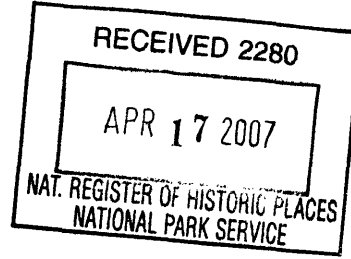


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**United States Department of Interior
National Park Service**



**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900A). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Messer-Mayer Mill
other names/site number Richfield Roller Mill

2. Location

street & number 4399 Pleasant Hill Road N/A not for publication
city or town Town of Richfield N/A vicinity
state Wisconsin code WI county Washington code 131 zip code 53076

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility 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 does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] April 12, 2007
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State Historic Preservation Officer - Wisconsin

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Messer-Mayer Mill

Washington

Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:
 entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Edson H. Beall

5/30/07

per

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as
as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources
in the count)

contributing	noncontributing
7	1 buildings
4	sites
2	structures
1	2 objects
14	3 total

Name of related multiple property listing:
(Enter "N/A" if property not part of a multiple property
listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources
is previously listed in the National Register**

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING: manufacturing facility

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: animal facility

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: agricultural outbuilding

Current Functions

RECREATION AND CULTURE: museum

RECREATION AND CULTURE: outdoor recreation

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation STONE

walls Weatherboard

roof WOOD

other WOOD

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Messer-Mayer Mill
Name of Property

Washington
County and State

Wisconsin

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Industry

Period of Significance

1856-1954

Significant Dates

1856, 1871-1873

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Messer-Mayer Mill
Name of Property

Washington
County and State

Wisconsin

9. Major Bibliographic References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous Documentation on File (National Park Service):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- X State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 15.12 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

A	<u>16</u>	<u>0397913</u>	<u>4790867</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
B	<u>16</u>	<u>0398066</u>	<u>4790869</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>16</u>	<u>0398142</u>	<u>4790649</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	<u>16</u>	<u>0398170</u>	<u>4790530</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D	<u>16</u>	<u>0397912</u>	<u>4790534</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

See Continuation Sheet

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Marge Holzbog, Dan Wittenberger, Quint Mueller, Marisa Kosobucki		
organization	Richfield Historical Society	date	July 2006
street & number	P.O. Box 268	telephone	262-251-3882
city or town	Richfield	state	WI
		zip code	53076

name/title	Marisa Kosobucki		
organization	Heritage Research, Ltd.	date	July 2006
street & number	N89 W16785 Appleton Avenue	telephone	262-251-7792
city or town	Menomonee Falls	state	WI
		zip code	53051

Messer-Mayer Mill

Washington

Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name/title					
organization	Town of Richfield		date	July 2006	
street & number	4128 Hubertus Road		telephone	262-628-2260	
city or town	Hubertus	state	WI	zip code	53033

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 1

Messer-Mayer Mill
Town of Richfield, Washington County, WI

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The Messer-Mayer Mill is located along the south side of Pleasant Hill Road in the Town of Richfield, Washington County, Wisconsin. The surrounding area is largely wooded and part farmland. Coney Creek, a tributary of the Oconomowoc River, runs along the western edge of the property. The mill property includes a 1871-1873 grist mill building, a farmhouse, barn, wood shed, smoke house, outhouse, a hand-dug well and hand pump, mill pond and mill race/dam, as well as the ruins of the original sawmill, engine house and pig house, all of which are contributing elements. The reconstructed horse shed, as well as two modern signs are considered non-contributing. The buildings are not visible from Pleasant Hill Road and are accessed by a long gravel driveway with trees on either side. The set back of the buildings, south from Pleasant Hill Road, range between approximately 946 feet and 1,080 feet. The mill house, barn, wood shed, smokehouse, outhouse, a hand-dug well and hand pump, and pig barn ruins are located on the west end of the property, near Coney Creek, while the grist mill, horse shed, sawmill ruins, engine ruins and modern signage are located on the east side of the property. All elements are considered to be contributing except for the horse shed and two modern signs.

DESCRIPTION OF BUILDINGS:

Grist Mill (Contributing, 1871-1873):

This three-and-one-half-story, front-gabled grist mill rests on a raised fieldstone foundation and is sheathed with narrow clapboard siding (see photos #1, 2, 4 & 5 of 25). Windows are regularly spaced and are typically comprised of six-over-six, double-hung sashes. A small brick chimney rises from the south end of the mill.

A one-story, enclosed front-gabled entrance¹ is centrally located along the primary (north) facade of the structure and is flanked to either side by a single window. Two windows are located directly above the entrance, while a single opening is found in the peak of the third level. Turning to the east elevation, the basement-level, fieldstone foundation contains three openings; two are currently boarded over. Three windows are located along the first level, while the second floor carries four openings.

Included along the first level of the rear (south) facade are the following: a wooden door; a small rectangular opening; a pair of six-light windows (near the upper edge of the floor); and, a single window situated near the east end. Two windows are located along the second floor, while the peak carries a single opening.

Turning to the east elevation, two windows in the foundation level are currently boarded over, while the former opening for the mill race is visible at the southern end of the structure. Four windows are located along both the first and second level of this facade.

Aside from general deterioration--due to its age and some degree of neglect--the mill structure has seen little change in the last 133 years (See photos Appendix D). Since 1999, there has been a concerted effort to restore the mill building. Restoration efforts include the installation of a new cedar roof, including rafter and roof board repair, as well as stone foundation wall repair.

¹ The front-gabled entrance was added to the mill structure between 1913 and 1927. Historic photographs, dated circa 1913 and circa 1927 (see photos #1 & #3 of Appendix A), on file at the Richfield Historical Society, Richfield, Wisconsin.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Messer-Mayer Mill
Town of Richfield, Washington County, WI

Section 7 Page 2

The first-floor interior of the mill contains equipment that was utilized for the beginning, as well as the end, of the milling process (see floor plan #1 of Appendix A). An office/desk area is located near both entrances, at the north and south ends of the mill. An Edward P. Allis mill stone (see photo #8 of 25) is situated at the rear (south), while four, Edward P. Allis roller mills (dated 1897, see photo #7 of 25) are lined up along the east wall; both were used for the initial grinding of the wheat or rye. Also on this level are flour bins, a grain hopper, a cattle feed bin and sack filler. A platform scale, a milling platform and an electric attrition mill that was used for grinding cattle feed (see photo #6 of 25) completes the first level.

The basic function of the second floor included flour sifting and grain storage (see floor plan #2, Appendix A).² The main storage bins occupy the center of the building, while the bins along the south wall were used to feed the mills stones. Along the west wall is the original bolting machine³ or flour sifter (see photo #10 of 25). During the process, the meal would enter the center of the reel (the large drum that runs down the center of the machine). The reel, which is covered by a silkscreen material, slowly turned at about 35 RPM. The fine flour was sifted out and it flowed back down to the first floor. The middlings (the coarser particles of ground wheat) were not sifted out, flowed out the open end and were kept separate to be either re-ground or sold as cattle feed. Several smaller bolting machines are located on the second floor as well; each has different-sized screens that produced various grades of flour. The plansifter (see photo #9 of 25), or gravity separator, (located on the east side of the mill), provided the intermediate step in the milling process. It used a shaking action to separate the flour and middlings. The flour then entered one of the nearby bolters for the final sifting, and the middlings were sent back down to the rollers for further grinding. The machines on the south end of the mill were driven by a large vertical shaft that comes up from the basement. The machines on the north end were driven by a belt that runs from the basement up to an overhead pulley.

The third floor (see floor plan #3, Appendix A) contains additional sifting equipment, the drives for the elevators and the chutes that direct the grain to the storage bins. There is a bolting machine on the south end at the top of the stairs, while two, Geo. T. Smith "Middlings Purifiers" are located on the north end (see photo #11 of 25). The Smith devices are flour sifters that operate on a different principle than the bolters, as they used a flat sieve that vibrates. A fan on top would pull a small vacuum, causing the middlings to float. The fine flour was sifted out, while the light-weight bran and impurities would be drawn off by the air movement and then directed to a separate room for collection. The middlings were directed back down to the roller mills for the next step in grinding. The end result of this process was a high-grade pure flour that was very light (white) in color and was sold under the name, Alaska Patent Flour.

The basement level also contains a variety of machines and equipment (see floor plan #4, Appendix B). The water from the millrace entered through the west wall and pressure box, and was then directed to the turbine. A number of gears and shafts directed the power to the line shafts in the basement, and the vertical shafts directed power to the upper floors. The grain cleaner, suspended from the ceiling, is located under the in-floor hopper on the first floor. There are two large grain bins that were part of the cattle feed grinding process. Also in the basement are the "boots" or bottoms of the elevators. The grain and ground all fell to the basement before being elevated to the second and third floors. A corn cob crusher was later added (1907) and is located at the northeast corner. The original turbine is currently located underneath rubble of a collapsed, interior inner-stone wall in the basement level.

² Most of the text, in the following three paragraphs, which describes the milling process was taken verbatim from the "Messer/Mayer Mill: Richfield Historical Park, Richfield, Wisconsin" booklet. "Messer/Mayer Mill: Richfield Historical Park, Richfield, Wisconsin," Booklet prepared by Daniel Wittenberger for the Richfield Historical Society (2005), 4-11.

³ "Bolting" is a term used in its general application to designate the process of milling in which the ground meal is sifted or separated into various grades by a machine designed to accomplish this. Bolting is done by means of reels or sieves covered with wire or silk cloth with a mesh size that would reduce the finished flour to the desired grade, "Messer/Mayer Mill History," 20.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Messer-Mayer Mill

Section 7 Page 3

Town of Richfield, Washington County, WI

Farm House (Contributing, circa 1865; south wing addition, circa 1890):

The house (see photos #13-16 of 25) is sheathed with clapboard and rests on a raised fieldstone foundation. It is comprised of a circa 1865 front-gabled wing on the north and a circa 1890, front-gabled wing on the south end. The primary (east) facade of the circa 1865 wing carries a tripartite window on the first floor with two, one-over-one sashes along the second story; all are placed in raised wooden surrounds and accented with simple, vertical strip trim. Remaining windows on this wing are typically one-over-one, double-hung sashes and consist of two openings on the north elevation, while the rear (west) facade is comprised of a tripartite and single opening along the first level and two windows on the upper story. A brick chimney rises from the center of the wing's west elevation.

The southern, circa 1890 wing features a recessed porch with a decorative spindlework frieze, trim and balustrade on the primary (east) facade. Two doorways are located on the north and east walls of the porch, while a single, one-over-one, double-hung sash rests to the south. Remaining windows on this elevation are comprised of one-over-one, double-hung sashes with wooden surrounds; a single opening is located on the south end of the first level, while the upper story holds two windows. Vertical strip trim (like that of the north wing) accents the upper-story windows. Remaining windows consist of one-over-one, double-hung sashes. A brick chimney rises from the center of the wing's south elevation.

Regarding the interior of the home (see Appendix C), the first floor consists of a large kitchen with an original wood-burning cook stove (see photo #18 of 25) and built-in cabinetry (see photo #17 of 25), east and west pantries, a living room, front parlor, and a small bedroom to the north. The second floor consists of six bedrooms, three in the north portion of the house. A hallway at the top of the curved stair provides access to the three northern bedrooms. The three southern bedrooms are entered from a corridor that connects to the stair hallway.

Since achieving its circa 1890 appearance, the house has undergone little change. In 2006, a new cedar roof was installed, and a hand railing was added to the front porch steps. The chimneys have been relined and repaired and the front (kitchen) door was refinished. The interior was cleaned and walls repainted with authentic colors. A furnace was installed and the lights and outlets have been rewired and brought up to code. Finally, the north section of the upper-level, wide-pine wooden flooring has been sanded and refinished.

Summer Kitchen (Contributing, circa 1856)

A one-story, front-gabled summer kitchen extends from the southwest corner of the circa 1890 wing. It was believed to be free-standing and then "connected" after the circa 1890 addition. The kitchen is sheathed with clapboard and rests on a raised, fieldstone foundation (see photos #15 & #16 of 25). A set of wooden steps are located at the north end of the east elevation and lead to a wooden entrance, while a one-over-one window (covered by a multiple-pane storm) is located on both east and west facades.

Barn (Contributing, circa 1890: north addition, 1910):

Sheathed with board-and-batten siding, this side-gabled, bank barn rests on a fieldstone foundation and is located directly west of the house (see photo #19 of 25). The south end was constructed in circa 1890, while the northern two-thirds of the barn was added in 1910. The interior includes a variety of stalls for small farm animals.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 4

Messer-Mayer Mill
Town of Richfield, Washington County, WI

Wood Shed (Contributing, circa 1890):

A front-gabled, wood shed that is sheathed with drop siding is located south of the house (see photo #20 of 25). This structure was utilized for firewood for the cook stove and main heater. A pigeon coop is located at the peak of the structure.

Smoke House (Contributing, circa 1890):

A gabled, one-story, horizontal board-sheathed smoke house is located directly south of the woodshed (see photo #20 of 25).

Hand Water Pump (Contributing, circa 1890):

A hand-dug water well and hand pump are located directly north of the wood shed (see photos #14 & #20 of 25).

Outhouse (Contributing, circa 1890):

A small, wooden outhouse stands to the south of the barn (see photo #21 of 25).

Mill Pond Site (Contributing, 1856):

The site of the mill pond (see photo #23 of 25) is located to the northwest of the mill structure, along the west side of the entrance. Although the original mill pond remains extant, it was originally a shallow bed of water and has now been grown over with soft wood trees and marsh grasses.

Mill Race (Contributing, 1856):

The original path of the mill race was formed in 1856 (see photo #25 of 25). It begins on the west side of the property, north of the mill house and extends to the southeast and beyond the mill structure.

Mill Pond Dam (Contributing, 1923):

The concrete dam is located on the west side of the property and was constructed in 1923 (see photo #24 of 25).

Pig Barn Ruins (Contributing, circa 1890):

The stone foundation of the former pig barn is located to the southwest of the barn. The foundation is currently covered with overgrown weeds and grasses, and is currently not visible (see sketch map for location).

Sawmill Ruins (Contributing, 1856):

A portion of the sawmill's original stone foundation remains and is located directly southeast of the grist mill (see photo #2 of 25).

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 5

Messer-Mayer Mill
Town of Richfield, Washington County, WI

Engine Shed Ruins (Contributing, 1895):

The wooden ruins of the original engine shed are located directly south of the grist mill (see photo #8 of 25).

Horse Shed (Non-Contributing, 2002):

A one-story, side-gabled, vertical board-sheathed open horse shed has been constructed in the approximate location of an earlier horse shed. It is located northwest of the mill structure (see photo #22 of 25).

Signage (Non-Contributing, Modern):

Two modern, wooden signs are located directly northwest of the mill structure (see photo #1 of 25). One is a sandblasted sign with historical information on the mill property, while the other is for changing displays. The signs are topped by small roof structures.

Historical records indicate a buggy shed was once located directly north of the outhouse; however, no above or below ground evidence traces remain. Therefore, it is not included in the resource count because there is not enough information to determine where this structure was originally located or how long this building stood.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 1

Messer-Mayer Mill
Town of Richfield, Washington County, WI

SUMMARY PARAGRAPH:

The Messer-Mayer Mill is nominated for the National Register of Historic Places under both Criterion A: Industry and Criterion C: Architecture. Regarding Criterion A, the subject mill stands as a testament to the importance of industry in the rural community of Richfield. Milling facilities were generally one of the first industrial endeavors in a fledgling community and provided an anchor around which additional commercial growth took place. The property first boasted a sawmill (no longer extant) in 1856, while the subject grist mill was added between 1871 and 1873. Despite the reported decline of the wheat industry, the Messer-Mayer Mill produced flour into the 1930s and was the only grist mill in the Town of Richfield between 1879 and (at least) 1925. In addition, a cattle feed grinding business operated out of the grist mill from the late 1890s until 1954. In regards to Criterion C, the subject structure is a fine, rural example of a frame-constructed, mill building with clapboard sheathing. The mill property is significant as a property type – a mill complex consisting of the primary industrial building, the mill, with its associated support resources. Despite the termination of grist milling in the 1930s and the cattle feed business in 1954, the mill retains its original equipment, which dates from 1873 to the early twentieth century. The original mill pond, the path of the mill race and the remains of a 1923 dam are also extant. The property also includes an intact late-nineteenth-century residence and a number of outbuildings, all of which were constructed by the early mill owners, the Messer and Mayer families.

HISTORY:

Located in the Town of Richfield (current population estimated at 11,336), the Messer/Mayer Mill is located in southeast Washington County approximately fifteen miles southwest of the City of West Bend (the Washington County seat) and seventeen miles northwest of the City of Milwaukee. Incorporated in 1846, Richfield was an agricultural area that gradually evolved from grain to dairy production. Early settlers in the town were typically of German descent, including some Irish and English immigrants. The first major influx of German immigrants to Richfield Township occurred in the 1840s. Many of these early settlers left Germany to seek economic relief or to escape from religious or political rule. Taking advantage of the abundant, cheaper land in Wisconsin, significant numbers of German families would locate to this area and form their own pockets of settlement. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Washington County became a popular destination for German immigrants, including the family of Johann (John) Messer.⁴

Johann (John) Messer was born on 26 October 1805, in Schwabsburg, Hess, Germany. On 16 November 1834, he married Miss Katharina Charlotte Mayer; together they had four children, George Philip, Andrew, Justina, and John Jr. Messer moved his family to Wisconsin in 1846, at which time he purchased 120 acres in the Town of Richfield, Washington County. The land was located directly east of what would be established in the 1860s as the crossroads community of Baer's Corner.⁵ By 1851, additional family from Germany followed the Messers to Wisconsin, including Katharina's brother, Johann George Mayer, and his wife Julianne, who settled near the Town of Polk, Washington County. Messer's property included vast forestland and Coney Creek. As a result of the abundant resources and the demand for sawn timber, he was prompted to construct a sawmill (no longer extant) in 1856.⁶

⁴ *A History of Washington and Ozaukee Counties, Wisconsin* (Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1881) 459-461; Barb Nelson and Margaret Holzbog, *Richfield Remembers the Past* (Richfield, WI: Richfield Historical Society, 1996) 17-22; Barbara Wyatt, ed., *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*, 3 Vols. (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Historic Preservation Division, 1986), Vol. 1, Settlement, 2/3.

⁵ Baer's Corners later became known as Pleasant Hill. Today the former crossroads community includes a handful of buildings with no support services and a tavern.

⁶ Nelson and Holzbog, *Richfield Remembers the Past*, 43-44; "Messer/Mayer Mill," 1.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Messer-Mayer Mill
Town of Richfield, Washington County, WI

Section 8 Page 2

Established by Messer as the Messer Mill in 1856, the subject property initially included a sawmill (only foundation ruins remain) that contained a "mulley up and down saw," which left a unique saw pattern on the lumber it produced. Water power for the mill was supplied by Coney Creek, which flowed along the west side of Messer's property and upon which he built a wooden dam (no longer extant). A few years later, in 1869, Johann sold twenty-seven acres and the mill to his son, Andrew, and wife Louisa (nee Guenther) for \$1,000. By this time, Andrew had constructed a home (the north half) on the subject property.⁷

Andrew Messer operated the mill site for only approximately five years, for he passed away at the early age of thirty-five. His death was reportedly due to "an accident with a horse." Two years later, the twenty-seven acres and both mills were sold to Andrew's uncle (his mother Katharina's brother), Johann George Mayer. Although Mayer did indeed own the mill property, it is unclear if he actually ran the mills himself. By 1880, the mill site was under the supervision of Mayer's son, Karl (Charles) Wilhelm Mayer (most often referred to as C.W.), who later purchased the facility from his father in 1885. Born on 13 October 1855, C.W. Mayer married Miss Mary Anna Kurtz in 1887, and together they had seven children that they raised in the home on the mill property. It was during C.W.'s ownership of the property that the southern addition on the house was completed (circa 1890). It is likely that the other outbuildings--including the barn, woodshed, smoke house and outhouse--were also constructed during/at this time. After that, the mill was known as the "Richfield Roller Mill(s)" or the "C.W. Mayer Richfield Roller Mills."⁸

In 1895, the mill pond level was low and, as a result, milling operations were negatively affected. Wheat cropping was on the decline in the 1880s, and farmers gradually turned to dairy farming. In December of 1899, C.W. installed a 6-roll feed roller to grind corn and oats for cattle feed. The grist mill maintained steady production and, in November of 1901, Mayer set a production record of 45 barrels of flour in just eleven hours. To expand on his cattle feed grinding business, C.W. added a corn cob crusher in 1907. In 1913, a concrete dam replaced the earlier wooden structure; however, it failed in 1923 and was again replaced with the existing dam structure.⁹

C.W. Mayer passed away on 17 March 1917 and, his two sons, George and Charles Milton, took over the mill operations. George ran the grist mill while Charles Milton was responsible for the sawmill. In December of 1927, the mill was equipped with electricity and a new electric-powered attrition (burr) mill was installed to grind cattle feed. In 1930, Charles Milton sold his interest in the family business to George. George continued the milling operations and remained at the mill house with his wife, Martha Anna Margaret (Maurer); together they raised a son, Vernon, and a daughter, Carol.¹⁰

Moving into the 1930s, flour milling was also on the decline and such operations ended at the subject mill. In 1951, the sawmill collapsed and, despite the termination of both the sawmill and grist mill operations, George continued cattle feed grinding until 1954. George and his wife remained at the mill house until Martha died in 1969 and George passed away in 1973.¹¹

⁷ "Messer/Mayer Mill," 1-3, 16-17; "Messer/Mayer Mill History," 5.

⁸ Nelson and Holzbog, *Richfield Remembers the Past*, 384; "Messer/Mayer Mill," 17-18; Newsbrief (re: Mr. C.W. Mayer marries Miss Mary Kurtz), *Hartford (WI) Press*, 21 October 1887, 3/5.

⁹ "Messer/Mayer Mill," 4.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 3, 4, 18-19; C.W. Mayer, Obituary, *The West Bend (WI) Pilot*, 23 March 1917, 10/2.

¹¹ "Messer/Mayer Mill," 4, 18-19.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Messer-Mayer Mill

Town of Richfield, Washington County, WI

Section 8 Page 3

In 1974, the property was sold to the Gibson family of Milwaukee. The family never utilized the property and it stood untouched (except for occasional vandalism) for over twenty years. In 1998, the Town of Richfield bought the land. The mill exterior was restored and two of the roller mills have been repaired. The other farm buildings have been maintained, while the interior of the house was thoroughly cleaned and rooms have been painted with colors original to the house. Since 1999, the Richfield Historical Society (RHS) has donated countless hours to the restoration of the mill property. The RHS plans to reconstruct the pig barn, buggy shed, engine shed and sawmill, as well as fully restore a garden and orchard that were originally located south of the house. The society hosts an annual "Thresheree" in September and, in 2006, began to offer mill/house tours on select dates during the summer. Also in 2006, the society will celebrate the mill property's 150th anniversary (with the start of the sawmill in 1856) as well as the 135th anniversary of the construction of the grist mill (1871). The subject mill property is now part of the Richfield Historical Park.

AREA OF SIGNIFICANCE: INDUSTRY; MILLING & MILLING TECHNOLOGY

Milling properties of all kinds were crucial to the economic development of early communities. Once a mill was established, it triggered settlement to the adjacent area. In Wisconsin, sawmills were more prevalent than grist mills at the time of statehood in 1848. In 1840, there were only twenty-nine flouring mills in operation. However, into the later part of the nineteenth century, sawmills were on the decline and grist mills became the leading industry in Wisconsin between 1845 and 1875. The number of flouring mills peaked to 705 by 1880. Following the state's overall decline in wheat production, the number of functioning flour mills in 1910 had dropped below 100. Some millers took up grinding cattle feed to make up for the loss of income. Between June 1879 and May 1880, the subject complex boasted an estimated maximum capacity of 250 bushels of wheat per day; for the entire year, the mill produced 500 barrels of wheat flour, 1,000 barrels of rye flour and 1,000 pounds of buck-wheat flour, as well as 67,600 pounds of cornmeal and 189,800 pounds of feed. Despite the reported decline in wheat production, the Richfield Messer-Mayer milling facility produced flour until the 1930s and was the only grist mill in Richfield between 1879 and (at least) 1925. In addition, the structure experienced over seventy years of prosperity as a feed mill and continued to contribute to the community's local economy until 1954.¹²

Furthermore, in order to maintain and increase production levels, the Messer-Mayer Mill was consistent with milling technology. Andrew Messer erected the subject flour/grist mill between 1871 and 1873. At that time, smaller, rural mill sites typically utilized local resources for their "run" of stone; however, milling equipment companies in Milwaukee offered more progressive materials. One such company was the Edward P. Allis Company, which was established by Edward Phelps Allis after the Civil War. The company produced steam engines and a variety of milling equipment, including milling stone made of a special "buhr" stone that was imported from France. Andrew Messer chose the E.P. Allis Company for his millstone and installed one "run" or set of the French buhr stone equipment. Originally, located along the south wall of the mill's first floor, this set included an upper, rotating block that was directly above (but not touching) the lower, fixed block, which produced a "low" grinding process that broke down the wheat kernel. To make use of the already established mill race, a seventeen-and-one-half-inch, Leffel water turbine (constructed by James Leffel & Co. of Ohio¹³) was installed

¹² United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census., *Tenth Federal Census of the United States, 1880* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1880), Microfilm copy; Wyatt, ed., *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*, Vol. 2, Industry, 8/1-2,4, 6; *Wisconsin State Gazetteer and Business Directory* (various publishers, 1879-1925).

¹³ Started in 1862 by James Leffel. James Leffel and Co. continues to manufacture turbines in Ohio. The subject turbine was shipped to Andrew Messer through the E.P. Allis Company of Milwaukee, "Messer/Mayer Mill History," 9-10.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Messer-Mayer Mill

Section 8 Page 4

Town of Richfield, Washington County, WI

in the mill. The turbine consumed 4,340 gallons of water per minute and generated a 25 horsepower to operate the grist mill (See Section 7 for full mill machinery description).¹⁴

Under C.W.'s ownership, the mill equipment was constantly being updated and the original turbine was replaced three times (in 1880, 1908 and in 1924). In 1893, four "stands" (sets) of "double roller" "noiseless belt" roller mills--designed by W.D. Grays and manufactured by the E. P. Allis Company--were installed in the mill. In November of 1895, C.W. added a gas engine (no longer extant) to power the mill. Shortly after, the engine failed and a replacement engine was installed. The replacement engine failed, and it was not until 1897 that a reliable 35-horsepower engine was installed and in operation. Moving into the twentieth century, the mill was electrified in 1927, and an electric attrition was added to the first floor of the mill.¹⁵

The interior of the Messer-Mayer mill retains its original wheat and cattle feed milling machinery (see Section 7 for full mill machinery description). As most early milling facilities have been stripped of their equipment, the interior of the mill clearly depicts the evolution of a small town milling facility. The original, 1873 E.P. Allis French buhr mill stone, the 1893 E. P. Allis Roller mills, and 1927 electric attrition motor all remain in place. In addition, the second and third floors have retained the original plansifter and the Geo. T. Smith Middlings Purifiers, as well as numerous bolting machines that were continuously added to increase production as the mill transitioned from wheat production to cattle feed.

AREA OF SIGNIFICANCE: ARCHITECTURE

Generally regarded as astylistic utilitarian structures, the earliest milling facilities were largely of frame construction, while later examples typically utilized local materials such as quarried stone for at least their foundation levels. The subject mill building was constructed between 1871 and 1873, and is a fine example of early mill design with clapboard sheathing. Although the mill pond is overgrown, the original path of the mill race, as well as the remains of the 1923 concrete dam (on Coney Creek), remain extant. The additional contributing buildings on the property include a farmhouse, a woodshed, smokehouse, bank barn and an outhouse. Although these buildings are not of individual architectural distinction, they are all intact and contribute to our understanding of the setting, design and function of a milling facility.

Although milling facilities continue to dot the landscape, many are in poor condition, while others have been moved from their original site. Both factors affect the integrity of milling facilities and are illustrated in the National Register Nomination prepared for the "19th Century Grist and Flouring Mills of Sheboygan County." Of the twenty-six mills known to have existed throughout Sheboygan County, only eleven of them retained enough historic integrity to be included in the 1984 thematic nomination; however, as of 2006, only four of the mills remain extant. Indeed, the Richfield mill--which retains integrity of both its interior and exterior--shares the same integrity as the Sheboygan County mills. In addition, the

¹⁴ "Messer/Mayer Mill," 1-3, 16-17; Wyatt, ed., *Cultural Resources Management*, Vol. 2, Industry, 8/2.; "Edward P. Allis Biography" as quoted from the *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York: Scribner, 1958), 219-220. Accessed online at: www.rootsweb.com/~nyccazen/Biographies/AllisEdwardP.html, on 12 May 2006.

¹⁵ "Messer/Mayer Mill History," 10, 17, 19.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 5

Messer-Mayer Mill
Town of Richfield, Washington County, WI

mill property still exhibits the original path of the mill race and the 1923 dam, as well as the original miller's house and various outbuildings, all of which are intact. All of these buildings combined provide for an intact property that exhibits a sense of time and place which represents a nineteenth-century milling property.¹⁶

SUMMARY:

The Messer-Mayer Mill property is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A: Industry for its association with the early milling industry of Wisconsin. In addition, the mill is an excellent example of a late nineteenth century grist mill structure that retains its original machinery and its associated buildings and, therefore, is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C: Architecture.

¹⁶ "19th Century Grist and Flouring Mills of Sheboygan County," National Register Nomination prepared by Miriam Rowe (10 January 1984). Copy on file at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Historic Preservation Division, Madison, WI.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 1

Messer-Mayer Mill
Town of Richfield, Washington County, WI

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Messer-Mayer Mill
Town of Richfield, Washington County, WI

Section 9 Page 2

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 10 Page 1

Messer-Mayer Mill
Town of Richfield, Washington County, WI

Verbal Boundary Description:

The general area is irregularly shaped. Beginning at the northwest corner, where the mill pond nears Pleasant Hill Road, the boundary follows 508 feet east to the western edge of the mill property's driveway and continues south 757 feet along the eastern edge of the property to a point where it turns in an easterly direction, and continues 461 feet. The line then turns southeasterly 399 feet and again turns westerly 818 feet, and then returns north 1,138 feet to the point of beginning. The boundary is indicated on the attached site map.

Boundary Justification:

The historic boundary coincides with the current property lines along the north, east and west boundaries. The eastern half of the southern boundary also follows the current property line, while western half was drawn to exclude extra acreage on the mill property that did not contribute to the property's significance.

Archaeological Statement:

The extant above-ground ruins suggest that the Messer-Mayer Mill property may have potential for eligibility under Criterion D as an industrial archaeological resource. The above-ground ruins on the subject property include the stone sawmill foundation, the wooden engine house remains and the stone pig barn foundation. A buggy shed was also located on the property, directly north of the outhouse (see sketch map for locations).

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Messer-Mayer Mill
Town of Richfield, Washington County, WI

Section photos Page 1

PHOTOGRAPHS:

MESSER-MAYER MILL (General view including mill, reconstructed horse shed and signage)
Richfield, Washington County, WI
Photo by Quint Mueller
May 2006
Negatives located at the Wisconsin Historical Society
View to Southeast
Photo #1 of 25

MESSER-MAYER MILL (General view, including mill, house and outbuildings)
Richfield, Washington County, WI
Photo by Quint Mueller
May 2006
Negatives located at the Wisconsin Historical Society
View to Northwest
Photo #2 of 25

MESSER-MAYER MILL (General view, house and outbuildings)
Richfield, Washington County, WI
Photo by Quint Mueller
May 2006
Negatives located at the Wisconsin Historical Society
View to Northeast
Photo #3 of 25

MESSER-MAYER MILL (Mill, north and east elevations)
Richfield, Washington County, WI
Photo by Quint Mueller
May 2006
Negatives located at the Wisconsin Historical Society
View to Southwest
Photo # 4 of 25

MESSER-MAYER MILL (Mill, west and south elevations)
Richfield, Washington County, WI
Photo by Quint Mueller
May 2006
Negatives located at the Wisconsin Historical Society
View to Northeast
Photo # 5 of 25

MESSER-MAYER MILL (Mill, interior 1st floor, electric attrition)
Richfield, Washington County, WI
Photo by Quint Mueller
May 2006
Negatives located at the Wisconsin Historical Society
View to Southeast
Photo #6 of 25

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Messer-Mayer Mill
Town of Richfield, Washington County, WI

Section photos Page 2

MESSER-MAYER MILL (Mill, interior 1st floor, three E.P. Allis Roller Mills)
Richfield, Washington County, WI
Photo by Quint Mueller
May 2006
Negatives located at the Wisconsin Historical Society
View to East
Photo #7 of 25

MESSER-MAYER MILL (Mill, interior 1st floor, E.P. Allis grinding stone)
Richfield, Washington County, WI
Photo by Quint Mueller
May 2006
Negatives located at the Wisconsin Historical Society
View to Northeast
Photo #8 of 25

MESSER-MAYER MILL (Mill, interior 2nd floor, Plansifter)
Richfield, Washington County, WI
Photo by Quint Mueller
May 2006
Negatives located at the Wisconsin Historical Society
View to Northeast
Photo #9 of 25

MESSER-MAYER MILL (Mill, interior 2nd floor, Bolting machine)
Richfield, Washington County, WI
Photo by Quint Mueller
May 2006
Negatives located at the Wisconsin Historical Society
View to Southwest
Photo # 10 of 25

MESSER-MAYER MILL (Mill, interior, 3rd floor, middling purifiers)
Richfield, Washington County, WI
Photo by Quint Mueller
May 2006
Negatives located at the Wisconsin Historical Society
View to North
Photo # 11 of 25

MESSER-MAYER MILL (Mill; interior basement, Cattle feed bin)
Richfield, Washington County, WI
Photo by Quint Mueller
May 2006
Negatives located at the Wisconsin Historical Society
View to Southeast
Photo #12 of 25

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Messer-Mayer Mill
Town of Richfield, Washington County, WI

Section photos Page 3

MESSER-MAYER MILL (House, north and east elevations)
Richfield, Washington County, WI
Photo by Quint Mueller
May 2006
Negatives located at the Wisconsin Historical Society
View to Southwest
Photo #13 of 25

MESSER-MAYER MILL (House, east elevation)
Richfield, Washington County, WI
Photo by Dan Wittenberger
November 2005
View to West
Photo #14 of 25

MESSER-MAYER MILL (House, south elevation)
Richfield, Washington County, WI
Photo by Dan Wittenberger
November 2005
View to North
Photo #15 of 25

MESSER-MAYER MILL (House, west elevation)
Richfield, Washington County, WI
Photo by Dan Wittenberger
November 2005
View to East
Photo # 16 of 25

MESSER-MAYER MILL (House, interior first floor kitchen, original built-in cabinet and doorways)
Richfield, Washington County, WI
Photo by Quint Mueller
May 2006
View to West
Photo #17 of 25

MESSER-MAYER MILL (House, interior first floor kitchen)
Richfield, Washington County, WI
Photo by Quint Mueller
May 2006
View to South
Photo #18 of 25

MESSER-MAYER MILL (Barn, eastern elevation)
Richfield, Washington County, WI
Photo by Dan Wittenberger
November 2005
View to West
Photo #19 of 25

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section photos Page 4

Messer-Mayer Mill
Town of Richfield, Washington County, WI

MESSER-MAYER MILL (Wood Shed & Smoke House, west elevation)
Richfield, Washington County, WI
Photo by Dan Wittenberger
November 2005
View to East
Photo # 20 of 25

MESSER-MAYER MILL (Outhouse)
Richfield, Washington County, WI
Photo by Dan Wittenberger
November 2005
View to Northwest
Photo #21 of 25

MESSER-MAYER MILL (Horse Shed)
Richfield, Washington County, WI
Photo by Dan Wittenberger
November 2005
View to Northwest
Photo #22 of 25

MESSER-MAYER MILL (Mill Pond)
Richfield, Washington County, WI
Photo by Quint Mueller
May 2006
View to Southwest
Photo #23 of 25

MESSER-MAYER MILL (Concrete Dam)
Richfield, Washington County, WI
Photo by Dan Wittenberger
November 2005
View to South (Check)
Photo # 24 of 25

MESSER-MAYER MILL (Path of original Mill Race and Mill)
Richfield, Washington County, WI
Photo by Dan Wittenberger
November 2005
View to Southeast
Photo #25 of 25

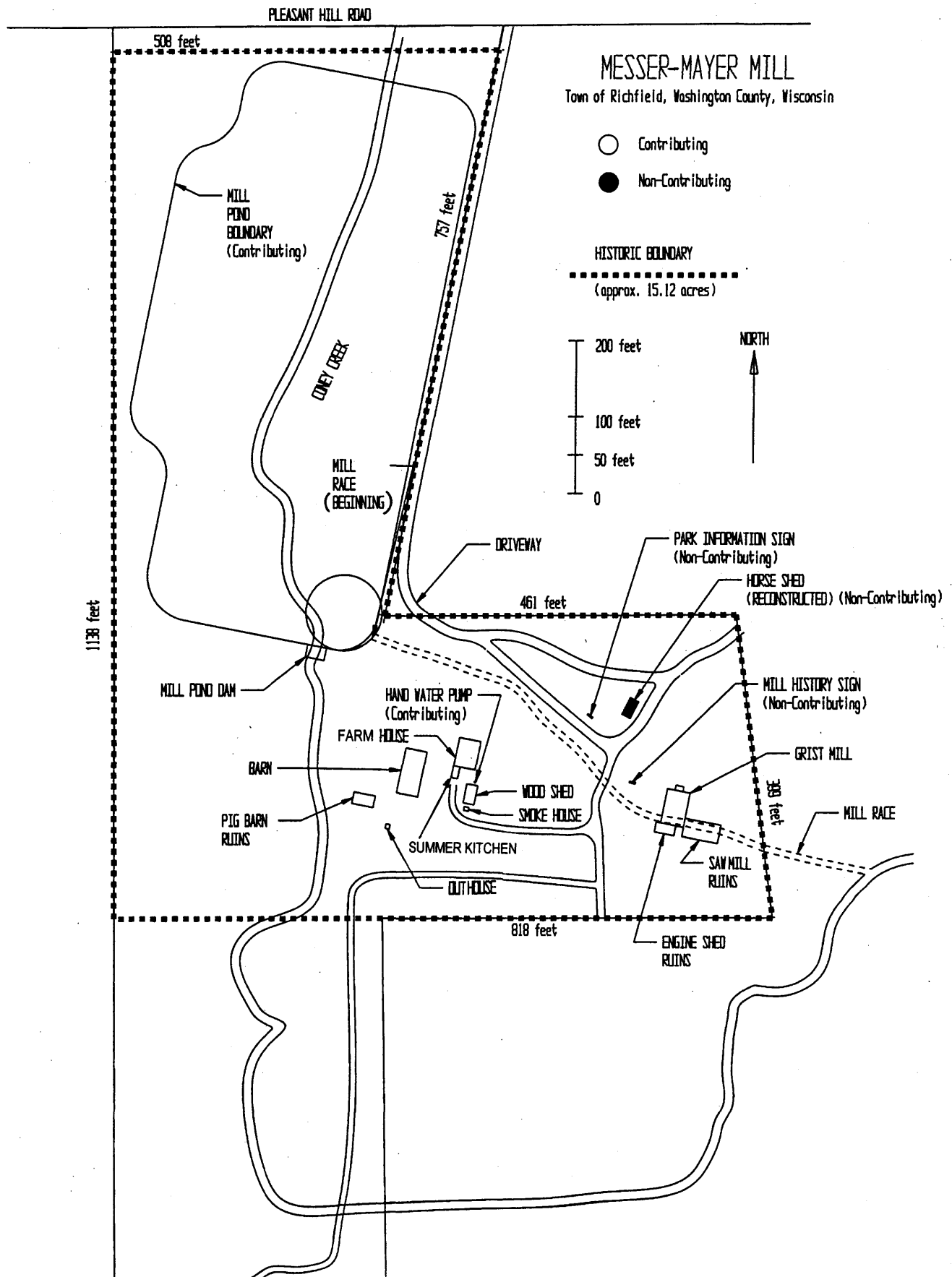
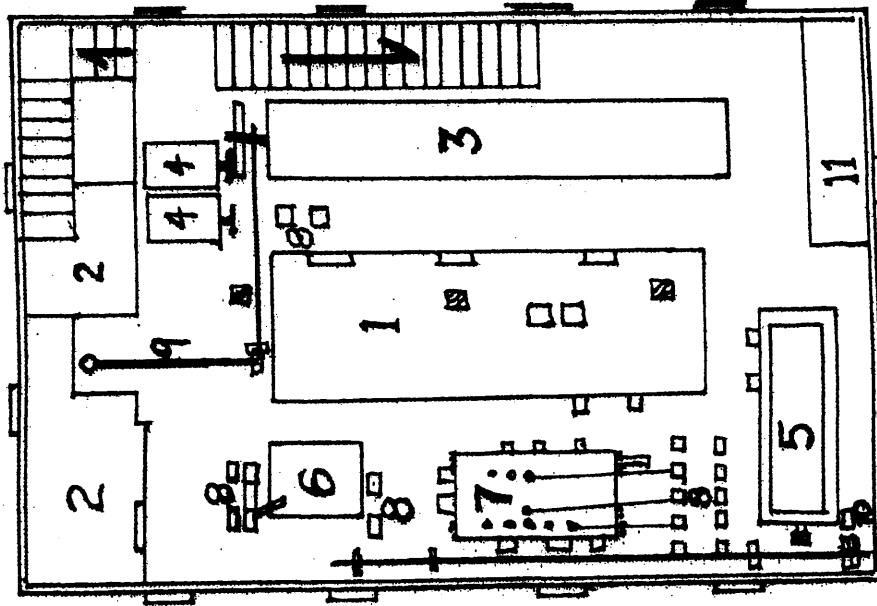


Figure 1: Messer-Mayer Mill
Town of Richfield
Washington County, Wisconsin

2.

Second Floor Mill Plan

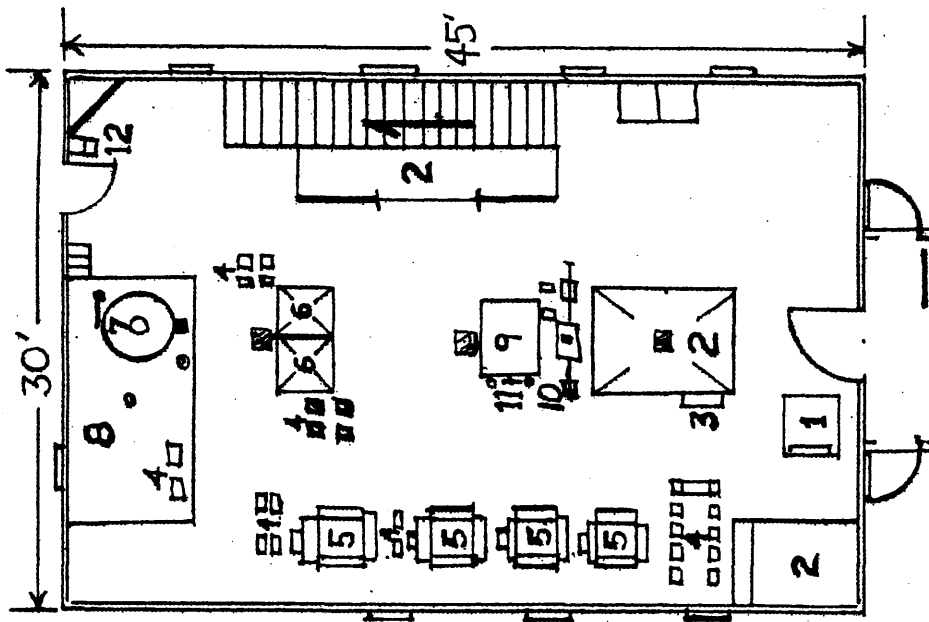


- Second Floor**
1. Main grain bins
 2. Grain bins for feeding stones
 3. Original bolting machine
 4. Bolters suspended from ceiling
 5. Bolters stacked two high
 6. Centrifugal reel boiler
 7. Planifier or gravity separator
 8. Elevator legs
 9. Line shaft
 10. Line shaft
 11. Work bench

N
↓
Not to Scale

1.

First Floor Mill Plan



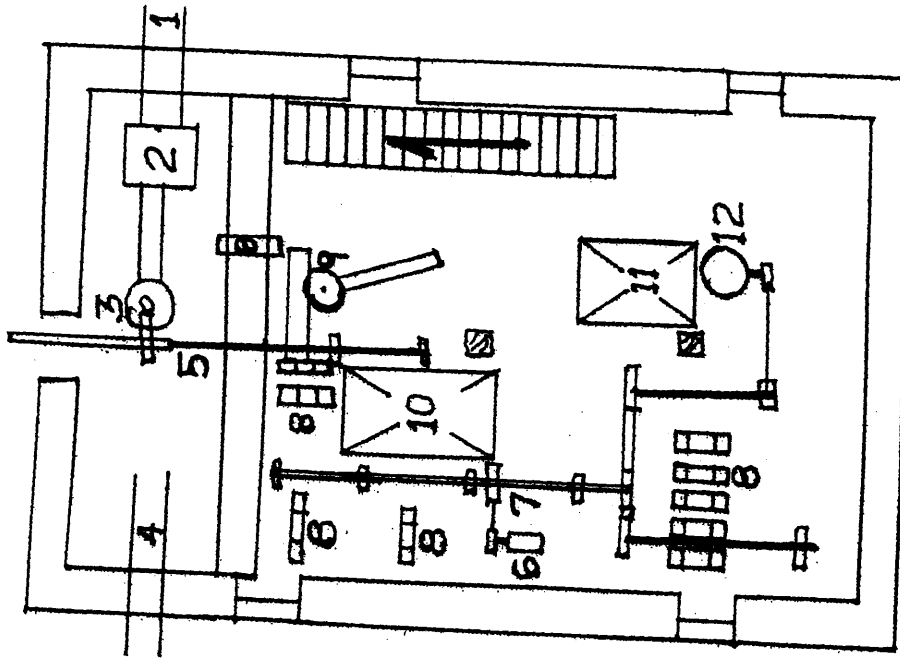
- First Floor**
1. Platform scale
 2. Flour bins
 3. Front office desk
 4. Elevator legs
 5. Edward Allis roller mills
 6. In-floor grain hopper
 7. Edward Allis mill stone
 8. Milling platform
 9. Cattle feed bin
 10. Electric attrition mill
 11. Cattle feed sack filler
 12. Rear office

Figure 2: Messer-Mayer Mill
Town of Richfield
Washington County, Wisconsin

Appendix A

4.

Basement Floor Plan



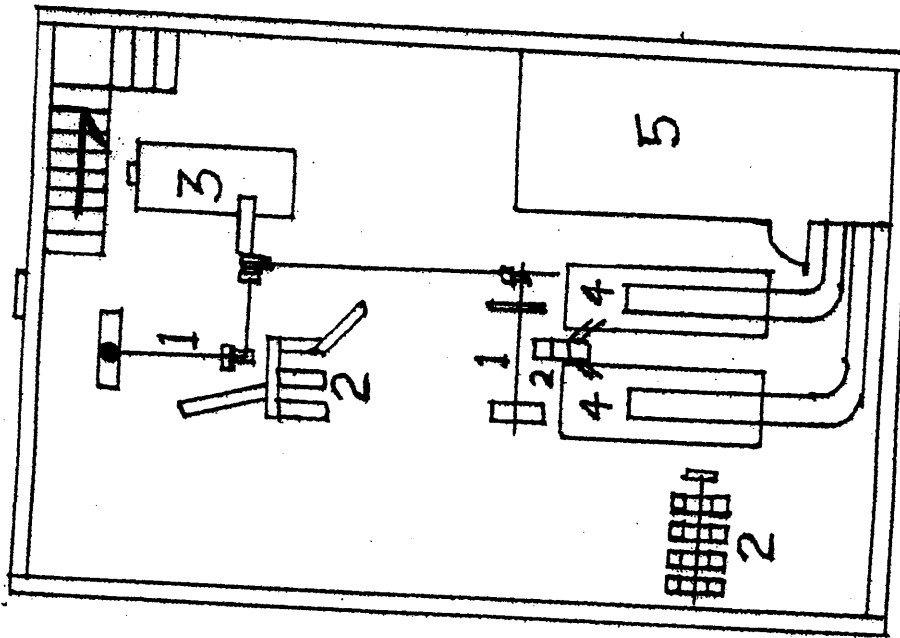
Basement

- 1. Water from millpond
- 2. Pressure box
- 3. Leftel water powered turbine
- 4. Water exit
- 5. Gear reduction and line shaft
- 6. Electric motor

- 7. North end line shaft
- 8. Elevator boots
- 9. Grain cleaner
- 10. Cattle feed grain storage bin
- 11. Cattle feed grain storage bin
- 12. Corn cob crusher

3.

Third Floor Mill Plan



Third floor

- 1. Line shaft
- 2. Top of elevator shaft and chutes
- 3. Bolting machine
- 4. Geo. T. Smith Middlings Purifier
- 5. Dust collection room

Figure 3: Messer-Mayer Mill
Town of Richfield
Washington County, Wisconsin

Appendix B



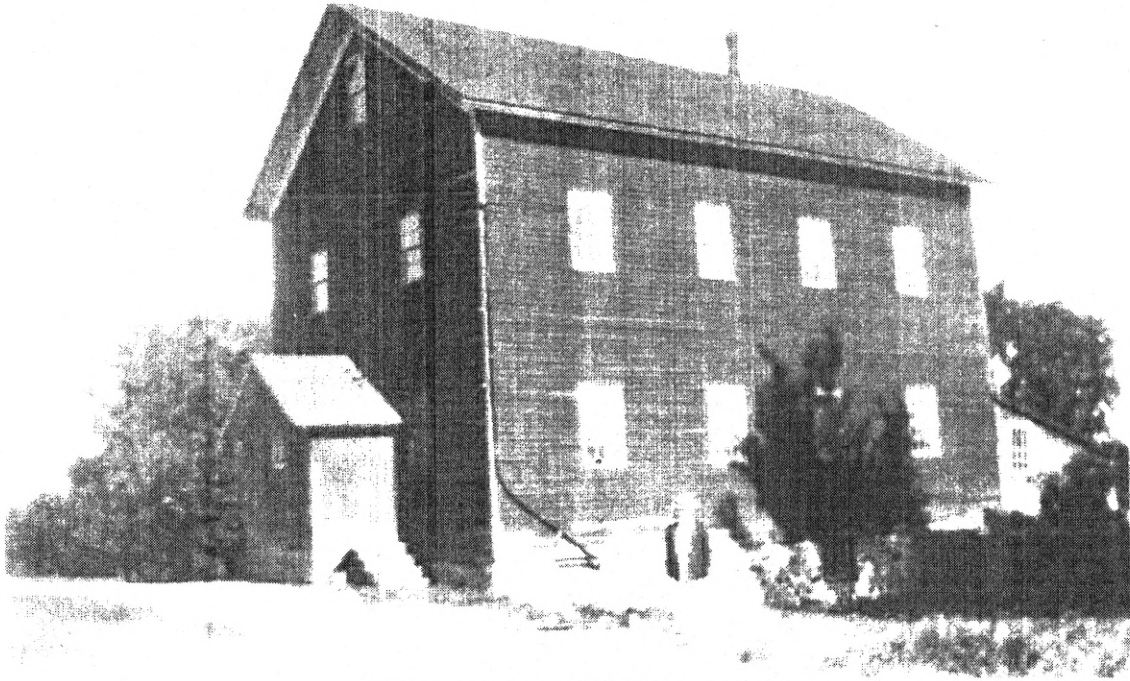
1. Messer/Mayer Mill Circa 1912



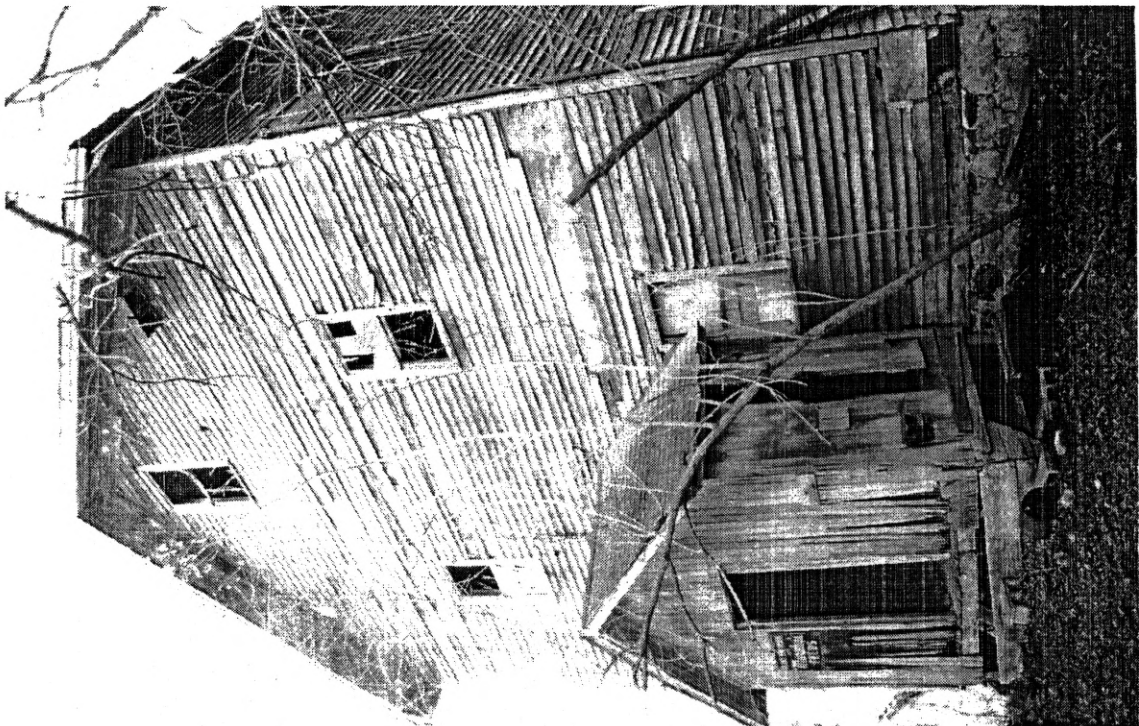
2. Messer/Mayer Mill Circa 1910

Figure 4: Messer-Mayer Mill
Town of Richfield
Washington County, Wisconsin

Appendix B



3. Messer/Mayer Mill Circa 1927



4. Messer/Mayer Mill Circa 1980

Figure 5: Messer-Mayer Mill
Town of Richfield
Washington County, Wisconsin

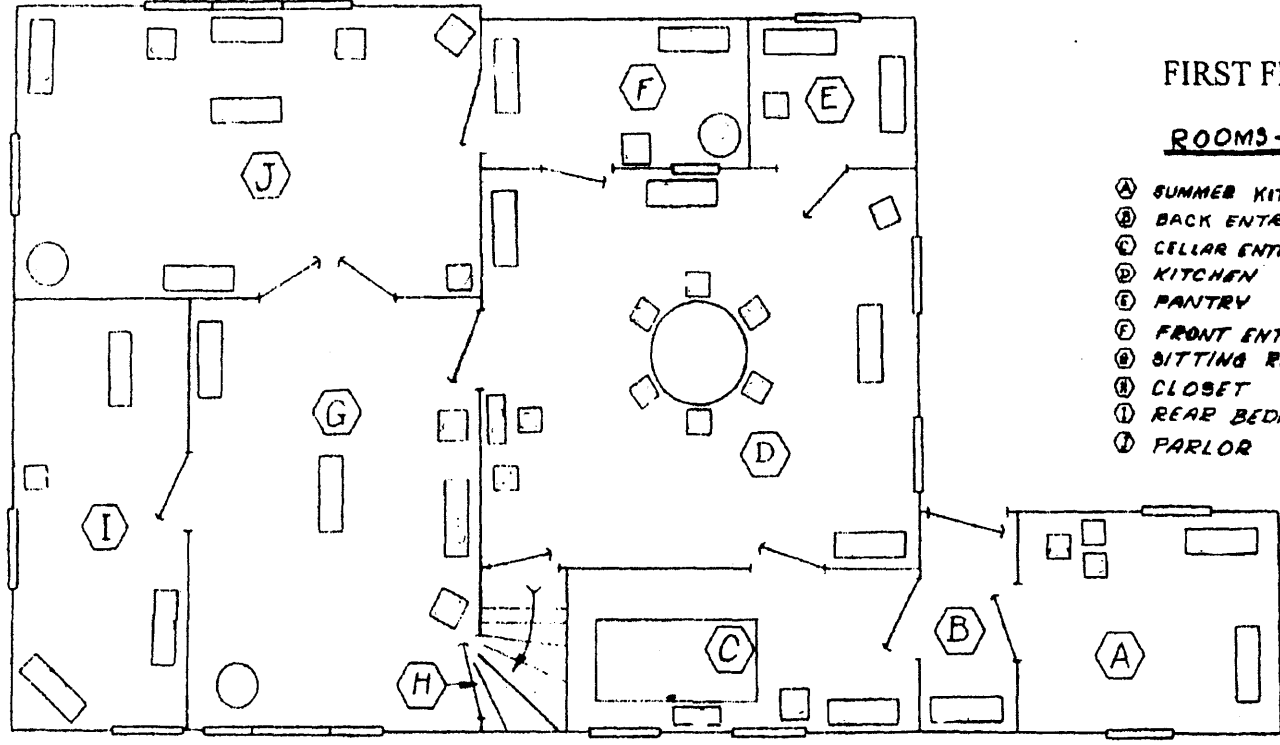
Appendix B



5. Messer/Mayer Mill Circa 2000

Figure 6: Messer-Mayer Mill
Town of Richfield
Washington County, Wisconsin

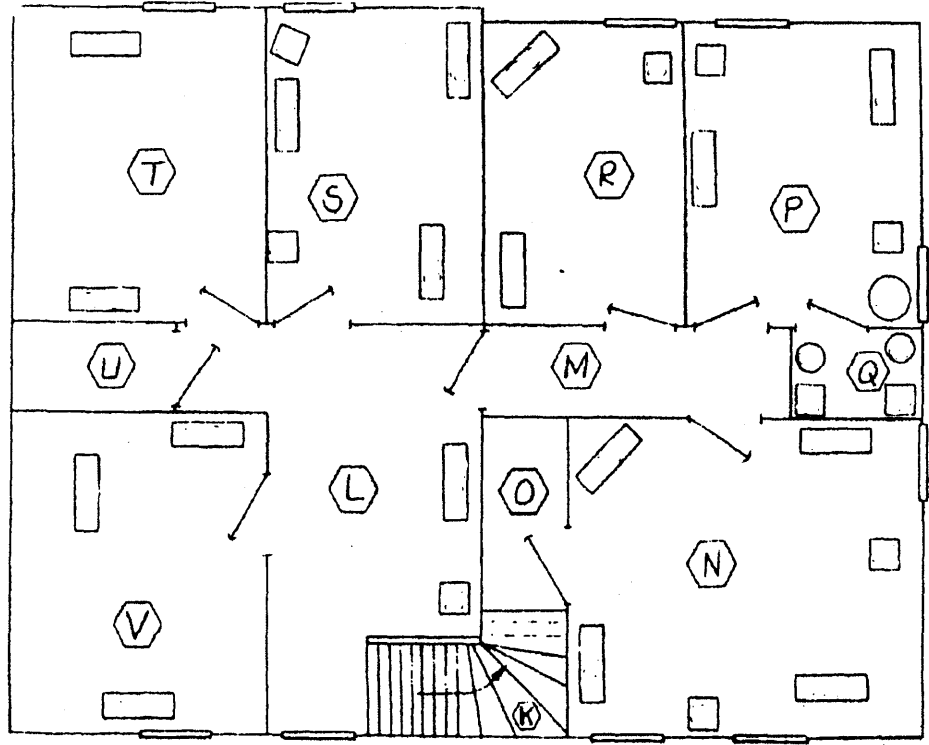
Appendix C: Mill House Floor Plans



FIRST FLOOR

ROOMS - 1ST FLOOR

- Ⓐ SUMMER KITCHEN
- Ⓑ BACK ENTRY
- Ⓒ CELLAR ENTRY/UTILITY ROOM
- Ⓓ KITCHEN
- Ⓔ PANTRY
- Ⓕ FRONT ENTRY/PORCH
- Ⓖ SITTING ROOM
- Ⓗ CLOSET
- Ⓘ REAR BEDROOM
- Ⓝ PARLOR



SECOND FLOOR

ROOMS - 2ND FLOOR

- Ⓚ STAIRS
- Ⓛ UPPER HALL/LIBRARY
- Ⓜ HALLWAY
- Ⓝ MASTER BEDROOM
- Ⓞ CLOSET-CLOTHING
- Ⓟ GUEST BEDROOM
- Ⓠ CLOSET (USED AS WASHROOM)
- Ⓡ BEDROOM
- Ⓢ BEDROOM
- Ⓣ BEDROOM-N.E.
- Ⓤ CLOSET-SEASONAL CLOTHS
- Ⓡ BEDROOM-N.W.



N

Not to Scale

Figure 7: Messer-Mayer Mill
Town of Richfield
Washington County, Wisconsin