

**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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Somerset Mill Historic District

Other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A

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

### 2. Location

Street & number: 140 Somerset Church Road and 1885-1999 Old Durham Road

City or town: Roxboro State: North Carolina County: Person

Not For Publication:  n/a Vicinity:  n/a

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination     request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets     does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:     national     statewide   X   local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

   A    B   X   C    D

<p>_____</p> <p><b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b></p> <p>_____</p> <p><b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></p>	<p>_____</p> <p><b>Date</b></p>
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<p>In my opinion, the property <u>   </u> meets <u>   </u> does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____</p> <p><b>Signature of commenting official:</b></p> <p>_____</p> <p><b>Title :</b></p>	<p>_____</p> <p><b>Date</b></p> <p>_____</p> <p><b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></p>

Somerset Mill Historic District  
Name of Property

Person County, NC  
County and State

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

##### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object



Somerset Mill Historic District  
Name of Property

Person County, NC  
County and State

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: standard industrial

OTHER: one-story mill house

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Foundation: Brick

Walls: Brick, Aluminum, Vinyl

Roof: Metal, Asphalt Shingle

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

### Summary Paragraph

Built in 1926, Somerset Mill and its associated mill village is the last of the four mill complexes to be constructed in Person County, all in Roxboro, the county seat and only incorporated municipality in the county, or in its immediate vicinity. The mill stands on the east side of a nine-acre tract bordered by Durham Road and the adjacent Durham & Roxboro Railroad (later the Lynchburg & Durham Railroad) on the west, Somerset Church Road on the north, Old Durham Road on the east, and unassociated residential development to the south. Eight mill houses on the east side of Old Durham Road face the mill. The complex is located approximately 2.9 miles south of the courthouse in downtown Roxboro, within the current town limits. While smaller in scale than Roxboro's three earlier mills, Somerset Mill is a highly intact mill complex and is characteristic of 1920s mill construction, exhibiting a steel structure with brick veneer, original steel-sash windows, wood floors, interior steel posts supporting wood roof trusses, and a monitor with clerestory windows. Associated resources on the mill site include a water tower, wellhouse, fiber house, and boiler room. Mill housing, though exhibiting material alterations, mimics the form and construction of mill housing in Roxboro's three other mill villages.

### Narrative Description

Somerset Mill Historic District is located in Roxboro, the county seat of Person County, in north central North Carolina. Constructed outside the city limits, the mill stands roughly 2.9 miles south of the Person County Courthouse in downtown Roxboro. The area was annexed into the Roxboro in the late twentieth century following the expansion of the mill, residential growth in

Somerset Mill Historic District

Person County, NC

Name of Property

County and State

the post-World War II era, and commercial development along the US 501 corridor (Durham Road) immediately west of the mill.

The mill stands on the east side of a nine-acre tract bordered by the Durham & Roxboro Railroad (later the Lynchburg & Durham Railroad) and just beyond that US 501\Durham Road on the west. Somerset Church Road, named for a church north of the mill, forms the northern boundary except for a small notch cut out at the northwest corner of the parcel to accommodate a power substation. East of the mill, Old Durham Road separates the mill from the eight mill houses that line the east side of the road, facing the mill. The southern boundary of the mill parcel is irregular, defined by the north edge of parcels containing unassociated residential development.

The west half of the mill parcel is undeveloped. Here, mature trees line the railroad right-of-way and extend across the northwest part of the parcel. Trees also line the south side of the parcel, providing a buffer between the mill and adjacent residences. The remainder of the parcel, which features level terrain throughout, is largely grass except for a gravel parking area at the north accessed by gravel driveways from both Somerset Church Road and Old Durham Road. Gravel parking along the west side of the building and paved concrete parking at the southwest corner of the building facilitated the loading of trucks along that elevation. Secondary buildings and structures on the mill site include a brick boiler room (NC) west of the mill, a water tower (C) and wellhouse (C) east of the mill, and a frame mill office (C) and fiber house (C) southeast of the mill. An early-twenty-first century shed (NC) also stands east of the mill. A small power station, encircled by a chain link fence, is located west of the mill, adjacent to a partial concrete-block wall. This small structure of indeterminate age is incidental, is addressed as part of the setting, and is not counted in the resource count.

Mill housing on the east side of Old Durham Road includes six contributing mill houses and two non-contributing houses, all with consistent spacing and setbacks of fifty feet from the street edge. Most of the lots are about 180 feet deep. Driveways, constructed after the mill sold the houses to private ownership, are largely gravel and several are shared between houses. One contributing shed and one contributing garage are present. Three non-contributing garages were also identified along with several small frame sheds, prefabricated sheds, and prefabricated carports that are not included in the inventory. Most of the front yards feature one or two mature trees; the rear yards are largely open and grassy.

The one-story frame mill houses follow the same forms found in the Roxboro Cotton Mill Village, the county's first mill village, located 2.5 miles north of Somerset Mill. Among these are a hip-roofed, three-bay house with inset corner front porch and a five-bay, hip-roofed house with engaged shed-roofed porch sheltering the center three bays. Plain weatherboards, six-over-two wood-sash windows, exposed rafter tails, turned porch posts, and interior corbelled brick chimneys were typical, though many of these features have been altered as described in the following inventory.

Somerset Mill Historic District  
Name of Property

Person County, NC  
County and State

**140 Somerset Church Road**

**Somerset Mill, 1926; 1931; ca. 1964; ca. 1986**

**Contributing Building**

The Somerset Mill is generally described in the order in which it was constructed. The north half of the mill was completed in 1926 and measures 90 feet wide and 150 feet long.<sup>1</sup> It was oriented to the railroad line to the west. In 1931, the mill was roughly doubled in size with an addition to the south that matched the original in form, scale, and detail.<sup>2</sup> About 1964, the mill was further enlarged to the south and offices were constructed on the building's north elevation. About 1986, bathrooms and offices were added at the northeast corner of the mill and in a small addition on the east elevation. An early freestanding office just east of the mill was enlarged ca. 1964 and attached to the building by a small, ca. 1986 wing; as the office was historically a separate building, it is described as such in the inventory. Dates of construction were derived from newspaper clippings and architectural analysis. Small-scale projecting bays, loading docks, and other alterations are described within the narrative for the portion of the building to which they are attached.

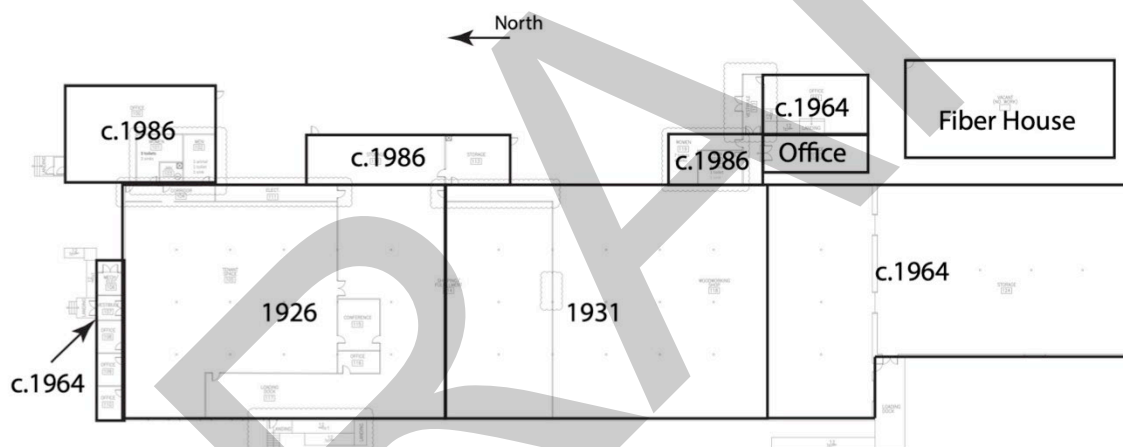


Figure 1: Somerset Mill Floor Plan Chronology (created from 2021 floor plans drafted by The Wooten Company for Stokes Manufacturing)

<sup>1</sup> "Things are Getting in Shape at Graigville: Few Looms Going Making Towels, Others Expected to Start up Soon," *Roxboro Courier*, June 23, 1926.

<sup>2</sup> "Somerset Mills Will Have New Addition," *Roxboro Courier*, May 13, 1931; "Somerset Mills Practically Doubling Its Capacity," *Roxboro Courier*, July 8, 1931.

Somerset Mill Historic District

Person County, NC

Name of Property

County and State

*1926 and 1931 Mills*

The two earliest sections of the Somerset Mill comprise a two-part, steel-framed building, roughly 90 feet wide and 300 feet long, as described above. The earlier section to the north is thirteen bays deep and the 1931 addition measure ten bays deep. Within the fifteen-foot-tall exterior walls, the lower one-fourth of the steel structure is concealed by concrete piers, between which is a brick knee wall resting on a concrete foundation. The upper part of the structure remains exposed. Sawn brackets at the top of each steel column appear to support the shallow overhangs of the low-sloped, gabled roof. Original paired, twenty-eight-light steel-sash windows extend the full width between the columns and the full height from the knee wall up to the roof.

Set within the fixed lights are eight-light operable sashes that tilt inward to increase ventilation of the space. Each window opening is roughly five feet wide by twelve feet tall. The original glass remains in more than half of the windows, all of which were covered in the 1960s with siding installed over the exterior of the windows and wood framing with attached plywood covering the interior. Portions of the siding and plywood have been removed on the east and west elevations to illuminate the rear manufacturing space.



Figure 2: Somerset Mill, ca. 1927 (Source: Person County Museum of History)

The gabled roof is covered with metal roofing material and bisected along the ridgeline by a near-full-length monitor. Steel-sash monitor windows likely remain in place behind covering later added on both the interior and exterior.

The west two-thirds of the north elevation is obscured by the ca. 1964 northwest addition that obscures the original façade, including the windows, which were removed in this section. The east end of the north elevation of the mill remains visible, including the brick knee wall, steel structure, and covered windows.

On the west elevation, the northernmost four bays have been altered with the installation of aluminum overhead loading doors in place of the windows. While the concrete concealing the base of the columns remains, the rest of the area formerly occupied by windows and brick at the base have been covered with stuccoed boards and the space above the doors has been further altered with the application of vertical vinyl siding. Immediately south of the loading doors, a steel pedestrian door has been installed, the opening around the door infilled with concrete block and sheathed with vertical vinyl. The door is accessed by a wood stair and a wood ramp that extends across the adjacent three bays. The windows of the eleven bays immediately south of the loading doors remain in place, though covered with vertical vinyl. This exterior sheathing has been removed from the seven southernmost bays of the west elevation, revealing the original windows.

Somerset Mill Historic District  
Name of Property

Person County, NC  
County and State

The east elevation is similarly treated. The northernmost four or five bays have been altered to accommodate the ca. 1986 northeast wing. While the original exterior wall remains behind the addition, its windows have been replaced with concrete block. The flat-roofed, ca. 1986 office addition covers the center part of this elevation. The adjacent five bays to the south remain exposed and retain their original windows. The southern three bays of the east elevation are obscured by an addition to the mill office; however, the original entrance to that wing from the mill, located in the southernmost bay of the 1931 mill, retains steel-sash windows above the paired one-panel-over-two-light-over-two-panel doors.

The south wall of the 1931 section of the mill has been removed to accommodate the mostly-full-width ca. 1964 South Addition.

The interior of the 1926/1931 mill remains largely intact with one-by-four, tongue-and-groove pine flooring layered over one-by-six boards laid at a forty-five-degree angle. Below the angled boards is another layer of two-by-six wood flooring, all resting on a compressed asphalt pad. Wood flooring has been removed in areas where significant water damage led to rotting of the finished and subfloors. In these areas, poured concrete or plywood flooring has been installed to maintain a level floor surface throughout the building. Flooring at the northwest corner of the building adjacent the loading doors also has been replaced with poured concrete.

The interior structure illustrates the slow-burn construction techniques of the 1920s that created broad interior spaces interrupted only by slender steel columns. The columns, placed every twenty feet across the length and width of the mill, support eight- or ten-inch-wide wood beams, each ten or sixteen inches thick, respectively, and slightly chamfered, above which extends two-inch tongue-and-groove ceiling sheathing. The beams extend beyond the exterior walls as exposed brackets. A long monitor runs along the ridgeline, supported by diagonal braces that rise from the wood beams. The ceiling of the monitor is also sheathed with two-by-eight tongue-and-groove wood boards. The monitor windows have been covered, but the manual gear system for opening the sashes remains visible. Electric lights and conduit, aluminum HVAC ducts, and a sprinkler system are all suspended from the ceiling.

Some sections of painted brick wall remain on the interior, although many of the original walls were covered with painted plywood or drywall when the windows were covered. Interior partition walls are of metal-frame construction covered with drywall. These walls divided the main mill into three large manufacturing areas with two offices located between the northernmost spaces. Long hallways constructed along the east side of the mill conceal mechanical equipment and provide access to the additions on the east side of the building.

#### *Circa 1964 South Addition*

In 1982, *The Courier-Times* published a centennial edition that included a 1964 photo of Somerset Mill. That photo shows a large, L-shaped addition at the south end of the building and a smaller office wing on the north elevation.<sup>3</sup> The east wall of the ell aligns with the east wall of the main mill. The northern part of the ell is roughly forty feet deep and extends the full 90-foot

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<sup>3</sup> "Industrial growth continues in 1964 as Eaton, Planet Announce..." *Courier-Times, Centennial – 1982*, page G11.

Somerset Mill Historic District

Person County, NC

Name of Property

County and State

width of the 1926/1931 mill. The southern part of the ell is roughly seventy feet wide by one-hundred-and-five feet long. The exterior exhibits load-bearing brick construction built of wider bricks than were utilized in the earlier construction. The east and south elevations of the addition are blind. An overhead door is centered on the southern part of the west elevation. A loading dock extends along the south wall of the northern part of the addition and projects beyond the west elevation of the mill. It is accessed by an overhead roll-up door and two steel pedestrian doors, all sheltered by a flat-roofed awning supported by a metal post.

The interior of the south addition opens directly to the earlier mill, the rear wall of which was removed. The wing has a poured concrete floor, brick walls, and steel posts supporting the corrugated metal roof structure. As with the main mill, all electrical, HVAC, and fire suppression systems are suspended from the roof. A load-bearing brick wall extends between the full-width northern and narrower southern parts of the addition, the latter accessed via a wide opening at the center of the wall. A second opening on the east end of the partition wall is concealed by a sliding metal fire door. An in-ground scale is located west of the doorway, adjacent the loading dock.



Figure 2: Somerset Mill, ca. 1964 (Source: The Courier-Times, Centennial – 1982, page G11.)

Somerset Mill Historic District

Name of Property

*Circa 1964 Northwest Addition*

Person County, NC

County and State

The shallow, flat-roofed northwest addition measures roughly sixty feet wide by ten feet deep. Constructed of concrete block with a brick veneer, the exterior is blind except for paired one-light steel doors at the east end of the north elevation. These doors are sheltered by a flat aluminum canopy and accessed by a concrete stoop with a concrete stair on its north and a concrete ramp extending to its east. The stoop is encircled with metal railings, and the doors open to an entrance hall. Seams in the brick on the north elevation indicate the entrance may have originally been inset. Paired steel doors on the east elevation of the wing access a storage space.

The interior of this addition contains an entrance bay, three offices, and a storage space. The interior of the storage space on the east end of the wing was not accessible. The entrance bay to its west features a vinyl-tiled floor, concrete-block walls, and exposed corrugated metal ceiling. Paired one-light wood doors on the south wall of the entrance bay, matching those on the exterior north wall, open to the main mill. The three offices on the west end of this wing are all finished with carpet, drywall, and dropped acoustical tile ceilings. All are accessed by one-light wood doors, and two offices feature one-light fixed windows between the office and main mill.

*Circa 1986 Northeast Wing*

A 1986 photo in the collections of the Person County Museum of History shows this one-story, flat-roofed wing at the northeast corner of the building. This wing originally extended just north of the original north elevation of the mill and measured roughly forty feet wide and fifty feet deep. It was later enlarged to the north by eleven feet. The entire wing features concrete-block construction with a brick veneer, membrane roof behind a brick parapet with metal coping, and fixed one-light windows on the east, north, and west elevations. A projecting aluminum-framed entrance bay on the east end of the north elevation is sheltered by a flat-roofed aluminum awning. The entrance is accessed by a concrete stair with metal railings.<sup>4</sup>

The interior of the northeast wing is divided into several rooms via concrete-block partition walls. These include an office with built-in vault at the north end. Men's and women's bathrooms at the southwest and a large meeting room at the southeast are separated by a narrow hallway that opens to an exterior steel door on the south elevation of the wing. Interior finishes have been removed from the office, leaving concrete floors, exposed brick and concrete-block walls, and an exposed corrugated roof structure. The vault at the northeast corner of the addition is encased with concrete block. The bathrooms, accessed by solid wood doors, retain tiled floors, drywall covering the walls, metal stall partitions, and dropped acoustic-tile ceilings. The meeting room is accessed from the office and via a one-light steel door from the hallway. It features a concrete floor, brick and concrete-block walls, and steel beams supporting flush wood sheathing at the underside of the roof.

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<sup>4</sup> A concrete-block screen wall was constructed east of the wing, obscuring the east end of the north elevation and contributing to a modern, up-to-date aesthetic of the façade, although the screen was removed after 1986.

Somerset Mill Historic District  
Name of Property

Person County, NC  
County and State

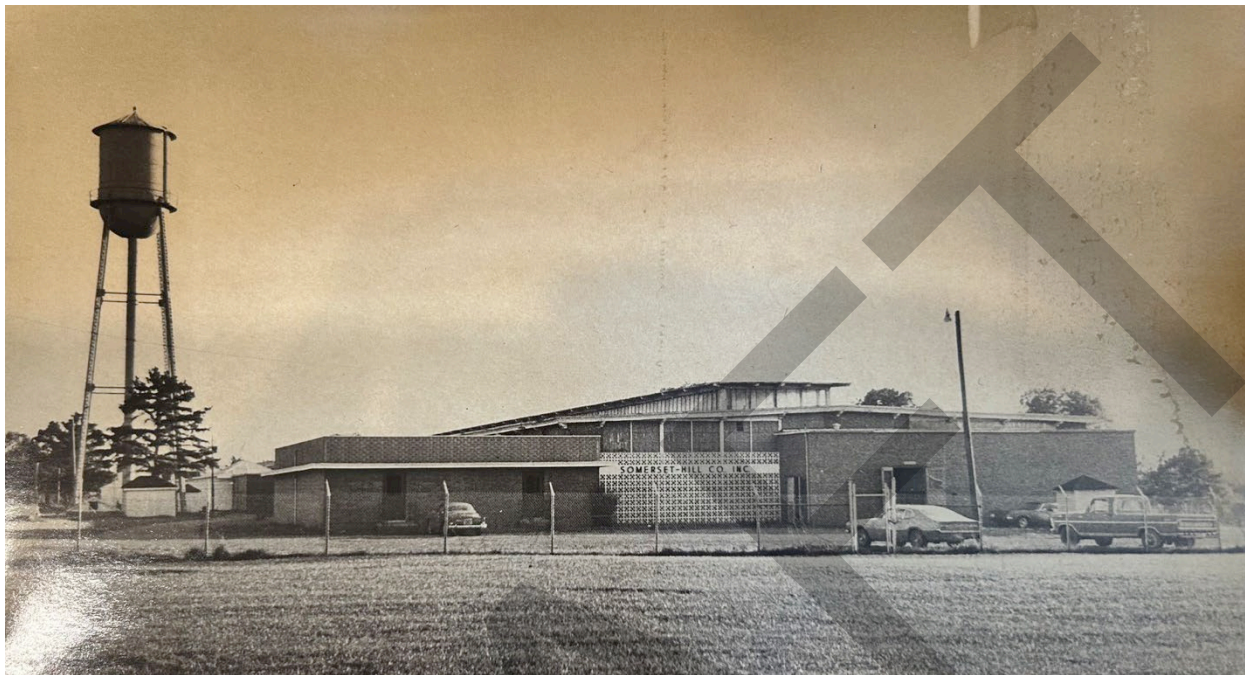


Figure 4: Somerset Mill, ca. 1986 (Source: Person County Museum of History)

#### *Circa 1986 Office Addition*

This one-story office addition is located near the center of the east elevation and measures roughly twenty by thirty-three feet. The flat-roofed, concrete-block wing is faced with a running-bond brick veneer. A steel door at the north end of the east elevation is sheltered by a flat metal awning supported by square posts. The awning extends as a covered walkway abutting the south wall of the ca. 1986 northeast wing. A steel door on the south elevation is uncovered. Above it a sign reads, “No Admittance, Except to Employees on Duty.” The interior of this wing was not accessible but likely has concrete floors and brick and concrete-block walls matching the ca. 1986 northeast wing.

#### **Mill Office, ca. 1926; ca. 1965; ca. 1986**

Southeast of the main mill and immediately north of the Fiber House is a hip-roofed, frame building that was originally freestanding and likely constructed concurrent with the mill as the mill office. The building, which measures roughly twenty-four by forty-two feet features wide weatherboards and a metal roof. The exterior has been largely obscured by later additions, but rectangular window openings remain on the west and south elevations. Paired five-panel doors on the north elevation were originally exterior doors but now open to a hallway into the ca. 1986 addition to the office.

#### **Contributing Building**

The interior of the office features wood flooring, flush horizontal wood sheathing on the walls, and an exposed roof structure sheathed with tongue-and-groove wood. A wide door opening and a small square window opening on the east elevation open to a shed-roofed wing that spans the east elevation of the building. This frame addition, measuring roughly fifteen feet wide and likely constructed in the 1960s, is sheathed with aluminum siding and topped by an asphalt roof.

Somerset Mill Historic District  
Name of Property

Person County, NC  
County and State

The interior of the windowless wing has a concrete floor, drywall walls, and exposed wood roof beams.

The office was connected to the main mill via a one-story, flat-roofed, brick wing to the north, likely constructed about 1986 as the exterior finishes are like those on the other additions to the mill from that era. The concrete-block wing has a running-bond brick veneer on both the interior and exterior, paired one-light steel doors and a fixed one-light window on the east elevation. The doors open to a hallway that extends along the south side of the wing accessing the office to the south, the main mill to the west, and two bathrooms located on the north side of the hall.

**Water Tower, ca. 1926**

**Contributing Structure**

East of the mill is a steel water tower, utilized for fire suppression. The cylindrical steel tank with a conical roof is supported by four supports of parallel, closely spaced steel beams connected by riveted diagonal braces. The four supports are set on concrete pads and are tied by metal cables that run at diagonals and crisscross as they rise to the tank. A steel pipe extends from the tank to the ground and is encircled by a narrow walkway with railing.

**Wellhouse, ca. 1926**

**Contributing Structure**

East of the mill and north of steel water tower, on the west side of Old Durham Road, is a low, concrete-block wellhouse. The building has a small opening on the west gable end and a corrugated metal roof with exposed rafter tails.

**Shed, ca. 2020**

**Noncontributing Building**

Immediately north of the wellhouse, on the west side of Old Durham Road, is a small, frame shed-roofed building sheathed with corrugated metal. It has a corrugated metal roof and door on its north elevation. The building was erected between 2016 and 2023 to house the sprinkler backflow system.

**Fiber House, ca. 1950**

**Contributing Building**

Immediately southeast of the mill is a large, front-gabled frame “fiber house.” The one-story building features a brick pier foundation, German-profile weatherboards, six-over-six wood-sash windows (now mostly deteriorated), and an asphalt-shingled roof with flush eaves. Windows are located on the ten-bay east and west elevations. The north gable end features a wide, centered entrance with batten door. A boarded window opening is west of this entrance, and a sliding plywood garage door is located to the east. The two door openings are accessed by a concrete loading dock supported by brick piers. The concrete dock extends north along the east side of the mill. A batten door on the south gable end is flanked by boarded window openings. A small, shed-roofed bay extends from the northeast corner of the building, housing the dry sprinkler system. The room is accessed only from the exterior, via a batten door on its north elevation. A fire bell on the east elevation of the bay reinforces the bay’s use for fire suppression systems.

The interior of the building features wood floors and exposed wood wall framing with insulation visible between the studs. The roof is supported by wood scissor trusses that are in turn supported by wood columns along the walls. Wood rafters and sheathing are visible above the

Somerset Mill Historic District  
 Name of Property

Person County, NC  
 County and State

trusses. The southwest corner of the building has suffered water damage and deterioration, though the building overall remains stable.

A fiber house, or fiber room, was traditionally dedicated to the preparation of raw fibers for spinning and may have housed tasks like opening and loosening fibers, cleaning, and blending fibers. While the specific uses of this building are not known, a sign on the main door identifies the building as a fiber house.

**Boiler Room, ca. 1926**

**Noncontributing Building**

West of the mill is a freestanding brick boiler room. Constructed as a two-room building, the south half of the building was demolished before 1993. The surviving north section features a running-bond brick exterior and a flat roof. It retains sixteen-light, steel-sash windows—two each on the east and west elevations and one on the north elevation—with brick rowlock sills. A vehicular bay on the west end of the north elevation is accessed via paired plywood doors. An opening on the south elevation originally led to the south room, but the batten door now opens to the exterior.

The interior of the boiler room retains a concrete floor and heavy wood posts supporting wood beams. Wood sheathing covers the underside of the roof and the walls are of painted brick. The mill machinery was never steam-operated; instead, boilers in this building heated water that was then piped to the mill for heating. The original two-room construction likely held boilers in one room with coal storage in the adjacent room. The building ceased use as a boiler room when the current gas heating system and central air system was installed in the 1970s.

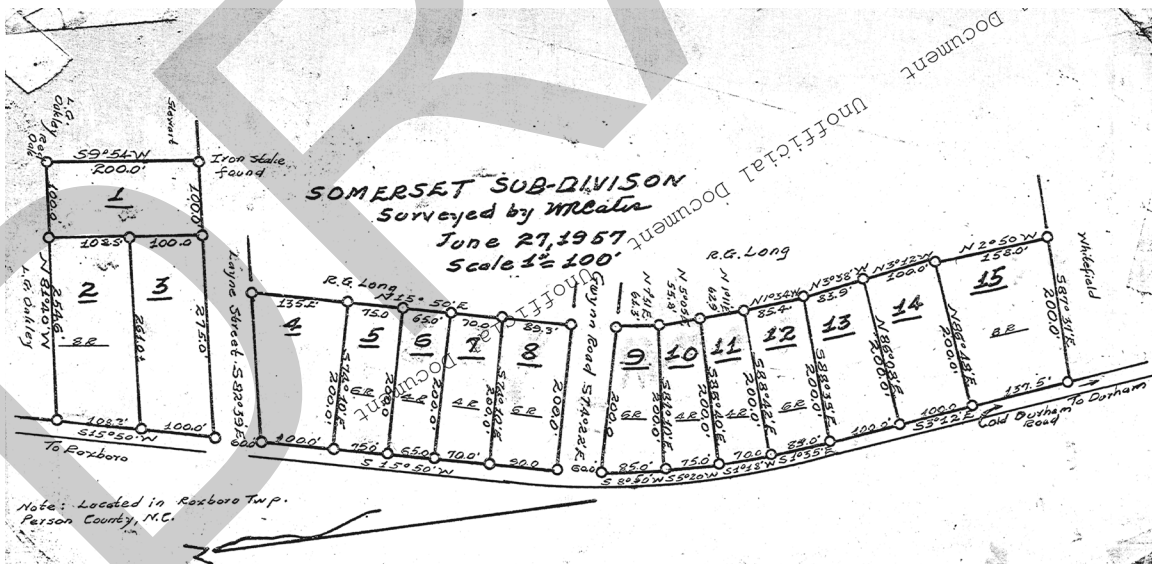


Figure 5: Plat of Somerset Mill Housing, 1957 (Source: Person County Register of Deeds Book 6 Page 110)  
 The inventory that follows is keyed to the lot numbers on this plat.

Somerset Mill Historic District

Person County, NC

Name of Property

County and State

**1885 Old Durham Road (lot 5)**

**Stuart-Craven House, ca. 1926**

**Contributing Building**

The northernmost of the extant mill houses, this one-story, hip-roofed house is the widest of the varied forms for mill housing in Roxboro. The house is five bays wide and two bays deep with a brick foundation, aluminum siding, vinyl windows, and a modern metal roof. The center three bays, a door flanked by windows, are sheltered by an engaged, shed-roofed porch supported by square wood posts. A wood railing extends around the porch. An entrance on the east end of the south elevation is sheltered by a matching, one-bay porch. A projecting, hip-roofed bay on the rear (east) elevation likely houses bathrooms. Two prefabricated sheds, each with a gambrel roof and plywood sheathing, are in the rear (east) yard.

The house, constructed by the Somerset Mills, Incorporated, was sold to Grady and Sabra Stuart in 1958.<sup>5</sup> Sabra appears to have occupied the house as early as 1930 when she is listed as a weaver in the “towel mill” and is shown living with her father, a retired farmer, and two sisters (Jenny and Ruth) who were also employed at the towel mill. According to federal census records, by 1950, Sabra and Jenny had married and their spouses were listed at this address, including Jenny’s husband, Wesley A. Craven, who was employed as a loom fixer, having previously been employed as a weaver at Longhurst Mill.<sup>6</sup> Of the six adults listed at this address in 1950, three were employed at Somerset Mill.

**1901 Old Durham Road (lot 6)**

**Copley House, ca. 1926**

**Contributing Building**

This one-story, hip-roofed house form is repeated throughout Roxboro’s four mill villages. The house is three bays wide with the left (north) two bays of the façade inset within a corner porch supported by a turned post. A replacement square post has been installed at the northwest corner of the porch. The house has a brick foundation, aluminum siding, vinyl windows, and an asphalt-shingled roof. An original nine-light-over-two-panel door is located near the center of the façade, accessed by the inset porch. The house is two bays deep on the left (north) elevation and three bays deep on the right (south) elevation.

The house, constructed by the Somerset Mills, Incorporated, was sold to Mary B. Copley in 1958.<sup>7</sup> The 1950 federal census lists Mary, employed as an inspector at Somerset Mill, occupying the house with her husband Alex P. Copley. Mary was the sister of Sabra Stuart and Jenny Craven, who occupied the house next door. Mary and Alex, who were listed as farmers in the 1930 and 1940 census, are illustrative of the many that transitioned to “public work” in the 1940s and 1950s. The Copleys owned the property until at least 1988.<sup>8</sup>

**Shed, ca. 1950**

**Contributing Building**

Northeast of the house is a shed-roofed, frame outbuilding which stands on slender piers and has vertical plywood sheathing. An original batten door is centered on the east elevation with a five-panel door, likely installed later, to its immediate south.

<sup>5</sup> Person County Register of Deeds, Book 80, Page 360.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, *1940 United States Federal Census*, U.S. Federal Census Collection, Ancestry.com.

<sup>7</sup> Person County Register of Deeds, Book 80, Page 363.

<sup>8</sup> Person County Register of Deeds, Book 199, Page 903.

Somerset Mill Historic District  
Name of Property

Person County, NC  
County and State

**1911 Old Durham Road (lot 7)  
House, ca. 1926**

**Noncontributing Building**

Originally constructed with an inset porch at the left (north) end of the façade, matching the neighboring house at 1901 Old Durham Road, this house was substantially altered with the enclosure of that porch and the installation of wide, one-light windows on the façade. The house has a brick foundation, vinyl siding and windows, and an asphalt-shingled roof with a single interior brick chimney. The three-bay house currently has a French door centered on the façade and sheltered by an aluminum awning. The left (north) elevation is two bays deep while the right (south) elevation is three bays deep. A modern wood deck extends from the rear (east) elevation. The ownership and occupancy history of the house is not clear, but it was constructed by the Somerset Mills, Incorporated and sold out of company ownership in the late 1950s. The alterations to the house were completed after that transfer of ownership.

**1925 Old Durham Road (lot 8)  
Lynch House, ca. 1926**

**Contributing Building**

One of four of this house type in the small village, this one-story, hip-roofed house is five bays wide and double-pile. The house has a brick foundation, vinyl siding and windows, and an asphalt-shingled roof with two interior corbelled brick chimneys. An original one-light-over-three-panel door is centered on the façade, flanked by windows, and sheltered by an engaged shed-roofed porch supported by decorative metal posts. A second entrance on the right (south) elevation is sheltered by a matching porch supported by original turned posts. A projecting, hip-roofed bay on the rear (east) elevation likely houses a bathroom. A small, prefabricated, shed-roofed shed stands east of the house; it is sheathed with vertical metal.

The house, constructed by the Somerset Mills, Incorporated, was sold to Kermit R. and Mary L. Lynch in 1958.<sup>9</sup> The couple appear in the 1950 census, likely occupying this house, though a street name was not given. They moved to the area from South Carolina in the 1940s, and in 1950 Mary was employed as a winder in the “towel textile mill” and Kermit worked as a foreman of a sawmill. The family owned the house until at least 1988.<sup>10</sup>

**Garage, ca. 2012**

**Noncontributing Building**

East of the house and accessed from Gwinn Road is a gabled, frame garage. The building has vinyl siding, an overhead garage door on the south gable end, and a pedestrian entrance flanked by windows on the west elevation. Aerial photos indicate the garage was constructed between 2010 and 2012, replacing an earlier shed in this location.

**1953 Old Durham Road (lot 9)  
Huff House, ca. 1926**

**Contributing Building**

One of four of this house type in the district, this one-story, hip-roofed house is five bays wide and double-pile. The house has a brick foundation, vinyl siding and windows, and a modern metal roof. An original nine-light-over-two-panel door is centered on the façade, flanked by

<sup>9</sup> Person County Register of Deeds, Book 80, Page 361.

<sup>10</sup> Person County Register of Deeds, Book 199, Page 903.

Somerset Mill Historic District  
Name of Property

Person County, NC  
County and State

windows and sheltered by an engaged shed-roofed porch supported by decorative metal posts. A second entrance on the right (south) elevation is sheltered by matching metal porch supports. A projecting, hip-roofed bay on the rear (east) elevation likely houses a bathroom. A small prefabricated, frame shed stands east of the house and garage, placed on the site between 2013 and 2017. The house, constructed by the Somerset Mills, Incorporated, was sold to M. C. and Lois Fox Huff in 1958.<sup>11</sup> The couple are listed at this location in the 1950 federal census, when Melvin C. Huff was employed as textile shipping clerk and Mildred Lois Huff was a weaver, both at the towel textile mill.

**Garage, ca. 2012**

**Noncontributing Building**

East of the house and accessed from Gwinn Road is a gabled, metal-frame garage with aluminum sheathing and two overhead doors on the north gable end. Aerial photos indicate the garage was constructed between 2010 and 2012.

**1967 Old Durham Road (lot 10)**

**House, ca. 1926**

**Noncontributing Building**

Originally constructed with an inset porch at the left (north) end of the façade, matching the house at 1901 Old Durham Road, this house was substantially altered with the enclosure of that porch and the addition of an attached shed-roofed porch. The house has a brick foundation, vinyl siding and windows, and a modern metal roof with two interior, corbelled brick chimneys. The off-center entrance is sheltered by a porch constructed between 2021 and 2023 and supported by square posts. The left (north) elevation is two bays deep while the right (south) elevation is three bays deep. The house, constructed by the Somerset Mills, Incorporated, was sold, along with the adjoining lot 11 to Melvin and Clarius Blalock in 1958.<sup>12</sup> Melvin and Clarius are listed in the 1950 federal census as farming in Flat River Township with Melvin's parents. Without an overt connection to the mill, the couple may have purchased the house as an investment property.

**Shed, ca. 2009**

**Noncontributing Building**

Southeast of the house is a front-gabled, frame shed with vertical plywood sheathing and vinyl windows. Aerial photos indicate the garage was constructed between 2008 and 2010.

**1983 Old Durham Road (lot 11)**

**House, ca. 1926**

**Contributing Building**

This one-story, hip-roofed house form is one repeated throughout Roxboro's four mill villages, including four examples in this village. The house is three bays wide with the left (north) two bays of the façade inset within a corner porch supported by decorative metal posts. The house has a stuccoed brick foundation, vinyl siding and windows, and an asphalt-shingled roof with two interior corbelled brick chimneys. An original one-light-over-three-panel door is located near the center of the façade, accessed by the inset porch. The house is two bays deep on the left (north) elevation and three bays deep on the right (south) elevation. One of the windows on the right elevation has been shortened, the space below infilled with siding. A wood deck extends from the right rear. A prefabricated aluminum carport was installed immediately north of the

<sup>11</sup> Person County Register of Deeds, Book 80, Page 362.

<sup>12</sup> Person County Register of Deeds, Book 80, Page 358.

Somerset Mill Historic District  
Name of Property

Person County, NC  
County and State

house between 1997 and 2003. The house, constructed by the Somerset Mills, Incorporated, was sold, along with the adjoining lot to Melvin and Clarius Blalock in 1958.<sup>13</sup> Melvin and Clarius are listed in the 1950 federal census as farming in Flat River Township with Melvin's parents. Without an overt connection to the mill, the couple may have purchased the house as an investment property.

#### **Garage, ca. 1970**

Southeast of the house is a front-gabled, frame garage with vertical plywood sheathing. A four-panel-over-four-light-over-eight-panel overhead door is centered on the west gable end. An open, shed-roofed bay spans the south elevation. Aerial photos indicate the garage was constructed between 1958 and 1993.

#### **Noncontributing Building**

#### **1999 Old Durham Road (lot 12)**

##### **House, ca. 1926**

One of four of this house type in the small village, this one-story, hip-roofed house is five bays wide and double-pile. The house has a brick foundation covered with stone veneer, vinyl siding and windows, and an asphalt-shingled roof with an interior brick chimney. The entrance, centered on the façade, is flanked by single windows and sheltered by an engaged shed-roofed porch supported by square wood posts. A second entrance on the right (south) elevation was sheltered by a shed-roofed porch, but that porch has been enclosed. It currently features a modern door flanked by paired aluminum windows. A projecting, hip-roofed bay on the rear (east) elevation likely houses a bathroom. An above-ground pool appears southeast of the house, having been moved to various locations in the backyard since 2017. The house, constructed by the Somerset Mills, Incorporated, was sold to Eric S. and Betty B. Garrett in 1958.<sup>14</sup> The couple are listed in the 1950 census as living on Gregory Street to the north and Eric owned a gas station. Without an overt connection to the mill, the couple may have purchased the house as an investment property.

##### **Contributing Building**

#### **Integrity Assessment**

The Somerset Mill Historic District retains integrity of location and setting; constructed outside of the Roxboro city limits, the mill and associated housing retain the rural character typical of early-twentieth century mill villages. The mill retains integrity of design, materials, and workmanship; the original form and detailing of the 1926/1931 Somerset Mill remains visible despite the construction of several mid- to late-twentieth century additions. The original beams and monitor roof remain intact, along with most of the wood flooring. Most of the original steel-sash windows remain, although many remain concealed by later interior and exterior sheathing. Associated extant resources including a water tower and fiber house, also remain extant and in good condition. While material replacement is common in the mill village and is typical of frame mill houses, the village retains original topography, landscape features, mostly uniform setbacks, and repetitive building forms, making it easily recognizable as an early-twentieth century mill

<sup>13</sup> Person County Register of Deeds, Book 80, Page 358.

<sup>14</sup> Person County Register of Deeds, Book 80, Page 413.

Somerset Mill Historic District  
Name of Property

Person County, NC  
County and State

village. Collectively, the Somerset Mill Historic District retains integrity of feeling and association, the mill and housing easily identifiable as a 1920s industrial complex with company-built housing.

### **Statement of Archaeological Potential**

The Somerset Mill Historic District is closely related to the surrounding environment and landscape. Archaeological deposits, such as debris that accumulated during operation of the mill, underground infrastructural components such as water pipes and drainage features, and other remains which may be present, can provide information valuable to the understanding and interpretation of the property. Information concerning worker health, nutrition, and quality of life, worker identity, the relationship between the mill company and its employees, can be obtained from archaeological investigations within the mill village and can provide information valuable to the understanding and interpretation of the district and its residents. Information related to environmental transformations during industrial development, and the effects of technological change on work culture and daily life, as well as details of construction processes and the operation of the mill can be obtained from the archaeological record within the area of the mill. Therefore, archaeological remains may well be an important component of the significance of the property. At this time no investigation has been carried out to discover these remains, but it is likely that they exist, and this should be considered in any development of the property.

Somerset Mill Historic District  
Name of Property

Person County, NC  
County and State

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Somerset Mill Historic District  
Name of Property

Person County, NC  
County and State

**Areas of Significance**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)  
ARCHITECTURE

**Periods of Significance**  
1926-1931  
ca. 1964

**Significant Dates**  
1926  
1931  
c.1964

**Significant Person**  
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)  
n/a

**Cultural Affiliation**  
n/a

**Architect/Builder**  
n/a

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Somerset Mill Historic District is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C for Architecture as Person County's most intact 1920s textile mill with associated worker housing.<sup>15</sup> One of only four mills constructed in the county, all within Roxboro and its vicinity, Somerset Mill illustrates the slow-burn construction developed in the late-nineteenth century and codified by insurance companies as a cost-effective means of protecting textile mills from loss due to fire. While Person County's two turn-of-the-twentieth-century mills utilized heavy timbers and Italianate-style brick exteriors, the Somerset Mill illustrates the slow-burn industrial

<sup>15</sup> Somerset Mill may also be eligible under Criterion A for Industry. Production information and employment statistics were rarely reported for Somerset Mill, making it difficult to discern how the small-scale mill fit into the larger textile manufacturing economy of Roxboro and Person County. Pending additional information, the nomination could be amended to establish additional significance under Criterion A.

Somerset Mill Historic District  
Name of Property

Person County, NC  
County and State

construction of the 1920s with steel supports and a steel-framed curtain wall of stacked, steel-sash windows on a brick knee wall. Somerset Mill is one of only two textile mills in Person County that date to the 1920s, both with associated mill villages. While the 1923 Baker/Ca-Vel Mill has been largely overbuilt, the character defining features of the Somerset Mill—including steel structure, monitor roof with bracketed overhangs, steel-sash windows, and wood flooring—remain in place and mostly visible. The mill village, while significantly smaller than the county’s other industrial housing developments, retains the repetitive building forms that make it recognizable as company housing. There are two periods of significance: the first extends from 1926 to 1931 to incorporate the construction of the two earliest parts of the mill and the associated houses; the second is ca. 1964 to include the large addition at the rear of the mill that illustrates typical industrial design of the 1960s.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

### **Architecture Context**

#### *Somerset Mill*

The early-twentieth-century expansion of the textile industry in North Carolina, and especially the introduction of steam-powered mills, initially corresponded with the popularity of the Italianate style. Architectural historian Catherine Bishir notes that, “trends in factory architecture and industrial housing that had begun in the 1870s and 1880s...reached their fullest development during the period from about 1890 to 1910.”<sup>16</sup> As a result, most of the brick industrial buildings constructed in the North Carolina Piedmont from 1880 to 1920 were constructed with Romanesque or Italianate detailing—including round- and segmental-arch door and window openings, corbelled beltcourses and cornices, and a low-sloped hipped roof on the towers.

By the 1920s, textile mill construction in the South had reached its peak and the design of industrial buildings—including Roxboro’s textile factories—became more streamlined, stripping away the Italianate- and Romanesque Revival-style brick detailing in favor of simplified detailing that directly express their function and materials and emphasized efficiency.<sup>17</sup> The wide banks of steel-sash windows that line the walls of the identical 1926 and 1931 portions of the Somerset Mill are a clear departure from the individual double-hung windows of earlier mills, their use made possible by the steel structure that replaced the load-bearing brick exteriors of earlier mills. The low-sloped, gabled roof remained the most common roof form for industrial buildings in the 1920s, typically bisected by a long monitor, as was the case at Somerset Mill. While small brackets were utilized to support the roof eaves of the Somerset Mill, the building is without the corbelling, segmental-arch openings, and other decorative brickwork seen on turn-of-the-twentieth-century mills.

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<sup>16</sup> Catherine Bishir, *North Carolina Architecture (Portable Edition)* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 431.

<sup>17</sup> Bishir, 430 and 438; Mildred Gwin Andrews, *The Men and the Mills* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press), 218.

Somerset Mill Historic District

Name of Property

Person County, NC

County and State

The flammability of cotton, specifically cotton fibers that were constantly in the air, made cotton mills especially susceptible to fire. Yet, in the late 1800s, fully fireproof buildings—constructed with noncombustible materials—were expensive to construct. Instead, New England fire insurance companies developed slow-burn technology that utilized traditional building materials in a way that would slow the spread of fire and thereby protect the structural integrity of the building.<sup>18</sup> Components of turn-of-the-twentieth-century, slow-burn construction include thick plank floors, brick walls, and heavy timber columns and beams that would “char but retain their structural strength instead of collapsing as iron did in heat.”<sup>19</sup>

Fire prevention remained the top priority of mill owners, though by the 1920s heavy timber construction gave way to steel supports. Somerset Mill illustrates this shift with steel columns, placed every twenty feet, supporting heavy-timber beams at the roof, most measuring eight or ten inches by ten to sixteen inches, respectively. Steel columns around the perimeter of the building are encased within fireproof concrete at the base and connected by a brick kneewall. Above the kneewall, the steel columns extend to the roofline, separating the window bays. On the interior, the finished pine flooring is laid atop a three-part wood subfloor, which itself rests on compressed asphalt concrete, resulting in a dense, slow-burn floor.

In larger mill complexes, the individual manufacturing processes were compartmentalized into different buildings, usually separating picker rooms and boiler rooms that were especially susceptible to fire, as well as storage warehouses and dye houses. In the Somerset Mill, raw fibers were held in a separate Fiber House, which contained a dry sprinkler, a separate fire suppression system to address the high flammability of cotton fibers. A masonry firewall with sliding metal-covered doors separated the southern portion of the ca. 1964 addition—where the presence of loading docks indicates the storage of finished goods—from the rest of the mill. Elevated water tanks—whether installed atop a stair tower or as a free-standing, metal water tower—were essential to fire suppression; Somerset Mill utilized a free-standing steel water tower.<sup>20</sup> The sprinkler system that is currently in place was likely a late-twentieth century addition.

In addition to fire resistance, the operations of the textile mill further required factory buildings to be of sturdy construction with broad open spaces. Looms and other machinery necessary for textile production tended to be very heavy and successful factories had many looms and spindles in operation at any given time. For this reason, heavy-timbers, and later steel beams, were necessary to provide broad, open interior spaces that allowed for the flexible placement of large machinery and, in the case of multiple-story mills, to support upper floors. The thick floors of slow-burn construction also served the additional purpose of providing the necessary support for the heavy machinery.

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<sup>18</sup> 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.

<sup>19</sup> Bishir, 431.

<sup>20</sup> Brent D. Glass, *The Textile Industry in North Carolina: A History* (Raleigh, NC: Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1992), 38.

Somerset Mill Historic District

Name of Property

Person County, NC

County and State

Initially constructed without electricity, cotton mills required large operable windows for essential lighting, but also to cool the buildings and provide fresh air for the workers. The large banks of steel-sash windows continue to flood portions of the building interior with natural light. Set within the fixed lights are eight-light operable sashes that tilt inward to increase ventilation of the space.

Somerset Mill also utilized a monitor roof to further increase natural light and airflow. A near full-length monitor with clerestory windows extends along the ridgeline, supported by diagonal braces that extend up from the wood beams. The clerestory windows provided additional light and allowed hot air drawn in through the lower windows to move up and out. While the windows themselves have been covered, they remain in place and the manual gear system for opening the sashes remains visible.

The introduction of air conditioning in the first decade of the twentieth century had a significant impact on textile manufacturing and led to physical changes in mill design and construction. Invented to regulate temperature and humidity at a Brooklyn, New York, printing plant, air conditioning systems were introduced to textile plants as early as 1906. In that year, North Carolina native and manufacturer of textile mill equipment, Stuart Cramer announced a system for the humidification, air cleansing, and temperature regulation in textile mills, a process that he named “air conditioning.”<sup>21</sup> Humidity was essential to keeping fibers and yarns pliable and air cleansing captured the flammable cotton fibers in the air.

Despite the obvious benefits of air conditioning, mill owners were slow to incorporate the new systems, likely because of the cost. Many mill owners did not install air conditioning systems until the 1930s or 1940s, presumably a response to the increased production schedules and revenues of the World War II era.<sup>22</sup> By the 1960s, air conditioning had been installed at most Southern textile mills—including Person County’s Roxboro Cotton Mill and Longhurst Mill—where, in order to maximize the efficiency of the systems, windows usually were bricked in. It is not clear when air conditioning was introduced at Somerset Mill, although as late as 1964, the windows remained uncovered (see image 2). However, perhaps as part of the 1984 alterations to the building, the windows eventually were covered with drywall on the interior and vinyl siding applied to the exterior, though significant portions of both have since been removed.

As early-twentieth-century mills were being modified to make the buildings more airtight and better able to regulate humidity and retain the cool air, mid-twentieth-century mills and mill additions were being constructed without windows at all. Advances in building technology and transportation also impacted mill design. In lieu of heavy-timber construction, steel posts and trusses were utilized to support the roof and load-bearing masonry exterior walls eliminated the use of wood in exterior framing. Additionally, the increase in road transportation as opposed to rail lines led to the introduction of loading bays that faced parking areas.

<sup>21</sup> “May 1906: Stuart Cramer and Air Conditioning,” *This Month in North Carolina History*, University of North Carolina Libraries, [https://blogs.lib.unc.edu/nem/2012/05/01/this\\_month\\_may\\_1906/](https://blogs.lib.unc.edu/nem/2012/05/01/this_month_may_1906/) Accessed April 1, 2025.

<sup>22</sup> “May 1906: Stuart Cramer and Air Conditioning.”

Somerset Mill Historic District

Person County, NC

Name of Property

County and State

The south and northwest additions, constructed about 1964, exemplify these latest methods of expanding and modernizing North Carolina's industrial buildings. The south addition features load-bearing brick construction and steel posts supporting the roof. Further, it is windowless and features overhead doors in elevated bays to align with the height of semi-trailer trucks. The northwest addition was constructed to house offices, providing modern spaces that replaced the original frame mill office southeast of the mill. The offices are without windows, like the south addition, and obscure a portion of the north elevation with a sleek, streamlined volume interrupted only by an entrance sheltered by a flat-roofed canopy.

### *Other Person County Textile Mills*

Only three other textile mills were constructed in Person County, all in the Roxboro area: the 1899 Roxboro Cotton Mill (NR2009), the 1907 Longhurst Mill, and the 1923 Baker/Ca-Vel Mill. The Roxboro Cotton Mill and Longhurst Mill are both examples of late-nineteenth-century, steam-powered mills with Italianate-style features including segmental-arch window and door openings and a low-sloped roof with brackets at the eaves. Both illustrate the slow-burning heavy timber frame construction common for turn-of-the-century mills and both feature towers providing circulation to upper floors and supporting a water tank for fire suppression. The Roxboro Cotton Mill and Longhurst Mill both featured separate buildings that served as an opening room, a picking room, storage of raw cotton, and a boiler room for the steam heat. While these remain largely intact at the Longhurst Mill, most have been removed from Roxboro Cotton Mill, along with an original monitor roof that was removed in the 1960s.<sup>23</sup>

As at Somerset Mill, additions were constructed to the Roxboro Cotton Mill in the 1960s, including a cotton warehouse at the north end of the complex. Like the ca. 1964 south addition to the Somerset Mill, this large, rectangular volume features a windowless brick exterior, with vertical metal sheathing the very top portion of the walls. Similarly constructed, the mid-twentieth-century cotton warehouse at the Longhurst Mill features a windowless brick lower level with a steel-framed, flat-roofed, upper floor sheathed with vertical metal. Additionally, in the 1960s, the railroad spur was removed from the Roxboro Cotton Mill, illustrating a shift toward the use of semi-trailer trucks to transport raw and finished goods.<sup>24</sup>

The 1925 Sanborn map reveals that the 1923 Baker/Ca-Vel Mill, constructed at the northern outskirts of Roxboro, originally shared certain characteristics of the Somerset Mill. The "main mill" was built with a monitor roof, steel-sash windows, and concrete construction. In the early 1930s, the mill was enlarged with two matching wings, resulting in a U-shaped plan that extended around the water tanks, boiler room, and pump house.<sup>25</sup> A weaving room and dyeing/finishing room were constructed, completed in 1940, each with a sawtooth roof with a series of north-facing windows that provided additional interior light.<sup>26</sup> These 1940 wings were each roughly the size of the original three wings combined.

<sup>23</sup> Carrie Ehrfurth, "Roxboro Cotton Mill," Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, 2009, Section 8, page 7.

<sup>24</sup> Ehrfurth, Section 7, page 3.

<sup>25</sup> "New Courthouse, 7-cent Tobacco, Bank Closing Made 1931 Unique," *Courier-Times, Centennial – 1982*, page E12.

<sup>26</sup> "Courier pushes 'through route' C&A expands plant, workers," *Courier-Times, Centennial – 1982*, page F6.

Somerset Mill Historic District

Person County, NC

Name of Property

County and State

In contrast to Roxboro's other historic textile mills, the Baker/Ca-Vel Mill has been extensively altered. The complex continued to be enlarged throughout the late twentieth century and by 1993 large wings at the south, west, and northwest sides of the complex had obscured much of the historic construction. The original, 1923 mill retains its monitor roof, although its windows have been boarded or removed; its walls have been stuccoed, new small, fixed windows have been installed, and the southeast corner is fully obscured by an office wing constructed sometime between 1943 and 1969.<sup>27</sup> The sawtooth roof of the weaving room at the northeast end of the complex is still recognizable from North Main Street, but the windows have all been covered or removed and the exterior of the building has been sheathed with stucco, obscuring the original fenestration. Only the south elevation of the 1940s dyeing/finishing wing at the southwest part of the complex appears to retain steel-sash windows.

### *Somerset Mill Village*

Constructed at the periphery of the burgeoning city of Roxboro, mill villages were laid out by the respective mill owners for all four local textile mills to house their growing workforce. The housing was utilized both to attract a constant supply of "good laborers who can afford to and will work for much lower pay than where houses are scarce and rents high" and to "provide a transition for the worker coming off the farm into "public work."<sup>28</sup> The location of the mills and mill villages outside of the city limits was encouraged by Daniel A. Tompkins in his 1899 book, *Cotton Mill, Commercial Features*, in which he advised mill owners to construct factories and villages up to four miles away from a city in order to "escape city taxation and other disadvantages" while maintaining "a measure of social and economic control that extended beyond the factory walls."<sup>29</sup>

In 1899, J. A. Long constructed the Roxboro Cotton Mill (NR2009) only one-quarter of a mile from the Person County Courthouse, in what at that time was the eastern edge of town, with a small village extending just beyond the mill. However, by 1907, when he erected his Longhurst Cotton Mill and the associated mill village, Long selected a site nearly two miles to the north of downtown Roxboro. In 1923, the owners of the Baker/Ca-Vel Mill and the associated village selected a site nearly three miles north of downtown Roxboro, while the 1926 Somerset Mill was constructed almost three miles south of downtown Roxboro. Despite their initially rural locations, historian Mildred Gwen Andrews notes that early-twentieth-century mills were ultimately "engulfed by expanding towns and cities and soon were taken within their limits, with all the benefits of water and sewage, streets and taxes."<sup>30</sup> Though the Somerset area would not be annexed into Roxboro until after 1972, city bus service was extended to the area as early as 1931.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>27</sup> This may be the "considerable expansion" that newspapers list for the Collins & Aikman Corp. in 1958; "Is Roxboro's Industrial Cupboard Bare?" *Courier-Times*, January 30, 1958.

<sup>28</sup> Brent Glass, "Southern Mill Hills: Design in a "Public" Place" in *Carolina Dwelling: Toward Preservation of Place: In Celebration of the North Carolina Vernacular Landscape* (Raleigh, NC: North Carolina State University, 1978), 143 and 147; Glass, *The Textile Industry in North Carolina: A History*, 42.

<sup>29</sup> Brent Glass, "Southern Mill Hills: Design in a "Public" Place," 143 and 147; Glass, *The Textile Industry in North Carolina: A History*, 42; D. A. Tompkins, *Cotton Mill, Commercial Features* (Charlotte, NC, 1899), 32, accessed July 1, 2025 via <https://archive.org/details/cottonmillcommertomp>.

<sup>30</sup> Andrews, 195.

<sup>31</sup> "Blacks Gain Major Political Posts," *Courier-Times, Centennial – 1982*, page G15; "City Bus Line," *Roxboro Courier*, July 1, 1931.

Somerset Mill Historic District

Name of Property

Person County, NC

County and State

Mill villages throughout North Carolina utilized single-family detached housing, rather than the boarding house model used in the Northeast. An abundance of inexpensive land, as well as a desire to attract rural farm workers by replicating “a rural atmosphere in the village by building detached houses on large lots with ample room for home gardens and animals,” fueled the trend toward rural mill villages in the state.<sup>32</sup> Roxboro’s mill villages were very similar in the designs of their houses and, with the exception of the Somerset Mill Village, which contained only a single row of houses on the east side of Old Durham Road, all featured narrow streets arranged in loose grids that followed the natural topography of the site and were oriented to the mill rather than any existing street grid.

The Baker/Ca-Vel Mill Village was the largest of Roxboro’s mill villages with 111 houses. The Longhurst Mill Village and Roxboro Cotton Mill Village contained 154 and sixty-four houses, respectively. At Somerset Mill, nine mill houses were erected on the east side of Old Durham Road, eight of which remain extant.<sup>33</sup> According to a 1957 plat of the mill housing, the Somerset Mill owned only fifteen residential lots. Land to the north, south, and east was owned by well-known Person County families not associated with the Somerset Mill. Somerset Heights was platted for residential development in 1966 and extended east from the mill village.<sup>34</sup> The c.1964 photo of the mill (Figure 2) shows several small-scale Ranch houses in this area. The private ownership and later development of the land surrounding the mill village confirm the size of the mill village.

The small scale of the Somerset mill village may be due to the already-established rural communities of Brooksdale and Somerset south of Roxboro. The onset of the Great Depression just three years after the mill was completed may also have played a role along with the expansion of city bus service to the area by 1931. In a 1931 newspaper article announcing the expansion of the Somerset Mill, management noted, “a large number of the operatives, largely young ladies, are from the country homes near the mill and live with their parents.”<sup>35</sup>

Housing in the Somerset mill village follows the same forms and finishes found in the Roxboro Cotton Mill Village, the Longhurst Mill Village, and the Baker/Ca-Vel Mill Village, the Somerset Mill owners no doubt copying the forms employed in Roxboro’s earlier villages. The eight extant mill houses are all one-story, hip-roofed, frame houses constructed in one of two forms: a five-bay house with centered entrance and a two-bay house with inset porch.

The housing at the Somerset Mill is most like that constructed by Baker/Ca-Vel Mill, established just a few years earlier and with most of their housing erected between 1925 and 1951. In addition to the two forms present in the Somerset mill village, the Baker/Ca-Vel mill village also includes several four-bay, hip-roofed houses with full-width, engaged porch that may have been constructed as a duplex. Similarly, the later phase of the Longhurst mill village, erected north of the mill after 1914, includes three-bay hip-roofed houses with engaged porches. The Longhurst

<sup>32</sup> Glass, *The Textile Industry in North Carolina: A History*, 18.

<sup>33</sup>Person County Register of Deeds, Plat Book 6 Page 110.

<sup>34</sup> Person County Register of Deeds, Plat Book 11 Page 38.

<sup>35</sup>“Somerset Mills Practically Doubling Its Capacity,” *Roxboro Courier*, July 8, 1931.

Somerset Mill Historic District  
Name of Property

Person County, NC  
County and State

mill village also includes a small number of one-and-a-half-story side-gabled houses that may have been erected for mill managers. The Baker/Ca-Vel Mill erected a separate district for its managers and executives.

The Longhurst and Roxboro Cotton mill villages display a wider variety of architectural styles with some houses more closely approximating the rural housing found throughout Person County. A one-story, three-bay, single-pile house with a gabled rear ell was among those forms found in the Longhurst and Roxboro Cotton mill villages but absent from Baker/Ca-Vel and Somerset mill villages. The oldest part of the Longhurst mill village, on the west side of North Main Street, also included one-story, gable-and-wing form houses. The Roxboro Cotton mill village, the closest to downtown Roxboro, also included several, hip-roofed duplexes that were not found in the other villages.

In addition to repeated forms, all four of Roxboro's mill villages utilized similar materials and details. Wood weatherboards, two-over-two wood-sash windows, one-light-over-three-panel doors, turned porch posts, and interior corbelled brick chimneys were typical in all of Roxboro's mill villages. Material replacement is common in all four mill villages (including vinyl windows; vinyl and aluminum siding; and replacement doors and porch posts). Yet, in each the housing is easily recognizable as an early-twentieth century mill village. Only two of the houses in the Somerset mill village have had their form altered with the enclosure of an inset corner porch. The Roxboro Cotton Mill Village and Baker/Ca-Vel Mill Village are similarly intact with few vacant lots and little infill construction. The north part of the Longhurst Mill Village is similarly intact, though the western part of the village, west of North Main Street, has been altered with the demolition of nearly half of the mill houses, many resulting in vacant lots, and the construction of infill development that detracts from the consistent form and scale of the mill village.

## Historical Background

### *Textiles in Person County*

The textile industry in Person County was established only after the Durham and Lynchburg Railroad was extended through the county in 1890, connecting Roxboro, the county seat, to larger markets in Durham and southern Virginia. Between 1883 and 1893, the population of Roxboro nearly tripled and three tobacco warehouses and two banks were constructed in the town to serve rural population of the county.<sup>36</sup> During the same period, J. A. Long, a local businessman, tobacco warehouseman, and the most vocal proponent of the railroad, envisioned additional local industry that would support the county's farmers. In 1899, he brought together local and regional businessmen to incorporate the Roxboro Cotton Mills Company.<sup>37</sup>

By the fall of 1899, the Roxboro Cotton Mill was completed and had begun the production of carded cotton yarns on 5,000 spindles.<sup>38</sup> Immediately successful, the mill added an additional

<sup>36</sup> Stuart Thurman Wright, *Historical Sketch of Person County* (Danville, VA: The Womack Press, 1974), 142.

<sup>37</sup> Wright, 157.

<sup>38</sup> Wright, 157.

Somerset Mill Historic District

Person County, NC

Name of Property

County and State

3,200 spindles by 1904.<sup>39</sup> The mill was so profitable that by 1906, J. A. Long had begun planning for an additional, larger mill north of Roxboro. The Longhurst Mill (originally called Jalong Mill), opened in 1907 and more than doubled the production of yarns in the county. By 1924, the two mills employed 750 people and produced over three million pounds of cotton yarn a year.<sup>40</sup>

As the spinning mills—Roxboro Cotton Mill and Longhurst Mill—continued to produce cotton yarn, two weaving mills were constructed in the 1920s. In 1923, the A. T. Baker Company constructed a textile plant about a mile north of Longhurst Mill to produce automobile upholstery. In 1927, the A. T. Baker Company merged with Collins and Aikman Company and the mill, which came to be known as Ca-Vel Mill, was enlarged several times in the early- to mid-twentieth century.<sup>41</sup> Meanwhile, south of town, a second weaving mill, Somerset Mill, was incorporated in 1925 and opened in 1926, producing high quality cotton towels.

Person County's main industries—agriculture, tobacco, and textiles—thrived during the 1920s and then, like all sectors of the national economy, were impacted by the Great Depression. Agriculture, which relied heavily on tenant labor, was hit particularly hard as many farmers mortgaged their property and then lost their farms due to low tobacco prices in 1933.<sup>42</sup> Meanwhile, the four textile mills remained open, though wages were cut and many workers were laid off, at least temporarily. New Deal legislation enacted in 1933 reduced the workday to eight hours, both to create work for additional employees and to temper unrest surrounding working conditions in the nation's mills.

The textile industry was essential to the World War II war effort, with mills nationwide tasked with making uniforms, parachutes, tents and other equipment. Roxboro's mills, like many others, benefited from government contracts that stabilized production. While a dip in production followed the war, the industry remained stable through the mid-twentieth century as indicated by additions constructed at the Roxboro Cotton Mill, Baker/Ca-Vel Mill, and Somerset Mill. By 1974, Baker/Ca-Vel was the county's largest employer with 1,800 employees, while Roxboro Yarns (which included both the Roxboro Cotton Mill and Longhurst Mill) employed 600 people.<sup>43</sup>

By the 1980s, American textile manufacturing could no longer compete economically with factories in other countries where lower wages were paid. With the failure of a series of federal trade bills that would have limited overseas textile imports, many textile plants throughout the South closed<sup>44</sup> In 1999, Roxboro Cotton Mill ceased production and its sister company, Longhurst Mill, closed in 2001/2002 when Tultex Yarns, which operated the mill, filed for bankruptcy. Collins and Aikman (Ca-Vel) ceased production at their Roxboro plant in 2006.

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<sup>39</sup> Ehrfurth, Section 8, page 5.

<sup>40</sup> Ehrfurth, Section 8, page 6.

<sup>41</sup> Wright, 184.

<sup>42</sup> Wright, 186.

<sup>43</sup> Wright, 190-191.

<sup>44</sup> Heather Slane, "Minneola Manufacturing Company Mill," Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, 2023, Section 8 Page 39.

Somerset Mill Historic District

Person County, NC

Name of Property

County and State

*Somerset Mill*

Inspired by the success of the Roxboro Cotton Mill and Longhurst Mill, in 1925 Person County businessmen W. H. Harris, J. C. Pass, C. H. Hunter, E. E. Bradsher, and D. S. Brooks established Somerset Mills, Inc. and purchased a fifty-acre tract south of Roxboro.<sup>45</sup> By June of 1926, John Watts & Son, a Philadelphia-based textile manufacturer, owned a controlling interest in the company, and the first phase of the mill was complete and already had several looms weaving cotton towels. *The Roxboro Courier* noted in June 1926 that, “while the Somerset Mills are starting off in a small way, we can but believe it is only the beginning,” with additional manufacturing being relocated from John Watts & Son’s Pennsylvania plants to Somerset.<sup>46</sup> Newspaper advertisements in *The Roxboro Courier* in September 1926 announced the sale of “Somerset Towels and Mill Ends.”<sup>47</sup> By November of 1926, James H. Craig, president of Somerset Mills, reported that the mill was operating at eighty percent capacity and “have all orders they can take care of,” but planned to be operating at full capacity by December 1, 1926.<sup>48</sup>

Due to the rapid success of the operation, in July of 1931 the mill completed a nearly 12,000-square-foot addition, constructed by local contractor George W. Kane. The addition, which matched the 1926 mill in form and details, doubled its capacity to make towels, bringing the weaving capacity from 100 to 200 looms. At that time, the newspaper noted that Somerset was producing “the finest towels,” though had practically no competition, “for they do not make the cheaper grade, but specialize on a grade found only in their plant.”<sup>49</sup>

Somerset towels continued to be promoted by local papers. *The Roxboro Courier* declared in 1933, “there should not be a towel or bath rug sold in this town, save those manufactured by this concern.”<sup>50</sup> In December 1935, the newspaper encouraged residents to purchase Christmas towel sets produced by Somerset Mills under the tagline, “Why Not Give Something Useful?” again noting that, “there is absolutely no reason why a single towel should be sold over the counters in Roxboro or Person County which was not manufactured by this firm.”<sup>51</sup> In honor of National Cotton Week in 1939, a nearly quarter-page ad was placed in the *Person County Times*, encouraging residents to buy local cotton goods, including from a “display of Towels made by Somerset Mills at Peebles Department Store.”<sup>52</sup>

Even when the newspapers weren’t openly encouraging readers to purchase Somerset Towels, they were reporting on new patterns being introduced by the mill.<sup>53</sup> Enjoying more than a regional market, towels from Somerset were ordered and produced for the White House in the fall of 1939, the newspaper reporting that, “Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau has

<sup>45</sup> “Somerset Mills, Inc.: New Textile Plant for Roxboro Incorporated,” *Roxboro Courier*, November 25, 1925.

<sup>46</sup> “Things are Getting in Shape at Graigville: Few Looms Going Making Towels, Others Expected to Start up Soon,” *Roxboro Courier*, June 23, 1926.

<sup>47</sup> “Somerset Towels,” *Roxboro Courier*, September 15, 1926.

<sup>48</sup> “100 Per Cent Capacity Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>,” *Roxboro Courier*, November 3, 1926.

<sup>49</sup> “Somerset Mills Practically Doubling Its Capacity,” *Roxboro Courier*, July 8, 1931.

<sup>50</sup> “Business Good with The Somerset Mills,” *Roxboro Courier*, November 29, 1933.

<sup>51</sup> “Why Not Give Something Useful?” *Roxboro Courier*, December 9, 1935.

<sup>52</sup> *Person County Times*, May 25, 1939.

<sup>53</sup> “New Numbers at Somerset,” *Person County Times*, March 12, 1936.

Somerset Mill Historic District

Person County, NC

Name of Property

County and State

selected three dozen Somerset towels (with blue borders and monogrammed F. D. R.) for Mr. Roosevelt's Christmas present."<sup>54</sup>

While a reduction in cotton prices during the Depression slowed production, by November of 1931, it was reported that "times are getting better," with Somerset Towel Mills once again operating full time.<sup>55</sup> By November 1933, mill president James H. Craig reported the best business since the establishment of the mill with payroll totaling \$4,000.<sup>56</sup> Additionally, mill management touted their ability to retain workers, noting that more than half of the workers hired for the opening of the mill in 1926 were still employed there and that there, "has never had the slightest labor trouble."<sup>57</sup> In 1933, adhering to regulations put in place by National Recovery Code, a piece of New Deal legislation, Somerset Mill, along with Roxboro Cotton Mill and Longhurst Mill, announced a minimum weekly wage of \$12 for its workers. The mills also agreed to two 40-hour shifts per work week.<sup>58</sup>

In the spring of 1940, John Watts & Son sold the Somerset Mill to Wamsutta Mills, owned by M. Lowenstein & Sons, Inc. of New York and one of the largest sheeting manufacturers in the nation at that time.<sup>59</sup> In the fall of 1945, despite a general reduction in manufacturing following the cancellation of government contracts at the close of World War II, Roxboro's mills remained at full production, with officials at Somerset Mills indicating that they were hiring for additional workers for their towel manufacturing.<sup>60</sup>

The Roxboro Cotton Mill purchased the property in September 1958, after M. Lowenstein & Sons, Inc. shut down operation of the mill.<sup>61</sup> While it's not clear whether any operations were moved from the Roxboro Cotton Mill or Longhurst Mill to this location, in June 1957, the company subdivided the mill housing and placed it for sale.<sup>62</sup> By December 1957, the newspapers were reporting the impending loss of Somerset Mill as one of Roxboro's industries.<sup>63</sup> A January 1958 newspaper editorial notes the prospect of three industries considering the building vacated by the Somerset Mill plant.<sup>64</sup> In June 1959, the plant was sold to Sale Knitwear Company, a Martinsville, Virginia manufacturer of men's sweatshirts.<sup>65</sup> By the early 1960s, the building was again vacant. In July 1964, W. Basil Hill "announced plans to open Somerset-Hill, Inc. in a building once occupied by Somerset Towel Mills."<sup>66</sup>

<sup>54</sup>"Links completed; fairground bought," *Courier-Times, Centennial – 1982*, page E5.

<sup>55</sup> "Times Getting Better," *Roxboro Courier*, November 11, 1931.

<sup>56</sup> "Business Good with The Somerset Mills," *Roxboro Courier*, November 29, 1933.

<sup>57</sup>"Somerset Mills Practically Doubling Its Capacity," *Roxboro Courier*, July 8, 1931.

<sup>58</sup> "National Recovery Code is Adopted by Roxboro Mills," *Roxboro Courier*, July 19, 1933.

<sup>59</sup> "Towel Plant to Hold 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Christmas Party," *Courier-Times*, December 24, 1956; "Courier pushes 'through route'" C&A expands plant, workers," *Courier-Times, Centennial – 1982*, page F6.

<sup>60</sup> "Roxboro Industrial Plants Continue Full Operations," *Courier-Times*, August 23, 1945.

<sup>61</sup> Person County Register of Deeds, Book 80 Page 456; "Somerset Mill Property Purchased by Martinsville, Va., Knitting Firm," *Courier-Times*, June 29, 1958; Reed Abelson, "Crown Crafts," *Fortune*, June 19, 1989, 148.

<sup>62</sup> Person County Register of Deeds, Plat Book 6 Page 110.

<sup>63</sup> "Along the Way," *Courier-Times*, December 23, 1957.

<sup>64</sup>"Is Roxboro's Industrial Cupboard Bare?" *Courier-Times*, January 30, 1958.

<sup>65</sup> "Somerset Mill Property Purchased by Martinsville, Va., Knitting Firm," *Courier-Times*, June 29, 1958.

<sup>66</sup> "Industrial growth continues in 1964 as Eaton, Planet Announce.." *Courier-Times, Centennial – 1982*, page G11.

Somerset Mill Historic District

Person County, NC

Name of Property

County and State

Somerset Mill is rarely mentioned in newspaper accounts after 1964, making it difficult to discern the changes in ownership and production. By the early 1980s, the plant housed Decorative Comforters, Inc., a producer of padded quilts and bedspreads. In 1984, that company, along with the Somerset Mill, was purchased by Crown Crafts, Inc., a Georgia-based producer of jacquard-woven textiles, flocked velvets, and tufted bedspreads.<sup>67</sup> Bedspreads and packaged comforters sets were produced in the Somerset Mill until about 2001, when Crown Crafts closed its cut-and-sew operation at this location and sold the Somerset Mill to Catalog Products, Inc., though the building remained vacant.<sup>68</sup> The building was generally underutilized in the twenty-first century until it was purchased by Stokes Holdings LLC in 2020.<sup>69</sup> Stokes removed the window covering from the 1931 section of the mill and currently utilizes that space for the manufacture of custom wood furniture and millwork while using the large ca. 1964 south addition for related storage. The 1926 portion of the mill is leased to another industrial client. The smaller wings, office, and fiber house remain vacant.

### *Somerset Mill Village and Community Activities*

Early-twentieth-century mill houses could be constructed for as little as \$350 for a three-room house, which was then “rented to the mill worker, before electricity, at an average of twenty-five cents a room a week,” with the rent increasing when electric power was run to the village.<sup>70</sup> While the specific practices of Roxboro’s mill owners is not known, the practice of renting houses by the room was common in many villages where mill owners required that a house rented by a mill family must provide one worker per room or two workers for three rooms,” the practice ultimately encouraging occupancy by larger and extended families.<sup>71</sup> Even in the small group of mill houses associated with the Somerset Mill, sisters and mill employees Jenny Craven and Sabra Stuart lived together with their husbands at 1885 Old Durham Road, while their third sister, Mary Copley, and her family occupied the adjacent house at 1901 Old Durham Road.<sup>72</sup>

Mill owners further reinforced a sense of community and camaraderie in the mill villages through welfare capitalism that, in addition to the construction of churches and school, included the organizing of “sewing clubs, garden clubs, flower and fashion shows, cooking schools, and baseball teams.”<sup>73</sup> In addition to providing activities that “blurred the distinction between the workplace and the mill villages,” through these company-sponsored social and cultural activities owners hoped to build a sense of loyalty to the mill, thus reducing the risk of unrest or collective action.<sup>74</sup>

In addition to sponsoring a baseball team that played other mill-sponsored teams in Roxboro and the surrounding area, mill owners supported local charities and groups. In 1931, the company

<sup>67</sup> “Crown Crafts, Inc.,” Encyclopedia.com, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/books/politics-and-business-magazines/crown-crafts-inc> Accessed July 1, 2025.

<sup>68</sup> Person County Register of Deeds, Book 335 Page 408.

<sup>69</sup> Person County Register of Deeds, Book 1086 Page 160.

<sup>70</sup> Andrews, 195.

<sup>71</sup> Glass, *The Textile Industry in North Carolina: A History*, 18.

<sup>72</sup> Person County Register of Deeds, Book 80 Page 360 and Book 80 Page 363; U.S. Census Bureau, *1940 United States Federal Census*, U.S. Federal Census Collection, Ancestry.com.

<sup>73</sup> Glass, *The Textile Industry in North Carolina: A History*, 54-55.

<sup>74</sup> Glass, *The Textile Industry in North Carolina: A History*, 54-55.

Somerset Mill Historic District

Person County, NC

Name of Property

County and State

donated four dozen towels to the Bethel Hill School athletic association.<sup>75</sup> In 1943, towels were presented to the hosts of a Red Cross instructors course in swimming and lifesaving and in 1946, Somerset Mills provided “bath cloths” as special favors for the district meeting of the Business and Professional Women’s clubs.<sup>76</sup> Employees, too, were lauded for their charitable contributions. In 1940, the *Person County Times* reported that employees of Somerset Mill made a donation of \$27.59 to the Red Cross Fund.<sup>77</sup>

Somerset Mill also hosted vaccination clinics and draft registration drives in the mid-twentieth century. As early as 1931, local newspapers announced Somerset Mill as one of the local sites at which Person County and the State Board of Health would be administering Typhoid Fever and Diphtheria vaccinations.<sup>78</sup> In 1943, newspapers announced immunizations for Whooping Cough, Diphtheria, Small Pox, and Typhoid being administered at Somerset Mill; vaccinations were offered again in May and June of 1945.<sup>79</sup> In October 1940, special registration centers were set up at all four Roxboro mills to enlist local men in a peace-time draft.<sup>80</sup> In 1956, Somerset Mill began hosting a Christmas party for children of the mill employees, the activities centered in the “mill yard.”<sup>81</sup>

Beginning in the mid-1930s, mill owners across the state began divesting themselves of mill housing by offering the houses for sale to mill employees. The reasons for the sale were many and included the high maintenance costs associated with the houses, improved infrastructure which facilitated hiring employees from a broader geographic range, and child labor laws that limited a mill’s ability to employ entire families.<sup>82</sup> The passage of a federal minimum wage, new regulations placed on industry as part of the 1933 National Industrial Recovery Act, and the resulting Textile Strike of 1934 and unionization of textile laborers also contributed to a gradual end to the paternalistic mill village as mill owners sought to weaken the communities of workers.<sup>83</sup>

In Roxboro, the sale of company housing began with the Baker/Ca-Vel Mill Village; platted for sale in 1951, the village included 111 houses, a store/office, and a Methodist Church.<sup>84</sup> In 1957, the Somerset Mill village was subdivided into fifteen parcels; notations on that plat indicate nine houses, the parcels marked with a 4R or 6R to indicate the size of the house (see plat at Figure 5).<sup>85</sup> In 1961, J. A. Long subdivided and sold the Longhurst Mill Village and Roxboro Cotton

<sup>75</sup> “Bethel Hill School Notes,” *Roxboro Courier*, October 28, 1931.

<sup>76</sup> “Certificates for Red Cross Work Not Yet Given,” *Person County Times*, June 24, 1943; “District Meeting if BPW is Held at Hotel Roxboro,” *Courier-Times*, April 29, 1946.

<sup>77</sup> “Red Cross Funds Continue to Come,” *Person County Times*, June 30, 1940.

<sup>78</sup> “Typhoid Fever and Diphtheria Treatment Free,” *Roxboro Courier*, June 17, 1931.

<sup>79</sup> “Vaccinations to be Given Soon by Person Unit,” *Person County Times*, May 20, 1943; “Thirty Places Clinic Sites for Summer Season,” *Courier-Times*, May 21, 1945.

<sup>80</sup> “3249 Register in County for Draft,” *Person County Times*, October 17, 1940.

<sup>81</sup> “Towel Plant to Hold 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Christmas Party,” *Courier-Times*, December 24, 1956.

<sup>82</sup> Glass, *The Textile Industry in North Carolina: A History*, 84-85.

<sup>83</sup> Glass, *The Textile Industry in North Carolina: A History*, 84-85; Jonathan Murray, “Textile Strike of 1934,” North Carolina Historic Project, <https://northcarolinahistory.org/encyclopedia/textile-strike-of-1934/>, accessed July 1, 2025.

<sup>84</sup> Person County Register of Deeds, Plat Book 3B Page 158.

<sup>85</sup> Person County Register of Deeds, Plat Book 6, page 110.

Somerset Mill Historic District  
Name of Property

Person County, NC  
County and State

Mill Village, the former including fifty-three houses and a Methodist Church, while the latter contained sixty-four houses and duplexes, a Methodist Church, and a company school.<sup>86</sup>

### *Conclusion*

Somerset Mill clearly illustrates slow-burn construction and streamlined aesthetic of 1920s industrial design. The 1899 Roxboro Cotton Mill (NR2009) and the 1907 Longhurst Mill are both illustrative of turn-of-the-twentieth-century Italianate-style, heavy-timber construction with load-bearing brick exteriors punctuated by individual windows and adorned with brick corbelling. The 1923 Baker/Ca-Vel Mill may have been constructed with similar detailing, but has been significantly overbuilt, obscuring its original form and detailing.

Similarly, the single row of mill housing opposite Somerset Mill—though significantly smaller than the associated mill villages for the Roxboro Cotton Mill, Longhurst Mill, and Baker/Ca-Vel Mill—illustrates the extent of historic worker housing built by this mill and utilizes common forms found in all of Roxboro's mill villages, making it easily recognizable as such.

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<sup>86</sup> Person County Register of Deeds, Plat Book 6 Pages 168, Plat Book 6 Page 179, and Plat Book 6 Page 180.

Somerset Mill Historic District  
Name of Property

Person County, NC  
County and State

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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Somerset Mill Historic District  
Name of Property

Person County, NC  
County and State

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**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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** PR0794

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** approximately 12.4 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 36.353127 | Longitude: -78.981681 |
| 2. Latitude: 36.353019 | Longitude: -78.979664 |
| 3. Latitude: 36.352807 | Longitude: -78.979713 |
| 4. Latitude: 36.352652 | Longitude: -78.978918 |
| 5. Latitude: 36.350980 | Longitude: -78.979165 |
| 6. Latitude: 36.350954 | Longitude: -78.979777 |

Somerset Mill Historic District  
Name of Property

Person County, NC  
County and State

- |                         |                       |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 7. Latitude: 36.351196  | Longitude: -78.979799 |
| 8. Latitude: 36.351356  | Longitude: -78.980753 |
| 9. Latitude: 36.351511  | Longitude: -78.980754 |
| 10. Latitude: 36.351226 | Longitude: -78.981949 |
| 11. Latitude: 36.353010 | Longitude: -78.982019 |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The National Register boundary is shown by a black line on the accompanying map, drawn at a 1"=100' scale.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated boundary contains the entirety of extant resources associated with the industrial operation and residential development of the Somerset Mill. It includes the parcel on which all industrial resources stand as well as a small mill village located to the east, on the east side of Old Durham Road.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Heather M. Slane  
organization: hmwPreservation  
street & number: P. O. Box 355  
city or town: Durham state: NC zip code: 27702  
e-mail heather@hmwpreservation.com  
telephone: 336.207.1502  
date: April 1, 2026

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Somerset Mill Historic District  
Name of Property

Person County, NC  
County and State

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Somerset Mill Historic District

City or Vicinity: Roxboro

County: Person County

State: North Carolina

Photographer: Heather M. Slane

Date Photographed: February 2023 and April 2025

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 18

Somerset Mill, facing northeast

2 of 18

Somerset Mill and Boiler Room, facing southeast

3 of 18

Somerset Mill, facing south with ca. 1964 and ca. 1986 additions

4 of 18

Somerset Mill, facing northwest with ca. 1986 additions

5 of 18

Somerset Mill, facing east with Mill Office and Fiber House

6 of 18

Fiber House and Water Tower, facing northeast

7 of 18

Somerset Mill, facing northeast

8 of 18

Somerset Mill (1926/1931), facing south

9 of 18

Somerset Mill (1931), facing north

Somerset Mill Historic District  
Name of Property

Person County, NC  
County and State

- 10 of 18  
Somerset Mill (1931), facing southeast
- 11 of 18  
Somerset Mill (1931), facing south
- 12 of 18  
Somerset Mill ca. 1964 Rear Addition, facing southwest
- 13 of 18  
Somerset Mill 1931 and ca. 1964 Rear Wing, facing east
- 14 of 18  
Mill Office, facing north
- 15 of 18  
Fiber House, facing southwest
- 16 of 18  
Circa 1986 Northeast Wing, facing southeast
- 17 of 18  
Mill Housing, facing southeast
- 18 of 18  
Mill Housing, facing southeast

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.