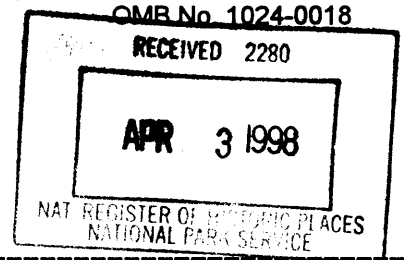


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



411

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

1. Name of Property

historic name Clarke Mills

other names/site number Vanity Fair Mills, Inc.; Vanity Fair Intimates Plant #14

2. Location

street & number 301 W. Church Street not for publication N/A
city or town Jackson vicinity N/A
state Alabama code AL county Clarke code 025 zip code 36545

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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 nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 3/30/98
Signature of certifying official Date

Alabama Historical Commission (State Historic Preservation Office)
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that this property is:
- entered in the National Register
 [] See continuation sheet.
 - determined eligible for the National Register
 [] See continuation sheet.
 - determined not eligible for the National Register
 - removed from the National Register
 - other (explain):

[Signature] 4-30-98
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check only one box.)

Category of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

_____ buildings

_____ sites

_____ structures

1

_____ objects

_____ Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

Historic & Architectural Properties of Clarke County, AL

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Industry/Processing/Extraction

Sub: manufacturing facility

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Industry/Processing/Extraction

Sub: manufacturing facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Moderne

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

roof asphalt

walls brick

other _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition on continuation sheet/s.)

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)

- X 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.
X 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.) N/A

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or a grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Industry

Period of Significance 1939-1948

Significant Dates 1939 1946 1948

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Bieberstein, H. B. (Architect) Guest & Son of Anderson, SC (Builders)

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS) N/A
preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:
[X] State Historic Preservation Office
[] Other state agency
[] Federal agency
[] Local government
[] University
[] Other
Name of repository

USDI/NPS Registration Form

Property Name Clarke Mills

County and State Clarke County, Alabama

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately 5 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone Easting	Northing	Zone Easting	Northing
1	<u>16</u>	<u>414810</u>	<u>3486190</u>	3
2	_____	_____	_____	4
	<u>See continuation sheet.</u>			

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan M. Enzweiler/Historian & Trina Binkley/AHC Reviewer

organization Alabama Historical Commission date December 30, 1997

street & number 468 S. Perry Street telephone (334) 242-3184

city or town Montgomery state Alabama zip code 36130

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Vanity Fair Mills Inc.

street & number 624 S. Alabama Avenue telephone 334/ 246-2481

city or town Monroeville state AL zip code 36460

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 1

Name of Property: Clarke Mills
County and State: Clarke County, Alabama

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#7 PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Clarke or Vanity Fair Mills is a sprawling, one-story, brick factory complex that lies to the west and north of the Jackson Historic District. The complex is surrounded by paved parking lots, but also has some green space, particularly to the front and west (side) elevations. Its rear property line more or less abuts the town's commercial area. To the north and across W. Church Street from it is a neighborhood comprised of modest working-class housing. Neither the historical research nor the building typologies indicate that this was a mill village associated with Vanity Fair.

The original section of the textile mill, which was constructed in 1939, was designed in the Art Moderne style by H. B. Bieberstein, Vanity Fair's architect. This 20,000-square-foot factory was described by the Clarke County Democrat as a "modern type and is made of steel, brick, and glass block". It was fireproof and, because of its glass block windows, air conditioned (Clarke County Democrat 3/23/1939 & 6/15/1939).

On its front facade, the factory expresses a horizontality that is somewhat counterbalanced by broad, vertical piers. Originally five bays, the facade is now seven bays wide with the two later, east bays adhering to the initial design. This expansion occurred in 1948 to create more office space. The design consists of slightly recessed, even numbered bays displaying horizontal reeding and long, rectangular glass block windows that are interspaced between piers featuring vertical reeding. Single leaf entrances crowned by flat awnings are located in the end piers. The double leaf, main entrance is located in the third bay or pier from the west. Above its flat awning there is vertical reeding and a circular motif. This frontispiece is flanked by piers. Except for the early addition to the front facade, the rest of the mill is strictly utilitarian in design. The entire mill is capped by a flat roof.

The complex has had several additions since its construction in 1939. Please refer to the footprint on page 7.2. The original section of the mill contained offices and the lingerie plant. The lingerie plant consisted of a large, open space with metal columns supporting the roof structure. Today it is used for storage. The majority of offices today are located in approximately the same areas as they were historically, although some of these rooms may have been reconfigured over time. The office walls are now covered in wood paneling. The additions added to the rear of the lingerie plant in the late 1940s included the 1946 addition #1 (150' x 79'), the 1948 warehouse #1 (53' x 110'), the 1949 comez building (142' x 80') and the 1949 knitting building (211' x 165'). Later additions were made to the knitting building. These were the 1959 warehouse (50' x 140'), the 1963 addition #2 (120' x 123') and the 1972 double knit building (272' x 150'). Generally, the interiors of these additions are large, open spaces (James Wilson interview 11/19/97).

Currently, the mill has 105 employees and 150 knitting machines. Although this textile mill is not operating at full capacity, it is the only knitting facility for the Vanity Fair division and provides over 80% of the square yardage used in Vanity Fair garments. The fabric is dyed and finished at the Monroeville plant in Monroe County (James Wilson interview 11/19/97).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL COMPONENT

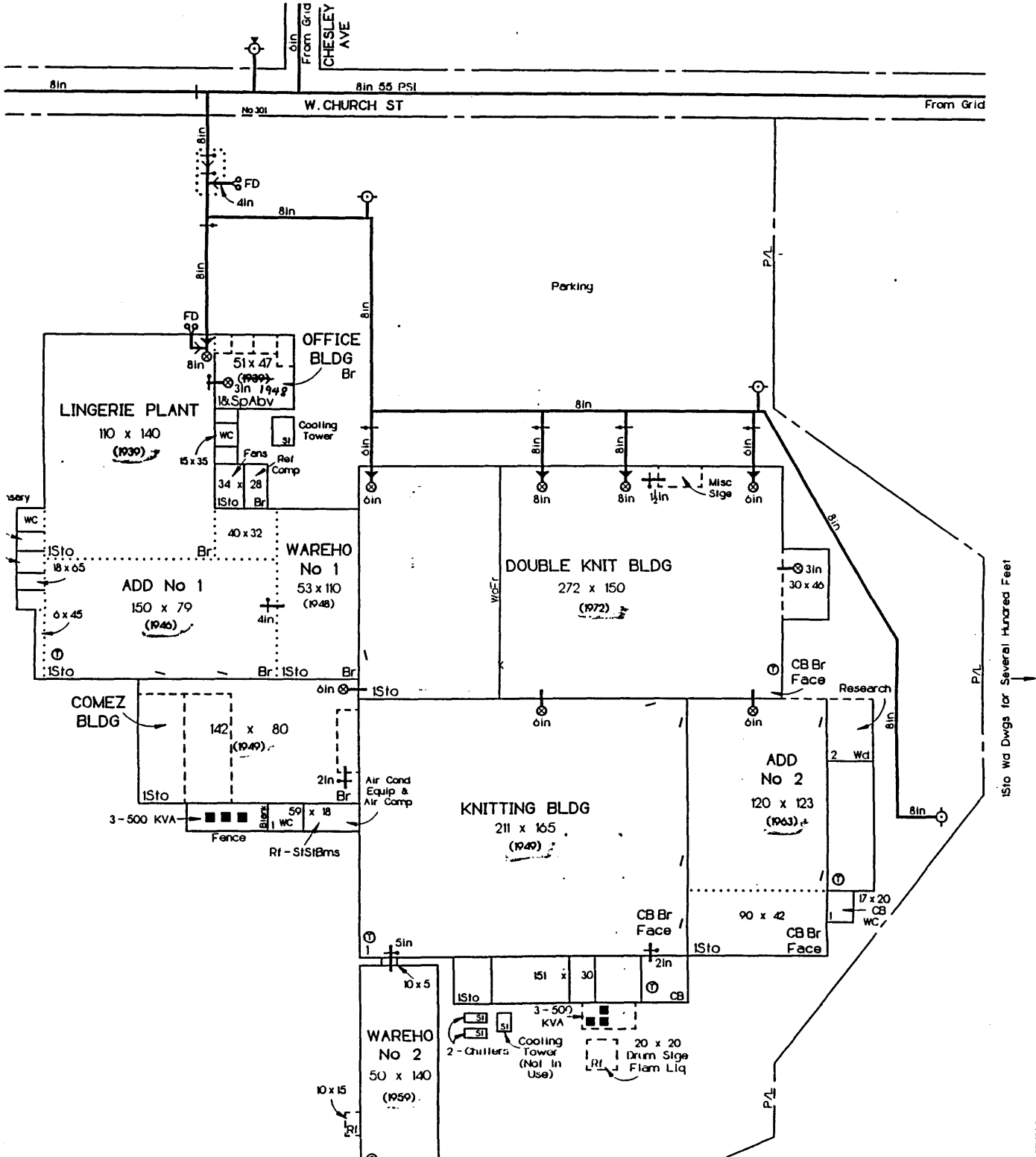
Although no archaeological investigations were undertaken, the potential for subsurface remains may exist. The Vanity Fair Mills is located in Jackson, which is one of the earliest settled areas of Clarke County.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 2

Name of Property: **Clarke Mills**
County and State: **Clarke County, Alabama**



15to wd Dwgs for Several Hundred Feet

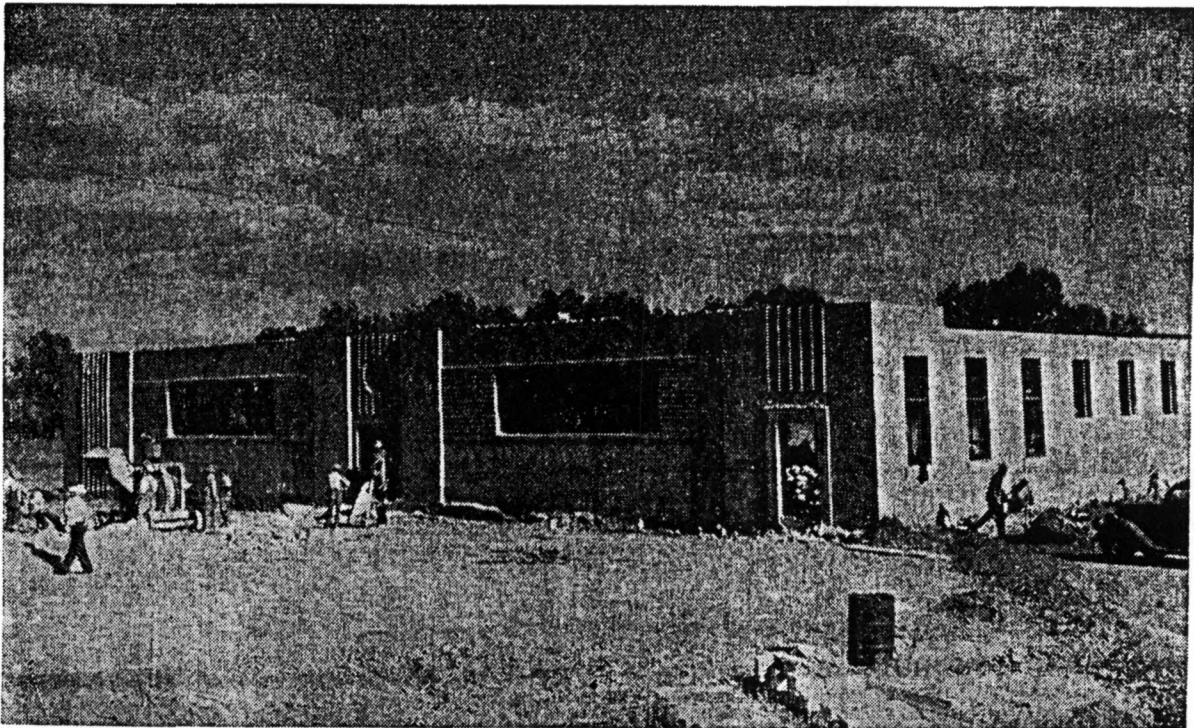
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 3

Name of Property: Clarke Mills
County and State: Clarke County, Alabama

ORIGINAL BUILDING COMPLETED IN 1939



The South Alabamian
June 18, 1959

**United States Department of the Interior
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 4

Name of Property: Clarke Mills
County and State: Clarke County, Alabama

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Period of Significance

The period of significance extends from 1939, the year the mill was constructed, to 1948 which is the fifty year cut off date for the multiple property nomination for Clarke County. The areas of significance for Vanity Fair Mills (also known historically as Clarke Mills) are industry and architecture. The mill was and still is an important industry in Jackson and in the county at large. Textiles played an important role in the industrialization of Alabama. This mill was the first textile industry to be established in Clarke and the second Vanity Fair plant to be built in the South. The Art Moderne style of the plant is an important contribution to the architectural landscape of the county.

Criterion A: Industry

The Clarke Mills in Jackson, constructed in 1939, are Vanity Fair's second oldest manufacturing facility in southwest Alabama and "the first major industry, aside from agriculture and timber, ever brought to Clarke county (sic)". This mill complex signifies how the development of the textile industry in Alabama in the first half of the twentieth century manifested itself within the local context of Clarke County. The county, along with Alabama and the rest of the South, experienced significant industrial development in the first half of this century. Textiles was a major industry in the South during this period and from 1914 to 1930 ranked first of all Alabama industries in total value of products (CCD 6/29/1939 & Rogers 1994:445).

As "the first major industry" of the county, the textile mill made a significant contribution to the industrial development and economy of Jackson. This was vitally important during the Great Depression and also after World War II when returning veterans needed jobs. The mills' importance to the general welfare is reflected in the amount of public monies that were invested in the Vanity Fair facility in its early history. Local citizens raised \$53,621.96 for the construction of the original mill in 1939. The plant's 1946 expansion cost a total of \$156,025 in public monies. Two years later, \$64,600 of public funds financed the mills' office addition. The following year, according to Vanity Fair's history of the mill, \$57,875 "was raised" for the addition of a warehouse and a warping department. This phrase implies that the money came from the public. In 1951, the public invested \$266,050 in the throwing department which was later converted to the current knitting department. Another, less costly, indication of the mill's prominence in the community was the Vanity Cafe opened by S. L. Strong in 1947. It was named after Vanity Fair Mills (Knitting Plant 1997 & CCD 9/18/1947).

In conclusion, Vanity Fair textile mills symbolize a dramatic shift in the industrial development of Clarke County. The county finally had a stake in the expanding textile industry of Alabama. This new industry was the first, and probably only, major industry in the county founded on silk.

Criterion C: Architecture

Within the local context of Clarke County, the Vanity Fair Mill is an excellent example of the Art Moderne style. Despite later additions, some of which are over fifty years old, the mill retains a high degree of architectural integrity. The plant was designed by H. B. Bieberstein, Vanity Fair's own architect from Charlotte, North Carolina. The contractors were Guest and Son of Anderson, South Carolina. The Clarke County Democrat described it in 1939 as a "modern type [structure that] is made of steel, brick and glass block" (CCD 6/15/1939). The plant encompassed 20,000 square feet and was of fireproof construction. With only glass block windows, it was air conditioned (CCD 3/23/1939). This was probably one of the earliest air conditioned buildings in Jackson, if not Clarke County.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 5

Name of Property: Clarke Mills
County and State: Clarke County, Alabama

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The Art Moderne style is associated with the urban landscape and, except for small gas stations like #106 in the Jackson Historic District, is not often found in rural communities. There are certain distinguishing design elements, however, to the style's interpretation in rural Alabama. The buildings are one story, expressing a horizontality that is emphasized by corbelled beltcourses. The beltcourses are in very low relief on a flat front plane. The buildings also usually have flat roofs, rounded corners and smooth wall surfaces. Because of the utilitarian nature of these resources, there is seldom additional detailing except, perhaps, for a flat awning.

More sophisticated, and often urban, examples of the Art Moderne style may feature a vertical orientation or a horizontality counterbalanced by vertical structural elements. Rectilinear ornamentation dominates but is softened by geometrical curves. Banks of windows are common and accentuate the streamlined character of the buildings.

The Vanity Fair Mills feature elements from both these traditions. Its major differences from the Art Moderne style of rural Alabama are its size, its lack of rounded corners and its wall treatment. While most Moderne buildings in the state's countryside are stuccoed, Vanity Fair features brick walls. However, it is a one-story, utilitarian building of horizontal orientation with simple ornamentation. Its corbelled beltcourses and rectilinear glass block windows emphasize its horizontality which is counterbalanced by broad, vertical piers. These display vertical reeding. The pier containing the main entrance also has a circular motif. Flat awnings are located over the three front entrances.

In summary, the Vanity Fair textile mill makes a significant contribution to Clarke County's collection of mid-twentieth-century architecture. It is the most sophisticated interpretation of the Art Moderne style in the county. Constructed during the Great Depression in a contemporary style, the plant symbolized economic renewal and modernity in Jackson, Alabama.

Historical Summary

The first Vanity Fair mill in the south was Monroe Mills established at Monroeville, Alabama in 1937. The Jackson plant was built as a hosiery mill in 1939 after Clarke Countians raised \$53,621.96 for its construction. It was dedicated on June 22 of that year (Knitting Plant 1997).

The company which came to be known as Vanity Fair began in 1899 in Pennsylvania as the Reading Glove and Mitten Company, manufacturers of silk gloves. In the 1910s the company changed its name to Schuylkill Silk Mills and also began to make underwear. Its first national advertisement with the new Vanity Fair brand name appeared in 1917. In 1919, the company adopted the name Vanity Fair Silk Mills (Monroe Journal 11 June 1987).

The company made great strides in the 1920s and the 1930s. It moved its manufacturing operations south to Alabama in the late 1930s, building a plant first in Monroeville and then in Jackson. It discontinued making gloves in the early 1920s and in the 1930s began manufacturing a line of girdles, panty girdles, and bras. This line of garments was discontinued during World War II, later revived, and then discontinued again in 1946 (Monroe Journal 11 June 1987).

During World War II, Extacee Inc., a subsidiary of Vanity Fair, was started to deal with war contracts and the sale of junior VF merchandise. The Clarke Mills in Jackson manufactured a variety of defense articles. These included escape, flare, aerial delivery and cargo parachutes, airplane protective paulins, mosquito netting and

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 6

Name of Property: Clarke Mills
County and State: Clarke County, Alabama

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bars and cot tops. The first uniform slips for the WACs were also made in Jackson (Monroe Journal 11 June 1987 & Knitting Plant 1997).

The decades of the 1940s and the 1950s saw a lot of changes for both Vanity Fair and its Jackson facility. The company changed its name to Vanity Fair Mills, Inc. on August 28, 1942. Six years later, Vanity Fair became the first women's lingerie company to produce all of its lines in nylon. In the 1950s, the company became the first manufacturer to use permanently pleated nylon in its garments. The manufacturing of hosiery at the Clarke Mills ceased in 1943. The mill was expanded in 1946 with \$156,025.00 in public monies and went into production of women's lingerie. Two years later, an office addition was made to the plant at a cost of \$64,600.00 in public funds. A warehouse and warping department were added in 1949 at a cost of \$57,875.00. In 1951, the throwing department was constructed and later converted into the present knitting department. The entire complex was remodeled, rearranged and received new lighting in 1957 (Monroe Journal 11 June 1987 & Knitting Plant 1997).

From 1952 to 1977, additional Vanity Fair mills were constructed in Alabama and Florida. The Clarke Mills figures prominently among these plants down to today. Knitting, lay-planning, cutting, and sewing operations all took place at the mill in Jackson prior to 1973. In addition, this plant housed the Research and Development group which designed and built the majority of VF's automated machinery. In 1991, this group was moved to the mill in Monroeville. The Vanity Fair Mill in Jackson contributed to the Allied effort in the Persian Gulf War by knitting the fabric for radar evading tank covers. Strands of metal woven inside the fabric's yarn disrupted the enemy's radar ability.

As the above contextual history indicates, the mill in Jackson was an important component of Vanity Fair's operations. It was constructed in 1939 and began operations in the summer of that year. Initial plans called for the mill to produce silk hosiery. At first, only the knitting would be done in the mill but later the work would be expanded to include spinning, dyeing, finishing, and packing (CCD 3/23/1939 & 6/15/1939). By the summer of 1941, however, there was not as great a demand for hosiery as the mill's managers had predicted so the plant began producing silk cloth for ladies' underwear (CCD 6/19/1941). Also in this year, the warp knitting operations were moved from the Monroeville, Alabama plant to Jackson.

The city planned to furnish the site for the plant and construct the building, then lease it to the mill company. The average number of workers employed by the mill during the period of significance is not known; however, plans called for the factory to initially employ 400 people (CCD 2/2/1939). The work force was increased by about fifty employees in 1941 (CCD 6/19/1941). A \$100,000 expansion to the plant occurred in 1946 (CCD 2/28/1946).

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National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9, 10 Page 7

Name of Property: Clarke Mills
County and State: Clarke County, Alabama

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Clarke County Democrat (Grove Hill, Alabama). 2 February 1939-18 September 1947.
Cited as CCD in notes.

No author cited. "Big dates in company's past." The Monroe Journal, 11 June 1987, 2-10. *Cited as Monroe Journal 11 June 1987 in notes.*

No author cited. "Knitting Plant, Jackson, Alabama: October 10, 1997." Jackson, AL: Vanity Fair Intimates Plant #14, 1997. Photocopied. *Cited as Knitting Plant 1997 in notes.*

Rogers, William Warren, Robert David Ward, Leah Rawls Atkins and Wayne Flynt. Alabama: The History of a Deep South State. Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1994.

Wilson, James. Interview by Susan M. Enzweiler, 19 November 1997.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

Parcel #42-03-08-2-001-003

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

These are the boundaries that are currently associated with the property.