

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

LISTED ON:  
VLR 09/17/2009  
NRHP 03/24/2010

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Dan River Mill No. 8  
other names/site number White Mill; DHR #108-0123

2. Location

street & number 424 Memorial Drive not for publication n/a  
city or town Danville (Independent City) vicinity \_\_\_\_\_  
state Virginia county Pittsylvania code 590 zip code 24541

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this x nomination \_\_\_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property x meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_\_\_\_\_ nationally \_\_\_\_\_ statewide \_\_\_\_\_ locally. (\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*William A. Krasser* February 4, 2010  
Signature of certifying official Date  
Virginia Department of Historic Resources  
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- \_\_\_\_ entered in the National Register  
\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.
- \_\_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register  
\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.
- \_\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register
- \_\_\_\_ removed from the National Register
- \_\_\_\_ other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- x private
public-local
public-State
public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- x building(s)
district
site
structure
object

Number of Resources within Property

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows: buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total.

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 5

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Industry Sub: textile mill
Industry power canal
Health/medicine mill clinic
transportation bridge

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Vacant Sub: not in use
transportation bridge

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Gothic Revival
Classical Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete
roof rubber membrane
walls concrete
other steel

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria** (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations** (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

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

**Areas of Significance** (Enter categories from instructions)

Industry  
Architecture  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance** 1920-1960

**Significant Dates** 1920-1921

**Significant Person** (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) n/a

**Cultural Affiliation** n/a

**Architect/Builder** Lockwood, Greene & Company / Aberthaw Construction Company

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

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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

**Previous documentation on file (NPS)**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Location of Additional Data**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources

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**10. Geographical Data**  
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**Acreage of Property** 18.75

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

Zone Easting Northing	Zone Easting Northing	Zone Easting Northing	Zone Easting Northing
1 <u>17 643518 4050637</u>	2 <u>17 643725 4050459</u>	3 <u>17 643645 4050405</u>	4 <u>17 643407 4050612</u>

See continuation sheet.

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

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

=====  
**11. Form Prepared By**  
=====

name/title Michael J. Pulice, architectural historian & John R. Kern, historian  
 organization Virginia Department of Historic Resources date July, 2009  
 street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone 540-857-7585  
 city or town Roanoke state VA zip code 24013

=====  
**Additional Documentation**  
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Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps** A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs** Representative black and white photographs of the property.

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

=====  
**Property Owner**  
=====

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

name City of Danville  
 street & number 427 Patton St. telephone 434-799-5100  
 city or town Danville state VA zip code 24543

=====  
**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 36 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, 1849 C St., NW, Washington, DC 20240.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

**Dan River Mill No. 8  
Danville, Virginia**

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**Summary Description**

The nominated Dan River Inc. Riverside Division's Mill No.8 parcel encompasses approximately 18.75 acres on the south bank of the Dan River, in the center of the City of Danville, Virginia. The property is characterized by the multi-story industrial building of mostly reinforced-concrete-construction. The building is typical of textile mill construction of the era, incorporating multiple windows for light and ventilation and fireproof interior structural systems, and displays some minimal exterior Gothic Revival stylistic features. The parcel includes a small, detached clinic building off of the southeast corner of the mill; a section of power canal that provided waterpower to the mills, and two transportation-related resources – a vehicular bridge and pedestrian bridge, both crossing the power canal – a total of five contributing resources. Construction of Mill No.8, or “White Mill” as it is commonly known, began in 1920 and opening day was celebrated on Thanksgiving Day, 1921. Lockwood, Greene & Company from Boston designed the mill and Aberthaw Construction Company, also from Boston, was responsible for the mill's construction. The mill is thought to have been built by Italian laborers who were housed at the construction site.

**Detailed Description**

The nominated parcel includes buildings and structures associated with the Riverside Division's Mill No.8, one of the historic textile mills in Danville developed by Dan River Inc. in the early twentieth century. Mill No.8 occupies the south bank of the Dan River, a major tributary of the Roanoke River and historically the source of power used by the mill complexes. The nominated resources occupy the level bottoms along the river, which lie at about 400 feet above mean sea level, and which have been extended by fill in recent decades. The mill lies in close proximity to the Downtown Danville Historic District, listed in the National Register in 1993, and the Danville Tobacco Warehouse and Residential District, listed in 1982.

The Mill No.8 property is bounded on its south side by acreage adjoining Memorial Drive, a modern thoroughfare. The parcel is adjoined on its south side by the historic central business district of Danville, a Southside Virginia city established in the 1790s. Although not included in this nomination, there are many immediate surroundings of the mill that contribute to its historic character. Spanning the river on the north side of the mill are waterpower dams, vehicular bridges, and a covered bridge. The Dan River, flowing eastward through the district, is scenic in character, with tree-lined banks, beds of aquatic grasses, and numerous rocky islets.<sup>1</sup>

The original nomination for the Dan River, Inc. Riverside Division (1982) states that Mill No. 8 is a “large four-story building of reinforced concrete construction measuring 832 feet long and 140 feet wide. Stylistically the building is a simplified version of Gothic Revival, with segmental arches with off-set block motifs and peaked details cast into its concrete envelope. The Gothic character was more pronounced when the building had its original expanses of steel-framed windows; most of these were walled up in recent decades. A total of four five-story elevator towers rise on the long north and south elevations, and stairs rise in the corners. Running down the center of the parapeted flat roof is a clerestory-like “mezzanine” formerly used for yarn storage. The interior is characterized by rows of 20 inch diameter concrete columns with inverted conical caps and by floors of reinforced concrete or combination concrete and maple. Canteens, offices, and restrooms occupied partitioned-off spaces at the ends of the floors.” Construction of Mill No. 8 totaled \$3,370,000. The construction techniques used in the mill, advanced for their time, accounted for fire hazards such as steam engines, primitive lighting, combustible fabrics, and machinery lubricants. The requirements of

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function, fire prevention, and cost dictated the basic character of the mill buildings, but exterior stylistic features, such as recessed wall surfaces with corbelling, are also present. These features are remnant expressions of late-nineteenth-century brick mill construction.<sup>2</sup> At the east end of the roof was, until recently, a large 1948 electric sign reading "Home of Dan River Fabrics," erected at a cost of \$22,602. The sign was taken down and purchased by a private individual, but there may be an opportunity to have it restored and remounted through a cooperative agreement.

The mill's interior is comprised of high ceilings supported 20-inch diameter concrete columns, with inverted conical caps, arranged in a grid pattern. Floors are of reinforced concrete or a combination of concrete and maple. Canteens, offices, and rest rooms occupy partitioned spaces at each end of the building. Mill No. 8 and its lost architectural companion across the river, the Dye House, marked the last phase of major construction at the Riverside Division. The mill's first floor originally contained dyeworks and slashers, and the upper floors housed looms and other weaving equipment. Air washers for humidifying the interior to 80% humidity were installed by Carrier circa 1920. Much of the mill's machinery was updated in the 1980s, but was sold to South American manufacturers in the 1990s.<sup>3</sup>

The mill clinic, a contributing building, is a small, one-story, reinforced concrete building on the east side of the mill. It has a low-pitch hipped roof and a large steel casement window on the north end elevation and three bays of paired six-over-six sash on the west elevation, facing the mill. Architectural features inspired by classical motifs, all fashioned of concrete, include pilasters dividing the window pairs, and a corbelled belt course surmounting the window bays. The base of the exterior walls projects outward in two tiers, comprising a molded water table.

The canal; a steel-and-concrete vehicular bridge, built over the canal 1927 by the Virginia Bridge and Iron Co.; and the circa 1920 narrow pedestrian bridge at the canal's eastern terminus, built of concrete piers and below-deck steel trusses, are each identified as contributing structures for the purposes of this nomination.

Power canal (Morotock Canal)

In 1816, William L. Lewis and Benjamin W. S. Cabell began construction of a dam and mill race to power their grist mill at Wynne's Falls. In the 1820s, the Roanoke Navigation Company incorporated the mill race into a canal with locks bypassing the falls, and by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century the canal was enlarged to eighteen feet wide and three-quarters of a mile long. Later, flood damage and competition from railroads rendered unprofitable the navigation works, and after 1850 industrial use of the canal increased. The Danville Water Power Company was formed to further widen the canal and construct the Union Street Dam to boost the canal's waterpower potential, in the early 1880s. In 1895, the canal's banks were walled in order to further augment waterpower, and a new bulkhead and head gates were built in 1923. Until 1972, Dan River Inc. used canal-generated power. Later, most of the canal was in-filled, leaving only the existing fifty-foot-wide, 1,450-foot-long section on the south side of Mill No. 8.<sup>4</sup>

The Mill No.8 complex remained in active use until the 1990s and was well cared for. Deterioration has since taken a toll, but the building is believed to be in good condition overall. Its historic integrity is likewise largely intact, although most of the mill's windows have been bricked up.

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**Dan River Mill No. 8  
Danville, Virginia**

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## **8. Statement of Significance**

### **Summary Statement and Justification of Criteria**

Completed in 1921 and located in what survives of the Dan River Inc. Riverside Division textile mill complex and historic district (listed in the National Register in 2000), Mill No.8 is a four-story reinforced concrete building on the south side of the Dan River in Danville, Virginia. All Dan River Riverside Division mills constructed prior to World War I featured thick brick walls and heavy timber supports with local design and local construction. After World War I, however, by the time that Danville became Virginia's principal producer of textiles, Dan River executives turned to New England, the nation's leading center of textile production, to contract with Boston engineering firms and contractors for design and construction of a reinforced concrete structure. On Thanksgiving Day 1921, when Mill No.8 opened, Dan River officials announced that Mill No. 8 housed "the most modern equipment in the most modern mill in the United States." Capped in 1948 by an electric sign reading "Home of Dan River Fabrics," Mill No.8 remained in active production from 1921 until the 1990s. The mill is an integral part of Danville's architectural fabric and a symbol of the textile industry's dominance over the local economy during the twentieth century. In addition to its architectural significance, Mill No.8 contributes dramatically to the character of Danville's historic urban core. It transformed the Danville waterfront from an essentially natural condition to an intensively industrialized area. Mill No.8 is eligible for historic designation at the state level of significance under Criterion A: Industry for the Danville mills that continued to lead Virginia in textile production from the 1920s into the 1990s; and Criterion C: Architecture, as a representative of post-World War I-era reinforced concrete construction. The Period of Significance is from 1920, when construction began on Mill No.8, until 1960, as its significant role as a leading Virginia textile producer continued until the 1990s.

### **Historical Background**

#### Dan River Inc. Riverside Division

Mill No.8 stands on the south side of the Dan River as the largest building in the Dan River Inc. Riverside Division industrial textile mill complex. Begun as Riverside Cotton Mills by Danville contractor and brick manufacturer Thomas B. Fitzgerald, the initial Mill No. 1 on the south side of the Dan River went into cotton textile production in 1883 with 100 workers, 100 looms, and 2,240 spindles. In 1887 construction on the north side of the Dan river began on Long Mill, which by 1894 housed 1,700 looms and 6,000 spindles. Soon Riverside Cotton Mills and its successor Dan River Inc. became one of the largest and best equipped textile mills in the South. The growth of Dan River Inc. Riverside Division marked an important transition in Danville's industrial economy from tobacco to textile production, and accompanied an increase in Danville population from 7,500 in 1880 to 16,000 in 1900, to 21,500 in 1920.<sup>5</sup>

Initially water power provided by a system of canals and locks on the Dan River drove the mills. Dan River Inc. relied on steel rail transport of finished products hauled by the Virginia Midland Railroad. That line, absorbed by the Southern Railway System in 1894, ran on the north side of the Dan River just north of Long Mill. A Boiler House constructed in 1913 next to the railroad provided steam power for the textile mills. Coal Bunkers built next to the railroad tracks fueled the Boiler House. The Riverside Division also constructed a Machine Shop and a Cotton House on the north side of the river in 1911 and 1917 before American entry into World War I.<sup>6</sup>

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All of the Dan River Riverside Division's two to four story buildings constructed 1882-1917 exemplified Riverside Cotton Mills president Thomas Fitzgerald's industrial design, which featured fire retardant "thick brick walls, heavy timber framing, heavy plank flooring, and avoidance of enclosed spaces such as attics or covered joists."<sup>7</sup>

Mill No.8

Completion of Mill No. 8 in 1920-1921 on the south side of the Dan River marked the beginning of a new era for the Riverside Division with construction of an imposing four story mill of reinforced concrete that housed the most modern machinery available powered by electric motors. Around the end of World War I, Riverside Division executives contacted leading engineering and construction firms in New England who had designed and built the nation's most productive textile mills in the Northeast. Lockwood, Greene & Company of Boston designed Mill No. 8. Aberthaw Construction Company, also of Boston, built Mill No.8, reportedly with Italian immigrant workers who lived on the construction site until the mill opened Thanksgiving Day, 1921.<sup>8</sup>

When Mill No.8 opened in 1921, the large 840 feet by 144 feet, four story reinforced concrete structure, capped by four five-story elevator towers, housed what Dan River officials called "the most modern equipment in the most modern mill in the United States." Loom manufacturers Crompton & Knowles provided Mill No. 8 with 464 automatic gingham looms at a cost of \$347,000, and with 1,271 Model E Drapers at a cost of \$440,000. Parks-Camper Company installed a new system of sprinklers, humidifiers, and air cleaners in the mill. All told, the Riverside Improvement program invested \$3,370,000 in construction and equipment for Mill No.8, more than three fifths of total capital expended on Dan River Inc. mill construction and upgrades after World War I.<sup>9</sup> In 1948 an electric sign reading "Home of Dan River Fabrics" was placed on top of the building a cost of \$22,600.<sup>10</sup> Recently damaged by a hurricane, the sign has been purchased by Danville preservationists and stored for replacement.

Textile mill production stopped at Dan River Inc. Riverside Division in 1996. Now, following recent demolition of most of the mill complex on the north side of the Dan river, Mill No.8 stands as the principal post-World War era reinforced concrete structure that survives from Danville's first industrial center for textile manufacturing. The City of Danville presently supports historic designation of Mill No.8 so that prospective buyers can pursue federal and state tax credits for rehabilitation of this landmark structure.

**9. Bibliographical References**

Hargrove, Thomas, and Michael Hammond. "Dan River Basin Cultural Resources Study." Chapel Hill, N.C.: Archaeological Research Consultants, 1981.

Pezzoni, J. Daniel. Dan River Inc. Riverside Division Historic District register nomination 108-0013. Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia, 1999.

Smith, Robert Sidney. *Mill on the Dam: A History of Dan River Mills, 1882-1950*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1960.

Virginia Department of Historic Resources survey files. Richmond, Virginia.



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**Dan River Mill No. 8  
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**10. Geographical Data**

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundaries of the nominated parcel are depicted on the scaled map that accompanies the nomination. Generally speaking, the parcel is bounded by property lines.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundaries of the nominated parcel are drawn so as to include all of the surviving resources historically associated with the Riverside Division Mill No.8 and to exclude adjoining areas that are not directly associated with the mill's development.

**Photographs**

Subject: Dan River Mill No.8

Location: Danville, Virginia

DHR ID: 108-0123

Photo 1) Mill exterior, facing southeast across Dan River.

Date: July 2009. Credit: Renee Blair

Photo 2) Mill exterior, east elevation

Date: July 2009. Credit: Renee Blair

Photo 3) Mill exterior, facing south-southwest across Dan River.

Date, July 2009. Credit: Renee Blair

Photo 4) Mill exterior, south elevation

Date: July 2009. Credit: Renee Blair

Photo 5) Mill exterior (with sign), facing southwest across Dan River.

Date: May 2006. Credit: Michael Pulice

Photos 6-8) Mill interior, first floor

Date: July 2009. Credit: Amanda Adams

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<sup>1</sup> Pezzoni, J, Daniel. Dan River Inc. Riverside Division Historic District register nomination 108-0013. Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia, 1999.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid; Smith, Robert Sidney. *Mill on the Dam: A History of Dan River Mills, 1882-1950*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1960.

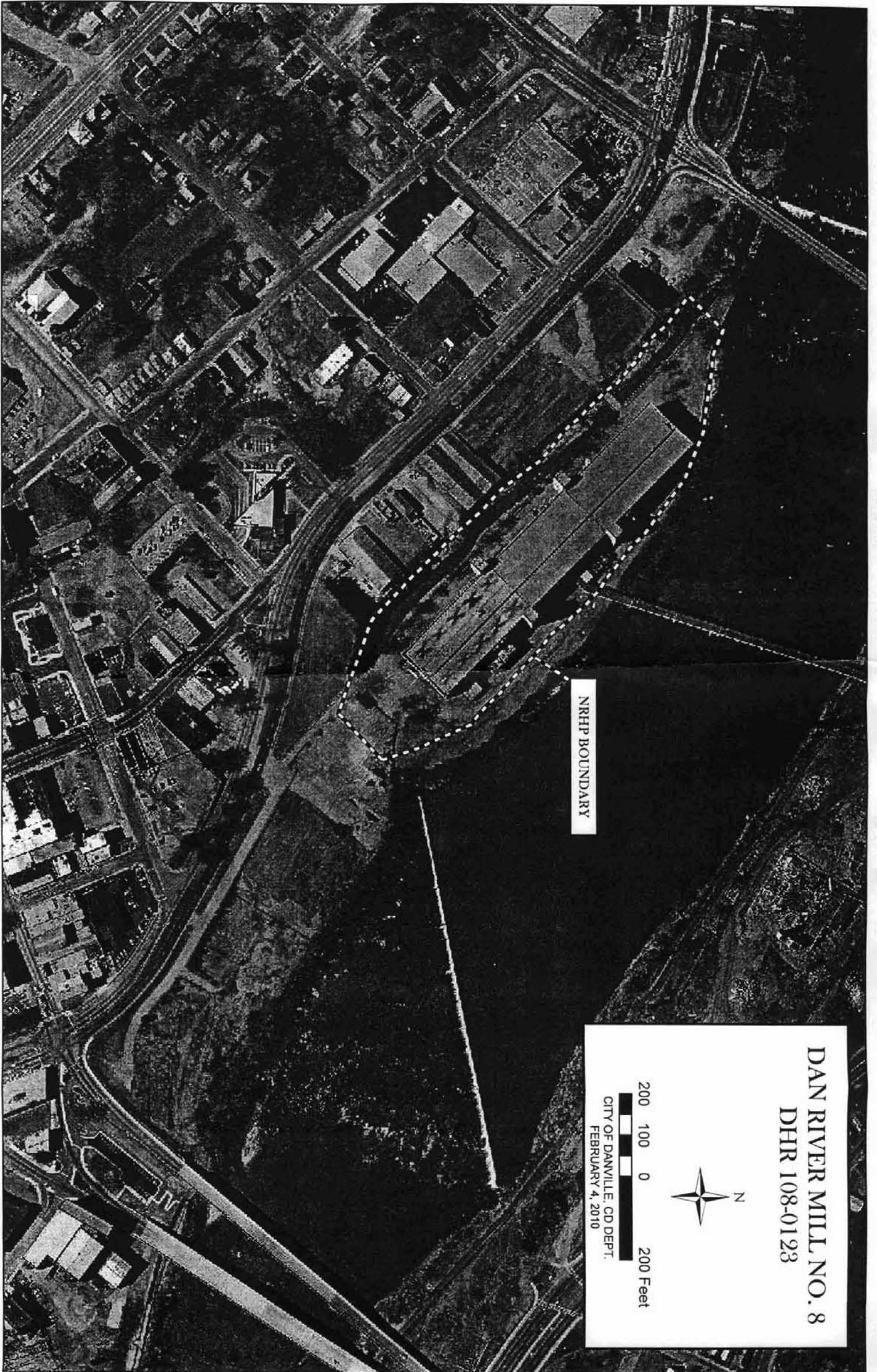
<sup>6</sup> Pezzoni 1999.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid; Hargrove, Thomas, and Michael Hammond. "Dan River Basin Cultural Resources Study." Chapel Hill, N.C.: Archaeological Research Consultants, 1981.

<sup>8</sup> Smith 1960, p.121; Pezzoni 1999.

<sup>9</sup> Smith 1960, p.121-122.

<sup>10</sup> Pezzoni 1999.



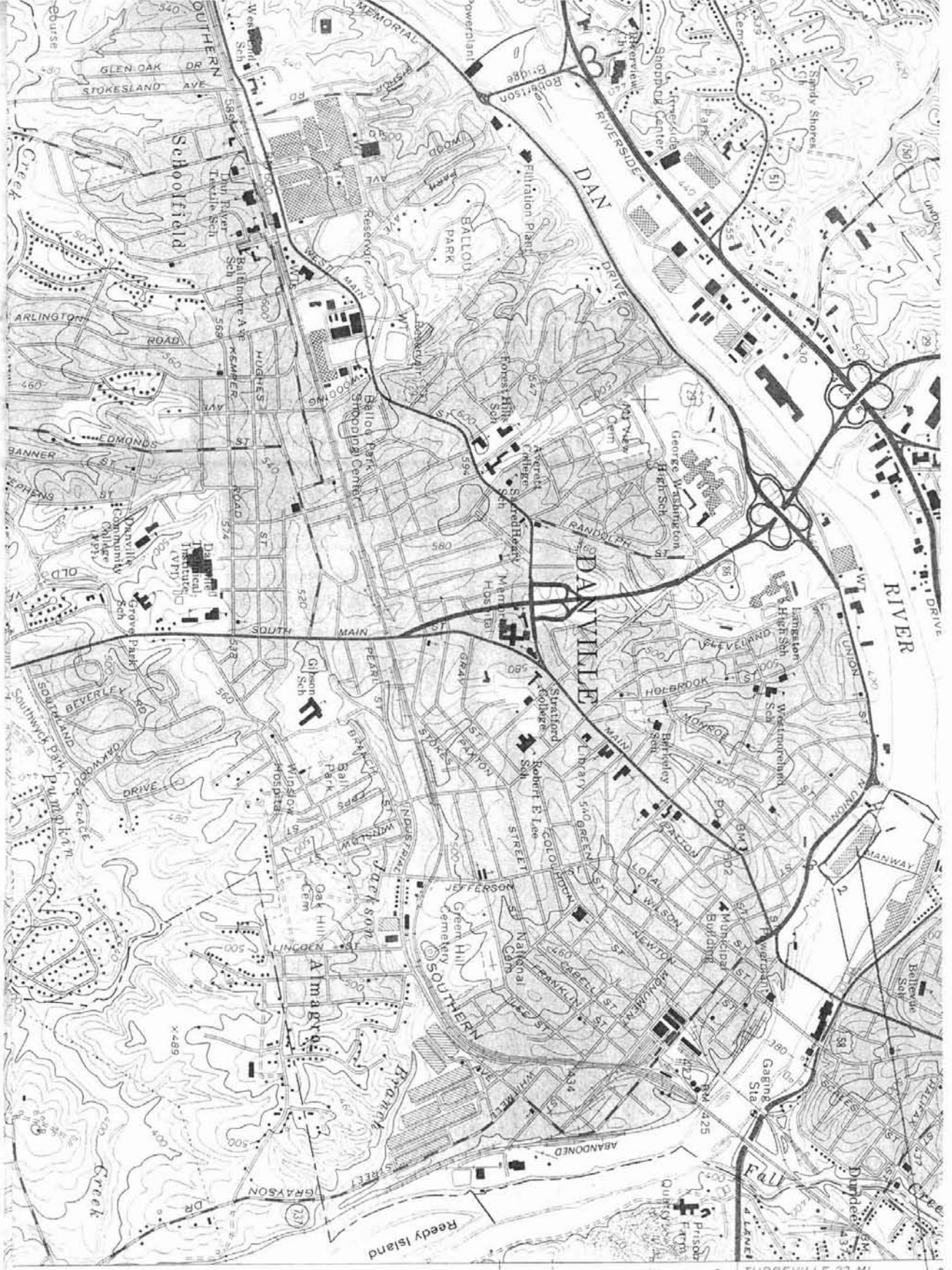
NRHP BOUNDARY

DAN RIVER MILL NO. 8  
DHR 108-0123



200 100 0 200 Feet

CITY OF DANVILLE, CD DEPT.  
FEBRUARY 4, 2010



(RINGGOLD) 5157 III SE 4047 4048 4049 4050 4051  
 TURBEVILLE 22 MI. SOUTH BOSTON 31 MI.

DANVILLE, VA

UTMS:

1. 176405124050637
2. 1764051254050459
3. 1764051264050405
4. 1764051274050612