

**NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE**  
Office of Archives and History  
Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Taylorsville Milling Company Roller Mill**

Taylorsville, Alexander County, AX0033, Listed 08/27/2019  
Nomination by Heather Fearnbach, Fearnbach History Services, Inc.  
Photographs by Heather Fearnbach, April 2018



Taylorsville Milling Company Roller Mill, east elevation



Third floor, belt drive

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 Taylorsville Milling Company Roller Mill

other names/site number A & M Feed Service, Inc.

## 2. Location

street & number 53 Second Avenue North

N/A not for publication

city or town Taylorsville

N/A vicinity

stat North Carolina

code NC

county Alexander

code 003

zip code 28681

e \_\_\_\_\_

## 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 for 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

North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural 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:

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

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

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

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

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

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**  
0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY: Manufacturing Facility

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT: Not in use

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Heavy-timber mill construction

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE  
walls METAL  
roof METAL  
other

**Narrative Description**

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

**8. Statement of Significance**

**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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1902

**Significant Dates**

N/A

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**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: \_\_\_\_\_

Taylorsville Milling Company Roller Mill  
Name of Property

Alexander County, NC  
County and State

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## 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreeage of Property** Approximately 0.45 acre

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

See Latitude/Longitude coordinates continuation sheet.

1	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	3	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	4	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>

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.)

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Heather Fearnbach  
organization Fearnbach History Services, Inc. date 5/3/2018  
street & number 3334 Nottingham Road telephone 336-765-2661  
city or town Winston-Salem state NC zip code 27104

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## Additional Documentation

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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.)

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## Property Owner

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

name A & M Feed Service, LLC, Robert E. Campbell  
street & number P. O. Box 32 telephone (828) 234-1195  
city or town Taylorsville state NC zip code 28681

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**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 listing. 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 20303.

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## Section 7. Narrative Description

### Setting

Taylorsville Milling Company is located in Taylorsville, Alexander County's centrally located county seat. The roller mill occupies an approximately 0.35-acre tax parcel at the southwest corner of Second Avenue North and Linney's Mountain Road. The site's elevation is lower than that of Main Street's commercial core, one block to the south, and the railroad corridor and depot on Second Avenue North's opposite side. Grass embankments to the north and south ameliorate grade changes. The mill's proximity to downtown and the railroad was optimal, as the business profited from high visibility and convenient access.

The building's deep setback from Linney's Mountain Road to the east allows for an expansive gravel-surfaced delivery and parking area east of the loading dock. The remainder of the tax parcel is grass lawn, punctuated by a cluster of deciduous trees and volunteer vegetation southwest of the mill. The lawn extends south to a drainage ditch that runs east-west outside of the National Register boundary. The surrounding area is characterized by early- to mid-twentieth century commercial, industrial, and residential development.

### **Taylorsville Milling Company Roller Mill, 1902 (main block and south wing), between 1924 and 1938 (west wing), mid-twentieth century (east addition to south wing)**

The mill comprises a three-story heavy-timber and dimensional-lumber main block with a shed-roofed loading dock spanning the east elevation and one-story west and south shed-roofed wings. The west wing, erected between 1924 and 1938, replaced a small one-story office at the mill's northwest corner with a larger office. Flour was processed in the main block, while the south wing's 1902 west section housed the grist milling operation. The south wing's east room, an office, was constructed in the mid-twentieth century.

Wide horizontal boards and corrugated-sheet-metal siding sheathe the mill's balloon-frame walls. The main block's original metal siding is extensively rusted, while the mid-twentieth-century metal siding beneath the loading dock and on the wings is in better condition. A black-stenciled sign between the east elevation's second and third stories advertises the property owner from 1953 until 1961: A & M Feed Service, Inc. Former owner Elizabeth Lawson replaced the mill's standing-seam metal roof with a comparable roof soon after acquiring the property in 2007.<sup>1</sup> The main block rests on a random-course stone foundation.

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<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Lawson, conversation with Heather Fearnbach, May 14, 2018.

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A 1986 photograph from Vickie Mason's Alexander County architectural survey illustrates that the loading dock was then supported by four slender square posts with matching braces. The posts and corrugated-metal shed roof were in poor condition. Lawson replaced missing and deteriorated roof framing as needed and installed robust square posts with chamfered caps, a narrow-board floor, a modern wood railing, and wood steps at the dock's center in 2007. Beneath the dock, modern painted wood lattice screens mid-twentieth-century, painted, formed-concrete piers.

Single- and double-hung multipane wood sash illuminate the interior. All but three were missing or deteriorated beyond repair by 2007. Lawson utilized salvaged multipane wood sash as replacements. Two original double-hung four-over-four sash remain on the east elevation's first story along with a wide, single-leaf, four-panel, horizontal-board south door and a paneled double-leaf horizontal-board north door. Plywood covers the north window opening. On the second story, the second window from the north end and the southernmost window have double-hung four-over-four sash. Plywood covers the north window opening and a replacement six-pane sash fills the third window from the north end. Four small square third-story window openings contain two-pane wood sash in the outer bays, a four-pane sash, and a six-pane sash.

Two two-over-two double-hung second-story and a six-over-six third-story sash have been installed on the mill's north elevation. Corrugated metal sheathes the first-story window and door openings. Second Avenue North's proximity precluded a north loading dock.

The three second-story sash on the mill's west elevation have been removed and the window openings covered with corrugated-metal siding. The board-and-batten shutter that secured the north opening is visible from the interior. Vertical boards fill the second opening from the north end. Three square third-story window openings contain two two-pane sash and a single six-pane sash.

A single two-over-two double-hung sash pierces the gabled south elevation's third story. Corrugated-metal siding covers the window opening at the center of the south wing's west section.

Two six-over six double-hung sash light the addition at the south wing's east end, one on each of the south and east elevations. The east window contains original sash. The single-leaf replacement door on the addition's north elevation provides access from the loading dock. The west elevation is blind. The south wing's west section has a brick foundation executed in five-to-one common bond. Near the wing's southwest corner, a short vertical-board door in the foundation provides access to the low-ceilinged unfinished basement. East of the door, concrete-block and metal louvered vents enclose two basement window openings. The south wing's east addition extends beyond the loading dock floor's east edge on a concrete-block foundation.

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On the west wing's west elevation, the central sash has been replaced by a wood door with a horizontal-panel base and three-horizontal-pane upper section. The base was shortened to allow for the door's placement in the window opening. Corrugated-metal siding covers the wing's north window opening and T-111 siding the original vertical-board sliding door on the north elevation. The south elevation is blind. The concrete-block infill that supplements the west wing's original brick pier foundation had been added by 1986.

## *Interior*

The mill's plan is largely open and the structure—heavy-timber posts, beams, and braces, and dimensional lumber wall, floor, and roof systems—exposed throughout the building. Short segments of heavy timbers with chamfered ends top internal posts on the first and second stories, distributing the load of the beams and floor boards above. Diagonal braces reinforce posts in exterior walls and on the third story.

The mill had no interior wall sheathing when built. Prior owners installed particle and gypsum board on the first story and finished the narrow-board floor in the early twenty-first century. Other recent modifications include the addition of linear fluorescent lights, lighted ceiling fans, surface-mounted metal electrical conduit, fiberglass roll insulation between the west wing's rafters, and a wood-burning cast-iron stove at the main block's southwest corner.

The 1938 Sanborn Company map indicates that the mill's first-story west wall initially remained after the west wing's construction, with two doors providing access to what then functioned as an office. The wall was later removed, perhaps in the mid-twentieth century when the south wing was expanded with an office addition, creating a large open room. Flush horizontal boards enclose the small room at the west wing's northwest corner that currently functions as a restroom. A single-leaf two-panel door on the east elevation provides access. The restroom's gypsum-board walls, acoustical-tile ceiling, and fixtures were added in 2007.

A single-leaf door at the east end of the main block's south elevation facilitates egress to the south wing. The west room, a living/dining area and kitchen, has a narrow-board floor, painted gypsum-board walls, and a textured painted-gypsum-board ceiling. A wide door opening in the east wall leads to the wing's east addition, now an office/bedroom with commercial-grade carpeting and mid-twentieth-century knotty-pine wall and ceiling paneling.

A quarter-turn wood stair with landings at the mill's northeast corner connects all three floors. Painted-particle-board-sheathed frame walls enclose the runs between the first and second stories, while the runs between the second and third stories are open.

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A fire of unknown date blackened and charred some of the second-story framing but did not weaken the heavy-timber post-and-beam structure, which is exposed throughout the open room. The wall studs and wide horizontal exterior sheathing boards are intact. Fiberglass roll insulation was recently added between the studs at the room's southeast corner and plywood covers the north elevation's central section. The narrow-board floor is in good condition. Matching boards added after the mill ceased operating in 1961 fill floor openings that previously contained mill equipment.

Since most of the machinery was removed after 1961, its configuration is unknown. Roller mills typically had steep wood ladder stairs between each floor to provide access to the grain elevator and other equipment. Conveyor belts and wood chutes conveyed flour between levels in order to facilitate the gravity-dependent aspect of the sifting process. Large bins for storing raw grains and refined products were likely located on the first floor near the loading dock, where farmers would have pulled up for delivery and receipt.

The only surviving mill equipment is on the third story, where the metal components of a long belt drive that powered machinery remain beneath the roof peak, supported by heavy timber beams. The open room features exposed wall studs, wide horizontal exterior sheathing boards, rafters, roof nailing strips, and a narrow-board floor. Matching floor boards and particle board have been added to fill once-open equipment voids since 1961.

Several poured-concrete pads elevated mill equipment above the dirt floor in the unfinished basement. The stone foundation and heavy-timber posts, beams, and sills are exposed.

## Integrity Statement

Taylorsville Milling Company roller mill stands on its original site in proximity to the railroad and Main Street, thus maintaining integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association. The remarkably intact edifice also possesses integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. Character-defining features of early-twentieth-century roller mill architecture include multi-story height, corrugated-metal siding, an open plan, and a durable, economical, and fire-resistant structural system comprising heavy-timber posts, beams, and braces as well as dimensional-lumber wall, floor, and roof framing. Although the metal cladding utilized at different times varies slightly in appearance, the consistent material composition unifies the building sections. Three original double-hung four-over-four and six-over-six wood sash remain and will serve as models for replica sash that will be installed in lieu of missing or existing replacement sash during the upcoming rehabilitation. Original single- and double-leaf horizontal-board doors remain on the south elevation. The vertical-board sliding door on the west wing's north elevation is intact behind T-111 siding.

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Heavy-timber posts and beams and light-frame structural elements such as joists, wall studs, wide horizontal exterior sheathing boards, and rafters are exposed throughout most of the interior. Narrow-board floors are in good condition. Floor openings that facilitated gravity-dependent mill equipment were infilled with matching boards after the mill closed in 1961. Although most equipment was removed at that time, the metal components of a long belt drive that transmitted power to milling machines remain on the third story beneath the roof peak, supported by heavy timber beams. A quarter-turn wood stair with landings at the mill's northeast corner connects all three floors.

Industrial buildings typically evolve in response to production and technology changes. Therefore, mid-twentieth-century additions and modifications such as the removal of the west wall's first story and the south wing's expansion do not diminish the mill's integrity as they were related to the mill's ongoing operation. Early-twenty-first-century updates such as the installation of a restroom, kitchen, first-floor interior sheathing, and fiberglass roll insulation between the west wing's rafters and at the second-story's southeast corner will be removed in conjunction with the renovation.

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## Section 8. Statement of Significance

The 1902 Taylorsville Milling Company roller mill is locally significant under Criterion C for architecture as a rare and intact example of traditional roller mill design in Alexander County. The utilitarian building, one of the county's few surviving early-twentieth-century grain-processing facilities, was erected when the economy was heavily dependent upon agriculture and related industries. The strong, durable, cost-effective, and fire-resistant construction method comprises heavy-timber post-and-beam structural members; dimensional lumber wall, floor, and roof systems; and metal siding and roofing. The main block's three-story height facilitated the function of gravity-reliant rollers, chutes, sifters, and purifiers for wheat milling. A completely open plan on each level allowed for flexible use. The west 1902 portion of the one-story south wing housed the corn grinding operation, while the circa 1924 west wing, initially an office, was later utilized for production and storage. The shed-roofed loading dock spanning the east elevation provided essential shelter for wheat and corn delivery and flour and meal pick-up. Single- and double-hung multipane wood sash illuminate and ventilate the interior. The period of significance is 1902, the mill's construction date.

## Historical Background

Although what is now Alexander County possesses abundant natural resources, fertile soil, and an ample water supply, the remote location impeded settlement until the late eighteenth century. The backcountry's population burgeoned after a 1763 treaty ended the French and Indian War. English, Scots-Irish, German, and Swiss immigrants from Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia began moving south to North Carolina. Migration slowed during the Revolutionary War, but accelerated thereafter.<sup>2</sup>

Given that many land grants and property acquisitions involved significant acreage, early settlers typically lived at great distances from each other, meeting at churches and in crossroads communities and small towns to socialize, trade, and address business matters. The vast majority operated subsistence farms, growing what was needed for household consumption and livestock feed. As they prospered, some sold surplus crops and agricultural products or traded them for locally made and imported commodities in local markets. Entrepreneurs engaged in manufacturing endeavors to generate supplementary income, processing raw materials such as corn, wheat, flax seed, and logs to produce meal, flour, linseed oil, and lumber. William Dobson, Joseph Jones, Martin Keller, Andrew Steel, George Thompson, and Isaac, Thomas and John Bradburn were among those who harnessed the power of the Lower and Middle New Rivers and tributaries to operate grist mills during the late-eighteenth century.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Sara C. Allen, ed., *The Heritage of Alexander County, 1847-1986* (Winston-Salem: Hunter Publishing Company, 1986), 19.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid; William E. White, "A History of Alexander County," *Taylorsville Times*, 1926, compiled by the Alexander County Historical Association, p. 4.

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A consortium of Caldwell, Iredell, and Wilkes County residents began advocating for a new county's creation in 1844. Iredell County sheriff and North Carolina legislator Joseph M. Bogle led the initiative that culminated in Alexander County's 1847 formation. Bogle, William Matheson, and James G. James donated three tracts encompassing approximately forty-seven acres near the new county's center to serve as the local government seat, named Taylorsville in honor of general Zachary Taylor, who became U. S. president in 1849.<sup>4</sup>

By 1850, Taylorsville's approximately 16 households contained 91 individuals, 22 of whom were enslaved. Growth was nominal through the Civil War, but escalated during Reconstruction. In 1867, Taylorsville businesses included a general store, hotel, cotton factory, wool mill, two tanneries, four mills of unspecified types, and boot, shoe, buggy, carriage, saddle, and harness manufacturers. The population gradually increased through 1870, when the federal census enumerated 144 white and 25 African American residents. By 1872, twenty-seven Alexander County mills processed corn, wheat, and/or lumber. Fifteen mill proprietors including A. M. Bogle received mail at the Taylorsville post office, indicating that their mills were located nearby.<sup>5</sup>

Transportation improvements and burgeoning trade fueled growth from approximately 180 inhabitants in 1880 to 300 in 1890. Taylorsville remained Alexander County's largest town. York Collegiate Institute reported 76 residents, while twenty-two crossroads communities each had less than 40 occupants. The Statesville and Western Railroad's September 1887 completion of an eighteen-mile line from Statesville to Taylorsville through Stoney Point and Hiddenite encouraged development and greatly facilitated economic progress. Contractors finished Taylorsville's passenger and freight depot and Edward L. Hedrick's Piedmont Hotel, which included a general store, in December 1887. Marcus Lippard, A. E. Alspaugh, and others planned to erect commercial buildings in spring 1888. By 1889, industrial concerns in or near Taylorsville included nine flour and grist mills, three of which also planed lumber; three saw mills; six tanneries; three saddle and harness manufacturers; and a cotton mill with 528 spindles and 2 looms. In 1896, ten Alexander County mills, seven of which were in the Taylorsville vicinity, processed wheat and corn. Two of those mills and sawmills in Ellendale and Hiddenite also supplied lumber. Taylorsville's population grew to 413 by 1900.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Allen, ed., *The Heritage of Alexander County*, 22, 30-31; White, "A History of Alexander County," pp. 1-2.

<sup>5</sup> Allen, ed., *The Heritage of Alexander County*, 31; Levi Branson, *Branson's North Carolina Business Directory for 1867-8* (Raleigh: Branson and Jones, 1867), 11; Levi Branson, *Branson's North Carolina Business Directory 1872* (Raleigh: J. A. Jones, 1872),

<sup>6</sup> "Letter from Taylorsville," *Statesville Record and Landmark* (hereafter abbreviated *SRL*), December 8, 1887, p. 1; Allen, ed., *The Heritage of Alexander County*, 32; Levi Branson, *Branson's North Carolina Business Directory 1890* (Raleigh: Levi Branson, 1889), 76-76; William R. Merriam, director, *Twelfth Census of the United States, Taken in the Year 1900, Population, Part I* (Washington, D. C.: United States Census Office, 1901), 467.

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## Taylorsville Milling Company

A promising turn-of-the-twentieth-century economic outlook spurred investment in new businesses including Taylorsville Milling Company, incorporated on February 26, 1902. Stockholders, including merchants Robert P. Matheson and Thomas L. Watts and farmer John G. Harrington, elected a board of directors and officers—president William L. Moose, vice president Humphrey T. Campbell, and secretary-treasurer Edward L. Hedrick—on April 5<sup>th</sup>. Construction commenced the following week on a lot ideally situated next to the railroad one block from Main Street. Attorney, North Carolina senator, and U. S. Congressman Romulus Z. Linney and his wife Dorcas donated the tract to Taylorsville Milling Company on April 7<sup>th</sup> in hopes that the undertaking would inspire other industrial endeavors.<sup>7</sup> The roller mill epitomized the early-twentieth-century manufacturing transition from water-powered plants near rivers to steam, gas, and electric-powered factories in proximity to railroad lines that facilitated shipping and delivery.

Steam-powered mill equipment was delivered to Taylorsville Milling Company in early May and employees began generating flour and feed for household use and the commercial market on July 10, 1902. The concern primarily processed local wheat and corn, but advertised the receipt of its first “western” wheat delivery, perhaps from the central United States, on September 20<sup>th</sup>. John F. Woodfin of Vashti moved to Taylorsville in late September to manage the mill.<sup>8</sup>

Although the 1902 *North Carolina Yearbook* identifies only one Alexander County grist mill, Ingram and Company in Taylorsville, others were in operation. Alsbaugh Roller Mills, for example, had been running since the 1880s on the Little River, its power source. Brothers William J. and Robert L. Davis also produced flour, meal, and feed utilizing water-powered equipment at Hiddenite Roller Mills, established in 1898 approximately five miles southeast of Taylorsville.<sup>9</sup>

Many of Taylorsville Milling Company’s board members were prominent community leaders and entrepreneurs. Vice president H. T. Campbell owned Campbell and Williams general stores in Taylorsville and Vashti in association with J. Y. and S. P. Williams. Campbell retained the Taylorsville location after the partnership’s February 1903 dissolution, operating as H. T. Campbell and Son. Grocery offerings included fruit, vegetables, eggs, cheese, and meat supplied by area farmers. Campbell’s associated ventures included a cannery that preserved large quantities of apples

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<sup>7</sup> Alexander County Deed Book “O,” p. 179; *Morning Post* (Raleigh), February 27, 1902, p. 8; “Taylorsville News,” *SRL*, April 7, 1902, p. 2; U. S. Census, Population Schedules, 1900, 1910.

<sup>8</sup> “From Taylorsville,” *SRL*, May 2, 1902, p. 2; “New Roller Mill Started,” *SRL*, July 11, 1902, p. 2; “Taylorsville Items,” *SRL*, September 23, 1902, p. 3; “Court at Taylorsville—News Items,” *SRL*, September 30, 1902, p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> *Alexander County Journal*, March 8, 1888, p. 5; North Carolina State Board of Agriculture, *The Bulletin*, Vol. 21, No. 8, August 1900, p. 27; News and Observer, *The North Carolina Yearbook 1902* (Raleigh: News and Observer, 1902), 60; H. B. Varner, commissioner, *Twenty-first Annual Report of the Department of Labor and Printing of the State of North Carolina* (Raleigh: E. M. Uzzell and Company, 1908), 112-113.

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for sale at regional markets. He was an Alexander Chair Company board member and oversaw its factory's equipment installation.<sup>10</sup>

Secretary-treasurer E. L. Hedrick's late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century endeavors ranged from managing a boarding house, the Piedmont Hotel, general stores, and Piedmont Wagon Company shops in Charlotte and Statesville, to selling industrial engines, boilers, and machinery manufactured by A. B. Farquhar Company of York, Pennsylvania. He began publishing a newspaper, the *Taylorsville Index*, in May 1890, and regularly contributed columns to other periodicals. Hedrick and H. T. Campbell served as county commissioners and were actively involved in statewide Democratic party activities.<sup>11</sup> Their business acumen was undoubtedly useful as Taylorsville Milling Company grew. Both men would have been conversant with marketing and distribution practices, and Campbell may have sold the mill's flour and meal in his store.

Taylorsville Milling Company hired M. P. Bogle to oversee the mill in 1903. The concern celebrated the Alexander County courthouse's completion that year by featuring an image of the Classical Revival-style edifice on its "Pride of Alexander" flour bags.<sup>12</sup> The mill and other community industries such as Alspaugh Roller Mills, Little River Cotton Mill, and sash and blind, casket, harness, and marble suppliers prospered as the county seat grew.<sup>13</sup>

Taylorsville Milling Company soon became the county's largest enterprise of its type, generating approximately 15,650 barrels of flour and an equal number of meal bushels in 1904. In comparison, Alspaugh Roller Mills produced around 15,000 barrels of flour and 3,000 bushels of meal, while Hiddenite Roller Mills processed 30,000 bushels of wheat. Two smaller ventures—Watts and Webster in Parte and I. N. Sharpe and Son in Mt. Pisgah—supplied customers with undisclosed amounts of flour.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> "The Apple Crop Around Taylorsville," *Farmer and Mechanic* (Raleigh), December 10, 1901, p. 1; "Taylorsville News," *SRL*, February 24, 1903, p. 3; "News of Taylorsville," *Statesville Record and Landmark*, June 30, 1903, p. 3; "Taylorsville Newsletter," *SRL*, July 19, 1907, p. 2; "Alexander," *Newton Enterprise*, January 16, 1908, p. 4.

<sup>11</sup> "Letter from Taylorsville," *SRL*, December 8, 1887, p. 1; "Minor Matters," *SRL*, May 15, 1890, p. 3; *Goldsboro Headlight*, May 20, 1891, p. 4; "Closing Sale," *Charlotte Observer*, November 2, 1893, p. 3; *Hickory Press*, July 13, 1893, p. 5; "The Flood in Alexander," *SRL*, March 21, 1899, p. 5; "Engines, Boilers, Machinery," *SRL*, December 15, 1903, p. 1; "Alexander," *Newton Enterprise*, June 4, 1908, p. 4.

<sup>12</sup> "News of Taylorsville and Environs," *SRL*, April 10, 1903, p. 3; "Taylorsville Items," *SRL*, May 8, 1903, p. 2; *SRL*, December 22, 1903, p. 2.

<sup>13</sup> Roller mills in Hiddenite and Vashti also processed wheat in 1903. H. B. Varner, commissioner, *Seventeenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Labor and Printing of the State of North Carolina* (Raleigh: E. M. Uzzell and Company, 1903), 297.

<sup>14</sup> *Biennial Report of Samuel L. Patterson, Commissioner of Agriculture* (Raleigh: E. M. Uzzell and Company, 1905), 688.

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Bartering was an important aspect of the agriculture-driven economy. Roller, grist, and saw mill operators often accepted a quantity of wheat, corn, or lumber in lieu of cash payment for processing crops and timber. Taylorsville Milling Company and other concerns also served as community gathering places.

Alexander County industry proliferated in the early 1910s, but the North Carolina Department of Labor identified only three roller mills during that time, likely reflecting the limited production and low employment at small facilities located along waterways and on farms. Although Taylorsville Milling Company and Alspaugh Roller Mills remained principal sources of flour, meal, and feed, employee numbers declined from the previous decade. At Taylorsville Milling Company, C. B. Matheson supervised nine workers in 1907. J. F. Woodfin returned in February 1914 to manage the mill. By 1915, L. C. Harper ran the mill with only one male assistant. Alspaugh Roller Mills then had a single operator. Other Taylorville industries, particularly eight building material factories and three textile manufacturers—Alspaugh Cotton Mills, Taylorsville Cotton Mill Company, and Watts Manufacturing Company—provided more regular and lucrative work. Roller mills elsewhere in the county included R. Lee Davis's Davis Springs Mills in Hiddenite and Pearl Milling Company, Inc., in Stony Point, operated by B. F. Hines and employees including Thomas A. Watt.<sup>15</sup> Severe storms in mid-July 1916 precipitated widespread regional flooding that completely destroyed resources including Alspaugh Roller Mill and the adjacent bridge as well as a bridge and employee house at Alspaugh Cotton Mills, which flooded.<sup>16</sup>

In late January 1924, Taylorsville Milling Company engaged millwrights E. C. Johnson and Messrs. Grant, Hay, Ritchie, and Simpson to install equipment that would increase daily production capacity from fifty to eighty barrels. The work was anticipated to take about a month.<sup>17</sup> The new electric machinery was a significant upgrade from the original steam-powered system. The mill's west wing, which replaced a small one-story office at the building's northwest corner with a larger office, may have been expanded at the same time.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> H. B. Varner, commissioner, *Twenty-first Annual Report of the Department of Labor and Printing of the State of North Carolina* (Raleigh: E. M. Uzzell and Company, 1908), 112-113; M. L. Shipman, commissioner, *Twenty-ninth Annual Report of the Department of Labor and Printing of the State of North Carolina* (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton Printing Company, 1915), 44-46, 179, 294; "Taylorsville News," *Statesville Sentinel*, February 12, 1914, p. 7; United States, Selective Service System, "Thomas Abernathy Watts," World War I Draft Registration Card, September 12, 1918, Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration.

<sup>16</sup> "Damage in Alexander by Flood Waters Enormous," *High Point Enterprise*, July 19, 1916, p. 5; "The Latest," *Union Republican*, July 20, 1916, p. 4.

<sup>17</sup> "Taylorsville Milling Company is Enlarging," *SRL*, January 28, 1924, p. 1.

<sup>18</sup> Sanborn maps indicate that the wing was built between 1924 and 1938. Sanborn map, Sheet 3, December 1924 and February 1938.

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L. C. Haffner headed Taylorsville Milling Company in 1925, when three male employees worked an average of four ten-hour days per week. The mill, which operated approximately two hundred days a year, was Alexander County's only identified flour, meal, and feed producer.<sup>19</sup> Taylorsville prospered in the 1920s, when other local industries included Taylorsville Cotton Mill, T. O. Teague Cotton Gin and Veneer Mills, North State Cotton Mill, and several planing mills and lumber yards.<sup>20</sup>

However, the Great Depression's onset checked the community's growth and appears to have triggered administrative changes at Taylorsville Milling Company. Delinquent street assessment tax payments resulted in the mill's sale at a January 1933 auction. Rom L. Moose purchased the property for \$700. In January 1934, he hired former Hiddenite Roller Mill operators William Jefferson Rogers, known as Jeff, and George Washington Jolly to manage Taylorsville Milling Company.<sup>21</sup>

Textile manufacturing drove Alexander County's economic recovery during the late 1930s, providing jobs for hundreds of workers. By 1938, three cotton mills, two hosiery mills, and a men's and boys' neckwear producer operated in Taylorsville. Smaller ventures included Carolina Cooler Corporation, Taylorsville Novelty Furniture Company, and Southern Paper Box Company. Industrial directories identified only two Alexander County roller mills: Taylorsville Milling Company, where Jeff Rogers, managed between one and five employees, and Standard Milling Company in Stoney Point, which had around the same number of workers.<sup>22</sup>

Taylorsville Milling Company maintained normal operations during World War II, although employees such as Jeff Rogers' grandson Walter Vaughn Rogers, known as Vaughn, were among the approximately 1,406 Alexander County residents who enlisted in the military. Vaughn served in the U. S. Army's 82nd Airborne unit. Those on the home front contributed to the war effort in a variety of ways, from filling vacant positions in local manufacturing plants to participating in bond drives and planting victory gardens.<sup>23</sup>

The Rogers family erected new mill at 619 East Main Avenue, approximately one-half-mile southeast of the 1902 mill's site, in 1945. They continued to lease the earlier building from Rom L. Moose, et. al

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<sup>19</sup> Frank D. Grist, commissioner, *Thirty-fifth Report of the Department of Labor and Printing of the State of North Carolina* (Raleigh: Mitchell Printing Company, 1926), 114, 164

<sup>20</sup> Sanborn map, December 1924, Sheets 1-6.

<sup>21</sup> Alexander County Deed Book 23, p. 190; "Hiddenite, Route 1," *Statesville Daily Record*, January 10, 1936, p. 4; U. S. Census, Population Schedules, 1930, 1940.

<sup>22</sup> North Carolina Department of Conservation and Development, *Industrial Directory and Reference Book of North Carolina* (Durham: Christian Printing Company, 1938), 71, 264.

<sup>23</sup> Spencer B. King, Jr., *Selective Service in North Carolina in World War II* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1949), 321; "Walter Vaughn Rogers," *Taylorsville Times*, December 26, 2017, p. 1;

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until acquiring the property under the auspices of A & M Feed Service, Inc. in March 1953.<sup>24</sup> Jeff Rogers managed the business, which was the county's principal flour, grist, and feed producer. Rogers Mills operated both mills six days a week, selling meal, flour, feed, fertilizer, and farm supplies and equipment from the East Main Avenue office. The concern also offered regional truck delivery service with routes in many western North Carolina counties. The family grew most of the concern's wheat and corn on their farm off Rocky Springs Road, but purchased additional quantities from other local farmers as needed.<sup>25</sup>

Jeff Rogers headed Rogers Mills until his February 1968 death. His grandson Vaughn Rogers then assumed ownership and headed the concern until his December 2017 death. Vaughn's daughter Becky White now manages the mill, assisted by employees including her nephew Gunnar Rogers. The family continues to harvest wheat and corn from their farm, supplementing as needed with products from local suppliers including Linney's Mill at 4635 Linney's Mill Road near Union Grove.<sup>26</sup>

In October 1961, A & M Feed Service, Inc. sold the Second Avenue North building to Rhodes-Day-Elledge, Inc., and it ceased to function as a mill.<sup>27</sup> Rhodes-Day-Elledge, Inc. conveyed the property to Taylorsville Savings and Loan Association in June 1969. The building's use from 1961 until 1975 is unknown, but it was likely vacant or used as a storage facility. Frank A. and Nancy A. Watson purchased it from the bank in September 1975.<sup>28</sup> The Watsons made only a few modifications, such as electric system and lighting updates, while using the edifice as a warehouse. The building had been vacant for many years when Elizabeth A. Lawson bought the property from Nancy A. Watson in September 2007. She undertook necessary repairs and opened an antiques store. Some of her customers who had visited the mill while it was in operation recalled that gathering in the parking area while waiting for wheat and corn to be processed was a popular social activity.<sup>29</sup> A & M Feed Service, LLC acquired the mill in December 2018 and will rehabilitate it to serve as a restaurant.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Rom L. and Florence H. Moose conveyed the property to R. D. Murray and Ray V. Arndt in January 1953. R. D. and Sue Lee Murray and Ray V. and Kathleen Arndt sold it to A & M Feed Service, Inc. in March 1953. Alexander County Deed Book 47, pp. 443 and p. 554.

<sup>25</sup> Frank Crane, commissioner, North Carolina Department of Labor, *North Carolina Directory of Manufacturing Firms* (Durham: Christian Printing Company, 1956), 135; Becky White and Gunnar Rogers, conversation with Heather Fearnbach, April 6, 2018.

<sup>26</sup> Jeff and Alma Rogers had four sons: W. Rayford, R. Howard, Albert B., and A. Neil. Vaughn Rogers was Albert's son. "Death Claims W. J. Rogers," *SRL*, February 28, 1968, p. 12; "Walter Vaughn Rogers," *Taylorsville Times*, December 26, 2017, p. 1; Becky White and Gunnar Rogers, conversation with Heather Fearnbach, April 6, 2018.

<sup>27</sup> Alexander County Deed Book 65, p. 551.

<sup>28</sup> Alexander County Deed Book 93, p. 49; Deed Book 183, p. 631.

<sup>29</sup> Lawson also purchased a 0.18-acre parcel at the mill tract's southwest corner from the Poole family in January 2016. This tract is not included in the National Register boundary. Alexander County Deed Book 512, p. 916; Deed Book 595, p. 905; Elizabeth Lawson, conversation with Heather Fearnbach, May 14, 2018.

<sup>30</sup> Alexander County Deed Book 604, p. 1195; Deed Book 613, p. 1061.

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## Flour Milling Overview

Processing wheat into flour for human consumption evolved from crushing kernels with pestles in wide, often stone, mortars to using man and animal-turned grinding stones to produce large quantities of finer, lighter flour. Millers typically employed heavy circular stones installed close to each other in a flat, parallel fashion to pulverize grain. The use of hydraulics to operate mill equipment became possible with the water wheel's development, re-engineered by the Roman architect Vitruvius around 19 B. C. into a form known as the undershot. Further experimentation resulted in the much more efficient overshot water wheel's conception, which better utilized gravitational momentum to turn the gears and axles that rotated grinding stones. In order to increase power generation capability, many millers dammed streams, creating ponds to store water before channeling it through races to water wheels.<sup>31</sup>

Flour milling technology remained substantially unchanged for many years. Iranian millers are thought to be the first to harness wind utilized in combination with grinding systems similar to those in water-powered mills circa 1000 A. D. In the seventeenth century, the process spread to the nascent American colonies where European settlers erected a Jamestown grain mill by 1621 and a Massachusetts windmill in 1631.<sup>32</sup>

Newport, Delaware, native Oliver Evans greatly advanced American milling in the late eighteenth century. His innovations, rooted in skills learned during apprenticeships to a wheelwright and wagon maker, included a mechanized system that introduced the concept of grain elevators, chutes, conveyor belts, and hopper bins, replacing a manual production line where men had carried, shoveled, sifted, and mixed grain by hand. Evans installed his flour-grinding equipment in a water-powered mill in the Wilmington, Delaware, vicinity in 1782. Designed to dramatically improve efficiency and reduce labor costs, the five-machine-system coupled with the high-pressure steam engine he patented in 1790 revolutionized the milling process. Evans outlined the production line components in his 1795 publication, *The Young Mill-Wright and Miller's Guide*, but they did not become widely used until the 1810s. It would be sixty years before further improvements reshaped the American flour industry.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Fran Gage, "Wheat into Flour: A Story of Milling," *Gastronomica: The Journal of Food and Culture*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Winter 2006), pp. 84, 87; Grimsley T. Hobbs, *Exploring the Old Mills of North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The Provincial Press, 1985), 9-10, 14-15.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 88-89.

<sup>33</sup> Theodore R. Hazen, Master Miller (mill operator), Millwright, Curator of Molinology, Site Supervisor, and Lead Interpreter, Pierce Mill, Rock Creek Park, National Park Service, National Capital Region, The Department of the Interior, "Flour Milling in America: A General Overview," <http://www.angelfire.com/folk/molinologist/america.html>, accessed in April 2013; "Oliver Evans," [http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/theymadeamerica/whomade/evans\\_hi.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/theymadeamerica/whomade/evans_hi.html), accessed in April 2013; Walter Harry Green Armytage, "Oliver Evans," <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/196952/Oliver-Evans>, accessed in April 2013.

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In 1871, Minneapolis milling magnate Cadwallader C. Washburn imported a French purifier, a type of sifting equipment comprised of silk mesh screens used in conjunction with flat grindstones to produce very finely ground flour. Washburn and others adopted this multi-step process and further increased efficiency by purchasing Hungarian-made iron rollers to crush wheat kernels. The rapid rotation of such rollers installed side-by-side at narrow intervals generated considerable heat, while purifiers and rotating cloth sieves called bolting reels that separated bran from wheat kernels produced significant quantities of combustible flour dust, resulting in a volatile atmosphere. American millers adopted the technology slowly. A Milwaukee roller mill opened in 1876, but the endeavor failed due to its lack of automation. Even following roller introduction, large facilities such as the 1874 Washburn 'A' Mill in Minneapolis employed millstones in the final grinding stages. After a spark ignited flour dust in 1878, resulting in an explosion that leveled that building as well as five neighboring mills, Washburn improved ventilation and added more steel rollers to the replacement structure completed in 1880, setting a new standard for the industry. Pillsbury soon followed suit in their Minneapolis complex, installing only steel rollers in the 1881 Excelsior Mill and the 1884 building that became the nation's largest flour milling operation.<sup>34</sup>

## Industrial Architecture and Roller Mill Context

North Carolina's early milling operations depended on hydraulic power, making locations along the Haw, Deep, and Catawba Rivers, where slate formations create falls and rapids, ideal for manufacturing. Entrepreneurs such as German merchant Michael Schenck, who erected a sawmill, grist mill, and several ironworks in Lincoln County before hiring ironworkers Absolom Warwick and Michael Beam to construct North Carolina's first cotton mill in 1813, achieved great success with their undertakings. Industrial architectural design during this period was influenced by the need to accommodate machinery in a manner that would allow for the most efficient interaction with the power source and utilization of natural light and ventilation. Many of North Carolina's early millers adapted existing frame buildings to serve their needs. Such structures, which usually had rough-sawn wood floors and wood shingle roofs, often resembled large residential or agricultural buildings as they were typically located in rural settings along the rivers and streams that generated their power. Heavy timbers allowed for building stability despite equipment vibrations, and the dense wood used for the framing was more fire resistant than sawn lumber. However, frame mills were still extremely susceptible to fire and few nineteenth-century North Carolina examples survive.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Swiss engineer Jakob Sulzberger utilized steel rollers to pulverize grain in 1834 and the technology spread to England, Scotland, and Ireland by 1869. Americans sought to capitalize on roller demand by streamlining the design. In 1880, Neenah, Wisconsin, native John Stevens patented the chilled steel rollers that he had invented in 1874. Fran Gage, "Wheat into Flour," p. 90; Theodore R. Hazen, "Flour Milling in America: A General Overview."

<sup>35</sup> Brent D. Glass, *The Textile Industry in North Carolina: A History* (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1992), 7, 14-17; Historian William Pierson, analysis by Betsy Hunter Bradley in *The Works: The Industrial Architecture of the United States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), VIII, 16-17.

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Many industrial buildings erected by the mid-nineteenth century were of “slow-burn” masonry construction, with brick walls, heavy timber framing, gabled roofs, large windows, and metal fire doors. Flour and grist mill construction was often even more utilitarian and less expensive, comprising framing systems clad with metal siding and roofing to shelter the equipment required to process wheat and corn. Unlike textile mills, where projecting stair towers, large operable windows and transoms, and monitor roofs provided mill workers with light and ventilation, flour and grist mills often had little fenestration. Primary grain processing areas were typically unheated due to the combustibility of flour dust. By the late nineteenth century, steam, gas, and electric power generation allowed milling operations of all types to move to urban areas with larger potential employee and client pools and proximity to railroad lines, thus facilitating increased production, sales, and distribution.<sup>36</sup>

Late nineteenth century innovations greatly improved wheat and corn milling technology by replacing heavy, unwieldy grindstones with steel rollers that produced more finely ground flour and meal at a much faster rate. Many millers installed rollers in operations that had previously employed grinding stones, while others built structures intended specifically for rollers and the associated equipment.<sup>37</sup> Necessary roller mill machinery includes conveyors to transport the grain from storage bins or silos to rollers, typically installed in pairs on stands at a higher elevation than the other equipment. Grain first passes through corrugated rollers that turn toward each other and begin breaking the endosperm and then moves down through chutes to mechanized sifters, which shake the particles through successively finer screens. After purifiers further separate the flour by density, subsequent sets of smooth rollers at progressively closer proximity to each other further reduce particle size. At the end of this process, depending on the desired final product, vitamins and minerals or whole wheat elements such as bran and germ might be mixed in prior to the flour packaging.<sup>38</sup>

Grinding mechanics and projected output dictated roller mill size and shape. Rectangular, multi-story, gable-roofed buildings with open plans allowed for flexible equipment and grain bin configurations. Steam-powered roller mills required at least three levels for gravity-reliant roller, chute, sifter, and purifier function. Basements housed boilers and engines that powered drive shafts, which were typically installed on top floors. Mechanical and processing equipment separation fostered operational safety. Complexes evolved in response to production and storage needs. Many rural mills expeditiously ground wheat and corn upon receipt primarily for local residents’ personal use, thus necessitating less storage capacity. Larger commercial ventures erected silos for raw grain and additions or warehouses to hold barrels and bags of flour, meal, and feed.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., Grimsley T. Hobbs, *Exploring the Old Mills of North Carolina*, p. 19.

<sup>38</sup> Gage, “Wheat into Flour,” pp. 91-92.

<sup>39</sup> Thomas R Buecker, “Nebraska Flour Mill Buildings, Structure and Style, 1854-1936,” *Nebraska History, Volume 66* (1985), 147, 149, 155.

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North Carolina's first identified roller mill, constructed in 1879 by John D. and Thomas J. Grimes one block west of Lexington's Main Street, manifests this form and technology. The brothers soon expanded the four-story, steam-powered, frame building with a four-story brick addition that still stands as a testament to their success. Grimes Brothers Mill operated until around 1960 and has been listed in the National Register since 2002.<sup>40</sup> Another such enterprise, the China Grove Roller Mill in Rowan County, was also initially housed in a frame building, but the company erected a three-story brick edifice designed by millwrights Lipe and Corriher in 1903. The complex, added to the National Register in 1983, processed wheat and corn until 1995.<sup>41</sup>

## Alexander County Roller Mill Architectural Context

It appears that late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century vernacular industrial buildings were rare in Alexander County by 1986, when historian Vickie Mason conducted a reconnaissance-level inventory of historic architecture. The project thus identified only a few grain-processing facilities including Taylorsville Milling Company and Linney's Mill at 4635 Linney's Mill Road near Union Grove.<sup>42</sup> It is impossible to ascertain how many roller and grist mills survive without additional survey. However, examination of a small sample—Linney's Mill and Rogers Mills at 619 East Main Avenue in Taylorsville—reveals that these edifices and Taylorsville Milling Company share similar features.

Milling practices changed little during the twentieth century's first half, requiring complexes with room not only for processing equipment, but also large grain bins or silos and warehouses for product storage and distribution. The frame structures at each site are comparable in terms of structure, materials, function, and appearance. The complexes manifest the utilitarian, fire-resistant construction that prevailed in flour and grist mill design from the nineteenth century through the twentieth-century's first decades. All feature heavy timber post and beam structures that support dimensional lumber wall, floor, and roof systems. The complexes expanded over time, with fire-resistant metal wall cladding and roofing unifying their sections. Long covered loading docks adjacent to ample parking areas accommodate product transfer.

The Rogers Mills complex includes a sizable front-gable-roofed two-and-a-half-story 1945 mill with one-story east and west shed-roofed wings sheathed in corrugated-metal siding and protected by metal roofs. A shed-roofed loading dock spans most of the west wing and the main block, ending at the east wing, which was a later addition. The office entrance is near the dock's center. A shed canopy

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<sup>40</sup> *News and Observer* (Raleigh, N.C.), August 24, 1899; Paul Baker Touart, *Building the Backcountry: An Architectural History of Davidson County, North Carolina* (Lexington: The Davidson County Historical Association, 1987), 64; Laura A. W. Phillips, "Grimes Brothers Mill," National Register of Historic Places nomination, 2002.

<sup>41</sup> Davyd Foard Hood, Patricia Dickinson, and Marshall Bullock, "China Grove Roller Mill," National Register of Historic Places nomination, 1983.

<sup>42</sup> Vickie Mason, "Historical and Architectural Development of Alexander County," July 1987, p. 20.

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shelters the service door on the west wing's west elevation. The heavy-timber and dimensional-lumber structure, diagonal exterior sheathing boards, and wood floors are exposed throughout the interior. Milling equipment, much of which is original, includes shellers, rollers, purifiers, scourers, sifters, separators, conveyors, chutes, and belt drives.

A wide covered breezeway separates the mill from the large concrete-block and frame warehouse to the north. The warehouse's shed roof extends to cover the breezeway, providing a sheltered area for product transfer. Horizontal boards sheathe the upper walls. North of the warehouse, a large front-gable-roofed frame equipment shed includes an internal Flemish-bond brick wall remaining from an earlier warehouse.

Linney's Mill also evolved over time. W. L. Linney erected the 1937 grist mill, dam, and waterwheel on a Rocky Creek site that has been utilized for milling since the late eighteenth century. Since Linney's 1962 death, his son William has managed and expanded the operation with the assistance of other family members and employees. The mill, thought to be North Carolina's sole operating water-powered commercial grist-processing facility, produces stone-ground cornmeal, grits, and livestock feed.<sup>43</sup>

The utilitarian, two-story-on-basement, frame, gable-and-shed-roofed building is sheathed in metal siding, wood panels, and rolled-asphalt faux-brick siding. A metal-clad grain elevator rises above the metal roof in the mill's northeast section. A shed-roofed loading dock, taller at its east end, spans the north elevation. The heavy-timber and dimensional-lumber structure, horizontal exterior sheathing boards, and wood floors are visible throughout the interior. Milling equipment, some of which is original, includes millstones, shellers, sifters, purifiers, scourers, separators, hoppers, conveyors, and chutes. A formed-concrete dam channels water to the formed-concrete mill race and overshot waterwheel that power the grinding equipment. The metal Quonset hut west of the mill houses the store and office. Conical-roofed metal silos stand east and west of the mill.

## Taylorsville Milling Company Roller Mill Architecture

Taylorsville Milling Company roller mill derives significance from its traditional early-twentieth-century roller mill design. The main block's three-story height facilitated the function of gravity-reliant rollers, chutes, sifters, and purifiers necessary for wheat milling. A completely open plan on each level was ideally suited for production and storage. The edifice was erected in manner that lessened construction and maintenance cost, allowed for flexible function, and reduced the propensity for extensive damage or destruction by fire. In order to achieve this, heavy timber posts and beams were used in combination with dimensional lumber wall, floor, and roof systems. The strong and fire-

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<sup>43</sup> Jim Maxwell, "Linney's Mill Still Operates," *SRL*, July 10, 1871, p. 3; William Linney, conversation with Heather Fearnbach, April 6, 2018.

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resistant building's dense wood structural members, masonry foundation, thick floor boards, and corrugated-metal siding and roofing minimized equipment vibration and allowed the mill to withstand a fire of undermined date that caused only superficial damage. Although the metal cladding utilized at different times varies slightly in appearance, the consistent material composition unifies the building sections. Single- and double-hung multipane wood sash provide ample light and ventilation.

A shed-roofed loading dock supported by square wood posts extends across the east elevation, which accommodated supplier and client traffic. Farmers likely unloaded corn and wheat into first-floor bins on the main block's east side, while large bins used to store outgoing shipments may have been located near the door opening on the north elevation facing the railroad. Sliding and double-leaf wood doors secure wide openings designed to aid product transference. The building's proximity to Second Avenue North did not allow for a north loading dock.

Heavy-timber posts and beams are exposed throughout the open-plan building. Short segments of heavy timbers with chamfered ends top internal posts on the first and second stories, distributing the load of the structural beams and floor boards above. Diagonal braces reinforce posts in exterior walls and on the third story. The wall studs, wide horizontal exterior sheathing boards, and floor and roof systems are intact. Narrow-board floors are in good condition. Floor openings that facilitated gravity-dependent mill equipment were infilled with matching boards after the mill closed in 1961. Although most equipment was removed at that time, the metal components of a long belt drive that transmitted power to milling machines remain on the third story beneath the roof peak, supported by heavy timber beams. A quarter-turn wood stair with landings at the mill's northeast corner connects all three floors.

Taylorsville Milling Company roller mill is particularly important as wheat and corn processing facilities, once essential and ubiquitous components of Alexander County's agriculture-driven economy, are now exceedingly rare. The 1902 building appears to be the oldest extant resource of its kind in Taylorsville and the vicinity.

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Alexander County, NC

## Section 10. Geographical Data

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

1. Latitude: 35.924287 Longitude: -81.172829

## Verbal Boundary Description

The National Register boundaries of Taylorsville Milling Company roller mill are indicated by the heavy dashed line on the enclosed map. The almost rectangular 0.35-acre tax parcel's north lot line parallels Second Avenue North, with a narrow strip of public right-of-way spanning the distance between the road and the mill's north elevation. The National Register boundary, drawn at the street's edge to include the right-of-way, encompasses a 0.45-acre area. The east lot line parallels the concrete municipal sidewalk on Linney's Mountain Road's west side. The south and west lot lines traverse grass lawn. Scale: one inch equals approximately fifty feet.

## Boundary Justification

Alexander County tax parcel #3759-68-7344 encompasses the acreage historically associated with the mill and the public right-of-way to the north and provides an appropriate setting.

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## Section 11. Additional Documentation

### Photograph Catalog

Photographs by Heather Fearnbach, 3334 Nottingham Road, Winston-Salem, NC, on April 6, 2018.  
Digital images located at the North Carolina SHPO.

1. Northeast oblique, looking south toward Main Street
2. East elevation
3. South elevation
4. Northwest oblique, looking southeast toward Linney's Mountain Road
5. First floor, looking north
6. First floor, looking southeast
7. First floor, looking southwest into west wing
8. Second floor, looking north
9. Second floor, looking south
10. Third floor, looking north
11. Third floor, belt drive



**1. Northeast oblique, looking south toward Main Street**

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2. East elevation (above) and 3. South elevation (below)



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4. Northwest oblique, looking southeast toward Linney's Mountain Road (above)  
5. First floor, looking north (below)



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6. First floor, looking southeast (above) 7. First floor, looking southwest into west wing (below)



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**8. Second floor, looking north (above) and 9. Second floor, looking south (below)**



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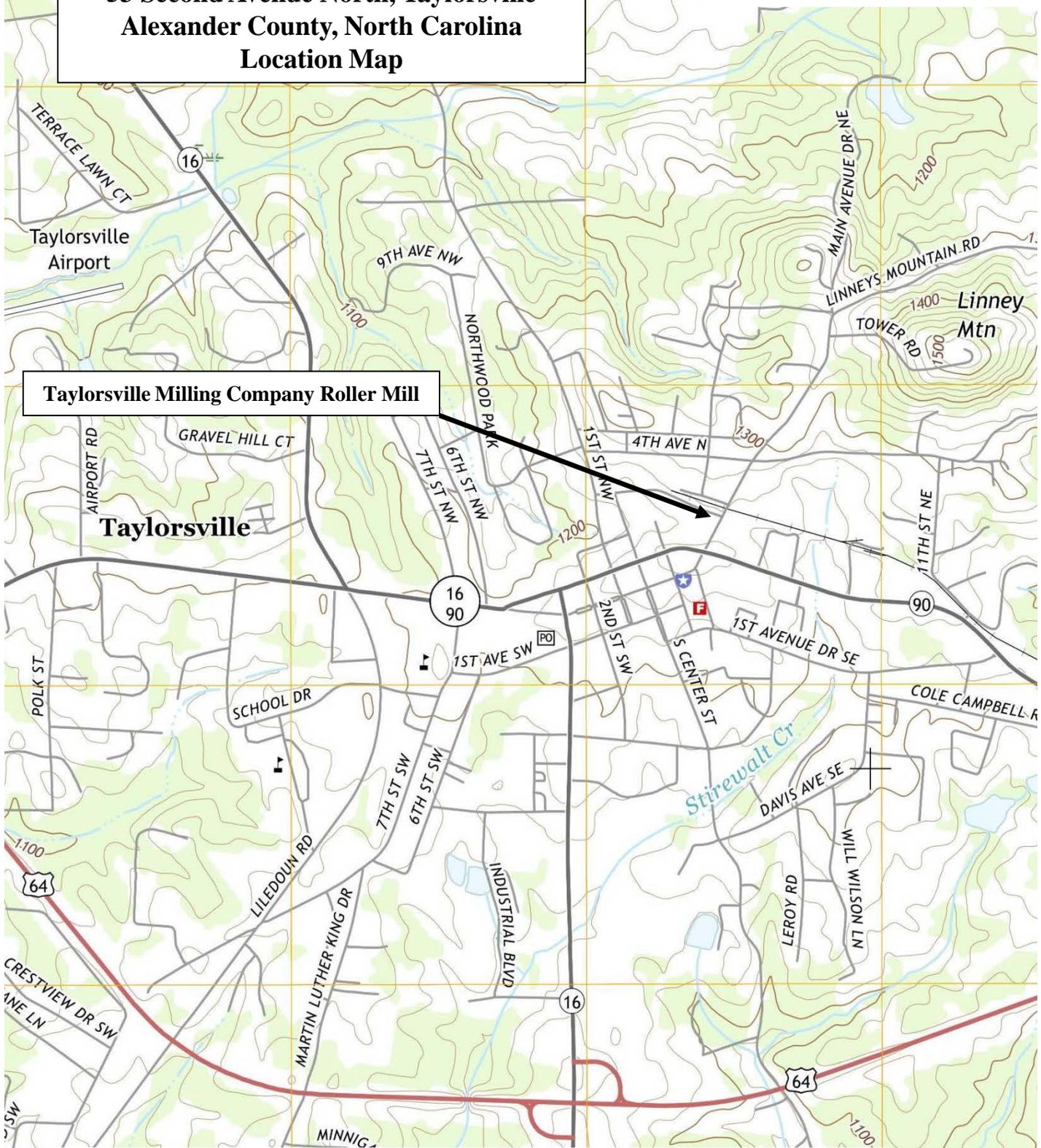


10. Third floor, looking north (above) 11. Third floor, belt drive (below)



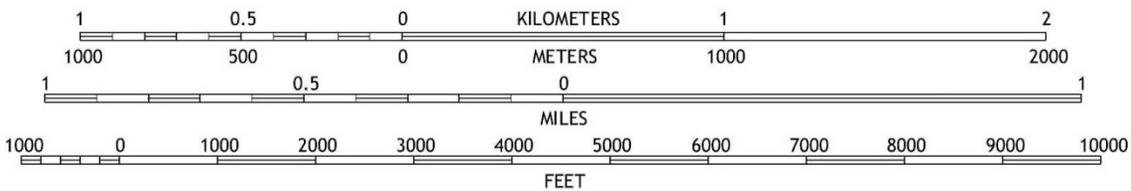
**Taylorsville Milling Company Roller Mill**  
**53 Second Avenue North, Taylorsville**  
**Alexander County, North Carolina**  
**Location Map**

U. S. Geological Survey  
Rocky Mount Quadrangle, 2016

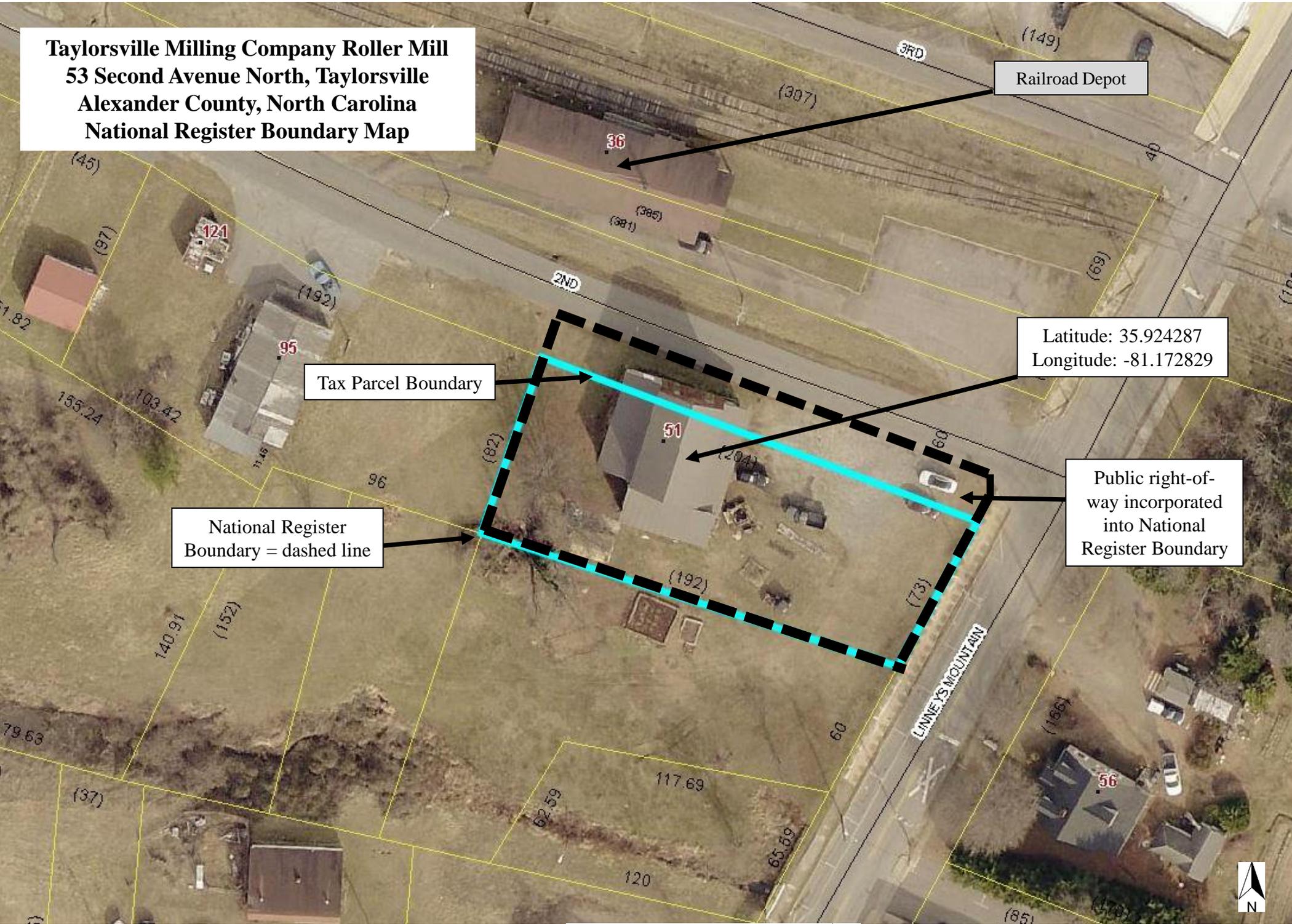


**Taylorsville Milling Company Roller Mill**

SCALE 1:24 000



**Taylorsville Milling Company Roller Mill**  
**53 Second Avenue North, Taylorsville**  
**Alexander County, North Carolina**  
**National Register Boundary Map**



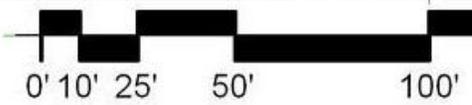
Railroad Depot

Latitude: 35.924287  
Longitude: -81.172829

Tax Parcel Boundary

National Register  
Boundary = dashed line

Public right-of-  
way incorporated  
into National  
Register Boundary



Scale: one inch equals approximately fifty feet



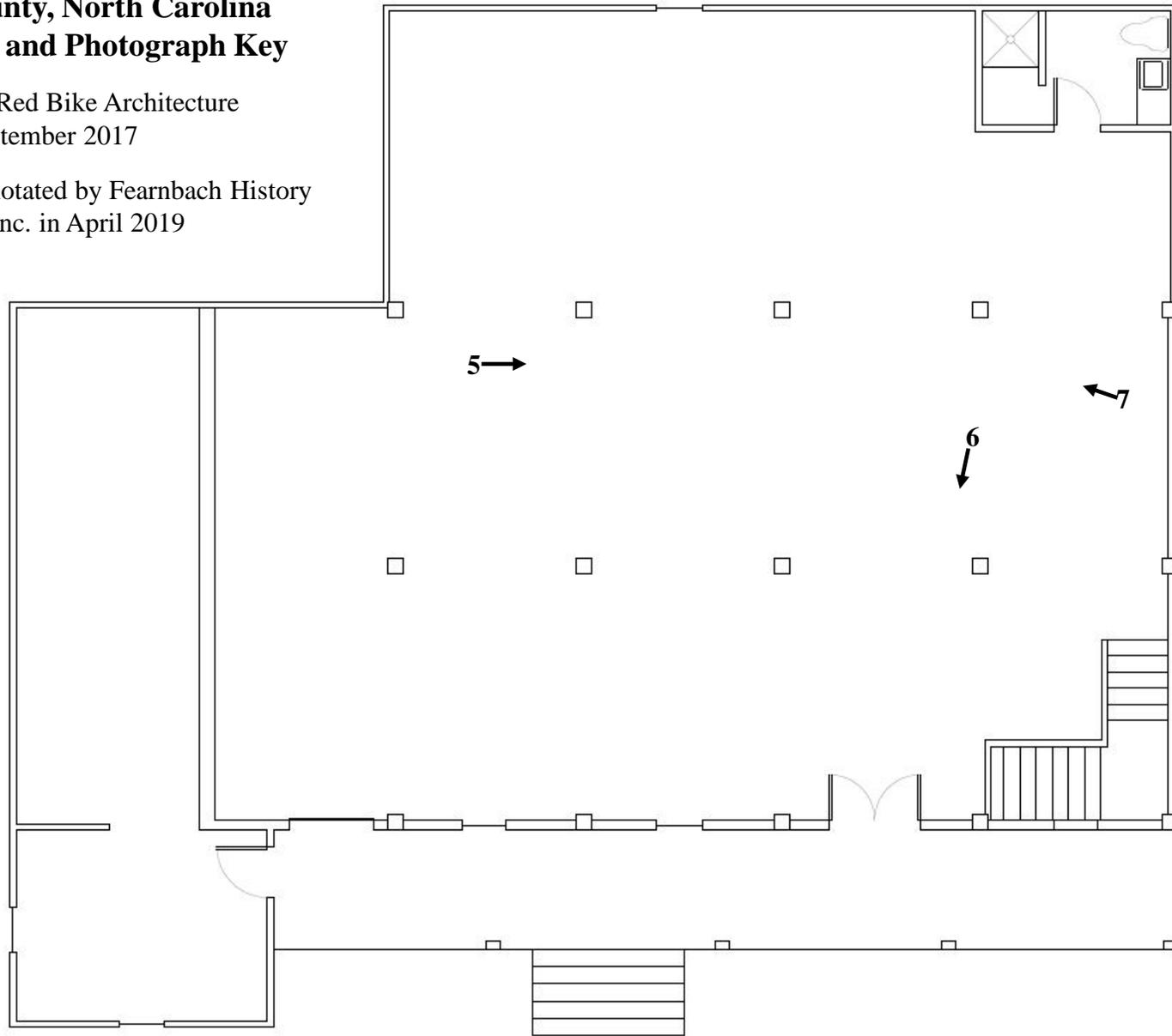
**Taylorsville Milling Company Roller Mill**  
**53 Second Avenue North, Taylorsville**  
**Alexander County, North Carolina**  
**First Floor Plan and Photograph Key**

Plan drawn by Red Bike Architecture  
in September 2017

Photograph views annotated by Fearnbach History  
Services, Inc. in April 2019

← 4

3 →



5 →

6 ↓

↖ 7

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2

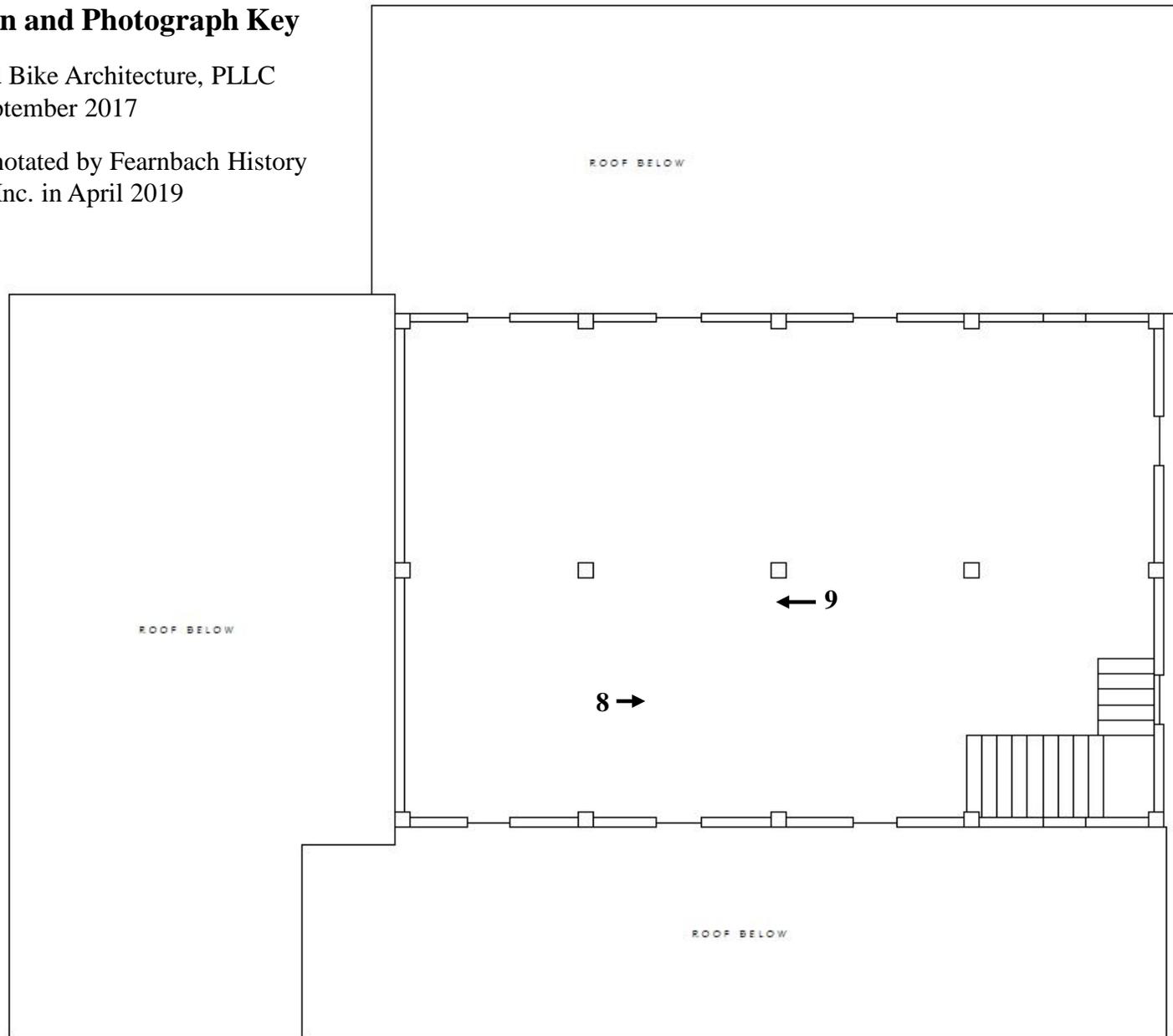
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**Taylorsville Milling Company Roller Mill**  
**53 Second Avenue North, Taylorsville**  
**Alexander County, North Carolina**  
**Second Floor Plan and Photograph Key**

Plan drawn by Red Bike Architecture, PLLC  
in September 2017

Photograph views annotated by Fearnbach History  
Services, Inc. in April 2019



**Taylorsville Milling Company Roller Mill**  
**53 Second Avenue North, Taylorsville**  
**Alexander County, North Carolina**  
**Third Floor Plan and Photograph Key**

Plan drawn by Red Bike Architecture, PLLC  
in September 2017

Photograph views annotated by Fearnbach History  
Services, Inc. in April 2019

