

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	OCT 24 1975
DATE ENTERED	JAN 1 1976

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Whited Grist Mill

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

306 East 7th Street

CITY, TOWN

Elk City

STATE

Oklahoma

___ VICINITY OF

CODE

40

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

No. 6

COUNTY

Beckham

CODE

009

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- ___ DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- ___ STRUCTURE
- ___ SITE
- ___ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- ___ PUBLIC
- ___ PRIVATE
- ___ BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- ___ IN PROCESS
- ___ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- ___ OCCUPIED
- ___ UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- ___ YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- ___ NO

PRESENT USE

- ___ AGRICULTURE
- ___ COMMERCIAL
- ___ EDUCATIONAL
- ___ ENTERTAINMENT
- ___ GOVERNMENT
- ___ INDUSTRIAL
- ___ MILITARY
- ___ MUSEUM
- ___ PARK
- ___ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ___ RELIGIOUS
- ___ SCIENTIFIC
- ___ TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER: Unused

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

The Cultus and Arimathaea Clubs

STREET & NUMBER

722 W. 5th Street

CITY, TOWN

Elk City

___ VICINITY OF

STATE

Oklahoma

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of the County Clerk

STREET & NUMBER

Beckham County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Sayre

STATE

Oklahoma

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Special Whited Grist Mill Survey

DATE

1975

___ FEDERAL STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Oklahoma Historical Society

CITY, TOWN

Oklahoma City

STATE

Oklahoma

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT DETERIORATED
 GOOD RUINS
 FAIR UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED, but
being restored

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Whited mill was a relatively modest affair, as befitted a raw, frontier town. But it served the Elk City community dependably for 40 years, expanding with the times. In its later years it even added flour milling equipment. Power was supplied originally by a quarter-horse kerosene engine. This was replaced in time by an electric motor.

The mill room, as built in 1903-1904, was roughly 17 x 32 feet in size. Attached to it on the east, under a lean-to roof, was the sheller room. It contained corn cribs, a cob bin, and a fanning mill for removing chaff and dirt from the corn before grinding. Attached to this room, in turn was a lean-to roof over the wagon scales. To the south, in time, another addition was erected to house a hammermill. Finally, in 1928-1928, a separate storage building was constructed to the west of the original mill. It still contains some flour milling equipment. Most of the original grist mill machinery bears the date 1871. The grinding stones were imported from France.

The Whited mill closed in 1944. By 1974, when restoration was begun, floors had rotted and the unused machinery had dropped to the ground beneath. As this nomination is being prepared considerable repair work has already been accomplished. The roof was replaced to prevent further deterioration. Side walls were dismantled, one-half-inch insulation board installed on the original 2 x 4-inch studs to give them added strength, then carefully replaced. The rotted floors have been replaced and the machinery re-set. At last report a local mechanic was working to re-create the original kerosene engine.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1903 - 1944

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Elk City was described recently as a community of "soul," with reverence for the building efforts of its citizens. This is currently being demonstrated by the development of an Old Town Museum Complex . . . and the preservation of the Whited Grist Mill. Significantly, this appreciation of the past is being expressed while the past itself goes back little farther than the day before yesterday.

This section of west-central Oklahoma was not opened for settlement until the land "run" of April 19, 1892. It took arrival of the Choctaw, Oklahoma and Gulf railroad (the present Rock Island) in 1901 to get a townsite laid out and a town started. Then in short order Elk City (although it was not called that until 1907) acquired the customary number of stores, eating houses, saloons . . . and the Whited Grist Mill, two blocks east of Main Street. What it may have lacked in size, it made up for in dependability. Over the years it served the growing community until the wartime unavailability of replacement parts for ancient machinery finally caused it to close . . . this in 1944.

Ruben Whited built his mill between the Rock Island tracks and Elk Creek, just southeast of the business district, in 1903-1904. The Whited family owned and operated it until it closed. It was the town's first and only mill. A long-time worker recently recalled its operation.

At the Whited Mill corn would be shelled for the cobs. The corn was ground for less than 25¢ per hundred, or for toll, which was a certain per cent of the meal. This toll was sold to those customers who did not have their own corn, along with that made from a reserve stack kept in the crib. Thus customers were always assured of freshly ground corn meal. There was also a fanning mill in the sheller room to remove all chaff and dirt from corn before it was ground.

A sign painted across the front of the wooden building proclaimed proudly: CORN GROUND INTO MEAL OR CHOPS AT ANY TIME. The mill attempted to keep up with the times. In the winter of 1928-1929 a new building was erected to the west of the original one, to provide extra sales and storage space and house flour milling equipment. Earlier remodeling involved installation of a hammermill to accommodate bundle feet. An electric motor eventually replaced the original kerosene-fueled engine to run the machinery. Most of the old milling machinery itself, with the French buhrs, remains in the restored building, though not yet in operating condition.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

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Whited Grist Mill

Much restoration work remains to be done, of course. In time it is hoped the old mill will again be able to operate, at least on a part-time basis. As in the work to date, as much as possible of the original timbering, support beams, red shale foundation stones, and other materials will be used in the restoration. As noted in No. 7, it is even hoped the original motive power can be re-created. Also programmed is an extensive clean-up of the grounds and nearby Elk Creek.