

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Johnson, Nicholas Mill
other name/site number Schollenberger Mill

2. Location

street & number Mill Crest Road not for publication N/A
city, town New Berlinville (Colebrookdale Township) vicinity N/A
state PA code PA county Berks code 011 zip code 19545

3. 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)	<u>4</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>1</u>	<u> </u> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
Gristmills in Berks County

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture/ processingDomestic/ single dwellingAgriculture/ animal facility

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/ Not in useDomestic/ single dwellingVacant/ not in use**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

~~Other: brick gristmill~~Other: vernacular farm house and barn

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stonewalls BrickMetalroof Metalother Stucco

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Nicholas Johnson (Schollenberger) Mill is located in northeast Colebrookdale Township in a rural built-up area. The farmhouse, barn, tenant house, and mill stand on a plot of several acres, while the rest of the farm has been developed as a housing tract. The farmhouse, barn and mill are all of brick construction, a rare combination in Berks County mill complexes. These buildings exhibit good exterior integrity. The tenant house is log and stone, and may have been built at the time of the earlier mill at this site. Mill and tenant house are located on the north side of Mill Crest Road, across the street from the other buildings. The Swamp Creek is about 200 feet north of the mill building flowing in an easterly direction. The land on this side of the road is within the floodplain of the stream. Included in the nominated property are the four contributing buildings and the water courses for the mill.

The mill has a datestone, "Nicholas Johnson, 1861". It is two and one-half stories plus basement, brick on a stone foundation, 36' by 40', three bays wide and four bays deep. The walls feature tie rods with star design, Dutch doors, and six over six window sash in most windows. The recently installed steel roof has a holst hood extending from the front gable. The cornices have been replaced with aluminum siding. The south gable end has three paneled Dutch doors vertically aligned below the bag holst hood. The hood roof has a ceiling and hole for the holst rope. There is marked wear in the bricks above each doorway caused by extensive use of the holst. The window frames throughout the mill are of fairly light construction. A carbide lamp is located to the east of the first floor doorway above the concrete loading dock. At the southeast corner a millstone fragment is built into the stone wall.

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Nicholas Johnson Mill

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The farmhouse has an 1838 datestone. It is a nicely proportioned two and one-half story brick structure, four bays wide and two bays deep. Its gable roof is covered with tin. It has end chimneys of brick, and each gable end features a pent eave. Small one story additions at each end do not detract from its overall integrity.

The barn, built c. 1850, is a typical Switzer banked barn with a long ramp to large sliding double doors at the upper level. The foundation is stone and the upper walls are brick. The forebay has the usual vertical board walls. Two notable design features are the hooded doorway in the ground level stone foundation at the north gable end and the X shaped ventilator designs in the brick walls. Of special interest is the pulley mounted on the exterior west side, indicating the use of a cable drive from the mill to run a threshing machine on the barn floor.

The tenant house was apparently built in two sections, the earlier log, and the later stone. It is covered with stucco. Dating from the early 1800's, it was probably the miller's residence before the brick house was built. The house has a gable roof and an end chimney. It has asymmetrical fenestration, basically four bays wide and three bays deep. It has a full length front porch.

The water power system for this mill has many unique features. Formerly water came through a head race to a dam just west of the mill and through a wide sluice to two overshot wooden water wheels. There is a concrete forebay approximately twenty feet long by 6'9" wide by 4' deep, extending just inside the west mill wall from the wing walls at the side of the pond. Near the pond end there are slots for drop logs to drain the forebay. There is a contractor's imprint in one wing wall: "Renninger general plasterer, Boyertown". There is no evidence of the tail race though it exited the mill through an arch, below grade in the north wall.

The head race arch is located in the west wall about one-third the wall length from the northwest corner. This wall has four cast iron tie rod stars. On the north wall there are two windows in the cellar level stone wall and in the brick wall on the first and second floors. There are two tie rods. The gable area is frame covered with painted metal. A sandstone millstone fragment is built into the northeast corner. This corner of the building is in poor condition.

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In the east wall, near the southeast corner there are two vertically aligned dutch doors like those on the south facade. A basement doorway is located near the northeast corner. There is a stone foundation and, above, a forged iron strap for supporting the steel boiler stack of a now removed steam engine. A chimney in the southeast corner was removed when the roof was renewed. A pair of French buhr millstones leans against the wall, and a single monolithic feed stone against the south wall, each 3' 10" in diameter. Except as previously noted, this building is in good condition.

The basement of the mill is dominated by the hurst frame and water wheel areas. There is one summer beam, supporting the first-floor joists, running east and west which sets off the south open one-third of the basement. The open ladder stair to the first floor is located in this area, against the south end of the hurst. There was a north-south stone partition wall, more or less on center, separating the wheel pit from that of the gearing and hurst. The wall is partially collapsed. The joists supporting the first floor, above the wheel pit are hewn timbers, 8" by 12". The remainder are mostly sawn and of lighter stock. The flooring is a mixture of wide vertically sawn and narrow hardwood tongue and groove boards. Because of its floodplain location, the basement is seasonally inundated by water. For this reason there is no flooring in this part of the mill. There appears to be an opening in the east wall which would have allowed removal and replacement of the south water wheel shaft, and an outside doorway with similar placement for the north water wheel. Against the east wall is a brick foundation with anchor bolts in the area of the boiler stack, suggesting the location of a vertical boiler and/or steam engine. In the west wall are two wheel bearing arches at a low level and the higher head race arch. The water left the mill to the north and it is expected that an arch for that purpose is located in the north wall, below the present standing water level.

The first floor is divided, overhead, into three bays by two full length summer beams, running east and west. Posts, summer beams, joists, and flooring all are nicely finished material. The posts have wide chamfers and lamb's tongue stops. The office located in the southeast corner is partitioned with vertical tongue and groove random width boarding. A chimney is built into, and projects five inches from, the east wall, beginning five feet above the floor at which level there is a stove pipe opening. Piping for a carbide gas light system exists in the southwest portion of this floor. The exterior dutch doors are made of vertical random width tongue and groove boards to the outside of which moldings are attached producing a paneled effect.

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On the first floor level the main element is the stone floor, elevated nine inches, running north and south through two-thirds of the length from the north wall, approximately on center. This level, currently used as a wood working shop, has been superficially altered without damaging evidence of its design purpose. An open ladder type stair, directly above that to the basement, leads to the second floor. The support system for the attic floor is the same as that for the first. The exterior walls are of reduced thickness on the second floor. However, directly below the summer beam ends, they remain the same thickness of the first floor causing them to project five inches and retain the load bearing capacity. The walls are plastered throughout the mill.

There is an open ladder attic stair directly above the others with nicely made railings around the floor opening. Floor boarding is the same as that of the second floor. A plastered knee wall forty inches high provides good headroom under the pitched roof. The rafters are 3" wide, 5.5" high, on 2' 5" centers, pegged at the ridge. The north gable is frame above the knee wall, and apparently original design element. The mill interior, above the basement level, is in good condition. The woodwork throughout is original and shows the results of years of use, but not abuse.

The power transmission machinery in this mill is quite exceptional. The prime movers were two apparently identical wooden overshot water wheels. Their sixteen sided, 1' 9" across the flats, shafts with cross wing gudgeons and stone bearings, were parallel, running east and west across the short dimension of the mill - an unusual configuration. Water entered the mill from the west through the concrete flume to the wooden forebay within the mill and between the wheels. It flowed both north and south through two control gates, of the diagonal board type, to each wheel, operated from the floor above. The wheels were nine and one-half feet wide and of compass arm design. The wooden flume and water wheels are very deteriorated but their remains offer clear evidence of the system.

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The massive white oak hurst frame supporting the power transmission of the two spur gear drives and four pairs of millstones is in place and fairly complete. The cast iron bevel pit wheels, their wallowers, wooden vertical shafts, and wooden spur gears, 6' 10" in diameter, are in place making this an exceptional example of wooden technology. On the east face of the hurst frame is a wooden vertical drive taking power to the ear corn cob breaker on the second floor. The stone spindles are missing.

There is a wooden extension of the vertical north spur gear shaft up through the first and second floors to the attic. It has a wooden pin gear to take power off to a horizontal shaft hung from the second floor ceiling, which in turn drives one of the wooden shafts and the slack belt bag holst. The south spur gear shaft, of steel on this level and above, goes to the attic where it powers a cable drive, passing through the mill south wall, to the barn threshing floor.

The mill was never converted from millstones to the roller process. Though it contained four pairs of millstones, two powered by each water wheel, none are in place. All of the stone furniture and associated equipment has been removed. There is clear evidence of where each of the bedstones was located on the stone floor and the four tentering screws are still in place on it. The mill was operated from the stone floor level, the meal being automatically moved from the basement to the upper floors by the four slanted bucket elevators. On the attic floor, and beneath, are two wooden conveyors and the remains of reels, suggesting that the flour dressers were in that location. The ear corn cob breaker on the second floor is of the typical cast iron type mounted in a partially removed wooden frame. It is the only milling machine remaining. The extensive wooden power transmission machinery above the basement is in remarkably good condition.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Engineering
Architecture
Industry

Period of Significance

1838 - 1939

Significant Dates

1861

Cultural Affiliation

N/A
N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknow

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Nicholas Johnson Mill is eligible for the National Register under Criteria A, C and D. Under Criterion A, this mill has been directly associated with the grain mill industry in Berks County from 1861 to the cut-off period of 1939. It exemplifies the mid to late 19th century period in its physical setting, its associated buildings, its exterior architectural features, and its interior technology. Under Criterion C, Architecture, the mill and its associated buildings, a brick farmhouse and a brick barn which form a rare example of architectural similarity in construction material and design. A very small percentage of Berks mills or barns are of brick. The other associated building is a miller's dwelling of an earlier period. Under Criterion C, Engineering, the water power transmission system in this mill is the only one of its kind in Berks County. Its configuration for two water-wheel driven systems with wooden shafts and gearing in place represents a rare survivor of its period. Under Criterion D, this mill is important for the interpretation of the history of grain milling in Berks County because so much of its original water power equipment, in wood, is still in place in a well constructed building which can be accurately dated.

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The present brick mill was built in 1861 by Nicholas Johnson. Johnson owned an earlier mill on this site which is listed in the 1850 manufacturer's census as having four pair of stones, a capital of \$4,000, ground 10,000 bushels of grain a year having a product value of \$6,350. That mill was a one man operation earning the miller \$25 a month grinding both flour and feed. In 1886, county historian Morton Montgomery described the building as "a large brick mill, supplied with good machinery, operated by water and steam and owned by Nicholas Johnson." In 1892 William Schollenberger bought the mill from Johnson. After Schollenberger died in 1935 his son, Daniel, took over and continued its operation until 1956. Most milling machinery was removed in subsequent years, but the power drive and transmission equipment was retained.

The brick mill building is a good example of a classic merchant mill, simple and straightforward without any remarkable architectural details. It retains its integrity throughout the interior with few alterations to the original, nicely accomplished woodwork. The brick house and barn compliment the mill in structural design, scale and material. The 1838 datestone of the house marks the early period of mid-nineteenth century use of locally manufactured brick in the area. The barn displays decorative designs of wall ventilators, using regularly place rows of an "X" pattern. These designs were formed by laying the brick in such a way that the openings pierce the wall providing both light and ventilation to the interior. All buildings of the complex represent Pennsylvania German vernacular traditions and contribute to the integrity of the complex.

Another feature of this complex is a cable drive which takes the mill's water power to the barn threshing floor. This is a later addition and furnishes a complete example of the machinery for such a system in both the mill and the barn. Although few examples exist, this auxilliary use of water power may have been more common than previously believed as several examples have been found in Berks County mills that were associated with farms.

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Technologically, the Nicholas Johnson Mill is one of the most interesting buildings identified in the Berks County Mill Survey. Though some elements are in poor condition and others not complete, enough equipment remains so that accurate interpretation of milling technology of the 1860's is possible. This mill demonstrates an unusual configuration with the two water wheels being at right angles to that usually encountered, the water entering between the wheels and having to turn to the right and left to reach them. It has the best example of a large hurst frame with double spur gear drive found by the survey, considered to be quite extraordinary. The preponderance of wood suggests that in this area of Pennsylvania as late as 1861 cast iron and steel were used only to a limited extent in the modern mill.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Berks County Conservancy Multiple Property Nomination and Survey: Gristmills in Berks County, 1989

Montgomery, Morton L., History of Berks County in Pennsylvania, Philadelphia: Evert, Peck & Richards, 1886

See continuation sheet

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

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Approximately four acres

UTM References

A	1, 8	4, 4, 7, 3, 6, 0	4, 4, 6, 6, 4, 0, 0	B	1, 8	4, 4, 7, 2, 5, 0	4, 4, 6, 6, 4, 8, 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	1, 8	4, 4, 7, 3, 6, 0	4, 4, 6, 6, 6, 3, 0	D	1, 8	4, 4, 7, 4, 3, 0	4, 4, 6, 6, 4, 8, 0

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Phoebe Hopkins, Project Director & Stephen Kindig, Consultant
 organization Berks County Conservancy date August, 1989
 street & number 960 Old Mill Road telephone 215/372-4992
 city or town Wyomissing state PA zip code 19610

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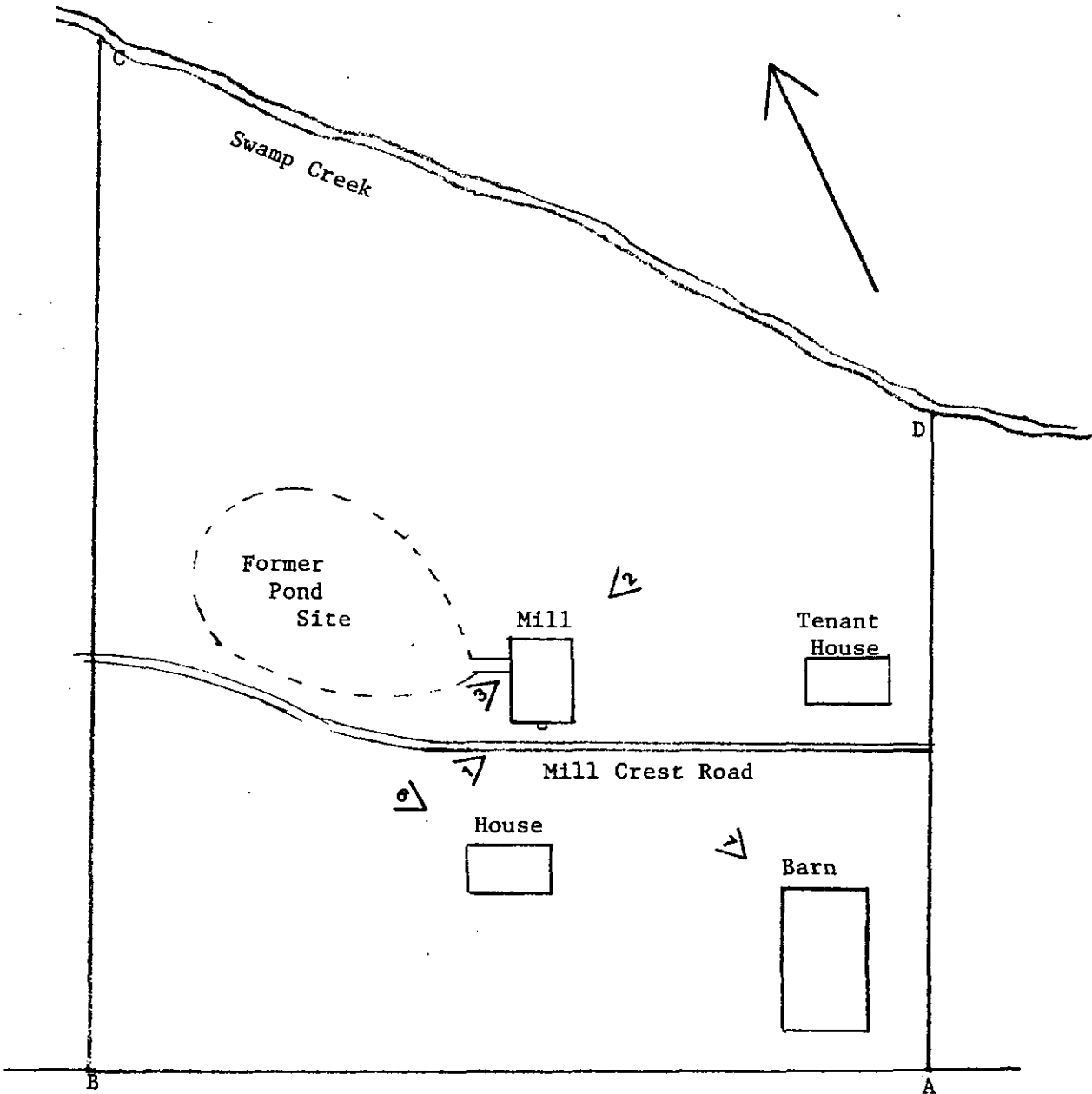
VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

From a point on Mill Crest Road 250 feet west of the southwest corner of the mill proceed northeasterly on a line parallel with the western side of the mill to the southwest side of Swamp Creek, approximately 375 feet; thence downstream in a southeasterly direction to a point east of the northeast corner of the tenant house, approximately 500 feet; thence southwesterly on a line parallel to the side of the mill passing the east side of the tenant house and the barn to a property line at Chestnut Street, approximately 400 feet; thence northwesterly along this property line along Chestnut Street at the rear of the barn and the house to a point in line with the first course drawn from Mill Crest Road, approximately 500 feet; thence northeasterly to the place of beginning, approximately 250 feet .

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary has been drawn to include the mill, existing remnants of its water courses, and its associated buildings. The southern edge of Swamp Creek is used as the northern boundary, the rear property line of the complex (Chestnut Street) is used as the southern boundary, and the east and west boundaries are lines of convenience parallel to the sides of the mill.

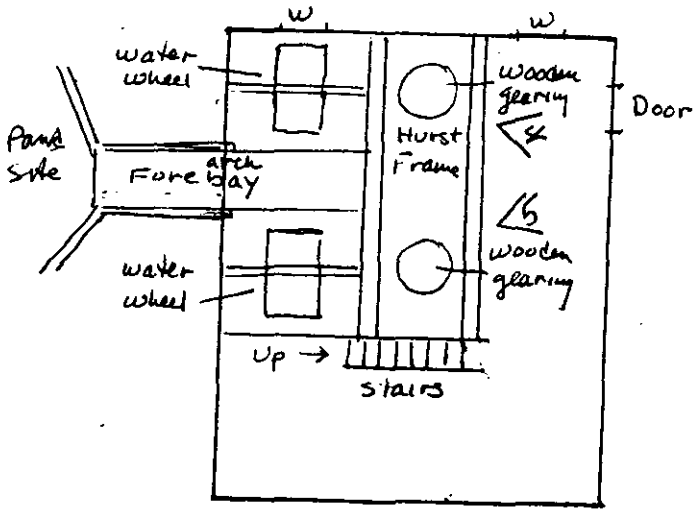
NICHOLAS JOHNSON MILL
BERKS COUNTY, PA



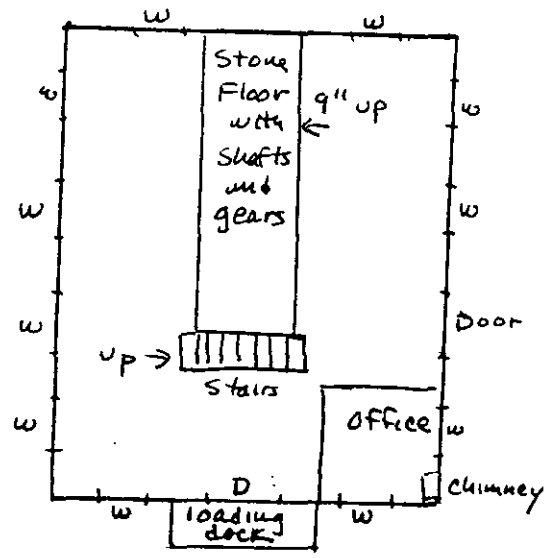
UTM POINTS: A B C D

PHOTO VIEWS: >

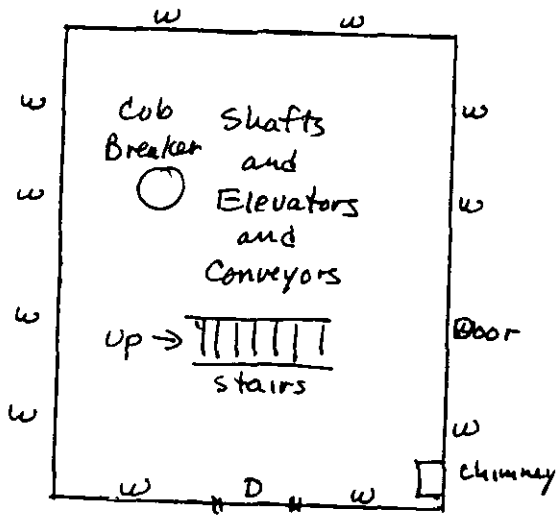
Nicholas Johnson Mill Berks County, PA.



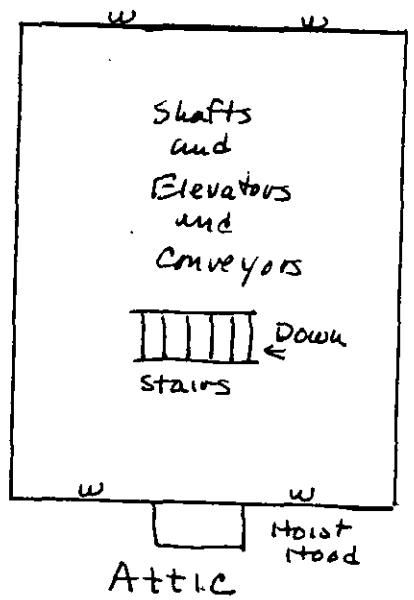
Basement



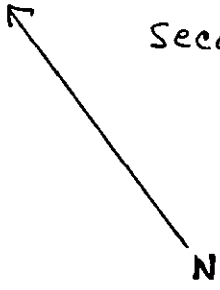
First Floor



Second Floor



Attic



< Photo Views
Not to Scale

Nicholas Johnson Mill
Berks County, PA
Sassamansville Quad
Zone 18

A 447360-4466400

B 447250-4466480

C 447360-4466630

D 447430-4466480

