

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received **DEC 27 1982**
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Meek's Flour Mill

and/or common Bonaparte Retreat Restaurant

2. Location

street & number First Street ~~Street~~ _____ not for publication

city, town Bonaparte _____ vicinity of

state Iowa code 19 county Van Buren code 177

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 type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" 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	<i>n/a</i> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	_____ being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Ben and Rose Hendricks

street & number First Street, c/o Bonaparte Retreat Restaurant

city, town Bonaparte _____ vicinity of state Iowa 52620

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Van Buren County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Keosauqua _____ state Iowa 52565

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title *n/a* has this property been determined eligible? yes no

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input 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

Meek's Flour Mill (1878) is a well-preserved and very fine example of a water-powered flour/grist mill once commonly associated with riverside towns throughout much of Iowa during the 19th and early 20th Centuries.

The original mill on this site was erected in 1844, the present replacement structure dating from 1878, apparently built along similar lines and scale as the earlier structure. The three-story gable roofed mill is of rectangular plan (40' by 50') and is built upon a raised basement foundation of ashlar limestone blocks. The window cuts in the foundation are capped with segmental brick arches which are recessed into the brick facade above the foundation line. Windows in the main facade are lined up vertically with basement windows, and similarly have segmental brick arches and stone sills. Sash is 6/6. Fenestration is symmetrical on the four sides, with two side doors being located on the first floor on the north face, a single centered door exists on the east face, and a similar door penetrates each floor in warehouse fashion on the west face. Tie rods with star bolt plates run end to end in pairs and from side to side in triplicate beneath each floor. Two end tie rods, spaced farther apart than those on the floor levels, penetrate the cornice beneath the roof line.

The interior structure is supported by nine vertical posts which are symmetrically placed so as to break the interior space into nine equal sized squares. Alterations include poorly matched brick repair work in the east gable end and the addition of a two-story kitchen, restroom and office wing on the west end (1978), sand blasting of the exterior, the addition of new flooring surfaces on three floors, and the alteration of the interior for restaurant and bar use. The addition of a fire escape and the construction of a mill pond to the south are important exterior changes as well.

The mill building is purely functional in design and detail work. It is a good example of local adaptive use with some degree of adherence to the visual and structural integrity of the building on the part of the present owners.

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 type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1878–1905

Builder/Architect

Robert Meek

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Meek's Mill is one of three remaining 19th Century industrial structures, all of which are compactly located along the Des Moines River in Bonaparte, Iowa, and all of which were built by the family of William Meek (1784–1863), an early area settler. His oldest son, Robert F. Meek (1815–1885), was the successor to the Meek businesses, but he was ably assisted by his brothers Isaiah (1821– ?) and Joseph (1830–1900).

William Meek and Dr. R.N. Cresap, laid out the original town of Meek's Mills in 1837, and Meek received one of the original authorizations to dam the river at that point to provide power for his first mill in 1844. The town was renamed Bonaparte in 1841, but the original name more appropriately attested to the central role of the Meek family in founding and developing the town. The same family was to occupy that central role through the turn of the century.

Employment was an important by-product of the Meek enterprises. The woolen mill alone employed seventy-five hands in 1878. The original flour mill was built in 1841, and was followed by a woolen mill in 1853, and a saw mill in 1860. The flour mill was rebuilt by Robert Meek in 1878 following a fire. Robert Meek served as county commissioner (1842–48) and state legislator (1855–56) and was a local landowner of note. Isaiah Meek was a member of the committee of acceptance for the new 1878 bridge which stood until the 1950's and was an incorporator of the Bonaparte Academy Association (1967–71).

Flour mills such as the Meek's did not employ more than three to five hands, but they operated all year and were very important within the context of the local agricultural economy. The present mill stands on the site of the 1844 mill, but it is not known to what degree the earlier structure remains extant within the present building. In 1880, the mill had a daily capacity of 300 bushels using five run of stones. During the year ending in May, 1880, 13,000 barrels of wheat flour, 2,700 barrels of buckwheat flour, 1,500,000 pounds of corn meal and 1,000,000 pounds of feed were processed. An American water wheel, powered by a nine foot fall in the river level produced 69 horsepower with which to operate the mill and other operations.

By 1900 the mill was operated by Grant C. Scott and Stephen Blackburn. Daniel Cresap was the last miller, operating the mill until floodwaters destroyed the dam in 1903–05. Subsequently, the mill housed a feed store (1928–63) following a 21 year period of vacancy. The Farmers Cooperative Association occupied the building until 1977 when it was converted for restaurant use.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Please see Continuation Sheet, Item #9, page 1.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Bonaparte

Quadrangle scale 1/24,000

UTM References

A

1	5
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 Zone

6	0	1	0	4	0
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 Easting

4	5	0	5	7	0	0
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 Northing

B

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 Zone

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 Easting

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 Northing

C

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 Zone

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 Easting

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 Northing

D

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 Zone

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 Easting

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 Northing

E

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 Zone

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 Easting

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 Northing

F

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 Zone

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 Northing

G

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 Zone

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 Easting

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 Northing

H

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 Zone

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 Easting

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 Northing

Verbal boundary description and justification From pt. 60' south of the southeast corner of Block 1, Town of Bonaparte and on west side of Main Street, thence west on First St. and parallel with south line of Block 1, 250' to pt. of beginning, thence 150' west along south side of First Street, south 75', east 150', and north 75' to pt. of beg., this area including

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries mill only and perimeter of 25' on each side of same.
state Iowa code 19 county Van Buren code 177

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title James E. Jacobsen, National Register Coordinator

organization Iowa SHPO date December 9, 1982

Historical Building

street & number East 12th and Grand Avenue telephone 515-281-4137

city or town Des Moines state Iowa 50319

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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Adrian A. Anderson*

title Executive Director Iowa State Historical Department date 24 November 1982

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the National Register

date 1/27/83

John Melrose Byers
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET BIBLIOGRAPHY ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

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