

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Hodgson-Aid Mill

other names/site number Hodgson Mill, Aid-Hodgson Mill (preferred)

### 2. Location

street & number Highway 181 [N/A] not for publication

city or town Sycamore [X] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Ozark code 153 zip code 65760

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [ ] nomination [ ] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [ ] nationally [ ] statewide [ ] locally.  
( See continuation sheet for additional comments [ ].)

 30 Nov 01

Signature of certifying official/Title Claire F. Blackwell/Deputy SHPO Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

( See continuation sheet for additional comments [ ].)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date

[ ] 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:)

See continuation sheet [ ].

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**5. Classification**

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		
		<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
		<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
		<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>

Name of related multiple property listing.

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION:  
manufacturing facility/mill  
GOVERNMENT: post office

**Current Functions**

WORK IN PROGRESS

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

OTHER: mill

**Materials**

foundation stone  
concrete  
walls weatherboard  
  
roof metal  
  
other

See continuation sheet [ ].

See continuation sheet [ ].

**Narrative Description**

See continuation sheet [x].

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**8. Statement of Significance****Applicable National Register Criteria**

☒ **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**

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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

See continuation sheet [x].

**9. Major Bibliographic References****Bibliography**

See continuation sheet [x].

**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

# \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

Industry

**Period of Significance**

ca. 1897-1951

**Significant Dates**

ca. 1897

**Significant Person(s)**

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Hodgson, Alva - builder

**Primary location of additional data:**

☒ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State Agency

☐ Federal Agency

☐ Local Government

☐ University

☐ Other:

Name of repository:

State Historical Society of Missouri

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**10. Geographical Data**Acreage of Property less than one acre**UTM References**

A. Zone	Easting	Northing	B. Zone	Easting	Northing
15	565520	4062700			

C. Zone	Easting	Northing	D. Zone	Easting	Northing

[ ] See continuation sheet

**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 Becky L. Snider, Ph.D.  
organization Becky L. Snider Consulting LLC date June, 2001  
street & number 507 South Garth Avenue telephone 573-256-1105  
city or town Columbia state Missouri zip code 65203

**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.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 FOP for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

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

name Hank and Jean MacIer  
street & number HC1, Box 1690 telephone (417) 261-2061  
city or town Tecumseh state MO zip code 65760

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7. Description, continued.

Summary:

The Aid-Hodgson Mill, in northeast Ozark County, is located on State Highway 181 between Dora and Sycamore, Missouri. The three and one-half story mill sits at the base of a rock-faced bluff from which Hodgson Mill Spring emerges. Constructed circa 1897 near the site of an earlier mill, it was the first of two mills built by Alva Hodgson in Ozark County. The building has a pegged post and beam timber frame covered with red-painted weatherboards. Several early shed additions are still in place on the front and sides of the original mill building. Although the mill has not been in operation since the 1970s, the two turbines and some of the milling equipment are still in place.

The mill faces west, and it sits approximately 150 feet east of Highway 181. (See Figure One) The mill pond is located between the mill and the highway. The mill is the only contributing building on the property; the man-made mill pond and the limestone barrel vault constructed at the base of the cliff where Hodgson Spring discharges are contributing structures. Although the mill is in need of rehabilitation, the building exhibits a high level of integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship and association. Recently, the foundation of the mill has been stabilized, and rehabilitation of the entire mill is currently in progress.

The name, Aid-Hodgson Mill, is listed as the preferred name for the property. This name rather than the historic name, Hodgson-Aid Mill, was chosen because it is the name by which the property has been known locally for more than fifty years.

Elaboration:

The Aid-Hodgson Mill in rural Ozark County, Missouri was built to harness the water power of the Hodgson Mill Spring as it emerges from the rocky bluff which shelters the building. The mill, which is situated over the spring's outlet, rises three and one-half stories above the water level and is a heavy post and beam timber frame building. The Aid-Hodgson Mill was constructed circa 1897 by Alva Hodgson, and it continued to operate as a mill until 1976. In recent years, the mill has been a tourist destination.

Hodgson Mill Spring is listed in Springs of Missouri as the 15th largest spring in the state. Measured at regular intervals, the spring has been recorded to discharge an average of 24 million gallons of water per day.<sup>1</sup> Originally, the Hodgson Mill Spring emptied onto the ground when it emerged from the bluff. It then flowed approximately one hundred yards south

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<sup>1</sup>Jerry D. Vineyard and Gerald L. Feder, Springs of Missouri. (Rolla, MO: Missouri Geological Survey and Water Resources, 1974), p. 168.

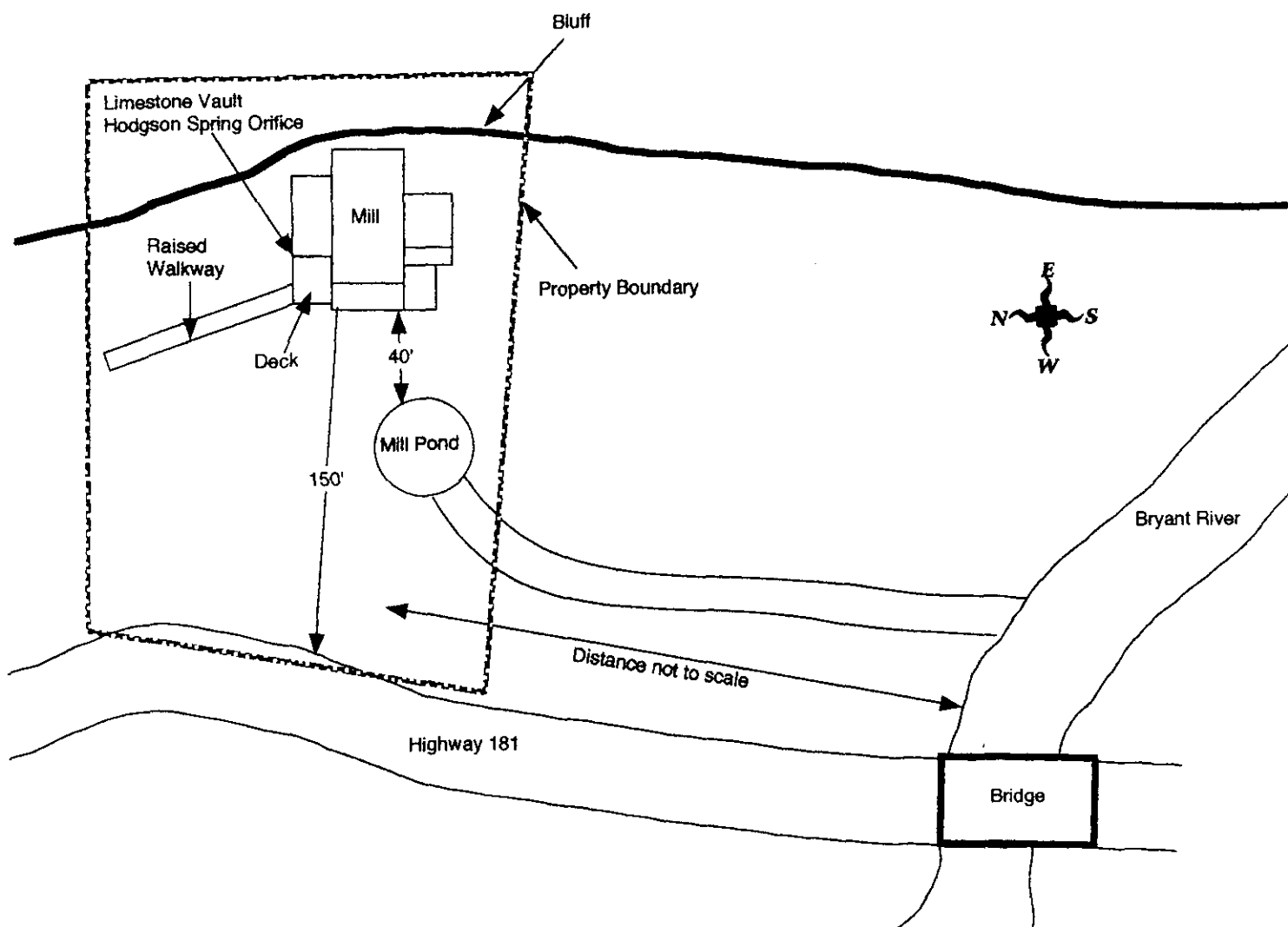
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Figure One: Site Map. Drawn by Becky L. Snider



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and joined with Bryant Creek. According to the Missouri Historic Property Inventory Form for the Aid-Hodgson Mill prepared by historian Robert Flanders, Alva Hodgson's

harnessing solution was to sink a turbine well near the spring into the limestone substrate, to a depth just above average high water level of Bryant Creek. A tunnel shaft was driven from the bottom of the well to a location where the ground falls away to shaft level, thus accommodating the tail race.<sup>2</sup>

Hodgson constructed limestone barrel vaults to stabilize the spring orifice and the tail race shaft orifice. (Photo No. 1) The barrel vault that is built into the cliff to stabilize the spring orifice is considered a contributing structure. The vault constructed for the tail race shaft and the turbine well are considered part of the mill building and are not counted as a separate structures. Hodgson also constructed a small pond approximately forty feet in front of the mill. The pond is approximately thirty feet in diameter and is fed by an underground water source, either the mill race or tail race. Water spills out of the pond over a small waterfall and flows south to join with the Bryant River which is just south of the mill. (Photo No. 5) The mill pond is a contributing structure.

Two steel turbines that are mounted on vertical shafts and sunk into the turbine well, power the millstones. (Photo No. 2) The millstones are reported to be imported buhrstones from the French Pyrenees.<sup>3</sup> One of the turbines is still in place, the other turbine has been temporarily removed from the well for repairs, but will soon be returned to its original position. Originally, the turbines powered the millstones, which ground wheat and corn into flour and meal, a cotton gin and a sawmill. In the early twentieth century, a dynamo was installed in one of the side additions and the two turbines beneath the mill produced enough power to run the flour and grist mills, a cotton gin, a lumber mill, and a clothing factory. They also generated electricity for other mill site businesses including a gift shop, a cafe, a general store, the operator's home and resort cottages.<sup>4</sup> A metal water wheel, which is located between the spring and the turbines, rotates with the flow of the water, but it never powered any of the mill equipment.

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<sup>2</sup>Robert Flanders, Missouri Historic Property Inventory Form for Aid-Hodgson Mill. On file in the Cultural Resources Inventory at the State Historic Preservation Office, Jefferson City, Missouri.

<sup>3</sup>George G. Suggs, *Water Mills of the Missouri Ozarks*. (Norman & London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990). p. 102.

<sup>4</sup>Kathleen Van Buskirk, "Hodgson Mill: A Haunting Place of Memories," *The Ozarks Mountaineer*. October 1996, p. 27.

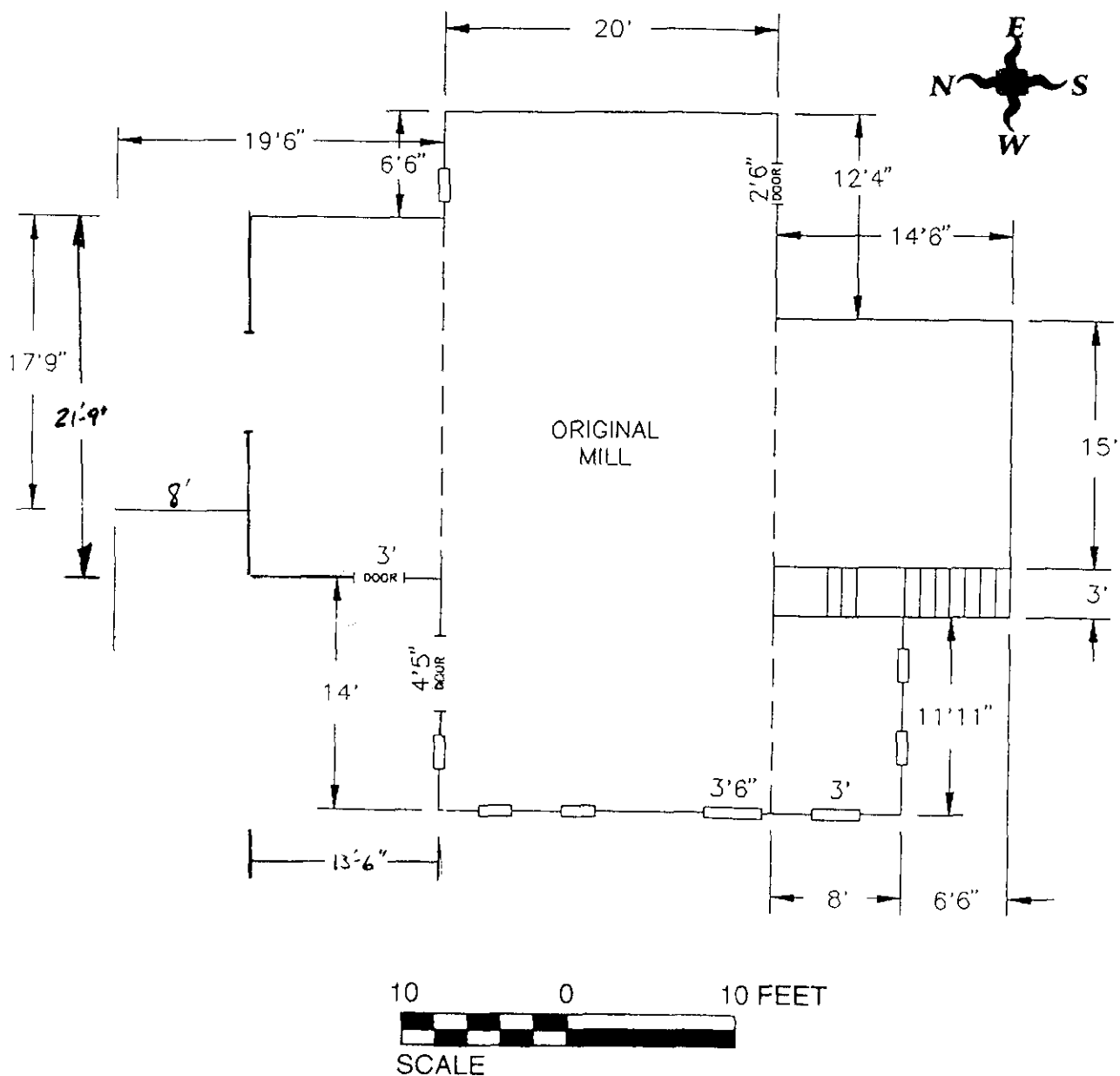
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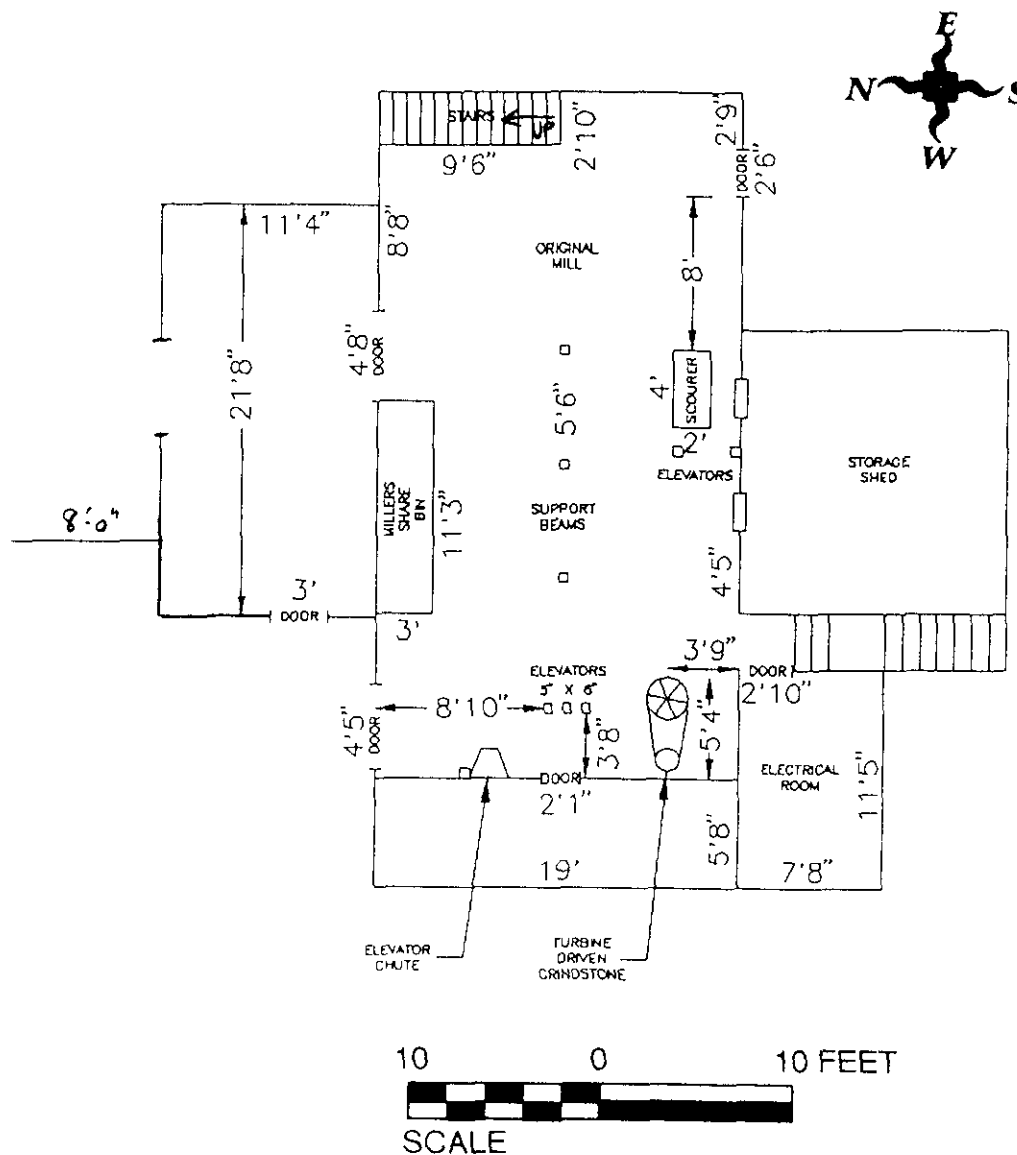
Figure Two: Aid-Hodgson Mill - Outside Dimensions  
Drawn by Robert Flanders 1995, updated by Becky L. Snider, 2001





**Aid-Hodgson Mill**  
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**Figure Three: First Floor Plan, Drawn by Robert Flanders 1995, updated by Becky L. Snider, 2001**



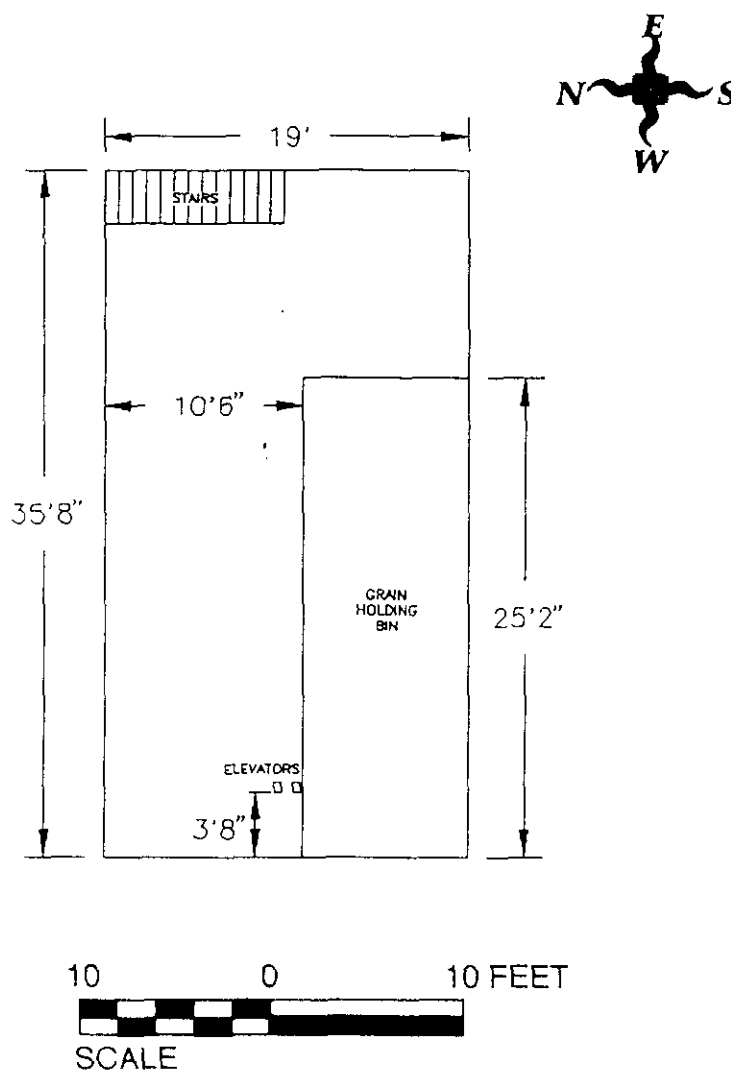
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Figure Four: Second Floor Plan, Drawn by Robert Flanders 1995.



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(Photo No. 3) It was installed simply for the pleasure of the tourists who visited the mill in the years since the mill ceased operation.

The mill consists of the original timber frame, gable-roofed mill building and four frame shed additions. (Photo Nos. 4-7) Both the original mill building and the additions are sheathed with weatherboard siding and have corrugated tin roofing. The interior walls and the floors of the original part of the building are covered with wooden planking; walls in the additions are a mix of wooden planking and luan paneling. Windows throughout the building are a mix of four light fixed and four-over-four double hung, and they are early or original. The mill, which is built into the rocky hillside, consists of the post and beam superstructure, the turbine well, and the water wheel on the unenclosed ground floor, the main mill and four additions on the first floor, the grain holding bins on the second floor, and a half story attic. (Figures Two and Three) The original portion of the mill building is three and one-half stories tall, rectangular in plan and measures approximately 20 feet wide and 42 feet deep. A raised wooden walkway approximately 60 feet in length leads from an old road to the north side of the mill building. (Photo No. 4) A wooden deck connects the walkway to the mill. Both the deck and the walkway are of modern construction.

The superstructure of posts and beams is exposed on the ground floor of the mill building. (Photo Nos. 2, 4-6) Many of the structural posts are set on a stone shelf; the rest sit on stone or concrete piers. The structural components of the original part of the Aid-Hodgson Mill are large, hand-hewn pine posts and beams which are held together with mortise and tenon joinery and wooden draw pins. Although most of the original construction materials of the building are intact and in good condition, the post and beam superstructure on the ground floor of the building was in extremely deteriorated condition due to water and termite damage. As a result, some of the supporting posts and beams on the ground floor level of the building were replaced in the Spring of 2001. While the replacement posts and beams are similar in their material and joinery to the originals, they have been left unpainted to distinguish them from the original materials.

On the first floor of the Aid-Hodgson Mill building, the original milling room is surrounded on three sides by four ancillary rooms in shed additions. (Figures Two and Three and Photo Nos. 4-6) The shed additions, which appear to be early, but not original, extend out from the front (west) and side (north and south) elevations of the original mill building. To the east, the perpendicular rocky bluff that shelters the mill is less than two feet from the back wall of the building. (Photo Nos. 7-8) Although much of the original milling equipment was removed from the building many years ago, the millstones, a scourer, and the miller's share bin are still in place on the first floor of the mill building. (Photo Nos. 9-12) The narrow, rectangular wooden elevators, which moved the grain throughout the building, are also largely intact.

The four additions, which extend out from the original mill building to the north, south and west are all of frame construction, and all have shed roofs sheathed with corrugated tin roofing. One wall of a fifth addition to the north of the north side addition also still exists but the rest of

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that portion of the building is gone. The north addition covers all but six feet of the north elevation of the original mill building, and it is the largest of all the additions to the mill building. It has open shelving on the walls, but no machinery in it. In recent years, this room appears to have been used to sell souvenirs. A glass display case is still in place on the east side of the room. (Photo No. 13) The shallow front addition, which extends across the full width of the front elevation of the original mill building, appears to have been primarily for storage as it is lined on all four sides with wooden shelving. (Photo No. 14) The shed addition on the southwest corner of the building was used as an electrical room. This rectangular room still contains a variety of mechanical equipment including a dynamo to generate electricity. The shed addition on the south side of the original mill building is reached via a narrow passageway and a short flight of stairs. It sits approximately three feet lower than the other additions.

The second floor of the Aid-Hodgson Mill Building is a long narrow room, which is the same dimensions as the main milling room below it. (Figure Four and Photo No. 15) The grain sifting and holding bins take up approximately one-third of the second floor space. These bins appear to have been rebuilt some time in the last thirty years or so, as they are lined with a pressed wood sheet material. A ladder to the attic space above the second floor is located on the west end of the room.

The Aid-Hodgson Mill is a wonderful example of ingenious engineering, fine craftsmanship and picturesque siting. Despite some deterioration from lack of maintenance, the building is little changed since the period of significance and it continues to retain a high level of integrity of design, materials, craftsmanship, and association.

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Summary:

The Aid-Hodgson Mill in rural Ozark County, Missouri was constructed ca. 1897. It is one of only four water mills left in Ozark County, a county which once boasted at least a dozen such facilities, and it is one of two mills constructed in the county by Alva Hodgson. The Aid-Hodgson Mill is significant under Criterion A in the area of INDUSTRY. The Aid-Hodgson Mill was typical of the custom water mills that were built in the rural Ozarks in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and it is significant as an excellent example of a late-nineteenth century, turbine-driven gristmill. The mill was initially run as a custom milling facility, but it later evolved into a large market milling operation. After the mill was purchased in 1934 by C.T. Aid, the millers who rented the facility operated it predominately as a market or merchant mill. In 1976, the Hodgson Mill operation was moved to a larger facility in Gainesville, Missouri. In recent years, the mill has been used as a tourist attraction.

The period of significance runs from ca. 1897, the year the mill was constructed, to 1951, the fifty year cut off point. The Aid-Hodgson Mill was an operational mill throughout the period of significance and, despite its lack of use for a number of years, it still retains a high level of level of integrity both inside and out.

Elaboration:

Ozark County, Missouri was organized in 1841 and, until 1857, included parts of Howell and Douglas County. According to James W. Goodrich and Lynn Wolf Gentzler, the editors of Marking Missouri History, the county name is derived from the French abbreviation "Aux Arcs" for Aux Arkansas, referring to Arkansas Indians.<sup>5</sup> The Aid-Hodgson Mill is located in the rural community of Sycamore, which is located in the northeast part of the county, approximately 17 miles north of Gainesville, the county's largest town. Although the area around Hodgson Mill Spring was settled prior to the Civil War and "milling had been an industry on Hodgson's location since 1861," the first post office for the area was not established until 1891.<sup>6</sup> The Sycamore post office was established by Alva Hodgson, the builder of the Aid-Hodgson Mill. He served as the first postmaster and named the post office "Sycamore" for the abundance of sycamore trees in the area. The post office, which was originally located in the mill, no longer exists in Sycamore.

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<sup>5</sup> James W. Goodrich and Lynn Wolf Gentzler, Marking Missouri History. (Columbia, MO: The State Historical Society of Missouri, 1998) p. 214.

<sup>6</sup> "Famous Millwright Alva Hodgson Founds Sycamore Post Office," Ozark County Times. June 22, 1967 p. 1.

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The Aid-Hodgson Mill was at least the second mill to be located in the vicinity of the Hodgson Mill Spring. In the early 1860s, William Holeman settled on Bryant Creek and constructed a water mill. The mill was closed during the Civil War, but it is not clear whether Holeman reopened the original mill or had to construct a new mill after the war. Holeman operated the mill until his death in 1879.<sup>7</sup> In 1884, Alva Hodgson and his mother, Mary Elizabeth Hodgson, purchased the mill from Manuel and Elizabeth Smith, the parents of Alva's future wife, Mary Elizabeth Smith Hodgson, for \$500.00.<sup>8</sup>

Alva Hodgson came from a family of millers. Alva Hodgson's father, Isaiah Hodgson, was also a miller. He constructed a mill in Ozark County at Rainbow Springs, but it was destroyed by a flood. According to "The Hodgson Family" written by Robert Flanders from oral history transcripts of Hodgson family members and friends, the earliest record of a Hodgson operating a mill in the United States was William Hodgson in Guilford County, North Carolina in 1787.<sup>9</sup> It is possible that Alva Hodgson's ancestors were millers in Europe and took up that same trade when they immigrated to the United States.

According to Terry S. Reynolds the author of Stronger Than A Hundred Men: A History of the Vertical Water Wheel, the harnessing of water power can be traced back to antiquity. The vertical water wheel appears to have been invented a century or two before the time of Christ. Its invention enabled man to use an inanimate power source rather than just the power of his muscles and had a major impact on technological and industrial development.<sup>10</sup> For centuries after it was invented, the water mill replaced the muscle power of men and animals for grinding grain. However, it was not until the fourteenth century that the widespread applications of this source of power began to be recognized and exploited. As A. Stowers notes in the chapter titled "Watermills c 1500 -c 1850" of A History of Technology, by the fifteenth century water mills were

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<sup>7</sup> Shirley Carter Piland (ed.), A History of Ozark County 1841-1991. Gainesville: Ozark County Genealogical and Historical Society, 1991, p. 61.

<sup>8</sup> Robert Flanders, "The Hodgson Family " (unpublished history developed from oral history interviews conducted with Eliza McCleary Glick, Fred Leach, and Ida Hodgson Simpson by the Center for Ozarks Studies and the Living History Foundation of Ozark County between August and October, 1991), p. 7.

<sup>9</sup> Flanders, "The Hodgson Family ," p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> Terry S. Reynolds, Stronger Than A Hundred Men: A History of the Vertical Water Wheel. (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), p. 4.

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being used for a variety of industrial purposes, and they could be found throughout Europe wherever there was an adequate source of water.<sup>11</sup> In England during the feudal period, manorial lords owned many of the watermills. The local miller paid rent to the lord, and peasants were forced to have their grain ground at the mill owned by their lord. Penalties were imposed on peasants who were discovered secretly grinding their own corn. This same sort of arrangement would later develop on plantations in the United States.

Just as other technologies were brought to America with European immigrants, so was the water mill. Louis C. Hunter, the author of A History of Industrial Power in the United States, 1780-1930, Volume One: Waterpower, notes that the common water mill was a characteristic feature of the pioneer settlement across the United States.<sup>12</sup> The importance of the watermill in the development of American communities cannot be overestimated. The proliferation of mills throughout the country is supported by census reports as well as information from newspapers, gazetteers, travel accounts, and local history publications.<sup>13</sup>

The first mill near Hodgson Spring built by William Holeman is reported to have been powered by a wood turbine. Alva Hodgson used Holeman's mill for several years after purchasing the property. However, during the off-season, he worked at a sawmill in Lake Charles, LA to earn the money to build a new mill that could produce white or "patent" flour.<sup>14</sup>

In 1897, Hodgson realized his dream when he completed the current Hodgson Mill building. A notice that appeared in the local newspaper on November 25, 1897 noted that "Mr. Hodgson is making a good grade of flour on his new roller mill."<sup>15</sup> "Patent" flour was a higher quality of flour than had been previously produced. It was made possible by the invention of the "middling purifier" which was created around 1870. George Christian, the first person to market

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<sup>11</sup> A. Stowers, Watermills c 1500 - c 1850. In Charles Singer, E. J. Holmyard, A. R. Hall, and Trevor I. Williams, A History of Technology: Vol. IV. The Industrial Revolution (pp.199-213). (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), p. 199.

<sup>12</sup> Louis C. Hunter, A History of Industrial Power in the United States, 1780-1930, Volume One: Waterpower. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1979), p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, pp. 6-7.

<sup>14</sup> "Ozark County's Milling Industry" A complimentary publication of the Antler Motel, n.d., n.p.

<sup>15</sup> Ozark County Times. November 25, 1897, p. 3.

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flour using the "new process," advertised it as made by a patented process, hence the name.<sup>16</sup> It is likely that Hodgson purchased much of the milling machinery including the "middling purifier" needed to make "patent" flour from the Bernard and Leas Manufacturing Company of Moline, Illinois. The company held a lean against the mill for several months until Alva sold an interest in the mill to his younger brother, George.<sup>17</sup>

Hodgson apparently took advantage of all of the latest developments when he constructed his mill. The invention of the middling purifier resulted in higher quality flour and the roller mill technology used less power and increased production yields. Furthermore, the mill constructed in Ozark County by Alva Hodgson also took advantage of the relatively new technology of the water turbine.

Despite the long history and widespread usage of water power in Europe, the basic technology of the watermill did not change for centuries. Although variations in the design of both horizontal and vertical water wheels had been experimented with for years, the invention of the Poncelet wheel and, subsequently, the invention of the water turbine by Benoit Foureyron in 1827 represented one of the most important developments in water power technology. As Terry S. Reynolds notes in Stronger Than a Hundred Men: A History of the Vertical Water Wheel, improvements and development of the water turbine resulted in the decline of the vertical overshot wheel.<sup>18</sup>

The water turbine had significant advantages over the water wheel. Turbines could operate completely submerged, a feature that reduced the effect of the changing water level of the water source and meant that the turbine could utilize more water power. The water turbine also operated at a much higher velocity, had a greater efficiency and could be much smaller than a water wheel. The type of turbine used at the Aid-Hodgson Mill is known as the Leffel water turbine. (See Figure Five) By the 1860s, the James Leffel Company was mass-producing these turbines to replace old-style waterwheels.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Charles B. Kuhlman, The Development of the Flour Milling Industry in the United States, (Reprint, Clifton, New Jersey: Augustus M. Kelly Publishers, 1973, (First Edition, 1895, rev. 1929), p. 116-119.

<sup>17</sup> Flanders, "The Hodgson Family," p. 7.

<sup>18</sup> Terry S. Reynolds, Stronger Than A Hundred Men: A History of the Vertical Water Wheel, (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), p. 343.

<sup>19</sup> Weaver, Dwight. "Missouri's Marvelous Old Turbine-powered Mills," Missouri Resource Review, p. 16.



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Between the time that Alva Hodgson purchased the mill property and the completion of the Hodgson Mill, Hodgson also built a general store on the mill property and, in 1891, he established a post office, which he named Sycamore. Sycamore never grew into a formally platted town, but the Aid-Hodgson Mill, like many rural gristmills, served as the center of a hamlet which developed in the vicinity of the mill. Mill owners often operated stores and other service businesses, such as saw mills, cotton gins and temporary accommodations on or near the mill site. In addition to the post office and the milling operation, a saw mill, a cotton gin, an overall factory, a general store and at least one house were located on the Aid-Hodgson Mill property during the period of significance. The mill is the only one of these resources that is extant. The Aid-Hodgson Mill was so popular that farmers often had to wait several days for their grain to be ground. Because goods and services could be purchased at the mill, a trip to the mill was often an event in which the entire family participated. Some camped in the bottom upriver from the mill and along the creek, and the farmer and his family could socialize with other local residents who came to the mill for the same reasons.<sup>20</sup>

The mill proprietor supplied goods and services for mill customers and local residents, but also he often provided a market for locally grown and produced goods. The mill "store not only sold necessities - groceries, hardware, and dry goods- it also bought every valuable commodity produced in the area."<sup>21</sup> Mill hamlets often exported much more than flour or meal. As a result, the development of a gristmill provided local farmers with an opportunity to move beyond a subsistence existence and "such mills encouraged a community's economic development in a number of ways."<sup>22</sup> As the hamlet around the mill developed, the local farmers could have their grain made into flour or meal for their own use, they could purchase necessities and services, and they could sell their excess grain and farm products to the hamlet owner in exchange for cash or credit.

In 1897, the year Aid-Hodgson Mill was completed, George Hodgson purchased one-third interest in his brother's mill. Four years later, Alva Hodgson sold his brother the remaining two-thirds interest in the Hodgson Mill, and George became the sole proprietor of the mill. Alva sold his interest in the mill to raise money for his next project, the construction of Dawt Mill on

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<sup>20</sup> Flanders, "The Hodgson Family," p. 8.

<sup>21</sup> Robert Flanders, "Seven Mills Survey Historical Context," February 15, 1995. (On file at the State Historic Preservation Cultural Resources Inventory, Jefferson City, Missouri.), p.9.

<sup>22</sup> Priscilla Ann Evans, "Merchant Gristmills and Communities, 1820-1880: An Economic Relationship," Missouri Historical Review. Vol. 68, No. 3, April 1974, p. 319.

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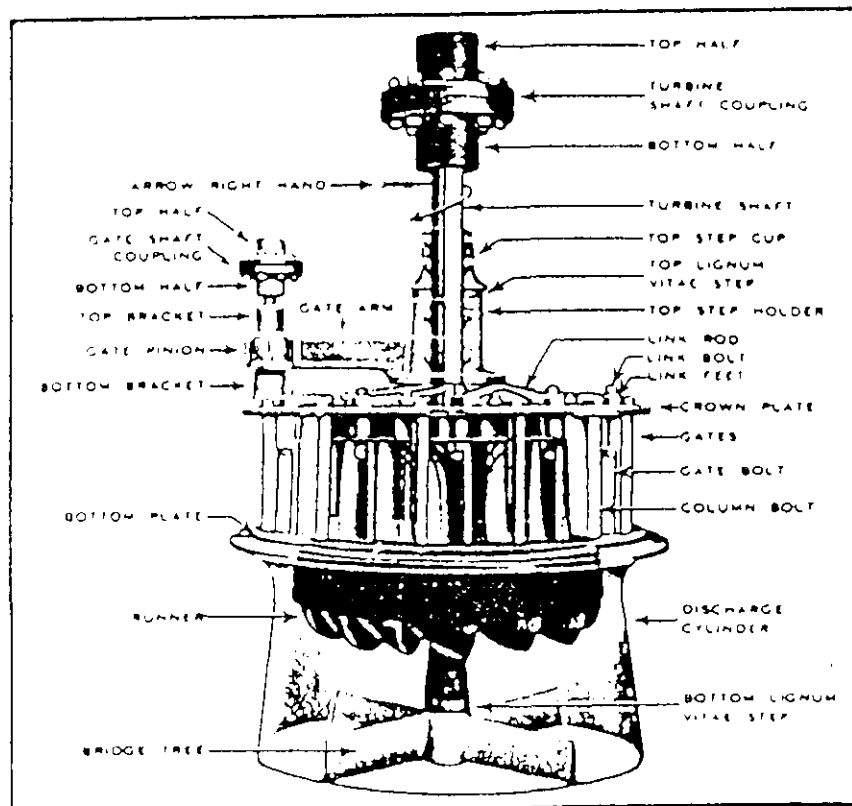
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Figure Five: The Leffel Turbine. From "Missouri's Marvelous Old Turbine-powered Mills" by Dwight Weaver, p. 16.

# The Leffel Water Turbine



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the North Fork of the White River.<sup>23</sup> In 1910, Alva Hodgson sold Dawt Mill to Wood, Reed and Patillo Mercantile, and he moved to Harrison, Arkansas to work on his final large construction project, a cotton gin.<sup>24</sup> Near the end of his life, Alva Hodgson returned to work with his brother at Hodgson Mill. He installed a dynamo to generate electricity to light the mill and to power six industrial sewing machines, which were used to produce Big Smith overalls. Herrod Smith, Alva's great nephew, recalled in 1991 that the sewing machine venture lasted from 1918 or 1919 to 1921 when the business was shut down shortly before Alva Hodgson died.<sup>25</sup>

George Hodgson died in 1927, and that same year, the Aid-Hodgson Mill left the ownership of the Hodgson family for the first time. The mill was owned by Fred O. Foster from 1927-1934. In 1934, the mill was purchased by prominent West Plains businessman, C. T. Aid.<sup>26</sup> Since this date, the mill has been known as the Aid-Hodgson Mill, and the mill stayed in the ownership of the Aid family until 1998.

For the first fifteen years after Aid acquired the mill, it was was operated intermittently by various leaseholder or renters. Then, according to local historian, Ruby Robins, for the next twenty-five years, the mill was put in full operation by various millers produced and marketed whole grain flour and corn meal.<sup>27</sup> Fred Leach was the first experienced miller to maximize the Aid-Hodgson Mill's potential. He sold his products at the mill, but also he marketed his products through food wholesalers. He also provided services such as picnic tables, campsites and a gift shop for vistors to the mill.<sup>28</sup> Leach increased production of meal and flour to as much as 2000 pounds a day, up from Alva Hodgson's 20 pounds a day in the mill's early years.

From 1963 to 1969, the Harold Stott family took over the operation of the mill. The Stotts expanded the mill's line of products to include "white and yellow cornmeal, whole wheat cereal

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<sup>23</sup> Piland, p. 61.

<sup>24</sup> Ozark County Times. January 31, 1910, p. 3.

<sup>25</sup> "Ozark County's Milling Industry" A complimentary publication of the Antler Motel, n.d., n.p.

<sup>26</sup> Robert Flanders, "The Hodgson Family, " p. 9.

<sup>27</sup> Ruby Robins, "Sesquicentennial Notes: Hodgson Mill - The Second 50 Years and Ongoing," (Date and Exact Source Unknown - from the Aid-Hodgson Mill Vertical Files at the State Historical Society, Columbia, Missouri).

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

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and bran, whole wheat, unbleached, rye and pancake flours."<sup>29</sup> However, the biggest boom in the Aid-Hodgson Mill's production came after Ken and Teena Harrington took over the property.

When Ken took up the lease in 1969, the mill was grinding only a couple of hundred pounds of flour a day. By 1973, sales had grown 500 percent, and the old mill was straining under the maximum of 1 million pounds of wheat and corn a year.<sup>30</sup>

By the mid-1970s, Hodgson Mill Enterprises had outgrown the Aid-Hodgson Mill. The milling operation had grown from its beginnings as a custom mill serving the local community to a large-scale market mill with worldwide sales. Today, Hodgson Mill products still portray the picturesque old mill on their packaging, but the company's operation has been at a modern facility in Gainesville since 1976.

Since 1976, the Aid-Hodgson Mill has been operated primarily as a tourist attraction. Although some attempts have been made to restore the mill, much of the work that was done in the last twenty years has been repairs and maintenance. The mill has flooded several times during this period. In 1982, water rose into the main milling room. Between 1985 and 1993, Herbert Smith, the great-nephew of Alva Hodgson, and his wife leased on the mill. In addition to providing tours of the mill, they also operated a store, resort cabins and a campground.<sup>31</sup> The store, a ca. 1970's concrete block building is the only one of these resources that is extant. It was excluded from the property boundary because it does not relate to the original function of the mill. The mill property has been vacant since the early 1990s. However, the new owners of the Aid-Hodgson Mill, Hank and Jean MacIer, plan to restore the mill and return the property to use as a tourist destination.

The Aid-Hodgson Mill operated for more almost eighty years providing the local community and, later the entire world, with high quality grain products. After the milling operation moved, the mill continued to provide a picturesque background for camping and picnicking, and tours of the building offered tourists a glimpse at an early rural factory. The 104 year old Aid-Hodgson Mill has been the subject of numerous newspaper and magazine articles; it is a favorite subject for local artists; and it is one of the most photographed mills in Missouri. The Aid-Hodgson Mill is a wonderful example of a nineteenth century, turbine-driven gristmill, and it looks today much as it did during the period of significance.

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<sup>29</sup> "Historic Aid-Hodgson Water Mill Grinds Meal and Flour Daily," Ozark County Times. May 9, 1968, p. 1.

<sup>30</sup> Steven Bennish, "Flour Power," Columbia Tribune. October 11, 1987.

<sup>31</sup> Kathleen Van Buskirk, "Hodgson Mill: A Haunting Place of Memories," The Ozarks Mountaineer. October 1996, p. 26.

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Aid-Hodgson Mill  
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10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundary of the Aid-Hodgson Mill property is shown as a heavy black line on the Ozark County Property Ownership Map which is reproduced below (Scale: 1" = 400'). The mill is located on parcel number 102-02-08-8.00 in Township 24N, Section 34, Range 12W.



Boundary Justification:

The current boundary was drawn to encompass the resources on the Aid-Hodgson Mill property that maintain historic integrity and that were directly related to the milling operation during the period of significance.



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**Aid-Hodgson Mill  
Ozark County, Missouri**

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**Photographs**

The following information is the same for all photographs:

Aid-Hodgson Mill  
Sycamore, Ozark County, Missouri  
Becky Snider  
May 23, 2001  
Negatives on file with Becky L. Snider Consulting LLC  
507 South Garth Avenue  
Columbia, MO 65203

**List of Photographs**

Camera Angles are indicated on the Photo Key Map

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Limestone Barrel Vault, the place where<br>Hodson Spring discharges from the bluff,<br>facing east. | 10. Main milling room, facing west.  |
| 2. Turbine and well, facing north.   | 11. Main milling room and miller's share bin,<br>facing northwest.             |
| 3. Waterwheel, facing southeast.   | 12. Scourer and grain elevators in the main<br>milling room, facing southeast. |
| 4. Walkway and west elevation, facing<br>southeast.  | 13. North shed addition, facing east.  |
| 5. West and south elevations, mill pond,<br>facing east.   | 14. West shed addition, facing north.  |
| 6. West and south elevations, facing<br>northeast.   | 15. Original mill building, second floor, facing<br>west.                      |
| 7. South elevation, facing north   |  |
| 8. North elevation, facing south.  |  |
| 9. Main milling room, facing northeast.  |  |

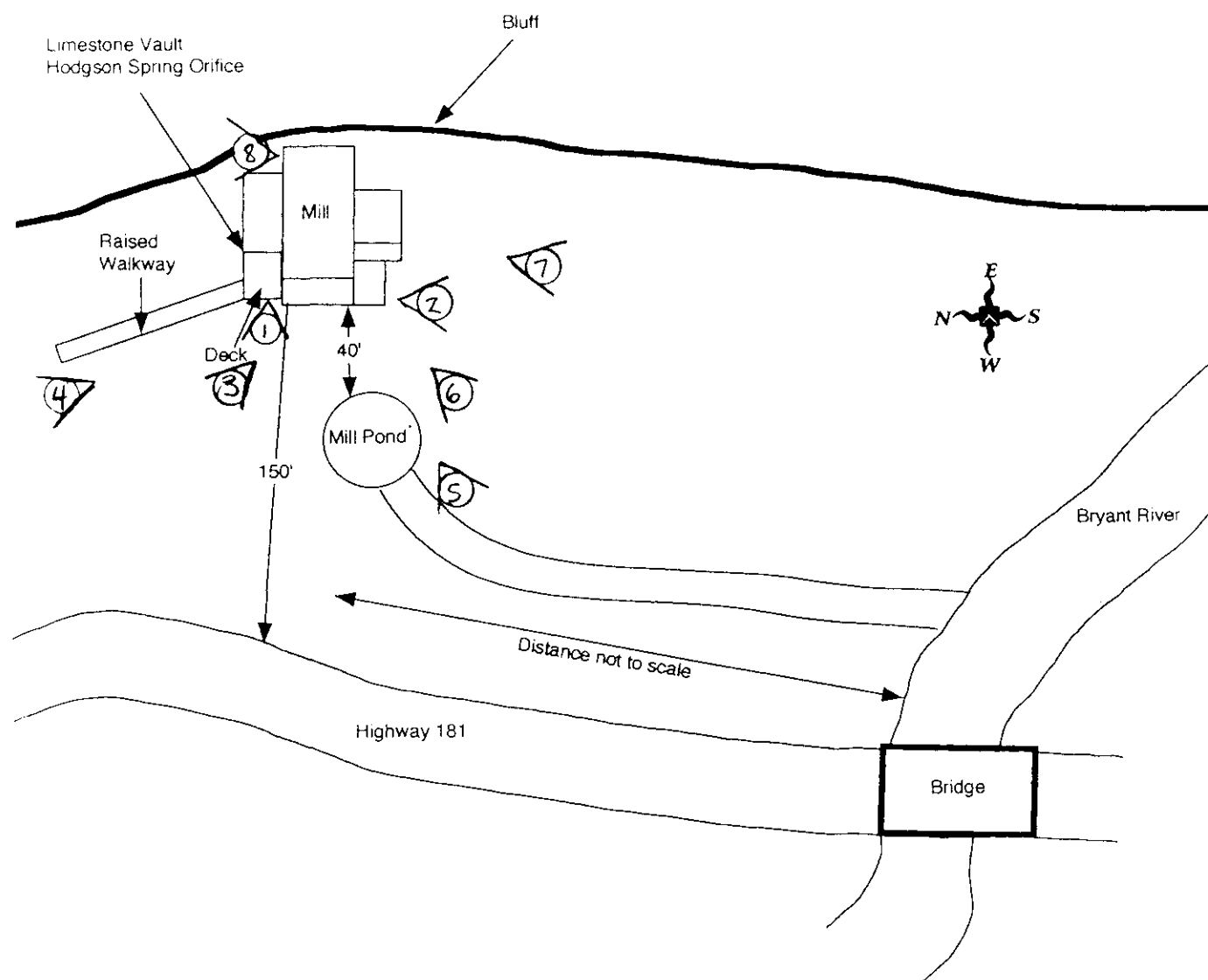
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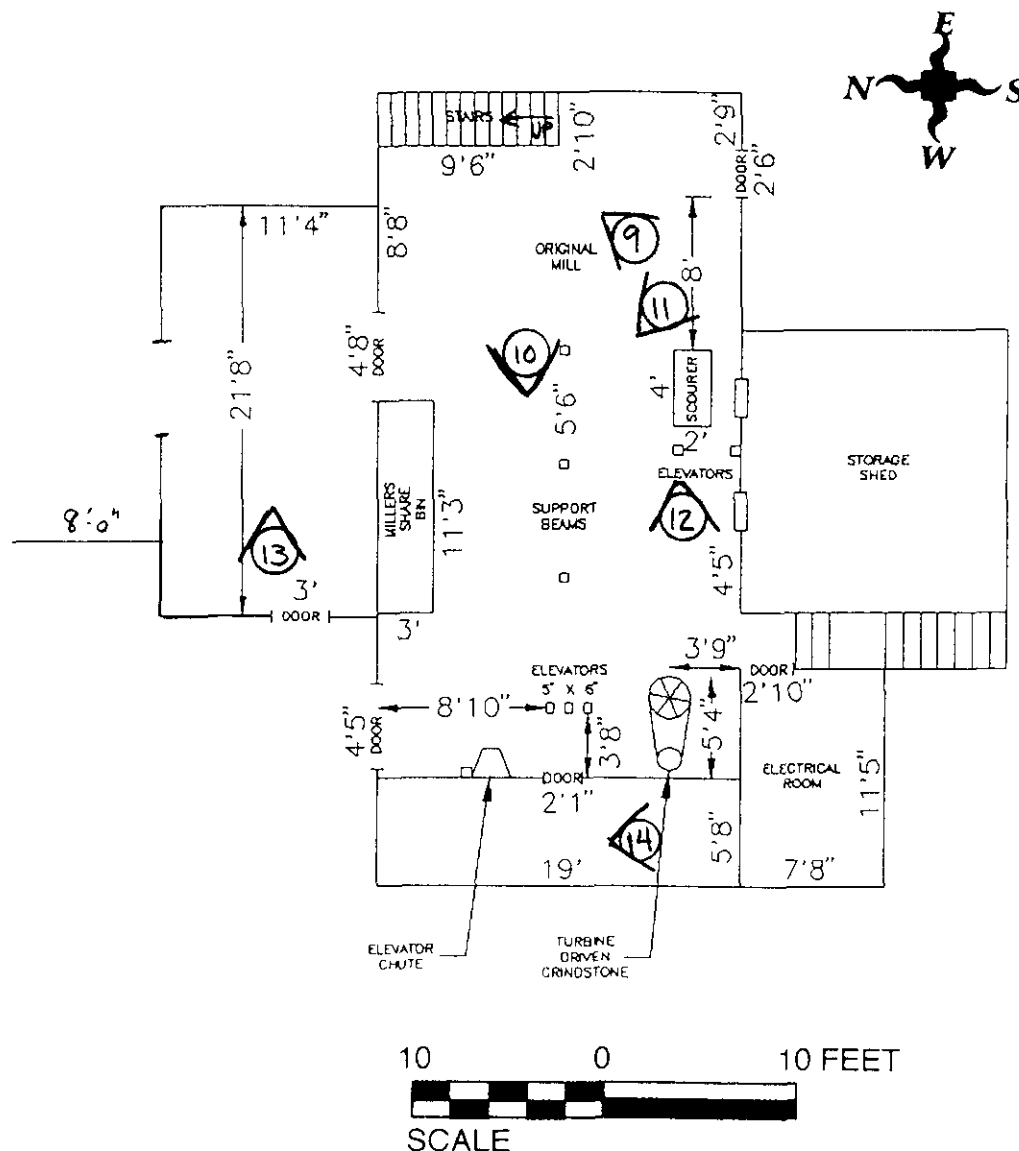
Figure Six. Photo Key Map - Site Map.



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**Aid-Hodgson Mill  
Ozark County, Missouri**

**Figure Seven. Photo Key Map - First Floor**



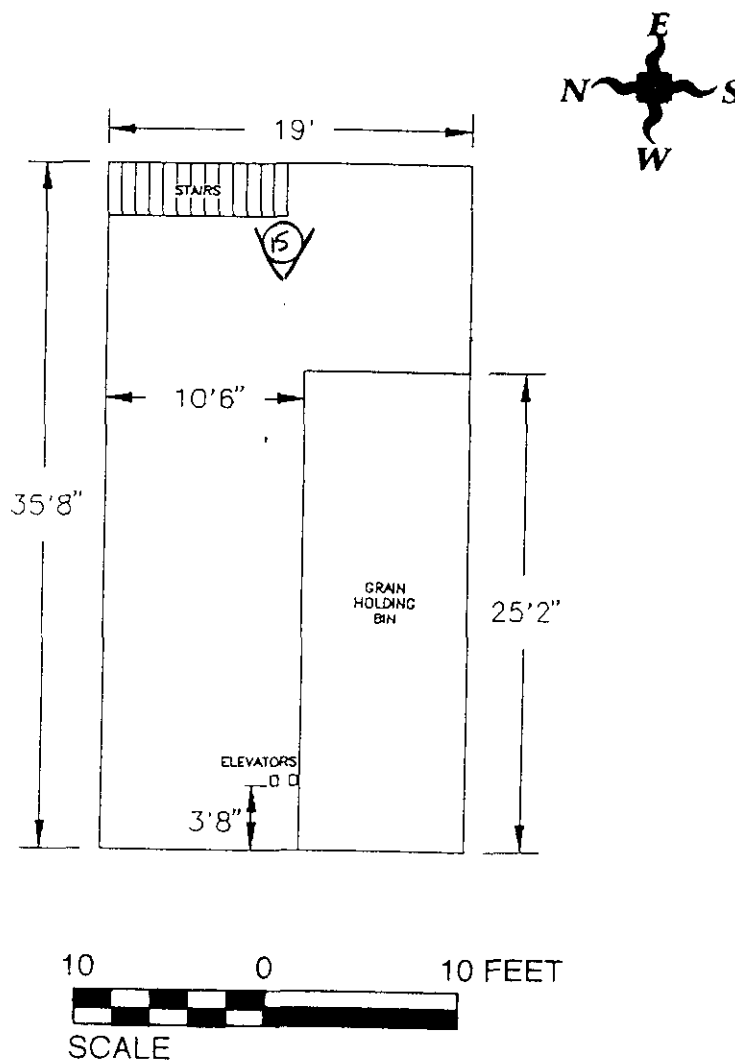
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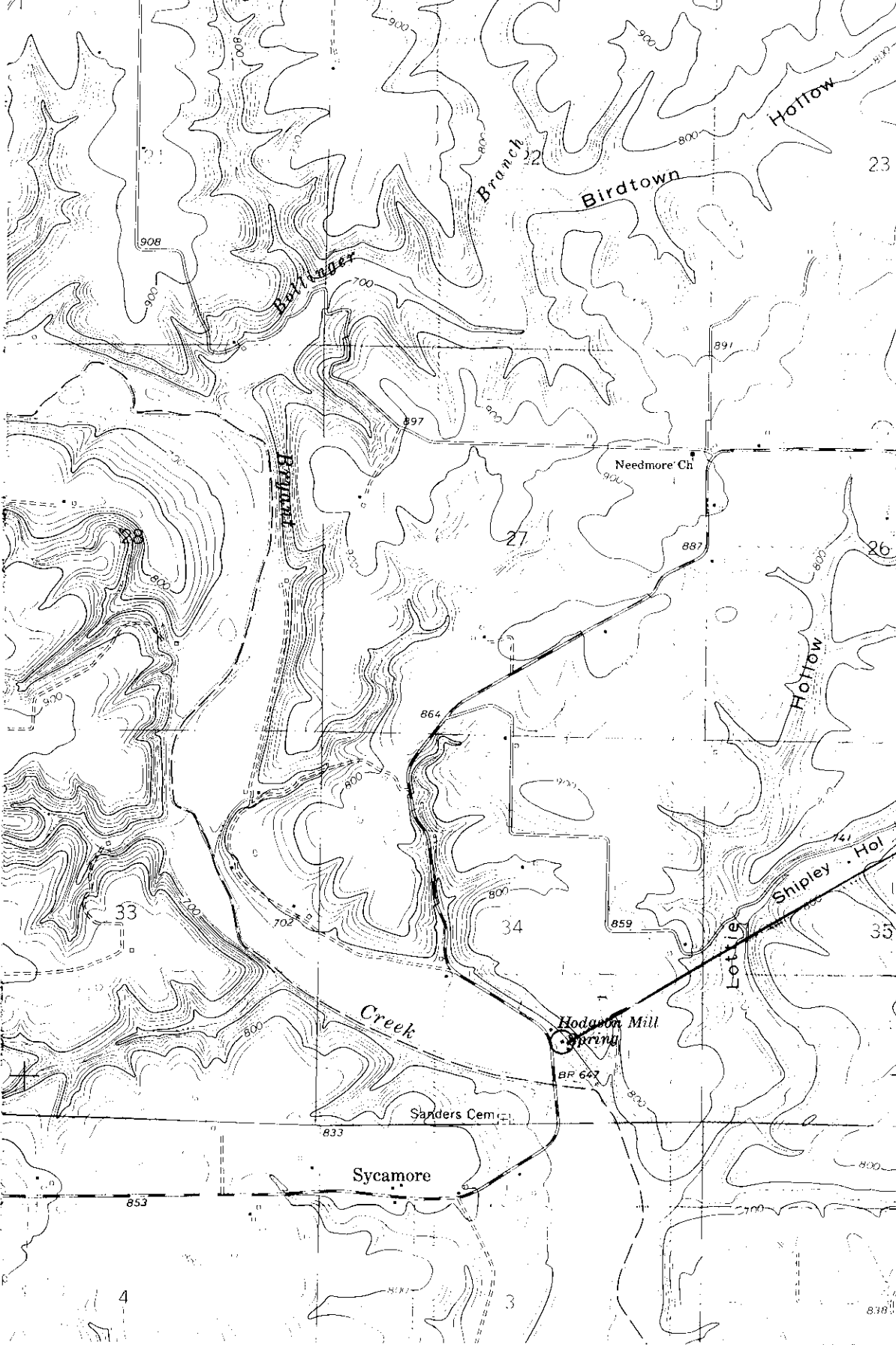
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Aid-Hodgson Mill  
Ozark County, Missouri

Figure Eight. Photo Key Map - Second Floor



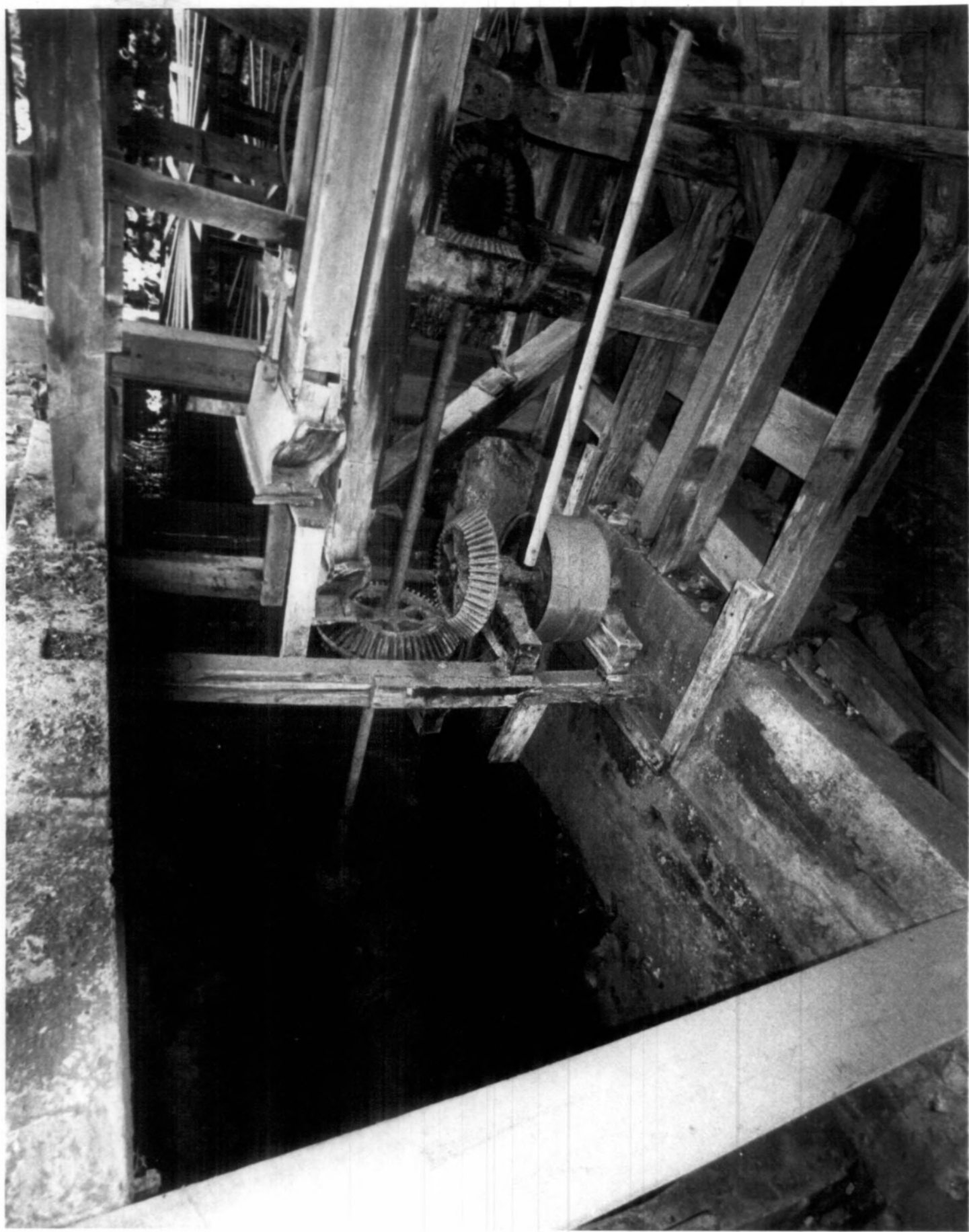
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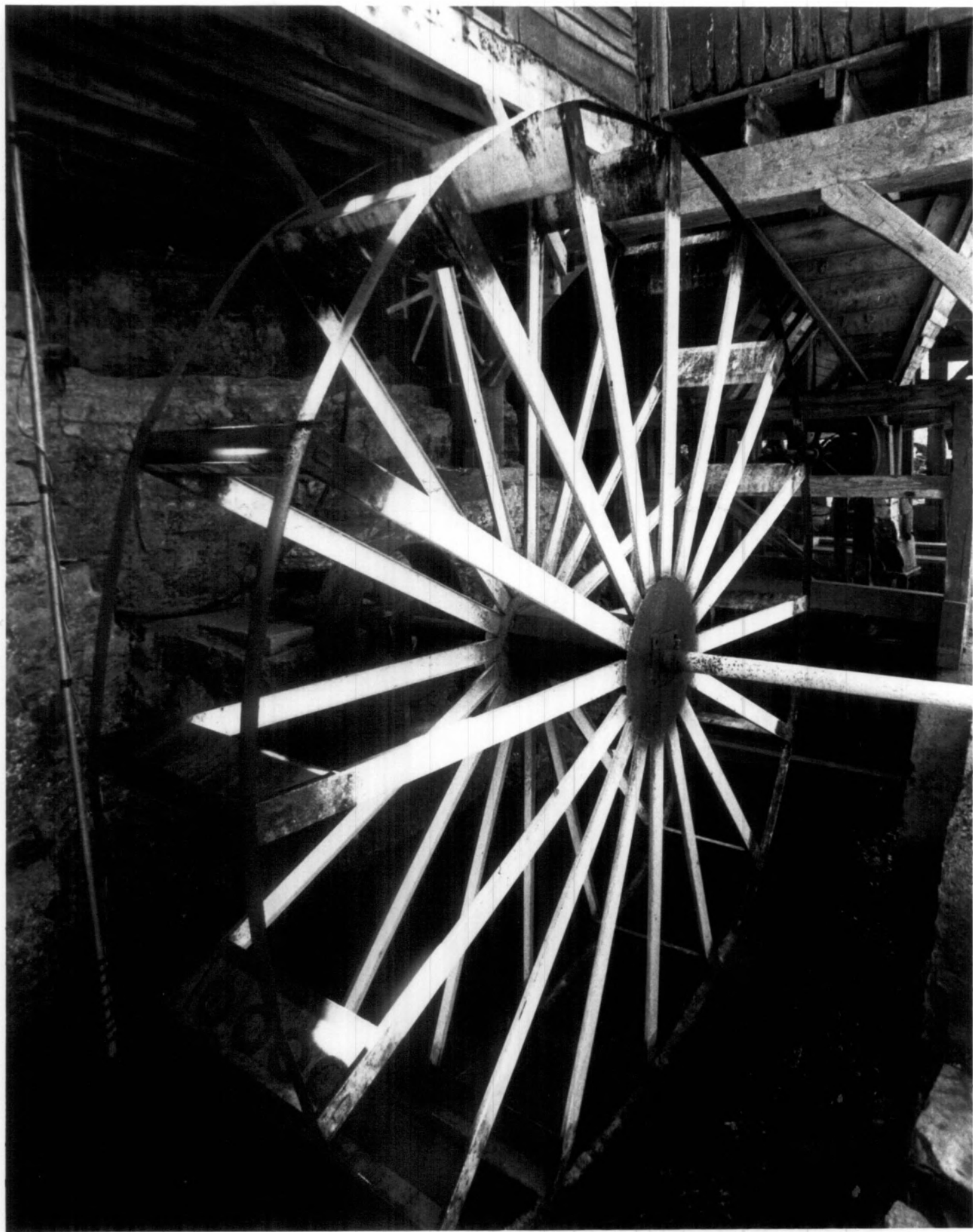
AID-HODGSON MILL  
[PRETERRIT]  
SYCAMORE VICINITY  
OZARK COUNTY, MISS  
SYCAMORE QUAD  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES TOP  
15/565520/406270

42'30"



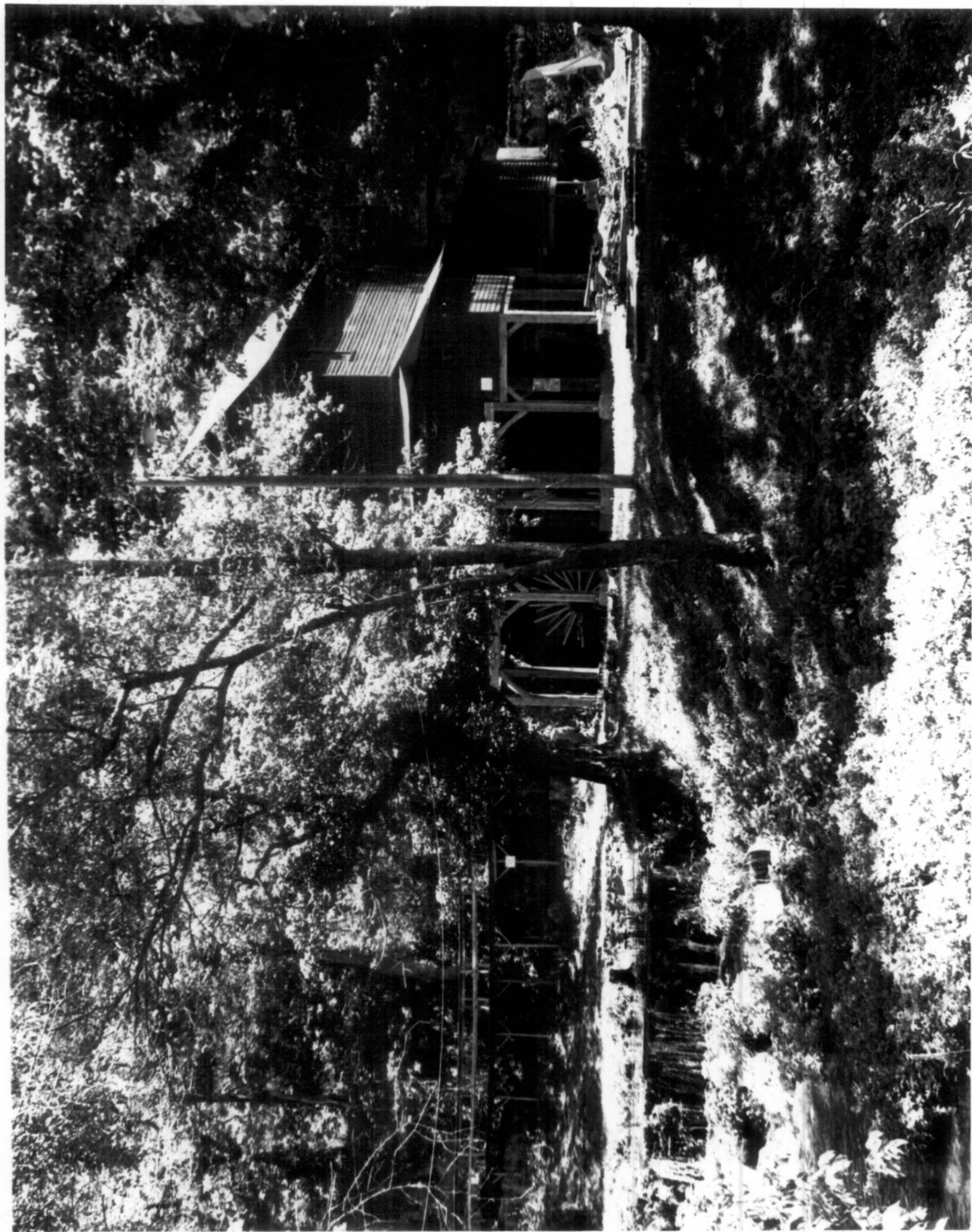








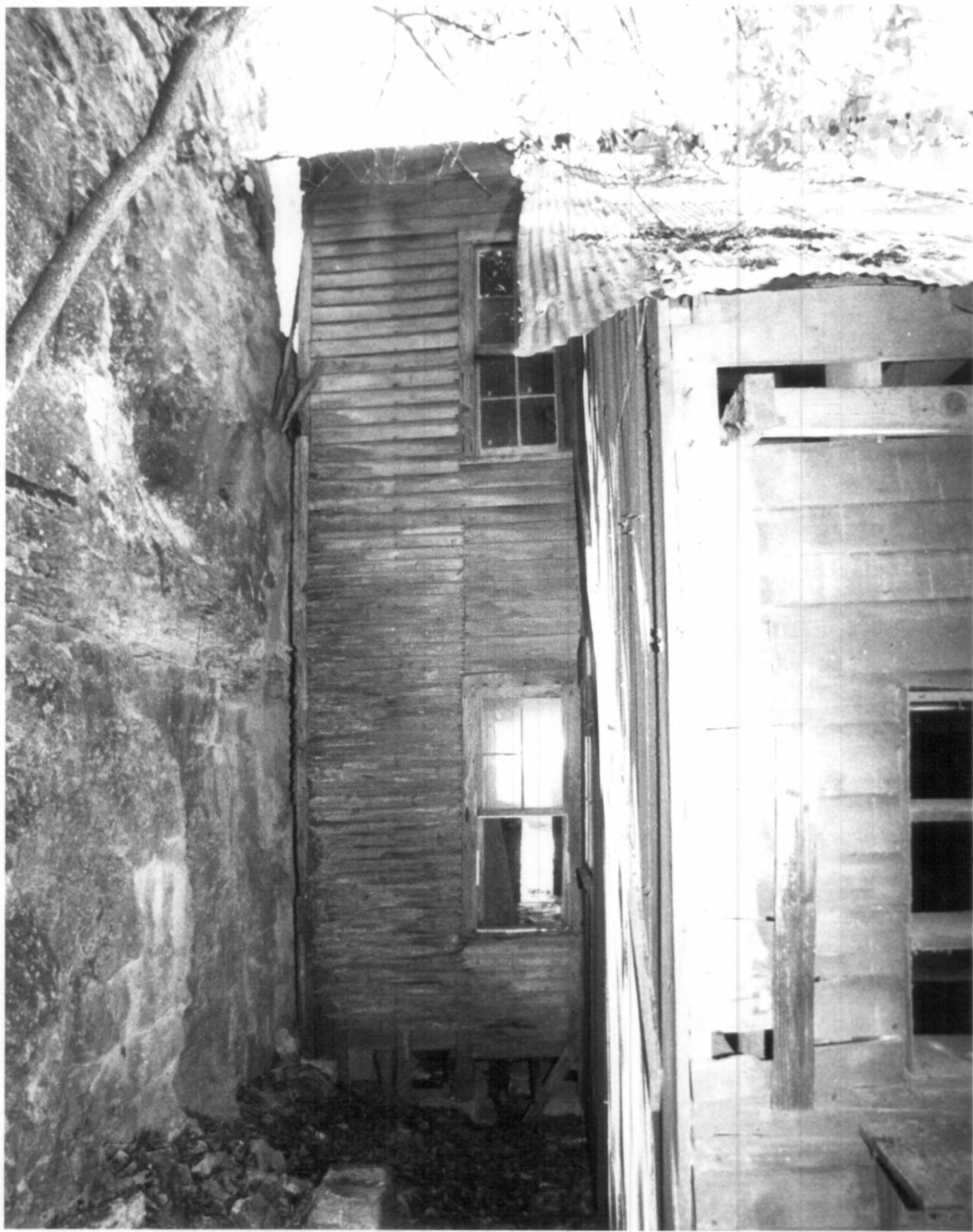




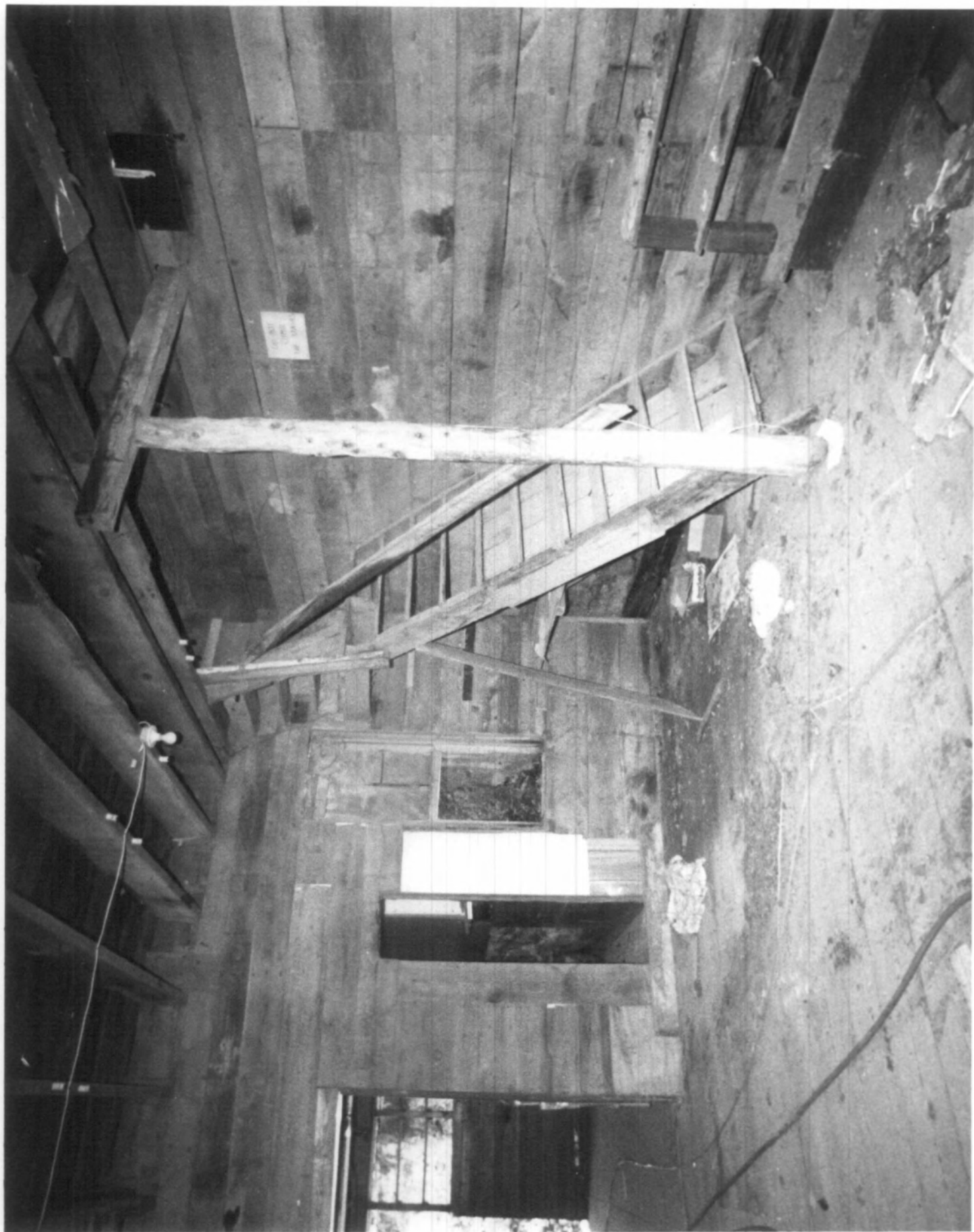


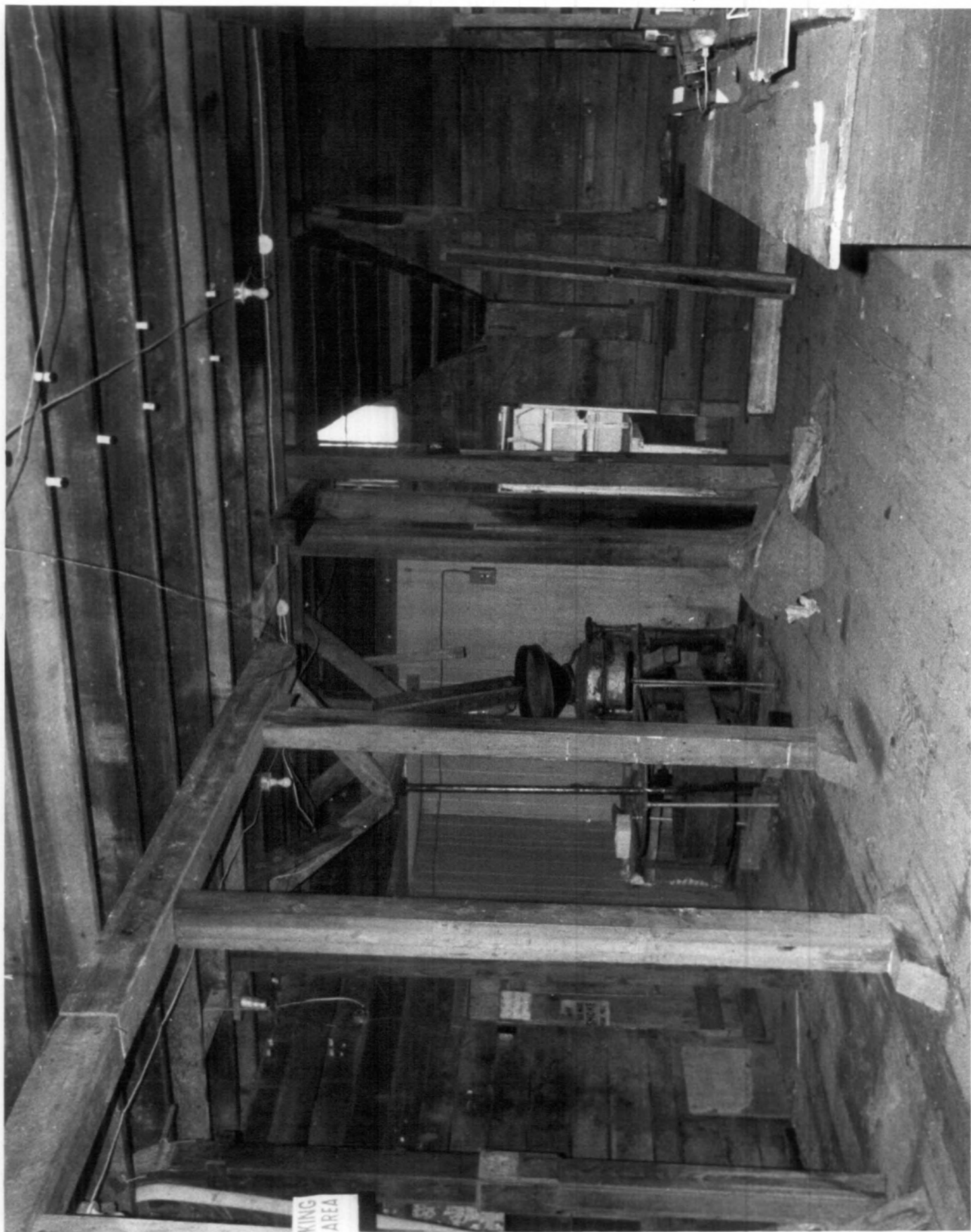


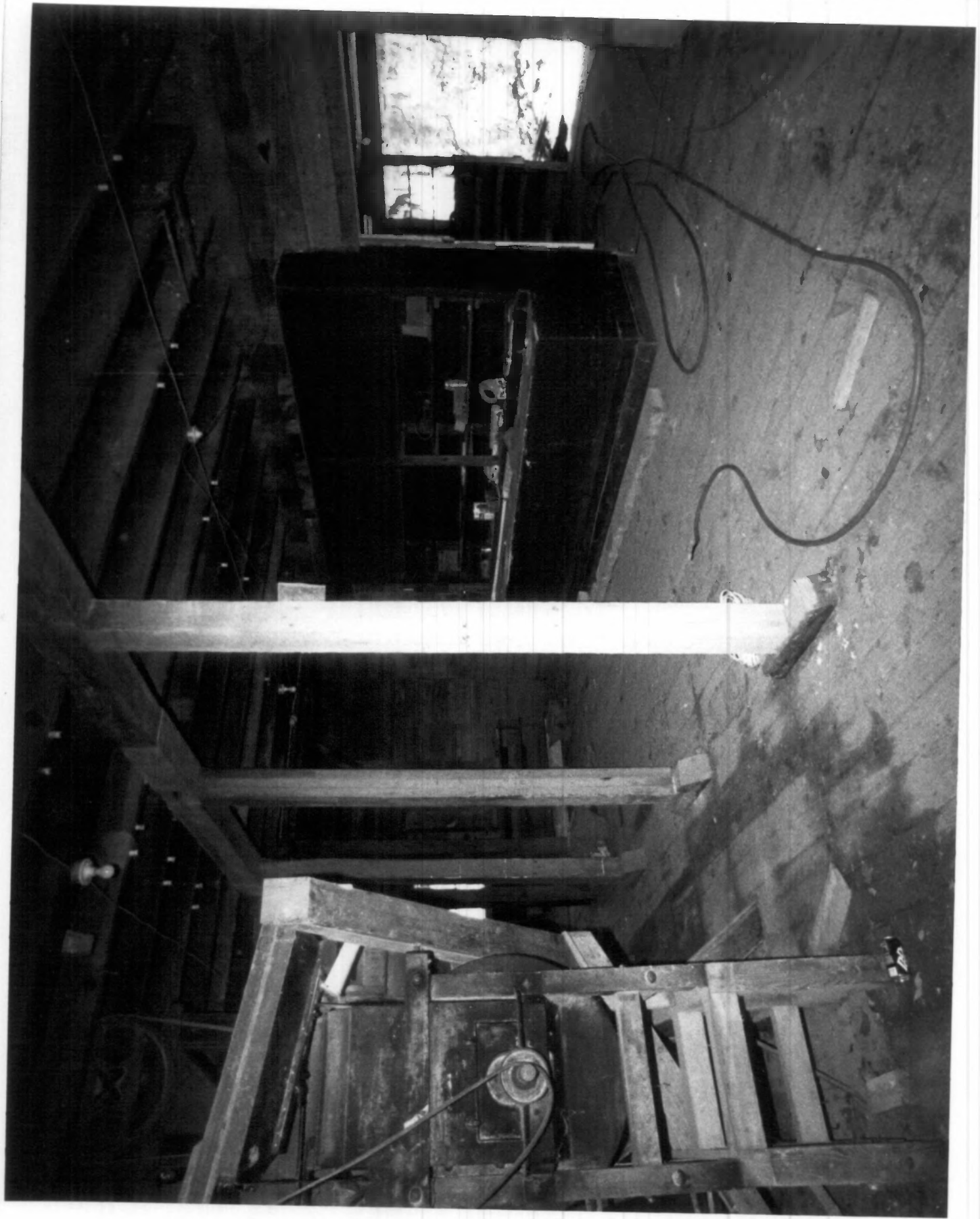






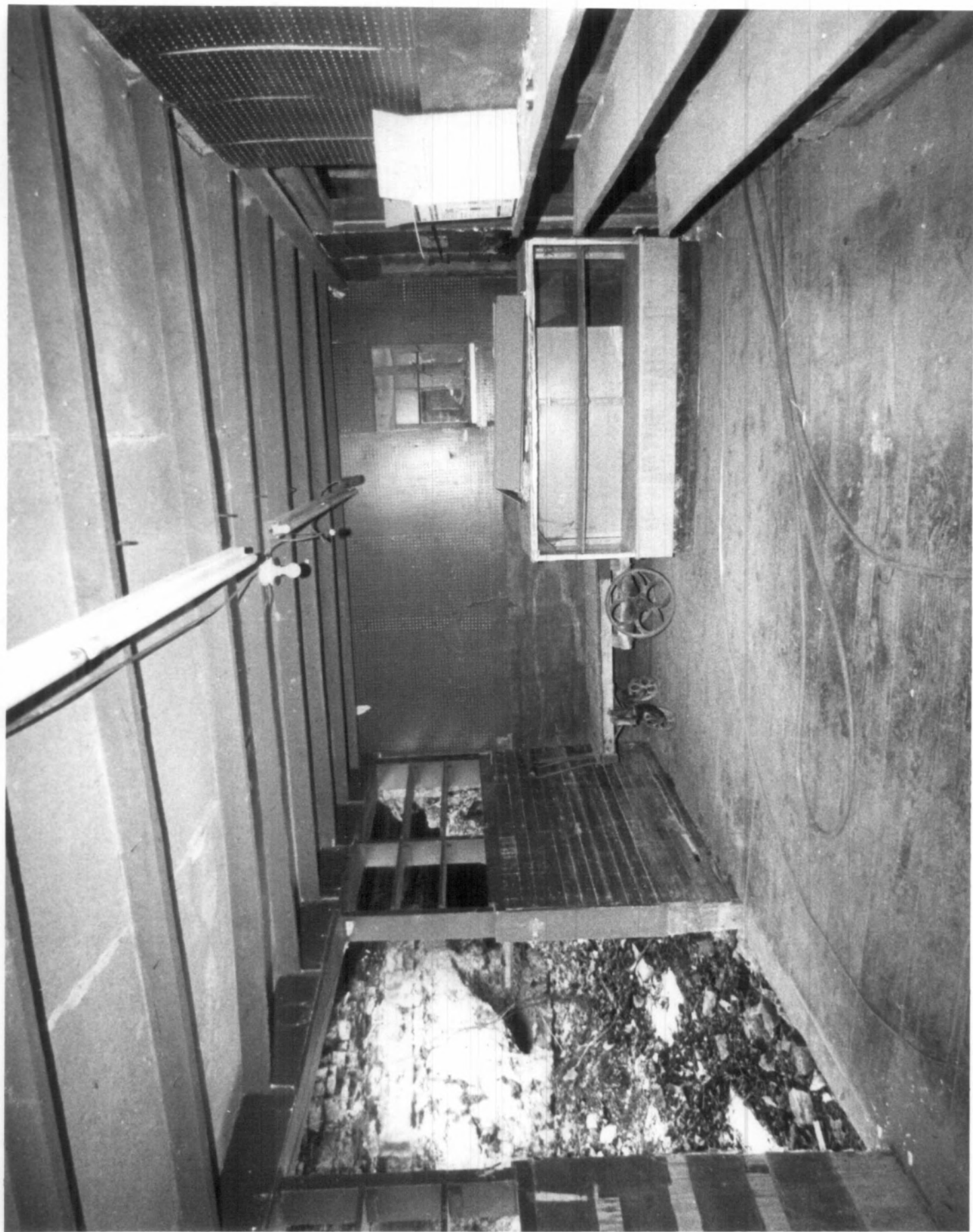


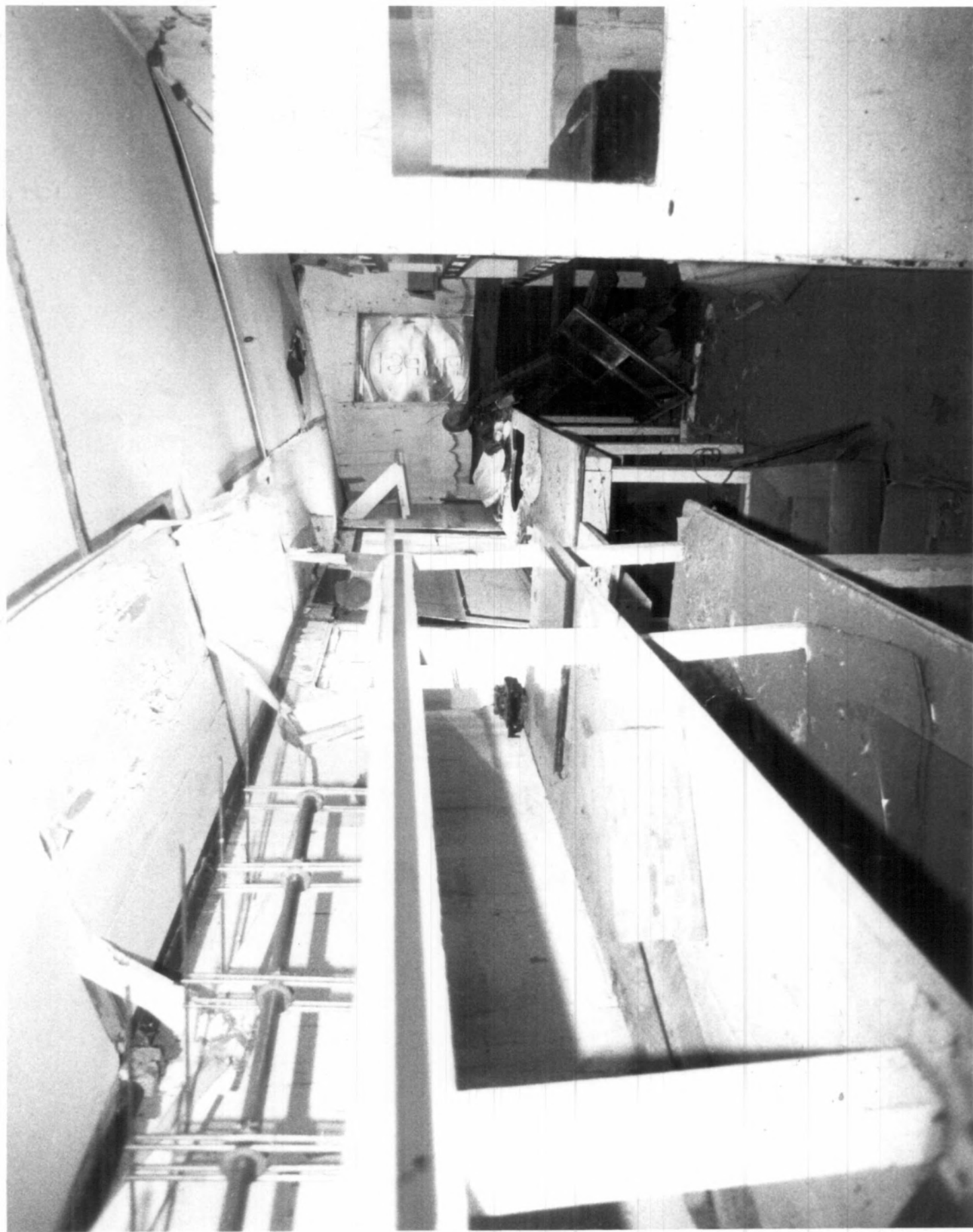
















EXTRA  
PHOTOS

