

## Bibb city Mill Worker Walking Tour

Hello folks my name is.....and I live in Bibb City. Bibb city is a mill town created to make homes for the workers of this here mill. This mill was built in 1898.and the town was constructed 1903 by the Bibb company from Macon Georgia. The town itself was built so people could reside closer to the mill and have a place to raise a family. It is a quaint little community. We have our school, our local church and then a few places to have fun such as the Comer auditorium and the Park.

Lets walk this way towards Porter street (Talk a bit about the surrounding building). This is the Residential district of Bibb city. If you notice the houses are all built in the same shape but each one has it's own character from the exterior. They are also built very close together. I being a single man working at the mill would live in one of these houses with one or two roommates who also work at the mill. We also are very friendly with the neighbors cause they are so close to us...literally. And about this time I would be at work and the neighbors kids would be waiting at the school for me to pick them up...the neighbor works the later shift. But if it were the summer I would be picking them up at the gym from "summer camp."

The first stop will be our gym, the Comer Auditorium. The comer auditorium was built 10 years ago in the year 1940. Our first basketball team was started here but they didn't go on to have many seasons because they hardly ever won. But we enjoy the gym as a recreational facility. We use it for events as well as for sports. And as I mentioned before we use it as a day camp/care service for working parents during the summer so the children won't be at home alone. During the other months out of the year they are in school. While this building is our main source of recreational activities, many of us enjoy the park on Hemlock.

### **the next section is to be done while walking**

Hemlock is one of the most beautiful sections of town if you notice it is covered with trees filled with Spanish moss...this is the only area in Columbus that has this many number of trees with Spanish moss. If you look down to where the park is there was once a stream that ran right through the middle of it and sources say that once in a while the stream has been known to flood and we get ourselves a fishing pond. But for the most part it just has the little stream. We enjoy going down there on a nice sunny day and have picnics by the stream...if we get time off...which is a rarity. Now we are gonna walk around the park and see the newer section of town.

This area was built up in the 1920's and has both a great view of the Chattahoochee and of the park. If you notice once we get past park and porter the streets begin to get curvy...that is the first indication you are in the new section...the second indication is that the houses are slightly different (a bit

smaller). But if you walk back towards the mill they get to look like all the rest. Now earlier I mentioned my neighbors kids ad needing to pick them up at some point soon so lets head towards the school.

Ok here we are at the Bibb Elementary school. The kids go here until secondary school begins and then they would usually go to Columbus for schooling or they go to work in the mill. This school was built in ..... The head mistress Eva Gardner is exceptionally kind, but very strict. If your child misbehaves, she will pay you a visit later that night.

There are many recreational things to do in town from the park on Hemlock Drive to the Comer Auditorium on the hill and this here indoor pool or natuarium. For 10 cents you can go for5 a dip in the summer or if you like to be mischievous you can sneak in after hours and risk getting caught by the police and possibly lose your job.

Chatfield\_meghanWell my break is almost over so we best be heading back to the mill.

As I said before I am a mill worker. I work in the shipping and packing department, I help pack up the cloth to be sent to the factories to become things like sheets and what not. My overseer is very kind and helpful but if he catches you doing something against the rules you will be penalized harshly, even fired. What the mill does is takes the cotton from bales and turns it in to cloth for the Bibb co. to use for towels, sheets, clothes etc. This is a basic run down of how the process goes. The cotton comes in on truck. It is then unloaded and run through a machine that flattens it out into sheets that can be used to make yarn or string. Then after it has been spun into yarn it is then taken to the weaving section where it is then woven into the sheets of cloth that I ship out. If the Bibb company wants a certain color of cloth to be shipped to the factory, it is then taken from the loom to the dying room and then dyed to what ever color it is intended to be. Finally it arrives in packing and shipping where it is then put in boxes and then loaded back on a truck to go to the factory for use. Sound fun? It was very hard work and the conditions made it harder. Tight spaces, dangerous machines, and you had your be on your toes at all times to keep from getting injured or worse...killed. And it was even harder if you were a child working in the mill. Especially if they were the ones that had to run under the machine that dropped the cotton balls. And the mill it self wasn't the cleanest of places and it got dirtier the further down in the building you work like the coal fueled boiler room. But we had to preserver and make it through the worst and it really wasn't as bad as it looked. You made life long friends and had stories to tell your children and then grand children...the mill staff became your second family. That was what made mill life great. Your community was your extended family.

Well now look at the time I guess I had better be getting back to work. You folks were fantastic and I hope you enjoyed getting a look at Bibb city. Have a great day and be safe.