

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Wiseman, Ray, House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 7540 Linville Falls Highway n/a not for publication

city or town Altamont n/a vicinity

state North Carolina code NC county Avery code 011 zip code 28647

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jeffrey J. Crow SAPO 10/16/96
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State of Federal agency and bureau _____

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain): _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	1	Total

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

n/a

Number of contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

DOMESTIC: secondary structure

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Bungalow/Craftsman

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

walls stone

wood

roof asphalt

other wood

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1941

Significant Dates

1941

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Franklin, Ernest: stone mason

Franklin, Clingman: carpenter

Davenport, Gordon: carpenter

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Ray Wiseman House
Name of Property

Avery Co., North Carolina
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	7
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4	1	5	0	3	0
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3	9	8	3	3	7	0
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Zone Easting Northing

3

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Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Helen Cain

organization _____ date August 15, 1996

street & number 1146 Lyncrest Avenue telephone (601) 355-8230

city or town Jackson state MS zip code 39202

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

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

name Mr. and Mrs. C. Eugene Cain

street & number 1146 Lyncrest Avenue telephone (601) 355-8230

city or town Jackson state MS zip code 39202

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Description

The Ray Wiseman House, an Arts-and-Crafts bungalow reflecting the Craftsman influence, was built in 1941 of native river rock by the local master stone mason Ernest Franklin, a member of the well known family of local stone masons. The bungalow is placed in a rural setting in the community of Altamont in Avery County on the original roadbed of old US Highway 221 at its junction with SR 1113 (Bowman Road). This location allows the house to nestle at the base of a southfacing slope. The house rests on the leveled land in front of an embankment that was cut during the building of the old US 221. Flanking are two large trees, a maple on the east and a venerable oak on the west, already well grown when the house was situated so as to face south across US 221 toward the 1895 Watkins House occupied by Uncle Clarence Wiseman. The large open area in front of the house is lawn, originally separated from the highway by a post and board fence which no longer exists. The bungalow is landscaped with native rhododendron interspersed between globeform arborvitae with columnar arborvitae at the corners of the front projecting gable. The arborvitae are the elements of the original plantings as remembered by family and as shown in documentary photographs. The front walkway is composed of large native stepping stones. The house, built of local water-polished river stone taken from the banks of the Linville River following the flood of 1940, sits low to the ground and appears in complete "earth-hugging" harmony with the surrounding landscape. At the time of construction, the nearby fields were used for cattle grazing, but now the bungalow is surrounded by acres of trees in row upon row and include Frazier fir, Blue Spruce, White Pine and other varieties grown for the Christmas tree market. Rows of trees are visible behind the house as well as on the land directly across US 221 belonging to Three Oaks Ltd., a nursery business headquartered in the 1895 Queen Anne Style Watkins house.

Access to the house has always been from Bowman Road on the west that leads into the old roadbed, now a graveled double pull-in, the northernmost of which leads into the non-contributing garage of later construction. The remains of an old low stacked stone wall at the base of the embankment behind the house extend to the east towards the Sallie Wiseman house. Behind the wall on the bank at one time had been planted roses and bulbs with a wind-

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break row of fir trees at the top of the bank. The roses and bulbs still exist in the area behind the wall, though the windbreak row of firs is gone. The bank of naturalized daffodil still present a cheerful Spring greeting to passersby. Stepping stones of large slabs of rock along the front of the wall lead to steps of rock dug into the bank approximately two-thirds of the way towards the Sallie Wiseman house, allowing Ray Wiseman's easy and safe access to his parents' home on the northeast hill slope. Today the path and wall are mostly grown over with grass and the stones visible only here and there. Inadequate care and maintenance of the wall have caused the stones to loosen, but a restoration of this wall is underway.

To the north, approximately three miles, is Crossnore Presbyterian Church, a stone church built in the Craftsman tradition by the stone mason William Erwin Franklin and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A few miles further north is Linville with its historic district of homes styled in the tradition of the Craftsman influence on the vernacular building of this area of Western North Carolina.

THE RAY WISEMAN HOUSE 1941

Contributing Building

The 1941 Ray Wiseman House, an Arts-and-Crafts bungalow, is located on a one-acre tract of land in rural Avery County on the west side of NC 194 and US 221 at the intersection with SR 1113 (Bowman Road). The one-story, south-facing house is built of native waterpolished river stone gathered from the fields and roads after the flood of the Linville River in 1940. Built in the Craftsman style, it is surmounted by a main side-gabled roof pierced by an interior stone chimney and flanked by lower gabled roofs that shelter slightly offset side wings, the easternmost of which has an interior end chimney. The asphalt-shingled roofs all feature overhanging eaves, exposed rafter ends, and exposed decorative purlins and braces. The gable ends of the roofs are finished in board-and-batten except for the kitchen wing which is clad in horizontal wood lap siding.

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The house is a pedimented bungalow, wider than deep, the entrance of which is on center creating direct access to the living room. The one-story plan is composed of six rooms organized into east-west parallel rows, with a living room, dining room, and kitchen on the front, and two bedrooms connected by a short hall with a bath on the rear. The living room and dining room back walls align, and a hallway running parallel to the front rooms links the bedrooms and provides access to the single windowed bath at the rear. The narrow hallway also has a boxed or closed stairway leading to the attic. Adjoining rooms are all connected by cased openings. A back porch accessed from the kitchen, is located at the east rear and a sunroom at the west rear is accessed from the adjoining bedroom and from the side porch.

Defining the entrance doorway and its flanking windows is a large intersecting, projecting gable finished in board-and-batten. Centered on the large front gable is a small gabled entry portico supported by a pair of turned columns that rest on a stone stoop gained by matching stone entry steps. The portico, with its exposed rafter tails and arched fascias, features a restrained sunburst in the gable end. The doorway is filled with a replacement, single-leaf door with a half-round, glazed panel resembling a fanlight. A southwest-facing, inset corner porch is located in the west-side wing and is supported by a single corner column that matches the columns of the portico. The wooden deck of the porch is gained by stone entry steps. The porch is accessed by two doorways, each filled with a single-leaf Craftsman-style glazed door, which probably echoed the design of the original entrance door. One door allows entry into the living room while the second allows entry into the west-facing sunroom which has two windows facing west and a single window to the rear. All windows of the house are filled with coupled four-over-one double-hung wooden sash, with the exception of the north wall of the easternmost bedroom in which the two windows are near the corners. Notable are the large dressed-stone window sills on every window and the standing-stone lintels over each window. Inserted in the exterior masonry under the paired windows in the living room and dining room are wrought iron supports for large window boxes. Window boxes have been rebuilt to resemble those remembered by Wiseman family members.

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The lower gabled east end is finished with horizontal wood lap siding. The kitchen at the front, in addition to the coupled south-facing windows, has an east-facing window placed to the right of the inside-end chimney; while the back porch to the rear has triple east-facing windows and is accessed from the rear of the house by a four light north-facing door which matches the four-over-one windows used throughout the house.

An interview with the constructing stone mason, Ernest Franklin, produced a description of the craftsmanship employed in constructing the house.¹ The stone foundation of the house was laid with the frame woodwork constructed all the way about the perimeter. The sole plate was bolted to the foundation; the corner posts were then put up, followed by the studs. To this was nailed the oak sheathing put in on the bias for wall strength. The studs are hand-sawn. The base plates are either 2x8 or 2x10 depending on the use. Rough window frames were constructed and when the finished windows were to be put in, a frame for them was ploughed out and they were fitted into that. The wooden walls and the eight-inch stone veneer are separated by felt insulation. These insulated wooden walls have grips in them which tie to and hold the stones. The wooden inner walls are tongue and groove boards, as are the ceiling boards which are nailed to the bottom of the joists. These inner house walls were then covered with heavy felt upon which wallpaper could be hung. The wooden floors throughout the house are double; the first or foundation floor is of six-inch wide, one-inch thick hemlock. Quarter sawn tongue and groove red oak, sawn in Altamont and sent to Johnson City, Tennessee for dressing, comprises the finished floor. Doors and windows used in the house were ordered through Spruce Pine Lumber Company in Spruce Pine, North Carolina.

The chestnut used throughout the house for the interior millwork was cut and sawn locally, hand-planed, and left in its original natural finish except for that in the kitchen which was originally painted. The baseboards throughout the house are one foot in height with a cap of molding. Framing the doors and windows are six-inch hand-planed sound chestnut boards in a natural finish. The doors are all original, having one large panel top and bottom and retain their original finish. The living

¹ Interview with Ernest Franklin, July and August, 1995.

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room features its original finely crafted post-and-lintel mantelpiece with moldings and a brick firebox. The mantelpiece is flanked by built-in cabinets with book shelves in the upper portion and paneled doors below. The bookcases feature scalloped detail in the front surrounds. All interior millwork is intact, hand-planed chestnut with its original unpainted finish that has developed a warm patina. The integrity of the interior of the house is outstanding and provides a remarkable document for middle-class taste of the early 1940s in Avery County. Original medallion design wallpaper remains in the sunroom, and sections of the kitchen where it is covered by plywood paneling. The sunroom retains the original white, wooden venetian blinds on the windows and door. All of the original light fixtures have survived as well as the original step-back door hardware, with the original chrome hardware in the bath. The bath retains the original fixtures, stamped 1941.

Garage

Early 1960s

Non-contributing Structure

The property includes a non-contributing garage southwest of the house. The gabled roof garage features a lower wall of concrete block and an upper wall clad in board-and-batten siding like that of the house. The asphalt shingled roof features overhanging eaves with exposed rafter ends resembling those of the house.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

The Ray Wiseman House, an excellent example of a Craftsman style bungalow, features an exterior of native Linville River water-polished stone with trim, flooring, and woodwork of Avery County chestnut and oak. The Ray Wiseman House embodies all of the premises of the Craftsman style: site, interior plan, the use of native materials such as the river rock and the chestnut wood, and the use of all native craftsmen in the master stone mason and carpenters. The house's design, architectural integrity, and well documented construction by highly-skilled local craftsmen embodies local historical significance and satisfies the National Register Criterion C. Built in 1941 during the interwar era, this house is a well preserved document of middle class tastes of the era just prior to World War II. The history of one family ownership is responsible for the house's outstanding architectural integrity, which includes the survival of all original millwork, hardware and bathroom fixtures as well as original wallpaper in the sunroom. Because of its exterior material, the house is well-suited to the area and is a member of a group of nearby houses featuring native stone construction. It is also related to the landmark Craftsman-style Crossnore Presbyterian Church (NR 1996) both by style and through its association with the Franklin family of masonry craftsmen.. The combination of the bungalow-style plan provided by the owners, the local stone mason and local carpenters, together with the use of native river rock and native wood, combine to create the classic bungalow but with features which make it a true reflection of its natural setting. Moreover, the Wiseman House is significant as the work of local craftsman Ernest Franklin, who, although prolific in the area, typically constructed only features of houses such as stone foundations and low-lying retaining walls. Of the four area buildings Franklin constructed, the Wiseman House remains the most intact example of his work and the example which best conveys the skills and workmanship for which Franklin was known. Further, of all of Franklin's work, it best exemplifies the merger of the more nationally prominent bungalow style with the purely localized vernacular work of this local craftsman.

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Historical Background

Ray William Wiseman (1910-1981) was born in Altamont Township in Avery County, the second son of Carter Hickey and Sara Elizabeth Dellinger Wiseman. He is the direct descendant of William Edward Wiseman who was born on St. James Street, London, England in 1741, and who was one of the first settlers of the Toe River Valley and lower Avery County. After stealing aboard a ship to America, young William was sold as an indentured servant to pay for his passage aboard the ship. By 1761 he had made his way to the mountains of North Carolina and during the Revolution he was a shoe maker for troops at King's Mountain.² The famous French botanist, Andre Michaux, spent time in what then was known as Bright's Settlement in this general area in 1794 and recorded that Wisemans were among the principal inhabitants.³

The land in Altamont Township on which the Ray Wiseman built his house was part of the parcel his father, Carter Hickey Wiseman, acquired in 1915. This was the same year that the Sallie Wiseman house, which stands several hundred yards to the northeast of the Ray Wiseman house, was built. Carter Hickey Wiseman purchased the tract from W. H. Ollis on January 1, 1915.⁴ In 1923 the Wisemans constructed a store next to the Sallie Wiseman house. In 1925 Sallie Wiseman became the Postmaster for Altamont and an addition to the store was constructed in 1932 by Gordon Davenport and Clingman Franklin to house an expansion of the store and the post office. The post office at Altamont was discontinued in 1956 and the store closed shortly afterwards.⁵

In January of 1941, Ray Wiseman acquired from his father and from his uncle, Clarence Wiseman, the parcel of land at the intersection of US 221 and Bowman Road on which to construct his house.⁶ This purchase closely followed his marriage to Sara Elizabeth Doggett (1913-1992) from Forest City, Rutherford County. The couple met when she accompanied her brother, James, on one of his trips to purchase cattle from Ray and his father. Carter Hickey and Ray Wiseman raised cattle and grew garden

² *Avery County Heritage: Genealogies*, 228-229.

³ Cooper, "History of Avery County," in *Avery County Heritage*, 230-232.

⁴ *Avery County Deeds*, Book 5, Page 504.

⁵ *Avery County Heritage: Genealogies*, 228-229; Interview with Don Wiseman, August 1995.

⁶ *Avery County Deeds*, Book 43, Pages 73-75.

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produce in Altamont. After their marriage, Sara and Ray Wiseman lived with his parents in the Sallie Wiseman house. Sara Wiseman came from a prosperous family and was largely responsible for the choice of the house plan, style, and fixtures. According to the builder, Ernest Franklin, Sara Wiseman gave him a hand-drawn plan with only inside room dimensions. He took that sketch and calculated the outside dimensions for the foundation and the house.⁷ After Ray Wiseman's death in 1981, Sara lived in the house until her death in 1992. The house remained closed for about a year until current owners Helen and Gene Cain purchased it. Maintenance of the house and restoration of the grounds, which continues, began in the summer of 1994.

Architectural Context

The Wiseman house is a true document of the influence of the Craftsman style on the building traditions in this area of Avery County in the mountains of Western North Carolina. It is also a intact example of a regional trend in which natural, indigenous materials were used so that the dwelling blended harmoniously with its surroundings. Although building materials such as stone and log were used often in the construction of tourism-related buildings associated with wealthier segments of society such as the Grove Park Inn (NR 1973) in Asheville and the resort buildings of the Linville Historic District (NR 1979), the use of rustic materials became a relatively common architectural idiom for domestic buildings owned and occupied by year-round middle class residents as well. By mid-century, rustic stone houses, churches and commercial buildings occurred across the breadth of the regional landscape.

The local tradition of the Craftsman influence in building began in the early decades of the twentieth century with the building of many Craftsman style houses in the Linville Area. Linville began in the 1890s with the opening of the Eseeola Lodge. Donald MacRae, industrialist and real estate developer had acquired land around what is now Linville in 1875. In the early days of this development, MacRae commented, "I think our way to success lies in making Linville a place of beauty and a popular resort for

⁷ Interview with Ernest Franklin, August 1995.

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health and pleasure for the best class of cultivated people possessed of means to aid in adorning and beautifying the valley."⁸ Though his efforts did not meet with immediate success, by the late 1890s the area was beginning to develop as the resort he envisioned. By the turn of the century houses began to be built in Linville.

The bungalow was well-suited to Linville. It was the most popular house style in the first three decades of the twentieth century. Although originating in California, the Craftsman style spread rapidly over the country as the newest fashion in building. The bungalow represented a distinct change in style. The vertical became the horizontal with the earth-hugging look of the natural setting. Brought into the resort area of Linville by people building houses to escape the heat and humidity of the summers in the lower elevations, the Craftsman style influenced tastes in the surrounding mountains.

The Ray Wiseman house gains further significance as an unaltered example of the highly skilled stone masonry of Ernest Franklin. Franklin, along with several members of his family, built houses and other buildings in and around the Altamont community in the early twentieth century. In the early 1920s the Crossnore Presbyterian Church (NR 1996) was built and stands today as a landmark of the Craftsman influence on this area. Ernest Franklin, master stone mason for the Ray Wiseman house, and the rest of the Franklin family attended the church and William Erwin Franklin, a relative of Ernest Franklin, worked as the stone mason on Crossnore Church. When asked to build the Ray Wiseman house, Ernest Franklin remembers that his thoughts for the exterior construction naturally turned to the river stone and Craftsman Style used in the Crossnore Church and the use of ornamental stonework on the other nearby buildings.⁹ Ray Wiseman was also familiar with the style of the Crossnore Presbyterian Church because as a young man he had assisted his uncle, Mack Dellinger, in hauling rocks for the construction.¹⁰ Ernest learned the trade from his father, Lenoir Franklin, and was influenced by other relatives including his cousin, William Erwin

⁸ John Parris, "Linville: One Hundred Years of Mountain Charm."

⁹ Interviews with Ernest Franklin, July and August, 1995.

¹⁰ Interview with Dr. Carter Wiseman, July 1995.

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Franklin, stone mason for the Crossnore Church. Ernest Franklin, who was also a skilled carpenter, constructed his own log house with a stone foundation and porch in 1932. He built stone porches for the Sallie Wiseman house and the Don Wiseman house and constructed a stone service station at the junction of US 221 and NC 194. The work of Ernest Franklin is visible in stone porches and retaining walls throughout the Altamont community. He worked on a plain rectangular stone dwelling located across US 221 from the Crossnore Church. One of the only other entire dwellings which Ernest Franklin completed is the Thern Wise house, a circa 1935 stone house featuring a full-facade recessed porch. The Ray Wiseman proved a benchmark in Franklin's career. It remains the only purely Craftsman style house he constructed and marks the merger of a more national style of architecture into what was a localized idiom. While Franklin's work of the previous decade is important for its purely vernacular expression, it is the 1941 Wiseman House which signifies the adaptability of a local building tradition to the popular Craftsman style.

In the late 1930s, the housing industry began to recover from the long drought caused by the Great Depression with the Cape Cod and Georgian Revival styles in greatest favor. However, in the rural setting of Avery County, a bungalow of Craftsman tradition was the choice of the Wisemans and other area middling families. Nearby examples of the use of native materials in Craftsman architecture, especially notable at Linville, served as a model for local residents wishing to emulate their far wealthier neighbors. Furthermore, the bungalow became a common element of the built landscape because it was the first house style to receive national exposure through accessible publications like *Ladies' Home Journal* and *the Craftsman*.

The Ray Wiseman house is the creation of Ernest Franklin (1915-1995). His work embodies the master stone masonry and teaching of his father, Lenoir Franklin, as well as that of his brothers Elgie and Lloyd. Lenoir Franklin was a direct descendant of Josiah Franklin, born in Ecton England in 1658, who decided to emigrate to American in 1683 after witnessing the execution of his father for being a Presbyterian. William Erwin Franklin, stone mason of Crossnore Presbyterian Church and Ernest Franklin, builder of the Ray Wiseman house, were cousins, both being great,

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great, great, great grandsons of Josiah.¹¹ Both came from the tradition of excellence in styles and designs of masonry.

It was Ernest Franklin's father, Lenoir, who was his son's closest inspiration. According to local tradition, "around 1925, after studying many books on different styles and designs of masonry, (Lenoir) concentrated his effort on native stone masonry."¹² It was this skill he passed on to his son, Ernest, and which is so well displayed in the stonework of the Ray Wiseman house. The stone for the Ray Wiseman house was hauled by Wiseman and Mack Dellinger the short distance from the Indian Cliffs area of the Linville River to the house site. Mack Dellinger's principal occupation was hauling timber and lumber and also working with his brother, Arthur, in the sawmill business.

Ernest Franklin had his own ideas for the Wiseman house and carried them out to the letter. After building the stone chimney and the living room fireplace, he felt that he should craft the mantel as well as finish the brickwork for all to be in harmony. He had no plan given to him for the mantel, but gave his own interpretation of a traditional post and lintel form.

The construction phase of the rock house was long, as stone masons could only complete about three square yards of stone work each day. Hoisting the stone up the scaffolding became a problem towards the later building stage as a man hired to do this would not bring the rocks up higher than his head. Ernest Franklin carried much of the stone for the upper portion of the house himself.

Franklin worked on many buildings in this area of Avery County, among them the Therm Wise house and the service station at the intersection of NC 194 and US 211, both built in the Craftsman Style of the stone found at the Indian Cliffs in the Linville River. Prior to the building of the Ray Wiseman house he had worked in 1930 with his father, Lenoir Franklin, and his brothers on the cellar rockwork and battered stone porch piers of the

¹¹ *Avery County Heritage: Biographies and Genealogies*, 81-82.

¹² *Ibid*, 87.

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Sallie Wiseman house. In the late 1940s he added the stone porch balustrade of the Don Wiseman bungalow. Both the Sallie Wiseman and Don Wiseman houses are in the immediate vicinity of the Ray Wiseman house. In 1932, Ernest Franklin built his own Craftsman style stone and log home where he lived the rest of his life. In addition to the Therm Wise house and the old service station, he worked as well on the bluestone Pisgah Methodist Church, the Altamont Methodist Church, and a circa 1940 stone dwelling across US 221 from the Crossnore Presbyterian Church.¹³

Clingman Franklin (1880-1959), brother of Lenoir, and Gordon Davenport (1885-1977) were the carpenters on the Ray Wiseman house. In 1923, Davenport was known to have been doing carpentry work in this area. Franklin is said to have been the master carpenter and did the finish work. Clingman Franklin and Gordon Davenport developed and perfected the style of exposed roof rafters in this area of western North Carolina.¹⁴

The woodwork was crafted from local lumber. Red oak lumber for the floors was sawn at Mack Dellinger's saw mill in Altamont and sent to Miller Brothers in Johnson City, Tennessee for planing. Oak, other than red oak, was desirable for purchase by the State of North Carolina at twenty-eight dollars a thousand board feet, whereas chestnut was twelve dollars a thousand board feet and red oak about the same. The chestnut for the interior millwork was cut at Arthur Dellinger's sawmill and taken to Mack Dellinger's sawmill in Altamont for finishing. Chestnut was plentiful in this area and it was not uncommon for a chestnut tree to be six feet at the through section.¹⁵

The Ray Wiseman House stands as an intact reminder of the hard work and skilled craftsmanship produced by native-born builders before World War II. In isolated mountain communities throughout western North Carolina, people like Ernest Franklin practiced a tradition handed down from fathers and uncles. They used native materials such as river stone and chestnut with which they were familiar to create a truly localized building idiom, but one which reflected the influence of national architectural trends.

¹³ Interview with Ernest Franklin, July 1995.

¹⁴ Interview with Ernest Franklin, August 1995.

¹⁵ Ibid.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries of the nominated property are all of parcel number 9822-00-99-1079-00000 as shown on Avery County Tax maps on file in the County Tax Office in Newland, N.C.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property is the house lot conveyed to Ray Wiseman in 1941 and represents all the property historically associated with the Ray Wiseman House.

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Photographs

Wiseman, Ray, House

Altamont

Avery County, North Carolina

Photographer: Helen Cain

October 17, 1995

Negatives in files of North Carolina Division of Archives and
History, Western Office, Asheville, North Carolina

#1 Full front south elevation

#2 Northeast end and rear elevation

#3 Southwest end elevation

#4 Interior view of living room showing original hand-planed
chestnut woodwork and fireplace with wood pilastered
mantlepiece flanked by built-in bookcases. Original single-
leaf Craftsmanstyle glazed door accesses the porch.

#5 Original bathroom

#6 Original wallpaper and border in sunroom with hand-planed
chestnut woodwork

#7 Detail of exterior stonework

413

57'30"

414

NEWLAND 7.4 MI. LINVILLE 8.5 MI

4656 III SW
(NEWLAND)

417

55'

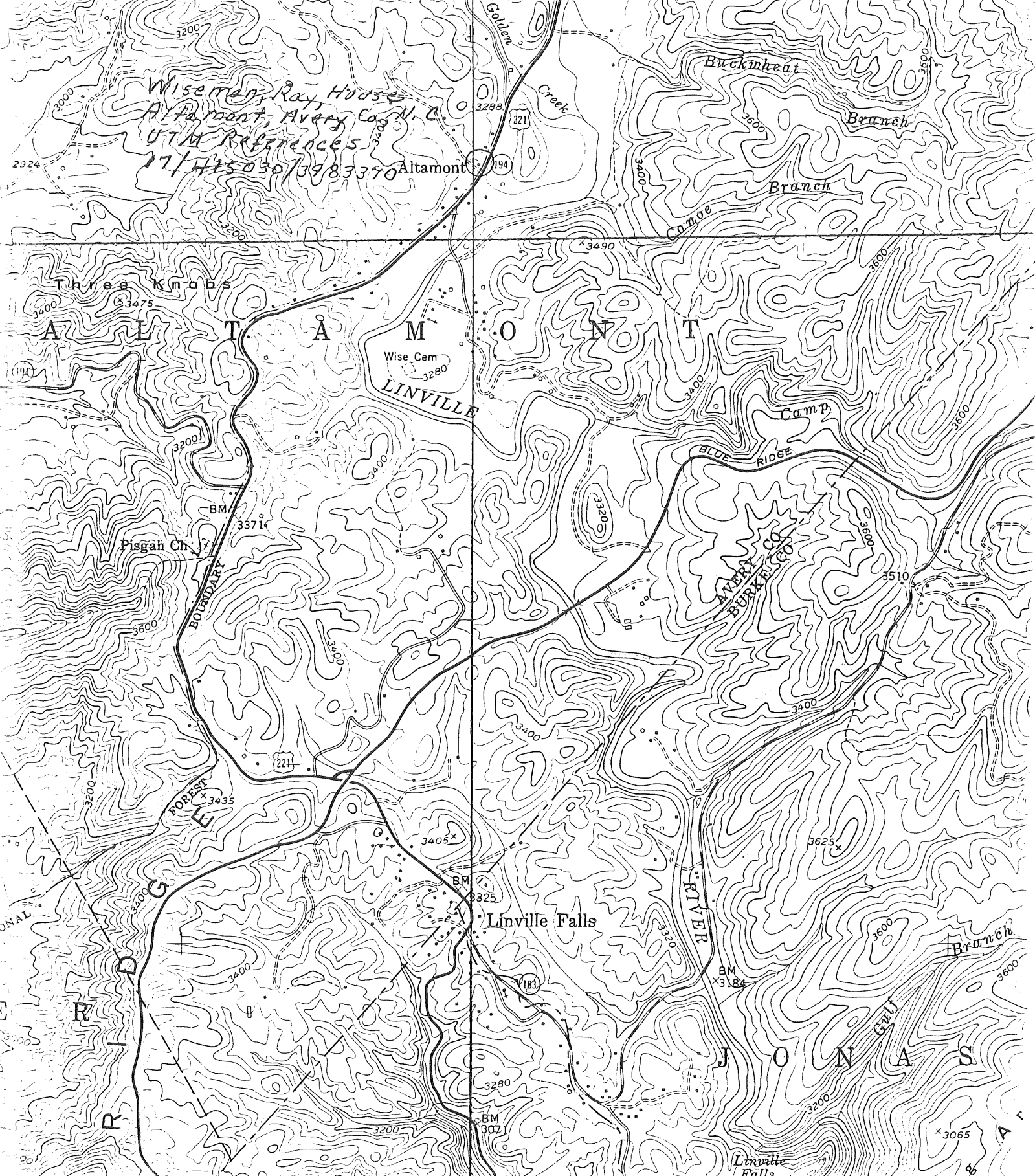
Wiseman, Ray House
Altamont, Avery Co. N. C.
UTM References
17/HRS 030/3983370

Altamont

Wise Cem
3280
LINVILLE

Linville Falls

Linville Falls



Three Knobs
3475
A T A M O N T
Pisgah Ch.
3371
3435
3405
3325
3221
3280
3071
3280
321
3490
3510
3625
3065
3065
86

Don W. Wiseman
Map # 80-1-10-4 by Michael M. Loxley

Scale 1" = 50'

Ray Wiseman House, Avery County, North Carolina
Survey of nominated property

