

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAR 23 1977
DATE ENTERED NOV 23 1977

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
Thorp Mill
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
Thorp Highway *off US 10/97*
CITY, TOWN
Thorp
STATE
Washington
VICINITY OF
4th - The Honorable Mike McCormack
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
COUNTY
Kittitas
CODE
037
NOT FOR PUBLICATION

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: abandoned

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Kenneth Wilson
STREET & NUMBER
Route 1
CITY, TOWN
Thorp
VICINITY OF
Washington
STATE
98946

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Auditor's Office, Kittitas County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER
500 North
CITY, TOWN
Ellensburg
STATE
Washington

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Washington State Inventory of Historic Places
DATE
December, 1974
DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS
Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission
CITY, TOWN
Olympia
STATE
Washington
98504
FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

7 DESCRIPTION

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 _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Thorp Mill is a three-story, timber-framed structure located in the village of Thorp, nine miles northwest of Ellensburg, Washington. Situated in central Kittitas County near the foothills of the Cascade Mountains, Thorp is a country town of some two hundred residents. The gristmill itself stands adjacent to the Thorp Highway and is bounded on the southeast by Mills Ditch, a narrow canal diverted from the Yakima River one-half mile to the east. At the mill site, the water flow is directed over a concrete dam and along the base of the mill building where it originally powered a horizontal wooden waterwheel. On the opposite side of the ditch are the remains of a sawmill constructed c. 1879.

The Thorp Mill is generally believed to have been erected in 1883. Its heavy braced frame is of hewn timbers with pegged, mortice and tenon joints. The structure rests on a rubble foundation, portions of which have been stabilized with cement in more recent years. The shiplap siding, wood shingled roofing, and interior joists and floorboards were undoubtedly produced in the nearby sawmill. The floor joists are mortised into sturdy plates, providing extra reinforcement against the weight of the mill machinery. The building's stepped, gabled roofline features a small, centrally-placed, gabled ventilator. A rather lengthy one-story extension toward the highway was appended to the mill at a later date. This addition provided a covered storage area for the finished flour and feed products. A small gabled wing on the southeast elevation is situated above the millwheel and turbine mechanism. On the opposite side of the building is a raised, covered platform for the unloading of grain from vehicles.

The mill is entered from the northwest side at first floor level where the actual work flow begins and ends. Here grain was admitted through an opening from the exterior platform, and underwent initial cleaning and conditioning. Roller mills, used repeatedly in the intermediate stages of the process, occupy much of the first floor area. A flour sacker, the final mechanical step, is located near the storage area and outside door. The second and third-story levels contain equipment for sorting and purifying the products of the break-rollers for further reduction. The material was transported through the vertical work flow by "elevators", or belt-bucket conveyors and gravity chutes. These shafts are constructed of clear-grained fir and lined with metal.

The work flow of the mill was a cyclical one in which the wheatberry was ground into increasingly finer grades. Gradually, impurities, wheatgerm, and bran were removed from the endosperm without actually grinding the kernel into flour until the last possible moment. After each break-roller stage, the material was sifted and sorted so that each particle of broken wheat was returned to exactly that pair of break-rollers for which its particular size was suited. Middlings purifying was a crucial last stage before the actual grinding of flour in a smooth-roller machine.

The Thorp Mill contains the following apparatus in general sequence of operation:

- Cleaning;
"Special Close Scouring Separating Machines"
Invincible Grain Cleaner Company
Date - 1897

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Grinding;

Five roller machines

Edward P. Allis Company, Milwaukee, last patent

Date - 1891

Barnard and Leas, Moline, Illinois

Nordyke and Marmon, Indianapolis

Scalping;

"Gorton's Improved Centrifugal Reel"

Date - 1887

Plansifter

Carl Haggemacher

Date - 1890, 1892

Aerator, manufacture and date unknown, apparently aerated flour
between plansifter and sacker

Purification;

"Air and Sieve Purifier"

Date - 1892

Packaging;

Flour sacker - spring operated

Power was supplied to the entire mill operation by a water driven turbine and connecting system of jack shafts, pulleys, and belts. Major elements of the system are located at ground level on the eastern most corner of the mill building. A horizontal water wheel of wood has rotted and is no longer intact. The pulleys are constructed of laminated wood, and the oldest belts are of leather. With only a few minor alterations, the water-powered drive mechanism remains as originally designed.

Although the Thorp Mill has been locked and boarded up, it has recently been subject to increasing vandalism. Its timber framework is structurally sound, but the mill is in need of reroofing. Exterior siding and window sash will require attention in the near future. For the moment, some twelve undamaged examples of 19th century flour-milling equipment remain in place.

6 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1883

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In 1883 a small country grist mill was constructed in the crossroads village of Thorp in Washington Territory. In its earliest years the mill served settlers from the surrounding farm area, the oldest irrigated section of Kittitas County. After the arrival of the Northern Pacific Railroad in 1886, the town gradually emerged as an agricultural shipping center of considerable importance to the upper county, and the grist mill became a merchant mill of increasing capacity. Originally a buhr mill, the operation was modernized between 1898 and 1904 with the installation of roller equipment. The Thorp Mill remained in production with its vintage milling machinery until 1944. Today it is thought to be the oldest mill structure in Washington that has retained intact its collection of 19th century equipment, most of which dates from the 1887-1897 period. As such, the Thorp Mill represents an industrial artifact of unique significance to Kittitas County.

Little is known concerning Oren Hutchinson, builder and original operator of the Thorp Mill. He was an early property owner in the area and, until the town of Thorp was platted in 1895, the local post office was known in his honor as "Oren". In 1879, James L. Mills secured water rights from Hutchinson and built a canal from the Yakima River, across Hutchinson's property, to power a sawmill. Four years later, in 1883, Hutchinson himself constructed a gristmill on the canal opposite the sawmill. For a time the two operated in conjunction with one another utilizing the same water wheel. In 1922, Frank Hutchinson improved the diversion dam on the Yakima River with a concrete replacement. Today the Mills Ditch irrigates the town of Thorp as well as several outlying properties.

The role of the Thorp Mill in the history of the county closely paralleled the development of the town of Thorp. In 1873, the Tannum Ditch Company constructed a canal in the vicinity. The irrigated land was particularly attractive to settlers, and stimulated the founding of a tiny agricultural service center, consisting at first of Mill's sawmill and Hutchinson's gristmill. Farm families for many miles around hauled their grain to the Thorp Mill to be ground into feed and flour. The small millstone operation was designed solely to satisfy local supply and demand, and functioned for several years on a simple system of product exchange.

In 1886 the Northern Pacific Railroad was routed through the village of Thorp. The railroad encouraged the rapid growth of the town as a trade and shipping center for local farm products. The first hotel was constructed in Thorp in 1893, followed by the opening of a general store in 1895. Thorp was officially laid out in 1895, the plat filed by early resident J. M. Newman. By 1904, the population had risen to nearly two hundred inhabitants. Thorp's continued prosperity was assured when the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway was constructed west of town.

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The year 1898 marked the beginning of the Thorp Mill's commercial growth. The business was purchased at that time by S. J. Kendall, then or shortly thereafter in partnership with Joseph D. Mack. Kendall enlarged the mill building and, by 1904, had updated the milling machinery. The daily output of the mill increased noticeably, and its products were regularly marketed beyond the immediate community, in the Puget Sound area. The mill, by then known as the North Star Mill, locally advertised the sale of bran, feed, shorts, and "Tiptop" and "Seafoam" patent flour.

The milling equipment which remains in place today was in all likelihood purchased and installed by Kendal himself over a period of time. The machines are of various origins and dates, indicating that the system was not designed and installed by a particular manufacturing company. In fact, some of the machines, the earliest of which is dated 1887, may represent equipment previously used in other mills. As an industrial unit, the Thorp Mill machinery and turbine, belt, and pulley system comprise an unusually fine example of turn-of-the-century milling technology.

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Steen, Herman, Flour Milling in America, T. S. Denison and Company, Incorporated, Minneapolis, 1963.

Tjossem, Albert, "Flouring Mills of Kittitas County", The Coast, Volume 15, Number 5, May, 1908.