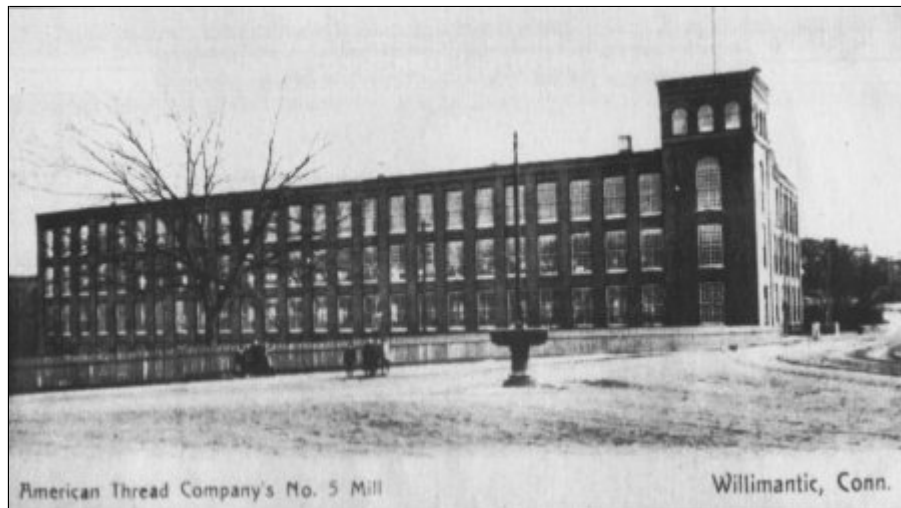


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## Mill Number Five Represented a Major Investment for Owners, Part Two of Two

ATCO's draftsmen and engineers designed Mill Number Five. It was 272' long and 100' wide, originally designed as four stories high a fifth story being added to later designs, and then abandoned and no basement. The building featured a 72' high tower on its northwest corner, facing the street. The roof integrated a "new idea" in drainage for large buildings. It was built of timber, overlaid with gravel, pitch and felt and sloped inwards from each corner to a central 7 1/2 inches diameter iron drainpipe.

**The photograph featured here comes from Francois Gamache's extensive postcard collection. It is an interesting view taken in 1904 before the construction of Mill Number Six, looking south from Thread Mill Square. It reveals the old water fountain and the old road which was realigned when Mill Number Six was built. Next week sees the first of a two part article which recalls the building of that mill in 1907.**



The original specifications called for the walls to be constructed of "hard merchantable brick with no soft spots or salmon color." The outside walls were laid in red mortar with granite window sills and a granite date plate, 12 inches high, bearing the inscription '1899'. The doors were made with three inch North Carolina pine plank, covered with 7/8 inch thick maple with two thicknesses of tar paper between. The mill's stairways were constructed of Georgia pine. Each floor consisted of 353,000' of two and three inch hard pine boards. Also, each floor contained eight water closets each, which drained into the Willimantic River. A local firm, Moriarty and Rafferty, won the \$2,000 plumbing contract.

The designs included plans for a 50' long, 15' high and 15' wide tunnel, under the highway connecting Mill Number Five with Mill Number One, enabling material to be transported by the company's small gauge railroad from the new finishing mill to new storage and shipping facilities in Mill Number One. The tunnel also housed mechanical shafting to transmit driving power from Mill Number One to the new mill. Mill

Number One's water power capacity was increased in 1899/1900 for this purpose. The construction of Mill Number Five's foundations began on November 7, 1899, with the construction of a retaining wall on the south-side of the new mill next to the Willimantic river. The excavation of the tunnel commenced on November 11, 1899.

Work continued through the winter. The mill's first two floors were up before work was suspended on January 26, 1900, as the bricklayers' mortar was freezing solid. The brickwork recommenced on March 20, and was completed in May. On March 29, 1900, a 50' flagpole was raised atop the mill's 72' high tower. In early June, power-shafting was installed in the tunnel under South Main Street from Mill Number One's improved water power capacity. By July, the mill's carpentry was completed. At 5. 15 on the morning of July 4, 1900, a large crowd assembled. Two canons, fire crackers and blank cartridges were fired, and a stars and stripes flag was raised among "mighty cheers" to a height of more than 120 feet on the new mill's tower. By August, the powershafting was installed, and it was hoped to have Mill Number Five operating by October 1, 1900. This proved to be overly optimistic, as the shafting was not completed until December 27, 1900, and the mill did not enter full production until March, 1901. Mill Number Five has graced Willimantic for most of the 20th century. When it was almost completed, in November, 1900, ATCO's directors announced that they had expended almost one million dollars on their New England mills the majority being spent on Willimantic's new finishing mill.