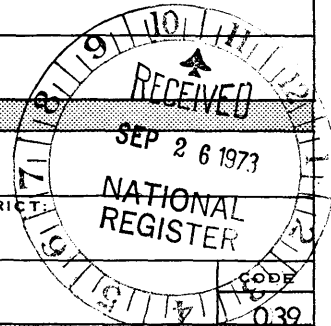


STATE:  
New Jersey  
COUNTY:  
Union  
FOR NPS USE ONLY  
ENTRY DATE  
JAN 8 1974

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

412  
2115 10/10/0000

1. NAME

COMMON:  
Droeschers Mill (Rahway River Mill)  
AND/OR HISTORIC:  
Williams Mill

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
347 Lincoln Ave. East  
CITY OR TOWN:  
Cranford  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:  
Twelveth  
STATE:  
New Jersey  
CODE:  
34  
COUNTY:  
Union  
CODE:  
039

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <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 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:  
Robert and Nancy Brooks  
STREET AND NUMBER:  
105 Columbia Ave.  
CITY OR TOWN:  
Cranford  
STATE:  
New Jersey  
CODE:  
34

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Union County Court House  
STREET AND NUMBER:  
Broad St.  
CITY OR TOWN:  
Elizabeth  
STATE:  
New Jersey  
CODE:  
34

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
New Jersey Historic Sites Inventory 813.5  
DATE OF SURVEY:  
1972  
 Federal  State  County  Local  
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Historic Sites Section of Department of Environmental Protection  
STREET AND NUMBER:  
Box 1420  
CITY OR TOWN:  
Trenton  
STATE:  
New Jersey  
CODE:  
34

STATE: New Jersey  
COUNTY: Union  
ENTRY NUMBER: JAN 8 1974  
DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
FOR NPS USE ONLY

**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

Present Appearance:  
Exterior

The siding is horizontal novelty siding, painted white, laid over 2" thick tongue and groove siding, and installed at a 45° angle. Windows are double hung 6 over 6 with plain trim. Glass appears quite old with many imperfections and is slightly green in color. Two large windows approximately 12 ft. wide, 10 ft. high occur at the ends in the front of the building. They consist 2' x 2' panes set in 5/4 specially cut continuous frames. The window at the south end of the building has been in place for some time; probably early 20th Century. The north end window was installed in 1971 to match the other and to replace a horizontal, double, sliding barn type door.

The main entrance at the front consists of a separate enclosure with double doors. Two doors at the building wall line provide access to the first floor area and to the stairs to the second floor. Siding is the same as the rest of the building. Interior walls of the entrance porch are recently installed walnut panelling over plaster walls.

Another front subentrance is located at the North end front, in the brick wall addition. In 1971 the opening formerly covered with a horizontal metal clad sliding door was recently replaced with a colonial period door, complete with trim.

At the second floor level there is a set of double doors complete with pivoted windows. Construction is typical "barn door" type.

The North (up - river) structure is single story brick walled with a sloping roof, pitched toward the river.

The windows at the second floor level are dormer type with 6 over 6 double hung sash.

The roofing is now asphalt shingles over cedar shakes. Under the shakes are roofing planks.

Structural Frame

Vertical 6" x 6" timbers on an approximate 2' - 0" center form the main structural frame. They rest on a 4" x 6" sill plate and are cross-braced by the 2" tongue and groove sub-siding applied directly to the 6" x 6".

First floor joists are 3' x 16' members approximately 16" on center, with support from a beam at the half - way position. Rough flooring is 2" tongue and groove.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian |  16th Century |  18th Century |  20th Century  
 15th Century |  17th Century |  19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal          | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric         | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <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

The documented history of what is now Cranford contains reports of many mills on the Rahway River. In early times prior to 1801, there were two portions: Craneville and Williams Farms. This continued until 1864 when the name of Cranford was adopted.

G. W. Thomas wrote in 1920 in the "Cranford Citizen and Chronicle" that in 1710 Benjamin Williams built a dam across the Rahway River near the present High Street Bridge and started a primitive saw mill, and later established a woolen mill. Other mills are suggested, but not mentioned. This was along an old stage coach road now known as Lincoln Avenue. The present mill stands on this same site although the age of the present structure is not fully documented, except to place it somewhere before the Revolution.

The present "Droescher's Mill" (formerly Williams Mill) is the last of eleven mills along the Raritan River, extending from Cranford to Clark and then to Rahway. It is a part of the Master Plan for the development of a Heritage Corridor in Cranford along the Rahway River. It now contains the start of a museum of milling and water powered machines, as well as artifacts obtained in the area.

The history of the Mill, its use and occupancy is as follows.

The site of the Mill had a crude saw mill somewhere near the present buildings structure. This was operated by a Squire Williams, formerly of Elizabethtown somewhere before 1737. Further, it is reported that the first structure was erected in 1737 by Squire Williams. At that time, he maintained a farm to the east of the Mill and towards Elizabethtown.

A pre-revolutionary map of Elizabethtown indicates the road to "Squire Williams Farm". Lincoln Avenue was once known also as "Kings Highway" and extended from the East, what is now known as North Avenue through Cranford and again hitting North Avenue toward the Garwood line and thence going to Lincoln and Philadelphia. It is reported by Dr. Homer Hall that the Swift Sure Railroad operated a stage coach on "Kings Highway"

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

G. W. Thomas, "Regarding Cranford's Naming", Cranford Citizen and Chronicle, July 28th, 1921  
 Bragdon, William B, Cranford Historical Society, Cranford Citizen and Chronicle, 1937  
 Hall, Dr. Homer, "300 Years at Crane's Ford" Cranford Citizen and Chronicle, 1937  
 Mendell, W.W. Sketches of Cranford's Early Days, after 1871.  
 Hatfield, Reverend Edwin. History of Elizabeth. 1868.  
Architecture. New Jersey. March, 1972.

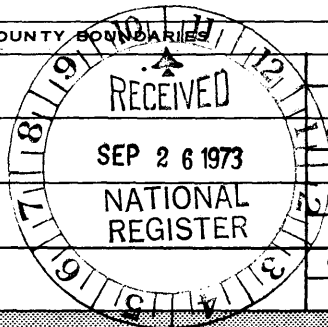
**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			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
NW	° ' "	° ' "	40°	39'	01"
NE	° ' "	° ' "	74°	18'	06"
SE	° ' "	° ' "			
SW	° ' "	° ' "			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: one half acre

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:  
(Robert Brooks, Consulting Engineer) Historic Sites Staff (Lois Richman)  
 ORGANIZATION: Department of Environmental Protection Historic Sites DATE: July 13, 1973  
 STREET AND NUMBER:  
John Fitch Plaza, Labor and Industry Building  
 CITY OR TOWN: Trenton STATE: New Jersey CODE: 31

**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: Richard J. Sullivan  
 Title: Commissioner  
Department of Environmental Protection  
 Date: September 18, 1973

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

W. R. Mortensen  
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 1/8/74

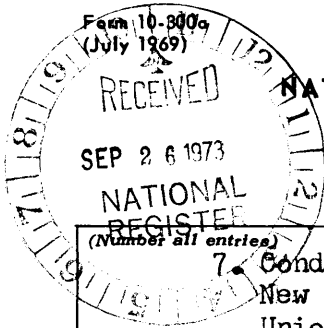
ATTEST:  
Charwell Herring  
 Acting Keeper of The National Register

Date: 1-7-74

STATE	New Jersey	
COUNTY	Union	
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE	
	JAN 8	1974

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

(Continuation Sheet)



7. Condition  
New Jersey 34  
Union County 039  
Droescher's Mill (Rahway River Mill)

Second floor joists are 2" x 16" with two together. A portion near the center of the building has a center support beam with supporting 8" x 8" columns. Rough flooring is 2" tongue and groove. A portion of the second floor has a 2" layer of concrete as a finished floor.

Attic floor joists are 2" x 16" with 1" rough pine flooring. Roof rafters are 2" x 12" arranged with a dutch roof style. Part of the roof system contains a 12" x 12" horizontal member for the exterior hoist to the second floor double door.

Interior Finishes

Upon acquiring the Mill, the sheet rock covering the 6" x 6" vertical main chambers was removed. 2" x 3" nailers were installed against the siding at each column, 3" insulation put in place and sheet rock was applied, thus exposing the columns which were hand finished. The sheet rock was painted with a sand coat paint, giving the appearance of a sand base plaster. Interior partitions are a mixture of walnut vertical grain panelling, painted plaster board, and burlap covered fiberboard. Several partitions are old pine wide board flooring and have been retained intact.

Foundation

The foundation is composed largely of stone, with some areas of brickwork apparently added to close up original openings. Portions of the foundation vary, in that different types were used in different areas. The South end is largely composed of field sandstone which could have been found in the local area. The center portion contains cut sandstone, a hard blue stone, and a hard stone with mica infusion. The latter two types are not found in this area and would have been imported from Morris or some of the Northern Counties in New Jersey.

The basement floor is at two levels. The Southern end is about 2'-6" higher than the northern end and is not hard surface. The lower portion is a hard surface concrete type material that apparently was laid over previous surfaces. It appears quite old itself, but excavation for a sump pump revealed a brick floor followed by field stone. Various machine foundations with mounting bolts are still present.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	New Jersey	
COUNTY	Union	
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(Number all entries)

7. Condition (2)  
New Jersey 34  
Union County 039

Millrace

The Millrace is composed largely of stone containing a mica schist. The mortar gives the appearance of a lime mortar, quite old. A poured concrete section provides a well for the present horizontal turbine which replaced the original undershot wheel. The race for a wheel has been covered over with concrete, but did exist.

The tail race foundation is exposed at low river water, but the wall has been destroyed. An aerial photograph taken in 1925 shows the tailrace intact.

The horizontal turbine, while not operative now is to be restored and put into operation to operate machinery being assembled in the basement.

Original Appearance

There is a photograph and a free hand pencil sketch which shows that a shed was constructed over the Millrace and Tailrace in the late 1890's. This no longer is a part of the Mill. The photograph indicates that there may have been other building programs since the mill was first built.



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

(Continuation Sheet)

3

STATE	
New Jersey	
COUNTY	
Union	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	JAN 8 1974

SEP 26 1973  
NATIONAL REGISTER

(Number all entries)

8. Significance (continued)

New Jersey 34  
Union County 039

It is not definitely known what use Squire Williams made of the Mill however; it is known that during the Revolutionary War blankets were produced at the Mill.

Further, the British tried to burn down the Mill as it was supplying blankets to the Revolutionaries. It is presumed that the blanket manufacturing continued during and to the Civil War Era.

During the Civil War mini-balls were produced at the Mill. Evidence indicates that the Calvary spurs were also produced at the Mill as there are a large number of of spur blanks which have been found not only around the Mill but also in the river. H.E. Sostman, a tenant prior to 1971, uncovered a finished calvary spur within the wall.

CALVARY

After the Civil War and until 1900 or thereabouts a Crosson Lyons operated a saw mill in the basement of the Mill. This has been verified by a nephew by personal conversation with him during 1972.

Around 1900 Severn Droescher purchased the Mill and it is believed to have been from a man named Vreeland.

Severn Droescher operated an oil stone manufacturing works and a cutlery importing and processing business.

A number of the oil stones are found in the foundation and throughout the area of the Mill. He transferred title to the Suburban Trust Company. The Suburban Trust Company sold the building to Lett Organ Company who held it for a few short years and it was then sold to Dr. Neil Castaldo. Dr. Castaldo operated the Mill as a rental property until purchased by the writer in 1971.

Congressional Representatives  
Senators - Harrison Williams  
Clifford Case  
Congressman - Mathew S. Renaldo