

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

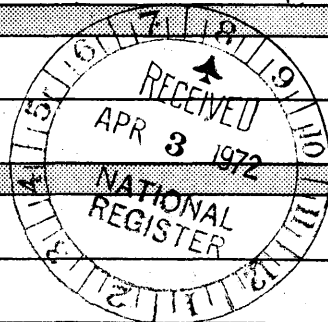
(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:  
**Oklahoma**

COUNTY:  
**Adair**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY NUMBER: **NOV 9** DATE: **1972**



1. NAME

COMMON:  
**Golda's Mill**

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
**Bitting Springs Mill**

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**c. 12 m. NW of**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Stilwell (SW/4 Sec. 16, T 16 N, R 24 E)**

STATE: **Oklahoma** CODE: **40** COUNTY: **Adair** CODE: **001**

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <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 (Specify) _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
**Golda Unkefer**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Rural Route 4**

CITY OR TOWN: **Stilwell** STATE: **Oklahoma** CODE: **40**

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
**Office of the County Clerk**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Adair County Courthouse**

CITY OR TOWN: **Stilwell** STATE: **Oklahoma** CODE: **40**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
**Oklahoma Historic Sites Survey**

DATE OF SURVEY: **1958**  Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
**Oklahoma Historical Society**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Historical Building**

CITY OR TOWN: **Oklahoma City** STATE: **Oklahoma** CODE: **40**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The first grist mill on this site was apparently built directly on Bidding Creek, some yards from the present mill location south and east of the stream. Creek waters, controlled by upstream dam and water gate, powered the water wheel directly. This simple mill was in ruins when Dr. Nicholas Bitting, a Methodist preacher, came to the region sometime after 1876. (By official act of the Cherokee National Council Dr. Bitting, his wife, their children, and his wife's brother, Daniel J. Nichols, were all admitted to the rights of Cherokee citizenship, to take effect when they permanently located inside the Nation.)

Dr. Bitting was the first to use the springs. He constructed a millpond a hundred yards or so southeast of the present mill site, dug a millrace to the relocated mill, powered by a large, over-shot wooden wheel. He operated the grist mill, with white granite buhrs cut in France, from around 1882 to the mid-1890s, part of the time at its full capacity of 200 bushels a day. The official 1890 census for the Going Snake District of the Cherokee Nation lists his wife, "Mary Jane, 41, can read and write," and describes the property as "2 dwellings, 4 other structures, 1 farm, 55 acres enclosed, 43 acres in cultivation." Value of the improvements is given as \$500.00. The mill was not included for it rates a separate entry: "1 grist mill valued at \$1,000.00 . . ."

J. C. Worley took over the mill about 1908 and operated it for 20 years. His principal improvement for replacement of the wooden wheel with an all steel one, 20 feet in diameter, which is still in use. It is said to have cost \$2,600.00. Worley's son and grandson operated the mill intermittently until 1945.

Mrs. Linn (Golda) Unkefer bought the property in 1950 and it has been known as Golda's Mill since that time. She has improved the facility considerably, while retaining its rustic appearance. Electric power is used for cleaning and drying the grain now, but water power and the original buhrs are used exclusively for the grinding itself. Mrs. Unkefer has added a small sales room and offers visitors a conducted tour for a nominal charge. The main building housing the mill proper measures 24 x 45 feet. Two smaller lean-to additions provide extra working space. The half-acre millpond is southeast of the house and the millrace traces a path between the house and the north (or creek) side of the mill where the wheel is located.

The site itself is well nigh idyllic, a flat, grassy area walled on the north and west by heavily wooded Bidding Creek and gently sloping woods to the south and east.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**SIGNIFICANCE**

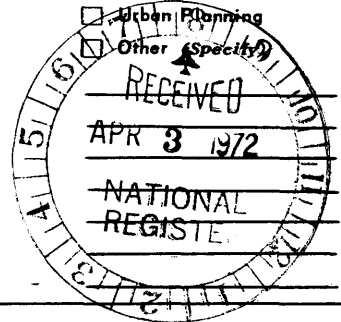
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |  |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |  |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1830s to the present** 1882

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal          | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric         | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic            | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture         | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture        | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications      | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation        |   |  |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Historic "facts" are hard to come by concerning the earliest use of what are now known as Bitting Springs to grind meal. Or of the waters of "Bidding" Creek into which the springs drain. (Dr. Nicholas Bitting settled here sometime after 1876. The logical corruption of Bitting to Bidding was officially incorporated into the name of the nearby stream and -- from Oct. 19, 1912, to June 15, 1928 -- of the post office serving the community.) Legend has it that meal was ground here in the late 1830s or early 1840s. Somewhat more substantial is evidence of the existence shortly after the Civil War of a crude grist-mill powered by a water wheel turned directly by the water of the creek itself and controlled by a simple dam and water gate.

According to the recollections of Mrs. Catharine Murray, daughter of Dr. Bitting, this mill was owned by her aunt, Mary Taylor. But it had disappeared or was in ruins when her aunt died and her mother inherited the property. She was 12 or 13 at the time. She knows that it was her father who first used the springs to develop the mill pretty much as it is today. He constructed the millpond, dug the race that now runs between the house and the mill, installed a big wooden wheel to power the grinding buhrs. He began operating the mill in 1882 or 1883 and was so busy for a time, she recalls, that she and her brother sometimes relieved him at the end of a day and ground meal throughout the night. The Bittings ran the mill until sometime in the 1890s.

(On one occasion, Mrs. Murray recalls, her father heard that the Cherokees back in the hills were starving. He sent word for them to come for free meal, giving it away at first by the bushel. Only when so many needy came that he was afraid he might run out did he reduce the portion to a bucketful per Indian. . . . Dr. Bitting was a Methodist preacher. According to the 1890 Goingsnake District census, he had a wife, Mary Jane, and six children. Catharine, who married R. W. Murray in 1888, was not included.)

Next operator of the Bitting Springs Mill was the Worley family. J. C. Worley was in charge from about 1908 to 1928. It was he who replaced the old wooden wheel with the all-metal one now in use. (The cost was said to have been \$2,600.) Son Luther and Ord Lee, a grandson, followed him. They kept the machinery intact but did considerable rebuilding of the mill itself. Then in 1945 they, too, shut it down.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Coffey, Ivy, "Mill Still Grinds," The Daily Oklahoman, Oklahoma City, Jan. 23, 1963  
 Horner, Eva, "Mills in the Hills," Tulsa Sunday World, Tulsa, March 17, 1946  
 Ruth, Kent, et al., Oklahoma: A Guide to the Sooner State, University of Oklahoma Press, 1956, pp. 480-481

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		35° 51' 34"	94° 45' 53"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

NO  
UTM  
HL

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **Five Acres**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE: **Kent Ruth, Deputy**

ORGANIZATION: **Oklahoma Historical Society** DATE: **February 1972**

STREET AND NUMBER: **Historical Building**

CITY OR TOWN: **Oklahoma City** STATE: **Oklahoma** CODE: **40**

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name *Kent Ruth*

Title *SLO for Oklahoma*

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

*Robert M. Utley*  
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date *11/6/72*

ATTEST:

*J. P. Bradford*  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date *Nov. 7, 1972*

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(Continuation Sheet)

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(Number all entries)

No. 8. Significance

Golda's Mill

Mrs. Linn (Golda) Unkefer found the mill in 1950 and, after months of restoration work, re-opened it for wholesale production of stone-ground meal, by then enjoying considerable popularity as a health food. By 1951 she was averaging production of 200 bushels of grain a day and her water-milled meal was going into every state of the union and nine foreign markets. \Production continues today, though on a somewhat reduced scale.

