

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

## 1. Name of Property

historic name: Perry-Carpenter Grist Mill

other name/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Location

street & number: 364 Moonstone Beach Road

not for publication: N/A

city/town: South Kingstown vicinity: N/A

state: RI county: Washington code: 009 zip code: 02879

## 3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private

Category of Property: building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Property name Perry-Carpenter Grist Mill

**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets      does not meet the National Register Criteria.      See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

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 Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Function or Use**

Historic: AGRICULTURE Sub: processing

Current: AGRICULTURE Sub: processing

Property name Perry-Carpenter Grist Mill

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification:

COLONIAL

Other Description: \_\_\_\_\_

Materials: foundation STONE, CONCRETE roof WOOD/shingle  
walls WOOD/shingle other \_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

X See continuation sheet.

**8. Statement of Significance**

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

Applicable National Register Criteria: A

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): B

Areas of Significance: AGRICULTURE

Period(s) of Significance: c.1716-1940

Significant Dates: c.1716

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Unknown

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

X See continuation sheet.

Property name Perry-Carpenter Grist Mill

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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: R.I. Historical Preservation Commission

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property: 3.28 acres

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	<u>19</u>	<u>284690</u>	<u>4685260</u>	B	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description:  See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification:  See continuation sheet.

**11. Form Prepared By**

Name/Title: Hetty Startup, Asst. / Virginia A. Fitch, Arch. Historian

Organization: The Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc. Date: November, 1989

Street & Number: 387 Lonsdale Avenue Telephone: 401-728-8780

City or Town: Pawtucket State: R.I. ZIP: 02860

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### Description

The Perry-Carpenter Grist Mill is a small wood-frame building set on a stone foundation and designed to house corn-grinding equipment. A small extension on the mill contains a 25-h.p. turbine and the power transmission system. The three-acre site includes a small flume flowing into the turbine pit under the mill and a tailrace flowing out.

The mill itself is a plain, one-story, rectangular (roughly 38'x20') building, of post-and-beam construction, oriented east-west. The western section of the mill is covered by a flank-gable roof; the eastern extension has a shed roof. Both walls and roofs are covered with wood shingles. The mill has a single entrance, at the west end of the north elevation, with a single-leaf door of plain vertical boards. A single double-hung window (with 6-over-6 sash) is set in each of the elevations, except the west which is blank. The windows and entrance have plain, flat-board surrounds.

The mill is set on a steep sloping site which leaves its full-height basement exposed at ground level on the south side. The south side of the basement is completely open. The foundation and the framing of the basement have been somewhat altered. The foundation is constructed of dry-laid rubblestone on the north side, of mortared rubblestone on the east side, and of poured concrete (a modern replacement) on the west side. The building is carried on a series of large square timber posts, most of them modern replacements of old materials.

The interior of the mill is a single room finished with plain materials. The floor is made of unfinished pine planks. The ceiling is covered with sheets of tin, as are the walls, except at the east end where unfinished pine boards are laid up horizontally to cover the walls. An uncovered hatchway is set in the center of the floor, opening to the basement.

The turbine pit is located in the southeast corner of the basement between the east foundation wall and a pier of rough-hewn granite slabs. A vertical shaft and belt transmit power from the turbine to the grinding equipment inside the mill. The corn is ground between two round Westerly granite millstones, 58" in diameter. The upper (or runner) stone is 15" thick; the lower (or bed) stone is 24". They are mounted on a vertical shaft and enclosed within a round wooden casing. Above the casing is a hopper, a four-sided box shaped like an inverted pyramid; the hopper is set in a timber frame over the casing containing the millstones.

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The dried corn is fed through the hopper and trickles down through the eye of the upper millstone into the small space between the millstones. It passes between the upper revolving stone and the lower stationary bedstone, where it is ground by grooves on the faces of the stones, and is expelled through these grooves to the periphery of the casing. The meal then drops past the lower stone and passes to a meal spout, located just below floor-level in the side-wall of the hatchway, where it is bagged.

Adjacent to the stone casing is a timber crane used to lift the upper stone off its mounting to expose the grinding faces of the stones, for the periodic resharpening of the grooves. Two large iron tongs are mounted at the end of the crane's swinging arm. The tongs are moved over the top of the upper stone, are pinned to it, and lift the stone from its shaft.

The mill property is set in the curve of Moonstone Beach Road which follows the course of the millstream. The stream flows roughly northeast to southwest from an unnamed mill pond which borders the property on the northeast. A simple earthen dam partially faced with dry-laid rubblestone forms the southwesterly border of the pond. A stone-lined sluice (about 1/10 mile long) leads from the pond to the northeast corner of the mill. At the head of the sluice is a gate, mounted on rack and pinion gearing, which allows water to flow to the mill. A stone-lined tailrace leaves the southeast corner of the mill and flows out under Moonstone Beach Road.

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### Significance

The Perry-Carpenter Grist Mill is significant for its ability to document some important patterns of South Kingstown's agricultural history. In its physical form and function, the grist mill preserves information about an important aspect of agrarian life: the milling of grain.

Agriculture was the dominant economic activity of South Kingstown in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The town contains some of Rhode Island's best farmland, flatter and more fertile than much of the state. In the eighteenth century, subsistence farmers who grew crops and raised livestock to provide for their families coexisted with large commercial farmers who operated hundreds of acres and produced crops and stock for an export trade through Newport across Narragansett Bay. In the nineteenth century, farming continued to be a mainstay of the economy; both specialty farms, such as dairies and orchards, and general farms (growing corn, potatoes, oats, sheep, swine, and poultry) flourished. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, corn was both the principal crop and a staple food in South Kingstown. Corn was among the first of the town's exports and remained a significant crop into the twentieth century. Corn meal was used in breads (often mixed with rye) and in the characteristic southern Rhode Island specialty, jonny cakes.

The first corn-grinding mill in South Kingstown was built in 1661, a scant decade after initial settlement; it no longer stands. James Perry constructed the Perry-Carpenter Grist Mill c. 1716 in the Matunuck area in southern South Kingstown. Sometime before 1789, the mill was moved a short distance to its present location by the Perrys. Through the eighteenth century, at least three other grist mills were constructed in the town. Located in relatively isolated locations on the small streams which were their power source, these four mills were essential adjuncts of South Kingstown's agriculture and had an influence on patterns of settlement and commerce. Three of the four mills became nuclei around which substantial villages later developed: at Usquepaug on the Queen's River, at Wakefield on the Saugatucket River, and at Glen Rock on Glen Rock Brook. Of the four, only the Perry-Carpenter Grist Mill remains in something akin to its original setting; it can still document at least partly the original relationship of such grist mills to the surrounding farms--a minor, isolated industrial outpost set amongst farmed lands.

The Perry-Carpenter Grist Mill was operated by the Perrys until 1789. The mill changed hands a number of times in the nineteenth century; it was operated from the 1870s to the 1960s by members of the Carpenter family. Little is known of the mill's patterns of operation in the eighteenth and

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nineteenth centuries; no accounts or records survive. The mill's size suggests that it was operated intermittently and served only a local populace, grinding a few bushels at a time as needed by nearby farms; certainly nothing in the mill's size suggests a commercial scale of operations.

The Perry-Carpenter Grist Mill has special significance because a rare survivor; it typifies a once-numerous class of resource, now much diminished in number. Several dozen grist mills once operated Rhode Island; only a handful still stand and few still grind corn—these, the Perry-Carpenter Grist Mill is the oldest.

Criteria Consideration B: The Perry-Carpenter Grist Mill was moved early in its history. The mill was probably constructed c. 1716; the first mention of the mill in the documentary record is its inclusion in the 1716 will of Samuel Perry. The mill was moved to its present location before 1789, when John Perry sold it to Thomas Hazard.

Period of Significance: The Perry-Carpenter Grist Mill dates from the eighteenth century and, insofar as is known, has operated at least intermittently since that date. The physical orientation, plan, design, and construction are consistent with what is known of colonial gristmills; but the actual materials of the mill are products of several periods. As with all operating industrial facilities, repair and replacement of physical elements have been required. Such repairs give evidence of being carried out in a manner consistent with the plan, design, and construction methods of the original building, but they do represent change in the actual colonial building materials. Much of the actual fabric may date from the nineteenth and early twentieth century; the runner stone, for example, is marked with a date, "1864"; nails of several periods have been identified; and the turbine pit is marked "1916." The period of significance is, thus, described as c. 1716 to 1940 for two reasons: 1) the mill has been a minor but integral part of the town's agricultural life since its construction to the present, and 2) the mill's physical materials have been repaired and replaced through time, and the resource is thus the product of several centuries of construction.



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### Major Bibliographical References

Evans, Oliver; The Young Millwright and Miller's Guide. (1795).

Hindle, Brooke (ed.). America's Wooden Age: Aspects of its Early Technology, (New York, 1975).

Historical and Architectural Resources of South Kingstown, Rhode Island: A Preliminary Report, (Providence, Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, 1984).

Woodward, Carl R. Plantation in Yankeeland. (Chester, Connecticut, Pequot Press, 1971).

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### Geographical Data

#### Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property of the Perry-Carpenter Grist Mill is 3.28 acres and occupies Town of South Kingstown Assessor's map 79-4, lot 7.

#### Boundary Justification

The property's boundaries include the mill, its current lot, and both the head and tail races.



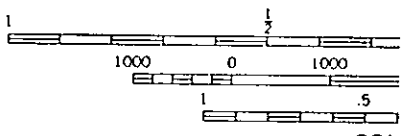
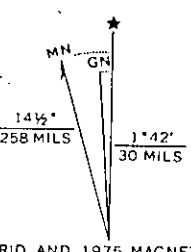
B L O C K I S L A N D S O U

283 35 285 38

PERRY CARPENTER CRIST MILL  
 364 Moonstone Beach Road  
 South Kingstown, Rhode Island

Kingston quadrangle

UTM:  
 19.284690.4685260

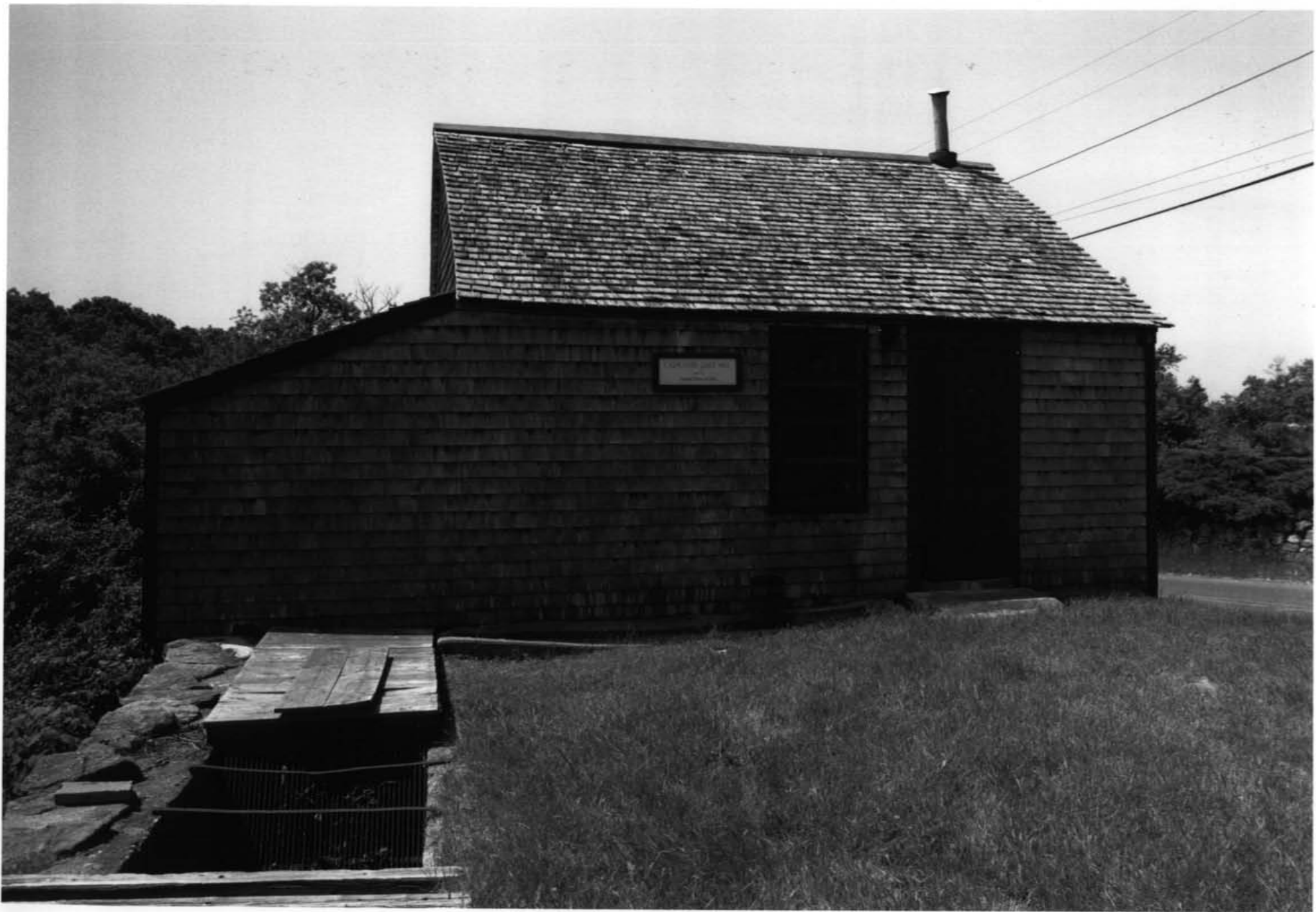


CON  
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 DEPTH CURVES AND SOI  
 SHORELINE SHOWN REPI  
 THE MEAN F

1970 AND 1975 MAGNETIC NORTH  
 DIRECTION AT CENTER OF SHEET

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH THE  
 FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

QUADRANGLE  
 e on the  
 te projec  
 41 meters west



1 Perry-Carpenter Grist Mill  
364 Noosstone Beach Road  
South Kingstown, Rhode Island

Photographer: Virginia A. Fitch

Date: July, 1959

Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission  
150 Benefit Street  
Providence, Rhode Island

View: Perry-Carpenter Grist Mill, north elevation, looking  
south; water flowing into the turbine pit on left.

Photo #1



2 Perry-Carpenter Grist Mill  
362 Moonstone Beach Road  
South Kingstown, Rhode Island

Photographer: Virginia F. Tice

Date: July 1989

Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission  
15 Benefit Street  
Providence, Rhode Island

View: Grist Mill, south and west elevations, looking north.

Photo #2





3 Perry-Carpenter Grist Mill  
364 Moonstone Beach Road  
South Kingstown, Rhode Island

Photographer: Virginia A. Fitch

Date: July, 1989

Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission  
150 Benefit Street  
Providence, Rhode Island

View: Grist Mill, southwest elevation of foundation, looking north.

PA3-3 = 3



Perry-Carpenter Grist Mill  
364 Moonstone Beach Road  
South Kingstown, Rhode Island

Photographer: Virginia A. Fitch

Date: July, 1980

Negatives: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission  
150 Benefit Street  
Providence, Rhode Island

View: Grist Mill interior, looking southwest, showing main  
grinding area; crane on right; millstones and  
hopper (inverted) at center.

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1. Perry - Carpenter Grist Mill  
364 Moonstone Beach Road  
South Kingstown, Rhode Island

Photographer: Virginia A. Eitch

Date: July, 1989

Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission  
150 Benefit Street  
Providence, Rhode Island

View: Grist Mill, southwest elevation of foundation,  
looking north into turbine pit.

Photo #4