

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	MAY 21 1975
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Pigeon Forge Mill

AND/OR COMMON

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

off U.S. 441

—NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Pigeon Forge

— VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
First

STATE

Tennessee

CODE

47

COUNTY

Sevier

CODE

155

**CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

**PRESENT USE**

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Simmons

STREET & NUMBER

The Old Mill

CITY, TOWN

Pigeon Forge

— VICINITY OF

STATE

Tennessee

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Sevier County Register's Office

STREET & NUMBER

Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Sevierville

STATE

Tennessee

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

—FEDERAL —STATE —COUNTY —LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Old Mill lies on the east bank of the Little Pigeon River in Pigeon Forge. The entire river is dammed above the mill in order for water to be conducted over the large 24 foot breast wheel. The structure was completed in 1830; at that time two ton French Buhrs were installed for grinding. Besides the breast wheel there are also smaller tub wheels within the expansive structure.

The mill which is still used today on occasion for making various meals originally had a number of uses. An iron forge was set up at the mill--it was the origin of the town name. Only a few remnants of the forge remain underneath the mill. One hammer lies close by at a local restaurant. Lumber was also sawed at the mill. On the second floor looms were kept and cloth was made during the Civil War period. The variety of use explains the shape and expansiveness of the building.

The section of the mill above the breast wheel is three stories high. Gear mechanisms and grinding stones are contained therein. The elongated section was once used as part of the sawing operation. Presently it contains crafts, meal and mountain "nick nacks". The mill is supported by 14" x 14" yellow poplar logs which are forty feet long and rest on pillars or large river rocks (now reinforced with concrete). The interior is hand-hewn hemlock and oak held together by hickory pegs. The floors are of heart pine laid down by rectangular nails. The exterior of all sections of the mill has been weatherboarded with yellow poplar. There is a one-story porch across the front of the building.

## 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/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1830

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Isaac Love

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Pigeon Forge is located in a narrow valley in the heart of Sevier County. The area was one of the first to be settled in the county (1790's); its rolling farmland lies in sharp contrast to the surrounding foothills and mountains. Its unusual name is derived from the Passenger Pigeons (now extinct) which flocked to the valley in migrating (thus the "Pigeon River") and the "Forge" came from the early iron works there.

As early as 1820 Isaac Love began iron production operations in the area. He mined the ore from hillside banks, transported it to the river and smelt the ore at the rustic forge which occupied the same site as the Old Mill. By 1836 Love and his three sons, William K. Love, James L. Love and Preston A. Love, had obtained about 7000 acres for the small industry. Land was often secured tax free because the Tennessee legislature permitted this measure of land "unfit for cultivation" for the establishment of iron works. The quality and quantity of the ore was not sufficient to sustain the Love business. By 1838 full time operation of the forge ceased; occasional operations continued until the 1860's.

The mill was constructed in 1830. The local farmers produced wheat, oats and corn which they brought to the mill for grinding. In later times wheat and oats were less frequently grown because of the competition of the Midwest. During the Civil War looms were set up at the mill for cloth production for the military. In 1885 the forge below the mill was dismantled and sent to Kentucky. Saw mill operations began about this time. The saws were removed and storage room for grain was set up. A generator was installed at the mill in the early 20th century and continued to supply the area with electricity until 1930.

The Pigeon Forge mill has made a significant contribution to the industrial life of the community for over a century. It has been adapted for a variety of uses, including the operation of an iron forge, grist mill, looms, sawmill, and power generator.

Long a landmark in the area, the Pigeon Forge Mill is one of the most popular attractions to the thousands of tourists visiting the Smoky Mountains National Park.

