

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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

1. Name

historic Grimes Mill

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 600 North Church Street

___ not for publication

city, town Salisbury ___ vicinity of

state North Carolina

code 037

county Rowan

code 159

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name The Historic Salisbury Foundation, Anne R. Williams, Executive Director

street & number Post Office Box 4221

city, town Salisbury ___ vicinity of

state N. C. 28144

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds, Rowan County Office Building

street & number 402 North Main Street

city, town Salisbury

state N. C. 28144

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title The Architecture of Rowan County has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes no

date Summer 1983 ___ federal state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records Survey and Planning Branch, Division of Archives and History

city, town 109 East Jones Street, Raleigh

state N. C. 27611

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 type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input 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

The Grimes Mill, located at 600 North Church Street in Salisbury, is a rare surviving example of Second Empire style industrial architecture in the state (others stand in Winston-Salem and Kernersville). Constructed in 1896-97 as the North Side Roller Mill, it owes its present name to the Grimes family who operated the mill from 1906-1963. The mill continued to operate until 1982, when it was purchased by the Historic Salisbury Foundation, Inc., which plans to reopen it as a mill museum.

The substantial three story granite trimmed brick building, resting on a basement and surmounted by a (later) rectangular cupola, has been considerably expanded by frame additions to the north and west; however, the original structure at the corner of Church and Franklin streets remains intact as the centerpiece of the milling complex. Most of the original belt-driven machinery also remains intact.

Rectangular in plan, the handsome brick mill faces east onto Church Street, with its cupola visible from Salisbury's Main Street, parallel to and one block east. The mill is three bays wide and four bays deep, with walls laid up in 6:1 American bond, enriched by granite quoins, window sills and thresholds. The two over two sash windows and door openings are set in segmental arches with granite keystones. Gable roof dormers project from the nearly straight sided mansard roof, covered with embossed metal shingles.

On the East or main facade, a pent shed roof extends across the front, sheltering the primary central entrance to the main mill block, the loading dock carrying across the front of the mill, the entrance to the one story flat roof addition containing the office, flour storage area and engine room, and the entrance to the larger frame grain storage elevator at the North. The large ca. 1906 gable roof grain elevator addition with cupola is covered with metal sheets which have been pressed to simulate brick.

A small addition, erected in 1956, adjoins the elevator at the North and was used to house pellet-producing machinery used in the production of feed pellets for domestic animals. Also contained in this addition is a molasses mixer and 4,000-gallon molasses storage tank.¹

Attached to the rear or west elevation of the main mill is a frame, shed roof, metal clad, one story addition, five bays deep, three bays wide, once used for corn storage. It rests on a basement/stable and is covered with brick-patterned metal siding.

Paralleling the south elevation is a coursed stone retaining wall, and an abandoned railroad spur where the hard wheat from Kansas and the Dakotas was received at the paired five panel doors in the easternmost bay of the south elevation, and there dumped into the basement level hopper from which the grain moved, via a belt driven horizontally spiralling brace and bit auger, under the first story floor to the grain elevator, being mixed as it moved along with the softer, North Carolina wheat.

Some local grains arrived, via wagons and trucks, at the first floor double door entrance to the grain elevator where it was dumped into a bin and weighed on a beautiful five-foot classically detailed scale with fluted columns supporting an architrave and frieze decorated with the name of the Howe Scale Co. As a toll/charge for personal grinding, one-eighth of the wheat was taken out. Many farmers, after receiving enough flour for their needs, sold the rest to the mill, which in turn sold it.

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The weighed grain was dumped into a separator, whose bolting action separated wheat from chaff. The roughly cleaned wheat was carried to the top of the grain elevator via small cups attached to a belt contained within wooden chutes. (Note: the belt-driven machinery was originally powered by steam, but the mill was converted to electricity between 1924 and 1927). Once in the elevator, the curing, green wheat was moved around the eight bins to keep it from molding.

Gravity brought the wheat down from the storage elevator and through the three floors of the mill, the tin lined chutes with cup elevators returning it for successively finer grinding and sifting, and finally gravity delivering it to the first floor where the flour was bagged and sold.

On the third floor of the mill are four dust collectors, the New Cyclone model, 1905, manufactured by the Knickerbocker Co., of Jackson, Michigan. These were probably installed by Grimes about 1906. Also on this floor is the original Monitor Dustless Receiving Separator, Huntley Manufacturing Co., Silver Creek, N.Y., patent dated Dec. 20, 1898, with twin graceful wooden chutes attached to the dust collector. Three different size grains can be separated by this machine which is used after the initial rough wheat/chaff separator in the first floor weighing/receiving room. The Eureka Horizontal Double Wheat Scourer, Eureka Works, Silver Creek, N.Y. and the Allis-Chalmers Reliance Purifier further clean the grain. There are two types of sifters or bolters on this floor, one for flour, and the other a Niagra Whipsifter, Richmond Mfg. Co., Lockport, N. Y., installed in the late 1930s and used for the sideline production of glue extenders (for use in furniture manufacturing) from poor quality or dirty flour. Three of the original small wheat storage bins remain on the third floor, unused since the 1913 elevator was constructed.

The second floor of the mill houses another separator used to remove the cockle, and a Nordyke & Marmon scourer, decorated with ornate hinges. On the painted brick south wall is an old hat rack where, by tradition, hung the varied work hats left by workers who left the mill's employ. Mill lore has it that Mr. Putnam, the longtime miller, could remember for years after the faces that went with each hat.²

The first floor contains the roller mills, mixing machine for self-rising flour, and the packing and bagging machinery. Six roller mills with rollers of graduated coarseness ground the wheat. After the wheat was ground by the coarsest first, it was elevated to the second floor sifters, returned by gravity through wooden chutes to the next mill, reground by the second mill, returned to the sifter, and so on, until the flour reached its finest consistency. Three of the roller mills are manufactured by Nordyke & Marmon Co., Indianapolis, Indiana, two by the Allis-Chalmers Co., Mill Watkins, Wisconsin, and one by the Case Co. The Grimes Roller Mill was capable of producing 1,000 lbs. of flour an hour during a 12-hour day.

Opposite the row of mills stand the self-rising mixer which adds salt, phosphate, and soda to the regular flour, an elevator, and three packing machines manufactured by Showes Co., Silver Creek, N.Y. A separate packer was used for the self-rising flour, regular flour, and bran which was used for animal feed. The flour was packed into good quality cloth bags, or smaller quantities into red striped paper bags: the stripes ran vertically on regular flour bags and diagonally on self-rising

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flour. The bran, for animal feed, was packed into rougher burlap bags. The cloth bags were stitched closed by a hand operated, belt driven sewing machine.

At the rear of this room is the addition which once was used for corn storage and, also, housed a corn sheller. The room is empty now and contains only a double row of three chamfered posts supporting the roof.

The finished sacks of flour were stored in the room behind the office in the one-story hyphen addition which connects the mill building and the grain elevator. The engine room lies at the rear of this storage area. The office still contains the original ornate safe manufactured by the Herring Marvin Safe Co., and was the only heated room in the complex. Woodstoves and fire were not permitted elsewhere due to the danger of combustion. There are still several signs scattered throughout the complex which reminded workers "Grain Dust is Like Explosives, No Smoking." After the mill was converted to electricity, as a precaution during thunderstorms, the wires would be temporarily disconnected from the building.

A manually operated man-lift connects the three floors of the mill, and there is a staircase in the northeast corner. Fire buckets hang in the stairwell at each floor. They have round bottoms, designed so that they cannot stand on their own and the workers would not be tempted to use them for other purposes.

The concrete floored basement houses the main line shaft and a multitude of belts and pulleys. At the rear is the former boiler room.

The one-bay wide, three-bay deep metal clad cupola which crowns the brick mill contains a curious collection of machinery for producing the once popular bleached flour. In this more nutritionally aware era with its emphasis on whole wheats and bran, it seems odd that bran was once considered fit only for animal consumption, and that bleached flour and white bread were the most desirable. Electric light was the first popular bleaching agent, then chlorine was used. The cupola contains a chlorine machine manufactured by the Alsop Process Co., St. Louis, patent date May 10, 1904. There is also a small electric motor which apparently powered an air compressor used in the chlorine process.³

The Grimes Mill is a significant Salisbury landmark both architecturally, as a rare and handsome example of a Second Empire style industrial building, and historically, since it operated continuously from its founding in 1898 until 1982, when it was purchased by the Historic Salisbury Foundation, Inc. for use as a mill museum.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 The Salisbury Post, 12 July 1956.
- 2 Interview with Mr. Albert Kluttz, miller 1926-33, Salisbury, 5 May 1983.
- 3 Ibid.

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	<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 type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<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 1896-1897 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Grimes Mill, a Second Empire style brick building constructed in 1896-1897, possesses historical significance in its own right and carries with it associations with its founders and operators who were important industrialists in Rowan and Davidson counties. The core of the present mill complex was erected by the North Side Roller Mill Company which included as its investors D. R. Julian, A. C. Mauney, and James C. and Napoleon Bonaparte McCanless. Their combined investment in this mill was typical of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century entrepreneurship and commercial development in piedmont North Carolina, where individuals invested in partnerships and concerns of diverse character. Julian and N. B. McCanless were actively involved in much of the industrial and commercial activity in Salisbury and Rowan County in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The mill operated as the North Side Roller Mill for about two years until it was sold by its builders. At a bankruptcy sale in 1906 John D. Grimes purchased the mill and expanded its physical plant. His family operated it until 1963 when it was purchased by Robert D. Davis of High Point who operated it until 1982 when he sold it to the Historic Salisbury Foundation. The Grimes family are millers of regional importance and claim credit for the construction of the first roller mill in North Carolina in Lexington in 1879. Following their purchase of the mill the Historic Salisbury Foundation has undertaken a large scale rehabilitation (and interpretation) program, cleaning and repairing the turn of the century (and later) milling machinery, with plans to operate the mill as a museum of milling history focusing on its role in the industrial history of Salisbury.

Criteria Assessment:

- A. Grimes Mill is associated with the agricultural prosperity of Rowan County and the late-nineteenth century industrialization of piedmont North Carolina.
- B. Grimes Mill is associated with the lives of its original incorporators as the North Side Roller Mill and with members of the Grimes family who owned and operated it from 1906 until 1963. Prominent among its builders was Napoleon Bonaparte McCanless (1851-1920) an as yet unheralded industrialist and builder in Salisbury and Rowan County from the 1870s until his death. The Grimes family, including John D. Grimes and his son J. Percy Grimes, were a prominent milling family in Rowan and Davidson counties from the 1879 construction of their roller mill in Lexington until selling this mill out of the family in 1963.

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- C. Grimes Mill, an intact--and expanded--nineteenth century industrial building, embodies the distinctive utilitarian features of turn of the century industrial buildings and enjoys the distinction of being one of a small number of Second Empire style industrial buildings in North Carolina. The style of the building owes in large part to the influence of Napoleon Bonaparte McCanless who in 1896 also erected as his residence on South Main Street a grand Second Empire style stone house which also survives.

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The Grimes Mill, constructed in 1896-1897 as the North Side Roller Mill, was one of the first roller flour mills in Rowan County. The mill was organized and built by D. R. Julian, A. C. Mauney, and brothers James C. and Napoleon B. McCanless, prominent Rowan County businessmen. The original mill building is a handsome three-story structure built of brick and trimmed with granite. Featuring a mansard roof with dormer windows and a cupola, the mill is one of a very small number of industrial buildings in North Carolina constructed in the Second Empire style.¹ At a 1906 bankruptcy sale the mill was purchased and remodeled by John D. Grimes. The mill was operated by the Grimes family until 1963 when it was purchased by Robert D. Davis. The mill continued in operation until 1982 when it was purchased by the Historic Salisbury Foundation for use as a working mill museum.

Napoleon B. McCanless and D. R. Julian were the leaders in establishing the roller mill; McCanless's brother James and A. C. Mauney, who was probably McCanless's brother-in-law, appear to have had little involvement in the mill after its initial organization.² McCanless and Julian, both active in numerous Salisbury business ventures, collaborated in several other enterprises. In 1895 they built and equipped the Kesler Manufacturing Company (a cotton mill), and took a \$50,000 contract to macadamize a number of Salisbury streets; in 1899 they would organize the Salisbury Savings Bank.³ McCanless was also a noted Salisbury building contractor and owner of a granite quarry. McCanless furnished the granite for the Federal Building and Post Office completed in Raleigh in 1877 and furnished the brick for the Kesler Cotton mill.⁴ He was probably responsible for building the brick and granite building for the North Side Roller Mill Company.

In 1878 there were twenty-four flour and corn gristmills in Rowan County, with fifteen of them located in the county seat of Salisbury.⁵ By 1884 there were only fifteen mills in the county with five of these in Salisbury.⁶ In 1886 James McCubbins and J. Mack Harrison converted their gristmill, located twelve miles southwest of Salisbury at Mill Bridge, to a roller mill; apparently this was the first roller mill in the county.⁷ The roller process produced cleaner and finer flour more quickly and in greater quantities than did the millstone operation. The Salisbury Carolina Watchman of October 28, 1886, reported that:

There is a revolution taking place in the milling business of the country which will consign to the rubbish heap the mills now in operation for making flour. It involves a total loss of the present machinery--buhr mill stones and all. Of course reference is had to the new system of making flour by crushing the wheat between steel or iron rolls instead of grinding it between stones. There is a great difference between the results. The flour from the roller mills is far superior and sells freely at \$3 and \$3.25, when that from the common mills of the county is refused at \$2 and \$2.25. . . . It is apparent, therefore, that the time for buhr stone mills is out, so far as making flour for the market is concerned. The revolution will necessarily be slow, for the cost of the roller system is much greater and beyond the means of the large majority of country millers. A strictly neighborhood business will be the limit of the mills now in use for a number of years, but the roller system will evidently supercede them in the end.

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None of the five flour mills in Salisbury in 1890 were roller mills but by 1892 the Salisbury Roller Mill Company was in operation. Evidently McCanless, Julian, and their partners felt they could successfully compete with the Salisbury Roller Mill and in April of 1896 they organized the North Side Roller Mill Company.⁸ The Salisbury Truth reported the mill in operation in July of 1897, running night and day producing fifty barrels each day of "first class flour."⁹ Despite the mill's success, McCanless and his associates sold the mill in 1898. For unknown reasons the mill went bankrupt in 1906 and company president James H. Ramsay sold the mill for \$4,000 to John D. Grimes of Lexington.¹⁰

In 1879 John D. Grimes, member of a prominent Davidson County family, built the first roller mill in North Carolina in Lexington.¹¹ At least three other members of his family operated mills in Davidson County. By the time Grimes purchased the North Side Mill in Salisbury a two-story addition had been built to the rear of the building. Grimes replaced much of the mill's equipment and in 1907 he contracted for the Southern Railway to build a short spur line connecting the main line to the mill.¹² John D. Grimes turned the management of the mill over to his son J. Percy Grimes in 1914; Percy Grimes operated the mill until his death when his son John D. Grimes assumed control of the mill.¹³ Percy Grimes expanded the mill in 1923 to increase production from 50 barrels of flour per day to 100 barrels per day. The mill employed seven people to produce a fancy patent plain flour and a self-rising flour as well as livestock feed. The mill bought local wheat for its consumption, but also found it necessary to purchase thousands of bushels of wheat grown in the mid-western states to meet the demand for the mill's flour. In 1963 the younger John D. Grimes sold the mill to Robert Davis of High Point who leased the mill complex to the W. A. Davis Milling Company of High Point.¹⁴ The Davis Milling Company continued operation of the mill until 1982. At that time the Historic Salisbury Foundation purchased the mill and currently plans to operate it as a mill museum.

The Grimes Mill is an important industrial landmark in Salisbury, having been continuously operated for eighty-five years and retaining most of its early twentieth-century machinery. The building is also significant for its intact condition as well as being a rare example of Second Empire style industrial architecture.

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FOOTNOTES

¹The Second Empire style was most popular in the 1860s and 1870s, a time when economic conditions did not permit much construction activity in North Carolina and thus there are few notable Second Empire style buildings in the state. Other examples of industrial buildings in the style are the former Harmon and Reid Flour Mill (1897) in Kernersville and the former Arista Cotton Mills (1880) in Winston-Salem, see Gwynne Stephens Taylor, From Frontier to Factory, An Architectural History of Forsyth County (Winston-Salem: City-County Planning Board of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County, 1981), 118, 218.

²James Brawley, "Footnotes to History," Salisbury Evening Post, 11 January 1976, quoting from the Salisbury Truth of 30 April 1896, hereinafter cited as Brawley, "Footnotes to History." A detailed biographical sketch of McCanless appears in North Carolina History, North Carolina Biography, Volume IV (Chicago and New York: Lewis Publishing Company, 1919), 135-136, hereinafter cited as North Carolina Biography. Photographs of McCanless and his wife appear opposite page 135. The above two sources furnished the author by Davyd Foard Hood of the Survey and Planning Branch, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, whose files on the Grimes Mill has provided much of the information for this nomination.

³North Carolina Biography, 135; James S. Brawley, The Rowan Story, 1753-1953 (Salisbury, N. C.: Rowan Printing Company, 1953), 222, 227, hereinafter cited as Brawley, Rowan Story.

⁴North Carolina Biography, 135; McCanless furnished the brick for the Kesler cotton factory in 1895, see Brawley, Rowan Story, 222.

⁵L. Branson (ed.), The North Carolina Business Directory, 1877 and 1878 (Raleigh: L. Branson, 1878), 267.

⁶L. Branson (ed.), Branson's North Carolina Business Directory for 1884 (Raleigh: Levi Branson, 1884), 582.

⁷Bruce S. Cheeseman, "Historical Research Report, Kerr Mill and the Mill Bridge Community," Typescript, 15 May 1979, copy in the Research Branch, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, 67-68.

⁸Brawley, "Footnotes to History"; Levi Branson (ed.), Eranson's North Carolina Business Directory, 1890 (Raleigh: Levi Branson, 1889), 580.

⁹Brawley, "Footnotes to History."

¹⁰Brawley, "Footnotes to History."

¹¹M. Jewel Sink and Mary Green Matthews, Pathfinders Past and Present, A History of Davidson County (High Point, N. C.: Hall Printing Company, 1972), 259.

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¹²Contract between Southern Railway Company and John D. Grimes, 19 April 1907, copy in the files of the W. A. Davis Milling Company, High Point, N. C. The contract includes a map of the property showing the rear addition to the building.

¹³Charles F. Daniel, "Grimes Company Here is Typical Milling Plant," Salisbury Evening Post, undated clipping, ca. 1939, in the Grimes Mill file, Survey and Planning Branch, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh. The file contains a number of dated and undated clippings about the mill from the Salisbury Evening Post.

¹⁴Robert Davis to Larry E. Tise, 28 July 1978, letter in Grimes Mill file; Salisbury Evening Post, 6 May 1963; clipping in the Grimes Mill file, Survey and Planning Branch, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheets

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approx. 0.78 acres See attached Rowan County Tax Map
Quadrangle name Salisbury Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A	<u>17</u>	<u>5418</u>	<u>31610</u>	<u>319</u>	<u>417</u>	<u>61010</u>	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing					Zone	Easting	Northing
C							D			
E							F			
G							H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

The property being nominated consists of Tract 55, Salisbury (Rowan County) Township Tax Map 11, being approximately 0.78 acres on which the mill building sits.

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

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
state		code	county		code

11. Form Prepared By

Statement of significance and criteria assessment by Davyd Foard Hood; Architectural name/title description by Patricia Dickinson (consultatn); historical research by Marshall Bullock.

organization Division of Archives and History date July 14, 1983

street & number 109 East Jones Street telephone 919 733-6545

city or town Raleigh state N. C. 27611

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 William J. Price, Jr.

title State Historic Preservation Officer date September 8, 1983

For NPS use only
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
date
Keeper of the National Register
Attest:
Chief of Registration
date

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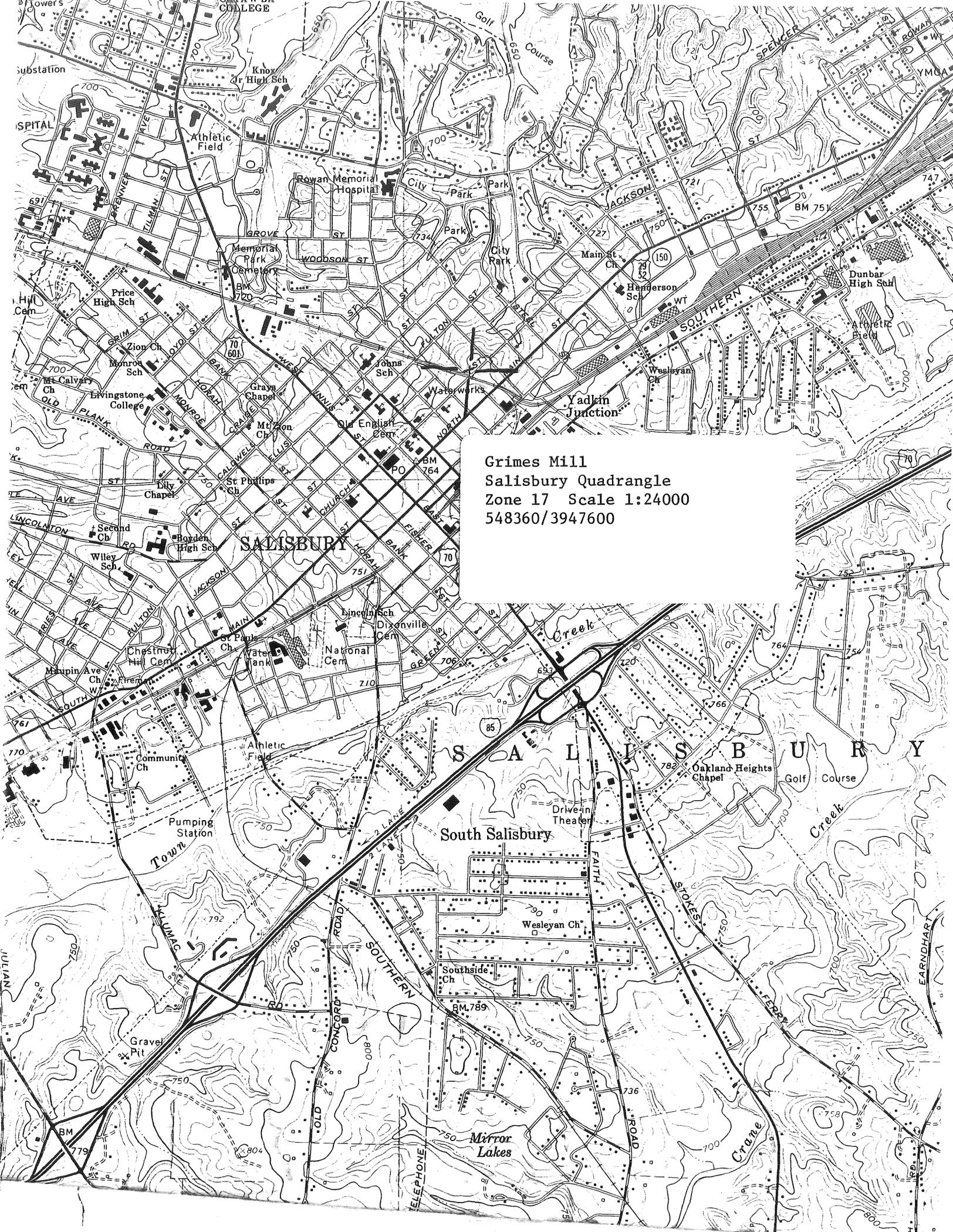
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Grimes Mill
Salisbury Quadrangle
Zone 17 Scale 1:24000
548360/3947600

SALISBURY

South Salisbury

Mirror Lakes

