**1. NAME**

**COMMON:** Somerset Roller Mills

**AND/OR HISTORIC:***

---

**2. LOCATION**

**STREET AND NUMBER:** NJ Route 29

**CITY OR TOWN:** Titusville vicinity

**CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:** Thirteenth

**STATE:** New Jersey

**CODE:** 314

**COUNTY:** Mercer

**CODE:** 021

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**3. CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

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**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

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**PRESENT USE**

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<th>Military</th>
<th>Religious</th>
<th>Educational</th>
<th>Museum</th>
<th>Scientific</th>
<th>Transportation</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

**OWNER'S NAME:** Miss Ethel Colover

**STREET AND NUMBER:** River Rd.

**CITY OR TOWN:** Titusville

**STATE:** New Jersey

**CODE:** 314

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**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

**COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:** Mercer County Courthouse

**STREET AND NUMBER:** 209 So. Broad St.

**CITY OR TOWN:** Trenton

**STATE:** New Jersey

**CODE:** 314

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**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

**TITLE OF SURVEY:** New Jersey Historic Sites Inventory 1516.5

**DATE OF SURVEY:** 1960

**DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:** Historic Sites Office; Dept. of Environmental Protection

**STREET AND NUMBER:** Box 1420

**CITY OR TOWN:** Trenton

**STATE:** New Jersey

**CODE:** 314
The random masonry buildings are simple and unpretentious, yet direct in the appeal of their wall fabric and periodic expansion. They stand well preserved. Remains of other stone out buildings such as a carriage house and horse barn dot this verdant property. The initial section of the house was a two room, two story house with an off center cooking fireplace in the eastern end wall. This feature, with the exception of its left jamb, seems original, and bears the intriguing inscription "1739" on the end of the oak beam lintel. A simple open three shelved cupboard with a lower closed section occupies the adjacent space. Evidently, the stairway to the second floor, with its bedroom with small fireplace and beaded paneling, always stood at the western wall. Pegged doors and window frames, some with 16th century sash, punctuate the long walls. The chamfered floor joists and beams measure six by three inches. A brick barrel vault on masonry piers in the cellar supports the fireplace and chimney.

An unusual lean to kitchen abuts the eastern end of the original house. Although its northern wall was laid up of stone very similar to that of the old house, the kitchen's eastern and southern walls were brick filled clapboarded frame construction. Its fireplace joins the earlier chimney flue. Because of noticeable, though not complete, line in the masonry wall of the north wall and the absence of a basement under the lean-to, one can conclude that this was a later addition, perhaps only ten years after the initial phase of the house.

The prosperity of the mill is reflected in the large, three bay, back and front parlor house that was probably built circa 1850. Its ogee arch brackets, wide dog-earred door frames, thick molding cornices and panelled doors and the simple Gothic arched fireplaces dictate a mid-century dating. Jonathan T. Comley's acquisition and development of the property corroborate this also. An impressive scale throughout elevated this new house into the small manor house category and left behind the closer modest 16th century living quarters.

The mill was originally one and a half stories high and two window bays long. Splayed window jambs, heavy timber construction with two foot thick longitudinal beams into which the floor joists are set and a tell tale section of the western masonry wall define the first building. The overshot waterwheel, which in its later years was iron, turned outside the eastern facade. We notice two large, puzzling segmentally arched openings, now filled. Eighteenth century pegged window frames and a continuity of masonry suggests that the mill was increased to two and a half stories within a few decades.

Enlargements of this building are difficult to chart, because of the general character of the wall and interior construction and the lack of stylistic evidence. However, it is reasonable to conclude that Comley doubled the size to the west in 1841, and then decked the two parts with another story in 1847. The western cube sports large (cont. page 2)
This small mill complex near the Delaware River and Canal represents a portion of the tradition of rural 18th and 19th century industry that has long since died. The house and the mill building sit besides Jacob Creek and reveal the origins and the growth of the grist mill business in the Delaware Valley. Of simple masonry construction, both buildings were expanded several times and hence show the effects of increased business and prosperity. Devoid of ornamentation, a simplicity in construction and an efficiency in operation characterize the forms of these vernacular buildings.

Tradition states that Isaac Smith received a land grant of 1000 acres from the English Crown in 1726. Presumably he built the first two room, two story house and one story mill sometime thereafter. He began processing grain and corn and shipped it down the Delaware to Philadelphia. The mill derived its power from a raceway that drew water from Jacob's Creek. It is likely that this mill provided flour for the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War.

The Delaware Canal opened in 1834 and seems to have stimulated business considerably. Jonathan T. Comley bought the complex in 1841, and immediately added two stories to the 16th century mill structure. In 1847, he topped the mill with a fifth floor. Shortly thereafter, he probably enlarged the house with spacious three bay, three story bracketed section.

In the last decade of the 19th century, the present owner's father bought the mill and successfully continued the grist operations, until the First World War. After that, automation in mid-western mill took over the field of flour refining and made this small, manual labor operation obsolete. Mr. Conover persisted, although he supplemented his activity with the production of apple cider. Operations ceased in the early years of the Depression.

(continued page 2)
9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

4. Historical Collections of New Jersey, Barber and Howe, page 265, 1644.
6. Title Trace

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY

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<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
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<tr>
<td>SW</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
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</table>

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES

<table>
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APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: about 5

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

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11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Connie Grieff; Annette Carter; with revisions Historic Sites Staff

ORGANIZATION
Mercer County Cultural and Heritage Comm.

DATE
March, 1974

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National [ ] State [ ] Local [X]

Name
David J. Barnes

Commissioner, Dept. of Environmental Protection

Date July 1, 1974

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

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 11/19/74

ATTEST:

Keeper of the National Register

Date 11/18/74

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES
7. Description (cont.)

Somerset Roller Mills
Mercer County 021
New Jersey 34

stone blocks at the corners, which were reportedly dragged across the frozen Delaware in the winter. Two tablets, one dated 1841, and the other dated 1847, appear in the top level. The former, relating to the western cube section, may have been transferred into the upper level of the north wall. The interior shows two interior timber frame constructions, reflecting the two distinct building periods.

8. Sign. In conclusion, the Somerset Roller Mills and house is a well preserved, modest industrial group in a rural setting. First, it documents the beginnings, the development and the final demise of a vital manufacturing process in pre-20th century America. Persistence, honesty and a well-chosen location accounted for its success. Automated machinery spelled its doom.

Furthermore, it provides us with excellent examples of simple, vernacular buildings of the 18th and 19th centuries. The rugged construction and various additions tell the story of its development.

Congressional Representation:

Thirteenth District: Joseph Maraziti
Clifford Case, Senator
Harrison Williams, Senator
Somerset Roller Mills
Mercer County (021)
New Jersey 34

7. Description continued

There are the two buildings on the property along with two foundations of buildings.

There is some equipment left in the mill that has not yet been identified. There are some millstones of French granite composition in the mill.
1. NAME

COMMON: Somerset Roller Mill

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: River Rd.

CITY OR TOWN: Titusville

STATE: New Jersey

3. MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE: Historic Sites Section Hand drawn sketch map

SCALE: October, 1974

4. REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS
1. Property boundaries where required.
2. North arrow.
3. Latitude and longitude reference.
Somerset Roller Mill
Mercer County (021)
New Jersey 34
Sketch Map
1974