

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries complete applicable sections)

STATE:
Missouri
COUNTY:
Clay
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

1. NAME				
COMMON:				
Watkins Mill				
AND/OR HISTORIC:				
2. LOCATION				
STREET AND NUMBER:				
6 miles northwest of Excelsior Springs in Watkins Mill State Park				
CITY OR TOWN:		CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:		
		6th		
STATE	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE	
Missouri	29	Clay	047	
3. CLASSIFICATION				
CATEGORY (Check One)		OWNERSHIP		STATUS
☒ District ☐ Building ☐ Site ☐ Structure ☐ Object		☒ Public ☒ Private ☐ Both		☐ Occupied ☒ Unoccupied ☐ Preservation work in progress
		Public Acquisition: ☒ In Process ☐ Being Considered		ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
				Yes: ☒ Restricted ☐ Unrestricted ☐ No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)				
☐ Agricultural	☐ Government	☒ Park	☐ Transportation	☐ Comments
☐ Commercial	☐ Industrial	☐ Private Residence	☐ Other (Specify)	
☐ Educational	☐ Military	☐ Religious		
☐ Entertainment	☒ Museum	☐ Scientific		
4. OWNER OF PROPERTY				
OWNER'S NAME:				
State of Missouri, State Park Board				
STREET AND NUMBER:				
Jefferson Bldg., Capitol Ave. & Jefferson Street				
CITY OR TOWN:		STATE:	CODE	
Jefferson City		Missouri	29	
5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION				
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:				
Clay County Courthouse				
STREET AND NUMBER:				
CITY OR TOWN:		STATE	CODE	
Liberty		Missouri	29	
6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS				
TITLE OF SURVEY:				
National Survey of Historic Sites & Bldgs.				
DATE OF SURVEY: 1966 ☒ Federal ☐ State ☐ County ☐ Local				
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:				
U. S. National Park Service, Office of Archeology & Hist. Pres.				
STREET AND NUMBER:				
Interior Building, 18th & 19th Streets at Virginia Avenue, NW				
CITY OR TOWN:		STATE:	CODE	
Washington		D. C.	001	

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	☒ Excellent	☐ Good	☐ Fair	☐ Deteriorated	☐ Ruins	☐ Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	☐ Altered	☒ Unaltered	☐ Moved	☒ Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Present Condition

The three-story brick mill survives, together with the manor house and the octagonal schoolhouse. Both the mill and its machinery are in an excellent state of preservation.

The mill has been termed "unique" by an authority on the subject, who stated:

...there is not, to my knowledge, one other example of a 19th century textile mill with all the original machinery...

The textile machines--carding machines, spinning machines, looms, and so forth--represent the finest types manufactured in the United States in the third quarter of the 19th century. Generally speaking, textile machines of this period have not been preserved, as mills in operation discarded them as they wore out or became obsolete. The two ring frames, used as twisters, are the earliest full-size machines of this type in existence. The ring frame was invented by an American, John Thorpe, and patented in 1829. We have several patent models in our collection, but I do not know of a single full-size ring frame in a museum collection in this country.¹

In addition to the above mentioned structures, the property contains a smokehouse, an 1870's church and the family cemetery.

¹Letter from Grace L. Rogers, Associate Curator in Charge, Division of Textiles, Smithsonian Institution, to Ray H. Mattison, National Park Service, October 9, 1961.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Pre-Columbian

☐ 16th Century

☐ 18th Century

☐ 20th Century

☐ 15th Century

☐ 17th Century

☒ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1860

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Aboriginal

☒ Education

☐ Political

☐ Urban Planning

☐ Prehistoric

☐ Engineering

☐ Religion/Phi-

☐ Other (Specify)

☐ Historic

☒ Industry

☐ Philosophy

☒ Agriculture

☐ Invention

☐ Science

☒ Architecture

☐ Landscape

☐ Sculpture

☐ Art

☐ Architecture

☐ Social/Human-

☐ Commerce

☐ Literature

☐ itarian

☐ Communications

☐ Military

☐ Theater

☐ Conservation

☐ Music

☐ Transportation

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

+) W

Built in 1859-1860 as the central feature of a self-sufficient community on Missouri's western frontier, Watkins Mill today is probably the best preserved example of a mid nineteenth century woolen mill. Not only the building, but the rare machinery and the voluminous business records also have been preserved.

Waltus Watkins, builder of the mill, was born in Virginia in 1806 and grew up in Kentucky. At the age of 25 he moved to Liberty, Missouri where he operated a gristmill and later, a cotton mill. The baled cotton was brought up the Missouri River from St. Louis. In 1838 he bought the land for his Utopian community and built a log cabin residence. In 1851 he built a large brick manor house and, some time later, an octagonal schoolhouse for his own and the children of his workmen. At first Watkins carried on a grain and stock farming operation, but in 1859 he began to build his woolen mill. He salvaged a boiler from a sunken steamboat and ordered the latest equipment from the East, along with skilled operators. Other labor was hired locally, but many of his employees lived in cottages he built for them. Watkins died in 1884, and about two years later the mill ceased operation.

The property remained in the hands of Watkins' heirs until 1945. The new owners preserved the buildings and records, but efforts to bring the mill into public ownership were unavailing. When the property was sold again at public auction in 1957, the mill records and Watkins family were given to the Jackson County Historical Society, and were deposited in the Harry S. Truman Library. A non-profit organization, the Watkins Mill Association, was formed to operate the mill as a museum under lease from the new owner. It became a State Park in May 1962.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Adams, Howard W. "The Story of Watkins Mill," Museum News
Vol. 40, No. 9 (May 1962)

Caldwell, Dorothy J., ed., Missouri Historic Sites Catalogue
(Columbia, Mo., 1963)

Cole, Arthur H., The American Wool Manufacture
(2 Vols., Cambridge, 1926).

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	39° 25' 34"	94° 16' 34"		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	39° 25' 34"	94° 14' 37"				
SE	39° 24' 21"	94° 14' 37"				
SW	39° 24' 21"	94° 16' 34"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1520

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Donald F. Dosch, Landmark Program Specialist	
ORGANIZATION U. S. National Park Service, Midwest Region	DATE Jan. 26, 1973
STREET AND NUMBER: 1709 Jackson Street	
CITY OR TOWN: Omaha	STATE Nebraska
	CODE 31

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☒ State ☐ Local ☐

(SGD) MERRILL D. BEAL

Name
Acting
Director, Midwest Region
Title National Park Service

Date FEB 12 1973

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

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Boundary Descripiton for Watkins
Mill National Historic Landmark

(Watkins Mill State Park is "T" shaped)

Beginning at a point 0.12 miles directly south of the southwest corner of the west arm of Watkins Mill State Park.

North to the southwest corner of the west arm of the park, continuing north along the west boundary of the west arm 0.52 miles to its northwest corner, continuing another 0.25 miles directly north to County Road MM.

North and east along Road MM about 2.14 miles to its intersection with the road which skirts the east boundary of the park's east arm.

South 1.38 miles along the above mentioned east boundary road to the southeast corner of the park's eastern arm.

West along the south boundary of the east arm and continuing across the center of the park 1.74 miles to the starting point.

The 1,520 acres recommended for the landmark is part of the original Watkins patent of 5,000 acres.

This acreage is needed to preserve an appropriate setting for the buildings and other historic features that formed the heart of the Watkins plantation.

All of the landmark will eventually be acquired by the state and managed as historic land.

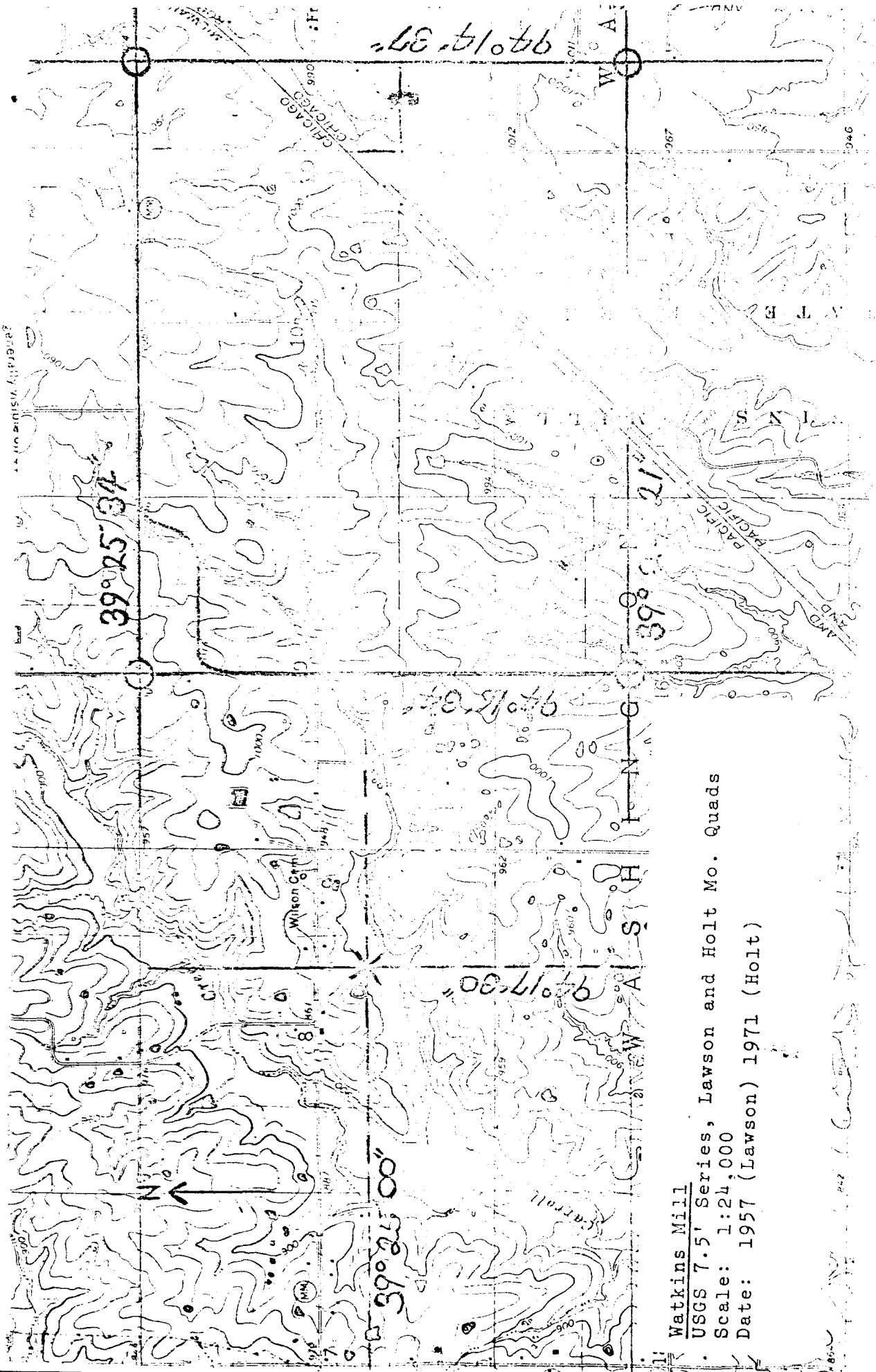
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE	
Missouri	
COUNTY	
Clay	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME			
COMMON: Watkins Mill			
AND/OR HISTORIC:			
2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
6 miles northwest of Excelsior Springs in Watkins Mill State Park			
CITY OR TOWN:			
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Missouri	29	Clay	047
3. MAP REFERENCE			
SOURCE:			
USGS 7.5' series, Lawson and Holt, Mo. Quads			
SCALE: 1:24,000			
DATE: 1957 (Lawson) 1971 (Holt)			
4. REQUIREMENTS			
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS			
1. Property boundaries where required.			
2. North arrow.			
3. Latitude and longitude reference.			



Watkins Mill
USGS 7.5' Series, Lawson and Holt Mo. Quads
Scale: 1:24,000
Date: 1957 (Lawson) 1971 (Holt)

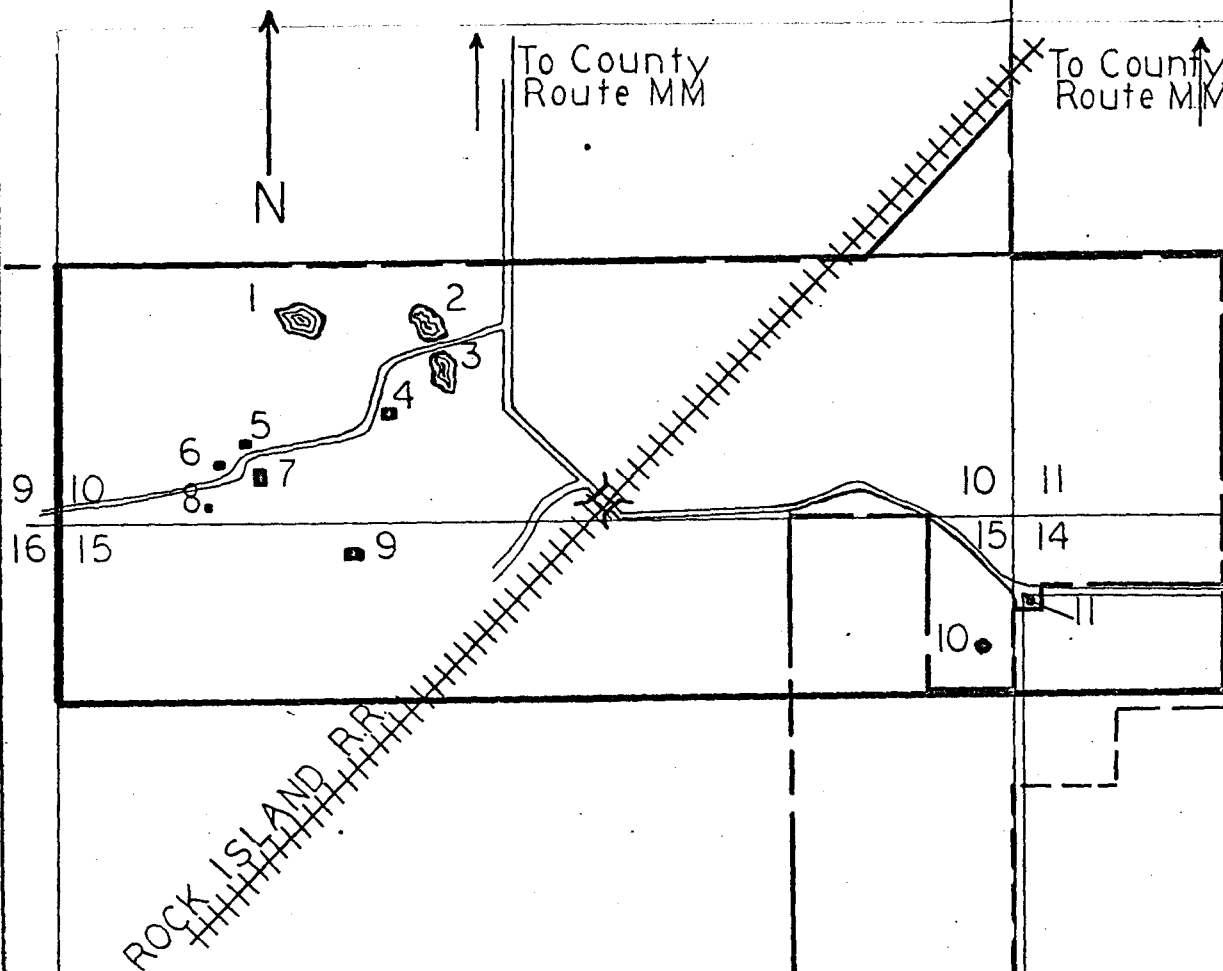
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Missouri	
COUNTY Clay	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

WATKINS MILL STATE PARK



1. UPPER LAKE
2. MIDDLE LAKE
3. LOWER LAKE
4. WATKINS MILL
5. GARAGE
6. SMOKEHOUSE
7. WATKINS HOME
8. FRUIT DRYHOUSE (TO BE RECONSTRUCTED)
9. FAMILY CEMETERY
10. OCTAGONAL SCHOOL
11. MT. VERNON CHURCH

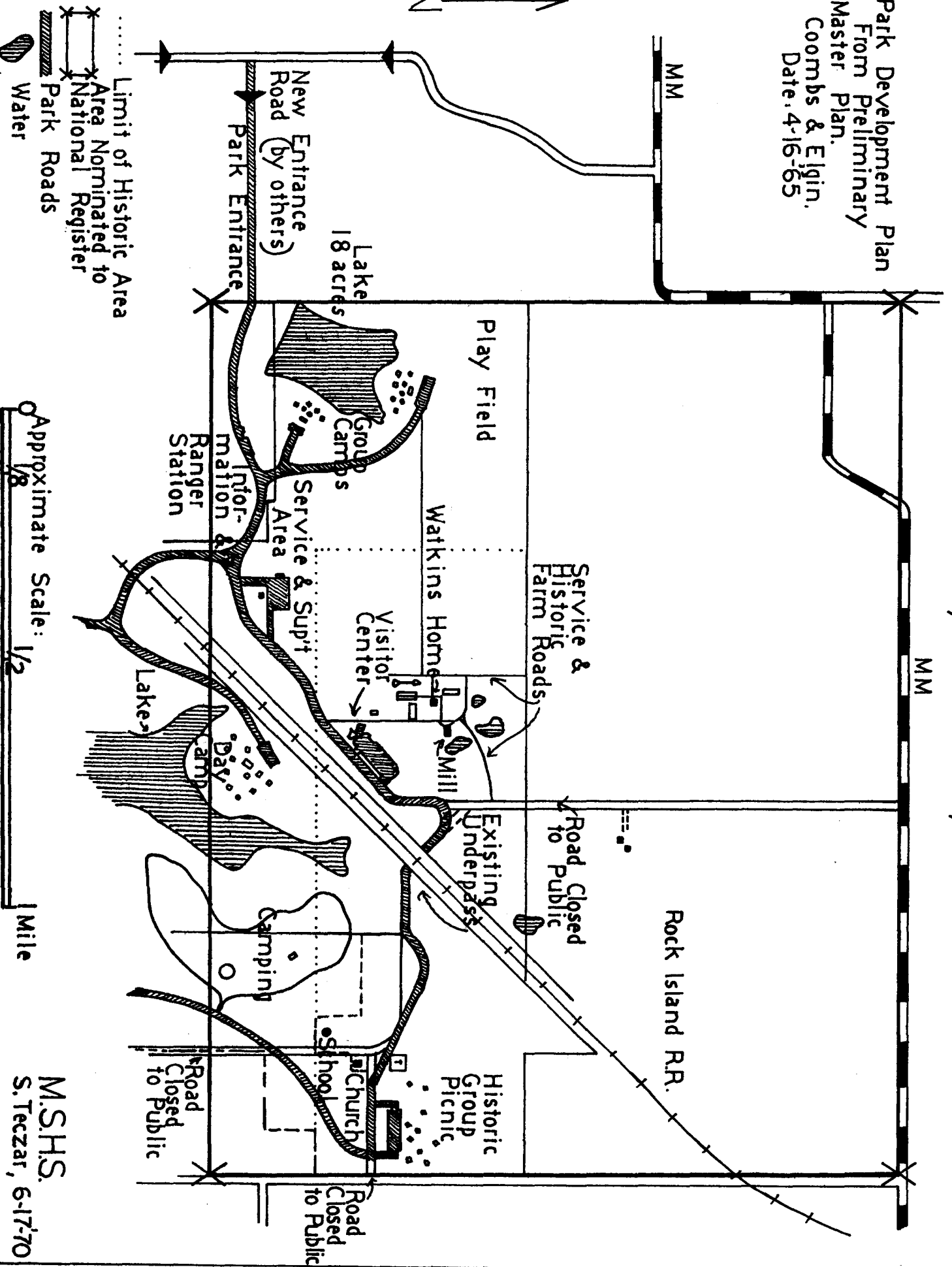
National Register Nomination
 Section Lines
 Present Park Boundary
 Proposed Park Boundary

MSPB BASE MAP
F. PHELPS 7/12/66

M.S.H.S., APRIL 1, 1969, STEVEN TEEZAR

WATKINS MILL STATE PARK, LAWSON, MISSOURI

Park Development Plan
From Preliminary
Master Plan.
Coombs & Elgin.
Date: 4-16-65

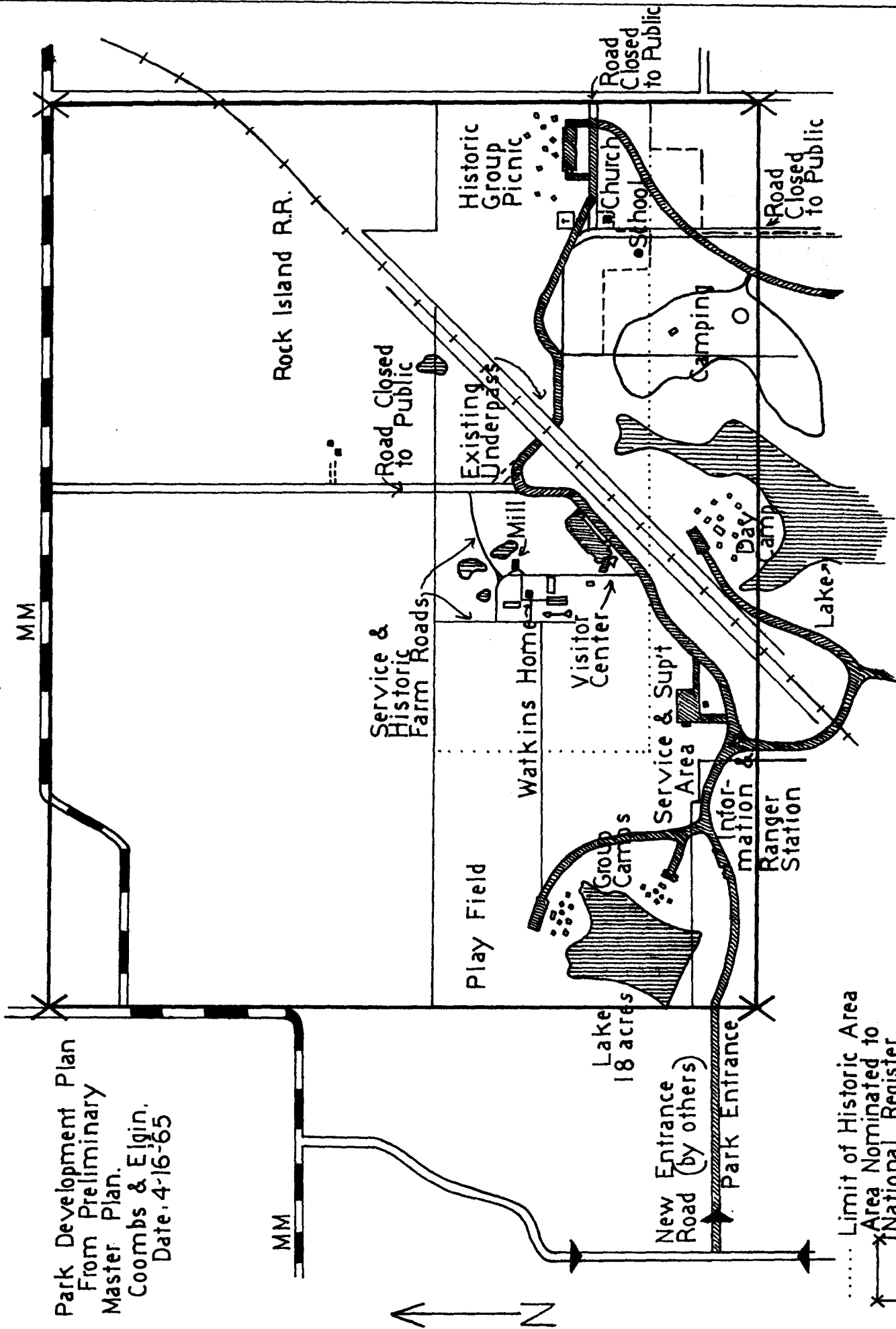


Approximate Scale: $\frac{1}{8}$ Mile

M.S.H.S.
S. Teczar, 6-17-70

WATKINS MILL STATE PARK, LAWSON, MISSOURI

Park Development Plan
From Preliminary
Master Plan.
Coombs & Elgin.
Date 4-16-65



- Limit of Historic Area
- Area Nominated to National Register
- - - Park Roads
- Water

Approximate Scale: 1/2 Mile

M.S.H.S.
S. Teczar, 6-17-70

WATKINS MILL (WATKINS MILL STATE PARK)

COUNTY:

Clay

LOCATION:

4 mi SW of Lawson on U.S. Highway 69;
1 1/2 mi W on County MM; 3/4 mi S on gravel
road

OWNER:
ADDRESS:

Missouri State Park Board
P.O. Box 176, 1204 Jefferson Building,
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

DATE PLACED ON NATIONAL REGISTER:

11-13-66

DATE CERTIFICATE AWARDED
(AND PRESENTOR):

DATE FILE REVIEWED:

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

DATE OF ELIGIBILITY:

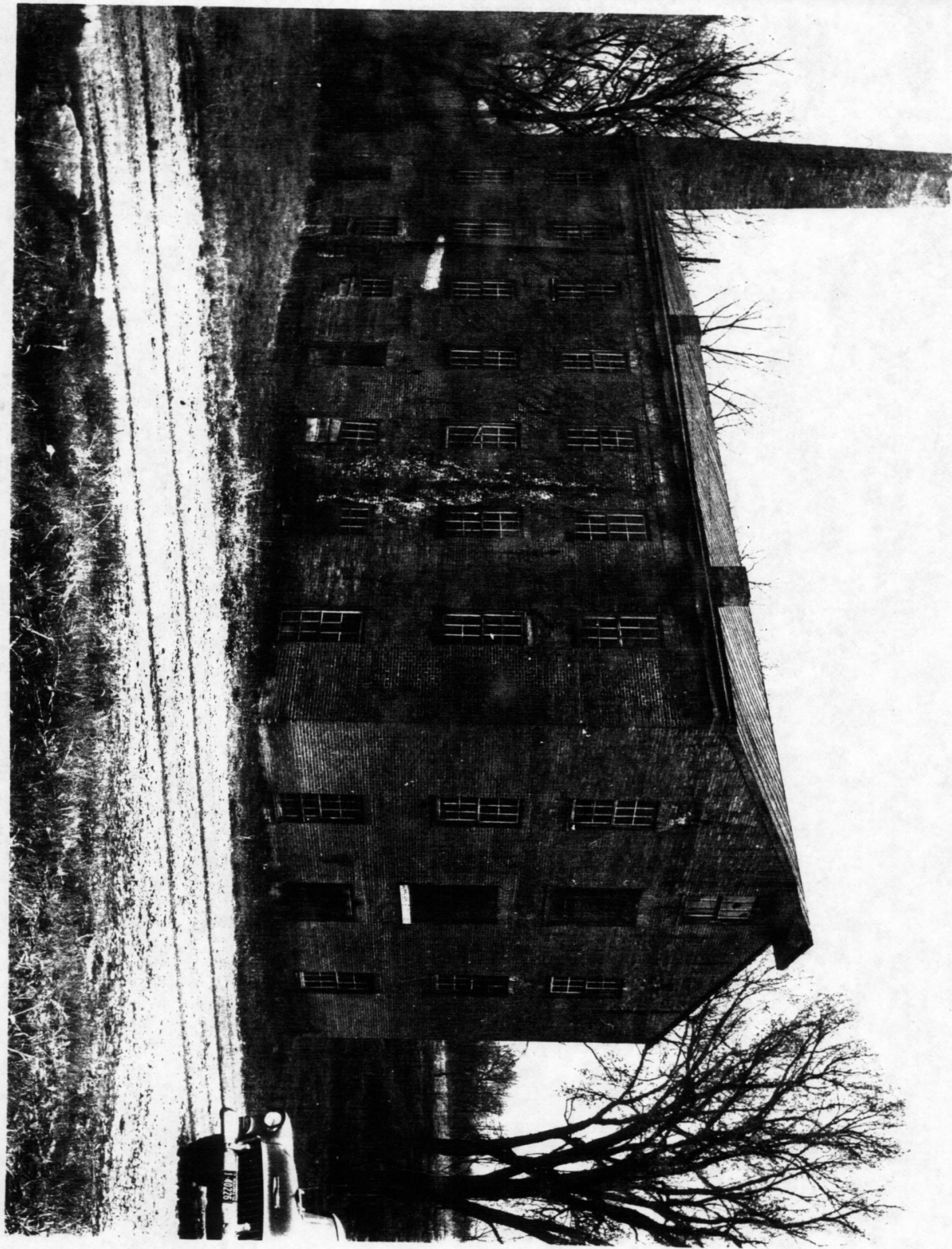
DATE OF PRESENTATION OF PLAQUE:

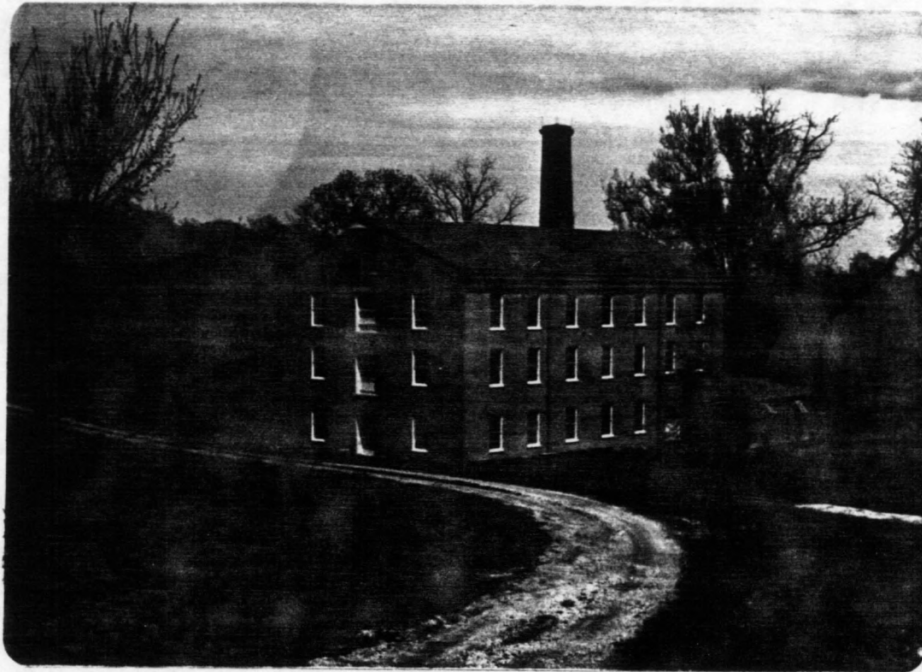
DATE OF ENTRY:

11-13-66



25 miles





Watkins Mill



Watkins Home



NSHSB
Near Kearney, Missouri

Watkins Woolen Mill near Kearney, Missouri. It was erected about 1861 and was abandoned in 1886. Camera pointing to the northeast.

Photo by Mattison, April 1962



NSHSB
Near Kearney, Missouri

Home of Wallis Watkins. This 2½ red-brick structure of Classical design was built in 1850. Camera pointing to the west.

Photo by Mattison, April 1962.



Watkins Mill, erected in 1861 by Altus L. Watkins (1806-1884). It was abandoned in 1896. It still has much of its original machinery. No view.

No.

Name



NSHSB

Near Kearney, Missouri

Brick ~~mill~~ ^{near} Watkins Mill.

Photo by Mattison, April 1962



