

## Remnants of Pope Manufacturing Co. Factories in 2016 – A Pictorial Review

By Robert McCullough, Burlington, Vermont, U.S.A.

Robert McCullough has traveled many miles over the northeastern U.S.A. searching out the remnants of buildings that had been used by the Pope Manufacturing Co. for the manufacture of Columbia bicycles in the late 1870s through to the early 20th century. He has also spent many hours in libraries and government

contain maps, plans, pictures, and other information relating to the buildings used by the Pope Manufacturing Co. for its pioneering work in establishing a thriving bicycle industry in the U.S.A. Pope's interest in bicycles was piqued when he saw an exhibit of these intriguing machines from England on display at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition that was held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1876, to commemorate the

100th Anniversary of this country. It has been said that a picture is worth a thousand words, and this pictorial review certainly contains a wealth of information about the beginnings of the modern bicycle industry in the United States. Additional information about Albert A. Pope and his endeavors to create interest in bicycles beginning with the high wheel can be found in the following authoritative books:

Epperson, Bruce D. (2010). *Peddling Bicycling to America: The Rise of an Industry*, 294 pp. (McFarland & Co., Jefferson, North Carolina).

Goddard, Stephen B. (2000). *Colonel Albert Pope and His American Dream Machine*, 253 pp. (McFarland & Co., Jefferson, North Carolina).

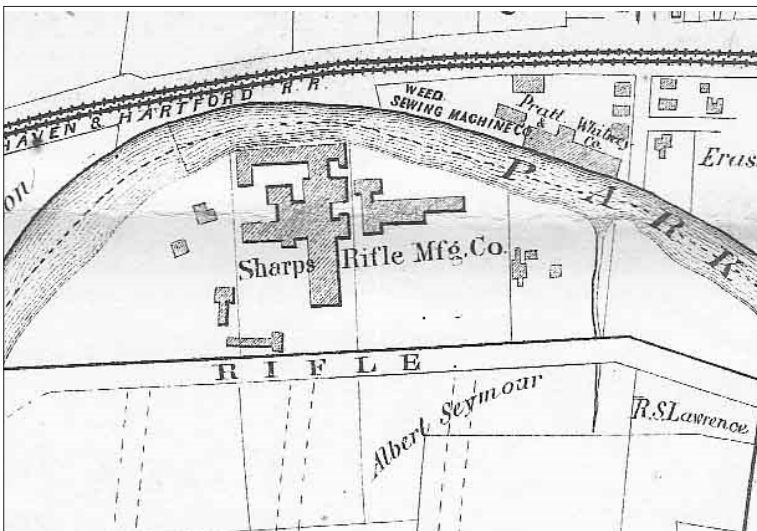


Figure 1: Plan of the Sharps Rifle Manufacturing Company factory complex on Rifle Avenue in Hartford, Connecticut. The Weed Sewing Machine Co. buildings are located on the northerly side of the Park River. Col. Albert Pope places an order to manufacture bicycles with the Weed Sewing Machine Co. in the spring of 1878. By 1880 the facilities of these two companies are joined to make bicycles for the new company called Pope Mfg. Co. From *Atlas of Hartford City and County* by Seth E. Marsh, and H.G. Loomis (1869), Plate 24

Figure 2: Plan of the Weed Sewing Machine Co. in 1880. *City Atlas of Hartford, Connecticut*, G. M. Hopkins, C.E. (1880), Plates D and N

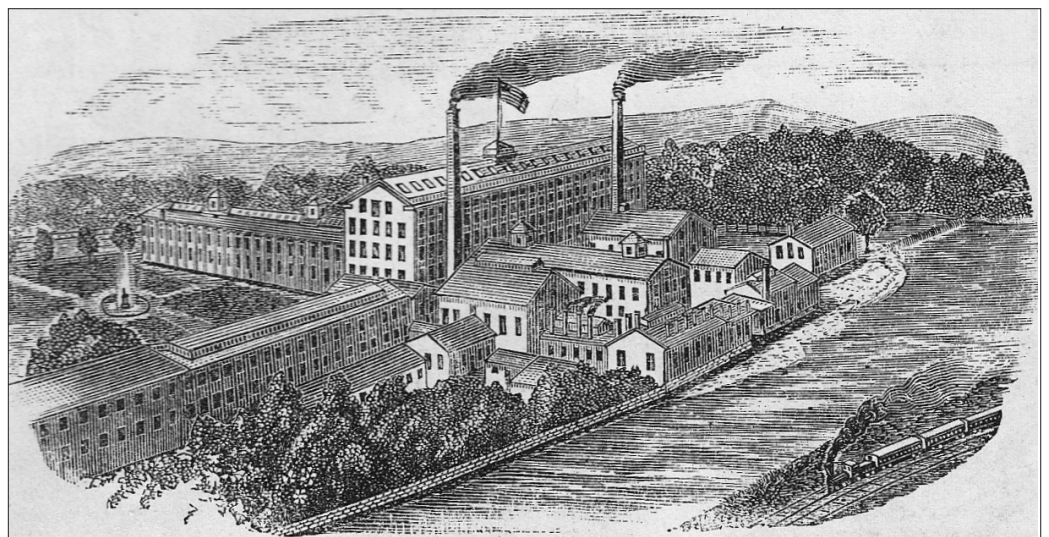
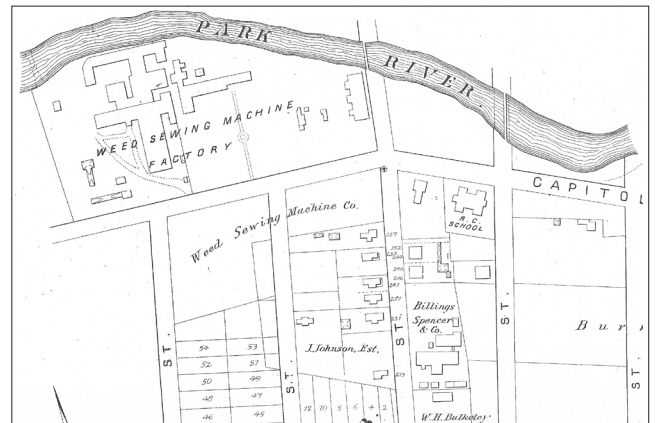


Figure 3: Weed Sewing Machine Company buildings looking south as shown in Frank Leslie's *Popular Monthly* (November, 1881).

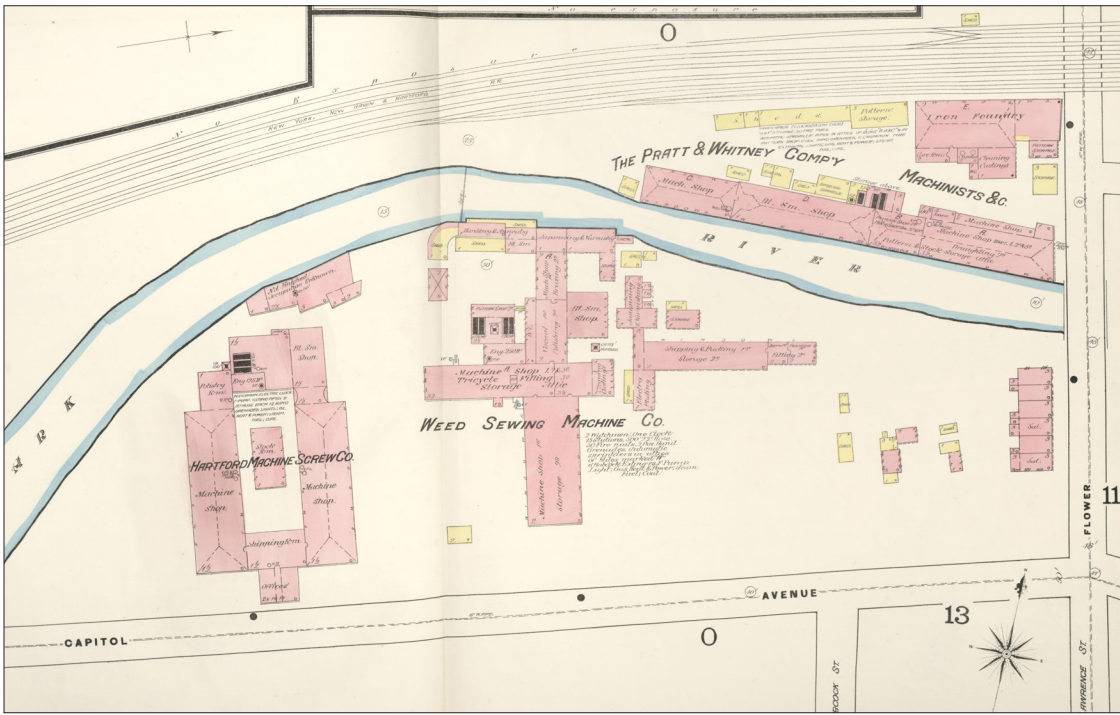


Figure 4: Plan of the Weed Sewing Machine Co. in 1885. Map of Hartford (1885) published by Sanborn-Peris Insurance Co

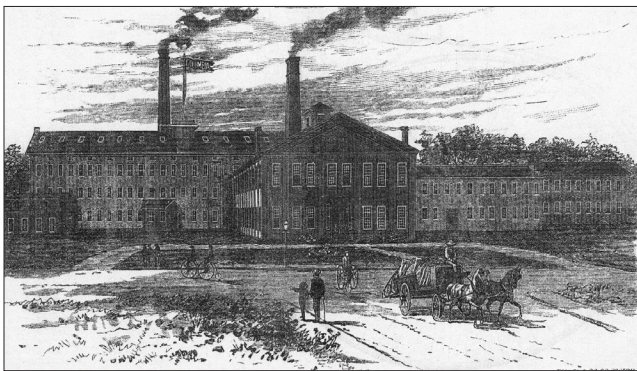


Figure 5: Weed Sewing Machine Company buildings as shown in 1886 in the L.A.W. Bulletin (February 26, 1886). The center wing is eight bays wide with windows spaced between six piers (corner piers included).

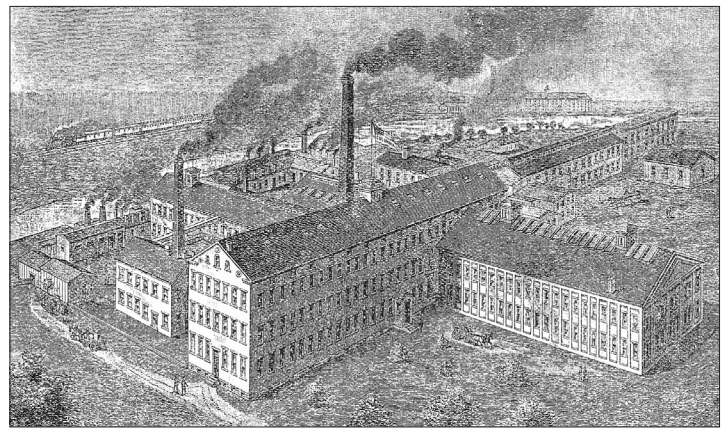


Figure 6: Weed Sewing Machine Company buildings in 1888 as shown in the L.A.W. Bulletin (February 3, 1888).

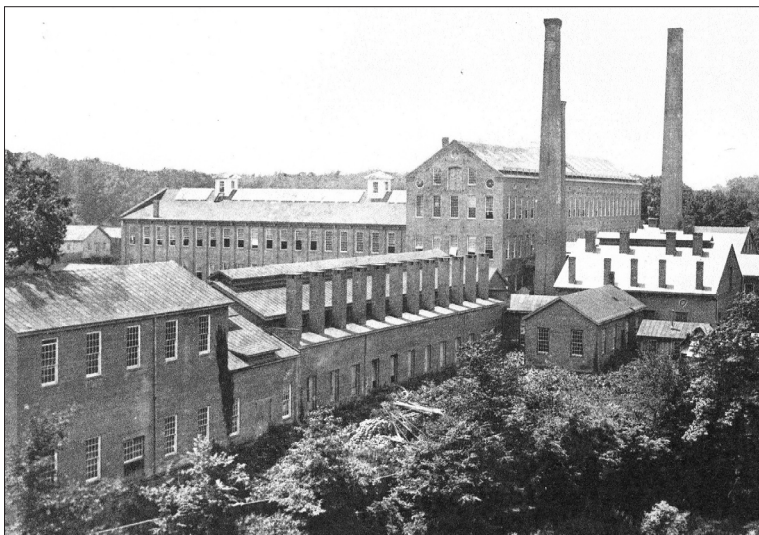


Figure 7: Capitol Avenue factory complex of the Pope Mfg. Co. in Hartford, Connecticut, 1888-1889. Courtesy Hartford Preservation Alliance.



Figure 8: Pope Mfg. Co. housing for employees in 1888 on the west side of Columbia Street, Hartford, Conn.

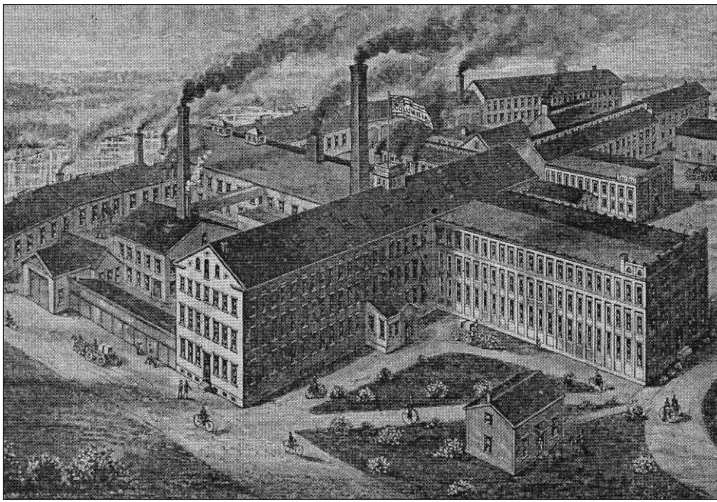


Figure 9: Pope Manufacturing Co.\* buildings in 1891 located in Hartford, Connecticut. Wheel and Cycling Trade Review (January 30, 1891). Vol. VI(23), p.602.

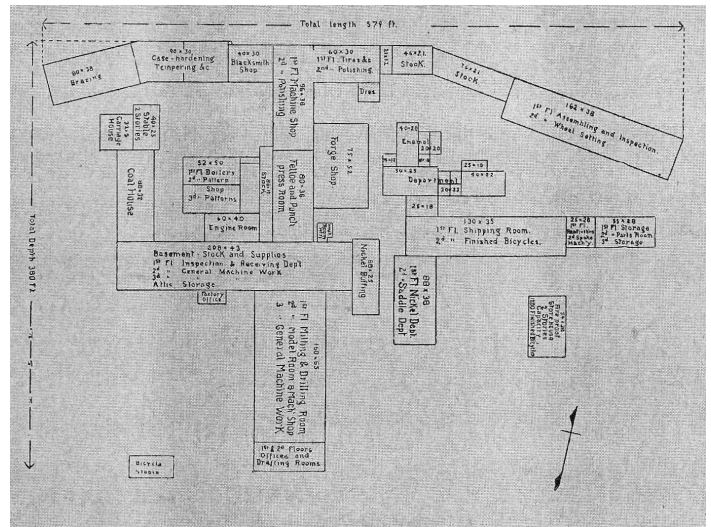


Figure 10: Plan of the Pope Mfg. Co. factory in Hartford, Conn., in 1891.

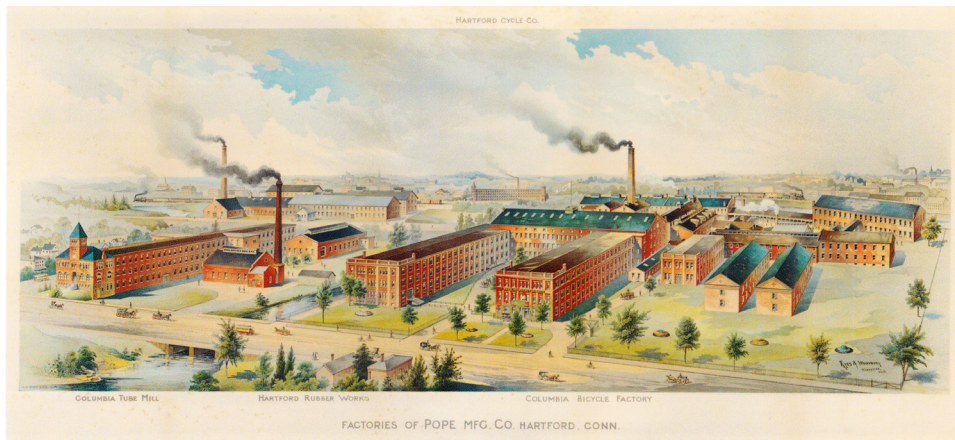


Figure 11. Partial view of lithograph showing the Capitol Avenue factory complex owned by the Pope Manufacturing Co. by Keyes & Woodbury, Worcester, Massachusetts (c.1892-1893). The center wing is now ten bays wide with windows spaced between seven piers (corner piers included).

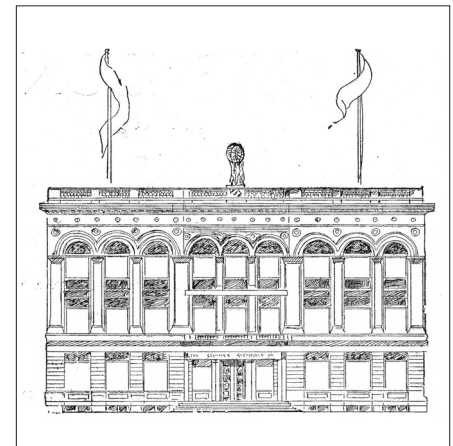


Figure 12: Corporate Headquarters in Hartford, Conn. of the Pope Mfg. Co. George Keller, architect.

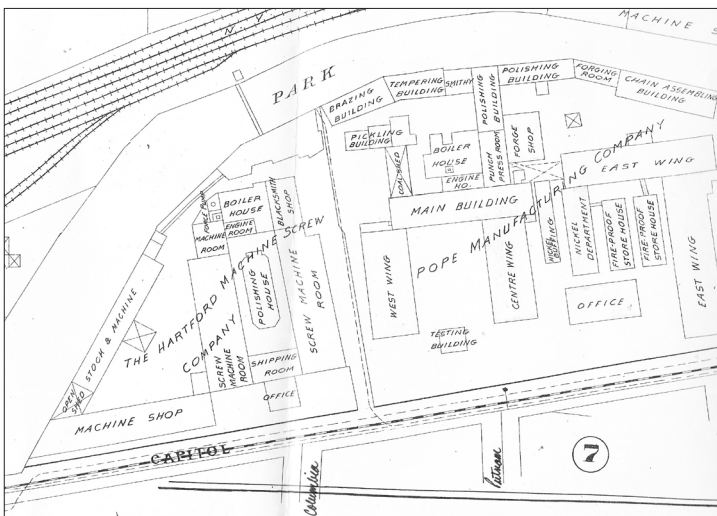


Figure 13: Plan of the buildings that were part of the Pope Mfg. Co. in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1896. Comparing this plan with the earlier plans shown in previous figures, it is easy to see that the company's operations had increased considerably over the intervening years. Atlas of Surveys - City of Hartford (1896), Plate 5.

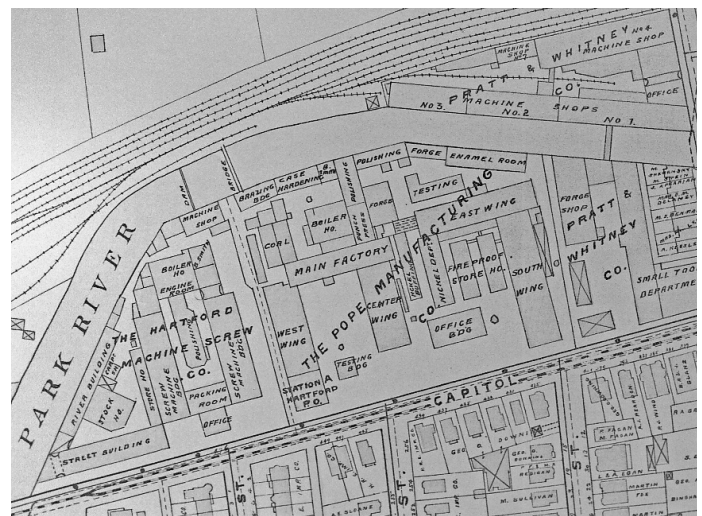


Figure 14: Plan of the extensive Pope Mfg. Co. in 1909. Atlas of the City of Hartford and the Town of West Hartford, Connecticut (1909).

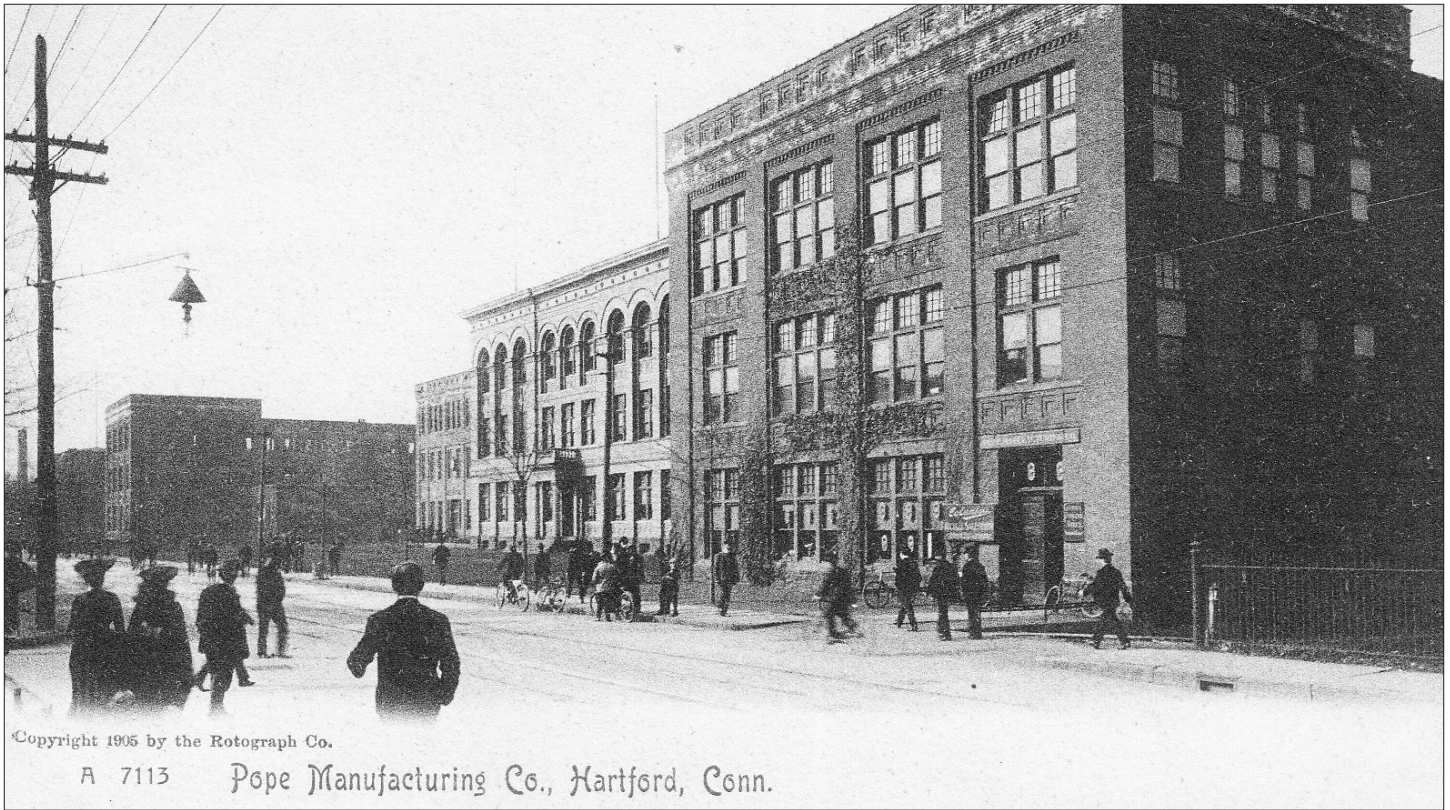


Figure 15: A 1905 postcard showing the Columbia Bicycle Factory Complex in Hartford, Connecticut, USA.



Figure 16: Former Station A, Hartford Post Office (1897) and former Pope Manufacturing Company (Massachusetts Corporation) Motor Car Plant (1912).

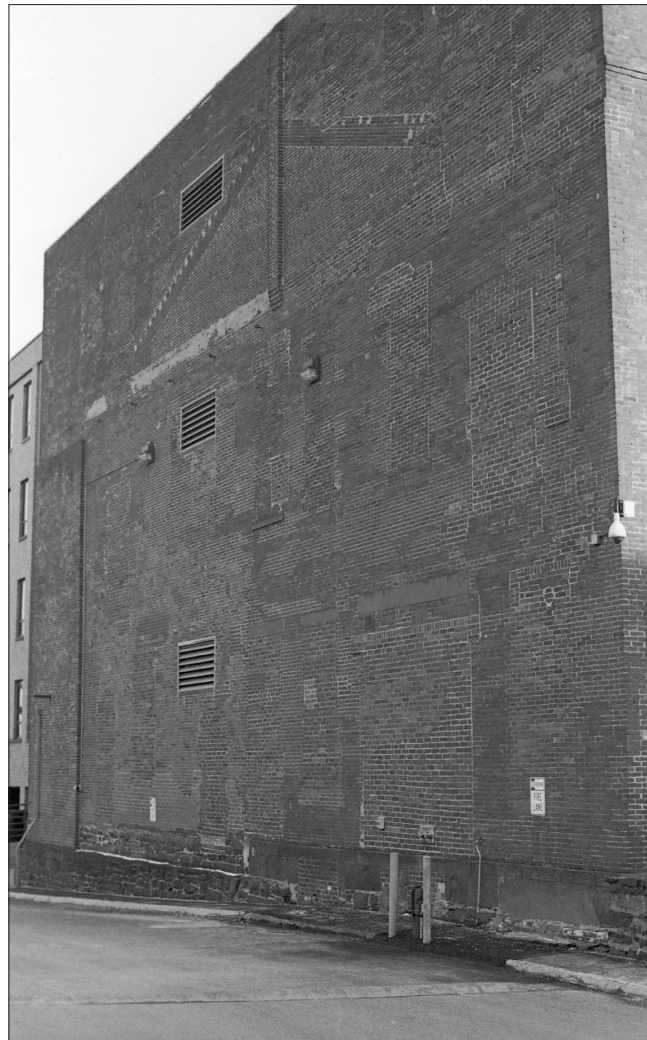


Figure 16a. Rear façade of the center wing showing the trace of a partial cornice for the gable roof of the earlier, two-story building enlarged in 1891 by adding a third story and increasing the building width. The precise methods and dimensions of the enlargement are not known, nor is the extent of any surviving materials from the earlier building. However, illustrations of the piers supporting the front façade of the 1891 building confirm the additional width, as does the roof line of the gable roof on the rear façade. Any surviving materials or interior space from that earlier building represent the sole remnants of the Pope Manufacturing Company's high-wheel era.

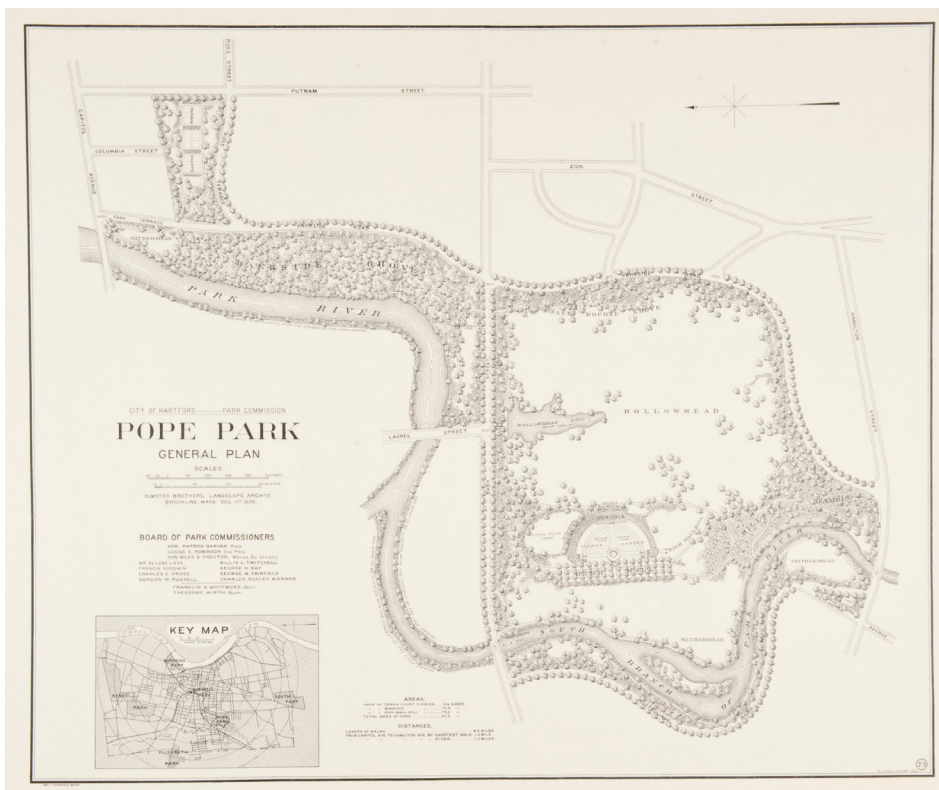


Figure 17. Plan for Pope Park in Hartford by Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. and John Charles Olmsted, 1898. Courtesy National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site.

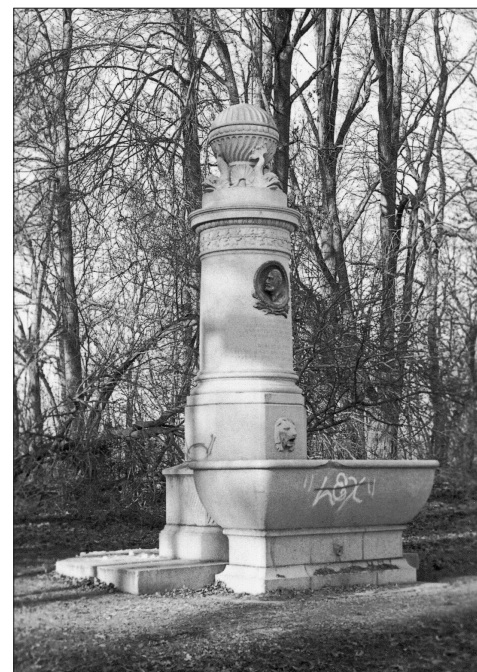


Figure 18: Pope Memorial Fountain and Cyclers Rest. George Keller, architect (1913). This Memorial was originally located at the entrance to Pope Park near the Capitol Avenue factory complex, but it was relocated during the 1960s to a hillside near the park's southwesterly edge.

## Conference Moment



David Herilhy, Nick Clayton & Carey Williams visit the former Pope factory in Hartford, Connecticut during the bus tour.

GREG SIPLE