

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

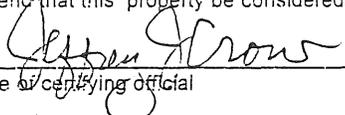
historic name **(former) Saxapahaw Spinning Mill**
other names/site number

2. Location

street & number **1647 Saxapahaw Bethlehem Church Road** N/A not for publication
city or town **Saxapahaw** N/A vicinity
state **North Carolina** code **NC** county **Alamance** code **001** zip code **27340**

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

 SHPO 4/6/98
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: Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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).

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u> 2 </u>	<u> 1 </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____ sites	
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____ structures	
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____ objects	
		<u> 2 </u>	<u> 1 </u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)	Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
<u> N/A </u>	<u> -0- </u>

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)		Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)	
Cat:	Sub:	Cat:	Sub:
Industry	<u> manufacturing facility </u>	Work in Progress	

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)	Materials (Enter categories from instructions)
<u> other: 19th-early 20th century industrial </u>	foundation <u> brick </u>
	walls <u> brick </u>
	roof <u> metal and asphalt </u>
	other _____

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- Criteria A, B, C, D with checkboxes and descriptions of property significance.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Industry
Architecture

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

Property is:

- Criteria A through G with checkboxes and descriptions of property characteristics.

Period of Significance 1906-1948

- Significant Dates 1906, 1917, 1927, 1938

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder unknown

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- Documentation checkboxes: preliminary determination, previously listed, designated landmark, recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey, recorded by Historic American Engineering Record.

Primary Location of Additional Data

- Location checkboxes: State Historic Preservation Office, Other State agency, Federal agency, Local government, University, Other.

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 6.69 acres

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

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	17	651425	3		
2			4		

See continuation sheet.

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 **John M. "Mac" Jordan**
 organization **Jordan Properties, LLC**
 street & number **1616 Jordan Drive**
 city or town **Saxapahaw**

state **North Carolina**

date **October, 1997**
 telephone **910-376-3122**
 zip code **27340**

Additional Documentation

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 **B. Everett Jordan & Son, LLC John M. Jordan, General Manager**street & number **Post Office Box 128**telephone **910-376-3121**city or town **Saxapahaw**state **North Carolina**zip code **27340**

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.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

(former) Saxapahaw Spinning Mill
Alamance County, North Carolina

Narrative Physical Description

Commanding the western-most six and one-half acres of the total thirty-four-acre Saxapahaw Mill property, the Saxapahaw Spinning Mill is a three-story augmented L-shaped brick, heavy timber and steel building, some 350 feet long (east-west) and 150 feet wide (north-south). Saxapahaw-Bethlehem Church Road (SR 2146) winds along the north edge of the site that contains a total of five buildings, while the Haw River frames the southern boundary. The western boundary of the property is formed by the Church Street (SR 2171) bridge that carries south over the river.

The spinning mill sits at an oblique angle to the river and stretches northeast to southwest (see Exhibit II). A screen of trees and scrub vegetation lines the bank of the river, and the boundary of the nominated property follows the property line that extends roughly one hundred feet beyond the bank. The topography of the site rises dramatically from the river bank to Saxapahaw-Bethlehem Church Road. This route forms the boundary between the mill complex and the small village associated with it (see Exhibit I). Overall, the site slopes some thirty feet from the east end, where the dye plant is located to the riverside south of the mill. Before 1938, a mill race paralleled the river, west of the complex (see Exhibit III). The two-story brick boiler shed with steel trusses and metal roof built between 1930-1938, sits parallel some 100 feet to the southeast of the mill. Two hundred feet to the northeast, beyond the nominated tract, the three-story brick dye plant, built in 1952 and expanded in 1954, also lies parallel with the spinning mill. While important in its physical size and company history, the dye plant is not included in this nomination because it is less than fifty years old. The cotton shed sits closest to the Saxapahaw-Bethlehem Church Road some fifty feet to the northwest of the mill, and was built between 1880-1917. The northern section of this building has frame exterior walls covered with pressed metal siding and consists of five bays separated by brick fire walls. As production increased during the 1930s and 1940s the cotton shed was expanded to the south toward the spinning mill. Due to the recent loss of its roof and floors from tornado damage, the building is presently non-contributing, but plans are underway to restore it, and the nomination may be amended to reflect that.

The oldest largely intact sections of the spinning mill date from between 1906 and 1938 and include the east wing, the north elevation stair towers, and the former power house located on the southwest corner (see 1924 Sanborn Map, Exhibit III). Holt, White & Williamson Company built these additions to the original 1880 west wing that had replaced the 1844 antebellum cotton mill erected on the site by textile pioneer Jonathan (John) Newlin.¹ The east wing is an excellent example of nineteenth-century rural textile mill industrial design with expansive five-foot by ten-foot segmental arch window openings, triple hung wooden multi-light sash, eighteen-inch-thick brick masonry walls, heavy-timber post-and-beam interior structure, and maple hardwood

¹ Bulla, Ben F. former Treasurer and Controller, and B. Everett Jordan, Jr.. former Vice President & President, Sellers Manufacturing Co., interview, August 1997

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

(former) Saxapahaw Spinning Mill
Alamance County, North Carolina

floors. Brick buttresses on the north and east elevations were added soon after its 1906 construction to stabilize the massive masonry walls.

The shallow side-gabled roof consists of two-by-six-inch tongue-and-splice sheathing overlaid with foam insulation board and a new single-ply membrane supported by massive eight-by-sixteen inch wooden beams.

There is some question as to the date of the three-story brick front north stair tower (Section B). While it is present in the 1924 Sanborn insurance map, its steel windows are of the same vintage as the 1930s west wing addition. No records exist to determine whether the structure was completely replaced or just the windows updated. However, the interior structure is steel, which may suggest this to be a 1930s-era building.

The former power house, a small rectangular, brick, side-gabled building, now attached to the west wing, straddled the old mill race filled in 1938, and contained the water powered turbines (Section A₁). Erected circa 1880 by Holt, White and Williamson, Co., the original structure contained a water wheel that operated a belt-driven shaft extending the length of the Newlin & Holt mills (former 1880s west wing). This water-powered wheel and shaft ran all the textile machinery in the spinning mill, therefore a single problem could shut down the entire plant. According to oral history notes taken by Mr. Ben Bulla in 1949, the Holt, White and Williamson Co. replaced the water wheel with turbines shortly after the death of George Williamson in 1917². To provide a more reliable source of power and increase the building's efficiency, Sellers Manufacturing Company replaced the flood-prone wooden dam with a thirty-foot-high concrete dam and power plant to the west of the spinning mill site (see Exhibit I and Exhibit VIII). The turbines were removed and the old race filled. While Sellers installed "modern" steel windows in the existing openings, the two-story, brick power house remains largely intact. The building's brick corbelling and keystone concrete lentils are the most ornate architectural detail of the complex.

The Saxapahaw Spinning Mill underwent considerable expansion after C. V. "Charles" Sellars purchased it out of receivership in 1927. Beginning in 1930, Sellers Manufacturing Company replaced the two-story 1880-era Holt Company west wing, as seen in the 1924 Sanborn Insurance Map, with the existing three-story rectangular west wing.³ This addition attaches to the west end of the circa 1906 east wing and effectively creates one large integrated building under a shallow side-gable roof. Typical of most early twentieth-century industrial facilities, the west wing consists of twelve-to-eighteen-inch thick brick exterior walls, expansive five-by-ten-foot flat-arched windows with steel mullions, steel columns and support beams, and maple hardwood floors. Although less ornate than its twin to the east, the west wing maintains the same building grid and window size and rhythm. The interior of the spinning mills is a typical

² Bulla, Ben F. "Saxapahaw, Among Oldest Settlements in Area". The Daily Times News, Burlington, NC. May, 1949.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

(former) Saxapahaw Spinning Mill
Alamance County, North Carolina

open-plan, "slow-burn" design similar to the architectural drawing shown as Exhibit V. The 1906-1924 east wing consists of sixteen bays with eight-by-ten heavy timber columns spaced eight feet on center. The 1927-1938 west wing consists of twelve bays with eight-ten-inch heavy-timber columns spaced eight feet on center. The 1927-1938 west wing consists of twelve bays with eight-inch steel I-beam columns spaced sixteen feet on center. The painted masonry walls and varnished hardwood floors, while well worn by decades of use, are in excellent condition. The few areas where wood roof sheathing, heavy timber supporting beams, and two layer four-inch hardwood flooring sustained moisture damage due to roof leakage have been reconstructed. The most substantial interior damage has occurred on the first floor west wing where river water from the 1996 Hurricane Fran flood buckled the entire floor structure. The present owners have managed to salvage the maple floor and are in the process of reconstructing the sub-floor.

Later expansions in the 1940s and 1950s include additions to the cotton shed (Section C₁); the three-story brick card and spinning room, attached to the south elevation of the east wing (Section D₁); the one story quality control lab, and two-story chiller room both located on the northeast corner of the east wing (Section D₂& E₁); and the one story brick warp room located on the west end of the west wing (Section E₂). The warp room was demolished due to damage from the 1994, tornado and Hurricane Fran in 1996. The last additions to the spinning mill consisted of the two-story chiller room and air conditioning system which ran the length of the west wing on the south side (Section F₁) and the two-story loading dock and canteen attached to the east end of the east wing (Section E₃). The chiller room/air conditioning system has also been removed due to substantial deterioration. Over half of the original windows have been removed or covered as a result of later expansion and modernization. A large portion of the east-facing exterior wall was removed and spanned with a steel beam lintel to accommodate the loading dock which was added in the late 1950s (Section E₃). A central clerestory roof monitor ran the length of the building but was removed during the 1950s when Sellers Manufacturing Company installed modern air conditioning systems.⁴ A replica was constructed by the present owner in 1996 as part of the roof renovation.

The massive three-story brick Saxapahaw Mill Complex with its steel and heavy timber structure has survived fire, two 100-year floods and a tornado. Its imposing yet majestic presence on the banks of the Haw River, in the center of the picturesque village of Saxapahaw, is a remarkable surviving example of rural textile mill architecture.

Integrity Statement

Like other successful long-running textile manufacturing operations, the Saxapahaw Spinning Mill developed and expanded its facilities throughout its 150-year history in order to accommodate increased production and technological advances. As shown in Exhibit II there were six significant periods of expansion:

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

(former) Saxapahaw Spinning Mill
Alamance County, North Carolina

-
- a) 1880 - 1906
 - b) 1906- 1924
 - c) 1927- 1938
 - d) 1939- 1949
 - e) 1952- 1956
 - f) 1962- 1965

Expansions by the Holt, White and Williamson Co. (Section B) and Sellers Manufacturing Company (Section C) enhanced the flow of production by replicating the open plan design, structure, and materials. Modernization of the facility during the 1950s and 1960s entailed installation of air conditioning and ventilation systems, covering of window openings and removal of the roof monitor. Fortunately the development and modernization of the building over time was pragmatic as well as sensitive; therefore, the overall appearance of this historic structure retains its original majestic presence overlooking the banks of the Haw River.

³Ibid.

⁴Bulla and Jordan, interview.

Section number 8 Page 5

(former) Saxapahaw Spinning Mill
Alamance County, North Carolina

Summary:

The circa 1880-1938 Saxapahaw Spinning Mill is the most historic and architecturally significant portion of the some thirty-four-acre, five building -Saxapahaw Mill complex overlooking the banks of the Haw River in the rural village of Saxapahaw in southern Alamance County. The site of one of the first textile mills in North Carolina, known as Newlin & Sons, which operated between 1844 and 1873 under Mr. Newlin, the Saxapahaw Site supplied yarn for fabric for the local citizens and the North Carolina Confederate Army. From 1873 to 1922, Holt, White and Williamson Company produced gingham and fancy woven fabrics. In 1927, Sellers Manufacturing Company switched to fine-combed mercerized yams for socks, underwear and hosiery which they produced until 1978. The Saxapahaw Mill operated for almost 150 years until Dixie Yarns, owners from 1978 to 1995, closed its doors in 1994. Restrained and functional in design and ornamentation, the building expands westward along the Haw River. The detailing includes segmental arch windows, exterior brick buttresses and heavy timber interior of the 1906-1917 east wing to the functional brick and steel 1927-1938 west wing. Providing the most reliable source of employment, apart from agriculture, for this rather remote community, the Saxapahaw Spinning Mill was pivotal to the economic and industrial development of this eastern Alamance County community. Similar in size, location and architecture to other rural cotton mills such as Cedar Falls, in Randolph County; Glencoe (NR 1979) and Bellemont (NR 1987), also in Alamance County; and Bynum, in Chatham County, the Saxapahaw Spinning Mill commands attention as a local landmark. Owned by three of the most prominent and influential families in Alamance County history (the Newlins, Holts and Jordans), this site represents an outstanding example of the classic rural cotton mill.

Historic Background and Industry Context:

Local legend maintains the name Saxapahaw means "rocks on the Haw". It is these rocks and this river which first led the Native American Sissipahaw Indians to establish a village along its banks, as evidenced by an early map dated 1592 that shows Sissipahaw (now Saxapahaw) and Sapona (now Cedar Falls), Randolph County as the two westernmost Indian villages on this pre-colonial map.⁵ Some 200 to 300 years later it was these same waters that allowed many of the first European settlers to build homes, farms, grist mills, and finally cotton mills in this remote area of the North Carolina Piedmont. The water that turned the wheels of the early grist mills started powering looms and spindles in 1837 when Edwin M. Holt built the first cotton mill in Alamance County on the banks of Alamance Creek, a Haw River tributary approximately eight miles northwest of Saxapahaw.⁶ Seven years later (1844), Jonathan (John) Newlin, born in

⁵ Bulla, "Saxapahaw..." 1949.

⁶ Pierpont, Andrew W., Development of the Textile Industry in Alamance County NC, unpublished dissertation, UNC-Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC, 1953, pp. 49-51, Hughes, Julian, Development of the Textile Industry in Alamance County, Burlington Letter Shop, Burlington, NC, 1965, pp. 33-39.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

(former) Saxapahaw Spinning Mill
Alamance County, North Carolina

1776 to Quaker immigrants, John and Deborah Newlin of the neighboring village of Eli Whitney, built the third cotton mill in Alamance County, following General Benjamin Trolinger's Granite Cotton Mill located six miles upstream in the town of Haw River built earlier that same year.⁷ The second largest textile mill complex on the Haw River, the Saxapahaw Mill, is among a chain of nine nineteenth-century mills beginning in northwest Alamance County and stretching diagonally southeast into northwest Chatham County. They are Altamahaw and Ossippee mills, (Glen Raven Mills); Glencoe; Carolina- Hopedale (Copeland Mills); Haw River (Granite/Cone Mills--the largest); Swepsonville (Virginia Mills)- Saxapahaw and Bynum (see Exhibit VI).

The Saxapahaw Spinning Mill (along with the cotton and boiler sheds) is similar to its sister mills along the Haw River in both its historical antecedents and its industrial significance. All began as relatively small operations consisting of a two-or-three-story brick, heavy-timber mill building, approximately fifty-to-seventy-five-feet wide by 100 to 200 feet long. They included an adjacent cotton shed, a front stair tower, a mill race, a power plant, and a boiler shed. Workers' houses, a company store and administrative building surrounded these massive structures, creating the classic rural mill hill model.⁸ With the possible exception of Granite Mill, also purchased by one of the Holts during the reconstruction years between 1873-1880⁹, the Saxapahaw Mill is arguably the most successful of the Haw River mills, having operated almost continually for 150 years until its closure in 1994 when a tornado damaged the roof and machinery of the west wing. By comparison, Glencoe and Belmont, both Holt family mills, were smaller and had much shorter life spans as textile operations.

John Newlin, who built the 1844 mill on the Saxapahaw site, died in 1867, leaving the Saxapahaw Mill to his sons, James and John, and George Guthrie, a minor stockholder. Newlin & Sons operated until 1873 when they sold to Edwin M. Holt of nearby Alamance, who went into partnership with his two sons-in-law, John L. Williamson and Captain James W. White, forming the Holt, White & Williamson Company. From 1880 until E. M. Holt's death in 1884, White and Williamson replaced and expanded the original Newlin Mill including the construction of a two-story (west) wing, a cotton shed, and a power house on the mill race. *The Alamance Gleaner* of March 17, 1880, reported that, ". . . the enterprise was successful, and by 1880, was well advanced on a program of experience and improvement. . . . the old machinery to be updated. . . . with the latest and improved kinds."¹⁰ The phenomenal success of E. M. Holt enabled his successors including his son, Governor Thomas Holt (Granite Mills)

⁷ Bulla, "Saxapahaw. . . ." 1949

⁸ Whatley, Lowell McKay. *The Architectural History of Randolph County, NC*. Randolph County Historical Society, Asheboro, NC, 1985, p.32.

⁹ Knauff, Bob and Gail, *Fabric of a Community: The Story of Haw River North Carolina*. The Haw River Historical Association, Haw River, NC, 1996, pp. 9-13.

¹⁰ Bulla, "Saxapahaw. . . ." 1949.

and sons-in-law, White and Williamson (Glencoe & Saxapahaw), to dominate the textile industry in Alamance County, controlling twenty-four of the twenty-nine cotton mills in the county well into the twentieth-century.¹¹

After World War I, an economic recession struck the overstocked textile industry, shutting down hundreds of cotton mills throughout the South. In 1927, three years after the White & Williamson Company had closed, C. V. "Charlie" Sellars, a wealthy merchant in Burlington, purchased the Saxapahaw Mill property out of receivership. Mr. Sellars hired his nephew, B. Everett Jordan, a plant manager from Gastonia who, after Mr. Sellars's death, became majority stockholder to run the operation. The new firm, incorporated as Sellers Manufacturing Company, immediately switched production from cotton gingham and tubing to fine-combed yarns for the rapidly expanding hosiery industry concentrated in Alamance County. In 1930, Sellers Manufacturing Company, after conducting a major building campaign that resulted in the construction of the present circa 1930 west wing, was the first cotton mill in Alamance County to produce mercerized yarn. In 1932, it established one of the first silk throwing plants in the South for making thread used in full-fashioned hosiery.¹² Continuing in the expansion-minded precedents of the Newlins and Holts, Sellers Manufacturing, in 1937, replaced all the remaining Newlin & Sons buildings, along with the 1880s west wing built by the Holt, White and Williamson Company, but leaving the circa 1880 powerhouse. These were replaced with the existing steel and brick west wing.¹³

Following the death of C. V. Sellars in 1941, Sellers Manufacturing grew into one of the most successful operations in the state, expanding to include four mills in Saxapahaw, Wake Forest, and Cedar Falls. At peak production, nearly 1,000 employees were on payroll and the Sellers mills were producing yarns on approximately 75,000 spindles.¹⁴ The proprietors of Saxapahaw Mills were also politically astute. Like his predecessor, E. M. Holt, whose son, Thomas Holt was elected Governor in 1891, B. Everett Jordan became very influential in state and local politics. By 1948, Jordan had become one of the most effective fund raisers for the state Democratic party. His reputation won him appointment as party chairman that year, and in 1958, Governor Luther Hodges appointed him to fill the unexpired term of U. S. Senator Kerr Scott. Jordan was subsequently elected to the post in 1960, 1964 and 1968. During his tenure from 1958 to 1973, U. S. Senator Jordan became a powerful figure as chairman of the Senate Rules Committee. In 1970, N. C. Senator Sam Ervin, addressing his remarks to President Nixon in the Congressional Record, stated that Jordan had ". . . done as much in a variety of practicable ways to serve the interest of North Carolina as any other man representing the state in my memory."¹⁵

¹¹ Pierpont, Development. . . . p. 276.

¹² Bulla, "Saxapahaw. . . ." 1949.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Bulla, Ben F., Textiles & Politics: The Life of B. Everett Jordan, Carolina Academic Press, Durham, NC, 1992, pp. 191-94.

¹⁵ Ibid, p 299.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

(former) Saxapahaw Spinning Mill
Alamance County, North Carolina

In 1978, four years after the Senator's death, Sellers Manufacturing Company sold the Saxapahaw and Cedar Falls mills to Dixie Yarns of Chattanooga, Tennessee. Dixie Yarns operated the Saxapahaw Mill until a tornado struck the building in 1994. Unable to justify the expense of reopening the mill as a textile operation, Dixie sold the property in 1995 to John M. Jordan, son of the late U. S. Senator B. Everett Jordan. Work on the mill buildings has been ongoing since that time to stabilize the damages sustained from the 1994 tornado and the 1996 flood that was a result of Hurricane Fran. Plans are underway for the rehabilitation of the mill buildings into apartments, shops, farmers' market, and restaurant.

Architectural Context

Late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century cotton mills, such as those built in Alamance County, differed from Northern operations, not so much in design but mainly in purpose and impact to their communities. North Carolina, like the rest of the Civil War-era South, had an agrarian-based society. The economy relied on the production of raw materials such as timber, tobacco, and cotton from the farms and plantations. Large-scale industry was practically non-existent.¹⁶

Beginning as early as 1837, and accelerating following the Civil War, a textile manufacturing building trend occurred in Alamance County with the chain of water-powered mills established along the banks of the Haw River (Exhibit V). In the midst of a shattered economy and devastated society, formerly wealthy planters, businessmen, and entrepreneurs sought opportunities not only to rebuild their own fortunes, but also to rebuild the South and its society in general. In the Piedmont, textile manufacturing was seen as the best means to achieve economic regeneration.¹⁷ In order for the textile industry to succeed in an area where manufactured construction materials, such as steel, were virtually non-existent and too expensive to import, the early post-war mill builders utilized native clay and pine to build factories during the Reconstruction era.¹⁸ At Saxapahaw, John Newlin used these materials to build his mill in 1844, and after the war, E. M. Holt used indigenous brick and timber to construct his expanded building. Use of these construction materials persisted as late as the 1950s, when B. Everett Jordan used native materials, together with steel, as an economical measure.

In addition to having access to cheap and abundant materials, Southern mill builders had three other advantages. The first was access to patternbook mill designs produced by nineteenth-century insurance companies, inspectors, and New England manufacturers that resulted in a fairly uniform set of standards, specifications, and building principles called the "New England

¹⁶ Cash, William Joseph, The Mind of the South, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1941, p. 9.

¹⁷ Pope, Liston, Millhands and Preachers: A Study of Gastonia, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1942.

¹⁸ Hall, Jacqueline, Life a Family, University Press, Chapel Hill, NC p. 48.

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 9

**(former) Saxapahaw Spinning Mill
Alamance County, North Carolina**

Mutual Vernacular."¹⁹ Prominent Southern engineers such as D.A. Tompkins and Stuart Cramer, both of Charlotte, North Carolina, encouraged the application of these principals for mill design. Widely known as "slow-burn" construction, the techniques included use of thick masonry walls and massive structural timbers, as well as separation of mill functions into self-contained areas (see Exhibit V).²⁰ The Saxapahaw Spinning Mill complex modeled the typical five-section plant design that is also seen at Glencoe (see Exhibit IV): cotton shed, boiler shed, picker room, stair tower, and main mill. These designs incorporate "slow-burn" technology and segregate areas housing volatile materials with fire walls, or in separate buildings; thus they helped to save time, money, and lives.

The second advantage available to mill builders in the rural South was cheap water power. Saxapahaw, like its eight sister mills in Alamance and Chatham Counties, harnessed the Haw River to generate power to run the textile machinery. The wooden darn, original race, and power house were replaced by Sellers Manufacturing with a thirty-foot-high concrete dam and a new mill race in 1938.²¹ Diesel generators served as a back-up power source until modern electrical service rendered the hydro-electric plant obsolete in the 1950s.

Finally, the last advantage that accelerated the proliferation of textile mill construction in the South was cheap labor. While not directly related to the architectural characteristics of the factories, the large population of desperately poor farmers in the South who became the worker force for these new enterprises indirectly affected their design and ultimately their success. Recruiting people off the farms to do "public work" required mill builders to provide obvious physical as well as psychological improvements.²² Majestic three-story rural mills like Saxapahaw and Bynum still appear awesome against the hilly terrain, river, and small mill village houses. Though not as ornate as Glencoe and Bellemont, Saxapahaw, with its rows of huge ten-foot windows with flat and segmented arches, front stair tower, roof monitors, and brick corbelling, is simple and functional in design yet creates an impressive physical presence.²³ For the Saxapahaw community, the mill, like the mills of other rural villages, was the "pre-eminent symbol of economic progress."²⁴ For the generations of families who worked in the mills, it was the architecture of their life.

¹⁹ Kaplan, Peter R., The Historic Architecture of Cabarrus County, North Carolina, Historic Cabarrus, Concord, NC, 1981, p. 6.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Bulla, "Saxapahaw. . . ." 1949.

²² Herring, Harriet L., Passing of the Mill Village: Revolution in a Southern Institution, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC, 1949, pp. 6; Potwin, M.A. Cotton Mill People of the Piedmont. A Study in Social Change, Columbia University Press, NY 1927, p. 58-59.

²³ Swain, Brent, "Southern Mill Hills: Design in a Public Place", Contained in Glass, Doug, ed., Carolina Dwelling, School of Design, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC 1978, p. 139.

²⁴ Kaplan, Peter R. The Historic Architecture of Cabarrus County North Carolina, Historic Cabarrus, Concord, NC 1981, p. 28

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

(former) Saxapahaw Spinning Mill
Alamance County, North Carolina

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United States Department of the Interior
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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9,10 Page 2

(former) Saxapahaw Spinning Mill
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Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is defined as Tract One of the survey plat by Landmark Surveying, Inc., Graham, NC, titled "Property of B. Everett Jordan & Son 1927-, LLC, dated September 18, 1995, consisting of 6.69 acres (as shown in Exhibit II).

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the nominated property provide the appropriate historical setting for the (former) Saxapahaw Spinning Mill overlooking the north bank of the Haw River, while excluding later noncontributing resources within the overall 31.34-acre complex.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

(former) Saxapahaw Spinning Mill
Alamance County, NC

Section number Photos Page 1

PHOTO SCHEDULE:

The following information applies to all photographs:

1. (former) Saxapahaw Spinning Mill
2. Alamance County, NC
3. Mac Jordan
4. October 1998
5. HPO

Photo #1: Southwest elevation

Photo #2: West elevation

Photo #3: Power house lintel detail

Photo #4: Northwest elevation showing front stair tower and cotton shed

Photo #5: East elevation buttress detail

Photo #6: Boiler Shed west elevation

Photo #7: Southeast elevation

Photo #8: Interior west wing

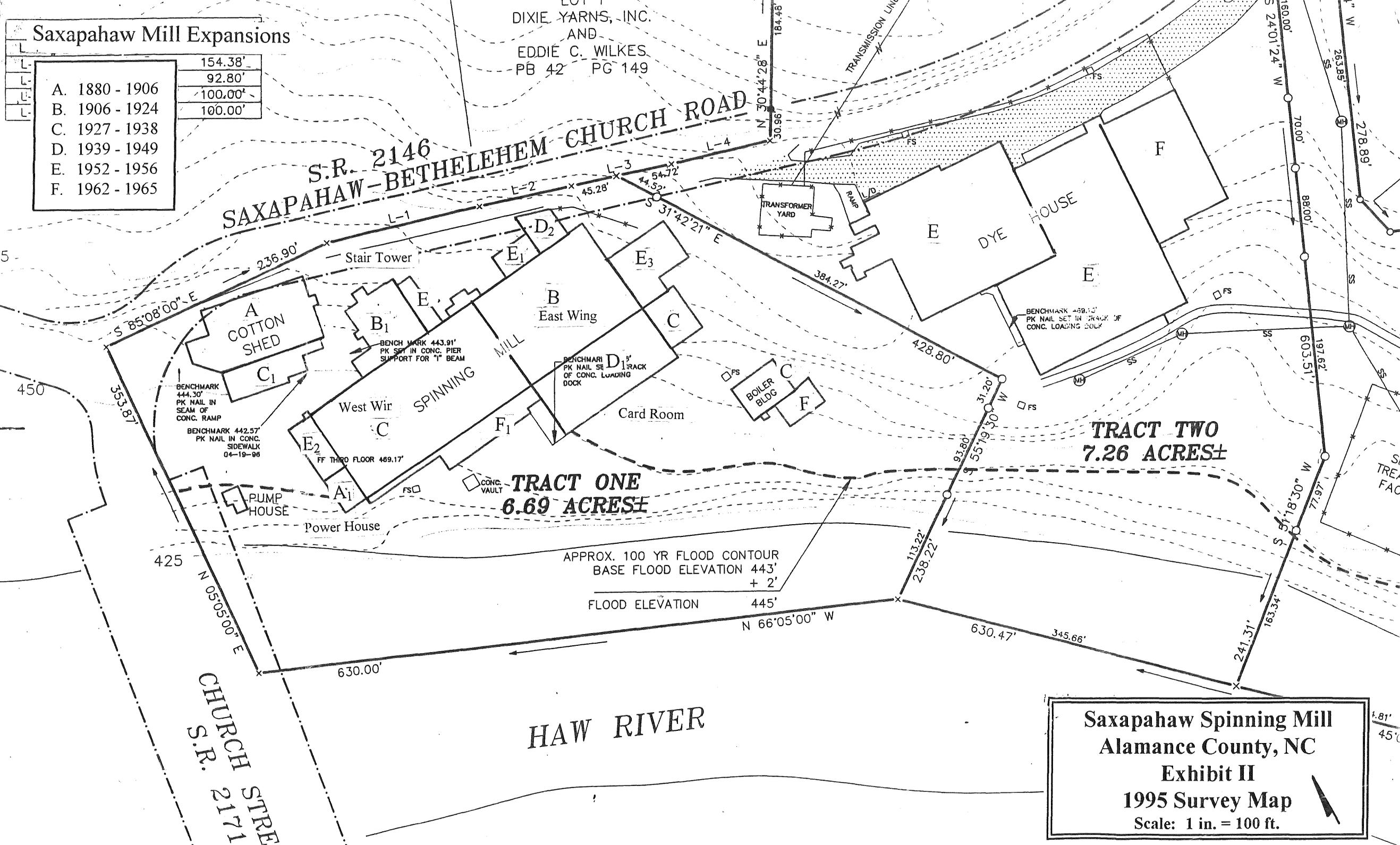
Photo #9: Interior east wing

Saxapahaw Mill Expansions

LOT 1
DIXIE YARNS, INC.
AND
EDDIE C. WILKES
PB 42 PG 149

	154.38'
A. 1880 - 1906	92.80'
B. 1906 - 1924	100.00'
C. 1927 - 1938	100.00'
D. 1939 - 1949	
E. 1952 - 1956	
F. 1962 - 1965	

S.R. 2146
SAXAPAHAW - BETHELEHEM CHURCH ROAD



75

450

425

TRACT ONE
6.69 ACRES±

TRACT TWO
7.26 ACRES±

HAW RIVER

Saxapahaw Spinning Mill
Alamance County, NC
Exhibit II
1995 Survey Map
Scale: 1 in. = 100 ft.

CHURCH STREET
S.R. 2171

APPROX. 100 YR FLOOD CONTOUR
BASE FLOOD ELEVATION 443'
+ 2'
FLOOD ELEVATION 445'

1.81'
45'

