

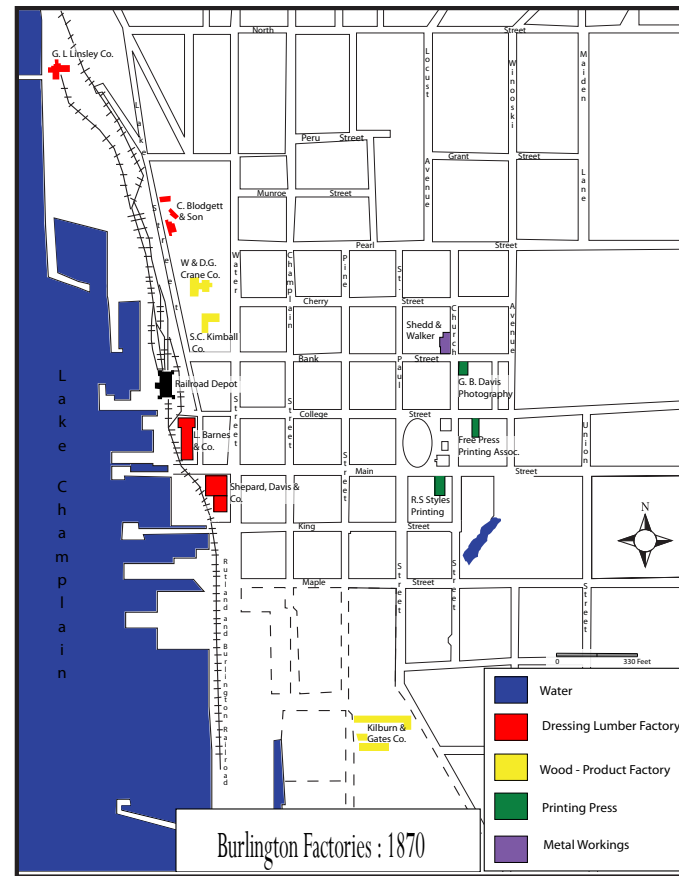
# 19th Century Development of Burlington, Vermont

By Tim O'Grady

Burlington, Vermont is situated along the eastern shore of Lake Champlain, 50 miles south from the Canadian border. The town was granted a charter in June 7, 1763 by the New Hampshire governor at the time - Benning Wentworth. Industry has been an integral part of Burlington's economy since 1772 when Ira Allen established a gristmill, sawmill, two forges and a furnace along the Winooski River. At the end of the 18th century, Burlington's economy focused primarily on subsistence and local trade. The town was still extremely small during this time period, evidenced by the 1791 census which reported a population of 332 citizens. As population began to increase during the beginning of the 19th century, Burlington's industry developed and the town began to expand. By 1870, Burlington became a compartmentalized city in which different districts served various purposes based on their natural geographic features and their spatial relationship to businesses and factories. The two nexuses of industry during the latter half of the 19th century were the Winooski Falls area and the Burlington Bay waterfront district.

Winooski, located about one mile northeast from Church Street, developed along the Winooski River (originally called Onion River) and naturally became a center of industry due to its 35 foot fall which afforded water energy to the manufacturing plants. The Burlington Mill Company was established as a woolen textile mill in 1835. The growth of Vermont's sheep-raising industry in the early 19th century and the earlier success of complex factories such as Slater Mill of Pawtucket, RI prompted Burlington entrepreneurs to invest in woolen textile mills. The Burlington Mill consisted of a sawmill, machine shop, plaster mill, furnace, two boarding houses for workers and a massive seven story brick mill. Furthermore, a dam and canal were built to harness the maximum amount of water power from the falls. With initial economic success, the Burlington Mill Company encouraged the city to expand eastward from the town's center, closer to Winooski Falls, as a residential neighborhood for workers.

The Winooski Mill Company was a cotton textile mill founded in 1845. It consisted of a small wooden edifice on the south side of the falls. This small cotton manufacturing operation commenced in 1845, however struggled to prosper economically in its early years of operation. The capital lost from the stagnant Burlington Mill and the general shift of the milling industry towards



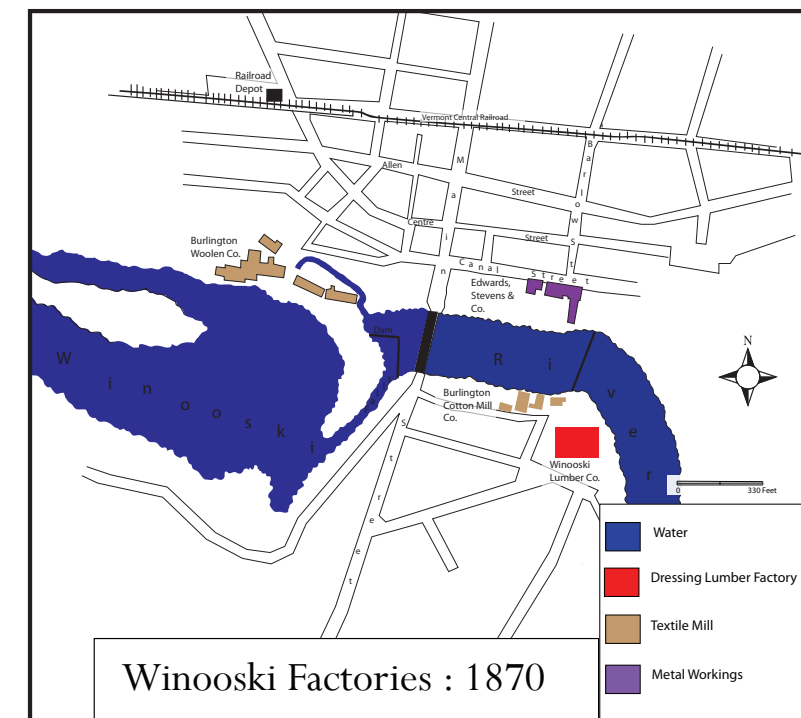
**Map 1. Burlington's Industrial Sector in 1870.** By 1870, the city's various factories were located in distinct geographical zones based on what they manufactured. The dressing lumber and wood-product factories dominated the waterfront district due to their proximity to the lumber yards while lighter manufacturing plants were established closer to the downtown district.

the southern United States undermined the success of this textile factory. Today, the landscape of Winooski Falls is reflective of the area's previous success in the textile industry. Smoke stacks still tower over the river and the uniform brick mill buildings straddle the river - however they have been converted into retail space and luxury loft apartments.

Burlington's waterfront district developed early on in the 1820's as a major lumber port. 1823 marked an important date in Burlington's history as the opening of the Champlain Canal connected the city to the Hudson River, and thus New York City. Establishing this trading route was crucial to the city because it encouraged the factories to expand their goods to a much bigger and

Name of Company	Industry	Annual Profits
1) Shepard, Davis & Co.	Dressing Lumber	\$1,528,237
2) Burlington Woolen Mill	Textile Mill	\$692,723
3) L. Barnes & Co.	Dressing Lumber	\$360,000
4) Winooski Flouring Mill	Flouring Mill	\$350,000
5) G.L. Linsley & Co.	Dressing Lumber	\$300,000
6) C. Blodgett & Son	Dressing Lumber	\$259,401
7) Winooski Lumber Co.	Dressing Lumber	\$240,000
8) Kilburn & Gates	Furniture	\$165,000
9) B.S Nichols & Co.	Machinery	\$95,000
10) Burlington Cotton Mill	Textile Mill	\$92,410

**Figure 1. Top 10 Most Lucrative Burlington Companies in 1870.** After the completion of the three railroads that passed through Burlington and the completion of the Chamby Canal in 1843, the lumber industry dominated the city's manufacturing sector. The Winooski textile mills also extremely profitable during this time period and diversified Burlington's industrial presence.



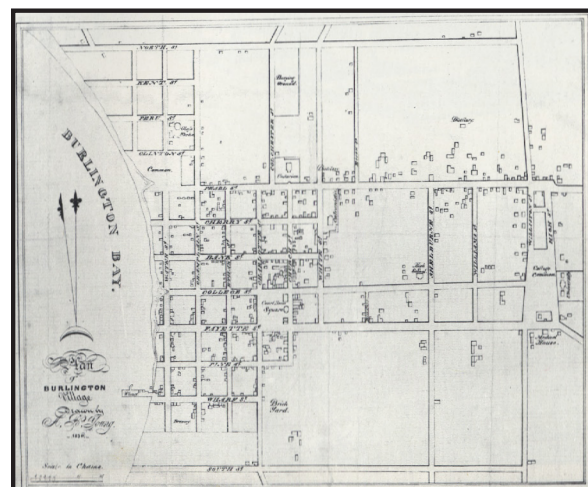
**Map 2. Winooski Falls' Industrial Sector in 1870.** The two textile mills continued to be lucrative factories by 1870. The dam and canal constructed to harness water power by the Burlington Woolen Company is present west of the bridge. The 35 foot falls of Winooski are located in the narrow waterway between the northern and southern banks of the river.

more profitable market. The Chamby Canal, completed in 1843, connected Lake Champlain to the forests of Quebec and enabled Burlington to obtain unlimited amounts of lumber from Canada. This canal further strengthened Burlington's place as a bustling lumber port and prompted the establishment of several lumber manufacturing plants in the waterfront district.

In 1849, the waterfront district developed tremendously when two railroads connected Burlington to major eastern cities and their markets. The Vermont Central Railroad Company connected Burlington to Bellow Falls, Vermont while the Rutland & Burlington Railroad connected the two cities for which it was named after. An additional line, the Vermont and Canada Railroad was completed in 1851 and forged a route to Montreal. The town's lumber industry developed extensively in the 1850's due to the new transportation links connecting the city to eastern metropolises and an international regulation that prevented Canadian boats from passing through the Champlain Canal. These two factors put Burlington in the perfect geographical location to serve as the distributing point for shipments of all goods from Canada.

Contingent upon the burgeoning lumber industry, a series of finished wood product factories popped up all over the city. By 1860, the waterfront district's morphology was completely altered as lumber sheds and planing mills covered the wharves. These waterfront factories manufactured the imported lumber into a variety of finished products such as wooden boxes, bobbins, spools, doors and architectural beams. Established in 1852 at the foot of Battery Park, the Pioneer Shops comprised of a series of factories (such as W & D.G. Crane Co.) that manufactured imported wood into finished products.

The commercial and institutional centers of Burlington were located in the "downtown" district which is bounded by Pearl Street to the north, King Street to the south, Church Street to the

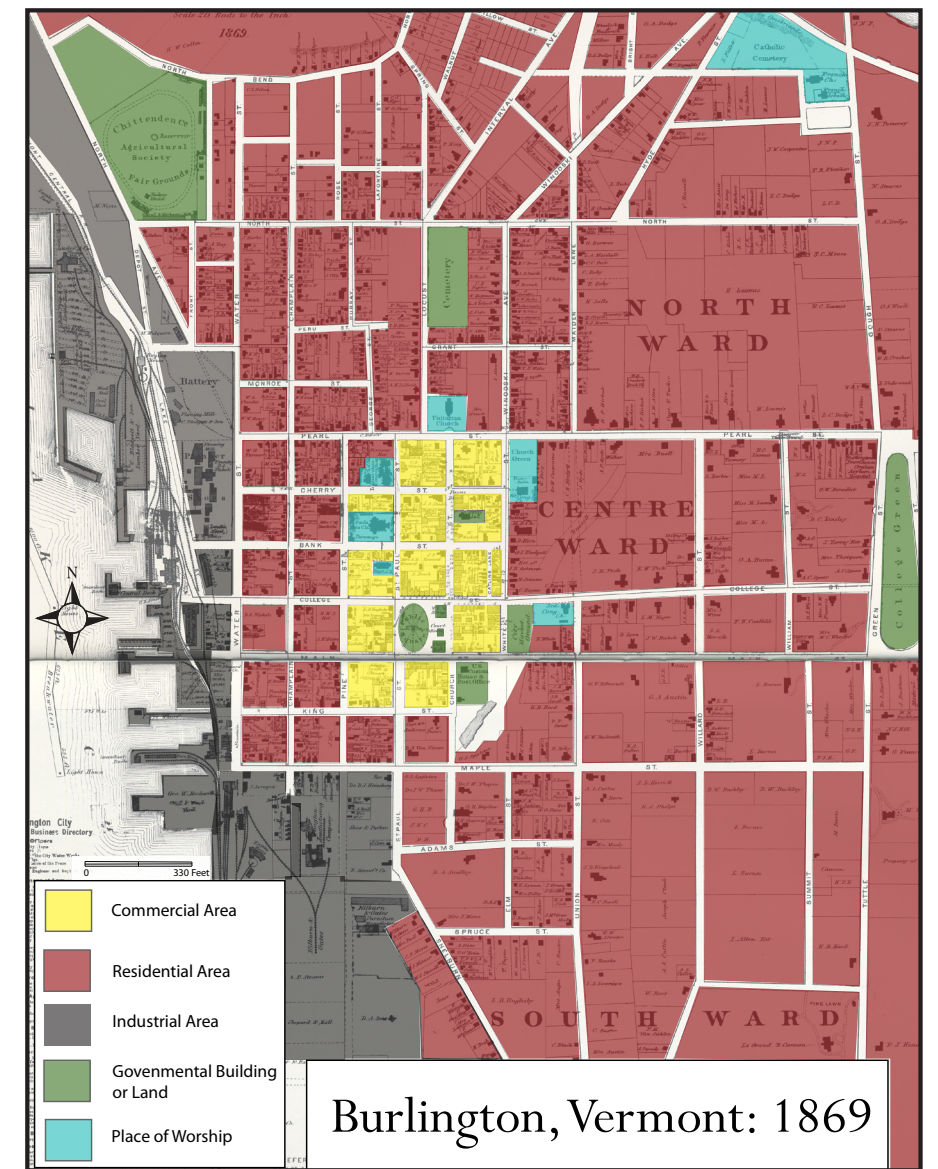


**Figure 2. Ammi B. Young's Map of Burlington in 1830.** The 1830 map of Burlington showcases that the city was much less developed before transportation routes connected the city to outside markets. The most striking feature is the waterfront district which only has one wharf and very few factories. The downtown district is the most developed part of the city and is home to governmental buildings as well as small businesses.

east and the waterfront district to the west. Although a few light manufacturing plants existed downtown such as printing presses and a tinsmith, commerce dominated this city sector. The importance of this district originated in the early 19th century with the construction of the Burlington Courthouse which faced a small park. A series of taverns, inns and shops sprouted up around the courthouse soon after it was constructed. During the latter half of the 19th century as the economy of Burlington flourished, the downtown district began to develop into a highly diversified commercial district which sold the products which were manufactured by the town's factories. The downtown district also acted as the nexus of institutional power since governmental buildings, such as the County Jail, Courthouse, City Hall and Post Office, were all located within a four block span.

The growth of the two manufacturing hubs prompted the expansion of bordering residential areas. Burlington's North End district developed north of the Battery Park on Pearl Street to house the blue-collar workers who needed cheap housing within walking distance to the waterfront factories. Most of Burlington's development from 1830-1850 was in residential areas such as the North End to accommodate the burgeoning population which doubled during this twenty year period. The homes of the North End are modest and simple dwellings that attracted masons, carpenters, and peddlers. Burlington's southern expansion occurred nearly 50 years after the North End developed. The Queen City Cotton Mill was established in 1895 in the southern part of Burlington later named "Lakeside". The mill produced a diverse range of products such as cheese cloth, twills, print clothes, sateens and specialty goods for high-end New York and Boston markets.

The compartmentalization of the city into a plethora of specialized districts created an interesting architectural blend. The downtown district is still comprised of Greek-Revival (1830-1890) and Italinat (1850-1900) commercial buildings which were the popular architectural styles in the United States during the city's economic expansion. The buildings in the manufacturing centers are industrial in nature, composed of fire-resistant materials such as brick, iron and stone. The waterfront district had all of the characteristics of a center of manufacturing and shipping with the city's railroad terminal, wharves and waterfront factories. Houses built in the Queen Anne style were prevalent in residential areas of the city and are characterized by their distinctive facades which are comprised of contrasting materials (brick and shingles for example). Today, much of the aesthetics and distinctive architecture of the city that developed during the 19th century expansion is still apparent in the cityscape and serves as a palimpsest showcasing the city's great industrial past.



**Map 3. The Urban Sectors of Burlington, Vermont in 1869.** Nearly twenty years after the Vermont Central Railroad and Burlington & Rutland Railroad were constructed, the Burlington Bay waterfront district developed into a hub of intensive manufacturing. The area surrounding City Hall Park which became the center of government beginning in the late 18th century continued to be so in 1869 as it was home to City Hall, the post office and the county jail. The commercial downtown district expanded into a center of diversified small businesses and services due to the mid-century industrial boom. It also had many Christian churches and cathedrals. Some older residential areas (such as the area between the waterfront and downtown districts) were remnants of the city's compartmentalization prior to the industrial boom. Others, like the North End (north of Pearl Street) developed later as a district for factory workers to purchase affordable housing within walking distance to the waterfront factories.

Sources:  
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