

FORM C - OBJECT

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
 MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
 220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
 BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

117/42/7 Westford 951
 Assessor's number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

Town Chelmsford

Place (neighborhood or village) South Chelmsford

Address or Location 192 Robin Hill Road

Name Match Factory Monument

Ownership Public Private

Type of Object (check one):

- statue
- bust
- group composition
- religious shrine
- boundary marker
- other (specify)
- monument
- milestone
- marker

Date of Construction Sept. 1975

Source Lowell Sun, Sept. 8, 1975
 Chelmsford Newsweekly, June 26, 1975

Designer/Sculptor William Colmer

Materials gray granite, Colmer Monument Co.

Alterations (with dates)
 none

Condition excellent

Moved no yes **Date**

Acreage 12,800 sq. ft.

Setting It is located beside the driveway to 192 Robin Hill Rd., next to the road. It is on the outskirts of a rural village. A wooded area is behind and to the right (south) of the monument. The house is to its left.

Recorded by Jane Drury

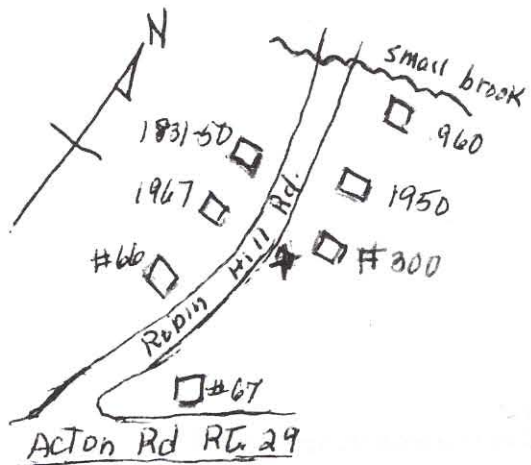
Organization for Chelmsford Historical Commission

Date (month/year) November 2005



Sketch Map

Draw a map showing the object's location in relation to the nearest cross streets and/or major natural features. Show all buildings between object and nearest intersection or natural feature. Label streets including route numbers, if any. Circle and number the inventoried object. Indicate north.



OBJECT FORM

DESIGN ASSESSMENT *see continuation sheet*

Describe the design features of the object, and evaluate in terms of other similar types of objects within the community.

The design of this monument commemorating the Lucifer match factory in Chelmsford is typical of others in Chelmsford in design. It is especially typical of many gravestones, probably because it was designed and made by William Colmer of the Colmer Monument Company. Below the inscription is a small etched match with flame on one end.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE *see continuation sheet*

Explain the history of the object, and how it relates to the development of the community

The house at 192 Robin Hill Road is built on the foundation of the match factory. The owner did not want the monument on the front lawn of the house, so it is situated next to the road, on the right side of the driveway to the house. The house is on the left side of that driveway. On Sept. 8, 1975 approximately 100 people attended the dedication of the "Byam Historical Monument" at the nearby First Baptist Church. The Chelmsford Historical Commission, the Chelmsford Historical Society, and the Chelmsford Revolutionary War Bicentennial Commission were the primary participants. The Byam family was represented by five people.

The Byam Match Factory was founded by Ezekiel Byam, a native of South Chelmsford, who, in 1835, manufactured the first Lucifer matches made in America in a little shop located at 192 Robin Hill Rd. Mr. Byam apparently had purchased the patent from Samuel Jones. The matches were made of attached strips of wood with "a compound of chlorate of potash and sulphuret of antimony, with enough of powdered gum to render it adhesive when mixed with water and applied over the end of the match, and dipped in melted brimstone." Due to the odor of sulfur, the neighborhood around the intersection of Robin Hill and Acton Roads became known as "Brimstone Corner." After about a year, Ezekiel Byam "moved the business to Boston, but in 1845 he returned to Chelmsford and continued to manufacture the matches here until 1848." At that time the accommodations were outgrown and the business was moved permanently back to Boston. About 1858 he formed the Byam, Carlton & Company, "Match manufacturers and dealers in phosphorus and brimstone." The company was eventually absorbed into the Diamond Match Company.

On each box of the Byam matches was printed:

"For quickness and sureness the public will find,
These matches leave all others behind;
Without further remarks we invite you to try 'em,
Remember all good that are signed by
E. Byam."

Ezekiel Byam, Sr. died in 1863, and he is buried in Forefathers' Burying ground in Chelmsford center.

ENTIRE INSCRIPTION (if applicable):

The first Lucifer
Match Factory in
America was estab-
lished by Ezekiel
Byam near this site
in 1835.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES *see continuation sheet*

Lowell Sun, Sept. 8, 1975; Chelmsford Newsweekly, October 2, 23, 1975; Chelmsford Independent, April 10, 1997
John Alden, July 4, 2001
William Colmer, Dec. 17, 2001

Recommended for listing in National Register of Historic Places. If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.



New historical marker

Chelmsford officials gather around a new historical marker commemorating the Lucifer

match factory in Chelmsford. Left to right are George A. Parkhurst, Richard O. Lahue, John

C. Alden and selectman Arnold Lovering.

SUN Staff Photo by Tony Alves

In Old Chelmsford

First Lucifer Matches In USA Made In South Village

This is another in a series of articles on old Chelmsford prepared for the Historical Society.

By Julia P. Fogg

CHELMSFORD — Among Chelmsford's early industries, the South Village has the distinction of being the home of the first Lucifer matches to be made in America. How many of us stop to think when we "strike a match", of the methods used by our forefathers to obtain a spark from a piece of high-carbon steel, and sulphur-tipped "spunks", or splinters, for generating flame from the smouldering tinder. These tinder boxes also contained a circular tin "quencher" for extinguishing the tinder.

Another type was the "instantaneous - light box" — a small tin box containing a bottle in which were placed some sulphuric acid, with sufficient fibrous asbestos to soak it up and prevent its spilling out of the bottle, and a supply of "properly prepared" matches. These were small splints of wood about two inches long, one end of which was coated with a chemical mixture prepared by mixing chlorate of potash, powdered loaf sugar and powdered gum arabic, the whole colored with a little vermilion and made into a thin paste. The splints were first dipped into the melted sulphur and then into the prepared paste and were readily inflamed by dipping into sulphuric acid. But the use of sulphuric acid had many disadvantages—one being its absorption of moisture from the air which soon rendered it inert.

THEN. IN 1826, an English

chemist, John Walker, invented a "friction light" which a few years later came to be known as "the Lucifer match." In the year 1835 Ezekiel Byam of South Chelmsford began making the first Lucifer matches in this country. His little shop stood near the center of the village on the old road leading from South Chelmsford to the Center (about opposite 187 Robin Hill Rd.) at what came to be called "Brimstone Corner." It was a small building, set into the bank, with one story above the basement.

The Lucifer matches were of small strips of wood; the inflammable mixture, "a compound of chlorate of potash and sulphuret of antimony, with enough of powdered gum to render it adhesive when mixed with water and applied over the end of the match, and dipped in melted brimstone." The matches could then be ignited by "drawing them through a bent piece of sandpaper."

THE FOLLOWING year, 1836, an improvement over the old Lucifer was realized in the invention of the friction match by A. D. Phillips of Springfield, Mass. Mr. Byam, seeing the importance of this invention, purchased first the right to manufacture, then the patent; and by 1837 introduced the friction match to the public. Ezekiel Byam was the senior partner in the firm of Byam, Carlton and Company, Match Manufacturers and Dealers in Phosphorus and Brimstone—otherwise known as the Boston Match Company. For, as might be expected, the business outgrew the little shop in South Chelmsford and the firm moved to Boston.

The old Lucifer matches were put up in packages containing one hundred, which sold for 25 cents a package. Mr. Byam saw that "at such

son, however small their means, and sold at less than one cent for more than 300. All matches were "warranted to keep 20 years in any climate" and were, therefore, "superior to others for exportation."

Several years ago the Chelmsford Historical Society was presented copies of the U. S. Internal Revenue stamp used on Byam's match boxes. Stamped on each box was this little rhyme:

For quickness and sureness
the public will find these
matches will leave all others
behind. Without further
remarks we invite you to
try 'em — Remember all
good that are signed by
E. BYAM

Some of the old Lucifer matches are also among the Society's possessions, as well as an old tinder box; and these will be proudly displayed at the time when the museum becomes a reality.

A large group attended the recent ceremonies connected with the dedication of the Byam Match Factory site Historical marker in South Chelmsford. Mrs. Lyman Byam, Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Byam, Mrs. Frank Cowdray and Mrs. George Nickerson represented the Byam family at the ceremony.

Among others there were Rev. Gary Dusek, Selectmen Arnold Lovering and William Murphy; Mr. and Mrs. Stephen D. Wojcik, Mr. and Mrs. George Ripsom, Mr. and Mrs. George A. Parkhurst, Mr. and Mrs. John C. Alden, Mr. and Mrs. Richard O. Lahue, Sr., J. Perry Richardson, Mr. and Mrs. John C. Carragher, Miss Janice Carragher, Miss Sandra Parkhurst, Mrs. John Wilder.

Also, Mrs. Alice Linsted and her grandson, Eric; Prescott Kimball of Littleton, Miss Bertha Trubey, Mrs. Minnie Brown, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Faid, Mr. and Mrs. Donald Howard, Mr. and Mrs. Weldon Holiday, Mr. and Mrs. James Mooney, Mr. and Mrs. H. Chadbourne Ward, Mr. and Mrs. Harold J. Davis, Mrs. Dana P. Caffelle, Michael Caffelle, David Lewis, Mrs. Donald Wilder.

Others included Mr. and Mrs. William Manti, Mr. and Mrs. Melvin de Jager, Mrs. Ralph S. Parlee, Mrs. William C. Hinckley, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Norton, James Scarth, Mrs. Helen R.

Poland, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Emmons, Mr. and Mrs. Donald Beaubien, Richard Hoxie, Mr. and Mrs. George Marchand, Miss Anna Normandin, Mr. Thomas, Mrs. John Bertucci, Mrs. Gordon Scott and her children, Mrs. Donald Foss, Mrs. Marvin Schenk.

Unveiling Of Granite Marker Sunday, Sept. 7

Another of Chelmsford's "firsts" will receive suitable recognition with the installation of a granite marker on the approximate site of the Byam Match Factory where, 150 years ago, Lucifer matches were first manufactured in the U.S. In order to make it a more meaningful expression of the entire community, the Historical Commission, sponsors of this Bicentennial project, decided to underwrite the very modest expense involved through small donations from many interested individuals and organizations. Only a few more donations are needed to meet the goal.

Because the names of the donors will appear on the marker, which will be unveiled in a public ceremony on September 7th, it has been necessary to set a deadline according to Richard O. Lahue, Sr., chairman of the committee in charge of arrangements. Those whose donations are received by August 10th can be given this recognition.

If you, or an organization with which you are affiliated, feel that publicizing a bit of Chelmsford's heritage deserves your support in at least a small way, please contact Mr. Lahue (256-2843) before the deadline.

Chelmsford Newsweekly
Oct. 2, 1975

Newsweekly
Aug. 7, 1975

Match factory lit up South Chelmsford

"For quickness and sureness the public will find,

These matches will leave all others behind;

Without further remarks we invite you to try 'em,

Remember all good that are signed by E. Byam."

This bit of doggerel appeared on each package of matches manufactured and sold by Ezekiel Byam of South Chelmsford in the early 19th century.

Prior to World War II, South Chelmsford was a small rural, residential and farming village with its general store, church, blacksmith shop, and community center — Liberty Hall.

It had never had any manufacturing establishments, unlike North and West Chelmsford and the Center. Well, almost never. There was one exception, the Byam match factory.

We take the common match for granted but it is a relatively recent invention. The Town of Chelmsford was already 25 years old when the English chemist, Robert Boyle, discovered that fire could be produced by drawing a sulphur-tipped splint through a fold of coarse paper that had been coated with phosphorus. And, it would be a hundred years later that this scientific curiosity would become a practicality.

In 1835, Ezekiel Byam (1795-1863), a descendant of some of Chelmsford's earliest settlers, began manufacturing the first lucifer

The way it was

By George A. Parkhurst



fer matches to be produced in the U.S. His "factory" was a small building set into the bank on Robin Hill Road near where it joins Acton Road, giving rise to the nickname "Brimstone corner" for this area. (The Historical Commission marked the site with a granite monument as part of the Bicentennial celebration in 1975.)

However, the lucifer became obsolete the following year, with the granting of a patent for the friction match and, soon after, the entire patent. He introduced them on the market in 1837.

Realizing that the original price of 25 cents for 100 matches put them out of reach of many, he eventually succeeded in reducing the price to one cent for more than 300. About a year later, the manufacturing operation was moved to Boston, where it stayed except for a brief return to South Chelmsford in 1845.

Byam's son, Ezekiel G. Byam, took over

the business and became a member of the firm of Byam, Carlton & Company. In 1880, he sold the business to the Diamond Match Company.

Fame spread for one brief shining moment from South Chelmsford to New York. According to the "Dictionary of American History: Ezekiel Byam manufactured the 'loco foco' celebrated in the presidential campaign of 1840."

It is reported that a Democratic nominating convention was being held in Tammany Hall in New York when a group of radicals from the Equal Rights faction seized control of the meeting. Their opponents, being in the minority, left the hall and turned off the gas. However, the radicals had anticipated this move and had brought a supply of "loco focos," they lighted candles and continued the caucus.

The newspapers dubbed them the "Loco Foco Party."

Although Ezekiel Byam did not invent either the Lucifer or the friction match, he did pioneer them. As one speaker at a meeting of the Massachusetts Historical Society several years ago said, "When I think of my cold fingers on some winter morning, benumbed in fruitless endeavor to coax from the reluctant steel the spark of the day, I always feel like invoking the blessings on E. Byam, whose likeness and autograph were shortly to appear on each wrapper."

George A. Parkhurst is a noted Chelmsford historian whose family has lived in town since 1654.

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GenMassachusetts-L Archives

From: Farns10th@aol.com

Subject: [GM-L] Mr Byam of Chelmsford and the "friction match"

Date: Sun, 27 Aug 2000 12:06:25 EDT

Subject: The Lucifer Match to the "friction match"

Source: History of Chelmsford (url end of report)

The Lucifer match was an English invention. This match was of small strips of wood, and the inflammable mixture was a compound of chlorate of potash and sulphurate of antimony, with enough of powdered gum to render it adhesive when mixed with water and applied over the end of the match, dipped in melted brimstone. These matches were ignited by drawing them through a piece of bent sandpaper.

The first Lucifer matches that were made in this country were manufactured at South Chelmsford, in 1835, by Ezekiel Byam, the founder of the house of Byam, Carlton & Co., of Boston, of which his son, E. G. Byam, was afterwards at the head. These matches were put up in packages containing one hundred, which sold for twenty-five cents a package.

Although this was a great improvement over anything that had preceded it, the expense was too great to bring it rapidly into favor. Very soon, however, this difficulty was overcome by the invention of the present friction match. This was patented by A. D. Phillips, of Springfield, Mass., October 24, 1836. Mr. Byam at once saw the importance of this invention, and, with characteristic enterprise, he purchased, first, the right to manufacture, and soon after the whole patent, and in 1837, introduced the friction match to the public. The old "match shop," as it was called, stood on the old road leading from South Chelmsford to the Centre, a few rods from the house of Mr. Eli P. Parker, on the opposite side. It was a small building, set into the bank, with office story above the basement.

The matches were put up at the Willard Byam house, which stood just beyond the shop on the site of the residence of Mr. E. P. Bean.

After manufacturing here about a year, Mr. Byam removed to Boston, at the corner of Union and Blackstone streets. He returned, however, to Chelmsford about the year 1845, and continued till the spring of 1848, when the business, having outgrown his accommodations, was transferred permanently to Boston.

Most of the old match shop was demolished years ago, but a portion of it was removed to the premises of Mr. N. B. Lapharn, and used as a carriage house.

The place in South Chelmsford where the matches were made was called Brimstone Comer. These verses went with the matches all over the country:

"For quickness and sureness the public will find,
These matches will leave all others behind;
Without further remarks we invite you to try 'em,
Remember all good that are signed by
E. BYAM.

Ezekiel Byam was bom in Chelmsford, October 24, 1796, the son of William and Rebecca. February 15, 1818, he married Charlotte Bateman, He died at the home of his daughter, Mrs. O. B. Dudley, in Bunker Hill street, Charlestown, August 9, 1863, and was buried in Forefathers' Cemetery, Chelmsford.

<http://genweb.net/~books/ma/chelmsford1917/chel1570ch11.txt>

Note: the chapter above reports on methods the colonists used before the invention of matches.

This thread:

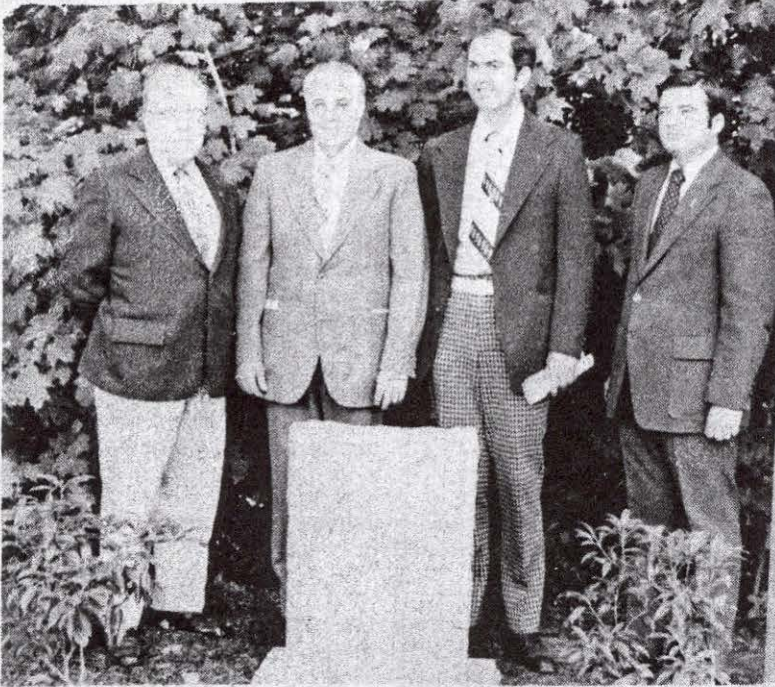
- [\[GM-L\] Mr Byam of Chelmsford and the "friction match" by Farns10th@aol.com](#)

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Oct. 23, 1975
 Chelmsford (Independent)
 Newsweekly



MARKING THE SITE near which Ezekiel Byam established the first Lucifer match factory in the United States is this monument just off Robin Hill Road, South section, which was dedicated on Sept. 4. Standing (L-R) are George Parkhurst, Bicentennial Commission chairman; Richard Lahue, Chelmsford Historical Society president; John Alden, Historical Commission chairman; and Chairman of Selectmen Arnold Lovering. (Photo by Girard Miller)

There were approximately one hundred present at the dedication ceremony for the Byam Match Factory Historical Marker on Sunday afternoon in South Chelmsford's Historic First Baptist Church, Richard O. Lahue being Master of Ceremonies. The invocation was given by the Reverend Gary Dusek. The Historical Significance of the Byam Match Factory was the topic of the speech given by George Adams Parkhurst, chairman of the Revolutionary War Bicentennial Celebrations Committee. The Byam Match Factory was founded by Ezekiel Byam of South Chelmsford who, in 1835, manufactured the first Lucifer matches made in America in the little shop located on the east side of Robin Hill Road. A beautiful granite marker commemorating this event has been placed near the site of the factory.

Other speakers were Arnold Lovering, Chairman of the Chelmsford Board of Selectmen and John C. Alden, Chairman of the Chelmsford Historical Commission. Mr. Alden read the names of individuals and participating organizations who, by their donations, have helped to defray the cost of the marker. Sponsors were Mr. and Mrs. John C. Alden, Mr. and Mrs. Angelo Balzarini, Mr. Edwin Byam, Mrs. Lyman Byam, Mr. and Mrs. Dana Caffelle, Michael Caffelle, Mr. and Mrs. John Carragher, Chelmsford 4-H Horse Lovers, Chelmsford Historical Commission, Chelms-

The group retraced their steps and stopped at Liberty Hall where a delicious collation was served under the direction of Mrs. John Carragher, Mrs. George A. Parkhurst, Mrs. John C. Alden, Miss Bertha Trubey, Mrs. Richard O. Lahue and Miss Janice Carragher.

Byam Match Factory was the topic of the speech given by George Adams Parkhurst, chairman of the Revolutionary War Bicentennial Celebrations Committee. The Byam Match Factory was founded by Ezekiel Byam of South Chelmsford who, in 1835, manufactured the first Lucifer matches made in America in the little shop located on the east side of Robin Hill Road. A beautiful granite marker commemorating this event has been placed near the site of the factory.

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Participating organizations in this project were The Chelmsford Historical Commission, The Chelmsford Historical Society, Inc. and The Chelmsford Revolutionary War Bicentennial Celebrations Commission.

The Candlelighters singing group from the Historic First Baptist Church of South Chelmsford sang three numbers appropriate to the occasion, "This Little Light of Mine", "Pass It On" and "One Little Candle". They were directed by Mrs. John Wilder and accompanied on the piano by Mrs. Alice Linstad.

Following the program, Mr. Lahue conducted the large group on a walking tour of South Chelmsford stopping at the historic Waite Farm, home of Ezekiel Byam following his marriage to Charlotte Bateman, the Lyman Byam House, at one time owned by Ezekiel Byam, the Eli Packard Parker House and concluded the tour at the Byam Match Factory Marker which has been landscaped by the Four Seasons Garden Club.



STAFF PHOTO BY CHRISTINE SEYMOUR

Matches found in the attic of the Byam House (above) located in South Chelmsford later became part of a collection at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. The match book cover (below) was one of the versions created by Ezekiel Byam.



Phillips of Springfield, Massachusetts had just received a patent for a new and useful improvement in the manufacture of friction matches for the instantaneous production of light.

Byam, being a resourceful manufacturer, saw that the new matches could be priced lower, so in 1837 he bought the right to manufacture, and in 1838, Byam bought the patent itself. This match used phosphorus, chalk, and glue on a wooden splint.

In 1837, Byam began selling

the improved friction matches for less than one cent per three hundred matches, and on each package he printed the following verse: "For quickness and sureness the public will find, These matches will leave all others behind; Without further remarks we invite you to try 'em, Remember all good that are signed by E. Byam."

After about a year in Chelmsford, Byam moved the business to Boston, but in 1845, he returned to Chelmsford, and continued to manufacture the matches here until, in 1848, he moved permanently to Boston, where he formed a business with Isaac E. Pearson out of Commercial Street.

Some time after, about 1858, he formed the Byam, Carlton &

Company, "match manufacturers and dealers in phosphorus and brimstone." Byam died in 1863, but Byam, Carlton & Company continued to sell matches until about 1894.

During the early 1900s, the government determined that white phosphorus, which was a component in the early "strike anywhere" matches, caused the disease "phossy jaw" in match factory workers, and in 1913, the government levied a high tax on white phosphorus to make the cost of using it prohibitive.

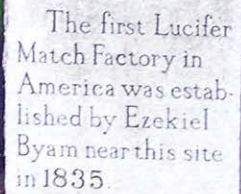
White phosphorus was replaced with non-poisonous chemicals, and today, the safety match is composed of a combination of chemicals that will ignite only when struck on a specific surface.

Brimstone Corner. Byam sold the matches for twenty-five cents per one hundred matches.

Byam knew that the cost of the Lucifer matches were not within the price range of the average American. After manufacturing the matches for about two years, Byam learned that Alonzo D.



HISTORIC SITE
OF
BYAM MATCH FACTORY
1835

A white rectangular sign with a black border and a circular logo at the top center. The logo depicts a factory with smoking chimneys. The text is in a serif font, with the year '1835' flanked by two horizontal bars.

The first Lucifer
Match Factory in
America was estab-
lished by Ezekiel
Byam near this site
in 1835.

A rectangular stone marker with a small metal nail or spike protruding from its base. The text is engraved in a serif font. The marker is surrounded by two small American flags and a basket of colorful flowers.

The first Lucifer
Match Factory in
America was estab-
lished by Ezekiel
Byam near this site
in 1835.

