

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name Rocky Mount Mills Village Historic District
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number bounded by Tar River, Columbia Avenue, Spring Street, and Carr Street N/A not for publication
city or town Rocky Mount vicinity N/A
state North Carolina code NC county Nash code 127 zip code 27802

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant _____ nationally _____ Statewide X locally. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jeffrey J. Cross SHPO 3/5/99
Signature of certifying official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- _____ entered in the National Register _____
_____ See continuation sheet.
- _____ determined eligible for the _____
National Register _____
_____ See continuation sheet.
- _____ determined not eligible for the _____

National Register
removed from the National Register _____

other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper Date
of Action

=====
5. Classification
=====

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>101</u>	<u>33</u> buildings
	_____ sites
<u>2</u>	_____ structures
	_____ objects
<u>103</u>	<u>33</u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 7

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

=====
6. Function or Use
=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling/Multiple Dwelling; SOCIAL/Community Hall; INDUSTRY/Mill Facility/Warehouse

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling; INDUSTRY/Mill Facility/Warehouse; COMMERCE/TRADE/Business Office

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7. Description
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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival, Bungalow/Craftsman, Italianate, Commercial Style, Other: Saddlebag

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick
roof Standing-seam tin
walls Weatherboard
other Brick

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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8. Statement of Significance
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Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture, Industry, Social History

Period of Significance 1835-1948

Significant Dates 1835, 1870, 1885, 1892, 1893

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) Battle, William Horn; Battle, James Smith; Battle, William Smith; Battle, Thomas Hall; Battle, Kemp Davis

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder UNKNOWN

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: _____

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property 48 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>		<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
1.	18	247320	3983100	3.	18	246880	3982170
2.	18	247600	3982580	4.	18	246600	3982680

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

=====
11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title Michelle Kullen
organization _____ date December 9, 1998
street & number 1210-207 Westview Lane telephone (919) 828-5104
city or town Raleigh state NC zip code 27605
=====

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12. Additional Documentation
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Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

=====
Property Owner
=====

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name John Mebane
street & number P.O. Box 1240 telephone (252) 442-1145
city or town Rocky Mount state NC zip code 27802
=====

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Section 7 Page 1
Rocky Mount Mills Village Historic District
Nash County, North Carolina

Section 7: Description

The Rocky Mount Mills Village Historic District is a remarkably intact mill village located south of the Tar River, in the northwest section of Rocky Mount in Nash County. Built between 1835 and 1948, the historic structures that make up the district comprise the historic mill and mill village associated with the second oldest cotton mill in North Carolina. Encompassing six blocks, the district consists of industrial and residential resources, from the antebellum, post-bellum, and twentieth century development of Rocky Mount Mills. Located on approximately ninety-eight acres and irregular in shape, the district is roughly bounded by the Tar River to the north, Spring Street to the south, and Columbia Avenue and Carr Street to the east and west, respectively.

Located on the outskirts of downtown Rocky Mount, the mill village continues to enjoy a rural ambiance, characteristic of many late nineteenth and early twentieth century mill villages in North Carolina. Falls Road, the only major thoroughfare in the district, is essentially an extension of Main Street running from downtown Rocky Mount. The Seaboard Coast Line Railroad track which once snaked through the village and terminated at the mill complex is no longer extant. Spreading south from the river, the village remains isolated from much of the residential and commercial growth experienced in Rocky Mount. Battle Park, a 1940s recreational area stands to the north of the mill village on the northern or opposite bank of the Tar River. The area to the south of the district consists of twentieth century mixed commercial and residential development. To the west is a city park, while a largely vacant tract lies to the east.

All seventy-one principal resources in the Rocky Mount Mills Village Historic District are contributing and include five industrial buildings, two dwellings located in the 1100 block of Falls Road, two structures, and sixty mill houses located on River Drive, Falls Road, Carr Street, Elm Street, and Spring Street. There are no non-contributing principal resources. Sixty-five secondary resources in the district consist of garages, carports, or sheds; thirty-two are contributing, while the remaining thirty-three are non-contributing.

Seven buildings in the district were listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1980 under Rocky Mount Mills. These include five industrial resources and two residential resources which hold significance under criteria A, B, and C. These previously listed resources, located primarily in a fenced-in compound on the east side of Falls Road, create the focal point of the historic district. The most prominent of these resources are the main mill buildings (20-23) which date from 1870 to the 1930s. These include two-story brick buildings featuring rows of segmental-arched windows, three-story brick towers, and one building with a three-story brick bell tower. Other mill buildings include a two-and-one-half story brick boiler room, a one-story brick polyester-manufacturing building, one-story brick warehouses, and a one-story frame shipping building. The one-story brick warehouses, located outside the fenced compound on the west side of Falls Road, were first constructed circa 1915, along the Atlantic Coast Line (ACL) railroad spur that transported products from the mill. The two residential buildings already listed include the two-story late Federal/Greek Revival style frame house erected in 1835 for mill owner, Colonel Benjamin D. Battle (24) and the circa 1918 Craftsman bungalow (25) which was erected as the mill village community house. The Battle House has been used as the company office since 1917 and the personnel office took over the community house by 1946. No significant changes have been made to

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these five resources since their listing in 1980.

The mill houses in the district are of frame construction and date from the late-nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century. In addition to the Benjamin Battle House (NR), the most architecturally important mill houses include a hip-roofed cottage with Greek Revival detail at 1107 Falls Road (27) and a gable-roofed Victorian cottage (13) that stands across the street at 1118 Falls Road. Built as a superintendent's house, the Greek Revival dwelling dates to the antebellum period and features a stone foundation, nine-over-six windows and double entry doors framed by fluted pilasters with corner blocks. The Victorian cottage exhibits a hip-roofed porch supported by decorative turned posts. Built in the late nineteenth century, its more highly executed details such as the Queen Anne porch indicate that the house was also designed for a company supervisor.

The most prevalent house form built in the district is a simple one-story, one-room-deep, frame saddlebag constructed for workers between circa 1888 and 1915. There are thirty-eight of this type. All have weatherboard or German siding, a rear gable ell of either one or two rooms, four-over-four or six-over-six sash windows in flat surrounds, and a nearly full-facade hip-roofed porch supported by plain or chamfered posts. Some are three-bays wide with a central door opening into a vestibule, while others are four-bays wide with two exterior doors opening into each room. Another common house type in the district are the frame two-story, single-pile houses originally built as duplexes. All five of the original examples survive in a cluster at the intersection of Falls Road and Elm Street. The houses at 1104, 1026, and 1020 (14, 16, 17) Falls Road and 2 E. Elm Street (61) have center brick chimneys, while the house at 1032 Falls Road (15) has two flanking exterior end brick chimneys.

With few exceptions, the houses stand in good condition. In the 1940s, Wilson architect Thomas Herman was contracted to design improvements to the houses, including interior remodeling and the alteration of the original porches. Most often Herman replaced the original hip-roofed porches with small gabled entrance stoops or side porches and adorned them with lattice railings. Also during this period of improvement, Craftsman style porch supports comprised of battered posts on brick bases were added to the houses at 11 River Drive (39) and 20 E. Elm Street (66). Other improvements made to the houses include the infill of the brick pier foundations, and the application of some asphalt shingle roofs and some asbestos siding.

For the most part, the village is laid out on flat ground. The houses along the north side of River Drive are on steeper ground with backyards sloping toward the riverbank. Arranged in straight rows with uniform setbacks, the mill houses sit on narrow but deep lots, measuring approximately 75 by 150 feet. Like most North Carolina mill villages, the houses were positioned close to the street so that the backyards could accommodate gardens. Today there are large vegetable gardens in many of the backyards. Also located in many of the rear yards are small frame sheds built by the mill employees to house wood and coal. The front yards are planted with grass and only a few houses have shrubs at their foundations. The larger, more stylish mill houses which housed higher-ranking employees, like superintendents, have more ornamental plantings. Numerous oaks and cedars provide extensive cover within the district. Areas of dense vegetation are found along the banks of the Tar River north of River Drive. Two heavily wooded areas along River Drive puncture the continual flow of houses on this street.

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These two areas have a low floodplain and were never built on. Five vacant lots stand in the district: two on Carr Street, three on East Elm Street and the site of Rocky Mount Mills School on Falls Road. Sidewalks, added as early as 1913, line either both sides or one side of the mill village streets. The lots have dirt driveways and cement driveway ramps.

The unusually intact condition of the mill houses reflects the continued ownership by Rocky Mount Mills. Rocky Mount Mills ceased operation in 1996 and plans are being made for the redevelopment of the mill buildings and mill housing.

Historic District Inventory

Notes:

Properties are organized by streets, beginning at the western boundary of the district and continuing east. North-south streets are listed first beginning with the west side and followed by the east side. East-west streets are then listed with north side first, then south side.

All of the buildings in the Rocky Mount Mills Village Historic District were constructed between 1835 and circa 1945.

Dates are estimated using design and style, the 1885, 1891, 1896, 1901, 1907, 1912, 1917, 1923, and 1949 Sanborn Maps (SM) and other sources including: Rocky Mount Mills Minutes from 1870 to 1950 (Minutes); 1923 Retrospective Appraisal of Rocky Mount Mills (1923 Appraisal); Rocky Mount City Directory (CD); and secondary sources such as 1979 "Rocky Mount Mills National Register Nomination" by Jacobs and Mobley (1979 NR Nomination); Richard Mattson's 1986 *History and Architecture of Nash County* (Mattson); and oral histories provided by mill employees and local residents including John Mebane, Kermit Paris, Harvey Israel, and Junior and Mary Lee Hicks (interviews).

To prevent excessive repetition, three house types found in the district are designated as Type A, B, and C and are described as follows:

- Type A: One-story, one-room deep, gabled, saddlebag of frame construction with weatherboard siding, three-bay main elevation, gabled rear one-story ell, less than full facade hip-roofed porch with plain or chamfered porch posts, four-over-four sash windows, center brick chimney, standing seam tin roof, and a single, central door entering into a vestibule in front of the chimney.
- Type B: One-story, one-room deep, gabled, saddlebag of frame construction with weatherboard siding, four-bay main elevation, gable-roof rear one-story ell, less than full facade hip-roofed porch with plain or chamfered porch posts, four-over-four sash windows, center brick chimney, standing seam tin roof, and two exterior doors entering each room.

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Type C: Two-story, single-pile duplex of frame construction with weatherboard siding, rear one-story addition, and less than full facade hip-roofed porch.

Mill houses that do not fit the three most common types are described in detail in the inventory list. Major exterior alterations or variations to the above house types are noted in the inventory entries. The resources in the district are keyed by number to the inventory map (Figure 1).

First block of Carr St., W side

- | | | | |
|---|----|-------------|---|
| C | 1. | 23 Carr St. | (ca. 1900) Type A mill house with asbestos siding features a shed-roof addition to the north side of gable ell, an enclosed rear shed porch, and a glazed and paneled door with metal storm door. (interviews)
<u>NC 1a. Shed. (1960s)</u> Modern metal utility shed. |
| V | | 21 Carr St. | Vacant Lot. Mill House removed in the 1960s. |
| C | 2. | 19 Carr St. | (ca. 1900) Type A mill house with asbestos siding features a shed-roof addition to the north side of gable ell, an enclosed rear shed porch, replacement Doric porch posts, an asphalt shingle roof, and a glazed and paneled door with metal storm door. (interviews)
<u>NC 2a. Shed. (1915s)</u> Dilapidated, small, front gable frame shed with vertical board siding and tin roof. |
| C | 3. | 17 Carr St. | (ca. 1900) Type A mill house with asbestos siding features an enclosed rear shed porch, replacement Doric porch posts, and a glazed and paneled door with metal storm door. (interviews)
<u>NC 3a. Shed. (1960s)</u> Modern metal utility shed. |
| C | 4. | 15 Carr St. | (ca. 1900) Type A mill house with asbestos siding features an asphalt shingle porch-roof, an enclosed rear shed porch, and a glazed and paneled door. (interviews)
<u>C 4a. Shed. (1915s)</u> Small, front gable, frame shed with vertical board siding and tin roof. |
| C | 5. | 13 Carr St. | (ca. 1900) Type A mill house with asbestos siding features an asphalt shingle roof, an enclosed rear shed porch, and a glazed and paneled door with metal storm door. (interviews) |

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C 5a. Shed. (1915s) Small, front gable frame shed with vertical board siding, tin roof raised on concrete blocks.

- C 6. 11 Carr St. (ca. 1900) Type A mill house with asbestos siding features an asphalt shingle roof, an enclosed rear shed porch, a glazed and paneled door, and a shed-roof addition to the north side of the gable ell. (interviews)
NC 6a. Carport. (1950s) One-car, shed-roofed carport supported by wood posts. (SM)
NC 6b. Utility Shed. (1970s) Modern metal utility shed.
NC 6c. Utility Shed. (1970s) Modern metal utility shed.

First block of Carr St., E side

- C 7. 22 Carr St. (ca. 1940) A one-story, three-bay, double-pile, frame dwelling with a gabled roof features asbestos siding, an interior brick chimney, brick foundation, single and paired six-over-six sash windows, and an engaged shed-roof porch with pedimented stoop and plain railing. The house was probably constructed around World War II, when the village experienced a shortage in worker houses. The house is very similar to the house at 35 River Drive. (SM)
C 7a. Shed. (1940s) Frame, front gable shed with weatherboard siding, tin roof, six-paned casement windows and bead board door.
NC 7b. Storage Building. (1950s) Frame, shed roof building with plywood siding.
- C 8. 20 Carr St. (ca. 1900) Type A mill house with asbestos siding features an enclosed rear shed porch, an asphalt shingle porch roof, and a glazed and paneled door. (interviews)
C 8a. Shed. (1915s) Small, frame front gable shed with vertical board siding and tin roof.
- C 9. 18 Carr St. (ca. 1900) Type A mill house with asbestos siding features a rear shed porch, an asphalt shingle porch roof, and a glazed and paneled door. (interviews)
- V 16 Carr St. Vacant Lot. Mill house removed in the 1960s.
- C 10. 14 Carr St. (ca. 1900) Type A mill house with asbestos siding features an enclosed rear shed porch, an asphalt shingle roof, and a glazed and paneled door with metal storm door. (interviews)
NC 10a. Carport. (1960s) One-car, shed-roofed carport supported by metal posts.
C 10b. Shed. (1915s) Small, front gable, frame shed with vertical board siding and tin roof.

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C 10c. Shed. (1915s) Small, front gable, frame shed with side shed addition, vertical board siding, and tin roof.

- C 11. 12 Carr St. (ca. 1900) Type A mill house with asbestos siding features a shed-roof addition to the north side of the gable ell, an enclosed rear shed porch, an asphalt shingle roof, and a glazed and paneled door with metal storm door. (interviews)
C 11a. Garage. (1940s) Frame, one-car garage with weatherboard and board-and-batten siding, vertical board double doors, under a front gable tin roof. (SM)
C 11b. Shed. (1915s) Frame, front gable shed with vertical board siding and tin roof.

1100 block of Falls Road, W side

- C 12. 1147 Falls Rd. (ca. 1915) **Warehouses (NR)**. One-story frame warehouses separated by five brick parapets, extending approximately 250 feet in a diagonal moving away from Falls Road. Features include a standing-seam tin roof, loading platforms with engaged shed roof porches on the east elevation, and a brick addition to the north elevation. (SM; 1979 NR Nomination)
- V 1122 Falls Rd. Vacant Lot. Site of Rocky Mount Mills School built in 1899. School was demolished in 1949. (Minutes; SM)
- C 13. 1118 Falls Rd. (ca. 1885) A one-story, side-gabled, three-bay, Victorian cottage of frame construction covered with German siding features a one-story rear gable ell with an interior brick chimney, boxed eaves, gable returns and a hip-roof porch with turned porch posts, turned railing and scrollwork brackets. Fenestration includes two-over-two sash windows and a center replacement door surmounted by a two-light transom. The rear porch off the gable ell is supported by replacement wood posts. The Queen Anne detailing on the house suggests that it was probably built for a mill manager. (Mattson)
- C 14. 1104 Falls Rd. (ca. 1890) Type C mill house with saddlebag form was originally built as a duplex. Fenestration includes a four-bay front elevation with two exterior doors entering each first-story room, nine-over-nine and six-over-six sash windows, and a paired two-over-two sash window in the upper story center bay. Other features include a one-story, hip-roof addition with enclosed shed porch, a center brick chimney, a standing-seam tin roof, and replacement Doric square porch posts and plain railing. By 1917, the house was used as a single dwelling. (SM).

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1000 block of Falls Road, W side

- C 15. 1032 Falls Rd. (ca. 1900) Type C mill house with saddlebag form was originally built as a duplex. Fenestration includes a four-bay front facade with paired exterior doors entering each room, six-over-six sash windows overall, and a paired two-over-two sash window in the upper story center bay. Other features include a one-story hip-roof addition with enclosed hip-roof porch with German siding, flanking exterior-end single-shouldered brick chimneys, a standing-seam tin roof, and replacement Doric columns and turned porch railing. Wood shutters have been added to the second-story windows on the front elevation. By 1917, the house was used as a single dwelling. (SM).
C 15a.-b. Shed. (1915s) Two small, frame, front gable sheds with vertical board siding and tin roof.
- C 16. 1026 Falls Rd. (ca. 1900) Type C mill house with saddlebag form was originally built as a duplex. The house features wide weatherboard siding with cottage corners, a three-bay front facade, a one-story hip-roof addition with enclosed shed porch, a center brick chimney, a standing-seam tin roof, and replacement Doric square porch posts and lattice patterned railing. Fenestration features paired nine-over-nine and single six-over-six sash windows and a central entrance with glazed and paneled sidelights. Wood shutters have been added to the second-story windows on the front elevation. By 1917, the house was used as a single dwelling. (SM).
- C 17. 1020 Falls Rd. (ca. 1890) Type C mill house with saddlebag form was originally built as a duplex. The house features a four bay front facade with a one-story gable ell with enclosed rear shed porch, a center brick chimney, a standing-seam tin roof, and replacement lattice porch posts. Fenestration includes four-over-four sash windows, a paired two-over-two sash window in the upper story center bay, and two exterior doors. Wood shutters have been added to the second-story windows on the front elevation. By 1917, the house was used as a single dwelling. (SM).
C 17a. Shed. (1930s) Frame, front gable shed with German siding, brick foundation, tin roof, and side shed-roofed addition.
C 17b. Garage. (1930s) Frame, shed-roofed, one-car garage with wide weatherboard siding and vertical board double doors.
- C 18. 1008 Falls Rd. (1889) A one-story, three-bay saddlebag of frame construction with weatherboard siding exhibits a full-facade rear gable ell and side gable addition. The house features a center brick chimney, six-over-six sash windows with metal storm windows, gable returns, an offset entrance with glazed and paneled sidelights, a standing seam tin roof, and a one-story hip-roof porch with replacement Doric

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posts and Chippendale pattern railing. Wood shutters have been added to the windows on the front elevation. (1923 Appraisal; SM)

- C 19. 1004 Falls Rd. (1889) Type B mill house with enclosed rear shed porch features two glazed and paneled doors and replacement Chippendale-influence porch posts and railing. (1923 Appraisal; SM)

1100 block of Falls Rd., E side

20. 1151 Falls Rd. **Rocky Mount Mills.** Established in 1818, Rocky Mount Mills was the second cotton mill constructed in North Carolina. Except for a two-year period in the 1880s, Rocky Mount Mills has been owned or operated by the prominent Battle family from its beginning. The mill was burned by Union Troops in 1863, rebuilt in 1865, burned again in 1869 and replaced in 1870 by the oldest mill building still standing. Growth in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries produced a series of brick buildings forming a large complex.
- C 20a. (1870) **Mill Number One (NR).** The two-story, brown brick building laid in common bond is rectangular in shape and stands on a north-south axis. The mill building features rows of segmental arched windows and a three story brick tower with segmental arched windows at the northwest corner. The building exhibits wooden eaves three boards wide with exposed curved wood purlins and a slightly gabled roof. All windows on the building are bricked in except for the third story windows in the tower. Mill Number One is the smallest of the three main nineteenth century mill buildings. The building was incorporated into a much larger and newer structure that extends south from the intersection of Mill Number One and Mill Number Three, essentially wrapping around Mill Number One and extending along its western side to the southern edge of the shipping building, then east, then north, approaching the mill run in an irregular, step-like progression. This addition includes a 1920s brick addition and a 1960s vintage brick finishing building. (SM; 1979 NR Nomination)
- C 20b. 1151 Falls Rd. (1889) **Mill Number Two (NR).** The two-story, brown brick building laid in common bond is rectangular in shape and stands on an east-west axis, parallel to the Tar River. The building exhibits wooden eaves three boards wide with exposed curved wood purlins, segmental arched windows and a slightly gabled roof. A three-story brick tower with segmental arched nine-over-six and nine-over-nine sash windows stands on the south elevation. The first story windows on the tower are bricked in. The building was extended to the west by 1917 and a two-story red brick addition with parapet at the east and west ends was added to the north of the

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building prior to World War II. The addition is distinguished by its red brick, as opposed to the brown brick of the earlier building. The building is joined on the south elevation to a circa 1891 one-and-one-half story front gable brick building originally built as an office. The office building later served as the "Canteen" restaurant from circa 1923 to the late 1960s. All windows on Mill Number Two and its additions are bricked in. Mill Number Two is joined to Mill Number Three to the east. (1979 NR Nomination; SM)

20c. 1151 Falls Rd. (1892) **Mill Number Three**. Built in 1892, the two-story, brick building laid in common bond is rectangular in shape and stands on an east-west axis, parallel to the Tar River. The building exhibits wooden eaves three boards wide with exposed curved wood purlins, segmental arched windows and a slightly gabled roof. A three-story brick tower with segmental arched windows stands on the south elevation. All windows on the mill building are bricked in. Mill Number 3 is joined to Mill Number 1 to the southeast and to Mill Number 2 to the west. This building was an addition to Mill Number 2, thus is not individually counted. (1979 NR Nomination; SM)

C 20d-e 1151 Falls Rd. (ca. 1891) **Machine Shop and Bell Tower (d) (NR)**. The two-story, common bond brown brick building with exposed wood purlins under a sloping tin roof features a three-story brick bell tower, which rises from the building's northwest corner. The tower, built of brick, has a castellated top and round arches in the third story, where the bell is exposed to view from all four sides. This building with bell tower joins the boiler house (20e) to Mill Number 3. During the mill's operation, the bell was rung daily indicating the changing work shifts. The machine shop and bell tower essentially function as an addition to the boiler house; it was never free standing (1979 NR Nomination; SM; interviews). **Boiler House (e)**. The boiler house is a two-story, three-bay, brown brick building laid in common bond with a gabled tin roof with brick parapets at each end. Two semi-elliptically arched entrances appear on the south elevation and one on the east elevation. The south elevation originally had three arched entrances, the far left arch has been bricked in and replaced with a double door entrance at ground level. Segmental arched windows on the east and west facades have been bricked in. The boiler house is connected to the main mill buildings by the machine shop and bell tower (20d). The boiler house was once used as the receiving department. (1979 NR Nomination; SM)

C 20f. 1151 Falls Rd. (ca. 1945) **Polyester Building (NR)**. The one-story, red brick building with a low pitched gable roof sits where a waste house one stood. The building was improved and extended in the early 1970s. (1979 NR Nomination; SM)

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- 20g. 1151 Falls Rd. (ca. 1940) **Shipping Building**. The one-story, frame shipping office set on brick piers features a gabled tin roof and brick parapets. A smaller board and batten storage shed with brick foundation, tin roof, and an open east end stands beside the shipping office on the south. The building is joined to Mill Number One on the east elevation. The building stands where cotton warehouses once stood. (1979 NR Nomination; SM)
- C 21. (ca. 1940) **Water Tower**. Metal water tower located east of polyester building (20f) and south of Mill Number Two (20b). (SM)
- C 22. 1151 Falls Rd. (ca. 1930) **Carpenter's Building**. The one-story, frame building with gabled roof, and board-and-batten siding features a three-bay west facade with raised double door openings, four-paned casement windows and six-over-six sash windows in the gable ends. Other features include a standing-seam tin roof, exposed rafter tails, a brick foundation, and a full length shed on the east facade with four equipment storage bays. (SM)
- C 23. (ca. 1920) **Water Tank**. A round, concrete block tank with a holding capacity of 140,000 gallons. Located south of shipping building (20g) and north of carpenter's building (22). (SM)
- C 24. 1151 Falls Rd. (1835) **Benjamin D. Battle House (NR)**. Two-story, double-pile, frame, late Federal/Greek Revival style house with white weatherboard siding is four bays long by five bays wide. Other features include nine-over-nine and nine-over-six sash windows, four exterior end chimneys with corbeled caps, a four-pillared front portico with railed balcony above and two center doubleleaf entrances, surrounded by transom and sidelights. The window and door surrounds are accented by decorative corner blocks. The original interior finishes survive as well. The present portico, in keeping with the style of the house, was added in the 1940s replacing an almost full-facade two-story porch that was built in the early 1910s. The house served as the home of mill owner Benjamin D. Battle, son of mill founder Joel Battle. A northern superintendent, named Crowder, lived in the house during the Civil War. He is responsible for persuading the Union Troops from burning the house during the 1863 raid that took the original mill. The company office has occupied the house since 1917. (1979 NR Nomination; SM)
- C 24a. Well house. (1940s) Frame, well house with weatherboard siding, pyramidal roof with wood shakes, and dentil cornice. Upper portion of well house has one open side and three ventilated sides.

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C 24b. Shed. (1940s) Frame shed with pyramidal roof covered with wood shakes, wide weatherboard siding, brick foundation, and vertical board double doors.

- C 25. 1135 Falls Rd. (ca. 1918) **former Community House (NR)**. The one-and-one-half story dwelling marked by a wraparound porch with battered posts over brick bases and plain railing is the only example of the Craftsman style in the mill village. The house features a five window dormer on the west facade, knee braces, exposed rafters, weatherboard siding, and six-over-one sash windows. The house was erected as the Community House circa 1918. It then served as the residence of a mill supervisor named Mr. Biggs. Later, the bungalow was used as a clinic and in 1946 became the company's personnel office. The 1948 City Directory lists the building as the "Rocky Mount Mills employee office and clinic." (SM; CD)
- C 26. 1121 Falls Rd. (ca. 1900) **Superintendent House I**. The one-story, frame, hipped roof house with projecting side gable wings with exterior end brick chimneys and a rear hip-roofed ell is covered with weatherboard siding. The house features single and paired six-over-six sash windows, a central door with glazed and paneled sidelights, a standing-seam tin roof, and a shed porch covering the three-bay recessed facade supported by replacement Chippendale-inspired lattice porch posts and a plain railing. The interior features five horizontal panel doors, plain mantels, and plain ceiling and baseboard moldings. (SM; interviews)
NC 32a. Garage. 1950s. Frame, one-car garage with front gable roof, weatherboard siding, semicircular gable vents and vertical sided doors. (SM)
- C 27. 1107 Falls Rd. (ca. 1835) **Superintendent House II**. The one-story, three-bay, hipped roof, cottage of frame construction with weatherboard siding and a one-story hip-roof rear wing with enclosed shed porch with German siding features Greek Revival details. The house exhibits a raised fieldstone foundation, a standing-seam tin roof, three interior brick chimneys, fluted corner boards and window surrounds, nine-over-six sash windows, and a double-leaf door flanked by fluted pilasters surmounted by an eight-light transom. The one-story hip-roof portico has a heavy entablature supported by square classical posts and a turned porch railing. This house may date from 1835, suggesting that the Union Troops spared more than the Battle House when they burned the mill in 1863. (Mattson; interviews)

1000 block of Falls Rd., E side

- C 28. 1027 Falls Rd. (ca. 1889) The one-story, gabled, four-bay frame asymmetrical dwelling with weatherboard siding features a full-facade rear gable wing and a front gable, two-

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bay pedimented porch with replacement paired Doric posts with lattice work and a plain railing. Other features include six-over-six sash windows, a center brick chimney, a standing seam tin roof, and gable returns. Interesting segmental arched and pegged vent openings adorn the gable ends of the porch and the main block. Wood shutters have been added to the windows on the front elevation. (1923 Appraisal; SM)

C 28a. Shed. (1915s) Small, front gable, frame shed with vertical board siding and tin roof.

- C 29. 1021 Falls Rd. (1908) The one-story, side-gabled, three-bay frame dwelling with weatherboard siding and rear gable ell features six-over-six sash windows, an exterior end brick chimney, a standing seam tin roof, and a center entrance flanked by glazed and paneled sidelights. The front shed roof stoop with lattice side panels and a side gable porch with arched trim and plain porch posts appear to have been added in the 1940s. Wood shutters have been added to the windows on the front elevation. (1923 Appraisal)
- C 30. 1009 Falls Rd. (1908) Type B mill house with two replacement exterior doors features an enclosed rear shed porch, some six-over-six sash windows, and replacement decorative Chippendale-influenced porch posts and plain porch railing. (1923 Appraisal)
C 30a. Shed. (1915s) Small, front gable, frame shed on brick foundation covered with vertical board siding.
- C 31. 1003 Falls Rd. (1908) Type A mill house with paired four-over-four sash windows features an enclosed rear shed porch, paired plain porch posts and replacement railing, and a glazed and paneled door with metal storm door. (1923 Appraisal)
C 31a. Garage. (ca. 1923) Frame, one-car garage with vertical board siding, exposed rafters, brick foundation and replacement doors under a front gable tin roof. (SM)

First block of River Dr., N side

- C 32. 35 River Dr. (ca. 1945) A one-story, three-bay, double-pile, frame dwelling with a gabled roof features asbestos siding, an interior brick chimney, brick foundation, single and paired six-over-six sash windows, and an engaged shed-roof porch with pedimented stoop and plain railing. The house was probably constructed around World War II, when the village experienced a shortage in worker houses. This house is almost identical to the house at 22 Carr Street. (SM)
NC 32a. Carport. (1950s) Two-car, shed roof carport with side shed supported by

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- wood posts.
NC 32b. Shed. (1940s) Front gable. frame shed with tin roof. exposed rafters and plywood siding.
NC 32c. Shed. (1950s) Front gable. frame shed with plywood siding.
- C 33. 33 River Dr. (ca. 1915) Type A mill house covered with German siding features a shed-roof addition to the north side of gable ell, an enclosed rear shed porch, metal storm windows, a concrete block infilled brick pier foundation, and a glazed and paneled door. (SM; interviews; Mattson)
NC 33a. Shed. (1960s) Modern metal utility shed.
NC 33b. Shed. (1960s) Frame, gambrel roof shed with plywood siding and doors.
- C 34. 31 River Dr. (ca. 1915) Type A mill house covered with German siding features an enclosed rear shed porch, metal storm windows, a concrete block infilled brick pier foundation, and a glazed and paneled door. (SM; interviews; Mattson)
NC 34a. Shed. (1915s) Dilapidated frame, front gable shed with vertical board siding.
- C 35. 29 River Dr. (ca. 1915) Type A mill house covered with German siding features an enclosed rear shed porch, metal storm windows, a concrete block infilled brick pier foundation, and a glazed and paneled door. (SM; interviews; Mattson)
NC 35a. Greenhouse. (1970s) Frame, front gable greenhouse built from random window sashes under a corrugated metal roof.
NC 35b. Shed. (1930s) Frame, shed roof building with vertical siding and front shed extension with corrugated tin roof.
- C 36. 27 River Dr. (ca. 1915) Type A mill house covered with German siding features an enclosed rear shed porch, metal storm windows, replacement Doric porch posts, a concrete block infilled brick pier foundation, and a glazed and paneled door. (SM; interviews; Mattson)
NC 36a. Shed and Storage. (1950s) Frame, shed roof building with vertical board siding and front shed extension with metal siding.
- C 37. 15 River Dr. (ca. 1915) Type B mill house covered with German siding features an enclosed rear shed porch, a rear full-facade shed addition, a concrete block and fieldstone infilled brick pier foundation, and two glazed and paneled doors. (SM; interviews; Mattson)
NC 37a. Shed. (1915s) Ruinous, frame, front gable shed with vertical board siding.
- C 38. 13 River Dr. (ca. 1915) Type B mill house covered with German siding features an asphalt

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shingle roof, a rear full-facade shed addition, two glazed and paneled doors, and wood shutters on the front elevation windows. (SM; interviews; Mattson)

C 38a. Shed. (1915s) Frame, front gable shed with vertical board siding and tin roof standing on concrete blocks.

C 38b. Shed. (1915s) Frame, shed-roof shed standing on concrete blocks with weatherboard siding and two five-panel doors.

NC 38c. Shed. (1915s) Ruinous, frame shed with vertical board and corrugated metal siding.

- C 39. 11 River Dr. (ca. 1915) A one-story, gabled, four-bay, frame dwelling with German siding exhibits a full-facade rear shed addition and a rear gable ell with enclosed shed porch. Other features include a standing-seam tin roof, six-over-six sash windows, a center brick chimney, an offset entrance and a one-story hip-roof porch with Craftsman style battered porch posts over brick bases. Wood shutters have been added to the windows on the front elevation. (SM; interviews; Mattson)
C 39a. and b. Shed. (1915s) Pair of frame, front gable sheds with vertical board siding and tin roofs.

First block of River Dr., S side

- C 40. 34 River Dr. (ca. 1915) Type A mill house covered with German siding features an enclosed rear shed porch, a concrete block infilled brick pier foundation, and a glazed and paneled door. (SM; interviews; Mattson)
- C 41. 32 River Dr. (ca. 1915) Type A mill house with German siding features an enclosed rear shed porch, a concrete block infilled brick pier foundation, and a glazed and paneled door. (SM; interviews; Mattson)
- C 42. 30 River Dr. (ca. 1915) One-story, gabled, four-bay, frame dwelling with German siding and full-facade rear shed addition. Other features include a standing seam tin roof, six-over-six sash windows, a center brick chimney, an offset entrance and a one-story hip-roof porch with Craftsman style battered porch posts over brick bases. Wood shutters have been added to the windows on the front elevation. Identical to 11 River Drive, this house was originally located at 9 River Drive. It was moved approximately one block southwest to this location in 1995 when Peachtree Street was extended north across River Drive. (SM; interviews; Mattson)
- C 43. 28 River Dr. (ca. 1915) Type A mill house covered with German siding features an enclosed

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rear shed porch, a metal storm door over a glazed and paneled door and a concrete block infilled brick pier foundation. (SM; interviews; Mattson)

NC 43a. Shed. (1960s) Modern metal utility building.

- C 44. 26 River Dr. (ca. 1915) Standing on a new concrete block foundation, the one-story, gabled, four-bay, frame dwelling features weatherboard siding, six-over-six sash windows, a center brick chimney, a rear gable ell with enclosed shed porch, a shed addition to the side with gabled side porch with replacement posts, and a standing-seam tin roof. The front pedimented stoop is supported by Doric porch posts. Identical to 10 River Drive, this house was originally located at 8 River Drive. It was moved approximately one block west to this location in 1995 when Peachtree Street was extended north across River Drive. When moved in 1995, the house was set back farther than the adjacent mill houses. (SM; interviews; Mattson)
- C 45. 24 River Dr. (ca. 1915) Type A mill house covered with German siding features an enclosed rear shed porch, a glazed and paneled door, and a concrete block infilled brick pier foundation. (SM; interviews; Mattson)
- C 46. 14 River Dr. (ca. 1915) Type B mill house features a plain porch railing, a concrete block infilled brick pier foundation, a rear full-facade shed addition, and two glazed and paneled doors. (SM; interviews; Mattson)
C 46a. Shed. (1915s) Frame, front gable shed with vertical board siding and tin roof.
NC 46b. Utility Shed. (1960s) Modern side-gable metal utility building.
- C 47. 12 River Dr. (ca. 1915) The one-story, gabled, four-bay, frame dwelling features weatherboard siding, six-over-six sash windows, a center brick chimney, a standing-seam tin roof, a full-facade rear shed addition with shed porch, a gabled side porch with posts, and a brick infilled brick pier foundation. The front pedimented stoop is supported by plain porch posts. (SM; interviews; Mattson)
C 47a. Shed. (1915s) Frame, front gable shed with vertical board siding and side shed extension.
- C 48. 10 River Dr. (ca. 1915) The one-story, gabled, four-bay, frame dwelling features weatherboard siding, six-over-six sash windows, a center brick chimney, a standing seam tin roof, rear gable ell with side shed addition with gabled side porch with Doric posts, and a brick infilled brick pier foundation. The front pedimented is supported by replacement Doric porch posts. (SM; interviews; Mattson)
- C 49. 6 River Dr. (ca. 1915) One-story, gabled, four-bay, frame dwelling exhibits weatherboard

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siding, six-over-six sash windows, a center brick chimney, a standing seam tin roof, a rear gable ell with enclosed shed porch, and a brick infilled brick pier foundation. The front pedimented stoop is supported by plain porch posts. (SM; interviews; Mattson)
NC 49a. Shed. (1960s) Modern metal utility shed.

First block of W. Elm St., N side

- C 50. 43 W. Elm St. (1910) Type A mill house covered with German siding features an asphalt shingle roof in the rear, wood shutters on the front elevation windows, an enclosed rear shed porch, and a replacement wood door with metal storm door. (SM)
NC 50a. Shed. (1915s) Frame, front gable shed with vertical siding and side shed addition with plywood siding and vertical board door.
- C 51. 7 W. Elm St. (1889) Type A mill house with asymmetrical front facade features single and paired four-over-four sash windows, an asphalt shingle roof, an offset glazed and paneled door, original semi-circular gable vents, and a replacement L-shaped double-pedimented front porch with plain porch posts and bead-board ceiling. The replacement side hip-roof porch off the gable ell has replacement porch posts and exposed rafters. (1923 Appraisal)
- C 52. 5 W. Elm St. (1889) Type A mill house with paired four-over-four sash windows features a replacement shed-roof stoop and a side gabled porch on the east elevation supported by paired square posts with lattice work. (1923 Appraisal)
NC 52a. Shed. (1960s) Frame, gambrel roof shed.
C 52b. Shed. (1915s) Frame, side gable shed with vertical board siding, exposed rafters and tin roof.
- C 53. 3 W. Elm St. (1889) Type A mill house with enclosed rear shed porch with German siding features paneled shutters, an offset replacement wood door, and a replacement front pedimented porch supported by plain porch posts. (1923 Appraisal)
C 53a. Shed. (1915s) Frame, front gable shed with vertical board siding and side shed extension.
NC 53b. Shed. (1960s) Modern metal utility building.
- C 54. 1 W. Elm St. (1889) Type A mill house with larger rear gable addition with corner porch supported by a turned porch post features a glazed and paneled door with metal storm door, front window shutters, and a replacement pedimented porch stoop supported by square Doric posts and a pedimented side porch supported by plain

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porch posts. (1923 Appraisal)

NC 54a. Shed. (1915s) Deteriorated frame, front gable shed with vertical board siding. One side of building is missing.

First block of E. Elm St., N side

- C 55. 7 E. Elm St. (ca. 1900) Originally a two-story duplex, the house was remodeled to its present appearance in the early 1940s as the home of electrician, Earl Harold, who wired the mill for electricity. The house is now a one-and-one-half story, gabled, three bay, Craftsman style dwelling standing on an infilled brick foundation. The house features weatherboard siding, a shed dormer, decorative knee braces, one exterior end and one interior brick chimneys, a tin roof, paired six-over-six sash windows, a glazed door, and a hipped roof porch with diamond shaped railing and supported by square Doric posts. (SM; interviews)
NC 61a. Garage. (ca. 1950) One-story, front gable, frame garage with weatherboard siding, tin roof, exposed rafters is missing its original doors. (SM)

First block of W. Elm St., S side

- C 56. 10 W. Elm St. (1889) Type A mill house with asymmetrical front facade features paired four-over-four sash windows, an offset entrance, a replacement door with metal storm door, and a replacement pedimented porch stoop and pedimented side porch supported by plain posts. (1923 Appraisal)
C 56a. Shed. (1915s) Frame, front gable shed with board and batten siding and brick foundation.
- C 57. 8 W. Elm St. (1889) Type A mill house with a four-bay main facade features a three-bay replacement pedimented front porch supported by plain porch posts, an asphalt shingle roof, and a glazed and paneled door with metal storm door. (1923 Appraisal)
C 57a. Shed. (1915s) Frame, side-gable shed with vertical board siding and tin roof.
NC 57b. Shed. (1950s) Frame, shed-roof building with exposed rafters, asphalt roll siding and plywood door.
NC 57c. Utility Shed. (1970s) Gambrel roof, metal utility building.
NC 57d. Workshop. (1960s) Frame, shed-roof workshop with plywood siding and shed stoop.

- C 58. 6 W. Elm St. (1889) Type A mill house features a replacement pedimented porch with shed

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extension supported by plain porch posts, shutters on front elevation windows, and a glazed and paneled front door. (1923 Appraisal)

C 58a. Shed. (1915s) Small, frame front gable shed with vertical board siding, tin roof, and strap-hinged door.

C 59. 4 W. Elm St. (1889) Type A mill house features a replacement pedimented stoop with molded posts, a side pedimented porch with paired plain porch posts, shutters on front elevation windows, and a two-paneled glazed and paneled door. (1923 Appraisal)

C 60. 2 W. Elm St. (1889) Type B mill house features a replacement pedimented stoop with shed roof porch extension supported by plain porch posts, shutters on the front elevation windows, and two glazed and paneled doors. (1923 Appraisal)

First block of E. Elm St., S side

C 61. 2 E. Elm St. (ca. 1900) Type C mill house with saddlebag form was originally built as a duplex. The house features a four-bay front facade with a one-story gable ell with enclosed rear shed porch, a center brick chimney, a standing seam tin roof, and a one-story hipped porch with exposed rafters and classical square posts. German siding covers a small 1-story enclosed porch addition. The upper facade is only two bays wide. Fenestration consists of four-over-four sash windows and two exterior glazed and paneled doors. By 1917, the house was used as a single dwelling. (SM)
NC 61a. Shed. (1915s) Deteriorated frame, front gable shed with vertical board siding.

C 62. 4 E. Elm St. (ca. 1940) The one-story, gabled, four-bay, frame dwelling exhibits a pedimented porch with gable returns supported by delicate classical porch posts. Covered with weatherboard siding, the house has six-over-six sash with metal storm windows, a Craftsman style glazed and paneled door, a brick foundation, an asphalt shingle roof, an interior brick chimney, and a gabled side porch with replacement posts. The present floorplan of this house does not correspond with the footprint of the dwelling on the 1912 to 1969 Sanborn Maps. The box-like shape of the building and fenestration are similar to 22 Carr Street and 35 River Drive, both built in the 1940s. (SM)
C 62a. Shed. (1915s) Frame, front gable shed with vertical board siding and tin roof.

V 6 E. Elm St. Vacant Lot. Mill house removed in the 1960s.

V 8 E. Elm St. Vacant Lot. Mill house removed in the 1960s.

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- C 63. 10 E. Elm St. (1889) Type A mill house with asbestos siding exhibits an enclosed rear shed porch, eight-over-eight sash windows, and replacement Doric porch posts. (1923 Appraisal)
- C 64. 12 E. Elm St. (1889) Type B mill house with asbestos siding features an enclosed rear shed porch and glazed and paneled doors. (1923 Appraisal)
C 64a. Shed. (1915s) Frame, front gable shed with vertical board siding and tin roof.
- V 14 E. Elm St. Vacant Lot. Mill house removed in the 1960s.
- C 65. 16 E. Elm St. (ca. 1900) Type B mill house with asbestos siding features a two-room gable ell with a seven-paneled door, a German-sided enclosed rear shed porch, and glazed and paneled front doors. (SM)
NC 65a. Shed (1915s) Dilapidated pair of frame front gable sheds with extended tin roof connecting the two.
C 65b. Shed. (1915s) Frame, side gable shed with tin roof and vertical board siding raised on concrete blocks.
- C 66. 20 E. Elm St. (ca. 1900) One-story, gabled, three-bay, one-room deep, frame dwelling with weatherboard siding features an exterior end brick chimney, paired and single six-over-six sash windows, a standing seam tin roof, a glazed and paneled door, and an almost full-facade one-story pyramidal roof addition to the rear with two brick chimney stacks. The house has a hipped roof porch with Craftsman style battered posts over brick bases that were probably replaced in the 1940s. (interviews)

First block of E. Spring St. (E. Spring Street was originally named E. Cedar Street)

- C 67. 5 E. Spring St. (ca. 1908) The one-story, gabled, three bay, frame saddlebag with asbestos siding exhibits single and paired six-over-six sash windows, a center brick chimney, and a two-room rear gable ell with shed additions. Other features include an engaged front pedimented stoop supported by Doric posts sheltering a center entrance with flanking Doric pilasters. (1923 Appraisal)
- C 68. 7 E. Spring St. (ca. 1908) Type B mill house features an enclosed rear shed porch, glazed and paneled doors (one with a metal storm door), and a concrete block infilled brick pier foundation. The porch foundation remains open. (1923 Appraisal)
C 68a. Shed. (1915s) Frame, front gable shed with vertical board siding.

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Section 8: Statement of Significance

Summary:

Rocky Mount Mills Village Historic District, containing one-hundred-thirty-six well-preserved industrial and residential resources dating from 1835 to the early 1940s is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A, for its importance in the areas of industry, community development and social history. It remains one of the most intact mill villages in Piedmont North Carolina, illustrating the social and industrial history of a locally-owned Southern cotton mill and village with antebellum roots. Originally established in 1818 by local investors who sought to establish the cotton textile industry in North Carolina for the benefit of the local economy, the original Rocky Mount Mills, Great Falls Mill, was the second cotton mill constructed in the state. Relying on the experience and technical expertise of New England textile operators, Rocky Mount Mills prospered during the antebellum period, making it a target of Union attack in 1863. The mill was rebuilt in 1870 during the emergence of the "New South." After battling the typical economic hardships of the Reconstruction period, Rocky Mount Mills emerged as one of North Carolina's major manufacturers in the late nineteenth century. Rocky Mount Mills exemplifies the post-Civil War development of the textile industry that occurred along rivers and streams in the Piedmont region of North Carolina, bridging the gap between an agricultural based economy and expanding industrialization. The mill village is typical of isolated mill complexes, where mills employed a paternalistic attitude by combining the social, industrial, and commercial functions of the industry into a community established for and by the mill.

The Rocky Mount Mills Village Historic District is eligible for the National Register under Criterion B, as it holds significance in its association with the prominent Battle Family, who except for a two-year period in the 1880s have owned or operated the mill from its 1818 beginning. Several members of the family who were associated with the mill have achieved prominence in North Carolina's history. William Horn Battle, the oldest son of mill pioneer Joel Battle, served as State Supreme Court Justice from 1852-1867. James Smith Battle, who owned the mill from 1847 until 1854, was instrumental in the 1834 landmark case of State vs. Will, which allowed slaves the right to defend themselves when under attack. James also contracted to build and with his own slaves completed many miles of the Raleigh and Wilmington Railroad. William Smith Battle is known in history for voting for secession in the Constitutional Convention of 1861. Thomas Hall Battle organized the Bank of Rocky Mount in 1889 and as early as 1892 urged the formation of a state banking association, which was created when the North Carolina Bankers Association was organized in Morehead City in July of 1897. Kemp Davis Battle was active in business and served Rocky Mount Mills for fifty-five years in the capacities of legal counsel, vice-president, and chairman of the board of directors.

Rocky Mount Mills Village Historic District is also eligible under Criterion C for its significant collection of mill buildings, stylish manager houses, and uniformly designed, two-room and saddlebag frame worker houses, most dating from the late 1880s to the 1910s. The most pivotal buildings are the early mill buildings which represent the "slow burn" construction method and feature hallmark characteristics of the Italianate style employed by mills nationwide in the late nineteenth century. The mill village enjoys a degree of architectural integrity rarely seen in

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historic North Carolina mill districts.

Historical Background and Social History Context:

In 1816 Joel Battle (1779-1829), who lived at the Shell Bank Plantation on the Tar River, a few miles below what is now Rocky Mount, bought land around the falls of the Tar River known as Great Falls at the Edgecombe and Nash County border. Battle and his family were cotton farmers who were aware of the cotton mill development occurring in the New England states. On this newly acquired land, Battle, along with his brother-in-law Peter Evans, and Henry Donaldson of Rhode Island, began efforts to build a cotton mill that would take advantage of the water power provided by the falls. Sometime between 1816 and 1817, Battle, Evans, and Donaldson constructed a four-story stone cotton mill building and named it the Great Falls Mill. Also at this time, the community of Rocky Mount was established and named for the rocky mounds and ledges near the falls.¹

The market for cotton products grew considerably during the antebellum period. Initially the Great Falls Mill served local areas. Planters primarily brought their cotton to the mill to be spun into yarn and then woven into cloth at home. Coarse cloth, often used to clothe the slave population of the surrounding plantations, was primarily manufactured. In addition to running the cotton mill, the partners ran the grist mill that had previously been erected at the Great Falls as well as a saw mill. The Great Falls Mill was the second cotton mill established in North Carolina, the first being the Schenck Warlick Mill established in Lincoln County in 1813. This mill no longer stands.²

In 1821 a disagreement arose among the mill's original three partners, and by 1825 Joel Battle was the sole owner of the mill. Under Battle's ownership, the mill had expanded its markets outside the region and the state by the late 1820s. The Tarboro Free Press noted the mill's expansion in 1828 with a report that the Battle enterprise had recently shipped twenty bales of yarn to New York, Philadelphia and Boston were also markets at the time.³

After Joel Battle's death in 1829, the mill became the property known as "Battle & Bros." under the leadership of William Horn Battle (1802-1879), Joel Battle's oldest son who later became a North Carolina Supreme Court Justice. The mill continued to prosper in the 1830s, in part due to the hiring of a trained cotton mill superintendent from Massachusetts named John Parker. Parker, who brought new machinery to the mill, was a partner in the company from 1830 to 1833. Two years later, Benjamin Dossey Battle, the second oldest son of Joel Battle, erected the handsome two-story frame house (24) near the mill. The house remains intact and has

¹ Jacobs, Barry. *National Register Nomination of Rocky Mount Mills*, 1979; *Rocky Mount Mills: A Case History of Industrial Development, 1818-1943*, pg. 10-11.

² *Rocky Mount Mills: A Case History of Industrial Development, 1818-1943*, pg. 12-13.

³ Tarboro Free Press as quoted in *Rocky Mount Mills: A Case History of Industrial Development, 1818-1943*, pg. 15.

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served as the general office of the company since 1917.⁴

Joel Battles' three sons continued to operate the mill until 1847 when it was acquired by their cousin, James Smith Battle (1786-1854), and his son William Smith Battle (1823-1915). At this time the name of the mill changed to Battle Mills. James and William were two of the wealthiest planters in North Carolina. At the time of their acquisition, James Battle owned \$120,000 worth of real estate and sixty slaves, while his son had \$25,000 in land and ninety slaves. James S. Battle is remembered in North Carolina history for his role in the 1834 landmark case of State vs. Will which determined that a slave had a right to defend himself against attack. Battle employed attorneys to defend the slave named Will after he killed an overseer who had attacked him. Battle was probably the first slave owner in the South to defend a slave in court against the charge of murdering a white man. James also contracted to build and with his own slaves completed many miles of the Raleigh and Wilmington Railroad. The Battles operated the mill with slave and free black labor until 1851, when they were replaced with white workers.⁵

William S. Battle gained full ownership of the mill three years after his father's 1854 death. He served as a member of the North Carolina Constitutional Convention of 1861, which voted for the secession of North Carolina from the Union. Prior to the Civil War, Battle Mills, employing twenty-eight men and twenty-two women, operated 1,716 spindles and produced \$55,200 of yarn annually. William Battle's plantation supplied meat and corn to Confederate troops, and he invested heavily in Confederate bonds. This, along with the fact that the mill produced cloth for uniforms and yarn for socks for the Confederate Army, attracted the attention of Federal officials. Consequently Union Troops raided and burned the cotton factory and associated structures in July of 1863. The superintendent of the mill at the time was a northerner by the name of Crowder who was responsible for persuading the troops from not burning the 1835 Benjamin D. Battle House.⁶ Apparently the antebellum mill superintendent's dwelling at 1107 Falls Road (27) was also spared. The report of the Union officer who burned the mill described it as employing over 150 white girls at its spindles and looms. These were undoubtedly recruited from the surrounding rural areas because there was no base of population at or near the mill that could have provided such a labor force.⁷

After the Civil War, William S. Battle built a larger brick mill which was burned in 1869 by a disgruntled worker. The company lost both the building and machinery.⁸ Battle rebuilt the mill in 1870 (20a) and expanded it in 1871,

⁴ Jacobs, Barry. *National Register Nomination of Rocky Mount Mills*, 1979; *Rocky Mount Mills: A Case History of Industrial Development, 1818-1943*, pg. 14, 16.

⁵ *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, p. 112 Vol. A-C, 1979; Jacobs, Barry. *National Register Nomination of Rocky Mount Mills*, 1979; *Rocky Mount Mills: A Case History of Industrial Development, 1818-1943*, pg. 17-18.

⁶ Jacobs, Barry. *National Register Nomination of Rocky Mount Mills*, 1979; *Rocky Mount Mills: A Case History of Industrial Development, 1818-1943*, pg. 19-20; *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, pg. 119 Vol. A-C, 1979.

⁷ *Rocky Mount, North Carolina Centennial Commemorative Book*, 1867-1967.

⁸ Battle, Kemp D., "A History of the Rocky Mount Mills," in *The Battle Book, A Genealogy of the Battle Family in America, 1930*, pg. 181.

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accommodating the mills' 3,000 spindles and 100 looms.⁹ The first school in the village, of which there is no recollection was a free school started in 1878 by the town, and mill children were entitled to attend. The school was discontinued in 1886 owing to the court decisions requiring equal per capita division of tax revenue between white and Negro schools.¹⁰

During the Reconstruction period, the mill was slow to establish a strong financial footing. William S. Battle was forced to use the plant's capital to pay debts. Battle attempted to strengthen the mill by incorporation and selling stocks to investors, however this did not provide enough capital to revive the mill. In 1883 the bankrupt and devastated Battle relinquished control of the mill to the trustees. This marked the first time in the mill's sixty-year history that it was out of the Battle family hands.¹¹

Like most of the south, North Carolina experienced a new industrial growth in the last decades of the nineteenth century. This birth of the "New South" was reflected in the quickly reinvigorated Rocky Mount cotton mill. In 1885 the trustees of the company reorganized the mill under the name Rocky Mount Mills. Even though the Battle family no longer had ownership in the mill, the company's creditors approved an operating plan by Thomas Hall Battle (1860-1936), a lawyer, banker, industrialist and great-grandson of Joel Battle. Soon after, Thomas H. Battle was elected secretary of the mill.¹² Thomas H. Battle is noted in North Carolina's history as the organizer of the Bank of Rocky Mount in 1889 and later as its president. He also helped in the organization of the Rocky Mount Savings and Loan Company and the Rocky Mount Insurance and Investment Company. As early as 1892, Battle promoted the formation of a state banking association, which was created when the North Carolina Bankers Association was organized at Morehead City in 1897. Battle served as the organizations first president.¹³

In 1886, James H. Ruffin, an experienced mill operator from Lowell, Massachusetts was hired as superintendent and proved to be invaluable in restoring the mill's productivity. The mill also benefited from the help of Paul C. Cameron, a leading postwar industrialist and railway and road builder and the mill's largest stockholder. Cameron encouraged many of the stockholders to use their influence in obtaining loans for the mill, thus bolstering its capital.¹⁴

The late nineteenth century marked a period of rapid expansion for Rocky Mount Mills and its village. In 1887 the mill was in full operation, running twelve hours a day. A year later, Thomas H. Battle was elected as

⁹ Jacobs, Barry. *National Register Nomination of Rocky Mount Mills*, 1979.

¹⁰ Herring, Harriet. *Welfare Work in Mill Villages*, pg. 37.

¹¹ Jacobs, Barry. *National Register Nomination of Rocky Mount Mills*, 1979; *Rocky Mount Mills: A Case History of Industrial Development, 1818-1943*, pg. 22-23.

¹² Jacobs, Barry. *National Register Nomination of Rocky Mount Mills*, 1979; *Rocky Mount Mills: A Case History of Industrial Development, 1818-1943*, pg. 25.

¹³ *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, pg. 117 Vol. A-C, 1979.

¹⁴ Jacobs, Barry. *National Register Nomination of Rocky Mount Mills*, 1979.

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company president, and under his direction, a second mill building (20b) was built in 1889.¹⁵ In this same year, shipping problems of the company were simplified when a spur line was completed connecting the plant with the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad (later the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad). The company bought additional equipment and increased the number of spindles from 3,500 in 1886 to 25,000 in 1892. Also in that year, a new auxiliary steam plant was added to supplement the factory's water power. A third mill building (20c) was added to the complex in 1894.¹⁶

The "mill village," as it is still referred today, grew up after the Civil War when a permanent labor force became attached to the mill. Before the village was established some employees were brought to the mill by horse and wagon from the outlying areas, while some lived in company tenement houses surrounding the mill.¹⁷ While most of the supervisors and technicians were brought in from areas with established cotton mills like Rhode Island and Massachusetts, most of the laborers were from surrounding rural areas. As with most cotton mills in North Carolina, the work force was exclusively white during the twentieth century. It was not until whole families became permanently employed at the mill, that the mill village grew. To occupy a mill house, the head of the household had to work at the mill. Usually, two or more household members, including wives and teenage-children, worked in the mill. In 1900, the mill houses were occupied by an average of four to eight persons, of which three to six worked in the mill in some capacity.¹⁸ Most often, houses were occupied by large families who worked in the mill for successive generations, as a repetition of names at various addresses in the village were found.¹⁹

Much of the mill housing along Elm Street and Falls Road was erected between 1888 and 1892. No record of a contractor or source of design for the mill houses was found. As with most mill villages, the houses were most likely designed and built by local carpenters, some of whom might have been employed by the mill. By 1889, twenty-five one-story frame houses, generally about 16 feet by 32 feet with a rear addition, had been built along East and West Elm Street and along the 1000 block of Falls Road. Three years later, twenty-eight mill houses of the same size were erected on West Elm Street, Falls Road, and Cedar Street.²⁰

As the mill continued to boom during the late nineteenth century, like many other textile mills in North Carolina, housing increased and improved, shaping the mill village into a cohesive social unit. In 1893 Rocky Mount Mills took formal action to obtain a charter from the legislature incorporating the growing mill village inhabited by its employees as the independent town of Rocky Mount Mills.²¹ In an 1894 circular announcing a bond issue by the

¹⁵ Ibid.; Sanborn Insurance Map, 1891.

¹⁶ *Rocky Mount Mills: A Case History of Industrial Development, 1818-1943*, pg. 28; Jacobs, Barry. *National Register Nomination of Rocky Mount Mills*, 1979; Sanborn Insurance Map, 1896.

¹⁷ *Rocky Mount, North Carolina Centennial Commemorative Book, 1867-1967*.

¹⁸ Census for Nash County, 1900.

¹⁹ Rocky Mount City Directories; Interviews with Kermit Paris and Harvey Israel, August 1998.

²⁰ American Appraisal Company. *Rocky Mount Mills Retrospective Appraisal*. Milwaukee, 1923.

²¹ Battle, Kemp D., "A History of the Rocky Mount Mills," in *The Battle Book, A Genealogy of the Battle Family in America, 1930*, pg. 181; Jacobs, Barry. *National Register Nomination of Rocky Mount Mills*, 1979.

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mill. the company is described as having three brick factories, eighty tenement houses, a brick office, store, and standard storage buildings.²² The town of Rocky Mount Mills, supported entirely by the company, had a full town government with a mayor, board, fire department, constable, and school. Postal service was provided by the post office in Rocky Mount.²³ The fire department was located on the east side of the present 900 block of Falls Road.²⁴

The second mill school, serving seven grades, was built by the company for the children of employees in 1889.²⁵ Non-extant, it stood at the southeast corner of Falls Road and River Drive. The school also held night classes available for the mill employees. Although the night classes taught by ladies of nearby towns or employees were voluntary, the mill encouraged the employees to attend them. The subjects were reading, writing, and later, general elementary curriculums. The early classes merged into the Moonlight School, an experimental program first started in Kentucky in 1911 which focused on the problem of illiteracy. Later the night programs at the mill school were converted to vocational classes.²⁶

Although the mill worker generally had a higher standard of living than as a tenant farmer, they were not without hardships. Mill workers suffered the strains of long hours, small wages, and disease. Malaria was a common illness in the area. "James Ruffin frequently referred to the loss of production due to malaria among the workers and observed that they often lacked 'snap and vigor.' " Poor sanitary conditions in the village assisted in spreading disease among the workers. In 1896, the unhealthful conditions began improving as running water was installed in the mill and village, and a company doctor was hired. Automatic humidifiers installed in 1899 helped to monitor the floating lint that workers breathed into their lungs. Rocky Mount Mills was one of the first mills in the state to install these.²⁷

In 1898 James Ruffin retired from Rocky Mount Mills and Thomas H. Battle was elected treasurer and took the roll of mill manager. Battle retired as President and was succeeded by R.H. Hicks, who remained president until his death in 1920. Hyman L. Battle, being the fifth generation of the Battle Family, succeeded his father as treasurer-manager in 1933.²⁸

The turn of the century brought many changes which benefited the mill employees. In 1902 management abolished the company store, once located on the west side of Falls Road, and the credit system that had kept many mill hands in debt to the company. Also in that year, the mill reduced its work week from seventy-two to sixty-six hours. The work week was further reduced to sixty hours in 1912.²⁹ Workers enjoyed close proximity

²² *Rocky Mount Mills: A Case History of Industrial Development, 1818-1943*, pg. 28-29.

²³ *Rocky Mount, North Carolina Centennial Commemorative Book, 1867-1967*.

²⁴ Sanborn Insurance Map, 1907.

²⁵ Mattson, Richard L. *The History and Architecture of Nash County*, pg. 298.

²⁶ Herring, Harriet. *Welfare Work in Mill Villages*, pg. 68.

²⁷ Jacobs, Barry. *National Register Nomination of Rocky Mount Mills*, 1979.

²⁸ *Rocky Mount Mills: A Case History of Industrial Development, 1818-1943*.

²⁹ *Ibid*: Jacobs, Barry. *National Register Nomination of Rocky Mount Mills*, 1979.

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to hardware, drug, and grocery stores that emerged in the early twentieth century at the southern edge of the mill village at the intersection of Falls Road and Ridge Street.³⁰

Beginning in 1906, the mill began building and improving worker housing in the village. In 1906, a one-story mill house was built at 22 East Elm Street and another was listed as "house in woods" in a 1923 retrospective appraisal. Ten one-story dwellings were built in 1908 on Falls Road, Cedar and Elm Streets. Another nine houses were constructed in 1910 along West Elm Street.³¹ All mill houses were rescreened and provided with indoor plumbing in 1911. Also in 1911, the mill and entire plant was electrified by one of the first steam turbines in the state. Two years later, the houses were equipped with electric lights and gas.³² The mill erected three three-room houses and five new rooms were added to other houses in 1913 at a cost of \$1,218. New sidewalks along Falls Road were installed in 1913. Concerning the sidewalks the mill treasurer commented, "The cost is high, but this will be a very great help to our people. The most difficult element in manufacturing at present is the labor and it is absolutely necessary that we do everything in our power to promote the health and comfort of our operatives."³³ Between about 1913 and 1916, the last group of mill houses was erected along River Drive.³⁴ The employee housing was regularly maintained by the mill. Most often, day employees conducted the upkeep on the houses. The housing was at least equivalent in comfort and convenience to any available rentals elsewhere in Rocky Mount. In an effort to maintain a presentable village, the mill held contests for the best kept properties and yards.³⁵

As demands for cotton products increased with the arrival of World War I, the mill rapidly expanded in the early twentieth century. At this time, the mill recruited employees from around the state, especially from Lumberton in Robeson County. It is said that recruiters promised steady work and good housing and as a result, they brought back workers by the wagonload. By World War I, the number of houses in the village reached a high of 165.³⁶

In keeping with the paternalistic attitude of the mill management, Rocky Mount Mills provided its employees with amenities other than company housing. Generally, the development of these amenities coincided with times of prosperity. A large bungalow (25) was constructed as a community house for the mill village during World War I.³⁷ The large, front room of the house was often used for social events like dances and its smaller rooms served as the doctor's day clinic. A company baseball team, the "Fighting Skinners" was also instituted in the early 1920s. Mill employees played on a field with grandstand at the northeast corner of present day Peachtree

³⁰ Mattson, Richard L. *The History and Architecture of Nash County*, pg. 298.

³¹ American Appraisal Company. *Rocky Mount Mills Retrospective Appraisal*. Milwaukee, 1923.

³² Jacobs, Barry. *National Register Nomination of Rocky Mount Mills*, 1979; *Rocky Mount Mills: A Case History of Industrial Development, 1818-1943*.

³³ Meeting Minutes of the Board, March 31, 1913.

³⁴ Mattson, Richard L. pg. 298.

³⁵ Interview with Kermit Paris, July 1998.

³⁶ Mattson, Richard L. pg. 298.

³⁷ Jacobs, Barry. *National Register Nomination of Rocky Mount Mills*, 1979; Mattson, Richard L. pg. 298; Sanborn Insurance Map, 1923.

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Street extension and River Drive. The grandstand was torn down in the early 1950s after the warehouses on Falls Road were expanded.³⁸ Mill employees also enjoyed movies at a theater located in the village. Torn down by 1949, the two-story frame movie theater stood east of the warehouses on Falls Road.³⁹ The mill also permitted and encouraged the establishment of a mutual welfare association for the employees. This association, run by mill employees, provided financial assistance to needy mill workers during such times as death or illness. A rent free restaurant named the Canteen was set up for the association in the former brick office building. This early 1880s building is now connected with Mill No. Two. The Canteen provided the workers with good food and the substantial profits were utilized in welfare services for the employees. The mill periodically made large contributions to the "Canteen Fund," each year. The restaurant served as a social gathering place for the employees in the village into the late 1960s.⁴⁰

In 1927 the Town of Rocky Mount Mills and the City of Rocky Mount merged, and conditions improved even more for workers at the mill.⁴¹ Work week hours were cut to fifty-five hours in 1929 and forty-eight hours in 1933. The Great Depression brought a degree of hardship to both capital and labor; nevertheless, the owners of the mill supported the Federal Wage and Hour Act in 1935 which proposed an increase in the minimum wage and set maximum hours for the textile industry. In 1939 the Federal government proposed an increase in the minimum wage for the cotton textile industry, and Hyman L. Battle, treasurer and manager of Rocky Mount Mills at the time, appeared before the hearing arguing in favor of the thirty-two-and-a-half cent per hour minimum wage. He, "wanted to correct the idea that all Southern textile men are against the recommended rate." Rocky Mount Mills installed employee benefits, including health insurance and a mutual welfare association, in the 1930s and 1940s.⁴²

World War II drastically increased production at Rocky Mount Mills. The mill devoted ninety-five percent of its output to supplying yarn to be used in the production of war supplies.⁴³ In April of 1944, the War Manpower Corporation ordered all textile plants to operate on a forty-eight-hour week basis rather than the forty-hour week, demonstrating the importance of the textile industry in producing yarn during the war effort.⁴⁴ The Battle family remained active in running the plant during the war. Kemp Davis Battle (1888-1973) served as vice president of the company at the time. Kemp D. Battle, a Rocky Mount lawyer and son of Thomas H. Battle, served for fifty-five years in the capacities of legal counsel, vice-president, or chairman of the board of directors of Rocky Mount Mills.⁴⁵

³⁸ "Riverside Bulletin," weekly newsletter by Rocky Mount Mills, 1944-45; Sanborn Insurance Map, 1923 and 1949.

³⁹ Sanborn Insurance Map, 1923 and 1949.

⁴⁰ *Rocky Mount Mills: A Case History of Industrial Development, 1818-1943*, pg. 37.

⁴¹ Jacobs, Barry. *National Register Nomination of Rocky Mount Mills*, 1979; *Rocky Mount, North Carolina Centennial Commemorative Book*, 1867-1967.

⁴² Jacobs, Barry. *National Register Nomination of Rocky Mount Mills*, 1979.

⁴³ Jacobs, Barry. *National Register Nomination of Rocky Mount Mills*, 1979.

⁴⁴ "Riverside Bulletin," weekly newsletter by Rocky Mount Mills, 1944.

⁴⁵ *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, pg. 113 Vol. A-C, 1979.

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Mill employees who left to serve in the armed forces were guaranteed their jobs upon their return. The mill maintained contact with the soldiers by publishing the "Riverside Bulletin," a weekly newsletter for employees in the armed services. The bulletin, which ran from March 22, 1944 to September 19, 1945, provided the soldiers with local news, war updates, sport scores, as well as a weekly "pin-up" girl, which was generally a photograph of one of the younger female employees.⁴⁶

As a result of the mills prosperity during the war, Rocky Mount Mills village underwent significant improvements in the 1940s. Thomas Herman, an architect from Wilson and a personal friend of Mr. and Mrs. Hyman L. Battle, was hired to restore the original portico to the Benjamin D. Battle House as well as update many of the mill dwellings. After much research, Herman replaced the 1910's two-story, almost full-facade porch on the Battle House with the present portico, which is in keeping with the original house design. Herman based the design of the portico on that of the Dunbar House, a similar Greek Revival dwelling in Edgecombe County. To spruce up the mill houses, Herman redesigned the facades of the dwellings with low-cost but well-conceived lattice and "colonialized" porches, relocated porches of some houses to the side elevations, and reorganized interior plans, converting duplexes to single-family units. All of the interiors were modernized at that time.⁴⁷ After a 1945 discussion by mill managers regarding the lack of labor force, authorization was approved to construct seventeen dwellings in the village to be sold to the employees. At the next meeting, the proposal was voted down.⁴⁸ The houses at 22 Carr Street, 35 River Drive, and 2 East Elm Street appear to have been constructed during the 1940s. In 1945 the streets in the village were paved with asphalt. The Rocky Mount Mills school was closed in 1946 and was used as apartments until its demolition in 1949. In 1946 the mill village accommodated only thirty-two percent of the some 700 mill employees.⁴⁹

At the conclusion of World War II, Rocky Mount Mills expanded its facilities and produced a variety of textile products. While most Southern textile companies were selling off their mill villages, Rocky Mount Mills village remained under company control. Life in the mill village changed very slowly. Many of the mill houses were updated in the 1950s with asbestos shingle siding, while others were destroyed.

In the 1960s, Thomas B. Battle, son of Hyman L. Battle, took over running the mill and continued until 1993 when John M. Mebane Jr., grandson of Thomas H. Battle, was elected president and chief executive officer. During the Vietnam War era, a period when demand for textiles increased, production at Rocky Mount Mills surged. Although Rocky Mount Mills continued to invest in new machinery during the 1970s and 1980s, the company operated during a period when cotton prices were volatile.

By the 1990s, Rocky Mount Mills was considered a small mill by production standards. In 1995, North Carolina cotton farmers grew their largest crop since before the Civil War. Cotton prices increased over fifty percent and

⁴⁶ "Riverside Bulletin," weekly newsletter by Rocky Mount Mills, 1944-45.

⁴⁷ Mattson, Richard L. pg. 299; Bishir, Catherine, *A Guide to the Architecture of Eastern North Carolina*, pg. 336.

⁴⁸ Meeting Minutes of the Board, 1945-46.

⁴⁹ Meeting Minutes of the Board, 1946 and 1949.

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yarn prices decreased, forcing many textile mills to close. Rocky Mount Mills, which closed in June of 1996 was one of many North Carolina textile mills that folded during that time. Since their closure, Rocky Mount Mills has been seeking developers to redevelop the mill and mill village. Preliminary studies have been conducted for the rehabilitation of the mill and warehouse buildings into condominiums, office and retail space. A Raleigh developer has the first option to purchase the mill village with covenants. The existing housing in the village will be rehabilitated and marketed as moderate income housing. Rocky Mount Mills seeks listing the entire mill village in the National Register of Historic Places in an effort to provide protection to the district and make its contributing buildings eligible for Federal and State rehabilitation tax credits.

Architectural Context:

The layout and design of the industrial and residential buildings in the Rocky Mount Mills Village Historic District are characteristic of similar mill villages constructed in North Carolina during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although small in comparison to mills in the Piedmont region and in Roanoke Rapids, the district retains the standard resources associated with textile-manufacturing mills and their attendant villages: factory buildings, warehouses, early and stylish houses built for management and supervisors, and more numerous modest dwellings for workers. Owing to the long company ownership of the mill, the district demonstrates a high level of architectural integrity unequalled by other mill villages in North Carolina.

Rocky Mount Mills Village Historic District represents the trends in factory architecture and industrial housing which resulted from industrial growth in North Carolina beginning in the 1870s. Although Rocky Mount Mills history begins in 1818, the surviving industrial structures date from 1870, the year construction began after two previous fires. Two residential resources remain intact from the mill's antebellum period.

The main factory buildings, built between 1870 and 1894, exemplify the Italianate style popular in North Carolina industrial architecture during the late nineteenth century. Generally modeled after New England examples, typical North Carolina mill buildings featured thick plank floors and stout timbers which would burn slowly during a fire. Brick stair towers, often supporting a water tank for a sprinkler system, were also employed to prevent fires from spreading between the main structures. The buildings were adorned with long, regular rows of arched windows to provide air and natural light for the workers inside.⁵⁰ The three Rocky Mount Mills factory buildings (20a-20c) exhibit the "slow burn" construction, brick stair towers, and rows of arched windows. The buildings also feature hallmark characteristics of industrial Italianate architecture including common bond brick, exposed curved wooden purlins, low gabled roofs, and decorative brickwork.

Housing in North Carolina's mill villages followed the Rhode Island model of single-family units, rather than the Lowell, Massachusetts system of boarding-houses for workers. In order to attract workers, mill owners replicated the rural atmosphere that the families of workers from nearby farms were accustomed to. Detached houses were set on large lots with ample room for gardens and animals.⁵¹ Rocky Mount Mills Village Historic

⁵⁰ Bishir, Catherine. *North Carolina Architecture*, p. 365-369.

⁵¹ Glass, Brent *Textile Industry in North Carolina: A History*, pg. 18

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District serves as an excellent illustration of the typical nineteenth century riverside mill village. The homogenous worker housing in the district consists of mostly one-story dwellings accompanied by two-story dwellings, originally built as duplexes, and several more architecturally significant houses built for mill managers and superintendents.

Generally, mill houses were designed and built by local carpenters. By the late nineteenth century the designs had become standardized and were available to textile engineers in textbooks like Daniel A. Tompkins 1899 book, *Cotton Mill, Commercial Features: A Text-Book for the Use of Textile Schools and Investors*. The book included examples of two-, three-, four-, and five-room one-story dwellings for workers that could be built for \$250 to \$450 each.⁵²

The numerous, small and simply-finished, one-story frame dwellings found in the Rocky Mount Mills Village Historic District are typical of similar modest dwellings erected in North Carolina mill villages and in the rural areas of Piedmont North Carolina during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The two-room houses with rear kitchen wings, most of which have saddlebag plans, were built as complete units. Both subtypes of the saddlebag form are represented in the district. Nine exhibit two exterior doors leading into each room while twenty-nine exhibit the second subtype, with a single, central door leading into a vestibule beside the chimney. The saddlebag houses with two-door, two-room arrangement provided for a small duplex plan that suited the mill's occupancy policy. Company rules stated in the early 1900s that each house had to be occupied by a minimum of two and maximum of three employees. Frame saddlebag houses, similar to those in Rocky Mount Mills village, were employed in other North Carolina mill villages such as Cedar Falls, Edna and Edenton.⁵³ In the rural areas of Nash County, this house was a common dwelling for both white and black tenants and sharecroppers. A single one-story, two-room frame house with exterior-end chimney remains in the district (72).

Two-story dwellings built as duplexes interrupt the rhythm of one-story houses in the district at the junction of Falls Road and Elm Street. Reflecting another common vernacular building form dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these five dwellings (14-17, 61) are two-story, single-pile dwellings, a common dwelling form for farmhouses in North Carolina during this period. The house at 1032 Falls Road (15) features flanking exterior-end brick chimneys, while the other four have central chimneys. Four have dual entries (14-16, 61), while 1026 Falls Road (16) has a center-hall plan with central entrance.

Among the repetition of small one- and two-story frame mill dwellings, the district contains three large and stylish dwellings constructed for higher-ranking mill associates. The earliest and most significant of these is the Benjamin D. Battle House (24) built in 1835. Constructed for a mill owner, the house represents the antebellum establishment of the mill and is one of Nash County's earliest surviving examples of the Greek Revival style. The intact two-story, frame dwelling retains emblems of the style including a low-pitched roof, fluted window and door surrounds, and double-entry doors framed by sidelights and transom. Another of the county's earliest

⁵² Glass, Brent. *Textile Industry in North Carolina: A History*. pg. 18.

⁵³ Bishir, Catherine. *North Carolina Architecture*, p. 369.

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surviving examples of the Greek Revival style is the superintendent cottage associated with Rocky Mount Mills. Located at 1107 Falls Road, the house (25) exhibits Greek Revival details similar to the Battle residence. The one-story, double-pile dwelling with central-hall plan features horizontal proportions well suited to the broad forms of the Greek Revival. The one-story form in the Greek Revival style was a common house type that appeared in Nash County between the 1840s and 1870s. In addition to the two Greek Revival houses, another architecturally important mill house is the late nineteenth century gable-roofed Victorian cottage at 1118 Falls Road (13) which was a typical dwelling of the post-Civil War era in North Carolina. The decorative porch with sawnwork brackets and turned porch posts suggests that the house was built for a mill manager.

The nationally popular Craftsman style is also represented in the district. Around 1918, when the mill was experiencing prosperity from World War I, a large bungalow at 1135 Falls Road (25) to be used as a community house was constructed. This intact bungalow is the only residential example of the Craftsman style in the district.

Industry Context:

Rocky Mount Mills' unique character is derived from the company's antebellum beginnings and its 178 years of operation. The long history of the mill parallels the evolution of the textile industry in North Carolina. Rocky Mount Mills was the second cotton mill in North Carolina and, at its closing in 1996, the oldest mill operating in the South.⁵⁴

Cotton manufacturing started in North Carolina in the Piedmont region in the early nineteenth century when mills were founded at waterpower sites. Before 1825, only three factories stood in North Carolina, one of which was the original Rocky Mount Mills, Great Falls Mill. It emerged at the eastern edge of the Piedmont under the direction of Joel Battle, a planter and merchant in Edgecombe County. In 1818, Battle positioned the mill at the falls of the Tar River, taking advantage of the excellent power source. The Schneck Warlick Mill in Lincoln County was established five years prior to Rocky Mount Mills. The third was developed by George McNeil in 1825 along the Rockfish Creek near Fayetteville.

The time of operation of Rocky Mount Mills represents the formative years of the industry in North Carolina. Like most Southern textile pioneers, Joel Battle relied upon the technology of New England and upon the technical expertise of northern engineers to assist in the building and managing of the mill. Despite assistance from experienced, mostly northern, mill supervisors, North Carolina textile pioneers were faced with complex and unique challenges which did not subside until after Reconstruction when the industry flourished. Although the 1840s brought a burst of activity in cotton mill production, the wave of expansion quickly diminished with rising cotton prices. North Carolina contained only twenty-five mills in 1840, which operated fewer than 50,000 spindles, about 700 looms, and employed only 1,200 people. The New England states had 674 mills utilizing 1,497,394 spindles and employed over 46,000 workers at the same time.

As a pioneer of the industry, Rocky Mount Mills was developing new products at a time when an industrialized

⁵⁴ Bishir, Catherine. *A Guide to the Architecture of Eastern North Carolina*, pg. 366.

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South was not well supported. It was not until the Civil War that the importance of industrial growth in the South was realized. Because it supplied goods to the troops, Rocky Mount Mills' importance increased with the onset of the Civil War, making it a target of the Union Troops. It was one of approximately ten North Carolina mills destroyed by Union Troops during the war.

Following a surge in cotton prices after the Civil War, the cotton market collapsed and prices fell through the 1870s. As a result, growth in cotton manufacturing dramatically expanded.⁵⁵ This rapid boom in the textile industry after 1880 is owed to the lure of profits and the desire to support an industry that would create jobs for poor whites, struggling in the agricultural based economy. The reorganization of Rocky Mount Mills in 1885 coincided with this boom in the industry; it expanded its operation in the early 1890s and had built a substantial mill village for its workers. The number of textile mills in North Carolina reached a high point between 1890 and 1910.

Before electrification, the textile industry emerged slowly in eastern North Carolina because there were not many waterpower sites. The industry was entrenched in the Piedmont just as eastern North Carolina towns like Tarboro, Wilson, and Edenton had just begun to establish mills.⁵⁶ By the time the industry had a strong footing in the state, Rocky Mount Mills had been in operation for over sixty years and had expanded its operation.

Rocky Mount Mills' long ownership and maintenance of the mill village represents the typical paternalistic spirit of North Carolina's industrial elite in projecting an image of social responsibility towards its employees. Between the 1930s and the 1950s, many North Carolina textile mills sold off their mill housing to employees. Rocky Mount Mills sustained ownership of their mill village and is one of a few mills which continued to offer its employees housing.

⁵⁵ McHugh, Cathy L. *Mill Family*, pg. 5

⁵⁶ Bishir, Catherine. *A Guide to the Architecture of Eastern North Carolina*, pg. 46.

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Section 10: Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundaries of the district are shown by a black line on the accompanying map, drawn approximately at a scale of 1 inch = 200 feet. This map is a composite of Nash County Tax Maps 3850.10 and 3850.14, mapped in 1997.

Boundary Justification:

The boundaries are drawn to include the densest concentration of contributing resources in the Rocky Mount Mills village.

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**Section Photos Page 36
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Photographs:

The following information pertains to all photographs:

Photographer: Michelle Kullen

Date: July 1998

Location of negatives: North Carolina Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh

- A. View of Rocky Mount Mills from the Tar River, looking southeast.
- B. View of Tower on Mill No. 2, looking southwest.
- C. General view of mill houses and large oak trees on west side of Carr Street, looking southwest.
- D. View of mill houses on Carr Street, looking southwest.
- E. Typical two-story, single-pile mill house at 1020 Falls Road, looking west.
- F. Typical early twentieth century saddlebag at 14 River Drive, looking south.
- G. Empty lot at SE corner of Carr Street and River Drive.
- H. Benjamin D. Battle House, looking east.
- I. Former Community House at 1135 Falls Road, looking east.
- J. General view of mill houses along West Elm Street, looking southwest.
- K. View of houses on the east side of Falls Road, looking south.

