

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
State Historic Preservation Office

Ramona M. Bartos, Administrator

Governor Pat McCrory
Secretary Susan Kluttz

Office of Archives and History
Deputy Secretary Kevin Cherry

February 6, 2014

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mary Pope Furr
Office of Human Environment
NCDOT Division of Highways

FROM: Ramona M. Bartos *RMB for Ramona M. Bartos*

SUBJECT: Historic Structures Survey Report, Replacement of Bridge 265 on SR 1345
(Farmer's Fish Camp Road) over New River, PA 13-04-0054,
Alleghany County, ER 13-3011

Thank you for your December 19, 2014, letter transmitting the above-reference report, authored by Marvin Brown of URS. We have reviewed the report and concur with its findings, with minor revisions.

We concur that the **Gambill Family Farm (AL0226)** is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for Architecture. We also believe that it is possibly eligible for listing under Criterion A for Agriculture in that the farm is remarkably intact and retains many of its historic outbuildings. While we do not expect the report to go into detail about the farming operation, if the fields remain intact, as seems apparent from the photographs, aerials, and the author's description of the landscape, we recommend eligibility under Criterion A. In so doing, the entire 110.48 acre tax parcel as described in the report is the appropriate boundary for the eligible property. We note that the boundaries extend to the edge of pavement for the roads,

We also concur that the following properties are not eligible for listing in the National Register:

- **Farmers Fish Camp**
- **Muncy Steadham House**
- **Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River Rural Historic District**

The above comments are made pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's Regulations for Compliance with Section 106 codified at 36 CFR Part 800.

Thank you for your cooperation and consideration. If you have questions concerning the above comment, contact Renee Gledhill-Earley, environmental review coordinator, at 919-807-6579 or renee.gledhill-earley@ncdcr.gov. In all future communication concerning this project, please cite the above referenced tracking number.

cc: Marvin Brown, URS



**HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSES FOR
REPLACEMENT OF BRIDGE NO. 265
ON SR 1345 (FARMERS FISH CAMP ROAD) OVER THE NEW RIVER,
ALLEGHANY COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA**

WBS NO. 17BP.11.R.57

**Prepared For:
North Carolina Department of Transportation
Raleigh, North Carolina**

**Prepared By:
URS Corporation – North Carolina
Morrisville, North Carolina**

December 2013

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WBS NO. 17BP.11.R.57

**Prepared For:
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Human Environment Section
1598 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1598**

Prepared by:

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December 2013

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes to replace Bridge No. 265, which carries SR 1345 (Farmers Fish Camp Road) over the New River northwest of Sparta in Alleghany County, North Carolina (WBS# 17BP.11.R.57). The project extends approximately 2,000 feet from its beginning on the southwest side of the New River to its termination on the northeast side of the river approximately 300 feet south of the junction of Farmers Fish Camp Road with SR 1342 (Johnny Road). NCDOT requested that URS Corporation-North Carolina (URS) evaluate the National Register of Historic Places eligibility of resources along Farmers Fish Camp Road and also conduct reconnaissance surveys in the area to investigate the possibility of the resources falling within a potential rural historic district generally identified by staff of the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office in 1976.

URS completed the required assessments and makes the following National Register-eligibility recommendations for the inventoried resources:

<u>Resource/PIN No.</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>
Gambill Family Farm (3052887181)	Eligible for National Register listing under Criterion C
Farmers Fish Camp (3052769650)	Not eligible for National Register listing
Muncy Steadham House (3052769650)	Not eligible for National Register listing
Potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/ New River Rural Historic District	Not eligible for National Register listing

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I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND METHODOLOGY

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes to replace Bridge No. 265, which carries SR 1345 (Farmers Fish Camp Road) over the New River northwest of Sparta in Alleghany County, North Carolina (WBS# 17BP.11.R.57). The project extends approximately 2,000 feet from its beginning on the southwest side of the New River to its termination on the northeast side of the river approximately 300 feet south of the junction of Farmers Fish Camp Road with SR 1342 (Johnny Road). NCDOT requested that URS Corporation-North Carolina (URS) evaluate the National Register of Historic Places eligibility of resources along Farmers Fish Camp Road in the vicinity of the project area and also conduct reconnaissance surveys in the area to investigate the possibility of the resources falling within a potential rural historic district generally identified by staff of the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (HPO) in 1976. The project's location and limits are depicted on Figure 1 and Figure 2. The location of a potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River rural historic district is depicted on Figure 3.

URS' evaluation of resources complies with the basic requirements of: Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended; the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, as amended; the Department of Transportation regulations and procedures (23 CFR 771 and Technical Advisory T 6640.8A); the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation regulations on the *Protection of Historic Properties* (36 CFR 800); and NCDOT's *Historic Architectural Resources, Survey Procedures and Report Guidelines*.

During the week of November 18, 2013, URS senior architectural historian and principal investigator Marvin A. Brown conducted fieldwork within the Area of Potential Effect (APE) of the project and within a larger area that included a potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River rural historic district. He visited, inventoried, photographed, and assessed all of the resources within the APE and photographed every notable standing resource within the potential district. He also spoke with knowledgeable local informants, including lifelong Alleghany County residents Johnsie Gambill McIntyre and Tam Gambill, and with Michael Southern of the North Carolina HPO. He engaged in local research at the Alleghany County Courthouse, the Alleghany County Public Library, and the Alleghany County soil conservation office in Sparta; the Grayson County Public Library in Independence, Virginia; and the North Carolina State Library and Archives and the North Carolina State Office of Historic Preservation in Raleigh.

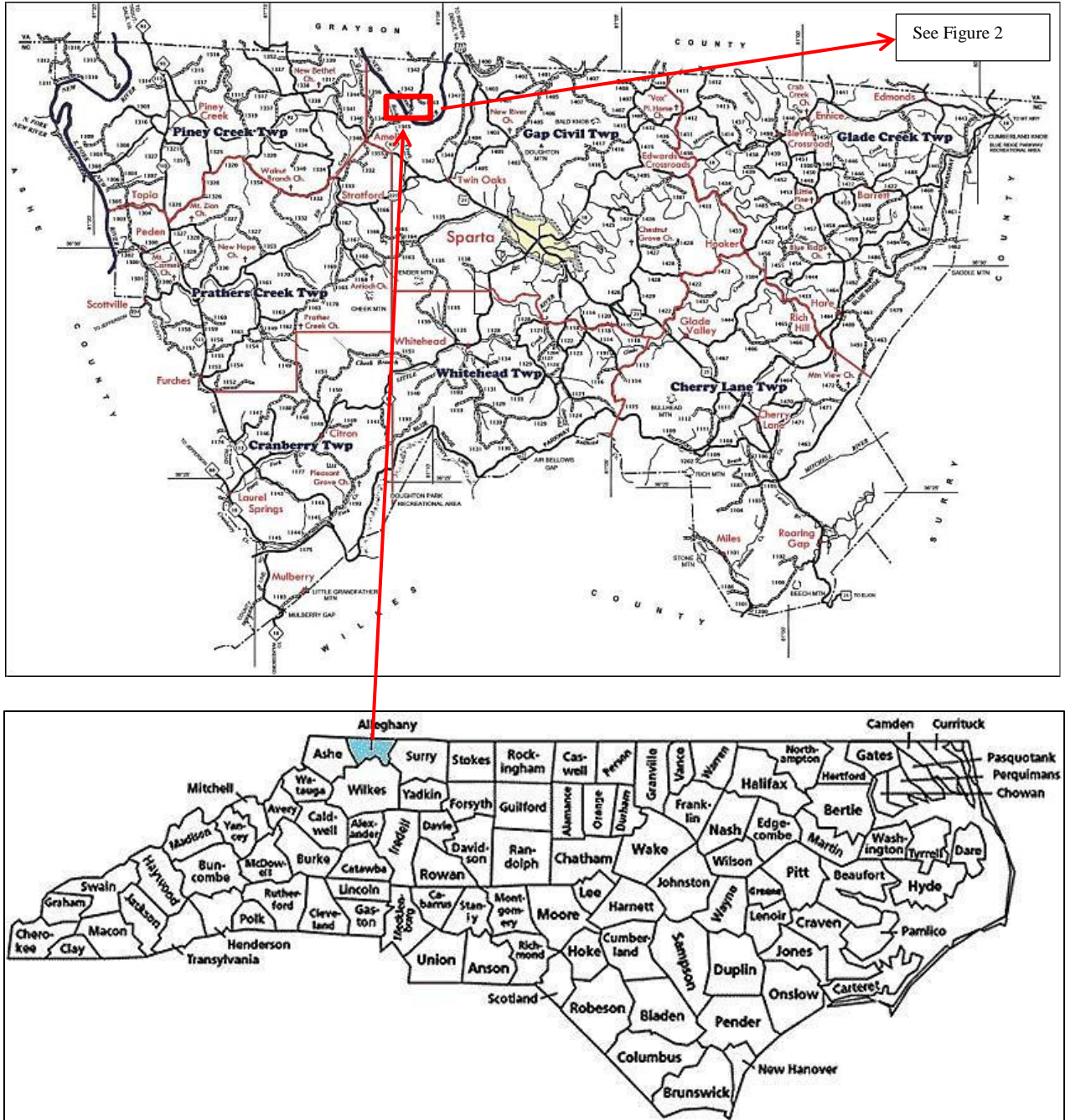


Figure 1: Project Location Map 1



Figure 2: Project Location Map 2 (source: RK&K, prepared October 2013 for NCDOT)

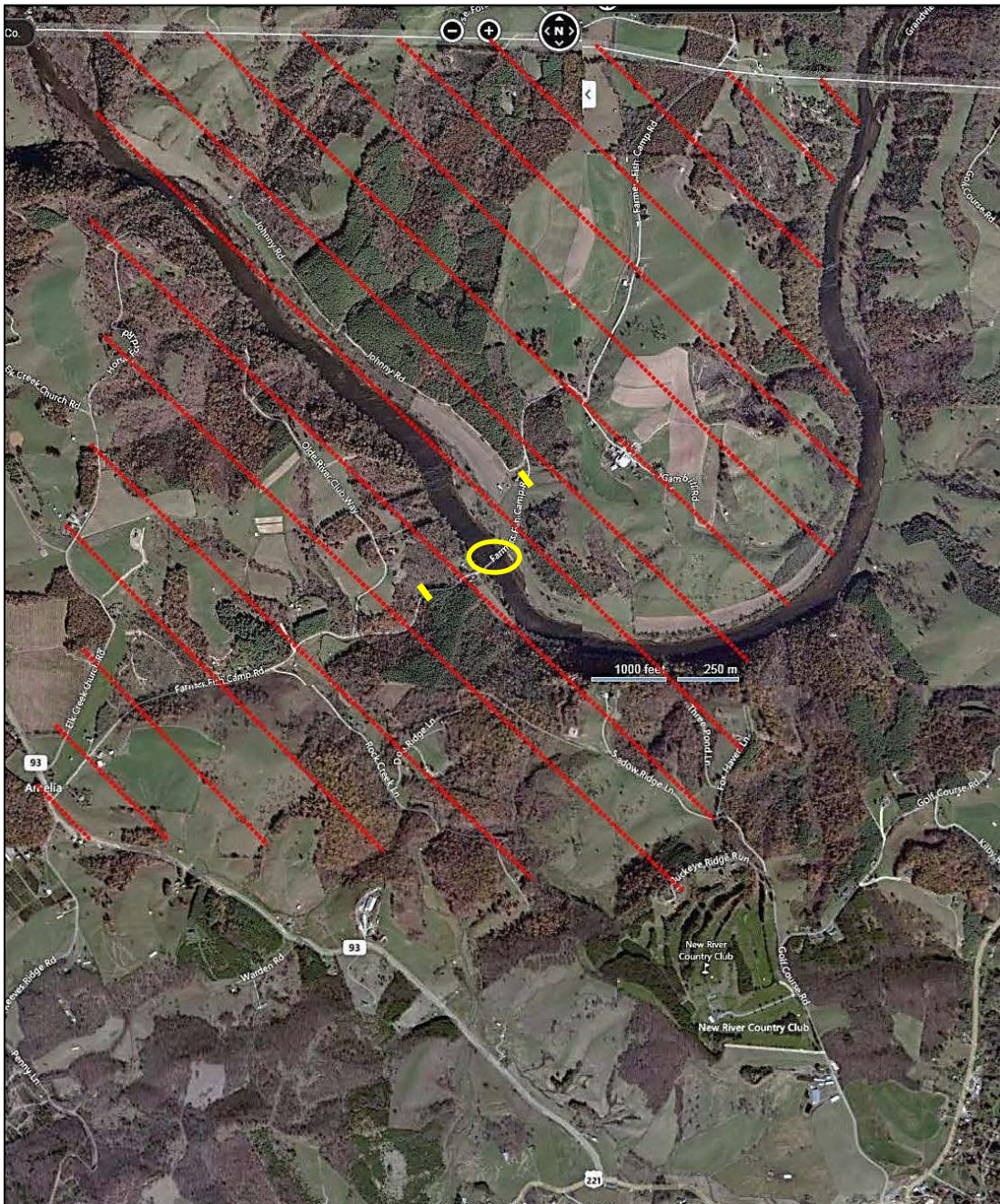


Figure 3: Location of potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River rural historic district denoted by diagonal red lines; project limits and Bridge No. 265 marked in yellow

II. CONTEXTS: HISTORIC, ARCHITECTURAL, LANDSCAPE

Alleghany County received its first settlers in the 1780s and 1790s. They came to the area, then part of Ashe County, from the north through river valleys and initially settled the area's fertile flood plains. The settlers were likely descendants of Scottish, Scot-Irish, and English settlers from Pennsylvania and Virginia (Joines 1998:7-8).

The first settlers, and later county residents throughout the nineteenth century and even into the twentieth, relied largely on subsistence agriculture and gardening to support themselves. Difficulties in reaching markets from the isolated county and limited labor constrained the establishment of cash crops. In response to labor shortages, a small percentage of Alleghany residents were slaveholders, including the Gambill family (discussed further below) (Joines 1998:9-11). Not until well into the twentieth century was the mountainous terrain and isolation of Alleghany County an attraction rather than a hindrance. As a bicentennial history of the county relates: "For years the Blue Ridge Mountains was not a vantage point, but rather a firm barrier separating Alleghany County from the rest of the state" (Alleghany County Historical Commission 1976:6). On the northwest side of the Blue Ridge, which cut it off from the rest of the state, Alleghany and neighboring remote counties Ashe and Watauga were inclined commercially and socially more to Virginia than North Carolina. The location of the three led them to be called the "Lost Provinces" in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Alleghany County Historical Commission 1976:6).

The North Carolina legislature formed Alleghany County in 1859, but its development awaited the end of the Civil War. The county came out of the war in relatively good condition, as it lost little capital or labor through the emancipation of slaves (Joines 1998:12). Jean Sizemore, who inventoried a number of the county's buildings in the early 1980s, identified the years between 1875 and 1915 as the county's "Golden Age" based upon the number of historically significant resources surviving from the period. She noted, however, the continued lack of development of any notable industry or cash crops during the period (Sizemore 1983:vii): "The relative prosperity and stability of those years resulted from a trickle-down effect from the general prosperity in North Carolina at that time rather than from any specific economic developments within the county." Davyd Hood (1978:202-215), in his essay on the "The Architecture of the New River Valley," utilized a timeframe tightened by a decade: he identified the years 1885 to 1915 as the period of new architecture that dominates the valley in Alleghany and Ashe counties. Sherry Joines Wyatt and Lori Tolliver-Jones (2009) identified a similar period of development, prosperity, and architectural flowering in neighboring Ashe County within and beyond the New River Valley.

In her thesis on Alleghany County farms, Sherry Joines Wyatt agrees with Sizemore's (and Hood's) conclusions and further notes (Joines 1998:13): "The wealth of stately Folk Victorian houses constructed during this period indicates that this was indeed an age of relative prosperity. The homes' lacy cut-work detailing proclaims the access of builders to an increasing amount of outside stylistic influences, technologies, and manufactured products."

Industry and commerce in the Alleghany countryside during the "Golden Age," in spite of increased access to the outside world, remained limited. Some water-powered mills were built and country stores rose at numerous crossroads, but rural Alleghany remained, and in many ways continues to remain, a quiet agrarian county. Corn was an important crop, as was domestic livestock that joined with farm families in consuming that staple (Joines 1988:13-18).

The importance of livestock to Alleghany farmers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, particularly cattle and sheep, is evident through a comparison of the agricultural censuses of 1870 and 1910. In 1870 the county's 655 farms held 7,134 sheep, 1,904 milk cows, and 2,190 other cattle. The county's population that year was 3,691. By 1910 Alleghany's population and number of farms had more than doubled to 7,745 and 1,466, respectively. Its numbers of sheep had remained relatively stable, increasing to 12,845, and its number of milk cows had about doubled to 3,714. Its cattle numbers had increased almost four-fold, however, to 8,010 (Joines 1988:18; University of Virginia Library). A farm staple had finally been born.

The 1920s through the 1950s saw incremental economic advancement in the county through the improvement of roads and bridges, the introduction of the automobile, and modernization of agricultural processes through soil conservation programs and mechanization. In the 1940s and 1950s dairying and beef cattle raising, as it had throughout much of the country, became a mainstay of Alleghany's small farmers. An important new cash crop increased greatly in production in the county beginning in the 1940s—burley tobacco (Joines 1998:18-21). With the loss of agricultural allotments, the crop has decreased in importance in recent years within and around the project area, although tobacco barns remain on the landscape (McIntyre 2013). Buildings associated with cattle also continue to stand. Raising cattle for beef has remained an important agricultural activity in and around the project area and throughout much of the county. If dairying was once popular within the area surrounding the project, however, little evidence of it remains. One other crop that has become important in the county in the past 25 years, although less so within the area of the project, is the growing of Christmas trees (Joines 1998:24).

The architecture and landscape of Alleghany County, not surprisingly, reflects its history. Early settlers built in log and frame, but little evidence of log construction survives in the county. In the Farmers Fish Camp Road area of the New River Valley, no log buildings were identified. A relatively small number of houses, outbuildings, and other resources from the early and middle nineteenth centuries continue to stand in the county but, again, none were identified within and around the project area.

Only three houses that date from the county's late nineteenth-/early twentieth-century building surge were identified within a potential New River/Farmers Fish Camp Road Rural historic district. All overlook Farmers Fish Camp Road and are discussed further below at the assessment of the potential historic district (Figure 5 through Figure 7). Two of them stand south of the project area, the Joines House (ca. 1900-1910) and the Oscar Gambill, Sr. House (ca. 1915) at 811 and 164 Farmers Fish Camp Road, respectively. The third—the Gambill Family Farm at 1667 Farmers Fish Camp Road (late 1880s/early 1890s)—is located within the project area near the river and separately assessed below. They appear on a map of 1938 with four other houses on the road that no longer stand (Figure 4). A careful view of the map shows Farmers Fish Camp Road above the river passing to the west side of the Gambill Family Farm and the creek. It was subsequently shifted to the east, although from the house down to the river it remained unpaved until the bridge was built (McIntyre 2013).

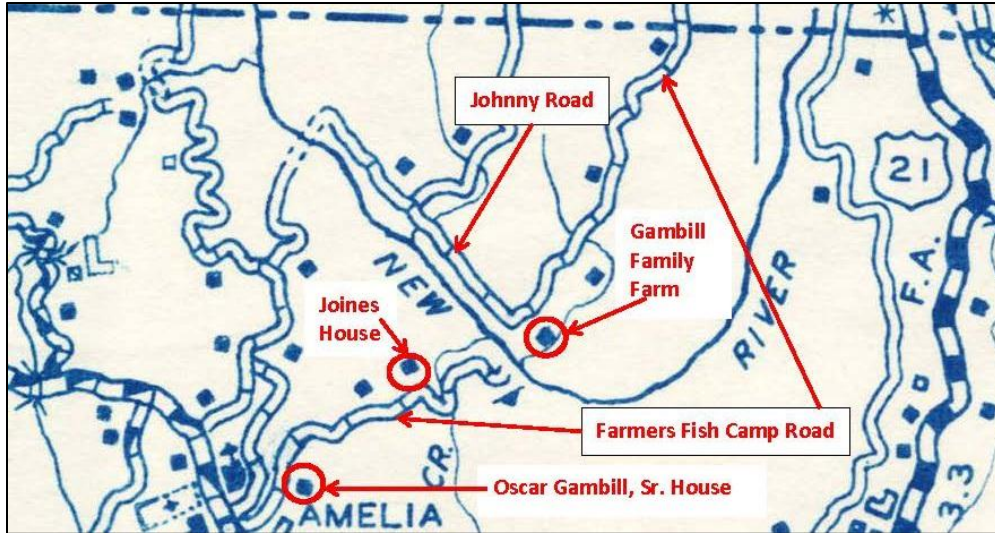


Figure 4: State Highway and Public Works Commission “Alleghany County” map of 1938

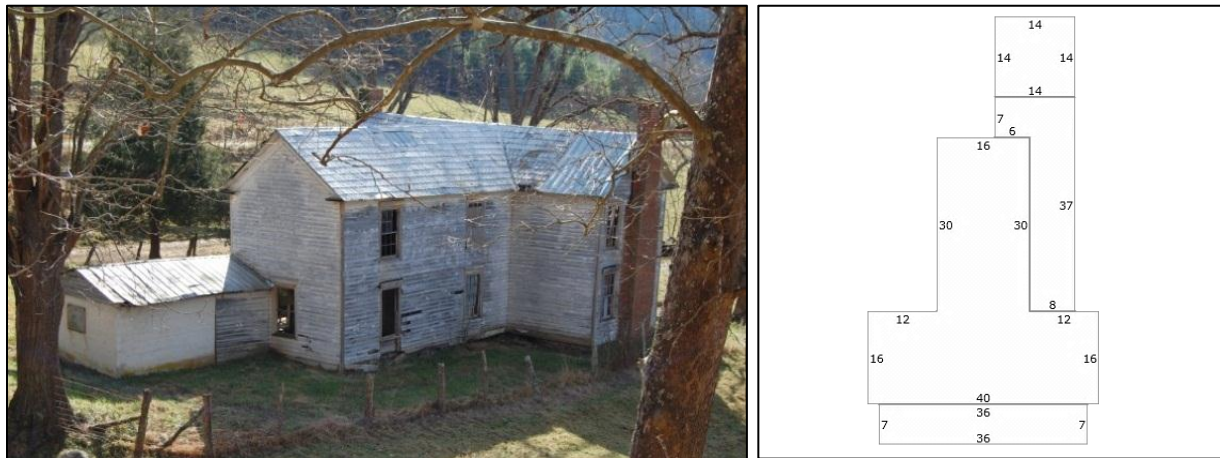


Figure 5: Gambill Family Farm house – at left, north rear and west side elevations of main block and two-story ell; at right, modern drawing from tax records depicting principal I-house-form block at bottom and ell extended to rear



Figure 6: Joines House – at left, modern drawing from tax records with south side elevation at bottom; at right, south side and east front elevations

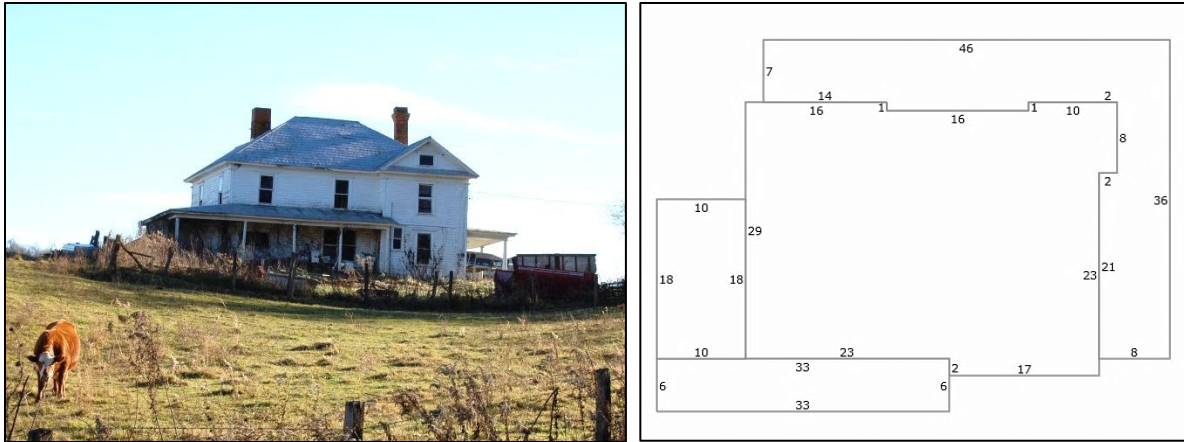


Figure 7: Oscar Gambill, Sr. House – at left, north front and east side elevations; at right, modern drawing from tax records with north front elevation at bottom

The inventory identified only a few other houses more than 50 years old within the area that might constitute a New River/Farmers Fish Camp Road rural historic district. The only one that is intact is the Johnsie Gambill McIntyre House at 2584 Farmers Fish Camp Road built in the late 1940s about a mile north of the project area (McIntyre 2013). The Earl and Myrtle Farmer House at 1347 Farmers Fish Camp Road within the project area overlooking the New River may date to the 1920s or 1930s, as might the Muncy Steadham House next to it (McIntyre 2013). Both have been heavily altered. These houses—part of a wave of construction in the county of small modest houses from about 1930 to 1950—are discussed further below at individual assessments and the assessment of the potential historic district.

Only one outbuilding from the late nineteenth century and a few from the early/mid-twentieth century were identified within and around the project area. They are also discussed the potential district assessment.

Sizemore’s (1983:v) description of Alleghany County 30 years ago continues to aptly summarize its physical appearance and agrarian nature:

Alleghany County is located in the northwestern section of North Carolina, bordering Virginia. It spreads across a high, rolling plateau in the Blue Ridge Mountains with an average elevation of 2,500 to 3,000 feet. In the county’s middle section the Peach Bottom chain of mountains rises another 1,000 feet. Flowing along the northern border of the county is the principal waterway, the New River; its tributary, the Little River, flows through the central section. Clear mountain springs and streams abound. Ranking ninety-fifth in size among North Carolina’s one hundred counties, and ninety-fourth in populations, Alleghany County is a quietly prosperous agricultural area, with beef and dairy cattle comprising the bulk of the farm income.

Joines appraisal of Alleghany County made 15 years ago remains equally accurate and is prescient as well. She writes (Joines 1998:6): “It is little wonder that pressures for land development are growing at a rapid rate. The beauty of the area creates a wealth of opportunities for vacation and retirement homes with striking views.” As discussed at the assessment of the potential district, many such new houses have been built in recent years in the county and in and around the project area, on many of its most prominent pieces of land.

III. INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT

GAMBILL FAMILY FARM

1667 Farmers Fish Camp Road, Sparta vicinity (PIN No. 3052887181)



Figure 8: South front elevation of House [A] at Gambill Family Farm

History

The Gambill Family Farm (Figure 8) is in its fourth generation of family ownership. In 1838 Robert Gambill (1810-1885) acquired from Jesse Long a 355-acre tract on the north side of the New River that included the farm property (Alleghany County Deed Book 6/Page 564). He recorded this deed in Alleghany County in 1885 along with three other acquisitions of property on both sides of the river (Alleghany County Deed Book 6/Page 560 (1859), Page 561 (1841), and Page 562 (1839)).

Robert married Nancy Thompson (1821-1903) in 1840. They lived with their seven children in a log house on the property north of the river that is no longer extant. Robert was politically active in the new county of Alleghany. He served as a state legislator in 1866-1867 and again in 1870-1872. He was also County Clerk of Court and a tax assessor for Gap Civil, the township in which the property is located (Alleghany Historical-Genealogical Society 1983:221; Cooper and Cooper 2001:20; McIntyre 2013; New River Notes 2013c).

Robert Gambill's positions reflected his wealth. In 1860 he owned 300 improved acres of land, 800 unimproved acres, and over 180 horses, cows, cattle, oxen, sheep, and swine. He also owned at least one slave in Alleghany County and, in 1870, his household continued to include a black domestic servant (New River Notes 2013a, 2013b, and 2013d).

The Gambills' son, John, fulfilled his role as youngest child by caring for his parents. In return, he received the home property and continued to care for his mother after his father died in 1885 (Alleghany County Deed Book J/Page 252 (1894)). Nancy lived with John (1857-1932), his wife, Myrtle (1875-1955), and their children until her death in 1903 (McIntyre 2013). John built the house in the late 1880s or early 1890s. It was therefore already standing when he married Myrtle Colvard in 1899 (McIntyre 2013; Latham 1996).

Robert Gambill gave property to his other sons as well as to John, and the family continued to live in close proximity (Cooper and Cooper 2001:14). The 1900 federal census identifies John and Myrtle living with Nancy in household 255, adjacent to or near John's brothers Thomas (or Thompson) at household 254 and William at household 258.

John Gambill was a farmer and livestock dealer. His activities included driving cattle and hogs to market in Elkin in neighboring Surry County. Myrtle's management skills and efforts saved the farm during the Depression, when livestock the family had under contract brought in much less than expected (Alleghany Historical-Genealogical Society 1983:220).

John and Myrtle had two children, Robert Eugene Gambill (b. 1900) and John Colvard "Johnny" Gambill (1902-1985) (Figure 9, at left). Both inherited the family farm, but Johnny stayed home and farmed it. His brother left Alleghany County to study animal husbandry and when he graduated from what is now North Carolina State University in 1925, he went to work in the dairy industry in Rowan County. In 1945, when he moved to a farm he had purchased in Bennettsville, South Carolina, he sold his interest in the family farm to his brother (Alleghany Historical-Genealogical Society 1983:220-221; McIntyre 2013; Publications Association 1925:76; Alleghany County Deed Book 53/Page 55 (1945)).

Johnny Gambill (1902-1985) followed in his father's and grandfather's footsteps in farming the family property and public service. He attended the predecessor of Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina and returned home to farm. In 1926 he married Rose Gambill (1901-2007), who gave up teaching to tend to the farm and the family (Figure 9, at right). Johnny served as an Alleghany County Commissioner from 1934 through 1936 and again from 1946 through 1951. He also served as County Chairman of the Democratic Party (Alleghany Historical-Genealogical Society 1983:220; Alleghany County Historical Commission 1976:59; Cooper and Cooper 2011:13).



Figure 9: John and Myrtle Gambill with sons Robert and John, 1907, at left; Rose Gambill in 2002, a day short of her 101st birthday (sources: Alleghany Historical-Genealogical Society, *Alleghany County Heritage*, at left, and *Alleghany News*, March 7, 2002)

The Gambills had two daughters, Johnsie, who married George McIntyre, and Nancy, who married Ralph Gentry, Jr. The sisters succeeded to ownership of the farm, probably after their mother's death in 2007. Johnsie was born at the farm in 1929 and lived there until the late 1940s. When materials became available following the end of WWII, she and her husband built a brick house about a mile north of the farm, although still on Gambill land, to which they moved. She recalled in 2013 how warm the new house, which she still lives in, was compared to the drafty farmhouse, where one could never quite warm up in the winter (McIntyre 2013).

In 1999, when they were interviewed for *The People of the New River*, Rose Gambill and Johnsie McIntyre lived together in the brick house that Johnsie and George had built (Joines 1998:48). Rose recalled encountering Johnny Gambill after she had finished college in Boone (Cooper and Cooper 2001:13):

One Sunday afternoon we went out to the river and my husband's folks lived in that house down there [by the river]. He came down there where we were. Of course, we went to school together and we were friends. He walked us home that night and from then on. After two or three years, we got married.

Mother and daughter also recalled life on the farm and how they crossed the New River, which isolated them from the bulk of the county. According to Rose, the farm produced corn, potatoes, onions, and cabbage. They raised cattle and, for wool, sheep, which they sheared on the farm. "Back then we didn't go to the store to buy much," she told her interviewer. "We grew it on the farm" (Cooper and Cooper 2001:13).

Rose noted that the river bottom was "rich land" where a crop of corn came up every year, unlike other locations off of the river. Until 1947, when he got his first tractor, Johnny farmed with four work horses (Cooper and Cooper 2001:14, 16). Cattle were the central farm resource, though: Johnsie's father, Johnny, was often away "out trading cattle all the time," but her grandfather, John, who lived until 1932, was always there for them. Rose recalled that "A big family has more fun than one or two" (Cooper and Cooper 2001:16). Johnny drove not only cattle to market in Elkin, but also pigs and turkeys (Cooper and Cooper 2001:17).

The family and others crossed the river on a ferry, by small boat, on horseback or, occasionally, on the ice. Johnny Gambill operated a ferry and there were other ferry crossings and fords, including one at Horse Ford Road about a mile upriver to the northwest and another downriver at Forest Forge (Figure 10 and Figure 11). When the state erected the bridge in 1962 (Dean 2007) to carry Farmers Fish Camp Road over the New—the first and only bridge ever erected at the site—Johnny "turned the ferry loose and let it go on down the river," according to Rose, apparently happy to be done with it (Cooper and Cooper 2001:13). Johnsie recalled polling a small boat across the river on occasion to get to school in Piney Creek, on the other side (McIntyre 2013). And Rose said, "When I wanted to go to my mother's I would get on a horse with Johnsie behind and Nancy in front and ride across that river. That's the only way I had to go." She also recalled her husband driving cattle into the river when it was shallow and then onto the ferry. And Johnsie remembered hearing stories of sending the herd right over on the ice when the river had frozen solid (Cooper and Cooper 2001:13). Finally both Johnsie McIntyre and Tam Gambill—who was born on Gambill property near the river in 1923 and continues to live in a house on Gambill Road just north of the project area—recalled in 2013 getting stuck at fords in the river with their mothers when they tried to drive their Ford automobiles across.

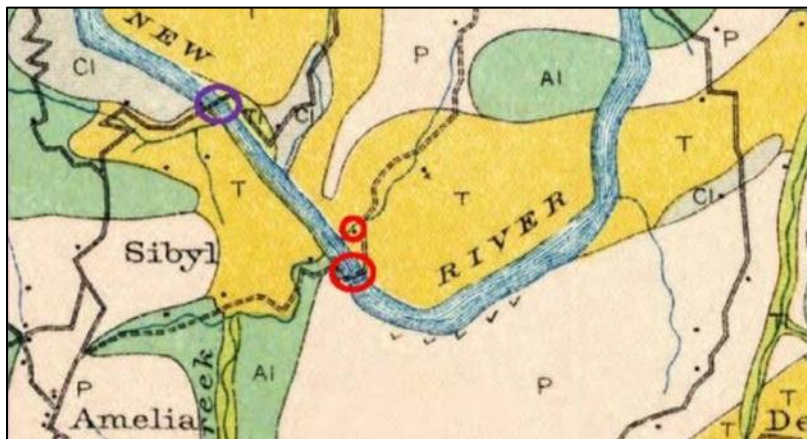


Figure 10: Burke, Hearn, and Lambert, "Soil Map, North Carolina, Alleghany County Sheet," 1915 with Gambill farmhouse and Farmers Fish Camp Road crossing of the New River circled in red and, upriver, Horse Ford Road crossing circled in purple

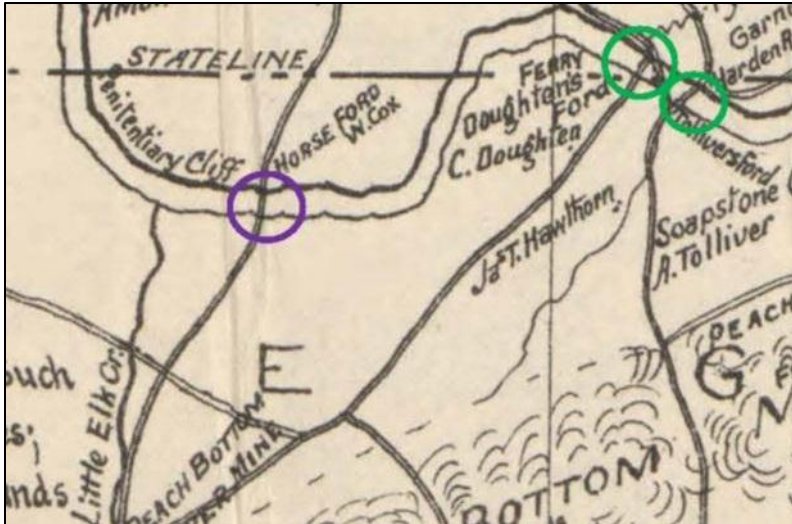


Figure 11: Dickey and Boyd, “Map of Grayson County, Virginia,” 1897 with Horse Ford Road crossing circled in purple and Doughten’s ferry and ford and Tolliver’s ford, at the state line to the northeast, circled in green

Rose and Johnsie also recalled social life (Cooper and Cooper 2001:14). Rose remembered that sometimes a “crowd of young folks came in to have a party and you wouldn’t know they were coming.” They would often square dance together. Johnsie had similar memories: “For the social life around here, the young folks went from house to house.”

Rose’s long life encompassed many inventions and changes, from the automobile to the radio (and the television), to farming with tractors (Cooper and Cooper 2001:19):

Times are a lot different today [1999] than what they were then. I remember seeing my first car. There was a house down at the barn and a couple lived there and they had the first radio. They owned this farm and had no children and they had more money than the rest of us around here. We didn’t have a TV. Radio was the first mystery.

Rose Gambill died in 2007 at the age of 106. Since the late twentieth century, the farmhouse has been empty and has fallen into disrepair. Although worn, it retains many of its early or original architectural features intact and continues to have a complement of outbuildings, some early, some built in recent years, as its property continues in agricultural use.

Description

The Gambill Family Farm occupies 110.48 acres of largely open pasturage that extends north of the New River on either side of Farmers Fish Camp Road (Figure 12 and Figure 13). Its ten standing resources are clustered southwest of the junction of Farmers Fish Camp and Johnny Road. The core building is the farmhouse on the east side of the creek. To its rear stand two privies, a garage, and a tractor shed. To its front, across the creek, are a cellar, granary, shed, pole barn, and silo. Its landscape includes pastures, fields, some woodland and a small house yard, and a spring and creek.

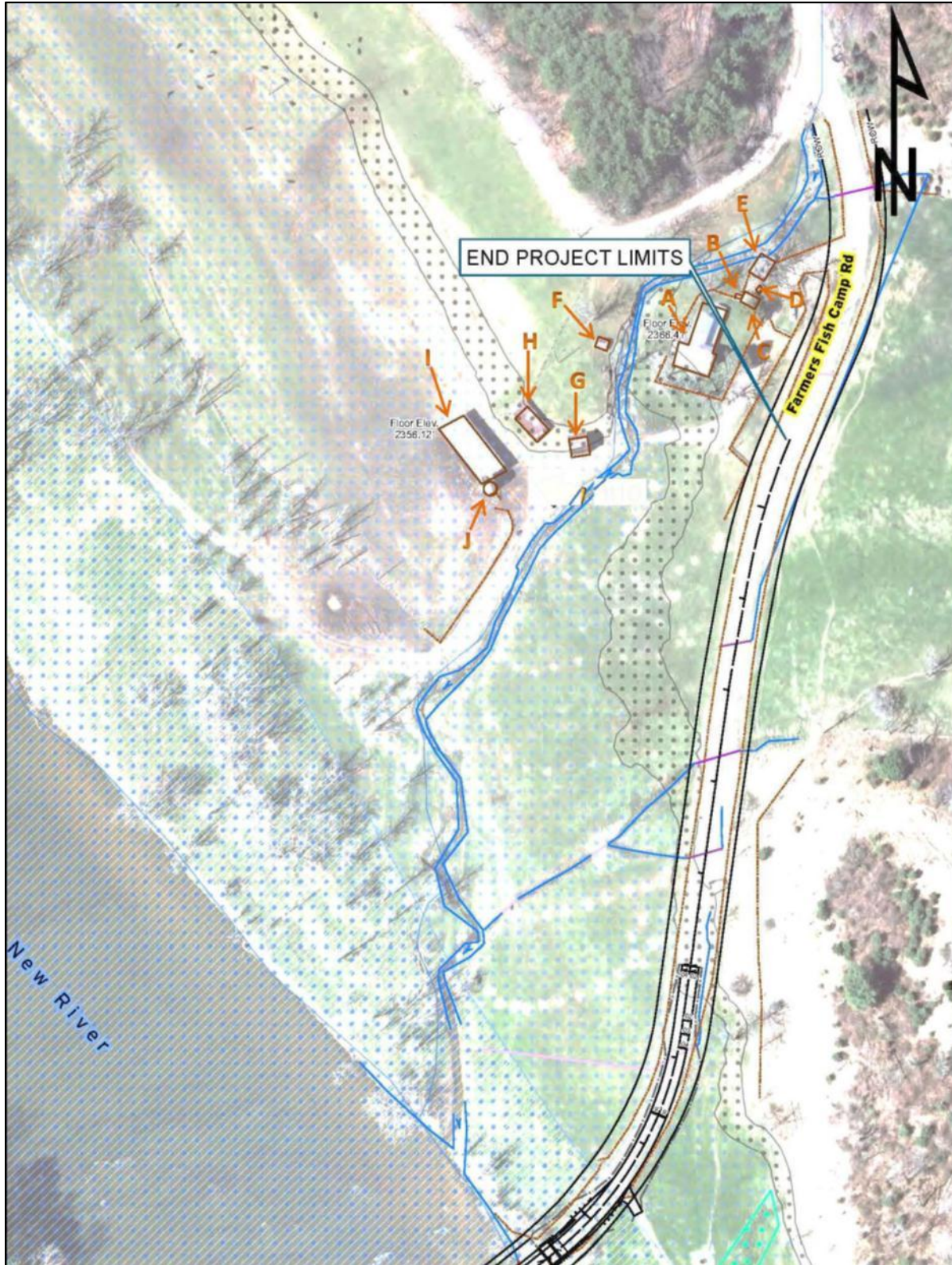


Figure 12: Gambill Family Farm sketch map, adapted from portion of RK&K map prepared for NCDOT October 2013



Figure 13: 1953 aerial photograph, sheet 3L-15 (source: Alleghany County soil conservation office, Sparta)

House [A on sketch map] – contributing building (ca.1885-1895)

Johnny Gambill built this house in the late 1880s or early 1890s (McIntyre 2013). Its front block utilizes the traditional I-house form: it is two stories tall, one-room deep, and has a center hallway with a room to either side. The block's rear ell also rises two stories. Centered, it gives the house a T-shaped footprint. A one-story springhouse, built in the early/mid-twentieth century, extends to the ell's rear (see Figure 5, above).

The front block of the house is built of frame and sided with weatherboards (Figure 14 through Figure 17). It stands on a stone-pier-and-brick foundation and is topped by a seam-metal gable-end roof. Its front (south- and river-facing) façade is three symmetrically placed bays wide. Sidelights and a transom flank the central entry, above which rises a double window with pairs of four-over-four sash. Surrounds crowned by heavy projecting pediments frame the four bays to either side of the central bays. Three of these four windows retain original six-over-six-sash; one has replacement two-over-two sash. The windows of the entire house—front block and ell—are identical (but for the replacement sash), which indicates that it was built at one time.

A one-bay-wide, two-story porch originally projected from the center of the façade (Joines 1998:48). Such porches were once typical of large nineteenth-century New River Valley houses (Hood 1978:211; Sizemore 1983:x). Thin, full-height, vertical boards to either side of the central bay, and the narrower weatherboards that face this bay, provide evidence of the former presence and position of the porch. The current full-façade, one-story porch appears to have been in place for many years. Its decorative posts, which are finished in two slightly different ways and which retain irregular mortises for no-longer-present rails, may have been salvaged from the original porch.

Centered common-bond brick chimneys and cornice returns mark the front block's side elevations. The windows and the surrounds of the elevations match those of the front façade. No windows cross the rear elevation of the block to either side of the ell.

The rear ell is two stories tall, one-room wide, and two rooms deep (Figure 18 and Figure 19). Two pairs of windows pierce its east and west side elevations. A single window is centered at the first story of the ell's rear (north) elevation which, like the front block, has cornice returns. Most of the ell's sash has been removed or boarded up. A one-bay, shed-roofed, screened-in porch crosses the ell's east side elevation. It extends past the rear of the ell to a join to the house a one-story, concrete-block springhouse that was likely originally freestanding.



Figure 14: House [A] –south front and east side elevations



Figure 15: House [A] –south front and west side elevations with large catalpa tree at right



Figure 16: House [A] – details of front elevation, second story



Figure 17: House [A] – details of front elevation, first story



Figure 18: House [A] – south rear and west side elevations of main block and ell with stuccoed, concrete-block springhouse at left



Figure 19: House [A] – east side and south rear elevations of main block and ell with screened porch and springhouse at center and right

The interior finish of the house is similar throughout both the front block and the rear ell and the downstairs and rooms above (Figure 20 through Figure 22). Five-panel doors—with flat panels on one side, raised panels on the other—open into the rooms. (A two-panel door beneath the stairs may be salvaged from an earlier house.) The walls and ceilings retain their original flush-board cladding, which in a few rooms has been obscured by modern materials (wallboard in the dining room and east front parlor and synthetic cladding affixed to the west parlor ceiling). The parlors retain decorative post-and-lintel mantels. Turned balusters and newel posts mark the stairs. Some of the rooms are deteriorated, particularly the kitchen at the rear of the ell and the ell's upstairs bedrooms, but nonetheless retain their integrity. The springhouse continues to contain its concrete troughs.



Figure 20: House [A] – at left, west downstairs parlor; at right, east downstairs parlor



Figure 21: House [A] – stair hall at left; east upstairs bedroom at right



Figure 22: House [A] – dining room in downstairs of ell, at left; springhouse at rear of ell at left

Crescent-moon privy [B] – contributing building (ca.1950-1960)

The two privies were added, for tenants, after Johnsie McIntyre moved to her new brick house up the road in the late 1940s (McIntyre 2013). The house appears to never have had bathrooms. This privy is built of frame with vertical-board siding at its front (south) elevation, which faces the rear of the house, and horizontal siding at its other three sides (Figure 23). A shed roof tops it and a crescent moon-shaped opening is cut into its door.



Figure 23: Crescent-moon privy [B] – looking north with garage [C] at right

Garage [C] – contributing building ca.1936)

Johnny Gambill built this one-car garage about 1936 to house a new car (McIntyre 2013). Large irregularly cut stones form its side and rear walls and a gable metal roof crowns it (Figure 24). Its east-facing front no longer has doors, which were apparently removed to facility the storage of hay, its current function.



Figure 24: Garage [C] – looking south with rear of crescent-moon privy [B] at right

Privy [D] – contributing building (ca.1950-1960)

Like the property's other privy on the opposite side of the garage, this privy was built for tenants after about 1950 (McIntyre 2013). It is frame building clad in vertical siding and topped by a metal shed roof (Figure 25). Its door is unadorned.



Figure 25: Privy [D] – looking north with corner of garage [C] at left; interior, at right

Tractor shed [E] – contributing building (ca.1950-1960)

A large woodhouse once stood at the site of this shed (McIntyre 2013) (Figure 26). It is a frame building sided with vertical boards and topped by a seam metal roof, in a fashion similar to the privy to its south. Its open room was likely used to store a tractor or other equipment. The small enclosed room at its north side also served as storage space. Like the garage, it now holds hay.



Figure 26: Tractor shed [E] – looking southwest from Farmers Fish Camp Road at tractor shed [E] at right, privy [D] and garage [C] at center left, and ell of house [A] at far left

Cellar [F] – contributing building (ca.1885-1895)

A small root cellar dug into a rise of land above the creek to the west of the house is likely its contemporary (Figure 27). Simply called the “cellar” by Johnsie McIntyre (2013), it was used to store pumpkins, squash, apples, and the like during the colder months. Large slabs of stacked stone form its walls, which disappear into the hillside. A single door is centered in its east-facing, gable-front façade. A sheet-metal roof, partially pulled or blown away, covers its gable. A small wooden vent stack extends up from the roof’s peak at the building’s rear. Inside, the stone walls are covered with later-added concrete. Hood (1978:2007) includes an image of a similar cellar in Ashe County in his essay on New River Valley architecture.



Figure 27: Cellar [F] – looking northwest, at left, and looking southwest, at right

Granary [G] – contributing building (ca.1930-1940)

A frame granary is the oldest of four outbuildings clustered south of the cellar on the west side of the creek (Figure 28). A gable-front building sided with vertical boards and topped by a shallow-peaked, metal roof, it is elevated on three sides to stand level in the rolling pastureland. A door into its west-facing front façade opens into its principal storage space. A smaller opening above serves a second storage area in its loft.



Figure 28: Granary [G] – looking southwest at granary [G] at center, shed [H] at right, and pole barn [I] and silo [J] at left

Shed [H] – contributing building (ca.1950-1960)

This long pole-barn or shed is built of round wooden poles sided with vertical boards and topped by a nearly flat metal shed roof (Figure 29). It is used for hay storage and—as its livestock gate and long, open, northeast-facing elevation indicate—to hold cattle.



Figure 29: Shed [H] – looking north

Pole barn [I] – noncontributing building (ca.1970-1980)

Round logs, scarfed to attain additional height at one side, support the metal-clad walls and shed roof of this pole barn, which stands on the site of an earlier barn (McIntyre 2013) (Figure 30 and Figure 13, above). Poured concrete footings and metal gusset plates connecting the modestly dimensioned roof trusses indicate that the building was not built before about 1970. Its livestock gate and moveable poles, which can be used to separate animals, indicate that it is designed to hold cattle as well as hay.



Figure 30: Pole barn [I] – looking southwest at pole barn [I] at center, silo [J] at left, granary [G] at right, and shed [H] at far right, with the New River in the background

Silo [J] – contributing structure (ca.1940-1950)

According to Johnsie McIntyre, this silo may date to the early 1940s (Figure 31). When it was erected, it stood adjacent to a barn that has been supplanted by a modern pole barn. Poured concrete forms the silo's walls. Any ladders or other appurtenances the structure once had are no longer in place.



Figure 31: Silo [J] – looking west at silo [J] at left and pole barn [I] at right with New River in background

Landscape [K] – contributing site

The landscape of the 110.48 acre Gambill Family Farm comprises a site that contributes to the overall integrity of the resource (Figure 32 through Figure 36). It consists of pastures, fields, some woodland and a small house yard, a creek, and a spring. These—with the presence of the New River at the south—were essential to the initial settlement of the farm and its continued agricultural use. Enclosed by wire-woven fence to contain cattle—and, in a small area around the house, to keep cattle out—the farm’s pastures continue to be open and to be grazed by a herd that pastures on the property. They extend along the New River to the east and west of Farmers Fish Camp Road. On the west they occupy the river’s floodplain from its banks up to the edge of Johnny Road; on the east they climb up a hill. Although the farm was once larger, the continued open expanses of the property would be clearly recognizable to earlier Gambill-family owners of the farm, all of whom relied on cattle as their primary agricultural resource.



Figure 32: Landscape [K] – composite image looking north across the New River at the Gambill Family Farm with buildings visible at center and pilings of Farmers Fish Camp Road bridge at right



Figure 33: Landscape [K] – at left, looking southwest at pasture, New River, and modern house at center distance; at right, looking north across pasture at southern outbuildings and house from edge of Farmers Fish Camp Road near the river



Figure 34: Landscape [K] – at left, looking northwest across yard toward house, creek, and cellar; at right, looking west at outbuildings north of house



Figure 35: Landscape [K] – at left, looking northeast from cellar and creek to the house and eastern pasture rising behind; at right, looking southeast from Farmers Fish Camp Road near house at eastern pasture



Figure 36: Pastures [K] – at left, looking south down creek from junction of Farmers Fish Camp Road and Johnny Road at northern outbuildings and rear of house; at right, looking east across pasture from Johnny Road with southern outbuildings at left distance and the New River at right

National Register Eligibility Assessment

The Gambill Family Farm is recommended as eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C for its architecture. Its farmhouse is an excellent and intact example of a traditional, two-story, center-hall, single-pile (I-house) form with many of its original decorative features—including window surrounds, weatherboards, doors, mantels, and board walls and ceilings—intact. The I-house form is a ubiquitous yet nonetheless important type for houses built in the New River Valley and elsewhere in Alleghany County, particularly during its “Golden Age” of architecture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The nine outbuildings on the property further contribute to the farm’s significance under Criterion C. Sizemore observed 30 years ago, after her inventory of much of Alleghany County’s architecture, that the farm had a notable collection of outbuildings. Since that time it appears to have lost only two outbuildings, a smokehouse that stood just northwest of the house and a corncrib. (It is not clear whether the early large barn was standing when Sizemore inventoried the farm.) Further, the farm continues to encompass 110.48 acres of land that were historically associated with it and that remain in historic use, providing pasturage for cattle. With its intact traditionally fashioned farmhouse, many outbuildings, and intact agricultural land, the Gambill Family Farm meets the significance and integrity requirements for listing in the National Register under Criterion C. (The architecture and landscape of the farm compare favorably with two other contemporary National Register-listed resources in neighboring Ashe County, the A.S. Cooper Farm and the Perry-Shepherd Farm (Wyatt 2001 and 2005). The period of significance for the farm is recommended as extending from the date of the construction of its farmhouse in the late nineteenth century through the mid-twentieth century.

As summarized in the following table, the Gambill Family Farm has a high degree of integrity for all seven elements of National Register integrity, which supports its proposed National Register eligibility under Criterion C:

Gambill Family Farm: Assessment of Integrity		
Element of Integrity	Level of Integrity	Assessment
Location	High	Continues to stand on the place where it was constructed and location continues to be complemented by intact setting.
Design	High	Farmhouse retains original I-house form and finish, including six-over-six sash set in decorative surrounds, original weatherboards, early or original porch posts, and original interior doors, walls, ceilings, and mantels.
Setting	High	Environment continues to illustrate physical character of place—setting remains rural along the New River on the river’s floodplain and the hills that flank it. Setting is bolstered by continued historic use of pastures for grazing and by presence of numerous outbuildings that reflect historic character of farm.
Materials	High	As noted at design, retains numerous original materials in original locations.
Workmanship	High	Remains intact and continues to display original workmanship of builders.
Feeling	High	Little-altered farmhouse coupled with rural setting, outbuildings, and pasturage continues to express the historic sense of its period of significance.
Association	High	Little-altered farmhouse coupled with rural setting, outbuildings, and pasturage retains association with late nineteenth and early/mid-twentieth century agrarian life in Alleghany County.

The Gambill Family Farm is not known to be associated with any important historic events or activities. It is therefore not believed to be significant under National Register Criterion A. It also not associated with any persons significant in our history and therefore is not believed to be significant under Criterion B. The Gambill family was locally important, but does not rise to the level required by the Register for

significance under Criterion B. As discussed below at the assessment of a potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River rural historic district, the farm is also not believed to be eligible as part of any larger historic district under Criterion C. Finally, it is unlikely that the farm would yield any important historical information not readily available from other sources and it is therefore recommended not eligible for National Register listing under Criterion D. (Any archaeological potential under Criterion D is not addressed in this report.)

Recommended National Register Boundaries

The National Register boundaries of the Gambill Family Farm are recommended as those of its 110.48-acre parcel (PIN No. 3052887181)—marked with diagonal lines at Figure 37—including the property at the north extending to the edge of pavement of Johnny Road and Farmers Fish Camp Road and the portion of Farmers Fish Camp Road that the parcel crosses, from south of the junction of Johnny Road to the northeast bank of the New River. This property has been historically associated with the farm and continues to hold its farmhouse, outbuildings, and pasturage.

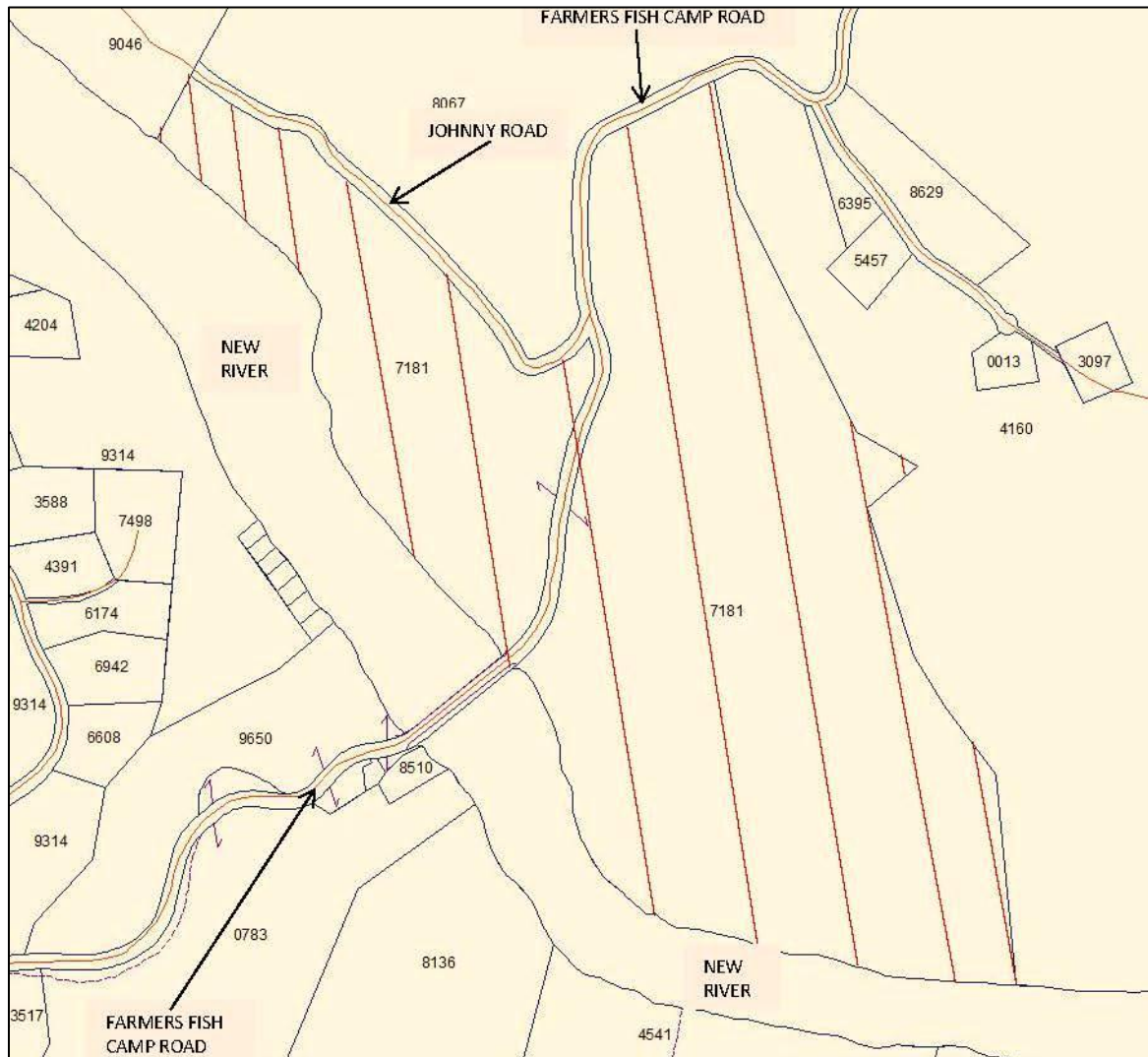


Figure 37: Proposed National Register boundaries, Alleghany County PIN #xxx, striped in red (base map: Alleghany County tax maps)

FARMERS FISH CAMP

1347 Farmers Fish Camp Road, Sparta vicinity (PIN No. 3052769650 – north side of road)



Figure 38: Farmers Fish Camp looking west from the edge of the road at the river

History

Farmers Fish Camp Road is named for the “fish camp” that Earl Farmer (1893-1959) and his wife, Matilda Toliver Farmer (1892-1969), ran from as early as the 1920s through the end of the 1950s. In 1920, according to the federal census, the Farmers were married and living on or near this property with two young children and head-of-household Mary Farmer, Earl’s mother. During the decade they likely erected a portion of the principal house on this property and began operating it as a fishing camp in association with a farm (McIntyre 2013; Cooper and Cooper 2001:16) (Figure 38).

Johnsie Gambill McIntyre, who was born in 1929 immediately across the river from the Farmers, recalled the fish camp when interviewed in 1999 (Cooper and Cooper 2001:16):

Farmer’s Fish Camp used to have cabins and rented the cabins to people and Mrs. Farmer cooked; she was a good cook. She’d serve country ham and eggs and gravy and fresh vegetables. That was a very popular place. He would pole the boat for the men to fish. The cabins are gone. Mother [Rose Gambill (1901-2007)] used to have an interest in a couple of the cabins. She would go and change the beds and sweep up. That was a way of earning a little spending money.

McIntyre again recounted the fish camp’s history when interviewed for this report in 2013. Local folks from “up the country” would come down on weekends to fish. They would stay in the cabins and eat in the kitchen of the Farmers’ house. In the 1940s and 1950s some patrons came from as far away as Iredell County, including a scout troop led by Tom Kyles, a son-in-law of the Farmers (*Statesville Record and Landmark*, May 11, 1955, August 16, 1948, and July 15, 1940). According to a newspaper account, the scouts’ visit in May 1955 included a wiener roast, a nature hike up the river, climbing a mountain, and identifying trees and tracks.

Earl Farmer identified himself as a farmer in the 1940 federal census. The fish camp was so popular and the family kitchen so crowded, though, that he added a separate building northeast of the house in which his wife could serve meals to their patrons (McIntyre 2013). This may have been in the 1940s, when the

property also received, according to Johnsie McIntyre, its own source of electricity (Cooper and Cooper 2001:16):

There was a water wheel across the river [from the Gambill Family Farm on the Farmer property]. My father and Cleve Gambill and Earl Farmer that lived across the river got electricity for several years from that. We didn't get electricity until 1947. When we wanted to wash, we'd call and tell Earl to turn the water wheel on. We couldn't all wash at the same time. We'd have lights and radio at night, but when Earl got ready to go to bed, the power went off. There was a line from the wheel to our house. It was also a mill where we could get corn ground. I don't know what happened to the old building.

In 1959 Earl Farmer died. His obituary noted that he was well known in his section of Alleghany County and that "for many years [he] had operated Farmer's Fishing Camp on New River" (*Statesville Record and Landmark*, March 10, 1959). Matilda Farmer could not run the fish camp without her husband and closed it down (McIntyre 2013). The following year she transferred the property to son-in-law and daughter, Joe G. and Bettie Ruth Kyles (Alleghany County Deed Book 69/Page 317 (1960)). When Betty R. Kyles (1930-2008) died in 2008, she transferred the property to its current owner, Sue Wagoner. Wagoner was Betty's niece—the daughter of Betty's sister, Clyde Virginia Farmer Delp—and also, according to Betty's obituary, one of her "special caregivers" (*Alleghany News*, April 30, 2008).

Sue Wagoner has made major changes to the property in the past five years. She has modernized the house and the former separate dining room; added a modern covered bridge to carry the driveway from Farmers Fish Camp Road across the creek to the house; built a covered deck on the piers of the mill that was located on the creek; and erected a modern deck and gazebo along the river (McIntyre 2013).

Description

The Farmers Fish Camp property encompasses 14.45 acres. At the northeast it extends along the bank of the New River. At the southeast the parcel crosses, in small part, Farmers Fish Camp Road to encompass the tiny tracts that a no-longer-extant cabin occupied and that the Muncy Steadham House (discussed below) continues to stand upon (Figure 39 and Figure 40).

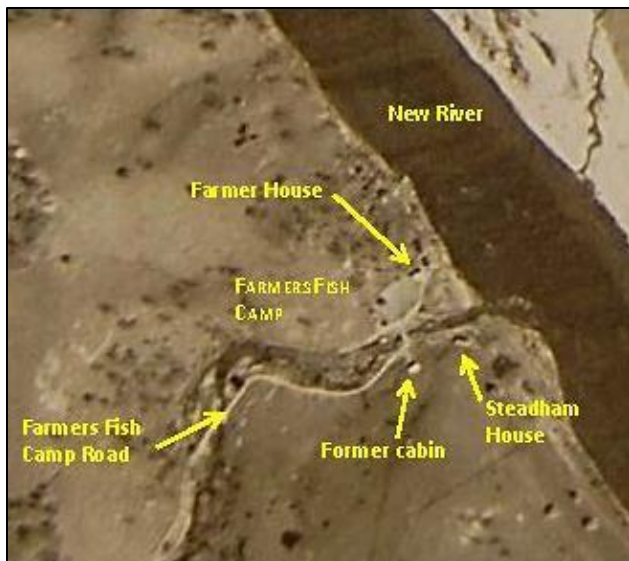


Figure 39: 1941 aerial photograph, sheet 12B-36 (source: Alleghany County soil conservation office, Sparta)



Figure 40: Farmers Fish Camp sketch map

House [A on sketch map] (ca. 1920-1930)

According to Johnsie Gambill McIntyre (2013), this house at its core is a modest concrete-block building similar to the Muncy Steadham House across Farmers Fish Camp Road (assessed below). When the house acquired its one-and-a-half-story bungalow appearance is not clear, as the property's present owner, Sue Wagoner, has altered it extensively within the past five years. These changes include the addition of modern sash, vinyl siding, decking, a new porch at the northeast side elevation, and a much altered Craftsman-style porch across its southeast front elevation (Figure 41 and Figure 42). (No one was home the times the property was visited and there was no access to its interior.)



Figure 41: House [A] – southwest side and southeast front elevations, at left; southeast front elevation, at right



Figure 42: House [A] – at left, northeast side elevation with new deck leading to former dining room [B]; at right, northwest rear and southwest side elevations with river and former dining room in distance

Dining room [B] (ca. 1930-1940)

This building began as a dining room for guests of the Farmers’ fish camp. Within the past five years its current owner has transformed it by the addition of new sash and bays, a walkway connecting it with the house, two new porches, and stone veneer at the tall foundation of its river-facing façade (Figure 43).



Figure 43: Dining room [B] – south side and west rear elevations, at left; east front and south side elevations, at right

Deck/gazebo [C] (ca. 2008-2013)

This modern wooden deck and gazebo, built within the past five years, stand on the property at the edge of the New River (Figure 44).



Figure 44: Deck/gazebo [C] – at left, with New River in background; at right, looking upriver with dining room [B] at center and house [A] at left

Covered bridge [D] (ca. 2008-2013)

This modern covered bridge was erected across the creek from Farmers Fish Camp Road to the house within the past five years (Figure 45). Its sign says “Farmers Fish Camp, Est. 1920s.”



Figure 45: Covered bridge [D] – at left, looking north from Farmers Fish Camp Road; at right, looking south toward creek and road with covered deck [E] at right

Covered deck [E] (ca. 2008-2013)

Sue Wagoner added this wooden covered deck at the site, and atop the concrete piers, of a former mill built by the Farmers and the Gambills to provide electricity to their properties (Figure 46, at left). Overlooking the creek that separates the house from Farmers Fish Camp Road, it includes a small representation of a waterwheel.



Figure 46: at left, looking northwest at covered deck [E] on concrete pilings of former mill; at right, looking northwest at storage building [F]

Storage building [F] (ca. 2008-2013)

This modern, metal, prefabricated storage building was placed on the property near the house within the past five years (Figure 46, at right).

National Register Eligibility Assessment

Farmers Fish Camp is not believed to be eligible for National Register listing under any of the Register’s Criteria. It is not known to have been associated with any important historic events, activities, or persons and is therefore recommended not eligible for National Register listing under Criteria A or B. The house and its separate dining room have been altered to the point of unrecognizability; any outbuildings

associated with the farming of the property are gone; at least two former cabins associated with the property have been demolished; and a small mill and bridge have been removed and replaced by modern structures. The resource is therefore not believed to retain sufficient integrity to support National Register listing under Criterion C. As discussed below at the assessment of a potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River rural historic district, the former fish camp is also not believed to be eligible as part of any larger historic district under Criterion C. Finally, it is unlikely that the resource would yield any important historical information not readily available from other sources and it is therefore recommended not eligible for National Register listing under Criterion D. (Any archaeological potential under Criterion D is not addressed in this report.)

As summarized in the following table, Farmers Fish Camp has a low overall degree of National Register elements of integrity and therefore does not retain sufficient integrity to support listing in the Register:

Farmers Fish Camp: Assessment of Integrity		
Element of Integrity	Level of Integrity	Assessment
Location	High	Continues to stand on the place where it was established along the New River, which was the basis for its use as a fishing camp, and therefore has a high degree in integrity of location.
Design	Very low	The house and separate dining room at Farmers Fish Camp have been heavily altered to the point where they would be barely recognizable to their builders. Other cabins on the property, a mill, and a bridge have been lost entirely and therefore retain no integrity of design. The absence of these buildings—particularly the loss of the cabins and any sense of connection of the overall resource with fishing—further diminishes the integrity of the surviving house and dining room. The overall design integrity of the resource is therefore very low.
Setting	Medium to low	The resource continues to stand along the New River in a rural setting. However, the integrity of its setting has been diminished by the loss of cabins and other resources and of any sense of connection of the house, dining room, and overall resource with fishing. Its overall integrity of setting is therefore medium to low.
Materials	Very low	As noted at design, the two surviving original or early resources—the house and dining room—have been heavily altered. Any of their surviving original materials have been completely obscured by modern changes and additions. The integrity of materials is therefore very low.
Workmanship	Very low	The many alterations to the house and dining room, and the removal or obscuring of their original features, have left the resource with a very low level of integrity of workmanship.
Feeling	Low	The resource retains some integrity of feeling due largely to its intact overall setting, particularly its continued location on the New River in an area that remains rural. The alteration of the house and dining room, loss of cabins and other resources, and the loss of connection with fishing, however, greatly detract from the resource’s integrity of feeling. The overall integrity of feeling of the resource is therefore low.
Association	Low	As noted at design, setting, and feeling, the many changes to Farmers Fish Camp—including major alterations to the house and dining room and the loss of cabins and other resources—along with the disconnection of the house and dining room from fishing, have greatly removed the sense of the overall resource to convey its original use, purpose, and history. Its integrity of association is therefore low.

MUNCY STEADHAM HOUSE

Opposite 1347 Farmers Fish Camp Road, Sparta vicinity (PIN No. 3052769650 – southeast side of road)

History

According to Johnsie McIntyre (2013), this house was long the home of Muncy Steadham. Census records indicate that William Muncy Steadham (1873-1947) was raised in the vicinity of Farmers Fish Camp Road and the New River. He was the son of A. Bartlett Steadham (1846-1939) and Esper Anders Steadham (1853-1929). In 1910 Muncy was the head of a household that included his parents and four siblings (Pollie, Bertha, George, and McKinley). He never married and is buried next to his parents in the Elk Creek Primitive Baptist Church cemetery. (The cemetery, located at the southern end of Farmers Fish Camp Road, also holds the remains of the Gambill and Farmer families.) It is not clear from the deed record how the property upon which the house is located passed from Steadham family ownership to Earl and Matilda Farmer, who lived opposite (Figure 39 and Figure 40, above). After Muncy's death, however, the house apparently became one of the cabins that visitors to the Farmers' fish camp could stay in.

Description

The Muncy Steadham House is one-story tall and one-room deep (Figure 47 and Figure 48). It is built of concrete block and clad in a modern sheathing of synthetic shingles. A seam-metal, gable-end roof tops it and a shed roof covers the porch that crosses most of its four-bay-wide, northeast- and river-facing, front elevation. Two doors lead inside, suggesting that it originally had at least two interior rooms. Its inside partitions have been removed, however, leaving a concrete-block-walled, single-room interior. Other changes to the house include the modern replacement of its porch posts and the earlier replacement of much of its original three-over-one frame sash with metal two-over-two sash.



Figure 47: at left, northeast front and southeast side elevations; at right, northwest side and southwest rear elevations, with Farmers Fish Camp Road, bridge pilings, and New River at left



Figure 48: at left, southwest rear and southeast side elevations; at right, view through back window

Two other small houses on the south side of Farmers Fish Camp Road—one just to the south and the other just to the southeast of the Muncy Steadham House—appear to have been built within the past 50 years, after the fish camp stopped operation. Both stand on parcels separate from the Farmers Fish Camp property and were never associated with it (Figure 40, above). Rather, they are private summer dwellings. The gable-end, one-story, single-pile house to the south rear of the Steadham House at 1350 Farmers Fish Camp Road (PIN # 3052866561) is owned by the heirs of Mrs. G.P. (Ruby Lee) Riner of Webster, Florida (Figure 49, at left). The Riners purchased the 0.16-acre parcel from the Farmers in 1953 (Alleghany County Deed Book 63/Page 350). The gable-end, one-story house to the southeast side of the Steadham House at 1364 Farmers Fish Camp Road stands on a 0.63-acre parcel (PIN #3052868510) that Adelaide M and Joe C. Shaw, Jr. purchased from John C. and Rose Gambill in 1958 (Alleghany County Deed Book 67/Page 343) (Figure 49, at right). The Shaws sold it to H. Glenn Pettyjohn and W.D. and Mary Pettyjohn Fesperman in 1982 (Alleghany County Deed Book 119/Page 187) and since 1989 it has been owned in its entirety by the Fespermans, who live in Advance, North Carolina (Alleghany County Deed Book 145/Page 577).



Figure 49: North front and east side elevation of 1350 Farmers Fish Camp Road, at left; east front and north side elevations of 1364 Farmers Fish Camp Road, at right

National Register Eligibility Assessment

The Muncy Steadham House is not believed to be eligible for National Register listing under any of the Register's Criteria. It is not known to have been associated with any important historic events, activities, or persons and is therefore recommended not eligible for National Register listing under Criteria A or B. Its siding and most of its sash is modern, as are its porch posts, and its interior has been stripped down to a single open space. The resource is therefore not believed to retain sufficient integrity to support National Register listing under Criterion C. As discussed below at the assessment of a potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River rural historic district, the house is also not believed to be eligible as part of any larger historic district under Criterion C. Finally, it is unlikely that the resource would yield any important historical information not readily available from other sources and it is therefore recommended not eligible for National Register listing under Criterion D. (Any archaeological potential under Criterion D is not addressed in this report.)

As summarized in the following table, the Muncy Steadham House has a low overall degree of National Register elements of integrity and therefore does not retain sufficient integrity to support listing in the Register:

Muncy Steadham House: Assessment of Integrity		
Element of Integrity	Level of Integrity	Assessment
Location	High	Continues to stand on the place where it was built along the New River and therefore has a high degree of integrity of location.
Design	Very low	Much altered through changes to most sash, addition of new siding and porch, and stripping down of interior to a single exposed room. Overall integrity of design is therefore very low.
Setting	Medium to low	Continues to stand along the New River in a rural setting. Changes to Farmers Fish Camp and addition of less-than-50-year-old houses to rear and side, however, have diminished immediate setting. Overall integrity of setting is medium to low.
Materials	Low	As noted at design, many alterations have removed or obscured almost all of its original materials. Original concrete block, however, visible at interior, and a few three-over-one windows survive. Overall integrity of materials is low.
Workmanship	Very low	The many alterations to the house have left it with a very low level of integrity of workmanship.
Feeling	Medium to low	As noted at setting, continues to stand at the New River, but has lost much of its original feeling due to changes to and addition of later resources in its immediate setting. Overall integrity of feeling is therefore medium to low.
Association	Low	Continues to stand at the New River, but has lost much of its original association due to changes to and addition of later resources in its immediate setting. Additionally, never had a link between any important historic event or person, so its element of association is least important of its seven National Register elements of integrity. Overall its integrity of association is low.

POTENTIAL FARMERS FISH CAMP ROAD/NEW RIVER HISTORIC DISTRICT

Bounded by the North Carolina/Virginia state line on the north; the New River, Fox Haven Lane, Buckeye Ridge Run, and the New River Country Club on the east; the end of Rock Creek Lane, a watercourse, and NC 93 at the Amelia crossroads on the south; and Elk Creek Church Road and Horse Ford Road on the west

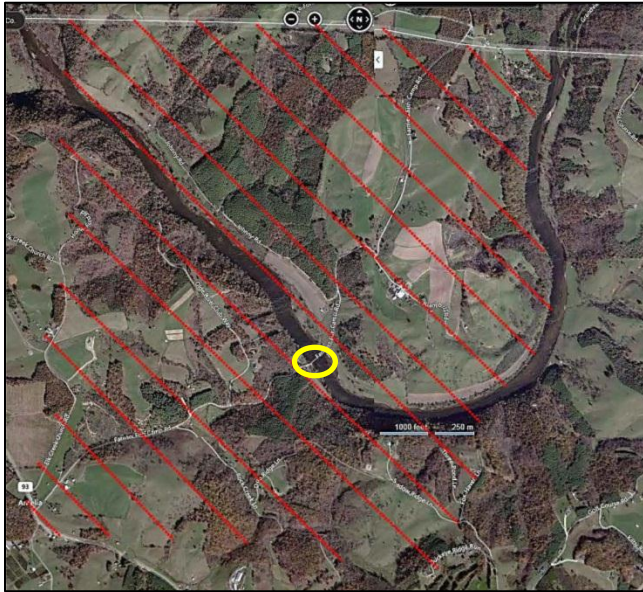


Figure 50: Location of potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River rural historic district denoted by diagonal red lines; bridge location circled in yellow

The identification of a potential National Register-eligible, multi-county and multi-state, rural historic district encompassing the New River Valley dates to 1976. A summary report—no final historic architectural report was prepared—describes the nature and brevity of the identification efforts, which were associated with the proposed damming of the New River (Cole, Shull, Tise, and Southern 1976):

On April 7 and 8, 1976, the National Register conducted background research and a preliminary reconnaissance survey of the North and South Forks of the New River and its tributaries in North Carolina and Virginia. The background research and follow up of the survey included consultation with the offices of the North Carolina and Virginia State Historic Preservation Offices, which indicated that no organized cultural research surveys on properties of historical and architectural significance had as yet been conducted in the environmental impact areas of either the Blue Ridge project or the area proposed for designation as a Wild and Scenic River. . . . The purpose of this reconnaissance was to get some background on the history of the area and to provide a preliminary assessment of the type and extent of historically and architecturally significant resources located in the area, an evaluation of their significance, an appraisal of the needs for more extensive cultural resource surveys in the project areas and an estimate of the cost of recovery of historically and architecturally significant resources identified in the field reconnaissance. . . .

The field survey was conducted on April 7 The method of field survey was twofold. A helicopter was used to spot and photograph properties and areas of potential significance. . . . To the extent possible, the properties identified by air and others spotted

from the ground were subsequently photographed as part of a drive through by automobile conducted the same day. . . .

The report included a brief summary of the history of the area and two-sentence descriptions of 34 individual historic resources located in Alleghany and Ashe counties in North Carolina and, to a lesser extent, north of the state line in Virginia. This historical summary stated that:

The preliminary survey indicates that the New River area with its 19th century farm complexes, Victorian farmhouses, mills, rolling farmlands, and small communities, is particularly significant because of the high degree of historical integrity which it has maintained. Due to its isolation and low population, there are very few 20th century intrusions.

This paragraph included the following caveat as a footnote: “Much of the information in this summary is based on a cursory view of secondary source material. Further documentary research must be conducted to verify its accuracy.”

The New River Valley project did not proceed and no concentrated effort was made to survey the valley or document its history. However, as a result of the extremely summary survey, Hood (1978:202-215) wrote a history of the valley’s architecture in Ashe and Alleghany counties, which was published in *Carolina Dwelling* in 1978. Further, Sizemore inventoried much of Alleghany County in the early 1980s and Wyatt and Tolliver-Jones inventoried Ashe County in 2004-2006 and prepared a history of its architectural and historic resources in 2006.

For the current bridge replacement project, NCDOT requested that URS consider a potential rural historic district that did not extend across two counties and two states, but that might encompass and continue beyond the bounds of the project area. URS initially drove the roads and lanes within Alleghany County bounded by US 221/21 on the east, US 221 on the south, NC 93 on the southwest, Elk Creek Church Road on the southwest, and the state line on the north. This area encompassed a total of about eight square miles. Due to modern development on US 221 and 21, and the terrain of the area—which rises and dips precipitously along ridges, creeks, and the New River—the principal investigator determined that an area of about two square miles or 2,500 acres, with the bridge crossing near its center, had greater potential for retaining sufficient integrity to constitute a rural historic district (Figure 3 and Figure 50, above and Figure 65, below). The investigator therefore conducted a reconnaissance-level survey within this area, which is bounded by the state line on the north; the New River, Fox Haven Lane, Buckeye Ridge Run, and the New River Country Club on the east; the end of Rock Creek Lane, a watercourse, and NC 93 at the Amelia crossroads on the south; and Elk Creek Church Road and Horse Ford Road on the west. As part of this survey, the investigator attempted to photograph and map all of the standing resources, other than minor secondary ones, within the refined area. Due to the inaccessible nature of some of the area, not all resources could be viewed or photographed, but certainly over 95% of them were accessible and were therefore recorded.

The area within and around the project area remains largely rural and in agricultural production. However, Joines’ observance and concerns 15 years ago of heavy development pressure in the county have—to the detriment of the rural historic and architectural integrity of the area—proven to be well-founded. Whether there is a rural historic district that encompasses the project area is a question not of whether it is significant, but whether it has sufficient integrity to support significance under any of the National Register’s Criteria.

It is difficult to develop a detailed image of what the historic appearance was of a potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River rural historic district. It was certainly agricultural and, since at least the mid-

nineteenth century, largely open due to grazing of cattle and sheep. Historic maps, which have a limited date range and level of detail, suggest that the area had relatively few houses until recent years. This is borne out by the historically thinly populated nature of the project area's township, Gap Civil, and of Alleghany County as a whole. There were no bridges across the loop of the New River that dropped down into the county from Virginia. Farmers Fish Camp Road was not a major road or access point across the river in the nineteenth century. The earliest detailed map of the area—of Grayson County, Virginia, drawn at the end of the century—does not include the road or its crossing. Rather, it depicts Horse Ford Road and its crossing to the west and two crossings at the state line to the east (Figure 51). The 1915 soil survey map (Figure 52) of the county depicts the Farmers Fish Camp Road crossing and a small number of buildings in the area, only one or two of which stand—the Gambill Family Farm and, perhaps, the Joines House. (The path of the road into Amelia was different then and it is therefore not clear whether the Joines House, built in 1915, is shown.) One prominent nonresidential resource is included on the 1915 map, the former Gambill School, which stood on Farmers Fish Camp Road north of the river. Rose Gambill went to school there, but Johnsie Gambill McIntyre (born 1929) did not and it has been gone for many years (Cooper and Cooper 2001; McIntyre 2013). By 1938 (Figure 53) there were almost certainly additional dwellings within the potential rural historic district, although fewer than on the main arteries to the east, south, and west. Only when the state erected the bridge in 1962—the only one known to have ever crossed this loop of the river—did Farmers Fish Camp Road become a thoroughfare that was more important than its rural neighbors (Dean 2007; McIntyre 2013) (Figure 54 through Figure 56).

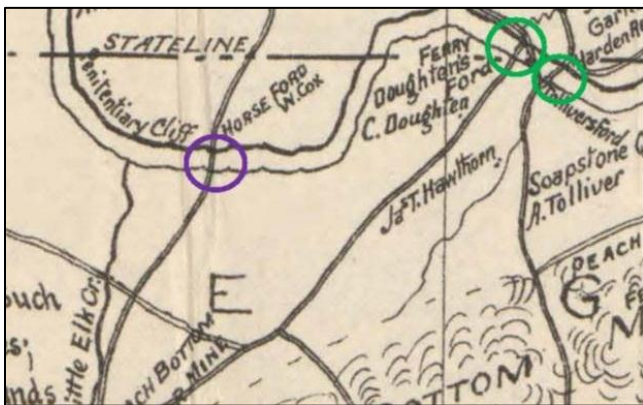


Figure 51: Dickey and Boyd, “Map of Grayson County, Virginia,” 1897 with Horse Ford Road crossing circled in purple and Doughten’s ferry and ford and Tolliver’s ford at the state line circled in green (same as Figure 11, above)

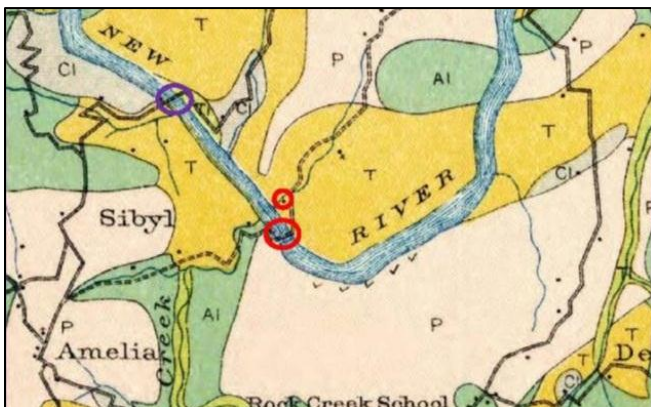


Figure 52: Burke, Hearn, and Lambert, “Soil Map, North Carolina, Alleghany County Sheet,” 1915 with Gambill farmhouse and Farmers Fish Camp Road crossing of the New River circled in red and, upriver, Horse Ford Road crossing circled in purple (same as Figure 10, above)

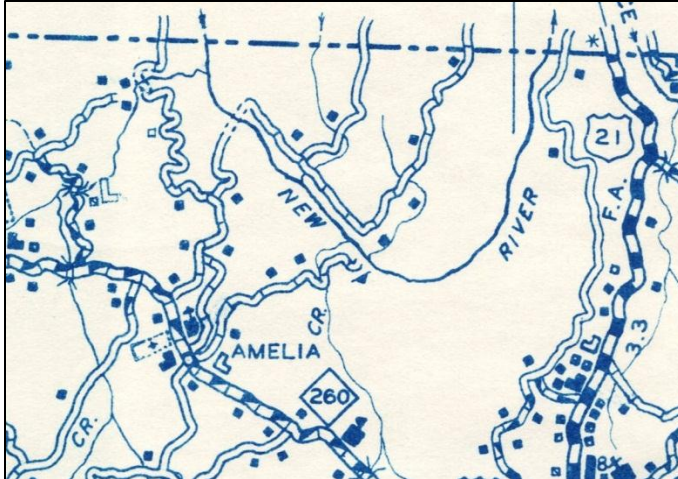


Figure 53: State Highway and Public Works Commission, “Alleghany County, North Carolina,” 1938, with New River at center top



Figure 54: Looking northwest up the New River from Farmers Fish Camp Road bridge, ca. 2011 (source: http://missmaggiep.blogspot.com/2011_04_01_archive.html)



Figure 55: Farmers Fish Camp Road bridge, intact during flooding as it functions as a low water bridge (source: *Alleghany News*, n.d. and http://www.alleghanynews.com/archive/122_31/Flood%203.jpg)



Figure 56: Looking northeast from Farmers Fish Camp toward Gambill Family Farm, ca. February 1, 2013; caption reads “This was a low water bridge over the New River that normally goes under water during high water events in Alleghany County north of Sparta.” (source: <http://www.flickr.com/search/?q=%22farmers%20fish%20camp%22%20road%20bridge> and NCDOT communications)

Historic images of buildings in the area are few. An early twentieth-century image of the Oscar Gambill, Sr. House, which still stands near the junction of Farmers Fish Camp Road and NC 93, shows it little changed to the present (Figure 57, left). In her Alleghany County architectural history, Sizemore included an image of the John Robert Edwards House that stood at the west end of Johnny Road within the potential rural historic district, west of the Gambill Family Farm (Figure 57, right). This house has not survived, but she described it as follows (Sizemore 1983:20):

This square-plan, turn-of-the-century house is located on the north bank of the New River upstream from the John Gambill farm. The two-story structure is simply finished, with a wraparound porch on two sides and projecting gables breaking the form of the broad hip roof. A notable gable roof barn and other outbuildings stand nearby.



Figure 57: Oscar Gambill, Sr. House, at left, early in the twentieth century; at right, John Robert Edwards House, no longer standing, in the early 1980s (sources: Alleghany Historical-Genealogical Society, *Alleghany County Heritage*, at left, and Sizemore, *Alleghany Architecture*, at right)

Unfortunately, files and maps are not known to survive from the 1976 New River Valley survey and the descriptions of the inventoried resources in most cases are not sufficiently detailed to identify their

locations (Southern 2013). The survey likely identified few if any resources within and near the project area, however.

There are a small number of houses within a potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River rural historic district, however, that survive from the late nineteenth through the mid-twentieth centuries. The house at the Gambill Family Farm is the earliest of the three houses in the area erected during the county’s “Golden Age” of architecture of the late nineteenth/early twentieth century. As noted above, John Gambill built it in the late 1880s or early 1890s. Its I-house plan represents the earliest of the architectural forms popular during the period (Figure 5, above and Figure 58).

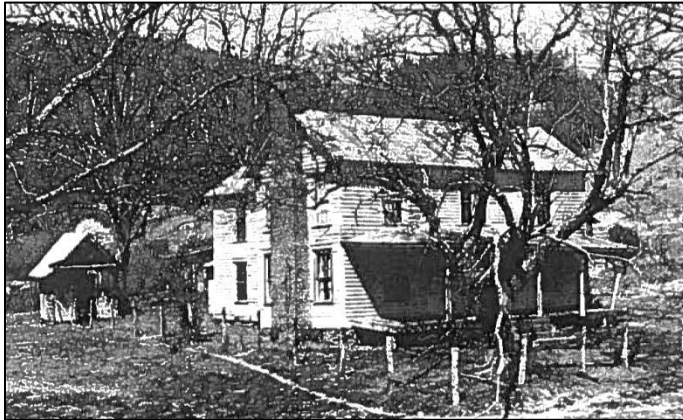


Figure 58: Gambill Family Farm – I-house-plan front block of house and, to left, no-longer-standing smokehouse, in the early 1980s (source: Sizemore, *Alleghany Architecture*)

The Oscar Gambill, Sr. House and Joines House represent variations on a second type from the period which, according to Sizemore, emerged in the opening decade of the twentieth century and “gradually replaced the I-house in popularity”—the two-story, square-plan house (Figure 6, above and Figure 59, at left). Tax records date the Joines House to 1901, which is a reasonable precise, or at least approximate, date of construction. Oscar Gambill built his house in 1915 (*Alleghany Historical-Genealogical Society* 1983:220). Through extended gabled sections, the houses achieve the desired picturesque asymmetrical wall planes and roofs of the Queen Anne style while still retaining some of the appearance of the I-house form (Figure 7, above and Figure 59, at right).



Figure 59: Joines House south side elevation, at left; Oscar Gambill, Sr. House west side and north front elevations, at right

There are three houses within the potential district that date from another notable period of construction in the county, the decades between about 1930 and 1950, when many small, minimally finished dwellings were erected. Only the Johnsie Gambill McIntyre House at 2584 Farmers Fish Camp Road is intact (Figure 60). Johnsie McIntyre, who owns the Gambill Family Farm, and her husband, George, had it built in the late 1940s once materials for its construction became available. Overlooking Farmers Fish Camp Road about a mile north of the project area, it is a small, brick-veneered, gable-end, minimal traditional-type dwelling. Its use of brick veneer was common during the period according to Sizemore.



Figure 60: Johnsie Gambill McIntyre House, east front and south side elevations, with modern vinyl-sided addition

The Earl and Myrtle Farmer House at Farmers Fish Camp at 1347 Farmers Fish Camp Road may date to the 1920s or 1930s (McIntyre 2013). It was heavily altered in the past five years, however. The Muncy Steadham House on a portion of the Fish Camp property on the opposite side of the road—which may be contemporary with the original portion of the Farmer House—is also much altered (Figure 61). Both are discussed individually above.



Figure 61: Earl and Myrtle Farmer House at Farmers Fish Camp, southeast front elevation, at left; Muncy Steadham House, north front and west side elevations, at right

Sizemore (1983:xii) notes that Alleghany County’s outbuildings “include barns of various sizes and forms, granaries, cribs, dairies, smokehouses, spring houses and other structures.” The earliest and rarest, she found, were built of log and dated from the nineteenth century. Most of the county’s surviving outbuildings, however, were of frame construction and were erected in the late nineteenth or during the twentieth century. Within the area that might constitute a Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River rural historic district there are a few groups of and some scattered individual outbuildings. They are less diverse than those described by Sizemore, largely consisting of sheds and barns to hold cattle and

tobacco. Probably only one outbuilding in the area dates to the nineteenth century: the small stone root cellar at the Gambill Family Farm, which may date to the late 1880s or early 1890s, when the farmhouse was erected (Figure 62, at left). Even outbuildings dating from prior to the 1950s are uncommon in the area. They include two other outbuildings at the Gambill Farm likely erected in the 1930s, a frame granary and a small stone garage (Figure 62, at right, and Figure 63, at left). More common are outbuildings erected during the last half of the twentieth century to hold burley tobacco and some large modern cattle barns (Figure 63, at right and Figure 64).



Figure 62: Gambill Family Farm – east front and north side elevations of cellar, at left; east front and north side elevations of garage, at right



Figure 63: Gambill Family Farm – west front elevation of granary with modern pole-barn-type outbuildings to either side, at left; post-WWII tobacco barn on west side of Horse Ford Road north of Amelia, at right



Figure 64: Composite image of modern metal and concrete-block barns at Tam Gambill Farm on Gambill Road east of Farmers Ford Road, just northeast of Gambill Family Farm

Regardless of the number of houses, outbuildings, and other resources that may have stood within the boundaries of a potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River rural historic district, it is possible to assess its relative integrity through a study of the resources that currently stand within it, both early and, in the large majority of cases, post-1963 and modern. It is believed that there are far too many resources built within the past 50 years to develop a historic district of any size around the project area, whether centered on the former bridge crossing or expanded to the studied boundaries of a potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River rural historic district.

The absence of an intact rural historic district is graphically displayed in two fashions in this report: through the large-scale map with photographs of standing resources within the potential district that is included in a pocket at the back of this report (Standing Resources within potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River Rural Historic District); and through the following images, largely of vistas, with the locations from which they were taken identified at Figure 65.

The large-scale map has a few salient graphic points aside from its many images of modern resources. The resources that are believed to be less than 50 years old are identified with brick-colored boxes and lines. Roads that were not present in 2000, when the USGS base map was drawn, are outlined in yellow. On the south side of the river, the new roads and the modern houses being raised along them have almost completely encircled the project area. The following photographs in the body of the report display the intrusion of numerous modern resources into a still beautiful, but historically altered, landscape that now features new houses on most of its most prominent knobs and ridges (Figure 66 through Figure 90).

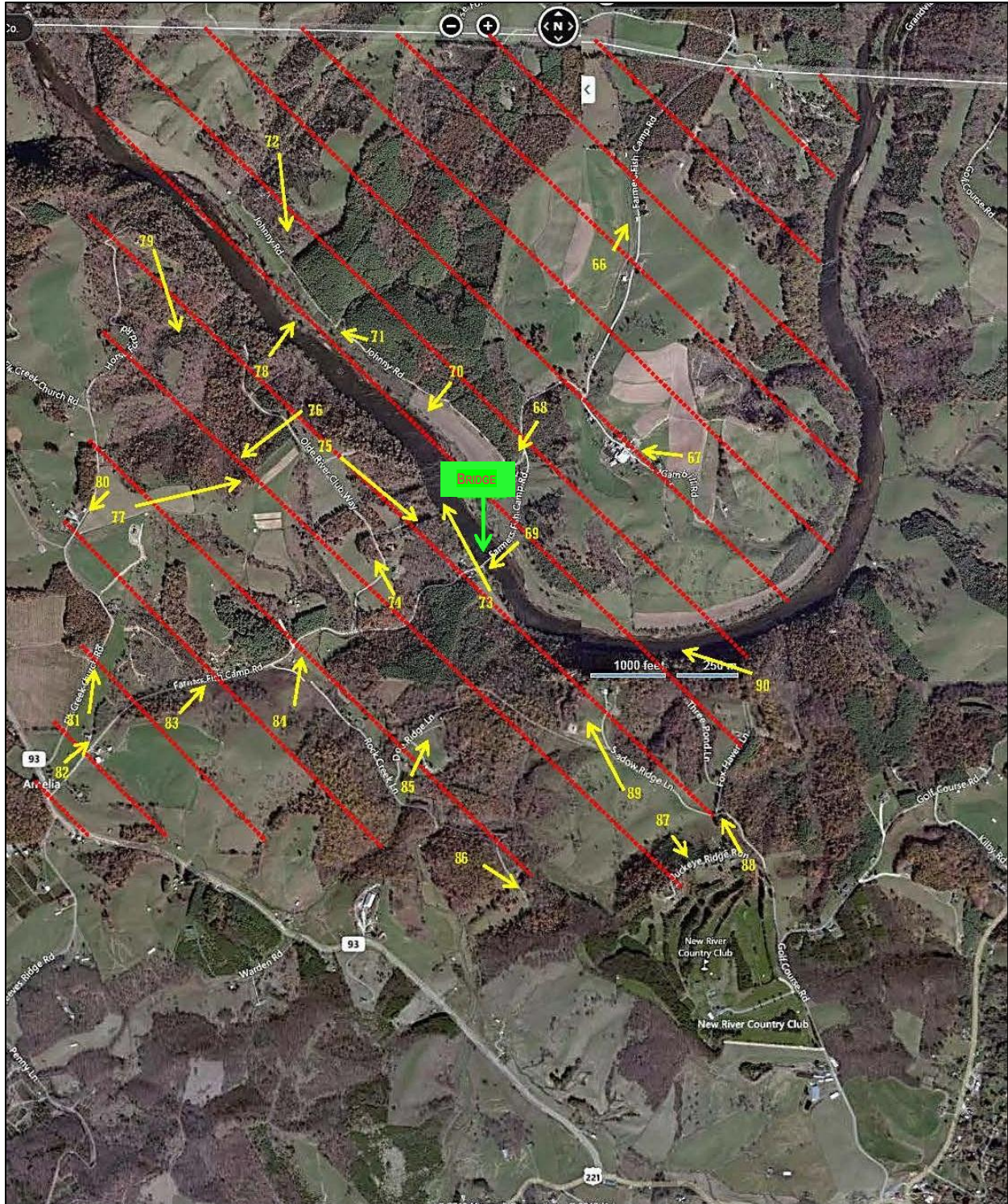


Figure 65: Location of potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River rural historic district denoted by diagonal red lines with bridge crossing at center; locations from which photographs were taken and arrows indicating direction of view marked in yellow



Figure 66: View within potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River rural historic district with Johnsie Gambill McIntyre (late 1940s) house at center



Figure 67: View within potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River rural historic district of modern Tam Gambill house and outbuildings



Figure 68: View within potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River rural historic district of Gambill Family Farm from junction of Farmers Fish Camp Road and Johnny Road



Figure 69: View within potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River rural historic district of pilings of Bridge 265, Farmers Fish Camp at right, Muncy Steadham House at center left, and later houses at far left



Figure 70: View within potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River rural historic district of Gambill Family Farm pastures, New River, and modern houses off of new Olde River Club Way on ridge



Figure 71: View within potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River rural historic district from Johnny Road of remnants of outbuildings with river in distance



Figure 72: View within potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River rural historic district from site of clear cutting north of Johnny Road and river



Figure 73: View within potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River rural historic district of Farmers Fish Camp, New River, and clear cutting north of Johnny Road at right



Figure 74: View within potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River rural historic district of modern houses on Olde River Club Way



Figure 75: View within potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River rural historic district from construction site on Olde River Club Way toward modern house at end of Shadow Ridge Lane



Figure 76: View within potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River rural historic district from construction site on Olde River Club Way toward modern house on rise east of Horse Ford Road



Figure 77: View within potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River rural historic district from modern house on rise east of Horse Ford Road toward construction site on Olde River Club Way



Figure 78: View within potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River rural historic district toward clear cutting on north side of river and silo at site of no-longer-standing John Robert Edwards House

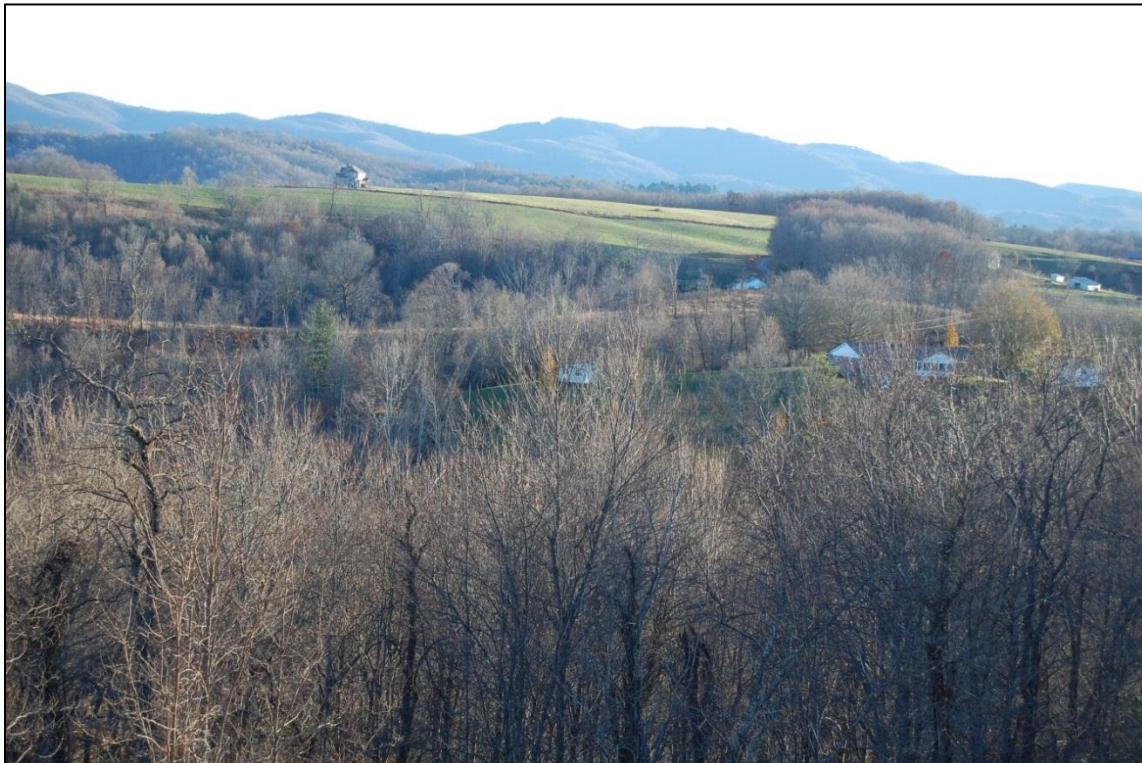


Figure 79: View within potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River rural historic district from north end of Horse Ford Road toward modern house on rise east of Horse Ford Road



Figure 80: View within potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River rural historic district of house and garages on west side of Horse Ford Road



Figure 81: View within potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River rural historic district of trailer and outbuildings on west side of Horse Ford Road near NC 93



Figure 82: View within potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River rural historic district from southern end of Farmers Fish Camp Road with Oscar Gambill, Sr. House (ca. 1915) and barns at right



Figure 83: View within potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River rural historic district of outbuildings and house on west side of Farmers Fish Camp Road



Figure 84: View within potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River rural historic district of Joines House (ca. 1900-1910), outbuilding, and trailer on west side of Farmers Fish Camp Road



Figure 85: View within potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River rural historic district of modern house on new Doe Ridge Lane



Figure 86: View within potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River rural historic district of modern house near end of new Rock Creek Lane



Figure 87: View within potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River rural historic district of modern house on south side of Buckeye Ridge Road with New River Country Club to rear



Figure 88: View within potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River rural historic district of entrance to modern Shadow Ridge Lane and planned development



Figure 89: View within potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River rural historic district toward modern house at end of Shadow Ridge Lane and New River



Figure 90: View within potential Farmers Fish Camp Road/New River rural historic district from end of Fox Haven Lane with Farmers Fish Camp and New River at center and modern houses on Olde River Club Way on ridge above river

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