

TEXTILE TRAIL

Summer 2021 Volume 54



Weaving the Textile Story

Official Newsletter of the
Textile Heritage Museum

Established in 2004

Glencoe/Burlington
Alamance County
North Carolina

Edited by John W. Guss

Lights. Camera. Action in Glencoe!



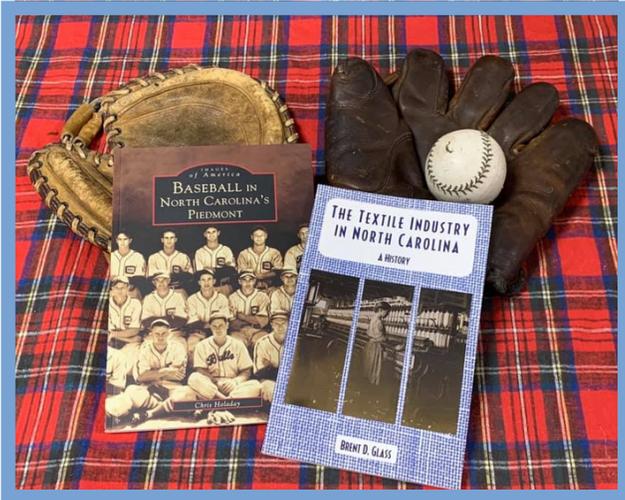
- Lights. Camera. Action!
- New Gifts Shop Merchandise
- Introducing Your Burlington Sockpuppets
- The Textile Industry in Alamance County
- Preservation in Glencoe
- Welcome New Neighbors
- Upcoming Events



In March, we were pleasantly surprised to have UNC TV Weekend contact John Guss, Historic Properties Superintendent, to discuss filming a small piece as a backdrop for "Day Trips from Greensboro". Initially the museum and Glencoe were to be the backdrop for another story, but we took center stage with the producer being more than impressed with the museum and the wonderful scenic outdoor atmosphere Glencoe provides. Thanks to Grace Vandevisser at the Alamance Visitor Bureau for directing the television producers to Glencoe and the Textile Heritage Museum.



Updates from the Museum Gift Shop



This has been quite an exciting season with a revamped Appalachian League and new Minor League baseball team with the Burlington Sockpuppets! Given Minor League baseball truly evolved from the textile mill villages, we've added some new related merchandise.



We also have two new hiking medallions to add to your favorite hiking stick!



Our signature designed coffee mugs handcrafted by Sunset Hill Stoneware have been a huge success. We sold out of our first two shipments, and now have a third on the shelves and ready for visitors to pick one up. A Great Christmas Gift!

ALL GIFT SHOP SALES GO TOWARD THE PRESERVATION AND OPERATION OF THE MUSEUM.

A New Era of Baseball in Btown



Socksquatch visits the museum.

Perhaps you recall the days long past when baseball was one of the main forms of entertainment in the textile mill villages across the small Southern communities. Here in Alamance County, the ballparks were the focal point on Friday and Saturday nights during the Spring and Summer months. Many major league players came out of these mill teams to include "Shoeless Joe" Jackson of Spartanburg, SC, Enos "Country" Slaughter of Roxboro, NC and many more. Over time the teams were transformed into minor league or semi-pro baseball teams sponsored and funded by the Major Leagues. Burlington began with the Burlington Bees (1947-1972), then came the Burlington Indians (1986-2006) and finally the Burlington Royals (2007-2020).

However in 2020, the Major Leagues decided to downsize which did not include supporting the longstanding Appalachian League established in 1911.

New owners evolved to take over the uncertain teams of the league, and they had to rebrand their investments. The new owner and general manager of the Burlington team to be named later, visited the Textile Heritage Museum in June 2020 in search of that new identity that would capture the heritage and pride of Alamance County. The Glencoe Plaids stood out with their vibrant colors and designs. Later some 1,200 mascot names would be submitted for consideration. As the anticipation grew the new team name was announced. The Burlington Sockpuppets! WHAT?!! Initially, the fan base were not happy going from names such as Indians and Royals to Sockpuppets.

However, as the season opened and the fans began to arrive at the stadium they embraced the new name and were welcomed by its unique mascot, Socksquatch, a furry loveable green monster like character with sock attached all over its body. In addition, the team and fans welcomed a famous figure in Major League Baseball, Jack "Blackjack" McDowell, 1993 Cy Young recipient of the New York Yankees.

Best of luck and GO SOCKPUPPETS!!



The Textile Industry That Changed Alamance County

By Samuel C. Powell, Ph.D.

Would you argue that working in the textile industry over the last 150 years has been a wonderful opportunity for the workers and community or would you argue that the textile industry took advantage of the workers and meant nothing more than menial work at low pay, long hours, and poor conditions? I would like to challenge the second set of assumptions in favor of the first.

Up until the 1850's, local citizens were largely dependent on farming, animal husbandry and home manufacturing to make a living. Economic livelihood was uncertain as a result of varying market conditions, drought, crop failure and other outside influences that challenged expected income. Working conditions were strenuous and required long hours to plant and again to harvest crops. Markets for sale of goods were uncertain and getting to the market was itself a challenge. Self-employment in the agrarian lifestyle offered its advantages, to be sure, but many farmers found it difficult to consistently feed their families through the winter months year after year. The textile industry coming to this area changed the economic outlook offering steady jobs and steady pay.

Textile mills provided dependable income for the first time in the lives of many mill workers. It was their first paying job. Steady pay meant the worker could predict their income and expenses and budget to buy things they wanted. As an aside, I remember my first job and how happy and proud I was to get a paycheck. I did not work in textiles and as a teenager did not get paid very much, but for me it put gas in the car and meant that I could go to a movie or save for other needs. I have to believe that a job in the mills was a tremendous source of pride and that they valued the opportunity very much. Those who were able to get a job in the mills were reluctant to leave and generally enjoyed the challenge of creating and dyeing thread and weaving it into fabrics. The mills were largely successful and pay increases were provided as the mills grew and as the workers gained experience. There were work outages when the water levels got low in the dry summer, but most workers had purchasing power which was less common for those who did not have jobs.

The mills found that they could stabilize their work force by offering housing for the workers and mill villages became common around the mills. Mill village life created a sense of community if not family. The workers formed close relationships with each other. They helped each other out when there were chores that required assistance or expertise from others. They gathered for social outings. They formed athletic teams with baseball being a chief interest. They sent their children to school and attended church together. At Glencoe, the Holts came to require the children to complete a few years of schooling before they could work in the mills. Rent for housing was very affordable at Glencoe and houses were supplied electricity from the mill hydroelectric plant at no cost. The mill provided for the needs of the workers and the mill store was a place workers could purchase items needed for daily life. At Christmas, the mill owner at Glencoe provided a Christmas gift for every child consisting of a bag of fruit, nuts and candy. The sense of family among the workers was very important in creating an atmosphere of love and sharing among the families and a sense of belonging. The broader community in which the mills were located also profited from the mills. The mill owners were community minded and used profits from the mills to support a variety of community needs. They paid taxes which supported services from the local municipality and county. The mill owners built and supported churches, swimming pools, the YMCA, scout troops, athletic teams, parks, and even brought telephone service to the area when telephone became available.



The Textile Industry That Changed Alamance County continued...

Mill owners in Alamance, like mill owners in other communities, took care of their workers. An example of mill owners attention to their workers was reported in the obituary of Anne Springs Close who died in August 2021, at age 95. Anne was the daughter of Elliott Springs of Fort Mill, S.C. who died in 1931. Mr. Springs owned 7 cotton mills in 4 towns. In the obituary for Anne Springs, there was a paragraph about what Mr. Springs did for his workers. The obituary reported that Mr. Springs provided a cafeteria in his mills so the employees could have a hot meal. It also states that he had a medical department and recreational programs in each of the towns where he had mills. He built a golf course for his employees. Other mill owners told him that the workers would never play golf. He built it anyway and the workers did play golf. His son, Colonel H.B. Springs continued his largesse with the purchase in 1948 of 30 acres of oceanfront property in south Myrtle Beach for an ocean front resort to be enjoyed by his mill employees. Having almost a mile of oceanfront, the workers could go and stay for one dollar per person per night. The resort contained one of the longest fishing piers in Myrtle Beach at 1,060 feet and had a large cafeteria, swimming pools, shuffleboard courts and game rooms.



Continuing today, Allen E. Gant, Jr. who ran Glen Raven Mills has recently funded a Burlington beautification program with signage and plantings along the main entrances and major thoroughfares of Burlington. He created the New Leaf Society which has taken on the Willowbrook Stream Restoration project and Arboretum. In addition to his hometown of Burlington, Mr. Gant and the New Leaf Society have worked to enhance the beauty of major thoroughfares in the towns of Elon and Haw River and in the Cities of Burlington, Graham and Mebane. This is an example of how the Gant family and other textile families have benefited the community in which they live. Textile families with the name of Holt, Gant, Lindley, Copland, Jordan, Love, May, Smith, Brown, Harris, Wooten and many others have provided much more than just jobs for the Alamance Community. They have been involved in every aspect of their communities and provided a very positive impact on the quality of life that we enjoy today. This rich history of the textile industry in Alamance County and beyond is what the Textile Heritage Museum, Inc. hopes to preserve.

The textile industry began the industrialization of Alamance County and created an employee work ethic that has attracted a wide variety of new industry in the past few years. The area has blossomed with industry of all types and Alamance County along with the entire state of North Carolina has been recognized nationally as a great place for business. We have the textile industry to thank for setting the stage for the business and industrial climate that has developed. And most importantly, manufacturing jobs of the type provided by the textile industry are the backbone of the local economy from which everything else is possible.

I think you will agree that despite work conditions that were difficult with long hours and marginal pay for many of the workers, that our lives have been improved with the coming of the textile mill industry. Sure, there have been labor strikes and many reasons to complain, but the same can be said about other industries as well. Textiles gave us our start and the memories of those efforts should be remembered for the benefit of future generations. To me, these are happy memories, not sad. From all that I have heard and read about Glencoe Mill, the workers enjoyed living and working at Glencoe. I think the same can be said about the other textile mills in Alamance County. It is a wonderful story.

Preservation & Restoration

In the Spring of 2021 we applied for a restoration grant sponsored by the Covington Foundation. We received \$7,500 of the needed \$15,000 to restore the front and back porches and stairs. The work will be completed by Lynco Restoration & Design, LLC, well known for its restoration work throughout Glencoe and Alamance County.

We will continue to seek additional funding and donations so we can fully restore this grand historic Glencoe home. If you would like to make a donation to the restoration of this 140 year old house please send checks to the Textile Heritage Museum and designate "Superintendent House Restoration". Thank you for helping us preserve a significant piece of historic architecture of the early American Textile Industry era.



The craftsmanship of Tom Cowan is exceptional in the restoration process.



New Neighbors in Glencoe

We are very excited to have Preservation Burlington join us in the Glencoe community. They have renovated the retired Quonset hut and transformed it into a wonderfully intriguing antique store with a wide variety of fixtures for those restoring historic structures or simply incorporating them into their own home or business. The money raised goes back to the preservation efforts on Preservation Burlington. Please call 336-539-1933 to find out which Saturdays the store is open.



Upcoming Events in the Village

Textiles & Tar Heels Heritage Festival

(SATURDAY, October 23, 2021, 10am-4pm)

Join us for this annual festival which celebrates the heritage of textiles in the Carolinas and across the country. We will have vintage automobiles on exhibit, artisans and living history, tours of the museum, food and drink, and other fulfilled activities.

Christmas Caroling in the Village

(THURSDAY, December 2, 2021, 6pm-8pm)

We are privileged to have the students and faculty from Alamance Community College visit Glencoe during the Christmas season to perform many popular Christmas carols. There will be holiday style refreshments and gift giveaways to the public. Event is free and donations are graciously accepted.

Founder's Day Celebration, 140th Anniversary

(SATURDAY, April 30, 2022)

We celebrate the 140th anniversary of the opening production of Glencoe Mills. In April 1882, the mill began manufacturing the cotton plaids, which made Alamance County world renown. We will have tours, artisans, living history, food and drink, music, and celebratory activities.

VOLUNTEER TO HELP PRESERVE YOUR HERITAGE

We have had many wonderful devoted volunteers over the years, some for a few months and some for numerous years. Even the founders of the Textile Heritage Museum, Jerrie and George Nall and Kathy Barry, were volunteers. However, the museum has since increased its operations dramatically now being open 40 hours a week, Tuesday-Saturday, which requires much more staffing for guided tours, educational programs, maintenance, and planning events.

We are most interested in having volunteers to provide guided tours to our visitors and assist with school programs, and special events. Please call or stop by the museum to find out more on how you can help preserve our textile heritage.



Our Mission

To collect, preserve, and interpret the history of the Southern textile industry and the cultural heritage of the Southern mill village.

Textile Heritage Museum, Inc. Staff, Board of Directors, and Support

Alamance Parks Staff

Historic Properties Superintendent John W. Guss

Board of Directors

Gary Harris	Dr. Samuel Powell, President
Wayne Drumheller	Jason Copland, Vice President
Rusty Holt	Harry Brown
Ann Honeycutt, Secretary	Lynn Cowan
Tom Lindley Jr., Treasurer	Chris Powell
Mark Payne	Charles Stedman, THM Attorney

Director of Alamance Parks	Brian Baker
Audio Visual Consultant	Chris Powell
Textile Consultant	Dr. Gary Mock
Textile Genealogy (Glencoe)	Ken Cates
Event Photography	Michael Jordan
Director Emerita	Jerrie Nall
Co-Founder Emerita	Kathy Barry

Hours of Operation

Tuesday-Saturday
9 am - 5 pm

Please contact the museum to arrange group tours.
(Reservations require at least 2 weeks in advance)

Contact Us



Website
textileheritagemuseum.org



Facebook
[Textile Heritage Museum](https://www.facebook.com/TextileHeritageMuseum)



Instagram
[@textileheritage1880](https://www.instagram.com/textileheritage1880)



Phone
(336) 270-6374



Email
textileheritagemuseum@gmail.com

Volunteers Welcome!

We need your support! Become a part of helping to preserve and interpret America's textile heritage.
We are a 501 (C-3) non-profit organization. Your contribution is tax deductible.

Please mail donations to: Textile Heritage Museum, Inc. 2406 Glencoe Street, Burlington, NC 27217

Name: _____ New Renew Date _____

Phone: _____ Secondary Phone: _____

Address: _____ Email: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

\$25 Individual Membership \$100 Textile Designer \$500 Textile Preservationist

\$50 Family Membership \$250 Textile Superintendent \$1,000 Textile Benefactor

I would like to make a donation of _____ in memory of _____

I would like to make a donation of _____ in honor of _____

I work for a company which will provide a matching gift and have enclosed the signed form

Company Name: _____