



## HOMESTEAD MILL COMPLEX



[Click here for newspaper articles and additional photos of the Mill Complex](#)

*This report was written on May 1, 1989*

**1. Name and location of the property:** The property known as the Homestead Mill Complex is located at 6216 Rozzelles Ferry Road, Charlotte, NC.

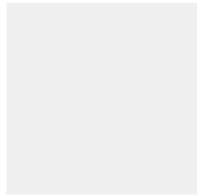
**2. Name, address and telephone number of the present owner of the property:**

The owner of the property is:  
Chatham Manufacturing Co.  
P. O. Box 620  
Elkin, NC 28621

Telephone: (919) 835-2211

**3. Representative photographs of the property:** This report contains representative photographs of the property.

**4. A map depicting the location of the property:** This report contains a map which depicts the location of the property.



**5. Current Deed Book Reference to the property:** There is no record in the Mecklenburg County Tax Office of the listing of the most recent deed to this property. The Tax Parcel Number of the property is: 035-054-02

**6. A brief historical sketch of the property:** This report contains a brief historical sketch of the property prepared by Paula M. Stathakis.

**7. A brief architectural description of the property:** This report contains a brief architectural description of the property prepared by Nora Mae Black.

**8. Documentation of why and in what ways the property meets the criteria for designation set forth in N.C.G.S. 160A-399.4:**

**a. Special significance in terms of its history, architecture, and/or cultural importance:** The Commission judges that the property known as the Homestead Mill Complex does possess special significance in terms of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The Commission bases its judgment on the following considerations: 1) the Homestead Mill Complex, which opened in 1920 and operated until 1986, is a well-preserved remnant of the textile heritage of Mecklenburg County; 2) landscaping and site planning for the

Homestead Mill Complex was performed by Earle Sumner Draper, a landscape architect of regional importance; 3) the Homestead Mill Complex, unlike the other mill communities in Mecklenburg County, was designed to be a self-contained unit, with its own baseball field, community building, scout building, boarding house, and even tennis courts; and 4) the overall environment of the Homestead Complex is a compelling example of paternalistic management on the part of John Lindsay Morehead and other members of the Morehead family.

**b. Integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling, and/or association:** The Commission contends that the architectural description by Nora Mae Black which is included in this report demonstrates that the surviving remnants of the Homestead Mill Complex meet this criterion.

**9. Ad Valorem Tax Appraisal:** The Commission is aware that designation would allow the owner to apply for an automatic deferral of 50% of the Ad Valorem taxes on all or any portion of the property which becomes "historic property." The current appraised value of the improvements is \$980,600. The current appraised value of the 65.161 acres of land is \$692,270. The total appraised value of the property is \$1,672,870. The property is zoned 12.

**Date of Preparation of this Report:** May 1, 1989

**Prepared by:** Dr. Dan L. Morrill  
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1225 S. Caldwell St. Box D  
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### ***Historical Overview***

*Paula M. Stathakis*

The Homestead Mill was the Charlotte plant of the Leaksville Woolen Mills owned by the Morehead family.<sup>1</sup>The Homestead plant was personally supervised by John Lindsay Morehead. One of Morehead's workbooks containing the mill construction records indicates that plans for Leaksville Woolen Mills #2 were laid August 1, 1919 in Motley, NC in the township of Paw Creek.<sup>2</sup> The mill made blankets, and carried out the process from start to finish, processing raw wool, weaving, binding and packing the blankets for shipment. Homestead opened for operations in 1920, and it got its popular name (Homestead) from the nearby P & N

Railroad stop which the railroad had named "Homestead" for no other reason than the name "sounded good."<sup>3</sup> The deserted mill and village stand on Rozzelle's Ferry Road. An immediately striking aspect of the village is the care that was taken in the planning and the landscaping of the complex, which was designed by landscape architect Earle Sumner Draper. The community was designed to have a village or self-contained atmosphere, which must have made it unique among the other mill complexes of Charlotte. The village is set off the road to the east of the factory, and at one time, 56 three and five room houses stood amid tall oaks and winding roads. Other facilities included a community store, a community building, a boarding house, a scout cabin, a baseball field, and tennis courts.

The community store was not a company store. The building and the property were owned by the Leaksville Company, but the businesses within were owned and operated entirely by independent grocers who ran a cash business; company scrip did not exist. Several different owners occupied the building: "Cookie" Todd, Oliver Lawing and Elbert Bowman (Lawing was the father of state senator Craig Lawing), and Moore and Son. The community building was built by J.L. Morehead in memory of his cousin John Motley Morehead. The [neo-classical](#) building, which seems out of place in a mill village, was completed in 1925. It served as the site for Saturday night dances and Sunday church services and weddings. The scout cabin, built in 1932, was the site of boy and girl scout meetings, as well as the place where the children of mill employees went to pick up their Christmas gifts from the company. The scout cabin also had two showers in the basement that were available for common use on certain days of the week for those who did not have showers or tubs in their homes. The baseball field was one of the most popular areas of the village. The Homestead team was known throughout the area as a first-rate ball club, and four Homestead boys played major league ball. The tennis courts were built about the same time the scout cabin was completed, and in later years, the children of Homestead received lessons from a tennis pro from Myers Park Country Club.<sup>4</sup>

Many of the first families at Homestead were drawn from the surrounding countryside. Many came from Mt. Holly, in neighboring Gaston County. Another significant portion of the first workers at the plant were brought from the Leaksville Spray Plant in Eden, N.C. Several of the Spray workers were expelled from the village after they organized a strike in 1929.<sup>5</sup> The strike was caused (with the help of an "outside agitator") by a change the company wished to make in the plant shifts. The plant operated two shifts, closing at 12:00 p.m. and at 6:00 p.m. for an hour for meal breaks. The company wanted to change to a three shift operation with no breaks, but to pay the same wages for eight hours of work instead of eleven and a half hours. No one remembers how long the mill was shut

down during the strike. The strike was detrimental to the company, especially because it immediately proceeded the crash of the Stock Market and the Great Depression. During the strike, the mill did not run, but the company paid those who were not involved fifty per cent of their wages, and they were not charged rent or for coal. <sup>6</sup>

This was the first and the last successful strike at Homestead. Labor organizers visited the site regularly, but none of them were able to organize the workers. One incident the former residents related was when a labor organizer came to the mill to talk to the workers, with Morehead's permission, about the union. The presentation took place late in the afternoon, so he was able to address the first and second shifts. After the labor representative finished, Morehead informed all the workers who were present that for listening, they would receive one hours wages. The first shift then went home, the second shift proceeded to work, and the labor organizer was left alone.<sup>7</sup> The Homestead employees remained steadfastly loyal to Morehead and to the company. During times that other textile mills in the region were rocked by strife between workers and management, the Homestead village remained relatively quiet. The best explanation for this is that the community was small with a stable population who responded well to the paternalistic environment created by J.L. Morehead. All of the former residents and employees who were interviewed describe Morehead as a kind and quiet man who took a keen interest in the welfare of his employees. The foundation of the village population was set by the early 1930's. The men and women who secured employment with the mill were glad to get it during the tough times of the 1930s.

At Homestead, they could live in close proximity to their work. During the periods that the mill had to suspend operations, Morehead allowed his employees to live in their homes rent free. He also provided food when they could not afford to buy their own.<sup>8</sup> One Christmas during the Depression, Morehead made arrangements with Martin's Department store (in downtown Charlotte, later absorbed by Belk's) to stay open after hours for a group of the mill women to purchase a gift from the company for each child of the mill employees. The women were given money by Morehead to purchase these gifts. This act of generosity is remembered by every former member of the village. Each child also received a bag of nuts, fruits, and candies (weighing several pounds) from the company every Christmas. The paternalistic environment created by Morehead was appreciated by the workers who remained with the company. Unfortunately, the sentiments of those who did not stay at Homestead are not known. Significantly, the majority of those who did choose to stay established roots in the early 1930s and did not start to move away from the village until after World War II; and it was usually their children who left the community. Those who were questioned were pleased with their

jobs and with their living and working conditions. The mill houses were an important draw to the village. Morehead provided three room and five room houses and charged 20 cents per room per week rent. This charge was fixed from 1936-1986.

Unlike houses in other mill villages, (D.A. Tompkins's [Atherton Mill houses](#) are a notable example), the Homestead Mill houses had electricity and indoor plumbing; important amenities in turn of the century housing that was a special attraction for incoming employees from the surrounding rural areas. The three room houses had provisions for bathing and toilet facilities on the back porch; the five room houses had the bathroom incorporated inside the house. None of the houses had tubs or showers included; the residents had to provide these on their own initiative. The reason for this is that the company had encountered difficulties with the employees at the Spray plant over this matter. At Spray, the employees stored coal in their tubs so they would not have to brave the cold weather to bring it indoors.<sup>9</sup> To encourage better housekeeping, the company elected not to include tubs as standard household equipment. The company also provided paint for the inhabitants so they could repaint their homes every year if they wished.<sup>10</sup> Another important amenity in the mill village was the Morehead Memorial Community Building, built in 1925. J.L. Morehead intended for this building to be used as a gathering-place for dances, socials, and plays. He stipulated that it was not to be used as a sanctuary for religious services. Nonetheless, the inhabitants of the village circulated a petition and decided by majority to establish a Methodist congregation in the village.

This organized church was predated by a village Sunday School that met in individual homes before the community building was completed. A Mrs. Hudson, who moved to Homestead in 1923, exchanged her five room house for a three room house so the first Sunday School at Homestead would have room to meet. The Sunday School met in the community building once it was completed and Mrs. Hudson was able to return to her five room house. The Sunday School was then conducted by Mr. Dave Johnson until 1932, when the church was formally installed. The first minister at the Homestead United Methodist Church was the Reverend Carl H. King. Until a parsonage was furnished, the Rev. King stayed and took his meals at the mill boarding house. Rev. King was able to eat free of charge, all others were charged twenty five cents per meal. The women of the congregation were responsible for furnishing the parsonage, which was no small feat during the depression. These women met regularly to quilt at the boarding house run by Mrs. Abernathy, and this social event is fondly remembered by many of the older mill women. The furniture presented a more difficult problem, since no one could afford to buy furniture for the minister's home. The enterprising ladies of the church diligently sought donations from all of the furniture merchants of

Charlotte until they succeeded in their quests, Morehead did not voice any objections to the church once it was established, and it is important to note that he was never involved in church affairs or in the selection of ministers. He did, however, allow the company to pay all the church's utility bills.<sup>14</sup>

The Homestead United Methodist Church held services in the community building until a new sanctuary was completed off site in 1959. The present location of the church is on Old Mt. Holly Road, essentially across the street from the mill. In addition to church activities, the community building was the site of Saturday night dances and plays. One's entire weekend might be spent in the community building; dancing on Saturday and church on Sunday. The dances were described as clean, wholesome recreation, as one parishioner stated: "I'm not ashamed I went to dances and went to teach Sunday School...."<sup>15</sup> Although the mill and village were located several miles outside of Charlotte, the inhabitants never felt isolated, nor were they at a loss for amusement. They were connected to Charlotte with the nearby P & N Railroad stop, and the trolley ran out of town as far as the Chadwick-Hoskins Mill, just a few miles away from Homestead. The cost of a trolley ride into town from the Chadwick-Hoskins stop was seven cents.<sup>16</sup> The people of Homestead also had plenty of entertainment at home. The Homestead baseball team, The Blankets, was a popular and much beloved recreation. The team was open to young men, and it was organized in three different leagues. In chronological order, these leagues were the Saturday Evening League, The Sunday School League (the players had to attend Sunday School three times a month to be eligible to play), and the Twilight League (for those who got off work at 5:00 p.m. and could play while it was still light.<sup>17</sup> The first team was organized by Luke Edwards, who joked that he quit playing baseball when his hitting average fell below 750. Other notable people who served as coaches and managers were Henry Lakey, Lee Grice, and Ralph Cline. The Blankets are probably most famous for the four men who grew up in the village and played major league baseball. They were: Kenneth Wood, who played for the St. Louis Browns, White "Pickle" Lockman, of the New York Giants, and Pete Whisnant and Tommy Helms of the Cincinnati Reds.<sup>18</sup> A lesser known story in the baseball history of the mill is that of John Sadler, a black employee who was given a leave of absence every summer to play baseball. He was a pitcher for the Charlotte Black Hornets and for the Atlanta Black Crackers. After playing three summers for the Atlanta Black Crackers, Sadler was scouted by the major leagues, and was selected to play professional ball. Tragically, a back injury incurred at the Homestead Mill prevented him from joining Jackie Robinson and George Gibson as they broke the race barrier in professional baseball.<sup>19</sup>

The baseball field was a wonderful gathering place not only for the athletes, but also for the young girls of the village, who had no interest in baseball, but a strong interest in boys.<sup>20</sup> The Methodist Young People's Association made ice cream to sell at the ball games to earn money to take summer excursions to Lake Junaluska. Baseball provided a healthy outlet for the young men of the village for summer exercise, as well as activity during periods of suspended mill operations. The children of the village had access to a number of activities and recreations. After the scout cabin was built in 1932, Boy and Girl Scout troops were formed. Church sponsored activities were also available for young and teen-aged children. One former inhabitant remembers Saturday afternoon excursions supervised by her Sunday School teacher to parks in Gaston County. The group would travel by train, have a picnic, and return to Homestead Saturday evening.<sup>21</sup> In the 1950's-1980's the company would hire a teacher in the summer months to run a camp.<sup>22</sup> Social activities were provided for every one in the village except for adult women. Since a formal organization was not created for them, they instituted their own in the form of the Missionary Society, which was organized in 1932. The women who were charter members of this group were vague about the purpose of their organization. The most memorable moment any of them can recall was that once, as they were preparing to serve coffee after church (in the community building), they blew out a fuse when they plugged in their coffeepot, and Luke Edwards had to save the day. The other memory that is stuck in everyone's mind is that one of their members was such a heroic coffee drinker that she was served in a soup bowl rather than a coffee cup, because it was too much trouble to keep her cup full. The women also staged plays, although they never specified which ones. They also presented a "manless wedding" for the amusement of the congregation. This spectacle occurred sometime in 1948-1949, during the tenure of the Rev. J.O. Erwin. This mock wedding was staged in the community building using only women, with a ten cent admission charge. The results were reported to have been hilarious, and the packed house roared with laughter at the women dressed in men's formal attire, carrying corsages and bouquets of onions and carrots. It is not clear exactly where the proceeds from this event went, however, it is certain that the money was funneled back into the church.<sup>23</sup>

The success of the mill and the character of the mill village changed after World War II. The children of mill employees did not usually work in the mill; they found better-paying jobs outside of the textile industry. As the original population of the village aged, many retired and established households outside of the village. Many of the former employees and village inhabitants now live on the Coulwood area. As synthetic fibers came into increased use, the small mill, with its outdated equipment found it difficult to keep pace with larger, modernized competitors. As the village population decreased, the management made the difficult decision



to remove vacant houses from the village. By January 1, 1976 the boarding house and all three room houses and two of the five room houses had been demolished. The Leaksville Mill #2 ceased operations in 1986. The small mill could not rely on dependable help. A serious problem at the mill in the 1970's and 1980's was the sporadic attendance of its employees. The Homestead community was perhaps a unique environment. The former inhabitants wistfully look back on their experiences, and sometimes paint a rosy picture, but it was probably a better place to live and work than most mill communities of its day in Mecklenburg County. The employees had to work hard, and in return they received spacious and modern housing, unheard of recreational facilities, a practical boss with a very big heart in the person of J.L. Morehead, and a strong sense of community.

The Homestead plant also employed black people well before World War II, and, although they did not work in all areas of the mill, nor did they get the best jobs, they frequently worked side by side with white workers.<sup>25</sup> This was not common in the textile industry until the 1970's. The Homestead Mill community stands as a deserted reminder of the industry that brought economic development and prosperity to Mecklenburg County and Charlotte. A few of the original 56 mill houses are still standing; the community store, the scout cabin, the factory, and the striking Morehead Memorial Community Building also still remain. It represents an unusual opportunity to look at the past, and a more appropriate site could not exist to understand how mill and community came together. There is great local interest in the preservation of the community building as a playhouse. If the site were to be preserved intact as a museum or park, enough of the original employees still live in the area to assist in the reconstruction of the day to day life of the village.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The Leaksville Woolen Mills consisted of three plants. The Eden (Spray) Plant which opened c. 1837-39 and closed in 1970; it employed 130-140. The Charlotte (Homestead) Plant opened in 1920 and closed in 1986; it employed 350-375. The Mt. Holly Plant opened in 1933, closed in 1986 and employed 25-35 people. This information is taken from an unpublished essay written by former executive president Mr. James P. Wilson.

<sup>2</sup> John Lindsay Morehead, Unpublished Notebook, property of Mr. James P. Wilson.

<sup>3</sup> Interview, Houston and Blannie Cline, 2-10-89

<sup>4</sup> Unpublished essay by Mr. James P. Wilson, former executive president, February 1989; Interviews: James P. Wilson, 2-24-89; Virginia Oates, 2-11-89; Blannie and Houston Cline, 2-10-89.

<sup>5</sup> Interview, Blannie and Houston Cline, 2-10-89; Unpublished essay, James P. Wilson, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Unpublished essay, James P. Wilson; Group Interview, 12-29-88.

<sup>7</sup> Group interview, 12-29-88. Other interesting stories abound; according to Virginia Oates, 2-11-89, labor organizers gathered across the street from the community store and encouraged all who wished to discuss organizing a union at Homestead to cross the street. The only thing that crossed the street was a cat.

<sup>8</sup> Former residents remember that this food was provided in a manner that was not embarrassing to the recipients. Usually, people woke up to find sacks of corn and other vegetables on their front porch. The village also had gardens and the company provided seeds. Group interview, 12-29-88; Blannie and Houston Cline, 2-10-89.

<sup>9</sup> Interview, Blannie and Houston Cline, 2-10-89. According to Mrs. Cline, people who kept coal in their tubs were a fine example of "mill trash".

<sup>10</sup> Group interview, 12-29-88; Interview, James P. Wilson, 2-24-89.

<sup>11</sup> Homestead Church and Community History, recorded July 28, 1977.

<sup>12</sup> James P. Wilson, unpublished essay, p. 5.

<sup>13</sup> Homestead Church and Community History.

<sup>14</sup> Group interview, 12-29-88.

<sup>15</sup> Homestead Church and Community History.

<sup>16</sup> Interview, Blannie and Houston Cline, 2-10-89.

<sup>17</sup> Homestead Church and Community History.

<sup>18</sup> James P. Wilson, unpublished essay.

<sup>19</sup> James P. Wilson, unpublished essay.

<sup>20</sup> Interview, Blannie and Houston Cline, 2-10-89.

<sup>21</sup> Interview, Virginia Oates, 2-11-89.

<sup>22</sup> Interview, Blannie and Houston Cline, 2-10-89.

<sup>23</sup> Homestead Church and Community History.

<sup>24</sup> Interview, James P. Wilson, 2-24-89.

<sup>25</sup> According to the people interviewed, black people worked at first in outdoor maintenance, in the dye house, in the unpacking room, and in the binding and packing room. The Clines have shared a photograph as evidence of this fact. After the War, as the original mill population declined, black people were used in nearly all phases of production. As yet, the pay scales for white, non-white, and female workers are not available.

### *Architectural Description*

*Nora M. Black*

Homestead Mill is located on the north side of Rozzelles Ferry Road near its intersection with Toddville Road in northwestern Charlotte. (On the City of Charlotte Engineering Department Topographic Map #147), the road forming the southern boundary of the Homestead Mill property is designated as Mount Holly Road, State Highway 27, rather than the older name of Rozzelles Ferry Road. This is to clarify the location since the Tax Office lists the address as 6216 Rozzelles Ferry Road. The property was developed by the Leaksville Woolen Mills as complete village with the woolen mills, office, worker housing, a community center (which became a church), a scout cabin, and a baseball field. The 1987 Real Property Appraisal Record gives the size of the property as 58.14 acres. The headings used refer to the diagram of the building complex obtained from the Southern Real Estate broker, Jim Plyler. It was prepared by Factory Insurance Association on May 14, 1969, for the Leaksville Woolen Mills. Worker housing, the church, the scout cabin, the baseball field, the superintendent's dwelling, the office, and other auxiliary services are referenced on the enlargement of the City of Charlotte Engineering Department Topographic Map (#147).

#### **The Main Mill**

Construction of the Main Mill was completed in 1920. The exterior and interior walls are constructed of brick laid in **common** and **running bond**. The structural frame consists of masonry walls with interior steel columns.

The one-story portion of the building has a floor of hardwood planks laid on tar and concrete although a few areas have parquet flooring. The roof has a low gable framed with steel trusses, it is covered with composition roll roofing. The estimated square footage is 74,950 feet (1987 Real Property Appraisal). The interior of the Main Mill receives light from large, thirty pane industrial windows on the north facade. Additional light is provided by a monitor which ran east/west over the weaving room and was extended over the 1940 addition. The ceiling is of planks supported on steel beams. Fluorescent light fixtures hang from the ceiling. Although the machinery has been removed from the building, the wiring still hangs from the ceiling. Pipes for the sprinkler system and heating ducts mingle with the confusion of electrical wiring that crisscross the huge open room. The south wall is of painted masonry pierced by two arched openings leading to the restrooms. A wood and glass wall at the west end separates the Main Mill from the 1937 addition. Another wood and glass wall separates two sections of the Main Mill. As the additions were added, various activities were relocated from the floor of the Main Mill. Before the Mill ceased operations in 1986, the Main Mill was used as a weaving room with the west end devoted to jacquard weaving. The extreme west end of the Main Mill, separated from the main floor by the wood and glass wall, was used for packaging and inspecting. The Main Mill is surrounded on three sides by additions. The north facade is the only one completely visible. The boiler house, the machine shop, the picker house and part of the dye house appear to be part of the original construction visible on the south facade. Since the railroad siding ran along the south facade of the building, there are several single and double doors with three-course brick segmental arches that give loading access to the railroad platforms on that side. In late 1988, the rail siding was removed.

### **The Boiler House and Machine Shop**

The Boiler House and the Machine Shop are one-story masonry portions of the structure located in the approximate middle of the south facade facing Rozzelles Ferry Road. The Boiler House is still operational and receives weekly maintenance to keep the water in the pipes of the sprinkler system from freezing. Some tools and machines remain in the Machine Shop for the use of the caretaker. Floors in both areas are concrete.

### **The Picker House**

The Picker House is a two-story masonry structure on the south facade. Each end of its portion of the building has high parapets over the roof to serve as fire walls. The parapets reach down the walls and end in a distinctive corbelled manner at the level of the first floor ceiling. Large, thirty-pane windows provide an abundance of light. The square chute,

rising a full story above the Picker House, is enclosed with wire that still has the remains of the last bales of fiber separated. Two original doors of the Picker House have three-course brick segmental arches. A more recent door is square-cut with no distinguishing features. Three of the original windows at the east end have been bricked up. Floors on the first floor are concrete. The second floor is also concrete, but has a slope that is similar to that of the low gable roof of the Main Mill. The interior of the Picker House has several room-size bins with plank walls to hold the separated fibers and the machines that performed the picking process. Holes in the second floor connected the bins and picking machines on the first floor. Rayon, as well as wool, was cut and picked in this area. Since the Picker House has its north facade facing the small courtyard, large windows on that side provide additional light.

### **The Dye House**

The Dye House is a one-story masonry portion structure on the west side of the Boiler House. Two small windows, headed by segmental arches, provided light from the south facade. Huge dye baths, some still stained by bright colors, are carved from the concrete floor. Both dyeing and drying took place in this area.

### **The Water Tank and Small Courtyard**

The Water Tank, which has a capacity of 60,000 gallons rises from a small courtyard between the Main Mill and the Boiler House/Machine Shop portion of the complex. It still proudly displays the words, "The Leaksville Woolen Mills, Homestead, NC, in white letters on the rusting black tank. It is a vertical focal point both in the composition of industrial buildings and to the immediate neighborhood. Approximately ninety feet high, it feeds the extensive sprinkler system that gives fire protection to the complex. In addition to the base of the water tank, the small, completely surrounded courtyard has a small house for the water softener and a larger structure that serves as the Lint House. The courtyard is a narrow space between the Main Mill and the Boiler House/Machine Shop portion of the complex. The west end is closed by the Dye House Addition while the east end is enclosed by the 1940 addition. It is crisscrossed by above-grade concrete paths that were used by workers with hand trucks. An old rusty hand truck with a few wooden spindles are a reminder of the busy days of the past at Homestead Mill.

### **Additions**

The additions surrounding the Main Mill have been constructed over many years. Most are in a good to average state of repair.

### **Finishing Room Addition (1937)**

An addition to the north end of the Main Mill was completed in 1937. Its north facade is of the same masonry construction as the Main Mill and it has the same size and style of windows. This one-story addition was used for folding and sewing. It strongly resembles the Main Mill.

### **Finishing Room Addition (1940)**

An one-story addition to the east end of the Main Mill was completed in 1940. Its north facade is also like that of the Main Mill. Its east facade is of masonry with the same type of large industrial windows used on the north facade. The south wall of the 1940 addition is a masonry fire wall separating it from the Raw Stock Warehouse. The floor is wood laid on tar and concrete. The 1940 addition was used for rewinding and spinning.

### **Finishing Room Addition (1955)**

An addition to the northwest corner of the Main Mill was completed in 1955. Again, it has a similar exterior appearance to the Main Mill. It has concrete floors. The 1955 addition was used for napping and racked finished goods storage.

### **Raw Stock Warehouse and Addition (1938)**

The Raw Stock Warehouse and Addition were completed in 1938. It is a two story, timber-framed structure. It has both board and concrete floors. The exterior is clad with wide weatherboards painted light green. The roof has a very slight gable running east to west to aid in draining rainwater. There are no openings on the south facade which faces Rozzelles Ferry Road. The east facade has one large sixteen pane window and two smaller horizontal windows which have metal awnings. The raw stock bins that held the bales and bags of rayon, orlon, and wool run from floor to ceiling on the second floor. The first floor stock bins were used for bales. The stock bins are made of planks framed with heavy timbers. Two chutes in the bin area connect the first and second floor. A few hanging, enameled standard domes with incandescent lamps provided light for the almost windowless area.

### **Warehouses 1 and 2**

Warehouse #1 and Warehouse #2 are two-story timber-framed portions of the complex to the southwest of the Main Mill. Small square windows are placed irregularly on the facades. Light green weatherboards cover the low-gabled buildings. A masonry fire wall separates Warehouses #1 and #2 from the Slasher Room and the Warp Room. The timbers that serve as

columns have chamfered corners to retard the spread of fire. An aluminum covered conveyor connects the second floor of Warehouse #1 to the Warehouse #3.

Although the two warehouses are separated by a wall, both were used for finished goods storage on the second floor. The first floor of Warehouse #1 was used for warping and storage of bales of cloth. The first floor of Warehouse #2 was used for storage of shocks (parts of boxes), cloth, and plastic bags.

### **Warehouses #3 and #4**

Warehouse #3 and Warehouse #4 are located approximately fifteen feet west of the Warehouse #1 portion of the Main Mill complex. They comprise one freestanding building of two stories. The building is covered with light green weatherboards. A mix of steel and timbers columns support the second floor. Plank floors are stained with oil from machinery. The plank ceiling has exposed bulbs and wiring. Warehouse #3 is connected to the second floor of Warehouse #1 by an aluminum covered conveyor system. Both floors of Warehouse #3 were used for staging of finished goods. Warehouse #4 was exclusively used for the storage of finished goods. The wooden walls and timbers bear the messages of bored and disgruntled workers throughout the life of the building.

### **Finished Goods Warehouse**

The Finished Goods Warehouse was used for the storage of rolled cloth and the shearing, folding, and inspection of cloth. It is connected to the Main Mill complex by a one-story canopy which has been enclosed with corrugated fiberglass panels. The Finished Goods Warehouse is of one-story masonry construction similar to the Main Mill. Its roof has a low gable and it has large, almost floor to ceiling windows like the Main Mill. On the day of the survey, it was not open for inspection.

### **Addition to Finished Goods Warehouse (1967)**

An addition to the Finished Goods Warehouse was attached to the west wall in 1967. The pre-engineered metal building could not be unlocked on the day the survey was taken, however, it has the profile of a rigid frame structural system with medium profile roof slope. There are no openings on the west facade. The north and south facades have very small square window openings.

## Warp Room and Slasher Room

The Warp Room and the Slasher Room are sandwiched between the Dye House and Warehouses #1 and #2. The laboratory and the small employee lunch room were located on the north side of the Warp Room. Large windows on the south facade provide light to the Slasher Room. This one-story portion of the complex is covered with green weatherboards. The Warp Room was used for storage of harness, drawn-in warps and machine parts, warping also took place there.

## Storage Warehouse

Located approximately twenty feet north of the Main Mill is a sixty-nine year old storage warehouse. It is covered with vertical board siding painted light green. The gable roof, supported by trusses, is covered with standing seam metal roofing which has begun to disengage from the purling. The west facade has six square windows of six panes each. A large sliding door opens on the south facade. The gables have horizontal board siding. The eaves have exposed rafters while the gable ends have exposed purling. The structure is composed of wood beams and columns, floors are pine. The two-story building is estimated to have 2592 square feet. An open stair of thick boards leads to the upper floor.

## Office

Located approximately ten feet north of the Main Mill is the Office. The building, side-gabled with gabled wing rear extension, exhibits a couple of different styles. The parapets on the [gabled roof](#) and the round-arched door were frequently used in the Richardsonian Romanesque style; the full-height entry with pediment on a side-gabled roof is distinctly [Greek Revival](#), and the round fanlight has Neoclassical origins. The white pilasters meet plain wooden brackets that support the entry pediment. However, this building was built much later than the active period of Greek Revival (1825-1860) in the United States and is distinctly modern. The four ranks of double 9/9 [windows](#) have white and green metal awnings on the south facade. Copper downspouts drain copper gutters at the boxed cave. There is a modest cornice of bed molding with a frieze board. All windows have concrete jack arches. Double windows have a concrete keystone as well. The east and west facades have triple windows at the second floor level. The center window has a half-circle of white concrete topped by a semi-circular brick header arch with concrete keystone. The first floor has five ranks of double 9/9 windows. One rank is a narrow 4/4 window. A door with concrete steps and black wrought iron railings provide access to the rear extension. The west facade appears to have been similar to the east facade, however, a square, flat-roofed brick addition in the ell of the building and extension conceals the early



building. A small white frame building northwest of the Office is listed on the 1969 map as a water closet. It appears to have been used as office or storage space at the time the Homestead Mill closed.

### **Auxiliary Buildings and Services**

Several other buildings and services were provided by the owners of the Homestead Mill for the use of their employees and their families.

### **Community Grocery**

A small, one-story building of approximately 1900 square feet served as a community grocery. Like many small country stores, the structure is a gable front building with the gable screened by a high rectangular parapet. The parapet provided a place for a large sign. The south facade faces Rozzelles Ferry Road at the northwest corner of its intersection with Toddville Road. The grocery is right beside the unnamed street that leads into the Homestead Mill property. The south facade has one double door and one single door. In addition, there is one double window and one single window. The east facade has no openings. The north and west facades have a group of frame additions with shed roofs.

### **Church**

The building that was used as a church was originally designed to serve as a community center for the workers and their families. It is an excellent example of a twentieth century interpretation of the Greek Revival style of architecture. Rectangular in plan, it is three bays in width and five bays in length. There is a belt course of [soldier brick](#) at the level of the first floor. The roof is covered with rust-colored shingles. The front-gabled west facade is dominated by a temple-fronted, full facade portico. The paving pattern of the portico is [brick herringbone](#). The entablature is dominated by unadorned horizontal elements. A circular window is the only adornment of the pediment. White Doric columns support the portico. White corner pilasters embellish the corners of the west facade. The white door surround is elaborately molded. The double, three-panel wooden doors are topped by a [transom](#) of four lights. Lintels over the windows are comprised of soldier courses. The windows themselves are double hung 4/4 [sash](#) in pairs with side by side double transom lights on the first floor. Basement windows are double hung 2/2 sash in pairs. The interior is a simple rectangle entered from the west facade. At the east end, there is a low, recessed podium or stage that served as the altar. Doors leading from each side of the podium lead to hallways. The walls are white with dark woodwork used to band the room vertically and horizontally. The dark woodwork is repeated at the windows and the edges of the podium.

## **Scout Cabin**

North of the church is the scout cabin. It is of frame construction on a rubble masonry foundation. The siding is vertical board and batten stained with dark brown stain. On the west facade, there is an exposed rubble masonry chimney that exits at the center of the gable. A porch roof supported on steel columns covers a porch on the west facade. The entry and a 6/6 window are located on one side of the chimney while a 6/6 window is located on the other side. A one-story shed addition is located on the east facade at the first floor level; it is one bay wide. The soil around the rubble foundation slopes to the east revealing an entrance to basement on the east facade. Cover for the basement entrance is provided by the shed addition supported on steel columns. The interior is of average construction with the exception of the large stone fireplace.

## **Baseball Field**

The employees enjoyed the use of a large baseball field provided by the Homestead Mill. It is located north of the Main Mill and east of the Church and Scout Cabin.

## **Services**

Homestead Mills provided many of its own services. A 220,000 gallon standpipe provides fire protection. It is filled from wells by automatic pumps. A sewage treatment plant is located at the western edge of the property, well away from the worker housing. A power transformer station is located about ten feet north of the Main Mill.

## **Worker Housing**

Homestead Mill provided housing for its workers at a very nominal rate. Houses had either five rooms or three rooms. One dwelling was provided for the superintendent. A boarding house was located north of the scout cabin, but it has been torn down.

## **Typical Worker House**

The typical worker house was a small frame bungalow. All of the eight remaining worker houses are of one story. Seven are five room houses. One appears to be a three room house, but could not be entered safely. It had a front-gabled roof with a partial width porch (now collapsed); the gable ends have triangular knee braces. Each of the remaining seven five-room houses has a tripped roof. The wide eave overhang shelters the exposed rafter ends. A dormer with a louvered ventilator is centered on the front of each house. Each is of white frame construction with dark green

trim. Some of the brick porch piers and brick foundations have been painted dark green as well. The full-width porches have four brick piers supporting square wooden columns. Porches that are high off the ground have porch railings. Back porches are usually enclosed and weatherized by the tenants. The interiors of the five-room houses follow the same floor plan. The houses have no hallways. The living room is entered by a glass and wood paneled door that is not centered on the entry facade. The room immediately behind the living room was a dining room or third bedroom; the main door to the bathroom is in this room. The room behind that appears to have been used as a bedroom in the existing houses. To the right of the living room entry is a bedroom with a fireplace. A door in that room connects to the bathroom. Beyond the bathroom, but entered only from the back bedroom is a large kitchen. Few cabinets were provided although there is a large pantry/broom closet. A door in the kitchen leads to a rectangular back porch.

### **The Superintendent's Dwelling**

The bungalow used by the superintendent for the mill was located next to the office. It has sustained considerable alterations over the years. Originally a one-and-a-half story house with triple window dormer centered on the front hip roof, it has been renovated to be a full two story house as can be seen on the northern facade. A first floor room has been added as well. The front porch has been enclosed with a wooden half wall with screens above.

### **The Sound of Homestead Mill**

One last surviving relic of the life of a textile worker that should be mentioned and recognized remains at Homestead Mill. That is the mill whistle. Located atop the roof of the Machine Shop, it is shown in a black and white photo. It called the workers to the mill in the morning and sent them home to their bungalows at night. It produced a sound dreaded by some and unavoidable despite the pleasant landscaped surroundings and amenities provided by the mill owners. But tolerated by most, it marked the cadences of life on the Homestead Mill property. It appears ready and able to mark new cadences throughout a new and different life for Homestead Mill.