

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY FORM FOR

MULTIPLE RESOURCE OR THEMATIC NOMINATION

OMB 1024-0018
EXP 12-31-84

1 NAME

HISTORIC Roberdel Mill No. 1 Company Store
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 1106 Roberdel Rd. NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CITY, TOWN Rockingham VICINITY OF 8th CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
STATE North Carolina CODE 037 COUNTY Richmond CODE 153

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER storage

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Harold B. Rainwater
STREET & NUMBER 1104 Roberdel Rd.
CITY, TOWN Rockingham VICINITY OF North Carolina STATE 28379

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC Richmond County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER 114 E. Franklin Street
CITY, TOWN Rockingham STATE North Carolina 28379

6 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Heather M. Hallenberg
ORGANIZATION Consultant for DATE May 31, 1981
STREET & NUMBER Archives and History, Survey and Planning Branch TELEPHONE (919) 733-6545
CITY OR TOWN Raleigh STATE North Carolina 27611

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Roberdel Mill No. 1 Company Store, located at 1106 Roberdel Road three miles northeast of the commercial center of Rockingham, is for its region an unusually well preserved and unaltered late nineteenth century commercial structure. The Roberdel Mill No. 1 began operations in 1884 and local tradition maintains that the company store was constructed in the same year.

The Roberdel Company Store is a one story brick structure featuring identical three-bay divisions of the front and rear elevations. Sixteen over eight sash windows set within segmentally arched openings flank central double door entries with four pane transoms. Brick denticulated courses follow the raking cornices of the broadly pitched gabled tin roof. The west elevation is pierced by five evenly spaced, segmentally arched clerestory windows. The east elevation is plain. The one room interior, now used for storage, retains several of the original display shelves and counters.

The company store stands on the west bank of the Roberdel Mill No. 1 pond and the shell of the mill, burned in October of 1970, stands on the east. A footbridge once connected the two.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

_____ NATIONAL

_____ STATE

 X

_____ LOCAL

PERIOD

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

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

SPECIFIC DATES

ca. 1885

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Roberdel Mill No. 1 Company Store, built in ca. 1884, is architecturally the most significant of the eleven company stores that at one time served the mill villages in the Rockingham vicinity. The others have been lost to fire, demolition or repeated remodelings

CRITERIA ASSESSMENT

- A. The Roberdel Mill No. 1 Company Store is associated with the life of Robert L. Steele, Sr., principal promoter of the textile industry in Richmond County and founder of the Roberdel Mill No. 1.
- B. The Roberdel Mill No. 1 Company Store is associated with the powerful textile based economy of Richmond County. By the early 1920s, eleven textile mills were in full operation in the Rockingham vicinity, making Richmond County one of the leading textile producers in the state.
- C. Roberdel Mill No. 1 Company Store is an excellent example of late nineteenth century commercial construction.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Robert L. Steele (1821-1895) was the son of Thomas and Judith Mosely Leak Steele of Steele's Township near Little River. He married Hannah Pickett Leak (1824-1893) and had moved to Rockingham by ca. 1850.¹

Robert L. Steele, Sr. who has been called the main entrepreneur and engineer of the textile industry in Richmond County, was not only a promoter of Great Falls Mill in 1869, but was also the driving force behind the founding of Pee Dee Mill in 1876, Roberdel Mill in 1882, and Steele's Mill in 1895.² These mills were strategically placed along Hitchcock Creek by Steele in order to take best advantage of the available hydraulic power.

The Roberdel Mill Dam is located at the site of the dam first built between 1860 and 1880 by Robert L. and Thomas J. Steele for the operation of a grist and saw mill.³ In April of 1882 Thomas J. Steele sold his interests in their twenty-six acre holdings to his brother, Robert L. Steele, Sr. The area was known as Steele's Mill at the time.⁴ On January 31, 1883 Robert L. Steele, Sr. sold the property for \$7,500 to the newly formed Roberdel Manufacturing Company.⁵

Roberdel was named for Robert Steele Leak, son of co-textile promoter, T. C. Leak, Sr. Robert L. Steele, Sr. sent the baby a silver cup engraved "From Old Robert L. to Young Roberdel;" hence the name.⁶

The mill and a new rock dam were built between 1882 and 1883, and the mill was manufacturing cloth by 1884. The dam broke during a flood of 1890, but was rebuilt and is still standing.⁷ The mill tragically burned on October 15, 1970, however, its shell, reflected in the large mill pond, provides a picturesque setting for the Roberdel Mill No. 1 Company Store.

The Company Store served an important role in the life of the mill village community. Workers purchased basic necessities at the local gathering place from the shelves stocked with food, clothing, hardware and other sundry items.

On December 18, 1929 the mill was sold to Entwistle Manufacturing Company and its name was changed to Entwistle No. 3.⁸ The Company Store was sold by the mill to Alma and Harold Rainwater in 1949, who utilize the building for storage.⁹

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. The Isaac S. London Papers, located in looseleaf notebooks at the Richmond County Office of the Superior Court, hereinafter cited as the Isaac S. London Papers, Richmond County Courthouse.
2. The Isaac S. London Papers, Richmond County Courthouse.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,7	6,1,4	6,1,0	3,8	7,0	4,2,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING				NORTHING
C					D					

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

All of lot 74, Map 56, Rockingham Township, consisting of a four sided lot measuring 175' x 78'.

The property being nominated includes the building and the lot on which it stands.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

Footnotes (Continued)

3. "Old Roberdel Mill To Be Sold and Put Into Paper Operation," Post-Dispatch (Rockingham), August 16, 1956, hereinafter cited as Post-Dispatch, August 16, 1956.
4. Post-Dispatch, August 16, 1956.
5. Post Dispatch, August 16, 1956.
6. Isaac S. London Papers, Richmond County Courthouse.
7. Post-Dispatch, August 16, 1956.
8. James E. and Ida C. Huneycutt, A History of Richmond County (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton Company), 1976, pp. 356, 357.
9. Richmond County Deed Book 303, p. 427.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

Huneycutt, James E. and Ida C., A History of Richmond County (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton Company), 1976.

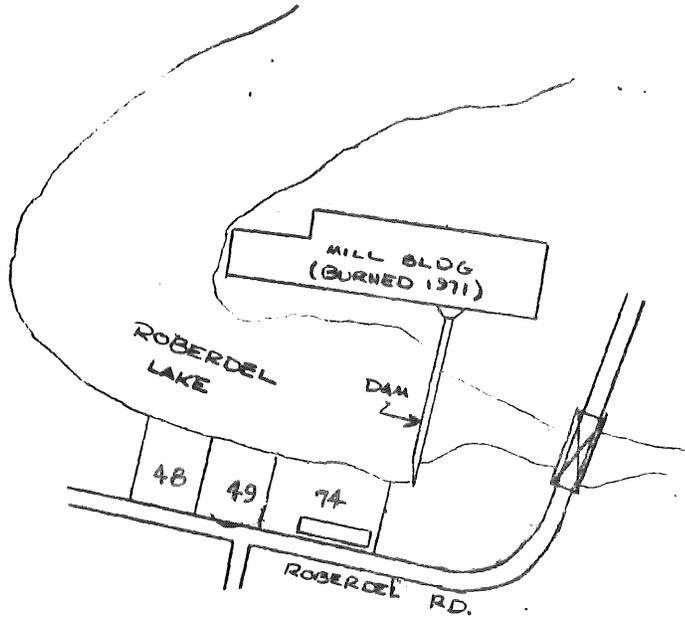
London, Isaac S., The London Papers are found in three separate collections housed at the North Carolina State Archives, the Richmond County Office of the Superior Court, and the Richmond County Library. Only the notes at the State Archives are loosely indexed according to general subject headings. The other two collections are not indexed.

"Old Roberdel Mill To Be Sold and Put Into Paper Operation," Post-Dispatch (Rockingham), August 16, 1956.

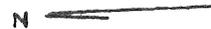
Richmond County Deed Books, Office of the Register of Deeds, Richmond County Courthouse, Rockingham, N. C.

SOURCE: TRACED FROM "ROBERDEL MILL
VILLAGE SURVEY" BY GRAHAM & LILES
SURVEYORS, AUG. 9, 1948.

TRACING BY ROCKINGHAM PLANNING
DEPT. AUG. 1981



SCALE: 1"=200'



ROBERDEL MILL #1
COMPANY STORE
1106 ROBERDEL RD
RICHMOND COUNTY
ROCKINGHAM, NC

LOT # 74, ROBERDEL MILL VILLAGE,
ROCKINGHAM TOWNSHIP

(ELLERBE)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

79°45'
35°00'

615000m.E.

ELLERBE 5.8 MI.

42'30"

3873000m.N.

1.7 MI. TO U.S. 220



Roberdel Mill #1 Company Store
Rockingham, N. C.
Hamlet Quadrangle
Zone 17 Scale 1:24 000
17 614610/3870420

57'30"

