



WEST VIRGINIA HISTORIC PROPERTY INVENTORY FORM

HM-0099

STREET ADDRESS

US 50

Tax Parcel:

COMMON/HISTORIC NAME

☐ Common ☒ Historic ☐ Both

Cummins' Mill

NO. IN SURVEY

ROM-002

NO. OF BAYS

FRONT

SIDE

TOWN OR COMMUNITY

Romney

COUNTY

Hampshire

NEGATIVE NO.

NOT VISIBLE
FROM ROAD

**ARCHITECT/BUILDER**

Unknown

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION

1795

EXTERIOR BUILDING FABRIC**STORIES**

0

DATE

NAT. REGISTER LISTED

STATE REGISTER LISTED

ROOFING MATERIAL**STYLE (STAFF USE ONLY)**

Not Styled

PROPERTY USE OR FUNCTION

Ruin (Current)

Mill (Historic)

TYPE OF FOUNDATION

Continuous Stone

QUADRANGLE NAME

Romney

SURVEY ORGANIZATION

Michael Baker Jr., Inc.
5088 West Washington
Second Floor
Charleston, WV 25313

PART OF WHAT SURVEY

Romney Core Run Road



DATE 03/23/1999

SITE NO.

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PRESENT OWNER

City of Romney

OWNER ADDRESS**GENERAL CONDITION OF PROPERTY**

Neglected

ADDITIONS**IF YES, DESCRIBE**☒ Yes ☐ No**ALTERATIONS****IF YES, DESCRIBE**☐ Yes ☒ No

See continuation sheet

NO. AND NATURE OF OUTBUILDINGS

See continuation sheet

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY (ORIGINAL AND PRESENT)

See continuation sheet

HISTORIC/CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

See continuation sheet

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet

FORM PREPARED BY

Cultural Resources Section

DATE

2/21/00

ADDRESS

Michael Baker, Jr., Inc. 5508
West Washington Second
Floor Charleston, WV
25313

CUMMINS' MILL (ROM-002)

Number and Nature of Outbuildings

There are no outbuildings associated with this resource.

Resource Description

Components of Cummins' Mill include the millhouse, the milldam, and the millrace.

The resource is the foundation of a gristmill located on the west side of Mill Creek immediately behind the Hamilton House. The structure was thirty-six feet long by thirty-two feet wide. The walls were 24 inches thick, and constructed of coursed rubble masonry. The foundation was about six feet deep. The metal remains of the water wheel are on the south side of the structure. A poured concrete cistern is between the foundation and Mill Creek; this was part of the City of Romney water system in the early 20th century. The concrete foundation of a structure located to the north of the mill is also associated with the water system.

The remains of the milldam are located to the south of the Core Run Bridge, just inside Mechanicsburg Gap. There is one cut stone on the west side of the creek, and locational evidence is also on the east side. The millrace cut through the pasture south of where the barn is now located, then turned east behind the hill on the property. The course of the millrace can still be seen.

The mill was featured in an 1863 lithograph of a Union encampment in the area. The millhouse was a three-story building. The waterwheel was "overshot" which meant that the water came over the top of the wheel. To get sufficient water to power this type of wheel, there needed to be a milldam, millrace and sluice. The milldam and the millrace are not shown in the lithograph. The mill sluice was built of wood and raised on short trestles. There are no remnants of the sluice.

Historical/Cultural Significance

Historical research indicates that the mill came into existence in 1795 or shortly thereafter.

Isaac Means purchased 361 acres along the west side of Mill Creek in 1790 (Record of Surveys "A" Hampshire County #200). In June of 1795 he petitioned the Hampshire County court for permission to build a "water grist mill" on the property. The petition was granted after a jury had viewed the site and concluded that the mill and dam would not overflow the neighbors' houses or gardens, cause any health problems, nor restrict navigation (HCMB 1795-1798:19,33).

Isaac Means bequeathed the mill, specifying the "mill-house, stills, and apparatus thereunto belonging" equally to his sons Robert and Ephraim (Loose Will # 436). The 1820 US Census of Manufactures listed Robert Means as owning the gristmill with "one pair of chopping stones" and employing one person. Ephraim Means was listed as having one distillery with 2 stills; it is unclear if both of these industries were in the same building. In November 1834 Ephraim Means conveyed the property "lying on Mill Creek . . . the same tract whereon the grist mill now stands" (HCDB 30:50) to Charles Caldwell. In 1846, after a

**CONTINUATION
SHEET**

chancery court suit, Hampshire County Sheriff Vance Fox conveyed the entire mill and 100 acres to Samuel Caldwell (HCDB 39:505).

He in turn sold the "tract of land . . . on Mill Creek . . . with the mill and other improvements thereon containing 100 acres" to Robert Cummins in 1848 for \$650 (HCDB 43:314). In the 1850 Hampshire County census, Robert Cummins gave his occupation as miller. Besides other members of the Cummins family, four men listed as millwrights also lived at the Cummins residence. Between 1850 and 1851 there was an increase of \$1600 in tax assessment because of new building (HCLB 1851). Having four millwrights in residence indicates that the mill was probably expanded at that time.

In 1860 Robert Cummins was still the miller but with only one day laborer living at his house. There is no mention of the mill in the Union documentation about the Mechanicsburg Gap camp. The Confederates briefly mentioned a mill in their report on the Battle of Hanging Rocks, which could have been Cummins' or Schull's Mill (Official Records Series I Vol. 5:213). John Blue mentioned the mill in his memoirs but neither contains any description or whether or not the mill continued to function during the war.

When in 1861 the Confederate forces were stationed in Mechanicsburg Gap "behind a breastwork formed of rock, and a dam across a mill creek, which flows through the pass" (Official Records Series I Vol. V:202), it seems likely that this was the Cummin's Mill dam.

In 1877, after another chancery suit, the heirs of Robert Cummins sold the land to W. V. Herriot. A survey was done in conjunction with this transaction: the parcel totaled 134 acres (HCDB 58:146-147). The 1880 census listed Herriot as a miller. There was one boarder who also was a miller. In 1897 the 134 acre parcel was conveyed to William Taylor (HCDB 72:31). Taylor willed the property to his daughter Clyde T. Wirgman in 1899 (HCWB 22:532). She in turn sold the parcel on the east side of the Northwestern Turnpike to George R. Hamilton in 1904 (HCDB 78:257-258). In 1911 the City of Romney purchased about $\frac{3}{4}$ acre surrounding the mill from Hamilton (HCDB 86:226). This included the right of way for a pipeline through the millrace, the milldam in Mechanicsburg Gap, and all his mill right and water power right in Mill Creek. The city used the land as part of its water supply system until 1937 (Brannon 1976:244). The mill was torn down in the 1950s. The City of Romney is still the owner of record.

National Register Eligibility Assessment

The resource was evaluated under the Criteria for Evaluation for the National Register of Historic Places. It was found to be *not eligible* because it lacks integrity.

The resource does not meet Criterion A because it lacks clear association with any significant historic event or patterns of history, nor does it meet Criterion B, as research has not revealed any association with a significant individual.

The resource was dismantled in the 1950s. All that remains is part of the foundation. Therefore it is not eligible under Criterion C.

Historic research has not determined a potential to yield information important to history or prehistory (Criterion D).

Bibliographic References

Brannon, S. W.

- 1976 *Historic Hampshire: A Symposium of Hampshire County and Its People, Past and Present.*
McClain Printing Company, Parsons, West Virginia.

Gray, L.

- 1863 Camps of the 4th Brigade 1st Division 8th Army Corps near Romney, Virginia.
Kreb & Bro, Lithographers, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Hampshire County Land Records

Hampshire County Deed Books
Hampshire County Land Books
Hampshire County Minute Books
Hampshire County Record of Surveys
Hampshire County Will Books

US Census

- 1860 Eighth Census of the United States. Microfilm, Archives and History Library,
Division of Culture and History, Charleston, West Virginia.

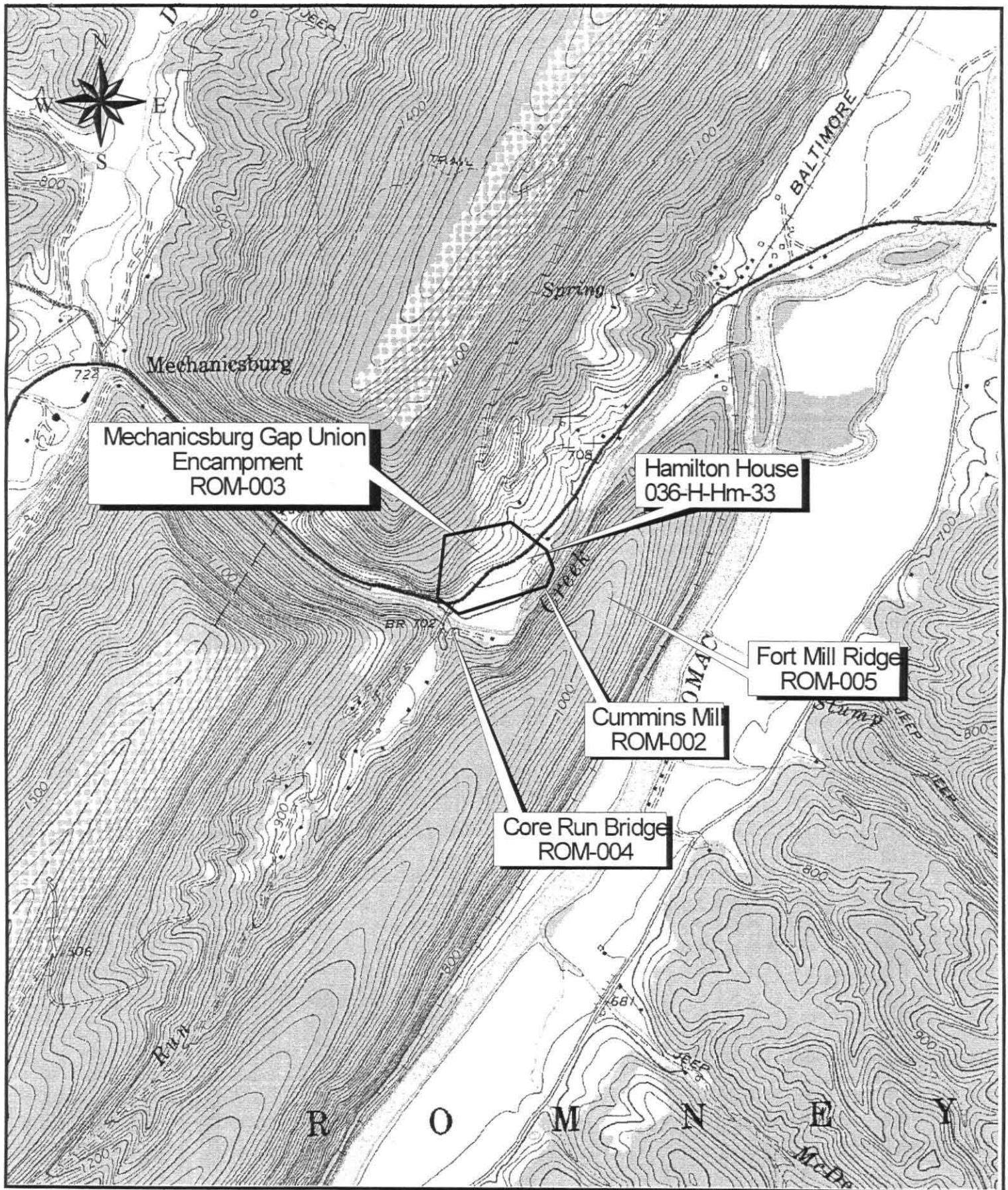
US Census

- 1850 Seventh Census of the United States. Microfilm, Archives and History Library,
Division of Culture and History, Charleston, West Virginia.

US Census

- 1880 Tenth Census of the United States. Microfilm, Archives and History Library,
Division of Culture and History, Charleston, West Virginia.

- 1881 *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies.* Series I Volume V. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.



**Location of Historic Resources in the
US 50 Project Area near Romney, WV**

100 0 100 200 300 400 500 600 Feet

