

HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY  
REPORT

**Replace Bridge No. 107 on SR 1015  
(Miller Street) over Bearskin Creek in  
Monroe, Union County, North Carolina  
TIP No. B-3543**

**State Project No. 8.2692201  
Federal Aid No. BRZ-1015(8)**

*(Piedmont Buggy Factory)*

North Carolina Department of Transportation  
Report Prepared by Mary Pope Furr

March 2000

**B-3543 - Replace Bridge 107 on SR 1015 over Bearskin Creek  
Union County**

**UN  
167**

HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY REPORT

**Replace Bridge No. 107 on SR 1015 (Miller Street) over  
Bearskin Creek in Monroe, Union County, North Carolina**  
**TIP No. B-3543**  
**State Project No. 8.2692201**  
**Federal Aid No. BRZ-1015(8)**



North Carolina Department of Transportation  
Report Prepared by Mary Pope Furr

March 2000

*Mary Pope Furr*

Principal Investigator  
Historic Architecture Section  
North Carolina Department of Transportation

*3-30-2000*

Date

*Barbara Church*

Barbara Church, Supervisor  
Historic Architecture Section  
North Carolina Department of Transportation

*3/30/00*

Date

**REPLACE BRIDGE NO. 107 ON SR 1015 (MILLER STREET) OVER  
BEARSKIN CREEK IN MONROE  
UNION COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA  
TIP NO. B-3543**

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Bridge No. 107 is located on Miller Street over Bearskin Creek in Monroe, Union County (Figure 1). The city has signed a Municipal Bridge Agreement (MBA) with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and proposes to replace Bridge No. 107 with funding provided by the Federal Highway Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation Program (FHBRRP). Bridge No. 107 is a two-lane concrete bridge built in 1955 and has a sufficiency rating of 42.1 out of 100. Based on NCDOT's records, the estimated remaining life of the bridge is four years if current conditions persist.

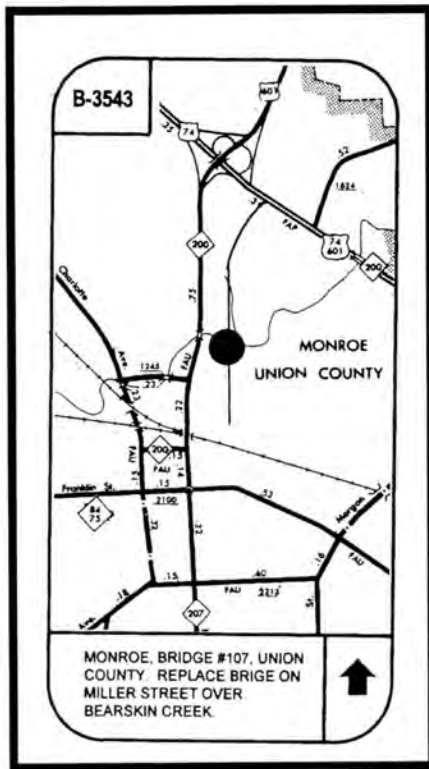


Figure 1 – Project location

The proposed replacement structure will be a reinforced concrete box culvert and the grade of Miller Street will be raised approximately 3 feet (0.9 meters). The project will also require approximately 340 feet (103.6 meters) of improvements to each roadway approach. The new roadway approaches will have 26-foot (7.9-meter) travelways with 2 foot-6 inch (0.8 meters) curb and gutter on each side. The design speed for the new structure will be 30 miles per hour. During construction the existing crossing will be closed and through traffic will be detoured along the existing streets.

The "do-nothing" alternative was considered but determined to be impractical. The existing bridge would continue deteriorating until it was unusable and unsafe. This would require closing the road or continued intensive maintenance. Rehabilitation of the existing bridge is not feasible due to its age and extent of deterioration.



## PURPOSE OF SURVEY AND REPORT

NCDOT conducted a survey and compiled this report in order to identify historic architectural resources located within the APE as part of the environmental studies performed by NCDOT and documented by a Categorical Exclusion (CE). This report is prepared as a technical addendum to the CE and it documents compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended. Section 106 of the NHPA requires that if a federally funded, licensed, or permitted project has an effect on a property listed in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation be given an opportunity to comment. This report is on file at NCDOT and available for review by the public.

## METHODOLOGY

NCDOT conducted the survey and prepared this report in accordance with the provisions of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Technical Advisory T 6640.8A (Guidance for Preparing and Processing Environmental and Section 4(f) Documents); the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological and Historic Preservation (48 FR 44716); 36 CFR Part 800; 36 CFR Part 60; and Survey Procedures and Report Guidelines for Historic Architectural Resources by NCDOT. This survey and report meet the guidelines of NCDOT and the National Park Service. In addition, this report conforms to the expanded requirements for architectural survey reports developed by NCDOT and the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (NCSHPO) dated February 2, 1996.

NCDOT conducted an intensive survey with the following goals: (1) to determine the Area of Potential Effects (APE), defined as the geographic area or areas within which a project may cause changes in the character or use of historic properties, if any such properties exist; (2) to identify all significant resources within the APE; and (3) to evaluate these resources according to the National Register of Historic Places criteria for evaluation.

The APE for historic architectural resources was delineated by a NCDOT staff architectural historian and reviewed in the field. The APE boundary is shown on the attached map (Figure 2).

The survey methodology consisted of a field survey and background research on the project area. A NCDOT staff architectural historian conducted field surveys on December 21, 1999 and February 9, 2000, by car and on foot. All structures over fifty years of age in the APE were photographed and located on an area map.

Background research was conducted at the NCSHPO, the North Carolina State Library in Raleigh and the Union County Library in Monroe.

## SUMMARY FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY

There are twelve properties (eleven residences and one commercial structure) greater than 50 years of age in the APE for this project. All have been photographed and further research undertaken to determine the feasibility of a mill village historic district encompassing all of the structures. This research concludes that the eleven residences, known as the Allen Street Mill Houses, are not historically connected to the commercial structure, nor do they possess the required integrity to be eligible for the National Register. However, investigations of the commercial structure, known as the Piedmont Buggy Factory, confirm that it is eligible for the National Register. There are no properties less than fifty years of age within the APE that qualify for the National Register under Criterion Consideration G.<sup>1</sup> In addition, there are no properties listed on either the National Register or the North Carolina State Study List located within the APE for the subject project.

*Properties Listed on the National Register or North Carolina State Study List:*  
None

*Properties Evaluated and Considered Eligible for the National Register:*  
Property #12 – Piedmont Buggy Factory

*Properties Evaluated and Considered Not Eligible for the National Register:*  
Properties # 1-11 – Allen Street Mill Houses

---

<sup>1</sup> Criterion Consideration G states that properties less than fifty years of age may be listed on the National Register only if they are of exceptional importance or if they are integral parts of districts eligible for the National Register.

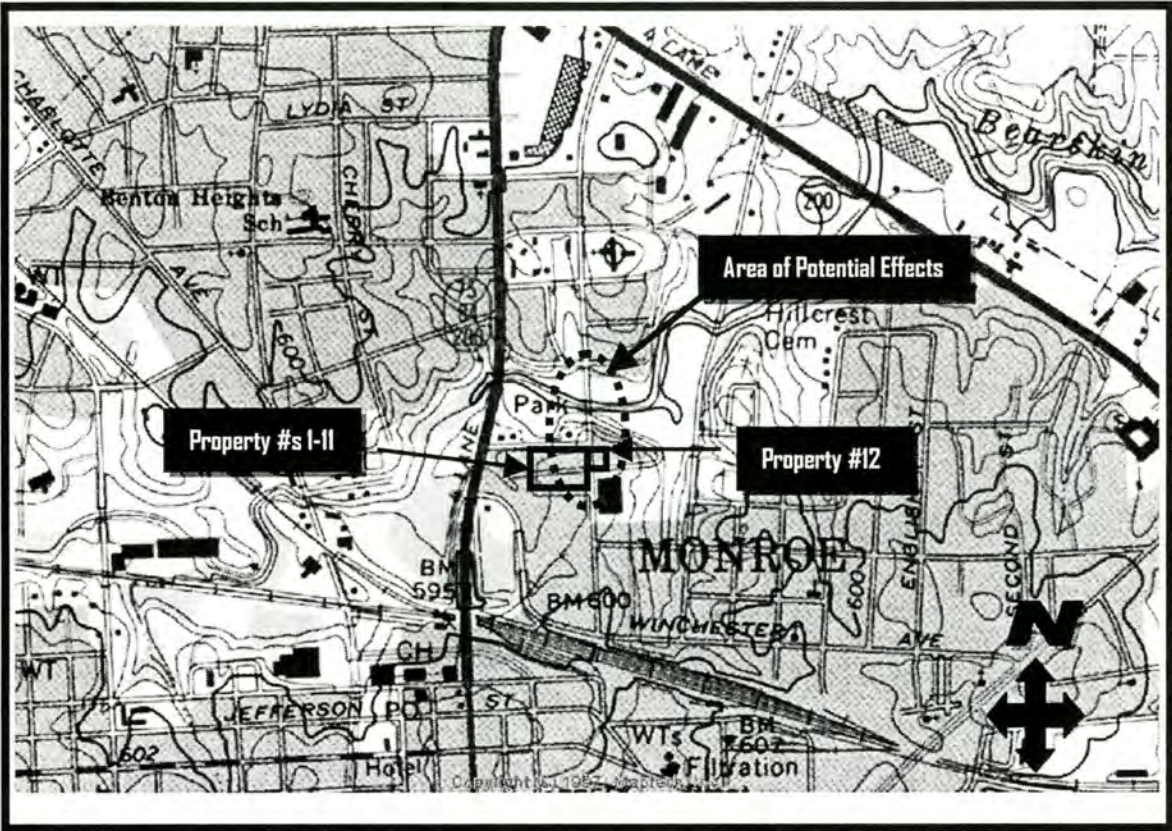


Figure 2 -- Project Area Map (USGS Topographic Map: Monroe, N.C.)



## PROPERTY INVENTORY AND EVALUATIONS

*Properties Evaluated and Considered Eligible for the National Register:*

### Property #12 – Piedmont Buggy Factory

#### Location.

The Piedmont Buggy Factory is located in the 500 block of Miller Street (SR 1015) in the city of Monroe.

#### Description.

The c.1910 Piedmont Buggy Factory is a three story brick building 205 feet deep by 68 feet wide and includes a 90-foot by 68-foot basement. This large building has features typical of the region's textile manufacturing buildings, including rows of segmental arched windows, a low pitched gable roof with plain brackets under the eaves, and an open plan interior supported by steel columns. Adjacent to the southern elevation of the structure is a tall, steel water tower erected c.1910 and capable of holding 50,000 gallons.<sup>2</sup> In her 1990 book on the architectural history of Union County, Suzanne Pickens stated that the Piedmont Buggy Factory, "is perhaps the most substantial historic industrial building in Monroe."<sup>3</sup>

The factory is located on a 6.270-acre site north of downtown Monroe. Included within the tax parcel of the site is a one-story brick warehouse built c.1910 to serve as the machine repair shop for the factory. A one-story frame office built before 1930 stands north of the factory. After 1956 an addition was built connecting the office to the factory. The factory and its associated buildings remain in good condition and retain sufficient integrity to convey the property's historical and architectural significance. The factory and associated buildings are assembled in the southern portion of the tax parcel, and the northern half of the parcel is a grassy area that gradually slopes downhill to Bearskin Creek.

#### Background Information.

Following the introduction of railroad service to Monroe in 1874, the city's economic dependence on agriculture ended and industrial ventures flourished. While Monroe's business district grew, an industrial center was established north of downtown and residential construction increased dramatically to accommodate the growing number of workers. As a result, industries such as the Piedmont Buggy Factory moved from their

---

<sup>2</sup> Sanborn Insurance Map, "City of Monroe," 1956.

<sup>3</sup> Suzanne Pickens "Sweet Union" *An Architectural and Historical Survey of Union County, North Carolina* (Monroe: Union County Historical Society, 1990), 45.

small downtown factories to larger structures in the newly established industrial center. In 1910 the buggy factory moved to a new three-story brick building on Miller Street next to the 1890s Monroe Cotton Mill.<sup>4</sup> In retrospect, it was poor timing because by the mid-1910s the automobile had taken over the vehicle industry and the buggy factory was forced to close in 1916.

One year later the property was purchased by M.K. Lee, a Monroe businessman who, along with several other local men, formed the Bearskin Cotton Mill Company. This group spent the next two years raising capital and retrofitting the factory for textile production. The Bearskin Cotton Mill opened in 1919 with 5,000 spindles and 250 employees.<sup>5</sup> In the same year the company engaged the services of a local builder named Marion Tucker to build a mill village for the workers.<sup>6</sup> Located north of the factory and across the creek, the Bearskin Cotton Mill Village was built along Willow, Cedar, and Wolfe Streets. Few of the original houses remain, but it appears that their design was typical of other early twentieth-century industrial residential communities. Advertisements for the mill village boasted of single-family frame dwellings on lots with individual garden plots, as well as communal grazing land for cattle, cow barns, and pig sties.<sup>7</sup>

Unfortunately the Bearskin Cotton Mill Company was nearly as short-lived as the Piedmont Buggy Factory. After only eleven years the mill was forced to cease operations as a result of the agricultural depression of the late 1920s and the economic fallout following the crash of the American Stock Market in 1929. In 1930, the property, including the industrial buildings and the residential village, was sold to its neighbor, the Monroe Cotton Mills Company. Monroe Mills (later Manetta Mills) promptly reopened the mill and continued to manufacture textiles in the former buggy factory as late as 1956. During a countywide survey of historic structures in 1988, the building was still owned by Monroe Mills, but stood vacant. Currently the unoccupied building is owned by Comar Reality Corporation and is surrounded by an eight-foot chain link fence.

---

<sup>4</sup> Mary Ann Lee, *An Inventory of Historic Architecture, Monroe, N.C.* (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1978), 88; and Pickens, 172.

<sup>5</sup> Lee, 88; and Pickens, 172.

<sup>6</sup> Pickens, 172.

<sup>7</sup> Lee, 9.



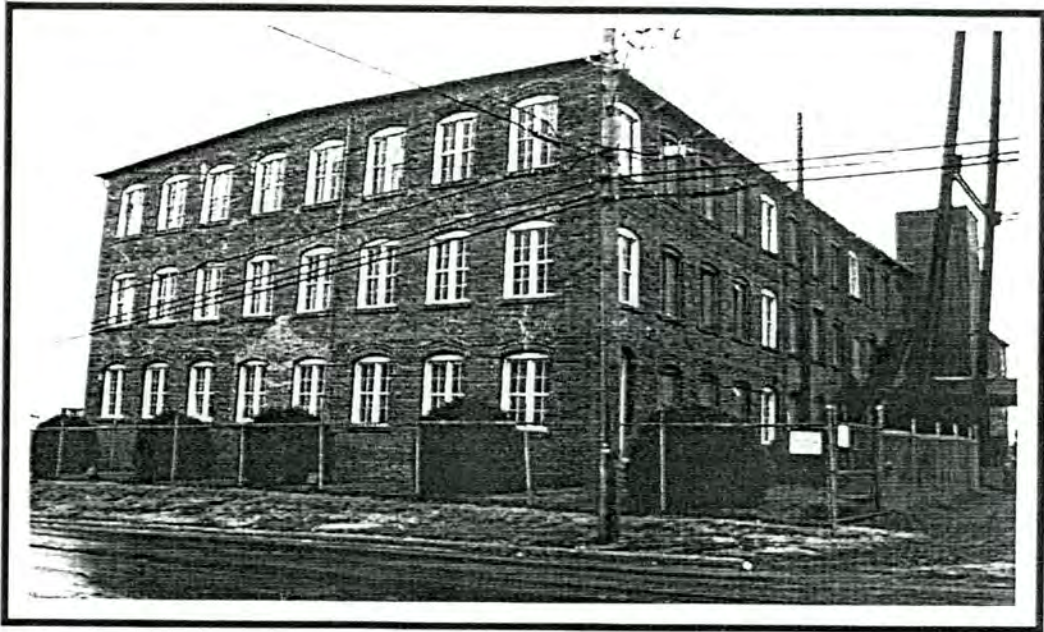


Figure 3 – Western and southern elevations of the Piedmont Buggy Factory



Figure 4 – Southern elevation of the Piedmont Buggy Factory,  
with water tower supports in the foreground

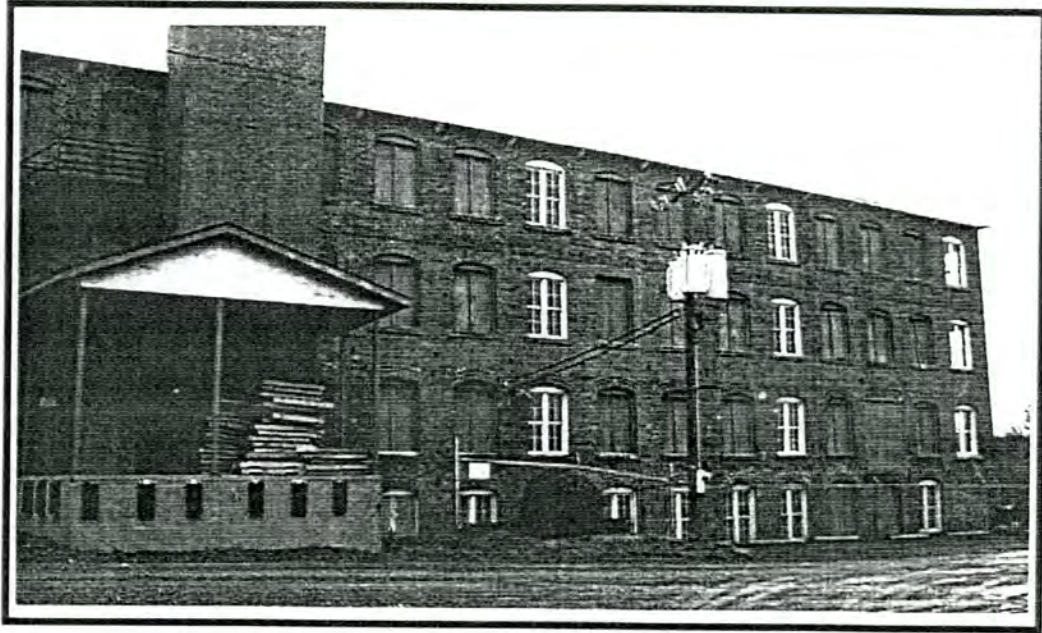


Figure 5 – Southern elevation of the Piedmont Buggy Factory

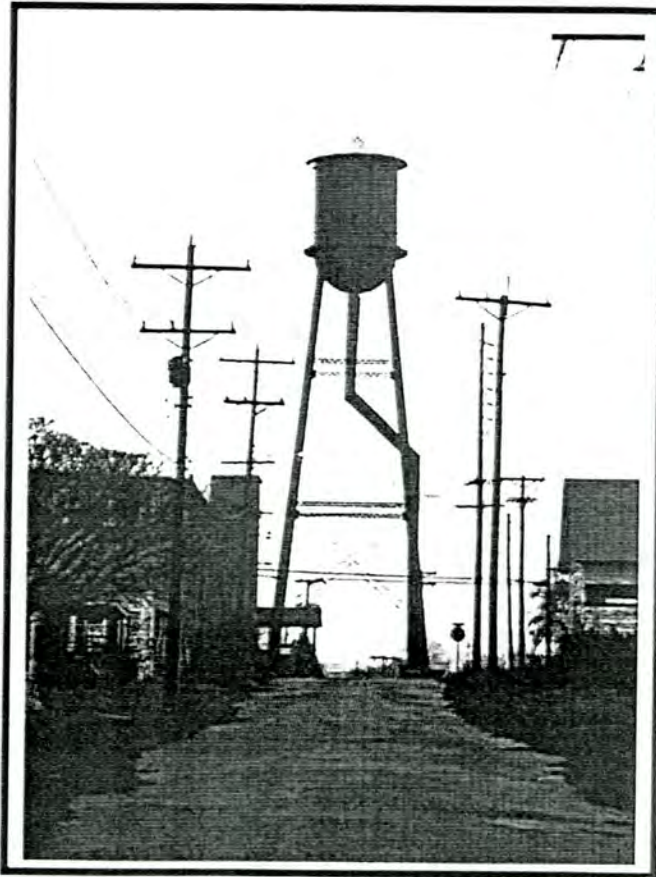


Figure 6 – c.1910 steel water tower for the Piedmont Buggy Factory





Figure 7 - Western elevation of Piedmont Buggy Factory, frame office is on left



Figure 8 - Northern and Western elevations of Piedmont Buggy Factory,  
1950s masonry addition is on the left

## Evaluation.

The Piedmont Buggy Factory is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A (event) for its significance in industry. *To be eligible for significance under Criterion A the property must retain integrity and must be associated with a specific event marking an important moment in American history or a pattern of events or historic trend that made a significant contribution to the development of a community. Furthermore, the property must have existed at the time and be documented to be associated with the events. Finally, the property's specific association must be important as well.*<sup>8</sup>

The Piedmont Buggy Factory is the only intact example of a manufacturing structure left in Monroe's former industrial center. This factory illustrates the growing size and importance of industry in Union County in the early twentieth century. The relocation of the factory from the small downtown area to the new industrial area north of town demonstrates the growth of manufacturing from small buildings to large industrial campuses. The Piedmont Buggy Factory continues to exhibit the characteristics of an industrial campus, complete with a factory, water tower, workshop, and office building. Unfortunately, the mill village associated with this campus has been greatly compromised by the destruction of a majority of the houses.<sup>9</sup>

The Piedmont Buggy Factory is not eligible for the National Register under Criterion B (person). *For a property to be eligible for significance under Criterion B, it must retain integrity and 1) be associated the lives of persons significant in our past, i.e., individuals whose activities are demonstrably important within a local, state, or national historic context; 2) be normally associated with a person's productive life, reflecting the time period when he/she achieved significance; and 3) should be compared to other associated properties to identify those that best represent the person's historic contributions. Furthermore, a property is not eligible if its only justification for significance is that it was owned or used by a person who is or was a member of an identifiable profession, class or social or ethnic group.*<sup>10</sup>

There are no persons of national, state, or local significance associated with the Piedmont Buggy Factory.

The Piedmont Buggy Factory is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C (Design/Construction) for its significance in architecture. *For a property to be eligible under this criterion, it must retain integrity and*

---

<sup>8</sup> National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 15* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 1991), 12.

<sup>9</sup> Pickens, 170.

<sup>10</sup> National Park Service, 15.



*either 1) embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; 2) represent the work of a master; 3) possess high artistic value; or 4) represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.*<sup>11</sup> The Piedmont Buggy Factory is the only intact example of a manufacturing structure left in Monroe's former industrial center. While the three-story brick building is very large compared to other industrial buildings in Monroe and Union County, it exhibits similar structural and design characteristics. These characteristics are: rows of segmental arched windows, a low pitch gable roof with plain brackets under the eaves, and an open plan interior supported by steel columns. The most striking element of the property is the tall, steel water tower. In numerous early-twentieth century photographs of Monroe, similar water towers dotted the city's landscape, but now this tower is the only one that remains.<sup>12</sup> Overall, the Piedmont Buggy Factory embodies the distinctive characteristics of an industrial campus, complete with a factory, water tower, workshop, and office building. Unfortunately, the mill village associated with this campus has been greatly compromised by the destruction of a majority of the houses.

The Piedmont Buggy Factory is not eligible for the National Register under Criterion D (Information Potential). *For a property to be eligible under Criterion D, it must meet two requirements: 1) the property must have, or have had, information to contribute to our understanding of human history or prehistory, and 2) the information must be considered important.*<sup>13</sup> The architectural and engineering components of the Piedmont Buggy Factory are not likely to yield information important in the history of building technology.

#### Boundary.

The historic boundary for the Piedmont Buggy Factory has been drawn according to the guidelines of National Register Bulletin 21, "Defining Boundaries for National Register Properties." The historic boundary for the Piedmont Buggy Factory follows the current property lines for parcel no. 09228228 as recorded in the Union County Tax Assessor's Office. The factory is located on a 6.270-acre site north of downtown Monroe. Included within the tax parcel of the site is a one-story brick warehouse built c.1910, a c.1910 steel water tower, and a one-story frame office built before 1930. The factory and associated buildings are

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>12</sup> Virginia A.S. Kendrick, *Looking Back at Monroe's History* (Monroe: City of Monroe, 1995), 82.

<sup>13</sup> National Park Service, 21.

assembled in the southern portion of the tax parcel, and the northern half of the parcel is a grassy area that gradually slopes downhill to Bearskin Creek.

The historic boundary for the Piedmont Buggy Factory is delineated on a portion of the Union County Tax Map No. 5435.15 (Figure 10).

National Register Boundary Justification.

The historic boundary for the Piedmont Buggy Factory encompasses all of the resources within the industrial campus that possess sufficient integrity to contribute to the property's historical and architectural significance. The mill village is not included within the current tax parcel, nor is it drawn within the historic boundary because of its lack of integrity.



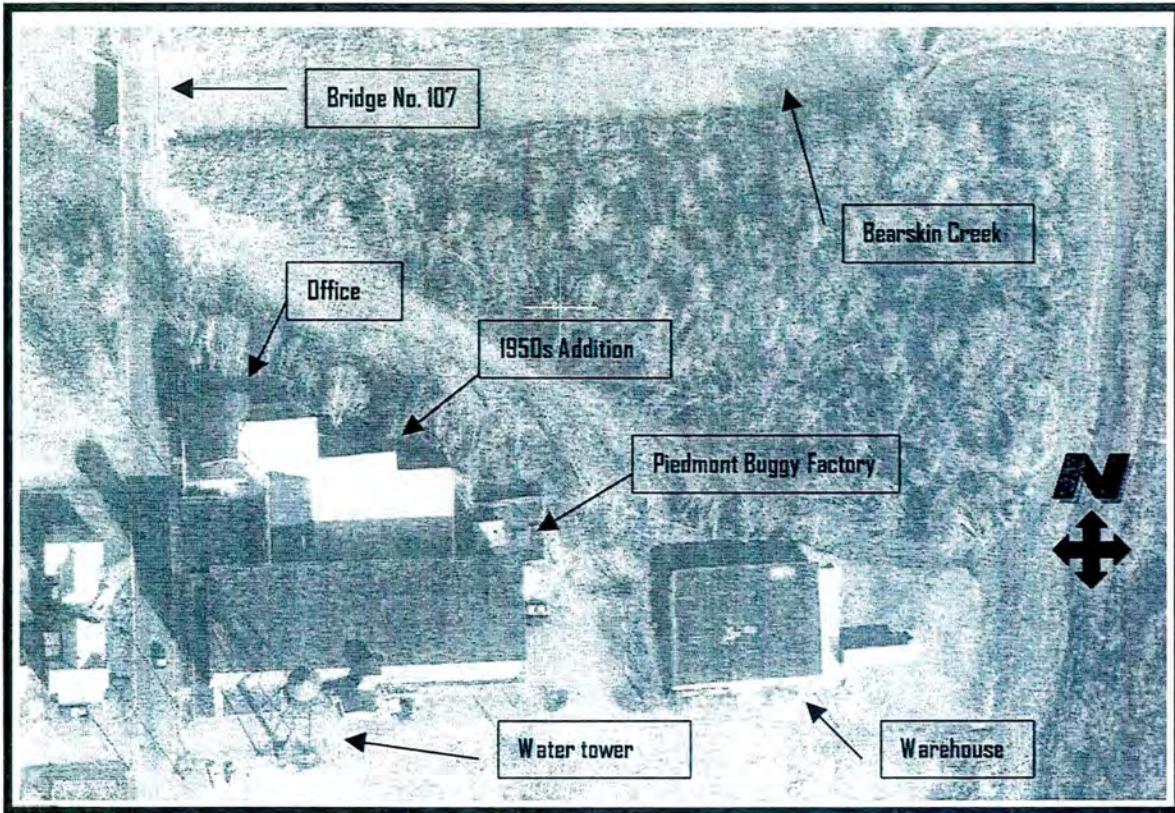


Figure 9 - Site Plan for the Piedmont Buggy Factory

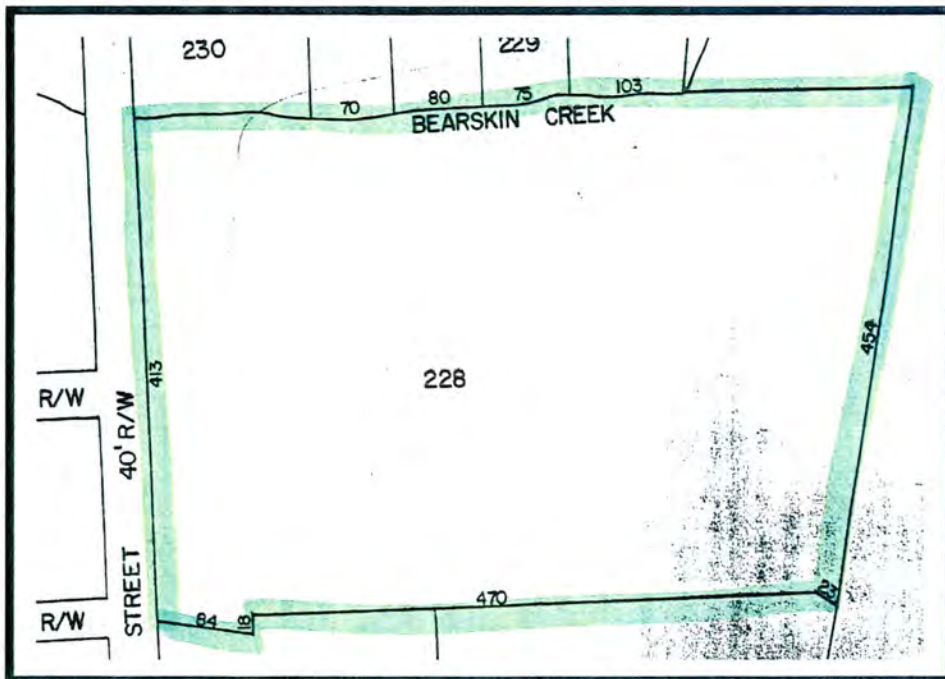


Figure 10 - Historic Boundary Map for the Piedmont Buggy Factory

*Properties Evaluated and Considered Not Eligible for the National Register:*

**Properties # 1-11 – Allen Street Mill Houses**

Location.

The Allen Street Mill Houses are located along Allen Street in the city of Monroe. Allen Street meets Miller Street at a T-intersection approximately 0.1 mile south of Bearskin Creek.

Description.

The eleven frame dwellings identified on Allen Street appear to be the sole survivors of the larger Monroe Cotton Mill Village. The houses are typical of other early-twentieth century industrial residential structures: single-story frame dwellings with brick foundations, gable roofs, interior chimneys, and porches facing the road. Unfortunately, the condition of the buildings has deteriorated rapidly since a 1988 countywide survey of historic structures, when the houses were photographed in good condition and inhabited. Since that time several of the structures have been demolished and most have severe problems with collapsed porches, incomplete roofs, and missing exterior weatherboards. The City of Monroe has condemned all eleven houses and plans to raze them.

Background Information.

Following the introduction of railroad service to Monroe in 1874, the city's economic dependence on agriculture ended and industrial ventures flourished. While Monroe's business district grew, an industrial center was established north of downtown and residential construction increased dramatically to accommodate the growing number of workers. Founded in 1890, the Monroe Cotton Mill Company (later known as Manetta Mills) was the first textile plant in the city's new industrial center. The village began to take shape shortly thereafter and building continued through c.1905.<sup>14</sup>

The village was never large and only contained Allen, Heath, and Meadow Streets. However, the small size allowed the Monroe Cotton Mill Company to provide individual garden plots for tenants, grazing land for livestock, and amenities such as running water, electricity, and sewer service.<sup>15</sup> In 1956 there were over thirty single-family houses recorded in Monroe Cotton Mill Village.<sup>16</sup> In 1988, twenty-five houses remained, all in good condition and inhabited.<sup>17</sup> Presently only eleven structures remain, and their condition has plummeted to the point that all have been condemned.

---

<sup>14</sup> Pickens.

<sup>15</sup> Pickens.

<sup>16</sup> Sanborn Insurance Map.

<sup>17</sup> Suzanne Pickens. "Union County Historic Structure Data Sheets." Unpublished manuscript (Raleigh: North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office. Survey and Planning Branch. 1988).



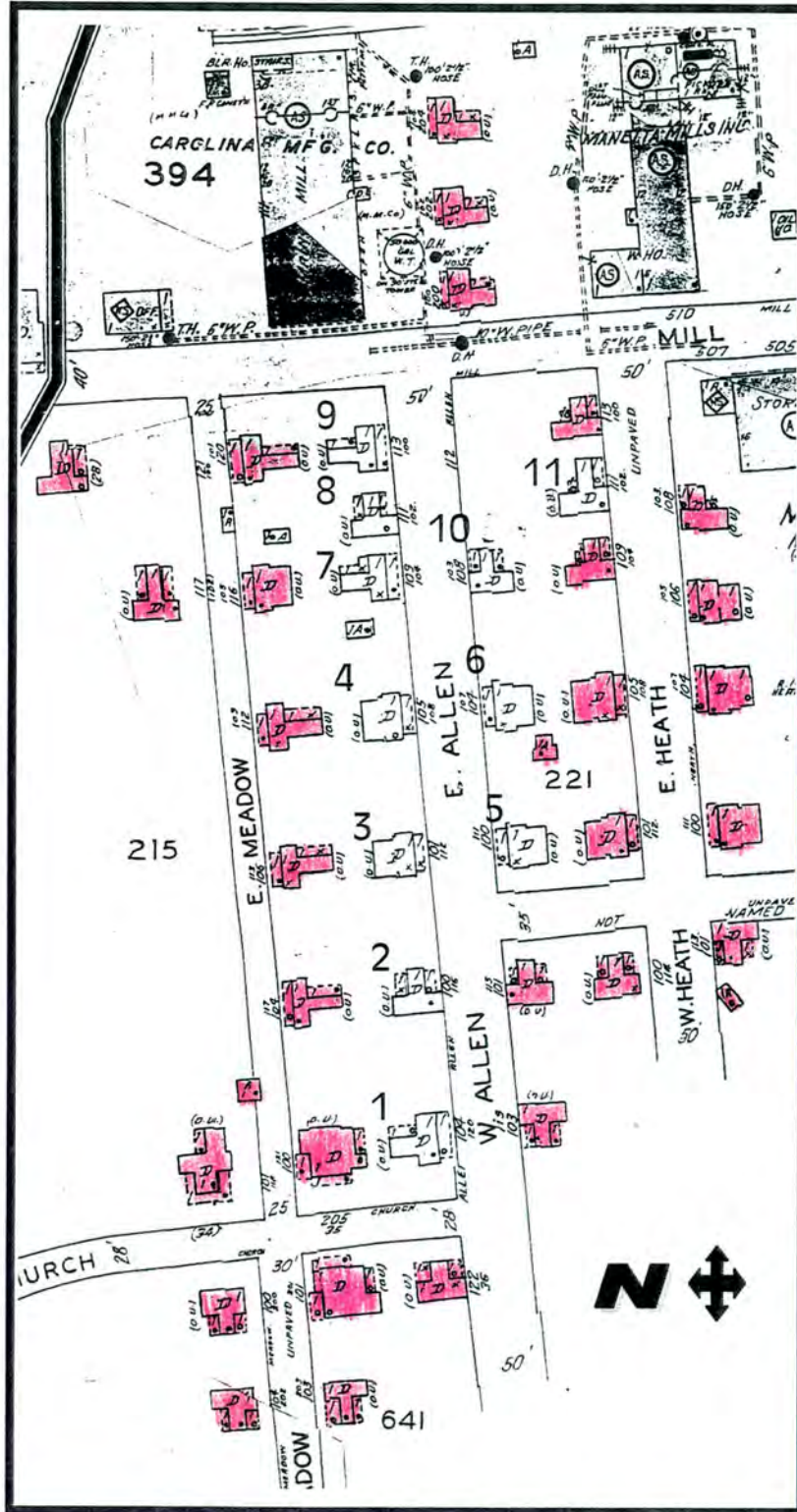


Figure 11 - Monroe Cotton Mill Village in 1956, houses in red are no longer standing, Sanborn Insurance Map



Figure 12 - Allen Street Mill Houses, looking East along Allen Street



Figure 13 - Allen Street Mill Houses, looking East along Allen Street





Figure 14 – Allen Street Mill Houses, House No. 1

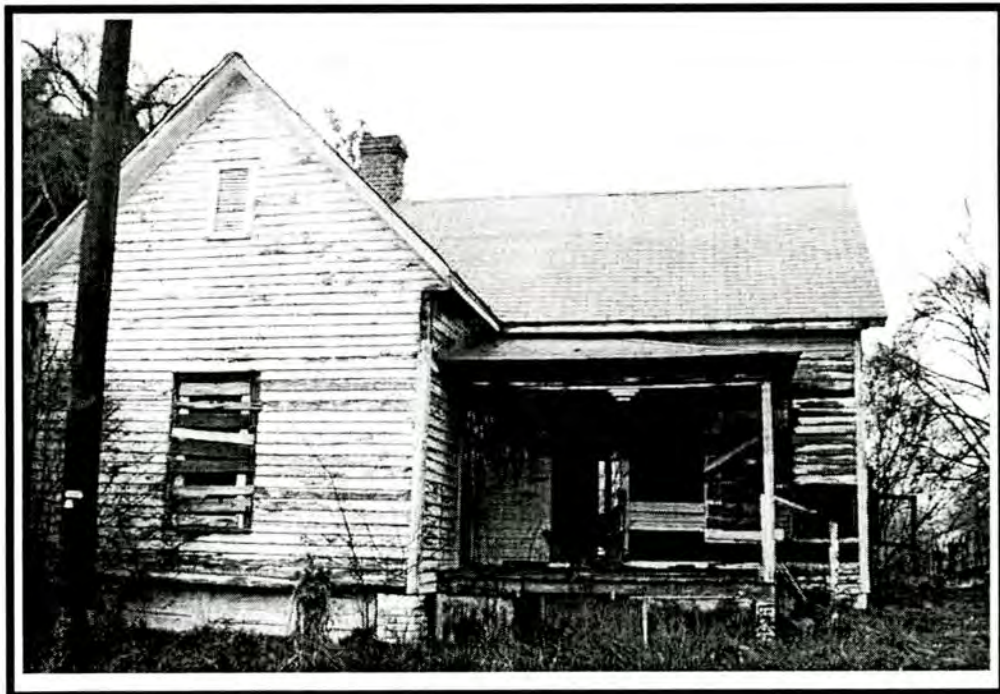


Figure 15 – Allen Street Mill Houses, House No. 2



Figure 16 – Allen Street Mill Houses, House No. 3



Figure 17 – Allen Street Mill Houses, House No. 4





Figure 18 – Allen Street Mill Houses, House No. 5

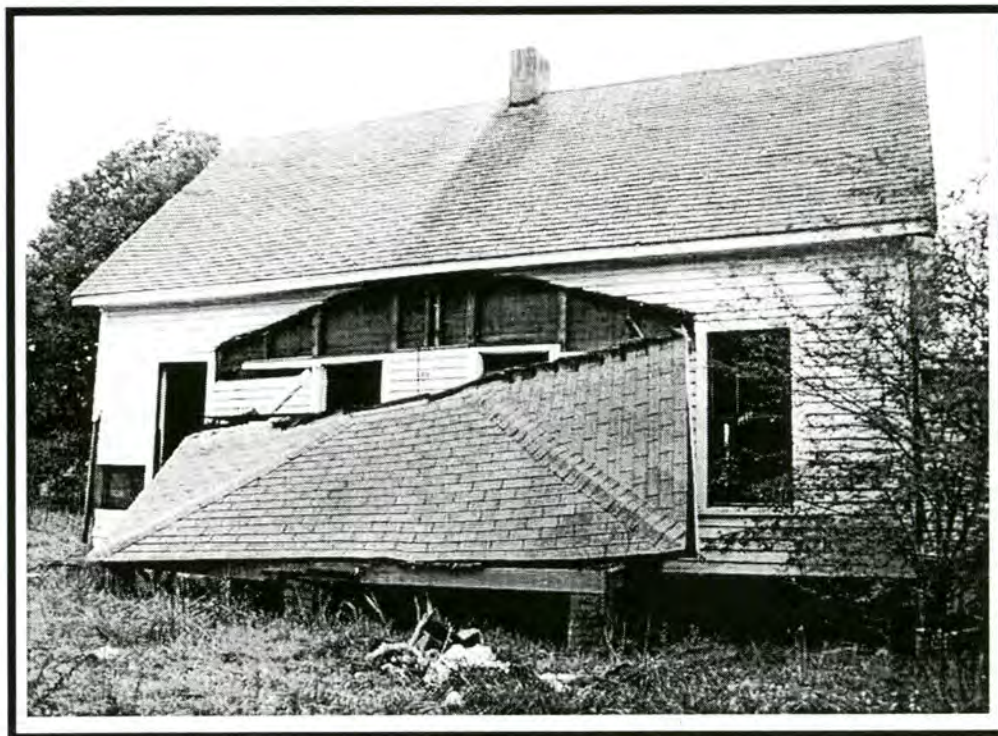


Figure 19 – Allen Street Mill Houses, House No. 6



Figure 20 - Allen Street Mill Houses, House No. 7



Figure 21 - Allen Street Mill Houses, House No. 8





Figure 22 – Allen Street Mill Houses, House No. 9



Figure 23 – Allen Street Mill Houses, House No. 10



Figure 24 – Allen Street Mill Houses, House No. 11



Figure 25 – Former Monroe Cotton Mill



## Evaluation.

The Allen Street Mill Houses are **not eligible** for the National Register under Criterion A (event) for their significance in community development and industrial development. *To be eligible for significance under Criterion A the property must retain integrity and must be associated with a specific event marking an important moment in American history or a pattern of events or historic trend that made a significant contribution to the development of a community. Furthermore, the property must have existed at the time and be documented to be associated with the events. Finally, the property's specific association must be important as well.*<sup>18</sup> While the Allen Street Mill Houses are associated with the Monroe's community development and industrial development in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, they do not possess the required integrity to be eligible for the National Register.

The Allen Street Mill Houses are **not eligible** for the National Register under Criterion B (person). *For a property to be eligible for significance under Criterion B, it must retain integrity and 1) be associated with the lives of persons significant in our past, i.e., individuals whose activities are demonstrably important within a local, state, or national historic context; 2) be normally associated with a person's productive life, reflecting the time period when he/she achieved significance; and 3) should be compared to other associated properties to identify those that best represent the person's historic contributions. Furthermore, a property is not eligible if its only justification for significance is that it was owned or used by a person who is or was a member of an identifiable profession, class or social or ethnic group.*<sup>19</sup>

There are no persons of national, state, or local significance associated with the Allen Street Mill Houses.

The Allen Street Mill Houses are **not eligible** for the National Register under Criterion C (Design/Construction) for their significance in architecture. *For a property to be eligible under this criterion, it must retain integrity and either 1) embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; 2) represent the work of a master; 3) possess high artistic value; or 4) represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.*<sup>20</sup> The Allen Street Mill Houses are typical of other early-twentieth century industrial residential structures: single-story frame dwellings with brick foundations, gable roofs, interior chimneys, and porches facing the road. Unfortunately, the condition of the buildings has deteriorated rapidly since a 1988 countywide survey of historic structures, when twenty-five houses were

---

<sup>18</sup> National Park Service. *National Register Bulletin 15* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior. 1991). 12.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

photographed and recorded in good condition. Since that time fourteen of the structures have been demolished and those that remain have severe problems with collapsed porches, incomplete roofs, and missing exterior weatherboards. The houses do not have the required integrity to be eligible for the National Register.

The Allen Street Mill Houses are **not eligible** for the National Register under Criterion D (Information Potential). *For a property to be eligible under Criterion D, it must meet two requirements: 1) the property must have, or have had, information to contribute to our understanding of human history or prehistory, and 2) the information must be considered important.*<sup>21</sup>

The architectural and engineering components of the Allen Street Mill Houses are not likely to yield information important in the history of building technology.

---

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 21.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Glass, Brent D. *The Textile Industry in North Carolina: A History*. Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1992.
- Kendrick, Virginia A.S. *The Heritage of Union County, North Carolina*. Monroe: Carolinas Genealogical Society, 1993.
- Kendrick, Virginia A.S. *Looking Back at Monroe's History*. Monroe: City of Monroe, 1995.
- Lee, Mary Ann. *An Inventory of Historic Architecture, Monroe, N.C.* Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1978.
- National Park Service. *National Register Bulletin 15*. Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 1991.
- National Park Service. *National Register Bulletin 21*. Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 1991.
- Pickens, Suzanne. *"Sweet Union" An Architectural and Historical Survey of Union County, North Carolina*. Monroe: Union County Historical Society, 1990.
- Pickens, Suzanne. "Union County Historic Structure Data Sheets." Unpublished manuscript. Raleigh: North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Survey and Planning Branch, 1988.
- Sanborn Insurance Map. "City of Monroe." 1956.
- Stack, Amos M. and Rowland F. Beasley, Sr. *Monroe and Union County*. Monroe: City of Monroe, 1902.
- Walden, H. Nelson. *History of Union County*. Monroe: self-published, 1964.