

## But time changed things . . .

The Community House and Plant Hospital of Loray Mills, Gastonia, served a vital need in the mill community in years past. In the Firestone years (since 1935) the Hospital was converted to a guest house and later apartments. The Community House continued to the 1970s as an activities place, when it was razed to make room for an employees parking lot. The company sold the other building and it, too, was torn down.

Under Firestone ownership, the Community House was later known as Girls Club or The Clubhouse, and last as the Recreation Center until the building was scrapped in late 1973.

Through the years it had been the center of plant-community social life. There were banquets, dances, programs, recitals, training classes, club meetings, weddings and receptions, and family reunions. For a while the mill operated a nursery there for children of employees. It even served as an emergency clinic

during a flu epidemic. It was a precinct voting place to the end of its history.

**BUT TIME** changed things. Demand for an activities center faded away. Last of the hostesses at the old building were Nellie Stowe, followed by Ida Byers. Both are retired.

Walter Dockery, retired powerhouse operator; John Fletcher, retired machine shop superintendent; and his brother Exlice, now a Shop bench mechanic, are among the people who remember "those days."

Walt was of a group of retired

men who played checkers in the lower level of the old building up to its final use as a recreation place in 1973. Today, most of the same group and some others who've since retired, meet in a house on Vance Street.



● Employees' children had care in a nursery at the Community House (upper left) while parents worked in the mill. Exlice Fletcher (Shop) and his brother John (retired from Shop) are "alumni" of the old nursery. Exlice thinks that he and John are among the children in this old photo, believed to have been made around 1919-20. The Fletcher brothers' mother worked in the mill's spooling department then.



**THREE DIVISION PLANTS** turned out 148,883,355 pounds tire fabric during last fiscal

year. It went to Firestone tire plants and outside customers in the U. S. and several other countries.

## \$25 million in 3 plant areas

● ● Firestone Textiles Company U. S. plants put into its 3 local economies \$25,288,530 during the 1977-1978 fiscal year. For the year ended last October 31, the company spent this amount for salaries, wages and purchases of materials, supplies and services at Gastonia, Bowling Green and Bennettsville.

**Figures for the 3 plants:** Gastonia—\$14,658,621. Bowling Green—\$8,718,000. Bennettsville—\$1,911,909.

All these expenditures were involved in the production of almost 150 million pounds of fabric, principally for use as reinforcement in tires.

Production was mainly in polyester, nylon and rayon. Small amounts of other synthetic materials were included. Gastonia produced (by rank of volume) nylon, polyester and rayon and a small amount of fiberglass and steelwire. Fiberglass

production was phased out by April, 1978; wire was discontinued earlier—in January.

Bowling Green produced fabric in polyester and nylon principally, with a smaller amount of fiberglass. Bennettsville turned out nylon fabric exclusively.

Production of the 3 plants was shipped to Firestone tire factories in the United States and Canada; and to Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Ghana, Kenya, New Zealand, Uruguay and Valencia. Also, some fabric went to Israel (shipped through the DuPont Company.)

## NC House member

Joe Johnson, Raleigh attorney and member of the N. C. House of Representatives from Wake County, was among 8 state legislators under age 40, selected from across the U. S., to make a political-exchange visit to the Soviet Union in late 1978. He represented the Southeast U. S., on the trip sponsored by the Council of Young American Political Leaders.

Johnson is the son-in-law of Rosie Francum (Mrs. John) Fletcher, retired toolroom clerk in the Firestone Shop. Fletcher is a retired machine shop supervisor.

Rep. Johnson is a graduate of N. C. State University and Wake Forest School of Law. His wife, Jane Francum Johnson, is a graduate of UNC-Greensboro. She was a Merit Award winner in the Firestone Scholarship program in her high-school senior year.

The Johnsons have 3 daughters—Elizabeth, 15; Ivory, 9; and Briles, 8.

## Proposed merger

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No changes are expected for the vast majority of Firestone employees, if the merger is accomplished.

The subject of merger will not be on the agenda of the Firestone stockholders annual meeting Jan. 27. A special meeting to deal with the merger will be set in the Spring, after final definitions of the agreement are worked out.

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The fire you kindle for your enemy often burns yourself more than him.

—Chinese Proverb

## Its parts still serving in Clio

Back in 1974 Firestone at Bennettsville gave an old firetruck to the Rescue Squad and Rural Fire Unit of neighboring Clio, S. C. The company had purchased the 1942 International, 6-cylinder, 500-gallon pumper for \$1,000 in 1948.

The truck served the plant in its fire-protection program. At the time the old vehicle changed owners, the mileage clock showed 2,630. Clio was to get a lot more out of it.

Today, though, it serves on through many of its parts installed on another truck—a present one in service at Clio.



Robin at UNC-Chapel Hill

Robinette Caldwell is a senior at University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, attending the university on a Firestone company scholarship. With a major in English and a minor in communications arts, Robinette will graduate at the Spring com-

mencement. She works part-time in a Chapel Hill restaurant.

Her mother Doris (Mrs. Lee) Hollifield of Gastonia was employed in industrial engineering at Firestone Textiles at the time Robinette was awarded the company scholarship.

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## ● GASTONIA

Claude C. Callaway, Editor

Plant Offices Warehouses

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**BENNETTSVILLE PLANT**  
Frances Fletcher, Redona David, Margaret McCaskill, Jimmy McCaskill

**BOWLING GREEN**  
Clifton O. Logsdon

## Looking around

● Noted: Cafe named Chat-N-Chew. Product of short-cut sign-painter on Gastonia establishment: GRO & PROD (Groceries & Produce).