NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. Aug. 2002)

OMB No. 1024-0018

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NAT REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

491

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Clark-Miller Roller Mill

other names/site number Davis-Clark Roller Mill; W.M. Miller Roller Mill

2. Location

street & number 180 Long Branch Road [West side SR 1352 (Long Branch Rd.) at junction with SR 1324 (Little Horse Creek Rd.)] not for publication N/A

city or town Lansing vicinity X

state North Carolina code NC county Ashe code 009 zip code 28643

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 ___ nationally ___ statewide X locally. (___See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Kevin Cherry — 6/24/2014

Signature of certifying official — Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources

State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

✓ entered in the National Register
___ See continuation sheet.
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ See continuation sheet.
___ determined not eligible for the National Register
___ removed from the National Register
___ other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action 8-19-2014

Clark-Miller Roller Mill
Name of Property

Ashe County, North Carolina
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

_X_ private
___ public-local
___ public-State
___ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

_X_ building(s)
___ district
___ site
___ structure
___ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) Historic and Architectural Resources of Ashe County, North Carolina, c.1799 – c.1957

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
Cat: Industry Sub: Manufacturing Facility

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
Cat: vacant / not in use Sub: Work in Progress

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)
No style

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)
foundation Concrete
roof metal
walls weatherboard
other N/A

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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)

__X__ 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.

__X__ 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.)

____ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
____ B removed from its original location.
____ C a birthplace or a grave.
____ D a cemetery.
____ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
____ F a commemorative property.
____ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Industry
Architecture

Period of Significance circa 1915 – 1940

Significant Dates N/A

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(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 # _____
___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Clark-Miller Roller Mill
Name of Property

Ashe County, North Carolina
County and State

Primary Location of Additional Data
_X__ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
___ Other
Name of repository: _N.C. Department of Cultural Resources, Office of Archives and History_

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property _1.868 acres_

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet) **See Continuation Sheet 10-13 for Lat/Long coordinates**

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1				2			3			4		

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)
Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title__Sherry Joines Wyatt_____
organization__Historic Preservation Consultant_____ date____April 16, 2014_____
street & number__102 Junkin St._____ telephone__540/392-8268_____
city or town__Christiansburg_____ state_VA___ zip code __24073_____

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets
Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location. – **See Google Earth map**
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.
Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.
Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)
name ____Steve Wrinn_____
street & number__425 S. Boylan Ave., Apt. 1___ telephone__(919)832-6508_____
city or town__Raleigh_____ state_NC___ zip code _27603_____

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. 470 et seq.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 36 hours per response including the 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 National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, 1849 C St., NW, Washington, DC 20240.

Description

Ashe County is located in the Blue Ridge Mountains of northwestern North Carolina. The small town of Lansing is in the northeastern part of the county in a narrow valley where Old Field Branch flows into Big Horse Creek. Approximately one mile northwest of Lansing is the c.1915 Clark-Miller Roller Mill in the Stikedale community. The mill is situated on a narrow triangular parcel of land of 1.8 acres at the intersection of Long Branch Road and Little Horse Creek Road. Little Horse Creek flows roughly through the center of the parcel and the mill building is situated on the east bank between the creek and Long Branch Road, facing the road. The lot is about two-thirds wooded, particularly on the west bank of the creek. The original dam and mill pond, located to the south of the mill building, are no longer extant; that area is largely open grass. Long Branch Road, running roughly parallel to the mill facade has been built up over time such that the mill lies several feet below the road grade. A driveway, opens onto Long Branch Road at both ends and runs immediately adjacent to and parallel to the front of the mill building. No other buildings are visible from the mill, although a few houses are located nearby. The topography falls sharply behind the mill to the west towards Little Horse Creek and continues to rise sharply across the road in front of the mill.

The mill building is banked with two stories at the front (east or Long Branch Road) elevation and three stories at its rear or creek-facing elevation. The basement/foundation level is poured concrete, the upper section of the building is frame with weatherboard siding and a metal roof. The original weatherboards, which were in an advanced state of deterioration, were removed in the fall of 2007 and the building sheathed in plywood and wrapped in plastic waterproofing material to make the building weather tight. All sound weatherboards were salvaged and stored for reuse. Since the current owner purchased the property in 2011 the original weatherboards have been installed on the front and both end elevations. Matching weatherboards will be installed on the rear elevation. A new five-v roof has been installed replicating the historic 5-V roof material, which was no longer serviceable. New wood frame, fiberglass clad, true-divided light windows have been installed since the windows were missing from the building due to deterioration and vandalism. The windows are six-over-six lights replicating the glazing pattern evident in the last surviving window sash fragment that remained in the building. New pine single-light two-panel doors, a single-light door, and half-light double-leaf historic oak doors salvaged from an early twentieth century building have been installed in original openings.

The building rests on a poured concrete foundation. The foundation is visible, but blank, at either end. The rear elevation of the foundation features two square openings that have been closed temporarily to secure the mill interior during construction.

The building form is a simple single-pile plan with a wide facade and side-gable roof. On the facade (east) in 2006 was a single centered opening with a wider doorway or loading bay to the south; neither of these openings carried the original doors or windows and had been covered with plywood during the initial rehabilitation. The current owner found framing evidence that the single width framed opening was a window originally. Shadow lines and nail holes on the framing studs at a height of thirty inches suggested a rough opening that would have exactly matched the other windows in the building. A new window has been placed in this opening accordingly. The original wider entry now carries a salvaged early-twentieth-century wood double-leaf door. The upper floor of the facade has only a centered window. A small, wooden chute that was part of the grain movement system within the mill projects through the second floor wall, north of the window opening. At the rear (west) elevation three window openings, all but one missing the sash, existed at the first and second stories in 2006. Currently, these openings have new window sash and a new door opening has been added between the right and middle windows of the first floor. The north side elevation

was blind with no openings in 2006 except for a projecting wooden chute. Currently, a new door has been added in the right bay of the first floor and a new window in the right bay of the second floor. In 2006, the south side elevation carried two windows on the second floor and a single doorway (with a board and batten door) on the first. Since that time, a new window opening has been added in the left bay of the first floor and a new wood door fills the original opening. Additionally, new small decks have been added at the southwestern corner, wrapping around the rear corner of the building. The decks, which have footprints of 12 feet by 16 feet and 8 feet by 18 feet, will carry simple wood post and cable railings where the distance from the deck to the ground exceeds thirty inches.

Inside the building, the basement, which is not full head-height, has a dirt floor and poured concrete walls. There is a wooden hopper near the center of the space where the raw product was loaded to begin the milling process and a cluster of four conveyor shafts around a metal axle with wheel-shaped pulleys located near the south end of the building. The axle extends to the south, outside the foundation wall, to a point near the southwest corner of the building where in 2005 a drive shaft with bevel gear and a concrete pad were located. The gear and drive shaft are thought to have been originally attached to the sluice and water wheel apparatus, which is no longer extant. The sluice extended to the south and harnessed power from Little Horse Creek to operate the mill. The concrete pad described above is no longer visible and is thought to have been buried between 2005 and 2006.

The first floor is open in plan except for a small office in the northwest corner of the building. The office was originally a pentagon plan formed by an angled wall (ie. "cut-off corner") to avoid ceiling-mounted drive shaft, pulleys and small chute. The owner reframed the office with a standard rectangular plan below head height so as to maximize floor space, but above head height the wall is still set at an angle to avoid the equipment. The additional floor space created by this change allowed the owner to hide modern necessities such as electrical panel, a water heater, laundry appliances, etc. and enhance the perception of the character-defining features of the first floor: the open floor plan and the industrial equipment. The original poplar board sheathing has been salvaged and will be reused on the front wall of the partition. Heavy timber posts in the center of the first floor support the upper floor. The walls and ceiling were originally unsheathed in this utilitarian building, revealing the studs and upper floor joists. Currently the new partition walls have been framed, but no interior sheathing has been added. The owner is in consultation with the N.C. State Historic Preservation Office and with the National Park Service to finalize rehabilitation plans in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The flooring is wood of various widths, primarily oak and maple boards about three inches wide. A staircase rises in a single run from the basement to the first floor and is surmounted by an open single run stair from the first to the second floor. The damaged original stair was an open riser wooden stair. It has been replaced with a wood open-riser stair; the metal handrail has not yet been installed. It is located in the northeast corner of the room.

In the center of the room, is the roller mill. The Anglo-American (Midget) Marvel brand roller mill is a large, metal machine about seven-and-a-half-feet long and about six-and-a-half feet tall with a wider base (about four-and-a-half feet) and narrower upper section. A large tapered wooden chute at the ceiling fed grain into a hopper on the top of the mill. Wheels that connected the mill to the water-driven power system are found on the south end of the machine. Clustered near either end of the mill are four conveyor shafts that connect all three levels of the building. They allowed for vertical grain/flour movement via small metal cups mounted on a belt. In the southeast corner of the room are two large tapered wooden chutes that moved finished flour from the second floor into the sack packer on the first floor. The Anglo-American Mill Company sack packer is a narrow upright machine that has been temporarily removed from its original location to accommodate the rehabilitation, but will be returned intact to its original location prior to completion. Attached to the ceiling near the center of the room is a long metal axle with pulleys of varying

sizes that once drove the constantly running belt drive system. Openings in the floor and ceiling allowed the belts to pass through all three floors of the building.

The second floor of the building is similar to the first with an open plan, wood floors, and unsheathed walls and ceiling. In the southeast corner, is the upper section of the first floor hoppers, a wooden box about five feet high by four feet long and eight feet wide that covers the openings of the two sack packer chutes below. Three pieces of equipment exist on the second floor, all powered by the axles, wheels, and belts attached to the roof joists at the center of the space. The largest piece of equipment, an Anglo-American Cleaner, is a two-unit metal machine and is located near the north end of the building. A large wooden chute extends from this machine diagonally northwest to the north wall of the building where it exits to the exterior. Near the center of the room is a smaller metal machine, a double scourer, with a wooden chute extending to the east and exiting through the front wall. A much smaller machine with a small hopper on top, a single scourer, is located near the south end of the building and may have been replaced by the larger piece of equipment in the center.

Integrity Assessment

The Clark-Miller Roller Mill exhibits adequate integrity in terms of its location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The mill was virtually untouched since its closure in 1940 until the previous owner began stabilizing it in 2007. The loss of windows and waterwheel apparatus were largely the result of natural forces (and perhaps vandalism) acting on the building. The building is currently being rehabilitated. Located on its original site on the bank of Little Horse Creek, it retains its simple unadorned form that defines its overall character. The surrounding landscape is probably more heavily wooded than during the period of significance, but that is true virtually everywhere in Ashe County. The raising of the road grade and the loss of the mill pond and dam effect the integrity of the setting, but are not detrimental to understanding the building.

The physical character of the building relates to the utilitarian frame buildings that were ubiquitous throughout Ashe County's agricultural communities during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Furthermore, banking buildings to utilize the falling terrain was a common practice in this mountain county. Exterior alterations, including the installation of new window sash (but the retention of the pattern and size of the windows) and the addition of two new windows and two new doors have not compromised the exterior character of this building where the unadorned side-gable massing is maintained. As many as possible of the original weatherboards were salvaged and now sheathe the facade and two end elevations. Although there have been some interior alterations, including the reframing of the former office and sistering-in of additional frame supports, most of the salient features of the open utilitarian space survive to convey how the building was used and how it looked during its historic period. It should be noted that the additional frame supports were necessary to stabilize the long-neglected building and to bring it into code compliance. Among the character-defining features retained on the interior are the first-floor open space itself and the continued presence of the historic constructed (chutes) and installed (Midget Marvel) milling equipment, which is extremely rare and of utmost importance.

In sum, the mill is an example of a building type once common in Ashe County, but now very rare. The building continues to retain sufficient integrity for National Register listing despite the changes caused by neglect and decay. Also, the current owner is in consultation with the North Carolina Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service regarding the building's rehabilitation.

General Statement about Archaeological Potential

Lawrence Abbott, N. C. Assistant State Archaeologist, provided the following statement regarding archaeological integrity: "The structure is closely related to the surrounding environment. Archaeological remains such as a mill sluice remnant, privies, wells, and other structural remains which may be present, can provide information valuable to the understanding and interpretation of the contributing structure. Information concerning land-use patterns, agricultural and milling practices, as well as structural details, is often only evident in the archaeological record. Therefore, archaeological remains may well be an important component of the significance of the structure. At this time, no investigation has been done to discover these remains, but it is likely that they exist, and this should be considered in any development of the property."[1]

1 Lawrence Abbott, email to Ann Swallow, 3 April 2014.

Summary

Ashe County, formed in 1799 from Wilkes County, is located in the northwest corner of North Carolina. The community of Stikedale is in the northern part of the county about a mile northwest of the small town of Lansing. Situated on Little Horse Creek, the Clark-Miller Roller Mill was constructed around 1915 for J. E. Davis and Ambrose Clark. The mill was soon under the sole ownership of Clark; he sold the mill to Wilday Miller in the mid-1930s who operated it until the devastating flood of 1940 forced its closure. The Clark-Miller Roller Mill is an outstanding example of a small rural roller mill from the early twentieth century and is one of the two most intact surviving mills in the county. Grist mills, both the earlier buhr stone and later roller type, were once very common in Ashe County. Serving farmers by grinding wheat and corn into flour and cornmeal for the consumption of the farm family as well as to provide a source of cash income, the mills were the most common industry in the county for a long period and were an integral part of the county's economy. The wood-frame side-gable building of the Clark-Miller Roller Mill shelters a remarkably intact array of milling equipment: the Midget Marvel Roller Mill machines, along with much of the axel, shaft, and pulley apparatus that transferred power from the water wheel to the mill, and the network of belts that enabled the transfer of grain and flour or cornmeal through the building. The property meets National Register Criterion A for industry and Criterion C for architecture. The local context and areas of significance are in the multiple property documentation form entitled "Historic and Architectural Resources of Ashe County, North Carolina, c. 1799-1957" (NR, 2009). In particular, the context sections entitled "Slavery, the Civil War, and the Age of the Yeoman Farmer: 1860 – 1915" (E, 16-34), "Change Comes With a Full Head of Steam: 1915-1929" (Section E, pages 35-46), and "National Crisis, Local Impact: 1930 – 1955" (E, 46-57) document the important events and trends that influenced the development of industry in the county during the property's period of significance from ca. 1915 to 1940. Industrial building types are discussed in the MPDF as well. Grist mills (including roller mills) were the most numerous industrial buildings in the county and dominated the county's industrial economy until the mid-twentieth century. (Section F, pages 30-32). In addition to age and integrity, the registration requirements for Ashe County industrial buildings note that "rural industrial buildings are so rare that alterations made to keep the structure technologically viable or changes caused by neglect and decay should not prevent an industrial building from being listed as long as its original overall form and a majority of original materials is present."

Statement of Significance

Historical Background and Industrial Context: Grist and Roller Mills in Ashe County

The Clark-Miller Roller Mill is located about one mile northwest of the Lansing town center in a small community known as Stikedale; a loosely-associated group of farms and a school (now a church) in the vicinity of the mill. The town of Lansing was settled during the mid-nineteenth century as a rural agrarian trading center and a post office was established there in 1882. With the arrival of the Virginia-Carolina (later Norfolk & Western) Railroad in 1914, Lansing grew significantly. This growth was based on the county's timber industry and drew an influx of people and businesses around the Lansing Depot, which was used to ship lumber and pulpwood. By 1930, Lansing was the third largest town in the county with a population of 267. The county's largest town, West Jefferson, had 704 people and the county seat of Jefferson had 296. [2]

The small agricultural communities that dotted Ashe County were made up of different combinations of

2 Ward Sexton, "Lansing Paragraphs;" "Lansing Historical Notes," unpublished history in vertical files of Ashe County Public Library ; "Report of the Condition of the Bank of Lansing," *The Ashe Recorder,* 11 March 1920, microfilm at the Ashe County Public Library; and *Mountain Times Almanac*, 1994, vertical files at Ashe County Public Library.

churches, schools, general stores, livestock dealers, lumber dealers, flour mills, tanners and other tradesmen.[3] This was the case for Stikedale, which was named after the local Stike family. No business directories exist for Ashe County for the first quarter of the twentieth century to illustrate the period when the Clark-Miller mill was constructed, but little had changed within the county since the late nineteenth century except for the arrival of the railroad. The railroad naturally served to generate business and cause many small communities (like nearby Lansing) to grow into towns.

Grist mills, both the buhr stone type and the later roller mills, were integral to Ashe County's minimal cash, agricultural economy. Mills were the most wide-spread industry during the nineteenth and early twentieth century with thirty-five mills grinding either wheat flour or cornmeal (or often both) across the county.[4]

The agricultural economy in Ashe County is important to our understanding of mills. With relatively poor roads, general stores and mills were scattered across the county to provide service within walking distance of most farms. This necessity is better understood in the context of self-sufficient food production practices typical of the county's farm families during the historic period. The mills in Ashe County were established to grind wheat and corn into flour and meal used by the farm family. Rather than paying cash for this service, the miller took a certain portion of the product, called a toll, as his payment. The flour and meal kept as toll were then sold to grocers and wholesalers locally or regionally.

Corn was the dominant crop in Ashe County throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries since it was used for both the farm family's cornmeal and livestock feed. Climbing from 277,027 bushels in 1880 to 397,716 bushels in 1910, the increase in corn production conveys the agricultural prosperity during this period. Corn production reached a historic peak in production in 1930 then fell sharply during the rest of the twentieth century.[5] Although wheat production remained relatively steady from 1880 through the 1890s, production fell significantly between 1900 and 1910 only to rebound in 1920 to a historic peak of 71,217 bushels. By 1930, wheat production entered a permanent decline.[6] The decline in corn and wheat production was probably due to the increased reliance on purchased food for the farm family and coincides with the decline in the number of grain mills operating in the county.

The late nineteenth and early twentieth century was a prosperous period for the minimal-cash farmers that made up the agricultural economy of Ashe County and this prosperity is reflected in the large number of mills that existed historically. By 1883, there were seven corn mills and eighteen flour/corn mills scattered along the county's many fast-running creeks. This number grew to fifteen corn mills and twenty flour/corn mills by 1890.[7]

Clark-Miller Roller Mill History

The first deed that references the Clark-Miller Roller Mill dates from March 1, 1921 when J. E. Davis and his wife Vinnia gave a Title Bond to Ambrose Clark. Through this instrument, Davis agreed to sell Clark two acres "to include the mill and all water power" for the amount of $3295.75. Clark received ownership of the property on January 30, 1922.[8] It is not known how the two acres became the current 1.8 acre tract, but it seems likely that it was

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3 *Branson's North Carolina Business Directory*, 1883 and *Branson's North Carolina Business Directory*, 1890, electronic version, <www.newrivernotes.com/nc/ashe.htm>, 2008.

4 Lee Tippett and Eric Voigt, "Archaeological Survey an Evaluation: U.S. Rte 221 Widening Project, 2003," North Carolina Department of Transportation, Raleigh; "Bower's Grist Mill," architectural survey file, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office; and Branson's 1868 and 1890 North Carolina Business Directory & Chataigne's 1883 North Carolina Business Directory

5 *U.S. Census of Agriculture,* 1870 – 1930.

6 *U.S. Agricultural Census,* 1880 and 1920.

7 *Business Directory*, 1883 and 1890.

8 Ashe County Register of Deeds, Deed Book B2, page 477 and Deed Book D-2, page 144.

through small adjustments over time, perhaps due to road construction. The mill was clearly constructed prior to 1921 and there is strong evidence that Davis and Clark began the mill as a joint venture. Stamped lettering on pieces of wood found near the sack packer and on a wood brace supporting the large belt wheel in the ceiling of the second floor are marked "Davis-N-Clark, Lansing, NC." Further narrowing the construction date of the mill building is the Midget Marvel roller mill, which could not have been manufactured prior to the 1910 organization of the Anglo-American company. Oral history indicates that the mill originally produced flour under the brand name Stikedale Mills; after the local community name.[9]

Little is known about Jessie (J. E.) Davis (born c.1873), but deed evidence indicates that he was living in Horse Creek Township by at least 1900. At the time of the 1920 census, Davis, his wife , and their eight year-old son James were still living in the Horse Creek area. The Davis household also included Jessie's grandfather George Davis. Jessie Davis' occupation is listed as "Manufacturor [*sic*] Mill." The Jessie Davis house was located on Long Branch Road a short distance south of the mill and was sold to the Poe family in 1938, presumably after Davis' death.[10]

In contrast, much is known about Ambrose Clark (1862-1938) who served two terms as Sheriff of Ashe County and served a term as a state legislator (1916-1918). Clark was also a farmer and owned a sawmill and lumber operation. The 1920 Census records Clark as a "Manager of Lumbering" living with his wife Agnes and one of the couple's eleven children, their twenty-three year-old son Russel. Clark was a successful businessman amassing about 1,000 acres of land and was known for his generosity. His obituary claims that he spent "at least $25,000" helping those in need and that he and his wife raised twenty-five orphan or dependent children. During his tenure as sheriff, Clark gained notoriety for his return of escaped African American prisoner Will Banks to Ashe County from Indiana. Family tradition holds that Clark resigned his post as sheriff because of his conviction that Banks was innocent. Banks' 1907 public hanging was the last in Ashe County. Clark's home (AH 112) is located on Little Horse Creek Road about three-and-a-half miles northwest of the mill.[11]

Clark apparently owned the mill until the 1930s. Clark most likely used a hired miller for daily operations. An agreement from May 30, 1933 between W. M. Miller and Monroe Clark and Ambrose Clark refers to a 1927 Deed of Trust for the mill indicating that W. M. Miller and Monroe Clark had attempted to purchase the mill at that time, but in 1933 were still indebted to Ambrose Clark for $2113. However, they agreed to bid that amount for the mill and operate it "in a business-like manner and keep same in good repair." A deed dated July 9, 1938, finalized the sale of the mill to W. M. Miller alone after Ambrose Clark's death in March 1938. The property was described as the "Roller Mill and Roller Mill land near Lansing . . . and being the Roller Mill Dam and all machinery, equipment belonging to said Roller Mill complete."[12]

W. M. (Wilday) Miller (1876-1948) was raised in the Horse Creek Township of Ashe County and his house (AH 111) stands about four and a half miles northwest of the mill on Little Horse Creek Road. Miller farmed, raised cattle, and operated a general store across the road from his home. The 1920 Census lists Miller as a farmer residing with his wife Elizabeth (Lizey) and their eight children. The eldest son, James, was a clerk in a dry goods store;

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9 Ashe County Architectural Survey, "Clark-Miller Mill," 2005, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Asheville and Poe, history notes.

10 Ashe County Register of Deeds, Deed Book PP, page 502; 1920 U. S. Census, <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~cenfiles/nc/ashe/1920/ed26/ed26part01.txt>, 2008; and Jack Poe (who grew up near the mill), written responses to questions posed by Sherry Wyatt, August 2008.

11 1920 U. S. Census; *The Heritage of Ashe County*, Vol. II, 1994, 19 and 96; Miles Tager, "The Hanging Of Will Banks," *Mountain Times* 2 September 2004 <http://www.mountaintimes.com/mtweekly/2004/0902/hand.php3>, 2008; and Ashe County Architectural Survey, "Ambrose Clark Farm," 2005, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Asheville.

12 Ashe County Register of Deeds, Book Q2, page 459 and Book L-3, page 336.

probably his father's.[13]

From the 1930s until 1940, Miller's son Reggie and an employee, George Stike, were primarily responsible for the operation of the mill. Stike was seriously injured during a fall into the power pulley belt at the mill during this time and is said to have died from his injuries. Wells Miller (no relation) was hired to replace Stike at the mill. The flour produced by them was sold under the Miller's Choice brand.[14]

During Miller's ownership, the mill produced wheat flour, cornmeal, buckwheat flour and livestock feed (made from corn). The mill was open year-round, but hours varied with season and demand. The busiest time was in autumn and winter due to the need for livestock feed processing. The mill served mostly local farmers with the next closest mill being the Perkins Mill (then known as Helton Mill) at Helton about eight miles to the northeast. Like other mills in the county, trade at the Clark-Miller Roller Mill was primarily conducted by toll rather than cash transactions. In addition to grain purchased locally or taken as a toll, Miller purchased grain, sometimes an entire boxcar load, that would be delivered to the depot at Lansing. Yet, it is thought that Miller did little outside shipping of the finished product suggesting that the product was sold at the mill or in local stores.[15]

The Clark-Miller Roller Mill closed after a devastating flood on August 13, 1940, that destroyed a section of the mill dam. The property has been vacant or used as storage since that time. Deed research shows a judgment in the law suit of Lee Miller (W. M. Miller's second son) against R. E. Miller (probably Reggie Miller, W. M. Miller's third son) that resulted in the sale of the mill to R. L. Smith at auction on September 14, 1973, for $1700. Smith then sold the property to George and Imogene Fields Smith on November 29, 1973. Imogene Smith sold the mill to David and Mary Lewis in 1983 and the Lewises sold the property to Ernie Carpenter in 2002. Mr. Carpenter sold the mill to David Bell with protective covenants via Preservation North Carolina in 2007. Mr. Bell sold the property to the current owner in 2011. The mill is currently undergoing rehabilitation into a vacation home.[16]

Mill Technology

While mill buildings in Ashe County were extremely simple in design, the water power for their operation was of optimum importance and often complex. In practice historically, the overshot wheel was common because it is relatively efficient, capable of harnessing eight-five percent of the potential energy of the falling water. Its large size made it relatively difficult to build and was not suited to all locations. Alternative methods of water wheel power included the vertically-mounted undershot wheel, breastshot wheel (where the water strikes the wheel at its middle), and flutter wheel (which was small, low and wide) as well as horizontally-mounted turbines and tub wheels. The wheel arrangement at the Clark-Miller Roller Mill was probably a vertically mounted wooden backshot or pitchback wheel, which operates by the water flowing behind the wheel. It is a variation of an overshot wheel where the water flows over the wheel.[17]

The power at the Clark-Miller Roller Mill was produced by the damming of Little Horse Creek with a fourteen to sixteen-foot high dam about twenty-five or thirty feet in width to create a mill pond south or upstream of the mill building. A wooden flume or sluice carried water from the pond to a wooden sluice gate that could be raised or

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13 1880 U. S. Census, <http://www.usgwarchives.org/nc/ashe/census/1880/20-01.gif>, 2008; Ashe County Architectural Survey, "Wilday and Elizabeth Miller House," 2005, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Asheville; and 1920 U. S. Census.

14 Poe.

15 Poe.

16 Poe and Ashe County Register of Deeds, Book I-5, page 380; Book 140, page 1216; Book 278, page 458; and Book 360, page 1934; and Ashe County Register of Deeds, Commissioners Book 2, page 424.

17 Old Sturbridge Village, <www.osv.org>, 2008; "Interpretive Training Materials, 2005," Society for the Preservation of Old Mills, <www.spoom.org>, 2008..

lowered to control water flow to the backshot wheel. The backshot wheel, located near the south end of the mill, was enclosed in a wooden structure about twenty feet tall and eight feet square, this is sometimes referred to as a penstock. Jack Poe grew up near the mill and describes the configuration of the wheel thusly: "the water fell down to the wheel and escaped thru [*sic*] a slot at the base causing the force coming in and leaving to turn the wheel." This description makes clear that the efficiency of the wheel was improved both by the force of the falling water and the force of the constricted exit flow at the bottom of the wheel. This is an important characteristic of backshot wheels, which are more efficient than overshot wheels.[18]

The power provided by the water wheel was transferred into the mill by a series of axles, shafts, pulleys, and belts. The Clark-Miller Roller Mill was built to utilize roller mill equipment rather than the older buhr stone method. Roller mill machines utilize pairs of long rolls or cylinders to complete the grain grinding. They were introduced by 1876 and refinements during the 1878-1885 period provided small mill operators with "concentrated mills," or machines that completed the grinding within a self-contained unit.[19]

The Midget Marvel roller mill in the Clark-Miller Roller Mill was among the earliest of the self-contained mills. It was invented by English milling engineer A. B. Tattersall and built by the Anglo-American Mill Company, one of the world's largest flour milling machinery companies during the early twentieth century. Anglo-American was organized by Kentucky native Lucius Freeman Little in 1910 in Owensboro, Kentucky. The 1922 book entitled *History of Kentucky* claimed that the Midget Marvel ". . . has done much to revolutionize the milling business in America, and has made it possible for every community to have a flour mill..." The machine was further acclaimed to have "come into national usage" and was used in "more than twenty-five per cent of all flour mills in operation in the United States."[20]

The Midget Marvel is located on the first floor along with an upright sack packer, also made by Anglo-American. Known as a friction clutch flour packer, this machine could automatically fill sacks from 6 to 140 pounds as well as barrels. The cleaner is located on the second floor and carries a large wooden chute directed out of the building's north wall, is similar to the simple receiving separator shown in *Practical Milling* (1924). If this identification is correct then it would suggest that the wheat was first brought to this machine before being conveyed by the chutes and elevators (cup belts) to the Midget Marvel roller mill below. The cleaner would have given the wheat its preliminary cleaning to remove stones, straw, sticks, etc.[21] Two other pieces of equipment, an Anglo-American double scourer and single scourer, are also located on the second floor.

Architectural Context:

Despite the large number of mills that once existed in Ashe County, only four mills survived at the time of the 2005 architectural survey of the county. Three of these, including the Clark-Miller mill, were constructed during the 1880–1920 period and a fourth dates to c.1936. Ashe County's mills were constructed in various forms, but were usually two-story side-gable or shed-roof utilitarian buildings with vertical board siding, often resting on a stone foundation. The Perkins Flour Mill (AH 59), was built in 1885 on Helton Creek for Winfield and Will Perkins. It is a large, three-story frame structure that rests on a high stone foundation at the edge of the creek. It served local customers and produced its own Lucy-Belle brand flour, as well as bran, cream of wheat, feed, and corn meal.[22] Of the

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18 White Mill (Dorset, UK) website, <http://www.whitemill.org/z0028.htm>, 2008; Nationmaster Encyclopedia website <http://www.nationmaster.com/encyclopedia/Backshot>, 2008; and Jack Poe.

19 B. W. Dedrick, *Practical Milling* (Chicago: National Miller, 1924), 97-99.

20 Kerr, Charles, *History of Kentucky,* p. 274, accessed at < https://archive.org/details/historyofkentuck04inkerr >

21 Dedrick, 50-51, 97-99, 254, and 317-319; and Kerr.

22 *Mountaineer Heritage.* Vol. 1, Northwest Ashe High School, 1980.

four surviving mills, the Cockerham Mill and the Clark-Miller Roller Mill are the best-preserved examples. The c.1899 Cockerham Mill sits at the mouth of Dog Creek where it enters the New River and is a frame and heavy-timber building (AH 56), partially supported by a later dam. It was owned by Marcus L. Cockerham whose son, Josh Cockerham, operated the grist mill as well as a planing mill and a forge on the property into the mid-twentieth century.[23]

All of Ashe County's mills are thought to have utilized water power and were located on one of the numerous fast-flowing creeks in the county. The Cockerham Mill, for example retains its vertical overshot water wheel, mill stones, and other equipment as well as part of the dam. The Clark-Miller Roller Mill retains its early twentieth-century roller mill, a sack packer, portions of the belt drive system, and other equipment. The retention of this character-defining equipment is extremely rare, and it is the salient feature contributing to the mill's historical significance.

23 "Cockerham Mill," architectural survey file, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office.

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Latitude and Longitude Coordinates: See attached Google Earth map at one inch equals fifty feet scale

Latitude: 35.506316
Longitude: -81.521297

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nomination is shown as the heavy solid line on the accompanying map labeled "Tax Map and Site Plan, Clark-Miller Roller Mill" at one inch equals two hundred feet scale.

Boundary Justification

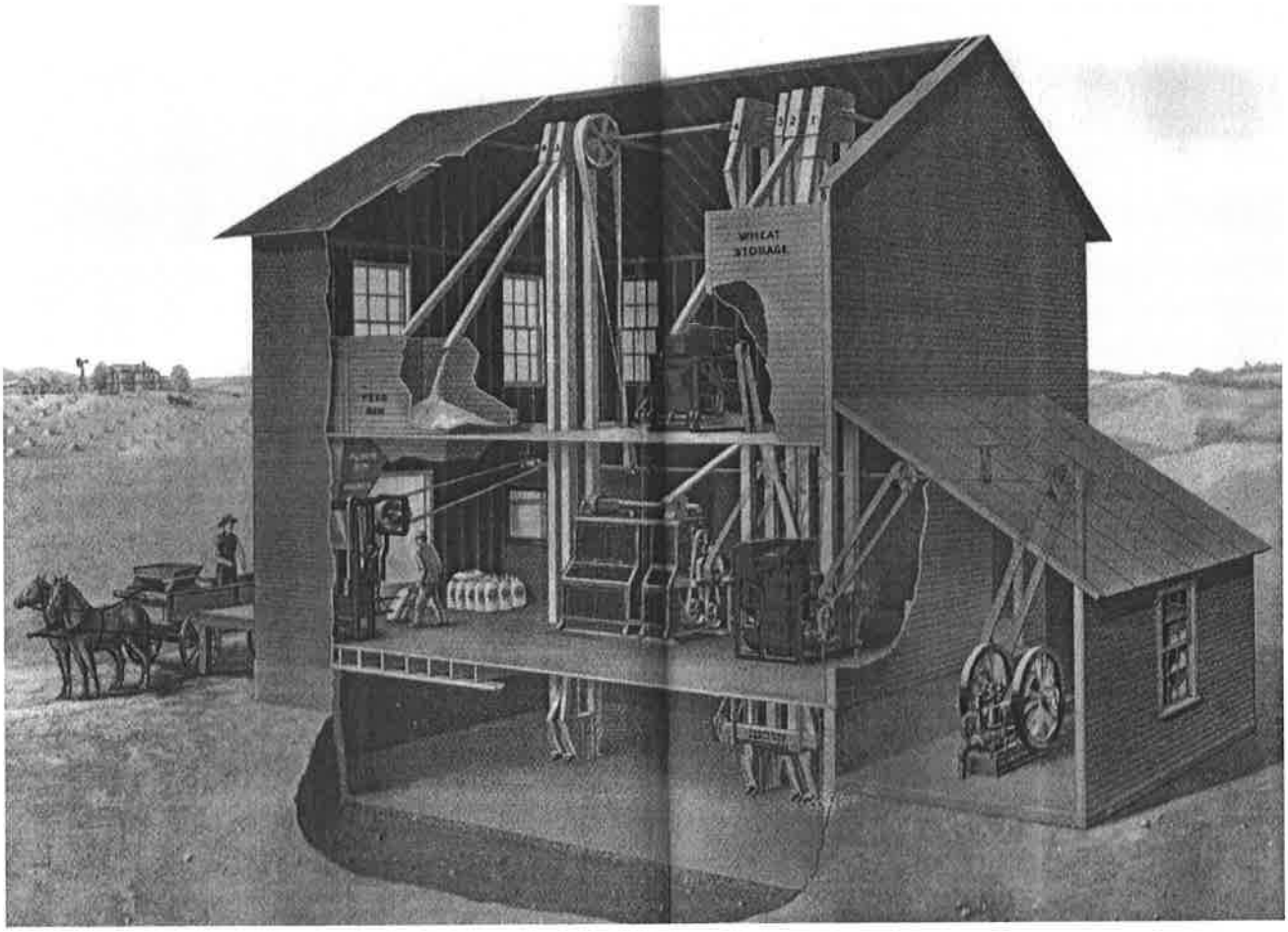
The boundary encompasses all or nearly all of the property known to have been historically associated with the mill. The boundary lines follow the property plat lines.

All photographs are of:

Clark-Miller Roller Mill, Lansing vicinity, Ashe County, North Carolina
Date: 1/2014 Photographer: Steve Wrinn
Digital files located at North Carolina State Historic Preservation Western Office, Asheville

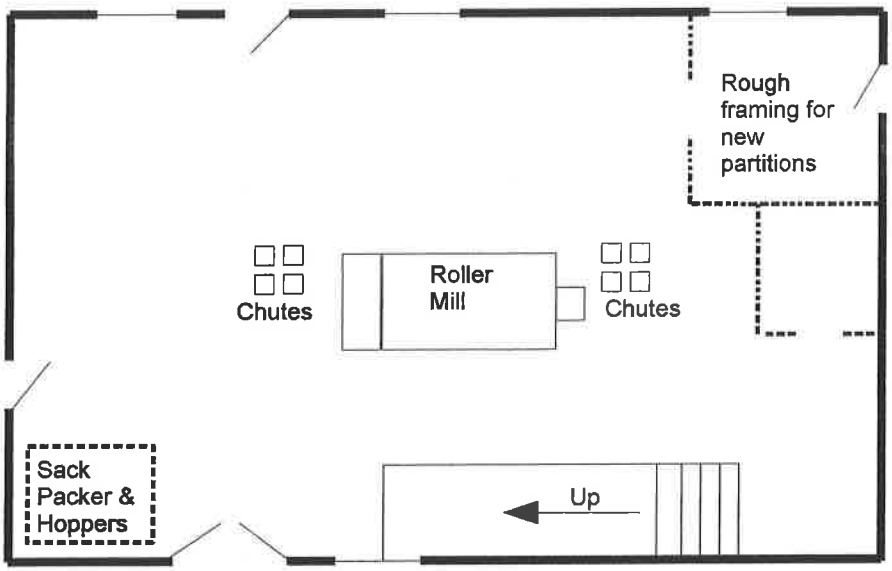
1. View of mill from Long Branch Rd., looking north
2. North end of mill looking south from Long Branch Rd.
3. West (rear) elevation
4. West (rear) elevation showing Little Horse Creek
5. Basement looking southeast
6. Basement looking north
7. First floor interior looking southeast showing Midget Marvel Roller Mill
8. First floor, northeast corner
9. First floor, northwest corner (former office location)
10. Second floor looking northeast
11. View of second floor rafter / roof system with grain conveyors
12. View of second floor looking southeast

Diagram from the 1916
The Story of a Wonderful Flour Mill: Midget Marvel[24]
Showing a Typical Roller Mill Design

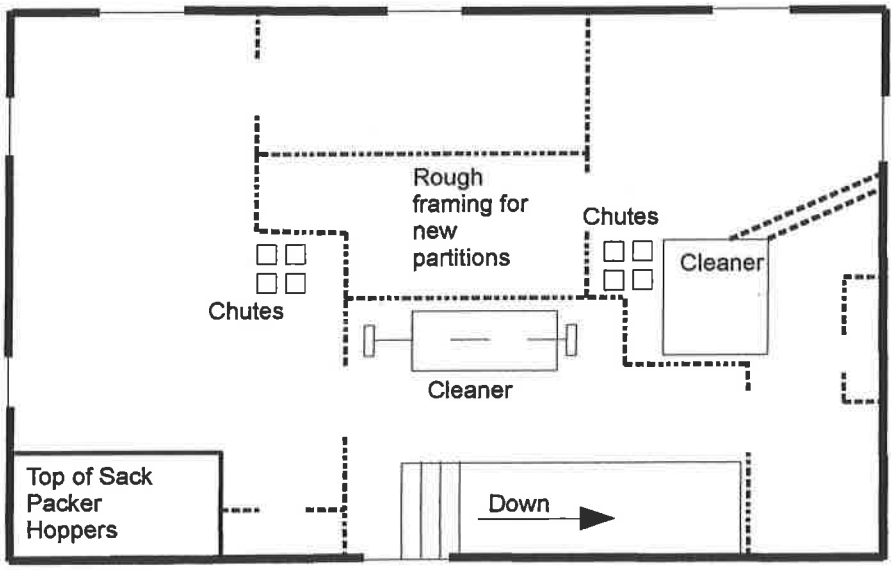


24
The Anglo-American Mill Co., *The Story of a Wonderful Flour Mill: Midget Marvel,* revised edition, August 1916 (reprint by Hanford Mills Museum, c.2007)

Clark-Miller Roller Mill
Lansing, Ashe County, N.C.

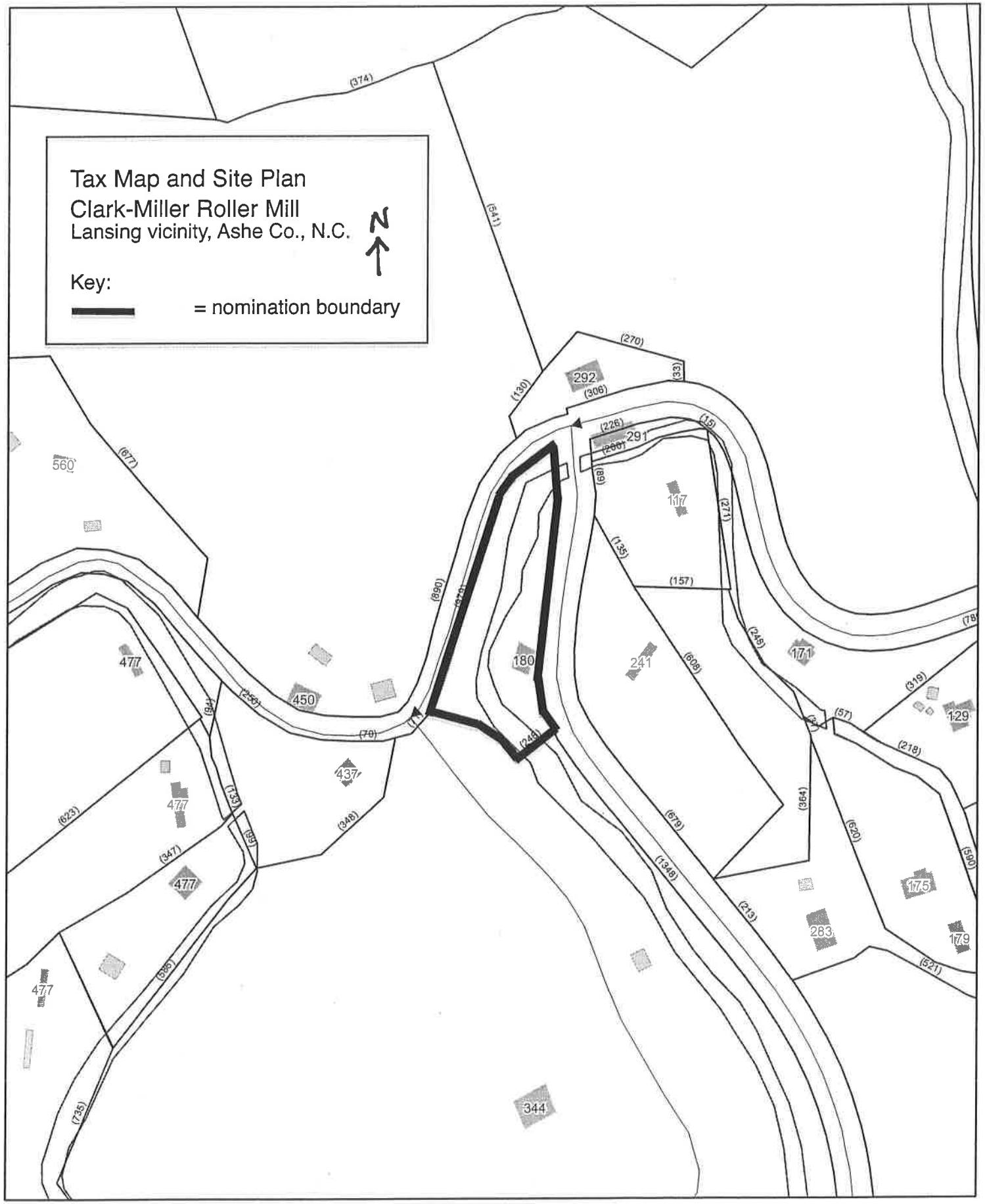


First Floor Plan Diagram
(not to scale)



Second Floor Plan Diagram
(not to scale)

16178-076



Legend

1 inch = 200 feet

Google earth

feet 100
meters 50

Clark-Miller Roller Mill
Lansing vicinity, Ashe County, North Carolina
36.506316, -81.521297

Green Guard
RainDrop
HOUSE WRAP

Green Guard
RainDrop
HOUSEWRAP