

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED APR 6 1976  
DATE ENTERED OCT 22 1976

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

*W*  
\* \* Bonneyville Mills

AND/OR COMMON

Bonneyville Mills

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

2.5 miles east of Bristol on C.R. 131

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Bristol

X VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

3rd

STATE

Indiana

CODE  
018

COUNTY  
Elkhart

CODE  
039

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

\_\_DISTRICT

X PUBLIC

X OCCUPIED

\_\_AGRICULTURE

X MUSEUM

X BUILDING(S)

\_\_PRIVATE

\_\_UNOCCUPIED

\_\_COMMERCIAL

X PARK

\_\_STRUCTURE

\_\_BOTH

\_\_WORK IN PROGRESS

X EDUCATIONAL

\_\_PRIVATE RESIDENCE

\_\_SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

X ENTERTAINMENT

\_\_RELIGIOUS

\_\_OBJECT

\_\_IN PROCESS

X YES: RESTRICTED

\_\_GOVERNMENT

\_\_SCIENTIFIC

\_\_BEING CONSIDERED

\_\_YES: UNRESTRICTED

\_\_INDUSTRIAL

\_\_TRANSPORTATION

\_\_NO

\_\_MILITARY

\_\_OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Elkhart County Park and Recreation Department

STREET & NUMBER

113 1/2 North Third Street

CITY, TOWN

Goshen

VICINITY OF

STATE

Indiana

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Recorder's Office, Elkhart County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

219 South Second Street

CITY, TOWN

Goshen

STATE

Indiana

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 \_\_\_\_\_

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

Bonneyville Mills located on the south bank of the Little Elkhart River is now the hub of a 155 acre park with an extensive natural area being developed by the Elkhart County Park and Recreation Department. Constructed in 1832 this heavy frame timber mill building has remained in good condition. A few of the structural timber were replaced in a recent restoration.

Several shed additions have been made to the original 2 1/2 story (40 x 40) medium gable mill building. One of these additions, although starting as a shed became a full height component with the gable intersecting the main structure about midway. This portion is also topped by a small gable roofed cupola. The horizontal siding with approximately four inches to the weather is broken by few windows. The gable ends have six over six sash windows in the upper story and a half and the downstream side of the building has three small windows irregularly spaced on the first floor.

Built on a field stone foundation this building now has in operation its original turbine water wheels. These were used to provide part of the electricity for the mill when it converted to electric power in 1919. Most of the parts of the original grinding and drive system still exist and are now in use in the mill operation.

This building has been restored using Amish workmen and the same construction methods, techniques and tools used to build the mill in 1832.

Some stone foundation walls were replaced. Gears and parts were handmade when they could not be obtained. Wood siding was found to duplicate the existing siding, cobblestone walks laid down, and all railings, gates, etc., were installed using rough sawn lumber with mortise and tenon joints. Much of the information on the restoration was obtained from the last operator of the mill. -- . . . .

# 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

1832

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Edward Bonney

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

When Edward William Bonney brought his young bride to York Township in northern Indiana in the early 1830's, he also brought with him a vision of a community to be called Bonneyville. Bonney, according to all the newspaper clippings, was a swashbuckling pioneer with handsome chiseled features, of a magnificent physique and the manner of a gentleman. He purchased a tract of land for \$600 on a site which he hoped one day would become an important part of northern Indiana. Shortly after he settled on his land, he purchased 80 acres on which he built a grist and sawmill near the Little Elkhart River. The native beams which support the mill had to be handcut, and the mammoth grinding stones were chiseled with wooden planes and hammers. A dam, made entirely from stone and reinforced by handmade cement of ground limestone and rock, stretched almost a city block across the river.

Bonney moved in the 1840's to Illinois. He is probably the Edward Bonney who wrote The Banditti of the Prairies or the Murderer's Doom! A Tale of the Mississippi Valley. This volume published in 1850 describes his adventures as an outlaw hunter and self-appointed agent of the law on the Midwestern frontier. In his efforts to track down bad men, he was not adverse to breaking laws; he was accused of murder and at times passed counterfeit bills.

The Mill's unique claim of importance, besides being the largest mill operated in this area at that time, was the first water powered mill not having an over-shot water wheel. It had, instead, a vertical shaft with a turbine-type wheel lying flat against the water flow. This was highly unusual for any mill in the 1830's. The sawmill has been torn down and no trace of it remains today.

Bonney's dream of establishing a city on the banks of the Little Elkhart River came to a tragic end when the railroad by-passed the community. The mill continued to function as a grist mill, becoming the oldest continuously operating mill in the state. Farmers brought buckwheat, corn and wheat to be ground from a radius of fifty (50) miles. Since the turn of the century, people from Bristol and Elkhart have come to the mill to picnic and fish. The site was especially popular as a gathering place for the Amish. Bonneyville Mill has functioned as an agricultural, industrial, (a saw and grist mill also as a generating plant) and for over 50 years as a recreation area.

After Bonney left Indiana, the mills passed through a succession of owners who continued their operation into the twentieth century. In 1969 a non-profit organization arranged purchase of the mills and adjacent land from Frank Mauck, the last private owner; the property was deeded to Elkhart County for preservation.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See attached continuation sheet)

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

*per phone call  
6/31/74  
36.*

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY ~~155 acres~~ *less than 1 acre*

UTM REFERENCES

A 16 602750 4619140  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING  
 C                  

B                    
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING  
 D                  

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

Leroy Troyer and Mrs. Chauncey Baldwin

ORGANIZATION

Leroy Troyer & Associates

DATE

10/23/75

STREET & NUMBER

112 1/2 Lincolway East, 402 Prospect

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Mishawaka & Elkhart

STATE

Indiana

## 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

Joseph A. ...  
 TITLE Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE March 30, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

ACTING

*Ray L. ...*

DATE 10/22/96

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE 10-20-76

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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The park's unique setting and history links present Elkhart County with its past heritage. The 155 acres at Bonneyville Mill Park offer a variety of terrains for gently rolling farm land to river and marsh areas. Much of this area has been left in natural state and provides many varieties of trees and shrubs, and a wonderful habitat for wildlife, birds and insects.

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of the Mississippi Valley. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963.

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