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OMB No. 1024-0018

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

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

1. Name of Property

historic name N/A
other names/site number Alcovy Road Grist Mill (preferred name), Freeman's Mill and Swann's Mill.

2. Location

street & number 1564 Alcovy Road
city, town Dacula (x) vicinity of
county Gwinnett code GA 135
state Georgia code GA zip code 30245

(n/a) not for publication

3. Classification

Ownership of Property:

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-federal

Category of Property:

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

Number of Resources within Property:

| | <u>Contributing</u> | <u>Noncontributing</u> |
|------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| buildings | 1 | 0 |
| sites | 1 | 0 |
| structures | 3 | 0 |
| objects | 0 | 0 |
| total | 5 | 0 |

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: n/a

Name of previous listing: n/a

Name of related multiple property listing: n/a

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

Mark R. Edwards Signature of certifying official June 15, 1998 Date

Mark R. Edwards
State Historic Preservation Officer

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency or bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

Entered in the National Register

Elson B. Beall 7-23-98

() determined eligible for the National Register _____

() determined not eligible for the National Register _____

() removed from the National Register _____

() other, explain: _____

() see continuation sheet

Beall Keeper of the National Register Date

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility

Current Functions:

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

OTHER/Utilitarian

Materials:

| | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| foundation | concrete and stone |
| walls | wood |
| roof | tin |
| other | n/a |

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

Alcovy Road Grist Mill is located on the east side of the Alcovy River in northeast Gwinnett County, approximately five miles east of Lawrenceville, the county seat. The Alcovy River starts at Hog Mountain in northeast Gwinnett County and flows downstream until it merges with the eastern fork of the Ocmulgee River. The mill is located near the edge of Alcovy Road on a gradual curve. The mill complex includes a historic mill, dam, two mill races, sluice gates, and waterwheel. The mill stones and system of belts are among the more significant features still located within the mill. A miller's house was originally located just east of the mill; however, the building was recently destroyed by fire.

Alcovy Road Grist Mill is a two-and-one-half story wood-framed grist mill constructed between 1868 and 1879. The major floor beams and some of the vertical corner posts are constructed of very large hand-hewn timbers. The remainder of the building is constructed with rough-hewn timber. The major structural members are mortised and tenoned together, while other members were originally nailed with square-cut nails. About half of the hand-hewn floor beams around the building's perimeter have been replaced due to rot. A number of other minor structural members have been replaced or re-nailed.

The mill building is square with a lean-to addition (1955) on the southwest end. Half of the lean-to section is two-stories high, while the other portion is only one story. The lean-to section contains two large bay openings for wagons and animals to enter to be covered and protected. The gable roof on the main portion of the mill creates a third or half story. The building frame is of hand-hewn timbers in a mortise-and-tenon construction joined by wooden pegs. This construction method helped the

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Section 7--Description

building remain standing under the stress of movement during grinding. The building rests on a stone and concrete foundation. The exterior is weatherboard which has been replaced, and the original tin roof was replaced in 1947. The two original Dutch doors constructed with wide planks of wood were used to keep the animals from entering the mill. The first floor windows are double hung with nine-over-night lights and the second floor consists of fixed nine-light windows. The building has never been painted.

The interior workings and equipment of the mill remain intact, except for the removal of the wheat stones. The original corn stones were 48 inches in diameter and the present stones, which replaced the original stones during the historic period, are 36 inches in diameter and weigh approximately 1,000 pounds for each stone. Electric wiring has been added to the building to provide sparse lighting. The main power source for the machinery remains water. The original waterwheel was made of wood with a metal shaft and was an overshot-type wheel 12-feet high and four-feet wide. The current wheel, which is historic, is a breaststroke-type wheel which runs "backwards" and is 20-feet high and three-feet wide with an 18-foot gear.

This property was used as a grist mill from its construction until 1986. The corn was first run through the corn sheller to remove the kernels from the cob. The cobs were used as firewood or run through the hammer mill with other debris to make feed for livestock. The kernels were then sifted to remove more debris before being funneled down a chute to the elevator belt, which had a capacity of 20 bushels. This belt carried the corn up to the second floor to pass through the blower. After additional trash had been blown from the kernels, the corn traveled back down the chute into the hopper and onto the stones. A mirror hung above the hopper to allow the miller to view the grinding to make sure there was always corn on the stones. If the stones turned without corn, they would wear down too quickly. The ground meal came out of an opening at the bottom of the stones and into a wooden bin ready to be bagged. The stones could be adjusted to change the coarseness of the meal as desired. Since all the machinery remains in the building, except for the original wheat stones, little effort would be needed to resume milling at the property.

The mill stones were turned by a series of belts and gears which were turned by the movement of the water falling over the waterwheel. Most of the belts and gears still remain intact in the mill. A wooden dam was constructed across the Alcovy River to create a contained water source in the mill pond. A mill race runs from the dam along the eastern bank of the river. The mill race does not end at the wheel but slightly turns towards the river then merges with the river. A second, larger mill race, which had a gate that could be opened and closed, runs from the mill pond slightly downhill towards the mill and the waterwheel. When the gate was opened, the water in the mill pond would rush down the race to the waterwheel. As the wheel turned, it moved the gears which were linked to the belts and rotated the stones to grind the corn. Corn ground by water power is said to taste better

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than meal from an electric mill. Milling with electricity is too fast and therefore heats the corn while milling, changing the flavor of the meal.

The wooden dam was replaced c.1910 with a V-shape stone dam. In 1946, a stone wall was added to the larger mill race, and a series of gates and channels between the dam and mill race were created to provide for better control of the water. The stones were quarried at a nearby mountain and hauled to the river. The dam is 20-feet high and 20-feet wide at the base. The dam is constructed with gates which were opened to drain sand from the mill pond. The mill race was built of concrete on one side and the earth on the other. At the point where the larger mill race runs next to the mill, the original wood spillway has been replaced by a galvanized metal pipe hidden by a wood wall. A previous miller had constructed a small wooden room under the spillway in which to take cold water showers. The overflow area is constructed of cement and was added in the late 1940's by Lewis Swann. Alcovy Road Grist Mill is in good condition and with a small amount of maintenance, the mill would be operational.

The setting of the mill includes mature hardwood trees, overgrown yard, and a nonhistoric wood fence located near the edge of the road. The functional relationship among the river, mill, and mill race is intact and clearly identified within the landscape. The setting outside the National Register boundary consists of one-story residences situated back away from Alcovy Road. The area is becoming more developed as more people are settling in the area.

8. Statement of Significance

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

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):

ARCHITECTURE
ENGINEERING
INDUSTRY
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance:

1868-1948

Significant Dates:

1868-1879 Construction of the mill.
1910 Replacement of the original dam.

Significant Person(s):

n/a

Cultural Affiliation:

n/a

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

unknown

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

Narrative statement of significance (areas of significance)

Alcovy Road Grist Mill is significant since it is one of the last remaining operational grist mills located in Gwinnett County and in the state. By 1876, the Department of Agriculture in Georgia listed 1,262 water powered grist mills. Today, there are only about 200 mills left standing in Georgia and even fewer that are operational. There are approximately 10 grist mills currently listed in the National Register. Although this mill is not currently operating, the mill remains operational due to the intact interior machinery. The mill is significant in the areas of architecture, engineering, industry, and landscape architecture.

Alcovy Road Grist Mill is significant in the areas of architecture and engineering since the mill is a good representative example of utilitarian rural mill design and construction featuring extremely heavy timber framing. The mill was constructed for the sole purpose of grinding grain and the type of building reflects the grinding process. The form of the building played an essential part in the grinding of the corn. The corn would enter the building on the first floor through a screen cleaner and be carried to the second floor by the elevator belt. The miller relied on gravity to direct the corn down through the milling equipment to the millstones. The small line shaft that operated the elevators and belts was located on the third floor. All power to the mill was supplied by the turning of the waterwheel. The surviving dam, mill race, sluice gates, waterwheel, millstones, and system of belts represent typical 19th- or early 20th-century hydropower engineering principles and practices.

The mill is significant in the area of industry since it represents an industrial mainstay of Georgia's historic rural economy. Local milling of corn and wheat was a critical part of Georgia's 19th and early 20th century rural agri-business. Mills like this one made it possible to economically convert large quantities of raw agricultural products like corn and wheat into foodstuffs and animal feed, given the transportation systems and industrial capabilities of the times. The 1880 manufacturing census shows that the mill did all custom grinding, producing 40 barrels of wheat flour, 14,400 pounds of corn meal, and 54,000 pounds of feed per year. Also, the mill produced corn meal at the property for the use by the Georgia state prison camp and a hospital in Lula, Georgia.

The mill is significant in the area of landscape architecture due to the surviving historic spatial and functional relationships among the mill, the site of the miller's house, the mill race, and the Alcovy River. The design of the landscape is good example of a 19th- or early-20th century grist mill complex that relied on water being channeled from a river down a mill race to power the waterwheel.

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

National Register Criteria

Alcovy Road Grist Mill is eligible under National Register Criterion A for its association to the economic history of the area and under National Register Criterion C as a good example of an utilitarian building used as a grist mill.

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

n/a

Period of significance (justification)

The period of significance for Alcovy Road Grist Mill begins with the construction of the mill in 1868 and ends in 1948, the end of the historic period. The period of significance is extended to 1948 since the mill is a rare example of a continuously functioning grist mill from its construction throughout the historic period in Gwinnett County, a county heavily developed during the past decades. The mill remained operational from its construction until it ceased to function in 1986.

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)

The Alcovy Road Grist Mill complex consists of one contributing building, the mill; one contributing site, the miller's house; and three structures, the dam and two mill races with gates. There are no noncontributing resources located within the National Register boundary.

Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)

According to family history, the mill was built by two members of the Loveless family, an early Gwinnett County family. Levi Loveless was born in South Carolina on September 13, 1798. His wife, Temperance Jones, was also born in South Carolina. They moved to Clarke County, Georgia around 1822 and later moved to Gwinnett County. Levi and Temperance had eleven children between 1823 and 1846. Levi was a Judge of the Inferior Court, a state senator, and state representative. He donated a portion of the land for Mt. Zion Baptist Church, where he served as a pastor. The 1860 census indicates that Levi owned a plantation of 650 acres and four slaves. Levi Loveless had three sons. Levi J. Loveless was a private in Battery D, 9th Georgia Light Artillery during the Civil War, Marion Francis Loveless was in the same Battery but died of measles during the war, and John Griffin Loveless did not go to war. John Griffin Loveless was a saddle maker and worked with Dr. Samuel H. Freeman rolling pills for the soldiers. During the late 1860s, John Griffin Loveless and Levi J. Loveless built the mill on the Alcovy River.

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

However, there are two other stories which tell of the early history of the mill. The first is that the mill was run during the Civil War by a miller named Wilson. When Wilson heard that the Union troops were coming, he hid his team of mules and valuables downstream. Then he sat and waited for the Union soldiers outside the mill with his shotgun. When the Union soldiers saw that he had a wagon of corn but no mules, they left him alone. A check of the December 1864 roll of men enlisted in the Georgia Militia indicates that there was a miller by the name of James W. Wilson that lived in the Lawrenceville area. It also lists Wilson as having a good shotgun, a horse, a saddle, and a bridle. James Wilson married Martha (Hattie) Loveless who was a younger sister to John Griffin and Levi J. The Wilson's son, James Wilson married Callie Freeman, who was the only daughter of Dr. Samuel H. Freeman. Another son, Julian Wilson, was the maternal grandfather of the present owner.

The other story is that the Loveless Brothers, apparently John Griffin and Levi J., sold meal to the Confederate army during the Civil War. There is no available information to support this story. The mill changed hands several times. However, a deed transferring ownership to the Freemans for the thirty acres which included the mill could not be found. W. Scott Freeman, and later his son, Winfield Freeman, were both millers at the mill. The Freemans lived up the hill from the mill, which is on a portion of the original 100 acre tract.

The mill was purchased by Newt Pharr in 1915. According to his grandson, Otis Pharr, by 1945 Newt Pharr owned five mills in the county. Between 1930 and 1940, Newt Pharr had a contract with the State of Georgia to provide meal for State Prison Camps and a hospital at Lula. This contract was made while Gene Talmadge was governor and Carson Smith was the purchasing agent. In order to have enough corn to fill the order, Newt ordered corn from Tennessee called Tennessee Red Cob. Otis Pharr remembers as a child swimming in the mill pond and helping to sharpen the mill stones. He also says that there was a wooden pattern which was taken to an Atlanta foundry when new gears were needed for the mill.

Lewis Swann brought the mill from the estate of Newt Pharr in 1946. His maternal grandmother, Callie Pharr Wilson, was one of Newt Pharr's thirteen children. Lewis Swann had the foundation of the mill raised and stabilized by engineers and replaced the leaking roof. His son, Julian Swann, the present owner, hired Darrell Tuck to replace the deteriorating siding on the mill. Tuck, the great grandson of Winfield Scott Freeman, continued to run the mill for Dr. Swann until 1986.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Meschick, Janet. "Swann's-Alcovy Road Grist Mill," Historic Property Information Form, August 1990. On file at the Historic Preservation Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia, with supplemental information.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): () N/A

- () preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- () preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been issued
date issued:
- () previously listed in the National Register
- () previously determined eligible by the National Register
- () designated a National Historic Landmark
- () recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- (x) recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # Inventory of Historic Industrial and Engineering Sites in Georgia, 1974-5. Completed by the Georgia Institute of Technology.

Primary location of additional data:

- (x) State historic preservation office
- () Other State Agency
- () Federal agency
- () Local government
- () University
- () Other, Specify Repository:

Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): Gw-401

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Approximately 3.16 acres.

UTM References

A) Zone 17 Easting 229580 Northing 3761700

Verbal Boundary Description

The National Register boundary for Alcovy Road Grist Mill encompasses four parcels historically associated with the history of the mill complex and is indicated by a heavy black line on the attached sketch map. Also, the National Register boundary is indicated by a heavy black line on the attached USGS Topographical map, drawn to scale.

Boundary Justification

The Alcovy Road Grist Mill National Register district area was originally a part of a 100-hundred acre tract owned by John Griffin Loveless in the 1860s. Today, four parcels encompassing the historic resources associated with the development of the mill complex retain integrity. Parcel A includes the miller's house site; parcel B includes the mill and adjoining section of the river from the dam, along the northwest bank, to the existing right-of-way of Alcovy Road; parcel C includes a small portion of the river just northeast of the dam; and parcel D includes the mill races. The bridge located just south of the mill on Alcovy Road is a nonhistoric structure and is located outside the National Register boundary.

11. Form Prepared By

State Historic Preservation Office

name/title Amy Pallante/National Register Specialist
organization Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources
street & number 500 The Healey Building, 57 Forsyth Street
city or town Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30303
telephone (404) 656-2840 **date** June 1998

Consulting Services/Technical Assistance (if applicable) () not applicable

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(HPD form version 02-24-97)

United States Department of the Interior
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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

Name of Property: Alcovy Road Grist Mill
City or Vicinity: near Dacula
County: Gwinnett
State: Georgia
Photographer: James R. Lockhart
Negative Filed: Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Date Photographed: July 1996

Description of Photograph(s):

- 1 of 13 View of Alcovy Road Grist Mill and setting; photographer facing north.
- 2 of 13 View of east facade of the mill; photographer facing west.
- 3 of 13 View of east facade of mill; photographer facing northwest.
- 4 of 13 View of south facade of mill; photographer facing north.
- 5 of 13 View of the mill and waterwheel; photographer facing east.
- 6 of 13 View of main drive shaft gear attached to waterwheel; photographer facing north.
- 7 of 13 View of the interior front door; photographer facing east.
- 8 of 13 View of corn hoppers located on the first floor; photographer facing north.
- 9 of 13 View of belt and gear on the first floor that run the elevator; photographer facing north.
- 10 of 13 View of stone dam, photographer facing north.
- 11 of 13 Detail view of stone dam, photographer facing northwest.
- 12 of 13 View of stone dam and gate; photographer facing west.
- 13 of 13 View of mill race; photographer facing west.

NATIONAL REGISTER SKETCH MAP

Alcovy Road Grist Mill Historic District

Dacula, Gwinnett County, Georgia

Scale: Approximately 1"=150'

□ = Mill

△ = Miller's house site

● = Race ways

— = National Register boundary

*note: the locations of the historic resources have been approximated.

