

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED AUG 21 1979 DEC 10 1979  
DATE ENTERED

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

Pine Creek Gristmill

AND/OR COMMON

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER NE of Muscatine in  
Wildcat Den State Park

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Muscatine *Ms.*

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First

STATE

Iowa

CODE

COUNTY  
Muscatine

CODE

**CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

**OWNERSHIP**

**STATUS**

**PRESENT USE**

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

**ACCESSIBLE**

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Iowa State Conservation Commission

STREET & NUMBER

Wallace State Office Building

CITY, TOWN

Des Moines

VICINITY OF

STATE  
Iowa 50319

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Muscatine County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Muscatine

STATE

Iowa

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input 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      DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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

The Pine Creek Grist Mill was built in 1848 by Benjamin Nye, and operated until 1923. The mill has two sections, the original four-level main milling structure (31' x 37') and a lean-to addition (22' x 37') constructed in 1873 and rebuilt after extensive flood damage in 1883. The foundations are rubble ashlar limestone, reaching to the second level on the north and west sides. The mill is of post and beam construction, with pegged blind mortise joints. Oak is the principal construction material, with hand-adzed beams and posts up to 14" square. Exterior walls are sheathed with narrow clapboards. These, as well as the flooring, 6/6 d.h.s. windows, doors, and roofing date from a restoration completed about 1936. Loading doors (one each level) are symmetrically placed in the west side.

The first level contains elevator boots, boiler, and a horizontal one-cylinder steam engine reputed to have come from a river boat. Milling machinery, including several sizes of roller mills, is concentrated on the second level. Most of this equipment appears to have come in a set, manufactured by Barnard and Leas, of Moline, Illinois, and dates from the late 19th century. Sifting and dust bins are located on the third level, with scalping reels and elevator heads on the fourth level. Originally there were three runs of Buhr stones, but only one run remains, retained after the roller mills were installed, to grind rye and buckwheat.

A wooden dam, with stone abutments, is located at the northeast corner of the mill. This structure was put in in 1966.

The mill has been the subject of a detailed study, to outline future possibilities for restoration and public interpretation. The study (see bibliography) contains very detailed information about the history, structural configuration, and machinery of the mill.

About 50' south of the mill is a single-span wrought iron Pratt truss, with 5 panels and a recently-redone wood plank floor. A plate identifies it as being from the Wrought Iron Bridge Co., Canton, Ohio, patented Nov. 1, 1878. It may be considered a contributing structure, in that it is part of the historic environment of the mill. Several hundred feet west of the mill are a picnic shelter, parking lot, and an old schoolhouse, recently moved to this site and set on a high concrete-block basement that houses public restrooms. These may be considered intrusive elements, although they are situated far enough from the mill so as not to seriously compromise the setting. East of the mill, across Pine Creek, are woods.

The mill is located at the extreme eastern end of Wildcat Den State Park, which includes several hundred acres of woods, trails, and camping areas. Because the mill is in this very large portion of land, and there are no clear visual or historic boundaries (Nye originally owned an entire quarter-section), it is felt that the best way to delineate boundaries for this nomination is to simply designate a

(See Continuation Sheet)

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Pine Creek Gristmill, Montpelier, Iowa

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square of 4 acres, with the center point located approximately at the point where the east end of the dam meets the river bank. This square permits inclusion of the mill, dam, bridge, and a portion of both river banks (the immediate natural setting of the mill), while excluding the picnic, parking and restroom facilities.

A Note on the bridge: This is probably the last of a series of bridges over Pine Creek at this point or in the immediate vicinity. The most likely date of this bridge's erection here is around 1883. The flood of that year took out the west end of a bridge by the mill, and the present bridge was possibly installed as a replacement for the damaged structure.

# 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 1848-1923

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Benjamin Nye

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Pine Creek Grist Mill is a significant artifact of Iowa's earliest industry. Its form and construction represent very traditional building techniques, utilizing local materials. The flour milling machinery, although worn with age, use and water damage from periodic flooding, is remarkably intact, and presents an excellent view of milling techniques from the late 19th century. "In the last quarter of the 19th century, American flour manufacturing was completely transformed from stone grinding to the use of roller mills, which were developed in Hungary and quickly spread to the United States. In addition, the process of handling the grain and its products was automated. The Pine Creek mill stands in the middle of this technological revolution. While it was a very small-scale operation compared to the giant establishments of Minneapolis or St. Louis in the 1890's, the Pine Creek Mill was a modern industrial plant." (Hippen, in The Pine Creek Grist Mill, p. 40.)

Benjamin Nye came to Iowa in 1834, among the first white settlers in Muscatine County. Nye built his first mill, for sawing lumber, about 1835, near the mouth of Pine Creek. By 1837 he had relocated the mill further upstream. Nye built his first grist mill in 1837, believed to have been located across the river from the present mill, which was built on the west bank of Pine Creek in 1848. Nye was killed by his son-in-law, George McCoy, in 1852, and the mill was sold to R.H. Patterson, who operated it until his death in 1863. John M. Thom, a subsequent owner, replaced the original overshot paddlewheel with a turbine wheel, and discarded one run of Buhrstones. Under Herman Huchendorf, the roller mills were installed, the lean-to addition built, and a larger turbine added. From 1893-4 to 1923, the Missel family owned and operated the mill. The mill was purchased from them in 1927 by the State Conservation Commission, who oversaw an extensive restoration by CCC and WPA laborers in the early 1930's.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

R. Neumann Associates (Iowa City, Ia.) The Pine Creek Grist Mill. (Report prepared for the Iowa State Conservation Commission, 1978.)  
 Hippen, James C., "The Machinery in the Mill," in The Pine Creek Grist Mill (above), pp. 40-55.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

QUADRANGLE NAME Montpelier, Ill.-Iowa

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,5	6,7,8	7,4,10	4,5	9,2	7,1,10	B	1,5	6,7,8	7,4,10	4,5	9,2	5,8,10
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING
C	1,5	6,7,8	0,1,10	4,5	9,2	5,8,10	D	1,5	6,7,8	0,1,10	4,5	9,2	7,1,10
E							F						
G							H						

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: A square of 4 acres, the center of which is the point at which the east end of the dam meets the river bank located in the SE ¼ at Sec.17, T 77 N R 1 E.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

M.H. Bowers, Historian

ORGANIZATION

Division of Historic Preservation

DATE

August 1979

STREET & NUMBER

26 East Market Street

TELEPHONE

319/353-6949

CITY OR TOWN

Iowa City

STATE

Iowa 52240

# 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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Adrian A. Anderson*

TITLE Director, Division of Historic Preservation

DATE

8/10/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*Carol O. Shull*

DATE

12-10-79

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: William H. Graham

DATE

12-10-79

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION