

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Deep River/ Columbia Manufacturing Company

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER SE side Main Street (SR 2615) at Deep River

CITY, TOWN

Ramseur

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

4th

STATE

North Carolina

CODE

37

COUNTY

Randolph

CODE

151

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Mr. Thomas J. Hill

STREET & NUMBER Thomas J. Hill Furniture Co.

CITY, TOWN

Ramseur

VICINITY OF

STATE North Carolina 27316

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Randolph County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Asheboro

STATE North Carolina

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Historic American Engineering Record

DATE

1975

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS National Park Service

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Columbia Manufacturing Company mill complex, built over the years between ca. 1850 and ca. 1920, consists of a three-story gable roof structure, built in three stages, with a southeast corner power plant, a west side four-story tower and two wings, and several freestanding auxiliary buildings--an office, pump house, and warehouse, located northwest of the main building.

The original mill (1), built ca. 1850, is the two-story rectangular south section, eleven bays long and five bays wide, whose narrow south end abuts a mill race parallel to the Deep River. This section is of brick laid in one-to-three common bond, and each bay is pierced by a nine-over-nine sash window with a plain wooden sill and an ovolo-molded surround, surmounted by a simple brick lintel. No original doors remain. Each interior floor is one large room with one row of eleven posts supporting the wooden ceiling joists at the center of the span. About half of the posts are turned, tapering columns with crude brick and wood bases. These are perhaps the original supports. The other supports are chamfered wooden posts or cast-iron posts. The ceiling joists, each a single beam, are hand hewn and measure approximately two feet by eight inches. The third story of this section, laid in one-to-four common bond, is a pre-1885 addition. This floor has sash windows identical to the first two stories, is capped with a gable roof, covered with tin, with overhanging eaves with exposed rafter ends, and has no interior supports.

After 1888 a three-story addition (5) connected the main block and the picker room. This thirteen bay long section is laid in one-to-six common bond, with star-headed iron tie rods, paneled doors within segmental-arched openings, and nine-over-nine sash windows within two types of openings. Those on the east side have rectangular openings with simple brick lintels, the remaining have segmental-arched openings, also with brick labels. The interior of each story is an extension of the open space of the original mill, with a single row of center supports bracing the ceiling joists. The turned wooden posts, more slender than those in the original mill, have a metal base and necking. The sawn joists, of identical dimensions as the original joists, are spliced at the center. Wood floors, bare brick walls and wood sheathed ceilings exist within both sections. The third story lacks intermediate supports in this section also. A belfry, sheltered by an onion dome sheathed with tin, perches on the roof ridge in the center of the entire block.

The original wheel house, built over the mill race, has disappeared, but the engine house (2), which powered the mill by 1885, still remains at the southeast corner of the main block, though overbuilt during several stages. This brick section apparently closely resembled the other mill additions of this period.

The picker house (3) was built before 1885 as a one-story free-standing building located north of the main block, and between 1885 and 1888 was doubled in size and raised to two stories. This structure, which now abuts the northwest corner of the north mill addition, is five bays long, of brick laid in one-to-six common bond, and has segmental-arched nine-over-nine sash windows surmounted by arches, and a tin gabled roof. The interior has a dirt floor, bare brick walls, no intermediate supports and an exposed roof truss system of bolted wood trusses with vertical metal tie rods extending from the ridge to the center of the joist.

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A four-story brick stair tower (4) abuts the center west side of the mill. Added between 1885 and 1888, the tower is laid in one-to-six common bond, has nine-over-nine sash windows with segmental-arched openings with brick labels, and segmental-arched doors. The original frame fifth story, with bracketed pyramidal roof, which contained the water tank, was removed after 1949.

The two west side wings--a two-story wing (6) which abuts the north side of the tower and a one-story wing (7) which abuts the west side of the picker room, form the final expansion phase, and were added within a few years of one another, probably in the early twentieth century. The two-story wing, laid in one-to-six common bond, has nine-over-nine sash and double, paneled doors within segmental-arched openings with brick labels. The shed roof has exposed rafter ends on the south side, and the cornice parapet on the remaining sides is ornamented with mousetooth and brick corbel courses. Each floor, one large room, has wood floors and bare brick walls. The first-floor supports consist of two rows of chamfered and bracketed wooden posts supporting sawn ceiling joists, each of which is spliced above each support. The second-story supports are simple posts without brackets, and the roof truss system is exposed.

The one-story wing, laid in random common bond, has door, window and roof treatment similar to the two-story wing. A single row of turned wood columns support the sawn, spliced ceiling joists, and the roof truss system is exposed.

At the northwest corner of the one-story wing is the free-standing mill superintendent's office (8), a one-story brick building, laid in one-to-five common bond, with front and side roof parapets concealing the shed roof. Corner brick pilasters and a parapet frieze of pointed-arched brick panels, brick corbel cornice and molded wooden eave ornament the building. The front (west) elevation contains a double, paneled door within a segmental-arched opening, and each side elevation contains a triple sash window, each sash with two panes, within a segmental-arched opening. The office interior contains a vertically-sheathed wainscot, sheathed ceiling, plaster walls and molded opening surrounds.

Beside the office is the pump house (9), a hexagonal brick structure with a pyramidal tin roof surmounted by a turned wooden finial. The walls are laid in random common bond, with segmental-arched openings with brick labels. The metal pump is probably a replacement for the original, which supplied water to both the mill and the entire town.

The warehouse (10), a one-story brick building located west of the pump house, is laid in one-to-five common bond and capped with a tin gable roof with exposed rafter ends. Each of the four sections, divided by stepped, parapetted fire walls on the interior and by brick pilasters on the exterior, has a round-arched opening with a metal door at the front and rear. The gable end and fire wall parapets are ornamented with mousetooth and corbel brick courses. Along the south side is a concrete loading platform sheltered by a bracketed shed roof.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1850-1963

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Columbia Manufacturing Company, located in the heart of North Carolina's historic textile region, was the fifth such factory built along Deep River in Randolph County. Its original building, completed by 1850, is one the the few antebellum mills still standing in the Piedmont. The development of the plant in the nineteenth century and its decline in the twentieth mirrored the general pattern of industrialization in North Carolina's riverside mill towns.

The construction of a mill at this site, once known as Allen's Falls, was part of a small antebellum industrial revolution along North Carolina's river valleys. The promotion of manufacturing was most intense in the Piedmont where geographical conditions inhibited the success of plantation-style farming with cash crops. "The simple truth," argued a Piedmont newspaper in 1837, "seems to be forcing itself on our people that neither our soil nor climate will permit us to become cotton growers. We are too far from market for us ever to profit by agriculture to the greatest advantage. Circumstances most plainly designate manufactures as the policy of the Piedmont and the progress made shows that we are coming right at last."¹

The growth of textile manufacturing along Deep River in the antebellum period was particularly encouraging to those who recognized a need for an alternative to agriculture. The first mill was built at Cedar Falls in 1837, followed by Franklinville (1838), Island Ford (1845), and Union Factory (1848) (later called Randleman). Plans for construction of a mill at Allen's Falls on the north bank of Deep River were first contemplated in 1843 by local merchants Isaac Foust, Washington Brower, Henry Kivett, David Kime and John Allen.² An epidemic halted construction, and the factory, first known as Deep River Manufacturing Company, was not completed until 1850 when the Greensboro Patriot reported that the Deep River mill was "partially in operation." The Patriot also voiced the hope "that a few years more will exhibit additional establishments of the kind going up at the numerous unimproved sites on the river. The capital now invested on Deep River is \$200,000 and the completion of the plank road, railroad, and navigation improvement must vastly increase the investment."³

The progress envisioned by industrial promoters came slowly. The Deep River Manufacturing Company, also known as Coffin, Foust & Company, began as a small weaving cotton manufacturing enterprise. It began with only 14 looms, 480 spindles, and about 20 employees. The census of 1860 recorded a water-powered mill with 20 looms and 1056 spindles operated by 9 men and 42 women. Each of the men earned a monthly wage of about \$20 while the women earned around \$7 apiece. The firm produced 150,000 pounds of cotton yarn and 210,000 yards of sheeting with a total value of just under \$50,000.⁴

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The mill stayed in operation during the Civil War and slowly expanded its operations over the next 40 years. The greatest growth came during the 1890s when the number of spindles doubled and a new three-story wing was attached to the ante-bellum factory. By 1900, the mill had reached the size of a typical southern mill--10,000 spindles and 300 looms. Figures for the 1920s revealed the factory at its maximum level of production with 11,280 spindles, 342 looms, and 30 carding machines, processing one million pounds of cotton annually valued at nearly ½ million dollars. Aside from a slight decline in the number of spindles, the mill remained at its 1920 level of production. In the post-World War II years, the factory underwent a degree of modernization. New spinning frames were installed in 1950 and new spoolers and warpers installed in 1955.

The original source of power for this machinery was provided by a stone dam, twelve feet high and 425 feet long, located some 300 yards west of the mill. The dam was built at a cost of about \$8,000. It was overhauled in 1893, developing a head of 15 feet for a 56-inch Sampson turbine waterwheel. A gin house and flour mill also ran off the same mill race. The waterpower system developed only 180 horsepower, however, and as more machinery was placed in the mill, auxiliary power sources were required. A small steam engine (75 horsepower) was already operating by the 1880s. In 1899, the North Carolina Geological Survey reported a 200 horsepower Corliss engine operating at Columbia to supplement the waterpower. "It is estimated," the report concluded, "that 250 horsepower is required to run the mill, so that steam has to be used all the time."

As the Columbia factory grew so did the village around it. The size of the work force increased from 50 in 1878 to 200 in the 1920s. The company built and owned much of the housing in the town which was first known as Columbia Factory and renamed Ramseur in 1889 in honor of Confederate Major General Stephen Dodson Ramseur. During the late nineteenth century, Ramseur became known as "a live manufacturing little town," one of the most prosperous on Deep River. Into the village came local farm families looking for wage earning positions in the mill. For several generations these families remained as mill workers beginning their work as small children. It was not unusual for employees to serve 40 and 50 years in the same plant.

The management and ownership of the company followed a similar pattern of longevity and continuity, typical of the small textile companies in North Carolina. The original operators of the mill sold out to Dennis Curtis and G. H. Makepeace sometime after the Civil War. These men in turn relinquished supervision of the mill to W. H. Watkins in 1879. Watkins reorganized the company, then known as Deep River Mills, into the Columbia Manufacturing Company and ran the mill and the village until his death in 1919. He was succeeded as president by his son-in-law I. Fletcher Craven who served until his death in 1959. His son, A. W. Craven, operated the mill until it closed in 1963. Thus the fortunes of the company were controlled by the same family for over 80 consecutive years.

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Like most riverside mills, Columbia was limited by its relative isolation from sources of transportation and power. The inadequacy of its power system was noted in a 1924 survey of Deep River by the North Carolina Geological Survey:

Each cotton mill [along Deep River] operates now as a separate entity, and takes whatever water comes to it from developments upstream this is an exceedingly uneconomic arrangement It is apparent that each year during the low water season the waterpower plants have to operate in part-time or shut down entirely. As a consequence each mill has to have an auxiliary steam plant to help meet its power demands in dry periods. In general these steam plants are equal in capacity to the water-power plants. They are small, are usually inefficient, and relatively expensive to operate.¹¹

Although electric power was added in the mid-1920s, the small factory could not compete with the larger textile chains which first emerged in the aftermath of the Great Depression and continued to grow following World War II. A growing slowdown in sales in the 1950s caused many cutbacks in production and the size of the work force dwindled to 135 workers by 1961. After 113 years of continuous operation, the Columbia Manufacturing Company finally closed its doors in January, 1963.¹² It has since been used as a warehouse and for light manufacturing. Since 1968, a small part of the mill has been used for the production of furniture. In 1969, Thomas James Hill, the present owner, purchased the mill property (22.59 acres) from Joseph B. Brown.¹³

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FOOTNOTES

¹Carolina Watchman, October 25, 1837.

²Grace Saunders Kinney, "Columbia Manufacturing Company Leads to Growth of Ramseur", The Randolph Guide (Asheboro), July 21, 1961, hereinafter cited as Kinney, "Columbia Manufacturing Company".

³Reported in Carolina Watchman, October 24, 1850.

⁴Eighth Census of the United States, 1860. Randolph County, North Carolina, Industrial Schedule, microfilm of National Archives manuscript copy, State Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, N.C.

⁵Industries and Resources of North Carolina, Board of Agriculture, 1878; Richard W. Griffin, "Reconstruction of the North Carolina Textile Industry, 1865-1885", North Carolina Historical Review, Winter, 1964; North Carolina Bureau of Labor Statistics, Annual Reports, 1902, 1907, 1918, 1926; Sanborn Map Company, Trinity College, 1885, 1888.

⁶Kinney, "Columbia Manufacturing Company."

⁷Ibid., J. A. Holmes, "Waterpowers of North Carolina", North Carolina Geological Survey, Bulletin 8, 1899.

⁸North Carolina Bureau of Labor Statistics, Annual Report, 1924.

⁹Kinney, "Columbia Manufacturing Company"; Troy Vidette, April 17, 1890.

¹⁰Ibid.; Marjorie Young, editor, Textile Leaders of the South, (Anderson, South Carolina: James R. Young, 1963) 53ff.

¹¹Thorndike Saville, "Waterpower Investigation of Deep River"; North Carolina Geological and Economic Survey, 1924.

¹²Kinney, "Columbia Manufacturing Company"; The Randolph Guide (Asheboro) January 30, 1963.

¹³Randolph County Deed Book, Randolph County Courthouse, Asheboro, N.C., Deed Book 983:240.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Blair, J. A. "Reminiscences of Randolph County". 1890.
 Carolina Watchman. October 25, 1837 and October 24, 1850.
 Eighth Census of the United States. 1860. Randolph County, North Carolina. Industrial Schedules.
 Griffin, Richard W. "Reconstruction of North Carolina's Textile Industry, 1865-1885".
 North Carolina Historical Review, Winter, 1964.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

see new UTM's & map

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 22.59 (amount bought by T. J. Hill in 1969)

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,7	6,2,1	7,5,0	3,9	5,4	6,8,0	B	1,7	6,2,1	7,3,0	3,9	5,4	5,6,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING					ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING			
C	1,7	6,2,1	6,6,0	3,9	5,4	5,4,0	D	1,7	6,2,1	6,6,0	3,9	5,4	7,2,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING					ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Description prepared by Ruth Little-Stokes, Survey Specialist
 Significance by Brent D. Glass, Consultant

ORGANIZATION DATE

Division of Archives & History

STREET & NUMBER TELEPHONE

109 East Jones Street 829-4763

CITY OR TOWN STATE

Raleigh North Carolina 27611

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE January 13, 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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Holmes, J. A. "Waterpowers of North Carolina". North Carolina Historical Review.
Bulletin 8, 1899.

Kinney, Grace Saunders. "Columbia Manufacturing Company Leads to Growth of Ramseur."
The Randolph Guide. Asheboro, N.C. July 21, 1961.

North Carolina Board of Agriculture. Industries and Resources of North Carolina. 1878.

North Carolina Bureau of Labor Statistics. Annual Reports. 1887-1926.

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983:240.

Sanborn Map Company. Trinity College. 1885. 1888.

Saville, Thorndike. "Waterpower Investigation of Deep River". North Carolina Geological
and Economic Survey. 1924.

Young, Marjorie, editor. Textile Leaders of the South. Anderson, South Carolina.
James R. Young. 1963.

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PAGE Addendum/Correction:

Acreage of Nominated Property: 3.5

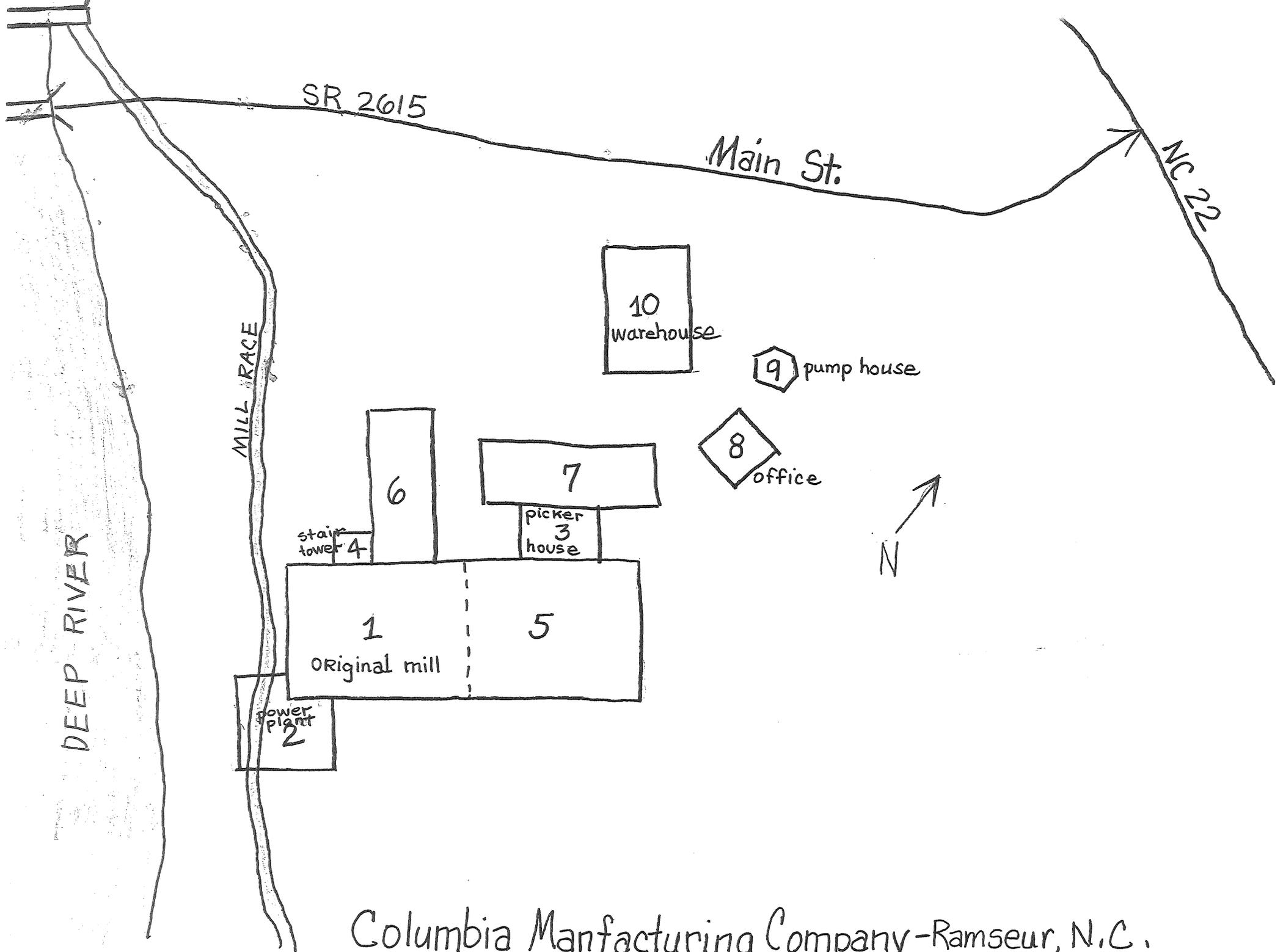
UTM references: A--621720/3954760 Code: 17
B--621800/3954640
C--621670/3954520
D--621580/3954680

New boundary description and sketch map.

Boundaries:

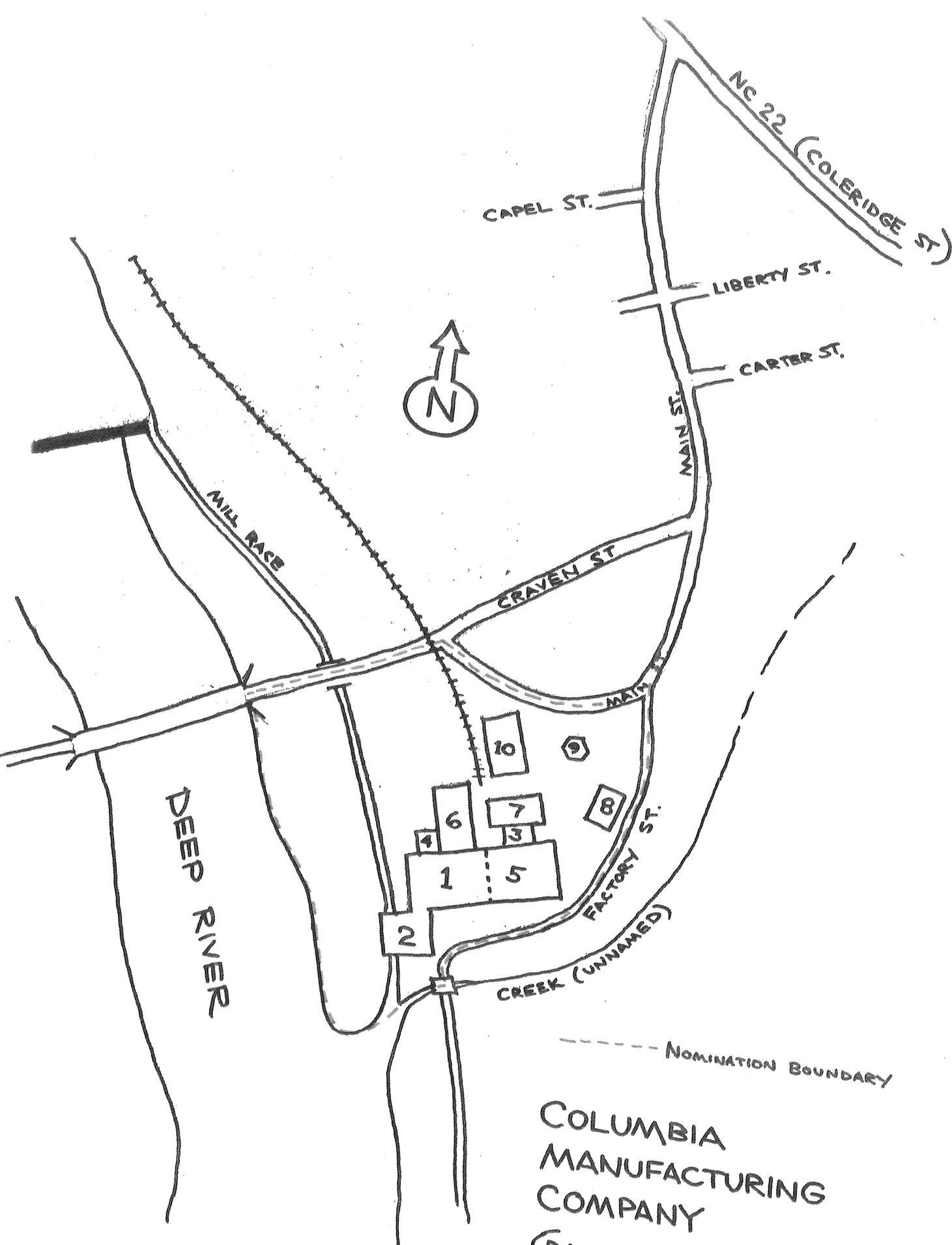
Columbia Manufacturing Company is bounded by Craven Street, Main Street, Factory Street, and the Deep River, enclosing the complex of factory buildings, and being the southernmost section of land historically owned by the company.

Beginning at the intersection of Main and Factory Streets, follow the west edge of Factory Street south and southwest to the brige that carries it over the unnamed creek located on the southeast side of the factory. Follow the bed of the creek west until it flows into the south end of the mill race; across the mill race to the east bank of the Deep River; follow the bank of the river north to the center line of Craven Street at the east end of the bridge over Deep River; follow the east edge of Craven Street northeast to the intersection with Main Street; follow the south edge of Main Street east to the intersection with Factory Street, the beginning point.

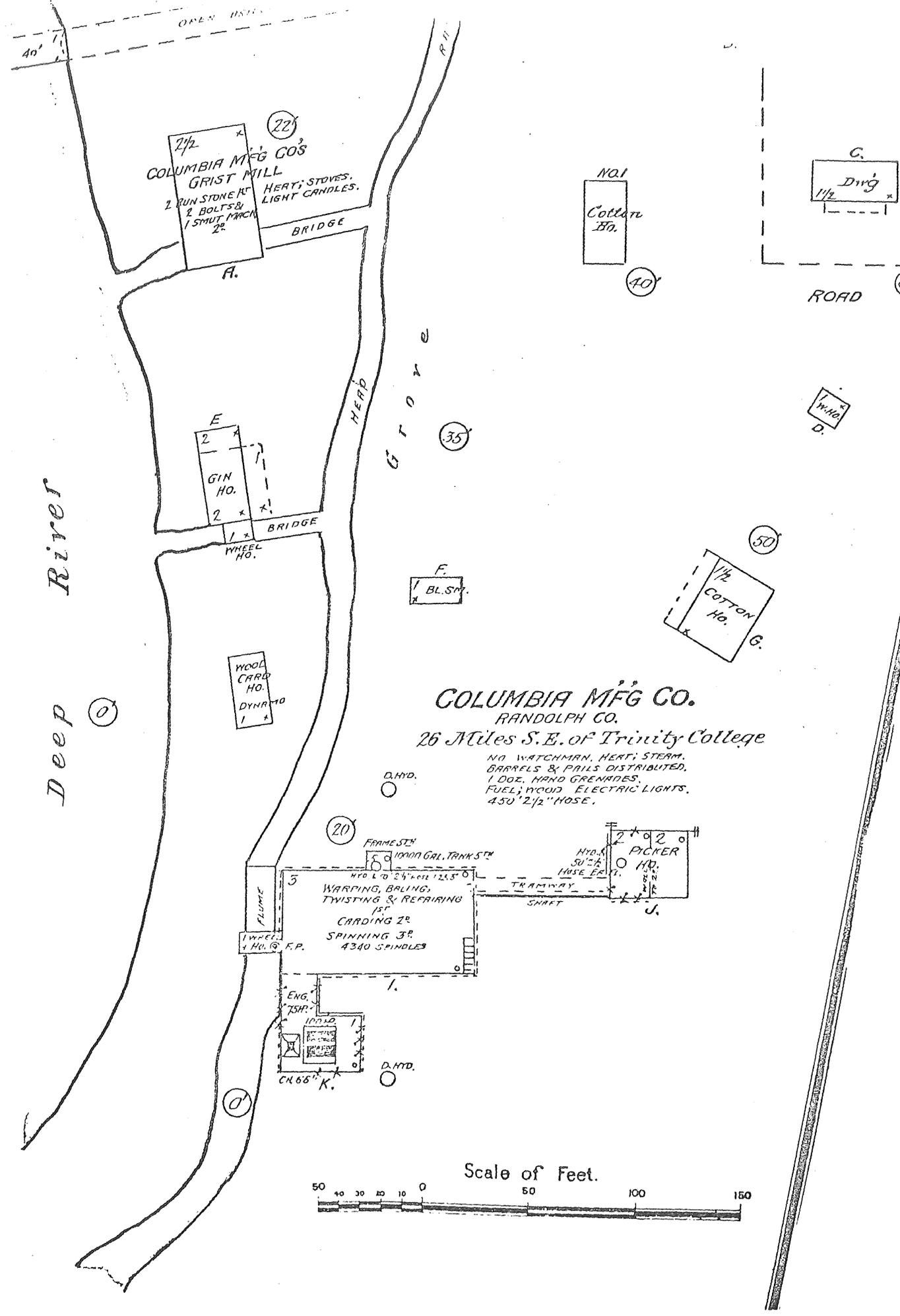


Columbia Manufacturing Company - Ramseur, N.C.

Dec. 1975 / NO SCALE



COLUMBIA
MANUFACTURING
COMPANY
(RAMSEUR, N.C.)
MARCH 1978
NO SCALE



COLUMBIA MFG CO.
 RANDOLPH CO.
 26 Miles S. E. of Trinity College
 NO WATCHMAN, HEAT, STEAM,
 BARRELS & PAILS DISTRIBUTED.
 1 DOZ. HAND GRENADES.
 FUEL; WOOD ELECTRIC LIGHTS.
 450' 2 1/2" HOSE.

Feb.
1888

