

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 an 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 Edenton Cotton Mill Historic District

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number Bounded by E. Church St., Blount's Creek, Queen Anne's Creek, and Wood Avenue N/A not for publication

city or town Edenton N/A vicinity

state North Carolina code NC county Chowan code 041 zip code 27932

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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.)

Jeffrey Brown SHPD 12/11/98  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State of 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 official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- 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): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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.)

- Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
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.
Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
removed from its original location.
a birthplace or grave.
a cemetery.
a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
a commemorative property.
less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Community Planning and Development

Social History

Industry

Architecture

Period of Significance

1899-1948

Significant Dates

1899

1900

1904

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Makepeace, C.R.

Borum, George L.

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:

Name of Property

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 48.853 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	18	355460	3991620
Zone	Easting	Northing	
2	18	355920	3991660

3	18	355940	3990980
Zone	Easting	Northing	
4	18	355500	3990940

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 Thomas R. Butchko, Consulting Architectural Historian

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date July 24, 1998

street & number P.O. Box 206 telephone 252.335.7916

city or town Elizabeth City state NC zip code 27907-0206

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 SHPO or FPO.)

name \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**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 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 Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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### 7. Description

The Edenton Cotton Mill Historic District consists of a small, remarkably intact mill village that attained essentially its present form between 1899 and 1923. It contains seventy-six primary resources located on seven blocks on the eastern edge of Edenton, a town of 5,268 residents (1990) that serves as the seat of Chowan County in the Albemarle region of northeastern North Carolina. At only 180 square miles, Chowan County is the smallest in area of the state's one hundred counties, and its 1990 population of 12,558 ranks thirteenth smallest in the state. Like its neighbors, Chowan County is an agricultural county, with principal crops being corn, soybeans, peanuts, and cotton. Edenton, the county's only incorporated town, has been a center of governmental, economic, educational, and social activities since its formation in 1712. Edenton's long history as one of the earliest towns in North Carolina, the colony's seat of government until 1743, a leading political center during the Revolution, and a prosperous trading center for a thriving antebellum plantation economy, is reflected in its abundance of historic buildings. Included among these are three National Historic Landmarks--the 1758 Cupola House (NHL 1970), the 1767 Chowan County Courthouse (NHL 1970), and the 1814-1817 Hayes Plantation (NHL 1974)--and residential and commercial neighborhoods that contain numerous buildings of local, regional, and statewide architectural and historical significance. The Edenton Historic District (NR 1973) encompasses much of a town well known and widely promoted for its history, architecture, and visual attractiveness.

The Edenton Cotton Mill Historic District lies east of the older district, separated from it by the eastern two-thirds of the block bounded by East King, East Queen, South Oakum, and Mill streets. In this block was located the Norfolk and Southern Passenger Station (demolished after 1974) and adjoining railyards. While one line of the rails remains and is used only several times a year to bring materials in and out of the Hayes farm, located immediately south of the cotton mill across Queen Anne's Creek, the tract is otherwise undeveloped and continues to serve as a buffer between the Edenton Cotton Mill property and the rest of Edenton. The district contains all or parts of seven blocks, bordered by East Church Street on the north, Mill Street on the west, Blount's Creek on the east, and Queen Anne's Creek on the south. Two of the four east-west streets in the mill district--East Queen, and East King streets--are extensions of the oldest east-west streets in Edenton, while Phillips and Elliott streets are found only in the mill village. (For research purposes, it is critical to note that prior to ca. 1993 East Church Street was known as East Church Street Extended and Phillips Street was known as East Church Street; the renaming was done to avoid confusion when the county's 9-1-1 emergency system was installed.)

The Edenton Cotton Mill Historic District is bordered by a mix of

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developed and undeveloped areas. East Church Street (on the north) is the only significant street entering the older section of Edenton from the east, serving as the route of NC 32-Business. It is the primary route from Edenton to the Yeopim section of the county and then southward across the Albemarle Sound Bridge to Tyrrell and Washington counties. The area northeast and east (across Blount's Creek) of the district consists of mixed commercial areas along East Church Street, and to the east of these, a recent up-scale residential development, several historic houses, and finally, farmland. Adjacent to the west is a large vacant tract that was the site of the local railroad depot and yards until the 1970s and beyond that are residential areas of the Edenton Historic District. To the northwest of the Edenton Cotton Mill Historic District (north of and along East Church Street) is a historically black residential neighborhood. The focus of the East Church Street corridor is the imposing five-story, 1909 brick building of the Edenton Peanut Company (NR 1979). Finally, south and southeast of the district, are swampy wetlands along Queen Anne's and Blount's creeks. Across the former is the large farm associated with Hayes (NHL 1974), and beyond that, Edenton Bay and Albemarle Sound.

The topography of the Edenton Cotton Mill Historic District is flat, drained by Queen Anne's Creek and its northward branch, Blount's Creek, which form the district's southern and eastern boundaries, respectively. It is along these creeks, particularly east of the mill (entry 1), that the district's only readily noticeable changes in elevation occur as the land slopes downward to the creek and its adjacent wetlands. The district has a fairly extensive tree cover consisting primarily of mature hardwoods planted as early as 1900-1901 along the four east-west streets: Phillips, East Queen, Elliott, and East King streets. While these have been underplanted and replaced on a limited scale, an extensive replanting program begun in 1996 has resulted in the installation of many new trees along the public streets. Other areas of notable vegetation are the dense swamp forests that cover the low areas along Queen Anne's and Blount's creeks and a handsome alley of pine trees bordering the eastern half of East King Street adjacent to the former Athletic Field (entry 59).

The Edenton Cotton Mill Historic District retains a remarkably high level of architectural integrity for two reasons: the entire property remained under mill ownership until 1995, limiting the extent of remodeling and the construction of garages and other outbuildings that might otherwise have occurred to similar privately-owned dwellings; and that the new owners in 1996, the Historic Preservation Foundation of North Carolina, Inc., commonly known as Preservation NC, placed the entire district under restrictive covenants. Thus, not only were the asbestos shingles installed on most of the one-story dwellings during the 1950s removed during initial restoration, but new construction is limited in size and is allowed only on the rear of dwellings. The residential resources are exclusively frame,

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while the mill buildings are exclusively brick. Only the First Christian Church (entry 70) has been altered with brick veneer. The district contains sixty-three primary resources, of which sixty-two, or ninety-eight percent, are contributing. The thirty-three secondary resources consist primarily of nine garages (three contributing) and five storage sheds (three contributing), plus fences, lawn curbs, and other incidental objects and structures, all noncontributing. Of the ninety-five total resources, seventy-four, or seventy-eight percent, are contributing.

### INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES

The most prominent resource within the Edenton Cotton Mill Historic District is, not surprisingly, the Edenton Cotton Mill itself (entry 1), a large one- and two-story brick building constructed in several phases between 1899 and 1916. With a frontage along McMullan Avenue of approximately 550 feet, the building exerts a considerable presence within the district. The design, as executed by C. R. Makepeace, a noted architect and engineer of textile buildings from Providence, Rhode Island, drew upon the Italianate Revival style that dominated American industrial construction during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The building's architectural character was defined by the repetition of large window bays filled with multiple-pane windows surmounted by segmental arches, the rhythm of which is punctuated by projecting ceiling joists overhead. These windows were bricked in the 1960s when the plant was air-conditioned, a process seen industry-wide in North Carolina and throughout the South. The focus of the plant continues to be a handsome three-stage tower set near the northeast corner of the building. It features round-arched windows in the upper story with segmentally-arched windows on the second floor (all now closed), a robust cornice of corbeled brickwork, and a low pyramidal roof. The mill building's low-gabled roof is distinguished by a clerestory monitor window that extends along the ridge for practically the entire 550-foot length of the building. Contiguous with the mill building are such prominent features as the machine shop, with its handsome round-arched windows, and the tall concrete smokestack, the only element of the mill building visible from a long distance. Other contributing secondary resources in the mill complex include buildings necessary for the successful operation of the mill, primarily a large, utilitarian, four-section brick and frame cotton warehouse (entry 1-a).

The Edenton Cotton Mill Office (entry 60) is a handsomely-scaled one-story brick building located immediately adjacent but across McMullan Avenue from the mill, facing Elliott Street. While its segmentally-arched windows and subtle brick pilasters echo those in the mill, a tall hip roof accented

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by a continuous boxed cornice provides a refined contrast to the staccato thrusts of the mill's projecting joists. A pedimented front porch, erected in 1948 and enclosed with glass (perhaps at a later date), provides further contrast to the mill but relates the building to the town's storied Colonial heritage.

## RESIDENTIAL RESOURCES

## Traditional turn-of-the-century house forms

The most prevalent house form in the Edenton Cotton Mill Historic District is a simple one-story, single-pile, frame dwelling beneath a gable roof. This house type, of which there are thirty-nine examples comprising seventy percent of the district's fifty-six dwellings, is simply finished with weatherboard siding, large six-over-six sash windows in flat surrounds, and a shed-roofed porch carried by simple chamfered posts. As would be expected, the roofs of the mill houses were originally covered with wood shingles and remained as such until 1928-1929 when, as reported at the company's annual meeting of stockholders, many of the shingle roofs were replaced with the standing seam metal roofs which remain today (Minutes, July 10, 1929). Each house originally stood upon an open foundation of brick piers, and while a few open foundations still remain, such as 401 and 403 Elliott (entries 45 and 46), most have been infilled with concrete blocks, as at 406 Elliott Street (entry 56).

While these simple one-story "tenements," as they were known in the minutes of the mill's Board of Directors, appear to be nearly identical, there are important, albeit subtle, differences. The porch carries the only decorative woodwork, the sawtooth lower edge of the vertically-laid beaded tongue-and-groove siding used to sheathe the ends of the porch roof on those houses erected as duplexes and which have central interior chimneys. The single-family dwellings, with a single central or off-center entrance and interior or exterior-end chimney flues, lack this simple element. Duplexes were built with a pair of centrally-placed doors leading to separate one-room apartments, with a shared kitchen occupying the one-room ell. Although all of these duplexes were eventually converted into single-family units as the housing needs of the mill workers changed, several houses--such as 402 Phillips Street (1909, entry 15), 409 East Queen Street (1904, entry 28), and 405 Elliott Street (1899, entry 47)--retain both front doors. Others, such as 408 East Queen Street (1899, entry 40), have had either the left or the right door closed. Still others, such as 408 Phillips Street (1908, entry 18), were built along the same plan but with a single central door. This basic house type was later built in a modified form with the addition of a false central gable, a feature prevalent in North Carolina vernacular dwellings of the period. Four houses of this variant were built in 1917 at 400, 402, 404, and 406 Elliott Street (entries 54-56).

Of the eight two-story dwellings, six were constructed for larger

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families of mill workers and two for overseers. These larger houses were built in two forms that followed building forms prevalent in eastern North Carolina during the turn of the century. Each has a simple shed-porch carried by chamfered posts across the facade and four-over-four sash windows.

Most numerous among the two-story houses are the four, gable-roofed single-pile workers' dwellings illustrated by three adjacent houses at 409, 411, and 413 Elliott Street (entries 49-51), all built in 1899. The main distinguishing feature among these is the location of the pair of interior chimneys in each dwelling, with those at 411 and 413 Elliott Street having interior chimneys flanking the central hall, while 409 Elliott and 501 East Queen Street (entry 33) have interior rear chimneys. Both chimney placements are atypical in Edenton and rural Chowan County, where exterior or interior end chimneys predominate in contemporary dwellings. Three of the houses have one- or two-room ells, each with a rear porch now closed. The exception is 411 Elliott which has full-width shed rooms with a one-room ell behind that.

The other two-story traditional houses within the Edenton Cotton Mill Historic District include a pair of identical adjacent workers' dwellings at 705 and 707 McMullan Avenue (entries 71 and 72), both erected in 1907. Each of these gable-front double-pile-plan dwellings is distinguished by an unaltered one-room rear ell that incorporates a side porch. Very similar to these two houses are a pair of 1921 Supervisor's Houses at 312 and 405 East King Street (entries 65 and 63). The main differences between the houses erected for supervisors and those for mill workers are a slightly finer finish of the porch and the use of more expensive one-over-one sash for the windows.

**Stylish early twentieth century house forms**

Domestic styles within the Edenton Cotton Mill Historic District follow modest examples of the Colonial Revival and Craftsman styles, the two styles that dominated residential construction in Edenton from ca. 1906 until the 1940s. Stylish houses within the mill village were generally reserved for the mill's management and supervisors, and the most accomplished of this limited number of dwellings are a trio of houses erected for mill supervisor's within six years in close proximity to each other. Each of these--the 1908 Engineer's House (entry 64), the 1909 Superintendent's House (entry 66), and the 1914 Spinning Overseer's House (entry 61)--is an asymmetrical composition that displays a juxtapositioning of reserved classical elements then popular among local home owners. Each of the three houses combines a side gable roof with a secondary offset front gable, while pediments and classical porch pillars accentuate the conservative lines. Each also has a feature that distinguishes it from the others: a deep engaged porch on the Engineer's House, an unusual gambrel form to the one-

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and-a-half-story front bay on the Superintendent's House, and a fully-developed two-story bay and demilune vents on the Spinning Overseer's House.

The only other dwelling within the district exhibiting Colonial Revival elements is the 1916 Carder's House (entry 62), on which sturdy Doric pillars and a continuous boxed cornice with frieze enliven an otherwise modestly-scaled and finished foursquare house.

The Craftsman style is represented in the Edenton Cotton Mill Historic District by three modestly-scaled but stylishly-finished one-story mill houses obtained in 1921 from the Aladdin Company of Bay City, Michigan, one of the nation's leading sellers of pre-cut house kits. These three houses at 503 East Queen Street and 410 and 412 Elliott Street (entries 34, 57, 58), with two more dwellings at 408 and 419 Elliott Street having been demolished, are "The Selwyn," as advertised in the company's 1918-1919 catalog. The simple three-room, gable-front buildings are entirely wood-shingled--the only dwellings in the mill village not originally covered with weatherboards--and have as a central focus of their design the use of attenuated paired casement windows, which impart a distinctively "modern" character to the dwellings that further distinguish them from neighboring houses having typical double-hung sash windows. Like all houses in the mill village, these Craftsman bungalows have a simple shed-roofed porch. Perhaps to save money, each porch is supported by sturdy chamfered posts rather than the slender Tuscan columns illustrated in the catalog.

### RELIGIOUS RESOURCES

The First Christian Church (1916, entry 70) is the only non-residential or industrial primary building within the Edenton Cotton Mill Historic District. Like many modestly-scaled church buildings erected by newly-formed congregations in small North Carolina towns during the early twentieth century, the First Christian Church follows a gable-front form that focuses on a two-story partially-inset corner bell tower. The building's Romanesque Revival character is supplied by the generous use of round-arched motifs, primarily the colored glass transoms above the central entrance and the one-over-one sash windows with colored glass Queen Anne borders. Further interest is supplied by subtle bellcast eaves of the pyramidal roof atop the belltower, a blunt wooden finial, and a large circular louvered vent at the apex of the front gable. During the 1960s the weatherboard exterior was veneered with brick.

### SECONDARY DOMESTIC RESOURCES

The number of secondary domestic resources--garages, storage sheds, and fences--within the Edenton Cotton Mill Historic District are relatively few primarily because the entire district remained under mill company ownership until 1996, thus limiting ancillary buildings erected by and for tenants. Of the fourteen domestic secondary buildings, only six are contributing

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(forty-three percent). These six, all of simple form and finish, primarily date from the 1930s and include simple gable-front, single-car frame garages with double-leaf doors (entries 30-a and 42-a), gable-roofed storage buildings (entry 50-a), and a well-maintained combination garage and storage shed (entry 49-a). All are typical of similar buildings erected throughout rural and urban northeastern North Carolina during the two decades before World War II. The noncontributing buildings are mostly frame garages and storage buildings, such as the large combination building behind the Engineer's House (entry 64-a) which was erected in the 1950s.

The other domestic secondary resources are noncontributing. They include two structures, 15-a and 61-a, which are poured concrete floors left from a garage or storage building that has been demolished. Four additional domestic structures are three recently-erected wooden picket fences enclosing rear or side yards (entries 7-b, 9-a, and 66-a), and the edging of concrete blocks along the sidewalk and walkway at 405 Phillips Street (entry 7-a) that provides a pleasant definition and border for simple plantings.

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### INVENTORY LIST

Historical information contained in the inventory list is based on material from the Edenton inventory files at the North Carolina Division of Archives and History, which was published in Thomas R. Butchko, Edenton: An Architectural Portrait (1992); the minutes of the Edenton Cotton Mills Company; Sanborn maps: 1910, 1920, 1927; newspaper references; and oral history. More complete histories of individual houses are given in those cases where single or extended families have occupied dwellings houses for extended periods. Those houses which have little known history were generally occupied by a succession of families, each for a relatively short period of time.

### Methodology

As the manufacturing plant of the Edenton Cotton Mill is the most important building in the Edenton Cotton Mill Historic District, that building and its associated secondary buildings and structures are listed first. Then the mill houses are listed, beginning with East Church Street on the north and continuing to East King Street on the south. Along each street, properties are listed from west to east, first those on the north side of the street and then those on the south side of the street. Lastly, the properties on McMullan Avenue, the only north-to-south street containing resources in the district, are listed from north to south, first those on the west side of the street and then those on the east side of the street.

The primary resource on a lot is assigned a number. Associated secondary resources carry the same number with a letter "a," "b," and so on.

The district map accompanying the nomination includes all inventory numbers. Vacant lots are numbered but not included in the count of resources.

### Status

The letter "C" indicates a contributing building. A building determined to be noncontributing is identified by either "NC-age," indicating that it was built after 1948; or "NC-alt," indicating a building that, while more than fifty years old, has been altered to the extent that it has lost its architectural integrity. Unless specified otherwise, each resource continues in its original use. Resources other than buildings are

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denoted as "C" or "NC" along with the suffix "-str" for structures, "-si" for site, and "-obj" for objects.

## Date

Building dates are largely derived from the minutes of the Edenton Cotton Mill Company and a map copied in 1988 from the company that delineates every dwelling and indicates its construction date. The Sanborn maps that cover the district date from 1910, 1920, and 1927, but never illustrate the entire district; unfortunately, an earlier 1904 edition shows none of the mill or mill village. For dating purposes, a resource that appears on the first map to show its parcel is indicated as "by 1910" or "by 1927," as the case may be. A resource which is not shown by one map but is shown on the next edition is indicated as "1910-1920," or however appropriate. Edenton has never been large enough to warrant a street-by-street city directory.

1. Edenton Cotton Mill 1899 C  
Large brick industrial building approximately 550 feet long and eighty feet wide, extending in a north-south direction along east side of McMullan Avenue; one-story for approximately northern three-fifths while southern two-fourths is two-story; covered by gable roof of shallow pitch that retains raised monitor windows along ridge; walls, raised in seven-to-one common bond brick, are pierced by tall segmental-arched windows that were bricked up in 1960s; major interest now supplied by arched soldier lintels with simple corbeled brick label moldings; adding to rhythmical progression of still-discernible arches is staccato punctuation of angled ends of large projecting rafters, one rafter situated between adjacent windows; focus of design is handsome three-story water tower situated on rear of northern end; walls pierced by segmental-arched windows on second story and round-arched windows on the third story, each with simple corbeled label moldings; cornice invigorated by complex corbeled brickwork featuring elongated brick dentils; several wings on rear of building include lapper and carder rooms in ell on rear northeast (behind tower) which connects to Cotton Warehouse (entry 1-a), and two-story reeling and spooling wing, added to rear southeast between 1910 and 1920; building enlarged on the south by a 116-foot long addition, the first of the two-story sections, in 1900, followed by other two-story additions in 1903 and 1909; in 1915-1916 a one-story wing for "carding" was appended on the north end; attached to the rear in the middle of the building is the engine room, boiler house, machine shop, and smokestack; the first two sections are original as they would have been required for the operation of the mill, with the engine room distinguished by handsome round-arched entrances on the first-story and segmental-arched

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windows on the second; the machine shop was added in 1906, its completion reported at 1907 annual meeting: "We have built and equipped a machine shop adjoining our engine room and boiler house and now do most of our repairing" (Minutes July 10, 1907); the smokestack, being approximately 130 feet tall, was built in 1913, its construction approved by directors on March 25, 1913, giving contract to The Weber Chimney Company of Chicago for \$1,975.00; at annual meeting on July 9, 1913 it was reported that construction on the concrete stack had been suspended due to "defective material," but stack was completed "satisfactorily" by next annual meeting, July 8, 1914; a seventy-five-foot-tall metal water tank (capacity 50,000 gallons) built behind the mill between 1910 and 1920 was removed after the mill was sold in 1990s as it was no longer needed; original one-story mill building was completed in late 1899, following design of architect and engineer Charles R. Makepeace of Providence, Rhode Island, with contractor being George L. Borum of Suffolk, Virginia; major suppliers to the construction and outfitting of mill included: bricks from local brick maker J. A. Jackson; rough and dressed lumber from D. W. Draper and Co. of Edenton; flooring from Branning Manufacturing Company of Edenton; structural timbers from Bush and Hicks sawmill in Briscoe, North Carolina; steam plant from Frick Company of Waynesboro, Pennsylvania; doors and windows from Winbourne and Rea of Edenton; bobbins and spools from Charlotte Supply Company; heating system from B. F. Sturdivant of Boston; and belting from Charles A. Scheisen and Company of New York;

1-a Cotton warehouse 1906 C  
1910-1920

Large utilitarian, one-story frame and masonry building divided into four sections by brick fire walls rising almost two feet above the side walls; the three eastern sections, the cotton warehouse proper, have frame side walls, while the western section, built between 1910 and 1920 as the opener room, is faced with brick; building section along entire southern elevation removed after September 1988, with only poured concrete floor remaining to function as a thirty-seven-foot-wide loading platform; new south elevation of remaining warehouse sided with exterior vertical paneling; railroad tracks were situated between warehouse and mill before being taken up in 1980s.

1-b Warehouse ca. 1940 C

One-story gable-front frame building sheathed with corrugated metal; approximately fifty feet wide and sixty feet deep, with wide shed addition on south elevation; another "Iron Clad" warehouse erected to north (south of Cotton Warehouse, #1-a), between 1910 and 1920 has been removed.

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- 1-c Pump House ca. 1930 C  
Small shed-roofed brick building approximately nine feet by thirteen feet; highest point of roof is about four feet above grade; on west are five cast concrete steps descending to floor, which is about five feet below grade; large metal pipe enters building from direction of mill.
- 1-d Sprinkler Reservoir by 1910 C-str  
Circular reservoir approximately fifteen feet in diameter with brick walls about two feet tall; although apparently uncovered originally, now surmounted by conical frame covered with wire screening intended to keep out leaves and vermin; although exact function is unknown, reservoir was connected with the sprinkler system for the mill interior and is shown on 1910 Sanborn map labeled "Brick Reservoir Supply Unlimited;" according to Sanborn maps reservoir was connected by "Open Ditch" in straight line to Queen Anne's Creek to south, with ditch bottom being two feet below level of low tide; ditch filled in after 1927, probably after the mill was connected to the Town of Edenton's water system in 1935.
- 1-e Sprinkler Shed ca. 1930 C  
Utilitarian brick shed-roofed building approximately eight feet by ten feet; two front doors apparently lead to separate storage chambers; metal fuel tank on roof; shed-roofed one-room concrete-block addition on east side; function unknown except supposedly connected with sprinkler system.
- 1-f Concrete Abutments ca. 1940 C-str  
Five poured-concrete trapezoid-shaped structures about five feet tall, ten feet long, and one foot wide; the northern one abuts an earthen berm while the southern four are freestanding; function unknown.
- 1-g Electrical Substation ca. 1950 NC-str  
Approximately twenty-seven-foot by seventeen-foot substation of electrical transformers and such; enclosed by barbed wire-topped chain-link fence; connected to main mill building by flat-roofed conduit protecting electrical cables.
- 1-h Storage Building ca. 1950s NC-age  
Large gable-roofed frame building sided with corrugated metal; open storage stalls on south and west; approximately sixty feet wide and thirty feet deep.
2. Vacant Lot  
400 East Church Street

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Vacant lot of 0.58 acres has never been built upon; nearly fifty-foot-square block in northern corner near intersection with McMullan Avenue deeded to Town of Edenton for use as electrical substation.

3. **Mill House** 1923 C  
500 East Church Street  
One-story double-pile frame dwelling beneath gable roof; wide three-bay facade (northwest) has central gable-front portico carried by tapered pillars, which continues as hip-roofed porch to wrap around southwest (right) elevation; similar porch extends along southwest side of rear ell; two-over-two sash windows; exposed rafter ends enhance Craftsman flair of porch; asbestos shingles.
4. **Vacant Lot**  
502 East Church Street  
Site of one-story mill house, erected 1923 and moved in fall 1997 to 607 McMullan Avenue (entry 69).
5. **Vacant Lot**  
401 Phillips Street  
Site of two mill houses similar to neighbor at 403; house on east (right) half built in 1916; house on west (left) half of lot erected 1923 between 1920 and 1927 on property that in 1920 was occupied by a small, privately-owned one-room frame grocery; left house demolished before 1960s, right house demolished between 1979 and 1988.
6. **Mill House** 1916 C  
403 Phillips Street 1997-moved  
One-story single-pile frame dwelling with single entrance containing one door; chamfered posts carry shed-roofed porch; six-over-six sash windows; brick piers with concrete-block infill; chimneys removed; asbestos shingles; house was moved here in 1997 from 417 East Queen Street when McMullan Avenue was realigned slightly to give more clearance to house at 501 East Queen street; even though it was moved, it remains contributing because the move was necessary to allow street alignment, it is nearly identical to the house originally on this lot, and its placement on lot continues the spacing and set backs established elsewhere on block.
7. **Mill House** 1916 C  
405 Phillips Street  
One-story single-pile frame dwelling with single entrance; replacement Craftsman door with glazed upper panel; replacement square posts carry shed-roofed porch, which is enclosed by modern square-in-section balusters; six-



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horizontal-panel door; replacement posts carry shed-roofed porch; six-over-six sash windows; one concrete-block exterior chimney flue; brick piers with concrete-block infill.

12. Mill House 1916 C  
415 Phillips Street

One-story single-pile frame dwelling with single entrance containing original four-panel door; replacement posts carry shed-roofed porch; six-over-six sash windows; one exterior chimney flue has fallen; brick piers with concrete-block infill.

13. Vacant Lot  
417 Phillips Street

Site of mill house similar to neighbor at 415 Phillips Street; built 1923; house removed from lot between 1993 and 1995.

14. Vacant Lot  
400 Phillips Street

Site of Mill House similar to neighbor at 402 Phillips Street; built 1909; demolished between 1979 and 1988.

15. Mill House 1909 C  
402 Phillips Street

One-story single-pile frame dwelling with two entrances containing original four-panel doors; replacement posts carry shed-roofed porch having sawtooth pattern in ends; six-over-six sash windows; central chimney; brick piers.

15-a Concrete Pad 1960s NC-str  
Rectangular poured concrete pad appears to be foundation of garage or storage building since demolished.

16. Vacant Lot  
404 Phillips Street

Site of mill house similar to neighbor at 402 Phillips Street; built 1909; house moved from lot between 1992 and 1995.

17. Mill House 1909 C  
406 Phillips Street

One-story single-pile frame dwelling with one entrance containing original four-panel door; chamfered posts carry shed-roofed porch embellished with sawtooth pattern in ends; six-over-six sash windows; central chimney; brick pier foundation.

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18. Mill House 1908 C  
408 Phillips Street  
One-story single-pile frame dwelling with one entrance containing original four-panel door; replacement posts carry shed-roofed porch embellished with sawtooth pattern in ends; six-over-six sash windows; central chimney; brick piers with concrete-block infill.
19. Mill House 1916 C  
410 Phillips Street  
One-story single-pile frame dwelling with one entrance containing original four-panel door; replacement wrought-iron posts support shed-roofed porch; six-over-six sash windows; exterior chimney flue; brick piers with concrete-block infill; gable-roofed addition to two-room ell under construction on rear; front yard defined by handsome hedge of deciduous privet, only one of kind in district.
20. Mill House 1916 C  
412 Phillips Street  
One-story single-pile frame dwelling with one entrance containing original four-panel door; replacement posts support shed-roofed porch; six-over-six sash windows; exterior chimney flue; brick piers with concrete-block infill; two-room ell; first known occupants were Thomas "Tink" Twiddy and wife, Sarah Ellen (Twiddy) Twiddy (b. 1886), who resided here apparently until deaths after World War II; raised four children who worked in mill, Albert, Hubert, Alpheus "Hump", and "Teeny", wife of Munsie Hudson.
21. Mill House 1916 C  
414 Phillips Street  
One-story single-pile frame dwelling with one entrance containing original four-panel door; replacement posts support shed-roofed porch; six-over-six sash windows; exterior chimney flue; brick piers with concrete-block infill; two-room ell; asbestos shingles remain only on side and rear elevations.
22. Mill House 1916 C  
416 Phillips Street  
One-story single-pile frame dwelling with one entrance containing original four-panel door; chamfered posts support shed-roofed porch; six-over-six sash windows; exterior chimney flue; brick piers with concrete-block infill; two-room ell; small porch added onto end of ell in 1960s/1970s; first known occupant was Benjamin Johnson (1865-1926) and wife, Annie (Alexander) Johnson (1869-1965).

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23. Mill House 1916 C  
418 Phillips Street  
One-story single-pile frame dwelling with one entrance containing original four-panel door; chamfered posts support shed-roofed porch; six-over-six sash windows; exterior chimney flue; brick piers with concrete-block infill; two-room ell; home of James Thomas "Jim" Twiddy (1876-1958) and wife. Louvenia "Love" (Johnson) Twiddy (1876-1953), who came from Tyrrell County ca. 1917, until deaths.
24. Mill House 1899 C  
401 East Queen Street  
One-story single-pile frame former duplex retains two central entrances containing five-horizontal-panel doors; replacement posts support shed-roofed porch embellished with sawtooth pattern in ends; replacement horizontal two-over-two sash windows accented with modern paneled shutters; asbestos shingles.
- 24-a Storage Building 1960s NC-age  
Gable-front weatherboarded frame building; south facade outfitted with central door flanked by fixed sash windows; perhaps a former garage.
25. Vacant Lot  
403 East Queen Street  
Site of 1899 mill house similar to neighbor at 401 East Queen Street; demolished between 1972 and 1988.
26. Mill House 1904 C  
405 East Queen Street  
One-story single-pile frame former duplex has two entrances containing original five-panel door on right and glazed Craftsman door on left; replacement posts support shed-roofed porch; six-over-six sash windows; central chimney; brick piers with concrete-block infill; asbestos shingles.
27. Vacant Lot  
407 East Queen Street  
Site of 1904 mill house similar to neighbor at 405 East Queen Street; demolished between 1972 and 1988.
28. Mill House 1904 C  
409 East Queen Street  
One-story single-pile frame former duplex has two central entrances with original four-panel doors; chamfered posts support shed-roofed porch; six-over-six sash windows; central chimney; brick piers with brick infill.

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29. Mill House 1908 C  
411 East Queen Street  
One-story single-pile frame dwelling has one entrance containing glazed Craftsman door; square posts support shed-roofed porch; six-over-six sash windows; central chimney removed; brick piers with concrete-block infill; small porch added onto rear of ell with handicap ramp.
30. Mill House 1908 C  
413 East Queen Street  
One-story single-pile frame dwelling has one entrance containing glazed Craftsman door; square posts support shed-roofed porch; six-over-six sash windows; central chimney removed; brick piers with concrete-block infill; small porch added onto rear of ell.
- 30-a Garage 1930s C  
One-car gable-front frame garage; weatherboard; double-leaf wooden doors.
31. Mill House 1908 C  
415 East Queen Street  
One-story single-pile frame dwelling has one entrance containing five-horizontal panel door; square posts support shed-roofed porch; six-over-six sash windows; central chimney removed; brick piers with concrete-block infill.
32. Mill House 1908 C  
419 East Queen Street 1997-moved  
One-story single-pile frame former duplex has two entrances containing one original four-panel door and one replacement Craftsman door; chamfered posts support shed-roofed porch; six-over-six sash windows; central chimney; brick piers; after original house at 417 East Queen Street was moved in 1997 to 403 Phillips Street (entry 6) to facilitate slight realignment of McMullan Avenue, this house was moved from original site (at northwest corner of East Queen Street and McMullan Avenue) about twenty-five feet west to its current location, about halfway between original sites of houses at 417 and 419; lot number 417 then eliminated; though moved, house retains contributing status because change in spacing is minor, nothing else has been modified about the house, and a move was necessary to allow realignment of McMullan Avenue; first known occupants were Frank Rogerson (b. ca. 1895), son of Richard Albert Rogerson, and wife Maria, from at least 1930s until retirements in 1960s, after which they moved to Virginia.

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33. Mill House 1899 C  
501 East Queen Street  
Two-story single-pile frame dwelling with central glazed Craftsman door; large four-over-four sash windows; chamfered posts support shed-roofed porch; interior chimneys flank central hall; brick piers with partial concrete-block infill; first remembered occupant in 1920s was a Twiddy; occupied from 1936 until 1977 by John Loney Harrell (1900-1977) and wife Lottie (Martin) Harrell (1897-1977), they having previously resided at 505 Phillips Street (entry 6); both retired after working at mill forty-two years; according to son, former Edenton mayor Roy L. Harrell, Lottie, a native of Alamance County, started working in mill between ages eleven and thirteen (ca. 1907-1910), although she is not listed as an occupant of the mill village in either the 1910 or the 1920 census; John Loney Harrell was raised in mill village, the son of John H. Harrell (1868-1910s) and Sallie (b. 1873).
34. Mill House 1921 C  
503 East Queen Street  
Small one-story gable-front frame dwelling is one of three similar houses in district (with entries 57 and 58); entirely wood-shingled house is "The Selwyn," a pre-cut kit from Aladdin Co.; simple shed-roofed porch carried by slender chamfered posts; unlike other two, this has original square-in-section balusters as shown in 1918-1919 Aladdin catalog; it is the only worker's tenement (as opposed to overseer's house) in the district to have a porch railing before World War II; unenclosed brick pier foundation; earliest known occupants were Roy and Mandy Downing in 1920s; during 1930s until their deaths in the 1960s house was occupied by John McClinnie and wife, Elizabeth (Martin) McClinnie, sister of neighbor Lottie (Martin) Harrell.
35. Mill House 1899 C  
505 East Queen Street  
One-story single-pile frame dwelling with off-center original four-panel door; small six-over-six sash windows; chamfered posts support shed-roofed porch; chimney removed; unenclosed brick pier foundation; first known occupants in 1930s were Lemman Jethro (ca. 1906-1970s) and wife, Alethia May (Rogerson) Jethro (d. 1990s), daughter of Richard Albert Rogerson (entry 71).
36. Mill House 1899 C  
400 East Queen Street  
One-story single-pile frame former duplex retains one central entrance



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over-six sash windows; central chimney removed; brick piers with concrete-block infill; first known occupants were Will Edwards (d. 1980s) and Katie (Rogerson) Edwards (d. early 1990s), who moved out of district in late 1930s; home since 1940 of mill employees Rupert Wright (1916-1980). Son of Samuel Wright, and wife Eliza "Sissy" (Rogerson) Wright, a niece of Mrs. Edwards and daughter of Henry Rogerson (entries 71 and 53).

42-a Garage 1930s C  
Elongated single-car gable-front frame garage has wooden double-leaf doors and exposed rafter ends.

43. Mill House 1899 C  
414 East Queen Street  
One-story single-pile frame former duplex retains two entrance containing four-panel doors; square porch posts support shed-roofed porch; six-over-six sash windows; central chimney; brick piers with concrete-block infill; first known occupant in 1930s was George Wesley Twiddy.

43-a Garage 1960s NC-age  
Tall weatherboarded frame gable-roofed garage with picket fence enclosing small garden/animal pen on west side.

44. Vacant Lot  
416 East Queen Street  
Site of 1899 former duplex like neighbor at 414 East Queen Street; demolished before 1988; during realignment of McMullan Avenue in 1997, the remnant of the vacant lot to the east, formerly 418 East Queen Street, was added to this lot; that lot was site of 1899 former duplex like neighbor at 414 East Queen Street; demolished before 1979; first known occupant in 1930s was Robert W. Twiddy (1896-1961), a distant cousin of brothers Jim (entry 23) and George W. (entry 43) Twiddy, who with wife, Bessie A. Twiddy, resided here until 1960s.

45. Mill House 1899 C  
401 Elliott Street  
One-story single-pile frame dwelling with one entrance having four-panel door; replacement wooden posts support shed-roofed porch embellished with sawtooth pattern in ends; six-over-six sash windows; central chimney removed; brick piers; first known occupant ca. 1920 was a Toler, who moved to Elizabeth City and then Powell's Point; occupied for many years by the Reverend Preston Cayton (1910-1987), originally from Aurora, Beaufort County, who worked in the card room for a living while preaching in Christian Churches in Martin County as a calling, and his wife, Estelle (Van

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Horn) Cayton (1911-1980), of Creswell, Washington County, who worked downstairs as a creeler; resided here until deaths.

46. Mill House 1899 C  
403 Elliott Street  
One-story single-pile frame dwelling with one entrance having four-panel door; chamfered posts support shed-roofed porch embellished with sawtooth pattern in ends; six-over-six sash windows; central chimney; brick piers; first known occupant ca. 1920 was George Mason (b. ca. 1861), who resided here with wife, Missouri (b. ca. 1864), until their deaths.
47. Mill House 1899 C  
405 Elliott Street  
One-story single-pile frame former duplex retains two entrances having non-identical glazed Craftsman doors; chamfered posts support shed-roofed porch embellished with sawtooth pattern in ends; six-over-six sash windows; central chimney; brick piers with brick infill; wooden deck added on east (right) side of ell; home of Archie Ashley (b. ca. 1893) and wife, Claudia Ashley (b. ca. 1896), from at least 1920s until their deaths in 1950s or 1960s.
48. Mill House 1899 C  
407 Elliott Street  
One-story single-pile frame former duplex with two entrance having original four-panel door on right and glazed Craftsman door on left; square support shed-roofed porch; six-over-six sash windows; central chimney; brick piers; first known occupants ca. 1920 were Henry and Gertie Rogerson.
49. Mill House 1899 C  
409 Elliott Street  
Two-story single-pile frame dwelling has central entrance with original four-panel door and transom light; chamfered posts support shed-roofed porch; four-over-four sash windows; interior chimneys flank central hall; brick piers with concrete-block infill; first known occupant ca. 1920 was a Hudson family.
- 49-a Garage with Storage Shed 1930s C  
Two-bay gable-roofed weatherboarded frame building contains open bay for automobile and single bay for storage; exposed rafter ends.
50. Mill House 1899 C  
411 Elliott Street  
Two-story single-pile frame dwelling has central entrance with original

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four-panel door and transom light; chamfered posts support shed-roofed porch; four-over-four sash windows; interior rear chimneys; handicap ramp added to east side of porch; brick piers with concrete-block infill; occupied in 1918-1919 and after 1921 by Charlie Wesley "C. W." Alexander (1866-1958) and Martha (Owens) Alexander (1874-1960), who were among the first Alligator residents to move to the Edenton Cotton Mills; they raised nine children here, five of whom made careers in the mill, and resided here until their deaths; still occupied by daughters Violet, a retired winder, and Martha A. Ashley, the latter the widow of Fred Lewis Ashley, Sr., who worked at the mill a short period before beginning a career with the state highway weigh station.

50-a      **Storage Building**      1930s      C  
One-room gable-roofed weatherboarded frame storage shed with exposed rafter ends.

51.      **Mill House**      1899      C  
413 Elliott Street  
Two-story single-pile frame dwelling has central entrance with original four-panel door and transom light; chamfered posts support shed-roofed porch; two-over-two sash windows rather than typical four-over-four sash; interior rear chimneys; brick piers with brick infill; first known occupants ca. 1920 were Carson Bennett and wife, Martha Bennett.

52.      **Mill House**      1899      C  
415 Elliott Street  
One-story single-pile frame former duplex retains two entrances having original four-panel door in left and glazed Craftsman door on right; replacement posts support shed-roofed porch; six-over-six sash windows; central chimney; brick piers; rear ell expanded during recent renovations by well-designed gable-roofed wing on northwest; first known occupants ca. 1920 were a Spruill family.

53.      **Mill House**      1899      C  
417 Elliott Street  
One-story double-pile frame dwelling is only house of its size/form in district; replacement posts support shed-roofed porch; modern square-in-section balustrade encloses porch; four-over-four sash windows; interior chimney; brick piers with concrete-block infill; first known occupant ca. 1920 was Jerry M. White (b. ca. 1863) and wife Flora (b. ca. 1871); later occupied by Henry Rogerson (1893-1984), overseer of card room, and his wife, Gertrude (Griffin) Rogerson (1897-1959), who moved out of district in early

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1940s; home from then until their deaths in 1990s of Charlie W. Owens and wife Edith (Alexander) Owens, the daughter of W. C. Alexander (entry 50); remains in family occupancy.

53-a      **Garage/Storage Building**      ca. 1930s      C  
Unusual shed-roofed building sheathed with both V-crimp metal roofing and metal sheets stamped to simulate rock-faced concrete blocks; salvaged double-hung windows enclose north elevation (rear).

54.      **Mill House**      1917      C  
400 Elliott Street  
One-story single-pile frame former duplex with gable-roof accented with triple-A gable; gable encloses circular louvered vent with flat surround recently embellished with applied molding in an octagonal pattern; double entrances recently replaced with off-center custom-made six-panel door; chamfered posts support shed-roofed porch; replacement six-over-six sash windows custom-made to replicate old windows; brick piers with brick infill; shed addition on rear of ell added in 1980s; currently the home of a granddaughter of the Reverend Preston Cayton, who resided across street at 401 Elliott Street (entry 46), and of John Loney Harrell (1900-1977), who lived at 501 East Queen Street (entry 33).

**(former) Vacant Lot**  
402 Elliott Street

Site of 1917 house similar to neighbor at 400 Elliott Street; damaged by fire in 1960s and subsequently razed; home of William Bryan Cayton and wife Josephine (Prescott) Cayton, both natives of Aurora; he had come to town seeking employment as a saw sharpener, working instead as a roper layer for the mill; during platting of lots by Preservation NC in 1996-1997, this lot was divided between adjacent lots at 400 and 404, and thus eliminated.

55.      **Mill House**      1917      C  
404 Elliott Street  
One-story single-pile frame former duplex with gable-roof accented with triple-A gable containing circular louvered vent with flat surround; west (right) entrance removed; chamfered posts support shed-roofed porch; six-over-six sash windows; brick piers with concrete-block infill; deck added onto east (left) of ell; first known occupants ca. 1920 were Thomas F. Wright (1877-1955) and wife, Kate W. (Twiddy) Wright (1884-1963), who resided here moving to a farm in late 1940s; then occupied by John Colas Twiddy (1910-1982), son of Jim Twiddy (entry 23), and wife Elsie (Wright) Twiddy, daughter of Major McKinley Wright (entry 10); since ca. 1955 by Dewey and Madge Whitehurst.



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between brick piers; first known occupants ca. 1920 were a Holmes family, and subsequently Davenport and Hudson families.

59. (former) Athletic Field by 1930 C-si  
414 Elliott Street

Large grassy area occupies eastern third of block except for (former) Edenton Cotton Mill Office (entry 60) in northeast corner; although the construction date of the baseball diamond here is unknown, it is shown in ca. 1943 aerial documentary photograph of the mill; home plate situated near Elliott Street with third base behind Office (entry 60), with limits of left and right fields being McMullan Avenue and East King Street, respectively; baseball most likely played here soon after mill opened in 1900 as it was the sport of choice during early twentieth century throughout eastern North Carolina; locals recall that heyday of baseball was in 1930s and 1940s, with teams usually known simply as Edenton Cotton Mill team, although some teams had nicknames, such as Roy L. Harlem's "Spinners" in late 1940s; "cotton mill diamond" was temporary home for the "Colonials," the Edenton entry in the semi-pro Class D Albemarle League in 1939 prior to the completion of Hicks Field (NR 1995) (The Chowan Herald, April 20, June 29, 1939); cotton mill teams played teams from nearby towns such as Gatesville, Eure, Gates, Ahoskie, Tyner, Perrytown; several who played on the mill team, but did not necessarily live in mill village, went to play in minor leagues, including pitcher William "Bud" Cayton, (brother of Preston Cayton, entry 45) a star pitcher for the Colonials who also played for the Pocomoke City (Maryland) "Chicks" in the early 1940s; other local big-league players who occasionally played on this field included brothers "Bullett" and Joe Herman Weaver, Lester Jordan, and Harry Lassiter; diamond last used for organized games in 1960s and now entirely grown over with grass; backstop remained along Elliott Street until 1990s, suggesting continued informal use.

59-a Fire Hydrant Shelter 1970s NC-str

Small, shed-roofed frame structure sheathed with vertical siding; concrete block foundation; shelters fire hydrant and hoses directly across McMullan Avenue from main mill building (entry 1); nearly identical to complementary shelter approximately 190 feet north (entry 60-b); earlier shelter on site shown on ca. 1943 aerial photograph.

59-b Steps 1970s NC-obj

Flight of pre-formed cast concrete steps (three risers) set into small earthen bank, rising from level of McMullan Avenue to playing level of

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Athletic Field; each side flanked by handrail of metal pipe; obviously installed to provide safe way for mill employees to gain access to grassy area of playing field; also to prevent erosion of bank from foot traffic.

60. (former) Edenton Cotton Mill Office 1909 C  
420 Elliott Street

Handsomely tall, one-story rectangular brick building covered by a hip roof accented with boxed cornices; three-bay-by-one-bay main block has elongated two-over-two sash windows with segmentally-arched soldier course lintels with corbeled brick drip mold; windows complement arched windows in mill building immediately to the east; later central pedimented one-bay porch is glass enclosed and echoes Colonial Revival elements; shed rooms across rear (south) elevation finished in same manner as main building; in authorizing construction of "a brick office" on January 7, 1909, directors left its size, design, and contractors to be determined by president Frank Wood and treasurer William O. Elliott; construction of brick Colonial Revival style addition mentioned at stockholders meeting of February 11, 1948; addition nearly doubled building in size, having handsome but modest hip-roofed porch; remained as mill office until mill closed in 1995; now regional office of Historic Preservation Foundation of North Carolina, Inc., commonly known as Preservation NC."

60-a Garage 1950s NC-age

Three-car concrete-block building with automobile bays accessed from north; shed roof accented by projecting pent roof in front that is sheathed with wood shingles.

60-b Fire Hydrant Shelter 1980s NC-str

Small, shed-roofed frame structure sheathed with vertical siding; concrete block foundation; shelters fire hydrant and hoses directly across McMullan Avenue from main mill building (entry 1); nearly identical to complementary shelter approximately 190 feet south (entry 63-a); replacement for taller ca. 1920s shelter shown on ca. 1943 aerial photograph of mill building (see Butchko 1992, 258); original probably built when water and sewerage extended throughout mill village in summer 1935 (Minutes, July 10, 1935).

61. Spinning Overseer's House 1914 C  
401 East King Street

Handsome two-story asymmetrical frame dwelling is largest house erected within mill village; broad gable roof covers double-pile structure, broken on front east (right) by pediment that shelters shallow projecting bay;

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pediment's asymmetrical placement balanced by diminutive pedimented dormer to west and pediment over central entrance to full-facade porch carried by Doric pillars; louvered demilune ventilators in gables, oversized one-over-one sash windows, and leaded and colored glass window in stair landing on west elevation provide stylish accents; construction authorized by board of directors on November 6, 1913, at a cost of \$1,600 to \$1,700; house is mirror image to the Charles T. Hollowell House (outside of district at 100 West Gale Street), built in 1913 by Frank Fred Muth (1860-1936), Edenton's leading white builder during the early twentieth century who had a special affinity for the Colonial Revival; leads to speculation that Muth possibly constructed the Spinning Overseer's House as well; although house built as home for the overseer of the spinning room, other occupants have included Clarence Cates, assistant superintendent during the early 1930s; Connie S. Cozart (1881-1944), twisting overseer from about 1934 until his death; Oscar Creech, the overseer of the carding room for the next several years; and Alexander Kirby Wright, Cozart's successor as overseer of the twisting room and supervisor of finishing department, who resided here from about 1948 until his death; widow remained until early 1990s.

61-a      **Concrete Floor**      ca. 1950      NC-str  
Poured concrete floor provided foundation for frame building (demolished) shown in 1979 aerial photograph for tax maps.

62.      **Carder's House**      1916      C  
403 East King Street

Boxy two-story hip-roofed foursquare form finished with modest Colonial Revival elements, primarily a full-facade porch carried by sturdy Doric pillars and a continuous boxed cornice with frieze; only asymmetrical element is off-center front door; one-over-one sash windows; house referred to as "a comfortable house for the carder" when its construction was reported to the stockholders in 1916; occupants have included Richard Carden, master mechanic from ca. 1939 to 1951; Charlie Hudson, overseer of spinning; and Rupert Riley, mill superintendent.

63.      **Supervisor's House**      1921      C  
405 East King Street

Two-story gable-front dwelling with clean uncluttered finish; simple shed-roofed porch extended to wrap-around east (left) elevation; supported by extremely late use of turned Victorian porch posts connected by square-in-section balusters; central entrance flanked by one-over-one sash windows, as are seen throughout house; nearly identical to house at 310 East King Street;

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- 63-a      **Garage**      1950s      NC-age  
Narrow one-car gable-front frame building with sides covered with V-crimp metal sheets; double-leaf garage doors; German siding on front with metal panels on sides.
64.      **Engineer's House**      1908      C  
310 East King Street  
One-and-a-half-story frame Colonial Revival cottage beneath pedimented roof; asymmetrical facade distinguished by recessed engaged porch on west (right) and projecting pediment on east; central pedimented dormer completes composition; porch carried by elongated wooden posts and enclosed by railing of slender square-in-section balusters; two-over-two sash windows; rear expanded by ell and later shed additions; building's construction noted in minutes of July 8, 1908: "We have built a very good dwelling for our engineer, Mr. Bean"; Major William Bean (ca. 1866-1916), a native of Salisbury, had come to Edenton in 1903 as the mill's second engineer, remaining here until his death; succession of occupants then included David Twiddy, the operator of the mill's generator, and Rev. Eather C. Alexander, from 1951 until early 1970s while he was master mechanic.
- 64-a      **Garage**      ca. 1950      NC-age  
Expansive two-car gable-front frame building with large shed addition for storage along south (left) elevation.
65.      **Supervisor's House**      1921      C  
312 East King Street  
Two-story gable-front dwelling with clean uncluttered finish; simple shed-roofed porch extended to wrap around east corner; supported by extremely late use of turned Victorian porch posts connected by square-in-section balusters; central entrance flanked by one-over-one sash windows, which are used throughout house; nearly identical to house at 405 East King Street; among the earliest occupants were Mr. Seymore, the master mechanic, and George Bennett, the "fixer" in the twisting room; Rev. Eather C. Alexander resided here between 1933 and 1951 while he was head of the picker room and a mechanic.
66.      **Superintendent's House**      1909      C  
400 East King Street  
Handsome one-and-a-half-story L-plan frame Colonial Revival dwelling focusing on projecting front wing finished with gambrel roof, yielding unusual juxtapositioning of gambrel roof onto pedimented side gable that





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porch; brick piers with concrete-block infill; first known occupants were Richard Albert Rogerson (ca. 1866-1930s), who came by 1910 from Bethel area to work in mill; succeeded by son Henry Rogerson (1893-1984), overseer of card room, and his wife, Gertrude (Griffin) Rogerson (1897-1959), who later moved to 417 Elliott Street (entry 53), moving out of district in early 1940s.

72. Mill House 1907 C  
707 McMullan Avenue

Two-story gable-front, double-pile, side-hall-plan dwelling follows form popular in Edenton for modestly-scaled dwellings during late nineteenth early twentieth centuries; shed-roofed porch supported by replacement wooden posts; four-over-four sash windows; rear occupied by one-room ell with porch; brick piers; occupants during 1920s and 1930s included Wade and Ida Edwards.

73. Mill House 1909 C  
709 McMullan Avenue

One-story single-pile, gable-roofed dwelling; central entrance has glazed Craftsman door; replacement wooden posts support shed-roofed porch; six-over-six sash windows; exterior chimney flue removed; asbestos shingles; brick piers; first known occupants were Benjamin Franklin Twiddy, Sr. (1878-1934) and wife, Emaline (Sawyer) Twiddy (1878-1953), who came from Alligator about 1908.

74. Mill House 1909 C  
711 McMullan Avenue

One-story single-pile gable-roofed dwelling; central entrance has glazed Craftsman door; chamfered posts support shed-roofed porch; six-over-six sash windows; exterior chimney flue removed; asbestos shingles; brick piers.

74-a Storage Shed ca. 1940 C  
Small, shed-roofed, one-room frame storage building sheathed with vertical paneling; well-maintained.

75. Sidewalks 1942 C-obj

Cast concrete sidewalks line all the streets of the mill village with the exception of both sides of Wood Avenue, west side of McMullan Avenue, and south side of East King Street east of Superintendent's House (entry 70); sidewalks were installed between June 23, 1942, when agreement was reached with the Town of Edenton to pave sidewalks at half cost (the Town having

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annexed the mill property in 1925), and September 11, 1942, when the minutes record their completion at cost of \$5,423.78; the mill actually paid \$3,935.52, or seventy-two percent; at the annual meeting on February 10, 1943, the president's report remarked that "The addition of sidewalks have greatly improved the appearance of our property"; while the sidewalks throughout the district vary in condition, generally they remain solid and safe; replacement sections are minimal.

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### 8. Statement of Significance

#### Summary

The Edenton Cotton Mill Historic District is a small, compact collection of buildings associated with a locally-owned cotton manufacturing plant constructed in 1899. It consists of a large brick mill building and an associated brick office, a brick-veneered church, and fifty-seven frame dwellings erected for mill managers and workers in an eight-block area on the eastern edge of Edenton. Founded in 1712, Edenton has a long history as a leading colonial trading center and the seat of an agrarian- and marine-based antebellum economy that diversified in the late nineteenth century with industrial processing of local lumber, peanuts, and cotton. The Edenton Cotton Mills Company was formed in 1898 by local investors who sought to participate in the state's booming cotton textile industry and to keep profits at home.

Although small in size compared to some of the state's historic textile mills and their attendant mill villages, the Edenton Cotton Mill Historic District exhibits a cohesiveness and degree of architectural integrity that is unrivaled by other mill districts in eastern North Carolina and rarely in the state. Of the district's sixty-three primary resources, sixty-one, or ninety-seven percent, are contributing. The entire complex remained in company ownership until 1995, which minimized the alterations and new construction that might have occurred otherwise. Furthermore, in 1995 the entire district was conveyed to the Historic Preservation Foundation of North Carolina, Inc., the state's only state-wide private non-profit preservation organization. The entire mill property, which now constitutes the Edenton Cotton Mill Historic District, was then placed under protective covenants, allowing the historic district to benefit from a comprehensive preservation policy rarely utilized in such an all-encompassing manner.

The placement of the Edenton Cotton Mill Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places not only recognizes the most architecturally-intact cotton mill and mill village in eastern North Carolina, but acknowledges an important working-class component to the fabric of a town best known for the architecturally distinguished dwellings of its wealthy citizens. The Edenton Cotton Mill Historic District qualifies for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, for its importance in the areas of architecture, community planning and development, industry, and social history, and Criterion C, the embodiment of distinctive traditional vernacular, Italianate, Colonial Revival, and Craftsman architectural styles and features. The period of significance, 1899 to 1948, begins with the year of construction of the mill and the earliest worker houses and includes all resources at least fifty years old.

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Historical Background, Community Planning and Development, and Social  
History Contexts

### Early Town History

During the late 1890s when the Edenton Cotton Mill Company was organized, Edenton was a small but prosperous town of 3,046 citizens whose history extended back for almost two hundred years (News and Observer 1902, 151). The first European settlers along Edenton Bay, a small indentation in the northern shore of the Albemarle Sound in northeastern North Carolina, were families who migrated southward after 1650 from the expanding Virginia colony about sixty miles to the north. Many followed what became known as the "Virginia Road," an Indian path that extended southward from Nansemond County (now the City of Suffolk), Virginia to its termination at Edenton Bay (Lefler and Newsome 1973, 17; Evans 1991, 9). This route is largely followed by present NC Route 32, known north of Edenton by the name "Virginia Road," and its southern continuation is East Church Street, the northern boundary of the Edenton Cotton Mill Historic District.

Edenton was established in 1712 with the formation of "the town on Queen Anne's Creek" as a site for a Court House for the Colonial Assembly; it was named in 1722 to honor recently-deceased Governor Charles Eden (Butchko, Edenton 1992, 3). As the seat of the Colonial government until its relocation in 1743 to New Bern, Edenton thrived as a center of political, mercantile, social, and religious activities for much of the colony. Furthermore, from 1750 until the Revolution, the town was the administrative center of the Granville District, which controlled land transactions for the northern half of present North Carolina. These official functions attracted men of ambition and influence, and local merchants such as Thomas Barker, George Blair, and Josiah Collins traded throughout the colonies, West Indies, and western Europe. During the turbulent times of the 1770s and 1780s, Edenton's residents included Joseph Hewes, a signer of the Declaration of Independence; Hugh Williamson, a signer of the United States Constitution; Samuel Johnston, North Carolina's governor from 1787 to 1789; and James Iredell, a member of the first United States Supreme Court. As shipping and settlement patterns shifted, however, the nineteenth century saw Edenton settle into the role of a locally-important agricultural, fishing, and mercantile center and county seat. The prosperity of the surrounding farms and the bountiful seine hauls of fish pulled from the Sound during the spring formed the basis for a stratified plantation economy controlled by relatively few families. After the Civil War, the 1881 connection of Edenton by railroad to the prosperous Virginia port of Norfolk heralded an era of industrial expansion and change (Cockshutt 1973; Butchko, Edenton 1992, 4-9, 17-26, 38-52 passim).

As was typical of many small towns in which entrenched families controlled the local economy, it was newcomers who first agitated for change

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and industrial development. Often among the first of these, or perhaps just the first to put his views into print, was the editor of the local newspaper. The first known newspaper to call for industrial development in Edenton during the late nineteenth century was The Albemarle Enquirer, a short-lived paper, which in 1886 opined that "The erection of cotton, tobacco, and other factories in Edenton will double its wealth and population in ten years. It has capital and every other requisite except one--action--and probably that. Let us see" (The Albemarle Enquirer, July 15, 1886). One of the most consistent pro-industry voices was that of A. H. Mitchell, publisher of the Fisherman and Farmer, the town's leading newspaper from 1886 until 1897. In early 1893 he broached the subject of a local cotton mill in a column titled "What Edenton Needs: a Number of Industries that Might be Made Profitable." As stated, "A cotton factory is one of our chief needs. Edenton is accessible to about 15,000 bales of cotton during the season. So why would it not pay to build a large cotton mill here? Labor is cheap and in abundance" (Fisherman and Farmer February 13, 1893). Six weeks later Mitchell declared that "Edenton wants manufacturing enterprises--something that will make the town more self-supporting and independent. Give us factories and shops that employ labor" (Fisherman and Farmer March 24, 1893). Frustrated at a lack of local interest, later that year Mitchell chastised the town's "human money bags . . . who never look out of the narrow circle of self-interest." Declaring that "We need more public spirit among our citizens," he urged those with money not to "hold a shilling so close to your eyes that you can't see a dollar beyond it" (Fisherman and Farmer October 27, 1893, reprinted in Butchko, Edenton 1992, p. 293, n. 32). Two years later, a lengthy article entitled "What Cotton Mills Do," lauded their benefits elsewhere in the South: "The bankers say that cotton mills are building up their towns, making business better and giving the farmers more profitable home markets" (Fisherman and Farmer January 25, 1895). Heretofore, Edenton's industry output was concentrated almost entirely on lumber manufacturing. While a succession of smaller mills operated between the 1870s and the 1920s, they were dwarfed by the mammoth twin mills of the Branning Manufacturing Company, which operated between 1889 and the 1910s. A contemporary was M. G. Brown and Company, which started in the mid 1880s and continued until the 1960s (Butchko 1992, 44-45, 156).

### Mill Formation and Construction

Mitchell's wish was fulfilled on August 2, 1898 when the organizational meeting of the Edenton Cotton Mill Company was held, and eight days later leading local merchants, bankers, attorneys, industrialists, and the foremost builder incorporated the Edenton Cotton Mills. The survival of the firm's minutes provide unusually complete documentation of the planning, construction, and operation of the mill and village. The company was

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entitled to engage in "all branches of the businesses of spinning, weaving, manufacturing, making and finishing warps, yarns, cloths, prints or any other fabrics of cotton, wool or any other material" (Edenton Cotton Mills Company Minutes, August 2, 1898, hereinafter cited as Minutes with date; Chowan Incorporation Records, A:30). No local newspaper was then in existence to report the event.

The organization of the mill was part of a statewide industrialization that was taking place at an increasingly rapid pace during the late nineteenth century. Generated in large part by an influx of capital after the Civil War and an increase in cotton cultivation, the expansion of the textile industry in North Carolina saw an average of six new cotton mills being built annually between 1880 and 1900 (Lefler and Newsome 1973, 505-511). The Edenton mill was only the second such mill ever constructed within the Albemarle region, being predated only by the Elizabeth City Cotton Mill in 1895 and followed only by hosiery mills in both towns (Butchko 1989, 244, 311; Butchko 1992, 47, 191). The nearest large textile mills were in Roanoke Rapids (Roanoke Rapids Historic District, 1998), where four large mills and their attendant mill villages were erected between 1894 and 1917 on a scale that dwarfed others in eastern North Carolina (Butchko 1998, 295-302).

Among the original investors in the Edenton Cotton Mill Company were men with deep roots in Edenton and Chowan County. Chief among these were members of the Wood family, the sons of Edward Wood, Sr. of Hayes Plantation: farmer Edward Wood, Jr.; farmer and businessman Frank Wood (1858-1926); farmer and banker Julien Wood (1863-1943); farmer and businessman Henry Gilliam "Hal" Wood (1868-1936); their brother-in-law, attorney William D. Pruden, Sr. (1847-1918), and his son, James Norfleet Pruden (1873-1921), also an attorney; and banker George P. Folk, a son-in-law of Edward Wood, Jr. Other Chowan natives included farmer Fred A. White (1842-1908); merchant William Oscar Elliott (1863-1931); and attorney William J. Leary, Jr. (1854-1917). Other incorporators were entrepreneurs, merchants, and professionals who had been attracted to Edenton earlier because of its economic opportunities: Ohio-native Edmund R. Conger (1857-1943), who came ca. 1897 from South Carolina and organized the Edenton Ice and Cold Storage Company; attorney Charles Spurgeon Vann (1857-1925); grocer and general merchant Abram T. Bush (1844-1923); undertaker and Elizabeth City-native Louis F. Zeigler (1854-1932); Theo Ralph (1857-1903), another native of nearby Elizabeth City who was the town's leading contractor and builder from the mid 1880s until his death; and banker, businessman, and Clerk of Court Haywood C. Privott (1862-1931). The most experienced industrialist of the group, and one of the town's wealthiest citizens, was Pennsylvania-native John W. Branning, who had come to Edenton in 1888 and organized a lumber manufacturing company that eventually operated two huge saw and planing mills plus a box factory on the western edge of town.

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Branning's company employed several hundred men, completely altering the scale of the town's heretofore small industries. While these investors had differing backgrounds and wealth, together they represented a broad spectrum of the town and county's economic interests during the last years of the nineteenth century. Furthermore, their lives are manifested not only in the buildings of the Edenton Cotton Mill Historic District but in residences and commercial buildings throughout the Edenton Historic District (Chowan Incorporation Records, A:30; Butchko, Edenton 1992, passim [or 208-209, 252-253, 154, 208-209, 145, 179, 144, 91-92, 209, 215-216, 253-254, 143-144, 143, 110, 87-88, 54, 277, 44-47, 187-188, 200-201, 93-94; Cockshutt 1973]).

Once organized and legally constituted, the company wasted no time in making plans to build. The first officers were Frank Wood as president, William O. Elliott as vice-president, and J. W. Webb as secretary, with the rest of the board of directors composed of William D. Pruden, Haywood C. Privott, Edmund R. Conger, and William B. Shepard, a farmer and fishery owner. At the second monthly meeting of the board of directors, the company approved the construction of a two-story spinning mill with the capacity of 10,000 spindles and let a contract with "Brickmakers at E[lizabeth] City" for bricks to be delivered by April 1, 1899 (Minutes, September 9, 1898).

In October 1898 the board accepted the old Collins ropewalk property as the site for the mill, purchasing thirty acres on January 31, 1899 from William Blount Shepard (a Collins descendant) for \$5,000 (Minutes, October 5, 1898; Chowan Deed Records, E:595). This ropewalk, a facility where hemp was manufactured into rope, was first owned by Declaration-signer Joseph Hewes. It was acquired in 1783 by merchant Josiah Collins, Sr. (1735-1819), and under the management of his son Josiah Collins II (1763-1839) it became a leading supplier of superior cordage for shipbuilders; it remained in operation at least until 1819. Located near the ropewalk was the old Copse graveyard, a burial ground maintained by the Collinses for family slaves; its exact location has never been determined (Butchko, Edenton 1992, 8, 21, Menius 1979, 404-405; Powell 1979, 405; Butchko, Edenton 1992, 184). Also at the October 5, 1898 meeting, the board of directors approved the selection of the C. R. Makepeace Company of Providence, R. I. to "make plans and engineer the mills" for \$1,250 (Minutes, October 5, 1898). A native North Carolinian, Charles R. Makepeace (1860-1926), was one of the nation's foremost designers of textile plants and mills. His firm designed more than 250 plants in twenty-four states, including three others in North Carolina, and in Canada, Mexico, South America, and Australia. Minutes of the Edenton Cotton Mills indicate that his Eno Cotton Mill in Hillsborough was consulted during the planning process regarding the purchase of machinery (Providence Journal, February 11, 1926; Butchko, Edenton 1992, 275; Minutes, April 13, 1899).

The minutes indicate a major difference of opinion between the board of directors and Makepeace as to size and shape of the proposed mill. As

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reported in January 1899, the plans submitted by Makepeace were not "in accordance with our former ideas and suggestions," and the board approved having President Frank Wood and Secretary J. W. Webb meet Mr. Makepeace in Greensboro to decide the matter of either adopting Makepeace's submitted plans for a one-story mill or having him prepare plans for a two-story mill as originally proposed by the board in September 1898. While the minutes do not mention why the architect was advocating a one-story building, the dispute was resolved--for the first time--on January 30, 1899 when the board rescinded the September resolution and approved plans for a one-story mill with 5,000 spindles according to Makepeace's plans and specs. This agreement lasted only three days for on February 2 the approval of the one-story building was rescinded and Makepeace was directed to "prepare plans and specs accordingly" for the two-story, 5,000-spindle-mill originally approved (Minutes, January 30, February 2, 1899). New plans were submitted to the board later in February and were "found satisfactory" except for the picker room, and the subsequently revised plans for a two-story mill and picker room were accepted and approved the next month. The board omitted a number of items to save expenses: base boards, iron sills at exterior doors, and a stairway at each end of mill. Other changes are reflected in the exterior appearance of the building today: the elimination of cornice work on the ends of the rafters, the omission of red exterior mortar and painted mortar joints, and the installation of smaller windows (Minutes, March 23, 1899). The back-and-forth battle of the board and Makepeace over a two-versus a one-story mill building was finally won by Makepeace in April when the board reversed its February 2 motion and approved a one-story mill with monitor roof. While this is the building that was constructed, the board finally got its two-story building when a 116-foot-long addition was built on the south in 1900, doubling the mill's capacity to the 10,000 spindles envisioned at the board's first meeting in September 1898 (Minutes, April 5, 1900, September 9, 1898).

The mill's construction progress is equally well-documented by the minutes. In January 1899 the board approved approaching the Norfolk and Southern Railroad about extending a switch line into the mill provided its cost be less than \$1,500. Even though the final cost was about \$1,800, the importance of the line made it a necessity; completion was in late February (Minutes, January 17, February 15, 1899). A continual concern was the manufacture and delivery of brick, with nothing more reported about the contract on September 9, 1898 given to brickmakers in Elizabeth City. The first order of business in 1899 was to accept the bid of J. A. Jackson of Edenton to make one million bricks at the cost of \$4.25 per 1,000. At the next meeting it was suggested that the bricks be made on the mill property at a site selected by the board and that Jackson be paid as each kiln of bricks was completed (Minutes, January 5, 11, 1899). The board was apparently confident enough in Jackson's ability to produce the bricks in a

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timely manner to reject an offer made in March by the Norfolk and Southern Railroad to halve rates for bricks shipped from Berkeley, a small industrial town of shipyards and factories across the river from Norfolk, Virginia. However, Jackson's production apparently was not as fast as anticipated, for in June 1899 the board expressed the need of "hurrying" the delivery of bricks (Minutes, March 17, 1899; Parramore 1994, 403; Minutes, June 9, 1899). An order was placed in July 1899 with L. W. Norman, a banker and businessman in the neighboring town of Hertford, for 100,000 hard bricks "to be shipped at once," and another 250,000 bricks were contracted from Jackson in August. Jackson leased a brick-making machine from W. O. Speight, owner of the Edenton Brick Works, as reported in the board's refusal the following June to pay for repairs on the machine. A few years later, in 1900-1902, Speight built a handsome brick Queen Anne residence, the Speight House and Cotton Gin (NR 1980), less than one-half mile east of the Edenton Cotton Mill. Finally, in April 1900 the board of directors sold 20,000 bricks left over from the mill's construction to fellow director Haywood C. Privott who used the brick for the construction of a handsome residence at 205 East King Street (Minutes, July 11; Haley and Winslow 1982, 158; Minutes, August 23, 1899, June 13, 1900; Butchko, Edenton 1992, 200-201).

The board of directors awarded numerous contracts for building materials and mill machinery, including rough and dressed lumber from D. W. Raper and Company, a local sawmill, and 61,814 feet of "rift" flooring from the Branning Manufacturing Company (Minutes, March 7, 1899); 130,000 feet of structural timbers from the Bush and Hicks sawmill in Briscoe, N. C. [unidentified] (Minutes, March 13, 1899); \$18,200 to the Sexton and Robbins Company in Charlotte for a steam plant from the Frick Company of Waynesboro Pennsylvania, with delivery by September 15, 1899 (Minutes, May 16, 1899); \$1,406.00 for doors and window sashes with frames to Winborne and Rea Company, a local door, sash, and blind factory (Minutes, May 16, 1899; Butchko, Edenton 1982, 46); bobbins, spools, and cans from the Charlotte Supply Company (Minutes, May 26, 1899); \$875.00 for a hot-air heating system from B. F. Sturdevant Company of Boston (Minutes, July 10, 1899); and \$870.00 to Charles A. Scheisen and Company of New York to furnish the "best quality pure oak-turned leather belting (Minutes, July 10, 1899). Among the last items necessary for operation of the mill were the construction of a thirty-by-one hundred foot cotton house, the purchase of a sprinkler system for same from Brooks and Warwick [location unknown], and the acquisition of 1,900 tons of coal for the power plant, at \$3.05/ton, from the Norfolk and Southern Railroad (Minutes, October 10, November 10, 18, 1899).

The general contractor for the mill was George L. Borum of Suffolk, Virginia (about forty-five miles north of Edenton), whose bid of \$4,205 was accepted for all the carpentry and brick work, with minor additions and alterations to the plans (Minutes, June 5, 26, 1899). Construction apparently began in late June 1899, with day laborers hired for excavating

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around the buildings being paid \$0.75 each for a twelve-hour day (Minutes, June 30, 1899). In addition to the suppliers of lumber, doors, and windows, the only other construction contract mentioned in the minutes was the roofing contract, which went to the Armitage Manufacturing Company of Richmond, Virginia (Minutes, July 10, 1899). E. B. J. Jones [of Edenton?] was paid \$65.00 in October 1899 to paint all the ceilings and posts inside the mill (Minutes, October 10, 1899). Whether the building cost more than estimated is difficult to determine from the minutes. It was reported in October that \$40,000 in stock had been issued in order to complete the building, with its estimated cost being \$101,000; of this amount, \$70,500 had been subscribed (Minutes, October 26, 1899). Construction on the mill was largely completed by the end of October 1899 when contractor Borum submitted a bill for the full settlement of his work, which totaled \$4,480.80. The mill company was responsible for hanging the doors and window sash which had not yet been furnished by the Winborne and Rea mill, and some of the timbers from Bush and Hicks been delivered (Minutes, October 30, 1899). The mill's operation began "about" January 15, 1900 (Minutes, July 11, 1900; Butchko, Edenton 1992, 259).

### Construction of Mill Village

Concurrent with the construction of the mill was the building of the first of the "tenements," as the dwellings of the mill workers, or "operatives," were known in official minutes. The minutes do not give the source of the design for any of the tenements nor the names of contractors. The only record of a contractor working in the mill village is from the Edenton Courier, a short-lived local newspaper, that reported on January 18, 1900 that Ben White was building ten "cottages" at the cotton factory (Edenton Courier, January 10, 1900). Construction of the earliest three-room tenements were approved by the directors in May 1899, one month before the contract for the mill itself was awarded; the first tenements were to be five dwellings on the south side of East Queen Street and five dwellings on the north side of Magnolia (now Elliott) Street (May 26, June 19, 1899). The labor for these houses were to be supplied by some of the day laborers hired at \$0.75 per day "if good hands" were obtained (Minutes, June 30, 1899). Five months later the construction of three, two-story tenements--one each of five, six, and seven rooms--were approved "in accordance with plans as submitted," the source of which were unidentified (Minutes, October 10, 1899). One month later it was reported to the directors that \$630.11 had been spent on the tenements (Minutes, November 10, 1899). In December 1899 the directors authorized the construction of five more three-room tenements, stipulating that they be like the first ten except they be plastered instead of ceiled (December 20, 1899). Thus, when the mill started operations on or about January 15, 1900, the mill village consisted of ten, one-story three-room tenements and three, two-story dwellings, with

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another five of the one-story houses planned or under construction.

### Mill Employees

Little has been documented about the earliest employees of the Edenton Cotton Mill and residents in the mill village. While experienced technicians and supervisors had to come from areas with established cotton mills, many of the early laborers in the Edenton Cotton Mill were recruited from farms in neighboring counties. The first known record is the 1900 Census, which enumerated fourteen households containing twenty-nine mill employees in the village as of June 1, 1900. As was standard among cotton mills in North Carolina during the early twentieth century, the work force was exclusively white, and remained so until the social upheavals of the 1960s. Residency within the mill village was also exclusively for whites. The surnames of these first households--Bascom, Basnight, Brown, Edmondsom, Fletcher, Johnson, Leggett, Ross, Scarborough, Shiekels, Speight, Sutton, and Taylor--are all, except that of Richard Shiekels, common names in counties within forty miles of Edenton. Many of the mill's early employees came from Tyrrell County, where Basnight is a common family name, particularly in the Alligator community in eastern Tyrrell County; Scarborough is a Dare County name rarely found elsewhere in the northern Albemarle (Census 1900, 21-23). This pattern of families coming from outside of Edenton and Chowan County to work in the mill was acknowledged in county native W. Scott Boyce's 1917 assessment of Chowan County's population growth by stating that the "labor of the cotton mill is largely from other parts of the state" (Boyce 1917, 36). All of the mill employees in 1900 are listed as "Cotton Factory Labor" or an abbreviation thereof, except for thirty-eight-year old Brickeread [sic] Fletcher) who may have been the superintendent or manager, and forty-five year-old William Scarborough, a machinist. Included among the 105 occupants of these fourteen dwellings were eight persons who listed occupations other than at the cotton factory, including three farmers, one farm laborer, and one retired farm laborer. Whether forty-two-year-old carpenter James B. Sutton or husband-and-wife painters Thomas and Susan Taylor were in any way employed in construction at the mill or mill village is impossible to tell. In each case of the non-mill workers, others within the household were employed at the mill, enabling the family to occupy a mill dwelling. The average household size was seven-and-a-half persons, indicating the first tenements were rather crowded. There were four households containing ten or eleven persons, and only three sheltering as few as four or five (Census 1900, 21-22).

The practice of a family occupying one of the tenements when members other than the head were employed in the mill is illustrated by the family of John H. Harrell (1868-1910s) and Sallie (b. 1873), neither of whom were listed in the 1910 or 1920 census as a mill employee, John being listed as a laborer "working out" in 1910. However, in 1910 the two oldest of their six

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children were employed in the mill, enabling the family to reside within the village. They were eighteen-year-old daughter Cland, a twister, and thirteen-year-old daughter Ethel, a spinner. John had died by 1920 when the household consisted of his widow, Sallie, and four children, two of whom, eighteen-year-old son Loney and eleven-year-old daughter Bessie, were mill workers. Bessie was the youngest girl employed at the mill, with only ten-year-old Wheaton Jethro, the son of William C. Jethro, being younger (Census, 1910, 1920).

As the mill's production increased--especially after the completion of the two-story addition in 1900-1901 and other expansions in 1904, 1909, and 1915-1916--more houses for workers were erected: in 1900, two, two-story houses (containing four rooms and a kitchen) and three, one-story houses (three rooms) (Minutes, March 9, 1900); in 1904, four, three-room houses and three, four-room houses "as soon as possible" (Minutes, March 3, 1904) and three or four, two-room houses on the north side of Queen Street (Minutes, October 12, 1905); in 1906-1907, three houses, the "style and number left to the discretion of the president" (Minutes, October 3, 1906, July 10, 1907); in 1908-1909, five tenements on East Church (now Phillips) Street (Minutes, August 8, 1908, July 14, 1909); in 1916, thirteen tenements at \$1,600 (Minutes, July 12, 1916); and in 1916-1917, four, four-room houses (Minutes, July 12, 1916). After the construction of five new tenements in 1908-1909 brought the total to forty, all were reported as occupied in July 1909 (Minutes, July 14, 1909). Although additional worker tenements were constructed in 1921 and 1923, there is no mention of them in the minutes. While the workers' houses were built along East Church (now Phillips), East Queen, and Magnolia (now Elliott) streets, Hertford Road (now East Church Street), and Mill (now McMullan Avenue), more substantial residences were erected in a small cluster along East King Street for mill supervisors and overseers: the Engineer's House in 1908 (entry 64) (Minutes, July 8, 1908); the Superintendent's House in 1909 (entry 66) (Minutes, July 14, 1909); the Spinning Overseer's House (entry 61) (Minutes, November 6, 1913); the Carder's House in 1916 (entry 62) (Minutes, July 12, 1916); and two dwellings for supervisor's in 1921 (entries 63 and 65).

By 1910 the mill village had grown to forty-two dwellings housing 228 people, of whom ninety-four were mill employees. The average number of residents per house had fallen to five-and-a-half, with six households having as many as eight occupants. The mill village had apparently become established as an identifiable neighborhood because the census tabulation was noted in the margin as "Factory Hill" by enumerator Octavius O. Ward; the term was recorded nowhere else in reference to the village. The Census shows a remarkable turnover in the village. In 1910 there was only one apparent holdover from the 1900 census of mill village residents, nineteen-year-old Charlie Sutton, a "Section head," who in 1900 was perhaps the eleven-year-old son of carpenter James B. Sutton. Among the village's

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forty-nine households in 1910 were surnames readily identified as from Chowan and Perquimans counties--Sutton, White, Harrell, Hassell, Spruill, Cofield [sic], Bunch, and Copeland--as well as others that would become well known within the mill during the next half-century: Phillips, Rogerson, Mason, Owens, Davenport, and Twiddy (Census 1910, 32A-34A).

The 1910 Census is the only one of the three released censuses pertinent to the district--1900, 1910, 1920--that specifies occupations within the mill. Jobs that were the exclusive domain of women and girls were spinning (eighteen workers), spooling (twelve), reeling (five), and feeders (two). Tasks for men and boys included doffing (eleven), drawing frames (five), twistors (four), oiling (three), intermeads (three), and (two each) ropers, sweepers, overseers, general laborers, and section foremen. Additionally, there was one each superintendent, watchman, section assistant, warper, speeder, and stuber [sic]. The only tasks performed by both men and women were carder and working the twist room, of which there was one of each gender (Census 1910, 32A-34A).

Several families from Tyrrell County, especially the Alligator section, supplied workers and supervisors to the Edenton Cotton Mill for three generations. These families included the Alexanders, Owenses, Wrights, and Twiddys. Patterns among these families embody the migration from farms to factories during the early twentieth century in eastern North Carolina and the generational and tightly-knit family character of the mill village before World War II. The fullest and most readily available information concerns the Alexander family, several descendants of which continue to reside in the village or nearby. The Reverend Eather C. Alexander, who worked in the mill from 1932 until 1983 as electrician, master mechanic, and after 1951 was maintenance supervisor for both the mill and the mill village, recalls that his parents, farmers Charlie Wesley "C. W." Alexander (1866-1958) and Martha (Owens) Alexander (1874-1960), were among the first Alligator residents to move to the Edenton Cotton Mills. They had been recruited by mill official Phillip Sidney McMullan (1898-1988) who made several trips to Tyrrell County seeking employees. The Alexanders first came to Edenton in 1918, but returned to Alligator in 1919 after one of their nine children was injured while working at the mill. McMullan talked them into returning in 1921, to the house they had occupied before, 411 Elliott Street (entry 51). They resided there until their deaths and family members continue to reside there (Alexander, December 9, 1997).

While the Alexanders were only one of many extended families to work for the Edenton Cotton Mill, their size and longevity of employment with the mill make them remarkable. Each of the nine Alexander children worked for the Edenton Cotton Mills at some time, and five made careers here: machinist Samuel Thomas Alexander (1895-1958); fly-frame operator Alton Lewis Alexander (1903-1970); spinner Edith Alexander Owens (d. 1994) (entry 53); electrician and mechanic Eather C Alexander (entries 64 and 65); and winder

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Violet Alexander (entry 51). Four children had shorter periods with the company: Jessie James Alexander (1897-1960), who left by 1930 after several years to become a logger, and eventually owned a small saw mill on the East Church Street Extended site now occupied by Hobbs Implement Company immediately east of the Edenton Cotton Mill Historic District; Charlie H. Alexander (1900-1951) who later carried mail, drove a school bus, and was an Edenton policeman; reeler Cassie Alexander Downing, whose husband, George Downing, had previously worked in a cotton mill in Roanoke Rapids; and Martha Alexander Ashley, who worked as a winder during the late 1930s and mid 1940s (entry 51) (Alexander, December 9, Chowan death records, passim; Census 1900, 21-23; Census 1910, 32A-34A).

Furthermore, several of the Alexander siblings were married to mill employees, and the extended Alexander family included Alton's wife, spooler Elsie (Ward) Alexander; Edith's husband, supervisor, overseer, and machinery overhauler William Charlie Owens (1900-1991); and Martha's husband, Fred Lewis Ashley, Sr., who worked at the mill a short period before beginning a career with the state highway weigh station. Both Owens and Ashley were raised in the mill village, the former the son of George and Emma Owens who had come from Gates County between 1900 and 1910, and the latter the son of Archie and Claudia Ashley who had come between 1910 and 1920 (entry 47).

Two of Martha Owens Alexander's sisters also migrated from Alligator as well: Josephine (1882-1971), whose husband, John Wright, also of Alligator, baled thread prior to shipment, and Narcissa, of whom little information is known. A brother, Robert Owens, operated a store (since demolished) in the 300 block of East Church Street across from the railroad depot and west of the Edenton Cotton Mill Historic District (Alexander, December 9, 1997; Butchko, Edenton 1992, 185-186; Chowan death records, passim; Census 1900, 21-23; Census 1910, 32A-34A).

Among the other Alligator families were the Wrights, Twiddys, and Basnights, all of whom had extensive connections through marriage with each other and the Sawyer, Owens, and Alexander families. These mill workers included Thomas F. Wright (1877-1955) (entry 55) and his wife Kate W. (Twiddy) Wright (1884-1963) (entry 71), who came in 1921 on the same boat that brought the C. W. Alexander family to Edenton the second time; Henry William Wright (1900-1947) and his wife, Elva; and Major McKinley Wright (1897-1979), who came in ca. 1922 (entry 10). Among the first of the large Twiddy clan to migrate to factory jobs from Tyrrell County was Benjamin Franklin Twiddy, Sr. (1878-1934), who came about 1908, followed by his brother William H. Twiddy (1881-1936) about 1918. Three of Benjamin's sons were longtime mill employees, Robert W. (1896-1961), Benjamin Franklin, Jr. (1901-1966) and Joseph Daniel (1911-1958). Illustrating the complex relationships common in isolated rural areas, Benjamin's and William's mother had been a Sawyer before marriage, Benjamin, married Emaline Sawyer (1878-1953) of Alligator, and her sister, Frances (1881-1956), married

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another Twiddy from Alligator, David Thomas Twiddy (1879-1955), relationship unknown. Other Twiddys included brothers James Thomas "Jim" Twiddy (1876-1958) (entry 23) and George Wesley Wright (entry 43), who came from Alligator ca. 1917 (Alexander December 9, 1997; Chowan death records, passim). Brothers Thomas J. Basnight (1886-1972) and Benjamin Franklin Basnight (1888-1966) also migrated from Alligator (Alexander, December 9, 1997; Nixon, July 21, 1998; Wright, July 22, 1998; Chowan death records, passim).

Many families came from other sections of eastern North Carolina to work in the Edenton Cotton Mill and occupy mill houses. Included among these were the Caytons from Aurora in Beaufort County. While the Reverend Preston Cayton (1910-1987) worked in the card room for a living, he preached in Christian Churches in Martin County as a calling; his wife, Estelle (Van Horn) Cayton (1911-1980), a native of Creswell in neighboring Washington County, worked downstairs as a creeler (entry 45). At least three other Caytons from Beaufort County moved to the Edenton mill village, although how or if they are related has not been determined. William Bryan Cayton came to town with his wife, Josephine (Prescott) Cayton, seeking employment as a saw sharpener, and worked instead as a roper layer for the mill. Others included Charlie Cayton (. ca. 1882) and his wife, Maggie, (b. ca. 1901), and Lawrence Cayton (b. ca. 1882), his wife, Ida (b. ca. 1882). From the Bethel area of Pitt County came Richard Albert Rogerson (ca. 1866-1930s) and his wife, Marie "Molly" (Sitterson) Rogerson (ca. 1874-1920s), sometime before 1910. They resided at 705 McMullan Avenue (entry 71) and raised six children who worked in the mill: Henry (1893-1984, the overseer of the card room; Frank (b. ca. 1895-1970s) (entry 32); Acibell (b. ca. 1898), the wife of mill painter Joseph Basnight; Katie (b. ca. 1904-1990s), the wife of mill employee Will Edwards (d. 1980s); Estelle (b. ca. 1907), who married a mill worker by the name of Pate; and Alethia (1910s-1990s), who married employee Lemman Jethro (ca. 1906-1970s) (entry 35) (Harrell, December 15, 1997; Wright, July 22, 1998; Census 1910, 32B; Census 1920, 1A-3B). The names of additional "operatives," obtained primarily by the recollections of current or former residents, are included in the Inventory List where possible.

Concerns of Mill Village

The character, attractiveness, and especially the healthfulness of the mill village was viewed as a prime selling point in attracting and keeping good workers. The decision in December 1899 to erect the second group of three-room tenement houses with plastered interior walls instead of manufactured tongue-and-grooved ceiling board may have been an attempt to make the houses more attractive to prospective workers (Minutes, December 20, 1899). Soon after the mill started production in January 1900, directors William B. Shepard and Fred A. White, both farmers, were instructed to lay off streets in the mill village and set out shade trees; Shepard was authorized to set out more "shade and other trees" the following

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December as well. The deep lots provided ample room for gardens for the workers, especially important since most of the workers were former farmers.

The trees in time provided a bower of overhead shade that in several sections remains today (Minutes, January 25, December 12, 1900).

Getting and retaining good labor was a continuing concern for mill officials. Even though the mill was described as "being short of hands in October 1902," eight months later the directors discussed enlarging the mill. This occurred in 1904 utilizing plans drawn by C. R. Makepeace and executed by contractor D. K. Cecil and Company (Minutes, October 8, 1902; June 6, 1903; January 20, May 20, 1904). Further labor actions in 1906 included raising wages for spinning from \$0.10 to \$0.125 per hour, the directors ordering a "strict enforcement" of state law excluding labor of children under twelve years of age, the reduction in July of working hours to sixty-three per week, and the construction of more tenement houses in October (Minutes, May 24, July 27, October 3, 1906). Despite talk of building another mill in 1907--"We have a site and land enough for a number of [new tenements] and many advantages from the present mill"--low prices on the yarn market forced the mill to cut to running only three days a week in November 1907. The mill did not return to operating full time until April 1909 (Minutes, July 7, July 10, November 20, 1907; March 1, April 21, July 8 1908, July 14, 1909).

Adequate labor remained a problem through much of the decade of the 1910s. In 1911 it was reported that even though all the tenements were occupied, "we frequently have idle machinery for lack of help" (Minutes, July 12, 1911), and again in 1914 the president reported that "almost daily we have some machinery idle for lack of help" (Minutes, July 8, 1914). There was an almost immediate turnaround, for the labor supply was considered so "abundant" at the July 1915 annual meeting that it was proposed building a new mill (Minutes, July 14, 1915). These conditions remained amid a period of "unusual business with advancing prices" until the company was unable to replace ten men called into the service prior to United States entry into World War I (Minutes, July 12, 1916). Yet, confidence remained sufficient to warrant the building of thirteen new tenements in 1916, with six more four-room houses planned in the near future (Minutes, July 14, December 20, 1915; July 12, 1916). Manpower conditions worsened in 1917 because of an inability to secure enough labor for the new mill. Furthermore, it was predicted that when the National Child Labor Law prohibiting children under the age of fourteen from working went into effect on September 1, 1917, the Edenton Cotton Mill would be deprived of "the use of about twenty children . . . curtailing the supply of spinners and doffers" (Minutes, July 11, 1917). Labor shortages grew even worse during World War I, when the president reported in 1919 that a "scarcity of labor" resulted in the mill operating at only seventy-five percent of capacity (Minutes, July 7, 1919).

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The health of the workers was a major and continuing concern of the board of directors. In August 1900, after hearing from Dr. John Henry McMullan, one of the town's leading physicians, that the existing shallow wells were responsible for "a great deal of the sickness amongst the help," it was decided to "try some deeper wells" (Minutes, August 5, 1900; Butchko, Edenton 1992, 146). While deeper wells were no doubt beneficial, the board decided a year later to secure the "services of some doctor to attend operatives" living in the village (Minutes, October 8, 1901). The first company physician, Dr. Thomas J. Hoskins, was paid \$42.00 per month, with much of this amount being raised by each employee living on mill property paying the mill ten cents per week for medical attention (Minutes, January 9, 1903; Butchko, Edenton 1992, 206). As a solution to the problem of water quality, water pipes were laid in 1908-1909 on all the streets in the village to supply "artesian water" from the town of Edenton (Minutes, July 14, 1909).

Another improvement in the healthfulness of the mill property was undertaken in October 21, 1912 when swamplands along Queen Anne's and Blount's creeks were filled, a project president Frank Wood had been urging for three years (Minutes, October 21, 1912; July 9, 1913). Significant improvements in the village's sanitary conditions occurred in 1916-1918 when the tenement windows were screened from flies and mosquitoes, and twenty "sanitary closets" were installed by enclosing a portion of the porch that extended along the rear ell on most tenement houses. By July 1918 sanitary closets had been installed in each of the village's sixty dwellings. The nature of these closets is unknown, as a sewage system as we know them today was not installed until the late 1930s. Furthermore, in 1917 Frank Wood recommended the employment of a "good woman to look after the welfare of the sick and needy employees" so as to not only help the families of the village but to improve the mill's labor conditions (Minutes, July 11, 1917; July 10, 1918). Despite these improvements, it was reported in 1919 that "much sickness" was in the village during the nationwide influenza pandemic in 1918-1919 (Minutes, July 9, 1919). There were several deaths from influenza within the mill village although the exact number and names are unknown (Alexander, December 9, 1997).

With the location of the passenger and freight depots of the Suffolk and Carolina Railroad on the nearby waterfront, commercial activity increased near the mill in 1902. This railroad, which traversed the rich agricultural lands of northern Chowan County and neighboring Gates and Perquimans counties, was absorbed into the reorganized Norfolk and Southern Railroad in 1906. The construction ca. 1908 of a handsome masonry passenger station immediately west of the mill village only added to the bustle of activity near the mill village (Butchko, Edenton 1992, 42-44, 292 n. 18; Minutes, May 19, June 25, July 8, 9, 1902).

Because the mill did not operate a company store, residents of the mill

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village patronized commercial establishments in Edenton. The most convenient stores were those near the intersection of South Oakum and East Queen streets, just one block west of the mill village on the west side of the Suffolk and Carolina Railroad tracks. The first of these was the ca. 1900-1910 Hughes House and Store at 315-317 East Queen Street, situated across from the depot to attract customers from there as well. Business from the mill village was the impetus, at least in part, for the construction around 1920 of three frame grocery-general stores and one drug store in this area, forming a commercial center for residents of the Edenton Cotton Mill and other customers in eastern Edenton (Butchko, Edenton 1992, 259, 236, 222).

In 1906 the mill leased a lot for a church building to the Methodist Episcopal Church South and donated one hundred dollars toward construction of a church; three years later the "Factory Mill Church" was allotted one hundred dollars quarterly for expenses (Minutes, May 24, 1906; December 21, 1909). While one hundred dollars was donated in 1915 toward a Sunday School Building (the present one, entry 70-a, was not erected until 1946), there is no record of the construction of the present church building (entry 70) in 1916. Since 1924 the building has been occupied by the newly-organized First Christian Church, the first of its denomination in Chowan County. Episcopal, Methodist, Missionary Baptist, Catholic, Northern Methodist, and Presbyterian congregations existed in Edenton during this period to provide other worship opportunities for residents of the mill village (Butchko, Edenton 1992, 24, 47-48)...

Children from the mill village attended the Edenton public schools. Until 1904, they apparently attended the (former) Edenton Graded School, a ca. 1851 one-story building at 205 South Oakum Street one block west of the railroad tracks. After 1904, they would have gone to the 1895 (former) Edenton Academy which had been taken over by the public schools. In 1916 a modern brick building, now known as E. A. Swain Apartments, was constructed on the academy site in the 100 Block of Court Street, where all Edenton white children attended school until the 1950s (Butchko, Edenton 1992, 48-49, 224, 150).

### Mill Expansion and Success

Throughout the first two decades of the twentieth century the mill plant was continually enlarged and improved. As noted earlier, the mill was enlarged in 1900 and 1904 from plans by C. R. Makepeace (Minutes, April 5, 1900; June 6, 1903; January 20, May 20, 1904). A 1907 proposal to erect a new mill to hold 10,000 spindles was approved by the directors in 1908, but abandoned in 1909 due to "very unfavorable" economic conditions (Minutes, July 10, 1907; July 8, November 30, 1908). However, construction began in September 1909 on a forty-eight-foot addition that was completed by the following July (July 13, 1910). Concurrent with this expansion was the

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year." (Note: through the years the bales averaged 517 pounds each.) Two years later, in 1911, the president reported that despite the general depression in business, the company was "fortunate at being able to buy the local cotton as it is offered" (Minutes, July 12, 1911). The mill's cotton consumption increased steadily during the early and mid 1910s, from 2,029 bales in 1913 to 3,307 bales in 1917, before falling slightly the next two years to 3,058 bales in 1919 (Minutes, July 9, 1913; July 8, 1914; July 14, 1915; July 12, 1916; July 11, 1917; July 10, 1918; July 9, 1919; 1920 Agricultural Schedule, Chowan County Census).

In addition to the mill's direct impact on area cotton farmers, the increase in cotton acreage stimulated increased business for industries and businesses that served the area's cotton farmers. Larger cotton crops meant additional business for the county's cotton gins. State business directories do not record cotton gins in the county prior to 1902, but according to W. Scott Boyce, during the 1880s there were between twenty and thirty horse-powered gins in the county, with some of the larger farms having their own gin (Boyce 1917, 112). The 1902 business directory enumerated seventeen cotton gins within the county, including one owned by Fred A. White, one of the original incorporators of the Edenton Cotton Mill.

Five of the gins were in or near Edenton, while most of the others were in the up-county farming communities of Rocky Hock, Tyner, Cisco, and Gliden. At least twelve cotton gins operated in the county through the 1910s, with just less than half located in the Edenton vicinity. By 1915 Boyce noted that all of the county's gins were operated with steam power (News and Observer 1902, 151; 1904, 172; 1907, 170; 1912, 168; 1914, 152; 1916, 169; Boyce 1917, 115). Members of the Wood family, the leading investors and officers in the Edenton Cotton Mill, in 1913 organized the Chowan Cotton Oil and Fertilizer Company to take advantage of cotton seeds extracted during ginning. While a large plant was erected on the opposite side of Queen Anne's Creek near the mill, the cotton seed mill was destroyed by fire about 1930; the ruins stood until at least 1978 when they were recorded by the Historic American Engineering Record (Butchko, Edenton 1992, 47, 294 n. 42).

In 1919 the Edenton Hosiery Mill Company was organized, providing a small local market for yarn produced at the much larger Edenton Cotton Mill. The

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construction of an office (entry 60) during late 1909 and another warehouse (Minutes, July 14, 1909). The construction in 1913 of a new smokestack (entry 1-c) by the Weber Chimney Company of Chicago at a contract price of \$1,975.00 was delayed when work was suspended because of "defective" material, but by July 1914 had been completed "satisfactorily" (Minutes, March 25, July 9, 1913; July 8, 1914). There was continued interest among the directors in 1915 for expansion, especially when it was reported that the mill company was then free of debt. Although an entirely new mill was again proposed because of low machinery costs and abundant labor, the board instead authorized an addition, with 9,072 spindles being added by July 1916 on the northern end of the mill (Minutes, July 14, 1915; July 12, 1916). In just twenty years of operation, the mill building itself had been enlarged at least five times: 1900, 1904, 1909-1910, 1913, and 1915-1916.

The financial success of the Edenton Cotton Mills was a boon to Edenton and Chowan County in several ways. First, and most direct, was the fact that the company's profits were divided among local investors who invested, saved, or spent in ways that boosted the local economy as well as their own fortunes. On July 11, 1900, at the first annual stockholders meeting after manufacturing began, board president Frank Wood reported a profit from about five months of operations of \$6,557,790 (Minutes, July 11, 1900). A \$75,000 profit in 1907 was deemed by Wood to be "due more to the exceptionally high prices of yarn than to any unusually good management on our part" (Minutes July 10, 1907). The president's comments at the annual meetings are telling barometers of the national and local economy, with profits of \$15,500.43 reported in 1910 after more than two years of "dull yarn markets" and "very unfavorable conditions" (Minutes, July 13, 1910; July 14, 1909; July 8, 1908). Conditions for the cotton industry gradually improved during the 1910s, due in large part to a worldwide demand for cotton for nearly all endeavors of war and industry during World War I. North Carolina farms and mills, along with others throughout the South, were major suppliers of raw cotton, yarns, and cloth throughout the world at war (Cain 1997, 169-179). By the end of the decade, the profits of the Edenton Cotton Mill were at record highs of \$133,091.12 (Minutes, July 9, 1919).

Local investment of these profits was directly manifested in the handsome residences erected or renovated by the company's major stockholders and officers. While some investors--especially brothers Frank Wood, Julien Wood, and Henry G. "Hal" Wood, and attorney Williams J. Leary, Jr.--resided in residences erected before the incorporation of the Edenton Cotton Mills in 1899 (see Butchko, Edenton 1992, 251-253, 154, 208-209, 253), other stockholders used cotton mill profits to assist in building new houses or in remodeling existing houses during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Haywood Cullen Privott (1862-1932) used his purchase of 20,000 bricks left from the construction of the mill in the construction of a brick Queen Anne style residence at 205 East King Street (Butchko, Edenton 1992,

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200; Minutes, April 26, 1900). Stockholder James Norfleet Pruden, a nephew of the Wood brothers, erected a smaller frame Queen Anne residence ca. 1901 at 105 North Granville Street, while the next year farmer Fred A. White raised a spacious brick residence at 300 North Broad Street that combined Queen Anne asymmetry with elements of the new Colonial Revival style (Butchko, Edenton 1992, 179, 91). In 1910 mill profits also helped build two Colonial Revival style houses on adjacent lots, a brick gable-front dwelling at 108 West Church Street for attorney C. S. Vann and a gambrel-roofed residence at 110 West Church Street for ice manufacturer Edmund R. Conger (Butchko, Edenton 1992, 143-144). During the decade of the 1910s, stockholder, attorney, and Wood brother-in-law William D. Pruden, Sr. expanded his ca. 1883 Queen Anne dwelling at 116 West Church Street and added an austere Colonial Revival porch (Butchko, Edenton 1992, 145). At the Homestead (101 East Water Street), Frank Wood, the mill's longtime president, enlarged a ca. 1771 Collins family home in 1895 with a large Queen Anne addition (which was removed in 1956). The Dr. Matthew Page House (121 West King Street), a fine Greek Revival house, was the home of William Oscar Elliott, the company's vice-president and secretary, from 1899 until his death in 1931 (Butchko, Edenton 1992, 251-253, 208-209, 215-216).

### Economic spin-offs of the mill's success

As promoted by the Fisherman and Farmer in 1895, another important economic benefit generated by the Edenton Cotton Mills was providing a cotton market to local and regional cotton farmers. Cotton was the primary cash crop in North Carolina during the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth century, and the increase in the cotton crop of Chowan County followed a statewide pattern that saw cotton production more than double between 1900 and 1925, from about 460,000 bales to approximately 1,102,000 bales (Lefler and Newsome 1973, 521, 577).

Cotton was an important crop in antebellum Chowan County, and became even more so after the Civil War, rising from 782 bales in 1859 to 1,331 bales in 1869. In both years, the county's cotton production was greater than the combined production of the other northern Albemarle counties of Gates, Perquimans, Pasquotank, Camden, and Currituck (Agriculture of U. S. 1864, 109; Statistics of Wealth 1872, 219). The Edenton Cotton Mills, along with the Elizabeth City Cotton Mills (est. in 1895), provided a market for some of the cotton that previously had been transported by river or canal to markets in Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Suffolk, Virginia (Butchko 1989, 155-156, 244; Butchko, Elizabeth City 1992, E:21-22, 30; Butchko 1991, 39; 1900 Agricultural Census).

While it is likely that most of the ginned cotton the Edenton Cotton Mills used during its early years was acquired locally, the company Minutes do not provide statistics prior to 1909, when 2,196 bales were used, the "bulk of which we buy locally at the low price prevailing throughout the

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year." (Note: through the years the bales averaged 517 pounds each.) Two years later, in 1911, the president reported that despite the general depression in business, the company was "fortunate at being able to buy the local cotton as it is offered" (Minutes, July 12, 1911). The mill's cotton consumption increased steadily during the early and mid 1910s, from 2,029 bales in 1913 to 3,307 bales in 1917, before falling slightly the next two years to 3,058 bales in 1919 (Minutes, July 9, 1913; July 8, 1914; July 14, 1915; July 12, 1916; July 11, 1917; July 10, 1918; July 9, 1919; 1920 Agricultural Schedule, Chowan County Census).

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small two-story brick building erected that year on West Hicks Street still stands even though the hosiery mill corporation dissolved in 1923 (Butchko, Edenton 1992, 191, 294 n. 44).

### Mill Operations, 1920-1948

In the years between 1920 and 1948, (the latter date being the end of the period of significance for the Edenton Cotton Mill Historic District), the Edenton Cotton Mill, like other industries in North Carolina, weathered a succession of prosperous and troubling economic times. The period began as the company's "most profitable in history due to extremely high prices of yarn," part of a period of nationwide prosperity following the end of World War I in 1918; the year's profit of \$256,957.35 was almost double the previous year's record (Minutes, July 14, 1920). Such flush times were, however, fleeting, as a worldwide economic recession took hold in September 1920, prompting president Frank Wood to report in July 1921 that "Since our last meeting we had had the most violent reverses in business affecting all classes of industry, and our lives have been especially depressed." Such was the turndown that the plant was running only thirty hours a week and wages paid to the laborers had been reduced about forty-three percent. Management was reluctant to cut wages further even though spinners were making twice as much as they did in 1915 (Minutes, July 13, 1921). While profits the next year, 1922, amounted to only \$11,752.58, it was the start of an economic recovery that saw profits double by 1924 to \$26,095.56, more than double the next year to \$68,038.51, and nearly double again by 1926 to \$130,584.39 (Minutes, July 9, 1924; July 8, 1925; July 14, 1926). Profits continued to rise for the rest of the decade. When Henry G. "Hal" Wood, who succeeded his brother as president after Frank's death in 1926, reported at the 1929 annual meeting that a profitable year was attained "despite . . . the industry [being] very depressed due to overproduction," little did he know the economic difficulties ahead (Minutes, July 10, 1929).

The stock market crash in October 1929 and the resulting collapse of the world economy into the Great Depression had a profound effect on the state, the town, and the Edenton Cotton Mill (Lefler and Newsome 1973, 606). The annual report in 1930 noted that the general business depression has been "unusually severe" for textiles, and that "conditions grow continually worse." Like mills nationwide, hours had been cut drastically, having recently reduced to running three days a week. Reported president Wood, "We would like to close down entirely, but feel that it would demoralize our labor as they cannot well exist on shorter hours than at present." The loss for the year was \$33,874.20, only the second loss in the company's thirty-one year history (Minutes, July 9, 1930). Annual losses, however, became standard throughout the 1930s, with only the annual reports in 1934 and 1937 showing profits and losses running as high as \$123,494.11 in 1938. Net losses for the years 1930 to 1939 totaled \$370,595.72, after the last four

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years of the 1920s yielded net profits of \$620,261.19. The fourteen-year swing of just under a million dollars was an immense amount for a town of 3,046 residents that had grown accustomed to the success of the Edenton Cotton Mills (Minutes, July 8, 1931; July 13, 1932; July 12, 1933; July 11, 1934; July 10, 1935; July 8, 1936; July 14, 1937; July 14, 1938; February 8, 1939; Cheney 1981, 1101).

The terse reports by the president at the annual meetings of the 1930s tracked national economic conditions. In 1931, he stated that "The constant decline in the price of cotton--now much below the cost of production--as well as the greatly decreased demand, has militated greatly against the mills." The amount of unsold yarn in stock, 325,000 pounds, equaled about one-fifth of the mill's annual production. The mill was operating only three or four days per week, and the workers had already suffered two reductions in wages of ten percent (Minutes, July 8, 1931). By the next year the continued depression was "even more severe than before," and there was no "encouraging outlook, unless it be that the present curtailment of the mills throughout the country, now more pronounced than at any time before, and a more clearing view of the political situation here and abroad, may give hope for more favorable conditions." The mill was operating only as it could sell yarn, "sometimes sixteen hours [a week] and sometimes none" (Minutes, July 13, 1932).

While the state government took steps in 1931 to put the state, its counties and towns, and its schools on a more stable financial footing, problems affecting industry, unemployment, and low prices required federal action (Lefler and Newsome 1973, 607-609, 611-613). In 1933, with the inauguration of Franklin D. Roosevelt as President and the start of the New Deal, president Hal Wood advised stockholders at the annual meeting in July that "After four years of the worst depression in our history, the turn for the better has apparently come. . . . Since the inauguration of Mr. Roosevelt, and the many New [sic] ideas he is attempting to put in operation, there has been a tremendous demand for yarn at improved prices."

The mill had not only sold its production but reduced its yarn stocks by over seventy percent; shipments the past May and June broke all previous records. However, Wood warned stockholders that recently-enacted laws would soon result in a great increase in wages and a limitation of two shifts of forty hours per week each (Minutes, July 12, 1933). After four years of losses totaling a quarter million dollars, the \$8,598.35 profit in 1934, while modest, was a profit nonetheless. Wood reported that the entire year had been operated under the control of the National Recovery Act (NRA), which had been passed by Congress in June 1933 with the goal of setting American industry on its feet (Lefler and Newsome 1973, 616-618). During the past year the labor cost per pound of yarn had increased seventy-seven percent and the total manufacturing costs were forty-four percent higher than in 1933. Yet, Wood reported that:

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For our part, we feel that operating under the Code [NRA] has been a great help to the industry, but when there are so many conflicting interests, it is very hard for the government to get accurate and unbiased opinion as to what is most advantageous for the industry as a whole. To us, it seems the most important thing is the proper adjustment of Production and Demand, so as to secure regular uniform operations throughout the year and avoid so many periods of dullness in orders and slowing down operations. Conditions are certainly better than before the operations were begun and we are hopeful of continued improvement and that some plan will be provided for the continuation of this control after the present act expires in 1935 (Minutes, July 11, 1934).

When the NRA was declared unconstitutional by the United States Supreme Court in May 1935, the report at the annual meeting two months later was the fear that the likely result would be a return to "cut-throat competition." Still, the directors were able to report that during the national labor strike in September 1934 the Edenton Cotton Mill had not the "slightest trouble" as it "retained the whole-hearted support of our entire force" (Minutes, July 10, 1935). The late 1930s saw a gradual improvement in the economy and the financial health of the Edenton Cotton Mills. Even though the only reported profit was \$91,558.29 in 1937, this amount is significant in that it was sandwiched between losses of \$12,377.90 in 1936 and \$123,494.11 in 1938 (Minutes, July 14, 1937; July 8, 1936; July 14, 1938).

Complicating the local manufacturing picture in 1938 was the difficulty in obtaining suitable cotton and the enactment of the Wages and Hours Act of 1938. This federal law mandated a maximum work week of forty-four hours at twenty-five cents per hour, which was raised to thirty-two-and-a-half cents in November 1939 (Minutes, July 14, October 12, 1938; November 8, 1939; Lefler and Newsome 1973, 617). Far worse for the Edenton Cotton Mill and the area's cotton farmers was the failure of the local cotton crop in 1938: for the first time since the company's organization in 1899, "money has had

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to be sent out of the community" to acquire cotton, primarily from Memphis, Tennessee (Minutes, February 8, 1939).

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s the mill company upgraded the plant, replacing equipment and machinery that was, in many cases, over twenty years old. The president reported in 1927 that, while the mill was in good condition, "much of our machinery is old, however, and will some day have to be replaced" (Minutes, July 13, 1927). Large scale replacements apparently did not occur until the Depression, when the mill acquired fourteen used Universal Winder Frames and was looking to further updates with machinery acquired from mills that had been closed (Minutes, July 13, 1932). The installation of additional new machinery was reported to the stockholders in July 1937 (Minutes, July 14, 1937). One of the biggest modifications in the plant occurred in 1929 when the company contracted with the Virginia Electric and Power Company (later known as VEPCO) to electrify the mill (Minutes, July 10, 1929; July 13, 1927).

This period also saw a major change in the mill's ownership and management as death claimed many of the founding directors. New members on the Board of Directors included attorney William D. Pruden, Jr. (1894-1946), son of an original stockholder and a nephew of the Wood brothers, who was appointed in 1923 to fill the vacancy caused by the death of merchant Abram T. Bush. Four years later Pruden built a handsome Colonial Revival residence (Minutes, December 22, 1923; Butchko, Edenton 1992, 86-87). With the death of Henry G. "Hal" Wood in 1936, the presidency of the board was passed to his nephew, John Gilliam Wood, Sr., the owner of Hayes Plantation (NHL 1974) directly across Queen Anne's Creek from the mill. The death of Julien Wood in 1943 brought to an end the involvement of the three founding Wood brothers. He was eulogized as the man "who made the original motion giving rise to the incorporation of this Company" (Minutes, April 16, 1943).

Along with the continual addition of new employees and managers to the mill's staff came John Augustus Moore (1878-1947) in 1931 as general manager. The manager of cotton mills in Henderson, Roanoke Rapids, and Franklinton, Moore rejected Edenton's offer of \$5,000 per year, requesting and getting \$7,500 instead; such daring in negotiations was remarkable for an out-of-work mill manager at a time of falling employment industry-wide. While he never resided in the mill village like many previous and successive managers, Moore managed the Edenton Cotton Mill until shortly before his death. His joining the Edenton Cotton Mill connected another of Edenton's prominent and interrelated families to the mill (Minutes, August 8, 1931; Butchko, Edenton 1992, 210, 120-121; Butchko 1998, 129).

### Mill Village, 1920-1948

Improvement and change within the mill village occurred throughout the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s. The last houses constructed were in 1921--the three Aladdin Company wood-shingled bungalows (entries 34, 57, and 58) and

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the pair of two-story supervisor dwellings (entries 63 and 65)--and in 1923 --two houses (entries 2 and 69) on East Church Street although the latter has recently been moved to McMullan Avenue. This completed the village as it now stands. The mill took great care in maintenance of the mill village, and in 1927 the president reported that he often hears "complimentary remarks made as to [the] attractive appearance of our village" (Minutes, July 13, 1927). During 1927 and 1928 the company replaced many of the original wood-shingle roofs on the tenements with ones of standing seam metal for enhanced fire protection as well as improved water tightness. In most cases these roofs remain today. The houses in the village were painted during the summer of 1929 and six years later, after all of the inside rooms of the tenement houses had been painted, it was reported that the action "was much appreciated and pleased the tenants" (Minutes, July 13, 1927; July 10, 1929; July 10, 1935).

In 1925 the Edenton town council extended the municipal limits to include the mill and mill village. President Frank Wood reported that "we will have an additional tax of approximately \$7,000 per annum to bear without receiving any compensation" (Minutes, July 8, 1925). Later, however, this permitted the company to have the town extend water and sewer lines throughout the village in 1935, providing the "comfort of running water" to the tenements, and to have the entire village wired for electricity in 1937. In 1940 a sewerage system was approved for the entire village and in 1941 the light, water, and sewer projects were completed (Minutes, July 10, 1935; July 14, 1937; June 13, 1940; February 14, 1941).

Through the assistance of the federal relief program of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in 1937, the town and the mill company improved some of the village's streets, and were hopeful of "receiving further improvements" (Minutes, July 14, 1937). But in 1938 board director David M. Warren (husband of a granddaughter of Frank Wood) urged board members to go before town council to seek action on the village's street, and, "if necessary, carry a few residents to protest the condition in which the WPA and the town left them" (Minutes, October 12, 1938). In 1941 the mill company and town officials met to consider having sidewalks and curbs installed, and sidewalks were built between June and September 1942 at the cost of \$5,423.78, with the mill paying \$3,935.52. Because of war-time shortages of materials, paving the village's streets was postponed until after the war (Minutes, September 24, 1941; February 11, June 23, September 11, 1942; February 10, 1943; Alexander interview, 1997).

World War II

United States entry into World War II had a profound impact on the Edenton Cotton Mill and the people associated with it. North Carolina's textile industry was vital to the national war effort, and the state led all others in this area, supplying material for sheets, blankets, bandages, tire

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ords, tents, and other fabric needs (Lefler and Newsome 1973, 622-623). For the Edenton mill, the loss of workers to the draft and other war efforts were accompanied by price ceilings enforced by the federal Office of Price Administration and Civilian Supply (OPA), resulting in higher costs and lower net profits. In early 1943 the president warned that the extra operating time of the factory had caused increased wear and toll on machinery (Minutes, February 10, 1943; Lefler and Newsome 1973, 621). By June 1943, the company was operating on a "directive basis" by which the War Production Board directed the shipment of yarns to factories for finishing (Minutes, February 10, June 16, 1943; Lefler and Newsome 1973, 621).

By February 1944 the strains of greater production, loss of manpower, material restrictions, and shortages were being felt. Stockholders were notified that scarce labor was limiting production "more and more" and that the mill property was in "as good a condition as existing conditions permit" (Minutes, February 9, 1944). Net profit for 1943 was a respectable \$56,447.40. Despite needs expressed earlier, the company did not invest in new machinery until after the war, acquiring two automatic spoolers from the Barber-Colman Company in April 1946 (Minutes, February 10, 1943; February 9, 1944, February 14, 1945, April 6, 1946). Other purchases were delayed in 1947 by large price increases and the death of general manager John A. Moore (Minutes, November 28, December 11, 1947; February 11, 1948). A contract was executed with the Whitin Machine Works in April 1948 at the estimated cost of \$503,000 (Minutes, April 7, August 11, 1948). Installation began in late 1948 and in 1950 it was reported that the spoolers had proved "worth while" (Minutes, February 9, 1949, February 8, 1950).

During the war years the mill village underwent minor changes. In 1942, soon after the sidewalks were completed, the mill purchased a filling station along the Yeopim Road (East Church Street Extended), beside the mill property, and soon was "repairing and transforming the filling station recently purchased into two dwellings for the village" (see entries 3, 4, and 68) (Minutes, September 11, 1942; June 16, 1943). Because of restrictions and food quotas for home use, there was a national campaign to increase food production. Individual "Victory Gardens" were encouraged nationally to provide food for the family table, an effort in which even the smallest child could take part. Board president John G. Wood reported in 1943 that "We have many good garden spaces throughout the village and in order to induce more intensive cultivation we contemplate offering some suitable prizes for the best gardens this year" (Minutes, February 10, 1943). Vegetable gardens on the southwest corner of East King Street and McMullan Avenue are shown in a ca. 1943 aerial photograph (Butchko, Edenton 1992, 258). Many of the village residents were originally farmers, and private vegetable gardens had been a staple in the village since 1900.

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### Edenton Cotton Mill after 1948

Since 1948, the fifty-year cut-off for contributing status within the Edenton Cotton Mill Historic District, the mill enjoyed almost forty years of operation until closing in 1996. A succession of business leaders and local citizens served on the Board of Directors, with Wood descendants remaining prominently involved in company decisions. Chief among these was Phillip Sidney McMullan (1898-1988), who as a new employee in the late 1910s had been instrumental in recruiting workers, particularly those families from Tyrrell County--Alexander, Basnight, Twiddy, and Wright--who figured prominently in the village. He had started with the mill in 1916, served as shipping clerk for a number of years, and retired as the president in 1986, and it was in his honor that Mill Avenue was renamed McMullan Avenue sometime after ca. 1950 (Butchko, Edenton 1992, 186). Other streets were also renamed in recognition of persons associated with the mill for many years: Railroad Avenue became Wood Avenue in honor of brothers Frank, Julien, and H. G. "Hal" Wood in addition to nephew John Gilliam Wood; Office Street became Elliott Street to recognize the contributions of long-time board secretary William O. Elliott; and just in 1995, East Church Street became Phillips Street in memory of Calvin A. Phillips, who served as superintendent from 1950 until his death, succeeding McMullan.

The physical appearance of the district's buildings has changed little during the past fifty years. The most notable modification was the closure in the 1960s of the tall, arched windows of the mill building itself (entry 1), undertaken when the building was outfitted with an air-conditioning system. There have been minimal additions of ancillary buildings to the mill's plant. The mill houses had only minor changes to their exteriors, and because the dwellings remained in company ownership, these changes were for the most part uniform throughout the district. In an effort to reduce maintenance costs, many of the one-story dwellings, especially those along Phillips and East Queen streets, were covered with asbestos shingles during the early 1950s. Such "modern" siding was not only popular in the state during this period, but was widely employed on company-owned houses in other textile mill villages in the state. Its application on more than 600 mill houses in the Roanoke Rapids Historic District (Pending NR) is the most extensive in the state (Butchko 1998, 7). The only other significant physical change to any of the mill's primary resources was a renovation of the First Christian Church (entry 70) in 1948, the construction of a frame church Annex in 1950 (entry 70-a), and the application of brick veneer to the church in the 1960s. The church's role in the village was underscored in 1950 when the company president declared that the church was "an important and worth while part of the village life" (Minutes, February 8, June 8, 1950). The congregation has historically drawn most of its membership from within the mill village and remains as the only congregation of its denomination in Chowan County.

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The character of the district also has changed very little since 1948. After complaints and negotiations that dated to the early 1930s, the streets in the mill village were finally paved in 1949, for which president John G. Wood announced "we are very grateful." He reported that the company was, "by degrees improving the houses and will continue to do so" (Minutes, February 8, 1950). Prior to the 1960s, the occupants of the village were present or retired mill employees, but industry and labor changes after that decade saw an increasing number of mill employees choosing to buy dwellings elsewhere rather than live their lives in company housing. This forced the mill to rent dwellings to non-employees to keep them occupied. Because of federal fair housing and employment legislation enacted during the 1960s, employment in the mill and residency in the mill village was no longer exclusively for white persons. As retired mill workers died or moved, mill houses increasingly were occupied by tenants who had no connection to the Edenton Cotton Mill Company other than that of landlord.

Despite overtures from larger companies to acquire the Edenton Cotton Mill, it remained in local ownership until 1990, with many stockholders being descendants of original investors (Minutes, February 13, 1946). In February 1990 the mill was sold to Pioneer Yarn Mills of Sanford, which was later acquired by Unifi, Inc. of Greensboro. In an effort to reduce maintenance of the mill village, the company offered to give selected one-story mill dwellings to anyone willing to move them out of the village. Fortunately, only three such houses were so removed (entries 13, 16, 39), which did not appreciably worsen a remarkably high level of intactness that had seen only nine dwellings demolished for a variety of reasons (entries 5, 14, 25, 27, 37, 44, 53, and the houses on two former vacant lots at 402 and 408 Elliott Street which were divided between neighboring lots in 1996 when individual lot lines were legally platted).

After Unifi announced the closing of the mill in 1995, putting seventy-five people out of work and removing an average \$1.6 million annual payroll from the local economy, Edenton attorney Samuel B. Dixon, a member of the Board of Directors of the Preservation Foundation of North Carolina, Inc., a statewide non-profit organization commonly known as Preservation NC, approached the Unifi Corporation about donating the entire mill property to Preservation NC (Chowan Herald, September 21, 1995). This donation, the largest in Preservation NC's twenty-five year history, took place in December 1995. Since then, Preservation NC has established an office for the northeastern part of the state in the former Cotton Mill Office (entry 60), has placed the entire mill property of approximately forty-nine acres under preservation covenants, and developed a preservation plan for the property. Former mill employees have been allowed to remain in their homes at nominal rents while vacant dwellings have been marketed with restoration restrictions. The future use of the mill building (entry 1) remains under discussion (Winston-Salem Journal, October 13, 1996).

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### Textile Industry in North Carolina Context

While cotton textile manufacturing began in North Carolina in 1815, the industry was limited in both size and geography throughout the antebellum period even though the state's thirty-nine cotton mills were the most in a southern state in 1860 (Lefler and Newsome 1973, 317-318, 399). The first cotton mill in eastern North Carolina was the Great Falls Mill on the Tar River in present Rocky Mount, with production beginning in 1818. Largely owned by the prominent Joel Battle family from 1825 until its close in 1996, the mill, later known as Rocky Mount Mills (NR 1980), occupied a complex of three brick buildings erected in 1870, 1889, and 1892, with the oldest section standing upon foundations laid in 1817. Its adjacent mill village retains less than half of the 136 frame dwellings erected between 1890 and 1920, arranged in a manner that is much less identifiable as such than at Edenton (Jacobs and Mobley 1979, 7, 7:1, 8:1-3; Mebane interview 1998).

After the Civil War, an influx of capital into the state along with a marked increase in cotton acreage encouraged an acceleration in the construction of cotton textile factories. After 1880, the industry proliferated, building an average of six new mills a year for the rest of the century as the state embarked on a rapid late-nineteenth century industrialization of the "New South." Furthermore, during the late nineteenth century textile manufacturing spread from piedmont counties, where the earliest mills had relied on water power from dams, to localities in eastern North Carolina where flatter landscapes provided far fewer sites capable of generating the horsepower needed for the operation of financially-viable textile mills. Illustrating this transition were the four mills at Roanoke Rapids. While the oldest mill, Roanoke Mills Company's Plant Number 1 (demolished 1990-1991), was built in 1895-1897 to utilize water power generated by a dam across the Roanoke River, the three subsequent mills--Rosemary Manufacturing Company (1901), Patterson Mills Company (1910), and Roanoke Mills Company's Plant Number 2 (1916-1917)--were erected away from the river and powered by electricity generated by turbines at the river (Butchko 1998, 296-297, 299). All three, along with their associated mill houses, are within the Roanoke Rapids Historic District (Pending NR). Mills such as those at Edenton and Elizabeth City (established 1895), located in areas with minimal water-power capability, relied on the relatively recent introduction of electricity produced by steam turbines (Lefler and Newsome 1976, 396, 398, 505-509, 521).

As the only other cotton mill in the Albemarle region, the history of the Elizabeth City Cotton Mill (established 1895) was in many respects similar to that in Edenton. While the Elizabeth City mill still operates as a producer of weaving yarn from cotton grown in Georgia, housing for its

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employees was not built by the company but rather by individual entrepreneurs, many of whom were also investors in the mill company. Thus, the mill complex never attained the physical cohesiveness exhibited by its Edenton counterpart, adding to the Edenton mill's significance as an exemplary cotton manufacturing complex from the turn of the century. Furthermore, the Elizabeth City mill building has undergone a series of external alterations that have negated its eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places (Butchko 1989, 244). Curiously, the two companies briefly discussed a merger plan in 1902, with no further action taken by the Edenton directors (Minutes, June 12, 1902).

The Edenton Cotton Mill Historic District is especially exemplary of smaller mill complexes in a state where large mill villages in the piedmont are more typical. Unlike other mill villages, like those in Roanoke Rapids which were sold by the company into private ownership in the 1950s and thus subjected to almost fifty years of alterations and modifications by multiple owners, the Edenton village remained in singular ownership until 1996. Furthermore, while economic pressures in larger mill towns in the Piedmont have created external development pressures on the mill village, the Edenton village and its surrounding neighborhood has remained virtually isolated from such redevelopment. Because the Edenton village retains such a high level of integrity (ninety-seven percent of the primary resources being contributing), the district provides an essentially unaltered view at a mill village erected between 1899 and 1923.

### Architectural Context

The Edenton Cotton Mill Historic District exemplifies the architecture and layout of cotton mills that were organized and constructed throughout North Carolina during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. While tiny in comparison to mills in the Piedmont region and in Roanoke Rapids (Roanoke Rapids Historic District, 1998), the Edenton Cotton Mill exhibits the standard spatial delineation, with dominant mill factory (entry 1) accompanied by modest dwellings for workers and more substantial residences for management and supervisors. The compact district, set in a fairly secluded site apart from the rest of Edenton, is a microcosm of cotton mill complexes throughout North Carolina. Because of its small size and the fact that the entire district remained under company ownership until 1995, the Edenton Cotton Mill Historic District is further distinguished by a level of architectural integrity that is seldom rivaled by other mill villages in the state, with sixty-one of its sixty-three primary resources, or ninety-seven percent, deemed contributing to the district's significance.

The factory building (entry 1) is representative of modestly-finished Italianate Revival-style brick buildings which dominated North Carolina industrial architecture during the late nineteenth and early twentieth

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centuries. The visual focus of the building is a handsome three-story water tower adorned with segmental arches and corbeled brickwork, all hallmarks of commercial Italianate architecture. Low gabled roofs accentuated with large projecting rafter ends, arched windows (now filled with brick), and a rare survivor of a monitor roof extending nearly the full length of the approximately 550-foot-long mill further distinguish the building as a modestly-finished example of the Italianate style that characterized North Carolina industrial buildings for over forty years.

The small, simple, one-story frame dwellings that line the residential streets of the district are typical of similar modest dwellings erected throughout eastern North Carolina during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While the central chimney placement of the earliest houses of this form, such as entries 26, 28, 32, 40-43, which were erected between 1899 and 1908 as duplexes, renders each house in a rudimentary manner, other nearly identical houses were built either as single-family dwellings with central or exterior-end chimneys. Houses of similar size and character were common in rural northeastern North Carolina as homes for small farmers or, more frequently, as dwellings for tenants and sharecroppers. The house type was equally suitable for rental dwellings in small towns such as Edenton, where similarly modest houses were erected ca. 1875 for black lumber mill workers on East Carteret Street (Butchko, Edenton 1992, 123).

While the repetition of these traditional one-story houses is unbroken along the 400 blocks of Phillips and East Queen streets, on other blocks this rhythm is interrupted by two-story dwellings that reflect popular building forms of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Two-story single-pile center-hall-plan houses (entries 33, 50-52) exemplify the ubiquitous I-house dwellings that not only served as the farmhouse of choice throughout much of eastern North Carolina during this period, but were widely utilized in small towns like Edenton and Elizabeth City for the homes of small merchants and shopkeepers (Butchko 1991, 46-47; Butchko 1989, 38-39; Butchko, Edenton 1992, 64-65). Two pairs of two-story, gable-front side-hall-plan dwellings (entries 63, 65, 71-72) provide additional variation in size and form to the mill village. These, too, are similar to houses erected during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Edenton and Elizabeth City, often as rental dwellings for shopkeepers, laborers, and clerks (Butchko, Edenton 1992, 63-64; Butchko, Elizabeth City 1992, F:3). Each of the two-story mill dwellings has the same simple finish as the one-story versions, enlivened primarily by chamfered porch posts.

The stylish dwellings within the Edenton Cotton Mill Historic District --four larger residences constructed for mill managers between 1908 and 1916 (entries 61, 62, 64, 66), and three modest, one-story gable-front workers' houses erected in 1921 (entries 24, 57-58)--exemplify the Colonial Revival and Craftsman styles, respectively. These two styles dominated North

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Carolina architectural fashion during the early twentieth century, with the former being especially appropriate in Edenton where it mingled with authentic colonial examples (Butchko, Edenton 1992, 71-73). The Colonial Revival houses in the mill, with the exception of the foursquare Carder's House (entry 62), exhibit the early form that the Colonial Revival style took as it retained lingering Queen Anne asymmetry but was rendered with fashionably simple Tuscan columns, pedimented gables, and restrained decoration. The wood-shingled Craftsman workers' dwellings are significant not only in their departure in form and finish from all the other houses in the district, but that they are examples of "The Selwyn" purchased as pre-cut kits from the Aladdin Company, one of the nation's best-known manufacturers of such houses. While other cotton mills often acquired pre-cut houses--most notably the Rosemary, Roanoke, and Patterson mills in Roanoke Rapids (Roanoke Rapids Historic District, NR 1998) which acquired almost 200 Aladdin houses--the Edenton examples are notable in that the purchase consisted of only five such houses, with two being demolished before the 1980s (Butchko 1998, 7, 11, 30, 71, 99, 100, 127, 328). The casement front windows on "The Selwyn" houses in Edenton provide a sense of stylishness in contrast to the houses' small size and rental status.

Other than the company's minutes identifying the mill architect and general contractor, there are few records of other architects' and builders' work in the Edenton Cotton Mill Historic District. The mill architect and engineer was Charles R. Makepeace (1860-1926) of Providence, Rhode Island. A native of Fayetteville, N. C., Makepeace studied at Trinity College (forerunner of Duke University) but left in 1880 before graduating to work with cotton mills in Randolph County; he also gained invaluable experience working in home-town mills owned by his father. In 1885 he moved to Providence and within ten years C. R. Makepeace and Co. had become one of the nation's foremost designers of textile plants, cotton and woolen mills, bleacheries, dye works, and incidental buildings such as power and water plants. The firm designed more than 250 plants in twenty-four states, Canada, Mexico, South America, and Australia. North Carolina commissions include Eno Cotton Mills in Hillsborough, T. M. Holt Manufacturing Company (1895) in Haw River, and J. R. Reynolds Building No. 8 (1899) in Winston-Salem. The Edenton mill will be the first of his commissions in the state to be listed on the National Register (Providence Journal, February 11, 1926; Butchko, Edenton 1992, 275; Minutes, April 13, 1899).

The contractor of the mill was George L. Borum of Suffolk, Virginia, whose work in North Carolina is largely unknown. In addition to the Craftsman bungalows supplied by the Aladdin Company in 1921, the only other firm identified as providing plans for a resource in the district was the Weber Chimney Company of Chicago, which in 1913-1914 provided the plans and presumably oversaw the construction of a new concrete smokestack (entry 1) (Minutes, March 25, 1913; July 9, 1913; July 8, 1914). A simple item in

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the Edenton Courier on January 18, 1900 that Ben White was building ten "cottages" at the cotton factory is the only record of a contractor working in the mill village. While leading Edenton builder Frank Fred Muth built a mirror image of the 1914 Spinning Overseer's House (entry 61) in the previous year, it has been undocumented that he constructed the latter house as well (Butchko, Edenton 1992, 54). Furthermore, whether the residence of forty-two-year-old "carpenter" James B. Sutton within the mill village on June 1, 1900 bears any indication of his involvement in the construction of the earliest mill houses can only be speculated (Census 1900, 21-22).

Because of its small size and long ownership by local stockholders, the Edenton Cotton Mill holds a distinctive place in the development and history of cotton textile mills within North Carolina. Even more important is its singular position as the most intact mill and mill village in eastern North Carolina, a region of the state that saw only limited construction of textile mills despite being a major grower of cotton. The acquisition in 1995 of the Edenton Cotton Mill by the Historic Preservation Foundation, Inc. enables the Edenton Cotton Mill Historic District to benefit from a comprehensive preservation plan and protective covenants as it enters the twenty-first century as one of the most important and intact cotton mills and mill villages in a state where textile manufacturing has been the leading industry since the 1870s.

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### 10. Geographical Data

#### Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the Edenton Cotton Mill Historic District is shown by the heavy black line on the attached 1"=100' map labeled Exhibit A. It is Chowan County Tax Map 7804.08, located in the Register of Deeds Office, Chowan County Courthouse, Edenton, North Carolina.

#### Boundary Justification

The boundary of the Edenton Cotton Mill Historic District was drawn to include the property conveyed to the Historic Preservation Foundation of North Carolina, Inc. in 1995. This includes all the property historically in mill ownership that was developed by the Edenton Cotton Mills Company for its factory and mill village.