

## VILLAGE OF NASONVILLE

The village of Nasonville was founded in 1825 by Leonard Nason who purchased the land on both sides of the river. Previous to that time, it was considered a wilderness. Mr. Nason immediately built a dam, cleared the land, dug a trench and mill race, erected a dwelling house, and put up a small mill for the manufacture of axes and hoes. In the spring of 1826, he had his machinery operating and built houses for his workers. By 1850, 1000 chopping axes and hoes a day were manufactured there. Mr. Nason purchased tracts of land to expand his acreage and holdings from various landholders. After several changes in ownership, losses by fire, and with additional buildings constructed, Joshua Perkins leased the property in 1886 and started manufacturing fancy cashmeres and woolens. Perkins built a large general store in the village, which supplied not only his workers but other inhabitants in the immediate vicinity. Later, Austin T. Levy bought out Mr. Perkins and continued manufacturing woolens until 1959 when the mill was sold to a plastics manufacturer.

The main road in Nasonville is the Douglas Turnpike built as the shortest way between Providence and Douglas, MA in 1805. The Western Hotel was a stopping place for travelers on the Pike with food and lodging available. There was a railroad station in Nasonville on the New York and New England line between Pascoag and Woonsocket. When the trolleys arrived in 1902, they shared the station with the Railroad.

The village of Nasonville was divided into three parts: Nasonville proper, Mohegan, and Tarkiln/Oak Valley. During the Civil War, the Mohegan Mill made Army cloth at the rate of 3000 yards a week. The Wanskuck Co. purchased the property in 1898 and stayed in business until 1954. Atlas Pallet purchased the property in 1974 and is still in the business of reconditioning pallets.

There were four mills in the Tarkiln/Oak Valley area. In 1810 a cotton mill was erected. The first white settler of Burrillville, John Smith, built his original cabin near Oak Valley. In 1815, Oak Valley and Tarkiln were the centers of a thriving neighborhood, and formation of a bank was proposed. Samuel Slater was asked to be its president, but he insisted the bank be built in the town named after him, Slatersville. Thus, Burrillville money was used to build the first bank in this part of Rhode Island. Unfortunately, over the years, the mills in the Tarkiln/Oak Valley area disappeared.

Our mills would never have been built without the waterways, and our villages would never have been settled without the mills. Nasonville and its surrounding areas are a prime example of the ways things used to be in the Town of Burrillville.

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