

Result
9.14

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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 Textile Mills of Louisville TR

and/or common NA

2. Location

street & number - see continuation sheet - NA not for publication

city, town Louisville NA vicinity of congressional district 3 & 4

state Kentucky code 021 county Jefferson code 111

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
NA district	NA public	X occupied	NA agriculture	NA museum
NA building(s)	X private	NA unoccupied	X commercial	NA park
NA structure	NA both	NA work in progress	NA educational	NA private residence
NA site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	NA entertainment	NA religious
NA object	NA in process	X yes: restricted	NA government	NA scientific
X Theme	NA being considered	NA yes: unrestricted	X industrial	NA transportation
(4 bldgs)		NA no	NA military	NA other:

4. Owner of Property

name - see continuation sheet -

street & number

city, town - vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Jefferson County (Ky.) Courthouse

street & number 531 W. Jefferson Street

city, town Louisville state Kentucky

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Kentucky Historic Resources Inventory has this property been determined eligible? NA yes X no

date April-May 1981 NA federal X state NA county NA local

depository for survey records Heritage Division, Department of the Arts

city, town Frankfort state Kentucky

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

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Textile Mills of Louisville
Louisville, Jefferson County

CONTINUATION SHEET Kentucky

ITEM NUMBER

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Eclipse Woolen Mill

- American Builders Supply Company
1044 E. Chestnut Street
Louisville, Kentucky 40206

Falls City Jeans and Woolen Mills -

- William & H.B. Benovitz
1010 & 1024 S. Preston Street
Louisville, Kentucky 40203

Louisville Cotton Mills

- Fincastle Investment Company
1318 McHenry Street
Louisville, Kentucky 40217
ATTN: Mr. Bodley Booker, Jr., President

Bradford Mills

- Carl K. and Helen S. Helman
1752 Casselberry Road
Louisville, Kentucky 40205

7. Description

Condition

☒ excellent
☒ good
☒ fair

☐ NA deteriorated
☐ NA ruins
☐ NA unexposed

Check one

☐ NA unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ NA moved date NA

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Louisville retains four former textile mills which are significant examples of nineteenth and early twentieth century industrial architecture. All four are located in the eastern part of the city, on the far edges of downtown. The old Eclipse Woolen Mill is in the Phoenix Hill neighborhood, about one-half mile due east of the central business district. The other three mills lie within a half-mile radius of one another, about a mile and a half southeast of the center city.

Besides sharing a common function, the four mills have a number of similarities of design. All four are constructed of red brick, are two to three stories in height, and have large wall surfaces broken by long rows of arched windows. One element that characterizes all four is the presence of a central entry tower, a feature that distinguishes this group from any other type of industrial building in the city.

The earliest of the four mills, the Eclipse Woolen Mill (photo 16), dates from 1867. It was listed individually on the National Register in December of 1978. The five-story, projecting entry tower is flanked by two-story brick wings. Windows with brick relieving arches are recessed between brick pilasters which form segmental arches above the second-story openings. The windows were originally single-hung, with sixteen-over-sixteen panes, but these were replaced in recent years by double-hung, multi-light sash windows. The tower contains the recessed main entrance. Windows pierce each story of the tower on all four sides. In the top story, three narrow, round-arched openings have hold, multiple arches of radiating brick. Brick corbeling and dentils embellish the crown of the tower and the wings. A wrought-iron fence with stone gateposts encloses the small front yard. The original architect is unknown, but additions and alterations are known to have been made by D.X. Murphy in 1884, 1887 and 1895. The building was extensively renovated in 1977. Alterations included removing existing floors in places to form an atrium, exposing the original poplar roof trusses and adding an arched entry on the west side.

The ca. 1886 Falls City Jeans and Woolen Mills (photo 1) is a two and one-half story brick structure. The central tower is gabled and flanked by long wings articulated by brick pilasters. The raised basement level has a row of half windows capped by smooth stone lintels. The windows of the main story are tall, with 12-over-12 lights, stone lintels and sills. Brick corbeling caps each bay. The gambrel-end roof is very steeply pitched across the facade. It is sheathed in slate and is pierced by a gabled dormer over each bay. The gables are embellished with decorative trim. The double-door entry through the tower is capped by stone lintels and flanked by two small windows. There are three windows in the second story. The tower's gable is trimmed in decorative wood at the cornice.

Louisville Cotton Mills (photos 2-11) is an intact, nineteenth century industrial complex comprising some ten major buildings located on a seven and one-half acre tract. The mill complex dates from 1889, with major additions in 1904 (for construction dates of buildings in complex, see map 6). The brick mill building itself, consisting of a five-story tower flanked by long, three-story wings, has a frontage of 650 feet. Fenestration in the wings consists of rows of large, segmental windows with multiple lights, brick voussoirs and stone sills. About 85% of the windows are intact; the others have been closed with concrete block.

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There is decorative corbeling between windows in the upper story. The main entry in the tower has been altered by the addition of a large stone surround, metal doors and a canopy. The windows are segmentally arched in the first three stories and round arched in the upper levels. Stone string courses and several bands of corbeling decorate the tower. An original, ten thousand gallon water tank still remains on its top floor. The mill's interior construction of wooden posts and beams is largely intact, as are the pine floors. (photo 10)

The original 1889 complex (see map 7) included, besides the mill itself, engine and boiler rooms, a dye house, warehouse and storage building. The engine room is attached to the rear of the mill and is one story in height. A second story is a recent addition. The adjacent boiler room (photo 5) has segmentally-arched openings. A 120-foot smokestack with decorative corbeling at its crown is attached to the boiler room. The one-story dye house (photo 6) is similar in style to the buildings already described, although a concrete loading dock and a clerestory of windows have been added to it. The original 1889 warehouse, attached to the dye house, also remains nearly intact except for an added clerestory. The brick storage building (photo 7) is similar in style to the others and has changed little from its original appearance.

Additions made in 1904 included the huge east wing of the mill (photo 3) and a warehouse (photo 8). The warehouse has three parts. There are two, one-story sections of frame construction with iron cladding, while the third section is three stories and brick. A later small building in the complex is the old shipping house (photo 9), built about 1915-18 of reinforced concrete.

Bradford Mills (photos 12-15) dates from 1910. The narrow facade features a five-story tower topped by a pyramidal roof. The segmentally-arched entry through the tower has double doors topped by a transom. In the next three stories, sash windows with brick relieving arches are arranged diagonally, following the interior staircase. A broad stone band inscribed with the words "Bradford Mills" separates the top story from those below. Oversized wooden cornice brackets which support the broad eaves extend down into the top story. Between the brackets is a series of small, rectangular windows. The three-story main body of the mill extends far back from the tower. The east side is pierced by long rows of large, multi-paned windows with relieving arches, nearly all of which are intact. On the west side, an original one-story brick structure (photo 15) has pilastered walls and windows similar to those on the other side. This section has a raised clerestory. Other original mill structures include the engine and boiler rooms attached to the rear. A four-story, brick and reinforced concrete addition (photo 14) was made on the west side in 1924. It is connected to the older mill building by a three-story passageway.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
NA prehistoric	NA archeology-prehistoric	NA community planning	NA landscape architecture	NA religion
NA 1400-1499	NA archeology-historic	NA conservation	NA law	NA science
NA 1500-1599	NA agriculture	NA economics	NA literature	NA sculpture
NA 1600-1699	X architecture	NA education	NA military	NA social/
NA 1700-1799	NA art	NA engineering	NA music	humanitarian
X 1800-1899	NA commerce	NA exploration/settlement	NA philosophy	NA theater
X 1900-	NA communications	NA industry	NA politics/government	NA transportation
		NA invention		NA other (specify)

Specific dates See Continuation Sheet ~~9, XXXX~~ **Builder/Architect** C.J. Clarke; D.X. Murphy; Brinton B. Davis

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Four former textile mills in Louisville are individually significant examples of 19th and early 20th century industrial architecture. In addition, these mills, with their distinctive towers, represent a type of industrial architecture in Louisville.

At least two of the mills are the work of prominent local architects. Louisville Cotton Mills, with its immense mill building and many secondary structures, is an outstanding, virtually intact industrial complex from the late nineteenth century.

Although textile manufacturing never attained the economic importance that the tobacco and distilling industries held for Louisville, it appeared early in the city's history and developed by the end of the last century into a thriving, multi-million dollar enterprise employing hundreds of workers. The earliest mention of the industry appears in the 1832 Louisville Directory, which lists one woolen factory and one cotton mill. Following the Civil War, Louisville experienced a tremendous growth in commerce and industry, aided in large part by the rapid expansion of the railroads. The textile trade profited from this period of general prosperity and reached its height during the years 1880 - 1910.

By far the most important product was "Kentucky Jeans" clothing, a coarse, durable and cheap fabric for the working man. The 1880 Census reported Kentucky to be the nation's second largest producer of jeans cloth. By 1890, six large woolen mills were turning out seven million yards of jeans cloth a year, with annual sales of \$1.5 million.¹ Jean pants could be purchased for \$1.50 a pair.²

These four mills are the best remaining architectural representatives of Louisville's textile industry. The oldest of them, the 1867 Eclipse Woolen Mill (photo 16), was entered in the National Register in December of 1978. The long wings flanking its five-story tower are articulated by segmental arched window openings. The facade is embellished by brick corbeling and dentils. The upper level of the tower once held a huge tank that supplied water for the sprinkler system. The original architect of the mill is unknown, but the local firm of D. X. Murphy & Brothers made additions during the 1880s. The mill remained in operation until 1910, producing jeans clothing. In 1977, the building was imaginatively converted for office space.

The ca. 1886 Falls City Jeans and Woolen Mills (photo 1) is an unusual, gambrel roof structure with a row of gabled dormers forming a full upper story. Though the body of the mill is brick, the squat tower terminates in a steeply pitched, frame gable. The architect of the mill was D. J. Williams. In the 1890s, it was the city's largest producer of jeans cloth, with an annual output of 2.5 million yards.³

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Louisville, Jefferson County, Kentucky

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Louisville Cotton Mills (photo 2-11) is a remarkable example of a late 19th century mill complex. It includes the huge mill structure itself, plus warehouses, engine and boiler rooms, dye house, picker house and maintenance shop. The company even owned and developed some of the neighboring blocks for employee housing. The founder of Louisville Cotton Mills was R. A. Robinson, an extremely wealthy merchant who owned successful drug and hardware businesses in addition to this and other textile holdings. The original 1889 mill was designed by C. J. Clarke; major additions were made in 1904 by D. X. Murphy & Brothers. The mill produced cotton warp for the jeans factories, but quickly diversified into other textile products. During the 1930s and 1940s, upholstery and drapery fabric was manufactured here and sold world-wide under the brand name of "Fincastle". There are now five companies occupying the various buildings, including a small operation which still weaves upholstery fabric (see photo 11).

The last of the four to be built, Bradford Mills (photos 12-15), dates from 1910. The oversize brackets and extended eaves of the tower roof suggest the Mission style popular at that time. The architect was Brinton B. Davis. Unlike the other three, Bradford Mills was not associated with jeans production, rather specializing in cotton and worsted yarns. The term "Bradford" refers to a system of spinning worsted yarns. The mill was originally under local ownership, but in 1913, it was acquired by the American Woolen Mills Company of Massachusetts and thus became the giant firm's only holding outside the Northeast.⁴

¹ "Traffic in Textiles", Louisville Courier-Journal, 1 January 1891, p.20-1.

² J. Stoddard Johnston, ed., Memorial History of Louisville from Its First Settlement to the Year 1896, Vol. I, (Chicago and New York: American Biographical Publishing Company, ca. 1896).

³ "Traffic in Textiles," pp. 20-21.

⁴ Correspondance with Merrimack Valley Textile Museum, North Andover, Mass.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
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Textiles Mills of Louisville; Louisville, Jefferson County, KY.
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Eclipse Woolen Mill, 1867; (additions 1884, 1887, 1895).-- *Previously on 6a*

Falls City Jeans and Woolen Mills, ca. 1886

Louisville Cotton Mills, 1889; (additions 1904, ca. 1915).

Bradford Mills, 1910; (addition 1924)

9. Major Bibliographical References

- see continuation sheet -

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property see continuation sheet, item #10, pg. 3

Quadrangle name Louisville East

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	6
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6	1	0	9	2	0
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4	2	3	4	0	1	0
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4	2	3	2	6	6	0
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C

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6	1	0	7	2	0
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4	2	3	2	2	0	0
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D

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6	1	0	3	0	0
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4	2	3	1	8	0	0
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Verbal boundary description and justification

- see continuation sheet -

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state NA code NA county NA code NA

state NA code NA county NA code NA

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Hugh B. Foshee / Architectural Historian

organization Louisville Landmarks Commission date April 26, 1981

street & number 727 W. Main Street telephone (502) 587-3501

city or town Louisville state Kentucky

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Mary Coran April

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 2/9/82

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Louisville Times

Correspondance with the Merrimack Valley Textile Museum, North Andover, Mass.

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Louisville, Jefferson

CONTINUATION SHEET County, Kentucky ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 2

Eclipse Woolen Mill - City Block 16-L, Lot 5.

Falls City Jeans and Woolen Mills - City Block 30-H, Lot 65-

Louisville Cotton Mills - Beginning at a point on the southwest corner of Goss Avenue and McHenry Street, thence southward following the west right-of-way line of McHenry Street 150' to a point, thence westward and parallel to Goss Avenue 140' to a point, thence southward and parallel to McHenry Street 223.5' to a point, thence westward and parallel to Goss Avenue 683' to a point in the east right-of-way line of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad tracks, thence northward following said right-of-way line to the point of its intersection with the south right-of-way line of Goss Avenue, thence eastward following said right-of-way line of Goss Avenue 656' to the point of beginning, being a part of City Block 26-A, Lot 85.

Bradford Mills - City Block 25-F, Lot 15.

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Textile Mills of Louisville
Louisville, Jefferson Co., KY
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ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY

Eclipse Woolen Mill
1044 E. Chestnut St. - 1.29 acres

Falls City Jeans and Woolen Mills
1010 S. Preston St. - .60 acres

Louisville Cotton Mills
1008 Goss Ave. - 5.13 acres

Bradford Mills
1034 E. Oak St. - 2.03 acres

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Continuation sheet

Item number
Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

Page dnr-11

Name Textile Mills of Louisville Thematic Resources
State Kentucky

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

1. Bradford Mills

Entered in the
National Register

for
Keeper

Delores Byers 10/6/84

Attest

2. Eclipse Woolen Mill
(Previously listed)

Keeper

Attest

3. Louisville Cotton Mills

Entered in the
National Register

for
Keeper

Delores Byers 10/6/84

Attest

4. Falls City Jeans and
Woolen Mills

Entered in the
National Register

for
Keeper

Delores Byers 10/6/84

Attest

5.

Keeper

Attest

6.

Keeper

Attest

7.

Keeper

Attest

8.

Keeper

Attest

9.

Keeper

Attest

10.

Keeper

Attest