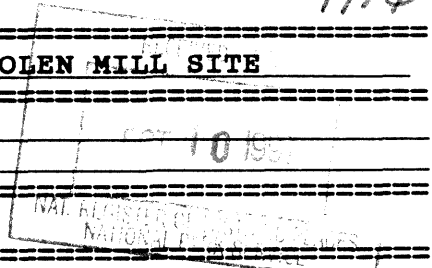


United States Department of the Interior National Park Service  
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

1716

1. Name of Property NICHOLLS RESIDENCE AND WOOLEN MILL SITE

historic name: \_\_\_\_\_  
other name/site number: \_\_\_\_\_



2. Location

street & number: State Route 67 - Wellsburg-Bethany Pike Not for publication: N/A  
city/town: Wellsburg vicinity: N/A  
state code: WV county: Brooke code: 009 zip code: 26070

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this x nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property x meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_\_\_ nationally \_\_\_ statewide x locally.  
(\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.)

William S. Jansen 10/11/97  
Signature of Certifying Official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau Date

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria. (\_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of Certifying Official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is: \_\_\_\_\_ Date  
Signature of Keeper of Action  
 entered in the National Register  
\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.  
\_\_\_ determined eligible for the  
National Register  
\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.  
\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the  
National Register  
\_\_\_ removed from the National Register  
\_\_\_ other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_  
Edson H. Beall 11/13/97

Nicholls Residence & Mill  
Name of Property

Brooke County, WV  
County and State

=====  
**5. Classification**  
=====

**Ownership of Property:**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>		buildings
<u>1</u>		sites
<u>1</u>		structures
		objects
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	TOTAL

**Name of related multiple property listing**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register** 0

=====  
**6. Function or Use**  
=====

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling  
INDUSTRY: Mill

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

=====  
**7. Description**  
=====

**Architectural Classification:**

(Enter categories from instructions)

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

SECOND EMPIRE

Foundation Stone  
Walls Brick  
Roof Slate  
Other Wood trim

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Nicholls Residence & Mill  
**Name of Property**

Brooke County, WV  
**County and State**

=====  
**8. Statement of Significance**  
=====

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Industry

Architecture

Archaeology: Historic/Non-aboriginal

**Period of Significance**

1795 / 1839

1893 - 1917

Nicholls Residence & Mill  
**Name of Property**

Brooke County, WV  
**County and State**

**Significant Dates**

1795  
1839  
1893

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

N/A

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

=====  
**9. Major Bibliographical References**  
=====

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of Repository: Owner

Nicholls Residence & Mill  
Name of Property

Brooke County, WV  
County and State

=====  
**10. Geographical Data**  
=====

Acreeage of Property: Approximately 1 acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

17      533940      4456215      Steubenville Quad Map  
Zone      Easting      Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

=====  
**11. Form Prepared By**  
=====

Name/Title: Katherine M. Jourdan, WV SHPO

and Paula Hamilton, owner

Organization: WV SHPO      Date: 7 August 1997

Street & Number: 1900 Kanawha Blvd, East      Telephone: 304/558-0220

City or Town: Charleston      State: WV      Zip: 25305-0300

=====  
**Property Owner**  
=====

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

Name: William and Paula Hamilton

Street & Number: Rt. 1, Box 100 B      Telephone: 304/737-1172

City or Town: Wellsburg      State: WV      Zip: 26070  
=====

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Nicholls Residence & Mill  
Section number 7

Brooke County, WV  
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The Nicholls residence rests on a low bluff above Buffalo Creek, along State Route 67. The two and a half story red-glazed brick home is a blend of styles with the Second Empire tower and mansard roof dominating the structure. The full front porch is Colonial Revival with Doric columns and a decorative pediment over the steps.

The first floor has a center entrance with a leaded glass door and transom with "Nicholls" inscribed. The windows are all 1/1 double-hung sash with stone lintels and sills. The center bay of the house projects out slightly with paired windows over the entrance and the central tower with Palladian windows. The entablature has a wide fascia and dentil trim, with low brackets under the eaves. There are four chimney stacks made of three circular brick flues linked at the top.

The two sides of the house are symmetrical with three bays divided by the exterior chimneys. The center bay has two openings on each floor including a door on the first floor. Between the chimney is a pedimented gable dormer with paired windows. The east side has a low hipped porch with spindles and wooden posts. The west side has a modern metal awning from the 1930s. The rear or south side has five bays on the second floor and a center pedimented gable dormer with rosette. A two bay garage has been attached to the first floor and is a noncontributing element.

The interior of the home has elegant woodwork of oak, and walnut. The fireplaces vary from room to room, but include Ionic columns, tile, egg and dart molding, and unique butterfly shaped columns in the back parlor.

The central staircase is paneled on the side, and the newel post is covered with a fern design. Each floor essentially has four large rooms with a central hallway. The third floor is open with a small room in the tower that served as an office for the mill business.

Stories among the Nicholls family involve a major change to the house over time, when the earlier home was encapsulated by the Second Empire design. A small hall off the kitchen appears to be a section of the earlier home and has a cross panel door leading to the cellar.

A small contributing brick structure is to the west of the home near the side drive. A low gable cover with asphalt shingles lifts off and inside is a brick-lined circular well with a pump on the outside rim.

The house overlooks Buffalo Creek with the property extending across the road to include the site of a mill along the creek bank. Archaeological exploration by SHPO Staff member Pat Trader in May 1997, found the sandstone block remains of the mill foundation. The foundation rose to a height even with the top of the bank and a clear rectangular image was found. A stone wall is clearly visible immediately adjacent to the creek, with a lower dirt depression towards the south bank. The stone wall and the foundation supported the shaft holding the mill wheel. The open area for the wheel has filled in over time to form the dirt depression. Opposite the site on the north bank is another stone footing for the dam which stretched between the two banks of the creek. The mill site retains good integrity, with a potential to yield additional information.

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A brick lane leads down from the roadway to the creek and foundation. Visible along the roadway are the wooden ties associated with a short-lived rail line between Wellsburg and Bethany, WV.

A map of the property from 1842 (Deed Book 15) clearly shows the earlier L-shaped house noted as the "Old Mansion", as well as the well, saw mill, factory, finishing house, and engine house. The property has been subdivided by earlier owners, and the site of the finishing house can be discerned in the open field next to the residence.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Nicholls Residence & Mill  
Section number 8

Brooke County, WV  
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The Nicholls property is significant under Criteria A for Industry, being associated with the brick industry and milling history of Brooke County, Criteria C for Architecture, and Criteria D for Archaeology. The period of significance for the property is 1795 and 1839 for the mill site, and 1893 to 1917 for the house and grounds.

Research on the property has been traced back to the original two patents for the property in 1775, when Absalom Wells obtained 650 acres. It is believed that he built the "old mansion" on Buffalo(e) Creek which still appeared in Deed Book 15 in 1842. The mansion was identified as an inn for travelers along the creek; from a ledger found by William Nicholls when a section of the old house was removed. The ledger recorded how guests traded furs for their lodging and meals.

In 1794, Absalom Wells sold 450 acres of land to Colonel James Marshel, a man active in the Revolutionary War and regional military activities. These events included the Indian sieges of Ft. Henry in Wheeling, when he was sheriff from 1784-1789, and the Whiskey Rebellion of 1794. In the early 1790s Colonel Marshel purchased large quantities of property in Wellsburg (then known as Charlestown), including several lots for buildings and wharfs. He served as a town trustee from 1791 until roughly 1815.

Colonel Marshel built the heavy stone dam and original mill across from the "old mansion" on the bank of Buffalo Creek in 1795. This mill was used for carding and manufacturing woolens. Blankets and fabrics were woven from the wool of the Merino and Saxony sheep at the finishing house on the property. The carding machines, spinning wheels and looms mentioned in Marshel's will inventory would have been in this building. Colonel Marshel was known as a man of means and enterprise and did a respectable business. He also owned the Wellsburg ferry which he purchased from Harry Prather in 1795.

At Colonel Marshel's death in 1829, he provided for his heirs and two slaves. The mill's name was changed to James Marshel (Jr.) and Bros. The mill reportedly was destroyed by fire around 1839 and rebuilt on the level of the dirt road (Wellsburg - Bethany Turnpike) with an engine house for power. The only remains of the original 1795 mill is the water wheel support made of cut stone. The foundation of the mill rebuilt after the fire is what still remains on the site. A site visit confirmed that the mill was sited next to the road and was of significant height to be even with the roadbed.

At the time of Colonel Marshel's death there was a sawmill, blacksmith shop, the old mansion, James Marshel's (Jr.) brick home (built in 1837), Samuel Marshel's brick home (razed in 1970s), and several other buildings including dwelling houses for the men or slaves. A map dated 1842 plots the site of the mill and is attached in the documentation. At this same time the property was turned over for debt satisfaction. The property was divided into smaller tracts and sold. The section for the house was noted as plat # 5, and is referred in the deed books as the "woolen factory property". It was reduced to eleven acres at this time and changed hands several times.



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Nicholls Residence and Mill  
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William Briggs was awarded the property in 1864 following a lawsuit. He had been residing in the house and was probably operating the mill in the interim. The mill was then known as "Briggs and Bros." for 20 years until 1884. Following Brigg's death the property was sold to William T. Nicholls in 1887.

The Nicholls were a prominent family in Brooke County. William Nicholls and neighbor Jim Mathews were related by marriage (Callie, William's wife was half sister to Jim Mathews). Mathews lived in the neighboring house once belonging to Samuel Marshal. Nicholls and Mathews were partners in brick manufacturing and contracting. Nicholls' brother Robert, was a brick layer and likely was part of the firm. Men from the Brooke County area served as an apprentice under Will Nicholls, who was known locally as a pioneer in the brick industry in the late 1800s. Will Nicholls developed an improved brick firing furnace that he had patented. He also used silica in his brick making process. The firm manufactured the bricks used for the Wellsburg - Bethany Turnpike. It is likely that the business utilized the mill, engine house and outbuildings for brick production.

In 1894, the tax records show an improvement from the previous year of \$500 was made on the property. Nicholls granddaughter, Mary Lou Nicholls Chamberlain, reported that Will Nicholls built a glazed brick house around the earlier L-shaped house, creating the present square plan. It seems the family worked on a section at a time living in different parts of the large house. Nicholls completely redid the interior and avoided higher taxes on a new house. What is now the basement door may have been in the original house, with its peg construction. Only half of the basement was excavated with stone walls. While there is a crawl space under the later portion of the house. Each room on the second floor has a different type of wood molding and fireplace mantel - cherry, oak, walnut. The house was piped for gas from a nearby well, and a water reservoir was constructed on the hill behind the brickyard with water running to holding tanks on the third floor of the home. Gas and water were also piped to the Mathews home next door. Nicholls office for the brick business was on the third floor of the house, located in the tower room with a view of the brick yard.

Jim Mathews son is said to have absconded with a large sum of money causing a rift in the partnership. Will Nicholls and his family moved to Oklahoma in 1917 and built several other foundries. He also discovered five fields of silica used in his brick-making process. The Brooke County property passed to the Chew family.

The property has been subsequently divided again so that less than an acre surrounds the house. The mill and outbuildings were razed or left to deteriorate over time. Foundations are still present for the mill, dam and water wheel support along the banks of the creek. The location of the finishing house is visible in the open field next to the house.

The present house is the 1893 Second Empire design completed during the Nicholls ownership of the property. The home is richly decorated on

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the interior with wood moulding and trim details such as dentils and egg and dart designs. The architecture is exceptional and the exterior is symmetrical in design with the brick work demonstrating the extent of the Nicholls family trade. The brick fireplace flues are of note with the three round flues topped by a horizontal cap. While the one side porch still shows details from the Queen Anne period with turned posts and cutwork design. The front porch appears to be more Colonial Revival in design with Doric columns, pediment and bracketed eaves reflecting the eaves of the house. The low hip roof has the central Mansard tower, with pediment window and a slate roof. The house is undergoing restoration of the eaves and boxed gutters at this time.

The Nicholls house is a well designed Second Empire home rich with interior details. While architectural investigation may demonstrate that the house was built over time and on the foundation of an earlier home, it does now date mainly to the 1890s period. Associated with the property is the site of the woolen mill, wheel support and dam on Buffalo Creek dating from 1795 and 1839. The property presents an era of Brooke County history linking the use of the property to the industrial production of wool products and bricks.

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Nicholls Residence & Mill

Brooke County, WV

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**Boundary Description**

The boundary is described as Lots 26 and 27, as noted in the Brooke County Tax Assessor's Office, Wellsburg, WV.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundaries enclose the property historically associated with the Nicholls residence, and the former mill site.

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National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Nicholls Residence & Mill

Brooke County, WV

Section number PHOTO

Page 1

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Name: Nicholls Residence and Woolen Mill Site  
Address: State Route 67 Wellsburg- Bethany Pike  
City: Wellsburg  
County: Brooke County

Photographer: Katherine Jourdan

Date: May 5, 1997

Negatives: WV SHPO Office, Charleston

Photo 1 of 10: Front Facade, Northwest Elevation  
Camera looking Southeast

Photo 2 of 10: Front Facade and Roadway  
Camera looking Southeast

Photo 3 of 10: East Facade  
Camera looking South

Photo 4 of 10: West Facade  
Camera looking East

Photo 5 of 10: South Facade - Rear  
Camera looking North

Photo 6 of 10: Well House - West Boundary  
Camera looking Northwest

Photo 7 of 10: View of Mill Site  
Remains of Mill foundation to right along roadway  
Depression for mill wheel and raised support to left  
along creek bank  
Camera looking Northeast - upstream

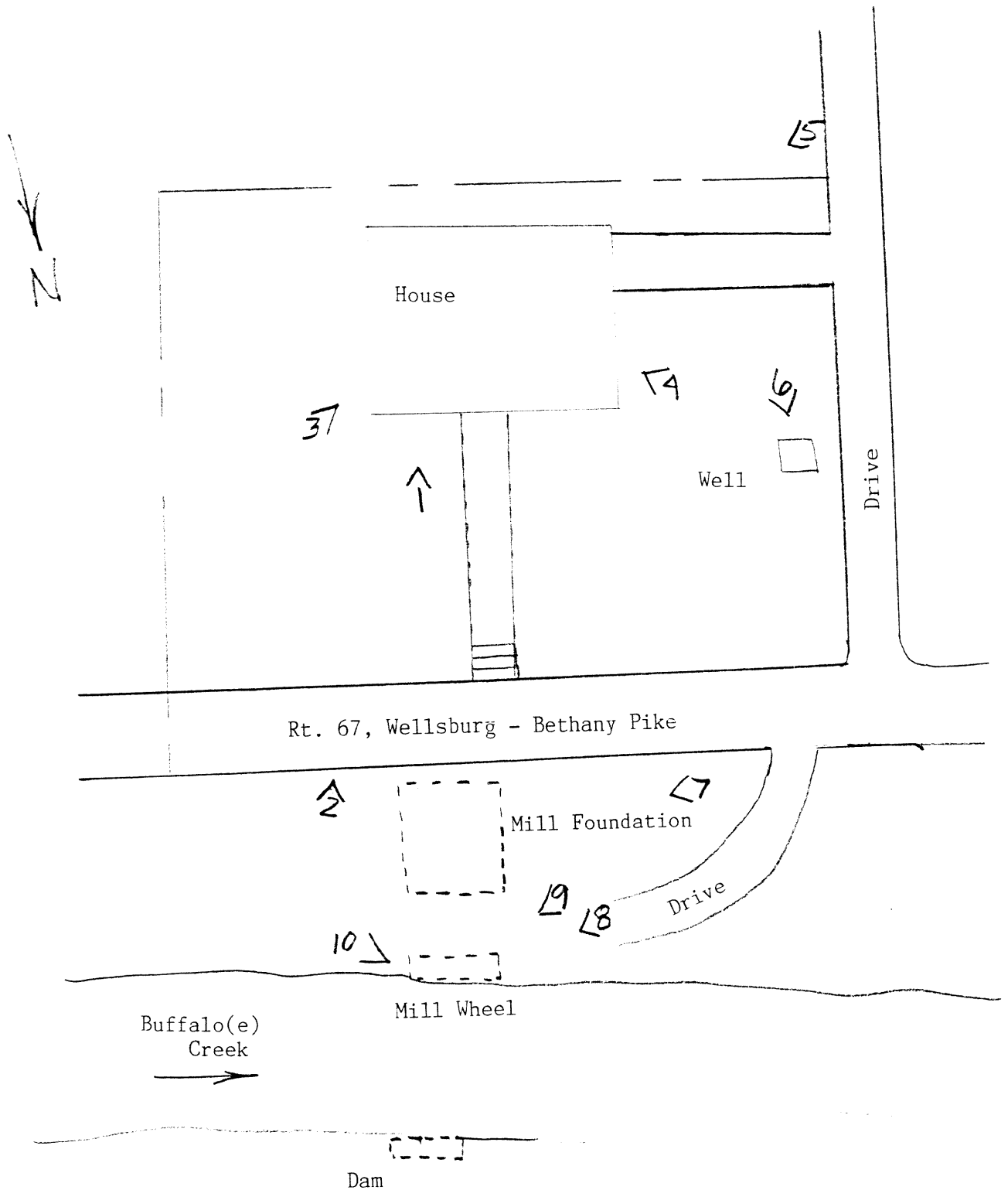
Photo 8 of 10: Buffalo Creek with mill support to right, and on  
opposite bank (left) is remains of dam foundation  
Camera looking Northeast - upstream

Photo 9 of 10: Raised stone bed for wheel support - West or downstream  
side  
Camera looking Northeast - upstream

Photo 10 of 10: Raised stone bed for wheel support - East or upstream  
side  
Camera looking Northwest - downstream

NICHOLLS RESIDENCE &  
MILL SITE  
Rt. 67, Wellsburg-Bethany  
Pike  
Wellsburg, WV  
Brooke County

Site Plan and Photo Map



NICHOLLS RESIDENCE & MILL SITE  
Rt. 67, Wellsburg-Bethany Pike  
Wellsburg, WV  
Brooke County

First Floor Plan

