

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

March 16, 2012

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Peirce Mill (expanded nomination)

other names/site number Pierce Mill

2. Location

street & number NW corner of Tilden Street and Beach Drive, N.W. (Rock Creek Park) not for publication

city or town Washington vicinity

state District of Columbia code DC county N/A code 001 zip code 20015

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide X local

DAVID MALONEY, DC SHPO
Signature of certifying official/Title

12/23/2010
Date

DC HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. 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:) Accept Additional Documentation

Patrick Andrews
Signature of the Keeper

4/26/2012
Date of Action

Peirce Mill (amended nomination)
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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
 (Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
 (Check only **one** box.)

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

<input type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
0	0	district
0	1	site
0	1	structure
0	0	object
0	2	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

1 (mill with tail-race)

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Current Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

PROCESSING/manufacturing facility

RECREATION AND CULTURE/museum

COMMERCE/restaurant

RECREATION AND CULTURE/museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Materials
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: Early-Nineteenth-Century Grist Mill

foundation: STONE: Granite

walls: STONE: Granite

WOOD: Weatherboard

roof: WOOD: Shingle

other:

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

SUMMARY PARAGRAPH

Peirce Mill, located within Rock Creek Park, is situated on the western bank of Rock Creek immediately north of the intersection of Tilden Street and Beach Drive, N.W. Sloping gently towards the water, the surrounding area is marked by mature maple and oak trees interlaced by a series of pedestrian trails. Three-rail wood fencing lines the western corner of the parcel adjacent to a concrete sidewalk. Bluestone pavers extend south from the sidewalk, passing a drinking fountain, to provide access to Peirce Mill. Landscaping in the front yard is limited to immature plantings and trees and a historical sign. The mill, which is sited to the northwest, is set in a slight depression, caused by numerous alterations to the surrounding roadbed and bridge. Peirce Mill is a large, two-and-one-half-story granite structure that is an interpretation of the vernacular style promulgated through the Pennsylvania Quaker building tradition. Designed and constructed by Isaac Peirce, the mill was constructed in 1829 and presents a predominately unaltered example of a nineteenth-century grist mill. Characteristic of the utilitarian building ethos of the Pennsylvania Quakers, Peirce Mill was not embellished with architectural elements suggestive of any high-style architectural influences. Indicative of many vernacular buildings constructed at this time, the mill was constructed of granite native to the area and minimally detailed. Laid with lime mortar, the building has blue granite walls of randomly coursed and sized stones. At the corners of the building, quoins are created using oversized stones, some with the veins running vertically. Detailing at the roofline, although minimal, includes the overhanging eaves, molded rafter ends, and interior-corner brick chimney with an angled brick stack. The mill is symmetrically fenestrated with double-hung, 12/8 wood-sash windows with simple stone lintels and wood surrounds. Narrow 6/6 windows pierce the upper-gable ends. The northwest (façade) elevation has a centrally located main entry with a vertical-board batten door with metal strap hinges, lock box, and pull latch. Set in a wood surround, the opening is sheltered by a narrow doorhood with wood shingles supported by outriggers. This door opening is mirrored on the southwest (side) and southeast (rear) elevations. A flume and tail-race flank the northeast (side) elevation of the mill. Feeding into Rock Creek, the tail-race is integrated into the mill structure.

Narrative Description

SITE DESCRIPTION

Peirce Mill is located near the southern end of Rock Creek Park, and is situated on the western bank of Rock Creek immediately north of the intersection of Tilden Street and Beach Drive, N.W. The mill is sited to the northwest with the rear of the building essentially parallel to Rock Creek. Visitor access to Peirce Mill is by automobile via Tilden Street, and by foot or bicycle via multi-use trails developed from nineteenth-century roads and early-twentieth-century bridle paths. Tilden Street, a dirt road that originally forded the creek just south of the mill, has always provided access to the rural mill. A multi-use trail flanks the western banks of Rock Creek aside Peirce Mill. Primarily open but marked with mature trees, this parcel slopes gently east towards the bank of the tree-lined creek. A densely vegetated steep embankment off of Tilden Street defines the area directly south of the mill. Whereas the area east of the mill is marked by mature trees, the open space behind the mill affords unobstructed views south towards Rock Creek and the Peirce Mill dam with integrated fish ladder.

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The grade of the north side of Tilden Street adjacent to the bridge crossing Rock Creek is substantially raised from its early-nineteenth-century appearance. A two-lane vehicular and pedestrian bridge has a plate girder design consisting of three simple spans with an overall length of 178 feet and width of 29 feet. This is the oldest extant bridge in Rock Creek Park, and as such conveys the changes to the physical setting of Peirce Mill at the turn of the twentieth century. Steel girders rest on stone piers and concrete abutments are faced with granite that was built in 1872 to support the original wooden superstructure. To allow for this type of structure, the grade on both the east and west approaches was raised slightly, beginning the gradual process of increasing separation between the roadway, the mill yard, and the mill.

An asphalt-paved pull-off extends northeast from Tilden Street and extends north of the mill to a small parking lot. The mid-nineteenth-century road that connected Peirce Mill to Blagden Mill, currently used as a multi-use trail, extends from the northern end of this parking lot to Broad Branch Road. The access road was closed in the 1960s and parking lots installed at both ends. As a result of the roadwork, the grade north of the site was raised substantially, enhancing the mill's sunken appearance.

The landscape surrounding the mill itself reflects alterations imposed by the building and interpretive programs of many eras. The tail-race, which leads from the mill wheel located on the northeast elevation of the mill, dates to the late 1960s. A slight depression in the landscape reveals the more extensive path of the tail-race. A non-original flume, attached to the northeast elevation of the mill, extends beyond the front elevation of the building up to the sidewalk. A concrete sidewalk extends alongside the parking lot and extends south to the east of Peirce Mill to intersect the Rock Creek Trail. Three-rail split fencing extends around the mill. Bluestone pavers, installed with the creation of the late 1960s living history interpretive program, step down the inclined front yard towards the main entry. Landscaping immediately around the building consists of immature trees, hedge rows, and planting beds. Foundation plantings continue down the southwest (side) elevation of the mill, where large bluestones form a rudimentary set of steps for a side entry. The 1969 National Register nomination for Peirce Mill made note of the sloping site and an approach of stones, one of which was an old grinding stone.¹

The mill is part of a much larger complex known as the Peirce Mill Complex, which encompasses 20.7 acres that also includes a barn and spring house, wooded buffer area, picnic areas, historic roads and the headrace area. The barn is located to the north/northwest. The spring house is located to the northwest, on what is now a median at the center of Tilden Street. Wooded buffer area and Rock Creek flank the historic road and headrace area that is located to the north of the mill. Picnic areas are located to the south of Tilden Street, east of Rock Creek and north of the headrace area. This nomination includes Peirce Mill with tail-race, dam, bridge, and archeological site, sitting on 15.612 acres of the larger complex.

Development of the landscape in which the mill is located is detailed in the Cultural Landscapes Inventory:

The land surrounding Peirce Mill is a remnant landscape defined by its use through three periods of development from 1800 to 1950. During the nineteenth century, Peirce Mill, as a privately owned milling and agricultural enterprise, contained orchards, transportation routes, agricultural clusters, and pasture land. After the transfer of the property with the creation of Rock Creek Park in 1890, Peirce Mill was renovated as a picturesque tea house and picnic grounds. With the restoration of the mill and wagon barn/stable in the 1930s, the landscape underwent extensive alteration to function as a living history museum interpreting nineteenth-century milling activities. Currently, the site is used for visitor recreation and historic interpretive programming.

¹ Nancy C. Taylor, "Peirce Mill," National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form (Washington, DC: 1969).

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This multi-layering of history has resulted in a site which retains limited integrity to any one period of significance, but provides an interesting chronology of park land development and preservation philosophy.²

The landscape in which the mill is located is described in the Cultural Landscapes Report:

The Peirce Mill historic landscape is located within the watershed of Rock Creek and reflects the geology, pedology, and hydrology of the creek and its tributaries. The large scale topography of the site has been formed by the hydrological forces and the erosion of Rock Creek. The topography surrounding the grist mill is characterized by a relatively flat and narrow plain extending west approximately 150 yards from the creek. The land then rises in an eastern facing slope. Artificial grading, the result of various road and race building episodes, further defines the landform immediately surrounding the mill. In addition, three creek tributaries historically flowed east into Rock Creek in proximity to Peirce Mill.

The landscape surrounding the mill itself reflects alterations imposed by the building and interpretive programs of many eras. The raceway, which leads from the mill wheel, located on the northeast (side) elevation, east to the creek dates to the late 1960s. A slight depression in the landscape reveals the more extensive path of the 1936 race restoration which was filled in during the late 1960s.

The current Peirce Mill landscape is characterized by a mix of both native and exotic vegetation. Areas utilized for interpretation, circulation and picnicking are relatively open, typically covered in light turf interspersed with canopy trees. There is very little vegetation adjacent to the buildings. At the mill, a medium sized flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*) is located at the southwest corner of the building. Directly south of the building is a crabapple (*Malus* sp.). The area immediately south of the mill is a sloped embankment with dense vegetation. Although choked by invasive growth, some native species are present including sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*), tuliptree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*), oak (*Quercus* sp.), one large sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*) and a crabapple (*Malus* sp.) To the east of the mill, turf spreads out to the retaining wall at the creek edge. Along the edge of the creek north of the millrace, there is a dense grouping of shrubs covered in invasive vines. The area to the north of the mill is primarily open, characterized by a groundcover of turf with single trees including American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), maple (*Acer* sp.) and oak (*Quercus* sp.) planted at irregular intervals. The cleared area to the west of the mill is also turf. This turf extends west to a flower bed which lines the eastern edge of the sidewalk. This planting bed is filled with annuals during the summer season. A hedge of shrubs extends from the sidewalk to the north. A clump of lilacs (*Syringa* sp.) is located near the mill race.

A historic road trace is located to the north of Peirce Mill. Constructed as a wagon route between Peirce Mill and Blagden Mill in the early nineteenth-century, this section of road is now used as a multi-use trail. Just north of the mill the multi-use trail curves to the east side of the mill, passing between it and the creek. It then passes under Tilden Street bridge and through the southern meadow area on an asphalt paved path, following the alignment of the creek.

² National Park Service, Peirce Mill-Rock Creek Park, Cultural Landscapes Inventory, 1998, revised 2003, Part 1:5.

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Much of the existing pedestrian circulation system on the east side of the Peirce Mill parking lot dates from the late 1960s rehabilitation of the millrace and subsequent interpretive program. The walkways are covered with varying rectangular shaped bluestone pavers. A bluestone path leads from the concrete sidewalk which borders the parking lot west of the mill to the western entrance of the mill structure. A primary interpretive path extends from the parking lot and follows the alignment of the millrace east, almost to the multi-use trail.

Many of the historic views associated with the Peirce Mill landscaped have been obscured by volunteer vegetation and alterations to the landscape. Invasive vines cover much of the riparian vegetation which grows thickly along the water's edge, screening views of the creek. The east facing slope, west of the mill where the nineteenth-century orchards were located, is now grown up in beech, maple, and oak. The area where the Peirce/Shoemaker residence [to the northwest of the mill] once stood, now outside the boundaries of the park, is screened from park visitors. Changes in elevation of the Tilden Street bridge have truncated views, which were visible from the mill during the nineteenth century. For instance, the view of the southern meadow from Peirce Mill has been prevented by the construction of the elevated Tilden Street bridge. This lack of view separates a landscape that once illustrated the connection between the milling and the agricultural enterprises of the Peirce/Shoemaker family.

There are three primary constructed water features which were integral to the development of the Peirce Mill landscape. These are the late nineteenth-century crib dam, the circa 1904 boulder dam, and the 1935 millrace. Remnant rock piles of the crib dam cross Rock Creek at an angle approximately one hundred yards north of Peirce Mill. The boulder dam, built on a foundation of concrete with a field stone facing on the downstream side, remains in place. It is one hundred feet long and has a spillway of forty feet located in the center. Masonry wings were added to the dam in 1905. During the 1930s restoration of Peirce Mill, the height of the dam was increased and the boulders were repointed by the Civilian Conservation Corp. Depressions in the landscape are visible at the former locations of the crib dam millrace and the later 1930s millrace closer to the mill. Recently, a stone fish ladder was constructed on the east bank of the creek directly south of the boulder dam. The fish ladder figures prominently in view from Peirce Mill to the east toward the creek and toward the boulder dam.³

PEIRCE MILL

PEIRCE MILL EXTERIOR

Parts of the following detailed architectural description of the Peirce Mill can be found in the *National Park Service Cultural Landscapes Inventory of Peirce Mill, 1998, Revised 2003*, as well as in the *National Park Service Historic Structures Report, 2000*. Sentences have been added and certain sections have been omitted or rearranged for clarity.

Peirce Mill is a large two-and-one-half-story, three-bay structure easily identifiable in the typical form of an early-nineteenth-century stone mill. Set on a solid granite foundation, this rectangular building is 50 feet and 1 inch wide by 40 feet deep. Laid with lime mortar, the building has blue granite walls of randomly coursed and sized stones. At the corners of the building, quoins are created using oversized stones, some with the veins

³ National Park Service, Peirce Mill-Rock Creek Park, Cultural Landscapes Report, 2009, 3.1-3.23.

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running vertically. The walls are about 30 inches thick in the basement, 24 inches thick above the first floor, and 23 inches thick to the underside of the roof rafters. Tapering occurs at the interior face of the walls. The southwest (side) upper-gable end is composed of stone with a date stone inscribed "B.I.P. 1829." In contrast is the northeast (side) upper-gable end, which is frame-construction clad in weatherboard siding.

Capping Peirce Mill is a simple side-gabled roof with the ridge in the northeast/southwest axis. Wood shingles cover the roof. Pronounced overhanging eaves along the façade (northwest elevation) and southeast (rear) elevation have open cornices accentuated by large exposed girders and rafters sistered to decorative curved ends. Of note are the wooden box gutters that are hung from the roof fascia. With no downspouts, the north end of the gutter is open to allow roof run-off to fall. Raking boards complete the roof ends. The roof has only one penetration, an angled brick chimney located in the southern corner of the mill.

Fenestration of the building is straight forward, with first- and second-story window openings containing 12/8, double-hung, wood sash set in square-edge wood surrounds with ogee-molded back banding. Stone lintels complete the exterior of these openings. The façade has a centrally located main entry with a vertical-board batten door with metal strap hinges, lock box, and pull latch. Set in a wood surround, the opening is sheltered by a narrow doorhood with wood shingles supported by outriggers. Two window openings flank the door opening while three windows are located on the second story, and two are below-grade.

The southwest (side) elevation has a vertical-board Dutch door centrally located. Set in a thick wood surround, this opening is also sheltered by a narrow doorhood with wood shingles supported by outriggers. Two windows flank the door opening while two window openings pierce the second story. Two 6/6, double-hung, wood-sash windows pierce the upper-gable end.

The northeast (side) elevation has two window openings on the first and second stories. The upper-gable end, which has a wood-frame structure clad in weatherboard siding, is pierced by two 6/6, double-hung, wood-sash windows set in narrow, square-edge wood surrounds. Connected to the first story is a flume. This wooden structure is approximately five feet wide and cantilevered over the race and water wheel on a stone wall. On the opposite side of the water wheel is the tail-race, which extends south to Rock Creek. Lined with dressed granite stones, this tail-race is approximately seven feet wide. This feature, attached to the mill structure, was added in 1936.

Due to the slope of the Peirce Mill site, the southeast (rear) elevation has a walk-up basement. The lower level is pierced by a centrally located vertical-board Dutch door set in a wood surround with stone lintel. A metal grille has been attached to the opening for security reasons. Stone steps provide access to the below-grade door opening. The lower-level window openings have been altered with horizontal bars screening internal shutters. Stone lintels and narrow, square-edge wood surrounds complete these small openings. The first and second stories are symmetrically fenestrated with three windows.

EXTERIOR ALTERATIONS

There have been few major alterations to the building itself. In 1931, a one-story, screen porch measuring 19 by 40 feet with a side-gabled roof was constructed on the northeast (side) elevation. The first-story window openings on the northeast (side) elevation were converted to door openings to accommodate access to the teahouse porch. Although removed in 1936, anchorage points remain. New sash was installed in the window openings as part of the restoration. Located on the exterior walls are miscellaneous abandoned metal anchors

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such as conduit penetrations, downspout anchors, and a few miscellaneous nails and spikes. The angled brick chimney was a product of the 1936 restoration. This reproduction was based on the lines of the original stack.⁴

Sash: The original sash configuration is unknown. Several photographs from the late nineteenth century document the existence of 6/6, double-hung, wood-sash windows. In the teahouse period (1906-1934), 2/2, double-hung, wood-sash windows were installed. As part of the 1936 restoration, 12/8, double-hung, wood-sash windows were installed. It is not known why this configuration was chosen. Window frames and surrounds appear to be unaltered.

Dormers: Two dormers were added to the southeastern slope of the roof as part of the teahouse alterations. The front-gabled dormers held 6/6, double-hung, wood-sash windows. The dormers were removed in the 1935 restoration.

Exterior Doors and Hardware: Based on indications in the 1935 restoration drawings, the basement batten door was replaced, while the frame was repaired. The door and frame on the southwest (side elevation) leading into the first level, were both existing and were indicated for repair. There is no documentation at this time regarding the door hardware.

Rock Creek Park Inscription: Located in the western corner of the façade, approximately 5 feet from ground level, "ROCK CREEK PARK" has been inscribed onto the stone exterior.

Mechanical Room Addition: On the southwest (side) elevation, near the southern corner, a small granite addition was built against the mill. Constructed in the 1960s, this small addition has a side-gabled roof of wood shingles with a plain fascia board. Two metal ventilation pipes pierce the roof. Access is via a below-grade door opening on the southeast (rear) elevation. Concrete steps with sidewalls lead to a single-leaf metal door. A three-light awning window is located on the southwest (side) elevation.

PEIRCE MILL INTERIOR

Located in the Attachments are schematics which explain in detail the inner workings of the milling machinery set in place at Peirce Mill.

The interior of the building is largely undecorated, exposed stone and timber construction with utilitarian character. Like most mills of the period, the interior is woody, stark, and arranged for functional tasks.⁵ Open and partially enclosed wood stairs in the northern corner of the building connect all four floors. In the first and second floor, the machinery takes up about half of the available floor space. There is a substantial heavy timber support frame that occupies the basement and first-floor level on the northeast side. This style of wooden support structure, with many closely spaced vertical timbers, is known as a Hurst frame. The Hurst frame, unattached to the building's structure, serves to separate the tremendous forces exerted by the mill wheel and gears from the stone structure.

The first, second, and third (attic) floors are supported on a wood joist system. Most of the timber framing appears to date from the original construction of the mill. The sizes, shapes, joining techniques, and chiseled numbering of individual elements all speak to early-nineteenth-century framing methods. There have been many repairs, and perhaps modifications, to individual wooden elements over the nineteenth and twentieth

⁴ William Bushong, "Historic Resource Study: Rock Creek Park," National Park Service, August 1990, 167.

⁵ Martha and Murray Zimiles, *Early American Mills* (New York, NY: Bramhall House, 1973), 40.

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centuries, using materials and techniques available at the time of the repair. Many of these are distinguishable due to distinctive texture, size, or material.

Major beams, known as summerbeams, occur at each floor along the building center line. The beams are pocketed into the north and south gable-end walls at each floor, except at the first floor where the summerbeam terminates just short of the Hurst frame. The summerbeam is supported by three columns at each floor. There is an additional column in the basement supporting the south end of the beam. (Presumably, this is a modification.) The columns and the beams are hand-hewn, square cut, and exceed 12 by 12 inches in cross section. At the top of each column is a wooden haunch, or beam set. These haunches have some shaping, which forms a very subtle decorative pattern. The longest summerbeam sections are 30 feet in length. One end of the floor joists is mortised into the summerbeams. Support members located in the basement have been substantially reinforced, repaired, or replaced. The bases of the columns in the basement appear to have been repaired numerous times. Flagstones, granite, and pressure treated lumber were used in these repairs

The joists are mostly oak, but some are pine. A few first-floor joists that have fracturing or cracking have had a second joist 'sistered' to them. The joists supporting the first floor range in thickness from three to four inches and in depth from nine to eleven inches. The upper floor joists range in thickness from two-and-a-half inches to three inches and in depth from eight to ten inches. The joists have indications of being circular sawn, vertical sawn, and, in some cases hand-hewn. The beams and columns are hand hewn, and so are assumed to be original.

The mill machinery is not original to the building. However, it is the product of a 1935 restoration that used technically skilled craftsman to reconstruct missing parts and incorporate parts from other milling machinery that came from similar mills in Pennsylvania and Maryland.

The main drive gears in the north end of the basement transfer their power vertically through the floors via a main drive shaft. Gears, belts, and secondary shafts then spread the power to the equipment on each floor. The main drive shaft, elevators, and some miscellaneous equipment penetrate from one floor to the next. Most of the components are wood construction.

Basement: The basement has a poured concrete floor, on which the support columns have been placed. The northwest wall has an approximately 3 feet high knee wall that extends to form the mill wheel pit in the northeastern end of the basement. Due to the building's stone construction, the interior walls are canted as the width of the wall decreases in proportion to height. The window openings on the southeast and northwest walls are canted and have stone sills and wide wood lintels. An air-conditioning unit has been installed in an opening on the southwest wall, and a rectangular fireplace is located in the southern corner. Located in the northern corner is a simple boxed staircase. The stair has solid pine treads, open risers, and a 2x4 handrail. The top of the stair forms a dog-leg, resulting in an L-shaped stair opening confined by a simple two-board railing.

Temporary metal jack supports and I-beams were installed during the more recent restoration of the building.

First Floor: The main floor, unlike the basement, has wood flooring and is bathed in natural light due to the nine window openings. These deep openings have stone sills and wood lintels that extend only half the depth of the opening. Door openings on the northwest and southwest walls have large wood lintels. Of note are the many support beams with chamfered edges, a stylistic embellishment uncharacteristic of nineteenth-century utilitarian buildings. Also, the interior walls have been painted on multiple occasions. A stone chimney projects from the southern corner of the first floor. East of the main entry is a straight-flight boxed staircase enclosed with vertical bead board and accessed via a single-leaf door. Extending northeast to the second floor, a handrail attached to

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the exterior wall accompanies the staircase. The second-floor opening has a vertical-board balustrade with molded handrail.

Second Floor: Illuminated by 10 window openings, the second floor benefits greatly from natural light. The window openings, though not as deep as the first-floor examples, do feature the same stone sills and half wooden lintels that span only the interior portion of the opening. Milling machinery dominates the second floor. Less refined than the first floor, the second-floor walls are untreated and most of the support beams are not chamfered. The western corner of the second floor has been enclosed with plywood and a single-leaf, paneled wood door. Floor joists for the third floor are set on a wood sill plate set in the stone structure. A stone chimney occupies the southern corner of the floor. Located in the northern corner is an L-shaped stair. The boxed staircase is open with a two-board rail balustrade up the first three treads. From the landing to the third floor (attic), the stair is enclosed with beaded vertical board accessed via a single-leaf, vertical-board door with strap hinges.

Third Floor (Attic): The upper floor of the Peirce Mill has been finished with wood flooring and two window openings on each gable end. Like the openings on the first and second floors, these feature stone sills and wood lintels spanning only the interior half of the opening. Characteristic of early colonial construction techniques, the ridge beam was omitted. The rafters are joined at the ridge with mortise-and-tenon joints with large wooden pegs. Most of the framing system is oak, with pine utilized for a few repairs. Rafters penetrate the stone walls that rise slightly above the third floor. These ends extend out and rest on a sill plate which, in turn, rests on the third-floor joists that also penetrate the wall cap. At the mid-span of the rafters, a large timber queen post extends up at an angle from the regularly spaced large horizontal timbers in the attic framing. This post supports purlins, which run the length of the roof. Though the heavy timber construction forms a substantial bracing system, the design does not create a rafter truss, often found in other timber-framed attics. This design does, however, provide the maximum vertical clearance and usable space in the attic. The queen posts are placed at an angle so as to maximize the useable floor area in the attic. (Most barn-type structures would have these elements perpendicular to the roof plane.) There are two members that appear to have been added at approximately six feet above the attic floor. These heavy timbers appear to be reused members installed for the purpose of hoisting machinery or to stabilize the movements of the roof. Located in the southern corner of the floor is the top of the stone chimney shaft, partially parged and substantially tapered from the lower levels. The rotated brick stack is built on top of the chimney shaft.

INTERIOR ALTERATIONS:

Peirce Mill has undergone multiple interior alterations and been configured to meet the needs of its operators, whether they be a miller, a tearoom owner, or the National Park Service. Currently, much of the interior of the mill is being restored, thanks in large part to an agreement between the National Park Service and the Friends of Peirce Mill, a local non-profit organization. Interior restoration centers on the installation of a new mill wheel and associated gearing and stones.

Structural: Two basement post-and-beam shoring locations are indicated in the 1935 NPS restoration drawings. The first is the addition of new shoring to support the joist ends at the west wall. The second alteration indicated is for removal of two existing joist mid-span shoring systems. (Currently, these mid-span locations have been shored in a manner similar to those indicated for removal in the 1935 drawings, suggesting that they were eventually replaced.)

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1974 Shoring: Two sets per floor of five by five inch post-and-beam support systems were added in 1974 to cut the span of the joists in half. The configuration and placement is consistent at each floor. This support was provided on an emergency basis, and was not designed to imitate the historic materials and construction.

Stair Changes: Currently, there are four flights of stairs in the northern corner of the building. The basement stairs are indicated on the drawings to have been repaired during the 1935 restoration. The first- to second-floor flight was replaced as part of the 1935 restoration. The second- to third-floor (attic) flight is indicated to exist in the teahouse period, and repaired in the 1935 restoration. It was an enclosed stair as early as 1909.

Repairs: There have been a variety of repairs to structural framing through the twentieth century that continue today. Many of these are visually discernable, while others were undertaken to be invisible. These are minor changes that do not impact the character or overall condition of the structure. At the time of the 2010 on-site survey, the grinding platform in the northeast end of the first floor was being rebuilt using compatible materials. The platform is elevated approximately two feet from the floor and includes three large openings.

Other Changes: The following items from the teahouse period were removed during the 1935 restoration: a small kitchen and a temporary storage room in the basement, a first-floor partition wall of chestnut and doors at the east third of the building, and toilet and rest rooms on the second floor. The basement floor is poured-in-place concrete. It existed prior to the 1935 restoration, as drawings from the restoration called for concrete repairs to be made. It is in sound condition, with little evidence of movement or cracking. The National Park Service has erected an office on the second floor.

PEIRCE MILL DAM

Located east of the mill, the dam was constructed in 1904 by Otto Strange to improve the site's scenic qualities. Built for approximately four thousand dollars, according to the Cultural Landscape Report, the "boulder dam reflects the Picturesque aesthetic, prominent at the beginning of the twentieth century. Utilizing native materials and a rustic building technique, the dam was constructed purely as a means of improving the beauty of the Peirce Mill picnic area and tea house by providing a focal point in the landscape. The sound of falling water provided a pleasant background noise. The dam, built on a foundation of concrete with a field stone facing on the downstream side, serves no milling function. The dam is one hundred feet long and has centrally located spillway of forty feet. Masonry wings were added to the dam in 1905. During the 1930s restoration of Peirce Mill, the height of the dam was increased and the boulders were repointed by the Civilian Conservation Corp."⁶ A fish ladder was constructed adjacent to the eastern end of the dam in 2007.

PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE

This pedestrian bridge, part of the paved multi-use trail, is located southeast of Peirce Mill adjacent to Rock Creek. Set on the stone walls of the tail-race, this wooden bridge has two rails with angled reinforcements.

PEIRCE MILL ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE (51NW154)

Information presented in a technical report on the site published in 2011 by John Bedell of The Louis Berger Group reads, "The Peirce Mill (Site 51NW154) is a standing stone mill built by Isaac Peirce in 1829. When Isaac Peirce acquired the mill property in 1794, it included at the very least the wooden mill and dwelling house that were part of the property prior to purchase and noted on previous surveys and assessments. Peirce added

⁶ National Park Service, Peirce Mill-Rock Creek Park, Cultural Landscapes Report, 2009, 4.34.

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improvements to the property, including the spring house or ice house (1801), carriage house (1807), cow barn (circa 1810), distillery (1811), log miller's house (circa 1820), and potato house (date unknown).⁷

The immediate surrounds of the Peirce Mill have been extensively disturbed. The only nineteenth-century remains noted during the 2010-2011 monitoring of the Peirce Mill rehabilitation project were two pieces of an unmortared stone wall that is almost certainly part of the historic mill race. "This wall was noted about 25 feet northeast of the mill, along the north side of the excavation made for the new race, and then...175 feet north of the mill. Much of this wall will remain buried on the site."⁸

INVENTORY

NAME	DATE	TYPE	CONTRIBUTING STATUS	STATUS IN 1969 NOMINATION
Peirce Mill with Tail-Race	1829	Building	Contributing	Contributing
Peirce Mill Dam	1904/c.1935/ 2007	Structure	Non-Contributing	Contributing
Pedestrian Bridge	circa 1990	Structure	Non-Contributing	Not Considered/ No Mention
Peirce Mill Archeological Site (51NW154)	Early Nineteenth Century	Site	Non-Contributing	Not Considered/ No Mention

⁷ The Louis Berger Group, Inc., "Archeological Monitoring at Peirce Mill (Site 51NW154) Rock Creek Park, Washington, D.C., Final Technical Report," National Park Service, August 2011.

⁸ The Louis Berger Group, Inc., "Archeological Monitoring at Peirce Mill (Site 51NW154) Rock Creek Park, Washington, D.C., Final Technical Report," National Park Service, August 2011.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture
Industry

Period of Significance

1829-1897
1934-1936

Significant Dates

1829
1897
1934-1936

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

Peirce, Isaac

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Period of Significance (justification)

The periods of significance extend from 1829 to 1897 and 1934 to 1936. The 1829 date signifies the construction of the mill by Isaac Peirce on the western bank of Rock Creek. In 1897, the shaft of the turbine broke; this marked the last time the mill was leased to and operated by private millers.

The 1934-1936 restoration of Peirce Mill was a Public Works Administration (PWA) project. It was one of the first preservation and restoration efforts undertaken by the National Park Service, and included the restoration of building elements to their early-nineteenth-century appearance and a notable reconstruction of nineteenth-century milling machinery.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

NA

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

Peirce Mill, constructed in 1829, stands as the only extant water-driven grist mill in the District of Columbia. This unique visual landmark serves as a symbol of the milling industry that once flourished along Rock Creek in Washington County (now Northwest Washington, D.C.) The mill, the second such structure on the site, was designed and built by Isaac Peirce and served as the centerpiece to the family's almost 2,000-acre industrial-agricultural complex that also included a sawmill, distillery, nursery, orchards, and other related enterprises. The vernacular mill, erected of blue granite quarried locally from the undulating landscape of Rock Creek, reflects the building traditions of Peirce's own Pennsylvania Quaker heritage. Peirce Mill was one of eight mills situated along Rock Creek in the nineteenth century, each reflecting the importance this local industry played in the establishment and development of the city of Washington. Peirce Mill is the sole remaining mill from this significant period in the history of Rock Creek and Washington, D.C. A part of Rock Creek Park since 1892 and under the direction of the National Park Service since 1933, Peirce Mill was meticulously restored to its original 1829 appearance as part of a Public Works Administration (PWA) project. This was one of the first preservation and restoration efforts undertaken by the National Park Service, and was conducted under the direction of Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes. The 1935 project, entitled "Restoration of Peirce Mill," was supervised by esteemed architects and architectural historians Thomas Tileston Waterman and Charles E. Peterson. Today, Peirce Mill is the only operational, early-nineteenth-century grist mill maintained by the National Park Service. Locally significant, Peirce Mill is eligible under Criteria A and C with periods of significance extending from 1829 to 1897 and 1934 to 1936. The boundaries, inclusive of 15.612 acres, were depicted by the "Map Showing the Boundaries and Properties of the Proposed Rock Creek Park, Washington, D.C.," which was produced by W.T. Rossell in 1891. The boundaries outlined on this historic map, which served as justification for the 1969 listing, remain clearly visible, justified, and unchanged.

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Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

Peirce Mill is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C, and is significant in the areas of **Architecture and Industry**.

Peirce Mill is significant in the area of **Architecture** as an early-nineteenth-century, water-driven grist mill. Peirce Mill, designed and built by millwright Isaac Peirce, is the only extant water-driven grist mill located along Rock Creek, a waterway that supported as least eight such mills during the early nineteenth century. Constructed of blue granite, a locally quarried stone, this large two-and-one-half-story vernacular mill reflects a building heritage derived from the Pennsylvania Quakers. Peirce Mill embodies distinctive characteristics of early-nineteenth-century industrial architecture not extant anywhere else along Rock Creek or in the District of Columbia. The mill's documentation and restoration by Thomas Tileston Waterman and Charles E. Peterson for the National Park Service speaks to the building's architectural significance.

Peirce Mill is also significant in the area of **Industry**.⁹ The construction utilized in the mill was a complex series of processes that facilitated the managing of materials, labor, and equipment to produce goods and services. The mill's Hurst frame, waterwheel, millrace, and milling machinery were all custom pieces derived from established models. Yet, Isaac Peirce is known to have successfully adapted this industrial building to its location along Rock Creek. Peirce Mill had multiple millstones, allowing it to adapt to changes in agricultural trends and prices. Spanning four floors, the milling machinery installed at Peirce Mill reflects a highly specialized process developed at the turn of the nineteenth century and perfected beyond. This machinery was meticulously restored and as necessary reconstructed by the National Park Service as part of a PWA project in 1934-1936. Today, Peirce Mill is the only operational, early-nineteenth-century grist mill in Rock Creek.¹⁰

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

Isaac Peirce and his Family's Property

Peirce Mill is the principal relic of the Peirce landholdings, which supported a flourishing agricultural commerce along Rock Creek in the nineteenth century. The mill is situated on a tract of land which included portions of three early English land patents. One of these, known as "Re-Survey on New Seat" was patented to George Read in 1747. Another, known as "The Gift", patented to Samuel Beall in 1762, passed to William Deakins, a prominent Revolutionary patriot, who conveyed it by deed to Isaac Peirce in 1784. The third patent included in the immediate parcel of land surrounding the Peirce Mill was one patented to James White on March 18, 1772, and known as "Mill Seat." The southern extremity of this tract was included in the land deeded by William Deakins to Isaac Peirce in 1794.¹¹ Purchased in 1794 for £750, Dryden describes the property as well-developed, "which included a dwelling house with brick chimney, barn, slave quarters, and more than 750 apple and other fruit trees."¹² When Peirce first settled in what is now Rock Creek Park, he found a two-story frame mill very near the eventual site of Peirce Mill. Isaac and his wife Betsy were well established in the area,

⁹ The original nomination had agriculture and commerce, which is now more accurately being supported as industry.

¹⁰ Washington, D.C., "Peirce Mill," National Register of Historic Places Travel Itinerary, <http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/wash/dc3.htm> (accessed July 26, 2010).

¹¹ Ruth E. Butler, "Pierce Mill, DC-22," *Historic American Building Survey*, (November 1936), 2.

¹² Steve Dryden, *Peirce Mill: Two Hundred Years in the Nation's Capital*, (Washington, D.C.: Bugamot, 2009), 3.

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having acquired from 1,600 to 2,000 acres of land stretching from Chevy Chase to the Zoo, broken only by about forty-nine acres of land belonging to Thomas Blagden.¹³

In his book, *Peirce Mill: Two Hundred Years in the Nation's Capital*, historian Steve Dryden provides the following running commentary concerning the formative years of Isaac Peirce and his family's property:¹⁴

Isaac Peirce was born on April 9, 1756 in Chester County, Pennsylvania. Peirce was the fourth generation of an immigrant Quaker family, whose ancestral home was located in Somerset County in southwest England. His family was skilled in the milling business, making his activities as a millwright logical.¹⁵

Peirce was more than just a millwright and farmer, as exhibited by his many interests and responsibilities in his community. At the turn of the nineteenth century "Peirce began taking a series of low-profile civic positions in the new capital. It was a role that he and other in his family would play for years to come."¹⁶ Dryden continues, "In May 1802, newly elected President Thomas Jefferson named Peirce to the Levy Court, which acted as a Board of Commissioners for Washington County. To attend Levy Court meetings, Peirce rode more than two miles on horseback from his home to the embryonic city. Other members of the court—a key position for any ambitious businessman, since that body determined tax assessments and built roads—included building contractor Robert Brent (who also served as the city's first mayor), Daniel Carroll of the prominent landowning family, Georgetown tobacco heir Thomas Peter, and manufacturer and future Georgetown mayor Thomas Corcoran."¹⁷ Peirce positioned himself as a pillar of not only the agricultural and commercial communities, but also the political arena.

Continuing his civic duties, in 1805 Peirce urged for the establishment for a "permanent institution for the education of youth in Washington City."¹⁸ Along with denizens of Washington's elite, including President Jefferson, Peirce "promised twenty dollars to the new school (the highest pledge was Jefferson's \$200)."¹⁹ This was a progressive notion, given that only the wealthy could afford to educate their children.

In addition to the milling complex, the enterprising Peirce operated a commercial nursery on portions of his estate. In 1805, Uriah Forrest ordered nearly 700 thorn bushes from Isaac Peirce and Thomas Main (who had a nursery at nearby Little Falls.) These were planted as replacements for livestock barriers and fences at Rosedale, a country estate and self-sufficient farm located in what is now the Cleveland Park neighborhood of Washington, D.C. Peirce is also known to have supplied Rosedale with hay, barley, flaxseed, and other grains.²⁰ In 1814, Peirce placed advertisements in the *Daily National Intelligencer* announcing the sale of 20,000 fruit trees:

¹³ Butler, 3.

¹⁴ Dryden, 3.

¹⁵ Dryden, 3.

¹⁶ Dryden, 10.

¹⁷ Dryden, 11.

¹⁸ Dryden, 11.

¹⁹ Dryden, 12.

²⁰ National Park Service, Peirce Mill-Rock Creek Park, Cultural Landscapes Inventory, 1998, revised 2003, 2a:2.

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On moderate terms, at the Nursery of the subscriber on Rock Creek, three miles from Georgetown, 20,000 ENGRAFTED APPLE trees of different sizes, consisting of nearly one hundred kinds, selected from some of the best orchards in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia.²¹

An advertisement from 1818 reveals that in addition to apple trees, Peirce grew “American Hedging” and “Evergreen Thorn Plants” at the nursery.²² His large nursery operation is supported by historic documentation as one of only three men simultaneously operating nurseries in the Washington metropolitan area. Interestingly, these nurseries were located on neighboring tracts of land along Rock Creek.²³ Tapping his entrepreneurial spirit, “sometime before 1817, he bought a shoreline ‘fishing landing’ at Little Falls, near the mill that his late brother-in-law, Abner Cloud, had built.”²⁴ This was a clear expansion of his commercial operations beyond agriculture. Peirce recognized the value of landing, but like his mill, was not responsible for its daily operation. Instead, much like Peirce Mill, “Isaac could lease the landing to commercial fisherman, as salted fish was a staple during the winter months. Being cheap and plentiful, fish served as food for enslaved African Americans, and could be ground up for use as fertilizer.”²⁵ Peirce’s business acumen allowed him to lease important factions of his estate to skilled professionals, resulting in a positive outcome for all parties.

The Construction and Use of Peirce Mill

Peirce’s first expansion of operations on his property likely occurred around 1800 with the construction of a saw mill alongside Rock Creek. Located downstream from the gristmill site, near the tributary now referred to as Melvin Hazen, the sawmill race extended to the south downstream from the larger mill site.

Strategically located, all of his subsequent outbuildings served his growing operation. Peirce built a springhouse, cow barn, carriage house, a large distillery building, and a miller’s house. However, the pinnacle of his construction efforts was Peirce Mill.²⁶ An exact construction date for the mill is unknown. It is likely the mill was built in 1829 as substantiated by an inscription in the stone southwest gable end bearing the inscription “B I P 1829”. However, this date may signify an alteration to the mill as the opposite gable end has a weatherboard veneer. “B I P” may mean “Betsy and Isaac Peirce” (Isaac having married Elizabeth Cloud) or “Built by Isaac Peirce.”

According to the Cultural Landscape Report, “the use of stone construction and accented quoins are architectural features commonly seen in eighteenth and early nineteenth-century buildings in Bucks, Montgomery, and Chester counties in Pennsylvania--the region where Isaac Peirce was born and raised This cultural identification was exhibited in multiple facets during the construction of the mill.” The Report states:

One such readily identifiable feature is the datestone found near the eaves of the gable roof in the south elevation of the mill, which is inscribed with the year of construction, along with the owner’s initials. This feature is closely identified with the vernacular architecture of southeastern Pennsylvania, and may have its origins in the British Isles. Also, the presence of a corner fireplace

²¹ “For Sale,” *Daily National Intelligencer*, 14 December 1814, 1.

²² “Fruit Trees,” *Daily National Intelligencer*, 7 March 1818, 1.

²³ National Park Service, Peirce Mill-Rock Creek Park, Cultural Landscapes Inventory, 2009, 2a: 2.

²⁴ Dryden, 12.

²⁵ Dryden, 14.

²⁶ Dryden, 14.

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within the mill suggest it may have served an enclosed office in which business related to mill operations was conducted. Again, there is a precedent for this form among the early mills of southeastern Pennsylvania.²⁷

Peirce Mill was built on a gentle slope, about 100 feet west of Rock Creek. Dryden explains the dynamics of putting the mill stone in action. “To turn the millwheel, water had to be brought from upstream, alongside the creek, in a channel called a headrace. The power that could be derived from the waterwheel was constrained by the head (the vertical distance from the water level above the wheel to the water level below) and flow (the quantity of water that can be consistently diverted from a stream to the waterwheel.) The head at Rock Creek mill sites was a challenge for millwrights, who would have preferred steeper grades along the creek for a taller head. Flow was sufficient but seasonally inconsistent.”²⁸

Nineteenth-century maps reveal that north of Peirce Mill, a dam diverted water into a headrace. Another map shows a later headrace extending more than 1,000 feet upstream to the Broad Branch tributary on the creek’s western shore. Isaac Peirce and owners of other mills on Rock Creek no doubt experimented with varying headrace designs and alignments, since they had other problems to cope with besides topography. Flash floods, caused by the clearing of land much farther upstream in Washington and Montgomery Counties, imperiled the mill’s operation.

Peirce incorporated waterwheels of various design. The ongoing success of Peirce’s mill, despite nearby commercial rivals, suggests that “Peirce and his millers managed the vagaries of water flow with a combination of design innovations and good business habits.”²⁹

According to Dryden, “Wheat grew well at the edge of the Piedmont, where soils were more suited to that crop than the Tidewater’s earlier mainstay, tobacco. In addition, it made more financial sense to trade in wheat, since, once ground into flour, it was a compact, more easily transported commodity. Though Peirce apparently grew little wheat both he and his neighbors would have needed the grain for flour and bread production. By 1810, milling was Washington County’s second most important manufacturing enterprise, with annual production valued at more than \$200,000.”³⁰

Eight Rock Creek Mills

Of the eight contemporaneous Rock Creek mills, Peirce Mill is the only extant example, having produced flour commercially until the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The mills along Rock Creek were modest enterprises in comparison to other nineteenth-century merchant mills built along the Potomac River and Chesapeake & Ohio Canal. Given the location of these larger, merchant mills, they benefited from docks, barge conveyance, and access to a transportation artery into the western hinterlands. In addition, the expense of transporting grain to the mills and shipping the barrels of flour to Georgetown or some other market confined the growth of the Rock Creek mills.

²⁷ National Park Service, Peirce Mill-Rock Creek Park, Cultural Landscapes Inventory, 2009, 3.5.

²⁸ Dryden, 16.

²⁹ Dryden, 11-18.

³⁰ Dryden, 15.

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The financial outlay required to construct a large, water-powered mill on the Potomac River was beyond the means of most American entrepreneurs like Isaac Peirce. The banks of smaller tributaries such as Rock Creek, which could provide a reservoir or small head of water to power two or three stones, was considered an alternative for investment in the lucrative milling industry. Although a much smaller waterway, the virtues of Rock Creek's water power did not go unnoticed. A resident of the area, Mrs. William Thornton intimates the former magnitude of Rock Creek in the following entry in her diary for August 9, 1980: "Four horses drowned in Rock Creek."

Among the most important of the eight or more mills along the creek during the early part of the 19th century was the Patterson Paper Mill. The Lyon's Four Mill, farther up, was advertised for sale in December, 1873, as a "large merchant mill in good order...with the whole water power of Rock Creek." The John Quincy Adams Mill was situated within the present confines of the Zoo. A description of it appeared in the *National Intelligencer* for August 5, 1867: "The mill is driven by an overshot wheel of twelve feet in diameter, the water being conducted over the wheel by a canal from the dam up the creek. The mill, with three runs of stones, when in full work, makes two hundred barrels of flour daily. It has been this season turning out daily some hundred and fifty barrels." The Blagden and Pierce Mills were farther up stream.³¹

In the 1830s, thousands of barrels of flour that were ground at the Rock Creek mills were shipped from the District of Columbia. In those days, the District stood eighth among the twenty four states in foreign commerce.³² Rock Creek supported eight mills during this period, varying in size and type to serve their local clientele. These industrial enterprises were built in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and grew in proportion to the development of the burgeoning city. The mills built on Rock Creek within the boundaries of the District of Columbia included Lyons (c. 1780), Deakins (pre-1794), Columbian (pre-1800), Parrott (pre-1800), Argyle (pre-1850), and Peirce Mill.

The following information pertaining to the other Rock Creek mills was prepared in 1990 by William Bushong in cooperation with the National Park Service for a Historic Resource Study of Rock Creek Park.³³

About 1780, across Rock Creek from Georgetown's Oak Hill Cemetery, the Lyons Mill was constructed most likely by business partners Pigman and Crow. In 1795, the property was conveyed to Joseph Rowles, who operated the mill under the name Federal Mills. Rowles heirs sold the flour-producing mill in 1811 to a small group of investors, including John Kurtz and John Lyons. At the time the mill ceased operation in 1875, it was under the sole proprietorship of Evan Lyons and known as Lyons Mill. The mill was advertised for sale in December 1872 as a "large merchant mill in good order... with the whole water power of Rock Creek." Lyons was the miller at this facility for more than 30 years. The mill was used for barn dances and other social occasions in the late nineteenth century and remained a poplar picnic spot until the 1910s.

The Columbian Mill was believed to have been built prior to 1800 by Georgetown merchant and real estate speculator Benjamin Stoddert. Stoddert was one of George Washington's agents who aided the President in his

³¹ Butler, 3.

³² James F. Duhamel. "Our Eyes Are Dimmed," *The Washington Post* (1923-1954), September 18, 1934, <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed July 9, 2010).

³³ Bushong, 34-40.

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negotiations with land proprietors in the region. He also was the first Secretary of the Navy. The mill was purchased by John Quincy Adams in 1825 and thereafter became known as the "Adams" mill. The property was located on the future site of the National Zoological grounds on the east bank of Rock Creek, about 700 feet south of a distinctive sharp bend in the waterway. After a checkered career, the flour mill ceased its business operation around 1867. Michler's 1867 map documented the complex as intact and identified it as "Columbian Mills."

Presumably, before constructing their own mill, the Peirces erected the Argyle Mill to replace and modernize the original one on the Argyle property. For much of the nineteenth century, the Argyle Mill was owned by Thomas Blagden, a prominent lumber merchant whose father served as superintendent of the stone masons constructing the United States Capitol building. Recorded October 22, 1853 in the local land records, Blagden purchased the property from Russian County Alexander de Bodisco for \$25,000. The Argyle property, as it was then known, later formed what is known today as Crestwood. Blagden leased the mill to German miller Charles W. Floecker or paid him to operate the facility. Floecker, born 1821 in Hannover, had a wife, Sophia, and seven children.³⁴ As evidenced by Floecker's employment with Blagden for more than a decade, the agreement between owner and miller must have been mutually beneficial. In 1860, the mill produced 4,200 barrels of flour valued at \$24,000, and by 1870, the mill's production of flour and meal had doubled to \$44,095. Thomas Blagden died in 1870, leaving his widow Laura with property valued at approximately a half million dollars. Then by 1880, when Charles Gaskins was operating Argyle Mill, its economic decline was readily apparent in the gross production value, which had plummeted nearly 75% to \$11,100. Another indication of the mill's financial decline was that operations were entailed entirely of custom grinding. The mill ground wheat, rye, and corn for individual customer's personal use for sale, rather than the merchant production of larger bulk quantities of flour or meal for wholesale dealers. These figures are not surprising given the fact that by 1880, the industry of flour milling had been transformed by the introduction of new processing methods, advanced technology, and rail transportation.

Little is known about the remaining mills. Richard Parrott owned a woolen mill that operated briefly in the early nineteenth century near the northeast corner of Q and 27th streets, N.W. As late as 1927, the building's walls were extant.³⁵

Historian Steve Dryden's research sheds light on the fate of Peirce Mill's contemporaries. By the twentieth century, "Rock Creek's other mills were gone. Most had been scavenged for stone, and the remains had been removed to restore the park's natural landscape. For many Americans, the extraordinary inventions and conveniences developed since the 1890s - electricity, the automobile, the telephone - seemed to erase all but academic interest in such antique notions as water-powered machinery."³⁶ Whether it was lack of maintenance, forces of nature, the decline of custom milling in America, or a combination of, the Rock Creek mills were erased from the landscape swiftly.

In "Milling in Rock Creek Park, General Background," Charles H. McCormick contends that in 1867, the Columbian Mill "came to an end. In that year it was stricken from the tax books."³⁷ McCormick's sources for

³⁴ 1860 U.S. Federal Census, Washington Ward 4, Washington, District of Columbia, Series M653, Roll 103, Page 29, Image 29, Family History Library Film 803103, Charles W. Floecker.

³⁵ Bushong, 34-40.

³⁶ Dryden, 67.

³⁷ Dryden, 31.

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this are the 1850 and 1860 census records as well as tax books; the reference from the tax books came from “*The Old Mills*” by Allen C. Clark.³⁸ The remains of the Columbian Mill and the Argyle Mill were severely damaged by the famous 1889 Johnstown flood. Peirce Mill’s relative distance away from the banks of the creek may have allowed it to remain structural viable during the flooding. In 1899, during the initial construction phase of Beach Drive, the remnants of the Columbian and Argyle mills were removed. Lyons Mill held on until 1913, at which point the mill collapsed and its ruins removed for road and trail construction in Rock Creek Park. Peirce Mill’s serendipitous location on the west banks of Rock Creek, opposite the eventual location of Beach Drive, helped save the stone structure.

The Mill During Commercial Operation, 1829 to 1890

Peirce Mill operated as a custom mill for much of the nineteenth century. Although the mill itself was a relatively small moneymaker for the family, Peirce’s construction of a large custom mill on the site of a previous smaller mill reflected the growing need and financial windfall a mill could render during the first half of the nineteenth century. Due to the fact that Peirce’s mill was a custom mill, the effect of its operation and that of the farmstead on the surrounding landscape was less industrial and more agricultural than might be presumed. Work yards, clusters of outbuildings, meadows, orchards, fenced spaces for garden plots and livestock barriers, and other unidentified features, such as a burying ground, were all interspersed with the features associated with the mill. The mill features included the dam and stone raceway, the stone mill and sawmill structures, the creek ford, fences and the roads leading to and from the mill site.³⁹ This clustering of buildings, centered on the activities of the mill, was far less commercial in scope and layout than its contemporaries along the banks of the Potomac River.

By 1840, milling, particularly of flour, was Georgetown’s principal industry. Perfectly poised to observe this growing industry just a few miles away, Isaac Peirce anticipated this shift in regional agricultural economics and designed his stone mill to take advantage of the blossoming flour business.⁴⁰ The original undershot water wheel was immediately supplanted by an overshot one.⁴¹ Although he was aware the mills of nearby Georgetown were able to take advantage of the power of the Potomac River to expand their business, Isaac Peirce was not interested in merging with one of those companies, nor did he want to move to a riverfront location. Belying his acumen for a well-balanced enterprise, he was satisfied with the farmstead on Rock Creek, of which the mill was just one component.⁴² Despite its relative small-scale and local operation, packages of flour ground at Peirce Mill were shipped to the West Indies, South America, and Europe.⁴³

Isaac and Betsy Peirce had nine children. The eldest, Abner C. Peirce (1785-1851), inherited the family farmstead in 1841. Peirce’s will, written in 1825, alludes to some tension in the household over his estate. He wrote that he did not want to “express any opinion” about the “terms upon which they [the children] may...live together.”⁴⁴ Abner Peirce, by occupation a stone mason, continued to operate the family’s property. Abner

³⁸ Allen C. Clark, “The Old Mills,” *Records of the Columbia Historical Society*, Vol 31-32 (Washington, D.C.: Columbia Historic Society, 1930), 101.

³⁹ National Park Service, Peirce Mill-Rock Creek Park, Cultural Landscapes Inventory, 2009, 2.9.

⁴⁰ Dryden, 18.

⁴¹ Butler, 4.

⁴² Dryden, 18.

⁴³ Candy Sagon. “True Grist: Fresh-Ground Corn is Still the Heart of Our Heritage.” *The Washington Post*, (1974-Current file), November 21, 1993, <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed July 20, 2010).

⁴⁴ Dryden, 25.

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decided to log his property following a business transaction with Samuel F.B. Morse, inventor of the telegraph. Morse contracted Peirce for five hundred chestnut posts on which to affix his new invention, the telegraph.⁴⁵ The 1850 census shows that he had 80 acres of “improved” land and 880 acres of “unimproved” land, which included pasture and woodland. Abner owned eighteen slaves, five horses, three mules, five milk cows, four working oxen and other cattle, as well as 50 sheep and 19 swine.

Abner Peirce died in 1851, bequeathing the property to his sister Abigail’s son, Peirce Shoemaker. Shoemaker proved himself a successful manager of the property, able to provide for his family and increase the estate’s yield. A ledger from the 1850s “reveals that the farm in that period grew wheat (193 bushels in 1853), rye, corn, potatoes, hay, peas, and beans, and produced wood, honey, and butter. Cider and vinegar brought a steady income.”⁴⁶ According to the National Park Service Cultural Landscape Report for Peirce Mill, prior to abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia in 1862, Shoemaker owned 20 slaves. After the Civil War the farm operation decreased in size, but the land increased in value. By 1870, his property consisted of 100 acres of “improved” land, 400 acres of woodland, and 108 of other “unimproved” land and no allotment for an orchard. Although the census lacks information on orchard production, Albert Boschke’s *Topographic Map of the District of Columbia*; 1861 indicates that an orchard was located on the slope north of the mill. Like Abner, Shoemaker was a major purveyor of lumber in Washington, D.C. in the mid-nineteenth century.

None of the proprietors or managers of the Peirce family estate were millers. (Isaac Peirce was a farmer and millwright, Abner Peirce a stonemason, and Pierce Shoemaker a jeweler. Therefore, the mill continued to be leased to millers as an investment property.) The proprietors received rent from and shared profits with a succession of millers—Donald, Tennyson, Fleckker, Gaskins, and White. Sometime shortly after the construction of the mill, a small frame house for the miller’s use was constructed near the stone barn north of the mill.⁴⁷ Unfortunately, the time of service for each of these men who worked at Peirce Mill has not been positively identified. Millers came and went, even returning in some cases several years later. A number of Rock Creek millers came from the same family, such as Charles and William Gaskins, and Horatio, Alcibiades, and Charles White. Being a small field, most millers took on work at several different mills along Rock Creek during their careers.⁴⁸ It is possible that the daily operation of the mill was overseen by one of Peirce’s slaves. Peirce, like his father who owned the land before him, was known to have been a slave owner.

Business at Peirce Mill flourished during the mid- to late-nineteenth century. This was considered the “boom” period in the history of the mill. Large quantities of corn, wheat, and rye were hauled by teams from all the surrounding towns and villages—from Georgetown, Rockville, Bladensburg, and Falls Church.⁴⁹ By 1879, U.S. census data documents that the mill ground for both its own account (merchant milling) and on a custom basis for others, a fundamental change from its origins as a custom mill. Three runs of millstones were grinding corn, wheat, and rye for flour, and also producing animal feed. According to Bureau of Census data for 1870, the mill operated for eleven months of the year with production valued at \$5,000. National Park Service Historian Charles H. McCormick described the mill as having initially an undershot wheel (though the term may have been used to describe a breast wheel), and that this was replaced by an overshot wheel around 1840. Records of

⁴⁵ Dryden, 42.

⁴⁶ Dryden, 40.

⁴⁷ National Park Service, Peirce Mill-Rock Creek Park, Cultural Landscapes Inventory, 2009, 2.4.

⁴⁸ Bushong, 37.

⁴⁹ Butler, 6.

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mill operations in 1880 also appear in census records. In that year, production was valued at \$8,250, consisting of corn meal and animal feed.⁵⁰

The installation of a turbine in 1876 is the only notable mechanical alteration recorded during the nineteenth century. However, some changes were undoubtedly made as it was normal practice in milling to incorporate new and improved equipment as it became available. A dam and millrace were integral to the operation of Peirce Mill throughout its history as it was water that powered the machinery to grind flour. The earliest recorded dam was built north of the existing dam just above the point where the creek formerly made a turn, so that it would cross the creek, as it now runs, at an angle (southwest to northeast.) This dam appears on the Boschke 1861 map and also on the Carpenter 1864 map. It was washed away during a period of high water in 1876, and since that time there have been three or four dams built between the site of the original and the present one.⁵¹ Additionally, maps of the period show several different configurations of headraces, which channeled water to the mill. Questions remain regarding the vintage of each headrace.

Incorporation of Peirce Mill into Rock Creek Park and the Cessation of Milling, 1890 to 1897

Rock Creek Park was authorized in 1890 as one of the first federal parks. Five other parks were established the same year—Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park, Antietam National Battlefield Site, Sequoia National Park, General Grant National Park, and Yosemite National Park. Shortly thereafter, in 1892, the Army Corps of Engineers acquired some of the Peirce lands including the mill by a process of condemnation and incorporated it into the park. The process by which the government seized the land and reimbursed land owners was highly contentious.

Two years prior, on September 27, 1890, President Benjamin Harrison signed into law an act of Congress appropriating \$1.2 million to purchase a maximum of 2,000 acres along both sides of Rock Creek. As part of the government taking, landowners were paid for their property. Unfortunately, many landowners felt their compensation packages unjust. This displeasure was spearheaded by Pierce Shoemaker, whose legal battle went the way to the United States Supreme Court. During the contentious proceedings, the Peirce Mill water power was valued by an independent engineer as \$29,908.87.⁵² Although Shoemaker was a staunch proponent of the formation of a “grand park, on and about Rock Creek,” he soon realized that he would not be fairly compensated for his family’s property.⁵³ The Supreme Court wrote the unanimous opinion upholding every lower court decision, effectively clearing way for the realization of Rock Creek Park. Begrudgingly, Shoemaker accepted \$16,306 for 15.612 acres of land that included the mill and springhouse in 1890.

In 1894, the Rock Creek Board of Control was established to administer the park. Peirce Mill was now under the control of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds of Rock Creek Park. The mill was leased to miller A. P. White, who ground corn, rye, and wheat into meal and flour until the main shaft broke in 1897. Officials with the Board of Control determined that the cost of the damage did not warrant its repair, thus marking the end of seventy years of private milling tradition at Peirce Mill. In the years immediately following its shutdown, the

⁵⁰ National Park Service, Peirce Mill-Rock Creek Park, Cultural Landscapes Inventory, 2009, 2.11.

⁵¹ Butler, 5.

⁵² “Rock Creek Values,” *The Washington Post* (1877-1922), August 15, 1891, <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed July 9, 2010).

⁵³ P.L.S. “To the Editor: Suggestions Concerning our Grand Park.” *The Washington Post* (1877-1922), May 12, 1879, <http://www.proquest.com> (accessed July 20, 2010).

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mill was reportedly used for various purposes by the local community, including hosting barn dances. The property surrounding was used by the local militia and fire companies for drills.

Various proposals were put forward around this time for the future use of Peirce Mill, notably by Louis P. Shoemaker, a descendant of the Peirces. In an address to the Columbia Historical Society in 1908, he advocated the use of the mill and a nearby barn for entertainment.⁵⁴ Measures taken during this period by the Board of Control focused on developing the area surrounding Peirce Mill as a picturesque recreational area. In keeping with this plan, a dam was constructed on Rock Creek near the mill starting in 1904. Constructed by Otto Strange at a cost of \$4,000, this concrete structure was set on a concrete foundation and faced with a stone veneer along the downstream side. In 1905, 100-foot-long side wings were added to the dam.

Teahouse Era, 1906 to 1934

From 1906 to 1934, a succession of private individuals, groups, and governmental agencies used the Peirce Mill as a tearoom. Renamed "Peirce Mill Inn," its proximity to a metropolitan city, situated in the oasis of Rock Creek Park, provided the mill with a distinct advantage over other teahouses in the city. Nationally, an uncountable number of grist mills like Peirce Mill suffered the fate of becoming tearooms, as did many other buildings like windmills and barns that equated a romantic past. Besides being inexpensive to rent, these buildings satisfied the quest for odd, romantic locations and required little alterations.⁵⁵

In the first decades of the twentieth century, tearooms became the fashionable places for women to meet friends in small towns, big cities, and suburbs alike.⁵⁶ The larger the city, the more tearooms there were to choose from. In 1920, Washington, D.C. had 437,571 residents, making it the fourteenth largest city in America. This paled in comparison to the 5,620,048 residents of New York City. Historian Jan Whitaker writes in her book *Tea at the Blue Lantern*, "Although no one knows exactly how many tearooms existed in America during this high-water mark, a restaurant trade journal reported in 1925 that New York City had eight thousand tearooms."⁵⁷ Despite an exorbitant number of teahouses in New York City, a news clipping described the New York scene, stating that "the tea hour at smart hotels and restaurants is, as always, overcrowded."⁵⁸ Although not identified in city directories by address or name, the Peirce Mill Inn would have been one of hundreds of tearooms, lunchrooms, and restaurants in the Washington, D.C. by 1933.

Many tearoom owners were inexperienced amateurs, with little knowledge of how to run a business.⁵⁹ However, Whitaker goes on to explain, "...it seemed there were almost no women in America who didn't harbor a wish to run a tearoom, decorate it (very important), and supervise every small detail. People were enamored with returning to the country, partaking in a fashionable cup of tea, and enjoying vestiges of an earlier time period."

⁵⁴ Louis P. Shoemaker, "Historic Rock Creek," *Records of the Columbia Historical Society*, Vol. 12, (Washington, D.C.: Columbia Historical Society, 1909), 46.

⁵⁵ Jan Whitaker, "Vintage American Tearooms," <http://users.rcn.com/janw.javanet/page1.html> (accessed July 9, 2010).

⁵⁶ Vintage Tearooms, "Tearooms," <http://www.vintagetearooms.net/index.htm> (accessed July 9, 2010).

⁵⁷ Jan Whitaker, *Tea At The Blue Lantern Inn*, (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2002), 13.

⁵⁸ Dolly Whitehead. "Gotham Tearooms Gay With Flash Of Vivid New Sealing Wax Shade," *The Washington Post* (1877-1922), April 16, 1922, <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed July 13, 2010).

⁵⁹ Whitaker, *Tea At The Blue Lantern Inn*, 6.

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The Peirce Mill Inn was no exception as a 1927 article in *The Washington Post* documents, “the furniture of the Peirce Mill tearoom are reproduction pieces of the ‘old colonial period.’”⁶⁰

Contrary to what their name suggests, tearooms didn’t necessarily revolve around tea, the beverage, or tea. At the turn of the twentieth century, some tearooms served a modest meal known as the afternoon tea, which featured the beverage tea.⁶¹ As noted by Whitaker, American tearooms developed into “small restaurants, serving mainly lunch and, secondarily dinner.” In reaction, a kitchen was installed in the basement of the former mill to provide small meals for patrons. Although the type of food served at Peirce Mill is not known, it can be assumed that the menu mirrored its contemporary’s blend of simplified French and New England fare, with a preference for fresh ingredients and simplicity in preparation. Sandwiches, salads, and casseroles came into their own on tearoom menus, and home-style desserts were perfected and made elegant.⁶² A 1906 article in *The Washington Post* reads, “Old Pierce Mill, one of the most picturesque spots in Rock Creek Park, has been converted into a teahouse, where the public in general will be served with ices and soft drinks, tea and sandwiches and cake from 2 o’clock onward each day.”⁶³ The first operator of the Peirce Mill Teahouse was a Miss Todd, whom the same article stated was, “well known to prominent residents of the city.” A Miss Noble operated the concession from 1910 to 1917. Florence I. Blake of the Dolly Madison Candy Company succeeded her, but the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds ousted Mrs. Blake in October 1919 for providing poor service and failure to pay her \$60-per-month rent promptly.⁶⁴

As was the case throughout much of America, National Park Service facilities were segregated in Washington, D.C. Yet, in 1920, Hattie Sewell, an African-American woman, took over the teahouse concession. Sewell, a Texas native, was born in 1876 and married to Simon Sewell, a watchman employed by the U.S. government.⁶⁵ Sewell’s acquisition of the concession contract at Peirce Mill made many Peirce and Shoemaker descendants unhappy. Thus, her contract was not renewed, and the concession was turned over to the Girl Scouts of America, who ran it from 1921 until 1926.⁶⁶

During the tenure of the Girl Scouts, who operated the tearoom under the administration of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, a fireplace and pipeless furnace were installed into the former mill. Peirce Mill teahouse served as a popular meeting place for riding parties, afternoon teas, and bridge parties during its first year of operation under the direction of the Girl Scouts. An 1922 article from *The Washington Post* touted the Easter Holiday reopening of the Peirce Mill teahouse by the Girl Scouts, which featured breakfast, followed by a luncheon and afternoon tea with the possible addition of dinner.⁶⁷ Among the prominent society women who served as hostesses was Lou Henry Hoover, the wife of Herbert Hoover and future first lady. During the 1920s,

⁶⁰ Blanche C. Howlett. “Mill, Within City Limits, Dates Back to Colonial Days,” *The Washington Post* (1923-1954), May 8, 1927, <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed July 9, 2010).

⁶¹ Whitaker, *Tea At The Blue Lantern Inn*, 9.

⁶² Whitaker, *Tea At The Blue Lantern Inn*, 10.

⁶³ “Old Mill a Tea House: Enterprise Is Under Management of the Misses Todd,” *The Washington Post* (1877-1922), June 7, 1906, <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed July 9, 2010).

⁶⁴ Rock Creek Park, “Administrative History: Under Military Rule,” National Park Service http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/rocr/adhi/adhi2e.htm (accessed July 20, 2010).

⁶⁵ 1920 U.S. Federal Census, Washington, District of Columbia, Series T625, Roll 211, Page 5B, Enumeration District 193, Image 81, Hattie Sewell.

⁶⁶ Dryden, 65.

⁶⁷ “Popular Tea Houses Will Be Soon Reopened,” *The Washington Post* (1877-1922), April 9, 1922, <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed July 9, 2010).

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Lou Hoover became prominent in organizations that had no connection to her politically active husband, who served as Secretary of Commerce at the time. Lou Hoover had been named a Girl Scout Commissioner in 1917. In 1921, she became the organization's national vice-president. From 1922 to 1925, she served as its president, and remained active in the Girl Scouts for the rest of her life.⁶⁸ Hoping to capitalize on the successes they experienced at the Peirce Mill teahouse, the Girl Scouts constructed a permanent structure at the eastern end of Hains Point in Washington, D.C. to function as a teahouse (non-extant) in 1923.

From 1926 until 1934, a charitable organization within the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds known as the Welfare and Recreational Association was responsible for operating the tearoom. Numerous changes and additions were made to the mill structure in 1931 to improve its usability as a tearoom. Ruth Butler stated in her 1936 report of Peirce Mill for the Historic American Building Survey:

The majority of changes seem to have been made under the Welfare and Recreation Association. In 1931 a staircase was cut in the northeast corner of the mill from the first floor to the basement, a gas heater was installed, and new window sills were added. Closets for supplies and for clothes were constructed on the third floor, the partition that had been made for the kitchen was extended, and the porch was added to the north side of the house where the mill wheel had formerly been. Rest rooms were built on the second floor, and the stone chimney in the southwest corner of the first floor was apparently built at this time, also. In the basement (where formerly there had been just a dirt floor, with a board walk running in front of the cockpit which connected the original staircase with the door on the east side of the mill) a portion of the floor was cemented. The remainder of the floor was cemented in 1932.⁶⁹

The most significant of the changes mentioned by Butler, one that radically changed the appearance of the mill, was the addition in 1931 of the screened porch. Other changes were made to the mill building, including the replacement of the 6/6 window sash with 2/2 sash.

Evidently, the oversight at the mill was lacking in the first years of the twentieth century. According to a government study of the teahouse period, "administration of the mill seems to have been quite casual.... What changes were made in the mill during this unbusiness-like administration is a matter of conjecture."⁷⁰ Projects undertaken, particularly in the surrounding landscape, failed to address the integrity of the building and site as a whole. For instance, in 1914, the millrace was filled in with "dirt and broken rock from a sewer trench being dug in the park." According to the Historic Structures Report, in April 1917, a "trench was dug for placing water in the mill" (presumably to pipe in running water for the tearoom). In June 1917, a new roof was put on and a telephone installed. In November 1917, the basement was cleaned and whitewashed, and, in June 1918, windows and doors were repaired and stone work pointed.⁷¹

⁶⁸ American President an Online Reference Resource, "Herbert Clark Hoover," Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia, <http://millercenter.org/academic/americanpresident/hover/essays/firstlady> (accessed July 9, 2010).

⁶⁹ Friends of Peirce Mill and Quinn Evans, "Historic Structures Report, Peirce Mill," draft (November 2000), Part 1, Chapter 1.2, page 1.2.5.

⁷⁰ Dryden, 65.

⁷¹ Historic Structures Report: Peirce Mill, National Park Service, (November 2000), 1.2.4.

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Early Restoration Efforts

Although the mill was operated as a teahouse, activities by the Board of Control hint at early preservation efforts. A conflict existed between designating the grounds around the mill for picnicking and passive recreation, or using them in the interpretation of the historic site.⁷² The forces that drove the changes and alterations to the building and surrounds did not give priority to the integrity of the site. However controversial, these steps by the Board of Control document the first indications that importance had been placed on the building as a resource for the enjoyment of the public betterment rather than just a mill. The Board of Control opted to fill in the millrace with dirt and debris from a nearby sewer-trenching project, stating that “it is a mistake to assume that the building known as Peirce Mill should be perpetually kept in all respects as it was found when the park was purchased.”⁷³

In 1919, Public Buildings and Grounds staff filed a report concerning the continuing function of the mill. The report favored upgrading the structure as a restaurant featuring *alfresco* dining, with some mill components in place for atmosphere.⁷⁴

The restoration of the mill feature in part brings up the question as to whether or not it would be well to attempt, for the sake of historical record, to put back, without competing with the new function of the property, the essential parts of an old-time mill. Enough could be readily obtained or reconstructed to connect up the main working parts and the effect would be right, whether or not the wheels were continuously turning. The first impression of the problem was not favorable to the attempted restoration of the mill-wheel as the last wheel used was an unpicturesque turbine, and the reconstruction of the preceding undershot wheel would leave it high and dry, fanning the air without any possible water-weathering or suggestion of a past. With detailed study, it is believed that the wheel could be restored if made apart of the proposed general restoration including necessarily a flume, race and spillway, partly following the old lines and partly conforming to and strengthening the new design.⁷⁵

The plan was never implemented. Also rejected during that period was a proposal by a local entrepreneur to restore Peirce Mill to a functioning state. Peirce Mill would not enjoy such restoration efforts for years to come, due in part to differing attitudes of the officials in charge of the mill’s operations. “It seems to me that from a business standpoint it would be a most unprofitable undertaking for you,” wrote Colonel Clarence O. Sherrill, the Army officer in charge of the park, to the aspiring mill operator. As historian Steve Dryden notes, “The mill still had the power to inspire people intrigued with the preindustrial life. But it would take an initiative from the federal government to get the millstones grinding again at Rock Creek.”⁷⁶

⁷² National Park Service, Peirce Mill-Rock Creek Park, Cultural Landscapes Inventory, 1998, revised 2003, Part 2a, 9.

⁷³ National Park Service, Peirce Mill-Rock Creek Park, Cultural Landscapes Inventory, 1998, revised 2003, Part 2a, 9.

⁷⁴ Rock Creek Park, “Administrative History: Under Military Rule,” National Park Service

http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/rocr/adhi/adhi2e.htm (accessed July 20, 2010).

⁷⁵ Memorandum, Peaslee to Ridley, November 22, 1919, Rock Creek Park General Project file, Commission of Fine Arts records.

⁷⁶ Dryden, 66.

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The National Park Service Restoration, 1934-1936

Although still operating under the Welfare and Recreational Association until 1934, in 1933, Rock Creek Park became a component of the National Park Service, which then assumed stewardship of the mill. The restoration of Peirce Mill was accomplished as a Public Work Administration project authorized by Harold L. Ickes, Public Works Administrator, on July 15, 1934. Funds were made available on October 8, 1934, and construction work commenced on December 1, 1934. Work was completed on October 1, 1936, and the milled placed in operation on December 1, 1936.⁷⁷

Interestingly enough, the National Park Service's decision to cease tearoom operations at Peirce Mill was a precursor for events in the future and coincided with the eventual demise of the cottage industry across America. As Jan Whitaker explains, "Tearooms were still around in the 1930s and 1940s, although the Depression and wartime took a toll on the business. After the war, apart from those in department stores, the tearoom no longer thrived and was considered the old lady of the restaurant industry."⁷⁸ The National Park Service's initiative to restore the building likely saved Peirce Mill from being repurposed as a bed and breakfast, as many tearooms were, or worse: being seen as a money-losing endeavor and allowed to deteriorate.

At the start of the restoration, the teahouse addition was still extant and 2/2, double-hung, wood-sash windows outfitted with shutters pierced the building. Dormers adorned the rear of the building. The restoration project, entitled "Restoration of Peirce Mill," was supervised by architects and architectural historians Thomas Tileston Waterman and Charles E. Peterson. The project restored building elements to an early-nineteenth-century appearance and attempted a reasonable reconstruction of nineteenth-century milling machinery. Led by Waterman's tenant that every stage of a building's history was just as important as its original form, the restoration specified which elements were to be conserved, restored, or preserved.

Thomas Waterman (1900-1951) was a noted architect working for the United States government on most of the key projects in the eastern seaboard states. According to historian Fay Campbell Kaynor, Waterman's "attributes and opinions influenced many decisions bearing on the treatment or recording of historic American buildings."⁷⁹ Waterman's ideals and preservation ethos were nurtured and developed by an academic tour-de-force consisting of people such as Ralph Adams Cram, Fiske Kimball, William Sumner Appleton, Charles E. Peterson, and Henry Francis du Pont. Waterman spent many years as an associated architect for the Department of the Interior's Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), later serving as supervisor of recording efforts along the eastern seaboard from 1933 to 1942.⁸⁰

Charles E. Peterson (1906-2004) was a restoration architect, architectural historian, and planner who launched his professional career with the National Park Service in 1929. He began work as a restoration architect in 1931 at the Moore House in Yorktown, Virginia. In 1933, Peterson founded HABS. Additionally, he was a charter member of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and a founding member of the Association for Preservation Technology (APT). Peterson is perhaps best known for his leadership in the 1950s revitalization of

⁷⁷ Historic American Building Survey Files, "Peirce Mill, DC-22".

⁷⁸ Whitaker, *Tea At The Blue Lantern Inn*, 11.

⁷⁹ Fay Campbell Kaynor, "Thomas Tileston Waterman: Student of American Colonial Architecture," *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 20, No. 2/3 (Summer - Autumn, 1985), 103.

⁸⁰ Currituck Co., N.C. Houses, "Thomas Cooper Ferebee Home / Lyle Otis Forbes Home,"

<http://www.ncgenweb.us/currituck/photosbios/houses/ferebeethomascooperhouse.html> (accessed July 12, 2010).

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the Society Hill neighborhood of Philadelphia, and his role during the same period as resident architect of Independence National Historical Park.⁸¹ His extensive library and research notes were donated to the University of Maryland, forming the National Trust Library.

The multi-year restoration, completed at a cost of \$26,624, was one of the National Park Service's first historic preservation efforts.⁸² As explained by Dryden, "the waterwheel and interior machinery were rebuilt, and the old millrace was cleaned out and repaired. The interior machinery was rebuilt or replaced by the Fitz Water Wheel Company of Hanover, Pennsylvania. For Peirce Mill, Fitz Water ordered his staff to scavenge parts from mills around the region to use in the repairs and construction. Gears were located in Pennsylvania and Maryland. The valuable, early-nineteenth-century 'hopper boy' (a mechanical device that cooled hot, freshly ground flour), came from a mill in Baltimore County."⁸³ At the conclusion of the 1935 restoration, vehicular parking was located at the rear of the structure, aside the creek.

The reopening of the mill was a remarkable success, with more than 1,000 pounds of free flour passed out to the more than 2,600 visitors the first day. Further bolstering the restoration's success, National Capital Parks was authorized to sell the flour to government cafeterias and to customers in one- and five-pound sacks.⁸⁴ More than 3,000 pounds of cornmeal and 700 pounds of wheat flour were sold in 1937.⁸⁵ To preclude charges of unfair competition with private enterprise, the National Park Service was careful to advertise its prices as "higher than in the stores."⁸⁶ Even with this restraint, people were willing to drive to the park to buy flour ground at Peirce Mill.

During World War II (1941-1945), the mill began to lose money due to wartime price controls. Limitations were made on how much flour could be sold to the public. This, coupled with the mill's inability to produce during colder months, resulted in a gradual degradation of the milling machinery. Dryden comments on this period in the history of the mill, "The mill's intermittent disuse caused the wheel to dry and then warp and crack."⁸⁷ In 1958, the National Park Service was forced to cease mill operations.

Repairs, Changes, and Operations from 1968 to 1993

In 1968, the National Park Service infilled the millrace to facilitate the ground's use as a picnic area. A new wooden flume and overshot wheel were built and installed under the supervision of Jim Askins of the National Park Service. This reconfiguration was not based on historic evidence but was done simply as an expedient way to get the mill operating again. The wheel was to be turned by water from a basin in the tail-race just below the water wheel. "This flow was enhanced by a pump attached to a new source-city tap water," Dryden explained. Although this new system resulted in the successful rotation of the water wheel, "environmentally, this was ill-

⁸¹ Biography, "Charles E. Peterson," University of Maryland, <http://www.lib.umd.edu/NTL/peterson.html> (accessed July 14, 2010).

⁸² Dryden, 75.

⁸³ Dryden, 71.

⁸⁴ Jay Walz. "Historic Pierce Mill Resumes Under Old Master's Guidance," *The Washington Post* (1923-1954), January 11, 1937, <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed July 14, 2010).

⁸⁵ "Pierce Mill Again Grinds Out Flour," *The Washington Post* (1923-1954), May 20, 1938, <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed July 14, 2010).

⁸⁶ Rock Creek Park, "Administrative History: Under Military Rule," National Park Service http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/rocr/adhi/adhi2e.htm (accessed July 20, 2010).

⁸⁷ Dryden, 79.

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advised; chlorinated water kills fish. Financially, it could have been a budget-breaker, though apparently the National Park Service was not charged for the water.”⁸⁸

Additional changes occurred to the setting. The rear parking lot was removed and a new parking lot with concrete curbs and stone walkways was installed. This change required the grade in front of the structure to be raised about 18 inches.⁸⁹ Yet, Peirce Mill was once again operational, selling flour to the public, and offering a unique interpretive educational experience in Rock Creek Park.

From 1971 until 1993, the mill was operational, except for periodic repairs. In 1973, an estimated 93,500 people came to watch the gears turn inside the mill. A high-water mark in terms of visitation, more than a half million people visited Peirce Mill in the 1970s.⁹⁰ This resurgence in interest at Peirce Mill was in large part due to the educational programs implemented to attract school-age groups and history seekers. Dryden highlights one monumental day in January of 1973, when “about five hundred people visited the mill, some tasting corn fritters cooked on a wooden stove by a government secretary dressed in handmade gingham...Visitors enjoyed the scene as pure nostalgia, or a bargain hunter’s delight. ‘It’s a very good buy, thirty cents a pound [for cornmeal]’, said one woman.”⁹¹ The National Park Service had hit a vein in the public’s thirst for simple pleasures and processes that exuded pureness and honesty. The Space Age had changed the way most Americans viewed the past, especially the days before electricity and automation. Many were disillusioned and sought comfort in the rediscovery of their country’s agricultural past. Although much of the flour ground by the mill was earmarked for cornbread and muffins served in government cafeterias, a limited supply was marketed to the public. Raymond Watt, miller at Peirce Mill during the 1970s, talked about the pure flour available at the mill, “People now use prepared mixes and can openers too much. But you can’t beat the taste and nutritional value of the real stuff.”⁹² Unbeknownst to the operators of Peirce Mill and its loyal customers, they were participating in the locally grown, community-supported agricultural movement that was in its infancy during the 1970s. Peirce Mill was the only water-driven grist mill in the area producing high-quality flour and meal.

In 1984, the National Park Service hired Theodore “Ted” Roosevelt Hazen, Jr. as the new miller for Peirce Mill. Hazen came aboard after three years of inactivity and reduced funding at the mill. He was instrumental in getting the mill reopened and operational once again and attracting visitors back inside the early-nineteenth-century mill. Historian Steve Dryden documents Hazen’s successes, stating that shortly after Hazen started work at Peirce Mill “he restored the flour bolter and rebuilt the grain elevator, bin, chute, and conveyor. The sack hoist operated for the first time in recent memory, and Hazen reinstalled the smutter. Hazen believed he got most of the automated system invented by Oliver Evans working again, including the so-called ‘hopper-boy’ mechanism used to cool flour fresh from the millstones.”⁹³

Unfortunately for Hazen, the city water propulsion system installed to turn the water wheel proved insufficient, forcing segmented operation of the mill. Despite this, Peirce Mill was once again able to produce flour for sale to the public, although with terms. The Park Ranger assigned to Peirce Mill “proposed that only corn be ground,

⁸⁸ Dryden, 82.

⁸⁹ Historic Structures Report: Peirce Mill, National Park Service, (November 2000), 1.3.6

⁹⁰ Dryden, 84.

⁹¹ Dryden, 84.

⁹² “Pierce Mill, Survivor of Days Long Gone, Still at Old Grind,” *The Washington Post* (1923-1954), December 18, 1953, <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed July 19, 2010).

⁹³ Dryden, 87.

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and that it be given away in small bags labeled 'bird feed,' a gesture he felt would eliminate worries about sanitation, ventilation, and health regulations."⁹⁴ This, however, did not sit well with Hazen. *The Washington Post* published advertisements that touted the availability of cornmeal; whole wheat; unbleached white and buckwheat flours; and yellow corn grits. Prices ranged from \$1.75 to \$3.50 for a two-pound bag.⁹⁵

The mill shaft broke for the last time in 1993, "dealing the building a venerable *coup de grâce* as visitation decreased significantly and hours of operation were reduced. During succeeding years, when water was not flowing through the flume, the water wheel dried and warped so badly that it was longer salvageable."⁹⁶

Friends of Peirce Mill

About 1996, the National Park Service indicated Peirce Mill was near the end of the line for the limited government funds designated for Washington-area park sites. "A volunteer at the mill, Richard Abbott, took action and wrote a letter, with a photograph of the mill prominently displayed, that appeared in *The Washington Post* in September of 1996. Abbott received dozens of telephone calls, and within three months, an organization was formed, giving hope that Peirce Mill's wheel would turn for a third century."⁹⁷ The Friends of Peirce Mill (The Friends) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) volunteer organization dedicated to the restoration of historic Peirce Mill to its operational condition. The vision of the Friends is to revive Peirce Mill as a living exhibit of water-powered milling and the nineteenth-century milling industry in the Washington area. The Friends are working to augment the National Park Service's resources by raising both money and awareness of the importance of preserving this valuable building.⁹⁸

According to the Friends of Peirce Mill, the study phase of the restoration has been completed. This phase included the technical study of the condition of the mill and its machinery by architects, structural engineers, and mill restoration specialists. Phase 1, which includes repairs to the internal structure of the building, is approximately 80% complete. Phase 2 includes repairs and/or replacement of elements of the wooden milling machinery, such as the Hurst frame, water wheel, main shaft, and internal gears and shafts. Phase 2 is approximately 20% complete. Phase 3, the final phase, includes the installation of a pumped water system to drive the water wheel and millstones. Detailed designs are complete for Phase 3.

Friends of Peirce Mill have raised over \$1million toward the cost of restoring the mill. Of this amount, over \$800,000 came from foundation grants and contributions from companies, individuals, and neighborhood associations. Owing to the "Partnership for Parks" program, a joint venture between the George-Pacific Corporation and the National Parks Conservation Association, Peirce Mill received a \$48,000 grant in 2000.⁹⁹ The District of Columbia government made a grant of \$100,000 and the National Park Service contributed \$41,000. With an estimated total cost of \$1,450,000, the current shortfall is expected to be made up by recently appropriated Federal funds for Peirce Mill and surrounding areas.

⁹⁴ Dryden, 90.

⁹⁵ Mary Estrada. "Finding the West in Washington," *The Washington Post* (1974-Current file), April 14, 1993, <http://www.proquest.com/> (accessed July 20, 2010).

⁹⁶ Dryden, 87.

⁹⁷ Dryden, 92.

⁹⁸ Friends of Peirce Mill, "Fact Sheet," <http://www.peircemill-friends.org/> (accessed July 13, 2010).

⁹⁹ William A. Uptide, "NPCA Notes," National Parks Conservation Association, January/February 2000, 42.

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The 2010-2011 rehabilitation project funded by the National Park Service, in partnership with the Friends of Peirce Mill, has resulted in the restoration of the mill machinery and the mill building. Improvements to the mill complex site were implemented and a portion of the head race was reconstructed to better inform the public of its historic association with the creek. The mill will be re-opening to the public in October 2011.

Assessment of Integrity

In evaluating the integrity of Peirce Mill, many standards developed for the evaluation of historic milling properties were implemented.

The lack of an element in the milling system does not detract from Peirce Mill's integrity as a whole. As such, although the mill currently lacks a water wheel, it retains sufficient integrity of design due to the retention of interior machinery specific to milling operations. The intrinsic design of the building is intact, and as such, would be recognizable to Isaac Peirce more than 180 years later. The materials that currently comprise Peirce Mill speak to the industrial nature of this building type. Although construction components from every phase of the building's history are present, this does not compromise its integrity of materials. Alterations to the building's exterior and interior reflect the changing objectives and values of the users. The 1935 restoration of the building resulted in substantial changes that can be viewed as positive. For example, inappropriate non-historic 2/2 windows were removed in favor of sash that more accurately represented the building practices of the nineteenth century. The milling machinery was replaced with mechanisms from other historic mills supplemented with 1935-era components. During the course of this restoration, sympathetic materials were used to preserve the building's integrity. Of importance is the system, not the individual parts or where they originated. Peirce Mill's system for milling grain into flour retains sufficient integrity. Peirce Mill's integrity of workmanship has been affected, but not compromised, by multiple restoration campaigns. Original workmanship is displayed in the stone walls and many of the original beams throughout the structure. Although the milling mechanisms are not original, their mere presence retains the feel of a confined working space, integral in conveying the highly mechanized and technical processes implemented at Peirce Mill. The setting surrounding Peirce Mill has been negatively affected by site changes throughout the twentieth century. Roadways, parking lots, and a pedestrian walkway have been introduced to the surrounding area. The millrace feeding the waterwheel is no longer visible, having been infilled and covered by a non-historic flume. The grade along the façade of the mill has been raised substantially, resulting in a bowl-like setting that is not reflective at all of the original setting. Landscaping and hardscaped features have been introduced to the front yard, lending a residential feeling, further diminishing the building's integrity of setting. Although pedestrian paths have been introduced, a non-historic dam constructed, and the road system expanded, Peirce Mill's inclusion within Rock Creek Park has been beneficial on some levels in preserving its natural, rural setting. Peirce Mill, located adjacent to Rock Creek, maintains its integrity of location. Peirce Mill maintains its integrity of feeling as a nineteenth-century water-driven grist mill set on Rock Creek. The building's integrity of design, materials, and workmanship contribute to its ability to convey the property's historic character. Peirce Mill, although no longer associated with the Peirce or Shoemaker families, retains its integrity of association. Sufficient features remain to convey a strong sense of connectedness between the property and a contemporary observer's ability to discern the historical activity that occurred at this location.

Consequently, Peirce Mill possesses the essential level of integrity to represent its significance as the only extant Rock Creek grist mill, therefore providing a direct connection with the once thriving milling industry in

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the District of Columbia. Peirce Mill possesses a distinct character not found elsewhere within Washington, D.C.

In 1936, Peirce Mill was documented by the Historic American Building Survey (HABS), which recognized the early-nineteenth-century building's architectural significance. In 1969, Peirce Mill was listed in the National Register of Historic Places for its architectural and historical significance. While currently functioning as an interpretive center associated with the National Park Service, Peirce Mill continues to serve the needs of the citizens of Washington, D.C. and countless visitors who flock to Rock Creek Park.

In 2008, National Park Service archeologists published findings stemming from an archeological survey at Peirce Mill (Site 51NW154) to identify and assess remains dating to the colonial period. The report stated that very little was found within the immediate area of the mill. "The extensive rebuilding episodes of the 1800s seem to have obscured the mill's early history. The site was heavily graded when the park was established and the Park road built, making it even harder to find traces of Samuel Beall's mill."¹⁰⁰

An additional study of the Peirce Mill complex was conducted as part of the rehabilitation project undertaken by the National Park Service. During the archeological monitoring of the 2010-2011 project, two pieces of an unmortared stone wall were discovered. "This wall was noted about 25 feet northeast of the mill, along the north side of the excavation made for the new race, and then...175 feet north of the mill. Much of this wall will remain buried on the site."¹⁰¹ The testing and monitoring efforts focused in the immediate vicinity of Peirce Mill. Future work proposed for the Peirce Mill complex may reveal further intact archeological deposits. "The 2004 study [concluded in 2008] showed that much of the modern landscape area around the mill has been disturbed by grading and filling. On the other hand, artifacts dating to both the prehistoric period and the nineteenth century were found, and at least one shovel test encountered an apparently intact buried ground surface underneath a foot of recent hill."¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ The Louis Berger Group, Inc., "Bold, Rocky, and Picturesque," National Park Service, August 2008, 41; Bushong, 34-40.

¹⁰¹ The Louis Berger Group, Inc., "Archeological Monitoring at Peirce Mill (Site 51NW154) Rock Creek Park, Washington, D.C., Final Technical Report," National Park Service, August 2011.

¹⁰² The Louis Berger Group, Inc., "Archeological Monitoring at Peirce Mill (Site 51NW154) Rock Creek Park, Washington, D.C., Final Technical Report," National Park Service, August 2011.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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 # DC-22
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

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“Our Eyes are Dimmed.” *The Washington Post*, 18 September 1934.

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Peirce Mill (amended nomination)
Name of Property

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	18	0322313	4312356	3	18	0322122	4311922
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	18	0322180	4311871	4			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundaries for Peirce Mill, inclusive of 15.612 acres, remain as nominated in 1969.

The property consists of 15.612 acres, following the boundaries set forth by the Fifty-First Congress on September 27, 1890 (Session I, Chap. 1001, 1890). This act of Congress authorized the purchase of the mill, other related buildings, and no more than 2,000 surrounding acreage for the establishment of a public park or pleasure ground to be known as Rock Creek Park.

The mill and its 15.612 acres were depicted on a "Map Showing the Boundaries and Properties of the Proposed Rock Creek Park, Washington, D.C.," which was produced by W.T. Rossell in 1891. As shown on this map, the eastern boundary parallels Rock Creek to the east, approximating Beach Drive. Tilden Street forms the southern boundary. The western boundary extends between Tilden Street and Broad Branch Road, following a multi-use trail (originally a road). The northern boundary extends across Broad Branch Road north of its intersection with Beach Drive.

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Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary of Peirce Mill is unaltered from that determined for the 1969 National Register nomination, being inclusive of the 15.612 acres authorized by an act of Congress as part of Rock Creek Park in 1890.

Peirce Mill is a three-story stone building built by Isaac Peirce in 1829. When it was built, the mill was on the outskirts of Washington, D.C., and was part of the large holding known as Linnaean Hill. Peirce Barn, Peirce Mill Distillery, and a springhouse were ancillary resources located near Peirce Mill. Through the years, the Linnaean Hill property has been subdivided; the parcel on which the mill is situated became part of the vast acreage making up Rock Creek Park in the 1890s.

Road construction, development of Rock Creek Park, and residential construction have resulted in Peirce Mill's isolation from other resources historically associated with Linnaean Hill. The 15.612 acres associated with the mill were depicted in 1891 on a "Map Showing the Boundaries and Properties of the Proposed Rock Creek Park, Washington, D.C." This map outlined only that remaining acres related to the mill and was used to determine the boundaries for the 1969 nomination of Peirce Mill; the boundaries as depicted on the 1891 map remain intact and clearly visible, justifying retention of the 1969 boundaries for this amendment nomination.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Paul Weishar and Laura Trieschmann/Architectural Historians
organization EHT Traceries, Inc. date July 2010/revised February 2012
street & number 1121 5th Street, N.W. telephone (202) 393-1199
city or town Washington state D.C. zip code 20001
e-mail ltrieschmann@traceries.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

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Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Peirce Mill
City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.
County: Washington **State:** District of Columbia
Photographer: EHT Traceries
Date Photographed: December 2009
Description of Photograph(s) and number: Peirce Mill and Rock Creek, looking North
1 of 12.

Name of Property: Peirce Mill
City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.
County: Washington **State:** District of Columbia
Photographer: EHT Traceries
Date Photographed: December 2009
Description of Photograph(s) and number: Peirce Mill and Dam, looking West
2 of 12.

Name of Property: Peirce Mill
City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.
County: Washington **State:** District of Columbia
Photographer: EHT Traceries
Date Photographed: December 2009
Description of Photograph(s) and number: Peirce Mill, looking South
3 of 12.

Name of Property: Peirce Mill
City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.
County: Washington **State:** District of Columbia
Photographer: EHT Traceries
Date Photographed: December 2009
Description of Photograph(s) and number: Peirce Mill, looking North
4 of 12.

Name of Property: Peirce Mill
City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.
County: Washington **State:** District of Columbia
Photographer: EHT Traceries
Date Photographed: December 2009
Description of Photograph(s) and number: Peirce Mill, looking Southeast
5 of 12.

Name of Property: Peirce Mill
City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.
County: Washington **State:** District of Columbia
Photographer: EHT Traceries
Date Photographed: December 2009
Description of Photograph(s) and number: Peirce Mill and Tail-race looking North
6 of 12.

Peirce Mill (amended nomination)
Name of Property

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Name of Property: Peirce Mill
City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.
County: Washington **State:** District of Columbia
Photographer: EHT Traceries
Date Photographed: December 2009
Description of Photograph(s) and number: Peirce Mill, First Floor, looking South
7 of 12.

Name of Property: Peirce Mill
City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.
County: Washington **State:** District of Columbia
Photographer: EHT Traceries
Date Photographed: December 2009
Description of Photograph(s) and number: Peirce Mill, First Floor, looking North
8 of 12.

Name of Property: Peirce Mill
City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.
County: Washington **State:** District of Columbia
Photographer: EHT Traceries
Date Photographed: December 2009
Description of Photograph(s) and number: Peirce Mill, Second Floor, looking North
9 of 12.

Name of Property: Peirce Mill
City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.
County: Washington **State:** District of Columbia
Photographer: EHT Traceries
Date Photographed: December 2009
Description of Photograph(s) and number: Peirce Mill, Second Floor, looking West
10 of 12.

Name of Property: Peirce Mill
City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.
County: Washington **State:** District of Columbia
Photographer: EHT Traceries
Date Photographed: December 2009
Description of Photograph(s) and number: Peirce Mill, Basement, looking Northeast
11 of 12.

Name of Property: Peirce Mill
City or Vicinity: Washington, D.C.
County: Washington **State:** District of Columbia
Photographer: EHT Traceries
Date Photographed: December 2009
Description of Photograph(s) and number: Peirce Mill, Third Floor, looking West
12 of 12.

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Property Owner:

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

name National Park Service-Rock Creek Park
street & number 3545 Williamsburg Lane, NW telephone (202) 895-6004
city or town Washington state DC zip code 20008

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.460 et seq.).

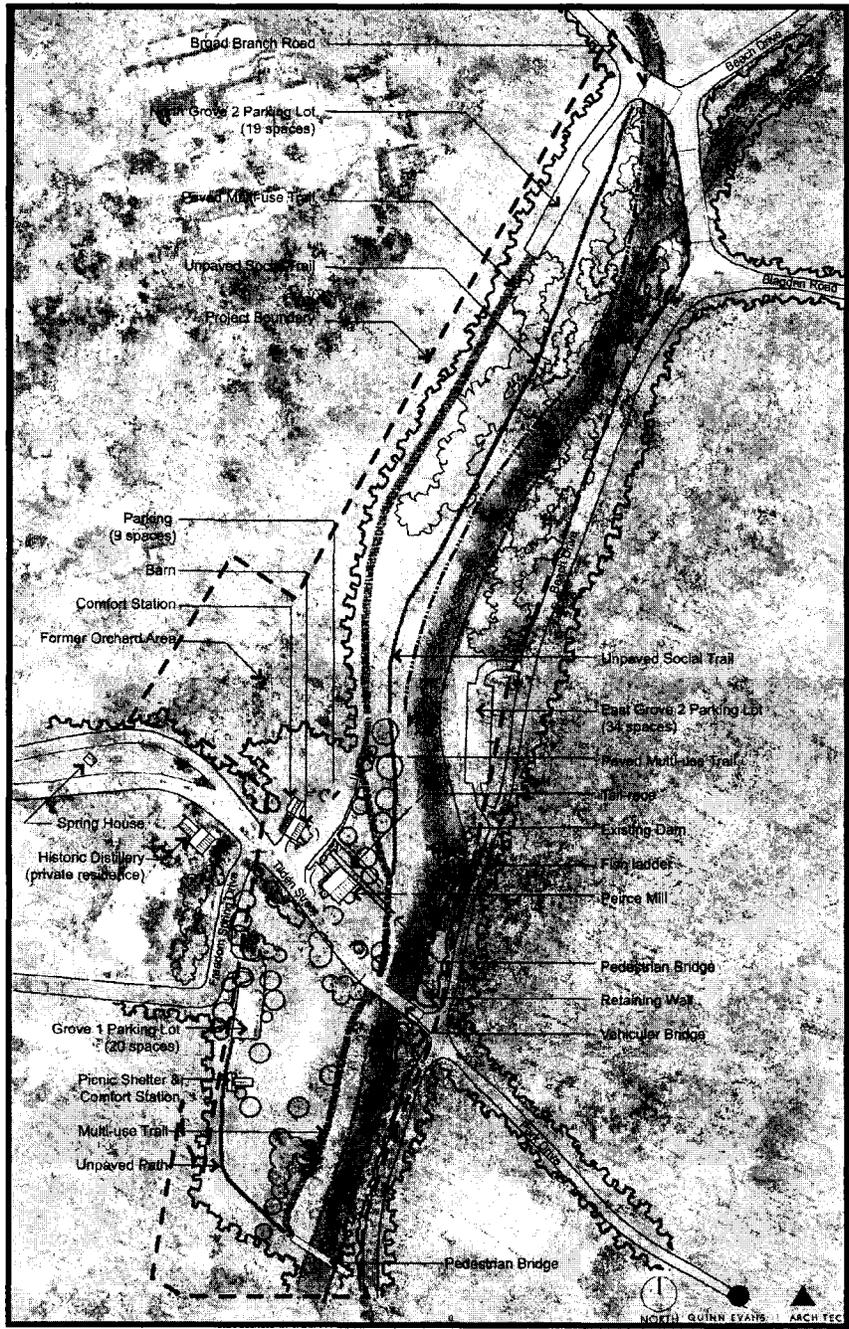
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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Site Plan, Peirce Mill

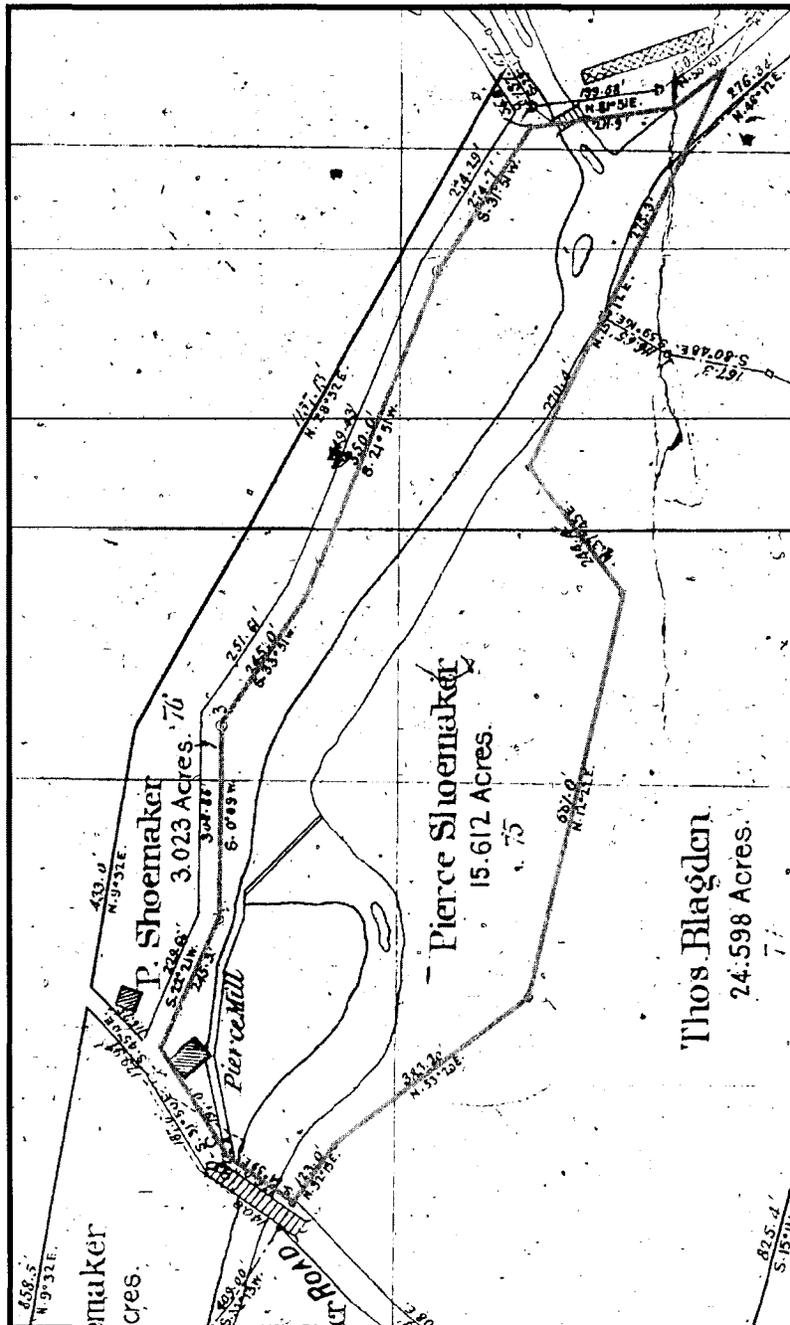
Source: Peirce Mill Complex: Cultural Landscape Report, August 2009, 3.29

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Outlined: Parcel 75, 15.612 acres

“Map Showing the Boundaries and Properties of the Proposed Rock Creek Park, Washington, D.C.”

W.T. Russell, 1891

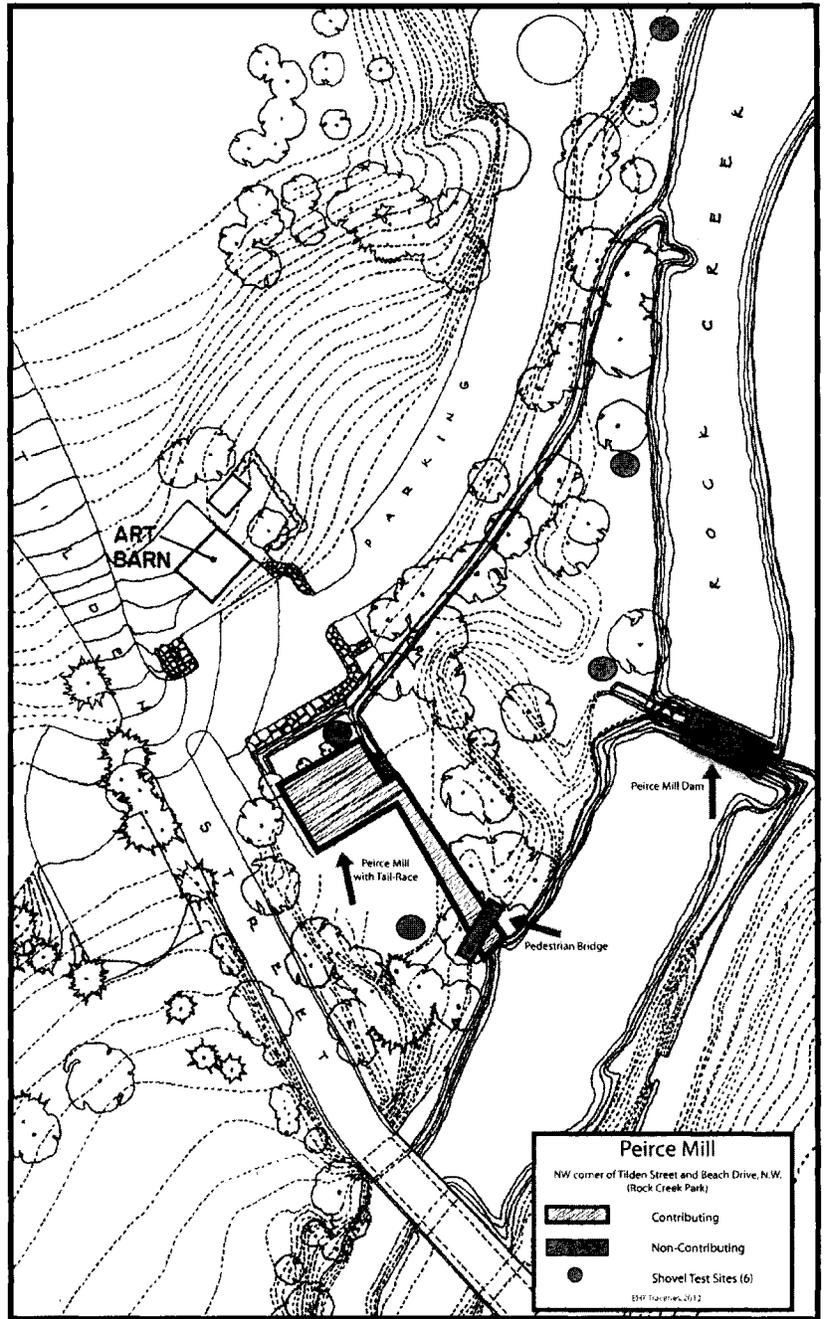
Source: National Park Service

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Contributing and Non-Contributing Resources

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Peirce Mill and Peirce Mill Road, c. 1840
Source: National Park Service

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
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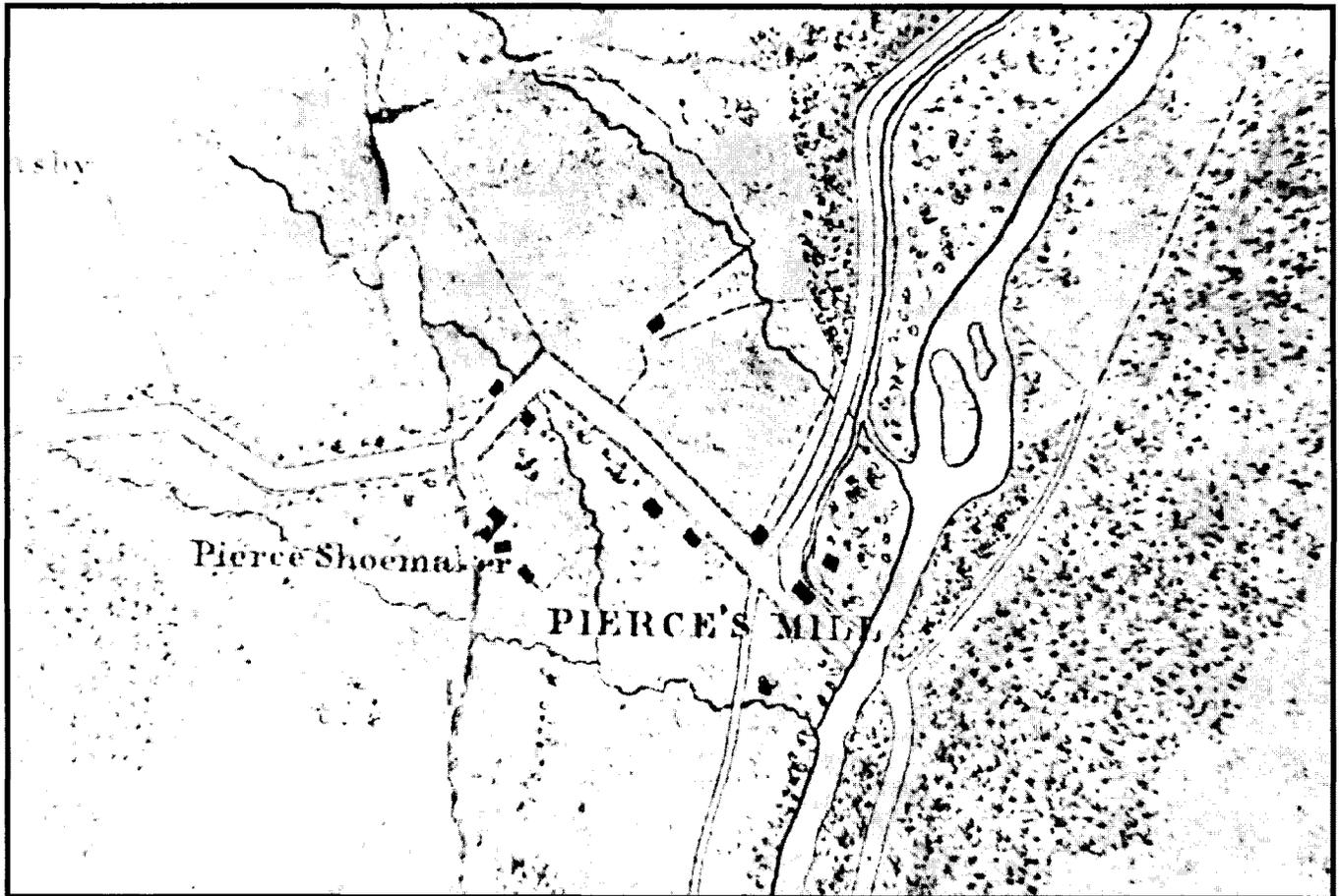
Peirce Mill, Boschke Map, 1861
Source: Library of Congress, Geography and Map, Washington, D.C.

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Peirce Mill, 1866 Michler Survey
Source: National Archives, Washington, D.C.

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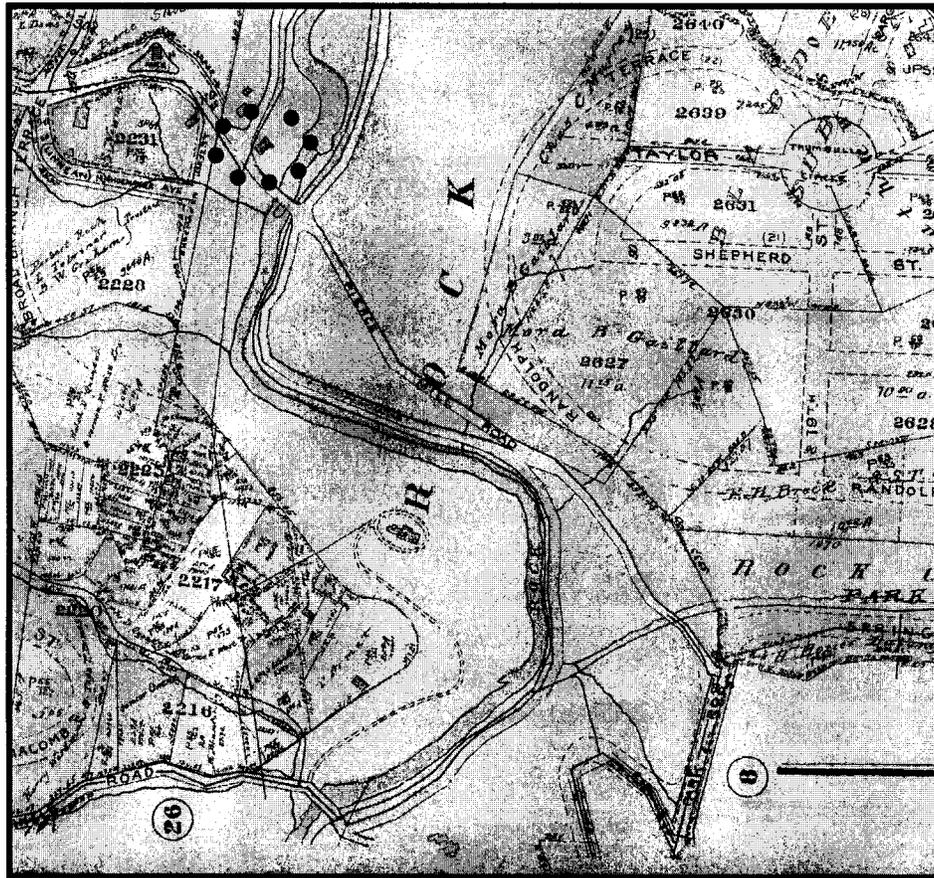
Peirce Mill, Michler Map, 1867
Source: Library of Congress, Geography and Map, Washington, D.C.

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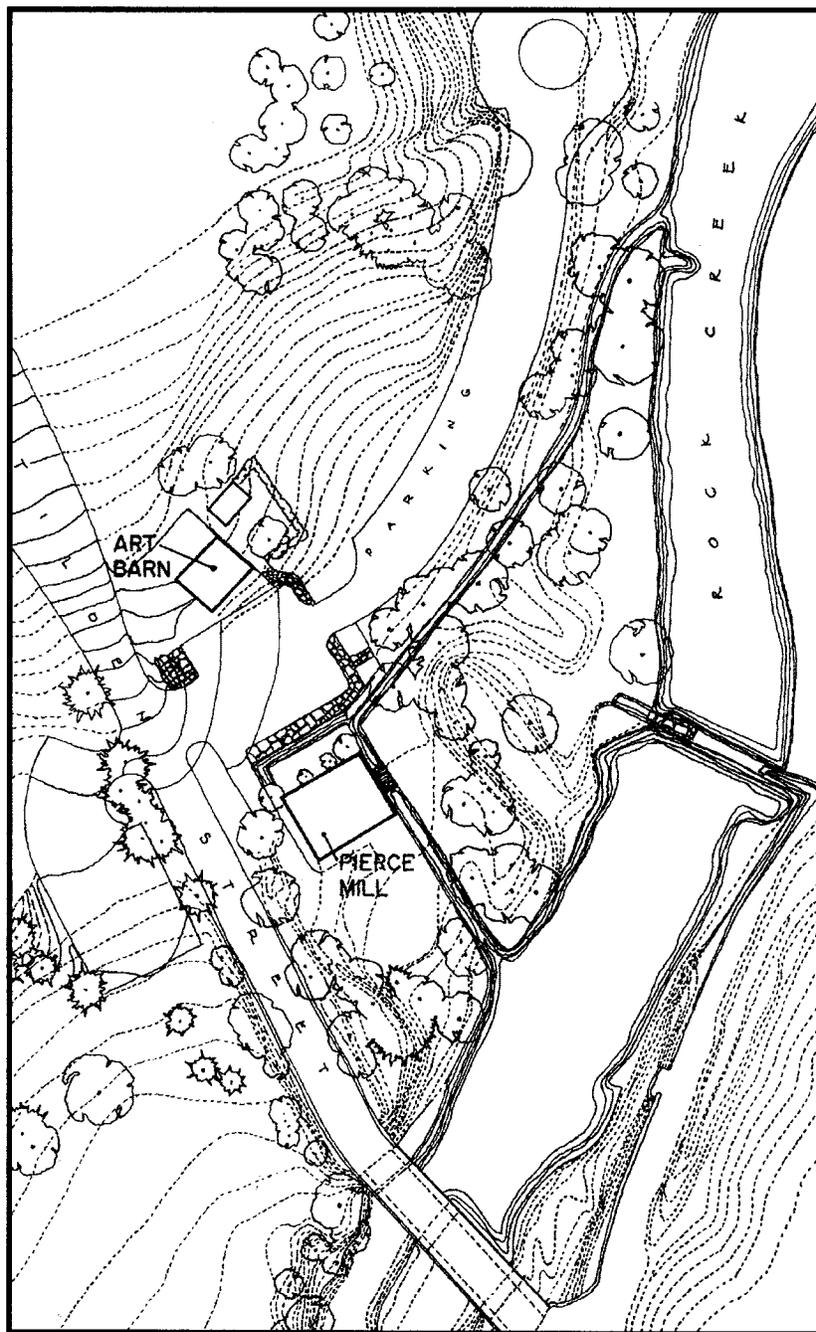
Peirce Mill, 1926 Baist's Real Estate Atlas of Surveys of Washington, D.C., Volume 3
Source: Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division

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Peirce Mill, Schematic, 1990

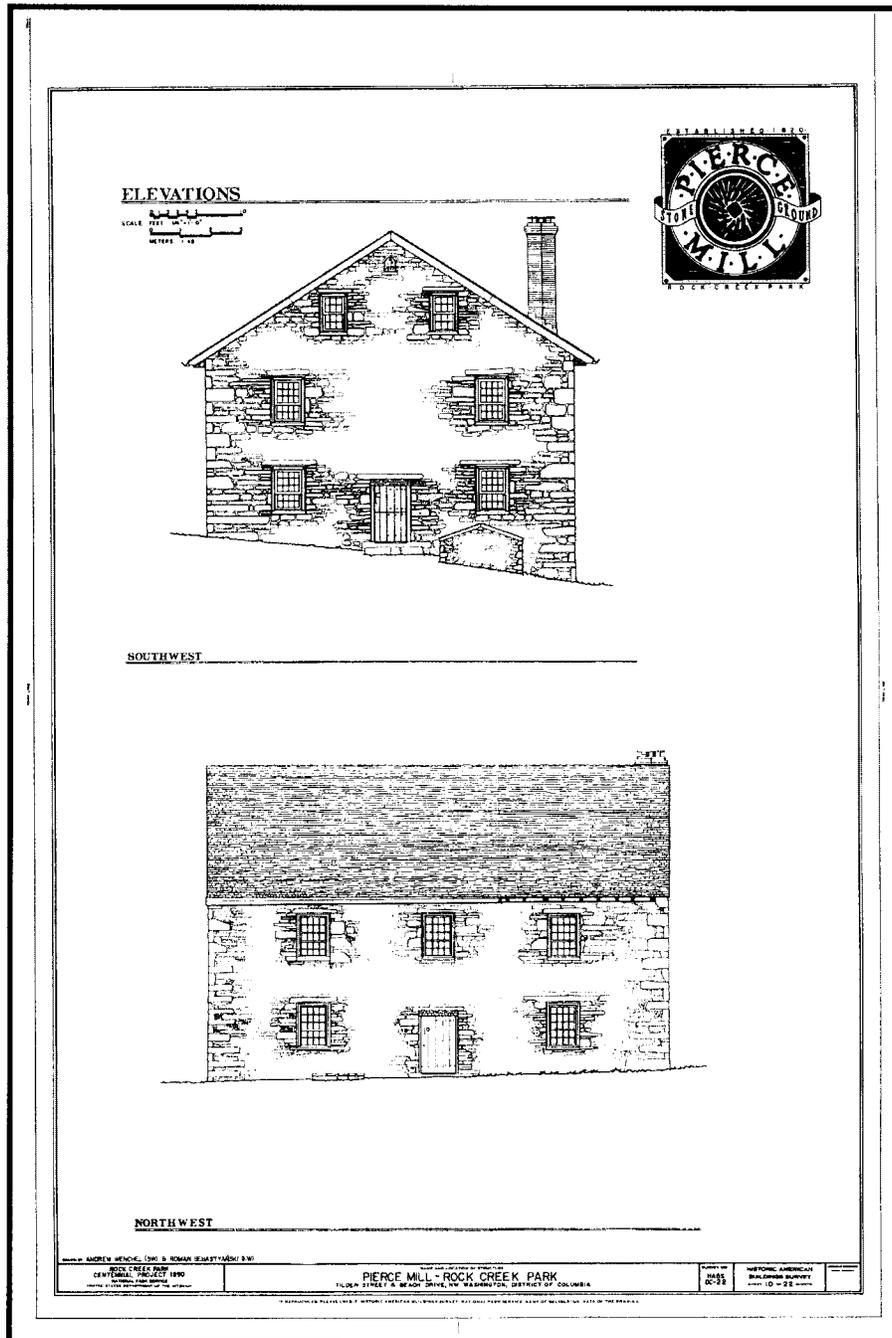
Source: Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey, U.S. Historical, Cultural Collections

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Peirce Mill, Elevations, 1990

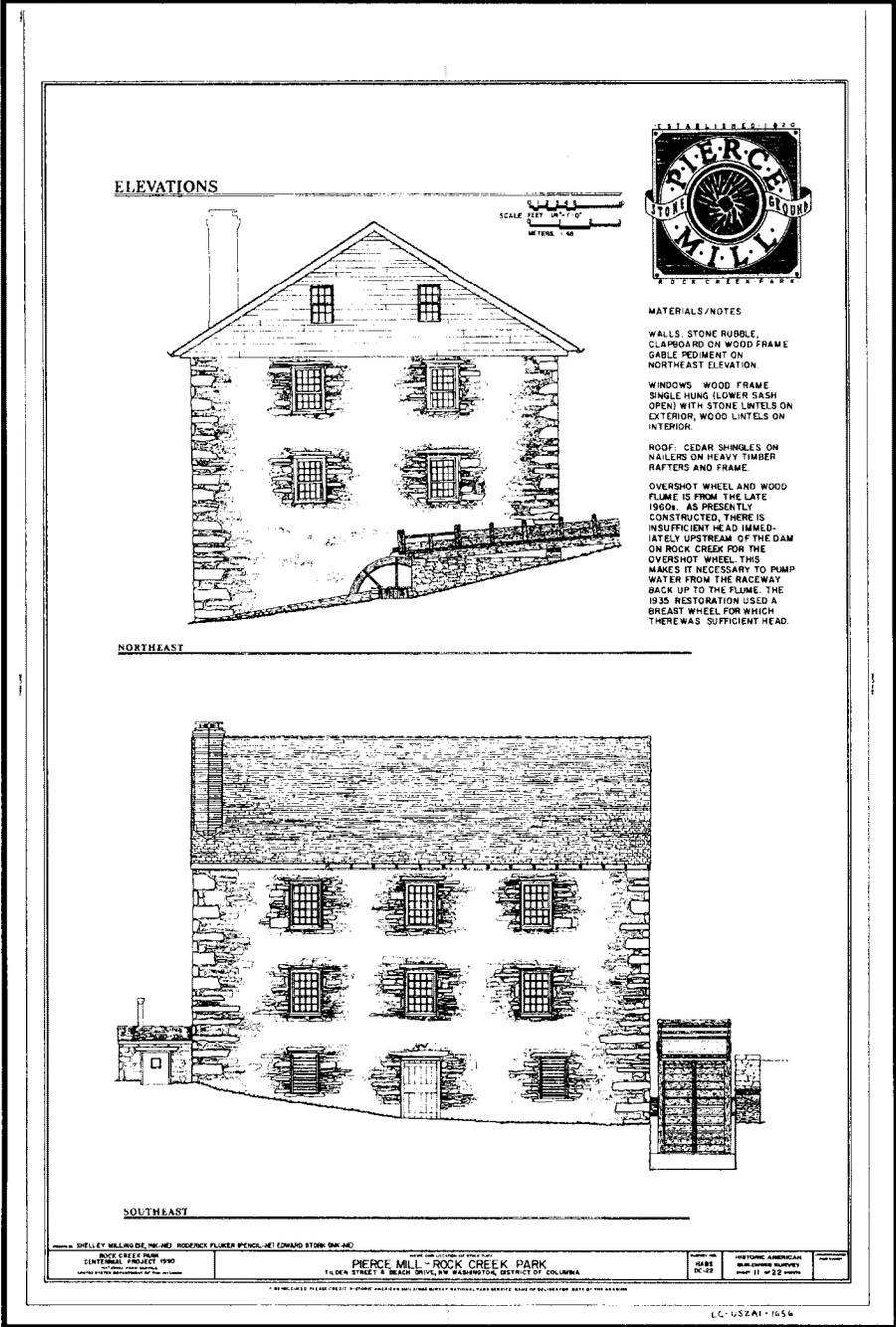
Source: Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey, U.S. Historical, Cultural Collections

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Peirce Mill, Elevations, 1990

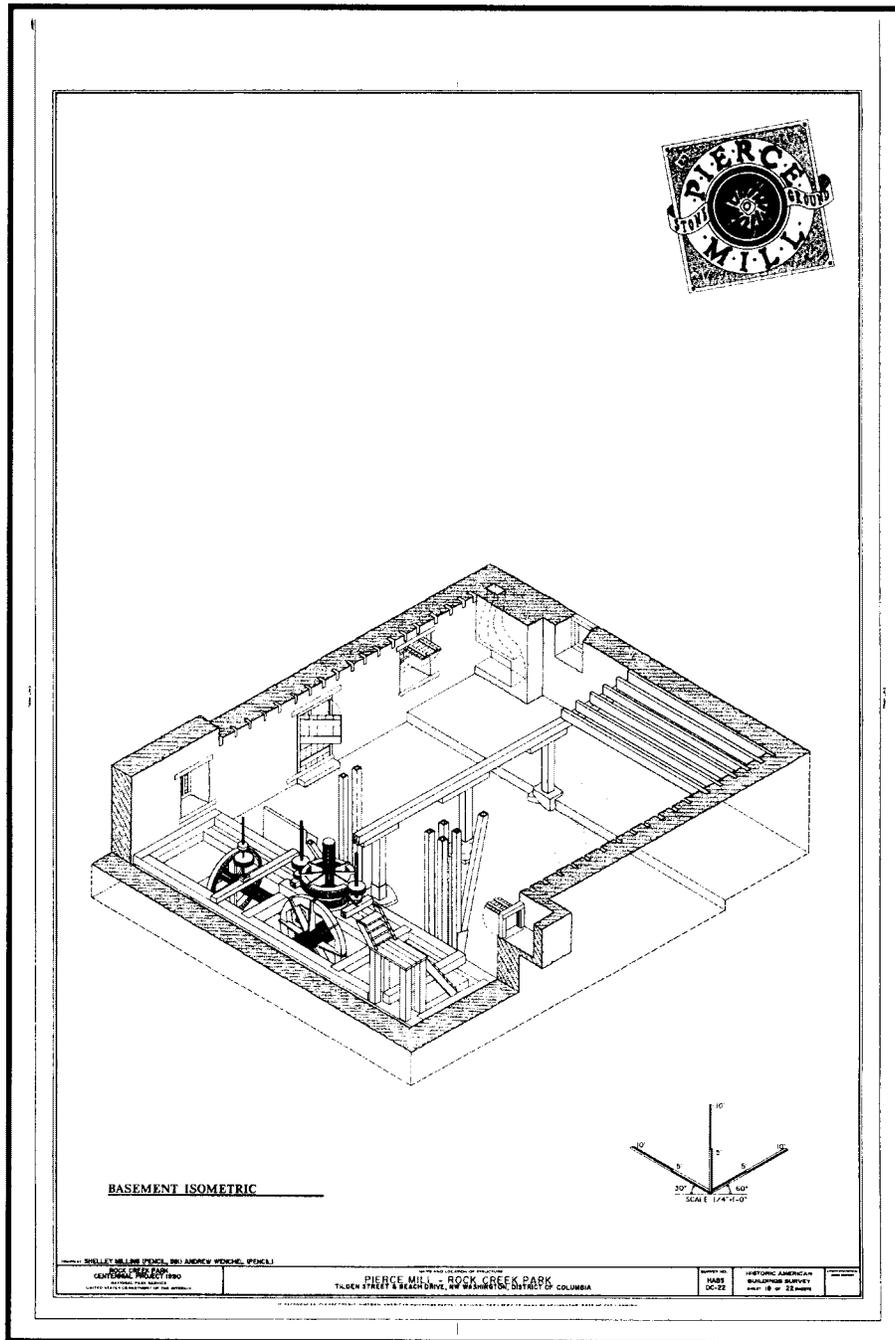
Source: Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey, U.S. Historical, Cultural Collections

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Peirce Mill, Basement Isometric, 1990

Source: Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey, U.S. Historical, Cultural Collections

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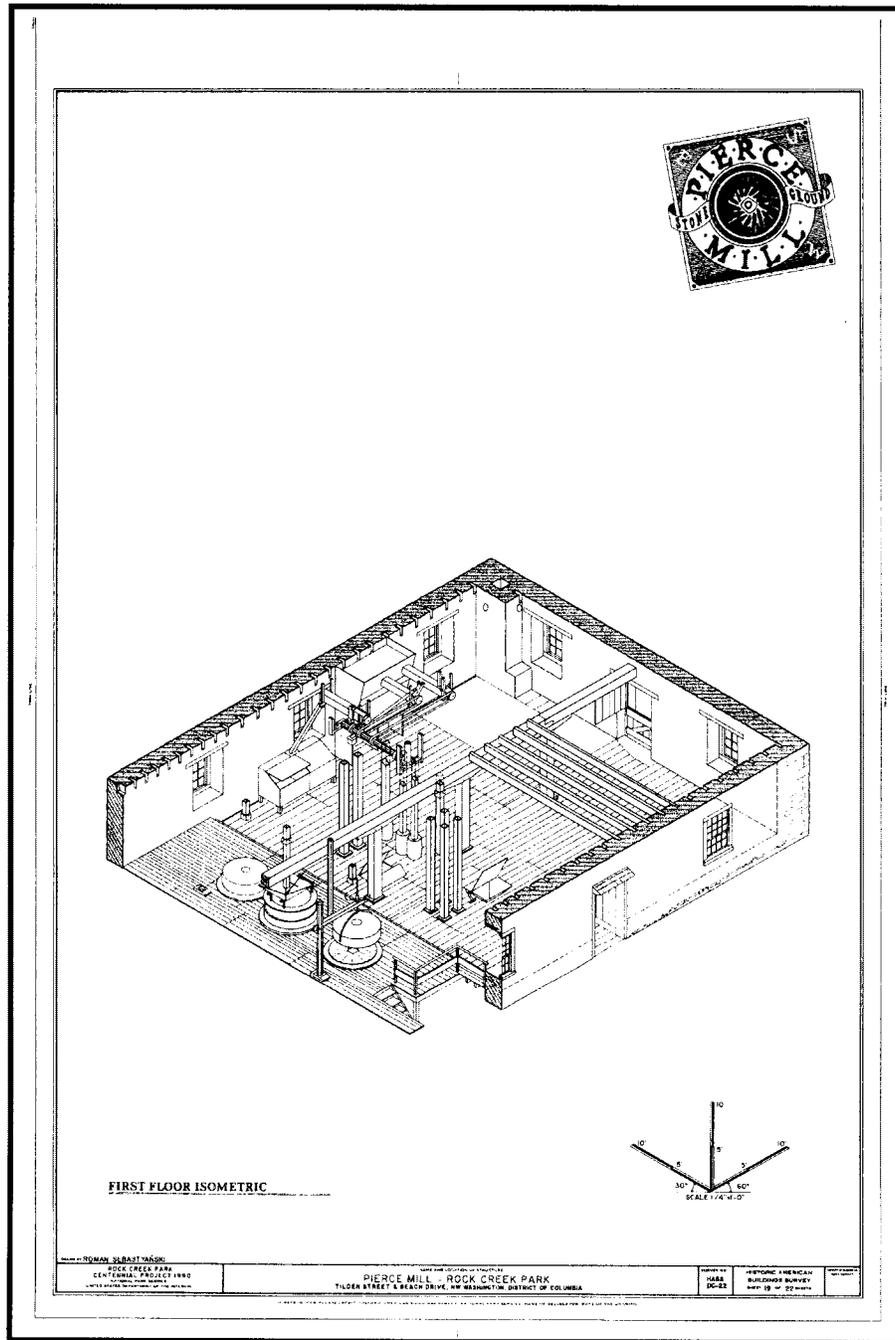
Name of Property
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Peirce Mill, First Floor Isometric, 1990

Source: Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey, U.S. Historical, Cultural Collections

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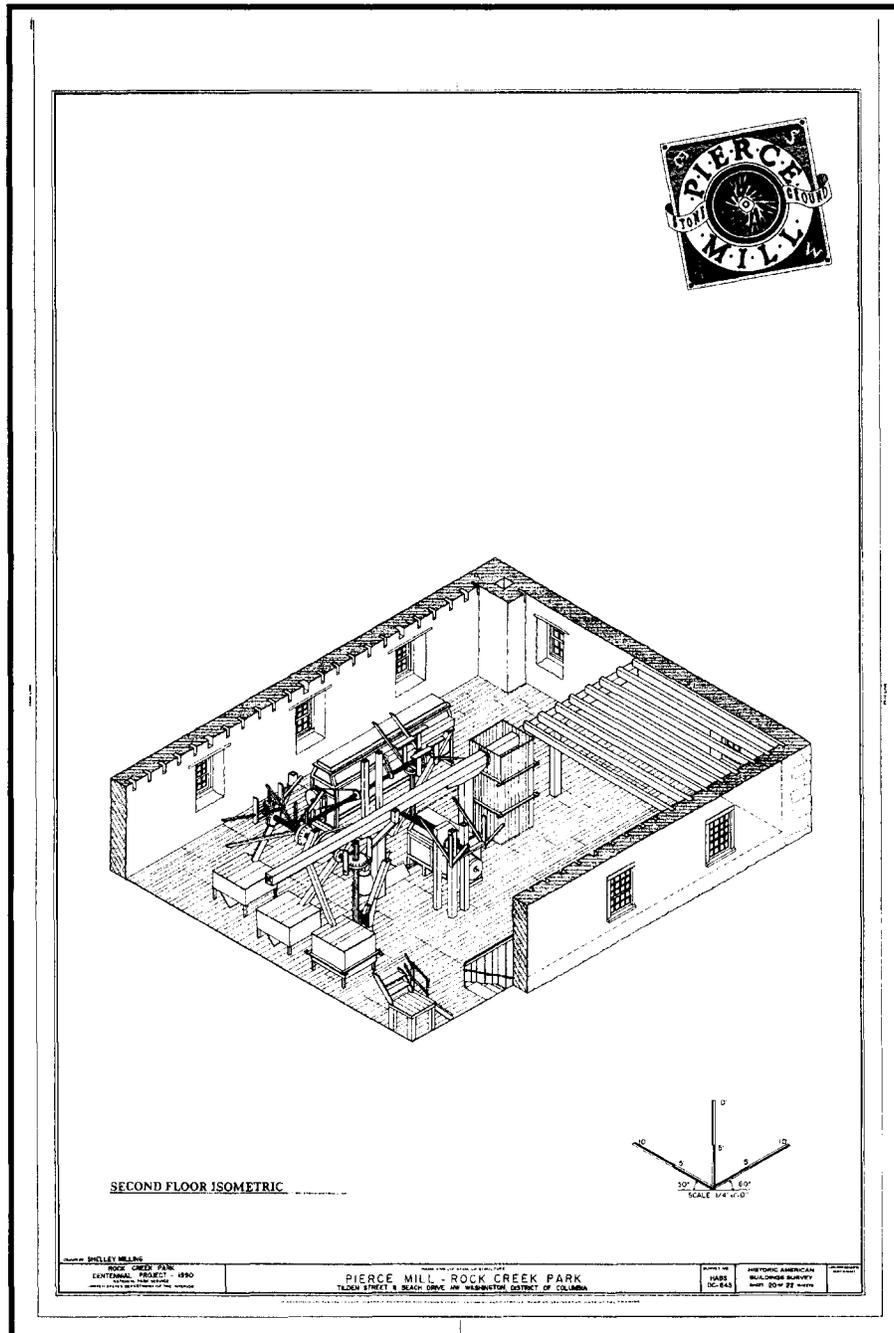
Name of Property
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Peirce Mill, Second Floor Isometric, 1990

Source: Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey, U.S. Historical, Cultural Collections

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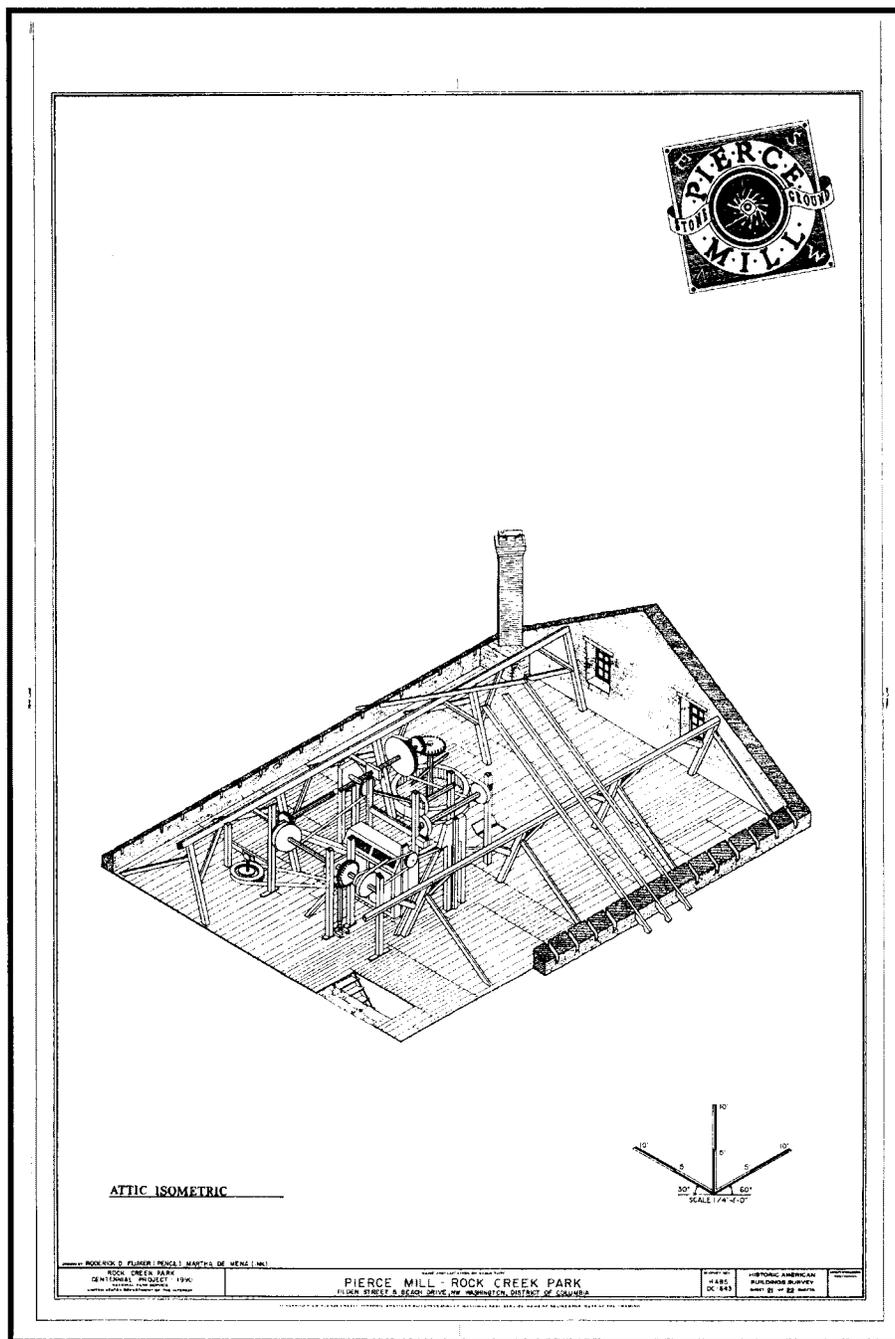
County and State

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Peirce Mill, Attic Isometric, 1990

Source: Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey, U.S. Historical, Cultural Collections

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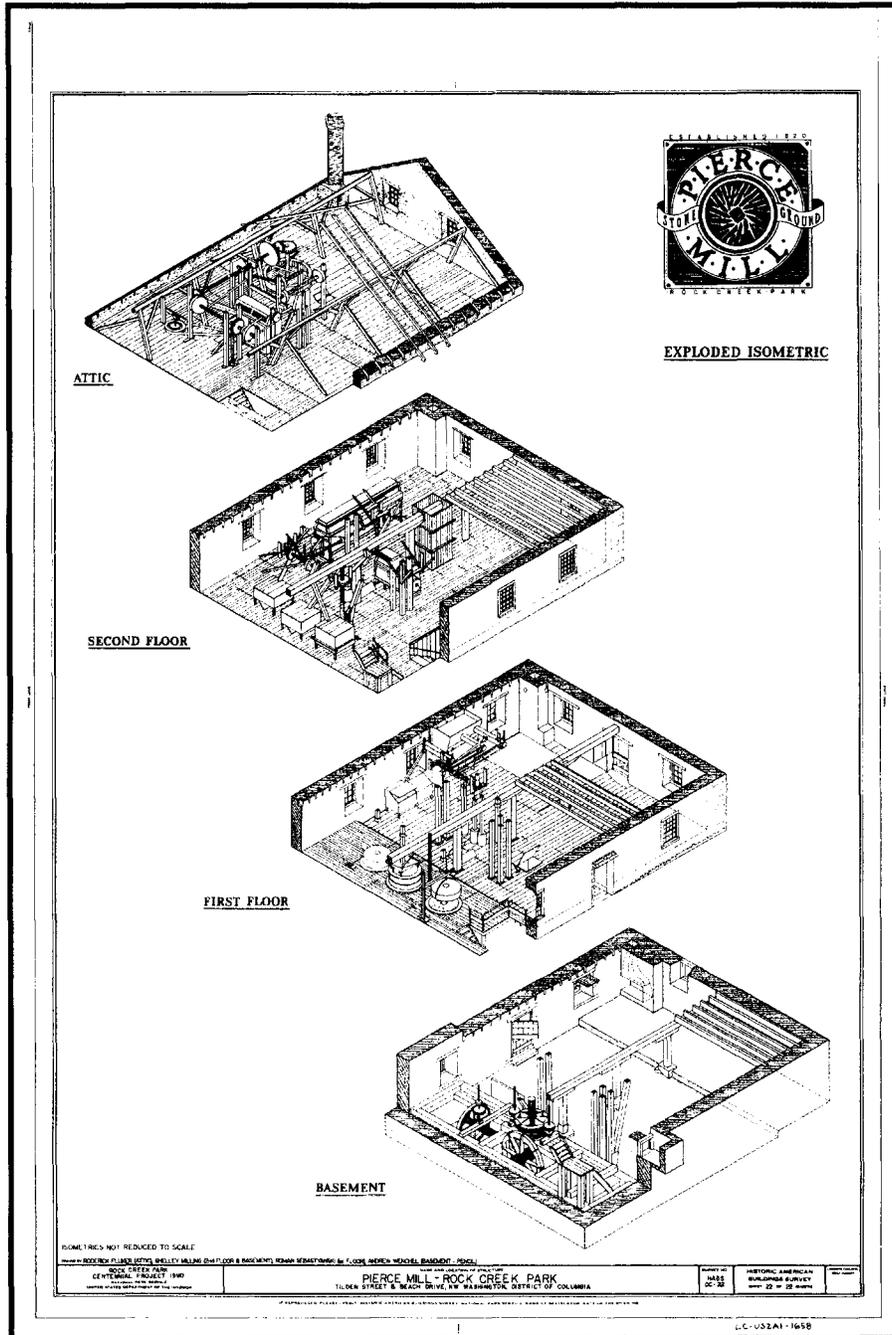
Name of Property
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Peirce Mill, Exploded Isometric, 1990

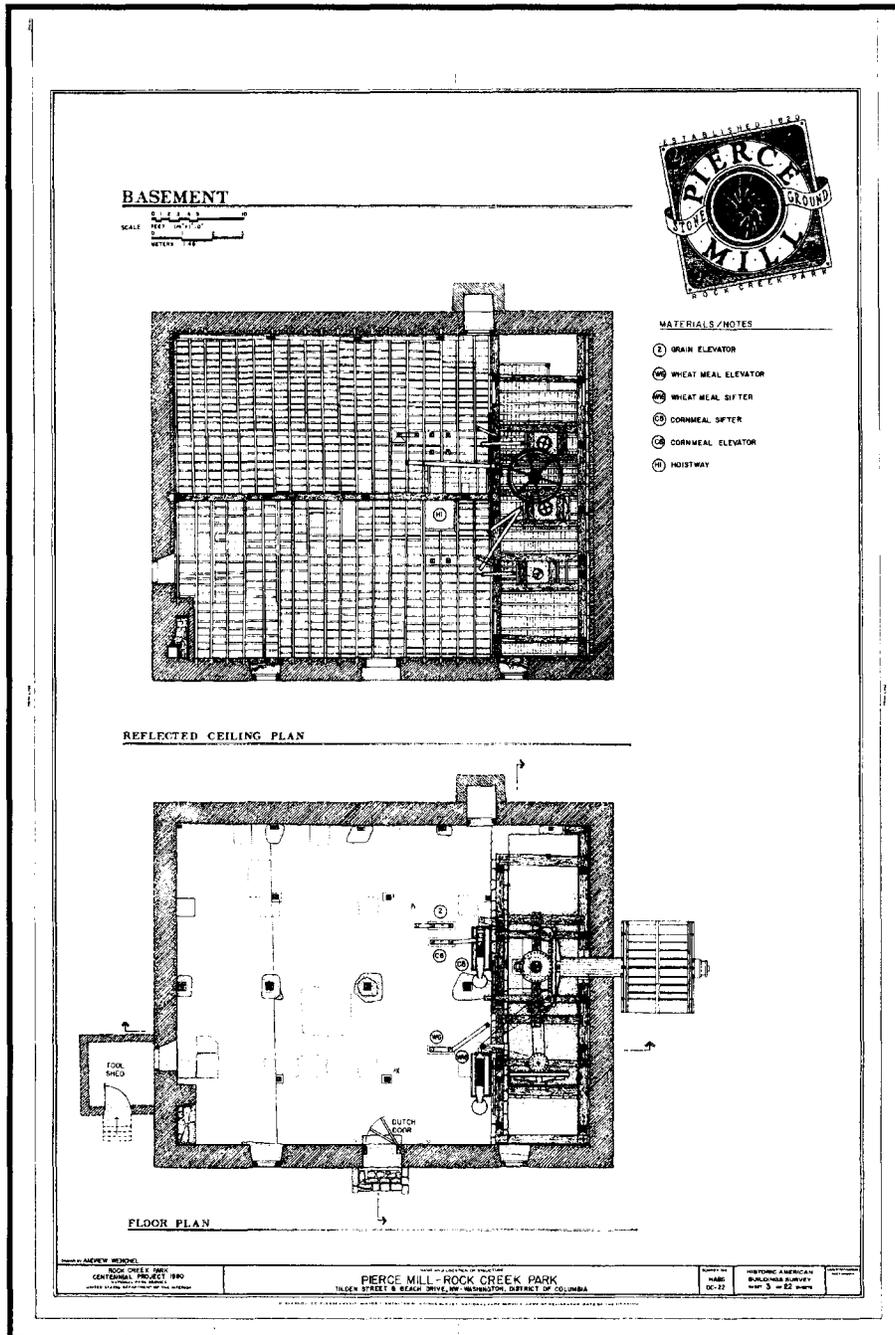
Source: Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey, U.S. Historical, Cultural Collections

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Peirce Mill, Basement Plan, 1990

Source: Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey, U.S. Historical, Cultural Collections

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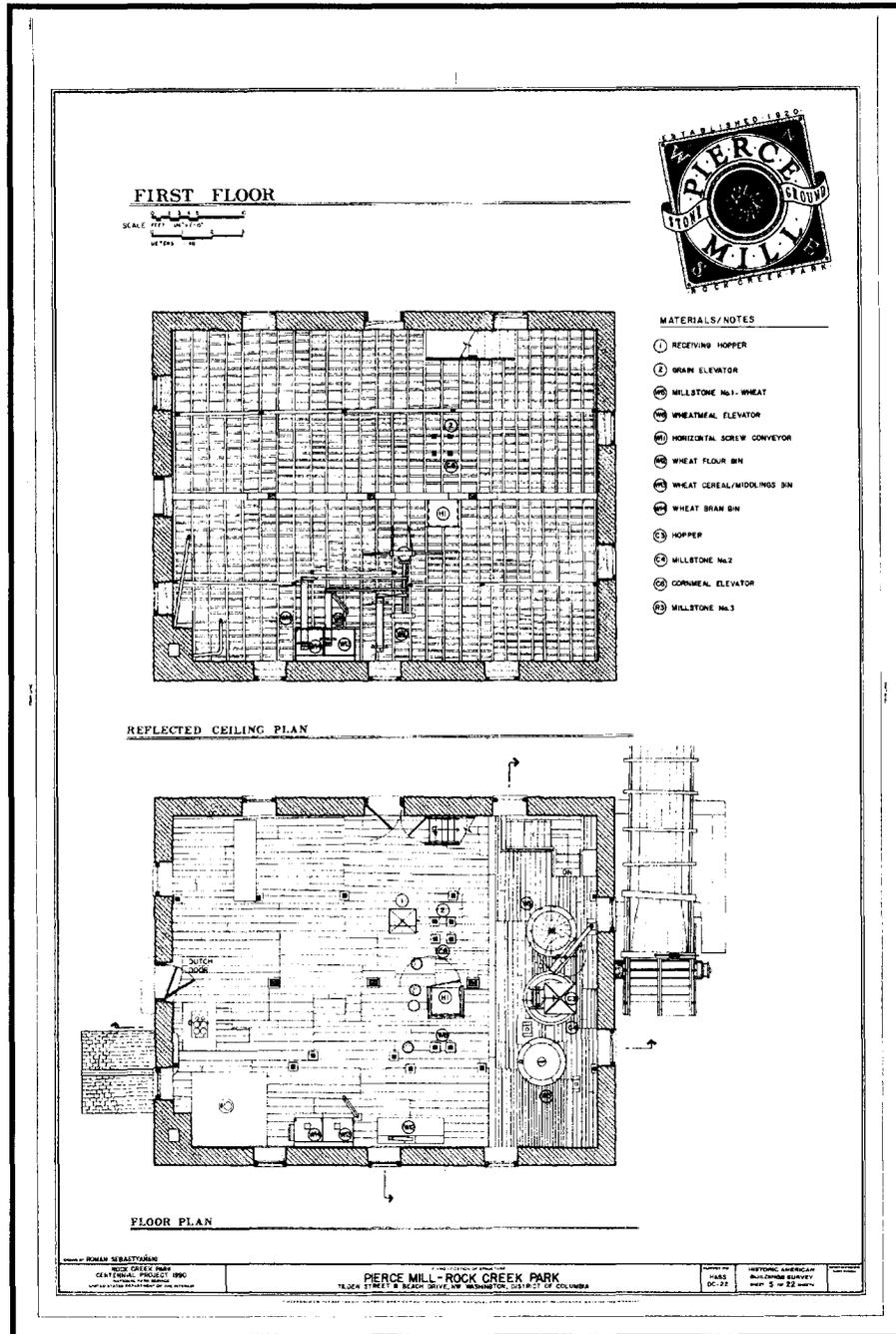
Peirce Mill (amended nomination)

Name of Property
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Peirce Mill, First Floor Plan, 1990

Source: Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey, U.S. Historical, Cultural Collections

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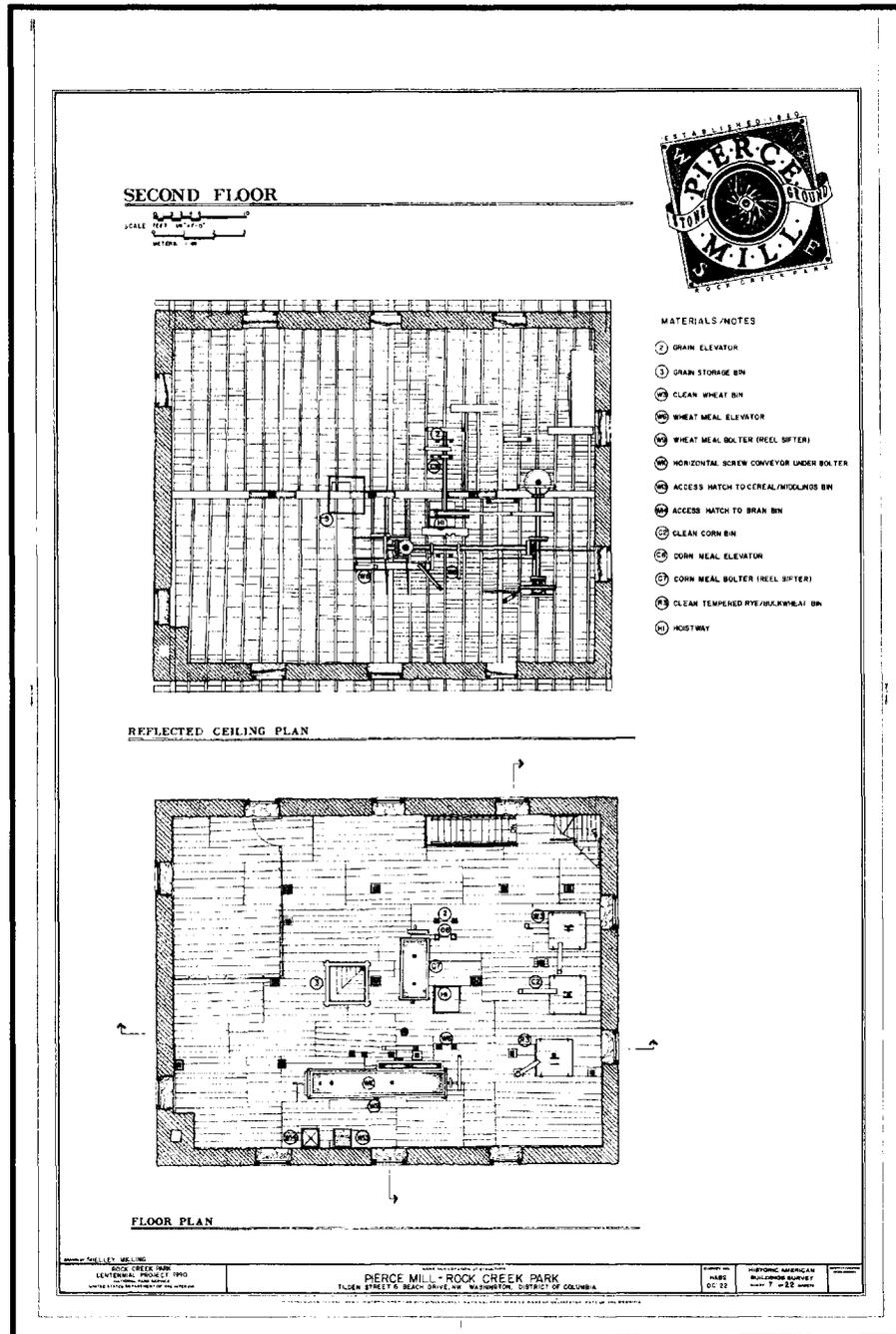
Peirce Mill (amended nomination)

Name of Property
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Peirce Mill, Second Floor Plan, 1990

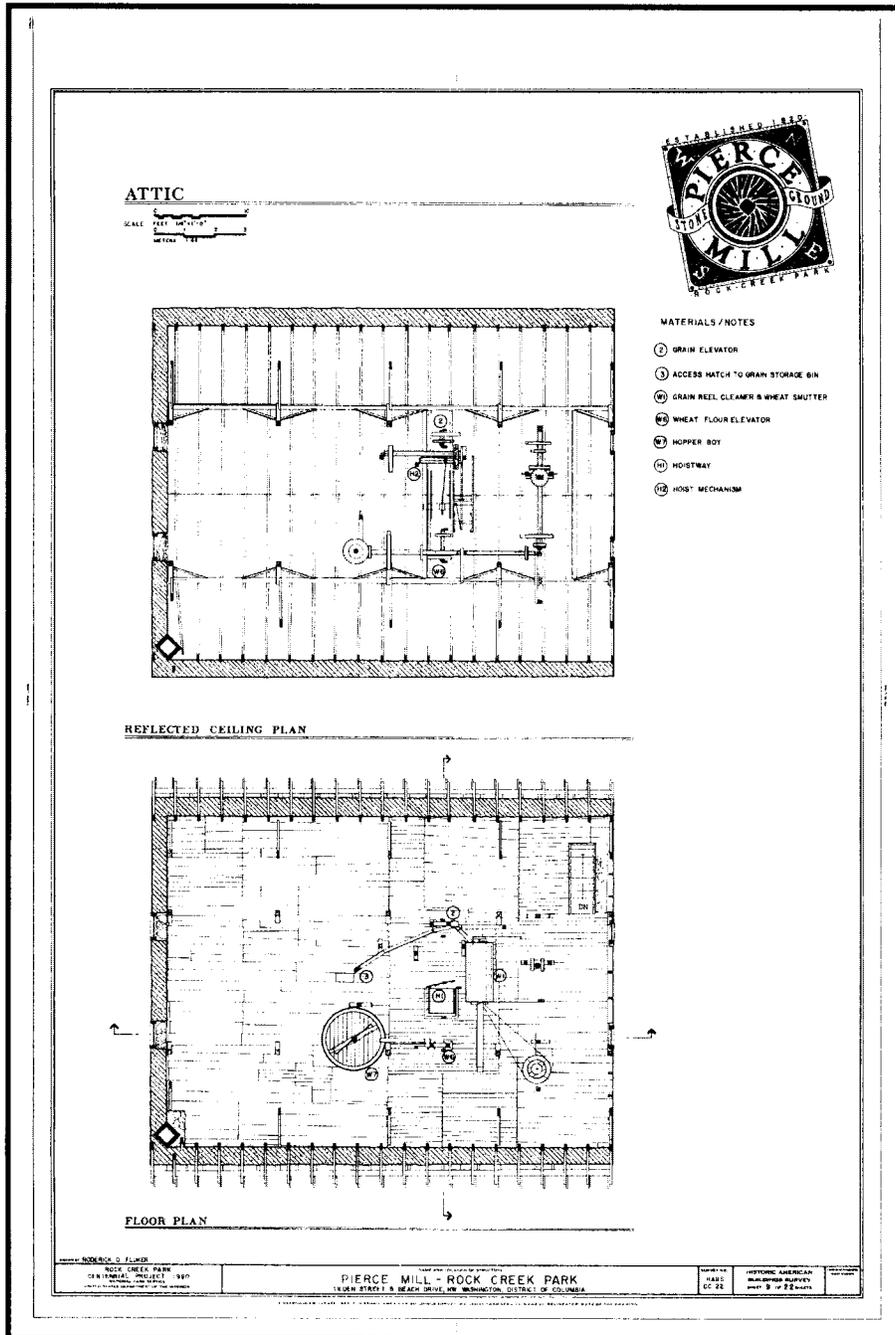
Source: Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey, U.S. Historical, Cultural Collections

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Peirce Mill, Attic Plan, 1990

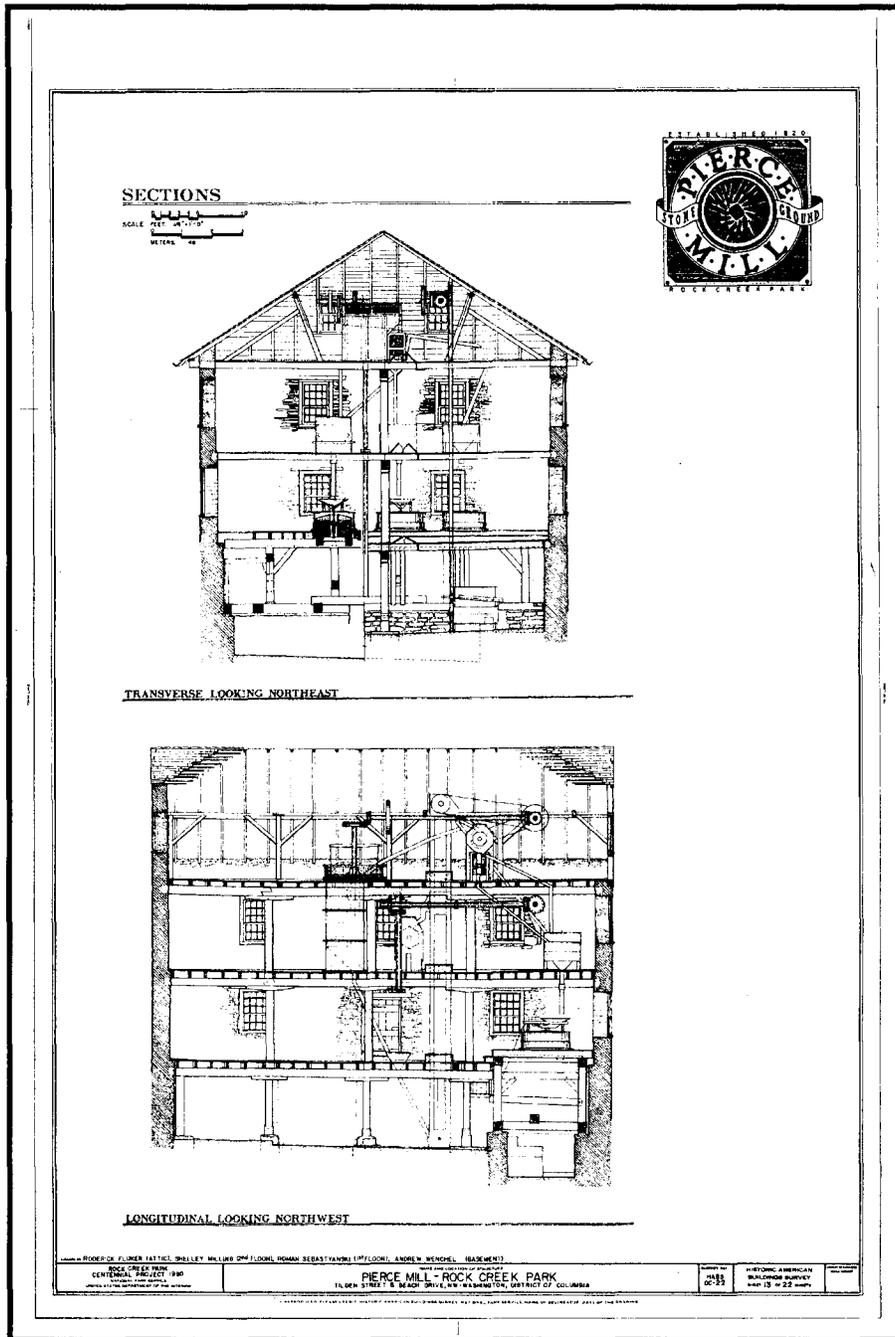
Source: Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey, U.S. Historical, Cultural Collections

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Peirce Mill, Sectional Views, 1990

Source: Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey, U.S. Historical, Cultural Collections

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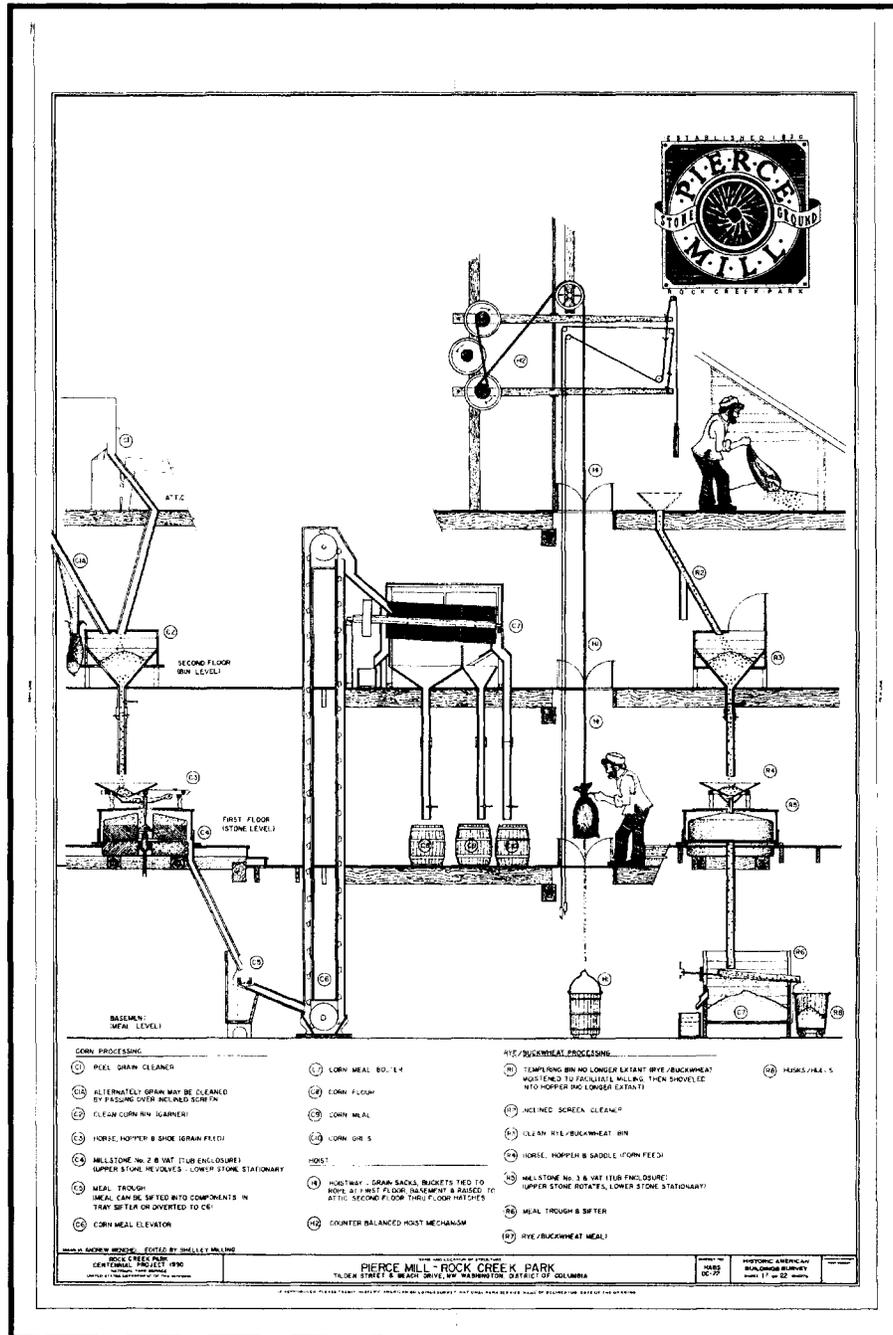
Name of Property
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Peirce Mill, Milling Operations, 1990

Source: Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey, U.S. Historical, Cultural Collections

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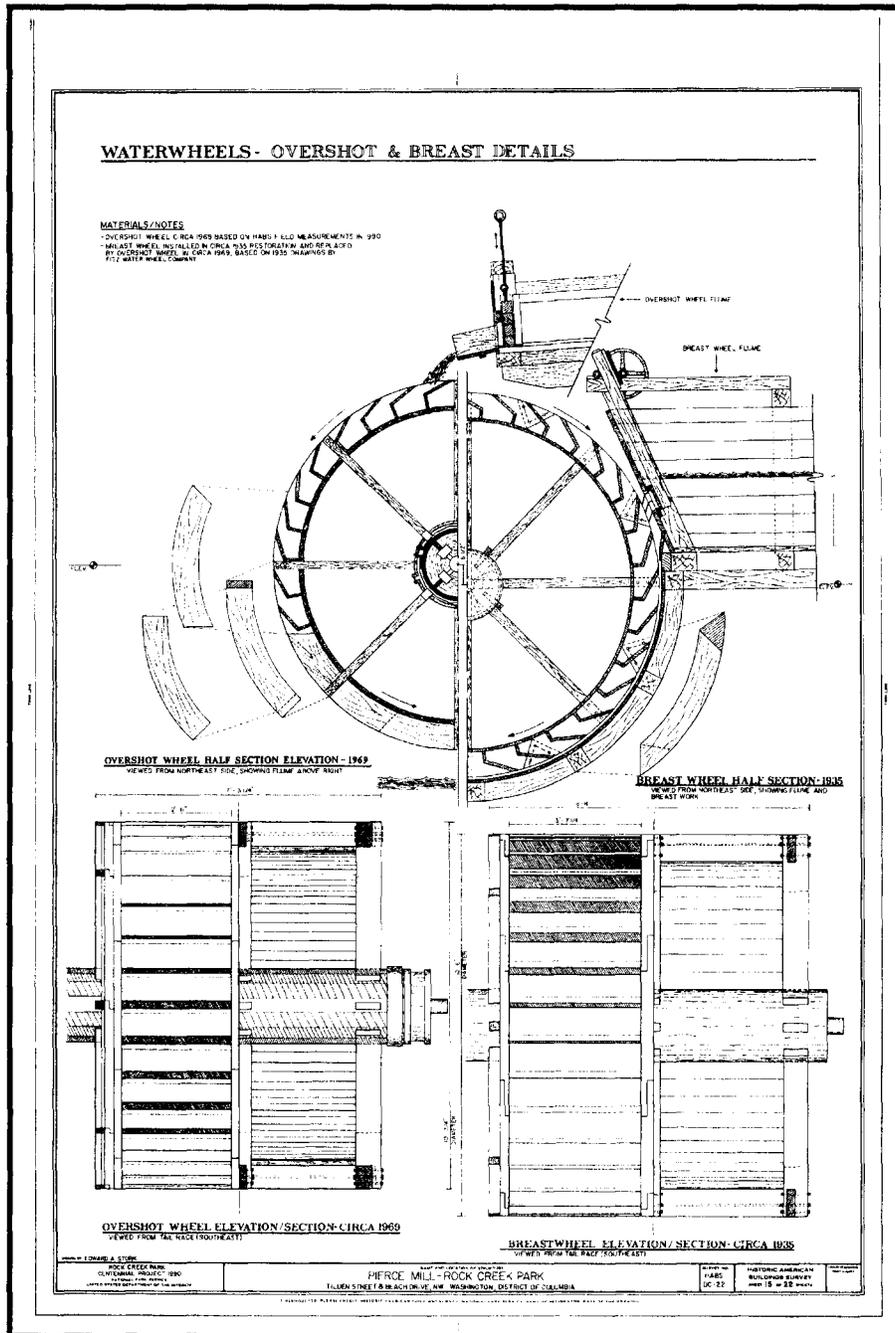
Name of Property
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Peirce Mill, Waterwheel Operations, 1990

Source: Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey, U.S. Historical, Cultural Collections

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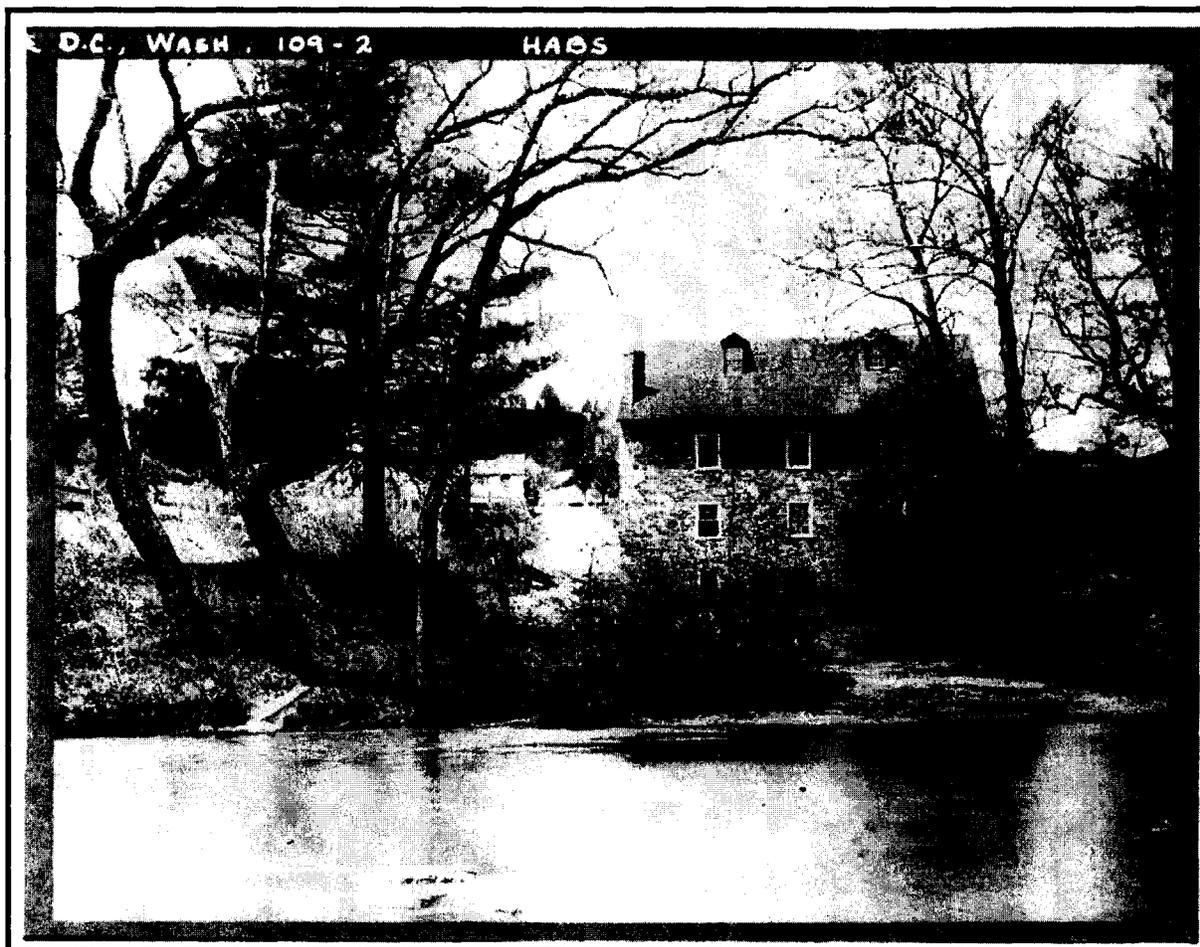
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Peirce Mill, c. 1900 (View west across Rock Creek)

Source: Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey, U.S. Historical, Cultural Collections

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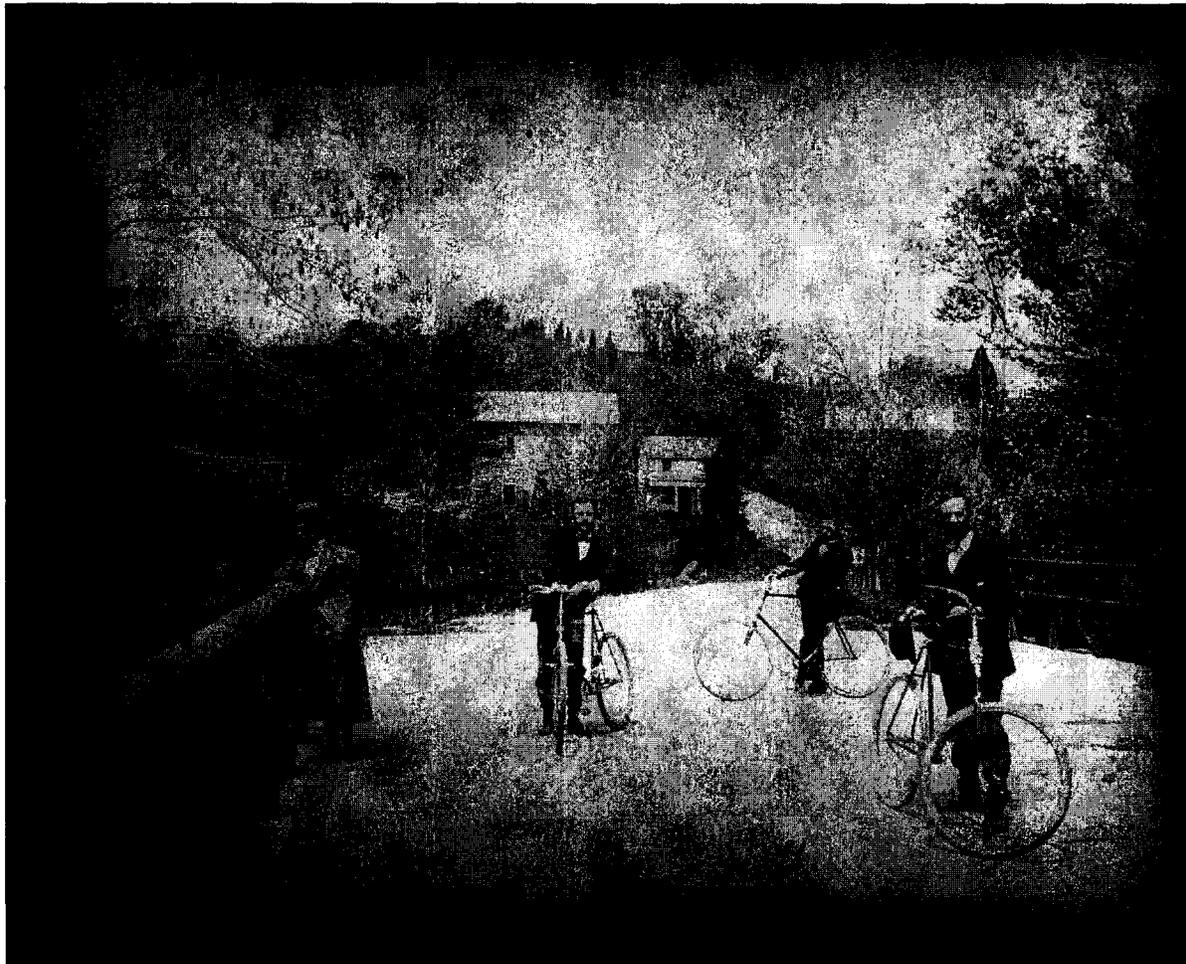
Name of Property
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Bicyclists at the bridge across Rock Creek south of Peirce Mill, c.1885-1920

Source: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division

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Peirce Mill, 1917 (View of Façade)

Source: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division

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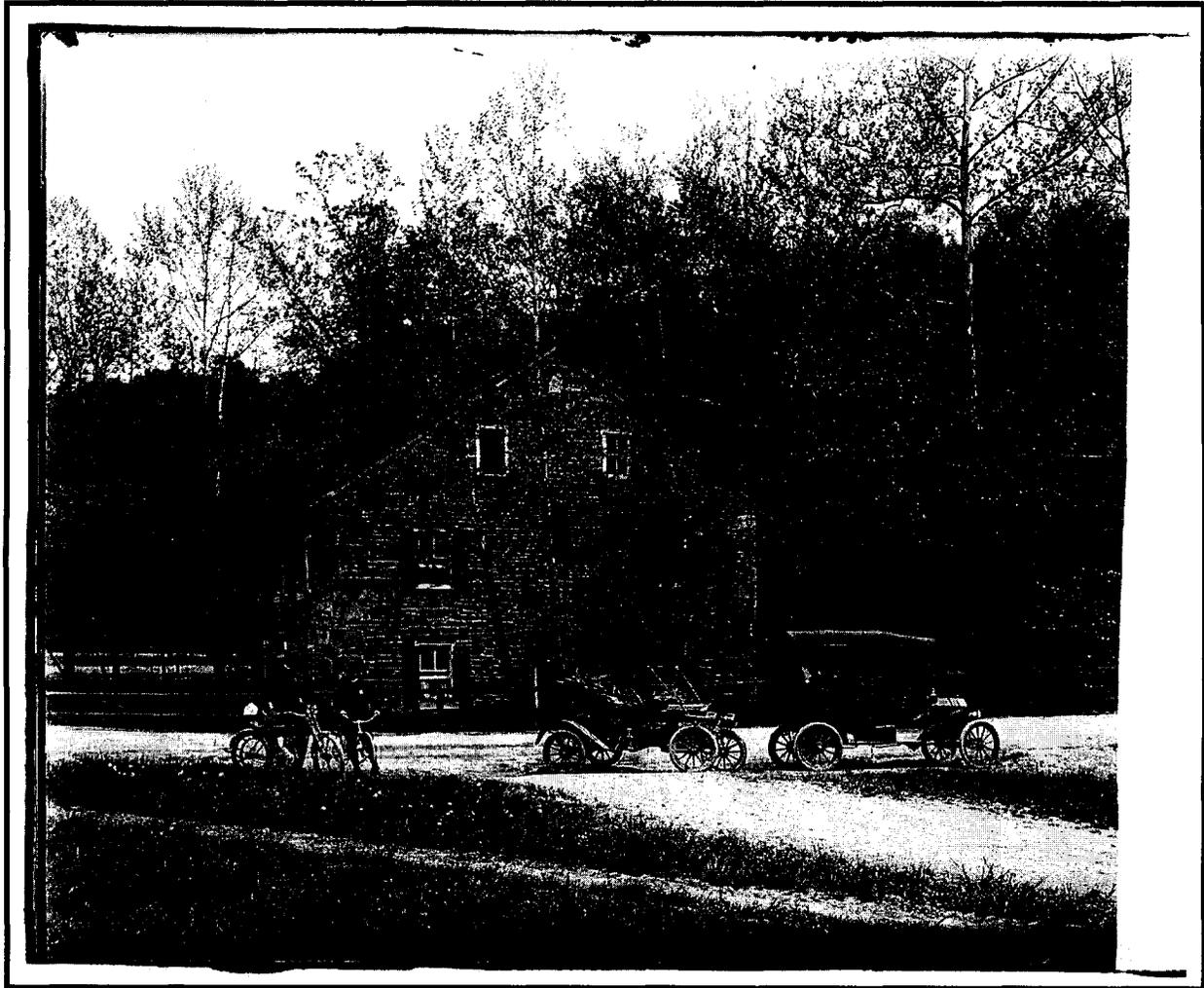
Peirce Mill (amended nomination)

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Peirce Mill, c.1919 (View from the West)
Source: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division

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Peirce Mill, c. 1935 (View of Façade)

Source: Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey, U.S. Historical, Cultural Collections

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Peirce Mill, c. 1934 (View of Teahouse)

Source: Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey, U.S. Historical, Cultural Collections

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Peirce Mill Teahouse Sign

Source: "Crestwood History Presentation," <http://www.authorstream.com/Presentation/CLUW-231930-crestwood-history-presentation-conve-washington-dc-conversion-pdf-education-ppt-powerpoint/> (accessed October 4, 2010).

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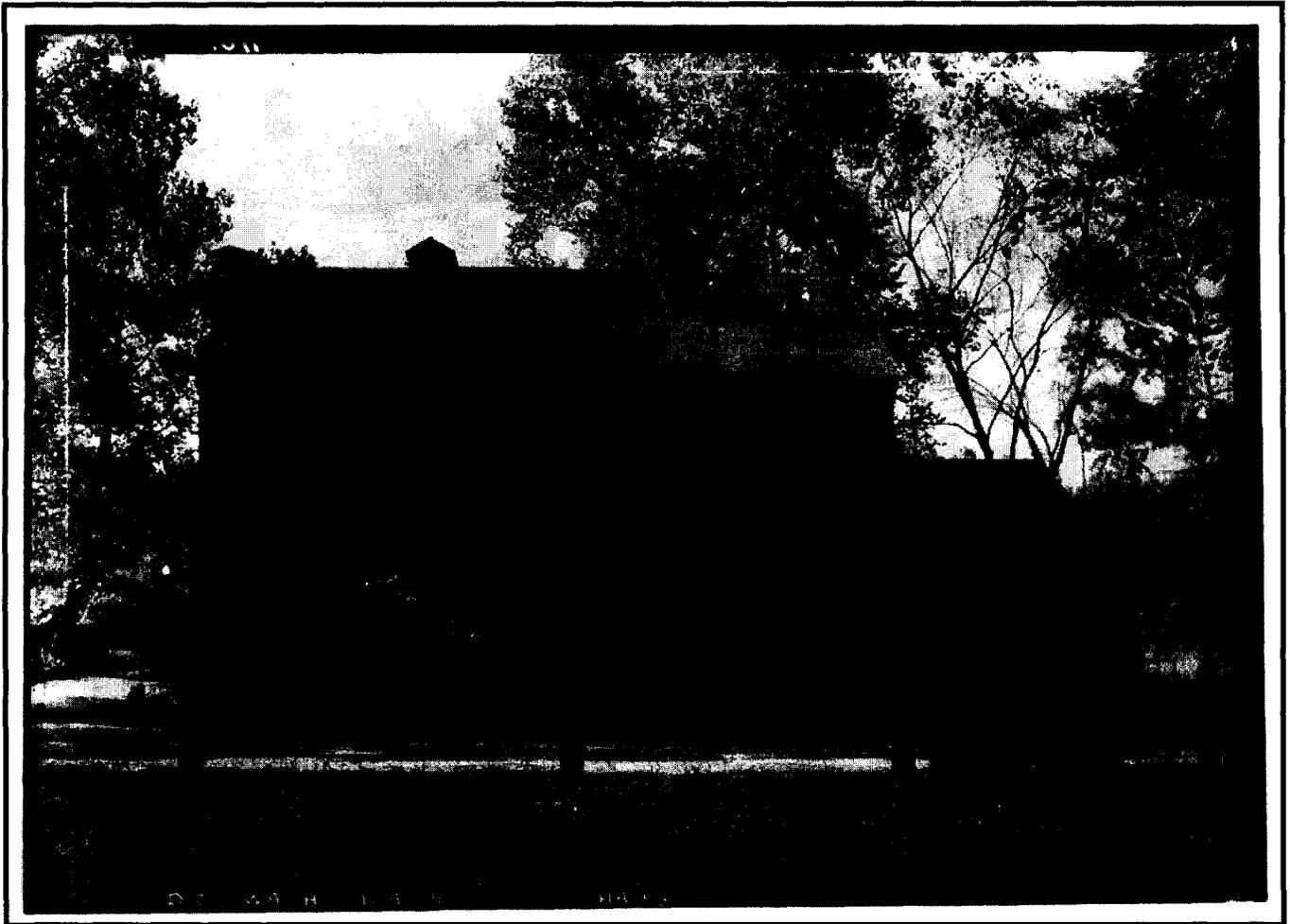
Name of Property
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Peirce Mill, c. 1934 (View of Southeast Elevation)

Source: Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey, U.S. Historical, Cultural Collections

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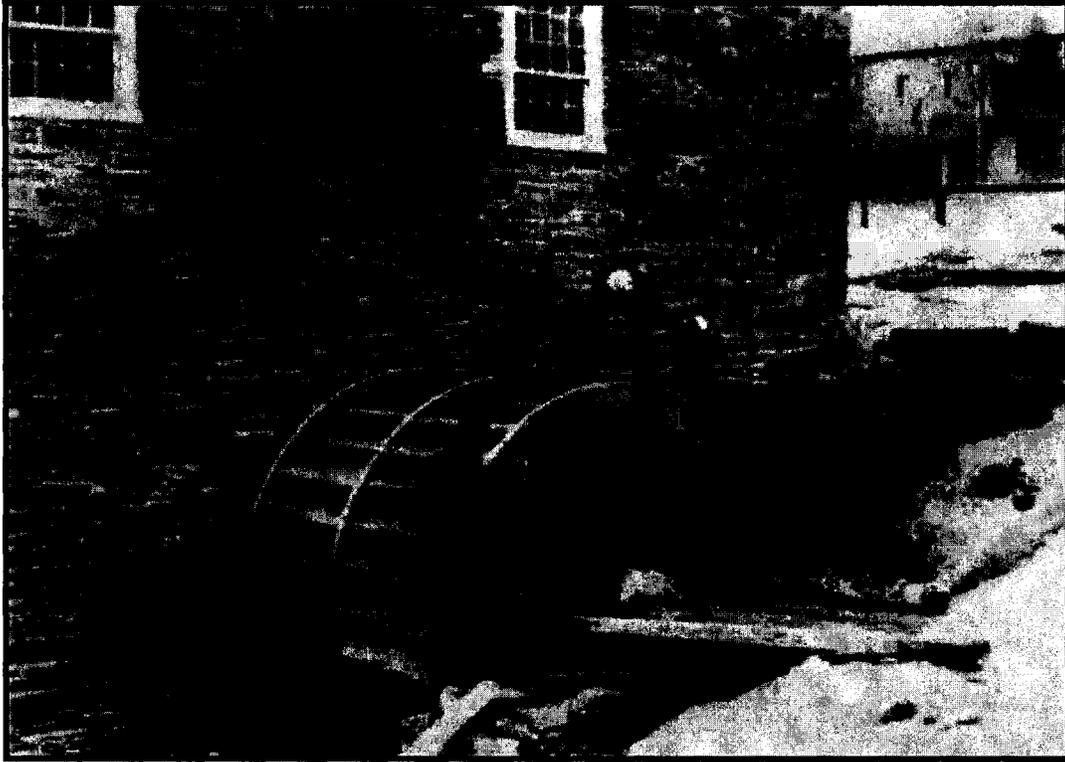
Name of Property
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Peirce Mill, 1936 (Restoration of Waterwheel)

Source: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division

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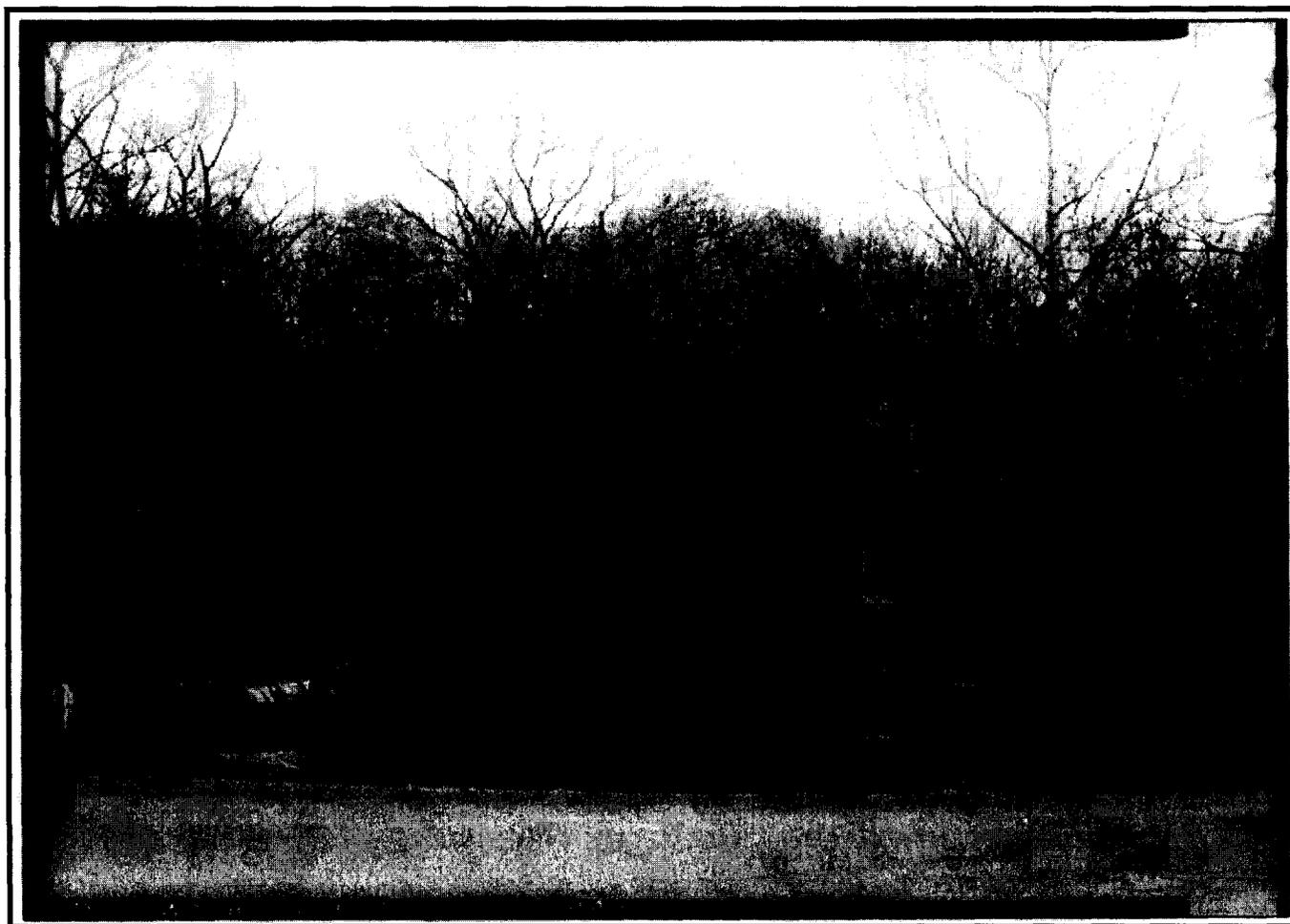
County and State

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Peirce Mill, 1936 (View of Façade)

Source: Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey, U.S. Historical, Cultural Collections

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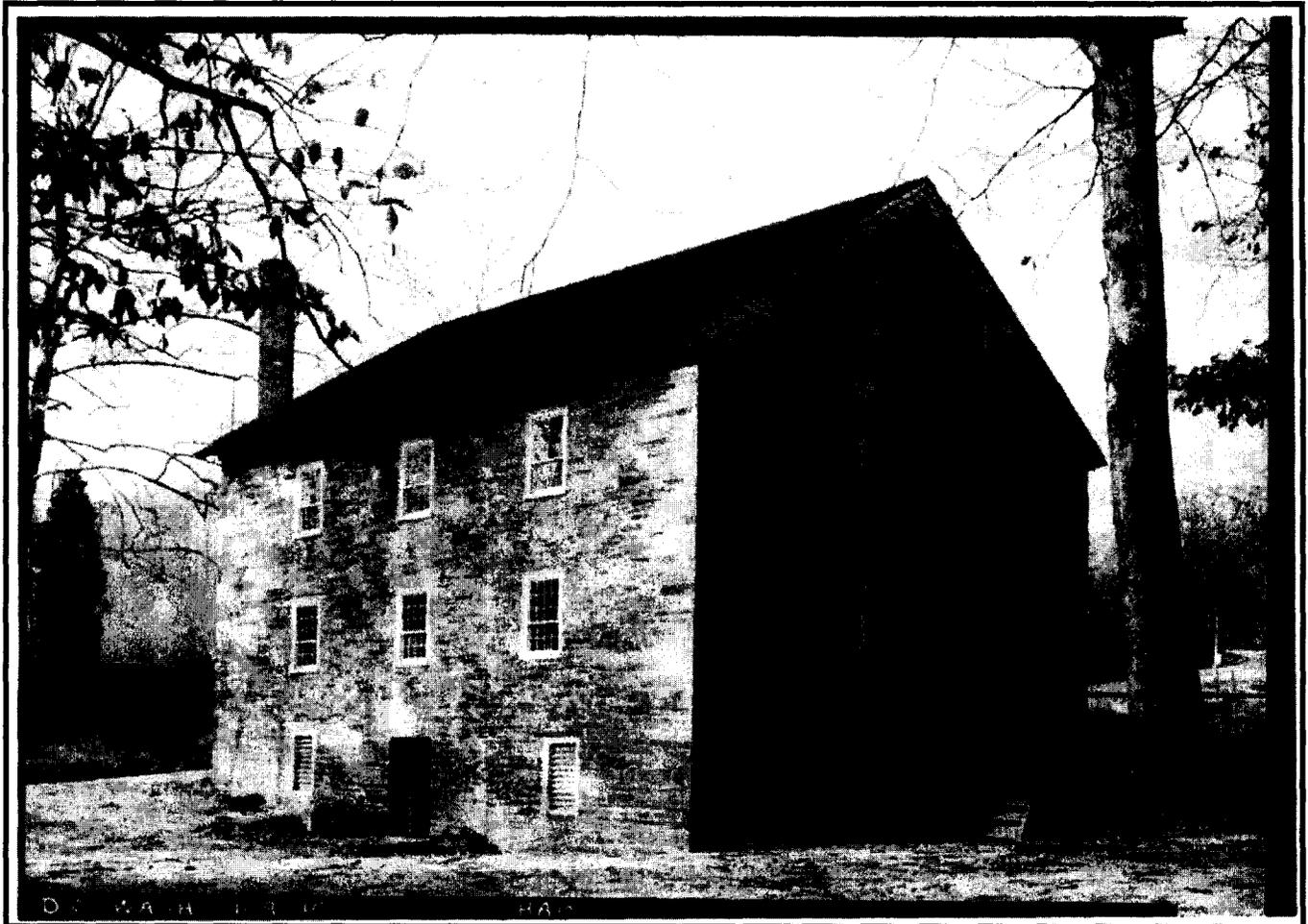
Peirce Mill (amended nomination)

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Peirce Mill, 1936 (East Corner)

Source: Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey, U.S. Historical, Cultural Collections

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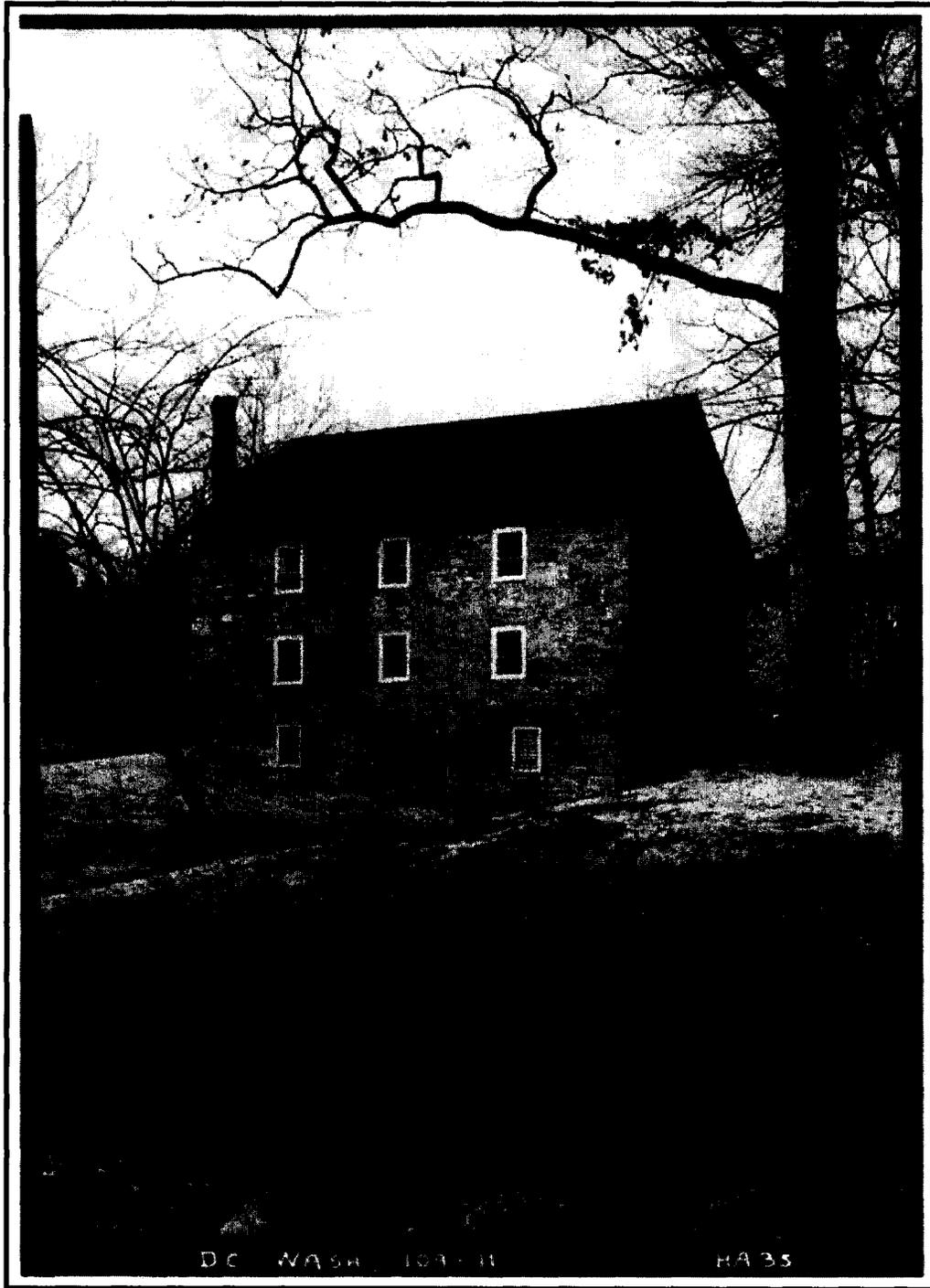
Name of Property
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Peirce Mill, 1936 (View west across Rock Creek)

Source: Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey, U.S. Historical, Cultural Collections

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Peirce Mill, 1934 (Millrace Construction)

Source: Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey, U.S. Historical, Cultural Collections

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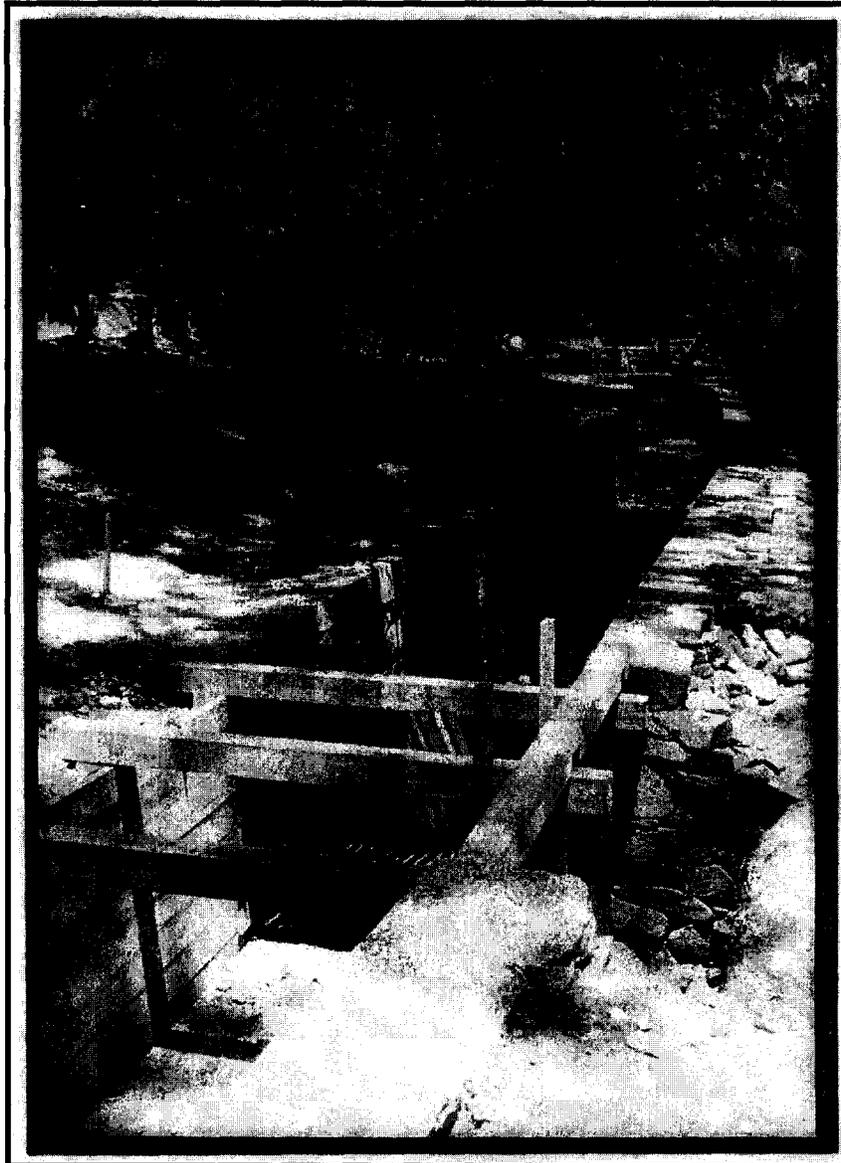
Name of Property
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Peirce Mill, 1934 (Millrace Construction)

Source: Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey, U.S. Historical, Cultural Collections

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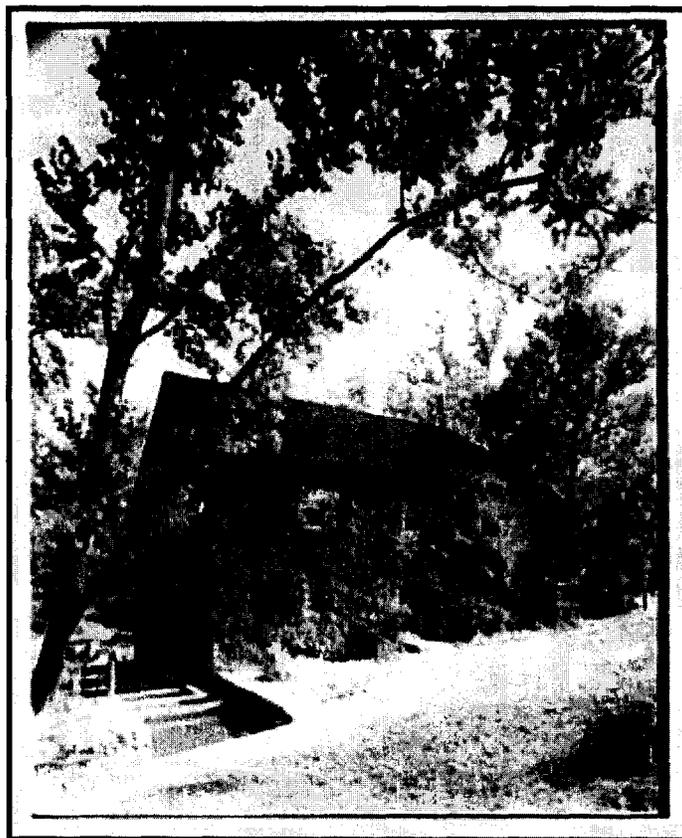
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Peirce Mill, 1940 (View of Facade)

Source: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division

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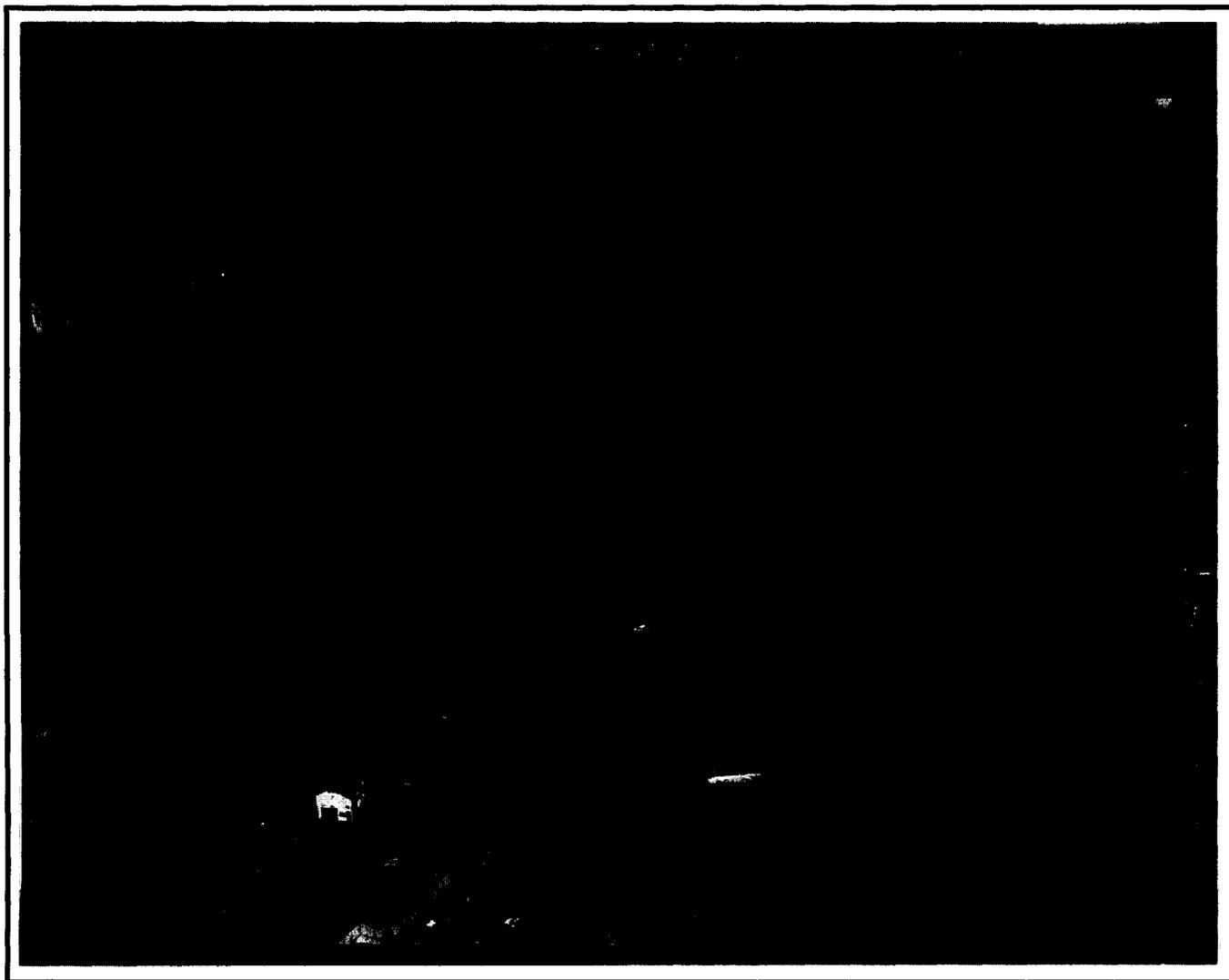
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Aerial, 1966 (View North of Beach Drive from Peirce Mill)

Source: Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey, U.S. Historical, Cultural Collections

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Aerial, 1966 (View South of Beach Drive at Peirce Mill)

Source: Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey, U.S. Historical, Cultural Collections

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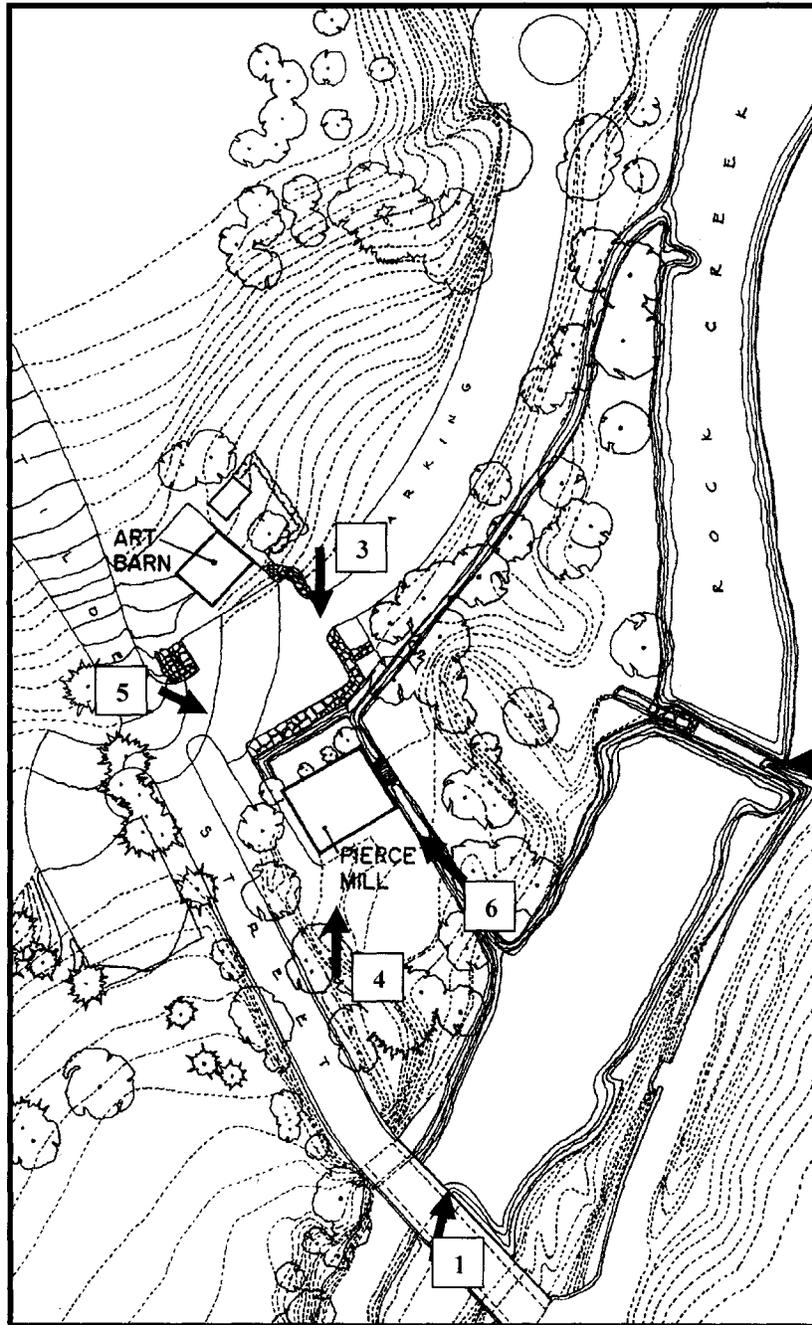
Peirce Mill (amended nomination)

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Photography Key, Peirce Mill

Source: Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey, U.S. Historical, Cultural Collections

➔ 5 Indicates Photograph View and Number

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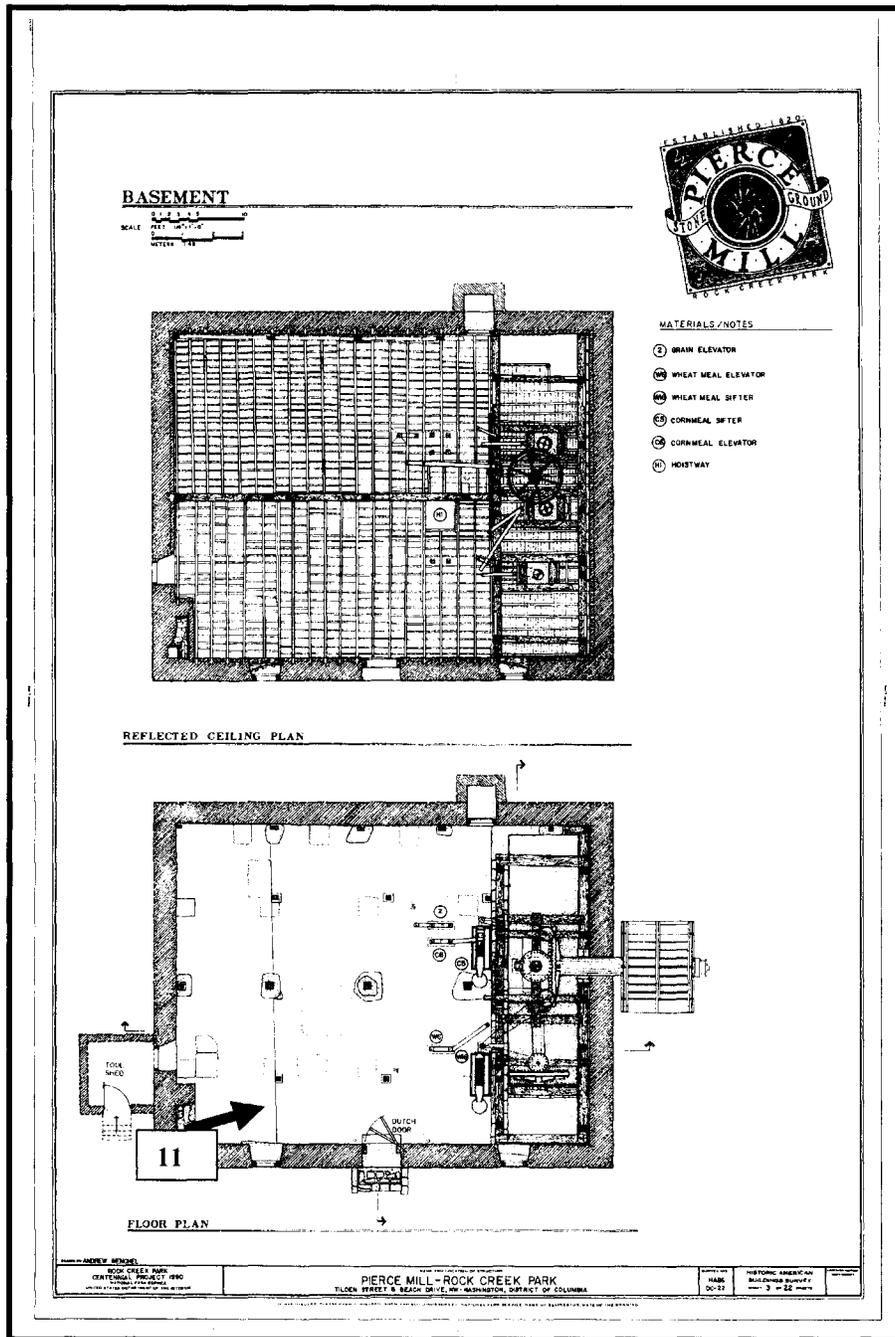
Name of Property
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Photography Key, Peirce Mill, Basement Plan

Source: Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey, U.S. Historical, Cultural Collections

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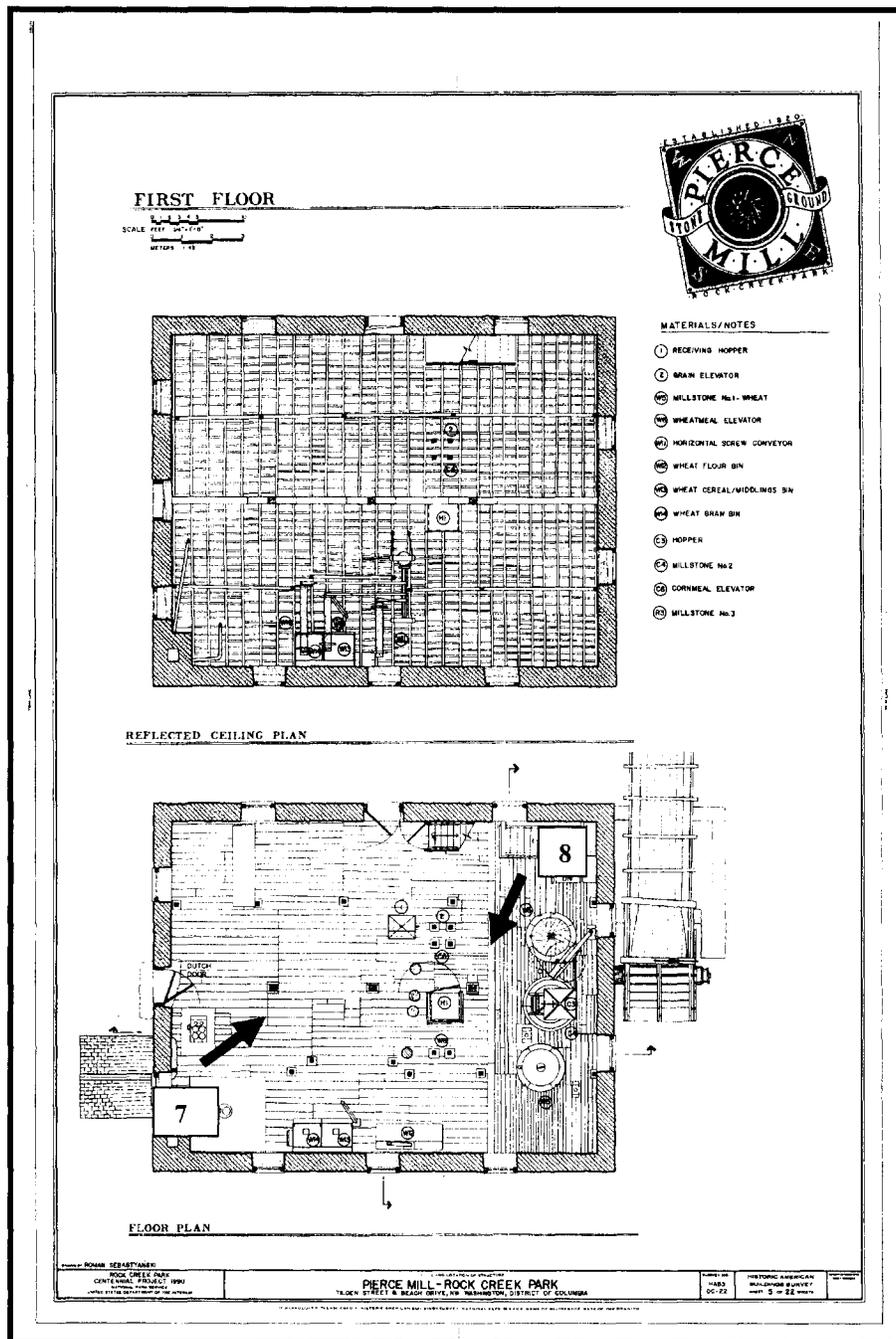
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Photography Key, Peirce Mill, First Floor Plan

Source: Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey, U.S. Historical, Cultural Collections

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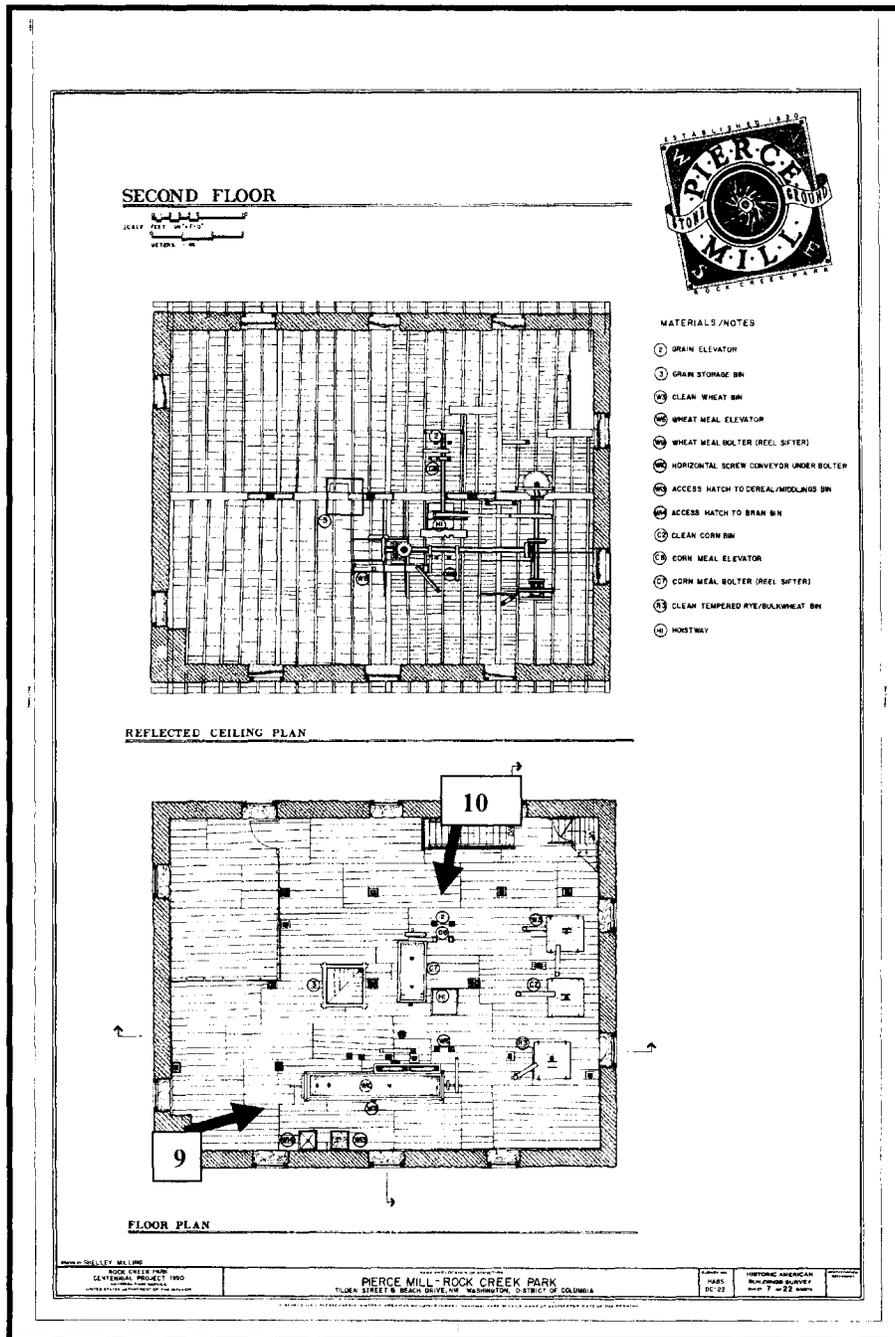
County and State

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Photography Key, Peirce Mill, Second Floor Plan

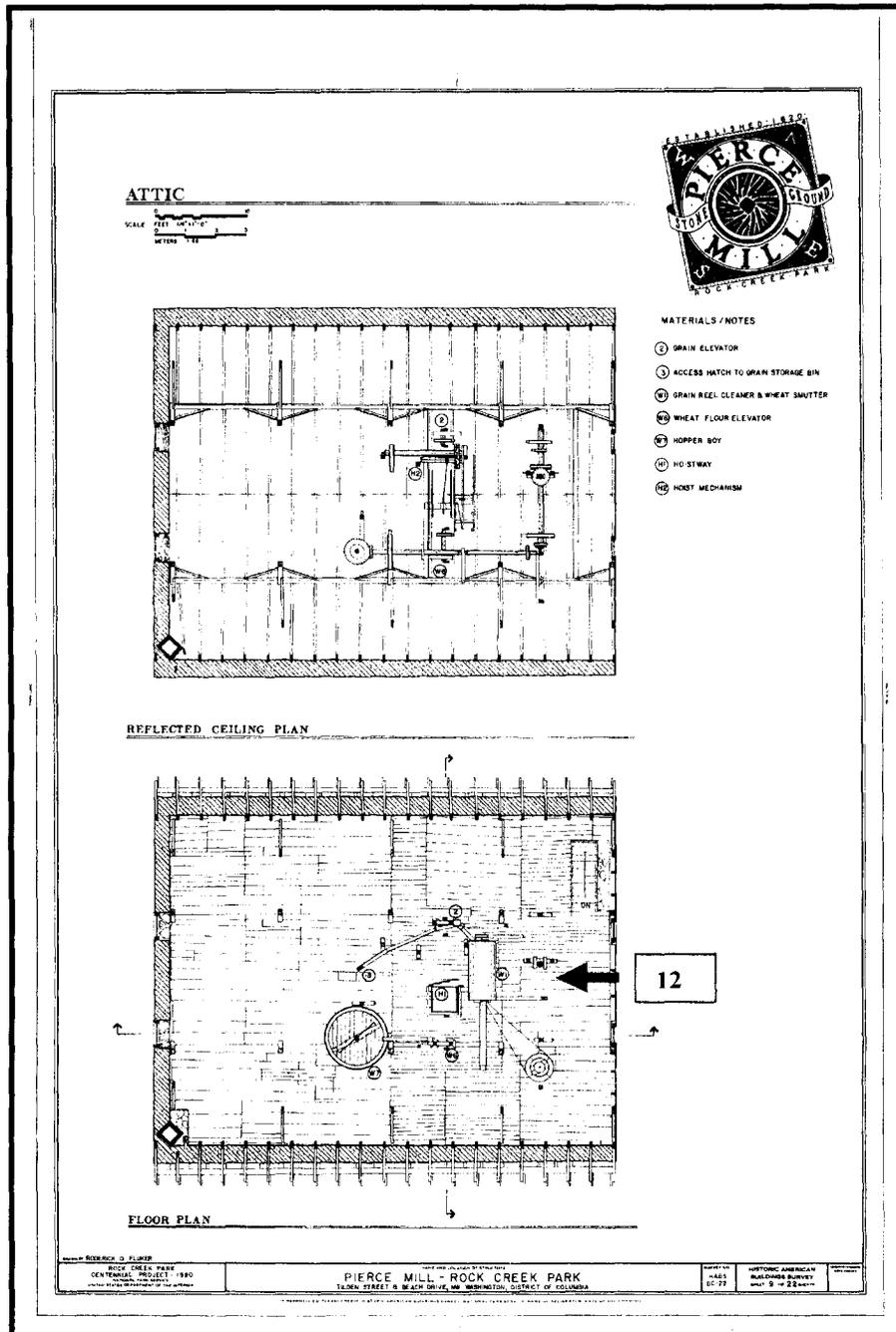
Source: Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey, U.S. Historical, Cultural Collections

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Photography Key, Peirce Mill, Attic Plan

Source: Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey, U.S. Historical, Cultural Collections

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492	FIFTY-FIRST CONGRESS. Sess. I. Ch. 1001. 1890.
September 27, 1890.	CHAP. 1001. —An act authorizing the establishing of a public park in the District of Columbia.
District of Columbia. Rock Creek Park established. Location. Description.	<i>Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That a tract of land lying on both sides of Rock Creek, beginning at Klingie Ford Bridge, and running northwardly, following the course of said creek, of a width not less at any point than six hundred feet, nor more than twelve hundred feet, including the bed of the creek, of which not less than two hundred feet shall be on either side of said creek, south of Broad Branch road and Blagden Mill road and of such greater width north of said roads as the commissioners designated in this act may select, shall be secured, as hereinafter set out, and be perpetually dedicated and set apart as a public park or pleasure ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people of the United States, to be known by the name of Rock Creek Park: <i>Provided, however,</i> That the whole tract so to be selected and condemned under the provisions of this act shall not exceed two thousand acres nor the total cost thereof exceed the amount of money herein appropriated.</i>
Dedication.	
Proviso.	
Maximum size and cost.	
Commission to be appointed.	SEC. 2. That the Chief of Engineers of the United States Army, the Engineer Commissioner of the District of Columbia, and three citizens to be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, be, and they are hereby, created a commission to select the land for said park, of the quantity and within the limits aforesaid, and to have the same surveyed by the assistant to the said Engineer Commissioner of the District of Columbia in charge of public highways, which said assistant shall also act as executive officer to the said commission.
Duties.	
Executive officer.	
Map to be filed.	SEC. 3. That the said commission shall cause to be made an accurate map of said Rock Creek Park, showing the location, quantity, and character of each parcel of private property to be taken for such purpose, with the names of the respective owners inscribed thereon, which map shall be filed and recorded in the public records of the District of Columbia, and from and after the date of filing said map the several tracts and parcels of land embraced in said Rock Creek Park shall be held as condemned for public uses, and the title thereof vested in the United States, subject to the payment of just compensation, to be determined by said commission, and approved by the President of the United States: <i>Provided, That such compensation be accepted by the owner or owners of the several parcels of land.</i>
Condemnation Title.	
Compensation Proviso.	
Acceptance by owner.	
Failure to agree.	<i>That if the said commission shall be unable by agreement with the respective owners to purchase all of the land so selected and condemned within thirty days after such condemnation, at the price approved by the President of the United States, it shall, at the expiration of such period of thirty days, make application to the supreme court of the District of Columbia, by petition, at a general or special term, for an assessment of the value of such land as it has been unable to purchase.</i>
Judicial procedure.	
Application for assessment.	
Petition and map.	<i>Said petition shall contain a particular description of the property selected and condemned, with the name of the owner or owners thereof, if known, and their residences, as far as the same may be ascertained, together with a copy of the recorded map of the park; and the said court is hereby authorized and required, upon such application, without delay, to notify the owners and occupants of the land, if known, by personal service, and if unknown, by service by publication, and to ascertain and assess the value of the land so selected and condemned, by appointing three competent and disinterested commissioners to appraise the value or values thereof, and to return the appraisement to the court; and when the value or values of such land are thus ascertained, and the President of the United States shall decide the same to be reasonable, said value or values shall be paid to the owner or owners, and the United States shall be deemed to have a valid title to said land; and if in any case</i>
Notification.	
Appraisal commission.	
Ascertainment out of value.	
Payment Title.	

Act Creating Rock Creek Park.
United States Fifty-First Congress, September 27, 1890.

PEIRCE MILL NW CORNER OF TILDEN STREET AND BEACH DRIVE, NW WASHINGTON, D.C. 20015	Photographer: EHT Tracerics Date: December 2009
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1. Tailrace, looking NW
2. Façade, looking SE
3. Mill and Dam, looking W
4. Mill, looking N
5. Context, looking SE
6. Context, looking S
7. Mill, looking E
8. Mill, looking N
9. Mill, looking W
10. Mill, looking SW
11. Basement, looking NE
12. Third Floor, looking NW
13. Third Floor, looking W
14. Second Floor, looking S
15. Second Floor, looking E
16. Second Floor, looking NE
17. First Floor, looking N
18. First Floor, looking S
19. Basement, looking E
20. Not Submitted
21. Not Submitted
22. Not Submitted
23. Not Submitted
24. Not Submitted
25. Not Submitted
26. Not Submitted
27. Not Submitted
28. Not Submitted
29. Not Submitted
30. Not Submitted
31. Not Submitted
32. Not Submitted
33. Not Submitted
34. Not Submitted
35. Not Submitted
36. Not Submitted



PEIRCE MILL

NW CORNER OF TILDEN ST. AND BEACH DR., NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20015

EHT TRACERIES

12/2009

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WASHINGTON, D.C., 20008

MILL AND ROCK CREEK, LOOKING NORTH

OF 12



PEIRCE MILL
NW CORNER OF TILDEN ST. AND BEACH DR, NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20015
EHT TRACERIES
12/2009

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MILL AND DAM, LOOKING WEST
2 OF 12



PEIRCE MILL

NW CORNER OF TILDEN ST. AND BEACH DR, NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20015

EHT TRACERIES

12/2009

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WASHINGTON, DC 20008

MILL LOOKING SOUTH
3 OF 12



PETRC MILL

NW CORNER OF TILDEN ST. AND BEACH DR. NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20015

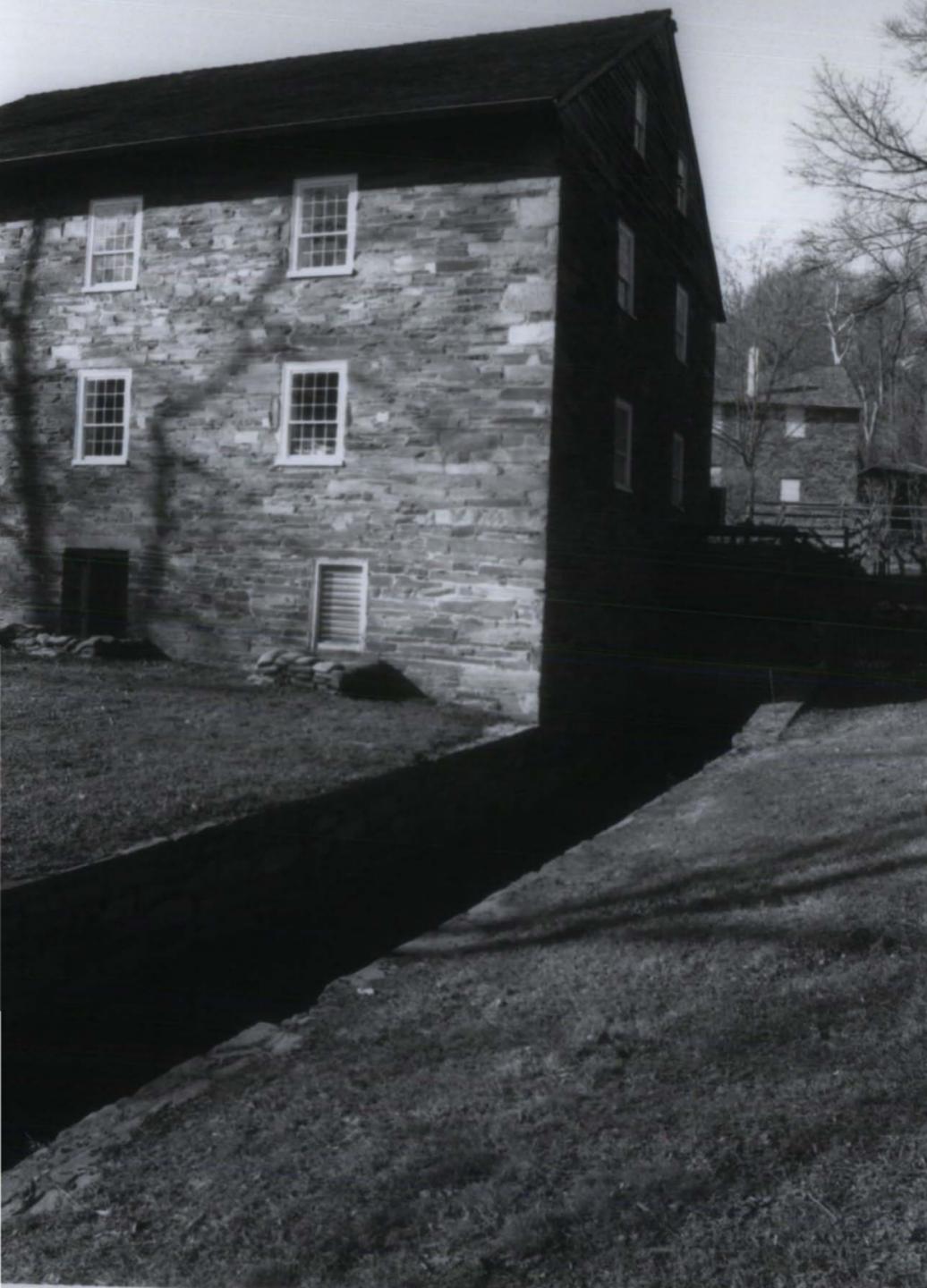
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MILL LOOKING, SOUTHEAST

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PEIRCE MILL
NW CORNER OF TILDEN ST, AND BEACH DR, NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20015

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MILL AND TAIL RACE LOOKING NORTH
6 OF 12



PEIRCE MILL

NW CORNER OF TILDEN ST. AND BEACH DR. NW

WASHINGTON, DC 20015

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MILL, FIRST FLOOR, LOOKING SOUTH

7 OF 12



PETRCCE MILL

NW CORNER OF TILDEN ST. AND BEACH DR. NW

WASHINGTON, DC 20015

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MILL, BASEMENT, LOOKING NORTHEAST

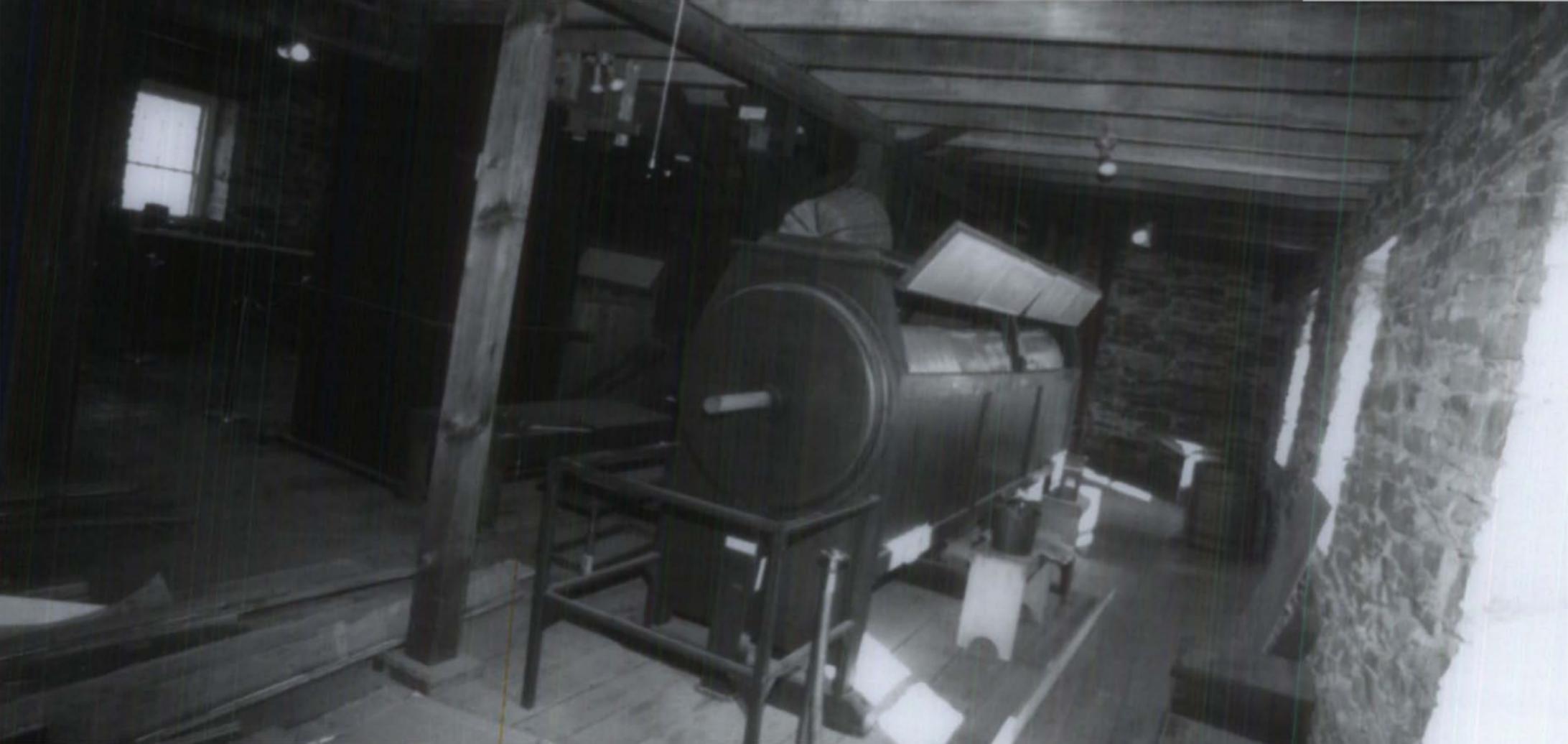


PEARLE MILL
NW CORNER OF TILDEN ST. AND BEACH DR, NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20015
EHT TRACERIES

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MILL, SECOND FLOOR, LOOKING WEST



PEIRCE MILL

NW CORNER OF TILDEN ST, AND BEACH DR., NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20015

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MILL, SECOND FLOOR, LOOKING NORTH

9 OF 12

