

1857

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

RECEIVED

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

SEP 6 1988

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Cook's Mill

other names/site number "The Old Mill", "The Greenville Mill"

2. Location

street & number Route 122

not for publication

city, town Greenville

vicinity

state West Virginia code 54

county Monroe

code 063

zip code 24945

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

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

Category of Property

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

Number of Resources within Property

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows for buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total.

Name of related multiple property listing:

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

Date

8/29/88

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- 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:)

Patrick Andrews

2/6/89

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

## 6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Industry/Processing Mill

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

"Work In Progress"

## 7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Other: post and beam, hand-hewn, mortis  
and tennon

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Limestone blocks, concrete  
walls Weather board

roof Corrugated metal

other Post and beam, hand-hewn, mortis  
and tennon

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Cook's Mill, in the town of Greenville (previously known as Centerville), was built in 1857 on the original foundation and site of a mill constructed earlier in approximately 1796. The property surrounding this mill including the dam, mill pond, tail race and stream, consists of approximately 3 1/2 acres. The mill is located one quarter of a mile west of the center of town, on state route 122, at the confluence of Laurel and Indian Creeks. The pond, currently under reconstruction, (removal of silt) covers an area of approximately three quarters of an acre. The mill itself is a 2 1/2 story (plus basement), hand-hewn post and beam building, with massive timbers pegged at their mortis and tennon joints.

Siding and trim are of poplar, windows are original (recently repaired and reglazed). Gable ends are constructed of vertical board and batton strips. Decorative barge boards still cover the gables and eaves (photo #1).

The dam, crossing Laurel Creek, is 10 feet high and 55 feet wide. The dam is constructed of reinforced concrete and is fitted with a gate for a flume (under repair) and a pond drainage gate as well. A series of five massive buttresses (also under repair) provide additional strength. The mill is operated by two horizontal Leffel water wheels (see appendix 1 - topographic map, assessors survey, site map).

The basement of the building consists of massive stone foundations on three sides, facing east, north, and west. The southern side of the building is partially open, facing the stream. This rear wall of the building contains the forebay (turbine box) and tail race. The turbine box and its exit (tail race) consist of a massive concrete box 8 by 20 by 10, and a short relatively undeveloped tail race. The turbine box contains two horizontal water wheels made by Leffel. These wheels are currently under repair and are restorable. (see photo #6)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

SEP 6 1988

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 2

The first floor of the building is entered from the north via a large traditional divided doorway. The material for this door, as well as the clapboard on the outer surface of the building, is poplar. A second entryway, to the west, permits access to a small bay leading into a massive 40 x 50 foot room, all constructed in large hand-hewn beams (some approaching sizes of 12 x 18 inches). A second bay to the east of the entry door is closed off from the main room as the mill office. To the south (in the rear of the building), is an elevated platform which provides for shafting and pulleys for the two large turbines, as well as a structure to support two grist mills [under reconstruction (see photo #2)]. The shaft of the most forward of the two turbines in the fore bay, passes through this elevated platform on into the second and third floors of the mill (see appendix 2 - first floor plan).

The second floor of the building is reached via a wide set of original steps and consists of a large open room approximately 40' x 50'. As in the case of the first floor, two central ceiling beams, each 50 feet long and of appropriate diameter and hand-hewn, provide a major portion of the architectural integrity to the building. In addition, massive vertical beams on the side walls, as well as intermediate supports, are on approximate 10 foot centers and are in excellent condition, completely intact, chestnut in color from age. This floor houses a system of pulleys and belts, used to operate the lift which is located in the front of the building (north side) at the peak of the roof above the third floor. In use, this lift is operated by engaging the forward turbine and by having the operator on the third floor control the lift apparatus via a handle and rope which goes to a belt tensioning device on the second floor, and is operated by the turbines located in the turbine bay (see photograph #3). A door, allowing access to this lift, may be found in the north wall of the second floor (see appendix 3 - second floor plan).

The third floor is entered via an original large staircase in the rear of the building and consists of a 40 x 50 foot room with approximate 6/12 roof descending to the eaves at floor level. The roof sheeting consists of original rough cut boards. The roofing material is corrugated metal. Floors on all three levels are in good to excellent condition with some areas needing minimal repair. Decorative fascia (barge board) is to be found surrounding all aspects of the eaves. This fascia is in good condition for 90% of its length and in reparable condition for the areas where water damage has occurred (see appendix 4 - third floor plan).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

SEP 6 1988

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 3

---

The pond, formed by a dam across Laurel Creek (prior to its intersection with Indian Creek) is in the process of excavation to permit it to cover approximately the same area as it did historically (about 3/4 of an acre). This excavation is necessiated by an approximate 100 year build up of silt deposited by Laurel Creek.

The setting for the mill and mill pond are in a beautiful valley enclosed by the 2 creeks. The area below the mill, which has been used historically as the site of a saw mill, cattle scales and associated corral structures, is currently devoid of structures other than a small foundation for cattle scales (see appendix 1 - site map).

During the period of historic activity, a flume from the mill dam ran a third turbine which operated a small saw mill which was attached to the mill building to the west. This flume will be reconstructed this summer, using similar techniques to that of the original. The dam, reconstructed at approximately the turn of the century, is approximately 25 feet down stream from the original wooden dam, which can be seen in the early photograph provided with this application (photo #4). The mill building and associated structures remain essentially as they were during the middle and late 1800's.

## 8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Industry, social history & communication

Architecture

Period of Significance

1857 - 1930

Significant Dates

See Below

Significant Dates:

Site first mill associated w/ Cook's Fort, 1796.

Present Mill building - 1857 - 1930

Post Office - 1831 to 1861 - Original mill building

housed post office from 1831 to 1857; recon-

structed mill housed it from 1857 to 1861.

Significant Person

Jacob Cook, Jr. - Grandson of the founder  
of Cook's Fort & builder of Cook's original  
mill and the builder of the reconstructed mill.

Architect/Builder

Humphries, James

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

### Summary:

Monroe County historian, Dr. "Maggie" Ballard, discusses the significance of mills to the community: "Mills in the late 1700's and 1800's were the focal point for country folk to gather and converse, trade horses, and pay their taxes while their "turn" was being ground. Cook's Mill was no exception. It was the gathering point for all and sundry." (Ballard, 68) This mill, which remained in the Cook family until the late 1800's, was the focal point around which the town of Centerville, now Greenville, was formed.

Local legend has it that the original mill building was burned during the civil war. Parenthetically, the original mill dam is visible during this period of restoration when the mill pond has been lowered. The old wooden dam is located about 25' up stream from the present dam. In 1857, Jacob Cook, Jr. and his brother Riley Cook contracted with a Mr. James Humphreys to rebuild the mill on the same sight and foundation. This building represents a significant and now rare example of a massive hand hewn post and beam architectural style. A fascinating document which outlines all of the building materials used, as well as prices of the day, exists in the form of a contract between Mr. Cook and Mr. Humphries and may be found in (Contract Book T, page 319, at the Monroe County Courthouse).

In her historical piece: "The Indian Creek Post Office (Virginia/West Virginia), a Continuous Post Office From 1831 to the Present," Dr. Maggie Ballard provides a treatise on the significance of this post office, located at Cook's Mill, which represents the longest continuous post office in the county of Monroe, WV. (Ballard, August 68), (Ballard, unpublished)

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Ballard, M. Early History of Monroe - Random Notes, The Monroe Watchman, Union, West Virginia, p 2, May 2, 1968 (Monroe County Historical Society).

Ballard, M. Early History of Monroe - History of the Greenville Post Office, The Monroe Watchman, Union, West Virginia, p 2, August 8, 1968 (Monroe County Historical Society).

Ballard, M. The Indian Creek Post Office, Virginia - West Virginia, 1831 - 1968, Unpublished (available - Monroe County Historical Society), 1968.

See continuation sheet

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

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property 2 acres approx.

UTM References

A 

1	7
---	---

5	2	7	6	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	1	5	5	1	8	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

  
Zone Easting Northing

C 

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

B 

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

  
Zone Easting Northing

D 

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description : BEGINNING at southwest corner of a bridge crossing north end of Mill Pond on Greenville-Wayside Road and with right of way line along south side of Greenville-Wayside Road N 82 W 192 feet to turn; thence N 71 W 165 feet to turn N 59 1/2 W 99 feet to cedar post a corner to Eddie Johnson and leaving state road right of way line and with Johnson land S 9 1/2 W 284 feet to northeast corner of bridge crossing Indian Creek on road from Greenville to Coulter's Chapel; thence with right of way line along north side of road

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification: The boundary includes all of the structures and facilities involved in the mill activities described under "Significant Areas" and "Significant Dates".

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title James P. Wells, Ph.D.  
organization Owner - Employer: WVSOM date May 27, 1988  
street & number P.O. Box 64A telephone (304)832-6775  
city or town Greenville state West Virginia zip code 24945

SEP 6 1988

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

---

Historic Context:

Industry: During the period of principal significance of the Greenville Mill, water power was the form of energy which was most available for industry. Of the many mills which dotted the landscape during the seventeen and eighteen hundreds, Cook's Mill is one of only 4 mills within the county still remaining and representative of this era of water powered industry. The mill in Greenville, is an excellent example of water powered industry, still having the dam, forebay, two large horizontal water wheels, massive shafts and flat belt pulley assemblies, and the tail race, relatively intact and currently under repair. It is unique in the county in its setting, original integrity and preservation. Only one other mill in the county is available to the public.

Social History: It is important to note that the mill was active as a grist mill and saw mill during the civil war and at the time of June 20, 1863, when West Virginia became a state. A date on the mill of that year can still be read in the graffiti which covers the entry way, and documents the visits to the mill by thousands of people since its building. It is the intent of the current owners that the restoration of the mill will not only permit it to be used for grinding corn again but will allow it to serve as a living museum with exhibits addressing the development of water powered industry in the region, the role of such mills as gathering places for the community, and offer an understanding of the history of the life ways of the people of Monroe County from the time of Cook's Fort to the present.

Contemporary local residents view the "Old Mill" with fondness relating stories about their childhood memories of its operation. The reconstructed records of its ownership demonstrate that most of the pioneer families in the area have at one time either owned or worked in the mill. Recollections by these people point to a simpler time of family life when the mill was a focal point for news, gossip, fishing in the pond on hot lazy summer days, and winter ice skating.

Communication: "On the sixth day of October, 1831, Jacob Cook, Jr., who had built a house on the north hillside opposite the mill, became the first postmaster. He was brother of Valentine Cook who owned the mill. This was before the day of the adhesive stamp. The postmaster simply marked the word 'Paid' with pen and ink and his initials or name. Jacob Cook, Jr. died at his home on Indian Creek in 1884. He bequeathed his house and orchards to his son Riley B. Cook. To his

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

SEP 6 1988

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 3

son Jacob Cook, III, he bequeathed land including 'my mills'. The plural here, we believe, simply means a mill for grinding grain and a saw mill. Riley B. Cook, son of Jacob Cook, Jr., became postmaster of the 19th day of January, 1844. The post office must have remained in the mill on Mill Creek or Laurel Creek, as it is now called. The name of the office from the beginning was Indian Creek. It was during the term of service of Riley B. Cook that the post office department adopted adhesive stamps (March 3, 1847) for use in the prepayment of postage. This represented one of the most important improvements in the postal service in America. A letter from George Peters to his nephew Uria Peters, dated 11 March 1853, gives some addresses of local persons: one of which says, 'in writing to Charles Miller direct your letter to Centerville at Cook's Mill'. Dr. Ballard further notes that the little village of Centerville (now Greenville) was established with its current two street configuration in 1846, when lots were sold "on the hill above the mill" and a store building was built. Somewhere around 1861, the post office was moved to this store building.

## Building:

In 1770, Jacob Cook, Sr., and his wife Rachael came to what is now known as Monroe County, WV. They constructed a house and a fort (Cook's Fort) on the South Side of Indian Creek near the confluence Laurel Creek and Indian Creek. The fort served as haven for settlers from the indians living in the area. Jacob Cook, S. died in 1797. (Ballard, 67) The first reference to "the grist mill" appears in 1797 in a will prepared by Valentine Cook, Jacob Cook's son (Will Book volume 1, page 133, Greenbrier County Courthouse), and also in a deed from Valentine Cook to Jacob Cook, Jr., his brother. (Deed Book, Volume 1, pages 731-732, Greenbrier County Courthouse). Thus it is clear that Cook's Mill was built during the period from 1770 to 1797. When this building burned in about 1855, Jacob Cook, Jr. had it rebuilt on the same site in 1857.

The Old Mill in Greenville represents an almost by-gone quality and style of construction involving massive hand-hewn, mortis and tennon posts and beams. Some of the beams in this building reach dimensions of 12" x 18". The original hand-hewn tool markings may still be seen and some of these beams reach lengths of 50'. To my knowledge, this building represents the most complete and finest example of this form of architecture to be found in Monroe County. As can be seen in the accompanying photographs, the mill structure is, in large part, in excellent condition.



SEP 6 1988

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 4

At approximately the turn of the century, Mr. George Kessler built the concrete dam at Cook's "Old" Mill. "When Mr. Kessler built his concrete mill dam on Laurel Creek, below Greenville, most blacksmith's had several panels of plank fence hanging full of horseshoes. Mr. Kessler went to these shops, got the old shoes, and after each days pouring of the cement, he would stick it full of horseshoes, halfway submerged, so that the next days pouring would hold good to the pouring of the day before. There are many hundred pounds of such iron in that old dam". (Ballard, 68) This replacement of the original wooden dam by a concrete dam occurred during the period of primary significance for the site. As wooden dams are short lived, and often replaced, and concrete represented a major advantage in construction material, this replacement of the early dam which no doubt had been replaced itself several times in wood, is appropriate and represents a material and construction approach found at all other mills and mill sites in Monroe County.

The town of Greenville itself has maintained its original historical flavor, and the mill at the foot of a large hill, several hundred yards from the town's primary country store, presents a picturesque and appropriate historical feeling to the observer. The significance of Cook's Mill, having been built and reconconstructed by Jacob Cook, Sr. and Jr., respectively, relates to the importance of this families contribution to the early settling and development of the region. Jacob Cook and his heirs were responsible for the building of Cook's Fort and Cook's Mill, which was the focal point for the community and the center around which the town of Centerville, now Greenville, arose. The mill lies on the opposite side of the creek from the fort and would have been within hailing distance of that important historic site. A historic marker in Greenville describes the saltpeter caves which were mined during the civil war and which provide the water for the mill. This marker was erected by the Department of History and Archives.

The mill property and mill building are among the most picturesque of such structures in the region. When the mill pond is refilled, after having been cleared of deposited silt this fall, it will again encompass its' large original size of about 3/4 of an acre, making this mill one of the most appealing and historically significant within the state.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

SEP 6 1988

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

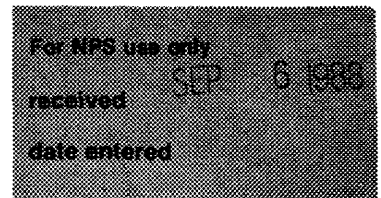
Section number 10 Page 2

---

N 88 E 50 feet to turn; thence S 85 E 80 feet to cedar tree in right of way line, S 69 E 100 feet to turn; thence S 58 1/2 E 30 feet to red oak 4 inch diameter; thence through the land of Aaron V. Canterbury N 26 1/2 E 100 feet to a point in center of concrete mill dam; thence with a line through mill pond S 67 E 76 feet; thence N 65 E 46 feet, N 33 E 50 feet; thence N 28 E 100 feet to center of bridge crossing north end of mill pond; thence with right of way along south side of Greenville-Wayside Road N 76 W 15 feet to the BEGINNING, containing 2 acres, according to survey made thereof by William T. Worley, Surveyor, on July 7, 1964.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number    Append.

Page 1

Appendix 1A: See Site Map

Appendix 1B: Topographic Map: Mill building on map outside of  
Greenville at junction of Laurel and Indian Creeks.

Appendix 1C: Accessors Survey: Plot #10 and #10.1

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

SEP 6 1988

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number Append. Page 1

---

Appendix 1A: See Site Map

Appendix 1B: Topographic Map: Mill building on map outside of Greenville at junction of Laurel and Indian Creeks.

Appendix 1C: Accessors Survey: Plot #10 and #10.1

**Photographs:**

Photo #1 - View of mill looking southwest.

Photo #2 - View of first floor and elevated mill platform.

Photo #3 - View of second floor and lift apparatus.

Photo #4 - Early photograph of mill looking north showing original dam.

Photo #5 - Typical mortis and tennon joint.

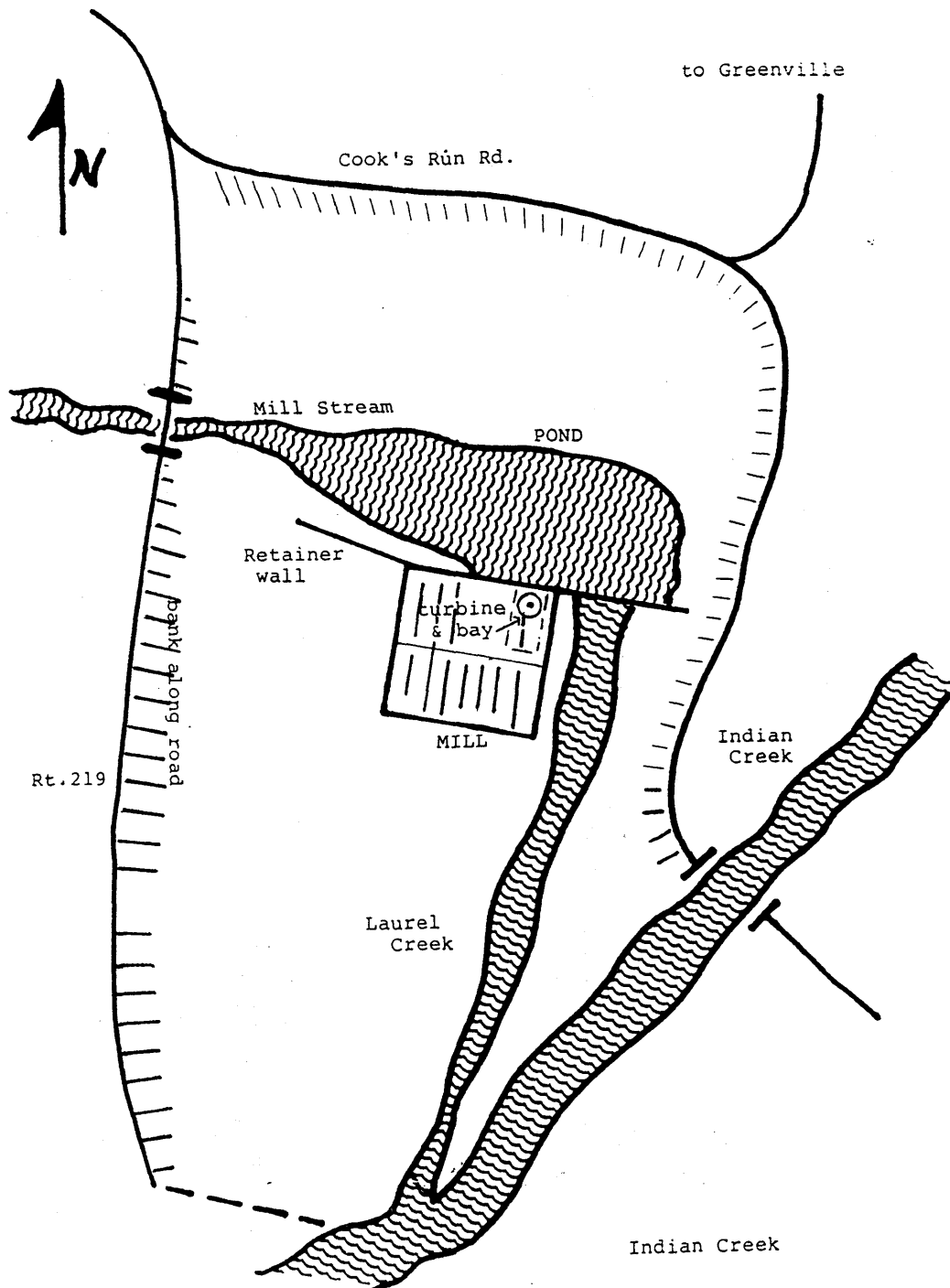
Photo #6 - Forebay (turbine box) showing one of the two turbines (the second turbine has been removed for restoration).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

SEP 6 1988

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Append. Page 1A

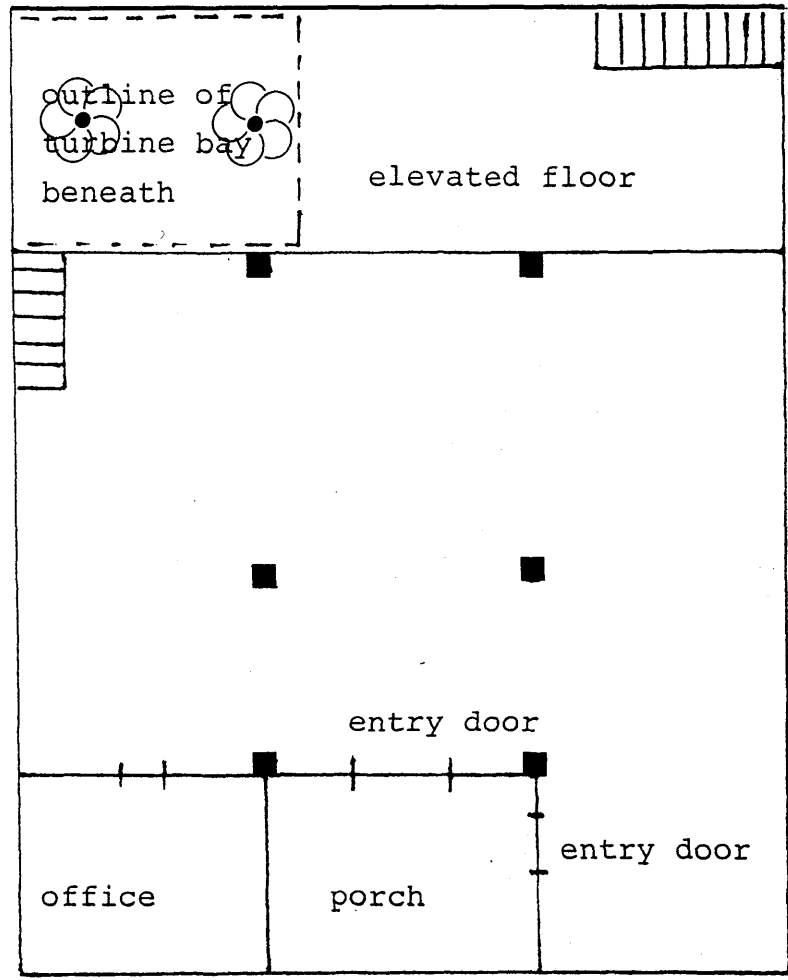


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

SEP 6 1988

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Append. Page 2



1st FLOOR PLAN

North side of building



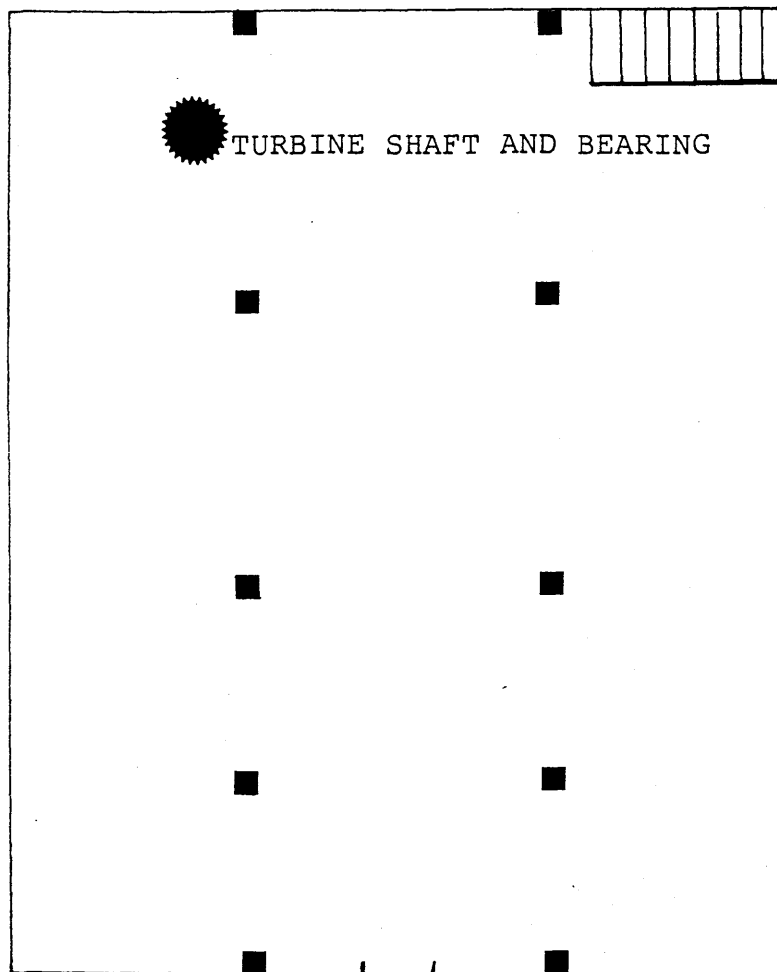
SEP 6 1988

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Append. Page 3

---



North side of building

2nd FLOOR

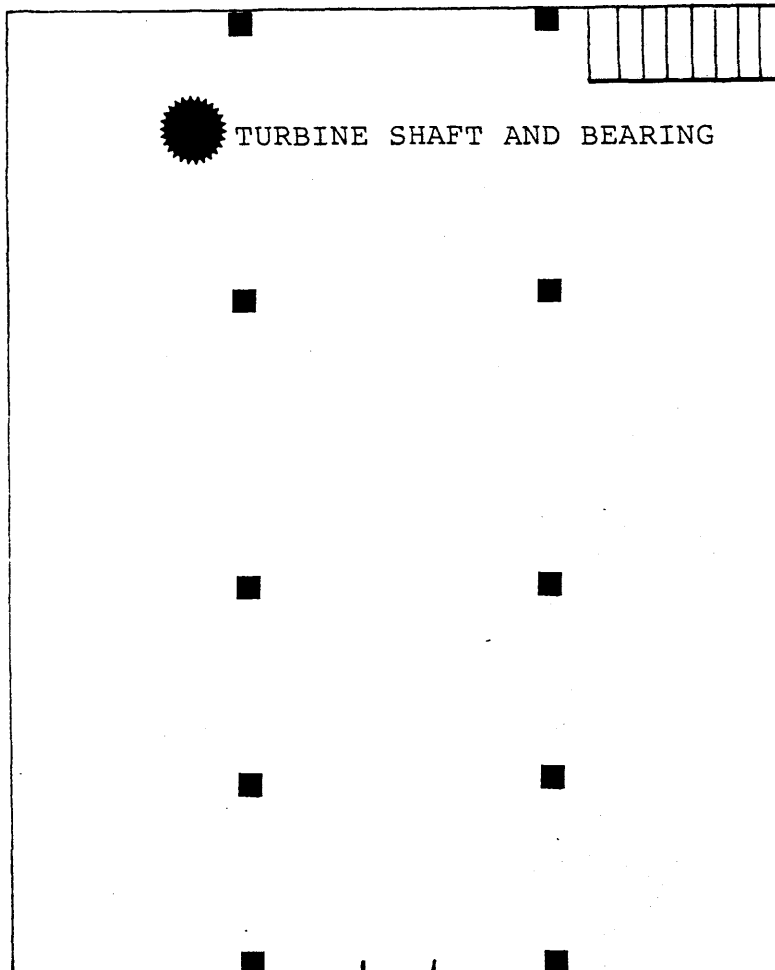
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

SEP 6 1988

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number Append. Page 4

---



North side of building

3rd FLOOR