

## **The Charlottesville Woolen Mills: Working Life, Wartime, and the Walkout of 1918<sup>1</sup>**

**By Andrew H. Myers**

That winter of 1917-1918 was a dark and frightened time. . . . We learned then that war was not a quick heroic charge but a slow, incredibly complicated matter. Our spirits sank in those winter months. We lost the flare of excitement and we had not yet put on the doggedness of a long war . . . . We remember World War I as a quick victory. . . . How quickly we forget that in that winter Ludendorff could not be beaten and that many people were preparing in their minds and spirits for a lost war. (John Steinbeck, *East of Eden*)

Monticello must have cast a bleak shadow over the Charlottesville Woolen Mills on the morning of 5 February 1918. This small factory sat a mile or two east of town where Market Street and a Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad line descended to the confluence of Moore's Creek and the Rivanna River. There, a four-story brick building perched on the sandy bank next to the trestle, its Victorian bell tower rising only yards away from the track. Rather than a bell, though, a steam whistle announced the work day's beginning.<sup>2</sup> Its shrill sound carried crisply through the icy air, across the pasture on the creek's other side, and up the wooded slopes to Jefferson's famous home.

On this morning, the company experienced its first labor disturbance since opening in 1867. Eighteen workers walked out of the plant after the general manager refused to compensate them for wages lost during a shutdown. This number comprised a relatively small percentage of the 130 or so employees, but the loss of skilled, experienced, hands struck a serious blow to management. Moreover, given the closely-interwoven nature of the Woolen Mills community, the unrest had great potential to spread. News of the incident made the front page of the local

*Daily Progress*. So, too, did an advertisement for replacements.<sup>3</sup>

Although the walkout was short-lived, it marks a significant turning point in the company's century-long history, and it raises several intriguing questions. First, why did so many of the workers at the Charlottesville mill remain loyal to management? Manufacturers elsewhere in the South and throughout the United States experienced not just walkouts or strikes, but extremely high turnover rates in general during the First World War. The sellers' market for labor forced them to boost pay sharply to keep employees from leaving. Some workers moved anyhow to find less arduous, higher-paying jobs. Others took advantage of the favorable labor market to form unions or exact concessions from management. Labor Department studies cite figures of 126 percent annual average turnover for textiles and 201 percent for American industry overall during the year 1917-1918.<sup>4</sup> The situation alarmed America's industrial leaders and spawned numerous discussions in trade journals and among economists of the time.

Nothing of this sort happened in Charlottesville. Turnover at the Woolen Mills was 21 percent, and the highest ever recorded there for this era only reached 29 percent in 1921.<sup>5</sup> Daily wages at the plant meanwhile had only risen 23 percent between 1913 and the end of 1917.<sup>6</sup> This increase, which included a bonus, had failed to keep pace with the 47 percent and 34 percent jumps in the prices of food and coal respectively.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, woolen mills elsewhere in Virginia offered higher pay as did other manufacturing industries in Charlottesville. Hence the second, third, and fourth questions: Why did the finishers not protest earlier? Why did they walk out when they did? And why did the rest of the plant not follow?

The answers highlight some important themes and trends in southern labor history. The field has seen a division between studies that rely primarily on oral interviews--such as Allen

Tullos's *Habits of Industry*--and ones that draw mainly upon manuscript census data and company records--such as Doug Flamming's *Creating the Modern South*. The central questions remain constant: Why did southern manufacturers go to such great lengths to provide housing, schools, and other amenities to employees? Were they munificent patriarchs or profit maximizers? And why did southern textile workers, the lowest paid of American industrial workers, not join unions or protest more for higher wages? Did the benefits lull them into complacency?<sup>8</sup>

Tullos uses personal testimonies to argue that a yeoman paternalism based on the Protestant work ethic pervaded southern society at all levels from management to labor. This ideology compelled factory owners to provide for their employees just as it compelled the latter to be obedient. Some historians have compared this relationship to that of a master and slave, but Tullos traces mill paternalism instead to the Scotch-Irish and German pioneers who first settled the Piedmont. Given the relative homogeneity of southern white culture, this brand of paternalism, he argues, is both historically continuous and regionally distinctive.

Flamming disagrees strongly. In his case study of a Georgia cotton mill, he uses statistics to prove that paternalism arose out of rational choices on the part of both management and workers. Mill village paternalism to him was part of modernization, not a throwback to the past. He subdivides paternalism into "personalism" and "welfare capitalism." In the former, a patron maintains control by dispensing favors based on individual decisions or whims. In the latter, the patron achieves control by comprehensive policies and services such as pensions and schools. Flamming portrays cotton mill owners as welfare capitalists who had more in common with modern industrialists of the North than they did with southerners of the past.

Not only does he clash with Tullos about historical continuity, he rejects overarching cultural explanations. Flamming backs up his arguments with exhaustive research and explicit economic data taken from census and company records. No less persuasively, Tullos relies on oral histories scattered over time and space.<sup>9</sup>

An investigation of the circumstances at the Charlottesville Woolen Mills leading up to the crisis in 1918 offers an opportunity to combine Flamming's methods with Tullos's arguments. Only a few fragments of oral history remain of the Woolen Mills, but there exist extensive company records, including payrolls, as well as manuscript census data. Additionally, and more importantly, the minutes of the Woolen Mills Sunday School shed light on both the religious activities of a majority of workers and their relationships with their fellow workers and with management.<sup>10</sup>

These documents give vivid witness to the complex, steadily-evolving nature of industrial paternalism. Management and employees in Charlottesville continually negotiated and renegotiated a social organization of labor based on mutual economic interests and embedded in the prevailing ethos of Protestant Christianity. Workers balanced ambition and material gain with a need to preserve kinship ties and maintain a sense of place in the world. Managers, as individuals who had families, grappled with those same issues. Simultaneously, as business leaders, they attempted to maximize profits by creating a stable work force which would produce high-quality goods at the lowest possible cost. The result was a system of labor that made efficient use of the dominant culture while steadily evolving in response to individual needs and the rapidly industrializing southern economy.

The shifting labor market within the Virginia woolen industry makes visible certain

aspects of the social organization of labor in southern textile manufacturing that are less apparent in the South's booming cotton industry. Furthermore, the unusual combination of events at the Charlottesville Woolen Mills during the First World War places these larger issues in a revealing light. Unlike many woolen or cotton mills in Virginia, laborers in Charlottesville received wages under the state average and experienced a relatively low turnover rate during a period of high turnover and upward wage pressure.

Clearly, money did not keep the Charlottesville workers from leaving. Nor did management. Leadership of the mill changed hands three times during that decade and, if anything, contributed to overall instability. Mill foremen, or "overseers," provided steady guidance throughout a critical period. They served both as supervisors on the shop floor and leaders in the mill community. Nowhere does this dual role appear more clearly than in the Woolen Mills Sunday School. Within this milieu foremen were able to merge the spiritual imperatives of Protestant religion with economic self-interest. The story of this school and its role in the mill community and the 1918 walkout begins eight years earlier with the death of mill patriarch Henry Marchant.

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Henry Clay Marchant died on 10 October 1910. Although he was over seventy years old, the suddenness of his passing shocked a mill community long accustomed to his leadership. Following a long-established custom, the Sunday School congregation at Marchant's death elected a committee to compose a eulogy for public reading and inclusion in the minutes book. One of the three was Henry Gustavus Bragg, at that time the school secretary and foreman of the weaving department.<sup>11</sup>

Marchant had figured prominently throughout most of Bragg's life. Bragg was born in 1867, the same year that Marchant had incorporated the Charlottesville Woolen Mills and rebuilt the plant from the ashes of the Civil War. His mother, Lucy Bragg, a young widow, opened a boarding house near the mill sometime during the 1870's. She rented the place from the company. There, she tended her five children along with five boarders using the help of a young black servant woman named Anna Henderson.<sup>12</sup>

The work force during the early days of the mill was a mixture of families or young single men and women from the surrounding countryside. The Bragg household combined both of these sources of mill labor under one roof. Lucy sent three of her children to the factory along with the boarders. She worked regularly there herself, too.<sup>13</sup> According to the 1880 Census, Henry Bragg had already begun working by the age of 12. Although many mills during the late nineteenth century used child labor, the one in Charlottesville did not do so then or later. Henry Bragg appears to be an exception.

Like all the workers, young Bragg learned his job through experience, probably with help from his mother and two older sisters. There were also old-timers there to teach him, men like Jonas M. Stark, who had made woolen cloth during the 1850's and 1860's at the previous plant located on the same site. Union soldiers had accidentally burned that building in 1865 while attempting to destroy the railroad. Although the Yankee invaders could plunder and burn, they could not, short of murder, eradicate the workers' accumulated expertise in woolen manufacture. No doubt such experience and training contributed to the high quality, varied selection of woolens that the company had already begun to produce by 1880. In fact, fabric woven in Charlottesville was chosen as the standard grade cloth for uniforms for guards at the 1893

World's Fair and for the United States Post Office.<sup>14</sup>

Young Bragg acquired more than just technical skills from being in the employ of Henry Marchant; he learned the value of hard work and religious devotion. Young Marchant had left Charlottesville in 1856 at the age of seventeen to work as a grocer's clerk in Petersburg. In 1860, he had joined the Twelfth Virginia Volunteer Infantry to fight in the Civil War. He returned to Charlottesville after a minie bullet shattered his leg at the Seven Days Battle in 1862. Marchant's father, John Adams Marchant, had bought the mill in 1852. While the bone was healing, Marchant bought the mill from his father just before it burned.<sup>15</sup>

That setback did not stop him. With the support of local stock subscribers and credit from the Furbush and Gage machinery manufacturers of Philadelphia, he resurrected the mill in 1867. What Marchant lacked in knowledge of textiles, he more than compensated for with his business acumen. His close brush with death during the war perhaps strengthened his religious convictions. He belonged to the Episcopal Church, and throughout his life, he adhered to the Protestant work ethic and a strict moral code. He demanded the same of his workers.

"The property of a manufacturing Company must ultimately rest on the efficiency and fidelity of its labor," Marchant wrote in an 1881 report. "It must be promoted by whatever promotes their self respect, elevates their character, and cultivates local attachments and the home feeling."<sup>16</sup> In 1906, he gave the following advice to an interviewer: "Work, work, strive to excel. If an employee, strive to faithfully and conscientiously discharge whatever duties you undertake, and make your services indispensable; and, above all, ask God's guidance and help, that you may live a sober, unselfish, righteous, and useful life."<sup>17</sup>

Henry Bragg could not have helped but absorb some of these sentiments. After all,

Marchant was himself a trinity of sorts, holding within one person the powerful positions of company president, general manager, and superintendent. Furthermore, he and his family lived nearby, next to the factory amidst the village that in 1880 totalled about sixty workers and had grown to 115 by 1892.<sup>18</sup> By 1910 the labor force stood at almost one hundred and thirty. Bragg paralleled that growth through development of his personal character and skill as a textile maker. By the time of Marchant's death, he had become a leader within the Woolen Mills community and foreman of the most important department in the plant, the weaving section.

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The process of turning sheep's wool into cloth started long before it reached Henry Bragg, of course. At an integrated plant like Charlottesville, it began in the sorting room. Raw wool arrived in the form of fleeces, which had been sheared from the sheep in one large piece. The sorting room was located in a building adjacent to the main four-story factory.<sup>19</sup> In it, sorters first cut the fleeces apart and separated the raw wool by quality. A single fleece could contain up to fourteen different grades of wool, so this sorting required a keen eye and long experience. Microbes in the dusty wool before it was picked and sorted posed the danger of anthrax, an illness common to sorters. Because of the chance of disease and the skill required for this job, workers earned relatively high wages, one to two dollars a day.<sup>20</sup>

Egbert J. Harlow supervised the sorting room. As all Charlottesville foremen in 1910, he earned \$3.10 a day. Marchant made best use of Harlow's trained eye by sending him frequently on trips to purchase wool. Whenever Harlow left, his assistant Silas F. Walton took charge. As "second hand," Walton earned \$2 a day. The lowest paid workers were teenagers James Hollows and Willie Desper, who earned \$1. Most likely these two were learning the job while performing

the simpler tasks of feeding sorted wool into the burr-picker machine and washer.

After leaving the washer, the wool went to the dyeing room, which sat between the sorting department and Moore's Creek.<sup>21</sup> Dyeing was a filthy, smelly job that required considerable strength. Like in the sorting room, only men were hired. Workers placed the wool into large vats, which they stirred with poles. They then dried the material in a large steam dryer. In addition to strength, this dirty task required great skill to get proper, consistent colors. Consequently, dyers received wages of \$1.50 or more per day. The foreman of this department was Charles E. Harlow, most likely a brother of Egbert.<sup>22</sup>

The only person of color in the entire work force was a dyer, an African American named Paul Coleman, who lived outside of the mill village on the road leading to Scottsville. His wife apparently had died at an early age, leaving him with two daughters. Many southern textile mills restricted all but the most menial jobs to blacks. Charlottesville deviated slightly from the norm in this instance. Coleman told the census taker in 1910 that he was a "hand," a term that placed him on par with his fellow workers. Indeed, he received the same wages as any other dyer with similar experience throughout his long career.

Once Coleman and the others of his department had finished their job, the wool was transported to the main building. Each floor here was arranged so that the machines on each of them could use power generated by the water wheel at the end of the building. This design had remained unchanged even though management had switched to external electric power a decade earlier.

On the third floor, five sets of Furbush carding machines began the process of turning the wool into yarn. Carders had first to mix the fibers together in the proper amounts and apply oil

to replace the natural grease lost by washing and dyeing. Afterwards, the sharp metal teeth of the carding machines reduced the wool to long, fluffy ropes called "roving." A worker had to take care not to get caught in the numerous belts and sharp moving objects that cluttered this floor. Perhaps it was for this reason that women were not allowed here either. Carders earned \$1.25 or more per day.

One of the most senior employees in the factory was a carder. Henry Haggard worked at the mill as early as 1870, when the census taker listed him as being 16 years old. He had followed in the footsteps of his father Robert Haggard. Henry was the second of the five generations of Haggards who passed through the factory doors before they closed. A single line of Haggards spanned the entire life of the company--almost a century.<sup>23</sup> Despite Henry's family and seniority, he never became the carding foreman. That job fell instead to Warren S. Graves, who had worked as a carder at least as early as 1880.<sup>24</sup>

Carding completed, supervision of production passed from Graves to Thomas H. Ryalls. Ryalls ran the fourth floor spinning room. At this stage, five Furbush "mules" converted the ropelike roving into a thinner yarn. The machine then wound the yarn onto bobbins. Three men handled the machines: Lee Scruggs, Dillard Brown, and Grover Maddex. Also needed were "doffers," people to remove the full bobbins from the spinning frame and replace them with empty ones. Generally, young boys were hired to perform this task because of the low skill and high agility required. No doubt Clarence Desper, Arthur Drumheller, Roy Brown, Homer Marshall, and their companions functioned in this capacity. The spinning department also required young women to operate the twisting machine and to stiffen yarn for the warp. These workers probably included the twin sisters Mary and Martha Lang, teenaged daughters of a local

carpenter. Male or female, the younger workers did not earn much, only 60 to 70 cents per day.

Only after sorting, carding, and spinning did the wool arrive at Henry Bragg's domain, the weave room. This department had the most people, and it took up two floors. On the second level stood twenty-five Knowles looms. The looms wove yarn through the warp beams. The newly created cloth then descended to the first floor where burlers inspected it for defects, pulled out any loose yarn, and corrected what flaws they could. For this task they used a burling iron.

With two floors and so much activity, Bragg had to rely heavily on his assistants. Robert N. Gianniny was the "second hand" for this department and earned \$2.12 per day, the most of any in his position at the plant. Not only was he an expert in all aspects of manufacturing, but he also helped Bragg in the everyday administrative tasks that the department required. On the shop floor, J. Festus Johnson took part in supervising as a "warper." He helped to lower warp beams into each loom to start a run of cloth, and he earned \$1.85 per day.<sup>25</sup> Johnson's job required not only considerable strength, but a detailed knowledge of the machinery. Of equal importance was the "fixer," who moved from loom to loom as needed. J. W. Drumheller and John Krickbaum both served as fixers, earning \$1.75 and \$1.85 per day respectively. Krickbaum, interestingly, was one of the few workers not born in Virginia. His parents had emigrated from Germany to his birthplace of Maryland.<sup>26</sup>

The majority of the workers in this department were women. Of these, widows and spinsters comprised the most stable part. Lelia Harlow, the sister of Egbert, had lost her husband before the age of twenty-seven. She had at least ten years of experience by 1910 and would stay through the 1920s. So, too, did Emma Adams, who after her husband's death moved in with her brother-in-law and co-worker, John Shisler.<sup>27</sup> Nellie Druin had married a man twenty-nine years

her senior in 1900. After he died, she lived in a rented house by herself and continued to work for many years. Older, unmarried women included relatives of mill supervisors such as Henry Bragg's sister Janie and Egbert Harlow's younger sister Amanda. Bettie Baltimore was one of only two women on the floor with husbands. She had married Amanda and Egbert's brother Marcellus. The other twenty or so weavers were single women in their late teens and early twenties. They included John Krickbaum's daughter Eva, J. W. Drumheller's daughter Gladys, and Viola Ladd who boarded with Robert Gianniny. These younger, single women generally worked for a few years before getting married and leaving.

Women gravitated to weaving because this job offered the highest potential income available to females and perhaps because it provided flexible hours. A good weaver could earn \$1 to \$1.30 per day. Unlike other jobs, which paid a daily rate, weaving income was calculated by the cloth produced. Top quality fabric earned a certain rate per yard, seconds somewhat less. Thus, weavers had an incentive to produce as much defect-free material as possible.<sup>28</sup> While this job gave women an opportunity to gain high pay, it also left them extremely vulnerable to minor seasonal fluctuations.<sup>29</sup> Despite this drawback, the weaving room remained the most desirable place for female workers.

Women who wanted to weave generally started in the burling room where they earned 60 cents to a dollar per day. Here, they could improve their skills and perhaps impress their supervisors John Shisler and Rives Tilman. These two men, called "perchers," inspected the cloth after the burlers had repaired it. After working six months to a year, most women shifted to the looms.

The only males on the floor other than the supervisors were Jacob Fauslen and Branch

Bibb. Like Henry Bragg and Henry Haggard, Fauslen had worked in the mill from its early days. For some reason he remained at the looms among the women. Apparently this situation, or something, did not agree with his wife. The couple had separated by 1910 and divorced sometime afterward, a highly unusual occurrence in the mill community. Branch Bibb was much younger and earned 65 per day. Most likely he was a sweeper, an unskilled but necessary position. The sweeper kept the floors clear of debris and gathered loose wool fibers for recycling. Additionally, Bibb probably assisted in keeping the looms oiled.

After being woven and after the women in the burling room had fixed any imperfections, the cloth continued to the wet finishing room, located on the first floor. Finishing gave cloth the body and texture normally associated with wool material. Workers lathered the fabric with soft soap and ran it through a fulling mill. The machine's combination of rollers and heat made the wool "felt" or interlock more closely. Like dyeing, this job was dirty and required great skill. The workers, all men, received an average of over \$1.50 per day. They included Henry Haggard's two sons Lloyd and James, Jacob Fauslen's son Homer, Louis Shisler, and three members of the Harlow family, Robert, John, and Marcellus Harlow.

James E. Timberlake was foreman of the wet finishing department. Born in 1856, he was one of the oldest workers at the plant. Apparently, he was also something of an outsider. In 1880, his house was located outside of the mill village close to Charlottesville. The community appears to have expanded outward to him by 1910. Nor did Timberlake seem to have as many family connections as did the majority of those so long established. His wife, Ann, had worked during the 1890's, and his son Algernon, nicknamed Gerney, worked briefly as a wet finisher after 1910, but other than that the payroll list no other Timberlakes or Timberlake relatives.<sup>30</sup> As

one of the oldest, most experienced workers in the mill, and given the expertise required for wet finishing, Timberlake must have been a person of considerable ability. Indeed, the *Daily Progress* in 1905 called him a "respected citizen."<sup>31</sup>

Compared to wet finishing, dry finishing was relatively simple. This process consisted first of specking to remove any vegetable matter clinging to the cloth. Next, workers sheared off loose threads from the edges and wound the fabric onto rolls. These they wrapped and packed into crates for shipping. This job took little skill although some strength was no doubt required to move the rolls. J. H. Shepherd supervised this department with the assistance of Spotswood Johnson, Linwood Carver, and Elwood Haggard. The latter was the third son of Henry Haggard to work in the mills. These men earned \$1.50 or more per day. Most men and women who worked here, however, received the lowest wages of any people in the plant. Some took home as little as 50¢ per day. Many of them were boarders with few connections to the larger mill community. Exceptions included John Shisler's niece Riva Thomasson and Linwood Carver's two daughters, Bessie and Carrie.

The long journey from fleece to finished fabric reached its terminus at the shipping room. John Hudson ran this department, but he earned only \$2.25 per day. He did not have the same status as the other foremen because he had no workers to supervise. His job did entail close coordination with the front office. Here, clerk H. D. Jarman and his assistant, Robert L. Meade, kept all records, balanced accounts, and disbursed pay. They also made arrangements for delivery with the salesmen who travelled the country in search of customers. Unlike many southern mills, Charlottesville did not utilize the services of a customs house. Once an order was filled, the packaged bolts of cloth left the mill by horse and wagon for transport to the railroad or

local customers. Salesmen around the country peddled it on a commission basis.

The Charlottesville Woolen Mills had specialized in making uniform cloth since the middle 1880s. Policemen in New York and Los Angeles wore uniforms made of Charlottesville cloth. So, too, did cadets at Virginia Military Institute and the United States Military Academy at West Point, as well as conductors for the Southern Pacific Railway. Although the company did not contract directly with the War Department, military post exchanges as far away as Vancouver bought woolen fabric from it. Famous civilian tailors such as Brooks Brothers also purchased Charlottesville products. Even in death, one could not escape the ubiquitous cloth: manufacturers in Burlington and Atlanta used it to line caskets.<sup>32</sup>

Having a secure market niche allowed for a certain amount of stability because demand stayed relatively constant, and uniform styles tended to change slowly. In the short run, Marchant could afford to operate the plant continuously and maintain an inventory without fear that fickle fashion would render it obsolete. In the long run, sales to uniformed organizations remained high even as urbanization and indoor work induced a growing number of Americans to switch from heavy woolens to lighter cotton garments. Consequently, the plant rarely shut down or laid off its workers during the early twentieth century.

This situation made the Charlottesville mill different from the more numerous woolen factories in Philadelphia and New England. There, manufacturers practiced what historian Phillip Scranton has called "batch production". Operations continued long enough to fulfill orders after which point employees lost their jobs until a customer placed another order. Charlottesville also differed in that the solid cloth required less skill to produce than the generally more intricate patterns made up North. Here in Charlottesville, management practiced

what Scranton would call "bulk production."<sup>33</sup> Utilizing this technique gave Charlottesville much in common with the more numerous cotton mills that dotted the Appalachian Piedmont. Of course, wool required more highly-skilled processing than did cotton, and the woven cloth more finishing, but the basics remained similar as did the social organization of the work force.

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According to the April 1910 payroll, the Woolen Mills employed approximately 122 people, 72 men and 50 women. One hundred and eleven of these appear on the 1910 manuscript census, which provides many demographic details. Of the 111 listed, 47 were married, 58 were single, and 6 were widowed. Married people earned the highest wages, averaging \$1.94 per day as compared to 86 cents for singles. Forty-nine lived with family members, a figure that includes wives. These relatives were not always only spouses or children. As noted earlier, mill households consisted of nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, and in-laws as well. No children under the age of thirteen were hired. Apparently, the relatively skilled nature of woolen manufacturing precluded the use of youngsters. The median male age in 1910 was 36, and the median female age was 20. Ages for everybody ranged from 13 to 66.

Of course, statistics do not tell the entire story, nor does simply describing the duties and family connections within the plant. Workplace organization extended outside the factory walls into the surrounding community. As early as 1850, mill management had tried to provide decent housing for its employees. By 1880, it rented out three houses and seven tenement dwellings. Henry Marchant lived in one of the houses, and plant manager John Tyler and his family occupied another. Fifty-five out of 60 workers lived in the remainder. In fact, Henry Bragg's mother had operated one of the seven tenement dwellings. This arrangement worked so long as

the employees were single boarders or had small families.

The size and nature of the village changed as people became more established. By 1910, 18 of 111 workers had the means to purchase their own homes. The company rented to another 30, and only 14 boarded. This arrangement benefited both management and employees. The former secured a stable labor force that reproduced itself and passed skills along generationally. The latter secured shelter, subsistence, and a sense of place.

The neighborhood expanded first up the C&O railroad line that followed the ridgeline to Charlottesville. It then spread to adjacent high ground. Although noise and smoke from trains must have been bothersome, the location kept workers safe from the floods that periodically inundated the low ground beside Moore's Creek and the Rivanna River. It also kept them away from the main sewage pipe that drained from town, as well as from the run-off from the outhouses and animal pens that lined the backyards.<sup>34</sup>

This geographic constriction was in another way fortuitous because it forced the village to grow in the direction of Charlottesville. By 1890, it had become a part of town rather than an isolated enclave.<sup>35</sup> Homes of mill employees blended into those of workers for the C&O Railroad, the Michie Publishing Company, and the local lumber yards. Oftentimes, people in one house would provide labor for more than one industry as children chose occupations different from their parents. This circumstance explains in part why townspeople never came to disparage mill workers as an outcast group of "lintheads," as happened in other parts of the region. Additionally, local merchants recognized the importance of the factory payroll to their businesses.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, most of the workers lived outside the city limit, and they represented no unified political threat.

For all the connectedness to town, the village retained a distinctive identity. Turn-of-the-century newspaper articles refer to the entire neighborhood as the "Woolen Mills" area. Family ties reinforced this sense of community to an extent unmatched by other Charlottesville industries. Unlike those enterprises, the mill employed people of both genders and a wide span of ages. Consequently, 76 out of 122 workers had at least one documented connection to another employee. The kinship network within the plant became even more tangled outside the factory--much too tangled to describe in words.

Four decades of shared experience flowed through the blood of mill families. Many of Henry Bragg's co-workers in 1910 spent the late nineteenth century in the community either as employees or children. They included carder Henry Haggard and weaver Jacob Fauslen as well as dry finishing foreman John H. Shepherd, wet finishing foreman James Timberlake, and carding foreman Warren S. Graves, all of whom were working for the mills by 1880. They also included people who had grown up in the village, such as shipping foreman James Hudson, son of William Hudson; weaving second hand Robert Nicholas (Nick) Gianniny, son of John Wesley Gianniny; sorting foreman Egbert Harlow, dyeing foreman Charles Harlow, and wet finisher Marcellus Harlow, sons of Hegelia Harlow. Except for a few women such as Henry Bragg's sister Janice, changes of names through marriage hinders tracing the connection of most of the female employees with any precision. Nevertheless, one can assume many of the women in 1910 had kinships as close and memories as long.

One event in particular stood vividly in the community's shared past: the great fire of 1882. That conflagration destroyed the entire building with all of the machinery inside. It also claimed the adjacent railroad trestle, which at the time was made of wood. Production halted for

over eight months. For a short time, the corporate board debated whether or not to dissolve the company entirely and divide the insurance money among the stockholders. Workers had to face this uncertain future while relying on the charity of townspeople for food and basic necessities.<sup>37</sup>

Marchant eventually decided to turn the disaster into an opportunity to modernize. He raised \$60,000 to more than double the company capital to \$125,000. Forty thousand of this money came from northern investors. Using these funds, he purchased up-to-date equipment from Philadelphia, including twenty-five looms, five sets of carding machinery, and five spinning mules. He also made plans to erect a mill building twice as large as the previous, burned-out one. The unemployed workers supplied the labor for the endeavor. They spent the months of June and July raising the new structure and by August were once again producing cloth. The hardship of that year remained seared in the minds of those who experienced it and in those who had heard the story retold countless times. Perhaps of equal importance was the sense of ownership and pride of people who had rebuilt their workplace brick by brick.

Laboring for Henry Marchant after regular hours was nothing new. He had hired workers to perform odd jobs before the great fire. His superintendent's journal is replete with references to individual workers. In 1871, for example, he paid Henry Haggard's father Robert Haggard 25 cents for hauling hay and \$10 to John Hudson's father William Hudson for cutting "lumber for back room." Marchant also paid for people to plow and make bricks. Conversely, the mill president provided essential services. He purchased coal and flour in large quantities, which he then distributed broadly.

The intimate, symbiotic relationship between management and employee may remind one of that between master and slave. Indeed, the mill village bears similarity to plantation row

housing; and textile foremen in Charlottesville, and throughout the South, were called overseers. But neither Henry Marchant nor his father appeared ever to have owned slaves. Rather, Marchant's regard for workers seemed grounded in the Protestant work ethic and the spirit of Christian charity. This form of paternalism was what labor historians call "personalism," a method whereby managers retain labor at low cost through arbitrary exchanges of favors.

No such relationship between employer and employee could have been an equal one. An old family story of the Giannini family underscores that inequality. In 1884, Marchant apparently wished his workers to vote for Grover Cleveland for president. Cleveland supported tariff reforms that Marchant no doubt hoped would reduce the price of imported wool and dyestuff for his plant. One of Marchant's employees John Wesley Giannini suffered an accident close to Election Day. Giannini was recuperating from a severed leg when Marchant sent his carriage to take the injured man to the polls. The trip caused the stump to begin bleeding again, and Giannini died from loss of blood.<sup>38</sup>

So long as Marchant provided a secure environment, a sense of place in the world, and the hope of future progress, his workers remained relatively content. By the end of the century, the labor force of the company was growing too large for Marchant to handle by himself. Marchant began during the 1890's to institute broad-based policies normally associated with what labor historians term "welfare capitalism."<sup>39</sup> He authorized the construction of additional mill housing and made arrangements for a school with the Albemarle County Board. He also reportedly organized a primitive form of health insurance.<sup>40</sup> Marchant remained a highly visible, personal leader, but he delegated increasing amounts of his power to foremen. Nowhere was this shift from personalism to welfare capitalism more apparent than in the Woolen Mills Sunday

School.

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The Sunday school was formed in 1886 in the wake of an intense Methodist revival. A year later, with Marchant's blessings, the workers erected a wooden, Gothic-styled building in the center of the mill community. Most members of the school belonged to other churches in Charlottesville. The Sunday school itself was affiliated with the Union Church, an ecumenical group well-organized enough to sponsor annual conventions.<sup>41</sup> Weekly attendance in 1910 averaged over two hundred people. Men and women attended in roughly even numbers with women slightly outnumbering the men.<sup>42</sup> The school convened promptly at three o'clock every Sunday afternoon. After an opening prayer and hymn, the congregation divided into twelve groups, each led by a teacher. The groups would collect an offering and then study the assigned lessons for 30 minutes. All classes had the same lesson. Afterwards, the congregation reassembled to sing more hymns, pray, or discuss church business. Frequently, a Sunday school officer would comment on the day's teaching.

Henry Marchant chose to wield power here subtly. Although he served as president of the Albemarle County Sunday School Association, he never held formal office within the mill congregation. His wife did teach one of the twelve classes and served as superintendent of the children's department. But more significantly, the Woolen Mills foremen assumed the key leadership roles in the school. Carding room overseer Robert Turner Allison was the first superintendent. Sorting room supervisor E. J. Harlow became the second after Allison died in 1898. Weaving boss Henry Bragg took a turn at this position in 1903 but soon stepped down in favor of E.J. Harlow. Bragg continued to serve as secretary, treasurer, and assistant

superintendent. In 1910, dyeing foreman Charles Harlow was the assistant superintendent. Other mill foremen who served in the Sunday School leadership were Thomas Ryalls of the spinning department, who was chorister; and John Hudson of shipping, who was secretary. J. H. Shepherd of dry finishing often served on various committees, too. Second hands such as Robert Gianniny, Silas Walton, and Louis Shisler also participated.

Carding foreman Warren Graves and wet finishing foreman James Timberlake were conspicuous by the lack of any mention of them in the minutes. A tragedy in 1905 highlights their apparent lack of participation in the Sunday School. Instead of attending church or Sunday School on the morning of 28 May, the sons of Graves and Timberlake decided to go fishing in the Rivanna River. Their boat capsized, and 17-year-old Archie Timberlake drowned. The congregation ordinarily would have responded with a eulogy, gift, or other gesture. Young Timberlake received only a penciled notation in the margin of the Sunday School records: "A. Timberlake drowned this A.M."<sup>43</sup>

In any case, their Sunday School leadership allowed the foremen to extend workplace authority into the life of the community. Marchant himself remained content to lead an occasional prayer or comment on the lesson. He also helped the school to purchase an organ.<sup>44</sup> At Christmastime, the offering would always increase substantially to some round figure like twenty or fifty dollars, an indication of the mill owner's largess. Marchant also participated in writing eulogies, which were read aloud and recorded verbatim in the minutes. Invariably, the tributes would refer to the deceased as a "co-worker."<sup>45</sup>

For those people who for some reason did not get Sunday off from work, Marchant offered an annual monetary award. What made this gesture unusual is that it duplicated the one

already given by the Sunday school. He presented this prize "to any member of the school who has been kept away providentially or for reasons over which there was no control but who would be otherwise entitled to a prize from the school."<sup>46</sup> The redundancy of this award reveals a possible ulterior motive: perhaps Marchant required some people to work on the Sabbath, such as the watchmen who guarded against fire at the factory on alternate Sundays.

On one rare occasion, circumstances forced Marchant to intervene directly. The Baptist Sunday School of Charlottesville had invited the Woolen Mills Sunday School to attend an outing in Staunton in the month of July 1900.<sup>47</sup> The school declined the offer in an oddly-worded entry written by dyeing foreman Charles Harlow: "Brother Marchant and others regret that we are not prepared to attend the Baptist S.S. on their picnic, but as [the] School is not going as a body, any individual is at perfect liberty to go and enjoy him or herself, knowing that it will meet the approval of the School."<sup>48</sup> Obviously, Marchant did not want his work force straying so far from home.

Obviously, Marchant did not want his work force straying so far from home. Sunday afternoon forays across the Blue Ridge would have made for very blue Mondays.

Although Marchant clearly used the church to influence workers' actions where they pertained to the mills, he did not seek to control their thinking. Marchant's own devoutness would not have allowed for such cynical manipulation. He appeared to have remained true to his beliefs whether dealing with workers or fellow capitalists. Additionally, the Sunday school lessons followed a scriptural rather than thematic outline. Moreover, Marchant could not have imposed his beliefs upon the Sunday school even if he had so desired. The people attended too many other churches for him to have exercised that level of control.

Nor did Marchant seek to influence his workers through other means such as newspapers or legislation. The debate over the prohibition of alcohol supports this conclusion. Under the provisions of the Mann Act of 1903, the people of Charlottesville voted in June 1907 whether or not to approve licensing of bars within the town limits. Religious leaders and the Anti-Saloon League mustered enthusiastic support for the "dry" cause through a series of rallies and revivals. Given his religious beliefs and the positive effects this measure would likely have on his work force, Marchant no doubt heartily approved. He did not publicly intervene. He had recently loaned *Daily Progress* editor James Lindsay \$200.00, and the newspaper gave a remarkably even-handed account of the debate. Moreover, the church minutes make no mention of the subject.<sup>49</sup>

Marchant died years before the First World War propagandists and Madison Avenue advertisers would refine techniques of manipulating opinions and attitudes. Aside from the raw economic power he wielded, Marchant instead relied on valued nineteenth-century traits--force of belief and the depth of character.

Only as the work force became too unwieldy for him to handle alone did he adopt the techniques of welfare capitalism. This transition was a gradual one, and he used his foremen to assist him. The *Charlottesville Chronicle* commented in 1892:

Much care is taken by the management in the selection of the heads of the different departments. In the first place the man must be of the first capacity in his line and in the second he must be a person of exemplary character. The management recognize the responsibility of his position in being placed over a large number of employees, many of whom are quite young, and in the formation of whose characters the head of the department is largely instrumental, and they make it a necessary qualification for the position that he be a man of strict sobriety and good

morals. . . . The management are very careful in looking up the antecedents of those who apply for work, and aim to employ only persons of good character, whether male or female.<sup>50</sup>

By 1910, the foremen had become well-established leaders both within the factory and within the community. As noted earlier, when Marchant died in October 1910, Henry Bragg and John Hudson composed a two-page tribute to him.<sup>51</sup> They also wrote a letter to the corporate board, asking that the directors encourage Mrs. Marchant to stay and continue her work in the Sunday School. They said of the Marchants: "as a result of their labors among us the efficiency of our school has been greatly enhanced."<sup>52</sup> The corporate board recognized Marchant, too, in a resolution dated 19 October 1910: "Mr. Marchant was not only faithful to the business with whose management he was entrusted, but his hand was ever ready to aid every effort for the welfare of his fellow man; and, above all, his life was crowned with a firm Christian faith, and his works showed his complete loyalty to the King whom he delighted to honor. . . ."<sup>53</sup>

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Marchant's replacement as president was Robert Poore Valentine. Although Valentine would attempt to emulate the personal style management of his predecessor, changing circumstances would thwart him. Additionally, Valentine did not appear to have grasped the necessity for adjusting his management style to meet the needs of a larger, less personal workplace. Born in 1852, Valentine was the son of Thomas Jefferson Valentine, who published the Charlottesville *Jeffersonian-Republican*. Robert himself worked briefly for the *Chronicle* from 1877 to 1879 and then moved on to become a successful entrepreneur. He was instrumental in starting Charlottesville's first street car line and power company. He also

founded the Southern Business College and ran a successful coal and lumber company in West Virginia. He, his wife, daughter, and two sons lived in an elegant house in Charlottesville on High Street. Upon assuming the presidency, though, he moved his family into Marchant's company house.<sup>54</sup>

Valentine's only experience with the textile industry came as vice-president of the Woolen Mills. When the board elected Valentine only to the position of president, Marchant's son Hampton took over as superintendent and general manager where he oversaw the technical details of production. The elder Marchant had held all three positions simultaneously. Valentine's duties included presiding over corporate board meetings, supervising the front office, obtaining raw materials, and securing purchase orders.<sup>55</sup> Dividing managerial responsibilities between two men required a lengthy adjustment period that opened the door for wounded feelings and trampled egos. Moreover, it set the stage for the 1918 walkout.

Personality conflicts between Robert Valentine and Hampton Marchant compounded the problem with organization. Quite possibly, Marchant resented Valentine's usurpation of his father's role.<sup>56</sup> Valentine, meanwhile, seems to have viewed Marchant as an obstacle between him and the labor force. Within six months, the company board intervened. It removed direct control of the general manager from Valentine. Although this measure may have relieved individual tensions, it weakened the management structure. As a consequence, the board became much more involved in details of the plant's operation and in the activities of individual workers than previously.<sup>57</sup>

Moreover, the board's action did not solve the problem of divided command. Conflict between Valentine and Marchant was serious enough to receive mention in the corporate board

minutes in 1912: “There have been differences between these officers on questions more or less important, which, while they have left no apparent sign of friction, have nevertheless proclaimed the existence of some degree of disquiet, not to say discontent, which tend to disturb the mental peace of the parties.”<sup>58</sup>

The board reversed its 1911 decision and again made Marchant subordinate to Valentine, but it warned the president not to interfere with day-to-day operations. How the foremen felt about their new bosses remains unknown with the exception of one detail. In 1916, James Timberlake requested that the board ratify his ownership of 5 1/3 acres that he had purchased from Henry Marchant in 1889.<sup>59</sup> That after waiting for over twenty-five years he would take this step provides evidence of insecurity.

Perhaps nobody suffered more from the lack of a clear chain of authority than did chief clerk, H. D. Jarman. He and his assistant, Robert L. Meade, worked in the front office where they kept track of incoming raw materials and outgoing cloth. They also maintained the payroll records and disbursed money biweekly. Jarman had worked in the office since 1873. Although he did not live in the village, he had a deep loyalty to the company and considered himself a part of the mill family. From his desk in the front office, Jarman was torn between the oftentimes conflicting demands of Marchant and Valentine. Certainly, the knowledge that these two men were helping to undo something for which he had invested over forty years of his life angered him. To make matters harder for Jarman, his assistant died in 1915.<sup>60</sup>

The struggle for power within the company perhaps explains Valentine's heavy-handedness in the Sunday School. A devout Presbyterian, Valentine joined the Sunday school soon after Henry Marchant's death. He replaced Charles Harlow as assistant superintendent in

1912. His predecessor, by comparison, never held an office in the school. Valentine continued the tradition of the alternate attendance prize. In a particularly ostentatious gesture, he presented superintendent and sorting foreman E. J. Harlow with a gold fountain pen in 1914.<sup>61</sup>

Clearly, Valentine recognized the importance of the church as a means of communication and interaction between management and labor. He sought to extend his influence through intense personalism, a method that even Henry Marchant had begun to abandon in favor of welfare capitalism. Some of Valentine's religious fervor at this time may have stemmed from the death of his wife in 1912, but he already held office in the Sunday School by that time.

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The beginning of the First World War in 1914 added to the internal strife. Although the United States remained neutral for the first three years of the conflict, the war caused considerable upheaval. Woolen manufacturers throughout the United States had difficulty acquiring raw wool from Britain and Australia or dyestuff from Germany. Expenditures for wool at the Charlottesville plant rose from \$151,454 in 1914 to \$194,054 in 1916 to \$406,405 in 1918. Increased government purchases offset the hardship for many companies. The Charlottesville Woolen Mills won no such contracts, however. As a result, profits there dropped from \$53,478.00 in 1914 to \$38,218.95 in 1915. They would not again reach prewar levels until 1919.<sup>62</sup>

Meanwhile, daily life became much more difficult for the individual worker and his or her family. Prices for basic goods in Charlottesville rose 11 percent between 1913 and 1916.<sup>63</sup> Labor turnover at the mill began to rise and by 1916 reached 20 percent, the highest level thus far for the decade.

In April 1917, the United States declared war. Two months later, on 5 June, 1,038 Charlottesville men registered for the draft. In July, the local board drew the first of over two hundred names. The lottery "winners" included Lloyd Haggard, the son of carder Henry Haggard. That same month, Private Preston Giannini deployed with the Monticello Guard to Alabama. He had worked as a spinner in 1915. Robert Valentine's son Vinton would see service overseas. No doubt the draft caused much anxiety, and the presence of armed guards on the Moore's Creek railroad bridge served as a constant reminder of the war.<sup>64</sup>

The guards were part of a larger effort to mobilize the local population. The unit from which they came had been formed to replace the Monticello Guard and to protect strategic local targets from sabotage. Additionally, community leaders such as R. T. W. Duke, Jr., and George Michie organized drives to raise money for Liberty Loans and War Savings Stamps. The University of Virginia became host to a training facility for over 1,800 military truck drivers and chauffeurs. The University also raised two ambulance units and a base hospital.<sup>65</sup> Newspaper articles urged women to ration food and shop at the newly-established curb market. Sugar and meat became especially dear.<sup>66</sup>

Higher prices had perhaps the most profound effect on the everyday lives of mill workers. Although the rate of inflation rose steeply, average wages remained at \$1.67 per day, only 14 cents more than in 1914. As if to add to the misery, the main sewage pipe running from Charlottesville to the Rivanna River broke during the summer. Foul odors wafted across the mill village from the leak.<sup>67</sup> The stench ended only with the arrival of the coldest winter in twenty years. On 31 December 1917, the temperature dropped to 8 degrees below zero.<sup>68</sup> Clearly, the workers had increasingly fewer apparent reasons to stay at the mill or even in Charlottesville.

Given the booming wartime economy, they would seem to have had increasing reason to leave.

Although the turnover rate did not come close to the high levels elsewhere, the trend continued to rise at the Woolen Mills in 1917 when it reached 21.5 percent. To combat this problem, the company board authorized in May 1917 a 10 per day wage hike for all workers except foremen, who continued to earn \$3.10 per day. In November 1917, the board granted 10 percent increases for everybody. Significantly, it classified both of these increases as "war bonuses" rather than raises.<sup>69</sup>

Even with the bonus, pay at the Woolen Mills did not compare favorably with wages elsewhere in Charlottesville. The only textile plant nearby was the Dery Silk Mills, located on the west side of town. The Virginia Department of Labor reported for 1917 that silk mill workers statewide averaged \$2.05 per day, over fifty cents more than at the Woolen Mills. Female workers at the Woolen Mills had little or no alternatives for employment other than the silk mill, but males could perform unskilled labor, most notably at the King or Charlottesville Lumber Companies. Indeed, the census lists many sons of Woolen Mills families who found jobs at one of those places. Wages for saw mill workers in Virginia averaged \$1.96 per day. The Michie Publishing Company offered another possibility. Printers and binders in Virginia earned \$2.31. The C&O railroad paid well, too. In 1912, the last year that the Department of Labor listed railroads in its annual report, the C&O paid \$2.28. Many relatives of woolen mills employees worked at these alternative places, but, for some reason, relatively few people switched from one to the other during the war.<sup>70</sup>

Opportunities beckoned outside of Charlottesville as well. The city of Winchester, for example, had a large woolen mill in 1917. Woolen workers across Virginia made an average of

\$2.13 per day, and so chances were that, given its size, the Winchester company paid higher wages than the Charlottesville mill.<sup>71</sup> An examination of the 1920 manuscript census for that city reveals no transfers from Charlottesville to Winchester. Even cotton mill workers in Virginia earned \$1.91.<sup>72</sup> Why, then, did so few people leave Charlottesville for higher pay? Why did they stay at the Woolen Mills?

First, the skills required to weave wool differed from those needed to process silk. Switching to the Dery Mills was therefore not an easy option. Indeed, census records show only one worker who shifted between the two, Jerry M. Hall.<sup>73</sup> Second, plant owners in Charlottesville knew each other and may have joined forces to discourage people from changing jobs. Michie Publishing owner George Michie had close ties to the Woolen Mills. He allowed the corporate board to meet in his bank office, and he eventually became a director of the company himself. He, for one, would not have wanted to enter into a bidding war over the local labor supply. Third, most manufacturing jobs such as saw mills and railroads were not open to women. The Woolen Mills therefore offered a higher family wage because more people within a household could work.

Nor did higher wages at other woolen mills constitute a significant incentive to leave Charlottesville. Virginia's woolen industry was so tiny that the Bureau of Labor Statistics did not keep records on the state until 1930.<sup>74</sup> In 1909, there were sixteen woolen mills in Virginia employing 542 people, 371 of whom, or 65 percent, worked either in the Charlottesville Woolen Mills, the Virginia Woolen Company of Winchester, or the Crawford Woolen Company of Martinsburg. The latter two were located in the upper Shenandoah Valley.<sup>75</sup> Had they desired to move, Charlottesville workers could easily have taken the train to either one, but none did.

Given the choices, then, most workers stayed where they had family and friends. Kinship connections and a shared past created intangible bonds that transcended mere economic choice. In the absence of coherent management or a strong individual patriarch like Henry Marchant, the foremen provided the ligaments for this community. They fostered a remarkable consistency in the workplace as well as leadership in spiritual life at the Sunday school. Additionally, rent for housing in the mill village remained stable throughout the war period.<sup>76</sup>

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Even bonuses and cheap rent could not offset the turmoil that came with the bitterly cold winter of 1917-18 during which the plant was shut down one day a week and Robert Valentine submitted his resignation as president of the company. The partial shutdown occurred because military and related demands for coal and oil was causing shortages and drove up fuel prices drastically.<sup>77</sup> Congress in August 1917 passed the Lever Food and Fuel Control Act, creating a Fuel Administration to regulate prices, production rates, and distribution. In Virginia, aspiring politician Harry F. Byrd took the first step in his long career by becoming the state Fuel Administrator.<sup>78</sup> On 16 January 1918, local Fuel Administration chairman George Walker announced a five day holiday. Thereafter for the next ten weeks, all Mondays would be legal holidays, meaning that the Woolen Mills would be closed those days. Violations could bring a \$5,000 fine or a year in prison.<sup>79</sup>

Simultaneously, Valentine's difficulties reached a climax. He became so ill in March that he required hospitalization. A month later, his daughter died.<sup>80</sup> That his son Vinton would soon go to war in Europe no doubt unsettled him further. Shortly thereafter, he became embroiled in a dispute with chief clerk H. D. Jarman, who protested directly to the board in a bitter letter dated

18 June. "Under Mr. Valentine's negative disposition Hampton [Marchant] is very much inclined to seek every opportunity and excuse to excuse himself from the Mill," Jarman wrote. He also complained that Valentine spent too much time loitering in the front office waiting for the mail, distracting the assistant bookkeeper, who Jarman was training to replace the late Robert Meade. Jarman warned that business would suffer if the board allowed the situation to continue.<sup>81</sup>

Valentine responded in a letter dated 16 July. "The charge that I was insulting to Mr. Jarman was explained to the board some time ago," he said. "If the unwarranted charges were at all true they could have all been adjusted long ago with most any one else except a man of Mr. Jarman's unfortunate disposition."<sup>82</sup>

Valentine, Marchant, and Jarman were summoned to a meeting in August to settle the dispute. The board concluded that "there is no question of the fact that there has been for some time, if not from the very inception of the present management, serious friction between the President, the head bookkeeper, and between the Superintendent and head bookkeeper." It added that "relations between the President and Superintendent have never been entirely cordial, and whilst friction between them has not been as great as at one time, they are not working as harmoniously as should be." The board left management intact, but warned Valentine to work through the department heads and not to deal directly with individual workers.<sup>83</sup>

The peace, if that is what it was, lasted only three months. Valentine submitted his resignation on 1 November 1917, to become effective in January 1918, when he would vacate the company house. The board immediately began searching for a replacement. Hampton Marchant remained superintendent, but the board hired a separate general manager in the person

of Durgen Van Wagonen.<sup>84</sup> In January 1918, the board decided to reelect Valentine president in January 1918, but not before stripping the office of all power. Although he served only a year in this capacity, he remained on the board until his death in 1928. He also stayed in the Woolen Mills Sunday School and led the morning prayer two days before the walkout.<sup>85</sup> The board had finally taken decisive action to make management more efficient after seven years of disorder. Still, according to the annual report, "It was with fear and trembling that the Board entered the New Year 1918, with the new management, and everything in the country more or less unsettled by reason of the war."<sup>86</sup>

Like his predecessor, Van Wagonen was not a professional textile executive. The scope of his business perspective, however, reached far more broadly than had Valentine's. Van Wagonen was born in Pascagoula, Mississippi, on 27 July 1871. His family moved the next year to Savannah, Georgia, where he grew up and attended the public schools. As a young adult, he was employed by the Central of Georgia Railroad and its subsidiary, the Ocean Steamship Company. He married Mary Rahn of Savannah and fathered two daughters and one son. In 1908, he moved to New York City to work for the Brunswick Steamship Company where he stayed until the Charlottesville Woolen Mills Board recruited him in late 1917.<sup>87</sup>

Van Wagonen's experience working with railroads and steamships made him aware of the interconnectedness of industry on a national scale. Within Charlottesville itself, he attempted foster cooperation among businesses by helping to found a local Rotary Club and serving as its second president in 1922. This broad, forward-thinking perspective he combined with a forceful personality and a willingness to take risks. He would later demonstrate these characteristics in abundance by his forceful handling of the finishers who walked out, his skillful expansion of the

mill during a period of later economic recession, and his stormy relationship with Board Chairman George Michie that ended with Van Wagonen's resignation in 1936.<sup>88</sup>

Although the new president belonged to the Presbyterian church, he did not share his predecessor's more nineteenth-century sense of Christian paternalism. His beliefs were closer to those espoused by writers such as Bruce Barton, whose popular 1926 book *The Man Nobody Knows* portrays Jesus as having the characteristics of a good advertiser and businessman.<sup>89</sup> Van Wagonen moved into the president's house at the Woolen Mills that Valentine had vacated, but he did not join the Sunday School. Consequently, although he would bring through his efforts great prosperity to the mill, he would never loom nearly as large in the social memories of mill families as did Henry Marchant.

Van Wagonen began work on 1 January 1918. The board granted him a salary of \$200.00 a month, \$50 more than Valentine had received. This vote of confidence, made at a time when the company had just borrowed money in order to pay dividends to stockholders, would put Van Wagonen in a difficult position only a month later when confronted with a demand for compensation for the lost days.<sup>90</sup> How could he plead poverty? Having a German-sounding name during this time probably did not improve his standing with his employees either.

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On the morning 5 February 1918, eighteen workers decided to test their new manager and demand payment for the days lost during the Fuel Administration's shutdown the previous week. Van Wagonen refused their demands. When they threatened a work stoppage, he fired them. Later that same afternoon, he advertised for replacements on the front page of the afternoon newspaper.

The eighteen workers who walked out consisted of twelve men from the wet finishing department and six women from the burling department.<sup>91</sup> More than likely, the male finishers made the initial request for compensation during the morning, and the females left later. The payroll supports this hypothesis because the men received half a day's pay for the 5th whereas the women received three quarters. The male finishers who walked out were Robert O. Harlow, Benjamin F. Hall, Arthur W. Holloway, Edward F. Blair, Alonzo (Art) Spencer, Frank M. Thomas, J. F. Johnson, Keller M. Pace, Earnest L. Bibb, John E. Shisler, E. D. (Donnie) Shisler, and Louis Shisler. Five finishers remained on the job; they were James Haggard, James Spencer, James Smith, Linwood J. Carver, and John Smith.<sup>92</sup>

In terms of a composite of their individual characteristics, virtually nothing distinguishes the group who walked out from the finishers who stayed or from the rest of the factory. They were no more or less connected to other mill workers by kinship or community ties than anybody else. They represented a mixture of old and young, married and bachelor, parents and childless, homeowner and renter, experienced and non-experienced, high-paid and low-paid. Their only distinguishing feature as a group is that the finishers who left marked the extremes of the individual traits of the workforce. They included the oldest and the youngest, the most experienced and the least experienced, as well as the highest paid and the lowest paid of the workers. The characteristics of the ones who stayed, meanwhile, were close to the norm.

The female burlers who walked out are clearly recognizable as a group. They are, however, more difficult to identify with certainty because women in this department tended to work more irregularly than men. More than six female employees, the number known to have walked out, are listed on the payroll as having missed days during the walkout. Nevertheless, the

women who actively protested were most likely Ada Gay, Ruth Harlow, Edith Thomasson, Edna Gianniny, Lula Marshall, and Lutie Payne. All of them had at least two years of experience as burler, yet none had advanced to working as weavers. None had a husband or children, and all lived with family members who provided them with housing

The women probably learned that Van Wagonen had fired the finishers early in the afternoon. Ada Gay must have become particularly angry over this news because her son-in-law, Earnest Bibb, was among the twelve. Gay had been living with Bibb and her daughter Ethel since her husband Andrew died. She was one of the most experienced women in the burling department, having worked there for at least eighteen years. It may well have been she who persuaded the other five burlers to follow her out of the factory.

Leadership in the wet finishing room, or the lack of it, helps to explain why most of the workers in that department walked out while no others did. James Timberlake, the foreman of wet finishing, was less connected to the mill community than the other foremen. He was, for instance, one of only two of eight foremen to have taken no active part in the Sunday school. The workers in other departments would have looked to their foremen for stability and guidance during the hard times of World War I while the wet finishers did not have the same ties to theirs.

Most likely, Timberlake's assistant or "second hand," Louis Shisler, had become the real leader of the wet finishers. Shisler participated actively in the Sunday school and was married to Kate Gay, who possibly was Ada Gay's sister. Shisler's tuberculosis would soon render him unable to work and drive him to suicide three months later.<sup>93</sup> Shisler may have decided that he had very little to lose by walking out, and the others simply followed. Unlike foremen in other departments, Timberlake lacked the moral authority to stop them.

Van Wagonen had little choice but to fire the workers. He had to demonstrate his authority and prove his mettle to the board. Fearful that the rest of the plant might strike, the board called an emergency meeting on 7 February. The directors specifically requested Van Wagonen's presence. At the meeting, they granted him the power to raise wages as he saw fit so long as the total did not exceed \$500. While signalling their support for Van Wagonen, the board was also saying to him that he should not fire the finishers if possible.<sup>94</sup>

All of the workers who had walked out on 5 February returned on the seventh. Van Wagonen had already removed the advertisement in the *Daily Progress* before the board's meeting, but he did not inform the *Progress* that the strike had ended until the next week.<sup>95</sup> Nor did Van Wagonen raise wages immediately. He waited until March before giving the workers a raise. He first reduced the base wage for everybody except the foremen then granted a 25 percent production bonus. This meant that biweekly pay went up and would stay up so long as production continued. In July, the percentage rose to 30 percent, and in August it climbed again to 45 percent. The bonus system stopped at the war's end 11 November 1918. Van Wagonen replaced it in 1920 with a 5 percent annual production bonus and an adjustment of the base wage rate. By this time, the average daily rate had increased from \$1.63 when Van Wagonen took over to \$3.25. This raise brought wages in line with the inflation rate and kept them competitive with other industries in Charlottesville.

The comprehensive bonus system represented another shift from the personalism of Henry Marchant to the welfare capitalism of Durgen Van Wagonen. So, too, was the extension of mill housing in 1920.<sup>96</sup> Likewise, workers came to treat management with greater formality. In 1922 and 1923 they submitted formal petitions for raises and vacations.<sup>97</sup> The workers had

good reason to distance themselves from Van Wagonen. In 1922, he had gone to Richmond to lobby against a proposed labor bill, which was defeated in committee.<sup>98</sup>

Some vestiges of the old system lingered, however, because the board apparently continued to exert influence through the Sunday school. The week after the walkout, publishing company owner George Michie addressed the assembled congregation. Michie, of course, had a vested interest in a stable labor force both because of his own plant and his close connections to the Woolen Mills board. Michie would eventually join and become its chairman. The Sunday school minutes said that he discussed war bonds, but his visit stands out nevertheless because of its timing and uniqueness.<sup>99</sup>

Immediately after the walkout, Robert Valentine stopped attending services there, and Hampton Marchant suddenly became a teacher even though he had never before been mentioned in the school records.<sup>100</sup> The change may have had its origins with the corporate board, which had exerted some control over the Sunday school membership in the past. In 1910, for example, workers had petitioned the board to allow Mrs. Henry Marchant to remain a teacher after her husband's death.

On 24 February 1918, the officers and teachers of the Sunday School met to determine whether Valentine should be dropped from the rolls. Never before and never afterwards did the leadership meet in order to terminate a membership. E. J. Harlow, Hampton Marchant, and Robert Gianniny were appointed to write a resolution. Dated 30 March 1918, the letter to Valentine thanked him for his service and then said:

Having sensed to a full degree the importance of this work upon whom the moral and social atmosphere of this community, and therefore directly resulting benefit

to the business in which we all have such a vital interest, you have thrown yourself earnestly and sympathetically into the school work and every other good work undertaken in our locality.<sup>101</sup>

Valentine responded on 14 April 1918. "The years spent with all of you have been helpful and will be long remembered," he wrote. "I have been with you in days of joy and days of sorrow and it is my hope that you and I have been made stronger in Christian love, faith, and service. It will be a real pleasure [to] visit you when I can. I think of you often on Sunday evenings."<sup>102</sup>

Van Wagonen did not choose to emulate his predecessors in regard to the Sunday school. His daughter became a teacher, but he himself did not join.<sup>103</sup> He certainly recognized the importance of the foremen, however. He granted them generous raises and benefits. The base wage for a foreman had remained at \$3.10 per day from as early as 1909 until 1919. Van Wagonen raised it to \$4.96 in January 1919 to \$5.05 in October 1919 to \$5.96 in 1920, and to \$7 in 1923. Foremen's pay stayed at this level until the Great Depression forced a reduction in 1931. The general manager also granted a week's vacation to all department heads starting in 1919.<sup>104</sup>

Pay raises comprised only a small part of the changes that Van Wagonen wrought. Prior to 1918, the shipping department used a horse and wagon to move goods to and from the railroad depot. Van Wagonen ordered it replaced with a truck within a few months of his arrival.<sup>105</sup> He began tracking sales separately, and he kept more accurate records of what each loom produced.<sup>106</sup> Additionally, he paid special attention to small details such as typing the annual report rather than scribbling it by hand. In recognition for his performance, the board elected

him president in 1920.<sup>107</sup>

That same year, Van Wagonen embarked on a major expansion of the factory. Ironically, the organizational ineptitude that failed to acquire military contracts proved to one benefit in that the company suffered little from the postwar economic slump. While textile manufacturers elsewhere went bankrupt, Van Wagonen increased the number of looms from 25 to 37 and the number of workers to 140 in 1921 to a peak of 172 in 1929. Production rose from 4,582 yards per two-week period to 12,647 on the eve of the Great Depression. Profits climbed during the same period from \$60,690 to \$131,127.

Although pay increased, life for the workers in the 1920s remained in many ways much the same as it was in 1910 when Henry Marchant died. Of course, the people had begun to enjoy modern conveniences such as automobiles, radios, electricity, and running water. But they partook of them within the village community. Proportions of homeowners to renters to boarders changed as little as did the median and average ages. Sixty three percent of the 1920 labor force had at least one other relative who worked in the factory as opposed to 68 percent in 1910. Average wages stayed at around \$3.50 a day throughout the decade, and turnover actually declined after 1921. Most of the foremen kept a steady hold on their department and the community until they retired.<sup>108</sup>

James Timberlake was one exception. He remained in his position as wet finisher foreman after the walkout ended, but Van Wagonen clearly had lost faith in him. In 1922, he hired P. L. Greene, an expert finisher from the North, to examine efficiency.<sup>109</sup> The next year, when Van Wagonen raised the base pay rate for foremen to \$7, Timberlake was the only one whose pay was kept at \$5.96. He retired in 1926 on a pension of \$60 per month. Earnest L.

Bibb, one of the men who walked out in 1918, replaced him.<sup>110</sup>

Henry Bragg, on the other hand, continued a remarkable climb upward in the mill hierarchy. In 1919, Van Wagonen removed him from the weaving room and put him in charge of the company store.<sup>111</sup> Robert N. Gianniny replaced him as foreman. Bragg became superintendent in 1924 after Hampton Marchant resigned and remained in that position until he retired in 1937. Unfortunately for him, he only received a \$30.00 per month pension because of the Great Depression.<sup>112</sup>

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The Charlottesville Woolen mills witnessed an evolution from personalism to welfare capitalism through the management of Henry Marchant, Robert Poore Valentine, and Durgen Van Wagonen. Given that neither Marchant nor his father were slaveholding planters, and given the devoutness of Marchant's beliefs, this personalism arose from the work ethic and patriarchy of Protestant Christianity rather than from a need to control chattel. Welfare capitalism arose from within and from necessity as the mill modernized and expanded.

This change evolved slowly, yet unevenly. Although Henry Marchant started with a strictly personalist management style, he had become more of a welfare capitalist by the time of his death. His use of the Woolen Mills Sunday School as a means of controlling workers represented a cross between the two methods. Robert Valentine tried to take a step backwards, and he learned to his chagrin that one person could not control everything within a large company. Durgen Van Wagonen cast aside almost all of the old ways, but even here, the corporate board continued to intervene in individual cases.

Foremen provided a crucial bridge in this evolution. In the absence of coherent

management at the top, they held the work force together during a period of high labor turnover. Moreover, they helped to prevent a larger strike in February 1918. The influence that they wielded within the Sunday school buttressed their workplace authority. By contrast, foremen such as Warren Graves and James Timberlake lost power by not participating. Moreover, in the case of the latter, that lack combined with unusual external circumstances and unstable personalities such as Louis Shisler to set the stage for the 1918 walkout.

The role of the foreman in modernization at the Charlottesville Woolen Mills stands in contrast to the part they played elsewhere in the United States. In Nelson Lichtenstein's study of the automobile industry, for example, foremen steadily lost power as management and organized labor squeezed away their authority. In Sanford Jacoby's more general study of industry during the First World War Period, foremen fought a losing battle against a growing cadre of professionalized personnel managers. In Charlottesville, the foremen served as a stabilizing influence instead. This example suggests the unevenness of change. Modernization occurred in fits and starts at different levels rather than in a single broad sweep. Management, line supervisors, and employees adjusted on their own terms to larger trends, local contingencies, and each other.<sup>113</sup>

Additionally, the gradual shift from personalism to welfare capitalism within the framework of Protestant Christianity suggests a certain continuity with the southern past. This conclusion tends to support Allen Tullos's finding that patriarchy and the work ethic combined to thwart labor organization in the South. Indeed, the Charlottesville Woolen Mills did not unionize until two years after the death of Robert Gianniny, the last foreman and Sunday school leader of the World War I period. As if to emphasize this break with the past, the first union

president was Henry Bragg's son. Its first treasurer was Otis Haggard, Sr., the son of James Haggard and grandson of Henry Haggard. By this time, too, the company was shifting over from woolens to synthetic fabrics.<sup>114</sup>

Whereas Charlottesville supports Tullos, it contradicts the conclusions of Douglas Flamming. Flamming rejects the agency of religion and argues for a chronological distinction between personalism and welfare capitalism. Perhaps the turmoil within the cotton industry can explain this difference. As economist William Phillips has proven, much of the mobility among cotton mill employees occurred among higher-skilled hands and foremen. These workers had considerable choices throughout the southeastern Piedmont.<sup>115</sup> Woolen foremen, on the other hand, had fewer options. Their relative stability permits the effects of their leadership, as well as their role in the community's religious life, to stand out more clearly.

The Woolen Mills Chapel symbolizes the enduring, yet evolving nature of southern culture even into the 1990s. The green and white meeting-place has been carefully restored as have many of the old houses throughout the neighborhood. Nearby, only a 1929 addition to the factory and a few subsidiary buildings still stand. The original 1882 structure was demolished to make a parking lot soon after the company closed in 1962. All that remains of it are the brick window frames of the first floor, a half-silted-in dye room, and fragments of the wet finishing building and sluice gate. Like these physical remnants, only fragments of the workers' lives survive in contemporary documents and family legends. When woven together, they reveal not just the dark times of which John Steinbeck evokes, but the rich fabric of everyday life.

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1. A version of this article, with the author's name misspelled, was published in *The Magazine of Albemarle County History*, Volume 53 (1995), 70-113. Printed or electronic copies of this article may be made for personal or educational use on the condition that the author receive attribution and that his name be spelled correctly. Reproduction for all other purposes requires permission from the author ([amyers@uscupstate.edu](mailto:amyers@uscupstate.edu) or [andrew.h.myers@us.army.mil](mailto:andrew.h.myers@us.army.mil)).
  2. According to Michael Giannini of Charlottesville, whose grandfather and great-grandfather were workers, the mill used a steam whistle to mark the beginning and end of the work day. The bell was reserved to warn of floods. Giannini says that the whistle was salvaged from the plant by a relative when it closed and that he has seen it himself. Dozens of Giannini's family worked for the mill.
  3. The *Daily Progress*, 5 Feb. 1918, contains the advertisement. The paper printed the story of the walkout the next day. The number of workers comes from the payroll, which are part of the company records located at the Merrimac Valley Textile Museum in North Andover, Massachusetts. The museum, hereafter listed as MVTM, is scheduled to reopen in 1996 in Lowell, Massachusetts.
  4. Paul Frederick Brissenden and Emil Frankel, *Labor Turnover in Industry, A Statistical Analysis* (New York, 1922), 52-53.
  5. Turnover at the Woolen Mills for this study was calculated using the formula agreed upon at the Rochester Conference of Employment Managers in May, 1918. The Department of Labor also used this formula at that time. See Brissenden and Frankel, *Labor Turnover*, pp. 7-28.
  6. Average wages calculated from the sample of payrolls taken from the first April of each month from 1909 to 1929. This figure does not include the weavers, who were paid varying rates according to yards of cloth produced. Omitting weavers should not skew the average because, based on two week totals, they earned somewhere near the factory mean. In fact, not including the weavers may even provide a clearer view of the prevailing price of labor because wages in this department tended to vary considerably on account of part-time workers. The April sample is sufficient for computing the average because production at the Charlottesville Woolen Mills exhibited little seasonal variation.
  7. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Retail Prices, 1913 to December 1919* (Washington, 1921), 370-371. The prices for this calculation come from Richmond, Virginia, approximately seventy miles from Charlottesville. The Bureau used Richmond as a regional sample. This figure correlates with the rate of 48% for goods listed in the Charlottesville *Daily Progress* in an article dated 7 Jan. 1918. In fact, the *Progress* cited the Bureau specifically for the article.
  8. Allen Tullos, *Habits of Industry: White Culture and the Transformation of the Carolina Piedmont* (Chapel Hill, 1989); Doug Flamming, *Creating the Modern South: Millhands and Managers in Dalton, Georgia, 1884-1984* (Chapel Hill, 1992).
  9. Flamming builds upon Cathy L. McHugh, *Mill Family: The Labor System in the Southern Cotton Textile Industry, 1880-1915* (New York, 1988) and Philip Scranton, "Varieties of Paternalism: Industrial Structures and the Social Relations of Production in American Textiles," *American Quarterly* (Summer, 1984), 235-57. See also Sanford M. Jacoby, *Masters to*

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*Managers: Historical and Comparative Perspectives in American Employers* (New York, 1991).

10. Minutes of the Woolen Mills Sunday School exist from 1897 until the mid 1950's. Written in company ledger books, the volumes are in the possession of the Woolen Mills Chapel Trustees. Subsequent references cited as WMSS Records. The minutes of the board of the Woolen Mills Company from 1870 through 1956, in four volumes, are in MVTM. Microfilm of the first three volumes, 1870-1937, are located in Alderman Special Collections, University of Virginia. Subsequent references to corporate board minutes cited as CBM, MVTM.

11. WMSS Records, 23 Oct. 1910.

12. Unless otherwise noted, biographical information comes from cross-referencing information from manuscript census records for 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1900, 1910, and 1920 with payroll documents and selected entries from the superintendent's journal (located at MVTM). A fire destroyed the manuscript census for 1890. See also Harry Poindexter, "A History of the Charlottesville Woolen Mills," (M.A. thesis, University of Virginia, 1955), and "Henry Clay Marchant and the Foundations of the Charlottesville Woolen Mills, 1865-1882," *Magazine of Albemarle County History*, 10 (1953), 26-48.

13. Payrolls before July 1909 are not available, but prior to that date, Marchant frequently listed the names of workers in the superintendent's journal. For a reference to Lucy Bragg, see Superintendent's Journal, 23 Dec. 1880, MVTM.

14. *Charlottesville Chronicle*, 20 May 1892.

15. Lyon G. Tyler, ed., *Men of Mark in Virginia: Ideals of American Life* (Washington, 1906), 343-44.

16. CBM, 11 Feb. 1881, MVTM.

17. Tyler, *Men of Mark*, 344.

18. *Charlottesville Chronicle*, 20 Jan. 1882.

19. *Insurance Maps of Charlottesville, Virginia* (New York, 1920). This volume contains a detailed drawing of the Woolen Mills with a listing of operations on individual floors. The Albemarle County Historical Society owns a copy of this atlas.

20. United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Wages and Hours of Labor in Woolen and Worsted Goods Manufacturing, 1916* (Washington, 1918). Pages 84 to 154 give a detailed description of the woolen manufacturing process. Average wages come from an analysis of the payrolls.

21. Wool can be dyed in its raw form, as spun yarn, or as completed cloth. In Charlottesville, however, dyeing took place first.

22. Hegelia and Martha Harlow, natives of Fluvanna County, had seven children. At the time of the 1900 Census, five of them still lived with their parents: Egbert, Lelia, Marcellus, Amanda, and Richard. Charles would have fit within the range of their births. So, however, would fellow workers James H. and Robert O. Harlow. If all of these people were siblings, they would total eight, which contradicts the census figure of seven. Thus, the relationship between Charles and Egbert is speculative in the absence of additional evidence.

23. The five are Robert, Henry, James, Otis, and Otis, Jr.

24. Graves's name does not appear in the 1880 Census, but he is listed as having received payment for work during October and November 1880 (Superintendent's Journal, 23 Dec. 1880,

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MVTM).

25. The term "warper" is somewhat ambiguous. The Bureau of Labor Statistics describes the job as highly skilled. The Virginia Annual Report of Labor Statistics lists "warper" as a relatively low-paying occupation. Given that Johnson described himself as a warper to the census taker and that he received relatively high wages, the Labor Department definition most likely applies here.

26. At the turn of the century, Marchant had imported at least one worker from England, John Arundale. He had attended the Bradford Textile School in Yorkshire. According to notes of an interview with his daughter, Arundale designed the broadcloths that the mill sold to the United States Military Academy at West Point. He returned to England in 1901 because of financial difficulties. Dorothy Arundale Gianniny Burrows, interview, Feb. 1981, Albemarle County Historical Society. WMSS Records, 2 Jun. 1901. The Riverview Cemetery in Charlottesville contains a few graves of other workers who had immigrated, but these people were exceptional.

27. Shisler had married Adam's sister Athalia Spencer.

28. The estimate for a weaver's daily pay was calculated by taking the two week total and dividing by twelve. How much a weaver earned per yard varied from person to person and is impossible to figure prior to 1919 because production records prior to that time were either not kept or lost. Additionally, total pay for weavers varied much more drastically than did wages in other parts of the factory. Many of the women appear to have worked part time.

29. Although the payrolls indicate that mass layoffs did not occur until the Great Depression, post-1919 production records show that output varied considerable from week to week. The difference in pay could vary by as much as a month's rent.

30. According to the 1880 Census, a seventeen-year-old weaver named Emma Timberlake boarded with the widowed mother of Jacob Fauslen. The relationship to James is unknown, and she disappears from the record. The Fauslens lived next to James and Ann Timberlake. Interestingly, both James Timberlake and Jacob Fauslen seem to have been outsiders in the mill community.

31. *Daily Progress*, 29 May 1905.

32. Customers listed throughout the Superintendent's Ledger, MVTM.

33. Philip Scranton, *Figured Tapestry* (New York, 1989).

34. Michael Giannini has in his possession a photograph of the Woolen Mills that includes the surrounding village. It was taken prior to 1929 because the additions to the mill built during that year do not appear in the photograph. CBM for 1917 contain repeated references to a broken sewer pipe. Apparently, city leaders in Charlottesville took their time in repairing the break.

35. "In a way, Charlottesville, is peculiarly situated. There are few cities of its size that can equal it in longitude and this peculiarity bids fair to be heightened rather than otherwise in the future. With the University at its western extremity it is probable that the whole growth of the city would be in that direction if no counteracting influences were brought to bear. As it is, however, the eastern extremity of the city and the Woolen Mills are fast becoming nearer together, the growth in this direction being nearly as rapid as in the west." *Charlottesville Chronicle*, 3 June 1892.

36. The *Charlottesville Chronicle*, 3 June 1892, reported that the mill payroll contributed \$45,000 annually to the local economy.

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37. *Charlottesville Chronicle*, 12 Jan. 1882.
  38. Both Allen Gianniny and George Giannini tell this story. The cousins spell their names differently, but both are great-grandsons of John.
  39. See Stuart D. Brandes, *American Welfare Capitalism, 1880-1940* (Chicago, 1976).
  40. Although official records are not available to prove the existence of a health insurance plan, Hampton Marchant told Harry Poindexter about it.
  41. Nancy G. Elliot, *Woolen Mills Chapel* (Charlottesville: School of Architecture, University of Virginia, 1974).
  42. WMSS Records contain a summary of attendance for each quarter.
  43. *Daily Progress*, 29 May 1905; WMSS Records, 28 May 1905.
  44. Mentioned in CBM, 8 Mar. 1911, MVTM.
  45. WMSS Records, 18 Sept. 1897.
  46. WMSS Records, 20 Jan. 1901, 5 Jan. 1908.
  47. WMSS Records, 8 July 1900.
  48. WMSS Records, 15 July 1900.
  49. Alvin Leroy Hall, "The Prohibition Movement in Virginia, 1826-1916," M.A., University of Virginia, 1964; *Daily Progress*, 22 May, 31 May, 3 June, 5 June, and 7 June 1907; WMSS Records, 1907; CBM, 31 Dec. 1902 and 31 Dec. 1903.
  50. *Charlottesville Chronicle*, 3 June 1892.
  51. WMSS Records, 23 Oct. 1910.
  52. WMSS Records, 25 Dec. 1910.
  53. CBM, 19 Oct. 1910, MVTM.
  54. Biographical information comes from an unpublished sketch on file at the Albemarle County Historical Society written by Robert's granddaughter Virginia Valentine Walker Meade. Other sources include an interview with Robert's daughter-in-law Irene Valentine printed in the *Daily Progress*, 29 April 1990; an obituary for his son Vinton in *ibid.*, 24 May 1968; and an obituary for his son Robert, Jr., in *ibid.*, 19 May 1960. Robert Valentine's personal papers are filed in Alderman Library Special Collections, University of Virginia.
  55. CBM, April 1911, MVTM.
  56. Harry Poindexter interviewed Hampton Marchant for his 1955 masters thesis. He writes in a footnote on page 140 that "Marchant informed the writer that no friction ever existed between him and Valentine. But the directors thought differently." Poindexter conducted this interview thirty years after the fact. His placement of the information in a footnote suggests that he, too, had doubts about the lack of friction. Furthermore, that Marchant would also tell Poindexter that no labor disputes had ever occurred speaks poorly for his memory.
  57. CBM, 11 Mar. 1911, MVTM.
  58. CBM, 18 Jan. 1912, MVTM.
  59. CBM, 16 April 1916, MVTM.
  60. Jarman's devotion to the plant comes through in his 1932 retirement letter: "At that time [1873] the plant was small--known as a one set mill. Its capital stock was less than \$50,000--paid in. Its output mostly plain cassimeres and kerseys. Notwithstanding many drawbacks in those days such as frequent high water, occasional serious floods, and a disastrous fire in 1882--causing an impairment of assets during the rehabilitating period--I have witnessed its growth to

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its present physical proportions--prestige, and financial integrity. I value the memory of many years of pleasant association with the officers and colaborers who have gone before, and those who remain--wish for them continued success and happiness that comes to a congenial group of workers in a worthy enterprise" (Correspondence Box, MVTM).

61. WMSS Records, 20 Dec. 1914.

62. CBM, Jan. of 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918, and 1919, MVTM.

63. *Retail Prices*, 370-371.

64. *Daily Progress*, 6 June 1917, 20 July 1917, 13 July 1917; CBM, 3 May 1917, MVTM; Vinton Valentine Papers, Alderman Special Collections, University of Virginia.

65. R. T. W. Duke, Jr., "Albemarle County and the City of Charlottesville in War Time," in Arthur K. Davis, *Virginia Communities in War Time* (Richmond, 1926), 681-94.

66. *Daily Progress*, 9 June 1917.

67. CBM, 12 July 1917, MVTM.

68. *Daily Progress*, 31 Dec. 1917.

69. CBM, 3 May 1917, 1 Nov. 1917, MVTM.

70. *Report of the Bureau of Labor and Industrial Statistics of the State of Virginia*, 1912, 1917.

71. The total average wages for Virginia woolen workers given here does not include pay for weavers because the daily pay for that occupation in Charlottesville is not available.

72. This figure does not include weavers either.

73. The 1910 payroll lists J. M. Hall as a worker in the wet finishing department. He earned \$1.65 per day. The 1910 census lists him as a finisher at the woolen mills who was widowed and had two daughters. The WMSS Records for 8 July 1906 note the death of Emma Hall. By 1920, Hall had remarried and is listed as a binder in the silk mills.

74. United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Wages and Hours of Labor in woolen and Worsted Goods Manufacturing: 1910 to 1930* (Washington, 1931), 1.

75. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *United States Census of Manufactures*, 9: 1277. 10: 100. See also Wilbur S. Johnston, *Weaving a Common Thread: A History of the Woolen Industry in the Top of the Shenandoah Valley* (Winchester, 1990), 46-86.

76. The payrolls periodically include annual rent list. Monthly rates varied from \$1.00 to \$6.50.

77. *Daily Progress*, 5 May, 23 June 1917.

78. United States Fuel Administration, Record Group 67, Finding Aid and Box 844, National Archives.

79. *Daily Progress*, 17 Jan. 1918.

80. WMSS Minutes, 8 April 1917. These illnesses were not the result of the infamous influenza outbreak. That epidemic did not reach Charlottesville until October 1918. *Daily Progress*, 7 Oct. 1918.

81. CBM, 18 June 1917, MVTM.

82. CBM, 8 July 1917, MVTM.

83. CBM, 2 Aug. 1917, MVTM.

84. According to Victoria Dunham, a cousin of Van Wagonen, the general manager spelled his first name "Duryea."

85. WMSS Records, 5 Feb. 1918.

86. CBM, 1 Nov., 5 Dec., 17 Dec., 27 Dec. 1917, 20 Jan. 1919, MVTM.

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87. Information comes from a biographical sketch written in 1956 for the Charlottesville Rotary Club. A copy, "furnished by Mr. DuBord of the Electric and Power Company", is on file at the MVTM in the correspondence box.
- 88.CBM, 8 Jan. 1935, MVTM.
- 89.Bruce Barton, *The Man Nobody Knows* (Indianapolis, 1926).
- 90.CBM, 11 Jan. 1918, MVTM.
- 91.The *Daily Progress* said that all eighteen workers belonged to the finishing department. Although burlers came under the supervision of the weaving foreman, burling is technically part of the finishing process.
- 92.The finishers who walked out did not receive pay for that day or the next. The number of blank spaces on the finisher payroll correlates with the number of men given by the *Daily Progress*.
- 93.Shisler killed himself with a shotgun blast to the head in May 1918. The Sunday School cancelled services so that everybody could attend his funeral. (*Daily Progress*, 17 May 1918; WMSS Records, 2nd Quarter Summary).
- 94.CBM, 7 Feb. 1918, MVTM.
- 95.*Daily Progress*, 12 Feb. 1918.
- 96.Van Wagonen could afford to be more generous with wages and benefits than had his predecessor because profits rose under his leadership. Additionally, the stockholders voted in February 1920 to increase the capital stock so that the plant could expand.
- 97.Petitions mentioned in CBM, 21 Jan. 1922 and 15 June 1923, MVTM.
- 98.CBM, 27 Feb. 1922, MVTM.
- 99.WMSS Records, 17 Feb. 1918. R. T. W. Duke says in his account that churches throughout Charlottesville allowed laymen to make pitches for War Savings Stamps and bonds from their pulpits. Michie's appearance nevertheless was a highly unusual event at the Woolen Mills Sunday school. Given the high level of personal involvement that Michie later exhibited in the business and company affairs within the mill community, it is reasonable to conclude that he could have had a motivations for addressing the congregation that went beyond selling war bonds.
- 100.WMSS Records, 1st Quarter Summary, shows erasure marks with Hampton Marchant's name inserted as a new teacher.
- 101.WMSS Records, 30 Mar. 1918.
- 102.Valentine Papers, 12 April 1918; WMSS Records, 14 April 1918.
- 103.The 1st quarter report for 1918 in the WMSS records lists a "Miss Van Wagonen" as a teacher.
- 104.Changes in the payroll correlate with resolutions in the CBM.
- 105.Accounts listed in the Superintendent's Ledger, MVTM.
- 106.Production statistics listed in the payroll books with the weavers. These records do not begin until 1918.
- 107.CBM, 15 Jan. 1920, MVTM. Given the H. D. Jarman remained accountant throughout this change in the bookkeeping, credit for the new system must go to Van Wagonen.
- 108.Of the 138 people listed on the 1920 payroll, 123 appear on the 1920 Manuscript Census.
- 109.CBM, 12 April 1922, MVTM.

110.CBM, 19 Nov. 1926, 15 Dec. 1926, MVTM.

111.Bragg disappears from the payrolls, and the 1920 census lists him as a storekeeper.

112.CBM, 2 May 1937, 18 April 1937, MVTM.

113.Nelson Lichtenstein and Stephen Meyer, eds., *On the Line: Essays in the History of Auto Work* (Chicago, 1989; Sanford Jacoby, *Employing Bureaucracy: Managers, Unionization, and the Bureaucratization of Work, 1900-1945* (New York, 1985).

114.According to Mabell C. Haggard, the employees staged a walkout during the forties after the manager refused to grant a pay raise. At the same time, 168 of 200 total workers formed Local Union #86 of the United Textile Workers of America (AFL). The employees returned to work the next day, and with federal assistance, they negotiated a contract. U.S. Department of Labor Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, Record Group 280, National Archives; UTWA Biennial Convention Meetings, 1944 and 1946; *Daily Progress*, 12 March 1945; personal interview with Mabell C. Haggard by Andrew Myers, December 1992; copy of union contract in correspondence box, MVTM.

115.William Phillips, "The Labor Market of Southern Textile Mill Villages: Some Micro Evidence," *Explorations in Economic History* 23: 103-123 (1986).