

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

For HCRS use only

received **OCT 19 1982**  
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Hixson<sup>J</sup> Skinner Mill Complex

and/or common Cole's Grist Mill Complex

**2. Location**

street & number Still Valley Road<sup>Rd.</sup> N/A not for publication

city, town Phillipsburg<sup>ve</sup> Township N/A vicinity of congressional district

state New Jersey code 34 county Warren code 041

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name John L. and Elsie A. Cole

street & number Still Valley Road, R.D. 1, Box 22

city, town Phillipsburg N/A vicinity of state New Jersey

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Warren County Court House, County Clerk's Office

street & number Second Street

city, town Belvidere state New Jersey

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title "Northwest New Jersey: An Inventory and Historic Industrial Engineering Inventory: Warren and Sussex Counties" has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1979  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Office of Historic Preservation

city, town Trenton state New Jersey

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The components of the 2 1/2 acre, largely 19th century, Coles Mill Complex include the mill building, head and tail race remains, a miller's house and garage, guest house, and a small pony pratt truss bridge across Pohatcong Creek. Cole's Grist Mill is a masonry and frame, three and one half story, gable roofed building with a frame, shed roofed appendage. Picturesquely sited on the south bank of the Pohatcong Creek in Pohatcong Township approximately one half mile east of the village of Springtown, it bears evidence of several periods of construction: the early 19th century, the mid-19th century, and c. 1968.

#### Main Block, Exterior and Construction:

The main block of the mill is a square structure, approximately 30 feet wide and 30 feet deep, whose masonry load bearing walls are surmounted by frame gables. Running east/west, its roof ridge parallels the creek to the north and the adjoining raceway on the south. The three and one half story building has a basement that is almost fully above ground level except on the east gable end. The latter, the principal facade, has little setback from the road.

Two stages in the construction of the main block are readily apparent in the contrast between the stone of its lower walls and the brick above. It began in the early 19th century as a small, stone, one and one half story building, the outlines of whose gables are visible in part on the east and west sides.

A locally quarried limestone, much of it iron stained, was used for the construction of this first portion. While coursed rubble with roughly squared quoins served for the north, south and west walls, on the east front more carefully squared stones, approximating random ashlar, were employed. On the east side a crude sort of belt course can be discerned just below the level of the original eaves. It is distinguished by two curious stones - carefully dressed, five sided blocks that resemble a gabled building in profile. One is set in several feet from both ends of the belt course.

These walls, approximately two to two and one half feet thick, were laid up apparently with a mud or clay based mortar and pointed with a lime-rich mortar. A considerable amount of early pointing remains on the west gable end where it was protected by a 19th century addition that is not longer extant. Elsewhere the stonework bears evidence of successive repointings, some with Portland cement. In places the pointing is missing from the joints.

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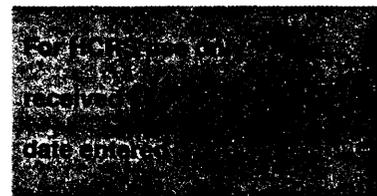
Cole's Grist Mill Complex, Pohatcong Twp.,

Continuation sheet Warren County, NJ

Item number

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DESCRIPTION

Sometime in the middle of the 19th century, probably between 1852 and 1860, the roof and gable peaks of this building were removed and its walls raised up in brick to provide a full second and third stories. The brick was laid in the common bond, varying with from six to eight stretcher courses between header courses. At the third floor level, the thickness of the walls was reduced by two bricks, one taken from the inside and one from the outside. A lime mortar appears to have been used. Again the pointing is missing in places and sections have been repointed with Portland cement.

The brick walls stop at the level of the eaves, above which the gables are of frame construction. Both gables are clad with flush siding, boards approximately six inches in width, nailed vertically. At the bottom, the siding overlaps the top of the brick walls by several inches.

The metal roof is a modern installation, replacing an older wood shingle roof. The eaves overhang slightly on the north and south sides. The flush raking eaves are trimmed with plain fascia boards only on the east gable. Protruding from the peak of the east gable, a gabled wooden cover protects the hoisting tackle.

The east gable end, the principal facade, exhibits the only regular fenestration on the main block. Its three bays are composed of a central entry with flanking windows on the first, second, and attic stories; on the third story the two end windows are present, but there is no central entry.

Crude stone lintels span the first floor windows and the first and second floor entries on this side. They consist of either one or two rectangular or of three blocks with the middle one roughly shaped to approximate a keystone. Both entries have a single rectangular stone block for their sills. Only one of the upper windows has a distinctive lintel; a single course of brick headers spans the second floor south window.

The three entries are framed with saw cut planks and lack any decorative trim; the first floor entry frame is two planks thick. All three have batten Dutch doors, made of random width boards and hung on iron, cross-garnet hinges. A square opening cut in the upper leaf of the first floor door is fitted with a single glass pane. This leaf also features a large cast iron, bean cusp, Suffolk latch of mid to late 19th century date.

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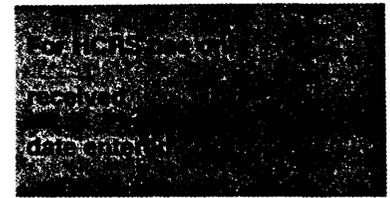
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DESCRIPTION

The first, second, and third story windows are framed with small, untrimmed timbers and are fitted with double hung, six light sashes. Visible pegs indicate that the second story window frames are of mortise and tenon joinery; the third floor windows are probably also so framed. The first floor windows appear to have been reworked; Portland cement fills the space between the opening in the stone wall and the smaller frames. These frames are made of much thinner lumber and lack the raked timber sills of the upper windows. The much smaller attic windows have simple board frames and four light sashes.

The other three facades of the main block have an irregular fenestration. The window openings vary considerably in size and number and are randomly placed. All have simple timber frames; some appear to have been reworked. Except for the brick header course spanning one second story window on the west gable end, they lack distinctive lintels.

On the north side there are one first floor window and two smaller cellar windows. The first floor window and one of the cellar windows have double hung sashes, 6/6 and 2/6 light respectively. The third, fitted with a fixed three light sash, occupied the upper end of the rectangular opening whose lower portion has been blocked up with stone.

Two entries open on the west gable wall. One leading to the cellar at ground level near the north corner has double batten doors, both with a large upper opening fitted with a fixed four light sash. These doors appear to be replacements. The off-center first floor entry once led to the removed wing. It has an early batten Dutch door made of boards with a bead molding on one edge that exhibit verticle saw marks.

No windows pierce the west wall at the cellar or first story levels. On the upper floors, however, the window placement approximates that of the east side, except for the lack of a third floor south window. Fixed nine light sash fill the second and third floor north windows. The second floor south window has double hung 3/6 light sashes. The attic windows are the same size as those of the east gable; their single pane fixed sash are modern replacements.

There are two openings, a doorway and a 6/6 sash window, on the south side of the main block on the first story. Now hidden by the frame appendage, they provided physical and visual access to the raceway from the grinding area on the first floor.

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DESCRIPTION

The floors (excepting that of the cellar), the gables, and the roof of the main block are of simple frame construction. The floor framing system consists of large summer beams - three for the lower two floors and one for the upper two - carrying joists on varied centers that are loosely lap-jointed above the central beam. The hewn timber summer beams of the two lower floors run north/south as does the vertically saw cut beam of the third floor. The summer beam of the attic floor, also vertically saw cut, runs east/west instead. The ends of all the members are let into sockets in the masonry walls; the ends of the center beams on the upper floors are anchored by S-shaped, iron tie bars.

The three summer beams of the first floor and the center beam of the upper floors are supported by one or two large, square, timber posts, several of which have splayed top blocks or capitals. The end beams of the second floor are smaller than the middle beam. They were designed to have diagonal end braces, only one of which survives. Re-inforcement of the third floor was provided by the installation of a saw cut beam at the east end. It is supported at both ends by small posts set on the ledge created by the change in thickness from stone to brick.

The frames of the two lower floors exhibit considerable modification. For example, to the south of its centered upright post, the first floor middle beam has been cut off and removed. This probably occurred when the massive timber cradle of the present mill works was installed. In other places the first floor beams have been cut and new timbers inserted. A good many of the joists also have been replaced, as evidenced by the number with circular saw marks. Both of the outer second floor beams have been cut off at the north end and supported by posts. The east beam was cut for the insertion of a staircase, for which the supporting post serves as part of the frame. The diagonal brace at the south end of this beam was removed—its mortise is visible - and replaced by a post set against the wall. Some of the joists also have been replaced with circular saw cut members.

The roof is framed with vertically saw cut common rafters that are connected at the peak by pegged lap joints. The junction of the rafters and the wall plates is not visible. The gable frames consist of fairly, regularly spaced studs to which are nailed small horizontal members.

Portions of two chimneys remain in the main block. One, a square stuccoed stack in the northeast corner, extends from the first floor to the top of the stone walls on the second story above which it has been removed. The other, a square brick stack located about the middle of the west wall, apparently began at the third floor level. It has been removed above the gable peak.

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DESCRIPTION

Appendages:

The doorway in the south wall of the main block now leads to the frame, one story, shed roofed appendage built over the raceway in about 1968 to replace an earlier frame addition that had become seriously deteriorated. The earlier appendage, which resembled the present structure in its basic form, is likely to have been built when the turbine, which powered the mill until recent years, was installed sometime before 1880. The present addition, set on concrete block piers, has board and batten siding, a wood shingle roof, flush eaves, and 6/6 sash windows. Its east end, set back about two feet from the front of the main block, features a recessed entry with shed hood and a large, multi-pane window.

Another addition, no longer extant, once abutted the west side of the main block. The ghost outline of its gable roof indicates that the structure, probably of frame construction, was of about the same height as, but was not axially aligned with the original stone mill. Instead, with its roof ridge several feet to the south of that of the main block, it apparently extended beyond the south wall of the latter and about as far as the south side of the cellar entry. The lack of a third floor south window and the protruding mortar from the brick joints within the outline of its gable suggests that this addition, possibly built c1850, predated the addition of the upper floors to the main block. The existence of the addition's gable would have precluded the insertion of a third floor main block window at that spot and prevented the exterior pointing of the brickwork. No trace of this wing's foundation is evident above ground.

Three holes in the masonry of the main block's west gable end probably provided for the passage of jack shafts and pulleys to power machinery in the wing. The first is a small, square opening on the cellar level near the south corner. The second, now patched with brick, is located between the two second floor windows. The third, also blocked up, pierced the brickwork between the second floor south window and the wing's gable peak.

Interior:

The interior finishes of the main block - each story of which has a single room - are simple, utilitarian, and in places crude. With the exception of the cellar's modern concrete slab, the flooring consists largely of wide, random-width, pine boards, cut and patched as necessitated by both the placement of the mill works and simple wear. A considerable portion of the first floor around the grinding area in the southwest corner has been replaced by regular, approximately three inch wide fir or hemlock flooring. In comparison, the upper floors are relatively unaltered.

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DESCRIPTION

Plaster wherever found on the inside walls of the mill is applied directly to the masonry. In the cellar plaster appears only in the southwest corner, the area where the bins to receive the freshly ground grain were set; elsewhere the stonework is left exposed. On the first floor the walls are roughly plastered and whitewashed; on the upper floors the masonry is plastered, but unpainted.

Throughout the main block, there are no ceilings. The framing of the floors was left exposed. Only on the first story was the exposed fabric of the floor above whitewashed.

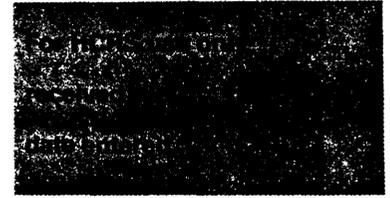
Small timber lintels span the door and window openings in the masonry walls on the interior. The windows all feature plastered recesses without wooden trim or sills, other than the sash holders. The treatment of the doorways, however, is more varied. Of them, the doorway on the first floor connecting the modern frame appendage and the main block is the most carefully finished. The matched, approximately five inch wide boards lining it have a small bead molding on one edge as does the inner edge of the otherwise plain surround. Some of the other doorways have crude trim made of narrow boards; still others have no trim at all and their doors are hung directly on the plank frames.

A staircase consisting of a single flight joins each level of the main block to the floor above. While varying in placement and quality of construction, all are quite simple. Set perpendicular to the west wall about midway, the cellar stairs descend through a trapdoor. The stairs leading to the second floor rise along the east half of the north wall. While rough sawn lumber was used for the former and planed boards for the latter, the treads of both flights fit into precisely cut grooves in the string boards. Neither flight has risers. The second floor staircase, however, has a plain wooden newel post and railing and the area beneath it is enclosed by vertically nailed boards. The two flights of stairs connecting the upper stories rise in the northwest corner. In contrast to the other two, they have treads and risers that are nailed to the open stringboards.

At one time the northeast corner of the first story was enclosed for an office; the ghost outline of its partition is visible on the floor boards. The pipe hole in the corner chimney makes it evident that the room was heated at one time by a stove. Into the base of the chimney is built a small safe. The inside of its cast iron door reads "Improved Salamander Safe, patented September 6, 1870" and is decorated with painted flowers and gilt border. Traces of similar decoration remain on the outside of the door.

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DESCRIPTION

## Mill Works and Machinery:

Although a 1940's, electrically powered, stone grinding wheel - installed in the northwest corner of the first floor in the 1960's - is used in the current production of flour, a considerable portion of the earlier water powered mill works remain. Little if any evidence is left, however, of the system employed in the mill's first period of operation. The surviving works appear to range in date from about the third quarter of the 19th century to the early 20th century. These works, as found today, are the result of periodic modifications to meet changing needs, technologies, and conditions.

Buried by silt in its concrete enclosed pit is a turbine, quite possibly the one that is known to have been installed before 1880. It undoubtedly superceded the water wheel - most likely an undershot or breast wheel - by which the mill was first powered. The poured concrete turbine pit and head race appear to be of early 20th century provenance, replacements of the timber framing typically used for the purpose at an earlier date.

The power generated by the turbine was transmitted to the grinding stones and other machinery of the mill by a typical system of drive shafts, gears, and pulleys. Protruding from the top of the turbin pit is the control rod used to regulate the turbine and the main power shaft. The latter terminates in a small pinion whose 29 teeth mesh with the 59 teeth of a large gear fixed to the end of a horizontal drive shaft. These works are all made of iron.

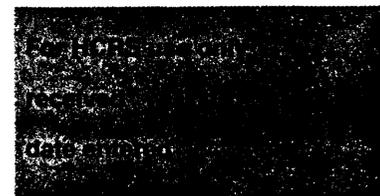
Passing through a hole in the main block's south wall into the cellar, the horizontal shaft ends in an iron-bound gear with wooden cogs. This gear meshes with the first of several gears - also iron-bound with wooden cogs - that enabled the transfer of power to three verticle drive shafts, two of which survive. This system of gears and shafts is held by a massive timber cradle whose circular saw cut members are framed with mortise and tenon joints.

A short horizontal jack shaft fixed to the northernmost gear of these works terminates in a large, wooden wheel. A pulley connects this wheel to a single cylinder gasoline engine, evidently of early 20th century date. Inscribed with the name of its maker the "Waterloo Gasoline Engine Co., Waterloo, Iowa" and a last patent date of 1902, it was probably installed to provide power in times of low water and winter freeze.

Immediately adjac to the cradle in the southwest corner of the cellar, the wooden chutes from the grinding area above and the paired wooden cases of the two grain elevator systems protrude through holes in the flooring. The one pair of elevator cases, made with bead-edged boards, is possibly older than the other pair. The bins which presumably collected the freshly ground grain in transit from chute to elevator have not survived.

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DESCRIPTION

Mounted on a timber close to the west wall is the iron saddle of a vertical drive shaft. How and if an attached shaft was geared to the other works is not evident. It is also unclear how the horizontal drive shaft, which presumably once passed through the near-by in the wall into the west wing, related to the extant works if at all. It is possible that this shaft was geared to the power system preceeding the existing works.

The two surviving vertical drive shafts pass upward through the first floor where one of them is connected by spindle and rynd to the northern of two pairs of millstones. The millstones are said to be French burhstone; one is dated 1752. The northern pair is enclosed by a round wooden vat with an iron band. Set on top of the vat, a frame of mortise and tenon construction supports a large wooden hopper with attendant shoe and damsel. The iron-bound southern pair of millstones has lost its drive shaft connection to the works below. Just to the west of both pair of stones is a small iron wheel, mounted close to the floor on a threaded iron rod, used to adjust the runner stone up and down to regulate grinding.

On the east side of the millstones stands a massive timber swivel crane of mortise and tenon construction. Through the end of its arm passes a thick, threaded, iron rod from the lower end of which hang the large iron tongs used to raise and lower the runner stones for sharpening. In a cupboard set along the west wall is housed the owner's extensive collection of millstone dressing tools.

To the west of the grinding area, the square wooden cases of the two grain elevators pass from floor to ceiling. The wooden chutes from the second floor by which the hoppers were fed with grain have been removed.

To the north along the side of the second floor stairs is located a large, fixed platform scale. The plank-covered platform is set flush with the floor. The cast-iron frame which holds the brass-fitted weighing apparatus consists of two Doric columns supporting a horizontal bar inscribed with the name "Fairbanks".

The other verticle power shaft passes upward from the cellar between the two pairs of millstones to the second story where, by means of an iron pinion and gear, power was transmitted to a horizontal jack shaft set parallel to the gable walls. A mortise and tenon joined frame attached to the ceiling beams supports the north end of the long jack shaft. By means of a variety of pulley belts and gears - some of which remain - a number of machines were once connected to it or to a short jack shaft geared to its east end.

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DESCRIPTION

Several of the machines needed in the production of flour and feed survive on the second and third floors. They include a large wooden bolter with screens and two hulling machines. One of the latter is identified as "G. S. Cranson's Combined Separator and Scourer with Magnetic Attachments". Manufactured by "Cranson, Huntley, & Co. Silver Creek, New York", it bears patent dates of 1885 & 1887 and model #1120. The other hulling machine, the "Silver Creek Roller Buckwheat Shucker" has model # 1255 and patent dates 1870, 1879, and 1880.

Power was transmitted from the horizontal jack shaft, by means of a pinion and gear at its north end, to another verticle drive shaft. This drive shaft passes upward in an unbroken line through the third story to the attic where it is geared to two small jack shafts.

A belt pulley from one of the jack shafts was connected to the elevator system. Another belt pulley from the other jack shaft powered the hoist, whose rope remains wound on its wooden spool. From the spool the rope runs along the roof ridge on small iron pulleys. Exiting through a hole in the east gable peak, it passes over a large pulley mounted under the gable hood. A small rope, of which only a portion remains, descending through holes in the floor allowed the miller to regulate the hoist from the grinding area.

Setting and Appurtenant Structures:

The approximately two and one half acre property on which Cole's Mill stands lies in the bottom land on the Pohatcong Creek. On its northern side, however, rises the wooded, steep, almost escarpment-like slope of the adjoining valley uplands. These uplands on the north and the Pohatcong Mountains on the south greatly constrict the bottom land of the Pohatcong Creek along its last five miles before emptying into the Delaware River. The accompanying drop in stream gradient created a number of water power sites, such as that at Cole's Mill, that were utilized at an early date.

The Pohatcong Creek divides the elongated, polygonal shaped property into small southern and large northern portions. From the east, Still Valley Road follows the north bank of the creek until about the middle of the tract. At this point it turns sharply southward and crosses the creek, passing immediately in front of the mill.

The fall of water needed to power the mill was provided by damming the creek on the east or upstream side of the bridge that carries the road over the creek. Removed in 1962, the rock dam was built up against the substantial stone bridge abutments on both sides. This configuration of bridges and dam was in existence as early as 1793.

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DESCRIPTION

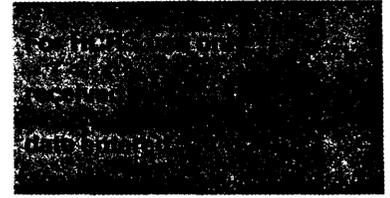
The mill race strikes off in a southwesterly direction just upstream from where the dam stood. The south bridge abutment serves as its west side; the earth bank forming its east side is eroded. Passing under the road, the raceway bends sharply westward to follow along the south side of the mill beneath the frame appendage. The poured concrete, early 20th century head race begins on the east side of the road. There the two wooden sluice gates, now badly deteriorated, are secured in concrete channels. For about twenty feet beyond the turbin pit, the narrow tail race has coursed rubble stone retaining walls. Continuing westward in a roughly straight line, it enters the creek approximtely 150 feet below the mill. A short distance to the south of the raceway can be discerned the partially filled channel of the spill way which provided for the safe release of water from the mill pond in times of high water.

Warren County bridge "Pohatcong #2" is a short span, four panel pony pratt truss bridge, ca. 1900, that carries Still Valley Road over the Pohatcong Creek. Measuring fifty-three feet in length and nineteen feet in width, it is pin connect-ed, of four chords with three I-beams under the macadam covered, wood plank road deck. The bridge has been modified by welded pin covers, hip supports and diagonal tension members. The coursed rubble stone abutments have been partially encased in concrete. The small bridge over the spillway, dating to the first half of this century, consists merely of I-beams carrying a road deck and simply metal guard rails.

On the north side of the creek east of the mill, squeezed between the road and wooded hillside, stands the house that was probably erected in the middle of the 19th century to house the miller. The frame, four bay, two-room plan, I-type dwelling was built on rising ground so that its first floor is partially below grade on the rear. Nearly all of the exterior fabric of the stucco-clad structure dates to an extensive "Colonial" remodeling in the 1950's. It is occupied by the present owner of the property. Adjoining the house on the west is a small garage of rusticated concrete block construction that dates to the 1920's. Further to the west, opposite the end of the tail race, is a small, frame guest house of mid-20th century date. Between the guest house and the garage, a stretch of coursed rubble stone retaining wall follows the north bank of the creek. The surrounding grounds with their many large trees and shrubs have a park-like setting.

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DESCRIPTION

Adjacent Surroundings

About two hundred feet to the east of the house, but on another property, is clustered a large farmstead that was the residence of the mill owner. The stonework of its simply detailed, vernacular Georgian, center hall dwelling is similar to that of the mill and probably contemporary. Although originally associated with the mill, this separate property has not been part of the milling operation since 1847. Open pastures and meadows appurtenant to the farmstead occupy the creek to the southeast of the mill; to the west of the mill the creek bottom is wooded. Across the creek to the south on the mill on Still Valley Road stand two buildings. The one is a simple, frame, vernacular dwelling of mid-19th century date whose gable is its principal facade; the other is a low, rambling, concrete block structure of mid-20th century date called "Tryon's Grove" that serves as a sort of social hall.

# 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
	early 19th, mid-19th			
<b>Specific dates</b>	and c. 1968	<b>Builder/Architect</b>	unknown	

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Occupying a water power site in use since the 18th century, Cole's Mill, a largely 19th century mill complex, exemplifies the small grist mills that proliferated throughout northwestern New Jersey until the early 20th century to serve the local agricultural community. In addition to their economic function, such mills played an important role, akin to that of church and store, as a neighborhood focal point and meeting place for the dispersed rural population. Today a local landmark often visited by interested individuals and groups, Cole's Mill is one of the few surviving mills in the county. Although presently utilizing electricity instead of water generated power, Cole's Mill is among the last grist mills still operating in New Jersey. In the surviving water powered works and the attendant equipment and machinery are preserved a valuable record of the technology of the small scaled, water powered grist mill in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Furthermore, Cole's Mill has been the site of several other water powered industries - an oil mill, plaster mill, distillery, and possibly a fulling mill - over the past two hundred years. The extant fabric reveals physical evidence of periodic modification for such uses; the site is likely to hold pertinent archaeological information as well. The property in its entirety provides an important document significant to our understanding of the development and evolution of the small scaled, decentralized, water powered industry once characteristic of the region.

One of the earliest records of a mill on the Pohatcong Creek at or near the site of Cole's Mill appears in a deed of 1764 for a 112 acre tract incorporating the present mill property. The appurtenant "water, corn, or grist mill" noted in this conveyance from John Opdyke and wife to Thomas and Hartpence Peterson was probably a recent improvement to the property, located in what was then Greenwich Township, Sussex County. Water powered mills to serve the nascent agricultural community had only begun to proliferate throughout northwestern New Jersey in response to the rapid increase in the region's population after about 1760.

By 1774, Greenwich Township, which incorporated the southwestern portion of what is now Warren County, contained six grist mills, three saw mills, and one fulling mill. In that year - the only one for which 18th century Township tax records survive - the fulling mill and one of the grist mills were assessed to Thomas Peterson, then owner of the property. The fulling mill may have been operated in conjunction with the grist mill, following a pattern of multiple use of a water power site common to the area.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

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# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 2.50

Quadrangle name Easton Quad

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UMT References

A 

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 Zone Easting Northing

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**Verbal boundary description and justification** Block 101, Lot 12 (containing mill) and Block 102, Lot 7 - Pohatcong Township Tax Map, Sheet 12. The mill property, encompassing these two lots, has had its present configuration since 1851.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dennis N. Bertland, Preservation Consultant  
John and Elsie Cole, owners

organization Box 11 (Bertland) date March 1982

street & number Box 22, R.D. 1 (Cole) telephone (201) 689-1705  
Port Murray 07865

city or town Phillipsburg 08865 state New Jersey

# 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer signature [Signature]

title date 10/1/82

**For HCRS use only**  
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register  
[Signature] date 12/2/82  
 Keeper of the National Register  
 Attest: date  
 Chief of Registration

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That there was more than one mill on the property can be inferred from a 1796 deed reference to a previous agreement executed between two Sussex County Freeholders and Robert Kennedy who had purchased the property from Peterson in 1780. This agreement of August, 1793 required Kennedy and his successors in title for a period of thirty seven years to

"maintain and keep in repair a certain bridge now built over the said Pohatcong Creek on said premises where a public highway is laid out, and also the mill dam and forebay of the late burnt mills of the said premises".  
(Sussex County Deeds, Vol. B, p. 384.)

In June of 1793 a two rod road was laid out along the present course of Still Valley Road, between approximately what is now U.S. Route 22 and Municipal Drive. Thus the location of the "burnt mills" clearly can be fixed at the site of the present mill.

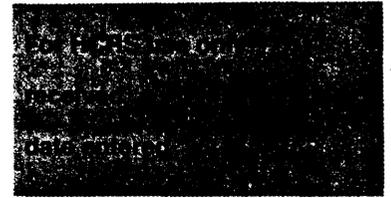
The mills evidently were destroyed by fire sometime shortly before the 1793 agreement. Their destruction may be reflected by the drop in price from 2,600 pounds paid by Kennedy for the property (reduced in size to 63 acres) in 1780 to the 900 pounds paid by Abraham Brunner in 1796. It is not likely that Brunner rebuilt on the site as he sold the tract two years later to John Allshouse for the same price that he had paid.

To John Allshouse, therefore, who owned the property until 1847, must be attributed the construction of the stone portion of the present mill sometime during his tenure. It may not, however, have been erected until after 1825 as Gordon's Warren County map of that year does not indicate a mill at its site. While documentary evidence is lacking, Allshouse's mill in its first year of operation was most likely a grist mill or possibly an oil mill operated on a small scale to serve neighborhood farmers. It was one of several small stone mills that appeared in conjunction with prosperous farmsteads at the numerous water power sites along the lower Pohatcong Creek.

The owner of such assemblages was typically a farmer or landowner with other business or professional interests as well as a miller, if he in fact personally operated his mill. Two earlier owners of the property, Thomas Peterson and Robert Kennedy, appear to have fit this pattern. On the 1774 Greenwich Township tax role, Thomas Peterson was assessed for 200 acres of land, a "merchant shop", and eleven

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horses and cattle in addition to his grist and fulling mills. A member of a prominent local family, Robert Kennedy occupied another farmstead/mill complex on the Pohatcong that he owned in addition to the subject property and other holdings. Little is known, however, about John Allshouse other than that he was described as from Easton, Pa. in his 1796 deed purchase and was a member of the near-by Lutheran Church. That he was also a substantial citizen is attested to by the stone, "Georgian", center hall house that he probably built about the same time as the mill.

In the middle of the 19th century the mill entered another phase in its development; no longer appurtenant to a large farm, it emerged from obscurity as part of a small scaled, multifunctional, industrial enterprise. Upon reaching old age, Allshouse in 1847 subdivided from his farm a 21.64 acre tract with the mill and sold it for \$3,500. A year later John Hixson, a member of a family settled at near-by Springtown since the 18th century, acquired the property for the same price. That substantial improvements shortly thereafter were made to the property seems clear from the available evidence. The 1850 Industrial Census of Greenwich Township lists three Hixson enterprises: John Hixson's grist mill, Hixson and Dalton's oil mill, and Hixson and Dalton's plaster mill. Furthermore, in 1851 John Hixson sold the 2.5 acre "oil mill lot", the present mill property, to Charles C. Hixson and Ephramin Dalton, probably young relatives of his, for \$5,450, almost \$1,500 more than he had paid for the entire 21.64 acre parcel of which it was part. It is quite possible, although mere conjecture, that the no longer extant west wing was built at this time to house the expanded operations.

It does not appear, however, that either Dalton or the Hixsons operated the mills in 1850; in the U.S. population census of that year John Hixson was described as a "farmer" and the two households listed immediately before his were those of Augustus Hawk "oil miller" and Abraham Hawk "miller". According to the 1850 Industrial Census, the grist mill with a capital investment of \$2,000 utilized two pairs of stones and one male worker to produce 800 bushels of "toll" grain worth \$500. On a capital investment of \$2,500 the oil mill produced 5000 gallons of linseed oil valued at \$2,700 and 1500 bushels of "oil meal" valued at \$900 from 1500 bushels of flax seed worth \$2000. It also employed one male worker as did the plaster mill in which \$1,000 capital was invested. In the later mill 100 tons of plaster worth \$400 were ground into 2800 bushels of plaster worth \$644. All three mills were water powered.

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As were most of the other industries enumerated in the 1850 Industrial Census for Greenwich Township, these were clearly small scale operations. Hixson's grist mill was one of five in the Township that produced "toll" grain; a sixth mill was the only one to grind wheat flour. No other oil plaster mills were listed. However, in Barber and Howe's Historical Collections of the State of New Jersey, published six years earlier, it was noted that Greenwich Township had four oil mills in addition to six grist mills and four merchant mills. Although a reduction in numbers is possible, the census taker in 1850 may have failed to include some industries as appears to have occurred subsequently. In any case, it is clear that Hixson's grist mill served only an immediate neighborhood, while the production of both the oil and plaster mills must have been of wider importance.

Within a year of their acquisition of the "oil mill lot", Charles Hixson and Ephramin Dalton due to mortgage difficulties, lost the property, which at a court ordered Sheriff's sale was repurchased by John Hixson. On both the 1853 and 1860 Warren County Maps the mill site is identified as John Hixson's "G. M. & distillery". It thus would appear that Hixson discontinued the oil and plaster mills and began a distilling operation shortly after his repurchase of the property. One can postulate that the brick upper stories of the main block were added at the time for this purpose. In its brick work and vertical proportions, the resultant structure resembles a distillery built in nearby Phillipsburg in 1850. The small brick chimney in the west wall could have served a coal fired, steam powered still. The purchase price of \$7,000 paid by Ephramin Dalton for the property in 1860 may well reflect this improvement.

One of three in Greenwich Township noted on the 1860 County map, the distillery was operated evidently by John Hughes in that year. The 1860 U.S. Census describes him as a "distiller" and lists the elderly John Hixson as a member of his household. Unfortunately, the 1860 Industrial Census has no entry for the names of either Hughes, Hixson, or Dalton. Two whiskey distilleries, however, are listed for Greenwich Township, which may provide comparative data if neither is the one in question.

Both enterprises produced whiskey from corn and rye grain and fattened livestock on the spent meal. The larger of the two, under the name of Mark T. Warne, had a capital investment of \$20,000. It produced 3000 barrels of whiskey from 23,000 bushels of corn and 5000 bushels of rye. In addition, 100 cattle and 500 hogs were fattened. This water powered operation employed six men. Warne also

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operated a grist mill which probably provided the needed grain. The other distillery with a capital investment of \$7,000 was worked by David Howell for only four months of the year and employed four men. From 8000 bushels of corn and 200 bushels of rye, 1000 barrels of whiskey were distilled and 146 cattle were fattened. The use of 150 tons of coal suggests that steam power supplemented water power in its operation. It is likely that the Hixson/Dalton distillery with its adjacent grist mill was a similar whiskey producing/livestock fattening enterprise.

By the 1870s the distillery evidently was abandoned; it does not appear in the 1870 Industrial Census and only a grist mill is indicated at the site in the 1874 Beer's "County Atlas of Warren, New Jersey". From this time onward there is no evidence of any industrial operation on the site other than the grist mill. While probably not among the four Greenwich Township "merchant mills" listed in the 1870 Industrial Census, it was one of seven grist mills in the Township noted in the 1874 County atlas. Undergoing another period of transition, the mill property changed hands five times between 1869 when it was sold by Dalton for \$6,550 and 1874 when it was purchased by Charles and Peter Skinner for \$5,500. The Skinners retained ownership until 1898 and probably operated the grist mill during much if not all of that period.

The 1880 Industrial Census of the lower district of Greenwich, shortly thereafter incorporated as Pohatcong Township, provides the best information on the operation of the mill in the later 19th century. According to the Census, the mill had two pairs of stones, employed two workers, and operated full time with a capacity of 60 bushels a day. The height of its fall was given as ten feet. Most notably by that time a "Hammes" turbin, quite possibly the present one, had been installed. Measuring four feet in breadth, it had 40 horse power and was capable of up to 100 rpm. Feed grain was by a wide margin the major product of the grist mill in 1880; in that year 520,000 pounds of feed grain were ground compared to only 80,000 pounds of corn meal, 600 barrels of rye flour, and 200 barrels of wheat flour. Only one tenth of its work was custom. Clearly its production had increased dramatically from that of Hixson's operation in 1850.

The Skinner's feed production was the greatest of the four grist mills listed in the 1880 Industrial Census as then operating in the lower district of Greenwich Township. Two of the other mills were much larger operations mainly grinding wheat flour, but also substantial amounts of other grains. The fourth was a small operation that did a considerable amount of custom work.

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The New Jersey 1891 "Annual Report of the State Geologist" found four grist mills and one flouring mill to be operating in Pohatcong Township. The latter was the Skinner brother's mill; its description as a flouring mill may indicate a shift in importance from their earlier feed production. Its fall was given as eight feet, its gross horse power as 40, and its net horse power as 24. While in terms of horse power capacity Skinner's mill was only one sixth and one half the size of the two Township grist mills on the Musconetcong River, it was twice the size of the two on the Pohatcong Creek.

In 1898 after the death of Peter Skinner, the mill property was sold for \$2,100, a loss of more than \$3,000 on the 1874 purchase price. Two years later it was sold again at a court ordered Sheriff's sale for only \$1,000. This reduction in value probably reflects the declining viability of the small scale milling operations.

The property changed hands twice again before its acquisition in 1924 by William Cole, the father of the present owner. Its works little changed, the mill remained in operation throughout most of this century doing custom work, both flour and feed grain, until about 1960. Then in 1974, after a fifteen year hiatus, the present owners began the commercial production of whole grain flour, utilizing an electrically powered stone grinder that they installed. The rebuilt frame appendage is used as an antique shop and art studio.

Cole's Mill, currently open to the public by appointment, has been visited in recent years by many individuals and groups of all ages. With its extensive works and variety of equipment from different periods of its operation, Cole's mill offers an opportunity for visitors to learn about the evolution of an area grist mill.

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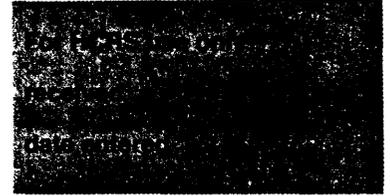
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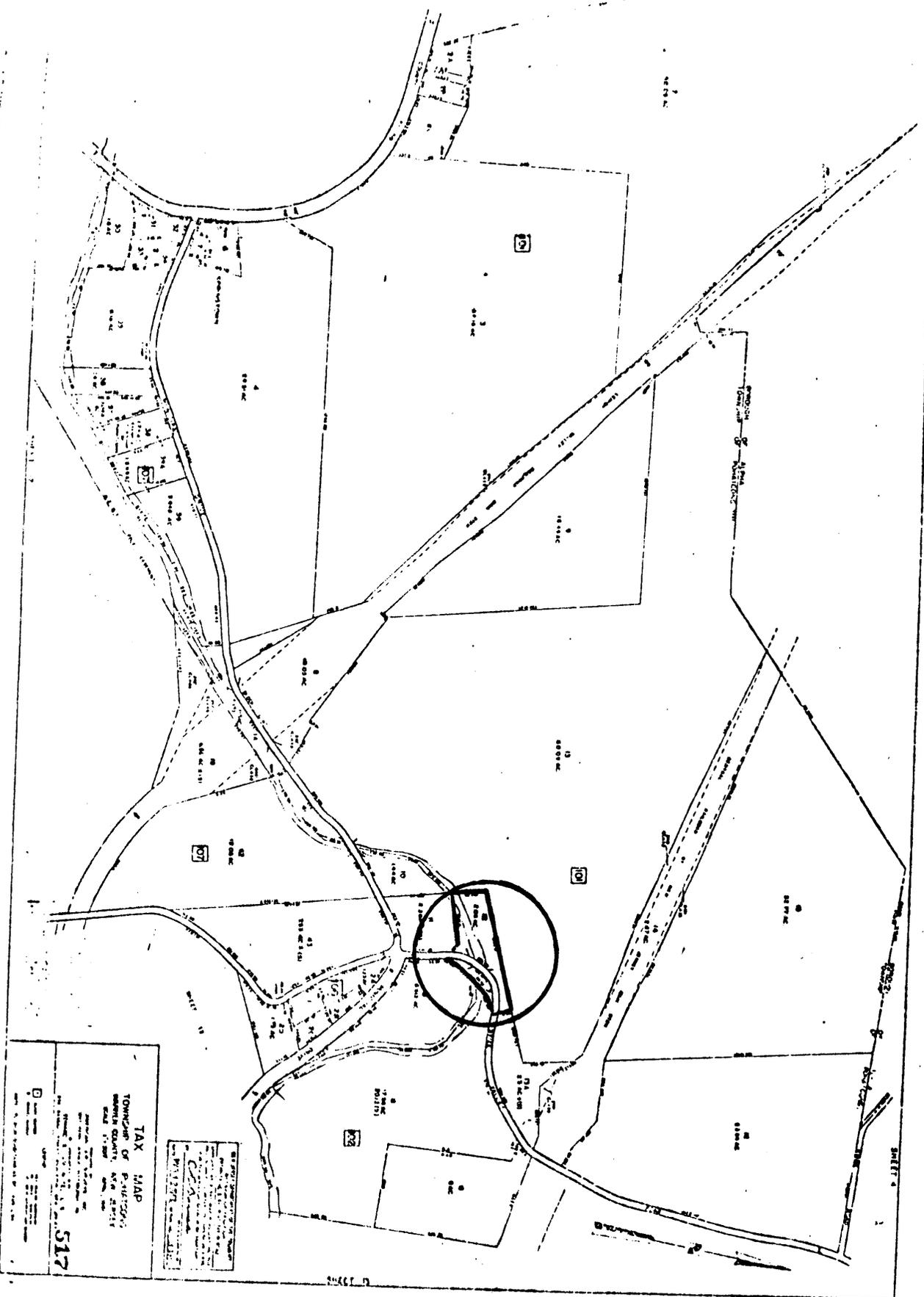
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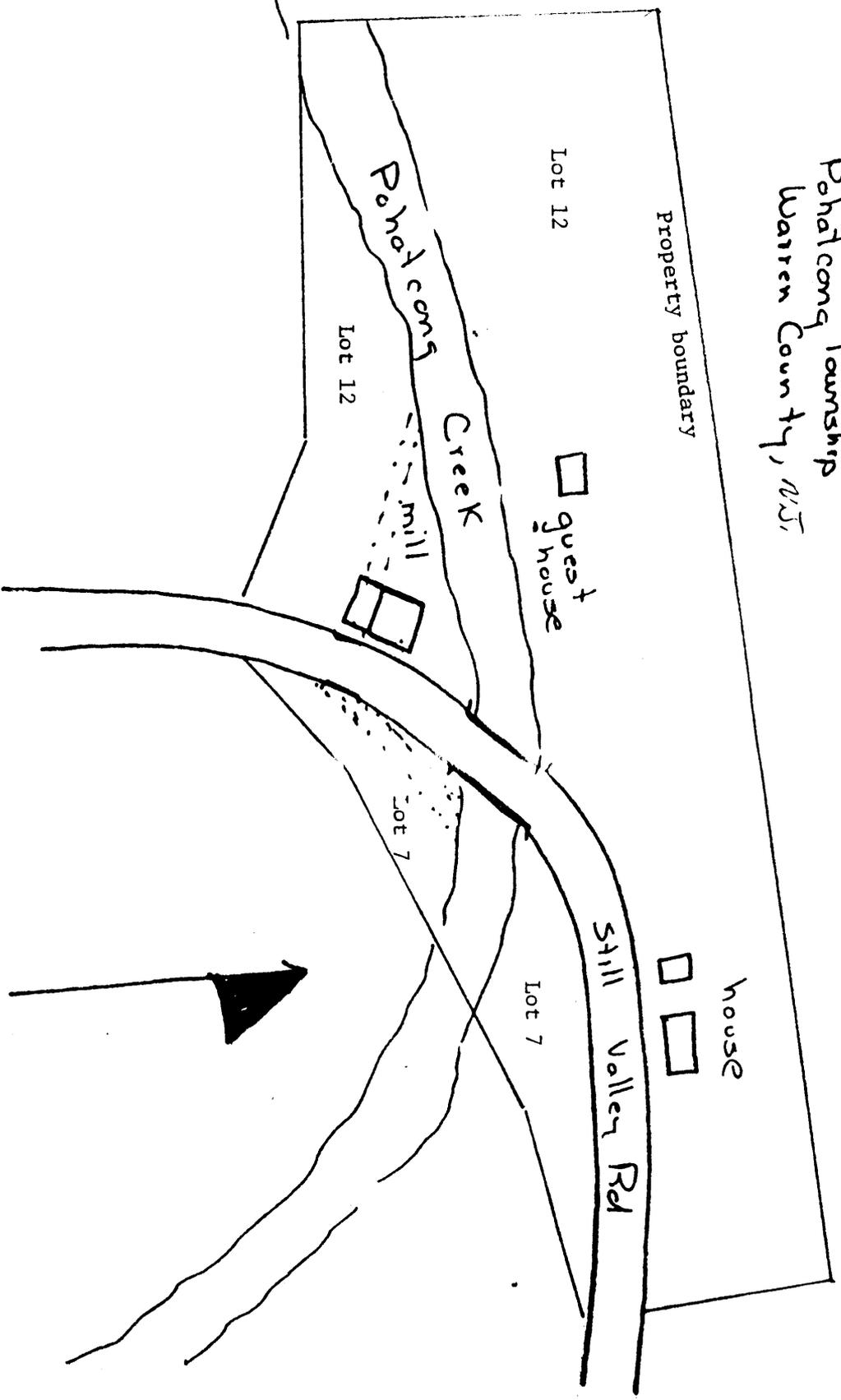
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Coles Grist Mill Complex  
Pohatcong Twp., Warren Co., NJ



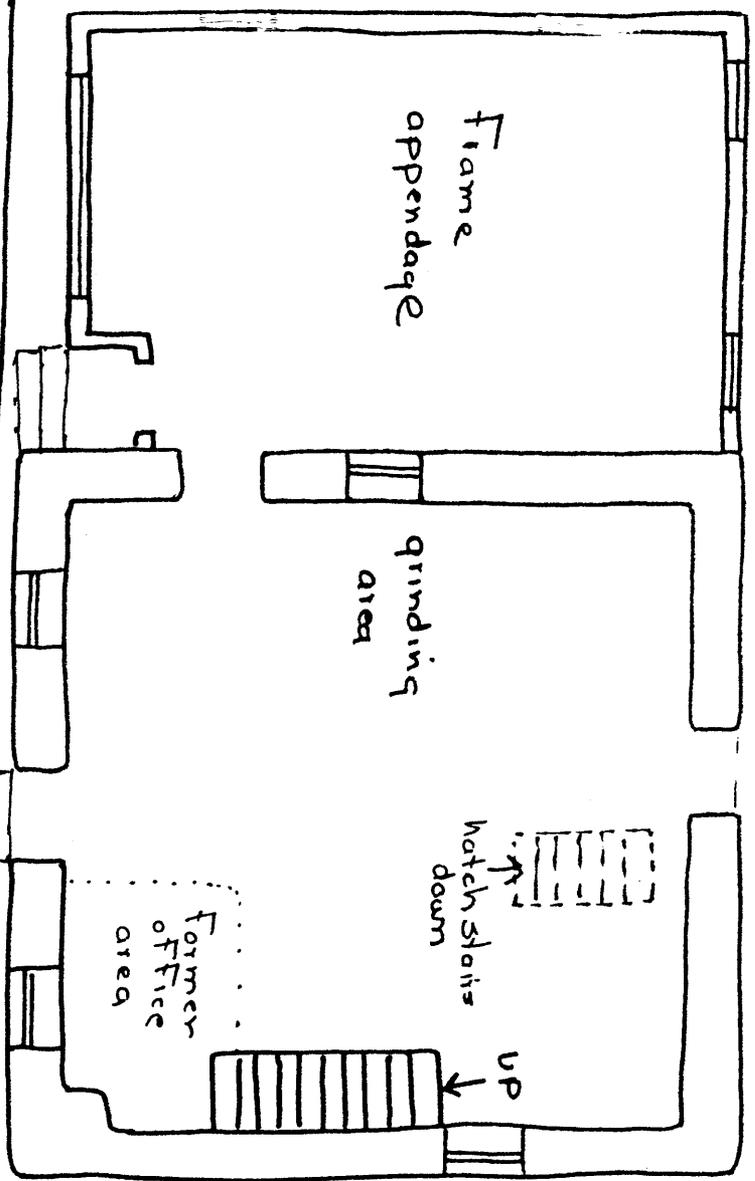
Cole's Mill Property  
Pohatcong Township  
Warren County, NJ





tail  
race

Cole's Mill, 1st Floor  
scale 1/8" = 1"



Still Valley Road

race way

Cole's Grist Mill Complex  
Pohatcong Township  
Warren County, N. J.



COLES GRIST MILL  
 POHATCONG TOWNSHIP  
 WARREN COUNTY, NJ

# LOPATCONG & GREENWICK

Scale 200 Rods to the inch

Reference: Beers, F.W. "County Atlas of Warren, New Jersey."  
 1874.