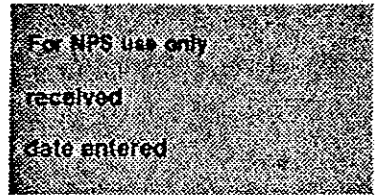


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Pearl Mill Village

Continuation sheet Historic District

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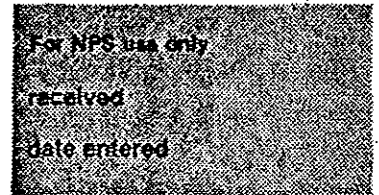
PROPERTY OWNERS

<u>Address</u>	<u>Owner</u>
<u>Washington Street</u>	
901 Washington St.	Paul B. Phillips Box 379-K, Rt. 1 Bahama, NC 27503
905 Washington St.	James B. Johnson, Jr.
907 Washington St.	Tracy W. Hogan
911 Washington St.	Ida T. Hobbs
913 Washington St.	Connie M. Brown
915 Washington St.	C.R. Lynch 3507 Duke Homestead Rd. Durham, NC 27704
919 Washington St.	Ernest J. Wendell 1308 Kent St. Durham, NC
921 Washington St.	Charles S. McBroom 2617 Fitzford Ct. Durham, NC 27712
925 Washington St.	Acme Plumbing & Heating 326 Geer St. Durham, NC 27702
<u>Orient Street</u>	
906 Orient St.	Paul B. Phillips (same as above)
910 Orient St.	Louise B. Noel

* Unless otherwise indicated, properties are owner-occupied and zip code is 27701.

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<u>Address</u>	<u>Owner</u>
914 Orient St.	Rosa B. Beavers 1505 Woodland Dr. Durham, NC 27701
918 Orient St.	Douglas N. Crabtree 220 Dacian Ave. Durham, NC 27701
920 Orient St.	Charles B. Draughan
922 Orient St.	Carrie L. Erexson
926 Orient St.	Mazelle T. Peninger
928 Orient St.	Robert Tillman Box 134-E, Rt. 1 Efland, NC 27243
909 Orient St.	Rosa B. Beavers (same as above)
913 Orient St.	Paul B. Phillips (same as above)
915 Orient St.	Clyde S. Dunnegan 1505 Woodland Dr. Durham, NC 27701
919 Orient St.	Nannie Shropshire
921 Orient St.	Herbert W. Oldham
923 Orient St.	Paul B. Phillips (same as above)
925 Orient St.	Octavia Dunnegan 1505 Woodland Dr. Durham, NC 27701

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

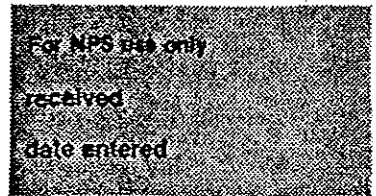
DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Set apart from diverse surrounding development by uneven terrain, a railroad line, and busy thoroughfares, the Pearl Mill Village Historic District retains much of its original character. The district consists of twenty-six mill houses on one-and-one-half blocks — both sides of the 900 block of Orient St. and one side of the 900 block of Washington St. immediately adjacent — totaling approximately 6-1.4 acres. All of the houses built in the district by owners of Pearl Cotton Mills (which formerly stood just across the railroad tracks to the southwest) survive; there are no vacant lots. The twenty-six houses all are situated in rows with uniform setbacks. They are placed on their lots so that they have sizable rear yards and very shallow front yards, particularly on the west side of Orient St. where the houses practically abut the curb. Mature hardwoods fill the side and rear yards and shrubbery dots many of the foundations.

The boundaries of the small district are clearly defined by changes in terrain and the uniformity of the district's architecture. The Pearl Mill Village Historic District is situated near the top of a hill sloping downward to the west. The houses on Washington St. at the east edge of the district face a large triangle of grass defining the merger of two thoroughfares, Washington and Foster streets, at the top of the hill. To the east beyond Foster St. there are blocks of bungalows and Period Houses built at the west end of the North Durham neighborhood during the 1930s and 1949s. The terrain begins its descent from Washington St. so that several of the mill houses are a few feet below the grade of the sidewalk. The slope from Washington St. to Orient St. is so steep that the rear elevations of most of the houses on the east side of Orient St. are practically on the ground while the fronts of these houses are elevated on brick piers many feet above the street. Behind the houses on the west side of Orient St., the land drops away to a deep ravine that separates the district from the Trinity Park neighborhood. The Norfolk & Western Belt Line runs along the western edge of the district. At the north end, there are two empty lots currently being developed with apartments, while to the south, across the busy thoroughfare of W. Trinity Ave., there is a large mixed commercial and warehousing district for several blocks and Durham's Central Business District beyond.

Typical of textile mill villages, uniformity pervades the district's architecture. Twenty-two of the houses were built as duplexes around 1905. These two-story one-room-deep frame houses have gable roofs that extend to engage a tall one-story shed across the rear elevation, creating almost a "salt box" form. In each, the second story is lower than the first, its head room extending into the gabled roof so that the attics are very short. Inventories of numerous other mill villages throughout North Carolina have not revealed a prototype for this form.

Resting on brick piers (now underpinned) and sheathed in plain weatherboards, the duplexes display no ornament. Each house has a plain central brick chimney which serves a single fireplace in each unit. There are curved rafter ends in the eaves of the main rooflines and almost full-facade shed-roofed front porches. Many of the porches retain their original slightly chamfered slender supports and match stick railings; steps are placed at the end of the porch, parallel to the main facade. Most of these houses retain their double-hung sash windows—six-over-six vertical rectangles in the first story and small two-over-two squares in the shorter second story. As con-

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structed, the lower main facades were all four bays wide, containing two doors (in line with the two small second-story windows) flanked by two windows.

Originally, each of the duplexes contained six rooms arranged in two dwelling units. Each unit contained two rooms on the first floor and an enclosed two-run staircase leading to a bedroom in the second story. A door between the units permitted the houses to be used as single-family dwellings for larger families. Most of the duplexes have had an additional shed added to an end of the rear elevations for bathrooms.

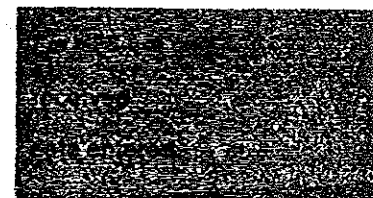
Four of the houses are one-story bungalows built by the mill around 1924. These rectangular, single-family "builder's houses" are three rooms deep with a low hipped roof, recessed full-facade porch, and three-bay main facade. Their floor plans are irregular, without any hallways. All of the front porches originally featured slender box posts on granite sills and brick plinths, match stick railings in between, and, like the duplexes, access from one end. Other distinguishing features are sheathing of German siding, six-over-six double-hung sash windows, exposed rafter ends in all eaves, and two interior chimneys with corbelled stacks. Foundations of brick piers have been underpinned and full-facade recessed porches have been enclosed for bathrooms and pantries.

Although many of the houses have been altered since the mill sold them to private individuals in 1945, all retain their integrity. Not unexpectedly, the most deteriorated houses (923 and 925 Orient St.) are among the least altered and presently face the greatest chance of being renovated unsympathetically. While only one of the two-story houses still serves as a duplex, just six of these houses have had their two front doors replaced with a single centered entrance. In one instance, one of the original doors was removed and its space weatherboarded. The most frequent alterations have occurred at front porches: All of the houses retain their original porch roofs, but several have replacement concrete floors and metal posts and railings. Only four houses have had their windows replaced, with horizontal two-over-two double-hung sashes. While only one of the houses is aluminum sided, a few have been covered with asphalt "brick" and asbestos shingles. In spite of these alterations and street improvements by the city, the Pearl Mill Village Historic District retains the ambiance of a village built and maintained by a mill that flourished early in this century.

Structures, of course, are closely related to the surrounding environment. Archaeological remains, such as trash pits, wells, and structural remains, which may be present, can provide information valuable to the understanding and interpretation of the structure. Information concerning use patterns, social standing and mobility, as well as structural details are often only evident in the archaeological record. Therefore, archaeological remains may well be an important component of the significance of the structure. At this time no investigation has been done to discover these remains, but it is probable that they exist, and this should be considered in any development of the property.

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NOTES

¹ The only other two-story duplexes with engaged rear sheds that have been identified in a North Carolina mill village are in Gibsonville, built by the Gibsonville Manufacturing Company about the same time the Pearl mill houses were constructed. The Gibsonville houses, however, are taller, with a full second story and porches with hipped roof and turned supports.

² Simple bungalows, often "pre-fabricated," were very popular for mill villages in the late 1910s and early 1920s. The December 25, 1919 edition of Southern Textile Bulletin contains a large advertisement for Reddi-Cut houses by The Aladdin Co., small bungalows similar to the four in the Pearl Mill Village Historic District.

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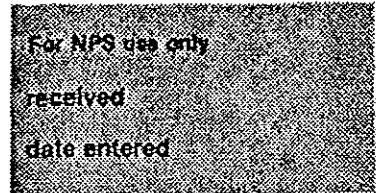
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INVENTORY LIST

Introductory Note: To avoid repetition, in each entry the structure is identified only by its design (a two-story duplex type built early in this century or a one-story bungalow constructed c. 1924) and further described in terms of alterations and condition. Although many of these houses have had long-term occupants for whom the dwellings could be named, only three of these families--those who continue to own and occupy the houses today--have been identified. In order to identify the other long-term occupants, extensive study of city directories beginning with the 1919 edition (the first year Durham's city directories list residents by street addresses) will be necessary.

Washington Street

- C 1. House. 901 Washington St. Duplex, intact except for replacement of two front doors with single central entrance and replacement porch steps in line with the new front door.
- C 2. Johnson House. 905 Washington St. Duplex with single replacement front door, centered; replacement two-over-two sash windows; and replacement concrete floor and metal posts at porch. James B. Johnson has lived in this house since the 1920s. The 1930 city directory lists him as a textile worker. He purchased the house from the mill in 1945.
- C 3. House. 907 Washington St. Duplex altered at a very early date so that it has a gable-roofed rear ell instead of an engaged shed. Porch remodelled with a concrete floor and large tapered box posts on brick plinths.
- C 4. Hobbs House. 911 Washington St. Duplex, completely intact except for loss of porch railing. Edward Hobbs, a doffer at Pearl Cotton Mills, moved into this house with his family in the 1920s and purchased it from the mill in 1945. His widow continues to live here today.
- C 5. House. 913 Washington St. Duplex; porch has concrete floor and metal posts.
- C 6. House. 915 Washington St. Bungalow, intact except for loss of porch railing.
- C 7. House. 919 Washington St. Duplex with aluminum siding and tapered box posts on very small brick plinths. Still contains two dwelling units.
- C 8. House. 923 Washington St. Duplex covered with asbestos shingles. Two original front doors replaced with single central entrance; porch has concrete floor and metal posts.
- C 9. House. 925 Washington St. Unaltered duplex, empty and apparently slated for renovation. Between this house and entry no. 8, there is a gable-front two-car garage, apparently once shared by the occupants of the two houses.

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Orient Street

- C 10. House. 906 Orient St. Duplex, intact except for centered front door replacing two original entrances.
- C 11. House. 910 Orient St. Duplex, with additional shed across rear. During recent rehabilitation, the front porch was remodelled as an enclosed sunporch with three pairs of one-over-one double-hung sash windows on its main facade.
- C 12. House. 914 Orient St. Unaltered duplex.
- C 13. House. 918 Orient St. Unaltered duplex.
- C 14. House. 920 Orient St. Unaltered bungalow, underpinned with German siding.
- C 15. House. 922 Orient St. Duplex, intact except for application of asphalt "brick" on lower elevations and asbestos shingles above.
- C 16. House. 926 Orient St. Duplex with southern front door removed; concrete floor and metal posts and railing at front porch.
- C 17. House. 928 Orient St. Duplex with replacement two-over-two louvered windows, concrete porch floor, and metal porchposts and railings.
- C 18. House. 930 Orient St. Duplex in the process of being remodelled with centered replacement front door, new wooden porch floor and 4" by 4" posts, and new shed across original attached rear shed.
- C 19. House. 909 Orient St. Duplex, unaltered except for loss of porch railing.
- C 20. House. 913 Orient St. Bungalow remodelled with metal porch posts and railing.
- C 21. House. 915 Orient St. Duplex covered with asphalt siding; no longer has porch railing.
- C 22. House. 919 Orient St. Bungalow. Only porch is altered, with concrete floor and metal posts.
- C 23. House. 921 Orient St. Duplex covered with asbestos shingles; replacement metal porch railing.
- C 24. House. 923 Orient St. Intact duplex, covered with asphalt "brick."
- C 25. House. 925 Orient St. Duplex with new wooden box porch posts, molded at bottom, no railing.
- C 26. House. 929 Orient St. Duplex with replacement two-over-two double-hung sash windows; porch has new concrete floor, metal posts, and no railing.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

____ NATIONAL

____ STATE

X

LOCAL

PERIOD

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

c. 1905, 1924

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

N/A

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

As the only intact vestige of one of Durham's four principal mills begun in the late nineteenth century, the Pearl Mill Village Historic District stands as a significant reflection of the city's development as a major textile industry center of North Carolina. Established by Brodie L. Duke in 1892, Pearl Cotton Mills was controlled by Erwin Cotton Mills Co. from 1893 (when Duke became a victim of the nationwide financial crisis) until it closed in 1968. Employing around 200 workers for most of its existence, Pearl Cotton Mills constructed a village containing approximately sixty houses in four clusters. While the mill and three of the groups of houses have been destroyed or severely altered, the largest pocket of mill housing, comprising the Pearl Mill Village Historic District, today looks much as it did sixty years ago. Set apart from surrounding development by topography and traffic arteries, the district contains many unaltered examples of two basic mill house types -- a two-story house built for use as a duplex or a single-family residence and a one-story bungalow. The district continues to convey its original quasi-rural ambiance in the midst of an industrial-based urban environment.

CRITERIA ASSESSMENT

- A. The Pearl Mill Village Historic District is the last intact portion of the mill village created by the Pearl Cotton Mills, one of Durham's four major textile operations begun in the late nineteenth century.
- B. The Pearl Mill Village Historic District reflects the accomplishments of several figures important in Durham's development, including Brodie L. Duke, Benjamin N. Duke, George W. Watts, William A. Erwin, W.H. Branson, and Jesse Harper Erwin.
- C. The Pearl Mill Village Historic District contains many intact examples of two basic mill house types and continues to convey the quasi-rural ambiance of a mill village.

The Pearl Mill Village Historic District is the only intact surviving vestige of Pearl Cotton Mills, one of Durham's four principal textile operations begun in the late nineteenth century. Pearl Cotton Mills was established in 1892 by Brodie L. Duke shortly after his brother, Benjamin N. Duke, and George W. Watts had established Erwin Cotton Mills in West Durham with some of their tremendous tobacco manufacturing profits. Having been the first in his family to start a tobacco factory in Durham, Brodie Duke also had become wealthy through tobacco manufacturing, and late in 1892 he followed his brother's example by incorporating Pearl Cotton Mills with a capitalization of \$100,000. Brodie L. Duke named his new mill for his daughter.¹

For several years, Duke had been amassing large tracts of land at the western and northern outskirts of Durham; his development of most of these areas as residential neighborhoods early in the twentieth century was to rank as his greatest accomplishment in a long and varied business career.² (See Trinity Historic District nomination also included in the Durham Multiple Resource Nomination.) In the 1870s Duke had built his large Second Empire style house on park-like grounds fronting N. Duke St., and at the close of that decade he had constructed the B.L. Duke Warehouse on Corporation St. just a block east of his home. When Duke ventured into textiles, he once again chose to keep his business close to home. Located on the west side of the new Norfolk & Western Belt Line on the dirt track later named W. Trinity Ave., the factory site was just a little more than two blocks northeast of his house. Situated just beyond the city limits, it was the closest of the area's mills to Durham proper.

A photograph taken early in this century reveals that the mill complex consisted of a three-story brick building (cited in the 1895 Hand-Book of Durham as measuring 80 by 255 feet), a two-story picker room, and engine and boiler rooms, all of brick. The mansard roof of the three-story tower was very similar to that of the tower of Duke's house.⁴ Other buildings in the complex were a frame cotton house and a waste house. The mill used 10,000 spindles and 160 broad looms to manufacture extra-wide sheeting, "from 72 to 99 inches, no mill in the South making anything wider," according to the Hand-Book.⁵

Brodie Duke began Pearl Cotton Mills independent of his father and brothers' textile ventures, but within a year of its incorporation he had to turn to his family

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Durden, Robert F. The Dukes of Durham, 1865 - 1929. Durham: Duke University Press, 1975.

Durham County Register of Deeds

Hand-Book of Durham, N.C. 1895

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 6.26 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,7	6,8,9	1,0,0	3,9	8,6	5,0,0	B	1,7	6,8,9	2,0,0	3,9	8,6	5,0,0	
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	1,7	6,8,9	1,0,0	3,9	8,6	2,5,0	D	1,7	6,8,8	9,5,0	3,9	8,6	2,5,0	

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Durham County Tax Map 64: block 4, lots 1 through 9 and 13 through 22; and all of block 5

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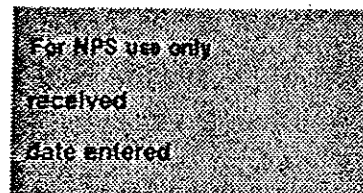
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for assistance. In the "Panic of 1893," Duke found that he had over-extended himself and was caught short in his speculation on cotton futures. His father, brothers, and George Watts came to his aid by increasing Pearl Cotton Mills' capitalization to \$175,000 and installing W.H. Branson as the mill's manager. Branson had become highly esteemed in the textile industry as the manager of Julian S. Carr's Durham Cotton Manufacturing Company, Durham's first textile mill, founded in 1884. By 1895, Pearl Cotton Mills had become highly successful under Branson's management.

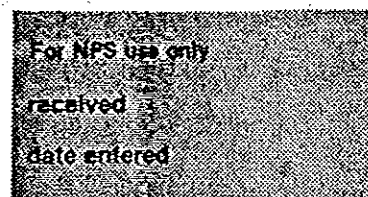
The 1895 Hand-Book lists George W. Watts as president and Branson as secretary and treasurer; there is no indication that Brodie Duke maintained any role in the management or as an officer of the mill. Duke did, however, remain active in the textile industry for several years as president of Commonwealth Cotton Manufacturing Company in East Durham. After Branson's death in an industrial accident at another textile mill, the Dukes, Watts, and William A. Erwin acquired Pearl Cotton Mills (as well as Durham Cotton Manufacturing Company) and placed its management in the hands of Jesse Harper Erwin, a veteran manager of textile mills in Burlington, N.C., and William A. Erwin's brother.⁸ The City of Durham Illustrated, published in 1910, lists Watts as president of Pearl Cotton Mills, William A. Erwin as vice-president and J. Harper Erwin as secretary-treasurer.⁹ In ensuing years, John Sprunt Hill succeeded his father-in-law (George W. Watts) as president of the company.¹⁰

The Pearl Cotton Mills Village developed in several stages over more than four decades. According to the 1895 Hand-Book, Pearl Cotton Mills employed 200 workers, "all of whom lived in houses recently built by the company."¹¹ The precise locations of the mill's earliest dwellings are not certain. On the 1913 Sanborn insurance maps, the first series of the maps to include the vicinity of the mill, approximately forty houses are shown -- twenty-three two-story houses along Orient and Washington streets (all in the Pearl Cotton Mills Historic District), twelve one-story houses with long rear ells on Foster St., east of the mill (all destroyed), and a few two-story L-shaped houses west of the factory on W. Trinity and Minerva avenues (also destroyed). The houses on Orient and Washington streets are believed to have been built around 1905, at about the same time that several small one-story houses across the ravine to the west on N. Duke St. were built.¹² The omission of the N. Duke St. houses from the 1913 Sanborn maps raises the possibility that additional houses, unidentified and destroyed, were built prior to 1913 by the mill. During the late 1910s, Pearl Mill constructed several bungalows along N. Duke St. and Harper Place.

In accordance with the paternalistic attitude traditionally displayed by textile mill management, Pearl Cotton Mills provided its employees with amenities beyond housing. In 1895, a Presbyterian Sunday School mission was established in the Pearl Cotton Mills Chapel, a small frame building (destroyed) built by the mill at the northwest corner of its factory lot. By 1902 the congregation had reorganized as the Second Presbyterian Church and in the 1920s it reorganized once again as Trinity Avenue Presbyterian Church when it prepared to move to new quarters one block to the

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west (in the Trinity Historic District).¹³ Also at an early date, noted Durham Methodist layman Reuben Hibberd, with the strong support of Brodie Duke, organized a Methodist congregation in a small church building on W. Trinity Ave. close to the mill. Known simply as the Pearl Mill Church, the building was torn down when the congregation merged with the nearby Gregson Street Methodist Church.¹⁴ Although there is no record of a Pearl Cotton Mills company store, undoubtedly such a facility was maintained in the early years of the mill for its workers when there were no other stores nearby. Children attended the North Durham School a few block east of Foster St.

In 1932, the Erwin Cotton Mills Co. purchased Pearl Cotton Mills and all of its property.¹⁵ The Pearl Mill became Erwin Cotton Mills' Mill No. 6, which continued to manufacture sheeting.¹⁶ The company-owned housing remained fairly adequate for the Pearl labor force, which had not grown appreciably since the 1910s, and the only additions that Erwin Cotton Mills made to the village were the four mid-1930s bungalows on Orient and Washington streets. By this time, development of the Trinity Park and North Durham neighborhoods was so extensive that they adjoined the west and east edges, respectively, of the pockets of mill housing and a small commercial district had supplanted the early mill houses on Foster St.

Although very little is known about the occupants of the Pearl Mill Village Historic District during its first three decades,¹⁷ it may be assumed that most of the workers living there then came from tenant farms. According to a 1980 senior thesis by Duke University student Karen Bostrom, all of those seeking employment at Pearl Cotton Mills in the 1920s came from rural farming backgrounds. Approximately half moved to Durham from the surrounding rural areas and half came from South Carolina. "Durham was known as a decent place to work in the early 1920s. The mill houses were comfortable, the wages were average, and especially during World War One [the mill administration] had a reputation for caring about the workers."¹⁸ One former Pearl Cotton Mills worker who migrated to Durham from South Carolina stated, "we heard about it from friends that had gone up here and had it good, so we went too."¹⁹

City directories list approximately half of the district's occupants during the 1920s and 1930s as mill hands; the rest are identified as weavers, machine operators, loom fixers, and doffers (workers who removed cloth from spinning frames).²⁰ At least one of the occupants — Charles B. Draughan, who has lived at 920 Orient St. since the 1920s — became a foreman. Although city directories usually list only the occupation of male heads of households and other teen-age or adult male family members, almost all of the adult women living in the district also worked in the mill, primarily on the night shift.²¹ Children normally began working in the mill when they reached their middle teens.

Like the other textile mill villages across the South, the Pearl Mill Village afforded the mill worker a standard of living higher than he had known on the tenant

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farm. During World War One, the cotton industry boomed with double shifts, twenty-four hour a day operations, and new and improved equipment. Because of the shortage of labor, wages were high. Paternalism continued to characterize the attitude of the mill administrators toward their employees, and additional workers were attracted to the mills by the improvements that the owners made to their villages with some of their increased profits.²²

After the war, however, there was a surplus of labor and wages dropped. Life in the mill villages still was better than life on the tenant farm, but the paternalistic offerings of houses, commissaries, churches, and recreational facilities now were transformed from benevolences to trade offs for low wages, insecure employment, and unpleasant working conditions. In order to increase production levels at the Pearl Mill, workers had to produce more cloth or operate more machines if they wanted to retain their jobs.²³ Production quotas rose steadily, resulting in general strikes at Erwin Cotton Mills Co. plants in 1932 and 1945 that yielded few concessions for the workers. Wages increased, but heavy work loads remained the rule.²⁴ According to Bostrom, the benevolent mill owners became task-masters whose overriding concerns of capitalism replaced an outmoded paternalism.²⁵ As changes occurred in the mill, the character of the neighborhood also changed. Paternalism had reinforced the mutual give and take by workers and their supervisors, provided a strong model for the values that parents wanted to impart to their children, and supported the values of "neighbor helping neighbor." The triangular reinforcement of mill work, family, and neighborhood had begun to fall apart with the advent of incentive systems, unionization, and capital intensive production.²⁶

Life in the Pearl Mill Village Historic District changed slowly but steadily throughout the 1920s and 1930s. It was not until 1945 when the Erwin Cotton Mills Co. began selling its houses that the neighborhood felt a powerful blow to its equilibrium.²⁷ The occupants had the first option to buy their houses, but only a few residents of the district could afford to purchase them. Most of the other occupants remained in their houses, paying higher rents to new landlords. After several ownership changes over the years, many residents felt insecure and believed that they had been punished for the 1945 strike, which had ended just before the mill put the houses up for sale. The sense of community in the district underwent further erosion when certain job positions at the Pearl Mill began to be phased out in the late 1950s. This "phase-out" continued until the mill closed for good in October, 1968. Workers in the district either transferred to the Erwin Cotton Mills Co.'s mills in West Durham or retired. Bostrom notes that although wages were high and work steady in West Durham, the Pearl Mill Village residents now felt an even greater loss of control over their lives in a purely capitalistic system.²⁸

With the exception of its smokestack and four-story tower, Pearl Mill was razed to make room for the Duke Tower Apartments around 1971. The houses immediately west

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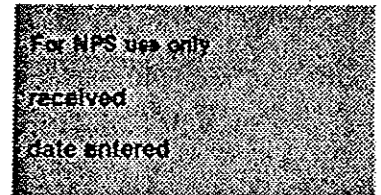
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of the mill site already had been destroyed to make room for the expansion of Durham High School, and the houses on N. Duke St. and Harper Pl. have been extensively altered and surrounded by newer development that has compromised their character. In contrast, the Pearl Mill Village Historic District retains its physical integrity. The district's preservation is due largely to the care of the owner-occupants in one-third of the houses, Community Development Block Grant programs that have provided fairly sensitive rehabilitation assistance, and the Durham Neighborhood Housing Services located in North Durham which includes the district in its program. As of 1980 when Bostrom wrote her thesis, six of the owner-occupants were retired former Pearl Cotton Mills employees; at least three of them remain in the district today. These retirees, as well as most of the district's other residents, are on fixed low to moderate incomes.

NOTES

¹ Robert F. Durden, The Dukes of Durham, 1865 - 1929 (Durham: Duke University Press, 1975), p. 133.

² Ibid., pp. 85-86.

³ Photograph archives, North Carolina Room, Durham Public Library; Hand-Book of Durham, N.C., 1895, p. 44.

⁴ Sanborn Map Co., "Durham, N.C.," 1898 series.

⁵ Hand-Book.

⁶ Durden, p. 133. The details of the relationship between Branson and the Dukes during the early and mid-1890s have not been determined. In 1899, a few months after Branson's death in an accident at the Durham Cotton Manufacturing Co. plant, the Erwin Cotton Mills executives gained control of the Durham Cotton Manufacturing Co. through stock purchases.

⁷ Hand-Book, pp. 44 and 46.

⁸ Durden, p. 139. Although Pearl did not become a branch of Erwin Cotton Mills until 1932, the "interlocking officers and boards of trustees and a common pool of resources definitely produced a 'family type' relationship between the two." Memo from Jerry L. Cross, Reseracher, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, to his Supervisor, Jerry C. Cashion, 17 July 1964.

⁹ The City of Durham, Illustrated (Durham: The Merchants Association, 1910), inside front cover.

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10 Durham County Register of Deeds (DCRD), Deed Book 105, page 61.

11 Hand-Book, p. 44.

12 According to Dr. Brent Glass, an authority on North Carolina's industrial history and architecture, the two-story duplexes were built around 1905. Dr. Glass learned of this date from one of the duplex owners who researched his house prior to rehabilitating it in 1981. The precise source of the date is not known.

13 Records on the history of Trinity Avenue Presbyterian Church on file in the church office.

14 Wyatt T. Dixon and Members of the Church History Committee, Ninety Years of Duke Memorial Church 1886 - 1976 (privately printed in Durham by Duke Memorial United Methodist Church, 1977), pp. 107-08. Dixon does not give any dates for the Methodist Church near Pearl Cotton Mills. The Gregson Street Methodist Church congregation disbanded shortly after the Pearl Mill Church merged with it.

15 DCRD, Deed Book 105, page 61.

16 Sanborn Map Co., 1937 series.

17 It is virtually impossible to trace occupants of the district through city directories prior to 1919, the first year that the directories listed residents by street address.

18 Karen Bostrom, "Those Who Were Left Behind. Erwin Cotton Mills and Paternalism," Senior thesis, Duke University, 1980, p. 5. Bostrom's thesis is based largely upon interviews with twelve former employees of Pearl Cotton Mills, all women, including six who had been living on Orient St. since the 1920s when they began working in the mill. The names of the interviewees were changed for the thesis and their exact addresses were not given. Bostrom also notes, on p. 34, that the gardens in the rear yards of the mill houses testify to the workers' agricultural roots and desire for some self-sufficiency.

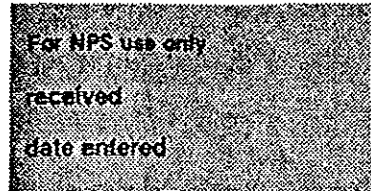
19 Ibid., p.5.

20 The city directories also indicate that most of the two-story houses in the district served as single-family residences during the 1920s and 1930s.

21 By 1940, married women made up 65.7% of the cotton textile operatives nationwide. U.S. Department of Labor, Bulletin of the Women's Bureau, no. 218 (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947), p. 41, cited in Bostrom, pp. 1-2.

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- 22 Bostrom, p. 7.
- 23 Ibid., pp. 8-11
- 24 Ibid., pp. 20-27.
- 25 Ibid., p. 11.
- 26 Ibid., pp. 32-46.
- 27 Ibid., p. 53; and DCRD Plat Book 15, page 58.
- 28 Bostrom, pp. 27-29.