

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Elkins Milling Company

Other name/site number: Darden's Mill

2. Location

Street & number: 2 ½ Railroad Avenue

City/town: Elkins

vicinity: N/A

State: West Virginia code: WV county: Randolph code: 083 zip code: 26241

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 nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Susan M Pierce 12/16/04
Signature of Certifying Official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau Date

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of Certifying Official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau Date

Elkins Milling Company
Name of Property

Randolph, WV
County and State

=====

4. National Park Service Certification

=====

I hereby certify that this property is: Signature of Keeper Date of Action

- Entered in the National Register _____ _____
 See continuation sheet.
 Determined eligible for the
National Register _____ _____
 See continuation sheet.
 Determined not eligible for the
National Register _____ _____
 Removed from the National Register _____ _____
 Other (explain): _____

- =====

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
 district
 site
 structure
 object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	building
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	TOTAL

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

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

Elkins Milling Company
Name of Property

Randolph, WV
County and State

=====

6. Function or Use

=====

Historic Functions	Current Functions
<u>INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION: Mill</u>	<u>VACANT/NOT IN USE</u>
<u>COMMERCE/TRADE: Specialty Store</u>	

=====

7. Description

=====

Architectural Classification:	Materials
<u>OTHER: Roller Mill</u>	
Foundation	<u>Stone and brick</u>
Walls	<u>Wood and corrugated metal</u>
Roof	<u>Roll roofing</u>
Other	<u>Wood</u>

Narrative Description
(See continuation sheets.)

=====

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.

Elkins Milling Company
Name of Property

Randolph, WV
County and State

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
INDUSTRY
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance
1901–1954

Significant Dates

1902
1910
1919
1937
1943

Significant Person
Darden, Ralph

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance
(See continuation sheets.)

Elkins Milling Company
Name of Property

Randolph, WV
County and State

=====

9. Major Bibliographical References

=====

Bibliography
(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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 X Other

Name of Repository: Randolph County Historical Society, C-HOPE , various individuals

=====

10. Geographical Data

=====

Acreage of Property: Less than one acre

UTM References

Quad Map: Elkins

17 4308669 599581
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description
(See continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(See continuation sheet.)

Elkins Milling Company
Name of Property

Randolph, WV
County and State

=====

11. Form Prepared By

=====

Name/Title: Ruth A. Brinker, Board Member, Citizens for Historical Opportunity, Preservation and Education in Randolph County (C-HOPE).

Organization: C-HOPE Date: 12 - 17 - 03

Street & Number: RR 2 Box 135-2 Telephone: 302-636-9791

City or Town: Elkins State: WV ZIP: 26241

=====

Property Owner

=====

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

Name: Citizens for Historical Opportunity, Preservation and Education in Randolph County

Street & Number: PO Box 1961 Telephone: 304-637-6702

City or Town: Elkins State: WV Zip: 26241

=====

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Elkins Milling Company
Name of Property

Randolph, WV
County and State

Section number 7 Page 1

Architectural Description:

The building is a three-story timber frame structure situated between Railroad Avenue, the old railroad grade, and First Street (Photo 1). The interior space is 10,500 square feet on three floors. The first floor is at street level on the north, south, and east sides, and the second floor is at railroad grade level on the west side. There is a concrete and stone retaining wall extending beyond the building supporting the grade. It appears that the building was constructed in phases, with the south half being the oldest. The building is now eight bays long, and three bays deep with a loading dock/porch on the east or street side, and two elevated loading doors on the west (Photo 2).

Setting

The Mill was built adjacent to the Railroad to provide ease of shipping the products. At one time there was a rail siding on a trestle adjacent to the Mill for their sole usage, and a railroad bridge crossing the Tygart Valley River within a few feet of the Mill. The newly rehabilitated Elkins Depot is approximately 100 yards north of the Mill. Both Railroad Avenue on the east and First Street on the south have asphalt surfaces with curbs and storm drains. Across the river to the south are commercial and industrial buildings including the old Elkins Power Plant building. To the west beyond the railroad grade, the former railroad yard is vacant. To the east across Railroad Avenue are residences and an old motel.

Exterior

The south portion was originally a four story rectangular structure built in 1902 (Figure 1). An addition before 1920 extended the building on the north side. A 1937 fire did enough damage that the fourth floor was removed. The current L shape was achieved by the removal of the southeast corner. The south portion has wooden German lap siding in fair condition on the east facade and poor condition on the west facade, with 6/6 or 6/1 regularly spaced windows. The L shaped loading dock/porch has a metal shed roof with a combination concrete and wooden floor. The concrete part is at ground level on the north, and the wooden part is several steps above ground level on the south due to a gentle North/South slope of the land.

In the early days of the Mill's operations there was a coal shed owned by John Davis and later Darden north of the mill (Map 1). The coal provided fuel to heat the boiler in the "iron clad" engine room, and generate power to the mill. The concrete floor remnants to the immediate north of the present building and the concrete railroad retaining wall may be the limited remains of a

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Elkins Milling Company
Name of Property

Randolph, WV
County and State

Section number 7 Page 2

Architectural Description (continued):

warehouse (Map 2). By 1910 the Mill was powered by electricity (Map 3). The current "iron clad" north portion filled the space between the current and original wood siding south portion and the former warehouse (Map 3). This conclusion is evidenced by the slight angle of the north wall that would have been the side abutting the adjacent building. In further support of the conclusion is the patched corrugated metal siding on the first and second floor of the north face showing the angle of the former shed roof (Photo 3). The corrugated metal siding is original to the north portion (note on Map 2). This siding has been interrupted on the first floor street side by modern doors and windows. The roof line angle of the north portion does not exactly match the south roof line. The roll roofing now spans this small offset (noticeable on Photos 1 and 2).

Interior

The interior of the south portion is in good condition, particularly on the second and third floors. Here the flooring and some of the walls are tongue and groove. The stairways between floors may not be original. This is evidenced by the fact that the stairs partially block a window (Photo 4), and between the first and second floors the stairs have the first step located at the loading dock doors, partially obstructing easy movement. Since there is no evidence of original stairways in the south portion, they may have been in the southeast corner that was removed. There is an elevator shaft, but no elevator remains. The brick chimney here is recent. On the second floor a very large opening in its north wall leads from the south to the north portion. A partial wall separates them on the third floor. On the first floor the ceiling is lower than on the other floors, and there are fewer windows. The floor has various coverings. A toilet room on the east wall is just large enough for a toilet and one person. A modern apartment was established on the south end with rooms partitioned off and recent doors and windows (Photo 5). At one time there were windows on the west railroad yard side that were in dropped boxes. These have been enclosed or boarded up. The north portion once had a stairway against its north wall. The first floor has a recent gas furnace. On the second floor near the north end, two massive posts were removed and a cable was stretched across the opening to help support the third floor. The upper beam now sags, but only slightly.

Grain mills are notorious for fires due to dust combustion, and at least two fires, 1911 or 12, and 1937 (Figure 2 through 6) left their marks on the community and the interior of both halves of the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

N Elkins Milling Company
Name of Property

Randolph, WV
County and State

Section number 7 Page 3

Architectural Description (continued):

building. Surface (1/4 to 1/2 inch deep) charring is visible on some of the interior beams; some have been replaced, and some recycled to other locations in the building. Pieces of original mill machinery are scattered throughout (Photos 6, 7, and 8), and machine mounts are present on walls and ceilings (Photo 9). These appear to be remnants of roller mill machinery. There is also a large industrial scale (Photo 10).

The Mill evidences change through time, which is to be expected in an industrial building responding to market forces. As milling technologies and local needs changed, so changed the building. Most of the changes occurred within the historic period, and do not constitute adverse impacts to the building's integrity. Modern alterations that include the apartment and recent commercial modifications are all easily reversible. The basic structure of the Mill is sound and worthy of rehabilitation.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Elkins Milling Company
Name of Property

Randolph, WV
County and State

Section number 8 Page 4

Statement of Significance:

This property is significant under Criterion A for industry, Criterion B for its association with local business person Ralph Darden, and Criterion C for its industrial architecture. The period of significance spans the years between 1902 (the date of construction) and 1954, a period in which the building served Elkins and the surrounding area as a merchant grain mill and feed store.

Significance Under Criterion A:

The Elkins Milling Company (also known locally as Darden's Mill) hereinafter referred to as the Mill, is an important link in telling the story of the early history of Elkins and the surrounding area, its workers, and its economy. In 1901, the Elkins Milling Company purchased a lot for \$1,000 on the railroad yard of the West Virginia Central and Pittsburgh Railway Company from Henry Gassaway Davis (Figure 7), and built a mill that operated from 1902 until 1919 (Figures 8 through 11) when it was sold to local businessperson Ralph Darden and added to his holdings under the Darden Company, or DARCO, name (Photo 13). The Mill provided a service for central West Virginia farmers and shipped finished products all over the state and beyond. During peak production, many tons of grain came in, keeping workers busy around the clock. When the Mill was completed in 1902, a coal fired steam boiler and engine powered the Mill at a time when water power dominated the industry. The original steam engine was replaced by electric power by 1910—an early conversion to this source of power. The Mill also kept the adjacent railroad yard running at its peak. During the first half of the 20th century, the railroad yard was an expansive hub of activity for industry and transportation (Photo 12). Today, the railroad yard is vacant, save for the passenger depot and the Mill.

DARCO was profitable through most of the first half of the 20th century, as it was the sole supplier to the Atlantic and Pacific (A&P) Tea Company for its stores throughout the state. The company eventually discontinued production of flour at the Mill and increased production of buckwheat, corn, feeds and farm supplies (Map 4). In 1943 the property was sold to Samuel D. and Minnie Girard who leased it to Altman's Cash Feed Store (Map 5). Then in 1946 the Darden Company went bankrupt due to competition from the Southern States Company. By the mid-1960s Girard's son Joseph operated the Elkins Farm Supply in the Mill, until March of 1967, then sold the building to Ray and Evelyn Hill. After this date the building passed through many owners, serving as a warehouse for selling used furniture and recycled construction materials.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Elkins Milling Company
Name of Property

Randolph, WV
County and State

Section number 8 Page 5

Significance Under Criterion B:

Mr. Ralph Darden is significant in regional history as a major employer, as a founding officer of the Elkins Milling Company, and as an investor in several other grain and milling related businesses in Randolph and Tucker Counties. Darden maintained his business office in Elkins on Davis Avenue, and his house in Elkins (421 Davis Avenue, built 1904, listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing building to the Downtown Elkins Historic District) has been preserved and rehabilitated by the Elkins Historic Landmarks Commission. As an early business developer in Elkins, he may be considered one of the founders of the community, which sprang into existence with the coming of the railroad. Born in Hoskie, North Carolina on March 10, 1867, Darden spent his early years in Murfreesboro. Darden was an early resident of Elkins in 1890, at a time when the town numbered a dozen houses. He started out in the real-estate and insurance business, and by 1894 he had incorporated the Darden Company, also known as DARCO. During his lifetime, he served in many community leadership roles, including the Methodist Church, the Randolph County Board of Education, as a charter member of the Rotary Club, as one of the first directors of the Elkins YMCA, as president of the Chamber of Commerce, and as the first president of the Monongahela Valley Association. Additional credits include serving as an officer of the Elkins Fair Association (which exists today as the Forest Festival), as president of the Cash and Grocery, and as a member of the Board of Directors of the Davis Trust Company. Darden passed away on December 1, 1948 at the age of 81, and was buried in Maplewood Cemetery, the resting place of many of the early business and political leaders of Elkins.

Significance Under Criterion C:

The post and beam/timber frame construction that dominates the interior is one of the few remaining industrial buildings in the state. Elkins historian Robert Whetsell says he can find "no other commercial building or mill still in decent shape in the region with a similar history and wooden frame/post and beam construction." The Mill's architecture is outstanding, particularly the interior where the massive posts and beams built strong to carry many tons of grain and feed are exposed to view (Photo 11). The Mill is a large, timber framed, post and beam building with approximately 10,500 square feet on its three floors. A small apartment/office was intruded into the first floor south bay, which overlays the original materials in this area. In addition the first floor walls and ceiling were painted white and various floor coverings were used.

The interior of the older south half has a more finished appearance than the north half where the building is sheathed in corrugated metal that in some areas is exposed in the interior.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Elkins Milling Company
Name of Property

Randolph, WV
County and State

Section number 8 Page 6

The northernmost warehouse is no longer extant, and the space between it and the original Mill structure has changed from a shed roofed lean-to to its present form (Photo 14). Despite the changes, the building retains integrity of design and materials.

The second and third floors have tongue and groove flooring, and in some areas beaded tongue and groove walls and ceilings that reflect a golden glow in the natural lighting from the Mill's many windows. Such beauty in an historic industrial building deserves our attention and recognition. Historic preservation architect Mike Gioulis (2002) concluded that it is structurally sound.

Statement of Significance Conclusion:

Mills serve a social function by bringing together people who might not otherwise have an opportunity to communicate. Mills bring into town rural people, and there is interaction between farmers and industrial workers, buyers and sellers. This Mill served a multi-county area of the state, because it not only milled the farmer's produce, it also shipped it throughout the State.

The Mill is significant for its distinctive and beautiful architecture, its function as a steam then electric driven roller mill, its social history, its connection to Ralph Darden, and the fact that it is the only remaining industrial building on the historic railyard to survive into the present era.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Elkins Milling Company
Name of Property

Randolph, WV
County and State

Section number 9 Page 7

Bibliography

Baxter, Phyllis. 2003 Press Release following the purchase of the Mill by Citizens for Historic Opportunity, Preservation and Education in Randolph County. (C-HOPE)

Board of Trade of Elkins, West Virginia. 1906 *Elkins, WV: The Coming Metropolis of the State*. Acme Publishing Co. Morgantown, WV. Reprinted by the Randolph County Historical Society, Elkins, WV. 1975. McClain Printing Company, Parsons, WV.

Gioulis, Michael 2002. Elkins Mill; Elkins, West Virginia, Inspection Report. Report provided to C-HOPE.

Rice, William H. 2003. Historical Notes on the Elkins Milling Company, and the Darden Mill. Report provided to C-HOPE.

Whetsell, Robert C. 1994. *Elkins, West Virginia The Metropolis Revisited*. McClain Printing Company, Parsons, West Virginia, 1994.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Elkins Milling Company
Name of Property

Randolph, WV
County and State

Section number 10 Page 8

Verbal Boundary Description

The following is the wording taken from the DEED of purchase recorded in the Office of the Clerk of the County Commission of Randolph County, West Virginia, in Deed Book 482 at page 414:

Beginning at a point along western boundary of Railroad Avenue in said City and 63.5 feet distant from the center line of the railway of Western Maryland Railroad Company and 40 feet south of the S.E. corner of the Darden Coal House (now gone) and in a line with the eastern boundary of said coal house, thence south along the western boundary of Railroad Avenue 154.3 feet to a point; said point being the N.W. corner of Railroad Avenue and First Street, thence at right angles to first line and along the north boundary and First Street 68.2 feet to a point, last mentioned point being 33 feet from the center line of the said Railroad measured at right angles thereto and on the eastern side of said railroad, thence in a concentric circle in a northeasterly direction and parallel with said railroad center line and 33 feet distant therefore 159 feet to a point, thence along a line at right angles to railroad and in a easterly direction 30.5 feet to the place of beginning, and containing 7,150 square feet, more or less. Said real estate being commonly known as the Darden Mill Property location at the corner of First Street and Railroad Avenue.

Boundary Justification

The above wording is consistent with the historic boundary of the property purchased from the West Virginia Central and Pittsburgh Railroad by the Elkins Milling Company in 1901 (see Figure 7). The Mill is effectively contained within these boundaries by two city streets and the railroad yard.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Elkins Milling Company
Name of Property

Randolph, WV
County and State

Section number Photo Page 9

Name of Property: Elkins Milling Company

Address: 2 ½ Railroad Avenue

Town: Elkins

County/State: Randolph, West Virginia

Photographers: Michael Gioulis, Gerry Milnes, and Phyllis Baxter

Dates: 2001, 2002, and 2004

Negatives: Augusta Center at Davis and Elkins College, Phyllis Baxter, and Michael Gioulis
Historic photos property of Robert Whetsell.

Photo 1 of 14: Phyllis Baxter, Camera facing NW, front façade and South elevation.

Photo 2 of 14: Phyllis Baxter, Camera facing SE, West and North elevations.

Photo 3 of 14: Gerry Milnes, Camera facing SW, North elevation and part of East elevation.

Photo 4 of 14: Gerry Milnes, Interior South half stairway.

Photo 5 of 14: Gerry Milnes, Camera facing NW, front façade and S elevation showing recent windows.

Photo 6 of 14: Gerry Milnes, Interior North half, Milling machinery.

Photo 7 of 14: Michael Gioulis, Interior, Westinghouse gear.

Photo 8 of 14: Michael Gioulis, Interior, South half, Sifter and railroad loading wagon.

Photo 9 of 14: Michael Gioulis, Interior, North half, belt drive wheels.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Elkins Milling Company
Name of Property

Randolph, WV
County and State

Section number Photo Page 10

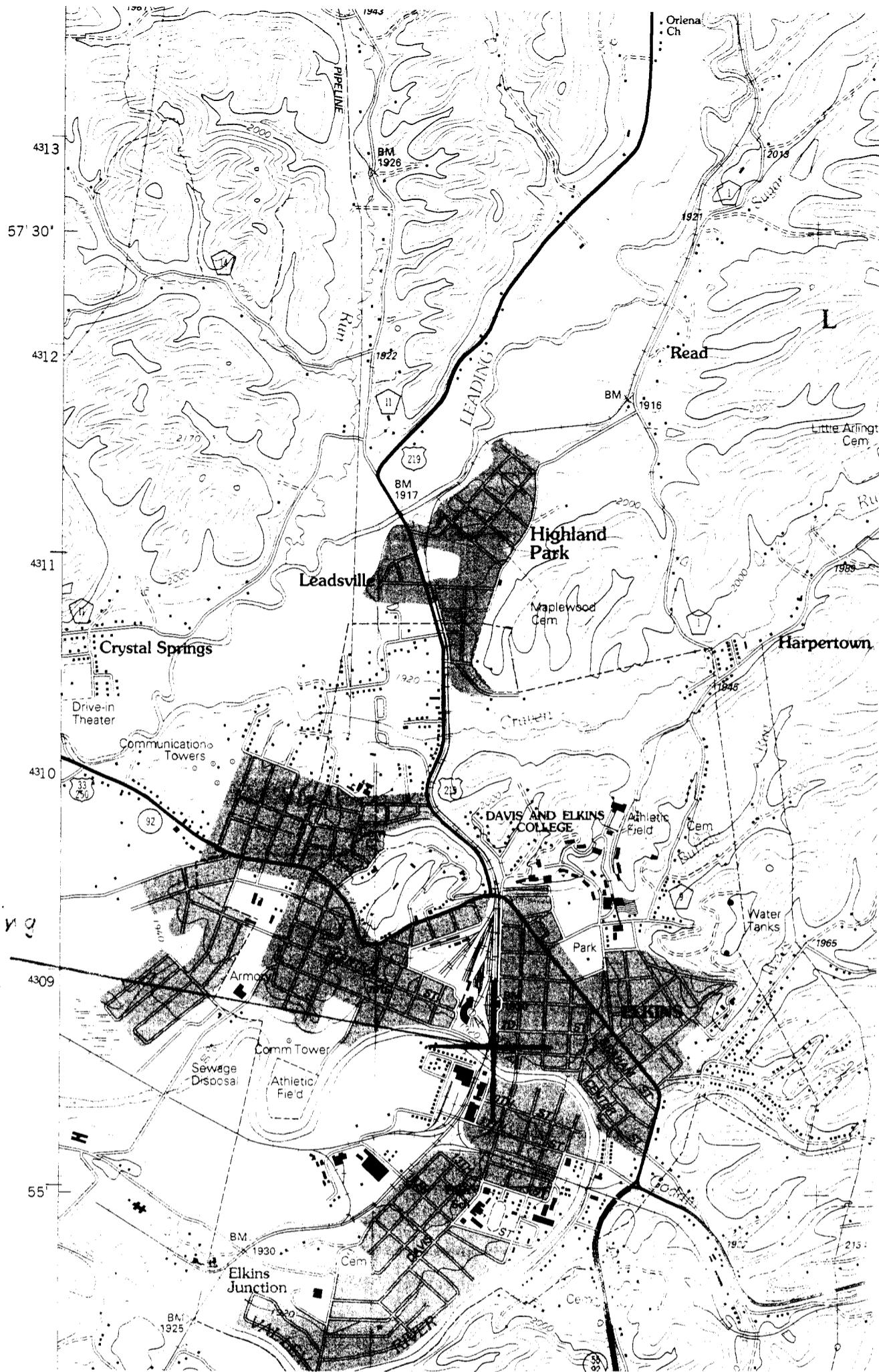
Photo 10 of 14: Michael Gioulis: Interior, South half, E. Spinner O'Flaherty (President of C-HOPE) at the scale, with elevator cage on the right.

Photo 11 of 14: Phyllis Baxter, Interior, South half.

Photo 12 of 14: Historic Aerial Photo of railroad yard and Mill.

Photo 13 of 14: Historic 1920 Photo, East elevation prior to the 1938 fire.

Photo 14 of 14: Pre-1909 historic photo, South and East facades.



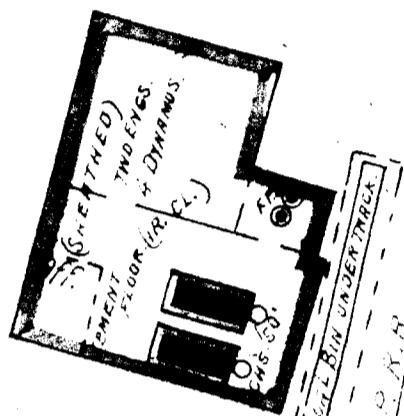
Elkins Milling
Company
Randolph Co.,
W.Va.
UTM:
17/599581/
4308669

ELKINS MILLING
COMPANY
RANDOLPH CO., WV
MAP 1
JULY 1902 SANBORN MAP

JULY 1902
ELKINS
W.V.A.

TYGARTS VALLEY IMPROVEMENT CO.
ELECTRIC LIGHT PLANT.

KIN DAY & NIGHT.
HEAT STEAM, LIGHT, ELEC.
FUEL COAL, NO FIRE APPS.



Supply
to
the

ELKINS MILL CO.
TO HAVE NIGHT WATCHMAN,
ELEC. LIGHT, FUEL, COAL,
HEAT, STEAM, CITY WATER
WORKS, TO HAVE STATION HUMPS
HOSE BUILDING NOT FINISHED.

CH. 65' STUDLING OVER 4. BOILER
NOT PROTECTED.

STORAGE TANK
FOR BOUTS 1ST
SET RAILS 2nd
OTHER MACH.
NOT PLACED YET.

GRAIN SINK 12x44
CAPY 20,000
BU

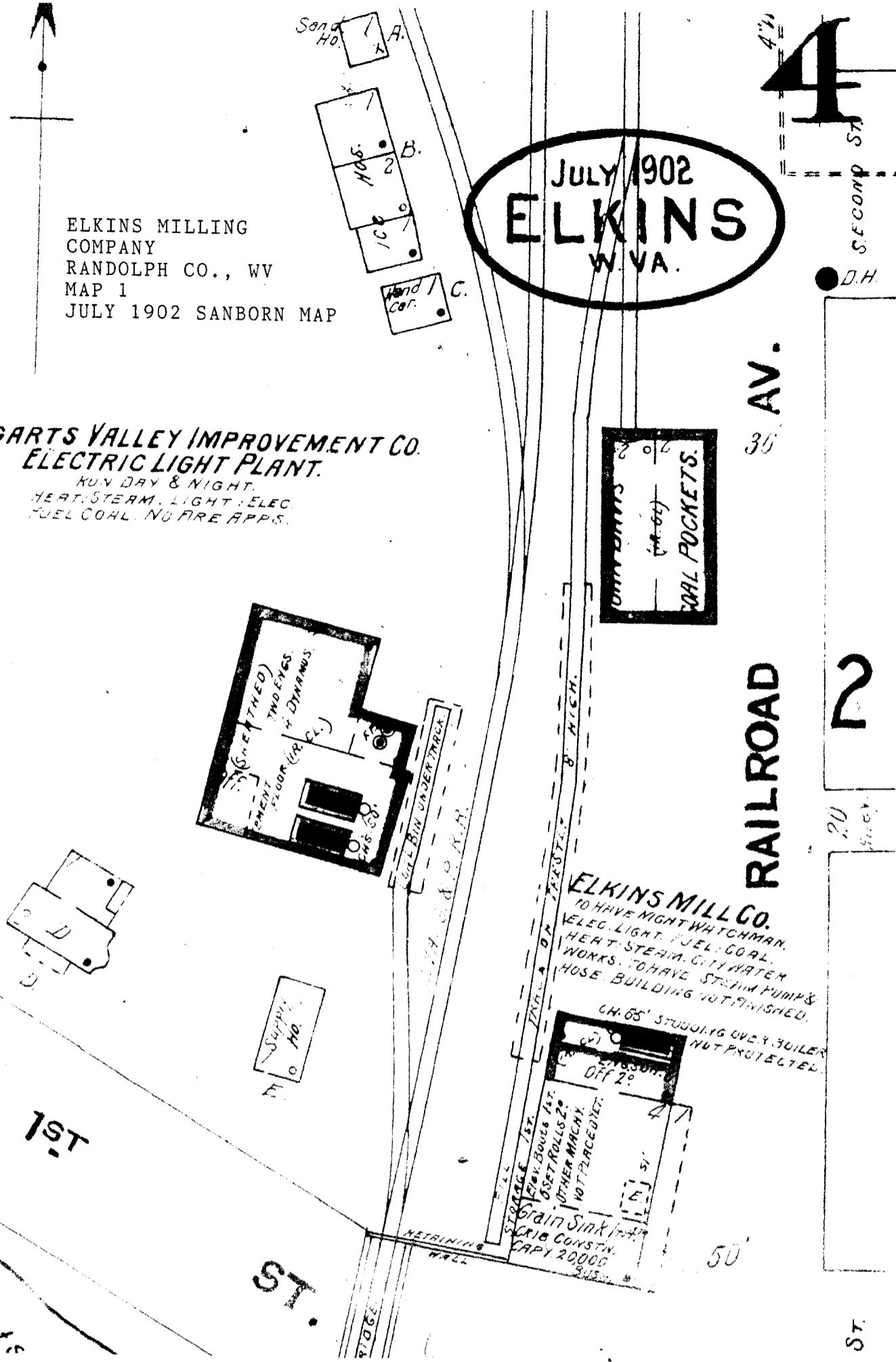
50'

ST.

1ST

Tygart

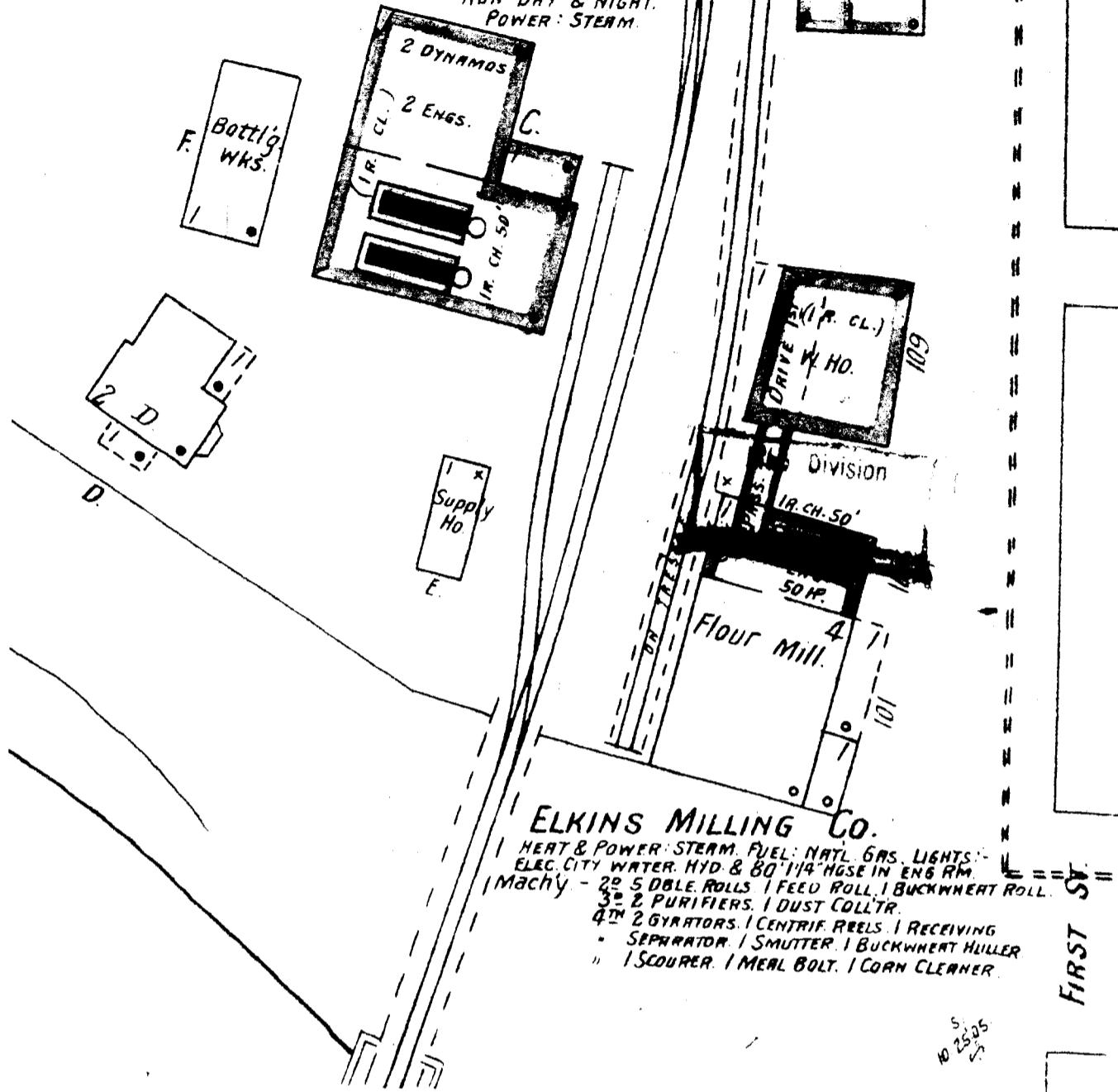
Proprietary



ELKINS MILLING COMPANY
RANDOLPH CO., WV
MAP 2
SEPTEMBER 1905 SANBORN MAP

TRYGART'S VALLEY IMPROVEMENT CO.
ELEC. LIGHT PLANT.

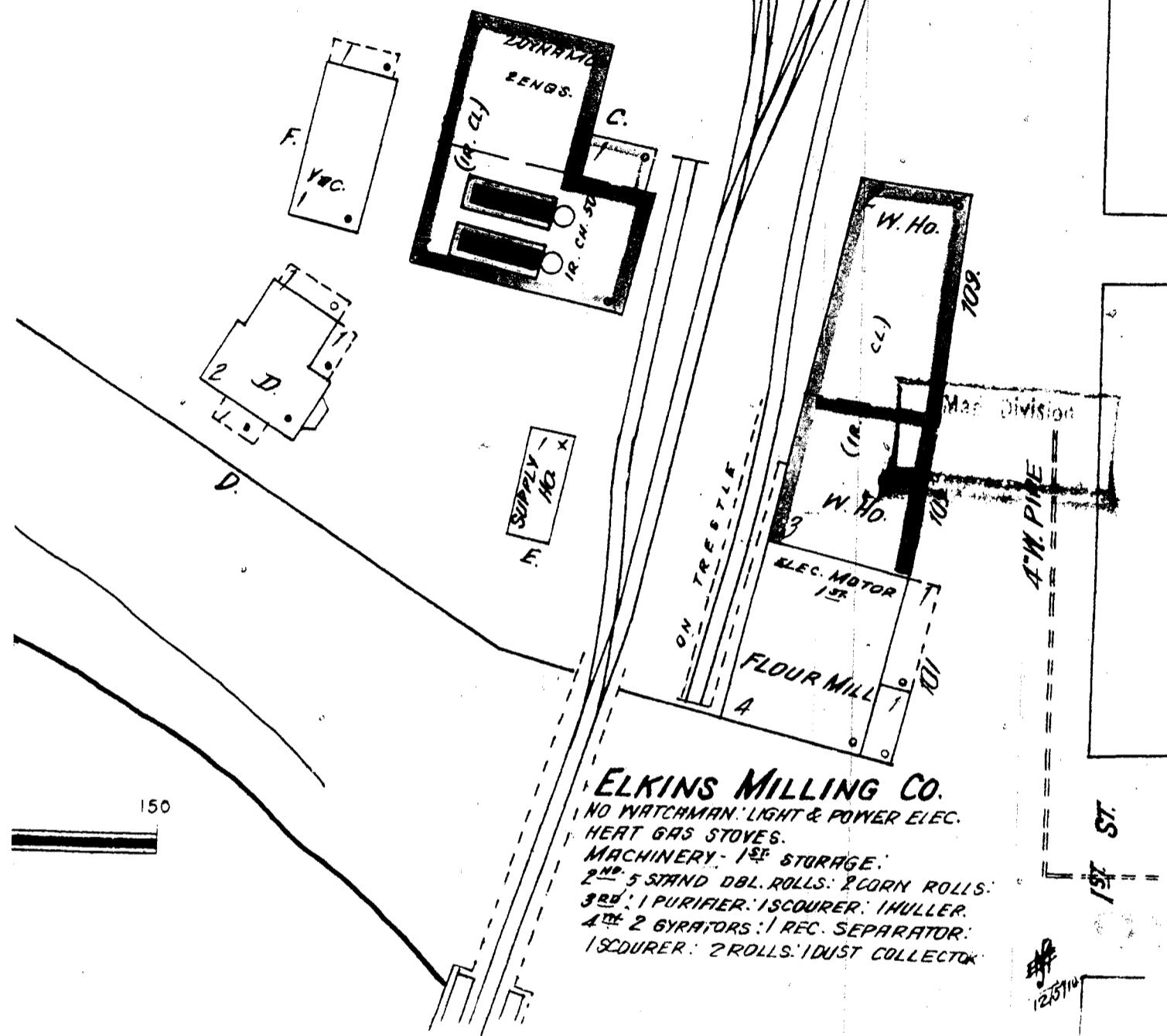
RUN DAY & NIGHT.
POWER: STEAM.



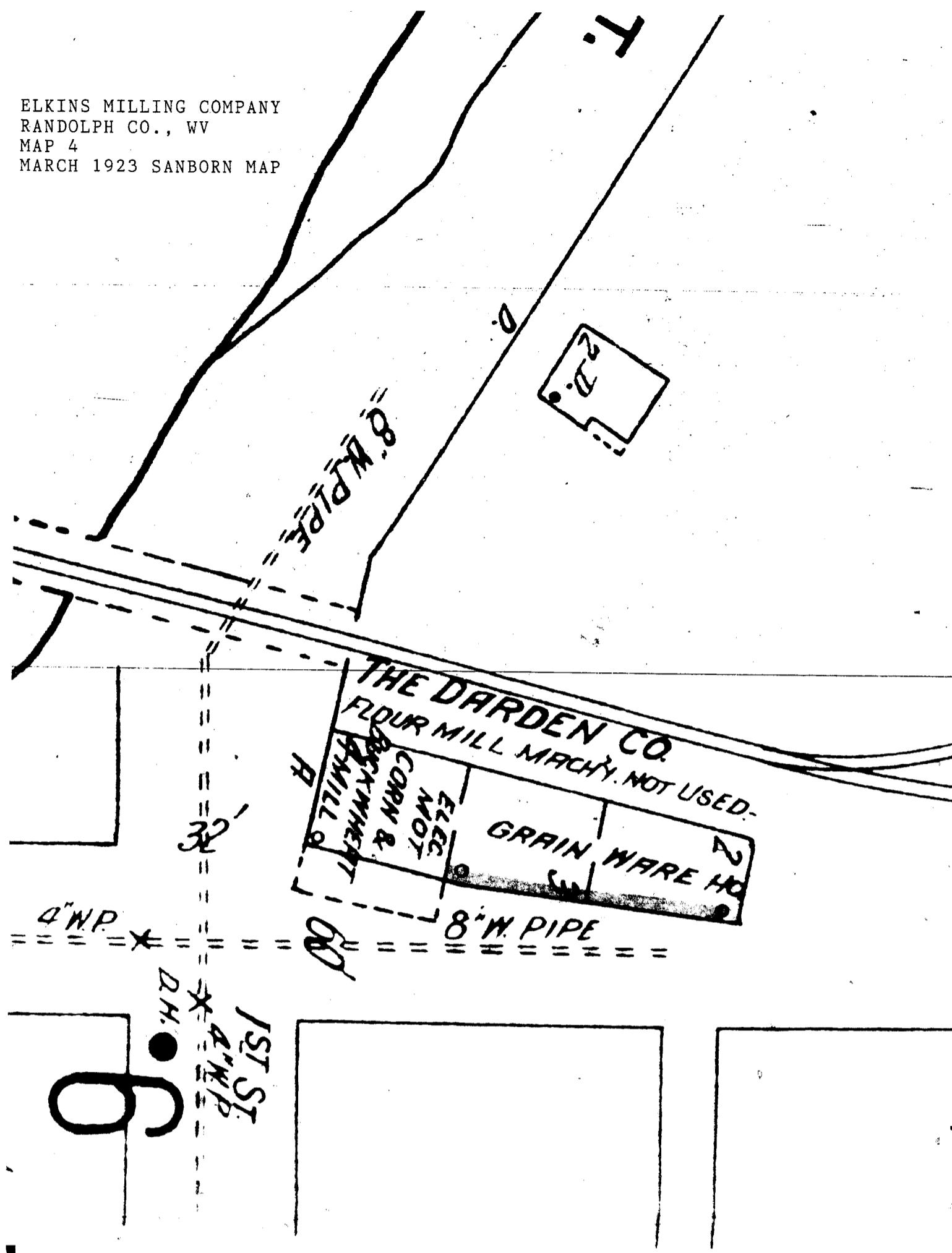
ELKINS MILLING COMPANY
RANDOLPH CO., WV
MAP 3
NOVEMBER 1910 SANBORN MAP

HAND
CARS
C.

ELKINS ELEC. RAILWAY, POWER STATION.
NO WATCHMAN: POWER STEAM: FUEL COAL.



ELKINS MILLING COMPANY
RANDOLPH CO., WV
MAP 4
MARCH 1923 SANBORN MAP

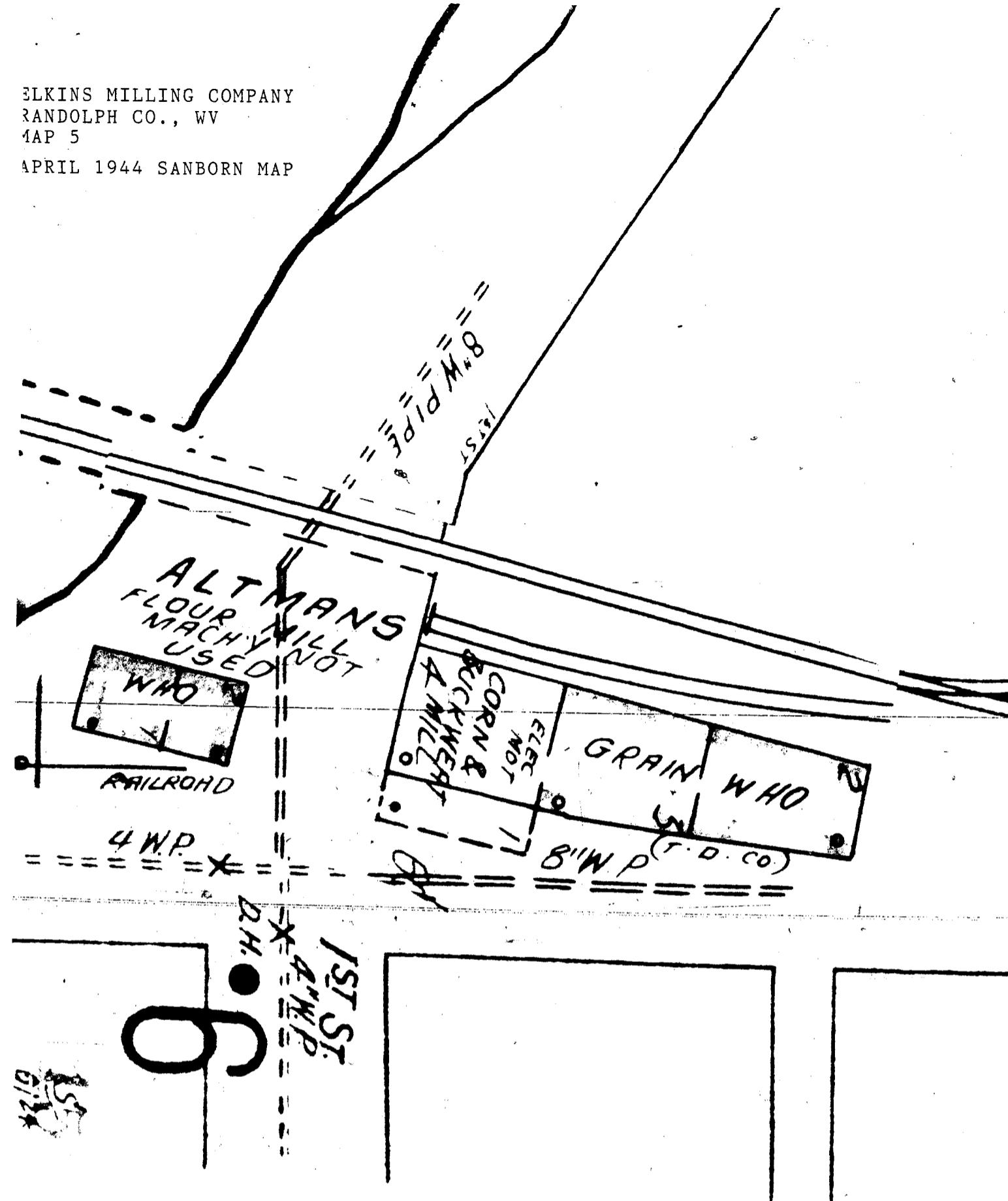


ELKINS MILLING COMPANY

RANDOLPH CO., WV

MAP 5

APRIL 1944 SANBORN MAP



ATKINS MILLING COMPANY
MADOLPH CO., WV
FIG. 1
DRAWING BY KATHERYN
HILLESPIE



