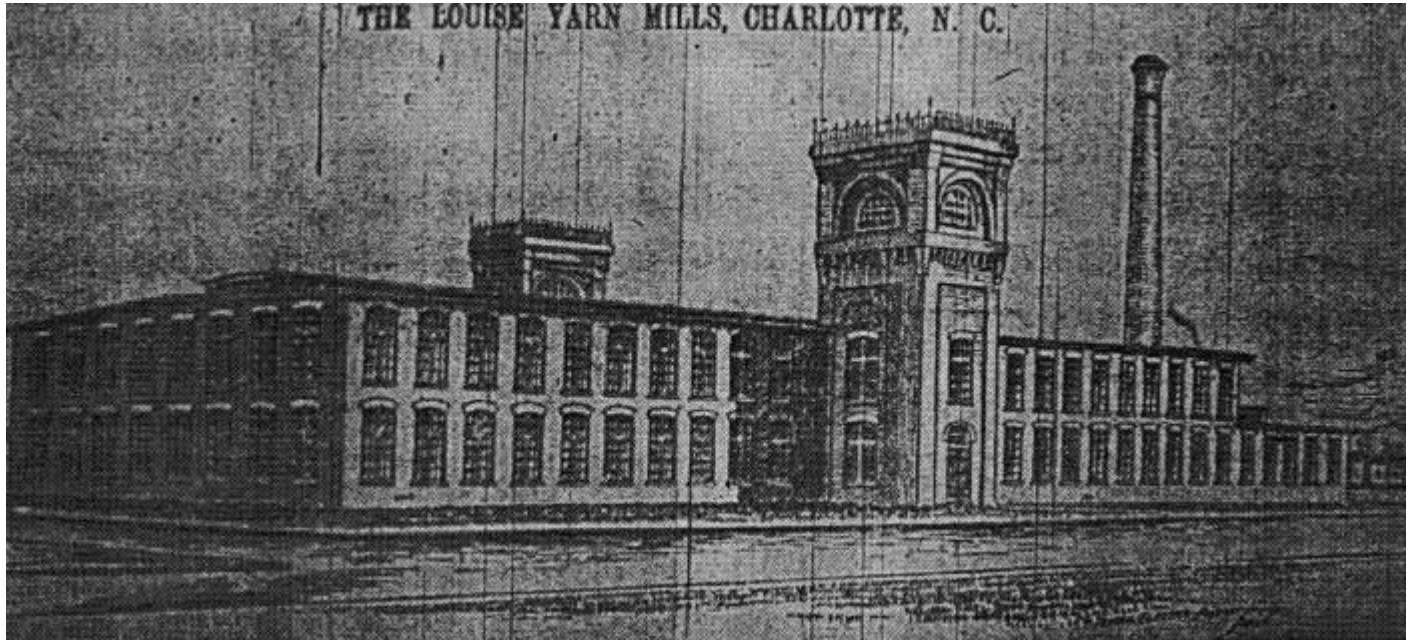
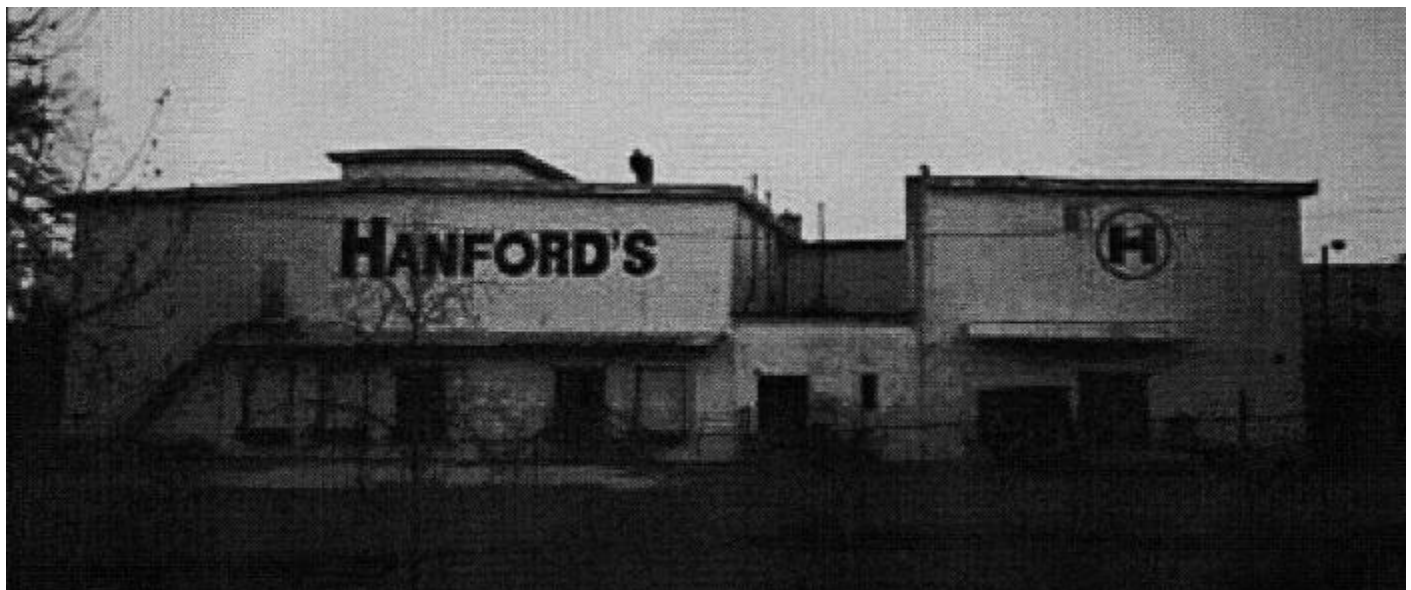


# Survey and Research Report On the Louise Cotton Mill



*Above photo, ca. 1897*



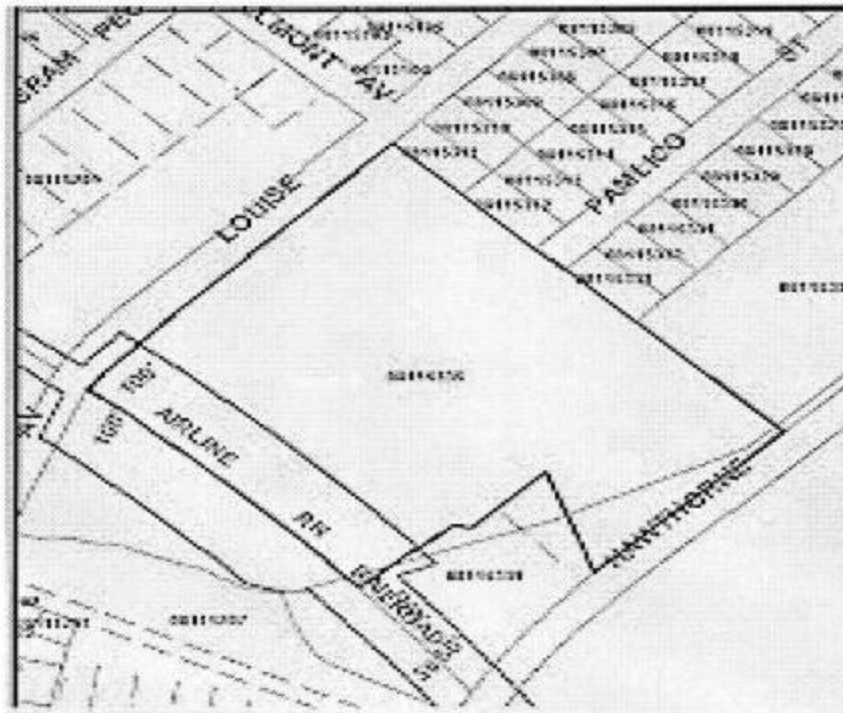
*Above photo, ca. 2001*

# SURVEY AND RESEARCH REPORT

## Louise Cotton Mill



1. **Name and location of the Property:** The Property, containing 7.709 acres known as the Louise Cotton Mill is located at 1101 Hawthorne Lane, Charlotte, North Carolina 28266. The UTM is 17 516611E 3897681N.
2. **Name, address, and telephone number of the current owner of the Property:**  
  
Hawthorne Mills, LLC  
516-B Fenton Place  
Charlotte, NC 28207-1920  
704-334-6833
3. **Representative photographs of the Property:** This report contains both exterior and interior representative photographs of the Property.
4. **A map depicting the location of the Property:** The following map depicts the location of the Property:





6. **A brief historical sketch of the Property:** This report contains a brief historical sketch of the Property prepared by Tracy A. Snyder.
7. **A brief architectural description of the Property:** This report contains a brief architectural description prepared by Tracy A. Snyder.
8. **Documentation of why and in what ways the Property meets the criteria for designation set forth in North Carolina General Statute 160A-400.5:**

a. **Special significance in terms of its history, architecture and/or cultural importance:**

The Commission judges that the Property known as the Louise Cotton Mill possesses special significance in terms of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The Commission bases its judgment on the following considerations:

- (1) The Louise Cotton Mill, erected in 1897, contains portions of one of the most well preserved textile mills in Charlotte.
- (2) The Louise Cotton Mill is a reflection of Charlotte's emergence as the focal point of the New South textile center.
- (3) The Louise Cotton Mill was developed and constructed by Charlotte New South entrepreneur and textile pioneer Captain Hubert S. Chadwick (1856-1899).

b. **Integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling and/or association:**

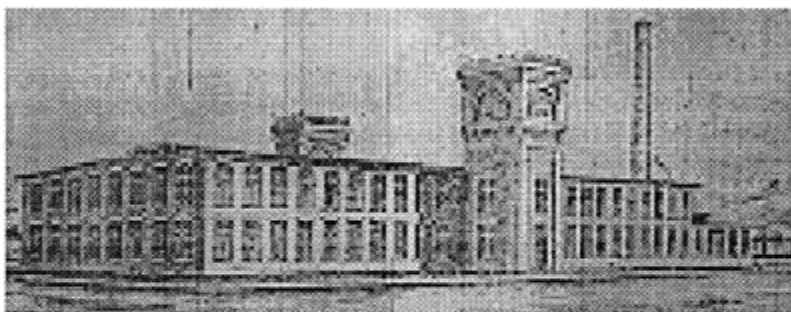
The Commission contends that the architectural description included in this report demonstrates that the Property known as the Louise Cotton Mill meets this criterion.

9. **Ad Valorem Tax Appraisal:** The Commission is aware that "historic landmark" designation allows the owner to apply for an automatic deferral of 50% of the ad valorem taxes on all or any portion of the Property. The current appraised value, for ad valorem tax purposes, of the land upon which the buildings are situated is \$2, 352, 210.

**Date of Preparation of this report:** December 13, 2001

**Prepared by:** Tracy A. Snyder  
 5002 Misty Oaks Drive  
 Apt. 1434  
 Charlotte, NC 28269  
 704-509-2975  
 tsnydermail@aol.com

## Historical Overview



Sketch of Louise Cotton Mill, 1897

### Summary:

The Louise Cotton Mill began operations in 1897. It was the largest textile mill in Charlotte at the time. The Louise Cotton Mill served as a symbol of Charlotte's emergence as the focal point for the New South textile industry. The Mill was built by an established businessman in Charlotte, Captain Hubert S. Chadwick. Chadwick named the mill after his wife, Blanche Louise. Chadwick committed suicide in 1899. In 1908 the Louise Cotton Mill became part of the Chadwick-Hoskins chain of textile mills. The leaders of the organization named their company after Captain Chadwick. The mill included a village of homes around it. The community developed into one of Charlotte's first working class neighborhoods. The Louise Cotton Mill operated as a textile plant until the 1960s. Most recently, it was owned by a wholesale florist company.

## Historical Significance

The Louise Cotton Mill was christened in a high-society celebration on May 31, 1896. During the event, one witnesses called the new textile plant "the finest mill in town".<sup>1</sup> It was an imposing symbol of Charlotte's emerging role as the focal point for the New South textile industry.

Cotton mills first moved into Charlotte in 1881 in a drive to "Bring the Mills to the Cotton".<sup>2</sup> Once the Charlotte Cotton Mills became a success, businessmen rushed to compete. By 1894, Mecklenburg County ranked third in the number of textile spindles in the state.<sup>3</sup> By the turn of the century, Mecklenburg County was home to 16 textile mills with a combined total of more than 94,392 spindles.<sup>4</sup>

The development of Charlotte as a textile giant was boosted by the growth of railroads. The first railroad steamed through Charlotte in 1852.<sup>5</sup> Railroads made Charlotte more accessible for not only the textile industry, but also for a growing merchant class. By 1869, Branson's North Carolina Business

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<sup>1</sup> *Charlotte Observer*, June 1, 1897.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas W. Hanchett, "Charlotte's Textile Heritage: An Introduction". Report available at [www.landmarkscommission.org](http://www.landmarkscommission.org). "Bring the Mills to the Cotton" was a rallying cry of the New South

Directory listed 183 merchants in Mecklenburg County. Textile mills located themselves near railroad lines for easy shipment and distribution. The placement of the Louise Cotton Mill was no exception. It sat along the Seaboard Air Line (now CSX).

Captain Hubert S. Chadwick was already a successful merchant in Charlotte when he planned his new mill. In fact, Chadwick sold good to other cotton textile mill operators from his shop, the Charlotte Machine Company.<sup>6</sup> Chadwick got involved in mill operations, serving as President of the Dover Mill in Pineville in 1892.<sup>7</sup> Then he decided to construct his own mill. Chadwick named the mill after his wife, Blanche Louise.



Sketch of Captain Hubert S. Chadwick, circa 1898

In 1897, the Louise Cotton Mill stood as the largest constructed in Charlotte. It opened with 7,000 spindles and 368 looms.<sup>8</sup> But Chadwick did not live to see the full success of his mill. Months after the Louise Mill opened, Chadwick joined the volunteer militia to fight in the Spanish-American War. The military gave Chadwick the rank of "Captain"<sup>9</sup>. Chadwick served a few months in Jacksonville, Florida, but was dismissed from service for "medical reasons".<sup>10</sup> Chadwick spent some time in a sanitarium, but returned to his wife and his mill in 1899. Shortly after, he went on a business trip to Boston. There, in a hotel room on March 3rd, Chadwick shot himself in the head. In his last will and testament, Chadwick left the Louise Mill and his other assets to his wife.<sup>11</sup>

Despite Chadwick's death, the Louise Mill thrived. In 1900, a large addition was added, bringing the mill to 20,000 spindles and 522 looms.<sup>12</sup> This addition gave the mill a rare design for Charlotte at the time. A Sanborn Fire Insurance map from 1911 illustrates this "U" shape design. Two two-story brick

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#### New South City: Charlotte and its Neighborhoods.

<sup>6</sup> Charlotte City Directories show the Charlotte Machine Company was located at both 202 and 204 South Tryon Street. The Charlotte Machine Company was apparently very prominent. Daily advertisements for the business appeared in the *Charlotte Observer* starting in 1892.

<sup>7</sup> From Chadwick's obituary published in *Charlotte Observer* and *Boston Herald*, March 3, 1899.

<sup>8</sup> *Charlotte Observer*, June 1, 1897.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* The term "Captain" is also seen in a September 23, 1897 article describing a birthday party for Chadwick.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* The articles indicate alcohol may have played a role in Chadwick's "medical reasons". Depression is also a likely source, although very little is written about Chadwick's personal life.

<sup>11</sup> Mecklenburg County Wills, March 10, 1899. Available on microfilm from the North Carolina room at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Library. The assets totaled \$50,000. Chadwick was from Enosburg, Virginia, but is buried in a family plot in Woodlawn Cemetery outside New York City.



buildings were connected at the Louise Avenue entrance, and by an overhead walkway toward the rear of the buildings. The map also shows an additional cotton warehouse, along with a 280,000 water storage tank to protect against fire. The map depicts the relationship of the Seaboard Air Line Railroad to the Louise Mill. A section of the track literally ran to the mill's back door.

As the Louise Mill grew, so did the community surrounding it. When it opened, the mill had between 72-75 cottages available for mill workers.<sup>13</sup> The mill became a centerpiece of the new Belmont neighborhood. This was Charlotte's first blue collar community.<sup>14</sup> The cottages lined the streets of Louise Avenue, Hawthorne Lane, and what is now Pamlico Street. By 1900, more than 450 employees worked at Louise Mill, and many lived in these cottages. Electric streetcars stopped on nearby Pegram Avenue, allowing some workers to commute from other locations.<sup>15</sup>

By 1901, the Louise mill village had 87 homes for its workers.<sup>16</sup> Although other mills had villages, the Louise village seems to be unusual. Many of the workers actually owned their homes privately, as opposed to renting or leasing from the mill.<sup>17</sup> Charlotte City Directories also show the Louise Mill community flourished. Louise Avenue had a pharmacy, cafe, barber shop, and club house all within site of the mill entrance.<sup>18</sup> The mill village had two churches and one school. Many of the mill village homes still exist as private houses.<sup>19</sup>



A surviving house located in the old mill village

Chadwick family ownership of the Louise mill ended in 1908. At that time, the mill became part of the new Chadwick-Hoskins Mills company. Company organizers honored Captain Chadwick in their corporation's name.<sup>20</sup> Until the 1940s, Charlotte City Directories show the Louise Mill was still known by

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, June 1, 1897.

<sup>14</sup> Hanchett, *Sorting Out a New South City*. Hanchett also writes a good deal of information about the community in "The Belmont-Villa Heights-Optimist Park" report for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmark Commission in 1985.. Report available at [www.landmarkscommission.org](http://www.landmarkscommission.org).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* Extensive details about Charlotte's streetcar system are available from Dr. Dan Morrill and his reports online at [www.landmarkscommission.org](http://www.landmarkscommission.org).

<sup>16</sup> Charlotte Observer, August 25, 1901.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* It was common for textile mills to lease homes to workers to reinforce the policy of paternalism. Many workers had lease or rent money deducted from their pay.

<sup>18</sup> Information gleaned through survey of Charlotte City Directories from 1900-1940.

that name. But a Sanborn Fire Insurance map of 1911 also shows the Louise Mill under the ownership name "Textron Southern". City Directories show that ownership stayed until 1955.

The Louise Mill property served as home to two printing company's during the 1960s: Creative Textile Printers and Printmatic. By 1968, the building sat empty. During that time, the entrance on Louise Avenue was closed, and the address for the property changed to Hawthorne Lane.



Exterior of Hanford's facing Hawthorne Lane

In the early 1970s, a Charlotte-area floral supply company bought and occupied the property. Hanford's wholesale company owned the property until 2001.<sup>21</sup> Two of the buildings served as different warehouse space for Eckerd's Drugs, Jack's cookie factory, and the United States Justice Department. Currently, the mill buildings are being cleared of the remaining inventory left from Hanford's.



## Louise Cotton Mill Architectural Description

### Summary:

The Louise Cotton Mill, constructed in 1896-1897, is a vernacular mill building typical of industrial architecture in the New South. The outside of the mill has undergone major changes, but the interior mill has been remarkably well-preserved. The Louise Cotton Mill has several character defining elements. Chamfered brick work lines the corners of rooms and doorways. The original buildings contain two portions of raised roofs with clerestory windows. Original maple flooring lines much of the lower level of the mill, and the post-and-beam design give the buildings an open feeling. The mill is also a fine example of architectural fireproofing.

### Description:

The Louise Cotton Mill is located at 1101 Hawthorne Lane in the Belmont-Villa Heights neighborhood of East Charlotte. The original entrance for the mill faced northwest perpendicular to the Seaboard Air Line Railroad. The railroad expends from the corner of Louise Avenue to Hawthorne Avenue. Hawthorne Avenue is classified as a Class IV minor thoroughfare by the City of Charlotte. Hawthorne Avenue and the Seaboard Air Line Railroad flow into Central Avenue, a main artery in Charlotte. The neighborhood surrounding the Louise Cotton Mill is mixed-use, composed of single-family homes and commercial establishments. The Louise Cotton Mill property is zoned I-2.

The entrance to the Louise Cotton Mill sits approximately 40 feet off Hawthorne Lane. The entrance is partially paved, but primarily gravel. There is no landscaping, only grass in front of the facility. Two 10-12 feet tall chain-link fences surround the property. A train spur, made of metal and wood, runs onto the property. It turns slightly left into the courtyard. The left half, or south section, of the property is flat, while the right side, or north section, slopes gently upward. The mill property is 7.709 acres.

The Louise Cotton Mill consists of four buildings. The buildings are connected together in a U-shaped design toward the west.<sup>1</sup> Two of the buildings are also attached by an overhead walkway to the rear, or east, of the property. Building "A" is a later addition to the mill. Buildings "B" and "C" were constructed in 1896-1897 and 1900 respectively. Building "D" is also a later addition. The mill is of a vernacular style, obviously constructed for commercial use and efficiency.

Set apart from the mill on the extreme northeast corner of the property is a one-story frame building. The building measures 50.3' by 40.4'. The building has a porch on its southern side. Sanborn Fire Insurance maps indicate this building may have served as a cotton warehouse for the Louise Cotton Mill.<sup>2</sup>

Sketches from the *Charlotte Observer* show the Louise Cotton Mill is missing several major elements from its 1897-1900 appearance. A Sanborn Fire Insurance map from 1911 shows a tower on the Louise Avenue, or west side, of the building. That tower is gone. The 1911 map also shows a 280,000 water storage tank close to the Hawthorne Avenue, or northeast, portion of the property. The water tank is also gone. The

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to appendix for map of property for building letters. Refer to appendix for copy of 1911 Sanborn Fire Insurance map.

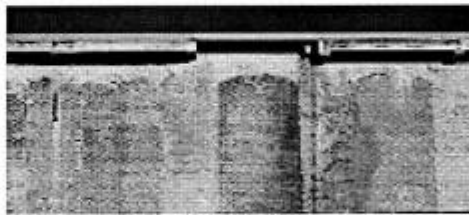
<sup>2</sup> Fire was the greatest fear for mill owners. Warehouses often sat on mill property away from the main buildings. This structure would have sat near the 280,000 gallon water tank on the property.

*Charlotte Observer* reports "much excitement"<sup>3</sup> surrounding the mill's tin roof in 1896. There does not appear to be any of the original roof left.

Building "A" is a single story brick building. A survey report shows it to be roughly 48.5 feet wide and 205 feet deep.<sup>4</sup> The building is made of red brick, painted white and peeling in many spots. The brick is rough to the touch. The brick is laid in a common running bond along the building's rectangular shape. The building is not part of the original structure, but added in the 1960s.<sup>5</sup> It was used as warehouse space. A concrete sidewalk of approximately 90 feet surrounds the building. Building "D" is a two-story, square structure positioned at the front, or east side, of Building "C". It is also a product of expansion between 1963 and 1973. It contains no historical significance.

Building "B" is the original structure built in 1896-1897. Building "C" is an expansion added in 1900. The buildings are constructed the same inside and out. However, building "C" is approximately ten feet wider than Building "B". For the purpose of this report, it can be assumed the architectural description of Building "B" mirrors that of Building "C".

Building "B" is two-stories tall and covered in red brick painted white. A Sanborn Fire Insurance map from 1911 shows the building served as a carding room on the first floor, and a spinning room on the second floor. The building has a former tenant's name, Hanford's, painted in large, black, block letters on the front, or east side, of the building. A large, raised slab of concrete sits in front of the building for deliveries and trucks. Along each side of Building "B" are dozens of bricked-over windows. Sketches show this section of the building probably had ten windows on the top level and ten on the bottom. The window spaces have relieving arches, two bricks wide, above them. The window areas are symmetrically spaced along the building. None of the original arched windows remain, but sketches show the windows were approximately 8/16.



The contrast between light and dark bricks illustrates where windows were located

Inside the building on the lower level, one can see more evidence of bricked-over windows. The windows stretched from four or five feet from the ceiling, to two or three feet above the floor. The paint on the walls is white. The floor is original, a soft, rich shade of maple. The floor has many nicks and indentations. Some patchwork of oak is visible. The interior ceiling is also covered with wood, painted red, gray, and white in different areas. The ceiling is approximately 14 feet high. The building is very open, with post-end-beam design. It has been wired for electricity. Building "B" consists of two large rooms and at least one storage space. The storage space is located in between the rooms on the right, or north, side of the

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<sup>3</sup> *Charlotte Observer*, August 25, 1901. The current property owner believes a major roof overall was conducted sometime during the 1960s.

<sup>4</sup> Based upon survey conducted by ALTA/ACSM Land Title Survey, Andrew G. Zoutewelle, Surveyor. Dated November 2, 2001.

<sup>5</sup> Tax Real Estate information from Mecklenburg County shows warehouse and industrial buildings added to the property in 1963 and 1973.

building. The storage room has a door at the end of it. It is not yet known what is located behind the door.<sup>6</sup> The interior corners and doorways of the building are chamfered. The doorways maintain a rectangular structure, with wood on the top of the door frame.



Interior door illustrates chamfered bricks

The main room on the lower level, on the east side, has a crawl space underneath the floor. A wooden panel reveals several concrete steps leading under the building.

The right, or north, side of the lower level contains many large, roll-up doors for loading and unloading of material. The doors are metal, with no windows. They open directly to the mill's courtyard. These doors are a major element of the mill's fire protection. They are designed to allow rooms to be closed off to protect the textiles in case of fire.<sup>7</sup>

A portion of the lower level in the center has a slightly elevated and pitched roof. Fire insurance maps indicate the area as "raised".<sup>8</sup> The raised portion of the ceiling is surrounded by clerestory windows. The windows appear to be original, 4/4. The window pains are covered in a greenish-gray paint. This section of the building is clearly one of its character-defining elements.<sup>9</sup>

An original stairwell leads to the upper level of the building. The stairway has wooden platforms and risers. The balustrade is of a simple design.<sup>10</sup> The second-story is a slightly smaller facsimile of the lower level.

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<sup>6</sup> The current owner of the property is clearing debris to reach the door.

<sup>7</sup> More details about how mills were designed to prevent fire destruction can be found in several survey and research reports on textile mills by Dr. Dan Morrill. These are available at [www.landmarkscommission.org](http://www.landmarkscommission.org).

<sup>8</sup> Reference to a raised roof is seen in the Sanborn Fire Insurance maps of 1911 and 1956.

<sup>9</sup> See appendix for photograph

<sup>10</sup> This staircase, like all others in the mill, is located in the corner of the room. This is another example of fireproofing. It also adds to the openness of the lower and upper levels. Large machinery could be placed anywhere in the room without a staircase obstructing it.

However, instead of wood, some flooring is concrete. Some window openings have been modified into small squares for the insertion of fans near the building's ceiling. There bathrooms in the center of the second level.

Sliding metal doors with handles that move in a clockwise direction separate rooms on the second-story. The doors appear to be original to the building, and they are another example of fire protection. One the extreme north side of Building "B", one of the metal doors leads to the walkway which connects to Building "C".



Note the overhead walkway that connects the Buildings "B" and "C"

On the ground level, a large courtyard extends Buildings "B" and "C". The courtyard is gravel and approximately 90 feet wide. The railroad spur leads into the middle of the courtyard. The courtyard provides easy loading and unloading of supplies. There courtyard has no landscaping. Sanborn Fire Insurance maps show the courtyard has always served as an industrial area.



This photo was taken inside the courtyard. Note how buildings surround it.

On the left, or south side, of the courtyard, Building "B" has two small windows on the second level. The 6/6 windows appear to be original.<sup>11</sup>

Directly under the walkway in the courtyard on Building "C" is a doorway with a thin, metal railing. It sits just right of the railroad track. The railing leads into a two-room structure. A room to the left appears to be a changing or break room. Metal pegs still hang on wood inside. The larger room is called the "Power Room" on a 1911 Sanborn Fire Insurance map.



This is the entrance to the "Power Room"

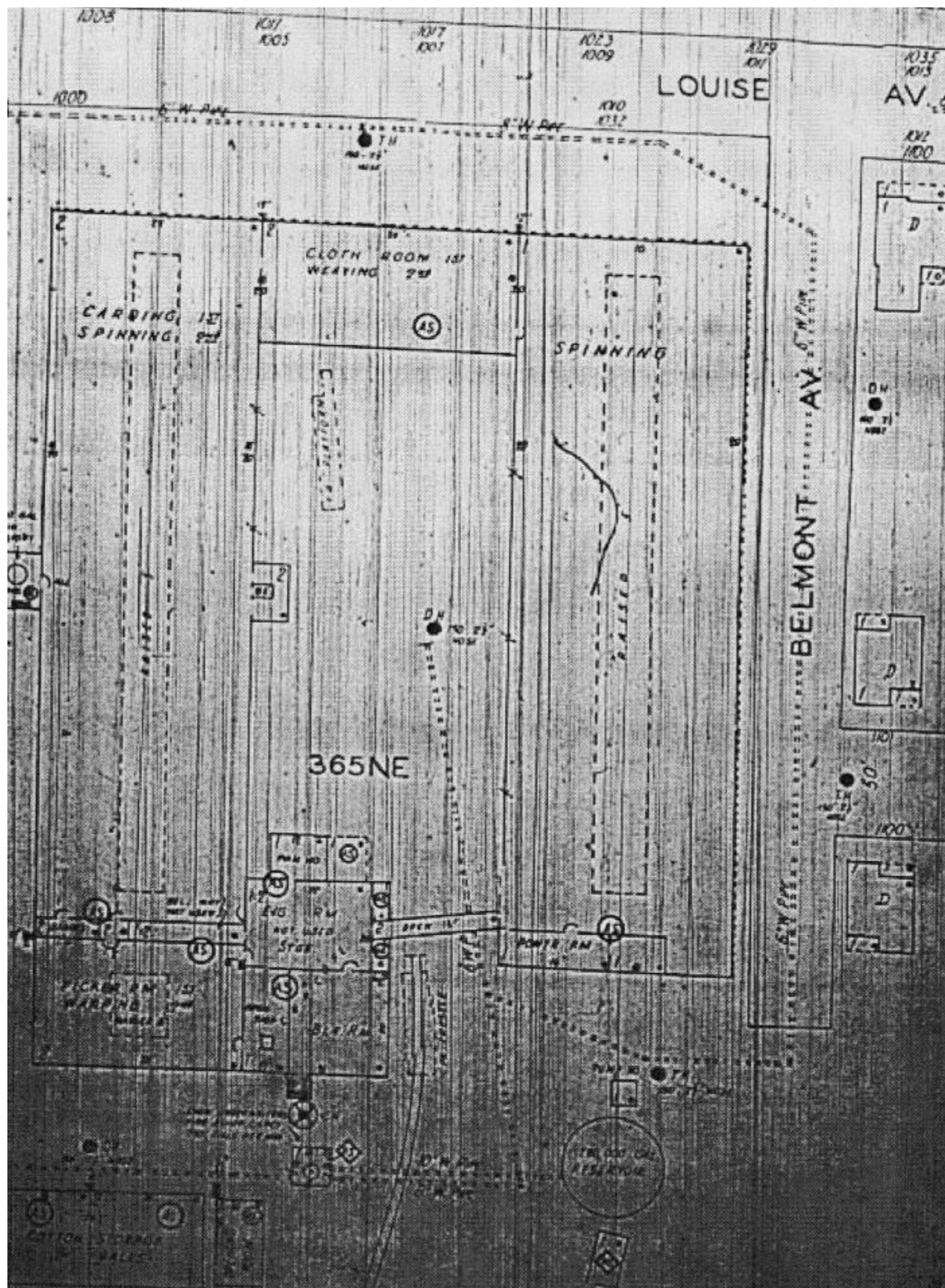
The rear, or west, portions of Buildings "B" and "C" come together. This spot of union was the original Louise Avenue address of the mill. There are several levy-pulled doors that open to Louise Avenue. There is also a hinged door that opens to Louise Avenue. The door has concrete and brick steps leading away from it. The rear, or west, side of the property sits close to Louise Avenue. Like the front of the property, a small patch of grass is the only landscaping.

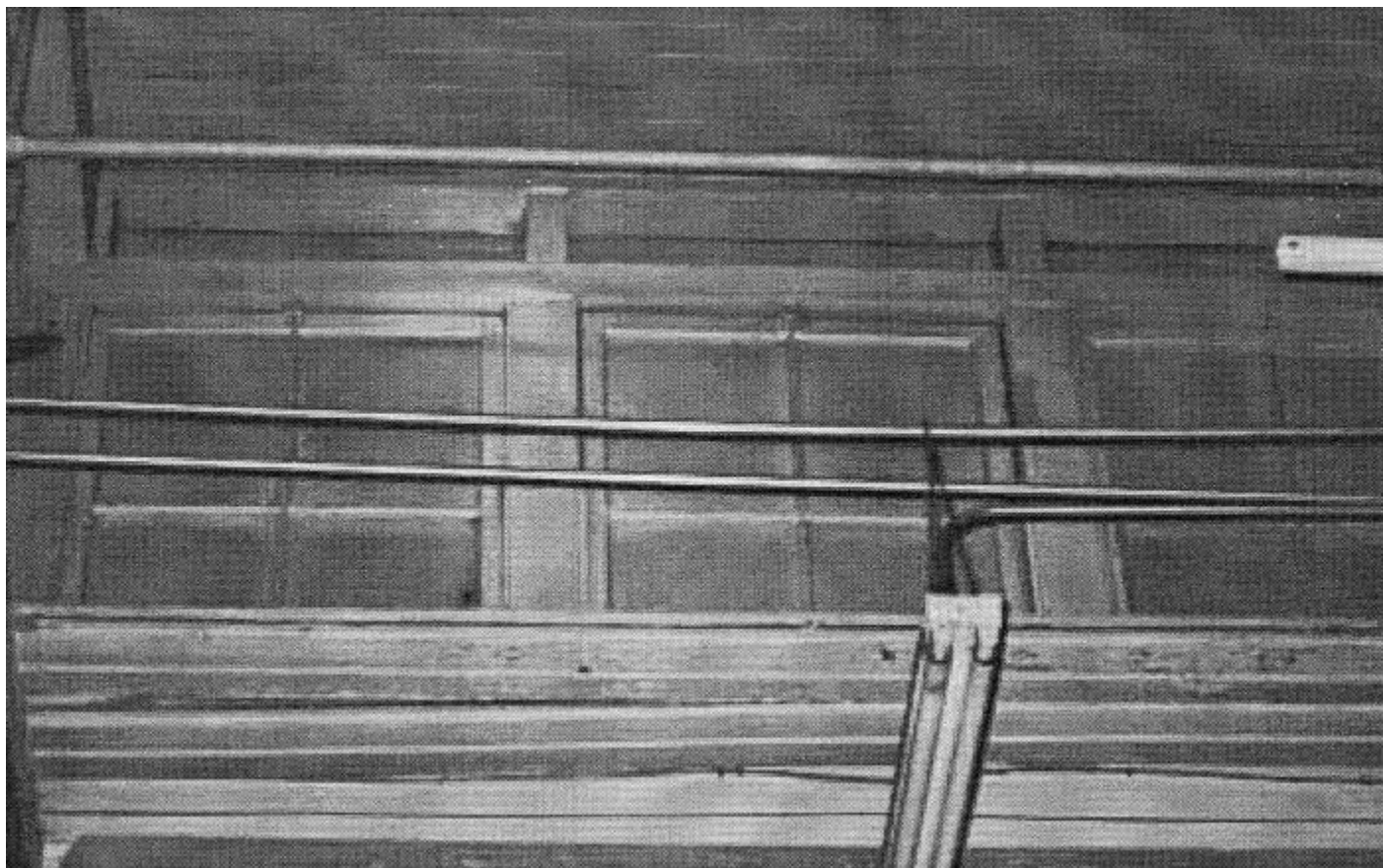


View from Louise Avenue. This used to be the front of the mill.

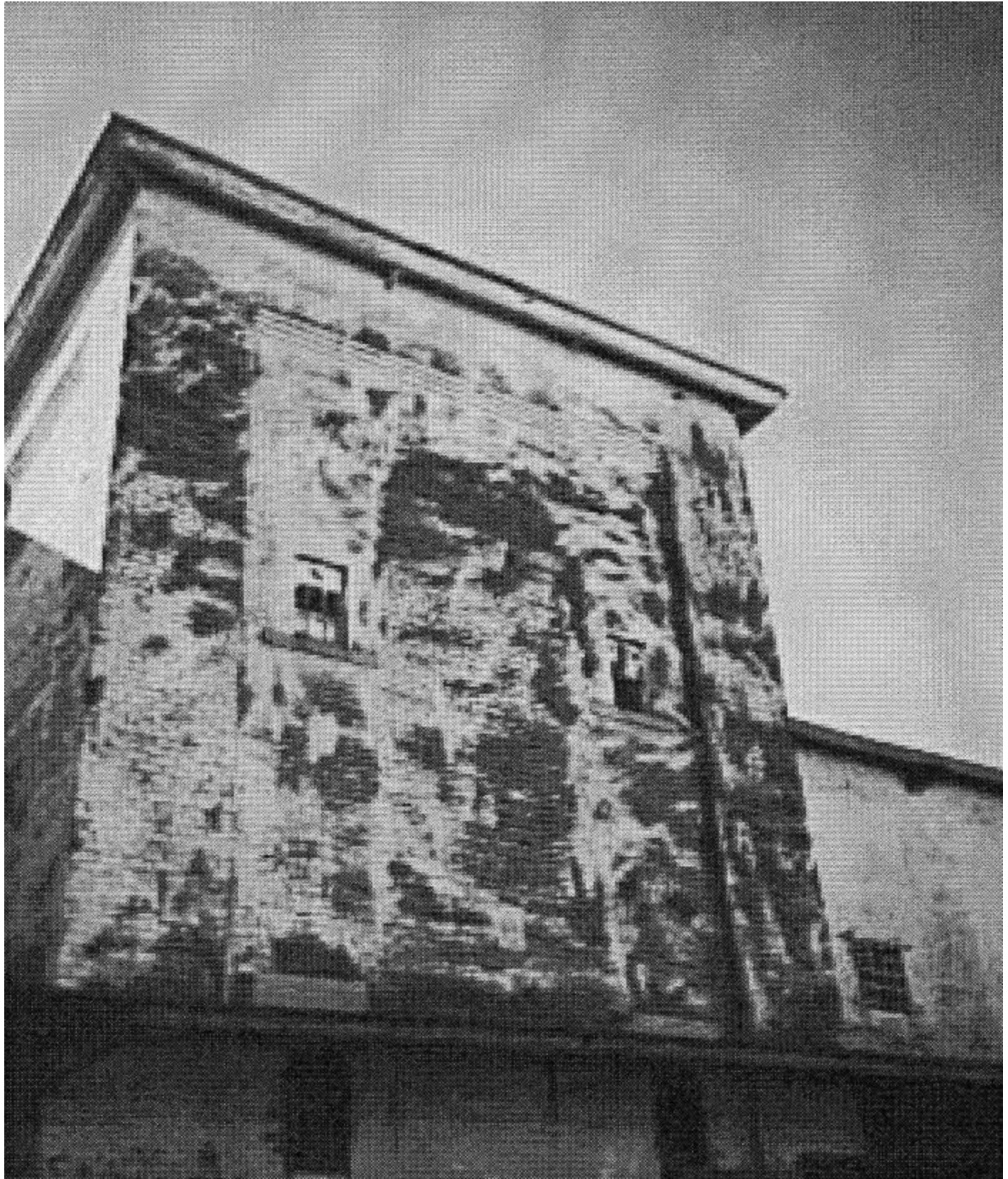






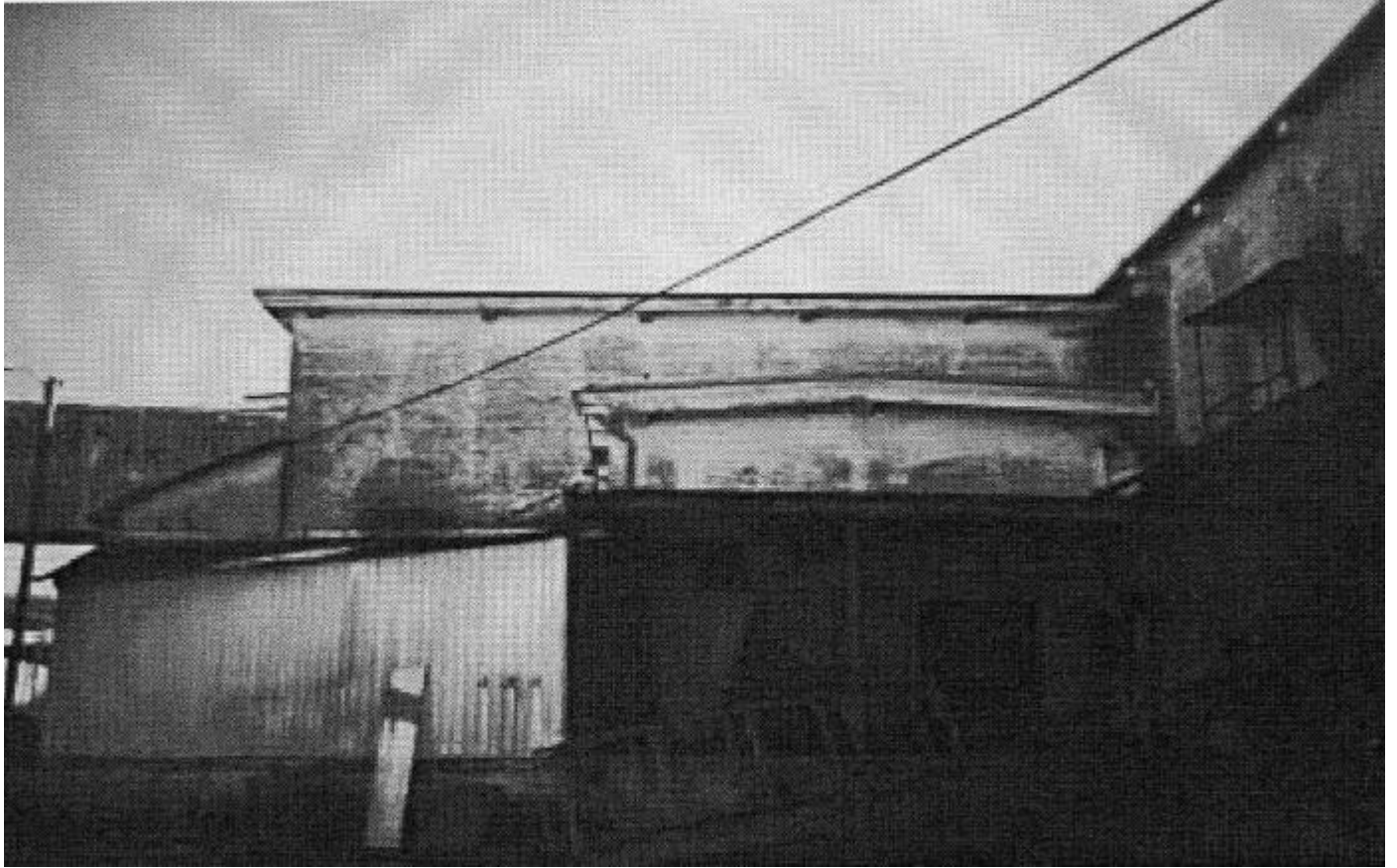


*Above photo: Clerestory Windows inside Building "B"*



*Above Photo: Interior courtyard Building "B"*





*Above photo: Courtyard looking east toward Hawthorne Lane*



*Above photo: View into crawlspace inside and under Building "B"*

Chadwick's Charlotte Machine Company Advertisement  
 Appeared weekly in the Charlotte Observer on page 3



Advertisement lists Chadwick as "President" of the company