

# RIVER MILLS

## MONOHANSETT MILL 23

A 1,000'-long canal formerly ran parallel along the east bank of the Quinebaug River before taking a wide bend to rejoin the river. At this bend - on this site - in 1868, Thomas Harris of Providence built a 4-story, mansard-roofed brick mill, about 200' x 55' with central stair tower. Pairs of round-headed windows set in flat dormers light the attic. On the three lower floors the windows have projecting segmental-arch lintels and brick sills. In 1872, the Monohansett Manufacturing Co. moved in and ran 280 looms and employed 175 people in the production of 2.75 million yards of cotton sheetings and shirtings annually. The canal has since been paved over.

## CARGILL FALLS MILL 36

On this site, Benjamin Cargill operated a grist mill originally built in 1730, adding a distillery and other shops in 1760. The Pomfret Manufacturing Company later built the Pomfret Cotton Mills to produce textile products in 1807; it is the oldest such site in the nation. The 4-story squared stone mill west of the detached hip-roofed office building is the oldest standing factory building (c. 1823) in the valley. A stone mill was added in the mid-1840s with 3-stories; the original gable roof has been flattened and the cupola removed. In 1850, these mills contained 4,260 spindles and 105 looms worked by 60 males and 45 females. A 3-story brick mill was added in 1856 and the office building and 3-story mansard-roofed brick mill in 1869.

## MORSE MILL 42

Constructed by Stonemason Lafayette Waters in 1846, this 4 1/2-story mill has a gable roof and central stair tower. Granite slabs frame the freight openings in the tower with granite used for lintels, sills and quoins. At its north end, a large 2-story wing is attached with a brick third story added later. The 360 horsepower dam across the Quinebaug River was constructed in 1861 and shared with the Rhodes and Nightingale mills across the river. In 1870, the Morse Mill employed 52 men, 44 women, and 29 children to run 9,046 spindles and 274 looms in the manufacture of cotton sheetings. By 1889, Owner George M. Morse headed a new firm that controlled the mills on both sides of the river. Frame mill houses dating back to 1850 still stand along Church and Morse Streets. The house to the left was originally a store owned by the mill.

## RHODES MILL 45

This is the site of the first mill built on what was called the middle water privilege in Putnam. Cotton entrepreneurs, anxious to expand, purchased the water rights and built a masonry dam and mill in 1830. It burned down in 1841 and was replaced with the present structure, a 3 1/2-story brick mill, with clerestory window line at the topmost floor, stone sills and lintels, and a projecting hoist tower centered on an end wall. G. C. Nightingale and C. Allen bought the Rhodes Mill in 1850 to augment the Nightingale Mill next door. A frame wing, since demolished, connected the mills.

## NIGHTINGALE MILL 46

This 3 1/2-story mill has a gable roof, stone walls, central hoist tower, and sills, lintels and quoins of granite. A rubble-walled wing to the north, originally 2-story, later gained a third story in brick. Morse, who had built a cotton mill directly across the stream in 1846, pooled his holdings with Owners Nightingale and Allen. In 1861 this group built the 157' long, 18' high dam to serve the mills on both banks. Originally stone this dam has been substantially re-built in concrete. In 1870 Nightingale Mills employed 60 women, 59 men and 39 children producing sheetings and shirtings on 10,432 spindles and 205 looms.



## BELDING MILL 44

Originally known as the Powhattan Mill, this 1872 brick 4-story mill has segmental-arch windows with brick sill and mansard roof with round-headed dormers. Freight doors open to each level in the central hoist tower. Owner George Morse ran 20,000 spindles and 416 looms for cotton manufacture here in 1884. Viewed from the bridge, the 115'-long, 10'-high dam retains much masonry from its original construction, including an arched opening on the west side to drain the pond. The dam provided Powhattan with 15 1/2' head and 200 horsepower augmented by a steam plant behind the mill. The Belding-Corticelli Thread Company bought Powhattan in 1918 and operated it until its closing. East of the mill, along Powhattan and Mohegan Streets, stand 20 double-entry, wood frame, workers' dwellings also built in 1872.

## PUTNAM HIGH SCHOOL 38

Built by the town in 1874 at an expense of over \$20,000, this High Victorian Gothic structure served as Putnam's first high school and is among the oldest high school structures still remaining in the state. Dominated by two towers with steep pyramidal roofs, the tallest features a gabled clock stage, belfry and weathervane finial. Windows are segmental-arched on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor and round-arched above. It has polychrome brickwork, banding with special courses and elaborate corbelling at the cornice and tower. At the bases of the towers are shed roofs on Gothic braces with a trefoil design. Brick effects include window hoods with brick dentils, basketweave at window sills, and soldier courses near window tops and between stories. This building was converted to serve as Putnam's town hall.



## MORSE MANSION 39

This circa 1868 2 1/2-story brick Victorian Italianate villa-style home was built by textile magnate George Morse overlooking the Quinebaug River in sight of three of his mills. With the addition of wings, this building has been integrated into the provincial house of the Daughters of the Holy Spirit. The integrity of the original building remains and features a square tower with arched-top windows, bracketed cornices, and elaborate over-window treatments. Church Street has several examples of large Victorian Queen Anne-style homes with asymmetrical massing, variegated siding, towers, cut-away stories, complex roofs, and stained-glass windows.



## Putnam River Trail

This approximately 2-mile biking and walking trail begins at Arch Street and winds its way north along the eastern shore of the Quinebaug River. The trail runs adjacent to Kennedy Drive for about 2 miles before terminating at Providence Street. The path of the trail runs through woodlands, 2 parks, an antique shopping district, and near revitalized mills. Five historic exhibits are located along the trail commemorating Putnam's railroad history, textile mills, and founding citizens. The river's natural resources and The Great Flood of 1955 are highlighted as well. There are 3 bridges adjacent to the trail including a 200-foot pedestrian bridge built on the stone foundation of an old railroad trestle. Each bridge offers scenic views of the river.



## River Mills Heritage Trail

This approximately 1.1-mile biking and walking trail commemorates Putnam's link to the American Industrial Revolution. The trail overlaps two sections of the Putnam River Trail and begins on Kennedy Drive at the Monohansett Mill historical marker. Follow the brown trail directional signs as they bring you cross the Quinebaug River to the Cargill Falls Mill on Pomfret Street - the oldest cotton mill site in the nation (1807). Follow Church Street to the Morse Mansion and the original 1874 Putnam High School since converted to the Town Hall. Then back to the western bank of the Quinebaug River for views of mills across and up the river before coming upon the Morse Mill. On to Providence Street and its outstanding bridge views of mill dams and the prominent Belding/Powhatan Mill. Visit the display at Miller Park before returning to Kennedy Drive and the adjacent Rhodes and Nightingale Mills. Follow the Putnam River Trail back to parking, shops and restaurants.

information



For tourism information, go to [www.theeastgreenvalley.org](http://www.theeastgreenvalley.org) or visit the Quinebaug-Shetucket Heritage Corridor Office in the Belding Mill Building or call toll free at 866-363-7226.



For other information contact the Mayor's Office at 860-963-6800 or visit us on the web at: [www.putnamct.us](http://www.putnamct.us)