

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of PropertyHistoric name: Boney's Gristmill, Dam, and Mill PondOther names/site number: Boney's Mill

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. LocationStreet & number: 717 E. Southerland StreetCity or town: Wallace State: NC County: DuplinNot For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this x nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property x meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide x local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

x A B x C D

Signature of certifying official/Title: State Historic Preservation Officer Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

Boney's Gristmill, Dam, and Mill Pond
Name of Property

Duplin County, NC
County and State

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ___ entered in the National Register
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register
___ removed from the National Register
___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:

☐

Public – Local

☒

Public – State

☐

Public – Federal

☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)

☒

District

☐

Site

☐

Boney's Gristmill, Dam, and Mill Pond
Name of Property

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Structure

☐

Object

☐

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

1

1

1

3

Noncontributing

buildings

sites

structures

objects

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use
Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

NOT IN USE

Boney's Gristmill, Dam, and Mill Pond
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7. Description

See Continuation Sheets.

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

NO STYLE

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: WOOD; METAL: Tin; METAL: Iron;
EARTH; CONCRETE; BRICK

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

See Continuation Sheets.

Narrative Description

See Continuation Sheets.

Boney's Gristmill, Dam, and Mill Pond
Name of Property

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Boney's Gristmill, Dam, and Mill Pond
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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1831-1944

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

See Continuation Sheets.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

See Continuation Sheets.

Boney's Gristmill, Dam, and Mill Pond
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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

See Continuation Sheets.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
 - ☒ Other State agency
 - ☐ Federal agency
 - ☐ Local government
 - ☐ University
 - ☐ Other
- Name of repository: State Archives, State Library of North Carolina

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): DP0349

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 6.9 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 34.741628 | Longitude: -77.982849 |
| 2. Latitude: 34.741476 | Longitude: -77.983082 |
| 3. Latitude: 34.740562 | Longitude: -77.983002 |
| 4. Latitude: 34.740451 | Longitude: -77.980698 |
| 5. Latitude: 34.741622 | Longitude: -77.980700 |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐

NAD 1927

or

☐

NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary for the property is a polygon anchored along the south parcel line for PIN 330604621645. The polygon's southwest point lies 284 feet east of the southwest corner of the parcel. From that initial point, the boundary extends north-northwest 336 feet to a point in the parcel line formed by the intersection of two segments. Those segments intersect at a point lying slightly northeast of the gravel parking lot accessed from Rose Avenue. The boundary then follows that segment of the parcel line northeast for about 90 feet. At that point, the parcel line turns north-northeast, but the boundary line turns to extend due east for 644 feet to a point in the millpond. The boundary line then turns to the south and extends 427 feet to the south boundary line of the parcel. The boundary line then turns generally west and extends along the south parcel line to the start of the polygon. The polygon encompasses 6.9 acres.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary as drawn is anchored by the south parcel line and encompasses those structures that historically comprised the milling operation, the mill building and dam, as well as a portion of the millpond. The size, extent, and appearance of the pond in the period of significance has not been determined, but the impoundment of water was essential to the operation of the mill. The inclusion of some impounded water illustrates the connection between the pond and power for the dam. Peripheral areas that do not directly contribute to the significance of the mill have been drawn out. This boundary defines the limits of this significant industrial resource. It extends to the south parcel line and out to a segment of the west parcel in order to anchor the boundary to some preexisting legal perimeters.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Cynthia de Miranda
organization: MdM Historical Consultants
street & number: PO Box 1399
city or town: Durham state: NC zip code: 27705
e-mail cynthia@mdmhc.com
telephone: 919-906-3136
date: November 5, 2025

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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Boney's Gristmill, Dam, and Mill Pond

City or Vicinity: Wallace

County: Duplin

State: NC

Photographer: Cynthia de Miranda

Date Photographed: March 2025

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 16: S elevation of Grist Mill and E end of Dam, view to NW.
- 2 of 16: S elevation of Grist Mill, Dam to the east and Mill Pond in background, view to N.
- 3 of 16: S and E elevations of Grist Mill, east spillways and E end of Dam, view to NW.
- 4 of 16: E elevation of Grist Mill, millstone in foreground, view to W.
- 5 of 16: E and N elevations of Grist Mill, with Mill Pond at right and Dam at background right, view to SW.

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- 6 of 16: N and W elevations of Grist Mill with concrete-capped spillway at foreground, view to SE.
7 of 16: W elevation of Grist Mill with concrete-capped spillway at foreground, view to E.
8 of 16: N and W elevations of Grist Mill with pond in foreground, view to SE.
9 of 16: Crest of earthen Dam with W elevation of Grist Mill in background, view to E.
10 of 16: Crest of earthen Dam with Mill Pond to right, view to W.
11 of 16: Crest of earthen Dam with west spillway in background, view to W.
12 of 16: West end spillway, view to NE.
13 of 16: Millstone, view to SW.
14 of 16: Interior of Gristmill from NE corner of building, view to SSW.
15 of 16: Interior of Gristmill from NE corner of building, view to WSW.
16 of 16: Interior of Gristmill from SW corner of grinding room, view to NN

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

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Boney's Gristmill, Dam, and Mill Pond

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Narrative Description: Summary Paragraph

Boney's Gristmill, Dam, and Mill Pond compose a small complex in Wallace, southwestern Duplin County. A single-story, side-gabled, ca. 1930 mill building stands on exposed supports of timber and steel at the east end of the earthen dam impounding the millpond. Its exterior walls variously feature vertical board siding, lap siding, and horizontal plank siding. A 5v tin roof covers the gabled roof. The interior incorporates cross-braced walls framed with heavy timbers built for an eighteenth- or nineteenth-century iteration of the gristmill at the same location. The stilted support allows overflow water from the millpond to pass beneath the industrial building. The existing mill building and the east end of the earthen dam are immediately north of the bridge that carries E. Southerland Street/NC Highway 41 over Rockfish Creek at the east edge Wallace. The dam parallels this roadway and extends roughly 400 feet to the west.

Narrative Description

The gristmill complex is on the east side of the Town of Wallace, northwest of the intersection of NC Highways 41 and 11. The town owns the roughly 97-acre parcel that includes the mill, dam, millpond, and surrounding land. A picnic area and fishing dock are on the west bank of the pond, and a canoe launch is just south. A gravel parking area fills the space between the pond and Rose Avenue northeast of its intersection with Southerland Street/NC Highway 41. Farrior Park, a local recreation site, is west of the pond, and a small boathouse perches on the pond's east shoreline northeast of the mill. Small-scale, mid-twentieth-century residential and commercial properties populate the immediate vicinity north and south of Southerland Street. The Wallace town limit actually extends across the dam and the north elevation of the mill so that the mill and dam are in the city limits but the pond is not.

1. Boney's Gristmill

Ca. 1831, ca. 1930, ca. 1950, ca. 1995, post-hurricane repairs in 2024-2025

Contributing Building

The gristmill is a partially enclosed, gable-roofed, single-story building framed by reused timbers from an earlier century. A tin roof shelters the building, which stands on piles over a spillway at the east end of the earthen dam. Concrete foundation walls support the east and west ends of the building, and some fragments of brick piers are evident in these sections of foundation as well. Water flows underneath the building and into a tailrace extending south-southwest to pass under Highway 41 and meet Little Rockfish Creek to the south.

The gristmill's exterior walls are clad with a variety of treatments. The west and north elevations have vertical board siding. The downstream-facing south elevation has lap siding at its west end and an area of horizontal plank siding near its midsection; a hatch is evident in the latter section. The east end of the south elevation and the entire east elevation lack exterior walls, leaving the framing exposed. A couple of horizontal boards nailed to the uprights act as railings where perimeter walls do not exist.

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The building's heavy timber framing and interior walls of braced timber construction reuse materials and structural elements that may date to the eighteenth century: While the first documented mention of a gristmill here dates to an 1831 will, family tradition holds that the gristmill dates to the earlier century. Regardless of the original construction date, the current appearance reflects a substantial rebuild in the early twentieth century, and some later changes reflect ongoing maintenance and repair. Hand-hewn timbers and circular-sawn lumber predating the twentieth century are evident in joists supporting a newly installed wood floor. Framing likewise includes heavy timber construction with mortise-and-tenon joints. Vertical timbers support five overhead heavy beams that extend beyond the west wall and the east-end verticals to shelter the gable ends of the building. The size and finish, as well as notching at the ends of some of the beams, suggest their age and reuse from earlier construction. A substantial beam runs north-south through the center of the building and is supported by vertical timbers, including at its midsection by a timber post with upbracing. Vertical supports of modern boards rest on the middle three timbers to hold up the building's rafters as they extend to the roof peak. Rafter tails are exposed at the north and south elevations. Note that modern boards were employed in repairs and as temporary supports even before the recent rehabilitation. For the 2024-2025 work, rough-cut southern yellow pine replaced missing and deteriorated floor joists, vertical framing, overhead beams, and vertical roof supports. Flooring also dates to the recent repairs.

The floor plan of the mill includes an enclosed room at the southwest corner, referred to by the last miller's grandchildren, who saw the building in operation, as the milling room. Here, interior walls are framed with pegged and braced timbers and clad with horizontal milled boards. Plank doors with horizontal braces allow access from the north and east sides. (Note that the east side door has been removed from its hinges and rests in the open east end of the mill.) Inside the milling room, the wood casing surrounding the mill stones and the wood frame that held the grain hopper remain. Additional equipment, including millstones and metal gears, hoists, and chutes, and furnishings, including wood spindles, saw horses, nail kegs, and benches, have been removed by the town to allow for the repair work; they remain in storage. Missing are the water wheel and component parts of the power train, including the vertical drive shaft and gears. A doorway at the south end of the east wall of the milling room leads to a small space with walls enclosed by horizontal planks that have not been set tightly together. The north and most of the east wall of the milling room appear to be surviving walls from an earlier and possibly two-story mill.

Some component pieces of mechanical equipment remain in the open end of the building. Included is a portion of a face wheel, which would have connected to a lantern gear to convert power from a horizontal axle to a vertical shaft. Also extant is an axle (or portion) with arms along its midsection and metal gear teeth at one end. There is no flooring immediately below the equipment. Just north of the unfloored section are two stacked, hewn logs with two large holes cut vertically through them. Pegged wood posts rise through the holes. The original configuration and precise function of these parts have not been determined. Two pieces of a broken millstone are stacked on the east bank of the spillway beside the mill, just inside a section of tall wood fencing that restricts access to a steep section of the bank down to the spillway.

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Section number 7 Page 3*Alterations over time*

The current form of the building is said to date to the 1930s. Earlier framing and cladding at interior walls (and historical precedent) suggest an earlier mill building of two stories with a smaller footprint. The work in the 1930s appears to have reduced the building to a single story and reused original timbers to reframe a larger building, expanding the floor area to include the open areas across the north and east ends. Alternatively, some large timbers may have originally framed the sawmill building that stood at the west end of the dam until at least 1910.

Family recollections of the gristmill operation in the 1940s confirm that the wood waterwheel remained in place at that time, immediately west of the building, and powered the rotation of the millstone. The wheel was not visible from the milling room but could be viewed from the northwest end of the mill. In that period, a series of ten or twelve gates held back the water beneath the mill. The gates were shaped like large paddles and could be pulled up into the open space of the mill to allow water to flow under the mill after a rain.¹

In the 1950s, then-owners Annette and James Rose removed the waterwheel, filled the space it occupied to extend the dam to the west side of the mill, and covered that section with concrete.² The gates under the gristmill were removed and, eventually, steel supports were added to the substructure. In 2007, a separate overflow gate west of the building was installed, consisting of a metal panel controlling flow into a corrugated metal conduit that tunnels through the dam. A short wood pier extends north from the dam to allow access to the gate control.

In 2024-2025, an NPS ESHPF grant funded work to address damage incurred by Hurricane Florence in 2018. The work included repairs to existing timbers, structural steel, and concrete as well as replacement of missing or heavily deteriorated elements. The contractor injected epoxy into deteriorating timbers to stabilize them and replaced missing or unrepairable timber braces with rough-cut pine using connections matching originals. Some timber piles in the foundation were wrapped with fiber-form jackets. Vertical supports and floor and overhead beams of wood were likewise replaced in kind. Existing steel substructure reinforcements, added after 1993, were rehabilitated. The contractor removed corrosion and applied a clear protective paint to prevent additional deterioration. Similarly, repairs to the concrete foundation walls and the pond outfall structure included removal and replacement of corroded steel reinforcement bars. A new 5-V tin roof was installed and its surface protected with an elastomeric acrylic coating; additionally, sealant was applied to fasteners and vertical seams. New flooring was installed.³ The roof and flooring replaced material installed in the late 1940s or the 1950s, after the period of significance, in order to preserve the building.⁴ All the work was done with oversight by the

¹ Bill Browder, interview with the author, July 2, 2025.

² Browder interview.

³ E.B. Pannkuk, PE, Stature Engineering, P.C., "Boney Timber Mill Close Out Packet," correspondence with the author.

⁴ Jeff Adolphsen, Site Visit Field Notes, May 8, 2018, in the Boney's Mill Survey Site File, DP0349, File Room, NC State

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NC State Historic Preservation Office.

2. Boney's Dam

1840 (according to NC Dam Inventory), dam repairs and alterations ca. 1950 and 2007

Contributing Structure

The earthen dam is roughly 470' wide with concrete-lined overflow spillways at both the west and east ends. The oldest spillway flows under the gristmill building and was once operated by wood gates. A concrete-lined spillway poured around 1950 replaced the waterwheel, immediately west of the mill building. A third spillway was installed at the west end in 2007 following a dam break the previous year. It includes a channel with concrete walls and floor that curves to the east to direct water toward the main spillway under the mill. A prefabricated metal bridge crosses the spillway from the west bank. At that time, a fresh layer of concrete was also poured to the section at the crest of the dam just west of the gristmill.

3. Boney's Mill Pond

ca. 1831

Contributing Site

The dam impounds the waters of the Padgett and Mill branches of Rockfish Creek. The roughly 100-acre lake is surrounded by 208 acres of generally wooded parkland, all outside the town limits but owned by the town. In 2007, an overflow gate was installed located west of the gristmill. A floating fishing dock has recently been installed by the NC Division of Wildlife near the south end of the west bank of the pond.

Integrity Statement

Boney's Mill, Dam, and Mill Pond retain all seven aspects of integrity. The complex remains in its original location, preserving integrity of location. The immediate setting remains unchanged, with the interrelationship of the three elements intact. Within the seasonal fluctuations of the natural world, the larger setting is also fundamentally unchanged, consisting of wooded landscape flanking the pond, the two-lane roadway and the bridge across the tailrace south of the pond, and houses and commercial buildings dotting the area. The shoreline's location and the pond acreage may expand and contract depending upon drought or rainfall, a condition consistent throughout the pond's history. The integrity of setting, therefore, is intact.

The integrity of design of the mill building is partially intact, suffering some loss of integrity with the removal of the waterwheel and powertrain equipment. However, as indicated in the NR MPDF, a mill, like other industrial buildings in the county, "must retain its original location and overall original form." While the mill building does not retain its original form, it does retain a form dating to the 1930s, which is within the period of significance. Additionally, it appears to retain some elements of its earlier form,

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potentially providing important information about the earlier history of the milling operation. Its integrity of design is therefore intact. The design of the dam appears basically unchanged, and the millpond that results from the impoundment likewise continues to reflect original design.

The composition of the earthen dam and impounded waters of the millpond have not changed; they therefore retain integrity of materials. While the mill building has recently seen repairs that included new flooring and roofing, those materials had post-dated the period of significance. The building retains materials from both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, its entire documented period of significance, and possibly from the eighteenth century. Additionally, the framing members and system show evidence of workmanship from the earlier portion of the period of significance, including hand-hewn and circular sawn finishing of timbers and notched and pegged joinery and braced framing. The integrity of materials and workmanship for the property are therefore intact.

All the above elements, in combination with the mill building's perch on the milldam at the edge of the impounded water that once turned the wheel to power the mill, contribute to the integrity of feeling and association in connection with the agricultural-industrial history of the county.

Statement of Archaeological Potential

Based on the Office of State Archaeology's (OSA) current records, there have been no archaeological surveys, nor are there any recorded archaeological sites within the boundaries of the nominated area. A survey was recommended by the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (NC SHPO), should federal funding become involved, for a project in 2020 that intended to develop Boney Mill Pond Park (GS 20-1043), citing the history of the mill, its continued use over approximately 230 years, as a likely indicator of affiliated archaeological deposits. Historic aerials indicate that the area surrounding the mill has not been significantly cleared nor altered. Surrounding archaeological deposits both on land and potentially in the water, such as debris that accumulated during operation of the mill and other remains which may be present, can provide information valuable to the understanding and interpretation of the mill and its functions. Details of the construction processes and the operation of the mill can also be obtained from the archaeological record. Therefore, archaeological remains may well be an important component of the significance of the property, and they should be considered in any future development of the property.

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Statement of Significance

Boney's Gristmill, Dam, and Mill Pond is significant at the county-wide level under Criterion A in the area of Industry as an intact example of a water-powered gristmilling complex. It is also eligible under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an example of an important building type. Small, water-powered gristmills were once common on the landscape across Duplin County and were built from the eighteenth through the twentieth century. Surviving mills and their associated dams and impoundments are a reflection of the small-scale economies that characterized rural and village life from colonization through the early twentieth century. The nature of the milling process also made mills important community meeting places; they often remained so after operations closed down. However, nearly all were gone by the time Jennifer F. Martin documented the county's historic architecture in the early 1990s county-wide survey. The period of significance begins in 1831, the first documented mention of the existence of the gristmill and pond, and ends in 1944, the date the gristmill ceased operation.

Historic context and comparable properties for Boney's Gristmill, Dam, and Mill Pond are discussed in the multiple property documentation form (MPDF) "Historic and Architectural Resources of Duplin County, North Carolina, ca. 1790-1943" under Contexts "Settlement and Early Development in Duplin County, 1736-1837," "The Railroad Era and the Emergence of Towns in Duplin County: 1838-1875," and "Town Building and Agricultural Prosperity in Duplin County: 1876-1943." Industrial/Agricultural buildings are discussed in Property Type 6: "Industrial Buildings and Sites." Boney's Gristmill, Dam, and Mill Pond meets the Registration Requirements outlined in the MPDF for historic and architectural integrity for this property type as a gristmill with intact form and location in its context with dam and pond. Additional history and context are included below.

History

Boney's Mill at present-day Wallace, in Duplin County, is an early twentieth-century water-powered gristmill that incorporates material from earlier mills dating possibly to the eighteenth century and documented as early as 1831. Grist mills were an integral part of the agriculturally based economy that European colonists established in North Carolina. Along with similarly powered lumber mills, the buildings were essential to community formation and development into the early twentieth century.⁵

Present-day Duplin County first saw European settlement in the second quarter of the eighteenth century, including colonists moving from the coast or from beyond the borders of present-day North Carolina. They had been farmers in Europe and continued that work here.⁶ Among them were Swiss-born members of the Boney family, who settled the area around present-day Wallace in southwest Duplin County. Joggi Boni (Jacob Boney in English) emigrated with his wife Eva Zellar and their 7 children from Frenkendorf, Switzerland in 1736. According to descendant Emily Lee, Jacob Boney was the first in the family to own the land on which Boney's Mill and millpond are located.⁷ Duplin's

⁵ Jennifer Martin, "Historic and Architectural Resources of Duplin County, North Carolina," NRHP Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF), DP1187, 1994, <https://files.nc.gov/ncdcr/nr/DP1187.pdf>, E4, E14, E30.

⁶ MPDF, 2-3.

⁷ Albert Bernhardt Faust and Gaius Marcus Brumbaugh, eds., *Lists of Swiss Emigrants in the Eighteenth Century to the*

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separation from New Hanover County and formal establishment came on April 7, 1750.

Emily Lee and her brother Bill Browder recall family tradition that the gristmill and a water-powered saw mill on Little Rockfish Creek had been established by members of the Boney family in the 1730s. "Apparently," Browder relayed, "the Boneys figured out that you could get extra land granted if you built a gristmill."⁸ While some sources mention a 1715 road and ferries act that allotted fifty acres of land to anyone willing to establish a gristmill, such a provision has not been found in the text of the 1715 act.⁹ Instead, an act relating more directly to mills allowed a grant of two acres for the establishment of a water-powered gristmill, required a public road to the mill, and granted use of any timber on adjacent lands for the purpose of building the mill.¹⁰

Browder did not know the name of the first Boney to establish a grist or saw mill on Little Rockfish Creek, but Jacob's son Weinbert (Wimbert in English, also transcribed as Wimberk and Wimbrick) Boney (1731-1801) did receive land grants in the area in 1787, including 100 acres on the "wt. side of the No. Et. (North East) river and no. side of Rockfish creek" and 200 acres "on the drains of Little Rockfish Creek." Other Boneys also received land grants on Rockfish creek in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.¹¹ None have been located that mention a mill. Similarly, no petition for a mill from a Boney has been found.

Wimbert Boney had largely grown up in the colony and, in 1760, married Catherine Teachey (1745-1826). Catherine was a daughter of Ann Wells and Daniel Teachey of the area, known then as Red House.¹² A state census in 1786 recorded fifteen people in Catherine and Wimbert Boney's household, including nine white and six Black members.¹³ The latter would have been enslaved workers, and the

American Colonies (Washington, D.C.: The National Genealogical Society, 1925), 99; Ancestry.com. *U.S. and Canada, Passenger and Immigration Lists Index, 1500s-1900s* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc, 2010; Emily Browder Lee, "W. Stokes Boney House," National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 1999, <https://files.nc.gov/historic-preservation/nr/DP0348.pdf>.

⁸ Browder interview.

⁹ "Chapter XXXVI: An Act Concerning Roads & Ferries," Acts of the North Carolina General Assembly, 1715-1716, Colonial and State Records of North Carolina, *Documenting the American South*, University Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, June 27, 2025, <https://docsouth.unc.edu/csr/index.php/document/csr23-0001#top>. For mention of the fifty-acre land grant for prospective grist millers, see Grimsley T. Hobbs, *Exploring the Old Mills of North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The Provincial Press, 1985). A number of other sources repeat the information, citing Hobbs.

¹⁰ "Chapter XXXVII: An Act to Encourage the Building of Mills," Acts of the North Carolina General Assembly, 1715-1716, Colonial and State Records of North Carolina, *Documenting the American South*, University Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, June 27, 2025, <https://docsouth.unc.edu/csr/index.php/document/csr23-0001#top>; Stewart E. Dunaway, *A Beginner's Guide to Grist Mills of North Carolina: A historical review using original county records* (Lulu.com, 2013), 77-78; Stewart Dunaway, *Maps and Drawings from North Carolina's Road, Bridge, Mill and Ferry Petitions* (Lulu.com: 2011), 6.

¹¹ Ancestry.com, *North Carolina, U.S., Land Grant Files, 1693-1960* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2016; State Land Grants, Duplin County, NC State Archives, digitized and searchable at nclandgrants.com. The land grants describe the bounds of the granted acreage, but none mention petitions for a mill.

¹² "Wimberk Boney" and "Catherine Teachey Boney," Findagrave.com.

¹³ Ancestry.com, *North Carolina, U.S., State Census, 1784-1787* [database on-line] (Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2006).

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number in the household indicates that the Wimbert and Catherine Boney household was among the wealthier in the area. Establishing a water-powered mill required resources, including the hired services of a millwright to choose the site and design and engineer the mill. If Wimbert set out to build a mill or mills, the enslaved men in the household would have constructed it according to a millwright's plans. However, no record of a mill established or owned Wimbert Boney has been located.

Wimbert Boney left "one hundred acres of land...on Little Rockfish" to his son John A. Boney (1766-1831).¹⁴ John A. Boney's will contains the first identified mention of mills—both a gristmill and a sawmill—on Little Rockfish Creek. The 1831 document leaves "to my loving wife Mary Boney, during her natural life, all my lands east of my mills, including the gristmill, and at her demise to my son William Boney." The lands west of mills, including his sawmill, he left to his son Wells Boney. John A. Boney apparently worked as a blacksmith as well and directed that his tools for that trade be divided equally between the sons. The will also lists a number of Black members of the household, people that John A. Boney enslaved and viewed as property he could bequeath to his wife and children: Bill, Sarah, Phebe, Maria, Dave, Jim, Chloe's children, Leah, Elina, Sam, Rachel and her children, Henry, Trepiteo, Bet and Bet's children, Windsor, Jacob, Caroline, Alice, Sofia, and Wright. Unless an earlier generation built the grist and saw mills, the men named in John A. Boney's will probably erected the buildings. No record of a millwright or designer of the mills has been located.¹⁵

William Boney (1802-1853), who inherited the gristmill from his father, would later leave it to his brother Wells Boney (1799-1877), who had inherited the saw mill. William Boney's 1853 will, in fact, bequeaths to Wells his entire plantation, "including my dwelling house, all outhouses, gristmill, and all the improvements and appurtenances," along with William's furniture, rights to turpentine lands, and the people he enslaved, namely, Jacob, Pat, Caroline, Caroline's children Anne, Dempsey, Sarah Eliza, and any future children. To an elder brother, John Wright Boney (1792-1856; generally referred to as Col. Wright Boney), William named additional enslaved people: children Enoch and Francinia, as well as Julia and her youngest children Margaret and Ellen and any children Julia might have in the future.¹⁶

Wells sold property that likely included the mills and the pond to his nephew James Wells Boney (1824-1885) in 1867 for \$2,000, reserving for himself a life estate in the property.¹⁷ Accordingly, the 1870 federal census lists Wells Boney as a miller living in James W. and Mary Boney's household in Island Creek Township and the Teachey post office district.¹⁸ James W. Boney was a son of Col. John Wright Boney, whom family tradition credits with owning and operating the mill. However, no records

¹⁴ Will of Wimberk Boney, 1801, Typescript uploaded by Ronald E. Evans in 2019, Ancestry.com, viewed June 25, 2025.

¹⁵ Will of John Boney, 1831, *North Carolina, U.S., Wills and Probate Records, 1665-1998*, database on-line at Ancestry.com, viewed June 20, 2025.

¹⁶ Will of William Boney, 1853, Ancestry.com, *North Carolina, U.S., Wills and Probate Records, 1665-1998* [database on-line], Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2015; William L. Murphy, *Genealogical Abstracts Duplin County Wills 1730-1860* (Rose Hill: Duplin County Historical Society, 1982), 15. William Boney also named enslaved people to bequeath to his sisters in his will.

¹⁷ Wells Boney to James W. Boney, July 20, 1868, Duplin County Deed Book 15, page 115.

¹⁸ Ancestry.com, *1870 United States Federal Census* [database on-line], Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2009.

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connecting Col. Boney to the mill have been located.

The manufacturer's schedule from the 1870 federal census lists "Jas. W. Boney" as owner of the gristmill and saw mill in Island Creek, although the population schedule indicates that Wells Boney still ran the mill. The manufacturer's schedule also provides excellent detail about the power source for the mills in that year. A three-foot-diameter water wheel constructed of wood powered the gristmill. In contrast, the lumber mill had two saws, each powered by a 2-foot-diameter water wheel, also constructed of wood. It appears that the mills remained two separate buildings, as older deeds appear to have described them.¹⁹

Some details changed over the next decade. The 1880 the manufacturer's schedule of the federal census lists the gristmill of "J. W. Boney" on Rockfish Creek in the Lower Island Creek Township at the Wallace post office. The mill benefitted from a seven-foot fall and drew power from a single water wheel four feet wide. The wheel ran at 120 rotations per minute, creating power equal to ten horses for turning the millstone.²⁰ The population schedule of that year notes that James Wells Boney's 32-year old son James D. Boney "attend[s] to gristmill" and the manufacturer's schedule reveals that it was a full-time job for one hand. No lumber mill is listed in the same area in that year, but Ephraim Boney ran a blacksmith shop and G. Boney & Sons had a tar and turpentine mill.²¹ It appears the saw mill was out of service as a commercial endeavor at the time.

James Wells Boney left "my water grist and saw mill" along with a tract of real estate that encompassed the buildings and a portion of the pond to his sons Robert Tate Boney (1857-1895) and William Stokes Boney (1860-1946). The line for the tract was described, in part, as "beginning at the Bridge where the Chinquapin road crosses the mill race, running with the Chinquapin road" to the corner of a neighboring parcel, north along the west side of the pond past a "Negro grave yard" and ultimately crossing the pond and continuing "down the east edge with High water, to the corner of the fence back of my Dwelling house, thence a south line to the Chinquapin road, thence with said road back to the beginning." James Wells Boney indicated that these two sons would "own and have equal interest in the above named mill." To Robert, he gave "all the real estate lying east side of the mill race and pond" and to Stokes he left "all of the real estate...lying on the west side of the mill race and pond." To his three sons Henry B. Boney (1847-1895), William Stokes Boney, and Jacob Leedy Boney (1864-1929), he left "my entire interest in my Steam Mill."²² The steam mill may have been at another location: Stokes Boney's daughter, Mary Emily Boney, recalled in a 1977 newspaper article that "the water-powered saw mill gave way to one powered by steam from the pond but not on it," but that seems likely to have been a

¹⁹ Tenth Census of the United States, 1870: Duplin County, North Carolina, Industry Schedule, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (microfilm, State Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh).

²⁰ Eleventh Census of the United States, 1880: Duplin County, North Carolina, Manufacturers Schedule, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (microfilm, State Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh).

²¹ Ancestry.com, *1880 United States Federal Census* [database on-line], Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2010. Robert Tate Boney, age 23, worked as a grocer while other sons, including W. Stokes Boney, worked on the farm.

²² James W. Boney Will, 1885, *North Carolina, U.S., Wills and Probate Records, 1665-1998* [database on-line at Ancestry.com], Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2015.

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transition that happened well after James Wells Boney's death in 1885. Mary Emily Boney also recalled existence of a rice mill that worked like a threshing machine that her mother could hear operating from their house.²³

Both Browder and Lee repeated family tradition that William Stokes Boney built and operated a water-powered sawmill on the west end of the mill pond dam around 1880, the same time he built a house (W. Stokes Boney House, DP0348, NRHP 1999) for himself near the southwest bank of the pond. Historical documents appear to indicate that a saw mill had been in that vicinity at least as early as 1831 but that it ceased operation sometime between 1870 and 1880. If so, it may be that W. Stokes Boney repaired and got the mill back into service to aid in the construction of his house. The wording in James Wells Boney's will might be interpreted as describing a single, water-powered building housing both a grist and a saw mill, but Bill Browder recalls separate buildings, each standing at one end of the mill dam. He personally saw the gristmill at the east end as a child in the 1940s, and was often shown the location of the saw mill, gone between 1910 and the 1940s, at the west end of the dam by older relatives, just as first described in John A. Boney's 1831 will.²⁴

W. Stokes Boney sold "all my interest in the mill tract of land," defined as a one-third interest, to his brother Jacob Leedy Boney in 1898.²⁵ A 1901 newspaper notice of Jacob Leedy Boney's marriage to his second wife Julia Augusta (Gussie) Johnson refers to him as "an enterprising truck planter and proprietor of Boney's gristmill near Wallace."²⁶ However, deeds from the first decade of the twentieth century commonly referred to "the W.S. and J. L. Boney Mill Pond" as a landmark for describing property boundaries.

In 1910, Jacob and Gussie sold their one-half interest "in their steam saw and gristmill and fixtures" to W. Stokes Boney, along with the "tract in Island Creek Township [known as] the 'James W. Boney Mill Property.'"²⁷ W. Stokes Boney appears to have been the owner of the other half-interest by then, despite the sale in 1898, and the property eventually began to be known as the "William Stokes Boney Sr. Mill Pond property" rather than the "James W. Boney Mill Property" or "the W.S. and J.L. Boney Mill Pond." W. Stokes Boney's grandchildren Emily Lee and Bill Browder report that Stokes Boney ran the gristmill into the 1940s, always using the wood waterwheel to power the grinding action of the millstone. "There was an enclosure in the mill house on the west end, so the grinding was done there....They'd close the gates in order to let the water [in the pond] turn the wheel," Browder recalls of operation in the 1940s. "I think [the water] probably went under the wheel, I don't remember any kind of chute or raceway going to the top of the wheel."²⁸

Upon the death of W. Stokes Boney, his children inherited the mill, dam, and millpond. They sold to

²³ Emily Browder Lee, interview with the author, June 17, 2025.

²⁴ Browder interview. A will in 1910 is the last mention of the steam mill found for this nomination.

²⁵ W. S. Boney to J. L. Boney, June 3, 1898, Duplin County Deed Book 56, page 549.

²⁶ "Afternoon Marriage," *Wilmington Semi Weekly Messenger*, September 13, 1901.

²⁷ J. L. and Julia Boney to W. S. Boney, August 27, 1910, Duplin County Deed Book 129, page 259.

²⁸ Browder interview.

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James R. and Annette Rose in 1948.²⁹ The Rose family removed the waterwheel, infilled the space, and paved it with concrete. The Roses tended to the mill building attentively and kept it in good repair, recognizing it as an important reflection of the agricultural history of the area.³⁰ Their daughter inscribed the concrete with her name and the date when a new layer of concrete was installed in 2007: "Ann Rose 1/13/07."

Additional Context: Building Gristmills in Duplin County

Boney's Gristmill, Dam, and Mill Pond was placed on the State Study List in 1993 at the conclusion of Jennifer F. Martin's Duplin County architectural survey as a rare surviving example of the community gristmill, an industrial building type integral to the agricultural economy that historically characterized the county.³¹ Small hydropower mills—both gristmills and sawmills—were once common on the landscape across Duplin County and the entire state. Most are now gone. Surviving mills and their associated impoundments reflect the small-scale economies that characterized rural and small-town life from colonization through the early twentieth century. The time-consuming nature of the milling process also made mills important community meeting places, and they often remained so after operations ceased.

According to Grimsley T. Hobbs, who restored mills in North Carolina and wrote a small volume documenting several others, building a water-powered mill was an expensive proposition, but one that paid handsomely once the power source was established. Due to the expense, some farmers with land well-sited for water power sold shares to others in the community in order to raise the money to build a mill. Hobbs also notes that mills became economic and social centers. "The seat of milling literally determined the placement of early roads.... Other sorts of industry quickly located nearby. Mills were almost universally associated with blacksmith shops, often with sawmills and cotton gins."³² Historian Stewart E. Dunaway, who has read through a great volume of eighteenth-century records relating to North Carolina infrastructure development, notes that "Mills were not independent entities; they demanded well-established roads."³³

Dunaway also notes that "merchant milling was a mature 18th century industry in Europe" and that both the development of water power and its transfer to the operation of grist milling equipment would be "well understood" to European settlers in North Carolina. A millwright would be engaged to survey the waterway and site and design the mill. Millwright handbooks were published in the United States as early as 1795, when Oliver Evans published one in Philadelphia.³⁴

Laws passed during North Carolina's colonial history, in 1715 and 1758, encouraged the establishment

²⁹ Gorman E. Boney et. al. to James R. Rose, May 1948, Duplin County Deed Book 446, page 278.

³⁰ Browder interview.

³¹ MPDF, E30, F71-72.

³² Grimsley T. Hobbs, *Exploring the Old Mills of North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The Provincial Press, 1985), 7.

³³ Dunaway, *Beginner's Guide*, 6.

³⁴ Dunaway, *Beginner's Guide*, 6.

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of mills for the public good and sought to direct the miller's behavior. Later laws continued the focus on the public good—mill owners had to keep their bridges on public roadways in acceptable condition—but also offered means of redress for adjacent property owners affected by the dammed water. Mills continued in operation as hyper-local endeavors into the twentieth century, despite a decline in numbers that began after 1880. Dunaway documents that the effect that the establishment of Pillsbury mills in Minneapolis had in 1872 trickled down to North Carolina and across the south once Pillsbury expanded to five commercial mills on the Mississippi River by 1889.³⁵

The first U.S. Census in 1790 recorded that Duplin County farmers tended to work small and medium-sized farms, generally without enslaved labor. Farms of the period included crops as well as livestock; many were subsistence farms. However, a small number of larger farms used the labor of between one and five enslaved workers, and eight of 232 farms operated with the work of twenty or more enslaved people.³⁶ Members of the Boney family appear to have been part of the small class of farmers who owned large tracts of land and relied upon the labor of enslaved workers. In 1800, a "Bimbrick" Boney (likely a transcription error for Wimbert) is listed with seven enslaved persons in his household and John Boney with two.³⁷ They appear to have had the means to erect both a gristmill and a saw mill in the eighteenth century.

By 1840, saw milling and grist milling were among the industries contributing to the area's economy; the pine forests of the county also made naval stores and turpentine distilling profitable. An 1840 gazetteer recorded that there were 55 gristmills and 30 sawmills in Duplin County, according to Jennifer F. Martin's research on the architectural history of the county.³⁸ Fifteen years later, staple products from Duplin remained the same. An 1854 gazetteer described the county as "partly covered with forests of pitch pine" and recorded a dozen saw mills.³⁹ It appears that gristmills were not always enumerated for the census or in manufacturers directories. Similarly, in 1860, the manufacturer's census recorded six water-powered sawmills; there was no documentation of gristmills.⁴⁰

Hobbs notes in his book that the gristmill at Wallace is similar to others in the region and that the similarities "point to a distinctive style of eastern North Carolina mill architecture." He notes the low dams, partially open mill buildings, and buildings framed with massive timbers. Hobbs also recorded that "a new turbine...is stored on the mill's main floor." This note is enigmatic; no turbine is on site, and family members and town officials report no knowledge that turbines ever ran the machinery at the mill.⁴¹

³⁵ Dunaway, *Beginner's Guide*, 77-78; 82-84.

³⁶ Martin, 2-4.

³⁷ Ancestry.com, *1800 United States Federal Census* [database on-line] (Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2010).

³⁸ MPDF, E14.

³⁹ Thomas Baldwin, *A New and Complete Gazetteer of the United States* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo & Co., 1854), 336.

⁴⁰ MPDF, E14.

⁴¹ Hobbs, 74, 77.

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At the conclusion of her countywide survey, Martin noted two mills in the Duplin County MPDF along with Boney's Gristmill that remained intact examples of the type in the county. The sawmill at the Seth Turner House (DP0202), judging by aerials, was removed from its site between 2011 and 2013. The Maxwell Mill and Mill Pond (DP0167), another water-powered corn-grinding grist mill—survives but is overgrown and heavily deteriorated, although the dam and millpond are intact. Boney's Gristmill, Dam, and Millpond, then, is an extremely rare survivor of a once-common type made more significant by the continued existence of materials and construction dating back possibly to the eighteenth century.

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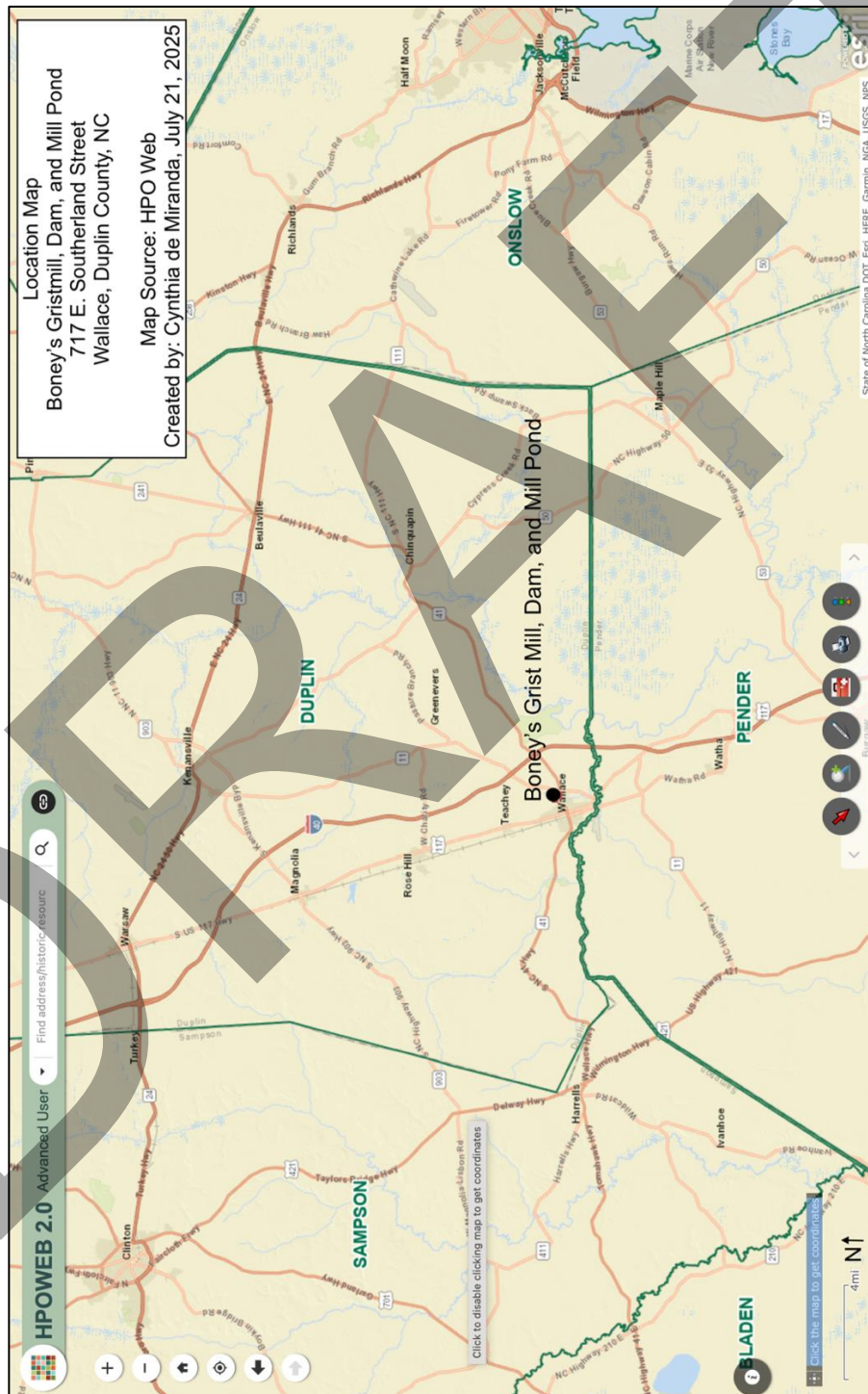
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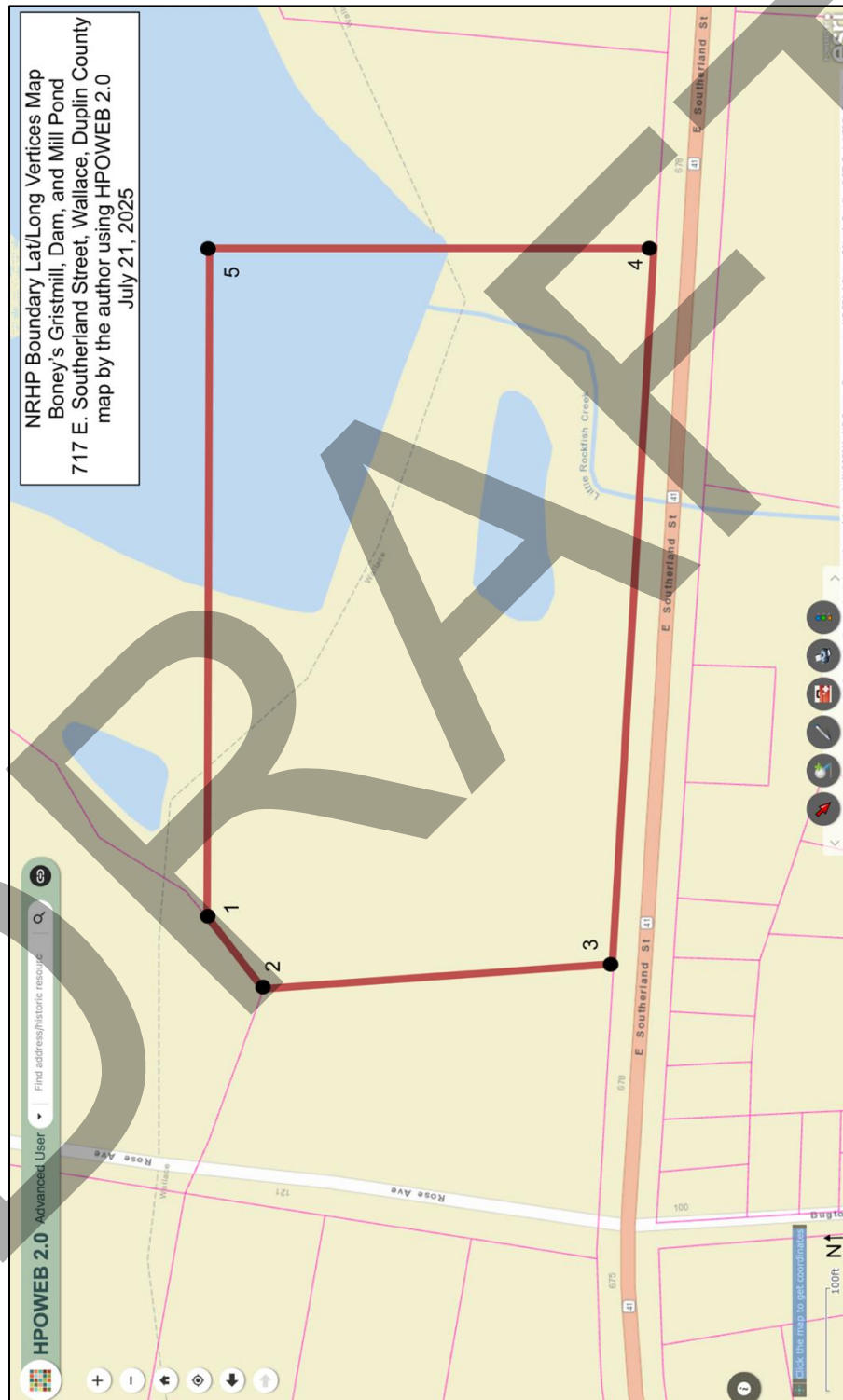
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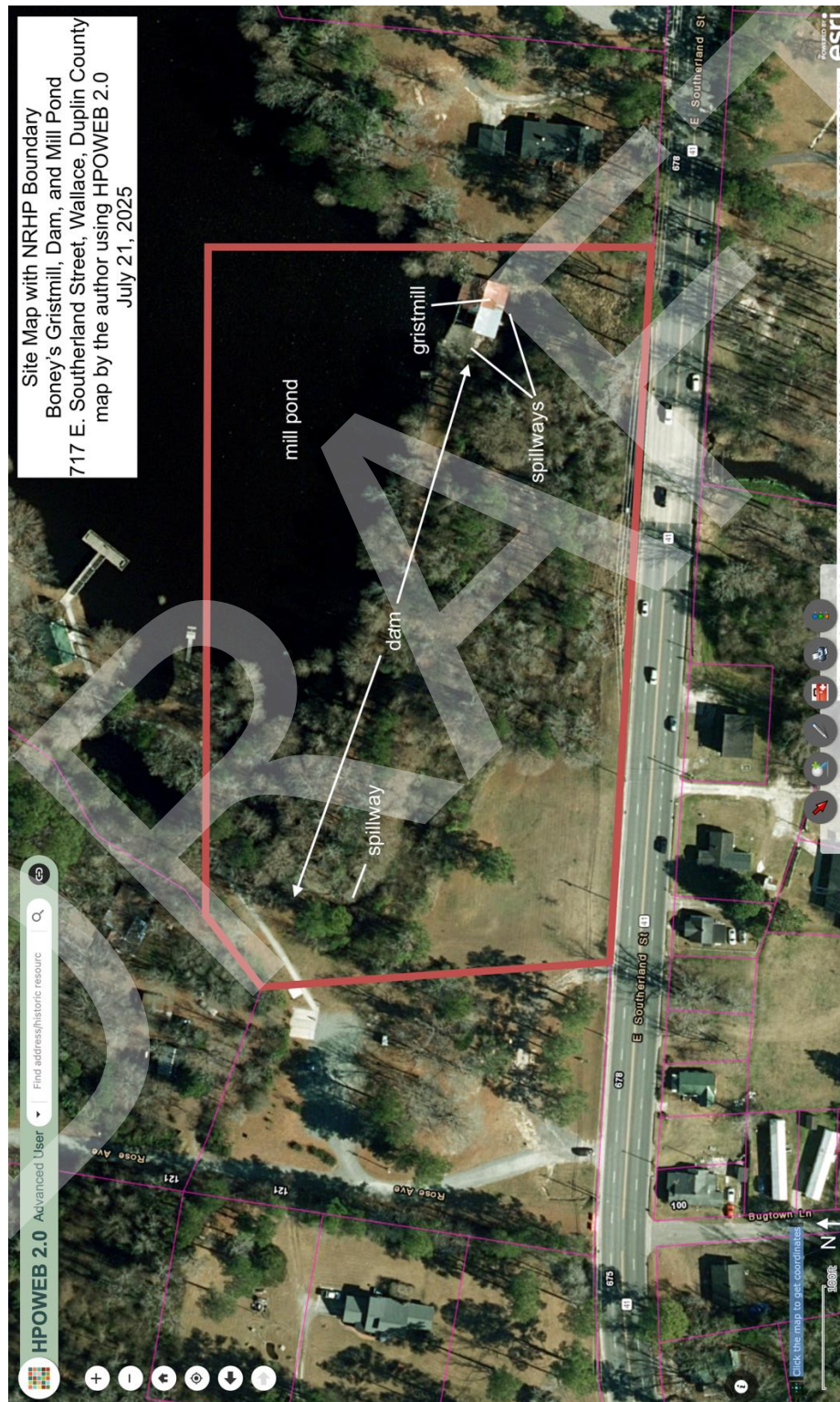
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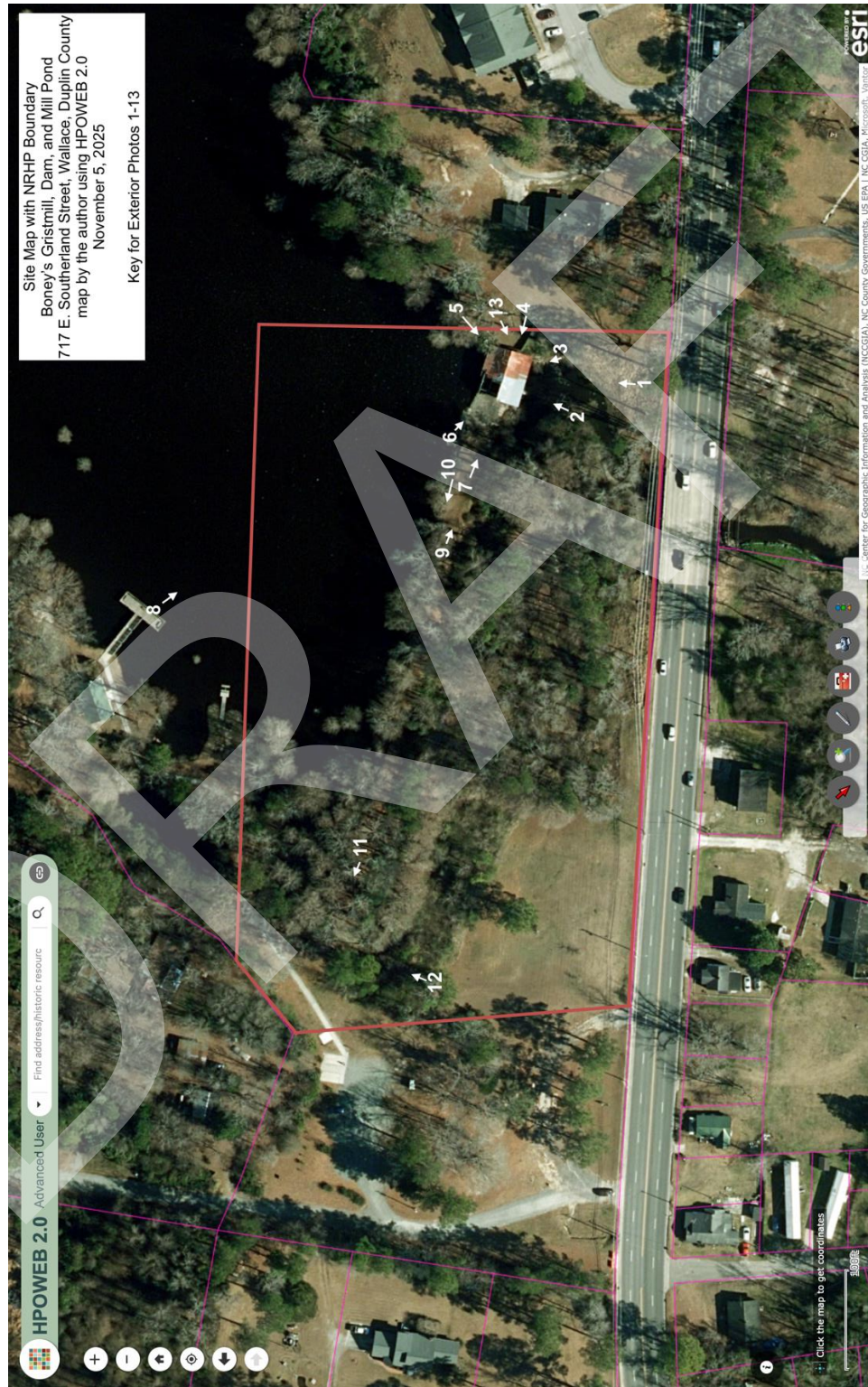
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Boney's Gristmill, Dam, and Mill Pond

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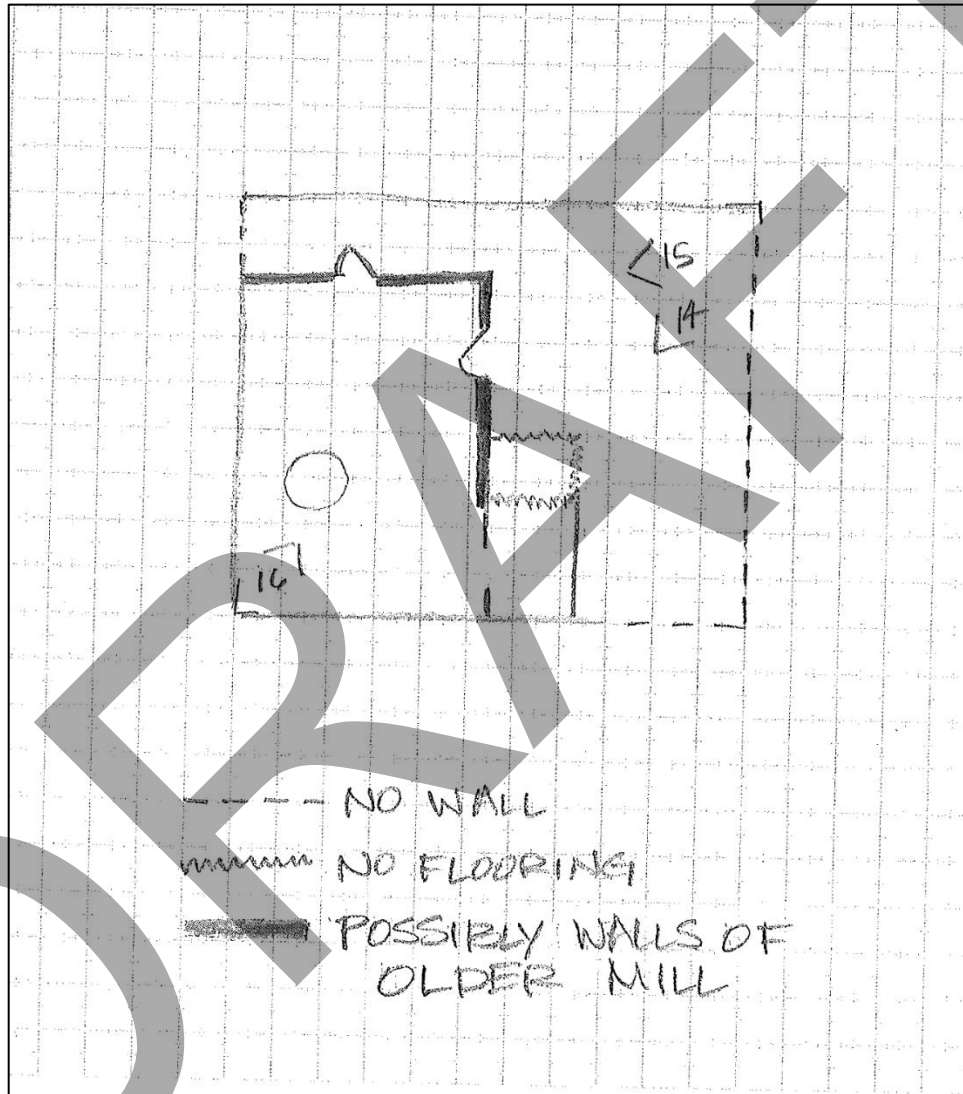
Duplin County, NC

County and State

Duplin County MPDF

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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Floor Plan with Key for Interior Photos 14-16
Boney's Gristmill, Dam, and Mill Pond N↑
717 E. Southerland Street, Wallace, Duplin County