

(Oct. 1990)

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 Belmont Hosiery Mill
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 608 South Main Street N/A not for publication
city or town Belmont N/A vicinity
state North Carolina code NC county Gaston code 071 zip code 28012

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 for 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 Crows SHPO 7/1/02
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, explain:)	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Belmont Hosiery Mill
Name of Property

Gaston Co., N.C.
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

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

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

n/a

n/a

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER/ Art Moderne-influenced

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick
walls Brick
roof Asphalt
other _____

Narrative Description

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

Belmont Hosiery Mill
Name of Property

Gaston Co., N.C.
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Industry

Period of Significance

1946-1952

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is: n/a

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

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Biberstein, Herman V. (architect)
Southern Engineering, Inc. (contractor for additions)

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:

Belmont Hosiery Mill
Name of Property

Gaston Co., N.C.
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 6.61 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 17 495600 3899180
Zone Easting Northing
2 _____

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing
4 _____

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 Jennifer Martin and Sarah Woodard
organization Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc. date May 4, 2002
street & number 5400 Glenwood Avenue, Suite 412 telephone 919/785-9702
city or town Raleigh state N.C. zip code 27612

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 Titus Greene
street & number 2109 Windermere Lane telephone 704-481-8800
city or town Shelby state N.C. zip code 28150

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 listing. 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 20303.

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
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Belmont Hosiery Mill
Gaston Co., N.C.

The Belmont Hosiery Mill at 608 South Main Street in the town of Belmont in Gaston County was begun in 1945 and completed in 1946. Additions to the building occurred in 1952, 1958, 1969 and circa 1998. Although established to manufacture ladies' seamless nylon hosiery, men's and children's socks dominated the mill's output throughout its entire period of operation. The mill ceased production in 2000 and the facility has been vacant since that time.

The majority of the mill building dates to 1946. In 1952, a two-bay-deep, two-story-on-basement addition was built across the rear elevation. In 1958, a two-story-on-basement rectangular addition was built at the southeast corner of the building. Offices and a boarding room where hosiery was formed occupied this addition. In 1969, a roughly U-shaped two-story-on-basement addition was built at the rear of the mill. A small one-story loading dock addition completed around 1998 is attached to the rear or west side of the 1969 section.

The two-story-on-basement brick mill building with a flat roof faces east-northeast and is located just south of and outside the commercial center of Belmont. The red brick is laid in common bond.

The mill stands on a 6.61-acre parcel bounded by South Main Street to the east, Vesta Street to the north and Dogwood Lane to the south. A paved, single-lane circular drive occupies the large grass-covered area in front of or to the east of the building. A paved parking lot occupies the area on the south side of the building. A single-lane road extends from the front circular drive, westward along the north side of the building then curves southward along the west side of the mill. Mature trees and shrubbery stand on the parcel: a large oak is to the southeast of the building; a magnolia grows just off the northeast corner of the façade; and tall pines and oaks stand along the north elevation. Holly bushes of varying heights extend along the façade. The south and east sides remain clear of vegetation. The parcel is mostly level, although it slopes downward toward the west where the 1969 addition stands. The mill was constructed on a 6.6-acre portion of a twenty-acre tract of land located within the city limits of Belmont originally proposed for residential housing. Today the mill property is surrounded on all sides by single-family residential housing, most of which pre-dates the mill.

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Belmont Hosiery Mill
Gaston Co., N.C.

The mill's front or east elevation is composed of two planes: approximately two-thirds of the north end of the façade projects outward around ten to twelve feet. The portion of the façade which is recessed is the east end of an addition completed in 1958. The asymmetric façade exhibits Art Moderne detailing in the horizontal bands of projecting brick that extend along the projection. This front elevation exhibits common bond brickwork and a parapet roofline with concrete coping. Fenestration consists of horizontally-oriented, two-over-two wooden sash windows on the first level. Three large, multi-paned, steel-frame windows occupy the second story of the front projection, while four small, horizontal, single-light windows with concrete sills arranged in a horizontal row pierce the second level of the recessed plane; similar windows occupy the north end of the projecting wall, but are arranged in a vertical row of five. A continuous horizontal concrete beltcourse frames both the top and the bottom of the first and second story windows on the projecting wall. The original main entrance is located on the right side of the projecting portion and features a modern metal door with side lights and a transom and a simple stepped brick door surround surmounted by the horizontal concrete beltcourse at the top of the first story windows. The recessed portion on the south side of the front façade lacks decorative elements. A small, one-story entrance bay with a door on its south side and topped with a flat roof is nestled at the inside junction of the two façade planes. This entrance was added when the 1958 addition was completed.

The north elevation features large, multi-paned, steel-frame windows with concrete sills and several large, square, glass-block-filled bays that helped illuminate the mill's dyeing room. Tile coping surmounts the parapets of the 1946 and 1969 sections. Two loading docks, both sheltered with flat-roofed awnings, occupy the center area of this elevation. The 1969 addition attaches and projects out just west of the westernmost loading dock. The north elevation of this addition features a full-height, single-bay-wide projection, windows positioned at the upper level and two large chemical tanks abutting the outside wall.

Steel-frame windows, a garage bay and a single-leaf door punctuate the first floor of the rear or west elevation. A double-leaf door is positioned at the upper level, above the garage bay. A single-story cinderblock structure used for loading and unloading trucks was built onto the rear around 1998. A concrete ramp with a metal railing extends from a door in the loading dock structure to the south along the rear wall of the 1969 addition.

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Belmont Hosiery Mill
Gaston Co., N.C.

The south elevation faces the large paved lot where employees parked. This side of the building is slightly u-shaped resulting from the recessed middle portion and exhibits tile coping along its parapet. The south side of the rear block features steel-framed windows and a single-leaf metal door on the first level and two fixed steel-framed windows that illuminate a stairwell. A one-story brick block that was originally used as a boiler room is attached to the east and south sides of the rear block. Original twin metal smokestacks rise from the flat roof of this rectangular section. Just east of the boiler room is an open shed attached to the main building and partially below ground level. The two-story block behind the shed features a few steel-framed windows and large metal-louvered openings on its first and second levels. A flat-roofed canopy shelters a loading dock located on the west wall of the easternmost projecting section of the south elevation. This easternmost block on the south side of the mill features a combination of windows on its south elevation: horizontally-oriented, two-over-two wooden sash and steel-framed windows pierce the first level and four sets of steel-framed windows in groups of four illuminate the second level.

The interior of the Belmont Hosiery Mill is typical of mid-twentieth hosiery mills of the Piedmont and remains nearly unchanged. The building's floors are wooden and are supported by steel I-beam post and beam construction with the beams being arranged in a grid pattern of 18 feet by 20 feet, a configuration necessitated by the dimensions and weight of the manufacturing equipment. Stairs are located in the northeast and southwest corners of the building. A freight elevator occupies the center of the north wall.

The three levels—first, second and basement—are mostly open with some brick, fire-resistant walls separating different work areas. The first story, or main floor, was used for packaging and shipping. The three glass block windows on the exterior of the north elevation illuminate the dyeing department which is located in a separate room. The eastern section, or front, of the main level contains offices that were partitioned with walls during the last twenty years. The second story which contains the largest windows allowing for the greatest amount of natural light was used for knitting operations, toe closing, looping and pre-boarding. The full basement, which had very little natural illumination, was the area designed for the storage of yarns and product packaging materials. This level has a concrete floor. An original scale used for weighing product before shipment occupies the basement and will remain in the building.

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Belmont Hosiery Mill
Gaston Co., N.C.

The Belmont Hosiery Mill, built in 1946, remains one of the most intact textile facilities in Belmont. The additions put on the building reflect the production increase the mill experienced in the 1950s and 1960s when the nylon seamless hosiery it produced enjoyed great popularity. These additions were executed in manner sympathetic to the original building and do not detract from the mill's overall integrity.

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Belmont Hosiery Mill
Gaston County, N.C.

Summary

Begun in 1945 and completed in 1946, the Belmont Hosiery Mill is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with the development and prosperity of the textile industry in the Piedmont town of Belmont following World War II. The period of significance, 1946 to 1952, reflects the mill's important role in the textile industry in Belmont in the post-war era; production continued after 1952, but the mill does not possess exceptional significance. Charlotte architect Herman V. Biberstein designed the mill at a time when prosperity and new developments in nylon and other synthetic resins and fibers prompted Belmont Hosiery Mills, Inc. to diversify beyond their Belmont Knitting Mill, which produced socks and full-fashioned knitted hosiery, and begin producing seamless nylon hosiery. Gaston County became home to more textile factories than any other county in the South during the early 1900s. By the 1920s, the county was the number one producer of textiles in North Carolina and the third largest producer in the United States. Belmont Hosiery Mills, Inc., which opened in 1928, was part of this boom in the 1920s, and the construction of its 1946 factory illustrates not only the continued importance of the textile industry in Belmont and North Carolina through the post-war years, but also marked the emergence of new technology in hosiery production. In 1954, the state's 425 hosiery mills produced forty percent of the hosiery made in the United States. Because of the popularity of its seamless nylon hosiery and socks, the Belmont Hosiery Mill was expanded in 1952, 1958 and 1969. Clyde Dietz, who managed the plant from 1945 until 1972, sketched the additions and Southern Engineering of Charlotte built them. The most substantial addition occurred on the rear of the building and does not overwhelm the original plant. The Belmont Hosiery Mill remains the most intact post-World War II textile plant in Belmont. The facility closed in 2000 and is now vacant.

Industrial Context

From the late 1700s through the Civil War, the majority of Gaston County's residents, like most people living in North Carolina's Piedmont, were subsistence farmers. Before the war, small-scale industries produced yarn, lumber, and flour for local consumption. Woodlawn Mill, Stowesville Cotton Mill and Mountain Island Mill began producing coarse cloth and yarn, which was sold in five-pound packages, in the 1840s.¹

Although a section of the Wilmington, Charlotte and Rutherford Railroad cut across Gaston County before the Civil War, access to larger markets was not readily available so farmers cultivated only what they needed. Post-Civil War railroad construction brought unprecedented industrial, economic and population growth to the

¹ Robert Lee Stowe, Sr., *Early History of Belmont and Gaston County, North Carolina* (1951; reprint, Charlotte: Laney-Smith, Inc., 1997), 15 (page references are to reprint edition).

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Belmont Hosiery Mill
Gaston County, N.C.

county. According to local historian Minnie Stowe Puett, the coming of the railroad meant the beginning of a prosperous new era.²

In the early 1870s, the North Carolina Railroad passed through Gaston County as it connected Charlotte and Greensboro, while the Atlanta and Charlotte Airline crossed the peninsula between the Catawba and South Fork rivers on the east side of the county. This section of the county was known as South Fork or Southpoint, and it was in this area that John Garibaldi, an Italian immigrant and engineer for the Mecklenburg Iron Works, supervised the construction of the Atlanta and Charlotte Airline and its bridges. A watering stop on the peninsula became known as Garibaldi's Station. In 1873, the leg from Charlotte to Spartanburg began operating, passing through Garibaldi's Station.³

When investors announced that the Atlanta and Charlotte Airline was to cross the peninsula, local residents began building. Adam Stowe had constructed a house in the area when he returned from the Civil War, and with the pending arrival of the railroad, he built a general store. With rail construction underway, other South Forkers opened businesses and small industrial concerns.⁴ A Catholic mission opened in Belmont in 1876 and helped influence the selection of a new name for the community. Because another Garibaldi, Giuseppe Garibaldi, had been an important figure in wresting control of Rome from the Pope, Father Leo Haid, leader of the abbey, proposed that Garibaldi's Station be renamed St. Mary's. The locals objected to this name and suggested "Belmont", meaning "below the mountains." In 1886, the community's name was officially changed.⁵

While Catholic missionaries were busy establishing their monastery and schools in Belmont, Gaston County entrepreneurs set about building textile mills along the rail corridors that connected the county to Charlotte, which was well on its way to becoming the leading textile distributing city in North and South Carolina. By 1902, just twenty-two years after the establishment of Charlotte's first successful cotton mill, three hundred mills had been built within one hundred miles of Charlotte, making this area home to more than one-half of the looms and spindles in the entire South.⁶

² Minnie Stowe Puett, *History of Gaston County* (Charlotte: The Observer Printing House, 1939), 205-206.

³ Stowe, 16; Ross Yockey, *Between Two Rivers: The Centennial of Belmont, North Carolina* (Charlotte: Sally Hill McMillan and Associates, Inc., 1996), 23.

⁴ Stowe, 17; Yockey, 27-28.

⁵ Yockey, 40; *The Charlotte Observer*, April 14, 1986.

⁶ Richard Mattson "Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, 1990," National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form, State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh.

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Belmont Hosiery Mill
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Gaston County was in this circle of spinning. The first modern mill in the county was Mt. Holly Mill, constructed in the early 1870s. McAdenville Mill followed in 1880. In the early 1890s, the county's first steam-powered mill, the Gastonia Cotton Manufacturing Company, came on line.⁷ The county had ten cotton mills in 1890 and forty-eight by 1910, rapidly becoming home to more textile factories than any other county in the South. By the 1920s, the county was the number one producer of textiles in North Carolina and the third largest producer in the United States. Gaston County towns exploded as the mills hummed and the trains chugged along their tracks.

Belmont was somewhat slow to establish its textile base, but once the mills arrived, the town became one of the foremost textile towns in the county. In 1900, Belmont was the only Gaston County municipality without a textile mill and its population stood at only 145, while the populations of other Gaston towns were booming. Samuel P. and Robert L. Stowe had invested in a Gastonia mill in 1899, and with money made from that investment, they began raising capital for a mill in Belmont. Joined by Pinckney Rankin, George Gram and John F. Love, with whom the Stowes had invested in Gastonia, the Stowes established the Chronicle Mills, which opened in 1902.⁸ D.E. Rhyne of Lincolnton and Abel Caleb Lineberger also became heavily involved with the mill.⁹

Other factories followed. Imperial Mill began operating in 1907 and was the first electrically powered mill in North Carolina. The Majestic Mill (1908) was the third to open and became the first Southern mill designed to produce fine combed yarns on ring spindles.¹⁰

With the onset of World War I, Gaston County mills began running twenty-four hours a day. Two mills, the National and the Climax Spinning Company, opened in Belmont by 1915. In 1916, eight mills were built in Gaston County and by the end of the war, Gaston County was home to more mills than any other county in the United States.¹¹ Of the prosperity brought to the town by these new industries, one regional magazine remarked that "Belmont, once backward...has become one of the State's most progressive and peaceful villages."¹²

⁷ Stowe, 15.

⁸ Ibid., 56.

⁹ Stowe, 58; Yockey, 53-55.

¹⁰ Yockey, 56.

¹¹ *The North Carolina Yearbook, 1915* (Raleigh: The News and Observer, 1915), 223.

¹² "The Belmont Mills," *Sky-Land Magazine*, September 1915, 448.

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Belmont Hosiery Mill
Gaston County, N.C.

The increased production in Belmont resulted in the construction of another rail link for the town. The Piedmont and Northern, an electric railroad promoted by James B. Duke, began running from Charlotte to Gastonia in 1912, and its slogan, "A Mill to the Mile," was true along most of its length.¹³ In 1916, a three-mile branch connecting Belmont to Mount Holly and thence onto Charlotte began operation.¹⁴

Throughout the 1920s, textile manufacturing continued to increase in importance in the Piedmont of North Carolina. Thirteen new Gaston County mills were incorporated in 1920, four of which stood in Belmont. Belmont's population had increased to about three thousand while the number of mills had increased to twelve in the first half of the 1920s. Mills continued to open in Belmont and across the county. One of these was the Belmont Knitting Company, organized in 1928 as a subsidiary of Belmont Hosiery Mill.

As in the rest of the country, the Great Depression cut short the prosperity of the 1920s. One of every two mill operatives was unemployed by 1931. Although most of Belmont's mills remained open by shortening their workweeks, Belmont Hosiery Mill came dangerously close to failure.¹⁵

The Depression also brought unrest to the local labor force. Although a 1929 strike at the Loray Mill in Gastonia turned deadly and attracted national attention, strikes affecting the rest of the county and Belmont did not occur until 1934. On September 1 of that year, the United Textile Workers went on strike, forcing the closure of ninety-two Gaston County mills, including all the mills in Belmont.¹⁶ The combination of the strikes and the economic challenges of the 1930s, forced some mills out of business while others were consolidated, often by the same families involved in Gaston County's first textile mills.¹⁷

Despite these setbacks, Gaston County and Belmont continued to be a textile manufacturing center between the World Wars, as evidenced by the construction of Wilkinson Boulevard. Wilkinson was the state's first four-lane highway and its location between Gastonia and Charlotte, reaffirmed the importance of Gaston County's mills. By 1941, Belmont's population stood at 4,356 and eighteen textile mills operated in the town.¹⁸

¹³ Brent D. Glass, *Textile Industry in North Carolina* (Raleigh: North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1992), 57-58.

¹⁴ Thomas T. Fetters and Peter W. Swanson, Jr., *Piedmont and Northern: The Great Electric System of the South* (San Marino, California: Golden West Books, 1974), 33.

¹⁵ Yockey, 105.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 112.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 116-117.

¹⁸ *The North Carolina Yearbook, 1941* (Raleigh: The News and Observer, 1941), 113.

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Belmont Hosiery Mill
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World War II provided a boost to the local economy so that by the close of the war, thirty-one manufacturing plants were operating in Belmont, including five hosiery mills. In 1946, four hosiery mills—Hatch Full Fashioned Hosiery, Knit Products Corporation, Belmont Throwing Corporation and the Belmont Hosiery Mill—stood in Belmont. By 1950, the population was 5,330.¹⁹ The industry continued to grow in the post-war era and in 1951, North Carolina produced forty percent of all the hosiery made in the United States.²⁰ By the mid-1950s, manufacturing accounted for sixty percent of Gaston County's work force. In Belmont, new mill buildings, however, were rare, as manufacturers continued operating in older plants. Between the end of the Depression and 1970, only five mills had been built in Belmont. One of these mills was the Belmont Hosiery Mill, constructed in 1947. The others were Belmont Throwing Company (1936), Allied Knitting (1943), Knit-Craft (1956), and Swag-Nit, Inc. (1967).²¹

Historical Background

Organized in 1928 as a subsidiary of Belmont Hosiery Mills, Inc., the Belmont Knitting Company was one of Belmont's many textile plants connected to the Stowe family. Charles E. Stowe, Sr. was secretary and treasurer and operated the plant, located on Chronicle Street, from 1930 to 1945. The plant produced full-fashioned hosiery and men's socks that required garters until rivals began making elastic-top socks. This competition, coupled with the Great Depression, pushed Belmont Hosiery Mills, Inc. to the edge of financial ruin, but rather than contract its operations, in 1934, Charles Stowe boldly expanded, tripling the plant's floor-space and taking in greige (raw) goods from other mills for finishing.²² In the late 1930s, after Dupont developed synthetic resins and fibers and the 1935 invention of nylon, the company's leaders, R.D. Hall, S.P. Stowe, Jr. and Clyde J. Deitz, decided to diversify and open the Belmont Hosiery Mill to manufacture seamless nylon hosiery.²³

World War II delayed the establishment of the new operation, but as soon as the war was over, construction of the South Main Street facility began. Herman V. Biberstein (1893-1966), a Charlotte architect known for his mill designs, was commissioned to prepare plans for the nylon hosiery manufacturing facility. Biberstein was the son of textile mill engineer and architect Richard C. Biberstein (1859-1931). Herman Biberstein's plans for the new mill are dated July 21, 1944, and construction of the mill began in October 1945. Charles E.

¹⁹ *A Report of the Seventeenth Decennial Census of the United States, Census of Population: 1950* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1952), p. 33-19.

²⁰ *Asheville Citizen*, May 1, 1951.

²¹ Yockey, 176-177.

²² Yockey, 105.

²³ Clyde J. Dietz, interview by David Adair, 14 August 2001.

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Belmont Hosiery Mill
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Stowe, Sr. died on December 29, 1945 and was succeeded by Clyde Dietz who oversaw the completion of the mill and managed it for approximately twenty-five years.²⁴

Construction of the mill was completed in 1946, and some equipment and personnel from Belmont Hosiery Mills' Chronicle Street facility moved to the new plant. While waiting for orders of nylon knitting machines to be filled, the mill produced men's and children's socks. Approximately 150 people worked at the Belmont Hosiery Mill initially, and eventually approximately two-thirds of the Belmont Hosiery Mill's employees worked at the South Main Street facility.²⁵

Demand for seamless nylon hosiery did not meet the company's expectations in the years immediately following World War II so the new factory produced both hosiery and socks. Production of men and children's socks was emphasized and orders for nylon hosiery knitting machines were changed to sock knitting machinery when possible.²⁶ Although the technology for making seamless hosiery had been utilized for socks since the early 1900s, it was not until the early 1950s that "certain aesthetic considerations made the circular knitted product completely acceptable [to the public]."²⁷ Around 1952, when the demand for seamless hosiery increased, Belmont Hosiery Mill stepped up production.

From 1950 to 1970, the Belmont Knitting Company was a joint subsidiary of Belmont Hosiery Mills, Inc. and Hudson Hosiery of Charlotte. During this period, the Belmont Hosiery Mill manufactured, finished and marketed socks while the company's hosiery products were sent to Charlotte for finishing at the Hudson Hosiery plant.²⁸

After 1970, the Belmont Hosiery Mill ceased production of hosiery and manufactured socks only. From 1972 until 1996, the son of the original owner, Charles E. Stowe, Jr., owned and operated the mill. In 1996, the Belmont Hosiery Mill, Inc. was sold to Chipman Union, Inc. of Union Point, Georgia. The Belmont Division of Chipman Union, Inc. closed in 2000 and the mill has been vacant since that time.²⁹

The Belmont Hosiery Mill was the first textile plant built after World War II in Belmont and was the first plant in town initially devoted solely to the production of seamless nylon hosiery. While other hosiery

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Harry Wignall, *Hosiery Technology* (New York, New York: National Knitted Outerwear Association, 1968), 8.

²⁸ Dietz interview.

²⁹ Ibid.

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Belmont Hosiery Mill
Gaston County, N.C.

companies switched over to the production of seamless nylon hosiery after the war, most did so by expanding their existing facilities. Today, numerous textile plants remain in Belmont, although most have been expanded greatly over time. Beltex Corporation, a hosiery plant built in the late 1940s, and Knit-Craft, built in the late 1950s, still operate and have been expanded significantly.³⁰ Neither of these plants retains the integrity of the Belmont Hosiery Mill.

³⁰ Clyde J. Dietz, interview with Jennifer Martin, 4 May 2002.

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Belmont Hosiery Mill
Gaston Co., N.C.

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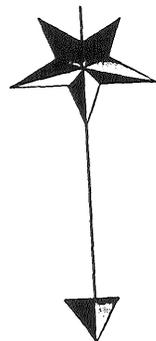
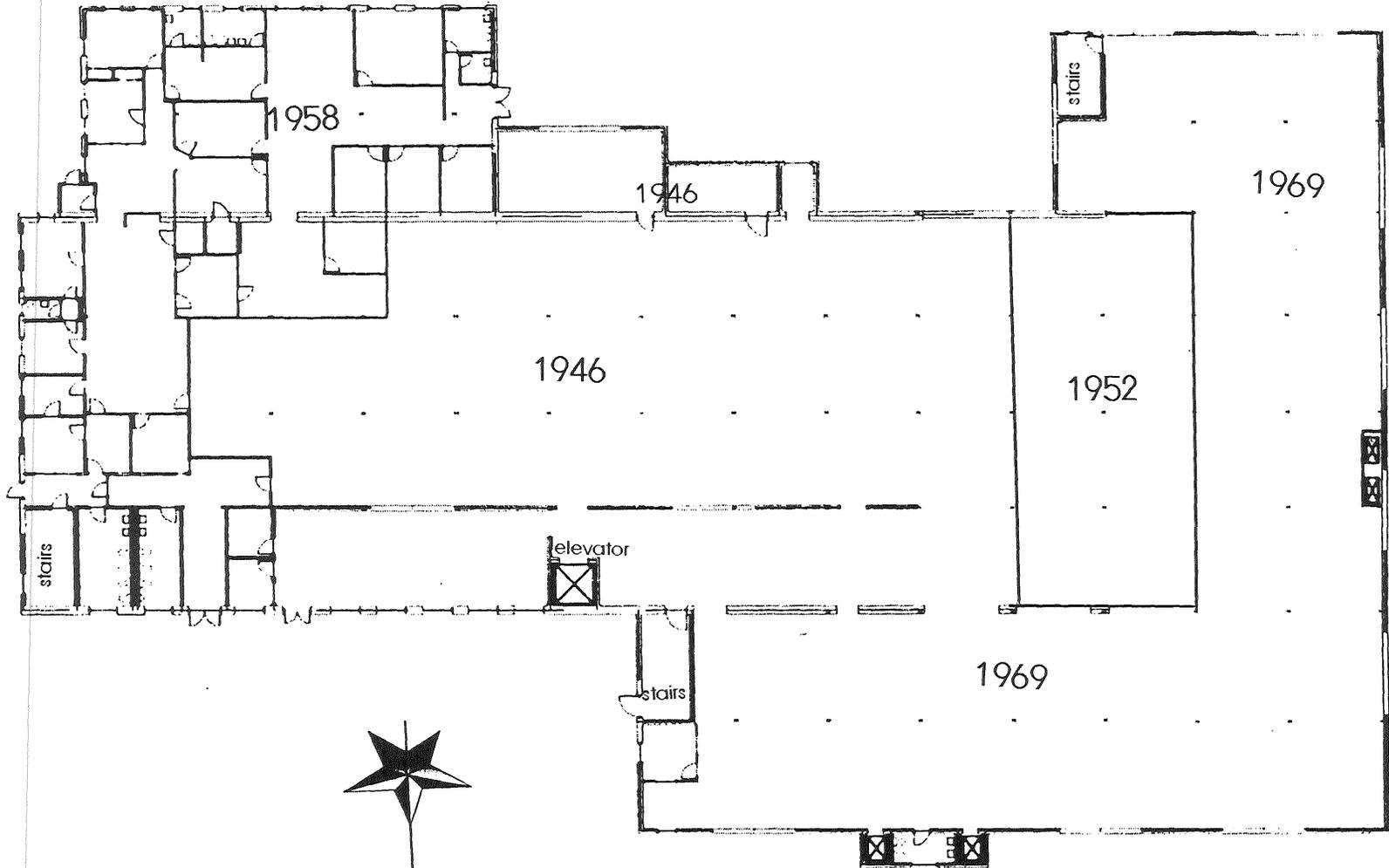
Belmont Hosiery Mill
Gaston Co., N.C.

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary for the Belmont Hosiery Mill is indicated by a dark heavy line drawn on the accompanying Gaston County tax map which is drawn at a scale of 1"=200'.

Boundary Justification

The boundary for the Belmont Hosiery Mill includes the 6.61 acres that were historically associated with the mill.



Belmont Hosiery Mill
Belmont, Gaston County, N.C.

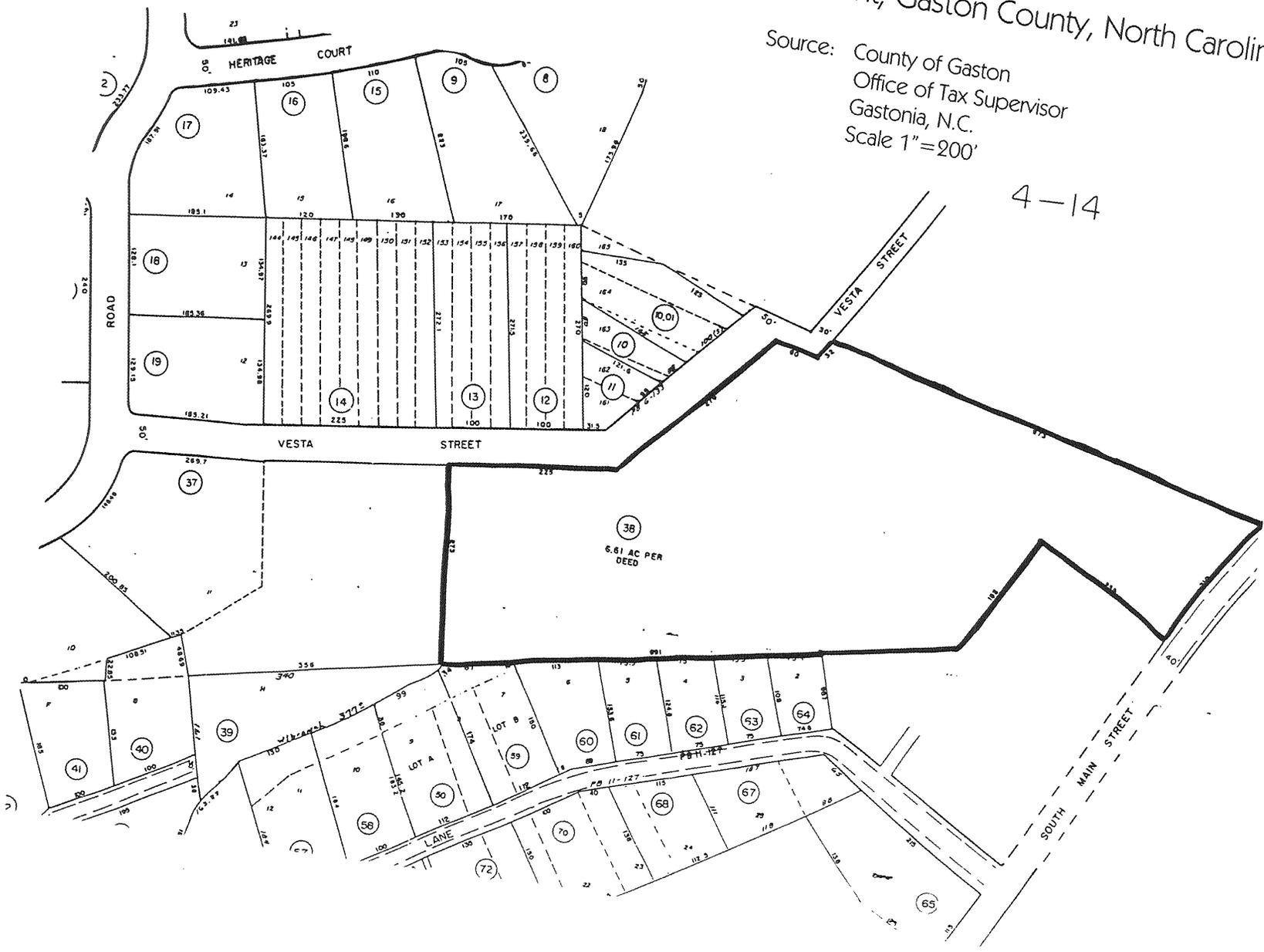


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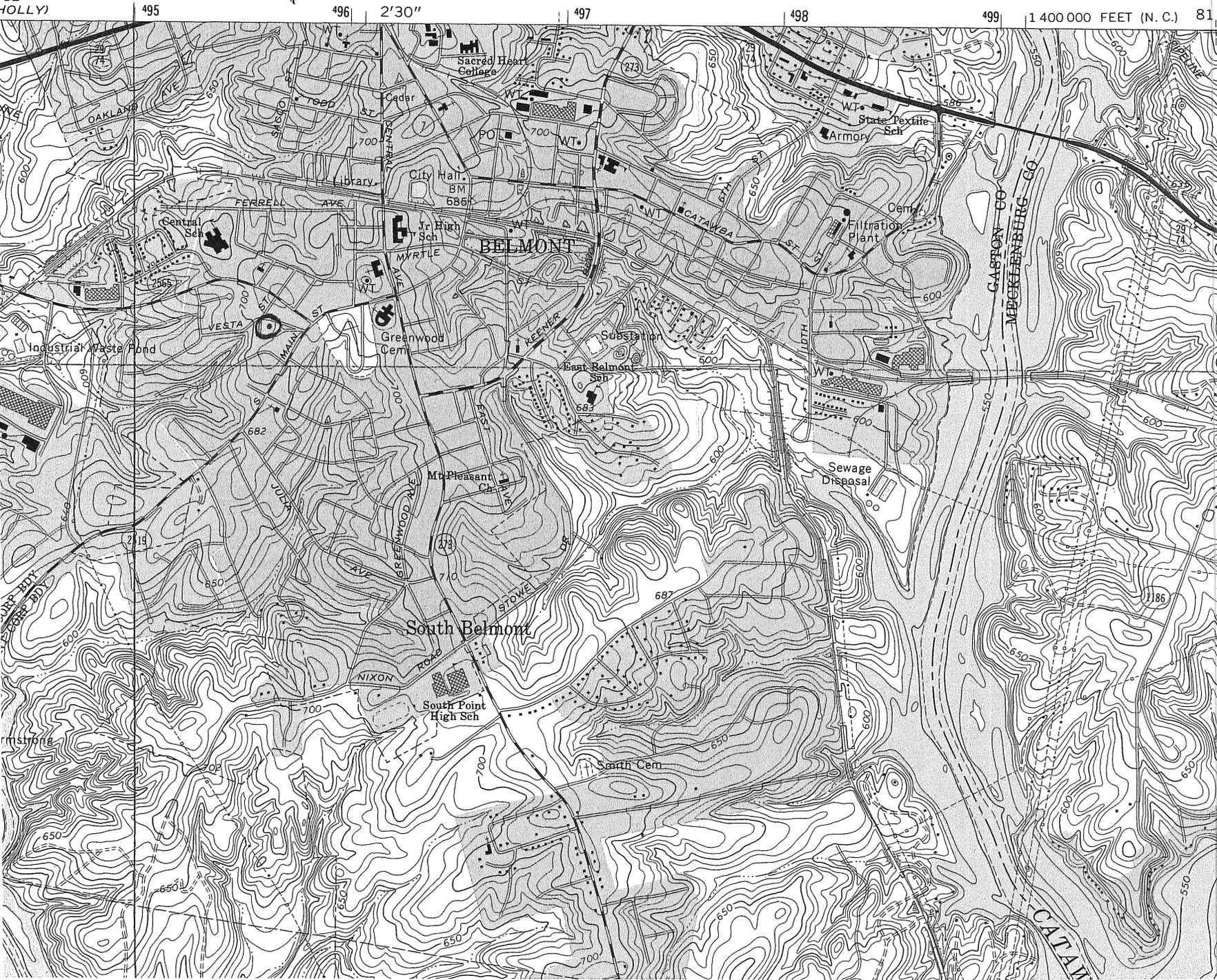
Belmont Hosiery Mill
Belmont, Gaston County, North Carolina

Source: County of Gaston
Office of Tax Supervisor
Gastonia, N.C.
Scale 1"=200'

4-14



4834 IV SW
MOUNTAIN ISLAND
LAKE



495 496 2'30" 497 498 499 1 400 000 FEET (N. C.) 81°00'
35°15'
550 000 FEET (N. C.)
3899
3898
3897

Belmont
Hosiery Mill
Belmont Quad
Gaston Co.
NC
Easting:
17 495600
Northing:
17 3899180

