

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

OA-

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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

1. Name

historic Wye Mill

and/or common Old Wye Mill; Wye Grist Mill

2. Location

street & number Maryland Route 662 **n/a** not for publication

city, town **Wye Mills** **n/a vicinity of** **congressional district** **First**

state Maryland **code** 24 **county** Queen Anne's **code** 035

3. Classification

4. Owner of Property

name Society for the Preservation of Maryland Antiquities

street & number 2335 Marriottsville Road

city, town **Marriottsville** **n/a vicinity of** **state** **Maryland** **21104**

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse registry of deeds etc Queen Anne's County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Centreville **state** Maryland 21617

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Maryland Historical Trust
Historic Sites Inventory

has this property been determined eligible? X yes ____ no

date 1977 federal X state county local

depository for survey records 21 State Circle

city, town Annapolis **state** Maryland 21401

7. Description

QA-

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Number of Resources

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Number of previously listed
National Register properties
included in this nomination: 0

Original and historic functions
and uses: industrial

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY:

Wye Mill, one of the earliest industrial sites on the Eastern Shore in continuous use, dates from the mid-eighteenth century. It is a small frame waterpowered, grist mill located on the west side of Delmarva Road (Rt. 662) in Wye Mills, Maryland. It is powered by an early 20th century 20 foot diameter iron overshot wheel, manufactured by the Fitz Water Wheel Company of Hanover, Pennsylvania. The wheel is located on the south side of the building and the mill is built on a bank so that the foundation on its west side is a full story. It is four bays long and two bays deep. Entrances are located on the east, north and west elevations and the windows all have 6/6 sash. The gable roof, siding, and foundation walls were renewed in 1953. The walls are covered with redwood siding replacing the 18th century cypress beveled siding, and the wooden steps and stoop are reconstructions. A mill race runs from an earlier dam, installed in 1950s by the Game and Inland Fish Commission, through a conduit wheel. The mill retains nearly all of its late nineteenth and early twentieth century equipment including French burr stone, American midget roller mill, sifters, bolters, grain hoppers and flour cleaning machines. Wye Mill is virtually unchanged in its attempt to keep up with milling technology for the last 200 years with those parts of the machinery or building which were worn out repaired or replaced as efficient operation demanded.

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

Specific dates	mid-18th century	Builder/Architect	unknown
----------------	------------------	-------------------	---------

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Applicable Criteria: A

Applicable Exceptions: none

Level of Significance for Evaluation: local

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY:

Wye Mill is significant for its association with the development of the grist milling industry on Maryland's agricultural Eastern Shore from the mid-18th century through the early years of the twentieth. A grist mill has existed on this site since the 1680's; the present building, constructed in the mid-18th century, retains structural features characteristic of that period including tilted-false-plate roof construction and a Dutch batten door, and houses a virtual museum of 19th- and early-20th-century grist milling machinery reflecting the evolution of the industry, and of the structure, during more than 200 years of nearly continuous use. Wye Mill is the oldest grist mill on the Eastern Shore, and probably the oldest in the state of Maryland.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Emory, Frederic. History of Queen Anne's County (1886)

Talbot County Land Records, #5 fol. 81; #26 fol. 616; #401 fol. 404; #413 fol. 329

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 0.76 acres

Quadrangle name Wye Mills, Maryland

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A	1 8	4 0 6	3 8 0	4 3 0 9	7 6 0
Zone	Easting		Northing		
C					
E					
G					

B					
Zone	Easting		Northing		
D					
F					
H					

Verbal boundary description and justification

Boundaries are depicted on the attached plat, and represent the current property boundaries; the nominated property, 0.76 acre, encompasses the resource within its historic setting.

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

state code county Queen Anne's code 035

state code county Talbot code 041

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ms. E. Barton Hall McGuire, miller

organization Society for the Preservation of
Maryland Antiquities date 31 July 1984

street & number Box 277 telephone (301) 827-6909

city or town Wye Mills state Maryland 21679

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 J. M. H.

title <u>STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER</u>	date <u>FEBRUARY 22, 1985</u>
For HCRS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
<u>Patrick Andrus</u>	
Keeper of the National Register	date <u>4/9/85</u>
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	

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

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

Wye Mill

Continuation sheet

Queen Anne's Co. , MD Item number

7

Page

1

For NPS use only
received
date entered

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Wye Grist Mill is one of three mills that named the town of Wye Mills. It is one of the earliest Maryland industrial sites in continuous use. The present building dates from the mid eighteenth century but a grist mill has existed on the site since the 1670s.

Wye Mill is a small frame building - four bays long and two bays wide. Its gable roof, siding, and the foundation were renewed in 1953. The windows are 6/6 sash and have a single batten shutter. An early dutch batten door is perhaps the most striking 18th century feature on the exterior. Entrances on the west, north and east elevations provide access to milling operations. On the south gable is a 20th century Fitz steel 1XL overshot water wheel and header tank. The water wheel is 10 feet in diameter, 8 feet wide and has three rows of arms. Originally manufactured by the Fitz Water Wheel Company of Hanover, Pennsylvania, it has, unfortunately, been badly reconstructed and damaged by inexperienced hands. The tailrace, now seriously "backwatered," meanders through a cleared area, then through dense woods to the west branch or head of the Wye River. The mill is built on a bank so that the foundation on the west side is a full story. The mill race (or sluiceway) with Armco sluice gate controls runs from the earthen dam holding 51 acres of water. It drops 12 and 1/2 feet downhill through a concrete conduit or flume under the road (Rt. 662) and thence to the water wheel.

The basement ceiling framing, as well as the first floor framing, divides the rectangular building into four equal bays. Running east and west are major girders with minor joists extending between them. Framing and supports in the south bay are heavier than the others as the heavy 48" French burr stones (2 tons) are located in this area, as well as an American Midget Marvel roller mill machinery. Several empty mortises in the framing may indicate that parts are "recycled" and used from elsewhere in the mill or from agricultural buildings in the area.

The wheelshaft is fitted with a cast iron driving spur about 8 feet in diameter. The wallower, a small pinion spur gear, is 21 inches. Secondary chain drive to a second countershaft drives the roller plant and other auxilaries. There are two basic drives from the water wheel, one being to the millstones and the other to elevators and the American Midge roller plant.

On the first floor a girder supported upon four chamfered posts runs north and south. Obviously a later addition, it was probably added to support more weight in grain and machinery.

Many repairs are evident in the structure:

Along with the Oak Hurst Frame (which needs to be separated from the structural framing of the building) there is evidence of two sets of millstones having been mounted. At present one pair of stones have been replaced with a Cranson flour cleaning machine.

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

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

Wye Mill
Continuation sheet Queen Anne's County, MD

Item number

7

Page

2

QA-
For NPS use only
received
date entered

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

Wye Mill has received the usual alteration to its machinery necessary to keep "up to date" with modern milling practice. Many repairs are evident in the structure but much of the 19th and 20th century machinery follows change in technology and forms a museum of milling technology history. Still remaining are the French burr stones, American Midget Marvel roller mill, Cranson flour cleaning machine, bolting machines, grain chutes, hoppers, scales, gyrator, flour chests, elevators separator, feed mixer, dust collector, fanning mills, corn shellers, and so forth.

In the northeast corner is a small office with brick chimney which served an interior cast iron stove. Adjacent to the office door is a ladder to the loft. The roof structure is original, being composed of minor rafters half lapped and pinned at the apex - having dove tail collar beams. The rafters rest on the tilted false plate. Many up and down braces have been completely removed.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

QA-

For NPS use only
received _____
date entered _____

Continuation sheet Queen Anne's County, MD

Item number

8

Page

3

HISTORY AND SUPPORT

The Wye Mill is located in the small town of Wye Mills and is one of the few United States mills in continual use since the middle of the 18th century. It is a "showcase of the history of milling" having moved along with the advance of milling technology. It displays a virtual museum of mill machinery. Like many flour-grist mills which once stood throughout the colonies, it was once an important and economic trading center for the region. A mill was an important component within any colonial settlement. The farmer could raise his grain independently, but he could not use it until it was ground. He took it to a mill. Other men did the same. The mill became a meeting place. It served that social function before either the general store or the newspapers. Communities centered around the mills.

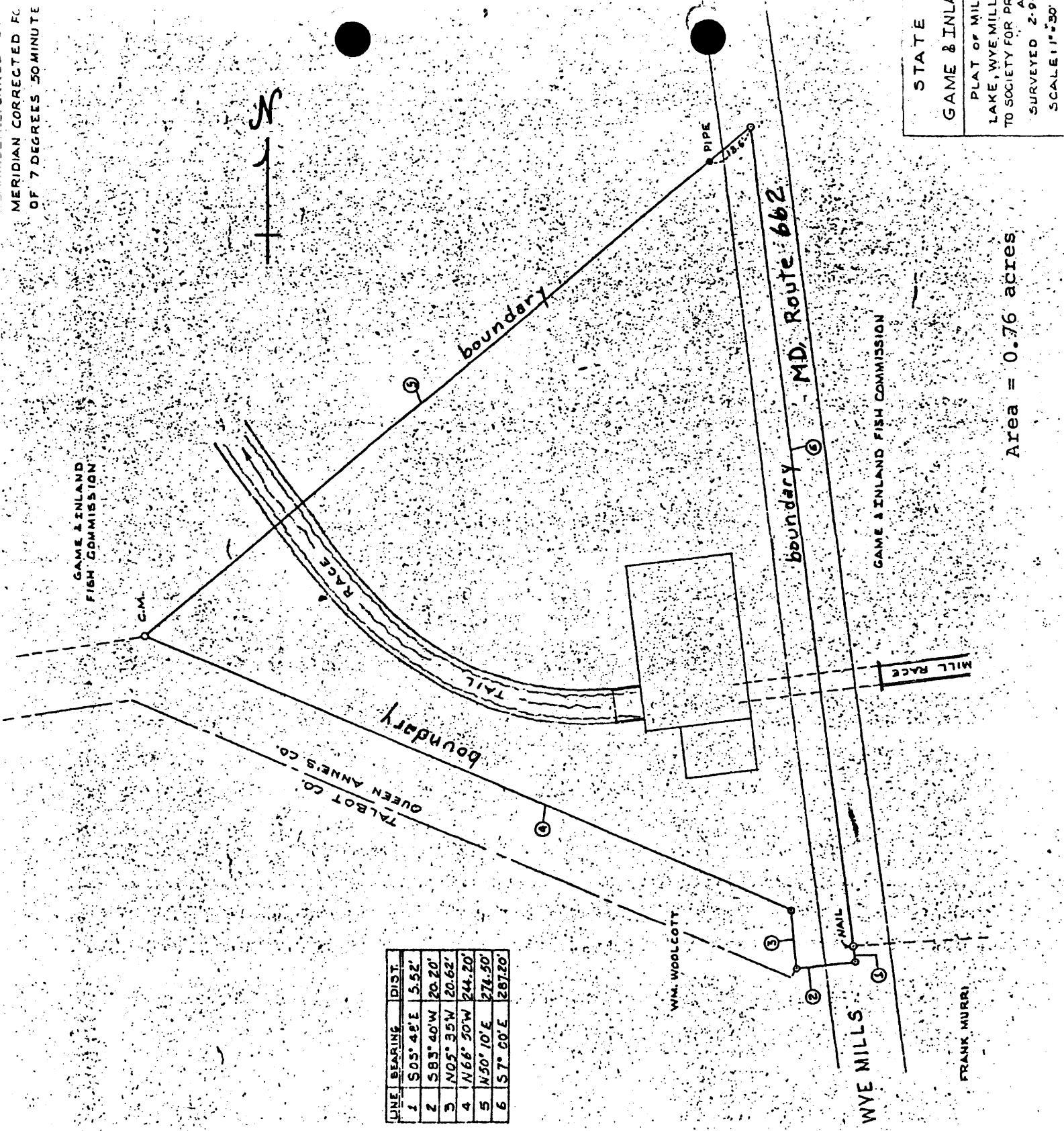
From the viewpoint of industry Wye Mill is significant as the oldest mill in continual use on the Eastern Shore and one of the oldest functioning mills still standing in Maryland. There are several functioning mills such as Kaese and Stanton's Mills in Garrett County, Rockland Mills in Baltimore County, and Union Mills (museum) in Carroll County but Wye Mill is one of the oldest mills in the state. The mill has been a landmark since 1706 when the general assembly created Queen Anne's County and the mill became a major point on the boundary line between Talbot and Queen Anne's Counties. In 1748 it was referred to as "Old Wye Mill" and in April of 1779 Colonel William Hemsley "of Old Wye Mill" received an order for ten thousand pounds sterling with which he was to send wheat ground at the Wye Mill to the continental troops at Valley Forge.

The following are known to have owned a mill on the site:

Edward Barrowclif	1680s
Richard Bennett	1690s-1722
Richard Sweatman	
Edward Lloyd	1722-1778
William Hemsley	1778-1821
Samuel Hopkins family	1821-1877
F. T. Brown	1877
John Brown	1887-1899
John S. Sewell	1899-1918
Winthrop Blakeslee	
Mary Scott Blakeslee	1918-1953

In 1953 the State of Maryland bought the property from Mr. Blakeslee and deeded one acre and the mill to the Society for the Preservation of Maryland Antiquities. The mill was restored from 1956 to 1960. Students from Chesapeake College, on a work-study plan, operated the mill through the 1970s.

GAME & INLAND
FISH COMMISSION



WYE MILL

Queen Anne's County, Maryland

boundary map

1984