

The *Capitol* of Turners Falls at the South End . . .

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The
PATCH

Remembering a Neighborhood



Presented by The Montague Historical Commission
in conjunction with
The Montague Historical Society via:

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The *Capitol* of Turners Falls at the South End . . .

The
PATCH

Remembering a Neighborhood

Patch History.

The vicinity known as "The Patch" was settled in the mid 19th century by Irish and Polish immigrants, who came to Turners Falls to work in the mills and the construction of the power canal that borders the neighborhood on its east side. The Connecticut River is the west side boundary which in effect, makes the Patch an island. The community layout consists of nine streets. G, H, & I Street run north-to-south. 10th thru 15th Streets are east-to-west. Entering and exiting the neighborhood requires traversing one of two bridges.

Entry from the south at the east side on Avenue 'A' one crosses the 11th Street Bridge. The Eleventh Street Bridge is a unique configuration of a double-intersection Warren through truss, with a pair of trusses on either side of the roadway, and lateral bracing between each pair, but none over the roadway. Total Length is 205 ft., Main Span Length: 167 ft., Roadway Width: 24 ft., Main Spans: 1



Eleventh Street Bridge-east portal. 3.26.06



Sixth Street Bridge-east portal 3.26.06

the neighborhood. The 6th Street Bridge is a Metal 8-Panel Rivet-Connected, Double-Intersection Warren Through Truss, Fixed. Built in 1912 By Builder Contractor: Eastern Bridge and Structural Company of Worcester, Massachusetts.

The main span is 136 feet with a roadway width of 19.4 ft. Total structure length is 139 ft., Main spans 1.

This bridge has been bypassed by a modern (non-historic) double-story Bailey truss bridge that was built in 1988 and this historic bridge has been left in place abandoned. The bridge is a significant example of an uncommon structure type, the double Warren truss. The bridge retains good historic integrity.

The 6th Street bridge is closed off when it clearly could support pedestrian traffic. It's nice to see that this bridge has been left standing next



Bailey truss bridge. 3.26.06

to its replacement, while many others may have been torn down for the sake of scrap metal. This bridge would also be a good candidate for relocation and reuse in a new location as a historic bridge for non-motorized traffic.

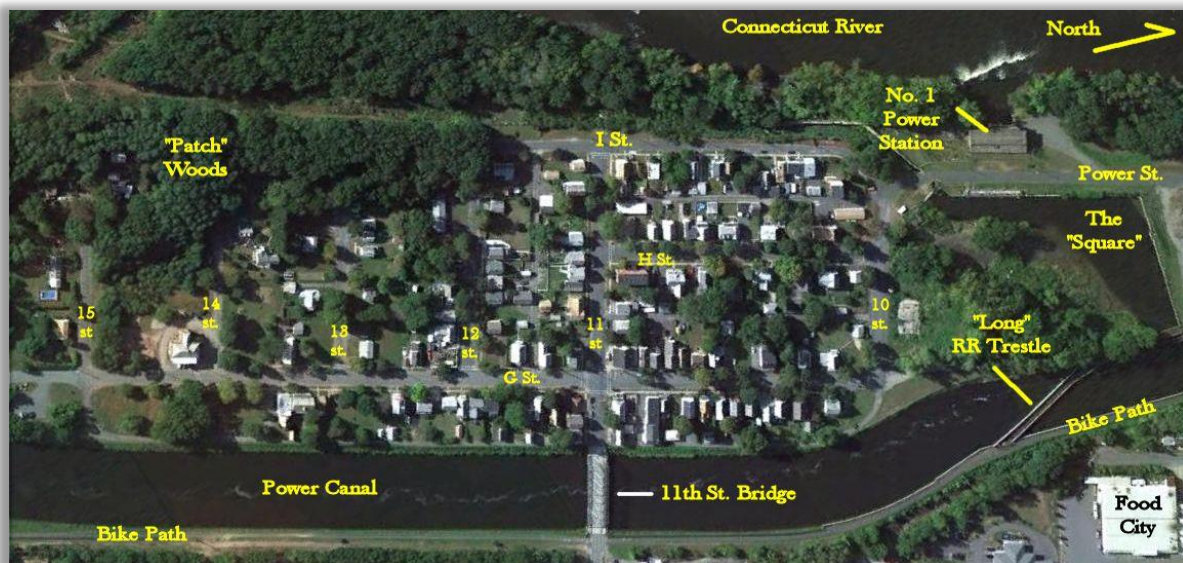
"The Patch" is strongly linked to the industrial dreams of Alvah Crocker along with the development of hydro-power and the rich geological, recreational and cultural aspects of an historically storied portion of Massachusetts. The richly ordinary look of this neighborhood lends itself to Blue-Collar America where an honest days' work contributed to the moral values of an earnest people.

"The Patch", is suitably known as the South End of Turners Falls, which is one of five villages in the Town of Montague. It is often referred to locally as the "*Capitol of Turners Falls*."

Fire Alarm boxes located in the "Patch" for 1906: Corner G & 11th and Corner 15th & 'M' streets. 'M' Street is actually on the east side of the canal. Today it's considered to be in Montague City.

Technology offers us a plethora of wonderful tools. This westerly view of the "Patch" is provided by Google Earth. For those of you that have not experienced this program, I implore you to do so.

The populated area of the *Capitol of Turners Falls*, the "Patch" is shown in this 2,586 foot aerial view. e.g.



Four alleys are part of the physical layout.

"G" Street Alley runs along the canal from 10th to 15th Street.

"H" Street Alley bisects "G" and "H" Streets.

"I" Street Alley bisects "H" and "I" Streets.

12th Street Alley Lies between 11th and 12th Streets.

An Alley between 12th and 13th Streets once existed . . . gone in the late 50s.

From the four segment community offering,

"Immigrant History Series of Turners Falls: Tales and Legends;
stories that shaped Turners Falls in the Industrial Era."

Presented by Turners Falls RiverCulture.

This history, presented during the month of September, 2012, consisted of four immigrant groups. Germans, Polish, French Canadians & Irish . . . in that order.

This segment, 9.28.12, "A Brief History of Irish Immigration to Turners Falls" includes pertinent information regarding the "Patch".

The "Patch"

Although an Irish neighborhood probably never developed in the Downtown Turners Falls area, the "Patch" was an Irish ethnic enclave in the truest sense of the word.

The "Patch" received its name because it was considered a "Patch of Ireland". It retained its strong Irish identity well into the early 20th century even though Polish and French immigrants had begun to move in.

In 1871, however, the Patch was still a small, compact and mostly Irish neighborhood. The names of some of the earliest residents included Burke, Murphy, J. Thomas, and Charles Kelliher, some of whom have been identified as recent immigrants who had worked on the Hoosac tunnel project.

It also included a boarding house operated by Morris Horrigan on the corner of "G" Street and the 11th Street Alley. It was here that the first Catholic religious services in Turners Falls were held in 1868 prior to the incorporation of St. Mary's Church in 1872. Lionel Girard talked of the loggers attending service there.

In 1877, the Patch was confined to "G", 11th and 12th Streets, and was not yet well developed.

By 1879, however, the neighborhood had experienced enough growth to warrant the attention of the school board which decreed that a school was needed in the Patch. This may have been due to the sudden influx of workers at the Cotton Mill and Turners Falls Paper Company, both of which were built that year. Initially only the first story of the South End school building was erected. Six years later, in 1885, increased population required that the South End School be enlarged and a second story was added, and it became a two story brick building with four classrooms. It is likely that, at least initially, the South End school served a growing population of predominantly Irish and some French immigrant children, the parents of whom were employed in the Cotton Mill.

The "Patch" acquired a reputation for being a tough neighborhood. Some of this may have been associated with one or both of the two saloons that were located in the neighborhood in the early 1880's. One was operated by a Mr. Fitzgibbons and the other by a Mr. Reilley.

The problems experienced in the District were significant enough to cause the Board of Selectmen to assign a special policeman to "the Patch". Carrol Daly was appointed in June, 1887 as a special policeman for the South End, to be on duty evenings and Sundays.

Cecil Bagnall, Editor of the Turners Falls Reporter commented: "The Selectmen made a happy choice when they selected Mr. Daly as he is a highly respected citizen who will take especial pains to perform his duties conscientiously and will soon make himself a terror to the rowdy "bad boys" element of his district which needed looking after."

The Patch, during its formative years . . . and beyond . . . was a closely-knit and self-imposed, semi-sequestered enclave that monitored quite closely the coming and going of visitors to the area.



Cecil Bagnall . . .
the "Voice" of
Turners Falls

During its earliest days, the Patch was also home to several Irish families who would later make significant, positive contributions to the development of Turners Falls.

John Thomas, who lived on "G" Street, was fresh off the Hoosac Tunnel project. His family became active in the Thomas Construction Company, that later helped to build many structures in Turners Falls.

The Kellehers (Helen Kelleher Trembl's grandparents) moved into the patch in the early 1870's. Helen's grandfather, Lawrence, had emigrated from County Cork Ireland in 1871. Jim Trembl's father operated a grocery business in the Patch around the turn of the century. His mother was originally from County Galway.

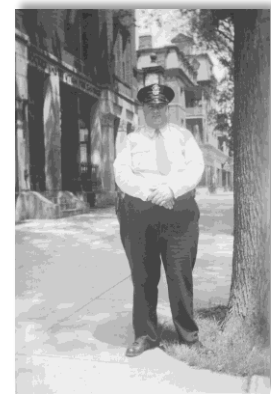


Eileen Kelliher c.1920
Courtesy Frank Abbondanzio

Eileen Kelliher, Helen Trembl's aunt, was born around the turn of the century, some-time after her family had moved from the Patch to Montague City. She became a teacher in the Montague school system.

William Casey, who had also worked on the Hoosac Tunnel project moved to Turners Falls in 1870; and after enduring a series of tragedies in his family, including the loss of his wife and two children, bought a house in the Patch in 1880. At this time the census listed him as working in the paper mill. One of William's sons, Phillip and his wife Hannah had a number of children including Walter, who became the Chief of Police.

By 1895 (Sanborn Maps), the "Patch" neighborhood was significantly larger, containing at least twice the number of dwelling units found on the Birds eye plan prepared in 1877.



Walter P. "Cocky" Casey
c.1955
Ed Gregory archive

One of the Irish businesses that had become established by that point was Shanahan Bros., a grocery store that was located on the corner of 11th and H Streets for many years. That family later opened a construction supply company located on Ave. 'A' near 11th St.



Shanahan Brothers store was in the same building as the Hanover Club, on the corner of H & 11th Streets. Jeremiah and Philip are shown. 1913.
Courtesy Frank Abbondanzio

With a burgeoning population, the Patch rapidly acquired a diverse and sometimes impenetrable array of ethnic customs. Each was respected by, and not to be interfered with by the individual cultural groups.

The Patch Was Colorful, Active Neighborhood

By Charles L. Keller Recorder Staff (not dated) Article courtesy of "Mitzi" Croteau. Image courtesy of Mr. & Mrs. Walter Traceski

Fourth of July bonfires are a thing of the past for the most part, memories of another era. Natives of The Patch — the old-timers' name for the south end of Turners Falls — are convinced that no bonfire anywhere will ever match theirs of the 1920s and 1910s.

"They were something else," said Dr. Edmund B. Olchowski, a Greenfield dentist who grew up in The Patch.

"There was a vying of groups in town to see which village had the largest bonfires. No one ever came close to ours. Montague City tried, but they could never match us."

The bonfires were built pyramid-style on the side of the hill east of Avenue A, opposite what is now Village Furniture and Shanahan's coal yard. Patch residents scoured the countryside for a full month, saving everything combustible, storing it in a tunnel behind the coal yards until the night before the Fourth. The Polish Co-Op store, Shanahan's and Picuch's groceries saved all their cardboard boxes and trash.

"People had wooden trash barrels in those days," Olchowski recalled. "If they hadn't hidden them where they would be safe a month before the Fourth, they were 'taken' for the fire."

Arthur Tatum and a man named Croteau donated their trucks for the event. Anything and everything burnable was picked up and carted to the hillside.

Several residents worked at the Boston & Maine Railroad's freight yard in East Deerfield and they brought back discarded wooden railroad ties. These were piled around the sides to give the fire some structure and stability.

It was midnight when Whitey Krensel touched the match that started the fire and sent flames and smoke billowing 150 to 200 feet into the air.

"Sometimes they'd have to restrain Whitey," Olchowski said. "He'd try to start it earlier. He couldn't wait."

"It was almost a ritual every year in that just before the fire was lit. Stanley Naida's wooden front steps would become part of the fire. The next day, there would be boxes there for the steps until new ones could be built."

Olchowski is not sure what led to the bonfires being outlawed or just when it happened. They went on for years and were a real community effort. "It couldn't be pollution laws, could it?" Olchowski asked. "Didn't they come much later? Perhaps it came when they outlawed fireworks."

Fireworks were sold at Janek's and Kliska's stores until they were banned because of their being dangerous.

Downtown Turners Falls isn't the same today as it was 40 or 50 years ago. Many believe it never will approach the vitality and color it once had. The same holds true for The Patch.

Olchowski said the Irish settled in The Patch before the Poles. "That's where it got its name," he said. In Ireland, small communities were known as "patches." Thus, the south end for years was known as "The Patch."

Names like McCarthy, Shanahan, Leary, Shea and Casey were common. "The Irish dominated, but they soon were outnumbered," Olchowski said. The Polish settlers came about 1905.

The Patch was as active a place as anywhere in town. There were at least six grocery stores during those years — the Polish Co-Op, Kliska's, Shanahan's, Picuch's, Brodeur's and Trembl's. There were two bakeries — one run by Charlie Noga and Frank Olchowski and another by the Polish Co-Op store. There were two pool-halls and some other shops and businesses.

Most of the men worked in the nearby mills along the canal, walking to the Keith or Esleek mills, the John Russell Cutlery or to the Cotton Mill now occupied by Railroad Salvage.

Despite the fact that clubs, lounges and bars have always been numerous and popular in downtown Turners Falls, Olchowski notes that no liquor license was ever granted to anybody for a business in the Patch. But that was not to say they didn't have their brew, Olchowski said.

Olchowski recalled the many colorful activities in this closely knit community. "I remember the crap games in the alleys every Sunday night after high Mass. Many of them (the participants) were altar boys. They'd see Father Skoniecki (the Rev. Alphonse Skoniecki) coming and they'd split. Then he'd pick up the dough left behind."

Every generation that grew up in The Patch made its way one way or another, some of them going on to get college degrees and attain high ranks in business. Others, like Frank "Arizona" Rudinski and Walter Schab became fly-casting champions and toured the country, demonstrating the Montague City Rod and Reel Co.'s products.

Former Montague Police Chief Walter Casey grew up in The Patch.

"Frank Peskor is president emeritus of St. Lawrence University in Canton, N.Y.," Olchowski said. "He came out of The Patch. His brother Bernard is a physician in Rochester" Olchowski's brother Edward is a dentist in Pittsfield.

Everybody had a nickname, Olchowski said, recalling such Patch athletes as "Deedum" Krynsel, who was all-western Massachusetts fullback and went to Fordham University; "Cannon" "Dump" and "Chucky" Novak; and "Need" Naida. "Everybody had a nickname."

Olchowski said Turners Falls owes much of its athletic prowess of years gone by to athletes coming out of The Patch. "I know why, too. They had good, strong legs It look me a long time to figure it out, but it's that damned hill we had to climb every day to go to the school."

"You'd get about two-thirds of the way up that hill and you had to stop. You couldn't breathe!" Olchowski said.



This photograph shows the crowd at Walter Traceski's stag party at Rock Dam, just south of the Patch, in July of 1941. Traceski, 63 and retired, lives at 170 Montague City Road in Turners Falls. Although it was billed as a stag party, it was attended by men and women. Most of these revelers are still around and look back with fond memories of their day in the Patch. The bartender is Al Przybyla. From the left are Theodore "Jocko" Kortz, Stanley Traceski, Stanley "Fats" Cislo, Paul "Press" Jablonski, Frank Ptak and Steve "Russian" Golowka, and Ernest Croteau.
Courtesy Mrs. Walter Traceski

The hill Olchowski refers to is known as "Yankee Hill". It ran from the railroad tracks 60-yards south of Bob Kirk's garage up to the apex of "L" St. where it meets Montague Street.

The patch kids used to climb it to get to the Grammar and High Schools located on Crocker Avenue.,

We, as kids, used to have wicked acorn fights on that sandy hill. Most of the area has reverted to scrub brush and grasses.

Ed Gregory

Let's take a look around the Patch. (contemporary Patch images by Ed Gregory unless otherwise cited)

The geographical layout of the nine streets and three alleys is . . .
10th thru 15th Streets and the 12th Street alley - East-West.
G, H and I Streets, along with the 'G' and 'I' Street alleys - North-South.

Our go round will be a counterclockwise intermittent loop.
We'll visit some of the prominent businesses and "way-marks" that were active here.
Please refer to the business listing later on in the book for numerous other endeavors.

Entering from the Eleventh Street Bridge that spans the power canal, we immediately pay attention to the stop-sign that defines the largest intersection in the village. Here's where 11th Street bisects 'G' Street.

On the north east corner of G & 11th, Mrs. Marie Brodeur opened a confectionary and fruit store in 1918. Later (1938) it became Ed Zewinski's Confectionary & Ice Cream shop. Zewinski also sold numerous sundry items.

"Zoo's" also had covert goings-on. In the rear of the store was a "nickel" pinball machine with no flippers. This machine would tilt very easily . . . acquiring a "feel" for the machine was the goal of all who rolled their five cents into its well-worn slot. If predetermined scores were reached, Ed would pay out in cash or goods what he thought your efforts worth. Typically if 20,000 points were racked-up your reward was a buck , which you were obliged to spend there . . . a nickel for every 1000 points.

Card games for the adult males would take place in the basement. "Quarter, half and one"—25¢, 50¢ and \$1.—were typical poker betting limits. However, some big games were known to have been staged there."



Zewinski's store, now a private residence was the "hang-out" for many of the locals. The front stoop was a favorite gathering place. 10.31.10

"Ed liked the kids in the neighborhood and he would hang a sheet on the exterior wall of the store and show movies and cartoons on a summer Saturday night. It was good for business. Some of the kids would make a soda or candy purchases from the store. This took place during the 1950s."
Stearl "Butch" Wickline

For a select group of adult males, a large collection of "stag" films were stored in metal file cabinets in the upstairs living quarters of the building. For *special occasions only* the smut was previewed.

"I went to school with Ed jr., and from time-to-time we had the opportunity to view some films . . . *special occasions only*, of course . . . when Zoo's parents were out-of-town."
e. g.

Taking a right on 'G' Street the very next building we see is Carol's Beauty Nook. Carol Shirtcliff-Demers is proprietor of a hair dressing business there (1973-present). The rear of the structure once housed the Noga & Olchowski Bakery (1929). In 1948 it became the Modern Bakery (Chas. Noga & Michael Sarhacheski.) in 1963 the business is defunct.

"I can remember the wonderful smells coming from that bakery."

s. w.

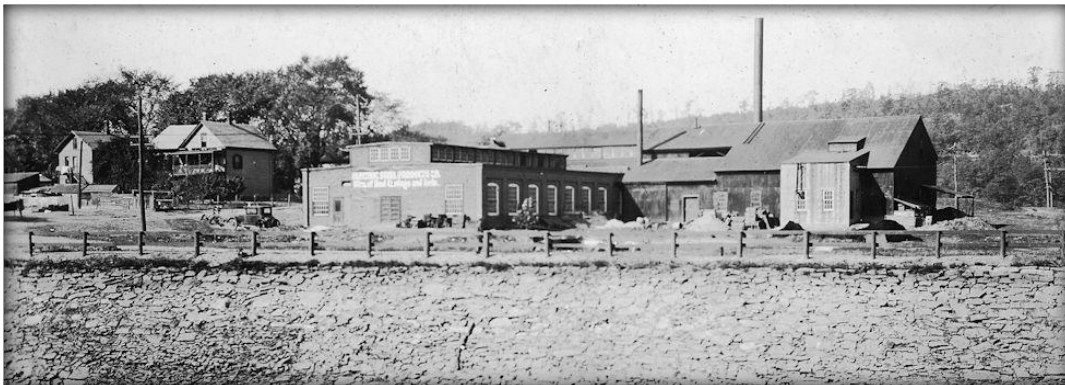


The rear of the Demers residence was a bakery. 11.18.12

Heading north on 'G' Street our next stop is on the north side of Tenth Street. The site of a sizeable manufacturing business to locate at the Patch.

"Tenth Street was originally laid-out about 15-yards south and parallel to its present location. There was to be a bridge built to cross the canal and 10th Street would have met with Ave. 'A'. Eleventh Street is configured this way." *e.g.*

In 1920 Olaf Hoff of Turners Falls started the Electric Steel Products Corporation and located it along the north side of Tenth Street. Axes and steel castings were manufactured here. The business folded in 1929.



Electric Steel Products Corp.

Ed Gregory archive

After a four year idle period, Hermino J. Miorando, in 1934, occupied the space and did business as the Turners Falls Lumber Company until 1937.

Turners Falls Lumber Co.
H. J. MIORANDO, Prop.
Manufacturers and Dealers
Anything in the Lumber Line Manufactured to Order
Dealers in Paints and Building Materials
Wholesale and Retail
Tel. 181
Office and Mill Tenth St. TURNERS FALLS, MASS.

Ad from 1936 H. A. Manning City Directory. Ed Gregory archive

Fourteen years pass. In 1952, Julius Blassberg utilizes the location as an annex for his junk business between 1st and 2nd Streets in Turners Falls. Blassberg retires in 1962. He and his brother Peter began the junk business c. 1895.

Blassberg Brothers
GARAGE
Dealers in
Used Cars—Parts and Tires
Texaco Oil Wholesale and Retail
Junk and Paper Stock
Phone 192
5 Second Street TURNERS FALLS, MASS.

Ad from 1921 H. A. Manning City Directory. Ed Gregory archive



The former E.S.P Co., T.F. Lumber & Blassberg site. We're looking east. The 'long' trestle and Greenfield Savings Bank can be seen through the tree line. 11.18.12

"Right across the street from this location lived an old guy who thought someone was going to disturb his way of life in the Patch. This was back in the 40's and early 50s I'm told. Ezra Coburn was a bit paranoid about numerous things. To comfort his affliction, he slept with a loaded shotgun under his bed." s.w.

Another character that lived across from the Blassberg was Chester "Doc" Skowron.

"Doc" had a pear tree in his front yard along 10th Street. One of my "H" St. buddies—who prefers to remain anonymous,—and I used to *raid* the tree every once in a while during the season. Ole "Doc" had a BB-gun and he'd shoot at us while we were up in the tree. Louie and I got hit in the ass more than once . . . the pears were always sweet." *e.g.*

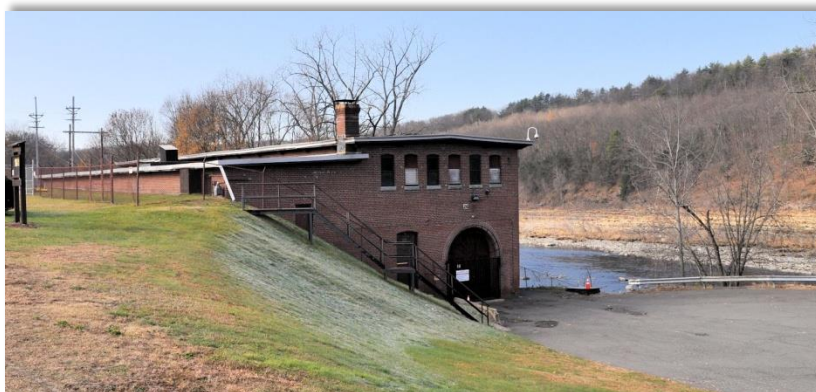
Moving west along 10th we pass by the "I" Street alley on our left and make a sweeping right turn on to Power Street. The Canal extension terminus and its manual gate system are prominently exposed along the concrete wall. As we pass this section, we're actually crossing over one of two small bridges that once existed here. This bridge was known as the #1 "I" St. Bridge Street Bridge. Built c.1895, It was removed and filled in 1961.*

*Report of Highway Department: 1961.
I Street Bridge #1 - The bridge was taken out and a large culvert built to replace it. The culvert was then covered over for the roadway. Gravel was hauled in and fine graded and the sealed with liquid asphalt and a layer of pea stone. Concrete posts and a cable guard rail were put in on both sides of the road.



The location of the #1 "I" St. bridge. Looking north. 11.18.12

We're now heading north on Power Street for 60-yards till we arrive at the No.1 Power Generating Station between the canal and the Connecticut River. Constructed in 1905, it houses six vertical generators and can produce up to 4,400 kw. Water flows from the canal through the penstocks to the dynamos that generate power when called upon to do so. This facility is unmanned and is controlled from the Northfield Mountain facility.



No.1 Power Station, north facade. 11.18.12

Put into service in 1906, it was a full-service station until 1973. Rededicated in 1982 it now serves as a "power on demand" facility.

Up the road a bit is what remains of the Griswold Cotton Mill. In 1879 Joseph Griswold and sons established a mill at Turners Falls. This would be a third mill as the initial pair were located in Colrain, Mass., (1832 business began; 1840 incorporated, and 1867 second mill in operation.)

Special Town Meeting June 10, 1913.

Art. 31. To see if the town will vote to build a bridge back of the cotton mill, and make an appropriation for the same, or act anything thereon.

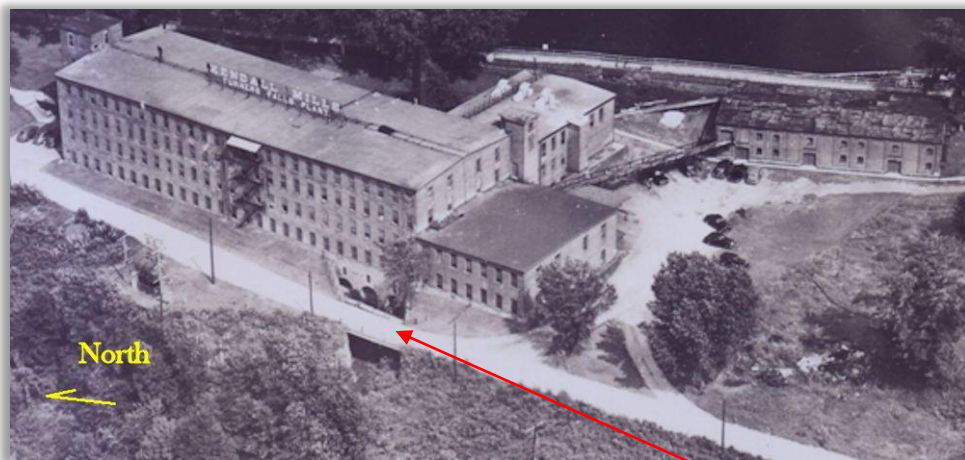
Art. 31. Voted that town raise by taxation and appropriate the sum of \$1300.00 to build a bridge on I street back of the Turners Falls Cotton Mill

Report of Highway Department: 1959
I Street No. 2 Bridge.

I Street Bridge was removed and one hundred feet of forty two inch reinforced concrete pipe was laid in the old race way. The hole was then filled with sand gravel to the top of the roadway. A new stone head wall was made to hold back the fill from washing away. Then the gravel was treated with liquid asphalt and that was topped with stone gritz.



Site of the #2 "I" Street Bridge . . . looking south to the Patch. 11.18.12



Ed Gregory archive

An aerial of the cotton mill (c.1930) shows the location of the #2 "I" Street Bridge.

The Cotton Mill played an important part in sustaining the lifestyles of the time at the Patch and in the Town of Montague. From 1879 till the mid 1950s the mill employed numerous south end residents. It later became a department store under the name of Rockdale and later still, Railroad Salvage.

"As Freshmen and Sophomores at Turners Falls High School (1960-61) a few of us had jobs at Rockdale (after school) sorting metal coat-hangers on the third deck of the building. This may sound a bit crazy but the store owners would have 48-foot trailers back into the loading docks and those trailers were literally filled with a tangled mess of those wire hangers . . . thousands of em'. We were paid 50 cents an hour for our work.

To supplement our daily wage we occasionally *laid-away* a few items that struck our fancy. One of those 100 % discounts was a full case of Double-Bubble bubble gum. A case would hold 2,000 hunks of those little squares of pink gum. We chewed and blew rubbery bubbles for weeks . . . our dentists made a few bucks on our indiscretion. I could tell you a ton of stories about that place."

e.g.



Rockdale - 1958

Ed Gregory archive

Rockdale publicized the business via a catchy-tune that everyone in town could vocalize on request.

♪ Rockdale is the store for me,
Me and all my fam-i-ly,
We save dollars by the score,
When we shop at Rockdale store. ♪

"My father worked at the cotton mill during the 1950s making cotton fabric and threads.

My mother worked at Rockdale and she was able to get me a job when I was four years old, sortin' coat-hangers for a half-a-buck an hour and can remember the owners of the place. Bill Palestine was President and Russ Kimball was second in command.

When I was 13 I worked for Dick Rosenberg, selling speed equipment for cars. Later on I ran the department for him. Quite a few people from the Patch worked here.

Once a year the owners hired a small circus to set-up in the parking lot. Rides and cotton candy were free. It usually lasted for two-days, typically on the weekend. Everyone loved it. A good way to promote the business.

I remember that 'Rockdale Song' playing on the radio. They played in the store a hundred times a day."

s.w.

From here we're turning back to the south retracing our trek down Power St. (formerly "I" st.) and head to the residential area of the Patch.

Crossing the location of the #1 bridge we take a half-right to meet "I" Street. Through the trees on our right, we see the Connecticut River as it flows on its southerly course.

Two-thirds of the way down, on the right side, the Patch horseshoe pits are neatly kept.



Four boxes, 2-pits, forty feet apart are ready for play. 9.10.12

During the 1940s, 50s and into the 60s, horseshoe competitions in Franklin County were a popular way to gather and to showcase one's ability to pitch the 2 lb-10oz. iron shoe 40-feet to a steel pin in a wood-framed box filled with clay dredged from the banks of the nearby river.

Turners Falls was the site for very structured competitions. Eight—lighted—pits were located at the Polish-American Vets Club (no longer exists) at the east end of Third Street near Unity Park and here at the "I" Street location. Teams from Shelburne Falls, Greenfield, Northampton, Brattleboro, Vt., Hinsdale, N.H., joined the Turners teams to compete, socialize and have a few "cold ones."

The Patch team played in the Western Division of the Twin-County Horseshoe League. The June 17, 1956 Greenfield Recorder Gazette had this account of the action.

Shelburne Falls and the Patch are tied for the lead in the Twin-County Horseshoe League's Western Division according to latest standings. The Falls leads in points by 25.

Patch 9 - Peels 3

Wickline-Rudinski (Patch) over Barnes-D. Richardson	50-33	50-32
Levielle-Martin (Patch) over Richardson Sr. & Jr.	51-45	50-46
Richardson Sr.-Barnes over Levielle-Rudinski (Patch)	54-39	50-41
Martin-Wickline (Patch) over D. & Jr. Richardson	52-39	52-19
Sr. & D. Richardson over Rudinski-Martin (Patch)	53-28	
Levielle-Wickline (Patch) over Barnes-Richardson Jr.	52-40	50-40
Martin-Rudinski (Patch) over Sr. & D. Richardson	53-14	

article courtesy Janel Nockleby

"We continue to pitch the shoes on Tuesday evenings during the warm months. My neighbors come over and we have a hell-of-a-time. It's convenient for me because the pits are just across the street from my house." *s.w.*

Leaving the horseshoe pits it's only a few paces to take a left to enter the west end of 11th Street. On the corner of 'H' and 11th we see the brick three-decker . . . the Shanahan Block. The ground floor was at one time home to the Hanover Club.

*"The Hanover Club was formed by a group of young Patch fellows. Their headquarters was on the corner of Eleventh and 'H' street in the Shanahan block.

Hanover meant, "hand over." Their club room consisted of furniture that was donated by the families of the members and anyone who wanted to donate. The club formed after World War II.

In the spring of the year when the river runs high a sign was washed down from Hanover, New Hampshire and caught in some bushes. The fellows dragged it out and they had a sign plus the name for their club.

In the club room there was a ping pong table, a pool table and other tables where the fellows' played games and cards. Dues were two dollars a year and the club consisted of about eighty members. "Finky" was president, Bernie W. was treasurer, Buddy W. secretary, and Skip Sojka as vice president.

Next, they formed a baseball and basketball team.

Baseball was most popular. The fellows constructed a baseball field beyond the school, and games were played during the week as well as Sundays.

Beyond the field, railroad ties were brought in to serve as seating. Behind the home base there was a tall link fence to catch fly balls. During games on Sundays a refreshment truck stood in front of Kazanowska's. You could buy hot-dogs, soda, chips and candy bars.

The club held a benefit dance. It was at the high school to buy equipment for the baseball team. Some of the positions played by members:

Mitzy C. & Finky T.	Catcher
Bernie W.	Pitcher and Third Base
Buddy W.	Pitcher
E. Milkey	First Base and Outfield
Skip S.	First Base
Fat Cislo	Short Stop

The club was good for the Patch young fellows. It taught sportsmanship and team work. It formed after the war when times were hard for the young men to get jobs. It was a place where they found camaraderie and a place to go when time was heavy on their hands.

Too bad it didn't last longer, but when you get to many fellows borrowing from the till and not paying it back, that's when things fall apart. You can't run a club on IOU's. They disbanded after about four years."

*Thanks to Edith "*Jadzia*" (Bakula) Bourbeau for the Hanover Club segment. Quoted from her perceptive book, "Polish and Proud", pg. 133; 2002 Edith (Jadwiga Bakula).

Additional Hanover Club information: The initial gatherings were at the wooded area at the end of 12th Street where it meets "I" Street. The boys could stay out-of-sight in the trees and out-of-mind of the grown-ups. As they became more organized they sought better quarters.

F.Y.I.:	"Mitzy" Philip Croteau Ed Milkey	"Finky" Frank Traceski "Skip" Walter Sojka	Bernie Waryas "Buddy" Walter Wysk "Fat Cislo" Stanley Cislo	<i>e.g.</i>
---------	-------------------------------------	---	---	-------------

"I can remember playin' ping-pong in the Hanover Club when I was a kid in the Patch. I was too young to be a member but the bigger guys let us kids in to use the pool and ping-pong tables. These guys were a tough bunch. Tough meaning sportsmen, not wise guys. They were honest and respectful to the older folks.

Walter "Brudger" Bialecki



Hanover Club basketball team c.1946

Back Row: Walter "Cubby" Kosciwicz, Walter "Buddy" Wysk, Marcel Nadeau, ?
 Front Row: Stan Noga, Tommy Fledging, Philip "Mitzi" Croteau, Joe Naida.
 Stanley "Snuffy" Sopollec, Jr. with ball.

Courtesy Mitzi Croteau



Hanover Club football team at Zewinski's store.

c. 1946

Walter "Skipper" Sojka, Stu Zewinski, "Machine" Tranowski, Frank "Finky" Traceski,
 Walter "Kezzy" Kuzeck, Philip "Mitzi" Croteau, George "T-Boy" McLaughlin,
 Walter "Gimmie" Naida, Stanley "Snuffy" Sopollec, Jr., Henry "Schnoz" Novak,
 Davey Kovalsick, Walt "Cyg" Cygnan, Marcel Nadeau.

Courtesy Mitzi Croteau



The Shanahan Block - home of the Hanover Club. Today the Franklin Community Action Group Neighborhood Youth Corps. is located on the ground floor. 10.31.10

F. Y. I. —Turners Falls was famous for nicknames. Almost everyone had one . . . including the women. For a nostalgic look at the sometimes-whacky monikers, please visit the Carnegie Library in town and ask to look at the *Turners Falls Nickname Book* by Harold "Googe" Fugere.

Headin' east, and on the south side of the street our next stop will be the former location of "Pete" Kliska's candy store.

John Kliska began the business in 1931 selling gas and oil along with candy and a small inventory of miscellaneous grocery items. The store, (24-11th) Street was located next to his residence at 22 11th Street. The business was handed down to his son John "Pete" Kliska in 1954. The store closed in 1965.

"I remember going into Kliska's store with my buddies from the Patch to buy some candy or a bag of chips and a soda. "Pete" was good to his neighbors and did a decent business there. He used to sing a song for us that we thought was strange. It had two verses . . . always the same . . .

♪ Na-po-le-on marched his men, turned around and said to them . . . Bō dlee ō dō dō.

♪ Wash-ing-ton at Valley Forge, bitter cold and up spoke George . . . Bō dlee ō dō dō.

On our way out, he'd smile as he stood behind the counter and watched as we left the store. To this day I have yet to figure it out." *e.g.*



The former Kliska residence. The store was in what is now a garage . . . to the left. 10.31.10

Saturday, December 8, 2012 Butch Wickline and I had the opportunity to visit with a one-time Patch resident, and life-long Turners Falls resident.

The reason for our visit was to photograph an iconic relic from the Patch . . . the soda bar that once catered to customers at Pete Kilska's store.

When we arrived at our destination, we were ushered to the basement of the house where the bar is located. It once served its owners as a dry-bar for family and friends entertainment. Now resting idle in its original state, it brought back instant memories of Pete's store and times spent there. We exchanged memories as I photographed the bar . . . take a look.



12.8.12

Pete's soda bar is a 6-stooler and equipped with all the necessary gadgets to ensure no customer left his store dissatisfied.

Choices for ice cream sodas and toppings were; Cherry, Chocolate, Dr. Pepper, Lemon, Pepsin, Strawberry & Vanilla.



12.8.12



12.8.12

Continuing east, we come to the intersection of "G" and 11th. On the north west corner, directly across from Zewinski's store was the Polish Union, later the Polish Co-op., (1921-1973.) This was a full-service grocery and meat store. It was the sister outlet for the main outlet that was on Fourth Street in Turners Falls.

In the rear of this store—a separate business—was a tiny bakery whose proprietor, John Szuba plied his trade from 1934 to 1939. Szuba sold to Anthony Lepianka in 1939 and who was there till (?). The Patch had numerous bakers and over time, some of the addresses were changed or were incorrectly listed in the Manning Guides.

In 1982, Frank "Puner" George utilized the Co-op store space for his ceramic arts and sales business . . . 'Puner's Pour House' . . . he closed sometime in 1983.

"I remember a woman that lived above the Polish Co-op and she used to spend a lot of time on the porch overlooking "G" and 11th Streets. A good vantage point to observe the goings-on, and to secretly listen to chit-chat of those visiting the store below. She was *all knowing* when it came to gossip. We called her "The Patch Gazette."

anon.



39 11th Street was home to the Polish Union (Co-op) Store. 10.31.10

After the Polish Union visit, we'll head south on 'G' Street. About 30-yards down the west side of the street we make another right turn to enter the 12th, Street Alley. Not much here but the remains of an old fire house that was in use prior to then turn-of-the-century and for some time into the 1920s. Exact dates for this station are unavailable.

Heading west, and half-way down the 12th Street Alley, the old fire house is on the right side of the lane. The original red paint job is flaking away. It appears that a paint touch-up was given to portions of the east facade.

10.31.10



Greenfield Recorder - Wednesday, September 14, 1977

— Recorder History —

This article appeared in the September 14, 1927 issue of the Greenfield Daily Recorder.

Turners Falls — A recent excerpt published in these columns from an issue of *The Reporter* of a half-century ago referred to "The Patch" in the most matter-of-fact way. The younger generation of readers may have wondered what was meant by "The Patch", but the older inhabitants recollected with a reminiscent smile that the name was the one originally applied to that section of Turners Falls known of late years and still known as the South End.

The present name was adopted after the residents of the lower end of the town got tired of hearing their attractive little community always referred to as "The Patch." Surely a name not calculated to arouse civic or any other kind of pride.

article courtesy Janel Nockleby

Emerging from the 12th Street alley at its west end, we bear left, and once again we're on "I" Street. Thirty yards south we meet 13th Street, and the beginning of the "Patch Woods." This wooded corner is where the boys hung-out and the beginnings of the Hanover Club were conceived here.

If one knows the "Patch Woods" at all, from this point a half-mile hike through the forest and along the Connecticut River, one comes to Rock Dam . . . more on this later.

As we walk east on 12th Street we meet "G" Street once again. Taking a right turn here we'll proceed to the Patch School or more properly known as the South End School.

The school and its property is flanked by 14th Street on its north side and 15th Street to the south, which is the southernmost street in the Patch.



The north facade of the Patch School. Currently, the Parent-Child Development facility has offices here.

10.31.10

"My 5th & 6th grade learning experience was had at the Patch School. Four of us guys would meet at 3rd Street in Turners and walk the distance to get to the school, about a mile, and walk back home, about a mile. (This was uphill . . . both ways . . . *just kiddin'!*)"

There was a Kindergarten teacher here, Molly Stratton, who used to wash her stockings in a small pot on an electric hot-plate. One day we asked her what she was doing. She said, "I'm making soup for the youngsters in my class." Now that's the truth!"

c.g.

SOUTH END pg.34

The South End School shows no external evidence of a second story addition. However, weathering of the brick facades may have erased a construction line that perhaps once existed.

The first story of South End building was erected in 1879, after the school board had decreed that a school was needed "on the patch."

Six years later, in 1885, increased population required that South End School be enlarged. A second story was added, and it became the two story brick building with four classrooms, which is now in use.

In 1921, the building was remodeled and improved.

During World War II the pupils and teachers, under principalship of Mrs. Josephine Foster, established an enviable record for the sale of war bonds and war savings stamps.

A 1952 survey by state personnel, requested by Montague School Board and Superintendent Arthur E. Burke, pronounced South End School in excellent condition. Mr. Raymond Welsh was board chairman and Mrs. John J. Mackin headed the evaluation sub-committee which supervised the state survey of both physical plants and school curriculum. This year of the bicentennial anniversary of our town's incorporation, South End School is occupied by a morning and an afternoon kindergarten class, one combination first and second grade and one fifth grade composed of pupils who live west of L Street, as well as these whose homes are in South End. Third and fourth grades South End Children attend New Eighth Street School. This arrangement was made as an emergency measure to prevent overcrowded conditions by distributing pupils as evenly as possible among the various rooms and buildings.

Because 1954 school authorities are faced with further problems of heavy enrollment, it will probably be necessary in the fall of this year to place one grade in the room which is now used as auditorium and music room.

A few yards south of the school is Migratory Way. A bike and walking trail built in 2005 for recreational purposes. This section of bike path is a single-entity. It's a smidgen over a mile long and is a part of the Turners Falls to Deerfield bike path that runs along the east side of the canal. This ribbon of blacktop parallels the canal on the west side from its source near 15th Street, south to Cabot Station in Montague City. Cabot is the No.2 and largest power generating station in the Town of Montague.

A scenic stretch where fishermen can often be seen reeling in a bass or a carp. The Patch Woods border the bike path and separate the Connecticut River from the canal.

This would be the best route to access the Rock Dam area. Along the way we'll learn about a couple way-marks that have relevance to some residents of the Patch.

A fifth-of-a-mile along the trail, on the canal bank, is a concrete structure that was built in 1914 as an over-flow gate in case of high water in the canal. If that occurred, the gate was linked to an overflow pond in the wood-line almost opposite the gate. The gate would allow water to fill the pond, which had a concrete square, about 3-feet by 3-feet and a few feet deep. This encased a large valve that would be opened to direct the excess water to the river about 90-yards to the west. That pond became known as Square Rock. A popular ice skating pond for the *Patchese*. The gate at the canal's edge—a popular fishing spot—is known to the locals as *Coke Cleves*. Why? Good question. Seems no-one in the Patch knows why either. *Coke Cleves* makes no sense in any way, shape, or form.

"My take on the *Coke Cleves* ambiguity is this. I believe an immigrant that was working on the construction of the gate—who spoke broken English—was asked what part of the canal he was working at, and because there are numerous Oak trees in that area, and not knowing a better location name, the immigrant, in his less-than legible English tongue answered . . . "Oak Leaves", and the person receiving the message—with less than first-rate hearing ability—heard from a distance . . . *Coke Cleves*." Then this person passed it on as . . . *Coke Cleves* . . . there you have it. If anyone has a better explanation, please give me a call. This mystery remains on my bucket list. I'd like it sparkling clean when I leave the planet." *e.g.*



The "*Coke Cleves*" gate exposed during a canal drain. 9.20.09

From "*Coke Cleves*", three-fifths of-a-mile down the bike path is a small bump-out that will accommodate 6 cars and is used as a parking area. Here we're introduced to Cabot Woods. Maintained by First Light Power, it's a picnic area nestled nicely into the pine and deciduous grove that will lead us to Rock Dam.

Every person in the Patch knows Rock Dam. If they don't, they're not a true *Patchese*. *anon.*



6.26.12



8.27.12

One of my favorite places in Franklin County, Rock Dam brings back tons of memories. I spend a lot of time here . . . year-round. Fishing and swimming during the warm months and just hangin' around taking pictures any other time. *e.g.*

Town of Montague Annual Reports
 Town Warrant information pertaining to the "Patch"

School Committee Report 1897-1898

Name of School Service and Teacher	Grade	Where Educated	Salary	Began
South End				
Katherine B. Diggin	III & IV	Montague High School	360	1893
Ellen F. Sullivan	II	Westfield Normal	360	1896
Bridget A. Diggin	I	Westfield Normal	324	1897

Selectman's Report; March 1, 1899

Sidewalk Ave. A and Eleventh Street

This appropriation was \$700, we found upon examination, to be very small for the work required of it; we found to do the work, and do it right, that a heavy retaining wall must be constructed from a point from the southerly corner of the shoe factory to the bridge over the tracks of the N.Y., N.H. & H. R.R. and from the southerly side of said bridge to Eleventh Street and along Eleventh Street across the ravine.

The wall was built on Eleventh Street, graded and concreted from G Street to Avenue A, and on the Avenue filled, graded and concreted south to a point near the south corner of the shoe factory, where wall should commence, which practically used up the appropriation.

We would recommend an appropriation to complete the work, as you can readily see that all the foot travel from the South End and Montague City (and it is very large) to schools, churches, post office and trade must come this way, and should be provided with a comfortable walk.

Sidewalk, Ave. A and 11th St. - Expense sheet

Appropriation	\$700	
Paid Clapp & Abercrombie, surveys and labor		\$21.45
George Starbuck, supplies and labor		2.55
Turners Falls Lumber Co., railing		8.61
Clark Mach. Co., iron posts and supplies		34.00
F. I. Webster, supplies		6.44
Painting railing and supplies		15.80
E. P. Marsh, labor as per payrolls		297.04
L. G. Stearns, concrete		284.20
Balance unexpended		<u>29.21</u>
	\$700	\$700.00

Various appropriations for road and highway work at the "Patch".

1902	\$360	Sidewalk G st.
	180	Sidewalk 11th st.
1903	\$250	Sidewalk G st.
	180	Sidewalk 11th st.

— Businesses and Self-Employed persons as listed in the Manning City Directories —

This list is compiled from available Manning Directories and may contain omissions or misspelled names. Every business or independent contractor did not use the guide as an advertising medium. A concerted effort had been put forth to make this list as complete as possible. e.g.

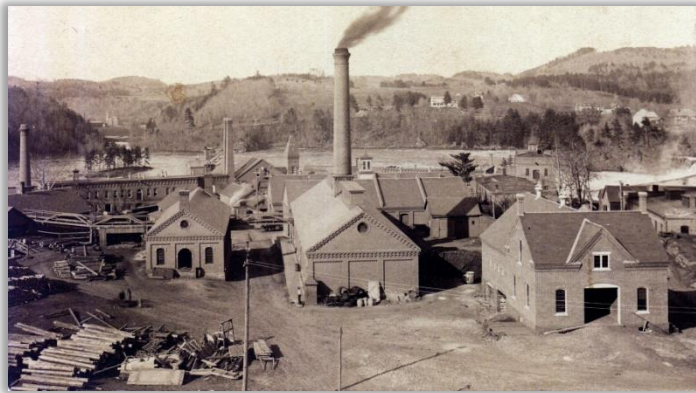
Year	Business/Trade	Person/Company	Location
1899	Carpenter(s)	Damos, Ulrich & Nelson Lamoreaux	I st.
	"	Joseph & William Dube	I st.
	"	Ambrose Desotel	I st.
	Insurance	Daniel Daly	G st.
	Mason	Daniel Foley	G st.
1900-1901	Painter/Paper Hanger	Hermidas Bourbeau	G st.
	Barber	Remi Corbiere	H st.
	Insurance	John F. Donovan (Donovan's)	G st.
	Mason(s)	John J. & Timothy Donovan	G st.
1902	Teamsters	Carroll Daly	G st.
	Carpenter(s)	George Bernard	15th st.
		Alphonse Lamoreaux	I st.
		Moses Vivier	G st.
1904-1905	Grocer	Frank Mroczyk	G st.
	Teamster(s)	Frederick Lambert	Cor. 11th & G
	Grocer	Phillip Shanahan	11th st.
1906	Cigars/Tobacco	Arthur Brodeur	Cor. 11th & G
	Confectionary/Fruit	Arthur Brodeur	Cor. 11th & G
	Fish & Oysters	W. L. Shanahan	11th st.
	Grocer/Meat Mkt.	John Gulo	11th cor. G st.
1907	Baker	George Kopec	15th st.
1909	Grocer	Ignaz Purchla	14th st.
1911	Dressmaker	Mary E. Barry	11th st.
1912	Fish & Oysters	Fred L. Trembl	11th st.
	Baker(s)	Joseph Badon	11th st.
		Wilfred Bernard	15th st.
	Contractor	Moses Vivier	G st.
	Blacksmith	Frank Koshaski	11th st.
	Merchant	James Corbiere	H st.
	Mason	Peter Foley	G st.
1913	Dry Goods	Ferris D. Hassan	30 11th st.
1914	Grocer	Shanahan Brothers	21 11th st.
	Painter/Paper Hanger	Phillip Nadeau	54 11th st.
1918	Confectionary/Fruit	Mrs. Marie Brodeur	55 11th st.
	Cutlery Mfrs.	Hinckly Mfg. Co.	10th st.
	Meats & Provisions	Telesfor Milowski	13 12th st.

1920	Electric Steel Products Corp.	Olaf Hoff	10th st.
1921	Glass & Putty	Wadislaw Piasecki	64 G st.
	Grocer(s)	Walter Piasecki (Wadislaw)	64 G st.
		Polish Union Store	31 G st.
	Iron & Brass Foundry	Mont. Mach. Co.	15th st.
	Steel Mfrs.	Elec. Steel Prod. Corp.	10th st.
	Trucking	Arthur Tatham	5 11th st.
1922	Confectionary/Fruit	Mrs. Agnes Golonka	30 or 39 11th st.
	Orchestra	Colonial Orchestra (Jos. Grogan)	71 G st.
	Taps, Dies Screw Plates	Gfld. Tap & Die Corp.	Cor. 11th & Ave. A
1924	Confectionary/Fruit	Joseph Brozo	30 or 39 11th st.
1927	Meats & Provisions	Anna J. Butor	29 G st.
	Railroad	N.Y. N.H. & Hartford	Cor. 11th & Ave. A
1929	Bakery	Noga & Olchowski	29 G st.
	Confectionary/Fruit	Stephen Golonka	35 11th st.
	Grocer	Albert Piecuch	29 G st.
1930	Bakery	Wojtasiewicz-Bodon Co.	39 11th st.
1931	Confectionary/Ice Cream	Jos. Kliska	22 11th st.
1934	Bakery	John Szuba	39 11th st.
	Coal/Coke	T. F. Coal Co. (Phil. D. Shanahan)	Cor. 11th & Ave. A
	Fuel Oil	T. F. Coal Co.	Cor. 11th & Ave. A
	Lumber Dealers	T. F. Lumber Co. (Hermينو J. Miorando)	10th st.
1935	Building Mat'l. & Supplies	T. F. Coal Co.	Cor. 11th & Ave. A
1936	T. F. Lumber Co.	H. L. Miorando	10th st.
1937	T. F. Lumber Co.	H. L. Miorando	10th st.
1938	Confectionary/Ice Cream	Edward Zewinski	49 11th st.
	Nurse	Margaret Sullivan	56 G st.
1939	Bakery	Anthony Lepianka	39 11th st.
	Grocer	Mrs. Mary Zewinski	49 11th st.
1944	Bakery	Noga and Sarhacheski	29 G st.
	Nurse	Thelma Borthwick	5 11th st.
1945	Nurse	Bernice M. Kondraski	17 G st.
	Variety Store	Ed's Variety	51 11th st.
1947	Nurse	Dorothy Brozo	1 G st.

1948	Bakery (Modern)	Noga and Sarhacheski (Chas. Noga & Michael Sarhacheski)	29 G st.
	Painter/Decorator	Ezra Coburn	4 H st.
1951	Beauty Parlor	Reggie's Beauty Shop	12 H st.
1953	Automobiles (Used)	Julius Blassberg Inc.	10th st.
	Carpenter/Contractor	Schab Bros. (Andrew J. & Michael C. Schab)	13 H & 69 G
	Nurse	Mrs. Mary Pervere	105 G st.
1954	Clothing Dealer	Rockdale Dept. Store (William Palestine & Carl Giordano)	Canal (Power st.)
	Confectionary/Ice Cream	Kliska's Soda Bar	24 11th st.
	Nurse	Claire T. Nadeau	9 G st.
1957	Assoc. & Clubs	T.F. Rifle & Pistol Club	"Patch" woods
1960	Contractor Equipment	Perry Supply Co., Inc.	Cor. 11th & Ave. A
	Beauty Shop	Regina's Beauty Shop (Regina C. Whiteman)	10 H st.
1965	Commercial Artist	Chester V. Schab	13 H st.
	Manufacturer	Village Furniture, Inc.	Cor. 11th & Ave. A
	Roofer	Louis D. Brozo	7 G st.
1966	Beauty Shop	Florence's Beauty Shop (Florence D. Golonka)	35 11th
1973	Beauty Shop	Carol's Beauty Nook (Carol A. Demers)	29 G st
	Excavating Contractors	John R. Barlow Construction	10th st.
	Trucking	John R. Barlow Construction	10th st.
1975	Furniture Mfrs.	Village Furniture Mfg., Inc.	Cor. 11th & Ave. A
1976	Social Services	Franklin Community Action Group Fkln. Cnty. Neighborhood Youth Corps.	G st. G st.
1982	Ceramic Products (Decorative)	Puner's Pour House (Frank George)	39 11th st.
	Heating Contractors	Jack's Heating Service	12 G st.
1988	Associations	Fkln. Cnty. After School Program	12 G st.
c. 1990s & Ave. A	Motorcycles	East Coast Chopper Works (Kevin Bourbeau)	Cor. 11th
c. 2010	Pet Services	Fido Dog Obedience School (Susan Jasmin)	31 11th st.
	Rubber Stamps	Simons' Stamps	Cor. 11th & Ave. A

Turners Falls industry that employed several "Patch" residents.

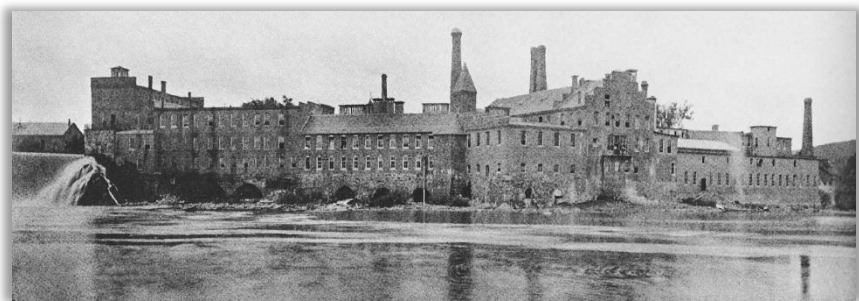
(Images; Ed Gregory archive)



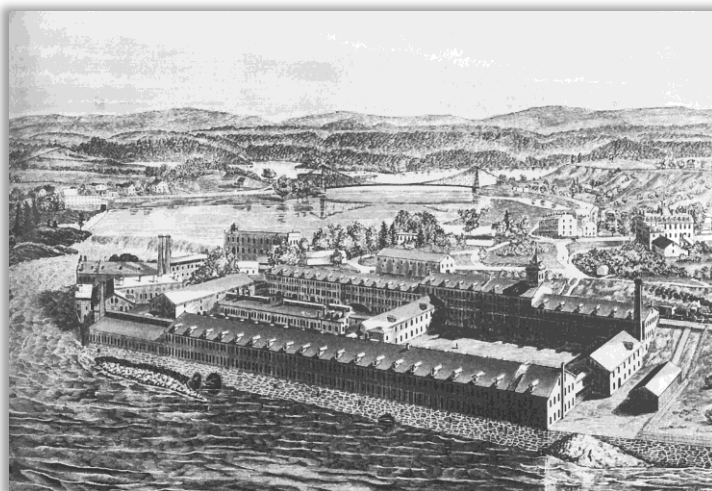
Clarke & Chapman Machine Co. at canal head.

Clark & Chapman Machine Company made water wheels for the various industries along the canal and did jobbers work for them. Work for outside concerns was also done. It began in 1871 at Bellows Falls, Vt., and soon moved to Turners Falls.

This mill was primarily making news print from wood pulp for the large New York newspapers in 1871. Two hundred and fifty were employed here.



Montague Pulp Co., later International Paper Co.

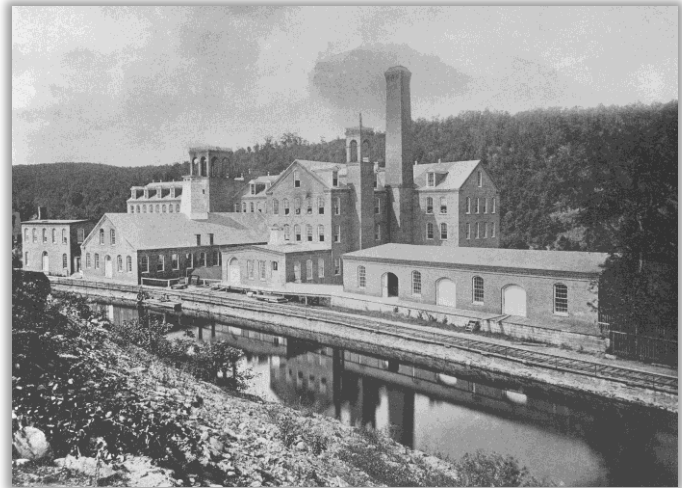


The Russell Cutlery Company.

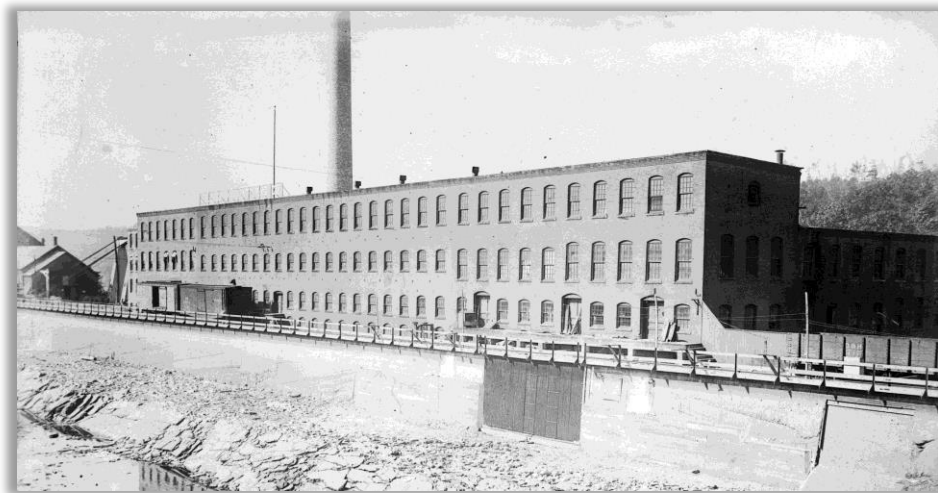
John Russell was enticed by Alvah Crocker to move his company from Greenfield to Turners Falls in 1870. This business employed up to 600 men & women.

It was located 50-yards south of the Montague Pulp Co.

John Keith manufactured fine papers in his mill that abutted the south side of the Russell Cutlery Co.



Keith Paper Mill. The third industry to locate on the canal in 1871.



Esleck Manufacturing Company

In 1895 the Marshall Paper Company did business a few yards south of the Keith Mill. It later (1900) became the Esleck Manufacturing Company that produced fine papers from rag pulp and experimented with various raw-material fabrics.



Turners Falls Paper Company.

1879, The Turners Falls Paper Company's primary product was newsprint from wood pulp. Located fifty yards south of the Esleeck Mill, it became a property of the International Paper Company in 1898.

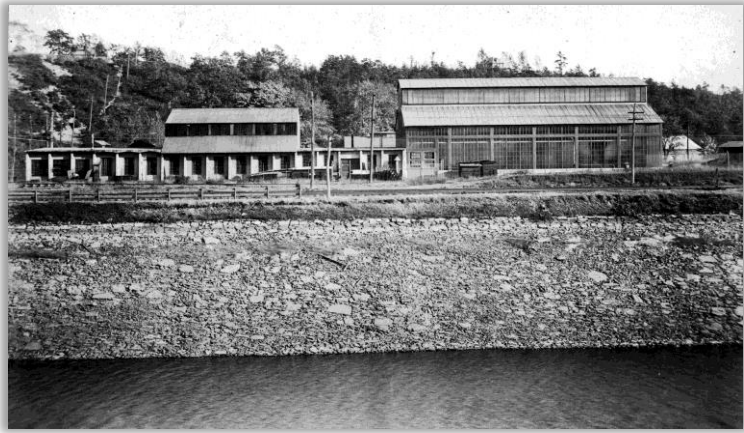


Griswold Cotton Mill east facade.

In 1879 Joseph Griswold and his two sons expanded their Colrain, Mass. Cotton mill business at Turners Falls, and incorporated the concern there as the Turners Falls Cotton Mills.

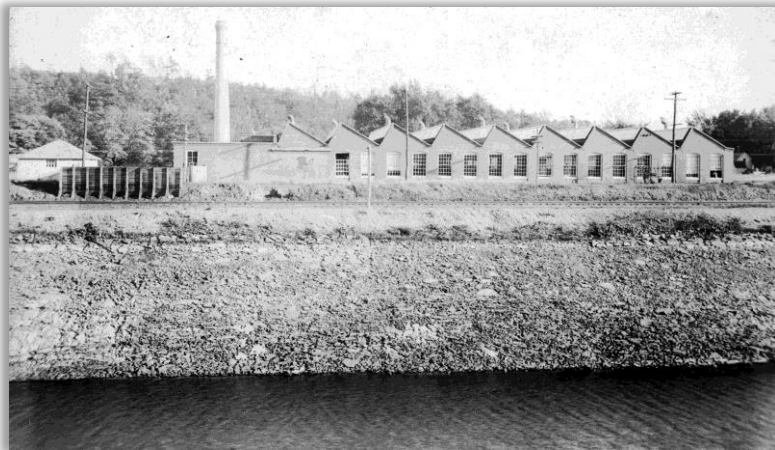
The next three industries were located on the east side of the Turners Falls Canal.

The Wells Forge got its start in 1907 and was purchased by the Greenfield Tap & Die Corporation in 1916. It is now defunct.



Wells Forge.

Fifty yards south of the Wells Forge, the McLane Silk Mill began its business in 1914 producing silk threads and fabric. In 1928 the operation closed.



McLane Silk Mill.



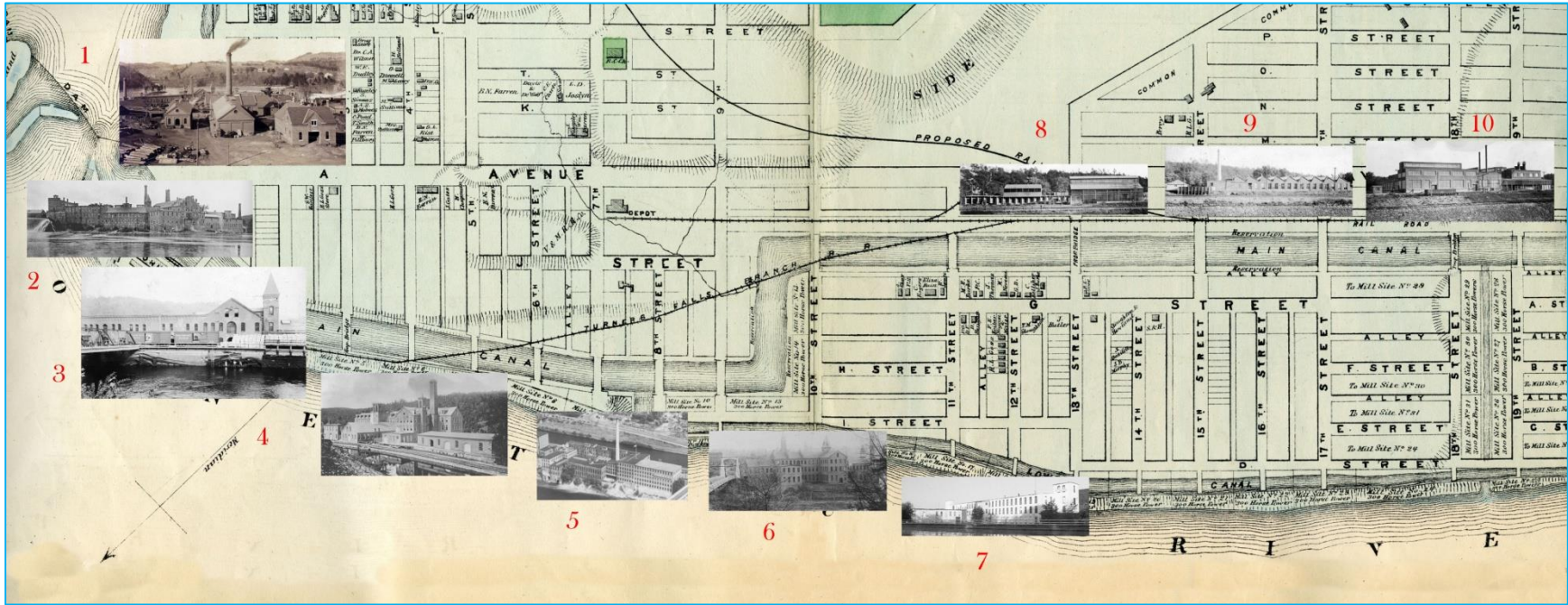
Montague Machine Company.

The Montague Machine Company is the evolution of the Clarke & Chapman Machine Company previously cited.

Founded in 1908, it continues business today.

Notes

Turners Falls industry that employed several "Patch" residents.



This abbreviated 1871 Beers Atlas layout of Turners Falls shows the major industries laid-in as they appeared along the canal. Seven occupied space on the canal's west bank . . . three on the east. For this presentation, their locations are not absolute.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1. Clarke & Chapman Machine Co. | 6. Turners Falls Paper Co. |
| 2. Turners Falls Pulp Co. | 7. Griswold Cotton Mill |
| 3. Russell Cutlery | 8. Wells Forge |
| 4. Keith Paper Co. | 9. McLane Silk Mill |
| 5. Esleeck Manufacturing Co. | 10. Montague Machine Co. (was Clarke & Chapman) |

Ancillary information of germane content provided by Janel Nockleby.

Around the County - Historic Bridge Regains Its Luster

Sunday Republican (Springfield, MA) - Sunday, November 19, 1995

Author: JOSEPH A. PARZYCH; STAFF: SUNDAY REPUBLICAN (Springfield,

Contractors R. Bates & Sons of Clinton have nearly completed restoration of the historic 11th street bridge in the village of Turners Falls. The 80-year-old bridge is of unique design in Massachusetts and perhaps the entire country, according to Department Highway Director John Hoey of the Massachusetts Highway Department.

"The basic truss configuration is the double intersection warren," Hoey said, "With four cones of trusses forming a triple-barreled bridge." (warren is a type of truss named after the designer.)

The pair of trusses flank the central roadway. Lateral struts and bracing join the side trusses overhead forming tunnels for sidewalks on either side. No upper struts or bracing of any kind join over the central roadway, leaving it open overhead. This is the only bridge of this type found among the 194 metal truss bridges in the Massachusetts DPW database, according to Hoey.

The Eastern Bridge & Structural Company of Worcester, erected the ironwork in 1916 for the Turners Falls company, a private enterprise. The bridge's overall length, including approaches, is 198 feet. Width is 27 feet. The bridge, itself, is 167 feet long, spanning the 125 foot wide canal. The Turners Falls Company was the result of a reorganization of the Proprietors of the Locks and Canals along the Connecticut River.

The proprietors of the canal company originally built a 50 foot wide canal, and locks, for river boats and barges to circumnavigate Great Falls on the Connecticut River. (The falls were renamed Turners Falls to honor Captain Turner who lead a raid on an Indian fishing encampment at the falls where he and his valiant soldiers slaughtered sleeping women and children, while the Indian braves were away.)¹

After railroads outmoded steamboat and barge transportation in 1906², the Turners Falls Company widened the 50 foot canal to 125 feet, deepened it to 15 feet. They added a 1,000 foot extension to divert water to a electric power generating plant the company built on the Connecticut River, according to The Northfield Mountain interpreter.

The canal also supplied water to power machinery in several mills along the canal. Water turbines turned elaborate systems of shafts, pulleys and belts connected to various machines in the mills. Later, the turbines turned generators to furnish electricity for electric motors in those same mills. One lone mill still in operation, Esleek Manufacturing Company, a paper mill, still generates electrical power in the spring during periods of high water.

With no need to keep the canal open overhead for boats, the Turners Falls Company undertook the ambitious plan of spanning the canal at the end of each cross street to join the spit of land formed by the canal along the Connecticut River.

It was common, then, for private companies to fund what is now considered public works projects. Mills often built employee housing in conjunction with mill construction, also. Economic times often disrupted grandiose plans. And only four bridges out a planned 12 were built.

Soon after the water power generating facilities began producing power, several electric companies joined to form Western Massachusetts Electric Company. The 11th Street Bridge was part of the deal. Later, in the 1950's western Mass Electric sold the bridge to the Town of Montague for \$1 - a questionable bargain.

¹ This description of Turner's raid on a peaceful Indian village while the Indian braves were away, is not totally accurate. There was reason for the raid. History writers should reflect the entire story before making one-sided assumptions. e.g.

² The railroads began to replace the canal traffic in 1858. By 1906 they were well established e.g.

One town employee said, "It's like getting a Cadillac with no engine." Repairing the bridge has also been likened to jacking up the Cadillac's horn and replacing the car.

"The Trusses are in excellent shape but everything else is pretty well shot," crane operator Bob DeForge said. "Even the abutments have to be replaced."

For new abutments, Bates' Manitowac 2300 crane drove two-foot diameter casings 12 feet deep, using an ICE air powered pile driver attachment. The pile driver drove 12-inch I-beam piles inside the casings down to bedrock 50 feet below.

The original builders hot riveted the bridge together at the site. "They did a good job," DeForge said, "we only had to replace a couple rivets, we're replacing them with high tensile strength bolts. The rivets are soft, but they held up damn good all these years."

While the trusses remain in excellent condition, after 80 years of abuse from de-icing salt and calcium chloride, the substructure suffered extensive deterioration. The restoration bid price was \$284,000. But once Bate's crew removed the deck, more deterioration was revealed than originally anticipated. The final cost has yet to be tallied.

Though it would have been much faster and perhaps cheaper to demolish and replace the bridge with a concrete bridge. And despite the problems of restoration, Hoey feels the historic bridge merits preservation because of its unique design.

"The problem is that the structure is like a house of cards," Hoey said, "You have to be careful about pulling out structural members or the whole thing will come down."

While Bates' welders have repaired and beefed up the deck substructure, the crew is replacing many beams and braces by bolting them in place rather than welding or riveting. Operator Deforge removes deteriorated beams and sets new ones with R. Bates & sons' Grove 35T rough terrain crane. The crew then bolts new beams in place.

"We're putting in over 7,000 bolts, drilling the holes on site," Deforge said. "We had some pieces pre-drilled but the holes didn't line up with the ones on the bridge. They were off by a half inch in places. Now we're getting the steel blank and drilling the holes here on the job. They (the original builders) must have drilled the holes as the bridge was being built. I don't know what they drilled them with, but there must be a million rivets in that bridge."

Retired contractor Steven Puffer, Jr. of Amherst who worked on similar iron bridges during that period, said that most of the rivet holes in bridge ironwork were pre-punched at the factory for assembly at the site, iron workers drilled some holes with compressed air drills on the job.

The 11th Street Bridge serves the community called the "Patch" where workers for Turners Falls, a once bustling factory village live. The bridge also provided access to a cotton mill and an axe foundry, closed now for many years.

The "Patch" is predominately Polish, though many French-Canadian construction workers, who came to build the village's mills and bridges, settled here. Restoration is complicated by having to keep the bridge sidewalks open for foot traffic from the Patch.

Water and gas mains that had to be re-routed, change orders, delays in receiving material, and hearings to cut down trees delayed the project. A completion date is uncertain, but a November opening is targeted.

Tales of Truth . . . from the recollections of those involved.

A hot, late August, early evening, a bunch of us guys were sitting on Zewinski's front steps gettin' ready for a dip in the canal. We had bathing suits and sneakers on and one guy speaks-up. "Hey! Let's take Blassie's crane¹ for a spin around the junk yard. We all looked at each other . . . let's go!

We hoofed it down "G" Street till we reach Balssie's. 'Joe' jumped up on the crane, got in the cockpit and fired it up. A couple of engine revs, he slapped it in gear, the rest of us jumped on and we were clankin' around the yard at about 2-miles per hour.

Someone saw a cruiser comin' down "G" Street with the bubble-gum machine flashin'. One of the neighbors must have called the cops. Joe shuts the crane down and we all jumped off and headed for the canal. Over the fence and into the 'drink' we went. We stayed close to the grassy shore `cause it hid us pretty good.

The cops didn't catch us but I'll bet he knew who we were. We stayed in the water till the cop left. By that time it was gettin' dark. We had a hell-of-a good laugh about that one. We never did it again.

e.g.

1. Blassberg's junk yard had a large crane in the yard for moving big objects.

Another Take on the *Coke Cleves* name:

I believe the **Coke Leaves** name came from the times when Western Mass. Electric used to clean the grid that was on the gate. It was usually filled with these big chunks of black stuff. I think it was coke* from Shanahan's coal sheds that was thrown into the canal and ended-up pluggin' up the gate. We used to watch em' clean the gate while we stood under the Oak trees that were nearby. We just gave the gate the name Coke Leaves. Whoever called it *Coke Cleves* is wrong! *anon.*

* a solid residue consisting mainly of carbon, left after the volatile elements have been driven from bituminous coal or other petroleum material. Use: fuel.

Coke Cleves rears its ambiguous head again!

I had the opportunity to reacquaint with an old friend of mine . . . John Crowley, who worked for Western Mass. Electric for 32 years. For many of those years, John was in charge of maintenance for canal. I asked him if he knew anything about "Coke Cleves". He remembers that the headwall there, supposedly built for a drainage gate foundation, was never used to drain the canal. *"In fact, there was never a grated wall that I'm aware of. Back in the 1980s an effort was made to expose the would-be drainage tunnel from the west end, where the tunnel would drain into the river. The plan was to find out if there was a tunnel there and if it was intact and if so, was it safe! Mackin came in with a D-10 dozer to dig out the mouth. All that was found was a concrete wall . . . no outlet. During the excavation the transmission in the dozer was ruined. And that 'gate valve' you mentioned at 'Square Rock' is in fact not a gate, but simply a man-hole to access to the supposed tunnel for inspection purposes. The name we knew the headwall as is Copley's. I'm not sure if the resident engineer's name was Copley or what. But that's what we called it . . . Copley's."* *e.g.*

Learning to Smoke

Gleaned From "Polish and Proud" "*Jadzia*" (Bakula) Bourbeau-2002

"One Saturday afternoon we decided we wouldn't go to the movies, instead we pooled our money to buy a pack of cigarettes. Who was going to buy them?"

Jeanne volunteered as her mother sent her many times to Ed's Store for cigarettes.

No questions asked for she bought her mother's brand.

Where to go? Into the woods by Bukowski's of course. This was a great hide out on the sandy bank behind the huge boulders.

There was Jeanne, myself, Fran and Jaboo (Ya-boo). We wasted more matches trying to light the cigarettes without putting the cigarette in our mouths. That's how much we knew about smoking.

They elected me to go and ask Bukowska for matches because I could speak to her in Polish. She was deaf and when she finally understood what I wanted she shook her head negatively and said "no".

Back to the hide out. I think it was Fran who finally said, "I think my father puts it in his mouth first." It worked!

We ventured down by the river. Naturally we got wet jumping stones. We built a fire and dried our socks.

Yaboo said, "we better listen for the five o'clock whistle or our folks will know we didn't go to the movies. We climbed the river bank and got up onto the road and headed towards Eds Store to come home. If we walked from the woods and our folks saw us they would catch on.

I don't know who we were trying to kid for as I think of it, our clothes must have smelled smoke from the fire.

It was a fun afternoon.

As far as I know Fran still lives in the Patch. The last I knew Jeanne was in California and Jaboo died. I live in Turners."

Living where I did in the Patch allowed me to watch the goings-on at Ed's store . . . the back-door entrance that is. On certain days I saw various men I know from town ring the bell, the door would open and they would be allowed in.

They weren't goin' in to play the pinball machine or have a coke . . . they were goin' in there to play poker. I know they used to have some big games in there. They weren't playin' for peanuts!

j.p.b.

There was a guy that lived on "G" Street that held card games in his cellar. He had one of those little bicycle bells screwed into the bulkhead door. You know, the little bell with the flat metal lever on it. When you pushed the lever with your thumb the bell would "ding-a-ling", the doors would open and the guys would head downstairs.

s.w.

I remember a guy from the Patch that committed suicide. He shot himself in the gut down in the Patch Woods by "Lone Pine". They found his body up by the canal where the lake is before Cabot Station. The gut-shot evidently didn't kill him. He must have crawled through the woods up to the canal.

They said he carved this message into the pine tree where he shot himself. "God is my God, my rock and forest tree." I saw that in the tree. It's long grown over now.

anon.

During WWII, most of the Patch folks didn't have telephones. One place in the village did have a pay-phone booth for public use. When a soldier wanted to phone his family from where ever he or she may be, the only number they took with him when they left home was the number for Kliska's store pay-phone. So . . . when a call came in from a service member, Pete, or one of his customers at the time, would walk or run to that home to let the folks know that their son or daughter was calling. It worked well for the families. Pete did a big service for them.

s.w.

Photo Gallery



Ed Gregory archive

Ed Zewinski's Store - In The "Back Room" April 12, 1950.

Lower left . . . around the horn: Jocko Kortz - John "Sully" Sullivan (Looking at Camera) - John "Mushy" Muszynski (Arm around Sullivan) Don "Zoo" Zewinski - (Hat Behind Zewinski is Unknown) Edgar "Hippo" Mullins (Tying Flies) Henry "Corper" Bocon - "Mottsy" Hoynoski (In Rear) - "Skipper" Sojka (hat pin) - Bob Nadeau (leaning on hand) . . . (Backs to Camera are Unknown).

It appears that the *boys* are taking a lesson in fly-tying from "Hippo". The real reason they're at Zoo's this day is indiscreetly lying on the card table . . . who'da thunk it!



Mitzi Croteau works the family garden.
c. 1950 Courtesy Mitzi Croteau



11th St. Bridge new deck, 1995.
Courtesy Mitzi Croteau



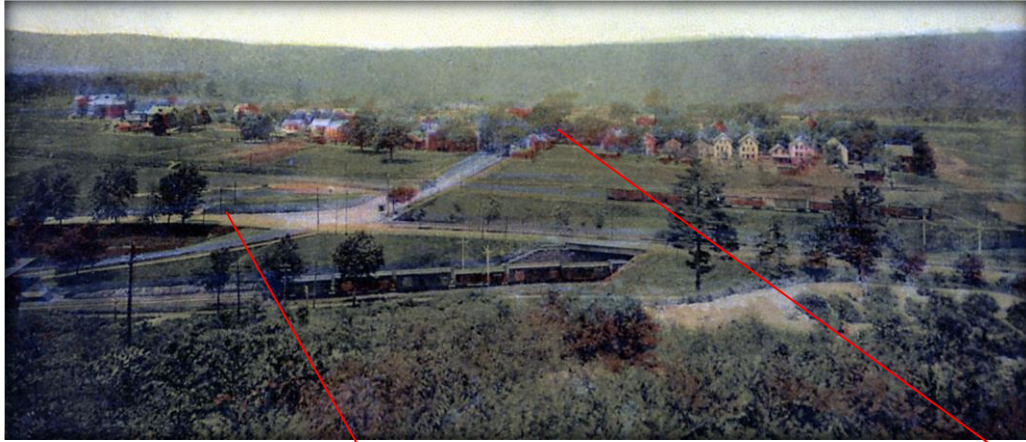
After Rockdale it was *Ruby Vine's* Railroad Salvage. c.1985
Ed Gregory archive



Looking north. Today's bike path runs along the dirt road. c.1985
Ed Gregory archive.



Looking southwest at "G" St. alley. c.1985 Ed Gregory archive



Postcard depiction of the Patch from Highland Ave. before the canal and the 11th Street Bridge. 1908 Ed Gregory archive.



Ice removal at the No. 1 Power Station at the Patch. C.1956. The Griswold Cotton Mill (Rockdale) is shown in the rear.

Courtesy Mrs. Joseph Naida



Millie Traceski at 11th St. Ed Zewinski's Original storefront is in the rear. 1944. The sign says . . . *Confectionary Fro-Joy Ice Cream* Courtesy Linda Traceski Creek



The Patch' sons during WWII. 1944. Courtesy Linda Traceski Creek



Flag Day, 1944. An unidentified woman hangs the American Flag and a banner that depicts a family member is in the service. Courtesy Linda Traceski Creek

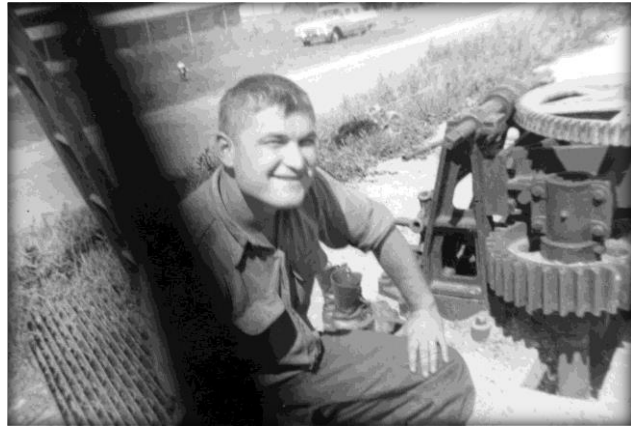
The house that anchors the wire that holds the flags is that of Frank Ptak. It's the first house on the right as you enter the patch crossing the 11th St. Bridge. A portion of the bridge is shown in the photo. That house is currently being renovated (2012).

I was told a story that one time when Frank was attaching the flags to the wire, he fell off the lower roof and broke an arm. He picked himself up and finished the task.

The folks in the Patch did this for each year of WWII, and when the troops came home. *s.w.*



An unidentified group celebrates the 4th of July, 1938, near Rock Dam.
Courtesy Linda Traceski Creek



Joe Naida, Western Mass. Elec. Co. diver, at the "Square" 1956.
Courtesy Mrs. Joseph Naida

Joe was quite a historian. When I began my employment with Western Mass., if there was anything I needed to know about the area or about the job, Joe was the go-to guy. I learned a lot from him. I'm glad I knew the man. He was a good friend.
John



Joe Naida prepares to dive into the canal to inspect the gates that keep rubble from entering the penstocks at the No.1 Power Station at the Patch. 1956. Courtesy Mrs. Joseph Naida

~end~