

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections



1. Name

historic Great Falls Cotton Mill

and/or common Fall City Cotton Mill

2. Location *W of Rock Island off US 705*

street & number Rock Island State Park N/A not for publication

city, town Rock Island *vic*, vicinity of ~~Congressional District~~

state Tennessee code 047 county Warren code 177

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name State of Tennessee Department of Conservation

street & number 701 Broadway

city, town Nashville N/A vicinity of state Tennessee 37203

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Warren County Courthouse

street & number N/A

city, town McMinnville state Tennessee 37110

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title State Architectural Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1977 federal state county local

depository for survey records Tennessee Historical Commission, 701 Broadway

city, town Nashville state Tennessee 37203

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Great Falls Cotton Mill is located in Rock Island State Park in rural Warren County. It is a three-story common bond red brick textile mill building with a low-pitch gable tin roof and a stone foundation. This rectangular building, simple in design and plan, was constructed in 1892. It has not changed significantly since that time. The building retains much of its original integrity, except for the absence of glass panes, the wheelhouse, and part of the machine shop.

The mill is located in Rock Island State Park, a small park set in the wooded hills bordering the Caney Fork River in rural Warren County. The mill is found on the banks of the Caney Fork near the entrance to the park. A two-lane paved park road runs 25 feet to the south of the mill building. The only development which surrounds the building is a small picnic area which is directly across the road from the mill.

The building is a late nineteenth century textile mill built in 1892 by Clay Faulkner, H.L. Walling and Jesse Walling. The building was planned by industrialist Asa Faulkner before his death in 1886. The mill is a three-story high rectangular common bond red brick building standing on a stone foundation. It has a low-pitch gable roof with closed verges on the gable ends and projecting eaves on the sides. A flush gable end flue is located on the east facade. The mill is five bays wide on the facade (east) and rear (west) elevations and eighteen bays long on side elevations (north and south walls). The second and third floor windows are 12/12 light topped by wood segmental arched surround heads and brick segmental arched radiating voussoirs with wooden window sills. The first floor elevation windows are the same design but have 16/16 lights.

The building remains virtually unchanged except for the following: a covered wood walkway and mill wheel that were located on the north elevation washed away in the flood of July, 1902; the roof and walls of the machine shop (attached to the west elevation) collapsed in an attempt to repair its roof in October 1973; many glass panes are absent from the windows on the second and third elevations; and the first elevation windows are absent frames and are boarded over.

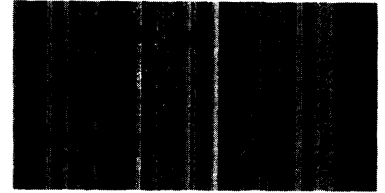
On the first story of the facade, facing east, only two structural openings are found: two windows which have been boarded over are located at the fourth and fifth bays on the right. A built-up dirt driveway leads to a wood platform at the main entrance of the building; the entrance is located at the left bay of the second floor and is comprised of a vertical wood blank double-leaf wide door with a flat wooden lintel.

A second entrance on the facade is approached by a wood staircase that leads from the platform to the central bay door of the third floor. A gabled porch with simple square posts and decorative sawn brackets provides shelter for the second-floor entrance. This entrance is comprised of a wide recessed double-leaf door of narrow vertical boards with segmental arched wood surround heads and segmental arched radiating voussoirs. Part of the staircase and third-story porch has plain narrow vertical board panelling which functions as a balustrade. The simple wood staircase is sheltered by a tin roof. Centered in the gable end of the facade is a small round vent with brick radiating voussoirs. The second and third floors of the facade have five windows each. These are 12/12 lights topped by wood segmental arched surround heads and brick segmental arched radiating voussoirs with wooden window sills.

The south side elevation is sixteen bays wide. An entrance is located at the left bay of the first floor elevation. The double-leaf diagonal board doors have wood lintels and deep wood reveals. The second and third elevation windows are the same as those on the second and third floors of the gable ends. A small round vent with brick radiating voussoirs is located

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at the right bay of the third elevation. The second and third elevations have sixteen windows which are identical to those of the same elevations on the gable end. The first floor windows are 16/16 lights.

The rear elevation is five bays wide. The second and third floor windows are constructed in the same manner as the facade and side elevations. A round gable vent identical to facade gable vent is present. The ghost of the one-story gable roof machine shop is present on the brick wall. The machine shop foundation walls of common bond brick still stand. The one-story machine shop originally had a low pitched gable roof and a stone foundation. The south (front) elevation of the shop was three bays wide with a central recessed doorway with a 16/12 light window to the right and left. The windows were topped by wood segmental arched surround heads and brick segmental arched radiating voussiors with wooden sills. The west side elevation of the machine shop was five bays wide with a round gable vent centered under the gable. The five bays consisted of five 16/12 light windows like those of the south elevation. The north, or rear, elevation of the shop was three bays wide with 16/12 light windows.

The north elevation is eighteen bays wide. All but one window are constructed in the same manner as those on the other elevations. A single-leaf wooden door, which formerly led to the wheel pit platform, has a flat brick arch, deep wood reveal and wooden lintel. It is located at the center of the first floor. A small flat brick arch window with a wooden lintel is located to the right of the platform door. A single-leaf wooden door with deep wood reveal and wooden lintels is located at the far left bay of the first floor and leads to an attached restroom, original to the building. The second and third floors have eighteen windows each. These are constructed in the same manner as those of the other elevations.

On the interior of the Great Falls Cotton Mill, the second or main floor of the structure originally had two small offices partitioned by wooden walls. The rest of the floor was open work area. In 1973 temporary partitions were built in the northeast corner by the Tennessee Division of Parks. The room is 50 feet in width. The ceiling is supported by nineteen sets made up of two 25 foot hand-hewn beams which are approximately 12" x 12". These sets run the length of the building. Where the beams meet, they are supported by a wood element which rests on octagonal wood posts. This configuration applies for every set of beams. The walls are of bare brick. The first floor of the mill building has one enclosed room that is half the length of the building. The remainder of the floor is open.

The entire third floor is an open work area with no partitions. The roof of the top floor is supported by nineteen sets of twenty-five foot beams in the same support configuration as the first floor. Some of the original gears which operated the machinery are still in place. It appears that originally there was a wooden ceiling on the third floor but this has been removed to expose the roof system.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1892 **Builder/Architect** Clay Faulkner, H.L. Walling, Jesse Walling

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) National Register Criteria A, B.
 The Great Falls Cotton Mill is a large three-story brick textile mill built in 1892 at a time when the cotton mill industry was at its peak throughout the Southeast. It is a monument to Warren County's initial industrial development, which was based on water-powered mills. It is also the only industrial structure remaining that was planned by Asa Faulkner, "the nestor of all Warren County's manufacturing interests," and the patriarch of the largest mill-owning family in the county. Furthermore, the Great Falls Cotton Mill is the only textile mill manufacturing building constructed prior to 1930 remaining in Warren County, and is the only building remaining associated with the village of Falls City.

Asa Faulkner began taking advantage of Warren County's wealth of waterways in 1830 when he built his first grist mill on Hickory Creek. Sixteen children, three wives, five mills, two cotton gins and two wool carding machines later, in 1886, he had established an industrial dynasty in Warren County. Five of his six sons are listed as manufacturers in the 1880 U.S. Manufacturers Census and were involved in some type of mill operation. He and his sons were noted as giving "constant employment to about 150 hands" in their mill operations.

His mill operations were each a commercial success. The Faulkner Central Factory built in 1848 produced Faulkner Jeans that were sold throughout the state. His Woodmon Cotton Mill was the largest in the entire border state region producing 2,500 yards of cotton domestics a day.

The Great Falls Cotton Mill was to be the culmination of a long and profitable industrial career. Asa Faulkner spent many hours acquiring property and making plans for his greatest mill. Together with Jesse and H.L. Walling and his son Clay Faulkner he organized the Great Falls Manufacturing Company in 1881. He had a wheel pit installed at the falls and a combination saw and grist mill erected on the present mill site.

However, on July 29, 1886 Asa Faulkner passed away, six years before the mill was completed. His eulogy in the Southern Standard called him "The nestor of all of Warren County's manufacturing interests." His son and partners continued with his plans for Great Falls. The Great Falls Cotton Mill Company was chartered on May 5, 1892 with a capital of \$30,000 to "Manufacture, spin, weave, bleach, dye, finish and sell all goods of every kind made of wood and cotton."

The Southern Standard on February 4, 1892 proclaimed the mills first shipment of February 2, 1892 to J.M. Cunningham and Company and Thurmon Brothers and Company of McMinnville and J.S. Reeves and Company of Nashville. At this time they were producing 4,000 yards of sheeting a day.

As with other mills in the Southeast a small mill town was built by the owners to provide mill laborers a place to live. The town of Fall City contained a post office, houses, and even a church where one of the mill owners, H.L. Walling preached on Sundays.

The mill was in operation for ten years until the July, 1902 flood. The Great Falls Cotton Mill was fortunate in that only its mill wheel was lost. However, the owners felt it was a time to sell. The Great Falls Power Company bought the mill in July, 1902. In 1912, the Tennessee Power Company purchased the site. In the late 1930s, the Tennessee Valley

9. Major Bibliographical References

see continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 67 acres

Quadrangle name Campaign, TN

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A 16 624220 3962710
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

see continuation sheet

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

state N/A code county N/A code

state N/A code county N/A code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Linda Drees (Resource Specialist) and J.T. Butler (Ranger Naturalist)

organization Tennessee Dept. of Conservation

date May, 1982

street & number 701 Broadway

telephone 742-6682

city or town Nashville

state Tennessee

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

Deputy

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Herbert E. Hager

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission

date 7/23/82

For HCERS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Allous Byers

Entered in the National Register

date

8/26/82

Keeper of the National Register

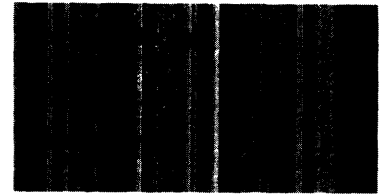
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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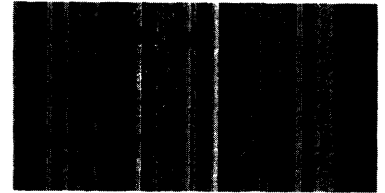
Authority acquired the mill. In 1973, TVA leased the property to the Tennessee Department of Conservation. Each of these owners have utilized the structure for storage and office space; as a result few changes have been made to the building and its integrity is retained.

In 1895, thirty-two waterpowered mills were in operation in Warren County. Four of these were textile mills and all were owned in part or in full by Faulkners. Less than a dozen survived the 1902 flood and most were rechartered. The flood was the beginning of the end of Warren County's mill industry. The Great Falls Cotton Mill is the only extant textile mill manufacturing building remaining from the late 1800 apex of the textile mill industry in south central Tennessee.

The mill now stands empty. Studies are currently underway by the Department of Conservation to determine adaptive uses (restaurant, cotton mill museum, or lodge) for the structure.

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Adams, William Hampton. Historical Archaeology of a Rural Mississippi Cotton Milling Community. U.S. Department of Interior N.P.S., June 1981.

Goodspeed's History of Tennessee, 1887. pp. 814-816, 825-826, 890-891.
Reprinted in 1972 by Charles and Randy Elder booksellers, Nashville.

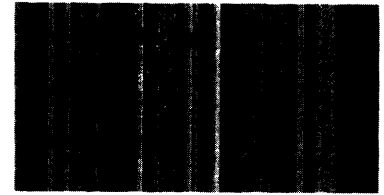
Mrs. Charles Faulkner Bryan, Interview, February 8, 1982.

Warren County U.S. Manufactures Census, 1880.

Womack, Walter. McMinnville at a Milestone, 1810-1960. Standard Publishing Inc., McMinnville, TN 1960, pp. 294-306.

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Boundary Description Great Falls Cotton Mill

The nominated property boundaries are drawn in red on the attached property assessment map. The area nominated is .67 acres. The boundary line begins at the intersection of the road and the western boundary which is 20 feet due west of the machine shop foundation. The line runs from the intersection along the road for 220 feet to form the southern boundary. The boundary line then turns northward 150 feet to form the east boundary and then turns west for 220 feet, forming the north boundary. The western boundary extends from the north to south boundary for 150 feet. Imaginary boundary lines have been drawn along the east, west and north because of the absence of physical landmarks. The extensive northern boundary is required to include the wheel pit.

41
7 AC. E

T.V.A.

42
17 AC.

N

4
325 AC. E

White
Creek

6-21

43

The Great Falls Cotton Mill
Vicinity of Rock Island,
Warren Co, TN
Scale 1" = 400 ft.

