

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

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Coleman-Franklin-Cannon Mill

Concord, Cabarrus County, CA0362, Listed 4/16/2015

Nomination by Heather Fearnbach

Photographs by Heather Fearnbach, October 2014



1898 Coleman Mill (background) and cotton warehouses



1912 Cannon mill addition

**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 Coleman-Franklin-Cannon Mill
other names/site number Coleman Manufacturing Company, Franklin Cotton Mills, Cannon Mills Plant No. 9

2. Location

street & number 625 Main Street Southwest **N/A** not for publication
city or town Concord **N/A** vicinity
state North Carolina code NC county Cabarrus code 025 zip code 28027

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:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain:) _____ _____ _____	_____	_____

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.)

Table with 3 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing, and Resource Type (buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total). Values: Contributing (10, 0, 1, 0, 11), Noncontributing (0, 0, 0, 0, 0).

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: Mill Office

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: Auto Repair Shop

COMMERCE/TRADE: Commercial Storage

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Heavy-timber mill construction

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.)

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

Ethnic Heritage: Black

Industry

Period of Significance

1898-1965

Significant Dates

1898

1902

1912

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

African American

Architect/Builder

Brown, Rufus A., brick maker

Propst, Adolphus Henry, builder

T. C. Thompson and Brothers, builder

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: Rubenstein Library, Duke University

Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill

Concord Library, Cabarrus County

Coleman-Franklin-Cannon Mill

Name of Property

Cabarrus County, NC

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 6.6 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

See Latitude/Longitude coordinates continuation sheet.

1	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

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 11/21/2014

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 Wilbur E. Bryant Jr., Insignia, Inc.

street & number P. O. Box 11655

telephone (704) 281-6289

city or town Charlotte

state NC

zip code 28220

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

Located about two miles southwest of downtown Concord's central commercial district, Coleman-Franklin-Cannon Mill stands near the north end of a 10.14-acre tax parcel bounded by Main Street SW to the west, Office Drive SW to the north, and the Norfolk Southern Railroad tracks to the east. South of the mill's west end, a Duke Power Company electrical substation occupies a separate 1.17-acre lot adjacent to the mill parcel's southwest boundary. The substation tract is wooded, as is the mill lot's southern portion, which includes a square water treatment tank. Burris Court SW forms a portion of the mill tax parcel's southwest edge. The parcel's short south end terminates at the right-of-way for a section of Highway 601 that has been known as Warren C. Coleman Boulevard South since 2001.

The Coleman-Franklin-Cannon Mill National Register boundary comprises the north 6.6 acres of the 10.14-acre tax parcel. The nominated area encompasses ten contributing buildings and one contributing structure erected from 1898 through 1950. The wooded acreage and the water treatment tank at the tax parcel's south end have been excluded. The area west of the railroad and north and west of the mill complex contains residences that once served as mill employee housing. On the railroad's east side, commercial and industrial buildings line Wilshire Court south of the city-owned Rutherford Cemetery's 16.7-acre parcel, much of which is wooded.

Short gravel drives on Main Street SW's east side provide access to gravel parking areas west of the mill and warehouses as well as the concrete-paved driveway that wraps around the buildings. The two-story-on-basement heavy-timber-frame and brick mill erected in 1898 and more than doubled in size in 1912 faces north. The site's gently sloping topography, which decreases in elevation to the south, allows the basement to be partially above grade.

A concrete driveway separates the mill from two one-story, corrugated-metal-sheathed, multi-section, early-twentieth-century cotton warehouses to the north. The driveway is approximately forty feet north of the mill but is at the same grade as the mill's first floor and primary entrances, resulting in a steep drop in elevation between the driveway and the mill. Steel-pipe guard rails thus line the driveway's south edge. A concrete bridge with a steel-pipe railing extends from the driveway to the 1898 stair tower's entrance.

A paved concrete parking area spans the almost forty-foot distance between the two cotton warehouses. At the parking area's north end, a corrugated-metal flat-roofed canopy supported by square steel posts covers the steel stairs with steel-pipe railings that lead to two one-story, hip-roofed, weatherboarded buildings, historically the mill office and a hose house. These buildings are most easily accessed from Office Drive. A formed-concrete retaining wall ameliorates the elevation change between the buildings on the hill and the parking area and warehouses.

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A flat-roofed frame canopy supported by round steel posts covers the wood loading dock that spans the east cotton warehouse's east elevation and projects to the south on the railroad's west side. At the dock's south end, a formed-concrete wall extends south and terminates at a flat-roofed brick storage building. West of the storage building, a shed-roofed corrugated-metal-sheathed garage, a shed-roofed German-sided pump house, and a flat-roofed brick pump house stand near the 1898 mill's southeast corner. A pyramidal-hip-roofed weatherboarded hose house is adjacent to the 1912 addition's south elevation close to its west end.

Coleman-Franklin-Cannon Mill, 1898, 1912, 1950s, 1960s, Contributing Building

Coleman Manufacturing Company's two-story-on-basement 1898 mill, now the plant's east section, is fourteen bays wide (114 feet in the east-west direction) and nine bays deep (80.5 feet in the north-south direction). At the 1898 mill's northeast corner, north of its smokestack, Coleman Manufacturing Company erected a one-story-on-basement addition encompassing a second-floor cotton picker room and a first-floor machine shop by March 1902 in order to qualify for fire insurance. In 1912, Franklin Cotton Mills hired the prominent contracting firm T. C. Thompson and Brothers, based in Charlotte, N. C., and Birmingham, Alabama, to expand the picker room and machine shop with a second story, construct a cotton warehouse to the north, and build a 200-foot-wide by 80.5-foot-deep two-story-on-basement addition on the 1898 mill's west end.¹ Cannon Mills updated the plant as needed through the mid-1960s, erecting restroom and elevator towers, HVAC equipment rooms and platforms, and loading docks on the north and south elevations and installing humidification and HVAC systems in the mill.

Builder Adolphus Henry Propst, brick maker and mason Rufus A. Brown, and their crews undertook the 1898 mill's construction.² The heavy-timber-frame edifice features brick walls executed in five-to-one common bond with segmental-arched window openings and a very low-pitched gable roof with projecting rafter ends that create deep eaves. Slightly projecting belt courses encircle the building at the top of each story. The north elevation's foundation has been parged with concrete.

¹ Fire insurance providers required the picker room to be moved from the mill to an adjacent building to minimize fire risk. The 1912 renovations included the installation of electric motors in place of the steam engine that originally powered the mill. Sanborn Map Company, "Concord," March 1902, sheet 5; T. C. Thompson and Brothers, correspondence with Franklin Cotton Mills, and Lockwood, Greene, and Company Engineers, "Appraisal of Franklin Cotton Mills, Inc., Concord, N. C.," October 20, 1926, p. 8, Box 183, Cannon Mills Records, 1836-1983, Rubenstein Library, Duke University; Allen Edward Burgess, "Tar Heel Blacks and the New South Dream: The Coleman Manufacturing Company, 1896-1904," Duke University, Ph. D. dissertation, 1977, p. 366.

² U. S. Census, Population Schedule, 1900; "The Coleman Factory," *Daily Concord Standard*, October 13, 1897, December 14, 1897, December 16, 1897, and February 7, 1898.

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The three-stage entrance and stair tower that projects from the façade (north elevation) originally included a recessed double-leaf door surmounted by an arched multipane transom and a corbelled brick hood. The transom has been infilled with brick and a double-leaf steel door with four panes in each leaf's upper section installed almost flush with the façade. The tower's mansard-roofed fourth stage has been removed. The tower's upper level, lit by dormer windows, contained a 10,000-gallon water tank that supplied the building's sprinkler system.

Large, double-hung, twelve-over-twelve, wood-sash windows illuminated the 1898 mill, including the stair tower. Cannon Mills installed steel-frame windows in some locations in conjunction with plant updates and in the 1960s enclosed the majority of the building's window openings with brick to facilitate air conditioning installation. Steel doors secure most exterior door openings in compliance with fire code. A tall brick freight elevator tower rises at the north elevation's east end.

Nine windows initially pierced the upper floor of the 1898 mill's east elevation, while only three windows punctuated the north end of the first floor and basement due to the projecting L-shaped, flat-roofed, one-story-on-basement wing containing the boiler and mechanical rooms that originally extended from the east elevation. The tapered, square, ninety-foot-tall smokestack that stood north of the boiler house is still intact, but Cannon Mills demolished the boiler house after installing the 1960s HVAC system. Other modifications on the 1898 mill's east side include the construction at the southeast corner (above the mechanical room) of a narrow, second-story, mid-twentieth-century addition with a stepped-parapet east wall.

The 1902/1912 one-story-on-basement addition at the 1898 mill's northeast corner is three bays wide and four bays deep. The north elevation's parapet is stepped, while the taller, flat, south parapet has been replaced. A steel I-beam and steel rods connect the addition to the east warehouse's south elevation. It appears that the resulting structural tension damaged the upper northwest corner of the 1902/1912 addition, as the brick had been replaced at that location. Three square, wood-frame, twelve-pane windows with round-arched surrounds remain on the north wall's upper level. Three large, rectangular, steel-frame windows with operable central sections pierce the west elevation's second story. The round-arched basement windows on all four walls and the windows on the east and south elevations' upper levels have been infilled with brick. On the east elevation, steel pipe railings secure the steel steps and steel landing that provide access to the single-leaf paneled wood door that, along with plywood paneling, fills a large opening in the wall. A metal-shed-roofed frame canopy supported by a square wood post shelters the single-leaf basement entrance on the south elevation. The foundation is parged with concrete.

The metal-sided frame warehouse projecting from the east end of the mill's rear (south) elevation was constructed between 1956 and 1964. A long, steel-frame, flat-roofed canopy extends to the west, sheltering the area outside three roll-up metal loading dock doors. The April 1921 Sanborn map illustrates a one-story frame shed in this location, but that structure had been removed by May 1927.

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By April 1921, employees benefited from the construction of a one-story restroom addition on the 1898 mill's rear elevation and a two-story restroom tower near the center of the 1912 building's rear elevation. Between 1947 and 1950, Cannon Mills replaced the restroom towers with one-bay-deep, two-bay-wide, three-story restroom towers. Masons executed the walls in five-to-one-common bond with high steel-frame windows that pierce the side (east and west) elevations at each level. Between the towers, likely at the same time, Cannon Mills constructed two flat-roofed, one-bay-deep, one-story additions in six-to-one common bond brick. On each addition's south elevation, a central square window now enclosed with brick originally illuminated the interior. One space is labeled "switch room."

A one-story, shed-roofed, windowless addition erected between 1956 and 1964 spans the distance between the 1898 mill's restroom tower and the late 1940s additions. West of those additions, a two-story, flat-roofed, windowless wing executed between 1956 and 1964 in five-to-one common bond brick houses HVAC system equipment. Two double-leaf and one single-leaf entrance provide access to the wing's ground level.

The two-story-on-basement 1912 addition at the 1898 mill's west end features a low gabled roof with projecting rafter ends that create deep eaves intended to shelter the large rectangular window openings that have been infilled with brick on the north and south elevations. The window openings are slightly recessed with pilaster-like sections of brick wall between them. The north and south elevations are twenty-five bays wide. On the west elevation, the first and second floors contain seven bays of segmental-arched window openings, while six matching openings flank the central, replacement, single-leaf, steel basement door. All of the windows and most of the original west entrance bay have been enclosed with brick.

On the 1912 addition's north elevation, the two-stage, one-bay-wide and two-bay-deep stair tower capped with a corbelled cornice has replacement steel-frame windows and cast-stone lintels. Brick corbelling also tops the second-story windows. The tower provided access to the carding and spinning rooms that more than doubled the mill's manufacturing space. As part of the 1912 expansion, contractors added a hip-roofed monitor with short windows above three-foot-tall kneewalls that spanned the entire width of both mill sections, illuminating the upper floor. Although poor historic aerial photograph resolution prevents close examination of building details, it appears that Cannon Mills removed the roof monitor between 1956 and 1964.³

That project was probably related to Cannon Mills' 1960s HVAC system installation, which also required the construction of two flat-roofed two-story-on-basement mechanical wings east and west of the stair

³ Sanborn Map Company, "Concord," May 1927, sheet 28, and March 1947, sheet 28; Cabarrus County GIS, aerial imagery, 1938, 1950, 1956, 1964, <http://gis.cabarruscounty.us/gisdataexplorer/> (accessed November 2014).

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tower on the 1912 addition's north elevation. Large aluminum louvered vents fill openings on each wing's west elevation and at the west end of each north elevation's five-to-one common bond brick walls.

An elevator tower rises on the 1912 addition's north elevation just west of the east mechanical wing. Between the elevator tower and the 1912 stair tower, a steel-frame platform covered by a flat-roofed canopy supported by steel posts and beams elevates HVAC equipment to the first-story level. Large metal pipes are secured to the building beneath the platform.

When roof replacement was necessary, rubber membrane and tar and gravel roofs proved to be the most serviceable options. Flush-board roof decking is intact in most locations.

Interior

The mill's open plan and interior finishes original to each construction phase are substantially intact. Painted brick walls and wood floors are typical, although some areas erected or renovated during the mid-twentieth century have concrete floors. Most wood floor boards originally ran east-west, but have been replaced in a few sections with boards that run north-south. The undersides of the wide plank floor and roof decking are visible in the spaces below.

Franklin Cotton Mills removed the 1898 building's west wall in order to allow for unimpeded flow between the 1898 and 1912 sections, both of which retain chamfered square wood posts and substantial wood beams. The long rows of posts divide the mill interior into three bays on each level, a width that accommodated sizable machinery. In the east and west sections of the first floor and the basement, steel collars secure posts directly to beams. In the central sections of those levels, short segments of heavy timbers with rounded ends top the posts, distributing the load of the structural beams above. On the second-floor, short heavy timbers with rounded ends cap the 1898 mill's posts. In the 1912 addition, short heavy timbers with angled ends surmount the posts.

Engineers specified the installation of steel posts and beams to provide supplementary support and as replacements in the early sections, and as original structural systems in warehouses and additions built from the 1920s through the 1960s. Post replacement is minimal except at the west end of the 1912 addition's first story, where Cannon Mills erected round steel posts in approximately sixty percent of the original heavy-timber post locations in the south two rows. A few posts in this area were removed altogether and steel beams spanning the greater distance added to carry the load, ostensibly to provide space for sizable equipment. Steel braces and girders reinforce areas throughout the complex to compensate for equipment weight and vibration.

Double-leaf steel doors with glazed four-pane upper sections secure the two stair towers on the north elevation. The 1898 tower retains open flights of stairs and railings with molded handrails, square newel

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posts, and square balusters. The 1912 tower features square newel posts spanned by solid vertical-board railings capped with molded handrails.

The mill's first floor remains predominately open. Wood-panel or steel doors hang in some interior doorways, but between most sections metal fire doors slide on steel tracks and are held open by weighted pulleys. In a few areas updated after the mid-twentieth-century, fire doors are mounted above door lintels and roll down. Gypsum board covers the west side and portions of the east side of the twenty-first-century frame partition wall that creates an entrance vestibule adjacent to the 1912 tower as well as the large storage area at the 1912 addition's west end. On the second floor, black plastic has been hung from the ceiling to delineate a large space at the building's west end. Gypsum board sheathes three small frame office and storage rooms with low ceilings that line the north elevation. A frame partition wall creates office and storage space at the 1898 mill's east end. On all floors, some of the restrooms retain original five-horizontal-panel wood doors, plaster walls, and black-and-white mosaic tile floors. Others have been partially remodeled and/or fixtures have been removed.

The June 1911 Sanborn map shows an interior elevator at the mill's northeast corner. A mid-twentieth-century conveyor belt at the first floor's east end also facilitated the transportation of equipment and product between the floors.

Contractors dropped fluorescent lights and sprinkler system pipes from the ceilings throughout the manufacturing area. Rigid metal ductwork and sizable air handling units remain from the air conditioning systems configured for the plant in the 1960s. Surface-mounted metal conduit houses electrical wiring.

In the basement, a poured-concrete platform elevates the floor at the 1898 mill's east end about four feet above grade. A concrete ramp with steel-pipe railings provides access to the elevated area. Frame partition walls and metal-wall enclosures create office and storage space adjacent to the south elevation. Faux-wood paneling sheathes the office walls. The basement's central section has a poured-concrete floor at grade level. Portions of the wood floor at the west end are intact, but some areas are damaged or missing due to the space's current function as a car repair business.

The open picker room interior matches that of the mill, with painted brick walls, wood floors, and exposed wood beams beneath wide flush-board roof decking. Given the room's modest size, only one central, round, steel post provides supplementary support for the roof structure. The basement mechanical room has painted brick walls, a concrete floor, and square heavy-timber posts and beams below exposed floor decking. Cannon Mills added a few round steel posts for additional support. Frame partition walls delineate storage and work areas. Fluorescent lights, sprinkler system pipes, rigid metal ductwork, and surface-mounted electrical conduit have been installed.

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Smokestack, 1898, Contributing Structure

A tapered, square, ninety-foot-tall smokestack executed in seven-to-one common bond rises east of the 1898 mill and south of the 1912 picker room and machine shop. Two corbelled courses wrap around the smokestack at its base and cap. The foundation has been parged with concrete with the exception of a small cleanout opening on the east elevation. A metal plate that slides up and down covers the opening. Sanborn maps and historic images illustrate that the smokestack initially stood north of the 1898 boiler house and east of the 1898 mechanical room. Coal fueled the complex's original steam heating system.

Historical overview of warehouses and other ancillary buildings

In 1902, a one-story frame waste house stood north of the mill and a round 57,000 reservoir was to the south. By June 1911, a one-story frame cotton shed occupied the waste house site and an L-shaped frame office with a porch and an open shed had been erected west of the cotton shed. A one-story frame cotton waste house; two hip-roofed, frame, one-story buildings; and a one-story frame structure labeled "crib" stood to the northwest. Three small frame buildings contained fire suppression hoses and valves. A one-story frame blacksmith shop had been erected southeast of the reservoir.⁴

The October 1906 Sanborn map is the first to illustrate the east cotton warehouse, which Franklin Cotton Mills expanded with a second (now central) section in 1912 and the third (north) section in 1926.⁵ To the west, an aerial photograph taken in 1938 indicates that the five-section cotton warehouse and connected opening room were in use by that year. The aerial also shows that a one-story frame cotton waste house had been erected west of the mill and east of Main Street SW after May 1927 and prior to 1938. A covered walkway completed between 1947 and 1950 connected the two buildings. The cotton waste house was demolished after historian Peter Kaplan photographed it during the 1979 Cabarrus County architectural survey and prior to 2001.⁶

The following list enumerates extant auxiliary buildings in order of significance based on age and function.

⁴ Sanborn Map Company, "Concord," March 1902, sheet 5, and June 1911, sheet 17.

⁵ Lockwood, Greene, and Company Engineers, "Appraisal of Franklin Cotton Mills, Inc., Concord, N. C.," October 20, 1926, p. 8, Box 183, Cannon Mills Records, 1836-1983, Rubenstein Library, Duke University.

⁶ Cabarrus County GIS, aerial imagery, 1938, 1950, 1956, 1964, 1968, 1975, 2001, <http://gis.cabarruscounty.us/gisdataexplorer/> (accessed November 2014).

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East Cotton Warehouse, erected in three stages between 1902 and 1926, Contributing Building

The October 1906 Sanborn map is the first to show the east cotton warehouse, which Franklin Cotton Mills expanded with a second (now central) section in 1912 and the third (north) section in 1926. Builder T. C. Thompson and Brothers erected the 1912 addition.⁷

The one-story, corrugated-metal-sheathed, three-part building has entrances on the east and west elevations. The south warehouse has a clipped southwest corner, perhaps to provide additional space for navigation between buildings. Brick fire walls executed in six-to-one common bond separate each section. More multipane steel-frame windows likely illuminated the warehouses, but only one six-pane steel-frame window pierces the north warehouse's west upper wall. Three remain on the south elevation.

The warehouses' open interiors retain concrete floors, painted brick, and plywood-sheathed balloon-frame walls. In the earlier two (south) warehouses, Cannon Mills replaced the heavy-timber posts with round steel posts and I-beams in the mid-twentieth century. The original heavy-timber beams spanning each section and the short heavy-timber segments with angled ends that topped the heavy-timber posts remain. At some entrances, metal or wood doors slide on metal tracks and are held open by weighted pulleys. In others, occupants have installed rollup garage doors or single- or double-leaf steel doors. Fluorescent lights and sprinkler system pipes have been dropped from the ceilings throughout the building.

A flat-roofed canopy comprising heavy-timber beams, flush-board roof decking, and round steel posts covers the wood loading dock that projects from the east warehouse's east elevation adjacent to the railroad. Tall brick piers comprise the loading dock's foundation. At the dock's south end, a formed-concrete wall extends south and, after a break that once held a double-leaf gate, terminates at a flat-roofed brick storage building.

West Cotton Warehouse, erected between 1927 and 1938, Contributing Building

A concrete driveway separates the mill from two one-story, corrugated-metal-sheathed, multi-section, early-twentieth-century cotton warehouses to the north. The six-part west building comprises five almost-flat-roofed warehouses—three with entrances on the west elevation and two with entrances on the east elevation—and an opening room at the southeast corner. Brick fire walls executed in six-to-one common bond separate each section. On the north, east, and west elevations, six-pane steel-frame windows and louvered vents pierce the balloon-frame warehouse's upper walls. The southwest warehouse's south elevation is blind, containing only one vent. Multipane steel-frame windows illuminate the opening

⁷ T. C. Thompson and Brothers, correspondence with Franklin Cotton Mills, and Lockwood, Greene, and Company Engineers, "Appraisal of Franklin Cotton Mills, Inc., Concord, N. C.," October 20, 1926, p. 8, Box 183, Cannon Mills Records, 1836-1983, Rubenstein Library, Duke University.

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room, which is shorter than the warehouses and all-masonry construction. The space between the opening room and the southwest warehouse was originally open, but Cannon Mills enclosed it after 1947 to create an additional room.

Concrete loading platforms and walkways secured by steel pipe railings wrap around the building with the exception of the southwest warehouse's south elevation. Almost-flat-roofed canopies supported by round steel posts cover a portion of the west loading dock and the full extent of the remaining walkways and loading areas. Beneath the canopies, board-and-batten siding covers the frame walls. At the north canopy's outer edge, its round steel support posts are bolted to a brick retaining wall with a concrete cap.

The warehouses' open interiors retain concrete floors, exposed brick and balloon-frame walls, substantial steel posts and beams, and wood board roof decking. At some entrances, metal-clad fire doors slide on metal tracks and are held open by weighted pulleys. In others, occupants have installed rollup garage doors or single- or double-leaf steel doors. Fluorescent lights and sprinkler system pipes have been dropped from the ceilings throughout the building. Frame partition walls, dropped-acoustical-tile ceilings, faux-wood sheet paneling, and vinyl-composition-tile floors have been added to portions of the opening room to create office space and meeting and storage rooms.

A paved concrete parking area spans the distance between the two warehouses. At the parking area's north end, a flat-roofed frame canopy supported by round steel posts covers the upper section of the concrete stairs with metal railings that lead to buildings adjacent to Office Drive. A formed-concrete retaining wall ameliorates the elevation change between the buildings on the hill and the parking area.

Office, 1910s, early 1930s, Contributing Building

The one-story, hip-roofed, weatherboarded building that once served as the mill office faces east on the hill above the west cotton warehouse. The simply finished, two-bay-wide and three-bay-deep structure has plain corner boards and a plain frieze below a boxed cornice. Two hip-roofed rear wings project from the building's west elevation. The central wing has the same wall height as the rectangular main block, but is slightly narrower and has a marginally lower roof pitch, while the one-room rear wing is shorter.

A shed-roofed frame canopy shelters the single-leaf door comprised of three horizontal lower panels below six glazed panes. Double-hung six-over-six sash windows illuminate the interior. Replacement wood steps and open wood railings provide access to the primary east entrance and an entrance near the south elevation's east corner that has been enclosed with a wood panel.

This building's form and exterior finishes indicate that it was constructed in the 1910s, indicating that it was moved to this location. The earliest images showing a building with this footprint on the hill are the 1938 aerial and the March 1947 Sanborn map. The June 1911 Sanborn map illustrates an L-shaped frame

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office with a porch and an open shed west of the east cotton warehouse. That building remained in use through at least 1927.

Hose House, early 1930s, Contributing Building

The pyramidal-hip-roofed weatherboarded hose house that stands on the hill near the west cotton warehouse's northeast corner retains a double-leaf board-and-batten door on its south elevation. Exposed rafter ends support deep eaves and metal coping protects the roof peaks.

Hose House, early 1930s, Contributing Building

The pyramidal-hip-roofed weatherboarded hose house adjacent to the 1912 mill addition's south elevation close to its west end retains a double-leaf board-and-batten door on its south elevation. Exposed rafter ends support deep eaves and metal coping protects the roof peaks.

Storage Building, erected between 1947 and 1950, Contributing Building

A one-story, flat-roofed, brick storage building with sliding wood doors stands near the 1898 mill's southeast corner. Cannon Mills constructed this building after the 1947 Sanborn map's issuance and before the 1950 Cabarrus County aerial photograph of the site was taken.

Garage, erected between 1947 and 1950, Contributing Building

A shed-roofed, corrugated-metal-sided, one-story, frame garage is located southeast of the 1898 mill's southeast end and southwest of the storage building. The garage has a poured-concrete floor and foundation, while the enclosed storage room at the building's south end has a brick foundation. Wood rafters support wood decking boards and metal roofing panels. Cannon Mills constructed this building after the 1947 Sanborn map's issuance and before the 1950 Cabarrus County aerial photograph of the site was taken. A frame blacksmith shop erected between 1906 and 1911 and used as a garage by 1921 stood on this site through the mid-twentieth century.

Pump House, erected between 1947 and 1950, Contributing Building

A small, shed-roofed, one-story, German-sided pump house stands south of the 1898 mill's southeast end and west of the garage. A double-leaf board-and-batten door fills the north elevation. The building rests on a concrete platform above a square brick cistern. Concrete steps with metal pipe railings provide access to the structure's lower level. Cannon Mills constructed the building after the 1947 Sanborn map's issuance and before the 1950 Cabarrus County aerial photograph of the site was taken. The building replaces a brick pump house that stood on the 84,000-gallon reservoir's west side by 1921.

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Pump House, erected between 1947 and 1950, Contributing Building

A flat-roofed pump house executed in five-to-one common bond is south of the 1898 mill and northwest of the German-sided pump house. The short single-leaf door on the north elevation opens into a small space elevated a few feet above grade. Cannon Mills constructed this building after the 1947 Sanborn map's issuance and before the 1950 Cabarrus County aerial photograph of the site was taken.

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Section 8. Statement of Significance

Coleman-Franklin-Cannon Mill meets Criterion A for its statewide importance in industry and African American ethnic history and Criterion C for its local architectural significance. Located approximately two miles southwest of downtown Concord's central commercial district, the property's 6.6-acre National Register boundary encompasses the mill, a smokestack, warehouses, an office, and ancillary buildings. Coleman Manufacturing Company's contribution to the local economy began with the mill's 1898 construction. African American entrepreneur Warren C. Coleman and a board of eight other businessmen led the concern chartered by the North Carolina General Assembly on February 16, 1897. Coleman's announcement of the company's intention to operate solely with African American labor spurred national debate. Newspapers including the *New York Times* postulated that the enterprise, if successful, might encourage widespread employment of black workers throughout the textile industry, which then utilized a predominantly white labor force. Supporters nationwide pledged to endorse Coleman's endeavor through the purchase of company stock, but many subscriptions did not transpire. Coleman thus approached white investors including Durham tobacco magnate Washington Duke, whose initial \$1,000 contribution and two subsequent \$10,000 loans allowed Coleman Manufacturing Company to erect and equip the mill.⁸

The inclusion of photographs illustrating the mill as it neared completion, Coleman Manufacturing Company's board of directors, and Warren C. Coleman in the African American history exhibit at the Paris Exposition of 1900 demonstrate the undertaking's significance as one of the few large-scale African American-owned industrial endeavors in the United States at that time.⁹ However, the company struggled to initiate and maintain operations. Production finally commenced in May 1901 but continued erratically due to equipment and funding issues. After Coleman's death in March 1904, Benjamin Duke and others required satisfaction of the company's debts, which resulted in foreclosure. Duke purchased the mill at a June 28, 1904, auction and operated the facility for a short time before selling it to Concord textile manufacturer J. L. Hartsell, who almost immediately conveyed the property to Cannon Manufacturing Company. The concern incorporated Franklin Cotton Mills in 1906 and maintained the complex under that name until the 1928 consolidation of eight Cannon-owned textile manufacturers as Cannon Mills Company. Franklin Cotton Mills then became Cannon Plant No. 9. The yarn mill, subsequently owned by Fieldcrest Cannon from 1986 until 1997 and Pillowtex Corporation prior its 2003 closure, employed approximately two hundred employees annually for much of its history.

Coleman-Franklin-Cannon Mill is architecturally significant due to its collection of intact late nineteenth and early twentieth-century buildings that manifest the evolution of industrial design during the period.

⁸ "Negro Help in Cotton Mills," *New York Times*, December 24, 1896; "Mill to be Run by Colored Men," *New York Times*, February 24, 1897; "Negroes as Mill Hands," *New York Times*, September 5, 1898.

⁹ W. E. Burghardt Du Bois, "The American Negro at Paris," *The American Monthly Review of Reviews*, Vol. XXII, No.5 (November 1900), 575-577; "Coleman Manufacturing Co., a Negro operated cotton mill, Concord, N. C.," in the "African American Photographs Assembled for 1900 Paris Exposition" collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

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The 1898 mill features a heavy-timber interior structural system in conjunction with load-bearing brick exterior walls executed in five-to-one common bond. Corbelled belt courses, segmental-arched window and door openings, and a four-stage stair tower embellish the building. These elements, in conjunction with the low-pitched gable roof, deep eaves with exposed rafter ends, and double-thickness wood floors are representative of fire-resistant industrial architecture commonly employed through the early twentieth century. The 1912 addition, picker room, and cotton warehouse display the ongoing use of heavy-timber construction. The later cotton warehouses and mill additions utilize structural-steel framing systems commonly seen during the mid-twentieth century. The period of significance begins in 1898, with the construction of the mill, boiler house, and smokestack, and continues to 1965. The plant's industrial function and physical expansion after 1965 are not of exceptional significance.

Historical Background and Concord's Textile Industry Context

North Carolina's early textile operations depended on waterpower, making locations along the Haw, Deep, and Catawba Rivers, where slate formations create falls and rapids, ideal for manufacturing. German merchant Michael Schenck erected a sawmill, gristmill, and several ironworks in Lincoln County before hiring ironworkers Absolom Warwick and Michael Beam to construct North Carolina's first cotton mill in 1813. Only a few other entrepreneurs attempted textile production before the late 1820s, when the North Carolina legislature approved the incorporations of approximately fifteen new companies. Henry Humphreys was the first North Carolina textile mill owner to experiment with steam power, installing a system in 1828 at his Mt. Hecla Cotton Factory near Greensboro that inspired others to invest in the technology. However, it was not until the late 1830s that industrialists such as Benjamin Elliot, Francis Fries, Edwin Michael Holt, Charles Mallet, John Motley Morehead, and John Trollinger capitalized on the piedmont's available sites, transportation, and labor force to establish spinning mills.¹⁰

Most inhabitants of Cabarrus County, created in 1792 from a portion of north Mecklenburg County, operated subsistence farms, in some cases generating enough agricultural yield for surplus to be sold at regional markets. Concord, established in 1796 to serve as the county seat and incorporated in 1798, functioned as the county's commercial and governmental center.¹¹ On February 16, 1839, prominent Cabarrus County residents incorporated Concord Steam Factory to produce cotton yarn, fabric, and cast-iron building materials. The thirty-five original subscribers included prominent farmers, merchants, attorneys, and physicians, as well as two wealthy women: Sarah Young and Mary S. Phifer. The business, which was the first of its type in Cabarrus County, erected a three-story, brick, steam-powered

¹⁰ Holland Thompson, *From the Cotton Field to the Cotton Mill* (Norwood, Massachusetts: Norwood Press, 1906), 45-49; Brent D. Glass, *The Textile Industry in North Carolina: A History* (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, 1992), 4-10, 14. "Humphreys" is also spelled "Humphries" in various sources, but as period documents use "Humphreys," that spelling is repeated here.

¹¹ William S. Powell, *The North Carolina Gazetteer* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1968), 79, 116.

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factory in 1840, commenced cotton yarn and carpentry nail production, and soon expanded its offerings to include woven goods.¹²

Norristown, Pennsylvania, industrialist John McDonald became the plant's second manager in 1841 and assumed its ownership on November 29, 1856. The venture, by then known as Concord Manufacturing Company, initially struggled, but operated at a profit by the Civil War's onset. McDonald supplied the military with uniform cloth during the conflict. His factory, purportedly one of only six functioning North Carolina textile mills in 1866, increased production in the late 1860s, but growing debt and the strain of the 1873 national financial crisis forced its sale.¹³

The mill only temporarily ceased production, however. Randolph County native John Milton Odell, a successful Concord merchant, paid \$11,700 for ten acres encompassing the Concord mill and associated worker housing at a March 1877 auction. Odell and seven other businessmen subsequently incorporated Odell Manufacturing Company. The concern commissioned the 1882 construction of an additional three-story brick plant, a sizable adjacent building in 1886, and Forest Hill Mill and a significant quantity of employee houses in 1889. On its opening, the 100,000-square-foot Forest Hill was North Carolina's largest textile complex, containing 21,000 spindles and 868 looms. Also in 1889, Odell Manufacturing Company expanded its operation to include Kerr Bleachery, said to be the South's first cloth-finishing facility of its type. In order to streamline the production supply chain and maximize profit, the firm erected and equipped Buffalo Cotton Mill to spin yarn for Forest Hill Mill and enlarged Kerr Bleachery in 1897.¹⁴

J. M. Odell served as young Cabarrus County entrepreneur James William Cannon's mentor, inspiring him to invest in a yarn mill and thus initiating the men's dominance of the region's textile industry that continued for decades. Cannon, Odell, and five other shareholders incorporated Cannon Manufacturing Company on August 24, 1887, with J. M. Odell as its president. The firm commenced spinning yarn in a two-story, brick, Franklin Street mill on April 1, 1888, and introduced "Cannon Cloth" and flat-weave towels in 1889. That year, J. M. Odell and J. W. Cannon facilitated improvements to the city's

¹² The largest stockholders, listed in descending order of share purchase quantity from thirty to ten, were O. Phifer, Paul B. Barringer, John F. Phifer, Caleb Phifer, Lard Falenweder, H. S. Gorman, John Rogers, E. R. Gibson, D. M. Barringer, Sarah Young, and Daniel Coleman. William Landis agreed to supply the enterprise with machinery in exchange for forty shares of stock. Cotton Steam Factory records, 1839-1902, Folders 1 and 2, Southern Historical Collection, UNC-Chapel Hill.

¹³ Caleb Phifer also invested in Cabarrus County's second cotton mill in 1860, partnering with John R. Neisler to house an operation with sixteen looms and 812 spindles in what had formerly been a water-powered frame grist mill adjacent to the Rocky River south of Concord. In 1870, the McDonald family obtained an \$8,000-loan from Salem, N. C., industrialist Henry W. Fries, who later foreclosed on the loan. Cotton Steam Factory records, 1839-1902, Folders 1 and 3; *Branson and Farrar's North Carolina Business Directory for 1866-67* (Raleigh: Branson and Farrar, 1866), 106; *Register*, January 20, 1882; Richard Gary Freeze, "Model Mill Men of the New South: Paternalism and Methodism in the Odell Cotton Mills of North Carolina, 1877-1908," UNC-Chapel Hill, Ph. D. dissertation, 1987, p. 157.

¹⁴Cotton Steam Factory records, 1839-1902, Folder 3; Freeze, "Model Mill Men of the New South," 154-159.

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infrastructure and chartered Concord Electric Light Company, which illuminated streetlights and provided residential power service.¹⁵

In 1896, the Southern Railway assumed the operation of the Richmond and Danville Railroad, which had leased since 1871 the line completed through Concord in 1856 by the North Carolina Railroad. In addition to serving area residents, the train drew visitors who noted the city's progressive spirit and explosive industrial growth.¹⁶

Concord's industrial concerns hired thousands of laborers during the nineteenth century's last decades, resulting in the city's inhabitants more than quadrupling between 1880 and 1900. Despite an economic downturn in 1893, textile production remained strong for most of the 1890s. Cannon Manufacturing Company's 140 workers processed an average of eight bales of cotton per day for use on 8,736 spindles, 230 looms, and 54 cards in 1891. Many employees lived in forty-five company-owned houses adjacent to the mill. D. F. Cannon and J. W. Cannon expanded their investment in the textile industry with the 1893 construction of Cabarrus Cotton Mill, where 150 employees operated 4,500 spindles and 278 looms by 1895. That year, L. D. Duval superintended Cannon Manufacturing Company's 400 hands, who utilized 17,000 spindles and 500 looms to generate yarn and sheeting from 5,000 bales of cotton.¹⁷

J. M. Odell and W. R. Odell's Odell Manufacturing Company payroll included 900 workers in 5 mills who ran 28,500 spindles, 1,326 plaid fabric looms, and 12 looms that wove seamless bags. The Odells also owned Kerr Bag Manufacturing Company, capitalized at \$224,000. Odell Manufacturing Company operatives lived in a mill village that encompassed 130 houses by 1891 and continued to grow in size. W. R. Kindly and G. W. Patterson operated the 2,080-spindle Patterson Manufacturing Company in Concord, while J. W. Cannon hired 125 laborers to run a mill with the same name, 4,000 spindles, and 130 looms in

¹⁵ Cannon briefly lived in Odell's Concord home while clerking at the general store owned by his brother David F. Cannon, P. B. Fetzer, and John R. Wadsworth. The four men and J. M. Odell, William R. Odell, and physician W. R. Lilly incorporated Cannon Manufacturing Company. U. S. Census, Population Schedule, 1870; Jim Cook, *It is Concord* (Concord, N. C., Jim Cook, 1891); Fieldcrest Cannon, Inc., *A Century of Progress: Cannon Mills Company, 1887-1987* (Charlotte, N. C.: Washburn Press, 1987), 5; Timothy W. Vanderburg, *Cannon Mills and Kannapolis : persistent paternalism in a textile town* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2013), 9-10.

¹⁶ John P. Coffin, "Concord: A Live Town in N. C.," *Manufacturer's Record*, April 13, 1889. The Southern Railway operated the railroad line until merging in 1982 with the Norfolk and Western Railroad to create Norfolk Southern Corporation. Jennifer Davis McDaid, Historical Archivist, Norfolk Southern Corporation, Norfolk, Virginia, email correspondence with Heather Fearnbach, May 12, 2014.

¹⁷ Cabarrus County contained one finishing and dyeing plant and seven cotton mills with 60,580 spindles and 2,239 looms in 1898. Coleman Manufacturing Company is included in the total, with a note that contractors had almost completed the mill's construction. "Summary of the 184 Cotton Mills in Operation in North Carolina," [Raleigh] *News and Observer* Cotton Mill Edition, November 28, 1895, p. 26; *Textile Excelsior*, June 27, 1896; *Branson's North Carolina Business Directory, 1896* (Raleigh: Levi Branson, 1896), 139-140; North Carolina Department of Labor and Printing, *Eleventh Annual Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of North Carolina* (Raleigh: Guy V. Barnes, 1898), 17, 27-28, 30-31; Jim Cook, *It is Concord, 1891*; *News and Observer, North Carolina Yearbook* (Raleigh: News and Observer, 1906), 137.

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China Grove. In 1896, J. W. Cannon added a \$75,000 cotton mill to his Concord holdings and R. S. Young and J. L. Hartsell organized a cooperatively-owned cotton mill with strong subscriber support. The Cannons partnered with R. E. Gibson to establish Gibson Manufacturing Company in 1899.¹⁸ These endeavors contributed to Concord becoming North Carolina's third largest industrial center after Charlotte and Winston by 1900. At that time, Concord's populace of 7,910 included 1,789 African American inhabitants and twenty-five entrepreneurs managed eighty-two manufacturing establishments.¹⁹ It was in this environment that black entrepreneur Warren Clay Coleman organized a cotton mill.

Warren Clay Coleman and Coleman Manufacturing Company

Free African Americans comprised approximately three percent of North Carolina's population in 1860. That year, Cabarrus County's 10,546 residents included 115 free blacks and 3,040 enslaved men, women, and children. Prominent black families who were free prior to emancipation continued to lead and invest in their communities after the Civil War, but a much broader segment of the African American population enjoyed economic stability as employment and educational opportunities increased exponentially during Reconstruction. In 1870, Cabarrus County's 11,954 inhabitants encompassed 3,929 African American citizens, many of whom searched for employment in new venues.²⁰

Industrial positions were often a lucrative option in urban areas during the late nineteenth century. Manufacturers' needs became more specialized as mechanization increased efficiency, but factories still employed thousands to untie, prepare, transport, and pack product. Such tasks in tobacco plants were seasonal, however, coinciding with the tobacco harvest. This forced laborers to spend the remainder of the year cobbling together odd jobs.

Textile mills, unlike tobacco factories, rarely offered production positions to black workers. Legislators codified this discriminatory practice, rooted in social custom, in laws mandating racial separation that prevailed through the mid-1960s. For example, South Carolina's 1915 Segregation Act, effective until 1960, banned textile manufacturing employees of different races from working in the same room.²¹

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid. Concord had approximately 1,600 residents in 1880 and 4,339 in 1890. William R. Merriam, director, *Twelfth Census of the United States, Taken in the Year 1900, Manufactures, Part II* (Washington, D. C.: United States Census Office, 1902), 663.

²⁰ Joseph C. G. Kennedy, *Population of the United States in 1860* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1864), 349-357; Francis A. Walker, *Ninth Census – Volume I: The Statistics of the Population of the United States* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1872), 54.

²¹ Timothy J. Minchin, *Hiring the Black Worker: The Racial Integration of the Southern Textile Industry, 1960-1980* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 12.

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Regardless of such challenges, social mobility allowed for freedmen's investment in myriad endeavors. Historian Loren Schweningen's analysis of Southern black property owners documented that from the 1870s through 1915 most prominent, wealthy, urban African Americans had been enslaved or were the children of slaves, representing a dramatic shift in socio-economic status. Although genealogical information is scant, Schweningen also determined that sixty-five percent of his study sample had mixed racial heritage.²² Typically described as "mulatto" during the period, this light-skinned contingent included Warren Clay Coleman, who was born in Cabarrus County on March 28, 1849, to a white father and Roxanna, a mixed-race slave who took the surname of her owners Daniel and Mary Mahan Coleman.²³

Although Coleman's father has not been definitely identified, Marvin Krieger and other historians hypothesize that attorney Rufus Clay Barringer was the most likely candidate. Photographs document a physical resemblance between the two men, and Rufus's father Paul Barringer and Daniel Coleman lived in close proximity to each other and were friends. Rufus Barringer, born in 1821, graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1842. Six years later, he became a state legislator and served in the House of Representatives until 1850. He maintained law offices in Concord and Charlotte until 1871, when he and his third wife, Concord teacher Margaret Long, moved to Charlotte. Rufus Barringer and his relatives were among the Concord residents who sold Warren Coleman land in Concord and the surrounding area.²⁴

Warren Coleman denied familial assistance as he proudly enumerated his achievements in interviews conducted around the turn of the twentieth century. However, as he was apprenticed to Cabarrus County attorney and farmer William M. Coleman until reaching the age of twenty-one and was then immediately able to acquire land, invest in rental houses, and establish a successful general store, it seems likely that he received subsidies from benefactors. On October 25, 1869, Coleman paid R. G. and C. C. Spragins six hundred dollars for a half-acre lot in Concord. He spent a year in Alabama during 1870 and 1871, but returned to open a Concord barber shop, confectionary, and grocery store by 1872. With William Coleman's support, he broadened his education by attending Howard University during the 1873-1874 academic term. After returning to Concord, he suffered several significant business setbacks following fire losses, but rebuilt his holdings each time. Despite personal financial difficulties, he was well-known

²² Loren Schweningen, *Black Property Owners in the South, 1790-1915* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 223-224.

²³ Roxanna had belonged to Mary's father, Cabarrus County planter John Mahan, until his death in October 1830, after which she became the property of his widow, Cynthia, and then the couple's daughter Mary and her husband. U. S. Census, Slave Schedules, 1820-1860.

²⁴ Beginning in May 1861, Rufus Barringer led North Carolina cavalry brigades during the Civil War. The Union Army captured Brigadier General Barringer in April 1865 and incarcerated him at Fort Delaware through 1865. Marvin Krieger, "Warren Clay Coleman, promoter of the black cotton mill: An analysis of an early effort to develop black economic power," Wake Forest University, M. A. thesis, 1969, 12-25; Thompson, *From the Cotton Field to the Cotton Mill*, 253.

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for his philanthropy, making donations to Rock Hill, Price Memorial, and Zion Hill A. M. E. Zion Churches in Concord and subsidizing tuition for youth at Howard University, Livingstone College, Shaw University, and the African American orphanage in Oxford, N. C.²⁵

Coleman's diverse business interests included purchasing land throughout Concord upon which he erected almost one hundred rental houses between 1875 and 1904. As Coleman sold lumber and other building materials at his store and likely supplied contractors with the necessary components for his houses, the per-dwelling construction cost was nominal. He rented many of the residences to African American families who moved from rural areas to Concord in search of employment in homes, commercial establishments, and factories. Coleman also acquired lots in municipalities including Charlotte, Gladstone, Greensboro, Monroe, and Winston-Salem, and rural acreage in Cabarrus and Union Counties, some of which he farmed.²⁶

Coleman developed a network of significant connections as he became involved with events such as the African American state fair, held in Raleigh each fall from 1879 until 1930. He organized an annual exhibit of Cabarrus County livestock and farm products that one viewer characterized as "a whole fair within itself." The North Carolina Industrial Association—an organization created by twenty-three African American businessmen to promote black advancement in agriculture, industry, and education—presented the gathering. Coleman purchased stock in the entity in 1881 and later became its treasurer, vice-president, and president.²⁷

As Coleman's interest in manufacturing grew, he served as chief commissioner for North Carolina's African American history exhibit at the Cotton States and International Exposition held in Atlanta, Georgia, from mid-September through December 1895. He also corresponded with leaders including educator and civil rights activist W. E. B. Du Bois, Durham tobacco magnate Washington Duke, and

²⁵ Coleman asserted that he was not able to obtain insurance due to his race. His Concord store and inventory, together valued at over seven thousand dollars, were a complete loss in a September 1885 fire. On July 7, 1900, a fire decimated the replacement store and six rental houses. W. C. Coleman, correspondence with Benjamin Duke, July 10, 1900, Box 14, Benjamin Newton Duke Papers, 1834-1984, Rubenstein Library, Duke University; Cabarrus County Deed Book 22, p. 585; Deed Book 44, p. 234; Deed of Trust Book 31, p. 206; Mortgage Book 3, p. 378; J. W. Hood, *One Hundred Years of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church* (New York: A. M. E. Zion Book Concern, 1895), 405-406; William Harvey Quick, *Negro Stars in All Ages of the World* (Richmond, V. A.: S. B. Adkins and Company, 1898), 117-120; *Branson's North Carolina Business Directory, 1896* (Raleigh: Levi Branson, 1896), 140; Krieger, "Warren Clay Coleman," 120.

²⁶ Coleman's holdings vacillated, encompassing between 20 and 40 undeveloped Concord lots, 60 to 96 rental houses, and almost 250 acres in rural Cabarrus County from 1875 through 1904. Krieger, "Warren Clay Coleman," 31; Thompson, *From the Cotton Field to the Cotton Mill*, 254; Burgess, "Tar Heel Blacks and the New South Dream," 119-121.

²⁷ *Concord Times*, September 14, 1888; *Raleigh Evening Visitor*, October 2, 1888; "W. C. Coleman at the Fair," undated newspaper article in the "W. C. Coleman" vertical file at the Concord Public Library; Quick, *Negro Stars in All Ages of the World*, 119; "North Carolina Industrial Association," <http://www.northcarolinahistory.org/encyclopedia/420/entry> (accessed September 2011).

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Tuskegee Institute president Booker T. Washington as he contemplated opening a cotton mill that would be owned and operated by African Americans. Coleman announced his plan in letters published in local newspapers including the *Concord Standard* and the *Salisbury Industrial Record* in June 1896 and national publications such as *Manufacturers Record* in August. He promoted the industrious nature of black workers as an incentive for investors to support his enterprise.²⁸

Coleman's argument, intended to assuage concerns that African Americans could not effectively and profitably operate a cotton mill, in fact drew attention to a hotly-debated issue. If his mill and others like it succeeded, the entry of African American laborers who earned a lesser hourly rate than their white counterparts into the overall textile industry's work force could potentially supplant white workers or result in universal wage reduction. Publications including the *New York Times* and the *Manufacturers Record* deliberated this possible economic and political threat at length, but most pundits deemed it insignificant. Proposed child labor law reform was a much more pervasive concern.²⁹

Warren Coleman paid \$291.66 for the first 11 2/3 acres of what would become the mill tract, which he acquired from Concord livery stable owner Marshall J. Corl and his wife Emma Jane on December 1, 1896. The North Carolina General Assembly incorporated Coleman Manufacturing Company on February 16, 1897. Six days later, Coleman, acting as the company's trustee, purchased approximately seventy acres from the Corls for \$1,750. Black and white leaders gathered at the courthouse to recognize the occasion. The company's twenty initial stockholders included eighteen distinguished African American men (authors, businessmen, educators, pastors, politicians, an attorney, and a physician), a black female teacher (Polly A. King), and one white man (Marshall J. Corl). Those stockholders present on February 22nd elected officers: Durham brick maker and Mechanics and Farmers bank incorporator Richard B. Fitzgerald as president; Raleigh lawyer, educator, and politician Edward A. Johnson as vice-president; and Warren C. Coleman as secretary and treasurer. These three men and six others comprised the board of directors.³⁰

Builder Adolphus Henry Propst and brick maker and mason Rufus A. Brown, both of whom were white, and their crews soon undertook the mill's execution. Brown oversaw the site's grading, brick production

²⁸ W. C. Coleman, "The Negro and the Cotton Mill," *Concord Standard*, July 16, 1896, p. 2; *Manufacturers Record*, August 7, 1896, p. 24, and December 11, 1896, p. 324.

²⁹ *Ibid.*; *Manufacturers Record*, March 26, 1897; "Negro Cotton Mills," *Concord Times*, July 30, 1896, p. 3; "To Test Negro Labor," *Concord Times*, March 11, 1897, p. 1.

³⁰ Coleman stated that a white investor Marshall J. Corl had purchased \$2,100-worth of stock by July 8, 1896. W. C. Coleman, correspondence with Benjamin Duke, July 8, 1896, Box 8, Benjamin Newton Duke Papers, 1834-1984, Rubenstein Library, Duke University; Cabarrus County Deed Book 51, p. 316; Deed Book 53, p. 130; *C Private Laws of the State of North Carolina Passed By the General Assembly at the Session of 1897* (Winston: M. I. and J. C. Stewart, 1897), 47-49; "The Colored Cotton Factory," *Concord Times*, February 11, 1897, p. 3; "Laying the Corner Stone of the Coleman Cotton Mill," *Concord Times*, February 10, 1897, p. 3; *Charlotte Observer*, February 23, 1897; *Concord Standard*, February 25, 1897.

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at a rate of as many as 50,000 per day during August and September 1897, and construction of brick walls for the mill, boiler house, and engine room. In mid-October, the *Textile Excelsior* noted that Propst had completed the mill's interior framing and floors and hung some doors and windows.³¹ Warren Coleman organized a day-long celebration of the construction progress held on February 8, 1898, that involved a series of speeches and musical entertainment at the courthouse and a cornerstone-laying ceremony at the mill. He advertised the event in newspapers statewide and thus drew a large contingent of African American and white supporters from other cities. Propst finished installing the mill's windows by the end of February and then erected the four-stage tower's stairs and mansard roof. Coleman deemed the building complete and ready for equipment by the end of April.³²

As Warren Coleman solicited the subscriptions necessary to capitalize his business, respondents made many small pledges and funds slowly accumulated. Concord industrialists J. M. Odell and J. W. Cannon endorsed the undertaking, but it does not appear that they made financial contributions. Coleman successfully secured assistance from Washington Duke, however. Duke's \$1,000 stock purchase in April 1898 was the first of three loans he granted Coleman Manufacturing Company totaling \$21,000 plus interest, thus allowing Coleman to finish and equip the Concord mill.³³

The building was substantially complete and Indianapolis machinist Carl J. Speckin of Atlas Engine Works supervised equipment installation in September 1898. That month, the *New York Times* reported

³¹ Propst and Brown each enjoyed long careers in the building trades. Catawba County native Adolphus Henry Propst, born March 18, 1850, died on December 10, 1917. Cabarrus County native Rufus A. Brown, born July 5, 1852, died November 24, 1907. Gravemarkers, Oakwood Cemetery, Concord, N. C.; *Branson's North Carolina Business Directory, 1896* (Raleigh: Levi Branson, 1896), 139; US Census, Population Schedule, 1900; "The Coleman Cotton Factory," *Concord Times*, September 9, 1897, p. 3; "Coleman Manufacturing Company," *Concord Times*, March 10, 1898, p. 10; "To the Coleman Manufactory," *Daily Concord Standard*, September 11, 1897, p. 2; "The Coleman Factory," *Daily Concord Standard*, July 9, 1897; July 19, 1897, August 2, 1897, August 18, 1897, October 13, 1897, December 14, 1897, and December 16, 1897. *Manufacturer's Record*, July 23, 1897, p. 435; *Textile Excelsior*, August 21, 1897, and October 16, 1897; W. E. B. Du Bois, *Some Efforts of American Negroes for Their Own Social Betterment* (Atlanta, G. A.: Atlanta University Press, 1898), 26.

³² *Daily Concord Standard*, February 7-9, 1898, March 3, 1898; *Manufacturers' Record*, April 29, 1898, p. 237.

³³ Krieger postulates that Rufus Barringer gave Coleman about \$2,500 in cash in 1894 as he settled his estate before his death. Warren Coleman first requested that the Dukes invest in his company's stock in a July 8, 1896 letter. They declined, but he persisted. Washington Duke also resisted Coleman's repeated appeals for him to serve on Coleman Manufacturing Company's board of directors, yet Duke's name is listed with those of other directors including white industrialist Lafayette Godfrey of Providence, Rhode Island, on the company's letterhead. Godfrey purchased stock in Coleman Manufacturing Company but was a director in name only. W. C. Coleman, correspondence with Benjamin Duke, July 8 and July 14, 1896, Box 8, and March 8, 1899, Box 12, and J. E. Stagg, April 20, May 3, and May 5, 1899, Box 12; Washington Duke, letter to W. C. Coleman, February 19, 1897, 1896-1897 letterbook, Box 66; J. E. Stagg correspondence with W. C. Coleman, April 23, 1898, and April 28, 1898, 1897-1898 letterbook, Box 67; W. C. Coleman, letter to Washington Duke, April 29, 1898, Box 10, Washington Duke, letter to W. C. Coleman, March 1, 1900, 1899-1901 letterbook, Box 68, Benjamin Newton Duke Papers, 1834-1984, Rubenstein Library, Duke University; "The Coleman Factory," *Concord Daily Standard*, March 12, 1897, p. 2; "The Coleman Factory," *Concord Standard*, March 10, 1898, p. 1; "The Coleman Mill," *Concord Standard*, February 15, 1900, p. 3; Krieger, "Warren Clay Coleman," 40.

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that only three of five hundred southern textile mills (two hundred of which were in North Carolina) employed black laborers. Coleman Manufacturing Company, albeit not yet operational, was included in the total, along with a cotton mill owned by the Monteith family in Columbia, S. C., and Elmwood Mill in Charleston.³⁴

Work was still underway at the mill in May 1899, when white Massachusetts native H. E. Smith and African American mechanic J. A. Lankford supervised the installation of equipment previously used by a New Hampshire factory. Smith negotiated the machinery purchase just prior to his move to Concord that month. A June 1899 notice in the *Manufacturer's Record* stated that sixty Coleman Manufacturing Company employees were in the process of positioning equipment. Carl J. Speckin returned to Concord to oversee the installation of a Corliss engine and two boilers. Newspapers across the country reprinted the article, which also noted that the one-hundred-acre tract associated with the mill contained a newly completed waterworks system. Coleman reported a total expenditure of \$51,000 on building and equipping the mill.³⁵

The Concord enterprise garnered international attention in 1900, when photographs displayed in the African American history exhibit at the Paris Exposition illustrated Coleman Manufacturing Company's board of directors, W. C. Coleman, and the mill as it neared completion.³⁶ Commentary regarding the mill appeared in black and white-owned newspapers throughout the United States. The endeavor also received accolades at the National Negro Business League's first annual meeting on August 23, 1900. President and founder Booker T. Washington organized the Boston proceedings. Prominent Washington D. C. lawyer, inventor, and investor Andrew F. Hilyer reported on black entrepreneurial successes, but noted the paucity of the nation's African American-managed industrial endeavors. His sole examples were a Chattanooga, Tennessee, stove foundry; a Greenfield, Ohio, carriage factory organized with

³⁴ "The Colored Cotton Mill is All Right," *Concord Times*, June 30, 1898, p. 3; *Concord Standard*, September 1, 1898, p. 3; "Negroes as Mill Hands," *New York Times*, September 5, 1898.

³⁵ *Manufacturers' Record*, October 14, 1898, p. 197; *Concord Times*, June 30, 1898; "Machinery Arriving," *Daily Concord Standard*, May 16, 1899, p. 1; "Mill Owned By Negroes," *Biloxi Daily Herald*, June 15, 1899; R. L. Polk and Company, *Indianapolis City Directory* (Indianapolis: R. L. Polk and Company, 1899), 870; W. C. Coleman, correspondence with B. N. Duke, February 21, 1900, Box 14, Benjamin Newton Duke Papers, 1834-1984, Rubenstein Library, Duke University.

³⁶ W. E. B. Du Bois wrote an article describing the exhibition, which was curated and installed by "Negro special agent" Thomas J. Calloway, a Tuskegee Institute teacher and a free-lance writer for publications such as *Harper's Weekly*. Du Bois won an award for his assistance compiling the section of the exhibit related to the African American experience in Georgia. There are no definitive image dates, but Calloway was likely at least the building photographer, as the *Daily Concord Standard* reported on Monday, December 12, 1898, that Calloway took pictures during his Concord visit "last Saturday." The building status at that time also supports that photograph date, as mill, boiler house, and smokestack are substantially complete but do not appear to be operational. W. E. Burghardt Du Bois, "The American Negro at Paris," *The American Monthly Review of Reviews*, Vol. XXII, No.5 (November 1900), 575-577; "Coleman Manufacturing Co., a Negro operated cotton mill, Concord, N. C.," in the "African American Photographs Assembled for 1900 Paris Exposition" collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

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\$15,000 in capital; at least three brick-manufacturing plants valued at more than \$10,000 each; and Coleman Manufacturing Company, represented as possessing \$100,000 of capital.³⁷

Warren Coleman was not able to travel to the meeting due to his wife's illness, but he sent his private secretary, Tuskegee Normal School graduate Roscoe Murray Simmons, to promote Coleman Manufacturing Company's achievements. The concern's president, Richard B. Fitzgerald, also attended. Simmons noted that North Carolina native James M. Henderson, who then resided in Boston, marketed yarn produced by the company's just over two hundred African American workers overseen by a white superintendent formerly employed in Fall River, Massachusetts. Clients in Boston, Cincinnati, New York; Liverpool, England; and Africa were among those who purchased the yarn.³⁸

W. E. B. Du Bois, Booker T. Washington, and other African American leaders encouraged entrepreneurs to form alliances at the local, state, national, and international levels.³⁹ Warren Coleman's wide-ranging networking initiatives included serving as treasurer of the Industrial Business Union of America, West Indies, and Canada, organized by James M. Henderson and based in Boston. The group met in Concord, North Carolina, on July 4, 1901, drawing a wide variety of black and white participants. African American editor, politician, Coleman Manufacturing Company board member, and Wilmington, North Carolina, customs collector John C. Dancy orchestrated the event. Coleman was too ill to attend.⁴⁰

Historian Loren Schweninger's analysis of federal census data found Warren Coleman and Richard Fitzgerald to be the only two African American property owners who accumulated North Carolina estates with assessed values of \$50,000 to \$99,999 between 1870 and 1915. Thirty-six other black Southern entrepreneurs attained comparable holdings. The only higher tier—estates worth more than \$100,000—encompassed sixty-six African American men, seven of who resided in North Carolina: Winston-Salem merchant and realtor Charles H. Jones, Durham barber and insurance company founder John Merrick, Durham physician and insurance agent Aaron McDuffie Moore, Wake County merchant Berry O'Kelly, Durham insurance executive Charles Clinton Spaulding, and Winston-Salem physician Daniel Cato

³⁷ Other period sources, such as the *North Carolina Yearbook* and *Textile World* estimate Coleman Manufacturing Company's capital stock at \$50,000. National Negro Business League, *Proceedings of the National Negro Business League, Its First Meeting, Held in Boston, Massachusetts, August 23 and 24, 1900* (Boston, MA: J. R. Hamm Publishing, 1901), 20, 181, 206-209; *Textile World, The Textile World's Official Directory of the Textile Mills and Buyers of Textile Fabrics* (Boston: Textile World, 1900), 184; News and Observer, *North Carolina Yearbook* (Raleigh: News and Observer, 1901), 78.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 206-208; U. S. Census, Population Schedules, 1900.

³⁹ W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Negro in Business; A Report of a Social Study Made under the Direction of Atlanta University; Together with the Proceedings of the Fourth Conference for the Study of the Negro Problems, Held at Atlanta University, May 30-31, 1899* (Atlanta: Atlanta University Publication no. 4, 1899), 50.

⁴⁰ "Fourth of July," *Concord Standard*, July 11, 1901, p. 4; W. C. Coleman, correspondence with J. E. Stagg, August 14, 1901, Box 15, Benjamin Newton Duke Papers, 1834-1984, Rubenstein Library, Duke University.

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Suggs. Schweningen noted that all of these men cultivated interracial business dealings, whether by securing loans from white financiers or catering to a diverse clientele.⁴¹

Although wealthy Southern businessmen and professionals were prime candidates to subsidize Coleman's endeavor, he also received small donations from working class citizens, many of who were inspired by newspaper coverage. The *Piedmont Indicator* of Spartanburg, S. C., for example, encouraged its readers to send Coleman contributions: "Let all colored men who have money to invest and race pride about them take stock in the mill."⁴² In an 1899 interview with journalist Charles B. Spahr, Coleman stated that "several hundred" of the approximately eight hundred Coleman Manufacturing Company subscribers were African American. Only about one hundred subscribers had yet remitted their pledges, however. Coleman and other company representatives thus pursued sizable sales of company stock to other black and white investors.⁴³ Washington Duke followed his initial \$1,000 contribution with a \$10,000 loan in April 1899, but it would be two years before production commenced.

Skepticism regarding the enterprise's viability grew as the company continued to postpone the mill's opening. On May 31, 1900, the *Concord Times* reprinted an article about the endeavor that had appeared in the *American Wool and Cotton Reporter*, noting that the Concord mill then contained 5,600 spindles and 140 looms. Although interest in the business remained strong, the author observed that subscriptions were meager and financial obstacles significant. In July 1901, Coleman wrote to Washington Duke that workers had been producing yarn for around six weeks. The enterprise had not generated any revenue, however, and Coleman thus requested Duke's assistance to satisfy mounting debts. The previous year, Duke had agreed to finance a second \$10,000 loan released in the form of four \$2,500 bonds less the past-due interest on the first loan. He declined to invest additional funds in 1901.⁴⁴

Coleman continued to update the Dukes on the mill's production, stating in February 1902 that Coleman Manufacturing Company had ten thousand pounds of "very fine yarn" ready to sell. In May 1902, Coleman reported to the *Manufacturers' Record* that his company's products were in high demand and emphasized the exemplary performance of the African American work force. Selling agents C. J. Webb and Company marketed cotton yarns while C. J. Bradbury served as the purveyor of forty-inch-wide cotton sheeting. In May 1903, the *Charlotte Observer* commended Coleman's "indomitable pluck and pride" and noted that Coleman Manufacturing Company's forty employees were "just as industrious and

⁴¹ Schweningen, *Black Property Owners in the South*, 226, 299-300.

⁴² *Piedmont Indicator*, December 12, 1896.

⁴³ Charles B. Spahr, *America's Working People* (New York and London: Longmans, Green, 1900), 47-48.

⁴⁴ B. N. Duke, letter to Coleman Manufacturing Company, June 23, 1900, 1899-1901 letterbook, Box 67; W. C. Coleman, correspondence with J. E. Stagg, May 18, June 26, and August 14, 1901, and Washington Duke, November 27, 1901, Box 15; Washington Duke, letter to W. C. Coleman, July 31, 1901, Box 15; Benjamin Newton Duke Papers, 1834-1984, Rubenstein Library, Duke University; News and Observer, *North Carolina Yearbook*, 1901, 78; Krieger, "Warren Clay Coleman," 93, 107.

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capable” as white mill operatives. The article also mentioned that the factory had already sold all products that could be generated during the next three months. Despite this momentum, the undertaking never attained financial stability. Coleman, who had invested \$9,500 in company stock and at least \$2,000 in personal loans to the business, began selling his personal property to generate revenue, but was still not able to reduce the mill’s indebtedness. He relinquished his role as secretary and treasurer in December 1903. In January 1904, Edward F. White began handling Coleman Manufacturing Company’s administration and H. E. Smith oversaw seventy-five employees. The stressful situation undoubtedly had a deleterious effect on Coleman’s already poor health, and he died on March 31, 1904, at the age of fifty-five.⁴⁵

Corporate vice-president Edward A. Johnson approached the Dukes with a proposal whereby they might subsidize the mill’s operation with another \$10,000 loan, but the family did not agree to the offer. Benjamin Duke, stating that the Coleman Manufacturing Company’s lack of insurance negated his ability to collect loan payment, initiated foreclosure proceedings and purchased the property for \$10,000 at auction on June 28, 1904. His subsequent investment of about \$13,000 in the venture was not effective, and the *Textile World Record* indicated that the mill was not operating in May 1905. Benjamin and Sarah P. Duke conveyed the mill complex, equipment, and 10 3/8 acres to Concord textile manufacturer J. L. Hartsell for \$10,000 on February 20, 1906. Hartsell and his wife Minnie sold the property to J. W. Cannon for the same amount on March 8, 1906. Cannon also purchased a small adjacent tract from the Hartsells for \$1,000. Elam King, the administrator of Coleman’s estate, coordinated the sale of 122 tracts of land at public auction on October 3, 1904. The residential property included Coleburg, a African American subdivision that bore its former owner’s name.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ W. C. Coleman, correspondence with B. N. Duke, February 24, 1902, Box 15, Benjamin Newton Duke Papers, 1834-1984, Rubenstein Library, Duke University; “Coleman Manufacturing Company,” *Concord Times*, August 14, 1902, p. 3; C. A. Dockham, *Dockham’s American Report and Directory of the Textile Manufacture and Dry Goods Trade* (Boston: C. A. Dockham, 1903), 215; *Textile Directory Blue Book* (New York, 1904), 127; “Colored People Prosperous in the Mill Business,” *Concord Times*, May 13, 1903, p. 3; *Concord Times*, January 15, 1904; “Death of Warren C. Coleman,” *Concord Times*, April 1, 1904, p. 3.

⁴⁶ J. E. Stagg, Benjamin Duke’s secretary, had required Coleman to obtain insurance on the property in 1899. When Coleman did not do so, Stagg purchased a \$10,000-policy on Coleman Manufacturing Company’s behalf and asked Coleman to reimburse Duke for the \$150.00 costs. It appears that the insurance must have lapsed. Benjamin Duke’s father Washington Duke died on May 8, 1905. Cabarrus County Deed Book 63, p. 191; Deed Book 64, pp. 332 and 344; Deed Book 67, p. 64; J. E. Stagg correspondence with W. C. Coleman, April 22, May 5, and May 6, 1899, and W. R. Odell, April 22, 1899, 1898-1899 letterbook, Box 67, Benjamin Newton Duke Papers, 1834-1984, Rubenstein Library, Duke University; *Textile World Record, A Directory of the Textile Establishments in the United States and Canada* (Philadelphia: Lord and Nagle Company, 1905), 206; “Map of Coleburg,” August 24, 1904.; Krieger, “Warren Clay Coleman,” 131; J. K. Rouse, *The Noble Experiment of Warren C. Coleman* (Charlotte: Crabtree, 1972), 93-96.

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Cannon Manufacturing Company in the Twentieth Century

Coleman Manufacturing Company general manager Edward F. White stated that the endeavor failed due to inadequate capital, machinery, and administration. He felt that with proper training African American laborers were capable of executing textile mill work, but the Cannons did not continue the experiment when they incorporated Franklin Cotton Mills in 1906, a time of significant industrial expansion in Concord. The previous year, C. W. Johnston and F. J. Haywood Jr. capitalized Brown Manufacturing Company with \$181,000 in stock and soon hired four hundred workers to weave gingham fabric. J. L. Hartsell partnered with R. S. Young in 1906 to create Young-Hartsell Mills Company, which spun yarn and wove damask fabric. That same year J. M. Odell and W. R. Odell incorporated Magnolia Mills Company, a twenty-five-employee yarn spinning operation established by A. C. Summerville in 1902. After the oldest part of the larger mill complex owned by the Odells burned in August 1908, George W. Watts purchased the property and established Locke Cotton Mills Company with \$725,000 in capital. J. Locke Erwin and Claude Ramseur served as the entity's officers. L. W. Brander acquired Hanover Manufacturing Company and reorganized as Brander Cotton Mills Corporation, employing sixty workers to weave damask in 1910.⁴⁷

That year, Franklin Cotton Mills was one of ten Concord cotton manufacturing concerns, only three of which predated 1900: Cabarrus Cotton Mills, Cannon Manufacturing Company, and Gibson Manufacturing Company. The Cannon family owned all three businesses. At Cabarrus Cotton Mills, 275 workers wove sheeting, while Cannon Manufacturing Company produced sheeting and towels. Gibson Manufacturing Company's 550 employees generated gingham and madras fabric. J. W. Cannon and Sons employed approximately two hundred workers at Franklin Cotton Mills, where W. E. G. Roberson supervised the operation of 28 carding and 15,000 ring-spinning machines to produce warp yarns marketed by Cannon Mills' New York office, open since 1904. J. W. Cannon served as the company's president after his brother David's 1904 death and E. T. Cannon its secretary and treasurer.⁴⁸

J. W. Cannon's strategy to maximize profit required controlling the manufacturing process from raw material processing to finished product sales. In order to facilitate this goal, the Cannons continually expanded and added plants. Their development of a new mill town, Kannapolis, in 1905, was followed by construction in Concord and China Grove in 1907 and Kannapolis and Concord in 1912. Prolific Charlotte mill architect and engineer Stuart W. Cramer orchestrated much of this work and may have designed the Franklin Cotton Mill addition, picker room, and warehouse erected in 1912 by prominent contractor T. C. Thompson and Brothers. The firm, based in Charlotte, N. C., and Birmingham, Alabama,

⁴⁷ Dockham, *Dockham's American Report*, 1903, 215; Thompson, *From the Cotton Field to the Cotton Mill*, 260-263; *Pocket Edition of "The Blue Book" Textile Directory of the United States and Canada* (New York: Davison Publishing Company, 1910), 136.

⁴⁸ "The Blue Book," 1910, 136; Vanderburg, *Cannon Mills and Kannapolis*, 13.

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completed the work at a cost of \$38,343.12.⁴⁹ In 1913, when Franklin Cotton Mill housed 13,000 spindles, Frank L. Bennett and Company noted that the plant and eleven others owned by the Cannons altogether operated 288,000 spindles and 4,581 looms. W. E. G. Robinson, who had served as Franklin Cotton Mill's superintendent since 1906, retired in 1914.⁵⁰

Given Concord leaders' business acumen, local industries successfully weathered the economic challenges wrought by World War I. Beginning in 1915, the federal government engaged Concord's ten textile manufacturers to fulfill military and medical needs. By 1917, B. M. Amick oversaw two hundred Franklin Cotton Mill workers who operated fifty carding machines and 80,000 ring spindles, generating twelve- to eighty-gauge yarns. In early 1918, military requisitions included Cannon Manufacturing Company's entire huck towel production run, which averaged around three million pieces each month. Orders dropped sharply at the war's end, however, and tax code changes dramatically impacted company's finances. Cannon suffered \$3.5-million in cancelled government contracts and paid increased taxes that exceeded the company's profit in 1919.⁵¹

Over the next few years, labor unrest exacerbated the textile industry's financial losses resulting from declining product demand. Workers organized strikes nationwide. In August 1921, the North Carolina militia oversaw the process of Concord operatives returning to work after walk-outs at Locke and Hartsell Mills as well as the Cannon plants in town and in Kannapolis. Union representatives dispersed without achieving their goals. Following this crisis, Cannon Manufacturing Company experienced a significant loss when its president James W. Cannon died on December 19, 1921. His youngest son Charles Albert Cannon assumed the company's leadership.⁵²

At that time, the Cannon Group's holdings included Cabarrus Cotton Mills, Cannon Manufacturing Company, Franklin Cotton Mills, Hobarton Manufacturing Company, Gibson Manufacturing Company, and Norcott Mills Company in Concord and Kannapolis; Barringer Manufacturing Company in Rockwell; Kesler Manufacturing Company in Salisbury; and Patterson Manufacturing Company in China Grove, in addition to stock in other North Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama mills.⁵³ In 1922, J. M. Talbert supervised

⁴⁹ When J. W. Cannon announced the Franklin Cotton Mill addition plans in February 1912, he stated that one hundred and fifty additional employees would be required to operate the expanded plant. The Cannons thus intended to build as many as fifty mill worker houses, but it is not known if the dwelling construction occurred. "The Kannapolis Mills," *Manufacturers' Record*, August 8, 1907, p. 103; T. C. Thompson and Brothers, correspondence with Franklin Cotton Mills, Box 183, Cannon Mills Records, 1836-1983, Rubenstein Library, Duke University; Concord *Tribune*, April 6, 1912, p. 4; "The Franklin Mill to be Enlarged," *Concord Times*, February 29, 1912, p. 1.

⁵⁰ Frank L. Bennett and Company, *How to Build, Equip, and Operate a Cotton Mill in the United States* (Boston: Frank L. Bennett and Company, Inc., 1913), 134; "Mr. Graham Robinson Resigns," *Concord Daily Tribune*, July 3, 1914, p. 1.

⁵¹ News and Observer, *North Carolina Yearbook* (Raleigh: News and Observer, 1915), 130; Davison's *Textile Blue Book* (New York: Davison Publishing Company, 1917), 231; Vanderburg, *Cannon Mills and Kannapolis*, 41-43.

⁵² Vanderburg, *Cannon Mills and Kannapolis*, 54-55.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 56.

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two hundred Franklin Cotton Mills employees who produced ten- to twenty-six-gauge yarns on twenty-eight carding machines and 29,536 ring spindles. Other cotton mills operating in Concord during the early 1920s were Brancord Manufacturing Company, Brown Manufacturing Company, Hartsell Mills Company, Kerr Bleaching and Finishing Works, Inc., Locke Cotton Mills Company, Roberta Manufacturing Company, and White Parks Mill Company. Two knitting establishments—G. H. Y. Hosiery and Hoover Hosiery—also reported significant production.⁵⁴

Cannon Mills applied a trademarked label to their goods in 1923 and initiated a national campaign to promote their brand the next year. Production escalated with increased product demand. In 1925, Franklin Cotton Mills employed five salaried staff and approximately 210 mill workers. The plant utilized 4,479,659 pounds of short-staple cotton to produce yarn valued at \$1,451,222.⁵⁵ In October 1926, engineers Lockwood, Greene, and Company's Boston office appraised Franklin Cotton Mills as part of New York insurance providers Flint and Company's evaluation of the property. At that time, the structure's assessed value was \$185,321 plus building equipment worth an estimated \$28,884. Manufacturing machinery and equipment, which included 29,536 spindles that produced sixteen-gauge single-ply yarn, was valued at \$470,419. Franklin Cotton Mill's additional real estate consisted of eighty houses, most of which contained four rooms; twenty-one-acres occupied by the houses and the mill complex; and an additional 135.59-acre tract that had belonged to the Caldwell family.⁵⁶

Franklin Cotton Mills operated under that name until its July 6, 1928, consolidation with eight other Cannon-owned operations—Barringer Manufacturing Company, Cabarrus Cotton Mills, Cannon Manufacturing Company, Gibson Manufacturing Company, Hobarton Manufacturing Company, Kesler Manufacturing Company, Norcott Mills, and Patterson Manufacturing Company—as Cannon Mills Company. The Franklin Cotton Mills complex became known as Cannon Plant No. 9 and continued to function as a yarn spinning facility.⁵⁷

In 1930, Concord's 11,820 inhabitants, 1,966 of whom were African American, comprised almost twenty-seven percent of Cabarrus County's overall population. Forty-two manufacturing operations generated

⁵⁴ "Manufacturing Industries of Cabarrus County," *Concord Times*, October 23, 1922, p. 5; *America's Textile Reporter* (Boston: Frank L. Bennett and Company, Inc.), 1922, 802; News and Observer, *North Carolina Yearbook* (Raleigh: News and Observer, 1923), 68.

⁵⁵ Superintendent's report and federal tax return, 1925, Box 185, Cannon Mills Records, 1836-1983, Rubenstein Library, Duke University.

⁵⁶ Cannon Mills, "Cannon: The inside story on Cannon Mills' quality products," 7-8; Lockwood, Greene, and Company Engineers, "Appraisal of Franklin Cotton Mills, Inc., Concord, N. C.," October 20, 1926, p. 4 and attached correspondence, Box 183, Cannon Mills Records, 1836-1983, Rubenstein Library, Duke University.

⁵⁷ "Cannon Mills Company," <http://www.secretary.state.nc.us/Search/profcorp/4602529> (accessed November 2014); Fieldcrest Cannon, Inc., *A Century of Progress*:

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product valued at \$30,351,926.⁵⁸ Fourteen of those enterprises were cotton mills: twelve in Concord, two in Kannapolis, and two in Mt. Pleasant. At Cannon Mills' five Concord plants (Nos. 2, 5, 6, 9, and 10), operatives utilized 127,632 spindles and 2,290 looms to produce yarn, towels, sheets, and gingham, madras, and novelty dress fabric.⁵⁹

Diversification was particularly important during the early 1930s as the textile industry faced challenges nationwide. Mechanization transformed manufacturing operations and more efficient equipment resulted in mill employee layoffs. Job loss, decreased pay, and poor working conditions thus made unions more appealing to mill workers. The depressed economy further contributed to pay cuts and job losses 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.

Although Cannon Mills's sales and profits decreased during the early 1930s as a result of the economic depression, the corporation remained solvent, a feat that garnered national recognition. Charles Cannon provided guidance to the Hoover and Roosevelt administrations, New Deal agencies, and the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond. He was determined to keep his plants in operation, even if they generated a surplus. Despite the company's declining revenue, it retained most of its workers, updated facilities, and introduced new products. Cannon Mills's continued resistance to labor reform inspired some of its Concord employees, including those at Plant No. 9, to participate in the 1934 strike, but Kannapolis residents did not.⁶⁰

Cannon Mills maintained its existing equipment during the depression, reporting no new spindle or loom additions between 1930 and 1935. In 1936, the company sold \$38,302,927-worth of goods, realizing a \$5,587,632 profit.⁶¹ By the time Cannon Mills celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 1937, approximately seventeen thousand employees produced towels, sheets, blankets, and hosiery in eleven North and South

⁵⁸ LeVerne Beales, supervisor. *Fifteenth Census of the United States: Manufactures, 1929, Volume III* (Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1933); 383, 389; Leon E. Truesdell, supervisor. *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, Population, Volume III, Part 2* (Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1932), 351.

⁵⁹ News and Observer, *North Carolina Yearbook* (Raleigh: News and Observer, 1930), 79.

⁶⁰ Vanderburg, *Cannon Mills and Kannapolis*, 94, 100-101.

⁶¹ News and Observer, *North Carolina Yearbook* (Raleigh: News and Observer, 1935), 105; Vanderburg, *Cannon Mills and Kannapolis*, 100.

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Carolina plants.⁶² The business's reorganization as Cannon Mills, Inc., became effective on December 30, 1937.⁶³

A late 1930s recession slowed the country's recovery from the Great Depression, but military contracts to support the United States' participation in World War II soon spurred burgeoning industrial production. America's goal to become "the arsenal of democracy" benefited large corporations—more than half of the \$175 billion-worth of government contracts awarded between 1940 and 1944 went to thirty-three nationally-known firms who had demonstrated their capacity to produce large quantities of quality goods—as well as small businesses, finally remedying the high unemployment rates that lingered after the recession. Industrial jobs increased by seventy-five percent in the South over the course of World War II, with traditionally underemployed 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.⁶⁴

Concord's industrial trends during this period reflected those of the nation. In 1940, twenty-nine manufacturing establishments operated in the city, which had grown to encompass 15,572 residents. The following year, Cannon Mills's five Concord plants (Nos. 2, 5, 6, 9, and 10), contained 129,012 spindles and 1,739 looms, representing only a slight change since 1930. The mill products also remained constant: yarn, towels, sheets, and gingham, madras, and novelty dress fabric.⁶⁵

Charles Cannon executed agreements with the War Department whereby Cannon Mills supplied the military with vast quantities of towels and sheets. Labor shortages ensued when 5,300 employees enlisted in the armed services during World War II, but the company attempted to attract and retain workers including women by raising wages to 37.5 cents per hour in 1941 and again to at least 55 cents per hour in 1945. This resulted in a significant increase in labor cost as Cannon Mills then employed around 20,000 workers. However, company sales rose 78 percent between 1939 and 1945, and net profits increased 133 percent.⁶⁶

Cannon Mills's promise to provide employment and housing for returning World War II veterans resulted in the creation of the "Servicemen's Personnel Department," which served 3,500 applicants, and the

⁶² Hazel Mizelle, "Cannon Mills Employ 17,000 in Carolinas," *Charlotte Observer*, July 11, 1937.

⁶³ "Cannon Mills Company," <http://www.secretary.state.nc.us/Search/profcorp/4602529> (accessed November 2014).

⁶⁴ 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

⁶⁵ Thomas J. Fitzgerald, supervisor. *Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940, Manufactures, 1939, Volume III* (Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1942), 745.

⁶⁶ Vanderburg, *Cannon Mills and Kannapolis*, 105-106, 113; "Pay Raise Permitted for Cannon Workers," *Raleigh News and Observer*, February 28, 1944.

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construction of fifty prefabricated dwellings in Kannapolis. The economy remained strong until a short recession in 1948-1949, which was counteracted by the Korean War's onset in 1950. Cannon Mills embarked on plant modernization and new product marketing campaigns and implemented cost-cutting measures in an effort to sustain profits. Items such as bedspreads and coordinated draperies, introduced in 1949, bolstered interest in the company's goods. Cannon also began producing upholstery fabric and drapery material to sell by the yard.⁶⁷

Union organization efforts failed again during the 1950s. At the decade's end, the textile industry suffered widespread mill closures and dramatic decreases in stock prices, as reflected in a 10.7 percent decline in Cannon Mills's stock value between June 1959 and January 1960. However, the company weathered the economic challenges of the period and soon invested in the construction of what was said to be the world's largest distribution center in Kannapolis, completed in 1963, as well as the modernization and acquisition of plants in Concord and elsewhere. Demand for fabric suitable for military use increased in the mid-1960s during the Vietnam War.⁶⁸

African American mill hands encompassed only 3.3 percent of the nation's textile manufacturing workforce in 1960, yet southern manufacturers generated approximately eighty-nine percent of the textiles produced in the United States the following year. Civil rights activism, legislation, and lawsuits soon brought radical change to the textile industry, forcing mill labor integration. Cannon Mills hired a few black laborers to execute janitorial, shipping, or site work through the mid-twentieth century, but it was not until 1962 that the company engaged women including Corine Lytle Cannon and Kay Willis to fill production positions. As in other textile mills, Cannon's black employees encountered systemic discrimination in the form of inequitable work assignments, production sabotage, and a dearth of advancement opportunities. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 attempted to abolish practices such as these, but it met with great resistance from textile manufacturers. Many corporations, including Cannon Mills, faced class-action lawsuits in the late 1960s as African American laborers continued to experience pervasive discrimination. After 1970s legal settlements, personnel training, and company restructuring, Cannon Mills' 22,000-laborer workforce grew to include about 5,500 African American employees by the early 1980s.⁶⁹

Charles Cannon led Cannon Mills until his death on April 2, 1971, at the age of seventy-eight. Chairman of the Board Don Holt then oversaw the operation for three years, successively followed by Harold Hornaday and Otto Stolz. The late 1970s recession triggered a 1982 takeover by Los Angeles investor David H. Murdock, who, immediately after assuming the company's management, laid off workers, sold

⁶⁷ Cannon Mills, "Cannon: The inside story on Cannon Mills' quality products," 8; Vanderburg, *Cannon Mills and Kannapolis*, 116, 119-121.

⁶⁸ Vanderburg, *Cannon Mills and Kannapolis*, 159, 161, 168-169.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 169, 175-176; Minchin, *Hiring the Black Worker*, 3, 9, 176, 178, 180.

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mill houses, and modernized and consolidated plants. In fall 1985, Murdock initiated negotiations with Fieldcrest Mills in Eden, N. C., which resulted in the companies' January 1, 1986, merger to create Fieldcrest Cannon. Although plagued with financial losses and labor issues, the business operated until late 1997, when the Texas-based Pillowtex Corporation acquired its assets. Pillowtex was only able to sustain production until July 30, 2003, when it closed sixteen plants nationwide, resulting in the loss of 6,450 jobs, 4,800 of which were in North Carolina.⁷⁰

Plant No. 9 operatives spun yarn until Pillowtex's closure, after which the complex stood vacant until 2007. Wilbur E. Bryant Jr., under the auspices of Billy Joe Holdings, LLC., then acquired the 10.14-acre property from Southern Leasing Company, LLC.⁷¹ As of 2014, various entities lease portions of the mill and the warehouses to serve as storage. Car repair businesses utilize the mill basement's west end and the southwest warehouse. A recycling company operates from the central west warehouse.

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. Since frame mills were extremely susceptible to fire and rarely had interior firewalls or other fire safety features, few nineteenth-century North Carolina factories survive.⁷²

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, exposed 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 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.⁷³

⁷⁰ Ibid., 173, 191-197, 204-206.

⁷¹ Cabarrus County Deed Book 7392, p. 226; Deed Book 7396, p. 145.

⁷² 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.

⁷³ 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.

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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.⁷⁴ 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.⁷⁵ 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.

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.⁷⁶

Thomasville, North Carolina, native Stuart Warren 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. In addition to preparing plans for mills, Cramer equipped facilities with textile production machinery of all types, some of which he invented. His salesmen, based in Charlotte and Atlanta offices, travelled throughout the country. Cramer's innovations in textile mill climate control garnered him international recognition, and he is credited with conceiving the term "air conditioning." Cramer often served his clients as a business advisor as well as a designer. For example, he installed an air-conditioning system at Loray Mill in Gastonia in 1908 and became the company's president four years later. Cramer established and led the American Cotton Manufacturers Association and the National Council of American Textile Manufacturers. He invested in textile concerns including Highland Park

⁷⁴ 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.

⁷⁵ Glass, *The Textile Industry in North Carolina*, 38.

⁷⁶ 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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Manufacturing Company in Charlotte and Mayes Manufacturing Company in the Gaston County community of Mayesworth, which became known as Cramerton in 1922. The mill complexes and the associated housing that Cramer designed at those and other locations featured efficient layouts that demonstrated his integrated work flow concepts.⁷⁷

Cannon Manufacturing Company commissioned Cramer to design new industrial complexes, improve existing ones, and oversee building completion and equipment installation. T. C. Thompson and Brothers executed much of the construction work. The contractor's documented projects include Cannon plant completion in Concord and China Grove in 1907 and Kannapolis and Concord in 1912. That year, T. C. Thompson and Brothers erected the Franklin Cotton Mill additions and warehouse that Stuart Cramer may have designed.⁷⁸

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.⁷⁹

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.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Ibid., 107; *Charlotte Observer*, June 22, 1912, p. 10; "Mr. Cramer is made president of Loray," *Charlotte Evening Chronicle*, December 26, 1912, p. 6; Thomas S. Morgan, "Stuart Warren Cramer" in William Powell, ed., *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, Vol. 1* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 455; Catherine Westergaard, "Stuart W. Cramer," *North Carolina Architects and Builders: A Biographical Dictionary*, <http://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000275> (accessed December 2014); Mattson, Alexander and Associates, Inc., "Loray Mill Historic District," National Register Nomination, 2001, Section 8, pages 36-37.

⁷⁸ "The Kannapolis Mills," *Manufacturers' Record*, August 8, 1907, p. 103; T. C. Thompson and Brothers, correspondence with Franklin Cotton Mills, Box 183, Cannon Mills Records, 1836-1983, Rubenstein Library, Duke University.

⁷⁹ Bradley, *The Works: The Industrial Architecture of the United States*, 144-147.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

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Concord Textile Mills

In order to take advantage of lower land prices and allow for unfettered expansion, Concord's industrialists erected mills and worker housing on the city's outskirts. When historian Peter Kaplan undertook the Cabarrus County architecture survey in 1979, he documented late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Concord textile mills including Buffalo Cotton Mill on Magnolia Street, Cabarrus Cotton Mill at 323 Corban Avenue SW, Gibson and Hobarton Manufacturing Companies at 325 McGill Avenue NW, and the Odell-Locke-Randolph Cotton Mill at 1 Buffalo Avenue NW. In areas then just outside of the city limits, Kaplan identified the complexes utilized by Brown and Norcott Manufacturing Companies on Cabarrus Avenue W and Franklin Avenue NW, Coleman-Franklin-Cannon Mill at 625 Main Street SW, and Young-Hartsell Cotton Mill on Old Charlotte Road SW.⁸¹ Most have been demolished, but Coleman-Franklin-Cannon Mill, Cabarrus Cotton Mill, Gibson Manufacturing Company, and Odell-Locke-Randolph Cotton Mill comprise a comparable collection of plants that began functioning during the late nineteenth century and subsequently expanded.

The industrial buildings share structural characteristics—heavy-timber frames with load-bearing brick exterior walls executed in five-to-one common bond and segmental-arched window and door openings—as well as embellishments such as brick corbelling capping stair towers. Fire-proofing measures include chamfered heavy-timber posts and beams, plank floors, metal-clad doors, projecting stair towers, and separate boiler and engine rooms. Large, double- and triple-hung, wood sash windows and monitor and sawtooth roofs provided ample light. As the twentieth century progressed, curtain walls consisting of bands of large metal-frame windows and brick sheathing allowed for maximum light and ventilation while enclosing concrete and steel structures.

Odell Manufacturing Company's northwest Concord plant, the city's largest during the late nineteenth century, remains a strikingly intact example of industrial architecture from that period. The mill complex occupies a prominent corner lot containing three buildings erected in 1882, 1899, and 1909 within the block bounded by Peachtree and Buffalo Avenues and Church and Locust Streets. The 1882/1909 mill's southeast facades front Buffalo Avenue, while the 1899 structure is oriented so that its long elevations parallel Church and Locust Streets. The former factory, called Odell-Locke-Randolph Cotton Mill [NR 1983] in reference to its sequential proprietors, ceased functioning for manufacturing purposes in 1974. A consortium of investors rehabilitated the complex in the 1980s to house retail establishments, offices, and condominiums.

⁸¹ Peter R. Kaplan, *The Historic Architecture of Cabarrus County, North Carolina* (Charlotte: Craftsman Printing Company, 1981), 69-70, 87, 122-123, 144, 146, 149.

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Odell Manufacturing Company expanded its production capability with the 1882 construction of a three-story, fourteen-bay-wide and five-bay-deep building on the northeast side of the 1840 mill that the company had acquired in 1877. The 1882 heavy-timber-frame structure features load-bearing brick exterior walls executed in five-to-one common bond with large, segmental-arched window and door openings and deep eaves. A four-stage stair tower with a corbelled cornice projects from the southeast elevation. The mansard roof that originally capped the tower has been removed. The Coleman Manufacturing Company mill's builders employed the same general construction principles and executed a similar tower in 1898.

In 1899, Odell Manufacturing Company erected a one-story-on-basement brick weave room northwest of the 1882 mill that features a long monitor that almost spans the low gabled roof's full length and tall triple-hung windows in segmental-arched surrounds that provide ample light. The twenty-five-bay-long and ten-bay-wide building's crenellated three-stage entrance tower faces Locust Street. Like Coleman Manufacturing Company, the engine and boiler rooms that projected from the main block for fire safety purposes have been removed.⁸²

Southern Cotton Mills was in the process of negotiating its purchase of the Odell Manufacturing Company complex when an August 1908 fire decimated the 1840 mill and the 1886 and 1889 buildings, resulting in their demolition. Durham industrialist George W. Watts acquired the property and commissioned the construction of the enormous one-story on basement sawtooth-roofed addition to the 1882 mill's west elevation that was completed in 1909.⁸³ The forty-bay-wide and eighteen-bay-deep structure complements the 1882 mill in its bracketed eaves and load-bearing brick exterior walls executed in five-to-one common bond with large, segmental-arched window and door openings. The expansive double- and triple-hung wood-sash windows have been rehabilitated. The building's distinctive sawtooth roof employs sloped southwest faces and almost-vertical northeast faces that contain bands of six-foot-tall windows. The 1907 weave rooms erected at Gibson Manufacturing Company and Young-Hartsell Mill also featured sawtooth roofs.

At the time Peter Kaplan undertook the Cabarrus County architecture survey, Odell-Locke-Randolph Cotton Mill included auxiliary buildings such as the mill office and company store, a dye house, storage sheds, and a six-part, circa 1890 cotton warehouse characterized by brick firewalls between each section, board-and-batten end walls, and standing-seam metal roofs. All have been demolished, leaving only a few significant examples of such structures—such as Coleman-Franklin-Cannon Mill's office, cotton warehouses, and other associated buildings—in the county.⁸⁴

⁸² Sanborn Map Company, "Concord," June 1911, sheet 11.

⁸³ Peter R. Kaplan, "Odell-Locke-Randolph Mill," National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1982.

⁸⁴ Kaplan, *The Historic Architecture of Cabarrus County*, 29.

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The earliest sections of Cabarrus Cotton Mill at 323 Corban Avenue SW are similar in appearance to those at Odell-Locke-Randolph and Coleman-Franklin-Cannon Mills. Kaplan's research indicates that the complex encompasses a two-story brick 1893 mill, weave rooms completed in 1897 and between 1902 and 1906, and a large 1927 addition. The June 1911 Sanborn map illustrates three two-story brick mills. A large brick weave room illuminated by a long roof monitor extends from Mill No. 1's east end. Three brick cotton warehouses and a brick office stood to the north, while a three frame warehouse and one brick warehouse with attached rooms for cotton waste, pressing, and storage were southeast of the mill. Heavy-timber posts and beams support the pre-1920s sections, while steel posts and beams used in conjunction with brick wall systems characterize later additions. The mill became known as Cannon Plant No. 5 after the Cannon Manufacturing Company's 1928 consolidation and received significant updates and expansions in 1948 and 1960. Most of the window openings throughout the complex were enclosed with brick in conjunction with air conditioning installation in the 1960s.⁸⁵

Gibson Manufacturing Company erected a three-story mill with a six-stage stair tower from 1900 to 1903, a one-story weave room in 1907, and a finishing building in 1924. The tower, embellished with a round-arched door opening that originally contained a double-leaf door and transom; tall, narrow, arched, paired windows in the upper five stages; and a corbelled cornice, faces the railroad tracks. The Gibson Manufacturing Company complex and Hobarton Manufacturing Company's one-and two-story, brick, 1924 mill to the south functioned as Cannon Mills Plant No. 6 after 1928. Brick veneer added to the original mill façade in the 1960s unifies the building at what is now 325 McGill Avenue NW and later additions. Most windows have been enclosed with brick.

Although Cabarrus Cotton Mill and Gibson Manufacturing Company have been altered as needed to accommodate evolving industrial function, they still retain important character-defining features. Coleman-Franklin-Cannon Mill and Odell-Locke-Randolph Cotton Mill, on the other hand, are even more remarkably intact. The simply-executed, utilitarian, early- to mid-twentieth-century buildings all reflect the design principles espoused by Tompkins and Cramer as well as the transition from heavy-timber to structural-steel framing.

Coleman-Franklin-Cannon Mill's 1898 section and 1912 addition and picker house feature common-bond load-bearing brick walls, very low-pitched gable roofs, and segmental-arched window and door openings that are representative of industrial architecture during that period. Chamfered square wood posts and substantial wood beams comprise the structures. Engineers specified the installation of steel posts and beams to provide supplementary support, as replacement structural elements, and to build additions. Steel braces and girders underpin some areas to compensate for heavy equipment's weight and vibration.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 70; Cabarrus County property records; Sanborn Map Company, "Concord," June 1911, sheet 12.

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The mill retains kalamein doors between most spaces, including the machine shop and boiler room that project from the main mill building. The early- to mid-twentieth-century Sanborn maps show that the complex included fire safety features such as a tank at the top of the 1898 mill's stair tower, a sprinkler system, a reservoir, pump houses, and small structures containing fire hoses. The tall brick chimney that served the boiler house is freestanding, also reducing fire potential.

Due to the propensity for combustion associated with cotton storage and blending, fire insurance providers suggested that warehouses, picker rooms, and boiler houses should be located a short distance from the main mills. The construction method utilized for the 1912 and earlier Coleman-Franklin-Cannon warehouses reflects the persistence of heavy-timber post and beam structural members and brick firewalls in industrial buildings, while the warehouses erected through the 1930s and replacement steel posts and beams earlier warehouses in the manifest the transition to steel posts and beams used in conjunction with brick and balloon-frame wall systems. Fire-resistant corrugated-metal wall cladding and roofing unifies the long, rectangular buildings' multiple parts, as do the shed-roofed loading docks associated with the warehouses.

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Section 10. Geographical Data

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

1. Latitude: 35.386951 Longitude: - 80.588963

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of Coleman-Franklin-Cannon Mill are indicated by the bold line on the enclosed map.
Scale approximately 1" = 100'

Boundary Justification

Located on a 10.14-acre parcel the property's National Register boundary encompasses ten contributing buildings and one contributing structure clustered on 6.6 acres. This acreage provides an appropriate setting surrounding the mill complex at the parcel's north end and on land historically owned by the mill. The 3.54 wooded acres at the tract's south end remained undeveloped throughout the twentieth century and have thus been excluded from the National Register boundary.

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Section 11. Additional Documentation

Photo Catalog

Photographs by Heather Fearnbach, 3334 Nottingham Road, Winston-Salem, NC, on October 16, 2014.
Digital images located at the North Carolina SHPO.

1. 1898 mill, north elevation, looking southwest
2. 1898 smokestack, southeast oblique
3. 1912 addition, south elevation, looking northwest
4. 1912 addition, west elevation, looking east
5. 1912 addition, north elevation, looking southwest
6. 1898 mill, stair tower, first floor entrance, looking north
7. 1898 mill, first floor, looking east
8. 1898 mill, second floor, looking east
9. 1912 addition, second floor, looking west
10. 1912 addition, basement, looking east
11. mid-twentieth-century brick and frame pump houses and frame garage, looking southeast
12. east warehouse, west elevation, looking northeast
13. east warehouse, south unit, looking west
14. west warehouse, east elevation, looking southwest
15. west warehouse, northeast unit, looking east
16. office, northeast oblique