

Hill Towns & Mill Villages

The Mill Village Tour *South to north along Route 12.*

Plainfield



13. Lawton Mills & Village (National Historic Register District). Lawton Mills was designed in the Italianate Industrial Style for Harold Lawton in 1905 and enlarged in 1911 (the only remaining portion). The first in the Quinebaug Valley to be powered by steam, the cotton mill once employed as many as 1,200 workers, housed in 125 duplex residences. The complex included 15 homes for supervisors, a distinctive pink community center in the Colonial revival style equipped with a large auditorium and swimming pool (now the Plainfield Town Hall), and **The Lawton Inn**, a hotel residence for single employees and visitors that has been renovated as housing for the elderly. **The Town Hall** contains interesting historical murals that may be seen by the public during regular business hours.

Travel to Route 14A, north on Route 12, 0.6 miles to:

14. Stone Meetinghouse (located in a National Historic Register District). The First Congregational Church of Plainfield, better known as the Stone Meetinghouse, stands in the village that grew up along the Norwich to Providence road around 1712. The congregation, organized in 1705, had several earlier buildings in the neighborhood. The present building, a handsome stone structure in the Federal style, was designed by the noted architect Ithiel Town c. 1816. As was common in Connecticut towns, the meetinghouse also housed the town government until 1872 when a new town hall was erected. The congregation used the upper floor of the original meetinghouse; the lower floor was used for town meetings and other town business.

*Travel north on Route 12, through the **Central Village National Historic Register District**, past the **Plainfield Woolen Mill** (c. 1901, now condominium), west on Route 205, a total of 4.5 miles to:*

15. Wauregan Mills & Village (National Historic Register District). The village of Wauregan looks today much as it did in the 1850s when Amos Lockwood purchased

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land and built the H-shaped cotton mill of local fieldstone. Powered by five turbine water wheels and two steam engines, the mill employed 800 workers at its peak. In 1858, James S. Atwood bought Lockwood's interest. The Atwood family operated the mill until 1957. Still standing are over 100 worker's houses, two boarding houses for single workers, the company store, and James S. Atwood's house.

Travel east on Route 205, north on Route 12, west on Route 6, first left to South Main Street, east on South Main Street, south on Tiffany Street, a total of 5.2 miles to:

Brooklyn



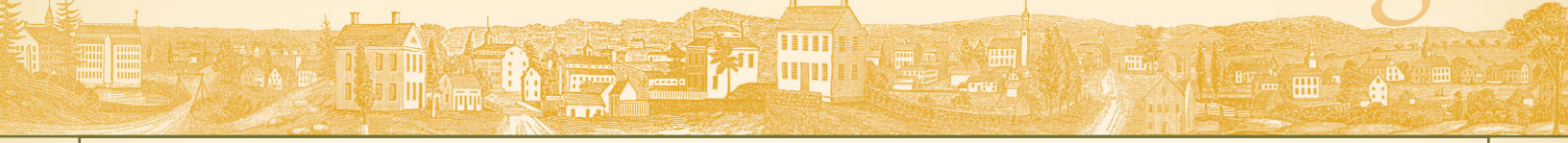
16. Quebec Square (National Historic Register District) – **Quinebaug Mills Weave Shed** (National Register of Historic Places). The Quinebaug Mill succeeded the old Tiffany Mill built in 1827 by Comfort Tiffany whose son Charles L. (of New York retailing fame) was the first manager of the company store. Amos D. Lockwood built the Quinebaug Mill (c. 1852) and by 1900 it was one of the largest and most complete cotton mills in Connecticut. It had 61,340 spindles, 1,656 looms, and produced 28 miles of cloth each day. Its production reached a peak during World War I. In 1961, most of the mill was destroyed by fire but the weave shed (c. 1881) and the mill houses for workers have survived. **Quebec Square**, across from the weave shed, dates from 1881. It was restored for use as low cost housing in 1984. Six distinctive brick row houses, each of which contains eight one and a half story apartments, surround a park quadrangle. Other somewhat earlier townhouses have survived nearby, as has the old Tiffany Company store at South Main Street. This area of present day Brooklyn was once part of Killingly.

Travel east on Route 6, 0.6 miles to:

Killingly (villages of Danielson, Elmville, Attawaugan)



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17. Danielson Cotton Mill. The red brick mill at Maple and Main Street (National Historic Register District) was built as the Danielson Cotton Mill in 1868. It succeeded two earlier wooden mills built by General James Danielson, a grandson of the borough's namesake.

Travel north on Route 12, 0.4 miles to:

18. Downtown Danielson and Davis Park. The Town of Killingly is an interesting example of how the development of New England towns was affected by technological innovations. Incorporated in 1708, the town remained sparsely settled until the early 19th century when the textile industry began to make use of the Quinebaug River and its tributaries. The early center of present day Danielson was north of Davis Park in Westfield Village. Stagecoaches to Plainfield traveled along Broad Street. In 1839, a rail depot was constructed to the east of the tracks and just north of Main Street. Business activities quickly shifted toward the "Railroad Village" in what is now the center of downtown. Along Main Street is the **Killingly Town Hall**, built in 1876 as the Music Hall, the finest center in its day for cultural entertainment in Windham County. The **Westfield Congregational Church** was organized in 1801 when the area was truly a "west field;" the building dates back to 1855. The triangular park was given to the town in 1893 by Edwin W. Davis in memory of his parents.

Travel north on Route 12, 1.8 miles to Dog Hill Road:

19. Elmville Mill. One of some dozen or so sites of active textile mills from the 1800s and early 1900s built on the Whetstone Brook. Five remain today.

Travel north on Route 12, 2.5 miles to:

20. Attawaugan Village & Mill. Another fine example of worker homes and a mill village.

Travel north on Route 12, 4.4 miles to:

Putnam

21. Putnam Railroad Station (National Register of Historic Places). Although not incorporated until 1855, the area of present-day Putnam, know as Pomfret Factory Depot, was already well established as a manufacturing and railroad center. The Norwich & Worcester main track (c. 1839) crossed the Boston-Hartford route. By the turn of the 20th century, 50 trains a day were common. The present railroad station was erected in 1905 near the site of the second station building (c. 1860s). The commercial center that grew up around the station drew professional men from surrounding hill towns to new brick office buildings and readily available banking and other business services.

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Travel north on Route 12, west on Route 44, 0.3 miles to:

22. Pomfret Cotton Mills at Cargill Falls. Cargill Falls on the Quinebaug River are named for Benjamin Cargill who operated several mills from 1760-1793. The falls later attracted the interest of the Wilkinson and Rhodes families, textile manufacturers from Rhode Island. In 1806, Smith Wilkinson, brother-in-law to Samuel Slater, selected this site to establish the first cotton mill in Windham County. The first building, a four-story wood framed structure, stood on the west bank below the falls. The four-story squared stone mill (c. 1823) standing just west of the detached office buildings on Pomfret Street is the oldest standing factory building in the valley. Mills on this site produced textile products continuously since 1807 to the late 1960s, the oldest such site in the nation. Along Route 44 near the mill are numerous tenements built to house the mill workers. Along **Church Street**, overlooking the river were the fine homes of mill owners and professional men. The Italianate house at the top of the hill was the home of Smith Wilkinson and subsequent mill owners. **The Town Hall** is an outstanding example of Victorian Gothic architecture. It was built in 1874 and served as Putnam's first high school until 1911.

From Church Street, travel east on Bridge Street, north on Kennedy Drive and west on Providence Street (Route 171), a total of 1.5 miles to:

23. St. Mary's Cemetery. Beginning around 1849, immigrant Catholic families in the Putnam area were served by Irish missionary priests. In 1866, Rev. Eugene Vygen, a newly ordained priest from Holland, became the first pastor of St. Mary's Parish. By 1870, the parish has purchased land, laid out a cemetery, and built a rectory and church. The present **St. Mary's Church**, on Providence Street, was built in 1902 and is the third church building of the parish. The angels at the cemetery gates and the many crosses within differentiate it from the Protestant graveyards in the region that tend to have other symbols. Separate sections of the cemetery have been set aside for the parish priests and for the sisters of the Daughters of the Holy Spirit, teachers in the parochial school.

Travel east on Providence Street (Route 171), north on Route 12, 4.9 miles to:

Thompson



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24. Masonville – Grosvenordale Mills. This mill village was once called Masonville, named for the family that built a small wooden cotton mill on the French River in 1813. In 1861, Dr. William Grosvenor, who had married into the Mason family and taken over the operation of the Masonville Company, moved the old mill and built a five-story brick cotton sheeting mill, the remains of which may be seen today. Several yards upstream is the three-story stuccoed fieldstone mill built by the Masons in 1826. In 1831, they attached the other three-story brick mill, and constructed the four brick houses to the south of the mills. Directly across the road are four double-entry stone and brick dwellings built by the company for its working families.

Travel north on Route 12, 1.4 miles to:

25. North Grosvenordale Mill (National Historic Register District). By 1864, Grosvenor owned most of the shares in the Masonville Company and proceeded to buy the water rights and mill of the Fisherville Company. Masonville became Grosvenordale; Fisherville became North Grosvenordale. The mills were merged into the Grosvenordale Company, a very large manufacturer of cotton sheeting. In 1872, the Grosvenordale Company built a mammoth cotton mill. The 464-foot-long turbine and steam powered mill was capable of developing 1,260 horsepower. In 1900, the mill had 1,750 employees and was considered to be the largest mill and employer in Windham County. Nearby mill housing includes “**Three Rows**” south of the mill, “**Swede Village**” west of the mill, and “**Greek Village**” east of Three Rows and across the river. The largest building on the hill west of the mill was the company store and boarding house. The warehouses along the railroad tracks to the east complete the complex. The mill continued to produce textiles until 1954, long after many of its competitors had gone out of business in the region.

Travel south on Route 12, east on Route 200, a total of 3.4 miles to:

26. Thompson Hill (National Historic Register District). The Thompson Hill Common is at the junction of Routes 200 and 193. The buildings around it were constructed in the early 1800s, a time of great prosperity for this crossroads of the Boston to Hartford and Providence to Springfield Pikes. The **Congregational Church**, c. 1855, was restored after a 1987 steeple fire. The **Vernon Stiles Inn**, c. 1814, was a long-time rest stop at the crossroads. The **Gay-Larned House** at the corner of Routes 193 and Chase Road was the home of Windham County’s historian, Ellen B. Larned (1825-1912).

Travel south on Route 193 to Route 12, cross intersection to West Thompson Dam Road, a total of 2.4 miles to:

27. West Thompson Dam. Many of the homes, churches and other buildings that made up the village of West Thompson were destroyed to make way for the dam and flood control reservoir that impounds the Quinebaug River.

Travel west on West Thompson Dam Road, north on Route 171, north on Route 169, a total of 5.3 miles to Woodstock Hill to begin the Hill Town Tour.

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