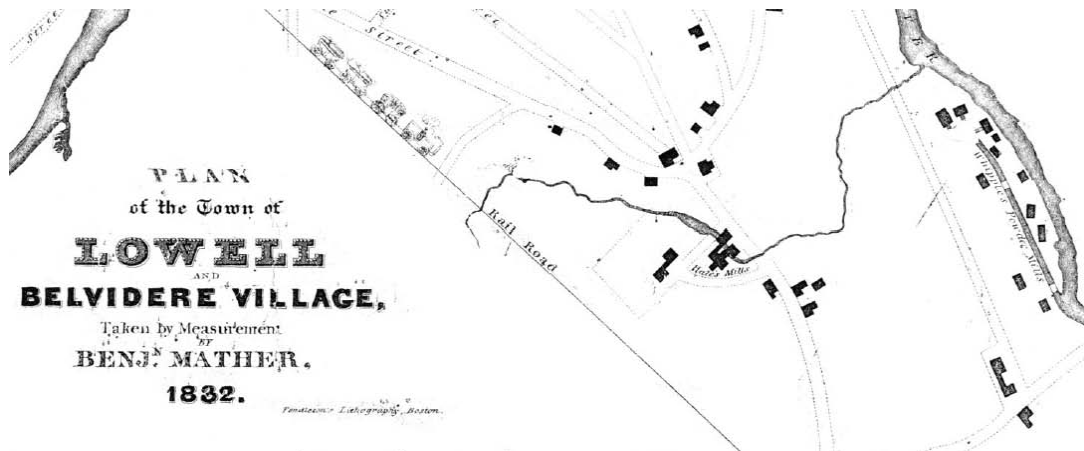


## Hale's Mills

### The Hale Family

The son of Ezekial Hale, Moses Hale was born in West Newbury, Massachusetts, in 1765 and moved as young boy with his family to Dracut, where his father established a mill for finishing homespun woolen cloth and grinding grain. Around 1790 the younger Hale acquired property in East Chelmsford and settled on a farm along River Meadow Brook. He built a dam and fulling mill on the brook and, like his father, produced finished woolen cloth made from handlooms on the surrounding farms.<sup>1</sup>



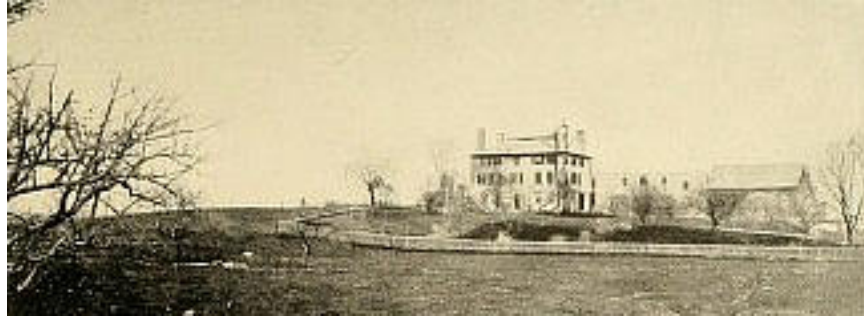
Hale's Mills on River Meadow Brook is seen on this 1832 map of Lowell and Belvidere Village. Gorham Street extends along the mill and crosses the brook near the dam, which is the major remnant of Lowell's earliest mechanized textile development.

### Hale's Mill

About ten years later Moses Hale constructed a second dam and mill along Gorham Street, about 200 feet upstream from his fulling mill. The new mill featured a water-powered carding machine for carding wool, the first in the area, and Hale hired Joshua Mather, an Englishman, to run the mill. Moses Hale's enterprises, which included a saw and grist mill, in addition to his carding mill, prospered.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This dam and mill were located about 200 feet below Gorham Street. Chambers street now runs near this site, which may contain ruins of this early industrial development.

<sup>2</sup> Wilkes Allen, *The History of Chelmsford, from Its Origins in 1653 to 1820*, (Haverhill, MA: P.N. Green, 1820), p. 83; A. Gilman, "Moses Hale, an Early Manufacturer of Wool, etc., in East Chelmsford," *Contributions of the Old Residents' Historical Association*, v. 1, (Lowell: Morning Mail, 1892), pp. 243-245



Built in the very popular Federal style and completed in 1812, Hale's house was one of the largest in the area. Joshua Swan subsequently acquired the house and it remained in the Swan family for many years.

### **Hale's Estate and Other Enterprises**

In 1812 Hale built a large Federal-style house adjacent to his barn, above River Meadow Brook. Three years later he purchased a farm near Chelmsford Center along Beaver Brook, where he dug a small power canal and erected a second saw mill. This venture proved unprofitable, but looking to expand his business near his home, Hale established a gunpowder works near the mouth of River Meadow Brook on the Concord River, beginning production in 1818 (for more on this gunpowder works see the section titled "Other Manufacturing.") Hale died in 1828, two years after the town of Lowell was established.<sup>3</sup>



In this recent view of Gorham Street, where it crosses River Meadow Brook, the dam, which originated with Hale's Mills in 1800, is clearly visible

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<sup>3</sup> Gilman, "Moses Hale, an Early Manufacturer of Wool," pp. 247-248.