

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received MAY 12 1986

date entered 6-13-86

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

1. Name

historic Brayton Grist Mill

and or common Brayton Grist Mill

2. Location

street & number Route 44 N/A not for publication

city, town Pomfret vicinity of Pomfret Center

state Connecticut code 09 county Windham code 015

3. 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"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: vacant

4. Owner of Property

Commissioner Stanley J. Pac
name Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection

street & number 165 Capitol Avenue

city, town Hartford vicinity of state Connecticut

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Town of Pomfret Town Clerk's Office

street & number Route 44

city, town Pomfret Center state Connecticut

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

See Continuation Sheet
title State Register of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1986 federal state county local

depository for survey records Connecticut Historical Commission
59 S. Prospect Street

city, town Hartford state Connecticut 06106

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Brayton Grist Mill is located on the eastern bank of Mahamoquet Brook south of Route 44, the historic Connecticut-Rhode Island Turnpike, just inside the main entrance to Mashamoquet Brook State Park. Originally one of several water-powered nineteenth-century industries clustered along the stream in the hollow, the mill now stands alone on the forested bank. While there is no evidence of the dam known to have been located to the north (upstream), the ruins of a diversion canal and the stone foundation set into the bank of another structure to the south (downstream) of Brayton Mill survive. The watercourses for the mill have either been obliterated or were entirely underground and survive unseen.

The vernacular structure dates to the last decade of the nineteenth century, replacing or incorporating an earlier grist mill on the site that is believed to have burned. Of post-and-beam construction utilizing salvaged materials, the four-story, gable-ended mill is set into the bank with two floors above grade. The facade (photograph 1) (east elevation) has paneled sliding doors on rolling tracks on the third and fourth levels and a separate entrance to the staircase servicing the fourth floor. All windows are double-hung six-over-six with plain surrounds, and the exterior is sheathed with both plain and beaded vertical board siding.

The power transmission equipment is housed on the two lower levels of the building. A late-nineteenth-century vertical turbine is set in a well pit in the basement below the original first floor of the mill where a mortise-and-tenoned frame with wrought-iron tie rods surrounded the turbine and main shaft. Sand and gravel washing into the building since the late 1920s have filled the basement, burying all but the top of the turbine and destroying the floor leaving one large open space rather than the original two-level configuration. A concrete retaining wall was installed on the east (front) bank.

Gearing for the transmission of power is housed on the second level. An iron spur gear (with some replacement steel teeth) keyed into the turbine shaft slid up to engage another spur gear that initiated power transmission to the stone or to the two auxiliary drive shafts. The auxiliary shafts powered the corn cracker and the portable joiner/lathe activated by bevel gears on the turbine shaft. The spur gears were engaged on the grinding floor level by a horizontally suspended 20'-long timber with a hand-forged dog on the end to catch and lift the sliding spur gear into position. Another vertical shaft, activated by a wheel on the third level, controlled the speed of water flow through the turbine.

The third (principal) level of the mill houses the milling machinery set in its historic, working position (photograph 2). The mill stones, with their casing, hopper, and damsel are intact as is the corresponding conveyor-fed bagging stand mounted in front of the stones. A Sullivan Machine Company (Chicago) corn sheller, patented 17 July 1888 and ? December 1890, and a sorting box are fixed in the

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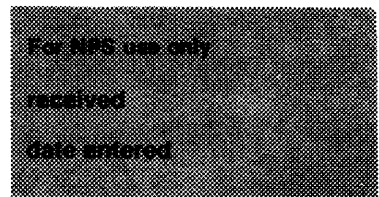
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DEP Cultural Resources Survey
1985

State

Connecticut Historical Commission
59 S. Prospect Street
Hartford, Connecticut

Historic American Engineering Record,
Connecticut, an Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Site
1981

State

Connecticut Historical Commission
59 S. Prospect Street
Hartford, Connecticut

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southwest corner. Not fixed in place but stored in the building is the wood-framed woodworking lathe and joiner (photograph 3) that was driven by the large through-floor belt pulley north of the grinding stones. Scattered around the room are several work tables, various sieves and miscellaneous hand tools. The fourth level was an open storage area with a curious double-truss roof framing system that features tie rods suspended from the intermediate rafters to carry the floor load. Although in deteriorated condition, the mill is remarkably complete and appears much as it did when milling operations ceased in 1928. Alteration is limited to the fourth level, where makeshift partitions were installed by the present owner.

Work is currently underway to stabilize the stone foundation walls and framing of the lower levels. The turbine, drive shafts, and milling equipment are not affected by the work, which is vital to ensure the continued preservation of the building and its contents.

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

Specific dates ca. 1890 **Builder/Architect** unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Originally part of the extensive eighteenth- and nineteenth-century complex of water-powered industries that lined Mashamoquet Brook in the rural northeastern Connecticut community of Pomfret, the Brayton Grist Mill survives as one of the best-preserved and most complete nineteenth-century mills in the state (criterion C). Rebuilt in the 1890s by William Brayton (1851-1928) on the site of an earlier mill, the grist mill stands virtually unchanged since milling operations ceased in 1928. The late-nineteenth-century machinery and mill stones survive in their historic operating configuration, making the mill an important, intact record of nineteenth-century technology. Additionally, the mill is representative of the the water-powered industries that once flourished along the banks of the brook.

The earliest mill on the site was apparently built by the Holbrook family during the middle of the eighteenth century. Avery Fisher purchased the property, which included a "dwelling house, corn house, blacksmith shop and 2/3s interest in the gristmill standing thereon," from the heirs of Ebenezer Holbrook, Jr., in 1816 (Deedbook 11, p.184). Fisher ran into financial difficulties and conveyed his interest in the property to Lemuel Ingals in 1817 (Deedbook 11, p. 294). In 1828 Ingals and Calvin Holbrook sold the mill to Dexter Ballou, who in turn sold to Orin Marcy in 1830 (Deedbook 13, p.262). Orin was the first of three generations of Marcys in the blacksmithing trade in the area, which was known locally as "Marcy Hollow." Throughout the numerous early nineteenth-century conveyances, Ebenezer Dresser remained a 1/3 owner of the grist mill. An 1859 water agreement lists Dresser as the operator of the grist mill and Marcy as the proprietor of the blacksmith shop (Deedbook 19, p. 245). At that time both facilities were powered by water wheels.

Orin Marcy died in 1870, but the business was continued by his son Alvin. In 1890, Orin Marcy's heirs sold the complex containing a cider mill, grist mill, and wagon shop to William Brayton (Deedbook 23, p.58). A Pomfret native, Brayton worked as a farmer and carpenter before purchasing the mill. He dropped the cider branch of the business and made grist milling, dealing in grain, and wagon repair his principal concerns. A period biography states that Brayton "made valuable improvements to the mill property."1 This statement coupled with the physical evidence at the mill structure, strongly suggests that he rebuilt the mill shortly after acquiring it in 1890. Brayton ceased milling operations and conveyed the property to his sister Mary

9. Major Bibliographical References

. Commerative Biographical Record of Tolland and Windham Counties Connecticut. Chicago: J. H. Beers, 1903.

Pomfret Land Records. Deed Book Vol. 3,4,11,13,14,23; Probate Vol. 22,24
(see continuation sheet)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approximately 2 acres

Quadrangle name Danielson CT

Quadrangle scale 1: 24,000

UTM References

A

1	9	25	3	3	20	46	4	8	38	0
Zone		Easting				Northing				

B

Zone		Easting				Northing				

C

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D

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E

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F

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

see continuation sheet.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state N/A code county code

11. Form Prepared By

edited by John Herzan

name/title Mary Elizabeth McCahon, Consultant, National Register Coordinator

organization Connecticut Historical Comm. date December, 1985

street & number 59 S. Prospect Street telephone (203) 566-3005

city or town Hartford state Connecticut

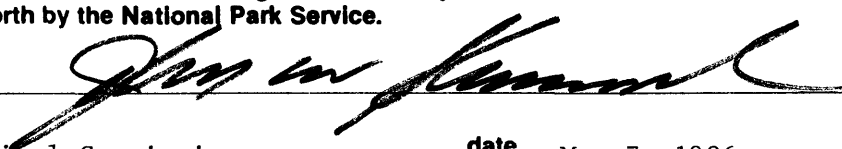
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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



title Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

date May 7, 1986

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

Entered in
National Register

date 6-13-86


Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Brayton just before his death in 1928. The state acquired the site in 1930 as part of Mashamoquet Brook State Park established in 1919, but it never utilized the building. The Pomfret Historical Society leased the mill from the state in 1985 with the intent of stabilizing the deteriorated structure and opening it for exhibition.

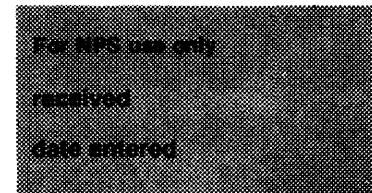
ENDNOTE

- 1 Commemorative Biographical Record of Tolland and Windham Counties Connecticut. (Chicago: J.H. Beers, 1903), p. 548.

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Pomfret Conservation Commission. Mashomaquet Brook Its Past --Into Its Future. Privately printed, 1975.

Roth, Matthew. Letter to David Poirier. October 17, 1979. Deposited at Connecticut Historical Commission.

The Putnam Patriot (Putnam, CT). November 6, 1941. "When Pomfret Built Its First Meeting House."

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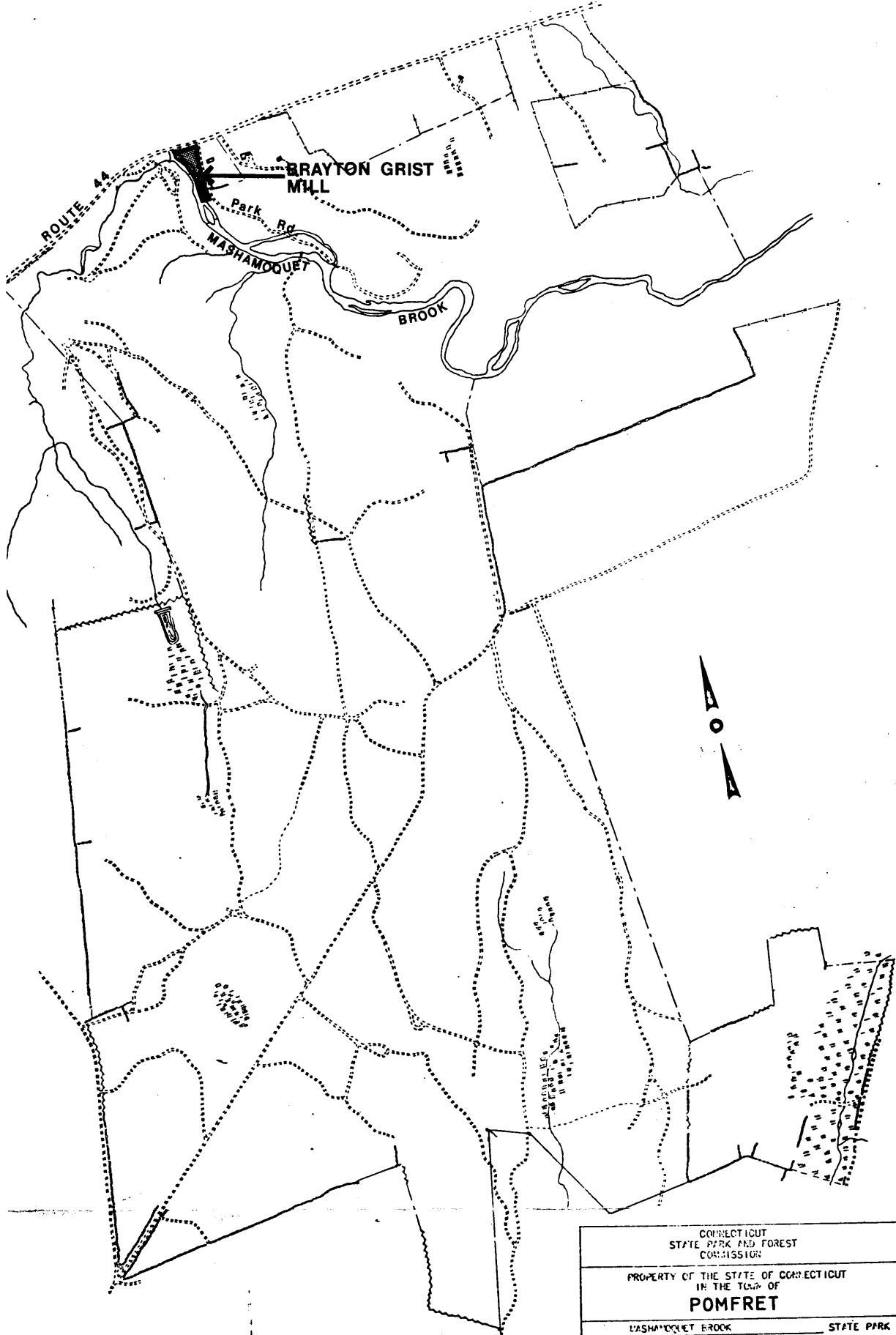
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Brayton Grist Mill

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

For boundary description, see attached map: Property of the State of Connecticut in the Town of Pomfret. Scale: 1" = 400'.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The site is located in a 838-acre state park. The nominated acreage, located on the east bank of Mashamoquet Brook, includes the land between the entrance road for the park and the brook. It contains, in addition to the extant grist mill, its power source as well as the unexcavated industrial archaeological sites associated with the grist mill and adjacent industries that may remain. While no industrial archaeological remains are visible, the land surrounding the mill is included to protect any that may exist.



CONNECTICUT STATE PARK AND FOREST COMMISSION	
PROPERTY OF THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT IN THE TOWN OF POMFRET	
WASHAMOQUET BROOK STATE PARK	
LAND SURVEYED AS OF: NOVEMBER, 1969	SCALE: 1 INCH EQUALS 400 FEET
FOR INFORMATION CONCERNING SURVEY DATA AND DEED IN- FORMATION CONTACT: DIRECTOR, STATE PARK AND FOREST COMMISSION, STATE OFFICE BLDG., HARTFORD, CONN. 06115	