

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received FEB 9 1987  
date entered MAR 13 1987

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Kennedy Mill, Pickle Mill, Fraser Mill

and/or common ✓ Riverdale Mill (preferred)

2. Location

street & number Wayland Road and Thorngrove Pike (Rt. 8)

N/A \_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Knoxville  vicinity of

state Tennessee code 047 county Knox code 093

3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Jean L. McCoy

street & number 604 Ensley Drive, Rt. 29

city, town Knoxville  vicinity of state Tennessee 37920

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Knox County Courthouse (City/County Building)

street & number 400 Main Avenue

city, town Knoxville state Tennessee

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Knox County Survey has this property been determined eligible? \_\_\_ yes  no

date 1982-1986 \_\_\_ federal  state \_\_\_ county \_\_\_ local

depository for survey records Tennessee Historical Commission

city, town Nashville state Tennessee

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

### **Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

Situated on a narrow tract of land along the Campbell Branch, Riverdale Mill is of mid-nineteenth century post and beam construction with mortise and tenon joints. The two main supporting beams consist of hand-hewn heart pine, measuring 8" X 11" each and 32 feet and 28 feet long. Wall studs and tongue and groove flooring are also constructed of pine while siding is a mixture of woods put on by a variety of owners who used whatever was expedient to replace rotted or decayed wood. The oldest siding on the mill is sawn weatherboarding measuring 1/2" X 6" in 10 foot lengths. Shingles on the gable roof were installed in the mid-1960s. The building measures 28 feet by 32 feet and is 2 1/2 stories tall with basement. It rests on a cut limestone foundation that was laid without mortar. A rectangular hole on the east foundation wall marks the location where the original wooden wheel shaft entered the mill. A circa 1915-1916 wheel is located on the west elevation. Both the mill and nearby mill dam are considered contributing resources. Having recently undergone restoration, the mill retains much of its historic and architectural integrity.

The east facade presently appears much as it did in the earliest known photograph of the mill taken in the 1940s. Two 6/6 double-hung sash windows flank the entry on the first story while one 2/2 double-hung sash window is located at the second story level along with a second story entry (now blocked off). One 6/6 double-hung sash window is situated in the gable end. A plain one-story flat roof porch covers the facade. In the 1960s the original porch was removed and the front entry was widened. The present owners have restored the porch and the front door to appear as they did in the early photograph. One window on the first floor was added in 1984 to provide for light in an office area. The 1940s photograph shows a shed attached to the mill on the south elevation. The shed, which housed a sawmill, extended along the entire south wall and came to within 6 feet of the roof line of the mill. Previous owners removed the shed addition and there are currently no plans to replace it.

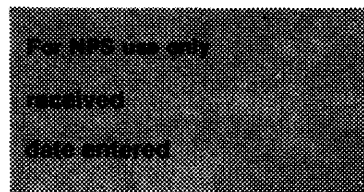
Both the north and the south elevations have four double-hung sash windows. The present owners installed three of the 6/6 double-hung sash windows on the south side in 1984. Located on the west elevation are five 6/6 double-hung sash windows and the 30 foot diameter Fitz overshot wheel.

Several structural measures were taken by the present owners to strengthen the building. Sills on the east and south walls, and corner posts on the northeast and northwest corners of the building needed replacement due to insect damage. Both 4" X 4" center posts in the mill were replaced with 8" X 8" beams, as the smaller posts were judged not sufficient to withstand anticipated weight loads on the upper floors. Some of the flooring on the first and second floors in the mill had rotted away and has temporarily been replaced with rough sawed poplar boards.

All of the original machinery in the mill, with the exception of a set of flat running millstones and a stone crane located in the southwest corner of the first floor, was removed in the 1960s. The millstones appear to have been locally quarried. Although it is impossible to determine the location of the quarry, there is a good amount of flint in the stones which is a characteristic of good millstones. A set of French buhr stones was found in the basement of the mill. It is suspected that the French buhr stones were used to make wheat flour, while the present set was used for corn meal. This was a common arrangement in rural, custom mills like Riverdale. The wheat stones were probably removed in 1916, when the mill was modernized and roll stands were installed.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet Riverdale Mill

Item number 7

Page 2

After purchasing the mill in 1983, the present owners purchased the contents of a small mill in White Pine, Tennessee. New lineshafts, pulleys, and a 24" Meadows Mill were purchased and installed in Riverdale Mill. The Meadows Mill was built in 1928 by the Meadows Mill Company in North Wilkesboro, North Carolina. A meal sifter from the W.J. Savage Company of Knoxville, Tennessee, is now used to sift grain products. No other machinery is presently used in the milling operation. However, other machinery purchased from the White Pine Mill is stored on the second floor and will be installed as time and funds permit. It is the plan of the present owners to continue to utilize Riverdale Mill as a working mill.

Two hundred and forty feet to the north of the mill is the mill dam. It was constructed circa 1915-1916 when the present wheel was installed. Built of 16" concrete poured in 5 sections or courses, the curved dam is 98 feet long and 13 feet tall. The original dam was probably a small wooden structure located halfway between the mill and the present dam. It diverted the water into a flume and delivered it to a 14 foot diameter wooden overshot wheel. With the installation of the present 30 foot diameter Fitz steel overshot wheel, the dam was moved upstream to gain needed elevation. The present dam and wheel were engineered to take fullest advantage of the modest, spring-fed flow of the Campbell Branch. A ten inch pipe extends from the base of the dam and follows the contour of the ground 240 feet until reaching the base of the wheel where it rises to the top of the wheel and delivers water to the 96 three foot wide buckets of the wheel. The steel riveted pipe has long ago rusted making it unuseable, although a section has been retained for historical documentation. Plans are to replace the pipe and make the wheel operational.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** c. 1858-1937      **Builder/Architect** Unknown

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Located near Knoxville in Knox County, Tennessee, the Riverdale Mill is being nominated under National Register criterion A for its local historic significance in the area of industry. The mill is an excellent example of a mid-nineteenth century custom grist mill. It is the only mill in Tennessee known to have been owned by the Grange, a nationwide farm organization founded in the nineteenth century, and its steel overshot waterwheel is the largest known wheel of Fitz manufacture in Tennessee. The 2 1/2 story, wood frame mill of post and beam construction served area farmers for almost 100 years before it closed in 1953. The mill and dam survive today as the centerpiece of Riverdale Community in east Knox County, Tennessee. A tannery, blacksmith shop, general store, post office, school, church, and mill formed Riverdale, a fine example of a typical self-sustaining, agricultural community of the late 19th century. Only the mill and post office (altered) still stand today. The mill retains much of its historic and architectural integrity.

Riverdale Mill, and hundreds of other similar mills just like it, were extremely important to villagers who lived nearby. Water powered grist and saw mills were among the first industries to be erected by residents because the construction materials were readily available, and because a good profit could be expected. More importantly, mills saved precious time and labor for other domestic chores. Mills sawed wood for housing and outbuildings, ground grains, pumped water, made paper, spun thread, prepared wool for spinning (fulling mills), and ground everything from apples to iron ore. However, the preparation of food stuffs such as at Riverdale Mill, was the most important and widespread application.

The earliest recorded document found that dates the Riverdale Mill is an 1858 Knox County tax record that shows the owner, James Kennedy, paid \$32.27 1/2 in taxes on the mill, a slave, and 322 acres in the 17th district of Knox County (1). The mill was valued at \$1,200. While the actual construction date of the mill cannot be fixed, the construction technique indicates that it was built within the decade previous to 1858. The mill does not appear on earlier tax records, nor was it identified in the 1851 Manufacturing Census for Knox County, Tennessee.

James Kennedy was born September 9, 1820, in Knox County, Tennessee. He was the son of a Presbyterian minister, the Reverend James Kennedy and spouse Mary Smith. The Reverend Kennedy's 1826 will does not mention a mill, but divides his property equally between his two sons, Samuel and James. (2) Riverdale Mill is situated on a tract of land first settled by James White, the founder of Knoxville and well-known Revolutionary War soldier.(3)

From its beginning in the decade prior to the Civil War, and even continuing into the turn of the twentieth century, Riverdale Mill served a relatively local group of families probably all living within an 8-10 mile radius. Many were related to one another, and were descendants of Knox County's first families. This was a typical arrangement with small, nineteenth century mill villages throughout the eastern states. Even in this early period and as late as 1890, residents of both the rural and urban reaches of Knox County

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1.5 acres

Quadrangle name Shooks Gap. TN 147NE

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

1	7
---	---

2	4	9	5	6	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	9	8	2	7	5	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

B 

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

C 

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

D 

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

E 

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

F 

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

G 

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

H 

--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

### Verbal boundary description and justification

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jean L. McCoy

organization N/A

date September 5, 1986

street & number 604 Ensley Dr., Rt. 29

telephone 615-577-7757

city or town Knoxville

state Tennessee 37920

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

Deputy

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Herbert L. Harper

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission

date 1/27/87

### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the National Register

J. Helms Byers  
Keeper of the National Register

date 3-13-87

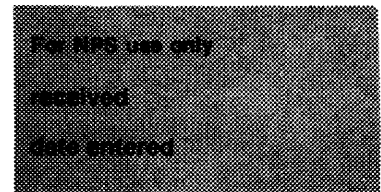
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet Riverdale Mill

Item number 8

Page 2

obtained the bulk of their flour and meal from nearby mills located along creeks within the city limits. This phenomenon was probably a function of convenience and preference on the part of both urban and rural dwellers. In 1891, 57 grist/flour mills were located within the county serving a population of about 60,000 residents. (4) Today, only 11 of these mill buildings can be found in various states of disrepair.

Because of its immediate proximity to Bowman's Ferry (100 yards north), Riverdale Mill is thought to have played a role in helping to relieve the Confederate siege of Fort Sanders during the Civil War. The ferry was guarded by Federal troops at this time, and while James Kennedy, a slave owner, could not have been expected to voluntarily supply provisions for the Federal army, his mill was likely used to grind meal for both the troops guarding the ferry, and as a base for supplies shipped under cover of darkness to Fort Sanders.

Following the Civil War and up until 1908, Riverdale Mill entered a period of instability followed by a quick succession of owners. The South was particularly devastated by the War. Farmers were destitute, with their livestock and crops having been depleted by both northern and southern armies. In 1867, the Grange was organized in Washington, D.C. with the basic purpose being to assist the farmer and his family who had suffered greatly during the War. (5) The Grange was chartered in Tennessee in 1873 and before the turn of the twentieth century there were over 1,100 chapters in the state. (6) The Grange was instrumental in the passage of extensive national legislation designed to provide economic relief for the farmer.

By 1875, James Kennedy was 55 years old and none of his sons were evidently interested in continuing the family business. Kennedy thus sold his mill to the Seven Islands-Mecklenburg-French Broad Granges Manufacturing Company. Farmer owned cooperatives were first organized by the Grange, and Riverdale Mill is the only one of two mills known to have been owned by a Tennessee Grange to have survived. (The other mill was located at Bailey's Switch, Maury County.) (7)

An interesting sketch of Riverdale is found in the Tennessee State Gazetteer and Business Directory for 1876-77. As the sketch is brief, it is reproduced in its entirety as follows: (8)

Riverdale

Also known as Grangeville, is a village of 100 inhabitants, situated on the French Broad river, in Knox county, 9 miles southeast of Knoxville. A tannery, harness shop, Methodist and Presbyterian churches and an academy are located here. Corn, wheat, bacon, poultry, etc., are exported. Mail twice a week. S.G. Bowman, postmaster.

Business Directory

Bowman, Kennedy & Co., tanners, boot, shoe, and harnessmakers.  
Bowman & Smith, General Store.  
Kennedy, W.S., physician.  
Mills, Rev. J.S.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet Riverdale Mill

Item number 8

Page 3

By 1881, there were over 1,700 grist/flour mills scattered throughout Tennessee serving a population of 1.54 million persons. (9) By far most of these were located in the hill and mountain country in middle and eastern Tennessee where water power was abundant. Little information about Riverdale Mill is available for the next several years. It is known that Amos L. Pickle and Sons operated the mill in 1891, and by 1895 the mill appears on an Knox County Map as Pickle Mill operated by E.G. Pickle. (10) The Grange in Tennessee had largely died out (most Granges were on paper only), and by 1900, at least in Tennessee, had ceased to be an agricultural influence. (11) The chain of title picks up 22 years after Kennedy's death when his heirs conveyed the mill to Ed Pickle on February 11, 1903, with a quit claim deed. The quit claim deed helps us to understand what happened to the Grange. It reports that the deed to the Grange had "never been registered," that the Grange was "never a legal corporation having never elected a board of directors," and that they, the heirs of James and Martha Kennedy, wished to convey the mill to Edward G. Pickel who has "become entitled to the legal title" to the mill. The Grange's cooperative effort was evidently unsuccessful, although, at least on paper, they owned the mill for 28 years. There were no other title holders between the Grange's ownership and Pickle's ownership and the mill had evidently remained a viable business operated by E.G. Pickle after its sale to the Grange.

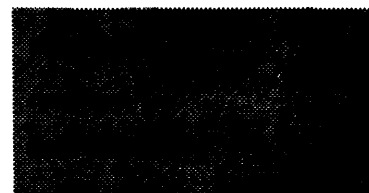
Edward G. Pickle must have had sale in mind and needed a clear title to the mill, as in October, 1903, eight months after he received title, he sold it to Ed Rutherford and James Swaggerty. In 1904, Swaggerty sold his part in the business to Rutherford. In 1908, Rutherford sold the mill to M.F. Atchley.

The final period of the mill's history begins in 1908 with M.F. Atchley's ownership. Atchley began the expensive task of modernizing the milling machinery, and converted the power source from a wooden wheel to the present 30 foot X 3 foot steel wheel—the largest known Fitz wheel in Tennessee. (12) Atchley's conversion was the final manifestation of a series of technological advances in the milling industry that began in the 1880s with the refinement of the modern day roller mill. The roller mill largely replaced the old millstones in almost all grist mills, and eventually led to the industrialization and centralization of flour manufacture owned by present day conglomerates such as Pillsbury and General Mills. The old, water-powered millstone could no longer compete economically with the massive flour plants that even now were scattered throughout the major cities. Knoxville, Chattanooga, Nashville, and Johnson City all had their large commercial flour mills located adjacent to the railroad tracks from which grains and flour products were shipped.

Atchley, along with most owners of mills that still used millstones, realized that if he was going to capture his share of the market, that he needed to install a series of roll stands to make white flour, and add cleaning and purifying machines to boost his production. Most rural custom mills in Tennessee had already made this conversion - often keeping one set of millstones for corn meal and installing roll stands for wheat flour.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet Riverdale Mill

Item number 8

Page 4

Such technological advances in flour production signaled the end to the small, custom mill - a village industry which served communities since before the American Revolution. Today, less than 150 of these mill structures remain in Tennessee. Between 80-90% of the present structures have been abandoned and vandalized or sit in mute testimony of their once proud heritage. (13)

Even after Atchley had modernized the mill, it would only be a matter of time before it was no longer economical to keep open. In less than a generation of time, the large conglomerates, accompanied by numerous socio-economic changes in American lifestyles, would slowly squeeze the life from nearly every old grist mill in the nation.

In 1915, Atchley sold the mill to H.F. and Arthur Kreis, and in 1921, John Kreis entered into a deed of trust for the mill with the last full-time miller, F.D. Frazier. In 1949, Frazier died. His son, Kenneth, bought the mill from his brothers and sisters in 1951. He sold it 2 years later to C.E. Hankins. Hankins never operated the mill. Preferring to use the structure as a storage facility, he gutted it of all its machinery, shafts, and pulleys. In 1976, Mr. Hankins sold it to W.O. Moorefield who began to modify the mill into a residence. Very little progress was made, however, and in 1983, the mill was sold to its present owner, Jean McCoy LaForest. Restoration of the mill began in 1983 and continues today.

Riverdale Mill remains as the centerpiece of a typical nineteenth century, self-sustaining village - the kind of village which once dotted the Appalachian valleys by the thousands. The community of Riverdale contained a post office (still standing as a home today), a general store, a church, a blacksmith shop, a ferry, and a mill. Associated with the mill was a tannery which provided leather for belts used in the mill, for harness made by the blacksmith, and for footwear. The tanning pits were uncovered by excavation just 20 feet to the south of the mill when a septic tank was installed at the mill in 1984.

Footnotes

1. Knoxville - Knox Co. Archives, Tax Record, 17th District, 1858, Roll T - 102 - T.
2. Will of Rev. James Kennedy, Book 4, p. 165, October Session, 1826.
3. Park, Rev. James, "The Centennial Anniversary of the Presbyterian Church of Knoxville, TN," October 11, 1896, page 14.
4. Polk's Business and Statistical Directory of Tennessee, 1891.
5. Gardiner, Charles M., The Grange - Friend of the Farmer, 1949.
6. Weems, Martha L., "The Grange in Tennessee, 1870-1908 and 1933-1966," Master's Thesis, Department of History, East Tennessee State University, August, 1969.
7. Weems, Martha L., *ibid.*
8. Tennessee State Gazetteer and Business Directory 1876-77, age 347.
9. Polk's Business and Statistical Directory of Tennessee, 1881.
10. Map of Knox County, Tennessee, 1895.
11. Weems, Martha L., *op. cit.*
12. Interview with D.O. Atchley, Knoxville, TN., 10 June 1986.
13. Society for the Preservation of Old Mills, Mill List for Tennessee, 1986.



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet Riverdale Mill

Item number 9

Page 2

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

French Broad Holston Country. East Tennessee Historical Society, nd.

Gardiner, Charles M. The Grange-Friend of the Farmer. np. 1949.

Luttrell, Laura E. Some Founders of Campbell's Station, Tennessee: A Geneology of Alexander, David, and James Campbell. East Tennessee Historical Society, volume 25, 1953.

Polk's Business and Statistical Directory of Tennessee. np. 1881 and 1891.

Tennessee State Gazetteer and Business Directory. np. 1876.

Weems, Martha L. "The Grange in Tennessee, 1870-1908 and 1933-1966." Thesis, East Tennessee State University, 1969.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



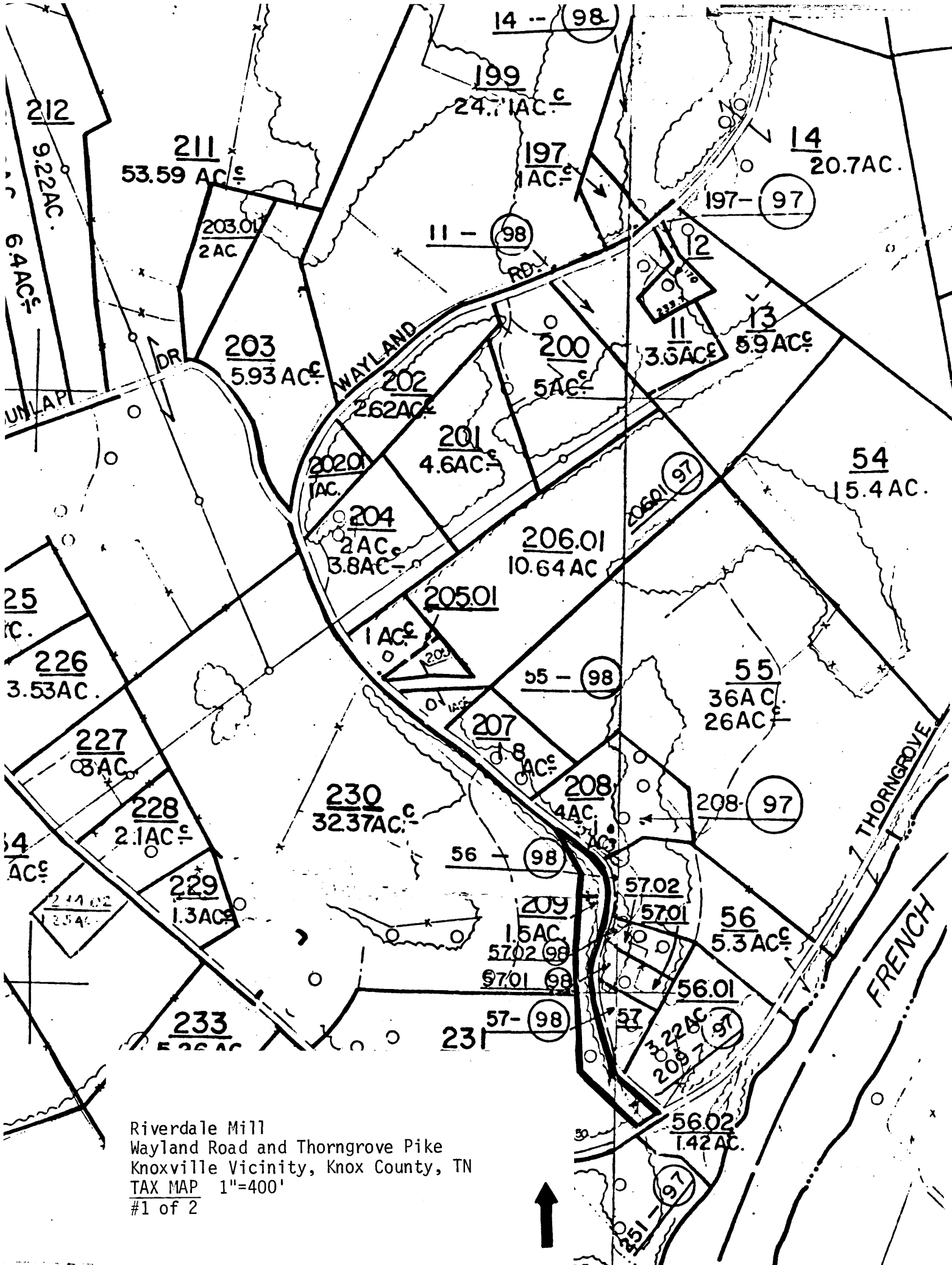
Continuation sheet Riverdale Mill

Item number 10

Page 2

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION

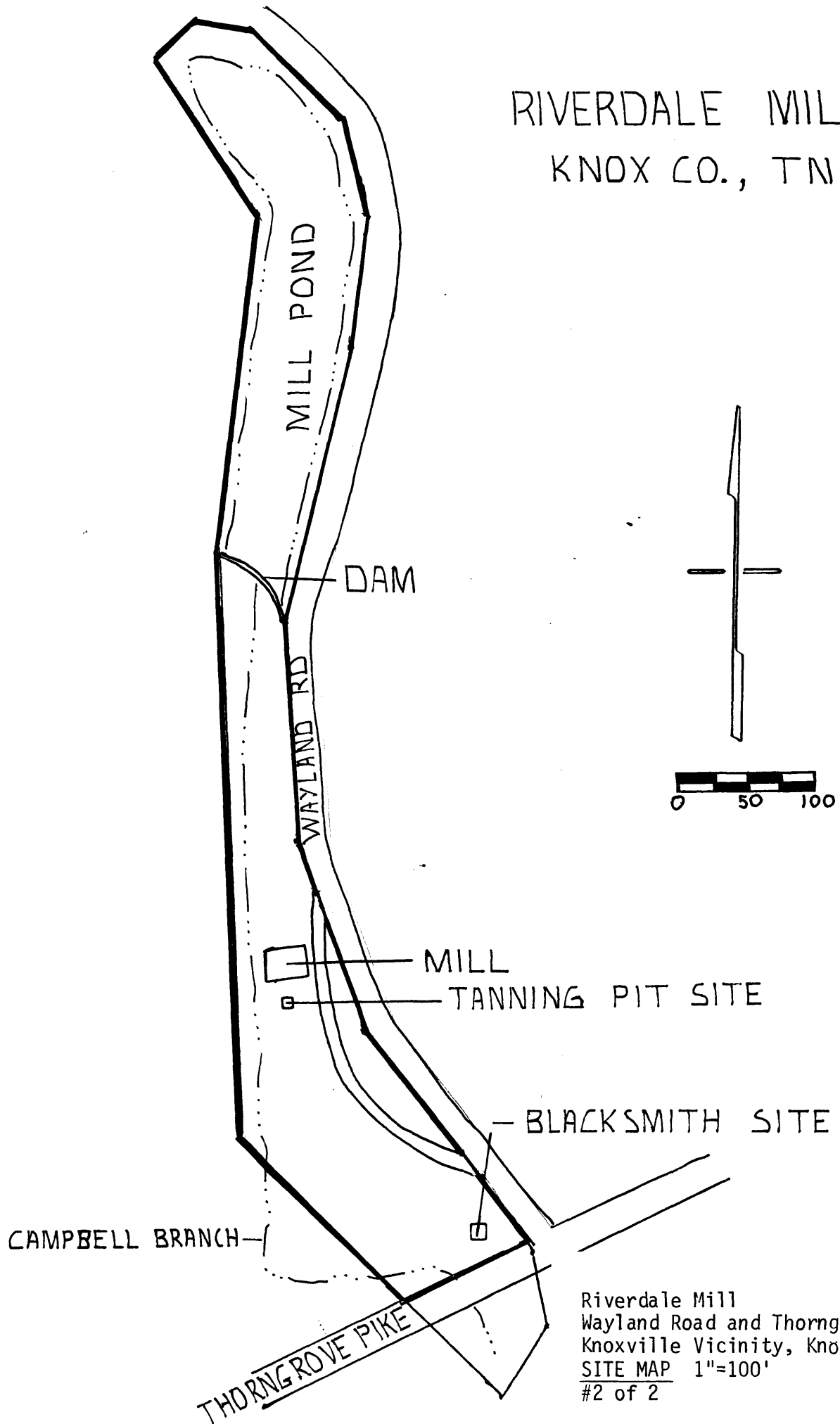
Riverdale Mill is located on an elongated 1.5 acre tract measuring approximately 1000 feet long and averaging 100 feet wide. The southern boundary adjoins the intersection of Thorngrove Pike and Wayland Road. The eastern boundary parallels Wayland Road. The western boundary adjoins neighboring property lines. This tract includes the dam, mill pond, and mill. It provides a historic setting for the nominated resources. (See tax map.)



Riverdale Mill  
 Wayland Road and Thorngrove Pike  
 Knoxville Vicinity, Knox County, TN  
 TAX MAP 1"=400'  
 #1 of 2



RIVERDALE MILL  
KNOX CO., TN



Riverdale Mill  
Wayland Road and Thorngrove Pike  
Knoxville Vicinity, Knox County, TN  
SITE MAP 1"=100'  
#2 of 2