The reference to a dresser house and room for adding more looms would suggest that Joseph C. was not only producing yarn but also had started to weave fabric; however, other records do not confirm this.<sup>49</sup> The first auction did not go through because the property was again offered for sale in August 1850, with an auction date of February 19, 1851.<sup>50</sup>

Ezbon's first venture into textile milling came sometime before 1832 because in that year he sold the Shady Lea Mill in North Kingstown to Edward Tillinghast.<sup>51</sup> There is some evidence that Ezbon may have constructed the original mill in the late 1820s, manufacturing jeans.<sup>52</sup> After selling Shady Lea, Ezbon built a new textile mill on the Annaquatucket River on the parcel he had bought with his oldest brother. Ezbon also built himself a new house less than 300 feet south of the mill site; it still stands today. Compared with his brother's house, Ezbon's house is a more modest

one-story, side-gabled dwelling, which also is probably more fitting in its rural setting. Even though both Joseph C. and Ezbon ultimately abandoned textile milling and none of their children decided to carry on with the family business, they allow us to place them in the larger context of textile milling in North Kingstown during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and to study the buildings, the workforce, and the product.

The first quantifiable data that provide insight into the people involved in the textile industry in North Kingstown comes from the 1850 *Products of Industry* and the federal census. North Kingstown was home to eight mills: three cotton mills and five woolen mills (see Table 1).<sup>53</sup>

Christopher and William Rhodes had purchased the Belleville Mill, a cotton mill, in 1830.<sup>54</sup> Belleville was at the time the largest textile mill in North Kingstown, with fifty looms, employing seventy people, and producing sheeting. Albert and Samuel P. Sanford were listed as the agents for the cotton mill founded by their father, Joseph C. It employed twenty people and produced warps. The *Products of Industry* made no mention of looms. Daniel Chase Hiscox and William E. Pierce were the owners and agents of the Silver Spring woolen mill. Pierce initially had worked with Robert Rodman at the Albro Mill in Exeter in 1840.<sup>55</sup> Hiscox and Pierce employed twenty-six people and produced coarse woolen. Rodman himself had purchased the Lafayette Mill from Albert Sanford in 1847.<sup>56</sup> Rodman employed sixteen people, and his woolen mill produced jeans and tweeds. Charles Allen had purchased Shady Lea from his brother Christopher in 1840, who in turn had bought the property from Tillinghast in 1836. Till-

Name	Owner/Agent	Raw Material	Power Source	Spindles	Looms	Male Workers	Female Workers	Monthly Male Salary	Monthly Female Salary	Product
Belleville Mills	C. & W. Rhodes, Owners & agents	Cotton	Water	2,000	50	40	30	\$620	\$480	Sheeting
Sanford Ville	A. & S. P. Sanford, Agents	Cotton	Water	1,600	0	12	8	\$250	\$80	Warps
Silver Spring	Hiscox & Pierce, Owners & agents	Woolen	Water	400	24	12	14	\$300	\$200	Coarse woolen
Lafayette Mill	R. Rodman, Owner & agent	Woolen	Water	280	16	6	10	\$168	\$219	Jeans & tweeds
Shady Lea Mill	Charles Allen, Owner & agent	Woolen	Water	280	12	5	8	\$150	\$112	Kentucky jeans
Annaquatucket Mill	Ezbon Sanford, Owner & agent	Woolen	Water	240	12	5	8	\$150	\$175	Kentucky jeans
Hamilton Company	S. H. Vaughn, Agent	Cotton	Water	1,800	0	12	11	\$250	\$150	Warps
Davis Mill	Davis Reynolds & Company, Agents	Woolen	Water	240	14	8	7	\$250	\$120	Kentucky jeans

TABLE 1: 1850 *Products of Industry*

inghast had acquired the mill four years earlier from Ezbon.<sup>57</sup> Allen's woolen mill employed thirteen people and produced Kentucky jeans. Despite being identified as a farmer in the 1850 census, Ezbon Sanford remained listed as the owner and agent of the Annaquatucket Mill. His woolen mill employed thirteen people and produced Kentucky jeans. Syria H. Vaughn (1817-1897) had purchased the Hamilton Company mill only about a month before the census was taken. His cotton mill employed twenty-three people and produced warps. The Davis Mill dated back to the early nineteenth century and had been owned and operated by members of the Davis family. In 1849, James M. Davis, together with brother-in-law Henry Sweet and cousin Albert S. Reynolds, called the firm Davis, Reynolds & Co.<sup>58</sup> In 1850, the woolen mill employed fifteen people and produced Kentucky jeans.

Four of the mills produced a fabric identified as jeans or Kentucky jeans, a lightweight twill fabric woven from an all-cotton or a cotton-and-wool-blend typically used to make men's work clothes. The fabric was not expected to last long, and by the 1840s, work pants were referred to as "Kentucky jeans" after the

state where they were originally made, although the fabric and the style of pants also were copied in other states because of its popularity.<sup>59</sup> There is some evidence that Ezbon may have been one of the first mill owners in North Kingstown to produce jeans, in the mill he constructed at Shady Lea in the late 1820s.<sup>60</sup> Kentucky jeans were considered a type of "Negro cloth," which also included cashmeres and kerseys to name but two.<sup>61</sup> "Negro cloth" was a cheap and coarse material manufactured specifically to reduce the cost of clothing enslaved people in the South. The production of "Negro cloth" played an important role in Rhode Island's textile industry during the nineteenth century. Between 1800 and 1860, more than eighty mills in Rhode Island produced a type of "Negro cloth," most of them located in Washington County. By 1850, 79 percent of all textile mills in Rhode Island manufactured slave clothing.<sup>62</sup> The records do not reveal whether Ezbon or any of the other mill owners in North Kingstown experienced a similar moral dilemma as Rowland Gibson Hazard did in neighboring South Kingstown with the production of "Negro cloth."<sup>63</sup> Through the production of various types of "Negro



cloth," textile manufacturers in New England were fully invested in Southern slaveholding. They received the raw materials from the South and in return produced fabrics that would clothe enslaved people on the same plantations from which they got their materials. The position of the mill owners in North Kingstown may have been as complex as that of Hazard, who had anti-slavery sympathies but also heavily benefited in multiple ways from the institution of slavery in the South.

The textile industry, of course, also required a labor force. Before the introduction of the power loom, the mills performed only some of the tasks, such as the carding and oiling of wool. This would then be spun by area residents at home and returned to the mill to be scoured and dyed. According to the 1850 federal census, approximately 2,991 people were living in North Kingstown, and of them, 1,000 people had their profession listed. There were 271 farmers, 247 laborers, fifty-four carpenters, seventeen jewelers, and seventeen miners, to name but a few of the professions. Fifteen men identified themselves as a manufacturer.<sup>64</sup> Some of those known to have been associated with the mills, however, did not, or were not, identified as manufacturers. For example, and as mentioned above, both Joseph C. and Ezbon were listed as farmers, Allen was listed as farmer and manufacturer, and Rodman was listed as a merchant. Due to the lack of similar records from before 1850, it is not clear why, for instance, Joseph C. and Ezbon did not identify themselves as manufacturers. Whereas Joseph C. seemed to have moved on from textile milling, Ezbon remains listed as the mill owner in the *Products of Industry*.<sup>65</sup> For textile-industry-specific jobs, the 1850 census listed thirteen

spinners, all men; four dresser tenders, one woman and three men; four male colorers; two overseers of a weaving room, both men; one male carder; and one male calico printer.<sup>66</sup> A wage and time book from the period between 1845 and ca. 1856 mentions twenty-three people who also showed up in the census records.<sup>67</sup> Of those nine who identified themselves laborers, eight listed no profession, six were listed farmers, one as a miner, and one as a mariner. It is possible that, similar to the mill owners, their jobs in the mill were seasonal and just one of many sources of income.

One hundred and seventeen people of color were recorded in the 1850 federal census for North Kingstown, identifying as either Black or "mulatto." Whereas none of them were directly linked to the textile mills in the census records, the wage and time book mentioned above provides more insight into their roles. The earliest entry, dated January 19, 1846, listed eight men, one of whom was J[oseph] G. Potter. The 1850 census identifies Potter as Black and lists his profession as a laborer. In 1846, he would have been about fourteen years old. The wage and time book also mentions Timothy and Isaac Rodman, father (aged 42 in 1850) and son (aged 14), and George Roame (aged 15), spelled Roome in the census records, as being Black. Timothy Rodman's profession was listed as a laborer, but Isaac Rodman and George Roame had no profession listed. In addition to Isaac Rodman and George Roame, six other minors listed in the 1850 census can be connected to the textile industry through the wage book.<sup>68</sup>

The end of the 1850s saw a downturn for the textile industry in Rhode Island and North Kingstown. The

Panic of 1857 affected the entire United States, including North Kingstown.<sup>69</sup> An article taking up almost one-third of a page in the *Manufacturers' and Farmers' Journal* published on December 24, 1857, mentioned the suspension of labor across the state of Rhode Island. In neighboring South Kingstown, only two of eight mills had ceased production, five were operating on a reduced schedule, and only one was running full time. In North Kingstown, the article listed five mills by their owners: Robert Rodman, Davis, Reynolds & Co., Hiscox & Pierce, Ezbon Sanford, and Charles Allen.<sup>70</sup> Except for the mill owned by Hiscox & Pierce, which still was running full time, the other mills had ceased operations. The mill in question was probably the Silver Spring Mill, although at this point Hiscox & Pierce also owned Joseph C.'s old mill. Even though there had been a third advertisement in the *Manufacturers' and Farmers' Journal* dated August 26, 1852, that offered Joseph C.'s mill for sale, with an auction date of March 2, 1853, a newspaper article from 1889, which reported on the destruction of what had been Joseph C.'s mill, mentioned that it had been sold to Colonel Daniel C. Hiscock [Hiscox] and William E. Pierce (sometimes also spelled Peirce) in 1850.<sup>71</sup> In his 1889 book, *History of Washington and Kent Counties*, J. R. Cole stated that Wilcox [sic] and Pierce had purchased the old Narragansett Mill (i.e., Joseph C.'s mill) in 1852.<sup>72</sup>

Due to a paucity of records, it is difficult to paint a clear picture of Ezbon's involvement with the Annaquatucket Mill or the story of the mill community itself. The available evidence indicates that it initially was a water-powered mill. To build up enough water

pressure to power the waterwheel, Ezbon would have had to dam the Annaquatucket River to create a millpond. Water privileges often were part of deeds for tracts of land along streams that had the potential to support a mill. In 1855, the river backed up, causing \$3,000 worth of damage to the waterwheel of the Narragansett Mill, Joseph C.'s old mill, which at that point was owned by Hiscox and Pierce. They sued Ezbon for damages done to their mill wheel.<sup>73</sup> The judge and jury went to the site at the request of the plaintiffs to review the situation firsthand. The outcome of the case was that Ezbon had to pay fifty dollars in damages, a fine to which he objected, and then requested a new trial, which he ultimately was denied.<sup>74</sup> The fact that Ezbon was identified as a farmer on the 1850 census suggests that being a mill owner was just one of several hats he wore. A common practice among mill owners was leasing their property for a certain number of years instead of selling it. Ezbon placed an ad in the *Manufacturers' and Farmers' Journal* in October 1858 for a woolen mill to be let, one-and-a-half miles south of Wickford. It contained one set of woolen machinery and room for two more and included tenements for millworkers.<sup>75</sup>

Whereas Joseph C. passed away in 1856 and Ezbon appears to have divested from the responsibilities of mill ownership around 1858, we still can follow the development of the textile industry in North Kingstown through the mills they built and the mills of their neighbors. The *Products of Industry* of 1860 mentioned only six mills in North Kingstown (see Table 2).

Three of the mills no longer were identified by their name but by the names of their owners. Robert Rodman was still listed as one of the owners. His water-



and steam-powered mill employed thirty-seven people and produced Kentucky jeans, as did Davis, Reynolds & Company, which operated a water-powered mill that employed thirty-three people. Syria H. Vaughn produced cotton warps at his water-powered mill and employed fifty-two people. His older brother Owen Vaughn was in charge of the Sanford Mill, which was Ezbon's Annaquatucket Mill. It was a water-powered mill and the smallest at the time, employing only thirteen people. Walter B. Chapin was the agent for Shady Lea Mills, which produced cotton warps and "casimeres" [cashmere].<sup>76</sup> The mill still was owned by Charles Allen at the time. The mill had switched from water to steam power and was one of the largest mills, employing seventy people. Hiscox and Pierce's Silver Spring Mill now was identified as the Kersey Mills. It was steam- and water-powered and produced kersey, cotton, wool, and warps. Kersey was a heavy, coarse fabric made from wool or wool and cotton and used for work clothes; it was considered a "Negro cloth." With ninety employees, the mill employed the largest workforce of the mills listed in North Kingstown in 1860, and the laborers were the best paid, with the men and women having equal wages, both earning approximately \$27.78 a month.

By 1860, the population of North Kingstown had increased slightly to 3,104. Approximately 862 people had their profession listed. Two-hundred-thirty-two people were identified as farmers, fifty-four as farm laborers, and thirty-seven as farmhands.<sup>77</sup> Eighty-six people had a profession associated with the textile industry, which was only 29 percent of the number of people listed as working in the textile mills in the

*Product of Industry* of 1860. Eight men identified themselves as manufacturers, all of whom were involved in the textile industry.<sup>78</sup> The number of jobs associated with the textile industry in North Kingstown became much more specific. People were listed as working in cotton mills (six), cotton spinners (three), or spinners (three). John Slocum was listed as an agent for a cotton mill, and Cyrus Dyer as an agent for a woolen mill. Twenty-three women were identified as weavers, Rowland Perry as a wool dyer, John Ritson as a dyer, and Lorenzo Stone as a woolen cloth finisher. John H. Mines, originally from England, was listed as a carder.

According to the 1860 census, twenty-eight minors worked in the textile mills; the youngest person was an eleven-year-old girl who was employed as a weaver. The number of people of color, Black or "mulatto," in North Kingstown had declined by 1860 to eighty-nine, one of whom was described as a factory hand, which was Joseph G. Potter, who also is mentioned above. The other three Black mill workers who showed up in the wage and time book and the 1850 census, Timothy and Isaac Rodman and George R. Roame, no longer appear in the 1860 federal census for North Kingstown. Timothy and Isaac Rodman do show up in the 1860 census for South Kingstown, where their professions are listed as factory laborers, and George Roame may have moved to Worcester, Massachusetts.<sup>79</sup>

An interesting shift in the nationalities in general and of those working in the textile industry in North Kingstown took place by 1860. According to the 1850 census, most people living in North Kingstown were born in the United States. Eighty-five were born in Ireland, twelve in England, and nine in Canada. Of

Name	Owner/Agent	Product	Power Source	Male Workers	Female Workers	Monthly Male Salary total for all employees	Monthly Female Salary total for all employees
Unnamed	Robert Rodman	Kentucky jeans	Water & steam	17	20	\$344	\$318
Unnamed	Davis, Reynolds & Company	Kentucky jeans	Water	15	18	\$325	\$315
Unnamed	Syria H. Vaughn	Cotton warps	Water	27	25	\$433	\$387
Sanford Mill	Owen Vaughn	Cotton [&] spinning	Water	7	6	\$137	\$78
Shady Lea Mills	W. B. Chapin Agent	Cotton warps Cassimers [sic]	Steam	50	20	\$1,200	\$400
Kersey Mills	Hiscox & Peirce [sic]	Kersey cotton, wool, and warps	Steam & water	45	45	\$1,250	\$1,250

TABLE 2: 1860 *Products of Industry*

the seventy-one people involved in the textile mills in North Kingstown in 1850, sixty-five were born in Rhode Island, one in Massachusetts, one in New York, one in England, one in Ireland, and one in Scotland. In 1860, eighty residents of North Kingstown were born in Canada, seventy-five in Ireland, and thirteen in England. Of the eighty-five individuals involved in the textile industry, twenty-six were born in Canada, eleven in Ireland, and one in England. An explanation for this increase can be found in immigration numbers during the second half of the nineteenth century. Between 1840 and 1930, roughly 900,000 French Canadians emigrated to the United States, leaving their native Quebec in search of better living conditions.<sup>80</sup> The agriculture in Quebec was in decline and industry undeveloped. Some of them found employment in the textile industry in New England, which rapidly would expand in part due to the Civil War. As for the Irish, they had long been fleeing British oppression, and a large number came after the potato famine of 1845. In 1860, there were 1.6 million Irish in the United States of a total population of 31 million.<sup>81</sup> Initially, most were too poor to move inland, so they congregated in cities along the East Coast near their port of entry. Scores ended up working as unskilled laborers in the textile industry in New England.

The mills the Sanford brothers had built remained in operation in 1860. When Daniel Chase Hiscox passed away in 1861, William Pierce became the sole owner of Joseph C.'s old mill, which by then was known as the Narragansett Mill. After Hiscox's death, Pierce leased the mill to Robert Rodman for ten years.<sup>82</sup> Ezbon had leased the Annaquatucket Mill to Owen Vaughn on September 9, 1860.<sup>83</sup> The indenture for Ezbon's mill gives a fairly detailed description of the property and the buildings that were part of the complex, such as a grist mill, a dye house, and several dwelling houses, as well as the water, waterpower rights, and privileges that went along with the mill. The grist mill suggests that this remained a diversified operation. Vaughn's lease of Ezbon's mill was confirmed by the 1860 *Products of Industry*.<sup>84</sup> Interestingly, the mill was described as a cotton spinning mill producing warps instead of a woolen mill. It appears the mill still produced fabric because Vaughn placed an ad for a dresser tender in the *Providence Journal* the following year to dress colored warps.<sup>85</sup> Ezbon passed away on July 19, 1864, but the mill initially remained in possession of the Sanford family. The lease to Vaughn must have expired after five or six years because, in March 1866, Abbie Sanford, Ezbon's oldest daughter, and her youngest brother (who also was called Ezbon) leased the



property to Syria Vaughn and Asa Sisson. The indenture described the property as containing approximately 50 acres, a cotton factory, a dye house, five dwelling houses, two barns, a carriage house, a [corn] crib, and other improvements.<sup>86</sup>

By the next decade there seems to have been a recovery in the textile industry in North Kingstown because according to the 1870 *Products of Industry*, eleven textile mills were in operation (see Table 3). Robert Rodman was listed in connection with the Lafayette Mill, the Silver Spring Mill, and the Narragansett Mill. The first two produced doeskin and cotton warp.<sup>87</sup> The three mills combined employed the largest workforce of men, women, and children in North Kingstown and spent the most on annual wages.<sup>88</sup> The Narragansett Mill remained one of the smaller mills in North Kingstown, in the size of its labor force and production, producing 600,000 yards of warp. S. A. Edmonds & Co. was listed in connection with the Shady Lea Mill, producing “Fancy Cassimeres.” The S. A. Edmonds & Co. was a partnership between Samuel A. Edmonds and Alexander A. Ellsworth. They had owned Shady Lea since at least 1868 because in that year William A. Harris filed a petition against them at the Clerk’s Office of the Supreme Court for the sum of \$1,269.41 for labor and materials for construction, repair, and improvements at the “Shady Lea Factory estate.”<sup>89</sup> They must have sold the mill not long after the census was taken by June of that year because according to J. R. Cole, Robert Rodman purchased the mill in 1870.<sup>90</sup> J. P. Campbell & Co. operated the Belleville Mill. In 1864, it had leased the mill from William E. Pierce and later purchased the

property.<sup>91</sup> John M. Davis and Henry Sweet still ran the Davis Mill producing Kentucky jeans. G. W. Reynolds & Co. operated a water- and steam-powered mill that also produced Kentucky jeans. This probably was the woolen mill at Sand Hill that a “D. Tillinghast” had sold to George Washington Reynolds (1822–1904) and Allen Reynolds (1826–1909) in 1860.<sup>92</sup> W. E. Peirce [sic] & Co. operated a water-powered mill that produced plain and twilled kersey. It is not clear which mill this might have been since Rodman leased the Narragansett Mill and John Campbell the Belleville Mill. Vaughn & Greene Manufacturing operated the Hamilton Mill and the Annaquatucket Mill. Both were water- and steam-powered cotton mills. The Annaquatucket Mill was one of the smallest textile operations in North Kingstown, equipped with only 1,404 spindles and producing no more than 97,000 yards of yarn. The last mill that was listed was the Waterside Mill. The mill had been constructed in 1865 by the American Bobbin Company in the village of Wickford.<sup>93</sup> It initially produced woolen and cotton bobbins and spools, undoubtedly some of which supplied the local textile mills. Seven of the eleven mills were still producing material that had been known as “Negro cloth” before the Civil War.

By 1870, the population of North Kingstown had increased to 3,568, and approximately 1,530 people had their profession listed. Three-hundred-and-one were identified as laborers; 275 as farmers; 125 as servants; sixty-two as domestic servants; forty-eight as farm laborers; and forty-one as mariners, among other professions. Two-hundred-and-seventy-five were associated with the textile industry, still more than

Name	Owner/Agent	Product	Power Source	Male Workers	Female Workers	Children and Youth	Annual Salary
Lafayette Mill	Robert Rodman	Doeskin; Cotton warps	Water & steam	25	41	0	\$24,000
Silver Spring Mill	Robert Rodman	Doeskin; Cotton warps	Water & steam	29	45	0	\$24,000
Narragansett Mill	Robert Rodman	Warps	Water & steam	13	7	8	\$8,000
Shady Lea Mill	S. A. Edmonds & Co.	Fancy cassimeres	Steam	26	16	10	\$23,000
Unnamed	J. P. Campbell & Co.	Fancy cassimeres	Water & steam	70	20	10	\$41,000
Unnamed	Davis & Sweet	Kentucky jeans	Water	13	6	2	\$11,650
Unnamed	G. W. Reynolds & Co.	Kentucky jeans	Water & steam	7	9	0	\$5,613
Unnamed	W. E. Peirce & Co.	Plain & twilled kersey	Water	7	8	2	\$6,250
Hamilton Mill	Vaughn & Greene	Cotton manufacturing	Water & steam	48	46	19	\$42,745
Annaquatucket Mill	Vaughn & Greene	Cotton manufacturing	Water & steam	8	4	8	\$6,390
Waterside Mill	Unnamed	Cotton; waste cloth	Steam	17	15	4	\$6,674

TABLE 3: 1870 Products of Industry

200 fewer than the number mentioned in the *Products of Industry*. Seventeen men identified themselves as manufacturers, ten of whom can be linked with the textile industry through the *Products of Industry*.<sup>94</sup> The types of occupations were more varied than during the previous census, and it is apparent from the types of jobs that the industry was expanding. People listed their positions as clerks in the woolen mill or engineers, overseers, and superintendents. There were, of course, still carders, dresser tenders, dyers, and spinners. There were forty weavers, nine men and thirty-one women. People also specified if they worked in a woolen mill or cotton mill. Despite the predominantly generic job descriptions, some entries provided more insight into the kind of machinery used in the textile mills, such as the man whose profession was listed as “mule spinner.” The mule spinner, or spinning mule, originally had been invented by Samuel Crompton in 1779.<sup>95</sup> The spinning mule combined elements from James Hargreaves’s spinning jenny and Richard Ark-

wright’s spinning frame. It produced a higher quality thread and allowed the cotton yarn to be spun simultaneously onto a much larger number of spindles than before. Some spinning mules could hold up to 1,320 spindles and be 150 feet long. The number of minors who were working in the textile mills had more than tripled to ninety-seven, with the youngest being an eleven-year-old boy working in a cotton mill. The number of people of color, on the other hand, had further decreased in North Kingstown, down to sixty-five with only one person, Abby A. Brown, a thirty-five-year-old Black woman, listed as working in a woolen mill.

As in the previous decade, many textile workers were born outside Rhode Island. Thirty-five were born in Ireland, thirty-two in Canada, twenty-eight in England, three in Scotland, and one in Switzerland. Of the twenty-eight people born in England and working in the textile mills, fifteen of them were working in a woolen mill. Some of them were working



in the mills in family units, such as James Bedford (57) and his two daughters, Emiline (20) and Mary A. (18), who were all born in England and listed as weavers in mills. Some were boarding together. Owen and Mary Conly were born in Ireland. Owen is listed as working in a mill. They had five boarders, four of whom were young Irish women, all of whom were weavers in a mill. Even though the 1870 federal census does not refer to specific addresses or mill villages, the way the census was recorded suggests that people were living in specific clusters, based on profession, and in some cases on their national background as well. The census taker recorded numerous dwelling houses in succession where the heads of household worked in a mill or woolen mill, including with some of their family members and boarders, suggesting that these were mill villages.

The threat of fire was a constant and serious danger for textile mills during the nineteenth century. The combination of flammable cotton and fabric dust and the grease that was used to lubricate the machinery saturated the wooden floors and created a high risk for conflagration. Workers often smoked, and in those mills that relied on steam power, the coal-fueled steam boilers added a further risk. So perhaps it was no surprise when the Annaquatucket Mill succumbed to fire on October 5, 1874. A newspaper report in the *Providence Journal* described the building as the "Annaquatucket Cotton Mill" formerly known as the "Esbon Sanford Mill."<sup>96</sup> According to the article, the mill was a small, two-and-a-half-story wooden building belonging to Syria H. Vaughn and used to produce cotton warps and yarns. The fire engine from Wickford

arrived too late, and the entire building, including the machinery and stock, were consumed by the fire. The building was insured in the Queen's Office in London for \$4,000.

The exact sequence of subsequent events is unclear. What is evident is that the mill was quickly rebuilt and perhaps at a larger scale than before because in June 1875, the property, then identified as the Ezbon Sanford Manufacturing Property, was offered for sale in the *Providence Journal*.<sup>97</sup> The advertisement described it as a new mill, 40 by 130 [feet], with a lapper building, a Collins Turbine Wheel, and six houses in good repair. Perhaps awaiting the sale of the property, Edwin Rhodes Gardiner, his wife Abbie Sanford Gardiner, and Ezbon Sanford III leased the property to James A. Greene on August 2, 1875.<sup>98</sup> Greene and Syria H. Vaughn had dissolved their partnership in 1873.<sup>99</sup>

A rich source of information on the actual structure of the new Annaquatucket Mill comes in the form of a Barlow's Insurance Survey conducted on October 25, 1876. As mentioned above, fires posed a great threat to textile mills and other industrial buildings during the nineteenth century. Insurance companies created maps for entire cities as well as individual properties as a tool for insurance company underwriters. The Jefferson Insurance Company of New York was the first to sponsor the production of detailed fire insurance maps in the United States in the 1850s.<sup>100</sup> Perhaps the best-known maps are the Sanborn fire insurance maps. Daniel A. Sanborn began producing fire insurance maps for the Aetna Insurance Company but set out on his own in 1866.<sup>101</sup> While Sanborn predominantly focused on entire cities, other companies produced

a series of individual insurance plans for commercial and industrial buildings, one of which was Barlow's Insurance Surveys of New York. Barlow's survey forms included a colored isometric view of the property and a plan, as well as detailed information describing the buildings, the occupants, and the fire risk. Three buildings were on the site. The main building measured 40 by 135 feet. The colored isometric drawing shows that it was a rectangular, one-story, banked building with a low-pitched gable roof. It had a stone-and-brick lower floor and a frame upper story. A rectangular brick chimney was located against the west elevation, near the south (front) gable end. Located on top of the roof, near the front-gable end, was a small decorative pyramidal-roofed cupola with double round-arched openings in each of its four sides. A covered bridge on the east elevation of the main building connected the upper floor with the one-and-a-half-story picker house, which measured approximately 18 by 40 feet. Located roughly 35 feet north of the main building was a freestanding cotton and waste house. The building measured about 22 by 50 feet and was constructed entirely out of stone. The plan shows a small trapezoidal-shaped shed against its east gable end. The description of the property mentioned that the upper story of the main building was used for carding and spinning and that it had the capacity for eighteen carding machines. A furnace was located in the basement of the main building, and light was provided by kerosene lamps. The mill operated an average of eleven hours a day, and waste was removed daily to the waste house. There was no watchman or sprinklers, but there was a medium-sized Fales & Jenks rotary pump in the

basement of the main building and hydrants on both of its floors as well as in the picker house.

In July 1877, Gardiner, his wife Abbie, and her brother Ezbon sold the property to Joseph Warren Greene (1798–1888) of Brooklyn, New York.<sup>102</sup> Greene was the father of James A. Greene, who had been leasing the mill since 1875. Joseph W. had set up his son in partnership with Syria H. Vaughn in 1866 at the former Bissell Mill Estate, which was downstream from the Annaquatucket Mill where the river empties into Bissell Cove. The reason Joseph W. purchased the Annaquatucket Mill in 1877 was perhaps not so much to diversify his operations as to ensure the protection of water rights for his much larger operation downstream.

A new census law passed in March 1879 created a more specialized record for the various businesses and industries.<sup>103</sup> The number of general economic questions was expanded to twenty-nine, and specialists were assigned to conduct the census for specific industries. One of these designated areas was the manufacturing of cotton, woolen, and worsted goods. These experts were paid at a rate not to exceed six dollars per day plus expenses, whereas the regular census takers were only paid fifteen to twenty-five cents for each establishment they recorded.<sup>104</sup> Unfortunately, the records for North Kingstown reporting on the textile industry have not survived.<sup>105</sup> However, general figures can give an insight into the continuing importance of this industry in Rhode Island. According to the 1880 *Report on the Manufacturers of the United States*, Rhode Island ranked second after Connecticut in New England with 115 cotton manufacturers and 21,474 people employed.<sup>106</sup> The number of cotton



manufacturers in New England (the Eastern states) was almost three times as many as in the Southern states, 439 versus 161.<sup>107</sup> It appears that the manufacturing of woolen goods played a less important role in Rhode Island. Out of thirty-five states that reported having wool manufacturers, Rhode Island came in fourteenth.<sup>108</sup>

By 1880, the population of North Kingstown had once again increased, this time to 3,949. The 1880 census for North Kingstown was divided into two districts, one covering the northern part (155) of the town and one the southern part (156). There were 255 farmers, 151 farm laborers, forty-two servants, and thirty-seven domestic servants, and only forty-nine people who identified themselves as laborers. The largest employer at the time was the textile industry, with approximately 720 people working in the mills in North Kingstown. Unlike in the previous federal census, most of these people were simply listed as working in a cotton or woolen mill. Weavers and spinners no longer were mentioned, and the only specialized occupation was that of dyer in a woolen mill. William E. Peirce [sic] identified himself as a manufacturer of cotton yarn, and James M. Davis and Henry Sweet as retired wool manufacturers. The census also still reflected the diverse national background of its citizens and those working in the textile industry. The largest non-American group was the Irish, with 165, of which sixty-five worked in the textile industry. There were 142 Canadians, and little more than half (seventy-two) worked in the textile mills, most of them in the cotton mills. Eighty-eight people were born in England, and forty-seven of them worked in the textile indus-

try. Twenty-one people were born in Scotland, nine of whom worked in a woolen mill. The number of minors who worked in the textile mills had almost doubled to 165, with the youngest being a nine-year-old boy, Archie D. Nichols, who worked in a woolen mill. There still were sixty-five people of color living in North Kingstown, one of whom identified as Filipino. None of them worked in the textile mills.

The role the Sanford brothers' mills played in the 1880s slowly declined. In 1885, the Hamilton Web Company was incorporated, and a new brick mill was constructed at the Bissel Cove site. Downstream from Ezbon's old mill, it measured 145 by 224 feet, operated eighty looms, and manufactured webbing.<sup>109</sup> The company maintained ownership of the Annaquatucket Mill, but the mill no longer appeared in the records. As for Joseph C.'s old mill, the partnership between William Pierce and his son-in-law Philogene Nichols was dissolved in September 1889, and about three weeks later, a mysterious fire caused the Narragansett Mill to burn to the ground.<sup>110</sup> A newspaper article estimated the loss of the mill at \$30,000, which would be approximately \$890,227 in today's money.<sup>111</sup> According to the newspaper report, the mill consisted of an older frame part and a newer brick section, each about 80 by 40 feet. The headline identified the mill as a seine twine mill, indicating that it produced a tightly twisted yarn used for warp. The report also mentioned that Pierce had a bad heart condition; the shock of the fire may have led to his early death about three weeks later.<sup>112</sup> The Narragansett Mill was not rebuilt, and the only remaining part is a stone arch, which was part of the raceway that channeled the Annaquatucket River

Village	Name	Product	Male Workers	Female Workers	Boys under 16	Girls under 16
Belleville	Bellville Woolen Mill — Closed					
Davisville	Davisville Woolen Co.	Jeans and cassimeres	17	8	0	0
Davisville	Davisville Woolen Co.	Woolen yarn	11	2	0	0
Hamilton	Hamilton Web Co.	Narrow fabrics	100	55	5	7
Lafayette	Rodman Mfg. Co.	Worsted suitings	104	88	0	0
Shady Lea	Rodman Mfg. Co.	Cotton yarn	48	30	1	2
Wickford	Coronet Worsted Co. — Closed					

TABLE 4: 1907 *Thirteenth Annual Report of Inspections of Factories, Mercantile Establishments, and Workshops*

underneath the Post Road. Pierce also owned the much larger woolen mill at Belleville that was located just upstream, so there may not have been a necessity to rebuild Joseph C.'s mill.

Unfortunately, the census records for 1890 for North Kingstown no longer survive. Most of them were lost in a 1921 fire that destroyed much of the Commerce Department building where they had been stored.<sup>113</sup> Other sources that could have shed some light on the textile industry in North Kingstown at this time are surprisingly vague. For instance, the *Fourth Annual Report of the Commissioner of Industrial Statistics* listed occupations by age and place of birth of the parents for North Kingstown residents.<sup>114</sup> None of the textile-related occupations mentioned in the previous census records are part of the list. Twenty manufacturers were living in North Kingstown, and there were 269 mill operatives, which after farmers (294) was the largest employment sector. Some of these likely were working

in the textile mills. According to the Census Bulletin, Rhode Island saw a decline in the number of cotton manufacturers from the previous decade, from 115 to 94, but it still came in second in New England and third nationwide.<sup>115</sup> Whereas cotton manufacturing had declined, the number of wool manufacturers had increased in Rhode Island from 62 to 91.<sup>116</sup>

By 1900, the population of North Kingstown had increased to 4,194.<sup>117</sup> North Kingstown was again divided into two districts: the northern (234) and southern (235) parts of town. A portion of the records for District 235 are challenging to decipher, making an accurate analysis difficult. The records still mentioned specific occupations associated with the textile industry, such as dyers, spinners and weavers, mule spinners, beamer tenders, card tenders, and dresser tenders. By 1906–07 only five mills remained in operation in North Kingstown (see Table 4).<sup>118</sup>

The Belleville Woolen Mill was closed, as was the



Coronet Worsted Company in Wickford.<sup>119</sup> The Davisville Woolen Company operated two mills in Davisville, one that produced jeans and cassimeres and one that produced woolen yarn, employing twenty-five and thirteen people respectively.

The Hamilton Web Company produced narrow fabrics and employed 100 men, fifty-five women, five boys, and seven girls under sixteen. The Rodman Manufacturing Company operated two mills. The Lafayette Mill produced worsted suitings and employed the largest workforce of the surviving mills in North Kingstown, with 104 and eighty-eight women. The Shady Lea Mill also was owned by the Rodman Manufacturing Company and produced cotton yarn, employing eighty-one people (including one boy and two girls under sixteen).

The Annaquatucket Mill had been more or less mothballed by the Hamilton Web Company. The inspection report of factories in North Kingstown done between January 1906 and January 1907 no longer mentioned the mill.<sup>120</sup> The mill was permanently shuttered in 1915 and by 1925 was torn down with only the cotton and waste house spared.<sup>121</sup> By 1944, the cotton and waste house were equipped with a fireplace and used as a "country camp."<sup>122</sup> All that remains now are parts of the foundation of the main building and the shell of the cotton and waste house.

After more than a century of operation, the textile industry in the United States fell into decline during the first half of the twentieth century. Some described it as a "sick giant" that had overexpanded and was overproducing.<sup>123</sup> Increased foreign competition, the Great Depression, and labor strikes led to a steady

decline that ultimately reached the textile mills in North Kingstown. A newspaper article in the *Providence Journal* of October 1936 reported on the temporary closure of the Lafayette and Shady Lea Mills, causing 250 people to be unemployed, and the Belleville Mill reducing its workforce to 25 percent.<sup>124</sup> Only the Hamilton Web Company was not affected at the time.

Ultimately, the remaining textile mills in North Kingstown fell into decline during the twentieth century, unable to compete with some of the new mills being built in the South and abroad. The Lafayette and Shady Lea Mills closed in 1952 and were sold at auction.<sup>125</sup> The Belleville Woolen Mill had ceased regular operations by the late 1960s and burned to the ground in 1969.<sup>126</sup> The Hamilton Web Company Mill was the lone survivor, having carved out a niche for itself in the narrow-weave fabrics market, but it ultimately closed in 1978. The textile industry had played an important part in North Kingstown's economy for more than a century, but on a much smaller scale compared with other parts of Rhode Island and New England. Its owners did not gain the national renown of people such as Samuel Slater, in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, or Francis Cabot Lowell, in Massachusetts, or the Hazard family in neighboring South Kingstown. And whereas other areas in Rhode Island had been susceptible to mill strikes, this does not seem to have been the case in North Kingstown. There are no records to suggest that the workers ever united to demand better wages and fewer hours or that mill owners organized to stave off unrest among its labor force.<sup>127</sup> For some North Kingstown families, the tex-

tile industry was their life's work, one that was passed from one generation to the next. For instance, the closure of the Lafayette and Shady Lea Mills brought an end to more than a century of textile manufacturing by eight generations of the Rodman family. The Greene family were the last owners of the Hamilton Web Company and had been in the textile business since 1794. Joseph C. Sanford and Ezbon Sanford were perhaps representative of a different type of mill owner during the nineteenth century that existed along the margins. Their lives suggest they saw textile mill ownership as a strategic investment, not a way of life worthy of their full attention and passing down to the next generation. None of their siblings appear to have joined them in their ventures, and although some of their children were involved at an early stage, most of them moved away and sought other forms of employment.<sup>128</sup> The only exception was Ezbon Sanford's son, Ezbon San-

ford III (1844–1903), who worked for Vaughn & Greene at the Hamilton Mill from 1869 until 1892, after which he worked for the Hope Webbing Company in Pawtucket until his death.<sup>129</sup> Although next to nothing survives of the Sanford brothers' mills, both men were an important part of nineteenth-century life in North Kingstown and Rhode Island and contributed to the nation's Industrial Revolution. Their lives and labors, and those of the workers they employed, deserve lasting acknowledgment.

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#### NOTES

1. Of the mills that once dotted the landscape of North Kingstown, only the Hamilton, Shady Lea, Lafayette, and Waterside Mills are still standing.

2. Gary Kulik and Julia C. Bonham, Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, and Historic American Engineering Record. *Rhode Island: An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites*. Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service Publication, no. 5. Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of the Interior,

Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, Historic American Engineering Record, 1978, 1.

3. James L. Conrad. "'Drive That Branch': Samuel Slater, the Power Loom, and the Writing of America's Textile History." *Technology and Culture* 36, no. 1 (1995): 1–28.

4. Kulik and Bonham, *Rhode Island: An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites*, 6.



5. Kulik and Bonham, *Rhode Island: An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites*, 7.
6. Kulik and Bonham, *Rhode Island: An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites*, 7–8.
7. Kulik and Bonham, *Rhode Island: An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites*, 9. Gary Kulik. “Factory Discipline in the New Nation: Almy, Brown & Slater and the First Cotton-Mill Workers, 1790–1808.” *The Massachusetts Review* 28, no. 1 (1987): 164–84.
8. The Wilkinson Mill, in Pawtucket, was built between 1810 and 1811 and was used as a cotton mill and a machine shop. David Wilkinson developed a power loom that would dominate the weaving industry in New England for much of the nineteenth century.
9. Robert F. Martin, *National Income in the United States, 1799–1938* (New York: NICB, 1939), 146, and George R. Taylor, *The Transportation Revolution, 1815–1860* (New York: Rinehart and Company, 1951), 174.
10. Seth Rockman, “Negro Cloth: Mastering the Market for Slave Clothing in Antebellum America,” in Sven Beckert and Christine Desan, eds. *American Capitalism: New Histories* (Columbia University Press, 2018), 171.
11. Kulik and Bonham, *Rhode Island: An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites*, 11.
12. Richard William Judd, *Second Nature: An Environmental History of New England* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2014), 122.
13. North Kingstown, Town Clerk, Land Records. Book 21A, 134.
14. North Kingstown, Town Clerk, Land Records. Book 26A, 270.
15. This applies to the census records from 1850 onward. Before 1850, the federal census records list only the names of the heads of families and the number of males, females, slaves, and “free colored persons” who are part of a household.
16. Joseph K. Ott, “More Notes on Rhode Island Cabinetmakers and Their Work,” in *Rhode Island History*, 28 (2), April 1969, 49–52.

17. “General Assembly.” *Providence Patriot*, November 11, 1820, 2.
18. “Republican Nomination.” *Providence Patriot*, March 10, 1821, 2.
19. “State Election.” *Providence Patriot*, March 28, 1821, 2, and “To the Public.” *Providence Patriot*, March 31, 1821, 2.
20. “North-Kingstown Bank.” *Rhode-Island Republican*, November 25, 1824, 3.
21. J. R. Cole, *History of Washington and Kent Counties: Rhode Island, Including Their Early Settlement and Progress to the Present Time; a Description of Their Historic and Interesting Localities; Sketches of Their Towns and Villages; Portraits of Some of Their Prominent Men, and Biographies of Many of Their Representative Citizens*. (New York: W. W. Preston, 1889), 464. See also G. Timothy Cranston, *The View from Swamptown*, “Samuel Elam and The Washington Academy,” February 17, 2000. <https://www.nklibrary.org/sites/nklibrary.org/files/pdf/Wickford.pdf>, accessed June 1, 2020.
22. Survey of Federal Archives (U.S.), and National Archives Project. *Ship Registers and Enrollment of Newport, Rhode Island, 1790–1939* (Providence, RI: National Archives Project, 1938), 389.
23. “North Kingston.” *Providence Journal*, October 25, 1839, 2.
24. “Sales at Auction.” *Manufacturers’ and Farmers’ Journal*, November 19, 1849, 3. The property continued to be offered for sale until August 1853.
25. The 1850s, however, became a period of transition for Joseph C. in his personal life. He had not only identified himself as a farmer in the federal census records, but also no longer was living in the same house as his wife. He lived with a 15-year-old girl named Harriet A. Dawley, who most likely was his servant. His wife, Frances Sanford, lived five houses away with five of their children and her younger sister Mary Northup. Joseph C. and Frances’s sons, Albert and Samuel P., did identify themselves as manufacturers in the 1850 federal census, suggesting they still were involved in the textile business. This is confirmed by the 1850 *Products of Industry*, which will be discussed below. Later that same year, Joseph C. filed a divorce petition. (“General Assembly.” *Providence Journal*, October 30, 1850, 2.) The divorce pro-

ceedings dragged on for several years and appear never to have been formalized. The proceedings ended with the death of Joseph C. in 1856 in Providence at age 68. (“Died.” *Newport Mercury*, September 13, 1856, 3.) It appears Frances had moved to Providence as well. She died there in 1886 at age 94. Despite the divorce filings, they were buried in the same grave near other members of the Sanford family at the Elm Grove Cemetery in North Kingstown.

26. Cole, *History of Washington and Kent Counties*, 419. James and Benjamin Sweet operated the mill for only two years.

27. “North-Kingstown Bank.” *Providence Patriot*, November 29, 1827, 3. Ezbon also was still on the board in 1848.

28. Cole, *History of Washington and Kent Counties*, 424.

29. An interesting social detail is that according to the 1850 federal census, Ezbon’s two youngest children, Alexander and Ezbon, already were living with Esther Chappell and her family, whereas Ezbon was living in a different house with his two older children, Alfred and Abby. Esther was listed as a teacher in the 1850 census, and the daughter of Francis Chappell, a former teacher at Washington Academy, and also listed (confusingly) as the Deputy Town Clerk in the 1850 census. I have been looking at the 1880 federal census for Newport and the city directory from the same year and sometimes people’s professions are radically different. I do not yet have an explanation for these discrepancies.

30. United States Federal Census, 1850, North Kingstown, 632. Ancestry.com, accessed June 11, 2020.

31. Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission (RIHPHC), *North Kingstown, Rhode Island. Statewide Historical Preservation Report, W-NK-1*, 1979, 16.

32. RIHPHC, *North Kingstown*, 18. Cole, *History of Washington and Kent Counties*, 406.

33. “For Sale.” *Newport Mercury*, June 10, 1815, 3.

34. Cole, *History of Washington and Kent Counties*, 415.

35. RIHPHC, *North Kingstown*, 21–22.

36. Cole, *History of Washington and Kent Counties*, 405. “Damages by the Late Storm.” *Connecticut Courant*, August 21, 1826, 3.

37. Cole, *History of Washington and Kent Counties*, 416.

38. United States Department of the Treasury, and Louis McLane. *Documents Relative to the Manufactures in the United States: Collected and Transmitted to the House of Representatives, in Compliance with a Resolution of Jan. 19, 1832*. (Washington, DC: Duff Green, 1833), vol. 1. Hereafter McLane Report.

39. Both houses remain standing.

40. Cole, *History of Washington and Kent Counties*, 399.

41. Cole, *History of Washington and Kent Counties*, 399.

42. “Copartnership Notice.” *Providence Journal*, November 30, 1848, 2.

43. “Fire at Allenton.” *Standard*, July 31, 1896, 2.

44. Cole. *History of Washington and Kent Counties*, 403.

45. Clive Day, “The Early Development of the American Cotton Manufacture” in *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 39 (3), May 1925, 450–469.

46. McLane Report, Vol. 1.

47. George R. Loxton. *Davisville, Rhode Island: A History of the Textile Mill Village of Davisville, North Kingstown, Rhode Island, Since the Arrival of Joshua Davis in 1694*. (Baltimore, MD: Gateway Press, 2001), 79.

48. “Mortgage Sale of a Valuable Factory and Privilege.” *Manufacturers’ and Farmers’ Journal*, November 19, 1849, 3.

49. A dresser was a person who would set up the warps on a loom to prepare it for weaving. The *Products of Industry* for 1850 does not mention any looms at what used to be Joseph C. Sanford’s mill.

50. “Mortgagee’s Sale of a Cotton Mill and Privilege.” *Manufacturers’ and Farmers’ Journal*, August 8, 1850, 3.

51. Cole, *History of Washington and Kent Counties*, 416.

52. Cole, *History of Washington and Kent Counties*, 416.

53. Rhode Island State Archives, Providence, Rhode Island, *Products of Industry*, 1850.

54. Cole, *History of Washington and Kent Counties*, 405. Both Christopher and William Rhodes are listed in the 1850 census for the town of Warwick, in Kent County, as a manufacturer.



55. "Obituary – William E. Pierce." *Providence Journal*, October 25, 1889, 3.
56. Cole, *History of Washington and Kent Counties*, 415. The Lafayette Mill originally was known as the North Kingstown Cotton Factory. Cole, *History of Washington and Kent Counties*, 405.
57. Cole, *History of Washington and Kent Counties*, 416.
58. Cole, *History of Washington and Kent Counties*, 406.
59. Lynn Downey, "Patent Riveted Clothing." In *Levi Strauss: The Man Who Gave Blue Jeans to the World*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016, 127.
60. Cole, *History of Washington and Kent Counties*, 416.
61. Barbara M. Starke. "A Mini View of the Microenvironment of Slaves and Freed Blacks Living in the Virginia and Maryland Areas from the 17th through the 19th Centuries." *Negro History Bulletin* 41, no. 5, 1978, 879.
62. Christy Clark-Pujara, "The Legacies of Enslavement." In *Dark Work: The Business of Slavery in Rhode Island*, 86–109. New York: NYU Press, 2016, 90.
63. Christy Clark-Pujara, "The Business of Slavery and Anti-slavery Sentiment: The Case of Rowland Gibson Hazard — An Antislavery "Negro Cloth" Dealer." In *Rhode Island History Journal*, 71, no. 2, Summer-Fall 2013, 35–56.
64. Besides the men who are mentioned in the 1850 *Products of Industry* and are identified as manufacturers in the 1850 census, there also are Euclid Chadsey, George A. Davis, William D. Greene, William Holloway, Oliver Kenyon, Elisha Kenyon, George C. Sanford, and Daniel Wall. Due to a scarcity of additional records, it is not always clear in which industry they would have been involved. George A. Davis was related to the Davis family that operated the Davis Mill, but the historic records do not tell us what his role was. William Holloway also is mentioned as the master of the Newport packet sloop *Resolution*, and in 1870 his profession is listed as an acid manufacturer. Oliver Kenyon is mentioned as the operator of the Oak Hill Mill in 1868, which was a woolen mill that around 1865 had belonged to William E. Pierce. George C. Sanford was the second oldest son of Joseph C. Sanford. He is not mentioned together with his two brothers as an agent of his

father's old mill. According to the 1860 census, he lived in Warren and worked in a cotton mill, and by 1870, he had moved to Providence and his profession is listed as a clerk in a railroad office. Daniel Wall's profession is listed as "manufacturer tin & sheet iron ware."

65. One explanation could be a combination of the accuracy of the person providing the information at the time of the census and the arbitrariness of the census taker. In 1850, for instance, Robert Rodman is identified as a merchant, but in 1860 as a manufacturer. In the 1870 census, he is identified more specifically as a woolen manufacturer, and in 1880, he is simply listed as working in a woolen mill.

66. We know there are inconsistencies between the federal census and other official records since the *Products of Industry* for 1850 lists 196 people working in the textile mills.

67. The wage and time book is held in special collections of the North Kingstown Free Library, covers the period from 1845 to ca. 1856, and relates to the Silver Spring Mill or the Narragansett Mill.

68. The youngest was Alonzo Bicknell, age 12. George N. Hammond (16) and George W. Gardner (17) are identified as spinners. James Kenyon (16) is listed as a student but also shows up in the 1850 wage book. William Bicknell (17) also shows up in the wage book but is listed as a farmer on the 1850 census.

69. Charles W. Calomiris and Larry Schweikart. "The Panic of 1857: Origins, Transmission, and Containment." *The Journal of Economic History*, vol. 51, no. 4 (1991): 807–34.

70. "Suspension of Labor." *Manufacturers' and Farmers' Journal*, December 24, 1857, p. 4.

71. "Mortgagee's Sale." *Manufacturers' and Farmers' Journal*, August 26, 1852, p. 3. "Seine Twine Mill Burned." *Providence Journal*, October 3, 1889, p. 8, and "Disastrous Fire at Belleville." *Narragansett Times*, October 4, 1889, p. 3.

72. Cole, *History of Washington and Kent Counties*, 404.

73. "Supreme Court." *Providence Journal*, August 25, 1855, p. 2.

74. "Supreme Court." *Providence Journal*, August 26, 1856, p. 2. See also Samuel Ames, *Reports of Cases Argued and Determined*

*in the Supreme Court of Rhode Island*, Providence, RI, 1902, 55–64.

75. "Woolen Mill To Be Let." *Manufacturers' and Farmers' Journal*, October 21, 1858, p. 2.

76. J. R. Cole described Walter B. Chapin as a general and noted that during the war the mill produced army blankets. Cole, *History of Washington and Kent Counties*, 416. According to the 1860 federal census, Chapin lived in Providence with his family, where his profession was listed as manufacturer.

77. Two of the other more common professions included seventy-five people who identified as a mariner and twenty-six laborers.

78. George A. Davis was still listed as a manufacturer on the 1860 census.

79. George Roame's last name is spelled Rome in the 1860 census.

80. Iris Saunders Podea. "Quebec to 'Little Canada': The Coming of the French Canadians to New England in the Nineteenth Century." *The New England Quarterly*, vol. 23, no. 3 (1950): 365–80.

81. George Brown Tindall and David E Shi. *America: A Narrative History*. Vol. 1. New York: W. W. Norton, 1999, 520–524.

82. "Seine Twine Mill burned." *Providence Journal*, October 3, 1889, p. 8.

83. North Kingstown, Town Clerk, Land Records. Book 33B, pp. 577–579.

84. Rhode Island State Archives, Providence, Rhode Island, *Products of Industry*, 1860.

85. "Wanted Immediately." *Providence Journal*, December 17, 1861, p. 3.

86. North Kingstown, Town Clerk, Land Records. Book 33B, pp. 762–764.

87. Doeskin can refer to a medium-weight wool fabric with a tightly woven structure, which made it more durable, or a finer quality of jeans. See William Henry Baker, *A dictionary of men's wear: embracing all the terms (so far as could be gathered) used in the men's wear trades . . . with an appendix containing sundry useful tables: the uniforms of "ancient and honorable" independent mili-*

*tary companies of the U.S.; charts of correct dress, livery, and so forth*. Cleveland, OH: The Britton Printing Company, 1908.

88. The "Children and youth" who were part of the workforce were younger than fifteen for the females and younger than sixteen for the males.

89. "State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations." *Manufacturers' and Farmers' Journal*. January 27, 1868, p. 2.

90. Cole, *History of Washington and Kent Counties*, 416.

91. Cole, *History of Washington and Kent Counties*, 405. John Peter Campbell (1843–1927) also was involved in the Oriental Manufacturing Company in Providence and the Campbell Mill in Westerly. See *Fibre & Fabric: A Record of American Textile Industries in the Cotton and Woolen Trade*, Volume 32, 1900, 116.

92. Cole, *History of Washington and Kent Counties*, 405.

93. "Building in Rhode Island." *Manufacturers' and Farmers' Journal*, December 28, 1865, p. 1.

94. William Holloway is identified as an acid manufacturer and James Eldred as a manufacturer of jewelry. The other men were Crawford Allen, Alonzo F. Crombe, Albert F. Ellsworth (he was the son of Alexander A. Ellsworth), Albert S. Reynolds (in the 1880 census listed as a wool manufacturer), and Albert Rodman (one of Robert Rodman's sons).

95. Joe Carlen. "Captains of the Revolution." In *A Brief History of Entrepreneurship: The Pioneers, Profiteers, and Racketeers Who Shaped Our World*, 143–63. New York; Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press, 2016, 158–160.

96. "North Kingstown." *Providence Journal*, October 6, 1874, p. 1.

97. "For Sale." *Providence Journal*, June 3, 1875, p. 4.

98. North Kingstown, Town Clerk, Land Records. Book 36, p. 547.

99. "Dissolution." *Providence Evening Press*, May 7, 1873, p. 1.

100. Helena Wright. "Insurance Mapping and Industrial Archeology." *IA. The Journal of the Society for Industrial Archeology*, vol. 9, no. 1 (1983): 1.

101. Helena Wright. "Insurance Mapping and Industrial Archeol-



ogy.” *IA. The Journal of the Society for Industrial Archeology*, vol. 9, no. 1 (1983): 2.

102. North Kingstown, Town Clerk, Land Records. Book 36, p. 590.

103. Charles G. Langham. “Economic Census of the United States: Historical Development.” In *Working Paper 38*, Bureau of the Census, 1973, 4.

104. Langham. “Economic Census of the United States: Historical Development.” 6.

105. This is based on research done at the Rhode Island State Archives in Providence. Only Schedule 3 for the manufacturers survives, which for North Kingstown reported on a wheelwright, blacksmiths, a tin and coppersmith, and boot and shoe factories.

106. Edward Atkinson, “Report on the Cotton Manufacturers in the United States,” in *Report on the Manufactures of the United States at the Tenth Census (June 1, 1880)*, Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1883, 15.

107. Massachusetts (175), Rhode Island (115), Connecticut (82), New Hampshire (30), Maine (24), and Vermont (7). North Carolina had the greatest number (49) of cotton manufacturers in the South.

108. George William Bond, “Report on Wool Manufacture in All Its Branches,” in *Report on the Manufactures of the United States at the Tenth Census (June 1, 1880)*, Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1883, 4.

109. Cole, *History of Washington and Kent Counties*, 400.

110. “Seine Twine Mill burned.” *Providence Journal*, October 3, 1889, p. 8, “Disastrous Fire at Belleville.” *Narragansett Times*, October 4, 1889, p. 3.

111. September 2021.

112. “Obituary—William E. Pierce.” *Providence Journal*. October 25, 1889, p. 3.

113. Kellee Blake. “‘First in the Path of the Firemen,’ The Fate of the 1890 Population Census, Part 1.” In *Prologue Magazine*. Spring 1996, 28, no. 1. Genealogy Notes. <https://www.archives.gov/pub->

[lications/prologue/1996/spring/1890-census-1.html](https://www.archives.gov/pub-), accessed June 11, 2020.

114. State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, *Fourth Annual Report of the Commissioner of Industrial Statistics: Made of the General Assembly at Its January Session, 1891*, Providence, RI: E. L. Freeman & Son, 1891.

115. Census Bulletin No. 237. “Manufacturers—The Cotton Industry.” Washington, DC, October 14, 1892, 4.

116. Census Bulletin No. 169. “Statistic of Manufacturers—The Wool Industry.” Washington, DC, March 8, 1892, 4.

117. This was only one more than recorded in the 1890 census.

118. J. Ellery Hudson. *Thirteenth Annual Report of Inspections of Factories, Mercantile Establishments, and Workshops from January 1st, 1906 to January 1st, 1907*, 1907.

119. This may have been the Gregory Woolen Mill.

120. J. Ellery Hudson. *Thirteenth Annual Report of Inspections*.

121. F. A. Westbrook Jr. “Hamilton Web Company,” in *Textile Age*, October 1944. According to Westbrook’s article, the main building was demolished at the outbreak of World War I, whereas a newspaper article from 1944 suggests it was not demolished until 1925. “A Mill That Is No More.” *The Standard*, June 22, 1944, p. 1.

122. “A Mill That Is No More.” *The Standard*, June 22, 1944, p. 1.

123. Robert W. Dunn and Jack Hardy. *Labor and Textiles: A Study of Cotton and Wool Manufacturing*. New York: International Publishers, 1930.

124. “North Kingstown Is Hit By Slump.” *Providence Journal*, October 13, 1936, p. 22.

125. “Plant Auction Closes 104-Year Rodman Textile Co. Regime.” *Providence Journal*, November 26, 1952, p. 1.

126. “Investigation Set on Fire at Belleville Mill.” *Providence Journal*, March 7, 1969, p. 25.

127. Several authors have looked at strikes in Rhode Island. Gary Kulik. “Pawtucket Village and the Strike of 1824: The Origins of Class Conflict in Rhode Island.” *Radical History Review* 1978, no. 17 (1978): 5–38. James Findlay. “The Great Textile Strike of 1934:

Illuminating Rhode Island History in the Thirties.” *Rhode Island History* 42, no. 1 (1983): 17–29. Carl Gersuny. “A Unionless General Strike: The Rhode Island Ten-Hour Movement of 1873.” *Rhode Island History* 54, no. 1 (1996): 21–32.

128. Of the brothers, William Congdon Sanford (1794–1882) is listed as a carpenter and a wheelwright, and Peleg Clarke Sanford (1812–90) as a carpenter and a building mover. Of Joseph C.’s children, Albert Sanford (1817/8–99) initially follows in his father’s

footsteps but ultimately moves to Providence, where he works in an insurance office and eventually joins the police. George C. Sanford (1820–84), also ends up moving to Providence to work for the railroad, as does his younger brother Samuel P. Sanford (1825–75/81/95), who ends up being an agent for the Hartford Providence & Fishkill Railroad.

129. “Obituary—Ezbon Sanford.” *Providence Journal*, August 25, 1903, p. 2.