

NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
Office of Archives and History
Department of Cultural Resources

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company

Morganton, Burke County, BK0363, Listed 5/1/2013

Nomination by Sybil Argintar

Photographs by Sybil Argintar, March 2011 and April 2012



View from street



View from railroad

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of property

historic name Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company

other names/site number Alpine Cotton Mill No. 1

2. Location

street & number 109 East Fleming Drive not for publication N/A

city or town Morganton vicinity N/A

state North Carolina code NC county Burke code 023 zip code 28680

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official

Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

entered in the National Register

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the

National Register

See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the

National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain): _____

Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company
Name of Property

Burke County, North Carolina
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

private
 public-local
 public-State
 public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

building(s)
 district
 site
 structure
 object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Industry Sub: Manufacturing Facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Work in Progress Sub: _____

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Other: heavy timber mill construction

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick
roof asphalt
walls brick

other concrete

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or a grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Industry

Period of Significance

1889 - 1949

Significant Dates

1889, 1895, 1949

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Campbell, John, brick contractor

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: _____

Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company
Name of Property

Burke County, North Carolina
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 8.321 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing
1 17 438380 3955270
2 17 438460 3955390

Zone Easting Northing
3 17 438640 3955340
4 17 438500 3955200
x See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sybil H. Argintar

organization Southeastern Preservation Services date December 5, 2012

street & number 166 Pearson Drive telephone (828) 230-3773

city or town Asheville state NC zip code 28801

12. Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Alpine Mill LLC c/o Ginny Erwin

street & number 105 Independence Blvd. telephone (828) 390-6151

city or town Morganton state NC zip code 28655

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company
Burke County, North Carolina

Summary

Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company sits on a slope below the railroad right-of-way, above East Fleming Drive, approximately one-half mile southeast of the center of downtown Morganton, Burke County, North Carolina. The two-story brick building, along with the paved parking area downhill to the east and southeast, includes approximately eight and one-third acres. The building is oriented northeast-southwest, near the northwest corner of the property, with long dimensions of the rectangular mass of the building facing northwest and southeast, and the shorter dimensions facing northeast and southwest. To the northwest of the building are the railroad tracks of Southern Railway, originally part of the Western North Carolina Railroad. On the opposite side of the tracks, is the Southern Railway passenger depot, with the freight depot located to the northeast. New commercial development is located to the south and west of the property. To the east and up the hill is the former Alpine Cotton Mill No. 2, a textile mill dating to 1902, currently in use as furniture manufacturing. Mill housing was located south, east, and west of the mill, along Country Road, which ran in a northeast to southwest direction, just south and east of the mill and parallel to it. Country Road later became Bethel Road and then Alpine Road, but this was later replaced with the current Fleming Drive, which forms an arc and is located farther to the south.

Attached to the southwest elevation of the original mill building are two brick flat-roof additions, two and three stories in height, dating from 1963 and 1966, which run in a northwest-southeast direction. Southwest of this and attached to the addition, is a one-story-plus-basement brick warehouse with an arched truss roof, built ca. 1920. To the north of the main building, near the northwest corner is a two-story, free-standing flat-roof brick building which was built as a boiler plant in 1963.

Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company. Contributing. 1888, 1900, ca. 1910, ca. 1920, 1963, 1966.

The two-story, brick-clad, side gable-roof Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company is banked into the hillside, with one story on the northwest elevation and two stories at the southeast elevation. The building is minimally ornamented, with most of the ornamental brick corbelling around windows openings visible on the northwest elevation.

The mill was built in several stages. The center section of the northeast-southwest oriented building was constructed in 1888 and it was in use for carding and spinning. Two small two-story wings, one containing a boiler house and the other picker and lapper rooms, extended from the north and south ends of the southeast elevation. By 1900, the carding and spinning areas were being expanded by a new carding room under construction on the southwest and a winding room,

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frame with brick walls, was already completed on the northeast.¹ This room was further expanded by 1910 to the size it is today.²

Later additions were made to the main mill building on the southwest side, oriented northwest-southeast, in 1963 and 1966. The 1963 addition is located directly south of the main mill building, and the later 1966 addition is located in front of it (see Exhibit A). To the southwest of these additions is the ca. 1920 cotton warehouse, which originally was part of a row of three warehouses attached to this side of the building. Two of the warehouses were demolished to make way for the 1963 addition.

The following description will be presented in terms of the original mill building and additions (1888, 1900, ca. 1910, ca. 1966), followed by the 1963 and 1966 additions and the ca. 1920 cotton warehouse plus additions from ca. 1966. Interior descriptions follow the exterior descriptions within each section.

Mill Construction, 1888 - 1910

The painted brick southeast elevation of the 1888 - 1910 cotton textile mill, facing the road, served as the entrance for the workers. A documentary photo from 1949 shows a clear view of the original southeast elevation of the mill, with twelve-over-twelve segmental arch windows.³ This elevation is thirty-two bays wide on both floors, with the tall foundation wall visible above ground, and the site sloping down from west to east. All window openings have been bricked in, and some have been replaced with sliding metal doors that were cut when there were additions made to the south.⁴ According to the 1894 Sanborn map, there were two, two-story projecting wings on this elevation, housing the picker and lapper rooms on the west wing, and the boiler room on the east wing. Neither of these wings remains, but there are two small two-story wings near the southwest end of the building, added after the 1949 photo was taken, which remain.⁵ One of these wings was built between 1949 and 1953, when it appears in an aerial photo. It contained bathrooms. The second two-story wing, farthest to the west, has two large openings for freight delivery, and was built after 1953.⁶

¹ Sanborn Map Company map, 1900.

² Sanborn Map Company map, 1910.

³ This photo appears in the 1949 and early 1950s Drexel Furniture Company annual reports. It was likely taken at the time the mill was sold to Drexel in 1949.

⁴ These 1960s additions have recently been removed.

⁵ The two original two-story wings were torn down at the time that later 1960s additions were made on the southeast elevation of the building. These later 1960s additions have since been removed.

⁶ Drexel Furniture Company annual reports from 1949 and 1953 have photos of the mill.

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Originally there was mill housing located to the south, southwest, and southeast of the mill, located along country road, which later became Bethel Road and then alpine Road.⁷ There were small warehouses to the south and southwest of the mill as early as 1894, but none of these remain.⁸ A larger cotton warehouse, originally in use as a waste house, was located southwest of the mill in 1910, but it also is gone.⁹ By 1924 three large warehouses had been added onto the southwest side of the mill. The largest and the southernmost of these warehouses remains, and is discussed below.

The northeast elevation of the 1888 – 1910 section of the mill building is on a slope down from the railroad bed, and is one story at the north corner and two stories at the east corner. The elevation has a side-gable roof with flush board soffits, corner pilasters, five segmental-arch window bays on the second floor, all infilled with concrete block. On the first floor, a ca. 1966 double-leaf-door delivery entrance opening has been added. There is a small one-story shed-roof brick ca. 1966 addition with multiple vents which projects to the northeast.

The northwest elevation, facing the railroad tracks, is one story in height due to the elevation change from south to north. It displays elaborate brick window surrounds and other brick detailing of the 1888 mill, along with the 1900 and 1910 additions. There are a total of three arched window bays at the north corner, with a ca. 1966 one-story loading dock addition covering a small section of this end of the elevation. Twenty-three window bays extend to the southwest. Each window bay is inset, with brick pilasters and corbelling at the top. A brick parapet end wall denotes clearly where the 1900 mill building ends and the 1963 addition to the southwest begins.

The southwest elevation of the 1888 – 1910 portion of the building is covered by the 1963 and 1966 additions as noted below.

On the interior of the 1888-1910 building, beginning with the ground floor of the 1888 portion of the building which was originally a dirt crawlspace, floors are now concrete with steel posts and beams added ca. 1963 by Drexel when they excavated the dirt in this space and created a ground level. Additional interior concrete foundation walls were added at the same time, to increase structural support to the upper floor. All of these changes were made by Drexel when this floor was converted to the wood shop for the upholstered furniture operations, but up until this time

⁷ Taylor, Charlie. Employed at Drexel, 1960 to 1965. Interview with Sybil H. Argintar, May 2012. Housing still appears extant in a 1953 aerial photo. The 1949 photo also shows the location of some of the original mill housing, which still remained in a 1953 aerial photo. All of the houses were torn down in the early 1960s after Drexel Heritage began using the property. See also Sanborn Map Company maps, 1924, 1931, and 1950.

⁸ Sanborn Map Company map, 1894 and 1905.

⁹ Sanborn Map Company map, 1910.

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the mill operated on the upper floor only.¹⁰ The sub-floor of the upper level remains, serving as the ceiling to the ground level. The ground level of the 1900 carding room, to the southwest of the 1888 building, is still a dirt crawlspace. The ca. 1910 winding room, to the northeast portion of the 1888 building, is part of the current ground floor.

The upper level of the building has a queen post truss system which allows for a large clear-span space. This system consists of a single horizontal beam at the bottom with upright members connecting to a gabled upper beam and diagonal bracing on either side. Upright members are further braced by diagonal boards.¹¹ The ceiling finish in the 1888 section is bead board, and the ceilings of the additions to the northeast and southwest are flush board. The northeast and southwest additions have the more common mill construction technique of heavy timber post and beam construction. A frame wall was added near the northeast end of the original 1888 section by Drexel Heritage in the early 1960s which combined a small portion of the 1888 section with the northeast addition. Running the length of the ceiling in this northeastern section of the building is an enclosed conveyor system tunnel used for drying wood furniture finishes. The stairs to the tunnel are located along the west wall. Drexel pulley system hooks with netting below are still in place in this portion of the building. The upper level retains its wood floors, which appear to date from 1924, when all additions on the northeast and southwest were completed, all additions were converted to brick walls, and Alpine Mill installed new floors to unify the space into one large operational center for the mill.¹²

Mill Construction, 1910 – 1963

Three warehouses were added to the southwest elevation of the 1888-1910 mill ca. 1920, appearing for the first time on the 1924 Sanborn map for Morganton. The two closest to the mill building were torn down, later replaced by the 1963 addition discussed below, but the third of these remains in place, also discussed below.

¹⁰ Wells, John. Worked at Drexel from 1960 to 1966, and was head of the upholstery operations. He noted that the old mill was in use as a warehouse on the upper level from 1949 to the early 1960s and no changes were made by Drexel until the early 1960s. At this time the ground level was excavated and turned into the wood shop.

¹¹“Historic American Roof Trusses: Queenpost Trusses”. *Timber Framing* magazine. Volume 71, March 2004, pp. 12-13.

¹² Sanborn Map Company map, 1924. John Wells (interview June 21, 2012) notes that Drexel didn't make any changes on this level. They added some temporary platforms on top of the wood floors to reach the drying racks, but that was all. The color Sanborn map also denoted brick for all exterior walls.

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Mill Construction, 1963 - 1966

In 1963 the two smaller warehouses directly attached to the mill on the southwest were removed and the two-story 1963 addition was built in the same location, followed, in 1966, by a three-story addition which is oriented northwest-southeast and is attached to the 1963 addition (see exhibit A). On the northwest elevation, the two-story 1963 addition abuts the 1900 addition parapet wall, and the building mass is setback from the northwest wall of the 1888 – 1910 building. The three windows on this elevation are twelve-light, metal-frame, with the center six lights operable awning style. There is a small, brick and metal ca. 1966 addition on this elevation.

Continuing south along the northwest elevation, and attached to the 1963 addition, is the one-story concrete block, ca. 1920 arched truss warehouse building with a covered loading dock at the northeast corner, likely added in the 1960s, and a brick parapet wall on the west. To the west of this parapet wall is a ca. 1960s one-story painted concrete block one-story addition with four raised delivery bays on the southeast elevation. Each bay has a metal roll-up door.

Moving around to the southwest elevation of the ca. 1920 arch truss warehouse section is a blank brick parapet wall. The southwest elevation of the warehouse, which stands on a down slope running northwest to southeast, has a metal door and five, twenty-light metal sash window bays on the second floor, with an additional door and two eight-light metal sash window bays on the first floor.

The southwest elevation of the 1966 addition, sloping down in elevation from northwest to southeast, has six bays on the second and third floors, with metal louvers in most of the openings. The first floor of this elevation has five bays and a door. Moving around to the southeast elevation of the addition, there are five delivery bays on the first floor, with a blank wall above. The southeast elevation of the addition is a full three stories in height, with six delivery bays, each with a metal roll-up door.

The 1963 and 1966 additions are the same on the interior on all levels, with concrete floors, metal ceiling framing, and metal post and beam construction. The original brick southwest wall of the mill, now painted and with modern doors cut through, comprises a portion of the northeast wall of the 1963 addition on the second story.

Boiler Plant. Non-contributing. ca. 1963.

Two-story concrete block, brick-faced, flat roofed building, built on a concrete slab replaced the office originally located here. The building has blank walls, except for two double-leaf metal doors on the northeast elevation, one on the first level and one on the second. The interior of the building is one large space, with the boiler and the plumbing for the boiler system still intact.

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Integrity Statement

Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company retains much of its original architectural character, despite the fact that windows are blocked in and there have been some additions made to the southwest side of the oldest portions of the building. Arched window openings are intact, and the gabled roofline is unaltered. In particular, the northwest elevation of the building displays an impressive array of brick corbelling around window openings.

Later additions to the building, made in the mid to late 1960s and which covered all of the southeast elevation were removed in 2012 to reveal the original 1888-1910 mill building. These two-story brick additions, dating from 1962, 1964, and 1969, comprised a single block extending the full width of the southeast elevation of the building. Together, they increased the size of the 1888-1910 portion of the building by approximately one and one-half times (see Exhibit B, showing location, size and construction dates of these additions). Since their removal, the overall massing of the earliest sections of the building (1888 – 1910) are now visible. The 1963 and 1966 additions the mill's southwest side do not obscure the view of the older mill from the public right-of-way. However, their prominent siting, large size and three-story height has lessened the older mill's integrity of setting and feeling.

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Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company
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Summary

Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company meets National Register Criterion A for its important role in the industrial development of Morganton, North Carolina, ushering in the cotton textile manufacturing era in the town. It is significant as being the oldest cotton textile mill in Morganton, completed in December 1888. The proposed period of significance is 1889 to 1949, the time period during which the building was in use as a cotton textile mill, first as Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company and, beginning in 1895, as Alpine Cotton Mill No. 1, under the ownership of William Allen Erwin of Durham, North Carolina.

Historical Background and Industrial Context

Industry in Morganton and Burke County through Reconstruction

Burke County, North Carolina, named for Thomas Burke of Orange County, was formed from Rowan County in 1777.¹³ It was an immense county that originally encompassed portions of present-day Alexander, Buncombe, Caldwell, Catawba, Haywood, Lincoln, McDowell, Madison, Mitchell, Swain, Watauga, and Yancey counties.¹⁴ It was not until 1783 that a court district, District of Morgan, was established by the state legislature, and not until 1785 that the first courthouse was built in the county seat of Morganton.¹⁵ The town and the county grew slowly, with little industrial development until the railroad arrived after the Civil War.

The end of the Civil War marked a significant change for Burke County from a largely agricultural economy fueled by slave labor to one that became more of an industrial economy. Two years after the Civil War ended in 1865, the railroad was completed into Morganton, but most residents continued to make their living through farming.¹⁶ However, despite what was still primarily an agricultural economy, some small industries were in operation in the county in the decades immediately following the Civil War, through the mid-to-late-1880s, the time of the construction of Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company. These included shoemaking, grist

¹³ Camp, Cordelia. *Sketches of Burke County*, unpublished booklet, 1954, p. 4.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 5. Originally the town was called Morgansborough, then Morgan, then Morgan Town, later shortened to Morganton.

¹⁶ Phifer, Edward W., Jr. *The History of a North Carolina County: Burke, Morganton*, North Carolina: Privately published by Edward William Phifer, Jr. 1977, pp. 219 - 220. Large land-holdings were broken up into smaller farms, increasing the number of farms in the county from 500 in 1860, to 880 in 1870, and 1648 by 1880.

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and roller mills, tanneries, saw mills, woodworking shops, furniture factories, brick making, tobacco factories, gold mining, distilleries, and home-produced textiles and apparel.¹⁷

Boot and shoemakers were common small businesses in the county, with one of the most well-known being the business of Robert Brown in Morganton, who began operations before the Civil War and continued through the end of the nineteenth century. There were several others in Morganton, including Hugh Alexander Howard, James A Campbell, Nathan L. Clark, David Rhyne, and E. Dixon, all of whom operated in the 1870s and 1880s. Others were located in Icard, Bridgewater, Lovelady, Linville Township, and Upper Creek Township.¹⁸

The number of grist mills greatly increased soon after the War, but by 1870 and 1880, the number had decreased and it cost more to begin operations. Some of the mills in operation in the 1860s and 1870s included Chuping's mill on Fiddler's Run; Elizabeth Avery's Mill on Bailey's Fork; and Ashley and James C. Mull's mill in Morganton Township. Additional grist mill owners in Morganton Township included Junius C. Tate, Robert C. Pearson and Colonel John Sudderth.¹⁹ Bartlett A. Berry and Daniel P. Johnson operated grist mills in Lovelady Township in the 1870s and 1880s, along with William McGalliard and John Correll. Upper Creek grist mills included those of John Collett, James and John Shuffler, Nicholas Posey Beck, Thomas W. Kincaid, and Joseph J. Erwin.²⁰ Silver Creek Township had several grist mills, including those owned by Tod R. Caldwell, Robert J. McElrath, Hugh C. Bennett, George White, and George Corpening.²¹ The Morganton Roller Mill in Morganton, operated by W. G. Hogan, and utilizing steam power, was established before 1890.²²

There were several tannery businesses in operation in Morganton in the 1870s and 1880s, including those owned by Jesse H. Howard (dating to the 1860s), Eli P. R. Cline, J. L. Patterson, S. M. Asbury, and Donald McKenzie. In Icard Township, there were three additional tanneries, owned by Lewis F. Warlick, Alexander Hood, and P. M. Warlick. Sawmills were in operation in Burke County by 1870, most of which were water-powered, and often operated alongside grist mills. There was one sawmill operating in Icard (Wesley Wilson), one in Silver Creek (Robert J. McElrath), two in Lower Fork Township (Samuel Carswell and Joel Cloud), one in Upper Creek Township (Thomas W. Kincaid), one in Linville Township (William F. McKesson), and two in Morganton Township (Joseph Mull and Utley and Company). By 1872 Austin Conley operated a

¹⁷ Ibid, pp. 230-253.

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 230.

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 232.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 232.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid, p. 233.

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sawmill in Bridgewater, along with several others that operated in Silver Creek Township, Icard Township, Lovelady Township, and Morganton Township that were in business by 1880.²³

While there were many carpenters and furniture makers in Burke County who operated their own shops in the decades following the Civil War, furniture manufacturing on a large scale did not emerge in the county until the latter part of the nineteenth century.²⁴ Morganton Woodworking Company was formed in 1885, and in 1886, J. W. Robertson established a sash, door, and blind factory. In 1885, the Morganton Furniture Manufacturing Company was founded in Morganton, but was destroyed by fire in 1887. After this fire, large-scale furniture manufacturing did not begin in earnest until after the beginning of the twentieth century.²⁵

There were small brickyards in operation before and soon after the Civil War, but there was little demand for brick until the Reconstruction years. However, when the State Insane Asylum at Morganton (now Broughton) was begun in 1883, a brickyard was built on site to construct the buildings. Samuel D. Dunavant, founder of the Dunavant Manufacturing Company, had the contract to produce bricks for the asylum.²⁶ In the late 1880s, John H. and Samuel T. Pearson won the bid to create brick for the Western North Carolina Railroad.²⁷

In 1884 Jonas Brittain operated a tobacco factory at Warlick; John A. Lackey and Brother operated one at Icard, and in 1886, the Sally Michael Tobacco Company was formed, shipping free pipes with tobacco orders.²⁸

Gold mining was an important industry in Burke County, with a flurry of activity taking place in the mid 1880s. Mines included Park Hill at Sigmonsborg and Penley at Perkinsville.²⁹

In 1884, there were five licensed distillers in the county. These included John Garrison, T. A. Garrison, Robert Powell, Wesley Walker in Morganton Township, and John McCall in Perkinsville.³⁰

²³ Ibid, pp. 238-239.

²⁴ Ibid, p. 241.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 242.

²⁶ Ibid, p. 249.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid, p. 250.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid, p. 251.

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Through the mid-1880s in Burke County, spinning and weaving still took place in private residences. “Home manufactories” in 1870 were valued at \$21,140.³¹ Also in 1870, Charles Shuping in Morganton, and Frank Warlick in Icard owned water-powered wool carding machines. Each used 2,000 bushels of wool to produce 2,000 pounds of carded wool.³² Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company in Morganton, was the first of the larger scale textile mills to be built in Burke County, in 1888.³³ It was followed in 1889 at Bridgewater by H. C. Bennett, who operated a cotton factory that burned.³⁴ In 1894, John Meier, who worked as superintendent at Oats Hosiery Mill in Charlotte, became interested in the farming community of Valdese and for a brief time set up hosiery machinery in a barn on one of the family farms. This did not operate for long, but it did introduce the Waldensian community to the idea of textile production.³⁵

Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company and a New Era in Textile Manufacturing (1888 – 1894)

When the first textile mill in the county, Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company, was organized in 1888, it signaled Morganton and Burke County’s move into larger-scale textile production. The land for the Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company, originally twenty-one acres across from the depot, was purchased from John W. Campbell on August 13, 1888, for \$1000.00.³⁶ *The Morganton Star* newspaper accounts from 1888 to 1889 note the excitement in the community as the mill construction was taking place. On May 4, 1888, the newspaper article pointed out that the community was “...still clinging to the hope that Messrs Wilson, Dunavant, and Reid can be induced to build their factory at Morganton instead of Round Knob....” A May 25 article from the same year announced that a decision had been made, and the mill would be located in Morganton.³⁷ At that time, E. F. Reid, Samuel DeWitt Dunavant, James W. Wilson, and Hardy Hicks comprised the founding partners, with the platted acreage already purchased

³¹ Ibid, p. 244.

³² Ibid.

³³ According to the 1901 North Carolina Yearbook (Raleigh, North Carolina: News and Observer, p. 48), the population of Morganton in 1900 was under 2,000, although the 1880 census records for Morganton Township indicates there were 3,021 individuals. The boundaries of the town for these publications may have been different, accounting for the discrepancy.

³⁴ Phifer, Edward W., Jr. *The History of a North Carolina County: Burke*. Morganton, North Carolina: Privately published by Edward William Phifer, Jr. 1977, p. 245.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Burke County Deed Book P, p. 314.

³⁷ “It Is Now A Certainty—Contracts to Be Let At Once for the Erection of the Building”. *The Morganton Star*, May 25, 1888.

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Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company
Burke County, North Carolina

from John W. Campbell.³⁸ The company was exempted from county taxes for five years as an incentive to build the mill in Morganton. On June 8, 1888, the paper announced the company would be called Morganton Cotton Manufacturing Company, with Dunavant as president, Hicks as vice-president, and Reid as secretary-treasurer. A contract had been let for the brick, with the hope the mill would be up and running by October 1, 1888. Groundbreaking for the mill happened on July 13, 1888, with John Campbell selected as brick contractor. The *Star* noted on August 17, 1888, that the name of the mill had been changed from the incorporated name of Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company to S. D. Dunavant Cotton, so as not to confuse it with Morganton Manufacturing Company. An August 24, 1888 article noted that the walls for the mill would be fifteen feet high and total cost would be \$8,000 to \$10,000 to build. As plans continued to develop, an October 5, 1888 article noted that the building would be 175 feet long, and fifty-four feet wide, with two large rooms attached on the south to house the engine department (seventy-two feet long) and the picker (sixty-two feet long).³⁹ A smoke stack would be eighty feet high, using 75,000 bricks, and there would be 2100 spindles to start which could process 2500 pounds of cotton warp every twenty-four hours. This same article noted that "...we look upon this enterprise as being the grandest and most conducive to the welfare of Morganton and Burke County of any enterprise, except the western North Carolina Asylum, that has ever been established here...." Despite the best laid plans of opening in October of 1888, the building was not completed until December 14, 1888. The *Star* further noted, in an article dated February 8, 1889, that the ten-horse-power-engine was being placed and the electric light plant was nearing completion. As of June 27, 1889, all machinery was in place and work was to begin the following Monday morning, with plans to enlarge right away.⁴⁰

Dunavant Cotton Mills purchased the property from one of the founding partners, James W. Wilson, on December 6, 1892 "...together with the cotton factory mill and all machinery therein and all houses and offices therein, including a desk and a certain safe and all office furniture in said offices...."⁴¹ The purchase price at this time, including the original twenty-one acres, was \$10,000.00.⁴²

³⁸ Little is known about Samuel DeWitt Dunavant, other than his brief ownership of a brickyard, but deed records in Burke County note that he was living in the county by 1875 and was buying and selling property in addition to the mill operations through 1918.

³⁹ The building is oriented northeast-southwest, so this is referring to the rooms located along the southeast elevation.

⁴⁰ See Sanborn map 1900. Expansion did not begin until 1900, when the property had changed ownership and was known as Alpine Mill No. 1. It is not known why the Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company did not expand right away, as noted in the newspaper article.

⁴¹ Name changed from Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company. Burke County Corporation Book A, pp. 74 to 76.

⁴² Burke County Deed Book W, p. 245.

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Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company
Burke County, North Carolina

Changing Leadership and Expanding Production (1895 – 1930)

By 1894, the Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company was in a receivership, with Franklin P. Tate (1867 – 1937), as receiver, and the company name was changed in 1895 to Alpine Cotton Mill No.1.⁴³ The mill was reorganized with William Allen Erwin of Durham as president, Thomas P. Moore as secretary-treasurer, and Colonel S. McD. Tate as an additional stockholder. Joseph Ernest Erwin, brother of William Allen, served as assistant manager and then chief executive officer.⁴⁴ William Allen Erwin was one of the major players in North Carolina during the “Cotton Mill Campaign” of 1885 to 1915, and by this time had already established several other mills in the latter part of the nineteenth century, including the Erwin Mills, Durham Manufacturing Company, and Pearl Mills in Durham.⁴⁵ The purchase of the Dunavant mill allowed the Erwin family of mills to expand into the western part of the state.

The 1894 Sanborn map for Morganton indicates the original Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company building consisted of the main section, comprised of carding and spinning operations, with the engine department and picker operations located in the wings which projected to the southeast. By 1900, when the company ownership had changed and it was known as Alpine Mill No. 1, there were plans for the addition of a carding room on the southwest and a winding room had been added on the northeast. By 1910, separate warehouse buildings had been built southwest of the main building, with the largest expansion happening between 1910 and 1924, when three large warehouses were attached to the west end of the building.

As of 1901, Alpine Mill No. 1 had \$50,000 of capital stock, 3,500 spindles, and no looms. The mill had expanded in size by this time to keep up with the growing need of other Erwin-owned mills for cotton thread. Alpine Mill No. 1 was producing course cotton thread, but no finished fabric.⁴⁶ Alpine Mill No. 2, was built up the hill and to the east of Alpine Cotton Mill No.1, in 1902. The *Morganton News Herald*, in a July 24, 1902, article entitled “A Visit to Morganton and Its Cotton Mills”, noted that the mills were located on the Western North Carolina Railroad, sixty miles east of Asheville, in a fine agricultural part of the state. Alpine Mill No. 2 had been

⁴³ Phifer, Edward W., Jr. *The History of a North Carolina County: Burke*. Morganton, North Carolina: Privately published by Edward William Phifer Jr. 1977, pp. 162, 165, 428. Franklin P. Tate, son of Colonel S. McD. Tate, served as Burke County surveyor from 1892 to 1894, was on the Board of Directors of Bank of Morganton when it was founded in 1904, and was also president of Morganton Insurance and Realty Company, established in 1909.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* p. 245.

⁴⁵ Glass, Brent D. *The Textile Industry In North Carolina: A History*. Raleigh, North Carolina: Division of Archives and History, 1992, p. 33.

⁴⁶ *North Carolina Yearbook*, Raleigh, North Carolina: *News and Observer*, 1901, p. 78. In contrast to Alpine Mills, other milling enterprises of W. A. Erwin were much larger. Erwin Mills had \$350,000 in capital stock, 25,000 spindles and 925 looms to produce finished cloth. Durham Manufacturing Company had \$150,000 in stock, 18,000 spindles, and 588 looms. Pearl had \$175,000 in stock, 10,200 spindles and 210 looms.

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Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company
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completed by Erwin earlier in 1902, and Alpine Mill No. 1 was continuing in full operation. As of 1902, president of the two mills was W. A. Erwin, with Joseph Ernest Erwin as assistant manager, and T. P. Moore as secretary-treasurer. J. I. Caine was mill superintendent, and J. T. Ramseur was the overseer of carding and spinning in Alpine No. 1. Assisting Mr. Ramseur was Harper Singleton, George Harden, carding, Tom McGalliard, spinning, and W. B. McNeely, engineer.⁴⁷

It appears that the two Alpine Mills in Morganton operated as one entity. Yearbooks and company letterhead note the production of 8s to 14s cotton yarn, a course yarn that was likely sold through the company's Erwin Yarn Agency in Philadelphia and perhaps to the myriad of other Erwin-run cloth mills in Durham.⁴⁸ These types of yarns, both quite coarse, were used in the production of course fabric such as gingham and other heavier fabrics. As of 1903, the secretary-treasurer of the Alpine Cotton Mills was Joseph Ernest Erwin, with T. P. Moore as superintendent. By 1905, Moore was no longer superintendent, and Erwin was listed as secretary-treasurer and superintendent.⁴⁹ By 1907, the population of Morganton had increased to 2,500, and Alpine Mills, along with other Erwin-owned mills in the piedmont area of the state, were all going strong.⁵⁰ Alpine Mills together had 10,400 spindles (no looms). All of the Erwin-run mills, except Alpine, produced finished cloth products.⁵¹

In addition to the two Alpine mills, several additional textile mills began operations in Burke County in the first two decades of the twentieth century. In May 1901, John "Bobo" Garrou, his brother Francis Garrou, and Antoine Grill formed the Waldensian Hosiery Mills, followed, in 1913, by the formation of the Valdese Manufacturing Company.⁵² The Henry River Manufacturing Company was built in 1905, manufacturing fine cotton yarns sold primarily in New York, and, in 1909, Drexel Knitting Mill which manufactured men's hosiery.⁵³ Also in

⁴⁷"A Visit to Morganton and Its Mills", *The Morganton News Herald*, July 24, 1902.

⁴⁸ Alpine Mills archives, in possession of current owner, Clark Erwin, grandson of Joseph Ernest Erwin. Letters of correspondence include company letterhead for Alpine Mills and of the Erwin Yarn Agency, Inc. in Philadelphia.

⁴⁹ *North Carolina Yearbook*, Raleigh, North Carolina: *News and Observer*, 1903, p. 127 and 1905, p. 132.

⁵⁰ It is not known how many people were employed at Alpine Mill No. 1 at this time. Other successful Erwin mills included Durham Cotton Manufacturing Company (run by another brother, J. Harper Erwin), Erwin Cotton Mills (run by W. A. Erwin), and Pearl Cotton Mills (run by W. A. Erwin).. Erwin Cotton Mill was running 25,088 spindles and 903 looms; Durham Cotton Manufacturing Company was running 22,544 spindles and 820 looms; Pearl Cotton Mills was running 10,336 spindles and 238 looms; Erwin Cotton Mill No. 2 (at Duke, North Carolina) was running 35,000 spindles and 1,024 looms; and Erwin Cotton Mill No. 3 (at Cooleemee, North Carolina) was running 47,360 spindles and 1,296 looms.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 1911, p. 111 and 194; 1913, p. 121, 122, 187; 1915, p. 126.

⁵² *Ibid*, p. 246.

⁵³ *Ibid*, p. 248. In the mid-1950s, Drexel Knitting Mill merged with Morganton Full-Fashioned Hosiery Mills and Huffman Full-Fashioned Mills to form Morganton Hosiery Mills.

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1913, the Martinet Hosiery Mills began operation in East Valdese, remaining in business until 1964. In 1914, the E. A. Smith Manufacturing Company was built on the Catawba River, and the Icard Cordage Company was built in Icard. It manufactured cotton braided sash cord and clothesline.⁵⁴ The Waldensian Swiss Embroidery Mill began in Valdese in 1915, operating only nine years. Vaudois Hosiery Mill formed in 1913 to 1914, near the railway depot in Morganton.⁵⁵ In 1917, Francis Garrou founded Liberty Hosiery Mill near High Peak, which continued in operation until 1939.⁵⁶ Also in 1917, Garrou Knitting Mills in Morganton was formed by Francis and John Louis Garrou, later known as Morganton Manufacturing and Trading Company.⁵⁷ Pauline Knitting Mills was begun in 1920, manufacturing mercerized ladies' cotton hose and later silk hose. It lasted only eight years, and became part of the Waldensian Hosiery Mill.⁵⁸ In 1920 Glen Alpine Knitting Mill was established to manufacture hosiery, continuing in operation until 1946.⁵⁹ In 1922, Garrou Knitting Mills was bought out by the Waldensian Hosiery mill, Drexel Knitting Mill, and A. V. Victorius and Company of New York. Morganton Full-Fashioned Mill was organized in 1926, and Garrou became part of it.⁶⁰

The textile mill industry in North Carolina and Burke County continued to expand in the mid-to-late 1920s. Cotton mills were moving from the North to the South entirely or opening southern branches. Cotton was plentiful in the South, labor was inexpensive and abundant, and there was less organized labor. This geographic change began the move from production of coarse thread in the South to finer threads and more finished cloth.⁶¹ In a special to the *Morganton News Herald* dated May 13, 1920, it was noted the Alpine Cotton Mill No. 1 had a total of 4,104 spindles, Alpine No. 2 had 6,336 spindles, and for many years the two plants formed one of the largest industrial operations in Burke County, employing 250 local workers.⁶² There were 377 cotton mills in operation state-wide in 1922, and both Alpine Cotton Mill No. 1 and No. 2 were in full operation.

⁵⁴ Ibid, pp. 247 to 248. In 1945, the Smith Mill and one in Catawba County were sold to Pacific Mills and then in 1954 were sold to Burlington Industries.

⁵⁵ Ibid. Albert F. Garrou, Ben Pons, and Henry Grill were the managers of Vaudois Hosiery Mill.

⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 246.

⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 246. Vaudois Hosiery Mill later merged with Garrou Knitting Mills.

⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 246.

⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 248. Incorporation papers referred to the company as the Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company.

⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 246.

⁶¹ *Morganton News Herald*, 1924 Prosperity and Publicity Edition.

⁶² Phifer, Edward W., Jr. *The History of a North Carolina County: Burke, Morganton*, North Carolina: Privately published by Edward William Phifer, Jr. 1977, p. 348. It is not known how many were employed just at Alpine No. 1. The 1930 population for Morganton was 6001, but information was not available for the exact population of Morganton in 1920.

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Alpine continued to produce course yarns, which were not used for the production of the newer trends towards finished hosiery and did not appear to make any effort to transition to the new finer hosiery production threads or machinery needed to produce them.⁶³ By 1925, there were 386 mills statewide, including the mills from earlier in the century in Burke County which continued operations. By 1927 one additional knitting mill, Frazier Hosiery Mills in Icard, had opened.⁶⁴

Changes in Textile Production (1931 – 1949)

Despite a slow-down in the early 1930s, by 1937, Alpine Cotton Mills were still in production, with \$200,000 in capital stock, but not running any more spindles than they had in 1920. The secretary-treasurer was S. M. Sloan, and they were still producing only 4s to 16s single and ply cotton yarns, but no finished products.⁶⁵ Garrou Knitting Mills in Morganton, producing hosiery, had \$100,856 in stock, and was running 215 circular and twelve full-fashion knitting machines. Morganton Full-Fashion Hosiery Company carried stock of \$617,800 and had sixty-six full-fashion knitting machines running.⁶⁶ Elsewhere in Burke County, Glen Alpine Knitting Mill produced fancy half hose; J. A. Cline & Son in Hildebran produced fancy and half hose; and Burke Cordage in Icard, producing sash cord and clothes lines, had \$150,000 in stock and ran 1184 spindles and 206 braiders. Production continued at other mills in the county in the late 1930s, including, at Valdese, fancy half hose at Blackstone Hosiery Mills, half hose at Martinat Hosiery Mills, full fashion hosiery at Pilot Full Fashion Mills, Inc., underwear and hosiery yarns at Valdese Manufacturing Company, draperies and upholstery fabric at Valdese Weaving Company, and hosiery at Waldensian Hosiery Mills.⁶⁷

The other Erwin Mills in Durham were also still in high production, with Durham Cotton Manufacturing company carrying \$450,000 in stock and running 23,936 spindles and 512 looms. Their products included gingham, furniture, and play cloths. Erwin Cotton Mills (No. 1 and No. 4) was carrying \$9,228,000 in capital stock and was running 89,984 spindles and 1897 looms. Along with Erwin No. 2, No. 3, and No. 5, they were producing wide sheetings, sheets, and

⁶³ North Carolina Yearbook, Raleigh, North Carolina: *News and Observer*, 1922, pp. 86 and 91. Erwin Cotton Mills No. 3, Pearl Cotton Mills, Durham Cotton Manufacturing Company, Erwin Cotton Mills Co. No. 1 and No. 4, Erwin Cotton Mills No. 2, and Erwin Cotton Mills Bleachery were also still in major production at this time. Also, interview with Clark Erwin, current owner and descendent of Joseph Ernest Erwin. Interview with Sybil H. Argintar, July 10, 2012.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 1927, p. 82.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 1937, p. 121.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p. 117, 119, 124.

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Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company
Burke County, North Carolina

pillow cases.⁶⁸ By 1939, Erwin Cotton Mills No. 3, with 40,080 spindles and 1230 looms, was producing cantons, tickings, covert, outings, interlining flannel, and suiting material. Durham Manufacturing Company produced dress goods, furniture cloth, and napped goods. Erwin No. 1, 4 and 6 produced sheeting fabric, and Erwin No. 2 and 5 produced denims, stripes, and fancy suiting material.⁶⁹ In contrast, Alpine Mills continued in its production of 4s to 16s single and ply yarns, a practice which continued into the 1940s.⁷⁰

Modern Industry in Morganton and Burke County (1949 – present)

Alpine Cotton Mill No. 1 remained in business until 1949 when it was sold to Drexel Heritage Furnishings, Inc. on February 4, 1949.⁷¹ While it is not documented why the mill was sold, it may have been due to the fact that it never switched over from coarse yarn production to finer grade yarns and finished fabrics, especially upholstery fabric, to keep up with the burgeoning furniture industry as many other local mills had done.⁷² Drexel used the upper level of the building as a warehouse until the early 1960s, when it began its upholstered furniture operation in the former cotton mill, changing the name to Drexel Plant No. 7. By 1966, with the completion of the 45,000 square-foot, three-story addition on the southwest, the mill was in full production, including building frames, cutting, sewing, cushion manufacturing, upholstery, and shipping.⁷³ Drexel Heritage sold the property on December 28, 2001, to HDM Furniture Industries, Inc.⁷⁴ As the furniture industry in North Carolina continued a downward trend in production, HDM Furniture owned the property until November 12, 2010, when it was sold to Alpine Mill LLC, the current owner, who also purchased Alpine Mill No. 2.

Only a handful of the textile mills in Morganton and Burke County are still in existence. Alpine Cotton Mill No. 2 was converted to Drexel Plant No. 6 (1902, 101 Dixon Street) and is still in use for furniture manufacturing. It has undergone extensive changes to the building with many modern additions dating after 1949 that almost entirely obscure the original building, except for the southwest elevation. The original Garrou Knitting Mills (1917, 305 E. Union Street), later Morganton Manufacturing and Trading Company, has been renovated into residential, office,

⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 116.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 1939, p. 117.

⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 122.

⁷¹ Burke County Deed Book 90, p. 362. According to the November 30, 1949 annual report for Drexel Furniture Company, p. 5, it appears they acquired both mills in 1949.

⁷² Erwin, Clark. Current owner and descendent of Joseph Ernest Erwin. Interview with Sybil H. Argintar, June 21, 2012.

⁷³ Wells, John. Interview with Sybil H. Argintar and Ginny Erwin, June 21, 2012, and “ ‘Old’ Alpine Plant Is Being Enlarged”, *Morganton News Herald*, February 9, 1966.

⁷⁴ Burke County Deed Book 1075, p. 389.

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Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company
Burke County, North Carolina

and retail use. While very little remains of the original 1891 section of the building, which was the John Dickson Woodworking Factory, the renovation of later pre-1949 additions has brought back the appearance of the building to its 1930s appearance. Morganton Furniture Company, (1905, 210 New Street), was converted to Drexel Plant No. 33 in 1957, and, like Alpine No. 2, has had extensive post-1949 additions made which have affected the integrity of the original building.

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Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company
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Sanborn Map Company maps 1894, 1900, 1905, 1910, 1924, 1931, 1950.

Taylor, Charlie. Worked at Drexel Furniture Company 1960 to 1965. Interview with Sybil H. Argintar, May 2012.

Wells, John. Former head of upholstery operations, Drexel Furniture Company, 1960 – 1966. Interview with Sybil H. Argintar and Ginny Erwin, June 21, 2012.

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Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company
Burke County, North Carolina

Additional UTM's

- 5. 17 438460 3955230
- 6. 17 438400 3955170
- 7. 17 438360 3955210
- 8. 17 438420 3955250

Boundary Description

The boundary is shown on the accompanying survey map, at a scale of 1 inch equals 100 feet.

Boundary Justification

The property boundary includes a portion of the land historically associated with the mill building which provides an appropriate historic setting. Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company. Mill-owned acreage where mill housing and other cotton warehouses were previously located has not been included.

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Section Number Photos Page 20 Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company
Burke County, North Carolina

Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company Photographs

The following information pertains to all photographs:

Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company
Morganton, Burke County, North Carolina

Photographer: Sybil Argintar

Date: Various dates, see photo view entry

Digital master location: North Carolina Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh, NC

View information:

1. Southeast elevation, view north, April 2012
2. Southeast elevation, view west, April 2012
3. Northeast elevation, view south, March 2011
4. Northwest elevation and boiler plant, view northeast, March 2011
5. Typical window opening, northwest elevation, March 2011
6. Ca. 1920 cotton warehouse, view north, March 2011
7. Ground floor, original mill section, view northeast, June 2012
8. Ground floor walls and foundation, March 2011
9. Second floor, view southwest, April 2012
10. 1963/1966 addition, second floor, March 2011
11. Overall view, looking north, April 2012

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Section number 1, 3 Page 1

Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company

Name of Property
Burke County, North Carolina

County and State
N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

1. Name of Property

Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company—Additional Documentation

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant locally.

Signature of certifying official/Title: **Date**
North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: **Date**

Title : **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

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Section number 4, 8 Page 2

**Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing
Company**

Name of Property

Burke County, North Carolina

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 determined eligible for the National Register
 determined not eligible for the National Register
 removed from the National Register
 other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Section 8—Additional Documentation

This additional documentation provides corrected information concerning the National Register nomination, Section 8, pages 10 and 11, for the Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company in Morganton, Burke County, North Carolina.

The nomination incorrectly named the mill founder as Samuel DeWitt Dunavant. His correct full name is Samuel David Dunavant (1839-1906). That the nomination provides an inaccurate middle name is due to the combined facts that historical records often refer to him simply as S.D. Dunavant and one of his sons was named Samuel DeWitt Dunavant (1880-1941).

The nomination also states in a footnote “Little is known about Samuel DeWitt [*sic*] Dunavant, other than his brief ownership of a brickyard, but deed records in Burke County note that he was living in the county by 1875 and was buying and selling property in addition to the mill operations through 1918.” New information, provided after the property was entered into the National Register of Historic Places, indicates that this statement is in error. Samuel David Dunavant died in 1906 after suffering from kidney disease.¹ The confusion resulting from the two related S.D. Dunavants is most likely what led to the statement that Samuel (David) Dunavant continued dealing in real estate until 1918.

Born in 1839 in Farmville, Virginia, Samuel David Dunavant moved to North Carolina in 1860 to work in the railroad industry. Nine years later, he married Burke County native Virginia Corpening. The couple eventually had six children, four of whom reached maturity. Although a railroad contractor, Samuel David Dunavant engaged in other commercial activity in and around Morganton, North Carolina. His other interests included ownership of a brickyard and a livery stable and, in the late 1880s, the organization of the Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company.²

¹ Robertson, Christopher Hunt, comp. *Railroad Builders: The Dunavant Family of Virginia, North Carolina and Tennessee* (Raleigh, NC: the compiler, 2014), np.

² It has also been suggested that, in 1885, Samuel David Dunavant built the Eagle Hotel, which was located between the railroad and downtown Morganton, but no clear primary source documentation from the mid-1880s confirms this.

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Section number 8, 9, 11 Page 3

**Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing
Company**

Name of Property

Burke County, North Carolina

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Although he organized the Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company, Samuel David Dunavant's primary business concern was railroad contracting. He was involved in the organization and/or construction of several railroads, including the Western North Carolina Railroad, the South and Western Railroad (predecessor to the Clinchfield Railroad), the Lenoir and Wilson's Creek Railroad, and the Caldwell and Northern Railroad.³ Dunavant continued to be active in the railroad industry even after the cotton mill was in receivership and eventually sold to the Erwin family.

In addition to railroad contracting, Samuel David Dunavant was active in the local community. Although all of his elected and appointed service is not known at this time, newspaper documentation indicates that he was elected to the Town Commission of Morganton for a three-year term in 1891. Also, in 1894, he served on the five-member Burke County Pension Board.

This new information was submitted by Christopher Robertson of Raleigh, North Carolina, a descendant of Samuel David Dunavant. The additional documentation was compiled primarily from newspaper articles from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Section 9 - Bibliography

Robertson, Christopher Hunt, comp. *Railroad Builders: The Dunavant Family of Virginia, North Carolina and Tennessee* (Raleigh, NC: the compiler, 2014).

Section 11

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May 1, 2014

³ Robertson, op. cit.