

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	
DATE ENTERED	

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

W. T. Blackwell and Company Tobacco Factory

AND/OR COMMON

Bull Durham Tobacco Factory

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

201 West Pettigrew Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION 4

CITY, TOWN

Durham

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

North Carolina

CODE

37

COUNTY

Durham

CODE

063

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

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

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

American Tobacco Company

Contact: Mr. Harwood T. Smith,  
Branch Manager

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 1091

CITY, TOWN

Durham

VICINITY OF

STATE

North Carolina

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Durham County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Durham

STATE

North Carolina

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

National Register of Historic Places, Historic American Engineering

DATE

1974, 1974

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

Record

DEPOSITORY FOR

SURVEY RECORDS

National Register, Historic American Engineering Record

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

District of Columbia

# 7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The W. T. Blackwell and Company Bull Durham Factory is a four-story, rectangular-shaped brick structure of Italianate design with an interior courtyard and is located at the corner of Blackwell and West Pettigrew Streets in a commercial-industrial section of downtown Durham, N.C. At one time, says Heimann, "the world's largest tobacco plant," the facility was constructed in stages between 1874 and 1903. It measures approximately 90 by 115 feet and contains 94,000 square feet of floor space.<sup>11</sup>

In 1874 Willian T. Blackwell and his partners constructed the north-facing main block on West Pettigrew Street and the attached east wing fronting Blackwell Street, and in 1880 they added the western wing to form a U-shaped structure. In 1903, 4 years after the American Tobacco Company assumed control, the southern wing was constructed, giving the building its present configuration.

According to the 1884 and 1898 Sanborn Insurance Maps of the factory, the main block housed company offices, the sales and shipping department, a tobacco storage facility, and packing and labeling operations. Near the center of this section was an entrance to the employee parking lot located in the inner courtyard. The east wing was used for cutting, bolting, and drying tobacco while the west wing housed a cutting and stemming operation, a tobacco storage facility, and a sorting, packing, and finishing operation. By 1898 this latter wing's operations had been confined largely to bag and box manufacturing. Behind the east and west wings were a box factory of frame construction, a 55 foot bell tower, a large stable, a paint shop, blacksmith and carpenter shops, a tobacco warehouse, machine shops, a building housing a wide variety of firefighting equipment, and numerous other structures. Over the years, these structures were all torn down as the American Tobacco Company expanded the scope of its operations on the site.

Sometime after American Tobacco took over the plant, the third and fourth stories were removed from the east wing and the eastern half of the main block. Relatively recently, this portion of the building including the entire north facade has been covered with gold-painted aluminum sheathing. The uncovered portions are white-painted brick which is set in American bond. The structure sits on 6-foot-thick brick foundations and has a partially raised full basement which is set apart from the four

(continued)

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 162.

533

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES 1874-1920

BUILDER/ARCHITECT W. T. Blackwell and Company

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Bull Durham Smoking Tobacco, according to scholar-tobacco executive Robert K. Heimann, was the "first truly national tobacco brand."<sup>1</sup> Aggressively promoted by William T. Blackwell and Julian S. Carr, the Durham Bull became a world-famous trademark and was at one time even emblazoned on the pyramids of Egypt. In addition to blazing new paths in the marketing of tobacco products, W. T. Blackwell and Company pioneered in the application of mechanized production and packaging techniques to the tobacco industry. Furthermore, says Nannie M. Tilley, eminent historian of the tobacco industry, "it was the bellowing of the Blackwell Bull that aroused James Buchanan Duke, the great entrepreneur who shifted the emphasis of his firm from smoking tobacco to cigarettes," thus contributing indirectly at least to the creation of the great American Tobacco Trust.<sup>2</sup>

Bull Durham also had a profound impact on American society. It became, says scholar Joseph C. Robert, "a definite part of the American scene. . . .A standard part of the cowboy's costume . . . was the tag from a sack of Bull Durham hanging from the shirt pocket."<sup>3</sup> It affected the language as well by making the word "bull" acceptable in polite society, as the absurdity of euphemisms for the product such as "cow brute" or "seed-ox" became readily apparent.

The W. T. Blackwell and Company Bull Durham Factory is a four-story, rectangular-shaped brick structure of Italianate design with an interior courtyard and is located at the corner of Blackwell and West Pettigrew Streets in downtown Durham, N. C. Although the exterior has been somewhat altered and a

(continued)

<sup>1</sup>Robert K. Heimann, Tobacco and Americans (New York, 1960), 185.

<sup>2</sup>Nannie M. Tilley, The Bright-Tobacco Industry, 1860-1929 (Chapel Hill, 1948), 551, 555.

<sup>3</sup>Joseph C. Robert, The Story of Tobacco in America (Chapel Hill, 1967), 125.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

American Tobacco Company, The American Tobacco Story (New York: American Tobacco Company, 1964).

Clark, Thomas D. and Albert D. Kirwan, The South Since Appomattox: A Century of Regional Change (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967)  
(continued)

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	<u>17</u>	<u>68819.00</u>	<u>391851.00</u>	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(see continuation sheet)

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
-------	------	--------	------

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
-------	------	--------	------

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Ralph J. Christian, Historian, Historic Landmark Project

ORGANIZATION

DATE

American Association for State and Local History December 1976

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

1400 Eighth Avenue South

615-242-5583

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Nashville,

Tennessee

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

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

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

51

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

**CONTINUATION SHEET** W.T. Blackwell ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE one

upper stories by a string course. The building is capped by a flat roof covered with gravel and tar and has an overhanging metal cornice ornamented with raised panels and a modillion course punctuated by curvilinear brackets which interrupt the paneled frieze.

The building's original exterior is best conveyed by the 12-bay-wide west wing. It is divided into four sections, each three bays wide with the first and third sections projecting slightly. Divisions are emphasized by stuccoed quoins. Windows in this section are set in crosseted stucco surrounds while windows in other sections are set in plain rounded arches. Windows throughout are of the four-over-four sash variety and have metal frames and wooden sills. Doorways generally have rounded arches, and the only remaining wooden doors have raised panels.

Inside, the structure has undergone little alteration with the exception of the first-floor section of the east wing and the eastern portion of the main block, which have been modernized to serve as office space for the American Tobacco Company. Although all original machinery has been removed, the character of the unaltered sections is conveyed by their original pine flooring, plastered walls, enclosed wooden stairways, six-panel wood doors, and exposed wooden ceiling joists resting on wooden support posts. Support posts in the 1874 section are square shaped while those in the more recent sections are rounded.

Although the factory is no longer used for tobacco manufacture, it remains in good condition. In addition to providing space for the Durham offices of the American Tobacco Company, it also houses a returned goods department and storage facility for obsolete machinery.

534

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

CONTINUATION SHEET W.T. Blackwell ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE one

portion covered with gold-colored aluminum sheathing, the building still retains much of its architectural vitality and late-19th-century, tobacco-factory character. Inside, the structure is virtually unchanged except for a first-floor section that has been converted into modern offices for the American Tobacco Company. Since 1957 Bull Durham Smoking Tobacco has been manufactured in Richmond, Va., and the old plant is currently used to house the Durham offices of the American Tobacco Company, a returned goods department, and a storage facility for obsolete machinery.

History

What eventually became Bull Durham Smoking Tobacco originated in 1865 when hundreds of foraging Union and Confederate soldiers carried off most of the granulated Bright-leaf smoking tobacco in John Ruffin Green's little manufacturing plant in Durham, N. C. What appeared to be a heavy loss soon turned into an unexpected bonanza for Green, as large numbers of these ex-soldiers returned to their homes and began to write letters to Durham asking how they might obtain a supply of the quality product they had sampled. The popularity of Green's tobacco was due in part to the fact that he used Bright tobacco, a relatively new variety which was lighter in color and milder in taste. Also, says Robert, he "initiated a quality product when the usual granulated article was of trashy and inferior leaf."<sup>4</sup>

In order to differentiate his product from those of his competitors Green soon adopted Bull Durham as his trademark. The bull whose picture adorned the package was inspired by the bull's head he had seen on jars of Colman's Mustard manufactured in Durham, England, and by a fine breeding animal owned by one of his neighbors. In 1868 Green formed a partnership with William T. Blackwell, a former merchant and tobacco peddler, who after Green's death one year later purchased his interest including the trademark for \$10,292.

Under Blackwell's direction, Bull Durham sales skyrocketed. In 1870 he brought James R. Day and Julian S. Carr in as partners, and the firm became known as W. T. Blackwell and

(continued)

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 123.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

CONTINUATION SHEET W. T. Blackwell ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE two

Company. Under Carr's direction, the first great tobacco advertising campaign was launched. By means of newspaper advertisements, testimonials from prominent men like Alfred Lord Tennyson, Thomas Carlyle, and Alexander H. Stephens, premiums, billboards, and posters, which at one time even adorned the pyramids of Egypt, Carr made the Durham Bull into a world famous trademark. The success of this advertising campaign, says Heimann was "almost as significant for the industry's future as the overnight renown Bull Durham brought to Bright leaf; the emergence of a national and international brand . . . marked an abrupt departure from the hundreds of brands that preceded it, all depending mainly on local renown and word-of-mouth recommendation for sales growth."<sup>5</sup>

As the company grew, it spawned numerous competitors. Adopting the motto, "Let buffalo gore buffalo, and the pasture go to the strongest," Blackwell and Company met the competition head on, successfully defending their trademark in a number of court cases and equipping their factory with the most up-to-date machinery for shredding tobacco, packing it in bags, making bags, and labeling them.<sup>6</sup> By 1883 the company was processing 5 million pounds of tobacco yearly, and its factory, according to Heimann, was the "world's largest tobacco plant."<sup>7</sup> It was because of this success that young James Buchanan Duke commented to a friend in 1881: "My company is up against a stone wall. It cannot compete with the Bull. Something has to be done and quick. As for me, I am going into the cigarette business."<sup>8</sup> Spurred on by Bull Durham's success, Duke by the 1890's had created the great American Tobacco Company Trust, which by 1899 had come to include W. T. Blackwell and Company.

(continued)

<sup>5</sup>Heimann, Tobacco and Americans, 161.

<sup>6</sup>Cited in Ray Ginger, Age of Excess: The United States from 1877 to 1914 (New York, 1965), 20.

<sup>7</sup>Heimann, Tobacco and Americans, 162.

<sup>8</sup>Cited in Robert F. Durden, The Dukes of Durham, (Durham, 1975), 19.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

CONTINUATION SHEET W. T. Blackwell ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE three

Bull Durham also had a profound impact on American society. It became, says Robert, "a definite part of the American scene.... A standard part of the cowboy's costume . . . was the tag from a sack of Bull Durham hanging from the shirt pocket."<sup>9</sup> It affected the language as well by making the word "bull" acceptable in polite society, as the absurdity of euphemisms for the product such as "cow brute" or "seed-ox" became readily apparent.

Despite the growing popularity of manufactured cigarettes by 1900, Bull Durham, now owned by the American Tobacco Company, more than held its own and, as late as 1909, was considered the world's most popular smoking tobacco. During World War I, the U.S. Government commandeered the plant's entire output, and each month two 30-car freight trains left Durham carrying 11 million sacks with enough tobacco to make 400 million cigarettes, but the Great Depression, says Heimann, brought the Bull "from its pen for one last fling" as the public was admonished to "Roll your own and save your roll."<sup>10</sup> Between 1930 and 1932 Bull Durham sales increased some 9 million pounds as cigarette sales plummeted. The American Tobacco Company still manufactures Bull Durham Smoking Tobacco, but since 1957 it has been produced at a plant in Richmond, Va.

<sup>9</sup>Robert, Story of Tobacco in America, 125.

<sup>10</sup>Heimann, Tobacco and Americans, 234.

532



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

**CONTINUATION SHEET** W. T. Blackwell ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE one

Durden, Robert F., The Dukes of Durham, 1865-1929 (Durham: Duke University Press, 1975).

Ginger, Ray, Age of Excess: The United States from 1877 to 1914 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965).

Heimann, Robert K., Tobacco and Americans (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1960).

Robert, Joseph C., The Story of Tobacco in America (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1967). Published originally in 1949.

Sanborn Insurance Maps of Durham, 1884 and 1898, copies in the North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C.

Tilley, Nannie M., The Bright-Tobacco Industry, 1860-1929 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1948).

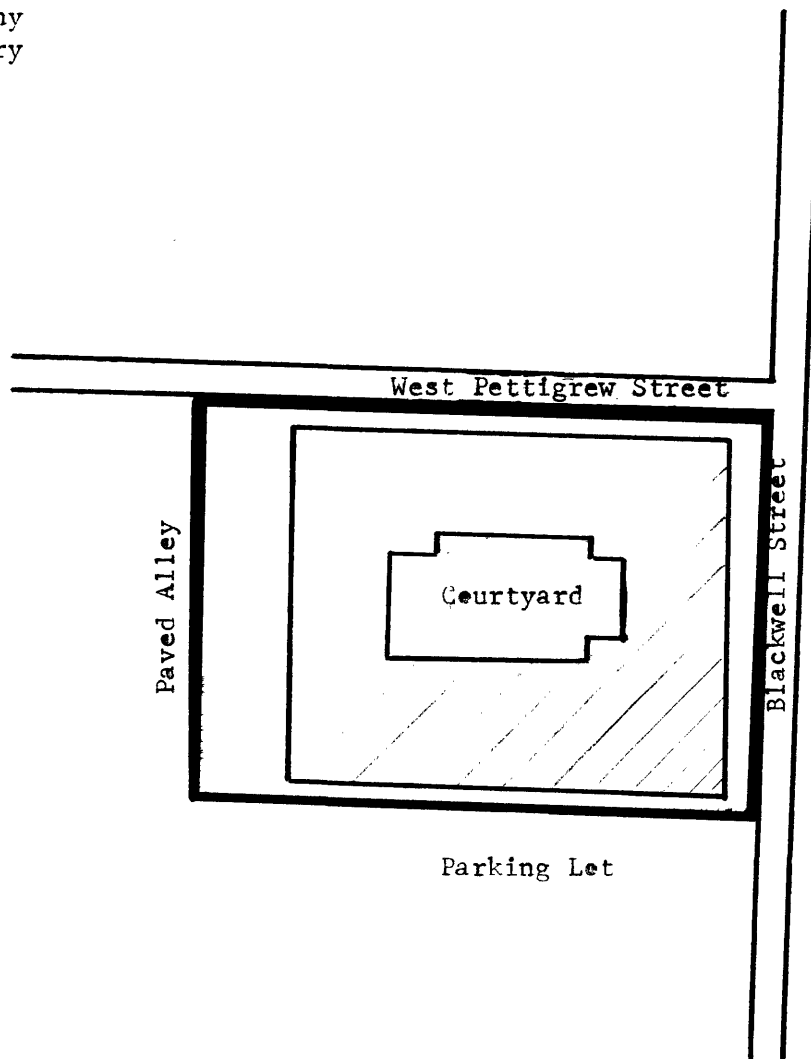
Tobacco Institute, North Carolina and Tobacco: A Chapter in America's Industrial Growth (Washington: Tobacco Institute, 1971).

Continuation Sheet W. T. Blackwell Item Number 10 Page one

As indicated in red on the accompanying AASLH sketch map, a line beginning at the intersection of Blackwell and West Pettigrew Streets and extending westward approximately 125 feet along the left curb of West Pettigrew Street to the east edge of a paved alley; thence southward approximately 100 feet along the east edge of said alley to a point; thence eastward approximately 130 feet along the north edge of a paved parking lot to the western edge of the right-of-way of Blackwell Street; thence northward approximately 100 feet along the left curb of Blackwell to the point of beginning.

539

W. T. Blackwell and Company  
Bull Durham Tobacco Factory  
201 West Pettigrew Street  
Durham, North Carolina



Prepared by:  
Ralph J. Christian  
AASLH  
December, 1976

NOT TO SCALE