

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Murray's Mill Historic District  
AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER The Mill is located on the southwest side SR1003 (Buffalo Shoals Road) 0.35 miles southeast of junction with NC 10. The mill pond and its surrounding acreage together with the standing structures comprise the district.

CITY, TOWN Catawba VICINITY OF Tenth  
STATE North Carolina CODE 37 COUNTY Catawba CODE 035

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Hickory Industrial Developers, Incorporated  
STREET & NUMBER c/o Boyd and Hassell, Realtors  
127 First Avenue, NE  
CITY, TOWN Hickory STATE North Carolina 28601  
VICINITY OF

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Catawba County Courthouse  
STREET & NUMBER  
CITY, TOWN Newton STATE North Carolina

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE  
DATE  
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS  
CITY, TOWN STATE  
\_FEDERAL \_STATE \_COUNTY \_LOCAL

Form No 10-300a  
(Rev 10-74)

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CONTINUATION SHEET      Owner of      ITEM NUMBER 4      PAGE 1  
Property

Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Murray  
Route 1,  
Catawba, North Carolina  
Phone: (704) 241-3849

Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Deal  
Route 1,  
Catawba, North Carolina  
Phone: (704) 241-2427

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Situated between the communities of Brandy's Crossroads and Catawba, (first known as Catawba Station, named Catawba in 1877, and incorporated in 1893), the Murray's Mill Historic District is comprised of the mill buildings, four residences and complementing structures associated with the milling operations and the Murray family. The district, nestled in the valley along Ball's Creek amid the rolling countryside of eastern Catawba County, includes the mill pond and the encircling acreage belonging to the Murray Family. This tree-dotted landscape, including fields, woodlands, and structures arranged in an arc around the mill, is enframed and protected from intrusion by its surrounding hills. The scene presents a strong visual recollection of the milling operations of the agrarian way of life in Catawba County at the turn of the century.

The buildings making up the Murray's Mill Historic District are significant not only as interesting examples of vernacular architectural practice but as a large collection of family-constructed and owned buildings, in a location of marked character. These vernacular buildings vary in date of construction from the 1880s to the mid-twentieth century, with the largest group being built in the first quarter of the twentieth century. Nearly all the buildings in the district are frame construction and covered with weatherboards (some were later stuccoed). A number of cedar shingle roofs remain, dating from the late 1940s, whereas tin roofs and asphalt shingles cover the other buildings. Several subsidiary outbuildings are covered with sheet metal on their roofs and elevations.

The district's picturesque landscape, once common in the rural countryside, has remained seemingly close to its appearance when acquired by the Murray family in 1898. The lushness of the mill pond, the fields along its banks, and the placement of pivotal buildings --the mill, the barn and the several residences--complement the rolling terrain of property. The trees, mostly deciduous, together with magnolias and evergreens remain in natural settings that define functional areas along the stream banks, around the houses, and at the field's edge. Many of the fields continue to be farmed, while others remain fallow.

The centerpiece of the district is the large two-story frame mill, situated on the north side of Ball's Creek, adjacent to the dam which forms the mill pond. Nearby, along the north edge of the pond are the grain house, the garage, the cotton house, and the tool shed. The present mill buildings replaced the original mill buildings on this site in 1913, the same year the dam on Ball's Creek was replaced by the present dam. The two-story-with-attic, frame building is two-bays wide by two-bays deep and rests on a poured concrete foundation. Covered with a gable roof, it was expanded on the northeast gable end by one bay. A recessed entrance and shed porch carry along the full northwest elevation of the building. Dating from the 1880s, the grain house, a long two-story frame building is located on the hill side to the southwest of the mill. Southwest of the grain house, the garage, the cotton house, and the tool shed, are simple frame structures covered with sheet tin, and sheathing.

When the present mill was being built, the two-story store building beside the mill, was rolled across the Buffalo Shoals Road to its present location. The two-story, gable-front store has a one-story, full facade shed, sheltering the central entrance of the first story. In the 1930s, a shed was added along its northwest elevation and the full facade was covered with stucco.

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A short distance to the north, and also facing the Buffalo Shoals Road, stands the oldest of the four residences of the Murray family included in the district. Each of them served as the residence of various members while they operated the mill and store. This house was built by William Murray in the early 1880s shortly after he arrived in Catawba County. The one-story frame structure also served as the residence of the builder's son O.D. Murray, prior to his construction of a larger residence on a tract of land removed from the mill property. In 1907, John L. Murray acquired a 5/6 interest in the mill property from his brother O.D. Murray, and some five years later turned his attention to a new residence for himself and his family. He took a small tenant house on the north shore of the mill pond and rebuilt it as a bungalow for his family. This one and a half story frame house is square in plan and covered with a high gable roof. A weatherboarded frame smokehouse stands nearby. Somewhat closer to the bank of the mill pond are a blacksmith shop and a smaller frame building. John L. Murray occupied this bungalow for a year only, however, as he built a larger house on the crest of the hill to the northwest of the mill. This second house had continued to the present day as the residence of Mr. Murray who is now 102 years old.

In the 1930s lightning destroyed the barn on the farm, and the large gambrel roof frame barn now standing replaced it. The barn has a central entrance/passage on a east-west axis. A large crib and a smaller pig sty stand on the east side of the barn. It was also in the 1930s that John L. Murray covered his house and well house with stucco.

About 1935 John Lloyd Murray, Jr. built a brick house on the east side of the mill pond for himself and his young wife. Somewhat later he built a brick garage and additional outbuildings and in the early 1950s a two-story residence on the east bank of the mill pond just southwest of his own house as a residence for his son who had just married.

Little construction was effected on the property in the district afterward until the late 1940s when John Lloyd Murray, Jr. returned from World War II, assisted by his brother, built or remodeled a number of structures on the farm property. The smokehouse, two poultry houses, and a well house were built near their father's house and a frame garage was moved from the front of their father's house to a position east of the house.

Through the past century the collection of buildings in the Murray's Mill historic district has retained the cohesive feeling of a small family-run business operation. The various milling and storage structures, together with the private residences of the Murray family, form a functionally balanced community. Despite the structural additions and mechanical changes in the milling process, Murray's Mill, and its milling machinery, remain intact.

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MURRAY'S MILL HISTORIC DISTRICT

CONTINUATION SHEET	A List of Buildings	ITEM NUMBER	PAGE
			1
	1. Murray's Mill		
	2. Grain House		
	3. Store Building		
	4. Garage		
	5. Cotton House		
	6. Tool Shed		
	7. Lloyd Murray House		
	8. Lloyd Murray House: Garage		
	9. Lloyd Murray House: Apartment Building		
	10. Lloyd Murray House: Smokehouse		
	11. Lloyd Murray House: Wood Shed		
	12. John L. Murray House		
	13. John L. Murray House: Well House		
	14. John L. Murray House: Smokehouse		
	15. John L. Murray House: Garage/Chicken House		
	15a. John L. Murray House: Chicken House		
	16. John L. Murray House: Barn		
	17. John L. Murray House: Crib/Granary		
	18. John L. Murray House: Pig Sty		
	19. Murray Tenant House		
	20. Murray Tenant House: Smokehouse		
	21. Murray Tenant House: Blacksmith Shop		

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MURRAY'S MILL HISTORIC DISTRICT

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22. Murray Tenant House: Chicken House

23. William Murray House

23a. Building

24. Barn

25. Crib

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CONTINUATION SHEET Murray's Mill  
Historic District ITEM NUMBER PAGE 1

1. Murray's Mill: Built in 1912-1913 on the north shore of the mill pond, adjacent to the tall concrete dam, Murray's Mill is a rectangular two-story with attic frame building resting on a high poured concrete foundation and covered with weatherboards and a gable roof. The present mill, originally two bays wide and two bays deep, was expanded in depth by a one-bay addition on the northeast gable end shortly after the above block was completed. A one-story shed carries across the full northwest, entrance elevation sheltering the loading area which is partially recessed into the body of the building. A small office is enclosed at the western end of the shed. A door at the northern end of the shed opens into the grain storage bins in the northern end of the mill building. Entrance into the milling room and a pair of scales are recessed in the center of the loading area while a secondary entrance to the milling room is located near the entrance to the office. The second story has a three bay division; the window openings contain nine-over-nine sash set in plain unmolded surrounds, a pattern followed throughout the building. The northeast and southwest gable ends have a two-bay division at each level with an attic window set high in each gable. The southeast elevation is dominated by the large overshot wheel set in the foundation below the other two bays and illuminate the basement. The interior of the building is not sheathed. Simple stairs connect the several levels inside the building from basement to attic. Storage bins, partitioned by tongue and groove sheathing, are positioned at various points in the building. The machinery used for producing flour, meal and other grain products operated by Lloyd Murray and his helpers, remains in place just as it was when Lloyd Murray terminated operations in 1967.
2. Grain House  
ca.1880s A large, two-story frame building elevated above the ground on wooden piers, resting on a poured concrete foundation, and covered with weatherboards and a gable roof. A board and batten door, set in the center of the first story's northernmost elevation, is shuttered by a projecting pent. Window openings occur at either peak of the top of the pent on the second story level. A six-over-six sash arrangement is found on all window openings. Simple windows occur at each level of the northeast and southwest gable ends, while the rear elevation, (facing the mill), has a symmetrical two-bay division on each level.
3. Store  
late 1890s,  
1930s The oldest portion of this frame building--the southeasternmost, two-thirds of the two-story block--originally stood to the west of the mill. It was relocated to the northside of Buffaloe Shoals Road, and expanded in 1913. The addition of the northeast gable end extended the building's rectangular shape with reduced proportions. A separat

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3. Store  
(continued)      gable roof covers the added rectangle. The storage room on the first story is accessible to the rear of the building by a door, flanked by windows on the northwest elevation. The second story contains a porch. In the 1930s the gable front of the store was covered with stucco when a large, one-story shed roof warehouse (also covered with stucco) was added to the full length of the northwest elevation. A board and batten door is centered in the blind, southwest facade. The two small openings on its northwest side contain four pane window and paired four-over-four sash windows are found on the rear elevation.
4. Garage  
ca. 1934      Located southwest of the grain house, the garage, built ca. 1934, is a simple one-story, shed roof, frame building covered with corrugated sheet metal. Openings occur at the rear elevation for access.
5. Cottonhouse  
ca. 1934      Located southwest of garage, the cottonhouses constructed about 1934 is a rectangular one-story frame building resting on a poured concrete foundation and is covered with sheetmetal and a gable roof. A door is set in its south gable end.
6. Tool Shed  
1940s      A small, rectangular, one-story frame storage facility dating from the 1940s covered with flush vertical sheeting and a gable roof.
7. Lloyd Murray House  
ca. 1935      This story-and-a-half frame building, covered with brick veneer is typical of residences built in the 1930s and the 1940s, following the strong influence of "the bungalow" of the teens and the 1920s. The brick is celery, red and mocha in color. Basically square in plan, the house has an entrance porch recessed behind arches on its southeast corner. In the early 1940s, a small one-story, gable roof apartment was constructed to the rear of the house as a residence for Mrs. Murray's parents, Mr. and Mrs. William Shuford. Rectangular in plan, it is set parallel to the main block of the house and is connected to it by a short breezeway.
8. Garage  
ca. 1936      Built with the house about 1936, this single-bay, gable front brick garage was subsequently expanded on its west elevation to accommodate larger cars.
9. Apartment  
Building  
early 1950s      This two-story building, dating from the 1950s, has a cinder block first level and a frame, German siding second level. The first story is fully exposed on the western, lake sides, yet much below ground on the east side. The first story door is set in the front of the west elevation and is flanked by windows which also occur on the north and south gable ends. On the second story, the door is set in the



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9. Apartment Building (cont'd) center of the east elevation and is sheltered by a braced archway. Flue stacks occur on the center of the north-south gable ends.
10. Smokehouse ca. 1930s Situated south of L. Murray residence, the smokehouse is a rectangular one story frame building, covered with a gable roof which has entrances on both its north and south elevations and a shed addition on its west elevation. The northwesternmost portion of the shed was used for tool storage while its extension to the south, separated by a partition was a chicken house Both the original construction and the addition date from the 1930s.
11. Woodshed 1930s Dating from the 1930s, the woodshed is a one-story rectangular frame building covered with weatherboards and a shed roof.
12. John L. Murray House 1913 Built in 1912-1913 by John L. Murray and remodeled by him in the 1930s, this large bungalow continues to be the residence of the builder. The one-and-a-half-story frame house is essentially square in plan and covered with a smoothly finished stucco and an expansive gable roof which splays to engage the full facade front (north) porch. This elevation terminates with a garage added in the 1930s to the northeast corner of the house. A large gable roof dormer, containing a triple window, is set in the center of the roof while its pendant on the rear elevation is covered with a shed roof. The side and rear (south)elevations of the house feature both individual and paired three-over-one sash windows. The effect of half timbering is achieved in the gable ends with the placement of flat boards in vertical and diagonal positions. Shed rooms and a one story kitchen ell occupy the rear elevation of the house; a chimney stands at the ell's south gable end. The interior has an asymmetrical room arrangement.
13. Well House 1930s This one-story, cement block building has a gable roof and shingled faced gable ends. It was stuccoed along with the J. L. Murray house in the mid-1930s. A five panel door is centered on the south elevation.
14. Smokehouse Late-1940s The later smokehouse is a rectangular, one story with loft, frame building set on a concrete foundation. The late 1940s structure incorporated tool and additional storage space. A trio of board and batten doors are symmetrically set in the building's first story on the north gable, front elevation.

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14. Smokehouse  
(continued) The center door (the smokehouse entrance), is flanked by ventilating openings to the side and a loft door above. The other two doors provide access to the storage rooms flanking east and west to accomodate the storage rooms, while a pentagonal-shaped garage opening allows storage of larger equipment on the west elevation. A gable roof splays on the elevation.
15. Garage/Chicken House  
ca. 1920, 1940s The garage is located southwest of the John L. Murray house. The oldest part in this frame building is the single-story, gable front garage, contemporary with the house, which was relocated in the 1940s from a position near the house. The rectangular structure, covered with weatherboards and a wood shingle roof, has a sliding door on its northwest, gable front. Shortly after the move, a large, low-pitched gable roof block was added to its southwest side and used as a chicken house. It is covered with weatherboards and a sheetmetal roof and rests on a poured concrete base. Entrances occur on its northwest elevation, while the southeast elevation has irregular fenestration.
- 15a. Chickenhouse  
1940s Located on the southwestern end of the above building and resting on a poured concrete foundation, this coop is rectangular in plan and is covered with flush horizontal sheathing and a wood shingle roof. It also dates from the 1940s.
16. Barn  
1930s In the 1930s, lightning sparked a fire which destroyed the original barn, and this large weatherboard building was built to replace it. The rectangular structure rests on a poured concrete elevation and has a tall central block with staggered lofts for storage. These lofts are positioned above and to the sides of the center passage, carried through the building on an east-west axis. A gambrel roof splays on the north and south to accomodate open-ended storage sheds, running the full length of the building. Open spacing of the weatherboards occur along top of the elevations, below the overhangs, to provide ventilation to the upper portions of the buildings. A single door on the south elevation provides access to the stable.
17. Crib/Granary  
1930s Located east of the barn and also dating from the 1930s, this weatherboarded frame building rests on stone piers and is covered with a wood shingle, gable roof. The rectangular plan of the building has a three-part division; the granary occupies the center unit, while an open-ended shed and a crib flank the granary on its north and south side respectively. (The eastern end has subsequently been enclosed.)

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18. Pig Sty  
1930s  
Contemporary with the barn, the covered pig sty is a rectangular frame building resting on a poured concrete foundation, covered with weatherboards and a wooden shingle gable roof.
19. Murray Tenant House  
ca. 1913  
This house served as residence for John L. Murray for a brief period, 1912-1913, while his new house was being built on the hilltop overlooking the mill pond. An early bungalow, the story and a half frame house is essentially square in plan; three bays wide and two bays deep. The house's expansive gable roof, penetrated on the southeast front elevation by a shed dormer, extends to shelter the full facade porch across that elevation. Turned posts support the roof and inter-chimneys rise to the rear of the roof's ridgeline. A one-story ell is set on the rear elevation. Window openings contain two-over-two sashes. The house has been occupied subsequently by millers and tenants.
20. Smokehouse  
ca. 1912  
Standing south of Murray Tenant House, the central block, smokehouse has one story and a loft, covered with weatherboards and a sheetmetal gable roof. A door is set in the center of its first story, northeast elevation. A single-story shed, covered by a wood shingle roof, encircles the buildings other elevations.
21. Blacksmith Shop  
1940s  
This small frame building, dates from the 1940s, and located on northeast bank of mill pond (now deteriorated), is covered with flush horizontal sheeting and a sheetmetal gable roof.
22. Chicken House  
1950s  
Erected west of the blacksmith shop in the 1950s, this small frame building is covered with vertical sheathing and a sheet-metal gable roof.
23. William Murray House: 1880s with later alterations  
The oldest portion of this weatherboarded one and a half story<sup>fram</sup> house, built in the 1880s by William Murray, has been substantially expanded and altered by the successive occupants of the house. Covered with a series of intersecting gable roofs, the house is now basically rectangular in plan with a one story porch across its front (southwest) elevation. Built on a center hall plan with a one story kitchen and dining ell, both the appearance and functions of the rooms have been changed.
- 23a. William Murray House--Storage Building  
1st quarter 20th  
A one-story weatherboarded frame structure covered with a gable roof, this building has entrances on both its southwest and southeast elevations. It too has seen several changes in its appearance.

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- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 24. William Murray House<br>The Barn: 1st quarter<br>20th century | The barn is a large rectangular frame building covered with weatherboards and a gable roof. The main entrance is on the southwest (front) elevation while a shed addition carries along the southeast side elevation. |
| 25. William Murray House<br>The Crib: 1st quarter<br>20th century | A small rectangular frame building, covered with weatherboards and a gable roof which projects on the southeast (front) elevation to shelter the wide entrance.   |

## 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Murray's Mill Historic District is comprised of some one hundred-fifty acres including the mill pond and surrounding fields and woodlands in the rolling landscape of eastern Catawba County, together with two dozen structures including the large two story frame mill and associated structures. It is important as the last surviving complex of its type in Catawba County. Of the many water powered mills known (from Yoder's Map of 1886 and other documentary sources) to have existed in the county, this is one of the few to survive the disastrous flood of 1916 and the last of the water-driven mills to remain in operation to the 1960s. While a mill was established here between 1873 and 1883, the present building, the centerpiece of the district, dates from 1913 when John L. Murray erected this building to replace the original one acquired by his father in 1883. Included in the district is the house which William Murray built shortly after his purchase of the mill, two residences built by his son, John L. Murray (one of which was long used as the miller's house), and a fourth house built by his grandson, Lloyd Frankli Murray, the last operator of Murray's Mill. The Murray family's involvement with the mill, dating from 1883 to its closing in 1967, together with the many buildings housing the family mill and farm operations are important historical factors here represented and preserved intact in a setting undisturbed by the increasingly rapid industrialization of Catawba County.

### Criteria Assessment:

- A. Murray's Mill Historic District, including a roller mill, saw mill and dry goods store associated with that long tradition of small, community oriented milling operations is vital to the agrarian economy of rural Piedmont North Carolina and is the last such complex in the county to survive intact to the present. The mill contains its machinery installed in 1913 as well as the bold twenty-two foot overshot wheel.
- B. The district has significance through its associations with the Murray family who, following on a tradition as millwrights in Alamance County, removed to Catawba County and operated mills at this site from 1883 until 1967, spanning four generation of the family.
- C. The picturesque district, including the mill pond and its surrounding acreage together with some two dozen structures associated with the milling operations and Murray family embodies those characteristics of vernacular building from the late nineteenth century through the 1940s whose integrity of location and setting remain intact and little disturbed to the present. Simple gable roof forms and functional arrangements mark all the buildings of the complex. They are representative of their types and chiefly significant as a total complex.

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Murray's Mill, located on Balls Creek, has been a landmark on the Catawba County countryside for nearly a century. The milling complex, producing flour, meal, and lumber, included warehouses and a country store. For most of its existence, the mill was associated with the Murray family, but circumstances surrounding its origin have led to some confusion over the years regarding the builder and the date of the first construction. Local tradition contends that the original mill was constructed in the early 1860s, either by Robert McKinzie or Wike McNeill.<sup>1</sup> McKinzie did own the property in the early 1860s but sold it to C. F. Connor in 1863, some years before the mill was constructed.<sup>2</sup> Records reveal there was no one by the name of Wike McNeill living in Catawba County during those years. The name seems to have stemmed from combining the names of Silas Wike and George C. McNeill who jointly purchased the land from Connor in 1873.<sup>3</sup> The Wike and McNeill names were apparently combined to reflect the Wike-McNeill partnership, and from there it was later assumed to be one person. It was during this period of joint ownership by Wike and McNeill that a mill was constructed.

The confusion over the construction date owes in part to the existence of an older mill located about a mile and a half upstream. R. P. Edwards operated the mill though it is uncertain that he owned the property.<sup>4</sup>

The Edwards Mill property, which adjoined the Robert McKinzie property, was referred to in the 1863 deed from McKinzie to Connor, as "the old mill tract." The selling price of \$485 for 77 3/4 acres suggests that there probably was no mill in operation on the McKinzie land.<sup>5</sup> When Connor sold the tract to Wike and McNeill ten years later, there was a reference to the old mill tract adjoining the property being sold.<sup>6</sup> Such terminology suggested that Edward's Mill was no longer operating, thus clearing the way for construction of a new mill downstream.

On January 6, 1883, Silas Wike transferred to William A. Murray (1848-1926) for \$850.00 his one half interest in the present property by then known as the mill tract.<sup>7</sup> The mill was thus constructed by Wike and McNeill between 1873 when they acquired the property and 1883 when Wike sold his half interest to Murray.<sup>8</sup>

In 1883, the owners of the property were William Murray and George C. McNeill, and for a number of years, it was referred to as the Murray and McNeill Mill Tract.<sup>9</sup> Dr. George C. McNeill was a physician born in South Carolina in 1839.<sup>10</sup> He moved to Catawba County by 1861, when he enlisted in Company F 23rd Regiment of North Carolina volunteers.<sup>11</sup> Serving as a private during the war, he later returned to Catawba County to establish a medical practice. He made his home on McLin Creek, a few miles northwest of the millsite and apparently served primarily as a financial backer of the project.<sup>12</sup> McNeill died between 1883 and 1886, during the early phases of the mill's operation, leaving a widow, Martha, and two minor sons, Charles and Avery.<sup>13</sup>

When the sons came of legal age, their rights and interests were sold to O. D. Murray, son of William A. Murray.<sup>14</sup> By 1898, the Murray family held a clear title to the mill

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on Balls Creek.

William Murray, the son of Lambert Murray, was born in 1848 in the western part of Orange County which became a part of Alamance County at its formation a year later. Several members of the Murray family in Alamance County were millwrights<sup>15</sup> and moved to Catawba County in 1850, settling in the southeastern section that later became Caldwell Township in 1868.<sup>16</sup>

In the 1880 census, Murray was listed as a farmer with a wife, Harriett, and four children including Ollie (O.D.) and John L. who later became owners and operators of the mill. W. Murray moved to the millsite shortly after purchasing his interest in 1883 and constructed a one-story frame dwelling, where he lived until his death in 1926. The house was also occupied by Murray's son, O.D., and then by O.D.'s neice on the north side of Buffalo Shoals Road. O.D.'s neice, Mrs. Yates Heavner, sold the house out of the family following her husband's death.

Although he maintained an interest in the ownership, William Murray turned over the operation and active business of the mill to his sons, O. D. and John L. in 1906.<sup>18</sup> John Lambert Murray was born in 1877,<sup>19</sup> and helped to manage the mill for some years before acquiring an interest in the ownership, thus making his association with Murray's Mill somewhere around seventy-five years. On June 25, 1907, O.D. Murray sold most of his interest to his brother, giving J. L. title to five-sixths of the property.<sup>20</sup> Five-and-a-third acres were excluded from the deed transfer, whereon O.D. and wife, Mattie, resided. A reserve clause also gave rent-free exemption to O.D., to run the store and warehouses "of the mercantile department of O.D. Murray and Company" for ten years. The exemption was to be renewable upon application on or before the expiration date.<sup>21</sup>

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, the property included a wooden dam and a mill with large burr stones for grinding corn into meal. The mill was powered by an enclosed turbine wheel.<sup>22</sup> Nearby was the residence of William Murray and his son, O.D. Murray.<sup>23</sup> A trail, barely wide enough for wagons, led the only passage across Balls Creek, but shortly after 1900 the trail was widened and a bridge replaced the foot log. It was probably after this first bridge was built that O.D. Murray constructed his general store and a warehouse. That building, adjacent to the mill, was a two-story gable front frame structure. The flood in 1916 washed away the bridge, but a few years later the county took over the road and installed a new bridge.<sup>24</sup>

J. L. Murray expanded the milling operation and made a number of mechanical changes in the first decade of the twentieth century. A small roller mill was installed to grind wheat into flour, and on ground slightly above the new flour mill, a frame storage building was constructed. Wagons, (and later trucks) unloaded bales of wheat to two grain elevators. Powered by steel cables attached to the water wheel, these elevators carried the grain to storage bins, where a gravitational transporter pipe carried the wheat from the storage area down to the flour mill.

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During low water periods, the mill wheels lay idle. Murray installed a bricked-in boiler and a new steam engine to remedy this situation. This second steam engine utilized the boiler's power source to operate a new sawmill housed in a separate building. Murray's sawmill profited for nearly a decade as it provided lumber to build a number of houses in the area. Murray also supplied the labor, as it is recorded that he built many of the houses himself. It seems probable that he constructed his first house, 1912-1913, on the bank of the lake, and his second residence on the hill overlooking the milling complex with lumber from his own mill.<sup>25</sup> During this period of profit, Murray also replaced the wooden dam with a concrete structure. Remains of the early dam are underneath the mill pond, since the new barrier was located slightly north of the old one. The grain mill was enlarged with the new dam and in 1913, the old mill was replaced with a new two-story frame structure, which included a six by twenty two foot overshot wheel instead of the turbine wheel. It was necessary to move O.D.'s store across the road to make room for the new structure and apparently the sawmill was taken down at the time.<sup>25</sup> The mill was enlarged to include a one-bay addition to its front in 1913.

Several other minor changes in the mill site have been made over the years. In 1938, the dam was raised six feet and a larger wheel, four feet by twenty-eight feet, was installed. A year or two later, a fifty-horsepower electric motor was installed to operate a feed hammer mill that ground cotton seed and corncobs into livestock feed. Power for electric lights was supplied by a generator operated by the water wheel, until Duke Power Company ran a line by the mill. Excluding this motorized feed hammer and generator lights, power for running the mill has come solely from the waters of Ball Creek.<sup>27</sup>

About 1938, John L. Murray went into semi-retirement and turned over management duties to his son, Lloyd Murray who had built a house for himself and his wife, two years earlier on the east bank of the mill pond. Another son, Ernest, and a son-in-law, Yates Heavner spent considerable time assisting in the mill operations as well.<sup>28</sup> Meal, flour and feed continued to be ground until 1967, when according to Floyd Murray, bureaucratic red tape and increasing taxes strangled the small operation and the mill closed.

To the present day, the buildings in the Murray's Mill complex have remained intact with much of their equipment. Efforts are being made at the local and state level to assure the future presentation of this historic site.



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1. Hickory Daily Record, March 20, 1974, and August 7, 1975.
2. Catawba County Deed Books, Office of the Register of Deeds, Catawba County Courthouse, Newton, Deed Book 7, pp. 112, 127, hereinafter cited as Catawba County Deed Book.
3. Catawba County Deed Book 8, p. 434. A search of the census records, estates, wills, and deed indexes failed to uncover any name or initials that could have been Wike McNeill.
4. Adjoining property listed in the deeds belonged to R. M. McKinzie, L. L. Turner, and H. A. Hewitt. Catawba County Deed Book 7, pp. 112, 127; and Deed Book 8, p. 434. For the residence of R.P. Edwards, See R. Yoder, Map of Catawba County, 1886. Map is bound and can be found in the Rare Book Collection of the State Library, Raleigh, hereinafter cited as Map of Catawba County, 1886. Edward's Mill was referred to in an interview with a member of the Murray family. Davyd Hood, Interview with Lloyd Murray, October 9, 1977, notes in Survey file folder-Murray's Mill, Archeology and Historic Preservation Section, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, hereinafter cited as Lloyd Murray interview.
5. Catawba County Deed Book 7, pp. 112, 127.
6. Catawba County Deed Book 8, p. 434.
7. Catawba County Deed Book 18, p. 310
8. Map of Catawba County, 1886. Research and designing of such maps took several years before publication dates. During that time there were several changes, such as the death of Dr. G.C. McNeil and the construction of the mill now called Murray's. A check of Branson's North Carolina Business Directories 1868-1890 shows mills owned by all of the land owners of the present Murray's Mill tract. The method of collecting data (use of local sources and numerous data collectors) accounts for the multiplicity and duplications of names for the same mill owners. Branson's Director however, shed no light on who owned the mill at a given time since no official records were consulted. The actual construction date cannot be determined from this source, so any estimations must therefore be based on the documentary records as explained on pages 1 and 2 of this report.
9. See Catawba County Deed Book 64, pp. 40 and 340.
10. Tenth Census of the United States, 1880: Catawba County, North Carolina, Population Schedule, 425, bound volume in State Archives, Raleigh, hereinafter cited as Tenth Census, 1880.

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11. Index to Moore's Roster of North Carolina Troops in the War Between the States, State Archives, Raleigh, North Carolina.
12. See Map of Catawba County, 1886. See also Tenth Census, 1880. McNeill died between 1880 and 1886 and there is no indication that he moved from his home on McLin Creek.
13. Tenth Census, 1880; and Catawba County Deed Book 64, pp. 40 and 340.
14. Catawba County Deed Book 64, pp. 40 and 340. For references citing O.D. Murray as son of William, see J. Paul Wagner, Interview with John L. Murray, May 3, 1971, summary in Survey file folder-Murray's Mill, Archeology and Historic Preservation Section, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, hereinafter cited as John L. Mur interview. See also Tenth Census, 1880.
15. Lambert Murray married Elizabeth Haney in August, 1832, in Orange County. Orange County Marriage Bonds, originals in State Archives, Raleigh. John L. Murray was bor in 1839. See Tenth Census, 1800, Catawba County. Alamance County was created from Orange in 1849. David Leroy Corbitt, The Formation of North Carolina Counties, 1663 1943 (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1969), 1. Murrays who wer millwrights included William, James, and John. See Seventh Census of the United Sta 1850: Alamance County, North Carolina, Population Schedule, 59, 63, and 72. That the Murrays of Catawba came from Alamance County, see Lloyd Murray interview.
16. No Murrays appear in Seventh Census, 1850, for Catawba County. See also William S. Powell, The North Carolina Gazetteer (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1968), 81.
17. Lloyd Murray interview. See also will of William A. Murray, Catawba County Wills, Office of the Clerk of Superior Court, Catawba County Courthouse, Newton, Will Book 4, p. 411, hereinafter cited as Catawba County Will Book.
18. Catawba County Deed Book 109, p. 320. As a result of this deed William Murray retained only a one-sixth interest in ownership of the property.
19. John L. Murray interview. See also Tenth Census, 1880.
20. Catawba County Deed Book 109, p. 326. John L. had previously received full title to twenty acres of adjoining property. Catawba County Deed Book 109, p. 328. John L. Murray did not receive full title until the death of his brother O. D. in 1936 because of the terms of their father's will which bequeathed his one-sixth share jointly to his sons. Catawba County Will Book 4, p. 411; and Will Book 5, p. 432, will of O. D. Murray.
21. John L. Murray interview. See also Tenth Census, 1880.

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22. John L. Murray interview; and Lloyd Murray interview. Lloyd Murray has a photograph of the old mill and dam.
23. Lloyd Murray interview; John L. Murray interview; and O. D. Murray to John L. Murray Catawba County Deed Book 109, p. 326.
24. John L. Murray interview.
25. Early history of the mill technology and changes at the site comes from John L. Murray interview.
26. John L. Murray interview. There are some differences regarding dates in Lloyd Murray interview, but the father's statements seem to coincide better with available records. Unfortunately, the tax records are incomplete and many are not available for the crucial years of construction.
27. John L. Murray interview; and Hickory Daily Record, March 20, 1974, August 7, 1975.
28. Hickory Daily Record, August 7, 1975; and John L. Murray interview.

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Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1969.

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of North Carolina Press, 1968.

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County Historical Association, 1954.

United States Census Records, 1850, 1880.  
Alamance County  
Catawba County

Wagner, J. Paul. Interview with John L. Murray, May 3, 1971.

Yoder, R. Map of Catawba County, 1886.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Catawba County Records  
 Deeds  
 Estates Settlements  
 Inventories of Estates  
 Marriage Register  
 Tax Scrolls  
 Wills

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 152.94 See attached Tax Map, Sheet 22 Y

### UTM REFERENCES

A	1 7	4 9,1 8,8,0	3,9 4,8 1,0,0	B	1,7	4 9,1 8,8,0	3,9 4,7 1,0,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	1,7	4 9,0 8,3,0	3,9 4,7 1,2,0	D	1,7	4 9,0 8,1,0	3,9 4,8 1,2,0

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The mill is located on the southwest side SR 1003 (Buffalo Shoals Road), 0.35 mi. south-east of junction with NC 10. The mill pond and its surrounding acreage together with the standing structures comprise the district.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Architectural description and criteria evaluation by Davyd Foard Hood, Survey and Planning Branch; Significance prepared by Jerry L. Cross, Research Branch

### ORGANIZATION

North Carolina Division of Archives and History

### DATE

September 13, 1979

### STREET & NUMBER

109 East Jones Street

### TELEPHONE

(919) 733-6545

### CITY OR TOWN

Raleigh,

### STATE

North Carolina 27611

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL  STATE  LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

### STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE September 13, 1979

### FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

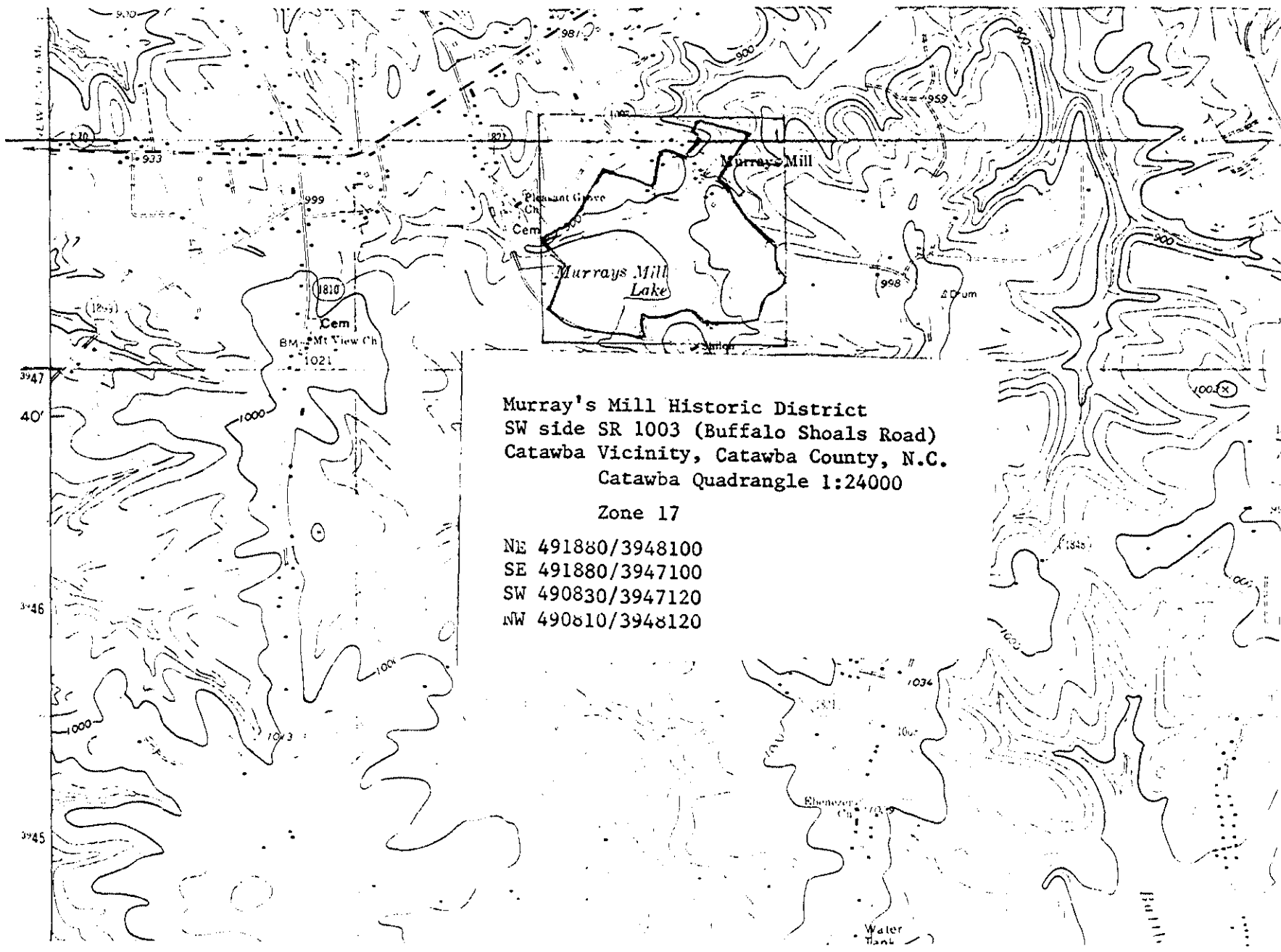
DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



Murray's Mill Historic District  
SW side SR 1003 (Buffalo Shoals Road)  
Catawba Vicinity, Catawba County, N.C.  
Catawba Quadrangle 1:24000

Zone 17

NE 491880/3948100  
SE 491880/3947100  
SW 490830/3947120  
NW 490810/3948120