NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 10024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 Mount Vernon Mill No. 1

other names B-62

2. Location

street & number 3000 Falls Road ☐ not for publication

city or town Baltimore ☐ vicinity

state Maryland code MD county Independent city code 510 zip code 21211

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ 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 ☒ 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).

Signature of certifying official/Title — Date 3-12-01

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying 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

Mount Vernon Mill No. 1
Name of Property

Baltimore city, Maryland
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
- ☐ public-local
- ☐ public-State
- ☐ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
4		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
4	0	Total

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

N/A

number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY/textile mill

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY/factory
COMMERCE/studio

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

MID-19TH CENTURY/Italianate

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE
walls BRICK
roof METAL
other WOOD, CONCRETE

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

Mount Vernon Mill No. 1
Name of Property

Baltimore city, Maryland
County and State

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 pattern of our* history.

☐ B Property 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)

Property is:

☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ B removed from its original location.

☐ C a birthplace or 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.

Area of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1873-1945

Significant Dates

1873, 1881, 1923

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Previous documentation on files (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:
Baltimore Museum of Industry

Mount Vernon Mill No. 1
Name of Property

Baltimore city, Maryland
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 5.073 acres

UTM References Baltimore West, MD quad
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	18	359400	4353700	3			
2				4			

☐ 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 Betty Bird and Rebecca Plant

Organization Betty Bird & Associates date June 30, 2000

street & number 2607 24th Street, NW telephone (202) 588-9033

city or town Washington state DC zip code 20008

Additional Documentation

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 SHPO or FPO)

name

street & number telephone

city or town state zip code

Paperwork Reduction 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.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Mount Vernon Mill No. 1, constructed serially between 1873 and 1918, is a complex of four buildings situated along Jones Falls in Baltimore, Maryland. The complex consists of three closely associated 19th-century buildings on the east side of Jones Falls and a 20th century warehouse on the west side of Jones Falls. Structures include a large, three-story brick Mill Building (1873) constructed above a stone basement; a two-story, brick, L-shaped Picker House (1873); a two-story, brick Store House (c. 1881); and a later, reinforced-concrete warehouse (1918). The Mill Building is the largest and most important building in the complex. No machinery dating to Mount Vernon Mill use remains. Typical of mill buildings in continuous use, the Mill Building has been altered over the years. Its monitor, north stair tower, and Mansart roof over the south stair tower have been removed and most window openings have been infilled with brick or concrete block. With the exception of the north stair tower, which was removed for a loading dock addition, these changes are reversible and do not affect the overall integrity of the resource.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Mount Vernon Mill No. 1, constructed serially between 1873 and 1918, is a complex of four buildings situated along Jones Falls in Baltimore, Maryland. The complex is the southernmost mill complex of a series of 19th century textile mills constructed in the Jones Falls valley in Hampden, a neighborhood comprised of mill villages. Mount Vernon Mill No. 1 is located on the east side of Jones Falls on a narrow site circumscribed by Jones Falls and Falls Road, which follows the contours of the steeply sloping Jones Falls valley and winds around the east and south sides of the Mill Building and Picker House. (The 1918 Warehouse is situated on the west side of Jones Falls; the Store House across Falls Road to the south of the Mill Building.)[1] The old Penn Central tracks, now used for Baltimore light rail, and the Jones Falls Expressway are located immediately west of the site on the west side of Jones Falls. The remnant of an old raceway runs under the Mill Building. The 1918 Warehouse is sited on the west side of Jones Falls between the Falls and the railroad tracks. This building, which follows the axis established by the railroad tracks rather than the axis of the older buildings, is connected to the Mill Building by a bridge connecting the 1st floor of the Mill Building with the 3rd floor of the 1918 Warehouse.

Within the Mount Vernon Mill No. 1 complex, the Mill Building dominates the site, occupying most of the property. The L-shaped Picker House occupies the southwest corner of the site. The east and north walls of the Picker House follow the contours of the southwest corner of the Mill Building. A bridge, now gone, once connected the north end of the Picker House with the south end of the Mill Building. Fire insurance maps and a c. 1925 historic photograph show that a stone retaining wall extended along the west side of the east bank of Jones Falls; the west walls of both the former Boiler House and the Picker House appear to rise from this retaining wall.

A commemorative card documents the appearance of the complex in the late 19th century. The card, which depicts a birds-eye view of the mill from the northwest, shows smoke-belching factories surrounded by trees. The twin towers at the north and south ends of Mount Vernon Mill No. 1 are topped by dormered Mansart roofs. A finial

[1]While the axis of the mill runs northwest to southeast, to simplify description the axis has been shifted to north-south. Thus the northwest facade becomes north; the northeast along Falls Road, east; the southeast, south; and the southwest along Jones Falls, west.

with a weather vane rises from the north tower, a flag pole from the south. The long Boiler House on the west side of the building, replaced by the present Boiler House, is flanked by two huge stacks. A monitor extending almost the entire length of the building supports an enormous sign bearing the legend, "MOUNT VERNON COTTON DUCK MILLS."[2] Both the Picker House and the Store House can be seen in this view, which is not dated.

Mill Building (1873, 1881, early 20th c.)

The Mill Building is a 27 bay x 11 bay, cross-shaped, three-story brick building that rests on a full stone basement. The basement is at ground level; the 1st floor, at the level of Falls Road. The building is topped with a shallow gable roof. The long axis of the mill runs north-south, roughly parallel to Jones Falls on the west and Falls Road on the east. A two-story Boiler House, constructed between 1914 and 1922, is attached to the west side of the center of the main block of the building. A five story stair tower survives at the center of the south facade. Entrances to the building are presently located in an early 20th c. stairtower adjacent to the cross gable on the east side of the building.

The roughly cross-shaped configuration of the present Mill Building reflects the form of three building campaigns. The original 1873 building, the southern portion of the mill, was roughly rectangular and extended to the north wall of the three-bay cross-gable projecting from the east side of the building. In 1881, the building was extended 10 bays to the north during the second building campaign. The third building campaign encompassed early 20th c. work. Some time after 1914, a small, two-story stair tower and entrance were added to the north of the cross-gabled section facing Falls Road. Between 1914 and 1924, a four-bay addition housing a hoist and toilet rooms was added to the west side of the building against the north wall of the Boiler House. All three major campaigns adopted the distinctive architectural vocabulary of the 1873 building.[3]

The facades of the Mill Building are delineated by full-height brick piers demarcating the structural bays of the building. Double piers articulate the corners. The piers rise to a corbelled brick cornice. The brick bond features a row of headers every sixth course. The south tower is the most highly ornamented element of the building. A projecting brick stringcourse decorated with honeycomb crosses runs between the corner piers at each floor level. The circular window openings at the top of the tower feature brick surrounds embellished with four brick keystones. Above the first floor, a marble panel bears the legend, "Mount Vernon Mills No. 1" and includes the dates 1845 (the date the mill was established) and 1873 (the date the mill was constructed). Original window openings, which remain on the south side of the stair tower and the west side of the rear wing of the mill, consist of paired arched window surrounds with crossettes. A key consisting of a dogtooth topped by an incised cap, also executed in wood, graces the top of the surround. Windows consist of 12-over-12 sash. A monitor roof that extended the length of the building was removed some time after 1953. A fire escape with an ornate cast iron rail is attached to the southern portion of the west wall of the building.

---

[2]A copy of this card may be found attached to Maryland Inventory of Historic Sites Survey Form B-62 at the Baltimore Museum of Industry.

[3]While there is no known design source for Mount Vernon Mill No. 1, Ruben Gladfelter, a carpenter long-associated with the Mount Vernon-Woodberry Mills may well have had a hand in the design, particularly the distinctive window frames. The November 22 issue of *The Mt. Vernon-Woodberry News* states that "He [Gladfelter] had been connected with these mills, he informed us, as far back as seventy years ago, and when Clipper Mill [1865] was built, as head carpenter, he was in charge of construction."

Subsequent 20th c. exterior alterations adapted the Mill Building to changes in the textile industry and transportation requirements for raw materials and products. A late 20th century transformer room has been attached to the west end of the south facade. A loading dock now extends north of the north facade and openings along the north end of the east facade have been enlarged for loading bays. The most significant exterior change has been the removal of window surrounds and the installation of brick infill and louvers in many of the window openings. This alteration is directly associated with the conversion of Mount Vernon Mill to the production of synthetic fibers in the mid-20th century. Requirements for controlled temperature and humidity resulted in this infill, which is typical of older mill buildings still in operation in the late 20th century.

The open plan interior of the Mill Building also reveals the layers of construction on the site. The basement appears to date to the Laurel Mill (1845), which burned in 1873. The basement has stone walls, some of which are covered with stucco, and features fluted cast iron columns supporting wood beams. The structural system of the building shows signs of 20th century alterations. There are blocks between columns and floor joists and large areas of joists appear to have been reworked. While some changes undoubtedly date to floor infill in sections formerly devoted to drive belts and fly wheels, other changes may date to replacement flooring installed in the early 20th century in response to federal Workmen's Compensation legislation passed in June 1914. A company newsletter from the period stated that existing pine floors were being replaced with maple to prevent injuries.[4]

None of the alterations impair the essential form and integrity of the mill. The relationship among buildings in the complex and the relationship of the buildings to the Jones Falls Valley and mill village of Stone Hill; the overall size, scale, and massing of the Mill Building itself; the distinctive roughly coursed stone foundation and corbelled brick work; and remaining windows and detailing clearly convey the architectural character of Mount Vernon Mill No. 1 and the scale of its operations.

Boiler House (c. 1920)

The present brick Boiler House, an irregularly shaped one-story addition attached to the west side of the Mill Building, was constructed between 1914 and 1924.[5] The building is topped by a flat roof with a tile coping and is lit by a gabled monitor. A square, tapered brick stack rises from the west side of the building, extending above the roofline of the Mill Building. The 1st floor of the west side of the Boiler House facing Jones Falls and the base of the south side of the Boiler House are faced with concrete. The Boiler House has paired 6-over-6 windows. The openings have concrete sills and flat lintels comprised of headers. Loading bay doors are situated within the projecting bay on the south side of the building near the Mill Building. While the interior of the Boiler House has been completely altered with concrete block partitions and a steel structural system, the original stone basement walls of the Mill Building can still be seen within.

[4] "Our Medical Work -- A Review" in *Mt. Vernon- Woodberry News* (Feb. 1921), p. 3. The article does not specify which mills this change affected.

[5] A larger Boiler House extending further toward Jones Falls can be seen in the 1914 Sanborn Map. The present Boiler House is visible in a 1924 photograph.

Picker House (1873-1879)

The Picker House is a three-and-one-half story, ell-shaped, brick building comprised of a long, rectangular original building constructed in 1873 and a smaller, square addition constructed in 1879. (These dates can be seen in stone panels on the south facade facing Falls Road.) Falls Road is level with the 3rd floor of the south facade as the road rises in a sharp right-angle turn around the southeastern corner of the site; the ground floor of the building is visible only on the north and east facades. The foundation of the 1873 section is coursed stone; the foundation of the 1879 section is brick with a projecting watertable. The Picker House is topped by parallel gable roofs, clad in galvanized metal, one over each section of the ell. Originally connected to the Mill Building by a bridge (now gone) at the north end of the east facade of the 1873 section, the Picker House incorporates the corbelled cornices and pilasters distinguishing the brickwork of the Mill Building. Openings are framed by segmental arches of stretcher brick and granite sills. Most of the metal fire shutters are closed; some 9-over-9 sash is visible on the east facade. The Picker House also incorporates distinctive small round-arched openings that once held gas lights. These openings, which once had steel shutters, are now infilled with brick. Entrances are presently located on the east and south facades of the building. The entrance on the east facade is at the 2nd floor level. A large opening on the east facade above the entrance, probably associated with an exterior elevator (now gone) shown in the 1953 Sanborn Map, has been infilled with brick. A massive dust flue that obscured most of the north facade of the 1873 section was removed some time after 1953. Nevertheless, the distinctive form of the Picker House and its relationship to the Mill Building can still be clearly read despite changes to the grade of Jones Falls Road and these minor alterations.

Store House No. 1 (c. 1881)

The Store House is a c. 1881 three-story, rectangular, brick building with a shallow gable roof situated across Falls Road south of the Mill Building. A large, shed-roofed element, presumably housing a hoist overrun, projects from the roof over the north end of the building. Sanborn Maps show that the building, which originally housed only a basement and two floors, had an additional floor inserted between 1914 and 1953. The Store House is simpler and more utilitarian in architectural character than the Mill Building or the Picker House. Remnants of a stepped brick watertable are visible at the east end of the north facade. A corbelled brick cornice runs below the corrugated tin roof; widely spaced wood brackets support gutters. The building was constructed with minimal openings; later openings have been punched into the walls, especially on the south facade, which is not visible from the street. Original openings have stone sills and are topped by brick segmental arches. Like the Picker House, the Store House features small arched openings that would have been used to house gas lamps. Entrances are situated on the north and south facades of the building. There is a loading bay with a canopy above the entrance on the north, which appears to be the only original entrance to the building. This loading bay corresponds with the location of a freight elevator on the interior of the building. The interior of the building consists of open plan space with wood posts supporting massive timber beams.

1918 Warehouse

The 1918 Warehouse, a four-story rectangular reinforced concrete structure that appears to have housed storage for finished goods, is situated along the former Penn Central railroad tracks on the west side of Jones Falls. The Jones

Falls Expressway (Interstate 83), the Mill Building, and foliage along Jones Falls limit visibility of the warehouse, which was oriented to the Mill Building and railroad tracks rather than to any roadway. The 1918 Warehouse is accessed from a pedestrian bridge that connects the top level of the warehouse to the first floor of the Mill Building and from a loading dock facing the Penn Central tracks along the west side of the building. Constructed partially on brick piers over Jones Falls, the building is topped by a flat roof and has 6-light steel hopper windows. Many windows along the east and south facades have been blocked. Unlike the three older buildings, this non-descript, utilitarian building has no ornamentation and little architectural character. The interior of the building incorporates four levels with low floor-to-floor height. The exposed structural system consists of squat round and octagonal columns supporting reinforced concrete floors. A hoist and fire stair are situated on the east side of the building adjacent to the bridge to the Mill Building.

SUMMARY SIGNIFICANCE

Constructed from 1873 to 1918, Mount Vernon Mill No. 1 is the southernmost surviving textile mill along Jones Falls. Part of a group of textile mills built by Horatio Gambrill, David Carroll, and William Hooper, along with Mount Vernon Mill No. 3, it served as headquarters for Mount Vernon-Woodberry Mills, one of the world's largest producers of cotton duck. The mill complex meets National Register Criterion A because of the significant role that it played in the development of Baltimore's textile industry. Mount Vernon Mill No. 1 also meets National Register Criterion C because it exemplifies locally important changes in mill construction during the 1870s and 1880s, namely a marked expansion in size and scale and a consequent shift from stone to brick buildings. The period of significance for the complex extends from 1873, the date the present Mount Vernon Mill No. 1 was constructed, to 1923, the year of a bitter strike that marked the end of an era for Baltimore's textile industry.

HISTORY

Mount Vernon Mill No. 1 originated in the transition from grist mills to cotton mills along Jones Falls in the early 19th century. In 1808 a consortium of investors constructed the Union Mill along the Patapsco in Oella. Other mills soon followed on the Gunpowder River, Gwynn's Falls, and Jones Falls. The first building to occupy the site of Mount Vernon Mill No. 1 was the Laurel Flouring Mill, erected by Hugh Jenkins in 1845.[1] Flour milling, however, was soon superseded by textile production. Thwarted by Thomas Jefferson's embargo on American exports, Baltimore's merchants and shippers turned their attention to domestic markets, investing their capital in the emerging textile industry.[2] Baltimore's thriving ship building and ship repair industry offered a ready market for cotton duck, used for sails. By 1810, the United States boasted 87 cotton mills, eleven of which were situated in or near Baltimore. The area proved attractive, because its numerous streams emptying into the Chesapeake Bay offered cheap power and easy transportation.

In 1815 the Washington Manufacturing Company purchased the ca. 1810 Mount Washington Flour Mill, converting it into the first cotton mill in the area. Like other early mills, this water-powered mill was designed to convert raw cotton into yarn.[3] In 1832, David Carroll and Horatio Gambrill, two entrepreneurs who spearheaded the development of textile production in the Jones Falls Valley, jointly purchased the Mount Washington Mill. In 1839, they acquired the nearby Whitehall Flouring Mill and retooled it to manufacture textiles. Because yarn production could not keep pace with the weaving output, in 1842 they

---

[1]Bill Harvey, *The People Is Grass*, p. 6-7.

[2]Robert Brugger, *Maryland, A Middle Temperament*, p. 177.

[3]Maryland Historical Trust Inventory Form for State Historic Site Surveys, completed for Mt. Vernon Mill No. 1, prepared by Dennis Zembala and Anne Steele, 1980, Vertical Files, Baltimore Museum of Industry (BMI), sec. 8, p. 1.

purchased the Woodberry Flouring Mill and converted it into a yarn spinning mill. When water power failed in 1845, the two men switched to steam, doubling the capacity of Woodberry Mill. Then in 1847, they bought the Laurel Flouring Mill, which was turned into a cotton mill and renamed Mount Vernon Mill No. 1.[4] A writer for the *Baltimore Sun* described the newly transformed building and its operations in glowing terms:

> Mount Vernon is...one mile this side of Woodbury; it is also propelled by water power, aided by a steam engine, from the same patterns as the one at Woodbury. The building is large and commodious, being 5 stories in height; different kinds of fabrics are here manufactured — such as muslins and a lighter kind of duck, but the proprietors are adding heavy duck loom . . .the lower story being still vacant."[5]

On June 20, 1873 the first Mount Vernon Mill burned to the ground. Carroll and Gambrill immediately rebuilt the present larger, brick mill over the foundations of the older mill and constructed the Picker House southwest of the Mill Building. The new Mount Vernon Mill No. 1, built as a textile mill, epitomized the change in scale and materials found along Jones Falls in the latter part of the 19th century. Although constructed along the remnant of an earlier raceway, Mount Vernon Mill No. 1 was steam powered.

In December 1874 Edward Leonard, Civil Engineer and Insurance Surveyor, filed a lengthy report describing the first stage of development of the present Mount Vernon Mill No. 1. Leonard wrote that Mount Vernon Mill No. 1, which produced "cotton, duck, twine &c." was "remarkable for cleanness and strict observance of its rules."[6] Managed by one of the proprietors, the mill was in operation 66 hours/week.

Leonard recorded that the southern section of the present Mill Building, which was constructed over a stone foundation, was three stories high with exterior measurements of 200 ft. x 126 ft. Walls were three to four ft. thick. The basement level was subdivided into four sections; upper floors were open plan space. The cloth office, engine room, and storage for stock and "old iron" occupied the basement. The steam engine's fly wheel penetrated the 1st floor. Two of the four basement sections were unfinished. The 1st floor housed carders, drawers, slubbers, and speeders; the 2nd floor, weaving, beaming, and warping. The manager's office, no longer extant, was also located on the 2nd floor. Drive belts and pullies encased in iron extended from the 1st to the 2nd floor. Spinning, spooling, and twisting took place on the 3rd floor, which was lit by

---

[4]James G. Bullock, "A Brief History of the Textile Manufacturing Mills along Jones Falls," (Baltimore, 1971), p. 5-6 and Phillip Kahn, Jr. *A Stitch in Time*, p. 16.

[5]Harvey, *The People Is Grass,* p. 11.

[6]Edward Leonard, "Plans, Sections, and Report of Mt. Vernon Cotton Mill, No. 1," n.p. Attention to cleanliness continued into the 20th century. A worker familiar with the mill in the years following World War II recalled, "I was fascinated how clean it was for a textile plant. They kept the place immaculate." (Hollyday, *Stone Hill*, p. 47.)

a 178 ft. long "ventilator" [roof monitor], now gone. Support functions such as the machine shop, carpenter shop, and blacksmith shop that could pose fire hazards were located at Mill No. 8 some 200 ft. away.[7]

The Mill Building boasted three "elevators." One went from the basement to the 2nd floor, one from the 1st to the 3rd floor, and one from the 2nd to the 3rd floor. None penetrated all four floors, enhancing fire separation between floors. The Mill Building's only stair was isolated in the south tower. Leonard reported that the stair led to a "French roof, which forms a neat observatory and is plastered and plaster ceiled." Other fire precautions included standpipes, at least nine sets of hoses with a combined length of 1100 ft. of hose, fire buckets, and watchmen.

Leonard also described the 1873 Picker House, which was connected to Mount Vernon Mill by a bridge. Cotton bales were stored in the basement. As an additional fire prevention measure, the Picker House was lit by glass-enclosed gas lights set in small openings in the exterior walls and lit from platforms on the outside of the building. Hoses could be threaded through these small openings in the event of fire. Picker Houses typically functioned to prepare raw cotton for the spinning process.[8] Bales of cotton, transferred to the Picker House from the Store House, were broken apart and machines removed impurities from the raw material. The picked cotton then was put through cards to untangle and align the fibers to prepare them for spinning.

In 1879 the Picker House was enlarged by the construction of a square, gabled section attached to the south end of the east facade of the building.[9] (The 1914 Sanborn Map depicts the later section used for "waste pickers" and "waste storage;" the earlier section housed a "dust room" in its basement.) In 1881, a three-story addition, measuring 170 ft. x 55 ft., was constructed on the northern end of the Mount Vernon Mill along with a separate "packing house" measuring 80 ft. x 40 ft.[10] The "packing house" is most likely Store House No. 1 since these dimensions describe the footprint and approximate size of the Store House.[11] (The 1914 Sanborn Map notes that burlap and machinery were housed in the basement, cotton on the 1st floor, and finished goods on the 2nd floor.) According to Baltimore chronicler Thomas Scharf, the Mount Vernon Manufacturing Company mills then provided "cotton duck and felting, the latter being used in making paper." The new addition increased the company's total employment to 1,600.[12]

---

[7]Edward Leonard, "Plans, Sections, and Report of Mt. Vernon Cotton Mill, No. 1," n.p.

[8]The initial part of the Picker House description in the facsimile copy of Leonard's report is virtually illegible.

[9]Date stone on south facade.

[10]"Mount Vernon Mills," in "Mills and Mill Work—Baltimore—Mt. Vernon," Vertical Files, BMI.

[11]The size of structural members within the Store House suggest that it was designed specifically to house the heavy floor loads dense cotton bales created.

[12]Quoted in Maryland Historical Trust Inventory Form for State Historic Site Surveys, completed for Mt. Vernon Mill No. 1, sec. 8, p. 2.

The Mount Vernon Mill complex exemplifies the second phase of mill construction along the Jones Falls Valley. Earlier mills such as Mount Washington Mill (1810), the earliest section of Woodberry Mill (1843), and Park Mill (1855) were typically constructed of stone and were smaller in size and scale than the first phase of Mount Vernon Mill No. 1. Many of the earlier operations adapted structures designed to house flour mills rather than construct new buildings specifically designed to house spinning and textile production. The first generation of mills depended on Jones Falls for their source of power, although Park Mill's boiler house demonstrated that Jones Falls supplied inadequate power for even pre-Civil War demand. Druid Mill, constructed by Horatio Gambrill as a textile mill in 1866, was a transitional structure. The largest stone mill in Maryland, it was the last stone mill to be constructed along Jones Falls and relied entirely on steam as a source of power.[13]

Later mills like the Clipper Mill (1865), Mount Vernon Mill No. 1 (1873), and Meadow Mill (1877) displayed a different typology dictated by the specific needs of textile production. Increasing demand for textiles, improved technology and power sources, and the increasing capital available to meet growing market demand resulted in a corresponding increase in the size of mills. Purpose-built textile mills required fire-proof construction and structures that could withstand the vibrations caused by the looms. While experts considered stone an appropriate material for foundations, brick was clearly the first choice for mill construction. Brick walls facilitated larger buildings that could be easily expanded in modular fashion to increase production. Building in brick afforded better quality control during construction, especially in the detailing of structural joints -- a critical element in a structural system designed to withstand vibration. Fire separation was also important. Stair towers were to be held separate from buildings to retard the spread of fire between floors. Separate buildings devoted to specialized functions isolated high risk activities and allowed structural systems to be tailored to specific load demands. For example, the density of cotton bales produced a load three times greater than the load created by textile machinery.[14]

Mount Vernon Mill No. 1 is typical of steam-powered mills built after the Civil War. Its brick construction and modular articulation permitted the building to be easily expanded, as indeed it was in 1881 and again in the early 20th century. Its distinctive stair tower, small-paned windows, structural bays articulated by pilasters, and structural system comprised of heavy timber beams supported by cast iron columns were important features of textile mill typology. Secondary buildings also incorporated important architectural characteristics displayed by textile mills of the period. The Store House featured heavy timber construction that could support loads posed by cotton bales; the Picker House isolated activities like unbaling and cleaning cotton, processes that generated dust and carried a high risk of fire.

---

[13]Dennis M. Zembala, ed., *Baltimore: Industrial Gateway on the Chesapeake Bay*, pp. 102-105.

[14]Charles T. Main's *Notes on Mill Construction* (1886), written by the assistant superintendent of the Lower Pacific Mills for mechanical engineering students, provides an excellent discussion of the technical requirements of textile mills of the period.

By the date of the 1914 Sanborn Map, Mount Vernon Mill had essentially achieved its present form. Although the reinforced concrete warehouse across Jones Falls was not constructed until 1918, all of the other functional areas of the mill were in place. The 1914 map details how the enlarged Mill Building was used. As in 1874, the engine room was in the basement, carding on the 1st floor, weaving on the 2nd, and spinning on the 3rd. The expansion of the Mill Building, however, permitted multiple activities to take place on each floor. By 1914 weaving took place on all floors, including the basement; warp rooms were located in both the basement and the 3rd floor. Fly frames were situated on the 1st floor, along with the carding process. The only functional change to the 2nd floor appears to have been the relocation of the Cloth Room from the basement; the 3rd floor continued to house "ring spinning, spooling, and twisting."

Later interviews further illuminate operations at Mount Vernon Mill No. 1.

> Raw cotton came to Mt. Vernon Mill No. 1, to the "opening room." There the cotton was put in the picker, which rolled it up. Then it went to a carder --a two-ton, big wheel with a wire on it, turning real fast. It came out in a roll about two inches in diameter -- in a can. Then it went to the twisters, which twisted it down small; then to the spinners, which made smaller yarn. Then they ply it together: two-ply, seven-ply, just like the thread you buy. From there it went to the slasher room -- to be on the warp.... Later, everything changed from hand looms to automatic. We made mail bags, lamp wicks, and so on.[15]

Mount Vernon Mills operated under a paternalistic system characteristic of American textile mills. The owners adopted the "Rhode Island System," which recruited and employed entire families, in contrast to recruiting single workers housed in boarding houses. During the 1840s and 1850s, David Carroll and Horatio Gambrill built several dozen stone duplex residential units for their workers on a hill overlooking Mount Vernon Mill No. 1.[16] Known as Stone Hill because of the stone houses, the village of workers housing soon formed the nucleus of the Hampden neighborhood. At the time the first stone houses were constructed, the Jones Falls valley consisted of a few small hamlets clustered around individual mills. As late as 1860, the combined workforce of all the area's textile mills totaled only 536.[17] Employment in the industry leaped from 616 in 1870 to 2,931 in 1880.[18] Gradually the area took the form of an industrial mill town.[19]

---

[15]Guy Hollyday, ed. *Stone Hill: The People and Their Stories*, p. 43

[16]Maryland Historical Trust Inventory Form for State Historic Site Surveys, completed for Mt. Vernon Mill No. 1, p. 15.

[17]Harvey, *The People Is Grass*, p. 7.

[18]Ibid., p. 17.

[19]Beirne, "Hampden-Woodberry," p. 10.

David Carroll and his son, Albert Carroll, epitomized the paternalist management style that permitted mill owners to exercise enormous control over the lives of their employees. The Carrolls closely monitored operations at Mount Vernon Mill No. 1 from their spacious homes on a ridge above the mills (today the Florence Crittenton Home and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals). In addition to workers housing, they constructed the Mount Vernon M.E. Church, the Hampden Hall Community Center, the Hampden Library, and a boarding house for single women.[20]

By the 1890s, the mills along Jones Falls were operating at their peak. The symbiotic nature of Baltimore's industrial development continued to fuel the growth of the Jones Falls textile mills. As the downtown needle trades, "the largest generators and users of capital in the city," expanded their production, the number of looms in the region increased as well.[21] With almost 4,000 workers, Baltimore's textile mills constituted a substantial employer.[22] One reason for Baltimore's dominance was the relatively low cost of non-union labor due to Baltimore's relative proximity to poor, rural areas. (Most of the mills' workers came from rural Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina.)[23] Although the mills also produced other cotton products, such as rope, netting, mops and "shoddy" (leftovers for pillows and mattresses), duck was still the most important product.[24]

Efforts to consolidate textile operations along Jones Falls finally came to fruition in the late 1890s. In 1898 seven companies joined together to form the Mount Vernon-Woodberry Cotton Duck Company, creating a virtual monopoly for cotton duck.[25] Nine of the fourteen mills operated by the new company, including Mount Vernon Mill No. 1, were located along Jones Falls. In 1915, another major reorganization occurred, and the company adopted the new name of Mount Vernon-Woodberry Mills.

World War I, as other wars, generated extensive government work for textile mills. Uniforms, knapsacks, tents, and parachutes all required cotton fabric.[26] The last building constructed at Mount Vernon Mill No. 1, a reinforced concrete warehouse adjacent to the Penn Central railroad tracks and across Jones Falls from the Mill Building, was completed in 1918.[27] World War I also transformed the attitudes of the Hampden-Woodberry labor force. The war time boom yielded more jobs, increased hours, and significantly higher

---

[20]Phillip Kahn, Jr., *A Stitch in Time*, p. 68n.
[21]Phillip Kahn, Jr. *A Stitch in Time,* p. 67.
[22]Harvey, "Hampden-Woodberry," p. 43.
[23]Karen Lewand, "North Baltimore: From Real Estate to Development," in D. Randall Beirne, ed., *Baltimore Neighborhoods: A Community Fact Book*, (Baltimore: Baltimore City Department of Planning and the University of Baltimore, 1989), p. 67.
[24]Harvey, *The People Is Grass,* p. 45.
[25]Bill Harvey, "Hampden-Woodbery: Baltimore's Mill Villages," in Elizabeth Fee, Linda Shopes and Linda Zeidman, eds., *The Baltimore Book: New Views of Local History*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), p. 43.
[26]Harvey, *The People Is Grass*, p. 45.
[27]The 1953 Sanborn Map has the date of the building's construction.

wages. After World War I demand slackened but the expectations of an expanded work force remained. In April 1923 Mount Vernon-Woodberry Mills announced a 54 hour work week and a 7.5% increase in pay; workers demanded a 48 hour week and a 25% increase in pay. When the company refused, a bitter strike lasting many months ensued. The 1923 strike marked a watershed in the history of the Mount Vernon-Woodberry Mills. It resulted in the end of the paternalistic system that governed mill operations and the end of an era of general prosperity and expansion of the textile industry in Baltimore. While owners had offered concessions in the earlier years, they now became intransigent. Management broke the strike by refusing to recognize the United Textile Workers, refusing to meet with a committee of workers, businessmen, and clergy formed by Mayor Howard Jackson, and evicting strike leaders from company housing. By 1925 they began selling off company housing. Three mill buildings were sold and operations were moved to Alabama and South Carolina, areas so poor that unions could never obtain a foothold.[28]

Textile manufacturing dropped off precipitously during the Depression. After 1939, when the U.S. began arming itself and its allies, orders for war materials revived production. By 1940, the Mount Vernon-Woodberry Mills were inundated with requests for almost one and half million packs and parachutes, as well as a million tents. In 1942, the mills began operating three shifts a day, seven days a week.[29] Because wartime industries like shipbuilding paid higher wages, the mills had difficulty attracting workers. As a result, the company began to employ more women and older workers. For the first time, they also began to recruit local African Americans.[30] The wartime revival proved short-lived. Particularly after the Korean War, Baltimore's textile industry entered another period of sharp decline exacerbated by the introduction of synthetic fibers and the lure of the non-union workforce in southern states. Mount Vernon Mill No. 1 was among the first mills to be converted for synthetic production.[31]

> When Dacron first came out, we were one of the first to use it for sailboats -- it repels water and is light. In the 1950s we made upholstering for Cadillacs. For at least ten years we had a steady order for ten thousand yards for tablecloths for California. We had one million yards in storage.[32]

---

[28]Bill Harvey, "Hampden-Woodberry" in *The Baltimore Book*, pp. 46-49. The strike was so traumatic that residents literally erased it from memory. Interviews with over 250 people yielded only fragmentary first hand recollection; no one was willing to talk extensively on tape.

[29]Article from the *Baltimore Sun*, (March 17, 1942), Vertical Files, BMI.

[30]Randall Beirne, "Hampden-Woodberry: The Mill Village in an Urban Setting," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 77(Spring 1982): 22-23.

[31]J.T. Ward, "Meadow and Mt. Vernon Mills Join Trend in Processing of Synthetics," *Baltimore Sun*, June 24, 1948, Vertical Files, BMI.

[32]Guy Hollyday, *Stone Hill*, p. 43. Workers recalled that "we were one of the first mills that tried to weave polyester and polypropylene." (p. 43)

By 1971, most of the mills along Jones Falls had closed: only the yarn unit in Mount Vernon Mill No. 1, which produced synthetic novelty yarns, and the cloth unit in Mount Vernon Mill No. 3 continued to operate. Together, they employed a total of 299 workers.[33] In 1972, the company announced that it would close the plants and liquidate all of its real estate holdings in the Jones Falls valley. Although the buildings remained in "excellent shape," officials claimed that new manufacturing methods had rendered multi-story textile buildings obsolete, and the lure of cheaper labor drew them south.[34]

The period of significance, 1873-1945, encompasses the period between the initial construction of the mill and the end of World War II.

[33]Bullock, "A Brief History of Textile Mills along Jones Falls," pp. 11-12.
[34]Textile Firm to Sell Plants," *Baltimore Sun*, (May 21, 1972), Vertical Files, BMI.

9. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Baltimore Sun (March 17, 1942). Vertical Files, Baltimore Museum of Industry [BMI].

Beirne, Randall D. "Hampden-Woodberry: The Mill Village in an Urban Setting," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 77 (March 1982): 6-26.

Brugger, Robert J. *Maryland, A Middle Temperament.* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988.

Bullock, James G., Jr. "A Brief History of Textile Manufacturing Mills along Jones Falls," 2nd ed. Baltimore: Mt. Vernon Mills, November 1971.

Harvey, Bill. "Hampden-Woodberry: Baltimore's Mill Villages," in Elizabeth Fee, Linda Shopes and Linda Zeidman, eds., *The Baltimore Book: New Views of Local History*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991. Pp. 38-55.

_____. *"The People Is Grass:" A History of Hampden-Woodberry, 1802-1945*. Baltimore: Bella Press, 1988.

Hollyday, Guy, ed. "Stone Hill: The People and Their Stories." Baltimore: Guy Hollyday, 1994.

Kahn, Philip, Jr. *A Stitch in Time: The Four Seasons of Baltimore's Needle Trades.* Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1989.

Leonard, Edward. "Plans, Sections and Report of Mt. Vernon Cotton Mill, No. 1. 1874. Vertical Files, BMI.

Lewand, Karen. *North Baltimore: From Estate to Development*, from the series *Baltimore Neighborhoods: A Community Fact Book*, ed. Randall Beirne. Baltimore: Baltimore City Department of Planning and the University of Baltimore, 1989.

Main, Charles T. *Notes on Mill Construction.* Boston: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1886.

Maryland Historical Trust Inventory Form for Mount Vernon Mill No. 1. Dennis Zembala and Anne Steele, preparers. 1980.

"Mills and Mill Work—Baltimore—Mt. Vernon." Vertical Files, BMI.

Olson, Sherry H. *Baltimore: The Building of an American City*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980.

Sanborn Map Company. Maps of Baltimore. 1953.

"Textile Firm to Sell Plants." *Baltimore Sun* (May 21, 1972). Vertical Files, BMI.

Vertical Files. Commission on Architectural and Historic Preservation Archives. Baltimore, Maryland.

Vertical Files. Enoch Pratt Free Library, Main Branch, Maryland Room. Baltimore, Maryland.

Vertical Files. Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Maryland.

Vertical Files. Baltimore Museum of Industry Research Center. Baltimore, Maryland.

Ward, J. T. "Meadow and Mt. Vernon Mills Join Trend in Processing of Synthetics." *Baltimore Sun* (June 24, 1948). Vertical Files, BMI.

Zembala, Dennis M. *Baltimore: Industrial Gateway on the Chesapeake Bay*. Baltimore: Baltimore Museum of Industry, 1995.

10. GEOGRAHICAL DATA

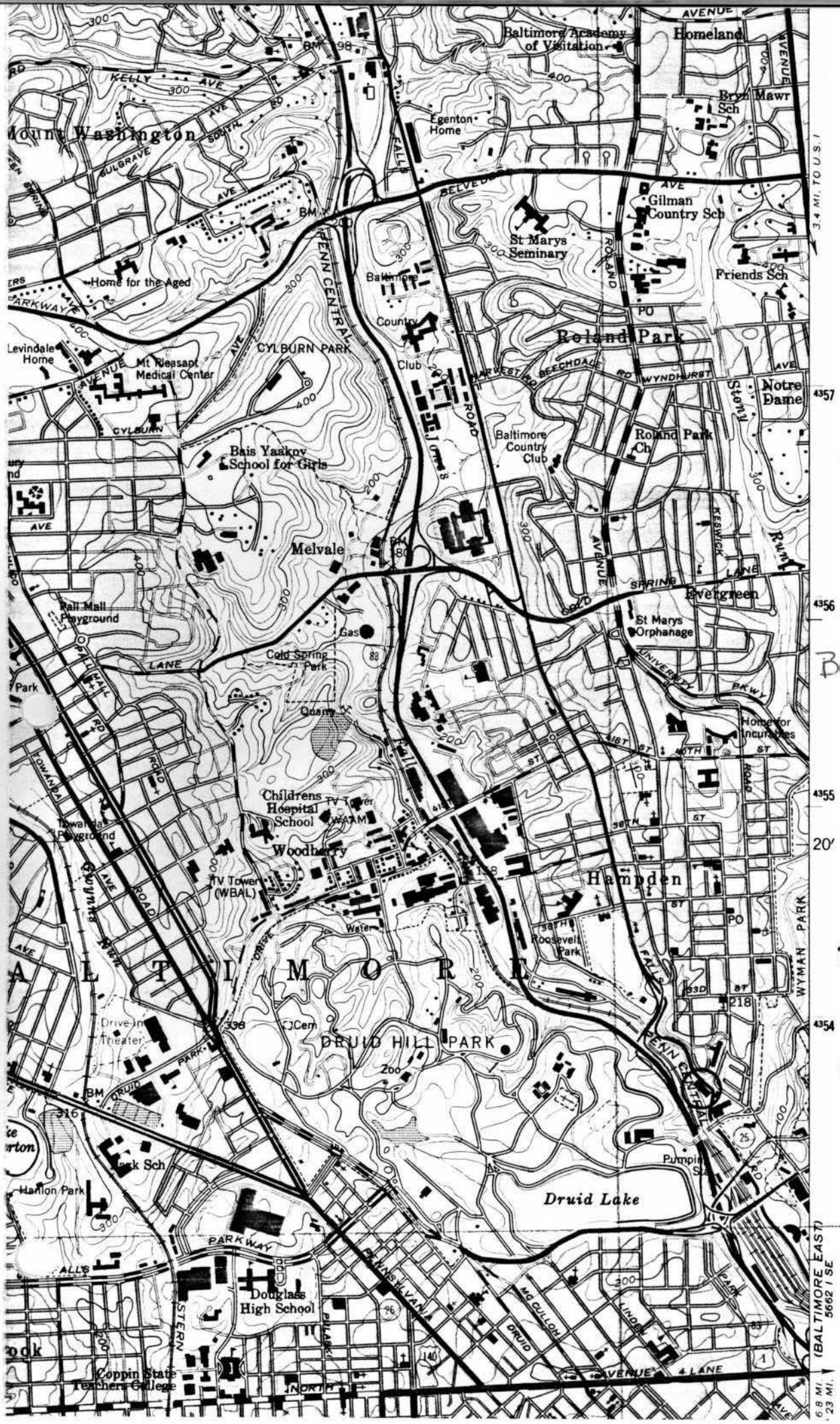
Verbal Boundary Description

The Mount Vernon Mill No. 1 occupies an irregular oblong-shaped group of four lots between Falls Road on the northeast and the M.T.A. Light Rail right-of-way on the southwest, with adjacent property lines forming the northwestern and southeastern boundaries. The four lots are Ward 13, Section 12, Block 3500, Lots number 1 (Mill); 1A (Picker House); 7 (Store House); and 3 (1918 Building). Jones Falls bisects the property and Lot 7 lies east of Falls Road.

Falls Road forms the northeastern boundary of the property. The northwestern boundary is formed by a property line set 29 ft from Falls Road, where the boundary crosses Jones Falls and is continued by the Falls itself for approximately 300 ft. The southwestern boundary of the property is formed by the M.T.A. Light Rail right-of-way. The irregular southeastern boundary is formed by a property line set 118 ft. east of the M.T.A. Right-of-way, at which point the boundary crosses Jones Falls again; the boundary continues along Jones Falls 291 ft. to the south, where the boundary is set back 104 ft. from Falls Road; the boundary continues along Falls Road approximately 300 ft. where it crosses the road to encompass the Store House. The Store House property is bordered on the south by a property line set back 65 ft. from Falls Road; on the southeast by a property line set back 163 ft. from Pacific Street; on the northeast by Pacific Street; and on the northwest by a property line set back from Falls Road 55 ft.

Boundary Justification

The boundary corresponds with the legal description of the property and encompasses the full extent of the site of Mount Vernon Mill No. 1.



Balto. West Quad

B-62

MOUNT VERNON MILL NO. 1

BALTIMORE CITY, MARYLAND

18-359400

4353700