

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

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Roxboro Cotton Mill

Roxboro, Person County, PR0219, Listed 8/27/2009
Nomination by Carrie Ehrfurth
Photographs by Carrie Ehrfurth, March 2008



Façade view – southern end



Façade view – northern end

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

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

1. Name of Property

historic name: Roxboro Cotton Mill

other names/site number: N/A

2. Location

street & number: 115 Lake Drive not for publication N/A

city or town: Roxboro vicinity N/A

state: North Carolina code NC county Person County code 145 zip code 27573

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] 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 [X] meets [] does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [] nationally [] statewide [X] locally. ([] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official

Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources

State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

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:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

[] entered in the National Register

[] See continuation sheet

[] determined eligible for the National Register

[] See continuation sheet

[] removed from the National Register

[] other, (explain)

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	0	Total

Category of Property (Check only one box)

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

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: INDUSTRY/PROCESSING Sub: Manufacturing Facility

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: EDUCATION Sub: School

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Italianate

Other: Slow-burn Heavy Timber Construction

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

roof RUBBER

walls BRICK

other _____

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

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

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

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

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

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY

Period of Significance

1899-1959

Significant Dates

1899, 1924, ca. 1943

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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

Please see Continuation sheets.

=====
9. Major Bibliographical References
=====

(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
_X State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
_X Local government
___ University
___ Other

Name of repository: Person County Library, Roxboro, NC

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10. Geographical Data
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Acreage of Property approx. 11.8 acres

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

Table with 4 columns: Zone, Easting, Northing, Zone, Easting, Northing. Values include 17, 681220, 4029260, 3, 17, 681180, 4028820, 2, 17, 681280, 4029260, 4, 17, 680960, 4028940.

Verbal Boundary Description

(See the description of the boundaries of the property on continuation sheet, Section 10.)

Boundary Justification

(See the explanation why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet, Section 10.)

=====
11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title Carrie Ehrfurth/historic preservation specialist

organization _____ date April 28, 2009

street & number 1011 Stewart Street telephone 919-434-1439

city or town Fuquay-Varina state NC zip code 27605
=====

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Continuation Sheets: See Sections 7-10, Pages 1-18

Maps

USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location and UTS References.
Sketch map for Boundary Description and to supplement Section 7.

Photographs

Digital Photos Submitted with nomination.

Additional items

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

Property Owner

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

name Roxboro Cotton Mill, LLC (Mr. Lacy Winstead)

street & number 141 Semora Road telephone 336-504-3339

city or town Roxboro state NC zip code 27573

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.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to range from approximately 18 hours to 36 hours depending on several factors including, but not limited to, how much documentation may already exist on the type of property being nominated and whether the property is being nominated as part of a Multiple Property Documentation Form. In most cases, it is estimated to average 36 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form to meet minimum National Register documentation requirements. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, 1849 C St., NW, Washington, DC 20240.

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Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 1

Roxboro Cotton Mill
Person County, North Carolina

Narrative Description

Summary

Roxboro Cotton Mill is located on the southwest corner of Depot Street and Lake Drive in Roxboro. To the southeast of the mill, across Lake Drive, is the mill village. The Norfolk and Western Railroad lines run parallel with the building along its western side. Even though Roxboro's downtown is just two blocks to the west, the mill building sits alone on an open and spacious lot. It is separated from the town and the mill villages by the railroad, the two bordering streets, a large expanse of grassy field to the south, and a paved parking lot to the east. The parking lot was built over the original mill reservoir which was filled in sometime after 1943. The grassy field to the south did contain three mill houses along a winding road, built between c.1914 and c.1925, but it does not appear that the area was further developed.

Roxboro Cotton Mill is an excellent example of a late nineteenth-century North Carolina textile mill with Italianate-style influence and slow-burning heavy timber frame construction. While the mill has two full stories, it is built into a hill, so the west and north elevations appear to be a single story. The mill features elements typical of such North Carolinian textile mills such as 1:5 common bond brick wall construction over heavy timber framing, segmental arched windows, wood roof and floor decking, and interior chamfered wood columns. The original mill building, constructed in 1899, and its 1924 addition together make up the main portion of this building, and they measure approximately 525 feet long (sixty-eight bays). When the mill was in operation the main mill building and its 1924 addition housed the spinning and carding operations. A railroad spur terminated at the north end of the 1899 main mill.

Over the years of operation, storage buildings and warehouses were constructed across the spur from the main mill. Eventually, the spur was removed, and an addition was constructed so that these warehouses were connected to the main mill. The north end of Roxboro Cotton Mill is a conglomeration of the separate building and later additions with construction dates ranging from c.1914 to c.1960. The north sections were used for cotton storage and the opening room, and the sections nearest to and connected to the main mill were used as the engine and boiler room and picker room.

Main Mill, 1899

The original brick, two-story main mill building was built in 1899, and an addition with the same scale, sizing, and features was built at the south end of this building in 1924. Together, these two buildings make up the main section of the mill. Much longer than it is deep, two rows of columns, spaced approximately every eight feet, run the length of the building. These columns support the heavy roof timbers that tie into the brick walls between the segmental arched windows on the north, south, and west elevations. The

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1899 portion of the building features heavy timber chamfered columns while the 1924 addition has steel posts.

The windows are large double-hung sash windows, and the windows on the upper floor are larger than the windows on the lower floor as the lower floor is shorter. The majority of the windows on the south and west elevations are replacement windows, installed during a partial 2005-2006 renovation. On the west elevation, one of the windows on the upper floor remains bricked up with the lighter buff colored brick used in the early 1960s when the Roxboro Cotton Mills Company closed in the building for greater humidity control. About half of the window openings on the north elevation have been reopened, and new double-hung windows have been installed.

A very shallow side-gable roof covers this building, and the heavy timber roof beams pierce the brick wall to create the appearance of corbels. Sanborn maps show monitor roofs through 1943. The monitors no longer exist and were most likely removed in the 1960s when the mill was sealed for better climate control in the 1960s. The upper floor is wood and the lower floor is a concrete slab on grade.

The main mill was used for the carding and spinning operations of the mill. Here, the cotton was cleaned before it was spun into yarn and wound on cones for shipping. The engine and boiler room, built in 1899, is a two-story building attached to the east elevation of the main mill on the north end. Segmental-arched, double-door openings can be seen on both the upper and lower floors. The door on the upper floor is accessed by an exterior concrete stair. This opening was closed at an unknown date, and the double-door has been replaced with a single metal door. The two entrances on the lower level have the original wood panel double-doors. On the upper floor, window openings of similar size and shape to those seen on the main mill façade are closed with buff-colored brick.

Inside the lower level of this building, the party wall is brick on approximately five feet of exposed bedrock. The upper floor of this building features five large interior multi-paned windows, four lights across by seven lights high. Open and spacious, this room was once the picker room where the cotton was inspected for quality.

Cotton storage and opening room building, c. 1943

As Roxboro Cotton Mill grew in operation, it needed more space for opening and storing the cotton bales that came in on the train. Across the railroad spur from the main mill, three sections of a separate building were constructed by 1943 for this purpose. Two of the sections are labeled opening room on the Sanborn map, and the third section is labeled cotton storage. Physical examination of the opening room shows that it is a two-story rectangular building with a later pie-shaped addition. The rectangular portion of the opening room has heavy timber beams supported by brick piers, while the pie-

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shaped addition features wood posts as supports. This section of the opening room also has five small windows on the upper floor which are filled with buff-colored brick.

The cotton storage building is a two-story brick building which was likely built after the opening room, and has three loading bays on the building's east elevation that have been closed with buff-colored brick, and smaller window openings on the upper floor have been boarded over. A small section of the cotton storage building can be seen on the west elevation. Because the building is built into the hillside, only one story is visible on this elevation. Two entrance openings can be seen. One is boarded over with plywood, and the other is a metal door set in a metal frame. Inside, both the lower and upper levels have wood posts supporting heavy timber beams.

Additions, c. 1960

Another Roxboro Cotton Mill growth spurt in the early 1960s brought about significant changes to the existing buildings. The monitor roofs were removed, the windows were bricked in, and new additions were constructed. The largest of these additions was the cotton warehouse on the north end of the mill complex. While it is single-story, this addition is tall enough to be a two-story building. More modern construction methods were employed when this building was erected. Steel beams, posts, and roof trusses support the concrete block walls. The block walls are faced with brick.

Also in the 1960s, the area between the main mill building and the opening room and cotton storage building was over-built and the railroad spur was removed. The few new walls needed to close in this two-story space are brick, and steel beams and posts support the floor and the roof. Smaller additions and machinery rooms were built in this period. During the 2005-2006 renovation of the main mill building, the larger of these additions, which were obscuring the original facades of the main mill, were removed. However, the footprints of these additions are still visible. Some of the smaller additions on the east elevation by the engine and boiler room remain.

Roxboro Cotton Mill operated for 100 years, from 1899 to 1999, and during that time, the building saw many changes. These changes, however, are mainly related to the growth and modernization of the mill operation. Modifications made to the buildings to accommodate new machinery and new technologies were common in textile mills of this age. For instance, the roof monitors that existed in the 1920s were removed and the original windows were bricked up in the 1960s when a new air conditioning and climate control system was installed.

More recent changes can be seen as well. A large portion of the main mill was renovated in 2005-2006 and currently houses the Roxboro Community School, a charter school for middle school and high school grades. During this renovation, nearly all of the window openings were reopened, and new vinyl-clad wood double-hung sash

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windows were installed. A new front-gable entrance pavilion was added to the east elevation. The pavilion is glass with brick piers and glass double-doors. Just inside the entrance, a section of flooring between the upper and lower floors has been removed to create an atrium. A new open staircase on the outer edge of the atrium provides access from the lower floor to the upper floor. The interior of the renovated main mill has been partitioned into large classrooms along the outside walls and down the middle of the building. Two broad halls provide circulation around the classrooms and leave the columns exposed.

Despite the changes, the Roxboro Cotton Mill still serves as an excellent illustration of textile mills built in North Carolina during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Much of the mill complex stands empty or is used as storage, and the 2005-2006 renovations retain the architecturally significant elements that characterize a textile mill. The rhythm of the columns and the windows, the wood roof and floor decking, and exposed the brick masonry can still be seen.

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Summary Statement of Significance

The Roxboro Cotton Mill, located on the corner of Lake Drive and Depot Street, Roxboro, North Carolina was constructed in 1899 with funding from a group of Roxboro businessmen, led by J.A. Long, in an effort to promote industry in Person County that would be mutually beneficial to local cotton farmers as well as the textile mill owners. Roxboro Cotton Mill meets National Register Criterion A in the area of industry for its role in the initial development and continuation of Roxboro's textile industry from 1899 to 1959. While the mill was in operation until 1999, the post-1959 period is not of exceptional significance.

Historical Background

The Roxboro Cotton Mills Company was incorporated in 1899 when a bill granting its charter was passed by the North Carolina Legislature.¹ J. A. Long was joined in this venture by outside investors such as B. N. Duke, J. S. Carr, G. W. Watts, and W. W. Fuller, and by local businessmen including A. R. Foushee, J. S. Bradsher, F. A. Lukin, R. I. Featherstone, A. S. de Valming, C. G. Wilson, T. J. Stevens, J. M. Blalck, J. C. Pass, J. S. Cunningham, W. F. Reade, A. J. Hesster, W. W. Kitchen, and R. E. Long.² Together, these men were able to subscribe \$45,000 for the initial construction of Roxboro Cotton Mill.

The idea of establishing a local industry that would be supplied by local cotton farmers was very popular with the county residents, and when the Roxboro Cotton Mills Company needed additional funds to complete the construction of the cotton mill, the management team was able to increase their capital stock to \$80,000. Before the mill was complete, they had to authorize a bond issue of \$20,000 as well.

The Roxboro Cotton Mill started production in 1900 of carded two, three, and four-ply yarns, and it proudly boasted 5,000 spindles at a time when older North Carolina textile mills were realizing the need for expansion.³ The mill prospered, and another 3,200 spindles were added in 1904.⁴ The success of Roxboro Cotton Mill was encouraging to Long, and in 1906, he started planning the construction of another larger mill in northern Roxboro. This mill, originally known as Jalong Mill, later known as Longhurst, opened in 1907 and contained approximately 10,000 spindles.

¹ *Roxboro Courier*, March 8, 1899, Vol. XVI.

² "Brief History of Roxboro Cotton Mills," *Person County Times*, August 8, 1935, Vol. VII.

³ Wright, 157.

⁴ "Brief History of Roxboro Cotton Mills," *Person County Times*, August 8, 1935, Vol. VII.

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The two yarn mills thrived during the early 1900s, and in 1912, Longhurst Mill increased its spindle count by another 5,000 spindles. After World War I, another 10,000 spindles were added to Longhurst Mill, bringing its total to over 25,000 by 1919. Roxboro Cotton Mill was updated and modernized beginning in 1923 when plans to double the size of the mill were put into motion.⁵ After the completion of the new mill addition and the installation of 5,000 new spindles in 1924, the Roxboro Cotton Mills Company had, between its two mills, a yarn production capacity of over three million pounds per year and was employing over 750 people.⁶

During this period of growth, Roxboro Cotton Mill was the site of a textile invention. Textile mills always struggled with the task of keeping the mills' production spaces clean. Excess lint jammed machines, affected air quality, and increased the risk of fire. In 1925, Roxboro Cotton Mill supervisor, William B. Walker, developed a self-propelled travelling vacuum to deal with the lint generated in the spinning, twisting, winding, and spooling of cotton.⁷ The vacuum was mounted on a track that was suspended from the ceiling. It traveled down the rows of spinning and picker machines sucking up the stray lint, which helped to reduce the risk of fire and keep the mill cleaner and healthier for workers.

Roxboro Cotton Mill continued to increase production, and by 1935, Roxboro viewed itself as a manufacturing town rather than a farming community. Long's vision of creating a stable industry that supported large numbers of workers was realized; the textile mills in Person County employed nearly 3,000 workers at that time.⁸ After World War II, it became necessary for the mill to modernize its equipment and update its facilities. Several factors contributed to this facility overhaul. Technological advances made it possible to update processes with newer, more efficient equipment. The number of spindles could be reduced while production increased. However, this newer equipment required stronger structural support for the mill. By the 1960s, newer additions to the mill were built of concrete and steel, and a few sections of the lower level of the main mill saw the replacement of heavy timber posts with steel structural posts to hold the heavier equipment loads.

Construction and facility advances such as centralized heating and cooling, humidification and dehumidification systems, and air purifiers became more widely available. These systems helped to create a dryer climate for the textile production, but they also helped create a safer work environment. As more labor safety regulations

⁵ "A Model Spinning Mill," *The Roxboro Courier*, August 29, 1923, Vol. XL.

⁶ "Brief History of Roxboro Cotton Mills."

⁷ Mildred Gwin Andrews. *The Men and the Mills*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987, 214.

⁸ "Roxboro is One of South's Leading Mill Cities," *Person County Times*, August 8, 1935, Vol. VII.

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were enacted, the systems were required for the health and safety of the worker. It was during this post-World War II period that the mill buildings at Roxboro Cotton Mill were essentially sealed up. Windows were bricked in and monitor roofs were removed. New heating and cooling equipment was installed and a new system was brought online.

The mill continued to prosper, but the textile industry was changing. In 1973, Roxboro Cotton Mills was purchased by the Tully Corporation (later known as Tultex Yarns). The company was successful, employing 600 workers at Roxboro Cotton Mill,⁹ and continued to operate and produce yarn for its fleece production until 1999. Beginning in 2005, Roxboro Cotton Mill underwent a partial rehabilitation and a portion of the building now houses the Roxboro Community School.

Industry Context

North Carolina Highway 501 runs north and south through the county, and North Carolina Highway 158 runs east and west through the county. The two state highways intersect in the center of Person County, and it is at this crossroads that Roxboro is located. Roxboro is the only municipality in Person County and is the county's economic and trade center. The town was incorporated in 1885, and before 1890, was a small rural town which served the surrounding cotton and tobacco farmers. It was rather isolated because no major thoroughfares went through the county. Plantations dominated the county before the Civil War, but the collapse of the plantation economy made way for many small family farms. The economy continued to be based on local trade, although some people travelled by horse or on foot thirty miles to the nearest train station in Milton, North Carolina, where they could shop or sell their goods.¹⁰

A local tobacco farmer and mercantile shop owner, James Anderson "Dee" Long, realized that the town of Roxboro and the surrounding county would be slow to grow and prosper if it were not connected to other markets via the railroad. For this reason, he invested a great amount of time and effort into bringing the railroad to Roxboro. Throughout the 1870s and 1880s, he made twenty-six different attempts to route a rail line through Roxboro.¹¹ His early efforts were focused on bringing the railroad to Roxboro through the Milton station, as it was the closest, and he commissioned a survey to site the route. When his negotiations with the Southern Railroad collapsed, he looked to the North and started negotiations on a route that would connect Lynchburg, Virginia, and Durham, North Carolina, via Roxboro.¹² His plans came to

⁹ Wright, 1974.

¹⁰ "Story of How J. A. Long Brought First Railroad Here," *Person County Times*, August 8, 1935, Vol. VII.

¹¹ Stuart Thurman Wright, *Historical Sketch of Person County*. (Danville, VA: the Womack Press, 1974).

¹² "Story of How J. A. Long Brought First Railroad Here," *Person County Times*, August 8, 1935, Vol. VII.

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fruition in 1890, and Roxboro was connected to new markets in both the North and the South. Long then built Roxboro's first tobacco warehouse, the Pioneer Warehouse, taking advantage of the railroad access to bring in new trade.¹³

The increase in commerce brought about the necessity for a bank, and the People's Bank of Roxboro was started in 1891. A group of dedicated business men, led by Long, continued to build up the infrastructure needed in a modern town. Electricity, water and sewer, and paved roads were in place in Roxboro at the turn of the century. The next step was to diversify the economy and establish a manufacturing industry.¹⁴ The first industrial enterprise, again initiated by J. A. Long, was Roxboro Cotton Mill. With the creation of the Roxboro Cotton Mills Company, town leaders looked to capitalize on the growing textile industry in the state and the county, increases in cotton production, and the migration of workers from fields to factories.¹⁵

Roxboro Cotton Mill was conceptualized as a way to help the entire county. Local farmers could sell their cotton to the mill, and in turn, the mill would produce yarn. The mill was successful, and a new Roxboro Cotton Mills Company mill, the Longhurst Mill, was constructed in 1907. The business men of Roxboro also wished to bring in other manufacturing and industrial endeavors to the county, and in 1916, the Person County Business Men's Association published pamphlets with demographic information about Roxboro as a part of their effort to entice new industry to the area.

By the early 1920s, the Baker Company started a textile mill one mile north of Longhurst Mill. This mill produced cotton velvet which was made with the yarn produced by the Roxboro Cotton and Longhurst mills. In 1926, the Collins-Aikman Company bought the Baker Company, but continued the production of cotton velvet. The economy of Person County and Roxboro was still locally based, with the farmers and textile mills working hand-in-hand.

The textile industry in Person County follows the trend of other North Carolina mills.¹⁶ The increasing demand for textiles during World War I translated into growth and prosperity for the mills. The mills in Roxboro expanded, as seen in the large 1924 addition at Roxboro Cotton Mill, and they added new products and systems. Longhurst

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Wright, 1974.

¹⁵ Broadus, Mitchell. The Rise of Cotton Mills in the South. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2001.

¹⁶ Brent D. Glass. The Textile Industry in North Carolina: A History. Raleigh, NC: Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1992.

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Mill added its first dye house in 1922, and added simple weaving to their production line.¹⁷

Roxboro's main industries, textile and agriculture, thrived during the 1920s, but the Depression hit the agricultural industry particularly hard. The price of tobacco, Person County's main crop, fell dramatically, but all three of the Roxboro-based textile mills remained open. The Collins & Aikman Company provided jobs for many of Roxboro's businessmen even during the economic down turn. The cultivation of industry served Roxboro and Person County well during the 1930s, and the businessmen and residents of Roxboro continued to encourage the growth and diversification of industry in the area.

Although Roxboro and Person County was able to bring in a broader range of industry, the textile mills continued to be the largest and most successful local industry. The textile industry across the country changed dramatically between the First and Second World Wars. The industry experienced increased production and profits in the years after WWI. The Roxboro Cotton Mills Company saw its highest production rate of \$6,000,000 in 1929. The economic collapse at the end of 1929 had the textile industry cutting wages and laying off workers. New Deal legislation designed to bring relief during the Depression changed the mill workers' work day from twelve to eight hour days in an effort to create jobs for more people. Legislation was also enacted to protect the workers' right to unionize.

In the first quarter of the twentieth century, North Carolina textile mills experienced labor unrest and strikes. The textile mills in Person County, however, did not experience of the strikes or walkouts seen elsewhere in the state. The *Person County Times* expressed surprise at this, but surmised that the mill workers, natives to Person County, felt a greater loyalty to the mills and the integrated nature of the local economy, since the mills were established, in large part, to support the agricultural industry and create jobs for those people who were unsuccessful at farming.¹⁸

In the 1940s, the country's textile industry was a key component to the World War II war effort. The Allied Forces required uniforms, parachutes, tents, and other equipment; the United States government demanded that the textile industry step up to fulfill these orders. Textile mills and textile machinery plants across the country were converted for wartime production. Mills were run around the clock, three-shifts a days, to meet

¹⁷ "Brief History of Roxboro Cotton Mills."

¹⁸ "Jalong An Independent Community," *Person County Times*, August 8, 1935, Vol. VII.

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demand.¹⁹ After the war, plants were converted back for the production of civilian products.

The war had two main effects on the textile industry. First, the research and development completed during the war brought about remarkable advances in textile production especially in the area of man-made textiles. Second, the conversion and reconversion of the plants stalled the development of textile plant machinery in the area of civilian products. Many textile mills were still updating their machinery and equipment as late as the 1960s. Companies that manufactured the equipment and machinery for the textile mills were overwhelmed with new equipment and installation orders. In the meantime, war-torn countries that were rebuilding were able to install newer and more efficient equipment in the early 1950s. These foreign textile industries would, twenty to thirty years later, create intense competition for the American textile mills, and would contribute to the flight of the textile industry overseas.²⁰

The idea of industry integration for the betterment of the greater local economy started to slowly unravel in the post-World War II era. The technological advances made during and after the war made diversification of products possible. Man-made fibers became increasingly popular and textile mills adjusted their production and company infrastructure in response.²¹ The mills had to be retrofitted with newer equipment, and the products of the mills became more and more specialized. In Roxboro, for instance, Collins & Aikman, a national company, was adjusting its product line to meet the growing need for automobile textiles and carpeting. Such products required specific yarns and specific manufacturing equipment. The company needed more control over all of the production materials, so they purchased small mills around the country that produced the kind of materials they needed.²² The mills in the South were attractive to major textile companies from the north because wages were lower and unions were less organized and less powerful.

By the early 1950s, Roxboro was able to boast a larger number of small manufacturing plants: two broom factories; a wooden clothes hanger plant; a textile inspection plant; a parachute factory; a tobacco re-drying plant; a poultry processor; lumber mills; and several fertilizer plants.²³ But in 1960, the textile industry was still the dominant industry in Person County, providing more than half of the manufacturing employment

¹⁹ Andrews, 175.

²⁰ Andrews, 177.

²¹ Glass, 82.

²² Collins & Aikman Corporation: A History. 2006.

²³ Wright, 188.

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Roxboro Cotton Mill
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opportunities.²⁴ By the late 1960s, Roxboro had several large industries including Collins & Aikman, Roxboro Cotton Mills, Eaton Corporation (valve cores), Loxcreen Company (storm windows and doors), Roxboro Manufacturing (survival equipment), Camp Chemical Corporation (fertilizer), and Crown Aluminum Corporation (aluminum products).

Vertical integration within companies occurred in the Roxboro Cotton Mills Company as well. Tully Corporation purchased the Roxboro Cotton Mills Company in 1973. The Tully Corporation produced fleece products, and it was necessary for it to have a specific type of yarn for the production of its fleece. By purchasing the Roxboro Cotton Mills Company and its two mills, Tully Corporation was able to control the quality of the yarn and produce it to their particular specifications. While these Roxboro mills came into existence as a way to bring the county together, after 100 years of development, the textile mills of Person County no longer worked together, but rather worked separately for larger national corporations.

Today, Roxboro Cotton Mill, Longhurst Cotton Mill, and the Collins & Aikman Cotton Mill still stand in Roxboro. The Collins & Aikman Cotton Mill has been wrapped by modern additions but Longhurst Cotton Mill, like Roxboro Cotton Mill, appears mostly intact.

²⁴ Lawrence Mann. "Population & Economy: Roxboro, NC," Roxboro, NC: Roxboro Development Committee, 1963.

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Roxboro Cotton Mill
Person County, North Carolina

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of Roxboro Cotton Mill is shown by the heavy black line around Person County Parcel #15816 on the accompanying Person County tax map.

Boundary Justification

Boundaries were selected to encompass the Roxboro Cotton Mill and the land which was historically associated with the mill.

Photographs

The following information is common to all of the National Register Nomination photographs of Roxboro Cotton Mill:

Name of Property: Roxboro Cotton Mill

Location: 115 Lake Drive, Roxboro, Person County, North Carolina

Photographer: Carrie Ehrfurth

Date of photographs: See photo descriptions.

Digital negatives located at NC SHPO

1. Looking northwest at front elevation. Photo taken March 8, 2008.
2. Looking northwest at new construction (2005) entrance pavilion. Photo taken March 8, 2008.
3. Looking northwest at northeast end of the building. Photo taken March 8, 2008.
4. Looking south at the northeast end of the building. Photo taken March 8, 2008.
5. Looking southeast at the rear (northwest side) elevation. Photo taken March 8, 2008.
6. Looking east at southwest end of building. Photo taken March 8, 2008.
7. Looking north at southwest end of building. Photo taken March 8, 2008.
8. Standing on the lower level, looking northwest at the new entrance atrium. Photo taken March 8, 2008.
9. Standing on the upper floor, looking southwest down the hall of the c.1899 building. Photo taken March 8, 2008.
10. Standing on the upper floor, now classroom, looking southeast. Photo taken March 8, 2008.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Roxboro Cotton Mill
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11. Standing on the upper floor, in the c. 1943 Cotton Storage building, looking west.

Photo taken August 8, 2008.

12. Standing on the lower floor, in the c. 1960 infill addition, looking southwest.

Photo taken March 8, 2008.