

Fieldcrest Mills, Inc.
Eden, N. C. 27288
Issued Every Other Monday For Employees
and Friends of Fieldcrest Mills, Inc.

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Mott House Entered Into Historical Register

The former "Mott House" which contains part of the offices of the Columbus Towel Mill at Columbus, Ga. has been accepted for entry into the National Register of Historic Places.

W. C. Battle, president of Fieldcrest Mills, Inc., was notified by Jackson O'Neal Lamb, state historic preservation officer, Department of Natural Resources, that the "Mott House" had been entered into the National Register of Historic Places.

With its mansard roof and with what architects have declared is the most classical portico in the State of Georgia, the house was the home of Col. Randolph Lawler Mott, a staunch Unionist in Columbus during the Civil War.

"This house has never been out of the Union," Col. Mott declared as he met General James Harrison Wilson following the capture of Columbus in the last land battle of the war.

The antebellum mansion, which Gen. Wilson used as his headquarters, today houses the Columbus Towel Mill's Purchasing, Payroll and Industrial Engineering Departments and a portion of the Data Processing Department.

The handsome three-storied house with its unusual roof, four large chimneys and cupola suggested historical homes in Ohio and New England. Iron grillwork forms a rail between the four Ionic columns of the small portico and adorns the top of the roof. The same wrought iron was used to enclose the four sides of the roof.

Built For Nancy Calhoun

The house was originally built for Nancy Howard Calhoun (Mrs. James S. Calhoun), a daughter of John Howard of Milledgeville, who has many descendants in present-day Columbus. He is said to have been very wealthy at the time of his death in 1822 and left a sufficient inheritance to a number of children to build handsome homes in the boomtown on the Chattahoochee River which was attracting much interest in many sections.

The house was sold in the 1840's to Daniel Griffin, a young Irish civil engineer, who had come south soon after landing to help build the Central of Georgia railroad. When he settled in Columbus and bought the "Calhoun house," as it was then called, he landscaped the grounds to the water's edge and planted camellias, gardenias and other flowers.

Some of the 100-year-old camellias are still in existence the most famous of which is the "Lindsay Neil", named for the Columbus gentleman who propagated it. The late Lindsay Neil was for many years employed in the office of Muscogee Manufacturing Company, now the Columbus Towel Mill of Fieldcrest Mills, Inc.

Daniel Griffin acquired a fortune as the owner of a line of stages between Milledgeville, the capital of Georgia, and Montgomery, recently made capital of Alabama, and was a bank president.

Famous Visitors

To please his bride in 1849, he filled the house with beautiful furnishings and lived in great style, often entertaining distinguished guests, including Samuel F. B. Morse, inventor of the telegraph. Griffin later sold the state line to become president and a big stockholder in the Morse Telegraph Line from Washington to New Orleans. He sold the house in 1856 when he moved to Washington as the head of the Southern Telegraph Line.

The purchaser of the house was Col. Randolph Lawler Mott, a native of Fauquier County, Va. Mott did much to beautify the house, including iron grillwork and brick walls all around with towers at the corners.

He was a Unionist who kept the respect of his neighbors. His son, John R. Mott, during the war was adjutant on the staff of Gen. Henry L. Benning, C.S.A., showing how sometimes families were divided by the Civil War.

When Columbus was captured, Mott invited Union Gen. James Harrison Wilson to make the house his headquarters.

Columbus fell on Easter Sunday, April 16, 1865. Neither side knew that Lee had surrendered to Grant one week earlier at Appomattox. Virginia was a long way off in that day and news traveled slowly. The Union forces under Gen. Wilson swept across the river from Alabama into Columbus, setting fire to railroad yards, freight cars, warehouses and mills, plus 125,000 bales of cotton.

American Flag Flew

In writing later of the devastation of Columbus, Gen. Wilson said he spared only one warehouse: "This was the property of a Union man, at whose house I made my headquarters, and within the dome of which he assured me the American flag had been kept flying from the outbreak of the war to the unfortunate day. He claimed with the fervor of a patriot that his house and grounds had never been out of the Union. Of course I ordered his property safeguarded until we withdrew from the city and that was done; but our last man had scarcely taken the road when Buford's Division of Forrest's Corps entered the town."

The present offices contain some of the original carved woodwork of the interior. A handsome two-way staircase from a design in one of the palaces in Milan has been removed from the front part of the house, which has always faced the river at the northern end of Front Street.

The Mott place formerly occupied the whole block and had entrances with iron gates



The historic "Mott House" in Columbus, Ga.

opening on Broad Street. The Columbus Towel Mill now covers the same block and its continuous operation for over a century spans the time the romance and history of Old South and today's textile operation.

Save Heat — Sensibly

No, the energy crisis hasn't gone away. It's very much with us.

The U. S. today has widespread shortages of gas and fuel oil. Nobody wants to sit in the cold dark this winter. So what can one do voluntarily to conserve energy at home? Here are a few commonsense suggestions:

- Set your home thermostat at 68 degrees the day and turn it down to 65 at night.
- If you have a hot-air furnace, check the filters each month. Dirty filters limit the heat from the furnace.
- Have your furnace cleaned, checked and adjusted at least once a year.
- Use storm windows and doors. You need 1/2 inches of good thermal insulation over your top ceiling to keep warm air effectively inside the house. Remember that drawn drapes and curtains are effective insulators.
- Install weather stripping around drafty windows and doors. Putty or caulk cracks around window foundations.
- Seal off attics, spare bedrooms and other rooms that don't require heat.
- Turn off lights, radio, TV and small appliances when you're not using them.
- Use the shower instead of filling the bathtub. Showers use less water, which is costly to heat.
- If You have a fireplace, close the damper when there's no fire. Updrafts in the flue can siphon off as much as 20 percent of the heat in your house.