

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of property

historic name Eller, Joseph P., House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 494 Clarks' Chapel Road not for publication N/A
city or town Weaverville vicinity N/A
state North Carolina code NC county Buncombe code 021 zip code 28787

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant _____ nationally _____ statewide X locally. (____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jeffrey Crow SHPO 6/23/04
Signature of certifying official Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
____ entered in the National Register ____ See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
____ determined eligible for the National Register ____ See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
____ determined not eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
____ removed from the National Register	_____	_____
____ other (explain): _____	_____	_____

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

private
 public-local
 public-State
 public-Federal

building(s)
 district
 site
 structure
 object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

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

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

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>Domestic</u>	Sub: <u>single dwelling</u>
<u>Agriculture/subsistence</u>	<u>animal facility</u>
<u>Agriculture/subsistence</u>	<u>agricultural outbuilding</u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>Domestic</u>	Sub: <u>single dwelling</u>
<u>Agriculture/subsistence</u>	<u>animal facility</u>
<u>Domestic</u>	<u>secondary structure</u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>
<u> </u>	<u> </u>

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

other: I-house

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone
roof asphalt
walls weatherboard

other wood

Narrative Description

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

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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 a grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

ca. 1880

Significant Dates

ca. 1880

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: Western Office, Archives and History

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DESCRIPTION

Summary

The Joseph P. Eller House, a two-story late nineteenth-century I-house, is located on a hill which sits above Clark's Chapel Road in the Flat Creek section of Buncombe County, North Carolina, a short distance north of the town of Weaverville. The Eller House was once associated with a large tract of land of approximately 200 acres, but its surrounding lot is now 6.47 acres. On the property, in addition to the main house, are a springhouse, a barn, a historic roadbed, remnants of foundations from other historic structures, and a new garage.

Clark's Chapel Road is located to the south of the property and the house sits uphill from the road. A gravel drive winds north from the road, passing between the barn and the house to a garage at the north of the house. The house faces west toward the barn, pasture, and a pond. A new plank-board fence runs around the pond and pasture area, in front of the house and along the road. To the north of the house, beyond the garage, is a new low stone retaining wall that continues east along the hill toward the back yard. At the rear of the house are a flat play area and the springhouse, located near the eastern edge of the property. To the south of the house, between the house and Clark's Chapel Road, is a flat garden area. Curvilinear planting beds edged in either stone or brick surround the house on the north and west, with a flat lawn area in the front of the house. A row of pines and cedars line the south edge of the lawn, set on the hillside which drops steeply away to the flat garden area on the south. The land to the north of the house property extends up a steep tree-covered hillside. Just outside the property, to the west of the pond, is a new subdivision road and wooded hillsides. Only one new house in this new subdivision is visible from the Eller House. To the south of the property, on the south side of Clark's Chapel Road, is a flat area along the creek, with wooded hillsides rising above this. To the east of the property the land rises in gently sloping hills, with scattered houses visible in the distance.

Joseph P. Eller House. Contributing. ca. 1880

The Joseph P. Eller House is an I-house with a main block that is two stories tall and one room deep with a two-story central portico at the front. There is a rear two-story ell, originally one-story, and a one-story enclosed porch on the south side of the ell. In addition to the main house there is a one-story garage on the north, attached to the ell by a covered walkway. The building sits on a stone foundation and is covered in lapped weatherboard siding, originally unpainted for many years. Original six-over-six windows with beveled surrounds and single-shoulder brick chimneys with stone bases remain. The gabled roof is covered with asphalt shingles. Changes to the house, ca. 1990, include adding a second story to the originally one-story ell, the addition of the garage, covered walkway, and mudroom, and the enclosure of the one-story porch on the south side of the ell.

The front, or west, elevation of the main block of the house has a traditional I-house look, being three bays wide and one room deep, with a side gable roof and an exterior single-shoulder chimney with simple corbelled stack in each gable end. The most notable features of the exterior are the deep eaves and the two-story portico. The eaves are flush-sheathed above a plain frieze board that abuts the tops of the

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second-story window surrounds and the molding atop the very slender corner boards. Extending the full depth of the chimneys, the eaves create a pediment with molded raking boards in each gable end.

The portico is similarly pedimented, but with "wave" bargeboards instead of the molded rake boards. The first floor of the portico features four square posts with beveled edges and, near the top, molding that suggests capitals; railings with one-by-two balusters and a beveled top rail; flush-sheathed ceiling; and original wood floor. It is unknown if the first floor porch balustrade originally matched the upper cutwork design, but this railing has been in place from at least the late 1970s.¹ There are new stone steps up to the porch and low stone edging around the planting area in front of the porch. The front door is four-panel with sidelights and transom lights. The second floor porch has two square posts that are not beveled, but are also molded as on the first level; a board and batten ceiling with wide battens, and a wood floor. The second-floor balustrade is almost solid, featuring bands of intricate cutwork circles and diamonds; the entrance is the same as on the first floor. Neither level of the portico has corresponding pilaster details. The wall of the portico pediment is flush-sheathed and pierced by a central six-over-six window.

Windows, with beveled surrounds, are six-over-six, set on either side of the single shoulder brick chimney, on the first and second stories on both the north and south elevations, and symmetrically placed on either side of the portico on the west elevation. Corresponding windows, set on either side of the ell, are located on the second floor of the west elevation, with a door on the first floor leading into the enclosed porch (see Exhibit A, floor plan).

To the east of the main block of the house is the two-story ell, which, along with the enclosed one-story porch at the southeast corner, covers most of the east side of the main block of the house. Originally one-story, the ell was enlarged with the addition of a second story ca. 1990, along with the enclosure of the porch. Detailing of the exterior of the ell is very much in keeping with the main block of the house, including the use of a pedimented gable at the second story pierced by a single six-over-six window. Six-over-six windows are utilized throughout the ell and the enclosed porch, including a continuous band of six-over-six windows on the porch. The siding on the ell and the porch matches the remainder of the house. Leading from the ell to the garage, at the northeast corner of the ell, are the mudroom and breezeway which connects to the garage, both added ca. 1990. The breezeway roof is gabled, with square posts set on concrete bollards. The ceiling of the breezeway is flush sheathing, to match the detailing of the remainder of the house. A small raised deck extends out from the mudroom, about halfway out to the garage. A flagstone walkway leads from the deck to the garage.

¹ Swaim, Douglas. Cabins and Castles: The History and Architecture of Buncombe County, North Carolina. North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1981, p. 114. The photo of the house at this time, taken in a 1979 survey, shows the porch railings as they exist today. It is difficult to see, but it appears in this photo that there may have been a cutwork section on top of the south railing, but this is no longer there. The Stewart family, who made the most changes to the house ca. 1990, preserved both railings intact in their renovation work.

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The interior of the main block of the Eller House is a typical single-pile floor plan, with a center stair hall and one room on either side on both the first and second stories. The rear ell, on the first floor, consists of two rooms, the enclosed porch to the south, and the mudroom to the northeast. The second floor of the ell contains a central hall, baths, and an additional bedroom (see Exhibit A, floor plan).

Throughout the house, the finishes reflect simple vernacular carpentry, including flush sheathing of all original walls and ceilings in wide boards and hand-planed mantelpieces. Door and window surrounds are plain boards. All original sheathing, except for the family room in the ell of the first floor, is unpainted. The first floor of the house has similar features throughout the two front rooms, hallway, and the two rooms of the rear ell, including twelve-inch baseboards, heart pine floors, and four- or five-panel doors. The stair treads and balustrade are more recent replacements. The balustrade has narrow one by one balusters and a narrow simple banister. The only change to the floor plan of the main block of the house is the addition of a bath in the north (office) room, added ca. 1990. The mantelpiece in the north (office) room has simple pilasters with molding at the top and bottom, an applied elongated beveled oval board which runs the full width, and a rounded shelf with indentations, supported by a half-oval full-width board. The mantelpiece in the south room (living room) has the same pilaster detail, an elongated raised diamond motif in the center, and a beveled shelf with a semi-circular inset in the center. Originally there was a third chimney, a brick interior one between the two rooms of the rear ell. When this was removed, the flush sheathing was patched to match the original. The kitchen and enclosed porch walls and ceilings are sheetrock, changes made ca. 1990.

Upstairs, the architectural features of the main block are much the same as downstairs. The mantelpiece in the north bedroom has the same pilaster detail as on the first floor, a central beveled applied oval, and a shallow beveled shelf. The south bedroom mantelpiece has pilasters, but of shorter proportions than the other three mantelpieces, inset panels, and a plain, unbeveled shelf. The only change to the floor plan in the main block of the house is the addition of a closet which projects out approximately two feet into the hallway. The walls of the closet re-used the original flush boards of the hallway wall, and new bi-fold doors were added. The bedroom and hallway through the added second story of the ell feature wood floors and sheetrock walls and ceilings (see Exhibit A, floor plan).

Springhouse. Contributing. ca. 1880.

Near the eastern edge of the property, along a creek bed, is the old springhouse. Granite slab steps lead down to the one-story frame building with a gabled roof covered by standing seam metal. Walls are unpainted lapped wood siding. The brick and concrete trough, which includes some new concrete work marked "May 1969," still fills with water.

Barn. Contributing. ca. 1880.

The barn is located at the southwest corner of the lot, downhill from the house and close to the road. The two-and-a-half story banked structure has a low-pitched gambrel roof, flush vertical board siding, and a metal roof covering. The lower level of the building is log construction, later covered with wood siding. It appears that the second story and loft of frame construction may have been added later, as farm operations

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expanded. The first floor interior has all exposed structure including log posts and hand-planed joists and beams. Animal stalls occupy the easternmost bay and there are two open bays to the west side against the earthen bank. Because of the sloped site, the second floor is reached from the upper drive.

Garage. Non-contributing. ca. 1990.

Located to the northeast of the main house, this one-story front-gable-roof building is connected to the main house by a covered walkway which ends at the mudroom entry into the kitchen. The garage faces west, like the main house, with double leaf beaded board doors and multi-light double hung windows on the east side. A modern door, multi-light-over-panel, opens into the garage on the south side, from the breezeway. Walls are weatherboard like the main house, and there are heavy timber braces on the walls.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

The ca. 1880 Joseph P. Eller House is one of few late nineteenth-century I-houses remaining in the Weaverville vicinity, north-central Buncombe County. It displays features typical of the once-pervasive form, including a three-bay main façade, exterior gable-end chimneys, deep eaves, and a prominent front porch. The Eller House is distinguished by notable architectural elements that include pedimented gables, a two-tiered entrance porch embellished with cutwork balustrades and wave bargeboards, and hand-planed mantelpieces representing an era of fine vernacular carpentry and craftsmanship. The house is associated with the Eller family, very late eighteenth- to early nineteenth-century settlers in Buncombe County. The Eller House is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C for architecture.

Historic Background

When it was formed in 1792, Buncombe County encompassed land that is today recognized as Henderson, Madison, Haywood, Jackson, Transylvania, Macon, Swain, Clay, Graham, and Cherokee counties.² Flat Creek, in present-day Buncombe County, lies north of Asheville and just east of the French Broad River. It was named for the character of the land, and was first mentioned in county records in October 1792. The "Old Warm Springs Road," an active but rough highway to western territories, ran through the Flat Creek area, bringing settlers from the Carolinas and Georgia through Flat Creek on their way to Tennessee, Kentucky, and beyond. By 1824, the Buncombe Turnpike, running from Greeneville, Tennessee, to Greenville, South Carolina, improved traveling conditions for the settlers, and kept a stream of traffic through Flat Creek. Also, it was in Flat Creek in the mid 1850s that W.T. Dickerson and Robert Blackstock made early attempts at producing tobacco as a cash crop in western North Carolina. By the 1870s, tobacco production was a mainstay for the local economy.³

The Eller family first came to the mountains of Buncombe County in the days before the Buncombe Turnpike. They settled in the area, acquiring large amounts of land. Genealogy records show that Eller ancestors came to America in the mid-1700s from Germany. Jacob Eller Sr. and his family followed other German families from the north to Rowan County, North Carolina. In the late 1770s, Eller's son, Jacob Eller Jr., married Mary Biffle in Rowan County. In 1789, Jacob Eller Jr. received a land grant in Sullivan County, North Carolina (now Tennessee), but by 1799 he had sold that land and moved to Buncombe County. Jacob Eller Jr. first appears in Buncombe County records in the 1800 census, listed as older than forty-five. Some of Eller's children included Jacob Eller III (b. 1789) who moved to Missouri, Joseph Eller (b. 1793), and Adam Eller (1795-1870).⁴

² Douglas Swaim, *Cabins and Castles: The History and Architecture of Buncombe County, North Carolina*, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1981, p. 11.

³ Flat Creek information taken from F.A. Sondley, *A History of Buncombe County, North Carolina*, Spartanburg, SC: Reprint Company Publishers, 1977, pp. 426, 494, 611, 617, 628.

⁴ *Heritage of Old Buncombe County, North Carolina, Vol. II*, ed. Doris Cline Ward, Winston-Salem: Old Buncombe County Genealogical Society and History Division of Hunter Publishing Co., 1987, p. 159.

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Joseph and Adam Eller stayed in Buncombe County and acquired vast landholdings. Joseph is said to have been only ten when he received his first land grant of 100 acres in Reems Creek and to have owned over 2000 acres in Reems and Flat Creek when he died.⁵ It would seem that Adam would have had similar fortunes, gaining land at a young age and increasing his holdings through the years. Deed records show that Adam made many land transactions.

Records of Adam Eller's family are somewhat unclear but indicate that he had a son whose birthday seems to match that of Joseph P. Eller, builder of the house in Flat Creek.⁶ Furthermore, the 1850 Census lists the Joseph P. Eller household next to the Adam Eller household as if they were neighbors or living on the same land. Considering the limited information available, it seems that Joseph P. Eller was the son of Adam Eller.

According to family history, Joseph P. Eller was a farmer, carpenter, preacher, and missionary. He was born in Buncombe County in 1820, presumably the son of Adam and Elizabeth Fields Eller. In 1845 he married Susan Anderson. Deed records show that Joseph P. Eller acquired approximately 160 acres along Big Ivy in Madison County, just across the Buncombe County line, from Pierce Roberts in 1851 and another fifty acres along Big Ivy from William Barnett in 1852. Family history notes that Joseph P. Eller attended several Methodist Protestant Conferences, first as a layman from the Buncombe Circuit and later as a preacher. In 1865 he was given his papers to preach, and from 1866 to 1868 he served as Superintendent of the Buncombe Circuit. He helped organize and build churches along the Pigeon River, even into Tennessee. Deed records show that in 1873 Joseph P. Eller leased half the rights to minerals and fossils on the 300 acres where he lived along Big Ivy.⁷

An 1880 deed indicates that Joseph P. and Susan Eller had a home along Big Ivy in Madison County, and the 1880 census lists the family in the Bull Creek/Big Ivy area.⁸ Then, in April of 1880, Joseph P. Eller sold that 300 acres.⁹ That same year he purchased land from J.R. Ball and his wife – a 200-acre tract that was listed as adjacent to J.R. Weaver and is likely the property in Flat Creek where Eller built his new home.¹⁰ Eller's first wife Susan disappears from records soon after this, and he married his second wife, Harriet Chambers (age 46) on November 30, 1880. After having bought land in Buncombe County in 1880 and re-marrying that same year, it is likely the house in Flat Creek was built for his new wife, Harriet. They apparently moved to their new Flat Creek home late in 1880 or early 1881.

⁵ *Heritage of Old Buncombe County, Vol. II*, 159.

⁶ 1840 U.S. Census

⁷ Clark's Chapel history, unknown author, non-published material, in possession of the owner.

⁸ Madison County Register of Deeds: A/487 (Dec 25, 1851); I/117 (July 12, 1852); and F/233 (Mar 27, 1873); US Census, 1880, Madison County, North Carolina.

⁹ Madison County Register of Deeds: F/233 (Mar 27, 1873) and I/271 (April 2, 1880).

¹⁰ Buncombe County Register of Deeds, Grantee Index.

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The Eller family developed a farm complex on their 200 acres. Originally the farm included many more buildings and operations than just the barn and springhouse which exist today, including a molasses making house and wash house, a cane grinding area adjacent to the molasses house, a blacksmithing shed, a woodworking shed, a surrey shed and corn crib, a smokehouse and root cellar, an outhouse, a chicken coop, and a wood shingle-making shed.¹¹

In his will, recorded in July 1892, Joseph P. Eller left to his son Lucius 160 acres including a house, barn, and mill, as well as farm implements. The will also stipulated that Lucius was to take care of Joseph's wife, Harriet. Lucius is listed as a co-executor of the will along with Andrew Roberts, his brother-in-law.¹² Lucius Eller lived in Flat Creek on the 160-acre parcel and continued the farming operations. While most of what was grown was for the family's use, he also grew corn and tobacco as cash crops. Sugar cane and a large family garden were also part of the operation. Livestock on the farm included cattle, hogs, chickens, peacocks, and guinea fowl.¹³ Lucius Eller married Rebecca A. Branks in 1904, when Lucius was 42 and Rebecca was 32. Records indicate that they never had children. Through the years, though, Lucius's sister-in-law, Catherine, and her son, Joseph Carl Eller, lived with Lucius and Rebecca.¹⁴

The transfer of land from Lucius Eller to Joseph Carl Eller is not clear. Lucius died in 1935 and was buried at Clark's Chapel Methodist Church.¹⁵ In 1947, J. Carl Eller acquired the house and land from the Board of Tax Supervision for Buncombe County. When he died in 1961, J. Carl Eller willed the house and land to his cousin, Dora A. West. The will noted the "exclusion of my other kin for the reason that all my other kin have not seen fit to aid and assist me in any manner during my life."¹⁶

The land and house stayed in the West family from 1961 until parcels were sold in the 1980s. The house was sold with a 10.85 acre tract to John P. Stewart in 1988. Changes to the house, made by the Stewarts ca. 1990, include adding a second story to the original one-story ell; the addition of the garage, covered walkway, and mudroom; the enclosure of the one-story porch on the south side of the ell; and the addition of the first-floor bath. The land was further subdivided by the Stewarts, who then sold the present 6.47 acres to the current owners, Scott and Jennifer Ramming, in 1998.¹⁷ The Rammings have continued to renovate the house, but have not made any additional structural changes to the property.

¹¹ Robinson, Carl and Vistula. Descendents of the Eller family. Interview by Jennifer Ramming, 20 March 2003.

¹² Joseph P. Eller, Last Will and Testament, Buncombe County records, Book C, page 212, July 1892.

¹³ Robinson, Carl and Vistula. Interview by Jennifer Ramming.

¹⁴ Buncombe County Marriage Records; U.S. Census, 1900-1930, Buncombe County, North Carolina.

¹⁵ Carolyn C. Aslund and Billie C. Ledbetter, *Cemetery Inscriptions, Buncombe County, Vol. 1-5*, Greenville, SC: A Press, 1984-1989, 199.

¹⁶ Joseph Carl Eller, Last Will and Testament, Buncombe County records, WW 602, May 19, 1956.

¹⁷ Buncombe County Register of Deeds: 1506/415 (Jan 19, 1988), 2031/149 (June 17, 1998).

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Architectural Context

The I-house building form, dating from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries, is one that was prominent in the southern American landscape, from the Chesapeake Tidewater in Maryland, through Virginia, and on into the mountains of North Carolina.¹⁸ Typically, the one-room-deep form was two stories of frame construction with a side gable roof, brick end chimneys, and various appendages including one- or two-story porches and rear ells. More unusual houses were built of brick, with roof types which included the hip or gambrel.¹⁹ Floor plan is typically central hall on both floors, with one room on each side. Variations included asymmetrical rooms on either side of the central hall, more common in the earlier houses. Still another subtype might have been considered a “two-thirds” plan, found more commonly in Virginia, where the house consisted of a stair hall and one room on both floors, with only one exterior end chimney.²⁰

Following the introduction of the symmetrical Georgian house plan in the mid-eighteenth century, the I-house form which is most typically found in North Carolina is a simplification of the Georgian plan, one room deep with a central hall and rooms of equal size to either side, side-gable roof, and exterior end brick chimneys. The I-house, along with other vernacular or folk forms of dwellings throughout the state, remained as the prominent house types from the coast to the mountains, probably due to the fact they were easy to construct, and these were the building traditions that were passed from generation to generation, slow to change. Full-width front porches, either one or two stories, were added to the building throughout much of its construction history from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries, as was a shed room or ell to the rear.²¹ They almost always were of frame construction, often with weatherboards left unpainted. Throughout its building history, the rural I-house form denoted “. . . agrarian prosperity and respectability . . .,” making it a common form for the farmstead.²²

In Buncombe County, the I-house building tradition continued much as it had throughout the rest of the state, utilizing wood frame construction and incorporating standard layouts with a wide variety of features. The most common I-house consisted of a central hall plan, side gable roof, two exterior end or sometimes central brick or stone chimneys, front porches, and rear ells or shed rooms.²³ Porches could be attached, engaged, two-tiered, or full-width. Some roof forms in the county are triple-A or side-gable with

¹⁸ Glassie, Henry. Pattern in the Material Folk Culture of the Eastern United States. Philadelphia: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980, p. 64.

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 67.

²⁰ Ibid, pp. 68-69.

²¹ Swaim, Doug, “North Carolina Folk Housing,” in Carolina Dwelling. Raleigh, North Carolina: Student Publication of the School of Design: Volume 26, 1978, pp. 29, 36, 38-39.

²² Ibid, p. 39.

²³ Survey files, Western Office, Archives & History, Asheville, North Carolina. Also, Swaim, Douglas, ed., Cabins and Castles: The History & Architecture of Buncombe County, North Carolina. Asheville, North Carolina: The Historic Resources Commission of Asheville and Buncombe County, 1981.

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name of property

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county and state

projecting center front gable, but these are the exceptions. Many have return eaves.²⁴ While it is unknown exactly how many I-houses were constructed in Buncombe County from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth century, it is likely to have been one of the most common house types. However, due to the frame construction and in many cases abandonment of farm housing, only twenty-nine remain which were built at approximately the same time as the Joseph P. Eller House (ca. 1880 – ca. 1900).²⁵ Of these, the majority are quite plain, with typical features such as an ell or shed addition to the rear and a variety of porch types including full-width one- or two-story attached, central two-tiered, and wraparound.²⁶ Exceptions to the overall plain appearance of most I-houses in the county include a number of dwellings which have elaborate bargeboards or vergeboards, decorative gable ends, or scrollwork on porches.

A number of I-houses remain in the north-central region of Buncombe County. In Weaverville and Reems Creek, south of the Eller House, these include the Brigman-Chambers House (ca. 1845; additions ca. 1890, Reems Creek); the Wagner House (late nineteenth century, Beech Community vicinity); the Weaver-Weaver House (ca. 1871, Weaverville vicinity); and Sunnycrest (1878, Reems Creek). Of these, only the Brigman-Chambers House and Sunnycrest, which has shingled gable ends like the Brigman-Chambers House, display any degree of decoration. The Brigman-Chambers House is notable for its beveled porch posts, scrollwork brackets, and balustrade on the two-tier front porch. These features are much like the Eller House which has the same beveled posts, intricate cutwork balustrade on the second story porch, and wave pattern bargeboards. While not documented at the present time, it is likely that Fabe Morris, the builder of the Brigman-Chambers I-house addition, was the same person who built the Joseph P. Eller House. Considering the proximity of Reems Creek and Flat Creek, the fact that the houses both date from ca. 1880 and share several architectural details, and the fact that members of the Eller and Chambers families knew each other make this a strong possibility.

North of Weaverville, in the Flat Creek area, the Joseph P. Eller House is only one of a handful of remaining late nineteenth-century I-houses. Most of these houses are relatively plain, but some are more elaborately detailed. They all have the same basic I-house plan and many have additions like ells or shed rooms. Some of these include the Joe Lee Redman House (ca. 1900, Jupiter vicinity), a typical I-house with paired interior chimneys and a two-tiered porch with sawnwork balustrade; the Will McKinney House (ca. 1890, Jupiter vicinity), a multi-gabled I-house with interior chimneys, bracketed eaves, and

²⁴ Buncombe County Architectural Survey, Western North Carolina Archives; Swaim, *Cabins and Castles*, 53-59.
³⁰ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid; Swaim, *Cabins and Castles*, 53-59.

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projecting front porch; and the Wiley Chambers House (ca. 1895, Weaverville vicinity) with twin gables on the front, bracketed eaves, and window hoods.²⁷

The Eller House is in keeping with the trends of I-house construction for the country and the county. The frame construction and center-hall plan of the main block, with a rear ell, are typical. As was common to some I-houses of Buncombe County, the Eller House has a two-tiered porch on the front with a central front gable and wave bargeboards. However, a feature of the Eller House unique among the county's I-houses is the pediment-gabled roofline giving the house a more refined appearance. Complementing this refinement is the concentration of decoration at the porch, including the wave bargeboards and the intricate cutwork balustrade. Flush-sheathed walls and ceilings and hand-planed mantelpieces on the interior exemplify the continued use of skilled local carpenters and craftsmen in constructing the more remote county houses such as this one.

²⁷ Swaim, *Cabins and Castles*, 114.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the nominated property are all of tract B as described in Buncombe County Deed Books 1506, p. 415 and 2031, p. 149.

Boundary Justification

The property includes all of the land both historically and currently associated with the house, and includes all intact standing structures associated with the property.

Joseph P. Eller House Photographs

The following information applies to all of the photographs, except where noted.

Name of Property:	Joseph P. Eller House 494 Clark's Chapel Road Weaverville Buncombe County North Carolina
Photographer:	Sybil Argintar Bowers
Date of photos:	February 2003
Location of original negatives:	Division of Archives and History One Village Lane Asheville, North Carolina 28803

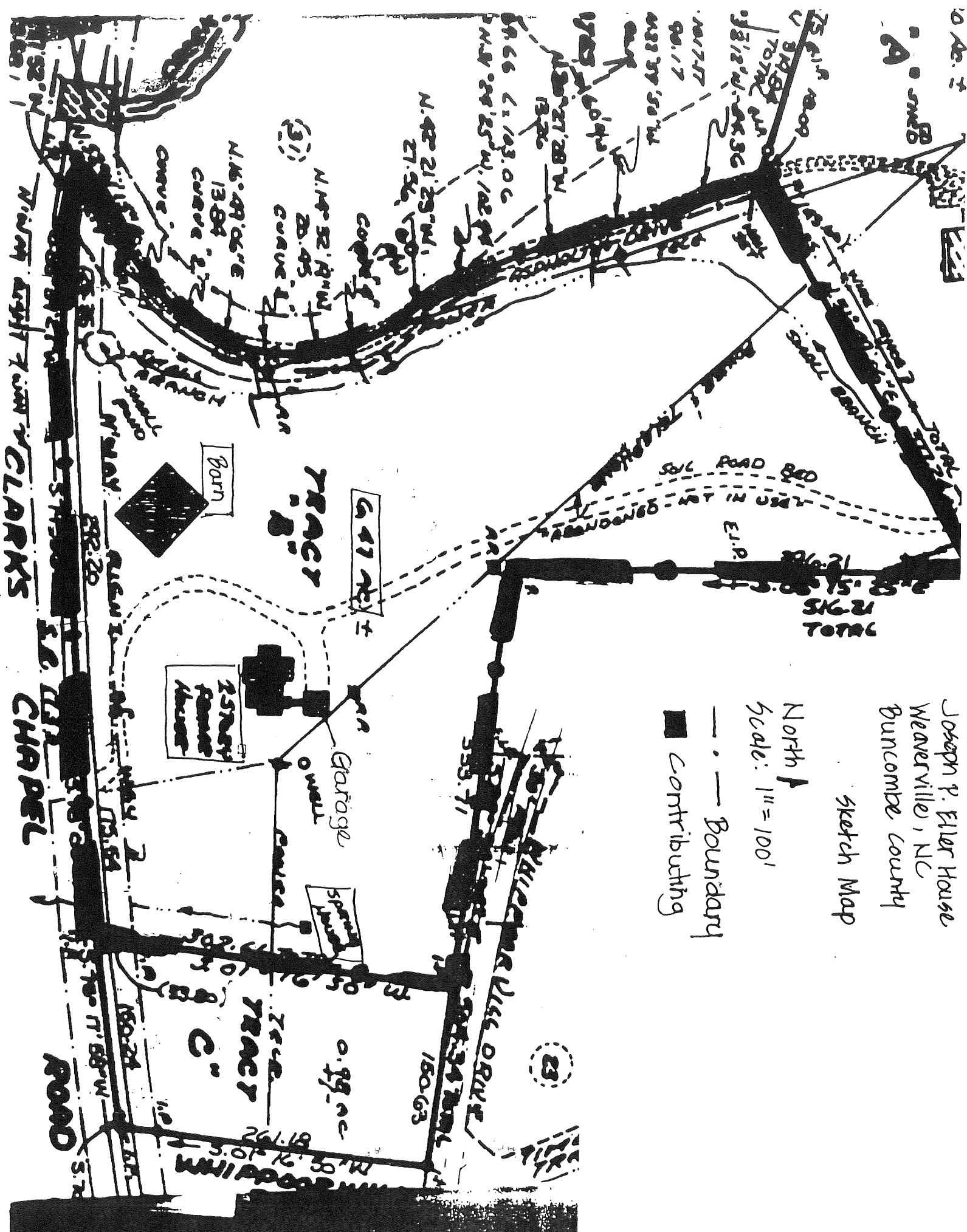
1. Front of house, view east.
2. Two-story front porch.
3. Rear elevation, view west.
4. Barn, view east
(March 2003)
5. First floor hall, view west
(March 2003)
6. First floor mantel.
7. First floor family room, view NE.
8. Stairs, view east.
(March 2003)
9. Second floor hall, view west.

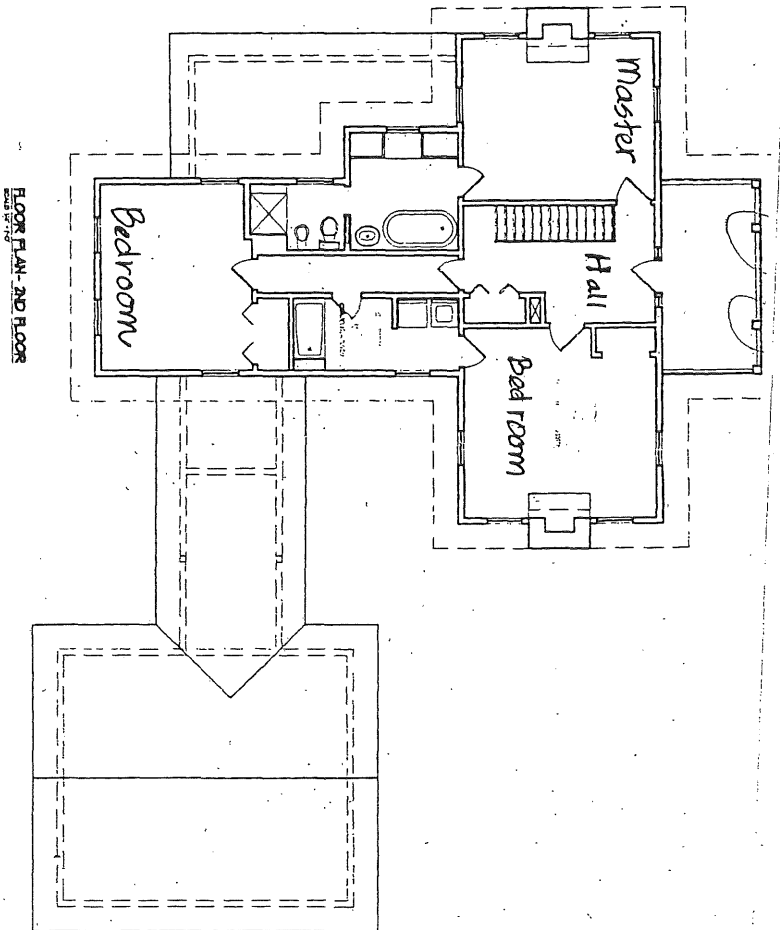
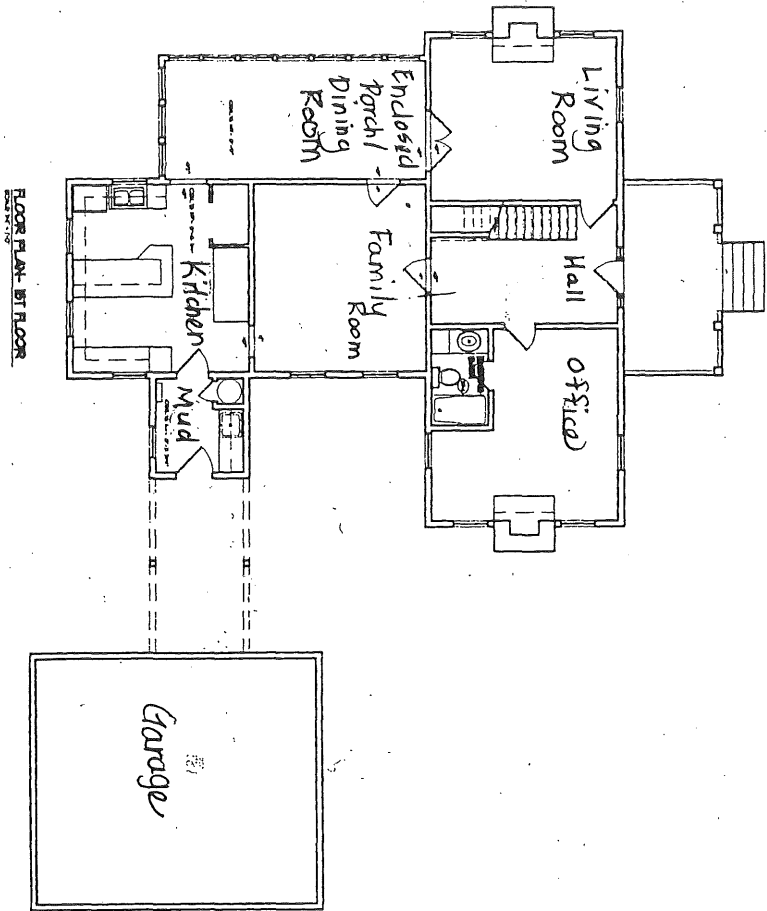
Joseph P. Eller House
 Weaverville, NC
 Buncombe County

Sketch Map

North ↑
 Scale: 1" = 100'

— — — Boundary
 ■ Contributing





Joseph P. Eller House
 Weaverville, Buncombe Co.
 Current Floor Plan
 Exhibit A



