

**Historic American Building Survey (HABS) Documentation:  
Simonds Manufacturing Company  
23-55 North Street  
Fitchburg, Massachusetts**

AHS Senior Historian Bruce Clouette, Ph.D., recorded the former plant of the Simonds Manufacturing Company (Simonds Saw and Steel) for the federal Historic American Building Survey (HABS), a permanent archive of historic buildings maintained by the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. The complex, now demolished, was significant for its historical role in the industrial development of Fitchburg, a noted manufacturing center in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In addition to textile and paper manufacturing, Fitchburg had a thriving metal-goods sector that included machine shops and railroad repair facilities. Saw production at Simonds Manufacturing was probably the largest specific activity within the overall metal-working category. Begun as a successor to a scythe shop, Simonds prospered in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by making circular and band saws for industry, as well as industrial machine knives such as planer blades. The company expanded to serve a national market, with agents in all major cities and additional manufacturing facilities in Chicago and Montreal. In 1905, the Simonds Company undertook a complete reconstruction of its Fitchburg plant, at which time most of the buildings recorded by the project were erected.



In addition to a narrative form and map for the complex as a whole (HABS No. MA-1265), the documentation included separate forms for four individual buildings within the complex. Clouette researched the plant using company archives and published sources, provided complete architectural descriptions of all the buildings, wrote an overall narrative that provided a context for understanding the historical significance of the Simonds Manufacturing Company, and directed the record photography, undertaken by photographer Wayne Fleming.

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