

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

August 20, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: Kate Husband
Office of Human Environment
NCDOT Division of Highways

FROM: Renee Gledhill-Earley *Renee Gledhill-Earley*
Environmental Review Coordinator

SUBJECT: Replace Bridge 436 on SR 1943 over East Prong Roaring River, PA 15-02-0023,
Wilkes County, ER 15-1901

Thank you for your memorandum of August 12, 2015, transmitting the Historic Structures Survey Report for the above-referenced undertaking. We have reviewed the report and **concur that neither the William B. Blackburn House (WK0412) nor the Brewer Mill site and Miller's House (WK0413) is eligible** for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

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 environmental.review@ncdcr.gov. In all future communication concerning this project, please cite the above referenced tracking number.

cc: Mary Pope Furr, NCDOT

mfurr@ncdot.gov

**HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY REPORT
Intensive Evaluation**

**Replace Bridge No. 436 on SR 1943 over East Prong Roaring River
Wilkes County
North Carolina Department of Transportation
TIP No. B-5525
WBS No. 55025.1.1**

**Prepared for:
Human Environment Section
North Carolina Department of Transportation
1598 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1598**

**Prepared by:
Acme Preservation Services, LLC
825C Merrimon Avenue, #345
Asheville, NC 28804
828-281-3852**

July 2015

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July 2015

Clay Griffith, Principal Investigator
Acme Preservation Services, LLC

Date

Mary Pope Furr, Supervisor
Historic Architecture Section
North Carolina Department of Transportation

Date

Replace Bridge No. 436 on SR 1943 over East Prong Roaring River, Wilkes County
North Carolina Department of Transportation
TIP No. B-5525 | WBS No. 55025.1.1

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes to replace Bridge No. 436 on SR 1943 (Brewer Mill Road) over East Prong Roaring River in Wilkes County. The project area is located in the northeastern section of the county near the community of Traphill. Built in 1964, Bridge No. 436 carries two lanes of traffic on a two-span steel stringer substructure that is supported by wood pilings on concrete footings. The bridge is rated as structurally deficient by NCDOT’s Bridge Maintenance Unit. The Area of Potential Effects (APE) for the proposed project is delineated as 300 feet from either end of the bridge and 75 feet on either side of the center line.

NCDOT contracted with Acme Preservation Services, LLC (APS) in April 2015 to complete an intensive historic resources evaluation of two properties adjacent to the bridge location: 394 Brewer Mill Road [PIN 3994-50-6621] and 447 Brewer Mill Road [PIN 3994-50-5902]. Architectural historian Clay Griffith conducted the fieldwork on June 5, 2015, photographing and mapping the property, and authored the report. Primary source investigation included research at the Wilkes County Courthouse, Wilkes County Public Library, and Pack Memorial Library in Asheville. The HPO’s Wilkes County survey files at the Western Office of Archives and History in Asheville provided some architectural context, but the county has not been comprehensively surveyed outside the towns of Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro. The Traphill Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980.

After an intensive evaluation following the National Register of Historic Places criteria for eligibility, the two properties—the William B. Blackburn House (WK0412) and Brewer Mill site and Miller’s House (WK0413)—were determined not to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under any criteria. The Blackburn House is a fairly common two-story three-bay frame house type that has been altered with the installation of vinyl siding and replacement windows. The Brewer Mill site contains few visible remnants of the saw mill and grist mill that stood on either side of the river before they were destroyed in the 1990s. The Miller’s House is an altered one-story side-gable frame dwelling. Neither property possesses the requisite significance or retains sufficient historic integrity to be eligible for the National Register.

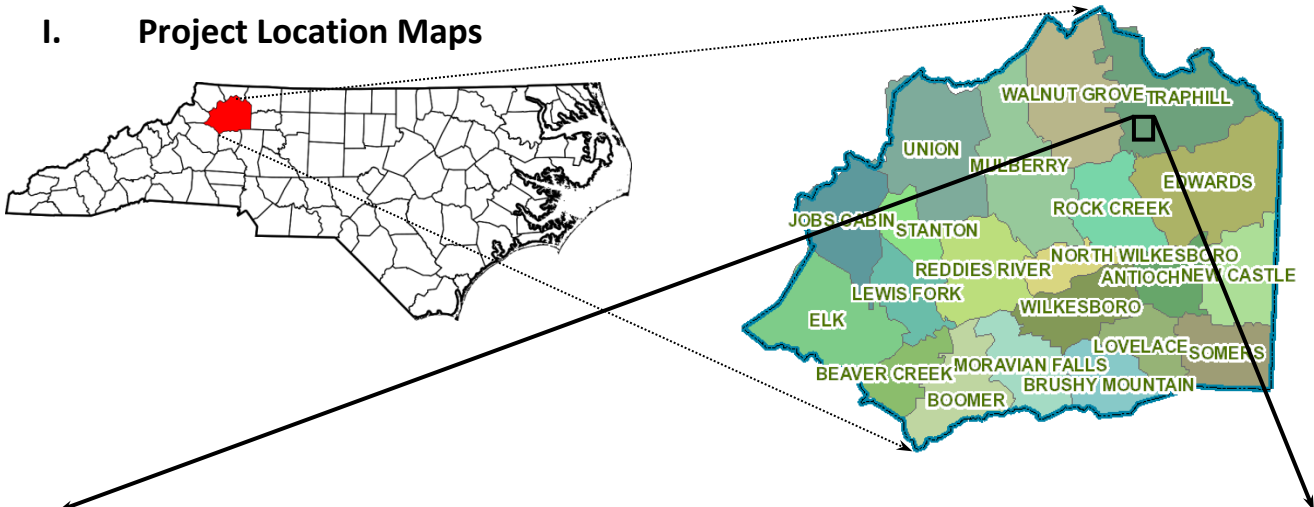
SSN	Property Name	Address	PIN	Eligibility Determination	Criteria
WK0412	William B. Blackburn House	394 Brewer Mill Road	3994-50-6621	Not Eligible	A, B, C, D
WK0413	Brewer Mill site and Miller’s House	447 Brewer Mill Road	3994-50-5902	Not Eligible	A, B, C, D

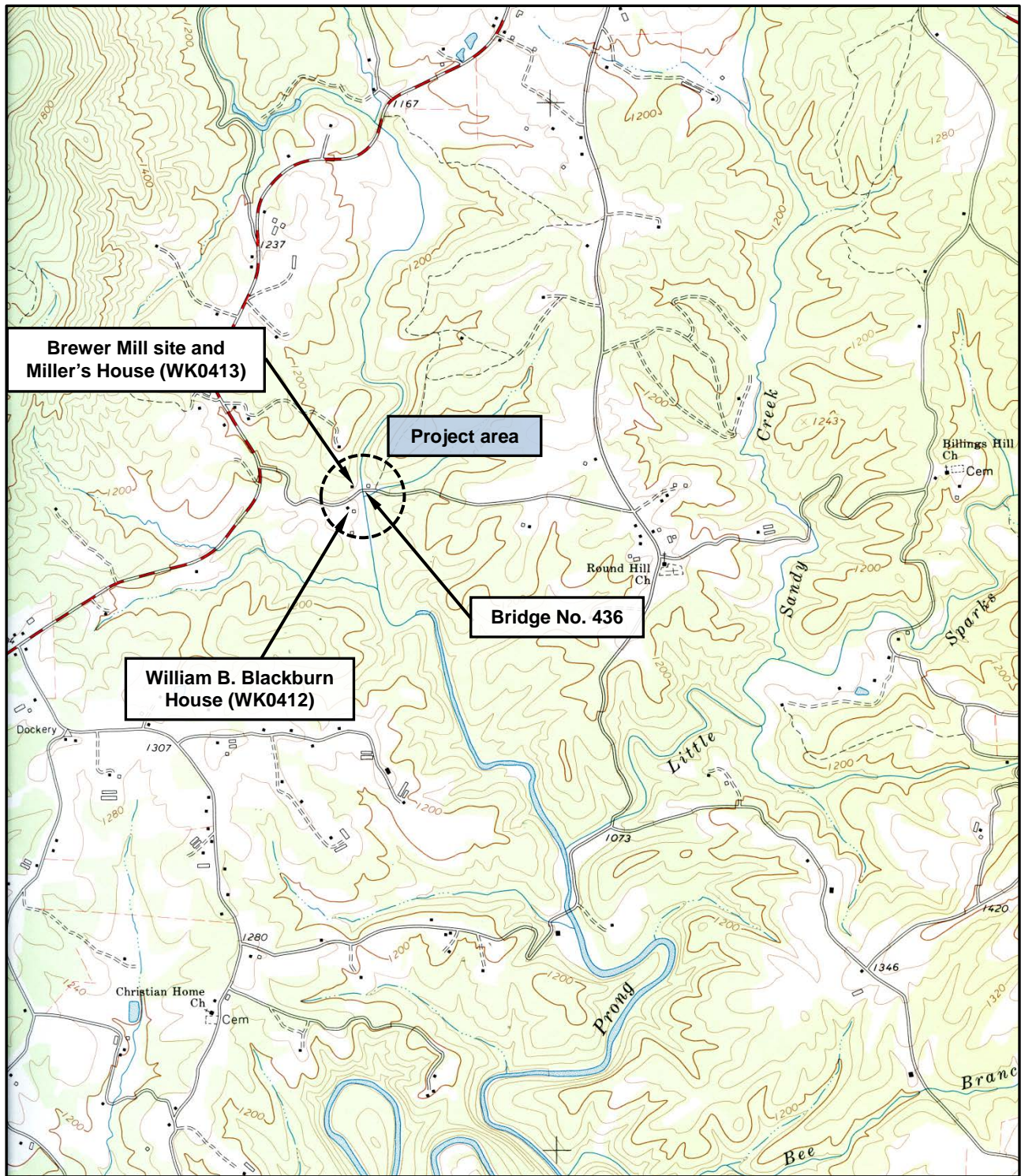
APS conducted the survey and prepared this report in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Technical Advisory T 6640.8A (Guidance for Preparing and Processing Environmental and Section 4(f) Documents); the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological and Historic Preservation (48 FR 44716); 36 CFR Part 60; 36 CFR Part 800; and the NCDOT document entitled *Historic Architectural Resources: Survey Procedures and Report Guidelines* (2003). This property evaluation meets the guidelines of NCDOT and the National Park Service.

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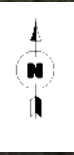
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I. Project Location Maps





Location Map – Traphill, NC USGS topographic quadrangle map (1968)



East Prong

Roaring River Vineyards

Brewer's Mill site

Miller's House

Area of Potential Effects (approximate limits)

1943

1943

Brewer Mill Rd

Bridge No. 436

Blackburn House

East Prong Roaring River

Roaring River Preserve

Brewer Mill Estates

Google

Bridge No. 436 on SR 1943 (Brewer's Mill Road) over East Prong Roaring River, Wilkes County, TIP No. B-5525 Area of Potential Effects Map



II. Introduction

The project area is located in the northeastern section of Wilkes County, approximately three miles southwest of the Traphill community. Bridge No. 436 is located on Brewer Mill Road (SR 1943) approximately 0.4 mile east of its intersection with Traphill Road (SR 1002). The Traphill branch of the Wilkes County Public Library stands at the intersection of Traphill Road and Brewer Mill Road. The bridge is located amidst rolling, wooded topography with Greenstreets Mountain located to the west of Traphill Road. Stone Mountain State Park is located approximately four miles north of the bridge location. The general project area is characterized by forested hillsides interspersed with cleared agricultural land.

The Area of Potential Effects (APE) for the proposed bridge replacement project is delineated as 300 feet from either end of the bridge and 75 feet to either side of the center line of the road. The area to the north of the bridge, containing multiple parcels, is held by the owners of Roaring River Vineyards, a vineyard, guest retreat, and event space founded in 2001. On the south side of Brewer Mill Road, the majority of land is platted for undeveloped residential subdivisions: Brewer Mill Estates and Roaring River Preserve. A small 1.7-acre tract containing the William B. Blackburn House (WK0412) is located immediately southwest of the bridge location.



Bridge No. 436, view to east along Brewer Mill Road (SR 1943)



Bridge No. 436, oblique view to northwest



Bridge No. 436, view to west along Brewer Mill Road (SR 1943)



Wine Tasting Room at Roaring River Vineyard, view to northeast from Bridge No. 436

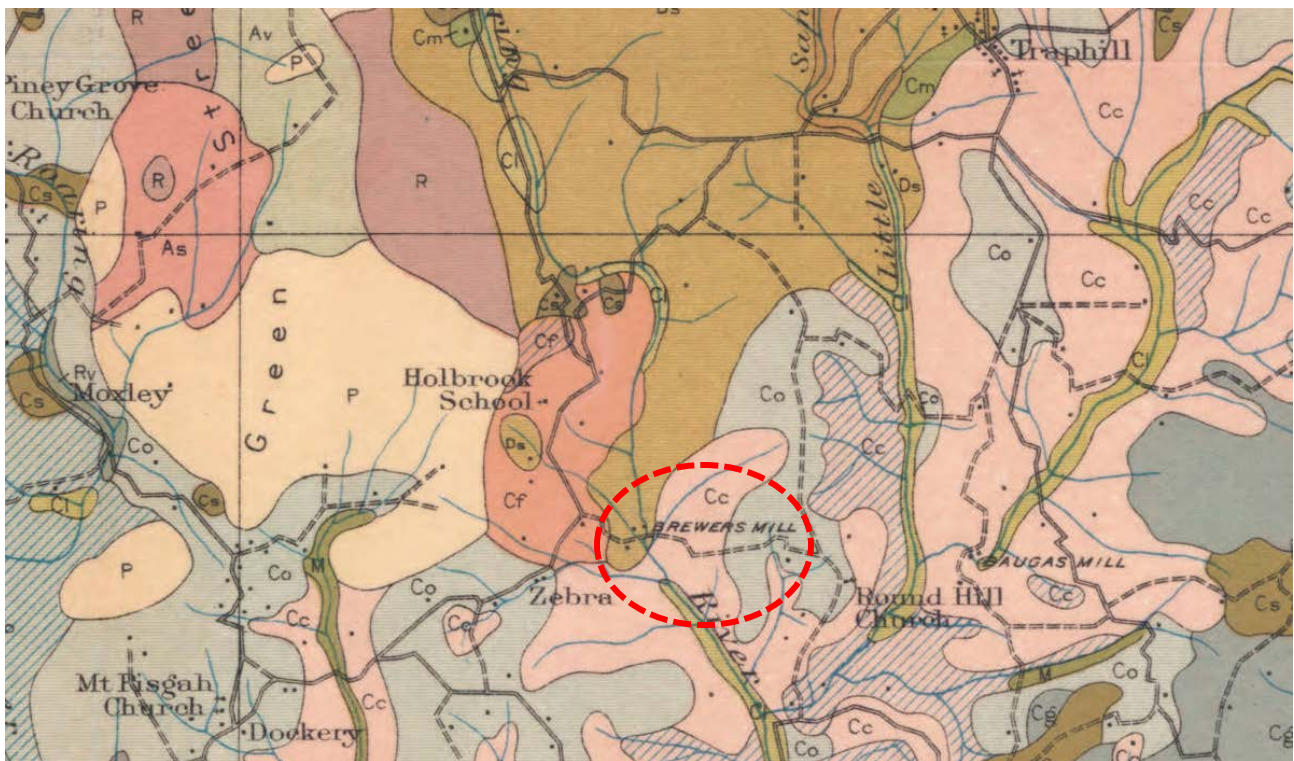


View to east along Brewer Mill Road (SR 1943) from east end of Bridge No. 436

III. Methodology

The field survey was conducted on June 5, 2015, and both properties to be evaluated within the APE were photographed and recorded. Basic research on the project area was conducted by reviewing online Wilkes County GIS records and consulting with the Register of Deeds office, the Wilkes County Public Library in North Wilkesboro, and at Pack Memorial Library in Asheville. Property owners were not present during the fieldwork and close inspection of the miller's house and Brewer Mill ruins was prohibited. The project area is not covered by Sanborn maps, but it is shown on USGS topographic quadrangle maps dating back to 1891.

Wilkes County has not been comprehensively surveyed for historic architectural resources, but the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office's (HPO) survey files at the Western Office of Archives and History in Asheville were searched to provide some architectural context. A review of the HPOWEB GIS Service (<http://gis.ncdcr.gov/hpoweb>) revealed few recorded properties in the northeastern portion of the county. The Traphill Historic District (NR, 1980) and the Holbrook Farm Complex (NR, 1978) are both listed in the National Register of Historic Places and are located within a few miles of the subject project. The other recorded properties in the general vicinity are bridges. In addition to the National Register nomination for the Traphill Historic District, which was consulted for background information and historical context, the supplementary documentation prepared by NCDOT in 2011 for the replacement of Bridge No. 5 on SR 2418 (Mitchell Mill Road) over Little Hunting Creek, TIP No. B-4846, Wilkes County, was also reviewed for its historical context about mills in the area.



Detail of Soil Map, North Carolina, Wilkes County Sheet (1918)

V. Historical Background

Wilkes County is one of only four of North Carolina's 100 counties not to have been systematically surveyed for historic architectural resources. The two principal towns—Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro—were surveyed in 1979-1981, but the county's rural historic resources are largely undocumented. Architectural historian Laura A. W. Phillips conducted the municipal surveys and produced National Register nominations for the Downtown Main Street Historic District in North Wilkesboro in 2003 and the Downtown Wilkesboro Historic District in 2009. In addition to the two downtown historic districts, twenty-one properties in Wilkes County are listed in the National Register. Of these, twelve are individual resources in Wilkesboro and three are individual resources in North Wilkesboro. The remaining six National Register-listed properties are located out in the county, including the Holbrook Farm Complex listed in 1978 and located on the East Prong Roaring River to the west of Traphill. A small Traphill Historic District encompassing resources primarily dating from the mid- and late-nineteenth century was listed in 1980.

Located at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains in northeastern Wilkes County, the crossroads community of Traphill derives its name from the rail-pen turkey traps of early settler and hunter William Blackburn, who came to the area from Virginia in the 1770s. As settlement increased in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, Traphill (originally written as "Trap Hill" and formalized as "Traphill" in 1892) developed into a prominent farming and trading center. A post office was established in 1837, and following the Civil War Traphill had the second largest population in Wilkes County outside of Wilkesboro, the county seat. The establishment of the Trap Hill Academy in the 1870s earned the community a reputation as a regional educational center that continued through the 1890s with the formation of Fairview College and the Baptist-affiliated Traphill Institute. The schools remained influential into the early twentieth century, but changing economics and new developments in public school education brought about a steady decline in Traphill's fortunes.¹

Review of the HPO survey files indicate only a small number of recorded properties beyond those listed in the National Register. Twelve properties have been approved for the State Study List and an additional ten properties have been Determined Eligible for the National Register. The recorded properties represent a cross-section of Wilkes County architecture including a post office, commercial buildings, churches, schools, mills, highway bridges, houses, and farms. While there is little documented evidence of Wilkes County's historic rural resources, general observations made during travel in the county suggest that a range of domestic, commercial, and agricultural buildings dating from the nineteenth century to the present day still survive. There are obvious signs of the large poultry growing operations that have become an important part of the local economy since the mid-twentieth century, but mostly a proliferation of Ranch houses, manufactured homes, and mobile home trailers challenge the historic visual character of the countryside.

¹ Claudia Roberts, "Traphill Historic District" National Register Nomination (1980). Catherine W. Bishir, Michael T. Southern, and Jennifer F. Martin, *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 132.

IV. William B. Blackburn House (WK 412)

Property Name	Address	PIN	Date of Construction	NR Eligibility
William B. Blackburn House (WK0412)	394 Brewer Mill Road, Traphill vic.	3994-50-6621	ca. 1890s	Not eligible (A, B, C, D)



William B. Blackburn House (WK 412), 394 Brewer Mill Road, façade, view to south

Description

Situated on a slight rise overlooking Brewer Mill Road to the north, the William B. Blackburn House is a two-story, three-bay frame house featuring a side-gable roof covered with metal shingles, a stuccoed foundation, exterior brick end chimneys, a two-story rear ell, and an enclosed one-story shed-roof porch on the east side of the ell. A two-story front-gable porch shelters the center bay of the façade and is supported by square wood posts on the first story and turned wood posts on the second story. A replacement thin metal balustrade has been added to the second story of the porch. A single-leaf wood door flanked by sidelights opens onto the second story of the porch. The house has been clad with vinyl siding and the windows are replacement one-over-one sash. A large picture window has been installed on the east side of the first story façade. The single-shouldered brick chimney on the east elevation appears to have been rebuilt at some point as the bricks and mortar joints appear to be considerably newer than those on the west elevation and rear ell. The interior of the house was not available for inspection.



William B. Blackburn House, facade, oblique view to southeast



William B. Blackburn House, west elevation, view to southeast



William B. Blackburn House, oblique rear view to northwest

History

The origins of the house are unclear, but it is attributed to William B. Blackburn, descendant of the pioneer William Blackburn (1764-1850) whose traps were recognized in the name "Traphill." A photograph of the house appears in the genealogical publication *The Heritage of Wilkes County*, Vol. 1 (1982), and according to the caption, it is described as the William B. Blackburn House "possibly" dating from "the late 1800s."² According to tax records the house was built in 1873. While it may have been erected as early as the 1870s, it seems more likely that it dates from the latter part of the nineteenth century or the turn of the twentieth century, which makes its association with William B. Blackburn less certain. No structures appear in this general location on the 1891 Wilkesboro USGS topographic quadrangle map.

A search of deeds for the property proved inconclusive prior to the mid-twentieth century, but the property appears to have descended through the family of James Oliver Brewer (1864-1944). The house is currently owned by Judith Ann Gambill Durham, who received an original seven-acre tract containing the house, mill site, and miller's house from her parents, William C. (Cleave) and Anna Mae Gambill. Ms. Durham sold the four-acre parcel on the north side of the road to the owners of Roaring River Vineyards in 2013. The Gambills apparently bought the house and mill in 1943, and Cleave Gambill (1913-1989) operated Brewer's Mill from that time until it

² Mrs. W. O. Absher, ed., *The Heritage of Wilkes County*, 1982 (N. Wilkesboro, NC: Wilkes County Genealogical Society, Inc., 1982), 12-13.

closed in the 1950s. The land owned by the Gambills was separated from several tracts totaling more than 300 acres that were sold by J. O. Brewer's heirs. The eldest son of Felix and Sarah Brewer, J. O. Brewer is listed as a farmer and merchant in census records but is not recorded as a miller.³



William B. Blackburn House. *The Heritage of Wilkes County*, Vol. 1 (1982), page 13.

While the house appears more likely to date from the late nineteenth or turn of the twentieth century, it seems probable that the dwelling may have been built for some member of the Brewer family. The 1910 census records that J. O. and Ellen Brewer lived on the Wilkesboro Road in Traphill township. Brewer's occupation was given as merchant and farmer and he owned a dry goods store. The next household enumerated in the census was that of John S. Brooks, who was a miller.⁴

³ Lankford.

⁴ *Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910: Traphill township, Wilkes County, North Carolina, Population Schedule*, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (Accessed online at <http://www.ancestry.com>; July 2015.)

Despite the limited number of previously surveyed houses from the late nineteenth century, a small selection of comparable recorded resources provides some context for understanding and evaluating the William B. Blackburn House (WK0412). In reviewing other previously recorded frame dwellings in Wilkes County from the same period, it is apparent that the two-story variant of center-hall one-room deep houses, commonly referred to as “I-houses,” was the prevalent form and that the majority of houses have been substantially altered, most often with the addition of vinyl siding.

The Blackburn House is a two-story single-pile frame dwelling with a three-bay façade, exterior brick end chimneys, and a two-story rear ell. Although it may date from as early as the 1870s, the house employs a common form that enjoyed popularity through the late nineteenth century and the turn of the twentieth century. The Blackburn House displays a two-story front-gable porch that is supported by square wooden posts on the first story and turned wooden posts on the second story. The porch exhibits a four-light window in the gable end and the roof is covered with metal shingles, but any other material or decorative details are obscured by later vinyl cladding.



Johnson House (WK0392), 113 S. Windy Gap Road, ca. 1900

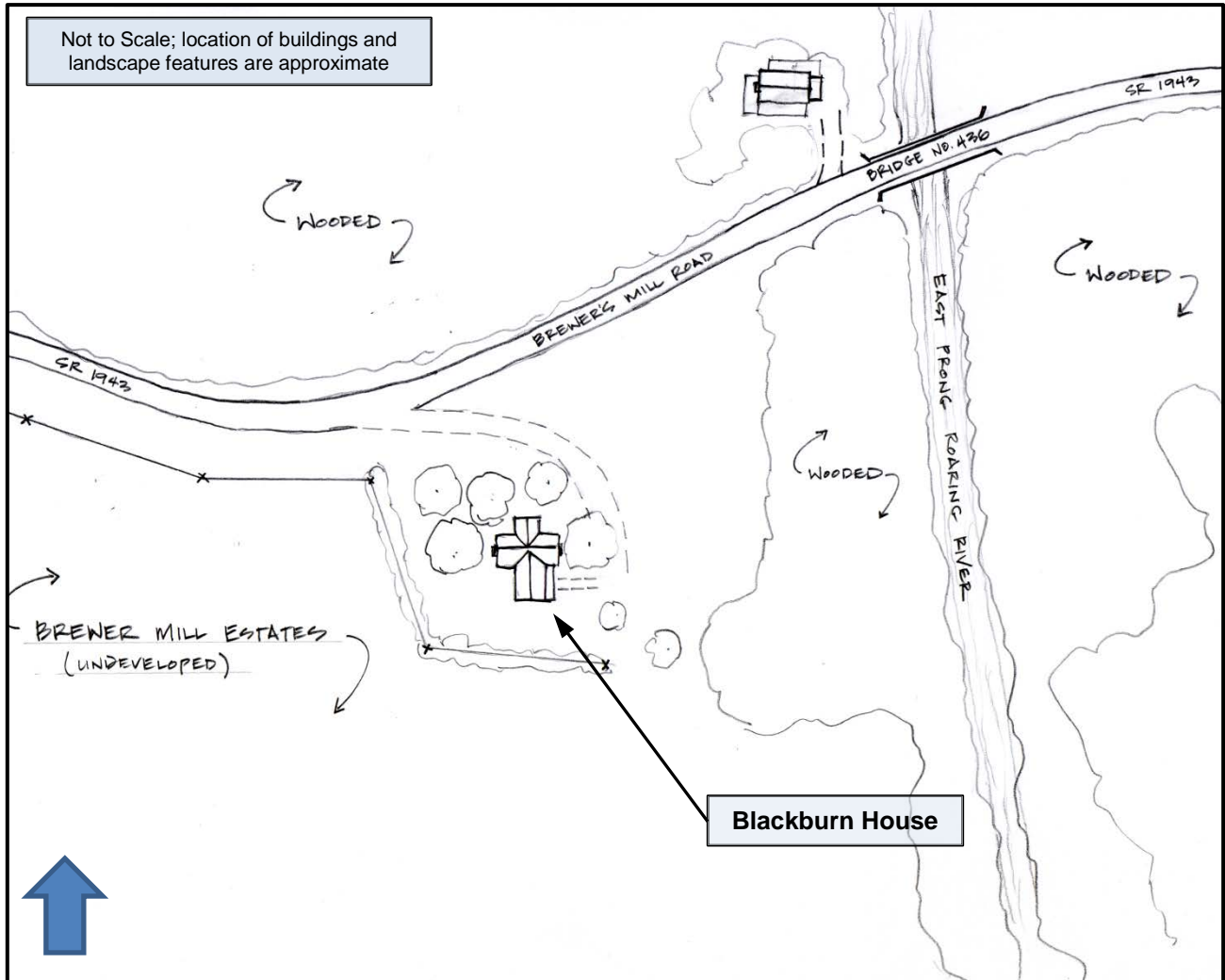
An informal and cursory review of the general project area made during the fieldwork suggests that the predominant mode of domestic architecture among surviving residences favored hip-roof and Craftsman-influenced dwellings. Several one-and-a-half-story side-gable houses with large front dormers and engaged full-width porches were observed along the road between North Wilkesboro and Traphill. Another common house form observed more frequently to the south of the project area is represented by the Johnson House (WK0392) at 113 South Windy Gap Road in the southeast portion of the county. The ca. 1900 Johnson House is a good, intact example of a

one-story frame house with a triple-A roof and modest Late Victorian embellishment. The basic form gained popularity in the late nineteenth century with the increased availability of factory-produced lumber and millwork. Center-hall, one-room-deep houses like the Johnson House were constructed throughout North Carolina in either one-or two-story variants and typically include a kitchen ell at the rear. Ornamental trim was typically applied to the most visible and easily adapted elements such as porches, window and door surrounds, eaves, and gable ends. In the case of the Johnson House, the decorative front gable is enlivened by patterned shingles and the porch features attractive turned posts and cut-out brackets.⁵

Several good examples of mid-to-late nineteenth century domestic architecture are located nearer to the community of Traphill. The Holbrook Farm Complex, placed on the National Register in 1978, includes the early Federal-style two-story side-gable house dating from 1826. Originally built by the Spicer family, Joseph Samuel Holbrook purchased the property in the 1870s and expanded it to include 1,000 acres and twenty-nine outbuildings. In Traphill the Joseph Bryan House was erected around 1847 and features a two-story shed-roof porch extending the full width of the façade. The White-Hinson House, built in the early 1880s, is a two-story side-gable frame residence with exterior stone chimneys, decorative bargeboards, and an attached one-story front-gable entry porch. The ca. 1905 C. D. Holbrook House presents a one-and-a-half-story form topped by a tall hip roof with gabled dormers. It is enlivened with cornice returns, diamond-paned windows, and a simple frieze board.⁶

⁵ Clay Griffith, "Historic Architectural Resources Survey Report, Intensive Evaluation: Johnson House and Store, Replace Bridge No. 732 on SR 2418 over Clercy Branch, Wilkes County, WBS No. 17BP.11.R.19," Report for North Carolina Department of Transportation, Raleigh, NC, February 2012. Catherine W. Bishir, *North Carolina Architecture* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 287-295.

⁶ Greer Suttlemyre, Michael Southern, and Jerry Cross, "Holbrook Farm Complete" National Register Nomination (1978) and Roberts.



Site plan – William B. Blackburn House, 394 Brewer Mill Road, Traphill vic.

Evaluation

For purposes of compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, the William B. House (WK0412) is **not eligible** for the National Register of Historic Places. The property retains integrity of location, design, and feeling, but its integrity of setting, materials, workmanship, and association have been compromised by later material alterations to the house and the loss of associated buildings and farmland.

The William B. Blackburn House is **not eligible** for the National Register under Criterion A (event). *To be eligible under Criterion A, a property must retain integrity and must be associated with a specific event marking an important moment in American pre-history or history or a pattern of events or historic trend that made a significant contribution to the development of a community, a state, or the nation. Furthermore, a property must have existed at the time and be documented to be associated with the events. Finally, a property's specific association must be important as well.* The Blackburn House does not possess significance related to a specific event or historic trend. The property was associated with the neighboring Brewer's Mill and store through the twentieth century, and it was likely part of a modest farmstead. With the loss of the mill, store, and farmland, the property no longer possesses sufficient integrity to be potentially eligible in the areas of commerce, industry, or agriculture.

The William B. Blackburn House is **not eligible** for the National Register under Criterion B (person). *For a property to be eligible for significance under Criterion B, it must retain integrity and 1) be associated with the lives of persons significant in our past, i.e. individuals whose activities are demonstrably important within a local, state or national historic context; 2) be normally associated with a person's productive life, reflecting the time period when he/she achieved significance, and 3) should be compared to other associated properties to identify those that best represent the person's historic contributions. Furthermore, a property is not eligible if its only justification for significance is that it was owned or used by a person who is or was a member of an identifiable profession, class, or social or ethnic group.* The property does not have a clear association, as is commonly assumed, with the Blackburn family that helped settle the Traphill area in the 1800s. The house has an uncertain association with the Brewer family, who were closely identified with the neighboring mill and store. It was later owned by Cleave Gambill, who also acquired and operated the mill. None of the associated property owners attained the level of prominence and significance required for National Register listing under Criterion B.

The William B. Blackburn House is **not eligible** for the National Register under Criterion C (design/construction). *For a property to be eligible under this criterion, it must retain integrity and either 1) embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; 2) represent the work of a master; 3) possess high artistic value; or 4) represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.* The Blackburn House is a plain, frame dwelling that dates from the late nineteenth or turn of the twentieth century. The house is a good, if undistinguished, example of two-story, three-bay, single-pile frame dwellings that were common throughout the late nineteenth century. The house features a notable two-story front-gable porch, but has been altered with vinyl siding and replacement windows. The Blackburn House is a common type that retains its basic form and massing, but alterations have obscured or replaced any modest decoration the structure may have once displayed. The two-

story three-bay house type with a side gable roof was one of the most popular forms of late-nineteenth and early twentieth century rural houses, and the Blackburn House appears to lack the requisite significance and distinguishing characteristics to be eligible for the National Register under Criterion C for its architecture.

The William B. Blackburn House is **not eligible** for the National Register under Criterion D (potential to yield information). *For a property to be eligible under Criterion D, it must meet two requirements: 1) the property must have, or have had, information to contribute to our understanding of human history or pre-history, and 2) the information must be considered important.* The late-nineteenth-century frame dwelling and house site are unlikely to contribute significant information pertaining to building technology or historical documentation not otherwise accessible from other extant resources and written records.

V. Brewer's Mill site and Miller's House (WK 413)

Property Name	Address	PIN	Date of Construction	NR Eligibility
Brewer's Mill site and Miller's House (WK0413)	447 Brewer Mill Road, Traphill vic.	3994-50-5902	ca. 1918	Not eligible (A, B, C, D)



Brewer's Mill site (WK 413), 447 Brewer Mill Road, mill ruins along East Fork Roaring River, view to north

Description

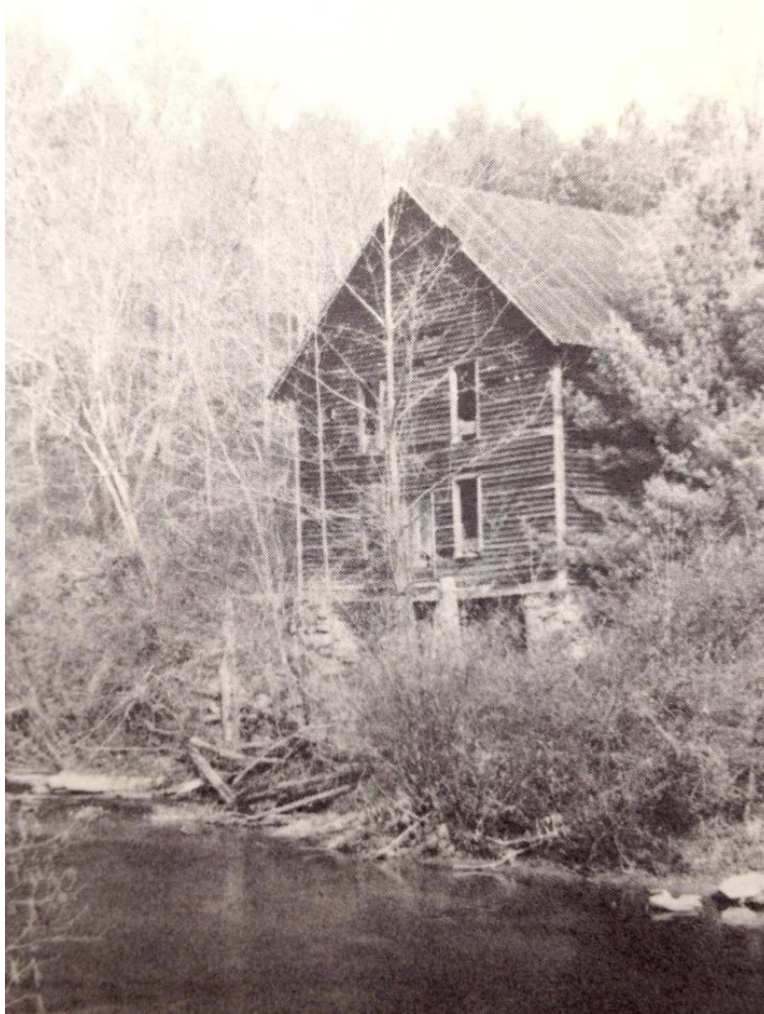
Remnants of the Brewer Mill site are visible on both sides of East Prong Roaring River just north of Bridge No. 436. The main foundation piers occupy the west bank of the river. Constructed of stacked stone, seven of the original eight tall piers remain standing and a few pieces of the metal gears and axles that powered the mill are located among the ruins. Four smaller stone piers stand to the north on an exposed rock bank of the river. On the east side of the river, stacked-stone walls extend to the water's edge and appear to have been the foundations of another structure associated with the mill. Two recent buildings and a third one under construction are located on the east side of the river as part of Roaring River Vineyards. The Lodgings and The Gathering Place were erected in the early 2000s for guest accommodations and an event space. A large two-story tasting room for vineyard is currently under construction immediately north of the bridge.



Brewer's Mill site, view to northwest



Brewer's Mill site, foundations, view to north



Brewer's Mill. *The Heritage of Wilkes County*, Vol. 1 (1982), p. 13.

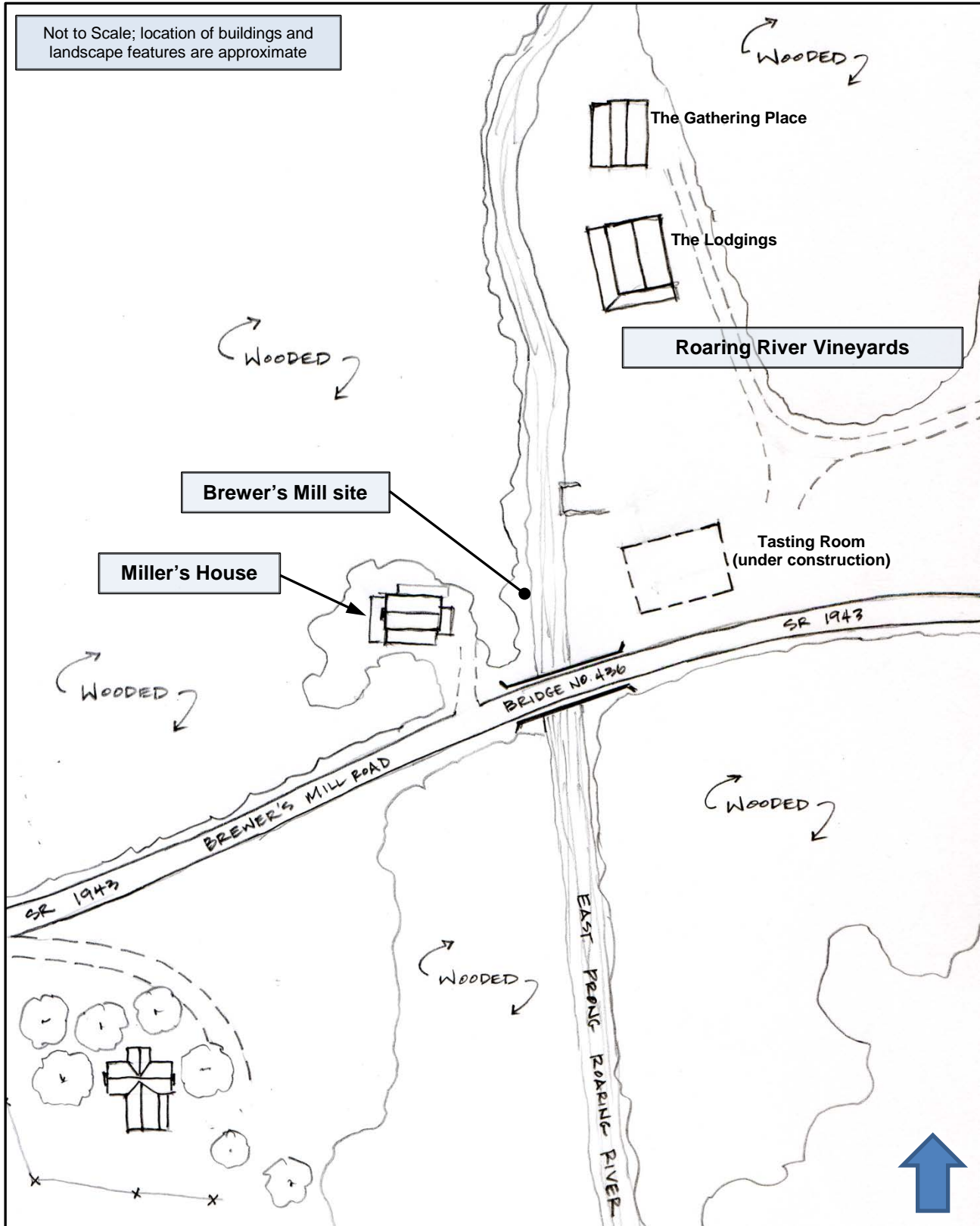
The Miller's House located at 447 Brewer Mill Road stands west of the mill site on the north side of the road. Situated back in the trees on a heavily wooded site, the one-story frame dwelling is typically of late-nineteenth and early twentieth century vernacular houses with a side-gable roof, exterior end chimney, and weatherboard siding. The chimney is constructed of stone with a brick stack rising above the metal-clad roof. A two-story shed-roof addition projects from the east elevation, with its lower story at the foundation level of the main house. It appears that the façade of the house is oriented to the north, away from the road, and a shed-roof extension carries across the rear (south) elevation of the house. Tall wood posts support the rear extension. The windows are typically replacement one-over-one double-hung sash with horizontal muntins from the mid-twentieth century. An early six-light wood casement window is located in the east gable end. An elevated wood deck is attached to the north and west elevations of the house.



Miller's House, 447 Brewer Mill Road, oblique view to northwest



Miller's House, 447 Brewer Mill Road, view to north



Site plan – Brewer's Mill site and Miller's House, 447 Brewer Mill Road, Traphill vic.

History

Like the Blackburn House located across the road, the origins of Brewer's Mill and the miller's house are unclear. It is reported that the mill was built in 1910s, around the time as another mill was erected for Winfrey Holbrook. A store building was also associated with the Brewer family and stood in the general vicinity. It was torn down by a later owner.⁷ James O. Brewer owned and operated the store, which is mentioned in a newspaper article from 1907. The article notes that "an important trial was heard at Brewers store, near Traphill" and that "about one hundred people attended the trial."⁸

A search of deeds for the property proved inconclusive prior to the mid-twentieth century, but the property appears to have descended through the family of James Oliver Brewer (1864-1944). The mill site and miller's house are currently owned by Thomas and Josephine Silvey, owners of Roaring River Vineyards, who purchased the four-acre tract from Judith Ann Gambill Durham in 2013. Ms. Durham received an original seven-acre tract containing the house, mill site, and miller's house from her parents, William C. (Cleave) and Anna Mae Gambill. The Gambills apparently bought the house and mill in 1943, and Cleave Gambill (1913-1989) operated Brewer's Mill from that time until it closed in the 1950s. The land owned by the Gambills was separated from several tracts totaling more than 300 acres that were sold by J. O. Brewer's heirs. The eldest son of Felix and Sarah Brewer, J. O. Brewer is listed as a farmer and merchant in census records but is not recorded as a miller. The 1910 census records that J. O. and Ellen Brewer lived on the Wilkesboro Road in Traphill township, and that he owned a dry goods store. The next household enumerated in the census was that of John S. Brooks, who was a miller.⁹

In 1990, Grant Lyon, who ran the nearby Holbrook Mill in the early 1930s, recalled that Brewer's Mill was erected for J. O. Brewer in the early twentieth century. It was a big mill capable of grinding both corn and wheat. There was also a water-powered sawmill at the same site. Anna Mae Gambill remembers tearing down the old store building, fearing it would start a fire, after her husband bought the mill in the 1940s. The Brewer's Mill building remained standing until the 1990s, at which time the severely deteriorated building was demolished.¹⁰

Brewer's Mill was one of numerous mills located throughout Wilkes County, which benefitted from an abundance of bold creeks and streams. As many as twenty-five grist mills operated during the 1910s and 1920s, grinding corn and flour for local farm families. Only the foundations of Brewer's Mill remain along the banks of East Prong Roaring River. The Miller's House stands a short distance west of the mill site and provided lodging for the miller in the early years of the mill. Census and deed records suggest that the Brewer family owned the mill, but did not directly operate it. They may have employed a miller to operate the mill, or leased it to a miller, who resided in the dwelling.

⁷ Lankford.

⁸ *The North Wilkesboro Hustler*, January 18, 1907.

⁹ Lankford. 1910 Census.

¹⁰ Lankford.

Although Brewer's Mill no longer stands, a good number of mill structures remain in Wilkes County, including two in close proximity to the Brewer's Mill site and the Traphill community. The Traphill Mill (WK0317) on Sandy Creek may have been built in the mid-1800s, but the earliest records indicate that it was operated by Joseph Samuel and Harden S. Holbrook in the 1880s and 1890s. The large frame mill building sits on a stone foundation. A small dam and reservoir fed a wooden millrace that supplied water to drive the overshot wheel. The mill operated until the mid-1950s and sat empty for many years before rehabilitation work began that transformed the structure into the Old Traphill Mill Inn & Resort at 452 Traphill Mill Road.¹¹

Winfrey Holbrook built a grist mill on East Prong Roaring River around 1918. The structure was built by Major Lyon. It was used primarily for grinding corn. Major Lyon's grandson, Grant Lyon, ran the mill for Holbrook in the early 1930s, and he was succeeded by Roscoe Royal, who operated the mill until the mid-1930s, when Holbrook died.¹²

Mathis Mill (WK0203) on Grey's Creek in the eastern part of Wilkes County was likely built in the 1880s and owned and operated by Richard Mathis through the early twentieth century. A successful farmer and businessman, Mathis had extensive land holdings and the property retains the two-story mill, main house, barn and outbuildings, and a tenant house. The ninety-eight-acre property containing the mill and associated building is located at 1845 Mathis Mill Road. It was placed on the Study List in 2000.

Mitchell Mill (WK0316) on Little Hunting Creek appears to date from 1909, when Samuel A. Mitchell is believed to have erected the present two-and-a-half-story heavy timber frame building on a stone foundation. It may have been built on the site of an earlier mill and operated until around 1960. Covered with weatherboards, the building has been substantially remodeled for used as a residence with replacement windows, renovated interior spaces, and a one-story two-bay garage wing addition. Located at 1059 Mitchell Mill Road, the property was determined to be not eligible for the National Register due to a significant loss of integrity.¹³

Built around 1896, the Elkin Creek Mill (WK0006) is a large two-and-a-half-story frame structure on Big Elkin Creek that features a stone pier foundation, weatherboard siding, and a metal-clad gable roof. A one-story gable-roof addition is attached to the south elevation along with a shed-roof porch. The mill remained in operation until the mid-1970s and retains a high degree of interior integrity, including much of its milling equipment. Located at 318 Elkin Creek Mill Road near the Surry County line, the building was listed on the National Register in 1982 as one of the best examples of a full-scale water-powered milling operation in western North Carolina. At the time of listing the owners of the mill planned to rehabilitate the building into a restaurant, but today is part of Elkin Creek Vineyard and Winery.¹⁴

¹¹ Jerry Lankford, "Three Old Gristmills Remain In Traphill," *The Journal-Patriot*, April 26, 1990.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Vanessa Patrick, letter to Claudia Brown, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, June 23, 2011.

¹⁴ Michael Southern and Joe Mobley, "Elkin Creek Mill" National Register nomination (1982), and Elkin Creek Vineyard website (<http://www.elkincreekvineyard.com/index.html>; accessed July 2015).

Evaluation

For purposes of compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, the Brewer's Mill site and Miller's House (WK0413) is **not eligible** for the National Register of Historic Places. The property retains integrity of location and association, but its integrity of design, setting, material, workmanship, and feeling have been severely compromised by the loss of the mill structure, material alterations to the Miller's House, and the construction of new buildings on the east side of the river.

The Brewer's Mill site and Miller's House is **not eligible** for the National Register under Criterion A (event). *To be eligible under Criterion A, a property must retain integrity and must be associated with a specific event marking an important moment in American pre-history or history or a pattern of events or historic trend that made a significant contribution to the development of a community, a state, or the nation. Furthermore, a property must have existed at the time and be documented to be associated with the events. Finally, a property's specific association must be important as well.* The bold streams of Wilkes County supported numerous small grist and saw mills in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and several examples remain extant, including the National Register-listed Elkin Creek Mill and the Mathis Mill, which is on the Study List. In the absence of the mill and store, the Brewer's Mill site and Miller's House do not appear to possess any special distinction or sufficient integrity to be eligible considered eligible in the areas of commerce or industry.

The Brewer's Mill site and Miller's House is **not eligible** for the National Register under Criterion B (person). *For a property to be eligible for significance under Criterion B, it must retain integrity and 1) be associated with the lives of persons significant in our past, i.e. individuals whose activities are demonstrably important within a local, state or national historic context; 2) be normally associated with a person's productive life, reflecting the time period when he/she achieved significance, and 3) should be compared to other associated properties to identify those that best represent the person's historic contributions. Furthermore, a property is not eligible if its only justification for significance is that it was owned or used by a person who is or was a member of an identifiable profession, class, or social or ethnic group.* The property does not appear to have a strong association with the Brewer family for whom the site is named. Although they are clearly identified with the mill bearing their name, the Brewers seem to have been more closely associated with the store operated at the site by J. O. Brewer, and the mill may have been operated for the Brewers by different millers. The store was demolished in the mid-twentieth century by Cleave Gambill, who owned and operated the mill in the 1940s and 1950s. None of the property owners attained the level of prominence and significance required for National Register listing under Criterion B.

The Brewer's Mill site and Miller's House is **not eligible** for the National Register under Criterion C (design/construction). *For a property to be eligible under this criterion, it must retain integrity and either 1) embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; 2) represent the work of a master; 3) possess high artistic value; or 4) represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.* The Shutt House, which once stood on a 304-acre farm outside the city limits, is comparable to many other two-story, frame Forsyth County farmhouses erected or expanded around the turn of the

twentieth century. In October 2008, at the conclusion of the Forsyth County survey update's second phase, eleven such dwellings including the Lineback-Jones House and the Brewer House were added to the North Carolina Study List. Most have little residual acreage once associated with agricultural production, but are architecturally distinctive and maintain excellent integrity. The residences are therefore eligible for the National Register under Criterion C for architecture as representative examples of their particular form or style.

The Brewer's Mill site and Miller's House consist of the foundation ruins of Brewer's Mill and a plain, one-story, frame dwelling that likely dates from around the turn of the twentieth century. The Miller's House, built for the operator of the adjacent grist mill, is a typical example of one-story vernacular frame dwellings that were common throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Aside from its stacked-stone chimney, the house possesses few remarkable features and has been altered with replacement windows. The vacant structure also suffers from deterioration. It retains its basic form and materials, but is otherwise undistinguished and compromised by window alterations. The associated mill no longer stands. The Brewer's Mill site and Miller's House lack the requisite significance and integrity to be eligible for the National Register under Criterion C for architecture.

The Brewer's Mill site and Miller's House is **not eligible** for the National Register under Criterion D (potential to yield information). *For a property to be eligible under Criterion D, it must meet two requirements: 1) the property must have, or have had, information to contribute to our understanding of human history or pre-history, and 2) the information must be considered important.* The early-twentieth-century mill site and associated dwelling are unlikely to contribute significant information pertaining to building technology or historical documentation not otherwise accessible from other extant resources and written records.

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Appendix A

Professional Qualifications

CLAY GRIFFITH

President/Architectural Historian

ACME PRESERVATION SERVICES, LLC

825C Merrimon Ave, #345

Asheville, NC 28804

Tel 828 281 3852

cgriffith.acme@gmail.com

EDUCATION

- Master of Architectural History (1993)
University of Virginia
- Bachelor of Science, Architecture (1990)
Georgia Institute of Technology
- Introduction to Federal Projects and Historic Preservation Law (1994)

EXPERIENCE

- **Acme Preservation Services, LLC, Asheville, NC**
November 2007 – present

Formed independent firm to provide historic preservation consulting services. Services provided include preparing National Register of Historic Places nominations, local landmark designation reports, rehabilitation tax credit applications, municipal historic architectural resources surveys, Section 106 compliance reports, and historical research.

- **Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc., Asheville, NC**
January 2002 – October 2007

Served as Senior Architectural Historian in Asheville office of private consulting firm. Responsibilities included preparing National Register of Historic Places nominations, local landmark designation reports, rehabilitation tax credit applications, municipal historic architectural resources surveys, Section 106 compliance reports, and historical research.

- **North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Western Office, Asheville, NC**
July 1998 – January 2002

Preservation Specialist serving the 25-county western region of North Carolina. Administered State Historic Preservation Office programs including statewide inventory of historic properties, survey and planning grant supervision, National Register of Historic Places nominations, environmental review, technical assistance, and public education.

- **North Carolina Department of Transportation, Raleigh, NC**
June 1993 – June 1998

Preservation Specialist with Historic Architectural Resources Section. Responsible for conducting and preparing documentation in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, and other state and federal environmental laws and regulations. Duties included conducting field work, identifying and documenting historic resources, evaluating National Register eligibility, and assessing effects to minimize impacts of NCDOT undertakings.

COMPLETED PROJECTS

- *Lake Junaluska Assembly Historic District Intensive Evaluation Report, Replace Bridge Nos. 155 and 158 on US 23-74 over Richland Creek, TIP No. B-3186 (for NCDOT), Waynesville vic., Haywood County, North Carolina*
- *Historic Architectural Reconnaissance Survey for Replace Bridge No. 159 on SR 1326 (Joe Brown Highway) over Hanging Dog Creek, TIP No. B-4069 (for NCDOT), Cherokee County, North Carolina*
- *Seven Oaks National Register Nomination, Asheville, Buncombe County, North Carolina*
- *Historic Architectural Resources Survey Update Report, I-26 Connector in Asheville, TIP No. I-2513 (for NCDOT), Asheville, Buncombe County, North Carolina*
- *Historic Architectural Reconnaissance Survey for Replace Bridge No. 291 on SR 1348 (Old NC 90) over Middle Little River, TIP No. B-4980 (for NCDOT), Taylorsville vic., Alexander County, North Carolina*
- *Stone Hedge National Register Nomination, Tryon vic., Polk County, North Carolina*
- *Dillard B. and Georgia Sewell House National Register Nomination, Penrose vic., Henderson County, North Carolina*
- *Giles W. Pearson Sr. House Intensive Evaluation Report, Replace Bridge No. 4 on SR 1102 over Fork Creek, TIP No. B-4792 (for NCDOT), Saluda vic., Polk County, North Carolina*
- *Historic Architectural Resources Survey for Screven County Industrial Park GRAD Certification (for Parker Engineering), Sylvania, Screven County, Georgia*
- *Historic Architectural Resources Survey Report, Intensive Evaluation, Widen and Pave SR 1601 (Payne Road) (for NCDOT), Forsyth County, North Carolina*
- *Historic Architectural Resources Survey Report, Intensive Evaluation, Improve NC 175 from the Georgia State Line to south of SR 1155, TIP No. W-5119 (for NCDOT), Clay County, North Carolina*
- *Flat Rock Historic District Boundary Increase, Boundary Decrease and Additional Documentation National Register Nomination, Flat Rock, Henderson County, North Carolina*
- *Bruce Bristol House Intensive Evaluation Report, Spot Safety Improvement Project, SR 1388 (Bristol Avenue), TIP No. W-52140 (for NCDOT), Andrews, Cherokee County, North Carolina*
- *Enterprise Building National Register Nomination, High Point, Guilford County, North Carolina*
- *West-Asheville-Aycock School Historic District Boundary Increase National Register Nomination, Asheville, Buncombe County, North Carolina*
- *Rhoney-Sain House Intensive Evaluation Report, Replace Bridge No. 34 on SR 1907 over Rock Creek (for NCDOT), Burke County, North Carolina*
- *Mt. Helen Estates Intensive Evaluation Report, Replace Bridge No. 184 on SR 1102 over Winter Star Branch (for NCDOT), Yancey County, North Carolina*
- *Riley Wall House Intensive Evaluation Report, Replace Bridge No. 261 on SR 1597 over Hickory Creek (for NCDOT), Henderson County, North Carolina*

- *West House Intensive Evaluation Report, Replace Bridge No. 87 on SR 1140 over Hyatt Mill Creek (for NCDOT), Clay County, North Carolina*
- *Phillips & Son Texaco Station Intensive Evaluation Report, Replace Bridge No. 293 on SR 1411 over Bald Mountain Creek (for NCDOT), Yancey County, North Carolina*
- *Historic Architectural Resources Survey Report , Intensive Evaluation, for Replace Bridge No. 11 on NC 143B over Long Creek (for NCDOT), Graham County, North Carolina*
- *Boxed House Intensive Evaluation Report, Replace Bridge No. 121 on SR 1103 over Silvermine Creek, (for NCDOT), Swain County, North Carolina*
- *Murrell House Intensive Evaluation Report, Replace Bridge No. 23 on SR 1152 over Burlingame Creek, (for NCDOT), Transylvania County, North Carolina*
- *Historic Architectural Resources Inventory Presentation and Historic Architectural Resources Survey Report, Intensive Evaluation, for Widening NC 294 from SR 1130 to SR 1312-A, TIP No. R-3622B (for NCDOT), Cherokee County, North Carolina*
- *Historic Architectural Reconnaissance Survey for Replace Bridge No. 112 on SR 1124 over Indian Creek (for NCDOT), Yancey County, North Carolina*
- *Historic Architectural Resources Survey Report , Intensive Evaluation, for Replace Bridge No. 217 on SR 1358 over Guilders Creek (for NCDOT), Yancey County, North Carolina*
- *Francis Grist Mill National Register Nomination (co-author), Waymesville vic., Haywood County, North Carolina*
- *Historic Architectural Resources Inventory Presentation and Historic Architectural Resources Survey Report, Intensive Evaluation, for Improve Intersection NC 225/SR 1164/SR 1779, TIP No. U-5105 (for NCDOT), Henderson County, North Carolina*
- *Historic Architectural Reconnaissance Survey for Replace Bridge No. 244 on SR 1137 over Clarks Creek (for NCDOT), Watauga County, North Carolina*
- *Historic Architectural Reconnaissance Surveys for Division 14 Bridge Replacement Projects (for NCDOT), Cherokee, Clay, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, and Polk Counties, North Carolina*
- *Historic Architectural Reconnaissance Surveys for Division 13 Bridge Replacement Projects (for NCDOT), McDowell, Mitchell, and Yancey Counties, North Carolina*
- *Tryon Country Club National Register Nomination, Tryon, Polk County, North Carolina*
- *Dr. Samuel Stringfield House and Dr. Thomas Stringfield House Local Landmark Designation Reports, Waynesville, Haywood County, North Carolina*
- *Historic Architectural Resources Inventory Presentation for SR 1419 (Old Fanning Bridge Road) Improvements and new access road, TIP No. 5524 (for NCDOT), Buncombe and Henderson Counties, North Carolina*

- Historic Architectural Resources Inventory Presentation and *Chapman House Intensive Evaluation Report, US 64 Improvements, TIP No. R-2409D (for NCDOT)*, Transylvania County, North Carolina
- *Historic Architectural Resources Survey Report, Intensive Evaluation, for Replace Bridge No. 115 on SR 1908 over Dan River (for NCDOT)*, Stokes County, North Carolina
- *Johnson House and Store Intensive Evaluation Report (for NCDOT)*, Wilkes County, North Carolina
- *Downtown Newton Historic District National Register Nomination*, Newton, Catawba County, North Carolina
- *Adams-Millis Corporation Plant No. 8 National Register Nomination and Part 1 Tax Credit Application*, Tryon, Polk County, North Carolina
- *Historic Architectural Reconnaissance Surveys for Division 11 Bridge Replacement Projects (for NCDOT)*, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Watauga and Wilkes Counties, North Carolina
- *Historic Architectural Reconnaissance Surveys for Division 14 Bridge Replacement Projects (for NCDOT)*, Graham, Henderson, Swain and Transylvania Counties, North Carolina
- *Downtown Asheville Historic District Boundary Increase III, Boundary Decrease and Additional Documentation*, Asheville, Buncombe County, North Carolina
- *Sunnydale National Register Nomination and Tax Credit Application* Tryon, Polk County, North Carolina
- *Asheville Survey Update*, Asheville, Buncombe County, North Carolina
- *Spread Out Historic District National Register Nomination*, Waynesville, Haywood County, North Carolina
- *Dougherty Heights Historic District National Register Nomination*, Black Mountain, Buncombe County, North Carolina
- *Wayah Bald Lookout Tower Documentation (for USDA Forest Service)*, Nantahala National Forest, Macon County, North Carolina
- *Lyncote National Register Nomination*, Tryon, Polk County, North Carolina
- *Pink Beds Picnic Shelters and Wayah Bald Lookout Tower Documentation and National Register of Historic Places Evaluation (for USDA Forest Service)*, Pisgah National Forest, North Carolina

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- "Henry Bacon," "Douglas Ellington" and "Grove Arcade" in *The Encyclopedia of Appalachia*. University of Tennessee Press, 2006.
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