

# The Historic Mills of North Andover:



## Local History at a Glance

The mills at North Andover altered the history of the town forever. Beginning with the Scholfield Mill in 1802, North Andover grew to become one of many leading textile equipment manufacturers in Massachusetts. By the nineteenth century, four sites stood along Cochichewick Brook to facilitate the growth of the North Parish's (incorporated as North Andover in 1855) woolen textile industry. During this period, the Stevens, later renamed Osgood, and Sutton Mills produced woolen textiles, while the Davis and Furber Machine Shop produced the machinery deployed in the manufacturing of those textiles. In the 1860s, Davis and Furber undertook rapid expansion as a result of the immense growth of the woolen industry during the Civil War period. In the backdrop of the war, the American woolen industry remarkably doubled in size. Even into the twentieth century, the companies located at the Cochichewick Brook sites provided North Andover with a formidable industrial business as well as a principal employer.



#### **Scholfield Mill (1802)**

.The Scholfield/Sutton Mills are believed to be the oldest continuous woolen manufactory in the country

.The Scholfield's/Sutton Mills was the first woolen mill in North Andover

.The mill was built in 1802 on Cochichewick by James Scholfield, originally consisting of a small building that stored a carding machine as well as a dwelling house which contained spinning jacks and looms operated entirely by man power

.Early on the mill manufactured broadcloth which was one of the first fabrics

made throughout the New England mills

.In the early days of the mill, the spinning, carding and weaving were done mostly by the James Scholfield family

.The Scholfield's carding machine used at Sutton is said to be the third carding machine ever operated in the United States

.William Sutton began to operate the mill in 1826



#### **Stevens Mill (1813)**

.The idea for Stevens Mill began in 1813 with the creation of a partnership between Captain Nathaniel Stevens, Dr. Joseph Kittredge, and Josiah Munroe

.Manufacturing at Stevens Mill likely began in 1814

.Before 1814, a woolen building was added to the site along with a gristmill that had been there previously

.It is likely broadcloth was the initial product of the mill

.In the period 1815-1816, Stevens Mill produced satinet, "mixed satinet", blanketing, and flannel

.Stevens Mill became one of the first manufactures in the nation to produce flannel

.In the early years, Nathaniel Stevens and Company owned the mill building and the water privilege. It employed the workers who carded, spun, and wove the wool on the mills first floor. The unique partnership of Hosmer and Worcester scoured and dyed wool for the Stevens company as well as dressing and finishing the mill's woven cloth. A cotton spinner reportedly rented the second floor of the mill, where he made the cotton yarns that were eventually sold to Stevens and his partners for use as wraps

.Stevens Mill became a fully integrated factory system around 1830

.Beginning in 1831, Steven's Mill would run as a successful family business for 120 years

In 1830 and 1846 brick additions to the 1813 mill building were put up. The timber walls to the original structure were completely rebuilt as brick as well

.By 1850, the mill employed forty-six operatives. Thirty men and sixteen woman worked on six sets of woolen-manufacturing machinery

.In 1887-88, a four-story, flat-roofed brick mill building replaced the brick addition of 1846. Twelve sets of carding machines were later installed, which allowed the mill to more than double their current output of product

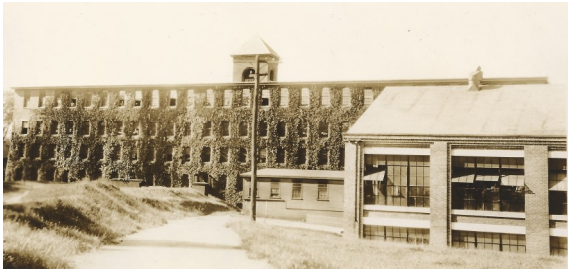
.By the late 1880s, the mill owned fifteen tenement buildings

.Philips pasture was purchased in 1888 by M.T Stevens and Sons to build more company housing

.After the purchase, a number of Shingle-Style houses were built in the pasture

.By the 1930s the Steven's family owned a vast set of 8 separate mill complexes in four different states

.In 1946 the firm of Stevens and Sons merged with J.P. Stevens and Company to consolidate the business



#### Sutton's Mills (1826)

.By 1826, Sutton Mills had moved their manufacturing operations into a substantial wooden mill building. This became an effort by William Sutton to modernize the mill

.Until 1846 the mill contained a three-story wooden building for the use of flannels

.In the 1840s, Sutton built six double houses

.In 1850, Sutton Mill employed sixty-seven operatives who produced nearly four hundred yards of flannel annually

.In 1875, the mill was producing 4000 yards of flannel each day

.Sutton Mill was owned by the Sutton family for an extended period of time

.The Mill Was originally built to be a clothing mill

.By the time James Scholfield sold the mill, it had two machines that carded wool

.The Sutton Mill was officially sold to the Ames Textile Corporation in 1958



#### North Andover Mills/Osgood Mill (1822)

.The founder of Osgood Mill was Dr. Joseph Kittredge

.Kittredge acquired the mill in 1822 at which time an eighteenth-century gristmill stood as the only device on the site

.Within three years the gristmill was joined by a new two-a-half-story stone factory building

. In 1828, Kittredge built a stone-faced dam on the mills site

.The construction of a three-story brick woolen mill was finished and put into operation in 1839. To complete the construction Kittredge formed the North Andover Mill Company, with Eben Sutton and George Hodges

.By the 1840's the mill company owned ten dwelling houses that were used for the workers

. In 1844, the brick mill was joined by a stone warehouse erected in 1844 that still exists in an altered state today

. After Kittredge died sole ownership of the mill was turned over to Eben Sutton in 1847

.By midcentury, the North Andover Mill was the largest of three flannel mills on the Cochichewick. It employed seventy-five operators in the annual production of six hundred thousand yards of flannel

While ownership of the mill was given over to Eben Sutton, manufacturing operations continued to be run by George Hodges and his sons

- .In 1893, a four-story extension was built on the eastern end of the main mill
- .When the company was purchased by M.T. Stevens (1899) the mills were renamed "Osgood Mills."
- .1909, Osgood Mill switched from flannel to worsted manufacturing
- .After 1946, Osgood Mill continued to run as a woolen operation for another twenty years



### **Davis and Furber Machine Shop (1836)**

.The origin of Davis & Furber was the 1828 shop of Sawyer, Phelps & Company. Sawyer & Phelps were originally from the South Parish but needed the increased power afforded by Cochichewick Brook.

.Eight years after it was established, the Sawyer & Phelps machine shop had a 30 man operation. Ownership of the shop resided in the hands of George H. Gilbert and Parker Richardson. The machine shop had also developed an extensive market for woolen machinery, particularly throughout northern New England

- . In 1836, Gilbert and Richardson leased a more suitable mill site on Cochichewick Brook, the former site suffered from an insufficient supply of water power
- . At the time, the mill site was owned by Isaac Osgood and contained a sawmill and an gristmill
- . Along with the site, Gilbert and Richardson purchased a 7 acre pasture located below Osgood's dam, which would house the new shop building
- .Owing to the national "panic of 1837" and the declining health of Mr. Richardson, the partnership of Barnes, Gilbert, and Richardson was dissolved in 1841. As a result, the entire machine-shop property was put on the auction block
- .After being re-purchased by Isaac Osgood, Osgood leased the shop property to George H. Gilbert, who was a previous owner of the shop. George L. Davis, the nephew of George Gilbert was officially taken in as a partner
- .As members of the partnership left, George L. Davis became the acknowledged leader of the firm, which resulted in the adoption of the name Davis & Furber in 1851.
- .In 1860, Davis and Furber constructed a steam powered Brick Block. With over thirty thousand square feet of space, the Brick Block building illustrates the dramatic growth of the company's business during the period 1835-1860 due to the tremendous growth in the woolen industry
- .The labor force of 30-40 workers in 1835 increased to over 100 in 1860. After that, the labor force exploded to 350 during the Civil War
- .By 1866, Davis & Furber owned 43 residential buildings
- .In 1882, over 900 people worked at the Davis & Furber Machine Company
- .After 1882, the Davis and & Furber Machine Company converted from a partnership to a privately held cooperation. George L Davis became Treasure and Managing Director
- .George L Davis was succeeded in the same role by his son George Gilbert Davis
- .Upon shutting down in 1981, Davis & Furber was the last of the four great textile enterprises in North Andover