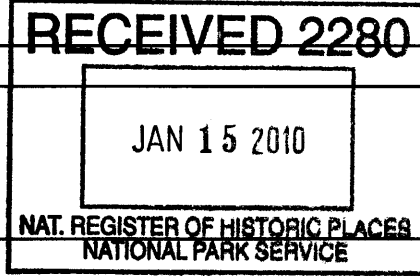


037

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in "Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms" (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.



1. Name of Property

historic name Bibb City Historic District
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Roughly bounded by the Chattahoochee River, Woodland Circle, 2nd Avenue and 35th Street
city, town Bibb City () vicinity of
county Muscogee code GA 215
state Georgia code GA zip code 31904

() not for publication

3. Classification

Ownership of Property:

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-federal

Category of Property:

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

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing

Noncontributing

buildings	238	6
sites	3	14
structures	5	1
objects	0	0
total	246	21

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 1 (Bibb Mill was one of five mill complexes listed in the nomination)

Name of previous listing: Columbus Historic Riverfront Industrial District, Muscogee County, Georgia, National Historic Landmark, June 2, 1978

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination 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 meets the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

Richard Clowers
Signature of certifying official

1-6-10
Date

for Dr. David Crass
Acting Historic Preservation Division Director
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

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

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency or bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other, explain:

see continuation sheet

Liz Beline 2/24/10

Keeper of the National Register

Date

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

DOMESTIC: single dwelling
DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling
COMMERCE/TRADE: office building
COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store
COMMERCE/TRADE: restaurant
SOCIAL: clubhouse
EDUCATION: school
RELIGION: religious facility
RECREATION AND CULTURE: theater
RECREATION AND CULTURE: auditorium
RECREATION AND CULTURE: sports facility
RECREATION AND CULTURE: outdoor recreation
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTING: manufacturing facility
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTING: water tower
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTING: energy facility
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTING: industrial storage
LANDSCAPE: park

Current Functions:

DOMESTIC: single dwelling
DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling
SOCIAL: clubhouse
RELIGION: religious facility
RECREATION AND CULTURE: auditorium
RECREATION AND CULTURE: outdoor recreation
LANDSCAPE: park

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Classical Revival
LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Bungalow/Craftsman
OTHER: Double Shotgun
OTHER: Saddlebag
OTHER: Pyramidal-Roof Duplex
OTHER: Side-Gabled Cottage
OTHER: Shotgun

Materials:

foundation BRICK
CONCRETE
walls WOOD: weatherboard

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7--Description

roof	BRICK ASPHALT METAL: tin
other	N/A

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

NOTE: On Thursday, October 30, 2008, during the course of this proposed National Register nomination, the Main Bibb Mill Building caught fire and burned leaving only the front façade and most of the outer walls (see Attachments 3 and 4). The walls were subsequently demolished leaving only the front façade (see Attachments 6-7). A portion of Bibb City including this mill site was previously listed as part of the National Historic Landmark-designated Columbus Historic Riverfront Industrial District (see Attachment 1).

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Situated along the Chattahoochee River, north of the city of Columbus, Bibb City is characterized by a landscape of dramatic terrain and a planned mill community with the site of an enormous mill complex perched on a high bluff.

The Bibb City Historic District encompasses site of the historic industrial buildings associated with the Columbus Plant of the Bibb Manufacturing Company, the remaining dam and powerhouse, the mill workers' houses constructed by Bibb Mill, and commercial and community landmark buildings. The main mill building was built in phases from 1900 to 1920 and was a five-story, 1,010-foot long, 90-bay brick building with a central tower (no longer extant). Other historic buildings and structures associated with the mill are the remaining warehouses, office building (no longer extant), and a water tower. The Bibb Dam and hydroelectric plant are also included in the district as vital components to the mill's operation. Mill houses in the district were built in two phases. Built in 1900, the "old village" houses were designed by the Atlanta architectural firm of Robert & Company and are three- or four-room frame cottages built for single and multiple families. Frame, two-story, 10-room houses were also built for families and boarders. After World War I, the company expanded the mill village and built many of the community landmark buildings. The company hired Earle S. Draper, a landscape architect, to design the "new village." Draper took advantage of the dramatic topography and created curvilinear streets, parks, and picturesque views. The architectural firm of Robert & Company designed Craftsman-style bungalows, double shotguns, and side-gable cottages in both single-family and duplex versions for the new village. Most of the large, two-story supervisors' houses overlooking the river were recently demolished. Community landmark buildings in the district include the city hall, the 1919 Classical Revival-style Bibb City School designed by Robert & Company, a natatorium, the Classical Revival-style 1936 Porter Memorial Baptist Church, the Classical Revival-style Comer Auditorium designed by architect Ella Mae Ellis League (built 1940-1941), and the 1954 Boy Scout hut. Also included in the district are a few historic one-story, brick, commercial buildings within the (former) city limits.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7--Description

FULL DESCRIPTION

NOTE: The following description was prepared by John Lupold of Columbus State University's History Department, and Elizabeth Barker of Historic Columbus Foundation, and edited by Gretchen Brock, National Register Coordinator, Georgia Historic Preservation Division. "Bibb City Historic District," draft *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*, April 27, 2001. On file at the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.

Along the Chattahoochee River, north of the original city limits of Columbus, a series of hills culminate in a high bluff known locally as Lovers' Leap. To Columbusites, the Bibb City area has always been distinctive, even unique. First, as the city's most beautiful picnic site, this riverside overlook attracted numerous visitors. Then, the dam and the quarter-of-a-mile long brick factory building invited community boosters to boast of the Bibb factory being the largest mill in the South—or even the nation (not substantiated). As a mill village, it was distinctive in terms of its landscape and the quality of its houses. Its residents shared a strong, positive sense of community and intense loyalty to their village while, ironically, outsiders feared it as a rough neighborhood. Finally, as an independent city, which resisted the forces of the city of Columbus and Muscogee County's government consolidation until 2000, it was seen as an interesting anomaly, albeit a romantic one, a surviving remnant of small-town America.

The development of Bibb City was fairly typical for villages built by large-scale Southern textile mills. Its original plan, its expansion after World War I, and the level of its paternalistic policies were similar to those of other mills in the Georgia and Carolina Piedmont. However, its unique landscape with curvilinear streets lined with Craftsman-style bungalows overlooking the river, made this village distinct from its peers. Many Carolina textile firms began abandoning their corporate welfare systems in the 1930s, while the Bibb Manufacturing Company (the Bibb) along with its deep South neighbors in Georgia, West Point Pepperell and Callaway mills, continued to own workers' houses and to operate many social programs until the 1960s. In the case of the Bibb Manufacturing Company, integration probably forced management to end those policies. In the same decade, the mill sold its houses, mostly to the workers living in them.

Bibb City's unique history has allowed the village to endure. The historic plan, streetscapes, and built environment remain. The surviving historic fabric tells the history of this company and community, while it reflects the general history of Southern textiles. Residents—both old timers and new comers—still share a pride in living in Bibb City and the mill village has survived as a cohesive neighborhood.

The historic and present appearance of Bibb City will be described in two parts: 1) the land and the landscape, and 2) the built environment:

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7--Description

The Land and the Landscape

The landscape of Bibb City has been shaped by three factors:

- the natural dramatic, hilly, riverside terrain;
- the curvilinear roads, terraces, sidewalks, and building lots designed by Earle Draper;
- the continuing maintenance provided by the company and the residents of Bibb City, especially prior to 1964.

Despite the small dimensions of Bibb City, its terrain is extremely diverse and consists of four separate features. In the north is a small group of hills that drop precipitously to a narrow strip of heavily wooded lowlands next to the river. To the south of the hills, the land falls away into a flat-bottomed ravine, now called the Hemlock Drive Park. A stream draining this area joins with another creek coming from the north and empties into the Chattahoochee River just north of Linden Point. The area to the east of this bottom, along the eastern border of the city (adjacent to 2nd Avenue) is part of the large North Highlands plateau that rises just north of the original Columbus city limits. The most significant terrain feature is the high rock outcropping that extends to the Chattahoochee's edge. The Bibb Company perched its mill on the top of this bluff, known to residents as Lovers' Leap and geologically as the Phenix City gneiss. The Bibb Dam is also anchored to this rock formation (photograph 17). This element connects to the larger North Highland plateau and creates an expanse of level ground that occupies more than half (the southern portion) of Bibb City.

South of Lover's Leap, especially from the river end of the mill, the elevation drops precipitously to the south and to the west toward the river. A small stream, which once flowed just south of the rock outcropping, was eliminated by the construction of the mill. Just above the southern town boundary is a small draw that originally contained a larger creek. The topographical changes produced by the mill and the roads changed the drainage patterns and diminished this stream to a ditch running east to west from the old company parking lot toward the river.

In the mid-1890s, previous to Bibb Manufacturing Company's ownership of the property, the North Highlands Improvement and Manufacturing Company owned the land and had plans to create a recreational park and upscale residential neighborhood in the area. The North Highlands Company first platted this area in the 1890s, retained irregular streets west of 1st Avenue, and extended the regular grid of Columbus northward into the area east of 1st Avenue. When the Bibb Manufacturing Company purchased the area, only the original shape of one North Highlands block (block number nine bounded by 1st and 2nd avenues and 35th and 38th streets) was maintained. The developers sold that property before the Bibb began acquiring land. Thus, between 1917 and 1919, after the first portion of the mill village was built, the mill bought these lots from the second owners. Because at least eight pre-Bibb houses already stood along 2nd Avenue and 38th Street, the company did not change the configuration of the block and, therefore, did not fill this space as tightly as most of the original mill village.¹ The distance between the rear facades of the houses facing 1st and 2nd avenues

¹ Indicative of the early history of these houses facing 2nd Avenue in this block, they receive their water from the Bibb City Historic District, Muscogee County, Georgia

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7--Description

is longer than for any other houses in the village. The second wave of houses built on this block, by the Bibb in 1919 through 1920, became the homes of supervisors, who were rewarded with large backyards. The Bibb also added a back alley, Carr Drive, to the block. The company greenhouse (no longer extant), which played an important role in shaping the town's landscape, once stood on that alley.

All of the other blocks (blocks 4, 5, 6, and 8) that the Bibb purchased from North Highlands Company were changed from the original plat and, therefore, show the imprint of a mill village.² In the case of Block 8, which appeared as a regular block on the North Highlands map, the company bisected the block with Anthony and Comer streets running east to west, so that more houses could be placed on the tract. The south half of Block 8 contained 30 houses, while only 19 houses, including five shotgun-type houses, occupied an equal space on Block 9. The company also created narrow blocks between 1st, Hanson, and Park avenues. Park and River avenues, which already existed, were straightened to create a wider, longer block for 24 two-story, ten-room houses with larger lots.

Rectilinear lots were delineated along all of these streets. The streets were dirt and probably without curbs. The elm and oak trees along the streets, which are now covered with Spanish moss, were probably not planted until after 1919.³

J. Homer Dimon owned the area north of the first mill village. Dimon bought 27 acres of land from the North Highlands Company for \$4,600 in 1914.⁴ In February of 1919, Bibb Manufacturing Company paid Dimon \$13,500 for the 27 acres of land. The Bibb Company's decisions to develop an addition to the mill village in the hills and to hire landscape architect Earle S. Draper made Bibb City a unique mill village. The company could have selected a piece of flat land to the northeast⁵ and created another plain, rectilinear mill village. Instead, they chose the more expensive option of working with the topography and creating a stunning setting. This period was the height of Southern textile mills developing attractive, modern housing areas, and the Bibb was not going to be left behind.

Columbus Water Works rather than from Bibb City or the old company water supply. So, they must have been receiving water before they were purchased by the Bibb.

2 The Columbus Power Company purchased Blocks 4, 5, 6, 8, & 9 of the North Highlands plat in April 1900 for \$14,382, Deed Book MM, 49. These were then passed to the Bibb Company in 1906 when the Bibb sold the power company to Stone & Webster. The riverbed and the eastern bank had been purchased earlier by G. Gunby Jordan, John Hanson, and John Hill and were then transferred to the Columbus Power Company.

3 The town council did report in October of 1912 that the street walk was "getting along nicely," but it appears to be one walk, perhaps into the mill, rather than sidewalks in general. All references to specific actions by the town government, especially those that are dated, are drawn from the town council minutes. These records are available in the Bibb City Collection, Columbus State University Archives.

4 Deed Book 16, 454. Dimon, a grandson of John Banks of The Cedars, was a real estate developer like his brother, S.K. Dimon, who was creating the Dimon Circle neighborhood at about this time. In 1920, J. Homer Dimon was elected as a member of the new commission form of government. Since he received the most votes, he acted as mayor.

5 The Anderson Village of the Bibb, created during World War II, was sited in such an area (outside of the historic district), and the 1919-1920 expansion could have occurred there.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7--Description

The Bibb hired Earle S. Draper, a landscape architect from Charlotte, North Carolina, to design the new addition to the Bibb mill village. Cape Cod-born Draper designed mill villages and residential neighborhoods throughout the South and later served as the first director of land planning for the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). At the same time he developed the new addition to the Bibb mill village, he redesigned St. Elmo Place (in the Weracoba-St. Elmo Historic District listed in the National Register of Historic Places July 1, 1994) and developed the prestigious Peacock Woods-Dimon Circle and Wynn's Hill-Overlook suburbs in the Wynnton area of Columbus (listed in the National Register of Historic Places on March 26, 2003 and May 10, 2005 respectively). Draper also maintained an office in Atlanta, Georgia, at that time and worked with the architectural firm of Hentz, Reid, and Adler on significant projects such as the Callaway Home in LaGrange, Georgia, and other residences in Atlanta.⁶

Draper's hallmark in Bibb City is his curvilinear streets inspired by the work of Fredrick Law Olmstead. He did not create all of the curved roads; several of them already existed. Draper did, however, shape the new streets around the hills and the bottom area. He created sidewalks and steps to join them to the street in this varied terrain. He then terraced the brow of the hill and placed the houses there in trapezoidal lots. Draper created attractive sitings for mill houses with beautiful views of open vistas extending to the river. In the northern portion of Bibb City, Draper eliminated the monotonous views of similar boxes sitting on similar lots on linear streets that characterized so many Southern mill villages. The fact that several styles of houses were built and located in a random fashion throughout the new village also reinforced the sense of individualized homes. The small, circular residential areas created by Draper also tended to create a sense of community, which reinforced the company's goals. Draper's treatment of Linden Point illustrates how he defined small neighborhoods. Originally, Boulevard followed the riverbank and crossed the stream that now enters the river just north of Linden Point. Draper's new road did not cross the stream; Linden Point became a closed loop that circled ten houses, perched on one of the most attractive sites in Columbus (photographs 53-55).

Draper created back alleys for all of the new houses so that coal could be delivered and garbage collected in the rear of these homes. His firm also planned the curbs and the sidewalks, but they were probably constructed after the houses were built. In April of 1921, the Bibb city government floated \$140,000 worth of bonds, \$50,000 of which was for "laying off, opening, maintaining and improving" the streets and sidewalks. The Bibb Manufacturing Company purchased these bonds and the city paid interest to the company. In a similar fashion, Draper might have planned the street-side vegetation, but probably did not oversee the installation. The city's florist, and eventually the residents, planted the bushes and trees, which resembled those in other suburbs. Elms and oaks, primarily water oaks, occupied the space between the curb and the sidewalks. The most ubiquitous

⁶ Richard M. Candee, "Earle S. Draper and the Company Town in the American South," in John S. Garner, editor, *The Company Town: Architecture and Society in the Early Industrial Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992). According to Charlie Auguar, professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Georgia School of Environmental Design, Draper recommended using the garden as an "out-of-doors living room" in a 1924 article, 25 years before other landscape architects incorporated the practice. Draper was the first living person whose work was nominated as National Historic Planning Landmarks by the American Institute of Certified Planners in 1987 and was considered ahead of his time in landscape planning. Draper's papers are located at Cornell and Duke universities.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7--Description

plant in the village is probably winged euonymus or burning bush, the shrub that the company planted around every house, presumably about 1920. Amazingly, this plant has survived either as a hedge or as an individual plant in more than half of the yards in Bibb City. In many of the yards, it is the only vegetation other than trees and grass. The company must have planted grass on the steep banks between the street and sidewalks in the hilly areas of the new village, but probably did not plant grass in the yards initially. The company cut all the grass and trimmed all the hedges until the mid-1960s. The company also tried to expand the number of plantings within the village.

The primary vegetation within the village today remains the trees and shrubs planted by the company c.1920. Oak and elm trees, now covered with Spanish moss, are present on almost every street (photographs 6, 37, 40, 41, and 50). Many of the dogwoods planted by the company florist still flourish, as do a smaller number of crepe myrtles (photographs 34). Bibb City has also planted some Bradford pears throughout the village and along 1st Avenue where a widening project removed 80-year-old oak trees. Today, about two-thirds of the yards only have the trees and shrubs planted by the company along with volunteer grasses. In less than one-quarter of the yards, the owners have maintained other shrubs. There are also a few lots with azaleas and camellias. Various hollies, a few nadenas, spirea, flowers, some magnolias, and cedars complete the inventory of prominent plants in the village (photographs 29, 32, and 47).

Paved streets were a late addition to the Bibb City landscape. The city government, rather than the mill, maintained but did not own the streets. Male residents were initially taxed \$2.00 per year as a commutation tax that exempted them from working on the streets. This amount was probably taken from their paycheck. After 1920 any woman who registered to vote was also taxed at the same rate. As early as August of 1926 the town council discussed paving the main roads in and around the mill, but nothing came of this discussion. In January of 1939, the government entertained a Works Progress Administration (WPA) proposal to pave the streets; but in order to proceed with this plan, the ownership of the streets would have to be transferred from the mill to the city. Apparently that did not occur. In January of the next year, the Muscogee County Board of Commissioners assumed the responsibility for maintaining the streets of Bibb City. This move reduced the commutations tax from \$2.00 to \$1.00 per resident. Still, the streets remained unpaved. In December of 1940, the city council talked about putting gravel on 1st Avenue and 35th and 38th streets. Finally, in 1942, Bibb City issued \$90,000 worth of paving bonds, and the streets were hard surfaced.

Another streetscape feature is the handrails on the steps between the street and the sidewalk. These appear to have been built in a later period, rather than when the company first built the sidewalks and street. In February and March of 1965, the city council discussed the need for these railings in the North Village (photographs 38, 40, 41, 45, 46, 49, 55, 56, 61, 62, and 64).

The city council maintained three parks within the city: Plez Johnson Park on 2nd Avenue, which currently has no recreational equipment nor any landscaping and is presently closed (photograph 46); Ed Vance Park which is adjacent to Beechwood Heights and has playground equipment (photograph 63); and Hemlock Drive Park which has a basketball court and tennis court (photographs

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7--Description

49, left, and 50, foreground).⁷

Other landscape features within the town are the natural areas that occupy portions of the southern, western, and northern edges of the city. On the southern edge is a draw that runs from the old parking lot to the river. This streambed, which flows during periods of heavy rain, contains a dense stand of volunteer hardwoods, scrub trees, smaller shrubs and vines, which are representative of the natural vegetation along the banks of the middle Chattahoochee River.

Because of the rugged terrain, the area immediately south of the mill building was never developed. The only built features there are an incinerator and the access road to the powerhouse. On either side of this road, as well as along the riverbank to the north of the mill and along the northern border of the town (beyond the housing area), is a nearly impenetrable stand of natural second-growth vegetation. Unlike the draw to the south, these areas do not have the mature stands of hardwoods that characterize other untouched sections of the riverfront. Instead, a few pines and sycamores tower over a thick mass of scrub oaks, bays, privet, willows, and many vines, such as smilax and honeysuckle.

The last major landscape change occurred in the late 1990s, with the extension of the Columbus Riverwalk from the Bibb Dam northward beyond the upper city limits. This section of the Riverwalk consists of a narrow strip of asphalt bordered by two bands of grass with a few planted trees (hybrid oaks, weeping willows, and crepe myrtles), lampposts, and occasional benches. The section through Bibb City has fewer plantings than other areas of the Riverwalk, and cuts a swath through what was an area of natural growth.

The Built Environment

The built environment of Bibb City consists of one of the largest historic textile mills and mill villages in the South. Buildings in the district include the main mill complex, which includes the main mill building (no longer extant), the weave sheds, warehouses, office buildings, a water tower, and the dam; community landmark buildings built by the Bibb Manufacturing Company including a school, church, auditorium/gymnasium, and Boy Scout hut; commercial buildings; and mill houses set on 16 curving streets on a bluff and on riverfront hills with stunning views of the Chattahoochee River.

MILL COMPLEX

NOTE: On Thursday, October 30, 2008, during the course of this proposed National Register nomination, the Main Bibb Mill Building caught fire and burned, leaving only the front façade and most of the outer walls (see Attachments 3 and 4). The walls were subsequently demolished leaving only the front façade, consisting of one bay of the original 90-bay building (see Attachments 5-7). The fire also damaged the historic office building and day nursery and the nonhistoric office building,

⁷ Earlier, prior to the expansion of the weave sheds to the south of the main mill in the 1950s, a large grassed space adjacent to the street served as a town green. There, children played football and baseball. Informal interview with Charles (Buddy) Hall by John Lupold, August 2000.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7--Description

all of which were demolished. The main mill building was previously listed as part of the National Historic Landmark-designated Columbus Historic Riverfront Industrial District.

The Columbus Plant of the Bibb Mill (listed in the National Register of Historic Places and as a National Historic Landmark in June 2, 1978 as a contributing property to the Columbus Historic Riverfront Industrial District) began operating in 1900 as a 300-foot spinning factory perched atop Lovers' Leap so the company's waterwheels could power the factory via a rope drive. In 1916, the company added another 200 feet to the mill and also began weaving tire cord at this location. In 1919, in response to the increased demand and profits brought by World War I, the firm doubled the length of the mill. The enlarged mill was impressive. By 1920, the building began at the Lovers' Leap bluff and extended 1,010 feet to the east, to 1st Avenue. The five-story building had 90 bays of arched windows along its length. By the 1930s, a large, one-story, weave shed extended southward from the main building, and the entire plant contained 35 acres of floor space (photograph 14).⁸ The company proclaimed it to be the largest textile operation under one roof in the United States (photographs 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 12, and 13 and attachments 1-7).

A site plan of the mill complex drawn for the Historic American Engineering Record, National Park Service by R.W. Karow in 1977 shows the extent of the historic mill complex through 1964, the end of the historic period for the nomination (see Attachment 2). Although the main mill building is no longer extant, there are surviving historic resources associated directly with the mill operations. A large expanse of one-story brick weave sheds and warehouses is located directly south of the main building (photographs 13 (left), 14, and 20). Additions were made to the buildings as the operations of the mill expanded throughout the early to mid-20th century. In 1911 and 1912, a weave shed was constructed adjacent to the original 1900 portion of the main mill building. The building was later used as a picker room. In 1918, one-story brick warehouses were constructed on the north side of the main mill building, adjacent to the weave shed (photographs 3, 7, and 8). In more recent times, some of the warehouses were converted to retail use and have large multi-pane windows (photograph 8). The original, one-and-a-half-story, brick office building was located on the north side of the 1916 addition to the main mill building (photographs 3, background and photograph 5, far left). The building was damaged in the October 30, 2008 fire and subsequently demolished (attachments 4-7). In 1966, a new one-story, hip-roof, brick office building was built directly east of the historic office building (photograph 3, center). This building was also damaged in the fire and demolished (attachments 4-7). The area between the main mill building and the warehouses originally had historic worker housing, but the houses were demolished in the late 1950s and mid-1960s. A historic, one-story, frame day-nursery building remained in this area until the fire and it also was demolished (photograph 3, left foreground, and attachments 4-7). Three historic structures are also within the mill complex: the historic 1902 North Highlands Dam (photographs 16 and 17), the 1963 Georgia Power North Highlands Hydroelectric Plant, and a historic early 20th-century water tower (photographs 9-11). A noncontributing substation is located south of the mill complex (photograph

⁸ The mill was included in the National Landmark district because of its scale and also because of the remnants of the rope drive systems in the western end of building. For more details about the mill, its rope drive system, and its architecture, see Barbara Kimmelman, John Lupold, & J. B. Karfunkle, "The Columbus Plant of the Bibb Company, Historic American Engineering Record, GA-12, 1977; and John Lupold, "Columbus Historic Riverfront Industrial District," National Landmark Nomination, 1977.

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Section 7--Description

19).

The mill complex currently includes:

- The site of the former main Bibb Mill building—counted as one noncontributing site
- The large weave sheds/warehouses south of the main mill site—counted as one contributing building
- The warehouses on the north side of the main mill site—counted as one contributing building
- The dam—counted as one contributing structure
- The 1963 Georgia Power North Highlands Hydroelectric Plant—counted as one contributing structure
- The water tower—counted as one contributing structure
- The nonhistoric substation—counted as one noncontributing structure

MILL VILLAGE

The workers' houses in Bibb City were built in two major phases known as "Old Village" and "New Village." The first phase, known historically as the old village⁹, consisted of 101 houses built by 1903, almost simultaneously with the dam, the mill (no longer extant), and the women's hotel (no longer extant). Robert & Company from Atlanta served as architects and West Point Iron Works as general contractors. The houses filled six blocks with three-, four-, and ten-room frame houses, all painted white with black trim, with brick pier foundations and set on narrow, 40-foot lots (Old Village is roughly the houses on River, Park, and First avenues and Hanson and Anthony streets. See National Register map.)

Historically, American textile mills had two models for housing: family dwellings and hotels for single women. The nation's first mill started by Samuel Slater in Rhode Island in 1790 had a village with cottages for the workers' families. In the 1830s, the larger mills created in Lowell, Massachusetts, hired young women from the countryside, lodged them in boarding houses, and educated them in Sunday schools. The initial housing in Bibb City fit both of these models. The women's hotel (no longer extant) originally had 25 rooms that later expanded to 60 rooms (and probably 100 beds). The ten-room houses were built with the intention of sheltering both families and boarders. The three- and four-room duplex houses were apparently designed for families, even though the two families lived in close proximity, sharing an outhouse, a water spigot, and later an enclosed bathroom on the back porch.

Rent was assessed according to the number of rooms, initially \$0.25 per room per week,¹⁰ and the company tried to have one worker per room in every house. Rent calculation included the room used as a kitchen. In the old village, the company came close to achieving that goal. In 1920, its 105

⁹ The terms old and new village would not necessarily be understood by the current residents of Bibb City, but they were used in the 1920s and 1930s.

¹⁰ By 1964, that rate had risen to \$1.50. Brooks Griffin and Plez Johnson interviewed by John Lupold, J. B. Karfunkle, and Barbara Kimmelman, June 28, 1977. Transcript in Oral History Collection, CSU Archives.

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houses with 544 rooms housed 534 workers and a total of 954 people.¹¹ By the next year, that density was reduced somewhat as Bibb workers began moving into the recently built houses in the new village. The houses in the two parts of the village are different in type and architectural details.

HOUSE TYPES AND ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS OF THE OLD VILLAGE

The old village had four different company-built house types for workers: the pyramidal-roof duplex, side-gabled cottage, saddlebag with rear addition, and ten-room house. Along 2nd Avenue were shotguns and at least one gabled-ell cottage that were not built by the company but later incorporated into the village (photographs 21 and 22). Houses in the old village all had full-width front porches and some type of rear porch. The balustrades on the porches were either crossed beams forming an "x" with a centerpiece joining the baluster rail to the center of the "x", or closely-spaced, flat, vertical balusters with their wide side facing out (photograph 32). The interior walls and ceilings of these early houses were horizontal beadboards with a plain baseboard at the floor and simple quarter round trim at the ceiling. Small coal-burning fireplaces heated these homes with the company initially supplying the coal. Simple wood mantels surrounded the fireplaces. In most cases, the room used as a kitchen probably only had a flue to connect the cook stove to the chimney.

The majority of the houses in the old village are pyramidal-roof duplexes with a square, symmetrical form (photographs 24, 26, 27, and 29). On the eastern edge of the village, 32 four-room pyramidal-roof duplexes occupy the lots on 38th, Anthony, and Comer streets between 1st and 2nd avenues and on the east side of 1st Avenue north of Porter Street¹². The pyramidal roof shape is the defining characteristic of this house type. Built as duplexes, these one-story, four-bay-wide houses have two front doors in the center of the facade with a four-over-four window in both outside bays. The houses contain four rooms of equal size: two front and two rear rooms on each side of the duplex. Interior doors connect all of the rooms, making it possible for one family to occupy the entire house if it had sufficient workers or adequate income to pay the rent. A door from the rear room opens into a shared rear porch, which was later enclosed as a bathroom by the mill company. These houses have two interior chimneys. The interior chimney served the front rooms and a flue from the rear room connected to a stove. In the 1950s, the company installed a closet (facing the front room) or a pantry (facing the back room or kitchen) in these houses between the fireplace and the exterior wall. The residents got to choose whether the workers built a pantry or a closet.¹³ The porches have shallow hip or shed roofs with exposed rafters and square wooden columns with either an X-shaped balustrade or vertical balustrades. Original porch posts are square wood posts with no ornamentation. After the company sold the houses, many porch posts were updated to the metal posts popular in the mid-20th century.

Another style of worker housing in the old village is the side-gabled cottage (photographs 30 and 31, left). The company built 21 of these four-room houses on both sides of 1st and Hanson avenues and

11 Based on the 1920 manuscript census.

12 One of these houses that faced 2nd Avenue was razed in September of 2000.

13 Informal interview with Nancy Clewis Sampson, Comer Avenue, by John Lupold, July 2000.

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on the east side of Park Avenue north of Porter and Comer streets.¹⁴ While they appear to be more rectangular than the pyramidal cottages, the dimensions of both are exactly the same: each measures about 30 x 30 feet. The side-gabled cottage plan is the same as the pyramidal-roof duplexes: two rooms of equal size on either side of the duplex. The fenestration of the front façades is similar to the pyramidal cottage with a window, two doors, and another window on both types. The chimney placement and the porches differ. On the side-gabled cottages, the interior chimneys were placed in the middle wall that ran from the front to back, rather than in the interior wall that ran side to side. Also, the chimney only seems to serve the front rooms. A vertical stovepipe might have served to vent the cook stove in one of the rear rooms. These houses have a shed-roof front porch that appears to be an extension of the main roof except that its pitch is slightly different (photograph 30). The slight break between the main roof and the porch indicates that the rafters are not continuous. The shed-roof over a smaller rear porch has a similar appearance. The front porches have chamfered, square wood posts and some have retained their original scrollwork brackets.

Another house type in the old village was a three-room house, essentially a saddlebag with one rear room. Historically, at least 18 of these houses stood adjacent to the north side of the mill¹⁵; they were razed to build a parking lot in 1958.¹⁶ Only one example of this house type still exists at 3804 1st Avenue, across the street from where a row of similar structures once stood. Saddlebag houses built in the district have two rooms, a central chimney, and a side-gable roof. A third room to the rear also had a gable roof.

The ten-room, two-story duplexes on River and Park avenues provided the highest concentration of housing for workers. They seemed to function as an amalgam of the two village models, since they housed both families and a large number of boarders. Originally, 24 of these were built. Today, 12 of the houses remain intact (photographs 4, 6, 37, and 40). The ten-room houses have a side-gable roof over the main two-story block and a one-story ell with a shed-roof to the rear. Fenestration on the first floor is arranged into four bays: a door, two four-over-four windows, and another door. The second floor has four two-over-two windows on the front facade. On the rear, two small, two-over-two windows are sandwiched between the main roof and the rear shed roof. The side facades have two four-over-four windows on both stories. Most of the houses retain their original two central, corbelled-topped, interior chimneys. Porch details include exposed rafters and chamfered posts; some original posts have been replaced by plain square posts. The balustrades are similar to others in the district with either crossed beams forming an "x" with a centerpiece joining the baluster rail to the center of the "x", or closely-spaced, flat, vertical balusters with their wide side facing out. The terrain dropped so sharply under some of the River Avenue houses that their rear wall was almost flush on the ground while their front porch was set on piers almost a story high (no longer extant, see

14 Two more of these houses originally faced Hanson Avenue where the Porter Memorial Baptist Church now stands, and at least five more were destroyed to build a parking lot north of the mill in 1958.

15 Probably more of these houses were originally constructed in this area but were eliminated in order to expand the mill and the warehouses prior to 1920. No Sanborn Maps exist for this area during that period. Another five houses facing 1st Avenue were destroyed when the weave shed was expanded after World War II. This expansion also eliminated the mill green where Charles (Buddy) Hall remembers playing football.

16 Griffin & Johnson Interview.

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photograph 39). The houses had one set of exterior stairs to the porch, located on either the left or right side of the porch. The Park Avenue houses, which are set on more level terrain, have two sets of porch stairs located directly in front of the two doors into the houses. The interior floor plan of the ten-room houses was divided into a duplex space with similar room arrangements on each side of the duplex. On the first floor, there was a large front room, a slightly smaller room behind it, and an even smaller room underneath the shed roof. A staircase in the front room led to the sleeping loft on the second floor. The second floor had a front room (the sleeping loft) and a smaller room behind it. The duplex shared a centered rear porch that was narrower than the main block of the house and later was enclosed as a shared bathroom. By 1920, 421 people, 253 of whom were mill workers, lived in these 24 ten-room houses. The company collected \$60 per week in rent from these residents.

At least seven other pre-1920 houses, not built by the mill, are located in Bibb City. The houses are located on 1st and 2nd avenues between 35th and 38th streets and include six shotguns, two gable-ell cottages, and one pyramidal cottage with a recessed porch (photographs 21 and 22). In all likelihood, private owners built them simultaneously with the old village houses. The North Highlands Company sold the lots to individuals at about the same time the Bibb Company purchased its land. Between 1917 and 1919, the Bibb Company bought the houses and annexed the block into the Bibb City limits in the summer of 1920.¹⁷

HOUSE TYPES AND ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS OF THE NEW VILLAGE

After World War I, additional houses in the new village and a number of community buildings were built as a companion to a major expansion of the main mill building. Approximately 160 homes were built between 1919 and 1921 and were designed to create a sense of community. In contrast to the original village, houses were constructed with Craftsman-style detailing and were attractively sited on a curvilinear street plan designed by noted landscape architect Earle Draper. This post-World War I expansion created the distinctive company village that came to be associated with Bibb City. Robert & Company of Atlanta and West Point Iron Works returned to Bibb City as the architect and general contractor, respectively. These two groups designed and built the 1919-1920 houses, an addition to the women's hotel (no longer extant), a new school building, and a natatorium (no longer extant). A few houses were also built as infill in the old village (for example, 85 and 95 Porter Street and 101-107 35th Street). Additional new houses were built across the street from the mill along 1st Avenue between 35th and 38th streets. The houses were similar in type and architectural style to the houses in the new village and were built as one-family houses for supervisors (photograph 20). There were more variations in architectural details than in the old village, and unlike the old village where houses were constructed in homogeneous blocks, the new village mixed types and styles within blocks to provide variety, making the new village appear more like a suburban neighborhood than a mill village.

The main house type built during the 1919 to 1920 expansion was the bungalow. The bungalows are generally five- or six-room duplexes with Craftsman-style details. The houses were built both as duplexes and as single-family homes. Different variations of the bungalow house form were built,

¹⁷ These houses were not included in the 1920 Census for Bibb City.

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which is most often seen in different porch and roof types. In general the houses are all square or rectangular in form with side-gable, front-gable, or hip roofs, weatherboard siding, and are set on brick piers. Architectural details vary on the houses and are representative of the character-defining features of the Craftsman style including exposed rafters, dormers, decorative brackets, singlework in the gables, grouped windows, square porch posts often paired or grouped or resting on brick piers, and integral or projecting porches.

The duplex located at 1 Poplar Street is a good example of one of the bungalow variations built during this time (photograph 38). Built on the edge of the old village, the house has a side-gable roof with exposed rafters, wide, overhanging eaves, a shed-roof dormer, and an integral front porch with paired wood posts and decorative brackets. Similar houses are located on Hemlock Drive (photograph 48), Woodland Circle (photographs 58, rear, 67, and 68), Beechwood Heights (photographs 62 and 64), and Linden Point (photograph 54). Another variation is a Craftsman-style side-gable bungalow with a front-gable portico (photographs 47 and 51). These duplexes have exposed rafters and a front-gable portico with grouped square posts. Front-gable bungalows were built throughout the new village. Good examples are the Craftsman-style houses on Hemlock Drive (photograph 43) and Woodland Circle (photograph 58) and the house at 90 First Avenue (photograph 36). An example of a hip-roof bungalow is located at 12 Hemlock Drive (photograph 42, left).

Another house type built in the new village is the double shotgun house (photograph 64). This house type was only built in the new village as duplexes that are two bays wide and three rooms deep. The double shotguns have hip roofs, weatherboard siding, a shed dormer, exposed rafters, and two center doors flanked by a single window. Originally, the porches would have been detailed with square wooden columns, decorative brackets and a simple balustrade. Side shed dormers were also added to some of these houses.

After the early 1920s expansion, the Bibb Mill Company stopped building houses in Bibb City. The company owned about 260 houses containing approximately 1,400 rooms, and at least 100 beds for workers in the women's hotel. By 1927, the mill employed 2,500 workers, leaving approximately 1,000 who could not live in the village. Workers had to earn the right to live in company housing. One advantage of living in company housing was that the company provided utilities and maintained the houses for the next 45 years. The maintenance standard for Bibb City was much higher than any other rental housing in the area including other mill villages. Historically, all of the houses were painted identically. The siding was painted white with the trim highlighted in black. Under the mill's ownership, the houses were spray painted every three to four years whether they needed it or not. As a result, by 1964 they were all covered with a thick coat of white lead paint. The company also painted the inside of the houses. A crew moved all the furniture into the middle of the room and then painted the walls. Some residents said they painted the outside one year and the inside the next year, but in terms of manpower alone it must have been less frequent. In 1953, a major tornado struck Columbus, leaving seven people dead and about 400 injured. Throughout the entire city, over 2,100 homes were damaged and approximately 3,000 families were homeless. Bibb City experienced extensive damage but no deaths or serious injuries. The most extensive damage to the village occurred on Linden Point, Hemlock Circle, and Woodland Circle. Nine houses lost their roofs, and falling trees and limbs struck about 75 houses. Between 150 and 200 trees were destroyed.

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The total devastation in Bibb City was estimated to be about \$250,000. The company repaired all of the houses damaged by the twister. Prior to 1964, the company also built garages on the back alleys behind many of the houses. From *Sanborn Fire Insurance* maps, the garages were long, frame buildings with numerous connected stalls for the cars. The company apparently demolished the garages before it sold the houses in 1964 because, given the configuration of the garages, it would have been impossible to delineate individual ownership.

APPEARANCE OF THE BIBB HOUSES AFTER 1964

In 1964, the company sold the workers' houses, primarily to the residents. The transition to private ownership resulted in some changes to the houses in Bibb City. New owners wanted to personalize and improve their new investments. A majority of houses in the district have vinyl or aluminum siding. In part, this change represents modernization of the houses and an effort to reduce maintenance, but the thick, but uneven coats of paint may also have prompted it. Some former duplexes have had the second door infilled with siding as almost all of the houses are currently single-family houses. The highly popular 1960s cast-iron posts replaced some original wood porch posts. Compatible rear additions and screened-in porches are also seen in the district. Some carports were added, and along the east side of the back alley on Hanson Avenue, to the rear of the lots, a row of garages was built after 1964. Overall the mill village retains a high degree of integrity and is one of the best examples of a company-owned and -built mill village in the state.

COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

Also within the district is an L-shaped stretch of five commercial buildings along the northern half of the western side of 2nd Avenue (just south of 38th Street) and five businesses around the corner along the entire southern side of the block of 38th Street between 1st and 2nd avenues. The businesses are part of a larger commercial area centered on the intersection of 38th Street and 2nd Avenue, which evolved at this location because of Bibb City and the other mills and mill housing in the area. Only those buildings within the historic Bibb City limits are included in this nomination.

Even before the Bibb purchased the property in the block bounded by 1st and 2nd avenues and 35th and 38th streets, commercial establishments apparently existed on 2nd Avenue—the Bibb City Coal and Wood Company, a barbershop, a pharmacy, and two grocery stores. Over the years this area continued to house such businesses as well as pool halls, restaurants, and a theater. The company never owned any of these businesses or the property on which they were built.

Commercial buildings in the district are generally one- and two-story brick buildings with shared party walls, recessed entrances, plate-glass display windows, and decorative brick corbelling and paneling on the front facades (photographs 23 and 25). A two-story commercial building originally functioned as an auto sales (1925) and a creamery (1929) on the first floor while the second was a skating rink (1925) and the headquarters for the Muscogee Ku Klux Klan in 1928 (photograph 23, left). There is a Craftsman-style movie theater built by Roy Martin in 1921 also located in the district (photograph 23, center). The construction of this theater is pictured in the 1921 *Industrial Index* along with an

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identical Roy Martin Theater being built in Phenix City, Alabama, across the Chattahoochee River.¹⁸ The theater, called the "Pastime," was under the jurisdiction of the Bibb City council. In 1937, some residents complained to the council that the theater stayed open until 9:30 on Sunday nights and, therefore, constituted a nuisance. The city identified problems with the theater's general condition as early as 1941, but the Pastime continued to operate until 1958. The building is stucco and has a front-gable roof with decorative brackets. The entrance historically was a large round arch with pedimented windows and a recessed main entrance and central box office. The arch was later filled in with stucco and the recessed front entrance is now a storefront with brick bulkhead and plate-glass display windows. The next two brick buildings to the north on 2nd Avenue were probably constructed in the 1920s.

The attached commercial buildings located on the 100 block of 38th Street in front of the mill were constructed in the 1930s (photograph 25). In the 1931 Columbus *City Directory*, a grocery store, barbershop, billiard hall, and restaurant are located on 38th Street. The commercial building located on the corner of 38th Street and 1st Avenue is currently a restaurant. The building was constructed prior to 1925 and may be the only building on this side of the block built by the mill. From 1925 until 1928, the building served as the headquarters for the Bibb City Boy Scout troop. During the 1930s, the Bibb Progress Club, a men's organization sponsored by the mill, held meetings in the building. Later the building housed the Bibb City Café, which served a substantial "meat and three" lunch for years. Since that time, the building has undergone several changes to the front façade and fenestration.

COMMUNITY LANDMARK BUILDINGS

Typical of the paternalistic Southern mill villages, Bibb City has a number of community landmark buildings that were built by the Bibb Manufacturing Company for the workers and their families.

After the mill complex, the Bibb City School was the most important building in the village, serving as the center of education and community life for 70 years (photographs 34 and 35). Prior to the 1919-1920 expansion, school was held in two houses, 3220 (not extant) and 3246 River Avenue. When the Bibb Company transformed the town by creating the new village, a school was built that matched the scale and style of the new houses. Earle Draper, the landscape architect, sited the school on the edge of the bluff in the center of the town. The architecture firm Robert & Company of Atlanta designed the new school with Algernon Blair of Montgomery, Alabama, serving as builder. Completed in late 1919, the brick building has two main stories with an above ground level basement. The building has a three-part plan with a center block and a projecting classroom block on each side. Typical of public schools during this time, the company-owned school was built in the Classical style with 12-over-12 sash windows, pedimented entrances, and a cornice topped by a decorated parapet. Windows on the basement level and a majority of windows on the front façade were later bricked in. A 550-seat auditorium extends to the rear of the main block forming a T-

¹⁸ The date of construction is interesting, since the property was not transferred from the Bibb to R. E. Martin until September 5, 1923. Deed Book 47, 524. (See photograph 15.) Martin also ran an open-air theater, known as Skeeter Flats, on 1st Avenue, probably just south of the Bibb City limits.

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shaped building. The auditorium served as the sole community meeting and activity space until 1941 and public city council meetings were held there in 2000. Across from the school at 96 1st Avenue is a vacant lot where the teachers' cottage once stood. Prior to 1919, teachers lived in the women's hotel (no longer extant). The teachers' cottage was demolished in the mid-1960s, presumably because it was too large for use as a private residence.

Immediately west of the school stood the natatorium, a multi-functional building that played an important role in the community (no longer extant). The one-story brick building was I-shaped with a covered swimming pool forming the long section of the "I". Robert & Company designed the building and Algernon Blair of Montgomery, Alabama, was the contractor. The "short" ends of the building had side gable roofs, eyebrow dormers, and a symmetrical three-bay façade with paired nine-over-nine sash windows, and a pedimented portico. By 1951, the pool was changed to an open pool. Using the pool always required a small admission fee and children were the most frequent visitors. Apparently, it had no filtration system, because in the late 1950s the pool was being drained and refilled every other day.¹⁹ The Bibb Company filled in the pool, presumably in the mid-1960s, when the city ceased to function as a company town, and the building was demolished in the late 20th century. To the rear of the lot is a one-story brick building built c.1907 as a gymnasium. Today, this simple Classical-style brick building with a front gable functions as part of the school. Its dominant feature is a round-arched hood, supported by large decorative brackets, that shelters the front door. Two pairs of nine-over-nine windows flank the entrance. The only other decorative element is the narrow rectangular vent centered over the door.

The Bibb Company provided a health clinic on 40th Street for the mill workers and their children (no longer extant). The company doctor and nurses worked out of this facility.

The vacant lot immediately west of the natatorium lot was the site of the house and store of W. T. Hawkins. He purchased the land from J. Homer Dimon before the new village was created. Hawkins and his family ran the store for almost as long as the company's village existed. Hawkins refused to sell out to the company, and children bought candy and parents bought groceries from this store.

Unlike other mill villages, the Bibb did not build or operate a village church, even when it expanded in 1919-1920. The company, however, encouraged religion and allowed Sunday school to be held in the mill-owned town council chambers in 1914. Sunday school was later held in the women's hotel, and mill managers taught some of the classes. The first Bibb City Baptist Church building was located to the east of the village (outside of the district). In 1936, the church built a new building across from the Bibb School (photograph 36). A thousand people attended its dedication in July of 1936. The food tables stretched along Hanson Avenue from 40th to Porter streets, and benches were needed to supplement the tables because the festivities were so large.²⁰ The church was renamed Porter Memorial Baptist Church for James Porter, a prominent company director associated with another mill village owned by the Bibb Manufacturing Company, Porterdale Mill in Newton County. The church is a two-story, rectangular, brick building with a large pediment supported by

¹⁹ Brown interview.

²⁰ *Bibb Recorder Scrapbook*, 2:105, CSU Archives.

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four Doric columns on the front facade. The building has flat-arched windows with contrasting plaster keystones and stained-glass windows. The congregation added a Sunday school building to the southwest corner of their church and built a parsonage on 2nd Avenue, the only brick house in Bibb City. The church could not sustain the loan payments for the house and it was sold to Plez Johnson, who later served as mayor for the village.²¹

By 1940, many Carolina textile companies had retreated from their paternalism, but not the Bibb. The board of directors authorized plans for a new gymnasium and community center in February of 1940, with construction beginning in August of 1940.²² Ellamae Ellis League, a Macon architect, designed the new building. The one-story, rectangular, brick building has an austere design (photograph 44). The front façade is divided into three bays. The center bay is topped by a pediment only adorned by a square vent and the entrance is comprised of three pairs of doors with circular panels flanking the doors. The outer bays have a vertical, white panel that provides contrast to the plain façade. Historically, windows were in the vertical panels, and round windows on either side of the entrance doors, which were wood panel doors. Other changes to the building include bricking in clerestory windows on the front façade and enclosing the flat-roof entrance portico with nonhistoric materials. An elaborate cupola that is strikingly different in design tops the building. The cupola has Exotic Revival-style details. The body of the cupola is an octagon with horizontal wooden slats used as siding. It rises from a tall, square base and has decorative brackets underneath the main portion of the cupola. Four thin, metal columns stand out from the octagonal body and pierce through the base and top. The top, or roof, of the cupola is copper. The roofline flares out to the columns and is topped with finials. The interior of the building has a utilitarian design and floor plan with a stage at the north end of the building and a basketball court with fixed bleachers along the sides. Offices and meeting rooms are located in the basement, and at one time a duckpin bowling alley was located at the north end of the basement. The building was dedicated in July of 1941 and was named for Edward Trippe Comer, brother of Hugh Comer, former president and chairman of the board of Bibb Manufacturing. The building served a variety of community functions over the years but was best known for the Bibb Invitational Basketball Tournament, which involved current and former college players competing on commercial teams. The city of Columbus acquired the building after 1964 in exchange for services to Bibb City.

At the extreme southwest end of the district at 3323 North Gordon Boulevard is the former Bibb City Hall. The building, a hip-roof bungalow, may originally have been used as a residence (photograph 15).

The 1954 Boy Scout hut remains in the district at the intersection of Linden Point and Poplar Street on a site overlooking the river (photograph 52). The original building was devastated by a tornado and was rebuilt by April of 1954. The one-story, frame building has a side-gable roof and a massive

²¹ Griffin & Johnson Interview. The Johnson family still occupies the house.

²² *Bibb Recorder Scrapbook*, 4:45, CSU Archives.

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fieldstone chimney on the front façade. In 1999, the building was covered with vinyl siding.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):

ARCHITECTURE
COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
COMMERCE
INDUSTRY
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance:

1900-1964

Significant Dates:

1900 – Construction of Bibb Dam, Bibb Mill, and the “old village” houses
1909 – Incorporation of Bibb City
1919-1920 – Construction of the “new village”, the school, and the natatorium
1936 – Construction of Porter Memorial Baptist Church
1940 – Construction of Comer Auditorium
1964 – Company sale of houses to residents

Significant Person(s):

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

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Architect(s)/Builder(s):

Blair, Algernon, builder, Montgomery, Alabama
League, Ellamae Ellis, architect, Macon, Georgia
Robert & Company, architectural firm, Atlanta, Georgia
West Point Iron Works, builders

Statement of significance (areas of significance)

The Bibb Manufacturing Company built and began operating in 1900 a large textile mill on a large bluff (locally called Lover's Leap) overlooking the Chattahoochee River. The spinning mill was powered by a waterwheel-driven rope drive. Through the early 1900s, the mill expanded a number of times, until by 1920 the main mill building was five stories tall and 90 bays long, and one of largest textile mills in the South. Mill workers' housing was constructed in two phases: between 1900 and 1903, 101 houses and a woman's hotel (no longer extant) were built and from 1919 to 1921 approximately 160 houses were built. The company sold the mill houses to residents in 1964 and the mill continued to operate until 1998. Bibb City remained a separate entity when Columbus-Muscogee County consolidated in 1971. Bibb City relinquished its charter in 2000. On Thursday, October 30, 2008, during the course of this proposed National Register nomination, the Main Bibb Mill Building caught fire and burned leaving only the front façade and most of the outer walls (see Attachments 3 and 4). The walls were subsequently demolished leaving only the front façade, consisting of one bay of the original 90-bay building (see Attachments 5-7). The fire also damaged the historic office building and day nursery and the nonhistoric office building, all of which were demolished. The main mill building was previously listed as part of the National Historic Landmark-designated Columbus Historic Riverfront Industrial District. The Bibb City Historic District is significant at the state level because it was evaluated as one of the largest and most intact company-built mill villages in the state.

The Bibb City Historic District is significant in the area of architecture for its excellent, intact collection of historic houses and industrial, commercial, and community landmark buildings that represent Southern textile mill architecture in the early 20th century. The architecture of the company-built worker housing and the industrial and community landmark buildings exemplifies buildings found in mill communities in Georgia during the early 20th century.

Mill houses in the district were built according to a few house types typical of mill villages in Georgia as defined in *Georgia's Living Places: Historic Houses in Their Landscaped Settings*. The four house types built in the "old village" are the four-room pyramidal-roof duplex, the four-room side-gable cottage, the three-room saddlebag house with rear addition, and the ten-room house either as a duplex or as a boarding house. Between 1919 and 1920, 160 mill houses were built in the "new village." The majority of these houses were Craftsman-style bungalows and double-shotgun houses. For both the old and new village, the architectural firm Robert & Company of Atlanta designed the houses and West Point Iron Works was the builder. Mill houses in the district retain their character-defining features including form, design, materials, and workmanship.

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

Although the main mill building and a number of mill-related industrial buildings have been lost or demolished, the Bibb City Historic District is significant in architecture for the remaining mill-related resources that are excellent and intact examples of textile buildings and structures including the historic water tower, dam, hydroelectric plant, and large warehouses and weave sheds.

The district is also significant in architecture for its community landmark and commercial buildings. Extant community landmark buildings built by the Bibb Manufacturing Company for its workers include the 1919 Bibb City school designed by architectural firm Robert & Company, the 1940 Comer Auditorium designed by architect Ellamae Ellis League, the c.1907 gymnasium, c.1920 Bibb City Hall, and the 1954 Boy Scout Hut. Although not built by the company, the 1936 Classical Revival-style Porter Memorial Baptist Church is a good example of an early 20th-century community church building.

Commercial buildings in the district were not built by the Bibb Company but played a vital role in community life in Bibb City. The one- and two-story brick commercial buildings on 2nd Avenue and on 38th Street are representative of commercial buildings built in Georgia in the early 20th century and retain their historic character-defining features including recessed entrances, plate-glass display windows, and decorative brickwork.

The district is significant in the area of community planning and development because the mill village exemplifies the comprehensive approach to business typical of Southern textile mills, which provided housing, recreational areas, and community buildings for workers. The plan of the old village was typical of Southern textile mill villages with houses laid out in a gridiron plan in close relationship to the mill complex. The design of the new village in 1919 and 1920, however, placed the Bibb Manufacturing Company apart from most other mill communities. By hiring a noted landscape architect, Earle S. Draper, to design a picturesque plan following the unique topography of Bibb City, the Bibb Manufacturing Company created a landscape that, according to the company's paternalistic business model, would in turn create a loyal and stable work force. Community landmark buildings were placed in prominent locations in the village and provided essential, civic, and social services for the mill workers as part of the mill's paternalistic business system.

Bibb City Historic District is significant in the area of commerce and industry because of its important role in the state as one of the largest textile mills. The production of textiles was a major component of Georgia's economy from the middle of the 19th century through the late 20th century, when nearly all textile manufacturing moved out of the United States. The Columbus Plant of the Bibb Manufacturing Company represents one of several plants that the Bibb Company operated throughout the state along the fall line (Macon and Porterdale were other mill sites), using water power to run the mill machinery.

The district is significant in the area of landscape architecture for landscape architect Earle S. Draper's innovative design for the expanded mill village in 1919 with curvilinear streets and trapezoidal lots. Draper was a noted landscape architect from Charlotte, North Carolina, who designed residential subdivisions and industrial towns throughout the South and later worked for the Tennessee Valley Authority. Draper's work was characterized by designing roads to follow the

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contours of the land and creating park-like subdivisions. For the new village in Bibb City, Draper applied his design principles by taking advantage of the dramatic topography north of the mill complex in the layout of the curvilinear streets and the irregular-shaped lots. Houses were perched on hillsides to take advantage of the view and parks were created in the low ravines for common greenspace.

National Register Criteria

The Bibb City Historic District meets National Register Criterion A in the areas of community planning and development, commerce, and industry because Bibb City exemplifies the comprehensive approach to business typical of Southern textile mills, which provided housing, recreational areas, and community buildings for workers and for its role as one of the largest textile mills in the state.

The district meets National Register Criterion C in the areas of architecture and landscape architecture for its excellent, intact collection of historic houses and industrial, commercial, and community landmark buildings that represent Southern textile mill architecture in the early 20th century and for the 1919 landscape plan of the new village designed by Earle S. Draper.

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

The Bibb City Historic District meets National Register Criteria Consideration G because the Bibb City Manufacturing Company continued to own and maintain its mill village for three decades after other Southern textile mill companies ceased the paternalistic system of ownership. Mill strikes in the 1930s led other textile companies to sell their worker housing, but houses in Bibb City were not sold until 1964. The time span from 1900 through 1964 represents the historic development of Bibb City.

Period of significance (justification)

The period of significance for the Bibb City Historic District begins in 1900 with the construction of the Bibb Dam and Mill and ends in 1964 when the Bibb Company sold the mill housing to the residents, stopped their paternalistic management, and ceased maintenance of the housing and community landmark buildings built by the company. The Bibb Mill continued to operate until March 20, 1998.

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Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)

There are 238 contributing buildings in the district, which includes the remaining mill warehouses, houses, commercial buildings, and community landmark buildings. The three historic parks are the three contributing sites and the five contributing structures are the water tower, dam, bridge, hydroelectric plant and the overall plan of Bibb City. Thirteen of the noncontributing sites are the sites of former houses on River Avenue; the houses were recently demolished for new development. Another noncontributing site is the site of the former main mill building. The recent fire and demolition of all but the first bay of the mill resulted in a complete lack of historic integrity; the site no longer conveys its historic materials, design, workmanship, association, and feeling as the largest textile mill building in Georgia. The one noncontributing structure is the nonhistoric substation.

Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)

NOTE: The following developmental history was prepared by John Lupold of Columbus State University's History Department, and Elizabeth Barker of Historic Columbus Foundation, and minimally edited by Gretchen Brock, National Register Coordinator, Georgia Historic Preservation Division. "Bibb City Historic District," draft *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*, April 27, 2001. On file at the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.

Native Americans certainly used this riverbank to manufacture tools, to hunt and, especially, to fish, even though the major historic-period Indian population centers (Coweta and Cusseta) were located south of the fall line. Archaeologists found a "flint quarry" in the approximate area of the present-day Bibb City. Also, a spud (or ceremonial axe head) in the McKnight Collection in a St. Louis museum is cited as being from Bibb City.²³ A rock overhang, known locally as "the cave," is a prime candidate for a rock shelter site, but no systematic investigation of this portion of the riverside has occurred. Studies on similar locations to the north and south have revealed occupations from the Paleo to the Creek periods. Some residents insist that there is an Indian burial ground in the area, probably to the north of Bibb City. Indian legends form an important part of the local mythology. The most lasting is that associated with Lover's Leap, the rock bluff over the turbulent Chattahoochee River. A local legend attributed the name of the pinnacle to Indian lovers who plunged to their deaths rather than live apart.²⁴

²³ Peter Brannon, *American Anthropologist*, 1909; general information on Indian inhabitation came from Frank Schnell, archaeologist, Columbus Museum.

²⁴ The myth portrays Mohina and Malachi as being from Coweta and Cusseta and leaping into the gorge because they were from separate tribes and, therefore, denied the right to marry. One version has them betrothed as a diplomatic maneuver and then forced to separate because of a breakdown in negotiations. When the lovers continued to see each other, they were pursued and jumped to their deaths. In actuality, if the Creeks had opposed a marriage, it probably was incestuous—a marriage between members of the same clan.

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While the Indians probably used this land, they did little to change the landscape. The Europeans and enslaved Africans did, however, as the level portions of Bibb City probably became cotton fields on the Cook plantation in the antebellum period. James C. Cook's lands originally stretched from present-day 29th Street to 44th Street in Columbus and included Lover's Leap and the land that became Bibb City. His house sat on the east side of his property (outside of the district). Also during the early 19th century, John Winter sited his Rock Island paper mill and small dam on the western side of an island near the Alabama shore.²⁵ The mill was destroyed by Union troops in 1865 and was never rebuilt. Nevertheless, the waterpower of the Chattahoochee River, which Winter used, would also shape the history of the piece of high ground on the eastern side of the river.

One of James C. Cook's descendants, S. A. Cook, organized and served as president of the North Highlands Land and Improvement Company that sought to create a recreational park there and develop the real estate beginning in the mid-1890s. The promotional plat for the North Highlands Improvement and Manufacturing Company touted the beauty of the land:

Tourists who have done all the wonders of this country and the old world, freely concede that neither upon the Rhine, the Rhone, the "Blue Danube" or the famed Palisades of the Hudson River, is there a continuous drive of the same length, equal in natural beauty and ever changing variety to the magnificent Boulevard Drive of the North Highlands along the winding banks of the gleaming Chattahoochee, curving in and out among the emerald islands and churning its waters into white mists and snowy foam as it dashes between and around the gigantic rocks that vainly impeded its onward rush.²⁶

Boulevard Drive probably predated the company's development of the area. The road wound its way along the crest of the riverside hills overlooking the turbulent river from about the present-day 25th Street in Columbus to the northern reaches of Bibb City.²⁷ Picnickers probably used it before the 1890s to reach Lovers' Leap and the rock boulders along the riverbank.

The North Highlands Company planned to develop the area as an upscale residential neighborhood and a recreational area to rival Columbus real estate developer John Flournoy's Wildwood Park and his real estate developments in the Wynnton area, east of Columbus. The North Highlands Railroad Company already operated streetcars to North Highlands Park. The trolley line ran from downtown Columbus up 2nd Avenue to just past present-day 38th Street and then angled westward along the present Hemlock Drive. Just north of the bridge at the bottom, the track veered to the northeast and climbed the hill. The streetcar then looped around what are now Beechwood Circle and perhaps some of Spruce Street in a counter-clockwise direction and returned southward on the same track.²⁸

²⁵ John Hill, Gunby Jordan, and John Hanson purchased John Winter's land in the 1890s; a map shows the location of the dam. All of the remaining traces of this mill were destroyed by the larger Bibb pond after 1900.

²⁶ The text on this plan also asserted that the *Encyclopedia Britannica* noted the beauty of Lover's Leap. This decorative map is framed in the Deed Room, Clerk of Superior Court, Muscogee County.

²⁷ Remnants of Boulevard [outside of the district] are 25th Street west of 1st Avenue, Riverside, Bradley Circle, and the private road around old Columbus Manufacturing Company.

²⁸ This track is shown on most of the early maps of the area, but the most illustrative in showing its location in Bibb City Historic District, Muscogee County, Georgia

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Remnants of brick and stone walls on the north slope of Hemlock Drive Park probably date from the North Highlands Park period and may have shored-up the foundation of an early road or the trolley track bed. To the north of the trolley loop stood a recreational pavilion, also called a casino or a dance hall (no longer extant). It was an idyllic setting. The main attraction was the scenic beauty of the hills and bluff overlooking the untamed Chattahoochee River. Where houses now stand at numbers 1 and 2 Spruce Street was a tower offering a panoramic view of the area (no longer extant). In the present-day Woodland Circle, a grove of large trees sheltered a park. Those trees probably included the two large, extant oaks on Magnolia Street, which predated the park.

Visitors took boat rides in a large pond in what is now Hanson Drive Park. The small lake, known as Marie Springs and presumably formed by damming the stream, was stocked with a few fish and domesticated fowl.²⁹ In the same vicinity, cool fresh water flowed from three mineral springs, which the streetcar line advertised as a reason to ride their line to the site.³⁰ Had it not been for its waterpower potential, the Lover's Leap or North Highlands area might have become the city's premiere middle-class suburb eclipsing the Wynnton-Weracoba area. Much more important to Columbus than a pretty setting for picnics or even a pretty setting for new suburbs, was the tremendous waterpower potential at Lover's Leap.

The North Highlands Park period is still visible in the configuration of some of the roads. The meandering Boulevard was straightened to become Riverside (or River) Avenue. Other sections of Boulevard became Linden Point and Woodland Circle. Park Avenue, named when the area functioned as a park, retained its title after it became lined with mill houses. Several unnamed roads looped and circled in the northern end of what became the village; they became various portions of Woodland Circle, Magnolia Street, Spruce Street, and Beachwood Heights.

The Bibb Dam, and hence the mill and the village, were built here for only one reason: to exploit this waterpower. At Lovers' Leap the Chattahoochee River flowed through a narrow rock gorge that shifted the river from the Alabama to the Georgia side of the riverbed. The natural fall of the river combined with the narrow gorge made this an ideal site for a dam, but the topography necessitated a large investment and a sophisticated technological arrangement. Neither of these existed before the late 1890s.

Bibb Dam & Mill

G. Gunby Jordan, John J. Hill, and John F. Hanson instigated the creation of the Bibb Dam and Mill when they began purchasing land for these facilities in 1897. Gunby Jordan, the city's most dynamic

relationship to the present features is J. Homer Dimon's plat of Riverview.

²⁹ Later, the original Bibb dam might have backed water into this slough. The 1917 Riverview plat of J. Homer Dimon shows backwater in this area. Also, a plaque on the west side of Hanson Drive overlooking this bottom identified it as R. B. Newton Lake in 1941. Perhaps when Georgia Power rebuilt the powerhouses between 1954 and 1963, the top of the dam was (the flash-boards were) lowered, so that the backwater from the dam no longer covered this space.

³⁰ *Bibb Recorder* (May 17, 1935) Scrapbook, 2:32, Columbus State University Archives; also see *Ledger-Enquirer* clipping in *Bibb Recorder* Scrapbook, 3:49, Columbus State University Archives. The Bibb Manufacturing Company published this free newspaper from 1920 until 1970. The Gardner sisters clipped and placed in a scrapbook all the articles relating to Columbus. Copies of these scrapbooks are available in the Columbus State University Archives.

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businessman at that time, owned banking, insurance, and real estate interests, and he was revitalizing the Eagle & Phenix Mill, one of the town's oldest mills, which had slipped into receivership in 1896. John J. Hill, the former Eagle & Phenix company engineer and an inventor of one of the first automatic fire sprinklers, apparently argued that a dam at this site—the first new hydro facility³¹ on the Chattahoochee since the 1840s—was feasible. Unfortunately, Hill died in 1898 just as the project was being implemented. Major John F. Hanson of Macon, along with Hugh M. Comer³² of Savannah, established the Bibb Manufacturing Company in an abandoned freight house of the Central of Georgia Railroad in Macon. Their company added two more Macon factories as well as mills in Porterdale and Taylor by 1898. Comer and Hanson, who both started their business careers as cotton merchants, were also major investors in the Central of Georgia Railroad, with both of them later serving as its president.³³

Illustrative of the centrality of waterpower in this Chattahoochee River venture, Jordan and Hanson created the Columbus Power Company in 1897 and purchased the property they had assembled.³⁴ Jordan and Hanson recruited the 35-year-old W. C. Bradley, Columbus' most successful rising businessman. Bradley and Jordan already shared similar banking interests and investments in the nearby Eagle & Phenix Mill. With the addition of Jordan and Bradley as major stockholders, considerable Columbus capital was added to the Bibb Manufacturing Company that had been a Savannah-Macon venture.³⁵ From its inception, these men designed the Columbus branch of the Bibb Manufacturing Company to be the premier mill in Columbus. They did not envision simply building a single mill at Lover's Leap. This complex project, which doubled the volume of waterpower being used in Columbus, involved constructing a dam, two powerhouses—one for the Bibb and one for the Columbus Power Company—and two mills. The Bibb Mill used mechanical power from its powerhouse, and W. C. Bradley's Columbus Manufacturing Company (several blocks to the south and outside of the district) consumed some of the electricity produced by Columbus Power Company. Called the first large dam built in the South, its construction began in 1899 and was still incomplete when it partially collapsed under high water in 1901.³⁶ The entire operation began in 1902.

³¹ Hill had modernized and increased the capacity of the Eagle & Phenix Dam in the 1880s.

³² Comer was born in Barbour County, Alabama, and would certainly have been familiar with Columbus and would have known W.C. Bradley, a fellow cotton merchant whose family plantation would have been upstream from that of the Comer's. Comer and Jordan also served together on the Georgia Railroad Commission. That might have resulted in Jordan attracting these Macon entrepreneurs to Columbus.

³³ Comer, who had enjoyed a long tenure as the Bibb president, died in 1900. Hanson succeeded him as president and oversaw the completion of the Columbus plant. He died in 1909, and Gunby Jordan then served as president for four years.

³⁴ "Bibb City Is Culmination of Industrial Romance of North Highlands Section," *Bibb Recorder*, September 10, 1937, in *Bibb Recorder Scrapbook*, 3:12, CSU Archives. Muscogee County Deed Book KK, 212 (December 8, 1897) records the transfer (for \$45,000) of the property from Jordan, Hanson, and Hill to the Columbus Power Company; that document also explains from whom they purchased the various tracts. Also see KK, 141 & 143.

³⁵ Collection of typescript histories and various clippings copied from company files in Bibb Folder, Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) Collection, CSU Archives. Also consult a company history by Edwin T. Brinkley, Editor, *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer*, in *Bibb Recorder Scrapbook*, 3:12, CSU Archives.

³⁶ William S. Lee served as chief engineer during the reconstruction. He later became the driving force along with Bibb City Historic District, Muscogee County, Georgia

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The new dam expanded local textile production, as Columbus Power Company became the city's major wholesale supplier of electricity. In addition to driving the Bibb Mill and Columbus Manufacturing Company, by 1906 electricity from the Columbus Power Company powerhouse turned the spindles in Swift Spinning Mill located on 2nd Avenue a couple of blocks south of the Bibb (outside of the district). Also, the increased availability of electricity led to the development of Perkins Hosiery Mill in east Columbus. Gunby Jordan invested heavily in this firm.

In 1906, the Bibb Manufacturing Company quit the power business and sold the Columbus Power Company and the other, electrical-producing powerhouse to Stone & Webster, a Boston-based utilities company, for \$1,000,000.³⁷ Stone & Webster already controlled the Columbus [Street] Railroad Company facility at the City Mills dam, which produced power for streetcars, streetlights, and retail electricity for homes and businesses. Stone & Webster organized the Columbus Electric & Power Company; Jordan and Bradley served as directors of the new company, but the Boston directors always held a majority of the votes.³⁸

The Bibb Company retained control of the smaller wheelhouse on the Georgia side of the Chattahoochee; it provided power to the mill by means of a series of rope drives. This system only drove the original section of the mill, but it continued to operate a small amount of spinning machinery until 1954. Electrical generators, for the use of the mill and the village, were added to this powerhouse in 1903.

The Bibb Mill in terms of its size, approximately 300 feet in length with 24,000 spindles, started as a rather typical Southern mill. It was designed to only be a spinning mill and included no weaving capacity. Its product, fine yarns with 60% being woven from Sea Island and Egyptian long-staple cotton, was unique for a Southern mill. In most Southern mills, relatively unskilled operatives used ring spinning frames to produce coarser yarns. This Bibb plant contained both ring spinning (15,000 spindles) and mule spinning (1,000 speeders); the latter required more skilled workers. The mule spinners spun sewing thread with counts as high as 120. The Bibb Manufacturing Company, in addition to exploiting the waterpower of Columbus, planned from the beginning to tap the city's large

James B. Duke behind the organization of Duke Power Company. Lee always credited his later success on his early experience in Columbus. A discussion of this facility and a cross-section of its electric powerhouse were included in Daniel Mead's textbook, *Water Power Engineering* (N.Y., 1920), 565-567. B.H. Hardaway, "Remarks on the recent Failures of Masonry Dams in the South", *Engineering News*, 6 January 1902, 107-109; J. B. Karfunkle, Barbara Kimmelman, & John Lupold, "The Power Station of the Columbus Railroad Company at City Mills Dam," *HAER Report GA-26* (1977), 1-4, 10-11; James E. Brittain, *A Brief History of Engineering in Georgia* (Atlanta, 1976) 13; George B. Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South, 1913-1945* (Baton Rouge, 1967), 72.

³⁷ The Columbus Power Company, rather than the Bibb Company, owned the property where the mill and the old village sat, until 1906, when the holdings of the Columbus Power Company were reduced to simply one of the powerhouses and the river.

³⁸ In 1930, Stone & Webster's holdings in South Georgia became part of the Georgia Power Company.

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pool of experienced textile workers.³⁹

During Jordan's term as president of the Bibb Manufacturing Company, the Columbus plant began producing tire fabric. The company started experimenting with this woven product in Macon in 1907 and approximately three years later received its first big order from Goodyear for 3,000,000 yards of fabric. The company moved the manufacture of tire fabric to Columbus in 1911, most likely to take advantage of the skill level of the workers. A weave shed was added to the mill.⁴⁰ Jordan eliminated the mule spinning equipment, but spinning remained an important focus, as the company also began fabricating tire cord. The popularity of Henry Ford's Model T's (1908) also affected the textile industry. In 1915 and 1916, another 200 feet in length was added to the main mill building and the number of spindles expanded to 48,000.

The Great War brought both profits and labor trouble to Columbus' textile mills. Encouraged by the policies of the National War Labor Board, which allowed workers to organize but not strike, Columbus operatives began to organize. A strike started at the nearby Swift Spinning Mill in August of 1918 when the company fired some union members. When labor unrest spread throughout the city, the governor declared the city to be under martial law. The National War Labor Board intervened, investigated the situation, and forced the textile companies to rehire union members.

Columbus textile workers remained organized and supportive of their union in early 1919. On February 3, 1919, textile workers throughout the nation went on strike for an eight-hour day. In Columbus, 7,000 workers joined that strike, walking out of mills after they had worked for eight hours that day. The strike succeeded in New England mills, but in Columbus the strike was broken by May. The labor organizers, however, were still trying to keep workers from going back into the local mills. On the evening of May 21, 1919, a group of pro-union workers gathered for a rally at the intersection of 32nd Street and 2nd Avenue, a corner illuminated by electricity from the Bibb Company powerhouse. An anti-union group gathered on the western side of 2nd Avenue. A single pistol shot rang out, apparently a signal for the street lights to be turned off. In the darkness, anti-union thugs on the roofs of buildings fired into the pro-union workers, killing Grady Tucker and wounding seven other people.⁴¹ A worker in the Bibb powerhouse had been ordered to extinguish the lights.⁴² This use of violence, which apparently was sanctioned by Bibb management, ended the strike.⁴³ One month later, in June of 1919, undaunted by the labor trouble, the Bibb Manufacturing Company decided to double the size of the Columbus plant by adding 500 feet to its length, another 77,000

³⁹ While the Bibb initially only spun yarn or thread, the adjacent Columbus Manufacturing Company only wove material, and it consumed some of the yarn spun by the Bibb.

⁴⁰ Henry Pittman, "The Bibb Manufacturing Company: A Profile of Progress, People, and Plants." Manuscript, c.1955. Was available at the Bibb Company Corporate Offices, Macon, Georgia.

⁴¹ Frank J. Byrne, "Wartime Agitation and Postwar Repression: The Columbus Strike of 1918-1919," *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, 81:2 (Summer 1997), 345-69. Also see the headline of the *Columbus Enquirer*, May 22, 1919.

⁴² Interview with Fred Vann, company engineer, by John Lupold and J. B. Karfunkle, summer of 1977.

⁴³ It is interesting to note that page 85 to 91 of the town council minutes are missing, from March 5, 1919 to January 12, 1920. This management-induced violence was unnecessary, since the strike had been broken.

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spindles, and approximately 160 more houses in the village. Profits earned during the Great War fueled this expansion.

The newly expanded plant continued to produce tire cord for Goodrich, Goodyear, and U.S. Royal tire companies; but during the 1920s, tire companies began manufacturing their own cord and the company shifted some production to apparel and print cloth. By the 1930s, in addition to some tire cord fabric, the mill produced print cloths, men's fancy shirting, ladies' dress goods, trousering, hose yarns, belting yarn, and other cotton yarns.⁴⁴ The real changes in the 1930s came from the policies flowing out of Washington, D.C. and Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration.

The New Deal, specifically the National Recovery Administration or NRA, and the national strike of 1934 changed the Southern textile industry and altered the relationships between management and labor. The NRA forced the change from twelve- to eight-hour shifts, raised wages, heightened workers' expectations, and increased union activities. In the South, these policies and the resulting conflicts tended to undermine the paternalistic corporate welfare systems that companies had established during the 1920s.

The Bibb Manufacturing Company experienced less conflict in 1934 than some textile operations in the Carolinas or than Callaway Mills in LaGrange, Georgia, possibly due to the strength of its paternalistic corporate welfare system within its village. By the late 1940s, the Bibb Mill most likely reached its apex employing about 3,000 workers. Perhaps half of these lived in Bibb City. While Columbusites viewed this riverside village as a rough place, most of its residents would have described their neighborhood as a good place to live and to raise children.

The Bill Mill Village

Mill villages, like other facets of Southern history, have developed their own mythology. Many of the generalizations about these villages are as inaccurate as the stereotypes about the colonnaded Taras of the antebellum period. Some of the images of village life were based on coal mining communities using unskilled laborers in the remote mountains of West Virginia and have been inaccurately applied to skilled operatives in textile towns.

Mill villages have often been viewed as the essential mechanism in the oppression of textile workers. According to this negative stereotype, workers were forced to live in company houses, were paid in chits and were forced to shop in company stores that kept them in debt to hold them at the mill.⁴⁵ Such an interpretation insults the intelligence of mill operatives. Workers were manipulated, but the

⁴⁴ *Bibb Recorder* Scrapbook Collection, 3:13, CSU Archives.

⁴⁵ An example of such an exaggeration was written by David Williams in his work *Rich Man's War: Class, Caste, and Confederate Defeat in the Lower Chattahoochee Valley* (Athens, 1998). "A kind of economic slavery was also common among mill workers in company towns like those of Columbus and West Point. Employees worked for company wages, lived in company housing, and were often paid not in cash but in company scrip that could only be spent at the company store or local establishments where the company had an interest." (p. 192.) Such a statement is inaccurate when applied to the Bibb Manufacturing Company. The West Point mill also had no company stores and a paternalistic system that resembled or exceeded the Bibb's.

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control was much subtler than economic bondage. A company's goal was not to simply hold workers in debt, but to win their loyalty. The Bibb Manufacturing Company excelled in this endeavor.

The Bibb mill workers did not have an easy life. Southern textile workers, in general, had extremely hard lives. At the turn of the century, women, children, and men worked 12 hours a day, and left the mill at the end of their shift exhausted, covered with lint, and soaking wet from perspiration. Temperatures inside the Bibb Mill soared to 118° in August. Some older workers had trouble breathing; their chests hurt, especially on Monday when they went back into the mill. Their compensation did not mitigate the conditions. They labored for meager wages, with only a few earning as much as \$10.00 a week prior to the labor laws implemented by the New Deal. The very existence of the Southern textile industry depended on the exploitation of cheap Southern labor and on the maintenance of the North-South wage differential that consigned Southern workers to a life of low wages.

Rather than adding to their misery, however, living in a mill village - specifically Bibb City - could actually improve the quality of a worker's life, and especially that of their family and children, if a worker could accept and live within the confines of the company's rules and its omnipresent paternalism.

Company villages may have been necessities at rural mill sites such as Riverdale and Langdale, along the Chattahoochee River in Alabama, or in the rural Carolina Piedmont where no housing existed for workers. The lack of stores in such areas led to the development of company stores, and these could be exploitative. Early textile historians writing from the Carolinas, improperly applied these generalizations to the entire South; but this picture was never valid for Georgia, where urban mills dominated the industry from the 1840s. In large cities—such as Columbus, Augusta, Macon, and Atlanta—mill villages were never a necessity. The Bibb Manufacturing Company did not have villages at its first mills in Macon.

The three major Columbus textile manufacturers, Muscogee Manufacturing, Swift Textiles, and Swift Spinning, never owned mill housing. The Columbus plant of the Bibb Manufacturing Company could have functioned and made more profits without a village. The location of the new Bibb Mill was neither rural nor isolated; streetcars ran to the site before there was a factory there. So why did the company create Bibb City? The organizers of the Bibb Mill in Columbus probably did not ponder this question for very long. All of their experience pointed toward creating a village, but an explanation of these factors establishes a context for understanding the history of Bibb City.

The company's Columbus investors, G. Gunby Jordan and W. C. Bradley, came from a mill tradition of providing houses for operatives. The Eagle & Phenix, where Jordan and Bradley were major investors, operated the city's most sophisticated village across the river in Alabama.⁴⁶ Also, the Bibb Manufacturing Company had purchased Porterdale Mills (near Covington, east of Atlanta and listed

⁴⁶ The name Phenix City originated from that mill village.

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in the National Register of Historic Places on September 17, 2001) along with an extensive village, and it might have served as a model for the Columbus plant.

Furthermore, the Eagle & Phenix experienced labor problems in the 1890s. Prince Greene, a weaver from that mill, was serving as president of the National Union of Textile Workers (NUTW) as the Columbus Bibb mill was being created, and labor unrest was still prevalent in other major Southern cities (Augusta, Columbia, Greensboro, Danville, etc.). A village setting increased management's potential control over workers or could reduce potential labor problems. If the company controlled a worker's house, he or she might be less inclined to strike.

Jordan and Bradley must have realized that the Bibb and the other mills spawned by the additional electricity from the Bibb dam would ultimately result in a labor shortage and a reduction in the availability of skilled workers within the city. By 1907 the superintendent of the Eagle & Phenix Mill, Oscar Jordan (Gunby's brother) was reporting such shortages to his board of directors.⁴⁷ A well-organized village that provided social services could insure the loyalty of workers and guarantee a more stable labor force.

First generation workers moving from a rural environment did not immediately adopt the values, work habits, and company loyalty needed to be dependable, stable mill operatives. Most of these first generation migrants would have rather been farming. They were forced by economic circumstances to move into the mill. As cotton prices fell and rural conditions worsened, many were forced to flee to textile mills for employment; however, most men came reluctantly. To own your own piece of land was the Southern ideal, so many farmers who came to the mill saw it as temporary employment. A majority of the families who came to the Bibb mill migrated from southern Alabama around Dothan or from the panhandle of Florida.⁴⁸

Mac Isaacs came to the mill in 1932 as a Georgia Tech graduate and worked his way up to superintendent of all of the Columbus Bibb operations (1961-1974). He remembered the attitudes of the workers who came to the Bibb mill from Lower Alabama: "Their whole idea in coming up and going to work in the mill was to get enough money to go back down there and buy them a patch of ground and farm. And a lot of them would come up and work all winter and into the spring. And then soon as spring came, they'd quit and go back down there and farm. And they'd come back in the fall and work again." One purpose of the mill village was to give workers a permanent alternative to their rural life. Judging from Isaacs's recollection, that objective was only partially fulfilled. Mill villages were also designed to indoctrinate farmers into the regular work patterns of the mill. Farmers worked hard, but not on a regular schedule for 12 hours a day, six days a week, for about 50 weeks a year. Some farmers coming into a mill simply worked long enough to earn enough money to get by on and then quit. Living in a mill village forced them to report to work every day. But temporary employment

⁴⁷ John Lupold, J. B. Karfunkle, & Barbara Kimmelman, "The Eagle & Phenix Mills," HAER Report (1977).

⁴⁸ The workers/residents called it "LA" for Lower Alabama or "down 'round" for down around Dothan. Carolyn Smith, "Minnie Clyde Balkcom and the Bibb City Experience, 1936-1998." Student Paper, 1998. CSU Archives.

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remained a pattern of many mill workers, and some Columbus mills—not necessarily the Bibb—hired temporary people every day.

While social control or making workers more responsible was an important objective of the Bibb Manufacturing Company, their ultimate aim was to have a stable labor force that did not need to be constantly retrained. Operating according to the classic principles of laissez-faire capitalism, the easiest way to insure a more tractable, capable labor force was simply to pay higher wages. But mill owners were not free agents; they had to obey the code of their peers. Unwritten, probably even unspoken, rules governed the actions of Southern mill owners, especially those within a single city. A prime commandment was that no mill paid substantially higher wages. In order to insure a more loyal, more stable work force, a mill spent extra money on its village and its social services. In the case of the Bibb mill, the social aspects came to outweigh the economic objectives.

The company's policy of building houses benefited the workers, but its underlying premise was intensely paternalistic. Rather than give workers more money and let them decide how they needed to spend it, management would decide what should be provided for the workers. Given the attitudes of the Southern textile industry, workers could not hope for any better treatment in 1921 than they received at the Bibb mill. So within that context, workers wanted to live in Bibb City, and they had to earn that right. The company always had more workers than houses, allowing only the loyal and dependable workers to live in the village.

The Old Village

By 1903, 101 houses stood in what came to be known as the old village of Bibb City. The configuration and appearance of these buildings have been described in the earlier portions of this nomination. This historical section will focus on the residents, their living conditions, their longevity, and the paternalistic world in which they lived.

The cluster of Bibb houses built by 1903 might have remained just that, a cluster of houses, if the company had not incorporated the town in 1909 and created a local government. Incorporation prevented Columbus from annexing the area and increasing taxes for the Bibb Manufacturing Company, but the influential local stockholders in the firm (i.e., Jordan and Bradley) could probably have prevented such a move. Incorporation was a way to increase the company's control over its workers; at the same time, it allowed the company to create its paternalistic state—its vision of corporate welfare.

In July of 1909, 45 of the 47 registered voters cast their ballots for incorporation, possibly the highest percentage of turnout of eligible voters the city ever experienced, even though it only represented about 10% of the population.⁴⁹ This electorate, which doubled to 98 by 1921, exercised their franchise every January.⁵⁰ At first they voted at the company office and then in the bottom of the stair tower and other locations in later periods. They had no choice for mayor; until 1939 the

⁴⁹ According to the 1910 census, Bibb City had 463 residents. The Muscogee County Superior Court granted the city's charter, and it is recorded in the deed records.

⁵⁰ According to the town council minutes, the number of voters varied in the early years from 20 to 76.

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superintendent always served in that position, but they could choose among their peers for council members. During the early years of the town, after the election the council treated the qualified voters to an oyster supper, apparently funded by office holders but supplemented in some years by city funds.

The town's budget came from several taxes. Council levied a \$2.00 commutation tax on all male residents as a substitute for performing street duty; failure to pay resulted in three days of work on the streets. After 1920, it imposed the same tax on women who chose to vote. They also taxed personal property at a rate of 15 mils, but the city's primary income came from taxes on the mill's property.

The council concerned itself with regulating residents and animals—dogs, hogs, cattle, chicken, and ducks. Stray, unregistered dogs were shot within 48 hours.⁵¹ The councilmen usually decreed that chickens must be penned in the spring but could roam free again in the fall. Residents could not pasture cows in town but were allowed to bring them to their houses to milk. The proximity of hog pens to the town was also specified.

The town government attempted to protect the health of residents. A small outbreak of smallpox appeared in the village in June of 1910. The council appointed Dr. J. R. Yeomans as a town physician and provided mandatory, free vaccinations to all residents. Those citizens who refused to be inoculated were fined \$25 or required to work in the streets. Anyone who contracted smallpox was to be removed to the Columbus Pest House at the expense of Bibb City. The outbreak must have been limited because it never reappeared as a subject at a council meeting.

Discipline of the residents represented a central and continuing concern for the council. In the early days they specified punishments for being intoxicated, firing a gun or pistol, throwing banana, apple, or orange peels "or other substances liable to endanger the safety of persons walking the streets." Yards were to be inspected by the town marshal, and no loitering was allowed. On some occasions the council identified a particular family that was objectionable and asked the mill to have them removed from the city.⁵² Most often, the town's executive in his dual role as mayor and superintendent punished wrongdoing in the mayor's court and could fire any serious or habitual offenders. Such individuals did not receive their last paycheck until they vacated company housing. Mac Isaacs, a former Bibb superintendent, thought most people "minded their Ps & Qs in the city, because they wanted to keep their houses. But boys would get liquored-up and let that become a habit and become a nuisance to the point where he annoyed his neighbors or where he didn't do his job and they would call him in, and say: 'Look you better straighten up and fly right or you're not going to have a job any more and you'll have to move out.'" Presumably Isaacs practiced this prerogative, even though he couched this description in the third person.

⁵¹ That practice continued for several decades. "Officer Harden warns that after Wednesday, May 7 [1941], all dogs found that haven't been inoculated will be shot without further notice." *Bibb Recorder Scrapbook*, 4:101, CSU Archives.

⁵² In January of 1913, council voted that the Knowels family is objectionable, and the mill be asked to have the family moved from Bibb City.

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According to the 1920 federal census, the population of Bibb City living in the "Old Village" was 1,090 people⁵³ with 528 people born in Alabama, 130 in Florida, and 345 in Georgia. Other birth states included the rest of the Southern states as well as Pennsylvania, Illinois, New Mexico, New Jersey, and Colorado. They included no African Americans and probably few recent immigrants. The census enumerated 165 families (or heads of households): 139 of them with male heads of households and 26 with female heads of household. The average age of the male heads of households was 38. Only two of them were single,⁵⁴ and all the others were either married or widowers. Of the 370 men over the age of 16, 211 were married, 135 were single, 16 were widowers, and five were divorced. The female heads of households averaged 41 years of age, the great majority of them were widowed. The youngest was 30 years old, the oldest 58. Of the 372 women over the age of 15, 207 were married, 114 were single, 47 were widows, and four were divorcees. Fifty-one out of 373 married women worked in the mill.

May Porter, a 39-year-old widow, was perhaps the most important female head of household. As the matron of the Bibb City hotel (no longer extant), she supervised 43 female mill workers ranging in age from 16 to 65, and 12 teachers. Porter also served as a social worker for the company and taught Sunday school classes at the hotel. Perhaps, in the tradition of earlier New England mills, this instruction may have involved more than Bible lessons and included general education. According to the census, of the 870 people aged ten and older in Bibb City, 829 could read and write.

Fifty-four percent of the town's residents (587) worked in the Bibb mill: 59% male operatives (346) and 41% (241) female. According to the census, no one younger than 14 (a total of 289 people) had an occupation in the mill or elsewhere, and only 11 of the 41 14- and 15-year-olds labored in the mill. The census taker failed to enumerate those children younger than 14 that might have served as helpers in the factory, learning to become operatives. Children received no pay until they mastered a skill. The Bibb mill, like most Southern mill communities, probably hid the real extent of minors in their mills, especially in the midst of a national campaign against child labor.⁵⁵

The census also showed 131 people who had no occupation. If this statistic was accurate, it must have displeased the superintendent. Only about a dozen Bibb City residents reported jobs that might have been outside of the town. Perhaps some of the unemployed people actually worked outside of the village and were reluctant to reveal that fact to an official. In later years, many people did have jobs outside of the city.

The company was concerned that a sufficient number of workers occupied every house, at least one

⁵³ The new village was being constructed and had not yet been occupied when the census was taken.

⁵⁴ C. L. Smith, a 23-year-old assistant paymaster at the mill who lived at 3155 1st Avenue, and J. A. Martin, a 19-year-old weaver at the mill. All of the information drawn from the 1920 census is based on the statistics compiled by David Dowd.

⁵⁵ Lewis Hine, the photographer who served as the chief prosecutor in the war on child labor, had visited Columbus in 1913, but he made no photographs of the Bibb mill. He was only able to gain entrance into the smaller new mills, Meritas and Perkins.

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worker per room including the one used as a kitchen. A four-room house should shelter at least four workers. The paymaster deducted rent at a quarter (\$.25) per room per week. The 1920 census, which may have been inaccurate about literacy and child labor, accurately reveals the density of workers per room. The Bibb Manufacturing Company almost achieved its occupancy goal of one worker per room. In January of 1920, the U.S. census taker visited Bibb City and documented 105 company houses with 544 rooms housing 534 workers. A total of 954 people lived in the company's three-, four-, and ten-room houses. This total included 212 families or family groups where at least two people in the same family lived together and 125 lodgers who had no apparent family connections.

Predictably, the fewest number of lodgers boarded in the three-room houses, which were located immediately north of the mill. These were probably designed as single-family houses. The occupants of these houses probably had more skilled positions or were even second hands—low level supervisors—since the tradition at this mill seemed to be for the higher ranking individuals to live closer to the mill. Charles (Buddy) Hall, who still lives in the only surviving three-room house in the village, grew-up in a similar house, next to the mill. His mother supervised her children while she was at work by going to the window of the mill and calling down to them. If they didn't all appear within a matter of a few minutes, they were in real trouble. Her periodic summons kept them from wandering away from their house.⁵⁶ As noted earlier in the nomination, the ten-room houses were more like boarding houses with more boarders and fewer families than the three- and four- room houses.

Earning a house and mobility in Bibb City

Even with the addition of about 160 houses in the early 1920s, being assigned a Bibb mill house was not automatic for workers. They either had to know someone or achieve some seniority before they earned the right to rent one. By 1922, the houses in both villages contained approximately 1,400 rooms, and the hotel had maybe 150 beds. This meant the company could house about 1,550 workers. By 1927, the company had 2,500 workers, so approximately 1,000 workers had to live outside of the village.

"To get in a house you went to personnel and they put your name on the list. If you knew somebody," Eulis Pippin remembered, "you could get by that list. ... It took me a pretty good while to get in the village. Sure did!" Pippin, as a 16-year-old, moved from Ozark, Alabama, to Bibb City in 1934. For about seven years he lived in two different locations outside of the village. When his first daughter was born in 1941, he was finally able to get a company house on Park Avenue. Then he moved to a three-room house on Hanson Drive. Next he moved to a four-room house and then "Dan Spivey [who had a six-room house] wanted a four room house, so we went to personnel and just swapped. I got this house [3810 1st Avenue] and Dan moved down there." By that time Pippin served as a supervisor and had the connections needed to exchange a house. About six years later, in 1964, Pippin bought his house from the company, where he continued to work for another 15 years.⁵⁷ Pippin's experience⁵⁷ was typical for workers who stayed; they tended to move from house to house as their family situation changed. But Pippin was not typical in terms of the average resident

⁵⁶ Charles (Buddy) Hall interview.

⁵⁷ Interview with Eulis Pippin by Linda Cox Bohannon, February 16, 1988. Transcript in Oral History Collection, CSU Archives. Pippin probably came to the Bibb as a young strike breaker.

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who moved to the village. He remained with the Bibb mill; most workers tended to leave, rather than stay.

Mobility is what characterized the residents of Bibb City. Of the 45 original residents of the newly incorporated Bibb City in 1909, only two of them remained by 1920. These men were probably skilled laborers, and, therefore, represented a more stable portion of the workforce. They also moved on within 11 years. Eleven of their surnames still existed within the village, so some of their families probably continued to work there.

Using the manuscript census, of the 1,090 people listed in 1920, only 86 appear in the 1925 city directory as residents of Bibb City; only five lived at the same address and only six had moved into the new village. The city directory showed another 44 as living elsewhere in Columbus. By 1931, the directory only cited 21 of the 1,090 as living in the village and another 21 in other areas of Columbus. Of the 21 still living in Bibb City, five had not been listed in 1925, illustrative of the mobility of these workers. Their propensity not to settle in one village or to make a career in one mill continued long after the 1920s.

Using the city directory as the source, a random sample of 37 houses (on eight streets) every five years between the early 1920s and 1950 netted the names of 270 different heads of households.⁵⁸ Only 27 of the 270 heads of household lived in the same house more than five years. Ten of those persisted at least ten years, six for 15 years, two for 20 years, and one for 32 years.⁵⁹ Not surprisingly, management and skilled labor persisted more than unskilled labor. Seven of the 27 were managers or office workers with four of them living on overseer's row (1st Avenue). Two more were loom fixers, the prime skilled job. One was a worker who became a watchman, and another was a widow. The longest resident was not even a Bibb employee and owned the local store. W. T. Hawkins bought his property (immediately west of the natatorium) from J. Homer Dimon before the new village was created. Tom Hawkins built a house and small store there by 1918 and was still there in 1950, the only homeowner in Bibb City. [Neither the house nor the store is extant; a vacant lot now occupies Hawkins property.] Mac Isaacs, a former mill manager, said the company could never get Hawkins to sell out. Children who grew up in the village remembered buying candy at Hawkins's store. The existence of this store is another example of how the Bibb did not control where its workers spent their money.

The Hawkins family's income depended on that store in that particular location; textile operatives did not need such stability. In good times, they could find a job from Anniston, Alabama, to Danville, Virginia, in any of the hundred or so mills in the Georgia or Carolina Piedmont. And they tended to move. Many of them also moved back to the farm - a practice that Mac Isaacs noted as occurring as

⁵⁸ The city directories were not always evenly spaced, so some gaps were for four years and others were for six. Since many of these houses had the potential to serve as a duplex, in some years more than one head of household was listed, but nothing was consistent. A house shown as a duplex in 1927 might be listed with only one head of household in 1931.

⁵⁹ CSU student David Dodd collected these statistics.

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late as the 1960s and 1970s. While the statistics do not seem to indicate it, some families stayed with the Bibb Company because of the social services provided by the mill.

The Corporate Welfare System

Simultaneous with the construction of the new village, the Bibb Company, in a manner similar to most large Southern mills, built modern facilities that housed and nurtured the mill's corporate welfare system. In Bibb City this concept produced a paternalistic culture that permeated every aspect of life in the city and the mill. Management sought to create a sense of community while at the same time it instilled loyalty to and pride in the Bibb mill. The company focused on families as much as it did on the workers. It expended as much effort infusing the proper values in village children as it did in encouraging workers to be more productive.

Part of the company's corporate welfare system focused on involving the residents in planting and beautifying the village, which fostered pride in the town. By the 1930s, a company-supported garden club supplied cheap fertilizer to residents, and reported that its members cultivated 40 acres in 1932 and 75 acres with 600 garden plots in 1933.⁶⁰

The city government also continued to plant hardwood trees, presumably between the curbs and sidewalks.⁶¹ By 1939, the city began planting flowering trees. James H. Porter, a prominent stockholder and benefactor to all the Bibb towns, donated 100 dogwoods; and the company florist, J.J. Brandt, supplied 300 trees, followed by another 100 (species unspecified) in February of 1940. He also created a list of flowers that residents should be planting.⁶²

By the 1940s, organized cleanups became important events in Bibb City. In April of 1941, 345 people representing nine different town organizations⁶³ marched in the cleanup parade. It ended at the men's Progress Club where soft drinks were served to all.⁶⁴ The same groups also participated in cleaning up the village and, in some years, planting trees and shrubs. In April of 1944, the town council noted that the florist, Mr. Alston, was looking for azaleas. If he found any and they were planted in great numbers, very few have survived. The florist also maintained the company greenhouse. During October when temperatures began to fall, his crew collected all the porch plants in the village, stored them during the winter, and then returned them to the proper houses in the spring.

In 1945 Russell Newton, the Bibb manager and mayor, asked the different clubs to prepare a four or five year plan for village beautification. If the articles in the *Bibb Recorder* are accurate, the size of

⁶⁰ *Bibb Recorder* (April 28, 1933) Scrapbook, 1:35, CSU Archives.

⁶¹ In 1937, the town council noted the planting of two water oaks, one beech, one maple, and one sweet gum that had been done with a great flourish.

⁶² *Bibb Recorder* (January 5, 1940) Scrapbook, 4:43, CSU Archives.

⁶³ Four youth groups, two boys and two girls, the Women's Club, the men Progress Club, the school band, the florist crew, and the garbage men participated.

⁶⁴ *Bibb Recorder* Scrapbook, 4:104.

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the cleanups might have peaked in 1947 when over 700 children were involved.⁶⁵ Later, with the decline in the number of people participating in club activities, the cleanup campaign changed its focus to the school children. By 1950 the campaigns included individual house inspections that insured yards were not littered and that nothing was underneath the houses. Those houses passing inspection were announced in chapel at the Bibb School. People were organized as families or teams for these events. John Wells, who later served on the Columbus City Council, remembered them culminating at Comer Auditorium where the company gave out prizes and provided cups of ice cream and entertainment.⁶⁶ Katie Barrett Brown remembers the cleanups in the late 1950s or early 1960s: her grandmother, who never allowed any grass around her house, swept the yard with a straw broom and burned the small piles of trash.⁶⁷ After the sale of the houses in the mid-1960s, the level of maintenance immediately declined. The town, however, continued to cut the grass between the street and the curb.

The level of utility services provided in Bibb City evolved over time. The first houses in the old village had no running water or electricity. In 1917, mill houses had wells and kerosene lamps. The houses might not have had electricity initially, but the town's streets were lit by electricity at an early date, because generators were installed in the Bibb powerhouse in 1903. In 1913, the town council discussed the placement of these lights and in April of 1915 noted the installation of new D.C. arc lights within the city, which would have provided very bright illumination for the streets and back alleys.

The lack of running water meant outhouses. A Columbus Chamber of Commerce booklet published shortly after the turn-of-the-century showed photographs of the Bibb powerhouse and the Bibb village with outhouses behind each house. These outhouses were three or four holers with a partition to divide the men from the women. Originally the waste was held in buckets, with the Bibb "honey wagon" coming by twice a week to empty the buckets.

The town began piping water throughout the old village as early as February of 1912. It was perhaps at this time that city workers placed one spigot on the back of every house, eliminating the need for wells by providing the needed water for the outhouses.

With so many people concentrated into such a small area, sewage became a major problem. Concerns about an open sewer on Park Avenue were discussed at the town council meeting in March of 1913, but apparently the town continued to dump the outhouse refuse into the river. In June of 1915, the Columbus Power Company called this practice a nuisance since the dumping site was upstream of their powerhouse and asked that it be stopped. Within a year, a new system was in place, whereby flowing water ran through every outhouse in town and those lines connected to sewer

⁶⁵ By the next year, the numbers had fallen to only 450 children. *Bibb Recorder Scrapbook*, 7:13 & 7:47.

⁶⁶ Interview with John Wells by Dawn Patrick, November 11, 1996. Transcript in Oral History Collection, CSU Archives.

⁶⁷ Katie Barrett Brown lived on Comer Avenue as a child during the 1950s and now owns an antique shop at the corner of 2nd Avenue and 38th Street. Informal interview with Katie Barrett Brown by John Lupold, August 2000.

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pipes that emptied into the river, probably at Linden Point.⁶⁸ By July of 1916 the residents of Bibb City had more modern outhouses. The town council ordered the printing of cards to be placed inside the water closets that had instructions for the tenants on how to use the new water closets. Judging by these developments, the new houses in the new village came with a running water outhouse and perhaps a water spigot on the back porch.

The responsibility for the water supply, the sewage system, the street lights, the street and sidewalks was transferred from the company to the town in 1921. In April of that year, by a vote of 76 to 0, the electorate of Bibb City⁶⁹ endorsed a \$140,000 bond issue for the town to purchase, maintain, and enlarge the utilities. The utility systems were purchased from the Bibb Manufacturing Company and the company held all the bonds.⁷⁰

By the late 1930s the Bibb began installing bathrooms in the houses. The one water spigot on the back porch was augmented by a small amount of indoor plumbing. A section of the back porch was enclosed and converted into a bathroom, which initially only contained a bathtub. Commodes were added later. In the old village, two rooms were built on the rear of the pyramidal cottages, one housed the tub and the other housed the commode. By that time, a sink was available in the kitchens.

By the 1930s, the company installed electricity in the houses, consisting of one light bulb hanging from a drop cord in every room. Residents probably could not have afforded electrical appliances. The company might have furnished the electricity in the earliest days, but by the late 1930s or early 1940s, the company charged \$.03 per kilowatt. Some residents, such as Eulis Pippins, believed they were never charged for electricity. But Plez Johnson, a former mayor and long-time village resident, remembered an extremely high bill of \$.18 for one month.

Coal was the original source of heat and fuel for cooking. It was delivered to coal bins in the back alleys. Gas heat came into the village immediately prior to World War II; the town council required the permission of the mayor before gas could be installed in any house. The gas company sold the fuel to the residents.⁷¹

The town provided garbage service until 2001. The residents did not even provide their own

⁶⁸ The town council minutes in October 1932 mentioned a plan for extending the sanitary sewer emptying into the river at Linden Point. In June of 1944, the county sewer line (probably one of the first by the county government) was routed to join with that of Bibb City, then presumably to flow into the river.

⁶⁹ The city had a total of 98 registered voters at that time. Proportionally, this was one of the highest voter turnouts in the history of company-controlled city. The supervisors must have been taking names.

⁷⁰ The details of the bond issue were as follows: \$45,000 for purchasing, maintaining and enlarging the sewer system, both storm and sanitary sewers; \$50,000 for laying off, opening, maintaining and improving the streets and side walks within the town of Bibb City; \$15,000 for the purposes of purchasing, maintaining and enlarging the equipment used in carrying and furnishing the water supply within the town of Bibb City; and \$30,000 for purchasing, maintaining and enlarging the equipment used to light the streets and alleys.

⁷¹ Griffin & Johnson Interview.

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trashcans. As late as November of 1945, the town council purchased 100 of them for the residents. In 1928 the town built an incinerator next to the road leading down to the powerhouses.

Education and Bibb City School

Outside of the mill itself, the Bibb City School became the most important institution in the implementation of the company's paternalism. Company-run education began in the old village. The initial schools occupied two different ten-room houses on the bluff overlooking the river. The first probably started in 1904 at 3220 River Avenue (no longer extant), the first house on the street coming from the mill. The school then moved to 3246 River Avenue at the other end of the block. According to the historical account in the *Bibb Recorder*, this school only had 16 to 18 pupils.⁷² The mill also operated a kindergarten in Bibb City by 1910 at 70 Riverside (later River) Avenue.⁷³

The scale and scope of education in the village changed drastically in 1919 with the creation of the new Bibb City School. The modern brick building contained ten classrooms and served as the community center with its 575-seat assembly hall, the only auditorium in Bibb City until 1941.⁷⁴ The basement rooms housed a day nursery for mothers working in the mill as well as social clubs for children and adults.

The key person in making the Bibb City School a community institution was Eva Gardner, its principal from 1923 until 1955. She established and maintained discipline. A former student commented that "Miss Eva Gardner could walk in that auditorium, and all she had to do was raise her hand up, and you could hear a pin drop."⁷⁵ Gardner had a form of control unavailable to most principals. She could report a disruptive student to the mill superintendent, and he could threaten the parent with firing.⁷⁶ As if to emphasize her important role within the village, principal Gardner always shared the dais with the superintendent and mill management at public functions where dignitaries or important guests were present. Gardner and all her teachers lived in the village, initially in the women's hotel and then in the teacher's cottage (no longer extant) across from the school.⁷⁷ The school was part of the

⁷² This building was used as a reading room for a while and later the upper floor became an Odd Fellows Hall, before they built their building on 2nd Avenue. See "Bibb City Mill History and Village History Told by Seventh Grade Pupils," *Bibb Recorder*, May 17, 1935. In *Bibb Recorder Scrapbook Collection*, 3:29 & 32, CSU Archives.

⁷³ The City Directory address does not conform to any later numbering system but must have been in the same block as the other schools.

⁷⁴ It was here at a public meeting of the town council in December of 2000, that the town voted itself out of existence.

⁷⁵ According to Iva Langford, a former student. Interview with Mrs. Iva Langford by Mike Regnier, February 19, 1988. Transcript in Oral History Collection, CSU Archives.

⁷⁶ Most Bibb City residents who were interviewed made such an assertion when they discussed how disciplined the students were, but they never cited a specific case where a parent was fired because of the behavior of the students. The threat must have been sufficient.

⁷⁷ See "Bibb City Mill History and Village History Told by Seventh Grade Pupils," *Bibb Recorder*, May 17, 1935. In *Bibb Recorder Scrapbook Collection*, 3:32, CSU Archives. According to John Wells, who grew up in the village, there were no male teachers, and unmarried women could apply to live in the teacher's cottage, where a maid cooked all their meals, and they paid very low rent. (Wells interview.) The teachers' cottage was torn down in 1964.

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Muscogee County school system and received state funding; but as in the case of providing a teachers' cottage, the mill supplemented the school and the teachers. Teachers were expected to visit their students' homes, to teach Sunday school, and to participate in the various clubs and community activities. Leila Gardner, a social worker and the principal's sister, served as part of the school staff in 1935. The community medical clinic, located in the natatorium (no longer extant) provided health care for students. If a student was sick more than a day or so, the nurse or the social worker and the teacher visited the pupil's home.

Other unique features of the school included teaching home economics at the elementary level; the curriculum taught girls how to cook and serve as well as proper manners and sewing skills. At the 1933 graduation, the girls wore dresses they made from pastel Bibb mill-produced fabric and carried bouquets of flowers. In 1937 they made curtains for the Bibb City Hotel. Music was taught in all grades, and all students memorized entire chapters from the Bible, which they recited at assemblies.⁷⁸ The school, at times, hosted activities usually found in churches, such as Sunday school exercises in 1931,⁷⁹ a revival in 1932, and sacred harp singing in 1935, before the Porter Memorial Baptist Church was built across the street from the school.

The company funded extracurricular activities such as band instruments and uniforms, and underwrote expenses for student trips. In March of 1936, for example, the seventh graders traveled to Atlanta where they saw Governor Eugene Talmadge, toured the capitol, the Cyclorama, and the zoo, and also rode by the Chevrolet plant and the federal prison. In 1940, the school added the eighth and ninth grades and became the Bibb City Junior High School. Eva Gardner managed those grades as well as the primary ones. In 1941, the ninth graders went to New Orleans,⁸⁰ probably the only ninth grade classes in Columbus to make such an ambitious trip. The Rotary Club apparently came to the school on a regular basis, and the children staged a special program each time.⁸¹

In 1949, the Columbus and Muscogee County school systems merged, which resulted in an assessment of the county schools. Virginia Cooksey, a reporter for the (Columbus) *Ledger-Enquirer* evaluated the nine county schools and ranked Bibb City as the best in the county. The Bibb City School had what the other eight county schools lacked: landscaped and beautifully kept yards, a building in good condition, steam heat rather than pot-bellied stoves, a library in every room and a larger library in the adjacent Comer auditorium, an excellent auditorium in the school and a larger one at the Comer facility, plus three well-equipped playgrounds. The school's principal did not have to teach and had a modern office. Bibb school instructors also had media equipment such as a Victrola, a movie projector, an opaque projector, a tape recorder, and a movie camera.⁸²

⁷⁸ Article about Bibb School by Paul Lupo in *Bibb Recorder*, September 10, 1937, in *Bibb Recorder Scrapbooks*, 3:47, CSU Archives.

⁷⁹ The non-denominational Sunday school reported an attendance of 477. It had to be in the school auditorium, since no other venue in town provided that much space.

⁸⁰ *Bibb Recorder Scrapbook Collection*, 2:78 & 4:95, CSU Archives.

⁸¹ *Bibb Recorder* (August 1936) Scrapbook Collection, 2:105, CSU Archives.

⁸² "Bibb City School System Judged Best in Muscogee System," *Ledger-Enquirer*, April 13, 1949.

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Even after the merger, the mill still supplemented the school, and its activities differed from the average Columbus school. The Bibb School continued to sponsor the community-wide May Day Festival, and the rules for the 1950 Bibb City clean-up campaign were announced at the school "chapel" program.⁸³ When interviewed, Bibb City natives often said that their school ranked as the best in the county and that high school (or later junior high) teachers were glad to have students from Bibb School because they were disciplined⁸⁴ and well-prepared.⁸⁵ While reminiscing about growing-up in Bibb City, Maria Meltzer said, "I always felt secure there. I never was afraid. ... There was nothing to be afraid of. You didn't have one set of parents, you had a whole village full of parents. That was just a warm comfortable feeling."

The internal and external perceptions about Bibb City have always been radically different. Many Columbusites viewed it as a rough mill village, while its long-term residents praised its sense of community. Rodger Grantham, another native, wrote, "To live in Bibb City meant you accepted a certain stigma—low-class, poor white, little educated and supposedly meaner than hell. Maybe to the outsider this was true.... People who lived in Bibb City were low-income families, dependent upon the guiding hand of the mill. Nearly all were poor compared to certain material standards, and we did have our neighborhood toughs. My family was poor perhaps in a material sense for there were seven of us." "As the son of a cotton mill worker," Grantham continued, "I must say I feel no bitterness [toward the mill]. Sure being a resident of one of the more exclusive neighborhoods would have been nice; but as a child I didn't lack the important things—a sense of belonging and the important outlets for mental and physical needs. The mill provided services and facilities for these purposes."⁸⁶ Other Bibb residents expressed a duality about the mill and village. They hated the mill work, but stayed because of the advantages of raising a child there. Meltzer's parents expressed such opinions: "I was threatened with every inch of my life, if I ever set foot in a mill. 'You will not go into a cotton mill [her parents told her]. I don't care what you do. You will not!'" But she enjoyed the community activities centering on the school and the clubs. And for a child like Grantham who enjoyed sports, "the village was one of the greatest places in the world to sharpen [one's] talents. Athletics were a way of life in Bibb City."

Within the six Bibb Manufacturing Company communities in Georgia,⁸⁷ schools, churches, health clinics, swimming pools, clubs for all ages and genders, sports activities, seasonal festivals, beautification and planting campaigns, playgrounds, trips for young people, and even competitions

⁸³ *Bibb Recorder* (May 12, 1950) Scrapbook Collection, 2:105, CSU Archives.

⁸⁴ Interview with Travis Hall by Mike Regnier, February 11, 1988. Transcript in Oral History Collection, CSU Archives.

⁸⁵ The following are examples of academic excellence from the Bibb School. In June of 1936, Marsden Dunaway and Annette Bryant won first and second place in Muscogee County's countywide examination. The next year Edna Dean, a seventh grade student won the U.D.C. essay contest, writing about Raphael Semmes. *Bibb Recorder* Scrapbook, 2:93 & 3:30, CSU Archives.

⁸⁶ Grantham wrote this paper as a student in a CSU local history class. Typescript available in CSU Archives.

⁸⁷ Two mills in Macon (Bibb County) and one each in Porterdale (Newton County), Taylor (near Reynolds in Taylor County), and Payne City (Vineville in Bibb County).

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among the various mills over Sunday school attendance⁸⁸ contributed to a heightened sense of community. In order to publicize these activities and to strengthen the sense of belonging to a community, the company published a weekly newspaper. The *Bibb Recorder* was distributed every Friday at the mill gates. It included material about all the Bibb mills and villages, and a large portion of it dealt with the Columbus operation. While it included official articles about new developments within the company, much of its content focused on folksy news found in most local newspapers. Columbus readers learned about births, weddings, deaths, newcomers to the Bibb Hotel, who was visiting from “down home,” who was visiting relatives “down ‘round” Dothan, and other gossipy items. “It was a family outfit the whole thing. The school, the mill, the church, was just one big family,” according to Audrey Fae Kent. “If you were a Girl Reserve or a member of the Woman’s Club or Pilot’s Club, there was something constantly going on. Lots of entertainment for every group.”

While the actual club structure changed over time, every person in Bibb City had his or her special organization. Boys progressed from BobCats to Cubs to Scouts. The Men’s Progress (or Improvement) Club waxed and waned over the years, and the location of their clubhouse also changed. The club tended to involve low-level management rather than rank-and-file workers, and its members supported a variety of community activities—the Boy Scouts, the band, May Day, Fall Bibb Festival, and frequent barbecues. Along with the Woman’s Club, the men’s club served as a Parent Teacher Association (PTA) for the school. In 1939, the two groups cooperated to create the Hemlock Drive Park. Eulis Pippin remembered the Progress Club in the white, wooden building next to the mill, which served a variety of functions over the years. “We used to have a glorious time down there. Shoot snooker, pool, and play pinochle. It was a glory hole.” A barbershop was there, but “no women, only men, but no drinking & no gambling.” Only a small proportion of the men in the village probably joined the club, but on Friday nights in the 1950s when only a few people owned televisions, a large number of men and boys gathered to watch the fights on the club’s set.⁸⁹

The Women’s Club met frequently and had set programs, but it probably tended to include the wives of the men in the Progress Club rather than average workers. They focused on recipes and sewing as well as supporting community activities. In 1938, they created a cannery, with a pressure canner, in the old Davidson home on River Avenue and encouraged residents to bring their food, jars, tops, and rings.⁹⁰

There were numerous short-lived organizations. The Bibb Brothers Bible class had an orchestra in 1933; a harmonica band flourished in 1938 and 1939; and the loom-fixing class enjoyed an outing to Brooks fishing camp in 1953.⁹¹ The latter was a very typical activity for all the various departments. The Girl Reserves received the most press coverage in the *Recorder* and more attention, in general, than any other club did. Perhaps it was harder to get boys involved, so their groups were smaller; but it appeared to be a philosophical difference. The company was more concerned with shaping the

⁸⁸ *Bibb Recorder* (August 19, 1932), Scrapbook, 1:19, CSU Archives.

⁸⁹ Grantham, “Bibb City.”

⁹⁰ *Bibb Recorder* (July 8, 1938), Scrapbook Collection, 3:93, CSU Archives.

⁹¹ *Bibb Recorder* Scrapbook Collection, 1:42, 4:8, & 9:65, CSU Archives.

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behavior and values of the girls. In keeping with traditional views about women, the Girl Reserves stressed moral conduct more than the boys' clubs did. While the boys tended to use the programs of the Boy Scouts, the activities of the Girl Reserves were devised by the social workers in the six Bibb communities. Even unmarried girls in the mill participated in the Girl Reserves, about 20 in the late 1930s. James Porter, who donated money for the local Baptist church, also provided funds to support the Girl Reserves.

The highlight of the year was the annual camp or excursion. "We made fantastic trips, you could belong to the Girl Reserves until you got married then you went into the Woman's Club. We took a trip to New York City; the mill paid our way. We always dressed in uniform, blue dresses with white ties or white dresses with blue ties. No matter where we went we always attracted a lot of attention. We went to Washington, D.C. and Miami." Audrey Fae Kent remembered, "We were taught morals, how to set a perfect table, how to decorate that table, what ever a girl should know we learned, and when we left there 'we had it'."

Girls had to earn the right to participate in camp or the trips. The requirements appeared to be extremely rigorous in 1933. In order to qualify, a Girl Reserve had to attend every troop meeting and Sunday school or church every Sunday, unless they had a valid excuse. She must treat her advisor, teacher, and parents with respect. Rules stated that "a girl who dresses or conducts herself in a manner that is indecorous and causes unfavorable comment will not be eligible for camp." In addition, each girl had to earn at least 450 out of 650 possible points by reading books from a prescribed list, memorizing poetry, and by improving her spoken English. A girl earned points "provided this improvement does away with the use of some of such phrases as I seen, I taken, I ain't done it, I have saw, I have did, I have took, etc. An improvement of 15 points [in regard to their spoken English] is compulsory." In addition to classics such as Shakespeare, George Elliot, Dickens, Hawthorne, and Cooper, the list of required readings included Thomas Dixon's *The Clansman*. A third of the weekly programs focused on health and the remainder consisted of "An Evening With" a variety of subjects. These topics included books, dress, courtesy, the poets Sidney Lanier and Albert Tennyson, work, family, the community, "the Girl and Her Life Work," prayer, church, nature, friendship, courage, a "Hall of Fame," recreation, music, and "A Resume of All the Things Which Enter into the Development of Ideal Womanhood."⁹²

By completing the 1933 requirements, a girl earned a trip to another Bibb village (Porterdale in Newton County) for a week and to spend two nights at the Piedmont Hotel in Atlanta. Many of the camps convened at Savannah Beach on Tybee Island in Chatham County. Other destinations by various age groups over the years included St. Augustine in Florida; New York for the 1939 World's Fair; Montgomery and Mobile in Alabama; New Orleans; Gatlinburg in Tennessee; Charleston, Asheville, and Mount Mitchell in North Carolina; the Southwest; etc. The requirements to participate did lessen over time. By 1935, girls only needed 80% attendance at meetings and the reading list was eliminated; but the girls had to be able to "give five reasons why you are glad you belong to the Bibb Family." Boys answering this question might have listed swimming at the company pool, basketball, baseball, pickup games of football on the mill lawn, and bowling at the Comer Auditorium.

⁹² *Bibb Recorder Scrapbook*, 1:31, CSU Archives.

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As Grantham noted, "Athletics were a way of life in Bibb City." Sports helped to build the sense of community that the company sought to promote. One of the best-known sports activities was the semi-professional baseball team that played other mills, small towns, and unit teams at nearby Fort Benning. Other companies probably emphasized baseball more than the Bibb mill. No one star pitcher at the Bibb confessed to his only job being to listen and make sure that the mill whistle was working.⁹³ By 1948, a girls softball team competed against similar types of opponents. Departments within the mill also fielded softball teams that played each other. The games involving the children actually had the most impact on the community. The Bibb mill always fielded inter-city league teams in all sports. According to oral traditions, an intense rivalry existed between the boys from Beallwood, an adjacent working-class neighborhood, and Bibb City that sometimes led to fights. Perhaps it stemmed from a basketball game in 1937 when Bibb beat Beallwood 60 to 10.⁹⁴ At the time, basketball games were played on boards that covered the indoor swimming pool at the natatorium before Comer Auditorium was built.

Sports continued throughout the year: during the summer and Christmas breaks, vacationing children were provided league and tournament play in the sport in season at that time. The idea was to reduce the amount of idle time. The 1941 Comer Auditorium helped to further that goal. Comer Auditorium and the Bibb mill's continuing commitment to athletics illustrated how the company continued to expand its social services, even as other mills reduced their paternalistic activities. The Comer Auditorium was a first-class facility and quickly became the venue for a variety of activities, such as plays and musical programs; Women's Club banquets; the annual Christmas pageant; the gathering place for rewarding prizes after town cleanups; the location where families picked up their Christmas boxes from the mill filled with nuts, candies and other goodies; and basketball.⁹⁵ The auditorium's finest years were the 1940s into the 1960s, as it featured the best basketball ever played in Columbus on the city's best hardwood floor. Insuring good basketball became an important task for the Bibb mill's athletic director. The company hired the first of these, Robert F. Abernathy, in 1939, perhaps in anticipation of the new auditorium. The best known athletic directors were Hubert Stubbs in the 1940s, who later headed the Columbus Parks and Recreation Department, and Fred Hyder, the brother of Georgia Tech basketball coach, "Whack" Hyder. Fred Hyder served for 15 years and built the Bibb invitational basketball tournament into a premier Southeast event. Some of the most outstanding basketball talent in the Southeast participated in these events.⁹⁶ Old timers in Bibb City believed the hardwood court in the Comer was the best in the city, at least until the city of Columbus took it over after 1964.

⁹³ A sidearm pitcher for one of the mills in the Valley (West Point-Lanett) said that was his job.

⁹⁴ *Bibb Recorder* Scrapbook, 3:60, CSU Archives.

⁹⁵ In 1944, Bibb City lost to the Fort Benning War Prisoners, 39-38; the Germans used three teams against the Bibb, who had few reserves in the middle of the war. *Bibb Recorder* (February 1944) Scrapbook Collection, 5:28, CSU Archives.

⁹⁶ Dave Denton, Jerry Shipp, Roger Kaiser, Jimmy Lee, and even an outside shooting guard from Auburn, Herbert Green. Grantham, "Bibb City," 8-9.

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The End of Paternalism The Strike of 1934

Many Carolina mills began selling their houses and ending their paternalistic programs for workers shortly after the strike of 1934.⁹⁷ This conflict, an important watershed for the Southern textile industry, grew out of New Deal policies. While it has little to do with the built environment, a brief examination of this strike shows that it reflected the power of the company's corporate welfare system. The union would attack the social policies of the Bibb Manufacturing Company, and the strike did have a limited impact on the Bibb mill.

The roots of the strike began in 1933 with the creation of the National Recovery Administration (NRA), which was designed to get the economy moving. It guaranteed workers the right to collective bargaining for the first time under federal law. The legislation resulted in increased union activities in all types of industries, and the NRA textile codes raised expectations of Southern workers. Their faith in President Roosevelt's New Deal programs made them believe that a new day was dawning.

The heart of the NRA was a series of codes drawn-up by businessmen. The NRA held meetings in which the leaders of major industries wrote a series of codes or regulations designed to increase demand, to expand production, to raise wages and, thereby, to prime the economic pump. The federal government then regulated the implementation of the codes drawn up by the business leaders. The textile codes addressed a long-term problem, the North-South wage and hours differential. New England manufacturers complained that lower Southern wages and longer hours, twelve hours as opposed to eight, made it impossible for them to compete with Southern mills. The NRA textile code reduced hours and raised wages in the Southern mills.

The announcement of this change appeared in the *Bibb Recorder* on July 14, 1933. "Effective July 17, work in the mills of the Bibb Manufacturing company will start on a new basis, each mill operating two 8-hour shifts, with a minimum wage for machine tenders of \$12 weekly, each week's work to consist of 40 hours. Productive machinery will operate only 80 hours per week. The first shift will work from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m.; the second from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m." At that point, in the middle of the Depression, the Bibb mill only ran one 12-hour shift and operatives were running on short time, actually working only two or three days a week. The wage of \$12 a week was a substantial increase for the workers. Harry Hardin remembered that his wages doubled from \$6 to \$12.⁹⁸

After the NRA wages took effect, some textile workers complained of speed-ups (management increasing the speed of machinery) or operatives being forced to operate more sides of spinning frames or more looms. No complaints surfaced about the Bibb mill in oral histories or in letters written to the NRA to complain about working conditions. But the *Bibb Recorder* of February 23, 1934 reported contests between shifts in the weaving department that may have been a way to speed up machinery.

⁹⁷ Burlington Mill started selling its houses in 1934 and "others followed suit." Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, et al., *Like a Family, The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World* (NY, Norton, 1987), 356.

⁹⁸ Textile workers in other parts of the country received \$13 a week. Interview with Harry Hardin by Tamara Jones, February 17, 1988. Transcript in Oral History Collection, CSU Archives.

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Membership of the United Textile Workers of America expanded rapidly in 1933 and 1934 in the South. Publicly, the Bibb Manufacturing Company accepted and praised the NRA and told its workers they did not need a union. Even before the codes changed the hours and wages, W.D. Anderson, president of the company, met with the workers and assured them that all the NRA provisions would apply to them. According to the account in the *Bibb Recorder* (June 30, 1933), Anderson told them that it was unnecessary “for any employe [sic] to join any union to obtain these benefits...if any of the Bibb employes [sic] wanted to join a union they were free to do so...benefits of the new law applied to all cotton mill employes [sic]...payment of dues to any organization was not necessary to enjoy these benefits.” He also explained that under the new rules “all cotton mill employes [sic] would begin to have the advantages that members of the Bibb family had been having in the past.” “Remember,” said Anderson, “the officials of the Bibb company are your friends.”

In July of 1933, Andrew W. Fuller of the American Federation of Labor attacked W.D. Anderson, and the Bibb Company’s paternalistic policies. Fuller argued for higher wages rather than company services and ridiculed the activities of the woman’s clubs in the Bibb mill villages. The women responded by publishing resolutions in the *Bibb Recorder* defending their practice of visiting and taking “trays, flowers and the furnishing of linens, to bring cheer and comfort to the sick, shut-ins, and newcomers.” They also defended Anderson and proclaimed the Bibb Manufacturing Company to be their friend. But the real issue was the implementation of the new code.

Many Southern textile workers misunderstood the codes and thought the NRA guaranteed every worker the right to work for 40 hours. The economy was not strong enough to hire everyone who wanted to work. But immediately after the codes went into effect, demand did rise, as did worker’s pay for those who had jobs. This brief boom, however, did not last. By December of 1933 the NRA agreed to reduce production to two 30-hour shifts per week.

In September of 1934, the United Textile Workers of America (UTW), with 250,000 members, called for a general nationwide strike. Approximately 400,000 workers struck and half the mills in the South were closed. The strike was not as bitter or protracted in Columbus as other cities.⁹⁹ Perhaps the use of violence in 1919 curbed union activities in 1934. UTW used “flying squadrons” or union picketers who moved from city to city and mill to mill trying to rally workers to their cause. Some Bibb workers did join the union and others participated in the strike. Mac Isaacs, was then a lower-level manager and later became superintendent, remembered, “Bibb people wanted to work; outsiders set up picket lines around the mill.” We only “had 15 or 20 people in this mill that were pro-union.”¹⁰⁰ In reality, the numbers were larger. Less than 400 workers reported for the morning shift on September 4th, and about 1,000 striking workers picketed the plant with that number growing to 5,000.¹⁰¹ Harry Hardin, who worked as a policeman and later became head of personnel, estimated

⁹⁹ A fight between union and non-union workers resulted in the accidental shooting death of a pro-union man, Reuben Sanders, at the small Georgia Webbing and Tape Mill in August of 1934. Operatives at the Eagle & Phenix struck in August also. James H. Creek, “Labor Strikes in the Columbus Textile Mills During the Summer of 1934,” (Specialist Project, Columbus College, 1984), 4-9.

¹⁰⁰ Isaacs Interview.

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a mob of 8,000 around the mill. Only 25 people reported for work on the evening shift.

The Bibb mill was the last of the Columbus' 11 textile mills to close.¹⁰² Throughout the South, management decided to fight the strike by shutting down. Columbus' mills remained closed for three weeks. The Bibb mill sent out cards asking workers if they would return to work if they were protected: 883 from Bibb City said they would. Others could respond by using the form in the *Bibb Recorder*.¹⁰³ Perhaps because of the response or because the Bibb company could control its village, it was selected as the first mill in Columbus to resume operations on September 17th.

In anticipation of the mill's reopening, the Bibb City town council on September 16, 1934, limited the number of picketers to two, who had to wear badges and could only picket the mill entrance for two hours. More significantly, Governor Eugene Talmadge, who had claimed to be a friend of labor in the 1934 election, sent 230 National Guardsmen to Bibb City on September 17 and 18. They cordoned off the city and only allowed Bibb mill workers or residents to enter a four-block area around the mill. The reopening of the Columbus plant of the Bibb mill was very peaceful in comparison with other Southern mills. Only four people were arrested on the first day.¹⁰⁴ The guardsmen limited the right of assembly to groups of no more than three people, and they allowed union officials to have peaceful gatherings, a contrast from the strike in 1919. On September 20th, 34 people, who claimed to be having a wiener roast but had no hot dogs, were arrested and detained in a vacant Bibb City store. Twelve were released the next morning; the others were detained and the press dubbed them the "Wiener Roast Ramblers" gang.¹⁰⁵

The Bibb Company had successfully broken the strike; it operated for a week before the strike was settled in the South and the other Columbus mills returned to work. The Bibb mill workers who failed to return during that week lost their jobs and were evicted from their company houses. W. R. Brown wrote the NRA complaining that he and two other family members after working seven years for the company were being replaced "by people from farms in Alabama."¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ Creek, 9-10.

¹⁰² Only Archer, a small hosiery mill, continued to run during the strike.

¹⁰³ *Bibb Recorder* (September 14, 1934) Scrapbook Collection, 1:80, CSU Archives.

¹⁰⁴ Two of them were released, and H. L. Pike and A. J. Causey were incarcerated in the Bibb City jail overnight, before being sent to an internment center in Atlanta. Pike and Causey apparently led a mob of about 200 workers who attacked African-American textile workers who lived in Beallwood, a working-class neighborhood to the west of Bibb City. They claimed the workers were acting as scabs, but there is no evidence that African Americans were used as strikebreakers. Creek, 11-12.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 12-13.

¹⁰⁶ October 29, 1934; similar letters were written by Mrs. Lillie Mae Walker, October 30, 1934; Lennie Vickers, October 29, 1935; Mrs. C. W. Riddy, who was still living in the village when she wrote the letter, October 29, 1934; and Mrs. Georgia Pritchard, November 27, 1934; all copies of letters from the NRA files, National Archives, also available in Bibb City Collection, CSU Archives. Harry Morgan, who was hired to play baseball for the Bibb in 1934, remembered: "And they had the big textile strike and I told the boss that I don't belong to the union. I don't consider myself striking but I'm not going to work with other people not working. Well he said you just go on and come back when it's over. So when the Bibb City Historic District, Muscogee County, Georgia

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The relative mildness of the strike at the Bibb mill many have been a result of the company money spent on corporate welfare since 1920. Also, the desire of workers to keep their houses certainly influenced some workers not to strike. Strong paternalism, however, does not guarantee a strike-free mill. The Callaway Mills in LaGrange in Troup County, which resembled and probably exceeded the Bibb mill in social programs, experienced a bitter, protracted labor conflict in 1935.

Bibb Manufacturing Company, 1937-1964

The strike of 1934 did little to limit the Bibb's paternalism. The company expanded its social services, such as building the Comer Auditorium, as the company's operation in Columbus grew. In 1937, the Bibb company bought Meritas Mill, a neighboring mill with a checkered past. Meritas Mill was the only major Columbus textile mill that started with outside capital, and from its beginning in 1913, it experienced management problems. Locals remember it as being plagued with corruption. Mid-level managers openly stole its cloth, and Fate Leebern, a local gangster, operated its commissary, the only company store known to have operated in Columbus. Part of the workers' pay came in the form of Googaloo, a bronze coin negotiable at Fate's store. His influence was so widespread, however, that his coins circulated at any establishment frequented by mill people.¹⁰⁷

Given its problems, Meritas Mill could not survive the Depression and was bought and renamed the Anderson Mill of the Bibb Manufacturing Company. During World War II, the Bibb company built a new set of mill houses, the Anderson Village, to the north of 38th Street between the two mills (outside of the district). Given the wartime shortage of lumber, the walls of these houses were load-bearing brick.¹⁰⁸ Living outside of Bibb City, the Anderson mill village residents never developed the sense of community shared by the original community, and Bibb City people viewed the Anderson people as outsiders.¹⁰⁹

Both mills boomed during World War II as the combined payrolls probably included 4,500 to 5,000 workers. The company, like the operations at neighboring Fort Benning, had begun expanding prior to Pearl Harbor. By 1940, the company had developed a heat-resistant cotton tire cord, which was

strike was over I went back and everybody lined up out in front of the mill." The supervisor, Red Dorn, came out and started picking the people who could go in to work. He didn't pick Morgan, so Morgan asked, "What about me? He [Dorn] said, 'Did you work last week?' I said, 'You know I didn't work last week.' He said, 'I'm sorry.'" Morgan was more fortunate than most strikers. He simply went down the street and got a job at Columbus Manufacturing Company. The overseer of the weave room there also managed the ball team. Morgan, Harry, interviewed by Steve Golden, November 18, 1996. Transcript in Oral History Collection, CSU Archives.

¹⁰⁷ According to local legend the Columbus Police Department shared in the corruption and anyone wishing to be hired by the department had to have a note from Fate Leebern. (Plez Johnson interviewed by John Lupold, 1977.) Plez worked at Meritas Mill, and by 1977 served as mayor of Bibb City.

¹⁰⁸ Linda Cox Bohannon, "The Anderson Village of the Bibb Company." Student paper, 1983.

¹⁰⁹ Maria Butler Meltzer and Brenda Lankford interviewed by Mike Regnier, February 8, 1988. Transcript in Oral History Collection, CSU Archives.

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made in Columbus and provided the Bibb mill with a special niche in the wartime market.¹¹⁰ The process for making this tire cord required a tremendous amount of heat and this section of the plant was always incredibly hot. This area was also the first where African Americans were allowed to work in production.¹¹¹

In 1940, the company installed wide looms to produce backing for carpets. During World War II, the new looms produced duck and other fabrics for the military, and the mill's spindles spun thousands of miles of tire cord. Ninety-eight percent of Bibb production went to the military during the war. By 1946, wartime profits allowed the purchase of additional wide looms. Eventually 2,500 looms wove bed sheets and pillowcases, the equivalent of 60,000 sets of these items every day. The 155,000 spindles provided the yarn for the linens and tufted yarn for the chenille industry. The Columbus plant of the Bibb Manufacturing Company probably reached its heyday under the direction of John S. Turner, who served as superintendent from 1941 to 1961.

In 1954, the rope drive broke. In 1900, the American rope drive system¹¹² was a typical way to turn the equipment in a water-powered mill. By 1954 its use was rather anachronistic, but the conservatism of the Bibb Company's directors, especially chairman Anderson,¹¹³ forced its perpetuation even when engineers asked to replace it. They got their wish when the bearings froze and the shaft carrying power to the ropeway snapped. By that time, it only operated a few spinning machines, but they were at the first of the process; so the entire mill stopped, and electricians scrambled to install motors for this equipment. In a similar manner, the forces of modernization would change other aspects of the conservative Bibb Company. The 1960s brought major changes to Southern textiles—improvements in working conditions, more automated equipment, and new workers. New air conditioning systems, which cooled and cleaned the air, necessitated the bricking-up of the windows. In the carding room at the Bibb mill, new "rovomatic" machines reduced the labor force by 50%.

The Sale of the Houses – 1964

As noted above, the Bibb lagged behind other Southern mills in regard to dismantling its corporate welfare. Some companies began divesting themselves of housing as early as 1934. Others moved quickly after World War II to sell their villages. In most cases, they sold houses to their workers and financed the sale. A mortgage note served to keep workers in the village and encouraged them to be stable and productive, the same goals as the old system. At the same time, it allowed the companies

¹¹⁰ The National Association of Manufacturers awarded Russell B. Newton, the local Bibb superintendent, the Pioneer Award in 1940 for his work on heat resistant tire cord; Pittman for the year 1948.

¹¹¹ The Bibb followed the practice of all Southern mills and confined African-American workers to the opening and picker room, the first step in the manufacture of yarn, where bales of cotton were broken down and dumped into the first processing equipment. The room was dirty and hot. A few more African Americans began working production during World War II, but not until the 1960s did they enter Southern plants in large numbers.

¹¹² The European system used belts rather than rope. See Kimmelman, Karfunkle, & Lupold, "Bibb" HAER study for a detailed analysis of this technology.

¹¹³ The member of a Macon family that played a prominent role in the company from the beginning, Anderson joined the Bibb in 1898, served as president from 1920 to 1947, and chairman from 1926 until 1954. *Bibb Recorder Scrapbook*, 9:29.

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to shift their capital into other areas.

By 1955, according to a detailed study,¹¹⁴ the Southern textile industry had sold most of its houses, but not the Bibb. The company controlled the city since it provided almost all of the income. The town personnel, such as treasurer Brooks Griffin, also served in the mill's office, so the two jobs overlapped. Harry Hardin, who ran the personnel department, also controlled the city's police force.

Beyond superficial changes, the Bibb directors resisted the regional trends. Automobiles tended to make mill villages more and more obsolete. As both wages and the availability of cars rose, workers could leave the village and the stigma attached to it. They could even move to a small rural plot and commute to work, reversing the process of their ancestors and getting back to the land. By 1958, commuting to Bibb City increased to the point that the company demolished the Bibb Hotel¹¹⁵ that faced 1st Avenue along with twenty-three houses on the north side of the mill and built a parking lot.

Other forces in Southern society eroded the conservative traditionalism of the Bibb directors. Integration quickly changed the Southern textile industry as the need for workers caused companies to rapidly employ African Americans.¹¹⁶ Management blamed the federal government for causing a reversal of long-term racial policies. Throughout the South for almost a century, the threat of integration had been used to curb unionization. In the 1960s, management sought black labor because the pool of white labor was shrinking. According to the oral tradition, the Bibb sold the houses so it would not be forced to allow African Americans to live in the white-only village. Mac Isaacs, the mill superintendent at that time, admitted that the elimination of the social programs - but not the sale of the houses - was prompted by integration. He regretted that the social activities were stopped because in hindsight he felt the integration had proceeded without any major problems. "In about the mid-1960s," Isaac recalled, "we sold our houses and we were several years behind a lot of mills. Most of the mills in Carolina started selling their houses in the 1950s. But anyway, if you lived in a house we gave you the opportunity to buy the house. And if you didn't want it then somebody else could come in and buy it. But about 98% of the people bought the house they were living in. And I would say about 80% or more probably still live in them [in 1975]. Some of them have sold them, some of them defaulted, and we had to repossess and sell to someone else. They got a bargain."¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Toby Moore, "The Unmaking of a Southern Cotton Mill World." Paper presented at the Georgia Tech Conference on the Second Wave Southern Industrialization, 1998; available at www.gatech.edu/hts/cssi/2ndwave/moore.html. Moore is a geography professor at the University of Iowa.

¹¹⁵ It had first been the girls' hotel for unmarried female operatives, but by the 1930s it housed both men and women who were not married.

¹¹⁶ Going into the mill meant higher wages for blacks. Mable Bass interviewed by Steven Kent, December 1, 1996. Transcript in Oral History Collection, CSU Archives.

¹¹⁷ Issacs Interview.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

In 1963, Herbert R. and Sara Givens paid \$1.50 per room per week or \$36.00 per month to rent their six-room house at 2 Poplar Street. In January of 1964, they purchased the house for \$5,525. Their payments were \$41.22 per month (not including taxes and insurance) for twenty years.¹¹⁸ The company discouraged John Clewis when he tried to pay-off all of the \$4,675 he owed on his four-room house on Comer Avenue, but he prevailed.¹¹⁹ Iva Langford remembered her newly purchased house at 11 Hemlock Drive as being meager: "These houses was just like a box when we bought it. They didn't have any cabinets in the kitchens, no lavatory in the bathroom. Bathroom was on the back porch. No storage closets or nothing."¹²⁰ Many new owners acted to improve their homes.

In 1977 Brooks Griffin, the town treasurer, estimated that landlords living outside of Bibb City owned 20% of the houses as rental property. People associated with the Bibb mill still owned approximately 80% of the homes, with 40% of those being retired. Younger workers were not choosing to live in the village. They simply made too much money, according to Griffin: a working couple could make \$20,000 to \$30,000 a year.

So, change finally arrived in Bibb City in 1964: the swimming pool was filled-in, the company stopped supplementing the school, the city of Columbus assumed control of the Comer Auditorium, and all the club activities stopped. As if to punctuate the end of the social services, the last edition of the *Bibb Recorder* was published in 1970.

The residents continued to change over time. The number of retired Bibb workers declined, and some younger people, such as Nancy Clewis Sampson and Rita Roman, who grew-up in the village but never worked in the mill, have returned to occupy their parents' homes. Other young people have been attracted to the village for the traditional reasons associated with historic preservation, the beauty of setting and the uniqueness of the architecture.

The Bibb City government, however, continued as it had earlier because the mill still provided it with most of its income. In 1964, the town's estimated income was \$47,944, of which \$42,035 came from the Bibb mill. So in essence, the company still controlled the town. In 1970 when the city of Columbus and Muscogee County voted to consolidate, the Bibb Company had enough influence to prevent Bibb City from being absorbed by the new consolidated government.

The town continued but not the paternalism, and the mill began to lag and reduced its labor force. For example, as early as 1964, the introduction of "rovomatic" machines in the carding room reduced the number of workers there by 50%, and such trends continued in other areas. By 1972 the labor

¹¹⁸ Muscogee County Deed Book 952, 240 & Book 1012, 496.

¹¹⁹ Sampson interview. She still has the card the mill used to inform her father of the cost of his house and his monthly payments.

¹²⁰ Langford interview.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8--Statement of Significance

force had declined to 1,400.

The Bibb Company, following the trends of many U.S. textile firms who could not compete in the world market, experienced several changes in ownership and various reorganizations. The company filed for bankruptcy in July of 1997. On March 20, 1998, only 200 workers reported for work on the final day the plant operated. In 1999, Buck Investment Company purchased the mill but was unable to find an immediate use for the building and, thus, failed to generate any revenue for the city.

In December of 2000, the Bibb City council, lacking funds to operate enough services to continue as a municipality, voted to relinquish its charter and enter the consolidated Columbus-Muscogee County government. The move was mourned by almost all of the residents of Bibb City. In January of 2001, the former town government still functioned as a transition to bring Bibb City into the larger entity.

Even though Bibb City is no longer an incorporated town, it is still significant today because its unique history allowed the village to endure. The historic plan, streetscapes, and built environment have survived. The surviving fabric tells the history of the company and community, while it reflects the general history of the Southern textile industry.

9. Major Bibliographic References

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- Barrow, Jay. "Bibb City's Still Happy." Special Sesquicentennial Supplement of *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer*, April 30, 1978, S-13.
- "Bibb City Is Culmination of Industrial Romance of North Highlands Section." *Bibb Recorder*, September 10, 1937.
- "The Bibb Manufacturing Company." Work's Progress Administration (WPA) Typescript, Alva C. Smith Collection, CSU Archives.
- "Bibb Manufacturing Company of Macon, Georgia." *Textile Age*, May 1940, 34-44.
- "A Brief History of Bibb Manufacturing Company." Typescript, 1966. Copied from company files, available Bibb City Collection, CSU Archives.
- Hemphill, Paul. "Nightfall on a Company Town." *Georgia Trend*, November 1991, 36-42.
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- "Interesting Improvements of Varied Nature at Bibb City." *Industrial Index*, December 31, 1919, 18-19.
- Karfunkle, J. B., Barbara Kimmelman, & John Lupold. "The Power Station of the Columbus Railroad Company at City Mills Dam." *HAER Report GA-26* (1977).
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National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 9—Major Bibliographic References

“A 91-year-old Bibb Enters New Era of Progressiveness.” *American Textile Reporter* (May 1, 1967), 15-17, 56-57.

Pittman, Henry. “The Bibb Manufacturing Company: A Profile of Progress, People, and Plants.” Manuscript, c.1955. Available at the Bibb Company Main Office, Macon, Georgia.

Oral History Interviews

Bass, Mable, interviewed by Steven Kent, December 1, 1996. Transcript in Oral History Collection, CSU Archives.

Brogdon, Myrtle, Audrey Fae Kent, Ed Vance, and Bessie Bacon interviewed by Margie Bickerstaff and Jim Lamb, April 25, 1989. Transcript in Oral History Collection, CSU Archives.

Brodgon, William, interviewed by Margie Bickerstaff, May 27, 1989. Transcript in Oral History Collection, CSU Archives.

Colwell, Gerald, interview by Tammy Caldwell, October 30, 1996. Transcript in Oral History Collection, CSU Archives.

Cope, Linda, interviewed by Yolanda Brown, November 1996. Transcript in Oral History Collection, CSU Archives.

Cox, Raymon, interviewed by Linda Cox Bohannon, February 18, 1988. Transcript in Oral History Collection, CSU Archives.

Griffin, Brooks, and Plez Johnson interviewed by John Lupold, J. B. Karfunkle, and Barbara Kimmelman, June 28, 1977. Transcript in Oral History Collection, CSU Archives. Both men were middle management people in the Bibb, and Johnson was mayor and Griffin was treasurer of Bibb City at the time of this interview. Johnson came to work in the Bibb in 1932 and Griffin in 1937.

Hall, Travis, interviewed by Mike Regnier, February 11, 1988. Transcript in Oral History Collection, CSU Archives.

Hardin, Harry, interviewed by Tamara Jones, February 17, 1988. Transcript in Oral History Collection, CSU Archives.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 9—Major Bibliographic References

Hardin, Harry, interviewed by Linda S. Reynolds, November 9, 1996. Transcript in Oral History Collection, CSU Archives.

Issacs, McAllister, Jr., by John Trotter, October 15, 1975. Transcript in Oral History Collection, CSU Archives.

King, John & Mildred, interviewed by by Steve Golden, November 14, 1996. Transcript in Oral History Collection, CSU Archives.

Langford, Mrs. Iva, interviewed by Mike Regnier, February 19, 1988. Transcript in Oral History Collection, CSU Archives.

Love, Virginia, interviewed by Yolanda Brown, November 1996. Transcript in Oral History Collection, CSU Archives.

Meltzer, Maria Butler, and Brenda Lankford interviewed by Mike Regnier, February 8, 1988. Transcript in Oral History Collection, CSU Archives. Meltzer and Lankford grew-up in Bibb City during the 1950s and 1960s.

Morgan, Harry, interviewed by Steve Golden, November 18, 1996. Transcript in Oral History Collection, CSU Archives.

Pippin, Eulis, interviewed by Linda Cox Bohannon, February 16, 1988. Transcript in Oral History Collection, CSU Archives.

Thomas, Marcus, interviewed by Steve Golden, October 30, 1996. Transcript in Oral History Collection, CSU Archives.

Watford, Paul, interviewed by Linda S. Reynolds, November 16, 1996. Transcript in Oral History Collection, CSU Archives.

Wells, John, interviewed by Dawn Patrick, November 11, 1996. Transcript in Oral History Collection, CSU Archives.

Maps

Bibb Company, Columbus Plant, HAER GA-12, Historic American Engineering Record (Library of Congress), Library of Congress, Prints and Photograph Division, Washington, D.C. 20540 USA, DIGID: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/hhh.ga0255> CONTROL #:GA0255. Accessed on November 16, 2007.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 9—Major Bibliographic References

Bibb Manufacturing Company Tenements Map, 1921. Drawn by O. F. Freeman. Copies of all these maps are available in the Bibb City Collection, CSU Archives. This map is available online on the Columbus Factory of the Bibb Company, HAER site, accessible from the Library of Congress Memory Page.

Botts & Associates, Inc. Bibb City, Georgia. c.1970. Shows individual houses but provides no house numbers.

Central of Georgia Ry. Co., Columbus, Ga. Map of Line to the Community Cotton Mills and Connection to the Columbus Power Co.'s Track at 31st and 2nd Ave. October 3, 1899. Muscogee County Deed Book LL, 432.

Lands Conveyed to Columbus Power Company. Recorded Muscogee County Deed Book KK, December 16, 1897. Shows original purchases by Hill, Jordan, and Hanson of land in the area, owned by individuals other than the North Highlands Company.

Map of Bibb City, Georgia, Part of Land lots 88 & 89, 8th District of Muscogee County, July 31, 1977.

Map of Bibb City, Muscogee County, Georgia, Showing Corporate Limits. Drawn by H. M. Fleming, c.1910. Before the Bibb Company purchased Block 9 of the North Highlands property.

North Highlands Property. Drawn by John Hill, circa 1895, showing the Rock Island dam, the fall of the river, the probable line of the Bibb dam, location of the North Highlands casino [sic], and the pre-Bibb streetscape. Map in the possession of Billy Martin, Hilton Avenue, Columbus. Copy in CSU Archives.

North Highlands showing grants to Columbus Power Co.

Plan showing the dividing Line between the Property of the Columbus Power Company and the Property of the North Highlands L. I. & Mfg. Co. and the Bibb Mfg. Co. in or near Columbus, Georgia. February 12, 1906. Surveyed and Drawn by Josiah Flournoy, C.E., and Henry A. Herrick, C.E. Muscogee County Deed Book, VV, 567.

Riverview, J. Homer Dimon Survey, North Highlands Park. Surveyed by Josiah Flournoy, March 17, 1917. Recorded Muscogee County Deed Book 17, 232.

Survey for Bibb Manufacturing Company, Bibb Village, Bibb City, Muscogee County, Ga. Drawn by G. V. Carr & Co., October 1963. Muscogee County Deed Book 32, 134-38 & Deed Book 48, 85. This map is the survey of the lots before the houses were sold.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 9—Major Bibliographic References

Student Papers

Bickerstaff, Margie. "These People, The Salt of The Earth." Student Paper, 1989. CSU Archives.

Cheatham, Lisa. "Houses of the Village: The Foundation of an Era." Student Paper, 1997. CSU Archives.

Ellis, Emory Danny. "The Mill Village of Bibb City, Georgia." Student Paper, Sociology, 1983. Bibb City Collection, CSU Archives.

Koper, Robert. "From Bibb Mill to Bibb City: A Study in Successful Labor Reform." Student Paper. CSU Archives.

Grantham, Rodger. "Bibb City." Student Paper, 1978. CSU Archives.

Lamb, James D. "Bibb City: 1940 – 1965: The Loss of Paternalism." Student Paper, 1989. CSU Archives.

Smith, Carolyn. "Minnie Clyde Balkcom and the Bibb City Experience, 1936-1998." Student Paper, 1998. CSU Archives.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): () N/A

() **preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested**

() **preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been issued
date issued:**

(X) **previously listed in the National Register** The main mill complex, the Columbus Plant of the Bibb Manufacturing Company, is listed within the Columbus Historic Riverfront Industrial District (National Register listing June 2, 1978)

() **previously determined eligible by the National Register**

(X) **designated a National Historic Landmark** The main mill complex, the Columbus Plant of the Bibb Manufacturing Company, is listed within the Columbus Historic Riverfront Industrial District (National Historic Landmark designated June 2, 1978).

() **recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #**

(X) **recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # GA-12, GA-26**

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 9—Major Bibliographic References

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office**
- Other State Agency**
- Federal agency**
- Local government**
- University Columbus State University, Columbus, Georgia.**
- Other, Specify Repository:**

Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Newly added acreage is approximately 48 acres. Approximately 55 acres was previously listed in the National Register on June 2, 1978, as part of the Columbus Historic Riverfront Industrial District National Historic Landmark nomination.

UTM References:

NOTE: reflect the total boundaries of the Bibb City Historic District.

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A)	16	688314	3598199
B)	16	688767	3598219
C)	16	688839	3596931
D)	16	688402	3596698
E)	16	688091	3597263

Verbal Boundary Description

The National Register boundary for the Bibb City Historic District is indicated on the attached tax maps drawn to scale with a heavy black line.

Boundary Justification

The proposed boundary is the area historically owned by the Bibb Manufacturing Company including the mill and mill village and encompasses the historic city limits of Bibb City.

11. Form Prepared By

State Historic Preservation Office

name/title Gretchen A. Brock/National Register Coordinator
organization Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources
mailing address 254 Washington Street, SW, Ground Level
city or town Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30334
telephone (404) 656-2840 **date** December 1, 2009
e-mail gretchen.brock@dnr.state.ga.us

Consulting Services/Technical Assistance (if applicable) () not applicable

name/title John Lupold/Professor of History (retired)
organization Department of History
mailing address Columbus State University
city or town Columbus **state** Georgia **zip code** 31907
telephone (706) 568-2263
e-mail N/A

- () **property owner**
- (X) **consultant**
- () **regional development center preservation planner**
- () **other:**

Property Owner or Contact Information

name (property owner or contact person) Elizabeth Barker, Executive Director
organization (if applicable) Historic Columbus Foundation
mailing address PO Box 5312
city or town Columbus **state** Georgia **zip code** 31906
e-mail (optional) N/A

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

Name of Property: Bibb City Historic District
City or Vicinity: Columbus
County: Muscogee
State: Georgia
Photographer: James R. Lockhart
Negative Filed: Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Date Photographed: July 2006

Description of Photograph(s):

Number of photographs: 68

1. Columbus Plant of the Bibb Manufacturing Company main mill building, front façade; photographer facing west.
2. Main mill building, front façade, and view down 1st Avenue; photographer facing south.
3. Main mill building, north façade, former day nursery, and office; photographer facing west.
4. View of Porter Street and water tower; photographer facing northwest.
5. View of main mill building, north façade, and Porter Street; photographer facing west.
6. View of 3221, 3223, and 3225 Park Avenue; photographer facing northwest.
7. View of main mill building and former warehouses; photographer facing southwest.
8. View of former warehouses; photographer facing southwest.
9. View of water tower base; photographer facing west.
10. View of water tower; photographer facing west.
11. Overview of mill complex from 1st Avenue; photographer facing west.
12. Main mill building, front façade; photographer facing northwest.
13. Main mill building, south façade; photographer facing northwest.
14. Warehouses/weave sheds; photographer facing northwest.
15. Bibb City city hall, 1st Avenue; photographer facing northwest.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

16. View of main mill building and dam; photographer facing northwest.
17. View of Chattahoochee River and dam; photographer facing north.
18. View of the mill complex from outside of the district boundary along the Riverwalk; photographer facing north.
19. View of noncontributing substation; photographer facing west.
20. View of 35th Street; photographer facing west.
21. View of 2nd Avenue at 35th Street; photographer facing northwest.
22. 3500 block of 2nd Avenue; photographer facing west.
23. Commercial buildings on 2nd Avenue; photographer facing southwest.
24. Intersection of 2nd Avenue and 38th Street; photographer facing northwest.
25. Intersection of 2nd Avenue and 38th Street; photographer facing west.
26. View of Anthony Street; photographer facing west.
27. View of 3813 2nd Avenue; photographer facing northwest.
28. View of 2nd Avenue at Hemlock Drive; photographer facing west.
29. View of Comer Street; photographer facing west.
30. View of 3800 block of 1st Avenue; photographer facing north.
31. View of Porter Street; photographer facing northwest.
32. View of Hanson Street; photographer facing north.
33. Overview of Hemlock Drive from 1st Avenue; photographer facing north.
34. Bibb City Elementary School; photographer facing north.
35. Bibb City Elementary School; photographer facing northwest.
36. Porter Memorial Baptist Church; photographer facing west.
37. 3231 and 3233 Park Avenue; photographer facing west.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

38. 1 and 3 Poplar Street; photographer facing northwest.
39. View of River Avenue; photographer facing north.
40. View of intersection of River Avenue and Poplar Street; photographer facing west.
41. View of Poplar Street; photographer facing southwest.
42. Intersection of 41st Street and Hemlock Drive; photographer facing northwest.
43. 5 Hemlock Drive; photographer facing southwest.
44. Comer Recreation Center, 107 41st Street; photographer facing north.
45. View of 4009 2nd Avenue; photographer facing northwest.
46. View of the Plez Johnson Park on Hemlock Drive; photographer facing west.
47. View of Hemlock Drive; photographer facing northwest.
48. View of Hemlock Drive; photographer facing west.
49. View of Hemlock Drive and Hemlock Drive Park (left side of photo); photographer facing north.
50. View of Linden Point from Hemlock Drive and Hemlock Drive Park (foreground); photographer facing northwest.
51. 25 Hemlock Drive; photographer facing northeast.
52. Boy Scout Hut; photographer facing northwest.
53. View of 8 Linden Point; photographer facing northwest.
54. View of Linden Point; photographer facing southeast.
55. View of Linden Point; photographer facing south.
56. View of Woodland Circle; photographer facing west.
57. 6 and 7 Woodland Circle; photographer facing northwest.
58. View of Woodland Circle; photographer facing south.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

59. View of Magnolia Street; photographer facing north.
60. View of Magnolia Street; photographer facing north.
61. View of Spruce Street; photographer facing east.
62. View of Beechwood Heights; photographer facing north.
63. View of park from Beechwood Heights; photographer facing southwest.
64. 2 and 3 Beechwood Heights; photographer facing south.
65. View of Beechwood Heights; photographer facing northwest.
66. View of Spruce Street; photographer facing east.
67. View of Woodland Circle; photographer facing northeast.
68. View of Woodland Circle; photographer facing northeast.

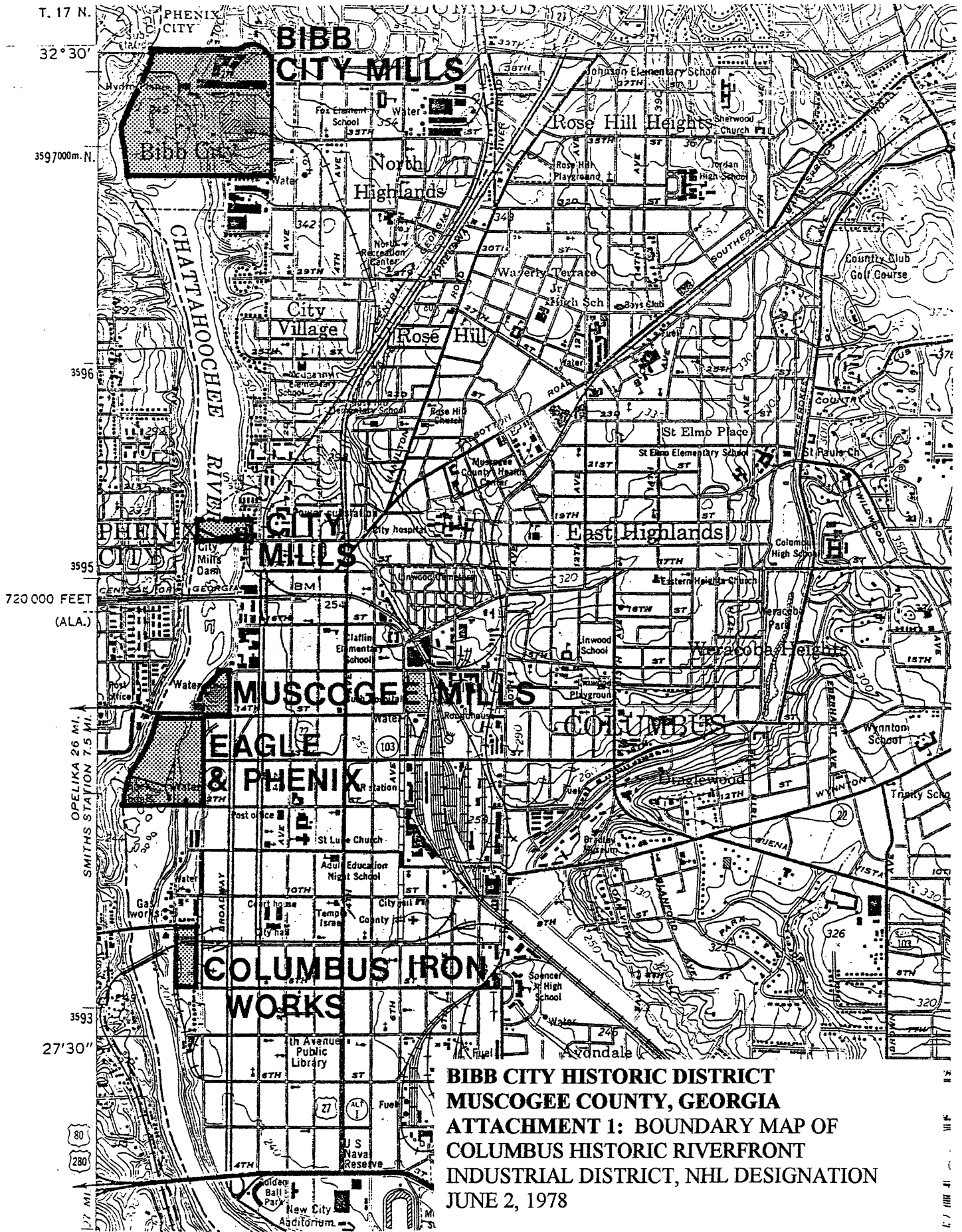
National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

List of Attachments

- Attachment 1: Boundary map of Columbus Historic Riverfront Industrial District National Historic Landmark, June 2, 1978, indicating previously listed Bibb City Mills area.
- Attachment 2: The Bibb Company, Columbus Plant, Muscogee County, Georgia. HAER record #GA-12. Accessed at <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/displayPhoto.pl?path=/pnp/habshaer/ga/ga0200/ga0255/sheet&topImages=00001a.gif&topLinks=00001r.tif,00001a.tif&title=&displayProfile=0> on November 16, 2008.
- Attachment 3: Bibb Manufacturing Company, main mill building, fire in progress on October 30, 2008. Photo by Elizabeth K. Barker, Historic Columbus Foundation.
- Attachment 4: Bibb Manufacturing Company, main mill building, October 31 2008. Photo by Elizabeth K. Barker, Historic Columbus Foundation.
- Attachment 5: Bibb Manufacturing Company, main mill building, demolished except for first bay. Photo by Lynn Speno, Historic Preservation Division, August 19, 2009.
- Attachment 6: Bibb Manufacturing Company, main mill building, demolished except for first bay. Photo by Lynn Speno, Historic Preservation Division, August 19, 2009.
- Attachment 7: Bibb Manufacturing Company, main mill building, demolished except for first bay. Warehouse on left. Photo by Lynn Speno, Historic Preservation Division, August 19, 2009.

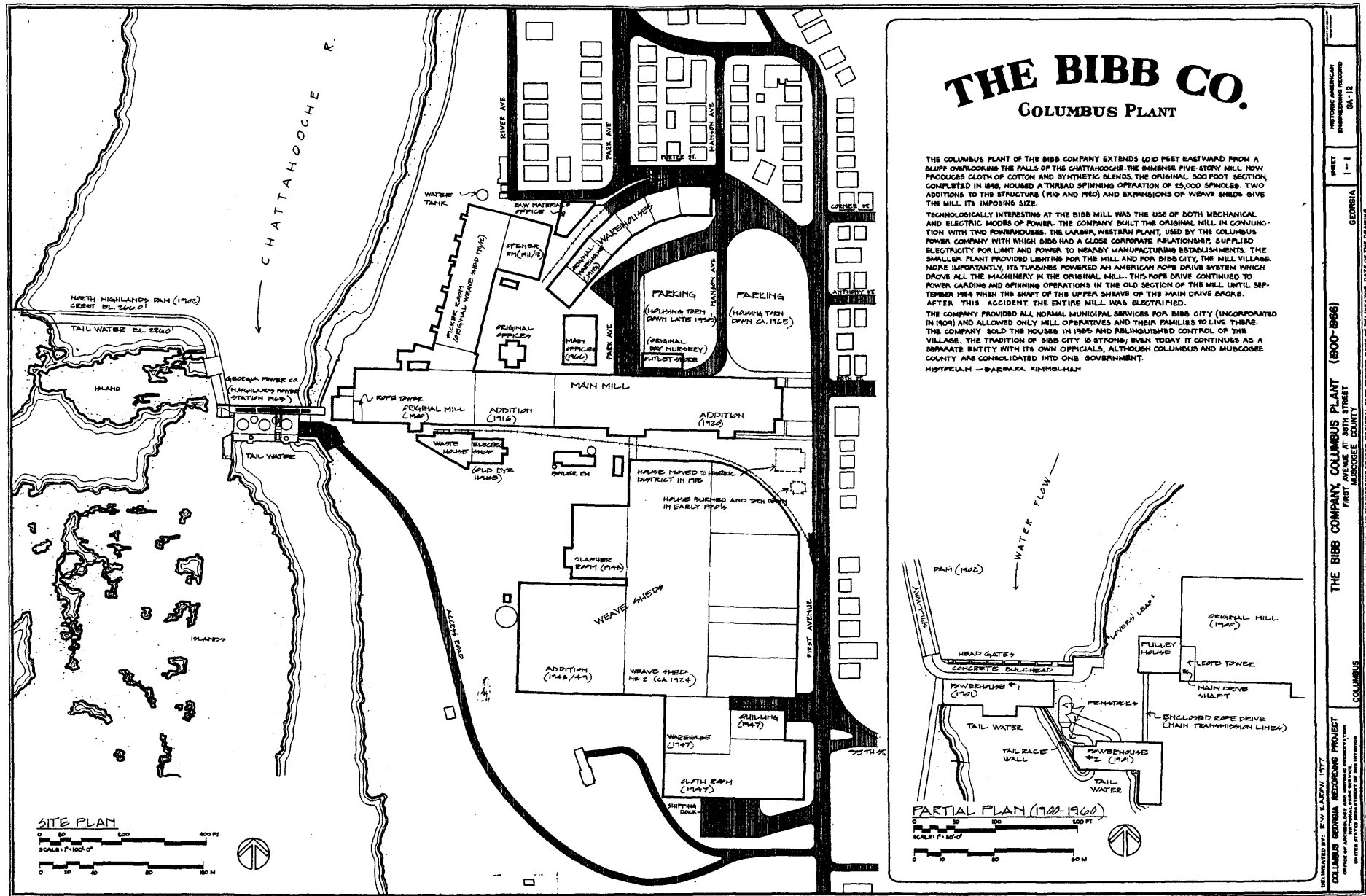
(HPD WORD form version 11-03-01)



**BIBB CITY HISTORIC DISTRICT
 MUSCOGEE COUNTY, GEORGIA
 ATTACHMENT 1: BOUNDARY MAP OF
 COLUMBUS HISTORIC RIVERFRONT
 INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT, NHL DESIGNATION
 JUNE 2, 1978**

T. 17 N.
 32° 30'
 3597000m. N.
 3596
 720 000 FEET
 (ALA.)
 OPELIKA 26 MI.
 SMITHS STATION 7.5 MI.
 3593
 27° 30"
 80
 280
 1.7 MI.

1:7 11/84 41 11 4



SHEET 1 OF 1
 GEORGIA
 THE BIBB COMPANY COLUMBUS PLANT (1900-1966)
 FIRST AVENUE AT 30TH STREET
 MUSCOGEE COUNTY
 COLUMBUS
 REPRODUCED, PLEASE CREDIT: HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, NAME OF DELINEATOR, DATE OF THE SURVEY

**BIBB CITY HISTORIC DISTRICT
MUSCOGEE COUNTY, GEORGIA
ATTACHMENT 2: THE BIBB MILL, COLUMBUS
PLANT, HAER GA-12, ACCESSED FROM:
<http://memory.loc.gov> on 11/16/2007**