

## LOOKING AT THE ERA OF INDUSTRIAL GROWTH: 1820-1920

(Editor's note: The Newmarket Service Club is the sponsor of "Newmarket Revisited" a component in the downtown revitalization/ historic preservation project being carried out with the assistance of The Thoresen Group, planning consultants in Portsmouth, N.H. The history that follows, prepared by Richard Candee, architectural historian, traces the period of rapid expansion of Newmarket between 1820-1920 when the Town was dominated by the Newmarket Manufacturing Company. It will give readers a better understanding of how the present structure of the community came to be, and it provides a foundation for planning the revitalization of the community.)

The village about the first falls of the Lamprey River has been the site of human occupation stretching back before European settlement in the 1620's. By the 1650's the river's water power was being used to drive sawmills, and the virgin forest gave way to a dispersed agricultural population. Farm, lumbering, shipbuilding and fishing were the major economic activities before and after the American Revolution.

The history of Newmarket's first two centuries can only be read today.<sup>1</sup> What remains is only to be found in buildings and cellar holes scattered along the older roads which led to the Lamprey River Village. Of that older community itself there are few remnants. But, beginning in 1822, Newmarket's third century can be "read" in the evolution of factories, homes, shops and institutions built for or stimulated by the growth of the Newmarket Manufacturing Company.

The creation of a corporation to develop waterpower sites for the production of cotton or other textiles was unique to Newmarket.

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1. For the earlier history of Newmarket, read: Lamprey River Village: The Early Years by Sylvia Fitts Getchell, and Old Newmarket by Nellie Palmer George.

In the same decade were formed the parent industries of Nashua, Dover and Somersworth, for example. But, where these each were formed by New Hampshire entrepreneurs backed by Boston merchants, the Newmarket Manufacturing Company was largely founded on the profits of Salem's Clipper trade. Unlike Newmarket, those Boston-financed corporations grew too fast, were reorganized or went bankrupt, and their management fell into the hands of the better capitalized and experienced Boston investors who developed Lowell, Massachusetts.

Newmarket's measured growth and smaller scale may reflect, in part, the remarkable continuity in the mills' ownership and management. In 1883 one writer noted that of its 28 original stockholders, "twenty-one now hold, with their families and descendants, over two thirds of the capital stock." Of some thirty men who served as officers or directors of the company before the Civil War, the vast majority were linked by marriage or business association with the Salem merchant-shipping firm of Pickman, Silsbee & Stone.

Salem not only provided the capital for the company's building campaigns, and reaped the profits of its labor force, but provided all but one of the factory Agents before 1879. These Salem men played the most active role in the physical growth of the community, not only supervising the construction of the mills and factory housing, but in the creation of streets and building lots forming the skeleton of the town's plan. Most of these Agents were stockholders and retired to Salem. Two became Treasurers of the corporation, then a position of even greater responsibility than the President.

Just as fire has destroyed many of the early town records, the Great Boston Fire of 1873 is said to have burned many of the early

town records, the Great Boston Fire of 1873 is said to have burned many of the early papers of the corporation. From what remains, however, one can document the parallel growth of the company and the privately owned buildings of the village. Two major periods of construction and rebuilding divide this century into nearly equal periods. The first (1820-1869) saw the building of the first four stone mills, early corporation houses, public and religious institutions as well as many homes and business blocks.

The second saw the rebuilding of shops and houses after an 1866 fire in the southern part of the community, new and larger business blocks along Main Street, Victorian structures for a new school and library, and a new home for Roman Catholic worship. The construction of two new mills in 1881 and 1892 not only stimulated local businessmen to rebuild their commercial buildings across Main Street in matching brick exteriors, it brought changes in the ethnic composition of the town which were reinforced by the even larger industrial buildings built in the first two decades of the twentieth century.

From the added distance of another half century, these products of Newmarket's architectural evolution form the historical record of its industrial and community development. Each period has its own stylistic character, preferences in building materials, design and decorative embellishment which it shares with the buildings of Portsmouth, Dover and other towns of this region built at the same time. The early nineteenth century preference for stone construction in mills, houses, and public buildings, on the other hand, is nearly unique to Newmarket in the seacoast area. Studying company construction and private building during both major periods of growth best serves

to illustrate the intertwined economic relationships that created the town's center as we know it today.

The Newmarket Manufacturing Co. 1822-1869

The system of cotton textile production and corporate organization established in Newmarket in the 1820's was based upon the practices developed between 1813 and 1820 by the Boston Manufacturing Company at Waltham, Massachusetts. Before the Waltham experiment, New England cotton mills were based on the English system of factory spinning and home weaving, family labor employing mostly women and their children, and irregular payment in credit at a company store.

The introduction of water-powered weaving at Waltham not only systematized the production of cloth within the mill, it saw the use of single, teen-age or older, "mill girls" paid cash wages. The industrial labor of young, unmarried Yankee farm women quickly led to the establishment of the symbol of this system, the company boarding house which was rented by a family (often widows) who contracted to take in boarders at rates set by the company who had built the houses.

This "Waltham system" required higher capitalization than the older system which was provided by the legal incorporation (with limited liability) and the sale of stocks. The high return on Waltham stock in its first years made urban merchants of many seaport towns consider buying the patent rights to the Waltham technology and investing some of their shipping profits in the creation of Waltham-like industrial communities. The largest number of these were located in southern New Hampshire during the 1820's by local promoters who acquired

land and water privileges, helped insure incorporation in the state legislature, and often took salaries as agent for the absentee management. As agents they successfully erected factories, boarding houses and related corporate buildings and uniformly failed in their management of production. In this respect, the career of the Dover Quaker Stephen Hanson - first agent of the Newmarket Manufacturing Company (hereafter the NMC) - is typical.

The two non-Salem backers of the new company which bought up the land about the Lamprey River falls in 1823 were Daniel M. Durell and Stephen Hanson. Durell, a Dover lawyer and past Chief Justice of the Circuit Court, lent his name as president of the company and saw to the passage of incorporation by the state legislature. His involvement was brief; after 1823 his name is not found among the Directors, nor did he continue to own stock.

Hanson, on the other hand, seems to have had some knowledge of cotton manufacturing. He had an earlier cotton mill where the Sawyers Falls factories were later built in Dover. After his brief tenure as Agent in Newmarket, he became the first "building agent" for the Exeter Manufacturing Company begun in 1827. He became agent of the NMC slightly a month after the company was incorporated for a yearly salary of \$600 plus board while on the job. Hanson managed the local affairs of the company during those years which saw the construction of the first two mills and the creation of a new street plan.

He also began building 2-story boarding houses on the south side of Elm Street and four 1½-story double cottages opposite. These wooden houses, and others built by his successors, were of a type originally developed in Dover. While most examples in other mill

towns have disappeared, some of Newmarket's were later moved to new sites on Washington and Lincoln Streets.

The oldest photograph of Mill Number 1, which was begun in 1823 and completed in 1824, clearly shows its derivation from the Waltham factories. Before it suffered later alterations, the attic was lighted by a clerestory monitor known as a "double roof" with a bell cupola centered on the roof top. Each of these features, as well as the overall size of the mill, could be found in the 1822 Dover Mill No. 1 (a documented copy of the third Waltham mill).

The Newmarket Directors may have voted to copy the Dover factory just as the Directors of the Great Falls company in Somersworth would do a few years later. The most significant difference was the substitution of stone for brick. Brick characterized the factories in the Waltham system, while stone was more common in southern New England. This conscious choice, which cost the stockholders over \$1,000 more than brick would have, set the pattern for the company's building during the first period.

Mill Number 2 was built of coursed granite in 1825, although it burned and was rebuilt in 1857. A third stone mill on the other side of the river was begun in 1827 although not furnished with machinery until 1829. By 1832 these three mills contained a total of 13,824 spindles (slightly less than the maximum potential of three Waltham-type mills), employed nearly 60 men and 613 women, and produced over 2,250,000 yards of cloth averaging ten cents a yard.

Because of the number of new cotton factories which were built in southern New Hampshire in the early 1820's, there was great competition for able female workers. Stephen Hanson seems to have attempted a

raid on the employees of the Dover Manufacturing Company (recorded in depositions taken by that company) in 1825. When the Dover managers objected to Hanson or his overseer visiting their mills for this purpose, one Newmarket overseer stated, "he had been in the Factory, but he did not stop long enough to hire any of the girls," as he could "get all of them at the Boarding Houses".

The 'gentle Quaker' Hanson, indicated to some Dover mill girls that they would lose their reputation there as "all kinds of characters were employed at the Factory and all kinds of practices carried on at the Boarding House." To others he stated that "we should be so well satisfied at Newmarket that we should never want to go back to Dover" and that he "was going to have some nice women from Newburyport & Salem to keep the Boarding Houses, who knew how to cook and treat Company and if we did not like them we might board where we pleased."

Opposite the mill yard on Main Street the company supplemented its wooden boarding houses with two long brick houses in the late 1820's, perhaps based on similar ones put up in Somersworth in 1824. On the hill by the bridge the company built a brick house for its Agent, from which he might keep a paternal eye on both the mills and their employees. As Hanson kept his own home in Dover, this may have been built for his successor, Stephen A. Chase, a relative of one of the original Salem stockholders.

Chase completed the third mill and put it into operation with the constant advise of the directors. Their correspondence, preserved from 1827-29 in a letterbook of the N. H. Historical Society, shows their daily concern for the smallest detail of building and production. Chase was assisted by Benjamin Wheatland, an early Director who became

Agent during the 1830's until 1846. Wheatland then returned to Salem and served as Treasurer for several years.

The best known of the Salem-born Agents, however, was Capt. John Webster. Starting as a seaman and then master on ships owned by Pickman, Silsbee & Stone, he came to Newmarket in 1834 as their clerk, paymaster, and "outside agent". In the latter role he was in charge of all shipping, which used packets or gundalows of about 19 ton capacity between the town landing and Portsmouth. In 1834 thirty foot keel boats with ten foot beam, rigged with a lanteen sail and of greater tonnage for passengers and freight, were added.

During the first decade the company also operated a store, first at the top of Water Street and after 1826 in one of the stores in the Brooks Block on Main Street. After Webster discontinued the practice, local merchants no longer faced competition with the company.

In 1846 Webster succeeded Wheatland as Agent. The next few years saw the first of several cyclical industry-wide business depressions. Rapid and extensive increase in new manufacturing capability in towns like Lowell and Manchester swamped the market with goods. By 1848 "low prices and slow sale of goods" forced the Newmarket management to reduce wages and close Mill Number 2 while also reducing the cost of board in their houses. The company had also donated land on which the town had erected the Town Hall in 1847. With the depression of 1848, voters in outlying areas claimed the town had been financially reckless by erecting that building. Town meeting broke out in brawls and ended without voting money for schools, which in time were closed too.



One result of the depression was an 1850 investigation of the company's financial condition reported to the stockholders. The Committee conducting the investigation concluded that except for the exertions of the directors and agents, the insufficient water supply (increased with a new reservoir in 1840 and supplemented with a steam engine in 1846), the high cost of buildings and machinery, and the lack of active capital, should have caused bankruptcy in the 1830's. Their recommendations included a temporary work stoppage, financial reorganization, and improved accounting.

On the committee of investigation was Samuel Lawrence of Lowell and Boston, a founder of Lawrence, treasurer of the Bay State Mills, and organizer of the Merrimack Water Power Association which dammed that river below Lowell. This Boston merchant-industrialist was elected to the Newmarket Manufacturing Company Board of Directors in 1851 and served until 1857, a year that financial panic closed many of Boston's leading mercantile houses, including his own.

In 1855 Webster moved to Salem to become Treasurer of the company, a job he held until 1882. He was replaced by the last Salem-born Agent, Col. George W. Frost, who served-except for a year during the Civil War - until 1879. During his tenure Mill Number 2 was rebuilt to its present appearance after a fire in 1857. In 1869 Mill Number 4, the last stone factory, was built opposite the rebuilt mill along Main Street.

Private, Public, and Institutional Building: 1822-1869

In the first decade of the mills' existence a number of substantial new homes, businesses and public buildings were built along Main Street

and the newly laid out Chapel, Church and Exeter Streets. Among the earliest may be the Hotel Willey, perhaps the pre-existing home of A.W.Doe purchased by Dr. George W. Kittridge in 1828. Under several names (Rundlett Inn, Washington House, and Silver's Hotel) the 3-story Federal building was enlarged with a one, and then a two-story portico, dormers, and extensive rear ells.

Multi-Purpose Masonry Buildings: While the mills were of stone, two company houses at the north end of Main Street had been built of brick by the late 1820's. Benjamin Brooks, a master mechanic in Mill Number 1, built a 3½-story brick "block" (a large multi-purpose structure) to their south in 1826. The stores on the ground floor soon contained the company store, the second story was the Brooks residence, and on the third was a hall for the Masonic Lodge. About the same time a narrow lot beside the Hotel Wiley was filled by a 12 foot wide brick house with fan shaped windows over the door and in the attic gable, occupied in 1830 by Miss Charlotte Murray as a millinery shop.

During the 1830's and '40's a number of handsome masonry buildings dotted Main Street, transforming the southern end of the village. The largest of these was a four-part brick building known as the Creighton Block, which occupied the present site of the American Legion. Designed by schoolmaster Tasker for James B. Creighton and partners, it was 4-stories in the rear and 3-stories on Main Street. It was 100 feet long and 40 feet wide with a notable "gothic" rounded brick corner. Also missing today is the brick tavern, built by Benjamin Tuttle in 1847 along side the Town Hall (also built in 1847). Here for many years the NMC Directors held an annual meeting of the company.

Less massive, but of equal interest, is the brick building across the street whose first floor shop-fronts are composed of solid granite piers and lintels forming the openings of its doors and windows with granite ashlar at the corners. Next door a small 2-story rubble stone house with its gable facing Exeter Street can be compared to a larger multi-family dwelling across the street. Rough cut quoins of granite frame their corners, while granite lintels above the doors and windows provide the only other decoration. Also of this period is the large 3½-story commercial building at the corner of Chapel and Main Street. It shares many features in common with the "Brooks Block", although it is slightly wider.

Most of the commercial and domestic buildings of this period, however, were of wood. Among the earliest is the Tasker house, a small cape cod on Chapel Street.

In 1831 what had formerly been Lovering's orchard was subdivided and offered for sale by the NMC. Within a year, a road had been laid out and a few houses erected. Numbers 11 and 23 Exeter Street on the east side appear on a map of that year, as does the Benjamin Watson house (later the Creighton house and Congregational Parsonage) across the street. Each is a center-entry house with rooms on either side of a hallway heated by internal chimnies. These earliest homes on Exeter Street have much in common with late Federal style houses in Portsmouth and Dover of the same date.

However, the large houses (14, 18 and 20 Exeter St.) built for Benjamin Tuttle, Vincent Torr and Ephriam Day adopted more contemporary finish for the same basic house form. The doorway of the Tuttle House and the upper window trim of the Torr house are typical details

associated with more formal Greek Revival designs. These houses of the 1830's may be compared with others, like 3, 5, and 7 Church Street which continue the same style into the 1850's and 60's.

Other buildings of the 1830's and '40's like the house next to the skinny brick shop on Main Street and Griffin's hardware store at the corner of Main and Exeter, where J. S. Bennett moved his tin and hardware business in 1847, contain other elements of Greek Revival style. Deep cornices of pedimented gables in imitation of Greek Temples and wide corner pilasters on the former Central House (19 Central Street) were all part of the mid-19th Century builder's architectural vocabulary.

Public and Institutional Structures: By 1857 the NMC had given land for three streets, an equal number of schools and churches, the Town Hall and a fire engine house. These share many of the same architectural features found on domestic and commercial buildings of the same decades.

The earliest surviving church, originally Congregational, was built at the corner of Main and Water Streets in 1829. It shares with other late Federal churches of the region a history of later enlargement and alteration. On the ridge of Zion's Hill the 1832 Universalist Meetinghouse employed local rubble masonry and was decorated only with a plain stone cornice and gothic arched window openings. Somewhat more utilitarian in design is the 1841 stone schoolhouse next door.

By the 1840's the continued use of stone walls was gradually giving way to brick. Unlike stone, brick could be used to create the decorative features carpenters were using to embellish wooden buildings.

The brick banding below the cornice of the 1847 Town Hall and the original corner pilasters illustrate this treatment. After the 1848 Somersworth School Act, permitting towns to form high schools, similar brickwork was used in the building of a new school (now the fire department). Across the street, the small 2-story fire engine house, built on land donated by the NMC in 1853, replicated these basic features of Greek Revival building in wood.

Despite three local fire companies and the help of neighboring towns, the Great Fire of 1866 destroyed many wooden buildings around the depot where it began and on Main and Water Streets. While some have been rapidly replaced, other lots remained empty for several years. This alteration of the townscape, combined with the 1869 construction of the last stone factory, mark the end of the first phase of the community's growth.

#### Rebuilding and New Construction: 1870-1920

A second phase of mill building began under Ambrose Nichols, the first agent to rise through the ranks of cotton mill employment, who became Agent here in 1879. Over the next 25 years he built 23 new double-tenement houses, three new factories, and installed new power and lighting systems. Mill No. 5 was built in 1886 and enlarged by No. 6 in 1892. Mill No. 7, built in 1901, occupied an irregularly shaped lot in front of Mill No. 3. All three were of brick and No. 5 was the first to be devoted entirely to weaving.

The construction of nearly two dozen double family houses in this era suggests the changes in labor which had accompanied the growth of the region's textile industry. Poor economic conditions in the 1849's

and '50's which caused the closing of some mills led management to seek lower wages generally. Elsewhere Yankee mill-girls tried to fight this change; others left and were replaced by Irish spinners and weavers. Since the 1820's there had always been some Irish families in Newmarket. However it was not until 1865 that there was a sufficient number of Catholics to purchase the old Stone Meetinghouse on Zion's Hill and convert it to a Catholic Church. By the time the first of the brick mills was in operation the company had begun hiring large numbers of French-Canadians. In 1887, when the old dam "went out" and closed the mills, a Dover paper reported, "A large portion of the operatives are French". In 1892 the Newmarket Advertiser reported that there were 478 French Canadian children under 21 (400 being between age 5 and 15) in town.

Like all mills in New England, the company reverted to family labor and the new houses on Nichols Avenue (called Canada Street in 1880's maps) reflect this change. When St. Mary's Church was built in 1898, the old stone church became a French speaking parochial school and the stone schoolhouse was made an English one to meet the spiritual and social needs of the parish. As the factories continued to grow, the town population was further increased by new emigrants from eastern Europe and elsewhere. In one brief month of 1891, for example, the newspaper noted the arrival of two large families of Russian Jews.

Though the largest, the mills were not Newmarket's only employers. B. F. Haley & Co. employed 500 in the manufacture of military uniforms and clothing toward the end of the century. Besides wholesale cloths they offered custom tailoring, as did C. V. Doe (inventor of a

patented clothes hanger). Moreover there were several ready-made clothing stores, dry goods merchants, and milliners along Main Street. W. W. Durrell, successor to Benjamin Haley in 1880, sold dry goods and furniture from Creighton's New Block, the large 3-story wooden building at the corner of Water Street. This later Greek Revival store is just one of many new stores erected in the 1870's and '80's, including the smaller wooden shops beside it and across the street. Also of this period is the 1873 Masonic Block, marked by a plaque on the gable end of the lodge's third story hall. B. S. Kingman's drug and jewelry store occupied the first floor; a printing office was on the second.

Fraternal organizations played a prominent role in the life of local business and professional men as well as NMC management. The Odd Fellows occupied the old Masonic Hall in the Brooks Block, and the G.A.R. and K. or P. the 2nd and 3rd floors above Frank Durgin's grocery. This 1894 building is one of a number of brick commercial blocks which replaced older wooden buildings across the new mills. The earliest of these is the Bennett Block south of the Hotel Willey. Originally planned with a third story meeting hall, this architect-designed Victorian structure was built in 1891. In January 1892 part of the gable end of the new building collapsed, injuring a passer-by and damaging the brick sidewalk below. Behind the plate glass windows was E. P. Pinkham's boot and shoe store, one of several such businesses in town.

Such new building was not the only way the appearance of Main Street was altered in the last quarter of the century. Relocation and rebuilding of older shops played an important role as well. In

1849 a small store, owned by "W. Cheswell" in 1817, was moved across Main Street. It became a law office, then a music studio, Sanders grocery, and with later additions and a new false front, Matthew Kennedy's grocery and shoe store.

At the corner of Main and Central Streets was a one story barber shop purchased by Dr. Samuel Greene in 1892. He extended the first floor and added a second story with bay window, which explains why the upper floor overhangs the first. When a new Methodist Church was erected in 1872 next to the Haley clothing business, where the post office stands today, the old Branscomb tavern was moved next to the Brooks Block. Refurbished for a grocery and bakery, it soon fell into its old ways and lived out the century as one of several pool halls and saloons.

Such places were often denegated by some, but they were undoubtedly important to the working men and to the politician. For many years the town was nearly equally divided between Republicans and Democrats; money and drinks were freely used at election time. In fact, druggist Alvah Place won distinction in 1907 for getting both parties "to suppress the illegal use of money or any form of bribery at elections."

Besides the renovation and rebuilding of businesses, and the continuing addition of private homes to the village, two noteworthy public buildings were erected after the Civil War. The steady growth of the town can be seen in the need for a new and larger school less than twenty-five years after the first brick high school was built. This lofty 1874 Victorian edifice, sited on the southeast side of Zion's Hill, clustered public and private education in this corner of town.



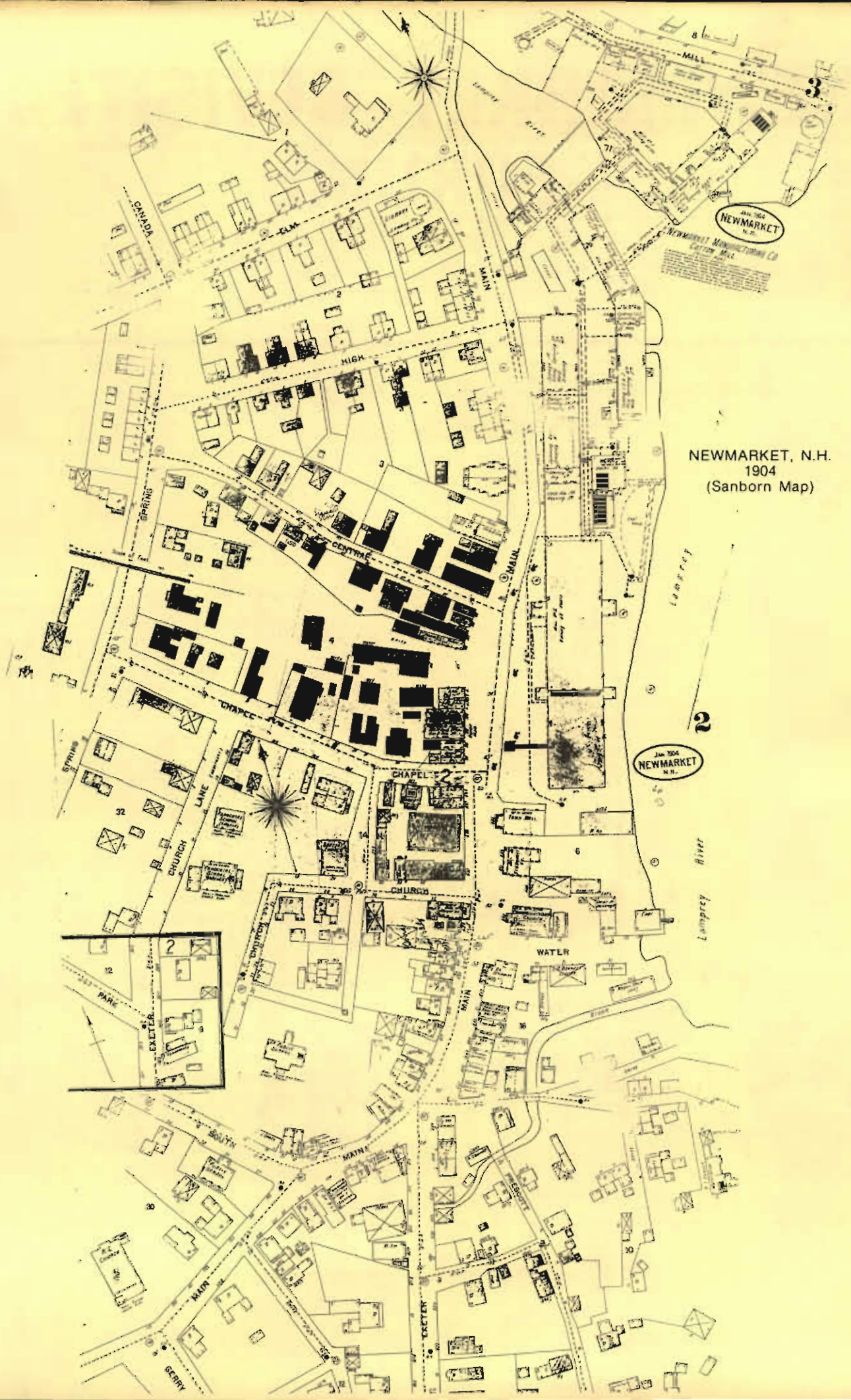
At the opposite end, the gift of \$17,000 from Capt. John Webster in the 1880's for land "on which to erect a library for the employees of the Newmarket Manufacturing Company", resulted in the handsome Victorian library and octagonal reading room at the corner of Elm and Main Street. Webster's will, probated in 1892, left another \$10,000 in trust for the library which was named John Webster Hall.

One last expansion of the mills which resulted in a major revision of the town plan was the removal of the first boarding houses and tenements on Elm, High, and Central Streets. Here, by closing High Street, the company created land for the construction of an enormous new weave shed. Many of the older structures, as noted earlier, were relocated on Washington and Lincoln Street and Elm Court, but the 1820's brick houses were destroyed. In this period, too, Mills No. 4 and 5 were joined by a modern concrete structure which unified the industrial facade along Main Street.

With minor exceptions, these buildings were the final contribution to the townscape in the century that the Newmarket Manufacturing Company dominated the economic life of the community. Since 1920 the trauma of the strike, the closing of the mills, followed by the effects on local building of the Great Depression and World War II, the visual appearance of Newmarket froze. Despite subsequent losses and more modern replacement buildings, the village retains a greater concentration of its 19th Century industrial, commercial, public and domestic architecture than the larger mill towns founded at the same time. Its architecture still speaks of the unique combination of

industrial and commercial investment which created it. With the contemporary concerns of historians and industrial archaeologists for documenting not only the distant past, but the history of our own industrial society, Newmarket has become a valuable historical artifact.

This project is funded in part by grants from the New Hampshire Council for the Humanities, an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the New Hampshire Charitable Fund, the Cummings Foundation, the Cecil Howard Trust, and by donations to the Newmarket Service Club.



NEWMARKET, N.H.  
1904  
(Sanborn Map)

JAN 1904  
NEWMARKET  
N.H.

2

3

Lamprey River

Lamprey River

CANADA

ELM

HIGH

CENTRAL

CHAPEL

CHAPEL

CHURCH

WATER

EXETER PARK

SOUTH

MAIN

MAIN

GERRY

SWAIN

EXETER



# NEWMARKET REVISITED

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(1820 - 1920)

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Newmarket, c. 1898,  
Looking across Lamprey River toward Zion's Hill

The village about the first falls of the Lamprey River has been the site of human occupation stretching back before European settlement in the 1620's. Of that older community there are few remnants.<sup>1</sup> But, beginning in 1822, Newmarket's third century can be "read" in the evolution of factories, homes, shops and institutions built for or stimulated by the growth of the Newmarket Manufacturing Company.

The development of waterpower sites for cotton factories was not unique to Newmarket. Whereas Nashua, Dover, and Somersworth were formed by New Hampshire entrepreneurs backed by Boston merchants, the Newmarket Manufacturing Company (NMC) was largely founded on the profits of Salem's Clipper trade.

Newmarket's measured growth and smaller scale may reflect the remarkable continuity in the mills' ownership. In 1883 one writer noted that of its 28 original stockholders, "twenty-one now hold, with their families and descendants, over two thirds of the capital stock." Of some thirty men who served as officers or directors of the company before the Civil War, the vast majority were linked by marriage or business association with the Salem merchant-shiping firm of Pickman, Silsbee & Stone.

Salem also provided all but one of the factory Agents before 1879. These Salem men played the most active role in the physical growth of the community, not only supervising the construction of the mills and factory housing, but in the creation

of streets and building lots forming the skeleton of the town's plan.

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Hanson owned an earlier cotton mill in Dover and was the "building agent" for the Exeter Manufacturing Company after 1827. He became agent of the NMC in 1823 for a yearly salary of \$600 and oversaw the construction of the first two mills and the creation of a new street plan.



Newmarket Manufacturing Company,  
1822 Mill No. 1 (left) and 1825 Mill No. 2 (right), rebuilt in 1857

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Opposite the mill yard on Main Street the company supplemented its wooden boarding houses with two long brick houses in the late 1820s (since destroyed). On the hill by the bridge the company built a brick house for its Agent, from which he might keep a paternal eye on both the mills and their employees. As Stephen Hanson kept his own home in Dover, this may have been built for his successor, Stephen A. Chase, whose family was among the original Salem stockholders.



Elm Street at Main.  
Company Houses and Webster Library (left),  
Agent's House and "Canada Street" (right), after 1880

Chase completed the third mill and put it into operation with the constant advice of the directors. He was assisted by Benjamin Wheatland, an early Director who became Agent during the 1830's until 1846 when he returned to Salem to serve as Treasurer.

The best known of the Salem-born Agents, however, was Capt. John Webster. Starting as a seaman and then master on Pickman, Silsbee & Stone ships, he came to Newmarket in 1834 as their clerk, paymaster, and "outside agent". He was in charge of all shipping on packets or gunboats between the town landing and Portsmouth. In 1834 thirty foot keel boats with ten foot beam of greater tonnage were added.

In 1846 Webster succeeded Wheatland as Agent. The next few years saw several industry-wide business depressions. Rapid and extensive increase of manufacturing in towns like Lowell and Manchester swamped the textile market. By 1848 "low prices and slow sale of goods" forced the Newmarket management to reduce wages, close Mill Number 2, and reduce the cost of board in their houses.

One result of the depression was an 1850 investigation of the company's financial condition. The investigating committee noted the company might have gone bankrupt in the 1830s. Insufficient water supply (increased with a new reservoir in 1840 and supplemented with a steam engine in 1846), the high cost of buildings and machinery, and the lack of capital had only been off-set by effective management.

In 1855 Webster moved to Salem to become Treasurer until 1882. He was replaced by the last Salem-born Agent, Col. George W. Frost, who served - except for a year during the Civil

War - until 1879. During his tenure, Mill Number 2 was rebuilt to its present appearance after an 1857 fire. In 1869 Mill Number 4, the last stone factory, was built along Main Street.

#### Private, Public and Institutional Building: 1822-69

In the first decade of the mills' existence a number of substantial new homes, businesses and public buildings were built along Main Street and the newly laid out Chapel, Church and Exeter Streets. Among the earliest may be the Hotel Willey (1828). Under several names (Rundlett Inn, Washington House, and Silver's Hotel) the 3-story Federal building was enlarged with a one, then a two-story porch, dormers, and extensive rear ell.



Creighton Block (1826) corner of Main & Creighton Street,  
1936 Photo. (SPNEA)

*Multi-Purpose Masonry Buildings.* While the mills were of stone, by the late 1820s two company houses at the north end of Main Street were built of brick. In 1826 Benjamin Brooks, a master mechanic in Mill Number 1, built a 3½ story brick "block", a large multi-purpose structure, now known as the Ritchie Building. The stores on the ground floor contained the company store, the second story was the Brooks residence, and on the third was a hall for the Masonic Lodge. About the same time a narrow lot beside the Hotel Willey was filled by a 12 foot wide brick house with fan shaped windows over the door and in the attic gable, occupied in 1830 by Miss Charlotte Murray as a millinery shop.

During the 1830s and '40s a number of handsome masonry buildings along Main Street transformed the southern end of the village. The largest of these was a four-part brick building known as the Creighton Block, which occupied the present site of the American Legion. Built for James B. Creighton and others, it was 4 stories in the rear, 3 stories on Main Street, 100' long and 40' wide, with a notable "gothic" rounded brick corner. Also missing today is the brick tavern, built by Benjamin Tuttle in 1847 beside the Town Hall (also 1847). Here for many years the NMC Directors held an annual meeting of the company.

Less massive, but of equal interest, is the Lamprey Tavern on Main Street, with first floor shop-fronts of solid granite piers and lintels forming its openings and granite ashlar at the corners. Next door the 2-story rubble stone house with its gable facing Exeter Street can be compared to a larger multi-family dwelling across the street. Rough cut quoins of granite frame their corners, while granite lintels above the doors and windows provide the only other decoration. The large 3½-story commercial building at the corner of Chapel and Main Streets (formerly the Newmarket Bank) shares many features in common with the "Brooks Block" of the same period.

*Domestic Buildings.* Most of the domestic building, however, was of wood. Among the earliest is the Tasker house, a small cape cod on Chapel Street. In 1831 what had formerly been Lovering's orchard was subdivided and offered for sale by the NMC. By 1832 two new houses were built on the east side of Exeter Street and the old Congregational Parsonage opposite. Each is a center-entry house with rooms on either side of a hallway heated by internal chimneys, with much in common with late Federal style houses in Portsmouth and Dover.

However, three large houses on the west side of Exeter Street adopted more contemporary finish for the same basic house form. Their doorways and the window trim are typical details of the Greek Revival style. These houses of the 1830s may be compared with others, like some on Church Street which continued this style into the 1850s and 60s.

Other buildings of the 1830s and '40s like the house next door to the skinny brick shop on Main Street and Griffin's hardware store at the corner of Main and Exeter, where J.S. Bennett moved his tin and hardware business in 1847, contain other elements of Greek Revival style. Deep cornices of pedimented gables in imitation of Greek temples and wide corner pilasters on the former Central House (19 Central Street) were all part of the mid-19th Century builder's architectural vocabulary.

**Public and Institutional Structures.** By 1857 the NMC had given land for three streets, an equal number of schools and churches, the Town Hall and a fire engine house. These show many of the same architectural features found on domestic buildings.



Two c. 1830 buildings west side of Main Street,  
Photo, c. 1865-1880

The Congregational church was built in 1829 and shares with other Federal churches a history of later enlargement and alteration. On the ridge of Zion's Hill the 1832 Universalist Meetinghouse employed local rubble masonry decorated by a plain stone cornice and gothic arched windows. Like the 1841 stone schoolhouse next door, it has lost its original wooden cupola.

By the 1840s the continued use of stone was gradually giving way to brick, which could be used to create the decorative features carpenters were using to embellish wooden buildings. The brick banding below the cornice of the 1847 Town Hall and the original corner pilasters illustrate this treatment. After the 1848 Sommersworth School Act, permitting towns to form high schools, similar brickwork was used in the building of a new school (now the fire department). Across the street, the small 2-story fire engine house, built on land donated by the NMC in 1853, replicated these basic features of Greek Revival building in wood.

Despite three local fire companies and the help of neighboring towns, the Great Fire of 1866 destroyed many wooden buildings near the RR depot, where it began, and on Main and Water Street. While some may have been rapidly replaced, other lots remained empty for several years. This change in the townscape, combined with the 1869 construction of the last stone factory, mark the end of the first phase of the community's growth.

#### Rebuilding and New Construction: 1870-1920

A second phase of mill building began under Ambrose Nichols who became Agent in 1879. Over the next 25 years he built 23 new double-tenement houses, three new brick factories, and installed new power and lighting systems. Mill Number 5 was built for weaving in 1880-1 and enlarged by Number 6 in 1892. Mill Number 7, built in 1901, occupies an irregularly shaped lot in front of Mill Number 3.

The construction of nearly two dozen double family houses in this era suggests the changes in labor which had accompanied the growth of the region's textile industry. Poor economic conditions in the 1840s and '50s, which caused the closing of some mills, led management to offer lower wages generally. Elsewhere Yankee mill-girls tried to fight this change; some left and were replaced with Irish spinners and weavers. Since the 1820s there had always been Irish families in Newmarket, but it was not until 1865 that the old Stone Meetinghouse on Zion's Hill was converted to a Catholic Church.

By the time the first of the brick mills was in operation, the company had begun hiring large numbers of French-Canadians. In 1887, when the old dam "went out" and closed the mills a Dover paper reported, "A large portion of the operatives are

French". In 1892 the *Newmarket Advertiser* reported that there were 478 French Canadian children under 21 (400 being age 5 to 15).

Like all mills in New England, the company reverted to family housing. Those on Nichols Avenue (called Canada Street on 1880's maps) reflect this change. When St. Mary's Church was built in 1898, the old stone church became an English speaking parochial school and the stone schoolhouse was made a French one. As the factories continued to grow, the town population was further increased by new emigrants from eastern Europe and elsewhere. In one month of 1891, for example, the newspaper noted the arrival of two large families of Russian Jews.

Though the largest, the mills were not Newmarket's only employers. B. F. Haley & Co. employed 500 in the manufacture of military uniforms and clothing toward the end of the century. Moreover there were several ready-made clothing stores, dry goods merchants, and milliners along Main Street. W. W. Durrell, successor to Benjamin Haley in 1880, sold dry goods and furniture from Creighton's New Block, the large 3-story wooden building at the corner of Water and Main Street. This later Greek Revival store is just one of several erected in the 1870s and '80s, including the smaller wooden shops beside it and across the street. Also of this period is the 1873 Masonic Block, marked by a plaque on the gable end of the lodge's third story hall. Jamuel Greene's drug and Kingman's Jewelry stores occupied the first floor; a printing office was on the second.

Fraternal organizations played a prominent role in the life of local business and professional men as well as NMC management. The Odd Fellows took over the old Masonic Hall in the Brooks Block; the G.A.R. and K. of P. occupied floors above Frank Durqin's grocery. This 1894 building is one of a number of



Main Street, 1900:  
Newmarket Bank, Methodist Church (1892),  
Durgin Block (1894) and Bennett Block (1891)

brick stores which replaced older wooden buildings across from the new mills. The earliest of these is the Bennett Block south of the Hotel Willey. Originally planned with a third story meeting hall, this architect-designed Victorian structure was built in 1891. In January 1892 part of the gable end of the new building collapsed, injuring a passerby and damaging the brick sidewalk below. Behind the plate glass widows was E. P. Pinkham's boot and shoe store, one of several such shops in town.

New building was not the only way the appearance of Main Street was altered; relocation and rebuilding of older shops played an important role as well. In 1849 a small early store was moved across Main Street. It became a law office, a music studio, and with later additions and a new false front, first Sander's, then Kennedy's grocery and shoe store.

At the corner of Main and Central Streets was a one story barber shop purchased by Dr. Samuel Greene in 1892. He extended the first floor and added a second story with bay window, which explains why the upper floor overhangs the first. When a new Methodist Church was erected in 1872 next to the Haley clothing business (where the post office stands today) the old Branscomb tavern was moved next to the Brooks Block. Refurbished for a grocery and bakery, it soon fell into its old ways and lived out the century as one of several pool halls and saloons.

Besides the renovation and rebuilding of businesses, and the continuing addition of private homes to the village, two noteworthy public buildings were erected after the Civil War. The steady growth of the town can be seen in the need for a larger school, an 1874 Victorian edifice sited on the southeast side of Zion's Hill. A gift of \$17,000 from Capt. John Webster in the 1880s

continued on page 6

# NEWMARKET REVISITED FORUMS

The Newmarket Service Club, a non-profit, non-partisan community service organization interested in the betterment of the Town, is the sponsor of "Newmarket Revisited" and a broader historic preservation and downtown revitalization programs. Concerned with the many vacant stores and deteriorating conditions in the downtown, the Club decided to make community revitalization one of its priorities.

To help with the program, the Service Club secured the assistance of a professional planning firm, The Thoresen Group of Portsmouth, N.H., to help in securing grants and in preparing the historic preservation and downtown revitalization plans. As an important part of the planning process, the Service Club wants to encourage broad citizen awareness and participation in the development of the plans. Therefore, as part of the process, the Club will hold three public forums, entitled "Newmarket Revisited" to encourage citizen interest and participation.

The three forums are based on the historical development of the community. The first forum, April 19, will discuss Newmarket's history, particularly the industrialization period of the 19th and 20th Centuries. The session, led by Dr. Richard Candee, an architectural historian, will be illustrated with slides. It will describe how the physical character of today was shaped by the past development.

The second forum, May 3, will focus on the community's values — what is important to the citizens. Those in attendance will be asked to give their preferences through an interesting

visual presentation and rating sheet. The session will be conducted by Dr. Charles Bolian, an anthropologist.

The third forum, May 24, will focus on the future direction of the community. Here again the audience will be asked to express their views on what is important for the community to achieve. Discussion of alternative approaches will be conducted by urban planner, Robert Thoresen.

From these forums and from the research data gathered during the project, a series of recommendations will be made by the consultants for consideration by the Newmarket Service Club. The Club hopes then to encourage broader town involvement in order to implement the recommendations for revitalizing the town center.

The Town Library now has a reading list with books on reserve about Newmarket and the industrial development of mill towns. A movable display about Newmarket is now being prepared by The Thoresen Group. Organizations which would like to show the display should contact The Service Club.

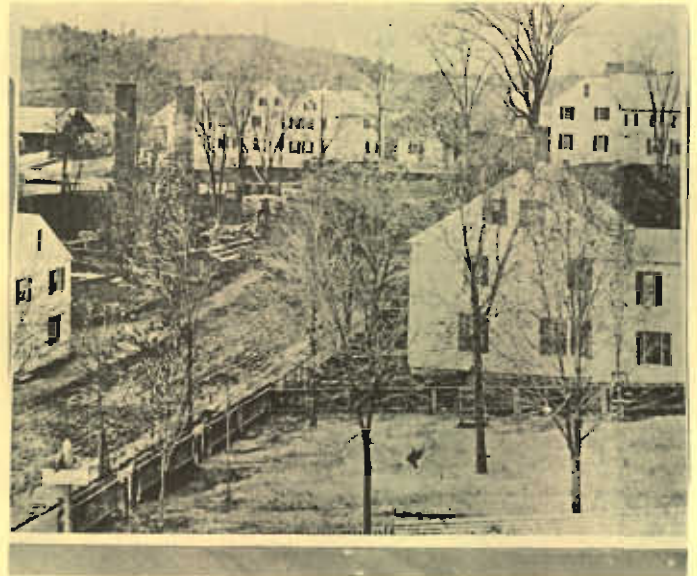
The Revitalization Committee of the Newmarket Service Club is coordinating this program. Members include:

Laurence Beauchesne, Patti Blanchette, Rev. Philip Bruni, Richard Gallant, David Halloran, *President*, Richard LaBranche, Wilfred LaPorte, Gary Mongeon, David Moore, Peg Plumer, *Fiscal Agent*, Michael Provost, *Coordinator*, Rolf Voltaire, and John Ward.

Contact them for further information on the project.



Do you recognize the areas of Newmarket in these pictures? Attend the Forums to find out!



This project is funded in part by grants from the New Hampshire Council for the Humanities, an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the New Hampshire Charitable Fund, the Cummings Foundation, the Cecil Howard Trust, and by donations to the Newmarket Service Club.



Kennedy Boots, Shoes and Groceries, photo c. 1900

for land "on which to erect a library for the employees of the Newmarket Manufacturing Company", resulted in the handsome Victorian library and octagonal reading room at the corner of Elm and Main Street.

One last expansion of the mills resulted in a major revision of the town plan. High Street was closed and the first boarding houses and tenements on Elm, High, and Central Streets were removed to allow the construction of an enormous new weave shed. Many of the older structures were relocated on Washington and Lincoln Street and Elm Court, but the 1820s brick houses were destroyed. In this period, too, Mills No. 4 and 5 were joined by a concrete link which unified the industrial facade along Main Street.



Main Looking North Toward High Street Housing

With minor exceptions, these buildings were the final contribution to the town scape in the century that the Newmarket Manufacturing Company dominated the economic life of the community. Since 1920, the trauma of the strike and closing of the mills, followed by the effects on local building of the Great Depression and World War II, the visual appearance of Newmarket froze. Despite subsequent losses and modern replacement buildings, the town retains a greater concentration of its 19th Century industrial, commercial, public and domestic architecture than the larger mill towns founded at the same time. Its architecture still speaks of the unique combination of industrial and commercial investment which created it. For historians and industrial archeologists concerned with not only the distant past but the history of our own industrial society, Newmarket has become a valuable historical artifact.

Corrections:

Photo 2: for "1822" read "1823"

Photo 4: Creighton Block (c. 1840)

Pg. 3, Col. 2, line 6-8: Although maps indicate the stone school was a Catholic school, 1890's papers and older residents show it continued in public use. The stone church became a parochial school until St. Mary's School was built in 1910. A Polish school also existed near Central and Spring Streets.

Pg. 4, Col. 2, line 24: for "Jamuel" read "Samuel"



Main Street 1866-1870.  
Town Hall before tower, Newmarket House,  
Congregational Church, 1866 fire site.

**Newmarket Service Club**  
Newmarket, New Hampshire

TO: