

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

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

For HCRS use only

received MAY 21 1982

date entered

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

**1. Name**

historic Rock Mill

and/or common N/A

**2. Location** OFF U.S. 141

street & number CTH R \_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Maribel vic.  vicinity of congressional district Sixth

state Wisconsin code 55 county Manitowoc code 071

**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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Robert L. Lyman

street & number Route 1

city, town Maribel \_\_\_ vicinity of state Wisconsin 54227

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Manitowoc County Courthouse

street & number South 8th and Washington streets

city, town Manitowoc state Wisconsin 54220

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1980 \_\_\_ federal  state \_\_\_ county \_\_\_ local

depository for survey records State Historical Society of Wisconsin

816 State Street  
city, town Madison state Wisconsin 53706

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## 7. Description

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**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved      date \_\_\_\_\_

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

The Rock Mill in rural Maribel, Manitowoc County is a two-story-plus-attic rectangular frame building with tin-covered gable roof and coursed limestone (originally rubble) foundation. Openings are limited: a pent-roof canopy supported by heavy timbers serves the double-door (original) and platform in the center of the front (east) facade, and a single door at the west end of the north side is covered by a small gabled hood; only two double-hung windows per story per side, and one in each end of the attic, light the interior. Inside, the heavy beam construction was replicated in 1977-78 with lumber from an old barn; the milling works, dating from the 1850s are still intact.

Substantial restoration of the building by the present owner began in 1975 when the deteriorated floorboards on the first floor were removed and the building was raised to allow rebuilding of the limestone foundation. In 1976 white cedar dropped siding (salvaged from demolished houses in the area) was used on the north, south, and east sides of the building to replace warped and missing siding, the front platform and hood over the side door were rebuilt, and a sixteen-foot overshot wooden waterwheel was constructed and installed on the south end. The first floor was replaced with newly-sawn oak in 1977, and several of the support beams were replaced with timber from an old barn. Floorboards on the second and attic story were repaired, new interior stairs were constructed, and rotted window sash were replaced in 1978. (In 1920, two-story frame sheds on the north and south ends of the building were removed due to deterioration, and the turbine and interior steel grain shafts were salvaged for scrap metal during World War II.)

On the first floor at the south end of the building the original grinding machinery is still in place: thirty-six and forty-eight inch French burr stones on a raised platform, and elevators to the grain hopper, bolter, and dust storage bin overhead; to the north are the tools and workbench for maintaining the works in good order. Where grain was kept at the north end of the second floor, the owner installed old theater seating to create a projection area for use by visitors to the mill and adjoining campground. The attic level was and is used for storage.

The Rock Mill site now includes a number of other buildings, constructed in the late nineteenth century, or recently constructed or reconstructed on the site; unrelated to the historic milling operation, none is included in the nomination. Located to the north of the mill, the stone barn and silo, sheep shed and buggy shed were constructed to serve the Emil Schlegelmilch farm, and were restored by the owner in the 1960s and '70s; the pump house was constructed in 1934 after the water supply from the river was lost.<sup>2</sup> The campground office (and owner's home) and the "Miller House" (actually the Kellner farmhouse, located where the former frame farmhouse stood before demolition in 1978) are one-story-plus-attic Norwegian shaped-log buildings of the mid-nineteenth century, moved to the site from nearby farms in the late 1970s. The garage/shop, separated from other buildings by a parking lot, was constructed in 1974. Campsites, are located on a hill to the southwest of the mill site. A split rail fence encloses the property along the road to the east.

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<sup>1</sup> Taped interview with Erwin Schlegelmilch, son of immigrant owner Emil Schlegelmilch, recorded December, 1967 by Robert Lyman, and held in his possession

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

(continued)

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

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



ROCK MILL, Maribel vicinity, Manitowoc Co., Wisc.  
Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 1

The owner hopes to rebuild the dam, head race and tail race to restore the milling operation for its educational and entertainment value to visiting campers and tourists. Although the area no longer has the resort reputation that it enjoyed at the turn of the century, the rolling country with its caves and waterways still offers special scenic value and rural seclusion.

Presumably, the Rock Mill received its name in association with the character of the surrounding terrain; the name first appears in the 1878 entry of the property abstract.

## 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1847<sup>1</sup> (construction) **Builder/Architect** "Messrs. Pierce and Bruce"<sup>1</sup>

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)** 1847-1934 (period of significance)

The most complete of only five survivals of the thirty-eight saw and grist mills built in Manitowoc County between 1830 and 1880, the Rock Mill near Maribel is a valuable historical artifact of early industry. As the only mill with its original grinding equipment intact, and structure restored, the building is also architecturally significant as a representative of a type of construction. A local landmark, the mill is located on a site with a number of historical associations pre-dating construction.

### Industry

Believed to be the oldest existing mill building in Manitowoc County,<sup>2</sup> the Rock Mill was originally built as a sawmill by Pliny Pierce and a Mr. Bruce in 1847. (Pierce, one of the earliest settlers of the area, emigrated from New York State in 1837,<sup>3</sup> and was to become a prominent entrepreneur and local politician. His commercial credits include the establishment of several mills in the county; his numerous civic contributions include terms as first county treasurer (1848), county clerk (1841-45), and county surveyor (1846-48), and he was active in the "old whig party,"<sup>4</sup> delegate to the state senatorial convention (1856), and a candidate (unsuccessful) for a state senate seat in 1865.) In the 1850s, the operation was converted to a gristmill, and continued to operate in that capacity until 1934 when the dam (the third in the mill's history) on Devils River which supplied its power was destroyed by ice and heavy rains. After several changes of ownership, the mill passed into the hands of Emil Schlegelmilch, a German immigrant who purchased it in 1878, and continued its operation until his death in the year of the dam's destruction. The property remained the residence of the Schlegelmilch family until its purchase by the present owner in 1964.

Prior to playing a role in the early industrial history of the region, the Rock Mill site was historically important. The mill was built alongside the old military road linking Fort Dearborn, Illinois with Fort Howard at Green Bay. The mill site, situated at a bend in Devils River, was a frequently used campground for the U.S. militia during the early 19th century and, long before, was an Indian camping place.<sup>5</sup> At the time that the Rock Mill was constructed, the nearby settlement of Cooperstown had just established a post office, and had yet to hold school or religious services. At the turn of the century, Cooperstown was eclipsed by the village of Maribel; served by the Chicago & North Western Railroad, the latter, in turn, served a short-lived tourist industry fostered by the Maribel Caves (an aspect of the numerous limestone outcroppings in the area) and the area's mineral springs.

### Architecture

Carefully restored to its simple mid-nineteenth-century form, the Rock Mill is an accurate example of early simple frame mill construction in Wisconsin. Although its

(continued)

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Falge, Louis, ed., History of Manitowoc County, Wisconsin (Chicago, 1912), Vol. 1, 315.

Interview of Erwin Schlegelmilch by Robert L. Lyman, December 1967.

Quitclaim Deed, February 9, 1858, Christen Olson and wife Dorothea Marie to John Arnu.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than 1.0

Quadrangle name Denmark, Wis.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

A 

1	6	4	3	8	1	2	0	4	9	0	5	2	0	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property shall consist of a square 70' x 70' centered on the center of the building, said property being located in the SW $\frac{1}{4}$  SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , Section 12, T-21-N, R-22-E, Civil Town of Cooperstown, Manitowoc County, Wisconsin.

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

state code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Diane H. Filipowicz/Architectural Historian, and Donald N. Anderson/Historian & Registrar

organization Historic Preservation Division

date August 14, 1981

street & number 816 State Street

telephone 608-262-2970

city or town Madison

state Wisconsin 53706

# 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Richard Murray

title Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin

date 4/19/82

For HCERS use only

I hereby certify that this property is Included in the National Register

Paul Lee Donald

date 6/21/82

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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

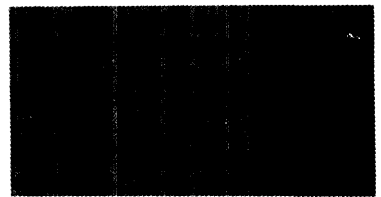
**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

ROCK MILL, Maribel Vicinity, Manitowoc Co., Wisc.

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 1



steel shafts and turbine were removed during World War II, the heavy timber structure is evident in the interior, alongside the original pre-Civil War machinery. Because of its integrity of structure and equipment, as well as the visible mill and tail races and remains of the 1915 dam some five hundred feet to the northwest, the site provides an excellent setting for illustrating the story of grain milling more than a century ago to the visiting public.

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- <sup>1</sup> Louis Falge, History of Manitowoc County, Wisconsin (Chicago, 1912), vol. 1, p. 315; John Nagle, "History of Manitowoc Co.," Atlas of Manitowoc Co., Wisconsin, 1878.
  - <sup>2</sup> Falge enumerates the various early milling operations in the territory and county, singles out the enterprises of Pliny Pierce (see Index, PIERCE, P., History of Manitowoc Co., Wisconsin), and records in 1912 that Pierce's businesses pre-dating the mill near Cooperstown are no longer in operation; the current owner of the Rock Mill has researched and surveyed known earlier mills to determine the Rock Mill's pre-eminence.
  - <sup>3</sup> Falge, p. 32.
  - <sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 234.
  - <sup>5</sup> The mill owner and nearby property owners report frequent discovery of Indian artifacts. In fact, a survey by D. Seurer and M. Moss in 1980 for the Highway Archaeology Survey (State Historical Society of Wisconsin) recorded an Archaic campsite (47-Mn-370) on the property. The Cooperstown area in general contains a number of Archaic and Historic sites.

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National Park Service**

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ROCK MILL, Maribel vicinity, Manitowoc Co., Wisc.

Continuation sheet

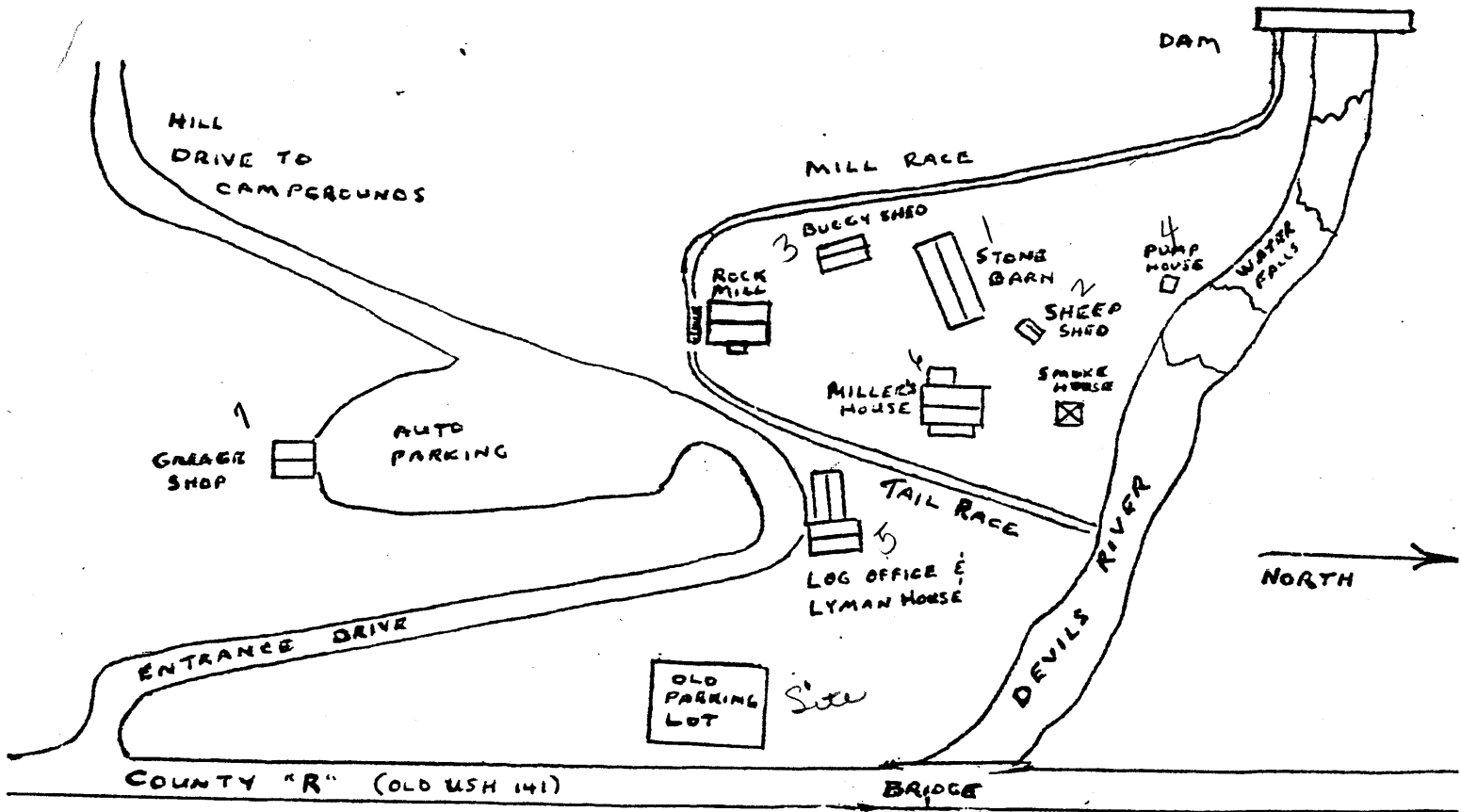
Item number 11.

Page 1.

FORM PREPARED BY:

Research assistance by: Robert L. Lyman  
Route 1  
Maribel, Wisconsin

November, 1980  
414/863-2812



Not to scale

ROCK MILL

Maribel, Wisconsin vicinity