



THE COTTON MILL

By Leonard Alderman - December 2001

The Cotton Mill stood where the Still House was later built. It was a long low building. It was owned by J. Broadbent & Son. Mr. Broadbent lived in the house later owned by the Alderman family. (Right, SW corner of Punch Brook Road & Route 4) He later owned the factory in Unionville known as the Woolen Mill where everything using cotton, like mattresses were made. It was situated near the bridge over the Farmington River and later called Myrtle Mills. It was a big old brick building right on the rivers edge. Our Uncle Dick Horsfall went to work in the Woolen Mill when thirteen years old and worked up to be President of the Company, known as J. Broadbent & Sons. To get back to the cotton mill at the foot of Barnes Hill. It was ran by a man named John Johnson and he lived in the house later owned by Mr. E. Stieg. About 3 times a week my Dad gave me the task of carrying a gallon jug of milk to him. I would leave it at the mill then linger around listening to the grinding of the machines at work. This shop or factory was called The Picker. One horse loads of cotton in big bales were brought from the Unionville factory. Put into the Picker to be picked into small pieces then stored in a 2 story building near by, then taken when needed back to the Unionville factory. Usually other children from the neighborhood would join me as we watched the proceedings. If we stayed too long or got into mischief, Mr. Johnson would open the door and out would pour the fluffy white sticky cotton. What a job to get it off of us. So we kids would start yelling "Mr. Yon Yonston don't open de door, oh Yonny Yonson don't open de door". He hated that and would chase us but we usually went back for more. You see he was Swedish and that was the way he talked so he hated to have us mimic him. The Picker was destroyed by fire. I awoke one morning early hearing people shouting and my Dad calling upstairs to my brothers something about a fire. I jumped out of bed, looked out the window and saw the shop burning. I had a grandstand seat so to speak, to watch it burn as that time I slept in the second story south bedroom overlooking the shop. I was saddened to see it go. It was never rebuilt, a cider mill was put in its place. Then I remembered how heavy that jug of milk got before I reached Yon Yonston's place.