

9. PELGRAM & MEYERS SILK MILL
76 Monroe Street
present owner: Boonton Handbag Co.

BACKGROUND:

In the year 1875, the slowdown in the iron works prompted a committee of concerned citizens to contribute to the erection of the first silk manufactory in town. According to the Boonton Weekly Bulletin of Sept. 30, 1875, the wood building was 2 stories high and was situated on Main Street. It was the first place in Morris County where silk goods were manufactured. Unfortunately, the original silk mill under the management of James Sanfield failed and was closed down. Two years later, the Pelgram & Meyers silk company of Paterson took over the dormant manufactory and in 1881 erected the 5-story building shown here. This was a brick structure, 40 feet by 200 feet with an annex attached. The factory employed over 300 workers at one time and produced 12,000 yards of silk goods per week. The building was heated and operated by steam. Pegram & Meyers failed to make satisfactory arrangements with the D. L. & W. Railroad for the transfer of its thrown products from Boonton to Paterson. As a result, Joseph Cole was hired to transport the silk in a "wagon encased in iron...and armed with several large revolvers." Today, the building is used by the Boonton Handbag Co.

ARCHITECTURE:

The silk mill is a typical post-Civil War industrial building. The arched lintels and the heavy, corbeled cornice with dentils were common during this period. Ornamental and geometric brickwork were an outgrowth of the picturesque movement in wood construction. Notice the anchor plates along the side of the building.

