

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: North Carolina
COUNTY: Buncombe
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
Sherrill's Inn

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
U.S. 74, 1.1 mi. southeast of junction with S.R. 2813

CITY OR TOWN:
Fairview vicinity

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
Eleven

STATE:
North Carolina

CODE:
37

COUNTY:
Buncombe

CODE:
021

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/> Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Clarke

STREET AND NUMBER:
Hickory Nut Gap Farm

CITY OR TOWN:
Fairview

STATE:
North Carolina

CODE:
37

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Buncombe County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
Pack Square

CITY OR TOWN:
Asheville

STATE:
North Carolina

CODE:
37

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE OF SURVEY:
 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:
East Capitol and Independence Ave.

CITY OR TOWN:
Washington

STATE:
D. C.

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Sherrill's Inn is set on a mountain hillside with a view of the road which curves below. The house is surrounded by extensive landscaping which includes stone walls, picket gates, large box bushes, secluded paths, fruit trees, a vegetable garden, and numerous outbuildings. The well-kept farmstead amid steep, heavily wooded mountains, has a lush pastoral ambiance. The present building is a large frame one, incorporating two early log structures and subsequent enlargements.

In The Early Architecture of North Carolina, Sherrill's Inn is described as a log house of the saddle-bag variety which has been raised to two stories and weatherboarded. This portion of the house is four bays long and two bays wide; it rests on a stone foundation. The windows have six-over-six sash at both levels and simple architraves. A one-story shed porch carries across the south facade and east gable end and becomes shed rooms across the north facade. (This north shed area is said to have once been divided into five small rooms to accommodate the guests, but now is two large rooms.) The porch is supported by gracefully tapered posts each rising without interruption from rectangular bases to approximately balustrade level, where it is quickly cinched in on all four sides; above, the post gently flares out to original width near eye level and then back in, until near the top the taper reaches its conclusion to flare quickly into a cap for the porch roof supporting plate to rest upon. The facade sheltered by the porch area has flush sheathing, a baseboard, and a Federal style chair rail of undetermined origin. The most interesting feature, however, is found in this porch at the point where the central chimney joins the two pens. This area houses an exterior stair to the second floor. The stair begins with a double run (east and west) of six steps each to a landing from which a single run rises north between the pens to the chimney wall, from which doors to the right and left provide access to the east and west rooms of the saddle-bag portion of the house. The stair balustrade, found only on the first runs and landing, is Federal in style. The rounded handrail is supported by paired, slender balusters, square in section, and the handrail turns outward at the first step in an abbreviated volute. The balustrade is similar on both sides of the landing and joins the protective rail of the landing about one-third of the way from its top. The landing balustrade varies from the stair only in that the handrail is narrow and slightly flattened.

To the west of the saddle-bag section is an originally separate log building, two bays wide and two bays deep. Since this section is now two stories high and weatherboarded, it is unknown how many stories high the log structure was. A small (one-bay) shed room to the south continues the line of the porch roof. This portion is joined to the saddle-bag portion by a north-south hall which was expanded in the early twentieth century to create a two-story, three-bay wide, gabled wing extending north a full bay beyond the shed rooms. This makes the west end one flush wall, a full four bays wide with two exterior end chimneys. A small, one-story gabled room with a shed porch to the north, is tucked between the two exterior chimneys and has its own exterior end chimney of stone. There are several Federal style exterior features which are a result of twentieth century renovations, such as small fanlight windows in the gables, over the rear door and in

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the west second-story windows.

The interior plan of the saddle-bag portion consists of two rooms up and two down with two rooms in the shed portion. There is an exterior entrance to each of the first floor rooms on the south side and access from one room to the other, up and down, to the north of the central chimney. Access to the shed rooms is from each of the two main rooms but not through each other. The east shed room opens onto the porch. This room has large murals, contained within applied moldings, which depict the history of the inn. It was painted in the early twentieth century by the present owner's mother, Mrs. J. G. K. McClure. There is a great deal of individualized, Federal style trim throughout the house which was installed about the first quarter of the twentieth century when the house was extensively remodeled.

It is difficult to separate the early and later fabrics. The large hall and wing which separates the two log structures, reflects much of the work from this period and speaks well for the local craftsman who created much of the Federal style woodwork of a more elaborate character. The north-south hall contains a partially enclosed stair and just to the west of this, on the first floor--in the smaller log section of the house--is a library which, though remodeled in the twentieth century, contains a simple, post-lintel-shelf mantel that probably reflects the no-nonsense pioneer origins of this interesting building. A most intriguing aspect of the remodeling of this room is a "secret" door cut through the logs into the shed room on the south. The door is hidden by book shelves above a two-door cabinet, which when closed, is not noticeable as a door. There was no original internal entrance to the shed room, which is said to have been reserved for drovers to keep them separate from the other guests of the inn.

The inn is surrounded by a number of supporting buildings and cottages of various ages. The two which appear to be the earliest and most interesting are to the west of the inn. Nearest the inn is a stone spring house, still functioning, which features a lattice-work portion about three to four feet wide, running beneath the gable roof which has a wide overhang on the front (east) to shelter the entrance. To the northwest is a strongly constructed log meathouse, also with a wide overhang of the gable roof on the front (south) to give protection to the entrance and work area. Further to the west arranged on both sides of a short lane are cottages; this lane forms a "T" intersection which runs south (or up hill) into an orchard and north to a large barn with a high pitched roof.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) ca. 1801, ca. 1834, ca. 1922

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	<u>Farmer's Alliance</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			_____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Sherrill's Inn, a large frame building encompassing two log structures, is part of a pleasant, rambling farm complex in a rural mountain setting of unusual charm. It was cited by Thomas T. Waterman in The Early Architecture of North Carolina as a notable example of a saddle-bag log house with an interesting exterior stair. The building is also significant for its use as an inn throughout much of the nineteenth century, located on the "Hickory Nut Turnpike," an early stage route vital to the development of western North Carolina.

Sherrill's Inn was an early way-station for stagecoach travelers and cattle drovers passing over the road connecting Rutherfordton and Asheville. The inn was located on a mountainside near the present-day town of Fairview in the "Hickory Nut Gap" section of southeastern Buncombe County. It served mountain travelers for over fifty years and during that time was host to a number of prominent visitors.

The inn was built for Bedford Sherrill sometime between 1839 and 1850 on a tract of land comprised of several smaller adjoining tracts which he acquired during this period. Sherrill apparently built the inn, which includes log structures that may date from before his ownership.

Of Bedford Sherrill and his family little is known. He was born in North Carolina about 1810, was married to Elizabeth P. Harris of Rutherford County about November, 1837, and became a resident of Buncombe County sometime before 1840. In January, 1841, the General Assembly appointed Sherrill and five other men from Rutherford and Buncombe counties (one of whom was Sherrill's father-in-law, John Washington Harris)

Commissioners . . . for the purpose of making and keeping in repair a Turnpike Road, commencing at or opposite Laxton Lynch's in Rutherford County, thence along or near the State Road, crossing the Blue Ridge at Hickory-Nut Gap, to the Widow Sail's, in Buncombe County.

In this act the assembly incorporated the commissioners as the "Hickory Nut Turnpike Company." empowered it to issue capital stock, set construction standards, and established rates of toll. The turnpike was completed sometime before May 10, 1847, when it was given a final inspection and presumably opened to traffic. The inn, located on the new turnpike road about fifteen miles southeast of Asheville, opened at least as early as

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February 26, 1850, the earliest date appearing in its register.

The new turnpike was not the first state road to be constructed between Rutherfordton and Asheville. As early as 1823 the General Assembly authorized an expenditure to be used "in making and improving the road leading from Asheville by the Hickory-nut Gap to Rutherfordton. . . ." In a progress report to the General Assembly issued in 1830, the commissioners noted that the road had been "recently much travelled" and boasted that it was "destined forthwith, to become the great channel of intercourse between the Western States and the Carolinas."

These early state roads were, in fact, highly regarded by the residents of this isolated and sparsely-settled region. With the railroad still decades away and the rivers too rough for navigation, the early roads--and the stagecoaches which traversed them--served as the only effective commercial ties to the outside world. The route through the Hickory Nut Gap appears to have been favored by the operators of stagecoach lines. The "Great Western Stageline," which began operations in 1839, utilized the route on its Salisbury-to-Asheville run. Twenty years later the Asheville-to-Charlotte "United States Mail Line" traveled the Hickory Nut Gap Turnpike and advertised it as "the cheapest as well as the most direct route."

The register of Sherrill's Inn is in the possession of Mr. James McClure Clarke, the present owner of the house. The register indicates that Bedford Sherrill began receiving guests at least as early as February, 1850, and that the inn remained open long after he conveyed it to his wife and children in 1878. The inn achieved a degree of acclaim despite the absence of evidence that it was ever advertised by the Sherrills in public print. In Mountain Scenery, a travel guide to the mountain regions of North Carolina published in 1859, Henry E. Colton noted that the inn was "a very pleasant place, and affords a fine view. It is a cool, pleasant place in summer." As late as 1890 (when the inn was being operated by Bedford Sherrill's daughter Margaret), Thomas H. Lindsey's Guide Book to Western North Carolina observed that "many a tired and weary traveler has spent the night at this famous old stopping-place--famous alike for the good fare and the hospitality of its mistress."

The inn's register reveals that the vast majority of pre-Civil War guests were from the Carolinas; nevertheless, guests from fourteen other states and from Ireland patronized the inn during the 1850s alone. After the war, as the Western North Carolina Railroad gradually extended its tracks in the direction of Asheville, the geographic composition of the inn's guest list began to broaden. As the postwar decades passed, the register began to include a proportionately greater number of visitors from the piedmont and coastal plains sections of the Carolinas, and ultimately from areas far from the borders of the two states. A study of the year-by-year changes in the register illuminates the railroad's effects upon Asheville and western North Carolina and suggests that the coming of the rail lines was a crucial factor in making that region an early tourist center. Between 1880 and 1909,

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visitors arrived from thirty-one states and nine foreign nations, including Russia, Siam, and New Zealand.

Sherrill's Inn was also visited by a number of well-known public figures, many of them prominent in North Carolina affairs. Notable Tar Heel guests included lawyer (and later United States senator, associate justice and chief justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court) Augustus S. Merrimon of Asheville (1858); then-United States representative (and later two-term governor and United States senator) Zebulon Baird Vance, also of Asheville (1859); Professor Washington C. Kerr of Davidson College, who later served as state geologist (1859); author Frances Tiernan Fisher ("Christian Reid") of Salisbury (1875); North Carolina historian John Preston Arthur of Asheville (1893); former Confederate General Robert F. Hoke (for whom Hoke County is named) (1884); and Greensboro textile pioneer Moses Cone (1884). The two most noteworthy visitors of national prominence were former president Millard Fillmore (who spent the night of July 23, 1858) and Governor Andrew Johnson of Tennessee (who registered at the inn on October 7, 1859). Both men actually signed the register.

The register also reveals that the greatest number of guests patronized the inn during the summer months. The inn's location made it a place of respite at this season of the year and probably difficult to reach during the winter months. The inn was also quite popular with livestock drovers, who used it as a stopover on their often lengthy journeys. Sherrill obviously possessed the facilities to board large numbers of animals as well as people: In February, 1860, one William Mundy of Clark County, Kentucky, registered "fifty one Mules & eight horses" as guests of the inn.

In 1878, at the age of sixty-eight, Bedford Sherrill conveyed to his wife and her heirs "eight small tracts, adjoining each other, situate on the waters of Ashworth's Creek, in Hickory nut gap . . . all now known as the Bedford sherrill lands. . . ." What became of Sherrill at this point is uncertain. His date of death could not be ascertained. Sherrill's wife Elizabeth acted as proprietor of the inn until 1880, when she conveyed it to her daughter Margaret. Margaret Sherrill and other members of the family operated it until February, 1908, when it was purchased by J. F. Spaugh for \$6,700. Spaugh died about a year later and the property was sold at public auction to H. T. Phillips, who paid \$7,500 for the old Sherrill property and two additional tracts in Henderson County. At about this time the inn was closed permanently.

After leasing the former inn property from H. T. Phillips for nearly a year, Mr. and Mrs. James G. K. McClure purchased the property outright in June, 1917. The McClures conveyed the tract to Mr. and Mrs. James McClure Clarke, the present owners, in December, 1946.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Research by Robert Topkins, survey specialist; architectural description by Charles G. Suttlemyre, Jr., survey specialist.
 The Asheville News. Advertisement, July 28, 1859.
 Buncombe County Deed Books. Office of the Register of Deeds, Buncombe county Courthouse, Asheville.
 Carolina Watchman (Salisbury). Advertisement, November 8, 1839.
 Colton, Henry E. Mountain Scenery: The Scenery of the Mountains of Western North Carolina and Northwestern South Carolina. Raleigh: W. L. Pomeroy; Philadelphia: Hayes & Zell, 1859.
 Laws of North Carolina, 1823.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	35°	29'	43"	82°	21'	55"			
NE	35°	29'	43"	82°	22'	02"			
SE	35°	29'	30"	82°	22'	02"			
SW	35°	29'	30"	82°	21'	55"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 20 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
 Survey and Planning Unit

ORGANIZATION: Division of Archives and History

DATE: 9 January 1975

STREET AND NUMBER:
 109 East Jones Street

CITY OR TOWN: Raleigh

STATE: North Carolina

CODE: 37

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: [Signature]
 State Historic Preservation Officer

Title: _____

Date: 9 January 1975

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: _____

ATTEST:

 Keeper of The National Register

Date: _____

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Lindsey, Thomas H. Lindsey's Guide Book to Western North Carolina. Asheville: Randolph-Kerr Printing Co., 1890.
North Carolina Spectator and Western Advertiser (Rutherfordton). "The Hickory Nut Gap Road," November 26, 1830.
Public and Private Laws of North Carolina, 1840-1841.
Rutherford County Records, Rutherfordton, North Carolina (Subgroups: County Court Records, Marriage Bonds).
Rutherford County Records, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina (Subgroups: County Court Records, Marriage Bonds).
Sherrill's Inn Register. Microfilm of original, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.