UNIVERSAL DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

NAME

HISTORIC
Kerr Mill
AND/OR COMMON
Same

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
Sloan Road, on south side of S.R. 1768, at junction of S.R. 1770
CITY, TOWN
Millbridge
STATE
North Carolina
VICTORY OF
Code
37

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY
DISTRICT
BUILDING(S)
STRUCTURE
SITE
OBJECT
OWNERSHIP
PUBLIC
PRIVATE
PRIVATE
PUBLIC ACQUISITION
IN PROCESS
BEING CONSIDERED
STATUS
OCCUPIED
UNOCCUPIED
WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
YES RESTRICTED
YES UNRESTRICTED
NO
PRESENT USE
AGRICULTURE
COMMERCIAL
EDUCATIONAL
ENTERTAINMENT
RELIGIOUS
GOVERNMENT
SCIENTIFIC
INDUSTRIAL
TRANSPORTATION
MILITARY
OTHER

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Mr. James A. Sloan
STREET & NUMBER
Route 1, Box 20
CITY, TOWN

Mr. Ulla
STATE

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Rowan County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Satisfaction

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITION ON
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE
Kerr Mill, a substantial brick structure, is pleasantly situated in a wide creek bottom surrounded by rolling hills in a rich farming area of Rowan County. The two-story structure, three bays wide and two deep, rests on a stone foundation which is hardly visible on the front but is exposed to form a full basement on the rear or creek side of the building. The brick, well finished with closers, is laid in four-to-one bond. Facades terminate in well-executed molded brick cornices. The three-bay main facade has a central entrance consisting of a heavy board-and-batten Dutch door, surmounted by a three-light transom. A simple molded door frame is neatly set into the thick brick wall. The door is surmounted by a handsome gauged brick flat arch and there is a well worn stone door sill. Flanking the door are windows with six-over-nine sash, also set into simply molded frames, with stone sills and similar brick flat arches. This window treatment recurs throughout the first floor. The window to the right of the door has batten shutters consisting of two vertical boards in each leaf joined by a horizontal board near the top and bottom; the shutters are held in place by strap hinges hung on pintles.

Directly above the central entrance is a large batten door with stone sill below and flat arch above. Since there is no evidence of a porch, this door was probably used for loading and unloading. The second-floor windows, which repeat the stone sills and molded frames of the first level, have six-over-six sash and flat arches one brick high.

Both of the two-bay gable ends have two large openings in the gables. The south end has two windows with six-over-six sash, and the north end has one window to the rear and a batten door for loading to the front. On the first floor of the south end is a door; otherwise the fenestration is like the front. The rear fenestration is similar to the front but lacks doors, except for the basement level. There is an interior end chimney in the north gable, but the stack is broken to the roofline.

The interior appears originally to have had one large room at each level, although some partition walls have been added. The heavy timber framing is sawn and chamfered with lamb's tongues. The interior walls are exposed brick and over each door and window are wooden lintels with supportive blind arches above. The only heat in the building was provided by one unadorned fire opening in the north wall of the first floor. The mill is not in working order now but all floors and the basement are filled with milling equipment. The equipment on the second floor and attic appears to be predominantly twentieth century while the material stored in the basement may be earlier. The floors have various shaped holes, reflecting where belts, shafts and wooden pipes have passed through during different stages in the operation. In the twentieth century, the mill was steam-powered; this equipment has been dismantled. No remnants of its water power source remain in place, though there was once a large mill pond (now a field).
The Kerr Mill in Rowan County is an unusually handsome and substantial brick grist mill, one of the few brick antebellum grist mills in the state. Evidently constructed for Joseph Kerr in the early 1820s, it was run by his son, Dr. Samuel Kerr, during much of the nineteenth century, producing 360 barrels of flour and 3,000 bushels of corn meal in 1850 and 1,500 barrels of flour in 1860. The mill, which was operated until the 1940s, is to be rehabilitated as a local preservation project.

Located on Kerr Creek near the community of Hillbridge in Rowan County, the grist mill that bears the name of Doctor Samuel Kerr was in existence in 1824. In that year reference to "Kerr's Mill" on "Kerr Creek" appears in county road overseer orders. Local tradition also claims that Samuel Kerr built the mill in the 1820s, but since Samuel Kerr was not listed as owning taxable property before 1830, it is more likely that his father, Joseph Kerr, built the mill probably sometime between 1820 and 1824.

Kerr Creek on which the Kerr Mill is located was known in the 1790s as "Cathey's Mill Creek" or "Cathey's Creek" named for James Cathey, head of a large landholding family in Rowan County at that time. Joseph Kerr received land on Cathey's Creek in three different deeds, the first in 1791 and the second one on February 3, 1796. Because the land granted in these deeds was divided according to landmarks that are now obscure, it is not absolutely certain which document referred to the mill site. In all probability, however, the mill location was included in a deed of February 3, 1796, granted to Joseph Kerr by his brother Samuel Kerr (Dr. Kerr's uncle). Although this land transaction does not specify the number of acres awarded to Joseph Kerr, it does list the tract of land as being "next to James Cathey" whose land bordered on the site of Kerr's Mill.

Joseph Kerr died in 1829, and in his will probated in that year he divided his property in Rowan County among his sons, Richard and Samuel, and his daughter Mary. His estate in that county consisted of "1,500 acres of land valued at $7,000, two town lots in Salisbury, mills, and twenty slaves." Samuel's share of the land evidently included the mill property on Cathey's Creek. Two other sons, Andrew and John, as well as a daughter, Elizabeth Wilson, received land in Tennessee near the Mississippi River.

Samuel Kerr was born in Rowan County in 1799. He was the son of Joseph Kerr and the former Mary Allison who were married on October 31, 1785. In 1822 Kerr received an A.B. degree from the University of North Carolina, but alumni records for the school show no further medical education. Upon graduation he returned to Hillbridge to live with his parents. After his father's death he and his mother lived in a house built by his father near the site of the Kerr Mill. His mother died in 1839. Unmarried, Dr. Kerr practiced medicine, farming, and served in the state senate, 1846-1847. He continued to run the mill on Kerr Creek until his death in 1865.
The Rowan County physician was a wealthy man. In addition to Samuel Kerr's vast
landholdings in Mississippi and Tennessee as well as North Carolina, he owned fifty-one
slaves in 1860. In that year the value of his real estate was placed at $228,200 and
his personal estate at $171,820. He also possessed considerable stock in the North
Carolina Railroad Company. The 1850 census indicates that after the death of his mother,
he lived alone with the exception of Dr. Francis N. Luckey, with whom he shared his
medical practice for a short time, and an overseer named Stanhope J. Brown. By 1860
Dr. Kerr had given up the practice of medicine and had turned solely to farming, invest-
ment, and the mill as sources of income.

Kerr's Mill, one of twenty-two grist mills in Rowan County in 1850, made a nice
profit for its owner. The 1850 census reveals that the facility annually produced 260
barrels of flour worth $1,440 and 3,600 bushels of corn meal valued at $1,220. Up to
that time the capital investment in the mill was $5,000, and one miller was employed
there at $10 per month. In 1860 the mill was used only for the production of flour,
and it produced 1,500 barrels of the staple worth $9,750. An additional man was also
hired to work in the mill at a salary of $10 per month.

In his will of 1865 Samuel Kerr left all of his property in Rowan County, including
his household furnishings and mill property, to his niece Catherine C. Barnes. "Kate"
Barnes, as she was known to her family, was the daughter of Elizabeth Kerr (Samuel's
sister) who had married James Wilson of Georgia in 1823. Kate had married George T.
Barnes in Rowan County in October, 1864.

In 1872 George and Catherine Barnes sold "593 acres on Cathey's Creek" that evidently
included the Kerr Mill to James McCubbins. McCubbins operated the mill until August 1893
when he sold a half interest in the "McCubbins Mill" and "six acres more or less" to
his mill operator, John Page, and also deeded a half interest in the same property to
J. N. Harrison. The deed to Harrison was made "in compliance with a bond for title given
said McCubbins and wife to said Harrison and dated March 21st, 1881."2 In October, 1895,
Harrison also sold his share of the mill and surrounding six acres to John Page.

Sometime between 1895 and 1908 the mill property was transferred to P. O. Tatton of
Rowan County. John Page died intestate in 1911, and neither the county deed books, final
settlements, or special proceedings make any reference to the sale of the mill property
to Tatton.

In June, 1909, P. O. Tatton sold the "Harrison-McCubbins" mill site to James W. Sloan
who in September, 1927, sold the property to his nephew, James A. Sloan, for "one dollar
and other consideration." James A. Sloan continued to operate the mill until the 1940s.
Since that time he has used the building for office and storage space for his scale
business. In 1973 Mr. Sloan agreed to donate the mill to the county of Rowan through the
Rowan Historic Properties Commission, providing that the commission make adequate funds
for preservation. The people of the county are now making plans to restore the mill.
The preservation of the mill is also a Bicentennial project.
1. Rowan County Deed Book 14:302.
2. Rowan County Deed Book 79:36, 57
### Major Bibliographical References
Battie, Kemp P. *History of the University of North Carolina From its Beginning to the Death of President Swain, 1789-1868.* Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton Printing Company, 1907.
Brawley, James S. *Rowan County: A Brief History.* Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, 1974.

### Geographical Data

| ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY | APPROX. 6 ACRES |

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| Verbal Boundary Description |

### List All States and Counties for Properties Overlapping State or County Boundaries

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<td>City or Town</td>
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### State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

- National [ ]
- State [x]
- Local [ ]

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

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### Approval Process

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

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Rowan County Records, Rowan County Courthouse, Salisbury, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills, Tax Lists, Marriage Bonds, Miscellaneous Papers).

Rowan County Records, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills, Tax Lists, Marriage Bonds, Miscellaneous Papers).


Kerr Hill
Millbridge vicinity
North Carolina

UTM References:
17/531850/3944720

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Primary highway, hard surface
Secondary highway, hard surface
Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Unimproved road

CLEVELAND, N. C.
N3537.5—W8037.5/7.5
1970

AM3 4855 W HW-SERIES V642