

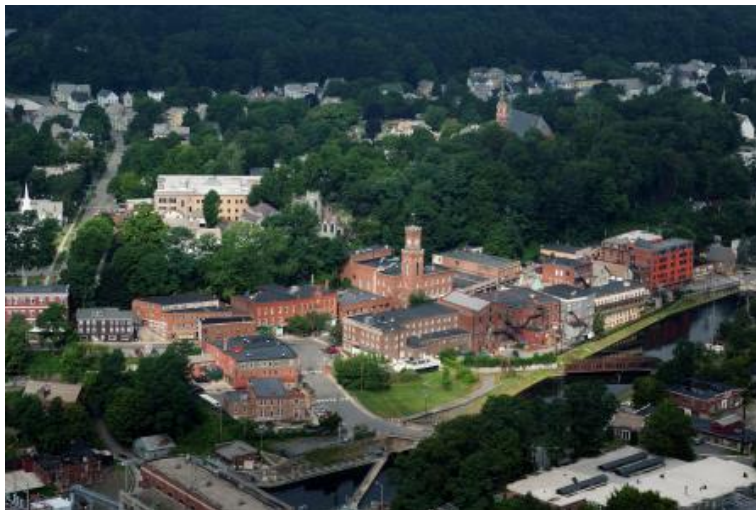
14 Bellows Falls Downtown Historic District

Bellows Falls, Vermont

The “Great Falls,” so named by English colonists, played significant roles for Native Americans, who utilized the Connecticut River as a main artery of travel and source of migrating salmon and shad food, and early settlers, who harnessed its great force for power. Historically documented as a settlement in 1753, the area was later renamed after local landowner Colonel Benjamin Bellows.

In 1785, Colonel Enoch Hale built the first bridge over the Connecticut River in Bellows Falls, which remained the only bridge spanning the river for more than 10 years, after which a

southern bridge was constructed in Springfield, Massachusetts.



Several years later, the Bellows Falls Canal, built between 1791 and 1802, lifted boats 52 feet through a system of nine locks bypassing the gorge, and tapping the water’s force. These two construction projects transformed and launched the industrialization of the community.

In the 1870s, the available water power attracted the establishment of paper mills that were among the first in the United States to use wood pulp, as opposed to rags, for raw material. In addition, factories produced furniture, marble, sashes, blinds, iron castings, carriages, cabinet ware, rifles, harnesses, shoe pegs and organs, which were shipped via railroads throughout the country using the critical Bellows Falls crossing over the Connecticut River, transforming the location into an important railroad junction in Northern New England.

Following the turn of the 20th century, Bellows Falls was incorporated as a village, expanding into an important manufacturing center with a business district reflecting its architectural character and prosperity.

Today, the Bellows Falls Downtown Historic District encompasses the central village and surrounding railroad and industrial areas

significant to its historical development, including Depot, Canal, Rockingham, Bridge, Mill and Westminster Streets. Many of the buildings display characteristics of the Italianate, Second Empire, Romanesque and Queen Anne styles of the times, interspersed with examples of earlier nineteenth century vernacular Federal and Greek Revival styles and of early 20th century eclectic and Modernistic construction.



Sources:

<http://www.danaxtell.com/bf>

<http://www.crjc.org/heritage/V06-3.htm>