

NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
Office of Archives and History
Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Henry River Mill Village Historic District

Hildebran vicinity, Burke County, BK0086, Listed 05/09/2019

Nomination by Clay Griffith, Acme Preservation Services, LLC

Photographs by Clay Griffith, October 2017 and Annie McDonald, January 2019



Mill houses, garage, and company store, overall view to northwest



Henry River Road, view to northeast from north end of Henry River Bridge



Henry River Road, view to north



1:5,000
0 0.03 0.07 0.13 mi
0 0.05 0.1 0.2 km

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Henry River Mill Village Historic District

Other names/site number: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: 4216-4283 Henry River Road

City or town: Hildebran State: NC County: Burke

Not For Publication: N/A

Vicinity: X

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 at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

<p>Signature of certifying official/Title: <u>North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources</u> State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	<p>Date</p>
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<p>In my opinion, the property <input type="checkbox"/> meets <input type="checkbox"/> does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>Signature of commenting official:</p>	<p>Date</p>
<p>Title :</p>	<p>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>27</u>	<u>2</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>29</u>	<u>3</u>	Total

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling
DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling
DOMESTIC/secondary structure
COMMERCE/general store

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

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village are most commonly one- or one-and-a-half-story frame dwellings or outbuildings associated with the domestic life of the mill's employees. The mill village, though decaying, survives unspoiled by modern intrusions and material alterations. The Henry River Mill Village is a distinguished collection of unaltered mill housing in a planned rural village associated with North Carolina's important textile industry in the early twentieth century.

Narrative Description

The Henry River Mill Village Historic District is a compact residential district located on the Henry Fork River in the extreme eastern part of Burke County. The rural mill village lies on both sides of the two-lane Henry River Road (SR 1002), just north the river, and occupies steeply sloping terrain that rises from the river bed. The district is located approximately one mile south of Interstate 40 and one-and-a-half miles south of the town of Hildebran, where the railroad provided access to Hickory to the east and Morganton, county seat of Burke, to the west. Hickory, the economic center of neighboring Catawba County, is located approximately six miles northeast of the Henry River Mill Village.

The mill founders selected this site along the Henry Fork River in 1902 for its energy producing potential. The river carves a deep gorge as it meanders through rolling topography on the eastern edge of the South Mountains in Burke County. In the nineteenth century, a forge operated at this site while other mills operated further down river.²

The Henry River Mill Village Historic District was laid out as a planned village on the hillside overlooking the river and mill site. A curving network of paved and unpaved streets formed several looping blocks where the original thirty-five one- and one-and-a-half-story frame houses were located. A small group of communal buildings, including the brick company store, boarding house, and garage, stood near the center of the village. The two-story frame boarding house, which was demolished in the 1960s, was located immediately south of the store. It was erected to house workers who were building the mill. An open room on the second story was used for church services, meetings, and other large gatherings. A stone-lined reservoir is also located near the center of the village, with hydrants for the fire suppression system and a public spigot near the store.

At the north end of the village, near the top of the hill above the mill, is the well that served the community. A tunnel led from the well to a point on Henry River Road where the

² Edward W. Phifer Jr., *Burke County: A Brief History* (Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, 1979), 35. Henry Fork River was named for Henry Whitener, an early settler west of the Catawba River in the eighteenth century; Jacobs Fork River to the south was named for Whitener's brother.

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community pump was located. The stone-lined opening to the narrow tunnel remains visible near the pump, where residents drew water for household needs. None of the houses in the mill village have indoor plumbing. The well, which is now covered by a modern well house, stands on the edge of a wooded area that marks the north end of the mill village. The wooded area was once a baseball field, but has become overgrown.

Henry River Road, the main road winding through the Henry River Mill Village, connects to Hildebran to the north and several crossroads communities to the south. The road originally wrapped around southwest of the store and boarding house before the curving route passed between the village to the north and the mill to the south. The road forded the river at the shoals below the dam and southeast of the village before continuing to the south along present-day Rudisill Street. In 1910, a steel truss bridge was erected over the river at the shoals. The Henry River Manufacturing Company, owners of the mill, entered an agreement with the Burke County Board of Education to construct the bridge. Plans and specifications were provided by W. E. Walton of Morganton and the company paid for the construction of the bridge, which the county would reimburse upon completion. The county paid \$3,250 to the Henry River Manufacturing Company in February 1911 for the bridge (Deed Book K-3, page 507).

The truss bridge remained in place until 1959, when the State Highway Commission erected a new concrete bridge, which remains in place today. Located upriver from the dam, the new bridge necessitated a realignment of Henry River Road. The new alignment began near the rear of the store and, from the existing roadbed, extended to the southwest where it connected to the new bridge. A mill house standing in the path of the new road was removed during construction of the bridge and new approaches.

An informal network of unpaved curving roads extends to the east from Henry River Road. Situated at a lower elevation than the central street, these roads were lined with mill houses. By the 1980s, the majority of these houses were gone and the network of roads had become overgrown except for a single unpaved loop connecting with Henry River Road.

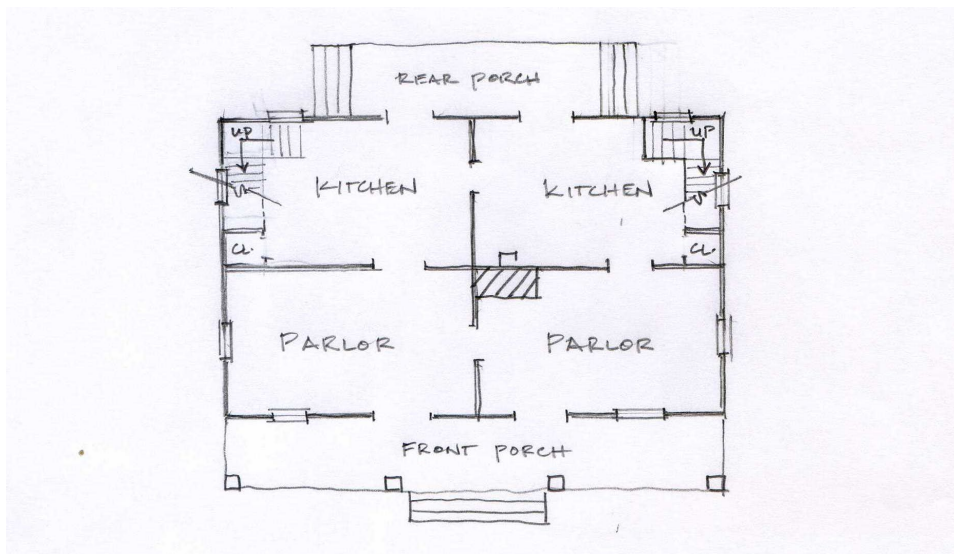
Sections of the original Henry River Road beginning at the north end of the village, to the north and west of the store, and along the southern edge of the mill village were bordered with stone retaining walls dating to the 1940s. The uncoursed stone masonry walls display raised mortar joints and concrete copings. Concrete steps are cut into the walls on the north side of the store and near the mill site at the southern end of the village. The steps connected to paved sidewalks that linked the houses with the store and central street through the village. The poured concrete foundations of a waste house (now a ruin) are visible above the retaining wall as the old road turns back to the north. The upper portion of Henry River Road, north of the store, was widened in the 1950s. The improvements included adding sidewalks and planting trees at the edge of the road.³

³ Lyman G. Barrett, "New Equipment Installed by Henry River Mills Co.," *Hickory Daily Record*, January 24, 1951.

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The floor plans of the twenty surviving mill houses describe three primary house types within the Henry River Mill Village Historic District. The houses are generally categorized by their form as Type A, B, or C. Originally built as one- or one-and-a-half-story frame single-family residences and duplexes, the overall form and room configurations are the principal character-defining features, but the houses are most readily distinguished as being either single pile or double pile and either one or one-and-a-half stories in height. There is generally little variation among types with regard to their exterior materials and porch elements, but some variations do exist and are noted below. The most common deviations are found on the interiors with a variety of wall materials and coverings and two common mantel designs. The majority of houses exhibit simple post-and-lintel wood mantels with a bracketed wood shelf. A small number of houses display post-and-lintel mantels with slender pilasters on wide bases, a tall beaded-board frieze, and molded shelf. All of the houses required outhouses since no indoor bathrooms were provided. Four frame privies remain intact, although the location of at least five others are shown by base features where the privy structure no longer stands. The structures were originally constructed with wood shakes roofs, which were later replaced with tin sheathing at an unknown date. The dwellings were never sold to private individual owners and, as a result, the district retains a strong visual cohesiveness with few modifications to the surviving buildings.



Typical floor plan – Type A mill house, Henry River Mill Village

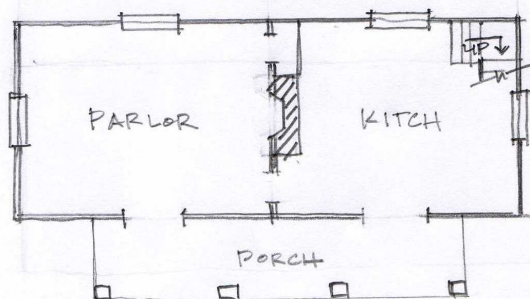
Type A: The Type A house is a one-and-a-half-story double-pile frame duplex with a side-gable roof, attached front and rear porches, and two single-leaf entry doors on the façade and at the rear. These dwellings are typically covered with weatherboards and have metal roofs, central interior chimneys, and four-over-four double-hung wood-sash windows. The façade is sheltered by an attached shed-roof porch that extends nearly the full width of the structure. The attached shed-roof rear porches are partial width and shelter only the two doors at the center of the rear elevation. On the interior, each unit contained a parlor with a fireplace at the

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front and a kitchen at the rear. An enclosed stair in the corner of the kitchen rose to the upper level sleeping quarters.

Type A houses, with thirteen surviving examples, are the most common dwelling types found in the Henry River Mill Village. These houses are primarily located on both sides of Henry River Road and the central street south of the store and, as a result, strongly define the visual character of the village. The vast majority of Type A houses are duplexes although some appear to have been converted later to single-family residences. At least one Type A house (inventory #5) appears to have been built as a single-family dwelling with single front and rear entry doors instead of the usual two and only one corner stair to the upper story. While the exterior form and massing of Type A houses presents a striking consistency, the interiors have subtle variations that introduce minor variations. The two units are not mirror images but display distinctions in room size, placement of the fireplace, and presence of small closets or built-in cupboards.

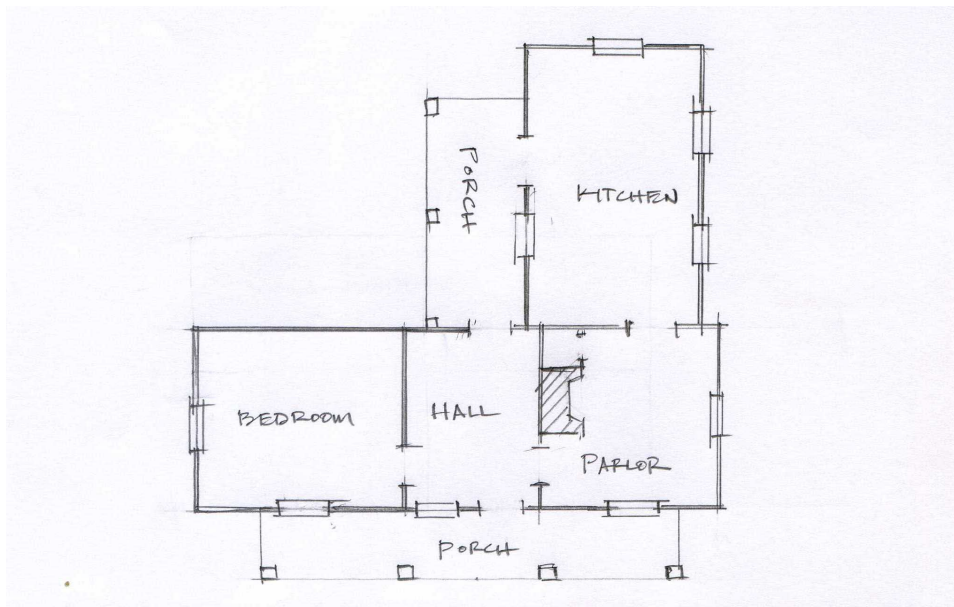


Typical floor plan – Type B mill house, Henry River Mill Village

Type B: Type B houses are one-and-a-half-story single-pile frame dwellings with a side-gable roof, attached front porch, center interior chimneys, and two single-leaf entry doors on the façade. Type B houses contained a parlor and kitchen on the first story, with an enclosed corner stair in the kitchen providing access to sleeping quarters on the second story. These dwellings are typically covered with board-and-batten siding and have concrete block pier foundations. The partial-width shed-roof front porches are carried on square wooden posts. The three surviving examples of Type B houses are located in the eastern portion of the village, although it is unknown how many of this type originally stood in the village. These small dwellings appear to have been built for single families.

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Typical floor plan – Type C mill house, Henry River Mill Village

Type C: With only two examples, Type C houses are one-story single-pile side-gable frame dwellings with a center hall plan and a gable-roof rear ell. The two examples are covered with weatherboards and have concrete block foundations, metal roofs, and interior brick chimneys. An attached shed-roof porch carried on square wooden posts extends nearly the full width of the structure and shelters a four-bay façade. A closely-set single-leaf entry door and window at the center of the façade open into the dwelling's center hall. Type C houses display a higher level of interior finish with reeded door and window surrounds and bulls eye corner blocks. The two surviving examples, which are located at the north and south ends of the district on the west side of Henry River Road, appear to have been built for single-family occupancy.

The Henry River Mill Village Historic District includes thirty-two primary and secondary resources with twenty-nine contributing to the significance of the district. The inventory of resources is organized beginning in the northern portion of the property on the west side of Henry River Road. All of the resources on the west side of the road are described before moving to the company store. The inventory resumes with the store and resources on the west side of the central street below Henry River Road and continues to the south end of the village. From the south end, the inventory describes the resources, from south to north, on the east side of the road back to the north end of the village. The small group of resources located on an unpaved road to the east are described at the end of the inventory.

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1. Well House, ca. 1995

Non-contributing building

A modern well house stands at the north end of the district on the edge of a wooded section where the baseball field was once located. The one-story, one-room building has a low-pitched asphalt-shingle side-gable roof and a single-leaf wood door on the south-facing front elevation. All other elevations are blind. The well house is constructed of concrete block and faced with brick veneer.

2. Farmhouse, ca. 1905

Contributing building

Located at the highest point of the mill village, the one-and-a-half-story T-shaped house does not fit the typology of the other houses in the district. Resting on a concrete block and brick foundation, the north-facing house features a side-gable roof with a decorative front gable and a front-gable wing on the west side. An attached shed-roof porch on the façade is carried by tapered wood posts supported on brick piers. The porch shelters three single-leaf wood doors—two that enter the main block and a third enters the west wing. The house exhibits a metal roof, interior brick chimneys, an interior brick kitchen flue, and four-over-four double-hung wood-sash windows. An attached shed-roof porch on the rear of the main block sheltered a single-leaf raised-panel wood door, but the porch roof has collapsed due to deterioration.

The interior of the main block is similar in plan to Type A houses with two sides composed of a front parlor and fireplace, kitchen at the rear, and an enclosed stair to sleeping quarters on the upper level. The interior is finished with wood floors, beaded board ceilings and walls, flat board window and door surrounds. The interior of the west wing contains two rooms of unequal size, an enclosed stair to the upper story, and groups of square four-light windows on the south and west elevations. The exterior siding, doors, windows on the west wing show substantial deterioration.

3. Mill House, ca. 1905

Contributing building

Type C house with a concrete block foundation, square wood porch posts, metal shingle porch roof, and four-over-four double-hung wood sash windows. The majority of windows are missing from the rear ell, and the interior brick chimney has been taken down below the roof line. An attached shed-roof porch on the south side of the rear ell is supported by turned wood posts. The interior features wood floors, beaded board ceilings and walls, molded door and window surrounds with bulls eye corner blocks, and raised-panel wood doors. A stone retaining wall with raised mortar joints extends along the road at the front of the property and from the road to the southeast front corner of the house. A concrete walkway leads from the road to the porch stairs.

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4. Mill House, ca. 1905

Contributing building

Type A house with a concrete block foundation, square wood porch posts, metal shingle porch roof, interior brick chimney, and four-over-four double-hung wood-sash windows. Vertical wood sheathing creates a solid porch railing open at the center where concrete steps ascend from the paved walkway to the road. The attached shed-roof porch at the rear is partially collapsed and supported by a single slender wood post. The interior is finished with wood floors, beaded board ceilings and walls, flat board window and door surrounds, and raised-panel wood doors. A stone retaining wall extends from the road the southeast front corner of the house, and a concrete walkway leads from the road to the porch stairs.

5. Mill House, ca. 1905

Contributing building

Type A variation with a single front entry door, concrete block foundation, square wood porch posts, metal shingle porch roof, and four-over-four double-hung wood sash windows. The house appears to have been either built as a single-family residence or converted from a duplex at a later date. An interior brick chimney flue rises at the rear of the house, but the central interior brick chimney has been taken down below the roof line. An attached shed-roof porch at the rear, which shelters a single single-leaf entry door, is supported by wood posts and accessed by concrete steps at the north end. The interior is finished with wood floors, beaded board ceilings and walls, flat board window and door surrounds, and raised-panel wood doors. A low stone retaining wall extends from the road the southeast front corner of the house, and a concrete walkway leads from the road to the porch stairs.

6. Mill House, ca. 1905

Contributing building

Type A house with a concrete block foundation, metal shingle porch roof, interior brick chimney, and four-over-four double-hung wood-sash windows. Storm windows have been installed on some of the windows, but the storm windows are smaller than the original sash and a plywood panel has been added above the metal-frame storms. The porch appears to have been replaced at an unknown date with new posts supported on low brick piers and German siding on the roof ends. None of the porch posts remain. An interior brick chimney flue rises at the rear of the house. An attached shed-roof porch at the rear is supported by wood posts; steps at the south end of the porch are no longer present. The interior is finished with wood floors, beaded board ceilings and walls, flat board window and door surrounds, and raised-panel wood doors. The rear surface of the wall separating front and rear rooms is clad with board-and-batten siding.

Privy, ca. 1905

Contributing building

Located behind the house at the edge of the woods, the frame privy rests on a concrete slab base and is covered with German siding. It has a metal-clad shed roof and solid wood door.

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7. Mill House, ca. 1905

Contributing building

Type C house with a concrete block foundation, metal shingle porch roof, and an interior brick chimney. The window openings have all been boarded over, and none of the front porch posts remain in place. The ends of the front porch roof are covered with beaded boards with a decorative sawtooth edge. An interior brick flue rises from the rear ell. The house has been enlarged at an unknown date with an enclosed L-shaped addition at the rear of the house and an attached shed-roof porch on the on the rear addition. The porch is partially enclosed with partial-height weatherboarded walls and framed openings that appear to have been screened. The interior features wood floors, beaded board ceilings and walls, molded door and window surrounds with bulls eye corner blocks, and raised-panel wood doors.

8. Mill House, ca. 1905

Contributing building

Type A house with a concrete block foundation, square wood porch posts, metal shingle porch roof, interior brick chimney, and four-over-four double-hung wood-sash windows. The majority of window openings have been boarded over with the exception of the upper gable ends and on the southwest elevation. The two front entrance doors are boarded up. The attached shed-roof porch at the rear is collapsed, leaving the two rear doors uncovered.

9. Shed, ca. 1905

Contributing building

A three-bay storage shed or garage rests on a stone foundation at the edge of the woods overlooking the river. The structure is clad with German siding and capped by a metal shed roof with exposed rafters. The open north elevation is divided into bays by square wood posts defining each bay.

10. Company Store, ca. 1905

Contributing building

Located near the geographic center of the village, the two-story brick commercial building housed the mill offices and company store. Laid in American bond and resting on a stone foundation, the building has a three-bay façade with brick pilasters, a flat parapet, and corbelled cornice. The first story of the façade is covered with smooth stucco. The narrow center bay of the façade contains double-leaf wood entry doors surmounted by a tall three-light transom. A single six-over-six double-hung wood-sash window is located on second story above the entry doors. The window rests on a cast concrete sill with a segmental arch lintel. The arch is composed of three courses of rowlock brick topped by a corbelled header course. The flanking side bays contain large storefronts on the first story

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and paired six-over-six windows set within arched openings on the second story. The storefronts consist of large four-light windows and multi-light transoms on a bulkhead wall with beaded board paneling. The south storefront has three main windows while the north storefront has two main windows and a single-leaf glazed-and-paneled door at the north end. The door opens into an enclosed stair to the second-story offices.

The side elevations are relatively plain with three arched window openings on the second story. The arches are composed of two rowlock brick courses and the windows are six-over-six double-hung wood sash. An arched doorway near the west end of the north elevation has double-leaf paneled wood doors topped by a three-light transom. A single arched window opening is located on the first story of the south elevation near the west end, but the window has been boarded over. A brick flue rises against the south elevation, and attached metal flashing provides evidence of an attached one-story shed addition that stood against the south side of the building. The shed addition appears to have been removed around 1990.

The rear elevation is four bays wide with single six-over-six double-hung sash set within segmental arch openings, although one bay on the first story lacks a window opening. The low-pitched gable roof is visible on the rear elevation and features exposed purlin brackets. A concrete stairwell descends from the southwest corner of the building and accesses a single-leaf wood door to the basement. A two-bar metal pipe rail surrounds the stairwell.

The interior of the store is dominated by a large open space on the first story with wood floors, plaster walls, and a beaded board ceiling. A row of slender wood columns in the center of the space support the floor above. An open stair at the rear of the building rises in a single run to the second story, and enclosed offices in the southwest corner are accessed through double-leaf doors and partially lit by interior four-light windows with translucent glass panes. Some built-in wood shelving remains in place along the north wall of the store.

11. Reservoir, ca. 1905

Contributing structure

A deep, oval-shaped reservoir is located near the center of the village. The pool is lined with stone and surrounded by an earthen berm topped by a chain-link fence. Several hydrants and release valves manufactured by Michigan Brass and Iron Works of Detroit are located on the south side of the reservoir.

12. Mill House, ca. 1905

Contributing building

Type A house with a concrete block foundation, collapsed front porch, and few remaining four-over-four double-hung wood sash windows. The sash has been removed from the majority of window openings and the two front entrances have been boarded over. The interior brick chimney has been taken down below the roof line. An attached shed-roof porch on the rear shelters two single-leaf five-panel wood doors and is carried by

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wood posts with a simple two-bar wood railing. Concrete block steps access the porch from the north end. The interior is finished with wood floors, beaded board ceilings and walls, flat board window and door surrounds, and raised-panel wood doors.

13. Mill House, ca. 1905

Contributing building

A singular variation of a Type A house, this structure is a one-and-a-half-story double-pile frame duplex with a side-gable roof, attached front and rear porches, and a central single-leaf entry door, which opens into a small common entrance hall with angled side walls. The residence features a five-bay façade, board-and-batten siding, and a concrete block foundation. Original four-over-four double-hung wood-sash windows have been removed, and the central interior chimney has been taken down below the roof line. An interior brick kitchen flue rises at the rear of the structure. An attached shed-roof porch covering the five bays is carried on boxed wood posts and shelters narrow double-leaf entry doors. The five-panel doors open into a small entrance hall that serves both sides of the dwelling. On the interior, each side of the dwelling contains a parlor and bedroom at the front and a kitchen at the rear. An enclosed corner stair in the kitchen rises to sleeping quarters on the upper level. The interior is finished with wood floors, beaded board ceilings, beaded and flush board walls, flat board window and door surrounds, and raised-panel wood doors.

14. Mill House, ca. 1905

Contributing building

Type A house with a brick foundation, attached shed-roof porch, and four-over-four double-hung wood-sash windows. The interior brick chimney has been taken down below the roof line, and the majority of the window sash has been removed. The wooden porch floor is significantly deteriorated and the porch posts no longer stand. An attached shed-roof addition on the rear rests on a concrete block pier foundation. The south end of the rear wing is enclosed with vertical wood siding, but the porch roof at the north end is partially collapsed and is no longer supported by wood posts. The interior is finished with wood floors, beaded board ceilings and walls, flat board window and door surrounds, and raised-panel wood doors.

15. Mill House, ca. 1905

Contributing building

Type A house with a brick foundation, metal shingle porch roof, and four-over-four double-hung wood-sash windows. The interior brick chimney has been taken down below the roof line, and the majority of the window sash has been removed. The attached shed-roof porch is supported by a single, surviving square wood post. The attached shed-roof rear porch has collapsed. The interior is finished with wood floors, beaded board ceilings, board-and-batten walls, and raised-panel wood doors.

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16. Mill House, ca. 1905

Contributing building

Type A house with a brick foundation, interior brick chimney, and four-over-four double-hung wood-sash windows. The majority of the window sash is severely deteriorated or removed. The attached shed-roof front porch no longer exists, and the attached shed-roof rear porch has collapsed. The two front and two rear entry doors and two façade windows have been boarded over. The interior is finished with wood floors, beaded board ceilings and walls, flat board window and door surrounds, and raised-panel wood doors.

17. Garage, ca. 1905

Contributing building

A one-story front-gable frame garage is located opposite the store building on the east side of the central street. The building likely began as a maintenance shed for company vehicles during the early years of the mill and later became a garage with increasing presence of automobiles. Resting on a stone foundation with an exposed basement at the rear, the building is covered with weatherboards and capped by a metal roof. The wide garage opening is covered by solid, sliding wood doors and sheltered by an attached pent roof with exposed rafter tails. A single square window is located on both the north and south side elevations of the garage, but they are covered with wood sheathing. An attached shed-roof addition at the rear is similarly finished with a deteriorated window opening and double-leaf basement doors on the south elevation. A concrete block storage room abuts the north elevation of the building.

Service Ramp, ca. 1905

Contributing structure

A service ramp is located to the north of the garage and is accessed at grade from the street. Constructed of heavy timber beams, the ramp consists of two tracks supported by wood posts with a timber end block at the east end. The ramp structure is open beneath the two tracks to allow for access to the underside of a vehicle positioned on the ramp.

18. Mill House, ca. 1905

Contributing building

Type A house with a concrete block foundation, square wood porch posts, metal shingle porch roof, and four-over-four double-hung wood-sash windows. The north entry door has been removed and replaced with a four-over-four window and plywood infill panel around 2011; the north door at the rear appears to have been replaced by a four-over-four window around the same time. The attached shed-roof porch at the rear rests on a concrete block pier foundation and is supported by slender wood posts with wood steps located on the north end of the porch. The interior is finished with wood floors, beaded board ceilings and walls, flat board window and door surrounds, and raised-panel wood doors. The interior partition walls and central fireplace have been removed to create a single, large open room on the first story.

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Privy, ca. 1905

Contributing building

Located a short distance northeast of the house (#18), the privy structure is not associated with a toilet hole and appears to have been moved. The structure is constructed of German siding and has a metal-clad shed roof and a solid wood door. The roof is partially deteriorated.

19. Mill House, ca. 1905

Contributing building

Type A house with a concrete block foundation, square wood porch posts, metal shingle porch roof, an interior brick chimney, and four-over-four double-hung wood-sash windows. The front porch posts are supported by low brick piers. The attached shed-roof porch at the rear rests on a concrete block pier foundation and is supported by slender wood posts with wood steps located on the north end of the porch. The south doors on both the front and rear elevations have been boarded over. The interior is finished with wood floors, beaded board ceilings and walls, flat board window and door surrounds, and raised-panel wood doors. One of the front rooms has been covered with wood paneling.

20. Mill House, ca. 1905

Contributing building

Type A house with a concrete block foundation, metal shingle porch roof, an interior brick chimney, and four-over-four double-hung wood-sash windows. Two of the original four square wood porch posts have been removed. The attached shed-roof porch at the rear is collapsed. The interior is finished with wood floors, beaded board ceilings, flat board window and door surrounds, and raised-panel wood doors. The interior partition wall between the two front rooms, which is constructed of vertical wood boards, has been cut to enlarge the opening between the two rooms.

Privy, ca. 1905

Contributing building

Located a short distance southeast of the house (#20), the privy structure is not associated with a toilet hole. The structure is constructed of German siding and has a metal-clad shed roof and a solid wood door.

21. Mill House, ca. 1905

Contributing building

Type A house with a concrete block foundation, metal shingle porch roof, and four-over-four double-hung wood-sash windows. Only one of the four original square wood porch posts remains in place. The interior brick chimney has been taken down below the roof line. The attached shed-roof porch at the rear is collapsed. An interior brick kitchen flue rises at the rear of the house. The interior is finished with wood floors, beaded board ceilings and walls, flat board window and door surrounds, and raised-panel wood doors. The partition walls in the rear southeast corner room are covered with board-and-batten sheathing.

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22. Mill House, ca. 1905

Contributing building

Type A house with a concrete block foundation, interior brick chimney, metal shingle porch roof, square wood porch posts, and four-over-four double-hung wood-sash windows. The window sash are largely deteriorated and the two façade windows have been boarded over. The attached shed-roof porch at the rear, which shelters only a single rear door, is partially collapsed. The interior is finished with wood floors, beaded board ceilings and walls, flat board window and door surrounds, and raised-panel wood doors. Wood panel veneer has been added in three of the four first-story rooms.

Privy, ca. 1905

Contributing building

Located a short distance behind the house (#22), the frame privy has German siding, a metal-clad shed roof, and solid wood door. The lower portion of the siding is substantially deteriorated.

23. Mill House, ca. 1905

Contributing building

Type B house with a metal-clad roof, weatherboards in the gable ends, an attached shed-roof porch, and four-over-four double-hung wood-sash windows. The porch posts are no longer standing, and the interior brick chimney has been taken down below the roof line. The two front doors are missing and the first and second-story windows on the north elevation are largely removed. The house rests on concrete block pier foundation. The interior, which is currently used for storage, has wood floors and beaded board ceilings and walls.

24. Storage Building, ca. 1930

Non-contributing structure

A concrete block storage building stands on the south side of the old roadbed. The structure is enclosed on three sides with a concrete floor, but lacks a door and roof.

25. Garage, ca. 1905

Contributing building

A partially overgrown two-bay garage rests on a stone foundation just inside the edge of the woods. The structure is clad with vertical wood plank sheathing and capped by a metal shed roof with exposed rafters. The west elevation is open with two bays formed divided by a center partition wall.

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26. Mill House, ca. 1905

Contributing building

Type B house with a metal-clad roof, weatherboards in the gable ends, an interior brick chimney, attached shed-roof porch, and four-over-four double-hung wood-sash windows. Except for the two windows on the rear (south) elevation, the majority of window sash have been removed. The porch is a concrete slab with slender wood posts supporting the roof. The two front doors are missing and the first and second-story windows on the north elevation are largely removed. The house rests on concrete block pier foundation. The interior has wood floors, beaded board ceilings and walls, flat board window and door surrounds, and raised-panel wood doors.

27. Mill House, ca. 1905

Non-contributing building

Severely deteriorated Type B house with a metal-clad roof, weatherboards in the gable ends, and an interior brick chimney. The attached shed-roof porch, window sash, entry doors, and interior partition walls have been removed. Although the upper portion of the chimney remains in place, the brick fireplace has collapsed. The interior has wood floors and retains some beaded board ceilings and walls and flat board window and door surrounds.

Integrity Statement

Henry River Mill Village contains a high degree of integrity of location, setting, design, workmanship, materials, feeling, and association. While the buildings within the village primarily suffer from deterioration and decay, the surviving resources present a relatively unaltered example of an early twentieth-century rural mill village. There have been few material changes to the houses, which lack indoor plumbing, and individual structures within the district. No infill construction intrudes upon the original setting and the spatial relationships between the houses, communal buildings, roads, and open space. Fifteen of the district's original thirty-five houses have been demolished over time, primarily around the perimeter of the village, but the core group along Henry River Road and the central street south of the store retains the forms, massing, spacing, and materials of the original residential district. The rhythm of buildings and uniformity of houses along the village's main street preserves the distinct visual character of the district.

Statement of Archaeological Potential

Henry River Mill Village is closely related to the surrounding environment and landscape. Archaeological deposits and remnant landscape features such as road beds and paths, planting beds, filled-in privies and wells, trash middens, and structural remains, which may be present, can provide information valuable to the understanding and interpretation of the property. Structural remains likely present on the property include those of the nineteenth century forge that preceded the mill, the mill itself, the boarding house, the waste house, and those of the

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mill houses no longer standing. Information concerning the development of the cotton mill and village, worker health, nutrition, and quality of life, environmental transformations during industrial development, and the effect of technological change on work culture and daily life, as well as details of construction processes and the operation of the mill can be obtained from the archaeological record. Therefore, archaeological remains may well be an important component of the significance of the property. At this time no investigation has been done to discover these remains, but it is likely that they exist, and these potential remains should be considered in any future development of the property.

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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.)

- 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Period of Significance

ca. 1905

Significant Dates

ca. 1905

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Henry River Mill Village Historic District is a locally significant collection of workers' houses and related structures associated with the Henry River Manufacturing Company's textile mill built along the Henry Fork River in eastern Burke County, North Carolina. The district meets Criterion C for architecture as a planned residential village for mill operatives in a remote rural location. Built alongside the mill and completed by 1905, the mill village design and layout represent the embodiment of planning preferences for industrial housing popular in the early twentieth century. The Henry River Mill Village was an early planned community of definable house types repeated throughout the district, with gardens, open space, and a few additional buildings and structures to serve the needs of village residents. Centered around a two-story brick Commercial Style building that served as the company store and mill offices, the one- and one-and-a-half-story side-gable frame single-family residences and duplexes on spacious lots created the impression of small rural farmhouses surrounded by garden plots and open land. Unlike the majority of textile communities in North Carolina, the mill owners never sold the workers' houses to individuals and, as a result, the village retains a strong visual consistency of form, scale, and materials. The period of significance for the district is ca. 1905, when the original mill houses, company store, and associated mill village structures were completed and occupied. Although only twenty of the original thirty-five mill houses survive, the physical and spatial relationships of Henry River Mill Village remain due to a lack of modern intrusions. The Henry River Mill Village is one of the best examples of an isolated industrial village in rural North Carolina.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Historical Background

Following the Civil War, Burke County, like much of North Carolina, underwent a significant transformation as the old agrarian economy supported by slave labor was replaced by greater industrialization. Located in the western Piedmont region of the state, Burke County had been formed in 1777, and the county seat established in Morganton in 1785. The county's primarily agricultural economy grew slowly until the Western North Carolina Railroad was completed to Morganton in 1867. Burke County began to evolve beyond farming and expand its economic base in the late nineteenth century with the opening of a railroad connection and construction

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of two major state institutions: Western North Carolina Insane Asylum and the North Carolina School for the Deaf.⁴

Across the state, the primary areas of industrial expansion after 1880 were cotton textiles, tobacco, and furniture. The production and use of timber products had been a component of the county's economy for many years, the number of tanneries and saw mills increased following the Civil War. The Morganton Woodworking Company and Morganton Furniture Manufacturing Company formed in 1885, but the latter enterprise was destroyed by fire in 1887. Large-scale furniture manufacturing, however, did not develop significantly until the early twentieth century.⁵

The number of cotton mills in North Carolina increased rapidly in the late nineteenth century. Many early mills were built along the Piedmont's numerous creeks and rivers to take advantage of water power. After 1900, the use of steam power began to dominate, and the shift allowed mills to become less bound to water-powered sites. The Henry River facility was a notably late example of a mill constructed to take advantage of water power, which determined its isolated location in rural Burke County. By 1900, North Carolina claimed 177 cotton mills producing more than \$28,000,000 worth of goods annually and employing more than 30,000 individuals.⁶

State industrial and business leaders strongly promoted the development of the textile industry in North Carolina as a way to rebuild the state's economy following the collapse of the antebellum agricultural system. Daniel A. Tompkins (1851-1914) of Charlotte became one of the most influential promoters of the "Cotton Mill Campaign." Tompkins settled in Charlotte in 1883 as an agent for the Westinghouse Machine Company to install steam engines in the Carolinas. By the late 1880s, he had formed the D. A. Tompkins Company to design and build textile mills and power plants, repair mill machinery, and produce and sell cottonseed oil. The owner of three cotton mills, Tompkins tirelessly promoted industrial development and used his controlling interest in three newspapers, the *Daily Observer* and *Evening News* of Charlotte and the *Greenville News* in South Carolina, to further spread his agenda.⁷

The first textile mill to open in Burke County began operation in 1889 near the railroad tracks and Morganton depot just south of downtown. Samuel D. Dunavant, Hardy Hicks, E. F. Reid, and James W. Wilson comprised the founding partners of the enterprise, which was

⁴ Phifer, 219-220; Catherine W. Bishir, Michael T. Southern, and Jennifer F. Martin, *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 148.

⁵ Phifer, 238-242

⁶ Hugh Talmage Lefler and Albert Ray Newsome, *North Carolina: The History of a Southern State* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1954), 479-480.

⁷ "Daniel Augustus Tompkins" in William S. Powell, ed., *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, Vol. 6, T-Z (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 42-43.

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incorporated as the Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company. Any success of the Dunavant Mill was short-lived because the company was in receivership by 1894 and reorganized as Alpine Cotton Mill No. 1 with William A. Erwin of Durham as president. Erwin, a prominent leader of the "Cotton Mill Campaign," owned mills in Durham, and the purchase of the Dunavant Mill allowed the company to expand its operations into the western part of the state.⁸

Beginning in 1901, members of the Aderholdt and Rudisill families of Gaston County began acquiring land in eastern Burke County for the construction of a cotton mill. David W. Aderholdt (1867-1935) married Vivian Mauney (1876-1935) of Cherryville and was involved in the manufacturing and mercantile businesses, including the formation of the Gaston Manufacturing Company and Vivian Cotton Mill in Cherryville. Vivian Mauney, for whom the Vivian Mill was named, was the daughter of Samuel S. Mauney, a prominent local textile owner. Aderholdt's brother, Marcus (1871-1952), and a sister, Emma (1870-1959), who married Michael Erastus Rudisill (1857-1921), joined D. W. Aderholdt in developing the Henry River site.⁹

The Henry River Manufacturing Company organized in 1902 for the purpose of erecting a water-powered cotton mill on Henry River near Hildebran. The new mill would be one of the last major cotton mills to be water powered, with the growing preference for steam-powered mills. Henry River Manufacturing Company organized with F. C. Quickel of Lincolnton as president, D. W. Aderholdt as secretary and treasurer, and M. E. Rudisill as general manager. The company formed with \$65,000 capital stock and plans to build a 5,000-spindle water-powered mill.¹⁰

For the mill site Aderholdt purchased the first of multiple tracts, totaling more than 700 acres, beginning in 1901, including a central fifty-acre tract from A. Y. Sigmon of Hickory. The deed, transferred to the Henry River Manufacturing Company in 1902, carried the right "to build a dam across the Henry River somewhere near the Sigmon Shoals or old Forge place" but required the new owners to compensate the upstream land owners "the sum of fifty dollars per acre" for every acre, or fraction of an acre, damaged by inundation resulting from the construction of the dam (Deed Book S-2, page 175).¹¹

⁸ Sybil Argintar, "Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company" National Register Nomination (2013), 10-12.

⁹ *The Heritage of Burke County, North Carolina*, Vol. II (Morganton, NC: The Burke County Historical Society, 2001), 106-107. The majority of historical accounts attribute the selection of the Henry River site to D. W. Aderholdt, but some accounts credit Michael E. Rudisill with identifying and engineering the site for the mill. See Mabel Miller Rowe, "Henry River Mill, Established 38 Years Ago, Keeps Up-To-Date," *Hickory Daily Record*, September 14, 1940; H. Russell Triebert, ed., *The Heritage Burke County* (Morganton, NC: The Burke County Historical Society, 1981), 36-37.

¹⁰ *The News Herald*, March 27, 1902; *The Davie Record*, June 11, 1902.

¹¹ Burke County Register of Deeds Office, Burke County Courthouse, Morganton, NC.

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In developing Gaston Manufacturing Company and Vivian Cotton mills in Cherryville, Aderholdt was credited with erecting some of the early mercantile stores and laying out streets around the mills. Both plants were located on the outskirts of the town, and the streets around the mills were typically extensions of the town's existing grid.¹² The Henry River Mill site, however, was selected for its water power potential and availability of reasonably priced land. After constructing the dam to achieve maximum head, a mill site had to be carved out of the hillside on the north bank of the river. The remaining acreage on the ridge above the river was densely covered with laurel and underbrush. Aderholdt had the thicket cleared to lay out the mill village on curvilinear streets.¹³

Construction of the mill and mill village progressed rapidly through the fall of 1902 with Lonnie Quickel overseeing the work.¹⁴ It appears that the mill began operating in 1903, although it may not have become fully operational until 1905. In May 1903, John Ballard, superintendent of the Vivian Cotton Mill in Cherryville, moved to Henry River to take charge of the mill operations.¹⁵ D. W. Aderholdt affirmed in a newspaper report that business at the mill "continues to be strong" in April 1904.¹⁶

The original mill building was a three-story brick structure with 4,000 spindles that produced carded yarn. Originally run entirely by water power, the company's 15,000 pounds of combed cotton were sold to the hosiery manufacturing industry. New machinery was added in 1907, and a steam plant was built to provide power in 1914. In 1925, the company spent \$90,000 on new equipment and production changed to a higher grade yarn. The plant converted completely to electric power in 1926.¹⁷

An interregnum of financial difficulty impacted the mill in the late 1920s. A court order forced the sale of the company's holdings in December 1928, including the mill, equipment, and approximately 700 acres of land. D. E. Rhyne of Lincolnton and W. H. Belk of Charlotte purchased the mill at public auction with a bid of \$151,000. It appears that the original owners, however, were able to regain control of the enterprise. An incorporation certificate from May 25, 1929, documented a name change to Henry River Mills Company. A. L. Quickel remained on

¹² "Cherryville, Gaston County, North Carolina," Sanborn Map Company, September 1914.

¹³ Rowe, *Hickory Daily Record*, September 14, 1940.

¹⁴ *News and Observer*, December 21, 1902.

¹⁵ *The Gastonia Gazette*, May 12, 1903.

¹⁶ *The Charlotte News*, April 15, 1904.

¹⁷ J. W. Long, "Henry River – The Aderholdt Saga," *The News Herald*, March 1, 1963.

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as president, D. W. Aderholdt as secretary and treasurer, and M. L. Rudisill as general manager (Corporations Book 1, page 401).¹⁸

In 1935, the company expanded the mill with a two-story addition, and the original building was re-floored, rewired, and renovated in 1940. New equipment with individual electric motors greatly improved production efficiency. At this time the mill employed 125 people to operate 10,300 spindles. Weekly production output was typically 15,000 pounds of combed yarns. The company began charging rent for the houses in the mill village in 1933; prior to this time, the thirty-five dwellings had been let free to employees.¹⁹

Life in the mill village was a difficult existence with long working shifts, low pay, and few luxuries, but despite the challenges and hardships, many former residents look back fondly on the close-knit community.²⁰ Henry River Mill Village was a largely self-contained community. Residents made many items they needed and grew much of their own food, and what could not be produced at home was available at the company store. Purchases were made using scrip from the company store and change was given in the form of doogaloo, zinc coins or tokens minted for the Henry River Manufacturing Company.²¹ Village residents often supplemented their meager incomes by taking on other roles or work within the community. These jobs included shifts working at the store, mowing lawns, picking and selling blackberries, fixing cars, or helping tend the owners' gardens. Walter Young cut men's hair and Margaret Reep, though not formally trained, was the community beautician.²² In the 1940s, Craig and Marie Lynn turned the upstairs room of their house into a photography studio complete with a darkroom.²³ Henry Lowman, one of the first residents to own a car, offered a taxi service to Hickory for his neighbors.²⁴

Henry River Mill Village was never incorporated as a municipality, so there were no town officials. Mill officials dealt with disturbances and minor misdemeanors. D. W. Aderholdt died in 1935, and operation of the mill passed to his son D. M. (Miles) Aderholdt (1902-1973). A graduate of Lenoir-Rhyne College in Hickory, Miles Aderholdt spent nine years teaching and serving as a school principal before returning to Henry River to work for the mill. Aderholdt

¹⁸ Burke County Register of Deeds Office; "Sale of the Henry River Manufacturing Co. Property," *The News Herald*, November 8, 1928; "Henry River Mill Is Sold Under Hammer," *Asheville Citizen*, December 13, 1928.

¹⁹ J. W. Long, "Henry River – The Aderholdt Saga," *The News Herald*, March 1, 1963.

²⁰ Nicole Callihan and Ruby Young Keller, *Henry River Mill Village* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2012), 7-8.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 33.

²² *Ibid.*, 19, 39.

²³ *Ibid.*, 52.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 40. Lowman later formed the Yellow Top Cab Company in Hickory.

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served as postmaster for Henry River in addition to his roles as secretary-treasurer of the company and general manager of the mill. A younger brother, Hal Aderholdt, served as vice-president of the company and managed the company store until his death in 1951.²⁵

In the 1950s, the mill made a number of changes in equipment and production to remain viable in the textile market. The Henry River mill produced fine grade yarns that were used in making lace, gloves, and electrical insulation. In addition to the mill upgrades, the owners substantially improved the mill village in the late 1940s with the addition of concrete sidewalks, widening the main street, and planting trees. The road was widened from eighteen to thirty-six feet. The village residences were repainted inside and out.²⁶

After several years of curtailment, Henry River Mill closed in 1970. Former workers continued to reside in the village, paying approximately \$10 per month rent. Beginning in 1972, Wade R. Shepherd of Hickory began the four-year process of purchasing the mill and mill village, a process complicated by the complex interrelationships of the Aderholdt and Rudisill descendants. Shepherd owned other hosiery mills and planned to continue textile manufacturing at Henry River Mill following completion of the sale. He allowed residents to remain in the village but raised rents to \$30 per month.²⁷

In 1977, the mill was destroyed by fire, ending Shepherd's plans of reestablishing manufacturing at the site. Authorities believe the fire was started by a lightning strike to the building during an early afternoon thunderstorm. Once discovered, the blaze quickly consumed the building and required as many as seventy-five firefighters to extinguish it. The smoldering building was reduced to foundations and the adjacent machine shop left in ruins.²⁸

The eight families that remained in the village through the late 1970s eventually dispersed, and the houses fell into disrepair.²⁹ The mill village enjoyed a surge of activity in 2011 when it was selected as the location of District 12 in the movie adaptation of *The Hunger Games*, a popular dystopian novel by Suzanne Collins. The company store, dam, several houses, and overall site are used in the movie to depict the poor coal mining district inhabited by the main character. One house, located near the eastern edge of the village, was destroyed during the

²⁵ Long, March 1, 1963.

²⁶ Lyman G. Barrett, "New Equipment Installed By Henry River Mills Co.," *Hickory Daily Record*, January 24, 1951; Ed Martin, "Fine Employment Record Boasted By Burke Plant," *Hickory Daily Record*, May 5, 1955.

²⁷ J. A. C. Dunn, "Once Historic, Now Pretty," *Winston-Salem Journal*, January 30, 1977.

²⁸ Ken Garfield, "Fire Guts Historic Burke Mill," *The News Herald*, August 18, 1977; Wake Bridges, "Landmark Destroyed By Fire," *Hickory Daily Record*, August 18, 1977.

²⁹ Rebecca Moore, "Dying Mill Village Still Clings To Life," *The News Herald*, May 25, 1982.

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filming of the movie to show, in a flashback, a tragic event in the young life of the main character.³⁰ The current owners acquired the mill village in 2017 from Wade Shepherd.

Architecture Context

Located in the western Piedmont section of North Carolina, the architectural development of Burke County displays a wide range of stylistic influences. The fertile valley of the upper Catawba River was settled beginning in the mid-eighteenth century as families moved from the eastern parts of the state and as immigrants poured into Piedmont North Carolina from Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Maryland, traveling along the Great Wagon Road through the Shenandoah Valley. By the early nineteenth century, the area around Morganton had evolved into a prosperous farming region, with stylish brick plantation houses representing the wealth and taste of the prominent Burke County planter families, who had established trade connections with low country of South Carolina. While Morganton became an important trading and political center, the rural parts of the county reflected more regional building patterns.³¹

Following the Civil War, frame construction became prevalent with the increased availability of factory-sawn lumber, either locally sawn or brought into the county by the railroad. Rural frame dwellings, however, typically followed traditional building patterns and were modeled on the plans of one- and two-room log houses. Toward the turn of the twentieth century, two-story, single-pile houses, known as I-houses, became the most common house type. They frequently included an attached one-story porch, exterior chimneys, and rear ells. These structures often lacked stylistic expression, but some modest decoration was frequently found on larger houses and the homes of more prosperous families. Decorative elements were typically limited to exterior and interior woodwork, which could be added according to the taste and budget of the family. Rural vernacular houses from this period represented an agricultural lifestyle and important continuations of the farming and folk traditions.

Mill villages developed alongside the growing number of textile and cotton mills in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. With the collapse of North Carolina's agrarian economy during Reconstruction, a wave of industrialization swept into the state to take advantage of available hydroelectric power and a large labor force. The numerous creeks and rivers of North Carolina's Piedmont offered an abundance of building sites and potential water power, while the vast population of struggling farm families supplied the manual labor. Mill owners constructed housing for their employees in order to entice rural residents to join the

³⁰ Jeff Willhelm, "Henry River Alive – In The Movie," *Charlotte Observer*, October 31, 2011.

³¹ William S. Powell. *North Carolina Through Four Centuries* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1954), 108-111; Milton Ready, *The Tar Heel State: A History of North Carolina* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2005), 160-162; Bishir, et al., 148 and 155-157.

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industrial workforce.³² In the case of the Henry River Mill Village, company-owned housing not only helped attract potential workers but also alleviated the complications of transportation in an area where road conditions were primitive at best.³³

Many North Carolina mill villages evolved into self-sustaining unincorporated communities, which preserved aspects of rural life while providing a close-knit community of individuals and families who supplied labor for the mill. In addition to housing, a mill village typically included a store, churches, a school or community hall, and recreation areas such as a ball field. While nineteenth-century villages often centered on the mill itself, later sites set the industrial buildings to one side and placed the communal buildings at the core of the village. By supplying employees with housing and other amenities of domestic life, mill owners exercised a form of social control over their employees that was seen as not only beneficial to the workers and residents but also to the company's bottom line.³⁴

The persistence of nineteenth century vernacular forms helped define mill villages across the state in the early twentieth century. While the practical needs of convening a large workforce at a remote industrial site spurred the construction of mill-owned housing in rural locations, the use of vernacular house types contributed to village character aimed at attracting displaced workers from the surrounding rural areas. Among the most common recurring house type in mill villages is the center-chimney plan, which derived from the traditional saddlebag form. It built from one to two stories tall as either a single-family house or a duplex with an attached front porch and either a porch or ell at the rear. Other common dwelling types echoed the center hall plan or two-room plan of small rural houses. Since the textile industry employed men, women, and children, the available housing catered to family units rather than individuals and the retention of open space for gardens and grounds offered a sense of independence within the new community. The mill villages concentrated laborers in areas where their working and domestic lives coexisted in close proximity but allowed employees an opportunity to retain familiar aspects of their rural lifestyle.³⁵

³² Jacqueline Dowd Hall, James Leloudis, Robert Korstad, Mary Murphy, Lu Ann Jones, and Christopher B. Daly, *Like a Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 114-119.

³³ J. Randall Cotton, *Historic Burke: An Architectural Inventory of Burke County, North Carolina* (Morganton, NC: Historic Burke Foundation, Inc., 1987), 35-36.

³⁴ Sara Lachenman, "Company Housing Designs in the South: Progressives, Planners, and Practice," *The Historic Dimension Series*, April 2004 (http://www.presnc.org/files/2014/03/Lachenman-Company_Housing.pdf; retrieved December 22, 2018); Catherine W. Bishir, *North Carolina Architecture* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press 1990), 367-370.

³⁵ Bishir, 369-370; Brent Glass, "Southern Mill Hills: Design in a 'Public' Place," in *Carolina Dwelling: Towards a Preservation of Place: In Celebration of the North Carolina Rural Landscape*, ed. by Doug Swain (Raleigh, NC: School of Design, North Carolina State University, 1978), 142-145.

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The design and planning of Henry River Mill Village was influenced by not only its remote location and topography, given its reliance on water power to run the mill, but also the writings of D. A. Tompkins, prominent Charlotte engineer, newspaperman, and mill designer. An outspoken promoter of North Carolina's textile development, Tompkins published notable guidelines for the design and layout of housing for mill workers, or operatives. In *Cotton Mill, Commercial Features*, published in 1899 as a textbook for investors, owners, and textile school students, Tompkins discusses a number of domestic features to appeal to mill workers and create advantageous conditions for mill production.

Factories generally build houses for the accommodation of their operatives [...] Factory houses are usually built around the mill, and form a little village to themselves. This seems at present the most satisfactory plan in the South, for both the mills and the operatives [...] It was formerly the custom to build for operatives long rows of houses exactly alike, and in most case adjoining one another. But it has transpired that this is not the best plan. Different families have different tastes, and as operatives grow in intelligence and prosperity, this differentiation in taste becomes more marked [...] Where land may be bought by the acre at a reasonable price, plenty of room should be allotted to operatives houses. In fact the ability to get this room should be one important deciding factor in locating a plant.³⁶

Tompkins argues for the importance of simulating rural conditions within the mill village to appeal to potential workers. Remembering that cotton mill operatives were, for the most, part, rural people accustomed to farm life, he recommended offering half-acre lots for each house set no less than 75 feet apart, center to center.

A half acre lot is just about the right size for the average lot. Most families have scant time to devote to gardening, because so many members of the family are occupied in the mill. Therefore a larger lot would be apt to be neglected. At the same time, it is well to encourage the planting of vegetables and flower gardens, as being conducive to general contentment among the operatives themselves, and as being an advantage to the mill company in making a cleanly and attractive property.³⁷

The number of houses needed followed the general rule of one operative for each room in the house. Thus a mill with 200 employees would require 50 four-room houses. In addition to operatives' housing, Tompkins' covers a wide range of agricultural and business topics, in

³⁶ Tompkins, 116-117.

³⁷ Ibid, 117.

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addition to chapters on company organization, management and accounting advice, building design, and machinery.³⁸

As planned, the Henry River Mill Village incorporates many of the features that became common in mill village design in later years. D. W. Aderholdt laid out the village on a ridge above the river to the north. The mill site had been cut out of the hillside near the dam. The thirty-five mill houses were arranged on curvilinear streets that rose through the site. Sidewalks and stone retaining walls were located originally in the lower portion of the village near the company store, boarding house, and reservoir. Later site development in the 1940s widened the main road through the village, extended sidewalks, and planted trees along the roadway.

The mill village consists of rows of identical houses of two primary types spaced approximately 100 feet apart, center to center, which were built along with the mill and completed by 1905. Approximately one acre was allotted to each house for gardens and a privy.³⁹ The surviving mill houses are typically modest vernacular center-chimney plan dwellings that can be sorted into two main groups: one-and-a-half-story double-pile houses covered with weatherboards and one-and-a-half-story single-pile houses covered with board-and-batten siding. The houses were built of light wood frame with side-gable roofs, attached front and rear shed-roof porches, interior brick chimneys, and four-over-four double-hung wood-sash windows. The porches were typically supported with boxed or square wood posts, and only the double-pile houses included rear porches. None of the houses were equipped with indoor plumbing, so a privy was located in the rear yard of each house. A few one-story houses employing a center hall plan display a slightly higher degree of architectural finish and include rear ells and porches.

Due to its small size, the village was never incorporated and thus did not require municipal officials or services. Only two commercial buildings stand in the village in addition to the domestic architecture. The principal edifice is the two-story brick company store building, which also contained the mill offices and served as the post office. The large upper-story space was used for church services, school classes, and meetings. The auto repair garage is a one-story front-gable frame building located across the street from the store. It likely began as a vehicle maintenance building in the early years of the mill, before automobile ownership became more prevalent. A two-story frame boarding house stood to the south of the store but was demolished in the 1960s. The Henry River Baptist Church eventually erected a church approximately one-half mile north of the village, and students were bused to school in Hildebran.

The company store building is a good example of the Commercial Style with its large storefront windows and transoms, center entrance bay and exterior entrance to the second

³⁸ Ibid, 116-117.

³⁹ Kelly Autumn Carroll, *Preserving North Carolina's Last Textile Landscape: The Case for Henry River Mill Village* (Master's thesis, Columbia University, 2012), 35. No individual lots, however, are assigned to the houses at Henry River Mill Village because the housing was never subdivided and sold to individual owners.

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story, arched second-story window openings, and a parapet roof. The Commercial Style was popular in towns across the country from the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth century. Considered a reaction to more ornate Queen Anne and Romanesque Revival style commercial buildings, the Commercial Style retained the basic elements of commercial architecture while simplifying the exterior expression. Commercial Style buildings were typically masonry construction, one-to-four stories in height with a brick façade. In addition to large storefronts on the first story, façades display brick patterning or paneling, accent details, corbelled cornices, and parapet rooflines. The company store building at Henry River features stucco over brick on the first story, and retains its storefront windows and transoms, central double-leaf entry doors, brick pilasters and arched window bays, and a corbelled cornice.

The Henry River Mill Village is not only one of the earliest planned mill villages in the region, but also one of the few surviving villages associated with a rural mill site. It stands in sharp contrast to other mill complexes in Burke County, in large part, due to a lack of definable mill villages. The Dunavant Cotton Manufacturing Company in Morganton, begun in 1888, is the oldest textile mill in Burke County. Later operated as Alpine Cotton Mill No. 1, the building is located adjacent to the Southern Railway tracks south of downtown Morganton. A mill village that was largely rural in character and associated with the Dunavant Mill stood to the east but no longer stands. Other textile mills began operation after 1900, including Henry River, as well as hosiery and knitting mills in Morganton, Valdese, and Glen Alpine. A cordage mill opened in Icard in 1914 to manufacture cotton braided sash cord.⁴⁰ As the textile and later furniture industries flourished in the early twentieth century, Morganton saw an increase in working-class housing with the construction of small bungalows and eclectic cottages followed as mill workers gained a new level of affluence.⁴¹

The town of Rhodhiss, which straddles the Burke-Caldwell county line, developed as a rural mill community at the beginning of the twentieth century. John Rhodes of Gaston County and George B. Hiss of Mecklenburg County selected a site on the Catawba River to build a cotton mill. Rhodhiss Manufacturing Company opened in 1902, after the partners built a horseshoe-shaped dam, electric generator, general store, and mill village in Caldwell County. The town was incorporated in 1903. In the early 1910s, a new steel bridge was built across the river where a second mill, the E. A. Smith Manufacturing Company, began operation in 1914 in Burke County. Southern Power Company purchased both the mills in 1924 and constructed a new dam to expand electric production. The town eventually grew to more than 1,000 residents.⁴² Separate mill villages were associated with each of the two mills: Rhodhiss Mill Village in Burke County

⁴⁰ Argintar, 13-14.

⁴¹ Suzanne Pickens Wylie, "Historic and Architectural Resources of Morganton" National Register Nomination (1987), 4.

⁴² Cotton, 71-72; "History," Town of Rhodhiss, website, <http://www.townofrhodhiss.com/history/>, retrieved January 2018.

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and Rhodhill Mill Village in Caldwell County. The two villages are informally arranged with houses lining both sides of the irregular network of streets. The houses in the Rhodhiss Mill Village are most commonly one-and-a-half-story side-gable frame dwellings with engaged full-width porches, while the Rhodhill Mill Village houses typically have attached partial-width front porches. The houses in both villages appear to have been predominantly single-family dwellings with a single front entry door. In both cases company houses were later sold to individual owners, and as a result the two villages contain mobile homes, infill construction, and later commercial buildings. Individual dwellings in the villages have undergone substantial alteration including replacement siding, windows, and porch materials; enclosure of porches; and new additions.

The unincorporated community of Millersville in Alexander County, north of Hickory, presents another small rural mill village. Dating to the beginning of twentieth century, the two-story Alspaugh Cotton Mill stands on the north side of Lower Little River a little more than two miles north of the Catawba River.⁴³ The mill village, which stands apart from the mill, consists of approximately twenty houses lining both sides of two parallel streets on the west side of NC 16. The houses are typically one-story side-gable frame dwellings with attached partial-width front porches and gable-roof rear ells and display extensive alterations including replacement siding, windows, and porch materials. New construction, including a large church complex, mobile homes, and Ranch houses, have been built in the distance between the mill site on the river and the mill village.

Approximately six miles downriver, in neighboring Catawba County, the Shuford family of Hickory erected the Brookford Cotton Mill around 1900. By 1915, the Brookford Mill complex consisted of two mill buildings, several warehouses, two stores, and 119 “frame tenement houses” on seventy-one acres in the town of Brookford, just south of Hickory.⁴⁴ The Brookford Mill Village, which consists of two areas of gridded streets on either side of a small park, occupies a hillside north of the mill site and contains a variety of house types. The housing stock includes one-story L-shaped dwellings, one-story side-gable houses with attached front porches, one-story hip-roof dwellings, and larger one-and-a-half-story front- and side-gable residences. The houses have been substantially altered with replacement materials, enclosed porches, and new additions. Two church buildings stand within the village, which has been impacted in recent years by improvements to the principal roads in the village.

The Henry River Mill Village Historic District survives as a significant collection of workers’ houses and related structures associated with the Henry River Manufacturing Company’s textile mill located on the Henry Fork River in Burke County. Built along curving streets on the hillside above the mill and completed by 1905, the mill village contains definable house types repeated throughout the district, with gardens, open space, and support structures

⁴³ Vickie Mason, “Historic and Architectural Development of Alexander County,” Report for North Carolina Archives & History Western Office, Asheville, NC, July 1987, 11.

⁴⁴ *Hickory Daily Record*, December 11, 1915.

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to serve the needs of residents. The one- and one-and-a-half-story side-gable frame single-family residences and duplexes on spacious lots created the impression of small rural farmhouses surrounded by garden plots and open land. Unlike the majority of textile communities in North Carolina, the mill owners never sold the workers' houses to individuals and, as a result, the village retains a strong visual consistency of form, scale, and materials. Although small to begin with, and though a portion of the original mill houses have been lost in the intervening years, more than half of the original residences remain in place and provide an unspoiled glimpse into a once prevalent part of North Carolina's landscape. The physical and spatial relationships of the surviving twenty of the original thirty-five mill houses in the village remain due to a lack of modern intrusions. Unlike other comparable complexes of mill housing, Henry River Mill Village retains a majority of its resources, original materials, and features. The eligible boundary does not include the ruins of the mill and industrial buildings, which were destroyed by fire in 1977, or the three surviving manager's houses, which no longer retain a high level of integrity due to material changes. The location, design, materials, setting, and feeling of the mill village all remain strong, while the association has been diminished to some degree with the destruction of the mill due to fire, and the integrity of workmanship has lessened due to deteriorating conditions. However, it is the scarcity of alterations and replacement materials on individual houses and the lack of infill construction gives Henry River Mill Village its unique standing among surviving mill villages in Burke County and the surrounding region. The Henry River Mill Village remains one of the purest architectural representations of an isolated industrial village in rural North Carolina.

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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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: Burke County Public Library, Morganton, NC

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): BK 0086

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10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property approx. 40 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| A. Latitude: 35.698865 | Longitude: -81.430813 |
| B. Latitude: 35.698836 | Longitude: -81.429394 |
| C. Latitude: 35.696563 | Longitude: -81.426979 |
| D. Latitude: 35.695327 | Longitude: -81.426680 |
| E. Latitude: 35.694262 | Longitude: -81.429950 |
| F. Latitude: 35.695031 | Longitude: -81.431981 |
| G. Latitude: 35.697822 | Longitude: -81.431177 |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The eligible boundary is shown by a solid white line on the accompanying Burke County tax map. The boundary encompasses portions of two tax parcels [PINs 2771-87-5298 and 2771-97-1412], as well as the right-of-way of Henry River Road (SR 1002) between those two parcels. The boundary begins at point A, at the northwestern most point of parcel 2771-87-5298, thence proceeding eastward along the parcel line to where the parcel line meets the western side of the Henry River Road right-of-way, thence eastward across the road to where the northwesternmost point of parcel 2771-91-1412 meets the east side of the Henry River Road right-of-way, thence travels 103 feet east (southeast) to point B. (Note: The boundary does not include any portion of the triangular shaped parcel 2771-88-7362 north of point B.) From point B, the boundary continues southeast approximately 1,108 feet to point C, where it meets the eastern parcel line, thence continues southeast along

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the parcel line which parallels the Henry River to point D, thence follows the southern parcel line west to where it meets the east side of the Henry River Road right-of-way. It then crosses Henry River Road to the point where parcel 2771-87-5298 meets the west right-of-way of Henry River Road. It then travels south along the parcel line to point E, then west (northwest) along the parcel line approximately 685 feet to point F. Then the boundary travels north following the contour of a gully to point G, where it follows the northwestern most parcel line to meet point A.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The eligible boundary for the Henry River Mill Village Historic District encompasses the concentration of resources and landscape elements historically associated with the mill village, which occupy portions of two tax parcels [PINs 2771-87-5298 and 2771-97-1412], separated by Henry River Road (SR 1002). Resources within the historic district represent the residential life of the mill's employees and retain a high degree of integrity. The boundary is drawn to include the surviving mill houses, dependent structures, remaining road network, sidewalks, and retaining walls situated within the cleared and landscaped areas of the mill village. In addition to the cleared and maintained areas surrounding the mill houses and other buildings, the boundary includes some of the wooded surroundings to provide an appropriate setting for the rural mill village, but excludes excessive woodlands within the tax parcels west of the boundary line between points F and G, and east of the boundary line between points B and C. Those two segments of the boundary deter from the parcel line to remain closer to the extent of the eligible resource. To accomplish this, it follows a natural feature, a gully, between points G and F, and begins segment B to C by roughly paralleling the tree line at the northwest of the segment, and then continues in a straight line to where the parcel line parallels the river. The eligible boundary does not include the ruins of the mill and industrial buildings, which were destroyed by fire in 1977, or the three surviving manager's houses, which no longer retain a high level of integrity due to material changes.

11. Form Prepared By

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organization: Acme Preservation Services, LLC
street & number: 825C Merrimon Ave., #345
city or town: Asheville state: NC zip code: 28801
e-mail: cgriffith.acme@gmail.com
telephone: 828-281-3852
date: January 2, 2019

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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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Photographs

The following information pertains to each of the photographs:

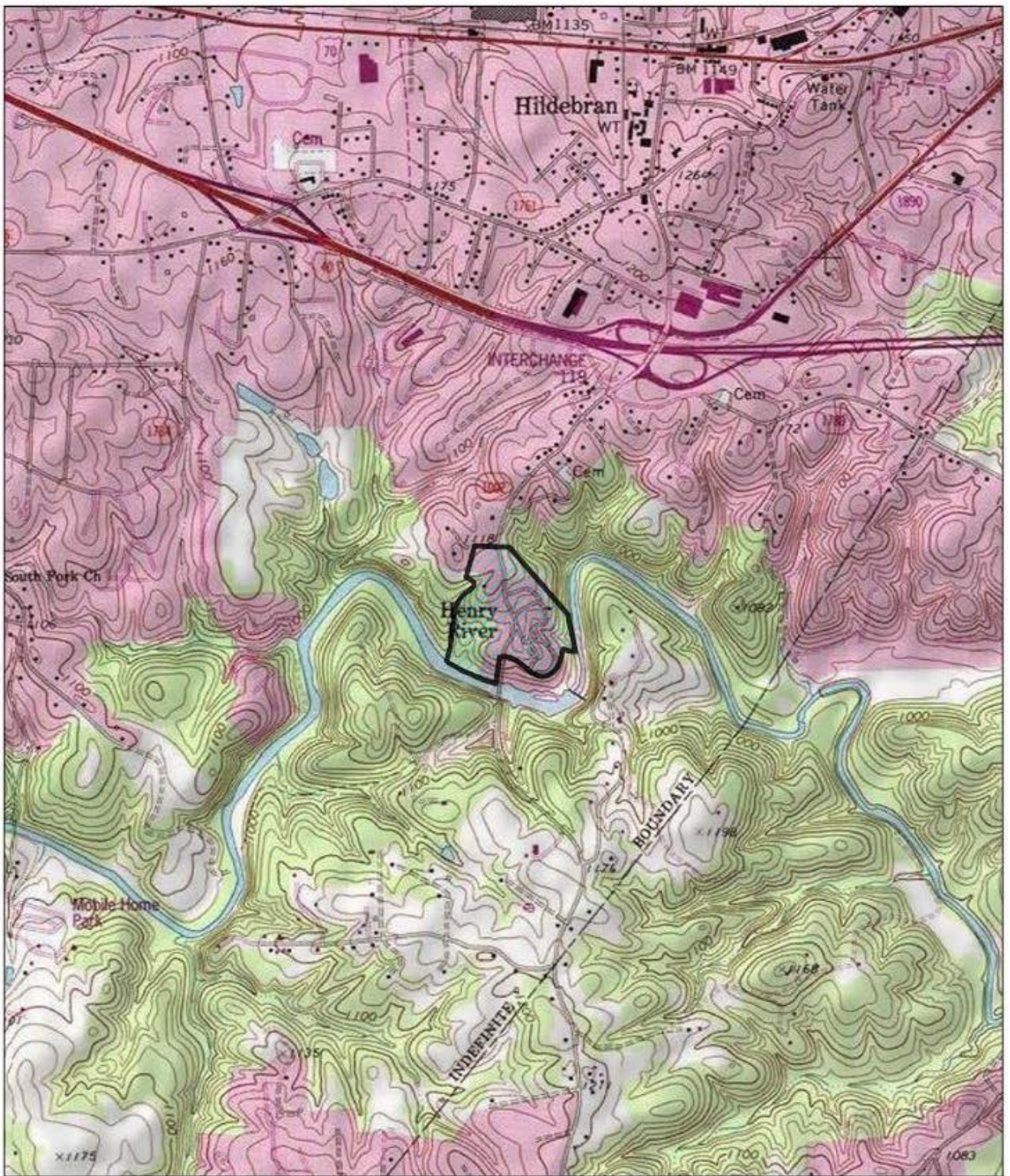
Name of Property: Henry River Mill Village Historic District
Location: Henry River Road, Hildebran vicinity, North Carolina
County: Burke
Name of Photographer: Clay Griffith / Acme Preservation Services
Date of Photographs: October 27, 2017
Location of Digital Master: Historic Preservation Office
North Carolina Division of Archives and History
109 E. Jones Street
Raleigh, North Carolina 27601-2807

Photographs:

1. Henry River Road, view to north (Annie McDonald, Jan. 7, 2019)
2. Henry River Road, view to northeast from north end of Henry River Bridge (Annie McDonald, Jan. 7, 2019)
3. Retaining wall and landscape features at south end of historic district, view to north
4. Mill houses, garage, and company store, overall view to northwest
5. Mill House (#18), Type A, oblique view to southeast (Annie McDonald, Jan. 7, 2019)
6. Mill House (#19), Type A, with Type B mill houses in background, view to east (Annie McDonald, Jan. 7, 2019)
7. Mill House (#20), Type A, façade, view to east
8. Mill House (#6), Type A, interior
9. Mill House (#26), Type B, oblique front view to southeast
10. Mill House (#3), Type C, oblique front view to southwest
11. Mill House (#13), façade, view to southwest
12. Farm House, oblique front view to southwest
13. Company Store, façade, view to west
14. Well House, Non-contributing resource, view to northwest

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

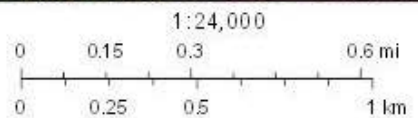


National Register of Historic Places Nomination

Henry River Mill Village Historic District

4126-4283 Henry River Road, Hildebran vic.
Burke County, North Carolina

National Register Boundary Map



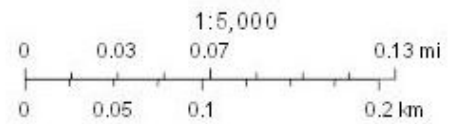


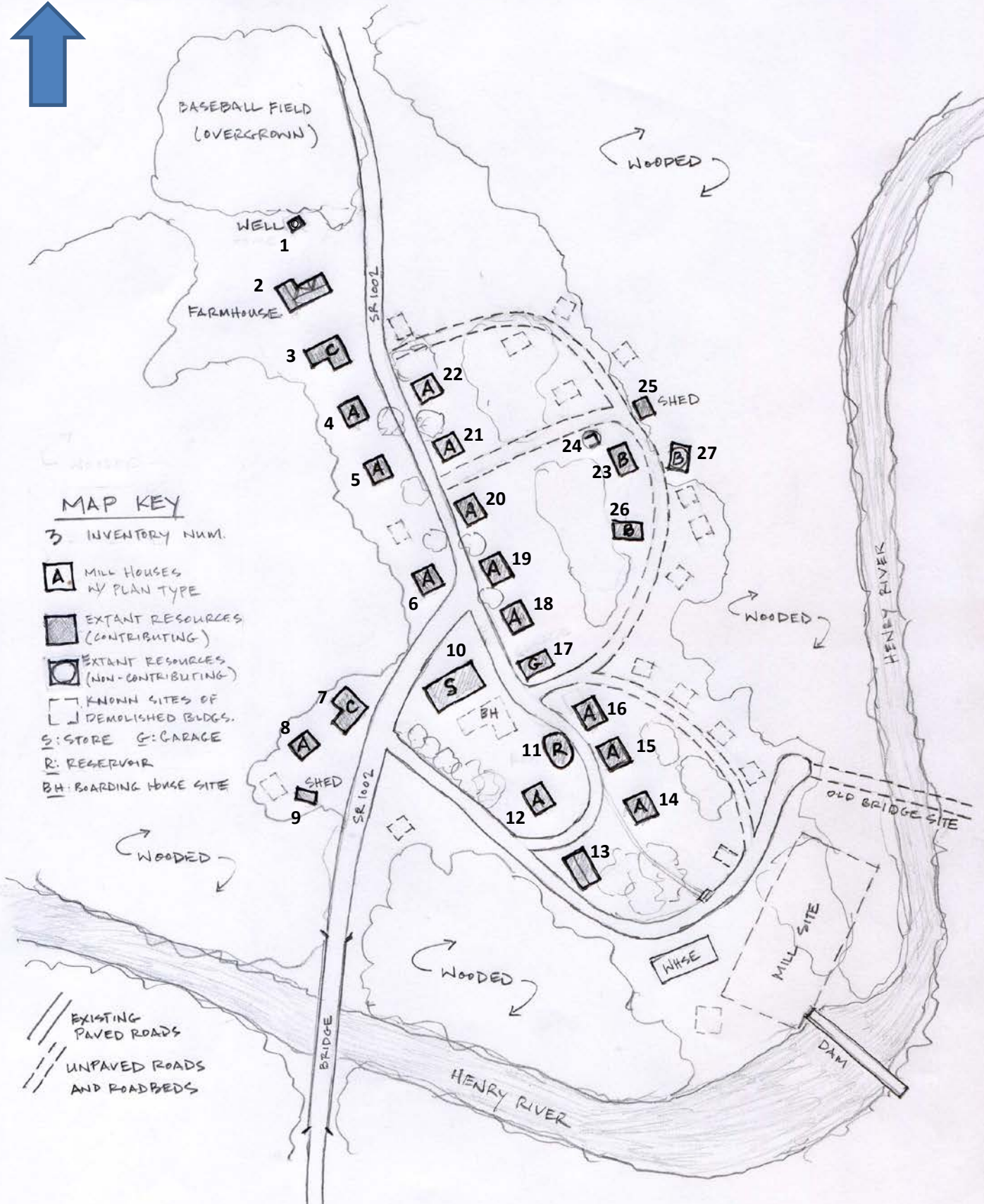
National Register of Historic Places Nomination

Henry River Mill Village Historic District

4126-4283 Henry River Road, Hildebran vic.
Burke County, North Carolina

National Register Boundary Map





MAP KEY

3 INVENTORY NUM.

A MILL HOUSES
BY PLAN TYPE

EXTANT RESOURCES
(CONTRIBUTING)

EXTANT RESOURCES
(NON-CONTRIBUTING)

KNOWN SITES OF
DEMOLISHED BLDGS.

S: STORE G: GARAGE

R: RESERVOIR

BH: BOARDING HOUSE SITE

EXISTING
PAVED ROADS

UNPAVED ROADS
AND ROADBEDS

National Register of Historic Places Nomination

Henry River Mill Village Historic District – Site Plan (not to scale)

4126-4283 Henry River Road, Hildebran vic., Burke County, NC



National Register of Historic Places Nomination

Henry River Mill Village Historic District

4126-4283 Henry River Road, Hildebran vic.
 Burke County, North Carolina

Photograph key



(photo number and direction of view)

