

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	FEB 20 1980
DATE ENTERED	FEB 22 1980

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Hoag Gristmill and Knight House Complex

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

*NW of Starksboro on*

STREET & NUMBER

State Prison Hollow Road

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Starksboro *inc.*

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Vermont

STATE

Vermont

CODE

50

COUNTY

Addison

CODE

01

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" 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	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: none

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Ronald J. Messer, M.D.

STREET & NUMBER

The Red House, Box 1055

CITY, TOWN

North Marshfield

VICINITY OF

STATE

Massachusetts 02059

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of the Town Clerk

(Land Records, Vol. 28, page 254)

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Starksboro

STATE

Vermont

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Vermont Historic Sites and Structures Survey

DATE

1975

— FEDERAL  STATE — COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

CITY, TOWN

Montpelier

STATE

Vermont 05602

# 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 Hoag Gristmill and the Knight House are excellent examples of their respective building types. With the exception of a small bridge over the Creek, there are no 20th century intrusions upon the site. The natural context of the buildings is dramatic and contributes both historic and aesthetic value to the complex.

The complex is located along the gorge through which Lewis Creek flows in Starksboro, Vermont. Described in the several histories of Addison County as a stream with many excellent millseats, the creek begins in the southern section of the township and flows generally northward, turning sharply west to fall through the gorge and then following the base of Hogback Mountain north into Chittenden County, from which it flows west into Lake Champlain.

The mill (#1) is set into the southern side of the gorge so that on the north its impressive masonry wall rises 30 feet from the water's edge. The entrance to the mill is on the south, where the wall rises only 8 feet above grade, thus placing the entrance on the second floor of this 2½ story building. The foundation and walls are of fieldstone laid in random ashlar. The mill is 30 feet 6 inches wide and 36 feet long.

In 1896 a fire destroyed the late 18th-century millworks and the attic story. During the subsequent reconstruction, the floors at the second story and attic levels were raised approximately three feet to permit more light to enter the milling room. Thus, below the eaves on three sides of the mill are windows which read from the exterior as if they are part of the wooden attic story, but which actually illuminate the second story room.

During the 1896 reconstruction, a new door was cut through the stone wall on the south facade corresponding to the raised floor inside. The original door at the west end of that wall was filled in with fieldstone and its threshold covered by the new grade. The entrance, framed with a simple surround of plain boards, is set within a 1½-foot recess which is paneled with beaded tongue-and-groove siding. The door itself has four large lights above three recessed panels set with similar tongue-and-groove siding. To the right of the entrance is a single window with 6/6 sash.

Immediately above the lintels of both door and window a wide fascia board marks the transition from the rough fieldstone wall to the darkly stained clapboards of the upper story. This fascia frame continues around the gable wall, delineating the additional height of the interior room at the corners and rising beneath the projecting eaves. At the attic level is a centrally placed board-and-batten door flanked by two windows with 6/6 sash. Above these the wall is decorated with wooden shingles in a fish scale pattern.

The west facade has a window with 8/8 sash at either end of its first story. At the second story are three symmetrically arranged windows with 6/6 sash. Above these in the clapboard section of the wall are two windows with six fixed panes. At the north-west corner of the roof a small skylight has recently been added. At the same time the roof received new wood shingles and a metal snow-slide at its eaves.

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The north facade has irregular fenestration: a single 9/6 window on the first story and a 6/6 window placed off-center on the second story with two fixed-pane windows above it. The gable wall is clad with vertical wood siding. It is penetrated by a single window with 6/6 sash. A narrow brick interior chimney rises from the roof ridge.

The east wall contains a single window with 6 fixed panes in the clapboard section of the second story.

The interior of the mill has been altered since the 1896 rebuilding. All the milling machinery was removed in 1946 when the building was converted to a wood-working shop. The first floor has a pit along its north end where the overshot waterwheel was formerly housed. In the east wall the opening where the penstock once entered to feed the wheel has been filled in with fieldstone. The southern half of this story has a stone floor raised four feet above the pit. It contains remnants of the millworks, including wooden beltwheels, leather and canvas belts, and a metal corncobber, all suspended from the remaining 12 by 12 inch beams. Along the southern wall are several of the early millstones which fell from the milling room above during the fire.

At the second story the floor is being repaired. An enclosed stair rises at the southeast corner, its walls clad with beaded tongue-and-groove siding, as are the splayed walls of the window on the south facade. The attic floor is partially suspended from the wooden roof truss by vertical iron tension rods, allowing unencumbered space in the former milling room below.

Although the interior of the Hoag Gristmill has been altered, the exterior retains the architectural integrity of both the 1799 masonry construction and the 1896 remodeling. The site itself still reveals its early character. To the east remains the stone retaining wall which once formed the southern side of the sluiceway. Above it once stood a blacksmith shop and a sawmill adjacent to the gristmill. These were demolished in 1946, the dam and penstock having washed out in an earlier flood.

The Knight House (#2) is comprised of a 1½-story gable-roofed main block and two 1½-story gable-roofed ells which intersect the north end of the main block. Two out-buildings, the former hay barn/stable and the former hog barn, stand west of the main house. The complex is situated along the north bank of Lewis Creek, about 225 feet upriver and across from the Hoag Mill.

The main block of the house is 5x4 bays, with the far right (north) bay of the front eaves elevation obscured by the ell porch. Located in the center of the eastern eaves elevation, the main doorway is the most outstanding architectural feature of the house. The recessed door is comprised of four pairs of panels of varying size. It exhibits a hand-forged handle and is topped by a semi-circular fanlight. The arched recess has paneled reveals; the panels correspond to the pattern of the door panels. The side stiles of the reveals continue as moldings on the soffit of the arch. Some hand-wrought

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nails are visible on the reveals and on the surround. Paneled pilasters flanking the door have unusual "capitals" of thin flat boards with cut-outs in the shape of a radiating tear-drop pinwheel. The molding on the outer edge of the arched portion of the surround is scored to resemble tiny dentils and the central keystone is ornamented with shallow symmetrical curves cut out along its upper edge. Stone steps and a stone sill further enhance the simple beauty of the entrance.

The windows of the main block have 6/6 sash and are flanked by simple shutters constructed of two vertical flush boards joined by two crosspieces. A simple molded surround and plain sill frame each window opening. There is a louvered fan in the apex of the southern gable of the main block.

Simple pilasters exist on the exposed corners of the main block. Remnants of fluting occur at the top of the pilasters, but the remaining length has weathered to a nearly flat surface. The pilasters have geometric cornerblock "capitals".

The central brick chimney is stepped back at the base and at the top. A simple molded fascia runs under the eaves of the main block.

The house was originally painted red and had green shutters.<sup>1</sup> Only traces of the paint remain. The clapboards have weathered to a deep brown, and the shutters are now painted sky blue. The standing seam sheet metal roof is painted black.

The interior of the main block retains some original Greek Revival details. A fireplace on the first floor has a molded surround with cornerblocks accented by Greek frets and a plain central panel. Many of the interior doorways have molded surrounds with geometric corner blocks similar to the "capitals" on the exterior corner pilasters.

The long 1½ story ell which extends to the right (east) from the main block is used for additional living space as well as a large garage and storage area. The portion of the ell closest to the main block is sheathed with wide (approximately 11 inches) horizontal boards, while the remainder has random width horizontal boarding. The recessed porch shelters two doors; one door gives entrance to the main block and is composed of nine glass panes over two longer panels. The other door is to the ell and has two long panels over two shorter panels.

A post and lintel configuration of old framing members runs the length of the garage portion of the ell, along its central axis. This system does not appear to help support the attic joists above, however, as the joists do not rest on the beam. The wide

<sup>1</sup>Bredemeier, David. "The Old Mill Workshop." Vermont Life, Vol. 24, Autumn, 1969, p. 22.

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garage bay opening is spanned by a long beam which forms the tie beam of a king-post truss with kingbolt. The end wall of the ell exhibits framing with one pegged mortise and tenon joint. Some of the framing of the ell may have been reworked during former restorations.

The exposed gable end of the ell exhibits a wide fascia, cornice returns and windows similar to those of the main block.

Two small one-story additions of recent construction fill the crook formed at the junction of the ell with the rear of the main block.

The ell to the west of the main block was formerly the corn barn.<sup>2</sup> In the mid 20th century, it was moved a little north to its present location adjoining the main block.<sup>3</sup> The ell rests on concrete piers. It has horizontal flush boarding on its lower portion and vertical boarding above. The siding was salvaged from the old saw mill.<sup>4</sup> Top-hinged panels cover the unglazed openings cut in three sides of the ell, which is now used as a summer room.

The former hay barn/stable (#3) is located west of the main house. It is 1½ stories high with a rubble foundation and a sheet metal gable roof. The interior has two distinct floor levels which relate to its original double-use. The levels correspond to the door on the left eaves end below-grade and to the large board-and-batten double-door in the center of the eaves elevation. The building has fixed 12-pane windows.

The former hog barn (#4) is 1½ stories high and has a wood-shingled gable roof and an ashlar foundation. The front gable end has two 12/8 windows on the upper level. The rear gable elevation exhibits two 12-pane fixed windows on the lower level. There is a door on the left side of the gable-end on the first floor, and a door in the center of the upper floor.

Behind the old hog barn is a former outhouse.

<sup>2</sup>Interview with Katie Thompson, former owner. Starksboro, Vermont. December 1979.

<sup>3</sup>Same as above.

<sup>4</sup>Bredemeier, David. "The Old Mill Workshop." Vermont Life, Vol. 24, Autumn, 1969, pg. 21.

# 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/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input 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      c.1799

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Hoag Gristmill and the Knight House have both architectural and historical significance. The mill is a well-preserved example of late-18th century industrial architecture, and was built and operated by a well-known Society of Friends family. The Knight house is a rather sophisticated example of rural farmhouse architecture, probably dating from the 1820's, and is also in an excellent state of preservation. The complex is sited in a dramatic natural setting along a boulder-studded waterfall, recalling the earlier power source of the mill and adding visual interest and beauty to the complex's present residential use.

The Hoag Gristmill was long associated with a prominent family who were among the early settlers of Starksboro. Land records show that the site of the mill was purchased in 1788 by Joseph Hoag of Nine Partners, New York, from Benedict Alford of Ferrisburg, Vermont. Although Hoag's renown in Quaker history was to come from his later vision while plowing his Vermont farm and from his relentless travels for the Society of Friends as far away as Illinois and North Carolina, he was known even in the late 18th century as a tireless rider whose circuit among Friends Meetings brought him often into Vermont.

In 1789, Joseph Hoag transferred the mill site to his father Elijah. The following year Joseph's name appears in the first U.S. Census as residing in the town of Monkton, from which 2726 acres, including the millsite, were annexed to Starksboro in 1797. In 1793 Elijah Hoag sold the property to two of his other sons, Elihu and David, and to his son-in-law, Stephen Carpenter.

At the time of the 1793 sale of land, there is no mention of any gristmill. By 1799, however, when Carpenter sold his portion of the land to his partners, he specifically excluded his rights in "the stone mill on the falls" and his mill privileges on Lewis Creek.

The mill remained in the Hoag family until 1831, by which time a sawmill had been built next to the gristmill. In 1896, the gristmill was exempted from taxes, indicating this year as the time of the fire which destroyed the wooden interior of the mill as well as its attic story.

Vesper Thompson purchased the mill in 1904. He installed a new turbine and milling rollers in about 1912. In 1926 he sold the mill to John Flynn but retained the right to operate it, which he did until his death in 1936. In 1946, the mill was purchased by Robert Adsit, who removed the milling machinery and converted the building into a wood-working shop. In 1971 his son sold the mill to Dr. Ronald Messer, the present owner.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bredemeier, David. "The Old Mill Workshop." Vermont Life, Vol. 24, Autumn, 1969.  
 Child, Hamilton, Gazetteer and Business Directory of Addison County, Vermont, 1881-1882, Syracuse, New York: Hamilton Child, 1882.  
 Friends, Society of, Lincoln Vermont. Record of Births, Marriages, and Deaths, 1737-1903. Manuscript in Collection of Vermont Historical Society, Montpelier, Vermont. (See Continuation Sheet 9-2).

ITEM NOT VERIFIED

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 7.65<sup>±</sup> acres

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

QUADRANGLE NAME Bristol

QUADRANGLE SCALE 7.5' series

UTM REFERENCES

A 18 654205 4900530

B               

C               

D               

E               

F               

G               

H               

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary coincides with the property lines of Dr. Richard J. Messer. (See accompanying sketch map.)

## 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

Peter Hawley and Nancy Boone, Architectural Historians

ORGANIZATION

Division for Historic Preservation

DATE

October 25, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

Pavilion Building

TELEPHONE

802-828-3226

CITY OR TOWN

Montpelier

STATE

Vermont 05602

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL     

STATE X

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*William B. Pinner*

TITLE

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

4/20/80

ATTEST:

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE

4/21/80

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The gristmill stands as an impressive reminder of the technological accomplishments of early settlers in Vermont. Because it is associated with the Hoag family, the gristmill bears significance not only for the Town of Starksboro, which was founded by the Friends, but also for the nation, as an example of the ingenuity and industry of Quaker entrepreneurs in 18th century America.

The Knight House was originally part of a farm complex that included a carding mill which stood downstream from the house.<sup>1</sup> Although the mill no longer exists, it may have stood on the site of a foundation downstream from the house.

The earliest known owner of the house was Benjamin Knight,<sup>2</sup> whose family had come to Starksboro in 1807. Steven Hard, who leased the mill<sup>4</sup> from the Hoag's c. 1830, may have lived in the house after Knight sold it in 1831. For many years in the present century, the house was occupied by the Thompsons. In the 1940's they sold it to Robert Adsit, who spent many years restoring the complex.

The house is an excellent example of early 19th century residential architecture. Stylistically, it exhibits both Federal and Greek Revival elements and was probably built in the late 1820's.

The visual qualities of the Hoag Mill and Knight House Complex are outstanding. The buildings are unified by the Creek, which irresistably draws the eye downstream from the house to the mill as the rapidly moving water proceeds through the gorge.

The commonalities of early vernacular design and natural weathered materials further enhance the unity of the Complex and bespeak its age and durability. The sound of rushing water adds another dimension to the overall pleasing perception of the Complex. There are no distracting modern intrusions on the site, which blends both natural and man-made elements into a unified aesthetic whole.

The boundary of the Complex coincides with the present property lines of the Messer property (see sketch map) which is appropriate to the purposes of the nomination. It encompasses both sides of the Creek, which is essential to proper recognition of the site. The northern boundary closely follows a natural topographic demarcation, a series of steep ledges, and the southern boundary borders a dirt road. The eastern boundary partially coincides with an old stone wall, and the western boundary follows an extension of an old road which used to bridge the Creek above the present road. The nominated property is sufficient to properly protect and define all significant aspects (visual, architectural, and historical) of the complex.

<sup>1</sup>Interviews with Bertha Hansen, local historian, Starksboro, Vermont. November 13, 1979 and January 4, 1980.

<sup>2</sup>Same as above.

<sup>3</sup>Smith, Henry P. and William Rann, editors. History of Addison County, Vermont, Syracuse, New York: D. Mason & Co.

<sup>4</sup>Interview with Bertha Hansen.



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- Hemenway, Abbey Maria. Vermont Historical Gazetteer, Vol. 1. Burlington, Vermont: A. M. Hemenway, 1867.
- Smith, John C. Joseph Hoag, Vermont Quaker, unpublished thesis. Earlham School of Religion, Richmond, Indiana, 1972.
- Smith, Henry P. and William Rann, editors. History of Addison County, Vermont. Syracuse, New York: D. Mason & Co. Publishers, 1886.
- Thompson, Zadock. History of Vermont, Natural, Civil, and Statistical. Burlington, Vermont: Chauncey Goodrich, 1842.
- Walton's Vermont Register and Farmer's Almanac. Claremont, New Hampshire: The Claremont Manufacturing Company, 1874.

Interviews

- Bertha Hansen, local historian, Starksboro, Vermont. November 13, 1979 and January 4, 1980.
- Katie Thompson, former owner. Starksboro, Vermont. December 1979.

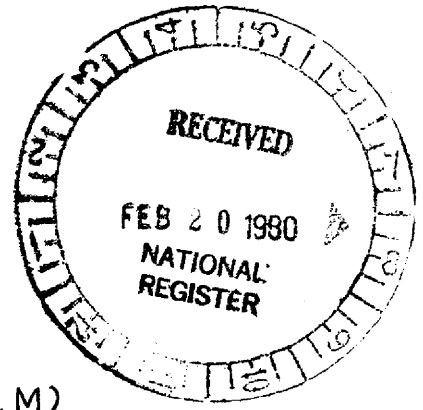
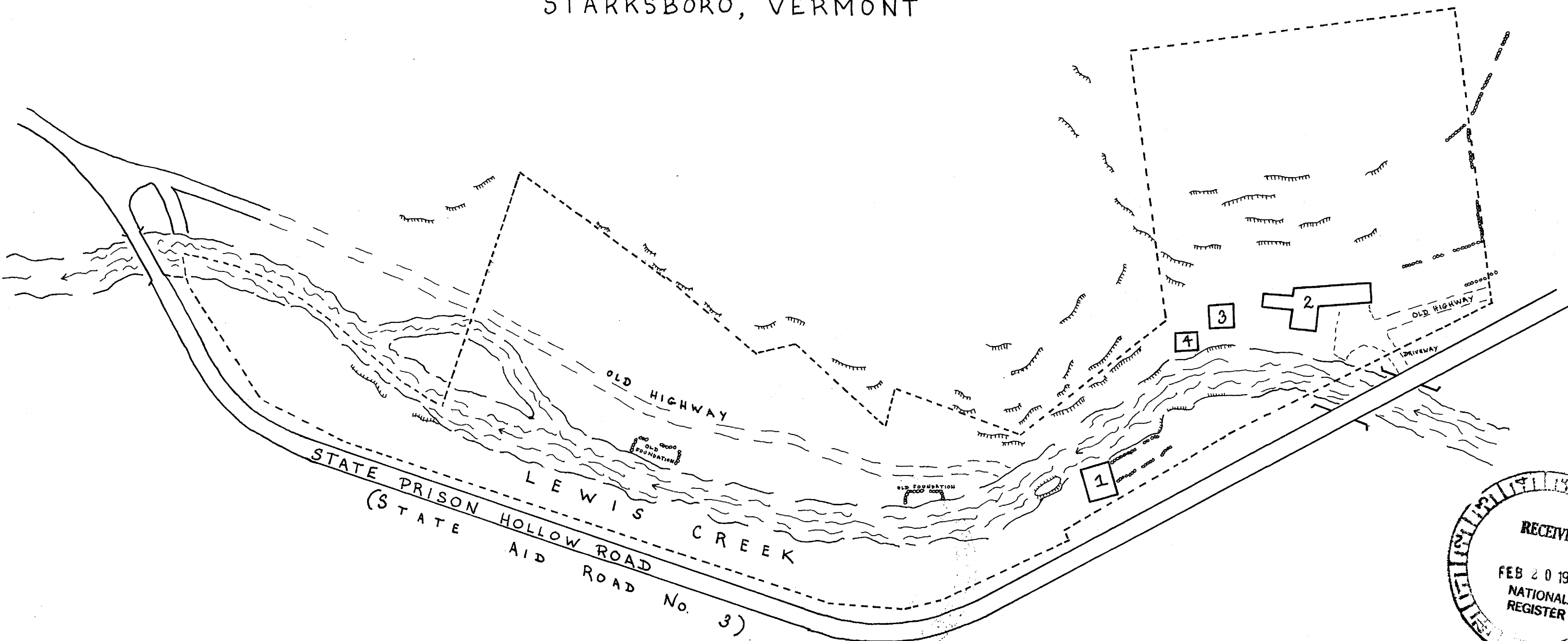
Maps

- Beers, Frederick. Atlas of Addison County, Vermont. New York: F.W. Beers & Co., 1871.
- Walling, H. F. Map of Addison County, Vermont, 1857. New York: William E. Baker & Co. Publishers, 1857.






# HOAG MILL AND KNIGHT HOUSE COMPLEX

STARKSBORO, VERMONT



FROM: A Map of lands Described in a Deed to  
RONALD J. and PATRICIA A. MESSER  
STARKSBORO, VERMONT  
"The Old Mill Property"

KENNETH G. WESTON, L.S. JULY 1978

-  OLD STONE WALL OR FOUNDATION
-  LEDGES
-  PROPERTY LINE  
(BOUNDARY OF NOMINATED PROPERTY)

