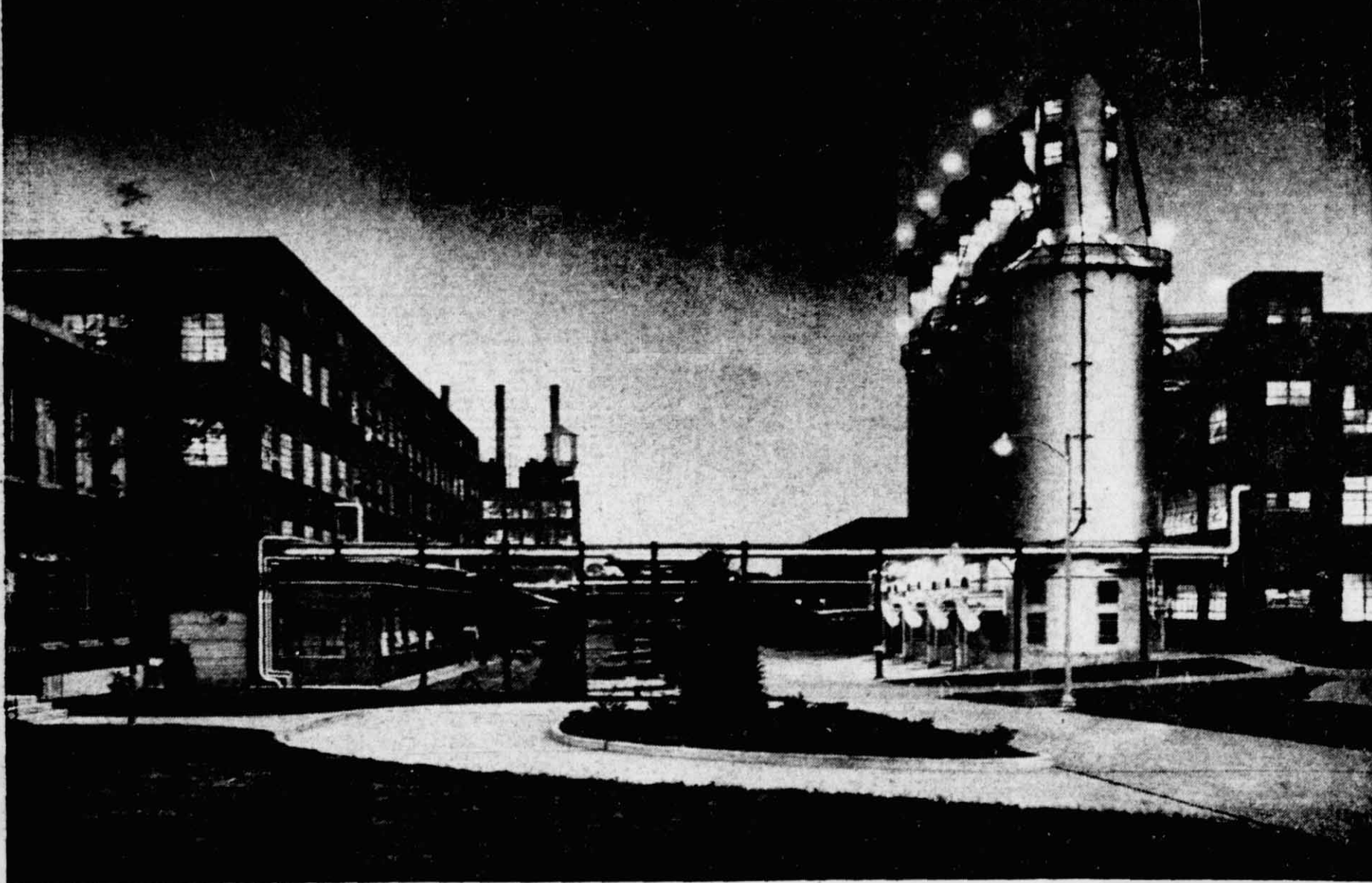


# Rock Hill, S.C. - Industrial Development

## industry...business



Celriver Plant of the Celriver Corporation of America

# R. H. One Of State's *Third-Centennial Edition - May 3, 1952* Centers Of Industry

By DEWARD BRITTAIN

Rock Hill is a leader in industrial enterprise. It always has been.

The vision of early businessmen and landowners and the constant progressiveness of their successors kept Rock Hill in the forefront of textile manufacturing in the South. Today the capital invested in industry, mainly textiles, in and near the city amounts to several hundred million dollars. And more than 13,000 workers are employed in textile plants and other lesser industries in the county.

As the South climbed out of the quagmire of Reconstruction, businessmen realized the "plantation economy" of cotton and crinoline was a thing of the past. Particularly in the Piedmont belt and in the Horsecreek Valley along the Savannah River men were talking about textiles. "Cotton mills among the cotton fields" was the new financial theory.

Quickly the dream caught fire in the village of Rock Hill. A cotton mill!

A. E. Hutchison and a handful of other leaders organized the Rock Hill Cotton Factory in 1880 — and a new textile center was born. The plant, the first mill to be driven by steam in the state, began operations in 1881. (Today the plant is the Gold-Tex Fabrics Corp.)

### New Mills

The next 20 years were wonderful for construction men in Rock Hill. Another mill was being built practically all the time — or else an existing plant was expanding. The Standard Mill (Highland Park) was organized in 1888, the Globe (Victoria) in 1889, the Arcade in 1895, the Manchester (Industrial) in 1895, and the Aragon in 1906.

Names linked with the early industrial development of the town are A. E. and David Hutchison, John R. London, A. H. White, W. L. and W. J. Roddey, A. Friedheim, A. E. Smith, W. J. Fawlinson, T. A. Crawford, R. T. Fewell, Julius Friedheim, J. R. Barron, J. B. Johnson, J. M. Cherry, John G.

Anderson, A. D. Holler and Alexander Long.

But textiles were not the only things being manufactured in the thriving and prosperous town. A. D. Holler and John G. Anderson were enjoying success in making buggies. The Rock Hill Buggy Co., which later was expanded into the Anderson Motor Company by Mr. Anderson, was chartered in 1886 and was profitable at once.

The L. L. Clyburn, Door, Sash and Blind Factory employed "25 hands".

About 100 persons were working in the Piedmont Tobacco Works in 1895. The plant made plug and twist tobacco.

Other miscellaneous items manufactured before the turn of the century were brick and tile, saddles and harness, and cotton seed oil products.

The town grew. And, comparatively speaking, times were good. Local investors didn't hesitate to plunge their capital into new ventures. They realized Rock Hill was blessed with many advantages as far as industry was concerned. The town itself was well located on the highest ridge between Charlotte on the Southern Railway. Its climate was good. It had an abundant water supply. It was surrounded by good farm lands. It had a supply of industrious labor.

After 1900 several mills changed hands or were reorganized, but they continued to operate, usually expanding. A wide variety of cloth was produced in the plants: grey goods, gingham, prints, broadcloths, poplin, denims, tickings. But essentially the finances of the town were bound to cotton and the products of cotton.

From 1910 until after World War I there was little change in the town's industrial picture. But over the state the cotton mill idea continued to spread. Rock Hill had been in the vanguard of the cotton textile movement years before — just as it was to be later in the migration of textile synthetics and printing and finishing.

### Bleachery

In 1928 the Lowenstein interests of New York were looking for a plant site in the South. Through the efforts of C. L. Cobb, W. P. Goodman and others, M. Lowenstein and Sons were persuaded to build in Rock Hill. Today this plant, the Rock Hill Printing and Finishing Company, is the largest concern of its kind under one roof in the world.

Shortly before World War II Samarkand Rugs, Inc., bought out the old Wymojo Mill next to the Bleachery and began manufacturing rugs. Although its future is indefinite, the rug mill, together with its yarn mill, is still operating in the city.

Except for the Jac Feinberg Hosiery Mill — now out of operation, the Bleachery and Samarkand were the only two plants to be opened in the city between the two world wars.

At the end of World War II, however, civic leaders went to work to obtain the acetate filament yarn spinning plant the Celanese Corporation of America was planning for the South. The deal was swung. On February 1, 1947 ground for the gigantic plant was broken on

a 70-acre track on the Rock Hill side of the Catawba River. To date an estimated \$100,000,000 has been spent at the Celriver Celanese Plant. Production was begun in the summer of 1948.

Also since the recent war other new industrial concerns have been opened in the city. All begun since World War II and now in operation are the Dave Baer Hosiery Mill, Kray-Feld Fabrics Corp., a corrugated box factory owned by the National Container Corporation, the Inter Chemical Company and several metal and wood-working establishments.

The industrialization of the county hasn't been limited to the Rock Hill area. Today the big Springs Mills, which is in the process of moving headquarters from Lancaster to Fort Mill, are among the world's largest. There also are mills at York, Clover and Bowling Green. And under construction is a small knitting mill at Hickory Grove.

Today the industrial payroll of York County amounts to some \$500,000 weekly. The county ranks second in the state in the amount of capital invested in manufacturing. The annual value of products manufactured in the entire county exceeds \$100,000,000.