

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 an 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 Greer Mill

other name/site number Greer Roller Mill

2. Location

street & town W. Side, State Highway 19, 10 miles north of Alton N/A not for publication

city or town Alton X vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Oregon code 149 zip code 65606

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.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

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 Mark A. Miles Date 18 APR 05
Mark A. Miles/Deputy SHPO

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is: _____ Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

- 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): _____

Greer Mill
Name of Property

Oregon County, MO
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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

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

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

n/a

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

n/a

6. Function or Use

Historic Function
(Enter categories from instructions)

Industry/Manufacturing Facility Mill

Current Function
(Enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/Not in Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Late-19th Century Mill

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Sandstone
walls Wood
roof Metal
other

Narrative Description

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

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 7

Greer Mill
Name of Property

Oregon County, MO
County and State

8. Description

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

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

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 8

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Kent Library, SEMO, U.S. Forest Service, Doniphan, Mo.

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 9

Greer Mill
Name of Property

Oregon County, MO
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

1 1/5 6/4/7/9/1/0 4/0/7/2/2/6/0
Zone Easting Northing

2 / / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

3 / / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

4 / / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Property Tax No.

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 10

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kim Leazenby, Pamela Watson, & Bonnie Stepenoff

organization Southeast Missouri State University date May 1, 2004

street & number 555 N. Spring #26 telephone 573-339-1768

city or town Cape Girardeau state Mo zip code 63701

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 FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

name/title U. S. Forest Service

street & number 1704 Walnut St. telephone 573-996-7745

city or town Doniphan state Mo zip code 63935

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.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Greer Mill
Oregon County, Mo.

Description

Summary:

The Greer Mill, located on Hwy. 19 in the Eleven Point District of the Mark Twain National Forest in Oregon County, is a frame 2½ story rolling mill set on a sandstone foundation. The rectangular mill has a side gable roof and a shed roofed 1 story rear extension. A side-gable cupola is centered on the mill roof. The sloping terrain provides for a walk-out basement on the back of the building and leads down to Greer Spring which, at one time, powered the mill. The windows are typically 2/2 double-hung sash windows that are symmetrically placed in the unpainted clapboard walls. The milling equipment has been removed as has the complex system of cables and pulleys that ran between the spring and building to power the mill. Despite the loss of equipment, the building can readily be identified as a rural late 19th century grain mill and retains integrity of design, setting, materials, location, and setting, on a rugged hilltop in a remote area of the Ozark highlands.

Elaboration:

The east façade is two stories tall and has three symmetrically aligned bays. The stone foundation is barely visible. Except for those in the cupola, all the windows in the building are 2/2 wood sash windows measuring three feet in width and six feet in height. Compared to the amount of wall surface the windows are small. The two windows of the first floor are evenly spaced from the north and south sides of the building. The centered first floor front entry is a plain vertical plank door that sits about six feet above the ground. The stairs that led up to the door are missing. A shed porch roof, eighteen feet in length has partially collapsed and is held up on each corner side by two wooden posts. The porch roof is covered with wooden shingles. The three windows on the second floor are evenly spaced above the three openings on the first floor. The eaves of the roof extend past the walls by approximately one foot, and the roof rafters are exposed. The provided floor plans furnish precise measurements of the building width and window placement.

The north façade consist of two bays and is 2½ stories in addition to the gabled roof. The main block of the building has a high-pitched side gabled roof and the rear extension a shed roof. The stone foundation is barely visible at the northeast (front) corner of the building, and is exposed as the ground descends towards the west. The northwest (back) corner has about six feet of the sandstone foundation exposed. The two first floor and second floor windows are symmetrical. The half floor gabled section has two paired windows. The eaves extend about one foot past the walls with exposed purlins. This completes the main block of the building with the remaining eleven feet of the north side consisting of the one story rear extension. A moderately steep pitched (7/12) shed roof covers this eleven-foot section of the mill. The shed roof slopes westward, and concludes evenly with the first floor of the main block.

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Greer Mill
Oregon County, Mo.

The south façade is of similar design, configuration, and dimensions of the north façade, i.e. (see attached floorplan for measurements). The first floor has one window located in the eleven foot shed extension of the mill. As with the north façade there are two windows on the first and second floors placed in a symmetrical position. The half floor gabled section had two paired windows. This side of the mill however has a few differences from the north façade regarding the design of openings. The main block has a small squared opening located directly above the sandstone foundation. This section would be considered the basement segment that is explained in the next paragraph representing the west façade. Also located in the main block, just to the east (front) of the façade is a door that sits half way through the sandstone foundation, the top half on the main block of the basement section. Another small square opening similar to the one found in the basement section sits between the two windows placed on the first floor of the main block.

The west (rear) elevation has two stories with a walk out basement. The clapboard siding extends to ground level on this side. The west façade consist of three bays. The basement section has one window placed on the south side of the façade with a door centered in the middle. The north side of the façade has a wide opening used for loading. A square opening of about 2/2 feet is located between and just above the window and the centered doorway. It appears to be directly below the basement ceiling. The first floor has two windows located directly above the basement window and the wide opening used for loading. The windows are about two feet below the eaves and the exposed rafters of the shed roof. Another opening, which appears to be a doorway, is located directly above the centrally located doorway of the basement section. The shed roof over the extension is covered with sheets of corrugated metal roofing material. The second floor, which is part of the main block, has three evenly spaced windows directly over the openings on the first floor. These windows are about four feet below the eaves of the west side of the gable roof, which extend over the walls about a foot and have exposed rafters.

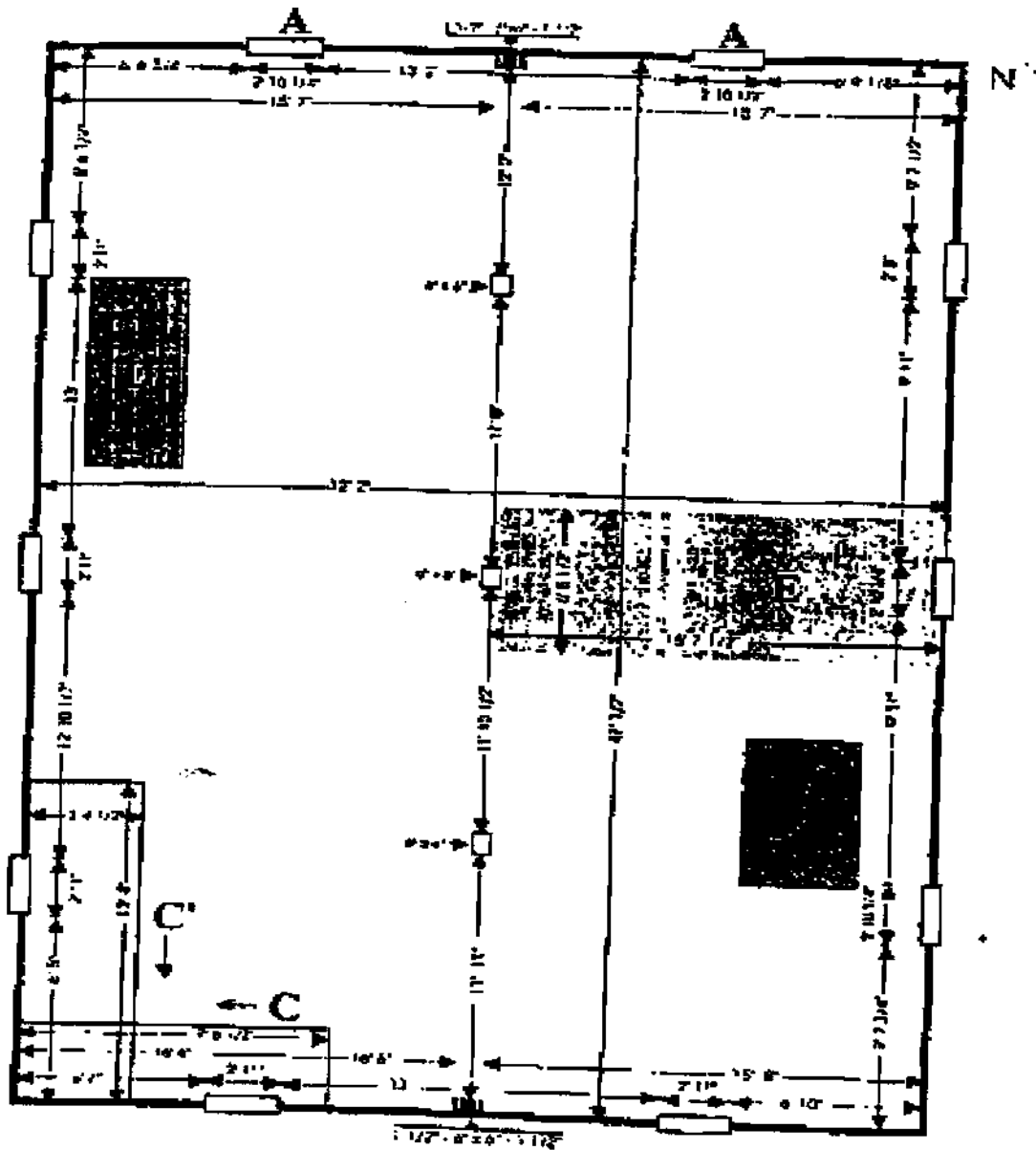
The roof of the main block has a moderately steep pitch (about 7/12) covered with sheets of corrugated metal. Located at the center of the peak of the roof is a rectangular cupola. The cupola is about ten feet in width on the east and west facades and five feet in width on the north and south facades. There are two, 2/2 foot openings located on the east and west facades. All of the sides as well as between the windows are wood framed and covered with wood shingles. There is a single 2/2 window located in the center of the north and south facades. The eaves extend past the walls by about one foot and the rafters and purlins are exposed. The roof of the cupola has a moderately steep pitch (7/12) covered with wood shingles. There is a lightning rod located at the center of the peak of the cupola roof.

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Greer Mill
Oregon County, Mo



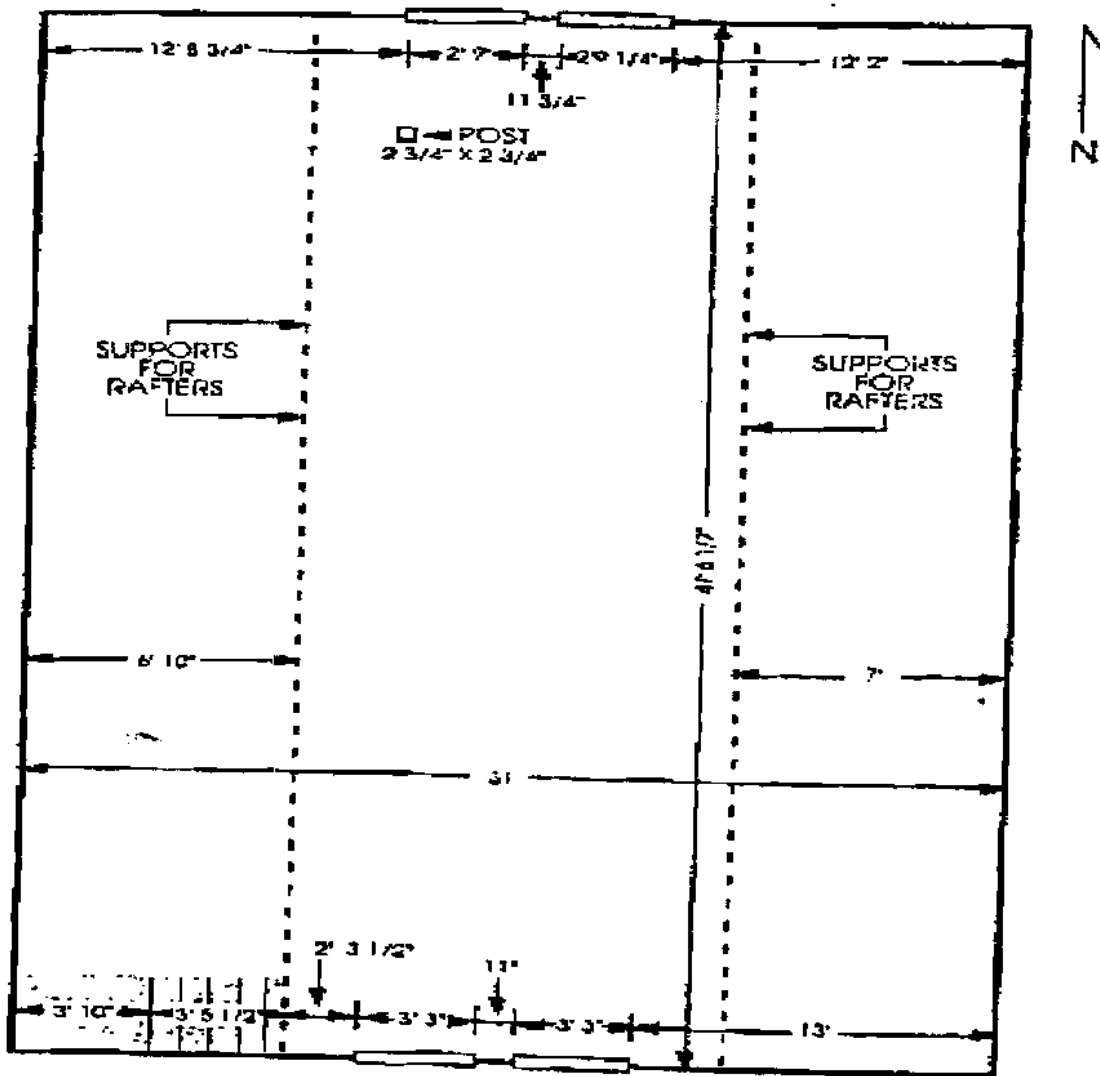
Second floor, Greer Mill

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Greer Mill
Oregon County, Mo



Third floor, Greer Mill.

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Greer Mill
Oregon County, Mo.

Statement of Significance

Summary:

Greer Mill (Greer Roller Mill), located in Oregon County on Missouri Hwy. 19 about ten miles north of Alton Mo., is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, in the area of industry, for its association with the introduction of roller milling technology in the Missouri Ozarks in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and under criterion C, in the area of Architecture, as an outstanding example of a water-powered roller mill, which has retained a high degree of integrity in form, materials, and setting. Completed in 1899, the mill replaced an earlier water mill and utilized up-to-date technology to grind grain for farmers in isolated hamlets in the nearby hills. By 1920, railroads penetrated the Ozarks, providing access to the products and services of larger roller mills in the surrounding cities. Although Greer Mill ceased operations in 1920, the building has survived intact in a wooded setting on a hill above the dramatic landscape of Greer Spring. Greer Mills period of significance is 1899-1920.

Elaboration:

Greer Mill stands as a picturesque reminder of a successful, if short lived attempt to bring modern industrial technology into a rural Ozarks setting. Between 1883 and 1899, Samuel Greer and his partner, George Mainprize, struggled heroically to harness the power of Greer Spring to run a flour mill on an isolated hilltop in south central Missouri. Greer's son lost his life in the process (see narrative below). Mainprize and his son ran the mill for a decade, enjoying some initial success, but finally losing their business to larger and more sophisticated mills in faraway cities that became accessible with the spread of railroads. The simple rustic form of the mill with its gabled cupola blends harmoniously with its wooded setting and seems to suggest the enduring qualities of the rugged Ozarks, which have long resisted the forces of modernization.

In *Water Mills of the Missouri Ozarks*, historian George Suggs, Jr., noted that Greer Mill differed from most other such buildings in Missouri, because of its location on high ground approximately three-fourths of a mile from the spring that was its source of power. This location provided easier access for farmers bringing their grain to the mill, but necessitated a complex system of cables and pulleys to transmit power from the spring. Some remnants of the cable survive on the steep hill between the mill and the spring. The mill building remains substantially intact, and in Suggs' words, "is a majestic structure even in old age."¹ Missouri artist Jake Wells

¹ George G. Suggs, Jr., *Water Mills of the Missouri Ozarks* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 93.

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Greer Mill
Oregon County, Mo.

commemorated this picturesque building in a painting, reproduced in Suggs' book.²

Samuel Greer, an early settler of Oregon County, Missouri, played an important role in building the first, second, and third mills at Greer Spring. Born in Rockingham County, North Carolina, in 1828, he moved with his family to Tennessee in 1849 and Missouri in 1859. In that year, he and his father, John Greer, purchased property that included the spring, constructing a mill the following year. Samuel Greer became a captain in the Confederate Army during the Civil War and returned to Oregon County to find that Bushwhackers had burned his mill. By 1870, Captain Greer constructed a dam, a waterwheel, and a three-story mill, in which he installed machinery to grind corn, saw lumber, and gin cotton. This mill was located on the spring branch far below the site of the surviving mill.³ In 1883, Greer began construction on the new roller mill on top of the hill.

Roller milling technology, developed in Europe in the mid-nineteenth-century, used ceramic-coated cylinders (rollers) rather than millstones, to crush grain. In the 1870s, American inventors improved the process, using steel rollers with belt drives to produce finely-ground flour. After 1880, many American millers replaced stones with rollers. Ultimately, however, the new technology would bring about the demise of the small mill, as the process became more efficient and sophisticated, requiring a greater investment in machinery.⁴

In an attempt to modernize his operation and respond to a local demand for ground wheat products, Captain Greer formed a partnership with George Mainprize, who owned roller milling machinery in Howell County. Mainprize agreed to move his operation to Greer Spring and help with construction of a new mill. This was an arduous undertaking, which required rebuilding the old dam and creating the complex mechanism for transmitting power. The process resulted in the death of Samuel Greer's twenty-three-year-old son. Lewis Greer died on March 3, 1884, when a timber fell on him and pushed him down into the rocky ravine, filled with swift running water, below the dam. Construction resumed a month later, but the family suffered greatly from the tragedy.⁵

Greer Mill is a structured vernacular design based upon complex building traditions handed down through generations of carpenters and millwrights. Samuel Greer utilized methods of construction ascertained through manuals, experience, and necessity. As with all mill architecture Greer Mill's style was governed by functional considerations not ornamentation. The mill was structurally designed to fit machinery and equipment together in a unified system in order to receive, clean, move, grind, sift, and sack grain. Making use of local materials in construction Greer used heavy timbered knot free pine for framing and sandstone for the foundation. The heavy timbering was necessary to accommodate machine vibrations while harnessing the energy of the spring. Height was required to accommodate the elevator shafts and to house equipment. The basement was filled with shafts, pulleys, and conveyor boxes while the upper floors were left open to hold machinery according to the flow plan of the mill. The copula and double hung windows provided light and ventilation by drawing air through the mill in order to reduce flour dust. The large opening situated along the west side provided space for unloading delivery wagons.

² Suggs, *Water Mills*, 91.

³ Howard Mormon, "History of Greer Mill," *Missouri Historical Review* 66 (1972): 611-612.

⁴ Rutherford, "Greer Mill and Greer Spring on the Eleven Point National Scenic River: An Historic Site Assessment for the Mark Twain National Forest." (Master's Thesis: Middle Tennessee State University, 1994), 19-21.

⁵ Mormon, "History of Greer Mill," 614-621.

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Greer Mill
Oregon County, Mo.

The mill operated without electricity so power was derived from Greer Spring. Since the mill was unusually located 1140 feet above its source this made it a rare type in the state. The distance necessitated the ingenious method of transmitting power from the turbine operating in the water below to the mill positioned on top of the hill. The sophisticated drive system consisted of continuous steel cable strung on pulleys carried in three towers. The cables entered through the back of the mill connecting to drive gear that turned belts that in turn moved the machinery on the upper floors.

The new mill did not begin operation until 1899. In that year, Captain Greer, who was seventy-one years old, sold one-half interest in his property to Mainprize. Three years later, Mainprize sold his half-interest to his son George B. Mainprize. In 1904, Greer and Mainprize sold the spring and the land surrounding it to railroad entrepreneur Louis Houck. Greer and Mainprize retained full rights to the use of the mill machinery.⁶ Mainprize continued to run the mill with great success until 1909. Demand for his services was so intense during this period that farmers sometimes had to camp out for two or three days waiting for their grain to be ground. Since neighbors in the area were widely scattered harvest time brought them together in one spot where they renewed associations and gathered news. Here, at the mill they had the chance to meet new people, exchange information about deaths, marriages, land sales, politics, and religion. The mill provided the campground, a general store, and a cookhouse for its customers. Greer Mill facilitated social intercourse and helped to make living in isolated areas more acceptable. The mill's success however was short lived.⁷

In 1909, Mainprize sold the milling operation to Sampson Williams and Louis Parrott, who quickly discovered that they did not want to continue in this business. Ira M. Williams and George F. Mormon took over and ran the mill until 1916, when Mormon purchased another mill at Fremont. Williams and his son-in-law, Cleve Bockman, operated the mill until 1920, when it closed down permanently.⁸

Railroads, which Houck helped to finance, contributed to the downfall of the enterprise. Bigger mills in the surrounding cities could ship flour by rail into the villages and hamlets of the Ozarks. Local farmers no longer had to grow grain except to feed livestock. Houck sold the Greer Spring property to the Missouri Iron and Steel Corporation of St. Louis in August 1919. Three years later, the Missouri Iron and Steel Corporation sold the land to Louis E. Denning. The Denning family held the property for more than sixty years. By the 1970s, the dam had blown out, and most of the cables had rotted away and disappeared, but the old weather-beaten mill remained intact.⁹

In 1987, the Anheuser-Busch company offered to buy the 7,000-acre property containing Greer Spring. Newspapers reported that the famous St. Louis brewery wanted to bottle water from the spring. Conservationist protested, and environmentalist Leo Drey of St. Louis stepped in to purchase the tract from the Denning family, including the mill. Drey offered to hold it for eventual sale to the United States Forest Service of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) at a price of \$500,000 less than he paid.

⁶ Rutherford, "Greer Mill and Greer Spring," 57.

⁷ Mormon, "History of Greer Mill," 618-619.

⁸ Mormon, "History of Greer Mill," 619-620.

⁹ Mormon, "History of Greer Mill," 618-620.

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Greer Mill
Oregon County, Mo.

The Forest Service had a long-standing interest in acquiring the property as part of the Eleven Point National Scenic River area in Mark Twain National Forest.¹⁰ Anheuser-Busch subsequently decided to match Drey's donation, presumably in an effort to reestablish their good name and concern for the state following unfavorable media publicity.¹¹

By the 1990s, The Forest Service had effected the purchase of the Greer Spring property, including Greer Mill. In 1991, Congress approved the purchase of the property. On January 12, 1993, Leo Drey sold the entire tract (known as the Denning Tract) to the Forest Service. The River Network, a non-profit corporation acted as an intermediary to facilitate the complicated transaction. For the benefit of the Denning family an easement related to use and occupancy of a small portion of the property (including the mill), extends until 2013 in order to provide for continued use of some cabins accessed by a road that runs next to the mill. The Dennings have no objections to any efforts the Forest Service wishes to undertake to protect, stabilize, or restore the mill.¹²

Oregon County had other grain mills in operation during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Located in an isolated area in the Southwest corner of the Mark Twain National Forest one other mill remains extant in Oregon County, The Falling Spring Mill. At this time the United States Forest Service has no plans regarding the buildings future. Two other mills were also in operation, The Boze Mill and Turners Mill. Both buildings are gone, however their locations are being considered as future archeological sites.

¹⁰ Rutherford, "Greer Mill and Greer Spring," 60-63.

¹¹ Dr. Susan Flader, Vice President, L-A-D Foundation to Dr. Bonnie Stepenoff, 17 February 2005.

¹² Ibid.

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Greer Mill
Oregon County, Mo.

Bibliography

- Mormon, William Howard, "History of Greer Mill." in Missouri Historical Review, 1972 66(4) p.610-621.
- Oliver, M. E., Old Mills of the Ozarks Point Lookout Missouri: The School of the Ozarks Press, Book Division, 1972.
- Rutherford, Clara Lee, "Greer Mill and Greer Spring on the Eleven Point national Scenic River: An Historic Site Assessment for the Mark Twain National Forest" Thesis. Middle Tennessee State University, 1994.
- Suggs, George G., Water Mills of the Missouri Ozarks Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, Norman and London, 1990.

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Greer Mill
Oregon County, Mo.

Verbal Boundary Description

SE ¼, SW ¼, SW ¼, NE ¼, Section 36, Township 25N, Range 4W

Verbal Boundary Justification

The Greer Mill building itself is 47x43 feet with its boundaries extending approximately 50 yards in each direction. These boundaries encompass the Mill building and yard as requested by the U.S. Forest Service. As far as the East Side of the building is concerned this perimeter comprises the land edging Mo. Hwy. 19 and the same dimensions have been given to all respective sides. The mill sits within the Mark Twain National Forest with no outbuildings on the site. Although originally there were contributing outbuildings located within the vicinity of the property none are extant. The area that incorporated the spring and cable system that provided energy for the mill's operation are also no longer significant because the cables have vanished and the spring is now used as a highlight along a hiking trail. The area outside the 50 yard boundary may at some future time become notable for its archaeological significance, however at this time the U.S. Forest Service has not requested it to be considered for National Register attention.

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Greer Mill
Oregon County, Mo

List of Photographs

Name of Property: Greer Mill

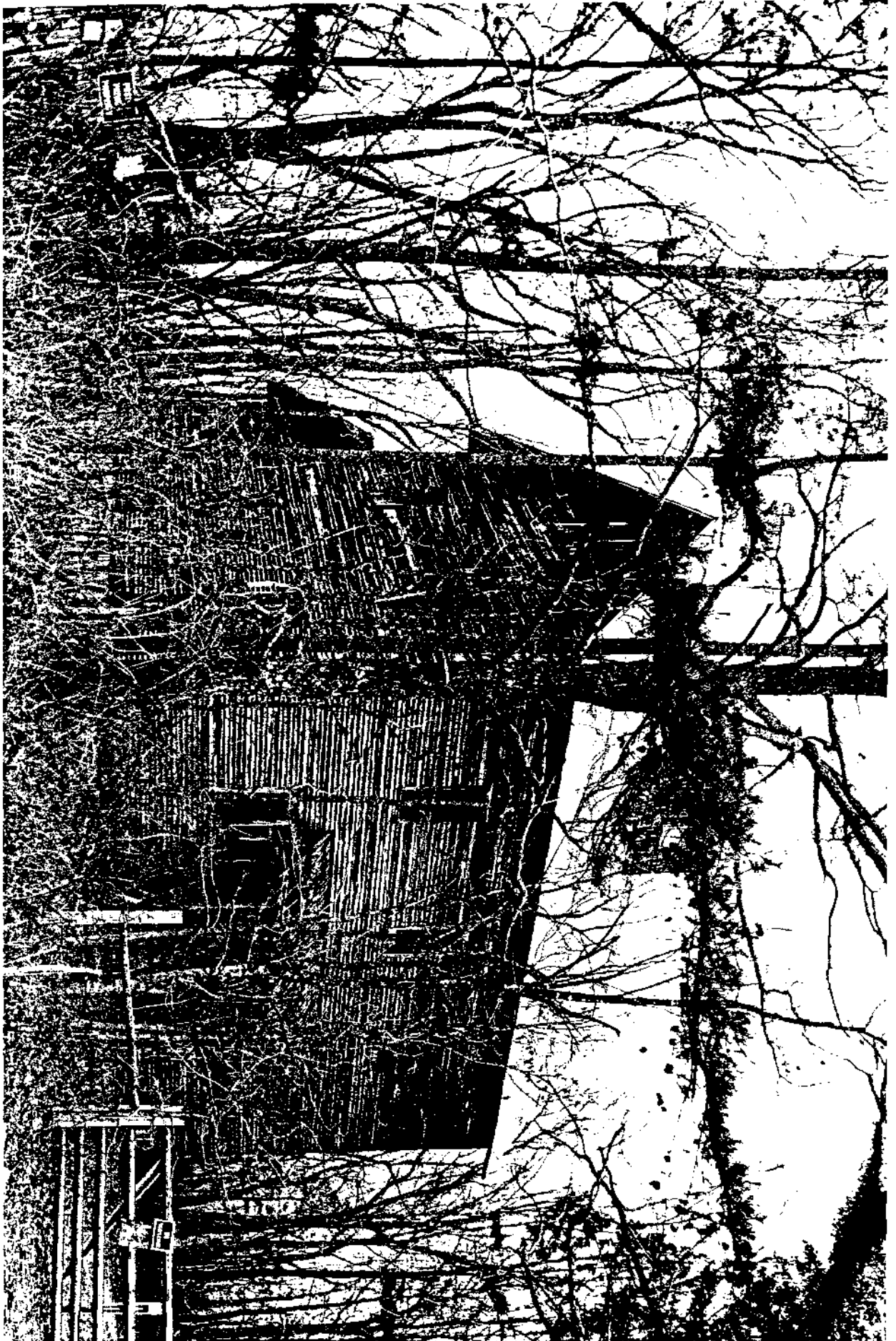
Location of property: Oregon County, Missouri

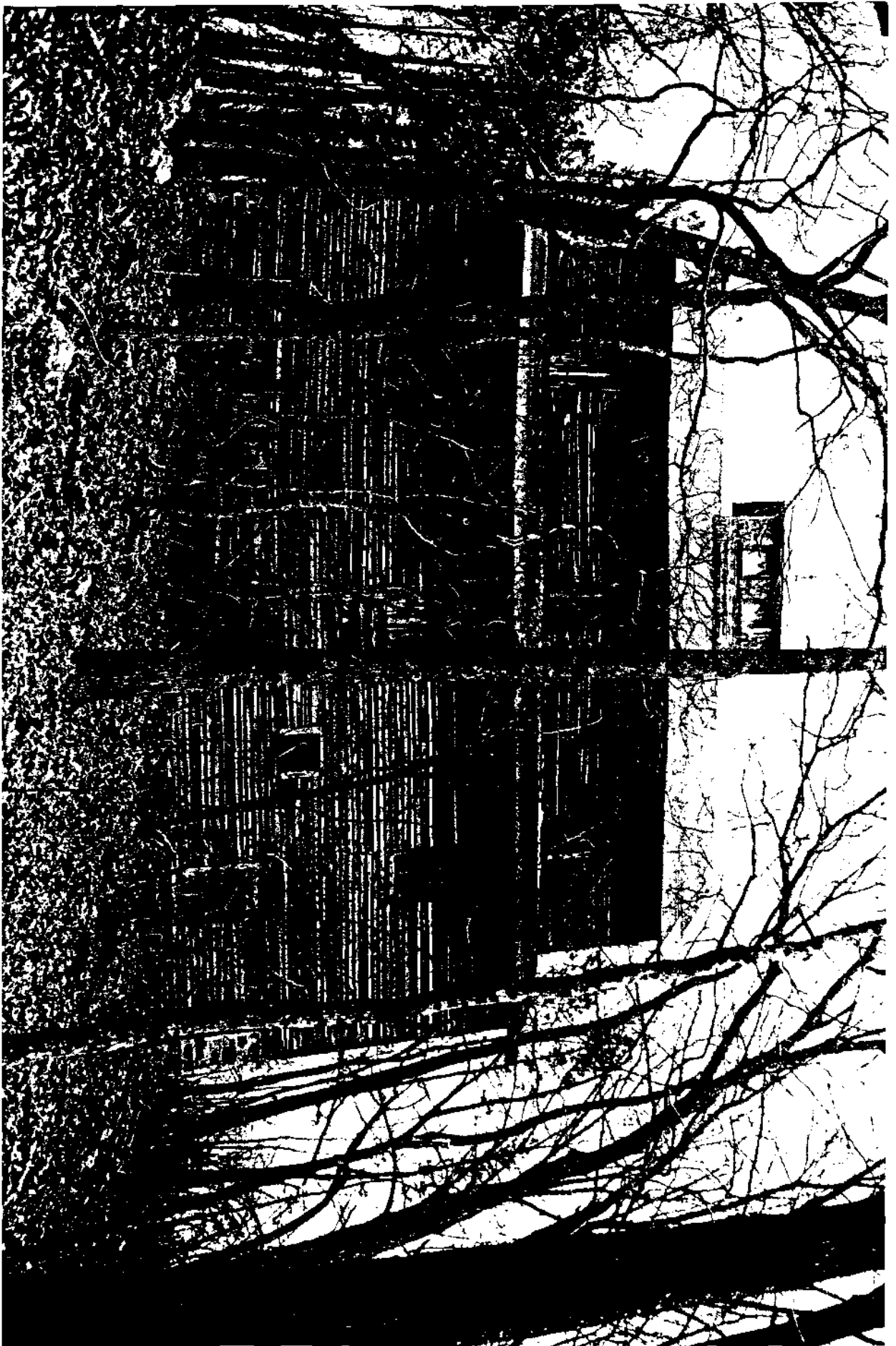
Photographers: Kim Leazenby, Pamela Watson, Bonnie Stepenoff

Date of photographs: January 16, 2004

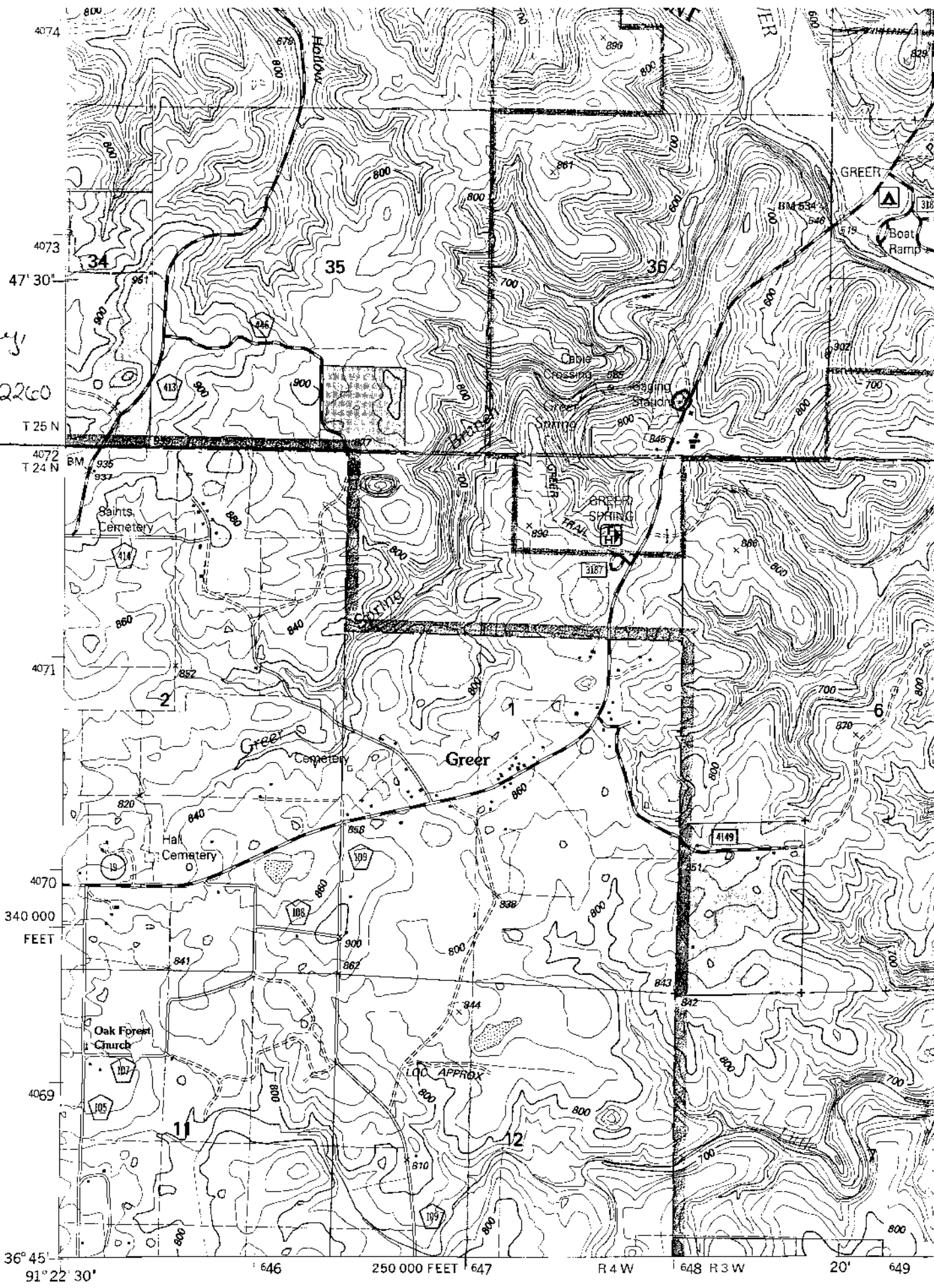
Location of negatives: United States Forest Service

1. Primary (east) façade and south side
2. South side, showing rear extension
3. Rear (west) side, showing cupola
4. Rear (west) and north sides





Creek Mill
 Oregon County,
 Missouri
 1617910/4072260



Produced by the United States Geological Survey 1983
 Revision within and adjacent to National Forest System lands
 by USDA Forest Service 1997

Topography compiled 1980. Planimetry derived from imagery taken 1995
 and other sources. Public Land Survey System and survey control current
 as of 1997.



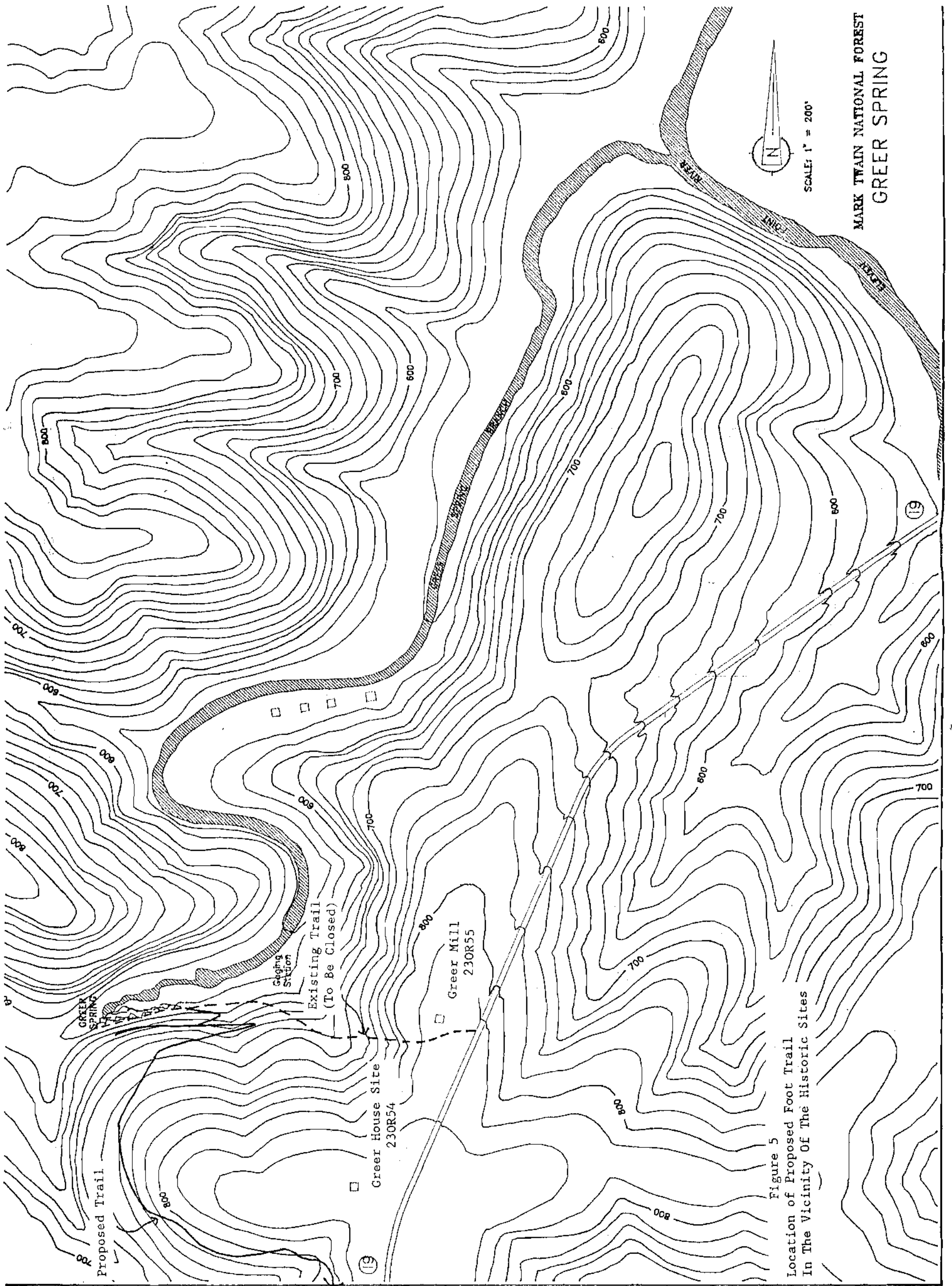


Figure 5
 Location of Proposed Foot Trail
 In The Vicinity Of The Historic Sites

MARK TWAIN NATIONAL FOREST
 GREER SPRING

To Parking Area







