

# Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

## Scanned Record Cover Page

<b>Inventory No:</b>	DED.AB
<b>Historic Name:</b>	Mother Brook Canal Area
<b>City/Town:</b>	Dedham
<b>Village/Neighborhood:</b>	East Dedham;
<b>Local No:</b>	
<b>Year Constructed:</b>	
<b>Use(s):</b>	Other Engineering; Other Industrial; Other Recreational;
<b>Significance:</b>	Engineering; Industry; Recreation;
<b>Designation(s):</b>	
<b>Building Materials:</b>	
<b>Demolished</b>	No



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Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Massachusetts Historical Commission  
220 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, Massachusetts 02125  
[www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc)

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# FORM A - AREA

Assessor's Sheets USGS Quad Area Letter Form Numbers in Area

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

See Attached	Norwood Newton	<b>DED.AB</b> A, AA	See Attached Table
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## Photograph



Mill Pond at Bussey Street, view southwest.

**Town/City:** Dedham

**Place (neighborhood or village):** East Dedham

**Name of Area:** Mother Brook Canal Area

**Present Use:** Recreation

**Construction Dates or Period:** 1639, ca.1958, ca.1976

**Overall Condition:** Mostly good integrity, with some intervening altered segments

**Major Intrusions and Alterations:** Altered by installation of a diversion a diversion gate added at the mouth of Mother Brook in 1958, re-channelization, residential, industrial, transportation and flood control development

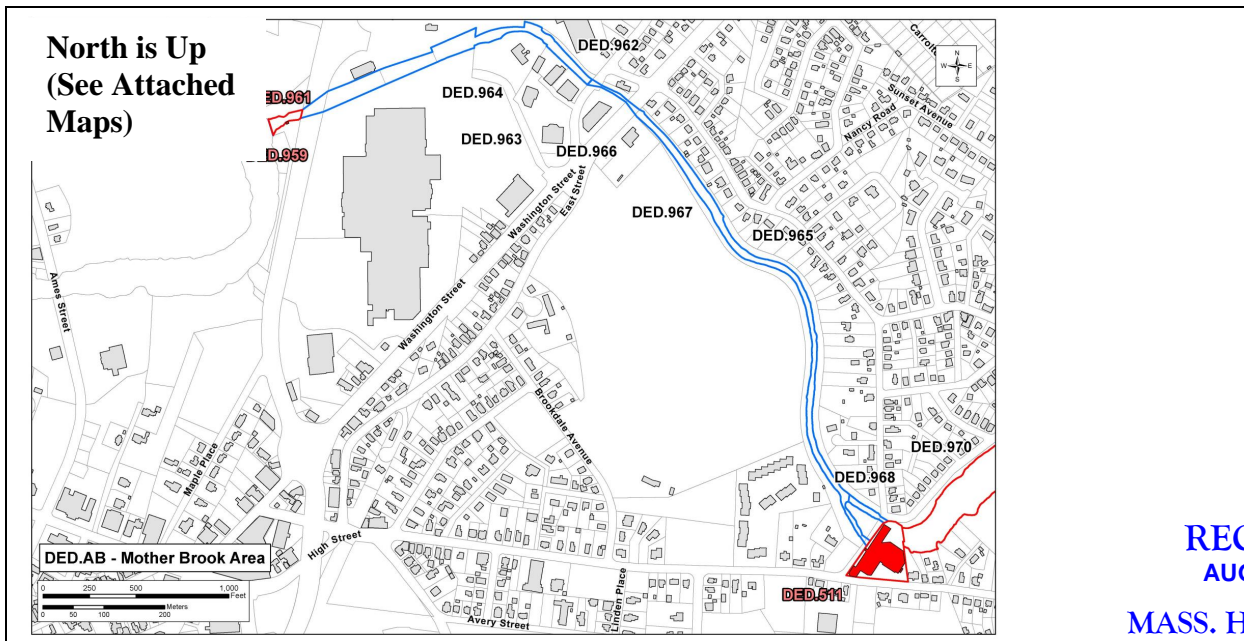
**Acreeage:** Approximately 30

**Recorded by:** Stacey Vairo

**Organization:** Heritage Consultants, LLC

**Date (month/year):** June 2019

## Locus Map



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see continuation sheet

**INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET**  
MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

DEDHAM

MOTHER BROOK AREA

Area Letter Form Nos.

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AA, A

See attached  
table

Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.  
*If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

*Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.*

### **ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION**

*Describe architectural, structural and landscape features and evaluate in terms of other areas within the community.*

The Mother Brook Canal Area in Dedham, Massachusetts is an approximately 30-acre, 3.8-mile long, 18-foot wide corridor following a roughly west/easterly route connecting the Charles River in Dedham and the Neponset River in the Hide Park area of Boston. Mother Brook lies in the northeastern part of the Neponset Watershed. The portion of the canal described and assessed in this form includes the area from the Charles River Diversion Floodgate to the Dedham/Boston municipal border. The canal continues beyond the town line into the fifth privilege in Hyde Park, Boston and continues to meet the Neponset River in the east. The corridor includes the route of the linear canal path and infrastructure associated with the canal such as impoundments, culverts, flood control measures, and associated sluiceways. This form addresses cultural resources and cultural landscape resources located along, and part of, the Mother Brook Canal in Dedham. Several separately identified areas, buildings, structures, and objects fall within the boundaries defined for the survey of this canal/watercourse corridor. These have been assessed using separate forms called out below.

Mother Brook begins at the Charles River just west of what is now Providence Highway in East Dedham. A flood control gate found at the western mouth of Mother Brook known as the Mother Brook Diversion Floodgate controls the flow of water into the stream. The concrete structure, built in 1958, uses a bascule gate to ensure that flow remains optimal between the Charles and Neponset Rivers. That same year, entire channel was straightened and cleared from the Mother Brook Diversion to Maverick Street as part of a flood control project undertaken by the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC). A modern recreational trail and a canoe/kayak launch is located just west of the Diversion. Mother Brook continues in an east/northeasterly direction as it passes beneath Providence Highway and bisects a heavily developed commercial area that includes the Dedham Mall to the south and several commercial properties to the north. The banks of the river are sloped through this area and remain wooded despite the surrounding building density. Approximately 325 feet east-northeast of the Providence Highway, Mother Brook passes beneath an access road to the mall for approximately 300 feet. On the northeast side of the access road the course of the canal continues straight in a northeasterly direction and then curves toward the southeast around a small industrial complex containing the Dedham Waste Management and Transfer Station. It then continues in a southeasterly direction toward Washington Street. This portion of the canal is also heavily wooded along the banks with commercial and industrial buildings found on either side of the tree lines. Throughout this section, the canal measures approximately 50 feet in width. East of Washington Street, the canal continues along the south side of the residential area along Curve Street and along the northern boundary of the Brookdale Cemetery. The slopes of the canal remain heavily wooded through this area, but the channel remains open and free from large rocks or any other obstructions. It was near this point that the man-made portion of the canal historically "ended" and transitioned into the natural stream known as Mother or "Mill Brook".

At Maverick Street, also known as the second privilege, there are two dams that remain in place. A Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from 1895 shows that there were two spillways at this privilege at that time, with the northeastern one serving as the primary channel. The southwestern spillway was used to accommodate overflow, much like how it is used today. Prior to 1958, Mother Brook appeared to have flowed freely over both dams beneath what is now the Boston Envelope Company Building. The northeastern dam structure was significantly reworked as part of a flood control project in 1955. The channel was again redirected in 1958 toward the northeast spillway with the southwestern spillway running only during times of high water. The northernmost section of the envelope factory was constructed on piers by the Dedham Finishing Company in 1920 to extend over Mill Pond near the site of the second privilege. The functioning dam was significantly reworked in 1958. These two structures along with the Colburn Street Dam found further upstream

# INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

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table

create the impoundment known as Boston Envelope Company Mill Pond. It is here in the mill pond that the first of a pair of measuring stones called out by Erastus Worthington in his description of Mother Brook are located. Worthington stated that the height of the mill pond was measured by a stone located on the “western margin of the mill pond, about 120 feet upstream from the foundation of Mr. Bussey’s factory and by a similar drill hole in another rock on the easterly side of the mill pond about 135 feet from the top of the rolling dam.”<sup>1</sup>

Mill Pond Park is located on the south side of Colburn Street, just west of the intersection of Colburn and Bussey streets. At Bussey Street a large culvert carries the water beneath the roadway. The Colburn Street Dam marks the site of the first privilege on Mother Brook and is located approximately 230 feet upstream from Bussey Street. Condon Park now occupies an open parcel of land located on the east side of Bussey Street and south side of Mother Brook. The brook is approximately 100 feet wide at this point and remains wooded with slightly sparser coverage allowing for more visibility of the stream from the park and from Colburn Street. Condon Park was once the location of the Maverick Woolen Mills, Merchant’s Woolen Company Mill and later Hodges Manufacturing Company. Approximately 500 feet east of Bussey Street, Mother Brook turns sharply to the south and continues beneath Saw Mill Lane. Traces of a former race can be seen extending in a northwestern direction on the eastern side of Bussey Street. This was once used to power the mill at this site. At times of high water, the raceway is still used to catch overflow during high water periods, diverting the overflow south of the park to the Mill Pond.

A second of Upper Mill Pond was formed south of what was once the third privilege at what is now Sawmill Lane, but the third and fourth privileges were merged in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century into one fall at the fourth privilege. The area near Sawmill Lane was the site of two wood-framed mills (a sawmill and a grist mill) until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Both had ceased operation decades earlier and neither have left any trace of their former industries at the site. The bridge at Sawmill Lane connects High Street to Dedham Boulevard. Mother Brook remains widened at this point and the banks in this area are covered by thick tree growth. The stream narrows again at the site of the fourth privilege near the Centennial Dam at Stone Mill Drive. This dam controls the flow of Mother Brook and is operated by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) as part of a flood control system for the Charles River Basin. The dam was first constructed in 1894 and rebuilt in 1994. A recent construction project further stabilized the structure in 2018. It is a fifteen-foot embankment dam with a concrete spillway with stone and brick side walls.

Mother Brook passes beneath Stone Mill Drive and continues to flow northeast and parallel to Milton Street. The channel here widens again to fifty feet across and remains straight until it enters an S-curve located just north of the intersection of River and Milton streets. The banks remain wooded. At this point Mother Brook crosses the municipal boundary of Dedham and enters the Hyde Park section of Boston.

The Brook continues to curve north and then east along the north side of River Street until it widens into Mill Pond. At Mill Pond, Mother Brook passes beneath River Street. There the Brook again narrows to reach the fifth privilege at Knight Street. It was here that the last dam on Mother Brook was constructed and where the Dedham Manufacturing Company was built in 1814; it was one of the earliest mills built in the area. The oldest portions of the present mill building on the site were constructed ca. 1866. This privilege was individually surveyed as the Dedham Manufacturing Company (BOS.11076) and the surrounding area was included in the Readville Industrial Area Form (BOS.RQ). The Brook narrows significantly at this point (to approximately 50 feet) as it meanders east and north to pass beneath Reservation Road. This area is heavily developed with commercial, industrial, and institutional buildings. Here the channel banks of Mother Brook are more open and less steep than in the previous sections. The brook passes beneath the rail line and Hyde Park Avenue before exiting the industrial area just west of the crossing of Dana Avenue at the Neponset. It is at this point that Mother Brook joins the Neponset River in Hyde Park.

<sup>1</sup> Erastus Worthington. “Historical Sketch of Mother Brook, Dedham, Mass.” Dedham, MA: C. G. Wheeler, 1900, 10.

**DED.AB**  
AA, A

See attached  
table

## **HISTORICAL NARRATIVE**

*Explain historical development of the area. Discuss how this relates to the historical development of the community.*

Mother Brook, known in the past as East Brook or Mill Creek, connects the Charles River in Dedham to the Neponset River in the Hyde Park area of Boston. The cut for the canal was hand dug beginning in 1639 to provide waterpower for Dedham's earliest settlers, making it one of the first man-made, industrial canals in the United States. The residents of Dedham created the canal to take advantage of a nearly 40-foot fall in topography between the Charles and Neponset Rivers. The new channel provided them with the waterpower required to build corn and lumber mills. In addition to agricultural products, Mother Brook manufactories produced paper, leather, and coins during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. By 1841, five privileges had been granted by the Town of Dedham and various manufacturing operations existed at each site.<sup>2</sup> A cotton manufactory began operation along Mother Brook beginning in 1807 with several large textile manufacturers occupying privileges by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The need for worker housing followed the success of the factories, which employed hundreds of employees each. Residential development was also driven by various transportation improvements during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including rail lines leading into the Readville section of Hyde Park and the advent of the streetcar system. By the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, East Dedham had been transformed into a thriving and self-sustaining area of town with two large neighborhood schools, several churches, and a commercial district centered around the intersection of High and Bussey streets. After Mother Brook ceased to power the town's factories, it was used by residents for recreational purposes with a large bathhouse serving the public near Washington Street. East Dedham's neighborhoods continued to develop following the closure of the last textile mills in the 1930s. In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, automobiles transformed Dedham into a suburban community and housing pressures remained ever-present. After the devastating Flood of 1955, Mother Brook proved to be a crucial part of a large-scale flood management plan that included the Charles and Neponset rivers. In Dedham this meant the re-channelization of Mother Brook and the subsequent development of the former marshland lining its banks into buildable land. Urban Renewal schemes in the 1960s impacted the surrounding built environment of East Dedham, but much of the original fabric of the Mill Village lining remains intact connected along the spine of Mother Brook.

The plantation at Dedham was established in September of 1635 by a group of former residents of Watertown, MA. Crucial to the settlement of the town was the establishment of mills to grind corn and saw lumber but none of the local water sources provided the waterpower needed. The first settlers used hand-cranked corn mill brought over from England by Governor Winthrop, but these soon proved to be insufficient for the quantity of grain required.<sup>3</sup> A water-powered mill in Watertown provided the closest option, but transporting loads of grain and corn there was nearly impossible without passable roads. As such, building a mill close to the central settlement became a priority for Dedham's earliest residents. In 1637, the Town of Dedham granted sixty acres of land to miller Abraham Shawe on the condition that he erect a water mill to grind corn. Shawe's mill was to be erected near the bridge leading over Dedham Avenue into Needham, but Shawe died before the mill could be built and the privilege was never developed.<sup>4</sup>

In 1639 the town appointed a committee to locate a mill. Each spring a portion of low-lying land now roughly defined by High, Harvard and Washington streets would be flooded forming a kind of spillway between through the meadowlands east of the Charles River and East Brook. East Brook was a natural "stream which began about 100 rods East of Washington Street in the rear of what is now Brookdale Cemetery."<sup>5</sup> The residents recognized that a canal connecting to East Brook and eventually to the Neponset could result in the necessary source of power. The diversion of water was also sought to protect farmers' lands from flooding.

<sup>2</sup> Frank Smith, *History of Dedham*, Dedham, MA: The Transcript Press, 1936, 254.

<sup>3</sup> Smith, 249.

<sup>4</sup> Erastus Worthington. "Historical Sketch of Mother Brook, Dedham, Mass." Dedham, MA: C. G. Wheeler, 1900.

<sup>5</sup> Worthington, 2.

# INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

DEDHAM

MOTHER BROOK AREA

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On May 25, 1639 the town voted, and it was...“Ordered yt a Ditch shalbe made at a Comon Charge through purchased medowe vnto ys East brooke yt may both be a ptieon fence in ye same; as also may serue for a cCourse vnto a water mill; yt it shalbe fownd fitting to set a mill vpon ye sayd brooke by ye Judgement of a workman for yt purpose.”<sup>6</sup>

Work began soon after on “the cut” and although no direct evidence notes when it was finished, most sources agree it was complete by 1640. In 1641, John Elderkin came from Lynn, MA to accept a proposal from the town to build a water mill.<sup>7</sup> In exchange for land, Elderkin built a corn mill near the eastern side of Bussey Street where it crosses Mother Brook.<sup>8</sup> Elderkin sold one half of his mill rights in 1642 to Nathaniel Whiting and other half to John Allin, Nathaniel Aldis, and John Dwight. The group operated mill until 1649 when Whiting became sole owner. In 1664, a second privilege was developed upstream by Daniel Pond and Ezra Morse. This mill formed the second privilege stood at the point where Maverick Street crosses Mother Brook and was to be finished by June 1665. Whiting complained bitterly about the construction of this second mill upstream from his own. Thus, began a dispute between Morse and Whiting which lasted for several years despite the fact that the Town urged Whiting “to liue together in a way of neighborly loue and doe each as they would have the other doe by themselves.”<sup>9</sup>

The dispute between Morse and Whiting was finally resolved in 1699 when the Town removed Morse’s dam and granted him land and a privilege in Norwood as compensation.<sup>10</sup>

The following is a description of the development of manufacturing sites at each privilege.

## First Privilege – Bussey Street

This is the location of the first mill built in Dedham by John Elderkin and Nathaniel Whiting in 1641 to grind corn. Today this property is the site of Condon Park, but it once included the largest of Dedham textile mills. The only factory building remaining at this site is the brick structure at 202 Bussey Street, known as Merchants Woolen Mill No. 2. This low, gable-roofed brick structure recalled the massive factory that once stood at this site until it was demolished in 1930. This privilege was powered by a dam located roughly in the same location as the Colburn Street Dam. A Stone Marker showing the location of the first mill in Dedham was once placed near the dam. This marker is now found along Bussey Street, approximately 100 yards from its original location in Condon Park.

Elderkin sold his interest in the mill and property to Nathaniel Whiting and John Allin in 1642. It remained in the Whiting family until it was purchased in 1821 by William Phillipe and Jabez Chickering of The Dedham Worsted Company. This enterprise soon failed, and the mill was purchased by Boston businessman Benjamin Bussey in 1824.<sup>11</sup> Bussey was responsible for the development of large-scale woolen factories at both sites with machine shops, dye houses and dwellings to house factory workers. Bussey also operated woolen mills at the second privilege at Maverick Street. Bussey was a successful entrepreneur and gentlemen farmer who introduced Merino Sheep to the American woolen market. In 1843, Bussey’s holdings were sold to J, Wiley Edmunds, who that same year formed the Maverick Woolen Company with Gardner Colby.<sup>12</sup> Thomas Barrows of Dedham acted as agent for the company. Maverick Woolen was succeeded by the Merchants Woolen Company in 1863. Merchants operated shops at the first and second privileges until 1895.<sup>13</sup> Edward D. Thayer, Jr. of Worcester purchased these buildings in January of 1895.<sup>14</sup> Thayer owned and operated the mills for the manufacture of woolen goods. By 1909, the privilege was operated by the Hodges Finishing Company, a massive operation that also produced finished woolen goods at the site. The factory remained vacant throughout the 1920s and

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<sup>6</sup> Worthington, 2.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> Worthington, 3.

<sup>9</sup> Worthington, 4.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> Worthington, 6.

<sup>12</sup> Worthington, 11.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

<sup>14</sup> Worthington, 12.

<b>DED.AB</b> AA, A
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See attached table
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was demolished before 1934. The Town of Dedham constructed Condon Park on the former factory site in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to provide recreational space for East Dedham's residents.

### **Second Privilege – Maverick Street**

The earliest mill at this site was operated to grind corn by Ezra Morse in 1664.<sup>15</sup> A long-term dispute between Morse's and Nathaniel Whiting eventually forced Morse to be relocated to another town in 1699. The privilege was next used by Joseph Lewis to power a Leather Factory at this site beginning ca. 1700. It was used in this capacity for nearly 100 years. In 1807, the Norfolk Cotton Manufactory was incorporated by thirty men, mostly Dedham residents including Samuel Lowder, Jonathan Avery, Rueben Guild, Calvin Guild, Pliny Bingham, and William Howe.<sup>16</sup> This marked the first textile manufacturer to operate along Mother Brook. Norfolk Cotton Manufactory constructed a large wooden mill on the stream on the east side of the road that would become Maverick Street and the company was very successful in the production of cotton goods. After trade routes were reopened following the War of 1812, the company was left with a large supply of stock which they were forced to sell at a drastically reduced price. The mill was sold in 1819 to Benjamin Bussey for a sum far below the actual value.<sup>17</sup> He purchased the buildings at the first privilege in 1824 and from that point until 1919 the histories of the first and second privileges were connected. Under Bussey new factory buildings were constructed in brick and several dwellings were built to house workers. Worker housing continued to expand northward from this privilege under the Maverick Woolen Company and the Merchants Woolen Company and along High Street (**Maverick-Colburn Streets Area**). The Dedham Finishing Company took over the buildings at this privilege in 1919. That same year they began construction on the northern portion of the current factory. They also built an office building located at the corner of Maverick and High streets between 1919 and 1920. Over half of the northern mill structure is built on pilings set directly over the **Boston Envelope Company Mill Pond**. The Boston Envelope Company purchased the building in 1936 and built the southern portion of the current factory structure starting that same year. The two spillways at this location were modified by a re-channelization scheme in 1955 which pushed much of the flow toward the northeastern spillway.

### **Third Privilege**

The third privilege was developed in 1682 as a fulling mill by Jonathan Fairbanks and James Draper. The town granted the men permission to move forward but only if Nathaniel Whiting was made a partner. This was done to avoid a conflict such as the one between Morse and Whiting. The dam was located at the place where Sawmill Lane now crosses Mother Brook.<sup>18</sup> The third privilege remained in the Whiting family for almost two centuries until it was sold to the incorporators of Merchant's Woolen Company in 1863. Officers for the company sold the rights of the third privilege to Thomas Barrows in 1864 and Barrows conveyed it back to Merchant's Woolen in 1872. Merchant's then conveyed the premises to Royal O. Storrs & Company in 1875 and repurchased it again in 1883 after the bankruptcy of R. O. Storrs in 1882.<sup>19</sup> A saw and grist mill were both operated at the third privilege under management of Charles C. Sanderson until 1868 and then by the Goding Brothers who vacated the premises in 1885.<sup>20</sup> Prior to this, a corn mill had operated on Mother Brook for over 240 years. The Godings continued to sell products out of the Stone Mill until 1895.<sup>21</sup> During the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the third privilege was merged with the fourth into a single fall and this location was no longer used to provide waterpower of any kind.<sup>22</sup> The land was purchased by J. Eugene Cochrane of the Cochrane Manufacturing Company in 1894 along with the buildings and land at the fourth privilege. According to Erastus Worthington the land around Sawmill Lane was "filled in" prior to 1900 and today the site is occupied by a modern commercial development.

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<sup>15</sup> Worthington, 2.

<sup>16</sup> Worthington, 5.

<sup>17</sup> Worthington, 5.

<sup>18</sup> Worthington, 4.

<sup>19</sup> Worthington, 12.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid

<sup>21</sup> Smith, 254.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid

**DED.AB**  
AA, A

See attached  
table

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#### Fourth Privilege

For a more complete description of activities at the Fourth Privilege, see the [Norfolk Manufacturing Company – Stone Mill](#).

The fourth privilege was developed immediately below the third one on property belonging to Nathaniel Whiting and James Draper given in a grant from the Town in 1682.<sup>23</sup> Water rights reverted to the Town some time prior to 1787 and that same year the Town transferred the rights to Joseph Whiting, Jr., Paul Moses, and Aaron Whiting for six pounds. A building was constructed there to block copper cents – it was used for this purpose for a short time only.<sup>24</sup> Herman Mann afterwards renovated the building to manufacture paper. In 1804, George Bird purchased the property and continued to manufacture paper. A second mill was erected at this privilege for the manufacture of wire and Ruggles Whiting of Boston was the agent. The two mills at this privilege were connected and used the same wheel. Mr. Bird's mill burned in 1809 and was rebuilt with a new raceway and foundation shortly thereafter.<sup>25</sup> In 1814, manufacture of wire was discontinued, and factory was used for making nails. In 1819, George Bird became the owner of the whole privilege including land and buildings and it was then again used to paper manufacture. A new corporation was created in 1819 known as the Norfolk Manufacturing Company with John Lemist of Roxbury and Frederick A. Taft as proprietors.<sup>26</sup> In 1823, George Bird and Frederick A. Taft formed the Norfolk Manufacturing Company to make cotton cloth using the machinery of the Norfolk Cotton Manufactory.<sup>27</sup> Bird leased the land and buildings to the corporation for ten years. In 1830, the corporation purchased the whole mill property including the land and John Lemist joined Taft in his venture. In 1832, Ezra W. Taft purchased the interest of Frederick A. Taft and Mr. Lemist sold his interest in the company to James Reed.<sup>28</sup> Under Taft's management the company began to thrive.

In 1835, the Stone Mill was built at the site and operated with Ezra W. Taft as manager and agent for nearly thirty years. The company continued to produce cotton goods and Taft acquired the latest machinery by which to do so. In 1863, Thomas Barrows purchased the mill and enlarged it adding turbines and a steam engine. He also branched out into the manufacture of woolen goods. This business continued until 1872 when the property was sold to the Merchants' Woolen Company. Merchant's sold the fourth privilege to Frederick R. Storrs in 1875 and Storrs continued to manufacture woolens until 1882 when his business failed and the property was once again purchased by Merchants Woolen Company.<sup>29</sup> In 1894, Merchants Woolen Company sold the third and fourth privileges with all of the associated buildings to J. Eugene Cochrane of Malden, Massachusetts. Cochrane conveyed the lands and rights to the Cochrane Manufacturing Company in 1897. The Cochrane Company specialized in the manufacturing of carpets and a smaller mill on the site [Merchants Mill No. 2](#), was used for coloring handkerchiefs.<sup>30</sup> Extensive improvements were made at this privilege by the Cochrane Manufacturing Company, including the combination of the fall of the third and fourth privileges on Mother Brook. The Cochrane Company closed in 1917. In 1927, the United Waste Company purchased the Cochrane plant to use in the production of shoddy wool. Shoddy wool was a type of woolen yarn, also known as "rag wool" made by using reclaimed wool, fabric and cloth mixed with new wool. In 1986, the Bergermeyer Development Company purchased and repurposed the factory buildings at the first privilege for use as 86 housing units known as Stone Mill Condominiums.

#### Fifth Privilege

In 1814, the fifth and final privilege was impounded by the Dedham Manufacturing Company, a cotton manufactory, in the Dedham village known as Readville, an area that is now part of Hyde Park in Boston.<sup>31</sup> The Dedham Manufacturing Company sold the property in 1867 to a group of men who conveyed it to the Smithfield Manufacturing Company of

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<sup>23</sup> Worthington, 6.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid

<sup>25</sup> Ibid

<sup>26</sup> Ibid

<sup>27</sup> Ibid

<sup>28</sup> Worthington, 7.

<sup>29</sup> Worthington, 12.

<sup>30</sup> Worthington, 13.

<sup>31</sup> Worthington, 7.



# INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

DEDHAM

MOTHER BROOK AREA

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See attached table
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Rhode Island in 1875.<sup>32</sup> It then came into the hands of the Manchung Company, which made extensive improvements to the site.<sup>33</sup> This area is only briefly discussed in this document since it is outside the boundaries of the Town, but a complete history of the fifth privilege on Mother Brook was included in the Readville Industrial Area, which was previously surveyed in 1997 (BOS.RQ).

## Disputes with Charles River Mill Owners

The channel was periodically deepened and widened to accommodate the various manufactories lining its banks, but mill owners along the Charles River began to question the diversion of the water through Mill Creek and an appeal was made to the Commissioners of Sewers to form a commission to examine the issue. In 1766 a committee was appointed at the request of the meadow owners in Roxbury, Dedham, Needham and Newton and included Eliphalet Pond, Joseph Williams and Joseph Mayo.<sup>34</sup>

In 1767, a sill was placed at Mother Brook to divert more water from the Charles and lower level of the flood plain.<sup>35</sup> That same year, the commissioners report requested removal of any obstructions that were causing flooding along the lands of Roxbury, Newtown, Dedham, and Needham. They also fixed a sill in Mill Creek at a certain height agreed to by those owners along the Charles and the mill owners on Mother Brook.<sup>36</sup> In February 1798, mill owners on the Charles River incorporated to protect under Chapter 45 of the Acts of the Year 1797 to preserve their waterpower rights along the Charles and prevent the Mother Brook and Neponset owners from taking advantage. Just one month later, the owners on Mother Brook and the Neponset Rivers were incorporated for the same purpose under Chapter 77 of the Acts of 1797.<sup>37</sup>

In March of 1809, the issue of water rights arose once more. The Neponset and Mill Creek owners formally organized again in September of that year. By that time, the first privilege was owned by Norfolk Cotton Manufactory; the second by Hezekiah Whiting; the third by Moses Whiting and heirs of Aaron Whiting, and the fourth by the Boston Iron and Nail Factory and by George Bird, paper manufacturer. The dam at the Norfolk Cotton Manufactory prevented a free flow of water and became a source of disagreement between owners on the stream. Mill owners on the Charles, Mother Brook and Neponset petitioned the Supreme Court of Massachusetts to let the Commissioners of Sewers divide ownership of the water rights between the streams.<sup>38</sup> Elijah Bingham of Leominster and Laommi Baldwin of Cambridge were appointed to investigate the issue and their report found that the sill that was fixed in 1767 was now missing. Committees were appointed to rectify the situation in 1811, but they accomplished little beyond placing new sills in Mill Creek and a line of stakes in the Charles River to measure water levels. They produced a report dated September 30, 1813 which stated that two-thirds of the water should pass to the Charles and one third diverted to Mill Creek.<sup>39</sup>

This debate finally came to an end in 1824 when the Norfolk Cotton Manufactory came into the ownership of Benjamin Bussey. Bussey agreed to lower the dam by 12 inches in addition to providing cap sills on the dam. Bussey, along with Committee members, set the width of the wastewater passage at 17 feet and the width of the rolling dam at 11 feet one inch. The level of water was "determined by a drill hole on a large rock in the westerly margin of the mill pond about 120 feet upstream from the foundation of Mr. Bussey's factory and by a similar drill hole in another rock on the easterly side of the mill pond about 135 feet from the top of the rolling dam"<sup>40</sup>. In 1900, these drill hole marks were still visible and governed the height of the water in Mother Brook.<sup>41</sup> Upstream, the height of the water was measured by additional drill holes in the rocks set along the course of the brook. One rock was located below Whiting's Grist mill at the third privilege,

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<sup>32</sup> Worthington, 13.

<sup>33</sup> Worthington, 13.

<sup>34</sup> Worthington, 7.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid

<sup>36</sup> Ibid

<sup>37</sup> Worthington, 8.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid

<sup>40</sup> Worthington, 10.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid

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but was "buried up...by filling in the mill pond near Mill Lane."<sup>42</sup> The hole in the rock below the first privilege remains visible periodically visible when the water is low.<sup>43</sup> A deed between George Bird, owner of the fourth privilege and Lemuel and Moses Whiting, owners of the third privilege set the water height by using another drill hole, which was mentioned in a report filed by Jabez Coney, Jr. in 1837.<sup>44</sup> Further investigation should be undertaken to define the location of all of the remaining drill holes as they are one of the few early built features associated with the canal.

The proprietors along Mother Brook and the Neponset River and those the proprietors of mills along the Charles entered an agreement on December 3, 1831. This is essentially the final agreement that governs the diversion of water to this day. The agreement was filed with the Norfolk Land Records that one third of the water was diverted to Mill Creek owners and two-thirds flowed freely to the Charles River owners. Sills were fixed on both streams and either party could adjust them to suit their circumstances given they followed an agreed-upon procedure.<sup>45</sup>

In July of 1837, surveyor Jabez Coney, Jr. reported to the proprietors a precise evaluation of the entire fall of Mother Brook. At the time it measured 42 feet 7 and 7/10 inches. Specifically, Coney measured the fall between each privilege as follows: from Benjamin Bussey's dam to Whiting's dam (2<sup>nd</sup> to first privilege) 15 ft 6 inches; the Whiting (2<sup>nd</sup>) to third (Norfolk Manufacturing Co) privilege 8 feet 11 9/10 inches; from third to fourth (Dedham Manufacturing Co.) 10 feet 4 inches; and from the 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> privilege 7 feet 9 8/10 inches.<sup>46</sup>

In 1900, Chapter 0161 of the Acts of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts established "...an Act to provide for protecting the flow and supply of water from the Charles River into and through Mother Brook to the Neponset River." This same Act established that upon petition from any of the mill owners, a commissioner would be appointed to oversee the water levels on Mother Brook. The commissioner,

"...whose duty it shall be to carry out the purposes expressed in section one during the time he shall continue in office; and to that end he shall have power as often as there is occasion, to do any and all acts, whether by way of removing obstructions from Mother brook or otherwise, which said mill owners, or any of them, or The Proprietors of Mills on Mill-Creek and Neponset River, a corporation created by chapter seventy-seven of the acts of the year seventeen hundred and ninety-seven, would have the right to do if this act had not been passed, in order to secure and protect said flow and supply of water and to prevent the diversion of the same."<sup>47</sup>

Finally, in 1904, the Annual Report of the Charles River Basin Commission stated that the amount of water passing into Mother Brook was regulated by two weirs, one in the Charles River a short distance below the Newton water works pumping station, and the other in Mother Brook in Dedham just above Washington Street. The one in the Charles River was 60 feet long and the one in Mother Brook was 30 feet long.<sup>48</sup> Today, the Charles River Diversion Floodgate maintains the flow between Mother Brook and the Charles River using the same division of water decided upon in 1831.

## Residential and Social Developments in East Dedham

Residential development in East Dedham began as early as the Colonial Period (1675-1775) when a village formed around the first, second and third privileges along Mother Brook. During the Federal Period (1775-1830) Bussey and High

<sup>42</sup> Worthington, 14.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid

<sup>44</sup> Worthington, 15.

<sup>45</sup> Worthington, 11.

<sup>46</sup> Worthington, 14.

<sup>47</sup> "Session Laws – Massachusetts, 1900." Massachusetts State Archives, <https://archives.lib.state.ma.us/bitstream/handle/2452/71140/1900acts0161.txt?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

<sup>48</sup> First Annual Report of the Charles River Basin Commission, 1904, 25.

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Streets provided access to East Dedham mills. Dedham became the shire town of Norfolk County in 1793 and rail lines arrived in 1835.

In the 1820s, the Town saw a population increase by nearly 25 percent. This was driven by people coming to work in the textile mills in various capacities.<sup>49</sup> Service industries sprang up to serve the growing population. Residential development along Mother Brook initially began as worker housing built by the textile companies. Benjamin Bussey, a successful Boston merchant and the first man to introduce Merino wool to America, was also one of the first to also construct several tenement houses for his workers at the first and second privileges. Later companies followed suit and many of these boarding houses dating from the 1820s to the early 1900s still stand today in the Maverick-Colburn Streets Area.

As the mills continued to prosper churches, stores and schools were constructed to serve the local population who were initially immigrants from Ireland, Scotland, Canada and England in the 1820s and 1830s. East Dedham was linked to the outside world by rail connections beginning in the 1830s. The Dedham Line of the Boston & Providence Railroad ran just south of the commercial area that came to be known as East Dedham Square at the corner of Bussey and High Streets.

Mill workers and those looking to make a living from the activities of the mills arrived from Germans and smaller groups of Northern and Eastern Europeans arrived in the 1870s and 1880s. The 1880 census showed that Irish immigrants made up the bulk of the population in the Maverick-Colburn Street Area. East Dedham was home to several prominent Jewish families, such as the Greenhoods who came from Austria in the 1880s. Italians arrived around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and soon became the largest immigrant group to settle in Dedham. Smaller groups of Syrian families lived along Curve Street in the early 1920s. Families arriving from the same area of the world would live in clusters of several nearby houses or would all live together in one large boarding house. St. Mary's Catholic Church was formed the 1840s with a church building finally constructed on High Street in East Dedham in 1880 to serve the local population. The members of nearly every ethnic group worked in Dedham's textile mills or in industries serving the mills. Census records show that many families went from renting to owning homes in the area; sometimes families owned several secondary homes which they rented to newcomers.

Mother Brook also served as a source of recreation for Dedham residents. Swimming was common at the Mill Ponds and upstream at the site of the Dedham Bath House which opened in 1899. The bath house was located on the north side of Mother Brook near the rail crossing west of Washington Street. At the height of its popularity in the 1930s the Bath House served 1,000 visitors a day. It was used to teach life saving lessons taught by the Boston Metropolitan Chapter of the Red Cross in 1933. Images of swimmers in the Mill Ponds throughout the early 20<sup>th</sup> century are common.<sup>50</sup> The bath house remained open until the 1950s.

### **20<sup>th</sup> Century Flood Control Measures**

Significant flooding has taken place along Mother Brook in February of 1886, March of 1936, July of 1938, August of 1955, and March of 1968. After the record-breaking rains brought by Hurricanes Connie and Diane in August of 1955, the Massachusetts Congressional Delegation on Flood Prevention and Relief was formed to minimize the impact of future floods throughout the state. The committee was chaired by Philip J. Philbin and sought Federal aid and matching funds in rebuilding several smaller industrial dams throughout the state.<sup>51</sup> The Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) of Boston took control of Mother Brook and devised a flood control plan in the Charles River Basin. This was a three-point plan that included the construction of the Charles River Dam in Boston, the Charles River Diversion Dam in Dedham, re-channelization of Mother Brook from the Charles River to Maverick Street, and construction of the Silk Dam at the Neponset River.<sup>52</sup> The MDC put just over two million dollars toward flood control projects included building new dams at

<sup>49</sup> Stott, Peter. MHC Dedham

<sup>50</sup> "Life Saving Lessons at Dedham Bath House" Boston Metropolitan Chapter of the Red Cross *Boston Globe*, June 23, 1931, 16.

<sup>51</sup> "N. E. Protection Inadequate – 10 Flood Control Projects Urged by Bay State Group," *Boston Globe* November 18, 1955, 5.

<sup>52</sup> Arthur Riley. "\$250,000 Dam Will End Floods in Charles." *Boston Globe* (Boston, MA), May 5, 1958, 19.

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Mother Brook to diverts flood water into the Neponset.<sup>53</sup> The new diversion dam at the Charles River was completed in 1958 and channel improvements between the dam and Maverick Street were completed in 1959.

The Charles River Diversion Floodgate was the first dam structure to be built at the mouth of Mother Brook. It was a concrete and earthen dam with an adjustable bascule gate at the downstream part of the structure designed to maintain proper control of the one-third diversion of the Charles River into Mother Brook. The design was a common type, but served an important role when flooding hit again in 1968. As the flood waters began to rise in Dedham, officials decided to raise the weir by four inches. This action decreased the flow enough to save many properties along Mother Brook. It was noted that with proper manipulation this structure was able to control the flooding outcome along Mother Brook considerably.<sup>54</sup>

Another round of flood improvements took place during the late 1960s and 1970s on the eastern section of Mother Brook east of Maverick Street. A Flood Control and Feasibility Study completed by the Anderson Nichols Company of Boston, Massachusetts in 1972. The study focused on the need for additional flood controls for neighborhoods located downstream from Dedham, such as Readville, and the need to develop recreational areas in the open spaces surrounding Mother Brook. The recommendations made in the study included making channel improvements "in concert with ecologically sound recreational activities in the Study Area." The study also evaluated the pressure to develop the floodplains and wetlands located adjacent to Mother Brook. These included the construction of a trapezoidal channel and lowering of the channel bottom for the portion of the brook located downstream from the Mill Pond dam. Also, the goal was to restore and extend Mill Pond to create a pool for recreating. Replacement of the Bussey Street Bridge and minor improvements to the Colburn Street dam were also recommended. These recommendations were taken seriously by the Town and by the MDC. By 1976, bids were being advertised in the Boston Globe to complete further flood control measures along Mother Brook. The advertisement specifically mentioned the need "for flood control along Mother Brook and miscellaneous related work in Boston and Dedham; 1300-ft of trapezoidal channel, clearing, thinning, grubbing cleaning and snagging along the remaining section of the Brook. Rebuilding Mill and Pond Dam construction of recreational pond with island, bituminous sidewalk construction, minor modifications of Colburn Street dam and construction of a twin-10 inch siphon under Mother Brook and footbridge over Mill Pond Dam."<sup>55</sup> These improvements took place over the next decade and included the construction of a new bridge over Bussey Street which was completed in 1976.

The Department of Conservation and Recreation took over control of the Mother Brook from the MDC when it was merged with the Department of Environmental management in 2003. All dams except for the Colburn Street Dam fall under the control of the DCR's Bureau of Engineering. The owner of the property parcels on the north and south sides of Mother Brook is the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Department of Public Works.

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<sup>53</sup> Boston Globe, September 23, 1964, 17.

<sup>54</sup> Anderson-Nichols Engineers/Environmental Consultants/Architects. *Mother Brook Flood Control Feasibility Study* Boston, MA February 1973.

<sup>55</sup> "Bids" *Boston Globe*, November 19, 1976: 51.

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MHC Number	Parcel Number	Address	Name	Description	Date	Type	Photograph Number
DED.961	76-16	255 Providence Highway	Mother Brook	Land	ca. 1958		
<b>DED.959</b>	<b>75-17</b>	<b>267 Providence Highway</b>	<b>Mother Brook Diversion</b>	<b>Diversion structure, ca. 1958</b>	<b>1958</b>	<b>Structure</b>	<b>1 and 2</b>
DED.962	77-12	200 Providence Highway	Mother Brook Canal	Land	ca. 1958		3
DED.963	76-1	300 Providence Highway	Mother Brook Canal	Land	1639	Landscape	
DED.964	77-68	5 Incinerator Rd	Mother Brook Canal	Land	ca. 1958		
DED.965	77-71	95 Washington St	Mother Brook Canal	Land	ca. 1958		
DED.966	77-19	125 Washington St	Mother Brook Canal	Land	ca. 1958		
DED.967	96-109	171 Bussey Street	Mother Brook Canal	Land	1639	Landscape	
DED.968	N96-109	At Maverick Street	Maverick Street Dam	Two spillways at Maverick Street	ca. 1820/ca. 1958	Structure	5
<b>DED.511</b>	<b>95-73</b>	<b>297 High Street</b>	<b>Boston Envelope Company Building</b>	<b>Building on Mill Pond</b>	<b>ca. 1919, 1936</b>	<b>Building</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>DED.960</b>	<b>96-109</b>	<b>171 Bussey Street</b>	<b>Boston Envelope Company Mill Pond/Lower Mill Pond</b>	<b>Mill Pond</b>	<b>ca. 1664</b>	<b>Landscape</b>	<b>6-7</b>
DED.969	96-109	171 Bussey Street	Measuring Stones	Stones in Mill Pond	ca. 1664	Structure/feature	
DED.970	95-79	222 Colburn St	Land/Park and overflow	Land	ca. 1950	Land	8
DED.971	96-111	194 Colburn St	Mother Brook Canal	Land	ca. 1950	Land	

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MHC Number	Parcel Number	Address	Name	Description	Date	Type	Photograph Number
DED.958	96-109	Along Mother Brook, east of Bussey Street and south of Colburn Street	Colburn Street Dam	Dam	ca. 1850	Structure	9
DED.972	114-14	76 Milton Street	Upper Mill Pond	Mill Pond	ca. 1665	Landscape	10-11
DED.973	97-97	15 Sawmill Lane	Mother Brook Canal	Land	ca. 1958		
DED.974	113-38	Stone Mill Drive	Centennial Dam	Dam	ca. 1894, 1994 (reconstructed)	Structure	13
DED.387	113-3	4 No Stone Mill Dr	Norfolk Manufacturing Company-Building 1	Granite Mill	1835	Building	10
DED.629	113-38-1020	S. Stone Mill Drive	Norfolk Manufacturing Company-Building 2-	Boiler House	ca. 1900	Building	
DED.630	113-38-1020	S. Stone Mill Drive	Norfolk Manufacturing Company-	Dye House	ca. 1872	Building	
DED.631	113-38-1020	S. Stone Mill Drive	Norfolk Manufacturing Company-	Print Room	ca. 1897	Building	
DED.632	114-14A	N. Stone Mill Drive	Norfolk Manufacturing Company-	Roller Storage	ca. 1905	Building	
DED.633	113-38-1020	Milton St	Norfolk Manufacturing Company-	Weave Shed	ca. 1900	Building	
DED.634	113-38-1020	90 Milton St	Norfolk Manufacturing Company-	Office	ca. 1885	Building	
DED.635	113-37	70 Milton St	Norfolk Manufacturing Company	Office/Storage	ca. 1885	Building	
DED.975	114-70	164 Veterans Rd	Mother brook Canal/East Brook	Open land	ca. 1639	Landscape	

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Figure 1. "Map of the Town of Dedham: Taken in the Year 1795..." by Elijah Pond showing the four privileges in Dedham along Mother Brook.



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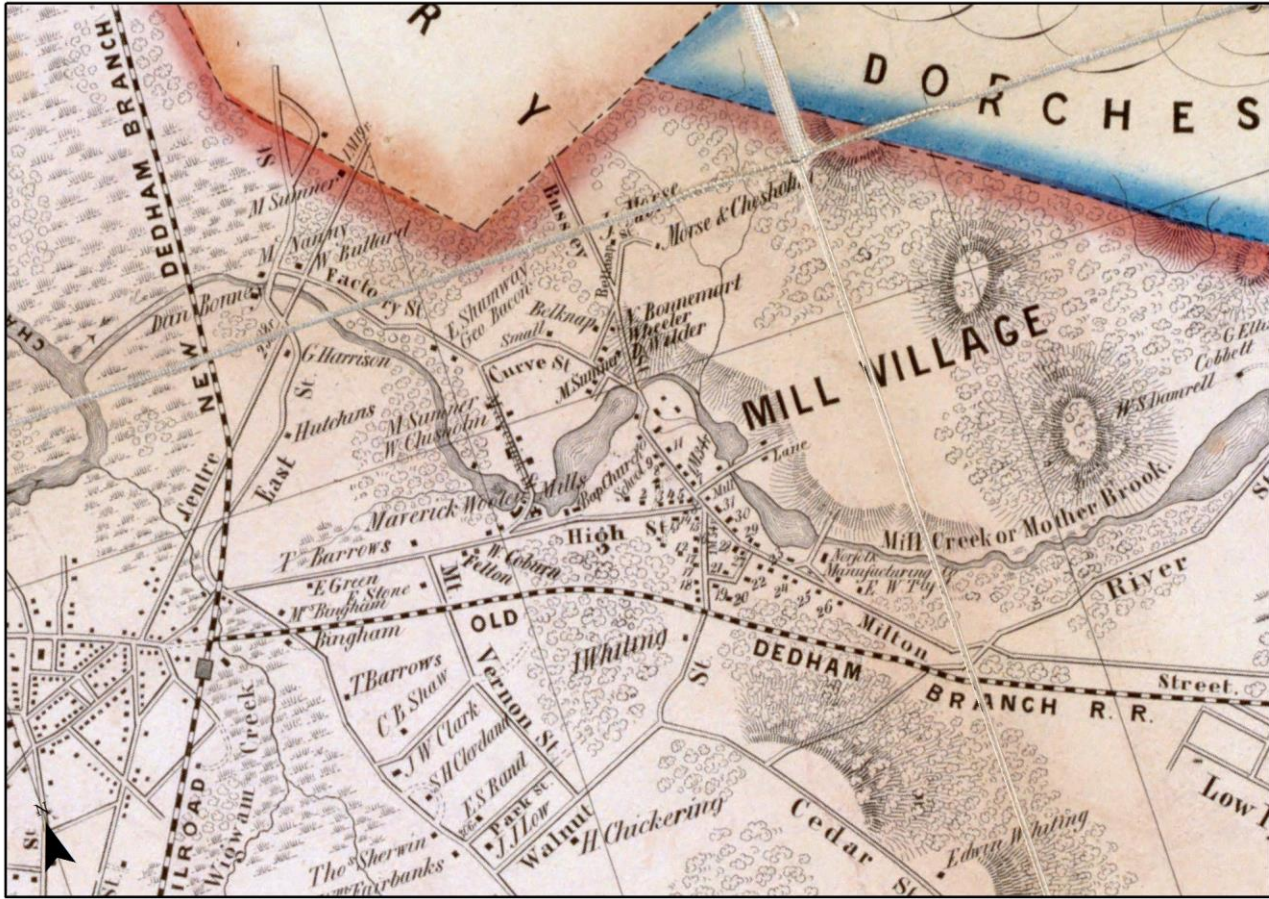


Figure 2. Detail of the 1851 Nathaniel Smith and Henry Francis Walling "Map of the Town of Dedham: Norfolk County, Massachusetts" showing the course of Mother Brook and development of surrounding neighborhoods.

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Figure 3. Aerial photograph from 1938 showing Mother Brook prior to rechannelization.

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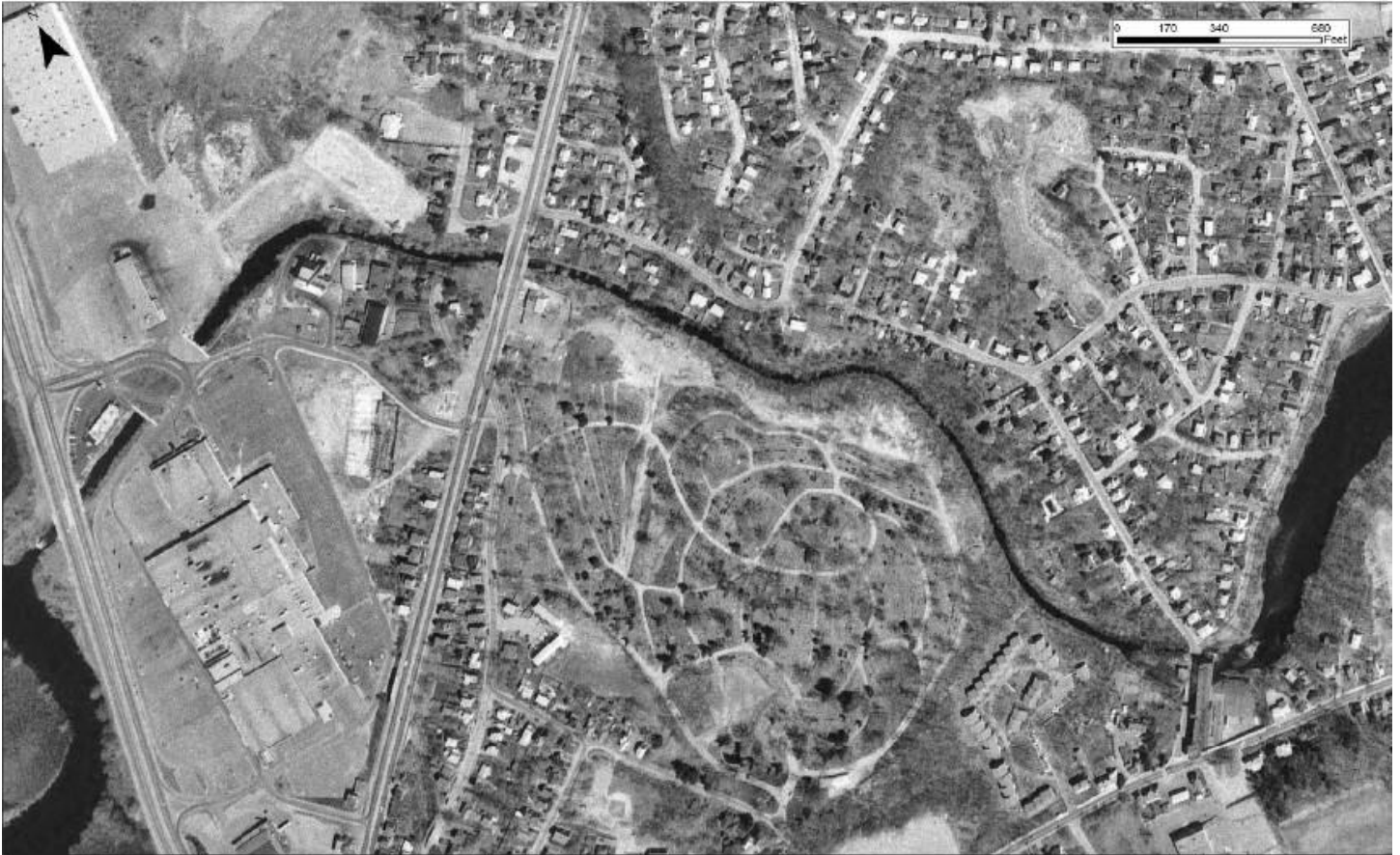


Figure 4. Aerial photograph from 1978 showing Mother Brook after re-channelization from the Charles River to Maverick Street.

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Figure 5. Image showing Mother Brook at the mouth of the Charles River ca. 1900 (Image from the Dedham Historical Society and Museum, Mother Brook File).

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Figure 6. Ca. 1936 image showing the Hodges Finishing Company Mill at the first privilege along with commemorative tablet. (Image from the Dedham Historical Society and Museum, Mother Brook File).

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Figure 7. Swimmers at the Mother Brook Bath House and Beach located upstream from the first privilege near Washington and East streets. (Image from the Dedham Historical Society and Museum, Mother Brook File).

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Figure 8. Swimmers at Mother Brook – the bathhouse is in the background. (Image from the Dedham Historical Society and Museum, Mother Brook File).

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Figure 9. View toward the Stone Mill from the Upper Mill Pond. (Image from the Dedham Historical Society and Museum, Mother Brook File).



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Figure 10. The Saw Mill formerly located at the Third Privilege along Mother Brook (A History of Dedham, Frank Smith, 1936).

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Figure 11. View of the Hodges Finishing Company at the second Privilege along Mother Brook. (Image from the Dedham Historical Society and Museum, Mother Brook File).

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Figure 12. Mother Brook at Maverick Street in 1956. (Mother Brook Flood Control Photographs, Massachusetts State Archives).

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Photograph 1. Charles River at the Charles River Diversion, view northeast.



Photograph 2. The Charles River Diversion structure, view west.



Photograph 3. View looking beneath the Boston-Providence Highway, view east.



Photograph 4. At Maverick Street looking northeast toward the Mill Pond

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Photograph 5. Dam at Maverick Street, view west.



Photograph 6. Mill Pond at Bussey Street, view southwest.



Photograph 7. Mill Pond near Bussey Street Bridge adjacent to the First Privilege, view north.



Photograph 8. Overflow spillway at Bussey Street, view southeast.

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Photograph 9. Colburn Street Dam at the site of the First Privilege, view south.



Photograph 10. Site of the Third Privilege, view northwest.



Photograph 11. Upper Mill Pond looking toward the Fourth Privilege and Stone Mill, view southeast.



Photograph 12. Site of the Fourth Privilege, view southeast.

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Photograph 13. Centennial Dam at Fourth Privilege, view southeast.

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### National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

- Individually eligible       Eligible **only** in a historic district
- Contributing to a potential historic district       Potential historic district

Criteria:     **A**     **B**     **C**     **D**

Criteria Considerations:     **A**     **B**     **C**     **D**     **E**     **F**     **G**

Statement of Significance by Stacey Vairo

*The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.*

The Mother Brook Area may be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as part of a larger district including former factory buildings, early tenement housing and former institutional resources, such as the Avery School and Brooklawn Cemetery under Criteria A and Criteria C. The Period of Significance begins in 1639 with the construction of Mother Brook and ends in 1958 when the first of a series of flood control measures were undertaken. The addition of these properties outside of those captured in this Area form would provide the context needed to understand the impact of Mother Brook on the town of East Dedham and on the western part of Boston. Mother Brook Canal was originally a hand-dug "ditch" that connected the Charles River to East Brook beginning in 1639. This action directly fostered the industrial development of East Dedham and the subsequent development of the town's economy from an agrarian to industrial. Several changes were undertaken to the channel itself in the 1950s and 1970s as part of a larger flood control scheme. The earlier of these changes from the Charles River to Maverick Street have acquired their own level of significance in the area of Engineering (Criterion C). Despite development along the course of the Brook, several areas along Mother Brook retain integrity of location, design feeling, association and setting. As this Area form is limited to that portion of the Mother Brook Canal in Dedham; it should be noted that documentation and evaluation of the portion east of the municipal boundary with Boston is still needed.



# INVENTORY FORM A CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

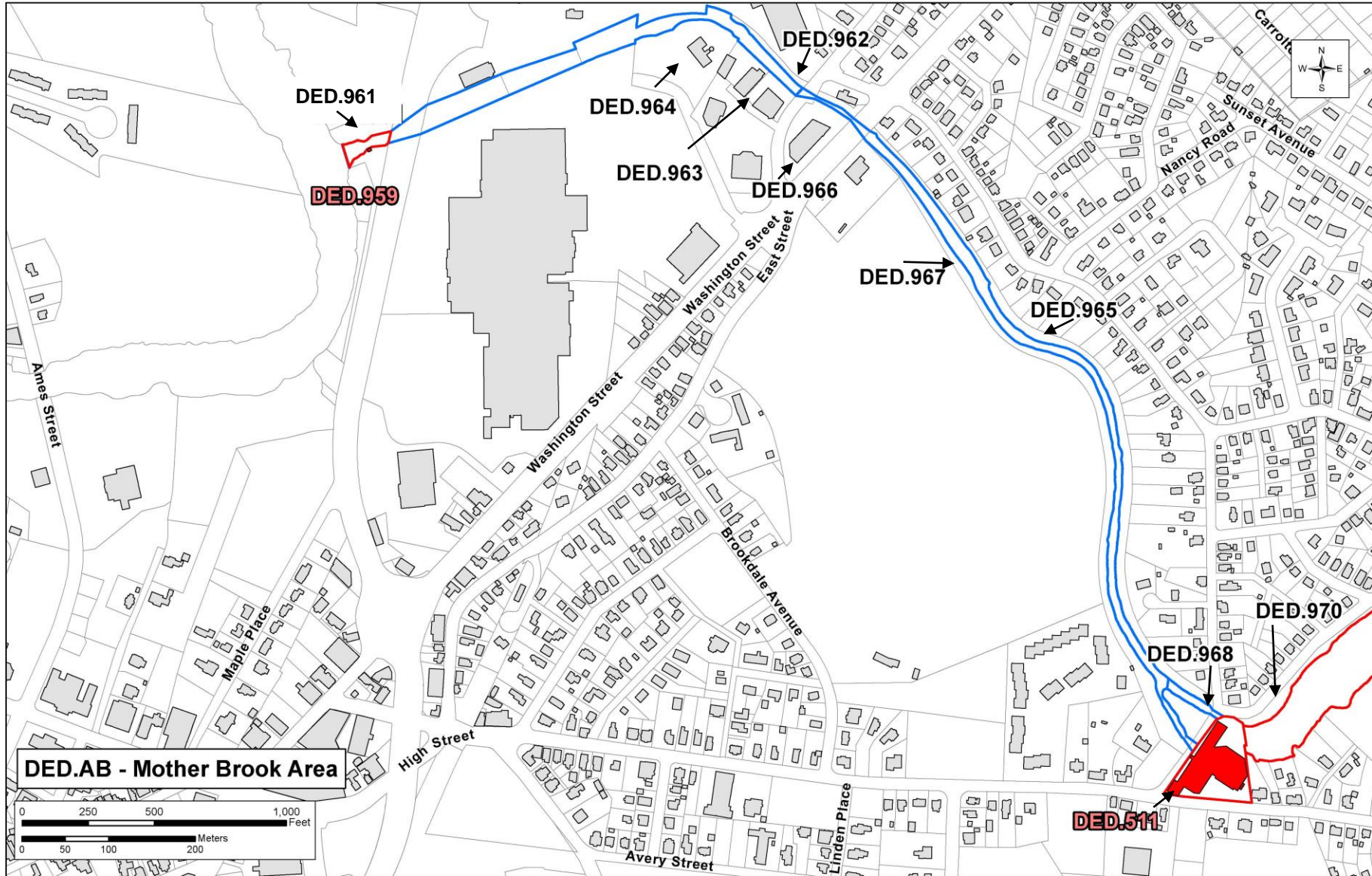
DEDHAM

MOTHER BROOK AREA

Area Letter Form Nos.

**DED.AB**  
AA, A

See attached  
table



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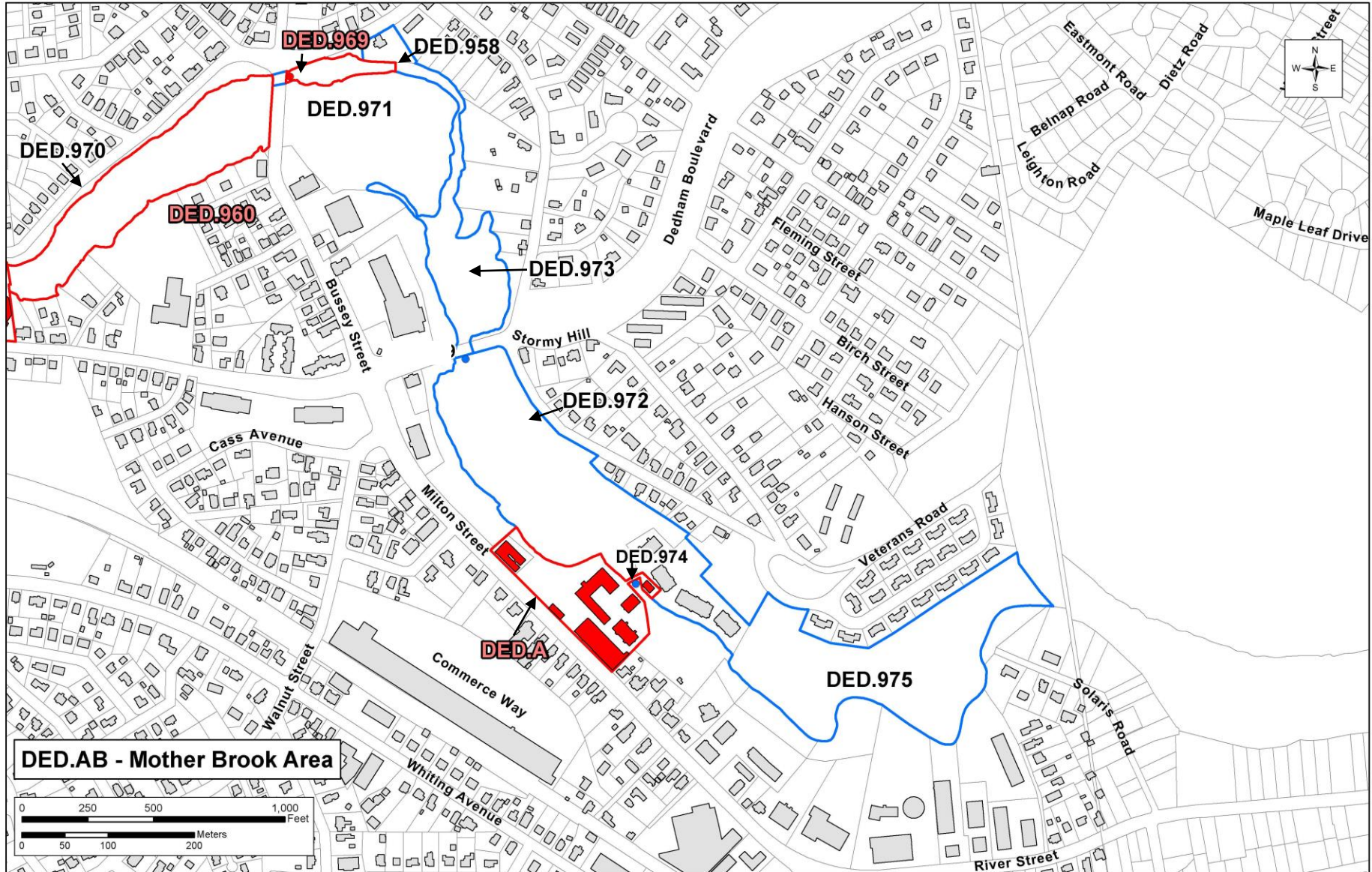
DEDHAM

MOTHER BROOK AREA

Area Letter Form Nos.

**DED.AB**  
AA, A

See attached  
table



<b>FOR MHC USE ONLY</b>	
Original form to CLG file	
One copy to the following:	
Eligibility file	
Inventory form	
Town <i>file (with correspondence)</i>	
MACRIS Coordinator	

<b>Community:</b>	Dedham
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## **CLG OPINION: ELIGIBILITY FOR NATIONAL REGISTER**

Please complete this form in Microsoft Word. Delete responses that do not apply.

<b>Date Received:</b>	11/19/2020	<b>Date Due:</b>		<b>Date Reviewed:</b>	
<b>Type:</b>	Individual	Yes/No	District (attach map indicating boundaries)	Yes	
<b>Property Name</b>	Mother Brook Canal			<b>MHC Inv Form #:</b>	DED.AB
<b>Prop. Address</b>					

<b>Action</b>	<b>Honor</b>	Yes/No	<b>ITC</b>	Yes/No	<b>Grant</b>	Yes/No
	<b>CLGC initiated</b>		Yes/No		<b>Other (specify):</b>	

<b>INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES</b>		<b>DISTRICTS</b>	
Eligible	Yes/No	Eligible	Yes/No
Eligible, also in a district	Yes/No	Ineligible	Yes/No
Eligible only in a district	Yes/No	More Information Needed	Yes/No
Ineligible	Yes/No		
More Information Needed	Yes/No		

<b>CRITERIA:</b>	A-Yes	B-No	C-Yes	D-No
<b>LEVEL:</b>	Local-Yes	State-No	National-No	

<b>STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE by:</b>	Dedham Historical Commission
(Please write a statement of significance and refer to criteria cited above in statement. If more information is needed, include it below.)	
<p>The Dedham Historical Commission (DHC) finds the proposed Mother Brook canal area, extending from the Charles River to the Hyde Park town line and in area as recommended in the Final Report of the 2020 Cultural &amp; Architectural Resource Survey, to be potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The Mother Brook Canal was created in 1639 by a cut from the Charles River to an inland stream that drains to the Neponset River. The canal provided water power to the industrial heart of Dedham for nearly 400 years. Five privileges were located along the banks of the waterway, and each developed a cluster of grist mills, saw mills, textile mills, machine shops, ancillary businesses and workers' housing.</p> <p>Dedham was formally established as a town in 1636. With the construction of the Meeting House &amp; the laying out of the burial ground, the town center was formed in its current location on the axis of High and Court Streets. Recognizing that that a corn mill would be essential to the settlement, in March of 1639 the Town Fathers "Ordered yt a Ditch shalbe made at a Comon Charge through purchased medowe vnto ye East brooke...; as also may serue for a Course vnto a water mill; yt it shalbe fownd fitting to set a mill vpon ye sayd brooke..." The resulting hand-dug canal is arguably the oldest manmade waterway in North America. The first mill, a grist mill was built by John Elderkin, in 1641-1642 at the First Privilege (near Bussey Street) and</p>	

subsequently purchased by Nathaniel Whiting and John Allin. A hand-drawn map of 1795 indicates that two grist mills, a leather factory at the Second Privilege (now Maverick Street) and a wire mill were present at that date. The First and Second Privileges were combined and extensively developed by Benjamin Bussey, who erected machine shops, dye houses, and dwellings at both locations after 1819. The Third Privilege (Sawmill Lane) was developed in 1682 as a fulling mill, later a saw mill. At the Fourth Privilege (Stone Mill Drive) a copper cent factory was established in 1787. The surviving Stone Mill (ded.387 NR) on this site was constructed in 1835 by the Norfolk Manufacturing Company as a cotton mill and continued to produce textiles under many different owners until 1986.

The series of mills along Mother Brook sparked the development of a bustling mill village in East Dedham populated by generations of mill laborers, primarily immigrants, who dramatically altered the composition and culture of the town. The mill village was complete with schools, churches, residential neighborhoods, and a compact commercial district known as Dedham Square located at the intersection of Bussey and High Streets. The area was significantly altered by urban renewal in the 1960s and most of the commercial district was demolished. Although Dedham Village has been extensively documented prior to this survey, Mother Brook and East Dedham had not yet been evaluated in any substantial way, although they linger in the memory of many current residents as an under-recognized chapter of the town's history.

The Dedham Historical Commission finds the Mother Brook Canal eligible for National Register listing under criteria A and C with significance at the local level. Although the MDC channelized Mother Brook during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, effacing remnants of its 17<sup>th</sup>-century origins, the canal runs in its original course, and an 1835 stone mill, an early 20<sup>th</sup>-century factory building on the footings of an earlier textile mill, a former mill's 1855 carpenter shop with under-flowing sluice, two mill ponds, several surviving boarding houses and multiple four- and two-family tenements nearby attest to the area's importance as a once-booming mill village and manufacturing center. Under Criterion A, Mother Brook is significant for its association with early grist mills and other water-powered industries in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and with the 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century textile industry in Dedham, Massachusetts and in the Charles and Neponset River Valleys. Under Criterion C it is significant as the site of multiple mill complexes that reflect its continuing use and the functional components of textile manufacturing since the Norfolk Cotton Manufactory was incorporated in 1807. The area possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Its period of significance extends from 1640, the date of its completion, to 1986, the date of the close of the last textile mill in Dedham.

Space expands as needed

### MHC STAFF OPINION

<b>Date Received:</b>		<b>Date Reviewed:</b>	<b>10 Feb 2021</b>
<b>Opinion:</b>	<b>Concur</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>More Information Needed</b>
<b>Comments by:</b>	<b>P. Stott</b>		

MHC staff does not agree with the opinion of the CLG. After review of the Mother Brook Canal Area (DED.AB), MHC considers that the Mother Brook Canal no longer retains the integrity necessary for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Portions of the canal have been channelized, and were substantially altered in the flood management program of the 1950s. None of the water-power features of the 17th-, or even of the 18th-century canal have been identified as surviving. Most dams have been replaced several times, or removed altogether. Lacking integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship, and feeling, it is the opinion of the MHC staff that the Mother Brook Canal area is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

While certain properties adjoining the canal, such as Brookdale Cemetery, the Stone Mill complex, the Boston Envelope Company, or defined areas of worker housing may possibly meet National Register criteria, these should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.