

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JUL 17 1975
DATE ENTERED	OCT 10 1975

**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

Dexter Grist Mill

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

ME 7

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Dexter

VICINITY OF

Second

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Maine

23

Penobscot

019

CLASSIFICATION

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

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Town of Dexter

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Dexter

VICINITY OF

STATE

Maine

3 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Penobscot County Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

73 Hammond Street

CITY, TOWN

Bangor, Maine

STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

HAER 8/13/75

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

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 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

Sited in the business district of a northern Maine community, the Dexter Grist Mill stands adjacent to its mill stream. Built in 1854, this rambling structure is an excellent example of 19th century vernacular industrial architecture.

The entire mill measures 35 feet by 75 feet and is of frame construction with brick, concrete and wooden post foundations. The exterior has both clapboards and shingles. The main section is two stories high, while its appendages vary from one to one and a half stories. No written or pictorial record has been found to indicate the chronology of their erection.

The north wall of the Dexter Grist Mill serves as its facade. The building is entered on the first story by a pair of double doors. In front of this doorway is a simple porch, the roof of which is supported by four wooden posts and three metal tie rods. From the porch roof hangs a 19th century sign which reads, "CORN AND FLOUR." To the left of the porch is a large window with twelve over twelve panes of glass. Because grain was stored in the second story, only one window is located there, at the southeast corner of the east wall. There is also a louvered vent directly under the pronounced overhang of the gable roof at the north and south walls. A small brick chimney projects from the north end of the peak of the roof. The roof itself is sheathed in corrugated metal, a roofing material which became popular for Maine barns at the turn of the century.

The main section of the Dexter Grist Mill is surrounded by appendages on the east, west, and south walls. The east and west walls are each flanked by a one story slanted roofed structure. The east appendage has a window on the north wall and a door flanked by two windows on the east wall. Located over the millstream, the west appendage has one window on the north wall and five on the west wall.

The southern appendage consists of a one and a half story gable roofed building to which is attached a one story slanted roofed structure. The one and a half story section has one window in the east and west walls and three in the south wall. The one story section contains a doorway and three windows on the east wall. Like the main building, the appendages are roofed mainly with corrugated metal.

The interior of the Dexter Grist Mill has been largely unchanged in its recent adaptation as the museum of the Dexter Historical Society. During the mill's last years of operation prior to its closing in 1967, the wooden water wheel was replaced by a cement encased modern horizontal wheel. This, in turn, has been removed. However, the machinery, all dating from 1905, remains intact and could be operated by a motor connected to the waterwheel shaft. The second story has a capacity of 10,000 bushels of grain, and its now empty storage bins are still in place along with the grain duct system. The Dexter Historical Society has creatively utilized this rambling industrial building as a backdrop for displaying its fine collection of items of regional interest.

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 checked="" 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 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 type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" 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

1854

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Caleb B. Curtis

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

During the 18th and 19th centuries, the grist mill was a feature of most rural Maine communities. By the last quarter of the 20th century the state has only approximately a half dozen surviving examples, of which the Dexter Grist Mill is one of the most well preserved. Its simple frame construction with its series of irregular appendages exemplifies the direct, "make-do" quality of rural vernacular industrial architecture.

The Dexter Grist Mill has its origins at the roots of the town's history. In 1801, the first year of settlement, Samuel Elkins came from Cornville with the equipment necessary to begin a saw and grist mill in Dexter. The following year this mill was established at the outlet of Lake Wassookeag. Its ownership changed hands several times before it was purchased by Jonathan Farrar in 1817.

A native of Meredith, New Hampshire, Farrar was a successful Skowhegan merchant and lumberman who decided to invest in Dexter's industrial future. He realized that business in the town merited a separate saw mill and grist mill. Thus, he expanded the saw mill at the large outlet and moved the grist mill to the site of the present mill in the center of the community.

To provide power for his grist mill, Farrar dug a mill pond and a canal which still runs under Dexter's Main Street bringing water from the Sebasticook River. In 1818 he constructed a small shingle covered frame building to serve as the grist mill. He maintained ownership of the mill until 1830 when he sold it to Jonathan Weatherbee. It was purchased from Weatherbee by Farrar and Cutler in 1854. This firm replaced the old mill that year, employing the local builder Caleb B. Curtis to construct the present one on the same location.

The Dexter Grist Mill was operated by one family for most of its history. In 1854 Farrar and Cutler hired James Quimby Maxfield as their miller. He was followed by two of his sons, while his daughter Lillian married Samuel L. Small, a mill employee. Small bought the mill in 1882 and passed it on to his son Harold in 1912. Harold Small ran the business until 1960 when it was leased to his daughter and son-in-law Mr. and Mrs. Clair Wilkins. In 1966 the Beacon Feed Company purchased the mill's grain business from the Wilkins. After operating the feed business for approximately a year, Beacon closed the mill. The Town of Dexter received clear title to it by purchasing the remainder of the Wilkins' 99 year lease. The town then granted the Dexter Historical Society (See continuation sheet)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Unpublished historical data, Dexter Historical Society Files

Plummer, Stanley, "A History of the Town of Dexter," Eastern Gazette newspaper series
June 25, 1942 - December 9, 1943

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1 ac.

UTM REFERENCES

A	19	4770510	49853510
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr., Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Maine Historic Preservation Commission

DATE

June 1975

STREET & NUMBER

31 Western Avenue

TELEPHONE

207-289-2133

CITY OR TOWN

Augusta,

STATE

Maine

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 National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

James H. Munday

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

July 15, 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

A. P. Wautersen

DATE

10/10/75

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

Ronald M. Greenberg

DATE

10/10/75

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Actg

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

The Miller's House, located just south of the mill, was built in 1838 by Seba F. Weatherbee.

The house, which faces west, is of Cape Cod form and carries Greek Revival style detail. It is of frame construction with gable roof, central chimney, 1½ stories, and granite foundation. Fenestration is 6/6, except for one small window in the east wall which is 1/1.

The facade is 5 bays wide and has a central entrance. This entrance consists of a single door with sidelights, framed by modified Doric pilasters and an entablatured lintel. The walls of the house are clapboarded, except for the south end, which is shingled in wood.

A 1½-story addition is attached to the south end, which has a full cellar. This is partly shingled, partly clapboarded. A simple one-story porch is attached to its west side.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

permission to use the mill, and a museum was opened there by the Society in July of 1967.

In the 19th century, the miller received compensation for his work by "tolling the grist" or keeping a certain proportion of the grain brought to the mill to be ground. The miller was considered to be a fair mark for jokes, and much was said about the expertise with which some millers would "toll" the grist twice or even three times. This practice is mentioned in one of the first issues of Dexter's Eastern Gazette established in 1853:

The Grist Mill in our village, we notice, is again having a large run of business, as it had last autumn. The drouth has stopped many of the mills in neighboring towns, while the excellence of the flour bolted in the mill of Farrar & Cutler is a strong inducement for people to give it their patronage.

By the way, such a mill is a great benefit not only to its owners, but to the place. Every bushel of toll saves as much money as its value, from going elsewhere, and thus contributes so much towards the raising of our own breadstuffs.

The original 1818 mill ground home grown grain exclusively. When the present mill was built in 1854, machinery was added for the grinding of flour as well as such local grains as corn, oats, and wheat. This machinery was used until 1890 when the flour grinding machinery was removed. By 1900 western corn was used along with local grains. At the peak of its business the grist mill would purchase two car loads of corn each month, the equivalent of 4,000 bushels. This was ground along with 4,000 bushels of local grains. The mill was running full time until the 1940's when commercial feeds began to be used by farmers in the area. During its last years, the mill specialized in custom grain grinding, the retailing of prepared feed, and the storage of oats for area farmers.

When the long history of the Dexter Grist Mill drew to a close in 1967, the town and its historical society displayed the foresight to preserve this building which has so long been part of the local scene. As a regional museum it continues to serve as a valuable landmark to a now vanished rural economy.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

The Miller's House, nearly contiguous to the south side of the Mill was built in 1838 by Seba F. Weatherbee, miller until 1854. It continued to serve as residence for the miller on a regular basis until the 1940's. Since then it has been a rental house though continuing to be part of the Mill property.