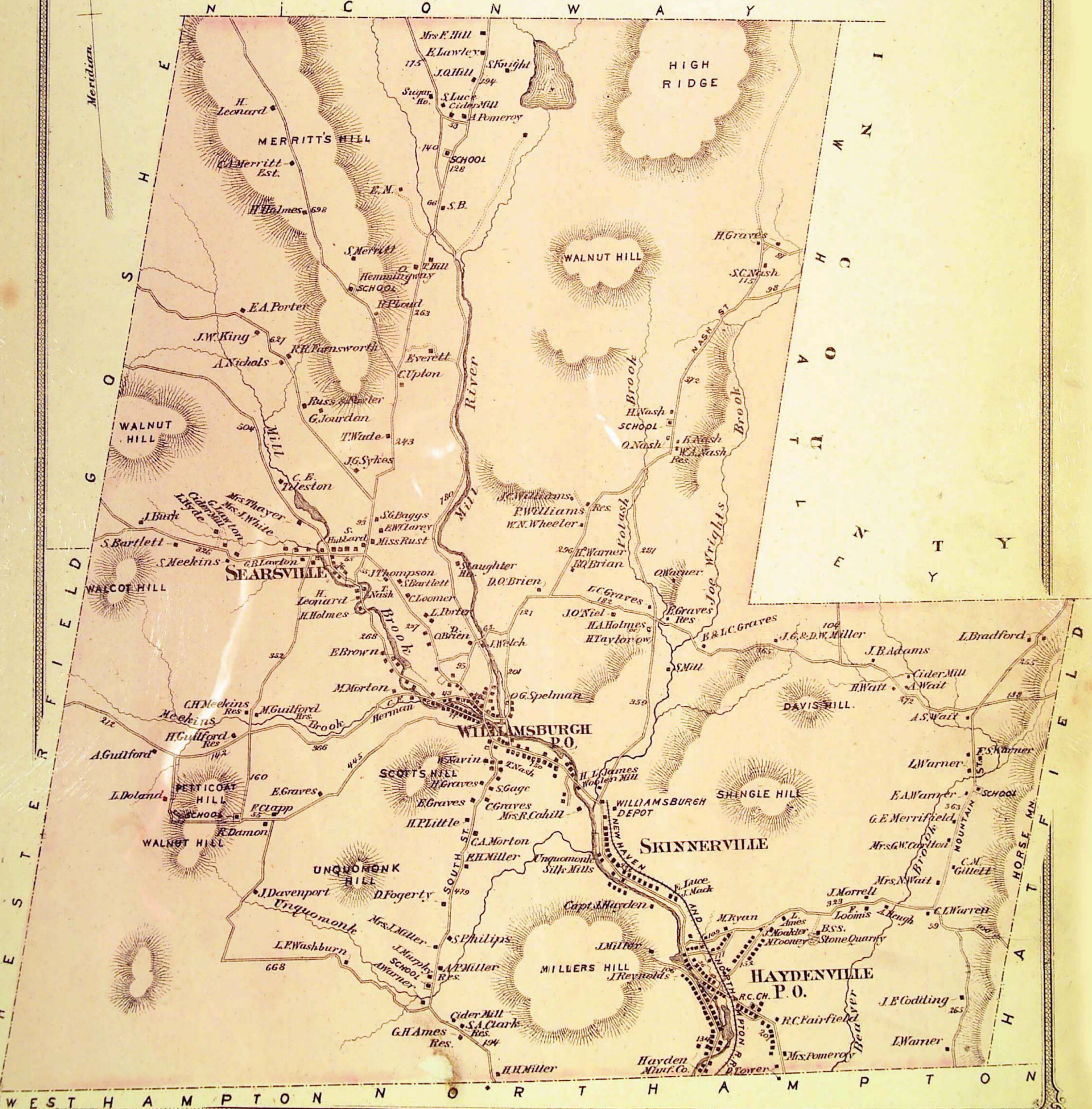


# WILLIAMSBURGH

Scale 160 Rods to the inch

F R A N K L I N C O N W A N Y K L





## THE HAYDENS – MANUFACTURERS IN HAYDENVILLE A VILLAGE OF WILLIAMSBURG

*Text and images collected by Ralmon Jon Black  
Williamsburg Historical Commission*

“The erection of the first mill for manufacturing purposes, in Haydenville, was commenced in 1809, by Daniel and David Hayden, (uncles of Joel and Josiah Hayden,) Seth Thompson, and Meletier Everett of Foxboro. This mill was of wood, two stories high, and 32 feet square. The proprietors put in 128 spindles, and commenced manufacturing cotton yarn. The building stood on the site of the present brass works. The mill was run from 1812 to 1818. At the time the mill was opened, cotton yarn was selling No. 16 at \$1 a pound, varying 4 cents a number. The present price is 25 cents for No. 16. During the war with Great Britain, the business was very flourishing, but on the conclusion of peace it gradually failed and the mill was in consequence closed, and remained in that condition from about 1818 to 1822, when Joel Hayden and James Congdon purchased the property, rebuilt the dam, made a new canal, repaired the building, and commenced the manufacture of power looms for weaving broadcloth.

**Power Looms.**  
**CONGDON, HAYDEN & CO.**  
**W**OULD inform those who are interested in manufacturing *Broad, Cassimere, Sattinet, Flannel or Cotton Cloths*, that they have now on hand, and are constantly making **Broad, Cassimere, Sattinet, Flannel & Cotton Power Looms**, at their Shop in Williamsburg, on a new and improved plan, which they feel warranted in saying are equalled by none. The numerous orders for Looms have induced them to enlarge their works, and they can now furnish either kind of the above Looms at short notice. The experience they have had in building and operating Looms has taught them, that the greatest defect in Power Looms is in their being too complicated. This they flatter themselves they have obviated by building them on an entire new and simple plan. All orders directed to *Congdon, Hayden & Co.* will be faithfully executed.  
P. S. Orders should be directed to be left at Northampton Post Office.  
Williamsburgh, Feb. 9. 59tf

Hampshire Gazette Wednesday July 12, 1826

“They continued that business until 1828. The style of the firm was Congdon & Hayden. In 1825, Guy Trumbull was admitted as a partner, and the name of the firm was changed to Congdon, Hayden & Co. Mr. Congdon withdrew in 1827, the style of the firm being Hayden, Trumbull & Co. At the time Mr. Trumbull was admitted to the business, the mill was enlarged to twice its original size, and various kinds of machinery were manufactured. Mr. Trumbull died in 1828, and was succeeded by Josiah Hayden, Jr. In 1831 Joel and Josiah Hayden commenced manufacturing Japanned buttons, tin buttons, button molds, and metal-shanked, lasting buttons, having previously manufactured door locks and harness trimmings. Early on Sunday morning, Nov. 4, 1832, the mill was entirely consumed by fire. It was insured for \$2500.”

“In the spring of 1833, the work of rebuilding was commenced. The building then erected is now the main portion of the present brick factory. It was 64 by 32 feet, three stories high. Two wings, two stories high, were added several years ago, which make the present length of the building 104 feet. On opening the new factory the Messrs. Hayden separated their business, both continuing. The manufacture of machinery was wholly given up at this time, and the button business was continued. Joel Hayden now commenced experimenting with pruned or lasting buttons by machinery—the same buttons as those now manufactured and called flexible shanked lasting buttons. The first of these buttons manufactured in this country were made at this factory at this time.

“The flexible buttons took the place of the sewed buttons then manufactured by Samuel Williston of Easthampton, and Messrs. Hayden and Williston made an arrangement by which the manufacture of buttons was carried on by them together. They employed about 200 hands, mostly females. This arrangement was continued until 1848, when Mr. Williston purchased Mr.

Hayden's interest and removed the business to Easthampton. [where Williston achieved great wealth, built a library and established Williston Seminary, now Williston-Northampton].

"In August, 1846, Joel Hayden and A.D. Sanders<sup>1</sup> commenced erecting a stone dam near the old saw-mill dam, about a third of a mile below the dam at the button factory; and in 1847 erected the present cotton factory. This mill is one of the finest in this section. It is four stories high, 132 feet long, 46 wide, and contains 4000 spindles. It turns out from eighteen to twenty thousand yards of sheeting a week. From 75 to 80 hands are employed. Stephen M. Crosby, Esq., (son-in-law of Joel Hayden,) is the active superintendent of the mill. Messrs. Hayden and Sanders retained the proprietorship until 1857, when an act of incorporation was obtained, under the name of the Hayden Manufacturing Company. Joel Hayden, Jr. took a portion of the stock, and the three persons here named now hold the entire stock. The goods sent from this mill have always ranked of the best quality in market.

"In 1847, the saw-mill erected by Messrs. Hayden & Sanders was converted into a factory for the manufacture of glazed sewing thread. This business is also carried on by the Hayden Manufacturing Company. Britton Richardson is the superintendent of this department. The thread here made is a decidedly superior article and has always been highly estimated in the markets.

"In January, 1851, Hayden & Sanders commenced the manufacture of plumber's goods on a small scale, occupying the button factory, which until this time had been unoccupied since the removal of the button business in 1848. This business, under judicious management, has greatly increased, and there are now employed in the establishment about 100 hands, all of whom are males. The firm consists of Messrs. Hayden and Sanders, Sereno Kingsley and Edward W. Gere<sup>2</sup>, its name being Hayden, Sanders & Co. They have a warehouse in New York, where the bulk of their goods are sent, and orders received, at the head of which is Mr. Gere. Connected with the warehouse in New York is an establishment for the manufacture and repair of the same kind of goods, where about 30 hands are employed. The growth of this business has been very rapid, and now this establishment is the largest and most extensive of its kind in the country. Its goods are beyond the reach of competition, and find their market in all sections of the United States as well as in Cuba and Canada.<sup>3</sup>

"The principal proprietors are men of large experience and well trained business faculties. Mr. Joel Hayden<sup>4</sup> has worked his way up from a boy in the cotton mill and an apprentice in a machine shop, to a position of wealth and influence. He served with Lemuel Pomeroy, gunsmith, in Pittsfield, from 1816 to 1821. He then worked as a journeyman machinist at Middletown, CT., and in 1822 commenced business for himself in Haydenville, with a cash capital of \$1500. He has ever been foremost in works of public improvement in the village and town; has served three years as Selectman of the town; was chosen in 1843 and 1844, at sharply contested elections, to represent the town in the Legislature; served two terms (six years) as a County Commissioner; has been a member of the Board of Overseers of Harvard College; a Bank Director, a Railroad Director, and often the candidate of his party (then in a minority) for Congress and the State Senate, and invariably received more votes than his associates. In all the positions

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<sup>1</sup> Albert D. Sanders/Saunders, b 15 Sep 1816, son of David and Amy (Wheeler) Saunders of Whately, the name was, apparently, changed or mistaken. He married 10/1839 at Wmsb. Jane E. Tileston .

<sup>2</sup> The three Gere brothers, sons of Eward & Arabella (Williams) Gere, born only a few hundred yards from Joel's birthplace, although thirty years younger than Joel, figured very much in Joel Hayden's industry. Henry S. Gere owned the newspaper Edward and Collins were partners in Hayden, Gere & Company.

<sup>3</sup> Sanders died in 1862 and the Hayden, Sanders & Co. then operated in the style of Hayden, Gere & Company. In 1885 a new company was organized under state law in the name of Haydenville Manufacturing Company.

<sup>4</sup> Born in 1798 on a farm in Williamsburg, he lived the first ten years or so in upstate New York where his father was missionary to the Indians.

in which he has been placed, he has discharged his duties in a manner creditable to himself and satisfactory to the public. He has numerous friends and wherever known is highly respected.<sup>5</sup>



KNOWLTON BROS. PHOTO



HAYDEN GERE & COMPANY

c. 1869

“Mr. Sanders, a native of Whately, was for several years a clerk in the drug store of J.P. Williston, in Northampton. He went to Haydenville in January, 1838, and on the opening of the store of J. & J. Hayden in November of that year, he took charge of their mercantile business. In the meantime he was employed as a clerk by Joel Hayden. He remained as principal manager of the mercantile business, several years, when he was transferred to the head of the financial department of the button works, and in 1846 joined Mr. Hayden in the manufacturing. In 1858, he was chosen to the Legislature from the 2<sup>d</sup> Representative District, but resigned that position at the close of the regular session, on account of pressing business engagements. He is accounted one of the most prudent and successful financial managers in Hampshire county.

“In 1833, on the erection of the brick factory, Josiah Hayden [III] commenced business alone, manufacturing Japanned buttons and button molds, using a part of this factory, and employing from 8 to 12 hands. This branch of business he continued until 1849. In 1839, he commenced manufacturing steel pens, with Andrew Adams of Middletown, Ct., as foreman. Mr. Adams remained with him about three years and then removed to Waterbury, Ct. His place as foreman was held by a Mr. Burke about two years, and in 1845, Mr. Hayden sold his interest in the business to Williston [Willisson] and Wm. E. Thayer of Williamsburg, who transferred the manufacture to that place. In the autumn of 1845, Rollin L. Dawson of Syracuse, N.Y., commenced with Mr. [Josiah] Hayden the manufacture of gold pens, and continued the business until March, 1848.

“In 1844, Mr. [Josiah] Hayden commenced the manufacture of horn buttons, erecting for this business the building now known as the “Pen Factory.” Mr. Hayden visited England in 1843 for the purpose of acquiring information respecting this business, and engaged there the services of a number of men having experience in this branch, among whom were A. P. Critchlow and John Tonncliff, now of Leeds, and Joseph B. Whitehouse of Florence. This business, although promising much at first, did not prove so successful as was anticipated. It was continued until 1849, at which time Mr. [Josiah] Hayden removed to South Boston, where he manufactured buttons

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<sup>5</sup> He was one of the original band of anti-slavery men, he published an abolitionist periodical in 1837. A member of the “Liberty Party Men.” Several times he ran as candidate of that party for Congress and the State Senate. He allied himself also with the cause of temperance. The year after the printing of this article, Joel Hayden served as a member of Governor Andrew’s Council, 1861-1862, and from 1863 to 1866 he had the honor of holding the office of Lieutenant-Governor to Governor Andrew of Massachusetts.



and various hardwood goods. He afterwards was in the iron and lumber business at Clinton, N.Y., about a year and a half, and in 1852 returned to Haydenville. Soon afterwards he commenced the manufacture of hardware at Columbus, Ohio, and in 1858 returned again to Haydenville. In 1859, he re-commenced business at Columbus, where he now resides. Mr. [Josiah] Hayden has ever been an active, industrious business man. As a local Methodist preacher he has been somewhat prominent, and for a long time was a leading and influential man in that denomination.”

“Joel and Josiah Hayden are names that have been and will long be familiar to the people of Haydenville. From its earliest prosperity they have been closely identified with its interests and have given to it much of its present wealth and good fame. As they sprang from among the laboring class, they have ever been in sympathy with those in their employ, and hence there has always existed among the residents of the village —employers and employees, farmers and laborers in all departments —the utmost cordiality of feeling. The interests of one class have ever been the interests of the whole.”



## DISASTER

As it came to pass, fourteen years after the *Hampshire Gazette* published the above article<sup>6</sup> and five years after Knowlton took the above photos, Lt. Gov. Joel Hayden died, and six months later, all the industries in Haydenville were swept away in the Great Flood of 1874 caused by the failed reservoir dam. All that remained was what C. Seaver, Jr. captured in this stereopticon.

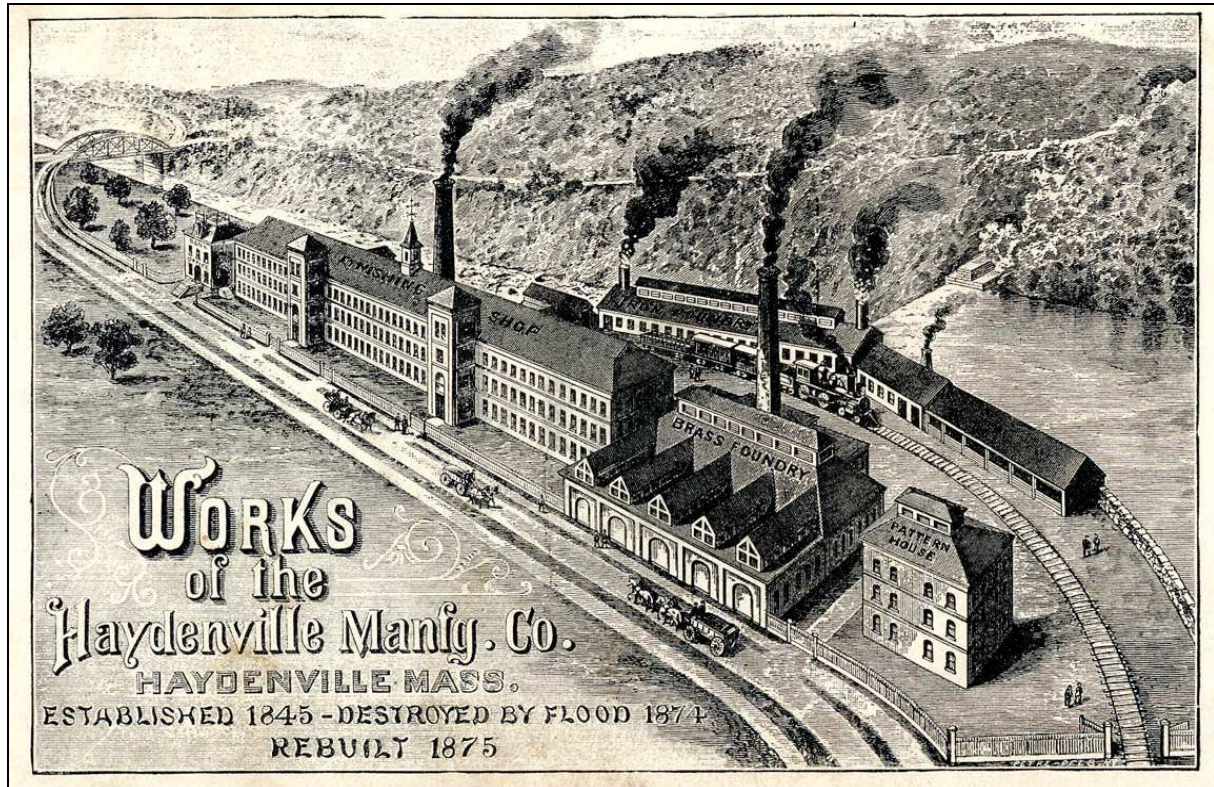


The story of the Disaster is a compelling one, and very well represented in two works of non-fiction: *In the Shadow of the Dam*, Elizabeth M. Sharpe and *American Phoenix*, Sarah S. Kilbourn. Both history books are available from the Williamsburg Historical Society.

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<sup>6</sup> Tuesday, July 17, 1860.

The mill building was rebuilt almost immediately, as conceived by an artist in 1876.



<sup>7</sup>Joel and Josiah Hayden are names that have been and will long be familiar to the people of Haydenville. From its earliest prosperity they have been closely identified with its interests and have given to it much of its present wealth and good fame. As they sprang from among the laboring class, they have ever been in sympathy with those in their employ, and hence there has always existed among the residents of the village —employers and employees, farmers and laborers in all departments —the utmost cordiality of feeling. The interests of one class have ever been the interests of the whole.

<sup>8</sup>The Haydenville Company originated in July, 1845, when the business was organized by Lieutenant-Governor Joel Hayden. A few years subsequently Mr. Albert D. Sanders was admitted as a partner and the business was continued until 1861 as Hayden & Sanders. Mr. Sanders died in 1861, at which time Mr. Hayden, his son Joel Hayden, Jr., and Mr. Collins Gere of Northampton organized the business as Hayden, Gere & Company. This concern operated until 1878, although Mr. Hayden died in 1873 and in the spring of 1874 the entire works were destroyed by the Mill River flood. The present factory was built and completed in 1876. Soon thereafter the property was purchased by The Hayden Company, a group of Boston people headed by Mr. Whiting and Mr. Gillis. The Hayden Company carried on the business for seven years, and in 1885 a new company was organized under the name of The Haydenville Manufacturing Company with Mr. A. T. Foster of New York as president. In 1899 the plant was pur-

<sup>7</sup> *Hampshire Gazette and Northampton Courier*, Vol. LXXIV-No 50, Published by Trumbull & Gere, July 17, 1860 as reproduced by the Williamsburg Historical Society, 1999.

<sup>8</sup> *A History of Williamsburg in Massachusetts* by Phyllis Baker Deming, Northampton 1946



chased by The Haydenville Company which was organized in March of that year with the following officers: Christian J. Hills, President; Albert S. Hills, Treasurer; Chester B. Hosford, Superintendent. On January 17, 1920, Albert S. Hills died and on January 22, 1932, Christian J. Hills died. The officers of The Haydenville Company at the present time are: President, R. B. Hills; Secretary and Treasurer, John H. Hills; Assistant Treasurer, F. A. Pelton; Superintendent, M. T. Cook.

<sup>9</sup>The Haydenville Company Brass Works represented the town's largest employer throughout the period until after World War II. Operated since 1899 by the Hills Family<sup>10</sup> until the 1950's, the business was subsequently purchased by the Sterling Faucet Company of Morgantown, West Virginia, the second instance in the town's history where a major industry was operated by a firm with its headquarters outside the town. Even though operated as a branch plant by a large corporation, the Haydenville factory proved a liability due to its obsolete equipment and unfavorable industrial location. In spite of substantial investment aimed at modernization, the Sterling Company was forced to cease operations after only a few years. The decaying building itself now stands beside Route 9 in Haydenville, mute testimony to the town's industrial past. Local efforts to find a new occupant in the past few years have thus far proved unsuccessful.

<sup>11</sup> Noble Manufacturing first manufactured chicken feeders and brooders, then added the line of firearms at which the Davidsons enjoyed some success and notation. During the Korean War they put out parts for the military Browning Automatic Rifle. In 1965, Noble Manufacturing bought and moved to the old Haydenville Brassworks, in the same village. The Old Hayden Brassworks had recently been vacated, and was a newer and more accommodating building. With growing pressure from big business, to fix the price of the arms, Noble Manufacturing went under about 1973.

<sup>12</sup>The Haydenville Historic District encompasses approximately 35 acres in the center of the village of Haydenville and includes 55 buildings. Haydenville is in the southeastern section of the Town of Williamsburg which borders Northampton. The village represents an industrial community, which grew up in the nineteenth century and includes excellent examples of the Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, and Italianate styles of architecture.

The focal points of the district are the Brassworks on Main Street and the two Greek Revival mansions overlooking the factory from across the street. The Brass Works building was constructed in 1875 following the flood of 1874 which swept away the 1851 structure. The two-story brick building is dominated by two three-story towers, projecting from the front facade.

Rows of windows are accented with granite lintels, and arched and segmental arched windows on the end pavilion are decorated with polychromed voussoirs. Horizontal banding connects the windows, and there are brackets supporting the ridge roof. In 1970 some portions of the complex were razed.

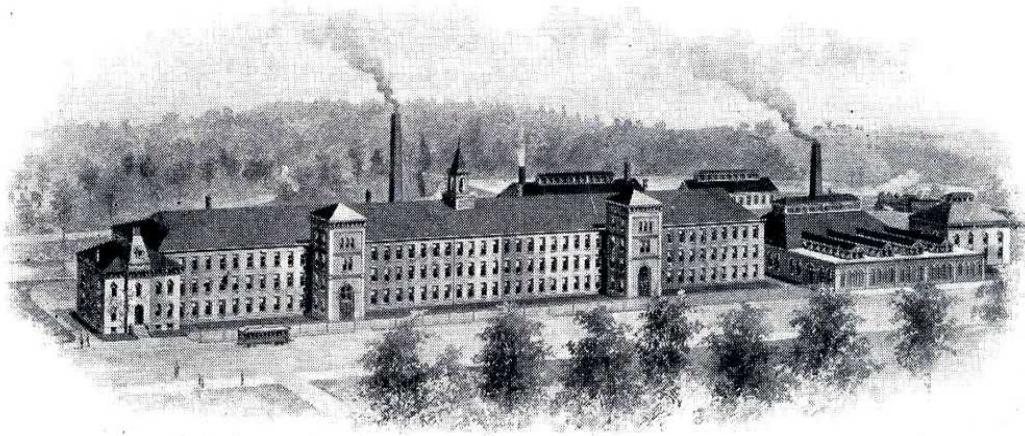
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<sup>9</sup> *The Hampshire History*, 1964, Page 234

<sup>10</sup> The last operator of the brass casting works was John Henry Hills, born 1901, son of Reuben Benjamin Hills (1865-1954) and grandson of Jacob Hills, mechanic (1822-1891), born in Rosenfeld, Germany, who came to the employ of Hayden, Sanders & Co. in 1855. Christina, wife of Jacob Hills was one of the 139 who died in the Great Flood.

<sup>11</sup> Historical notes on Noble Manufacturing Co.

<sup>12</sup> Williamsburg Historical Commission, Haydenville Historic District Inventory, Gertrude Ronk.



## **THE HAYDENVILLE COMPANY**

**HAYDENVILLE, MASS., U. S. A.**

**ESTABLISHED 1845**

c. 1933

<sup>13</sup>Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Paul Guzzi has announced that [among] properties [which] have been accepted to the National Register of Historic Places [is] The Haydenville Historic District in Williamsburg, a delightful 19th century industrial community.

<sup>14</sup>The Brassworks Building in Haydenville is restored and back in business... The historic mill building is in top shape. [1984]

The works went through a series of successive owners through the years and part of the mill is still extant housing offices, studios and for some years prior to 2015 the HILLTOWN COOPERATIVE CHARTER SCHOOL.

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<sup>13</sup> *Massachusetts Historical Commission Newsletter*, Volume II, No. 3, July 1976

<sup>14</sup> *Daily Hampshire Gazette*, Northampton, MA, December 1, 1984.



— Mill River Flood of 1874 by Elizabeth M. Sharpe, Ph.D.

The Mill River flood was the first major dam disaster in the United States and one of the greatest calamities of the nineteenth century. It happened early one May morning in 1874, in the hills above the western Massachusetts towns of Williamsburg and Northampton, when a reservoir dam (used for waterpower) suddenly burst, sending an avalanche of water down a narrow valley lined with factories and farms. Within an hour, 139 people were dead, and four mill villages were washed away. The Mill River flood instantly became one of the nation's big news stories. Newspapers and magazines recounted survivors' daring escapes from the floodwaters and described the horrors of the week-long search for the dead among acres of debris. Investigations showed that the dam had collapsed because it was poorly and negligently constructed, but, like many other disasters of the nineteenth century, no one was held accountable. The flood's legacy was that it prompted Massachusetts, and nearby states, to grasp the hazards of unregulated reservoirs and to pass landmark dam safety laws.



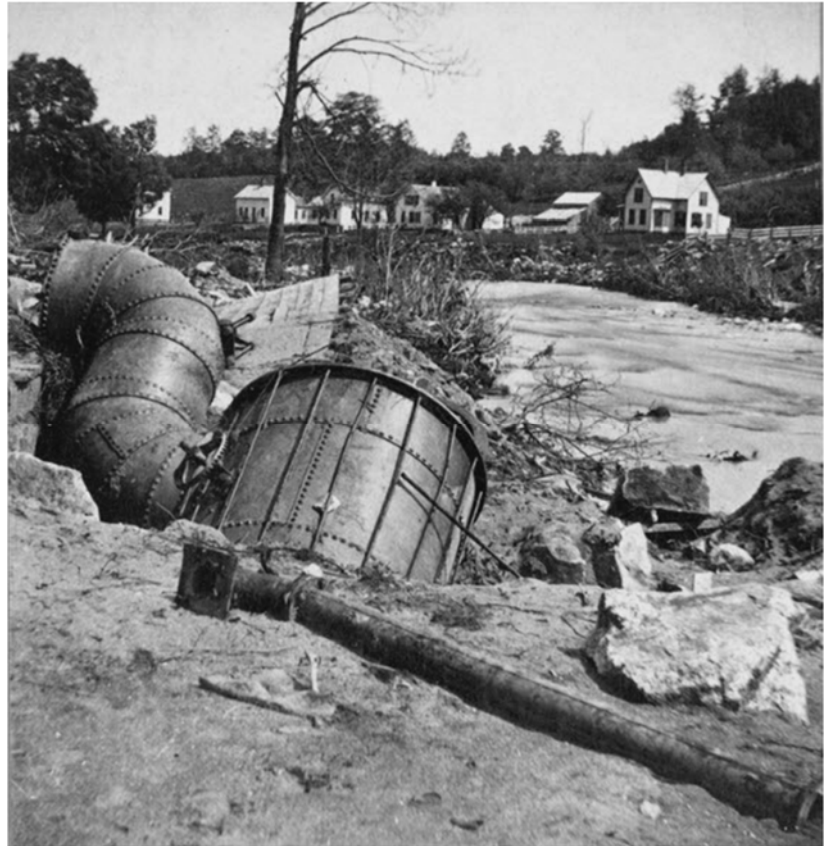
The Mill River is a slim rocky stream, just fifteen miles long, that tumbles down the foothills of the Berkshires into the Connecticut River. By the mid-nineteenth century, it powered small-scale industries that made brass goods, grinding wheels, silk thread, buttons, and cotton and woolen fabrics. As the century wore on, the Mill River manufacturers, like their counterparts around New England, required more water to sustain profits. Increased flow allowed them to scale up production to stay competitive in the nation-wide marketplace created by railroads. And, it enabled them to counteract the effects of upstream deforestation as eroding soil washed downriver and silted in mill ponds thereby reducing water storage capacity at the mills. The solution was to build an upstream storage reservoir which could be tapped as needed to provide a steady flow to the factories downstream. Thus, in 1864, eleven manufacturers formed the Williamsburg Reservoir Company to dam the upper reaches of the Mill River in Williamsburg. Completed in 1866, the earthen embankment dam consisted of a stone wall (meant to keep the dam watertight) supported by massive banks of packed earth. It stretched 600 feet between hillsides and rose 43 feet above the river. The reservoir covered 100 acres. In the absence of state regulation on dam construction, the reservoir company was free to design and build the dam as they pleased. Frustrated with the \$100,000 cost of a design prepared by professional civil engineers, the company opted to dictate their own design to an incautious local engineer who wrote general specifications. The company then hired careless contractors for \$24,000 who made the inadequate design worse. Despite repairs, the dam leaked and slumped for eight years. Anxious valley residents who questioned the dam's safety were reassured by the manufacturers that the dam would hold.

At seven o'clock on Saturday morning May 16, 1874, when the reservoir was full, the damkeeper spied a forty-foot-wide slab of earth slide off the downstream face of the dam. Within minutes, dozens of streams spurted through the bank as it began to crumble. The damkeeper jumped on his bareback horse and raced three miles downriver to Williamsburg village. While he was warning the inhabitants there, the dam burst open. Reservoir water had found its way through the base of the poorly grouted stone wall and into the downstream bank which, once saturated, could no longer hold. Unsupported, the stone wall gave way to the pressure of the reservoir water. A convulsive boom roared through the hills which farmers miles away described as louder than the biggest clap of thunder they had ever heard. The breach quickly enlarged to nearly half the width of the dam and 600 million gallons of water poured out, forming a floodwave twenty to forty feet high that roared down the valley, picking up everything in its path. One observer said the floodwave looked like a hayroll, but instead of strands of hay, the roll was comprised of timber, roofs, boulders, mill wheels, furniture, animals, and people, with no water visible.

Villagers had no warning except for the shouts of four brave men (the first was alerted by the damkeeper) who relayed the message down the valley by racing ahead of the flood in wagons and on horseback to alarm the factories first and then villagers at home. Most of the factory workers escaped, and the majority of the dead were women, children, and older people at home eating breakfast or doing morning chores. Half of the victims were immigrants, mostly from Canada and Ireland. Within an hour of the dam break, 139 were dead, 740 were homeless, and the villages of Williamsburg, Skinnerville, and



Haydenville (in the town of Williamsburg) and Leeds (in the town of Northampton) were washed away. One million dollars in property was destroyed, most of it the value of the factories owned by reservoir company members, all uninsured. Minutes after the flood passed, survivors began searching for the dead by culling through wreckage so dense and snarled that mattresses and quilts were knotted with belting and machinery, and hanks of raw silk were lodged with toys and potatoes. With no federal and state disaster relief programs, clean up and relief were managed by local committees who organized thousands of volunteers and pleaded for Americans to send money to help the sufferers. When \$100,000 was raised, it was called the largest outpouring of charity since the Great Chicago Fire three years earlier.



Members of the Williamsburg Reservoir Company and Northampton bankers took charge of the valley's economic recovery. Although they rebuilt all the villages except Skinnerville, the valley never returned to its former prosperity. The heavy business losses had occurred as the era of profitable manufacturing on small New England rivers was ending, and so the flood hastened the decline of industry on the Mill River.

A coroner's inquest thoroughly investigated the disaster's cause. The verdict named five parties at fault: the reservoir company which owned the dam; the contractors who built it; the engineer who provided an inadequate design; the county commissioners who inspected and approved it; and the Massachusetts legislature which chartered the reservoir company without requiring any assurance that it was safe. There were no indictments, no fines, and no subsequent law suits. A year after the flood, in 1875, Massachusetts passed its first legislation regarding reservoir dam design, construction, and liability. Considered weak by today's standards, the law was, nevertheless, a first step toward safer dams. Americans in 1874 saw the Mill River flood as a terrible calamity and as one example one out of hundreds of disasters—including steamboat explosions, railroad bridge collapses, and mill fires—caused by the carelessness and dishonesty of self-interested manufacturers and businessmen. It took disasters such as the Mill River flood to expose such negligent practices and to serve as a catalyst for legislation to ensure public safety.

