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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Aeolian Company Factory Complex
Other names/site number: Aeolian Organ and Music Company
Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing

2. Location

Street & number: 85 Tremont Street
City or town: Meriden State: CT County: New Haven
Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

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 at the following level(s) of significance:

___national ___statewide ___local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___A ___B ___C ___D

Signature of certifying official/Title: **Date**

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: **Date**

Title : **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

_____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:	x
Public – Local	
Public – State	
Public – Federal	

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)	x
District	
Site	
Structure	
Object	

Aeolian Company Factory | New Haven, CT
Name of Property | County and State

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
3	0	Total

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.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE
INDUSTRY/*Manufacturing Facility*

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Other: Late 19th and early 20th c. Industrial

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: _____
Foundation: Stone
Walls: Brick, Concrete
Roof: Asphalt, EPDM

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Aeolian Company Factory Complex is a masonry industrial complex at 85 Tremont Street in Meriden, Connecticut, constructed from 1887 through 1920 to produce automatic musical instruments and music rolls. The complex consists of approximately ten adjoining and freestanding blocks clustered at the northwest corner of an approximately 2.19-acre parcel, at the intersection of Tremont and Cambridge streets with the remainder of the lot devoted to paved surface parking. The complex includes three contributing resources: the original mill building with additions, a power house/boiler room, and a record production building. The buildings are primarily constructed of red brick with stone trim, with heavy timber slow-burning framing common in 19th century mill buildings. Later additions constructed in 1920 incorporate reinforced concrete, steel framing, and terra cotta tile. All roofs are covered in EPDM. The complex retains a high degree of historic integrity.

Narrative Description

Setting

The Aeolian Company Factory is situated in the North End neighborhood of Meriden and is defined by Cambridge Street on the north; Tremont Street on the west; the northern lot lines of 59 Tremont Street, and 33 and 41 Locust Street on the south; and by the western lot line of 15 Locust Street on the east (Figures 1-2). Meriden is located in New Haven County. The parcel is located between the Amtrack railroad tracks one-quarter of a mile to the west, and Harbor Brook, one-tenth of a mile to the east. The immediate setting is primarily residential with light industrial and commercial buildings along Cambridge Street and a recreational field to the southeast. The residential development along Tremont Street dates to the late 19th and early 20th centuries and primarily consists of 1 ½ to 2 ½ -story wood frame working-class housing. The complex is clustered at the western half of its lot with very little setback from Cambridge and Tremont streets. The complex originally filled most of its compact lot. The primary extant buildings form a connected L-shaped footprint that extends twenty-two bays along Cambridge Street and thirty-four bays along Tremont Street.

Architectural Overview

Constructed in several phases, the main manufacturing blocks present unified red brick facades along Cambridge and Tremont streets. Overall, these blocks rise four stories to flat roofs, feature regularly spaced rectangular window openings with rowlock segmental arched lintels and stone sills, and corbeled and denticulated brick cornices. The original block constructed in 1887 extended seventeen bays along Cambridge Street and eleven bays along Tremont Street. The Cambridge Street elevation was extended five bays at its eastern end in 1893. The Tremont Street façade was extended seventeen bays south in 1901 and four more bays in 1920. While the last four bays mimic the treatment of the rest of the façade, the 1920 addition is constructed of reinforced concrete. An additional block was added off of the eastern (rear) elevation the 1901 extension as part of the 1920 expansion.

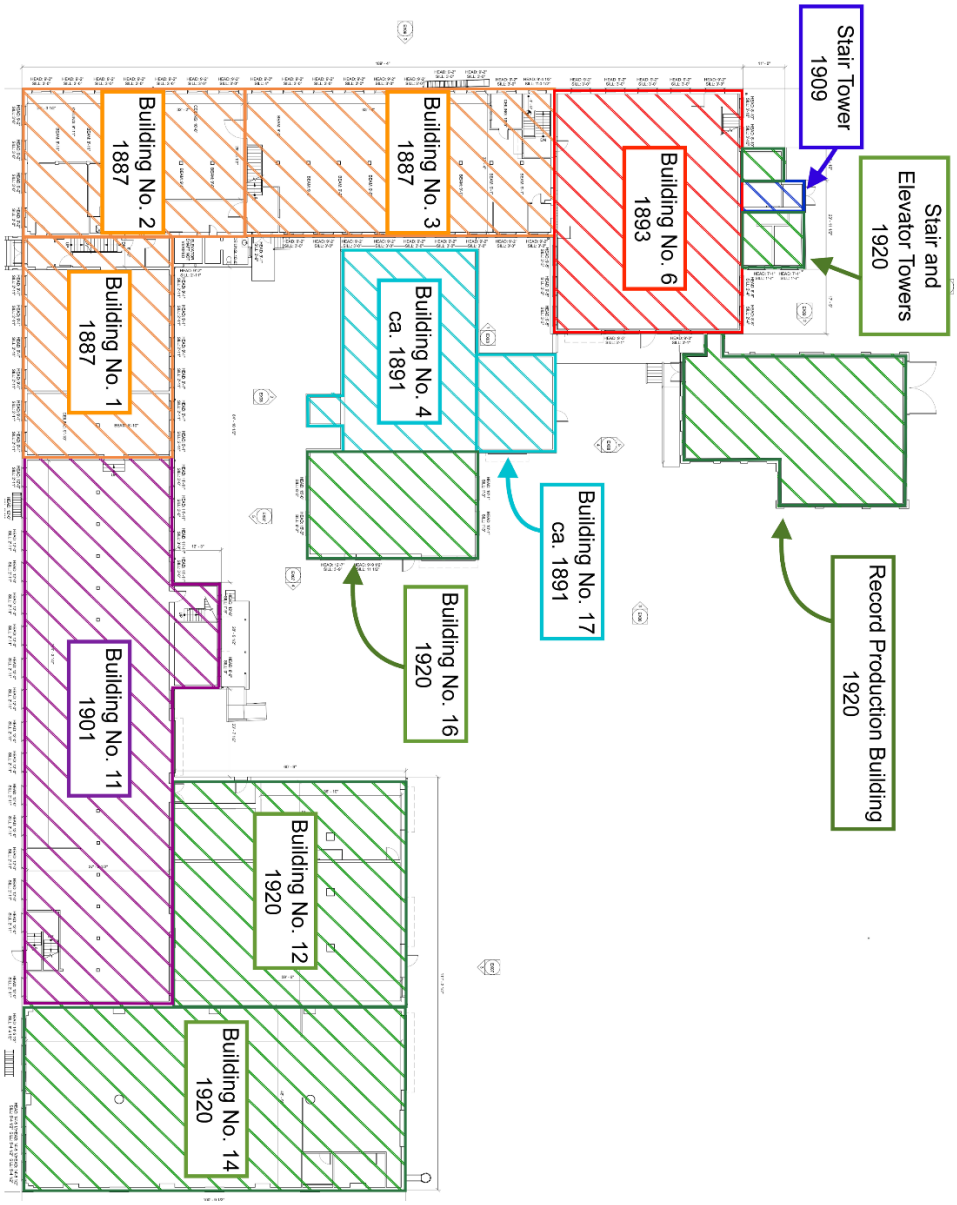
The interior courtyard of the factory contains several smaller blocks including one and two-story brick boiler houses constructed between 1891 and 1920, a brick chimney constructed in 1901, and a two-story reinforced concrete building constructed in 1920. An exterior elevator tower was constructed off of the eastern end of the Cambridge Street façade in 1909 and appears to have been altered in 1920.

District Data Table

Building Number*	Building Function	Date	Architect	Builder	Photo No.
Original Mill Building with additions (1 contributing building)					
1	Office & Shipping, Veneer, Finishing	1887	Henry M. Jones	unknown	1-2, 4-6, 8, 9, 15, 22-23, 35, 42, 56
2	Woodworking, Paper Stock, Finishing, Expression	1887	Henry M. Jones	unknown	1-2, 4, 9, 15, 22, 24-25, 29-30, 48, 52
3	Woodworking, Cabinetry, Cutting, Stock	1887	Henry M. Jones	unknown	1-3, 17-18, 22, 26, 28, 33, 45-46, 55
6	Woodworking, Cabinetry, Veneer, Machine & Stencil, Stock & Shipping	1893	Henry M. Jones	H.Wales Lines	1-3, 17, 20, 22, 47, 53
11	Machining, Finishing, Expression	1901	Adolph Strack	H.Wales Lines	4-7, 9-11, 14-15, 19, 21-22, 27, 34, 41, 49-51, 54, 57
12	Music Roll Production	1920	Walter T. Arnold	J.G. Grozier Co.	11, 14, 19, 21-22, 40, 43
14	Music Roll Production	1920	Walter T. Arnold	J.G. Grozier Co.	7, 9-11, 19, 21, 44, 58
Power House (1 contributing building)					
4	Power House	by 1891	unknown	unknown	
16	Boiler Room	1920	unknown	J.G. Grozier Co.	12-13, 15-17, 21-22, 36-39
17	Kiln/Coal shed	by 1891	unknown	unknown	17, 22
n/a	Smokestack	1901	unknown	H.Wales Lines	12, 16, 22
Record Production Building (1 contributing building)					
n/a	Record Production	1920	Walter T. Arnold	J.G. Grozier Co.	13, 18, 20, 31-32

* The Building Numbers indicate building sections. The numbers are taken from the 1950 Sanborn map of the complex (Figure 21) and are shown on the plan below. Each counted building and the sections within it are described in the following text.

Plan of Building Sections, drawn by Ryan LLC (North is up)



Mill Building (1 contributing building)

Buildings No. 1, 2, and 3 (1887)

Exterior (Photos 1-6, 8-9, 15, 17, 22)

Identified as three distinct buildings on the 1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Buildings No. 1, 2, and 3 are actually a single structure with interior functional divisions defined by fire walls. Together they form the original factory block designed by architect Henry M. Jones in 1887. Building No. 1 housed offices and shipping space, as well as veneer and finishing processes; Building No. 2 housed woodworking, paper stock, finishing and expression processes; Building No. 3 housed woodworking, cabinetry, cutting and stock. The building has an L-shaped footprint and extends seventeen bays along Cambridge Street, eleven bays along Tremont Street and is forty feet in depth. The block is constructed of red brick laid in common-bond and rises four stories over a raised basement that rests on a granite water course to a flat EPDM roof. It is modest in expression, but with embellishment concentrated around the main entrance, windows, and at the roofline that distinguish it as a late 19th century industrial building with a domestic appearance.

The façade faces west onto Tremont Street. The building's primary entrance is located in the fifth bay and is set within a gabled brick portico with a flat-arch opening, stone keystones, and brick corbels. A stone plaque above the entry reads "1887." The recessed entrance is reached by a flight of concrete stairs and currently holds replacement doors. The fenestration is regularly arranged across the façade and is defined by rectangular openings with double-course rowlock segmental arched lintels and quarry-faced granite sills. Basement windows have been boarded up with painted plywood and all other windows hold replacement sash with metal infill. A painted sign that reads "THE AEOLIAN ORGAN AND MUSIC COMPANY" spans across the façade between the third and fourth stories but is mostly faded and appears as a ghost line. Circular, masonry wall anchors are regularly arranged between bays on all floors. A corbeled and denticulated brick cornice crowns the public-facing elevations including the façade (west) and north elevation. A simple brick cornice band is visible on the exposed portions of the south and east elevations, which face the parking lot.

A large loading opening is located in the first story of the north elevation, in the eighth bay, and appears to be a later alteration to an original window opening. The seventeenth bay features a similar alteration with a pedestrian entrance into the basement below the enlarged opening. This entrance is narrow, unadorned, and holds a replacement paneled door. A metal fire escape is affixed to the western-most two bays of the façade (west elevation). The south and east (rear) elevations are more utilitarian in appearance than the street-facing elevations. A five-story, one-bay by two-bay brick exterior elevator tower with an adjoining one-story brick headhouse is located at the intersection of the L-shaped block.

Interior (Photos 23-26, 28-30, 35, 42, 45-46, 48, 52, 55-56)

Circulation within the 1887 building is facilitated by two sets of enclosed wood stairs located between the functionally divided portions of the building (i.e., between Building No.1 and Building No. 2, and between Building No. 2 and Building No. 3). Brick partition walls with metal fire doors mark the division between the three sections of the building on all floors. The basement has stone and brick perimeter walls, concrete floors, wood framing members, and exposed mechanicals. Portions of the space are divided by partitions. Several original 2/2 wood windows remain. On the first floor, the main office entry vestibule is located in Building No.1; it consists of a narrow east-west stair corridor with an enclosed wood stair with entrance to the office to the south. The vestibule remains largely intact with paneled walls, decorative cased openings with transoms, and an original glass and paneled wood interior door. The majority of the first floor in Buildings No. 2 and 3 is largely open in plan with painted timber framing members regularly arranged across the floor. Floors are wood plank, perimeter walls are painted brick, and the ceiling is unfinished with exposed mechanicals, plumbing, and wood decking of the second floor above. Building No. 2 has some partitions, but the finishes are the same. The second floor of Building No. 1 is defined by a double-loaded corridor with wood frame partitions dividing small offices. Floors are carpeted, exterior brick walls are painted, frame partitions are plastered and painted, and ceilings are acoustical tile. Buildings No. 2 and 3 have the same plan and finishes as on the first floor. The third floor was inaccessible. The fourth floor of building Nos. 1 and 3 resembles the first floor in plan and finishes. Building No. 3 has later steel framing members for partition walls in some places. Building No. 1 has an open stair to the roof along its north wall.

Building No. 6, 1893

Exterior (Photos 1-3, 13, 17-18, 20, 22)

Building No. 6, designed by architect Henry M. Jones and constructed in 1893, was the first major addition to the original factory. It consists of a 49’ x 66’ block at its eastern end that extended the Cambridge Street elevation five bays to the east. It housed a variety of operations including woodworking, paper stock, finishing and expression. The fenestration arrangement and architectural treatment of the Cambridge Street elevation is identical to the façade of the original block. This addition was once connected to a frame building immediately to its east (not extant) (Figures 14, 16-17) The eastern elevation retains a series of projecting elevator and stair towers that communicated between these buildings and now have sealed openings. These date to 1909 and 1920. The southern elevation of this block is utilitarian in appearance and regularly fenestrated. A raised concrete loading dock extends from the first floor with a large garage door opening in its western-most bay and a pedestrian entrance in the center bay. A concrete connecting bridge at the first floor of the eastern-most bay joins the block to the Record Production Building located immediately to the south.

Interior (Photo 33, 47, 53)

Circulation in Building No. 6 is facilitated by an enclosed stair that runs along the masonry wall shared with Building No. 3. The first floor is divided by a partition wall with the northern two-thirds of the floor finished for office space with plastered walls, carpeted floors, and acoustical

tile ceilings; the southern third of the floor is open in plan with exposed heavy timber framing, wood floors, and painted exterior brick walls. The second and fourth floors are open in plan with the same exposed structure and finishes as on the southern side of the first floor. The third floor was inaccessible.

Building No. 11, 1901

Exterior (Photos 4-7, 9-11, 14-15, 19, 22)

Building No. 11, designed by architect Adolph Strack and constructed in 1901, was the second major addition to the 1887 factory. It consists of a 146' x 50' block at its southern end that extended the Tremont Street elevation seventeen bays to the south. This addition housed machining, finishing, and expression processes. The design and materials of this building match the original mill, forming a continuous façade except that this block has no basement, taller first-floor window openings, and no wall anchors. The north and south sides of this building are not exposed.

The east (rear) elevation includes a three-bay, four-and-a-half story projecting elevator tower attached to the fourth through sixth bays from the north. A later brick addition (Building 12) is attached at the south end of the east elevation. The central bay of the elevator tower extends above the roofline with a circular window centered in the half-story. A small loading dock and garage door opening are located in the central bay, with tall, narrow windows centered above it. There is evidence of a bricked-in former opening above the door. Window openings flank the central bay; openings on the north side are located between floors and those on the south side are at floor height. The southern end of the eastern elevation and the south elevation adjoin Buildings 12 and 14 described below.

Interior (Photos 27, 34, 41, 49-51, 54, 57)

Circulation in Building No. 11 is facilitated by the stair and elevator tower on its eastern wall and a stair near the southwest corner of the building. There is no basement for this addition; floor heights align with Building No. 1 on all but the first floor which steps down slightly, resulting in taller window openings and ceiling heights on this floor. Segmental arched openings with metal fire doors provide access between the buildings. The floor plate is open with exposed heavy timber framing regularly spaced across the space, wood floors, painted exterior brick walls, exposed mechanicals, and wood decking of the upper floors. The northern third of the second floor is organized around the double-loaded corridor that runs north-south from Building No. 1; partitions divide offices of varying sizes. In general, floors are carpeted, partition walls are plastered and painted, exterior brick walls are painted, and the ceilings have acoustical tile. The plan and finishes change at the stair/elevator tower where a corridor with wood floors and exposed ceilings continues along the east wall leading to Buildings No. 12 and 14. Small offices are located along the western wall, these without carpeting or finished ceilings. The third floor and fourth floors were inaccessible except for the corridor leading from the stair and elevator

tower to Building No. 14. These have painted frame partitions, wood floors, and exposed ceiling framing.

Building No. 12, 1920

Exterior (Photos 11, 14, 19, 22)

Building No. 12, designed by architect Walter T. Arnold and constructed in 1920, was one of two contemporaneous final additions to the main mill. It consists of a four-story, 56' by 60' brick block that abuts the eastern (rear) wall of Building No. 11 and the north wall of Building No. 14. This addition was used for music roll production and replaced a one-story brick block used as a pattern house that was part of the 1901 expansion. Its fireproof construction is noted on the 1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. The east elevation is regularly fenestrated with two garage openings on the ground floor. The upper floors hold original 3-over-3 historic sash. The north elevation is unfenestrated with a pedestrian entrance located where the additions meet. An enclosed, fenestrated brick bridge at the fourth floor of Building No. 11 connects the elevator tower to Building 12.

Interior (Photos 40, 43)

Building 12 has large steel structural members supporting each floor. The ground floor is largely open in plan with brick partition walls forming two rooms on the northern side of the floor. It has concrete floors, painted brick exterior walls, and exposed steel framing that has been painted located at regular intervals across the center of the floor plate. The second floor has brick and frame partitions on the western side of the floor but is otherwise open in plan with the same finishes as the first floor.

Building No. 14, 1920

Exterior (Photos 7, 9-11, 19, 21)

Building No. 14, designed by architect Walter T. Arnold and constructed in 1920, was built contemporaneously with Building No. 12 and also housed music roll production. It is a four-story, 50' x 100' reinforced concrete pier and spandrel building that extends from the southern end of Building No. 11. Like Building 12, which it abuts to its north, it was designed with fire-proof construction methods. The building is four bays by eight bays; the Tremont Street elevation is a false front designed to match the facades of Buildings No. 1 and No. 11. (Photos 9-11, 21). The south and east elevations reveal the concrete structural system with concrete piers and brick panels, continuous stone sill courses, and regularly spaced, rectangular window openings. The roof features a single sawtooth monitor that faces north.

Interior (Photos 44, 58)

Building No. 14 features regularly spaced poured concrete Turner mushroom columns across a predominantly open floor plate. Floors are concrete, structural framing is exposed; exterior walls are painted masonry.

Power House (Building No. 4, ca. 1891), Kiln/Coal Shed (Building No. 17, ca.1891) Boiler Room (Building No. 16, ca. 1920), and Smokestack (1901), (1 contributing building)

Exterior (Photos 12-13, 16-17, 21-22)

The Power House, with attached Kiln/Coal Shed, Smokestack, and Boiler Room is located on the interior side of the complex, immediately southeast of the original mill. These buildings measure 45' x 86' overall. The Power House and its adjacent coal room were constructed by 1891. The 1 and 2-story Power House is rectangular in plan and constructed of red brick that steps up in height across the east and west elevations to a combination pitched and flat roof with skylights located on the slope. Original window openings have been bricked in and boarded up. The 1-story kiln/coal shed adjoins the Power House on its eastern elevation. Constructed of red brick, it features a gable roof with a simple brick corbeled raking cornice with a gable return. A central entrance is located in the gable end beneath a double rowlock segmental arch. A garage door opening has been cut into its southern elevation. An adjoining 2-story boiler room was added to the southern elevation of the Power House ca. 1920 to accommodate a Manning Boiler, which were typically 20-30 feet high. This building was constructed using fireproof construction methods. It is constructed of red brick and features terracotta tile on its southern elevation as well as historic multi-pane steel sash with operable central awning sections on all elevations. A garage door opening has been cut into the eastern-most bay of its southern elevation. A brick smokestack constructed in 1901 is affixed to the western end of the Power House. This was shortened at an unknown date.

Interior (Photos 36-39)

The interiors of the Power House, Boiler Room, and Coal Shed consist of open volumes with concrete floors, painted brick walls, and exposed steel roof framing. The original south elevation of the Power House is visible with bricked in original window openings discernable. Power House skylights appear to hold original divided glazing.

Record Production Building (1920, 1 contributing building)

Exterior (Photos 13, 20, 22)
A two-story reinforced concrete building constructed in 1920 for record production is located east of the boiler houses. This building connects to the southern elevation of Building No. 6. It has an L-shaped footprint. The main block measures approximately 46'x 34'and has a shallow gable roof; the ell measures approximately 30' x 25' and has a flat roof. The building has large rectangular window openings separated by piers; most openings are infilled or boarded up. Large garage door openings have been cut into the eastern and northern elevations. This building is

showing signs of advanced deterioration, including water ponding, roof membrane and framing failures, and the structure "appears to be perilously close to collapse," according to a structural engineer's report produced in November 2021. There is no plan to demolish the building.

Interior (Photos 31-32)

The interior of the Record Production Building consists of two large open volumes with poured concrete floors, exposed steel structural framing, wood roof framing, and poured concrete exterior walls.

Integrity

The Aeolian Company Factory Complex retains its original location and setting in terms of its spatial relationship to Cambridge and Tremont streets, the surrounding residential neighborhood, and proximity to the railroad line. Portions of the industrial complexes across Cambridge Street have been lost, but the Aeolian complex and remains of nearby manufacturing facilities serve as a reminder of this former industrial corridor. Within the complex, most of the primary production spaces remain. Ancillary wood buildings set behind the mill lofts were removed by the mid-twentieth century and a railroad spur present in 1891 no longer appears on Sanborn maps by 1896. The scale, design and workmanship of the original factory is visible on the continuous façade, with its decorative brickwork, balanced proportions, and subtle ornament. Technological advancements in fire-resistive construction and structural capacity for open spans is represented by the mixed masonry, concrete, and terra cotta buildings on the interior (rear-facing) side of the complex. In addition, the character-defining materials and workmanship dating from the late 1880s through 1930 are mainly intact: on the exterior, most windows and doors have been replaced, and some openings have been infilled or obscured but some original windows remain as evidence of the historic sash. The building interiors retain open production spaces, high ceilings, visible structural members, and a portion of the original materials. Historic wood flooring, metal fire doors and segmental arched masonry openings remain. The existing factory fully retains its feeling and association as a late nineteenth and early-twentieth century industrial facility that operated through the first quarter of the twentieth century.

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.)

- [X] 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.)

- [ ] 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY

Period of Significance

1887-1930

Significant Dates

1887, 1893, 1901, 1920 (original construction and additions)

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder
Arnold, Walter T., architect (1920)
J.G. Grozier Co., builders (1920)
Jones, Henry M., architect (1887 & 1893)
Lines, H. Wales, builder (1893, 1901)
Strack, Adolph, architect (1901)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Aeolian Company Factory Complex is eligible for listing on the National Register at the local level under Criterion A in the category of Industry for its association with the production of automatic musical equipment. The plant was the first purpose-built factory for the Aeolian Company, founded in Meriden in 1887 as the Aeolian Organ and Music Company, and renamed the Aeolian Company in 1895. The enterprise became an internationally renowned manufacturer of automatic musical instruments, primarily organs and player pianos, and the perforated paper rolls that generated their music. These were initially pneumatic instruments, operated by the pumping of air via foot pedals that triggered interior mechanisms that automatically played the keys following the direction of the music roll; later models were electric requiring no operator at all. Their relatively simple function made it possible for their owners to reproduce music without any musical training, making them hugely popular from the late nineteenth century through the end of the 1920s when the radio made music accessible without instruments. There were many manufacturers of these automatic player pianos and organs and their music rolls, but the commercial success attained by the Aeolian Company set them apart from other producers. The company rapidly expanded to include seven factories in the United States and two in Europe. The Meriden factory initially functioned as a manufacturing plant for automatic organs and music rolls. It continued to function in these capacities, serving as the company's primary music roll production facility in the U.S., and also expanded its output to include production of player pianos, and after 1915, phonograph parts and records. As the company grew, so did the Meriden factory, with additions in 1893, 1901, and 1920. The Aeolian Company was a significant employer in the town of Meriden, employing as many as 500 workers in 1906, many of them women. The decline of the automatic musical instrument trade in the late 1920s lead to a series of consolidations and mergers and the closing of the Meriden factory in 1930. The period of significance begins in 1887 with construction of the earliest portion of the factory and ends in 1930 when the Aeolian Company halted production at the plant.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Criterion A: Industry

The Aeolian Company Factory is significant for its association with the Aeolian Company, a commercial and manufacturing enterprise of international stature during the first quarter of the twentieth century. The company was founded in 1887 and rose to prominence in the early twentieth century under the leadership of President Harry B. Tremaine. Its Meriden factory was the first plant constructed by the company and continued to play an important role in the Aeolian Company's production even as the business expanded to include additional manufacturing facilities. Initially, automatic organs and music rolls were produced in Meriden. As the company

developed new instruments and opened new factories in the early twentieth century, production in Meriden largely shifted to music rolls, producing 6,000-10,000 rolls per day. The Aeolian Company was the largest producer of music rolls in the United States in the early 1920s, with production of the rolls concentrated in the Meriden factory.[1] The plant also produced pianolas for foreign export until 1906 and continued manufacturing automatic organs into the 1910s. After 1915, the factory also manufactured phonograph parts and records, amounting to roughly 12,000 records a day by 1924.

The Rise and Fall of the Automatic Musical Instrument Industry in the United States, ca. 1876-1930

Mechanical musical instruments have a long history that dates back centuries. However, their mass production by multiple manufacturers and widespread adoption by the public had a brief but intense period of development beginning in the late nineteenth century, peaking in the 1910s, and steadily declining in the 1930s. The Centennial International Exhibition held in Philadelphia in 1876 may mark the beginning of the mechanical musical industry, as it featured several tabletop mechanical instruments known as organettes made by various manufacturers from several different countries.[2] These simple instruments typically played a small range of notes dictated by perforated cardboard or paper rolls when a hand crank was turned. The late 1870s and 1880s became a period of great experimentation and competition in the budding mechanical musical industry. In his comprehensive history of the Aeolian Company, company historian Rex Lawson suggested timing as an influential factor in the drive for automatic music:

> New York in the mid-1870s was a teeming hive of cosmopolitan humanity, with music as one of the dominant forces that held society together. Transport was well established; railways ensured regular and reliable communication, propellor-driven steamboats had been crossing the Atlantic for nearly thirty years, and international news and business communication was unremarkably carried out on a daily basis by transatlantic cable…the time was ripe for a form of home entertainment that obviated the need for too much brain power.[3]

Astute businessmen recognized the potential market for musical instruments that could be played without training and mechanical minds set to work advancing the principles behind the novelty tabletop instruments and applying them to instruments with a broader range of notes, higher musical potential, and more impressive pieces of furniture. This began with reed and pipe organs which were fitted with music rolls, first operated with hand cranks and later via air introduced by pressing foot pedals. These instruments were embraced by the wealthy in the 1880s but were largely out of reach to everyone else. The piano became the focus of future advancements in automatic player technology with early efforts concentrated primarily on a device with mechanical, felt covered "fingers" that was rolled up to the keyboard and operated—like player organs—pneumatically with foot pedals and a music roll; these were known as piano

[1] Arthur W.J.G. Ord-Hume, *Player Piano: The History of the Mechanical Piano and How to Repair It*, (South Brunswick: A.S. Barnes), 1971, p. 265.
[2] "History of the Pianola: Organettes," *The Pianola Institute.* www.pianola.org.
[3] Rex Larson, "Towards a History of the Aeolian Company," *The Pianola Journal No.11*, 1998, p. 11.

players. The most commercially successful of these, the Pianola, was built by Edwin Votey, an organ builder associated with the Aeolian Company and its player organs, in 1895, and marketed by the Aeolian Company with great success beginning in 1898. These instruments were extremely popular and the companies that manufactured them spent about a decade improving their musicality by expanding the number of notes they could play to include the full eighty-eight keys of the piano keyboard and inventing devices that could improve the control of tempo and dynamics while operating the instrument. With each improvement, the instruments gained more respectability in the musical community, and eventually well-known composers such as Igor Stravinski began arranging music especially for these automatic players. Automatic musical instruments had advanced significantly from tabletop novelty instruments in the 1870s and early 1880s, to full pieces of furniture that took pride of place in people's homes and were included in chamber music ensembles, used as accompaniment for singers, and occasionally appeared in orchestras by the early twentieth century.[4]

The next major advancement widely adopted in the automatic musical instrument industry was integrating the piano player technology into the piano, itself. Piano player manufacturers had experimented with this in the 1890s, but without well-known piano makers behind the instruments, they were not commercially successful. By absorbing and partnering with established piano manufactures, the Aeolian Company was able to marry their automatic Pianola mechanisms with reputable piano brands, such as Weber and Steinway, resulting in widespread acceptance of what was marketed as a Pianola Piano in the early years of the twentieth century. These instruments could function as regular pianos as well as automatic players, combining the two instruments in one. Other piano player manufacturers followed suit and before long the integrated player pianos replaced the push-up piano players. Ever experimenting with the possibility of automatically generated music, inventors created reproducing player pianos next, which operated with an electric motor and played back music rolls that had been recorded by actual pianists without the need of any manual operation whatsoever.

The decline of the automatic musical instrument industry is generally attributed to the rise of broadcast radio and electric recording and the onset of the Great Depression after the stock market crash of 1929. Radio not only provided in-home music previously only available from physical musical instruments; it also expanded the variety of home entertainment beyond just music. Not inconsequentially, it did all of this inexpensively at a time when households did not have significant disposable income for amusement. A former employee of the Aeolian company's advertising staff, Richard Anthony Leonard, witnessed the decline of the player piano industry firsthand. In an article he wrote about player pianos in 1961 he reflected:

> The ascendancy of radio came so fast that the player piano companies never fully realized what hit them. They reeled through a series of liquidations, mergers and bankruptcies. The stock market crash of 1929, with the subsequent Great Depression, dealt the player piano the final blow.[5]

[4] "Piano Players," *The Pianola Institute*. www.pianola.org.
[5] Richard Anthony Leonard, "The Glorious Age of the Player Piano," *Hi-Fi/Stereo*, March 1961, 63.

The Aeolian Company

While there were many manufacturers of automatic musical instruments, the Aeolian Company stood out as the leader in its commercial achievement. As Aeolian Company historian Rex Lawson asserts, "For around fifty years…the Aeolian Company reigned supreme in the world of mechanical musical instruments. Others may have developed more ingenious instruments or have made more faithful recordings, but no other company came close to the worldwide success of the Aeolian, Weber Piano and Pianola Company."[6] The company was founded in Meriden, Connecticut on July 26, 1887. It was organized as the Aeolian Organ and Music Company, reflecting its origins as a merger between the Mechanical Orguinette Company of New York (dealers and manufacturers of mechanical organs) and the Automatic Music Paper Company of Boston (manufacturers of musical paper rolls for automatic instruments). The company was the first to combine the two related products.[7] The Aeolian Organ and Music Company shortened its name to the Aeolian Company in 1895, and became a subsidiary of the Aeolian, Weber Piano and Pianola Company in 1903, but the overarching business was generally referred to as the Aeolian Company after 1895.[8]

The Mechanical Orguinette Company was founded in 1878 by James H. Morgan, a granite dealer in New York with no particular expertise in musical instruments. His partner was John Nichol of New York. Logically, the Mechanical Orguinette Company initially sold a tabletop reed organ called an Orguinette, a novelty spelling used for its own brand of organette, and other small mechanical instruments. It expanded its product line in the 1880s under general manager, William B. Tremaine (1840-1907), to include upright player organs, the most famous of which was the Aeolian Organ. The Mechanical Orguinette Company had a factory for producing their small instruments in Brooklyn, New York, and partnered with the Munroe Organ Reed Company of Worcester, Massachusetts, for manufacture of its larger instruments. These were sold throughout the United States and internationally in the mid-1880s. A dispute with the Worcester manufacturer led the managers of the Mechanical Orguinette Company to reconsider its operations. [9] Morgan became acquainted with Horace Wilcox of Meriden, Connecticut, owner of the Britannia Company, renowned silversmiths, and co-founder of the traditional reed organ

[6] Rex Lawson, "Peddling Pianolas—Aeolian Company Advertising," *Pianola Journal vol. 17*, 2006, 3; The Aeolian, Weber Piano and Pianola Company was created in 1903 when the Aeolian Company purchased the Weber Piano Company. It served as a holding company for the Aeolian Company and its many subsidiaries. See footnote 7.
[7] "History of the Pianola—Player Organs," *Pianola Institute*. www.pianola.org.
[8] The first name change occurred in 1895 when the Aeolian Organ and Music Company became simply the "Aeolian Company." As the company grew and expanded its line of instruments, it formed partnerships with and absorbed various businesses involved in the manufacture and sales of its instruments. In 1903, the Aeolian, Weber Piano and Pianola Company was created as a controlling organization for all of the subsidiaries. In 1911, these included The Aeolian Company, The Orchestrelle Company (London) the Choralion Company (Berlin), the Aeolian Co. Ltd (Paris), The Pianola Company Proprietary, Ltd (Melbourne and Sydney), The Weber Piano Company, George Steck & Company, Stuyvesant Piano Company, Chilton Piano Company, Technola Piano Company, Votey Organ Company, Vocalion Organ Company, and the Universal Music Company. In advertisements, the business refers to itself as the Aeolian Company as early as 1891. See Rex Lawson, "Peddling Pianolas—Aeolian Company Advertising," 3-57; Rex Larson, "Towards a History of the Aeolian Company," 23-41; and Alfred Dolge, *Pianos and Their Makers*, (Covina, CA: Covina Publishing Company) 1911, 332.
[9] Rex Larson, "Towards a History of the Aeolian Company," 17-18.

company Wilcox & White, both located in Meriden. Forming a cooperative relationship with the Wilcox & White Company meant the Mechanical Orguinette Company could cut ties with the Munroe Organ Reed Company, and the business moved its own small instrument factory out of Brooklyn temporarily to a plant neighboring the Wilcox & White organ factory on Cambridge Street in Meriden in 1886.[10]

The Automatic Music Paper Company was founded in 1880 by George B. Kelley, Edward Rand, and John L. Given, organ action contractors at the Mason & Hamlin Organ Company in East Cambridge, Massachusetts. The company produced perforated paper music rolls for a number of competing brands of organettes and player organs and were the primary producer of music rolls as the automatic music industry was taking off.[11] As Morgan was reorganizing the Mechanical Orguinette Company's production operations, he recognized the advantages of consolidating the related businesses.

The Mechanical Orguinette Company and the Automatic Music Paper Company joined forces in 1887 with the incorporation of The Aeolian Organ and Music Company in July of that year. The Company's open-ended purpose was "to manufacture, buy, sell and deal in all kinds of music organs and other musical instruments, and the several parts thereof, and of musical paper of all kinds, and of all musical articles and appliances, and all articles used in connection therewith."[12] The capital stock of the new company was $150,000. The officers and directors of the new company reflected the new partnership, and also indicate a foundational association with the Wilcox & White Company. The president, treasurer, and general manager were James Morgan, John Nichols, and William B. Tremaine of the Mechanical Orguinette Company, George Kelly and John Given of the Automatic Music Paper Company were Directors, and James H. White of Wilcox & White served as secretary and assistant treasurer, while Horace Wilcox served on the board of directors.[13] The first meeting of the officers and stockholders was held in the offices of Horace Wilcox's Britannia Company.[14] This cooperative arrangement with the Wilcox & White company was short-lived and the businesses became competitors in the 1890s.

As its name implied, the primary products manufactured by the Aeolian Organ and Music Company in the late 1880s and early 1890s were Aeolian Organs and music rolls and a handful of smaller instruments. The Aeolian Organ was a forty-six-note player reed organ with a keyboard; it took the shape of an upright piano and could function as a traditional reed organ or be operated automatically with foot pedals and music rolls. It was sold beginning in 1885 by the Mechanical Orguinette Company, and became a highly regarded, commercially popular instrument among the wealthy. (In 1890 Aeolian organs ranged in price from $150-$500, or roughly $4,300-$14,500 today).[15] The Aeolian organ was embraced by well-known musicians such as Ignancy Jan Paderewski, and owned by wealthy Americans, as well as foreign royalty.[16]

[10] "Meriden's New Industry," *The Meriden Daily Republican,* July 27, 1887.
[11] Rex Larson, "Towards a History of the Aeolian Company," 9-10.
[12] "The Orguinette Company," *The Meriden Daily Republican* July 26, 1887.
[13] The Orguinette Company," *The Meriden Daily Republican* July 26, 1887.
[14]The Orguinette Company," *The Meriden Daily Republican* July 26, 1887.
[15] "Aeolian Company Busy," *The Meriden Daily Journal,* October 1, 1890.
[16] "History of the Pianola—Player Organs," *Pianola Institute.* www.pianola.org.

(Figure 3) Meriden journalists were enthusiastic about the association of the instrument's manufacture with the town, which some expected would elevate Meriden to international stature: "[the establishment of the Aeolian Organ and Music Company] in all probability has put on a firm foundation a trade and industry which shall bear the name of this city, and cause it to become as well known and familiar in the most remote regions of the world, as the city of London is now."[17] The Aeolian Organ and Music Company also manufactured the Celestina, a 20-note tabletop organette, and several other small instruments.[18] (Figure 4).

Music rolls were the other main products manufactured by the Aeolian Organ and Music Company at its start. (Figure 5). Music roll production evolved as instruments advanced technologically, but the majority of rolls produced were made from master rolls that were created by hand. Musical editors transcribed sheet music by punching perforations onto rolls of paper, creating what was known as a stencil. The stencils were used by automatic machines to then mass produce the hand-perforated music roll; then the rolls were spooled and packed away in individually labeled boxes. In addition to producing the music rolls, the Aeolian Organ and Music Company manufactured its music roll machinery and boxes, and printed labels in-house.

While manufacturing took place in Meriden, the main offices and showrooms for the Aeolian Organ and Music Company were located in New York City. The initial location was a small basement and storefront at 831 Broadway, out of which the Mechanical Orguinette Company had operated. In 1891, the company leased a larger building at 18 West 23rd Street. Before the end of the decade, the company erected its first purpose-built headquarters known as Aeolian Hall located at 362 Fifth Avenue where they remained until 1912 when they moved into an even larger Aeolian Hall constructed for the company on West 42nd Street. Each successive move reflected the growing success of the Aeolian empire. The showrooms housed in these buildings began modestly and evolved to include concert halls, the last of which was home to the New York Symphony Orchestra (Figures 6-7). In addition to showrooms, the company produced catalogues that were advertised as available upon request in their promotional material as well as monthly publications known as bulletins that featured newly available music rolls; the bulletins were mailed to existing customers and were also made available upon request.

Two important developments in the mid and late-1890s advanced the trajectory of the Aeolian Company from a successful medium-size organ and music roll business to a dominant player in the manufacture and sale of automatic musical instruments with its own architectural statements taking their place in the New York City skyline. One was the introduction of Harry B. Tremaine (1866-1932) to the leadership of the company, first as general manager in 1892 and then as president in 1898. The other was the introduction of the Pianola piano player developed by Aeolian associate, Edwin Votey (1856-1931), and first marketed by the Aeolian Company in 1898 (Figure 8). Henry B. Tremaine was the son of William B. Tremaine, general manager of the Mechanical Orguinette Company and the Aeolian Organ and Music Company until 1892. The younger Tremaine rose quickly to president of the company and was at the helm until his death in 1932. He was a far-sighted businessman with a particular talent for identifying and securing

[17] "Meriden's New Industry," *The Meriden Daily Republican*, July 27, 1887.
[18] Rex Larson, "Towards a History of the Aeolian Company," 20.

strategic alliances and employing sophisticated advertising in the marketing of his company's products. Combined, these qualities contributed significantly to placing the Aeolian Company at the forefront of the mechanical musical instrument industry. Among his most fortuitous connections was his relationship with Edwin Votey, an innovative organ builder who developed many instruments for the Aeolian Company, including the Pianola. Tremaine's business acumen and Votey's instrumental innovation were a powerful combination.

Tremaine began by improving and expanding the range of instruments offered by the Aeolian Company, building a reputation for innovative and high-quality products, and then advertised them widely. Beginning in 1892, the Aeolian Company introduced at least one new or improved instrument a year, including the Aeolian Grand organ, the Aeolian Pipe Organ, the Aeolian Orchestrelle, the Aeriol Piano, and the Pianola piano player.[19] These instruments were initially not manufactured by the Aeolian Company, but by other firms with whom Tremaine had contracted, most of which were eventually purchased (with their patents) by the Aeolian Company, and functioned as its subsidiaries.[20] The organs were very popular with wealthy and were owned by Mark Twain, Pierre DuPont, Andrew Carnegie, and John D. Rockefeller, and many others.[21] In 1900, they ranged in price from $750 to upwards of $3,000 or approximately $24,000-$95,000 today, placing them well out of range to all but the wealthiest. The Pianola, by contrast, was an expensive but more affordable $250 or roughly $7,900 today, making it an immediate success with the upper middle class for whom a residential organ was out of reach, but the desire for musical entertainment with minimal effort was equally strong.

With the introduction of the Pianola, Tremaine seized the opportunity to extend the Aeolian Company's reach into the piano industry (Figure 9). As Lawson speculates of Tremaine's strategic thinking, "He already had pipe organs, reed organs of many varieties, and piano players in his portfolio of instruments, he needed to have some piano factories either under his control or at least closely allied to his company's interests."[22] Tremaine joined forces by absorbing or forming exclusive arrangements with some of the most well-known piano makers in the industry beginning with the Weber Piano Company in 1903, and eventually including George Steck and Company, Wheelock Piano Company, Stuyvesant Piano Company, and Steinway. He formed the Aeolian Weber Pianola and Piano Company in 1903 as the controlling company for these, and other subsidiaries, including the original Aeolian Company. Tremaine expanded the Aeolian Company's reach outside of the United States as well, constructing factories in Germany and England to supply the European market and establishing subsidiary companies in London, Berlin, Paris, Melbourne, and Sydney.[23] At the height of the Aeolian Company's success in the 1920s, Tremaine was perceived as a master businessman and cultural ambassador. The *National Cyclopedia of American Biography* wrote of him in 1922: "he has developed the automatic musical instrument industry to such an extent that it has changed the whole aspect of the piano

[19] Rex Larson, "Towards a History of the Aeolian Company," 22.
[20] These were the Ferrand & Votey Organ Company of Detroit (producer of the Aeolian Pipe Organ and Pianola), The Vocalion Company of Worcester (producers of the Orchestrelle), and Brown & Simpson (producers of the Aeriol Piano—this company did not ultimately become part of Aeolian's holdings).
[21] Scott Hummell, "Music on Demand: Residential Pipe Organs in America," *Vox Humana*, January 20, 2019.
[22] Rex Larson, "Towards a History of the Aeolian Company," 28.
[23] Alfred Dolge. *Pianos and Their Makers*, (Covina, CA: Covina Publishing Company), 1911, 332.

trade. He is probably the greatest single factor in the spread of culture and refinement in musical taste, not only in America, but throughout the civilized world."[24] Tremaine was accepted as a leader in the field outside of the U.S. as well. He was the recipient of Cross of Legion of Honor from the French Government, and seven royal appointments from various European courts.[25]

Advertising played an important role in the Aeolian Company's prosperity and expansion, and Tremaine was the helm of the advertising strategy. In 1902, he placed a four-page, colored advertisement promoting the Pianola in *Cosmopolitan* magazine. Its length and appearance were such a vast departure from traditional black-and-white advertisements, which were commonplace at the time, that it is generally considered a watershed moment in the player piano industry. Among the key themes in this and later advertisements by the Aeolian Company was the notion that music could be available in the home to everyone who had use of their feet—no need for years of training and practice, so simple even a child could operate it. [26] In his 1911 treatise, *Pianos and their Makers,* Alfred Dolge declared that Tremaine's advertising blitz "stunned the old timers in the piano trade."[27] As the company continued to develop its instruments, it advanced its heavy advertising campaigns with striking, full and multi-page ads in daily papers and magazines. In 1915, *Piano Trade Magazine* reported on the outcome of the Aeolian Company's advertising strategy:

> While there may be, and undoubtedly are, honest differences of opinion as to which of the leading player houses has contributed the most to the mechanical development of the player, there can be no two opinions on the subject of which house has done the most in developing sales through national advertising…the Aeolian Company has been the biggest single factor in the creation of a market. In doing what it has toward the creation of this market, hundreds of thousands of dollars have been spent for advertising in mediums of national circulation. [28]

Tremaine's contributions to the expansion and world-wide recognition of the Aeolian Company are unquestionable. But shrewd business leadership without marketable instruments would not have ensured commercial success on its own. Here the partnership between Tremaine and Votey is significant. The first Pianola was built in 1895 by Edwin S. Votey, an organ builder based in Detroit, Michigan. His association with the Aeolian Company dates to 1893 when his firm, the Farrand & Votey Organ Company, began manufacturing the Aeolian Pipe Organ. Votey's Pianola, as previously described, was a cabinet that rolled up to an ordinary piano and played its keys mechanically using pedals that turned a music roll, which in turn directed mechanical "fingers" to play the keys. The Pianola was initially manufactured for the Aeolian Company by a newly organized Votey Organ Company in Detroit, which was purchased by the Aeolian Company in 1898. Manufacture moved to a new plant in Garwood, New Jersey in 1903. Votey

[24] *National Cyclopedia of American Biography Volume XVII* (New York: James T. White and Company), 172.
[25] "World-Wide Honor to H.B. Tremaine," *The New York Times,* November 19, 1922.
[26] Timothy D. Taylor, "The Commodification of Music at the Dawn of the Era of 'Mechanical Music,' *Enthomusicology,* Spring/Summer 2007, 286, 288-289.
[27] Alfred Dolge, *Pianos and Their Makers,* 330.
[28] "Will ask H.B. Tremaine to Act? Advocates of National Advertising Campaign Want Benefit of his Experience." *Piano Trade Magazine* , December 1915, 6.

was elected to the board of the Aeolian Company in 1897 and rose to vice president, secretary and technical director in 1903.

With Tremaine and Votey working together, the Aeolian Company continued to introduce refinements to and expansion of its instrument collection. Several versions of the Pianola piano player were developed and marketed by the Aeolian Company through the first decade of the twentieth century. Once the piano player technology was successfully moved into the pianos themselves, player pianos gradually surpassed the Pianolas in popularity. The Pianola Piano was introduced in 1904, the Grand Pianola Piano in 1909, and the reproducing piano known as the Duo-Art in 1914. In 1915, the Aeolian Company entered the phonograph market with their Aeolilan Vocalion and began producing records in addition to instruments. Votey led the teams that developed these instruments and Tremaine marketed them widely with great success through the 1920s (Figures 10-12).

The rise of the radio and the onset of the Great Depression affected the mechanical musical instrument industry as a whole, generally leading to a steady decline during the 1930s. The Aeolian Company was no exception, though a series of mergers kept it alive until 1985. In 1932, the Aeolian Company divided its organ and piano business and merged each with different corporations. The organ side of Aeolian merged with the Boston-based Skinner Organ Company, becoming the Aeolian-Skinner Organ Company, which continued to operate in Boston until 1972. While player pianos were on their way out, there was still a market for regular pianos and the Aeolian Company owned many of the piano makers. It merged with the American Piano Corporation forming the Aeolian-American Corporation and moved its operations to the American Piano Company headquarters in East Rochester, New York, where they operated until 1985.

The Meriden Plant

The Meriden plant of the Aeolian Company was the first purpose-built factory associated with the Aeolian company. As the company grew the Meriden plant expanded and became one of several factories operated by the Aeolian Company in the United States and Europe. The Aeolian Company's only other factory in New England was located in Worcester, Massachusetts. The other U.S. factories were concentrated in New York and New Jersey, including a plant in Garwood, New Jersey, for the manufacture of pianolas and Aeolian pipe organs, and the absorption of several Manhattan-based piano companies that were placed under Aeolian's control after 1903. The European factories were located in Gotha, Germany, and Hayes, England. [29] Of all of the factories producing Aeolian products, only the Meriden, Garwood, and Hayes plants were purpose-built by the Aeolian Company (Figure 13).

Shortly after setting up the Aeolian Organ and Music Company in 1887, the work of constructing the company's first manufacturing plant began. Here the cooperative nature of the venture with the Wilcox & White Company was clear. The site chosen for the new building was directly across Cambridge Street from the Wilcox & White factory. According to local newspaper

[29] Rex Lawson, "Towards a History of the Aeolian Company," 48.

accounts, the Aeolian Organ and Music Company factory was physically connected to the Wilcox & White factory by a third-floor bridge that crossed Cambridge Street, and the steam power for the Aeolian plant was initially provided by the Wilcox & White plant. [30] During the early period of cooperation between the businesses, the Wilcox & White Company provided the woodwork for Aeolian Instruments.[31] Henry M. Jones (1828-1908) of Meriden was the architect for the Aeolian Organ and Music Company Factory. In addition to many residences for Meriden's elite, he also designed several local factories, including the original block of the Wilcox & White factory.

The new building was initially conceived of as two buildings: one 120 x 40-foot building on Tremont Street and one 60 x 40-foot building on Cambridge Street.[32] The revised design consisted of a single, L-shaped building constructed of "North Haven brick,"[33] four stories high, 40-feet wide, with frontage of 138-feet along Cambridge Street and 102-feet along Tremont Street. (Buildings No. 1, 2, and 3) The contractors for the new building included A. R. Boardman (excavation), O. Bonnelli (mason), James Kane (brickwork), and H.L. Morehouse (woodwork).[34] By 1891, Wilcox & White—until then manufacturers of traditional reed organs—began to produce their own automatic organs. The cooperative arrangement with the Aeolian Organ and Music Company was severed and the companies became competitors. The 1891 Sanborn map does not indicate any physical connection between the plants and the Aeolian Company factory had constructed frame buildings on site for lumber and varnishing (previously supplied by Wilcox & White), as well as its own powerhouse (Building No. 4) The frame buildings, which were expanded over the years, are no longer extant.

The 1891 Sanborn map illustrates the division of functions in the earliest years of the plant's operation. At this time, the main manufacturing of organs and music rolls occurred in Buildings No. 2 and No. 3 along Cambridge Street with supplementary production, clerical, and shipping-related functions relegated to the ell along Tremont Street, Building No.1. The manufacturing of automatic organs required several key spaces for materials and finishing processes. These included lumber storage and varnishing space (which occurred in the frame buildings noted above), a dry kiln for seasoning the wood used to build the organs and their cases (Building No. 17, converted for use as a coal shed by 1901 when additional kilns were added to the site), spaces for assembling interior mechanisms for controlling the instruments, as well as the exterior decorative frames in which they were encased. Music paper roll production required paper storage—in order to be properly seasoned, it was stored for twelve to eighteen months—and paper cutting and stencil duplicating machinery. The design of this equipment was a highly protected trade secret requiring the company to build its own machinery on site. This necessitated space in the plant for machine production. Lastly, safe shipping required boxing up the instruments and music rolls, which required space for box shooks on the premises as well.

[30] "The New Orguinette Shop," *The Meriden Daily Journal*, August 3, 1887; "Contracts Awarded," *The Meriden Daily Republican,* August 3, 1887.
[31] The New Orguinette Shop," *The Meriden Daily Journal*, August 3, 1887.
[32] Contracts Awarded," *The Meriden Daily Republican,* August 3, 1887.
[33] The New Orguinette Shop," *The Meriden Daily Journal*, August 3, 1887.
[34] Contracts Awarded," *The Meriden Daily Republican,* August 3, 1887.

The original layout of the various spaces (Figures 14-15) was as follows: In Building No. 1 the basement was the location of box shooks; the first floor served as office space and housed the shipping department; the second floor functioned as manufacturing space for the action mechanisms that connected the keys to the organ pipes; music roll stencils were stored on the third floor, and the small, table-top instruments produced by the company in its early years were manufactured on the 4th floor. In Building No. 2, the basement and fourth floor served as general storage; the first floor functioned as packing space; the second floor was used for fly finishing and tuning of organs; the third floor housed music roll paper storage. In Building No. 3, the basement was used for cutting lumber into the shapes required for the instrument; the first floor functioned as the location for machine work; case work was conducted on the second floor; and the third floor was where music sheets were cut.

The first expansion of the original building occurred in 1893, shortly after Harry B. Tremaine took the reins and expanded the Aeolian Company's instrument offerings. Architect H.M. Jones designed the new addition (Building No. 6), which expanded the Cambridge Street block to the east.[35] The contractor was the H. Wales Lines Company, Meriden-based builders who constructed many residences, manufacturing buildings, banks, churches and schools in Meriden and other parts of Connecticut. Much of their work was industrial.[36] The scale of the addition was modest but provided additional manufacturing space. The 1896 Sanborn illustrates the factory arrangement after the completed 1893 addition. The frame lumber storage building was moved to the east and connected by bridge to Building No. 6 where organ reed boards and cases were being manufactured. The basement of the addition was used for storage, the first floor for reed board production, the second floor for case work, the third floor for carving, and the fourth floor for storage. Buildings 1, 2, and 3 continued to function in their original capacity as illustrated on the 1891 Sanborn. Two additional one-story frame dry kilns were also added behind Building No. 6 and the lumber house at this time (not extant). (Figure 16)

A major expansion of the factory in 1901 reflects the continued market for Aeolian organs and the company's addition of Pianolas. (Building No. 11) Though the Aeolian Company had constructed a plant in Garwood, N.J., specifically for manufacturing Pianolas the previous year, the Meriden plant absorbed some of the Pianola manufacturing until 1906 when pianola production shifted entirely to Garwood. The addition of Pianolas and continued popularity of residential organs also increased demand for music rolls, and the 1901 addition attests to increased production in Meriden. The smaller instruments formerly produced at the plant gave way to the larger markets for pianolas, music rolls, and player organs that required all of the factory space. Early reports of the addition emphasized the increase in business at the plant in 1899 and planning for an addition was being contemplated in 1900.[37] Local newspaper accounts

[35] "Five Story Brick Factory Will Be Built By Aeolian Organ Company," *The Meriden Daily Republican*, February 14, 1893.
[36] "H. Wales Lines Company 1864-1983)" The Connecticut Historical Society Museum and Library. http://emuseum.chs.org/
[37] "Addition to the Aeolian Organ Shop: Increase in Company's Business During the Past Six Months," *The Meriden Weekly Republican*, March 29, 1900.

identify the architect for the 1901 addition (Building No. 11) as Adolph Strack of New York.[38] The H. Wales Lines Company were the contractors. The primary expansion was along Tremont Street, which more than doubled in length with a one-story ell used as a pattern house for music roll stencils located off its eastern elevation at the southern end of the building (not extant). A machine room was located on the first floor of the new addition, a finishing room on the second floor, an expression room on the third floor, and stock and packing were located on the fourth floor. There was some rearrangement of functions in the earlier blocks of the plant, but they continued to be devoted to organ and music paper roll manufacture; all floors were occupied with none devoted to general storage any longer. The frame building on Cambridge Street was significantly expanded as part of the addition, and no longer simply housed lumber. It incorporated shipping and packing functions, an organ action production room on the third floor and a pianola action production room on the 4th floor. A new two-story frame building for paper storage (not extant) was also constructed on the interior of the site, directly behind Building No. 11. A third kiln was added, and a new chimney constructed. The third kiln allowed for the conversion of the original kiln to a coal shed (Building No. 17). The 1901 Sanborn map indicates that even with the expanded space, there were still large lumber piles scattered over the site (Figures 17-20). In 1902 the plant was electrified.

Official production numbers are difficult to discern, in part because the company was generally deliberately vague about its business in a highly competitive market. However, several accounts in company histories ,local newspapers and trade journals give an idea of the level of activity at the Meriden plant at this time. In 1901, the factory employed approximately 250 workers and produced about fifty pianolas a week.[39] In 1903, approximately 350 workers were employed at the plant and the number of pianolas produced was consistent, with an aim to increase that number to 3,000 pianolas annually. Seventy-five percent of these pianolas were sent overseas.[40] Production numbers have not been uncovered for the Meriden plant's player organs.

Accounts of the Meriden factory's production emphasize that the majority of the plant's production consisted of its music rolls in the early twentieth century. Even as early as 1890, well before the automatic musical instrument business really took off, the company employed 41 people in its perforating department and was producing about 16,000 rolls per month.[41] In 1902 a trade journal reported that 250 new selections of popular music and classics were added to the music catalogue every month.[42] In 1904, the Universal Music Company, a subsidiary of the Aeolian Company, was organized for the purpose of producing the company's music rolls, with main offices in New York, and branches in Chicago, San Francisco, and Toronto, and manufacture at Meriden. The following year the company published a six-hundred-page catalog of music rolls for use on the pianola and pianola piano alone. The list represented upwards of 15,000 musical compositions. By 1906, the Aeolian Company boasted:

[38] "Additions to two Meriden Factories," *The Meriden Morning Record and Republican,* April 24, 1901.
[39] "Aeolian Co. is Very Busy," *The Meriden Record Journal*, January 12, 1901.
[40] "Meriden Instruments Sold in Many Foreign Lands: The Wilcox & White, and Aeolian Companies' Products in demand all over the world," *The Meriden Record Journal,"* September 9, 1903.
[41] Rex Larson, "Towards a History of the Aeolian Company," *The Pianola Journal No.11*, 1998, p.20.
[42] "The Growth of a Great Industry," *The Music Trade Review,* June 28, 1902, 1.

> During the past year it has been necessary for the Aeolian Company to devote an entire factory, with upwards of 110,000 square feet to the manufacture of music rolls *exclusively*. Last month the output of music rolls showed an increase of 112 percent over the corresponding month of one year ago.[43]

In that year, a new department for the manufacture of paper boxes for the music rolls was added. Accounts of music roll output varies with mention of from 6,000-10,000 rolls per day around this time. In 1913, a dispute over the introduction of the Taylor efficiency system which resulted in wage cuts led to a strike at the Meriden factory which involved 200 employees, or about two-thirds of the workers (all of whom were employed in music roll production). Local reporting on the strike--which required opening a temporary facility in Hartford for over a year-- indicated that music roll production was brisk:

> The Aeolian Co. is regarded as the mother of the player piano music roll. The output of music rolls is as high as 10,000 rolls a day. The concern has branch offices in all the large cities of the world. The mechanical piano is now and has been on the crest of a wave of popularity and in consequence the local concern has done, and is doing, a tremendous business. The men and women employed on the music rolls, are, of course, experts in their line and their places will be hard to fill. [44]

Resolution of the strike in1914 resulted in an agreement on a nine-hour work day with an aim of producing 8,000 rolls per day.[45] It appears that the Hartford factory continued to produce music rolls with a small staff for at least another year.

While the majority of the factory was devoted to music roll production in the early twentieth century, there was still a portion reserved for the manufacture of instruments. In 1909 the Aeolian Company moved production of a line player organs, the Vocalion and Orchestrelle, previously manufactured in Worcester to the Meriden plant and installed new machinery for their manufacture. The addition of a four-story elevator tower to Building No. 6 on the eastern end of the Cambridge Street block in 1909 was likely part of making new accommodations for the additional production. The remainder of the plant was focused on music roll production.

The Meriden plant was expanded a final time in 1920 due to steady demand for music rolls and a new demand for records. In 1915, the Aeolian Company introduced its phonograph, (called the Vocalion), and began manufacturing its parts at the Meriden plant in 1917 and producing Vocalion records in 1919. All the while, demand for music rolls remained high, and additional roll perforating equipment was installed in 1919.[46] In that year the Universal Music Rolls were rebranded as Mel-o-dee Music Rolls. Music roll production in Meriden just prior to the

[43] "The Musical Revolution Caused by the Pianola Piano," *New York Tribune*, October 7, 1906.
[44] "Two Hundred Out Strike at Aeolian," *The Meriden Weekly Republican*, June 26, 1913.
[45] "Nine Hour Day at Aeolian Co," *The Meriden Weekly Republican*, March 5, 1914.
[46] "Universal Co. Improves Roll Pant," *The Music Trades*. March 1, 1919, 29.

expansion amounted to 6,000 rolls per day and photograph records manufactured was approximately 7,000 records a day.[47]

Several new buildings were erected as part of the 1920 expansion: a four-story reinforced concrete building at the southern end of the Tremont Street block (Building No. 14), a four-story brick building abutting this new block on the eastern elevation (Building No. 12), a two-story concrete building connected by a concrete bridge to Building No. 6 (Record Production Building), and an expansion of the boiler houses to the south (Building No. 16). Buildings No. 12 and 14 expanded the music roll production space, adding a musical stock room with a capacity of 250,000 rolls on the first floor, a music roll finishing department on the second floor, a printing department for music roll labels on the third floor, and cutting machines on the fourth floor. The design, which incorporated concrete mushroom construction and 20-foot steel sash windows, was praised for providing practically clear space from end to end with plenty of natural light.[48] The addition was intended to allow for an increase in music roll production to between 8,000 and 10,000 rolls a day. [49] A contemporary description of the plant shortly after the additions were completed provides some details of how the factory functioned in music roll production:

> The Mel-O-Dee Music Co., Inc, a subsidiary of the Aeolian Company, has a large and perfectly equipped factory at Meriden, Conn. This factory of modern brick construction, with specially designed buildings for the proper storage of paper, is five stories in height, contains approximately 200,000 square feet and every modern facility for the production of music rolls. A thoroughly equipped box making and printing department occupies a portion of it. A machine shop in which the company constructs its own perforating machines is maintained. Herein are machines of the most up-to-date construction. Scientifically constructed conveyors connect all related departments. Handling of co-related parts is thus reduced to a minimum, all tending to speed and efficiency in meeting the trades' music roll requirements. The Mel-o-Dee Music Company ranks as one of the largest manufacturers of music rolls in the world today. It is the pioneer in the music roll history and has enjoyed unparalleled advantage in being closely associated with the development of the player piano itself through its position as one of the allied and subsidiary corporations of the Aeolian, Weber Piano and Pianola Company…The preeminence of the Mel-o-dee music rolls is the result of definite superiority, both musical and mechanical. From a musical standpoint, the skill and vast experience of those responsible for the artistic arrangements of Mel-o-dee music rolls make possible remarkable results obtainable with these rolls, upon all makes of player-pianos. Specially milled paper, seasoned to withstand climatic variations, metal flanges, invented and made in the company's own factory with the obvious advantages of such flanges, are used

[47] "Employees and Their Families to Make Merry in New Buildings Which Have Been Erected To Double The Output of Rolls and Records." *Meriden Morning Record*, September 22, 1920.
[48] "Grozier Co. Gets Several Contracts, Start Soon on Buildings for Aeolian Co.," *Meriden Morning Record*, December 9, 1919.
[49] "Employees and Their Families to Make Merry in New Buildings Which Have Been Erected To Double The Output of Rolls and Records." *Meriden Morning Record*, September 22, 1920.

> while the rigid inspection following every operation insures [sic] the perfection for every roll placed on the market…[50]

The two-story building housed the Vocalion record production.[51] Original sound recordings were made in recording studios in New York. The process of manufacturing records at this time was recorded in a silent film produced in 1923, called *The Immortal Voice.* According to the film, records were reproduced from what was called a "wax master" sent from the recording studio to the factory. The reproduction process involved coating the master with graphite, placing it in an electroplating bath for 24 hours, removing the copper shell to reveal a "metal master," and creating a stamper shell that was soldered to a heavy brass disk used to stamp the records from a plastic compound in a hydraulic press.[52] The trade Journal, *Music Trade Review,* reported that the new record production building at the Meriden plant was designed "especially to meet the demands of record manufacturers," and notes a mezzanine floor for additional space, a special ventilating system that removed dust through special flues, griding machinery and record presses.[53] The new building was intended to allow for an increase in record production from about 7,000 per day to 10,000 per day. [54] Records were produced at the plant until the end of 1924 when the Aeolian Company sold the Vocalion Record business to the Brunswick Company in order to avoid another physical expansion of the plant and focus on instrument and music roll production. At that time, approximately 115 of 370 employees were dedicated to record production which had reached about 12,000 records daily.[55]

The architect for the new buildings was Walter T. Arnold and the builders were the J.H. Grozier company. The 1950 Sanborn map illustrates the 1920 buildings in relation to the earlier factory blocks (Figure 21). It is unclear when the frame buildings were removed, but by 1920 demand for player organs had largely been replaced by player pianos, which were mainly produced at the Garwood plant. It may be that the frame buildings were no longer necessary as their function was either obviated by the new additions and/or by diminished demand for the manufacture they supported.

Shipping from the Meriden factory relied upon rail service and also included trucks beginning around 1913. A music roll truck could deliver half a ton of rolls at a time from Meriden to New York, where they were distributed among New York dealers and the retail Aeolian store.[56] These

[50]" John C. Freund. "The Mel-O-Dee Music Roll," *The Purchasers Guide to the Music Industries, the 1922 Addition*, (New York: Music Trades Company), 255.
[51] Employees and Their Families to Make Merry in New Buildings Which Have Been Erected To Double The Output of Rolls and Records." *Meriden Morning Record*, September 22, 1920.
[52] J.A. Norling, Director. *The Immortal Voice*. Bray Studios, 1923. 13 min. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQ6KmeLjLCs.
[53] Prominent Artists Appear at Aeolian Dedication, Official Opening of New Factories of the Aeolian Co, in Meriden, Conn, Marked by Elaborate Concert by Vocaltion Artists—New Plants are the Acme of Efficiency," *Music Trades Review*, October 23, 1920, 35.
[54] "Employees and Their Families to Make Merry in New Buildings Which Have Been Erected To Double The Output of Rolls and Records." *Meriden Morning Record*, September 22, 1920.
[55] "Aeolian Co. Sale will not Result in Closing Plant, Only Vocalion Red Record Business Sold to the Brunswick Co," *Meriden Record Journal, December 8, 1924.*
[56] "Aeolian Company of New York Uses Sixteen Trucks," *The Power Wagon*, December 1, 1913, 48.

trucks were reportedly particularly useful during periods of rail delays and embargos. In the 1920s, the demand for music rolls was so widespread that that the company initiated a wholesale distributing system in order to speed up shipments. Rather than sending all rolls from Meriden to New York, local wholesalers that carried a full wholesale stock were established in large centers across the country. The change was attributed to the expansion in the number of dealers, necessitating a wider number of distributors.[57]

The Aeolian Company was a significant employer in the town of Meriden. A variety of skilled and unskilled workers supported the manufacture of the instruments, music rolls, phonographs, and records at the plant. The manufacture of the instruments required builders of elaborate wood cases or cabinets that initially housed the organs and small instruments, and later phonographs, as well as constructing interior action mechanisms for organs and pianolas. Music roll production required musical editors for transcribing scores of music to piano rolls, perforating machine operators to mass produce the master stencils, spoolers to guide the rolling of the finished rolls, as well as box-making machine operators, label printing machine operators, and machinists who built all of the equipment used in the plant. Sketches printed in the Aeolian Organ and Music Company Catalogue published in 1894 illustrate the some of the key processes of early music roll production (Figures 22-24). As seen in Figure 24, from the outset, both men and women worked at the plant. The work force expanded and contracted with fluctuations in the economy but in 1903 when business began its steady incline there were approximately 350 workers[58] and by 1918, the workforce had grown to approximately 500 employees, [59] roughly 200 of whom were women primarily employed in the music roll department. [60] Substantial numbers of women were regular employees at the Meriden factory. In 1906, for example, when the company began manufacturing its own paper boxes for music rolls, this production was staffed entirely by women.[61] The majority of the 200 strikers in 1913 were women who worked in the music roll department.[62] The Meriden city directory from 1911 reveals that many employees lived relatively close to the factory.

The Meriden plant remained productive until 1930 when the Aeolian Company began consolidating its plants and Meriden's manufacturing departments were relocated to New Jersey. At its time of relocation, roughly 100 employees remained at the plant, some of whom transferred to New Jersey.[63] In 1932, the plant was placed for sale at a public auction. Thereafter it housed a series of tenants, including the General Electric Company in the 1940s and 1950s.

[57] "Mel-O-Dee Music Co. to Establish Wide Wholesale Distributing System," *The Music Trade Review*, January 26, 1924, 9.
[58] "Meriden Instruments Sold in Many Foreign Lands," *Meriden Morning Record*, September 9, 1903.
[59] Everett G. Hill, *A Modern History of New Haven and Eastern New Haven County,* (New York: The S.J. Clarke Publishing Company), 1918, *304.*
[60] "Critical Point in Local Strike," *The Meriden Weekly Republican*, August 7, 1913.
[61] "Pertaining to Aeolian Hall," *Music Trade Review*, March 31, 1906, p.32.
[62] "Critical Point in Local Strike, " *The Meriden Record Jounal,* August 1, 1913.
[63] "Aeolian Plant Will be Moved to New Jersey," *The Meriden Daily Journal*. December 17, 1930.

The Organ and Piano Industry in Connecticut

As a producer of automatic musical instruments and their music, as well as phonograph parts and records, the Aeolian Company was something of an outlier Connecticut's musical instrument industry, generally speaking. Annual reports of the Factory Inspector to the Governor of Connecticut classified the Aeolian Company as a manufacturer of "self-playing musical instruments and music," the only business listed in that category. [64]There were several organ and piano manufacturers in the state as well as supply businesses that produced piano and organ hardware, actions, keys, attachments, and even music rolls, but typically these businesses specialized in one area, whereas the Aeolian Company in Meriden was manufacturing multiple products and part of a vast, international commercial enterprise. The closest comparative business in the state was the Wilcox & White Company, located directly across the street from the Aeolian Company, in Meriden. Founded in 1877 as a traditional reed organ manufacturer, the Wilcox & White Company joined the automatic musical instrument business manufacturing its own self-playing organ, piano attachment, and later player and reproducing pianos. The Wilcox & White Company also produced its own music rolls. Compared with the Aeolian Company, the Wilcox & White Company, though well known, was a much smaller concern. It had a capital stock of $450,000 compared with Aeolian's capital stock of $2,000,000, and in 1918, the company employed 250 workers at its Meriden plant, compared with 500 factory workers across the street at the Aeolian Company.[65] Despite being in the business of producing automatic musical instruments, the Wilcox & White Company was categorized as a manufacturer of "organs and piano attachments" in the state reports on manufacturing. The Wilcox & White Co. went out of business in 1922, and the Aeolian Company briefly considered purchasing the plant, according to local news accounts. By contrast, while the Aeolian company closed its Meriden plant in 1930, its broad reach with its subsidiary companies allowed it to continue through a series of mergers into the 1980s.

Nationally, Connecticut was consistently among the leading states in the manufacture of automatic musical instruments and of more traditional organ and piano parts. A 1905 special report on U.S. manufacturers published by the Department of Commerce and Labor Bureau of the Census included a section on musical instruments. In the category of automatic musical instruments, piano players—the instrument that rolled up to a traditional piano—the report declared, "Connecticut ranks first in the manufacture of these instruments, with Meriden as the center, while New Jersey, Michigan, New York, and Illinois are respectively the second, third, fourth and fifth states in order of principal production." Connecticut ranked fourth in 1905 in the manufacture of self-playing pianos—the instrument that included the self-playing mechanism inside the piano, still relatively new at the time—behind New York, New Jersey, and Missouri. The production of self-playing organs was declining at this time as the piano attachments and interior piano players gained in popularity, and New Jersey (where the Aeolian Company had a large factory) was the primary center for production. Connecticut manufacturers were also important suppliers of traditional piano and organ materials and parts, ranking third behind New

[64] *Annual Report of the Factory Inspector to the Governor of Connecticut*, 97.
[65] Everett G. Hill, *A Modern History of New Haven and Eastern New Haven County*, (New York: The S.J. Clarke Publishing Company), 1918, *304.*

York and Massachusetts in 1905, with Ivoryton and Stamford leading production for piano parts (of keys and piano plates, respectively), and for organ parts: Ivoryton (keys), Mansfield (pipes), and Deep River (stops and knobs).[66] In 1909, Connecticut ranked fourth in the combined piano and organ industry (where it also ranked in 1904), with seventeen establishments, 2,304 wage earners, the value of its products amounting to $5,538, 018, which represented 6.2 percent of the national total. Comparatively, New York--ranked first in the industry-- supported 184 establishments, 11,938 wage earners, and produced a value of $33, 679, 953, or 37.5 percent of the total.[67] Thus, while not the largest supplier of piano, organ, and automatic instruments and their components, Connecticut played an important role in their manufacture during the peak years of the industry.

[66] William F. Worcester, "Musical Instruments, Attachments, and Materials," *Manufacturers 1905 Part IV Special Reports on Selected Industries* (Washington: Government Printing Office) 1908, 239-263.
[67] "The Manufacture of Musical Instruments," *Manufacturers 1909 Part III, Special Reports on Selected Industries* (Washington: Government Printing Office) 1909, 513.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Aeolian Company. *The Aeolian Pie-Organ and its Music.* New York: The Aeolian Company, 1907.

Aeolian Company. *Aeolian Quarterly, Vol.1* New York: The Aeolian Company, 1897.

Aeolian Company. *Catalog of Music for the Pianola, Pianola Piano, and Aeriola, Vol 1,* New York: The Aeolian Company, 1905.

"Addition to the Aeolian Organ Shop: Increase in Company's Business During the Past Six Months," *The Meriden Weekly Republican,* March 29, 1900.

"Additions to two Meriden Factories," *The Meriden Morning Record and Republican*. April 24, 1901.

"Aeolian Company Busy," *The Meriden Daily Journal,* October 1, 1890.

"Aeolian Co. is Very Busy," *The Meriden Record Journal,* January 12, 1901.

"Aeolian Company of New York Uses Sixteen Trucks," *The Power Wagon,* December 1, 1913.

"Aeolian Co. Sale will not Result in Closing Plant, Only Vocalion Red Record Business Sold to the Brunswick Co," *Meriden Record Journal, December 8, 1924.*

"Aeolian Plant Will be Moved to New Jersey," *The Meriden Daily Journal*. December 17, 1930.

"Contracts Awarded," *The Meriden Daily Republican,* August 3, 1887.

"Critical Point in Local Strike," *The Meriden Weekly Republican,* August 7, 1913.

Dolge, Alfred. *Pianos and Their Makers.* Covina, CA: Covina Publishing Company, 1911.

"Employees and Their Families to Make Merry in New Buildings Which Have Been Erected To Double The Output of Rolls and Records." *Meriden Morning Record,* September 22, 1920.

"Five Story Brick Factory Will Be Built By Aeolian Organ Company," *The Meriden Daily Republican,* February 14, 1893.

Fox, Joseph. "Day of the Player Piano," *America Heritage*, May/June 1988.

John C. Freund, ed. *Purchasers Guide to the Music Industries*, New York: The Music Trades Company, 1922.

General Centennial Committee. *Centennial of Meriden.* Meriden: Journal Publishing Co, 1906.

Gilmore, Nicholas. "The Laziest Musical Instrument in the World," *The Saturday Evening Post*, November 14, 2019.

Gillespie, C. Bancroft, ed. *An Historic Record and Pictorial Description of the Town of Meriden, Connecticut.* Meriden: Journal Publishing Company, 1906.

"Grozier Co. Gets Several Contracts, Start Soon on Buildings for Aeolian Co.," *Meriden Morning Record*, December 9, 1919.

"The Growth of a Great Industry," *The Music Trade Review*, June 28, 1902.

"H. Wales Lines Company 1864-1983" The Connecticut Historical Society Museum and Library. http://emuseum.chs.org/

Hill, Everett G. *A Modern History of New Haven and Eastern New Haven County*, New York: The S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1918.

"History of the Pianola: Organettes," *The Pianola Institute.* www.pianola.org.

"History of the Pianola: Player Organs," *Pianola Institute.* www.pianola.org.

"How Music Rolls are Made," *The Literary Digest*, January 2, 1910.

Hummell, Scott. "Music on Demand: Residential Pipe Organs in America," *Vox Humana*, January 20, 2019.

Lawson, Rex. "Peddling Pianolas—Aeolian Company Advertising," *Pianola Journal vol. 17*, 2006, 3-61.

Lawson, Rex. "Towards a History of the Aeolian Company." *The Pianola Journal No.11*, 1998, 4-72.

Leonard, Richard Anthony. "The Glorious Age of the Player Piano," *Hi-Fi/Stereo*, March 1961, 60-63.

"The Manufacture of Musical Instruments," *Manufacturers 1909 Part III, Special Reports on Selected Industries* (Washington: Government Printing Office) 1909, 513.

"Mel-O-Dee Music Co. to Establish Wide Wholesale Distributing System," *The Music Trade Review*, January 26, 1924.

Meriden Directory. New Haven: Price & Lee Company, 1911.

"Meriden Instruments Sold in Many Foreign Lands," *Meriden Morning Record*, September 9, 1903.

"Meriden's New Industry," *The Meriden Daily Republican*, July 27, 1887.

"Music Rolls for the Masses: the Science of their manufacture," *The Musical Courier*, April 10, 1907.

"The Musical Revolution Caused by the Pianola Piano," *New York Tribune*, October 7, 1906.

National Cyclopedia of American Biography Volume XVII. New York: James T. White and Company, 1922.

New England Business Directory and Gazetteer No. XIV. Boston: Sampson & Murdock Co. 1893.

Norling, J.A., Director. *The Immortal Voice.* Bray Studios, 1923. 13 min. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQ6KmeLjLCs.

"The New Orguinette Shop," *The Meriden Daily Journal*, August 3, 1887; "Contracts Awarded," *The Meriden Daily Republican*, August 3, 1887.

"Nine Hour Day at Aeolian Co." *The Meriden Weekly Republican*, March 5, 1914.

"Our Motor Truck Department," *The Music Trade Review*, September 30, 1911, 29.

Ord-Hume, Arthur W.J.G. *Player Piano: The History of the Mechanical Piano and How to Repair It.* South Brunswick: A.S. Barnes, 1971.

"The Orguinette Company," *The Meriden Daily Republican* July 26, 1887.

"Pertaining to Aeolian Hall," *Music Trade Review*, March 31, 1906.

"Piano Players," *The Pianola Institute.* www.pianola.org.

"Prominent Artists Appear at the Aeolian Dedication, Official Opening of New Factories of the Aeolian Co. in Meriden, Conn, Marked by Elaborate Concert by Vocalion Artists—New Plants are the Acme of Efficiency," *Music Trade Review*, October 23, 1920.

Rockey, J.L. *History of New Haven County Connecticut*. New York: Preston & Co, 1892.

Sanborn Map Company. *Meriden, Connecticut,* New York: Sanborn Perris Map Company, 1891. (also 1896, 1901, 1950).

State of Connecticut. *Twentieth Annual Report of the Factory Inspector to the Governor for the Year Ended September 30, 1906.* Hartford: the Smith-Linsley Co, 1906.

State of Connecticut. *Second Biennial Report of the Factory Inspector to the Governor for the Two Years ended September 30, 1910*. Rockville, CT: Journal Publishing Company, 1911.

"Two Hundred Out, Strike at Aeolian Co." *The Meriden Weekly Republican*, Mach 5, 1914.

Taylor, Timothy D. "The Commodification of Music at the Dawn of the Era of 'Mechanical Music,' *Enthomusicology*, Spring/Summer 2007, 281-205.

"Universal Co. Improves Roll Pant," *The Music Trades*. March 1, 1919, 29.

"Will ask H.B. Tremaine to Act? Advocates of National Advertising Campaign Want Benefit of His Experience." *Piano Trade Magazine*, December 1915.

William F. Worcester, "Musical Instruments, Attachments, and Materials," *Manufacturers 1905 Part IV Special Reports on Selected Industries.* Washington: Government Printing office, 1908, (293-263).

"World-Wide Honor to H.B. Tremaine," *The New York Times*, November 19, 1922.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) 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 # _____
____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

____ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency

Aeolian Company Factory | New Haven, CT
Name of Property | County and State

____ Federal agency
____ Local government
____ University
____ Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

---

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately 2.19 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
Datum if other than WGS84:_____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)
1. Latitude: 41.551099 Longitude: -72.786682

2. Latitude: Longitude:

3. Latitude: Longitude:

4. Latitude: Longitude:

Or
UTM References
Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

1. Zone: Easting: Northing:

2. Zone: Easting: Northing:

3. Zone: Easting: Northing:

4. Zone: Easting : Northing:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The Aeolian Company property consists of a 2.19-acre parcel known as 85 Tremont Street (identified in the city of Meriden assessment records as Map/Block/Lot 0407-149C-0053-0056). The northern boundary is defined by Cambridge Street, the western boundary is defined by Tremont Street, the southern boundary is defined by the northern lot lines of 59 Tremont Street, and 33 and 41 Locust Street, and the eastern boundary is defined by the western lot line of 15 Locust Street.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary of the nominated property corresponds to the original parcel belonging to the Aeolian Company.

---

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Roysin Younkin, Senior Consultant
(Edited by Jenny Scofield, CT SHPO)
organization: Macrostie Historic Advisors/Ryan LLC
street & number: One International Place, 100 Oliver Street, Suite 1840
city or town: Boston state: MA zip code: 02110
e-mail ryounkin@mac-ha.com
telephone: 617-833.-5441
date: June 16, 2022

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Aeolian Company Factory

City or Vicinity: Meriden

County: New Haven State: Connecticut

Photographer: Emily Dominijanni

Date Photographed: November, 2021 and February, 2022

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

When photographs show multiple buildings, they are identified left to right across the photo.

1 of 58: North and west elevations, Buildings No. 6 (1893), No. 3, No. 2, and No. 1 (1887), facing southeast.

2 of 58: North and west elevations, Buildings No. 6 (1893), No. 3, No. 2, and No. 1 (1887), facing southeast.

3 of 58: North elevation, Buildings No. 3 (1887) and No. 6 (1893), facing southeast.

4 of 58: North and west elevations, Buildings No. 2, No. 1 (1887) and No. 11 (1901), facing southeast.

5 of 58: West elevation, Buildings No. 2, No. 1 (1887) and No. 11 (1901), facing northeast.

6 of 58: West elevation, Buildings No. 1 (1887) and No. 11 (1901) facing east.

7 of 58: West elevation, Buildings No. 11 (1901) and 14 (1920), facing east.

8 of 58: West elevation entrance, Building No. 1 (1887), facing east.

9 of 58: West and south elevations, Buildings No. 2 (1887), No. 11 (1901), and No. 14 (1920), facing northeast.

10 of 58: West and south elevations, Buildings No. 11 (1901) and 14 (1920), facing northeast.

11 of 58: East elevation, Buildings No. 14 (1920), No. 12 (1920), and No. 11 (1901), facing west.

12 of 58: South elevation Building No. 16 (1920), facing north.

13 of 58: South elevation, Buildings No. 16 (1920), and No. 6 (1893), and Record Production Building (1920), facing northeast.

14 of 58: North and east elevations, Buildings No. 12 (1920) and No. 11 (1901), facing west.

15 of 58: East and south elevations, Buildings No. 11 (1901), No. 1, No. 2 (1887), and No. 16 (1920), facing northwest.

16 of 58: West and south elevations, Building No. 16, (1920), facing northeast.

17 of 58: East and south elevations, Building No. 16 (1920), and south elevation, Buildings No. 17 (1920), No. 3 (1887), and No. 6 (1893), facing north.

18 of 58: South elevation, Building No. 6 (1893), and west and south elevations, Record Production Building (1920), facing northeast.

19 of 58: East and south elevations, Buildings No. 14 (1920), No. 12 (1920), and east elevation, Building No. 11 (1901), facing southwest.

20 of 58: East and north elevations, Record Production Building (1920) and Building No. 6 (1893), including stair and elevator towers (1909, 1920), facing southwest.

21 of 58: East elevation, Buildings No. 14 (1920), No. 12 (1920), and No. 16 (1920), facing west.

22 of 58: East and south elevations, Buildings No. 12 (1920), No. 11 (1901), Nos. 1-3 (1887), No. 6 (1893), No. 16 (1920, No. 17 (1920), and Record Production Building (1920), facing northwest.

23 of 58: Basement, Building No. 1 (1887), facing south.

24 of 58: Basement, Building No. 2 (1887), facing north.

25 of 58: Basement, Building No. 2 (1887), facing northwest.

26 of 58: Basement, Building No. 3 (1887), facing east.

27 of 58: First floor, staircase, Building No. 11 (1901), facing west.

28 of 58: First floor, Building No. 3 (1887), facing east.

29 of 58: First floor, Building No. 2 (1887), facing east.

30 of 58: First floor, Building No. 2 (1887), facing northeast.

31 of 58: First floor, Record Production Building (1920), facing south.

32 of 58: First floor, Record Production Building (1920), facing south.

33 of 58: First floor, Building No. 6 (1893), facing west.

34 of 58: First floor, Building No. 11 (1901), facing north.

35 of 58: First floor, Building No. 1 (1887), facing south.

36 of 58: Building No. 16 (1920), facing northeast.

37 of 58: Building No. 16 (1920), facing north.

38 of 58: Building No. 16 (1920), facing south.

39 of 58: Building No. 16 (1920), facing south.

40 of 58: First Floor, Building No. 12 (1901), facing west.

41 of 58: Second floor, staircase, Building No. 11 (1901), facing west.

42 of 58: Second floor, Building No. 1 (1887), facing south.

43 of 58: Second floor, Building No. 12 (1920), facing south.

44 of 58: Second floor, Building No. 14 (1920), facing southeast.

45 of 58: Second floor, Building No. 3 (1887), facing east.

46 of 58: Second floor, Building No. 3 (1887), facing west.

47 of 58: Second floor, Building No. 6 (1893), facing south.

48 of 58: Second floor, Building No. 2 (1887), facing east.

49 of 58: Third floor, Building No. 11 (1901), facing east.

50 of 58: Third Floor, Building No. 11 (1901), facing south.

51 of 58: Third Floor, Building No. 11 (1901), facing south.

52 of 58: Third Floor, Building No. 2 (1887), facing east.

53 of 58: Fourth Floor, Building No. 6 (1893), facing northeast.

54 of 58: Fourth Floor, Building No. 11 (1901), facing south.

55 of 58: Fourth Floor, Building No. 3 (1887), facing west.

56 of 58: Fourth Floor, Building No. 1 (1887), facing south.

57 of 58: Fourth Floor, Building No. 11 (1901), facing southwest.

58 of 58: Fourth Floor, Building No. 14 (1920), facing southwest.

GRAPHICS

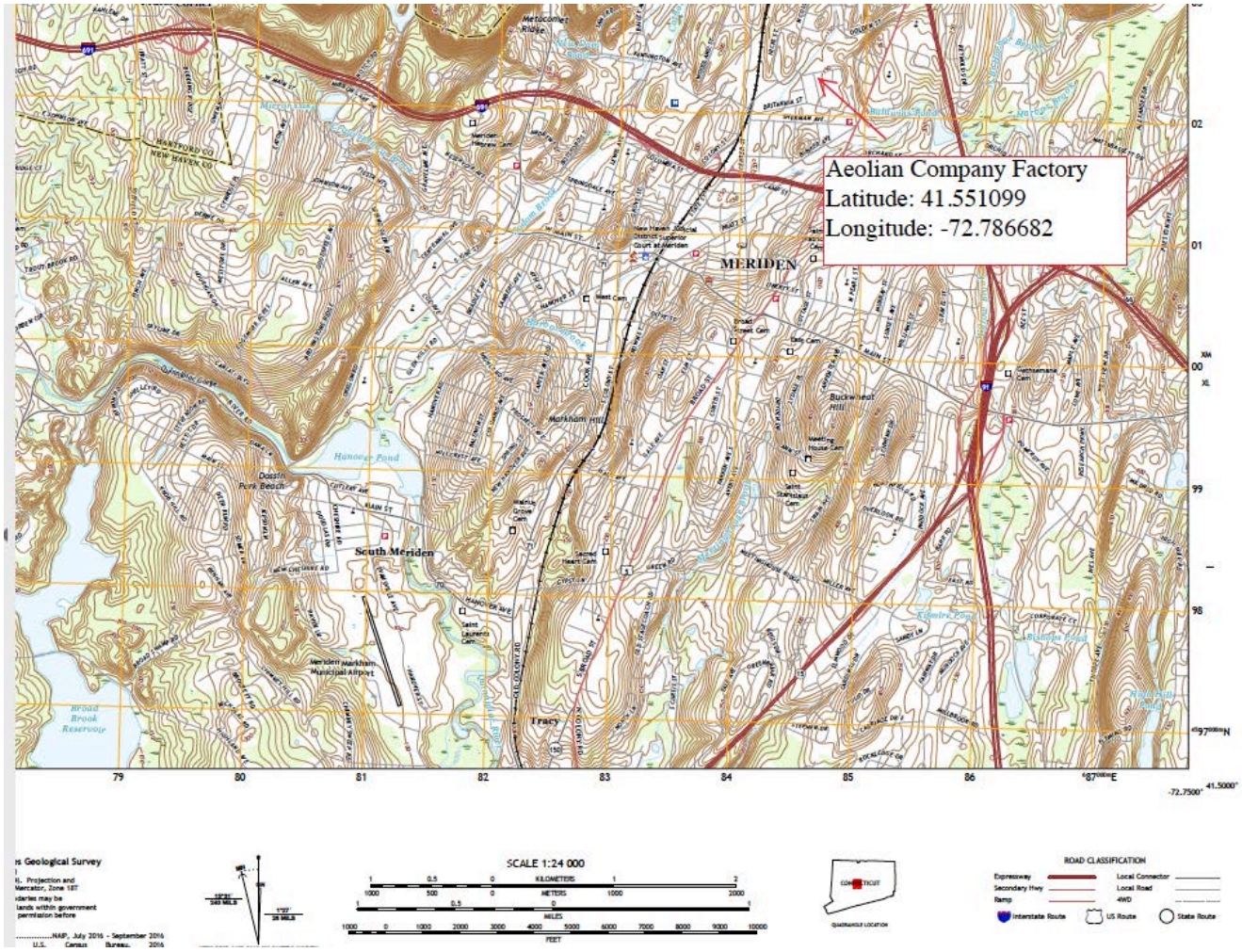


Figure 1: Location of Aeolian Company Factory at 85 Tremont Street, Meriden, Connecticut, shown on USGS Map.

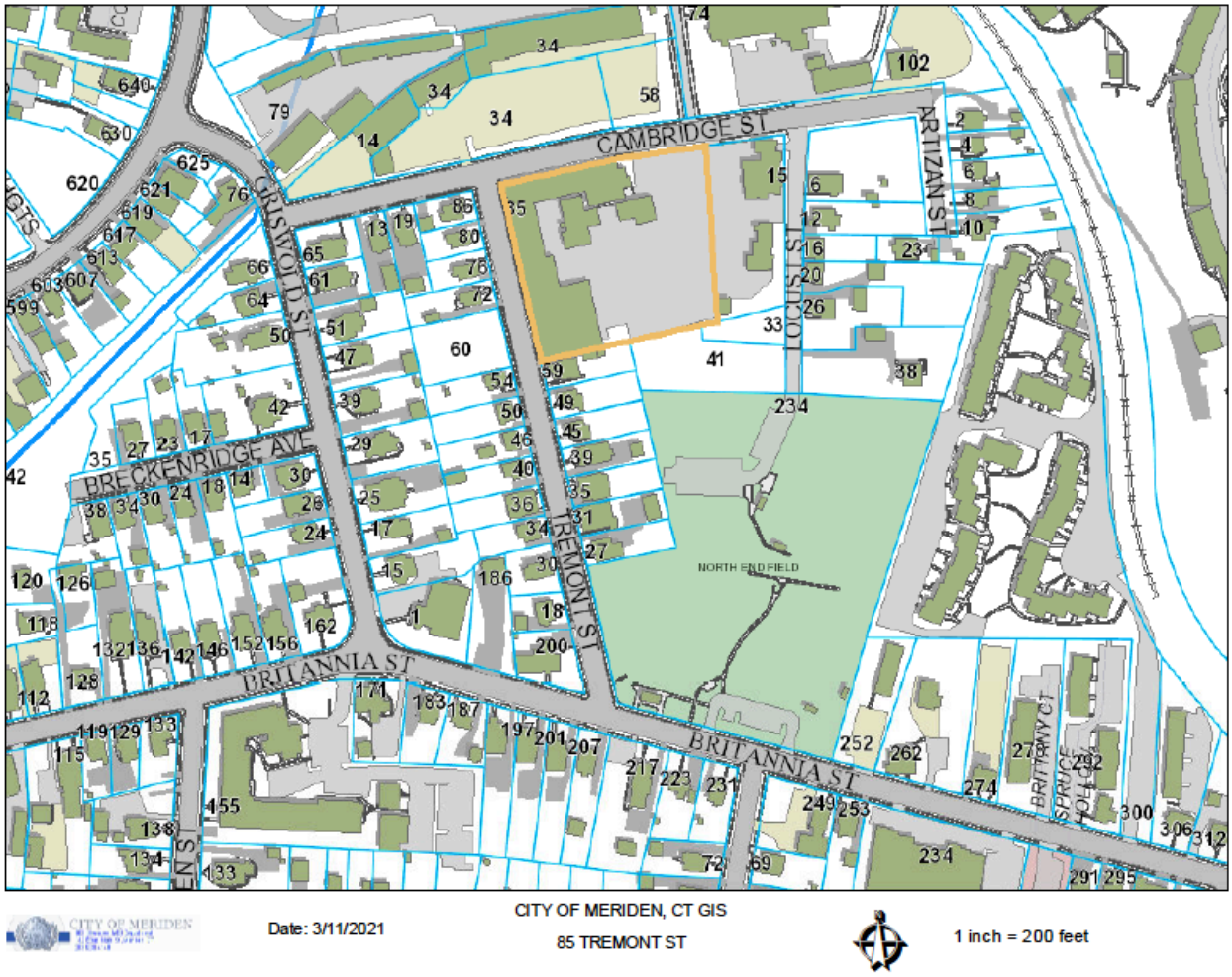


Figure 2: Meriden Assessor's Map, 85 Tremont Street, Map/LOT 0407-149C-0053-0056. Boundary of nominated property shown in orange.

MUSIC 33

THE ÆOLIAN.

The GREATEST MUSICAL INVENTION of MODERN TIMES.

WHAT IT IS.

The ÆOLIAN is the result of an attempt to make an instrument that would simplify the act of playing, so that a person could learn without devoting years to study and practice.

WHAT IT WILL DO.

On the ÆOLIAN, any one, without regard to any knowledge of music they may or may not have, can, after a week's practice, play any piece of music ever composed.

THE GREAT FEATURE.

All selections for the ÆOLIAN are arranged from the full orchestral score, and its rendition, therefore, of the higher grades of Operatic and Classical music is more perfect than that of any other instrument.

The Highest Possible Indorsements:

I consider your instrument the greatest musical educator I have yet known. I find in my own case that my children, young as they are, develop good taste in the selections they like; and the ease and facility with which the instrument is played will, I am confident, educate the musical taste of the general public to a very high degree, since it enables them to become, without previous musical training on any instrument, early familiar with the work of the best composers. Very truly yours,

EDMUND C. STANTON,
Director German Opera, New-York City.

My Æolian has interested me greatly; so much so that I take no hesitation in saying that I regard it as a very useful and meritorious invention. I can readily conceive that it will enable even those who cannot play to produce on the "Æolian" everything to which they could wish to listen, for the manual skill that is necessary should be easily and quickly enough acquired by everybody. I think I can safely predict a widespread popularity for this instrument. Believe me, that this is the very sincere wish of.

Very truly yours, ANTON SEIDL,
Leader German Opera, New-York City.

The ÆOLIAN is on daily exhibition at any of the following places, and you are earnestly invited to call and see it.

THE ÆOLIAN COMPANY,

831 Broadway, New-York City.

Chicago:
LYON & HEALY,
State and Monroe Sts.

Pittsburgh:
MELLOR & HOENE,
77 Fifth Ave.

Boston:
F. W. BAILEY,
180 Tremont St.

Cincinnati:
ALBERT KRELL,
144 W. 4th St.

Philadelphia:
C. J. HEPPE & SON,
1117 Chestnut St.

Toledo, Ohio:
WHITNEY & CURRIER CO.
111 Summit St.

San Francisco:
KOHLER & CHASE,
28 O'Farrell St.

Montreal, Canada:
L. E. N. PRATTE,
2676 Notre Dame St.

April, '91.

* After May 1st, 18 West 23d St. *

Figure 3: Advertisement for the Aeolian Organ in *Century Magazine* 1891, reproduced in *Peddling Pianolas.*

No. 831 Broadway, New York. 3

THE CELESTINA.

Length, 16 in. Height, 14 in. Width, 14 in.
Weight, boxed, 32 lbs.

PRICE, with One Roll of Music, $25.00.

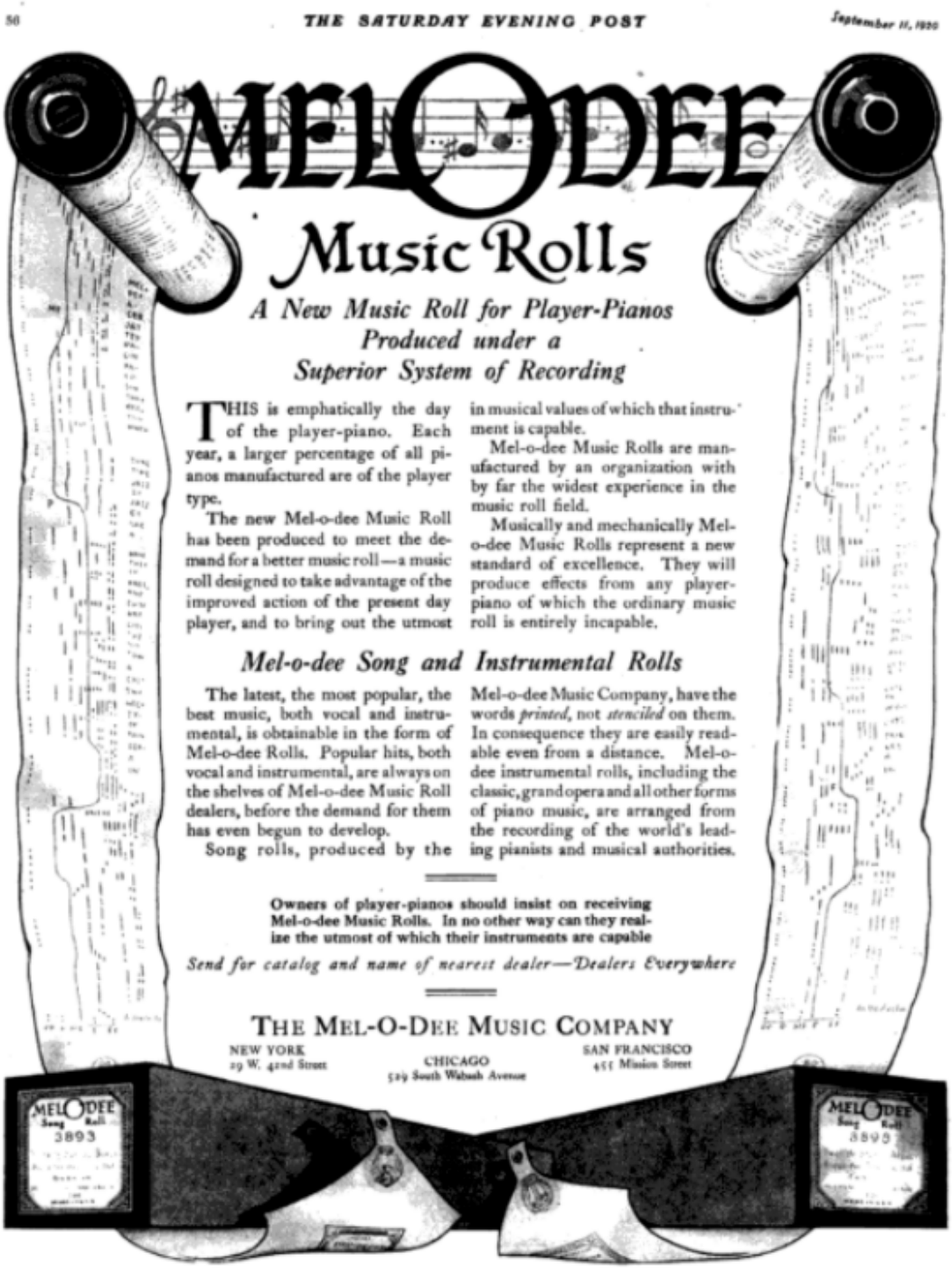
THIS INSTRUMENT, for its size, astonishes all who hear it, having a richness and fullness of tone fully equal to the best Double Reed Organ in the Market.

Over 10,000 of this style have been sold during the past year, giving universal satisfaction to every purchaser.

EVERY INSTRUMENT FULLY WARRANTED.

LIBERAL DISCOUNTS TO THE TRADE.

Figure 4: One of a number of smaller, tabletop mechanical instruments manufactured by the Mechanical Orguinette Company and then the Aeolian Organ and Music Company in its early years. This advertisement appeared in the Mechanical Orguinette Company catalogue in 1886, reproduced in *Peddling Pianolas.*



56 THE SATURDAY EVENING POST September 11, 1920

MEL-O-DEE

Music Rolls

A New Music Roll for Player-Pianos Produced under a Superior System of Recording

THIS is emphatically the day of the player-piano. Each year, a larger percentage of all pianos manufactured are of the player type.

The new Mel-o-dee Music Roll has been produced to meet the demand for a better music roll—a music roll designed to take advantage of the improved action of the present day player, and to bring out the utmost in musical values of which that instrument is capable.

Mel-o-dee Music Rolls are manufactured by an organization with by far the widest experience in the music roll field.

Musically and mechanically Mel-o-dee Music Rolls represent a new standard of excellence. They will produce effects from any player-piano of which the ordinary music roll is entirely incapable.

Mel-o-dee Song and Instrumental Rolls

The latest, the most popular, the best music, both vocal and instrumental, is obtainable in the form of Mel-o-dee Rolls. Popular hits, both vocal and instrumental, are always on the shelves of Mel-o-dee Music Roll dealers, before the demand for them has even begun to develop.

Song rolls, produced by the Mel-o-dee Music Company, have the words *printed*, not *stenciled* on them. In consequence they are easily readable even from a distance. Mel-o-dee instrumental rolls, including the classic, grand opera and all other forms of piano music, are arranged from the recording of the world's leading pianists and musical authorities.

Owners of player-pianos should insist on receiving Mel-o-dee Music Rolls. In no other way can they realize the utmost of which their instruments are capable

Send for catalog and name of nearest dealer—Dealers Everywhere

THE MEL-O-DEE MUSIC COMPANY

NEW YORK 29 W. 42nd Street | CHICAGO 529 South Wabash Avenue | SAN FRANCISCO 451 Mission Street

Figure 5: The Mel-O-Dee Music Company and Universal Music Company were controlled by the Aeolian Company with production of the rolls at the Meriden Factory. This advertisement appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* in September of 1920.

Figure 6: The first purpose-built Aeolian Hall in New York City, headquarters for the Aeolian Company from 1902-1912.

Figure 7: The second purpose-built Aeolian Hall in New York City, headquarters of the Aeolian Company after 1912.

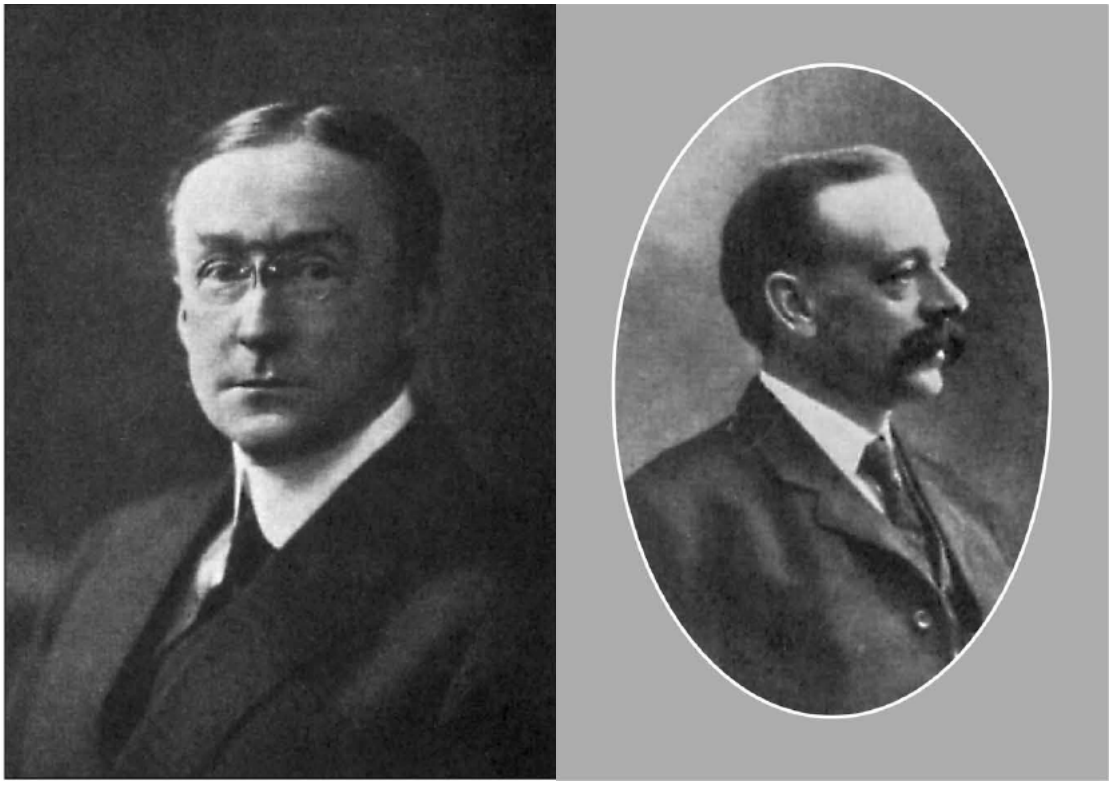
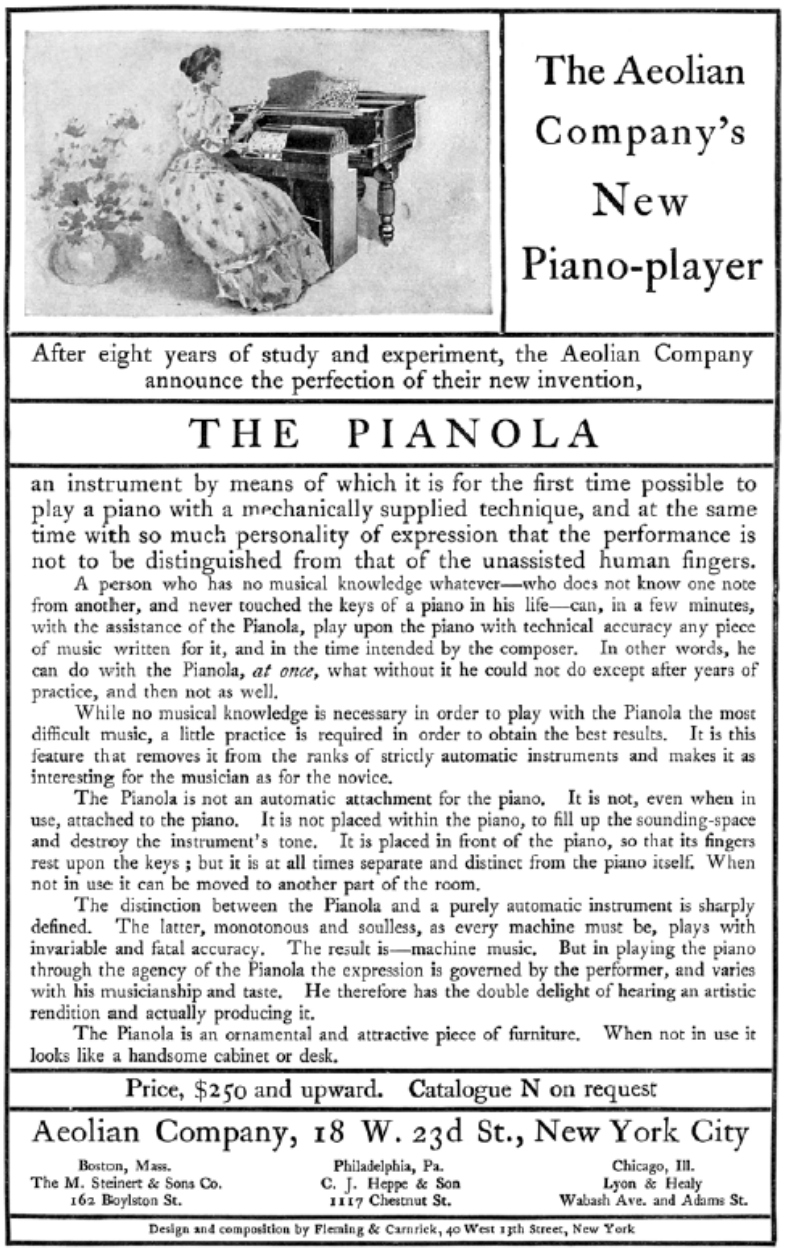


Figure 8: Left: Henry Barnes Tremaine (1866-1932); Right: Edwin S. Votey (1856-1931)



The Aeolian Company's New Piano-player

After eight years of study and experiment, the Aeolian Company announce the perfection of their new invention,

THE PIANOLA

an instrument by means of which it is for the first time possible to play a piano with a mechanically supplied technique, and at the same time with so much personality of expression that the performance is not to be distinguished from that of the unassisted human fingers.

A person who has no musical knowledge whatever—who does not know one note from another, and never touched the keys of a piano in his life—can, in a few minutes, with the assistance of the Pianola, play upon the piano with technical accuracy any piece of music written for it, and in the time intended by the composer. In other words, he can do with the Pianola, *at once*, what without it he could not do except after years of practice, and then not as well.

While no musical knowledge is necessary in order to play with the Pianola the most difficult music, a little practice is required in order to obtain the best results. It is this feature that removes it from the ranks of strictly automatic instruments and makes it as interesting for the musician as for the novice.

The Pianola is not an automatic attachment for the piano. It is not, even when in use, attached to the piano. It is not placed within the piano, to fill up the sounding-space and destroy the instrument's tone. It is placed in front of the piano, so that its fingers rest upon the keys; but it is at all times separate and distinct from the piano itself. When not in use it can be moved to another part of the room.

The distinction between the Pianola and a purely automatic instrument is sharply defined. The latter, monotonous and soulless, as every machine must be, plays with invariable and fatal accuracy. The result is—machine music. But in playing the piano through the agency of the Pianola the expression is governed by the performer, and varies with his musicianship and taste. He therefore has the double delight of hearing an artistic rendition and actually producing it.

The Pianola is an ornamental and attractive piece of furniture. When not in use it looks like a handsome cabinet or desk.

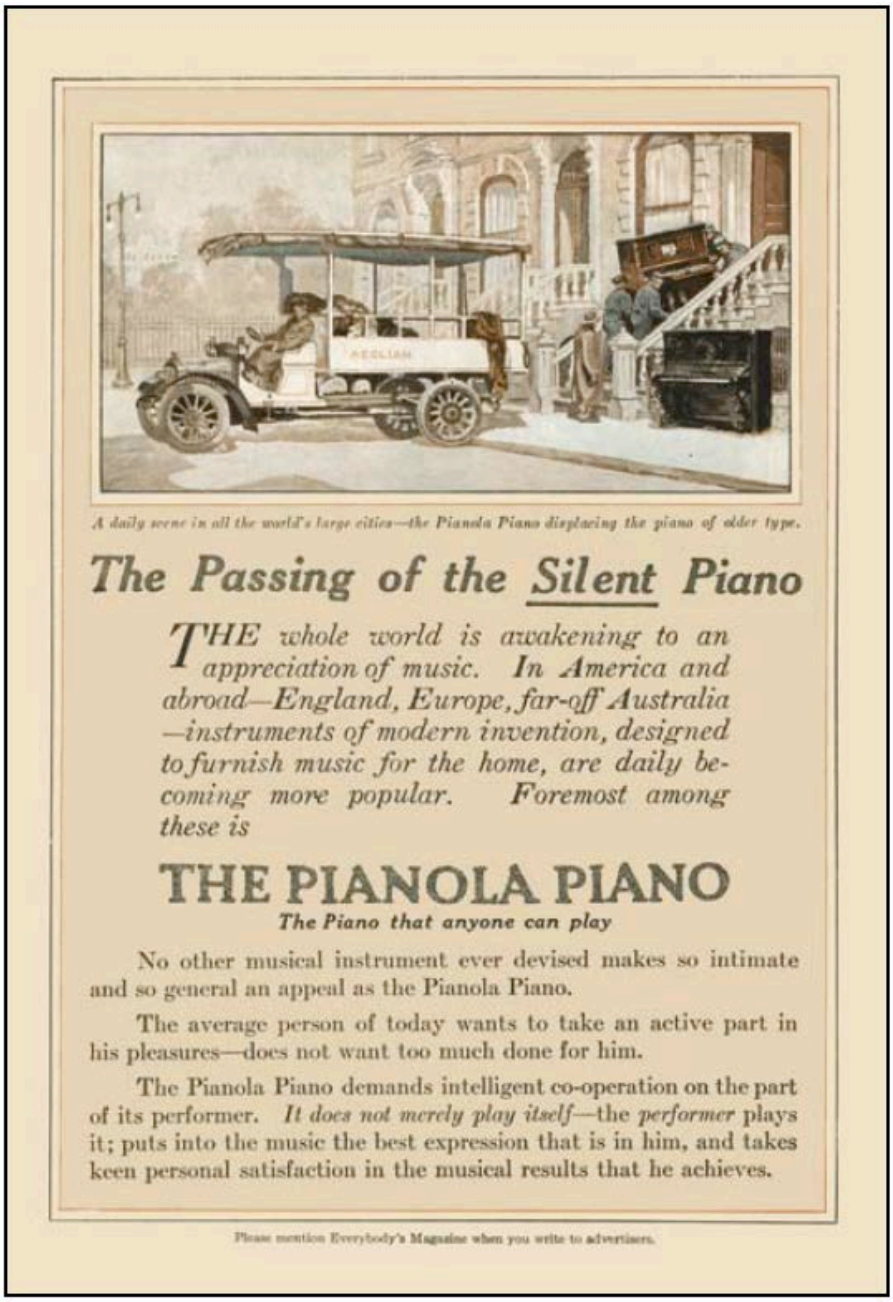
Price, $250 and upward. Catalogue N on request

Aeolian Company, 18 W. 23d St., New York City

Boston, Mass.	Philadelphia, Pa.	Chicago, Ill.
The M. Steinert & Sons Co.	C. J. Heppe & Son	Lyon & Healy
162 Boylston St.	1117 Chestnut St.	Wabash Ave. and Adams St.

Design and composition by Fleming & Carnrick, 40 West 13th Street, New York

Figure 9: The Pianola, advertised here in *Scribner's Magazine* in 1898, reproduced in *Peddling Pianolas*, marked the entrance of the Aeolian Company into the piano market.



A daily scene in all the world's large cities—the Pianola Piano displacing the piano of older type.

The Passing of the Silent Piano

THE whole world is awakening to an appreciation of music. In America and abroad—England, Europe, far-off Australia—instruments of modern invention, designed to furnish music for the home, are daily becoming more popular. Foremost among these is

THE PIANOLA PIANO

The Piano that anyone can play

No other musical instrument ever devised makes so intimate and so general an appeal as the Pianola Piano.

The average person of today wants to take an active part in his pleasures—does not want too much done for him.

The Pianola Piano demands intelligent co-operation on the part of its performer. *It does not merely play itself*—the *performer* plays it; puts into the music the best expression that is in him, and takes keen personal satisfaction in the musical results that he achieves.

Please mention Everybody's Magazine when you write to advertisers.

Figure 10: The pianola piano, and the variations that followed it, moved the exterior piano player mechanisms into the piano itself.

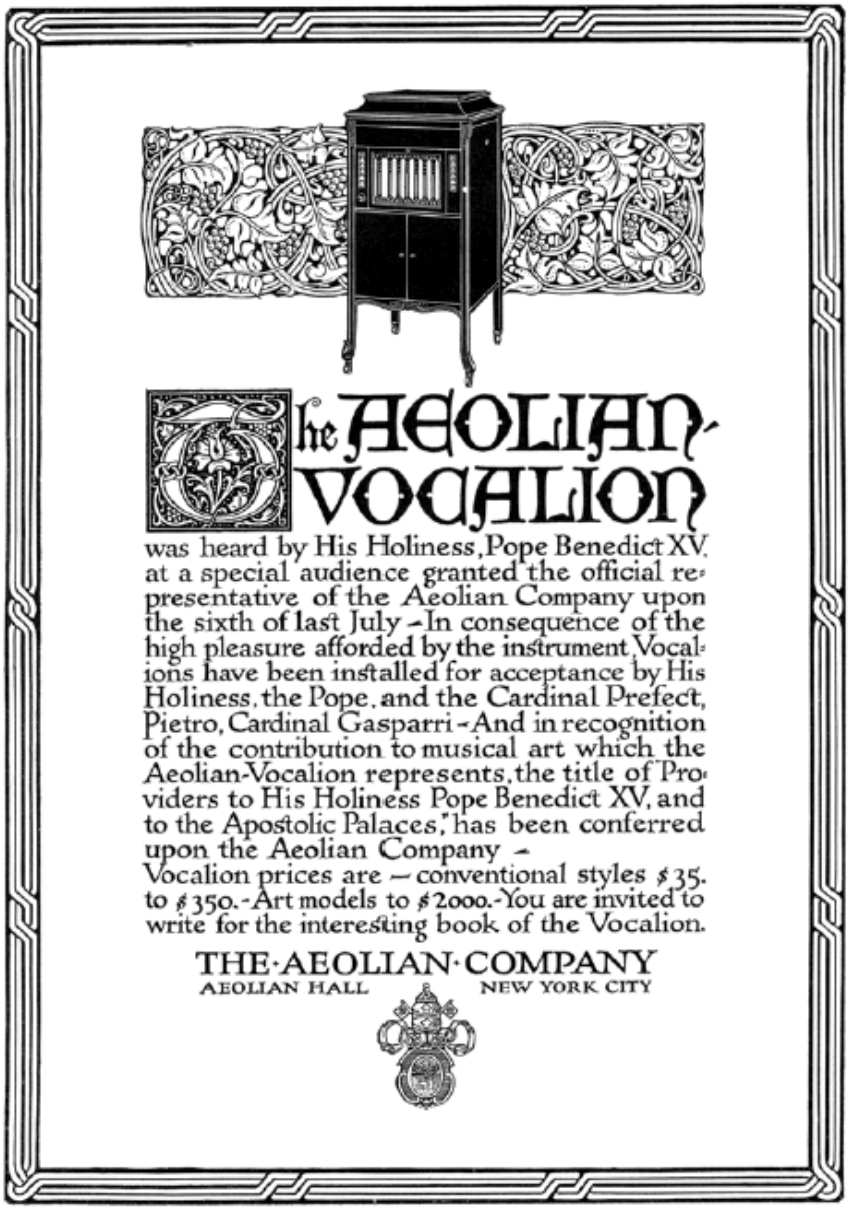


Figure 11: The Aeolian Company's phonograph, the Vocalion, introduced in 1915.

Figure 12: Aeolian advertisement from July of 1920 in the *Saturday Evening Post* illustrating the range of instruments, rolls, and records the company manufactured. H.B. Tremaine's Cross of the Legion of Honor is featured at the center of the advertisement.

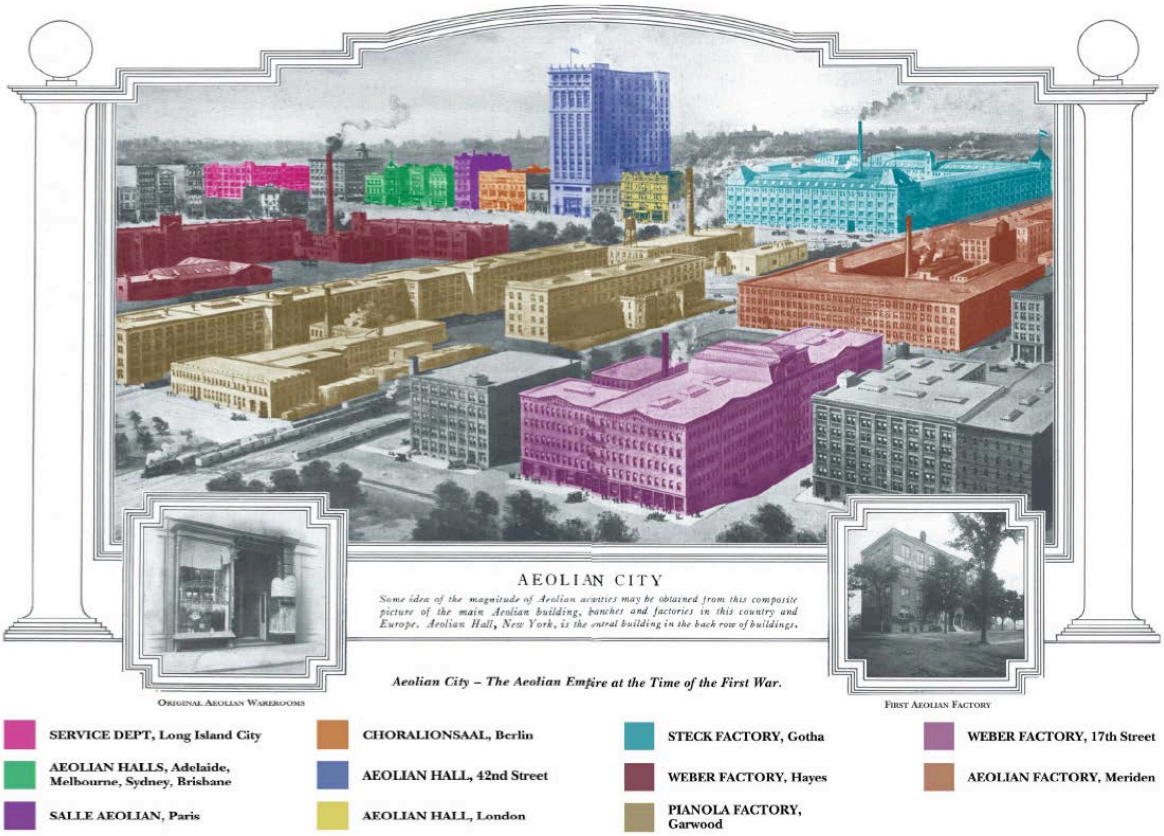


Figure 13: “Aeolian City,” a composite image depicting Aeolian factories, branches, and its corporate building, ca. 1920. Inset on the bottom right is the Meriden factory, headed “First Aeolian Factory.”

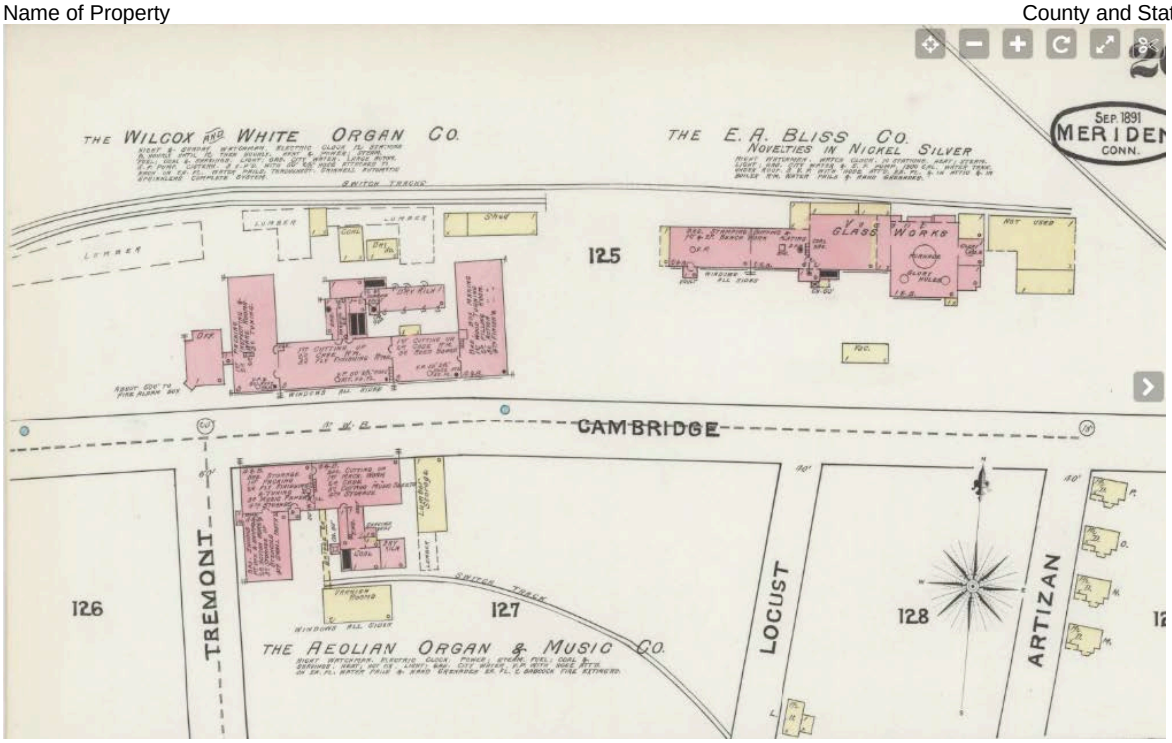


Figure 14: 1891 Sanborn map showing the original block of the Aeolian Organ & Music Co. and its location across Cambridge street from Wilcox & White Organ Co.

Figure 15: The Aeolian Organ and Music Company factory, 1893.

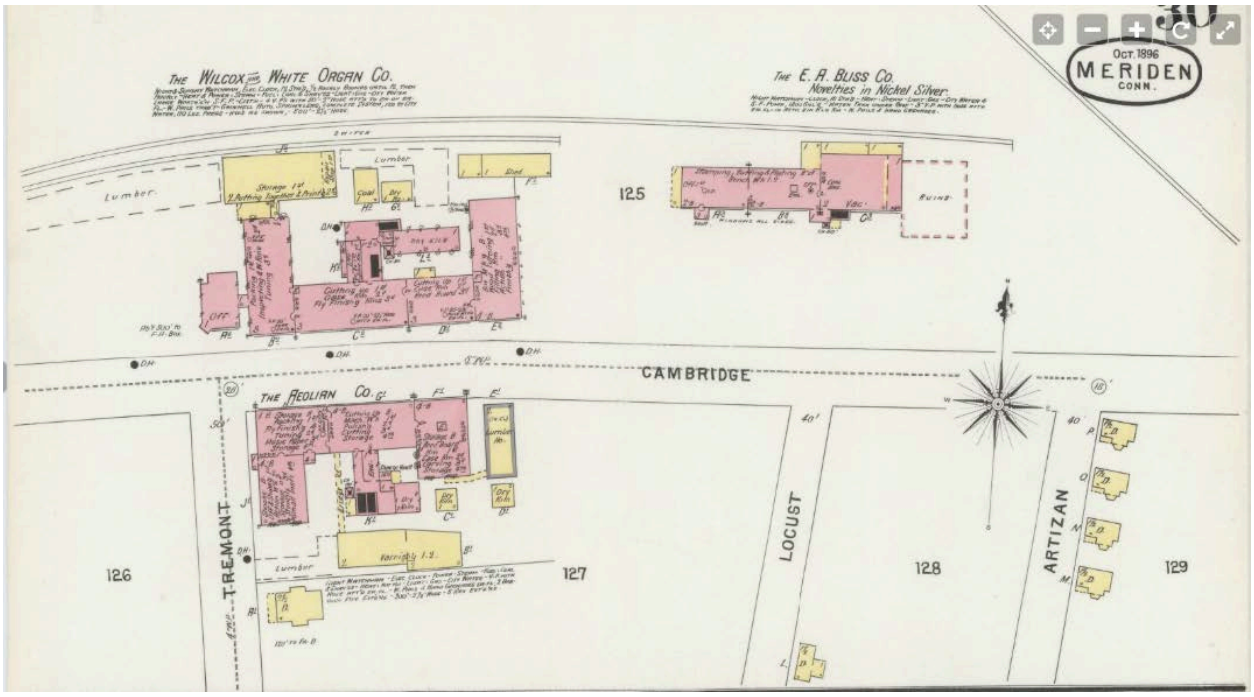


Figure 16: 1896 Sanborn map showing the 1893 expansion of the Aeolian Organ & Music Company factory along Cambridge Street.

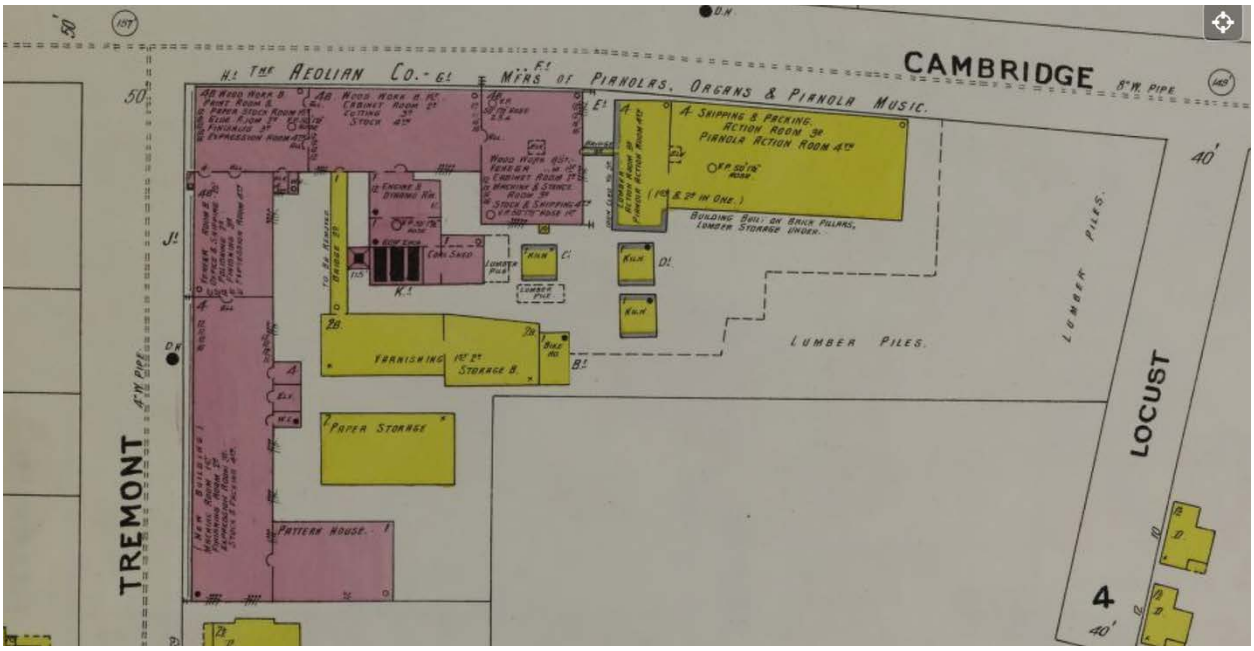


Figure 17: 1901 Sanborn map showing the 1901 additions along Tremont and Cambridge streets and the interior courtyard.

Figure 18: Aeolian Company factories in 1905. The Meriden factory (indicated with the arrow) depicts the factory with additions through 1901.

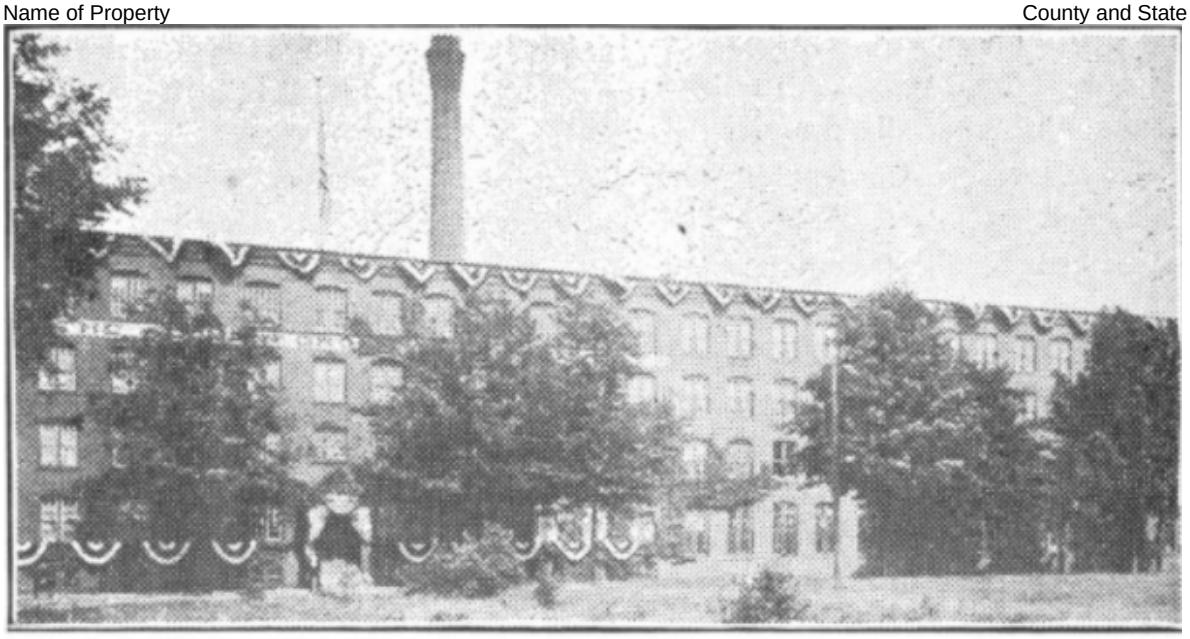


Figure 19: Extended Tremont Street façade of the Meriden factory in 1906, decorated for the town's centennial.

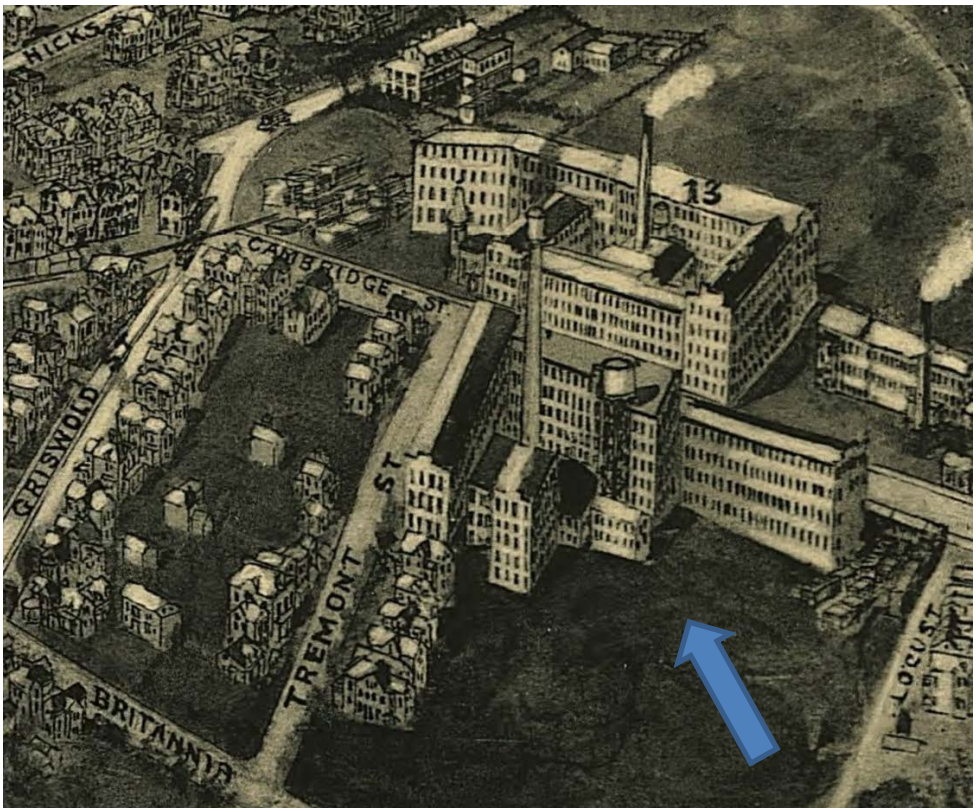


Figure 20: Bird's Eye illustration of Meriden showing the Aeolian Company Factory in 1918.

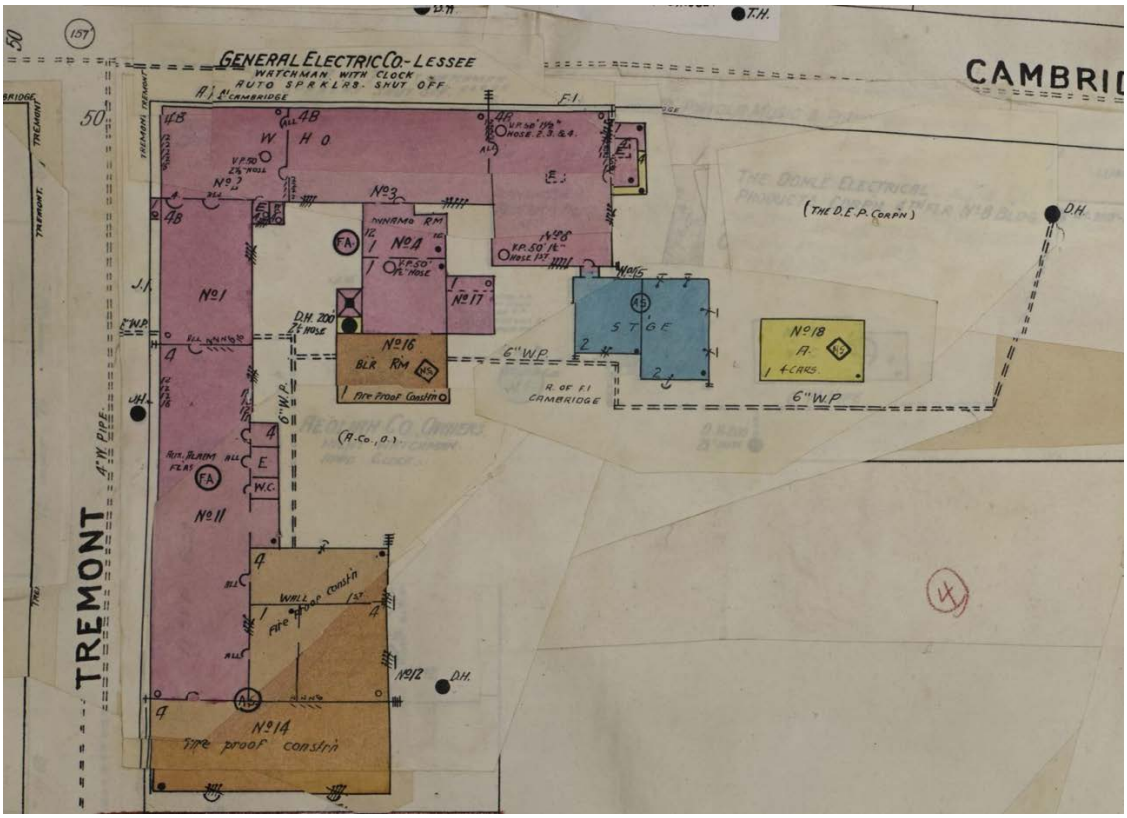


Figure 21: 1950 Sanborn map showing 1920 additions and the removal of most of the frame buildings along Cambridge Street and the courtyard.

Figure 22: Laying out music for the Aeolian Organ at the Meriden Factory, 1893.

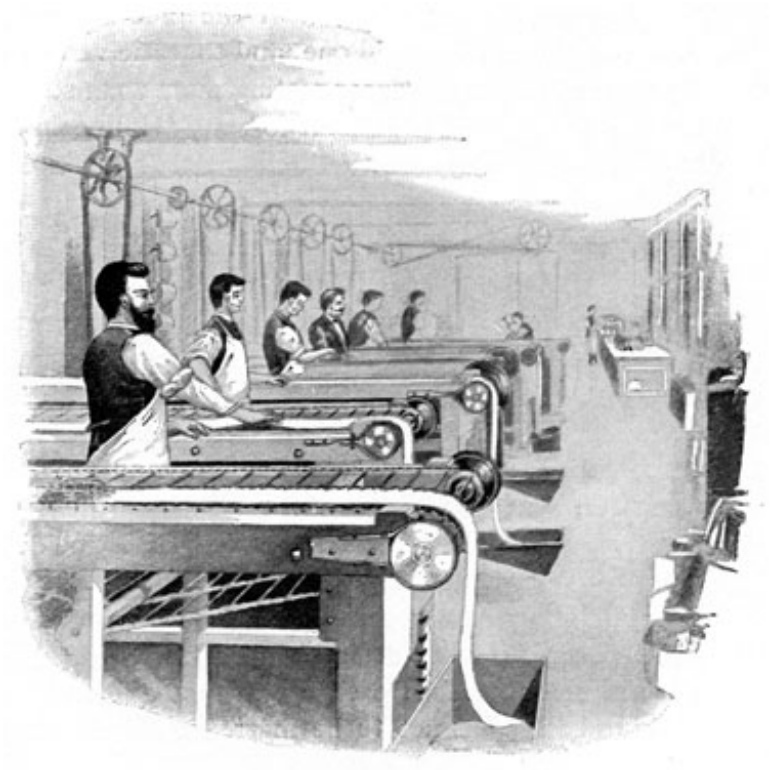


Figure 23: Perforating the music rolls at the Meriden factory, 1893.

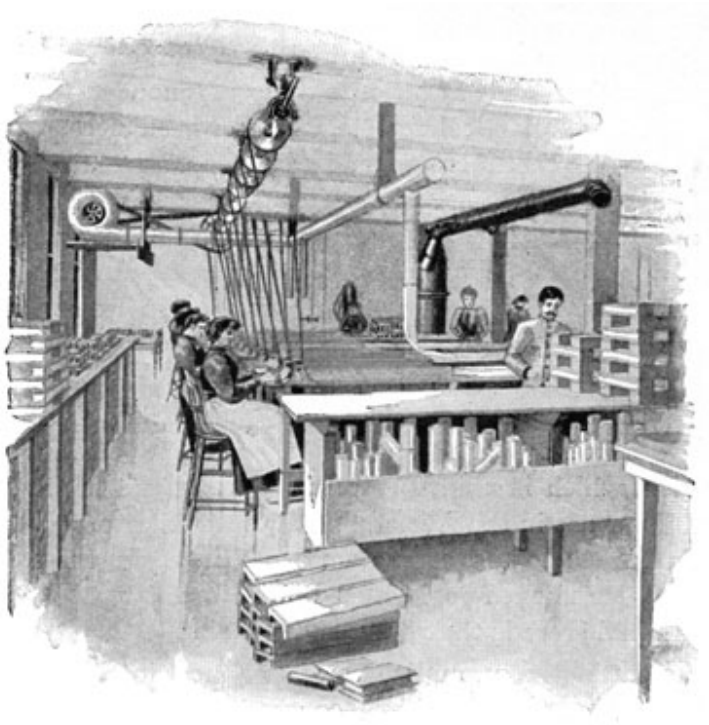


Figure 24: Spooling up music rolls at the Meriden factory, 1893.

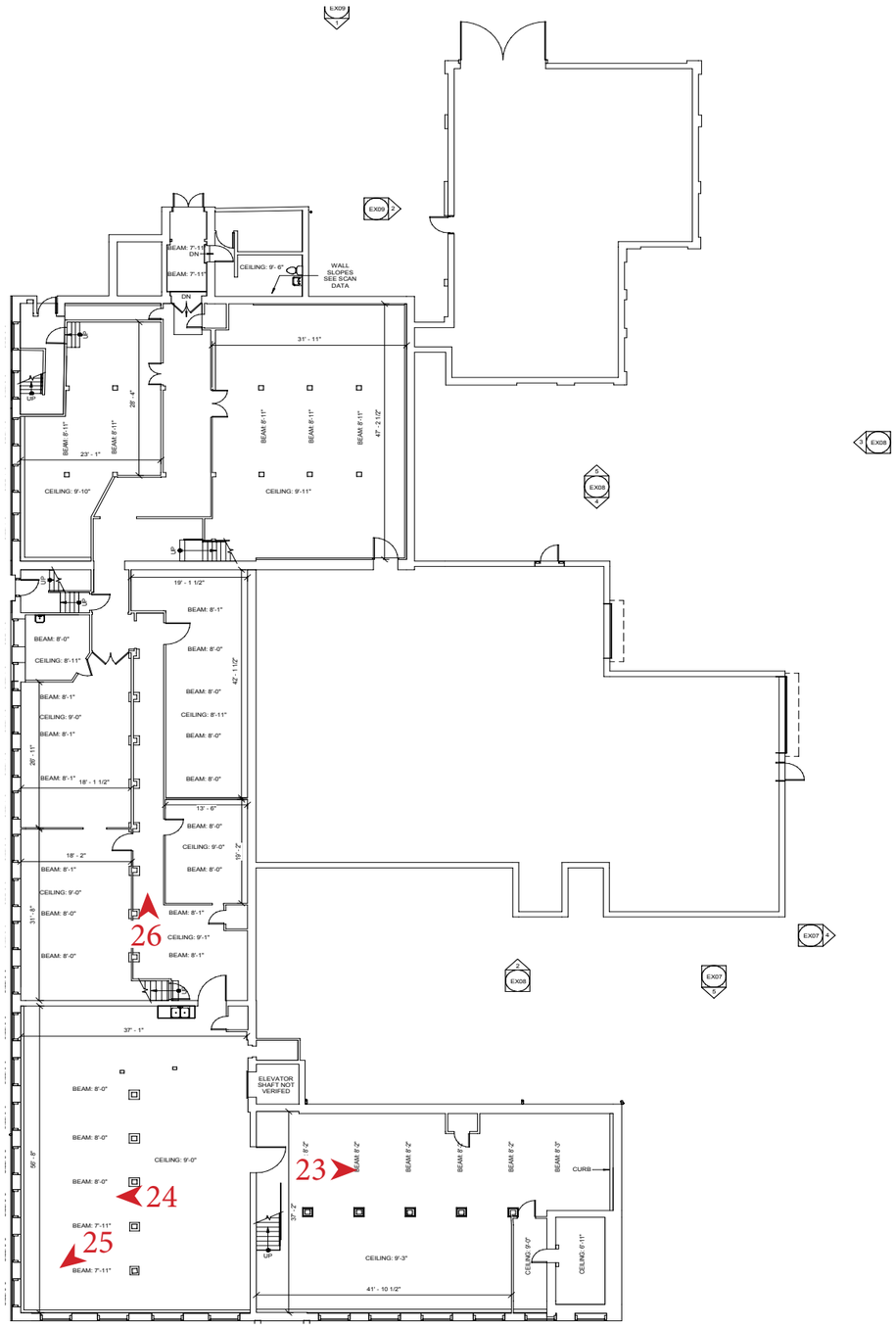
Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

MacRostie Historic Advisors
Bringing strategy, equity, and experience to historic building development

Aeolian Company Complex

85 Tremont Street
Meriden, CT 06450

CT SHPO
NR Nomination Photo Key
Site Plan

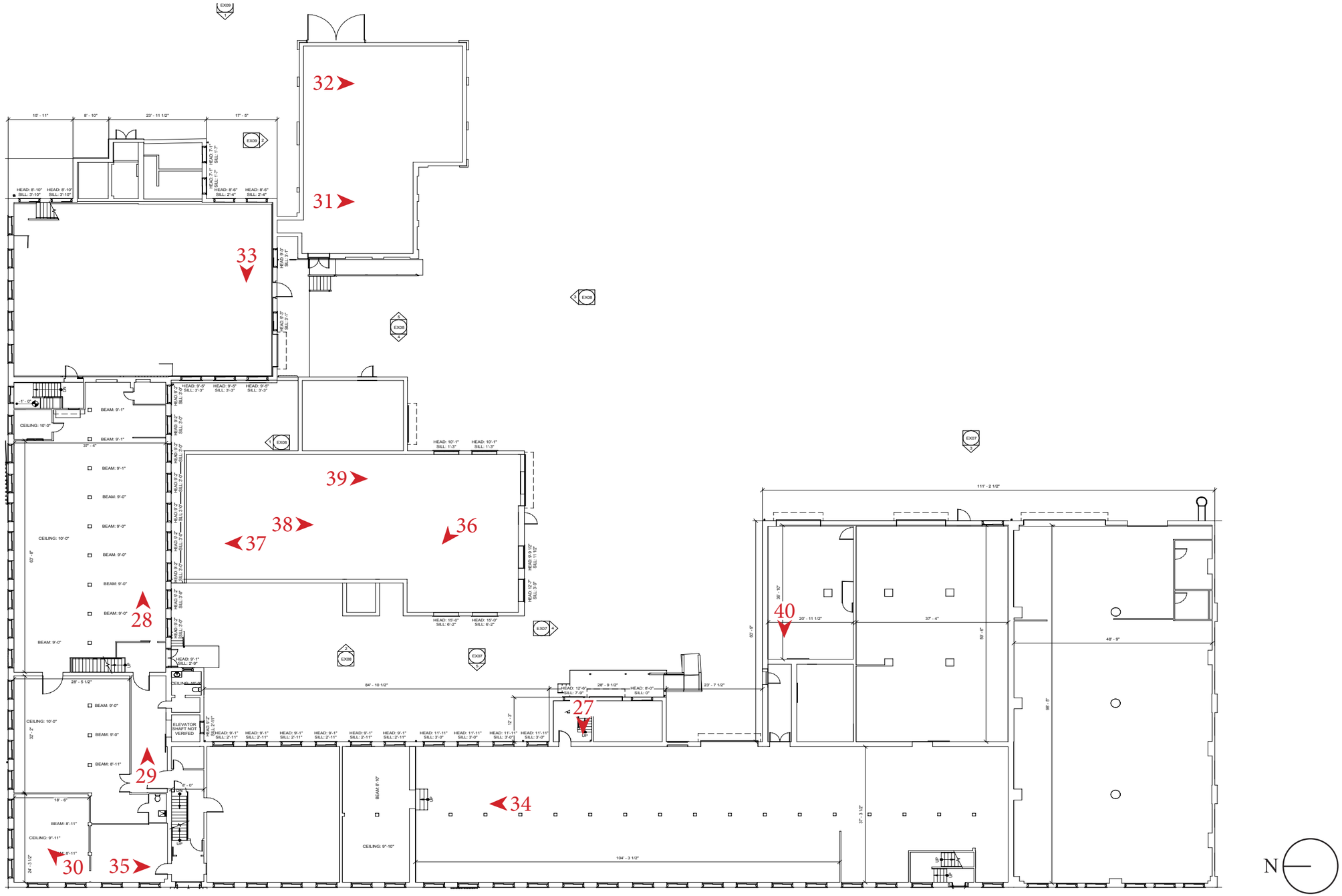


MacRostie Historic Advisors
Bringing strategy, equity, and experience to historic building development

Aeolian Company Complex

85 Tremont Street
Meriden, CT 06450

CT SHPO
NR Nomination Photo Key
Basement Plan

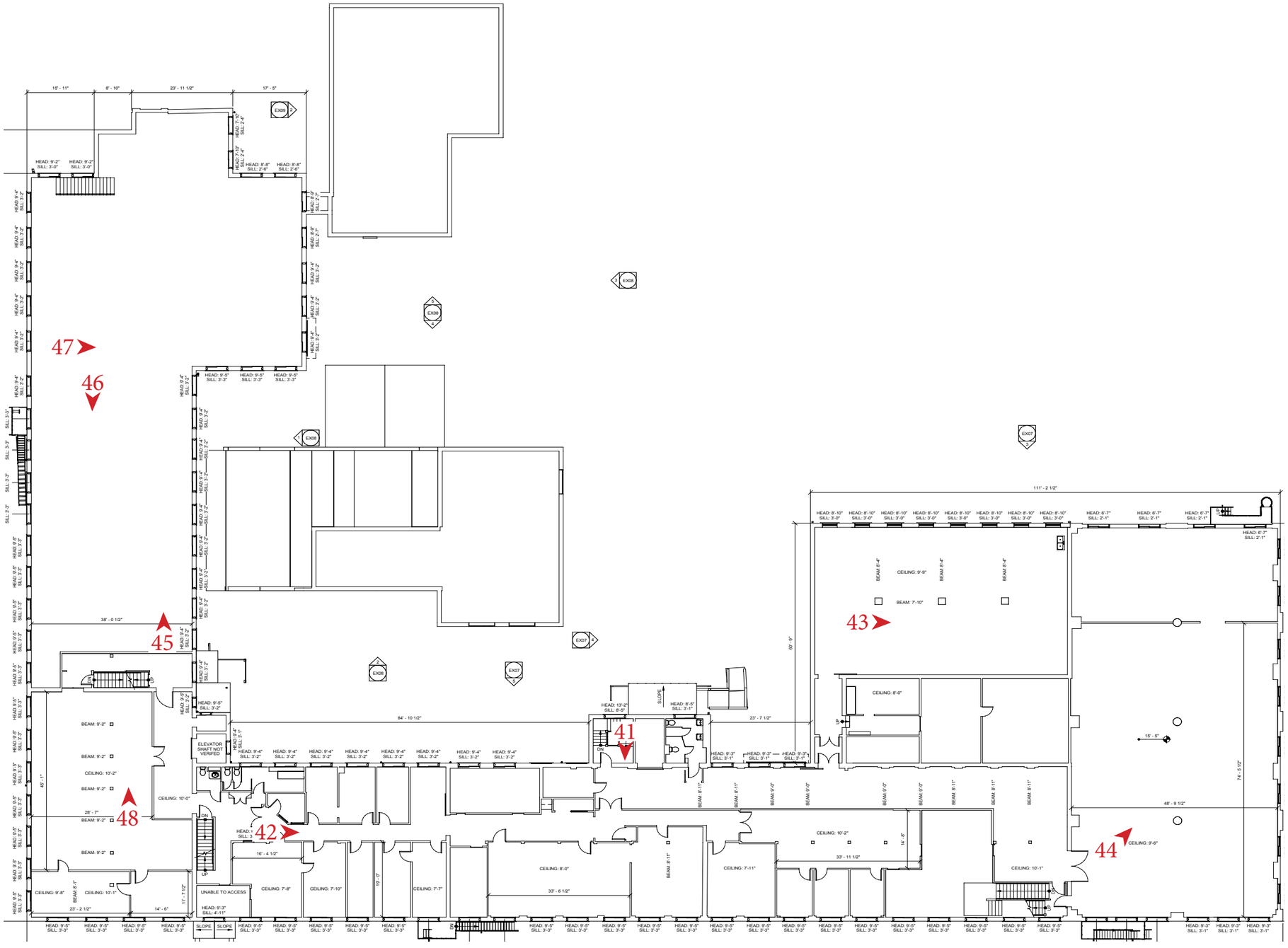


MacRostie Historic Advisors
Bringing strategy, equity, and experience to historic building development

Aeolian Company Complex

85 Tremont Street
Meriden, CT 06450

CT SHPO
NR Nomination Photo Key
First Floor Plan

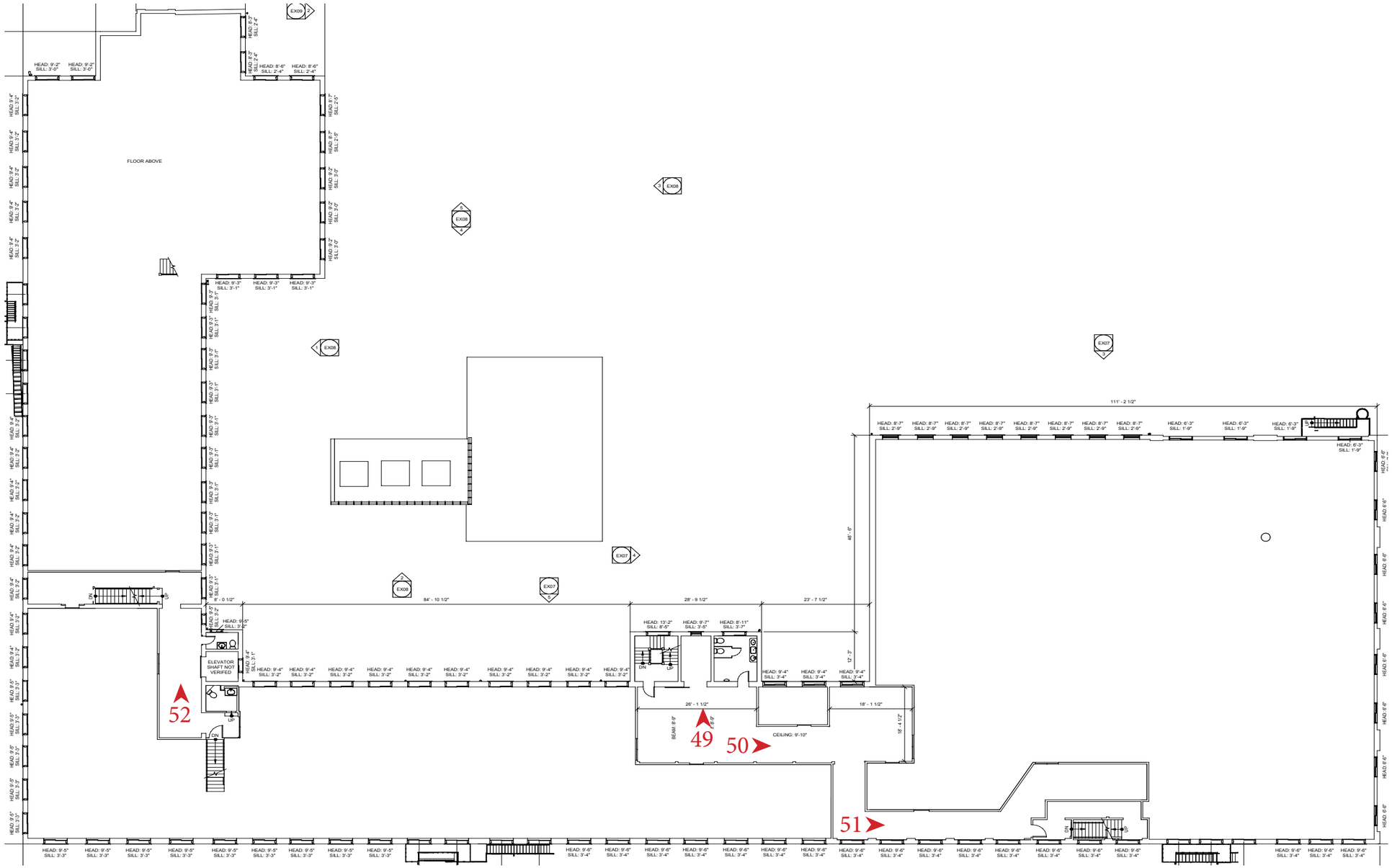


MacRostie Historic Advisors
Bringing strategy, equity, and experience to historic building development

Aeolian Company Complex

85 Tremont Street
Meriden, CT 06450

CT SHPO
NR Nomination Photo Key
Second Floor Plan

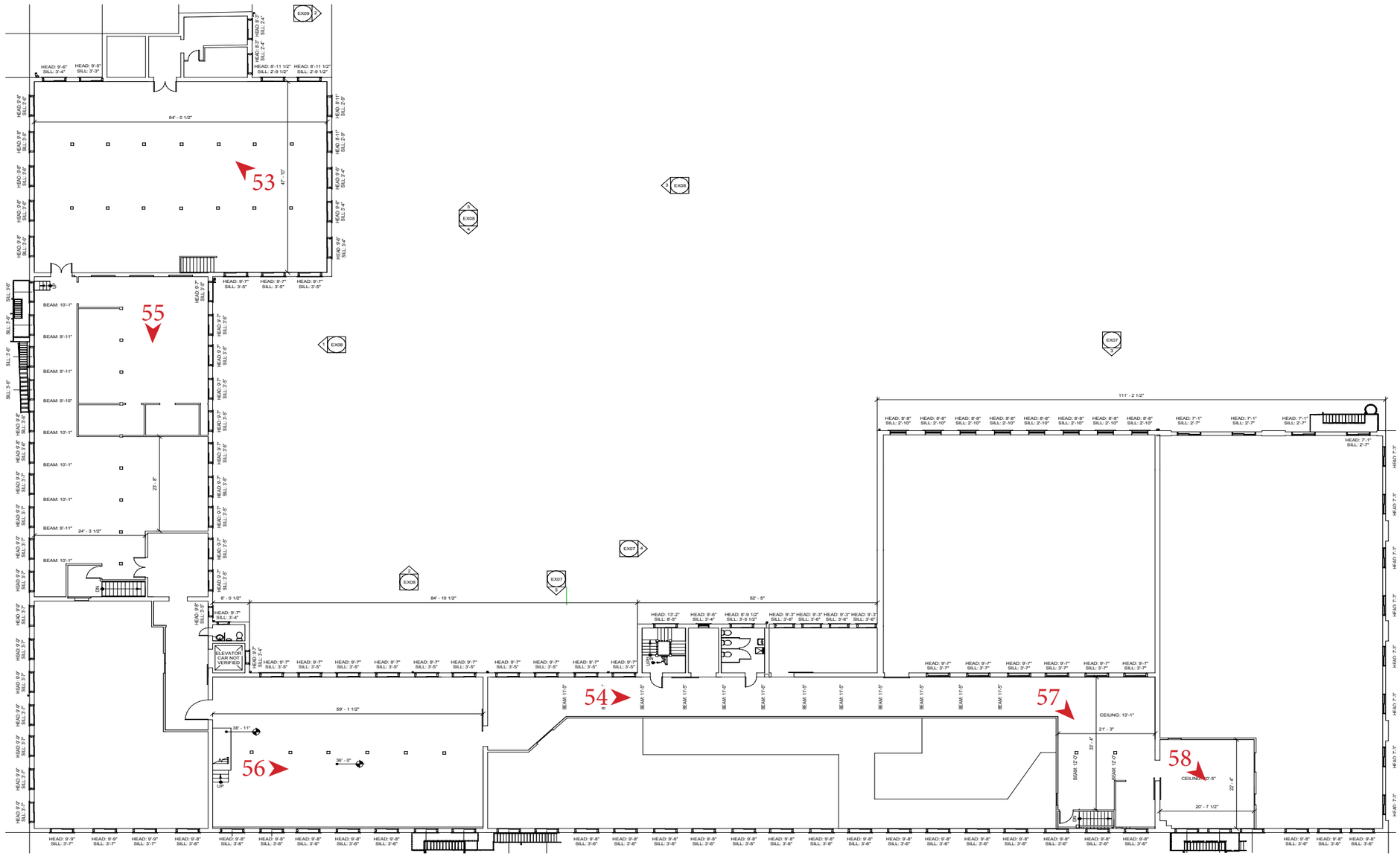


MacRostie Historic Advisors
Bringing strategy, equity, and experience to historic building development

Aeolian Company Complex

85 Tremont Street
Meriden, CT 06450

CT SHPO
NR Nomination Photo Key
Third Floor Plan



MacRostie Historic Advisors
Bringing strategy, equity, and experience to historic building development

Aeolian Company Complex

85 Tremont Street
Meriden, CT 06450

CT SHPO
NR Nomination Photo Key
Fourth Floor Plan

CT SHPO
National Register Photos
Aeolian Company Complex

June 2022

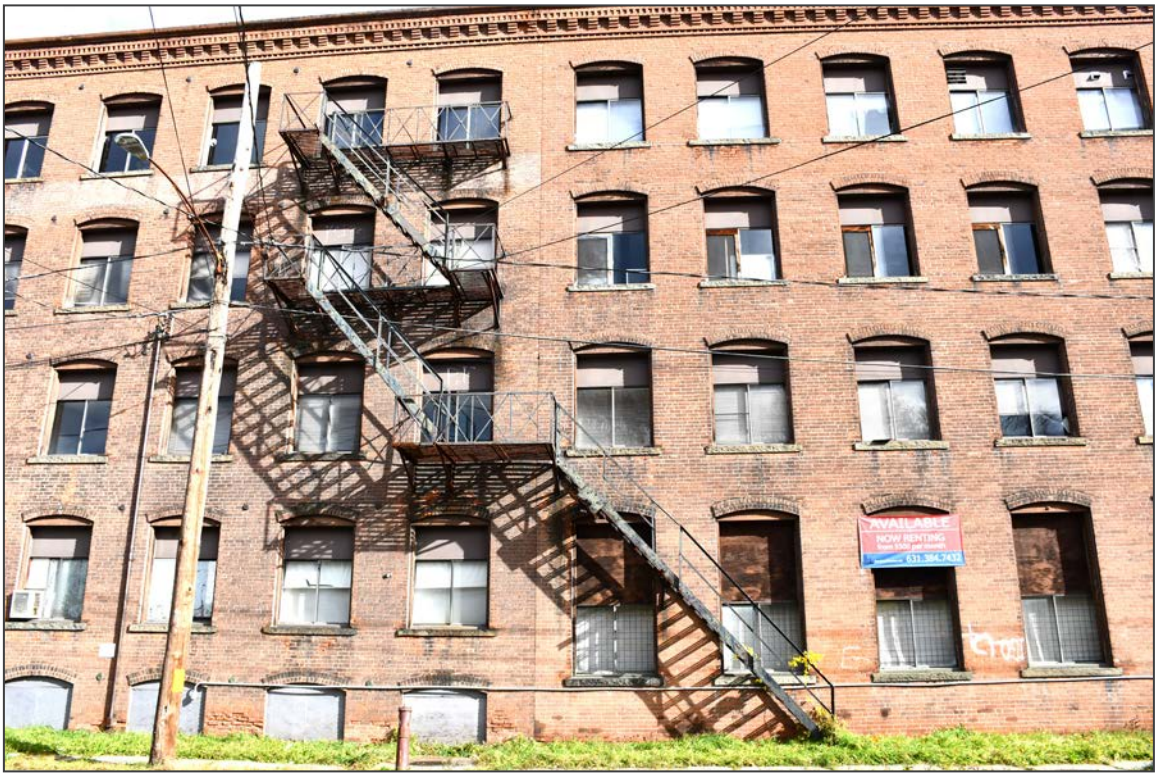
1. North and west elevations, Buildings L-R: No. 6 (1893), 3, 2, and 1 (1887), facing southeast

2. North and west elevations, Buildings No. 6 (1893), 3, 2, and 1 (1887), facing southeast

3. North elevation, Buildings No. 3 (1887) and 6 (1893), facing southeast

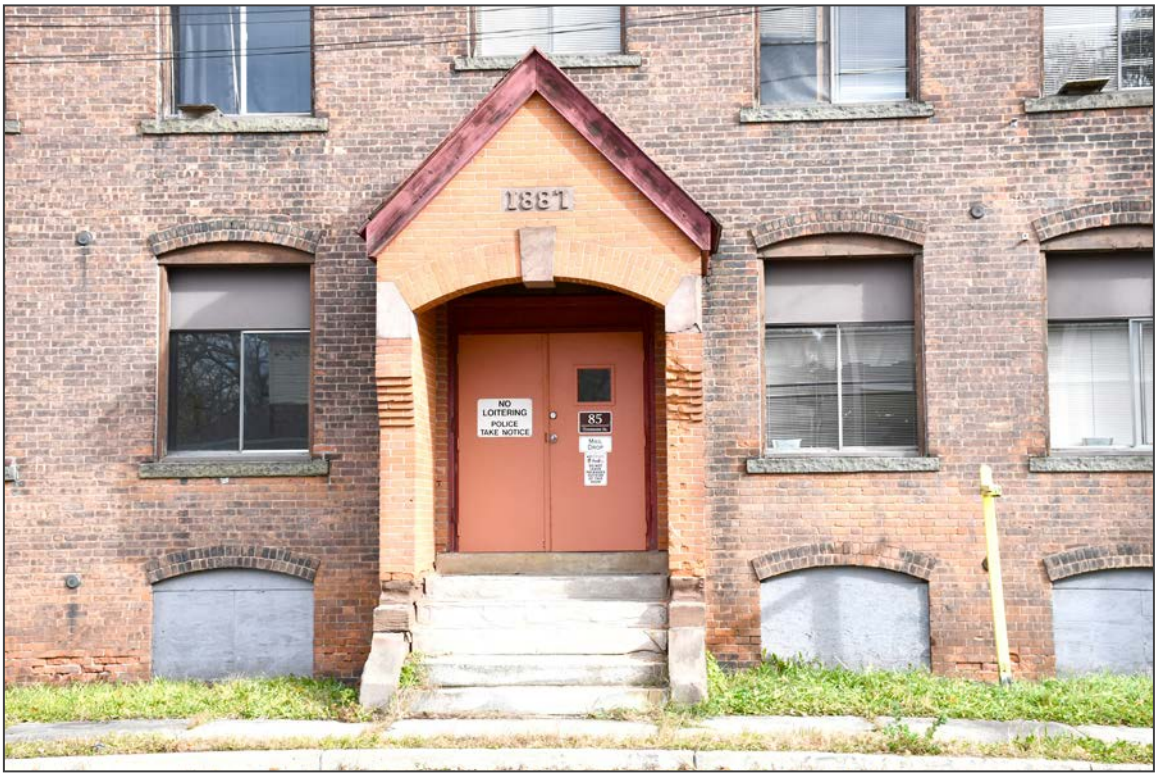
4. North and west elevations, Buildings No. 2, 1 (1887), and 11 (1901), facing southeast

5. West elevation, Buildings No. 2, 1, (1887) and 11 (1901), facing northeast



6. West elevation, Buildings No. 1 (1887) and 11 (1901), facing east

7. West elevation, Buildings No. 11 (1901) and 14 (1920), facing east



8. West elevation entrance, Building No. 1 (1887), facing east

9. West and south elevations, Buildings No. 2 (1887), 1 (1887), 11 (1901), and 14 (1920), facing northeast

10. West and south elevations, Buildings No. 11 (1901) and 14 (1920), facing northeast

11. East elevation, Buildings No. 14 (1920), 12 (1920), and 11 (1901), facing west

12. South elevation, Boiler House (Building No. 16) (1920), facing north

13. South elevation, Buildings No. 16 (1920) and 6 (1893) and Record Production Building (1920), facing northeast

14. North and east elevations, Buildings No. 12 (1920) and 11 (1901), facing west

15. East and south elevations, Buildings No. 11 (1901), 1 (1887), 2 (1887), and 16 (1920), facing northwest

16. West and south elevations, Building No. 16 (1920), facing northeast

17. East and south elevations, Building No. 16 (1920), and south elevation, Buildings No. 17 (1920), 3 (1887) and 6 (1893), facing north

18. South elevation, Building No. 6 (1893), and west and south elevations, Record Production Building (1920), facing northeast

19. East and south elevations, Buildings No. 14 (1920) and 12 (1920), and east elevation, Building No. 11 (1901), facing southwest

20. East and north elevations, Record Production Building (1920) and Building No. 6 (1893), including stair and elevator towers (1909, 1920), facing southwest

21. East elevation, Buildings No. 14 (1920), 12 (1920), 11 (1901), and 16 (1920), facing west

22. East and south elevations, Buildings No. 12 (1920), 11 (1901), 1, 2, and 3 (1887), 6 (1893), 16 (1920), 17 (1920) and Record Production Building (1920), facing northwest

23. Basement, Building No. 1 (1887), facing south

24. Basement, Building No. 2 (1887), facing north

25. Basement, Building No. 2 (1887), facing northwest

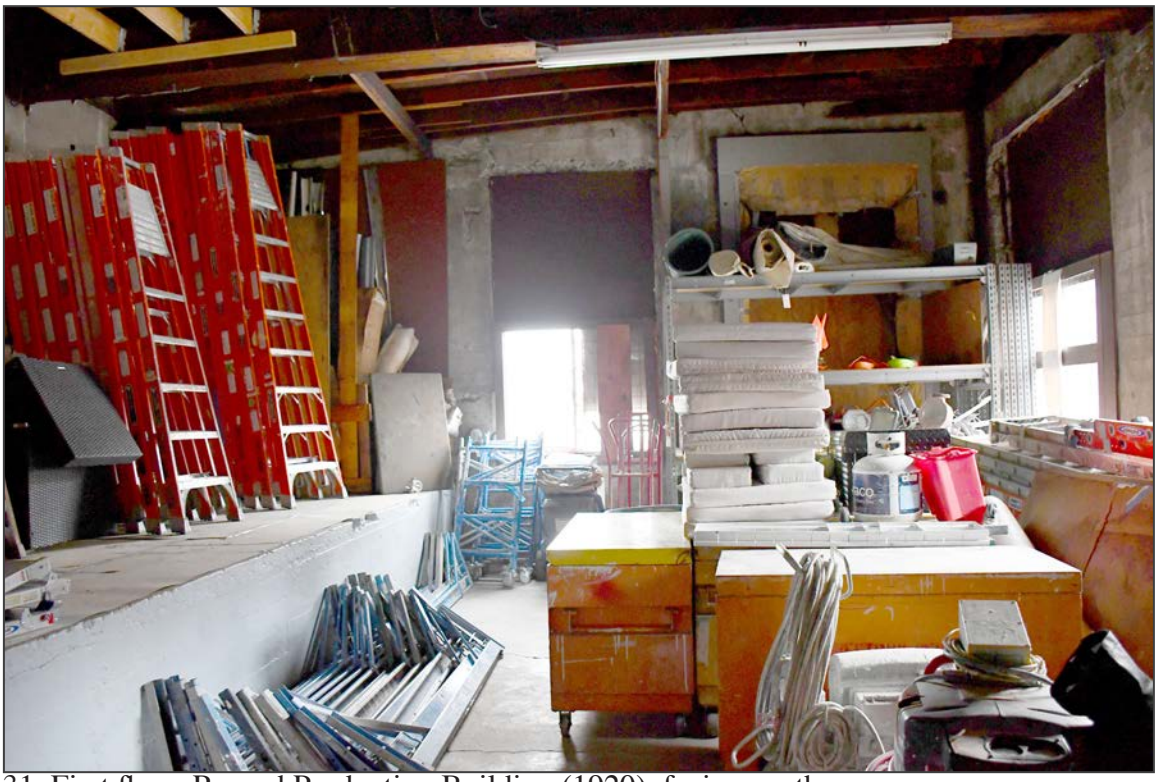
26. Basement, Building No. 3 (1887), facing east

27. First floor, staircase, Building No. 11 (1901), facing west

28. First floor, Building No. 3 (1887), facing east

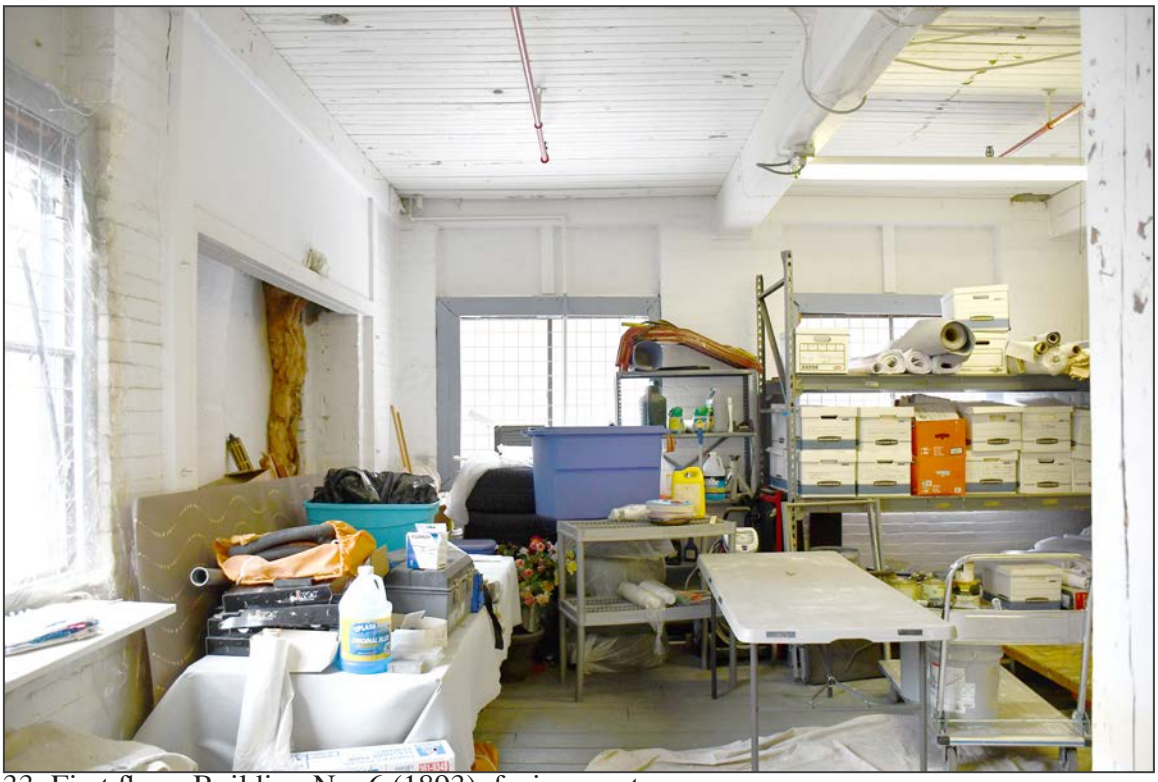
29. First floor, Building No. 2 (1887), facing east

30. First floor, Building No. 2 (1887), facing northeast



31. First floor, Record Production Building (1920), facing south

32. First floor, Record Production Building (1920), facing south

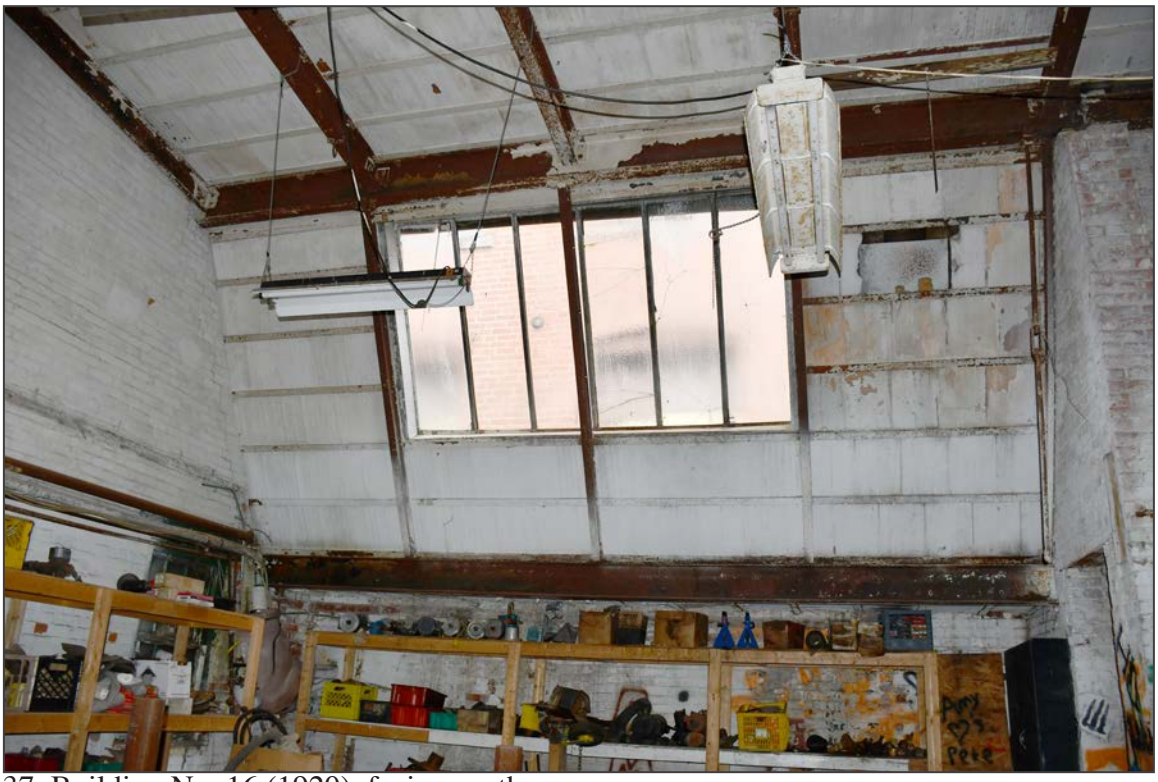


33. First floor, Building No. 6 (1893), facing west

34. First floor, Building No. 11 (1901), facing north

35. First floor, Building No. 1 (1887), facing south

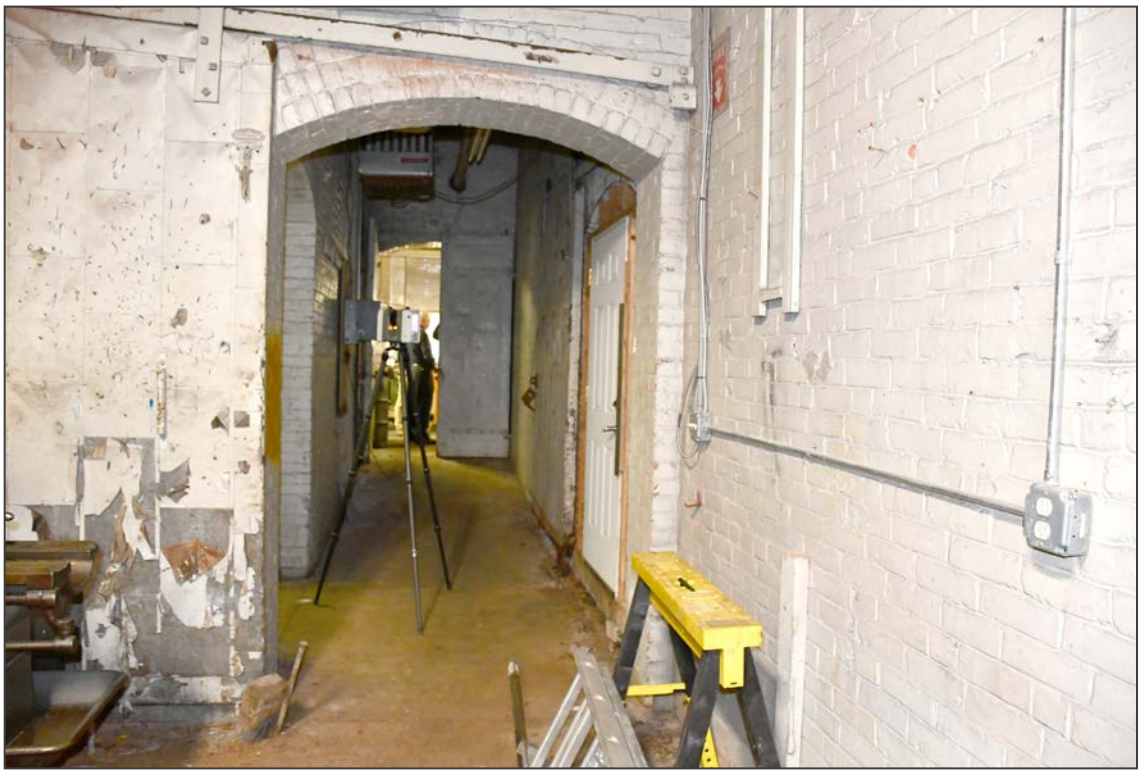
36. Building No. 16 (1920), facing northeast



37. Building No. 16 (1920), facing north

38. Building No. 16 (1920), facing south

39. Building No. 16 (1920), facing south



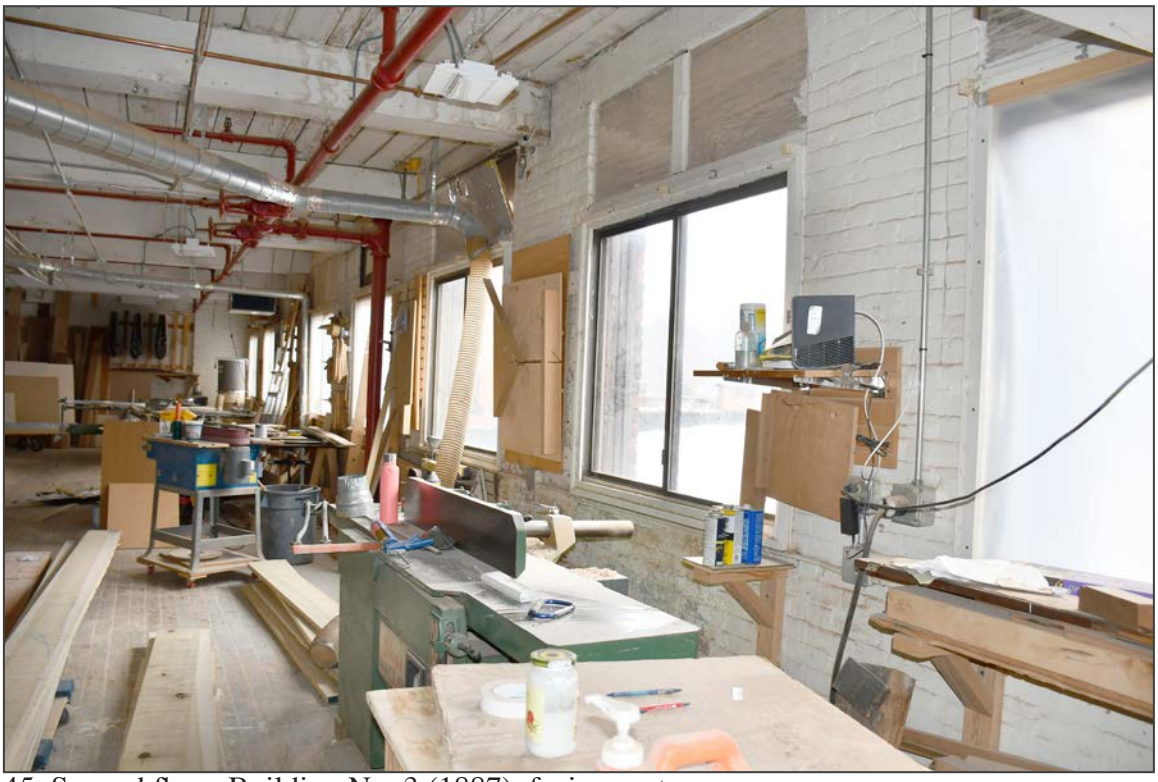
40. First floor, Building No. 12 (1901), facing west

41. Second floor, staircase, Building No. 11 (1901), facing west

42. Second floor, Building No. 1 (1887), facing south

43. Second floor, Building No. 12 (1920), facing south

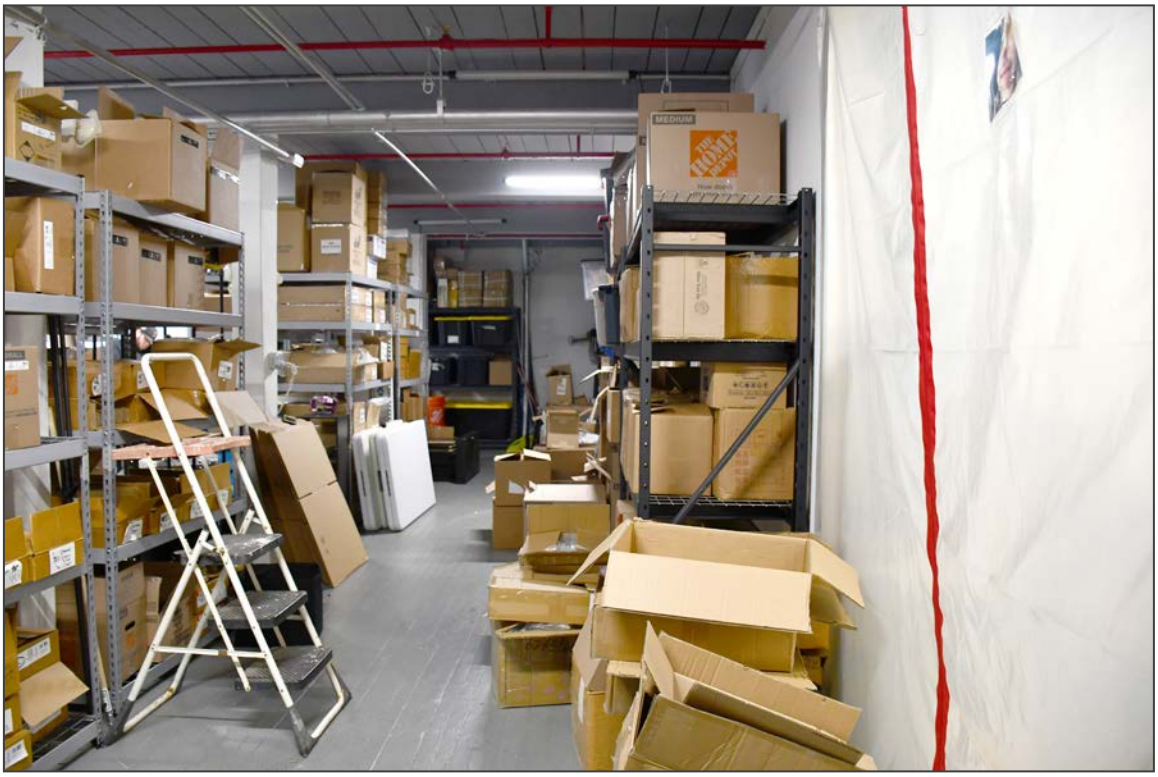
44. Second floor, Building No. 14 (1920), facing southeast



45. Second floor, Building No. 3 (1887), facing east

46. Second floor, Building No. 3 (1887), facing west

47. Second floor, Building No. 6 (1893), facing south

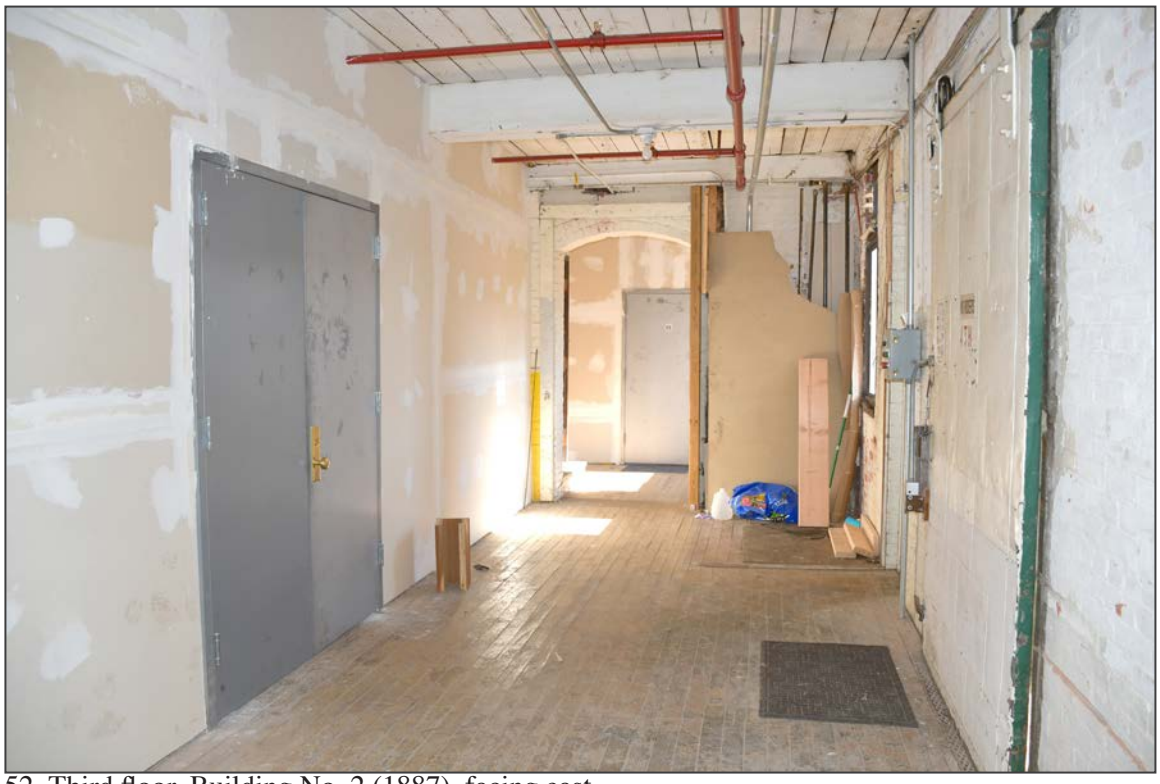


48. Second floor, Building No. 2 (1887), facing east

49. Third floor, Building No. 11 (1901), facing east

50. Third floor, Building No. 11 (1901), facing south

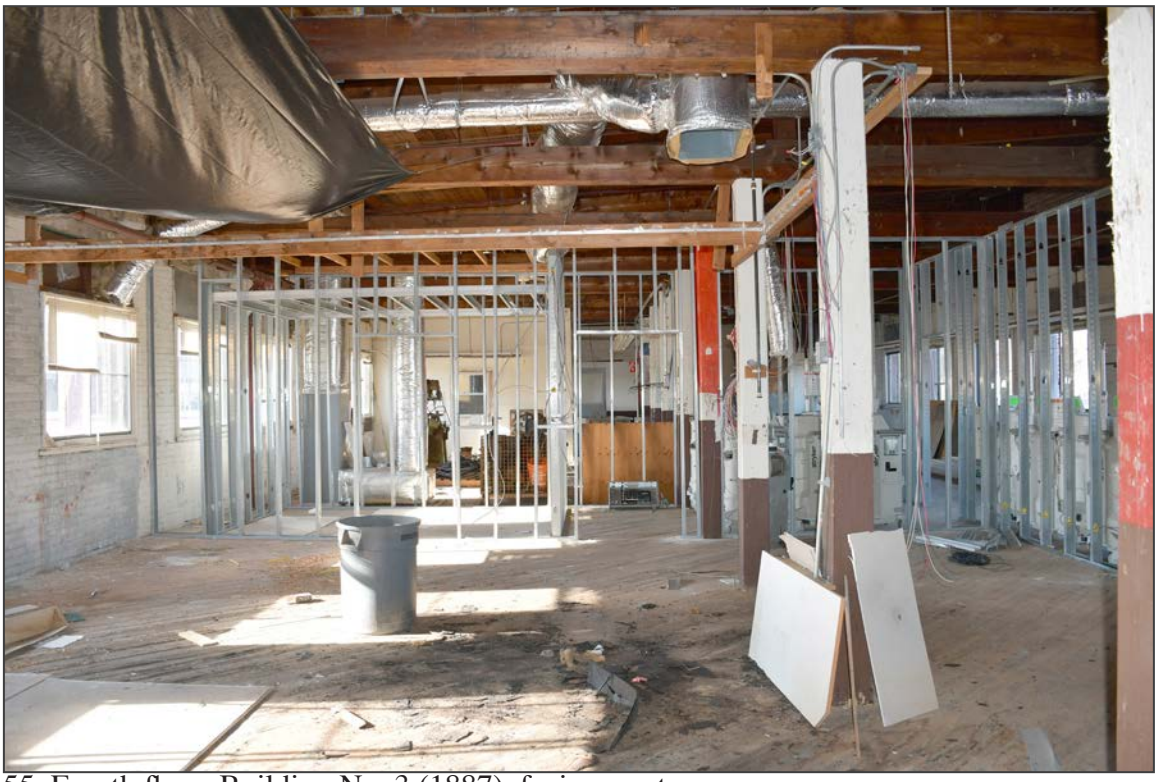
51. Third floor, Building No. 11 (1901), facing south



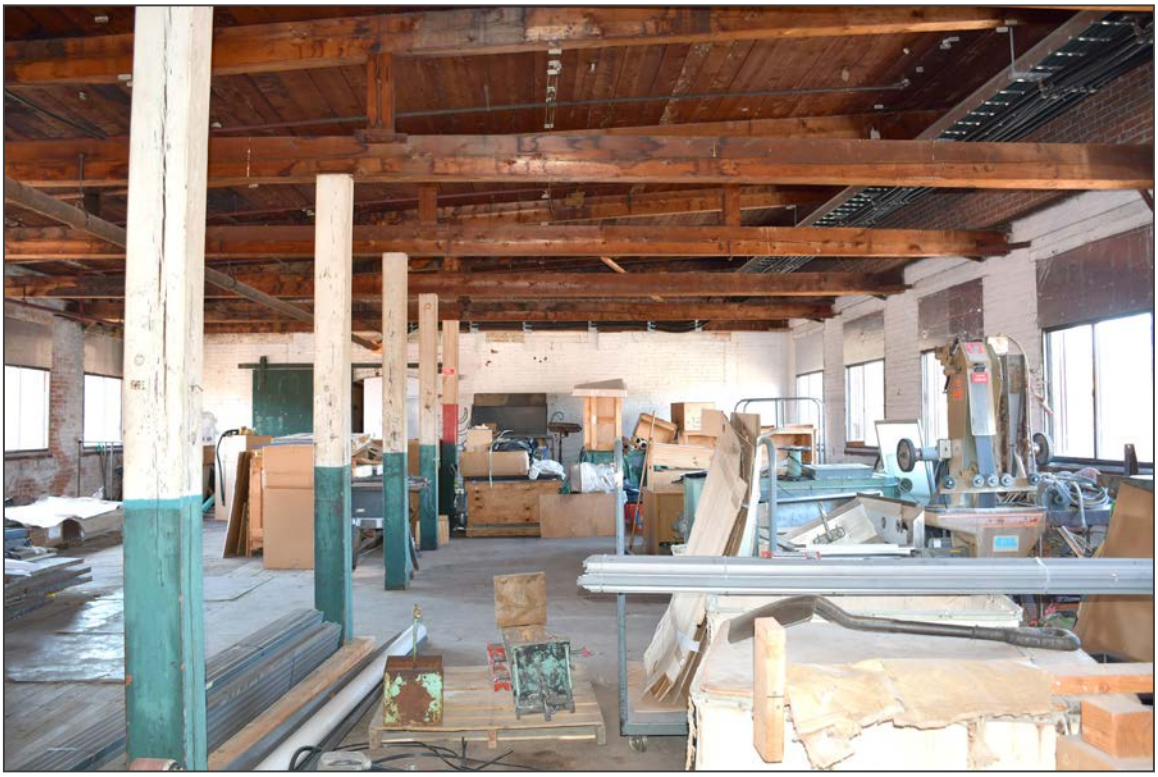
52. Third floor, Building No. 2 (1887), facing east

53. Fourth floor, Building No. 6 (1893), facing northeast

54. Fourth floor, Building No. 11 (1901), facing south



55. Fourth floor, Building No. 3 (1887), facing west



56. Fourth floor, Building No. 1 (1887), facing south

57. Fourth floor, Building No. 11 (1901), facing southwest

58. Fourth floor, Building No. 14 (1920), facing southwest