

NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
Office of Archives and History
Department of Cultural Resources

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Acme – McCrary Hosiery Mills

Asheboro, Randolph County, RD0510, Listed 8/18/2014
Nomination by Heather Fearnbach
Photographs by Heather Fearnbach, March 2011



Acme – McCrary Hosiery Mills, North Street, 1909-1972



McCrary Hosiery Mill No. 3, North Church Street

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 an 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 Acme-McCrary Hosiery Mills
other names/site number Acme Hosiery Mills; McCrary Hosiery Mills; Asheboro Grocery Company

2. Location

street & number 124, 148, and 159 North Street; 173 North Church Street N/A not for publication
city or town Asheboro N/A vicinity
state North Carolina code NC county Randolph code 151 zip code 27203

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 for 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.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources

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 certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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 the Keeper

Date of Action

Acme-McCrary Hosiery Mills

Name of Property

Randolph County, NC

County and State

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

(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
6	0	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
7	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY: Manufacturing Facility

INDUSTRY: Industrial Storage

COMMERCE/TRADE: Specialty Store

COMMERCE/TRADE: Warehouse

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY: Manufacturing Facility

INDUSTRY: Industrial Storage

VACANT: Not in use

7. Description**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Heavy-timber mill construction

Other: Steel-framed, load-bearing-brick-wall mill
construction

Other: Concrete mushroom column construction

Art Moderne

Commercial Style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls BRICK

CONCRETE

METAL

roof SYNTHETICS: Rubber

other

Narrative Description

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

Acme-McCrary Hosiery Mills

Name of Property

Randolph County, NC

County and State

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.)

- ☒ **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.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or 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

Period of Significance

1909-1964

Significant Dates

1909, 1915, 1917, 1924, 1928, 1929, 1938, 1947, 1948, 1949, 1953, 1962

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Biberstein, R. C., and successor firms, architect
(executed plans from 1927 to 1986)

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(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: Randolph County Library, Asheboro

Acme-McCrary Corporation, Asheboro

J. Murrey Atkins Library Special Collections, UNC-Charlotte

Acme-McCrary Hosiery Mills

Name of Property

Randolph County, NC

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 7.32 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

See Latitude/Longitude coordinates on continuation sheet.

1
Zone Easting Northing

2

3
Zone Easting Northing

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 Heather Fearnbach

organization Fearnbach History Services, Inc.

date 4/13/2014

street & number 3334 Nottingham Road

telephone 336-765-2661

city or town Winston-Salem

state NC

zip code 27104

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 SHPO or FPO.)

name Acme-McCrary Corporation

street & number 159 North Street

telephone (336) 625-2161

city or town Asheboro

state NC

zip code 27203

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 listing. 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 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 Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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Section 7. Narrative Description

Setting

Acme-McCrary Corporation owns and operates Asheboro's largest historic industrial complex. Although utilized by two distinct business entities—Acme Hosiery Mills and McCrary Hosiery Mills—the plant was commonly referred to as Acme-McCrary Hosiery Mills during the period of significance. That name is therefore used where appropriate throughout this document in order to streamline the narrative. The companies officially adopted a hyphenated appellation in conjunction with the 1961 merger that created Acme-McCrary Corporation.

Located adjacent to the downtown commercial district, the 7.32-acre property associated with the enterprise's evolution includes three tax parcels containing seven contributing resources—six buildings and a smokestack—erected between 1909 and 1962 on West Salisbury Street's south side north of Sunset Avenue. Acme Hosiery Mills constructed the two-story, heavy-timber-frame, brick mill that has stood on the railroad's east side at what is now 159 North Street since 1909. Acme and McCrary hosiery mills' subsequent expansions to the original building include two- and three-story brick, heavy-timber-, structural-steel-, and reinforced-concrete-framed dye house, mill, and warehouse additions that extend west toward the railroad and south to commercial buildings on Sunset Avenue's north side.

In March 1931, McCrary Hosiery Mills acquired the adjacent two-story, heavy-timber-frame, brick Parks Hosiery Mill west of the railroad on North Church Street's east side. McCrary Hosiery Mills expanded into the facility, constructed the connected two-story brick Mill No. 2 to the north in 1937, and slightly enlarged the mid-1920s mill around 1940. The company's ongoing growth necessitated the 1948 completion of a third contiguous knitting mill: the two-story, Art Moderne-style, steel-framed, brick building at 173 North Church Street. The two-story brick employee recreation center finished in December 1949 at 148 North Street also reflects the company's up-to-date image through its Art Moderne design. The last substantial expansion of the industrial complex's footprint was the two-story, brick, wedge-shaped, 1962 office and warehouse that spans the distance between the 1924 section's west side and the railroad right-of-way. The building received a third-story addition in 1972.

Acme-McCrary Corporation's 4.37-acre parcel encompasses three tracts. The concern's production, storage, and office space occupies two lots totaling 2.9 acres flanking the railroad, while the recreation center and contiguous parking fill the 1.47-acre lot on North Street's east side. In 2012 and 2013, Acme-McCrary Corporation sold to private entities the 2.58-acre parcel at 173 North Church Street containing McCrary Hosiery Mill No. 3 and a parking lot as well as the commercial block that occupies a .369-acre parcel at 124 North Street south of the recreation building. Both properties are

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included within the National Register boundary given their historic function as part of Acme-McCrary Hosiery Mills.

The surrounding area is primarily commercial and industrial. West Salisbury Street, which serves as the complex's north boundary, is a heavily-trafficked east-west corridor characterized by ongoing commercial development. The Art Deco-style 1938 Asheboro Municipal Building fronts North Church Street at the Acme-McCrary Corporation complex's southwest corner. Sunset Avenue, which runs east-west through Asheboro's business center and comprises a portion of the Acme-McCrary property's south boundary, is lined with commercial structures, as are North Church Street to the west and Fayetteville Street to the east.

Acme Hosiery Mills and McCrary Hosiery Mills

159 North Street, 1909, 1915, 1917, 1924, 1928, 1929, 1947, 1953, 1956, 1962, 1972, 1986
Contributing Building

In February 1909, Acme Hosiery Mills began erecting a two-story, heavy-timber-frame mill with load-bearing brick walls and an attached one-story dye house of the same construction on the railroad's east side at what is now 159 North Street.¹ Italianate-style corbelled hoods embellish the six-bay-wide east façade below its stepped parapet and blind transoms surmount the central double-leaf door and the single-leaf door near the north corner. The 1909 mill is thirteen bays long, while the dye house comprises seven bays to the west. The company subsequently expanded the building numerous times, constructing austere two- and three-story brick, heavy-timber-, structural-steel-, and concrete-framed mill and warehouse additions that extend west toward the railroad and south to commercial buildings on Sunset Avenue's north side. In the earliest sections, low-pitched gable roofs with exposed rafter ends and deep eaves shelter segmental- and flat-arched window and door openings. Although many double-hung, wood-frame, multipane windows have been covered with vinyl siding, some are exposed and protected by storm windows. Large steel-frame multipane windows remain in most of the post-1928 edifices, which have flat or only slightly-pitched gable roofs. Most original exterior wood doors have been replaced with steel doors in compliance with fire-safety regulations.

In 1915 and 1917, the company commissioned the construction of two almost identical, contiguous, two-story additions to the south on North Street. As in the original section, both structures have heavy-timber frames and load-bearing brick walls executed in five-to-one common bond pierced by large, double-hung, multipane, wood-sash windows in arched surrounds. The 1915 building is approximately one hundred feet long and sixty feet wide, with a belt-course extending across the eleven-bay east and west walls between the first and second stories. For the fourteen-bay-long 1917 addition, masons dispensed with the belt-course in order to accommodate larger windows and achieve

¹ "Acme Hosiery Mills Co.," *The Courier*, February 4, 1909, p. 1.

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greater ceiling height. The 1917 improvements included the addition of a long gable-roofed monitor featuring four-foot-tall side walls and operable wood sash windows that runs north-south above the 1909, 1915, and 1917 sections to provide supplementary second-story light. The one-story, hip-roofed, 1909 dye house to the west also manifested this feature.

The April 1922 Sanborn map indicates that Acme Hosiery Mills then encompassed boarding equipment on the 1909 mill's first floor and knitting machines on the second, while the North Street additions contained knitting, looping, hemming, and finishing areas. To the west, extending from the dye house's south elevation, three one-story structures served as dye storage, a machine shop, and the boiler room. By April 1931, Acme Hosiery Mills had erected a second story above the dye house and a one-story, eleven-bay addition on its west end in order to increase space for knitting operations. A roof monitor with three-foot side walls illuminated the one-story wing until 1947, when it received a second-story expansion.² Masons inserted a row of short window openings between the first and second stories in order to match the 1909 mill's height.

In 1924, a three-story, twelve-bay-long, heavy-timber-frame addition's construction on the plant's south end greatly increased manufacturing space. Stepped parapets disguise the low-pitched gable roof, which includes exposed rafter ends and deep eaves. Segmental-arched window and door openings pierce the load-bearing brick walls. McCrary Hosiery Mills, established around 1927, occupied the addition, employing the second floor for silk stocking knitting and the first floor for finishing. Acme Hosiery Mills continued to utilize the earlier complex to the north in the same manner as it had previously. A 1928 rendering and the April 1931 Sanborn map illustrate two modest-sized two-story additions on the 1915 and 1917 wings' west elevations that functioned as storage, packing, and knitting rooms.

The plant's southern expansion continued in 1928 with the completion of an addition designed for McCrary Hosiery Mills by Charlotte architect Richard C. Biberstein to house full-fashioned hosiery machines. A three-story, single-bay, brick hyphen containing a recessed double-leaf steel door surmounted by a tempered-glass transom and a steel-frame multipane window on each of the upper two floors connects the 1924 and 1928 sections. The eleven-bay-long addition is almost the same height as the 1924 structure but only two stories. The 1928 knitting mill manifests an important shift in building technology, as its steel structure allows for wider spans between interior posts, thus accommodating more equipment. The windows also represent evolving industrial standards, as the brick curtain walls contain tall, steel-frame, multipane units with cast-stone sills. Slightly-projecting brick pilasters flank the window bays. Biberstein's firm specified a similar appearance for the two four- and eight-bay additions to the south that followed the next year in rapid succession. Each building is two stories tall with parapets a few feet higher than the 1928 mill. Slightly-projecting brick

² Acme-McCrary-Sapona, "Service Awards 1948."

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pilasters flank the window bays and extend several inches above the parapet walls, creating a stepped effect. Masons used red brick to execute the four-bay section and variegated brick to erect the eight-bay section, thus clearly delineating the phased construction.³

A three-story brick 1953 addition on the 1917 section's west side included a loading dock adjacent to the railroad. Another significant 1950s modification was the 1956 Acme-McCrary Hosiery Mills office renovation planned by Biberstein, Bowles, and Meacham that included the addition of a streamlined Modern cast-stone surround at the 1924 building's North Street entrance. The surround is intact, although a single-leaf, aluminum-framed, tinted plate-glass door and sidelight added in 1986 light the foyer. Most other operational exterior doors are fireproof steel.

Biberstein, Bowles, Meacham, and Reed designed the last substantial expansion of the industrial complex's footprint: a two-story, wedge-shaped, brick, 1962 office and warehouse that spans the distance between the 1924, 1928, and 1953 sections' west elevations and the railroad right-of-way. The location dictated the canted configuration of the 1962 building's west wall. The firm also prepared plans for the third floor added in 1972. The brick-veneered concrete block edifice features vertical columns of six-panel steel-frame windows with slightly-recessed spandrel panels and a freight elevator that also serves the earlier sections. The 1962 building obscures the 1928 section's northwest end and the 1924 and 1953 sections' west elevations.

In the late 1950s, the company constructed three steel-framed overhead walkways spanning North Church Street, the railroad, and North Street, thus facilitating connectivity between formerly free-standing sections of the mill complex. This improvement made the entire plant accessible from the interior for employee and product movement and ameliorated safety concerns as well as inconveniences due to inclement weather. Acme-McCrary Corporation sheathed the brick-veneered walkways with vinyl siding in 2011.

Interior

Much of the Acme-McCrary Corporation complex still functions as a finishing plant and warehouse and thus retains an open plan. Most pre-1929 sections of the substantially intact interior feature wood floors and exposed brick walls, while later construction and some renovated areas have concrete floors. Chamfered square wood posts and substantial wood beams comprise the structure in the sections erected in 1924 and earlier. Engineers specified the installation of steel posts and beams to provide

³ Richard C. Biberstein plans for eleven-bay addition created in March 1927 and revised in April 1927 and October 1928. Plans for four-bay addition dated April 1929 and those for eight-bay additions created in June 1929 and revised in July. All plans in the Acme-McCrary Corporation's collection.

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supplementary support, as replacements, and to build additions beginning in 1928. Steel braces and girders reinforce some areas to compensate for heavy equipment's weight and vibration.

Beadboard and vertical boards cover stair enclosure and restroom walls in multiple locations throughout the building's pre-1930 sections. Doors with horizontal raised panels and glazed upper sections provide access to the restrooms, which have frame stalls. Beadboard-sheathed walls with expansive multipane fixed-sash interior windows separate the first-floor dye house office from what is now a storage room. Some interior doorways are open, but between building sections metal fire doors slide on steel tracks and are held open by weighted pulleys. In post-1953 areas, fire doors are mounted above door lintels and roll down. On many outside walls and formerly exterior walls that have been encapsulated between additions, original double-hung, multipane, wood-frame sash windows are intact. In other interior cases, window sashes between sections have been removed, leaving open spaces. Contractors have dropped fluorescent lights, sprinkler system pipes, and HVAC ductwork from the ceilings and installed acoustical ceiling tiles in a few spaces. Carolina Steel of Greensboro fabricated the steel racks and floor plates installed on the 1929 building's second floor in 1969. Climate control and air quality specialists configured air conditioning and washing systems for the finishing plant and boarding room between 1965 and 1973.⁴

Biberstein, Bowles, and Meacham's design for the 1956 Acme and McCrary Hosiery Mills office renovation included the installation of wood-paneled partition walls, acoustical tile ceilings, and air conditioning on the 1924 building's second floor. Subsequent modifications created first-floor offices with dropped ceilings and gypsum-board partition walls in the same building. Acme-McCrary Corporation converted the southeast corner of the 1917 section's second-story to office use in 1986, but the original ceiling remains exposed above gypsum-board partition walls.

The 1924 building retains a brick-walled vault with a steel-reinforced, barrel-arched, brick ceiling. Cary Safe Company of Buffalo, New York, manufactured the steel unit that secures the vault's entrance, which comprises a double-leaf interior door in addition to the exterior door.

Acme-McCrary Hosiery Mills Smokestack, circa 1940, Contributing Structure

A seventy-foot-tall brick smokestack executed in all-header bond and emblazoned with "Acme-McCrary" in white letters on its east side rises south of the boiler room. The smokestack's exact construction date is unknown, but Sanborn maps indicate that coal fueled the complex's steam heating system. Historic photographs and renderings illustrate two tall, narrow smokestacks rising through the boiler room roof. A circa 1940 rendering of the complex illustrates the single existing smokestack, but it does not appear on the 1950 Sanborn map.

⁴ Plans in the Acme-McCrary Corporation's collection.

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Parks Hosiery Mill - McCrary Hosiery Mill No. 2 **North Church Street, mid-1920s, 1937, circa 1940, late 1950s, Contributing Building**

In March 1931, McCrary Hosiery Mills acquired the mid-1920s Parks Hosiery Mill on North Church Street's east side. The two-story heavy-timber structure with load-bearing brick walls originally included a one-story eastern dye house of the same construction lighted by a large roof monitor. The building's location just west of the railroad opposite the Acme-McCrary complex was optimal, as was the fact that the sale included all of the equipment. Parks Hosiery Mill employees operated 176 knitting machines prior to ceasing production in early 1931.⁵ The building then served as McCrary Hosiery Mill No. 2.

A stepped parapet is the six-bay west façade's only embellishment. Deep eaves supported by exposed rafter ends shelter the south elevation's original sixteen bays. Most large, multipane, steel-frame windows are intact, but the glass has been coated with thick paint on both the interior and exterior to reduce heat and glare. The interior retains an open plan, painted brick walls, and wood floors at the first story's west end and on the second story. Chamfered heavy-timber posts and beams remain throughout the building, supplemented with steel posts and beams likely added circa 1940. McCrary Hosiery Mills replaced the first story's east wood floor with poured concrete at about the same time. Renderings and Sanborn maps indicate that the company also constructed around 1940 a second floor above the dye house and a two-story, two-bay-deep, six-bay-wide "air-conditioning room" near the north elevation's east end. The addition's flat parapet extends a few feet above the 1920s mill's roof, but the multipane, steel-frame, second-story windows are the same size.

A one-story, single-bay-wide, brick hyphen initially connected the mid-1920s mill and the 1937 addition. After 1950, McCrary Hosiery Mills increased the hyphen to two stories in height, which allowed for the late 1950s construction of the elevated pedestrian walkway that spans the distance between Mill No. 2 and the two-story 1948 Mill No. 3 that stands on North Church Street's west side. Mill No. 2's double-leaf, partially-glazed, North Church Street door pierces the hyphen's first-story wall. Also in the 1950s, the company installed a freight elevator at the former Parks Hosiery Mill's southwest corner to improve access to the upper floor and expanded manufacturing space with a two-story east addition.

Although Richard C. Biberstein's firm prepared plans in January 1932 for an addition to be erected on Parks Hosiery Mill's north side, McCrary Hosiery Mills did not construct Mill No. 2's expansion until

⁵ The April 1931 Sanborn map indicates that Parks Hosiery Mill was not in use at that time. *News and Observer*, *The North Carolina Yearbook*, 1931, p. 78; Randolph County Deed Book 227, p. 630.

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1937.⁶ The two-story, five-bay-wide, ten-bay-long, flat-roofed building at North Church and West Salisbury Street's southeast corner epitomizes the most advanced industrial construction methods of its era. A poured-concrete foundation, concrete and steel mushroom columns, and formed-concrete ceilings comprise the first-story structural system. The column name derives from the flared top, which has a mushroom-like appearance. On the second story, steel posts support steel beams spanned by wood roof decking. Masons executed the exterior walls in variegated, textured, running-bond brick veneer embellished with cast-stone buttresses. Almost-full-height steel-frame windows originally filled each bay, providing ample light and ventilation. Continuous cast-stone sills and lintels remain, but the company enclosed the expansive window openings with brick and much smaller, central, glass-block windows by 1957. An original flat-roofed metal canopy embellished with Art Deco-style geometric motifs shelters the West Salisbury Street entrance. Matching sconces flank the canopy. Fluorescent lights, sprinkler system pipes, and HVAC ductwork hang from the ceilings throughout the building.

McCrary Hosiery Mill No. 3 173 North Church Street, 1948, 2012, 2014, Contributing Building

The Biberstein firm also designed the two-story, steel-framed, brick knitting mill on North Church Street's west side. The asymmetrical, Art Moderne-style, four-bay façade features a slightly-projecting entrance bay at the center of a three-bay north section with curved outer edges. A two-story, fluted, cast-stone band surrounds the replacement aluminum-frame, insulated-glass, double-leaf door, its aluminum-frame multipaned sidelights and transom, and the large, multipane, aluminum-frame window above the flat-roofed metal canopy that surmounts the door. Three-tier metal railings with curved outer corners embellish the entrance. On both sides of the entrance bay, cast-stone bands outline square aluminum-frame windows and brick panels with alternating recessed courses that wrap around the building's corners. An auxiliary double-leaf door that matches the primary entrance pierces the façade near its recessed southeast corner. Three bays of smaller square aluminum-frame windows pierce each of the side elevations. Glass block originally filled these window openings. Cast-stone coping caps the roof parapet.

The mill's floor plan was initially open on both levels, with steel posts and beams and stuccoed and painted brick walls as in the company's other buildings. A "Cunningham Brick" stamp discovered during the renovation revealed that the manufacturer's Thomasville plant supplied the brick. On the second story, large rectangular cream tiles with black bull-nose and base tiles sheathed each wall's lower half. A similar finish is intact in what were restrooms at the first floor's southeast corner and the second floor's northeast corner, where square yellow tiles edged with burnt-orange bull-nose and base tiles cover each wall's lower section. The rooms, devoid of fixtures, also retain variegated brown

⁶ Richard C. Biberstein plans in the Acme-McCrary Corporation's collection.

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mosaic tile floors and will serve as storage closets. The first story has a poured-concrete floor, while the second level's floors are hardwood.

In 2012, the Randolph County Senior Adults Association, Inc., acquired the property for use as a resource and enrichment center and undertook a comprehensive rehabilitation executed by Asheboro contractor S. E. Trogdon and Sons that included creating a first-floor community room and second-story administrative offices and meeting rooms. These spaces have gypsum-board walls and dropped-acoustical-tile ceilings with fluorescent-light panels that conceal the HVAC ductwork and sprinkler system pipes that hang from the original ceiling. The project, designed by Greensboro architect Major S. Sanders Jr. and Asheboro's Summey Engineering Associates, PLLC, also involved constructing a two-story, brick, flat-roofed, rear wing completed in 2014. The steel-framed addition with aluminum-frame insulated-glass windows encompasses classrooms and a kitchen. A gabled porte cochere shelters the primary entrance.

Acme-McCrary-Sapona Recreation Center 148 North Street, 1949, Contributing Building

Henderson, North Carolina, architect Eric G. Flannagan designed the distinctive Art Moderne-style two-story brick recreation center constructed between April 1948 and December 1949. The building's three-part, seven-bay façade encompasses a recessed central section flanked by two wings with corners that step back to the outside edges. The slightly-projecting one-story entrance bay contains three double-leaf aluminum doors surmounted by transoms. Steel-frame windows illuminate offices and community rooms, while tall glass-block windows border the entrance and light the gymnasium. Cast-stone bands and panels surround the windows and a cast-stone water table and cornice encircle the building. Brick buttresses with cast-stone caps separate the gymnasium window bays on the side elevations. A one-story, gable-roofed, brick swimming pool wing illuminated by large, aluminum-frame, tinted insulated-glass windows projects from the south elevation's east section.

Beginning in December 1949, employees and their guests enjoyed a 1,200-seat combination gymnasium and auditorium, heated swimming pool, bowling alleys, volleyball courts, and ping-pong tables; a cafeteria and commissary; lounge, reading, television, shower, and locker rooms; and two apartments.⁷ Most of these spaces are remarkably intact, retaining original features and finishes. In the lobby, tri-colored basketweave-pattern linoleum covers the floor and display cases flank the central yellow wire-cut brick fireplace and chimney. Four double-leaf doors with streamlined modern handles lead into the gymnasium/auditorium, which features an exposed bow-arch steel-truss roof system, large rectangular cream tile wainscoting, hardwood floors, collapsible wood bleachers, and a stage at the east end. First- and second-story offices, meeting rooms, and other spaces have plaster walls. The

⁷ Jack Abernathy, "Building Will Be Pleasure To Workers," *Greensboro Daily News*, December 24, 1949.

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majority of the building's doors have glazed upper sections. Restrooms contain pink marble partition walls, square tile wainscots and mosaic floors, and original Art Deco-style white ceramic fixtures.

Large rectangular yellow-glazed tiles sheath most basement walls, providing hygienic and easy-to-clean surfaces in the cafeteria (which currently serves as an aerobics room), commissary, other gathering spaces, halls, and locker rooms. Three built-in refrigerators and freezers occupy the kitchen's south wall, which is sheathed in aluminum panels and retains three horizontal-wood-paneled doors. A soda fountain and a jukebox once occupied the area near the basement bowling lanes, which were removed to create a weight room. Carpenters utilized some of the lane flooring to create benches for the basement. The swimming pool features exposed bow-arch steel-trusses, skylights, a corrugated metal roof, large rectangular cream tile wainscoting, and a mosaic tile floor. Acoustical tile ceilings and fluorescent lights, sprinkler system pipes, and HVAC ductwork are present in most areas other than the gymnasium and swimming pool.

Commercial/Industrial Building

124 North Street, circa 1900-1920, circa 1936, late 1950s, Contributing Building

In May 1910, four commercial buildings occupied the site where 124 North Street now stands. Near North and Worth (now Trade) streets' intersection, hip-roofed one-story livery stables stood on the north and east sides of a one-story restaurant with a rear warehouse. Farther north was a one-story produce store with a front porch. By April 1922, property owners had replaced the north livery stable with a one-and-one-half-story brick automobile service garage with a twenty-five car capacity. A two-story commercial building with three storefronts filled North and Worth streets' northeast corner and the east livery stable functioned as retail space.

The building configuration remained the same through 1935, when Charlotte architect H. V. Biberstein's firm planned the complex's conversion for Asheboro Grocery Company's use as a warehouse.⁸ The two-story, seven-bay-wide, south building served as the warehouse. To the north, a slightly recessed two-story, three-bay-wide section featured a wood roll-up garage door with thirty-six square wood panels in four rows below two rows of paired glazed panes. The garage bay facilitated the central section's function as a loading dock. At the north end, the one-and-one-half-story, two-part storefront comprised two single-leaf entrances flanked by wood-framed plate-glass display windows surmounted by tall, multipane, wood-framed transoms.⁹

⁸ In 1937, Alton R. Hix served as Asheboro Grocery Company's president, Pattie Walker Redding its vice-president, and D. B. McCrary its secretary-treasurer. *Miller's Asheboro, N.C., City Directory*, 1937; "Store Building for Asheboro Grocery Co.," H. V. Biberstein plans dated October 1935 in the Acme-McCrary Corporation's collection.

⁹ Photographs taken by John David for the Asheboro Chamber of Commerce in the late 1950s illustrate the one-and-one-half-story automobile service garage storefront. Images in the Asheboro Chamber of Commerce collection.

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The circa 1936 project that created a three-part, fourteen-bay North Street façade required removing ten feet of depth from the south two sections' west ends. In order to unify the structures, the architects specified the use of variegated textured brick. The renovation also involved bricking up the five-bay south elevation's existing window openings and increasing the formerly stepped parapet's height to achieve uniform flat parapet walls capped with terra cotta coping.

Masons executed decorative soldier-course door and window lintels on the façade. Concrete keystones further embellish three windows surrounding the south entrance, which retains a recessed double-leaf wood door with a paneled lower section and glazed upper panes. A slightly-recessed stretcher surround bordered with a header course frames the door as well as the running bond spandrel panel and eight-pane steel-frame transom above it.

On the façade and south elevation, contractors installed large multipane steel-frame windows with upper sections that tilt open, facilitating ventilation. The façade's three-bay-wide central section contains three steel-frame second-story windows and a large garage bay enclosed by plywood panels where a double-leaf steel door provides interior access. At the façade's four-bay north end, the south entrance retains a single-leaf door while the north entrance has been enclosed with brick. Stretcher courses delineate door and window bays, with a continuous soldier-course lintel topping the first story. A soldier-course band extends across the façade below four steel-frame second-story windows. On the south elevation, three square first-story steel-frame windows have been removed and the window openings enclosed with plywood. Earlier, taller window openings have been fully or partially enclosed with brick.

On the north elevation, a tall, paneled, double-leaf, early twentieth-century door remains intact and operable, although it is now slightly below grade. Original multipane, wood-frame, square windows in poor condition are encapsulated between plywood on the exterior and interior gypsum board. A steel fire escape leads to the second-story entrance, which is the sole opening on that elevation's upper level.

After the circa 1936 renovation's completion, McCrary Hosiery Mills used the north section for storage, assuming use of the entire building as a warehouse, print shop, and carpentry shop around 1955. In the late 1950s, McCrary Hosiery Mills commissioned the creation of a second-story door opening near the façade's south end to allow for an elevated pedestrian walkway to provide access to the main plant's southernmost 1929 addition. After the walkway's construction, the company engaged contractors to expand the one-and-one-half-story north section to two stories and to articulate a façade matching that of the adjacent two-story building.¹⁰

¹⁰ Photographs taken by John David for the Asheboro Chamber of Commerce in the late 1950s illustrate the breezeway under construction.

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The complex's open interior features wood and concrete floors and plastered and exposed brick walls. Contractors used steel posts and beams to create the new interior structural system in the two-story section's southern three storefronts around 1936. In order to remove the paint added by McCrary Hosiery Mills to the walls in these sections, the owner sand-blasted and painted them with a clear sealant. The south room's wood floor is elevated approximately three feet above the central room's floor, requiring five steps to provide access to what served as a loading platform. The single-leaf door between the rooms has three raised horizontal panels below a six-pane glazed upper section.

The north building's exposed steel post and beam interior structural system dates to its late 1950s expansion to two stories. The first floor walls retain plaster on the west, south, and east walls. McCrary Hosiery Mills's gypsum board installation on the north elevation encapsulated the first-story windows.

The majority of the interior doorways between the building's sections are open. A central enclosed freight elevator provides the only interior access to the second floor, where two metal fire doors that slide on steel tracks and are held open by a weighted pulleys remain. One has been removed from its track. The south section contained a mid-twentieth-century, wood, L-shaped staircase with a steel pipe railing that rose to the second floor near the west elevation's center until 2013. Fluorescent lights and sprinkler system pipes hang below the ceilings and metal conduit carries electrical wiring throughout the building.

Commercial/Industrial Building

Trade Street, circa 1900-1920, circa 1936, late 1950s, Contributing Building

This one-story brick commercial/industrial building and the neighboring two-story edifice fronting North Street share a common central wall, but a narrow space separates them at their northwest juncture. Although the buildings originally functioned separately, both were renovated and an interior connection created in 1936.

A paneled double-leaf door with a glazed upper section and a matching single-leaf door pierce the north elevation. Double-hung, multipane, wood-sash windows are intact behind plywood panels and metal security bars on the north and east elevations. A stepped parapet surmounts the south elevation's two storefronts. In both, large plate-glass display windows and partially-glazed doors were removed many years ago, and until very recently plywood panels enclosed the storefronts. An all-header band wraps around seven brick courses in the parapet, creating the effect of a sign band.

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The wide interior door opening between the one-story building and the North Street building's central first-story room contains four concrete steps. A roll-up metal fire door installed above the lintel in the North Street building secures the opening. The one-story building's floor level is lower in elevation.

Replacement exposed steel posts support the structure, which also has a replacement poured-concrete floor. Most of the brick walls have been plastered. The original pressed-metal ceiling features a square-paneled central section, a textured band around the outer edge, and a cornice with narrow rectangular panels and a fleur-de-lis corner motif. Plastered frame partition walls create a room at the northeast corner. An open doorway provides access to that space and a restroom occupies its southeast corner.

The building housed a series of concerns after its conversion to retail space from its original function as a livery. Bingham-Johnson Hardware Company, advertised as purveyors of "Everything in Hardware," including electrical appliances, paints, and sporting goods, leased the storefront from around 1947 to 1952. The following year, Joseph E. Parsons began operating Parsons Sewing Machine Shop at 122 Trade Street. McCrary Hosiery Mills later utilized the entire structure as a warehouse.¹¹

Integrity Statement

Acme-McCrary Hosiery Mills encompasses two of Asheboro's most intact early to mid-twentieth-century knitting mills as well as an associated recreation center and a commercial structure converted to industrial function. Although Acme Hosiery Mills and McCrary Hosiery Mills erected a series of additions to accommodate increased production during the period of significance, the complex has experienced remarkably little alteration over decades of continuous use. The edifices manifest technological evolution from heavy-timber framing with load-bearing brick walls to steel and concrete structural systems. Particularly significant early features include large double-hung, multipane, wood-sash windows in segmental-arched surrounds and a long gabled roof monitor with four-foot-tall side walls and operable wood sash windows that provided supplementary light for the 1909, 1915, and 1917 buildings' second stories. The 1937 McCrary Hosiery Mill No. 2 concrete mushroom-column structure is also noteworthy. The complex retains indicators of changing stylistic preferences such as corbelled Italianate window and door hoods on the 1909 mill's façade and streamlined Art Moderne elements in the 1948 McCrary Hosiery Mill No. 3 and the 1949 Acme-McCrary-Sapona Recreation Center designs. The two-story commercial/industrial building at 124 North Street evolved over time, but is tied to the mill complex in terms of ownership history, utilization, and appearance, as the

¹¹ M. Luther Johnson served as the company's president, A. Vester Moffit its vice-president, and William A. Bingham its secretary-treasurer. *Miller's Asheboro, N.C., City Directories, 1937-1962*; David Smith, telephone conversation with Heather Fearnbach, December 4, 2013.

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variegated brick veneer that unifies the circa 1936 eleven-bay façade matches that used to execute some of the mill additions. The connected one-story commercial/industrial building retains historic features, including a stepped parapet and a pressed-metal ceiling, although its two Trade Street storefronts have been removed.

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Section 8. Statement of Significance

Acme-McCrary Hosiery Mills meets National Register of Historic Places Criterion A for industry and Criterion C for architecture. Located adjacent to the downtown commercial district, the 7.32-acre property includes three parcels containing buildings erected from 1909 through 1962 on West Salisbury Street's south side north of Sunset Avenue. The plant is Asheboro's largest and most intact historic industrial complex and played a significant role in Asheboro's industrial history. The entity's contribution to the local economy began when seventeen Asheboro businessmen created Acme Hosiery Company in 1907. The concern incorporated as Acme Hosiery Mills on December 15, 1908, but struggled until brothers-in-law and hardware and farm machinery purveyors D. B. McCrary and T. H. Redding partnered with banker W. J. Armfield Jr. to assume the operation's ownership in 1909. Their management transformed the cotton sock-knitting mill into a successful enterprise.

In order to ensure an ample supply of high-quality cotton yarn, McCrary, Redding, and Armfield established Sapona Cotton Mills on March 20, 1916, and acquired and soon improved the existing Cedar Falls Manufacturing Company complex to serve that purpose. McCrary and Armfield remained Acme Hosiery and Sapona Cotton mills' chief executives following T. H. Redding's 1918 death. Around 1927, the entrepreneurs created McCrary Hosiery Mills, a silk and rayon hosiery manufacturing concern housed in the three-story 1924 addition on the Acme plant's south end. Acme Hosiery Mills and McCrary Hosiery Mills continued to expand operations in Asheboro and Cedar Falls, and further increased capacity in 1938 through the construction of a Ramseur factory that remained a separate corporate entity until merging with McCrary Hosiery Mills in 1948. Acme and McCrary hosiery mills consolidated on April 1, 1961, to form Acme-McCrary Corporation.

Acme-McCrary Hosiery Mills is architecturally significant due to its collection of intact early to mid-twentieth-century buildings that display the evolution of industrial design during the period. The 1909 mill and dye house feature heavy-timber framing in conjunction with load-bearing brick exterior walls executed in common bond. Corbelled Italianate hoods surmount the segmental-arched window and door openings on the mill's facade. These elements, in conjunction with the low-pitched gable roof, deep eaves with exposed rafter ends, double-thickness wood floors, and large, multipane, double-hung, wood-sash windows, are representative of fire-resistant industrial architecture commonly employed through the early twentieth century. The 1915, 1917, and 1924 structures manifest the ongoing use of heavy-timber framing and the addition of long gable-roofed monitors to improve light and ventilation. The buildings and additions completed between 1928 and 1972 incorporate structural-steel and reinforced-concrete framing systems frequently used during the mid-twentieth century.

The complex reflects the work of architect Richard C. Biberstein and his successor firms, who prepared plans for the company's Asheboro, Cedar Falls, and Ramseur mill expansions beginning in 1927. McCrary Hosiery Mill No. 2, executed in 1937 with concrete mushroom-column framing and

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variegated, textured, running-bond brick veneer embellished with cast-stone buttresses, is particularly noteworthy. Masons employed identical brick to construct the circa 1936 façade that unifies the commercial block at what is now 124 North Street for the use of Asheboro Grocery Company, a wholesale business owned by Alton R. Hix and the McCrary and Redding families. In 1948 and 1949 the company embraced current architectural trends, erecting two streamlined Art Moderne-style buildings—McCrary Hosiery Mill No. 3 designed by the Biberstein firm and the Acme-McCrary-Sapona Recreation Center planned by Henderson, North Carolina, architect Eric G. Flannagan—and thus conveying a sense of modernity and industrial prosperity.

The period of significance begins in 1909, with the construction of the first mill and attached dye house at what is now 159 North Street, and continues to 1964. Although the Acme-McCrary Corporation continues to use the plant, its industrial function and physical expansion after 1964 are not of exceptional significance.

Historical Background

North Carolina's earliest hosiery manufacturing entities included the Randleman Hosiery Mill in Randolph County, incorporated in 1893, and the Durham Hosiery Company and the Golden Belt Hosiery Company, also in Durham, both established in 1895. By 1914 the state's seventy-four knitting plants employed approximately eight thousand workers who produced almost nine million dollars-worth of stockings. Most hosiery mills were located in central North Carolina cities with strong textile manufacturing traditions such as Asheboro, Burlington, Hickory, High Point, and Winston-Salem.¹²

Seventeen Asheboro businessmen created Acme Hosiery Company in 1907. The concern incorporated as Acme Hosiery Mills on December 15, 1908, and stockholders met on January 5, 1909, to elect officers and a board of directors and to vet potential mill sites. D. B. McCrary served as the first president, C. C. Cranford vice-president, and O. R. Cox secretary and treasurer, leading a board comprised of William J. Armfield Jr., William F. Hughes, Earnest L. Auman, and Edwin H. Morris. The enterprise initially maintained an office in the McCrary-Redding Hardware Company's North Street warehouse. On January 30, 1909, D. B. and Allie McCrary, T. H. and Pattie W. Redding, and W. J. and J. Alice Miller sold the parcel at North and West Salisbury Street's southwest corner to Acme Hosiery Mills for \$1,000. Builders began erecting a two-story brick mill on the site in February. Brothers-in-law and hardware and farm machinery purveyors D. B. McCrary and T. H. Redding

¹² Brent D. Glass, *The Textile Industry in North Carolina: A History* (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, 1992), 44; L. Barron Mills Jr. *Randolph County: A Brief History* (Raleigh: Office of Archives and History, 2008), 89; Jean Bradley Anderson, *Durham County: A History of Durham County, North Carolina* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 213.

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partnered with banker W. J. Armfield Jr. to assume the operation's ownership later that year. Their management soon transformed the cotton sock-knitting mill into a successful venture.¹³

Acme Hosiery Mills employed twenty-two men and thirty-eight women in 1911. The following year, Acme and Randleman Hosiery Mills remained Randolph County's sole knitting plants. Acme workers utilized eighty steam-powered seamless hosiery machines and six sewing machines to generate \$65,000-worth of black, burgundy, grey, and white socks. As German dyes were the most colorfast available at that time, Acme purchased supplies from the Berlin Aniline Works until World War I's onset. In order to facilitate greater fiber quality control, McCrary, Redding, and Armfield established Sapona Cotton Mills on March 20, 1916, soon improving the Cedar Falls Manufacturing Company complex, established in 1829 on Deep River's banks just over seven miles from Asheboro. The enterprise then provided Acme Hosiery Mills with cotton yarns. Acme constructed two-story additions at its Asheboro mill in 1915 and 1917, increasing the facility's capacity to 42,000 stocking pairs daily.¹⁴

By 1921, Randolph County's hosiery knitting mills had grown in number to four: Acme, Asheboro, Randleman, and Staley. Acme Hosiery Mills employees operated 400 knitting machines and 45 sewing machines for 300 days. The following year, W. J. Armfield Jr. served as the company's president; D. B. McCrary its secretary, treasurer, and buyer; and Kemp Alexander its superintendent. Workers manned equipment including 10 ribbing, 11 sewing, 22 looping, and 425 knitting machines.¹⁵

In 1924, Sapona Cotton Mills's 200 employees ran 12,000 spindles and Acme Hosiery Mills's 200 workers generated \$300,000-worth of cotton and rayon stockings. The three-story addition completed that year on the Acme plant's south end accommodated fine-gauge circular knitting machines. The company soon diversified its operations to include full-fashioned (with seams at the back of each leg) silk hosiery manufactured under the auspices of a third business, McCrary Hosiery Mills, created around 1927. As the operation required more square footage and equipment, Charlotte architect Richard C. Biberstein designed the contiguous two-story steel-frame building completed in 1928.

¹³ "Acme Hosiery Mills Co.," *The Courier*, January 7, 1909, p. 1; *The Courier*, February 4, 1909, p. 1; Randolph County Deed Book 135, p. 88.

¹⁴ Acme Hosiery Mills acquired the lot upon which the 1917 addition stands in April of that year. M. L. Shipman, *Twenty-Fifth Annual Report of the Department of Labor and Printing of the State of North Carolina, 1911* (Raleigh: E. M. Uzzell and Company, 1911), p. 152; M. L. Shipman, *Twenty-Sixth Annual Report of the Department of Labor and Printing of the State of North Carolina* (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton Printing Company, 1912), pp. 142-143, 146; Randolph County Deed Book 173, p. 19; "The Story of McCrary Hosiery Mills, Inc. and Acme Hosiery Mills, Inc.," *Textile Age*, April 1949, unpaginated.

¹⁵ M. L. Shipman, *Thirty-Second Report of the Department of Labor and Printing of the State of North Carolina, 1919-1920* (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton Printing Company, 1921), 82-83, 90-91; "Acme Hosiery Mill," *American Wool and Cotton Reporter: Section Two*, Volume XXXVI, No. 7, February 16, 1922, p. 789.

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Biberstein's firm also prepared plans for the two four- and eight-bay additions to the south that followed the next year. The plant growth allowed Acme to increase its equipment from 650 silk, rayon, and cotton hosiery knitting machines in 1931 to 850 such machines in 1935. McCrary's plants then contained 92 full-fashioned silk hosiery knitting machines. Sapona Cotton Mills comprised 12,584 spindles and 188 looms used to produce Osnaburg and hosiery yarns.¹⁶

The Acme and McCrary hosiery mills' successes epitomize statewide trends in the industry. North Carolina was second only to Pennsylvania in the number of hosiery mills operating in 1927, when 117 plants in thirty-five counties employed approximately 15,500 workers and produced hosiery valued at almost \$53 million. Alamance County contained the largest number of hosiery mills (26), followed by Guilford County (15), Catawba County (10), Burke and Durham counties (8 each), and Forsyth and Randolph counties (5 each). In 1936, North Carolina's 187 hosiery mills (of the South's 239) encompassed 2,028 full-fashioned hosiery machines. By the late 1930s, more new hosiery mills were being established in North Carolina than any other type of industrial plant. In 1938, entrepreneurs erected forty-four new plants and expanded thirty-eight existing hosiery mills, resulting in a total of 249 hosiery mills (75 full-fashioned and 174 seamless) by 1939. North Carolina manufactured approximately twenty-six percent of the nation's hosiery that year, almost doubling the state's product in 1929.¹⁷

Diversification was particularly important during the early 1930s, which brought challenges to the textile industry nationwide. Mechanization transformed manufacturing operations, with more efficient equipment resulting in mill employee layoffs. Job loss, decreased pay, and poor working conditions thus made unions more appealing to mill workers. The Great Depression further contributed to pay cuts and job losses in Asheboro and elsewhere, and set the stage for mill employees across the South to participate in the General Textile Strike of 1934, which closed down textile mills throughout the region. Many mill owners fired known union members and sympathizers. Union efforts were not in vain, however, as the Roosevelt administration's social and economic reform programs eventually resulted in the institution of a forty-hour work week and increased worker pay.¹⁸

¹⁶ Fred Burgess, *Randolph County, Economic and Social* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, Department of Rural Social Economics, May 1924), 41; *News and Observer*, *The North Carolina Yearbook*, 1931 and 1935; "Acme Hosiery Mills," "Central Falls Manufacturing Company," "D. B. McCrary Store Building," "McCrary Hosiery Mills," "Sapona Cotton Mills," drawings and project files, 1926-1956, Biberstein, Bowles, Meacham & Reed Records, J. Murrey Atkins Library Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

¹⁷ Marvin Shirley, "Of 672 Mills In Country, State Has 117, Is Second to Pennsylvania With 277," *The Charlotte Observer*, November 23, 1930; Robert Menzies, "Stockings Miss North Carolina Buys From Chicago Probably Made at Home," *Raleigh News and Observer*, October 24, 1937; "Migration," *Raleigh News and Observer*, January 29, 1939; C. H. McGregor, *The Hosiery Manufacturing Industry in North Carolina and Its Marketing Problems*, Research Paper 15, Graduate School of Business Administration, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, June 1965, 6-7.

¹⁸ Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, James Leloudis, Robert Korstad, Mary Murphy, Lu Ann Jones and Christopher B. Daly, *Like a Family: The Making of the Southern Cotton Mill World* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1987), 202-208;

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The Acme and McCrary hosiery mills and Sapona Cotton Mills maintained production during the Great Depression while weathering the economic downturn. McCrary, Redding, and Armfield family members and long-time Acme Hosiery Mills superintendent Kemp Alexander continued to function as officers of the three companies. In March 1931, Acme Hosiery Mills enlarged its plant by purchasing for \$84,000 the adjacent Parks Hosiery Mill and its contents on North Church Street.¹⁹ Sapona Cotton Mills converted to a silk throwing facility in 1936 in response to consumer demand for silk stockings. McCrary Hosiery Mills completed a sizable addition to the former Parks Hosiery plant in 1937, setting the stage for the company to become one of thirty-two hosiery mills in the United States authorized to weave DuPont's new nylon fiber after its 1938 introduction. McCrary Hosiery Mills remained Asheboro's largest full-fashioned hosiery business that year, with between seven and eight hundred employees. Acme-McCrary Hosiery Mills further expanded in 1938 through the construction of a plant in Ramseur. In 1939, Acme employees utilized 850 knitting machines to generate silk, rayon, and cotton hosiery, while McCrary workers operated 125 full-fashioned silk hosiery knitting machines and the Ramseur plant contained 15 full-fashioned knitting machines. Sapona Cotton Mills comprised 6,544 spindles and 6,000 silk-throwing machines, generating Osnaburg as well as hosiery yarns.²⁰

Acme-McCrary Hosiery Mills gradually acquired property surrounding the Asheboro plant to facilitate future growth. One such tract on North and Worth (now Trade) streets' northeast corner contained a row of attached commercial buildings erected at different times between 1900 and 1920. A one-story store, a one-and-one-half-story automobile service garage with a twenty-five car capacity, and a two-story commercial building with three storefronts fronted North Street by April 1922, when the structure to the east, originally a livery stable, functioned as retail space. The building configuration remained the same through 1935, when Richard C. Biberstein's firm planned the complex's conversion for Asheboro Grocery Company's use as a warehouse. The architects specified a variegated textured-brick façade to unify the North Street elevation and interior modifications including a steel structural system's installation in the south building. At the time contractors completed the renovation, Alton R.

Margaret Crawford, *Building the Workingman's Paradise: The Design of American Company Towns* (London and New York: Verso, 1995), 194-195.

¹⁹ Acme Hosiery Mills also purchased \$5,000-worth of Cetwick Silk Mills stock in March 1931. Randolph County Deed Book 227, p. 630.

²⁰ North Carolina Division of Commerce and Industry, North Carolina Department of Labor, and the Works Progress Administration, *Industrial Directory and Reference Book of the State of North Carolina*, 1938, 506; *News and Observer*, *The North Carolina Yearbook*, 1939; Acme-McCrary Hosiery Mills. *Acme-McCrary: Fifty Years in Hosiery, 1909-1959* (Raleigh, NC: Edwards & Broughton Company, 1959), not paginated; "Acme-McCrary celebrates 75 years of history," *The Courier-Tribune*, October 21, 1984, p. 4; Chip Womack, "Families, not family, remain key ingredient," *The Courier-Tribune*, October 31, 1999, pp. 1A and 12A; Larry Penkava, "McCrary Gym was gathering place," *Randolph Guide*, April 7, 1999, pp. 1 and 11; Sapona Manufacturing Company, Inc., "History of Sapona Manufacturing," Cedar Falls, N.C., 2006.

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Hix served as Asheboro Grocery Company's president, Pattie Walker Redding its vice-president, and D. B. McCrary its secretary-treasurer.²¹

North Carolinians rose to the challenges of World War II in the early 1940s. Approximately 4,500 Randolph County residents served in the military during the war, and those left behind were occupied with the war effort in a variety of ways, from participating in bond drives to filling vacant positions at mills and factories that accelerated their production to meet the needs of servicemen and women. Industrial jobs increased by seventy-five percent in the South over the course of World War II, with traditionally under-employed groups such as women, African Americans, and the elderly receiving invaluable education, training, and experience. Output soared after May 1943, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the Office of War Mobilization to coordinate a diverse array of support endeavors including manufacturing, scientific research, and agricultural production.²²

Asheboro's industrial development burgeoned during this period, far surpassing the twentieth century's earlier decades. Although World War II silk importation and nylon rationing presented stocking production challenges, the Acme and McCrary hosiery mills furnished the military with nylon for parachutes, ponchos, and other items. Reflecting its increased synthetic yarn production, Sapona Cotton Mills changed its name to Sapona Manufacturing Company in 1942 and increased its plant's size considerably in 1946. J. F. McCrary served as the concern's president and W. A. Underwood Jr. managed the nylon throwing facility. McCrary Hosiery Mills expanded its Asheboro complex with a second-story addition above the dye room in 1947. Ramseur Hosiery Mills invested in a new plant in 1947 and remained an independent corporation until merging with McCrary in 1948. The following year, the company's four plants' approximately 1,500 employees produced 360,000 pairs of ladies' hosiery per week. Acme workers operated 800 fine-gauge seamless machines and McCrary staffed 100 full-fashioned machines.²³

Acme Hosiery Mills superintendent Kemp Alexander, who oversaw operations for almost four decades, retired in 1948. He continued to serve as a company vice-president and a member of the Board of Directors until his 1963 death. His son, World War II veteran John Wilson Alexander,

²¹ Between April and June 1932, Acme Hosiery Mills, Inc., purchased three tracts on North Street's east side that had previously belonged to T. H. Redding. Sanborn Map Company, Asheboro, North Carolina, Sheet 2, May 1910, April 1922, and April 1931; Randolph County Deed Book 252, p. 260; Deed Book 256, pp. 261 and 349; *Miller's Asheboro, N.C., City Directory*, 1937; "Store Building for Asheboro Grocery Co.," H. V. Biberstein plans dated October 1935 in the Acme-McCrary Corporation's collection.

²² Marilyn M. Harper, et. al. *World War II and the American Home Front* (Washington, D. C.: The National Historic Landmarks Program, October 2007), 3, 13-16; Randolph County Historical Society, *Randolph County, 1779-1979* (Winston-Salem: Hunter Publishing Company, 1980), 179-180.

²³ Acme-McCrary-Sapona, "Service Awards 1948;" "The Story of McCrary Hosiery Mills, Inc. and Acme Hosiery Mills, Inc.," *Textile Age*, April 1949.

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managed Acme's seamless hosiery division's quality control department for twelve years. The late 1940s also brought physical expansion, as the corporation invested in two of Asheboro's most distinctive Art Moderne-style structures: McCrary Hosiery Mill No. 3, a knitting, looping, and seaming facility at 173 North Church Street completed in 1948, and the approximately \$500,000 Acme-McCrary-Sapona Recreation Center at 148 North Street, finished in 1949.²⁴ The McCrarys, who were instrumental in Randolph Hospital and Asheboro High School's construction, worked with architect Eric G. Flannagan on those projects and thus commissioned him to render the recreation center in the same style.

Acme Hosiery Mills and McCrary Hosiery Mills had previously afforded their employees with myriad recreational opportunities, sponsoring athletic teams, classes, and social clubs. The McCrary Eagles basketball and semi-professional baseball teams garnered winning records beginning in the 1930s. The baseball team won the North Carolina championship in 1937 and went on to attain a ranking of fifth in the national tournament. Company owners and employees incorporated a recreational association in April 1941 to facilitate programming as well as fundraising for a structure to accommodate such activities. However, World War II's onset delayed the building's construction, which finally commenced in April 1948. Beginning in December 1949, employees and their guests enjoyed a 1,200-seat combination gymnasium and auditorium, heated swimming pool, bowling alleys, volleyball courts, and ping-pong tables; a cafeteria and commissary; lounge, reading, television, shower, and locker rooms; and two apartments. The McCrary Eagles played Davidson College in the basketball game that marked the facility's opening. Athletic director Paul Clyde Cheek, his assistants Ab Williams and Bill Sheets, cafeteria manager Jennie Thurston, and commissary operator Guy Clodfelter served as the center's initial staff. The company also subsidized the 1949 completion of McCrary Field, an 8.77-acre baseball park at 138 Southway Road.²⁵

²⁴ Kemp Alexander attained a degree from North Carolina Agricultural and Mechanical College's Textile Department in 1900. John Wilson Alexander, born in 1919, also matriculated at the institution and worked at Acme Hosiery Mills until his death in 1957. "The Story of McCrary Hosiery Mills, Inc. and Acme Hosiery Mills, Inc.," *Textile Age*, April 1949; Eleanor Bell Alexander and Margaret Alexander Stevens, "Kemp Alexander," in Cheryl Lynn Martin, ed., *The Heritage of Randolph County, North Carolina, Volume I* (Asheboro, N.C.: Randolph County Heritage Book Committee, 1993), 29, 130.

²⁵ Elon College physical education program graduate Paul C. Cheek began his career as a shipping clerk at Sapona Cotton Mills in 1936 and soon began coaching the company's baseball and basketball teams. He became recreation director in 1939. "America's Greatest Semi-Pro Baseball Teams," 1937; "O'Quinn Gets Honors...Eagles Dedicate Gymnasium," December 5, 1949, and "Cheek's Career Reflects Twenty Years of Athletics," ca. 1959, newspaper clippings in a scrapbook in the possession of the Acme-McCrary Corporation; "McCrary Wins Semi-Pro Title," *Enterprise*, July 16, 1937; "Asheboro Mill Workers Hold Annual Meeting," *Greensboro Daily News*, December 22, 1949; Jack Abernathy, "Building Will Be Pleasure To Workers," *Greensboro Daily News*, December 24, 1949; "Acme-McCrary Organization Announces Formation of A Recreation Association," *The Courier-Tribune*, December 22, 1943; Adrian Brodeur, "Balanced Sports Program Offered By McCrary Gym," *Greensboro Record*, January 10, 1953; Acme-McCrary-Sapona, "Service Awards 1973: Featuring the Recreational Association." Asheboro engineer Richard H. Moore prepared plans for

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Randolph County's 35 hosiery plants (17 seamless, 15 full-fashioned, and 3 knitting) employed 4,457 workers in 1953. Strong product demand necessitated plant growth. Around 1955, McCrary Hosiery Mills assumed use of the entire building at 124 North Street as a warehouse, print shop, and carpentry shop. Acme Hosiery Mills commissioned the construction of a state-of-the-art brick-veneered seamless knitting mill on an 11.58-acre parcel at 647 East Pritchard Street in 1956. The same year, Sapona Manufacturing Company enlarged its complex to facilitate the production of a greater variety of nylon yarns. By 1959, Robert W. Hughes, Charles W. McCrary, J. Frank McCrary, T. Henry Redding, W. Howard Redding, and William A. Underwood managed Acme and McCrary hosiery mills' 1,800 employees. Executives oversaw production facilities in Asheboro, Cedar Falls, and Ramseur, and salespeople marketed its product from offices in Asheboro, Chicago, Dallas, New York City, and San Francisco.²⁶

In the late 1950s, Acme Hosiery Mills and McCrary Hosiery Mills faced challenges resulting from women's fashion shifts that dramatically impacted the hosiery industry. When full-fashioned hosiery declined in popularity, the associated job of sewing seams became obsolete. McCrary laid off many of its full-fashioned knitters in March 1958 due to what it deemed the hosiery industry's "deplorable condition." The action reflected a broader trend, as although almost half (49.4 percent) of the nation's hosiery mills were located in North Carolina in 1958, the state's full-fashioned hosiery mills decreased sixty-one percent in number (from 414 to 159 plants) by 1963.²⁷

The Acme and McCrary hosiery mills' reorganization and expansion during this period included merging on April 1, 1961, to form the Acme-McCrary Corporation. Charles Walker McCrary served as president, T. Henry Redding and W. Howard Redding vice-presidents, J. Frank McCrary treasurer, and Robert W. Hughes secretary. Improvements at the Asheboro complexes included a new North Street office and warehouse erected in 1962 and enlarged in 1972 and the Pritchard Street facility's 1970 expansion. Sapona Manufacturing Company president T. Henry Redding orchestrated new product development such as stretch nylon yarns. As long-tenured employees retired, management

the Acme-McCrary Recreation Association's baseball practice field in December 1946. Plans in the Acme-McCrary Corporation's collection.

²⁶ Acme-McCrary expanded the East Pritchard Street complex with the construction of a concrete block warehouse in 1985. "Acme-McCrary Leading Firm in State's Hosiery Industry," *The Employment Security Commission Quarterly*, Winter-Spring 1953, p. 30; Acme-McCrary Hosiery Mills. *Acme-McCrary: Fifty Years in Hosiery, 1909-1959*, not paginated; Chip Womick, "Families, not family, remain key ingredient," *The Courier-Tribune*, Asheboro, October 31, 1999, pp. 1A and 12A-14A; "Building Summary," Randolph County Tax Department.

²⁷ "Multiple Machinery Work Begins at McCrary Mill," *The Courier-Tribune*, March 10, 1958, p. 2; C. H. McGregor, *The Hosiery Manufacturing Industry in North Carolina and Its Marketing Problems*, Research Paper 15, Graduate School of Business Administration, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, June 1965, 7, 23.

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duties shifted. Sapona plant manager William A. Underwood worked until 1967, when his assistant manager L. Frank Henry assumed the facility's oversight.²⁸

As new competitors emerged and the industry continued to change, the Acme and McCrary hosiery mills' owners explored other textile manufacturing avenues.²⁹ They partnered with Frank and Jeanne Guest, who established girls' sportswear producer Marlowe Manufacturing Company in Florence, South Carolina, in May 1959. The business became a subsidiary of Acme-McCrary Corporation in June 1963, with Frank Guest remaining its president and Charles Walker McCrary chairing the board of directors.³⁰

Fashion trends influenced the hosiery industry again in the 1970s as more women began wearing pants and therefore purchased short stockings, which were much less labor-intensive to produce than pantyhose, or dispensed with hosiery altogether. Acme-McCrary Corporation thus diversified into sport sock manufacture in the late 1970s. By 1982, demand fueled company-wide high-speed knitting machine purchases and plant expansions. The ongoing decline of sheer hosiery's popularity allowed Acme-McCrary to absorb four competitors between 1996 and 2004: Roane Hosiery Mill of Tennessee and in North Carolina, Laughlin Hosiery of Randleman, Vision Hosiery of Spruce Pine, and Phantom, Inc., of Canada's Siler City manufacturing facility, Phantom USA. Subsequent expansions included opening a finishing plant in close proximity to San Pedro Sula in Honduras in 2008. The company moved manufacturing operations from Asheboro to a second Siler City location in 2012. Acme-McCrary Corporation continues to design, develop, and produce socks, sheer hosiery, and seamless apparel such as women's active wear and lingerie, primarily for private labels including Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.; J. C. Penney Company, Inc.; and Spanx, a shapewear purveyor established by Sara Blakely in 2002.³¹

²⁸ Acme-McCrary Hosiery Mills. *Acme-McCrary: Fifty Years in Hosiery, 1909-1959*, not paginated; "Acme and McCrary To Merge April 1," *High Point Enterprise*, March 2, 1961, p. 8B; *Miller's Asheboro, N.C., City Directory*, 1962; Acme-McCrary-Sapona, "Service Awards 1971: Featuring the Sapona Story;" Womick, "Families, not family, remain key ingredient;" "Acme Hosiery Mills, Inc.," "Acme Hosiery Corporation," "Sapona Cotton Mills, Inc.," and "Sapona Manufacturing Company, Inc.," Business Corporation Information, North Carolina Department of the Secretary of State, <http://www.secretary.state.nc.us/corporations/>, accessed in November 2013.

²⁹ Randolph County entrepreneurs established approximately thirty new hosiery mills, mostly small concerns with fewer than twelve employees, between 1955 and 1970. Mills, *Randolph County: A Brief History*, 109.

³⁰ Acme-McCrary-Sapona, "Service Awards 1972: Featuring the Marlowe Story."

³¹ Charlene Nelson, "Acme-McCrary Corporation Now Largest Manufacturer of Private Label Sheers," *Legwear Trends and Fashions*, March 2004, pp. 12 and 13; J. D. Walker, "Local Textile Firm Grows," *The Courier-Tribune*, January 6, 2004, pp. 1 and 2A; Larry Penkava, "Acme-McCrary expanding," *The Randolph Guide*, December 12, 2007, pp. 1 and 10A; Justin Catanoso, "Spanx giving a lift to Acme-McCrary," *Triad Business Journal*, November 5, 2010.

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Asheboro's Industrial Development

The completion of a Southern Railway line through Asheboro in July 1889 spurred development and the municipality's population exploded, almost doubling every decade between 1890 and 1930. John Milton Worth established two of the city's earliest manufactories, Asheboro Roller Mills and a lumber mill, abutting the railroad tracks. After an early 1890s fire destroyed many commercial buildings on Main Street's east side near the courthouse, other entrepreneurs followed suit, erecting brick mills and factories on lots closer to the railroad than the courthouse. The McAlister family began operating Asheboro's first hosiery mill in a brick commercial building at the intersection of Salisbury and Main streets in the late 1890s.³²

In 1900, Asheboro Roller Mills and Home Building and Materials Company owners J. D. Ross, Arthur Ross, and W. J. Scarboro erected an electric generator to power their adjacent plants. Arthur Ross partnered with C. C. Cranford in 1905 to form the Asheboro Electric Company, making power available to other townspeople. The city purchased the company in 1911, but afforded residents use of electric power only at night given the demands of local industries.³³

Seventeen Asheboro businessmen invested in textile manufacturing with Acme Hosiery Company's 1907 creation. The enterprise prospered, eventually sharing a complex just north of Asheboro's central commercial district with McCrary Hosiery Mills, established around 1927. The North Street plant expanded with the companies' exponential growth.

Early furniture-making endeavors included those of industrialist C. C. Cranford, who in 1908 purchased property on Church Street south of Asheboro's commercial center that contained the Randolph Chair Company as well as vacant buildings that once functioned as the Asheboro Furniture Company. In 1917, Cranford constructed a two-story brick building to house Asheboro Hosiery Mills, which grew from a plant with approximately thirty employees operating thirty seamless hosiery machines to become one of Randolph County's largest industrial concerns, employing six hundred workers who used one thousand circular knitting machines to manufacture sixty thousand pairs of hose daily in 1937. Around 1918, he erected the first new building in the Cranford Furniture Company complex. By 1938, his businesses, collectively known as Cranford Industries, encompassed Asheboro Hosiery Mills, Cranford Furniture Company, National Chair Company, Piedmont Chair Company, Standard Tytape Company, and the Asheboro Hardwood Company and provided jobs for fifteen hundred Randolph County residents. The company enlarged the Asheboro Hosiery Mills complex and

³² Whatley, *Architectural History of Randolph County*, 188-189; Mills, *Randolph County: A Brief History*, 86; Hammer and Lambert, "History of Asheboro (to 1938)," 5.

³³ Whatley, *Architectural History of Randolph County*, 192.

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the Cranford Furniture Company factory significantly in the late 1930s and 1940s as demand resulted in increased production.³⁴

Although Asheboro Hosiery and the Acme and McCrary hosiery mills initially dominated the local hosiery manufacturing scene, brothers Charles G. and Joseph C. Bossong, who incorporated Bossong Mills in New York in 1927 and erected a 25,000-square foot Asheboro plant in 1928, transformed Asheboro's hosiery industry through the introduction of the full-fashioned stocking fabrication process to the city. The company's approximately thirty employees initially operated ten knitting machines. By 1938, Bossong Mills employed between 450 and 500 workers, making them almost as large an operation as Asheboro Hosiery Mills, which had around six hundred employees that year. The company was one of the first hosiery mills in the country to weave DuPont's new nylon fiber, which was introduced in 1938 but was in limited supply during World War II due to its use for military applications. Hosiery mills were forced to utilize silk, which was also difficult to procure as Japan was the world's primary supplier. In 1953, the Bossong plant's sixty full-fashioned machines knitted ladies' hosiery marketed by a New York sales representative. Due to changing demand, the company transitioned completely from full-fashioned to seamless hosiery manufacture in 1959. Bossong Mills still produces hosiery at their 840 West Salisbury Street complex.³⁵

The number of hosiery concerns located in Asheboro increased significantly during the 1930s. Parks Hosiery Mills, owned and managed by Hugh Parks, produced ladies' silk and rayon hose with 176 knitting machines in 1931. J. Roosevelt Hinshaw's company, Hinshaw Hosiery Mills, employed fewer than ten workers who wove children's socks on thirty circular knitting machines in 1939. N. McLaurin Cranford purchased Keystone Hosiery in the late 1930s and established McLaurin Hosiery Mills. The plant's approximately 200 employees manufactured "men's banner wrap and misses' anklets" on 183

³⁴ Sanborn Map Company, Asheboro, North Carolina, May 1910; Sheet 2, April 1922, Sheet 3; and April 1931, Sheet 1; Burgess, *Randolph County, Economic and Social*, 41; "Cranford Furniture Manufacturing Plant," *Burlington Daily Times*, July 21, 1931, p. 4; "Keystone of Stability in Cranford Enterprises," *Raleigh News and Observer*, April 7, 1935; "Cranford Furniture Company Develops Into an Outstanding Unit of the Cranford Group," "Hardwood Plant Latest Addition to Cranford Group," and "Standard Tytape Company One of Largest Tape Plants Operating in North Carolina," *The Randolph Tribune*, Randolph County Progress Edition, circa 1937, p. 3; Mrs. W. C. Hammer and Miss Massa E. Lambert, "History of Asheboro (to 1938)," *Asheboro Courier-Tribune*, 1938, reprinted by the Randolph County Historical Society, 1968, 5; "75th Birthday Today," *Raleigh News and Observer* article reprinted in an unnamed newspaper on February 2, 1950; James A. Hayworth, "The Industrial Development of Asheboro, North Carolina," 9; Whatley, *Architectural History of Randolph County, North Carolina*, 195, 223; Chip Womick, "A dream that just ran out of steam," *The Courier-Tribune*, October 29, 1999, p. A10.

³⁵ North Carolina Division of Commerce and Industry, et. al., *Industrial Directory and Reference Book of the State of North Carolina*, 1938, 506; "Bossong Mills," <http://bossongmills.com/>, accessed in December 2010; "Bossong Hosiery Mills, Inc.," *The Employment Security Commission Quarterly*, Winter-Spring 1953, p. 30; Chip Womack, "Bossongs keep changing to keep up in tough business," *The Courier-Tribune*, Asheboro, October 28, 1999, pp. 1A and 16A.

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circular knitting machines in 1939. Cranford sold the enterprise to Burlington Mills before his death in 1945 and the company commissioned the northern building's construction in 1947.³⁶

Arthur Ross founded Tip-Top Hosiery Mills in 1932 to produce men's hosiery. In 1939, the company owned \$35,000-worth of assets including one hundred knitting machines and employed between 75 and 100 workers. His son Arthur Ross Jr. served as president in 1953, when the Asheboro plant manufactured a variety of socks including "Genuine wrap, English ribs, argyle, and cushion soles" on 167 circular knitting machines. The business ceased operating in 1972.³⁷

Numerous small hosiery mills were listed in Asheboro Chamber of Commerce brochures and Asheboro City Directories from 1930 through 1962, but most operated for only a short period and employed fewer than twelve workers. Such businesses included Allred Hosiery Mills, Arch Hosiery Mills, Auman Hosiery Mills, Balfour Hosiery Company, Brown and York Hosiery Mill, Burke Hosiery Mill, Charmeuse Hosiery Industries, Cline Hosiery Mill, Cornelison and Hallman Hosiery Company, Craven Hosiery Mill, Fair Grounds Hosiery Mills, Richard Grey Hosiery Company, Golda Hosiery Mill, Harvelle Hosiery Mills, Isley Hosiery Company, Kennedy Hosiery Mills, Longwear Hosiery Mills, Luck Hosiery Mills, Martha Mills, Moffit Hosiery Mills, E. H. Steere and Company, Swing-Taylor Hosiery, Terry Hosiery Mill, and Vuncannon Hosiery Mills.³⁸

Asheboro's hosiery mills were the municipality's largest industries, but other textile mills and establishments producing goods ranging from mattresses to millwork were also successful. The Chamber of Commerce reported that the city's fifty-one industrial plants drew from an abundant local labor force in 1937. C. C. Cranford's 1938 letter detailing Asheboro's economy lists thirty-eight industries operating at that time, including three full-fashioned hosiery mills, two seamless hosiery mills, two mills that manufactured men's half-hose, a broom factory, a printed string plant, a silk throwing plant, a handkerchief factory, a tape manufacturing plant, a flour and feed mill, a paper box

³⁶ Sanborn Map Company, Asheboro, North Carolina, April 1931 and April 1950, Sheet 7; *News and Observer*, *The North Carolina Yearbook*, 1931 and 1939; North Carolina Division of Commerce and Industry et. al., *Industrial Directory and Reference Book of the State of North Carolina*, 506; Randolph County Historical Society, *Randolph County, 1779-1979*, 170;

³⁷ *Ibid.*; Mills, *Randolph County: A Brief History*, 97; "Tip-Top Hosiery Mills, Inc.," *The Employment Security Commission Quarterly*, Winter-Spring 1953, p. 30.

³⁸ Asheboro Chamber of Commerce, *Asheboro, North Carolina: The Center of North Carolina* (High Point: Barber-Hall Print Company, circa 1939); Asheboro Chamber of Commerce, *Asheboro, North Carolina: The Center of North Carolina* (High Point: Hall Print Company, circa 1941); Asheboro Chamber of Commerce, *Asheboro, North Carolina: The Center of North Carolina* (circa 1938 brochure in Randolph County vertical file, North Carolina Collection Vault, Box 1, Folder 1); Charles W. Miller, *Miller's Asheboro, N.C. City Directories* (Asheville: Southern Directory Company, 1939-1940, 1949-1950, 1960).

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factory, a creamery, two ice plants, two lumber and building supply companies, four furniture factories, and fourteen other sundry concerns.³⁹

Stedman Manufacturing Company, established by Sulon B. Stedman in 1930 to make handkerchiefs, expanded their Hoover Street factory with the construction of a large, two-story, streamlined, brick building in the late 1930s. The United States Navy commissioned the company to produce men's t-shirts during World War II, and they continued fabricating men's apparel at a new plant after the war ended. The Stedman complex at 604 Hoover Street was utilized by Sunspun Chenilles by 1941 and Blue Gem Manufacturing Company, who fabricated work garments, by 1951.⁴⁰

Industrial Architecture Context

Many of North Carolina's early textile producers adapted existing frame buildings to serve as their first mills. Such structures, which usually had rough-sawn wood floors and wood-shingle roofs, often resembled large residential or agricultural buildings as they were typically located in rural settings along the rivers and streams that generated their power. As frame mills were extremely susceptible to fire and rarely had interior firewalls or other fire safety features, few nineteenth-century North Carolina examples survive.⁴¹

In purpose-built industrial buildings, designers strove to accommodate machinery in a manner that allowed for efficient access to power sources as well as the utilization of natural light and ventilation. Most industrial buildings erected by the mid-nineteenth century were of "slow-burn" masonry construction, with load-bearing brick walls, heavy-timber framing, thick plank floors, gabled roofs, large operable windows and transoms, and metal fire doors. Heavy-timber framing members that were at least twelve inches square with chamfered edges effectively slowed the progress of fire, particularly when used in combination with a floor system that encompassed three- to four-inch-thick plank decking covered with waterproof paper and topped with hardwood floors. The floor system was left

³⁹ Asheboro Chamber of Commerce, *Asheboro, North Carolina: The Center of North Carolina*, circa 1937 brochure in the Asheboro Chamber of Commerce vertical file, Randolph Room, Asheboro Public Library; C. C. Cranford, "Asheboro Today," December 19, 1938, letter written to be sealed in the Asheboro Municipal Building's corner stone, in the Asheboro Hosiery Mills vertical file, Randolph Room, Asheboro Public Library.

⁴⁰ Asheboro Chamber of Commerce, *Asheboro, North Carolina: The Center of North Carolina* (High Point: Barber-Hall Print Company, circa 1939); Mills, *Randolph County: A Brief History*, 103, 106; Sanborn Map Company, Asheboro, North Carolina, April 1931 and April 1950, Sheet 9.

⁴¹ Historian William Pierson, analysis by Betsy Hunter Bradley in *The Works: The Industrial Architecture of the United States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), VIII, 16-17.

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exposed underneath in order to avoid the use of flammable ceiling materials and finishes. Chamfering the corners of beams, posts, and girders removed splinters that could ignite easily.⁴²

During the late nineteenth century, steam and electric power availability encouraged factory movement to urban areas in close proximity to railroad lines and a large potential employee pool. Textile mill construction evolved from a vernacular process whereby owners worked with builders who erected edifices based on mutually understood norms to a field dominated by professionally-trained mill engineers who designed industrial buildings and supervised their construction.⁴³ Standards imposed by machinery manufacturers and insurance companies also guided industrial architecture's evolution. Roof monitors provided mill workers with abundant light and ventilation. In order to minimize fire risk, stairwells, which could serve as conduits for fire movement between floors, were located in projecting stair towers. Brick interior walls and galvanized-sheet-metal-clad, solid-core-wood doors, known as kalamein doors, separated the mill sections where fires might start or spread rapidly.⁴⁴

Acme-McCrary Hosiery Mills retains kalamein doors between most spaces, including the machine shop and boiler room that project from the main mill building. These heavy doors would automatically close in the case of a fire, as the heat would melt a soft metal link in the door's counterweight assembly and the door would slide shut on the sloped metal track. As an additional precaution, water reservoirs and elevated water tanks supplied automatic sprinkler systems in many industrial complexes. The April 1922 Sanborn map shows that Acme Hosiery Mills included fire safety features such as an elevated water tower and a sprinkler system. The tall brick chimney located south of the boiler house is freestanding, also reducing fire potential.

North Carolina industrialists benefited from the contributions of resident engineers who disseminated specifications dictating best practices in mill layout and design. South Carolina native Daniel A. Tompkins, sent by the Pittsburgh-based Westinghouse Engine Company to Charlotte in the early 1880s to sell and coordinate the installation of the company's equipment in the region, became a driving force in the southern textile industry. Tompkins partnered with Charlotte grain merchant R. M. Miller in 1883 to establish the D. A. Tompkins Company, an engineering firm. The company created plans for over one hundred mills in addition to other industrial buildings.⁴⁵

⁴² Sara E. Wermiel, "Heavy Timber Framing in Late-Nineteenth-Century Commercial and Industrial Buildings," *APT Bulletin: Journal of Preservation Technology*, Volume 35, No. 1, 2004, 56.

⁴³ Bradley, *The Works: The Industrial Architecture of the United States*, 15-21; "Piedmont Manufacturing Company," http://www.nps.gov/history/nhl/DOE_dedesignations/Piedmont.htm, accessed in February 2011.

⁴⁴ Glass, *The Textile Industry in North Carolina*, 38.

⁴⁵ Thomas W. Hanchett, *Sorting Out the New South City: Race, Class, and Urban Development in Charlotte, 1875-1975* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 50.

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Thomasville, North Carolina, native Stuart Cramer, who began his career with the D. A. Tompkins Company, was another highly-influential mill engineer. Cramer set up his own Charlotte firm in 1895, and by 1915 had designed almost one-third of the new mills erected in the South during that period. Cramer's innovations in textile mill climate control garnered him international recognition, and he is credited with conceiving the term "air conditioning."⁴⁶

Talented architects and engineers such as Richard C. Biberstein of Fredericksburg, Texas, worked in Stuart Cramer's office. Biberstein, born in 1859, attained a mechanical engineering degree from the Worcester (Massachusetts) Polytechnic Institute in 1882. He found employment at U. S. Electric Lighting Company in Newark, New Jersey, and Atlas Engine Works in Indianapolis before moving to Charlotte in 1887 to undertake a draftsman position at industrialist John Wilkes's Mecklenburg Iron Works. H. S. Chadwick offered him a similar job at the Charlotte Machine Company, which manufactured mill equipment, in 1897. Biberstein accepted the offer and remained on staff until 1902, when he became Stuart Cramer's employee, thus garnering valuable experience that prepared him to launch an independent firm specializing in mill design three years later.⁴⁷

Richard C. Biberstein's son Herman Von Biberstein matriculated at North Carolina State University and began working with his father after completing a civil engineering degree in 1914. Architect William Andrew Bowles became a partner in 1930. Following the senior Biberstein's 1931 death, the practice bore his name until around 1940, when H. V. Biberstein's name appears on plan sheets. Biberstein and Bowles operated as principals until Louis Hunter Meacham achieved partnership in 1948. Biberstein, Bowles, and Meacham subsequently elevated Charles Harmon Reed to full partnership between 1956 and 1959. Mechanical engineer William Ernest Stowe Jr. became a principal by 1962.⁴⁸

The firm had a significant impact on Southern industrial development, designing hundreds of structures throughout the region. Asheboro industrialists began engaging the Bibersteins to design mills in the 1920s and continued to solicit the firm's services through the 1980s. The practice's Asheboro commissions include buildings for Acme Hosiery Mills, Asheboro Furniture Company,

⁴⁶ Ibid., 107.

⁴⁷ Thomas W. Hanchett, William H. Huffman, and Catherine W. Bishir, "Richard C. Biberstein," *North Carolina Architects and Builders: A Biographical Dictionary*, 2009, accessed in November 2013; "Biberstein, Bowles, Meacham & Reed: Biographical/Historical Note," Biberstein, Bowles, Meacham & Reed Records, J. Murrey Atkins Library Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

⁴⁸ "Biberstein, Bowles, & Meacham: Biographical Note," Guide to the Biberstein, Bowles, & Meacham Records, 1944-1954, MC 00222, North Carolina State University, Raleigh. Plans in the Acme-McCrary Corporation's collection in Asheboro created from March 1927 through the 1930s are stamped "R. C. Biberstein, mill engineer and architect." A set of drawings from May 29, 1940, has "H. V. Biberstein, mill engineer and architect" in the title block.

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Asheboro Hosiery Mills, McCrary Hosiery Mills, McLaurin Hosiery Mills, Sapona Cotton Mills, and Stedman Manufacturing Company.⁴⁹

Although architects and engineers specified iron and steel structural systems for industrial buildings during the nineteenth century, high cost greatly limited the materials' use. The ability to withstand the weight and vibrations of heavy machinery without failing contributed to the popularity of structural-steel construction, as did the ease of fabricating framing systems from standard, factory-generated components. Steel posts and beams could be riveted together and tended to be smaller and lighter than wood or iron framing members, thus allowing for wider and taller buildings with more square footage for equipment.⁵⁰

By the early twentieth century, urban timber scarcity and the popularity of roof monitors resulted in increased structural-steel framing prevalence. Distinctive sawtooth roof monitors, which were common in the northeast United States and England but infrequently utilized in North Carolina, consist of a sloped south face and an almost-vertical north face with bands of tall windows that allow more light to penetrate interior spaces. Many industrial buildings employed a combination of steel interior framing and load-bearing brick exterior walls before moving to engineered brick, concrete, or tile curtain walls that provided structural bracing but did not carry any weight. Building materials and labor were in short supply during World War II, but when construction resumed after the war's end, steel-framed industrial edifices with masonry curtain walls predominated.⁵¹

The Acme and McCrary hosiery mills' simply-executed, utilitarian, early twentieth-century buildings reflect the design principles espoused by Tompkins, Cramer, and Biberstein as well as the transition from heavy-timber to structural-steel framing. The main mill, dye house, and additions' common-bond load-bearing brick walls, very low-pitched gable roofs, segmental-arched window and door openings, and large, multipane double-hung, wood sash surmounted by multi-light transoms are representative of industrial architecture from that period. Chamfered square wood posts and substantial wood beams comprise the structure in the sections erected in 1924 and earlier. Engineers specified the installation of steel posts and beams to provide supplementary support, as replacements, and to build additions

⁴⁹ Richard C. Biberstein, et. al. "Acme Hosiery Mills," "Asheboro Grocery Store," "Central Falls Manufacturing Company," "D. B. McCrary Store Building," "McCrary Hosiery Mills," "Sapona Cotton Mills," 1927-1986 drawings in the possession of Acme-McCrary Corporation, Asheboro, N.C.; "Biberstein, Bowles, Meacham & Reed: Scope and Contents," Biberstein, Bowles, Meacham & Reed Records, J. Murrey Atkins Library Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Charlotte; George S. Koyl, ed., *American Architects Directory, Second Edition* (New York: R. R. Bowker Company, 1962), 54; George S. Koyl, ed., *American Architects Directory, Third Edition* (New York: R. R. Bowker Company, 1970), 70.

⁵⁰ Bradley, *The Works: The Industrial Architecture of the United States*, 144-147.

⁵¹ Ibid.

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beginning in 1928. Steel braces and girders underpin some areas to compensate for heavy equipment's weight and vibration.

Concrete construction technology also improved during the early twentieth century. Engineer Claude A. P. Turner patented a structural system comprised of concrete mushroom columns and formed-concrete floors in 1908 after utilizing it in his plans for Minneapolis's 1906 Johnson-Bovey Building. He then designed the country's first bridge supported by the columns, which carried Lafayette Avenue over the Soo Line in St. Paul, Minnesota. The Cameron Avenue Bridge over Falling Branch Creek in Winston-Salem, completed in 1920, possesses statewide engineering significance as North Carolina's only such structure employing reinforced-concrete mushroom columns to carry a concrete slab span. Few extant examples have been documented nationally. The technology was often employed in mill construction, however, appearing in North Carolina factories such as those erected in Winston-Salem by R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company beginning in 1915 and the six-story knitting mill that P. H. Hanes Knitting Company built in 1921.⁵² Biberstein and Bowles's specification of reinforced-concrete mushroom columns for McCrary Hosiery Mill No. 2 in 1937 reflects the structural system's enduring popularity. The transition from heavy-timber-frame construction to steel- and concrete-framed structures in North Carolina was slow, however, and heavy-timber beams and posts continued to be used through the 1940s.

Although some American industrial design began to reflect European architectural trends by the 1920s, the vast majority of manufacturing complexes continued to be planned with function rather than aesthetics in mind. Walter Gropius and Mies van der Rohe were among the European architects and designers who emigrated to the United States beginning in the late 1930s and espoused Modernist principles to a new audience. Gropius, the highly influential founder of the German design school known as the Bauhaus, began teaching at Harvard's Graduate School of Design and used his personal residence in Lincoln, Massachusetts, erected in 1937, to promote the central tenets of Bauhaus philosophy—maximum efficiency and simplicity of design.⁵³ American architects and engineers, who

⁵² As construction drawings for the Cameron Avenue Bridge have not been located, the engineer is unknown. However, R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company commissioned the bridge's construction as part of its development of the surrounding neighborhood for its employees. J. E. Sirrine and Company, architects and engineers of many of the company's structures, specified mushroom columns for buildings erected during that period. A. S. Macolmson, "The Mushroom System of Reinforced Concrete Building Construction," *Engineering-Contracting*, September 4, 1907, p. 137; Lichtenstein Consulting Engineers, Inc., "Bridge ID No. 330373," North Carolina Department of Transportation Historic Bridge Inventory Report, 2003; Nannie M. Tilley, *The R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), Tilley, 307; *Manufacturers' Record*, August 26, 1915 and October 14, 1915; Anita Scism and Spencer Gung, "R. J. R. Downtown Buildings, 1875-1950: A Historical Perspective," unpublished report prepared for R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, March 12, 2002.

⁵³ Bradley, *The Works: The Industrial Architecture of the United States*, 250; Henry-Russell Hitchcock Jr. and Philip Johnson, *The International Style: Architecture since 1922* (New York, W. W. Norton & Company, 1932, 20; "Gropius House," <http://www.historicnewengland.org/visit/homes/gropius.htm>.

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had long employed the same principles in their factory and office building commissions, began incorporating Modernist elements into new construction in an attempt to present an up-to-date image.

Albert Kahn was one of only a few American architects who specialized in early twentieth-century industrial building design. Kahn's Detroit office designed hundreds of factories for American industrialists including automobile manufacturers Packard, Chrysler, Ford, and General Motors, as well as for international clients. At the Packard Motor Car Company Forge Shop (1910) in Detroit, Kahn used a steel structural frame to support a traveling crane mounted to the roof trusses and glass curtain walls to allow for maximum light and ventilation. He minimized the exterior walls' bay articulation by using narrow steel columns of about the same size as steel window sashes. Kahn's firm continued to utilize bands of steel windows in conjunction with masonry or concrete screens to conceal steel structural framing in edifices such as the Industrial Works (ca. 1915) in Bay City, Michigan. The firm's design for the Dodge Half-Ton Truck Plant in Detroit, completed in 1937, was a much more sophisticated building with tall glazed curtain walls reminiscent of Walter Gropius's Bauhaus School (1926) in Dessau, Germany.⁵⁴

Although structures such as architect Richard C. Biberstein's 1928 and 1929 additions to the Acme-McCrary Hosiery Mills plant were designed to be functional and fire resistant rather than aesthetic masterpieces, they reflect many of the ideas promoted by Albert Kahn, Walter Gropius, and other Bauhaus architects. Industrial architecture consistently utilizes new building materials, technology, and forms in an attempt to create edifices that epitomize efficiency, modernity, and economic progress. The two-story flat-roofed McCrary Hosiery Mill No. 2 also serves as a good example of an edifice constructed to serve a specific manufacturing purpose using new and cost-effective materials. The 1937 building has a reinforced-concrete structure (mushroom columns, joists, and floor system) and variegated, textured, running-bond brick exterior walls. On the second story, steel posts support steel beams spanned by wood roof decking. Almost-full-height, multipane, steel-frame windows originally filled each bay, providing ample light and ventilation but also generating heat and glare. Cast-stone sills and lintels remain, but the company enclosed the expansive window openings with brick and much smaller, central, glass-block windows by 1957, likely following an air conditioning system's installation. In order to avoid the challenges created by large windows, the Biberstein firm specified only a few small multipane steel-frame windows for the Art Moderne-style structural-steel-framed McCrary Hosiery Mill No. 3's production areas. The buildings asymmetrical brick façade features more glass, however, highlighting the entrance bay.

⁵⁴ "Art: Industrial Architect," *Time*, August 8, 1938; Bradley, *The Works: The Industrial Architecture of the United States*, 248, 248-258.

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Asheboro's Industrial Architecture

Industrial architecture consistently utilizes new building materials, technology, and forms in an attempt to create edifices that epitomize efficiency, modernity, and economic progress. Asheboro's simply-executed, utilitarian, early twentieth-century, heavy-timber-frame and brick mills and factories with flat or low-pitched gable roofs and large windows reflect the design principles espoused by Tompkins, Cramer, and Biberstein as well as the transition from heavy-timber to structural-steel and reinforced-concrete framing. By the 1940s, Asheboro's industrialists embraced popular architectural styles, particularly Art Moderne, to convey a sense of prosperity and modernity. Asheboro Hosiery Mill No. 2's 1945 expansion, McCrary Hosiery Mill No. 3, erected in 1948 per the plans of Charlotte architects Biberstein and Bowles, and the 1949 Acme-McCrary-Sapona Recreation Center, designed by Henderson, North Carolina, architect Eric G. Flannagan, exemplified this trend with streamlined features such as rounded corners and glass-block windows.⁵⁵

Although Asheboro retains a number of industrial buildings erected during the first half of the twentieth century, many have been extensively modified or demolished. The Acme-McCrary Hosiery Mills and Asheboro Hosiery Mills - Cranford Furniture Company complexes encompass the city's earliest and most intact industrial edifices, as well as some of the most stylish. The 1909 Acme Hosiery Mill and its 1915 to 1929 additions, the 1917 Asheboro Hosiery Mill No. 1, the 1924 Asheboro Hosiery Mill No. 2, the 1925 Cranford Furniture Company factory, and the mid-1920s Parks Hosiery Mill have experienced remarkably little alteration over decades of continuous use. The buildings manifest the fire-resistant construction that continued to prevail through the twentieth century's first decades.

Asheboro's largest industrial complex, owned and operated by the Acme-McCrary Corporation, encompasses buildings erected from 1909 through 1962 on seven acres south of West Salisbury Street. Acme Hosiery Mills's first building, a two-story brick edifice, stands on the railroad's east side at what is now 159 North Street. The load-bearing masonry structure, which has a low-pitched gable roof with exposed rafter ends and deep eaves, features arched window and door opening embellished with Italianate-style corbelled hoods below the stepped parapet on its east façade. The company expanded the complex numerous times, constructing more austere two- and three-story, brick, heavy-timber-, structural-steel-, and concrete-framed warehouse and factory additions that extend west toward the railroad and south to commercial buildings on Sunset Avenue's north side. Architect Richard C.

⁵⁵Eric G. Flannagan's other local commissions include the 1932 Randolph County Hospital and the 1949 Asheboro High School. Plans in the Acme-McCrary Collection and the Biberstein, Bowles, Meacham & Reed Records, J. Murrey Atkins Library Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Charlotte; "Acme-McCrary Recreation Building," exterior sketch and plans 1944-1948 in Flat Folders 52, 61, and 66 in the Eric G. Flannagan Papers, 1922-1989, Collection MC 00087, North Carolina State University.

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Biberstein and his successor firms prepared plans for the company's Asheboro and Cedar Falls mills from 1927 through 1986.⁵⁶ The window openings in the earliest buildings, which contain double-hung, wood-frame sashes, have been covered with vinyl siding, but large steel-frame and glass-block windows illuminate the later edifices.

An elevated, vinyl-sided, pedestrian walkway extends above the railroad at the complex's north end, providing access to McCrary Hosiery Mill No. 2. The two-story, flat-roofed, 1937 building is sheathed in brick veneer with cast-stone buttresses, a cast-stone watertable, and cast-stone bands encircling the building above each floor. The structure abuts a mid-1920s two-story brick hosiery mill with large steel-frame windows that stands to the south on North Church Street's east side. Another elevated, vinyl-sided pedestrian walkway connects McCrary Hosiery Mill No. 2 to the company's third Asheboro mill, a two-story, red brick, Art Moderne-style plant erected to the west at 173 North Church Street in 1948.

McCrary Hosiery Mill No. 3's asymmetrical four-bay façade features a slightly-projecting entrance bay at the center of a three-bay north section with curved outside edges. A two-story, fluted, cast-stone band surrounds the double-leaf aluminum-frame door, multipaned sidelights, and transom, as well as the large, multipane, aluminum-frame window that surmounts the entrance above a flat-roofed metal canopy. The Acme-McCrary-Sapona Recreation Center completed at 148 North Street the following year is even more distinctive, with a three-part, seven-bay façade with a recessed central section flanked by two wings with corners that step back to the outside edges. The slightly-projecting entrance bay has three double-leaf aluminum doors surmounted by transoms. Cast-stone bands and panels surround the windows and a cast-stone watertable and cornice encircle the building. Brick buttresses with cast-stone caps framed the tall glass-block gymnasium windows on the side elevations.

Asheboro Hosiery Mills also evolved to accommodate increased production. Like the earliest Acme Hosiery Mills buildings, Asheboro Hosiery Mill No. 1 features five-to-one common-bond load-bearing brick walls, heavy-timber framing, a low-pitched gable roof, and segmental-arched window and door openings. The original, large, double-hung, twelve-over-twelve, wood-sash windows that remain on the second floor's south elevation include a mechanism that allowed the upper sash to tilt open, facilitating ventilation. A long, rectangular, wood-framed, monitor-roofed skylight provided abundant illumination.

⁵⁶ Whatley, *Architectural History of Randolph County, North Carolina*, 195; "Acme Hosiery Mills," "Central Falls Manufacturing Company," "D. B. McCrary Store Building," "McCrary Hosiery Mills," "Sapona Cotton Mills," 1927-1986 drawings in the possession of Acme-McCrary Corporation; Drawings and project files, 1926-1956, Biberstein, Bowles, Meacham & Reed Records, J. Murrey Atkins Library Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

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The company erected a two-story addition on the 1917 building's south end as part of their 1924 plant expansion and enlarged the mill again in the late 1930s with the construction of a two-story wing near the main mill's southeast corner, doubling the building's size.⁵⁷ The 1924 and 1930s additions were executed in five-to-one common bond with rectangular window opening and very low-pitched gable roofs. Chamfered square wood posts and substantial wood beams support the floor and roof systems in the 1924 section, while steel posts and beams were used to construct the late 1930s addition. As with many industrial buildings during this period, the exterior brick walls are load-bearing. Large steel-frame windows with eight-pane central sections that tilt open illuminate the entire building.

Asheboro Hosiery Mill No. 2, erected in 1924, is also a two-story, heavy-timber-frame edifice with load-bearing five-to-one common-bond brick walls. Cranford Industries constructed a three-story brick building that abutted the 1924 mill's north elevation at the same time and leased it to Old Dominion Box Company, who operated a factory at the site for about twenty years.⁵⁸ Both buildings were extensively renovated as part of Asheboro Hosiery Mills's 1945 update. The floor systems in the three-story factory were removed and the interior was completely reconfigured, creating a two-story building with structural-steel framing, high ceilings, and improved lighting. Asheboro Hosiery's narrow, two-story, brick, Art Moderne-style addition on Mill No. 2's west elevation created a new entrance, stair hall, and elevator tower. The streamlined façade, which features translucent glass-block windows and a two-story, stepped, soldier-course band surrounding the central entrance bay, foreshadowed the two Art Moderne-style buildings in the Acme-McCrary Hosiery Mills complex that manifest more high-style design elements. All three buildings represent the influence of European architectural trends on American industrial design.⁵⁹

The Cranford Furniture Company factory that occupies the block's south end is another intact example of early to mid-twentieth-century industrial architecture. The two-story brick building's original section, constructed around 1925, is executed in five-to-one common bond with stepped-parapet north and south elevations and a very low-pitched gable roof. The additions to this factory, like the others in the complex, manifest the company's use of structural-steel framing technology by the late 1930s. The building retains large steel-frame windows with eight-pane central sections that tilt open.

Other Asheboro industrial buildings feature similar construction technology but have less integrity. The former Keystone Hosiery Mills – McLaurin Hosiery Mills complex at 150 North Park Street consists of a one-story, brick, heavy-timber-frame mill erected at the northeast corner of Hoover and

⁵⁷ The two-story wing does not appear on the 1931 Sanborn map but is illustrated in a line drawing and photographs that appear in Asheboro Chamber of Commerce brochures from the late 1930s and early 1940s.

⁵⁸ Ibid.; *News and Observer*, *The North Carolina Yearbook* (Raleigh: *News and Observer*, 1931), 78.

⁵⁹ "Asheboro Hosiery Mill Expansion Under Way Provides Plenty of Jobs," *The Courier-Tribune*, September 9, 1945, p. 1; Womick, "A dream that just ran out of steam;" Sanborn Map Company, Asheboro, North Carolina, April 1931 with April 1950 updates, Sheet 3, accessed via NCLive.com.

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Park Streets in 1930. Like the pre-1924 sections of the Acme-McCrary Hosiery Mills complex, the mill features a very low-pitched gable roof with deep eaves, but most of its windows have been enclosed with brick. The two-story, brick, heavy-timber-frame, 1947 building to the north has a flat roof and intact steel-frame windows. Brick buttresses with concrete caps flank the window bays.⁶⁰

The Biberstein firm's design for the former Stedman Manufacturing Company complex erected at 604 Hoover Street in 1930 is similarly utilitarian, consisting of austere one- and two-story heavy-timber-frame industrial buildings with load-bearing exterior brick walls pierced by large multipane steel-frame windows like those in the post-1928 Acme-McCrary Hosiery Mills. Many first-floor window openings have been infilled with brick or concrete block or covered with plywood or vinyl siding. The one-story, flat-roofed, brick office addition lighted by double-hung, wood-sash windows that projects from the two-story building's façade was constructed in the 1930s.⁶¹

The Bossong Hosiery Mills plant has been greatly altered, but the complex, like others in Asheboro, employs both heavy-timber and structural-steel industrial framing. The one-story, four-bay, sawtooth-roofed edifice that stands next to the smokestack emblazoned with the company's name was encompassed by the construction of the one-story, flat-roofed 1935 factory at 840 West Salisbury Street, which was subsequently enlarged several times. Although the façade (south elevation) retains a Classical Revival-style entrance flanked by original sconces at its west end, all but one of the steel-frame windows on the building's south, east, and west elevations were enclosed and the brick walls stuccoed after a 1950s expansion, significantly diminishing the building's architectural integrity. The original brick exterior walls, cast-stone foundation, steel-frame windows, and cast-stone window sills are still intact on the rear (north) elevation, however. A one-story metal-sided warehouse and a 48,000-square-foot, one-story, brick-veneered, 1970 addition occupy the complex's northwest end.⁶²

Other Asheboro industrial concerns had much smaller operations, and many buildings constructed prior to the mid-twentieth century are no longer extant or have been significantly altered. For the most part, these complexes contained completely utilitarian factory and warehouse buildings erected to facilitate manufacturing and storage needs without any concern for aesthetic appearance.

⁶⁰ Sanborn Map Company, Asheboro, North Carolina, April 1931 and April 1950, Sheet 7; Randolph County Historical Society, *Randolph County, 1779-1979*, 170.

⁶¹ "Stedman Manufacturing Company," drawings for 1930 plant and 1933 addition and project files (1930-1936), Biberstein, Bowles, Meacham & Reed Records, J. Murrey Atkins Library Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

⁶² Asheboro Chamber of Commerce, *Asheboro, North Carolina: The Center of North Carolina* (circa 1938 brochure in Randolph County vertical file, North Carolina Collection Vault, Box 1, Folder 1); Asheboro Chamber of Commerce, *Asheboro, North Carolina: The Center of North Carolina* (High Point: Barber-Hall Print Company, circa 1939), 5; Chip Womack, "Bossongs keep changing to keep up in tough business," *The Courier-Tribune*, Asheboro, October 28, 1999, pp. 1A and 16A.

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The former Banner Hosiery Mills plant consists of a small one-story building erected at 406 Hoover Street in 1940 that was completely surrounded by expansions in 1973 and 1981. Nantucket Hosiery Mills Corporation conveyed the property to Swing Enterprises in 1984. The structure served as Acme-McCrary Mill No. 4 from February 2010 until May 2011.⁶³ The building's windowless design reflects its later construction date. A few loading docks pierce the north elevation, but the east elevation is blind. The entrance near the south elevation's southwest corner is characterized by a Roman brick-veneered wall surmounted by canted plate-glass windows.

Klopman Mills, organized in 1947, improved the Cetwick Silk Mills plant, established in 1928, at 162 North Cherry Street to function as their Asheboro plant. The company became a division of Burlington Industries in 1954. According to Randolph County property card data, the complex includes a 1927 building, which is likely the west end's central section. The plant had been expanded by 1950, and was significantly altered by the construction of large, windowless, one- and two-story additions in 1966. The northwest corner entrance was also updated at that time by the installation of aggregate wall-sheathing panels and a flat-roofed entrance porch supported by decorative concrete block posts.⁶⁴

⁶³ Schwarz Properties, LLC, purchased 406 Hoover Street from Swing Enterprises in 2007. Randolph County Deed Book 1157, p. 857; Deed Book 2040, p. 891; Bruce Patram, Chief Financial Officer, Acme-McCrary Corporation, email correspondence with Heather Fearnbach, December 11, 2013

⁶⁴ Ibid.; "History of Klopman Mills," October 23, 1963, from the Klopman Mills vertical file in the Randolph Room of the Asheboro Public Library; Randolph County Historical Society, *Randolph County, 1779-1979*, 170.

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Randolph County, NC

Section 10. Geographical Data

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

1. Latitude: 35.706926 Longitude: -79.815422

Verbal Boundary Description

Acme-McCrary Hosiery Mills's National Register boundary is indicated by a bold line on the enclosed map. Scale: one inch equals approximately two hundred feet.

Boundary Justification

Located adjacent to the downtown business district, the 7.32-acre property historically associated with Acme-McCrary Hosiery Mills includes three tax parcels on West Salisbury Street's south side containing buildings erected from 1909 through 1962. The tract provides an appropriate setting for the complex. The surrounding area is primarily commercial and industrial. West Salisbury Street, which serves as the complex's north boundary, is a heavily-trafficked east-west corridor characterized by ongoing commercial development. The Art Deco-style 1938 Asheboro Municipal Building fronts North Church Street at the Acme-McCrary Corporation complex's southwest corner. Sunset Avenue, which runs east-west through Asheboro's business center and comprises a portion of the Acme-McCrary property's south boundary, is lined with commercial structures, as are North Church Street to the west and Fayetteville Street to the east.

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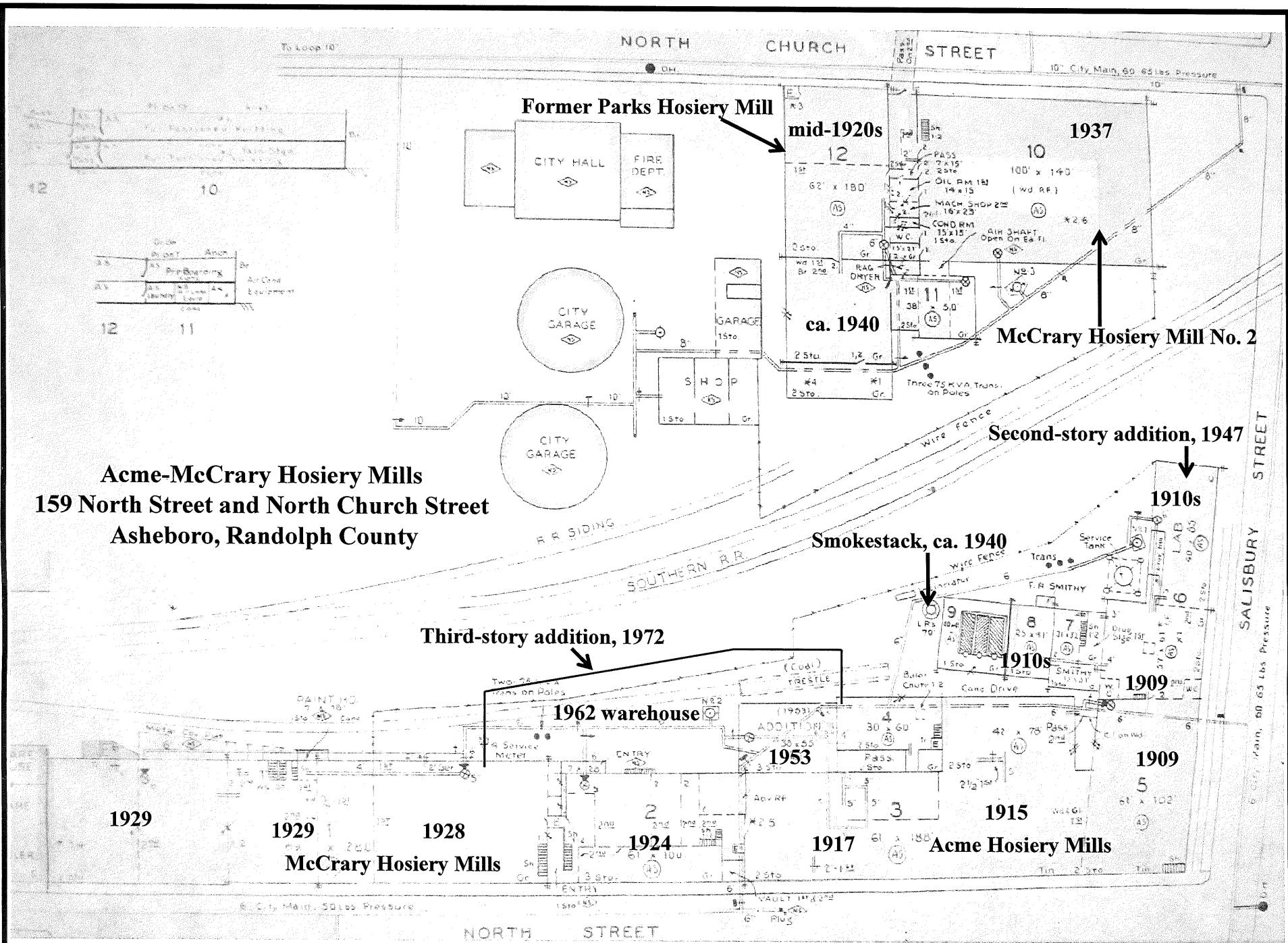
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Randolph County, NC

Photo Catalog

Photographs by Heather Fearnbach, 3334 Nottingham Road, Winston-Salem, N.C., 2011-2014.
Digital images located at the North Carolina SHPO.

1. Acme Hosiery Mills, 159 North Street, northeast oblique, 1909 mill and additions
2. Acme Hosiery Mills, 159 North Street, first floor interior
3. Acme Hosiery Mills, 159 North Street, second floor interior
4. McCrary Hosiery Mills, 159 North Street, east elevation, from 1909 mill (far right) to 1929 (far left) addition
5. Acme-McCrary Hosiery Mills plant, 159 North Street, looking northeast with boiler room and smokestack at center
6. McCrary Hosiery Mill No. 2, North Church Street, northwest oblique
7. McCrary Hosiery Mill No. 2, North Church Street, interior, first floor looking north
8. McCrary Hosiery Mill No. 3, 173 North Church Street, northeast oblique
9. Acme-McCrary-Sapona Recreation Center, 148 North Street, façade, looking southeast
10. Acme-McCrary-Sapona Recreation Center, 148 North Street, gymnasium, looking east
11. Commercial/Industrial Building, 124 North Street, façade, looking southeast
12. Commercial/Industrial Building, Trade Street, façade, looking northwest

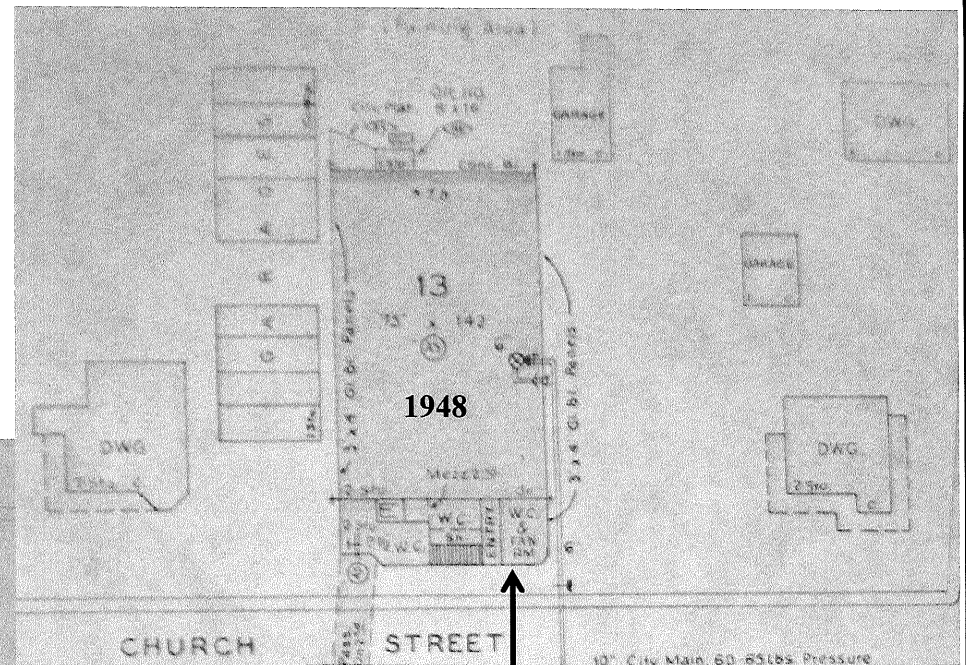
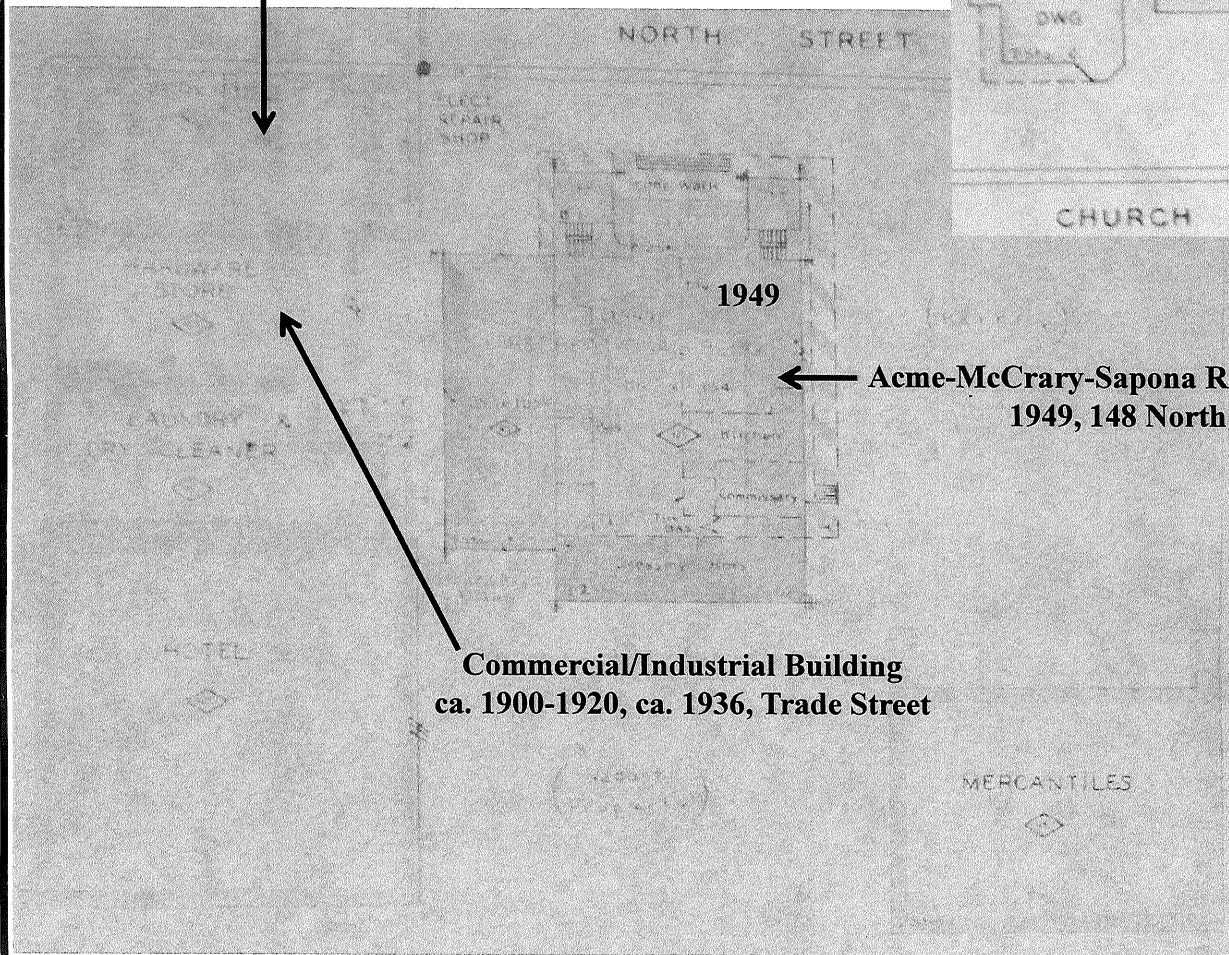


Base map created by Factory Insurance Association, Eastern Regional Office, Hartford, Connecticut, September 28, 1953
 Building construction dates added by Heather Fearnbach, Fearnbach History Services, Inc., April 2014



**Acme-McCrary Hosiery Mills
124 and 148 North Street, Trade Street, and
173 North Church Street
Asheboro, Randolph County**

**Commercial/Industrial Building
ca. 1900-1920, ca. 1936 façade and
remodel, 124 North Street**



**McCrary Hosiery Mill No. 3
1948, 173 North Church Street**

**Acme-McCrary-Sapona Recreation Center
1949, 148 North Street**

**Commercial/Industrial Building
ca. 1900-1920, ca. 1936, Trade Street**

McCrary Hosiery Mill No. 3,
1948, 173 North Church Street

McCrary Hosiery Mill No. 2,
mid-1920s-ca. 1940, North Church Street

Acme-McCrary Hosiery Mills,
1909-1972, 159 North Street

Acme-McCrary-Sapona
Recreation Center, 1949,
148 North Street

Acme-McCrary Hosiery Mills
Smokestack



Latitude: 35.706926
Longitude: -79.815422

Commercial/Industrial
Building,
ca. 1900-1920, ca. 1936,
124 North Street

Commercial/Industrial
Building,
ca. 1900-1920, ca. 1936,
Trade Street

Acme-McCrary Hosiery Mills
124, 148, and 159 North Street; 173 North Church Street (7.32 acres)
Asheboro, Randolph County, North Carolina

National Register Boundary = heavy dark line, Scale 1" = approximately 200'
Six contributing buildings and one contributing structure

