

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Taylor's Mill
other names/site number Taylor's Mill Historic District

2. Location

street & number NA not for publication
city, town Taylor's Mill & Rockaway Roads vicinity
state New Jersey code 034 county Hunterdon code 019 zip code 08833

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private, public-local (conservation easement), public-State, public-Federal
Category of Property: building(s), district, site, structure, object
Number of Resources within Property: Contributing (2, 1, 3), Noncontributing (buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total 0)
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.
Signature of certifying official: Assistant Commissioner for Natural & Historic Resources/DSHPO
Date: 9/10/92

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official
Date
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
entered in the National Register.
determined eligible for the National Register.
determined not eligible for the National Register.
removed from the National Register.
other, (explain:)
Signature of the Keeper: Patrick Anderson
Date of Action: 6/11/92

## 5. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY: Manufacturing Facility

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

VACANT: not in use

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

## 7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Vernacular (Dutch influence), 18th c.

Other: 18th c. mill construction

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

walls stone; frame

roof synthetic shingles

other asphalt siding

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Taylor's Mill Historic District is comprised of a c. 1760 grist and flouring mill with its hydro-system and the cottage occupied by the miller, all of which are contributing. This complex is found in Readington Township, Hunterdon County, and is located at the intersection of Taylor's Mill Road and Rockaway Creek Road. The head race originates 8/10ths of a mile from the mill, and runs east paralleling Rockaway Creek, which serves as Readington Township's northern boundary. Until recently a bridge spanned the brook at this same intersection, allowing residents of nearby Oldwick (18th-century village originally named New Germantown) in neighboring Tewksbury Township to reach the mill. This complex remains isolated in a totally rural section as far as the eye can see, at least on the Readington Township side of the creek. There is, in fact, the Oldwick Materials (Houdaille) quarrying operation opposite the mill in Tewksbury, but because the stream border is wooded, it is not especially visible. The immediate and also distant environs of the mill are in a natural state of vegetation. The flood plain of the creek is in the immediate vicinity of mill and cottage, bordering Rockaway Road up to the bridge site. The creek swings south a little distance behind the miller's residence, its course marked by a fringe of trees. The terrain rises considerably on the south side of Rockaway Road immediately behind the mill and this hill slope is heavily wooded its entire length to Potterstown Road more than a mile distant. Opposite is the flood plain. There is not a single building of any kind along this road. (See Photo # 1) Taylor's Mill Road is equally deserted for some distance, with broad floodplain to east and gently rising land, mostly wooded, opposite.

At the time the mill was opened, neither of the roads now making the intersection were in existence. There was but one road to the mill, which branched off from the main road from Potterstown Village north to the Rockaway and followed a right-of-way through a farm to emerge a few hundred feet south of the complex. (See Figure 1, sketch map)

Taylor's Mill (Block 2, subdivision from Lot 1 as proposed)

The mill in its original state stood three stories tall, its topmost story of wood, which has since been taken down and roof not replaced. (See historic photos # 16, 17.) The remaining structure is of stone masonry. This is laid up with large blocks of rubble stone, more or less coursed, on those elevations

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conspicuously seen from roadside. The flume-side wall and rear wall are somewhat less finished, containing an assortment of stone sizes. All four corners have quoining. The wall against which the waterwheel was housed has been modified over time, with different siding visible in old photographs. Today we find that a central segment of the masonry wall is gone, replaced with cinderblock and set back slightly from the plane of the remaining wall extending from both corners. The reconstructed section represents about a third to one-half of the wall. This wall is embanked to provide a course for the race. It has a water table that projects a little above grade level.

In dimensions the mill measures 32 feet by 40 feet. The axis of the (removed) gable roof runs longitudinally, with the mill entrance in the gable end facing to Taylor's Mill Road and across it toward the miller's dwelling. After 1930, under new ownership, the building was used for generating electricity and what is seen today on this main facade is the large vehicular opening substituted for the original door and adjoining small window. On second story level, at center, is the typical miller's door opening, flanked by two windows. (See Historic Photo, # 17.) The side elevation facing Rockaway Road has two original window openings on ground level, and on the level above a centered doorway and two windows. No fenestration remains and doors are missing. On the rear wall at the upper level, there is a doorway that permitted millers to walk directly to the head race.

The mill was run by an overshot water wheel. After it was removed, a penstock was installed. This form of flume for channeling the race water into the mill still remains in position. (See Historic Photo # 18; photo # 4.)

The removed top story can be seen in old photographs. By 1915, its frame was sheathed with vertical siding, which appears to have been a replacement for an earlier skin, most likely clapboards, judging by photographs of other area mills. no longer standing. (See Figure 2.) The interior of the building is stripped of gear. It had once had two runs of stones. In the 19th century, some of the millers also had a sawmill operation under way. Its last use is recorded by the present concrete floor strengthened by a steel beam. The original interior as recalled many years later by Esther Lance Rodgers, daughter of the last miller, suggested a typical mill layout, with a pair of millstones centered on first level and feed hopper on next two levels in a position almost above the grinding stones. A flight of stairs originated in the southeast corner. Grain bins and an office were on second level. The gable front doorway to which farmers' bags of grain were hoisted by cable was on the third floor. (Historic photo # 17.) The bags were lined up against the south side wall, and loose grain--oats, corn, etc.--were stored in the bins spread across the back wall. (1)

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### The Hydro-system (Block 1, Lot 1, conservation easement)

The siting of the mill at this intersection is somewhat curious, and even confusing, given the topography. The U.S. Geological Map will show the meanderings of the North Branch of the Rockaway Creek. The mill is at a much lower level than the race, which enters from the rear. The embankment held back by stonework is as high as the second story of the structure, as seen in old photograph # 18. The race flows by gravity, but with the laying out of Rockaway Road in the 1840s the race was directed to flow under it in a culvert at the point of encounter. The road then begins a descent which brings it almost to streamside, as a change in the creek's course brings it close to the mill. (Photo # 14.) The tail race exits below grade in a culvert under Taylor's Mill Road (opened in 1839) and then travels a short distance--a few hundred yards--on the northerly side of the miller's house before returning to the creek just beyond the site of the former bridge-crossing. (Photograph # 10 shows the last bridge, a late-19th-century iron truss bridge, in its close relationship to house.)

The surviving components of the system consist of dam, head race, flood gates, leaf strainer, penstock, and tail race. (There are also remnants of a secondary system, dating from this century, when Philip Lance placed a second wheel in the stream itself, using water from a nearby manmade falls.) A map has been sketched to illustrate the salient features. At a point clocked at 8/10ths of a mile west of the mill building, the race begins with the dam built to divert water from the stream. It has been reconstructed with concrete walls (Photo # 5).

The race itself can be clearly followed, visible as a deep wide V impression in the flood plain (Photo # 6). The 19th-century road was laid out close to its edge. The stream for some distance swings northerly and disappears from view. As creek and race begin to converge again, flood gates are found on the race. These are built up with stone and concrete blocks. (Photo #s 7, 8.) Close to this feature the race is directed in a southeasterly course, at which point the road crosses it, approximately 1/20th of a mile from the mill. Just short of its termination by the waterwheel, there still survives a grate made of iron rods installed to strain out falling leaves. (Photo # 9.)

### Miller's House (Block 3, Lot 1)

Sited a few hundred feet southeasterly of the mill, the miller's dwelling is more or less on alignment with its front wall, the house facade facing toward it in a northwesterly direction. This is a one-and-a-half story frame building, two rooms deep, measuring 28 feet by 32 feet. There are two internal end chimneys with plain rectangular brick stacks. On the southerly gable wall is

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an exposed brick chimney back. The house sits close to grade, with a low stone foundation visible at rear and northerly walls. Original clapboards have been replaced with a post W.W. II asphalt covering of brick pattern. Though the roof has been resurfaced with synthetic shingles, the original roofline has been preserved: Eaves and rake course are both flush with walls.

The southeasterly (rear) elevation has three bays; the entrance is centered. The main elevation also has three bays, but the last occupant shifted the position of the entry to the left of center (at end of hall) and closed the original opening. A shed-roofed porch on plain posts spans almost all of the facade. A small shed-roofed addition for a bathroom projects from the rear room from an opening made in the northerly-facing gable wall. The 1/1 sash has replaced the original. Additional windows have been inserted in the southwesterly gable wall, including two widely spaced in the half story and one centered on the ground story. There is additionally one curious window of hexagonal shape illuminating the rear room (kitchen).

The interior plan, which is recognizable despite some changes, displays a center-hall arrangement with--formerly--two rooms on each side (now partitioned into three on one side). In the living room the heavy beams supporting the floor above can be seen, but elsewhere they are concealed by a ceiling. The northwest (presumably front) room, has a corner fireplace with a Federal style mantelpiece. Paired fireplaces on the opposite gable wall, as indicated by the double chimney flues in reversed V formation in the attic and exposed chimney back, have been removed. One half of the loft story is finished into rooms with plastered walls. This may have occurred long ago, as the plaster ceilings of these rooms are attached to hand-split lath. (See Photo #s 11, 12, 13.)

The immediate surroundings of the miller's cottage are bleak and forlorn at present, since there are no plantings and the former grass lawn has not been attended to for some time. The land along the north gable wall slopes almost immediately toward the nearby tail race. A short distance behind the property, Rockaway Creek bends southward on its course to join the main flow of water of the same name. The water's edge is fringed with trees. Since the recent removal of the last bridge to span the stream at this intersection, traffic has almost ceased on both roads leading to the mill. Local plans of the Township Historian include the restoration of the mill and possibly the dwelling house as well, if ownership can be arranged. The hydro-system will not be threatened by development since it lies in flood plain and has been placed in a conservation easement.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Exploration/settlement  
Architecture  
Military  
Industry

Period of Significance

1760-1930

Significant Dates

1778-80 (Revolutionary  
period)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Taylor, John (Colonel)

Architect/Builder

N/A

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

This nomination to the National Register includes the last surviving pre-Revolutionary mill in Readington Township and eastern Hunterdon County, a mill which also played a role in the Revolution as grain supplier for Washington's Army, and was owned and run by an officer in the State Militia and Continental Army eventually receiving the honorific title of General. The hydro-system serving the mill, which has survived in its entire length, and the miller's cottage dating to the same period are proposed as part of the Taylor's Mill Historic District. The nomination qualifies under Criteria A, B, and C. The mill complex is significant in the areas of early settlement pattern, industry, and commerce, military, and architecture. John Taylor was the progenitor of his line in America. Born in Bath, England, he emigrated to this country as a young man. While land was still available from the first large investors and early Dutch settlers in Readington Township, Taylor obtained tracts near the north branch of the Rockaway Creek and erected the first grist mill there. Located but a couple of miles from the very early settled Potterstown to southwest and New Germantown (Oldwick) to northeast, the mill had a function in the livelihood of both villages and their surrounding farms. Later it was one of the mills supplying grains for the Revolutionary Army. Taylor became an American patriot who gave military service for over two decades and whose dedication was recognized by his superiors. Significance under architecture is found in the building as a record of 18th-century mill construction in masonry, of which few examples remain, and of its head and tail races with structural (replacement) components in place, indicating its engineering. The miller's cottage in its vernacular style of architecture relates to Dutch traditions in plan and dimensions with slight modifications, suggesting that the prevailing Dutch/German culture had some influence on the English-born Taylor, a carpenter by training.

During the Revolution, there was a great need to draw on the countryside for supplies of every kind. Moore Furman, Esq., Deputy Quartermaster General of the Continental Army for New Jersey moved his commissary to Pittstown, in Hunterdon County (Franklin/Alexandria Townships), during 1778-80. Records abound of his requisitioning of supplies throughout the area; (2) Contemporary records also

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A
[ ] 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 #

[X] See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- [ ] State historic preservation office
[ ] Other State agency
[ ] Federal agency
[X] Local government
[ ] University
[ ] Other

Specify repository:

Readington Township Archives, Municipal Bldg.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property ±18 Califon, NJ Quad

UTM References

A [1, 8] [5 1, 9| 4, 0, 0] [4, 5| 0, 1| 9, 0, 0]
Zone Easting Northing
C [1, 8] [5 1, 9| 7, 2, 0] [4, 5| 0, 0| 6, 8, 0]
E 1 8 5 1 8 7 8 0 4 5 0 1 5 8 0

B [1, 8] [5 2, 0| 2, 0, 0] [4, 5| 0, 0| 8, 9, 0]
Zone Easting Northing
D [1, 8] [5 1, 9| 4, 6, 0] [4, 5| 0, 1| 3, 8, 0]

[ ] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

[X] See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

[X] See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Stephanie Stevens, Readington Twp. Historian & Ursula Brecknell, Consultant
organization Readington Township date October 1991; revised Feb. 1992
street & number Municipal Bldg., Route 523 telephone (908) 534-4395
city or town White House Station state New Jersey zip code 08889

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exist of the march of the Continental Army through Readington Township, down Potterstown Road, with prisoners, to be temporarily held at Pittstown. Beyond that, there are the statements made by a number of individuals regarding the supplies provided the Army from this particular mill. Affidavits recorded in the May term of the Court of Common Pleas in 1783 address the matter of the services performed at Taylor's mill. (3) One individual was attempting to get the miller to make up the difference in currency because of depreciation that had occurred before he was paid. Four individuals each gave testimony under oath, two witnessed by Moore Furman. A statement given by Joseph Inslee set forth that in April 1780, he was appointed contractor of the County of Hunterdon and that a law of the state authorized and directed him to settle all the accounts of provisions furnished under what was called General Washington's Requisition in January 1780, which were furnished in the County of Hunterdon. He then stated that Colonel Taylor made return of and rendered his accounts of provisions collected under that Requisition, and that Taylor personally gave four bushels of wheat and 35 bushels of corn.

Another interesting deposition was made by the miller Ephraim Bush who said that he attended the mill of Col. John Taylor for two years, 8 months previous to May 1781 and that the Colonel took in grain "for the use of the publick, that a greater part of what he took in was applied to the use of the Publick...that the grain was applied to the Use of the Army," adding "that he made up the invoices and sent on the Flour to the Army---that it was about the time General Washington made the requisition throughout the great part of the state...."

John Hoffman testified that "in the winter of 1779 and 1780 at the time the magistrates were going round to collect provisions for the army, he sold 12 bushels and a half of wheat to Col. John Taylor" part of it "for the use of the Army...." Taylor had told the deponent he would pay him in money if he could get it, but could not. He believed the Colonel expected to get the money from the public. He added that it was "common report that a considerable quantity of wheat was brought into his mill for that (Army) use."

Colonel John Taylor, though English by birth, was a strong supporter of the Revolutionary cause. Upon arrival in America, he was initially at Trenton where he received mail in 1758; but soon was in ownership of a 400-acre tract of land on the Rockaway Creek, where the mill was located c. 1760. He married Lydia Kar somewhat later and had three children, the baptism of his son Nathaniel being recorded in the Readington Reformed Church in 1769.

It is reported that at the beginning of the Revolution, "he tendered his services to the patriots and was chosen captain of one of the companies of militia raised in Hunterdon county, in the Fourth Regiment, under command of Colonel John Mehelm." (4) Almost immediately, October of 1775, he was promoted to Second

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Major, and in November of the following year made Major in Colonel Read's Battalion, State Troops. He was commissioned Lieutenant-Colonel of the Fourth Hunterdon Regiment on Feb. 17, 1777, and raised to Colonel in just a few months. After the Revolutionary War came to an end, Col. Taylor remained in military service and was given the honorary title of General. (5)

Taylor gradually built up his real estate holdings, as indicated in mortgages of 1766 and 1772, and had land on both sides of the creek. The Readington Township tax ratables of 1778-80 show Colonel Taylor as owner of 190 acres, 8 horses, 14 cows, 7 pigs, and one slave. (6) In 1779, his tax was based on 246 acres, 9 cows, 11 pigs, 2 gristmills and a sawmill. Changes in amount of acreage taxed and numbers of livestock are listed for him through 1790. As a large landholder and prominent citizen, Taylor was elected to serve as a Hunterdon County Freeholder representing Readington. This was during a time when this township had two Freeholders. From the mid-1780s to 1798 his name appears on the Freeholders' Minute Books as overseeing the building of bridges across the streams of Readington and Tewksbury as well as between Hunterdon and Somerset. (7) While no documentation was found concerning the erection of the first bridge by the mill; it would seem reasonable to expect that Taylor petitioned for one inasmuch as he held property on both sides of the Rockaway. He was also one of the three Freeholders invited to design the plans for the new Court House in Flemington, when that town was made the new county seat in the 1780s.

The millowner was subject to unhappy experiences twice over, first during his period of active service during the war and later because of financial problems. Though Col. Taylor had served in the skirmish at Weston (Van Nest's Mills on Millstone), and in the battles at Elizabethtown, Monmouth, and elsewhere, he was charged with cowardice during the Battle of Springfield, June 1780, by one or a few members of his regiment. Taylor wanted to clear his name, fearing the report propagated was "injurious to his character." Major General Philemon Dickenson publicly came out in his support in a message sent to the newspapers from his home at Trenton, "the Hermitage," informing the world that Taylor "had been dismissed with reputation," and that he had "repeatedly served under my command, and I ever found him an active, spirited, attentive, good officer, whose exertions were uncommon when the distress of America was the greatest." (8) Nonetheless, because of the complaint, Taylor was subjected to a court martial which was ordered held in February 1781. Before a court consisting of several officers of high rank, Taylor was absolved by all, the verdict stating "he did not manifest any degree of timidity of cowardice...but on the contrary (situated as he was) discovered spirit, prudence, and sagacity; conspicuous and inherent qualities in a good officer. (9)

Taylor was in debt by 1792, possibly because of war-incurred obligations, as suggested by Stephanie Stevens in Forgotten Mills of Readington. Because of the unavailability of "hard money"

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Taylor had attempted to pay for grain for the Army in certificates, only to be rebuffed by his creditors. Eventually these same creditors sought the justice of the courts to settle their claims. (10) In 1792 Taylor mortgaged the mill and three other properties--some 400 acres--to his old friend Dr. Oliver Barnet of New Germantown (11) and he also borrowed from John Stevens of Potterstown, son of one of the state's prominent families. Both men had been his fellow officers in the 4th Hunterdon Militia, Stevens a captain, Barnet a surgeon. Since Barnet was the principal creditor, when the Mellick family of Bedminster wanted to buy Taylor's family of slaves, they sought permission from Barnet first. (12)

Taylor's problems worsened by 1795 when as bondsman he was held responsible for the defaulting on loan payment by Joshua Corshon, who was then county collector. Unable to pay the debt, he was prosecuted in the Supreme Court and "entered the Goal" in September 1795. He was released next month but the sheriff then "levied on eight horses, twelve cattle, twenty sheep, one old negro man, two wenches and three negro children; viz: two boys and one girl, one eight day clock, one desk, two tables, six chairs, two beds and bedding, four hundred acres of land where Taylor lives in Tewksbury and part in Readington." (13)

In order to complete payment to all creditors, Taylor gave up his "mills, orchards, fencing, outhouses, stables, etc." which were sold at public auction on May 9, 1796. (14) His old friend Dr. Barnet bought up Taylor's holdings. No more is learned of Colonel Taylor, and the date of his death is unknown. Henry Race, in an article concerning him that appeared in The Jerseyman, reflected:

"In civilized countries heroes and patriots have often been distinguished and honored and their memory embalmed in classic eulogy. Such was not the award of this veteran officer." (15)

The mill changed hands often after that. Within a few months Dr. Barnet sold both mill and acreage to Major Richard Stillwell. Another old soldier, Stillwell served with Taylor in the 4th Hunterdon Militia. Five years later Stillwell sold the mill to his sons, Richard Jr. and Tobias, who continued milling until 1804, when they sold to John D. Sutphin. (16)

Next owner was the prominent attorney Nathaniel Saxton, of Flemington, who made his purchase in 1815 and held the mill for thirty years as an absentee owner, having made a business of buying mills as investments. (17) Under him a sawmill was added. He became over-extended financially and the mills were seized by the sheriff in 1845 and offered at public auction.

Subsequent mill owners were Charles Bartles, another lawyer, for two years,

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followed by Jacob D. Trimmer, a miller, about mid-century, Susan Trimmer, Peter Sutphin, John Lane, Robert and Paul Honeyman, Eleanor and Manning McCrea and William and Philip Lance. The Lances, father and son, bought the mill along with 102 acres, in 1909 for \$5000. (18) Philip Lance farmed during daylight and ran the mill at night seven days a week, grinding corn, oats, and wheat. With the help of his daughter Esther, he continued the operation until 1929. For an experiment he also tried briefly to operate a sawmill in the tail race. (19)

Albert Preen bought the mill property and the property opposite in Tewksbury Township, where he established a quarry, which afterward became Houdaille Sand and Stone and now is Oldwick Materials. Preen converted the mill into a generating plant for electricity, installing a turbine. The changes visible today--removal of frame floor level and alteration of entrance--date to his ownership.

Both mill and miller's house appear to be contemporaneous in time, illustrative of the style of building in favor in the rural countryside about mid-18th century reflecting certain national influences. The mill itself is classic in style as simple rectangular envelope of utilitarian purpose. Not all mills were three stories in height, but photographs and sketches of known mills of that century indicate that in parts of Hunterdon they could be found. This is also true of the combination of building fabric. These same examples show one or more stories of stone masonry, with a top floor of wood construction. Characteristically, the waterwheel, whether undershot, overshot, or breast, was located against one long wall, and the grain bags were hoisted to the gable peak of the topmost floor. As long as Taylor's Mill was operated for grinding grist for animals and flour for domestic use, the mill appeared thus. Photographs survive showing Philip Lance, last miller, at his upper doorway in receipt of a hoisted bag of grain.

Although the mill has been deprived of its final framed-out third story, this loss does not necessarily detract too meaningfully from its integrity, as photographs exist (see Historical Photos #s 16, 17, 18) of the building as it was before post-1930 decapitation, and also sufficient evidence of photographs of mills of Hunterdon County that were contemporaries. This documentation will serve in the restoration of the mill as planned by Readington Township.

A three-story mill was seemingly common enough in the 18th century in Hunterdon County, and moreover, the combination of building materials, ground story and possibly second story of stone, with a framed-out top story a not unusual pattern. It must be assumed that the skin applied was weatherboarding or clapboards rather than the final sheathing shown in c. 1915 photographs.

Masonry construction is more characteristic of buildings in Hunterdon County than

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in the counties to its east: Somerset and Middlesex, for example, and Mercer County to its south (excepting Lawrence Township). The stonework here exhibited on the mill appears to be similar in terms of block size, color, and coursing to other 18th-century buildings extant in Readington Township and other eastern municipalities of the county.

This mill remained in service grinding grain until 1930, a period of almost 175 years. Today it is significant as the only surviving resource of its kind. The dwelling, too, as companion to mill, in vernacular style of the same era, adds to the value of this resource.

Readington Township has plans in place for the acquisition of the mill site from the property owner and has a conservation easement on the mill race. There will probably be negotiations undertaken to obtain the seemingly unoccupied, somewhat deteriorated cottage from that property owner. A museum to interpret the role of mills in times past is hoped for at this complex.

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### REFERENCES

1. Interviews with Esther Lance Rodgers by Township Historian Stephanie Stevens on a number of occasions over the years.
2. New Jersey Archives, hereafter NJA, Second Series, Newspaper Extracts, Vol. 2, pp. 212, 227, 293; ibid., Vol. 3, p. 417; ibid., Vol. 4, pp. 183, 665f.
3. Hunterdon County Court of Common Pleas, Affidavits on record, 1783, made in May and October terms by Ephraim Bush, Dorothy Boss, John Hoffman, Jr., and Joseph Inslee.
4. NJA, Second Series, Vol. 4, note, pp.581n; also Henry Race, "The Two Colonels John Taylor," The Jerseyman (March 1982), pp. 34f.
5. Race, ibid.; also Andrew D. Mellick, Jr., The Story of an Old Farm, p. 603
6. Tax Ratables for Readington Township.
7. Hunterdon County Freeholders, Minute Books: 1786, p. 125; 1791, pp. 92, 93, 150, 180.
8. NJA, ibid., Vol. 4, pp. 581f.
9. Ibid., Vol. 5, pp. 197,207
10. See Reference 3 above.
11. Hunterdon County Mortgage Book 1, p. 514
12. Mellick, op. cit., pp. 603f.
13. Hunterdon County, Deeds, Book 2, p. 510; also Court of Common Pleas, passim; Sheriff Anderson's Docket, p. 39.
14. Docket, ibid., p. 94

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15. Race, loc. cit., p. 35.
16. Hunterdon County, Deeds, Book 2, p. 510; Book 24, p. 159; Book 8, p. 171.
17. Ibid., Book 24, p. 159.
18. Ibid., Book 87, p. 551; Book 89, p. 212.
19. Interviews with Esther Lance Rodgers.

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Taylor's Mill Historic District, Readington  
Township, Hunterdon County, NJ

Section number 9 Page 1

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## PUBLIC RECORDS

Hunterdon County Public Records:

Deeds: Book #s 2, 8, 24, 87, 89

Mortgages: Book # 1

Court of Common Pleas: May and October terms, 1783; also Vols. 4, 5, 8, 9, 13, 14

Freeholders Minute Book # 1

Road Returns

Readington Township Tax Ratables lists, in State Archives and also published in the Genealogical Magazine of New Jersey.

New Jersey Archives, 2nd series, Newspaper Extracts, Vol. 4 (1779-80), Vol. 5, 1780-82

U.S. Census, 1850; Industrial Schedules, Readington Township.

## BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

Mellick, Andrew D, Jr., The Story of an Old Farm. Somerville: The Unionist-Gazette, 1889

Race, Henry, "The Two Colonels John Taylor," The Jerseyman, March 1892

Stevens, Stephanie, Forgotten Mills of Readington. 1987

Stryker, William S. Officers and Men of New Jersey in the Revolutionary War

## PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

Esther Lance Rodgers, 1983-86

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### MAPS

Beers, F.W. County Atlas of Hunterdon, New Jersey. New York: F.W. Beers & Co.,  
1873

Cornell, Samuel C. Map of Hunterdon County, New Jersey. Philadelphia: S.C.  
Cornell and Lloyd Vander Veer, 1851.

Hammond, D. Stanton, Hunterdon County, New Jersey. Genealogical Society of New  
Jersey, 1965.

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### BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Taylor's Mill Historic District includes the whole of Block 3, Lot 1, which is bounded in part by the north branch of Rockaway Creek on the north and by Taylor's Mill Road on the west. It also includes the whole of Block 1, Lot 1 through which flows the mill race. A conservation easement has specifically been granted by the property owner for the entire course of the mill race, including its structural components (the race being in the flood plain, an undevelopable area), and that portion of Lot 1, Block 2, which includes the mill race after it crosses below the road, and the mill building itself. The boundaries of this last lot have been proposed and accepted through an application that was approved by the Readington Township Planning Board for a development called Grist Mill Estates, which has been bankrupt for some time. The lot agreed upon to be set aside for conservation purposes and historic preservation of the mill structure begins in Rockaway Road at the point where the race enters Lot 1 and continues the length of the road on the south side to the intersection, then turns the corner and proceeds south on Taylor's Mill Road to a point past the course of the mill race adjoining the south wall of the mill, and then with a line of convenience follows the outer edge of the race back to point of beginning. The lot will be 1.9 acres.

### JUSTIFICATION OF BOUNDARIES

The boundaries are drawn relatively tightly regarding the mill building, based on the agreement struck by the Readington Township Planning Board at time of a development application. Since zoning in Readington Township calls for a minimum of three-acre residential lots, there is no concern that an "intrusion" will be built close enough to have a negative impact on the setting. Additionally, the steepness of the slope in the near vicinity of the District will call for further restrictions on building within view of the mill. The entire lot of 16 acres on which the tail race and the miller's cottage are found was included because this land is flat and open and adds the necessary dimension of uncluttered space to preserve the feel of the rural character of the area. The race itself will come under a conservation easement, but Block 1, Lot 1 in its entirety has been included to safeguard against the possible shifting of brook or race.

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Photographs of the Taylor's Mill Historic District were taken by Stephanie Stevens, Readington Township Historian, except for numbers 16 through 19, which were taken by others at earlier times. These four were photographed from prints and new prints were made from them by Arthur Brecknell.

Photographs 1 through 15 were taken between 1985 and 1990 and new prints made from the negatives. These photographs still present the prevailing situation, except in one instance, where the truss bridge seen in the background no longer remains on the site. This has been noted in the description.

Negative repository is the Readington Township Archives, maintained by the Township Historian.

1. Rockaway Road looking west. Mill race is in flood plain to right of road.
2. Taylor's mill seen from intersection of two roads. Rockaway Road is shown on right of picture. Stream is behind photographer and camera is pointed southwesterly. Some idea of the terrain immediately behind the mill and to its side can be obtained, explaining why the mill had an overshot wheel.
3. Taylor's Mill showing its southerly side and mill race, with weeds growing in it. In background the penstock can be seen. Camera is pointed northerly.
4. The penstock directing the flow of water from the mill race above the stone embankment into the mill. Camera is pointed westerly.
5. The dam across the north branch of Rockaway Creek, which diverts the flow of water to the head race. Camera facing north.
6. The head race, looking west.
7. Flood gates on race, looking southerly.
8. Close-up view of flood gates, looking westerly.
9. Iron grates used as leaf catchers above race near its termination at mill. Camera is pointed north.
10. Miller's cottage, showing its relation to mill in background left, to tail race behind house at right, with glimpse of 19th-century iron truss bridge in distant background at right of photograph. At time of construction, no road existed to separate mill and house. Camera is pointing northerly, slightly westerly.

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## PHOTOGRAPHS

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11. Photograph of poor quality (but only one available) taken at time of visit made some years ago, showing corner fireplace wall in front (northwest) room.

12. Photograph taken at same time as No. 11, showing bedroom with plaster walls created in attic.

13. Photograph taken at same time as above two, showing handsplit lath used to attach plaster ceiling over attic rooms.

14. Rockaway Creek opposite the mill, with partial dam of boulders (not related to historic race). In background can be seen quarry operation in Tewksbury Township, which is not too visible when trees are in foliage. Camera is pointing north.

15. Segment of early dry-laid stone wall discovered along head race, function unknown. There may be potential for an archeological dig at some time. (This cannot be pinpointed on a map, but must be located by walking site.)

16. Historic Photograph: Mill, c. 1915. Miller Philip Lance is seen in door opening. Camera is pointing westerly.

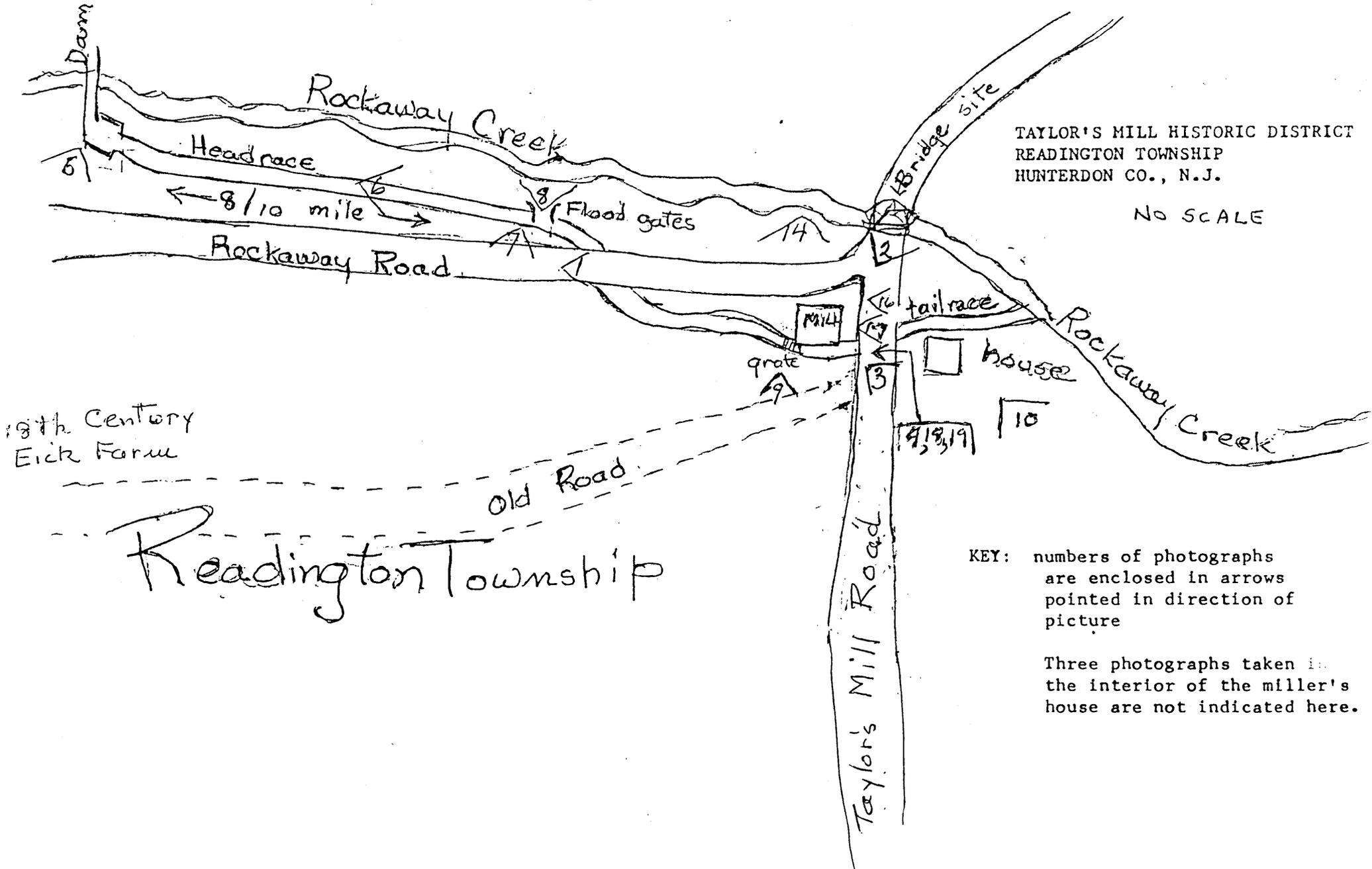
17. Historic Photograph: Miller Philip Lance with bag of grain as it was being hoisted by pulley. Possibly also taken c. 1915.

18. Historic Photograph: Water flashing through penstock, suggesting a break in it. Reveals the force of flow. Construction of side wall of mill as it was at some time in the past and the boulder-built retaining wall, which has not changed much over time. Photographer was facing west.

19. The same scene as in No. 18, but taken at a different time, when more of the side wall appears to be of stone construction. The windows still remain today. This also illustrates the position of the penstock when in use.

# Tewksbury Township

Figure 1



TAYLOR'S MILL HISTORIC DISTRICT  
READINGTON TOWNSHIP  
HUNTERDON CO., N.J.

NO SCALE

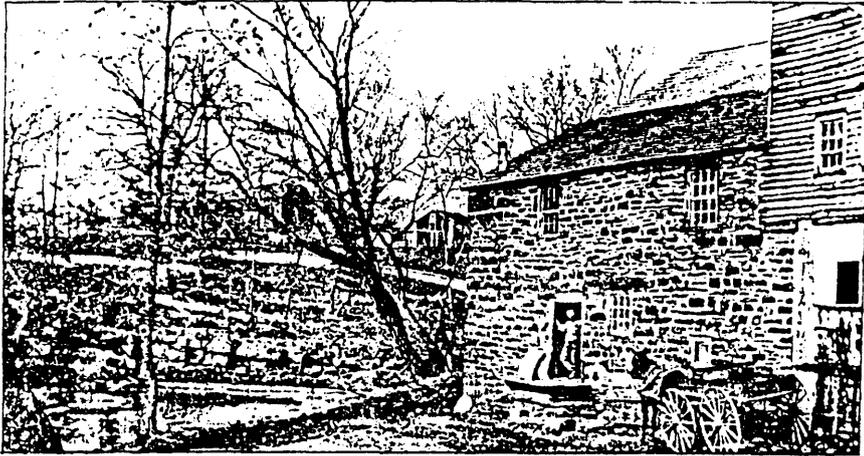
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FIGURE 2

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Taylor's Mill Historic District, Readington  
Township, Hunterdon County, NJ

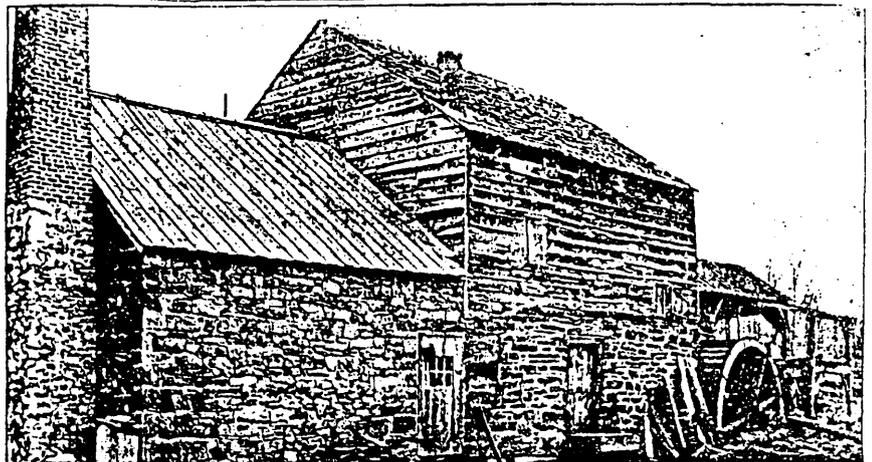


Mill of George Opdycke, son of John Opdycke; about 1770.



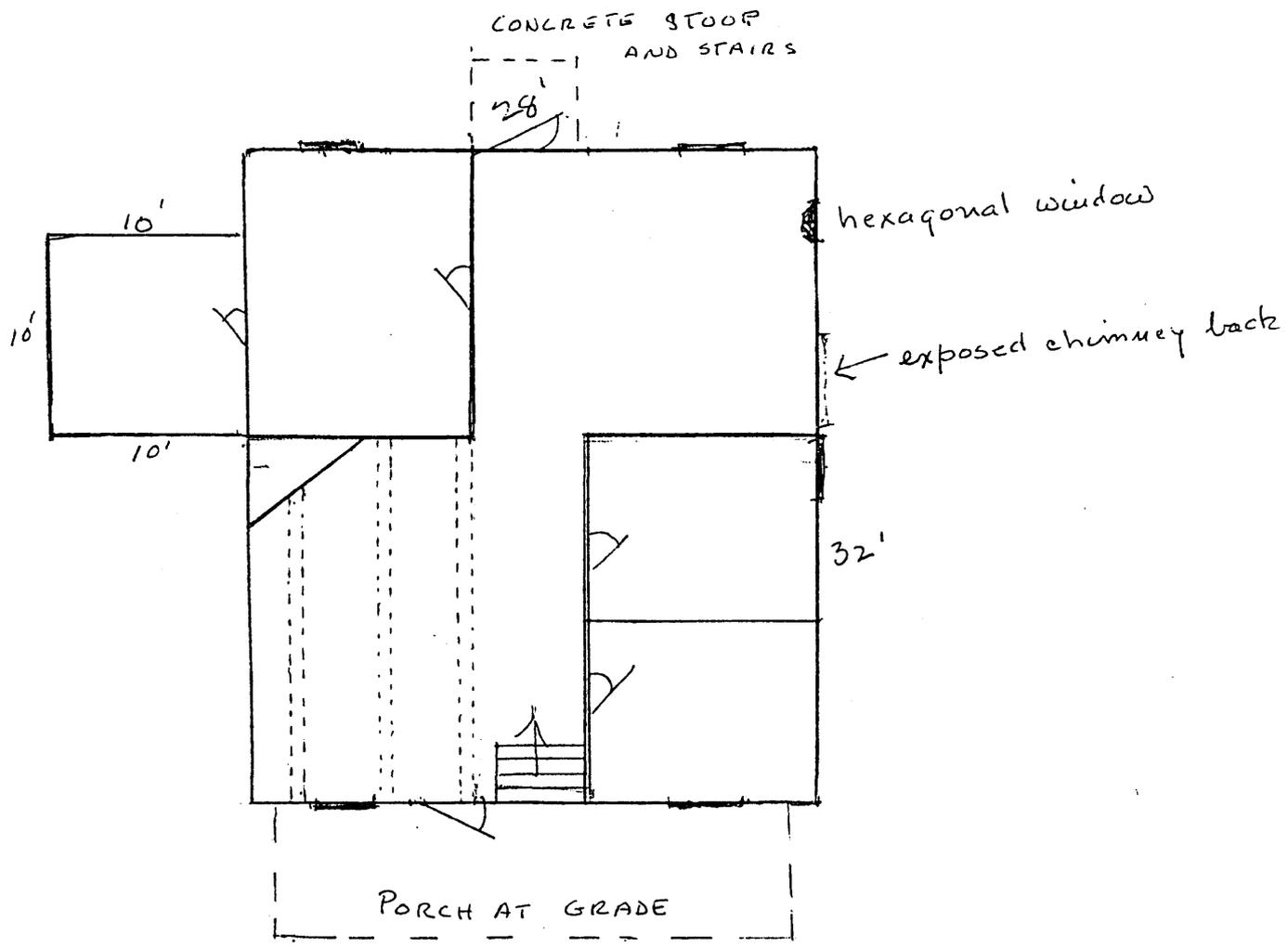
House and Mill of Samuel Opdycke, Hunterdon Co., N. J. Built 1751.

Examples of mill construction  
in Hunterdon County in 18th  
century

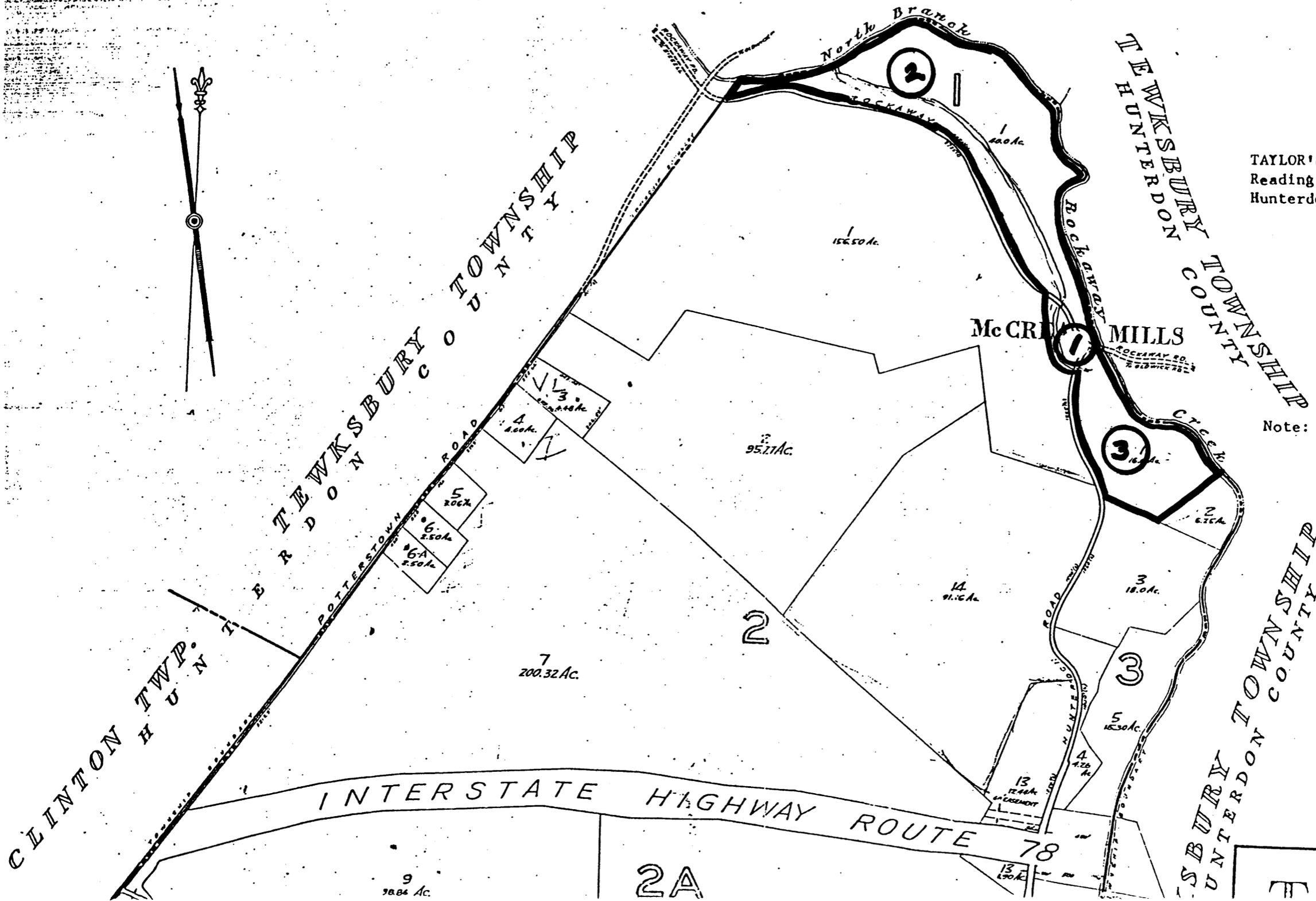
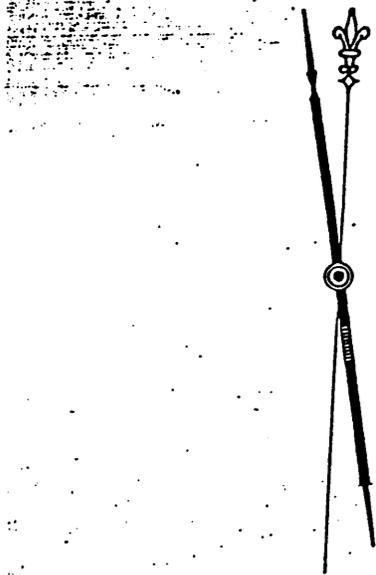


Grist Mill of Thomas Opdycke, son of John Opdycke.

TAYLOR'S MILL HISTORIC DISTRICT  
Readington Township, Hunterdon Co., N.J.  
The Miller's House







TAYLOR'S MILL H.D.  
Readington Township  
Hunterdon Co., N.J.

KEY: numbers in circles  
1=mill  
2=mill race  
3=millers house

Note: Block 2, Lot 1. contains the mill, though a separate lot of 1.9 has been approved to be set off mill. See accompanying map.

ROBERT CROSKER  
ROUTE 316, EMMERTON, N.J.  
REVISED: OCT 10, 1976, JAN 1, 1977, NOV 1, 1977, NOV 1, 1978, MAY 1, 1979, MAY 1, 1980, MAY 1, 1981, MAY 1, 1982, MAY 1, 1983, MAY 1, 1984, MAY 1, 1985, MAY 1, 1986, MAY 1, 1987, MAY 1, 1988, MAY 1, 1989, MAY 1, 1990, MAY 1, 1991, MAY 1, 1992, MAY 1, 1993, MAY 1, 1994, MAY 1, 1995, MAY 1, 1996, MAY 1, 1997, MAY 1, 1998, MAY 1, 1999, MAY 1, 2000, MAY 1, 2001, MAY 1, 2002, MAY 1, 2003, MAY 1, 2004, MAY 1, 2005, MAY 1, 2006, MAY 1, 2007, MAY 1, 2008, MAY 1, 2009, MAY 1, 2010, MAY 1, 2011, MAY 1, 2012, MAY 1, 2013, MAY 1, 2014, MAY 1, 2015, MAY 1, 2016, MAY 1, 2017, MAY 1, 2018, MAY 1, 2019, MAY 1, 2020, MAY 1, 2021, MAY 1, 2022, MAY 1, 2023, MAY 1, 2024, MAY 1, 2025

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MAY 17 1978