



**North Carolina Department of Natural and 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

March 29, 2016

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Shelby Reap  
Office of Human Environment  
NCDOT Division of Highways

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

**SUBJECT:** Historic Structures Survey Report, Replace Bridge 278 over Middle Fork Creek  
And Realign Intersection of US 321 with SR 1540 and SR 1531, B-5177 and  
PA 10-03-0167, Watauga County, ER 16-0453

Thank you for your March 10, 2016, letter transmitting the above-referenced report. We have reviewed the document and offer the following comments.

We concur that the **Tweetsie Railroad (WT0940 and WT0010)** is **eligible for listing** in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A, B, and C and that the proposed boundary appears appropriate.

We also concur that the **Sholl or Shull House (WT0261)** is **not eligible for listing** for the reasons outlined in the report.

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



PAT McCRORY  
Governor

NICHOLAS J. TENNYSON  
Secretary

EP 16-0453

March 10, 2016

Renee Gledhill-Earley  
Environmental Review Coordinator  
North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources  
4617 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-4617

tt Annie  
3/30  
re letters  
3/28/16

Dear Ms. Gledhill-Earley:

DL 4/4/16

RE: Historic Structures Report for TIP# B-5177, PA 10-03-0167, Replace Bridge No. 278 over Middle Fork Creek and Realign Intersection of US 321 with SR 1540 and SR 1531 in Watauga County.

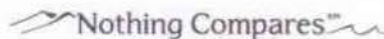
The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) is conducting planning studies for the above-referenced project. Please find attached one hard copies and one digital copy of the Historic Architectural Resources Survey Report, which meets the guidelines for survey procedures for NCDOT and the National Park Service.

Please review the attached survey report and provide us with your comments. If you have any questions concerning the accompanying information, please contact me at 919-707-6088.

Sincerely,

Shelby Reap  
Historic Architecture Group

Attachments



**HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCE REPORT  
INTENSIVE EVALUATION FOR  
THE TWEETSIE RAILROAD THEME PARK  
AND  
THE SHULL HOUSE**

Replace Bridge No. 278 over Middle Fork Creek on SR 1540 and Realign  
Intersection of U. S. Highway 321 with SR 1540 and SR 1531  
Watauga County  
WBS# 42548.1.1  
B-5177

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

Prepared by:  
Mulkey Engineers and Consultants  
6750 Tryon Road  
Cary, North Carolina, 27518

MARCH 2016

**HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCE REPORT**  
**INTENSIVE EVALUATION FOR**  
**THE TWEETSIE RAILROAD THEME PARK**  
**AND**  
**THE SHULL HOUSE**

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Cary, North Carolina, 27518

MARCH 2016

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Sarah Woodard David, Principal Investigator

March 7, 2016

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mary Pope Furr, Supervisor  
Historic Architecture Group  
North Carolina Department of Transportation

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Management Summary

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes replacing Bridge No. 278 on SR 1540 (Tweetsie Railroad Lane) over Middle Fork Creek in Watauga County. The NCDOT defines this project's Area of Potential Effects (APE) as 100 feet on either side of Bridge No. 278 and 300 feet from the structure along SR 1540 to the west, and 300 feet to the north and south along U. S. Highway 321, which runs immediately parallel to Middle Fork Creek, and 300 feet to the east along SR 1531 (Middle Fork Road). NCDOT Architectural Historians reviewed the properties within the APE and determined that two properties greater than 50 years of age warranted further evaluation: the Sholl, correctly spelled as Shull, House (WT 261) and Tweetsie Railroad (WT 940), including the East Tennessee and Western North Carolina Railroad Locomotive No. 12 (WT 10), which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1992. Architectural surveys of the county, overseen by the State Historic Preservation Office, were undertaken in the late 1970s, late 1980s, and 2002-2003. Both the Shull House and the original Tweetsie Engine were documented in the earliest survey projects. The entirety of the Tweetsie Railroad amusement park had not been surveyed previously.

This project is subject to review under the *Programmatic Agreement for Minor Transportation Projects* (NCDOT/NCHPO/FHWA, 2007). NCDOT architectural historians established an APE for the project and conducted a preliminary investigation, identifying two resources warranting additional study and eligibility evaluation.

There were no other properties within the APE that are greater than 50 years of age, and none which appear to meet Criteria Consideration G for properties that have achieved significance within the last fifty years. Bridge No. 278 is not addressed in this report. Built in 1961, the span is a common bridge type that does not have the engineering or aesthetic significance for National Register eligibility under any criterion.

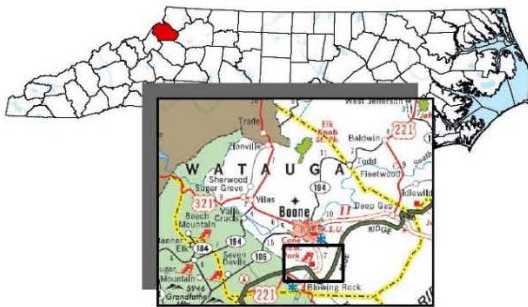
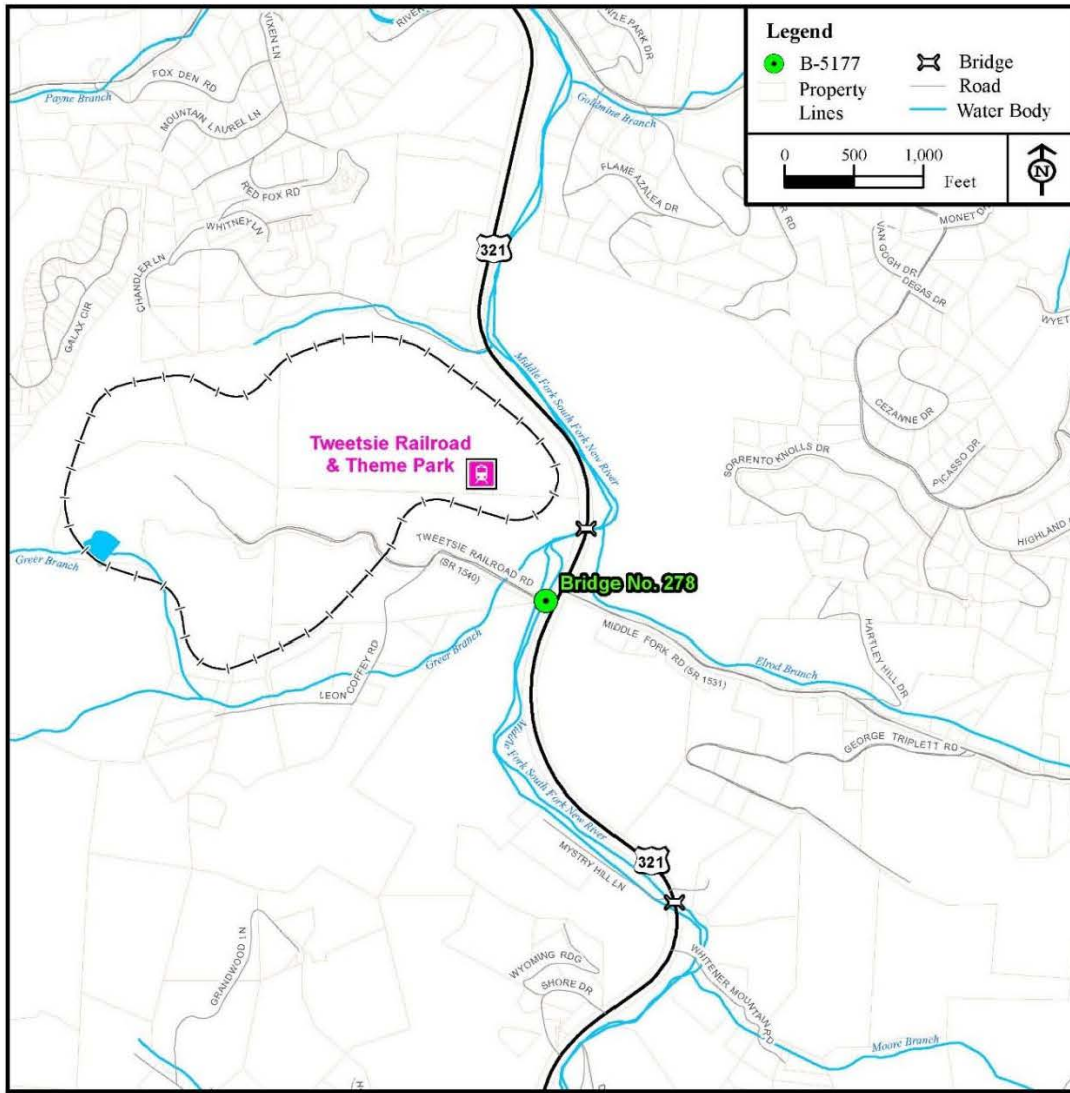
In January 2016, NCDOT requested that Mulkey Engineers & Consultants (Mulkey) complete research, an intensive-level historic field survey, and a National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) evaluation of the Shull House and Tweetsie Railroad.


Based on the field survey, background research, and the evaluation documented in this report, Tweetsie Railroad is recommended eligible for the NRHP and Locomotive No. 12 remains eligible for the NRHP. Based on the field survey, background research, and the evaluation documented in this report, the Shull House is recommended ineligible for the NRHP.

Property Name	NCHPO Survey Site Number	Eligibility Determination	Criteria
Tweetsie Railroad	WT 940 and WT 10	Eligible	A, B, and C
Sholl or Shull House	WT 261	Not Eligible	None

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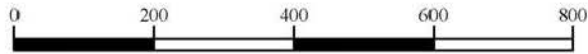


	NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS PROJECT DEVELOPMENT & ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS UNIT
	<p align="center"><b>WATAUGA COUNTY</b></p> <p align="center"><i>Replace Bridge No. 278 over Middle Fork Creek on SR 1540 &amp; realign intersection of US 321 with SR 1540 and SR 1531</i></p> <p align="center"><b>STIP No. B-5177</b></p>
<p><b>Project Vicinity</b></p>	

Replace Bridge No. 278 over Middle Fork Creek  
 Watauga County  
 WBS# 42548.1.1  
 B-5177





<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Area of Potential Effects (APE)</b> STIP No. B-5177</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">WATAUGA COUNTY</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Replace Bridge No. 278 over Middle Fork Creek on SR 1540 &amp; Realign intersection of US 321 with SR 1540 and SR 1531</i></p> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>1 INCH = 200 FEET</p> </div>
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Replace Bridge No. 278 over Middle Fork Creek  
 Watauga County  
 WBS# 42548.1.1  
 B-5177

## Methodology

On February 12 and 13, 2016, Mulkey Architectural Historian Sarah Woodard David visited Tweetsie Railroad and the Shull House, completed photo documentation, and conducted a windshield survey for comparable examples of similar resources in Watauga County. The investigator interviewed Chris Robbins, the owner of the Tweetsie Railroad and nephew of Tweetsie's founder. The investigator also made several phone calls and mailed a letter to the owner of the Shull House, but was not successful in contacting the owner. Additionally, the investigator undertook research at the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office and the North Carolina State Archives. The investigator also used online research tools and resources, including the Watauga County Register of Deeds online index, Watauga County GIS Mapping, the website findagrave.com, and the web-based subscription services, ancestry.com and newspapers.com.

Mulkey conducted all fieldwork, research, and evaluations to meet the provisions of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, and its implementing regulations, 36 CFR 800, as well as NCDOT's *Guidelines for the Survey Reports for Historic Architectural Resources*.

## Evaluation: Tweetsie Railroad

Resource Name	Tweetsie Railroad
HPO Site No.	WT 940 and WT 10
Street Address	300 Tweetsie Railroad Lane
PIN	2819-60-1195-000 2819-70-0562-000 2819-72-7268-000 2819-60-4828-000 2819-60-9537-000 2819-40-5715-000 2819-70-4449-000 2819-61-0658-000 2819-70-0259-000 2819-81-1463-000 2819-60-6461-000 2819-62-5277-000
Construction Date(s)	1956-1957, and later
NRHP Recommendation	Eligible under Criteria A, B, and C



### Property Description

The Tweetsie Railroad, commonly referred to simply as “Tweetsie,” is a theme park surrounding a small mountain in southern Watauga County. Watauga County, located in northwestern North Carolina, is a mountainous county with rugged terrain. Fertile valleys follow the county’s largest river, the Watauga, while narrow, fertile floodplains flank smaller rivers and creeks.

Established in 1956, Tweetsie is located on the west side of U.S. Highway 321 and Middle Fork Creek, and it encircles an officially unnamed mountain that Tweetsie’s developers originally christened Roundhouse Mountain. The entrance to Tweetsie and most of its buildings and structures are situated on Roundhouse Mountain’s east side. Immediately downhill from the entrance, the original late-1950s parking area hugs the hillside. Downhill from that, a late 1960s parking area covers the floodplain at the base of the mountain.

Tweetsie is divided into seven primary areas: Main Street, The Hacienda, and the engine shops at the lowest level; Tweetsie Junction and the Country Fair at the middle level; Miner's Mountain near the top of Roundhouse Mountain; and the railroad tracks. Generally, the earlier buildings are downhill and closer to the entrance with newer structures uphill. These areas are described broadly below, and more detailed descriptions of specific buildings and structures follow in the Inventory List.

The Main Street (figures 5 and 6) area appears much as it did by 1960, and includes an entrance building and ticket office with board-and-batten-siding and a wraparound porch with turned posts. To the east of the entrance building is a connected series of buildings housing shops and offices. Within this group, an original one-story building was replaced with a two-story shop and office building in 1989, and many of the original buildings have undergone some updates and renovations. The earliest building, the original depot completed in 1957 (figure 21), was destroyed by fire in 2008, and a new building was completed in 2009 in approximately the same location. In spite of changes, the overall original Wild West appearance and feeling of the 1959-1960 village remains.

To the southwest of Main Street is The Hacienda, which does not contain any permanent structures. Rather, this is a level terrace where a substantial tent is erected in the summer months to house a performance venue.

To the east of Main Street is a group of three buildings comprising the engine shops. The easternmost building dates from 1958 and was the original work and storage area for the park. Another building was constructed in the 1960s for use as a fire service museum, and a third building was completed in 1999. Two sheds, probably dating from around 1960 are also part of the complex.

Moving uphill, the next level hosts Tweetsie Junction and the Country Fair. Tweetsie Junction is made up of a group of one-story buildings dating from the mid-1980s that include shops and a performance pavilion. The rear elevation of the performance pavilion is actually a turn-of-the-twentieth-century railroad depot move from elsewhere in Watauga County. Tweetsie Junction is also home to The Palace (figures 7 and 8), constructed in 1961, which is probably the park's most ambitious, most historically authentic (in terms of late-nineteenth-century, Western United States, frontier architecture), and least altered building. Immediately east of The Palace is the Feed and Seed Restaurant and several other shops; this group of buildings was added in 1977 (figures 9 and 10).

Moving east from the Feed and Seed Restaurant complex is the 1961 chairlift landing area (figure 11). This is an open air pavilion that has undergone several thematic changes over time.

The Country Fair (figures 12 and 13) is situated to the northeast of the chairlift landing and dates from the early 1970s when the rides were moved to this location from Tweetsie's Magic Mountain area. Rides include a Ferris wheel, Tilt-a-Whirl, a planes and helicopters ride, and a carousel. The Ferris wheel and carousel date to an earlier Grover Robbins, Jr., amusement park called Skyland.<sup>1</sup> Many of their components have been replaced several times over, but their frames and general appearance remain. The planes and helicopters ride is a modern incarnation of an earlier, 1960s version. The area is also home to the park's 1961 cars, which are low-speed go-carts that young children can drive. An arcade building in the Country Fair was added in 1977. A group of three rides for adults and older children was appended to west edge of the Country Fair in 2007.

Uphill, near the top of the mountain is the Miner's Mountain area. Originally called Roundhouse Mountain, when no structures or amusements were located on it, it was reimagined as Magic Mountain in 1961 with buildings and rides generally reflecting fairy-tale theme. Around 1970, the mountain was renamed Miner's Mountain and the magic, fairy-tale theme was replaced by a mining theme; earlier amusement equipment was relocated farther down the mountain to the County Fair area, as described. Today's Miner's Mountain buildings were constructed in the 1990s with a few exceptions. The top terminal for the chairlift was originally housed in a 1961 castle or fortress building with round turrets at each corner (figures 14, 15, 16). The original chairlift machinery and portions of the castle structure remain, including two turrets altered to fit with the mining theme. An A-frame pavilion at the center of Miner's Mountain also dates from 1961 with later updates (figure 17).

In the mid-1970s, the company added the Deer Park to Miner's Mountain. Originally stocked exclusively with deer, the Deer Park is now home to a variety of goats, pigs, and llamas that can be fed and petted. Fences have been repaired and altered over time, but the location of the Deer Park is unchanged.

On the park's far western side, two stops on the train's route have their origins in the late 1950s. Frontier Town or the Frontier Outpost is a group of facades that create a set where actors and actresses act out components of a story of cowboys, deputies, and Indians. This story is ongoing throughout the day so that visitors see different portions of the story every time they ride the train. The story continues farther along the tracks at Fort Boone (figure 19), a fictional

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<sup>1</sup> Skyland Amusement Park was located near Blowing Rock and predated Tweetsie, though its exact years of operation are not known. It was demolished many years ago and is now the site of condominiums.

“Western” stockade fort. Fort Boone is somewhat more substantial with sizeable blockhouses on each end of the fort. Both of these sites look like their predecessors, but the current Fort Boone is the fourth version of the fort and Frontier Town’s current set is only ten years old.

The highlight of Tweetsie, however, is the park’s two locomotives. Locomotive No. 12 (figure 2), built in 1917, originally ran on the East Tennessee and Western North Carolina Railroad, and it has a 4-6-0 wheel configuration, meaning four small wheels are located at the front with six larger wheels in the middle, and no wheels under the cab. Locomotive No. 190 dates from 1943 when the U. S. Army commissioned it, and it has a 2-8-2 wheel arrangement. Both narrow-gauge engines are painted green with red and black trim and gold lettering.

Two other resources at the park are over fifty years in age but are not related to the park: Middle Fork Baptist Church Cemetery and a nineteenth-century farmhouse built by the Payne family. The cemetery contains graves from the first years of the twentieth century to the present day. Middle Fork Baptist Church was located across the highway from the park, but when Highway 321 was altered, the congregation moved the church building across U. S. Highway 321 and to the north of Tweetsie. The Payne House is a two-story farmhouse with a double-tier porch on its front elevation and a second double-tier porch on its side elevation. The house overlooks the remnants of an orchard. Tweetsie has owned this property since the mid-1980s, and it has not been used since the mid-1990s.

### *Inventory List*

The inventory list is keyed to the Tweetsie Site Plan. It starts with the tracks and engines and is then arranged roughly from lower level to upper level. Dates are based on the 1992 National Register Nomination for Locomotive No. 12, the author’s interview with Chris Robbins, and information in Tweetsie’s history booklet, *A Blast from the Past*.

#### 1. Railroad Tracks and Trestle, 1956-1958 Contributing Structure

One mile of track, from the original depot location, across the 225-foot-long trestle (figure 1) over an unnamed branch, was built in 1956 and 1957. The rest of the track and associated cuts and grading were finished in time for the 1958 season and they create a three-mile-long loop. The trestle and track remain in their original configuration and retain complete historic architectural and structural integrity.



*Figure 1: Original trestle*

## 2. Locomotive No. 12, 1917 Contributing and NR-listed Structure

The original Tweetsie Locomotive (figure 2) was constructed by Baldwin Locomotive Works in Pennsylvania in 1917 and operated on the East Tennessee and Western North Carolina Railroad. In 1956, it was refurbished and arrived at Tweetsie in 1957. According to its 1992 National Register Nomination, the engine retains its historic integrity and, with the exception of paint, it has not been altered since its construction., The engine contributes to the historic integrity of Tweetsie Railroad, but it also remains eligible for the National Register, independent of the park, under Criterion A in the area of Transportation for its historical association with rail transportation in the mountains of western North Carolina and eastern Tennessee.



*Figure 2: Engine No. 12, photograph from Tweetsie.com*

### 3. Locomotive No. 190, 1943 Contributing Structure

Steam locomotive No. 190 (figure 3) was built by Baldwin Locomotive Works for the U. S. Army in 1943. The locomotive was placed in service in Alaska where it acquired the nickname Yukon Queen. In 1960, Tweetsie bought the engine, refurbished it, and placed it in service at the park. Like No. 12, the Yukon Queen retains its historic integrity, and with the exception of paint, it retains its original appearance. No. 190 is not individually eligible for the National Register; it was one of many locomotives commissioned by the U. S. Government during World War II and one of several surviving examples of its type. It was brought to the mountains of North Carolina for use at Tweetsie rather than for use as a working engine. Engine No. 12, by comparison, was a working locomotive that derives its significance from its association with transportation in western North Carolina. Engine No. 190 does contribute, however, to the park's history, character and integrity as a structure added to the park more than fifty years ago.





*Figure 3: Engine 190, as seen during a ride*

#### 4. Original Parking Lot, 1957 Contributing Structure

This parking area was graded for use during the park's inaugural season. It has been paved, but its presence from opening day is directly related to the car-based tourism that Grover Robbins, Jr., was tapping into when he conceived Tweetsie. It is a mundane but important feature necessary for Tweetsie's function and success.

#### 5. Entrance Building, 1960 Contributing Building

This one-story building (figure 4) features a hipped roof topped with three square cupolas. The center cupola houses a clock face on the front and rear elevations, while windows are located in the front and rear elevations of the other two. Board and batten siding sheathes the building, and a wrap-around porch with turned posts and a scalloped vergeboard trim the roof edge. The porch is engaged under the main roof. A small, hip-roof addition that matches the original building projects from the west end. The central entrance features a double-leaf door flanked by inset display cases that suggest window openings. Originally, the cupolas had flat roofs encircled by

low railings; gable roofs were added at an uncertain date. A low railing also encircled the primary roof. Otherwise, the building retains its architectural integrity.

The building houses ticket offices and stiles through which visitors pass to enter the park.



*Figure 4: Entrance Building*

6. Depot Building, 2008-2009  
Noncontributing Building

This rectangular, one-story building replaced the original Depot which fire destroyed in 2008. The structure is a board-and-batten building with a false parapet. It houses restrooms and a first-aid area.

7. Fire Museum Building, ca. 1965  
Contributing Building

This one-story, brick and concrete block building originally housed a fire museum, but has been incorporated into the repair shop complex. The unadorned, utilitarian building has a terracotta cap on a parapet wall.

8. Locomotive Shop, 1999  
Noncontributing Building

The newest building in the repair shop complex is a tall one-story, pre-fabricated metal building with a garage bay opening, single door, and small window on the west elevation.

9. Locomotive Shop Sheds, ca. 1960  
Contributing Structures

Two gabled-roofed structures cover two railroad track sidings and provide a sheltered area in which the locomotives are parked during the offseason and for repair. Both sheds have metal roofs and wooden vertical siding.

10. Locomotive Shop, ca. 1958  
Contributing Building

This is a two-story brick building with modern replacement windows attached to a tall one-story, gabled building clad in vertical metal siding. This served as the original repair shop for the railroad, and it is still part of the operation's shop.

11. Happy Trails Toy Shop, ca. 1960  
Contributing Building

One of the original shops on Tweetsie's Main Street, this building is a one-story, gable-front building with a false parapet in front of the gable end. The building features a wrap-around porch with turned posts that is part of a longer porch that extends across the fronts of the Main Street buildings. Board and batten siding covers the exterior, and the windows are modern replacements.

12. Shop, ca. 1960  
Contributing Building

This shop is another original Main Street building with a gable-front roof behind an arched parapet wall. It, too, is covered in board-and-batten siding, and, in the operating months, the façade is mostly open to the interior. The Main Street porch also extends across this façade.



*Figure 5: Main Street Shops*

13. Jail, ca. 1960  
Contributing Building

The Jail is a one-story gable-front building with a parapet wall in front of the gable end. Board and batten siding covers the façade which is punctuated with a large door opening and a window. Again, the Main Street porch shelters this building.

14. Cowboy Cantina, ca. 1960  
Contributing Building

The Cowboy Cantina (figure 6) is a two-story, side-gable building with a stepped parapet wall hiding the roof. At the parapet's center, a bracketed cornice highlights the taller section of the parapet wall. Modern double-sash, six-over-six windows and fixed-sash twelve-light windows are located on the façade, and its two double-leaf entrances feature six lights above panels with X motifs. The Main Street porch continues across this building, ending at its west end.



*Figure 6: Cowboy Cantina*

15. General Store, 1989-1990  
Noncontributing Building

This building replaced an earlier Main Street building. The two-story weatherboard building features two projecting bays, a two-story porch with turned posts and turned railings, and simple curved brackets. Lattice creates a wide cornice between the two levels of the porch. Most of the building's windows are six-over-six sash windows. The façade's parapet wall is covered in standing seam metal and suggests a Mansard roof.

16. Western Mercantile, ca. 1989-1990  
Noncontributing Building

Western Mercantile was added to Main Street when the General Store was constructed. It is a one-story, weatherboard-clad building with a parapet roof and full-width porch with square posts and a plain railing.

17. The Funnel Factory, ca. 1960  
Noncontributing Building

This building is original to Main Street, but was originally an open-air pavilion. It has been completely enclosed and remodeled to a late-nineteenth-century appearance with a narrow bracketed cornice, parapet wall, weatherboard siding, two-over-two sash windows, and a service window sheltered by a pent roof on the front elevation

18. Water Tower, ca. 1957  
Contributing Structure

The functional water tower (visible in the background of figure 2) is a metal cistern on a braced wooden base. A J-shaped pipe can be manually raised and lowered to facilitate filling the engine with water.

19. Performance Pavilion, ca. 1910 and ca. 1985  
Noncontributing Building

This pavilion was built in 1985 and incorporates an early-twentieth-century depot building moved to the park from Montezuma or Pineola, North Carolina. Both of these towns were stops on the East Tennessee and Western North Carolina Railroad, so presumably this is a depot from that line. The pavilion, including the depot section, features hip roofs and wood siding. The depot section retains board and batten siding and eave brackets.

20. Sparky's Southwestern Barbeque, ca. 1985  
Noncontributing Building

This restaurant is a one-story, frame, side-gabled building with a square gabled copula and vertical wood siding.

21. Blacksmith Shop, ca. 1985  
Noncontributing Building

This shop is a one-story, frame, side-gabled building with vertical wood siding and a full-width porch to shelter the smith's workspace.

22. Tweetsie Junction Shops, ca. 1985  
Noncontributing Building

This long, J-shaped, one-story gable-roofed building with vertical wood siding houses several shops.

23. The Palace, 1961  
Contributing Building

The Palace (figures 7 and 8) is Tweetsie's most ambitious and most historically authentic building. It takes design cues from Western antecedents, such as the buildings in Tombstone, Arizona, a National Historic Landmark. The building is clad in board-and-batten siding. It features a double-tier porch that wraps around a curved corner. The porch has turned posts and a turned balustrade. Slightly arched panels span the space between posts on the first floor porch. A parapet trimmed with a narrow bracketed cornice extends above the porch's roof. Original two-over-two sash windows are among the park's few surviving original windows. Double-leaf corner entrances are located at both the first and second stories. Inside, The Palace continues its Wild West saloon theme with an interior balcony with turned balustrade and a stage at one end of the large room.



*Figure 7: The Palace*



*Figure 8: The Palace, interior*

24. Feed and Seed Restaurant, 1977  
Noncontributing Building

The Feed and Seed Restaurant (figure 9) is a rambling, board-and-batten building with a one-story section and a two-story section. It also has a gable-front porch overlooking Main Street. The building has a parapet wall and six-over-six sash windows.





*Figure 9: Feed and Seed Restaurant*

25. Restroom Building, 1977  
Noncontributing Building

Attached to the Feed and Seed Restaurant is a two-story faux barn structure that houses bathrooms. At the second level, a projecting gambrel-roof shed shelters an opening in which plywood cows are located.

26. Fudge Works, 1977  
Noncontributing Building

The Fudge Works (figure 10) is a one-story, side-gable building with weatherboard and board-and-batten siding. It has a full-width porch, eight-over-eight sash windows, and a large bay window in the gable end.



*Figure 10: Fudge Works*

27. Miner's Mountain Chairlift, 1961  
Contributing Structure

Added to the park in 1961, the chairlift has not been altered except for necessary maintenance. It features traditional ski lift cars suspended from parallel cables. (figures 11, 14, 15, 16)

28. Miner's Mountain Chairlift Lower Level Landing Pavilion, 1961  
Noncontributing Structure

Although this structure (figure 11) was built in 1961, it has undergone many changes. Originally, a mansard-like parapet roof surrounded it, and, later, a tall shaft topped with a small building reminiscent of historic mining housing and equipment was located on top of the structure. Today, it is a board-and-batten pavilion with shed wings on either side. Its original steel structure remains in place.



*Figure 11: Miner's Mountain Chairlift, lower level*

29. Country Fair Ferris Wheel, ca. 1955  
Contributing Structure

Grover Robbins, Jr., installed this Ferris wheel (figure 12) at an earlier attraction called Skyland Amusement Park and he moved it to Tweetsie's Magic Mountain area in 1961. Many components have been replaced several times over, but the frame is original. It was moved to this location when Magic Mountain became Miner's Mountain.

30. Country Fair Helicopters and Planes Ride, ca. 2000  
Noncontributing Structure

This ride replaced an earlier, 1960s version. It consists of hydraulic arms that lift helicopters and planes into the air while going in a circle.

31. Country Fair Carousel, ca. 1955  
Contributing Structure

Like the Ferris wheel, this ride came to Tweetsie from Skyland Amusement Park and was later moved to this location from the Magic Mountain area. Also like the Ferris wheel, it has been repaired and had many parts replaced over time, but its frame and overall appearance are original.



*Figure 12: Country Fair Rides*

32. Country Fair Tilt-A-Whirl, ca. 1955  
Contributing Structure

This ride also come from Skyland Amusement Park. Like the other former Skyland rides, it was also relocated to the Country Fair area from the Magic Mountain area and has undergone extensive refurbishment overtime. However, it retains its original appearance with nine cars and an undulating, circular platform.

33. Country Fair Arcade, 1977  
Noncontributing

This is a gable-roofed, barn-like building with board-and-batten siding. (figure 13)



*Figure 13: Country Fair Arcade and Turnpike Cruisers Track*

#### 34. Turnpike Cruisers, 1961 Contributing Structures

The Turnpike Cruisers (track pictured in figure 13) are modified go-carts with small car bodies on top of the go-cart. They are identical, except for color, and reference the long lines of mid-century vehicles. Their low speed and small scale allows very young children to drive them. They originally traversed a track around Magic Mountain until they were moved to the Country Fair area.

#### 35. Country Fair Modern Rides, 2007 Noncontributing Structures

The Tornado, Free Fall, and Round-Up were added to an area beside the Country Fair. Tornado is a spinning ride with swings. Free Fall is a drop-style ride where riders on a platform are “dropped,” and Round-Up is a centrifugal force ride.

#### 36. Miner’s Mountain Upper Level Landing Pavilion, 1961 Noncontributing Structure

Like the lower landing pavilion, this structure (figures 14 and 15) has undergone extensive changes. Originally, a castle surrounded it, but when Magic Mountain became Miner's Mountain, the walls and two rear turrets were torn down. The front turrets were remodeled in a mining theme, and the structure was left exposed.



*Figure 14: Miner's Mountain Chairlift, upper level with a castle turret converted to a water tower*



*Figure 15: Miner's Mountain Chairlift, upper level*



*Figure 16: Chairlift Mechanical System*

37. Mouse Mine No. 9, ca. 1970  
Noncontributing Structure

Mouse Mine No. 9 is a ride designed by artist Jack Pentec. It consists of a small gas-powered train engine and cars that travel a track laid out over the original Turnpike Cruisers track. The train enters a long tunnel that is lined with fluorescent tableaus of mice working in a mine made of Swiss cheese. It is remarkably intact from its original design, but it does not meet the fifty-year requirement for National Register eligibility or appear to warrant consideration under Criteria Consideration G for exceptional importance.

38. Gem Mining Pavilion, 1961  
Contributing Structure

This A-frame building (figure 17) was constructed as a picnic shelter in 1961. Some changes have been made to make it appear more “miner-like,” principally, replacing the multi-colored tent-like roofing with wood or wood-appearing roofing but it is only minimally altered since its construction.



*Figure 17: Gem Mining Pavilion*



39. Gold Panning Area, ca. 1970  
Noncontributing Structure

This is a plain, gabled pavilion used to shelter the gold panning area.

40. Miner's Mountain Theater, ca. 1995  
Noncontributing Building

This is a partially enclosed building with board-and-batten siding and a sheltered open-air seating area for watching performances.

41. Company Store, ca. 1995  
Noncontributing Building

The Company Store is a one-story, board-and-batten building with a parapet.

42. Miner's Diner, ca. 1961, ca. 1995  
Noncontributing Building

This (figure 18) was the original carousel pavilion when the carousel was located at Magic Mountain. It has been enclosed for use as a restaurant, and is covered with board and batten siding.



*Figure 18: Miner's Diner*

43. Miner's Mountain Rides, ca. 1995  
Noncontributing Structures

These rides include the scrambler, which is called the Tweetsie Twister, a boat ride, and an airplane ride. All three date from renovations in the mid-1990s.

44. Deer Park Zoo, ca. 1975  
Noncontributing Site

This is a park laid out with rambling sidewalks through fenced-in animal enclosures.

45. Fort Boone, ca. 2005  
Noncontributing Structure

Fort Boone (figure 19) is an integral and iconic piece of Tweetsie's history, but this particular structure is relatively new. A version of Fort Boone has stood at this location since the park's second or third season. The current version is a stockade-type fort that terminates at blockhouses on each end. One blockhouse is faux log construction with a gabled roof. The other is board-and-batten with a pyramidal roof.



*Figure 19: Fort Boone*

46. Frontier Town, ca. 2006  
Noncontributing Structure

Like Fort Boone, Frontier Town, also known as the Frontier Outpost, is an iconic piece of Tweetsie's history, but the existing structures are about ten years old. Frontier Town consists of set-like building facades and an outhouse that can collapse during an explosion.

47. Payne House, ca. 1900  
Noncontributing Building

The Payne House (figure 20) is typical of Watauga County farm houses. It is a two-story house with a double-tier, gable front porch over the center bay. The façade contains two front doors on the porch, and six-over-six sash windows in the outer bays. Upstairs on the front elevation, there are no windows, only a door onto the upper level of the porch. A two-story ell extends to the rear and it, too, has a narrow double-tier, gabled porch. Weatherboards cover the house. No chimneys remain, but given the window placement, they would have been internal chimneys. The house is noncontributing because it does not contribute to the history or historic integrity of Tweetsie

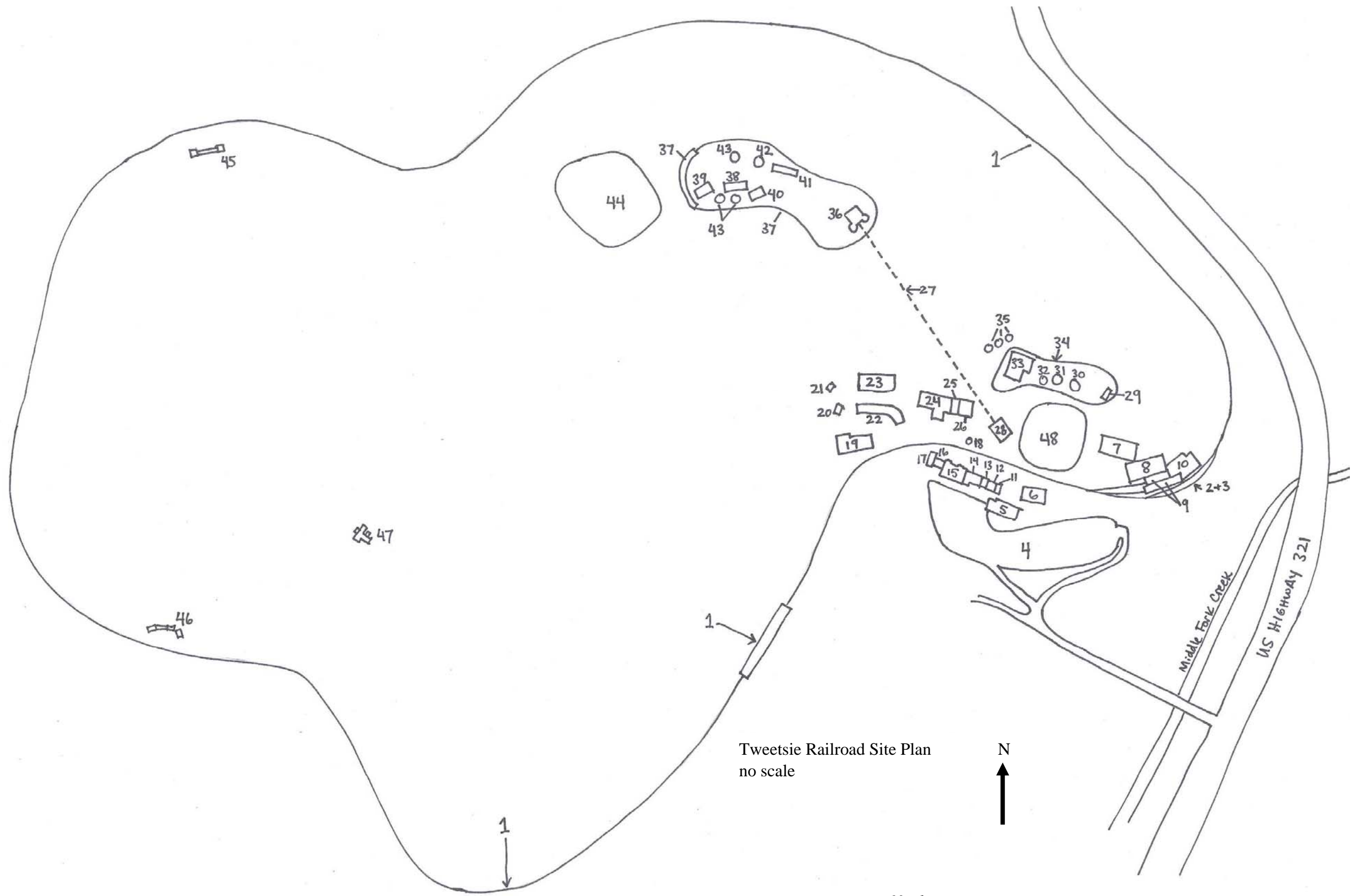
Railroad, and it was built before Tweetsie's period of significance, which starts in 1956 when construction of the railroad tracks started.



*Figure 20: Payne House*

#### 48. Middle Fork Baptist Church Cemetery, 1909 Noncontributing Site

Like the Payne House, this cemetery pre-dates Tweetsie's period of significance. The cemetery spreads over a hillside near the front of the park. The earliest graves date from the early 1900s and burials continue today. Markers are typical upright stone tablets, with most of them being granite. A few concrete markers are extant.



Tweetsie Railroad Site Plan  
no scale



Map 1

## Historical Background

Amusement parks in the United States are rooted in seaside resorts in England and at Coney Island, New York. In the second half of the nineteenth century, steam-powered rides, such as the carousel, were invented and by the late 1800s, Coney Island was home to several rides, including a rollercoaster. In North Carolina, amusement parks were often associated with local power companies promoting the adoption of electricity and the use of electrically powered trolleys. In Wrightsville Beach, Hugh MacRae, the owner of Wilmington's electric company, constructed Lumina Pier (1905), and Carolina Power and Light filled Blounts Park (1914) with rides and electrically powered wonders on the outer edge of Raleigh.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, tourism in the mountains of western North Carolina focused mainly on restful and healthful resorts and scenery. In the 1840s, a Lenoir industrialist built a turnpike from Lenoir to his family's land where they had a vacation cottage. The area was called Blowing Rock for a nearby rock formation, but until the arrival of improved roads and, eventually, the railroad, only a few family cottages and houses populated the settlement. With the railroad, however, came hotels and resorts, and the creation of the Great Smokey Mountains National Park in 1930. Also, during the 1930s, Blowing Rock's mayor, Grover C. Robbins, Sr., started promoting Blowing Rock itself as an attraction. The foundation of the area's tourism, however, remained grounded in the healthful benefits of mountain air rather than the addition of amusement rides.<sup>3</sup>

Another primary industry in western North Carolina in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was the extraction of minerals and timber. Numerous companies built short narrow-gauge railroads to transport timber to sawmills and ore to processing facilities. One such company was the East Tennessee and Western North Carolina Railroad (ETWNCRR), established in the 1860s, but only in sporadic operation until 1882 when the company completed a narrow-gauge line for the Cranberry Iron and Coal Company. This line proved successful, and the company opened other lines for mining and logging. By 1918, the ETWNCRR reached Boone.

With tourism already a pillar of the local economy, the ETWNCRR had run excursion trips from its beginning, and in the 1910s, it added excursion cars as part of its fleet. Pennsylvania's

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<sup>2</sup> Catherine Bishir, *North Carolina Architecture* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 448-449, and David Perkins, ed., *Raleigh: A Living History of North Carolina's Capital* (Winston-Salem: John F. Blair, Publisher, 1994), 128.

<sup>3</sup> Tim Hollis, *The Land of the Smokies* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2007), 18, and John Preston Arthur, *A History of Watauga County, North Carolina with Sketches of Prominent Families* (Richmond, VA: Everett Waddy Co., 1915), 270.

Baldwin Locomotive Works built the company's small ten-wheeled engines, and Baldwin finished Locomotive No. 12 in February 1917. Locals affectionately called the small engines "tweetsie" for their shrill whistles echoing through the valleys.<sup>4</sup>

Following World War II, car-ownership soared and tourism, a historical main-stay in North Carolina's mountains, expanded. The Blue Ridge Parkway brought even more tourists to the region, but additional highways and better roads soon put the ETWNCRR out of business. In the fall of 1950, the "tweetsie" engines made their final runs and the tracks were taken up. Tourism, however, was poised for growth.<sup>5</sup>

The Great Smokey Mountains National Park, established in the 1930s, drew more tourists to the west, and the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians began developing tourism attractions at their Qualla Boundary Reservation in southwest North Carolina. After World War II, they added an outdoor drama, *Unto These Hills*, to their offerings and built the Oconaluftee Indian Village, a reconstruction of a mid-eighteenth-century Cherokee settlement.<sup>6</sup>

In 1950, noting the success of *Unto These Hills*, the Southern Appalachian Historic Association commissioned playwright Kermit Hunter to write an outdoor drama, *Horn in the West*, which has been performed annually in Boone since 1952. Also in 1952, Hugh MacRae Morton, grandson of Lumina Pier-developer Hugh MacRae, took ownership of Grandfather Mountain. The mountain had long been a tourist attraction, but Morton promoted it heavily as "Carolina's Top Scenic Attraction," and he built the site's famous Mile High Swinging Bridge in 1952.<sup>7</sup>

At about that same time, three railroad enthusiasts purchased the East Tennessee and Western North Carolina Railroad's Locomotive No. 12. They moved the engine to Virginia where they established the Shenandoah Central Railroad as a tourist attraction. The following year, however, Hurricane Hazel's rains washed the tracks away, and the investors sold the engine and cars to Gene Autry. He planned to move them to California, but the coast-to-coast move proved too costly. Autry then sold the equipment to Grover C. Robbins, Jr., a businessman from Blowing Rock and the son of the former Blowing Rock mayor.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Laura A. W. Phillips, East Tennessee and Western North Carolina Railroad Locomotive #12, National Register Nomination, 1992, section 8, pages 2-3.

<sup>5</sup> Phillips, section 8, page 2.

<sup>6</sup> Tim Hollis, *The Land of the Smokies* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2007), 12-13 and 64-65.

<sup>7</sup> Catherine Bishir, Michael Southern, and Jennifer Martin, *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 79 and 226.

<sup>8</sup> Phillips, section 8, page 3, and Tweetsie Railroad, *A Blast from the Past* (Blowing Rock, NC: Tweetsie Railroad, no date), 6.



Figure 22: Undated postcard with original depot, image from cowcard.com and photo by Hugh Morton

Robbins astutely trumpeted the engine’s return to North Carolina. Governor Luther Hodges declared May 20, 1956 as “Tweetsie Home Coming Day,” and the Governor visited the engine at the Carolina and Northwestern Railroad shops in Hickory where it was undergoing refurbishment.<sup>9</sup>

While mechanics spruced up No. 12, Robbins negotiated leases and rights-of-way with local farm families and the Carolina Mill and Lumber

Company for land on Middle Fork Creek on the west side of U. S. Highway 321 between Boone and Blowing Rock. There, he developed the Tweetsie Railroad, a “Wild West” theme park featuring a three-mile loop on which No. 12 would eventually pull cars, stopping along the way for “train robberies” and shoot-outs among cowboys, deputies, and Indians.<sup>10</sup>



Figure 21: Undated postcard showing Magic Mountain, image from cowcard.com

<sup>9</sup> *A Blast from the Past*, 7.

<sup>10</sup> Phillips, section 8, page 3, and *A Blast from the Past*, 13.



On May 23, 1957, No. 12 and the original ETWNCRR cars were loaded on to flatbed transfer trucks and began a slow climb to Blowing Rock. Although Hickory, where the equipment had been repaired and refurbished, was only 40 miles away, the elevation difference was more than three thousand feet. The caravan traveled at less than five miles per hour and the final hill was the most challenging: the freshly graded road up the slope from the Middle Fork Creek floodplain to Tweetsie's tracks called for the use of two bulldozers to push and pull the locomotive and its truck.<sup>11</sup>

Tweetsie opened on July 5, 1957, and it appears to be North Carolina's first theme park.<sup>12</sup> At that time, the Tweetsie Railroad consisted of a depot building and a one-mile stretch of track that passed over a newly constructed trestle and part-way around an officially unnamed mountain that Tweetsie christened Roundhouse Mountain. The ride took passengers to the end of the line for a picnic and then backed up to the station.<sup>13</sup>

By the 1958 season, Tweetsie was still a picnic outing, but the tracks had been completed to create the present-day three-mile loop. In 1959 or 1960, Robbins added the Wild West Main Street, and, around that same time, a Charlotte TV station rented Tweetsie and threw a birthday party for Fred Kirby, the host of one of their children's shows. In the show, which changed names over time, Kirby consistently played a cowboy, and, for the party, the TV station hired actors from the *Horn in the West* outdoor drama to attack the train. Robbins kept the show as part of the park and constructed Frontier Town and Fort Boone as sets for the action.<sup>14</sup>

In the early 1960s, Robbins added a chairlift to take visitors to the top of Roundhouse Mountain where he broke from the Wild West theme and partnered with Jack Pentes to create Magic Mountain. Pentes was a Charlotte artist and designer responsible for untold numbers of sets, signs, and art installations in Charlotte. For the Magic Mountain area, Pentes designed a terminal for the chair lift that was a castle with four turrets and a sleeping giant display. Low-speed go-carts disguised as small cars ringed the Magic Mountain area, which included a Ferris wheel and other amusement park rides.<sup>15</sup>

In the 1970s, the company moved the Magic Mountain rides, including the go-cart cars, downhill to a new area styled as the Country Fair, and Magic Mountain was revamped as Miner's

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<sup>11</sup> *A Blast from the Past*, 8.

<sup>12</sup> Bishir et al., *Guide*, 213. An amusement park and a theme park are different: an amusement park houses a variety of rides that are not necessarily related. A theme park presents a story or a theme.

<sup>13</sup> Chris Robbins, Tweetsie owner and nephew of Grover Robbins, Jr., interview with the author, February 12, 2016.

<sup>14</sup> Robbins interview and Hollis, 112.

<sup>15</sup> Robbins interview, Hollis 115, and Mark Washburn, "Charlotte Artist Jack Pentes Built a Career on Child's Play," (Charlotte) *Observer*, February 10, 2015.

Mountain, featuring Mouse Mine No. 9, another Pentes design in which a very small train travels through a mouse mine with Swiss cheese walls and a fluorescent tableau of mice engaged in mining. The Mouse Mine tracks followed the original route laid out for the go-cart cars. The Magic Castle at the top of the chair lift was stripped of its walls to create an open-air structure with two turrets retained and remodeled as mining apparatuses. In the mid-1970s, the company added a deer park farther up the hill behind the Miner's Mountain area.<sup>16</sup>

The Miner's Mountain area has undergone extensive remodeling over the years. Mouse Mine No. 9 retains its original appearance from the early 1970s, and an A-frame pavilion in the center of the area dates to the early 1960s. Additionally, two turrets and part of the structure of the original Magic Castle also remain, albeit in extensively altered states. Most of the other buildings and features on Miner's Mountain date from the 1990s.<sup>17</sup>

Most recently, a fire destroyed the original 1957 depot in 2008. A new building, completed in 2008 or 2009, recalls the earlier structure and houses bathrooms and a first-aid area.<sup>18</sup>

Regionally, other small-scale theme parks followed Tweetsie. In 1960, R. B. Coburn, a Virginia native and former Holiday Inn innkeeper, purchased a mountain top in Maggie Valley and started planning Ghost Town in the Sky. Like Tweetsie, Ghost Town tapped into the popular "Wild West" genre and featured a main street lined with faux saloons, hotels, and banks, which housed shops and served as a set for daily shootouts. The park included amusement park rides, but its main claim to fame was the chair lift and funicular inclined railroad that carried visitors up the mountain side to the Ghost Town itself. During its heyday in the 1960s, the park hosted over 600,000 visitors each year.<sup>19</sup>

By the 1970s, Ghost Town had changed ownership and the numbers of visitors was in steady decline. Coburn bought the park back in the 1980s, but his efforts to update the park and expand its offerings with the construction of a roller coaster failed, and he put it up for sale again in 2002. Since that time, the park has struggled with ownership changes, bankruptcy, and several re-openings and closings. The park is currently undergoing another renovation and has been

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<sup>16</sup> Robins interview.

<sup>17</sup> Robbins interview.

<sup>18</sup> Robbins interview.

<sup>19</sup> Bill Studenc, "Maggie Valley Considers Loan for Ghost Town," Asheville *Citizen-Times*, May 14, 2009; Hollis, 119, and Ghost Town Village Wikipedia entry, accessed on February 8, 2016 via [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghost\\_Town\\_Village](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghost_Town_Village).

rebranded as the Ghost Town Village. It is scheduled to reopen in the summer of 2016 with the original Wild West buildings revamped in an “Appalachian” style.<sup>20</sup>

Also, in the 1960s and 1970s, the Cherokee Indians expanded their offerings. The Cherokee who escaped the Trail of Tears in 1838 eventually formed the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, headquartered in the Qualla Boundary in Swain County. In 1952, the tribe created the Oconaluftee Indian Village as an educational tourist attraction.<sup>21</sup> During the 1960s and 1970s, the Cherokee worked with R. B. Coburn, the developer from Ghost Town in the Sky, to create Cherokee Wonderland and Frontier Land, both of which included narrow gauge railroads.<sup>22</sup> Both of these parks have closed or been absorbed into other attractions.

Also at Cherokee, Santa’s Land opened in 1966. This amusement park has suffered decline over the decades, but is still in operation with amusement park rides and a small North Pole-themed shopping area.<sup>23</sup>

Geographically closer to Tweetsie is The Land of Oz, the brainchild of Jack Pentecost who partnered with Grover Robbins, Jr., to develop the park. The park was originally based on the book *The Wizard of Oz* rather than the movie, and visitors were supposed to assume the role of a character as they moved through the park. Visitors literally followed the Yellow Brick Road to visit Dorothy’s house, Munchkin houses, and the witch’s castle. At the end of the tour, a ski lift, with chairs modified to simulate hot air balloons, awaited guests. The Land of Oz opened in 1970, just a few months after Grover Robbins, Jr., succumbed to cancer. Despite being the Southeast’s biggest attraction in 1970, with over 20,000 visitors on opening day, The Land of Oz struggled financially, particularly after a 1975 fire, and it closed in 1980. Since then, the park suffered vandalism before becoming part of a condominium development in the 1990s. The current owners have restored portions of the Yellow Brick Road and Dorothy’s house is available to rent, but most other vestiges of the park have been lost.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Jessi Stone, “Ghost Town Rolls Out New Plan for 2016,” *Smokey Mountain News*, December 9, 2015, accessed on February 8, 2016 via <http://www.smokymountainnews.com/news/item/16830-ghost-town-rolls-out-new-plan-for-2016-season>, and Ghost Town Village website, accessed February 10, 2016 via <http://www.ghosttownvillage.com/home.html>. The author made several varied attempts to contact the current owner and re-developer in an effort to assess the integrity of the park, but the owner did not respond. Based on online photographs, it appears that the town retained its original 1961 appearance as recently as 2010.

<sup>21</sup> Ron Holland, “Oconaluftee Indian Village” in William Powell, ed., *Encyclopedia of North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 841.

<sup>22</sup> Hollis, 124-125.

<sup>23</sup> Hollis, 84.

<sup>24</sup> Land of Oz Wikipedia entry, accessed February 10, 2016 via [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Land\\_of\\_Oz\\_\(theme\\_park\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Land_of_Oz_(theme_park)); “What on Earth Happened to the Land of Oz,” on the

Today, Tweetsie stands as one of the few locally-conceived tourist attractions still in operation in western North Carolina today. The park will open for its fifty-ninth season in April and Locomotive No. 12 will celebrate her centennial in 2017.

## Architectural Context

Placing Tweetsie in an architectural context is difficult, but most of western North Carolina's amusement parks and attractions share one thing: topography. The mountains serve as the general backdrop for the tourist attractions, but the use of and response to topography plays a role in the landscape architecture of the most long-lived tourist attractions, including Great Smokey Mountains National Park, Tweetsie Railroad, Ghost Town in the Sky, Blowing Rock, Chimney Rock, and Grandfather Mountain.

Roads, bridges, picnic areas, and other amenities were added to the National Park to attract visitors, make scenic views more accessible, and allow visitors access to the most beautiful aspects of the mountains. At Grandfather Mountain, Blowing Rock, and Chimney Rock, roads, parking areas, and gift shops became part of the landscape design. Grandfather Mountain even added features such as a swinging bridge while Chimney Rock's owners installed an elevator inside the mountain.

At Tweetsie and Ghost Town in the Sky, the terrain created a backdrop but also highlighted the park's features. Ghost Town's primary attraction was a chairlift that carried passengers straight up a steep incline, over 3,000 feet in distance, to the Wild West town at the top. At Tweetsie, the railroad circled a mountain. This design reflected the necessity of having the track run along relatively level terrain, but it also allowed passengers to feel like they were really riding away to a different place and time. The mountain served to hide Fort Boone and Frontier Town, the two places the train stops for shows, from the rest of the park. Beyond simply hiding the inner workings of the shoot-outs and the exploding outhouse, the way the train hugs the side of the mountain and passes through one particularly deep cut, highlights the drama and anticipation of what might be next, what might lurk in the woods, and what cowboy or Indian might appear next. In short, the mountain is integral to the park's theatrical component.

For its inaugural season, only one building stood at Tweetsie, a frame depot similar to the depots built all over North Carolina in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but the park's overarching architecture reflects a fascination with Wild West themes and the architecture of the

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Emerald Mountain Properties website, accessed February 10, 2016 via <http://www.emeraldmtn.com>; and Hollis, 106.

western United States in the late 1800s. Beginning with Hopalong Cassidy in 1949, over 100 western series aired on TV during the 1950s and 1960s. Shows such as Gunsmoke, Bonanza, Wagon Train, and Rawhide were modern-day morality plays with good guys, bad guys, and justice in the end.<sup>25</sup> The programs were wildly popular, and Grover Robbins added Western-style buildings to the park for its second season. By its second or third season, the Tweetsie locomotive began making two stops along its loop to watch cowboys and Indians fight it out in front of sets depicting the fictional Fort Boone and Frontier Town.<sup>26</sup>

Tweetsie's architecture is also grounded in a long history of nostalgia-based theme parks that can be linked to European pleasure gardens. Theme parks, Tweetsie included, are intended to make money while European pleasure gardens were intended to display money, but in linking European gardens to theme parks, geography professor Terence Young cites nostalgia as a primary connection. The "Arcadian meadow" created around 1770 at the French commune Ermenonville was intended to provide a pastoral escape, and Young goes on to argue that "the pastoral" has never lost favor. Another ubiquitous troupe he notes is the lost village or town. "A civic but nonindustrial past is romanticized and presented as the open, attractive, supportive, and reliable alternative to a modern city."<sup>27</sup>

Furthermore, Young documents the continuing role of performances in European gardens from as early as the sixteenth century through to modern-day theme parks. Theaters within pleasure gardens and theme parks alike were and remain common, but he notes a particular tendency for performances to move off the stage and into the park's larger landscape. At Marie-Antoinette's model farm, her court served as actors and actresses playing shepherds and shepherdesses. Similarly, costumed actors at Williamsburg represent a wide variety of characters and personalities from eighteenth-century Virginia.<sup>28</sup>

Theme parks can also be likened to pilgrimage sites that have increased in popularity as society has become more secular. Pilgrims to theme parks "can alleviate the anxieties in their lives and the crises in their societies," and, indeed, North Carolinians frequently ascribe the word "pilgrimage" when discussing their childhood visit or visits to Tweetsie.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> New York Public Library Blog entry, "On TV Westerns of the 1950s and '60s," accessed on February 14, 2016 via <http://www.nypl.org/blog/2012/12/01/tv-westerns-1950s-and-60s>.

<sup>26</sup> Robbins interview.

<sup>27</sup> Terence Young, "Grounding the Myth: Theme Park Landscapes in an Era of Commerce and Nationalism," in Terence Young and Robert Riley, *Theme Park Landscapes: Antecedents and Variations*, (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2002), 2-3.

<sup>28</sup> Young, 3.

<sup>29</sup> Young, 4.

Nationalism, too, runs through the history of theme parks with recreations of local buildings and landscapes based on American national identity evident at many parks, including Disneyland and Disneyworld, and Knott's Berry Farm in California. At Knott's Berry Farm, the Ghost Town area of the park and Fiesta Village, which highlight the history of western expansion and California's Spanish heritage, respectively, are particularly good examples of the historical nostalgia and nationalism employed at so many theme parks.<sup>30</sup>

Tweetsie encapsulates all of these aspects: a pastoral, scenic setting with a "historic" nationalistic village, and theatrical performances where the good guys always win, the bad guys are only marginally bad, and the not-too-smart-guys provide laughs.

The actual construction of Tweetsie's buildings is most closely related to set design. While the buildings along the main street are substantial and contain shops and offices, they are still very set-like in nature with facades that are frequently touched-up, improved, or altered. The Palace is the largest of the earliest buildings and is remarkably intact. It dates from 1961 and clearly draws from western commercial buildings with double-tier porches, such as those in Tombstone, Arizona, which was declared a National Historic Landmark Historic District that same year.

Ghost Town in the Sky had (and may still have) similar architecture with a set-like "downtown" or main street area executed in a Wild West theme similar to Tweetsie's. Since the early 2000s, and especially since 2009, this park has struggled to stay open and has periodically closed its doors. It is currently undergoing a renovation that proposes to re-brand the Wild West town into an "Appalachian Village." The owner could not be reached and the park is currently closed for the winter, so its current state is not known.

### *Comparable Examples*

Tweetsie is, to a great extent, a one-of-a-kind theme park in North Carolina, but it shares some common elements with other parks including the "lost" or historic village, a history based nationalism, and the use of a railroad.

Ghost Town in the Sky (figures 23 and 24) is probably the best comparison. Ghost Town opened in 1961, just a few years after Tweetsie, and it featured a ski lift ride up a mountain side to a Wild West village where actors recreated shoot-outs throughout the day. Ghost Town's owner could not be reached, in spite of repeated attempts, and the park is undergoing a renovation, so its current appearance and historic and architectural integrity are unknown. When recent photographs and historic post cards and photographs, accessible online, are compared, it appears

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<sup>30</sup> Young, 5-6, and Knott's Berry Farm History, accessed via <https://www.knotts.com/media-center/history> on February 15, 2016.

that most of Ghost Town's village remained intact at least until very recent years, and the current website for the revamped park shows most of the village still much as it was in the 1960s.

The Land of Oz (figure 25) has a completely different theme from Tweetsie, but because Grover Robbins, Jr. and Jack Pentec were both involved in its creation, it should be compared to Tweetsie. The Land of Oz, however, has been damaged by neglect and vandalism since it closed in 1980. The current owner has uncovered and repaired most of the Yellow Brick Road and Dorothy's house is available for rent, but the park's other features, such as the witch's castle, the chairlift/hot-air-balloon ride, and most of the other buildings have been torn down. At the time the investigator visited Beech Mountain, the snow-covered road to the site was impassable, but because so much of the Land of Oz park has been lost, Tweetsie is a better example of the theme park work of both Grover Robbins, Jr. and Jack Pentec.

Most other parks or theme parks in western North Carolina do not make good comparisons despite sharing histories based in tourism and increasing car-based travel. Santa Land still exists, but its theme is completely unlike and unrelated to Tweetsie. The Great Smokey Mountains National Park is not a theme park, while Chimney Rock, Blowing Rock, and Grandfather Mountain are centered on natural geologic formations.

Other parks in the United States have narrow-gauge steam trains as part of their offerings. The closest examples geographically are at Dollywood in western Tennessee and Six Flags over Georgia near Atlanta. At Dollywood, Klondike Katie, a former U.S. Army train, very similar to Tweetsie's Yukon Queen, circles the park daily. While this engine shares some history with the Yukon Queen, the focus or theme of Dollywood is not the railroad; the train is simply one of many amusement park rides. At Six Flags, two engines travel around the park. These were built specifically for the park in the late 1960s and were never "working" engines. Both were oil-fired steamers, but both have been converted to diesel.



Figure 23: Ghost Town in the Sky, image from ghosttownvillage.com



Figure 24: Undated but recent image of Ghost Town from ghosttowndotcom.wordpress.com





Figure 25: Undated postcard of Land of Oz, image from matterhorn.com

## National Register Evaluation

### Integrity

Tweetsie Railroad retains its integrity of location because it has not been moved. It also retains integrity of design, setting, feeling, and association because it appears much as it did by about 1961 and is still associated with tourism and recreation. The Magic Mountain/Miner's Mountain has undergone changes, but the park nonetheless substantially retains its original design and setting. Over time, integrity of materials and workmanship has been diminished by repairs, updates, and some alterations as structures such as the Ferris wheel and the sets along the rail route have been replaced or renewed.

Tweetsie Railroad is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the areas of entertainment/recreation and commerce for its association with tourism in western North Carolina and the Great Smokey Mountains. Tweetsie was the first true theme park in North Carolina, but its tourism significance is geographically specific to western North Carolina, a region where tourism has been a part of the economy since the early nineteenth century. The

park epitomizes the aspects of a theme park, which, unlike an amusement park, tells a story, and it is one of the most successful and longest-surviving tourist attractions in North Carolina. Tweetsie is, to a great extent, a one-of-a-kind theme park in North Carolina, but it shares some common elements with other parks including the “lost” or historic village, a history based nationalism, and the use of a railroad. As such, it is an excellent representative of a theme park and of the locally-produced tourist attractions that fueled the region’s economy after World War II.

Tweetsie Railroad is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B in the areas of entertainment/recreation and commerce for its association with Grover Robbins, Jr., who was locally significant to the history of tourism development in western North Carolina. Robbins was involved in at least three amusement parks or theme parks (Skyland Amusement Park, which is no longer extant, Tweetsie, and the Land of Oz, which is only partially extant) and numerous golf and ski developments. He was a driving force in the region’s tourism economy. The two houses he resided in during his productive years, one in Blowing Rock and one in the Hound Ears, a nearby residential golf club that Robbins developed, are still standing, but Robbins’ work at Tweetsie best represents his efforts to increase tourism in the area. The other remaining developments associated with Robbins are primarily residential in nature and focused on golfing or skiing. Tweetsie is not eligible for its association with artist Jack Pentes because all that remains of Pentes’ work at Tweetsie is Mouse Mine No. 9, which does not meet Criterion Consideration G for resources that have achieved significance within the past fifty years.

Tweetsie Railroad is eligible for the National Register of Historic under Criterion C because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a Wild West theme park. Over time, the buildings have been updated and altered, but they continue to embody the Wild West theme and they directly reflect the set-design-based architecture of a typical late-1950s theme park.

Tweetsie Railroad is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion D because it has not yielded and is not likely to yield information important in history or prehistory.

Locomotive No. 12 is individually listed in the National Register. It still retains its integrity of design, feeling, association, materials, and workmanship, as detailed in the 1992 National Register Nomination. Locomotive No. 12 has not been altered and therefore, it retains its eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of transportation, and it continues to meet Criterion Consideration B as a structure that has been moved from its original location.

## Boundary Description and Justification

The proposed National Register boundary for the Tweetsie Railroad encompasses the park's original and unaltered three-mile railroad loop plus the original entrance and parking area. It encompasses all the features and buildings historically associated with the theme park. The boundary follows the outer edge of the railroad tracks at a point about fifteen feet beyond the outer edge. Along the park's northeast side, the boundary passes between the tracks and the parcel boundary, which is the U.S. Highway 321 right-of-way, and so does not include any highway right-of-way. Along the boundary's southern edge, it leaves the track's edge and swings south to encompass the original parking lot. See Proposed National Register Boundary map.



Map 2

## Evaluation: Shull House

Resource Name	Sholl or Shull House
HPO Site No.	WT 261
Street Address	4259 U. S. Hwy. 321
PIN	2819917206000
Construction Date(s)	ca. 1908
NRHP Recommendation	Not Eligible



*NOTE: When the original architectural survey documented this house in the 1980s, the investigator recorded the family name as Sholl. Deeds, census records, and newspaper articles, however, clearly use the name Shull. Thus, this report uses Shull.*

### Property Description

The Shull House stands on the east side of Middle Fork Creek. The gently sloping yard is part of the creek's floodplain, and evergreens line a circular driveway in front of the dwelling. Behind the house is a small creek and behind that, to the east, the terrain climbs into forested hills. In front of the house, U. S. Highway 321 follows a raised berm on a north-south axis. To the north of the house, the yard extends toward the intersection of Middle Fork Creek with the creek that runs behind the house. This area retains a few gnarled fruit trees.

The Shull House is a two-story, cruciform-plan house with drop or novelty siding. Asphalt shingles cover the roof, and the house stands on a full brick foundation. The west façade (figure 26) is asymmetrical with the southern ell being slightly longer than the other gabled wings. The main entrance (figure 27) is situated along the south wing's west side and features Craftsman-style, full-length glazing. Windows are arranged singly and in pairs and feature four-over-one sash. On the north elevation (figure 31), a stone chimney is centered on the gable end. Another stone chimney is off-center on the south gable end (figure 28). A third stone flue is situated on the east end of the one-story rear ell (figure 29).

A full-width porch extends across the entirety of the west façade and around the north gable end. The porch is simple with no railing and slender, square paired posts. The porch was lengthened

to incorporate a porte cochere on the house's south end. The south end of the porte cochere features a stone wall (figure 36).

On the rear elevation (figure 29), a one-story ell with a stone chimney flue originally housed a kitchen and spring house or milk house. Also on the rear elevation of the south gable wing, a one-story, shed-roof porch was enclosed, possibly during the 1930s or 1940s when extensive remodeling appears to have occurred.

The 1930s or 1940s remodeling included replacing original windows, removing the central chimney and adding exterior chimneys, and, possibly, replacing original porch posts. Although drop siding could be original to the design, the original sheathing was more likely plain weatherboarding, so the drop siding likely dates from the remodeling as well.

Inside, the house follows a cruciform plan. Originally, a central chimney stood at the junction of the four wings with a staircase running along the chimney's south edge. When the central chimney was removed, the staircase was moved to the north side of the original chimney location. The house does not have a hallway downstairs. The front door opens into a large living room that occupies the entire south gable wing, and the original staircase would have landed in front of the front door. Single rooms occupy each of the other three gabled wings.

During architectural surveys in the 1980s and early 2000s, the interior was recorded as being largely intact despite the alterations to the plan. The walls are finished with varnished beaded board, and upstairs floors are built of hand-dressed lumber.

The investigator made repeated phone calls to the owner and sent a letter, but received no response. On February 12, the house appeared to be occupied but no one was home then or on February 13. One set of windows had open curtains, and the downstairs southernmost room appeared to retain its original finishes as seen in the survey photographs.

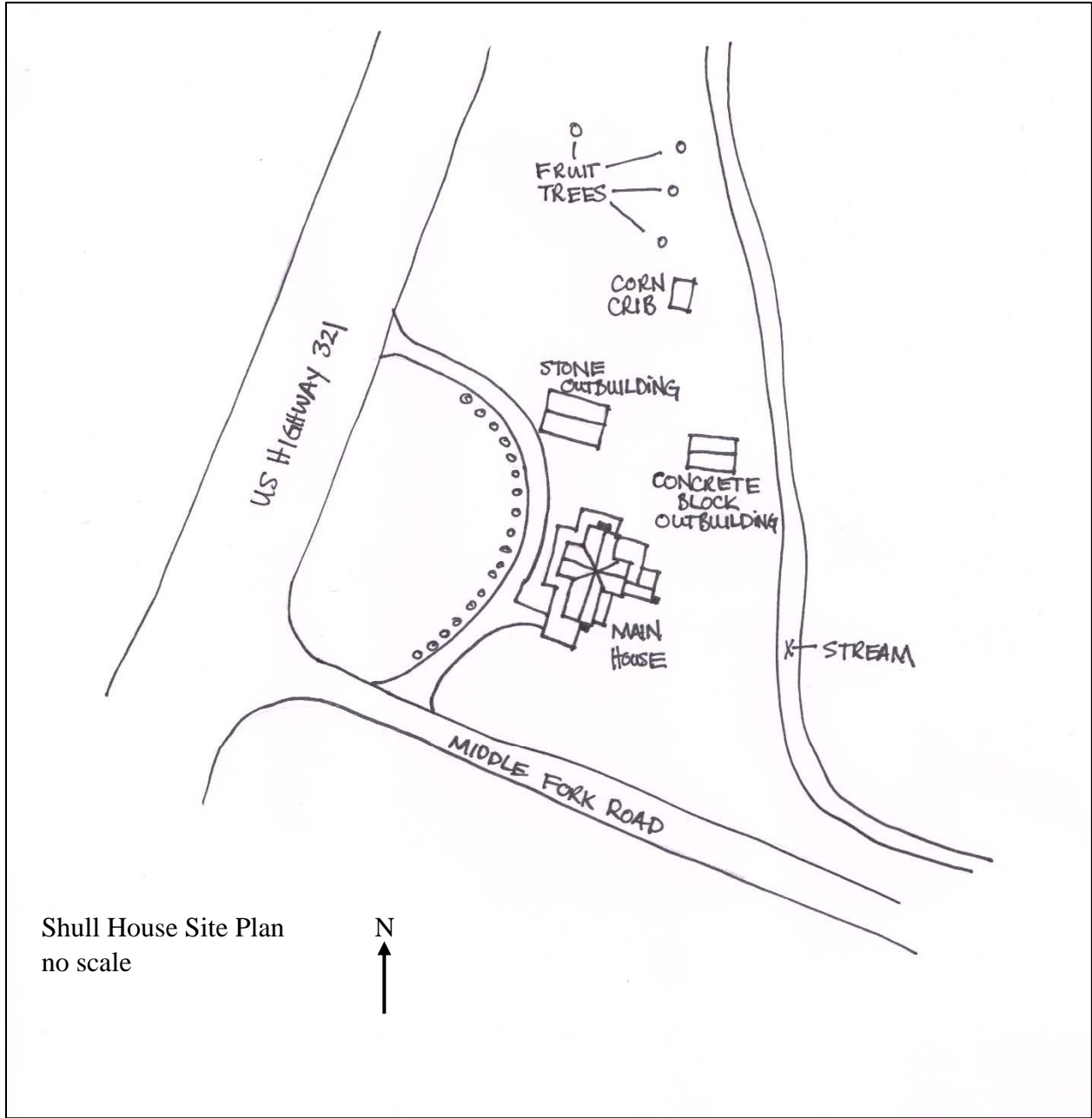
To the north of the house are three outbuildings. One is a gable-front, stone building (figures 32 and 33). It has sliding wooden doors on the front elevation and drop siding around the cornice and in the gable ends. Ghost marks suggest that the building was expanded toward the front. The 1980s survey form notes this as a spring house dating from the 1930s, but its placement and form do not support that. It likely was an early garage which was lengthened when cars got longer in the 1950s.

Behind this building is a gable-front, one-story, concrete block building (figure 34) constructed in the bank of a berm that follows a stream behind the dwelling. This building appears to have

had four-over-four sash windows flanking a central entrance. The roof is covered with 5-V crimp metal roofing. This building is in poor condition. The survey form does not mention a use, but it was likely a food storage building, such as a can-house, apple house, root cellar, or some combination of those three.

To the north of these two outbuildings is a frame corn crib (figure 35) with a shed roof and slatted walls.

The original survey form documented a fourth log outbuilding described as a one-hundred-year-old crib that had been moved to the site at some point. This outbuilding no longer exists.



Shull House Site Plan  
no scale

Map 3





*Figure 26: Shull House, west elevation*



*Figure 27: Shull House, west elevation, front door*



*Figure 28: Shull House, south elevation*



*Figure 29: Shull House, east elevation*



*Figure 30: Shull House, northeast corner*



*Figure 31: Shull House, north elevation*



*Figure 32: stone outbuilding, west elevation*



*Figure 33: stone outbuilding, southwest corner*



*Figure 34: concrete block outbuilding, southwest corner*



*Figure 35: corncrib, northeast corner*



*Figure 36: Shull House, southwest corner*



*Figure 37: Shull House, west elevation from U. S. Highway 321*

## Historical Background

Andrew Jackson Shull was born in 1854 in Burke County, and in 1879, he married Margaret Cornelia Harstin. The newlyweds were residing with Shull's mother and aunt in Burke County in 1880, and Shull's occupation was farming.<sup>31</sup> In March 1889, the *Watauga Democrat* reported that Mr. A. J. Shull was in Boone while sawing lumber for a new hotel in Blowing Rock.<sup>32</sup>

In 1891, Shull purchased three tracts of land totaling 125 acres, and this house appears to stand on one of these tracts.<sup>33</sup> The 1900 census records the couple in Watauga County, with Shull working as a blacksmith, and in 1901, Shull made his second and last purchase of land in Watauga County.<sup>34</sup> A note in the *Watauga Democrat* in 1903 describes Shull as a "gatekeeper on the B. B. R. turnpike," which is the Boone-Blowing Rock Turnpike, established in the 1880s and constructed in the 1890s.<sup>35</sup> According to notes in the architectural survey file for the house, he and Margaret built this house around 1908, and the 1910 census notes that Andy Shull was a farmer, but he does not appear in the agricultural censuses.

The Shulls established themselves in Watauga County at a time of rapid change for the area. Agriculture and tourism have been a part of the region's economy since the first settlers of European descent came to the area, but improving roads and the arrival of railroads to the county sparked intense logging and mining operations. Moving away from subsistence farming toward cash crops and the extraction of raw materials changed the county's socioeconomic make up, but well-positioned farmers, such as Shull, who appears to have farmed, operated a sawmill, provided blacksmithing services, and served as a turnpike gatekeeper, were able to benefit from the region's growing economy.

In 1918, Shull sold the house and farm to his son, Thomas Shull and his wife, Dakota Elrod Shull and the elder Shull moved to Beaver Dam, Virginia.<sup>36</sup> Thomas Shull worked at a sawmill

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<sup>31</sup> United States Census Records, Burke County, NC, 1880, accessed via ancestry.com; Burke County marriage records, accessed via ancestry.com; and Andrew Jackson Shull's tombstone inscription accessed via findagrave.com.

<sup>32</sup> *Watauga Democrat*, March 13, 1889, page 3.

<sup>33</sup> J. M. and R.C. Earnest to A. J. Shull, January 26, 1891, Watauga County Deed Book O, page 306.

<sup>34</sup> United States Census Records, Watauga County, NC, 1900, accessed via ancestry.com, and Carlton Coffery to A. J. Shull, August 15, 1901, Watauga County Deed Book Y, page 140.

<sup>35</sup> *The Weekly News* (Lenoir, NC), August 14, 1903, page 2. Gatekeepers were also known as tollkeepers or toll collectors; it is not known if this would have been a full-time or part-time job for Shull or if the work would have been paid or voluntary. Paying gatekeepers and tollkeepers appears to have varied by turnpike.

<sup>36</sup> A. J. and M. C. Shull to T. H. Shull, February 20, 1918, Watauga County Deed Book 20, page 409, and A. J. Shull obituary, *Watauga Democrat*, February 2, 1922.

according to the 1920 census, and in 1921, his father died. In February 1927, Thomas and Dakota Shull sold the property to D. S. Shore, who re-sold it only a few months later to Mrs. R. C. Greene (Belle C. Greene). Mrs. Greene owned and occupied the house until the mid-1980s when Laverne Greene Prevatte, presumably the daughter of Mrs. Greene, acquired it. Laura Belle Lillis, also likely a descendent of Belle C. Greene, currently owns the house.<sup>37</sup>

The house appears to have been remodeled significantly, probably during Mrs. Greene's ownership, sometime in the 1930s or 1940s. At that time, the windows were replaced with four-over-one, Craftsman-style sash, and the exterior doors were replaced with Craftsman-style glazed doors. It seems likely that the plain, square, paired porch posts also date from this remodeling. On the south elevation, the porch was extended to create a porte cochere with a delicately curved stone wall along its south edge. The drop siding, not seen by the investigator on other early-twentieth-century houses in the county, likely also dates from this remodeling.

The one-story, rear ell was originally a kitchen and milk house or springhouse that was moved and joined to the main house, while a rear shed-roof porch was enclosed along the south wing's east elevation. A brick addition is located on the north side of the rear ell, but its construction date is not known.

Inside, the house retained many original finishes at the time of the architectural survey, but the original plan had been altered when the stairs were relocated from the south side of the now-demolished central chimney to the north side of the chimney. Exterior, gable end chimneys presumably date from the time of the removal of the original central chimney, and because their stone construction matches the porte cochere wall, it is likely that the chimney changes happened during the Greene remodeling.

Today, tenants occupy the house. Although it exhibits deferred maintenance, the house does retain original interior finishes and many 1930s or 1940s features on the exterior.

## Architectural Context

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Watauga County farmers generally prospered with improved roads and railroad connections facilitating a cash economy, while tourism also brought money and jobs to the region. Many families, including the Shulls, did a

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<sup>37</sup> T. H. and Dakota Shull to D. S. Shore, February 16, 1927, Watauga County Deed Book 35, page 36; D. S. and Alice Shore to Mrs. R. C. Greene, October 17, 1927, Watauga County Deed Book 35, page 401; Belle G. Greene to Laverne Greene Prevatte, August 16, 1982, Watauga County Deed Book 224, page 791; and Watauga County Deed Book 1576, page 672.



little bit of everything with many farmers also engaging in timbering and sawmilling, blacksmithing, or perhaps carpentry.<sup>38</sup>

Logging was another significant economic force. As railroads entered the county in the early twentieth century, logging companies streamed in, bringing “unprecedented growth and commerce.” Because logging left behind cleared land, it also facilitated agricultural growth with more than 88,000 acres of improved farm land in the county by 1900, as compared to 17,000 in 1850. Corn and cabbage were the primary agricultural products, although tobacco and dairy farming increased in importance during the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>39</sup>

The Shull family built their house during an era of intense change but general prosperity in Watauga County. Most successful residents built two-story I-houses decorated with sawnwork ornaments and porches that are frequently elaborate two-story designs described in the *Architectural History of Watauga County* as “flights of architectural fancy.”<sup>40</sup> A. J. Shull, however, diverged from the standard I-house with a “fancy” porch that many builders used in Watauga County at the turn of the twentieth century. Instead, he created a fairly plain house with a cruciform plan that was more complex than the straight-forward, center-passage I-house.

The dwelling does have an extensive wrap around porch, but the house and porch are devoid of the sawnwork decorations typical of the era. The house underwent substantial remodeling before World War II which may have stripped it of earlier Victorian-era ornamentation. No extant ghost marks suggested earlier ornamentation now removed.

#### *Comparable Examples*

The Grover Johnson House (WT 103, figures 38 and 39) is the best comparison to the Shull House. The Johnson House is a one-story dwelling thought to have been constructed in 1896 or 1900 by a builder named Willy Greene.<sup>41</sup> Like the Shull House, the cruciform plan radiates from a still-extant central chimney. The Johnson House is intact with weatherboard siding, diagonally-laid sheathing in the gable ends, and two-over-two sash windows. The Johnson House retains a few small outbuildings, including what appears to be a spring house.

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<sup>38</sup> Daniel Pezzoni, *The Architectural History of Watauga County, North Carolina* (Boone, NC: Watauga County Historical Society, 2009), 48-49.

<sup>39</sup> Pezzoni, 73, 76-77.

<sup>40</sup> Pezzoni, 54.

<sup>41</sup> Pezzoni, 158.



*Figure 38: Grover Johnson House, WT 103*



*Figure 39: Grover Johnson House, WT 103*

The John McBride House (WT 441, figure 40) and the A. L. Greene House (WT 465, Study List, figure 41) have plans suggestive of a cruciform plan, but they achieved their forms over time through additions, and their plans do not create a symmetrical cross shape. The John McBride House has been altered with vinyl siding and modern replacement windows, but the site includes two barns and a wellhouse. The A. L. Greene House is the seat of a working farm with numerous outbuildings and barns surrounding it.<sup>42</sup>



*Figure 40: John McBride House, WT 441*

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<sup>42</sup> Pezzoni, 139 and 168.



*Figure 41: A. L. Greene House, WT 465*

An unsurveyed dwelling (figure 42) at 6364 U.S. Highway 421 in Vilas, has a cross-gable roof, but is not a full cruciform-plan house. This one-and-a-half-story house retains weatherboard siding, a pressed metal roof, and two-over-two sash windows. Several log and frame outbuildings and barns still stand on the property.



*Figure 42: Unsurveyed house on U. S. Highway 421 in Vilas*

Far more common from the era in which the Shull House was built are I-houses with sawnwork porches, which represent the prototypical late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Watauga County farmhouse.

### National Register Evaluation

The Shull House retains integrity of location. It retains aspects of design integrity through its original cruciform plan, but other aspects, such as the central chimney and the design elements of the porch posts and windows, have been lost. It retains its setting within a fertile valley, but the expansion of U. S. Highway 321 and the loss of surrounding farmland detracts from its original setting. It features materials and workmanship from both the early 1900s and 1930s or 1940s, with the integrity of both periods of materials and workmanship being diluted by the other. It retains its feeling as a farmhouse, but its association with agriculture has been lost.

The Shull House is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A because it does not retain historically significant associations with agriculture or another area of significance. The Shull House no longer retains associated agricultural land. The A. L. Greene House and the John McBride House better retain their agricultural setting and association. Additionally, the investigator noted many intact late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century farms across the county, particularly around Valle Crucis area and in the Watauga River valley.

The Shull House is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B because it is not associated with the life of a significant person in our past.

The Shull House is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C because it does not embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, nor does it represent the work of a master or possess high artistic values. The house has been significantly altered over time. It no longer communicates the architecture and design of its original construction around 1908, nor is it a good example of pre-World War II architecture, when the house was remodeled. The turn-of-the-twentieth-century form, featuring the cruciform plan, a steep roof, and wrap-around porch is obscured by circa 1930s or 1940s alterations including replacement windows, the porte cochere, Craftsman-style doors, and, potentially, entirely new drop siding. Ultimately, the house is not a good representative of a turn-of-the-twentieth-century farm house or a 1930s or 1940s farmhouse because it does not retain enough integrity from either period.

The Shull House is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion D because it has not yielded nor is it likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

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