**Form 10-300 (Rev. 6-72)**

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**INVENTORY – NOMINATION FORM**

*(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)*

---

**1. NAME**

| COMMON: | Moratock Iron Furnace (Moody's Tunnel Iron Works, Moratock Mining and Manufacturing Company) |

---

**2. LOCATION**

| STREET AND NUMBER: | East side of S.R. 1674, 0.3 mi. east of intersection with N.C. 89 |
| CITY OR TOWN: | Danbury vicinity |
| STATE: | North Carolina |

**CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:**

| The Hon. Wilmer D. Mizell |
| STATE: | North Carolina |
| CODE: | 37 |
| COUNTY: | Stokes |
| CODE: | 169 |

---

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY (Check One)</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OWNERSHIP</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC (Check One):**

| Yes: | Restricted |
| No: | Unrestricted |

**PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate):**

| Agricultural | Government | Park |
| Commercial | Industrial | Private Residence |
| Educational | Military | Religious |
| Entertainment | Museum | Scientific |

**TRANSPORTATION | COMMENTS**

---

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

| OWNER'S NAME: | Stokes County Commissioners |
| STREET AND NUMBER: | Stokes County Courthouse |
| CITY OR TOWN: | Danbury |
| STATE: | North Carolina |
| CODE: | 37 |

---

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

| COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: | Stokes County Courthouse |
| STREET AND NUMBER: | |
| CITY OR TOWN: | Danbury |
| STATE: | North Carolina |
| CODE: | 37 |

---

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

| TITLE OF SURVEY: | |
| DATE OF SURVEY: | |
| DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: | |

---
The Moratock Iron Furnace is an imposing industrial structure which
represents the only visible remains of the Moratock furnace and forge
complex. Built of rough-quarried rectangular granite stones, unmortared on
the exterior, the furnace is in the form of a trapezoidal cube, measuring
roughly 28 feet square at the base, 28 feet high, and 26 feet square at the
top, allowing for the typical "choked" interior flue. The "bosh" or conical
throat of the furnace is lined with an inner wall, constructed of layers of
fire brick set between a supporting framework of iron bars. Three sides of
the furnace are pierced by arched, vaulted openings which allow access to
the bosh. Each round arch is faced with trapezoidal stones. Each vault is
lined with granite blocks like those of the exterior wall surface, and has
a dirt floor. At the base of the inner wall of each vault is the small
opening to the bosh, framed by two wedge-shaped stones. The largest vault,
in the east elevation facing the river, was most likely the main casting
floor. It contains a trough at the base for the molten iron. The vaults
flanking this vault, in the north and south sides, are about two-thirds the
size of the main vault. Air was supplied to the fire in the furnace by
debbows through the openings at the rear of these smaller vaults. Large
forged iron eyes remain in three elevations, indicating the attachment of
shed dependencies or the use of hoisting machinery.

Moratock was a smelting furnace of the forced-blast variety, fed with
a combination of charcoal, brown hematite, and limestone. The ore was
mined from a site several miles up river from the furnace, where mine
shafts are still visible, and probably floated to the furnace on flat barges.
The power for operating the bellows at the north and south vaults was
supplied by an overshot waterwheel which was fed from the northwest bend
of the river by a system consisting of a dam, tunnel, and flume. The terrain
is uniquely suited for this operation, for the furnace is located in a
bend in the Dan River, and the elevation drops continuously as the river
flows east to the furnace. Water was channeled through the flume from the
river to the west across the bend. Ground depressions indicate the flume
location. All that remains of the forge is a depression in the ground
several hundred yards north of the furnace, and the head of a beam-type
water-operated forge hammer in the possession of a local resident.
The Moratock Iron Furnace is one of the best preserved of the small number of eighteenth and nineteenth century iron smelting furnaces known to exist in North Carolina. The large, architecturally significant granite furnace, believed to have been built in 1843 as Moody's Tunnel Iron Works, is an excellent example of the stonemason's skill and one of the few structures remaining from the antebellum iron industry in North Carolina. The scenic bend of the Dan River below Danbury, the county seat of Stokes County, in which the furnace and forge remains are located, is being developed as a historical park.

Stokes County was one of a number of Piedmont North Carolina counties which contained rich deposits of iron ore, and numerous small iron works, or bloomeries, were established in this area in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. These iron works generally consisted of a furnace to refine the ore and a forge, or hammer factory, to produce usable bar iron from the rough pig iron. Within the state, the iron masters of Lincoln County led iron production during this period, but by the early nineteenth century, five such ironworks had been founded in Stokes County: Martin's forge, Perkin's forge, Moore's Iron Works, Keyser's bloomery, and Hill's bloomery. Lack of an adequate transportation network and of sophisticated machinery, however, restricted the products of the North Carolina iron works to local markets, and the state's iron industry was eclipsed by those of Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee during the 1820s and 1830s.

The 1850 United States Census lists five bloomeries in Stokes County, two of these owned by Nathaniel Moody. The larger of Moody's bloomeries produced annually 100 tons of bar iron worth $9,000; the smaller, 50 tons of bar iron worth $4,500. One of these bloomeries is the "Tunnel Bloomery Forge," also known as "Moody's Tunnel Iron Works," which Moody and his partner John Pepper built in 1843. (The present furnace is believed to be the furnace constructed by Moody and Pepper, although it is possibly a replacement of their 1843 furnace dating from the management of one of the two later companies which owned the iron works before the Civil War.) The 107-acre site of the bloomery, on the north bank of the Dan River below Danbury, had been purchased by the two industrialists in 1840 from Alexander Hampton for $300. It is probable that the iron ore which supplied the furnace was obtained from the "well-known ore bank called the Rogers ore bank" which is mentioned as part of the lands which Moody
mortgaged in 1842. Also mentioned in this mortgage deed is the "well-known forge that the said Johnson Clements sold to the said Nath. Moody," indicating an earlier iron works possibly on the site of Moody's Tunnel Iron Works. In 1854 the iron works was purchased for $3,000 by Reuben Golding, a wealthy Stokes County citizen, who formed the Stokes Iron Mining Company. The 1860 United States Census indicates that Golding was operating both the forge, valued at $5,000, and a "smith shop," valued at $1,000.

The industrial needs of the Confederacy during the Civil War caused a renewed interest in the iron works of North Carolina, and in 1862 Golding and a number of other men, including two from Richmond, Virginia, incorporated the Moratock Mining and Manufacturing Company. This company was short-lived, and by 1871, apparently not having survived the war, the iron works was mortgaged to pay off the company's debts. In 1875 the mortgage was foreclosed and the property sold at public auction. The highest bidder was Colonel Jonathan M. Heck of Raleigh, who had been a partner in the North State Iron Works and a bayonet manufacturing company during the Civil War. Heck reactivated the Moratock Company, probably primarily for the purpose of mining the ore, and the operation continued until his death in 1894. In the same year his widow sold the property to J. Spot Taylor of Stokes County, though reserving the "rights to all the minerals in the land and ingress and egress for working, digging, mining and carrying away the same." The furnace and site remained in the possession of the Taylor family until 1973, when it was deeded to Stokes County for use as a county park.
Research and architectural description by Ruth Little Stokes, survey specialist.


Lesley, J. P. The Iron Manufacturer's Guide. 1856.

Heck, J. M., papers. Private Collections, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.

Public Laws of North Carolina, Sessions 1854-1855.

Stokes County Records, Stokes County Courthouse, Danbury, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds, Census Records).

### 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Public Laws of North Carolina, Sessions 1854-1855.
- Stokes County Records, Stokes County Courthouse, Danbury, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds, Census Records).

### 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CORNER</th>
<th>LATITUDE</th>
<th>LONGITUDE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NW</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 9 acres

### 11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Survey and Planning Unit

ORGANIZATION:
Division of Archives and History

STREET AND NUMBER:
109 East Jones Street

CITY OR TOWN: Raleigh

STATE: North Carolina

DATE: 23 April 1974

### 12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION:

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

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

Name: Thornton W. Mitchell

Title: Acting Director, Division of Archives and History

Date: 23 April 1974

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

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: __________________________

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date: __________________________
Stokes County Records, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina. (Subgroups: Deeds, Census Records).