

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name United States Rubber Company Mill Complex

other names/site number R.I. Locomotive Works, American Locomotive Co., Joseph Bannigan Rubber Co., Uniroyal

2. Location

street & number Bounded by Hemlock and Valley streets, Richmond Place, and the Woonasquatucket River not for publication

city or town Providence vicinity

state Rhode Island code RI county Providence code 007 zip code 02903

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register
 - See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register
 - See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
 - See continuation sheet.
- removed from the National Register.
 - See continuation sheet.
- other (explain)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

United States Rubber Company Mill Complex
Name of Property

Providence County, Rhode Island
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
29	4	buildings
		sites
4		structures
		objects
33	4	total

Name of related multiple property listings

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility
COMMERCE/business

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER/Industrial

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation STONE/granite, CONCRETE
walls BRICK, CONCRETE
METAL/steel
roof ASPHALT: shingle; SYNTHETICS: rubber
other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

United States Rubber Company Mill Complex
Name of Property

Providence County, Rhode Island
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 36) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

c. 1885 – 1954

Significant Dates

1885, 1896

1905, 1918

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

William Gilbane & Brothers; Cruise and Smiley

United States Rubber Company Mill Complex
Name of Property

Providence County, Rhode Island
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 23 acres

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 9	2 9 7 4 5 8	4 6 3 3 1 6 2
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	1 9	2 9 8 1 1 6	4 6 3 3 5 7 2

3	1 9	2 9 8 2 1 4	4 6 3 3 3 7 4
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	1 9	2 9 7 5 4 1	4 6 3 3 0 8 9

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Edward Connors, Principal

organization Edward Connors and Associates date December 2004

street & number 14 Brook Street telephone 401 433-2871

city or town Barrington state RI zip code 02806

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and amend listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

United States Rubber Company Mill Complex	Providence	Providence County, RI
Name of Property	City/Town	County and State
Section Number <u>7</u>	Page <u>1</u>	

Description

General

The United States Rubber Company Mill Complex is a large factory complex that evolved from the late-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, consisting, for the most part, of large, long, gable-roofed, red brick buildings, one to five stories tall, on an expansive site along Valley Street, on the banks of the Woonasquatucket River. Constructed between c. 1885 and c. 1960, thirty-three buildings (twenty-nine contributing and four non-contributing) and four structures (all contributing) are inventoried in this document.

This complex occupies an area of slightly more than 23 acres. It is defined by Valley Street to the north, Richmond Place to the west, Hemlock Street to the east, and the Woonasquatucket River to the south. Eagle Street, the former eastern boundary of the late-19th-century Joseph Banigan Rubber Company Complex, now runs in a north-south axis through the complex. The United States Rubber Company Mill Complex consists of buildings, overhead walkways and pipeways, asphalted areas, and interior roadways. A granite water level marker is also inventoried. There are also significant remains of two bridges that once spanned the Woonasquatucket River and a reinforced concrete enclosed bridge spanning Eagle Street.

The site has a complex history of ownership, use, and change. The following inventory describes two groups of buildings that evolved under separate ownership and separate industrial use until they were combined under the ownership of United States Rubber Company in 1918.

The Joseph Banigan Rubber Company began operations in 1896 at the western end of the present complex. These works were acquired by Revere Rubber Company, a division of U.S. Rubber Company, in 1910. Over time, U.S. Rubber improved the Banigan works, expanding easterly across Eagle Street to the vicinity of the American Locomotive Company plant at the eastern end of the property. In 1918 the United States Rubber Company acquired the works of the American Locomotive Company (successor to the Rhode Island Locomotive Works, 1866–1898). One R.I. Locomotive Works (RILW) building, the former office (Bldg. 61), survives. Three buildings associated with American Locomotive Works (1902–1918), successor to RILW and manufacturer of the Berliet and ALCO automobiles, also survive. These were incorporated into the U.S. Rubber Company plant in 1918. The remainder of the complex represents the U.S. Rubber Company's addition of buildings in its eastward expansion to Hemlock Street.

Very little demolition has occurred. Demolished buildings include: the 1896 Banigan Rubber Company office building (Building 17, between 1951 and 1960), a second office building for U.S. Rubber that stood next to Building 17 (Building 19, between 1951 and 1960), Building 28 (between 1926 and 1937), Building 86 (after 1960), and Building 55 (after 1960).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

United States Rubber Company Mill Complex	Providence	Providence County, RI
Name of Property	City/Town	County and State
Section Number <u>7</u>	Page <u>2</u>	

Inventory

Contributing buildings and structures are those built during the period of significance that retain all or most of their original features. Non-contributing buildings are those built after the period of significance, altered in such a way as to no longer resemble the original structure, or minor additions of a temporary nature.

The building numbering scheme follows a convention established by United States Rubber Company in the 20th century.

Eagle Street

25 Building 10, Banigan Rubber Company Carpenter and Last Shop (1896): A four-story, 160' x 50', brick, gable-roofed building, sited perpendicular to Building 5 and built as the Carpenter and Last Shop. A "last" is a model of the human foot used in the forming of footwear. Framing consists of heavy timber with round-section iron columns.

This building originally faced into the courtyard until the construction of Buildings 8 and 9 in 1911. This building is of rectangular plan but for a slight inward jog on the east elevation that appears to follow an earlier property line. In 1921 a small pump house occupied this jog. The foundation is granite. The roof is shingled; the cornice is wooden.

Although several are brick-filled, upper floor windows are typically segmental arch, wood frame consisting of an 8-light upper sash fitted to the arch, a fixed 12-light sash, and a movable 8-light sash. Other windows are filled with glass brick or have been replaced with modern replacement types.

In 1921 this building housed a thread cutting operation (1st floor), steam curing (2nd floor), and golf ball manufacture (3rd floor).

Building 10, along with Buildings 1, 2, 3, 5, and 14, represents the Joseph Banigan Rubber Company plant as it existed from 1896 until its acquisition by the U.S. Rubber Company in 1910.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

United States Rubber Company Mill Complex	Providence	Providence County, RI
Name of Property	City/Town	County and State
Section Number <u>7</u>	Page <u>3</u>	

Eagle Street, continued

25 Building 11, U.S. Rubber Company Dip Goods Building (between 1918 and 1921): This 100' x 32' building is an extension of Building 18, duplicating its design. It extends from the east wall of Building 18 to Eagle Street. Unlike Building 18, there are no street level segmental arch entrances. Two modern garage doorways have been cut in along the alley. An altered commercial entrance is found at the northeast corner near Eagle Street. The south foundations of Buildings 11 and 18 are integral with the Woonasquatucket river wall.

Building 11 and Buildings 4, 6, 8, 9, 12, 15, 18, 33, and 34 represent an expansion of the Banigan Rubber Company plant after its acquisition by the U.S. Rubber Company in 1910. Most of these buildings were constructed by Cruise and Smiley, of Pawtucket, Rhode Island.

25 Building 14, Banigan Rubber Company Building (1896 et seq.): A brick, 62' x 18', single-story, gable-roofed building on the north bank of the Woonasquatucket. The western approximate half of this building appears to date to the original Banigan Rubber plant. It was lengthened to about twice its original size by U.S. Rubber Company between 1911 and 1918. The original space separating it from Building 18 was infilled in the early 20th century. Four segmental arch openings on the north elevation are cinder block filled or altered with modern metal inserts. On the west elevation is a cinder block connector to the modern shipping dock of Building 15. Its floor is concrete.

The function of this building in the original Banigan plant is unknown. In 1921 it served as a cement house and churn house. Another concrete/cement related structure in the location of the present Eastern Butcher Block shipping enclosure was demolished.

Building 14, along with Buildings 1, 2, 3, 5, and 10, represents the Joseph Banigan Rubber Company plant as it existed from 1896 until its acquisition by the U.S. Rubber Company in 1910.

25 Building 15, U.S. Rubber Company Machine and Carpenter Shop (1911 et seq.): A two-story, steel frame, brick, flat roofed, 120' x 50', pier and spandrel building. Ground floor steel columns are partially encased in concrete. Originally this building had an irregularly-shaped, single-story brick ell labeled as Building 16. In the late 20th-century a concrete block second story was added. This addition may have been carried out at the same time as the construction of the modern shipping dock and enclosure used by Eastern Butcher Block. This concrete block shipping enclosure extends easterly into the courtyard and is attached to Building 14.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

United States Rubber Company Mill Complex	Providence	Providence County, RI
Name of Property	City/Town	County and State
Section Number <u>7</u>	Page <u>4</u>	

Eagle Street, continued

An altered segmental arch door opens to the courtyard defined by Buildings 5 and 8. An original, wooden, 2nd-story freight door survives. Although most windows are of the modern replacement type, original metal-frame windows are found on the 2nd floor of the north and west elevations. These are rectangular, 30-light, metal frame, with a 9-light hopper. The roof is flat with half-round ceramic coping defining the roofline.

In 1921 this building housed a machine shop (1st floor) and a carpenter shop (2nd floor). It also housed the company printshop.

Building 15 and Buildings 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 18, 33, and 34 represent an expansion of the Banigan Rubber Company plant after its acquisition by the U.S. Rubber Company in 1910. Most of these buildings were constructed by Cruise and Smiley, of Pawtucket, Rhode Island.

25 Building 18, U.S. Rubber Company Dip Goods Building (1911): A two-story, brick, 115' x 32' building sited at the edge of the Woonasquatucket. This steel frame, pier and spandrel building has a concrete foundation and a flat roof with half-round ceramic coping defining the roofline. Brickwork above the 2nd-floor windows is corbelled in four courses to meet the surface of the adjoining piers. Surviving original windows are 20-light metal frame set in a rectangular opening with a brick sill. A six-light casement pivots open. Some original windows, especially those on the first floor, have been replaced with late 20th-century replacement type. Two overhead walkways span the alley to permit passage to Buildings 8 and 10. There are three segmental arch openings on the first floor; two are brick-filled. The remaining arched entrance has an original transom and a late 20th-century metal door.

A partial, shingled gable roof was added over the existing roof sometime ca 1970.

Building 18 and Buildings 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 15, 33, and 34 represent an expansion of the Banigan Rubber Company plant after its acquisition by the U.S. Rubber Company in 1910. Most of these buildings were constructed by Cruise and Smiley, of Pawtucket, Rhode Island.

(off) NC Building 7, U.S. Rubber Company Connector Building (between 1951 and 1960): A 3-story passage between Buildings 5 and 10. This flat roofed building has a concrete frame with cinderblock walls. A 2nd-story window is glass brick. A ground level entrance is now filled with plywood. This

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

United States Rubber Company Mill Complex	Providence	Providence County, RI
Name of Property	City/Town	County and State
Section Number <u>7</u>	Page <u>5</u>	

Eagle Street, continued

building occupies the original location of an elevated frame walkway between the same two buildings. Building 7 is also attached to Building 6.

- (off) **Building 9, U.S. Rubber Company Building (1911):** A two-story, 162' x 56', brick, rectangular plan, steel frame, gable roofed building. At the ground level two original segmental arch openings are altered: one is brick-filled; the other has been altered to accept a modern door. Upper story windows are rectangular metal frame. An oculus facing the alley is now filled with plywood. Above this oculus is a panel reading *RRCO 1911* (Revere Rubber Company).

In 1921 this building was used for rubber storage (1st floor) and tire curing (2nd floor).

Building 9 and Buildings 4, 6, 8, 11, 12, 15, 18, 33, and 34 represent an expansion of the Banigan Rubber Company plant after its acquisition by the U.S. Rubber Company in 1910. Most of these buildings were constructed by Cruise and Smiley, of Pawtucket, Rhode Island.

- (off) **Building 12, U.S. Rubber Company Boiler House (between 1918 and 1921):** An irregular plan, brick, roughly 100' x 50', two-story boiler house. The roof is flat and defined by ceramic coping. Windows are metal frame set in a segmental arch opening. One segmental arch entrance and two modern garage doors are located on the south elevation. A second-floor walkway sheathed in corrugated steel allows passage to the bridge spanning Eagle Street.

In 1921 this building was subdivided for three separate industrial functions: The eastern section served as the boiler house; the middle section was a pump room drawing fuel from nearby tanks; and the rear section housed refrigeration machinery.

Building 12 and Buildings 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 15, 18, 33, and 34 represent an expansion of the Banigan Rubber Company plant after its acquisition by the U.S. Rubber Company in 1910. Most of these buildings were constructed by Cruise and Smiley, of Pawtucket, Rhode Island.

- (off) **Building 24, U.S. Rubber Company Storage Building (1923):** A 5-story, flat roofed, reinforced concrete frame structure with brick spandrel walls (see Figure 6). This interplay of brick and concrete forms a rigid square grid relieved only by the off-center stair tower on the south elevation. The roofline is defined by a low parapet with half-round ceramic coping. A concrete loading dock for a rail spur is located on the north elevation. The roof is covered with rubber membrane.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

United States Rubber Company Mill Complex

Providence

Providence County, RI

Name of Property

City/Town

County and State

Section Number 7

Page 6

Eagle Street, continued

Original windows are metal-frame, 14-light with two 4-light hoppers. A row of original paired, 12-light, metal-frame windows is found along the first floor loading dock on the north elevation. The second floor of this elevation has early 20th-century, 12/12, wood sash, double hung windows set in re-bricked openings. On the south elevation, a number of original openings were partially bricked-in, allowing smaller window inserts.

An elevated, enclosed bridge spans Eagle Street and connects this building to Building 10 (see contributing structures).

Buildings 24, 25, 35, 37, 62, 74, and 85 represent the eastward expansion of the U.S. Rubber Company across Eagle Street toward the American Locomotive Company plant.

(off) **Building 25, U.S. Rubber Company Laboratory (1913):** A 3-story, 100' x 37', flat-roofed, reinforced concrete building with brick walls. Altered modern entrances are located on the east and north elevations. No original windows survive.

Building 25 and Buildings 24, 35, 37, 62, 74, and 85 represent the eastward expansion of the U.S. Rubber Company across Eagle Street toward the American Locomotive Company plant.

(off) **Building 38, Guardhouse (c. 1960):** A roughly 12' x 12', brick and glass, single story building at the Eagle Street entrance to eastern part of the complex.

(over) **Combined walkway, bridge and ground-floor enclosure connecting Buildings 10 and 24 (between 1913 and 1921):** A reinforced concrete frame and stuccoed brick structure that comprises a ground-level enclosed room. This structure is 160' x 12 and is supported by four concrete piers and the walls of the ground floor enclosure. A low parapet, partly brick and partly concrete is defined by ceramic coping. Windows are rectangular, 24-light, metal frame with a concrete sill.

A perpendicular extension to this structure into the present courtyard once housed a vapor curing room and a dispensary. This extension was built ca 1918 and was demolished by 1951.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

United States Rubber Company Mill Complex

Providence

Providence County, RI

Name of Property

City/Town

County and State

Section Number

7

Page

7

Hemlock Street

- 36 Building 61, Rhode Island Locomotive Works Office Building (c. 1885):** A two-story, 67' x 39', brick building with timber framing. Fronting on Hemlock Street, this building rests on a raised granite foundation. It is the sole surviving structure of what was once a rambling complex of predominantly brick locomotive production buildings arrayed along Valley and Hemlock Streets (see Figures 1 and 2). Most of the windows are late 20th-century aluminum replacement types set in the original rectangular openings with the original quarry-faced granite sills intact. One of the original north elevation window openings has been plugged with brick. Although three relatively modern windows now appear on the south elevation, this wall originally had no windows for the likely reason that it faced a large RI Locomotive Works foundry building demolished sometime after 1908.

This building has a simple, corbelled cornice and a hipped roof surfaced with rubber membrane. Both front and rear entrances have been altered to accept modern, glass and aluminum doorways. Current interior plan is typical of modern office space: drywall partitions, dropped ceilings, and wall-to-wall carpeting.

- (off) Building 51, American Locomotive Works Building (1905):** A three-story, steel-frame, brick clad, pier and spandrel building designed for manufacture of the Berliet automobile (1906-1908) and, later, the ALCO automobile (1908-1918). Although the intended original dimensions of this building were roughly 375' x 60', the American Locomotive Works added another 125' to the west end of the building by 1907 at the latest (see Figure 4). This building sits on a raised concrete foundation. The roof is a shallow gable.

At the top of each pier, four courses of brick are cantilevered to evoke a classical capital; a double belt course below suggests an astragal. This design element is also found on the brickwork of Buildings 52 and 58.

Windows are rectangular, 12/12, wood frame, and double-hung; most are paired. Sills are quarry-faced granite; lintels are steel. Many of the original window openings are now brick-filled. Some of the original, large window openings have been filled with plywood with smaller, modern windows inserted. Along the south elevation facing the river are found a shipping dock, transformer enclosure, and a 1-story brick structure. A brick stairtower built by Revere Rubber Company between 1918 and 1921 is found at the northwest corner of the building.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

United States Rubber Company Mill Complex	Providence	Providence County, RI
Name of Property	City/Town	County and State
Section Number <u>7</u>	Page <u>8</u>	

Hemlock Street, continued

A 30'-wide automobile test track surrounded the building from 1905 to 1918. This accounts for the roughly 30' width of infill Building 53 (q.v.). A private bridge (see listings for Woonasquatucket River) spanning the Woonasquatucket once led to a south elevation entrance, no longer extant. In 1921 Revere Rubber Company used this building as a compound room, calendar room, and tube department.

A two-story elevated walkway connects the upper floors of this building to Building 58. It is of steel frame construction sheathed in modern wood paneling. Immediately to the north of this structure is a riveted, steel truss pipeway.

Building 51, along with Building 52 and most of Building 58, was constructed between 1905 and c. 1910 by the American Locomotive Company for manufacture of the Berliet and ALCO automobiles. ALCO ceased automobile manufacture in 1907. The buildings were acquired by the U.S. Rubber Company in 1918.

(off) Building 52, American Locomotive Works Building (1907): The second ALCO factory building is a single-story, 240' x 112', steel frame, pier and spandrel structure. The foundation is concrete. The cornice is wooden and the roof has two rows of sawtooth windows, now covered over. The function of this building during the ALCO period is not known. In 1921 Revere Rubber utilized it as a compound room, calendar room, and tube department. The same pier detail described for Building 51 is found on this building. Much of the north elevation is sheathed in corrugated steel.

A ca 1940 concrete and brick addition is found on the north elevation along with a shed of steel sheathing and Texture 1-11. A late 20th-century concrete block loading dock extends from the east elevation.

Building 52, along with Building 51 and most of Building 58, was constructed between 1905 and ca 1910 by the American Locomotive Company for manufacture of the Berliet and ALCO automobiles. ALCO ceased automobile manufacture in 1907. The buildings were acquired by the U.S. Rubber Company in 1918.

(off) Building 53, U.S. Rubber infill building (between 1918 and 1921): A single story, flat-roofed, 30' x 250', brick infill structure built by Revere Rubber Company to utilize the space once occupied by the ALCO test track (see Building 51). Steel beams were run between the two buildings to

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

United States Rubber Company Mill Complex	Providence	Providence County, RI
Name of Property	City/Town	County and State
Section Number <u>7</u>	Page <u>9</u>	

Hemlock Street, continued

support a roof. The floor is concrete. In 1921 this narrow space was used as a tube room. Half-round ceramic coping defines the west elevation roofline.

Building 53, along with Buildings 56, 73, and the south extension of Building 58, represents infill and additions made by the U.S. Rubber Company after 1918.

(off) **Building 56, U.S. Rubber Company Building (between 1937 and 1951):** A single-story, NC 25' x 50', pitched roof structure sheathed in corrugated steel. This building is connected to Buildings 51 and 73. There are two garage doors on the east elevation and an entrance on the north elevation.

Building 56, along with Buildings 53, 73, and the south extension of Building 58, represents infill and additions made by the U.S. Rubber Company after 1918.

(off) **Building 58, American Locomotive Works Building (between 1908 and 1918 et seq.):** The last of the American Locomotive Works buildings. A 3 story, brick, steel-frame, flat-roofed, pier and spandrel structure resting on a concrete foundation. Some of the original window openings are brick-filled, others have Texture 1-11 inserts for modern replacement windows. No original windows survive. A long concrete loading dock extends the length of the west elevation. Six entrances are found on the east elevation, all altered.

Between 1918 and 1926, U.S. Rubber Company extended this building about 70' toward the river. A stairtower is located at the south east corner of this addition. Steel columns in this newer part of the building are concrete-encased.

The original portion of Building 58, along with Buildings 51 and 52, was constructed between 1905 and ca 1910 by the American Locomotive Company for manufacture of the Berliet and ALCO automobiles. ALCO ceased automobile manufacture in 1907. The buildings were acquired by the U.S. Rubber Company in 1918. The south extension of Building 58, and Buildings 53, 56, and 73, represent infill and additions made by the U.S. Rubber Company after 1918.

(off) **Building 73, U.S. Rubber Company Toilet Tower (between 1926 and 1937):** Located at the northeast corner of Building 51, this 20' x 30', three-story toilet tower sits on a raised, concrete

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

United States Rubber Company Mill Complex	Providence	Providence County, RI
Name of Property	City/Town	County and State
Section Number <u>7</u>	Page <u>10</u>	

Hemlock Street, continued

foundation at the east end of Building 53. Windows are rectangular, paired 8/8/4, metal-frame with a concrete sill and brick lintel. The roof is flat and defined by half-round ceramic coping. There are no exterior entrances.

Building 73, along with Buildings 53, 56, and the south extension of Building 58, represents infill and additions made by the U.S. Rubber Company after 1918.

south of Bldg. 61 Building 74, U.S. Rubber Company Building (c. 1937): A flat-roofed, steel frame, single story, 120' x 46', L-plan utilitarian building sheathed in pressed-steel panels and resting on a concrete foundation. This building has seven garage openings on the west elevation, some plugged with Texture 1-11. Original 6/6/3 steel-frame windows are found on the south and east elevations. The pattern of the stamped steel panels matches those of Building 37.

Building 74 and Buildings 24, 25, 35, 37, 62, and 85 represent the eastward expansion of the U.S. Rubber Company across Eagle Street toward the American Locomotive Company plant.

Richmond Place

Granite water level marker (after 1875): On Richmond Place in the vicinity of Building 15 is a polished granite marker with inscribed notations of various water levels for dams (including the early Rutenberg dam and upstream Rising Sun Pond), raceways, normal flow, and hurricane waters. The four faces of the base are inscribed with four correctly-oriented compass points. The only date inscribed is that of an 1875 hurricane water level. The marker rests on a concrete bed. Further research may reveal a legal conflict among companies utilizing waterpower along the river. Although resembling a monument, this marker may have served the purpose of visually indicating changes in water level due to the raising of dams.

Valley Street

375 Building 1, Banigan Rubber Company Building (1896): A small, two-story, pitched-roof brick building attached to Building 2 and originally of trapezoidal plan. In the early 20th-century, a small ell was added to extend the building westward about 15' to Richmond Place. The older part of the building has a granite foundation; the foundation of the ell is concrete. Although the original function of this building is unclear, its location next to the Boiler House (Building 2) and adjacent to

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

United States Rubber Company Mill Complex	Providence	Providence County, RI
Name of Property	City/Town	County and State
Section Number <u>7</u>	Page <u>11</u>	

Valley Street, continued

a chimney (now demolished) that once stood in the gap between these two buildings indicates that it served as part of the plant's power generation. In 1921 it served as a Compound Room.

Windows in the 1896 portion are segmental arch, consisting of upper, paired, 4-light fixed sashes with a 12-light sash below. The sills and sashes are wooden. In the later ell, the windows are segmental arch with a brick sill with rectangular metal frame windows. An upper panel fills the space defined by the arch and the rectangular window. A large, elevated, double wooden door at the west elevation of the ell opens onto Richmond Place.

Building 1, along with Buildings 2, 3, 5, 10, and 14, represents the Joseph Banigan Rubber Company plant as it existed from 1896 until its acquisition by the U.S. Rubber Company in 1910.

375 Building 2, Banigan Rubber Company Boiler House (1896): A brick, deep single story, roughly 30' x 50', timber-frame, shallow gable-roofed boiler house connected to Building 1. Although the foundation is not visible, the construction date of this building would indicate that it is granite. The cornice is wooden with rafter ends exposed. Single story, brick infill built between 1918 and 1921 occupies the space between this building and Building 5.

Building 2, along with Buildings 1, 3, 5, 10, and 14, represents the Joseph Banigan Rubber Company plant as it existed from 1896 until its acquisition by the U.S. Rubber Company in 1910.

375 Building 3, Saxon Worsted/Banigan Rubber Company building (c. 1890, 1896): A brick, four-story, roughly 125' x 50', trapezoidal plan, timber frame, building. The foundation is granite; the roof is flat with a wooden cornice. Although the exact history is unclear, this building appears to have been built as a one-story component of the Saxon Worsted plant. An 1896 Providence Journal of Commerce item describes Joseph Banigan's intentions to build a one-story, 137' x 40' addition to the existing plant.¹ The roof has a small parapet at the east end, from which the rest of the roof pitches downward. This parapet is supported on the Valley Street façade by a cantilevered brick bracket. Attached to Buildings 1, 2, 4, and 5, this building occupies the space between the rear of Building 5 and Valley Street. In 1921 it was used as a wash house (1st floor) and rubber drying room (2nd, 3rd, and 4th floors).

¹ "Rhode Island Industrial Notes." *Providence Journal of Commerce* 4 (September 1896): 499.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

United States Rubber Company Mill Complex	Providence	Providence County, RI
Name of Property	City/Town	County and State
Section Number <u>7</u>	Page <u>12</u>	

Valley Street, continued

Original first- and second-story windows on the Valley Street elevation were segmental arch, double-hung, wood frame, consisting of a 4-light transom and 12- and 8-light lower sashes. Many of these are now brick-filled. The second-story windows have been bricked in to reveal only the transom (some of which have been removed). These are similar to the original segmental arch, 4-light windows found on the third and fourth floors. Many of the first floor windows are brick-filled. While the upper story transoms are fitted to the arch, the ground floor windows are not.

A rear 3-story, brick tower connects this building to Building 5. Building 7 (q.v.) and provides passage between this building and Building 5.

Building 3, along with Buildings 1, 2, 5, 10, and 14, represents the Joseph Banigan Rubber Company plant as it existed from 1896 until its acquisition by the U.S. Rubber Company in 1910.

375 Building 4, U.S. Rubber Company Building (between 1911 and 1918): A single-story, brick, trapezoidal plan infill building, roughly 130' x 44', built in the space defined by Valley Street and the rear elevation of Building 5. This shallow-pitched gable roof building is attached to Buildings 3, 5, and 6. It has a concrete foundation, steel beam roof structure, and half-round ceramic coping at the roofline. Windows are loosely-spaced, segmental arch, metal-frame, 12-light, with a brick sill. The entrance to this building is at the east end of neighboring Building 3. In 1921 it served as a rubber thread room.

Building 4 and Buildings 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 15, 18, 33, and 34 represent an expansion of the Banigan Rubber Company plant after its acquisition by the U.S. Rubber Company in 1910. Most of these buildings were constructed by Cruise and Smiley, of Pawtucket, Rhode Island.

375 Building 5, Saxon Worsted/Banigan Rubber Company Main Manufacturing Building (c. 1890, 1896): A four-story, 325' x 50', brick building resting on a granite foundation, built by Saxon Worsted about 1890. Joseph Banigan acquired this building in 1896 and hired Gilbane Brothers to build a 7-story tower. This building served as the main manufacturing plant of Banigan Rubber Company. Iron columns are round-section; floor and truss framing is timber. The 1896 off-center, seven-story tower with segmental arch windows (see Figure 3) and ornate Victorian detailing has been altered significantly. These tower alterations include the removal of two stories above the brick corbelling as well as removal of the original paired segmental arch windows on the three remaining

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

United States Rubber Company Mill Complex	Providence	Providence County, RI
Name of Property	City/Town	County and State
Section Number <u>7</u>	Page <u>13</u>	

Valley Street, continued

floors. These arched openings were partially bricked-in the early 20th century to create the rectangular openings visible today.

Building 5 once faced a landscaped courtyard defined by the perpendicular siting of Building 10 (1896) and a former hipped-roof, frame, two-story office building (demolished between 1951 and 1960) that once stood along Richmond Place. The west end of the first floor (adjacent to the boiler room in Building 2) housed an engine room.

The building has a gable roof with exposed rafter ends. A 20th-century brick transformer enclosure is found at the west end of the first floor. An early-20th-century, one-story, brick electrical room has been built at the foot of the tower's west wall. The area to the east of the tower serves as a loading dock for Buildings 5 and 8. The irregular space defined by the rear of Building 5 and Valley Street is occupied by Buildings 1, 2, 3, and 4. While Banigan Rubber Buildings 1-3 are part of the original plant, Building 4 was built between 1911-1918 by U.S. Rubber Company.

Original windows, many of which are found on the rear elevation are segmental arch, wood-frame windows with a wooden sill. These consist of an 8-light transom fitted to the arch and lower 12- and 8-light lower sashes. The remaining windows are of various 20th-century designs or brick-filled.

The main entrance to this building is an altered 20th-century doorway at the base of the tower. A partial east tower connects this building with Building 6.

Building 5, along with Buildings 1, 2, 3, 10, and 14, represents the Joseph Banigan Rubber Company plant as it existed from 1896 until its acquisition by the U.S. Rubber Company in 1910.

375 Building 6, U.S. Rubber Company building (between 1908 and 1918): A two-story, brick, roughly 75' x 80', trapezoidal plan building. The roof is flat and defined by half-round ceramic coping. Three modern garage doors open onto Valley Street. Unlike most of the U.S. Rubber pier and spandrel construction of this period, the walls of this building are undifferentiated except for the loosely spaced windows. These are mixed: typically rectangular, 12-light metal frame with a 6-light hopper set in a segmental arch opening are found on the first floor. Second floor windows are wood-frame, 8/8 double hung set in a rectangular opening. All windows have brick sills. On the Valley Street elevation an oculus is fitted with a ventilation fan.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

United States Rubber Company Mill Complex	Providence	Providence County, RI
Name of Property	City/Town	County and State
Section Number <u>7</u>	Page <u>14</u>	

Valley Street, continued

Building 6 and Buildings 4, 8, 9, 11, 12, 15, 18, 33, and 34 represent an expansion of the Banigan Rubber Company plant after its acquisition by the U.S. Rubber Company in 1910. Most of these buildings were constructed by Cruise and Smiley, of Pawtucket, Rhode Island.

- 375 Building 8, U.S. Rubber Company Building (between 1911 and 1918):** A four-story, steel-frame, flat-roofed, brick, 162' x 50' pier and spandrel building. The predominant window form is 6paired, 30-light (9-light hopper), rectangular, steel frame occupying the entire space between pier and spandrel. Sills are brick. Half-round ceramic coping defines the roofline.

A design element in the fourth story brickwork of this building is echoed in much of the Revere Rubber Company pier and spandrel construction of the period: four courses of brick are cantilevered from the recessed level of the spandrel wall to meet the surface of the adjoining piers (see Buildings 3, 11, and 18). Courtyard entrances are altered.

Building 33 (see below) provides passage between this building and Building 5.

Building 8 and Buildings 4, 6, 9, 11, 12, 15, 18, 33, and 34 represent an expansion of the Banigan Rubber Company plant after its acquisition by the U.S. Rubber Company in 1910. Most of these buildings were constructed by Cruise and Smiley, of Pawtucket, Rhode Island.

- 375 Building 33, U.S. Rubber Company Connector Building (between 1926 and 1937):** A four-story connector building between Buildings 5 and 8. This reinforced concrete frame structure is similar in design to Buildings 24 and 25 (1913). The concrete loading dock along the elevation of Building 5 likely dates to this period. A ground-level, corrugated steel enclosure has been built on this dock at the base of the building. Within this enclosure, original first floor segmental arch window openings are concrete block filled.

Building 33 and Buildings 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 15, 18, and 34 represent an expansion of the Banigan Rubber Company plant after its acquisition by the U.S. Rubber Company in 1910. Most of these buildings were constructed by Cruise and Smiley, of Pawtucket, Rhode Island.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

United States Rubber Company Mill Complex	Providence	Providence County, RI
Name of Property	City/Town	County and State
Section Number <u>7</u>	Page <u>15</u>	

Valley Street, continued

375 Building 34, United States Rubber Company Building (between 1918 and 1921): A roughly 50' x 70', trapezoidal plan extension of Building 6 occupying the corner of Valley and Eagle Streets. All Eagle Street segmental arch openings have been bricked-in. Two upper-story oculus windows on this elevation are also fitted with ventilation fans.

Building 34 and Buildings 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 15, 18, and 33, represent an expansion of the Banigan Rubber Company plant after its acquisition by the U.S. Rubber Company in 1910. Most of these buildings were constructed by Cruise and Smiley, of Pawtucket, Rhode Island.

375 Building 37, U.S. Rubber Company Building (between 1937 and 1951): A single-story, 100' x 75', steel-frame, gable-roofed, utilitarian building resting on a raised concrete foundation. The roof is shingled. Concrete block infill now connects this building to the east elevation of Building 24. The building is sheathed with stamped steel panels with a simple, geometric design (see Building 74).

Building 37 and Buildings 24, 25, 35, 62, 74, and 85 represent the eastward expansion of the U.S. Rubber Company across Eagle Street toward the American Locomotive Company plant.

375 Building 62, U.S. Rubber Company Cement House (between 1918 and 1926 and seq.): A single-story, 38' x 25', gabled and flat-roofed, brick structure resting on a concrete foundation. The original wing of this building is the gabled south end. After 1926, Revere Rubber Company enlarged the building northerly with a flat-roofed extension. A low parapet with half-round ceramic coping defines the roofline of both sections of the building. The roof is shingled. A concrete stair on the east elevation leads to a steel door. A modern garage door is on the west elevation. Windows, all Texture 1-11 plugged, have concrete sills and brick lintels.

Building 62 and Buildings 24, 25, 35, 37, 74, and 85 represent the eastward expansion of the U.S. Rubber Company across Eagle Street toward the American Locomotive Company plant.

415 Building 35, U.S. Rubber Building (1929): A single-story, 112' x 340', brick, flat-roofed building designed by Lockwood Greene and built by Cruise Construction (Pawtucket). This irregularly massed building has two different roof heights along Valley Street: a 4-bay section at the east end and a 10-bay section at the west end are 25' in height. The 20-bay section that forms the middle is 19' in height. The floor is concrete. An elevator tower is located on the Eagle Street elevation. An

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

United States Rubber Company Mill Complex

Providence

Providence County, RI

Name of Property

City/Town

County and State

Section Number 7 Page 16

Valley Street, continued

elevated garage door opens onto Eagle Street. A series of single-story additions built between 1951 and 1960 are found on the east elevation. Typical windows are paired, rectangular, metal-frame, 18-light with concrete sill.

Building 35 and Buildings 24, 25, 37, 62, 74, and 85 represent the eastward expansion of the U.S. Rubber Company across Eagle Street toward the American Locomotive Company plant.

485 **Building 85, U.S. Rubber Company Building (between 1937 and 1951):** A two-story, steel-frame, 200' x 112', brick, pier and spandrel building. There are two roof configurations: the rear section of the building has a shallow pitched gable roof; the front section along Valley Street is flat-roofed and 6' lower than that of the rear. All windows along the Valley Street facade are filled and stuccoed. Some of the surviving original windows are grouped in threes: a 20-light sash flanked by two 16-light sashes. Others consist of three 16-light sashes. A large garage door and a commercial entrance are on the east elevation. This building exhibits the same brick corbelling pattern found on Buildings 11, 18, and 35.

In 1951 this building was utilized for the manufacture of roll covering.

Building 85 and Buildings 24, 25, 35, 37, 62, and 74 represent the eastward expansion of the U.S. Rubber Company across Eagle Street toward the American Locomotive Company plant.

501 **Building 87, Precision Industries (between 1937 and 1951):** A heavily altered, single story, **NC** 180' x 80' steel frame building. The 1951 Sanborn map identifies this as a U.S. Rubber factory with "sides mostly glass in steel sash." This original glass sheathing has been replaced with cinderblock. The roof is a metal, simplified mansard commonly found on commercial buildings of the period.

Woonasquatucket River

(over) **Pedestrian and Vehicular Bridge (c. 1905):** A steel through-girder bridge made up of riveted, **near** built-up plate girders. There are two main girders and five perpendicular floor beams providing a **Bldg. 51** roughly 30' span of the Woonasquatucket River. The abutments are concrete and integral with the Woonasquatucket riverwall. The deck was removed at an unknown date. This bridge appears to have been built to provide vehicular and pedestrian passage to ALCO Building 51 around 1905.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

United States Rubber Company Mill Complex

Providence

Providence County, RI

Name of Property

City/Town

County and State

Section Number

7

Page

17

Woonasquatucket River, continued

(over) **Railroad Bridge (between 1918 and 1926):** This steel through-girder bridge appears to be the second railroad bridge built to serve the complex. The first, located a few hundred feet to the east brought rail service to the old plant of the Rhode Island Locomotive Works in the late 19th century. **between** **Bldgs.** **51 & 58** The current skewed bridge, essentially intact, including rails, appears to date to construction associated with the American Locomotive Company operation between 1901 and 1905. The two riveted, built-up plate girders are about 60" deep and are about 30' in length, providing a single rail line through the opening between ALCO Buildings 51 and 58. Concrete abutments are integral with the riverwall.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

United States Rubber Company Mill Complex	Providence	Providence County, RI
Name of Property	City/Town	County and State
Section Number <u>8</u>	Page <u>18</u>	

Significance

The United States Rubber Company Mill Complex is significant as the location for almost eighty years of one of the nation's largest producers of rubber goods. From its inception as the Joseph Banigan Rubber Company (1896 to 1910), through its acquisition and expansion as a regional plant of the United States Rubber Company (1910-1975), to its current use as owned or leased space for a wide array of industrial and commercial uses, this complex is representative of a pattern of industrial innovation, expansion, and decline seen throughout New England. In its adaptation of pre-existing buildings for new uses, the U.S. Rubber Company was typical of expanding manufacturers of the period.

This site is also significant as the location of three buildings designed and constructed as the automobile manufacturing works of the American Locomotive Company from 1905 to 1913. The United States Rubber Company acquired this plant in 1918, adapting and expanding it for the manufacture of rubber goods.

The surviving buildings of the U.S. Rubber Company provide a strong visual sense of the density and layout of the plant as it expanded to its fullest point in the mid 20th century.

Thirty contributing buildings and four contributing structures of the United States Rubber Company survive. The complex meets National Register **Criterion A** in the area of industry and **Criterion C** as a good example of the evolution of industrial architecture as it evolved through the late 19th and mid-20th centuries.

History

Population growth and congestion in downtown Providence, the rechanneling of the Woonasquatucket River, introduction of rail service to this part of the city, and the availability of process water attracted a number of manufacturing firms to largely undeveloped land north of downtown Providence in the last half of the 19th century.² These industries included Brown and Sharpe, Nicholson File, Armington and Sims, the Rhode Island Locomotive Works, and the Joseph Banigan Rubber Company.

² Before the rechanneling of the river, the Woonasquatucket followed a very irregular path through this area, including much of the land associated with U.S. Rubber. See: *Plan of Cove Lands in Providence* (1867, on file, RI State Archives).

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

United States Rubber Company Mill Complex	Providence	Providence County, RI
Name of Property	City/Town	County and State
Section Number <u>8</u>	Page <u>19</u>	

Locomotive and automobile manufacture

The earliest industrial exploitation of this area was the relocation to Providence in 1862 of the Bristol (R.I.) Firearms Company, later Burnside Rifle Company. General Ambrose Burnside and two other partners had set up shop in Bristol, RI, in 1853 for the exploitation of patents he held for an improved mechanism for a breech-loaded rifle. This company secured extensive and profitable government contracts during the Civil War. Burnside reinvested those profits in 1866 with the incorporation of the Rhode Island Locomotive Works (RILW) and the conversion of his Providence works for this purpose. For about 30 years, this company produced locomotives in a large plant centered along Valley and Hemlock Streets (see Figure 4). The company appears to have failed in the Depression of 1893. RILW defaulted on a mortgage taken out one year into the depression and the works were sold at public auction in 1898. The only surviving RILW building is a ca 1885 office building (Building 61) on Hemlock Street.

In 1901 seven regional locomotive manufacturers were consolidated into the American Locomotive Company (ALCO) as means of eliminating competition. A 1901 *Board of Trade Journal* article announcing the formation of the company described the necessity of the combination:

...concentrating, as they have, the many plants which were competing at suicidal prices for the construction of locomotives for the vast railroad interests of the United States, the organizers of the American Locomotive Company will be in a position to practice a thorough system of economics and to enter the field of locomotive construction upon a profitable basis.³

ALCO ceased production of locomotives in 1907. It appears that ALCO's intentions for the Providence plant focused from the beginning on a new market: the automobile. Shortly after its formation, ALCO had purchased the International Power Company, Providence-based producer of the Hoadley-Knight steam truck and

³ "American Locomotive Company" *Board of Trade Journal* 13 (June 1901): 223. The seven consolidated shops were: Brooks Locomotive Works, Dunkirk, NY; Cooke Locomotive & Machine Works, Patterson, NJ; Dickson Manufacturing Company, Scranton, PA; Manchester Locomotive Works, Manchester, NH; Pittsburgh Locomotive & Car Works, Pittsburgh, PA; Rhode Island Locomotive Works, Providence, RI; and Richmond Locomotive Works, Richmond, VA. Source: Steamlocomotive.com (www.steamlocomotive.com/builders), accessed December 2004. According to figures posted on this website, RILW/ALCO produced some 3,500 locomotives at the Providence plant from 1866 to 1907.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

United States Rubber Company Mill Complex	Providence	Providence County, RI
Name of Property	City/Town	County and State
Section Number <u>8</u>	Page <u>20</u>	

continued production of these vehicles after the acquisition.⁴ In 1905, ALCO established a new subsidiary and announced the construction of a new factory building (Building 51) for the American manufacture of the luxury Berliet Automobile, a car produced for the European automobile market in Lyons, France. This car was, arguably, the “finest car produced in the U.S. prior to WWI.” At a price of from \$6,000 to \$7,500 it was certainly one of the most expensive. The American-made Berliet automobiles won the Vanderbilt Cup in 1909 and 1910 (see Figure 5).⁵

This building, followed quickly by Buildings 52 and the older part of Building 58, became the manufacturing plant for a four-cylinder automobile, available in 25 or 40 HP.⁶ Berliet Automobiles were produced from 1906 until the expiration of the American license in 1908. From 1908 to 1913 ALCO continued to manufacture cars and trucks in these buildings under their own name.⁷ A 30’-wide test automobile track originally surrounded Building 51. The southern segment survives as the paved internal road along the south elevation of the building. The northern segment is the present location of infill Building 53.

The United States Rubber Company

Joseph Banigan (1839-1898) relocated to Woonsocket from Providence in 1864 to set up a factory for the production of rubber blankets and rollers for clothes wringers.⁸ He had previous experience in the manufacture of rubber bottle stoppers in a small operation in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts.

Banigan appears to have had a potent combination of technical and entrepreneurial genius and luck, for his operations expanded dramatically, eventually encompassing the manufacture of rubber boots and shoes. By 1889 he had set up the Alice factory in Woonsocket, at the time the largest rubber factory in the world.

⁴ The 1900 Sanborn map identifies the RI Locomotive Works as being under the operation of International Power Company. This company may have acquired RILW at public auction in 1898 to become part of the holdings of the American Locomotive Company in 1901.

⁵ See Stanley Lemons, “The Automobile Comes to Rhode Island.” *Rhode Island History* 52 (August 1994): 71.

Lemons cites Beverly Rae Kimes, “The Mighty Alco,” *Automobile Quarterly* 11 (Second quarter 1973): 206

⁶ “A New Automobile Shop in Providence.” *Board of Trade Journal* 17 (October 1905): 484

⁷ Providence city directories continued to list the automotive division of ALCO at this location until 1918. G. Georgano’s *The Complete Encyclopedia of Motorcars* (E.P. Dutton, 1969), however, dates the cessation of ALCO production to 1913.

⁸ Brothers Lyman and Simeon Cook were investors in this enterprise.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

United States Rubber Company Mill Complex	Providence	Providence County, RI
Name of Property	City/Town	County and State
Section Number <u>8</u>	Page <u>21</u>	

The economic climate of the 1890s drew Joseph Banigan into the United States Rubber Company, a combination established in 1892. Banigan became president of this firm a year later, only to resign in 1896 out of a distaste for the company's singular emphasis on stock value and consequent disinterest in manufacturing innovation.

The same year, Banigan purchased the plant of the Saxon Worsted Company along Valley Street on the north bank of the Woonasquatucket River and hired William Gilbane and Brothers to erect a 7-story tower on the main Saxon factory building and add at least one story to Building 3. Banigan added other buildings to create a plant for the manufacture of rubber footwear. Although altered, expanded, and connected by infill over the decades, the early Saxon buildings and most of the early buildings associated with the Joseph Banigan Rubber Company survive (Buildings 1, 2, 3, 5, 10, and 14; see Figure 3).

Banigan died in 1898. His successor, Walter S. Ballou, who had been associated with him for decades, took over the company, eventually selling it in 1910 to the same rubber trust from which Banigan had resigned fourteen years earlier. The new owner was Revere Rubber Company, a division of United States Rubber Company. Revere shifted its production from footwear to rubber tires and rubber thread.

By World War I, the terms Revere Rubber Company and U.S. Rubber Company were used interchangeably, the latter name eventually supplanting the division name. From this point on, the corporate name U.S. Rubber Company will be used to describe the Providence operation.

In the eight years following the acquisition, the Banigan plant underwent a dramatic expansion.⁹ This included Buildings 4, 6, 8, 9, 12, 15 and 18. In 1910 U.S. Rubber Company purchased a parcel of land on the east side of Eagle in the vicinity of the American Locomotive Company plant. By 1913 the company had built a concrete storage building (Building 24) and laboratory (Building 25). With the U.S. entry into WWI, the company had difficulty meeting war production orders for rubber goods, notably balloons for military use. In what the *Providence Journal* described as "one of the largest real estate transactions that has been recorded in this city,"¹⁰ U.S. Rubber purchased the idle ALCO buildings and began outfitting them for the manufacture of solid and pneumatic tires.

⁹ This expansion included the demolition of the original, hip-roofed detached office building that stood on the courtyard at Richmond Place.

¹⁰ See "Rubber Co. Buys Locomotive Plant," *Providence Journal*, 16 March 1918, p. 1

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

United States Rubber Company Mill Complex	Providence	Providence County, RI
Name of Property	City/Town	County and State
Section Number <u>8</u>	Page <u>22</u>	

The U.S. Rubber plant, now encompassing some 23 acres, continued its wartime expansion into the 1920s and 1930s with the manufacture of golf balls and bath caps along with dip goods¹¹, tires, and rubber thread. This expansion included Buildings 11, 34, 35, and the south extension of ALCO Building 58. Later in the 1930s, two steel-sheathed utilitarian buildings were erected (Building 37 and 74) as well as Building 85 fronting on Valley Street.

U.S. Rubber secured extensive military contracts during WW2, reaching an all-time high employment figure of 3200. Because of military needs and restricted sources of latex, rubber was rationed during these years. DuPont introduced synthetic rubber, or neoprene, on the market in 1932 and the Providence U.S. Rubber plant converted to this new technology to address the shortages. By 1948 the company had reconverted to natural rubber production. Postwar expansion included Building 87.

Recent history

By 1965 U.S. Rubber, beset by labor problems, had reduced its staff to 480, moved much of its production out of state, and teetered on the edge of bankruptcy. As buildings became idle, the company tried to market the eleven buildings at the eastern end of the plant (in the vicinity of Hemlock Street) as an "industrial park," leasing space to industrial tenants. This effort was apparently unsuccessful. U.S. Rubber Company changed its name to Uniroyal in 1967.

By the end of the 1960s, profit was elusive despite active production of military pontoons, various types of containers, and a line of offset printing blankets. Although government contracts associated with U.S. involvement in Vietnam stabilized the company for a while, their fortunes continued to decline in the 1970s.

Labor strife persisted until the plant announced its intent to close in April 1975. Despite efforts by the union, and state, local, and federal intervention, the Providence plant ceased operation a month later. The present owner, Licht Properties, purchased the plant in July of that year.

Current plans are underway for extensive rehabilitation of the plant and conversion to a mix of residential and commercial use.

¹¹ Dip goods: "Latex can be shaped into such products as toys or gloves by dipping forms made of porcelain or plaster of Paris into concentrated latex. A coating of latex adheres to the form and is stripped off after vulcanization." Source: Seymour Z. Lewin, M.S., Ph.D. "Rubber," Microsoft® Encarta Online Encyclopedia 2000.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

United States Rubber Company Mill Complex	Providence	Providence County, RI
Name of Property	City/Town	County and State
Section Number <u>9</u>	Page <u>23</u>	

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Achtermier, William O. *Rhode Island Arms Makers and Gunsmiths, 1643-1883*. Providence: Man at Arms Magazine, 1980.

Bicknell, James. *History of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations* (Vol. 5). New York: American Historical Society, 1920 (Banigan biography, p. 485).

Pearson, Henry C. "The India Rubber Industry in New England." *The New England States* (William T. Davis, ed.). Boston: D.H. Hurd and Co., 1897.

Biographical History of the Manufacturers and Businessmen of Rhode Island. Providence: J.D. Hall, 1901 (Joseph Banigan Rubber Co., p. 44).

Carroll, Charles. *Rhode Island: Three Centuries of Democracy* (Vol. 2). New York: Lewis Historical Publishing, 1932. (Rubber Goods article, pp. 879-880).

Articles:

"\$20,000,000 worth of Tires to be Made Here." *Providence Journal* (11 April 1918): 9.

"\$90,000 Addition for Local Plant." *Providence Journal* (22 September 1929): B8.

"A New Automobile Shop in Providence." *Board of Trade Journal* 17 (October 1905): 484.

"American Locomotive Company." *Board of Trade Journal* 13 (June 1901): 223.

"American Locomotive Company." *Board of Trade Journal* 14 (September 1902): 342.

"American Locomotive Co. Receive Large Order." *Board of Trade Journal* 20 (February 1908): 63.

"Big Rubber Business in 1947 Brings Growth to Rhode Island." *Providence Journal* (2 January 1948): 16.

Brierley, Brooks T. "ALCO: The Art Of Buying Market Share." *Car Collector* (November 2004): 58.

Harrington, Clyde. "Uniroyal advances on two fronts." *Providence Journal* (16 February 1969): B14.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

United States Rubber Company Mill Complex	Providence	Providence County, RI
Name of Property	City/Town	County and State
Section Number <u>9</u>	Page <u>24</u>	

Lemons, J. Stanley. "The Automobile Comes to Rhode Island." *Rhode Island History* (August 1994).

"Revere Rubber Co., division of U.S. Rubber, to build plant in Providence." *Providence Journal* (20 December 1910): 1.

"Rhode Island Industrial Notes." *Board of Trade Journal* 17 (December 1905): 572.

"Rubber Co. Buys Locomotive Plant." *Providence Journal* (16 March 1918): 1.

"Rubber Trade in Rhode Island." *India Rubber World* (1 November 1921): 131-2.

"Uniroyal Closing Providence Plant." *Providence Journal* (15 May 1975): B1.

"United States Rubber Company Honored by Chamber." *Providence Magazine* 41 (May 1930): 165.

"United States Rubber Expanding Plant." *Providence Magazine* 41 (January 1930): 536.

"U.S. Rubber to Seek Tenants for Buildings." *Providence Journal* (19 January 1965): 1.

Maps and Engineering Drawings

Plot of Houselots on Cove Heights Belonging to C. Dyer, and William C. Snow. Surveyed and platted May 5, 1846 by Atwater and Schubarth, Providence Plat Card 60.

Plat of Part of the Woonasquatucket River. Samuel B. Cushing, 1859

Plan of Cove Lands in Providence. John Howe, 1867

Map Showing the Rearrangement of the Railroad Station and Tracks in the City of Providence. Samuel B. Cushing, 1873

Plan of Land belonging to the RI Locomotive Works. John Howe, 1883 (Providence Plat card 440)

Everts and Richards Topographical Atlas Map, 1895

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

United States Rubber Company Mill Complex

Providence

Providence County, RI

Name of Property

City/Town

County and State

Section Number 9

Page 25

Providence Plat Maps (Hopkins), 1882, 1918, 1926, 1937

Sanborn Fire Insurance maps 1889, 1900, 1904, 1921, 1951

Richards Atlas Map 1908

First Floor Plan, United States Rubber Company (1960)

Providence Land Evidence:

Book 335: 387

Book 415: 491

Book 419: 259

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

United States Rubber Company Mill Complex

Providence

Providence County, RI

Name of Property

City/Town

County and State

Section Number 10

Page 26

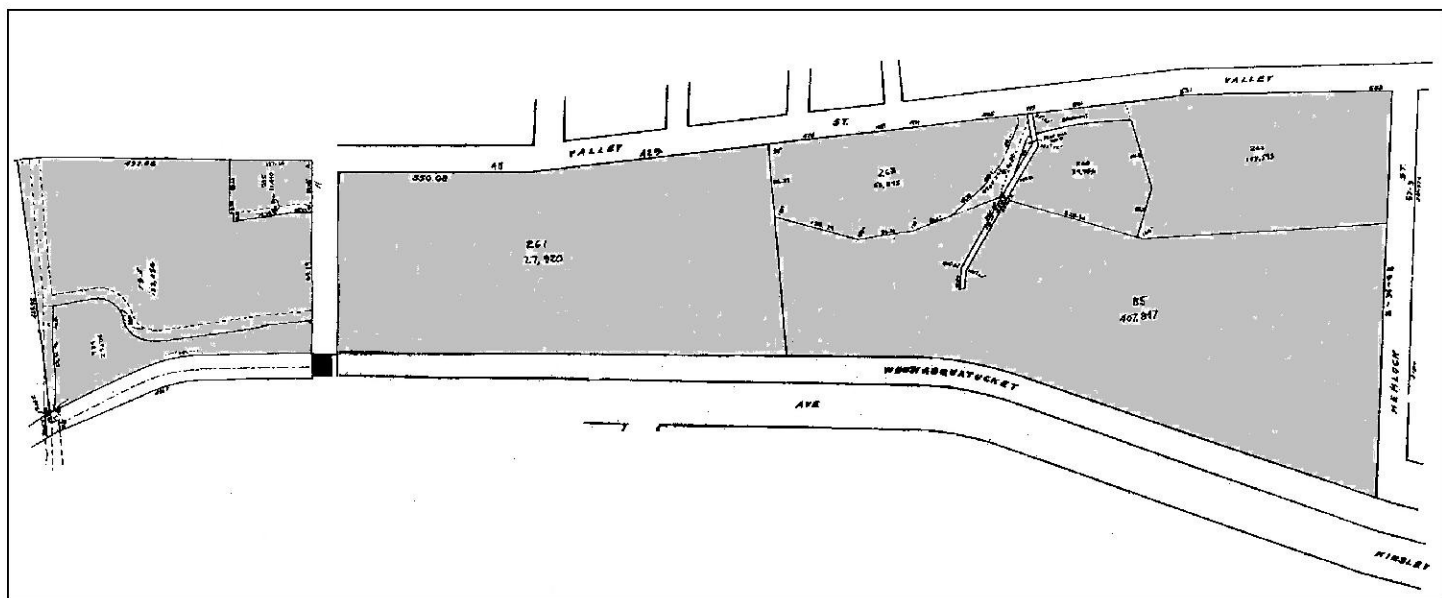
GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Boundary Description

The boundaries of the United States Rubber Company Mill Complex are contiguous with Providence Tax Assessor's Plat 27, Lots 85, 260, 261, 262 and 263; Plat 65, Lots 195, 934, and 935; and coterminous with the outer dimensions of the two bridges spanning the Woonasquatucket River south of Building 51 and the enclosed bridge spanning Eagle Street.

Boundary Justification

These boundaries, comprising about 23 acres, define all of the land and bridges historically associated with the Joseph Banigan Rubber Company, The R.I. Locomotive Works (later, American Locomotive Company), and the U.S. Rubber Company during almost eighty years of industrial occupancy.



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

United States Rubber Company Mill Complex

Providence

Providence County, RI

Name of Property

City/Town

County and State

Section Number 10 Page 27

United States Rubber Company Mill Complex
Vicinity of Richmond Place, Valley Street, Eagle Street, and the Woonasquatucket River
Providence, R.I. Quadrangle
Scale: 1: 24,000



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

United States Rubber Company Mill Complex

Providence

Providence County, RI

Name of Property

City/Town

County and State

Section Number _____

Page 28

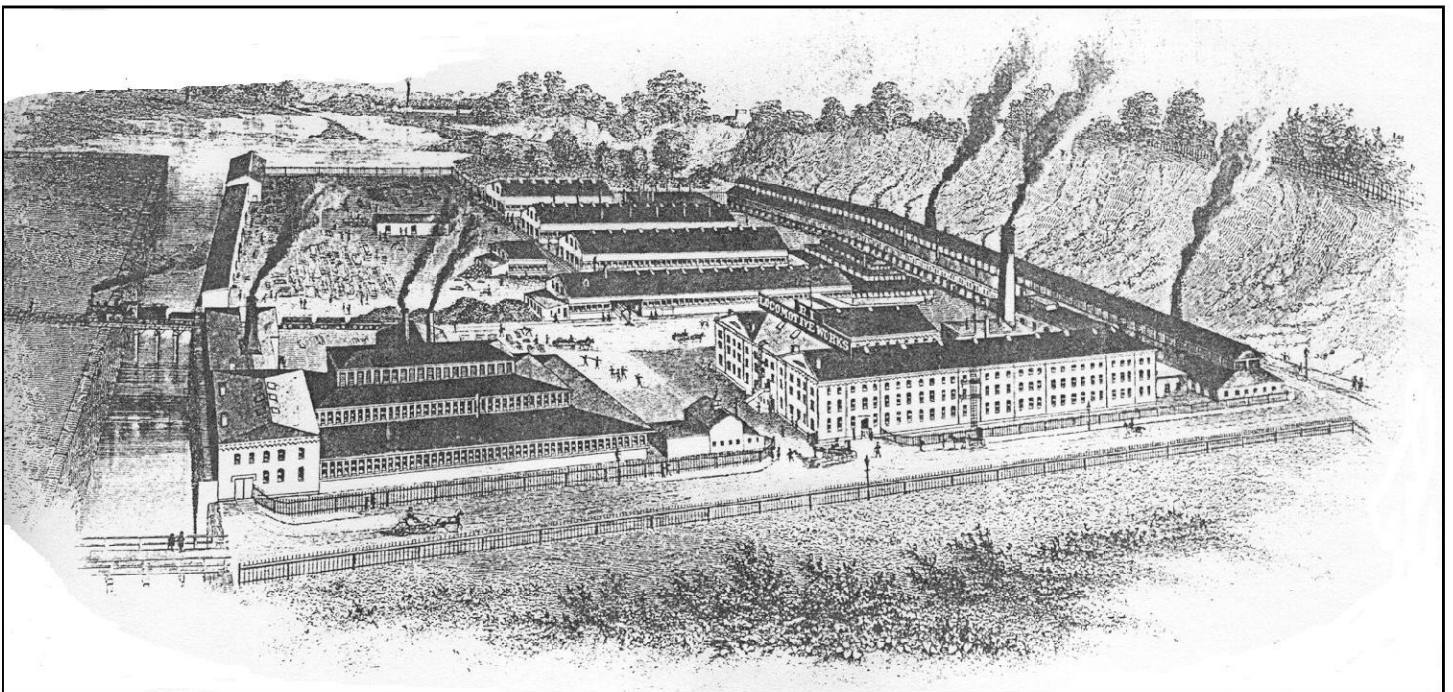


Figure 1
Rhode Island Locomotive Works
View to west, Hemlock St. in foreground
Between 1866 and 1885

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

United States Rubber Company Mill Complex

Providence

Providence County, RI

Name of Property

City/Town

County and State

Section Number _____

Page

29

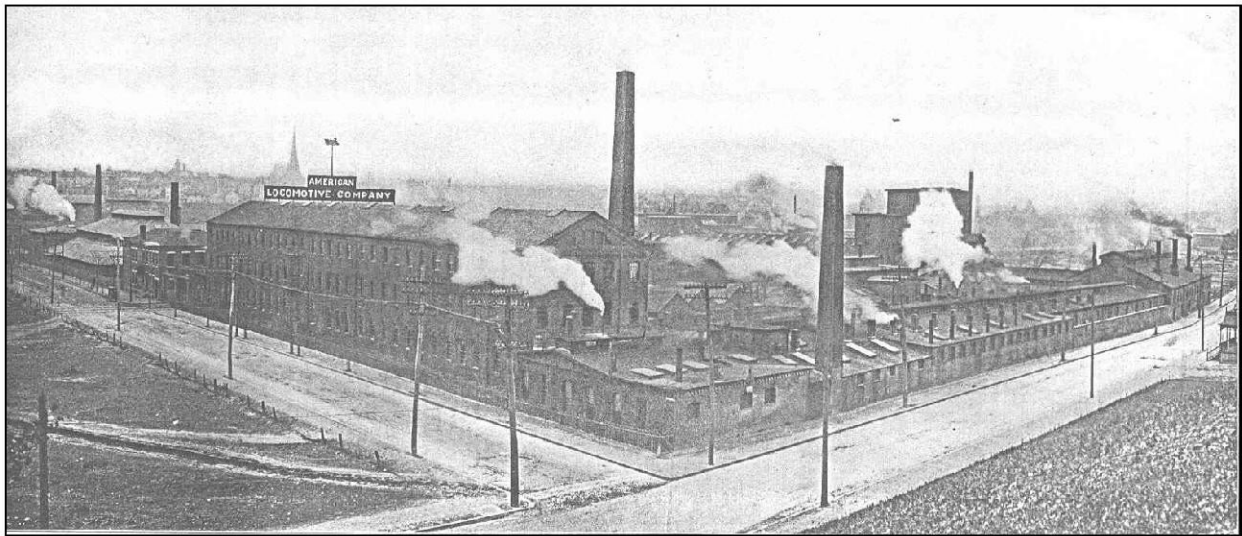


Figure 2
American Locomotive Works
View southwesterly from corner of Hemlock and Valley
1903

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

United States Rubber Company Mill Complex

Providence

Providence County, RI

Name of Property

City/Town

County and State

Section Number _____

Page

30

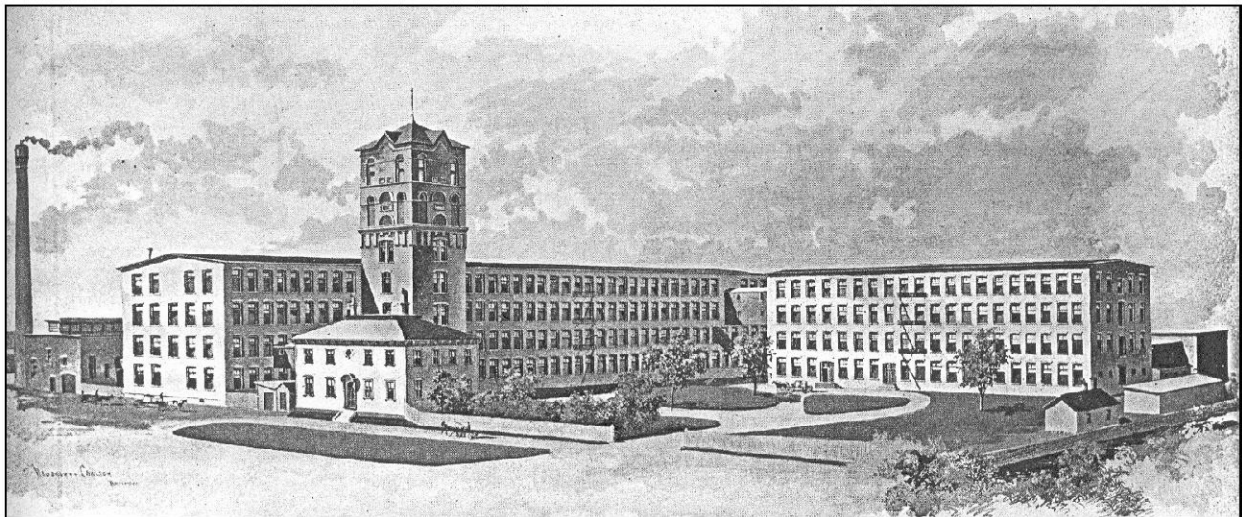


Figure 3
Joseph Banigan Rubber Co.
View northeasterly from river
Bldgs 2, 3, 5, 10, 14
Former office (now demolished) in foreground
1904



Figure 4
Alco Building 51
View northerly from across river
1907

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

United States Rubber Company Mill Complex

Providence

Providence County, RI

Name of Property

City/Town

County and State

Section Number _____

Page

31

1909 The Two-Time Winner of the Vanderbilt Cup 1910

"It Stays New"

6 CYLINDER, 60 H.P. TOURING CAR.

ALCO



THE VICTOR was a single entry in a field of thirty, including several teams of two and three specially built cars, foreign and domestic. The average speed of the ALCO for the 278.08 miles was 65.18 miles an hour.

In both 1909 and 1910 the race was won by Harry Grant with the same six-cylinder stock chassis.

This unprecedented performance was possible because of a perfectly balanced chassis, wonderful engine consistency, and indestructible qualities of material imparted by the exclusive alloy steels of the American Locomotive Company.

These are the same in all ALCO models.

It can be readily explained and demonstrated to you why this car of amazing longevity is "a little better" than any other in the world, and is the most economical to own—not reckoning the luxury.

 **American Locomotive Company** 
1886 Broadway, NEW YORK,
2501 Michigan Ave., CHICAGO,
(LICENSED UNDER SILVER PATENT)

Collection of James Kincaid

Figure 5
ALCO advertisement
1910

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

United States Rubber Company Mill Complex

Providence

Providence County, RI

Name of Property

City/Town

County and State

Section Number _____

Page 32

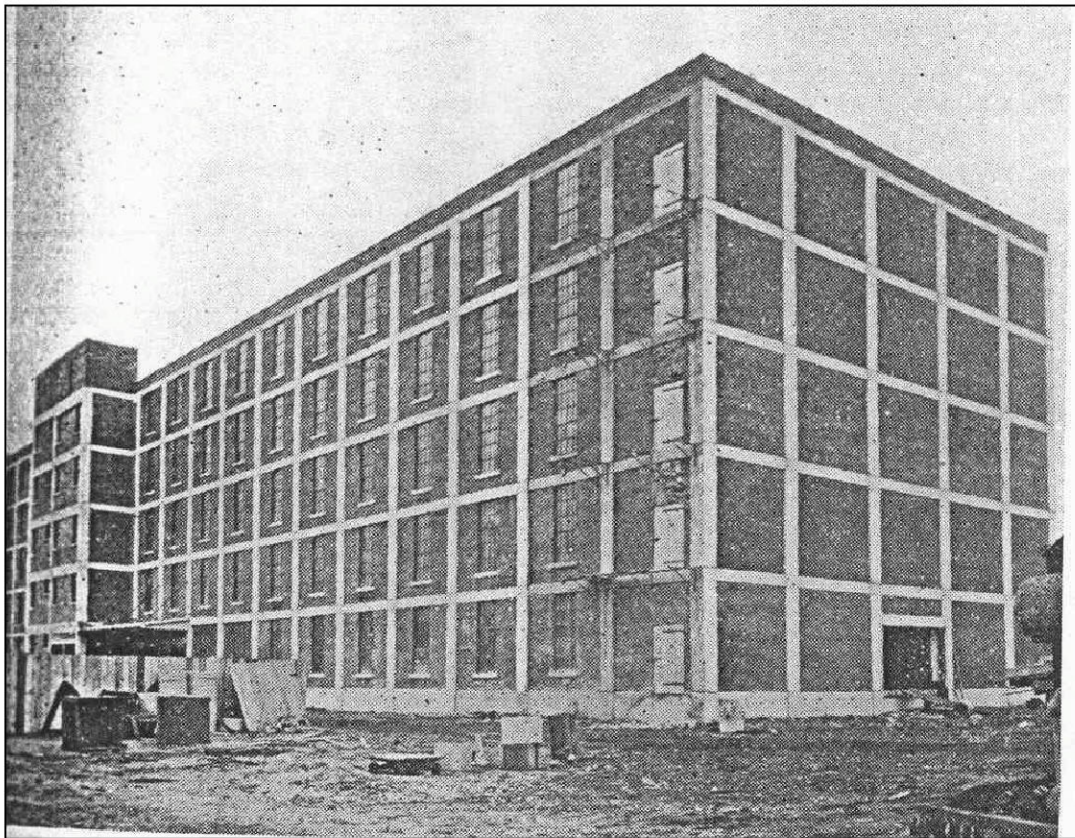


Figure 6
U.S. Rubber Co. Building 24 under construction
1913

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

United States Rubber Company Mill Complex

Providence

Providence County, RI

Name of Property

City/Town

County and State

Section Number _____

Page

33

PHOTOGRAPH INDEX:

(The information in numbers 1-5 is the same for all photographs)

1. United States Rubber Company Mill Complex
2. Providence County, Rhode Island
3. Photographer: Edward Connors
4. January 2005
5. Original Negatives on file at: Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission
150 Benefit Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

6. Building No. 5, Saxon Worsted/Banigan Rubber Company Main Manufacturing Building: view northeast
7. #1

6. Building No. 10, Banigan Rubber Company Carpenter and Last Shop: view northeast
7. #2

6. Building No. 8, U.S. Rubber Company Building: view west
7. #3

6. Building No. 11, U.S. Rubber Company Dip Goods Building, and Building 18, U.S. Rubber Company Dip Goods Building: view northwest
7. #4

6. Building No. 14, Banigan Rubber Company Building: view southeast
7. #5

6. Building No.15, U.S. Rubber Company Machine and Carpenter Shop: view southeast
7. #6

6. Building No. 24, U.S. Rubber Company Storage Building: view northeast
7. #7

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

United States Rubber Company Mill Complex

Providence

Providence County, RI

Name of Property

City/Town

County and State

Section Number _____

Page

34

6. Building No. 25, U.S. Rubber Company Laboratory: view east

7. #8

6. Building No. 51, American Locomotive Works Building: view east

7. #9

6. Building No. 58, American Locomotive Works Building: view southwest

7. #10

6. Building No. 61, Rhode Island Locomotive Works Office Building: view northwest

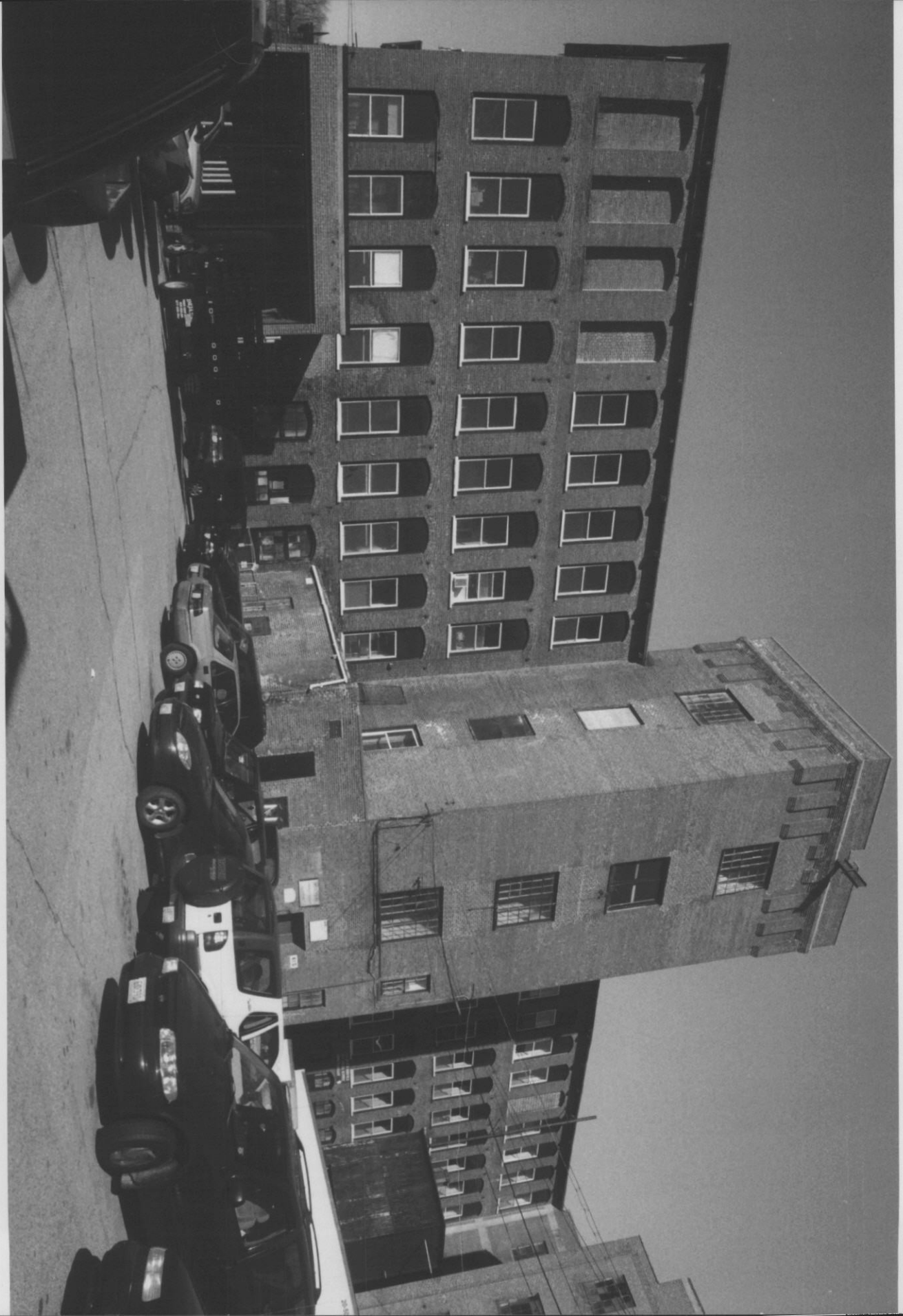
7. #11

6. Combined walkway, bridge and ground-floor enclosure connecting Buildings 10 and 24: view northeast

7. #12

6. Railroad Bridge over the Woonasquatucket River, view north

7. #13









GREAT WOODS
ESTABLISHED 1888
FURNITURE

MEYER



1214



NO PARKING

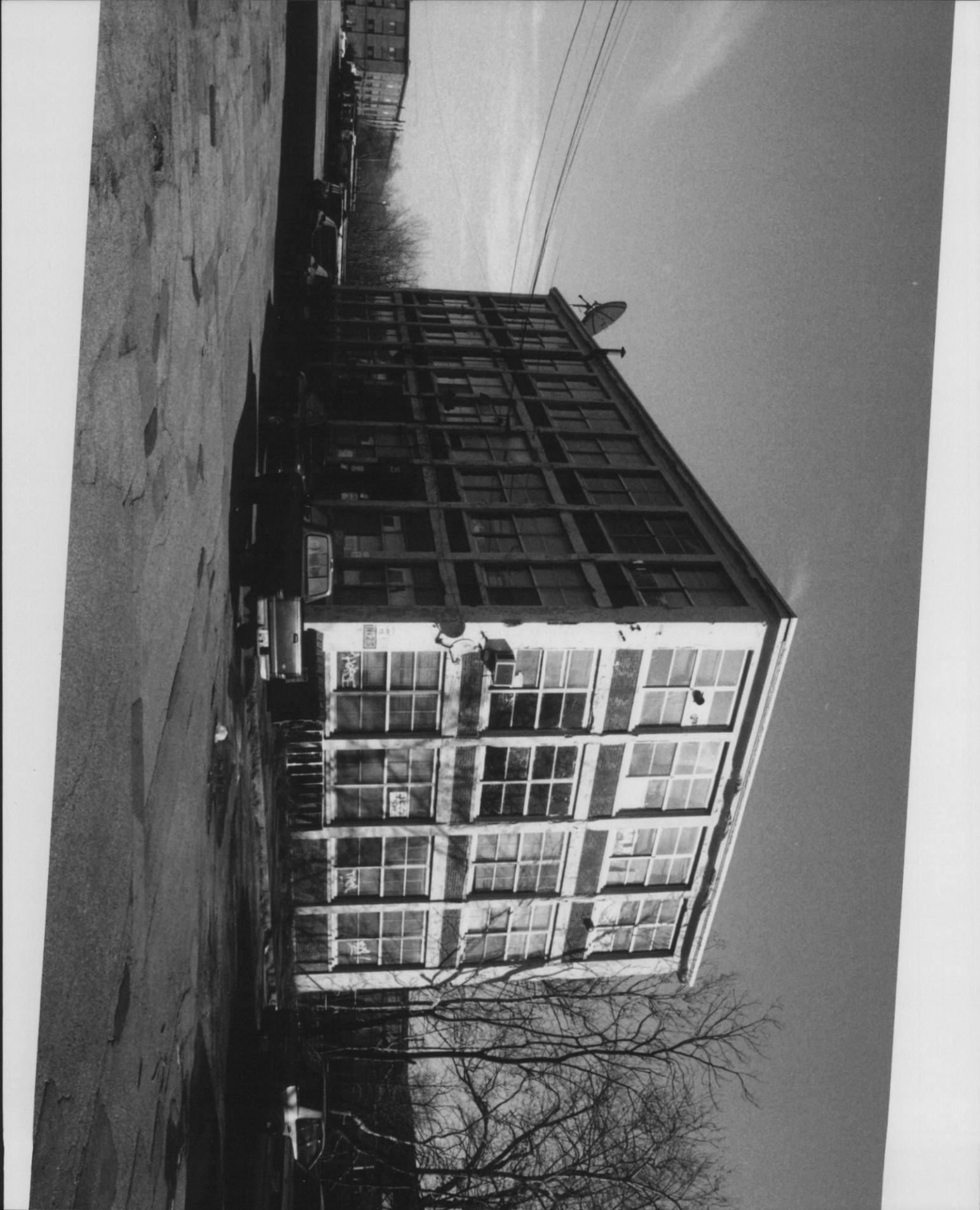


CHER BLOCK
TLET BLDG'S

American
Apartments

10
SULET

PROPOSE
APR 2008











6-20-64 FOR 24

REPAIRS
24 HOURS
1234 5678

