

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Taylor's Mill

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER  
N. Side SR 1120 0.5 mi. W. of jct. w/SR 1124

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN  
Middlesex

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
Second

VICINITY OF

STATE  
North Carolina

CODE  
037

COUNTY  
Nash

CODE  
127

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME  
Mr. John Tippett

STREET & NUMBER  
Route 1

CITY, TOWN  
Zebulon

VICINITY OF

STATE  
North Carolina 27597

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.  
Nash County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Nashville

STATE  
North Carolina

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE  
Historic and Architectural Resources of the Tar-Neuse River Basin

DATE

1977

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS N.C. Division of Archives and History--Survey and Planning Branch

CITY, TOWN

Raleigh

STATE  
North Carolina

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 2

Alsey Jackson Taylor was born about 1817 but virtually nothing is known of his early life. Since he never learned to read or write, it may be concluded that he had little opportunity for an education. He never married and for many years his sister and mother, both named Mary, were members of his household.<sup>14</sup> Taylor managed to acquire considerable property and slaves, which brought a substantial income and elevated him to the planter class. Although he had acquired some property in the 1840s, Taylor enjoyed a meteoric rise in economic and social status during the 1850s. At the beginning of the decade his real estate was valued at \$2,000, but the census listed his occupation as none. By 1860 he was listed as a farmer, but his assets amounted to \$25,000 in real estate and \$42,850 in personal property. He also owned a total of thirty-nine slaves. Since he did not rely on a cash crop income his financial resources obviously came from other business interests.<sup>15</sup>

A. J. Taylor frequently acted as a banker for friends and neighbors, loaning them money to pay off debts. He was forced to foreclose on a number of notes and sometimes acquired valuable property in the settlement process.<sup>16</sup> Too, he operated a successful coopering enterprise which turned out an average of 800 barrels annually valued at \$1,600.<sup>17</sup> But perhaps the most significant portion of his income came from the milling business. Taylor owned two mills, one on Moccasin Creek and the other on Tar River. Both were successful operations; however, he decided to sell the Tar River facility and 202 acres in 1858, at which time James T. Webb became the purchaser for \$2,200. Although much renovated and enlarged, the mill still stands and is currently known as Webb's Mill.<sup>18</sup>

The mill on Moccasin Creek, which was named Taylor's Mill, is surrounded by tradition. It has long been believed by residents of the community that A. J. Taylor studied the site for some time and then employed slaves to dig out the mill pond and erect the mill. Furthermore, according to the tradition, Taylor lived about a mile north of the mill pond in a manor house originally built for Eli Strickland in 1812 (the house is gone). There lived also Taylor's brother Joseph, a physician whose office stood near the main house, not far from the row of slave cabins. Most of the tradition stems from the testimonials of M. P. Williams who lived<sup>19</sup> in the old Taylor house for six years (1887-1893) while his father worked in the mill. The oral tradition is accurate in a general context, but the documentary records revealed some slight discrepancies in the details of the story.

The chain of title clearly shows that the millpond existed nearly ninety years before Taylor purchased the property;<sup>20</sup> consequently, the millpond was not originally dug out by his slaves. Taylor did, however, enlarge and improve the facilities by building a new turbine operated mill (the one now standing) and perhaps by constructing a new dam to provide adequate power for the larger mill. It seems likely also that a sawmill was constructed about the same time.<sup>21</sup> All of the changes probably required some digging out of the creek bed and its banks, and possibly expansion of the millpond—thus the origin of the tradition.

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 3

The location of A. J. Taylor's residence is a more complicated matter. Census records indicate that from 1850 to 1870 Taylor lived east of the mill between Moccasin and Turkey creeks.<sup>22</sup> The home north of the millpond, the one in which M. P. Williams lived, and long believed to have been A. J. Taylor's manor house, was in fact the home of A. J.'s brother, Joseph M. Taylor.<sup>23</sup> The plantation had once belonged to Eli Strickland, and the inscription in the stone chimney, E. S. 1812, suggested that he had built the house.<sup>24</sup> A. J. Taylor acquired the property in the late 1840s, but by 1850 it was Joseph and his wife Mary who lived in the house.<sup>25</sup> Apparently the brothers had worked out an agreement whereby Joseph would live in the house and manage the plantation for his brother in exchange for an interest in the estate.

In 1850 Joseph M. Taylor was a thirty year old physician, and the doctor's office which he constructed near the manor house stood for many years. The rigorous life of a country doctor, however, seems to have taken its toll. Sometime in the 1850s, Joseph decided to change careers, swapping his doctor's shingle for a lawyer's license.<sup>26</sup> Perhaps it was not coincidental that Joseph switched to the legal profession during the period of his brother's rapid rise to prosperity. Joseph's superior education may have been the reason that A. J. Taylor felt his brother was better qualified to run the plantation and to manage business affairs. An indication of the agreement between Joseph and A. J. was the fact that the row of slave cabins on the Taylor plantation, as recalled by M. P. Williams, housed thirty-five of A. J. Taylor's slaves while the remaining four were house servants at A. J.'s home in the vicinity of present day Middlesex. Joseph himself owned only three slaves.<sup>27</sup> The arrangement brought prosperity to both, but the Civil War wreaked dramatic changes in the fortunes of the Taylor family.

In the spring of 1861, A. J. Taylor formed a company of volunteers known as Taylor's Company. In May, the group joined the Seventh North Carolina Regiment as Company E; Taylor was awarded the rank of captain. Captain Taylor's military career was short lived as he reluctantly resigned on July 14, 1862, because of chronic laryngitis.<sup>28</sup> The war nearly brought A. J. Taylor to financial ruin. Most of his wealth had been tied up in land and slaves, and with emancipation, he was forced to sell more than two thirds of his real estate to avoid bankruptcy. His landholdings which had reached 3,500 acres were reduced to 1,000 acres, most of which stretched from the mill northward between Moccasin and Little creeks.<sup>29</sup> Profits from land sales insured survival of the mill which became the main source of Taylor's income. Unfortunately Joseph died a few years after the war, and A. J. found it increasingly difficult to continue the operation.<sup>30</sup> On June 27, 1877, Captain Taylor sold the Taylor plantation of 500 acres and the mill tract to James T. Webb for \$13,500.<sup>31</sup>

James T. Webb was a businessman who formed a partnership with Henry Tisdale. Webb lived near the present town of Spring Hope while Tisdale moved to the Taylor's Mill area where he became general manager of a growing industrial complex.<sup>32</sup> It is unclear which of the businesses at the millsite were begun by Taylor and which were founded by Webb & Tisdale, but during the decade 1877-1887, Taylor's Mill thrived as a bustling community. M. P. Williams recalled the scene:

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

For HCRS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 5

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Granville Grants, State Archives, Raleigh, Book 21-E, plat attached.

<sup>2</sup> The word "mills" is plural in three successive Lee wills. The last, that of Moore Lee, gives a clear indication of two structures, but only one may have existed at the present site of Taylor's Mill. See Nash County Will Books, Office of the Clerk of Superior Court, Nash County Courthouse, Nashville, Will Book A, 256; and Book 1, pp. 212, 421, hereinafter cited as Nash County Will Book.

<sup>3</sup> Nash County Court Records, Minutes of the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions, April, 1778, p. 8, hereinafter cited as County Court Minutes.

<sup>4</sup> See Mouzon's Map of North and South Carolina, 1775; Price-Strother, First Actual Survey of North Carolina, 1808; Nash County Records, State Archives, Raleigh, Road Records, 1768-1887; and Bridge Records, 1779-1874. Compare with United States Department of the Interior Geological Survey, North Carolina, Spring Hope Quadrangle, 1902; and Map of Nash County, North Carolina by Wells & Brinkley, Engineers, 1918-1919.

<sup>5</sup> Nash County Will Book A, 256.

<sup>6</sup> That the mill was standing in 1783 is proved by a grant to James Lee for 100 acres adjoining "on the waters of Moccasin Creek beginning at a white oak below the mill." This landmark was mentioned in later boundary descriptions of the enlarged home and mill tract. See Nash County Deed Books, Office of the Register of Deeds, Nash County Courthouse, Nashville, Deed Book 2, p. 54, hereinafter cited as Nash County Deed Book. See also Nash County Deed Book 9, p. 168 for comparison of boundary description. For James Bud Lee's petition, see research of Dr. Margaret Battle of Rocky Mount as stated in a letter to Mr. John Tippet, February 19, 1976, copy in Taylor's Mill File in possession of Edythe M. Tippet of Zebulon, North Carolina, hereinafter cited as Battle Research. Dr. Battle is a well known local historian and considered to be a thorough and competent researcher by professional historians.

<sup>7</sup> Duplin County Records, State Archives, Raleigh, Marriage Bonds. The bond is dated December 23. A check of Nash County deeds, wills, and estates papers found no entries for James Bud Lee.

<sup>8</sup> Battle Research. Full ownership by James Lee is proved by Lee's will giving the mills to his son Leary. Nash County Will Book 1, p. 212.

<sup>9</sup> Nash County Will Book 1, p. 212. For Leary Lee's residence see deed from him to Moore Lee in which Leary is "of Johnston County." Nash County Deed Book 9, p. 168.

<sup>10</sup> Nash County Deed Book 9, p. 168. For fraternal relationship of Leary and Moore Lee, see Nash County Will Book 1, p. 212, will of James Lee. The Larry mentioned is actually Leary Lee.

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 7

<sup>22</sup>See order of visitation in Seventh Census, 1850. Population Schedule, 254; Eighth Census, 1860, Population Schedule, 36; and Ninth Census, 1870, Population Schedule, 49. Taylor lived some distance from the Stricklands and others known to have resided in the mill vicinity. For a description of the original townships, see Ricks, Nash County Historical Notes, 277-278.

<sup>23</sup>Compare Eighth Census, 1860, Population Schedule, 10, 22, 36, with Williams Testimonials. See also Nash County Deed Book 18, pp. 88, 464, and Taylor Estate Papers.

<sup>24</sup>Williams Testimonials. The house was destroyed many years ago and the only knowledge of the inscription comes from Mr. Williams.

<sup>25</sup>See footnote 23.

<sup>26</sup>See occupations listed in Seventh Census, 1850, Population Schedule, 292, and Eighth Census, 1860, Population Schedule, 10.

<sup>27</sup>Eighth Census, 1860, Slave Schedule, 1, 56.

<sup>28</sup>Walter Clark (ed.), Histories of the Several Regiments and Battalions from North Carolina in the Great War, 1861-'65 (Raleigh and Goldsboro: State of North Carolina, 5 volumes, 1901), I, 361; and Louis H. Manarin and Weymouth T. Jordan, Jr., (eds.), North Carolina Troops 1861-1865: A Roster (Raleigh: Archives and History, 7 volumes, 1966-1979), IV, 452.

<sup>29</sup>See Agricultural Schedules in Eighth Census, 1860, p. 7, and Ninth Census, 1870, p. 3. For location, see deed from Taylor to Webb, 1877, in Nash County Deed Book 30, p. 580.

<sup>30</sup>In the deed to Webb, there is a reference to the dower rights of Mary Taylor, Joseph's wife, proving that he had died before the agreement to sell the property. Nash County Deed Book 30, p. 580.

<sup>31</sup>Nash County Deed Book 30, p. 580.

<sup>32</sup>Williams Testimonials. See also Ricks, Nash County Historical Notes, 234-235.

<sup>33</sup>Williams Testimonials.

<sup>34</sup>Nash County Deed Book 97, p. 20.

<sup>35</sup>Nash County Deed Book 97, p. 20; and Williams Testimonials.

<sup>36</sup>Susan Mooring Hollis. Interview with John C. Tippet, Sr., of Taylor's Mill, summer, 1979, hereinafter cited as John Tippet interview. See also Williams Testimonials for description of hub and spoke shop.

<sup>37</sup>Nash County Deed Book 132, p. 467.

<sup>38</sup>See Nash County Deed Book 132, p. 497; Book 238, p. 586; Book 239, pp. 466-467;

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 1

- Corbitt, David Leroy. The Formation of the North Carolina Counties, 1663-1943. Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1950.
- Cross, Jerry L. Interview with Marie Tippett, January 22, 1980.
- Duplin County Marriage Bonds. State Archives, Raleigh.
- Edgecombe County Records. Deeds, Estates Papers, and Wills.
- Granville Grants. State Archives, Raleigh.
- Hollis, Susan Mooring. Interview with John C. Tippett, Sr., summer, 1979.
- Manarin, Louis H. and Weymouth T. Jordan, Jr., eds. North Carolina Troops 1861-1865: A Roster. Raleigh: Archives and History, 1966-1979. Seven volumes.
- Maps. Mouzon's Map of North and South Carolina, 1775. Price-Strother, First Actual Survey of North Carolina, 1808. United States Department of Interior Geological Survey, Nash County, North Carolina, Spring Hope Quadrangle, 1902. Wells & Brinkley, Engineers, Map of Nash County, North Carolina, 1918-1919.
- Nash County Records. Bridge Records, Deeds, Estates Papers, Inventories and Settlements, Minutes of Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions, Orders and Decrees, Road Records, and Wills.
- Powell, William S. The North Carolina Gazetteer. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1968.
- Thorpe, John H. Roster of Nash County Confederate Soldiers. Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton, 1925.
- Turner, J. Kelly and John L. Bridgers, Jr. History of Edgecombe County, North Carolina. Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton, 1920.
- United States Census Records, 1850-1870.
- Williams, M. P. Testimonials, November 8, 1955. March 7, 1959. Originals in possession of John C. Tippett of Taylor's Mill.
- The Zebulon Record. August 28, 1975.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Battle, Dr. Margaret. Letter to John Tippet, February 19, 1976. Contains research notes. Copy in possession of Edythe Tippet of Zebulon.

Clark, Walter, ed. Histories of the Several Regiments and Battalions from North Carolina in the Great War, 1861--'65. Raleigh and Goldsboro: State of North Carolina, 1901. Five volumes.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Quad name: Spring Hope, NC  
Quad scale: 1:62500

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 100

### UTM REFERENCES

	Lat.	Long.		Lat.	Long.
A	35°47'15"	78°19'40"	B	35°47'05"	78°19'27"
	ZONE EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE EASTING	NORTHING
C	35°46'43"	78°19'48"	D	35°46'46"	78°20'01"

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary of the Taylor's Mill property is indicated as the red line on the enclosed site plan and includes the mill pond, dam, mill, and land on each side of Moccasin Creek to just south of SR 1120.

### 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 Architectural description: Susan Mooring, Intern  
Historical statement: Jerry L. Cross, Researcher

ORGANIZATION Survey and Planning Branch DATE January, 1980  
Archaeological & Historic Preservation Section

STREET & NUMBER N.C. Division of Archives and History TELEPHONE (919) 733-6545  
109 E. Jones Street

CITY OR TOWN Raleigh STATE North Carolina

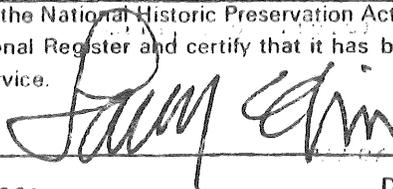
## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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



TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE March 13, 1980

### FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

# TAYLOR'S MILL POND



Boundary  
of  
Nominated  
Area

[-----] — OLD WOODEN DAM  
(SUBMERGED)  
~100' ABOVE PRESENT  
DAM

STONE DAM  
BUILT ~1920

SMALL BOAT  
LANDING

JOHN TIPPETT'S  
STORE

TAYLOR'S  
MILL

60'

30'

40'

DIRT  
PARKING  
AREA

JOHNSTON CO.

"HARNEY  
BODY  
SHOP"  
D. by 1940

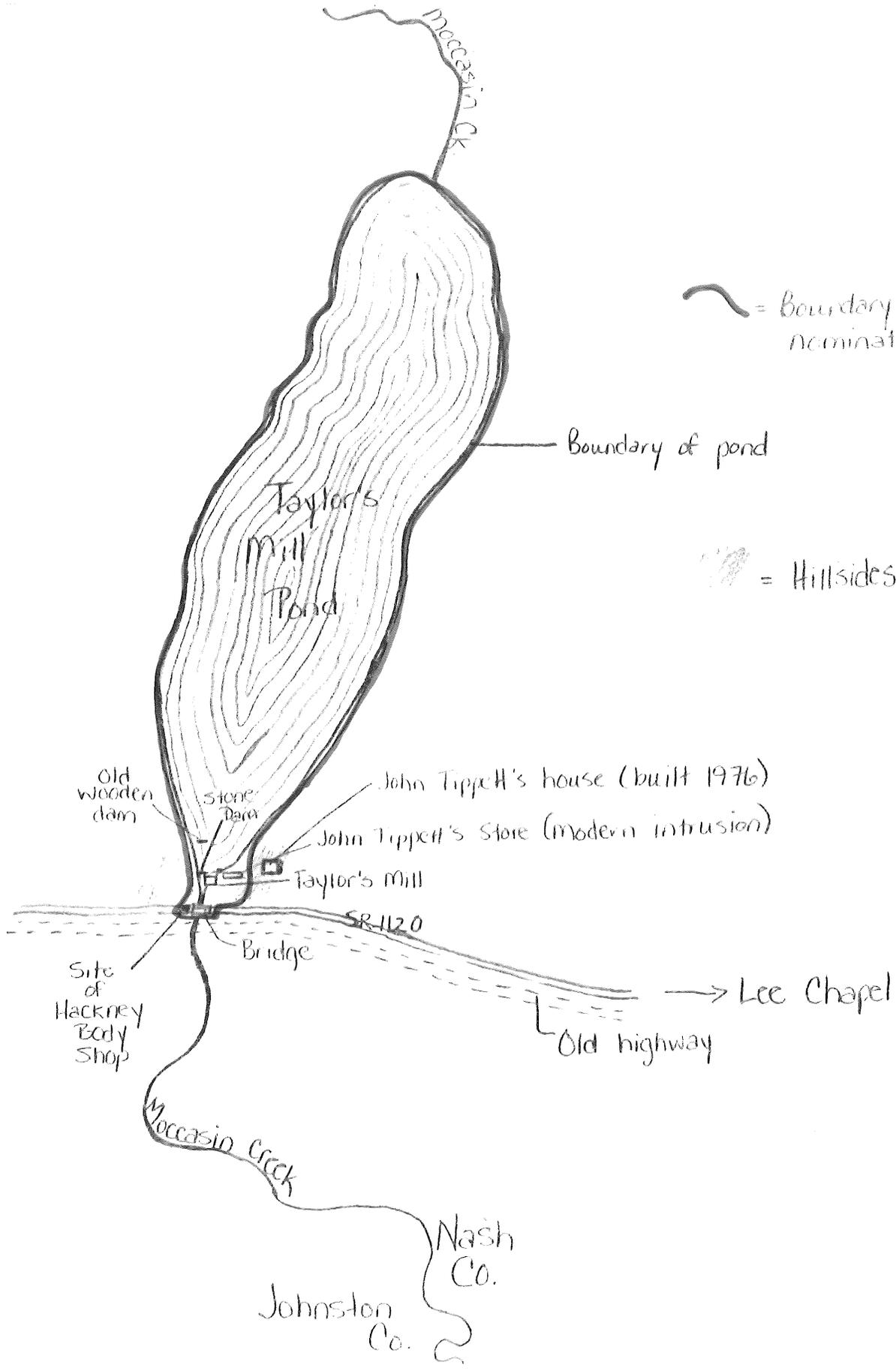
BRIDGE

SR 1120

NASH CO.

MOCCASIN  
CREEK

OLD ROAD



~ = Boundary of nominated area

Boundary of pond

[shaded area] = Hillsides

Old wooden dam

Stone Dam

John Tippett's house (built 1976)

John Tippett's store (modern intrusion)

Taylor's Mill

SR 1120

Bridge

Lee Chapel

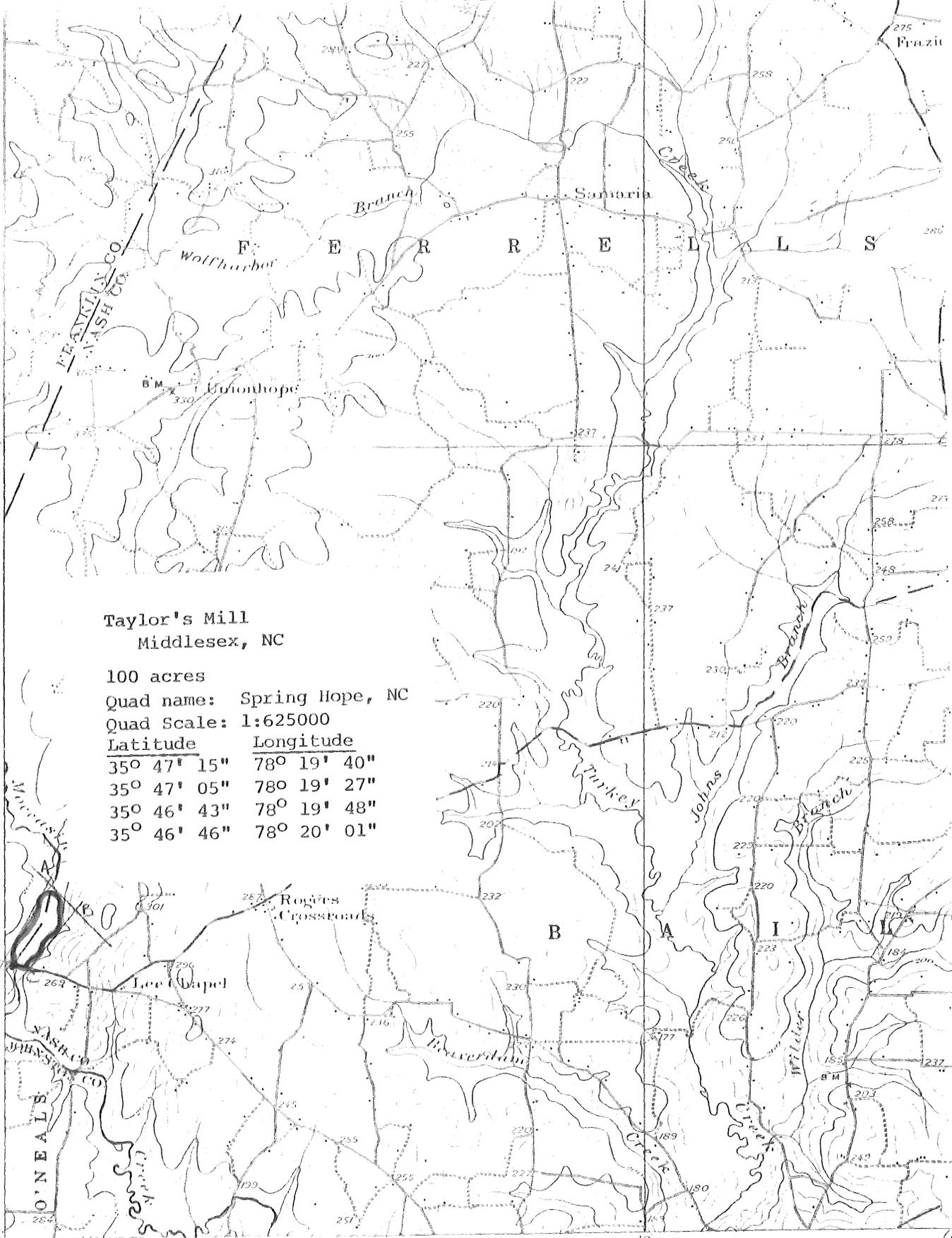
Old highway

Site of Hackney Body Shop

Moccasin Creek

Nash Co.

Johnston Co.



**Taylor's Mill**  
Middlesex, NC

100 acres

Quad name: Spring Hope, NC

Quad Scale: 1:625000

Latitude	Longitude
35° 47' 15"	78° 19' 40"
35° 47' 05"	78° 19' 27"
35° 46' 43"	78° 19' 48"
35° 46' 46"	78° 20' 01"

35°45'  
78°15'

H. M. Wilson, Geographer in charge.  
Control by Sledge Latum, and Robert Cue  
Topography by A. H. Burnstead, Robert Coe and T. F. Slaughter.

SURVEYED IN 1902

3000 0 3000 6000  
1 5 0 1  
SCALE  
Contour in  
Datum is n.

FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAP:

