

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Gray-Watkins Mill

AND/OR COMMON

Gray's Mill

2 LOCATION

(Corner of River & Mill Streets, Southeast corner)

STREET & NUMBER

211 N. River Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Montgomery

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

15th

STATE

Illinois

CODE
012

COUNTY

Kane

CODE

089

3 CLASSIFICATION

Illinois Legislative Dist. #39

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Max and Betty Grimshaw

STREET & NUMBER

Rt. 1, Box 557

CITY, TOWN

Oswego

VICINITY OF

STATE

Illinois 60543

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Kane County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

South Third Street

CITY, TOWN

Geneva,

STATE

Illinois 60134

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Illinois Historic Structures Survey of Kane County

DATE

October, 1972

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

405 East Washington Street

CITY, TOWN

Springfield

STATE

Illinois

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The building known as Gray's Mill can be described as follows:

1. It was originally built and used as a flour mill, begun 1851, compl. 1853
2. The building is detached from any other.
3. General characteristics:
 - Rectangular
 - Four (4) stories plus a loft
 - There are fifteen (15) supporting columns per floor, each 12 x 12"
 - Exterior construction is limestone
 - Roof shape is gable, with asphalt shingle roofing material
4. There is one concrete dock at the front door (west side of building) which we faced with rough-sawn oak boards and upon which we constructed a porch, roofed with wood shakes. There are forty-three (43) windows throughout, almost all of them 6' x 4'; there are three (3) exterior doors - the huge, heavy main door (west side), one side door onto a turreted stairway which was added to the building in the 1950's (north side), and double doors leading from the lower level onto the lower level parking lot, which is slightly above river level, (and which was originally the location of the mill race.) There is one dormer which houses the pulleys, etc. for the elevator which was installed in the 1960's but is not in use presently.
5. Cannot say that there are any decorative elements about the building. It is what it is - rugged, well-built and beautiful for the use it was intended for. Arched tops of 2 of 5 races still seen on South side
6. When the mill was no longer used as a mill (around 1922) all the machinery was dropped down into the millrace (which ran through the building - this being a turbine driven mill, the turbine concept being introduced in 1850 and this mill constructed 1853) the race filled in and eventually covered with a concrete floor, now the floor for the lower level.

The interior stairs on the west side of the building are where they originally were, although we rebuilt with new treads and risers and a break and landing placed at the upper reaches to comply with the present building codes. A bannister, wrought iron, was taken from a demolition project in Chicago some time in the past and installed. Have no way of ascertaining time period.

When we purchased the building, all interior stone walls had been covered with a cement/plaster material except for portions of the lower level. For fuel economy and comfort, and since in effect the walls had already been "altered", we firmed out all walls except the lower level and installed insulation and covered with drywall.

The main floor has a lovely cherry-wood floor. It was in very bad condition as the mill had most recently been used as an electrical motor rebuilding and manufacturing facility. However, many sandings, scrapings, etc., and a good finish material have restored it to real beauty. In cutting out the section for the landing in the front stairway we discovered that there had been a fire at one time. Charred beams and rafters were exposed. Also exposed were three layers of flooring at the 2nd floor level, so undoubtedly the top one is not the original. This floor has also been sanded and refinished.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Gray's Mill

7) Description
CONTINUATION SHEET

7
ITEM NUMBER

2
PAGE

The building had been wired for electricity in the early 1900's, and supplemented by the subsequent tenants, but we completely rewired the building. There is now a light fixture in each of the 10' x 10' bays delineated by the fifteen columns per floor. Rustic fixtures now install

Since the building when we purchased it was an empty shell, and hopeless for one couple to finance and restore as a working mill, we felt to save the building and help bring it and the neighborhood to new life, we could work with it and try to keep the flavor and atmosphere of its period. Old barn siding has been used in some interior walls, and the moldings around the doorways not mitered, but butt jointed. Some small amount of original existing woodwork indicated.

The first and biggest job we had was replacing seven of the fifteen columns in the lower level area. All had rotted from dampness and age. The building was jacked up from the inside, the old columns removed, and 12 x 12 weathered timbers put in their place upon new concrete footing.

The walls are very thick, graduating from 40" at the lower level to about 24" in the loft area, each floor having a step-in ledge on which to build that floor.

We have kept the interior as plain and simple as the building itself, and it is shinningly beautiful.

7. There is a small restaurant on the property, (north side) removed from the main building by about 3' of space. This is of contemporary block construction, originally with a flat roof. We have redesigned and constructed the roof and painted the building that it might (and does) better blend with the mill.

For landscaping we reworked most of the area, heavily grown up in brush and scrub timber, taking out all brush and saving the big, valuable trees. What had been the filled-in millrace (lower level, outside) is now the lower level parking lot, separated from the upper by an embankment of stepped-back railroad ties. The small creek (Mill Creek) running through the property has likewise been cleaned up. Last summer we constructed a rustic bridge across it to connect with additional parking we have across the creek. This year (1979) with the river as high as it has ever been perhaps, water rose in the creek, flooding the parking lot and gaining entrance to the building. We have since re-worked this parking lot to have an embankment against future flooding.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8, PAGE 2

The Mill was operated by water power until the big ice flow, in about 1916, which destroyed the dam. Electricity was installed and the mica mill continued in Montgomery until 1922, (when the move to Forest Park was made).

The mill stood empty until Ernest Anfinsen bought it for an electric motor manufacturing facility in 1945. After his death in 1971 the building stood empty until purchased by Max and Betty Grimsaw for restoration and renovation in our bicentennial year, 1976.

In 1975 the Mill was designated a historical landmark by the Aurora Historical Society and the Village of Montgomery, and a bronze plaque placed on the building.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Early Aurora Beacon News newspaper clippings, (125th Ann. issue - 1945)
 Letter from Furnas descendant to Aurora Historical Society of Mill
 history from 1907 thru 1922. (From Ruth Furnas Nicholson,
 dated 8/15/75)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .96

UTM REFERENCES

A	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	B	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION Beginning at a point on westerly line of Block 15, original town of Montgomery, IL, 130.8 feet southerly from the northwest corner of said Block; thence easterly at right angles to said westerly line, 110.0 feet; thence southerly parallel with said westerly line, 80.0 feet; thence westerly 110.0 feet to a point in the westerly line of said Block, 218.0 feet from the northwesterly corner thereof; thence northerly along said westerly line 80.0 feet to the point of beginning, also excepting that part thereof lying southerly of a line running easterly at right angles to the

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

westerly line of said Block from a point on the westerly line of said Block, 218.0 feet southerly from the northwest corner thereof and extended easterly to the Fox River. Village of Montgomery, Kane County, Illinois

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
-------	------	--------	------

NO OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Betty J. Grimshaw

6/20/79

ORGANIZATION

Box 557, Rt. 1,

DATE

312-554-8223

STREET & NUMBER

Oswego,

TELEPHONE

Illinois 60543

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE X

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
 ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

9. Major Bibliographical References

Early Aurora Beacon News newspaper clippings, 125th Anniversary Issue-1945.
 Letter from Furnas descendant to Aurora Historical Society of Mill history
 from 1907 through 1922. (Ruth Furnas Nicholson, 8/15/75.)
 SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property Less than one

Quadrangle name AURORA SCOTT

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A	<u>16</u>	<u>380540</u>	<u>4162104110</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C			
E			
G			

B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D			
F			
H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Betty J. Grimshaw

organization _____ date 6/20/79

street & number Box 557, Route 1 telephone (312) 554-8223

city or town Oswego state Illinois

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Dad Kennedy

title Director, Ill. Dept. of Conservation date 10/26/79

For HCRS use only

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

date _____

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE ILLINOIS

Date Entered DEC 17 1979

Name

Location

Gray-Watkins Mill

Montgomery
Kane County

Milne, Robert, House

Lockport
Will County

Also Notified

Honorable Charles H. Percy
Honorable Adlai E. Stevenson
Honorable Tom Corcoran
Honorable George M. O'Brien

DEC 17 1979