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## Gray's Mill: National Register Application Draft, Section 8

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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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Gray's Grist Mill  
Bristol County MA

Although a grist and saw mill have been on the site for nearly 300 years the period of significance for the present mill dates from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> century. The surviving Mill complex including the mill building, water-power features and machinery retain sufficient integrity as an architectural resource and working mill to be eligible to the National Register of Historic Places at the local level under criterion A, C, and possible D. Under criterion A the mill complex is significant for its associations with the early settlement of Westport, then part of Dartmouth until \_\_\_\_, and the economic history of the town. A 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century mill village grew at the head of the west Branch of the Westport River in the vicinity of the mill. The mill possesses integrity of location, setting, workmanship and association. In addition the mill represents the influence of the industrial revolutions and development of water Turbines in New England (1820) on villages in outlying communities.

Under Criterion C the mill complex is also significant for its surviving architectural and design characteristics associated with a continuously operated mid 19<sup>th</sup> century water-powered grist mill. Although the mill's water-powered turbine ceased operation after the 1938 hurricane most of the water-powered features remain and are still being used.. The mill complex may also be significant under criterion D. Documentary evidence and surface remains indicate archaeological resources may survive associated with water-power features and industries that overlap or predate the 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century period of significance of the current mill.

## Historic Importance

Gray's Mill is located in Westport , originally Dartmouth), Massachusetts.

Formed in 1664 the original Town of Dartmouth included Westport, Dartmouth, New Bedford, Fairhaven, Acushnet, Tiverton and Little Compton The west boundries between Dartmouth, Mass and Rhode Island remained in dispute until 1741 when the Royal Commision, appointed by George II drew an arbitrary boundary from Mt. Hope Bay in Rhode Island straight to the ocean. This line gave the Town of Tiverton (formerly in Dartmouth) to Rhode Island then cut through a part of Adamsville,(original Taberville) a town in Little Compton RI, dividing the mill pond so that 3/4 remained in Rhode Island and 1/4 in Dartmouth, Massachusests. To make matters more confusing in 1787 the town of Westport voted to incorporate thus changing its name from Dartmouth to Westport.. And this is where the confusion begins: In the early deeds Gray's Mill site, formerly known as Tabers' Mills, is described (before 1741)as being in Dartmouth, Tiverton, or Tabers' Mills, and by 1847 Adamsville and Westport.

It is not known when the original mill at Westport/Adamsville was built. In 1712, Benjamin Crane an able surveyor commissioned under Queen Anne see Cory Farm..doc in History Cory House Cory farm <sup>2</sup> LOOK AT HIS BOOK The late Henry Barnard Worth, who was a respected title lawyer and historian writes in 1915 "The earliest mill in Westport was established at Adamsville before 1700 by Philip Taber. In 1759 there was a grist and saw mill and the same are still in operation." Worth footnote .<sup>1</sup> Except for Mr Worths reference to Philip Taber having "established" the mill, there seems to be no other evidence indicating who the first owner was, or who actually built the original mill.

Philip Taber , 1675 to 1751 (grandson of Philip Taber 1605 to 1672 who came from Essex England,) is the first owner on record of the Philip Taber Mill, when in 1717 he conveyed two pieces of land to a Benjamin Swett (Sweet) a blacksmith.<sup>4</sup> In this deed <sup>5</sup>the property is described as bounded westerly on th. diving line between Little Compton and Dartmouth , and northerly on the "mill pond".

The Wright Genealogy <sup>6</sup> describes Philip Tabor will dated July 14, 1749 leaving to his son William “1/2 of grit mill and all the sawmill”. In 1751 the year of Philip Taber’s death, he leaves “a certain grist mill and saw mill together with about four acres” to his son Jonathan.

and explains early deeds describing the mill property are use Adamsville as the Location.

**More to write**

AA. Tabers

A. Henry Worth comment

A, Type of village. Blacksmith next door etc.

A. Ice business ca 1900 Cut third of April

A. Taberville to Adamsville

A. Industrial rev. About turbine. Turbine-more efficient could operate under the ice in winter.

A. Mill in operation for always. Other mills in localities the same

C. Hurrican

C. Jonny cakern + flint corn+plus fresh grains with no additives or preservatives.

C. John hart about and how he used carriage makers shop

C. Put turbine back. Have copy of original

C, 1980 Restoration – mill, Tail race and spillway and 2006 pond.

C. John Church and dam road- town

“Additional research may extend the boundaries of the mill complex district to encompass farmsteads and residences located along the Adamsville and Cornell Road corridors. ”Check Cory wills for mention of Taber Mill

Section 7- add surrounding property and more about the pond+name of brook+ surround property  
Mill stone not burr BUHR Fix spelling

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<sup>2</sup> Crane

<sup>1 11</sup> Worth

<sup>4</sup> see #19. pag 13 P Gay

<sup>5</sup> see # 20 “ “

<sup>6</sup> see 18. “ “