

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: North Carolina	
COUNTY: Richmond	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

found

1. NAME

COMMON:
Great Falls Mill

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Richmond Manufacturing Company

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
West Washington and Broad Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:
Rockingham (Congressional District Eight, the Hon. Earl B. Ruth)

STATE: North Carolina CODE: 37 COUNTY: Richmond CODE: 153

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) (not in use) <input type="checkbox"/> Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Heirs of Claude Gore, c/o Mrs. E. R. Tull

STREET AND NUMBER:
1610 Plum-Nelly Road

CITY OR TOWN: Rockingham STATE: North Carolina CODE: 37

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Richmond County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Rockingham STATE: North Carolina CODE: 37

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Great Falls Mill is situated on one slope of the ravine created by Falling Creek, the stream that powered the mill. The industrial complex consists of a large gable-roof main building with attached towers of unequal size on either side, and a smaller adjacent building. All are built in the Romanesque Revival style. Constructed of brick laid in common bond, the buildings feature the arched windows and arcaded corbel cornices characteristic of the Italian Romanesque buildings from which the style is primarily derived.

The main building is quite large, rising four stories above a raised basement and measuring 76 2/3 feet by 146 feet. It is entered from the east gable end, which is four bays wide with each bay at the four levels marked by windows set in segmental-arched openings. Most of the windows have lost their sash and are now covered by wooden shutters. In the third story, which is on the same level as the present road, a window in the north bay has been converted into a door reached by a trestle-like footbridge across the ravine. In the gable is a large oculus. Each corner is marked by wide pilaster strips, as are all corners of the building. Above the arcading at the roofline is a narrow corbel cornice consisting of two rows of projecting bricks. The west end of the building is similar to the east, except that it has no door and, because of the slope of the land, there is a row of windows at the raised basement level.

A large square central stair tower divides the north facade into two expanses of seven bays each, marked at all levels including the raised basement by windows in segmental-arched openings. (At the second level, a door in the third bay from the east end opens into a small wooden enclosed passage-way that serves as a bridge to the secondary building.) Terminating the facade is an arcaded corbel cornice that runs the full length of the building.

The stair tower which dominates the composition is modeled on an Italian Romanesque campanile and is six stories high, one bay wide, and one bay deep. It consists of two stages: the first five stories provide a base for the sixth, which resembles a belfry. Each face of the lower portion is framed by continuous pilaster strips which support an arcaded corbel cornice at the top of the fifth story. The east and west faces of the tower are marked at each of the first five levels by tall narrow segmental-arched windows. The north (main) face features in each of the first four stories a larger segmental-arched opening containing a tripled-arched window. In the fifth story the design is varied by the institution of a pair of round-headed windows. The top story of the tower is separated from the lower ones by a heavy molded corbel cornice. Each face of this final stage of the tower features a pair of tall round-headed arched windows (now filled in) flanked by somewhat smaller blind arches. The tower terminates in an arcaded corbel cornice and is capped by a shallow pyramidal roof.

The south facade is similar to the north, except that here the stair tower takes the form of a four-story projection one bay wide and one bay deep with a gable roof running perpendicular to that of the main block. Its south face, repeating the pattern of the pilaster strips and arcaded corbel cornice, has no windows. The east and west faces, marked at each level by

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single narrow windows in segmental-arched openings, repeat the pattern of the north and south facades of the main block.

The vast interior of the main building is empty. The space in each story is interrupted only by a central row of massive chamfered posts that runs the length of the building, with a post occurring between every bay to provide central support for the framing. At each level, doors lead into the north and south towers, each of which contains a stair.

The secondary building, across the ravine, consists of a two-story main block and a one-story wing, each with a gable roof. Between the two sections rises a small windowless tower. The ornament of the secondary buildings repeats in simplified fashion that of the main one.

3. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1870

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Richmond Manufacturing Company (later the Great Falls Manufacturing Company) was the first cotton mill in Richmond County and is thought to have been the fifth of its kind to operate in North Carolina. The mill, powered by the waters of Falling Creek, was built by Walter F. Leak near Rockingham on a 100-acre tract formerly owned by William Deffie. Walter F. Leak, who served as president of Richmond Manufacturing Company until 1869 when it was reorganized as Great Falls Manufacturing Company, was a member of the House of Commons in 1831, a member of the state senate in 1832, and a trustee of the University of North Carolina from 1846 to 1868.

In 1833 the General Assembly of North Carolina ratified an act to incorporate the Richmond Manufacturing Company, authorizing Walter F. Leak, William Cole, and Francis T. Leak to open books in Rockingham and receive subscriptions for shares of the company. The shares sold for one hundred dollars each, and the firm was capitalized at \$50,000.

The mill began operation about 1837, producing cotton yarn. This was sold to customers who came from all over the area and are said to have camped with their wagons near the mill to wait for a load of the yarn. Later the operation was expanded to include wool yarn.

The Richmond Manufacturing Company was burned on March 8, 1865, by bummers from Sherman's army then moving through North Carolina. After the war, on November 1, 1868, the company president, Walter Leak, sold 22½ acres including all the buildings and equipment of Richmond Manufacturing Company to the stockholders of the company for \$1,000. The company was reorganized under a legislative act of April 20, 1869, and its name was changed to the Great Falls Manufacturing Company.

The mill was rebuilt in its present form, and operations were resumed about 1870, this time on a much larger scale, employing 100 looms and 3,000 spindles. John Leak served as president of Great Falls Manufacturing Company until his death in 1873 when he was succeeded by Robert T. Steele. During Steele's presidency the charter of the Great Falls Manufacturing Company was revised. The capital was raised to \$500,000, and the board of directors was expanded to include up to seven members. Steele died in 1895 and was replaced as president by W. I. Everett, who continued in the position until his death in 1911. Everett was general superintendant of the Western North Carolina Railroad from 1866 to 1870 and state senator from 1885 through 1887 and in 1905. On November 27, 1911, the property was sold at public

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auction for \$37,000. The mill continued to operate until 1930 when it was closed as a result of the Depression. The building was last used by John W. Gore as a bonded cotton warehouse.

In the early nineteenth century, almost all North Carolinians, including those in Richmond County, were farmers. There was very little industry in the state; the people depended on the factories of the other states for nearly all manufactured goods. Among the few native efforts at manufacturing were water-powered cotton mills that served the local cotton planters and a local market. Richmond County, where the growing of cotton began well before it became the dominant crop in the South, was a logical site for one of the first of these mills. The Richmond Manufacturing Company is significant as an early example of the small local industries that would later, on a larger scale, enable North Carolina to move from an almost totally agrarian economy to a more balanced one. From just such meager beginnings the textile industry has grown to become a major contributor to the present economy of North Carolina.

In the larger context of the nineteenth century as a whole, it is interesting to note that the Great Falls Mill embodies the two opposing currents that provided one of the central conflicts of the century: the Industrial Revolution and the Romantic Movement. The mill is historically significant as an early example of the rather tardy coming of the Industrial Revolution to the state, while its architectural style came into popular use primarily as part of the revivalism of the Romantic Movement, which in reaction against the depersonalization of the Industrial Revolution sought inspiration in the styles of the pre-industrial medieval period.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

C. C. "Early History of Cotton Mills," Spirit of Richmond, Richmond County Magazine, Vol I. Hamlet and Rockingham, North Carolina: News-Messenger and Post Dispatch, 1932.

Richmond County Records, Richmond County Courthouse, Rockingham, North Carolina, Office of the Register of Deeds. (Subgroups: Deeds and Wills).

Richmond County Records, State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina. (Subgroups: Deeds and Wills).

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "		34 56 14	79 47 10	
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Eight Acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Survey and Planning Unit Staff, John B. Wells, III, Supervisor

ORGANIZATION: State Department of Archives and History DATE: 13 August 1971

STREET AND NUMBER: 109 East Jones Street

CITY OR TOWN: Raleigh STATE: North Carolina CODE: 37

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name H. G. Jones Title Director, State Department of Archives and History Date 13 August 1971

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____ ATTEST: _____

Keeper of The National Register

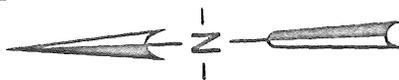
Date _____

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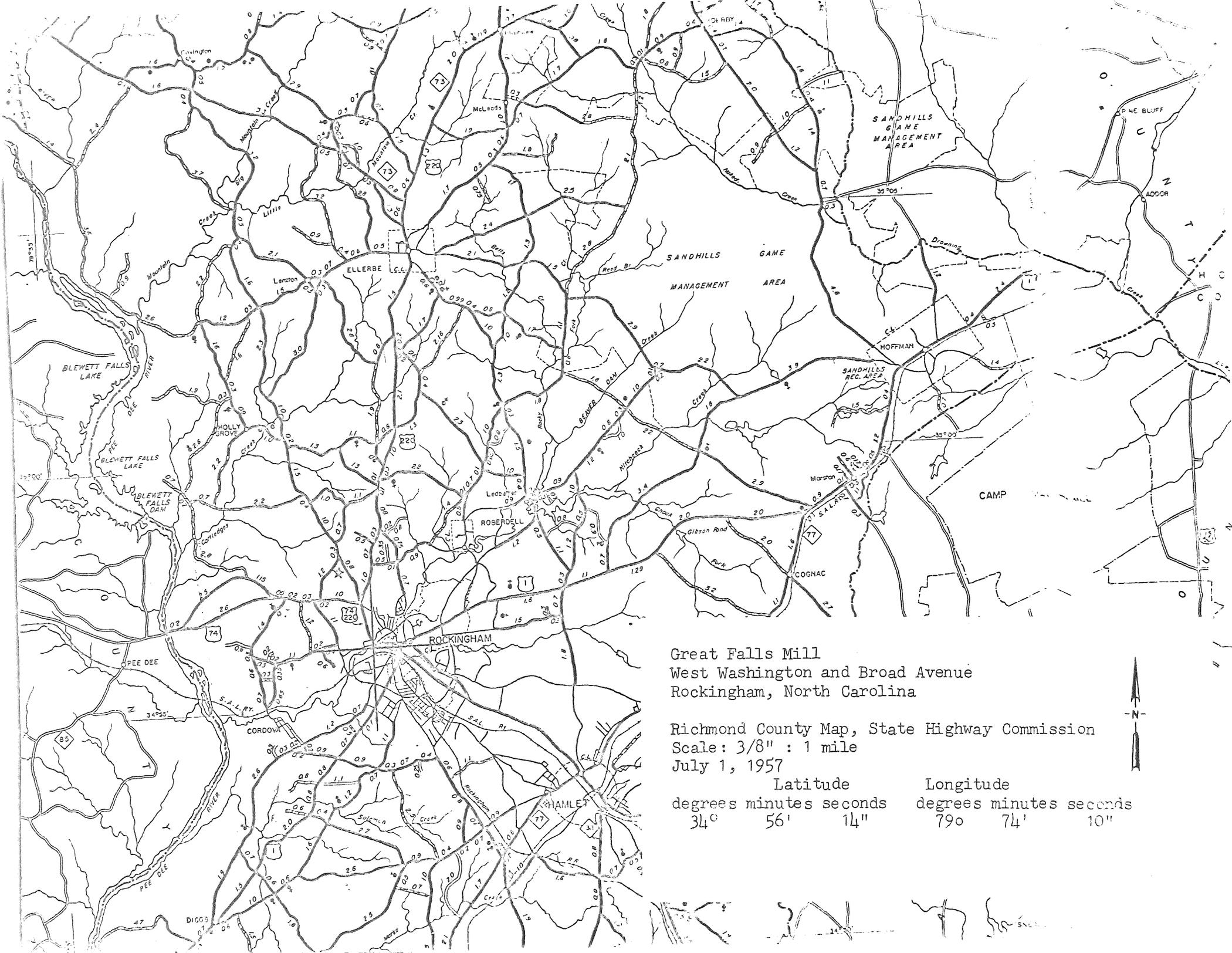
Great Falls Mill
 West Washington and Broad Avenue
 Rockingham, North Carolina

City of Rockingham: Street Map
 Berry Liles, Surveyor
 Scale: 1"/600'
 May, 1971 (revised)



Latitude			Longitude		
degrees	minutes	seconds	degrees	minutes	seconds
34°	56'	14"	79°	74'	10"

T.S.H.



Great Falls Mill
 West Washington and Broad Avenue
 Rockingham, North Carolina

Richmond County Map, State Highway Commission
 Scale: 3/8" : 1 mile
 July 1, 1957

Latitude			Longitude		
degrees	minutes	seconds	degrees	minutes	seconds
34°	56'	14"	79°	74'	10"

