

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received MAY 31 1983
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic TR Mills of Grafton (~~thematic nomination~~)
and/or common n.a.

2. Location

street & number Flour Mill: 1300 - 14th Avenue
Worsted Mill: 1350 - 14th Avenue not for publication
city, town Grafton vicinity of
state Wisconsin code 55 county Ozaukee code 089

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> n.a.	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Grafton Flour Mill: William Mabry (land contract purchaser)
street & number 1300 - 14th Avenue
city, town Grafton vicinity of state Wisconsin 53024

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Ozaukee County Courthouse
street & number 109 W. Main Street
city, town Port Washington state Wisconsin 53074

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date 1975 federal state county local
depository for survey records State Historical Society of Wisconsin
city, town Madison state Wisconsin

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Introduction

The Grafton Flour Mill and the Cedarburg Woolen Co. Worsted Mill are located along the west bank of the Milwaukee River in the small village of Grafton. They are just south of an old iron bridge which was the only bridge across the river in Grafton throughout the 19th century. The wide concrete dam is just north of the bridge. A long covered flume from the dam to each building is now located under the parking lot and a 1967 addition to the woolen mill. Ruins of concrete and stone retaining walls for the tail races can still be seen at the water's edge.

Grafton Flour Mill

The Grafton Flour Mill is a simple, rectangular, three-story structure (50' x 66.5') with a one-story wing (31.65' x 50') to the south. The three-story section probably was built in three parts. The oldest part is a two-story section on the north end, which may date to 1846-1847.¹ The outline of a gabled parapet remains on the east wall. The local limestone rubble walls have been stuccoed on the east and west sides. The third story is cream brick on the east and west sides and stone rubble on the north. A short segment of stone rubble extends around the northeast corner, suggesting that the stone section may at one time have been three stories high.

A large, cream brick, load-bearing addition to the south is three-stories also and probably dates to 1884-1894. A small rectangular one-story brick shed rests atop the flat roof in the northwest corner. A one-story brick load-bearing addition to the south was added between 1910 and 1929, to the east of which a small concrete block extension (19.7' x 31.65') was added after 1929. The river (east) side of the mill is actually four stories high due to grade changes on the site; tiny six-light windows pierce this basement story.

All other windows have six-over-six double-hung sash under segmental arches. Original doors in the pre-1894 section include one on the north side, two on the west (one above the other at the second and third stories), and a Dutch door on the east side of the oldest section. One door in the 1910-1929 section has a transom light. All are segmentally arched. Post-1952 doors include a loading door on the north end of the west side, another under the two upper story doors and one on the south side.

The interior is simple, with heavy wooden posts and flooring of maple planks laid diagonally. The basement and first floors are divided by wooden partitions into smaller work and sales rooms; the second and third floors are open and empty.

None of the flour milling machinery remains, but it is possible that the six turbines still exist under the three-story brick section of the mill.

(continued)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Mills of Grafton, Grafton, Ozaukee Co., WI

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 1

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Traces of the old "Badger Worsted Mills" sign painted along the cornice line can still be detected. The building is currently used as a knitting goods shop with a wool cleaning and carding business in the rear.

Cedarburg Woolen Company Worsted Mill

The Cedarburg Woolen Company Worsted Mill is located just south of the Grafton Flour Mill. It is a much larger structure constructed of load-bearing coursed rubble with some brick, fieldstone, wood and ashlar incorporated into the walls. The predominant material is a blue-gray dolomite limestone. The original, 1880, portion of the mill is three-stories high with evenly spaced six-over-six windows under segmental arches constructed of cream brick. The roof is a very slightly pitched gable. A four-story stone tower with slightly battered sides was part of the original building. Decoration on the tower consists of a bull's-eye window on each side between two levels of tiny doubled round-arched windows. Low rounded arches at the south end of the east and west facades of the old mill mark the original water race.

A major expansion campaign was announced in the Milwaukee papers in 1882.² It is likely that most of the limestone additions date to that time. A very large two-story building was constructed a few feet to the north, connected to the 1880 building by a small, one-story picker house and an iron clad passage. To the south of the 1880 mill was added a one-story boiler room, a two-story wash and dyeing room and a frame dye house.

Between 1894 and 1904 the passage between the two major buildings was connected by a three-story stone structure. Between 1904 and 1910 a new brick boiler room with a tall chimney was added to the south; between 1910 and 1929 the large, two-story building received a third story and minor one story brick additions were appended to the south end.

All windows in these limestone sections followed the original in design: six-over-six sash and segmental arches, spaced evenly across the facade. Some have been replaced through the years with one-over-one sash but the current owner has already begun to restore them to the original configuration. Gable-roofed elevator sheds rest on the slightly sloping roof.

Large, one and two story concrete block wings were added in the 1930s, 1941, and 1967 (see enclosed map). Although these later structures are functional in design, they contribute to the historical significance of the building because they were built by the woolen company which owned and used the complex from 1902 to 1980.

The interiors of the limestone sections are basically the same: one central row of heavy wood posts running north to south support heavy east-west beams. Unfinished flooring of mixed segments of fir, maple and walnut in

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Mills of Grafton, Grafton, Ozaukee Co., WI

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 2

the 1880 section, and oak in the ca. 1882 section have a soft sheen from the lanolin oil in the wool processed here for nearly 100 years. Walls are plastered on the inside.

Although much of the historic machinery was still operating in 1980, the previous owners sold nearly all of it before vacating the premises. The only artifacts remaining are one electrified skein-winding machine (one of the original 100), two old pulleys affixed to roof joists, a large, built-in foreman's desk, a built-in Howe scale, and another Toledo scale, one wire cage freight elevator and one wooden freight elevator. The previous owners state that the original Leffel turbine remains in its tub underneath the 1880 structure, but it is not accessible.

The office wing at the far north end houses a leather company office on the first floor. Above, construction is underway to convert the next two stories into open, loft-type housing units. The concrete block sections house several small light manufacturing concerns at the moment. Plans call for the conversion of the entire complex into housing and offices when the market improves. The few remaining pieces of machinery will be retained in the building.

¹An early settler reminiscing in 1880 about his arrival in 1848 noted that the original 1847 mill structure was part of the 1880 mill. Then in 1884 a fire reportedly destroyed the mill, but it is unlikely that the heavy stone walls were totally demolished before rebuilding. A plaque in the stone section reads "Grafton Mills, 1884." The 1894 Sanborn-Perris map shows a three-story building of stone and brick.

²Milwaukee Sentinel, Jan. 17, 1882. All of the limestone additions are shown on the 1894 Sanborn-Perris map.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below					
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture (Grafton only)	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/humanitarian		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1980	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention				

Specific dates see below Builder/Architect unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Specific dates: Flour mill: 1847, rebuilt after fire in 1884.¹
 Worsted mill: 1880 with later additions.²

Period of significance: 1846-1980

The Grafton Flour Mill and the Cedarburg Woolen Co. Worsted Mill are historically significant as the only remaining mills in Grafton. They represent two important phases in the development of agrarian interests in Wisconsin: the first wheat-growing phase and the wool producing phase which followed it. They are significant to the history of Grafton as key 19th century industrial plants in the small German village.

They are architecturally interesting as large, imposing landmarks representative of the limestone building construction indigenous to the area. However, the woolen mill has lost some of its visual integrity by the addition of concrete wings. Finally, the existence of the flume, concrete and stone retaining walls for races, and some milling machinery are of some value to industrial archeologists.

Thematic Background

In 1843, a waterfall and a series of rapids among rocky outcroppings in the Milwaukee River drew the first white settlers to the area, later known as Grafton. For the first three years life in the pioneer village revolved around a stone building erected by Yankee settlers as a courthouse (extant and in use as a tavern) in the hopes that Grafton would be declared the county seat. When those hopes were dashed, the pioneers turned their attention to industrial enterprise.

In 1846-1847 two dams were built, the first at the rapids, where the existing dam is now, and one three-fourths of a mile downriver at the waterfall. The power of the first dam, which had a 14 foot fall, was used for a grist mill and two sawmills. The 20' fall at the waterfall dam was intended to power a papermill but instead became the power source for a chair and bedstead factory. Despite the fact that Grafton could boast the finest water power on the Milwaukee River, and attracted some settlers, the village for many years "lay in a state of rest ... [a] Rip Van Winkle slumber,"³ perhaps because the aggressive business leaders in Cedarburg, only four miles away, provided too much near-by competition. The few manufacturing interests in Grafton were each, therefore, comparatively vital to the well-being of the tiny hamlet.

(continued)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Mills of Grafton, Grafton, Ozaukee Co., WI

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 1

Besides the grist mill (begin in 1846-1847) and the worsted mill (begun in 1880), both discussed below, the other water-powered mills in Grafton were:

1. Two sawmills powered by the grist mill dam, began in 1846-7 and were demolished ca. 1855-1860.
2. Lamson and Gill's cabinetmaking firm (the chair and bedstead factory mentioned above) was begun in 1846-1847 and operated continuously under a number of owners until 1873. The building was vacant until 1881 when a spring flood swept the dam away. Around 1890 when the dam was rebuilt for a lime company, a knitting company moved in. Later the mill was a chair company and in the 1920s was one of the few recording laboratories in the country specializing in "Race" records. Across the street another mill served alternately as a sawmill (ca. 1860), various furniture mills (bedsteads, tables, cane seat chairs), and an auxiliary building to the other mill. In 1860 the firms operating at the waterfall dam employed 18 men, the largest group of laborers in the Grafton area (in 1870 the number had risen to 30 men). Unfortunately the entire complex was demolished before 1950. The site of the dam is now a picturesque area of rapids and tiny waterfalls.
3. A two-man tannery just north of the grist mill dam was reported in the 1880 census as using the Milwaukee River and a boiler for power. The stone building later housed an electrical supply firm and is now gone.
4. In 1890 the Milwaukee Falls Lime Co. rebuilt the waterfall dam to provide power to their six stone lime kilns. The small power house was demolished in the distant past, but the six older (ca. 1874) kilns have been preserved as a focal point in a village park.

Other industrial and service enterprises in 19th century Grafton were the Grafton Brewery (stone and brick veneer, demolished), and a number of one and two-man blacksmithies, cobbler shops and saddleries. Only one building connected with these smaller operations is known to remain: the Kohlwey Blacksmith Shop, a two-story fieldstone structure on the main street.

In summary, the only mills remaining that reflect the importance of water power to early residents of Grafton are the Grafton Flour Mill and the Cedarburg Woolen Company's Worsted Mill.

Grafton Flour Mill - INDUSTRY

As in most pioneer Wisconsin communities the flour mill in Grafton was a place of industrial importance, serving area wheat, rye and dairy farmers. It was also a place of social congregation for those farmers and their

(continued)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Mills of Grafton, Grafton, Ozaukee Co., WI

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 2

families.

A group of Yankee farmers, I. Edwards, William Bonniwell, P. M. Johnson and T. A. Holmes, built the dam and grist mill in the winter of 1846-1847. The grist mill originally operated with three runs of stone. In the 1850s the mill was owned by a prominent local lawyer and civic leader from upstate New York, Harvey G. Turner. In 1860 before he moved back to New York, Turner sold the mill to W. J. Tibbits. In that year, the mill kept three men occupied grinding 6000 barrels of wheat and 3000 barrels of rye for a total production valued at \$37,600. This production was average compared to mills in neighboring towns, but Grafton produced less rye flour, perhaps because the other mills were owned by Germans. In 1865 the dam washed out. Andreas Kreutzer bought the mill and repaired the dam. In 1870, three central discharge wheels, one iron turbine and three runs of stone ground \$21,952 worth of flour for area farmers and \$13,425 for Kreutzer to sell in surrounding towns. At that time the mill was the second largest industry in Grafton behind the chair factory.

A succession of owners, all German, followed. In 1880, H. Smith (Schmidt) and Company's five stones, four water wheels, two turbines and five employees ground 10,000 barrels of flour, 5000 barrels of rye flour, and 77,000 pounds of feed for a total production of \$83,000.⁴ The dam washed out and was rebuilt in 1881 but in 1884 a devastating fire caused the mill's unfortunate one-armed miller, Mr. Schmidt, to default. The mill was quickly rebuilt, however, by his creditors and grew to have a steady trade in Milwaukee for its "White Lily" flour. After a tornado blew off its tin roof in 1890, another succession of owners continued to operate the mill uneventfully except for the change from all stone grinding to rollers at the end of the 19th century. The mill was bought in the Depression by the Badger Worsted Mills.

ARCHITECTURE

The grist mill is architecturally important at the local level as a virtually unaltered 19th century industrial structure. The oldest section was built from locally-quarried dolomite limestone, a material frequently used in neighboring Cedarburg, but seldom used in less prosperous Grafton, where fieldstone buildings are more common. As mentioned above, the only other 19th century industrial structures remaining in Grafton are the fieldstone Kohlwey blacksmith shop, the Ormsby Lime Co. kilns, and the worsted mill. All of these buildings are probably eligible for the National Register because of their relative state of preservation and the importance to Grafton of the industrial enterprises housed in them. But the Grafton Flour Mill is the most intact, both inside and out.

Cedarburg Woolen Company Worsted Mill- INDUSTRY

In 1880, the Cedarburg Woolen Company decided to expand their production to include worsted yarns and fabrics. They bought lots next to the

(continued)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

Mills of Grafton, Grafton, Ozaukee Co., WI

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

8

Page

3

grist mill in Grafton and erected a large stone mill that went into production will 100 hands in February, 1881. When it was built, a local history claimed that it was "the only worsted mill in the west."⁵

In 1882 a group of investors, mostly Milwaukeeans, bought the mill and incorporated as the Grafton Worsted Company. The president of the Cedarburg mill, Diedrich Wittenberg, was one of the directors of the new firm. After a short period of ownership by the Sheboygan Knitting Company in the 1890s, the Wittenberg family converted the mill into a tannery. In 1902, though, a son and son-in-law of D. Wittenberg bought the building and incorporated their new venture as the Badger Worsted Mills. According to a member of the family, the mill was so important to Grafton's economy that during the Depression they were asked to pay the taxes for the mill early in order to keep the village operating.⁶

In 1952, the mill had 65 employees and manufactured worsted yarns for domestic and industrial applications, still using the river as its power source. All processes were carried on in the building, from combing and spinning to dyeing and packaging. In 1980 the worsted manufacturing operations were moved to the sunbelt. The Cedarburg Woolen Mill in Cedarburg (NRHP) and the worsted mill in Grafton are among just a handful of woolen mills remaining in Wisconsin.

The limestone rubble construction and large size (237 feet long) of the worsted mill make it somewhat architecturally interesting but it is not being nominated for architectural significance because of the many concrete additions on its west side.

¹Letters from Friederich Hilgen to F. Boerner, Dec. 6, 1846 and from William Schroeder to F. Boerner, Jan. 4, 1847, in "German Pioneer Letters," Wisconsin Magazine of History, June, 1933, pp. 438 and 440; and, "1884" plague on building.

²History of Washington and Ozaukee Counties, Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1881, p. 530.

³Ibid., p. 530.

⁴The grinding of feed reflects to rising importance of the dairy industry in Wisconsin.

⁵History of Washington and..., p. 530.

⁶Interview with Stan Roebken by Rita Renner, Dec. 17, 1981.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Please see continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Flour mill: .53 acre; Worsted mill: 1.87 acres

Quadrangle name Cedarburg, Wisconsin

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

Grafton Flour Mill:

1 6 4 22 0 3 0 4 7 9 6 3 8 0
Zone Easting Northing

Cedarburg Woolen Co. Worsted Mill:

1 6 4 2 2 0 5 0 4 7 9 6 3 0 0
Zone Easting Northing

C [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []
E [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []
G [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

D [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []
F [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []
H [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

Verbal boundary description and justification

Please see continuation sheet.

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

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Katherine H. Rankin, preservation consultant, for

William Mabry and

organization Innovate, a Wisconsin partnership date February 3, 1983

street & number 1109 Sherman Avenue telephone 608-256-2905

city or town Madison

state Wisconsin 53703

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Richard Memeey

title Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin

date 4/29/83

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

See Continuation Sheet for details date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

Mills of Grafton, Grafton, Ozaukee Co., WI

For NPS use only
received
date entered

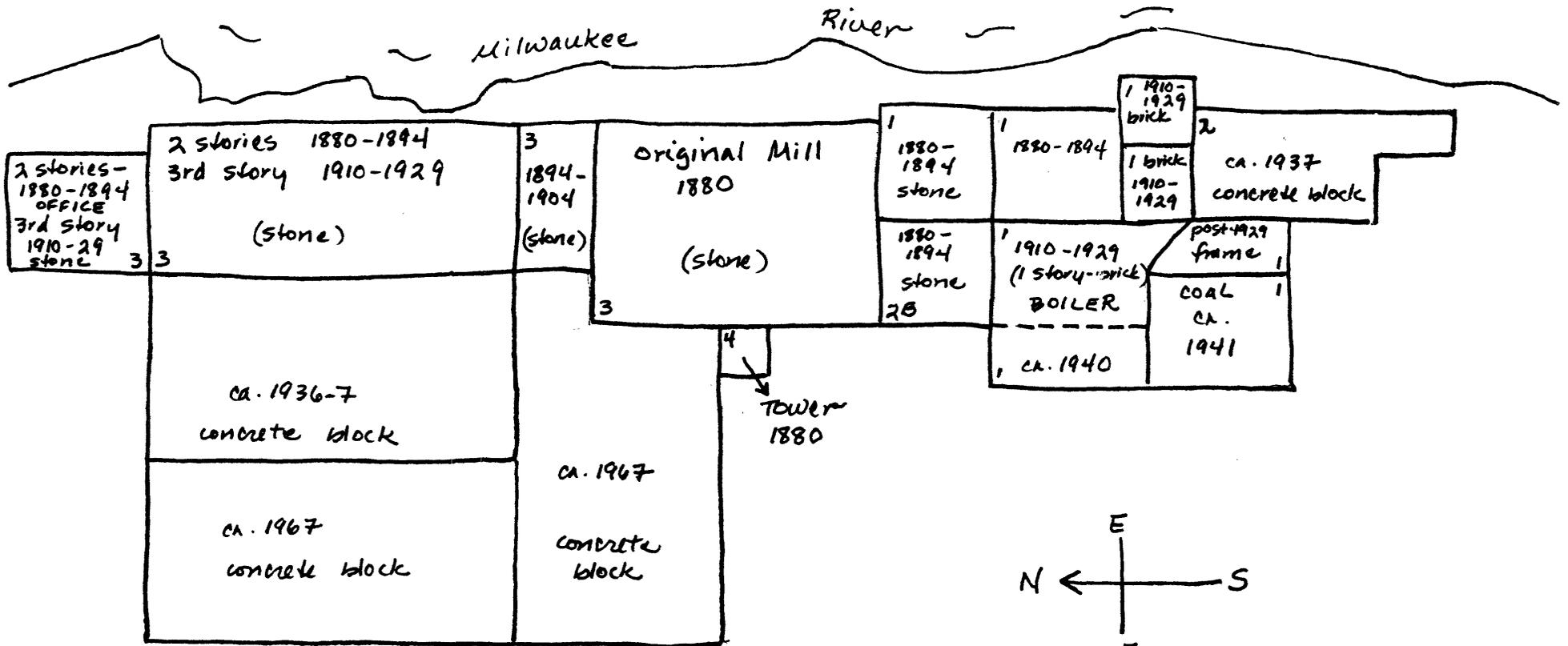
Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 1

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- Merk, Frederick, Economic History of Wisconsin...During the Civil War Decade, Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1916.
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- Photo of Cedarburg Woolen Company Worsted Mill under construction, 1880, in possession of Peter Renner.
- Population and Products of Industry Schedules, United States Census for Ozaukee County, 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880.
- Quaife, Milo M., ed., "Biographies," State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Collections, v. XXIX, Madison, 1928, p. 927.
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Worsted Mill, Grafton



not to scale

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

Page 1 of 1

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Mills of Grafton Thematic Resources
State Wisconsin

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

1. Cedarburg Woolen Co.
Worsted Mill

Entered in the
National Register

for
Keeper

Melrose Byers 6/30/83

Attest

2. Grafton Flour Mill

Entered in the
National Register

for
Keeper

Melrose Byers 6/30/83

Attest

3.

Keeper

Attest

4.

Keeper

Attest

5.

Keeper

Attest

6.

Keeper

Attest

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Keeper

Attest

8.

Keeper

Attest

9.

Keeper

Attest

10.

Keeper

Attest