

Chadwick-Hoskins

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The Chadwick-Hoskins mill villages lie some three miles northwest of the center of Charlotte along Rozelles Ferry Road. Created in the early 1900s, the district represents an important era in Charlotte's economic development. Chadwick-Hoskins, like the contemporaneous [North Charlotte](#) area across town, was created as something of a "textile new-town," a massive new district of mills and workers' housing that helped solidify Mecklenburg County's position as a leading textile producer, and pushed Charlotte toward being the largest city in North and South Carolina. ¹ The Chadwick-Hoskins district is also of interest in North Carolina's business history. In 1908 its mills became part of one of the state's first corporately-organized mill chains. ²

Building the Villages:

The Rozelles Ferry Road, which runs northwest from Charlotte to a crossing of the Catawba River, is among the county's oldest trails, dating back to the eighteenth century. In 1861 it was joined by the rails of the Wilmington, Charlotte, and Rutherford Railroad, later known as the Seaboard Railroad. ³ As late as the 1890s, the land near the crossing of the road and the rail line was occupied by large tenant farms, whose owners included such prominent local citizens as S.B. Alexander, W.S. Alexander, and James Thomas. ⁴ The area seemed destined to remain farmland for a long time, for it was almost two miles from the border of the small city. This all changed rapidly, beginning in the fall of 1899. Farmer William Vandever sold his 124 acre farm to speculator Julian H. Little, who in turn sold it to the Southern Real Estate Loan and Trust Company of Charlotte. ⁵ In July of 1901 Southern Real Estate sold the acreage to a consortium of Charlotte businessmen who planned a mill for the site along the railroad. ⁶ Included were H.C. Clark, E.A. Smith, J.P. Wilson, and F. Dilling, who made up the board of the recently incorporated Chadwick Manufacturing Company. ⁷

The founders of the Chadwick Manufacturing Company were an interesting lot. Wilson was a member of a locally prominent real estate and textile family. Captain Dilling was from Kings Mountain, North Carolina, where he headed the Dilling, Enterprise, and Cora mills. ⁸ Smith and Clark were both transplanted New Englanders. They represented the beginnings of a movement which saw first individuals, then investors, and finally entire corporations drawn south by the booming textile economy of the Piedmont during the first decades of the twentieth century. Edward Arthur Smith had come to Charlotte from his native Baltimore, Maryland, as salesman for the

Baltimore-based textile supply firm of Thomas K. Carey and Son. In 1889, with the help of textile leader D.A. Tompkins, Smith founded his own [Charlotte Supply Company](#), "general cotton mill furnishers, manufacturers of leather belting, dealers in machinery, machinist's tools, etc." ⁹ Henry C. Clark came to Charlotte in 1900 to assume presidency of Charlotte Supply, and to join Smith in his planned mill-development ventures. ¹⁰ Clark had built a reputation as a distinguished textile man and public leader in New England, having organized Standard Mill Supply in Providence, Rhode Island, and served as mayor of Warren, Rhode Island. That he would leave to come south to Charlotte was indicative of the Piedmont town's growing importance in the nation's textile economy. Possibly to atone for being largely composed of "outsiders," the new corporation chose its name to honor one of Charlotte's pioneer textile men, Colonel H.S. Chadwick, who had founded the Louise Mills. Work on the new Chadwick Mill began in early 1901, even before the sales agreement for the land had been officially filed. By August the *Charlotte Observer* could report that the plant was nearing completion:

The Chadwick has the reputation of being the finest-built mill in the State. The main building is three stories high, 262 feet long and 78 feet wide. It is built of pressed brick ... by J.A. Jones of Charlotte. The mill is equipped with machinery for the manufacture of yarns and a fine grade of convertible sheetings. It will operate 12,000 spindles and 300 looms. ¹¹

The article went on to describe the mill village taking shape along the west side of Rozelles Ferry Road:

The extensive ground around the factory is as level as a floor, and in laying off the plant the opportunities which it offered for a model mill community were taken advantage of. A town of 40 houses was built to the north of the mill as homes of the operatives. The buildings are of wood, painted a pure white with green blinds and present a pleasing appearance. The architecture of all is the same. Each house contains four rooms, a front and back porch. All the rooms are connected and there are closets and other conveniences. A broad street is laid off in front of each row of buildings and between them is a broad open space divided off into gardens ... so that the occupants have the blessings of air and light and the advantages of a garden large enough to supply their needs year round.... The town store is a large brick building whose interior arrangement is equal to that of a city store. It is not kept by the factory, but is leased to an outsider, with whom the operatives are at liberty to trade as they please. ¹²

The building of the Chadwick plant was only the first step in E.A. Smith's plans for the land along the Seaboard tracks. In April of 1903 he chartered a second corporation with investors J.A. Wilson and Jeremiah Goff, known as [Hoskins Mills, Incorporated](#).¹³ The following month the new company took title to 121 acres of farmland owned by John T. McGee adjacent to the Chadwick property, plus an additional twenty acres owned by Smith and his wife Mary.¹⁴ The three-story Hoskins Mill is quite similar to that shown in drawings of the Chadwick Mill, and both were built by J.A. Jones of Charlotte, who was on his way toward achieving a national reputation as a construction contractor.¹⁵ By November carpenters were laying the thick, fire-resistant floors: "three layers of timber, with a total thickness of about five inches. The top layer of the floors will be of maple timber."¹⁶ The building and its one-story brick office may be seen today on Hoskins Avenue, about a half mile north of the Chadwick site. More parallel rows of mill houses sprang up. Linwood, Cromer, Cregler, and Goff streets south of the Hoskins Mill, and Hoskins, Cloudman, and Ramsey streets north of the plant are lined with early mill houses. Stores could be found on Rozelles Ferry Road near the Hoskins Avenue intersection. Larger homes, probably occupied by overseers and store-owners, lined Rozelles Ferry across the railroad from the mill village. Mecklenburg County built the two-story brick Hoskins Elementary School at Linwood and Gossett streets (demolished 1985). And the mill owners contributed land for a Methodist Church and a Baptist Church, and donated 20% of the cost of the buildings.¹⁷ Also, the McGee Presbyterian Church at 109 N. Cloudman Street was established just outside the village in 1913.¹⁸ Its vaguely Victorian wood-frame sanctuary is believed to have been erected soon thereafter. Reported the *Charlotte Observer*, "When the new plant is in operation, the Chadwick settlement will have a population of about 1600 people."¹⁹ The creation of a district of this size in a period of about three years would be noteworthy today in Charlotte, but in the 1900s it was almost breathtaking. In 1900, census figures showed that only 18,000 persons lived in Charlotte itself.²⁰ The new Chadwick-Hoskins district increased the area's population by almost ten percent (though it did not formally become part of the city until 1960), and boosted the county's industrial capacity by more than thirty percent.²¹ What was even more remarkable, investors William Holt, Charles Johnston, and Jesse Spencer were undertaking a similar development across town in the [North Charlotte](#) area at the same time, as we shall see in a later chapter.

The Hoskins Mill



The Chadwick Mill



The Chadwick-Hoskins Company, Incorporated:

The way in which the Chadwick and Hoskins mills had originally been chartered was typical of the general practice in the Piedmont in the late nineteenth and very early twentieth centuries. Usually each mill was set up as a separate corporate entity. Interlocking directorates might create small chains of several mills controlled by one family or one management team, but on paper each was distinct, with its own unique roster of investors. Stockholders in these early decades were generally drawn from the region around the mill in question. Most were farmers, storekeepers, or others with a small surplus of cash to invest. With only one or two minor exceptions, all money for Charlotte's mills prior to 1908 came from a region within a hundred mile radius of the city. In the course of the twentieth century, the hundreds of independent, locally-owned mills have been consolidated into a handful of major chains, among them Burlington, Ti-Caro, J.P. Stevens, and Textron Southern. The large corporations draw

capital from investors in both the old New England textile region and the newer Piedmont area, and in fact from all over the world. The development of these corporations has had great impact on North Carolina history. The infusion of out-of-state capital, as well as the marketing strength and production-planning efficiency of the large companies, allowed continued growth of the industry throughout the first two-thirds of this century, though this was accomplished at the sacrifice of local control over local industries. E.A. Smith helped start this trend in 1908. On February 18, 1908, he filed incorporation papers for the Chadwick-Hoskins Company, with capital stock of \$3 million.²² Chief investors in the company were Smith, Charlottean E.C. Dwelle who had managed the Chadwick Mill, and a father and son from New England who were famous in textile circles. William F. Draper and his son Arthur J. Draper lived in Hopedale, Massachusetts. William F. Draper's father George Draper had developed the Draper power loom, used in nearly every textile mill.²³ William took over the lucrative business, and also found time to serve as United States Congressman (1892-1897) and Ambassador to Italy (1897-1900).²⁴ Arthur Draper came south to live in Charlotte and serve as president of the Chadwick-Hoskins concern.²⁵ He quickly became one of the city's financial leaders, an official of the American Trust Company and a founding member of the Stephens Company, developers of Myers Park. With the backing of this New England capital, the new corporation was able to take over operation of not only Smith's mills, but also three earlier mills in the county.²⁶ The Hoskins and Chadwick mills became "Mill #1" and "Mill #2." The 1889 [Alpha Mill](#) (by this time known as the Calvin Mill) near downtown Charlotte at Twelfth and Brevard streets was "Mill #3." The 1897 Louise Mill in the [Belmont-Villa Heights](#) section of the city was "Mill #4." And the 1894 Dover Mill in the village of Pineville south of Charlotte became "Mill #5." In a single stroke, the Chadwick-Hoskins Company became the largest textile corporation in all of North Carolina, operating 98,000 spindles.²⁷

Lakewood and Thomasboro:

In 1911, the burgeoning mill district was connected to the still-distant City of Charlotte by commuter rails. J.B. Duke planned an electric interurban railroad network connecting all the major towns of the Piedmont textile region.²⁸ The Chadwick-Hoskins directors saw to it that the Charlotte-Gastonia link of this Piedmont and Northern Railway ran immediately to the west of their mill villages, with a regular stop at "Hoskins Station."²⁹ The line allowed corporate officers to move easily from the mills to downtown, and it also provided freight service to the factories.

Not only did the new railway give the Chadwick-Hoskins #1 and #2 mills the advantage of two competing shippers, but it also brought development of the surrounding land. The Piedmont and Northern itself located its Pinoca shops (a word coined from a corruption of Piedmont and Northern Company) just north of the mill

villages. The yellow-brick buildings survive in the 1980s much as they were originally designed by Charlotte architect C.C. Hook.³⁰ To the west of the mills, farmer James E. Thomas began to create the suburb of Thomasboro from his father's old farm. In fact, he now listed his occupation in the Charlotte city directory as "real estate." Despite the Piedmont and Northern Railway, the land was in reality too far from town for convenient commuting. J.E. and brother P.A. Thomas platted the land slowly throughout the 1010s and 1920s, a street or two at a time.³¹ Most of the area today is covered with short meandering blocks of small wood-frame bungalows. The district did not fill up until after the Second World War, when new Veterans Administration mortgages and widespread availability of the automobile made Thomasboro more accessible.

Southeast of the Chadwick Mill, the Piedmont and Northern undertook a development of its own in the 1910s. An earthen dam was built across a hollow near where Parkway Drive runs in the 1980s. Behind the dam a lake filled up, and along its shores the interurban company built a romantic park with pavilions, a theatre, and picnic shelters.³² Lakewood Park supplanted the old Latta Park -- also built by a trolley company -- as the city's favorite playground. The Park closed in the 1930s, and the dam and the lake are gone. But if one looks closely, one will still see street signs proclaiming "Lakewood Avenue," "Lakeview Street," "Fairground Avenue," "Parkway Avenue," and "Parkview Street," a legacy of those earlier days.

Development after 1920:

About 1922, A.J. Draper stepped aside as president of the Chadwick-Hoskins Company.³³ The new chief officer was Benjamin B. Gossett, son of Spartanburg, South Carolina banking and textile pioneer James Pleasant Gossett. The elder Gossett had begun building up mill holdings in 1901 with the Williamston Mills of Williamston, South Carolina.³⁴ By the 1910s he was on the Board of Directors of Duke's Piedmont and Northern Railway, and he and his son Benjamin controlled the Williamston, Brogan, Calhoun, Riverside, and Toxaway mills in South Carolina.³⁵ Purchase of a large block of Chadwick-Hoskins stock in the 1920s gave the Gossetts control of those five North Carolina Mills. Not long after, they purchased control of the Martinsville Cotton Mill Company in Martinsville, Virginia.³⁶ By 1939 the Greenville, South Carolina *News* could state that "The Gossett chain, comprising twelve plants in three Southern states (two other plants not in the chain) involves the creation of a large manufacturing organization by one man, and the carrying on of a fine tradition by the father's own son."³⁷ Benjamin B. Gossett proved to be a strong figure in his own right. He came to Charlotte to live in posh [Myers Park](#) upon taking charge of the Chadwick-Hoskins chain, and before long was on the boards of the Seaboard and the Piedmont and Northern railroads which served the city.³⁸ In 1932-1933 he was national president of the American Cotton Manufacturers

Association.³⁹ He became an outspoken conservative voice for southern textile interests, and eventually endowed the Gossett Lecture Series at North Carolina State University.⁴⁰ Gossett took charge of all of the family's mills upon his father's death in 1939.⁴¹ Under the direction of Gossett, as under Draper, the Chadwick-Hoskins Mills continued to be spoken of as better-than-average living environments. According to a 1917 article in the *Southern Textile Bulletin*:

No mill company in the country has done more to beautify their mills and surroundings There are trees, flowers, and shrubs in all the villages, the mills are surrounded with them, and the whole is kept in perfect condition. The lawns are spacious and well-kept. Thousands of dollars have been spent to keep the villages places of permanent beauty.⁴²

The *Bulletin* noted that the management under Draper sponsored annual flower shows among its operatives. This still continued in 1923 under Gossett, according to a second article:

Under the direction of a gardener the people have been most enthusiastic in their efforts at raising fine vegetables and flowers. Indeed the annual flower show given at the Chadwick-Hoskins community is eagerly looked forward to by the tenants. These exhibits take place in the fall and are among the social events of the year. Prizes are offered for... the best specimens. Several hundred dollars are given away each year by the management.⁴³

The article went on to note that the company provided a community building with a reading room, gymnasium, auditorium, and swimming pool. There was also a trained nurse available to community residents, provided in cooperation with the Charlotte Cooperative Nursing Association.⁴⁴ Remembered long-time Chadwick-Hoskins resident Edna Hargett in 1979: "People would quit the mills and go up to another mill. But after I came over here I liked it so well I just stayed."⁴⁵ The Gossett years at Chadwick-Hoskins seem to have meant more localized control of the mills, with most stock being owned by Carolinians. In 1946, this changed.⁴⁶ Benjamin B. Gossett merged all of his family's holdings including the Chadwick-Hoskins mill villages with the giant Textron-Southern chain. The corporation was based in Delaware for tax purposes, but was controlled by a group of New England investors. Gossett became a top officer in Textron Southern, but evidently soon retired from active participation in the business. He died in 1951.⁴⁷ Since 1946, the Chadwick-Hoskins area has been in the hands of a succession of different companies.⁴⁸ By the 1980s the Chadwick Mill

was gone, and the Hoskins mill used only for storage. The Hoskins School succumbed to the bulldozer in 1985, but many of the early operatives' houses remained, though privately owned. Now part of the City of Charlotte, the district remains a working-class residential area, punctuated by warehouses and industrial buildings.

Notes

¹ *United States Bureau of the Census, Sixteenth Census: 1940*, Vol. I, pp. 772, 976.

² Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds Office: records of corporations book 2, p. 313.

³ LeGette Blythe and Charles R. Brockman, *Hornets' Nest: the Story of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County* (Charlotte: McNally of Charlotte, 1961), p. 261. John Gilbert and Grady Jefferys, *Crossties Through Carolina* (Raleigh, N.C.: The Helios Press, 1969), p. 8.

⁴ Butler and Spratt, "Map of Charlotte Township, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, From Recent Surveys... 1892." Copies are in the collections of the History Department of the Mint Museum, Charlotte, and the City of Charlotte Historic Districts Commission.

⁵ Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds Office: Deed Book 140, pp. 145, 160.

⁶ Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds Office: Deed Book 161, p. 76.

⁷ Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds Office: records of corporations book 1, p. 194.

⁸ *Charlotte Observer*, November 27, 1900.

⁹ William H. Huffman, "Old Charlotte Supply Company Building: Survey and Research Report" (Charlotte: Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1983). Huffman quotes the original incorporation document.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Charlotte Observer*, August 12, 1901. See also, *Charlotte Observer*, February 11, 1901 and July 4, 1901.

¹² *Charlotte Observer*, August 12, 1901. I-85 now runs north of the old mill site, and there are no houses in that direction.

¹³ Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds Office: records of corporations book 1, p. 352.

¹⁴ Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds Office: Deed Book 179, pp. 110, 114.

¹⁵ *Charlotte Observer*, August 12, 1901 shows the Chadwick Mill and mentions Jones' involvement. Information on the Hoskins Mill comes from Dan L. Morrill, "A Survey of Cotton Mills in Charlotte, N.C...." (Charlotte: Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1981).

¹⁶ *Charlotte Observer*, November 30, 1903.

¹⁷ *Southern Textile Bulletin*, December 20, 1917. Both of these early structures have evidently been demolished, as has the Southern Industrial Institute also mentioned in the article.

¹⁸ Date is found on the signboard in front of the church.

¹⁹ *Charlotte Observer*, November 30, 1903.

²⁰ Charlotte Chamber of Commerce, "1950 Census Data" (Charlotte: Chamber of Commerce, 1950). This report conveniently includes city-wide and ward data back to 1850.

²¹ According to the *Annual Report of the Bureau of Labor and Printing of the State of North Carolina*, 1900 Mecklenburg County had 94,392 spindles in that year. The 1904 report showed that the Chadwick and Hoskins mills had added a combined total of 28,800 spindles to that number.

²² Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds Office: records of corporations book 2, p. 313.

²³ For more on the loom and its impact see Feller, "The Draper Loom in New England textiles, 1894-1914..." *Journal of Economic History*, September 1966, p. 339. Carol Alice Galenson, "The Migration of the Cotton Textile Industry from New England to the South: 1880 to 1930" (Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1975), p. 42,

explains that "The Draper loom helped eliminate many stops per day, resulting not only in longer hours per machine. but also in assignment of more machines to each worker."

²⁴ *Who's Who in America, 1908-1909* (Chicago: A.N. Marquis and Co. , 1909 .

²⁵ Mrs. Owen Fitzsimmons of Charlotte, interview with Thomas W. Hanchett, March, 1985. Mrs. Fitzsimmons is A.J. Draper's daughter.

²⁶ Data for this paragraph were drawn from the Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds Office: Deed Book 1217, p. 499, and the *Annual Report of the Bureau of Labor and Printing for the State of North Carolina*, 1901.

²⁷ *Annual Report of the Bureau of Labor and Printing of the State of North Carolina*, 1910. It was almost a decade before Chadwick-Hoskins was surpassed in number of spindles by the Cabarrus Cotton Mills corporation of Kannapolis and the Wiscasset company in Albemarle.

²⁸ Thomas T. Fetters and Peter Swanson, Jr., *Piedmont and Northern, the Great Electric System of the South* (San Marino, California,: Golden West Books, 1974), passim.

²⁹ Kratt, p. 104 shows a facsimile of the transit schedule.

³⁰ William H. Huffman, "Piedmont and Northern Railway Station: Survey and Research Report" (Charlotte: Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1982).

³¹ The first major sections of Thomasboro were laid out in 1914: Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds office: Map Book 332, pp. 16, 140, 161. The Thomas House, a handsome two-story structure from the turn-of-the-century, stands at Marble and Willard streets.

³² For a picture of the park see Kratt, p. 106.

³³ Spencer Turner served briefly as President between Draper and Gossett. See Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds office: records of corporations book 6, p. 449. *Charlotte Observer*, November 14, 1951, noted that Gossett arrived in Charlotte "about 30 years ago."

³⁴ Marjorie Young, ed. *Textile Leaders of the South* (Columbia, S.C.: James R. Young, 1963), pp. 76-77.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 751.

³⁶ Edgar T. Thompson, *Agricultural Mecklenburg and Industrial Charlotte: Social and Economic* (Charlotte: Charlotte Chamber of Commerce, 1926), pp. 139-140.

³⁷ quoted in Young, p. 751.

³⁸ *Charlotte Observer*, November 14, 1951. Gossett bought the former Charles Lambeth House at 923 Granville Road and lived there until his death.

³⁹ *Charlotte Observer*, May 2, 1946.

⁴⁰ *Charlotte Observer*, November 14, 1951.

⁴¹ Ibid. and Young, p. 751.

⁴² *Southern Textile Bulletin*, December 20, 1917, pp. 20-21.

⁴³ *Southern Textile Bulletin*, November 22, 1923, pp. 92-93.

⁴⁴ Thompson, ed., p. 140.

⁴⁵ Edna Hargett, interview with Jim Leloudis in Charlotte, July 1979. Southern Oral History Program files in the Southern Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina Library, UNC-Chapel Hill. Quote is from a typed manuscript.

⁴⁶ Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds Office: records of corporations book 23, p. 239. See also *Charlotte Observer*, May 2, 1946, October 6, 1946.

⁴⁷ Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds Office: death certificate 1482. *Charlotte Observer*, November 14, 1951.

⁴⁸ Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds Office: Deed Book 1308, p. 17; Deed Book 1994, p. 153; Deed Book 2192, p. 535; Deed Book 2436, p. 256; Deed Book 3147, p. 15; Deed Book 3403, p. 481.

SIGNIFICANT SITES

In and Around the Chadwick-Hoskins Survey Area

Within the Survey Boundaries (original mill villages):

109 N. Cloudman Av. - McGee Presbyterian Church (c. 1913)

201 S. Hoskins Av. - Hoskins Mill and Office (1903)

Outside the Survey Boundaries:

1000 Marble Av. - Thomas House (c. 1906)

Off Ramsey St. at Seaboard Railway- Pinoca Shops (c.1911)

McGEE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (circa 1913)

109 N. Cloudman Avenue

The handsome McGee Presbyterian Church is one of a dwindling handful of early frame churches in Charlotte. The congregation organized in 1913 and took its name from John T. Gee, a prominent landowner in the area. Ten years before, McGee had sold 121 acres of farmland to the Hoskins Company for their new textile mill and village. The McGee Presbyterian congregation was likely made up of mill employees and nearby storekeepers, for when it was founded, the area was still far outside the city. The present church was presumably erected soon after the congregation organized. In its massing and details it shows hints of the Victorian era of architecture which was just drawing to a close in the early 1910s. The structure has a cross-shaped plan with a short tower nestled into a front corner. Roofs are gabled with exposed rafters in the narrow eaves and simple bargeboards. Side windows have graceful Gothic arches, while front windows are simple one-over-one-pane double-hung sash. A round arch in the base of the tower reveals the main entrance. Weatherboarded exterior walls complete the picture.

HOSKINS MILL AND OFFICE (1903)

201 S. Hoskins Avenue



Within months of the opening of the Chadwick Mill off Rozelles Ferry Road north of Charlotte, financier E.A. Smith began planning a second large textile manufacturing facility. Smith was a Charlotte resident and head of the mill-machinery sales firm Charlotte Supply, but he was a New England native with strong financial connections to the established capital resources of that region. They helped fund construction of the new Hoskins Mill beginning in April of 1903. The three-story brick building with segmental-arched windows was nearly identical to the earlier Chadwick facility which had been built by Charlotte contractor J.A. Jones, who was then at the start of a career that would see him become one of the United State's largest construction firms. Inside Jones' brick walls, the construction was of heavy wooden timbers and maple planking, utilized for its fire-resisting qualities. Workmen gave the wood and brick interior a coat of glistening white paint designed to reflect all available light and make the workplace as brightly lit as the technology of the day would allow. Today the Hoskins Mill is used only for storage, but it remains in excellent original condition. Most other plants in the South had their windows bricked in with the advent of air conditioning, but the Hoskins retains its original wooden sash. With the Alpha (Orient Building 1901) and Mecklenburg (1903-1904) it is one of only three well-preserved mills in Charlotte, and an important reminder of the era when Mecklenburg was among the South's most important textile-manufacturing counties. Adjacent to the Hoskins Mill, and also in excellent condition, is the one-story office building, constructed of matching red brick with a slate hipped roof.

THOMAS HOUSE (circa 1906)
1000 Marble Street

The Thomas House, located on a side street northwest of Bradford Drive, is the most impressive structure in the Thomasboro neighborhood. In 1892 the land was shown on Butler and Spratt's "Map of Charlotte Township" as part of the farm of J. Thomas. In the 1900s the Chadwick-Hoskins mill village was developed adjacent to the farm, and in 1911 the Piedmont and Northern electric railway connected it with the City of Charlotte. In 1914 J.E. Thomas and P.A. Thomas, presumably sons of the earlier

farmer, began filing plats for suburban subdivision of the land as Thomasboro. The Thomas House is by far the largest structure in this predominantly one-story bungalow neighborhood. It is a two-story Rectilinear style residence. Its basic form is a rectangle with a small gabled side bay and a one-story rear kitchen wing. The high hipped roof is sheathed in slate, and pierced by a hip-roofed front dormer. A spacious one-story porch runs across the front and wraps around one side, supported by square wooden columns. Trim is very plain, with weatherboarded walls, narrow boxed eaves, and corner boards. Windows are double-hung sash, with small upper panes in the second-floor units. Large fixed-pane windows with transoms flank the central front door. Preliminary title research indicates that the Thomas farm may have some interesting historical connections in the years before the present house appeared. An earlier owner was Stephen Mattoon, first president of black Biddle Institute and grandfather of socialist United States Presidential candidate Norman Thomas. Famous American industrial pioneer Cyrus McCormick also appears in the chain of title as guarantor of an 1880s deed of trust.

PINOCA SHOPS (circa 1911) off Ramsey Street at the Seaboard Railway

The 1900s were a heady time in the fast-growing Piedmont textile region. Thousands of spindles were coming into operation every month in an arc of cities and villages extending from Greensboro, North Carolina, through Charlotte and Gastonia, and down to Greenville and Spartanburg, South Carolina. A major industrializing force was millionaire James B. Duke's Southern Power Company (Duke Power today), which was beginning to provide cheap hydroelectricity to the mills.. In 1911 Southern Power embarked on a secondary project, the construction of an electric "interurban" railway. Duke envisioned his Piedmont and Northern Railway connecting all the textile towns, encouraging additional industrial development, and not coincidentally giving Duke a piece of the lucrative freight traffic then controlled by the Southern and Seaboard railroads. Though legal maneuvers by the established rail companies kept Duke from building the all of the line, the Piedmont and Northern did operate trackage in North Carolina and South Carolina for many profitable years. Construction started on the Charlotte to Gastonia leg in April of 1911. This lucrative line linked the region's major city with its most productive textile county. The Charlotte firm of C.C. Hook and W.G. Rogers provided plans for all stations and associated buildings. Today their distinctive red and yellow brick designs may still be seen in Mount Holly, Gastonia, Greer, and the Mecklenburg County community of Thrift. Duke's engineers chose the name Pinoca (a shortening of the company name) for the junction of the Piedmont and Northern and the Seaboard Railway just north of Charlotte. Here they built the shops to service the electric interurban cars. The

structure has two gable-roofed service bays, and its walls of yellow brick above the window sill line, and red below, carry out Hook and Rogers' distinctive motif.