North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

State Historic Preservation Office

Ramona M. Bartos, Administrator

Governor Josh Stein
Secretary Pamela B. Cashwell

Office of Archives and History
Deputy Secretary Darin J. Waters, Ph.D.

January 7, 2026

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mary Pope Furr mpfurr@ncdot.gov
Historic Architecture Group
NC Department of Transportation

FROM: Renee Gledhill-Earley
Environmental Review Coordinator

SUBJECT: Helene Permanent Repairs on NC 197 South, Yancey County, TIP# none, WBS# 49082.2.13, PA# 24-11-0013, ER 25-4109

Thank you for your December 15, 2025, memorandum transmitting the Historic Structures Survey Report (HSSR) for the above-referenced undertaking. We have reviewed the report, accepted it as final, and offer the following comments.

We concur that the Mount Helen Estates (YC0220) continues to merit eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under Criteria A, B, and C.

We also concur that the C.C. and Grove Ray General Store and Tenant House (YC0101) and Hensley Cabin and Farm (YC0251) are eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criteria A and C.

Lastly, we concur that the following properties are not eligible for listing in the NRHP under any Criteria:

- David Dellinger House (YC0029)
- Riddle House (YC0265)
- Joe McPeters House (YC0123)
- Hensley-Robertson House (YC0103)
- Laurel Branch Baptist Church (YC0077)
- Murchison Store (YC0266)
- Brown-Wilson House (YC0267)

The above comments are made pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's Regulations for Compliance with Section 106 codified at 36 CFR Part 800.

If you have questions concerning the above comment, contact Renee Gledhill-Earley, environmental review coordinator, at 919-814-6579 or environmental.review@dncr.nc.gov. In all future communication concerning this project, please cite the above referenced tracking number.

HISTORIC STRUCTURES SURVEY REPORT

Helene Permanent Repairs NC 197 South, Yancey County

WBS No. 49082.2.13 • Project No. 18313.1100997 • PA 24-11-0013

Prepared for:

North Carolina Department of Transportation,
Environmental Analysis Unit
1598 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, North Carolina, 27699

Prepared by:

GFT Infrastructure
1 Glenwood Avenue, Suite 900
Raleigh, North Carolina 27603

DECEMBER 2025

HISTORIC STRUCTURES SURVEY REPORT

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1 Glenwood Avenue, Suite 900

Raleigh, North Carolina 27603

GFT Project No. 081908

Adam Archual — Date

Principal Architectural Historian

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Anya Grahn-Federmack — Date

Architectural Historian and Primary Author

GFT Infrastructure

Mary Pope Furr — Date

Supervisor Historic Architecture Section

North Carolina Department of Transportation

Date:

December 4, 2025

Management Summary

In response to Hurricane Helene, the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Highway Division 13 is constructing permanent repairs to approximately 11 miles of NC 197 South from E. Main Street (SR 1428) in Burnsville to Ewart Wilson Road (SR 1100) in Murchinson. The project also includes repairs to approximately 20 miles of portions of 19 connected Secondary Road (SR) routes, as well as eleven bridges in Yancey County. This project is subject to review under the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement for the Transportation Program in North Carolina (FHWA/USACE/NCDOT/ ACH/NCHPO, 2020).

An NCDOT architectural historian defined the Area of Potential Effects (APE) and conducted preliminary documentary research and site visits to identify and assess all resources within the APE that are approximately fifty years of age or older. Nine resources warranted intensive evaluation for National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility evaluation and are the focus of this report. An NCDOT architectural historian determined that all other properties and districts within the APE do not warrant further study and evaluation due to lack of historical significance and/or integrity.

In May 2025, NCDOT requested GFT Infrastructure (GFT) to complete NRHP-eligibility evaluations for nine properties. Following initial fieldwork and in coordination with the NCDOT architectural historian, three properties were determined to not be worthy of further study and evaluation due to lack of historical significance and/or integrity and the limited proposed scope of repair work in the vicinity. These properties included the Penland House (YC0090); and the Virginia Ray Farm (YC0102). (Archual, 2025)

Following initial fieldwork and in coordination with the NCDOT architectural historian, three properties were added to the evaluation: the Riddle House (YC0265), Murchison Store (YC0266), and Brown Wilson House (YC0267). Additionally, based on field review, GFT concluded that no significant changes had occured within the NRHP-eligible Mount Helen Estates (YC0220) and does not recommend a change to eligibility status.

GFT conducted the survey and prepared this report in accordance with NCDOT's *Historic Architectural Resources, Survey Procedures and Report Guidelines*, and the NCHPO's *Report Standards for Historic Structures Survey/Reports/ Determinations of Eligibility/Section 106/110 Compliance Reports in North Carolina*. These evaluations meet the guidelines set by both NCDOT and the National Park Service.

As a result of these efforts, GFT evaluated nine properties for eligibility for listing in the NRHP. Of the newly evaluated properties, two properties are recommended eligible for listing in the NRHP and seven properties are recommended not eligible. Additionally, Mount Helen Estates remains eligible for listing in the NRHP (Table MS-1 next page).

Table MS-1. Historic Property Summary and NRHP Recommendation

HPO Site Survey No.	Site Name	Address (Burnsville, NC)	Yancey County PIN	NRHP Eligibility Recommendation (Criteria[on])
YC0028	David Dellinger House	15 Dove Cove Road	071900954989000	Not eligible
YC0101	C.C. and Grover Ray General Store and Tenant House	7280 State Highway 197 South	072800295477000	Eligible under Criterion A (Commerce, Community Development and Planning) and Criterion C (Architecture)
YC0251	Hensley Cabin and Farm	3105 Bolens Creek Road	072900415539000, 072900415366000, 072900423448000	Eligible under Criterion A (Agriculture and Settlement) and C (Architecture)
YC0265	Riddle House	8325 State Highway 197 South	072800136985000	Not eligible
YC0123	Joe McPeters House	150 Laurel Woods Drive	072800138382000	Not eligible
YC0103	Hensley-Robertson House	78 Riverview Road	072800032946000	Not eligible
YC0077	Laurel Branch Baptist Church	12 Pensacola School Road	071700998901000, 071800908280000	Not eligible
YC0266	Murchison Store	10516 State Highway 197 South	071700830632000	Not eligible
YC0267	Brown-Wilson House	2475 Ewart Wilson Road	071600819113000	Not eligible
YC0220	Mount Helen Estates	Cattail Creek, Winter Star Road, and Deep Gap Road	Multiple	Remains eligible under Criterion A (Entertainment/ Recreation), Criterion B (Percy Threadgill), and Criterion C (Architecture). (Griffith, 2014)

Contents

List of Maps

I. Project Location Maps

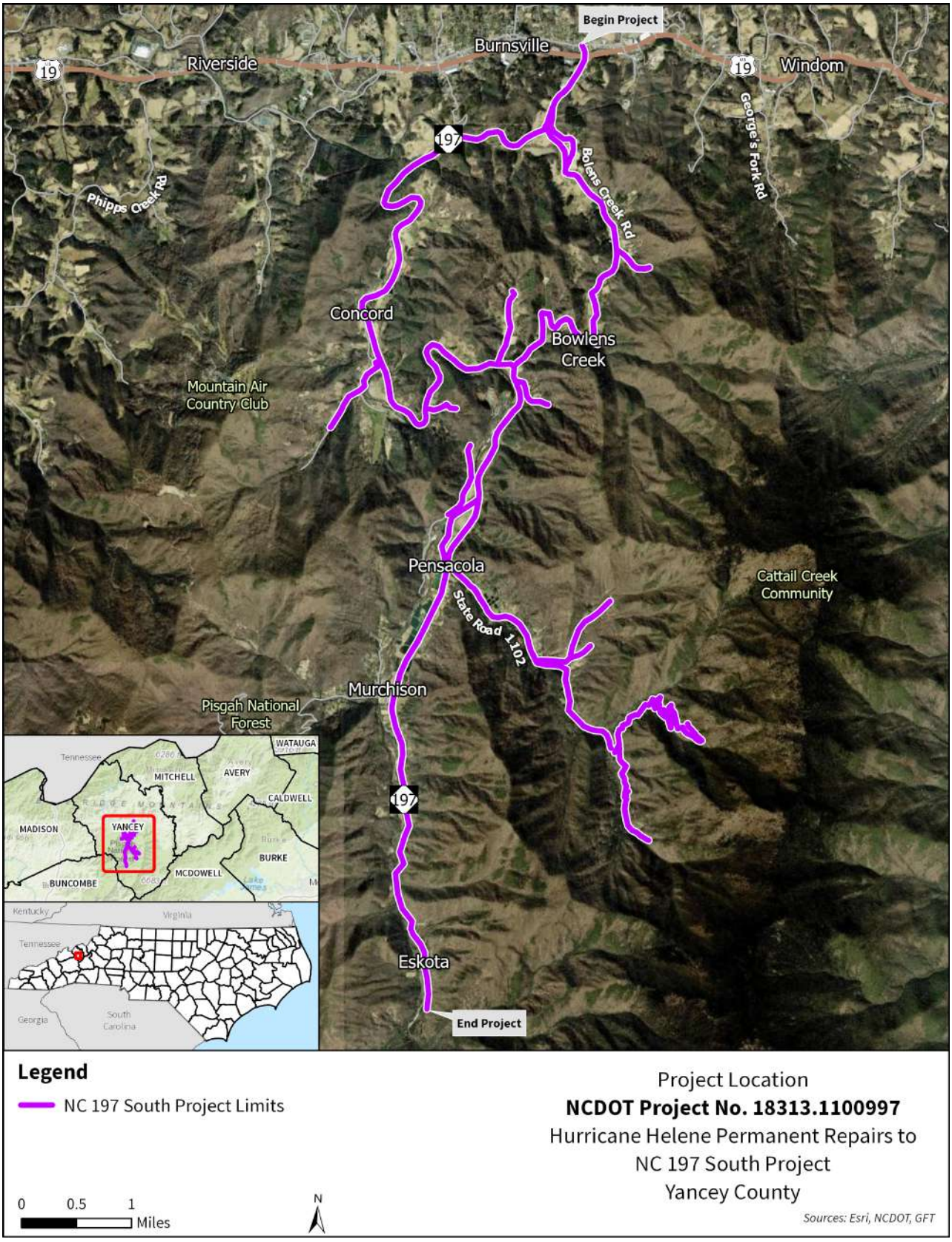

Figure 1. Project Location Map

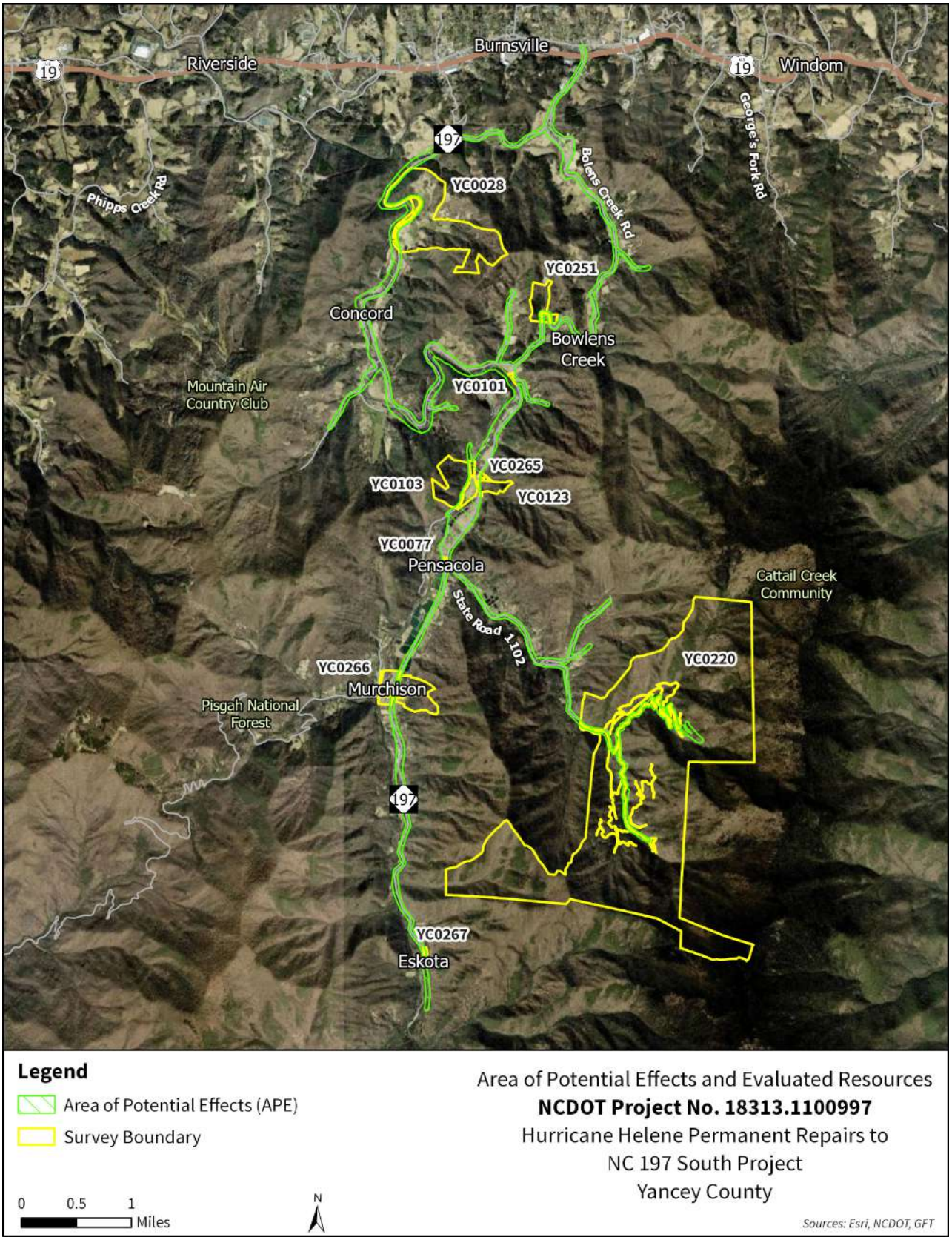

Figure 2. Area of Potential Effects (APE) and Evaluated Resources

II. Introduction

In response to Hurricane Helene, the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Highway Division 13 proposes to construct permanent repairs to approximately 11 miles of NC 197 South, from E. Main Street (SR 1428) in Burnsville to Ewart Wilson Road (SR 1100) in Murchinson in Yancey County. Additionally, it encompasses repairs to approximately 20 miles of portions of 19 connected Secondary Road (SR) routes:

- Wid Smith Road (SR 1182)
- Bolens Creek Road (SR 1109)
- Concord Church Road (SR 1113)
- Toodies Creek Road (SR 1112)
- Powell Road (SR 1179)
- Ray Mine Road (SR 1192)
- Bee Branch Road (SR 1110)
- Ray Farm Road (SR 1111)
- Moody Mountain Road (SR 1108)
- Heavenly Lane (SR 1198)
- Hollifield Road (SR 1183)
- Riverview Road (SR 1184)
- Pensacola School Road (SR 1106)
- Cattail Creek Road (SR 1102)
- Ewart Wilson Road (SR 1100)
- Rocky Fork Road (SR 1105)
- Walt Road (SR 1104)
- Winter Star Road (SR 1102)
- Deep Gap Road (SR 1103)

Additionally, eleven bridges require repair or replacement:

- Bridge 51 on NC 197 over Bowlens Creek (constructed 1939)
- Bridge 185 on Heavenly Lane (SR 1198) over Bowlens Creek (constructed 1994)
- Bridge 98 on Bowlens Creek Road (SR 1109) over Bowlens Creek (constructed 1963)
- Bridge 135 on Toodies Creek (SR 1112) over Cane River (constructed 1979)
- Bridge 253 on Ray Farm Road (SR 1111) over Tudy Creek (constructed 2008)
- Bridge 180 on Powell Road (SR 1179) over Cane River (constructed 1978)
- Bridge 287 on Hollifield Road/Riverview Road (SR 1183) over Cane River (constructed 1978)
- Bridge 46 on NC 197 over Cattail Creek (constructed 1951)
- Bridge 136 on Cattail Creek/Winter Star Road (SR 1102) over North Fork Cattail Creek (constructed 1962)
- Bridge 184 on Cattail Creek/Winter Star Road (SR 1102) over North Fork Cattail Creek (constructed 1960)
- Bridge 54 on Ewart Wilson Road (SR 1100) over Falling Water Branch (constructed 2015)

The purpose of the project is to permanently reestablish critical roadway infrastructure damaged by Hurricane Helene and, where feasible, install resiliency features to protect the roadway against future flood events.

III. Methodology

The permanent repair work is subject to review under the Section 106 Programmatic Agreement for the Transportation Program in North Carolina (FHWA/USACE/NCDOT/ ACHP/NCHPO, 2020).

An NCDOT architectural historian reviewed the known historic properties in proximity to the Area of Potential Effects (APE) using HPOWeb, Yancey County GIS, survey site files from the HPO Western Office, and NCDOT's 2023 Historic Bridge Inventory. The intent was to "flag" specific properties or districts that should be avoided or will require plan review with NCDOT and NCHPO to determine if they will have an effect on the property.

NCDOT's intent is to conduct all work within existing right-of-way (ROW) and maintenance easement to the greatest extent practical to restore previous function without the need for significant new ROW or easements. However, deteriorating field conditions could require the acquisition of ROW or easements. The NCDOT architectural historian generated an APE to facilitate the environmental review by buffering each road to its corresponding ROW or maintenance easement width, or from 20 to 60 feet.

The NCDOT architectural historian visited the APE in January 2025 to assess the condition of the known properties. None of the damaged bridges were previously determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) as a part of NCDOT's current Historic Bridge Inventory.

In May 2025, NCDOT requested GFT to conduct NRHP eligibility evaluations for nine properties. Following initial fieldwork in May, and in coordination with the NCDOT architectural historian, two properties were determined to not be worthy of further study and evaluation due to lack of historical significance, compromised integrity, and the limited proposed scope of repair work in the vicinity: the Penland House (YC0090) at 91 Sunset Lane, where later alterations obscure the historic log cabin and infrastructure repairs are unlikely to adversely affect the property; and the Virginia Ray Farm (YCO102) at 232 River Bend Drive, which has served as farm storage for over forty years and exhibits substantial deterioration, alterations, and non-historic additions. (Archual, 2025)

Mount Helen Estates (YC0220) is located within the APE along portions of Cattail Creek Road, Winter Star Road, and Deep Gap Road and includes Bridges 136 and 184. In 2014, Mount Helen Estates was determined eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A for its significance in Entertainment/ Recreation as a retreat community dating to the 1930s; under Criterion B for its association with Percy Threadgill, the community's builder and developer; and Criterion C for its collection of Rustic Revival-styled cabins, houses, and community buildings dating from the 1930s through 1970. GFT conducted fieldwork in the area on May 15, 2025, and concluded that no significant changes had occurred within the district since 2014 that would compromise the property's NRHP eligibility status. Therefore, the Mount Helen Estates is recommended to remain eligible for listing in the NRHP and a new or updated eligibility evaluation is not included in this report. (Griffith, 2014)

In June 2025, the NCDOT architectural historian identified three additional properties requiring eligibility evaluations: the Riddle House (YC0265), Murchison Store (YC0266), and Brown-Wilson House (YC0267).

As a result, this report presents NRHP eligibility evaluations for nine properties within the project APE and listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Historic Property Summary and NRHP Recommendation

HPO Site Survey No.	Site Name	Address (Burnsville, NC)	Yancey County PIN	NRHP Eligibility Recommendation (Criteria[on])
YC0028	David Dellinger House	15 Dove Cove Road	071900954989000	Not eligible
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YC0267	Brown-Wilson House	2475 Ewart Wilson Road	071600819113000	Not eligible
YC0220	Mount Helen Estates	Cattail Creek, Winter Star Road, and Deep Gap Road	Multiple	Remains eligible under Criterion A (Entertainment/Recreation), Criterion B (Percy Threadgill), and Criterion C (Architecture) (Griffith, 2014)

GFT conducted fieldwork on May 14-15, June 24, July 9-10, and July 22, 2025. GFT notified property owners and current tenants of site visits via letters mailed a minimum of one week prior to survey. During site visits, GFT documented each resource and its setting through written notes and photographs. Some property owners permitted access to buildings and structures in which case an interior assessment was conducted. Full access to the interior was not permitted at every property. GFT also interviewed some property owners, neighbors, and local historians both on-site and via telephone and email correspondence. The report identifies those who shared historical information about specific buildings.

GFT conducted background research to better understand the area's historical development and to place resources within their appropriate historic context. GFT reviewed materials at the Yancey History Association, Yancey County Public Library, Olivia Raney Local History Library, NCHPO Western Office, as well as performed online searches including the Yancey County GIS and Register of Deeds databases, DigitalNC, and HPOWeb. In addition, GFT consulted other NC architectural historians and conducted informal windshield surveys in Yancey and Mitchell counties over the course of fieldwork to identify comparable properties.

Yancey County has not been extensively surveyed. Mitzi Presnell (née Shook) conducted the first recorded county-wide survey, *Historic and Architectural Resources of Yancey County, North Carolina*, identifying approximately 150 historic sites between 1981 and 1983. Many previously documented sites have been lost—such as the John Bailey House (aka Yellow Jacket; YC0008) at 216 Bennett Branch Road and the house (YC0069) at 1077 Little Creek Road—while others, like the house (YC0068) at 1190 Lickskillet Road and Laurel Branch Baptist Church (YC0077; 12 Pensacola School Road), have undergone substantial alterations since Presnell's survey. (Shook, 1981)

Since the early 1980s, small transportation-related Section 106 surveys have documented select resources and resulted in some NRHP eligibility determinations. However, many rural communities and outlying areas remain undocumented.

GFT evaluated the nine properties in this report for eligibility using the National Register Criteria for Evaluation (36 CFR Part 60.4). GFT conducted the survey and prepared this report in accordance with NCDOT's *Historic Architecture Groups, Procedures and Work Products*, and the NCHPO's *Report Standards for Historic Structures Survey Reports/Determinations of Eligibility/Section 106/110 Compliance Reports in North Carolina*. The property evaluations meet the guidelines of NCDOT and the National Park Service (NPS). Submitted under separate cover are the completed North Carolina Historic Preservation Office (NCHPO) survey site forms, associated geospatial data, and photographic documentation.

IV. Historic Background and Architectural Context

Located on the North Carolina–Tennessee border, Yancey County boasts the highest average elevation of any county in the state. Its dramatic topography ranges from Mount Mitchell (6,683 feet) to the lower elevations surrounding its county seat, Burnsville (2,749 feet). The Black Mountain Range, named for the dense canopy of evergreen trees that contrast with the lighter hues of deciduous forests below, forms a natural "J"-shaped boundary along the county's southwest, south, and east sides. The Cane River flows northward through the center of the county, joining the North Toe River, and forming the Nolichucky River that continues northwest into Tennessee. The Unaka Mountains stretch northeast from the Nolichucky River to the Watauga River, dividing North Carolina and Tennessee. These mountain ranges frame the Toe River Valley, which encompasses all of Yancey County and portions of Mitchell and Avery Counties. A network of intermountain basins and trench valleys intersect and give the area its rugged mountain character. This physical geography has defined settlement patterns in Yancey County which remain largely dispersed around small community centers. (Sharpe, 1961)

The Cane River Valley of southern Yancey County is characterized by its rural residential character, with some small-scale (family) agricultural land uses. The roads and highways closely follow the stream and river courses and surrounding mountainsides are largely forested. Historic farmsteads cluster in flatter areas near roads and adjacent to water courses, while cleared hillsides support pastures and cultivated fields.

Euro-American Settlement and Life Before the Railroad (1770-1880)

In 1771, the Cherokee ceded all lands east of the Blue Ridge Mountains and along the Nolichucky River through the Treaty of Long Island of Holston. Although white settlers were likely already in the region, the treaty officially opened the Toe River Valley for settlement in 1778. Navigating rugged terrain, early settlers—primarily of English, Scotch-Irish, and Irish decent—entered the valley through narrow mountain passes from the east, including Gillespie and McKinney Gaps in neighboring McDowell County. From there, they moved north through the Toe River Valley, following the Catawba River to the Watauga Settlement, in what is now Washington County, Tennessee. By 1790, approximately 80 families (roughly 300 individuals) had established homesteads in the Toe River Valley. (Deyton, 1947; Shook, 1981)

Early Settlement Patterns

These first homesteaders lived in relative isolation and relied on the region's natural resources. Families depended on subsistence farming, grazing livestock and growing crops in stream and river bottomlands like the Native populations that preceded them. Rural land development patterns evolved as each generation subdivided land, cleared new areas, and built farms—a tradition that continues today.

Settler communities historically formed around central gathering places such as churches, stores, and saw and grist mills at key crossroads. Bartering and trading with neighbors were essential in an economy with limited cash. When surplus existed, communities pooled resources to transport produce and goods to markets in Morganton, Asheville, and Lenoir, where merchants transported mountain products to larger markets in Charlotte, Charleston, and Savannah. These conditions persisted into the Civil War Era, fostering small tightly knit communities relatively secluded from the world beyond the Toe River Valley. (Sharpe, 1961)

County Formation

The region's mountainous geography influenced not only daily life, but also the formation of county boundaries. Prior to Yancey County's establishment, the area was part of Burke and Buncombe Counties. With few passable roads, reaching the county seats in Morganton (Burke) and Asheville (Buncombe) took days by horseback or wagon. In 1833, the state formed Yancey County from portions of Burke and Buncombe, naming it after US Congressman and state senator Bartlett Yancey. Officials selected Burnsville as the county seat because of its central location—equally difficult for all residents to reach—

and named it in honor of Captain Otway Burns, a privateer during the War of 1812. The new county stretched from present-day Avery County to the middle of Madison County. Parts of Yancey County became Watauga County in 1849, Madison County in 1851, and Mitchell County in 1861. (Cross, 1994)

Subsistence Farming to Commercialization

Subsistence farming was the primary industry in Yancey County well into the twentieth century. Families produced corn, potatoes, apples, chickens and eggs, often shipping surplus to markets in Asheville and Johnson City, Tennessee. Most farms were small and the use of enslaved labor was limited to larger farms in the southwestern section of the county where large-scale livestock and grain production required more labor. In 1860, 362 enslaved people lived in the entire Toe River Valley. (Bishir, 1999; Cross, 1994; Shook, 1981)

By the mid-nineteenth century, river bottomlands supported commercial or "for profit" farming. Between 1840 and 1850, at least 74 estates ranged in size from 500 to 3,000 acres, though most land remained forested. Corn was a primary cash crop—used for food, animal feed, or distilled into whiskey. Cattle numbers doubled to over 10,000, and sheep increased to over 20,000, boosting wool production by over 700% compared to the previous decade. Most households produced corn whiskey as well as apple brandy and vinegar, with stills typically located near springs. In 1840, 32 distilleries in the county produced 5,790 gallons of whiskey, cider, and brandy annually. In 1893, the North Carolina Department of Agriculture encouraged farmers to clear timber and graze livestock on the resulting grasslands. This shift led to a decline in corn and potato production as farmers favored more profitable livestock. (Bishir, 1999; Brown, 2004; Cross, 1994; Deyton, 1947; Sharpe, 1961; Silver, 2003; Stewart, 2006)

Religion and Education

Early settlers in Yancey County arrived independently with their families, rather than as part of organized church groups. Traveling Baptist or Methodist ministers helped establish churches in mountain communities. Early worship services took place in log structures, which communities rebuilt as congregations grew. By 1850, the county had 29 churches, of which 20 were Baptists, eight Methodist, and one Dunkard. (Cross, 1994; Sharpe, 1961)

The demands of subsistence farming typically outweighed formal schooling. Most families taught children at home or sent them to subscription schools led by educated locals. Though many settlers had Presbyterian roots, Methodist and Baptist denominations established the region's first schools, including the Burnsville Academy (1851), Stanley McCormick School (1899), and the Yancey Collegiate Institute (1901), to combat "moral decay" and illiteracy. The county formed its first board of education in 1842. Apprenticeship laws enforced basic education, particularly for orphans, teaching girls homemaking and boys agriculture. (Cross, 1994; Deyton, 1947; Griffith, 2003)

Road Building & Transportation

Early roads followed Native American trails and wagon paths, even after the 1778 opening of the wagon road that supported western expansion into Southern Appalachia. This route started at the Watauga Settlement and crossed through the mountains into settled regions in North Carolina, following portions of the North Toe River and passing through Grassy Creek and Gillespie Gap. Though the North Carolina General Assembly passed its first road act in 1834, limited funding, political interests, the Civil War, and the rugged terrain slowed progress. (Deyton, 1947; NCDOT, 2012; Shook, 1981)

Before the state authorized highway bonds in 1921, counties bore the responsibility for building and maintaining roads. For newly formed counties like Yancey, this task proved daunting and expensive. Counties designated overseers to organize unpaid workdays, requiring able-bodied men to build roads (Figure 3). Many subsistence farmers struggled to participate, and courts often enforced labor contributions. Early road networks centered around Burnsville, offering little benefit to rural residents. (Cross, 1994; *Images of Yancey County*, 1993)

To address these challenges, turnpike companies emerged to build and maintain roads. In 1840, local leaders envisioned a route from Burnsville to the crest of the Blue Ridge in McDowell County, just south of Grassy Creek, to connect Yancey County to markets in the Piedmont. The Laurel Turnpike Company constructed a road from the Tennessee line to Ivy Gap in 1849, roughly following today's US 19E. The following year, the McDowell and Yancey Turnpike Company completed a toll road from Burnsville to Marion. Despite these efforts, road construction remained slow and costly. As a result, economic development lagged, and many rural communities remained isolated well into the twentieth century. (Brown, 2004; *Common Times*, 1981; Griffith, 2008; NCDOT, 2012; Sharpe, 1961)

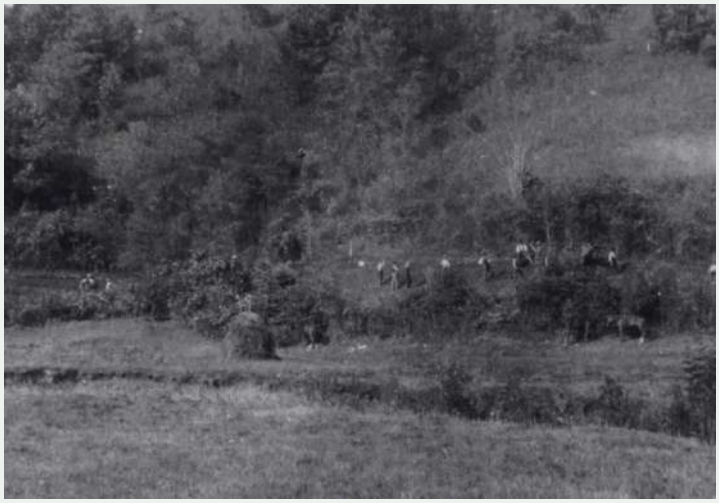


*Figure 3. Photo of men building the public road east of Burnsville, circa 1900-1901. (*Images of Yancey*, 1993)*

Log Construction

Log construction dominated building practices in the mountain regions from early Euro-American settlement through the early twentieth century. Settlers relied on readily available natural resources for construction, including logs from the forests and stone for foundations and chimneys. Early builders used hardwoods indiscriminately, constructing fences, animal pens, cabins, and barns with available materials.

Tree height, log size, and available labor shaped the design and scale of early buildings. Using two-man crosscut saws, settlers felled trees and split trunks into manageable lengths with a froe and maul. This method typically produced single-pen cabins measuring 16 feet square or 16 by 24 feet with stone foundations, chimneys, and wood shingle roofs. Many expanded single-pen cabins by adding a second room, creating double-pen or "saddlebag" plan (Figure 4). Settlers often built multi-purpose gable log barns and outbuildings to support their farming activities. (Cross, 1994; Shook, 1981)

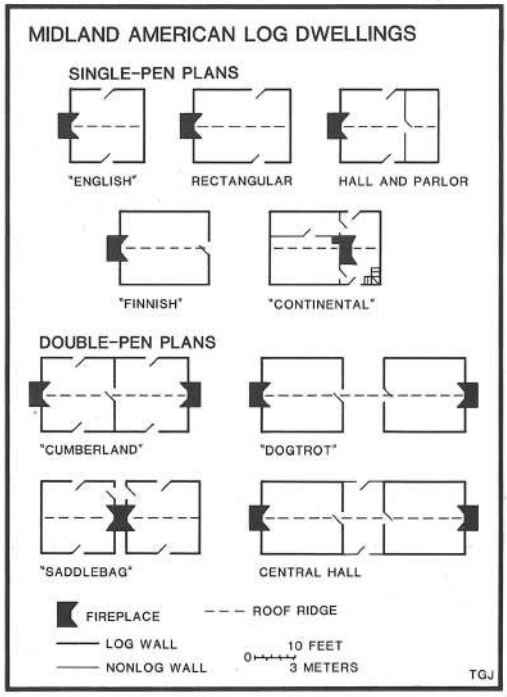


Figure 4. Evolution of log structures. (Jordan, 1985)

Post-Civil War Transformation: Railroads & Industry (1880-1930)

Railroad Construction and Expansion

The arrival of the railroad marked a significant turning point in Western North Carolina's history. Although chartered in the 1850s, railroad expansion stalled due to political confusion and corruption following the Civil War. In 1880, the Western North Carolina Railroad reached Asheville, sparking regional interest in rail development. (Bishir, 1999; Williams, 1991)

In 1901, George L. Carter purchased portions of the Charleston, Cincinnati, and Chicago Railroad—known as the "Three C's"—and renamed it the South & Western. The Three C's initially ran between Johnson City, Tennessee, and Huntdale, in Mitchell County, North Carolina; however, Carter envisioned a railway spanning Southern Appalachia, linking Virginia and Kentucky coalfields to South

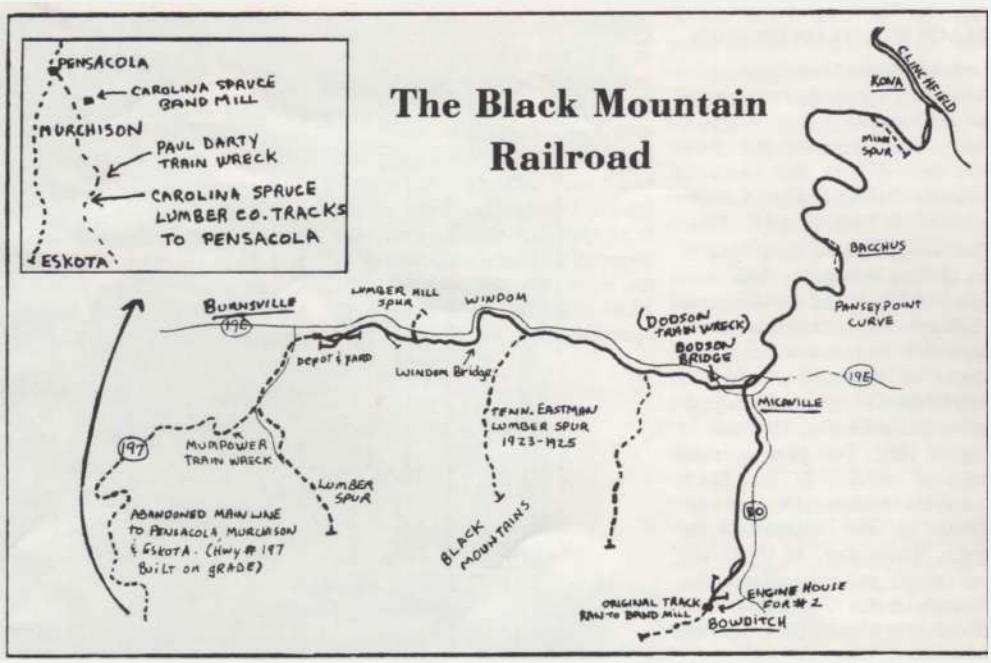
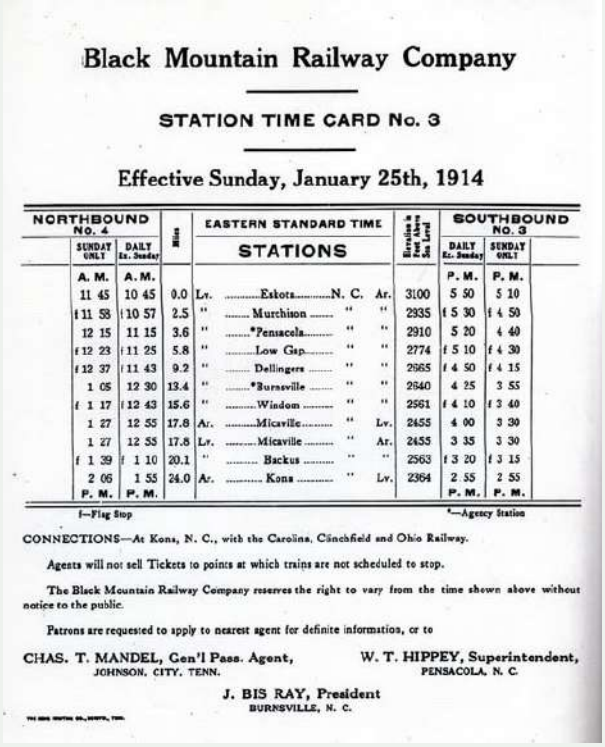


*Figure 5. The route of the Black Mountain Railroad from Kona in Mitchell County to Eskota in Yancey County. (*Common Times*, 1981)*



Black Mountain Railway Company

STATION TIME CARD No. 3

Effective Sunday, January 25th, 1914

NORTHBOUND No. 4 SUNDAY ONLY	NORTHBOUND No. 4 DAILY Ex. Sunday	Miles	EASTERN STANDARD TIME STATIONS			Elevation above Sea Level	SOUTHBOUND No. 3 DAILY Ex. Sunday	SOUTHBOUND No. 3 SUNDAY ONLY
A. M.	A. M.						P. M.	P. M.
11 45	10 45	0.0	Lv.	Eskota	N. C. Ar.	3100	5 50	5 10
f 11 58	f 10 57	2.5	"	Murchison	" "	2935	f 5 30	f 4 50
12 15	11 15	3.6	"	*Pensacola	" "	2910	5 20	4 40
f 12 23	f 11 25	5.8	"	Low Gap	" "	2774	f 5 10	f 4 30
f 12 37	f 11 43	9.2	"	Dellingers	" "	2665	f 4 50	f 4 15
1 05	12 30	13.4	"	*Burnsville	" "	2840	4 25	3 55
f 1 17	f 12 43	15.6	"	Windom	" "	2561	f 4 10	f 3 40
1 27	12 55	17.8	Ar.	Micaville	" Lv.	2455	4 00	3 30
1 27	12 55	17.8	Lv.	Micaville	" Ar.	2455	3 35	3 30
f 1 39	f 1 10	20.1	"	Backus	" "	2563	f 3 20	f 3 15
2 06	1 55	24.0	Ar.	Kona	" Lv.	2364	2 55	2 55
P. M.	P. M.						P. M.	P. M.

f—Flag Stop *—Agency Station

CONNECTIONS—At Kona, N. C., with the Carolina, Clinchfield and Ohio Railway.

Agents will not sell Tickets to points at which trains are not scheduled to stop.

The Black Mountain Railway Company reserves the right to vary from the time shown above without notice to the public.

Patrons are requested to apply to nearest agent for definite information, or to

CHAS. T. MANDEL, Gen'l Pass. Agent, JOHNSON CITY, TENN.

W. T. HIPPEY, Superintendent, PENSACOLA, N. C.

J. BIS RAY, President BURNSVILLE, N. C.

Figure 6. Station Card showing arrival times for the Black Mountain Railroad. The route largely followed today's NC 197 South, traveling through Pensacola, Murchison, and Eskota. (Huber, 2021)

Carolina cotton mill towns. (Lewis, 1900)

The South & Western became the region's most expensive railroad project, largely due to Yancey and Mitchell Counties' rugged terrain. Carter hired renowned civil engineer and railroad builder M.J. Caples to oversee construction. The 240-mile line stretched from Dante, Virginia, to Spartanburg, South Carolina, with final costs exceeding $125,000 per mile. Caples minimized bridge construction, opting for fills whenever possible. In one instance, the railroad crossed a narrow gorge in the Unaka Mountains on an elevated trestle built directly into the riverbed. In 1905, tunneling through the Blue Ridge Divide extended the line deeper into the mountains. Caples' labor-intensive construction standards required thousands of workers, attracting some 4,000 German, Russian, and Italian immigrants to the region. The railroad reached Spruce Pine in 1903 and connected to Johnston City by 1905. Carter's line merged with other charters to form the Carolina, Clinchfield, & Ohio (CC&O) Railroad, renamed the Clinchfield Railroad in 1924. (J.O. Lewis, 1900; J. Lewis, 2003; Sharpe, 1961)

Access to the Clinchfield Railroad, which followed the north side of the Nolichucky and North Toe rivers at the north and east ends of Yancey County, fueled rapid growth in existing communities as well as the creation of new mining and timber boomtowns. In 1907, the Scutt-Lambert Lumber Company built an 8-mile spur from Kona—the end of the Clinchfield Railroad—to Bowditch, passing through Micaville. The Carolina Spruce Company and Brown Brothers' Lumber Company expanded the line to Pensacola and Eskota between 1911 and 1913. Known as the Black Mountain Railroad, the line reached Burnsville in 1912 and Eskota in 1913 (Figure 5). Though intended for timber and mining transport, the line offered passenger service until 1926, with stops in rural communities including Low Gap, Pensacola, Murchison, and Eskota (Figure 6). The railroad largely followed the Cane River, overlapping with present-day NC 197 South. (Brown, 2004; Hamrick, 1975(a); Shook, 1981; *The Yancey Journal*, 1976(a))

By the early twentieth century, expanding railroads and improved road networks opened the region to new economic opportunities, linking once-remote mountain towns to national markets and industrial centers. Towns like Burnsville, Pensacola, Murchison, and Eskota grew rapidly due to their connection with rail lines and improved roads. Meanwhile, remote communities remained difficult to access, widening the gap between mountaineers and town residents. (Sharpe, 1961)

Industrial Growth & Economic Shifts

Small-scale mining and timbering began during the Civil War era; however, improved roads and the arrival of the railroad opened access to markets and made large-scale efforts viable, sparking an industrial boom in southern Yancey County. These new industries fueled the local economy and created a surge in labor demand. The Perley and Crockett Lumber Company alone hired 200 local workers, yet the growing demand for manpower led companies to recruit beyond the region. Logging companies recruited workers from Philadelphia employment offices, including 400 Italian and Austrian immigrants, and advertised in Asheville newspapers. This influx of workers increased the county's population from 11,454 in 1900 to 15,093 in 1920. (Hamrick, 1975(a); Silver, 2003; USCB, 1921)

Mining

Railroads enabled the shipment of mica, feldspar, and quartz out of the mountains for processing. By 1911, the Spruce Pine Mining District was established, encompassing mines throughout Yancey, Mitchell, and Avery Counties. In 1917, North Carolina supplied 50% of the nation's feldspar—90% was sourced from the Spruce Pine District. By 1962, the state produced nearly half of the nation's feldspar and 60% of its sheet mica, with 75% of mica coming from the Spruce Pine District (Figure 7). Sheet mica was used in stoves, lamps, and glazing, and feldspar in ceramics and glassmaking. (Brown, 2004; Cross, 1994; Griffith, 2014; Shepphard, 1991; Shook, 1981; Stuckey, 1965)

*Figure 7. Mica mining on Cattail Creek. (*Images of Yancey County*, 1993)*

Logging

Before the 1880s, most sawmills served local needs; however, starting in 1893, the US Department of Agriculture encouraged farmers to clear timber for grazing, promoting the profitability of trees. That year, Clem Ellis and Rube Woody introduced the first circle sawmill on Brushy Creek in Yancey County. By 1900, two-man water-powered sawmills were common. (*A History and Geography of Yancey County,* 1930; Cross, 1994; Sharpe, 1948, 1961; Shepphard, 1991; Shook, 1981; Williams, 1991)

Timber became a significant economic driver when Northern firms turned to Appalachia after exhausting forests in the Northeast and Midwest. In 1911, three firms with ties to Pennsylvania began competing for timber around Mount Mitchell: the Carolina Spruce Company, the Brown Brother's Lumber Company, and Dicky, Cambell, and Co. (later Perley and Crockett).

That year, the Carolina Spruce Company purchased nearly 5,200 acres near Pensacola for $10,000 and laid approximately 17 miles of the Black Mountain Railroad track through the Cane River Valley, connecting Pensacola to Kona (Figure 8). They also built nearly 17 miles of narrow-gauge lines in Cattail Creek to carry their three locomotives and log trains into the mountains. The company constructed an eight-foot band mill and lumber yards near Pensacola. (Bishir, 1999; Cross, 1994; Griffith, 2014; Hamrick, 1975(a))

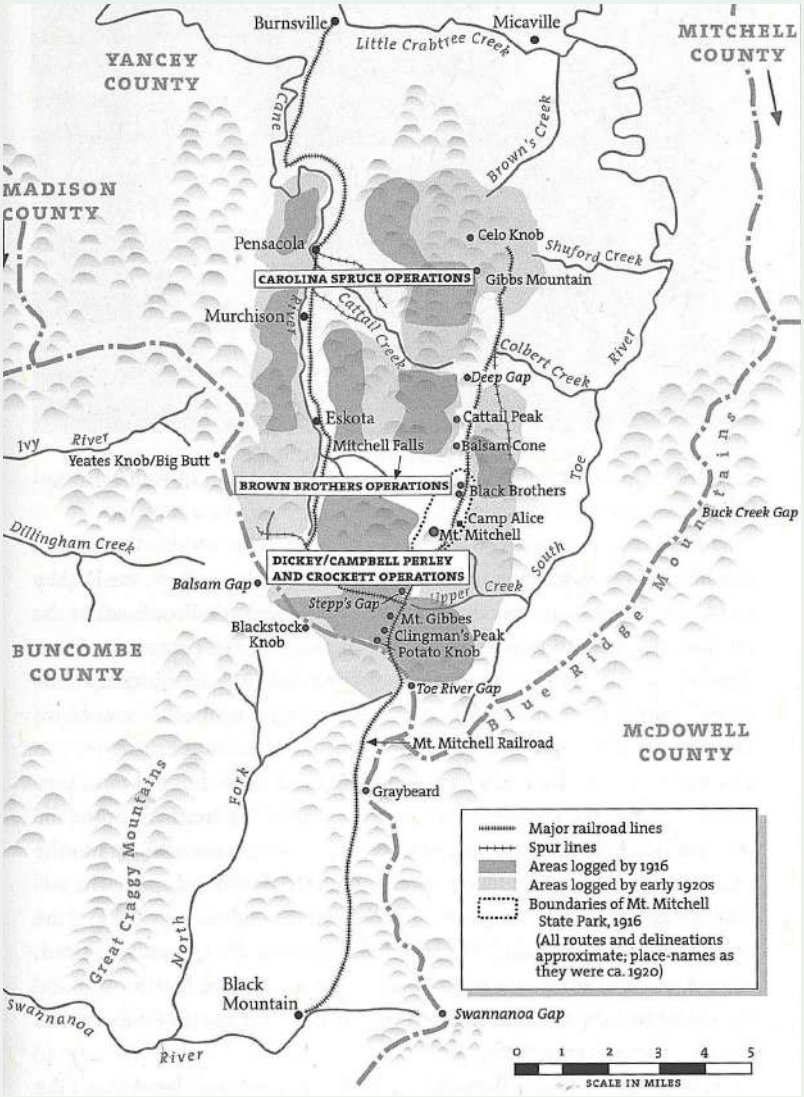


Figure 8. Several companies competed for timber in the Black Mountains, including the Carolina Spruce Company in Pensacola, and the Brown Brothers' Lumber Company in Eskota. (Silver, 2003)

*Figure 9. Brown Brothers Lumber Mill on the Cane River in Eskota. (*Images of Yancey, Vol. II*, 2012)*

The Brown Brothers' Lumber Company acquired nearly 12,000 acres around Murchison and Eskota. In addition to connecting to the Black Mountain Railroad in Pensacola, they built a twelve-mile spur from Eskota to Stepps Gap, linking to the Mount Mitchell line owned by Perley and Crockett. Their mill in Eskota featured an eight-foot band saw and operated a log train and engine (Figures 8 and 9). (Cross, 1994; Perko, 2018; Silver, 2003)

Meanwhile, Dickey, Campbell, and Co.— acquired by Perley and Crockett of Pennsylvania in 1913—purchased 9,000 acres on Mount Mitchell's east side and constructed the Mount Mitchell Railroad, hauling timber and tourists to the mountain's peak (Figure 8). By 1914, they had cleared so much forest that, after reaching Stepp's Gap, they acquired timber rights from the Brown Brothers' Lumber Company and eventually connected to Carolina Spruce Company's operations. (Cross, 1994; Eller, 1995; Mastran, 1983; Silver, 2003)

These companies quickly cleared virgin forests of chestnut, oak, poplar, maple, and hemlock, often reaching 100 to 125 feet in height. At peak capacity, mills processed 50 carloads of logs daily, producing 110,000 board feet of lumber. During World War I, these mills supplied 30-foot clear spruce lumber for aircraft; the Carolina Spruce Company and Brown Brothers' Lumber Company shipped 174 million board feet to support the war effort. (Cross, 1994; Hamrick, 1975(a))

Logging stripped mountain slopes of all but small clusters of trees, exposing thin soils to erosion. In 1913, sparks from Perley and Crockett's locomotives ignited brush fires on two separate occasions, destroying forest from Clingman's Peak to Mount Mitchell (Figure 8). Single-gauge railroads navigated steep hillsides, hauling timber to "log ponds" like those in Pensacola that held timber awaiting cutting (Figure 10). (Silver, 2003)

Between 1917 and 1920, the chestnut blight arrived in Western North Carolina, spread partly

by railroads from Virginia. By 1925, one in ten wild chestnut trees in Yancey County was infected. Timber companies harvested dying trees to slow the spread, but the blight ultimately devastated mountain forests and Appalachian life. Chestnuts provided food for livestock and wildlife, and income for families who sold them to merchants. (Silver, 2003)

Community Growth Around Industry

Beginning in the late nineteenth century, communities expanded around mining, railroad, and logging camps. Railroad depots—often paired with mailstops and post offices—spurred concentrated development in towns like Pensacola, Murchison, and Eskota, transforming these rural settlements into boomtowns. By 1884, the Yancey County Board of Education operated 37 public schools—36 for white students and one for black students—and most communities supported at least one church. The Carolina Spruce Company opened in Pensacola and the Brown Brothers' Lumber Company in Eskota, bringing with them industry and new technologies like electricity and phone service, linking communities to Burnsville and beyond. (Griffith, 2003; Hamrick, 1975(a), Sharpe, 1961)

*Figure 10. Carolina Spruce Band Mill at Pensacola. Logs are stored in the mill pond adjacent to the mill, waiting to be sawn. (*Common Times*, 1981)*

*Figure 11. Seen in the background of the Pensacola Train Depot, there are rows of company houses for the mill workers (right). (*Common Times*, 1981)*

Pensacola

The unincorporated town of Pensacola lies at the confluence of the Cane River and Cattail Creek, about 10 miles south of Burnsville, its name derived from a Native American term meaning "Forked Valley." In 1896, Pensacola was a small farming community with 175 residents. Only a few families, such as the Rays and Wilsons, held land grants exceeding one hundred acres. Located at an important crossroads, the town included a cluster of houses, Baptist, Free Will Baptist, and Methodist churches, a general store, and a corn and flour gristmill. (*Branson & Farrar's*, 1890; Hammrick, 1975(a))

The start of the Carolina Spruce Company's operations in 1911 ignited a boomtown atmosphere. A company commissary, hardware stores, seed and feed shops, barber shops, drug stores, and a makeshift weekend movie theatre emerged. A railroad station (located at 269 Cattail Creek Road), locomotive and car repair shops, and 40 company houses lined today's Cattail Creek Road (Figure 11). Boarding houses and logging camps—made of tents and shacks—clustered around the rail lines. (Shook, 1981)

At its peak, Pensacola's population surpassed that of Burnsville's, making it the largest employment center in Yancey County. Most residents worked for the lumber companies, railroad, or businesses supporting these industries. The community also built new churches and schools, including a high school (no longer extant) behind the Laurel Branch Baptist Church (YC0077; 12 Pensacola School Road, Burnsville).

In 1916, Pensacola and nearby Vixen (sometimes referred to as Low Gap) served as the backdrop of the silent film *I'll Come Back to You*, staring Alice Brady, Jack Sherrill, and Eric Blind. As one of the first films shot in North Carolina, it brought Hollywood to the mountains. Cast and crew stayed with local families or in boarding houses during production. (Hamrick, 1975(b))

Murchison & Eskota

The unincorporated towns of Murchison and Eskota lie east of the Cane River. Murchison is located approximately 1.3 miles south of Pensacola, at the intersection of NC 197 South, Ewart Wilson Road, and Murchison Road. Eskota—a Native American term meaning "Peaceful valley"—sits about 2.5 miles farther south at the end of Ewart Wilson Road. (Hammrick, 1975(a))

In 1851, Amos Lafayette Ray purchased a 13,000-acre tract around present-day Murchison and Eskota, where he built a water-powered sawmill and gristmill on the Cane River. After Ray lost the land in a legal dispute, David R. Murchison acquired the property at public auction for $2,450 in 1876. The Murchison family used the property—known as the Murchison Boundary—as a wilderness preserve for hunting and fishing. They appointed Thomas "Big Tom" D. Wilson (1825-1908), Ray's son-in-law and legendary tracker, as warden and gamekeeper. In 1857, Wilson gained fame for discovering the body of Dr. Elisha Mitchell on the mountain and became renowned for his bear hunts, reportedly killing as many as 110 bears. His legacy is commemorated by Mount Big Tom, located 1.5 miles north of Mount Mitchell. Early twentieth century maps often referred to the region as "Big Tom Wilsons" or the "Wilson Boundary," after Wilson family members purchased the land from the Murchisons. (Hensley, 1986; Perko, 2018)

Figure 12. 1916 Map of Mount Mitchell shows that there is a post office (P), store (S), telephone station (T), and farm products (O) available in Murchison. The red arrow points to the town of Muchison. (Southern Railway, 1916)

*Figure 13. The Commissary stood just to the north of the Froelich House, seen in the background. (*Images of Yancey*, 1993)*

The 1916 Mount Mitchell National Forest map showed seven buildings clustered around Murchison. Wilson family members operated stores, a telephone station, and post office that ran from 1906 to 1928 (Figure 12). Adolphus "Dolph" G. Wilson (1861-1940), Big Tom's son, was a justice of the peace, livestock dealer, and merchant. He also built and operated the Murchison Hotel near the railroad from the 1910s to the 1930s, hosting visitors to Mount Mitchell. None of these structures remain on the landscape. *(Branson & Farrar's*, 1890; Findagrave.com, 2025; *Images of Yancey*, 1993; Silver, 2003; Winter, 2024).

In Eskota, the Brown Brothers' Lumber Company built a large commissary and the Unity Church (no longer extant), which also served as a school, on the hillside east of the mill. Ward Brown, the company president, and his family members operated both the commissary and post office, which ran from 1914 to 1922 (Figure 13). In 1915, Brown built two foursquare houses—the Brown-Wilson House (YC0267; 2475 Ewart Wilson Road, Burnsville), and another for his sister's family, the Froeliches. Both homes featured indoor plumbing and steam heat generated by the mill. Workers lived in shanties, tents, and simple wood-frame houses along the river, while logging camps dotted the narrow-gauge rail lines in the mountains. Most of these structures are no longer present. (Boone, 2021; Winter, 2024)

On July 1, 1920, a fire destroyed the Brown Brothers' lumber plant and sawmill. By then, the company had nearly exhausted the mountain's timber and anticipated only one more month of production. The fire caused an estimated $50,000 in damage, though insurance covered $40,000. The company chose not to rebuild, marking an end of industry in Eskota. (*The Asheville Citizen*, 1920)

Commercial Enterprise

In Yancey County, enterprising farmers often operated stores alongside their farms to supplement income and serve community needs. Storeowners typically lived nearby to protect merchandise and monitor customer traffic while tending to farm duties. Families often shared store responsibilities. In addition to selling everyday items, they provided access to goods farm families could not produce. These rural stores served as vital community gathering places, providing a place to see people and to learn the latest news, like churches and gristmills. (Fearnbach, 2012)

The arrival of the railroad expanded access to manufactured goods and increased foot traffic. Local stores sold homemade wares, creating markets for home goods alongside crops and livestock. This economic boom led to the establishment of stores like the C.C. & Grover Ray General Store (YC0101; 7280 State Highway 197 South, Burnsville), built along the Black Mountain Railroad near the Vixen rail stop. (Cross, 1954; Silver, 2003)

Early commercial buildings in Yancey County were typically one to two stories tall, rectangular in plan, and featured flat, gabled, or stepped-parapet facades and full-width front porches. Builders commonly incorporated large display windows, paneled doors, brick chimneys, and weatherboard siding. Interiors featured ground floor retail space with shelves, tables, storage bins, display cases, and a long counter for measuring, weighing, wrapping, and processing purchases. Upper floors often housed living quarters for the storekeeper, storage spaces, or meeting rooms for local organizations. As transportation improved and wealth increased, merchants moved off-site, and commercial buildings transitioned into one-story designs. (Fearnbach, 2012)

Modernization of Farming

The arrival of the railroad in the late nineteenth century provided access to new markets for Yancey County goods in the North Carolina Piedmont, Atlantic Coast, and southern port cities like Charleston and Savannah, resulting in essential cash flow for mountain families.

In addition to growing produce, grains, and livestock, farmers also harvested valuable forest products included ginseng and galax, which grows naturally in the North Carolina mountains and are used medicinally. Wild ginseng was prized in China, where demand outpaced domestic production. In 1837, western North Carolina processed 86,000 pounds of the root, and by the mid-1800s, annual harvests exceeded 181,127 pounds. (Duncan, 1997; Silver, 2003)

Burley tobacco, once grown for home use, became Western North Carolina's dominant commercial crop in the 1920s, with Madison, Yancey, and Buncombe Counties leading production in the state. At its peak, over 10,000 small farms—many less than one acre—across twenty counties grew burley tobacco, often curing it in repurposed log livestock barns or new framed barns. (Appalachian Barn Alliance, 2025)

Site Design

Farmers in Western North Carolina typically chose farm sites based on six key factors: proximity to gravity-fed spring water, southern exposure, protection from west and northwest winds, ease of access, gentle slopes requiring minimal excavation, and proximity to mineral rich farmland. Builders placed houses uphill but near water sources, as wells were not common due to the difficulty of drilling through bedrock. They also located houses on hillsides—not hilltops—to shield them from winter winds and provide views of fields (Figure 14). Gentle slopes required minimal excavation and allowed for

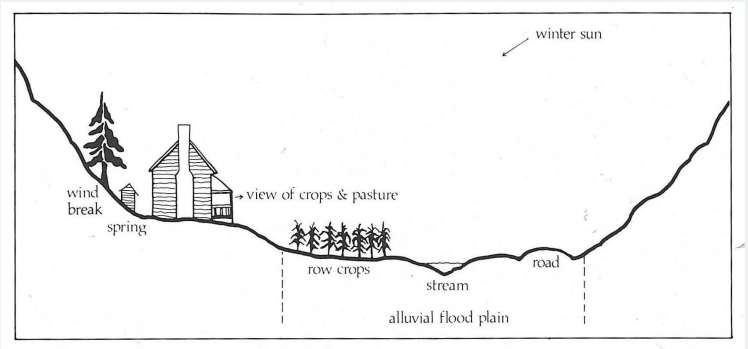


Figure 14. Typical site layout demonstrates the relationship between the house on the hillside and the fields and pasture near a water source below. (Keber, 1978)

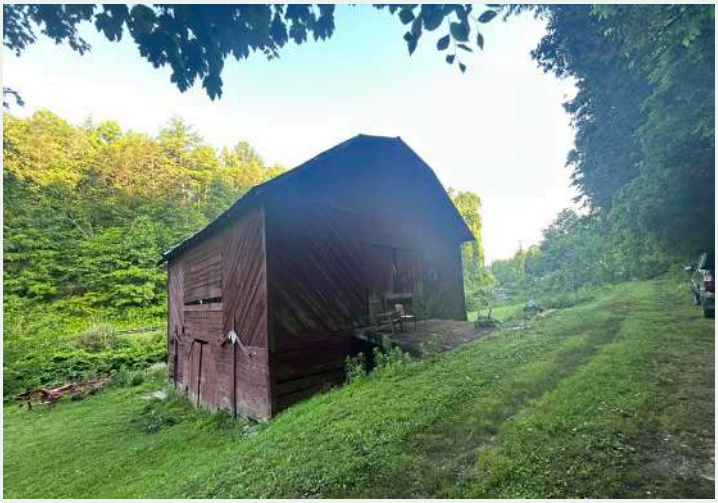


Figure 15. The barn at Hawkins Farm (MD0021; 12 Charles Blankenship Road, Marshall) is an example of a bank barn.

Figure 16. This barn on Hog Branch Road in Yancey County shows the evolution of barn design. The building rests on a log crib foundation with a post-1915 gambrel roof wood structure above. To the right side is a tobacco barn addition with a shallow roof slope that ties directly into the gambrel barn.

Figure 17. Horton Laughrun Farm (YC0053; 34 Gilders Creek Road, Burnsville) features tobacco and cattle barns, an apple house, sheds, root cellar and other agricultural buildings.

root cellars built into the hillside, while southern exposure maximized natural light and passive heating. Barns were often placed near roads for easy access to fields and markets, with houses set behind the barn for privacy. The mineral-rich soil of bottomlands along streams and rivers supported crop cultivation, further reinforcing the site's agricultural value. (Keber, 1978)

The John G. and Nannie H. Barrett Farm (aka Ox-Ford Farm, BN2484; 75 Ox Creek Road, Weaverville) was determined eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A for its agricultural significance. Dating to circa 1895, the farmstead reflects traditional Appalachian farm site design and comprises one of the most intact and significant farmsteads of its era. Domestic buildings such as garages, chicken coops, and a privy cluster around the farmhouse, while barns, sheds, and animal shelters form agricultural work zones near pastures and fields. The 54-acre farm remains in agricultural use and features eight primary agricultural buildings and eleven primary structures along Ox Creek. (Phillips, 2012)

Barns & Outbuildings

Yancey County's barns reflect the evolution of farming practices in the region. Traditional Appalachian livestock barns were log crib structures with animals housed on the lower level and hay stored above. Transverse-crib barns featured a central aisle, allowing wagons to pull into the barn to unload hay and feed near animal pens, like the one at the Hensley Cabin (YC0251; 3105 Bolens Creek Road, Burnsville). Due to the mountainous terrain, farmers often built bank barns into hillsides, allowing wagon access to second story haylofts (Figure 15).

The rise of burley tobacco as a cash crop in the early twentieth century significantly influenced barn design. Farmers adapted earlier log barns and corncribs for tobacco curing due to their natural ventilation. Lattice siding used for haylofts lent itself to air-curing tobacco, and farmers added horizontal tier poles for hanging the harvested plants. Steep gable barn roofs helped shed water from wood shingles; however, the introduction of metal roofing in 1915 allowed for gambrel roofs and monitors that further improved the air-curing process. (Appalachian Barn Alliance, 2025)

Later, farmers constructed tobacco barns and additions specifically for curing (Figure 16). These barns are distinguishable by their square massing, shallow or flat roofs, and minimal openings. Interiors included multiple levels of tiered poles for hanging the tobacco. Horizontal or vertical wood siding, with slight gaps in the siding for airflow, typically clad the exteriors.

The shift from subsistence to commercial farming transformed the agricultural landscape and built environment. As farming became more specialized, farmers built a wider variety of structures to support specific functions. Farms like the Ox-Ford Farm (BN2484) and Horton Laughrun Farm (YC0053; 34 Gilders Creek Road, Burnsville) illustrate this trend, with spring houses, root cellars, smokehouses, apple houses, animal shelters, sheds, and barns (Figure 17). Builders constructed these of log or frame construction with weatherboard, plank, or board-and-batten siding. Stone foundations and stone root cellars and spring houses were common. (Hood, 1978)

Conservation and State Parks

By the early 1900s, large-scale timbering had stripped the Black Mountains of their old-growth forests, leaving slopes vulnerable to erosion, forest fires, and habitat loss. In response, the Weeks Act of 1911 authorized the US Forest Service to purchase sensitive lands—particularly watersheds and navigable streams—for conservation. In 1915, the State of North Carolina appropriated $20,000 to purchase Mount Mitchell. That year, *The Sunday Citizen* reported that Mitchell's Peak Park commission met in Burnsville and acquired 508 acres—95 acres from Big Tom Wilson heirs and 313 acres from the Brown Brothers' Lumber Company and Highland Spruce Company for $5 per acre. By 1916, the commission had acquired 795 acres and established Mount Mitchell State Park, the first state park in the southeast and among the earliest in the nation. Access relied on former logging infrastructure: Perley & Dickey's (later Perley and Crockett Lumber Company) Mount Mitchell Railroad began passenger service in 1915, carrying 15,000 tourists its first year (Figures 18 and 19), and later built the Mount Mitchell Motor Road in 1923, which drew 13,000 visitors its first season. From the 1910s through the 1930s, the state park ranked among the nation's top tourist destinations. (Clark, 2016; Elliston, 2014; Perko, 2018)

Figure 18. Mount Mitchell Railroad. (Elliston, 2014)

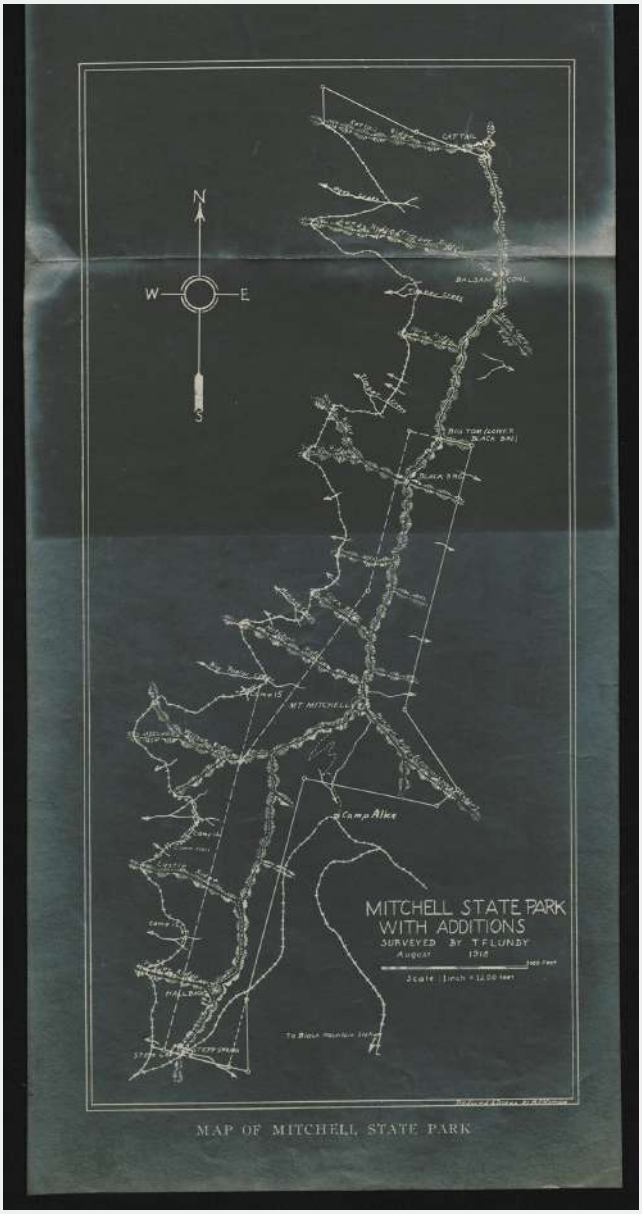


Figure 19. 1918 Mount Mitchell State Park map shows the Black Mountain Railroad on the east (right) side of the ridge. (Flundy, 1918)

*Figure 20. Dolph Wilson Hotel in Murchison. (*Images of Yancey*, 1993)*

Figure 21. First auto trip up the Big Tom Wilson Toll Road to Mount Mitchell. (Boone, 2025)

*Figure 22. Ewart Wilson at Stepps Gap. (*Images of Yancey*, 1993)*

Rise of Tourism and Travel

Several national trends fueled Yancey County's tourism boom in the early twentieth century. The arrival of the Western North Carolina Railroad transformed Asheville into a major health resort, with its population growing from 2,000 in 1880 to 10,000 by 1890. The health benefits of clean mountain air, water, and climate drew visitors nationwide. Adventure seekers soon ventured beyond Ashville into neighboring counties seeking respite and recreation, spurring the development of new health resorts in nearby communities like Burnsville and Spruce Pine. (Deyton, 1947; Eller, 1995)

Mount Mitchell's park designation opened new opportunities to Yancey County residents, particularly Big Tom Wilson's descendants, who continued to offer guided hunting and scouting parties on the Yancey County (west) side of the mountain. Dolph Wilson opened the Murchison Hotel (Figure 20), near the present-day intersection of NC 197 South and Ewart Wilson Road, while his son Ewart Wilson hosted hunting parties at his homes in Eskota including the "Big Tom Wilson Hunting Club," a reference to Big Tom Wilson's bear hunts in the Wilson Boundary around Mount Mitchell a generation before. (Elliston, 2014)

In 1925, Ewart Wilson opened the eleven-mile "Big Tom Mount Mitchell Motor Toll Road," providing the only access to Mount Mitchell from Yancey County (Figure 21). Built by mules and local labor, the road followed the Cane River over old railroad beds from Eskota to Stepps Gap, then climbed the ridgeline for two miles over state-owned land, ending within a quarter mile of the summit. A toll booth stood along today's Ewart Wilson Road, which partially traces the original route. The Wilsons named the area "Camp Wilson" and built the Mount Mitchell Inn, tourist cabins, a restaurant, and souvenir shops at Stepps Gap (no longer extant) (Figure 22). (Perko, 2018)

The Handicraft Movement and Economic Opportunity

In the late nineteenth century, Protestant church missions helped lead the handicraft movement in southern Appalachia, including Yancey County. Rooted in social reform, the movement aimed

to improve living conditions while preserving traditional values and crafts. Women played a central role, teaching domestic folk arts such as weaving, pottery, and candle making. These goods could be sold for income, helping families financially.

As tourism grew—especially in resort cities like Asheville—demand for handmade goods increased, creating new markets for mountain artisans. By the mid-twentieth century, organizations like the Farmers' Federation in Asheville promoted the hooked rug industry, and Yancey County artisans transported thousands of rugs weekly to markets in Kentucky and Ohio. Even during World War II, when tourism declined, demand for rugs remained strong and four new floor-covering stores in Asheville opened. The Arts and Crafts movement provided a steady demand for handmade goods, helping preserve mountain traditions while supporting local economies. (Check, 1997)

Railroad, Technology, and New Building Forms

Yancey County's architectural and building history reflects its geography and economic conditions more than the influence of trained architects or builders. Early settlers relied on the region's abundant timber to construct log buildings, a tradition that continued well into the twentieth century; however, in the early twentieth century, the railroad and improved roads connected the mountain region to the world beyond, expanding economic opportunities and access to new construction technologies and materials, spurring an architectural revolution. (Bishir, 1999; Shook, 1983)

The expanding railroad system brought heavy woodworking machinery to Yancey County, making sawn lumber widely available. Builders began replacing earlier log buildings with new wood-framed balloon or braced framed buildings. The comparatively lighter milled lumber enabled greater flexibility in floor plans, complex roof structures, and the addition of second stories. The railroad also transported building materials—like lumber, doors and windows, and architectural ornamentation—from distant sawmills quickly and cheaply, removing geographic barriers to popular architectural styles. (Bishir, 1999)

This accessibility led to a wave of cottage-style houses featuring inexpensive folk Victorian detailing, often made-to-order and shipped by rail. Builders incorporated milled ornamentation such as turned posts and balustrades, lace-like spandrels, scrolled eave brackets, and pedimented window surrounds—stylistic elements made possible by improved technology and transportation. The railroad also helped propagate new house forms, like gable-front, hall-parlors, and pyramid-roof cottages. (Bishir, 1999)

As families grew in size and wealth, they often adapted existing log cabins to meet new needs. Some added ells of box or frame construction, such as the circa 1860 ell on the Hensley Cabin (YC0251; 3105 Bolens Creek Road, Burnsville). By the 1920s and 1930s, many families had expanded single-pen log structures into larger double-pen houses reflecting hall-parlor or center-hall forms. In some cases, additions completely enclosed the original cabin, aligning it with contemporary architectural styles. For instance, the Laus Peterson House (YC0177; 299 Toe River Road, Green Mountain) added a second story (Figure 23), while Absalom Penland's 1828 log cabin (YC0090; 91 Sunset Lane, Burnsville) became part of a Craftsman-style cottage. (Jordan, 1985)

When families built new homes, they often repurposed older log cabins for farm use.

Figure 23. The Laus Peterson House (YC0177; 299 Toe River Road, Green Mountain) is an example of a nineteenth-century log cabin with an early twentieth century second-story addition, creating an I-house form.

Builders' familiarity with log construction continued into the early twentieth century particularly for farm buildings that are still common throughout Yancey County.

Figure 24. Emphraim Honeycutt House (YC0050; 1533 Coxes Creek Road, Burnsville) is an example of a turn-of-the-twentieth-century center-hall I-house.

Figure 25. The Hensley-Robertson House (YC0103; 78 Riverview Road, Burnsville) reflects the Triple-A form.

Frame Buildings

Frame buildings began appearing locally in the 1870s, but did not become widespread until later in the century, when local mills started producing lighter, dimensional lumber suitable for nailed frame construction. By the late nineteenth century, this advancement allowed for the construction of new frame homes, commercial buildings, and churches that often incorporated nationally recognized architectural styles. The arrival of the railroad and improved transportation networks made dimensional lumber and milled architectural details more readily available, spurring this architectural shift.

Early frame houses in Yancey County retained the simplicity of log cabin plans, typically featuring one- to two-story, single-pile hall-parlor or central-hall plans with stone or brick end chimneys. Rear ells often housed kitchens. During this period, two-story I-houses—two-rooms wide and one room deep—and central-passage houses such as the Ephraim Honeycutt House (Figure 24) (YC0050, 1533 Coxes Creek Road, Burnsville) gained popularity. North Carolina Triple-As, named for their three gables, also became common, as seen in the Hensley-Robertson House (Figure 25) (YC0103, 78 Riverview Road, Burnsville). As builders grew more familiar with frame construction, they introduced double-pile plans and more complex roof forms.

Plank or "Box" Buildings

At the turn of the twentieth century, the rise of sawmills and industrial growth reshaped Yancey County's building practices. In addition to frame buildings, builders also began replacing traditional log buildings with plank or "box" structures. Previously, neighbors collaborated to build homes, but growing employment demands and the need for cash income left neighbors with less time for communal building efforts. Box structures offered a more practical, low-cost alternative that a single builder could construct quickly. Logging and railroad camps frequently used this method to provide inexpensive temporary workforce housing. (Williams, 1991)

These plank buildings required less lumber and fewer finished materials than traditional framed structures. Buildings followed familiar plans, and common layouts included single-pen and hall-parlor forms. Builders nailed wood planks to hand-hewn or milled sills and top plates to form single-ply walls without insulation. While some houses featured weatherboard cladding, simpler versions used battens to cover gaps between vertical boards. Inside, residents lined the walls with newspaper, wallpaper, or wood sheathing. (Montell, 1976; Williams, 1991)

The tenant houses at the C.C. & Grover Ray General Store (YC0101; 7280 State Highway 197 South, Burnsville) and the David Dellinger House (YC0028; 15 Dove Cove Road, Burnsville) reflect the house form that followed the railroad south from Kentucky and Tennessee (Figure 26). Relying on familiar building practices, these homes featured two front rooms around a central chimney, with a lean-to shed addition at the rear containing a kitchen and dining room. These plans echoed earlier saddlebag log cabins. (Warminski, 1996)

Picturesque and Romantic Designs

The railroad also introduced nationally recognized architectural styles to the region, which local builders adapted to suit regional tastes favoring picturesque, romantic, and rustic cottage-inspired designs that complimented the mountain landscape. Although influenced by national trends, these local interpretations were typically more conservative, emphasizing simple forms, clean lines, and minimal ornamentation. Pyramid- and hipped-roof cottages, along with cross-gable forms, began to appear throughout the region. Central-hall plans with two to three projecting gable dormers above a full-width porch were also common. Hipped-roof cottages with projecting gable wings, such as the now-demolished Watson-Whisnant House (YC0198; 11 E. Main Street, Burnsville), featured symmetrical layouts with paired rooms flanking a central hall (Figure 27). These cottage-style houses, such as the Wray Villa (YC0126; 500 Prices Creek Road, Burnsville), incorporated conical roof forms, flared eaves, and cutaway bays beneath gables (Figure 28). Partial, full-width, and wraparound porches were typical and milled architectural ornamentation added style to otherwise plain country houses. (Bishir, 1999; Georgia Department of Natural Resources, n.d.)

Frame construction techniques enabled more complex building forms in regional churches that incorporated tiered or stepped steeples. Builders used these to form exterior overhangs denoting entrances, as seen at Black Mountain Church (ML0072; 1008 Crabtree Road, Spruce Pine), or were incorporated as interior towers, such as the one at Toecane Baptist Church (ML0070; 668 Toecane Road, Bakersville). Much like houses of the era, builders embellished

Figure 26. Tenant House behind the C.C. & Grover Ray Store (YC0101; 7280 State Hwy 197 South).

Figure 27. Watson-Whisnant House (YC0198; 11 E. Main Street, Burnsville). Photo dated August 9, 1985. (Humphries, 1985(c))

Figure 28. The Wray Villa (YC0126; 500 Prices Creek Road Burnsville).

Figure 29. E.W. and Dollie Huskins House (YC0024; 7412 East US Highway 19 E).

Figure 30. Brown-Wilson House (YC0267; 2475 Ewart Wilson Road).

wood-frame churches with turned wood posts, scrolled brackets, decorative cornice treatments, and textured siding patterns incorporating Folk Victorian influences to these otherwise simple structures like the Laurel Baptist Church (YC0077; 12 Pensacola School Road, Burnsville).

Craftsman Houses

Beginning in the early twentieth century, Folk Victorian ornamentation gave way to more restrained styles. Craftsman and Prairie influences introduced low-pitched gabled or hipped roofs, wide eaves with exposed rafters, deep front porches with tapered columns, groups of windows, and use of natural materials characterizing bungalows such as the circa 1930 E.W. and Dollie Huskins House (Figure 29) (YC0024; 7412 East US Highway 19 East Burnsville). Magazines, pattern books, mail-order catalogues, and journals promoted the Prairie and Craftsman styles to homeowners, suburban developers, and even industrialists seeking workforce housing.

Nationally, the American Foursquare gained popularity from the 1890s through the 1930s for its efficient, cost-effective design featuring a symmetrical square or rectangular façade and plan, often with a central entrance beneath pyramidal or hipped roof with a full, partial-width, or wraparound porch. Builders often added box bays and one-story wings subordinate to the principal massing, such as the sunporch wing on the Brown-Wilson House (Figure 30) (YC0267; 2475 Ewart Wilson Road, Burnsville). While common in urban and suburban areas, the Foursquare style was rare in rural Yancey County, where simpler frame houses prevailed.

Hardship and Change: Great Depression to Present (1930–2025)

Collapse of Local Industry & Railroad Decline

The decline of the timber and mining industries marked the end of Yancey County's early twentieth century economic and industrial boom. By the 1920s, the timber industry had depleted Mount Mitchell's forests, prompting lumber companies to move southward and out of the region. Large-scale mining, once a significant contributor to local economies, also began to decline in the mid-twentieth century. Together, these shifts signaled a broader collapse of the region's resource-based economy.

As industry declined in the mid-twentieth century, railroad use waned. The Clinchfield Railroad sought to abandon the Black Mountain Railroad, eliminating passenger service in 1926 and removing the tracks through Pensacola by 1933. In response, Yancey County residents raised $70,000 to purchase the line and its assets. The line was purchased for $22,000 with the remaining capitol used to acquire a new

locomotive, rebuild the tracks, and repair bridges. The newly formed Yancey County Railroad (YRR) began operations in 1955, hauling lumber, coal, feldspar, agricultural products, and building supplies to and from the Clinchfield Railroad line at Kona. However, the closure of the Feldspar Corporation at Bowditch in 1971 significantly reduced revenue, and the flood of 1977 further damaged bridges and tracks, forcing the railroad to cease operations shortly thereafter. (Bishir, 1999; Sharpe, 1961)

Unlike many competing lines, the Clinchfield Railroad remained largely independent, avoiding the typical cycle of mergers and acquisitions. In 1924, the Atlantic Coast Line (ACL) and Louisville & Nashville (L&N) Railroad entered into a 999-year lease agreement for the line. Despite challenges during the Great Depression, Clinchfield expanded its line to meet increased traffic and shipment during World War II. ACL and L&N merged in 1967 to form the Seaboard Coast Line, which later became CSX in 1986. Thanks to its solid infrastructure, portions of the historic Clinchfield Railroad remain active under CSX, continuing to transport agricultural products, coal, minerals, timber, and food products—much as it did historically. (Burns, 2024)

Population Decline and Economic Bust

For generations, mining, timbering, and farming sustained mountain families in Yancey County. However, decades of unsustainable practices depleted the region's natural resources and farming became increasingly unprofitable. Between 1900 and 1930, mills actively recruited thousands of workers from Western North Carolina, and younger generations found work in the West Virginia mines or in cotton mills in North and South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama. During World War I, Italy and Austria recalled immigrant workers for military service while others left for better opportunities as local industry declined. The Pensacola post office closed on July 1, 1964, and services transferred to Burnsville. The railroad, once a tool for exporting goods, provided a means to escape the declining mountain economy. (Eller, 1995; Sharpe, 1948; *The Yancey Record*, 1964)

These departures contributed to a steady population decrease in the area and reshaped Yancey County's education system. Between 1935 and 1939, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) program built five new high schools in Bald Creek, Bee Log, Burnsville, Clearmont, and Micaville in the rustic revival style (Figure 31). While smaller one- and two-teacher schools continued until the 1940s, school consolidation became inevitable. Between 1958 and 1976 consolidation brought all high school students to Mountain Heritage High School on US 19E near Burnsville, the county's only high school. The school board adapted former high schools to elementary and middle schools and demolished others, including the one in Pensacola. (Cross, 1994; Deyton, 1947; Griffith, 2003; Hamrick, 1975(a))

Figure 31. The Bald Creek School (YC0006; 100 Bald Creek School Road, Burnsville) reflects the WPA-era rustic revival style. Built as a high school in 1938, the building is now used as an elementary school.

Smaller Country Stores

Country stores thrived from the late nineteenth century into mid-twentieth century in Yancey County, serving as vital community hubs in rural areas. Despite improved roads and the growing affordability of automobiles by the 1920s, many rural residents lacked cars even into the 1940s, making it essential for stores to be within walking distance of farms and homes. As a result, these stores fulfilled more than just commercial roles—they often served as vaccination clinics for the local health department, stops for

library bookmobiles, even voting places. Stores like the Murchison Grocery Store (YC0266; 8325 State Highway 197 South, Burnsville), provided necessary sundries while fostering social connections. During this period, one-story front- and side-gable stores became increasingly popular, and by the mid-twentieth century, storefronts began incorporating modern materials and design elements, such as large, fixed glass panes that created greater display areas. By the 1970s, most country stores had closed, no longer able to compete with the rise of modern convenience stores, supermarkets, and big-box retailers. (Fearnach, 2012; USCB, 1940)

Tourism in the face of Economic Decline

In 1925, Percy Threadgill of Miami, Florida, purchased 5,200 acres southeast of Pensacola to create Mt. Helen Estates (YC0220), envisioned as a summer retreat. The Great Depression forced him to seek alternative income from the property through livestock, galax harvesting, Christmas tree farming, and mining ventures. During the 1930s, Threadgill built cabins and a dining hall for a short-lived boys' camp. By the mid-1940s, he had sold around 50 cabins to Florida families, and by the 1970s, had built 150 of the development's 200 homes, many in the rustic revival style. (Griffith, 2014)

In the 1930s, President Franklin D. Roosevelt envisioned a 400-mile scenic parkway connecting Great Smoky Mountains National Park to Shenandoah National Park. The Asheville Chamber of Commerce, North Carolina legislators, and lobbyists promoted Asheville as a key destination. The state began acquiring rights-of-way along the route, and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) constructed the Blue Ridge Parkway, employing local mountain men and providing much needed jobs during the Great Depression. The Parkway opened in 1939, passing through Potato Knob just miles south of Mount Mitchell, and brought tourists to Yancey County. (Mitchell County Historical Society, 2021; Perko, 2018)

Tourism declined during the Great Depression, intensifying the rivalry between the Perley and Wilson toll roads. In 1936, Ewart Wilson agreed to the CCC using his road to reach Camp Alice; however, when CCC trucks damaged the road, Wilson began charging them the $1 toll, sparking conflict with the state. In 1939, the North Carolina General Assembly banned private toll roads in state parks, but Wilson successfully fought the ruling and won an $8,000 settlement from the Highway Commission. The state officially incorporated Wilson's toll road into Mount Mitchell State Park in 1941. Despite pressures from the state, Wilson refused to sell his land at Stepps Gap, where his family had developed a gas station, souvenir shops, and tourist cabins. In 1950, the North Carolina Department of Conservation and Development argued that proper park management required state ownership, and the state began condemnation proceedings for Wilson's 51 acres in Stepps Gap. When a $150,000 appropriations bill reached the North Carolina General Assembly in 1959, Wilson secured a rider allowing purchase—but not condemnation—of his property. In 1961, he sold the land to the state for $130,000 and opened the Soco Gap Tourist Court in Maggie Valley (Haywood County), which he ran until his death in 1975. (Elliston, 2014; Perko, 2018; Silver, 2003)

In the 1960s and 1970s, conservationist R. Philip Hanes, Jr., began purchasing land from Wilson family members and others. He eventually acquired 9,800 acres for himself and his real estate holding firm, before donating a conservation easement to his nonprofit, the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy. This action preserved the Big Tom Wilson Preserve on the west slope of Mount Mitchell, adjacent to the state park, for generations to come.

Agricultural Trends

In the twentieth century, shifting markets and evolving agricultural practices reshaped rural life in Yancey County. Family farms gave way to small-scale operations, growing small crops and raising livestock to supplement income. Traditional crops like tobacco and apple orchards remain viable, while ginseng and galax remain in high demand.

Dairy farming and Christmas tree cultivation experienced significant growth after 1930. Dairy farming

expanded rapidly thanks to improved transportation and the 1936 opening of the Carnation Dairy Station in Spruce Pine, which connected local producers to the Carnation Condensery in Statesville. By 1942, the number of dairy farms had grown from one Grade A producer to 38, making dairy revenue second only to burley tobacco in Yancey County. In the late 1950s, the North Carolina Agricultural Extension Service promoted Christmas tree farming, leading to the cultivation of thousands of acres and launching a new multi-million-dollar industry in Western North Carolina (Figure 32). (Mitchell County Historical Society, 2020(a); Silver, 2003; *The Yancey Record*, 1942; Sharpe, 1961)

Figure 32. The Byrd-Peterson Farm (aka Ulysses L. Byrd House; ML0142; 2400 Pigeon Roost Road, Green Mountain) reflects changing agricultural patterns and current serves as a Christmas tree farm.

Standardization of Building and Design

New construction along the corridor includes churches, manufactured homes, brick ranch houses, and residences in Rustic Revival and modern eclectic styles. New buildings largely reflect the growing standardization of building designs seen nationally, with subtle regional influences. Modern steel pole buildings serve practical purposes, housing volunteer fire departments and storing agricultural equipment. Local convenience stores follow a familiar, modernist one-story model. Residential development reflects a mix of architectural design styles, often echoing popular suburban trends. These include modest brick and vinyl sided ranches and new traditional houses. Prefabricated and mobile homes are frequently observed. The idea of mountains as a wilderness retreat and the appeal of log buildings has influenced the rustic style of many homes, incorporating native materials like natural wood, log, and rough textured stonework. (Bishir, 1999)

In many of the properties surveyed, GFT noted owners have "modernized" late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century buildings, often incorporating new architectural stylistic elements as fortunes allowed. At times, cottage houses saw the addition of new stone veneer foundations and Craftsman-inspired tapered wood columns. Later renovations introduced contemporary, low-maintenance materials like vinyl siding, aluminum doors, and vinyl windows, reflecting broader trends in rural modernization.

V. David Dellinger House (YC0028)

Figure 33. Oblqiue view of the north facade and west elevation of the David Dellinger House, looking southeast from front yard.

Resource Name	David Dellinger House
HPO Survey Site #	YC0028
Address	15 Dove Cove Road, Burnsville
PIN	071900954989000
Date(s) of Construction	Circa 1890
Recommendation	Not eligible

Physical Description

Setting

The David Dellinger House (Figures 1, 33, and 134) sits on a hill overlooking NC 197 South, approximately 420 feet west from the intersection of Dove Cove Road and the highway. The house and associated farm buildings occupy a roughly S-shaped legal parcel of about 293 acres (Figure 35). Dove Cove Road, a gravel one-lane drive, bisects the center of the parcel, separating the house and farm site to the north from the pastures, outbuildings, and tenant house to the south. The Dellinger-Ray Family Cemetery lies about 420 feet southwest of the house, just south of the driveway.

During fieldwork, GFT documented the exterior of the resource through written notes and photographs. Interior access was not available. GFT spoke with the current

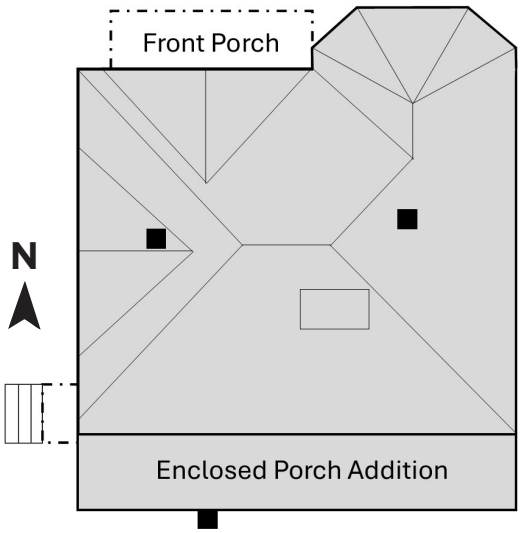


Figure 34. Roof plan for David Dellinger House.

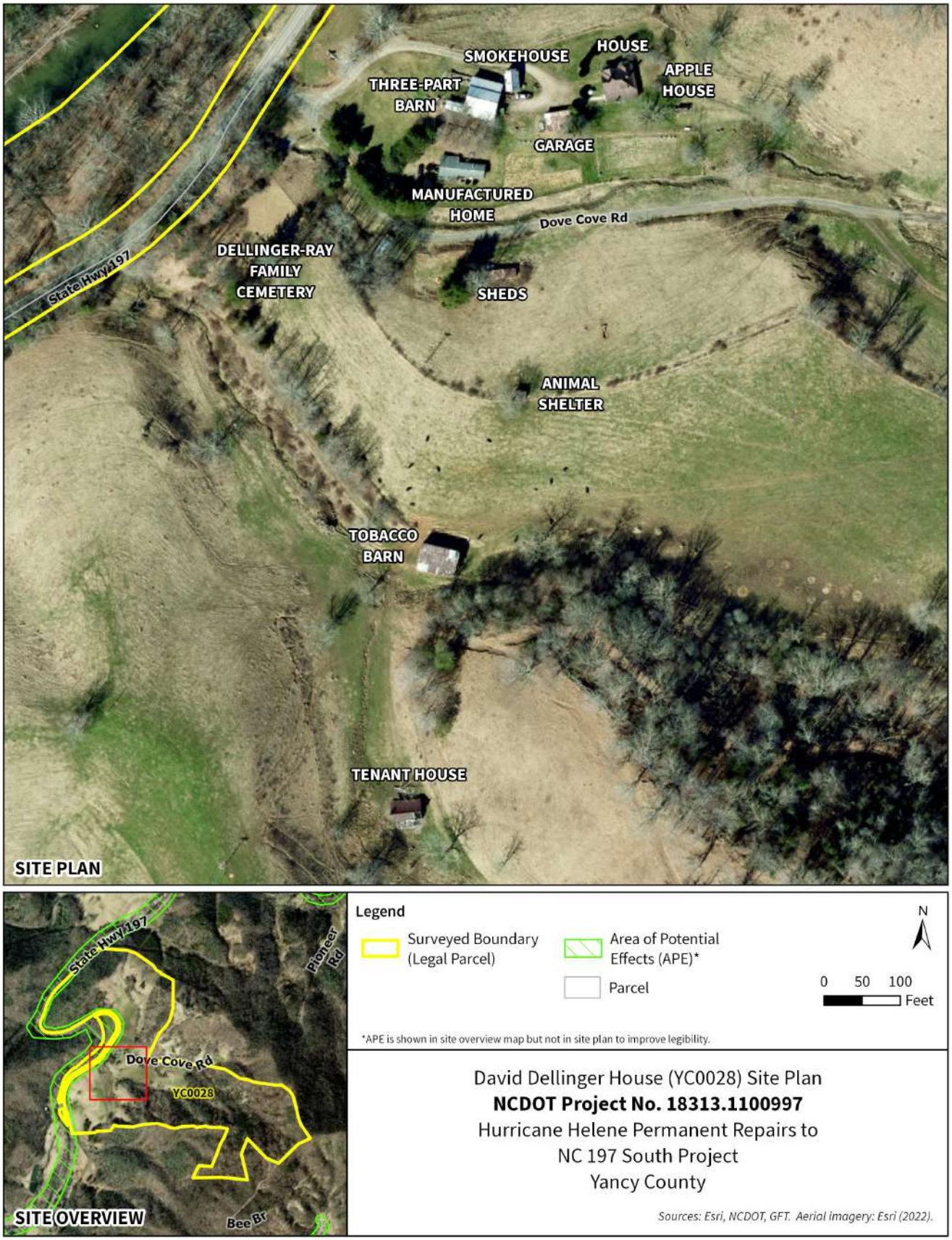


Figure 35. David Dellinger House Site Plan.

resident, Roy Tolley, via a phone call on August 22, 2025, to gain additional information about the house's interior; he was not familiar with the history of the site.

David Dellinger House, *Circa 1890*

The David Dellinger House is a one-and-one-half story, double-pile house. A hipped roof covers the central square massing with projecting features, including gable wall dormers with flared eaves and a conical bay. The house sits on a partial concrete block foundation with portions of the rear elevation resting on a rubble stone foundation and piers. Vinyl siding and trim clads the exterior, with vinyl one-over-one windows occupying historic openings. The rear addition includes vinyl sliding windows. Decorative vinyl batten shutters with metal hinges frame the windows. Contemporary exterior doors were observed throughout. Red-colored asphalt shingles cover both the house and its porch roofs, and vinyl wraps the historic wood cornice and eaves.

Figure 36. North facade of the house, looking south from front yard.

Figure 37. West elevation of the house, looking east from the yard.

The north façade spans three bays and features a projecting cutaway bay with conical roof (Figure 36). Windows wrap three sides of the conical bay. A partial width front porch extends across the following two bays. Concrete block and stone piers support the porch floor while chamfered wood posts with decorative scrolled brackets support the shed roof. The main entry consists of a wood door with three diagonal lights and an aluminum screen door. A window is also located beneath the porch roof. A projecting gable wall dormer with flared eaves and a single window is centered above the porch.

On the west elevation, the foundation consists of concrete block transitioning to the irregular coursed rubble stone in the northwest corner (Figure 37). Three concrete steps, flanked by stone wing walls, lead to an aluminum six-panel door and a three-part aluminum and glass storm door beneath an aluminum-framed flat-roof porch with corrugated metal roofing. A gable wall dormer with flared eaves projects from the

center of the elevation. A mix of single and paired vinyl one-over-one windows are seen throughout. An ornate red brick chimney with banding and corbelling pierces the dormer's ridge.

The south elevation is an enclosed rear porch addition. The stone and concrete block foundation features three six-light wood windows, a historic two-paneled wood door, and a wood batten door (Figure 38). Three sliding windows and a one-over-one window line the wall of the main level beneath its shed roof. An off-center shed dormer with two double-hung windows projects from the hip roof above. An exterior concrete block chimney transitions to a stucco-concrete treatment with horizontal lines marking the courses as it breaks the eave of the shed roof.

The east elevation rests on the hillside as it slopes downhill to the south (Figure 39). The concrete block foundation beneath the enclosed porch addition wraps around this side from the south elevation. This elevation includes a one-over-one vinyl window beneath a second ornate red brick chimney, identical to the one on the west elevation.

GFT did not access the interior. M. Presnell's 1983 survey described the parlor's chevron-patterned tongue and groove wood sheathing above the chair rail. It also recorded a partially enclosed stair with a laurel root newel post and laurel limb baluster, along with distinctive fireplace mantles with two vertical panels. Mr. Tolley reported he purchased the property in 2024, and prior remodeling had replaced the wood sheathing with drywall. Only one fireplace remains, now adapted to a wood burning insert with barnwood surround. The laurel branch newel post and balustrade no longer exist. (Presnell, 1983(a); Tolley, 2025)

Figure 38. South elevation of the house, looking northeast from the yard.

Figure 39. East elevation of the house, looking west from the yard.

Outbuildings

Outbuildings are grouped around the house, Dove Cove Road, and located in pastures to the south of the road (Figure 35).

Apple House, *circa 1900*

A circa 1900 apple house, now repurposed as a chicken coop, sits on stone piers about 50 feet southeast of the house (Figures 35 and 40). This front-gabled structure has horizontal wood shiplap and weatherboard siding covering vertical interior wood planks. On the west elevation, a cantilevered gable roof with wood covered eaves shelters a historic four-panel wood door and a square opening covered by chicken wire above. A similar opening is in the rear gable where there is also a cut opening at the base accessing the chicken run surrounded by chain link and wire fencing. A historic standing seam metal roof covers the structure.

Figure 40. Apple house, looking east from the backyard.

Garage, *circa 1930s* with later modifications

A three-sided garage sits approximately 50 feet west of the house (Figure 35). It has dirt and gravel floor and features contemporary dimensional wood rafters supported by posts and beams of varying sizes and ages (Figure 41). The north elevation, facing the driveway, spans three bays. The front wall of the center bay likely dates to an earlier 1930s garage, based on its framed garage door opening and historic wood weatherboard siding. Vertical wood siding covers the later post-and-beam side bays, though overgrown vegetation obscures much of the east side. Standing seam metal covers the roof's exposed wood rafters and battens.

Figure 41. Three-bay garage, looking southeast from parking area.

Smokehouse, *circa 1900*

A smokehouse sits approximately 40 feet northwest of the garage, on the opposite side of the driveway (Figures 35 and 42). The log structure rests on a stacked stone foundation and faces south. Weatherboard siding fills the gable ends and board-and-batten siding covers the log structure of clay chinking and half-dovetail notching. Historic wood batten doors access the structure from the north, south, and east elevations. The north elevation features two rectangular framed openings, but no windows. Standing seam metal covers the gable roof that cantilevers over the south elevation. While its wood-sided log construction makes precise dating difficult, construction methods and site development history suggest David Dellinger likely built it before 1900.

Figure 42. Smokehouse, looking southwest from driveway.

Figure 43. East facade of the barn, looking northwest from the yard.

Figure 44. West elevation of the central aisle barn, looking east from the yard.

Figure 45. Manufactured Home, c. 1985, sits to the south of the house, accessed from Dove Cove Road.

Central Aisle Barn, *post-1977*

A post-1975 central aisle barn sits southwest and adjacent to the smokehouse (Figures 35, 43, and 44). The wood-framed barn is three bays wide, has a dirt floor, and is oriented east. The first bay has horizontal wood plank siding and two wood batten doors that open to the driveway (Figure 43). The second bay is open to provide access to the interior of the barn, and the interior walls of this bay are lined with standing seam metal panels and plywood. The third bay has plywood sheathing on the exterior. Standing seam metal panels—matching those inside the central bay—cover the exterior walls of the south, west, and north elevations (Figure 44). A single vinyl six-over-six window punctuates the north elevation. The exposed roof trusses have contemporary metal connector plates and eaves covered by standing seam metal roofing. On the west side, a contemporary aluminum pole structure extends from the barn, sheltering dog pens.

Manufactured Home, *1985*

A single-wide manufactured home sits about 60 feet south of the barn and parallel to Dove Cove Road. Yancey County records show that the house was built in 1985 (Figures 35 and 45).

Sheds, *early twentieth century and 1970s*

Two sheds are located on the hillside on the south side of Dove Cove Road, approximately 125 feet southeast of the manufactured home (Figures 35 and 46). The first features contemporary concrete block construction with a concrete lintel above the wood batten door and likely dates to the 1970s based on materials. The second structure appears to be sitting directly on the ground and is wood framed with vertical wood and corrugated metal siding, a wood batten door, a framed window opening covered in plastic tarp, and a second narrow door opening. The building's materials suggest an early twentieth century build date. Both structures face north with standing seem metal roofing covering their wood-framed roofs and exposed rafter tails.

Animal Shelter, *2010s*

A wood-framed animal shelter sits approximately 150 feet south and uphill of the two sheds (Figures 35 and 47). Board-

and-batten cover its exterior walls punctuated by square window openings on the east and south sides, and a wood paneled door on the east elevation. Standing seam metal covers the exposed rafter tails of its roof. An open-lean-to addition extends from the east elevation. Wood planks nailed to the base enclose the space. Wire fencing and metal posts surround the building. The structure is likely no more than twenty years old.

Tobacco Barn, *circa 1940s*

Hewn logs create a post-and-beam structured tobacco barn that sits approximately 215 feet southwest of the animal shelter (Figures 35 and 48). The rectangular-shaped barn is oriented west and has a dirt floor. Horizontal wood siding covers the exterior walls, with standing seam metal panel repairs on the south elevation. On the west elevation, two batten wood doors enter the building. Rows of siding have been removed from the east and west elevations and z-framed wood fence gates cover the openings between the poles. Standing seam metal covers the shed roof that slopes south. The style and design of the tobacco barn is simple, utilitarian, and common throughout the county, and Yancey County tax records suggest a 1940s construction date.

Tenant house, *late 1800s*

Approximately 300 feet south of the tobacco barn is a one-and-one-half story, symmetrical tenant house built before 1900 (Figures 35 and 49). The structure rests on stacked stone piers with a partial contemporary concrete block foundation. The house reflects the boxed construction method popular at the turn of the century. Weatherboard siding covers the exterior walls and shiplap covers the façade beneath the full-width front porch (Figure 49). The north façade features a collapsed full-width porch with a four-panel wood door and window for each "unit" (half of the house). The west elevation has a tapered stone wall chimney that transitions to red brick above the chimney box. A replacement concrete block chimney with terracotta flue is on the east elevation. A collapsed, partial-width, wood-framed rear addition on the south elevation has a concrete block foundation and board-and-batten

Figure 46. Concrete block and wood-framed sheds above Dove Cove Road, looking south from the pasture.

Figure 47. Animal shelter, looking southeast from pasture.

Figure 48. Tobacco barn, facing southeast in the pasture.

Figure 49. North façade of the tenant house, looking south from the pasture.

Figure 50. Oblique view of the west and south elevations of the tenant house, looking northeast from the pasture.

siding (Figure 50). Standing seam metal covers the roof. A capped concrete well is located approximately 25 feet behind the house.

Landscape Elements

A gravel driveway climbs northeast from Dove Cove Road, curving around the north side of the barn and smokehouse before ending in a gravel parking area beside the garage and house. Grass lawns surround the house and outbuildings, interspersed with clusters of trees and evergreen shrubs. A solar array, consisting of six panels mounted on a steel frame, stands on the lawn between the house and the vegetable garden. A chain-link fence, lined by small plantings, separates the house and outbuildings from Dove Cove Road to the south (Figure 51).

Grass-covered pastures dominate the hilly site and serve as grazing areas for beef cattle. Split rail wood fences as well as wood post and wire fences commonly follow ridgelines, while allées of trees define boundaries between different pastures. Dense forests cover the steepest slopes on the eastern side of the property. Small unnamed creeks cut through the property to the north and south of the farm site.

Dellinger-Ray Family Cemetery, *1870-2000*

South of the intersection of NC 197 South and Dove Cove Road, the Dellinger-Ray Family Cemetery contains 24 recorded graves (Figures 35 and 52), including settlers Solomon David and Mary Ann Dellinger and their Ray descendants.

Figure 51. Overview of the site, looking north from Dove Cove Road.

Figure 52. Dellinger-Ray Family Cemetery, looking southeast.

The cemetery occupies a roughly 0.2-acre rectangular clearing with graves arranged in three east-facing rows. The earliest recorded death is 1870 (Mary Etta Dellinger, infant daughter of Solomon David and Mary Ann) and the most recent is 2000 (Maglee Ray). Most markers are commercially carved gray granite. Older arc and ogee upright headstones stand beside serpentine top headstones on die-cut bases, decorated in typical funerary motifs such as floral borders, wreaths, ferns, crosses, and urns. Several flat markers are also present. The oldest markers cluster in the northwestern corner, while newer burials extend southeast. A post and wire fence and borders of trees and shrubs enclose the site.

Historic Context

Yancey County records provide a construction date of 1875; however, physical evidence, research, and comparisons with similar house styles suggest the house likely dates to around 1890. The house first appears on the 1900 USGS Map of Mount Mitchell and Tennessee (Figure 53).

Solomon David ("S.D." or "David") Dellinger (1844-1931) and wife Mary Ann (1844-1925) began acquiring large tracts of land around the Cane River and today's NC 197 South between 1881 and 1885; however, the presence of the family cemetery suggests they lived on the site by 1870. Based on family history, they replaced a log cabin with the current house around 1890. The Dellingers sold the property to their daughter Joanna Ray (1878-1965) for $800 in 1904 (Book 83, Page 540). (Findagrave.com, 2025; Presnell, 1983(b); USCB, 1930).

The Rays farmed the property for two generations, raising crops and livestock. Joanna and her husband, Robert Spurgeon Ray (1878-1954), expanded the farm by purchasing adjacent parcels between 1904 and 1926. Their son Tom C. Ray (1902-1971) took over the farm by 1940 and continued to expand the acreage in 1944 and 1946. Tom was active in the Farmers' Federation, serving as a director for Yancey County in the 1950s. He grew corn and tobacco and raised livestock. Many of the extant historic outbuildings likely date to Tom's tenure on the farm. (Findagrave.com, 2025; *The Yancey Record*, 1950(a), 1951)

Historic Appalachian farms often featured houses on hillsides overlooking fields and pastures, with barns typically placed near roads. Rural family cemeteries are commonly found in a fields, with family members interned on the property. As farms expanded, distinct work zones emerged—domestic areas near the house and agricultural zones closer to fields. The Dellinger-Ray farm reflected this pattern: a garage, smokehouse, and apple house formed the domestic zone, while sheds, tobacco barn, and tenant house marked the agricultural zone to the south of Dove Cove Road.

By the late twentieth century, Dove Cove Road served as the central axis for a large-scale

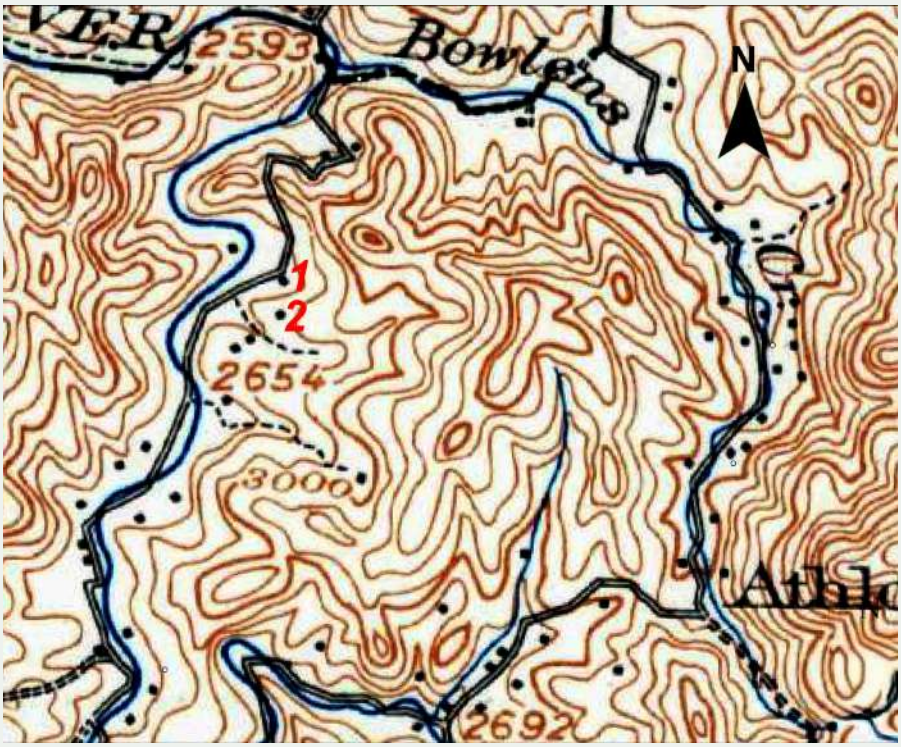


Figure 53. 1900 USGS Map of Mount Mitchell and Tennessee. The map shows the approximate location of the David Dellinger House (1) and the tenant house (2). (Wilson, 1900)

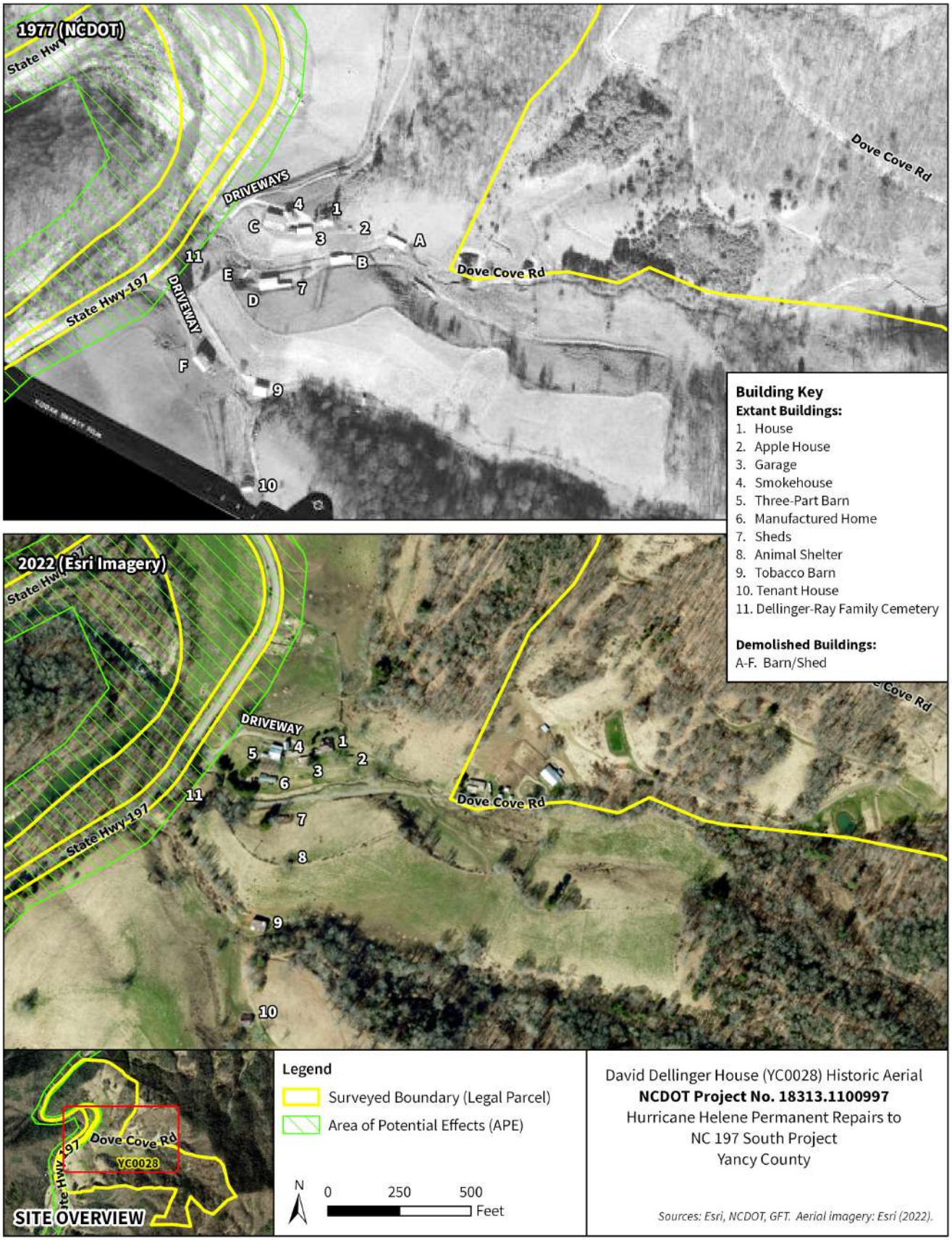


Figure 54. David Dellinger House (YC0028) Historic Aerial.

farming operation as depicted in 1977 aerial imagery (Figure 54). Nonextant agricultural buildings (Structures A, B, and D) lined Dove Cove Road. Structure D attached to the west side of the extant sheds (#5) on the hillside above the road. A gable barn (Structure C) stood near the smokehouse and garage, where the current central aisle barn now sits. Gravel driveways extended from Dove Cove Road into adjacent pastures, and another gravel driveway connected NC 197 South to Structure F, the tobacco barn (#7), and tenant house (#8).

Figure 55. Oblique of the north facade and east elevation, 1983. (Presnell, 1983(a))

Figure 56. Justice House (YC0197). Photo dated August 9, 1985. (Humphries, 1985(b))

Photographs from the 1983 survey by Presnell show the house appeared similar to today, with asphalt shingle roofing, vinyl siding, decorative shutters, aluminum storm windows and doors, and enclosed porch addition (Figure 55). (Presnell, 1983(b))

Architectural Context

Hipped roof cottage-style houses, like the David Dellinger House, were common around the turn of the twentieth century. Drawing from picturesque and romantic architectural styles, they typically featured wraparound porches, projecting gables, conical bays, and dormers. The expansion of the railroad made milled architectural ornamentation widely available, adding stylistic flourishes to otherwise modest designs. A survey of rural housing stock in Yancey and neighboring counties and discussions with staff at the Western HPO office identified two early century houses comparable in design to the David Dellinger House. A survey of rural housing stock in Yancey and neighboring counties and discussions with staff at the Western HPO office identified two early twentieth century houses comparable in design to the David Dellinger House. (Bishir, 1999)

The now-demolished Justice House (YC0197; 105 North Main Street, Burnsville) reflected early twentieth century Queen Anne and American cottage styles (Figure 56). Built circa 1900, the two-story, double-pile, central-hall plan featured a hipped roof with projecting gables with cutaway corners and gabled wall dormers, a wraparound porch, and a later shed-roofed rear addition. The porch showcased a lattice skirt and turned posts and balustrades. The first floor featured one-over-one windows and half-light doors, while second floor windows had lattice-patterned top sashes. Pressed metal roof shingles covered the roof, and each gable included curved gable returns and plain rake boards. The Justice House occupied a town lot in Burnsville.

The Henry Seawell and Mary Jane English Brown Farmstead (MC0089; 15956 US 221 North, Marion) was listed on the NRHP in 2009 under Criterion C for architecture. The 1916 farmhouse and its four outbuildings sit on 21 acres along the Catawba River in McDowell County. The one-and-one-half story, wood-framed house follows a center hall double-pile plan with a rear kitchen ell. Queen Anne and Colonial Revival influences are reflected in the wraparound porch with chamfered posts, a two-story

portico with triangular pedimented front gable, projecting window bays, and a mix of historic two-over-two and six-over one wood windows (Figure 57). Hipped-roofed dormers with paired windows punctuate the hipped roof above the central mass. Outbuildings include a half-dovetailed log smokehouse and granary, a gable-front barn with mortice-and-tenon framed core, and a 1920s wood frame garage. (Brown, 2009)

Figure 57. Farmhouse at the Henry Seawell and Mary Jane English Brown Farmstead (MC0089).

Integrity

The David Dellinger House retains integrity of location and setting. There is no evidence to suggest that the house has been moved. The house, its remaining farm structures, and the Dellinger-Ray Family Cemetery reflect their historic relationship with each other, the roadway, and the surrounding pastures, fields, and forests.

The application of replacement materials and a rear addition have compromised the integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. While the historic central-block form of the house remains, the enclosed full width rear porch addition alters its historic form. Alterations and material replacements, including vinyl siding and windows, and reported interior remodeling have eliminated or obscured much of the historic workmanship. These changes have diminished the house's overall feeling and association as a reflection of the cottage-style architectural movement.

The site's deteriorated condition and loss of agricultural outbuildings have diminished the overall integrity of feeling and association with Yancey County's agricultural history. Historic outbuildings have fallen into disrepair (i.e., tenant house and tobacco barn) due to disuse and incompatible repairs—such as standing seam metal and plywood that detract from their integrity of design, material and workmanship. Historic driveways are no longer maintained, disrupting circulation patterns. The abandonment and demolition of historic farm buildings have altered spatial organization and functions, obscuring the traditional domestic and agricultural zones typical of early twentieth-century farms. The farm has lost its direct association with the Dellinger-Ray family following its sale outside of the family. These changes have diminished the property's ability to convey its historic association with Appalachian farming and early twentieth century rural life.

National Register Criteria Evaluation

The Dellinger House is recommended not eligible under Criterion A for its association with agriculture in Yancey County. Historically the property operated as a commercial farm with a variety of outbuildings reflecting their farm use. The loss of historic agricultural outbuildings and the deteriorated condition of remaining outbuildings preclude any meaningful association with broader agricultural trends. The house, tenant house, agricultural buildings, and cemetery no longer retain sufficient integrity to convey how the Dellinger and Ray families lived, worked, and sustained their way of life in the early twentieth century.

The David Dellinger House is not recommended eligible under Criterion B, as research did not identify any associations with individuals of recognized significance in local, state, or national history. The Dellinger and Ray families were one of many in the area that engaged in farming, and David Dellinger and his descendants did not achieve a level of prominence and significance that would meet the threshold for NRHP eligibility.

The property is also recommended not eligible under Criterion C for its architectural significance. While the overall form of the David Dellinger House reflects a common early twentieth century cottage-style farmhouse, it no longer retains sufficient integrity to serve as a good and representative example of the type. Material changes to the David Dellinger House, including replacement vinyl siding and windows and upgrades to the interior, have significantly altered its association with this movement. While historic outbuildings remain—including the apple house, garage, smokehouse, sheds, tobacco barn, and tenant house—these historic buildings likewise have been compromised by material alterations and general disrepair. The post-1977 barn further disrupts the property's historic use. Overall, the agricultural buildings lack individual distinction and are too deteriorated to convey architectural significance.

The David Dellinger House is not recommended eligible under Criterion D for its potential to yield information. For a property to be eligible under Criterion D, a property must meet two requirements: (1) it must have, or have had, information that contributes to our understanding of human history and prehistory, and (2) the information must be considered important. The property is not likely to yield any new information pertaining to the history of building design and technology and is therefore not recommended eligible under Criterion D.

VI. Hensley Cabin and Farm (YC0251)

Figure 58. East elevation of the Hensley Cabin, looking southwest from the yard.

Resource Name	Hensley Cabin and Farm
HPO Survey Site #	YC0251
Address	3105 Bolens Creek Road, Burnsville
PIN	072900415539000, 072900415366000, 072900423448000
Date(s) of Construction	Circa 1812 (cabin and granary), 1860 (ell addition), 1860 (smokehouse), 1880s (transverse crib barn), 1980 (tobacco barn), 2025 (log barn)
Recommendation	Eligible

Physical Description

Setting

The Hensley Cabin and Farm (YC0251) sits in a curve on Bolens Creek Road, approximately one-half-mile northeast of its intersection with NC 197 South (Figures 1, 58, and 59). The farm spans approximately 45 acres across three parcels on the north, east, and south sides of Bolens Creek Road. Bee Branch Mountain stands to the north, and the terrain slopes generally southwest. The cabin and historic outbuildings cluster between Bolens Creek Road and an unnamed stream that flows southwest through the property towards the Cane River (Figure 60).

GFT conducted an on-site interview with the property owners, Wesley and Wanda Hensley, and their son Tim on July 9, 2025, at the time of the property survey. They shared their knowledge of the

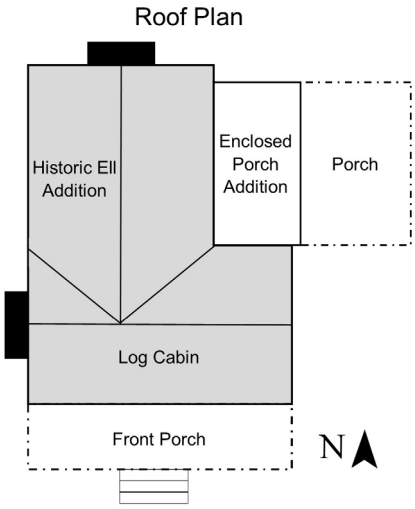


Figure 59. Roof plans of the Hensley Cabin and Farm

Figure 60. Hensley Cabin and Farm Site Plan.

Figure 61. South facade of the cabin, looking north in the yard.

Figure 62. The historic logs show evidence of the reconstructed porch raising the height of the porch.

Figure 63. East elevation of the cabin, facing west from the backyard.

history of the site and allowed surveyors to enter the cabin and outbuildings. Wesley Hensley later provided additional information in August 2025. Information provided by the Hensley family is referenced throughout the evaluation.

Hensley Cabin and Farm, *Circa 1812 – Late Nineteenth Century*

The Hensley Cabin is a one-and-one-half story, roughly sixteen-by-twenty-foot rectangular single-pen log cabin built around 1812. Its walls consist of hand-hewn poplar logs with half-notch dovetailing at the corners and concrete chinking. According to family history, the framed rear ell dates to around 1860, and its partial-width porch was enclosed in the 1960s. Both the cabin and ell rest on a 1960s stone veneer foundation. A flat-roof porch overhang, built around 2020, extends from the enclosed porch addition (Figure 59). Wavey, live edge hemlock siding clads the ell and enclosed porch addition. The cabin retains its historic openings, now fitted with replacement six-over-six wood, double-hung windows and board-and-batten wood doors. Operable board-and-batten wood shutters protect the first-floor windows, and wood and wire screen doors protect the doors. One-shoulder external gable end stone chimneys with metal caps are located on the north and west sides of the house. Standing seam metal roofs cover the cabin and porches.

A full-width shed-roof porch shelters a centered doorway on the south façade. The porch rests on a stone veneer foundation with three stone steps leading to the central entrance (Figure 61). Reportedly constructed of redwood, the porch features wood decking, a railing on three sides, and square wood posts and joists supporting the roof. Ghost lines of earlier porch joists, now filled with cement chinking, are visible beneath the roof (Figure 62). Grapevines cover much of the porch.

On the east elevation, a centered window in the cabin wall with horizontal wood siding below indicates a former door opening (Figure 63). The gable features unpainted weatherboard siding and a single square divided-light casement window. The 1960s enclosed porch addition contains a window and door. Around 2020, the Hensleys added the rear porch with a wood

Figure 64. North elevation of the cabin, looking south from Bolens Creek Road. Note the enclosed porch addition to the left of the ell's gable end.

Figure 65. West façade of the cabin, looking southeast from the front yard.

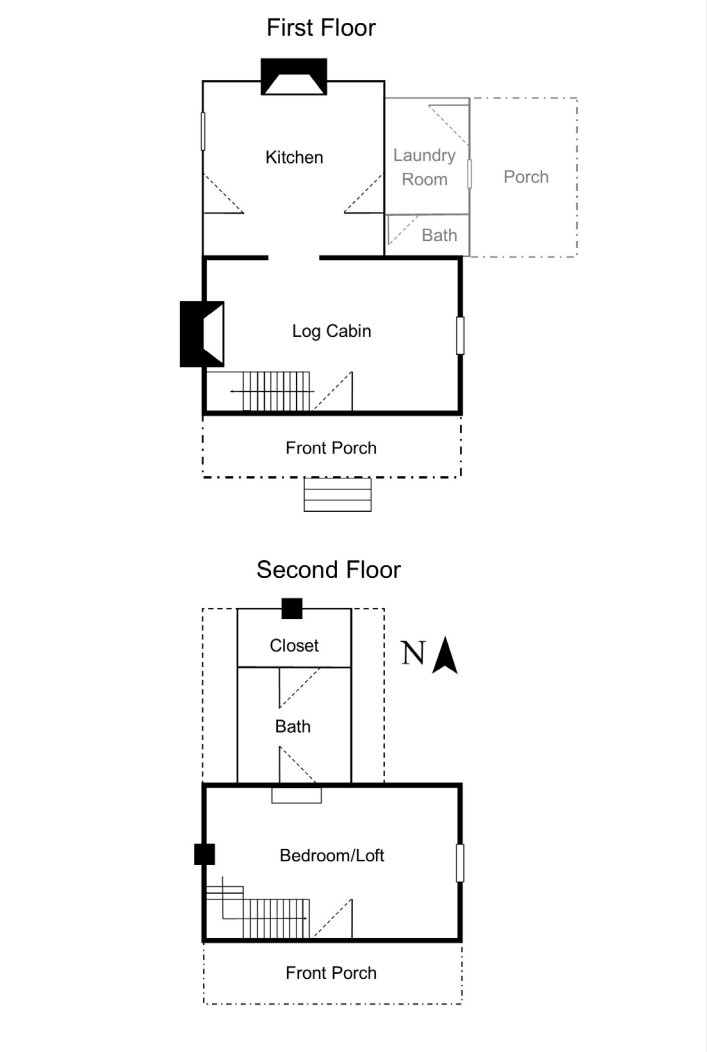


Figure 66. Floor Plan of the Hensley Cabin.

Figure 67. Kitchen in circa 1860 ell.

Figure 68. Hand-hewn logs on the north wall of the cabin.

floor, square wood posts, and flat roof.

The ell includes the tapered stone chimney on the north elevation (Figure 64), and a window, batten door, and screen door that enters the kitchen (Figure 65) on the west facade. The cabin's side gable is clad in weatherboard and the external chimney extends through the roof ridge.

The first floor contains four rooms (Figure 66). The enclosed porch addition houses a laundry room and bathroom. The rear ell contains the kitchen, which features wood floors, unpainted wood shiplap walls, and cabinetry and appliances along the east wall. A historic fireplace with stone and mortar surround and soapstone hearth, which the Hensleys believe was mined on-site, serves as a focal point. An electric metal stove fills the hearth and a walnut mantle, crafted from trees harvested on-site, tops the fireplace (Figure 67). Square wood joists run west to east on the ceiling, which shows signs of smoke damage from a fire that reportedly occurred between 1849 and 1903.

A framed opening on the kitchen's south wall leads to the living room in the log cabin. Edgar Hensley rebuilt the floor structure in the 1960s, installing random-width wood peg flooring. This room features exposed hewn logs with cement chinking (Figure 68). A second stone fireplace with a cherry mantle stands on the west wall (Figure 69). Narrow carpeted open steps on the south wall of the room lead to the loft.

The half-story loft space features knee walls of exposed log and the interior gable ends feature vertical shiplap between lot joists. The ceiling mimics the appearance of the walls with shiplap sheathing between the log joists (Figure 70). A single casement window opens on the east side of the cabin. On the north wall, a wood step leads through a flush wood door to a bathroom and closet above the rear ell (Figure 71). This space includes a wood plank floor, drywall, and plain wood trim.

Outbuildings

The Hensley Cabin and Farm buildings cluster between an unnamed stream and Bolens Creek Road (Figure 60). The cabin sits approximately 20 feet from the edge of the road. A granary stands roughly 50 feet northeast of the cabin, and a

Figure 69. Cherry mantle in the log cabin, looking west from the living room. (W. Hensley, 2025)

Figure 70. Inside loft, looking east.

Figure 71. Looking north into the attic of the ell.

Figure 72. Log barn, looking northwest. (W. Hensley, 2025)

Figure 73. Granary with root cellar, c.1812.

Figure 74. Interior of the root cellar, facing east.

Figure 75. Interior of the granary, facing southeast.

smokehouse lies about 30 feet to the east. A transverse crib barn is located about 180 feet southeast, adjacent to the unnamed stream and surrounded by pastures. A new log barn, built in 2025, stands 170 feet north of the cabin, across Bolens Creek Road.

Log Barn, *2025*

In 2025, Tim Hensley constructed the front-gable log barn to replace a circa 1910 tobacco barn destroyed by Hurricane Helene (Figures 60 and 72). The barn rests on a dry laid stone foundation and incorporates salvaged chestnut logs from the original structure. The log walls feature v-notched ends and no chinking. Vertical wood siding covers the gables, and a standing seam metal roof tops the structure.

Granary, *circa 1812*

The circa 1812 granary is built into the hill northeast of the cabin (Figures 60 and 73). The one-and-one-half story front-gable log structure sits on a red clay mortared rubble stone foundation. Wire mesh covers rectangular vents in the foundation, and a wood board-and-batten door accesses the root cellar from the east elevation. The log walls of the structure have the same half-dovetail notching and cement chinking treatment as the cabin. A board-and-batten door leads into the granary on the north elevation, while an off-centered wood board-and-batten shutter protects a historic six-over-six double-hung wood window on the south elevation. Weatherboard siding covers the gable ends, which include wood vents. The roof is standing seam metal with contemporary gutters and

downspouts. The granary received electricity in the 1960s.

The root cellar has dirt floors and exposed stone walls. Wood partitions—remnants of grain bins—line the east wall (Figure 74). Above, the granary has wood plank flooring and horizontal wood shiplap over the log walls. Partitioned half-walls of wood posts and shiplap line both sides of the room (Figure 75). A wood framed grain bin sits in the southeast corner adjacent to the doorway. Milled wood joists run northeast to southwest across the ceiling. The attic was not accessible.

Smokehouse, *circa 1860*

Wesley Hensley moved this smokehouse to the site from his maternal grandfather, Fred Ayers's farm on Jacks Creek in Yancey County in the 1970s to replace a deteriorated smokehouse on site. The circa 1860 smokehouse sits east of the cabin and rests atop large corner boulders (Figures 60 and 76). It features half-dovetail notched hewn logs without chinking, a wood floor, and a single wood board-and-batten door on the northwest elevation. Timbers support the new standing seam metal roof. Wood pegs protrude from the west wall, and Wesely Hensley believes they are linked to weaving. The building originally served as a smokehouse, sheltered pigs in the 1990s, and now serves as storage space (Figure 77). (W. Hensley, 2025)

Transverse crib barn, *1880s, 1980, 2022*

The two-story transverse crib barn is located southeast of the cabin, surrounded by pastures, and dates to the late nineteenth century (Figures 60 and 78). The gable-front barn rests on a rubble stone foundation and a center aisle runs northeast to southwest through the first floor. Log walls featuring half-dovetail and v-notch joinery form the first floor. Wood lattice covers the top half of the walls, ventilating the hayloft, and historic weatherboard clads the gables. A standing seam metal roof on open sheathing tops the barn.

In the 1980s, Wesley Hensley constructed the shed roof tobacco barn addition on the south elevation that continues the central aisle (Figure 79). It features vertical wood plank siding over a

Figure 76. Smokehouse, looking south from the yard.

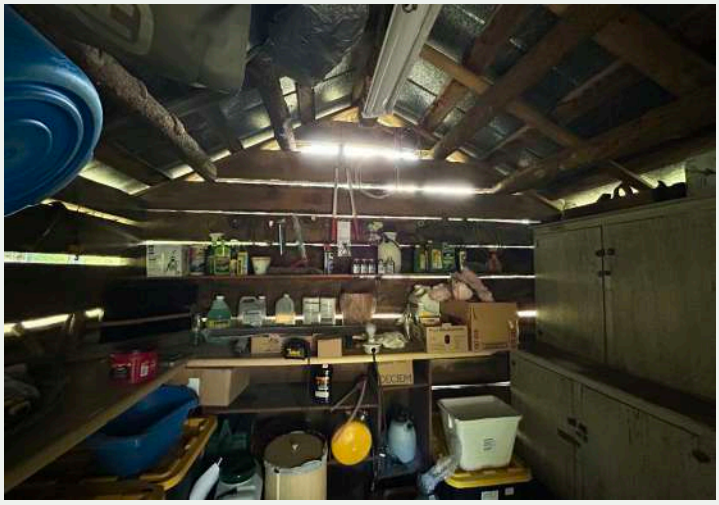


Figure 77. Smokehouse interior, looking southeast.

Figure 78. Transverse crib barn, looking southeast from pasture.

Figure 79. Tobacco barn addition, looking northeast from pasture.

Figure 80. Animal cribs, looking east from center aisle.

concrete block foundation and horizontal wood plank siding above for airflow. In 2022, Tim Hensley built a shed roof lean-to on the east side, supported by rough-hewn log posts and a wood-framed roof. All roofs have standing seam metal.

The barn's structure combines hewn log and milled wood post and beam construction. The lower level has a dirt floor, with hewn logs forming cribs, or animal pens, on either side of the central aisle (Figure 80). Each pen includes a wood Z-braced batten gate with wood handles and latches. Lumber and log lattice form hay feeders on the interior of the pens. The hayloft above has a wood plank floor and wood and timber bents for curing tobacco (Figure 81). The tobacco barn addition features timber and milled lumber framing, with posts resting on concrete slabs.

Landscape Elements

Historic Appalachian farms often placed houses on hillsides overlooking fields and pastures. As farms grew, distinct work zones emerged—domestic areas near the house and agricultural zones closer to fields. The Hensley Farm reflects this development pattern: the granary and smokehouse cluster near the cabin, while barns sit further out in the pastures (Figure 82).

Within the domestic zone, fieldstone and gravel paths connect the cabin, granary, smokehouse, and driveway. A gravel driveway enters from the

Figure 81. Hayloft, looking northeast.

Figure 82. The granary, smokehouse, and cabin comprise the domestic zone, looking southeast from Bolens Creek Road.

Figure 83. Reconstructed log barn, looking northwest from Bolens Creek Road.

Figure 84. Pastures surround the transverse barn and tobacco barn addition, looking northeast from Bolens Creek Road. The smokehouse is visible on the left.

west between the granary and the cabin. Split rail fences define the domestic zone, running along the roadway and forming a boundary behind the granary that separates it from adjacent pastures. Grass lawn surrounds the cabin, granary, and smokehouse.

The new log barn stands north of the domestic zone, across Bolens Creek Road in an uphill pasture (Figure 83). The transverse crib barn lies to the south, surrounded by pastures where beef cattle, donkeys, and other animals graze (Figure 84). Pastures and cleared hillsides line the road, giving way to dense vegetation uphill. The Hensleys actively log these forested hillsides to restore historic fields and farm patterns. Split rail fences line both sides of the road frontage and wood post-and-wire fences enclose active pastures and fields.

Historic Context

Physical evidence, historical records, and family accounts suggest the homestead dates to the early 1800s. Stephen McMahan settled the Low Gap area in the early nineteenth century, appearing in the 1810 and 1820 US Census Bureau (USCB) in Buncombe County (before Yancey County formed). He received a fifty-acre land grant in 1835 and likely cleared the land himself, using felled timber for construction. The Hensley family attributes the single-pen log cabin and granary—both built of virgin poplar with half-dovetail notching around 1812—to McMahan. (W. Hensley, 2025)

Located in Low Gap Hollow, the homestead benefits from natural features such as creeks and surrounding hillsides. Gentle slopes minimized excavation and allowed for practical features like a hillside granary with a root cellar. The mineral-rich soil supported crop cultivation, reinforcing the site's agricultural value. Historically, the farm sat about 1,200 feet north of Bolens Creek Road, a key transportation route into the upper Cane River Valley. Early subsistence farms typically had multipurpose outbuildings, but as farms became more specialized, landowners like McMahan added structures such as granaries and smokehouses to support specific functions.

In 1846, John A. Hensley (1819-1911) married McMahan's daughter, Anie Mariah (1826-1910), and later acquired the property from her father. John Hensley was a farmer, and he is also associated with the C.C. and Grover Ray General Store (YC0101; 7280 NC 197 South, Burnsville). The Hensleys had eight children between 1847 and 1864, likely prompting the construction of the rear ell around 1860. According to Wesley Hensley, the family subdivided the land across generations, keeping relatives close while ensuring access to water. Approximately 34 Hensleys and McMahans are buried in the Low Gap Cemetery, located on the parcel south of the property. (Findagrave.com, 2025; W. Hensley, 2025; USCB,1900)

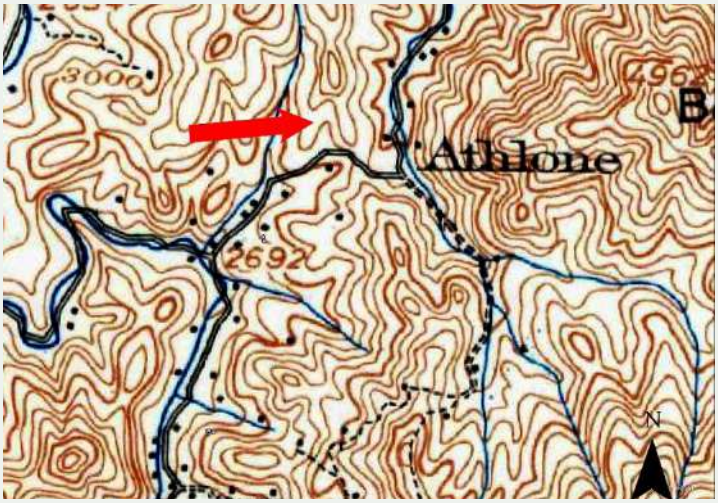


Figure 85. 1900 USGS Map of Tennessee-Mount Mitchell Quadrangle. The red arrow points to the approximate location of the Hensley Cabin. (Wilson, 1900)

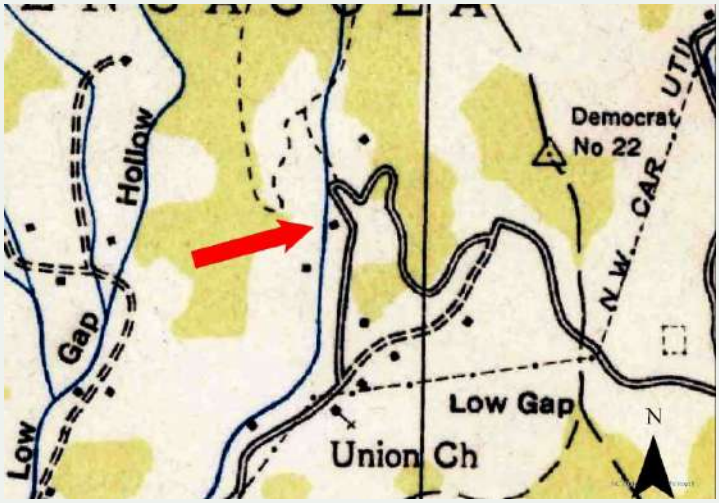


Figure 86. 1935 USGS Map of the Burnsville Quadrangle. The red arrow points to the approximate location of the Hensley Cabin. (Pike, 1935(a))

Figure 87. A circa January 1938 photograph of the Hensley Cabin, showing the road traveling on the east side of the cabin. Note the gabled structure in the lower left; the circa 1860 smokehouse replaced this building in the 1970s. (Sharpe, 1938)

Figure 88. A circa January 1938 photograph of the Hensley Cabin, looking southwest. Note that the porch is not enclosed and the ell has narrow weatherboard siding. Split rail and post and wire fences line both sides of the road. (Sharpe, 1938)

Ownership passed to their son, Marcus "Clingmon" Hensley (1849-1903), listed in the 1900 US Census as a farmer, and he owned roughly 200 acres. Clingmon likely built the transverse crib barn, based on its half-dovetail notched log and latticework—features poular in the late 1800s for haylofts and burley tobacco curing. The multi-purpose barn housed animals beneath the hayloft. Tobacco was grown on the parcel to the north of Bolens Creek Road, and a new tobacco barn constructed around 1910. (T. Hensley, 2024)

The 1900 Mount Mitchell USGS map (Figure 85) does not include the cabin, but it does appear on the 1935 Tennessee Valley Authority map of the Burnsville Quadrangle (Figure 86). Map comparisons indicate that Bolens Creek Road was rerouted to the north between 1900 and 1935. The 1935 map shows the road running along the east side of the cabin, dividing the yard. Historic photographs depict this road configuration with a split rail fence following the roadway with a picket gate along the road and post and wire fencing surrounding the fields and pastures on both sides of Bolens Creek Road (Figures 87 and 88).

In 1962, Edgar Hensley (1918-1998), inherited the property from his father, Wesley Bingham "W.B." Hensley (1877-1960), and he began restoring the cabin and farm (Book 131, Page 120). According to the family, Edgar added the stone veneer foundation—replacing the original corner boulders—rebuilt the floor structure, and installed reproduction wood windows and batten doors (Figure 89). He reportedly rebuilt the front porch using redwood from Howard Johnson's lumberyard in Tennessee with help from neighbor and housebuilder Vance Hensley. Edgar also enclosed the ell's side porch to create a laundry room and bathroom, converted the ell into a kitchen, added the walnut and cherry fireplace mantles, and replaced the loft ladder with stairs. He also installed a new standing seam metal roof and ran electricity to the outbuildings. (Findagrave.com, 2025; W. Hensley, 2025)

Figure 89. Photograph of the Hensley Cabin, looking northwest c. 1976-1977. (Southern Appalachian Digital Collections, 2005)

In 1963, the state took ownership of the road and relocated it again from the east side of the cabin to the west. Historic aerial imagery from 1977 confirms the change. (NCDOT, 1977(b))

Wesley Hensley began making property improvements in the 1970s. He purchased the smokehouse from his maternal grandfather, Fred Cornelius Ayers (1898-1994), and moved it from Ayers's farm near Jacks Creek to the north. Wesley numbered the logs, deconstructed the structure, and rebuilt it on the current site. He housed pigs there in the early 1990s. In 1980, he built the tobacco barn addition to the transverse-crib barn. He and Wanda also installed the buildings' current standing seam metal roofs. After Hurricane Helene destroyed a circa 1910 tobacco barn in 2024, Tim Hensley salvaged the chestnut logs and rebuilt the barn as an animal shelter south of the original location, closer to the cabin and Bolens Creek Road (Figures 60 and 72). The Hensleys continue to operate the property as a small-scale farm, raising goats, donkeys, and beef cattle. They actively log and clear overgrown areas to restore the historic field patterns seen in 1950s aerial photographs. The family remains committed to preserving the cabin and outbuildings with a strong sense of stewardship. (T. Hensley, 2024, 2025; W. Hensley, 2025)

Architectural Context

The Hensley Cabin and Farm express the distinctive half-dovetail notching characteristic of early nineteenth century log construction. Early settlers cleared the land for farming and used the locally sourced timber for log houses and farm structures. However, many have been significantly altered—modernized with weatherboard siding, decorative millwork, or incorporated into newer buildings that conceal their original log walls. Others were dismantled, their logs repurposed or used for firewood. While log construction remained common for farm buildings into the early twentieth century, intact examples of early log dwellings and farmsteads are increasingly rare. The Hensley Cabin and Farm represent one of the few surviving collections of early nineteenth century log structures in western North Carolina, and the site was added to the state's NR study list in 2024. (Bishir, 1999; T. Hensley, 2024)

According to HPOWeb, North Carolina has 90 log buildings listed on the NRHP, though at least seven have been lost. About half of the remaining structures were constructed before 1850. Log construction was common into the early twentieth century and the 1983 Yancey County survey recorded several log houses; however, few surviving examples remain intact. A survey of rural housing stock identified three examples of log construction similar to the Hensley Cabin and Farm in Yancey and Mitchell counties.

The now-demolished Bennett Log Cabin (YC0141; 600 Bennett Branch Road, Green Mountain) was a single-pen, half-dovetailed log structure dating to the early nineteenth century (Figure 90). The structure reflected the single-pen log cabin type with a rectangular plan (approximately twenty by eighteen feet), centered doorway, and one-shoulder stone gable-end chimney. The cabin had weatherboard gables, a cedar shake roof, and a lean-to addition clad in vertical wood siding. The cabin was in deteriorating condition at the time of the 1983 survey and has since been lost. (Presnell, 1983(h))

The Peterson-Arrowood Cabin (YC0045; 325 Gilders Creek Road, Burnsville), built around the turn of the twentieth century, features half-dovetail construction with concrete chinking, weatherboard-clad gables, six-over-six wood windows, and a one-shouldered stone chimney (Figure 91). Its one-and-one-half story, central-hall plan with partial-width front porch resembles popular frame house forms of the period. Several additions and modifications in the 1950s altered the cabin's form and compromised its integrity. Only minimal evidence of its farm use remains, including a historic one-story frame shed and a two-story tobacco barn. Due to these cumulative changes, it was determined ineligible for NRHP listing in 2013. (Griffith, 2013)

The Henry Willis Cabin (ML0002; 1132 Conley Ridge Road, Bakersville) was listed on the NRHP in 1988 under Criterion C for its architectural significance (Figure 92). Builders used chestnut logs with half-dovetail notching to construct the fifteen-foot-square, single-pen cabin around 1880. It features weatherboard gables, six-over-six wood windows, two opposing wood batten doors, and a one-shoulder stone

Figure 90. Oblique view of the now demolished Bennett Log Cabin (YC0141), (Presnell, 1983(h))

Figure 91. Oblique view of the south elevation and west façade of the Peterson-Arrowood Cabin (YC0045).

Figure 92. Oblique view of the north elevation and east facade of the Henry Willis Cabin (ML0002).

exterior end chimney. In 1890, a second single-cell log room was added to create a double-pen, followed by a full-width porch and kitchen ell in the early twentieth century. After 1930, owners constructed two additional expansions. These changes reflect the typical evolution of single-cell cabins as families adapted them over time. By the 1930s, owners had demolished most of the associated farm buildings, including the pig pen, spring house, woodshed, and "rag shop" building, leaving only stone foundations and a board and batten privy. (Humphries, 1988)

Integrity

The Hensley Cabin and Farm retains integrity of location and setting. There is no evidence to suggest that the historic house and outbuildings have been moved. The cabin and remaining historic farm structures maintain their historic relationship with each other and to the surrounding pastures, fields, and forests. Although the road shifted from the east to the west side of the house in the 1960s, the change did not alter internal orientation or access, and the farm maintains its relationship to the road. The property conveys the feeling and association of an early nineteenth century Yancey County homestead and has remained in the Hensley family for at least five generations.

The Hensley Cabin and Farm also retains its integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. The cabin, outbuildings, and pastures form one of the most intact collections of nineteenth-century log farming structures in Western North Carolina. The cabin preserves its historic log walls and stone chimneys. Notably, its first addition—a rear ell constructed around 1860—deviates from the more common saddlebag or hall-parlor expansions seen in other log structures. Renovations in the 1960s sought to preserve the cabin, introducing reproduction wood windows and board-and-batten doors, a rebuilt front porch, and wood floors. Later additions, such as the 1960s enclosed porch and the 2020 side porch, reflect adaptations for the cabin's continued use. While these changes have altered some historic fabric, they do not compromise the cabin's overall integrity. The historic granary and barn also retain their historic design and materials, and the layout of buildings continues to reflect nineteenth century Appalachian agricultural patterns.

National Register Criteria Evaluation

The Hensley Cabin and Farm is recommended eligible under Criterion A for its historic association with agriculture and settlement in Yancey County. Stephen McMahan constructed the log cabin and granary around 1812, before Yancey County separated from Buncombe County in 1833. McMahan and later generations of Hensleys cleared the land for farming and used available natural resources—hand-hewn poplar logs, stone foundations, and clay mortar—to construct buildings that reflect early pioneer building practices. Although Wesley Hensley relocated the smokehouse to the site, it replaced a comparable structure of similar vintage and geography (Yancey County). The cluster of buildings forms a well-preserved example of an early nineteenth century farmstead with minimal alterations to its historic domestic and agricultural work zones. Over time, the family adapted the property to meet changing agricultural and domestic needs, often using traditional construction methods and materials. The farm's evolution—from subsistence farming to livestock to tobacco cultivation—mirrors regional agricultural trends. As such, the Hensley Cabin and Farm represents a rare, intact collection of a nineteenth-century farm that remains in continuous use.

The Hensley Cabin and Farm are not recommended eligible under Criterion B as research did not identify any associations with individuals of recognized significance in local, state, or national history. The McMahan and Hensley families were among many in the area that engaged in farming and did not achieve a level of prominence and significance that would meet the threshold for NRHP eligibility.

The property is recommended eligible under Criterion C for its architectural significance. Log construction remained common for agricultural buildings into the early twentieth century, even after milled lumber became widely available. The original 1812 structures use half-dovetail notched log construction, a hallmark of early settlement-era workmanship. The single-cell log cabin remained

unaltered until the 1860 ell addition, which is clearly distinguishable by its north-south orientation and framed construction. The cabin's evolution illustrates how families expanded log homes historically to meet changing needs. The granary and smokehouse reflect early farming trends, while the later transverse crib barn—with its lattice venting—demonstrates the building's adaptation to tobacco farming. These modest structures are not the work of master builders, but rather a reflection of regional building practices and vernacular traditions that retain integrity and represent a collection of good examples from their periods of construction.

The Hensley Cabin and Farm are not recommended eligible under Criterion D for thier potential to yield information. For a property to be eligible under Criterion D, a property must meet two requirements: (1) it must have, or have had, information that contributes to our understanding of human history and prehistory, and (2) the information must be considered important. The property is not likely to yield any new information pertaining to the history of building design and technology and is therefore not recommended eligible under Criterion D.

NRHP-Eligible Boundary Description

The proposed NR-eligible boundary for the Hensley Cabin and Farm includes approximately 3.2 acres of the roughly 45-acre site (Figure 93). It covers all of the northeastern legal parcel (Yancey County PIN 072900415539000) and the portion of the southern parcel (Yancey County PIN 072900415366000) bordered by Bolens Creek Road to the north, west, and east. The southern boundary aligns with the legal parcel line, while the remainder follows the edge of the pavement as the historic cabin extends beyond the legal parcel and into the NCDOT right-of-way.

The boundary includes the homestead's historic buildings—the cabin, granary, smokehouse, and transverse crib barn—associated with the homestead, all circulation paths, and the surrounding pastures and woodlands that contribute to the resource's agricultural setting. This boundary excludes the parcel to the north of Bolens Creek Road (Yancey County PIN 072900423448000), which contains only the 2025 log barn and adjacent forested and pastured areas across Bolens Creek Road. This parcel no longer reflects its historic use (tobacco farming) and instead functions as an animal pasture and forest. While the Hensley property spans both sides of the road and the public road has historically served circulation with the property, the proposed NRHP-eligible boundary focuses solely on the historic core and excludes newer development.

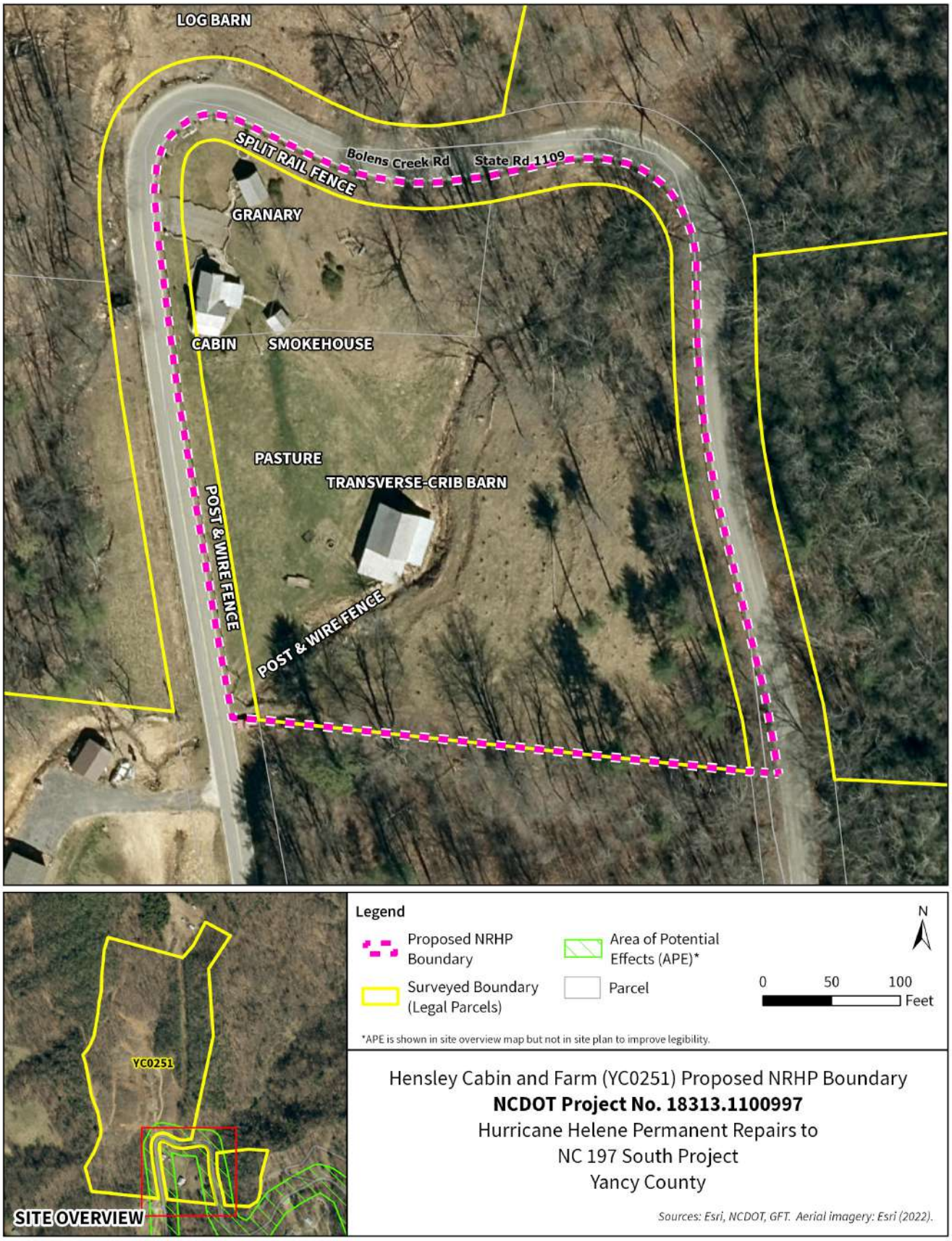


Figure 93. Map of Proposed NRHP Boundary for Hensley Cabin and Farm (YC0251)

VII. C.C. and Grover Ray General Store and Tenant House (YC0101)

Figure 94. Oblique view of the north and east facades of the C.C. and Grover Ray Store, looking southwest from NC 197 South. Note the tenant house directly to the south.

Resource Name	C.C. and Grover Ray General Store and Tenant House
HPO Survey Site #	YC0101
Address	7280 State Highway 197 South, Burnsville
PIN	072800295477000
Date(s) of Construction	Circa 1892
Recommendation	Eligible

Physical Description

Setting

The C.C. and Grover Ray General Store and Tenant House are located on the west side of NC 197 South, approximately 360 feet south of its intersection with Bolens Creek Road, and within the historic logging and railroad camp of Vixen (no longer extant) (Figures 1 and 94).

The 3.35-acre triangular parcel is relatively flat, bordered by the Cane River to the west and the highway to the east (Figure 95). The store stands about 20 feet west of and below the road grade and about 150 feet west of the river. The tenant house sits approximately 45 feet behind (south) of the store, and 20 feet west of the highway. Mature trees are scattered across the site, forming a border along the riverbank.

GFT conducted an on-site interview with the property owner, Danny Hensley, on June 24, 2025, at the time of the property survey. He shared his knowledge of the history of the site and allowed surveyors to enter the store and house. The information provided by Hensley is referenced throughout this evaluation.

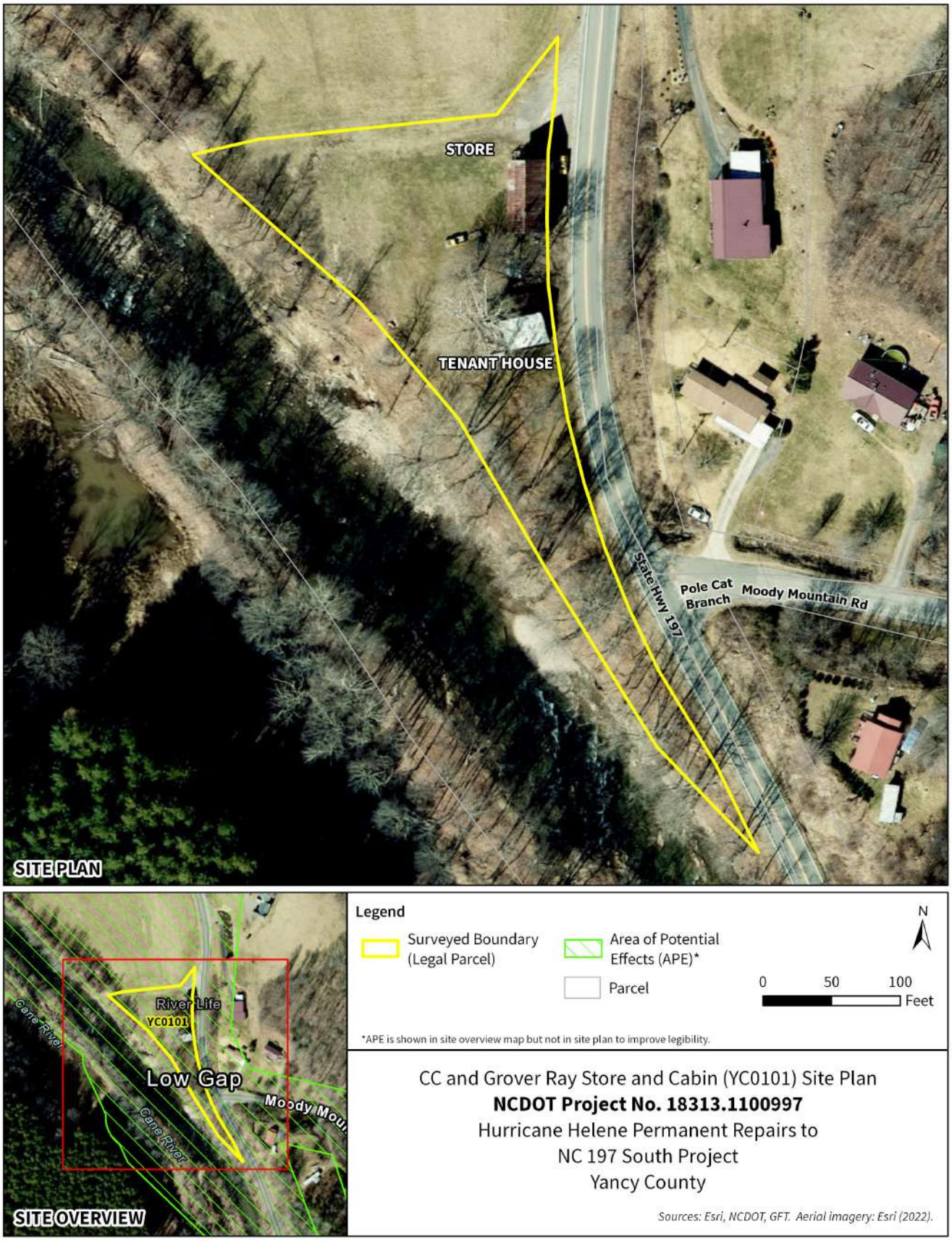


Figure 95. C.C. and Grover Ray General Store and Tenant House Site Plan.

C.C. and Grover Ray Store, *Circa 1892*

The C.C. and Grover Ray General Store is a substantially intact two-and-one-half story, wood-framed structure, oriented north (Figures 96 and 97). The store is rectangular in form and rests on a stacked stone basement foundation with two wood-framed window openings—now covered in plastic sheathing—centered on the west elevation. A historic concrete slab spans the façade, extended by a contemporary wood deck with simple posts and horizontal rails along the north edge. The slightly recessed central entrance features a historic ten-light transom, two five-panel wood doors, and wood and wire screen doors (Figure 98). Historic wood and metal signs decorate the façade, including a prominent "C.C. & Grover Ray" metal sign above the entrance. Stacked windows appear on the façade and rear (south) elevation, along with centered gable attic windows (Figures 98 and 99). Most windows are historic six-over-six wood windows except for historic six-over-one and one-over-one wood windows on the second level of the rear elevation (Figure 99). Built-to-fit wood frames with two rebar strands protect each sash in the first-floor windows. A historic wood batten door and similar screen door enters the southeast corner of the store and faces the highway (Figure 100). The exterior retains historic board-and-batten siding, with a subtle break in the pattern between floors. Standing seam metal panels clad the roof, which features boxed eaves.

A wood framed lean-to addition with stone and concrete foundation and pressed tin roof extends from the west elevation to protect concrete steps leading to the basement (Figure 101). The lean-to is clad with horizontal and vertical wood plank siding. A wood plank door that opens north enters the basement, which has a concrete floor and stone walls showing signs of past concrete repairs. Salvaged wood posts and beams along the east and west walls and hewn logs in the center of the room support the floors above (Figures 97, 102, and 103).

Figure 96. C.C. & Grover Ray Store, looking southwest from NC 197 South.

The interior consists of four tiers of rectangular open rooms, divided into three bays by rows of wood posts—some with diagonal bracing—that support north-south wood beams (Figure 97). Unpainted shiplap covers the walls of the first and second floors, and historic wood flooring is present throughout. A long wood display case

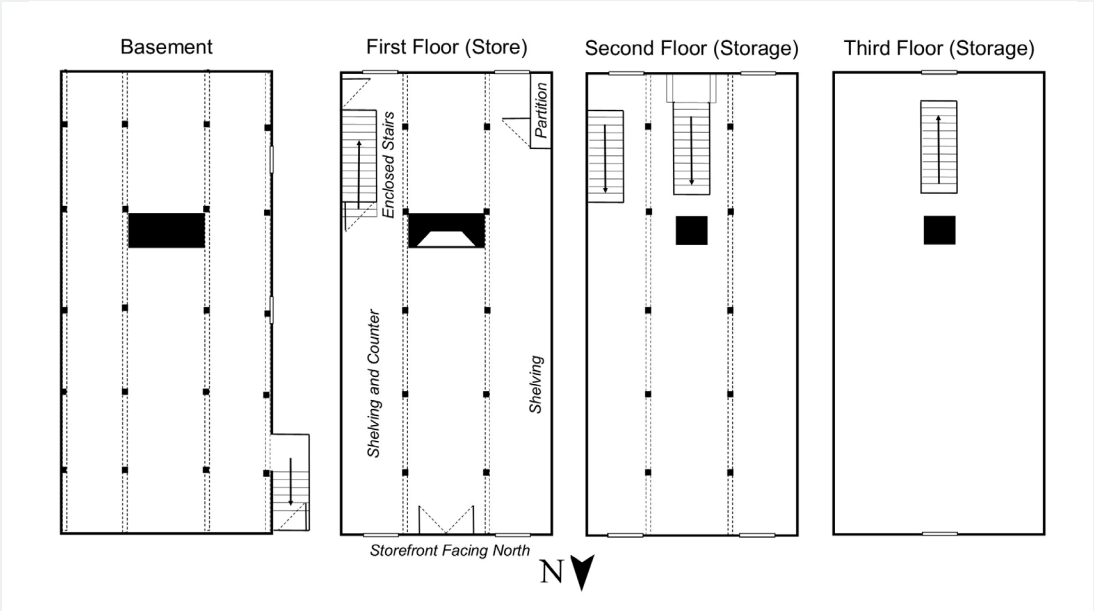


Figure 97. Floor plans of the store. Note that plans are not to scale.

Figure 98. North facade of the store, looking south from yard.

Figure 99. South elevation of the store, looking north from the yard.

Figure 100. East elevation of store, looking northwest from NC 197 South.

Figure 101. West elevation of the store, looking east from the yard. Note the lean-to shed addition covered by blue tarp at frame left.

Figure 102. Enclosed exterior stairs of the addition, looking northwest from inside the basement.

Figure 103. Basement of the store, looking southwest.

Figure 104. Interior of the store, looking north through the front doors.

Figure 105. Historic shelving along the east wall of the store, looking northwest.

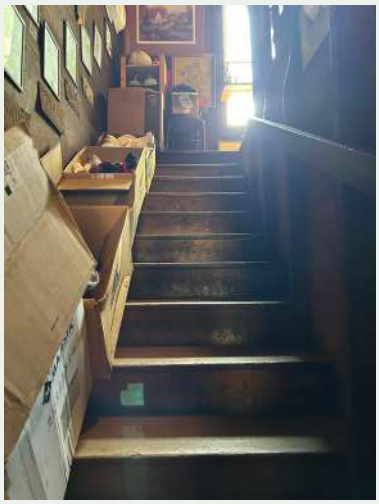


Figure 106. Historic wood stairs leading to the second level, looking south from the store.

Figure 107. Interior of the store looking southwest. Note the partition in the corner.

Figure 108. Second level of the store, looking north.

Figure 109. View of the attic, looking north.

and store counter run the length of the east wall in the main level, ending at an enclosed staircase in the southeast corner (Figures 104 and 105). The staircase includes a historic wood batten door with historic iron hinges and a latch (Figure 106). Historic wood shelving and display cases also fill the west wall and center of the store, and a second partitioned space with wood plank walls occupies the southwest corner (Figure 107). A red brick fireplace with historic wood mantle shelf divides the front and rear sections of the store and extends through the second and third floors, now used for storage (Figures 108 and 109). Exposed wood rafters and plank sheathing form the roof structure in the attic (third floor). Property owner Danny Hensley reported that the structure was framed with virgin chestnut.

Tenant House, *Circa 1900*

The one-and-one-half story, side-gable house reflects early twentieth century boxed, or plank, construction. The house is three-bays wide and rests on a rubble stone foundation. It has a full-width front porch with unhewed log posts, a centered interior red brick chimney, and standing seam metal roof (Figure 110). On the façade, double-hung windows frame three centered entrances within each bay, each with a historic three-light wood paneled door. The center door is slightly wider, and a plywood patch covers a gap in the porch ceiling above it (Figure 111). The property owner shared that stairs leading from the porch to the loft had been removed. Historic wood four-over-four and one-over-one windows appear throughout, with three-over-two and one-over-one windows in the gables (Figures 112 and 113). A contemporary lean-to addition extends across its rear (south) elevation and includes a mix of salvaged vinyl four-over-one, one-over-one, picture windows, and an octagon-shaped window, along with a half-light leaded glass aluminum panel door (Figure 114). A metal stove pipe extends from the western third of the shed roof. Unpainted wood board-and-batten siding of varying widths clads the exterior of the house, and a patch beneath the window on the east elevation marks a later repair (Figure 113). Unfinished vertical wood siding clads the rear addition.

Figure 110. North facade of the tenant house, looking south from the yard.

Figure 111. Three entrances across the tenant house's north facade. Note the plywood sheathing covering the opening above the central door.

Figure 112. West elevation of the tenant house, looking southeast from the yard.

Figure 113. Oblique view of the east elevation and north façade of the tenant house, looking southeast from the yard.

Figure 114. South elevation of the tenant house, looking north from the yard.

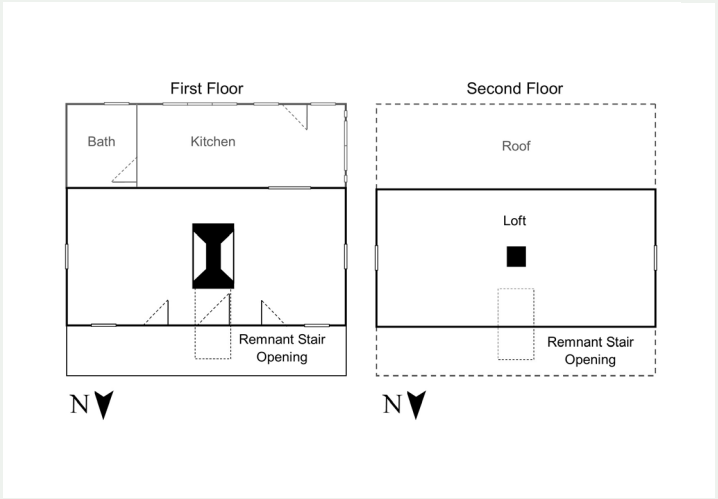


Figure 115. First and second floor plans of the tenant house.

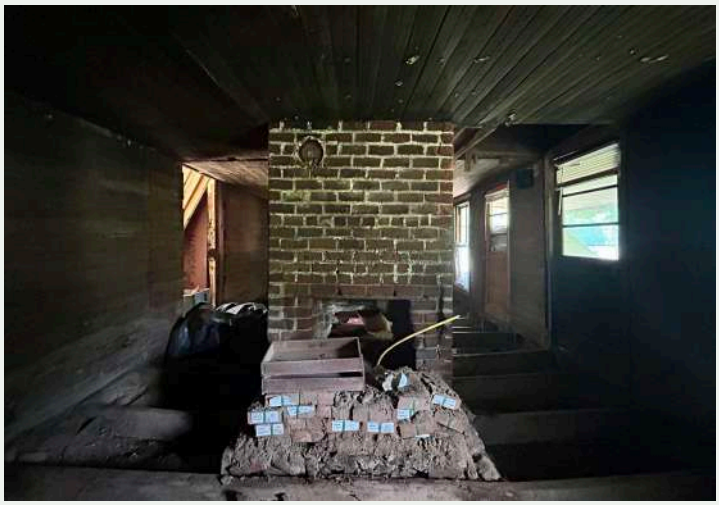


Figure 116. Inside the tenant house, looking west. Note the hole in the ceiling to the left of the chimney, which once held the stairs.

Figure 117. Room to the west of the chimney, looking from kitchen addition entrance, into the tenant house.

Figure 118. C.C. and Grover Ray General Store and tenant house, looking southwest from NC 197 S and the driveway.

The interior of the wood frame tenant house includes two rooms separated by a central red brick chimney with hearths on both sides (Figures 115 through 117). Vertical shiplap forms the overmantel on the west side (Figure 117). Hurricane Helene damaged the floors which were removed, exposing north-south floor joists resting directly on the stone foundation. Unpainted wood shiplap covers the walls and ceilings. These rooms now connect to a rear addition, which contains a kitchen and a bathroom. Upstairs was inaccessible as the staircase from the porch no longer exists. According to the property owner, the upstairs loft contained two rooms, matching the floor below, and historically had wood stoves.

Landscape Elements

The store and tenant house sit at the northern end of the parcel, between the tree-lined Cane River to the west and NC 197 South to the east. The NC 197 South roadbed rises about two feet above the elevation of the store and five feet above the tenant house (Figures 118 and 119).

A large gravel driveway north of the store provides site access, with parking areas to the north and east of the building (Figures 95 and 118). Stone-lined planting beds frame the store's facade. Although Hurricane Helene left sand across much of the site, grass had regrown around both buildings by the time of the field survey. Adjacent to the tenant house, remnants of a stacked stone wall line the sandy roadbed, bordered by Rose of Sharon bushes (Figure 120).

Figure 119. The store and tenant house, looking north from the yard.

Figure 120. Remnants of a stacked stone wall and Rose of Sharon shrubs along slope of the road, looking south from the yard.

Historic Context

Built around 1892, the C.C. and Grover Ray General Store stands at a key crossroads near Bolens Creek Road and NC 197 South in the historic rural community of Vixen (sometimes referred to as Low Gap). According to property owner Danny Hensley, William E. Clontz, Sr. (1837-1911) and John A. Hensley (1819-1911) constructed the store of virgin chestnut sourced from a mill on Toodies Creek, about three miles west. Hensley is also associated with the Hensley Cabin (YC0251), located about 0.7 mile north of the store. Census records list both men as farmers, and they likely managed the store in addition to farm duties. (Findagrave.com, 2025; USCB, 1880, 1900)

The arrival of the Carolina Spruce Lumber Company and the Black Mountain railroad brought workers and industry to the Cane River Valley in the early twentieth century (Figure 121). Logging camps and railroad settlements sprang up along the tracks, including one in Vixen, contributing to the boomtown atmosphere. A passenger stop opened in Vixen in 1913, and a post office opened in the C.C. and Grover Ray General Store in 1915. The house behind the store was as a two-family tenant house built of boxed, or plank, construction—an affordable and fast method suited to meeting the

*Figure 121. Ella Ray and Sally Ray Penland walk the new railroad tracks adjacent to the store building, circa 1913. Photograph taken looking south along the tracks. (*Images of Yancey, *1993.)*

increased and temporary housing demands of the camp.

Samuel Bartus Penland (1879-1950) and Sally ("Sallie" in some historic records) Ray Penland (1881-1967) operated the tenant house as a boarding house, offering lodging and serving two meals daily to railroad workers. A photograph from the early 1900s shows the Penland family in front of the tenant house with a tall picket fence and stairs leading from the porch to the second floor (Figure 122). While the 1920 US Census lists Samuel as a farmer, their son, Clyde Penland (1902-1974) worked as a salesman in a retail store, likely this general store, and later operated the Murchison Store (YC0266; 10516 State Hwy 197 South, Burnsville). (Findagrave.com, 2025; D. Hensley, 1984)

Figure 122. 1920s photograph of Bart and Sally Penland family in front of the tenant house. Note the staircase leading up to the second floor between the two front doors and the steep embankment of the railroad to the left. (D. Hensley, 2025)

Figure 123. Advertisement for the silent film Then I'll Come Back to You *(1916). (D. Hensley, 2025)*

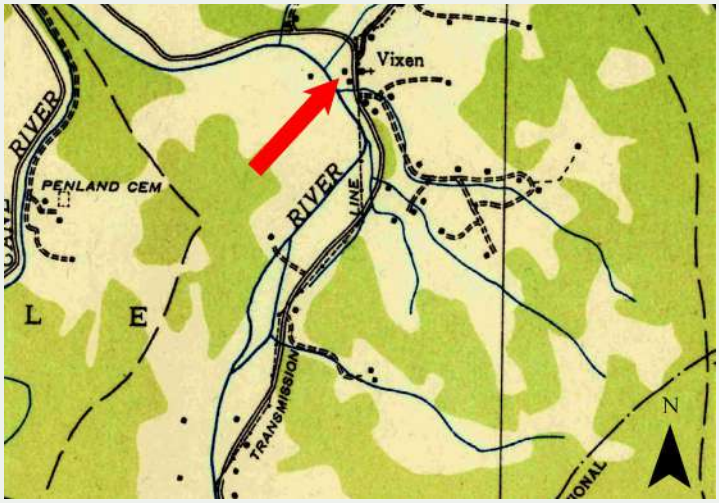


Figure 124. 1935 Tennessee Valley Authority Map of Black Brothers Quadrangle, NC. The red arrow points to the approximate location of the C.C. Grover Store and Tenant House. Note the location of a church across the road. (Pike, 1935(a)

Figure 125. North facade, 1983. (Presnell, 1983(d))

In 1916, the site served as the backdrop for the silent film *Then I'll Come Back to You*, directed by George Irving and starring Alice Brady, Jack Sherrill, and Eric Blind (Figure 123). Filmmakers recorded a major fight scene near the store at a bend in the river, with logs from the Carolina Spruce Company in Pensacola rushing past. Locals played minor parts or participated as extras. The film is based on a novel by Larry Evans. (Hamrick, 1975(b))

In 1927, the Penlands sold 25 acres—likely including the tenant house and the store—to Horace D. Ray, Senior (1898-1974) and Ada Hensley Ray (1907-2000) for $1,000 (Book 65, Page 439). The 1935 Tennessee Valley Authority map shows by that time, Vixen had grown into a small town with a cluster of buildings, including the general store and tenant house, around a church (Figure 124). The Rays operated the store into the 1960s, with Horace serving as postmaster from 1930 to 1948, followed by his son Horace Ray, Jr. (1924-1969). The Vixen post office closed in 1954. Locals remember purchasing general merchandise and weekly groceries from the Rays. (Findagrave, 2025; D. Hensley, 2025; Winter, 2024)

In the 1940s the Rays converted the tenant house into a single-family home. Danny Hensley recalls a partial-width rear addition on the southwest corner that included a kitchen and dining room, along with wood stoves in the kitchen and upstairs bedrooms. The house served as a rental property until the 1977 flood damaged the tenant house.

In the 1970s, brothers Clyde Clayton "C.C." (1917-1971) and Grover D. Ray (1907-1977) rented the store from the Ray family. C.C. was an experienced merchant; Grover was both a farmer and merchant, and he lived near the store. They continued to sell sundries to the rural population until the end of the decade. (Hamrick, 1975(b); D. Hensley, 2025)

By 1983, when M. Presnell conducted an architectural survey of the site, the store housed Joel & Scott's Antiques, a furniture repair and refinishing shop (Figure 125). Classified ads for the business

ran in the *Yancey Journal* through December 1986. The shop closed in the late 1980s and remained vacant for decades, though still owned by Ray descendants. Presnell did not document the tenant house during the survey.

In June 2018, Danny Hensley purchased the site from the Ray family and began extensive repairs, including rewiring and plumbing. In 2024, Hurricane Helene shifted the store off its foundation and caused the east wall to bow. Hensley used jacks to straighten and stabilize the structure. He extended the concrete pad with a wood deck and replaced the roof. Hensley reopened the store, selling bread, milk, cakes, drinks, antiques, and other items. He also removed the failing rear addition from the tenant house and constructed a full-width rear addition similar in form to the original.

Architectural Context

C.C. and Grover Ray General Store

Two-story country stores were popular from the late nineteenth century into the early twentieth century in Yancey County, typically featuring gable-front facades, modest rectangular footprints, and utilitarian wood-frame construction with weatherboard siding. Typical elements included paneled wood doors, large windows or banks of windows for displays, metal interior bars for security, and fireplaces or wood stoves. Positioned close to the road for ease of access, they housed commercial space on the ground level and living space, storage, or community meeting rooms above. A survey of rural country stores in Yancey County identified two early twentieth century, two-story country stores comparable in design to the C.C. and Grover Ray Store. Neither have been previously evaluated for NRHP eligibility. (Fearnbach, 2012)

Figure 126. Oblique view of the south and east facades of the A.J. Edwards General Store.

Figure 127. Oblique view of the east façade and south elevation of the A.O. England General Store (YC0048).

The A.J. Edwards General Store (1304 Bald Mountain Road, Burnsville) is an early twentieth century symmetrical two-and-one-half story front-gable building (Figure 126). It has a central entrance featuring two wood paneled doors with historic wood screen doors. It sits on a rubble stone foundation with a poured concrete porch supported by concrete blocks. Ghost lines suggest a former hipped roof addition on the east elevation. The building features classical design with weatherboard siding, plain frieze boards, and gable returns. The building has a historic metal standing seam roof with a brick chimney. The vacant and deteriorating structure faces the intersection of Bald Mountain Road and Bee Log Road. (Bishir, 1999)

The A.O. England General Store (YC0048; 7 Indian Creek Road, Burnsville) built around 1900, stands at the crossroads of Horton Creek Road and Indian Creek Road in Paint Gap (Figure 127). It rests on a rubble stone

foundation with a walkout basement on its rear elevation. Painted weatherboard clads the exterior, and historic six-over-six double-hung windows appear throughout. The asymmetrical façade includes two covered rectangular window openings on either side of a recessed entry with a V-joint wood plank door, and a second entrance on the northeast corner. The second story features a projecting hipped roof enclosure under the gable, supported by wood posts that form a covered porch for the storefront. Windows form an asymmetrical pattern on both the first and second stories. Despite some modern materials, including a concrete porch, replacement wood posts, and the standing seam metal roof, the store retains its historic integrity.

Figure 128. Oblique view of the north façade and west elevation of the Tenant House at the David Dellinger House (YC0028).

Figure 129. West façade of the Wingo House (BN6879).

Tenant House

Boxed, or plank, houses, were a dominant housing type in late-nineteenth and early twentieth century Western North Carolina, built quickly and inexpensively using local timber and sawmills. Typically following traditional folk house plans, the saddle bag plan—with two rooms located on either side of a central chimney—was common and often served as two-family tenant houses in lumber and railroad camps. Few boxed houses survive today due to their rudimentary construction. (Gannett Fleming, 2023)

A search of HPOweb revealed 546 examples of tenant houses, of which 186 were listed as demolished. Roughly 200 of the remaining sites were constructed in 1900 or later and are mostly found in the Piedmont and Coastal Plain regions, where they supported large farms or industrial centers. A survey of Yancey and neighboring counties identified three houses comparable in design and construction to the subject tenant house.

The circa 1900 tenant house associated with the David Dellinger House (YC0028; 15 Dove Cove Road, Burnsville) is a one-and-one-half story, side-gable, two-family boxed house with a full-width front porch and stone and concrete block end chimneys (Figure 128). It sits on a stone pier foundation. The house retains historic features such as weatherboard siding, shiplap siding beneath the porch, six-over-six wood windows, four-panel wood doors, and a beadboard porch ceiling. Deterioration and alterations, including partial concrete block foundation, concrete block chimney, as well as a collapsed rear ell and porch floor have compromised its historic integrity.

The Wingo House (BN6879; 2057 Old Fort Road, Black Mountain) was found not eligible for the NRHP in 2023 due to extensive renovations and additions in the 1960s-1970s (Figure 129). Rehabilitation work added structural framing, a walk-out basement, infill and veneered stone foundation, and side and rear additions. The one-story, side-gable house features cast metal porch columns with scrolled

motifs and matching railings. Alterations included aluminum sliding and awning windows, a twelve-light fixed wood window on the south elevation, and vinyl and wood replacement doors. (Gannett Fleming, 2023)

The Hiram King House is a contributing feature of the Biltmore Forest School (aka Cradle of Forestry; TV0002; 11250 Pisgah Highway, Pisgah Forest), listed on the NRHP in 1974 for its role as the nation's first forestry school and its rustic style architecture. Built in the 1880s, the three-bay, central-hall, side-gabled house features a full-width front porch, rear ell, and tapered stone chimneys (Figure 130). An L-shaped stair beneath the porch runs parallel to the exterior wall before turning into the loft. The house retains its stone pier foundation, weatherboard siding, batten shutters and doors, six-over-six wood windows, interior wood plank sheathing, and wood mantle shelves. The Hiram King House housed forestry students at Biltmore Forestry School and retains a high level of historic integrity. (Preston, 1974)

Figure 130. Hiram King House, associated with the Biltmore Forestry School (aka Cradle of Forestry, TV0002). (R.A. Media, 2024)

Integrity

The C.C. and Grover Ray General Store and Tenant House retain integrity of location and setting. There is no evidence to suggest that the buildings have been moved, and both continue to reflect their historic relationship with NC 197 South, each other, and surrounds.

The C.C. and Grover Ray General Store retains integrity of design, materials, and workmanship typical of an early twentieth century two-story, gable front, wood-frame store. It maintains historic exterior finishes including board and batten siding, wood windows, five-panel and batten doors, and metal signage. Inside, the historic stone foundation, wood posts and beam structure, wood floors, unpainted shiplap walls, narrow enclosed staircases, shelving, and display cases remain intact. No major alterations or material replacements were observed. The store continues to serve as a country store and community gathering place, maintaining its integrity of feeling and association.

The Tenant House likewise retains integrity of design, material, and workmanship. Its popular side-gabled, saddlebag form and boxed construction remain evident. The historic rubble stone foundation, board and batten exterior, interior shiplap sheathing, and central brick chimney with two hearths are also intact. Hurricane Helene damaged the historic wood flooring, prompting its removal. Hensley replaced the historic rear addition with a new full-width shed-roof addition that respects the historic design and minimally alters the historic form. This type of addition is not uncommon to dwellings from this era and represents the evolution of a historic home for continued use. While these changes diminish the tenant house's historic fabric, they do not compromise its overall integrity. The tenant house still conveys its integrity of feeling and association through its boxed construction and appearance as a two-family tenant house.

National Register Criteria Evaluation

The C.C. and Grover Ray General Store and Tenant House are recommended eligible under Criterion A for their historic association with Commerce and Community Development and Planning in Yancey County. Both buildings reflect the growth and development of the valley during the region's industrial boom. Established on the only transportation route into the upper Cane River Valley, the store provided

sundries and other necessities to rural residents through the 1970s and again today. It acted as a vital hub, offering goods otherwise inaccessible to rural residents due to poor roads that limited travel to Burnsville. The store benefitted from the arrival of the Black Mountain Railroad in 1913 with a stop in Vixen and served as the Vixen Post Office from 1915 to 1954. The Tenant House remains largely intact and offers a tangible link to the itinerant working class that staffed the railroad and logging boom in the upper Cane River Valley at the beginning of the twentieth century. Further, Mrs. Sally Penland rented rooms and served meals to railroad workers, supporting the local labor force.

The C.C. and Grover Ray General Store and Tenant House are recommended not eligible under Criterion B as research did not identify any associations with individuals of recognized significance in local, state, or national history. While connected to the locally prominent Penland and Ray families, the site's significance stems from its role in the community rather than the prominence of past owners.

The C.C. and Grover Ray General Store is recommended eligible under Criterion C for its architectural significance. It retains its historic front-facing gable form, recessed entrance, board-and-batten siding, and wood windows and doors. Inside, the store preserves its historic wood shelves, unpainted wood shiplap walls, enclosed staircase, and visible post and beam construction. It is an intact and well-preserved example of a country store dating to the late nineteenth century in the area, and a rare example of an operating historic country store.

The Tenant House is also recommended eligible under Criterion C for its architectural significance. It retains its side-gable saddlebag form, full-width front porch, and boxed construction. The central chimney with dual hearths allows the interior to read as two rooms, despite the removal of the walls and floor. According to the property owner, the loft's two-room plan remains intact, though the staircase has been lost. The full-width rear addition is not uncommon to dwellings from this era and represents the evolution of a historic home for continued use; its simplistic design does not detract from the historic house form. The tenant house, along with the severely deteriorated example at the David Dellinger House (YC0028; 15 Dove Cove Road, Burnsville), represents one of the few surviving examples of the two-room saddle-bag tenant house form in the region. Once common, plank construction facilitated rapid, low-cost housing for laborers, but was never meant to endure. As a result, most examples have not survived. This house stands out for its historic integrity and clear expression of both the saddlebag form and historic plank construction.

The C.C. and Grover Ray General Store and Tenant House are not recommended eligible under Criterion D for their potential to yield information. For a property to be eligible under Criterion D, a property must meet two requirements: (1) it must have, or have had, information that contributes to our understanding of human history and prehistory, and (2) the information must be considered important. The property is not likely to yield any new information pertaining to the history of building design and technology and is therefore not recommended eligible under Criterion D.

NRHP-Eligible Boundary Description

The proposed NRHP-eligible boundary for the C.C. and Grover Ray General Store and Tenant House encompasses the entirety of its 3.35-acre legal parcel (Yancey County PIN 072800295477000), historically associated with both structures (Figure 131). The boundary includes the store and tenant house. The proposed boundary provides the C.C. and Grover Ray Store and tenant house, circulation patterns, and open space to provide sufficient historic context to support their historic significance. On the east side, it extends to the edge of pavement within the NCDOT right-of-way of NC 197 South.

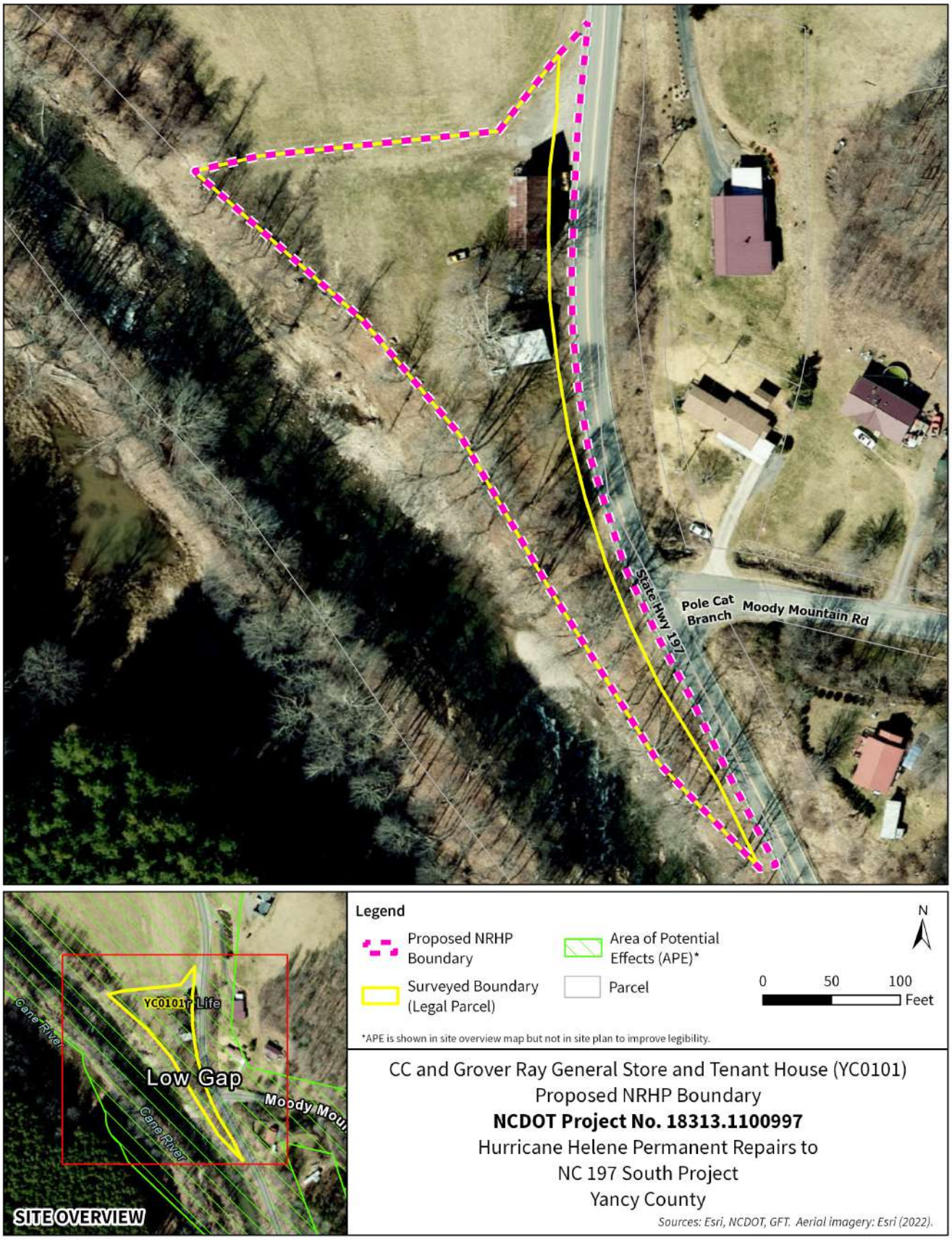


Figure 131. Map of Proposed NRHP Boundary for C.C. and Grover Ray General Store and Tenant House (YC0101).

VIII. Riddle House (YC0265)

Figure 132. Riddle House, looking northeast from NC 197 South.

Resource Name	Riddle House
HPO Survey Site #	YC0265
Address	8325 State Hwy 197 South, Burnsville
PIN	072800136985000
Date(s) of Construction	Circa 1890
Recommendation	Not eligible

Physical Description

Setting

The Riddle House (YC0265) is located east of the intersection of Riverview Road and NC 197 South (Figures 1, 132, and 133). Riverview Road crosses the Cane River approximately 200 feet west of the house. The legal parcel resembles an upside down "U" and contains 3.25 acres on the east side of the highway.

The Riddle House is located in the western section of the lot approximately 60 feet east of the highway (Figure 134). A gravel driveway provides access on the south side of the house. The front yard was minimally landscaped with grass and groupings of shrubs and flower plantings. The parcel slopes gently uphill to the east and ends at a wooded hillside that borders Mount Mitchell State Park. Adjoining parcels include post-1970 residential development by the Riddle family.

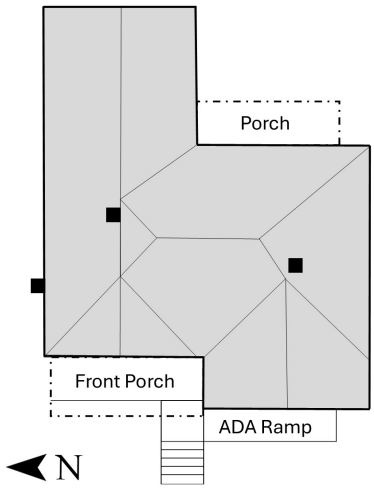


Figure 133. Roof Plan of the Riddle House.

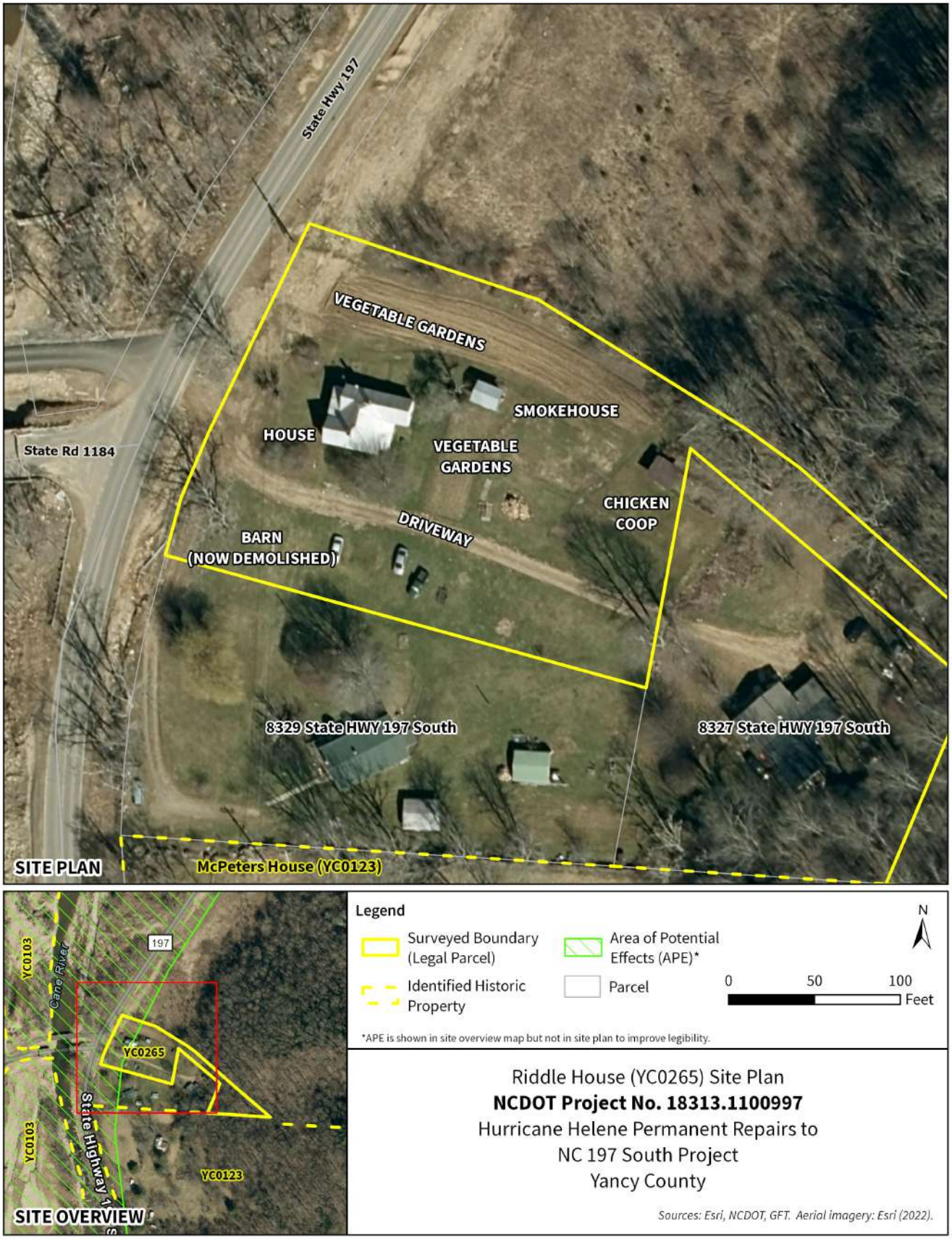


Figure 134. Riddle House Site Plan. Bobby Ray Riddle subdivided the 5-acre lot to create three parcels for his sons between 2016-2017, resulting in neighboring lots at 8329 and 8327 State Hwy 197 South.

GFT conducted an on-site interview with the property owner, Bobby Lee Riddle, on July 22, 2025, at the time of the property survey. Riddle is the fifth generation of his family to live in the house. He shared his knowledge of the history of the site and provided interior details, though he did not grant interior access. The information provided by Riddle is referenced throughout this evaluation.

Riddle House, *Circa 1890*

The Riddle House is a one-and-one-half-story double-pile plan with a hipped roof over a central, square massing with two projecting gable wings (Figures 133 and 135). The house sits on a mortared rubble stone foundation with visible concrete repairs. Vinyl siding clads the exterior walls, and the house features windows and doors of varying styles, ages, and materials. Two internal brick chimneys and an external concrete block chimney extend above the standing seam metal roof.

The L-shaped, three-bay façade includes a projecting gable wing that frames a partial-width front porch spanning the first two bays (Figures 133 and 135). The house cantilevers over the foundation in places, most notably at the southwest corner (Figure 135). The porch has a stone veneer skirt, open wood steps, and an accessibility ramp extending south. Both the stairs and ramp feature a lattice skirt and simple wood posts and handrail. Green and black outdoor carpeting covers the stair landing and ramp. The porch shelters a pair of historic three-over-one wood windows and a contemporary divided half-light aluminum storm door over a historic paneled wood door. Aluminum soffit panels cover the porch ceiling, which extends past the projecting gable wing. One vinyl one-over-one window is centered on the main level of the projecting gable wing. Historic two-over-two wood windows with historic wood surrounds are centered on each projecting gable of the second floor.

Figure 135. West façade, looking northeast from the front yard.

Figure 136. North elevation of the house, looking south from yard.

The north elevation is a simple rectangular form with a mix of three-over-one historic wood and vinyl windows (Figure 136). An internal chimney, with decorative cornice and a mix of tan, red and purple-colored bricks, breaks the roof ridge at the intersection of the hipped roof and projecting gable wing. A contemporary external concrete block chimney is also present.

On the east elevation, concrete blocks support the wood decking of the partial-width porch (Figure 137). Groupings of

Figure 137. East elevation of the house, looking northwest from backyard.

Figure 138. Oblique view of the south and east elevations of the house, looking northwest from yard.

Figure 139. Smokehouse, now used as a garden shed, looking northeast from the backyard.

two to three sistered wood posts support the porch's shed roof, which shelters a screened historic wood one-over-one window. Its projecting gable ell includes a historic three-paneled wood door centered beneath a historic wood attic vent. Missing aluminum cornice and soffit expose the unpainted wood cornice beneath.

The south elevation features two one-over-one vinyl windows with screened storm windows below the hipped roof (Figure 138). The projecting gable ell has a contemporary aluminum screen door over a historic half-light three-paneled wood door beneath the porch and a damaged historic three-over-one wood window. A deteriorating red brick chimney protrudes beneath the hipped roof's ridgeline.

Property owner Bobby Lee Riddle reported that sawn locust and chestnut lumber framed the house. The living room has tile flooring, while the bedrooms are carpeted. The house has a wood heater and cook stove but no fireplace. It lacks a crawlspace and rests on wood posts set directly on the ground. In some areas, the stone foundation—likely added later—supports the structure.

Outbuildings

A garden shed stands in the backyard, facing east on a concrete block foundation (Figures 134 and 139). Bobby Lee Riddle reported he constructed the hemlock-framed structure as a smokehouse in the 1970s. Unpainted, horizontal wood boards clad the exterior. A wood batten door opens on the southwest corner of the west elevation; a second door sits at the northeast corner. The roof has exposed rafter tails and standing seam metal roofing. Grapevines climb the east and south walls.

A wood-framed 1970s chicken coop sits on the east side of the backyard matching the siding materials of the smokehouse (Figures 134 and 140). A wood batten door opens on the west side of the south elevation. The east elevation includes doors and a small window for chickens beneath the standing seam metal roof. Wood poles and wire fencing form a chicken run that extends east onto the adjacent property at 8327 NC 197 South. Grapevines and other vegetation cover the structure.

Landscape Elements

A Y-shaped shared driveway connects the site to NC 197 South. One branch runs east along the southern property line, providing access to this and the neighboring house at 8327 NC 197 South; the other extends south to 8329 NC 197 South (Figures 134 and 141).

The Riddle house is located on a relatively flat area east of the Cane River. Vegetable gardens lie to the north and east of the house (Figures 134 and 142). The front yard has minimal landscaping—grass, shrubs, and flower groupings surround the house. Shrubs line the north and south sides of the yard. A mature ash tree marks the southwest corner of the lot and two mature maple trees stand at the front of the property.

Historic Context

Yancey County records provide a construction date of 1920; however, physical evidence, research, and comparisons with similar house styles in the region suggest the house likely dates to around 1890.

Deed records show the Riddle family has owned the property for at least five generations, beginning with Samuel Mannon "S. M." (1865-1953) and Barbara Aletha "Letha" Riddle (1863-1933). By the 1880s, they owned and farmed land on both sides of the Cane River, selling timber before clearing land—a practice encouraged by the USDA. An 1884 timber rights agreement shows they received one dollar per tree harvested before February 12, 1890 (Book 15, Page 60). The Riddles may have constructed the house after timbering the land east of the Cane River. (Findagrave.com, 2025; Riddle, 2025)

The 1900 Mount Mitchell USGS map and 1935 Tennessee Valley Authority map of the Black Brothers Quadrangle depict a house at the point where the river and roadway converge (Figures 143 and 144).

In the early 1900s, the Riddles began selling land around the Cane River and Turkey Ridge (the mountains to the west), and their son, William Theodore "W. T." or "Thea" Riddle (1886-1980) purchased some of these parcels between 1912 and 1918. Based on family

Figure 140. Chicken Coop, looking north from backyard.

Figure 141. View of the Y-shaped gravel driveway and site, looking east from west side of NC 197 S.

Figure 142. Vegetable gardens and east elevation of the smokehouse, looking west from backyard.

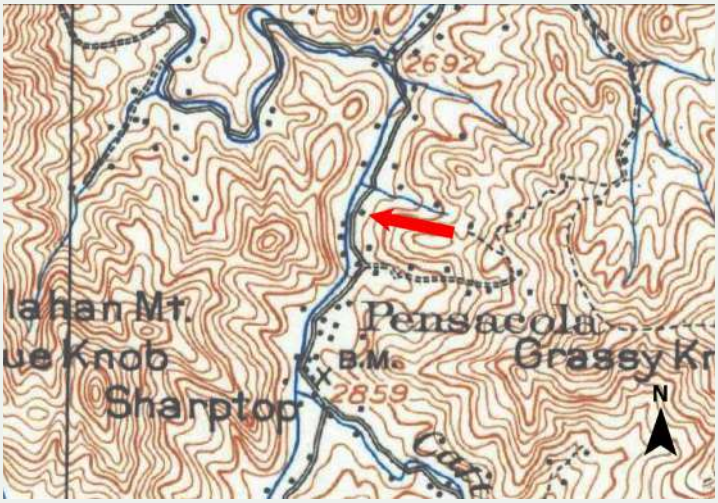


Figure 143. 1900 USGS Map of Mount Mitchell and Tennessee. The red arrow points to the approximate location of the Riddle House. (Wilson, 1900)

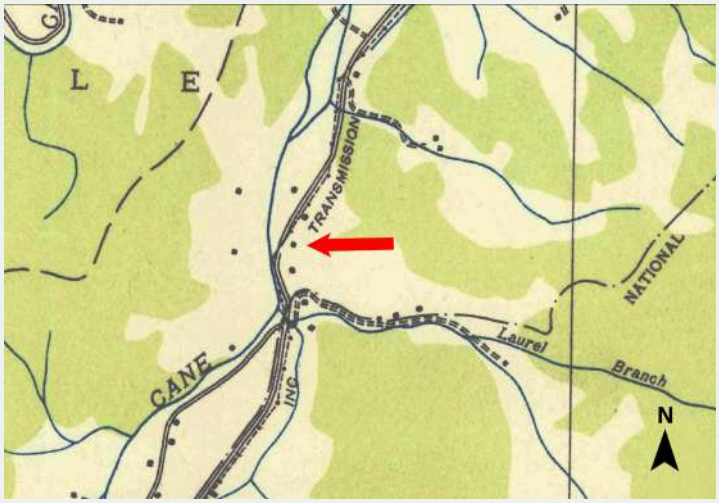


Figure 144. 1935 Tennessee Valley Authority Map of Black Brothers Quadrangle, NC. The red arrow points to the approximate location of the Riddle House. (Pike, 1935(a))

history, the house was among the first in the area to receive phone and electric services in the early twentieth century due to its proximity to the Carolina Spruce Company in Pensacola. (Riddle, 2025)

The family farmed the property for at least three generations, growing tobacco and likely raising livestock. Bobby Lee Riddle recalled a barn once stood at the Y-intersection of the driveway (Figure 136). Family history also mentions a chestnut orchard southeast of the house and chestnut rail fences across the road. The family harvested, sold, ate, and fed the chestnuts to their hogs. (*The Yancey Journal*, 1980; *The Yancey Record*, 1970(a))

In the 1960s, Horace Lee (1912-1980) and Thelma Harris Riddle (1916-2003) added plumbing to the house then sold the property to their son Bobby Ray Riddle and his wife in 1970 (Book 144/Page 111, Book 125/Page 190). Over the next decade, they built a smokehouse and chicken coop, and demolished the barn before 1977, as shown in historic aerial imagery. In the 1980s, they installed vinyl siding and windows on the first floor, followed by a standing seam metal roof, aluminum soffits, and eaves in the 1990s. Between 2016 and 2017, they subdivided the property, creating lots for their sons at 8325, 8237, and 8329 NC Highway 197 South (Figure 134). (Findagrave.com, 2025; *NCDOT Historical Aerial Imagery Index*, 1977(b); Riddle, 2025)

Architectural Context

The hipped roof cottage with projecting gable wings was among several new house forms introduced to Yancey County during the railroad era. This form featured a central square mass with hipped roof with projecting gable bays, arranged in a symmetrical plan around a central hall. Builders enhanced these homes with milled ornamentation reflecting picturesque and romantic cottage-inspired styles. A survey of rural housing stock in Yancey and adjacent counties, along with input from Western HPO staff, identified three comparable examples from the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century. None have been previously evaluated for NRHP eligibility. (Bishir, 1999; Georgia Department of Natural Resources, n.d.)

The one-and-one-half story Metcalfe House (YC0190; 71 Azalea Lane, Burnsville) has a central hipped roof with projecting gables forming the partial-width front porch and ell (Figure 145). (The 1983 survey suggested the porch may be a later addition.) The house retains some historic features, including a central half-light door with sidelights, several wood four-over-one windows, wood clapboard siding, and pressed tin shingles. The Metcalfe House is in deteriorating condition and material alterations such as

the closed red brick foundation and replacement four-over-four vinyl windows on the second floor compromise its integrity. (Humphries, 1985(a))

The circa 1900 David Dellinger House (YC0028; 15 Dove Cove Road, Burnsville) also features a projecting gable above a partial-width front porch (Figure 146). The flared eaves of its gables and projecting conical bay on the facade are noteworthy features of its design though a rear shed-roofed addition detracts from its historic form. Alterations and material modifications including replacement doors and windows, decorative shutters, and foundation materials have eliminated or obscured historic materials.

The 1890 Dr. Peterson House (YC0091; 32 Hortons Creek Road, Burnsville) offers a more ornate two-story variation of the house form (Figure 147). It features a central mass with hipped roof, gable wall dormer, and cutaways corners on the projecting gable ell of its façade. A two-sided wraparound front porch forms a six-sided octagon around the projecting wing. The house retains its historic integrity, preserving many cottage-style details such as scrolled corner brackets, wide frieze boards, turned porch posts and balustrades, and red brick chimneys with elaborate detailing.

Integrity

The Riddle House retains integrity of location and setting. There is no evidence to suggest the house has been moved. Further, the house continues to reflect its historic relationship to the surrounding residential rural and small-scale (family) agricultural character of the Cane River Valley.

The application of replacement materials have compromised the integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. While its historic house form remains apparent, replacement materials including the stone veneer porch skirt, aluminum porch columns and ceiling, vinyl siding and windows, standing seam metal roof, and interior remodel have eliminated or obscured much of the historic workmanship. These changes have likewise diminished the house's overall feeling and association with the turn of the twentieth century cottage-style architectural movement.

Figure 145. South façade of the Metcalfe House (YC0190).

Figure 146. North façade of the David Dellinger House (YC0028).

Figure 147. Southeast façade of the Dr. Peterson House (YC0091).

The loss of agricultural outbuildings and fields have diminished overall integrity of feeling and association with Yancey County's agricultural history. Historic outbuildings have been removed (i.e., barn) and areas that historically may have served as pastures and cultivated fields now function as gardens, lawns, and new residential development. These changes have eroded the property's ability to convey its historic association with Appalachian farming.

National Register Criteria Evaluation

The Riddle House is recommended not eligible under Criterion A for its historic association with agriculture in Yancey County. Historically the property operated as a farm; however, the loss of physical evidence—such as field patterns and agricultural buildings—precludes any meaningful association with broader agricultural trends.

The Riddle House is recommended not eligible under Criterion B, as research did not identify any associations with individuals of recognized significance in local, state, or national history. The Riddle family was one of many in the area that engaged in farming and they did not achieve a level of prominence and significance that would meet the threshold for NRHP eligibility.

The property is also recommended not eligible under Criterion C for its architectural significance. While the overall form of the Riddle House reflects a hipped roof cottage with projecting gable wings, it no longer retains sufficient integrity to serve as a good and representative example of the type. Unlike the Dr. Peterson House (YC0091), material changes to the Riddle House, including replacement window and siding materials, have diminished its historic integrity.

The Riddle House is not recommended eligible under Criterion D for its potential to yield information. For a property to be eligible under Criterion D, a property must meet two requirements: (1) it must have, or have had, information that contributes to our understanding of human history and prehistory, and (2) the information must be considered important. The property is not likely to yield any new information pertaining to the history of building design and technology and is therefore not recommended eligible under Criterion D.

IX. Joe McPeters House (YC0123)

Figure 148. West and south elevations of the Joe McPeters House, looking northeast from the front yard.

Resource Name	Joe McPeters House
HPO Survey Site #	YC0123
Address	150 Laurel Woods Drive, Burnsville
PIN	072800138382000
Date(s) of Construction	Circa 1900
Recommendation	Not eligible

Physical Description

HPOWeb currently identifies this property as the Joe Wilson House (YC0123) based on the 1983 Survey Record. However, research conducted for this project concluded that Joe Wilson is not associated with this property, and the appropriate historical association is with Joe McPeters.

Setting

The Joe McPeters House (YC0123) is located southeast of the intersection of Riverview Road and NC 197 South (Figures 1, 148, and 149). The house is located in the northwest section of the parcel on a terrace approximately 250 feet east of the highway (Figure 150). The driveway roughly parallels NC 197 South and connects to Laurel Woods Drive which intersects the highway about 615 feet south of the house. The parcel contains

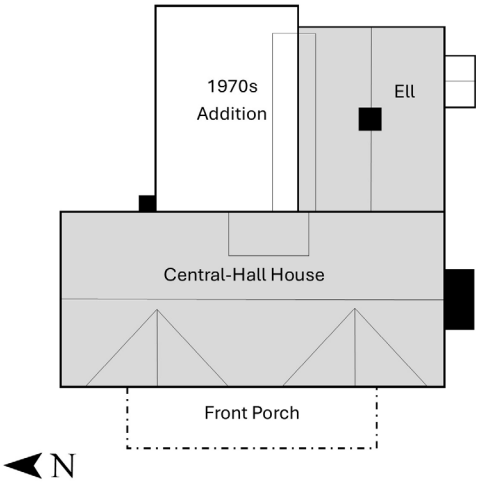


Figure 149. Roof plan of the Joe Wilson House.

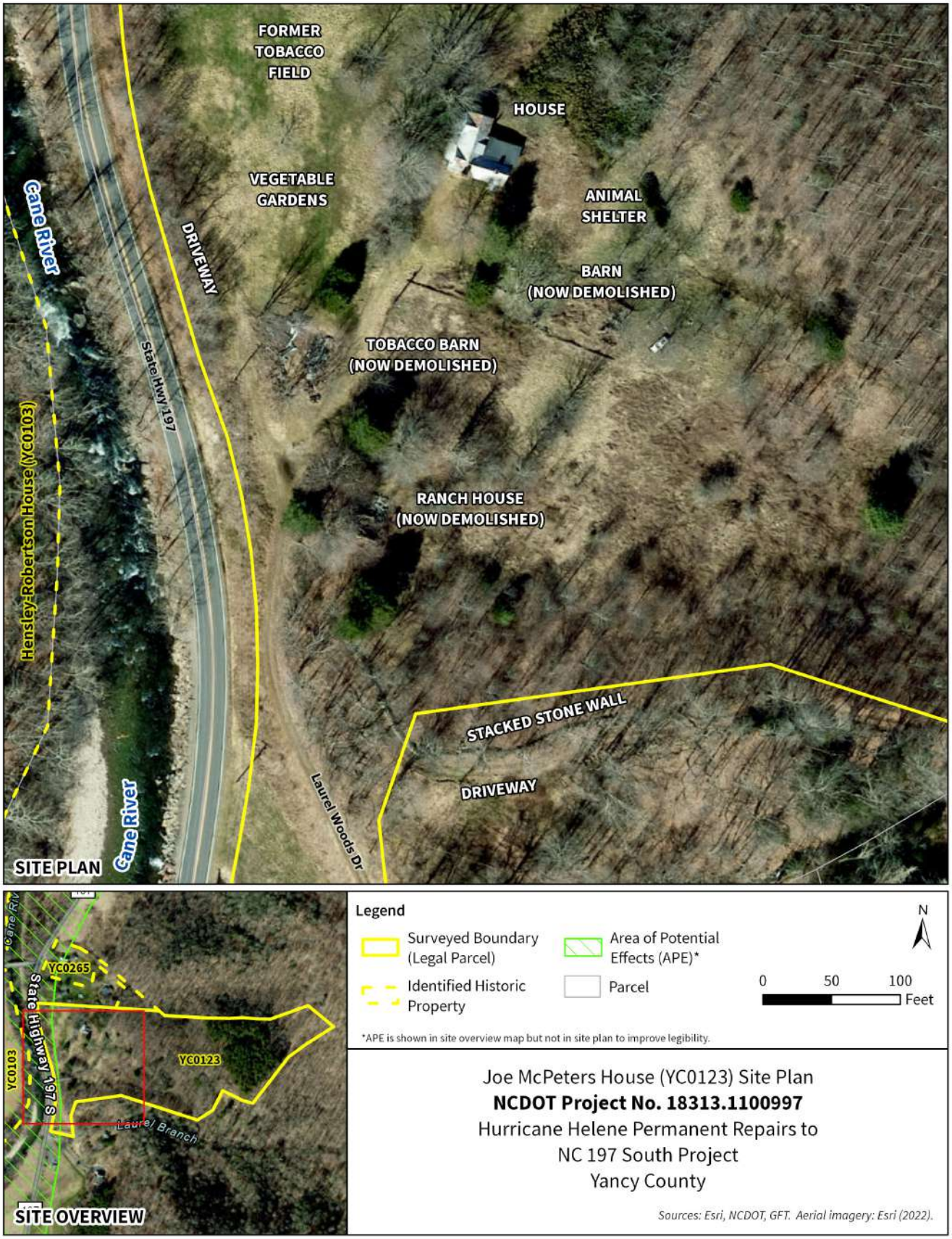


Figure 150. Joe McPeters House Site Plan.

remnant agricultural fields and overgrown pastures. Mature trees border the western and northern property boundaries, and forests surround the eastern and southern property boundaries.

GFT conducted an on-site interview with the property owner, Bryan Blevins, on May 12, 2025, at the time of the property survey. Blevins was staying in a recreational vehicle (RV) on the property. He shared his knowledge of the history of the site and allowed surveyors to enter the Joe McPeters House, though the rear ell was not accessed due to structural issues. The information Blevins provided is referenced throughout this evaluation.

Joe McPeters House, *Circa 1900*

The Joe McPeters House is a one-and-one-half story, side-gable, three-bay frame house with two gable wall dormers on the façade (Figures 149 and 151). The house sits on a rubble stone foundation and has a tapered stacked stone end chimney on the south elevation. A historic kitchen ell and 1970s shed-roof addition extend from the rear (east) elevation. Wood composite board and shingle siding clad the house. There are wood windows covered by aluminum storm windows and doors of varying styles throughout. Standing seam metal covers the roof of the historic house and later additions.

Figure 151. West façade of the house, looking northeast in the front yard.

The elongated central hall's west-facing façade has a partial width front porch (Figure 151). Stone veneer covers the porch skirt, and stone piers with concrete caps flank concrete steps that lead to the central entrance. Vinyl fluted columns on a concrete slab floor support its shed roof. The symmetrical façade includes two-over-two double-hung windows just outside of the porch, and an aluminum screen door protects a centered half-light, paneled wood door. Storm windows are present on all but the window to the south of the door.

Figure 152. South elevation of the house, looking north from yard.

The south elevation reflects the historic form of a central hall with one-story rear ell (Figure 152). This elevation has three-over-one wood windows covered with aluminum storm windows on the main level. The side-gable has two square windows, one now boarded over, on either side of the tapered stacked stone end chimney. An interior stuccoed chimney extends from the midpoint of the ell's roof ridge and is associated with the interior kitchen space. A gabled overhang protects a side entrance with a contemporary door and aluminum screen door on the eastern half of the ell.

The east elevation sits at the toe of the slope and was largely inaccessible due to the grade and vegetation (Figure 153). The ell's gable contains a single window. A 1970s shed roof addition extends from the ell across the back of the central hall form. The flatter shed roof of the addition was built up to meet the steep gable of the ell. The shed

Figure 153. East elevation of the house, looking west from hillside.

Figure 154. View of the 1970s addition (at left) and rear elevation of the central hall house, looking west from the backyard.

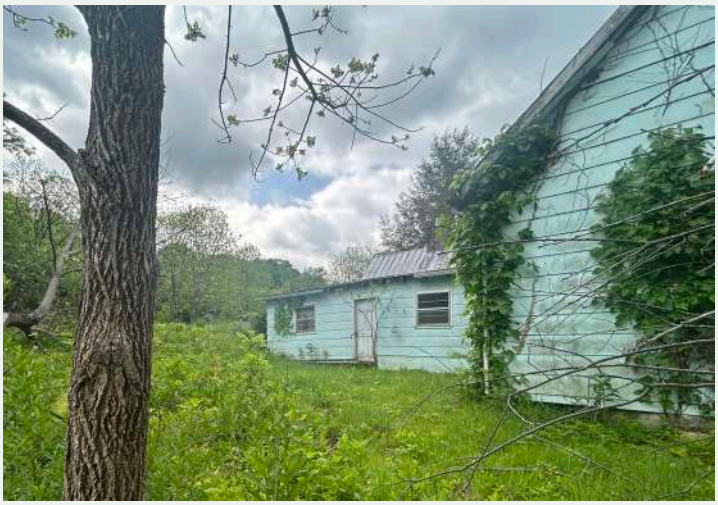


Figure 155. North elevation of the house, looking southeast from the side yard.

Figure 156. Corner where the 1970s addition meets the historic house, looking southwest.

extension contains a single four-light wood window with aluminum storm window (Figure 154). A shed roof dormer protrudes from the center of the central hall's roof and contains two sliding vinyl windows. A half-light paneled wood door and concrete stoop enters the central hall at the north end of this elevation (Figure 154).

The north elevation of the addition rests on stone piers and includes single-hung four-light wood windows and an aluminum door (Figure 155). A concrete block chimney sits in the intersection of this addition and the central hall (Figure 156). A single four-light wood window with aluminum storm window is centered on the first floor under the gable end. Stone retaining walls flank stone stairs leading to a cellar beneath the northwest corner of the historic house (Figure 157).

Inside, historic paneled wood doors open to rooms on either side of the central hall and storage space under the open, U-shaped staircase. The stairs, with wood posts and plain balustrade, fill the back wall of the hall partially covering a window opening that is now completely obscured by the 1970s addition, suggesting the staircase in this configuration was a later addition to the house (Figure 158). The central hall features wood shiplap walls and simple wood trim, and beadboard covers the staircase. Blevins' uncles

Figure 157. Cellar entrance beneath the northwest corner of the house.

Figure 158. Stairs in the central hall, first floor, looking east.

Figure 159. Blevins recalled that his uncles built this stone veneer chimney in the family room, likely in the 1970s-1980s.

Figure 160. Shed dormer above staircase, looking east from the second floor central hall.

built a stone veneer fireplace with wood mantle in the family room to the south of the hall (Figure 159) at about the same time as other additions to the house, circa 1970s-1980s. A wood paneled door on the east side of the family room leads to the rear ell and the 1970s addition. This addition contains the kitchen, bathroom, and a bedroom. GFT did not access this section of the house as the floor structure has collapsed.

The upstairs plan matches the floor below with a central hall and two bedrooms. The east-facing dormer window over the stair landing and windows in the gable wall dormers light the upstairs rooms (Figures 160 and 161). Storage is built into the knee walls of the second-floor space.

Figure 161. Bedroom, second floor, looking south from central hall.

Figure 162. West elevation of the animal shelter, looking east from the hillside.

Figure 163. Collapsed barn, looking northwest from the hillside. Note the south elevation of the animal shelter in the background (right).

Outbuildings

A side-gable wood frame animal shelter is located east and uphill of the house (Figures 150 and 162). The structure rests on stone piers. It has vertical wood board siding and an opening in the corner of the building, suggesting its prior use as a chicken coop. A collapsed barn or animal shelter is located southwest of this outbuilding (Figure 163).

Landscape Elements

A series of driveways cover the western portion of the site around the historic farmhouse (Figure 150). Laurel Woods Drive is a public road that intersects NC 197 South approximately 615 feet south of the property and generally parallels the highway. A gravel and dirt two-track driveway lined with dry laid stone walls intersects Laurel Woods Drive south of the property and continues uphill to the east, roughly following the southern property line (Figures 150, 164, and 165). Laurel Woods Drive terminates in a Y-intersection about 240 feet southwest of the historic house where a gravel parking pad with a metal storage container is located (Figure 166). The remnants of Blevins' grandparents' ranch house are directly east of this intersection. An overgrown dirt driveway continues northwest from the Y-intersection to NC 197 South at the northwest corner of the property. The house number "150" appears on the south elevation of the house (Figure 152), demonstrating that the historic approach to the house was from the south.

Figure 164. Stacked stone walls lining the southeast portion of the site, looking uphill to the east along the driveway.

Figure 165. View to the south from Laurel Branch Drive.

Figure 166. View of the property looking north from the driveway. The path to the left (west) leads downhill to NC 197 South, and the path to the right (east) terminates near the house.

Figure 167. Lawn and pastures to the south of the house, looking northeast from side yard.

The landscape reflects the site's agricultural history with remnant pastures and agricultural fields defined by barbed and electric wire fencing on wood posts. Several mature trees are located near the house (Figure 167) and grassy pastures extend toward the animal shelter and further uphill to the east (Figure 168). Blevins remembered a tobacco field located to the west of the house.

Historic Context

Yancey County records provide a construction date of 1866; however, physical evidence, research, and comparisons with similar house styles in the region suggest the house likely dates to around 1900.

The 1900 Mount Mitchell USGS map (Figure 169) shows the Joe McPeters House north of a Y-intersection: the north-south roadway that parallels the Cane River and an unpaved roadway leading uphill along Laurel Branch (stream not depicted). This configuration remains evident in the landscape. The 1935 Tennessee Valley Authority map of the Black Brothers Quadrangle (Figure 170) shows the house and a roadway configuration more closely reflecting the current alignment of NC 197 South and Laurel Branch Drive.

Blevins attributed the house to his great-grandfather, "Little Joe" McPeters (1889-1982).

Figure 168. Meadow behind the house, looking east from the side yard.

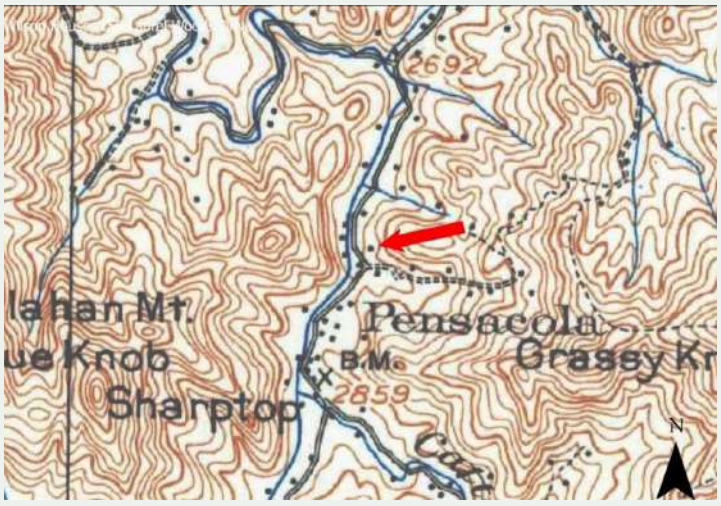


Figure 169. 1900 USGS Map of Tennessee-Mount Mitchell Quadrangle. The red arrow points to the approximate location of the Joe McPeters House. (Wilson, 1900)

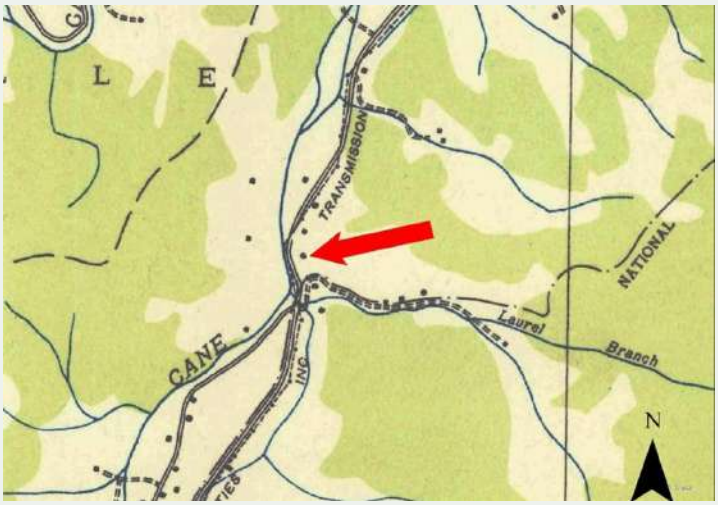


Figure 170. 1935 Tennessee Valley Authority Map of Black Brothers Quadrangle, NC. The red arrow points to the approximate location of the Joe McPeters House. (Pike,1935(a))

By 1935, McPeters' son, Carmel (1917-1992), and his wife Clara (1918-2008) farmed the property. They sold the property to Carmel's sister, Pansy L. (1928-2007) and her husband Charles Hensley (1927-2013) in 1964 (Book 133, Page 1). (Findagrave.com, 2025; USCB, 1940, 1950)

Blevins recalled that his grandparents, Pansy and Charles Hensley, also farmed the property. They raised chickens, milk cows, hogs, and a mule. They also had vegetable gardens, as seen in the 2005 aerial image from Yancey County. Blevins remembered a tobacco field between the house and NC 197 South, north of the now-demolished tobacco barn. (Blevins, 2025)

Blevins also remembered his grandparents constructing the shed addition to the rear ell in the 1970s, which included an interior bathroom that replaced the outhouse (not extant). His uncles built a new stone ranch house (not extant) on the southwest corner of the property (Figure 152) and added the stone end-chimney on the historic house in the 1970s, as well. The Hensleys stayed in the ranch house during the winter months because it was better insulated than the historic house they occupied in the summer.

Blevins and his cousin James Harris are the current owners of their grandparents' property (Consolidated Real Property (CRP) 755/532 and Book 743, Page 143). Per Yancey County aerial images, they removed many of the property's deteriorating historic features, including the stone ranch house and tobacco barn, between 2018 and 2022. A metal storage unit now sits atop the barn's gravel foundation.

Architectural Context

The one-and-one-half story, cottage-style form became increasingly popular in Western North Carolina in the decades around 1900, often featuring front gable wall dormers providing architectural intrigue to the half- and second stories. Milled and prefabricated architectural details like scrolled brackets, moldings, medallions, and textured wall surfaces added style to otherwise simple country homes. Many examples followed a central-hall plan. A survey of rural housing stock in Yancey and neighboring counties identified three late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century farms comparable in design to the Joe McPeters House. (Bishir, 1999)

The now demolished Garland-Whitson House (ML0143; Beans Creek Road, Bakersville) was determined eligible for the NRHP under Criterion C as a representative example of the American cottage house style popular in the early twentieth century. The one-and-one-half story, central hall plan with a one-story kitchen ell featured two gable wall dormers on the façade with decorative diagonal wood siding that converged at a central point behind an applied medallion (Figure 171). Other Queen Anne-inspired architectural ornamentation included pressed tin roof shingles, decorative brackets, scrolled wood ornaments, and chamfered wood porch posts. (Ross, 2023)

The NRHP-eligible Horton Laughrun Farm (YC0053; 34 Gilders Creek Road, Burnsville) and the Bradley House (aka J.D. Bradshaw House, ML0083; 174 Relief Road Extension, Green Mountain) likewise utilize front gable dormers to light their second stories (Figures 172 and 173). Both homes retain a notable level of architectural ornamentation, including plain raking boards in the gable ends, a wide frieze band that divides the dormer windows, decorative moldings, and historic double-hung wood windows. The Horton-Laughrun Farm is eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion C for its architectural

Figure 171. Southwest and southeast elevations of the now demolished Garland-Whitson House (ML0143; Ross, 2023).

Figure 172. North facade of the Horton-McLaughrun House (YC0053).

Figure 173. West façade of the Bradley House (ML0083).

significance and retains several historic features including chamfered wood porch posts, scrolled brackets, and wood fish scale shingles in its gabled dormers. The Bradley House, a contributing property to the Relief Historic District (ML00005), likewise retains architectural features such as turned wood porch posts, scrolled brackets, and a spindle balustrade. (Griffith, 2013)

Historic Integrity

The Joe McPeters House retains integrity of location and setting. There is no evidence to suggest the house has been moved. Further, the house continues to reflect its historic relationship with the surrounding residential rural and small-scale (family) agricultural character of the Cane River Valley.

The application of additions, replacement materials, and deterioration have compromised the integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. While the historic central hall plan and rear ell remain apparent, the addition of the shed-roof extension on the north elevation has altered the historic house form. Alterations and material replacements including the standing seam metal roof, aluminum siding, vinyl porch materials, replacement doors and windows, and evidence of interior remodels have eliminated or obscured much of the historic workmanship. These changes have diminished the house's overall feeling and association as a reflection of the cottage-style architectural movement.

The site's deteriorated condition, loss of agricultural outbuildings, and overgrown fields have diminished overall integrity of feeling and association with Yancey County's agricultural history. Historic outbuildings have been removed (i.e., tobacco barn) and fallen into disrepair, and areas that historically served as pastures and cultivated fields are overgrown and no longer maintained. These changes have eroded the property's ability to convey its historic association with Appalachian farming.

National Register Criteria Evaluation

The Joe McPeters House is recommended not eligible under Criterion A for its historic association with agriculture in Yancey County.

Historically the property operated as a farm; however, the loss of physical evidence—such as field patterns and agricultural buildings—precludes any meaningful association with broader agricultural trends.

The Joe McPeters House is recommended not eligible under Criterion B, as research did not identify any associations with individuals of recognized significance in local, state, or national history. The McPeters and Hensley families were among many in the area that engaged in farming, and Joe McPeters and his descendants did not achieve a level of prominence and significance that would meet the threshold for NRHP eligibility.

The property is also recommended not eligible under Criterion C for its architectural significance. While the overall form of the Joe McPeters House reflects a common early twentieth century cottage-style farmhouse, it no longer retains sufficient integrity to serve as a good and representative example of the type. Unlike the NRHP eligible Horton-Laughrun Farmhouse (YC0053) and Bradley House (ML0083), material changes to the Joe McPeters House, including replacement door and window materials and upgrades to the interior, have significantly altered its association with this movement.

The Joe McPeters House is not recommended eligible under Criterion D for its potential to yield information. For a property to be eligible under Criterion D, a property must meet two requirements: (1) it must have, or have had, information that contributes to our understanding of human history and prehistory, and (2) the information must be considered important. The property is not likely to yield any new information pertaining to the history of building design and technology and is therefore not recommended eligible under Criterion D.

X. Hensley-Robertson House (YC0103)

Figure 174. East facade of the Hensley-Robertson House, looking west from the front yard.

Resource Name	Hensley-Robertson House
HPO Survey Site #	YC0103
Address	78 Riverview Road, Burnsville
PIN	072800032946000
Date(s) of Construction	circa 1900
Recommendation	Not eligible

Physical Description

HPOWeb currently identifies this property as the Pearson Riddle House (YC0103) based on the 1983 Survey Record. Pearson Riddle (1897-1987) lived in a house at 86 Pearson Road in Pensacola and, based on research completed for this project, has no documented association with the property at 78 Riverview Road, i.e., the Hensley-Robertson property.

Setting

The Hensley-Robertson House (YC0103) sits at the intersection of Riverview Road and Morning View Road west of the Cane River (Figures 1, 174, and 175). Riverview Road crosses the Cane River and intersects NC 197 South approximately 350 feet east of the property.

The legal parcel contains almost 100 acres of land on both sides of Morning View Drive and Riverview Road (Figure 176). The property

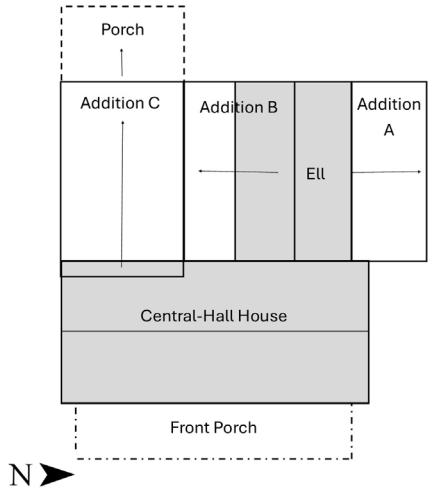


Figure 175. Roof Plan for the Hensley-Robertson House.

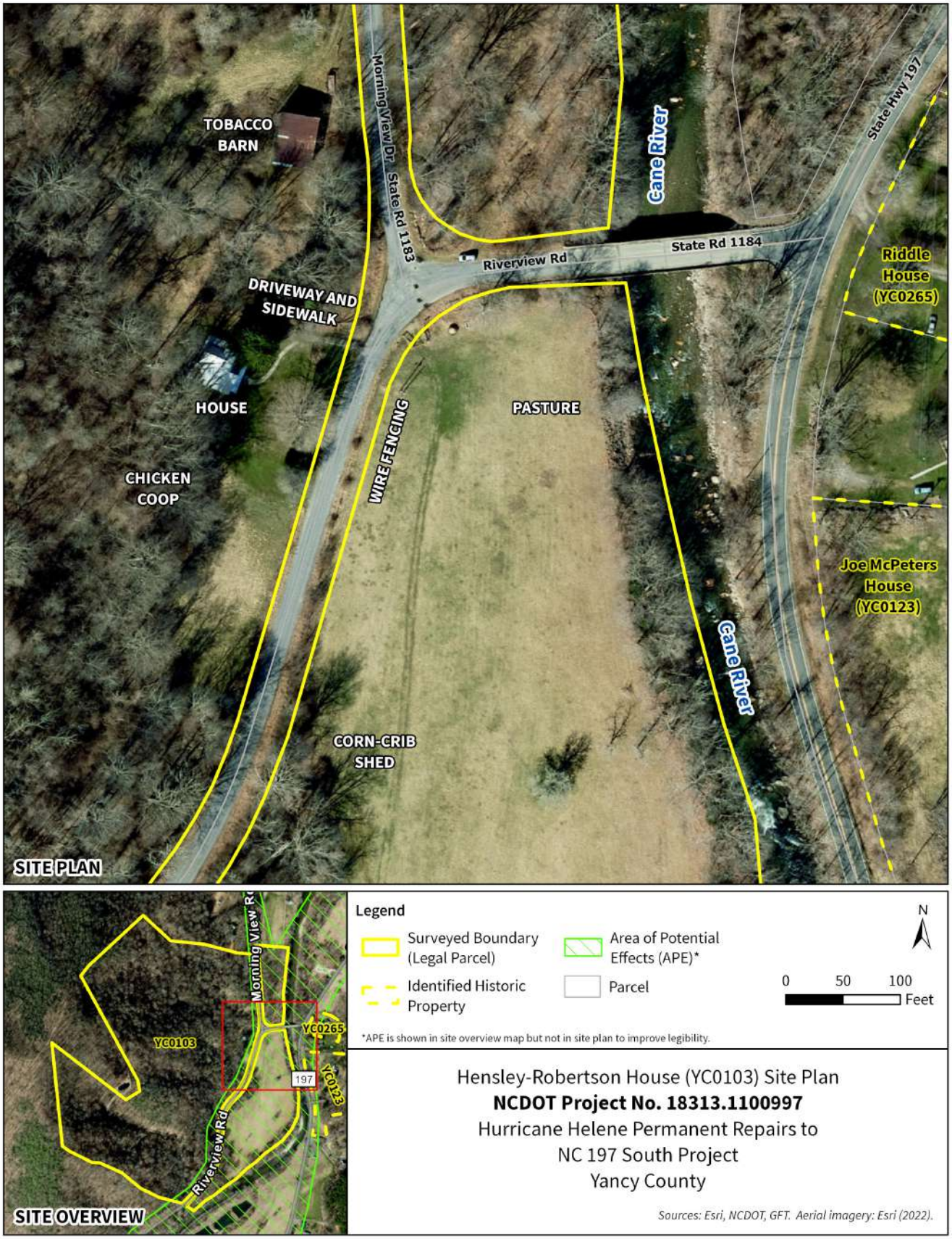


Figure 176. Hensely-Roberston Site Plan.

extends from the top of Turkey Ridge to the west to the Cane River to the east. Riverview Road bisects the site and separates the house and barn from the pastures in the river floodplain. The house and barn are located on a relatively flat portion of the site above the Cane River. Dense vegetation covers the hillside behind these buildings.

The Hensley-Robertson House is located in the northeast section of the parcel, setback approximately 100 feet west of Riverview Road (Figure 176). A dirt driveway provides access on the north side of the house, just south of the Y-intersection formed by Riverview Road and Morning View Drive. The front yard around the house was minimally landscaped with grass and groupings of shrubs and flower plantings around split rail and wire fences. A wood barn sits approximately 150 feet northeast of the house and approximately 40 feet west of Morning View Road.

GFT did not receive a response to the survey notification letter and residents were not on-site at the time of the site visit. During fieldwork, GFT documented the exterior of the resource through written notes and photographs. Interior access was not available. GFT spoke with neighbor Bobby Lee Riddle on July 22, 2025, and local historian Elaine Boone on September 2, 2025, about the history of this site. The information they provided is referenced throughout this evaluation.

Figure 177. North elevation of the house, looking south from yard. The rear ell has been covered by Addition A, which projects to the north.

Hensley-Robertson House, *Circa 1900*

The Hensley-Robertson House is a one-and-one-half story, single-pile, central hall house with rear additions. The house has a central projecting gable above the partial width front porch, creating its Triple-A form (Figures 174 and 175). Later additions "A", "B", and "C" are attached to the historic rear ell (refer Figure 175). Weatherboard clads the exterior walls of the central hall and ell's gable and wavy shingle asbestos siding covers the later additions. Vinyl one-over-one windows of varying sizes are used throughout. Contemporary standing seam metal roofing covers the house and porch roofs.

The east façade is three bays wide, with a partial width front porch and a projecting center gabled wall dormer. Tiered stacked stone walls with concrete caps flank seven concrete steps leading to the porch. The shed-roof porch shelters a replacement wood paneled entry door covered by a contemporary aluminum screen door flanked by one-over-one windows (Figure 174). The porch features a poured concrete floor, stone veneer foundation, and chamfered wood posts with scrolled brackets. The dormer showcases decorative bargeboard terminating at a semi-sunburst at the peak of the gable and wood siding forms a chevron pattern above sawtooth molding.

The north elevation reflects the historic central hall with rear ell form (Figure 177). This section of the house sits on a rubble stone foundation, and vinyl windows are centered on the first and second stories of the side gable. Addition A rests on a poured concrete foundation and matches the width of the ell but sits proud of the gable (Figure 177). A pair of one-over-one windows are located to the east of a red brick external chimney, which is partially covered by stucco. Addition A has a shallow shed-roof covered in standing seam metal.

The west elevation is an amalgamation of several additions (Figures 175 and 178). The historic ell and the additions appear to have a poured concrete foundation. Addition A, described above, contains a four-panel door beneath a shed roof awning. A pair of one-over-one vinyl windows are centered on

Figure 178. West elevation of the house, looking southwest from hillside. The gable of the rear ell is flanked additions A and B. Note the adjustment to the gable roof pitch on the right (south) slope of the ell and narrow weatherboard siding above Addition B's window (right).

Figure 179. Oblique view of the south elevation and east facade of the house, looking northwest from yard.

the wall of the ell. The slope of the ell's gable changes to cover Addition B, which may have been an enclosure of the ell's historic porch, and features narrow weatherboard siding above a single-hung vinyl window (Figure 178). Addition C has a shed roof that slopes to the west and one vinyl window. A second wood-framed shed roof supported by square wood posts attaches to the exposed rafter tails of Addition C and creates a covered porch over a partial concrete patio.

On the south elevation, the historic house and Addition C have a concrete block foundation that features a single two-light steel hopper window (Figure 179). Wood stairs flanked by concrete block retaining walls lead to the basement entrance beneath the side gable. A historic three-light, three-panel wood door sits at the bottom of these steps, slightly off-centered from the vinyl windows above (Figure 180). Stacked one-over-one vinyl windows are located on the north elevation of the central hall's side gable. Addition C extends to the west, containing an external red brick chimney covered in stucco and two vinyl windows (Figures 179 and 181).

Figure 180. View of the basement entrance on the south elevation of the historic house, looking north from yard.

GFT did not access the interior; however, the 1983 survey notes that the foyer contains a central hallway with doors opening to rooms on either side and a rear staircase. It states, "The interior of the house has been extensively remodeled. However, the simple post and lintel mantel remains intact" (Presnell, 1983(e)).

Outbuildings

A circa 1950s wood frame, shed-roofed tobacco barn is located north and uphill of the house (Figure 176). The barn rests on a concrete block foundation, and horizontal boards of varying sizes clad the exterior. The south elevation has a square opening at the center of the wall, just beneath the roof eave, and a sliding barn door of vertical wood on its western half (Figure 182). The north elevation mirrors the south elevation's openings. The east side has no openings, and the west side was not accessible due to a locked gate. The style and design of the tobacco barn is simple, utilitarian, and common throughout the county.

An abandoned chicken coop, likely from the 1950s, is covered by vegetation and located directly south of the house (Figures 176 and 183). The building has a wood framed door with chicken wire and a chicken run to the right (north) of the door. The shed roof, clad in standing seam metal like the house, appears to have collapsed and now rests on its side on the ground directly south of the building.

A corn crib-shed structure is located about 350 feet southeast of the house and on the east side of Riverview Road (Figures 176 and 184) and may date to the 1940s. Collapsed wood piers support the raised floor of the two-bay wide, front-gable structure. The east bay has wood slats covered with wire screening on the interior, indicative

Figure 181. View of Addition C and covered patio on the south elevation, looking north from yard.

Figure 182. South elevation of the tobacco barn, looking north from yard.

Figure 183. Oblique view of the north and east elevations of the chicken coop, looking southwest from yard. Note the standing seam metal roof structure laying to the side of the chicken coop.

Figure 184. North elevation of the corncrib-shed structure, looking southwest from the pasture.

Figure 185. View of Riverview Road, looking south from the driveway. The pastures along the river are located to the left of the road; the front yard of the house is to the right.

Figure 186. View of the driveway, looking west from the front yard.

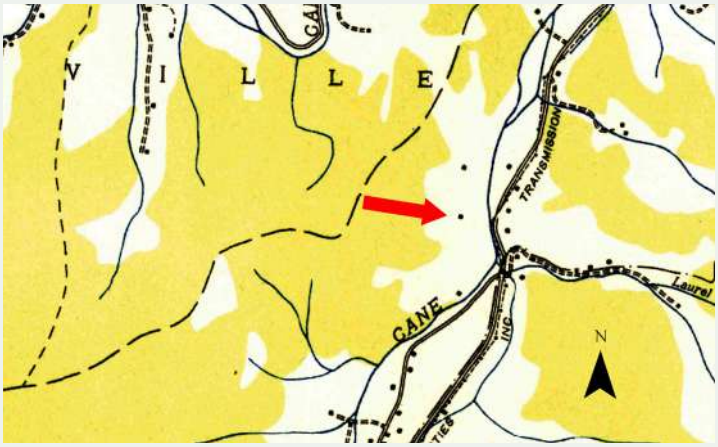


Figure 187. 1935 Tennessee Valley Authority Map of Black Brothers Quadrangle, NC. The red arrow points to the approximate location of the Hensley-Robertson House. (Pike, 1935(a))

of a corn crib. The west bay is open and may have been used to either house animals or farm equipment.

Landscape Elements

Evidence of the site's past agricultural use is present in the form of the above-described outbuildings. Post and barbed-wire and electrical fencing delineates animal pastures to the west and north of the barn, around the corncrib-shed outbuilding, and in the area between the road and the chicken coop (Figures 176 and 185). Split rail fences line portions the road and a single apple tree to the southeast of the house and adjacent to the road appear to correlate with a former orchard observed in historic aerial imagery.

A short dirt driveway provides access to the site just south of the Morning View Drive and Riverview Road intersection and ends before reaching the house (Figure 186). The driveway was severely damaged by Hurricane Helene. A section of curved concrete sidewalk extends southwest from the driveway to the front porch steps. Historically, a driveway connected the house to the barn to the north, but flooding from the hurricane washed out this section. A gravel driveway links the barn's north side to Morning View Drive. Pre-Helene aerial imagery shows that agricultural roads once connected the fields and pastures between Riverview Road and the Cane River, but the storm washed out these roads and surrounding pastures.

Historic Context

Yancey County records provide a construction date of 1932; however, physical evidence, research, and comparisons with similar house styles in the region suggest the house likely dates to around 1900.

A house first appears at this location on the 1935 Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) map of the Black Brothers Quadrangle (Figure 187), but it is absent from the 1946 North Carolina Mt. Mitchell Quadrangle Map (Figure 188). The house and barn are visible in the 1977 NCDOT Historical Aerial Imagery (NCDOT, 1977(c)). M. Presnell's 1983 survey noted that the house had "been moved," though no further details are provided. Interviews with nearby property

owners did not mention this house's relocation.

The original builders of the house remain unknown but neighbor Bobby Lee Riddle believes his ancestor, Samuel Riddle (1865-1953), owned and farmed the land on this side of the Cane River. Local historian Elaine Boone associates the house with Rachel Catherine "Kate" Robertson (1860-1920), daughter of Big Tom Wilson. (Boone, 2025; Findagrave.com, 2025; Riddle, 2025)

In the early twentieth century, Elbert Mack (E.M.) Hensley (1874–1949) and his wife Nancy Ray Hensley (1880–1960) began acquiring land in Burnsville and Pensacola Townships. They lived on this property by 1935 and deeded it to their daughter Lillie (1900–1978) the same year (Book 69, Page 460); Lillie was married to Jesse Robertson (1899-1981), son of Kate Robertson. The Robertson family has owned the land for three generations, with sons Ray (1925-2003) and Clinton (1919–2011) farming and expanding the property by purchasing adjacent tracts in 1980 and 1993. Clinton's children own the property today (Book 746, Page 566). (Findagrave.com, 2025; USCB, 1940, 1950)

Architectural Context

North Carolina Triple-As, such as the Hensley-Robertson House, were among the earliest frame house styles in the region, distinguished by a central projecting gable dormer on a side-gable house form and central-hall plan. Technological advances in woodworking and improved transportation at the turn of the twentieth century made mass-produced architectural ornamentation widely available and affordable. As a result, builders added picturesque and romantic details that came to define the cottage-style aesthetic popular during the railroad era. A survey of rural housing stock in Yancey and neighboring counties confirmed the widespread use of the North Carolina Triple-A central hall house form and identified three similar examples to the Hensley-Roberston House. (Bishir, 1999)

The John G. and Nannie H. Barrett Farm (BN2484; aka Ox-Ford Farm; 75 Ox Creek Road, Weaverville) was determined eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A for its agricultural

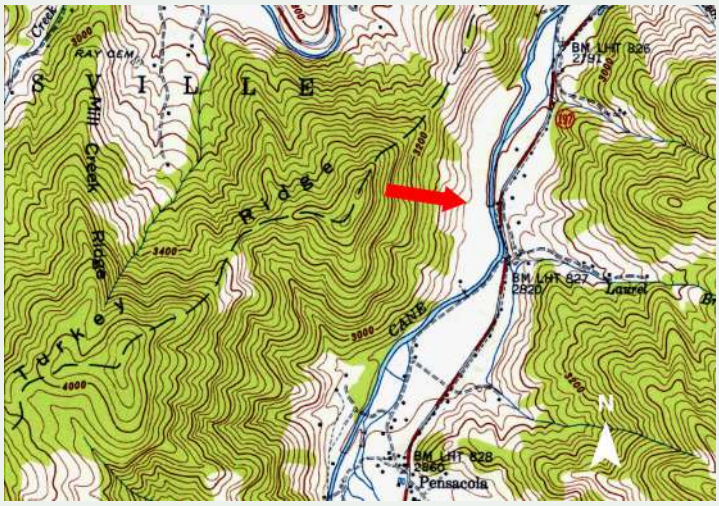


Figure 188. 1946 Tennessee Valley Authority Map of the Mt. Mitchell Quadrangle, NC. The red arrow points to the approximate location of the Hensley-Robertson House. Note that the house is not included in this map. (Tennessee Valley Authority, 1946)

Figure 189. Oblique view of the east façade and south elevation of the Barrett House (BN2484).

Figure 190. Oblique view of the north and west elevations of the barn, circa 2012. (Phillips, 2012).

Figure 191. Southeast façade of the Henry Holcome House (YC0083).

Figure 192. South façade of the Horton Maney House (YC0082).

Figure 193. Shed to the southwest of the Henry Holcome House (YC0083).

significance (Figures 189 and 190). As previously noted, the circa 1895 farmhouse, along with its outbuildings, pastures, and idle land, comprises one of the most intact Appalachian farmsteads of its era in the region. The Barrett Farmhouse is a one-and-one-half story, central hall Triple-A house featuring a rear ell, a projecting front gable wall dormer, and a partial-width hipped roof porch. Its restrained ornamentation includes plain posts and balustrade, weatherboard siding, and plain cornices. The 54-acre farm retains a high degree of historic integrity, reflecting farming practices from the first part of the twentieth century. (Keber, 1978; Phillips, 2012)

Although Triple-A farmhouses are common in Yancey County, none have been evaluated for NRHP eligibility. Two examples include the Henry Holcome (YC0083) and Horton Maney (YC0082) Houses (1270 Hortons Creek Road, Burnsville) (Figures 191 and 192). Built in 1899, both houses exhibit noteworthy architectural ornamentation, including historic broken triangle window hoods, square wood porch posts with decorative brackets, ornate wood balustrades, and pressed tin roofing. The Maney House is distinguished by its projecting gable that forms a portico above the entrance. Both houses have later rear and side additions and share a 37-acre site that includes several outbuildings reflecting their agricultural history, such as a bank barn, pole barns, sheds (Figure 193) and a wood-sided garage.

Integrity

The Hensley-Robertson House retains integrity of location and setting. The 1983 survey notes that the Hensley-Robertson House was moved; however, subsequent research and interviews with neighbors did not corroborate this claim. The house and its remaining farm structures reflect their historic relationship with each other, the roadway, and the surrounding pastures and forests.

The application of additions and replacement materials have compromised the integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. Additions A, B, and C obscure the rear ell and alter the historic house form. Alterations and material replacements including the standing seam metal

roof, replacement doors and windows, concrete and stone veneer porch materials, and reports of interior remodels have diminished integrity of workmanship. Further, these changes have diminished the house's overall feeling and association as a reflection of the cottage-style architectural movement.

The site's deteriorated condition, loss of agricultural outbuildings, and overgrown fields have diminished overall integrity of feeling and association with Yancey County's agricultural history. Historic outbuildings have fallen into disrepair (i.e., chicken coop and corncrib-shed) and areas that historically served as pastures and cultivated fields are overgrown and no longer maintained. These changes have eroded the property's ability to convey its historic association with Appalachian farming.

National Register Criteria Evaluation

The Hensley-Robertson House is recommended not eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A for its historic association with agriculture in Yancey County. Historically the property operated as a farm; however, the deteriorated condition of the remaining outbuildings and discontinued agricultural use preclude any meaningful association with broader agricultural trends. Other farms from the same period, such as the Barrett (Ox-Ford) Farm (BN2484), retain higher levels of integrity and better represent the region's agricultural history.

The Hensley-Robertson House is recommended not eligible under Criterion B, as research did not identify any associations with individuals of recognized significance in local, state, or national history. The Hensley and Robertson families were among many in the area that engaged in farming and did not achieve a level of prominence and significance that would meet the threshold for NRHP eligibility.

The property is also recommended not eligible under Criterion C for its architectural significance. The Triple-A form is well-represented in Yancey County and across North Carolina. Though a simple expression of the form, the NRHP-listed Barrett (Ox-Ford) Farm and the Henry Holcome house retain a high degree of integrity and period architectural ornamentation. Material and design changes to the Hensley-Robertson House including rear additions and interior remodels have altered the house form and diminished its integrity. Thus, the house no longer retains sufficient integrity to serve as a good and representative example of this type.

The Hensley-Robertson House is not recommended eligible under Criterion D for its potential to yield information. For a property to be eligible under Criterion D, a property must meet two requirements: (1) it must have, or have had, information that contributes to our understanding of human history and prehistory, and (2) the information must be considered important. The property is not likely to yield any new information pertaining to the history of building design and technology and is therefore not recommended eligible under Criterion D.

XI. Laurel Branch Baptist Church (YC0077)

Figure 194. Oblique view of the south and east façades of the Laurel Branch Baptist Church, looking northwest from the intersection of Pensacola School Road and NC 197 South.

Resource Name	Laurel Branch Baptist Church
HPO Survey Site #	YC0077
Address	12 Pensacola School Road
PIN	071700998901000, 071800908280000
Date(s) of Construction	Circa 1894
Recommendation	Not eligible

Physical Description

Setting

The Laurel Branch Baptist Church stands at the northwest corner of NC 197 South and Pensacola School Road in the rural community of Pensacola (Figures 1, 194, and 195). The historic church is located in the southern corner of a roughly two-acre, triangular parcel about 28 feet west of NC 197 South and 55 feet north of Pensacola School Road (Figure 196). Cattail Creek Road intersects NC 197 South/Pensacola School Road approximately 80 feet southeast of the church. Residential development, including an abandoned mobile home park, surrounds the property on the west, south, and east.

The unincorporated community of Pensacola occupies a relatively wide, flat stretch of river valley surrounding the confluence of

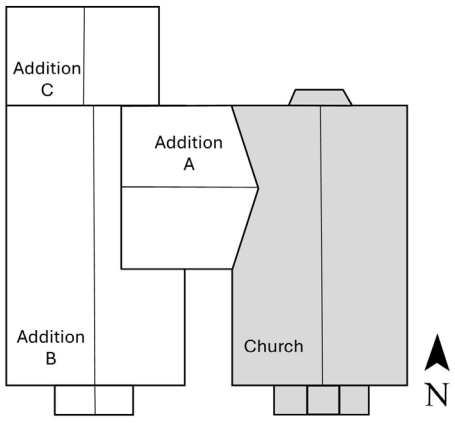


Figure 195. Roof plan of Laurel Branch Baptist Church.

Figure 196. Laurel Branch Baptist Church Site Plan.

Figure 197. Historic wood siding hides beneath contemporary vinyl siding on the south facade.

Figure 198. South façade of the church and Additions A and B to the west, looking north from the gravel parking area.

Figure 199. Oblique view of the south facade and west elevation of church, looking northeast from the front yard. Addition A covers the northern two bays of the church on this side.

Cattail Creek and the Cane River which is about 1,000 feet southwest of the historic church. A gravel driveway from Pensacola School Road accesses the site with a sidewalk leading to the church entrance. An open picnic pavilion sits behind the church to the north. Hurricane Helene scattered debris, gravel, and sand across the lot, though patches of grass and vegetation remain around the base of the building.

GFT conducted an on-site interview with church volunteers on June 24, 2025, at the time of the property survey. They shared their knowledge of the history of the site and allowed surveyors to enter the building. Information provided by church members is referenced throughout this evaluation.

Laurel Branch Baptist Church, *Circa 1894*

Laurel Branch Baptist Church is a one-and-one-half story, gable-front wood-frame structure with three side additions— "A", "B", and "C" (Figures 194 and 195). Addition A is a two-story, side-gabled addition that connects the west side of the church to the one-story front-gable Addition B. Addition C extends Addition B to the north, and the former is slightly narrower and has a lower ridgeline than Addition B. Vinyl siding covers the church's historic weatherboard siding (Figure 197) and clads additions A, B, and C. In summer 2025, volunteers installed six-over-six vinyl windows in the church and new windows and doors in the additions. The 1894 church retains its historic decorative pressed metal shingle roof with cleats, while Additions A, B, and C feature standing seam metal roofing. Vinyl soffits cover the boxed eaves.

The church features a rectangular plan and form, with a belltower on the south façade and sheltering the entrance. The building rests on a stone veneered foundation. The main entry is accessed by three concrete steps and composed of two contemporary four-paneled steel doors with arched lights. Three chamfered wood posts support the four-stage belltower. Each stage includes cascading shed roofs, and the final stage features a hipped roof topped with a decorative three-part wood spire (Figures 198-200). The east and west elevations span four bays, each with six-over-six vinyl replacement windows (Figures

199 and 200). Addition A covers the northern two bays of the church on the west elevation. The north elevation has a projecting bay window with two one-over-one vinyl windows (Figure 201).

Addition A, a two-story side-gabled structure, connects the church to Additions B and C (Figure 195). It rests on a parged concrete block foundation and includes three one-over-one vinyl windows on both levels of the south elevation (Figures 198 and 199). On the north elevation, wood posts support a second-floor wood deck with an L-shaped stair extending east and north (Figure 201). One-over-one vinyl windows are located beneath the porch and flank the steel flush panel door accessing the second level.

Additions B and C, both one-story and front-gabled, sit perpendicular to Addition A on a parged concrete block foundation. On the south façade, two wood posts support Addition B's projecting gable porch roof, which shelters a pair of six-panel steel doors matching those of the church (Figures 198 and 199). Two one-over-one vinyl windows flank the porch and another appears on the east elevation (Figure 199). Together Additions B and C span six bays on the west elevation (Figure 202). A wood deck with horizontal wood skirt, simple wood railing, and wood decking extends across bays four and five. Two steel half-light two-panel doors open onto the deck flanked by one-over-one vinyl windows. Addition A's side gable rises above the standing seam metal roof. On the north elevation, Addition C projects beyond the rear wall plane of the church and Addition A and has vinyl one-over-one windows on its east and south sides (Figure 199).

Both entrances on the church's façade open directly into the sanctuary, facing a trapezoidal apse on a raised altar centered on the north wall (Figure 203). Following Hurricane Helene, church members rebuilt the floor and installed a particle board subfloor by July 2025. Flooding destroyed most interior furnishings, including the wood pews. Walls and ceilings feature a mix of new and historic wood shiplap. Decorative square corner blocks accent the trim around two paneled wood doors flanking the apse and a third door on the left (west) wall leading to Addition A (Figure 203). Plain wood casings,

Figure 200. East elevation of the church, looking west from NC 197 South.

Figure 201. North elevation of the church and Additions A and C, looking southwest from the yard.

Figure 202. West elevation of Additions B (right) and C (left), looking east from the yard. The side gable of addition A extends above the ridge of Addition B.

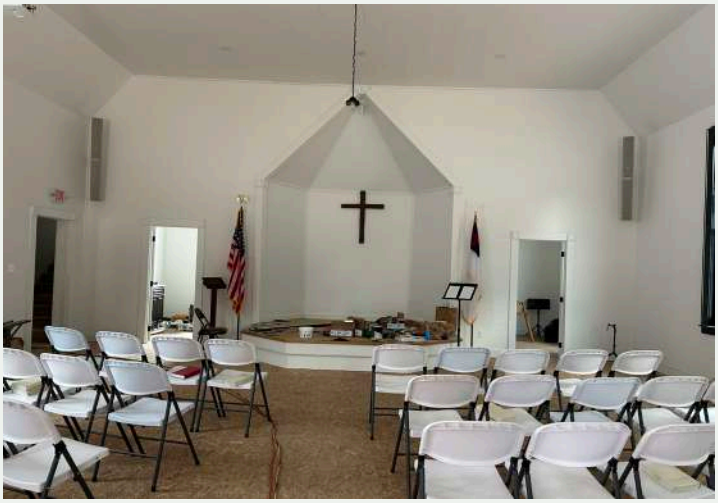


Figure 203. Interior of sanctuary, looking north. Note the particle board covering the reconstructed floor structure.

Figure 204. Shiplap covers the walls. Note the new casings and trim on the baseboard and surrounding the window.

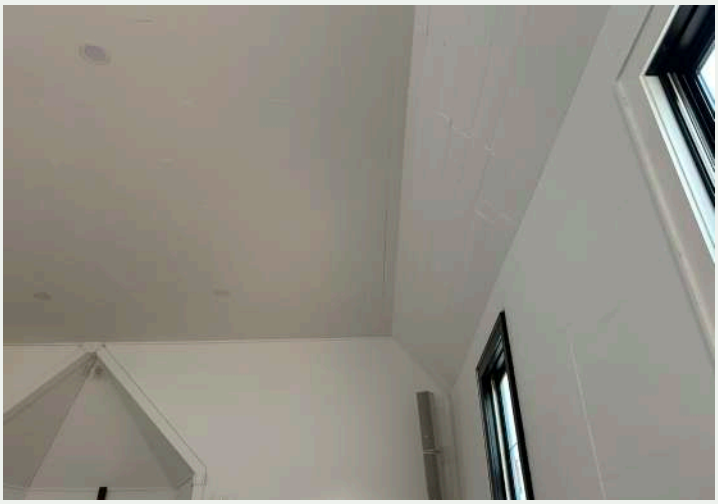


Figure 205. Shiplap extends to the ceiling of the sanctuary.

Figure 206. In June 2025, church members installed new six-over-six vinyl replacement windows, matching the design of the historic wood windows.

sills, and aprons frame the historic window openings (Figures 204-206).

Behind the apse, two rooms open to the north, one containing the projecting bay window. Addition A connects the sanctuary to Additions B and C. A staircase in Addition A leads to the second floor, where a contemporary six-panel wood door opens to a large room with a dropped ceiling. Additions B and C include a ramped ADA entrance, a refurbished communal kitchen and bathrooms, classrooms, and community gathering spaces used as the Fellowship Hall.

Outbuildings

A contemporary gabled pavilion is located directly north of and in line with Additions B and

Figure 207. Pavillion, looking southeast from yard.

Figure 208. Sand, rock, and debris cover much of the site in summer 2025.

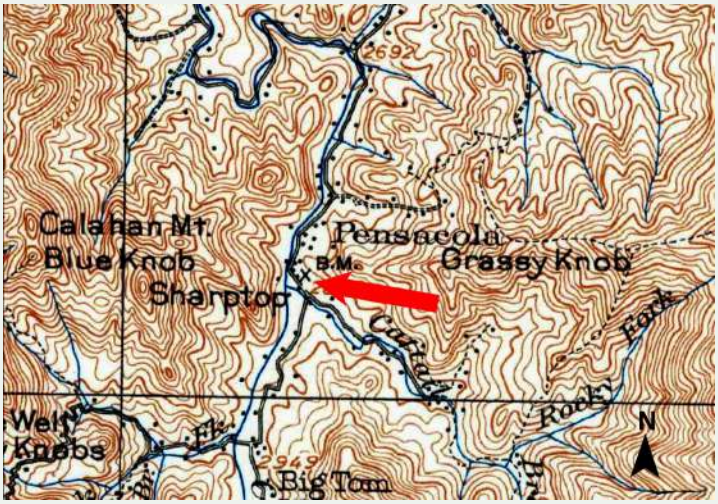


Figure 209. 1900 USGS Map of Mount Mitchell and Tennessee. The red arrow points to the approximate location of the Laurel Branch Baptist Church. (Wilson, 1900)

C and rests on a concrete slab foundation (Figure 207). Square wood posts with diagonal bracing support the standing seam metal roof, and aluminum panels cover the ceiling.

Landscape Elements

Hurricane Helene caused extensive damage to the site in September 2024. By summer 2025, church members and volunteers had cleared debris and re-graded the site (Figure 208). Dirt, sand, and piles of stone and broken asphalt covered much of the yard, except for a gravel parking area along Pensacola School Road and concrete sidewalks. Sidewalks connect the parking area to the church's entrance and the wood deck north of the pavilion.

Historic Context

The Laurel Branch congregation formed between 1803 and 1805 and formally constituted in 1807. Early settlers arrived independently, not as part of organized church groups, and traveling ministers assisted in establishing churches. According to church members, the Laurel Branch congregation initially met in a log church built around 1808, located about one mile north of the present site near the mouth of the Cane River and Laurel Branch Stream. (*The Yancey Journal*, 1985; Young, 1968)

In 1893, Benjamin B. Ray (1854-1933) and Martha "Mattie" Jane Ray (1862-1949) sold land to the Board of Trustees for the Missionary Baptist Church of Laurel for $5, enabling construction of the current building (Book 43, Page 511). Benjamin Ray, a prominent Yancey County resident and former county commissioner, may have acted at the urging of his brother, Reverend Samuel Burdette "S.B" Ray (1842-1916), who served the church in 1861. The Riddle family built the church, and Reverand Benjamin Riddle served as its first pastor. The congregation dedicated the building in 1894. (*The Burnsville Eagle*, 1933; Findagrave.com, 2025; Presnell, 1983(c); Young, 1968)

At the time of the church's construction, Pensacola was a small, isolated community with a handful of homes and farms (Figure 209). The arrival of the Carolina Spruce Lumber Company and the Black Mountain Railroad transformed

it into a boomtown at the beginning of the twentieth century. Tracks ran directly east of the church, within the current NC 197 South right-of-way, providing a strategic connection from Burnsville to the north and Eskota to the south (Figures 210 and 211). Although the timber boom faded in the 1920s, the church remains a prominent local landmark along NC 197 South and one of the few remaining late nineteenth century structures in Pensacola.

Around the turn of the twentieth century, the availability of sawn lumber and milled architectural ornamentation enabled the construction of stepped or tiered bell towers —a design popular among country churches in Yancey and surrounding counties. Much like houses of the era, builders embellished wood-frame churches with turned wood posts, scrolled brackets, decorative cornice treatments, and textured siding patterns incorporating Folk Victorian influences to these otherwise simple structures.

Laurel Branch Baptist Church followed this trend. Historic photographs show chamfered wood posts, scrolled brackets, arched moldings, and a dentil cornice surrounding the entrance beneath the tower, along with molded wood returns. The belfry displayed a distinctive V-shaped pattern created by diagonally applied weatherboard. A 1920s photograph also depicts an interior chimney protruding from the slope of the east elevation (Figure 211).

Yancey County property records date the additions to the 1940s and 1950s. The congregation constructed Addition A first, possibly in the 1940s, based on historic photographs and the addition's massing and fenestration pattern (Figure 212). Church members recall that indoor plumbing replaced the outhouses in the 1960s. Historic aerial imagery and photographs show that Addition B appeared after 1976 and Addition C between 2010 and 2014.

In July 1983, M. Presnell's architectural survey found the church much as it historically existed. Photographs show the church with plain weatherboard siding, the diagonal-patterned belfry, and architectural ornamentation of the belltower's porch (Figure 213). Inside, carpet

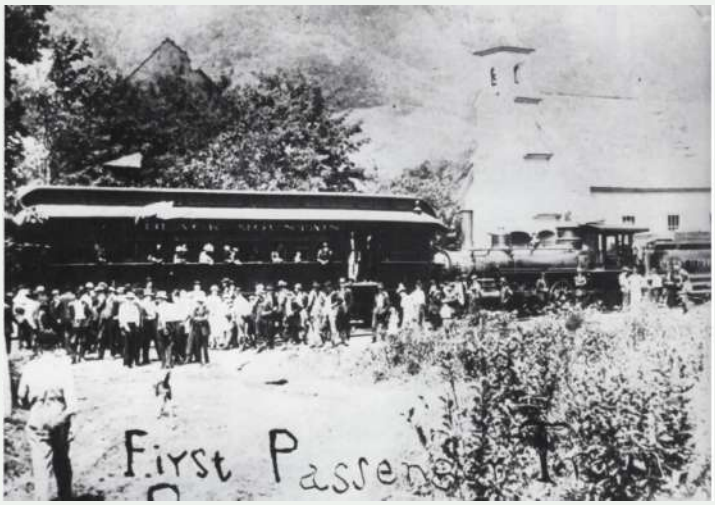


*Figure 210. July 1913 Photograph commemorating the first passenger train arriving on the Black Mountain Railroad, just outside of the Laurel Branch Baptist Church. (*Images of Yancey, *1993)*

*Figure 211. Circa 1920 photograph of Laurel Branch Baptist Church. (*Images of Yancey, Vol. II, *2012)*

Figure 212. Circa 1976 photograph of the Laurel Baptist Church's south facade with Addition A extending west. (Westveer, 1976)

Figure 213. Oblique view of the south and east facades of the historic church, July 1983. (Presnell, 1983(c))

Figure 214. Interior photographs of the apse and window trim with corner block treatment, July 1983. (Presnell, 1983(c))

covered the floors and wood trim with decorative corner blocks framed windows and doors (Figure 214). Presnell noted that the six-panel wood doors were replacements. Louvered wood shutters protected the windows.

Between 1983 and April 2015, the church replaced or covered historic elements with contemporary materials. Vinyl siding obscured or removed the belfry's patterned siding, dentil frieze, and arched moldings. A July 2015 tax assessor's photograph shows windows with transoms above operable window sashes.

Hurricane Helene severely damaged the church and its additions. Floodwater collapsed the sanctuary's historic floor structure and destabilized Addition B's southwest corner, requiring new foundational footings and reconstruction of the front wall (Figures 215-218). Inside, volunteers removed damaged materials—including drywall, shiplap, and other finishes—exposing the wood wall and floor structures of the church and its additions. Reconstruction efforts included installing new drywall, windows, and doors. During GFT's July 2025 site visit, particle board covered newly installed floor joists, awaiting finish flooring in the sanctuary. Crews installed vinyl windows matching historic dimensions and cased them with new, plain wood moldings (Figure 219).

Figure 215. Interior of the church following Hurricane Helene. Note that shutters cover the historic window opening to the left of the side door accessing Addition A. (Laurel Branch Baptist Church, 2024)

Figure 216. The historic wood floor had to be removed to pour new footings to support the altar. (Laurel Branch Baptist Church, 2025(a))

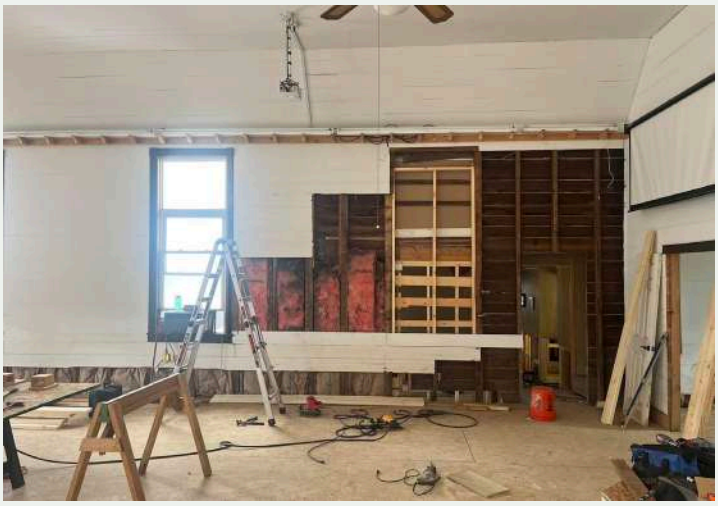


Figure 217. Volunteers reframed and covered the historic window opening with new shiplap as part of the Hurricane Helene rebuilding efforts. (Laurel Branch Baptist Church, 2025(c))

Figure 218. Hurricane Helene severely damaged the southwest corner of Addition B, requiring the Church to reconstruct a portion of its foundation, floor, and wall structure. (Laurel Branch Baptist Church, 2024(b))

Architectural Context

Laurel Baptist Church emerged during a transitional period at the turn of the twentieth century, when framed buildings were replacing traditional log construction. Churches of this era typically followed a rectangular, one room plan; the stepped or tiered belltower is a defining characteristic of regional church architecture observed on churches throughout the region. Builders may have embellished church exteriors with Folk Victorian milled ornamentation—scrolled brackets, arched moldings, dentils, and drop novelty siding. Churches were frequently placed in prominent locations within the community where they served as a beacon for followers. A survey of rural country churches in Yancey and neighboring counties identified three late-nineteenth and early twentieth century churches comparable in design to the Laurel Branch Baptist Church, and none have been previously evaluated for NRHP eligibility. (Bishir, 1999)

The 1882 Bryd Baptist Chapel (YC0261; 65 Lucille Lane, Burnsville) is a gable-front rectangular wood-frame structure anchored by a four-part steeple tower (Figure 220). The structure rests on

Figure 219. Church volunteers installing new windows. (Laurel Branch Baptist Church, 2025(d))

Figure 220. West façade of the Byrd Chapel (YC0261).

Figure 221. Oblique view of Miller's Chapel's (YC0262) south and west facades.

Figure 222. North façade of Brummetts Creek Baptist Church.

a partial concrete block foundation, and the tower's cascading hipped roofs terminate in an open bell tower adorned with wood pickets. The exterior retains historic five-panel wood doors, four-over-four wood windows, and weatherboard siding. Inside, the steeple forms a vestibule leading to the sanctuary with a raised altar along the rear (east) wall. The church retains its historic tongue-and-groove wood floors and shiplap walls and ceiling coverings. The church lost its rear and north additions when relocated in 1974 and has remained vacant for several decades, now in deteriorating condition. (Byrd Chapel Baptist Church, n.d.)

Miller's Chapel (YC0262; 10460 US Highway 19W, Burnsville), built in the 1930s, also follows a rectangular plan with a three-tiered steeple tower ending in an open belfry beneath a truncated hipped roof forming a narrow spire (Figure 221). It rests on a concrete block foundation. Two-over-two pressed glass windows line the four-bay west elevation, and a shed-roofed concrete block addition spans the east elevation. The tower's first tier shelters a pair of steel panel entry doors on the façade. Vinyl siding clads the exterior. Pressed metal covers the tower's cascading hipped roofs, while standing seam metal roofing covers the sanctuary and addition. Inside, a contemporary wood paneled chair rail and drywall covers the walls and ceiling. Replacement materials and later alterations have diminished the church's historic integrity.

Brummetts Creek Baptist Church's (610 Brummetts Creek Road, Green Mountain) features a three-tier bell tower on its gable-front façade (Figure 222). The building dates to around 1935, based on historic map analysis, and rests on cut stone piers (Pike, 1935(c)). The tower shelters paired steel paneled doors and features cascading hipped roofs with a pyramidal roof covering the enclosed belfry. A shed-roof addition projects from the northeast corner of the façade. The church features steel doors, one-over-one vinyl windows, contemporary wood decking and railings, vinyl siding, and standing seam metal roofing. Replacement materials and alterations detract from the church's historic integrity.

Historic Integrity

The Laurel Branch Baptist Church retains integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association. There is no evidence to suggest the church has been moved. The church continues to reflect its historic relationship with NC 197 South, a key transportation route, and sits at a prominent crossroads within the rural community of Pensacola. Located in a valley, it remains a visible landmark from a distance. Despite material changes and alterations, the building still reads as a country church and evokes its historic role in serving the rural Laurel Branch Baptist congregation, which formed by 1807 and has continuously used this building for their services since 1894.

The application of additions and replacement materials have compromised the integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. Additions A, B, and C have altered the historic church form, fenestration patterns, and spatial arrangement. Replacement materials—including a veneered stone foundation, vinyl siding and windows, and steel doors—obscure historic surface treatments and ornamentation, including entryway details and the belfry's textured wall pattern (Figures 223 and 224). Interior remodels have likewise removed historic trim such as the corner-block treatments noted in the 1983 survey, further diminishing the historic workmanship. These changes detract from the church's overall feeling and association with the region's Folk Victorian-inspired country churches built at the turn of the twentieth century.

National Register Criteria Evaluation

The Laurel Branch Baptist Church is recommended not eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A for its historic association with religion or community development in Yancey County. While the church has housed the Laurel Branch Baptist congregation since its dedication in 1894 and served the growing population of Pensacola, it lacks documented associations with significant events in the history of the Baptist Church, Pensacola, or Yancey County. Though the church is an important community resource, and among the few remaining following the devastation caused by Hurricane Helene, research did not establish a significant connection between this church and the growth of Pensacola. Rather the existing congregation constructed Laurel Branch Baptist Church to serve a population that was employed in the farming in the upper Cane River valley prior to the timber boom.

Laurel Branch Baptist Church is recommended not eligible under Criterion B as research did not identify any associations with individuals of recognized significance in local, state, or national history. While members of the Riddle and Ray families served as financiers, trustees, pastors, and builders of the Laurel Branch Baptist Church, their contributions appear confined to the context of this single

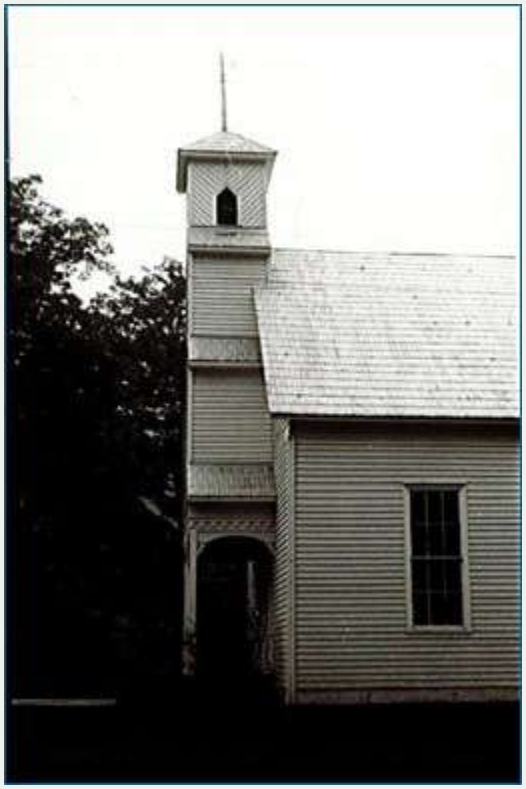


Figure 223. Circa 1983 architectural survey photograph of the west elevation. (Presnell, 1983(c))

Figure 224. July 2023 photograph of the same elevation, facing west from NC 197 South.

congregation. Their roles do not demonstrate a broader historical influence that would support significance at the local level.

The Laurel Branch Baptist Church is not recommended eligible under Criterion C for its architectural significance. The church's tiered tower design is recognizable and well represented in Yancey County and within the mountain region. Although it is grander in scale than Miller's Chapel and Brummetts Creek Baptist Church, Laurel Branch Baptist Church has similarly lost key architectural features due to material alterations and remodels. The application of vinyl siding, replacement windows and doors, and vinyl soffits have obscured or removed the Folk Victorian-inspired milled architectural ornamentation that defined its historic design. Additions have altered the church's overall form and massing, while interior changes—including the removal of historic wood floors and trim—have further diminished its historic integrity. As a result, Laurel Branch Baptist Church does not represent a good example of a late nineteenth century country church.

The Laurel Branch Baptist Church is not recommended eligible under Criterion D for its potential to yield information. For a property to be eligible under Criterion D, a property must meet two requirements: (1) it must have, or have had, information that contributes to our understanding of human history and prehistory, and (2) the information must be considered important. The property is not likely to yield any new information pertaining to the history of building design and technology and is therefore not recommended eligible under Criterion D.

XII. Murchison Store (YC0266)

Figure 225. Oblique view of the south and west elevations of the Murchison Store, looking northwest from edge of driveway.

Resource Name	Murchison Store
HPO Survey Site #	YC0266
Address	10516 State Highway 197 South
PIN	071700830632000
Date(s) of Construction	Circa 1930
Recommendation	Not eligible

Physical Description

Setting

The Murchison Store (YC0266) stands at the northwest corner of the intersection of NC 197 South, Ewart Wilson Road, and Murchison Lane, at the center of the Murchison community (Figures 1 and 225). At this intersection, NC 197 South turns west to Barnardsville in Buncombe County, Ewart Wilson Road continues south to Eskota, and Murchison Lane ends to the east. The store is setback approximately 40 feet from NC 197 South. Behind (west) the store, a large grassy field and a tree-lined mill pond border the Cane River.

The Murchison Store is currently associated with two adjacent legal parcels on both sides of NC 197 South by ownership (Figure 226). These parcels extend to the south and east of the store. The parcel south of NC 197 South and west of Ewart Wilson Road consists mostly of grass interspersed with tree lines east of the Cane River. The parcel east of NC 197 South contains a field with wood-frame sheds, barns, and a circa 1940 bungalow. These structures do not appear to be historically associated with the Murchison Store and are not included in this assessment.

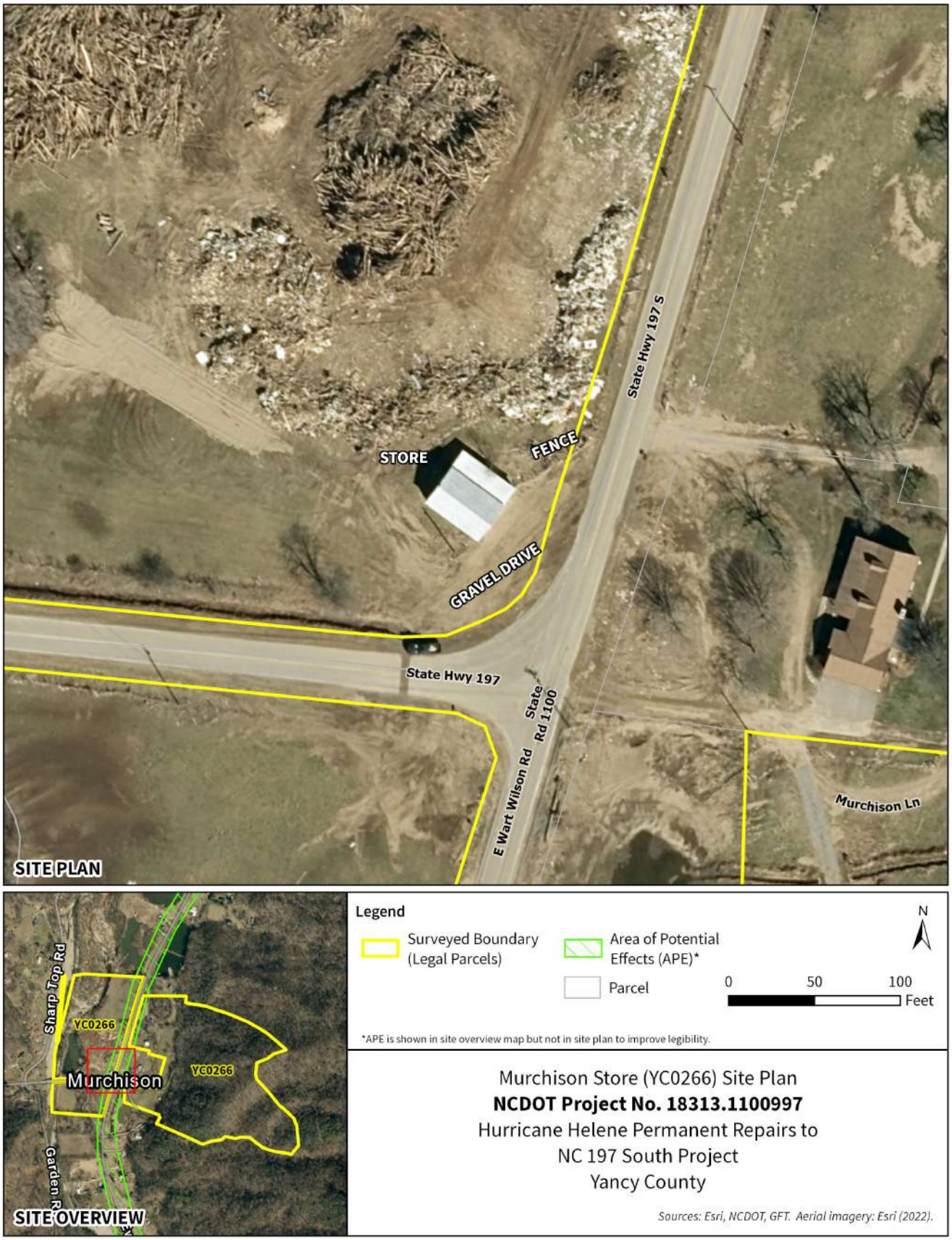


Figure 226. Murchison Store Site Plan.

GFT received no response to the survey notification letter, and no one was on site at the time of the site visit. During fieldwork, GFT documented the exterior of the resource through written notes and photographs. Interior access was not available. GFT corresponded with local historian Elaine Boone about the history of the site in September 2025. Information provided by Boone is referenced throughout this evaluation.

Murchison Store, *Circa 1930.*

The Murchison Store is a one-story, front-gable wood-frame building organized around a rectangular form (in plan and massing). Overgrown vegetation and sediment from Hurricane Helene obscure much of the foundation, but GFT observed a stone pier and timber framing beneath the building. The façade's recessed entry features a concrete floor, contemporary wood paneled door with fanlight, angled window openings, and a beadboard ceiling (Figure 227). Plywood with broken grids of three by four simulating divided lights cover the façade's two storefront windows. While it is not clear if the historic windows remain, the simple wood trim and sills survive. A painted wood sign above the entry reads, "Murchison Grocery | Feed & Seed Gas & Oil | Murchison NC." The southwest elevation has no openings (Figure 228), and the rear (northwest) elevation includes two historic two-over-two double-hung wood windows with narrow trim and a boarded attic window opening flanking a red brick chimney (Figure 229). Painted weatherboard and simple corner boards clad the exterior, with signs of repair around the storefront, including wider profile boards on the bulkheads and recessed entry. The store has boxed eaves and a standing seam metal roof.

A shed roof addition meets the façade below the eave of the front gable. It features a slightly recessed, historic five-panel wood door on the façade and two historic four-over-four wood windows on the northeast elevation, all with wide, simple wood trim (Figures 227 and 230). The addition features weatherboard in a wider profile than the original store building and some drop board siding. Standing seam metal covers the shed roof's exposed rafter tails.

Figure 227. Southeast façade of the store, facing northeast from the front yard. Note the difference in the reveal of the weatherboard above and below the windows.

Figure 228. Southwest elevation of the store, standing on NC 197 South looking northeast.

Figure 229. Northwest elevation of the store from the field behind the building, looking southeast.

Figure 230. Northeast elevation of the store, looking southwest from the field adjacent to the building.

Figure 231. Oblique view of the southeast façade and northeast, looking south from the driveway.

Figure 232. View of the site, looking northeast from NC 197 South. Fields and timber cover the site.

GFT did not access the interior and overgrown vegetation blocked most un-boarded windows. Limited observations into the interior of the addition revealed vegetation growing through the floor and some shelving. The building currently serves as storage.

Landscape Elements

Hurricane Helene deposited sediment across the site, obscuring landscape features (Figure 231). A sand and gravel driveway covers much of the area in front (southeast) of the store. The store interrupts a wood post and wire fence that runs along the south and east property boundaries, separating the store from the open space to the north and west. Behind the store (west), workers staged downed trees for disposal (Figure 232).

Historic Context

Country stores lasted from the late nineteenth century into the mid-twentieth century in Yancey County. Poor road conditions persisted into the 1940s, and the 1940 US census shows most rural Yancey County residents did not own a vehicle. As a result, country stores needed to be within walking distance of farms and homes. These stores served as vital community gathering places—offering news and social interaction, much like churches. In addition to selling items not produced on the farm, they met broader community needs by often serving as the local post office, polling location, and vaccination clinics. (Fearnbach, 2012)

Local historian Elaine Boone attributes the store's construction to Wood Wellington Wilson (1868-1961), son of Big Tom Wilson, and placed it on the west side of the road originally and moved to the current site at a later unknown date. She reported that Wilson operated the store for about two decades before moving to Barnardsville around 1920. However, physical evidence, research, and comparisons with similar commercial buildings in the region suggest that the Murchison Store dates to the 1930s, with its addition built in the 1940s. These dates of construction postdate Murchison's economic boom as a stop on the Black Mountain Railroad (circa 1913-1933) and discontinuation of the community's post office in 1928. Like many country stores, the Murchison Store stood at

a prominent intersection surrounded by farmland. Farmers, looking to supplement their income, often operated stores near their homes to protect merchandise and monitor customers while tending to farm duties. The Murchison Store does not appear on historic USGS maps between 1900 and 1946. (Boone, 2025; Fearnbach, 2012; Findagrave.com, 2025; Pike,1935(a); Tennessee Valley Authority, 1946; Wilson, 1900)

Local newspapers mention the Murchison Store, later Murchison Grocery, from the 1950s through the 1970s. In the 1950s, Emma Wilson Hensley (1888-1966), daughter of hotelier Dolph Wilson, operated a general store in Murchison. Clyde (1902-1974) and Jesse Penland (1908-1999) later took over operations, with Clyde working as both a merchant and a farmer. The store served as a community hub, hosting the Yancey County bookmobile and promoting a vaccination clinic in 1971 (Figure 233). It also sponsored a softball team in the Yancey County Recreation Commission League between 1976 and 1977. After 1977, newspaper references cease, suggesting the store may have fallen into disuse after the devastating flood in November of that year. (Childs, 2004; Findagrave.com, 2025; Mitchell County Historical Society, 2020(b); *The Yancey Journal*, 1974,1976(b); *The Yancey Record*, 1950(b), 1971)

Figure 233. Men outside of the Murchison Store, 1970s. Note the change in the dimension of the reveal between the weatherboard siding above and below the windows. (Thomason, 2001)

Historic aerial imagery (1977, 2005, 2010, 2014) depicts the site much as it exists today, with the store facing southeast toward the prominent intersection of NC 197 South, Ewart Wilson Road, and Murchison Lane. Gravel covered the area in front of the store. The post and wire fence, first visible in October 2010 imagery, runs along the property line, and the field behind the store has been intermittently cultivated for crops. (NCDOT, 1977(d); Yancey County GIS Map)

Boone recalled that Frank Jerome "Jerry" Wilson (1940-2024), a descendent of Big Tom Wilson, owned the store most recently. Boone and her husband salvaged historic wood store shelves from the building before Hurricane Helene. (Boone, 2025; Findagrave.com, 2025)

Architectural Context

Early twentieth century stores were modest, wood-framed buildings with a rectangular plan and often included side additions for local post offices. Storefronts featured large windows or banks of windows for displays, window grills, and wood paneled entry doors. Owners frequently hired painters to add signs with store names and advertisements on walls, doors, and canopies. Country stores typically stood at key crossroads, positioned close and perpendicular to the main road, since most customers arrived on foot, eliminating the need for parking before personal vehicles were common. A survey of rural country stores in Yancey and neighboring counties identified two buildings constructed between 1902 and 1940 comparable in design to the Murchison Store. (Fearnbach, 2012)

The 1902 Penland Post Office and General Store (ML0069; 1655 Penland Road, Bakersville), listed on the NRHP in 2012 under Criterion A for Communications and Commerce, is the oldest surviving

Figure 234. West façade of the Penland Post Office and General Store (ML0069), looking northeast from the driveway.

Figure 235. South façade of the Harris Clay Company General Store (YC0042), looking north from State Highway 80.

commercial structure tied to the community's logging and mining past and Mitchell County's oldest active post office (Figure 234). The one-and-one-half story, gable-front store includes a central entrance with three-quarter light wood paneled doors flanked by two-over-two storefront windows. The shed roof side addition houses the post office and features a half-light wood paneled door and pair of two-over-two wood windows. The building is rectangular in plan and features a stone foundation, board and batten siding, and a red brick exterior chimney. Painted wood signs above the post office door read: "U.S. Post Office | Penland, N.C. | 28765." (Cole, 2025)

The Harris Clay Company General Store (YC0042; 573 Micaville Loop, Micaville), was added to the state's Study List in 2025 under Criteria A and C for commerce and architecture. It was constructed on a prominent corner in the Micaville Historic District (YC0015) circa 1915 to 1920. It likewise uses a circa one-and-one-half story front-gable design with a 1942 false-front side addition for its post office (Figure 235). The building has a rectangular floor plan and features a centered recessed entrance beneath a gabled overhang. The angled divided-light fixed display windows extend onto the façade and a four-part circular window flanked by two vents are located in the gable end. Pebble ash stucco between half timbering covers the exterior. Inside, the store retains historic wood floors, painted beadboard walls, shelving, and pressed tin ceilings. The one-room side addition served as a post office and includes weatherboard siding, six-over-six windows, a recessed entry, and a shed-roof porch supported by square posts with diagonal bracing. (NCHPO, 2025)

Integrity

The Murchison Store retains integrity of location, setting, feeling and association. Although oral history suggests the building was relocated from the east side of the road after 1920, GFT found no evidence to support this in research or field survey. The store continues to reflect its historic relationship with a prominent intersection within the residential rural and agricultural community of Murchison. Despite its discontinued use, the building continues to read as a country store and evokes the feeling of a rural community gathering space.

Deterioration and later alterations have compromised the Murchison Store's integrity of the design, materials and workmanship. The building reflects a typical early twentieth century one-story, gable-front, wood-frame store with a shed-roofed side addition. It appears to retain historic features, including its stone pier foundation, weatherboard siding, two-over-two wood windows, red brick chimney, and standing seam metal roofing. However, alterations to the façade—such as the replacement steel door in the recessed entry and boarded storefront windows—detract from the historic fenestration pattern.

Although interior evaluation was not available, visible signs of deferred maintenance and deterioration, including vegetation growing through the floor, suggest further threats to the building's historic materials and workmanship. These cumulative changes diminish the store's historic integrity.

National Register Criteria Evaluation

The Murchison Store is recommended not eligible under Criterion A for its historic association with commerce in Yancey County. Although the building historically operated as a country store, its discontinued use and lack of documented history precludes any meaningful connection with broader commercial trends.

The Murchison Store is recommended not eligible under Criterion B, as it lacks documented associations with any individuals of recognized significance in local, state, or national history. Although linked to the locally prominent Wilson and Penland families, its potential significance is derived more from its function within the community than the prominence of past owners.

The Murchison Store is recommended not eligible for Criterion C for its architectural significance. Its overall form and materials reflect a typical early twentieth century commercial design, including a recessed entrance with angled window openings, large storefront windows, a red brick chimney, and weatherboard siding. The discontinuation of its use has led to plywood potentially covering historic wood storefront windows and a replacement door. GFT also observed vegetation growing through the floor on the interior. The style and design of the store is simple, utilitarian, and common throughout the region.

The Murchison Store is not recommended eligible under Criterion D for its potential to yield information. For a property to be eligible under Criterion D, a property must meet two requirements: (1) it must have, or have had, information that contributes to our understanding of human history and prehistory, and (2) the information must be considered important. The property is not likely to yield any new information pertaining to the history of building design and technology and is therefore not recommended eligible under Criterion D.

XIII. Brown-Wilson House (YC0267)

Figure 236. Brown-Wilson House (right) and tiny house (left), looking northeast from Ewart Wilson Road.

Resource Name	Brown-Wilson House
HPO Survey Site #	YC0267
Address	2475 Ewart Wilson Road, Burnsville
PIN	071600819113000
Date(s) of Construction	Circa 1915
Recommendation	Not eligible

Physical Description

Setting

The Brown-Wilson House is located about 2.5 miles south of the intersection of NC 197 South and Ewart Wilson Road, in an area associated with the historic logging camp of Eskota (Figures 1, 236, and 237). The house sits on a 1.42-acre parcel approximately 50 feet east of Ewart Wilson Road and overlooks the Cane River to the west (Figure 238).

During fieldwork in July 2025, GFT documented the exterior of the resource through written notes and photographs. No residents were on-site at the time of the site visit, and interior access was not available. Property owner Elaine Boone responded to the survey notification letter and later provided

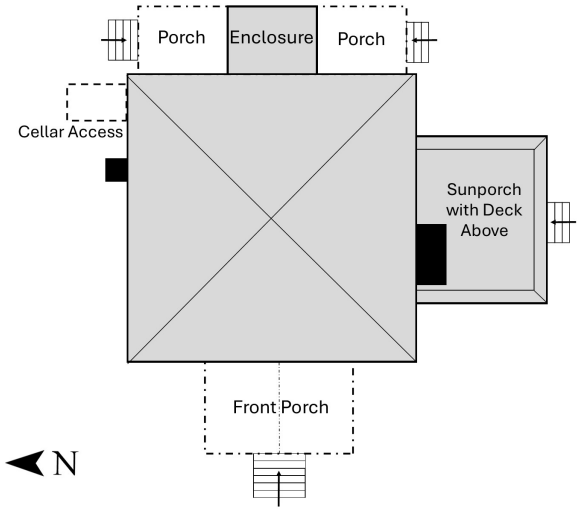


Figure 237. Roof plan of the Brown-Wilson House.

Figure 238. Brown-Wilson House Site Plan.

Figure 239. West facade, looking east from the front walkway.

Figure 240. North elevation of the house, looking south from yard.

Figure 241. Oblique view of east and north elevations, looking southwest from the backyard.

Figure 242. View of the rear porch from the south elevation, looking north from the stone patio.

historical and interior details via phone and email in September. She and her husband David are the fourth generation of the Wilson family to own the property. Information provided by Mrs. Boone is referenced throughout this evaluation.

Brown-Wilson House, *Circa 1915.*

The Brown-Wilson House is a two story, double-pile, wood-frame house following a foursquare form (in plan and massing) with Colonial Revival and Prairie-style elements (Figures 236 and 237). It includes a partial-width front porch, an enclosed one-story sunporch wing, and two rear porches (Figure 237). The exterior features wood weatherboard siding, plain cornices, and corner boards. Historic red brick chimneys with decorative cornices stand on the north and south elevations, with the south elevations' chimney featuring a tapered rectangular form. The house has an asphalt shingle pyramidal roof with deep eaves covered by vinyl soffits.

The house rests on a board-formed concrete foundation (Figures 239 and 240). A concrete bulkhead with a steel door provides cellar access on the northeast corner. The front porch has a pedimented gable roof that shelters an aluminum paneled door with centered leaded glass panels. A one-story rear addition separates two open porches beneath a flat roof (Figure 241). The northern porch

includes an arched half-light aluminum door; the southern porch features a single French door (Figure 242). These porches share wood lattice skirts, wood steps with spindle railings and square newel posts, wood floors, low turned wood balustrades, classical square columns, and beadboard ceilings. Single and paired six-over-one vinyl windows are the most common treatment on the house with a few noted exceptions: paired four-over-four windows above the front porch, paired four-over-one wood windows beneath the southern rear porch, two sliding basement windows on the north elevation, and an eight-over-one window on the north elevation.

A one-story sun porch wing extends from the south elevation (Figure 243). Wood steps and railing, matching the other porches, lead to a centered single French door on the south elevation. Eight-over-one vinyl windows wrap the porch's west and east sides; six-over-one vinyl windows face south. The sunporch has a pressed tin mansard roof. Above, a low turned wood balustrade frames the second-level deck, accessed by a single French door east of the tapered brick chimney.

Elaine Boone reported the house has a concrete basement, and the interior follows a typical foursquare plan with four bedrooms upstairs and three bathrooms. The Boones undertook an extensive renovation to structurally stabilize and make the house livable in 2001. They removed the plaster walls down to the framing to replace insulation, plumbing, electrical, and heating systems. They salvaged and repurposed historic wood flooring, six-panel doors, and trim work. The house retains its original enclosed staircase and two fireplaces with replacement mantels. (Boone, 2025)

Outbuildings

The Boones added a tiny house at the north end of the property in 2023 (Figure 244). The structure faces west and rests on a concrete block platform. It features a front porch, six-pane divided light windows, vertical wood siding, and a standing seam metal gambrel roof.

Figure 243. Oblique view of the west façade and south elevation of the house, looking northeast from the gravel parking area.

Figure 244. Tiny house, looking north from the yard.

Figure 245. Stone retaining wall, concrete steps, and "Eskota" sign mark the front walkway, looking southeast along Ewart Wilson Road.

Landscape Elements

A stone pedestrian bridge and pipe span the roadside ditch, connecting the road to concrete steps framed by board-formed concrete retaining walls (Figure 245). In 2001, local blacksmith Johnny Thacker crafted the wrought iron "Eskota" sign adjacent to the gravel path to the front porch. Low stacked stone retaining walls, ranging from two to four feet in height, line the front yard. In the backyard, stone walls of the same height follow the base of the hillside, and remnants of a now-demolished historic shed's stone foundation sit northeast of the house (Figure 246). (Boone, 2025)

Figure 246. Stacked stone retaining walls behind the house, looking south from the backyard.

Grass covers most of the yard, with landscape beds and floral foundation plantings. An S-shaped gravel driveway begins about 165 feet south of the house, curves northward from the road, and ends at a gravel parking area beside the sunporch. A paver patio at the southeast corner of the house connects the sunporch to the back porch. Mature trees are located throughout the yard, while forests cover the hillside directly north, east, and south of the house.

Historic Context

Yancey County records provide a construction date of 1940, but physical evidence, research, and conversations with the property owner suggest the house dates to circa 1915. Ward Fulton Brown (1869-1922), president of the Brown Brothers' Lumber Company, built two foursquare houses: one for him and his wife Olive (1879-1945) at 2475 Ewart Wilson Road, and another—now-demolished—about 250 feet south for his sister's family, the Froeliches, near the company's commissary (Figure 247). (Boone, 2025; Findagrave, 2025)

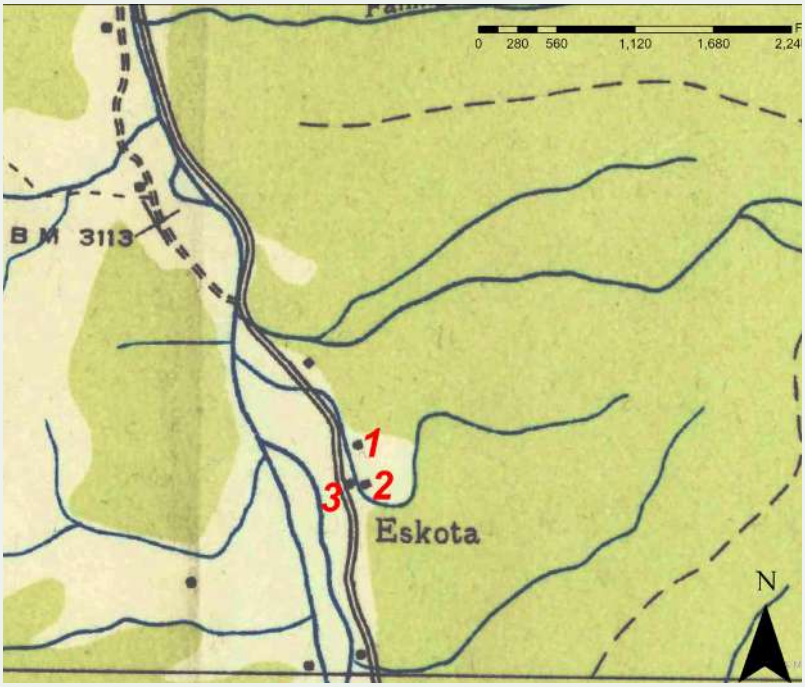


Figure 247. 1935 Tennessee Valley Authority Map of Black Brothers Quadrangle, NC. The map depicts the approximate locations of the Brown-Wilson House (1), Froelich House (2), and Commissary (3). (Pike, 1935)

The Brown Brothers' Lumber Company milled the lumber for both houses. Mrs. Boone noted that materials were marked "1" for the Brown-Wilson House and "2" for the Froelich House to guide material deliveries. The Brown-Wilson House featured indoor plumbing, running water, and two bathrooms—rare amenities in rural Yancey County in 1915. Further, steam from the sawmill heated the home through underground pipes. When the lumber company returned to Pennsylvania around 1920, Mrs. Brown took the original fireplace mantles with her (Figure 248). Brown also constructed a wood frame

Figure 248. Mrs. Olive Brown (middle) in front of the Brown-Wilson House. View of the house, looking northeast. (Boone, 2025)

one-and-one-half story backyard storage shed with stone foundation. (Boone, 2025)

Historic photographs show that by the 1920s, the Brown Brothers' Lumber Company had cleared much of the hillside behind the house. The Brown-Wilson House and shed sat north of the Froelich House and commissary, with smaller buildings dotting the hillside. The mill operated on the west side of the Cane River, and stored lumber in front of the house on the east side of the river (Figure 249).

In 1917, the Brown Brothers' Lumber Company sold 11,997 acres of the Murchison Boundary to Dolph and Joe Wilson for $25,000, including the Brown-Wilson House (Book 52, Pages 343-358). Ewart Wilson (1890-1975) lived in the Brown-Wilson House from 1921 to 1946 and bought the home from his father Dolph in 1940 (Book 84, Page 500). After World War II, Ewart moved his family into the neighboring Froelich House and established the "Big Tom Wilson Hunting Club" with his father, Dolph, out of the Brown-Wilson House where they welcomed guests and organized hunting parties. (E. Boone, 2025; V. Boone, 2021; Findagrave.com, 2025; Hensley, 1986)

As previously mentioned, Ewart Wilson played a key role in promoting tourism in Yancey County and on Mount Mitchell. Before establishing the hunting club, Ewart built the one-way Big Tom

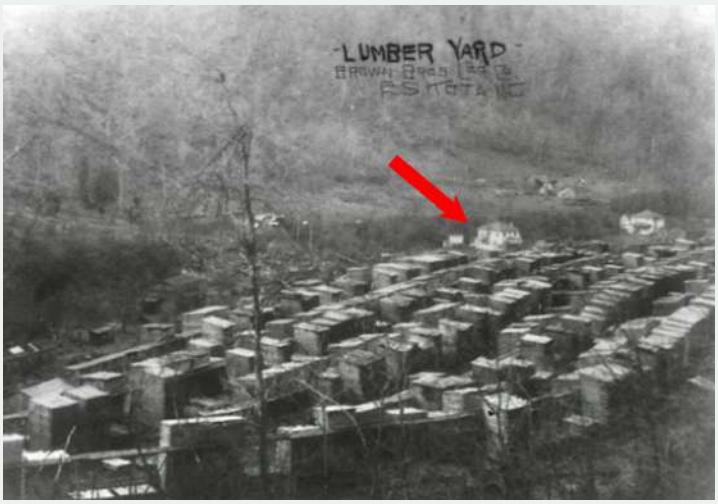


Figure 249. Brown Brothers' Lumber Company. The red arrow points to the Brown-Wilson House and shed. Note the Froelich House and commissary to the right and structures on the cleared hillside. (Childs, 2021)

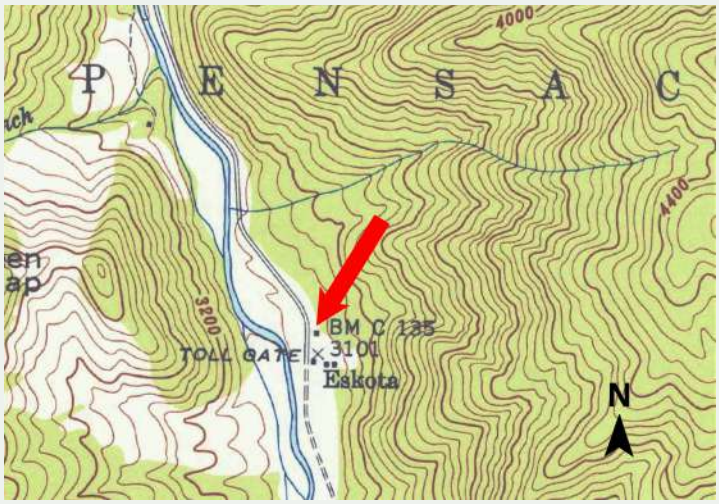


Figure 250. 1946 North Carolina Mt. Mitchell Quadrangle Map. The red arrow points to the approximate location of the Brown-Wilson House. Note the location of the toll gate. (Tennessee Valley Authority, 1946)

Figure 251. The toll booth to the Big Tom Mount Mitchell Motor Toll Road sat to the south of the Brown-Wilson House, looking southwest from the front yard. Note the barn in the background (left) (no longer extant). (Yancey History Association, 2016)

Figure 252. Front porch prior to 2001 restoration. The Boones reconstructed the porch using similar square posts but added a decorative balustrade. Note the eight-over-one windows and ten-light window above the pedimented gable. (Boone, 2025)

Figure 253. Southwest oblique of the house during the restoration. (Boone, 2025)

Mount Mitchell Motor Toll Road, which followed today's Ewart Wilson Road, in 1925 and provided access to Mount Mitchell and Camp Wilson at Stepp's Gap. In 1927, he constructed a toll booth south of the house (Figures 250 and 251). (Boone, 2025; Perko, 2018; Wilson, 1922-1925)

By 2001, the Brown-Wilson House was abandoned and obscured by overgrown vegetation (Figure 252). David and Elaine Boone began renovations that year, rebuilding walls and ceilings, and installing new building systems. They reconstructed the porches based on historic photographs and physical evidence, introduced decorative turned balustrades, and re-clad the house in custom-milled weatherboard. They modified fenestration patterns, replacing historic eight-over-one wood windows with paired six-over-one vinyl windows and installed new aluminum exterior doors (Figures 252-256). David Boone is Ewart Wilson's grandson; the Wilson family has owned the house for four generations. (Boone, 2025)

Architectural Context

The arrival of the railroad and out-of-state industrialists, such as the Brown Family from Pennsylvania, introduced national architectural styles to the region in the early twentieth century. Among these was the American Foursquare, which reflected the Midwest's Prairie School of Architecture and simplified the complex forms and projecting towers of boxy late nineteenth century houses into a

Figure 254. North elevation of the house during the 2001 restoration. (Boone, 2025)

Figure 255. View of one of the brick fireplaces in the home. Mrs. Brown removed the mantles when she returned to Pennsylvania around 1920. Note the six-panel wood door stored in the corner. (Boone, 2025)

more symmetrical and restrained design. The style commonly incorporated Colonial Revival, Prairie, or Craftsman details. A survey of rural housing stock in Yancey and adjacent counties identified three variations of the American Foursquare comparable to the Brown-Wilson House in neighboring Mitchell and Buncombe Counties. These properties were found to be eligible for the NRHP, either individually or as contributing resources within larger historic districts. (Bishir, 1990, 1999)

According to HPOWeb, 69 foursquare houses have been documented in Western North Carolina, most concentrated around Asheville in Buncombe County and identified through previous surveys. Only one—the Calhouse Hotel (SW0115; 135 Everett Street, Bryson City)—has been added to the state's Study List while two others— the Joseph Wells House and Barn (BN0747; 202 N. Turkey Creek Road, Leicester) and the Phillips-Palmer House (HW0163; 90 Palmer Hill Road, Waynesville) — have been found individually eligible for the NRHP. A survey of Yancey and adjacent counties identified three American Foursquare houses comparable to the Brown-Wilson House in Mitchell and Buncombe Counties, all eligible for the NRHP either individually or as a contributing resource within a larger historic district.

The Dr. I.W. Bradshaw House (ML0145; 19 Relief Road Extension, Green Mountain) is an elongated foursquare blending Prairie and

Figure 256. Reconstruction of the front porch and sunporch circa 2001. Note the new vinyl windows. (Boone 2025)

Figure 257. Southwest façade of the Dr. I.W. Bradshaw House (ML0145).

Figure 258. Northeast façade of the Joseph Wells House (BN0747).

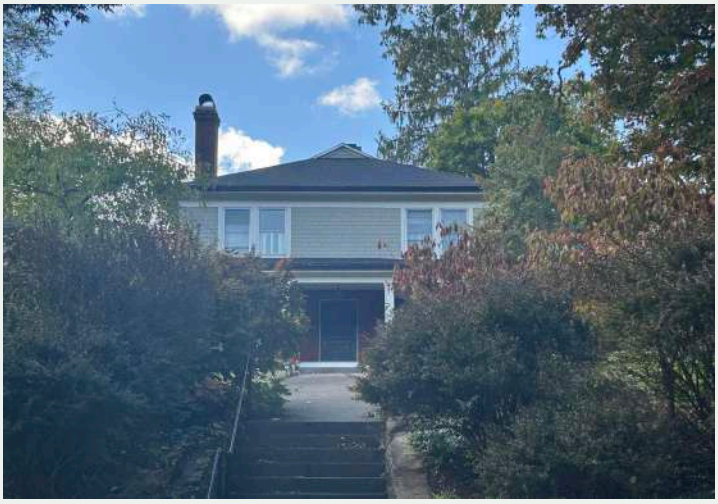


Figure 259. East façade of the C.W. Brown House, a contributing resource to Asheville's Grove Park Historic District (BN0194).

Colonial Revival styles (Figure 257). Built in 1917, it contributes to the Relief Historic District (ML0005), which is eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A for exploration and settlement and Criterion C for architecture. The three-bay, two-and-one-half story house features a three-sided wraparound porch with Tuscan columns, hipped roof with deep boxed eaves, and a central hipped-roof dormer. Inside, a central hall plan organizes four rooms around a hallway with a historic, enclosed rear staircase. A one-story contemporary addition wraps the north, east, and south sides, but preserves the foursquare's original massing. Although the house was severely damaged during Hurricane Helene, it retains two historic wood fireplace mantles with tile surrounds, wood trim, and beadboard wall sheathing. The exterior maintains historic wood weatherboard siding and trim. Material alterations include a concrete block foundation, vinyl replacement windows, and vinyl soffits. (Brook, 1995)

The Joseph Wells House and Barn (BN0747; 202 N. Turkey Creek Road, Leicester) was determined eligible for the NRHP in 2019 under Criterion A for its association with agriculture and Criterion C for its architectural significance. Built around 1905, the three-bay, two and one-half story foursquare farmhouse features a symmetrical rectangular façade with a full-width hipped-roof front porch (Figure 258). The porch's pedimented central bay highlights the leaded glass entry door and sidelights. Weatherboard and shingles clad the exterior walls, separated by a slight pent between floors. Hipped roof projecting dormers and red brick chimneys punctuate the roofline. The house retains its historic integrity, preserving Queen Anne, Craftsman, and Colonial Revival-influenced details, including Tuscan porch columns, molded cornices, plain frieze boards, and historic wood windows. Inside, the central hall plan organizes four rooms around a hallway and rear enclosed staircase. A two-story rear addition from the 1960s complements the original structure. The property also retains several historic agricultural buildings, including a barn, chicken coops, and tenant houses. (Gannett Fleming, 2019)

The C.W. Brown House contributes to Asheville's Grove Park Historic District (BN0194). Built in 1909, the two-story three-bay American Foursquare features a symmetrical square façade with a stone foundation, two-sided wraparound porch, and hipped roof with decorative gable vents (Figure 259). The house maintains historic integrity, preserving its brick veneer and wood shingle exterior walls, paired and ribbon one-over-one wood windows, paneled square porch posts, low balustrade, and two interior brick end chimneys with corbelling. This urban example is situated on a knoll above E.W. Grove Park and framed by mortared rubble stone retaining walls along the street front. (Bowers, 1989)

Integrity

The Brown-Wilson House retains integrity of location as there is no evidence to suggest the house has been moved. Demolition of nearby Brown Brothers' Lumber Company buildings—including the Froelich House, commissary, and mill—erased the spatial organization and land use patterns of the former lumber camp and diminished integrity of setting, feeling, and association.

The application of replacement materials has compromised the integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. Though still identifiable as a foursquare house form, extensive remodeling in the early 2000s resulted in the reconstruction of many historic features, including but not limited to the porches and wood siding, and eliminated much of the historic workmanship. The renovation also introduced new stylistic elements and design features—including ornate balustrades, replacement doors and windows—and altered fenestration patterns which detract from the original design and workmanship.

National Register Criteria Evaluation

The Brown-Wilson House is recommended not eligible under Criterion A for Industry or Entertainment/ Recreation. Although historically associated with early twentieth century logging and later tourism in Yancey County, the house lacks sufficient historic integrity to represent the Brown Brothers' Lumber Company era (1915-1920) or Ewart Wilson's toll road era (1921 to 1946).

The Brown-Wilson House is not recommended eligible under Criterion B, which requires the property to be associated with individuals of recognized significance in local, state, or national history. The house does not retain sufficient historic integrity to reflect its connection to Ward Brown or Ewart Wilson.

The property is also not recommended eligible under Criterion C for its architectural significance. While it retains its American Foursquare form, extensive alterations—including reconstructed porches, replacement windows and doors, and modified fenestration—compromise its integrity. Unlike the NRHP-eligible Joseph Wells House (BN0747) which retains a high degree of integrity, the Brown-Wilson House no longer serves as a strong representative example of the type due to its material and design alterations, and the reconstruction has not achieved significance in its own right.

The site is not recommended eligible under Criterion D for its potential to yield information. For a property to be eligible under Criterion D, a property must meet two requirements: (1) it must have, or have had, information that contributes to our understanding of human history and prehistory, and (2) the information must be considered important. The property is not likely to yield any new information pertaining to the history of building design and technology and is therefore not recommended eligible under Criterion D.

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