The News - Journal

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1982

Hats Tipped To Textile Neighbors This Week

Burlington Industries' Menswear Raeford/Dyeing Plants are joining TexElastic Corporation and over 1,300 other textile operations across North Carolina in observance of North Carolina Textile Week October 18-24.

Theme of the observance is "Textiles Touching Our Lives Totally."

Ashwell Harward, manager of community relations, said of Burlington's local operations: "Our celebration will include activities for employees and their families, as well as the community. They are essential to the success of our community as part of this very important industry in North Carolina. We are also underscoring the economic impact in jobs and payrolls, and the more intangible yet important contributions that our people make to the life of the community."

Plans have been finalized to have an "Ice Cream Dipping" at both plants for the employees. Each employe will be given a Burlington decal to go on their car. This is being done in recognition of our employes for a job well done.

Burlington is the nation's largest manufacturer of textiles and related products, with 87 plants in 10 states. The Raeford/Dyeing Plants are two of 50 Burlington manufacturing operations in 39 Tar Heel communities. In addition, Burlington's corporate offices corporate research and development, major distribution centers and corporate transportation operations are headquartered in North Carolina. Burlington employs some 30,000 people at these operations, more than half the company's total employment in 10 states and four foreign countries.

"Ours is a very basic and traditional industry, yet it is modern and viable," Harward said. "In spite of the current economic downturn, textiles continues to be the largest industry in North Carolina, with over 219,000 employees in the Tar Heel state."

North Carolina textile payrolls are $2.8 billion annually; textile products range from basic textiles for home, apparel and industry, to more exotic products, for the space program, for military and medical uses, and use in other industries such as microelectronics.

Other important Tar Heel industries such as fiber manufacturers, dye stuff and machinery manufacturers, research and development facilities, warehousing, distribution and trucking industries depend largely upon textiles.

Textile products represent almost one fourth of North Carolina's total industrial manufacturing shipments.

The textile industry is the leading employer of women and minorities in the state; it has also averaged a 4.3 percent annual gain in productivity since 1975, in a period in which U.S. manufacturing generally has averaged only 1.8 percent.

Textile capital spending in North Carolina has totaled $2.3 billion over the past 10 years; these expenditures have dramatically increased productivity, plant efficiency, quality, and energy conservation.

"Burlington's capital program continues to be the leader in the industry," Harward said. "Our company will spend over $200 million in 1982 for new and expanded facilities; of this total, a major part is going into North Carolina operations. For example, we are completing a $55 million shuttleless weaving plant at Erwin this year; last year we dedicated a new air-jet weaving plant at Marion; the year before we dedicated a new water-jet unit in Richmond County. These and other projects make Burlington Plants the most modern in the industry.

Burlington Celebrates 26 Years In Raeford

by Bill Lindau

Burlington Industries has been an industrial citizen of Raeford since 1956, with over 1,700 people now employed.

The Dyeing Plant and the Raeford Plant originally constituted a single operation, built in 1951 by Robbins Mills to produce synthetic yarns and fabrics.

The Raeford plants are the largest operations of their type in the world. What these plants do more than any others is produce worsted and worsted-blend fabrics for suiting, slacks, and uniform markets.

It is often said that nine of every 10 U.S. military men and women wear winter uniforms made of cloth manufactured in Raeford. A more conservative estimate would suggest the majority of U.S. armed forces people are dressed in fabrics produced here.

And closer to home, odds are good that the high school band and local police are clothed in Burlington fabrics made here, as are many bus drivers and airline employees.

The two Raeford plants also produce fabric designed for women's wear which is sold under the Burlington "Ms." label.

The Raeford plant and Burlington Menswear here are among eight manufacturing plants in the Burlington Menswear Division.

The company has made important commitments to expand and modernize manufacturing capacity and meet increased market demands. The Raeford Plant, for example, finished in the late 1970's a $5 million project for innovative weaving equipment, and BMD completed a $3.8 million project in the early 1980's.

The Dyeing Plant professes dyed stock (fiber in staple form) for Raeford and other greige plants in the division. BMD also manufactures natural (undyed) stock for another Menswear plant where fabric will be piece-dyed.

The Raeford Plant is a fully integrated yarn manufacturing and weaving unit that produces greige fabric (unfinished cloth).

Gabardine and serge are examples of the fabrics made from worsted and worsted-blend yard at Raeford. The yarn is tightly woven with a smooth, hard surface after it is spun from strands of fiber in silver (untwisted) form.

The two operations make Burlington the leading employer in Hoke County and Raeford's and Hoke County's largest taxpayer. Burlington's impact on the region's economy is significant.

In addition to the $19.5 million in annual payroll and one of the best benefit packages in the textile industry, the company spends about $3 million each year for utilities, energy purchases and local taxes.

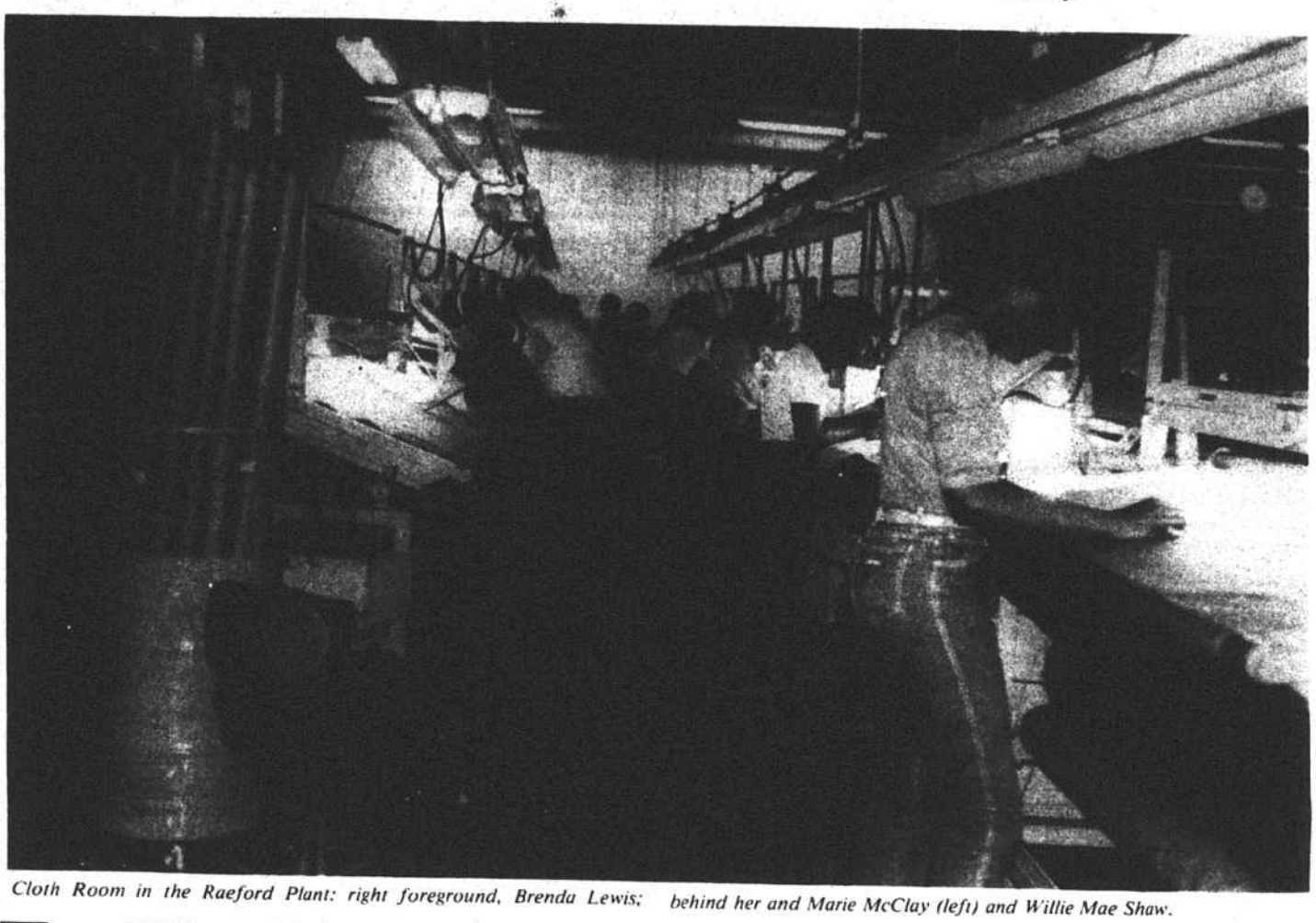
During a recent five-year period, absenteeism at these plants has been less than half the national average for all manufacturing plants.

The stability of the work force is equally impressive. During 1980, for example, more than 90% of the employees in both plants remained with the company. This compares with the textile industry average of less than 70%.

BMD pioneered in a Work Effectiveness program in 1979. The program involves small groups of employees doing similar work who meet each week to discuss their production and quality problems, investigate causes, recommend solutions, and take corrective action. Work Effectiveness improves job satisfaction, teamwork and communications.

Plant employes participate off the job in community activities. Various employes have served on the Raeford City Council, as chairman of the Hoke County United Way, chairman of the Hoke County Parks and Recreation Commission, as officers of the Raeford-Hoke County Chamber of Commerce and in other civic and church organizations.

The Burlington Foundation, on behalf of employes of the two plants, also makes annual donations to various agencies and institutions of the area.



Cloth Room in the Raeford Plant: right foreground, Brenda Lewis; behind her and Marie McClay (left) and Willie Mae Shaw.

TexElastic Helps Garment Industry

TexElastic's Corp.'s Raeford plant, which now employs 153 people seven days a week on three shifts, was founded originally in 1949 as Parathread Co.

It was equipped with Arnold covering machines manufacturing heavy elastic yarns for the half hose and foundation garment industries. The plant was capable of producing approximately 10,000 pounds of elastic yarns weekly. Some of the original employees were Carson and Gene Lewis and Wayne Lackey who later founded TexElastic.

U.S. Rubber Co., at that time the giant of the elastic yarn business, acquired the plant in 1955 and added some more Arnold equipment along with some cannister machines which were converted to Arnold machines.

In the early and middle 1960s many of these machines were converted from reel type take-ups to tubes and with the introduction of "Lycra" and "Vyrene" spandex was converted from rubber covered with cotton and rayon to spandex covered with nylon. This moved the plant into another field - ladies' hosiery.

In July 1969, the plant was purchased from Uniroyal by TexElastic and continued to run mostly Arnold machines for primarily the half hose and foundation garment industries with a small amount of yarn going to ladies hosiery.

In 1970, the first high speed, fine denier, Model 66 OMM covering machines were installed, and the size of the plant was doubled to accommodate expansion. By 1972 there were 33 Model 66 machines in operation turning out fine denier yarns for support hosiery. During 1972, 10 more Model 66 machines were acquired, along with 15 Model 63 OMM's, for a total of 58 OMM covering machines.

During this buildup period the proper auxiliary equipment was also purchased to completely back up these high speed covering machines.

Ten more Model 66 machines were purchased and put in production in 1973. Also, the Model 63 OMMs were converted from 20,000 revolutions per minute spindles to 30,000 RPM spindals to keep up with customer demands for more fine denier yarns.

At this time all covering of rubber yarns as well as most of the Arnold machines were moved to the Archdale Plant and the Raeford Plant had been changed from a rubber covering plant serving the half hose and foundation garment industries to a spandex covering plant serving the ladies hosiery trade.

In 1976, two more Model 66 OMM machines were added for a total of 70 OMM machines. From this time until August of 1977 all Arnold and Suma machines were moved out of the plant to Archdale.

At this time 106 OMM machines are running yarns for sheer support, control panty, and waist bands for ladies' hosiery.

The company currently is selling yarns that go into the following national brands: L'Eggs Sheer Energy, Kayser-Roth Sheer Comfort Stride, Round The Clock's Givenci, and Hanes Slenderalls, as well as numerous other customers in unbranded lines.

TexElastic here produces 16,000 to 20,000 pounds of fine denier covered yarns in a seven-day cycle. The selling price of the various yarns runs from $6 to $15 per pound.

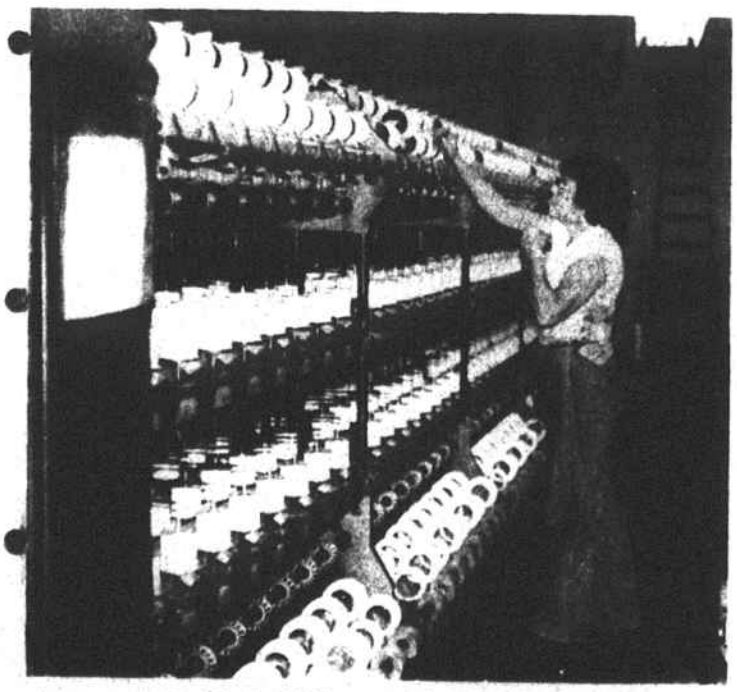
Visitors to the Raeford plant find themselves in a climate-controlled environment where the temperature ranges from 80 to 85 degrees and the humidity is maintained at 55 to 66 percent. These climate factors are necessary to produce a quality product.

Jamie Johnson, Raeford quality control supervisor, says that certain styles of fine denier covered yard require as much as seven days to complete a covering doff cycle.

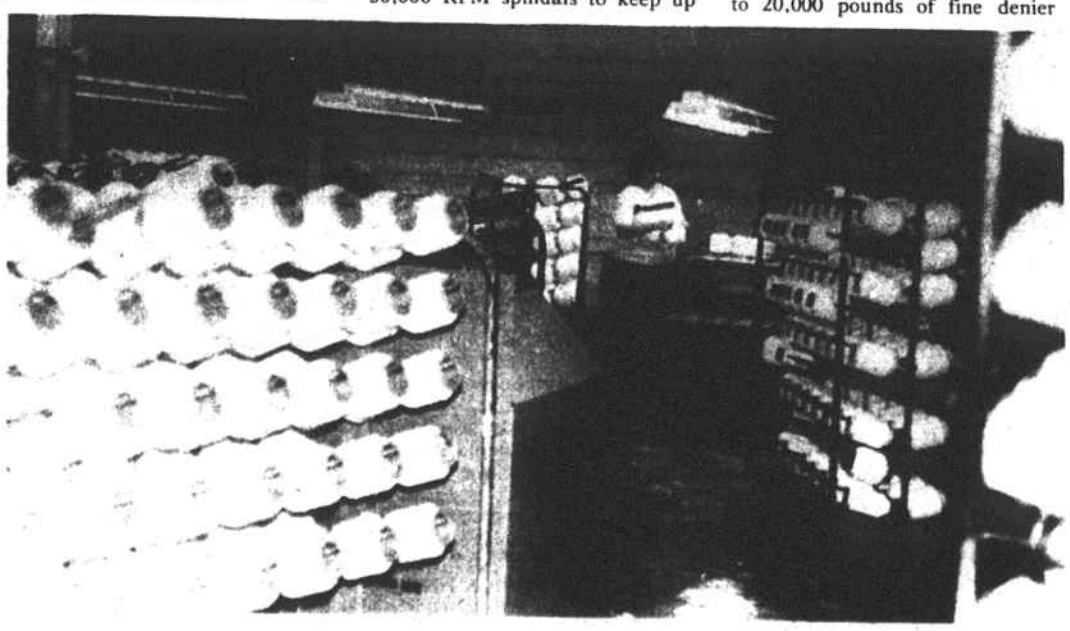
The Raeford Plant's manager is Horace Stogner, who has been with the firm since the Adams-Millis Corp. bought the Raeford plant in 1969. Before then, he was with Uniroyal, the previous owner of the plant.

Stogner was appointed plant manager in 1974. He had been working in scheduling and planning, as a supervisor, and as plant superintendent before assuming his present duties.

He is a native of Wadesboro and attended Presbyterian Junior College in Maxton. His wife formerly worked with Uniroyal and TexElastic. They have two sons, one living in Durham, and the other in Winter Park, Fla.



TexElastic OMM operator Ann Sipes at work.



Francis Harris at work as an inspector in the TexElastic plant here.

At work in part of Burlington Industries here.