This photo taken in 1908 is typical of any wheelpit. The workers are in the process of removing a casing of an old turbine to be replaced. They are standing in one of the raceways.

All that remains now in the story of the hydraulic motive power that powered the textile empire of Lowell is to return the water to the Merrimack River from whence it originated. Regardless of what product the mills were producing, nothing was to interfere with the waterpower flowing through the underground raceways to provide the mill power for the insatiable thirst of the machinery.
Two massive stacks stand in testimony in the mostly demolished mill yard today, testifying to the eventual dependency of the motive power on steam engines. But long before the happening of this event, and for a good time after the introduction of steam power, waterpower was the prime mover. Waterpower had the advantage that it was simpler to operate and much cheaper fuel-wise. The drawback was the erratic functioning of the wheel or turbine, the power chain from the river through the feeder canal to the tailrace to operate the machinery, due to the low supply of water in the dry seasons that vastly effected the production of the manufactories. But this narrative is on waterpower not steam engines, and whether wheels or turbines, the end result was identical and the looms turned.
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