NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Athens Factory (also called "The Old Mill") consists of two brick buildings joined in the shape of an "L." The smaller building, situated next to the North Oconee River and parallel to it, is known as the "wool" building; the larger building, lying at right angles to the wool building, is known as the "cotton" building. These two buildings were originally surrounded by a complex of outbuildings including a picker house, a stone warping house, dye houses, boiler rooms, and warehouses, but these outbuildings were demolished some time ago, and little remains except archaeological evidences, mostly covered by a parking lot.

The wool building is a three-story structure measuring some 75 feet by 60 The ground floor is enclosed by massive masonry foundation walls with irregularly-cut stone on the exterior and brick on the interior. ground floor runs the millrace; above it are the two upper stones. floors are enclosed by thick, load-bearing masonry walls consisting of brick throughout. The interior of the building is subdivided into the various partitionless floor levels by timber construction consisting of square columns or posts, and lintels, heavy joists, and thick planks. Simple, multipaned doublehung windows, set into large rectangular openings topped by flat brick arches, are spaced evenly across the walls at each of the three floor levels. A lowpitched (nearly flat) roof with widely-spaced projecting rafter ends covers the building. At the north end, the roofline is hidden behind a stepped para-Only the central section of this parapet is a part of the original wool building; the lower flanking sections, most of the top floor, and the lowpitched roof itself date from a subsequent enlargement of the original thirdfloor story.

The cotton building, at right angles to both the wool building and the river, is similar to the wool building in nearly every respect. It is proportioned differently, however, being slightly longer, not quite as wide, and four stories high. The cotton building also has a principal entrance at the west end of the north side; this entrance, at the third-floor level, is housed in a short, square, projecting tower and features a round-headed double doorway set under a segmental brick arch. Changes in brickwork and fenestration indicate that the original cotton building, like the original wool building, was subsequently enlarged, at least once and maybe twice: the building has been lengthened to the west, and the one story expanded into a full fourth floor. A four-and-a-half-story square tower formerly adjoined the west end of this building.

A brick-enclosed elevator shaft, built in the early twentieth century, occupies the inner angle of the "L" where the cotton and wool buildings come together. Diagonally across from it, at the outer angle of the "L," is a structure which housed the turbine and, later, a generator. The turbine was

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM



CONTINUATION SHEET Description

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 2

located at the level of the millrace, which runs under the wool building; the generator was situated above it, more or less at the first-floor level.

Although these two major mill buildings remain intact architecturally, none of the original equipment or machinery (except two overhead wheels associated with the power transmission system within the buildings) has survived intact.

In the recent metamorphosis from abandoned mill buildings into a bustling complex including shops, a restaurant, and a tavern, some small changes have been made in and around the Athens Factory. The grounds have been landscaped with grass, shrubs, trees, parking lot and walkways to principal doorways have been constructed. Three wooden decks have been built among the trees along the edge of the river. One of these decks is reached by a new bridge across the millrace (which, incidentally, still carries water under the wool building). The wool building now houses a tavern or restaurant ("O'Malley's") on its first floor. This new establishment is given architectural definition by the row of original wooden posts running the length of the building: on one side, facing the yard, is a long bar and small tables, and on the other side, overlooking the river, are larger tables for dining. In the dining section, the floor is raised several inches by the installation of maple flooring on top of an earlier concrete floor. The maple flooring was bought from a mill in Burlington, North Carolina, and has been used elsewhere in the new complex, where the original floors were damaged by leaks in the roof. The third floor of the wool building has been partitioned into corridor and shop spaces which connect with similar spaces on the third floor of the adjacent cotton building to form a shopping arcade of twelve stores. A principal entrance to this mini-mall is the original third-floor doorway at the west end of the cotton building. Between the cotton and wool buildings, over the original location of the turbine and generator, a solarium has been established for the enjoyment of those who patronize the tavern, restaurant, and shops of this new establishment.

No archaeology at the Athens Factory has been reported. An archaeological potential, however, is inferred from historical documents. The condition of these inferred potential resources is unknown.

Notices, advertisements, titles, deeds, etc., provide some information about the composition, operation, and production of the factory. However, Sanborn insurance maps of the factory graphically record a segment of the development of the complex. The maps indicate the location, size, and composition of

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Description

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 3

the many service buildings that surrounded the extant structures. Maps exist for the years of 1885, 1888, 1893, 1903, 1908, 1913, 1918 and 1926.

As the role of the factory changed, so did the functions of the service buildings as indicated by the maps. These less substantial structures were altered, then abandoned, and finally removed. An expanding university and a growing urban center shifted economic priorities from products to services. This is dramatically exemplified by the present adaptations of the extant buildings.

The surroundings of the extant buildings exhibit the changing land-use patterns dictated by new priorities, apartments and a "quick" market. The condition of the inferred archaeological potential is undetermined. The severity of impact of recent uses of land near the extant buildings is difficult to assess. As sufficient topographic data are unavailable, effects of recent landscaping activities on the archaeological potential are unknown.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION No conger relevant See new boundary justification in addondum:

Due to the archaeological potential, the boundaries of this nomination have been expanded to include a convenience store and part of an apartment complex that were built on identifiable areas of the original factory complex. The convenience store and apartment buildings are non-contributing features of the nomination. The boundary as marked on the accompanying tax map includes land of three owners. An older, historical property line has heen used as the southernmost boundary and this cuts through the middle of the apartment complex. The westernmost boundary is the railroad track which, from the Sanborn Maps, was always the maximum extent of the complete factory. The northernmost boundary of the nominated property was also identified by using the Sanborn Maps and earlier boundaries reflected in the tax map. The easternmost boundary is the river.

SPECIFIC DAT	ES 1858	BUILDER/ARCH	HITECT Unknown	
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PERIOD	AF	REAS OF SIGNIFICANCE CH	IECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW	

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The site and buildings of the Athens Factory constitute a characteristic waterpowered factory complex of the second half of the nineteenth century and show the results of industrial growth and development in that period. riverside location speaks of the need of harnessing available local waterpower for industrial purposes; the dam, millrace, and spillway show how this energy was harnessed. Yet, this waterpower proved insufficient in the long run, and steam engines were subsequently installed, although no trace remains of them. The architecture of the Athens Factory is straightforward and purposeful and, like the waterpower, was in its day adequate to the task. Fireproof, loadbearing brick masonry walls, large windows, partitionless floors and "slowburning" timber interior construction relate this local mill to the mainstream of industrial architecture and engineering. With the passage of time, the need for more space, and the perfection of stronger roof trusses, the original gabled clerestory roofs were replaced with the low-pitched (almost flat) roofs of the late nineteenth century, thereby converting the waster attic and clearestory spaces into fully usable floors and giving the refurbished mill an updated look. The twentieth century brought with it new sources of energy. new building materials and methods, new techniques of space utilization, and the gradual obsolescence and ultimate abandonment of the nineteenth-century mill buildings. But the present day offers an opportunity for imaginative, adaptive reuse -- an opportunity already being fulfilled -- while the site holds fast to its architectural and archaeological reminders of the past.

The first waterpowered factories in the Georgia Piedmont date from c. 1810 and include the paper mill at Skull Shoals on the Oconee and textile mills on the Little River in Morgan County and Upton's Creek in Wilkes County. These were short-lived. In the 1830s and 1840s, a second generation of mills was built at water sources all across the Piedmont. In Athens, the first of these was Georgia Factory, opened in 1830; the second was Athens Factory, the subject of this nomination, opened in 1833; and the third was Princeton Factory, the land purchased in 1833.

A thumbnail sketch of Georgia Factory's history is given here, since it has at times been confused with that of Athens Factory. Georgia Factory, for its first few years called Athens Factory, was built in 1829 and opened in February, 1830; its capitalizers were John Johnson of Massachusetts, the

	s, Georgia 1801-1901. [Athens] Banner
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Strahan, Charles Morton. <u>Clarke County</u> , <u>Ga</u> Hynds, Ernest C. <u>Antebellum Athens and Clar</u>	the County Georgia Athens: University of
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White, George. Statistics of the State of (Georgia. Savannah, 1849; reprint, Spartanburg
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11 FORM PREPARED BY	
NAME/TITLE Patricia Irvin Cooper for William	L. Laird, P.O. Box 8085, Athens, Ga.
NAME/TITLE Patricia Irvin Cooper for William Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., Historian	L. Laird, P.O. Box 8085, Athens, Ga.
NAME/TITLE Patricia Irvin Cooper for William Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., Historian ORGANIZATION Historic Preservation Section	DATE
NAME/TITLE Patricia Irvin Cooper for William Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., Historian	
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9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM



CONTINUATION SHEET

Significance

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 2

agent; Augustin S. Clayton, Abram Walker and John Nisbet of Clarke County, and William Dearing of Wilkes County. It was located at Thomas Moore's mill on the North Oconee, four miles below Athens, at what is now Whitehall (Clarke Co. Deed Book O, pp. 147-48).

Times were prosperous and feeling against the tariff high; a few years later, four of the same entrepreneurs bought land for a second factory which came to be called Athens Factory, the subject of this nomination. It was also on the North Oconee, but within the town of Athens at Cedar Shoals, adjacent to north campus. In May of 1832, William Dearing (now of Clarke County), John Nisbet, Augustin S. Clayton and Abraham Walker (now of Burke County) bought for \$8,000 some fifty-five acres from William A. Carr on both sides of the river, "bounded on three sides by said Carr's lands & Westwardly by the College Land" (\underline{Book} \underline{P} , pp. 60-61, 68-69). The tract, located on the road to Lexington and on one of the two bridges across the North Oconee, extended upstream to beyond Trail Creek and contained a sawmill and gristmill on the east side. The new owners added a gin (\underline{Book} \underline{P} , p. 189).

It must be noted that Athens Factory was organized in 1832, not in 1830, as stated by Hynds, and by four men, not two, as stated by Hull and Hynds (Hull, p. 101; Hynds, p. 23). The advertisements noted by Hynds (p. 139, n. 4) from the Athenian of February 2, 1830 (announcing that the factory was now in operation) and of March 22, 1831, both signed by John Johnson, pertain to the factory at Whitehall. Because of the mill's distance from town, the notices point out that orders can be filled not only at the factory but also by "Mr. Seaborn J. May, Athens," and that there is a small freight charge added to factory prices. This factory produced only cotton yarns and cloth.

In contrast, the newer factory manufactured both cotton yarns and woolen yarns and cloth. In fact, its first name was Athens Cotton & Wool Factory, as shown by the notice of September 28, 1833, in the Southern Banner, signed by William Dearing, president. The advertisement informs us that the factory sold cotton yarns in all sizes; that it carded wool for customers and spum it, also, if desired; and that it had "put up a 48 Inch double carding Engine with Tube condensers (nothing like it in Georgia), also, 150 wool spindles"[italics original].

Much of the business at the mills was by exchange; the farmer paid in cotton or wool, not in cash. The 1830 advertisement above specified that cotton could be exchanged for yarns and cloth.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM



CONTINUATION SHEET Significance

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 3

The same men, with the exception of Johnson, had invested in both mills; for a while they called the first one "Athens Factory" and used the term, "Athens Manufacturing Company" in relation to both. In 1833, Clayton sold his interest in the Carr tract and its factory to Dearing and Nisbet (\underline{Book} \underline{P} , p. 189). In 1835, Dearing and Nisbet are referred to as "surviving Co-partners of the late Manufacturing Interest known ... by the name of the Athens Manufacturing Company" (\underline{Book} \underline{O} , pp. 353-54, 356). However, the company kept right on. It was probably about this time that it sold the first mill to John White, which became known as "Georgia Factory," while the mill in Athens was called henceforth "Athens Factory."

The first buildings were most likely of framed construction. The factory burned in 1834, was rebuilt, lost a wing in the "Harrison freshet" of 1840, and burned again in November of 1857 (not 1856, as Hull says, pp. 101-02; Hynds, pp. 23-24).

The present brick buildings thus date from 1858.

In 1849, Athens Manufacturing Company (Athens Factory) had 2,500 spindles, 40 looms, 85 operatives ("mostly female"), who made \$5-\$12 per month. It made osnaburgs (a heavy cotton cloth), stripes, bed-ticking and linsey-woolsey on machinery from New Jersey (White's <u>Statistics</u>, p. 182). It was the largest of the Clarke County factories.

Athens Manufacturing Company, like other textile mills, prospered during the Civil War.

In 1862, the company had sold sixteen acres at the junction of Trail Creek and the North Oconee, upstream of Athens Factory, to Cook and Brother, who built there an armory which supplied rifles to the Confederate Army (Book \underline{W} , p. 387). H. Hull was then president of Athens Manufacturing Company, and John S. Linton was secretary and agent. In 1870 (not 1867, as Hull states, p. 332), the company bought back the armory parcel, now enlarged and, of course, with a substantial building on it (Book Y, p. 404).

During this period, R.L. Bloomfield succeeded Linton as agent and, in the early 1880s, succeeded Hull as president of the company (<u>Book CC</u>, p. 325; <u>Book EE</u>, p. 187). F.W. Cheney became the agent.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM



CONTINUATION SHEET Significance

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 4

R.L. Bloomfield was a devout Episcopalian and built the rather Gothic St. Mary's Chapel on Oconee Street -- also Episcopalian -- for the millworkers.

After Athens Manufacturing Company bought the armory, it converted it to a weaving mill, locally known as the "check mill" for its Daisy Check gingham of the late nineteenth century. The looms were moved from Athens Factory to the upper mill. It is said that the yarns were poled upstream on barges. The division into spinning mill (Athens Factory) and weaving mill (now Chicopee) is shown on the Sanborn Insurance Maps, the first of which was published for Athens in 1885. A copy of the 1888 sheet showing Athens Factory accompanies this nomination.

The two buildings standing today are the wool building next to the river and the cotton building at right angles to it. The turbines were in the outside angle of the L. At the near end of the masonry dam is the raceway with sluice gates; the water flows through an arch in the wool building and under the length of the building, formerly turning a turbine at the other end, then back into the river. In the 1890s, this factory had 10,000 spindles. The shoals had a fall of thirteen feet, giving 338 horsepower, and the factory used almost all of it, with a turbine of 300 (Strahan, p. 35). Strahan speaks of one turbine, though the Sanborn maps show two. The plant used waterpower, steamheat, and wood for its boilers. By 1893, it was generating its own electricity for lights; the generator was above the turbine.

The wool and cotton buildings were the heart of the complex. In these were carried out the wool-carding, reeling, and spinning, and the cotton-carding and spinning. There were also, next to the cotton wing, a brick tower, picker house and a stone warping room (building); there were dye houses with a tower upstream along the river, boiler houses and woodpile; a wool-drying platform over the raceway; brick and frame warehouses and cotton-storage buildings; a reservoir southwest of the factory a couple of hundred feet, and, in the early twentieth century, a spur of the railroad into the grounds. All these buildings and activities can be read from the Sanborn maps of the 1880s and 1890s and from an undated but contemporaneous old photograph in special collections of the University of Georgia libraries.

A major change in the buildings occurred when the clerestory stories in both wings, shown in both photograph and Sanborn maps, were replaced by a full top story and a nearly flat roof with projecting rafter ends. An elevator tower was added, also.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM



CONTINUATION SHEET Significance

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 5

The wall on the river side of the raceway was raised at some point, perhaps twice, in order to keep floodwaters from spilling over into the raceway. This may reflect the heavy siltation that began choking Southern creeks and rivers in the late nineteenth century. About four feet of this wall was removed when the new decks were built.

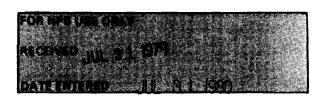
R.L. Bloomfield also bought land along the Oconee upstream of the upper mill and along Sandy Creek (\underline{Book} \underline{YY} , pp. 138-41 etc.). Apparently, the purpose was to own the land inundated by the factory pond; since water backed up to the mouth of Sandy Creek, it also backed up along the creek itself.

The sawmill and gristmill (actually a flour mill as well, as seen from Carr's notice in The Athenian, July 26, 1831), which were on the fifty-fiveacre tract when the factory capitalizers bought it in 1832, were most likely on Trail Creek, where a few ruins remain and where Carr's pond existed until drained in the early 1890s. The Athens 1874 map shows a gristmill on the river bank near the weaving mill (the old armory); since it used water from the tail race, as deduced from the 1874 and Sanborn maps, it must have been built after 1862. It seems to have lasted briefly. The 1874 map also shows a mill across from and slightly downstream of Athens Factory, using its dam. This was on land owned by Athens Manufacturing Company. Undated photographs in the collection of the University of Georgia Libraries show a square masonry building, the upper floors stuccoed, with a mansard roof. This was the building on Boys' Club property which was torn down in the winter of 1976-77; it was not likely an early stage stop, nor Richard Easley's mill. Instead, it very probably dated from the rebuilding in stone and brick of the factory buildings, across the river, from c. 1858. The mansard roof may have been from still later.

The period of 1865-1899 was that of the greatest prosperity for Athens Manufacturing Company. Hull says it paid an average of thirteen percent on dividends for thirty years. Athens Factory was humming and upriver the company's weaving mill in the old armory was producing the popular "Daisy Check."

R.L. Bloomfield, president of Athens Manufacturing Company, had bought Barnett Shoals on the Oconee River and had hopes of developing that great water-power source. In the early 1890s, he built Star Thread Mill there, which had a power plant capable of generating more power than needed for the lights in the mill. Bloomfield's idea was to sell the excess to the town of Athens and to industries (See Strahan, p. 35; Hull, p. 391). However, his

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM



CONTINUATION SHEET

Significance

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 6

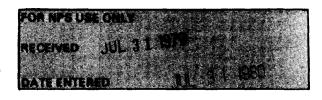
overextended financial resources collapsed in April of 1897, and so did Athens Manufacturing Company.

A.H. Hodgson became president (<u>Book 00</u>, p. 297), and the company entered a period of reorganizing, liquidating assets and paying debts, with Billups Phinizy being the receiver. R.L. Moss helped save the company in 1904; he bought it from the receiver and sold it back to the company for the same price a year later (<u>Book ZZ</u>, p. 115, 118). In May of 1905, the company entered into trusteeship; T.P. Vincent was president, John J. Wilkins and Howell C. Erwin were the trustees (<u>Book ZZ</u>, p. 121). The stockholders authorized the president to issue twenty-year bonds, payable in gold, the security being part of the company property. However, the bonds were issued but never sold, being used for security only; the indebtedness was paid off, the bonds destroyed, and trusteeship terminated in 1919 (26-185).

Obviously, the company had prospered after the reorganization and through World War I. The weaving mill unit (now Chicopee Mills) kept running even during the Depression, and came to represent Athens Manufacturing Company in local thought. However, the Athens Factory unit, still operating in 1918, was no longer running by 1926, the year of the last Sanborn map. Since early in the century, its work was dwindling; the maps show a succession of vacant buildings which eventually disappear. In 1926, all that remains are the two buildings standing today (1979), one new warehouse, the stone warping room plus a wing, and the picker room at the end of the cotton wing. The old check mill had made no ginghams since the turn of the century; it was producing only "greiges," umbleached, undyed cotton cloth, both light and heavy. The Athens Factory buildings were used only for storage. Its remaining machinery was sold to other mills or for scrap.

After the death of A.G. Dudley, president and chief stockholder of Athens Manufacturing Company, in 1947, the company was dissolved and the three units sold. In 1950, the weaving mill (old armory) was sold to Chicopee Mills, a division of Johnson and Johnson. Southern Manufacturing Company, in the west end of town, which Mr. Dudley had bought during the Depression, was sold to John J. Wilkins, Jr. Hundreds of mill cottages were sold, first chance to buy going to the operatives living in them. And in 1951, the old Athens Factory buildings were sold to W.B. Upchurch and Ben T. Comer (127-113), the latter soon selling his interest to Charlie Nichols.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM



CONTINUATION SHEET Significance

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE 7

Upchurch and Nichols owned Southern Mill Supply, which sold all types of used textile machinery, so the old buildings were still used for a textile-related business.

In 1972, Upchurch and Nichols sold the property (\underline{Book} \underline{PP} , pp. 373-469). After several title changes and the building of River Mill Apartments just south of the old factory buildings, the property reverted to Nichols and the Upchurch heirs, who in October of 1977 sold a tract of over four acres containing the factory buildings to William L. Laird (402-712).

Mr. and Mrs. Laird are recycling these old factory buildings into the Old Mill Center, including a tavern (or restaurant) and "mini-mall" of shops. The O'Malley's tavern opened on May 18, 1978; the first shops opened in June, and the dedication was held in the fall of 1978. The combination of river, trees, decks on the water's edge and massive old buildings has proved very attractive.

The archaeological potential of the Athens Factory, inferred solely from historical sources, is significant for a number of reasons. The Sanborn insurance maps begin in 1885, fifty-two years after the factory started. Only hints of changes in the physical composition of the factory complex are conveyed by deeds, newspapers, correspondence, etc., prior to 1885. To fully understand the role of this factory in the industrial development of Athens, the state, and the South, all stages of development warrant study. Thus, the early stage of growth which is less documented is dependent on potential resources, i.e., archaeological, for understanding in the absence of actual resources.

The two remaining buildings comprise only a segment of the entire milling process. Sole reliance on them would distort any interpretation of the role of the factory in industrial development. Only by considering all of the process, through all available resources, actual and potential, can a full understanding be obtained.

Until recently, archaeologists have shown little interest in knowledge of the effects of modern landscaping technology on archaeological resources. Only as urban archaeology has gained recognition has the archaeological community become aware of its ignorance of landscaping practices as "cut and fill."

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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CONTINUATION SHEET Significance

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 8

Gradually, archaeologists are acknowledging the fact that modern development does not result in the total loss of archaeological resources. Sites such as the Athens Factory hold the potential of adding to our understanding of the effects of urban change on archaeological resources. The practice of "cutting" may destroy, but "filling" buries.

Finally, documentary sources such as deeds, plats, newspapers, and insurance maps must be treated as artifacts. The variables of behavior that result in these documents must be considered. Personal motivations and objectives are sources of distortion, deletion, and deception. The accuracy and completeness of such documents cannot be assumed. Other sources of verification must be sought, potential and actual.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM



CONTINUATION SHEET Bibliography

ITEM NUMBER 9

PAGE 2

S.C.: The Reprint Company, 1972.

Interviews with Mrs. Fay Harrison, H.T. Gilbert, William L. Laird, John Ray Nicholson, all of Athens, Ga.

Personal inspection, Patricia Cooper; Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., August 14, 1978.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

PAGE

AMENDMENT

ATHENS FACTORY ATHENS, CLARKE COUNTY, GEORGIA

The Athens Factory nomination is amended as per instructions from the National Register in order to eliminate areas whose archaeological potential have been severely disturbed by modern construction. This amendment provides for a new, smaller boundary for the nominated property. It eliminates areas owned by two property owners. light of this amendment, the following sections of the nomination should be changed as follows.

Section 4:

The owner of the nominated property is: William L. Laird

Post Office Box 8085 Athens, Georgia 30601

Section 7:

Boundary Justification: The boundary of the nominated property is the remaining factory building and the adjoining parking lot which are the only parts of the original complex to remain undisturbed by more recent construction.

Section 10:

Acreage: approximately 2.3 acres. The UTM reference remains the same.

The Verbal Boundary Description remains the same since it refers to the boundary as marked on the Sketch/Tax Map. A new U.S.G.S. map and Sketch/Tax Map with corrected boundaries have been included.

Preparer:

Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., Historian Historic Preservation Section Department of Natural Resources 270 Washington Street, S. W. Atlanta, Georgia 30334 June 19, 1980

Elizabeth A. Lyon, Ph.D., Chief Historic Preservation Section Acting State Historic Preservation Officer

6-27-80

