

HISTORIC MARKER PROGRAM

Forsyth County Historic Resources Commission

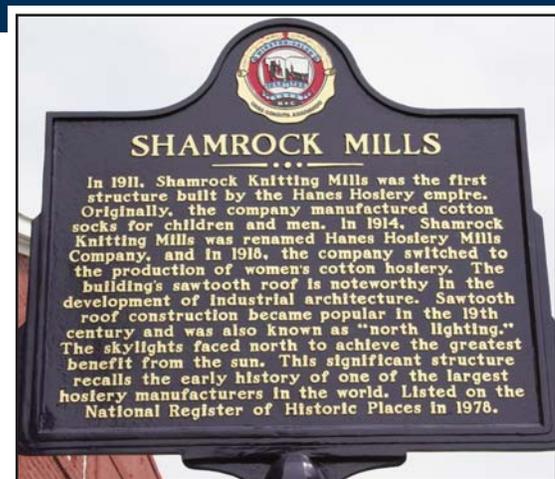
Shamrock Mills

Shamrock Mills, constructed in 1911, was the first structure built by the present-day Hanesbrands Inc. In 1872, Pleasant Henderson Hanes and his brother, John Wesley Hanes, came to what was then the town of Winston from Davie County, North Carolina. Together, the brothers first established a tobacco manufacturing enterprise, P.H. Hanes & Co. However, they sold the business in 1900 to the R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company and then the brothers separately went into the textile business. John Wesley Hanes went into the manufacturing of stockings, while his brother opened an underwear manufacturing business under the name P.H. Hanes Knitting Company.

John Wesley Hanes acquired a four-story building in Winston that had been formerly used by a tobacco company. Using the name Shamrock Knitting Mills, Hanes was producing men's and children's socks by 1902. Unfortunately, Hanes did not live to see his company become a nationally prominent corporation; he died in 1903.

In 1911, Shamrock Knitting Mills constructed its new manufacturing facility at Pine (now N. Marshall Street) and W. Second Streets. The plant housed 200 knitting machines and 200 employees. It was a distinctive element of Winston's skyline with a sawtooth roof design that featured six-foot high skylights.

Sawtooth roof construction for manufacturing facilities had become increasingly popular and was also known as "north lighting." The skylights faced north to achieve the greatest benefit from the sun's rays, yet avoided their glare. In fact, textile "knitting rooms" in England began to feature sawtooth rooflines as early as 1854. By the



mid-1880s, these knitting rooms were seen in the United States, likely inspired by the introduction of large, high speed automatic looms. These looms produced a vibration and impact that existing multistory mill buildings could not withstand. A one-story knitting room was better able to accommodate updated machinery. Because these one-story rooms were quite expansive, a need for skylights became apparent – many looms were located beyond the reach of light from wall windows. However, skylights

were not without issues; they were difficult to keep clean and watertight. Also, as artificial lighting systems improved, skylights became less practical. Artificial light was constant and there was no heat loss or gain found with the glass skylights.

In 1914, Shamrock Knitting Mills was renamed Hanes Hosiery Mills Company. As such, the building became the first Hanes hosiery mill – a company that grew into a national textile empire. Hanes converted to the manufacturing of women's hosiery in 1918; the products were offered in black, gray, brown, navy, and

bleached white. By 1926, the company had outgrown the "Sawtooth" facility and moved into a larger plant. In 1962, Hanes Hosiery Mills merged with the P.H. Hanes Knitting Company; the merger created one of the largest hosiery manufacturers in the world.



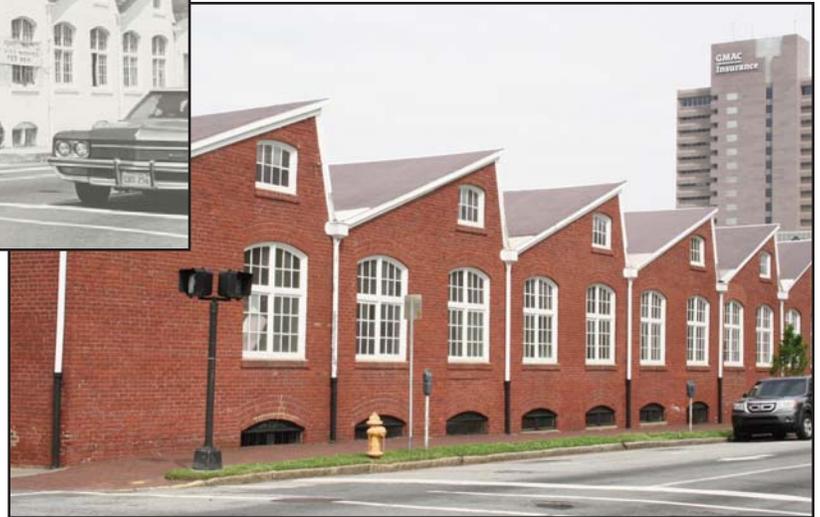
Carolina Cadillac Company next occupied the building and it was used as an automobile dealership. During the late 1970s, the building underwent its first major renovation, and became home to the Arts Council of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County and the Sawtooth Center for Visual Art. In the summer of 2010, after a two-year construction/renovation project to the complex, the

Sawtooth Center became part of the Milton Rhodes Center for the Arts. The Center offers instruction in drawing, painting, ceramics, woodworking, photography, etc. It is fitting that the studios are able to take advantage of the original sawtooth roof lighting design that allows more natural light to enter.

In 1978, Shamrock Mills was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



Sawtooth Building on North Marshall Street
Courtesy of Forsyth County Public Library
Photograph Collection



Sawtooth Building, 2012

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

[http://www.textilehistory.org/
HanesHosieryWinstonSalemNC.html](http://www.textilehistory.org/HanesHosieryWinstonSalemNC.html)

[http://www.digitalforsyth.org/photos/browse/
places-interiors-hanes-hosiery-mill](http://www.digitalforsyth.org/photos/browse/places-interiors-hanes-hosiery-mill)



This information is also available
at the Forsyth County
Historic Resources Commission's web site:
<http://www.ForsythCountyHRC.org>