



**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

September 1, 2016

**MEMORANDUM**

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

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

**SUBJECT:** Historic Structures Survey Report, Replace over Bridge 123 on SR 1536 over Elijah Estes Mill Creek, PA 15-11-0022, Caldwell County, ER 16-1373

Thank you for your memorandum of August 4, 2016, transmitting the above-referenced report. Having reviewed the report, we concur that the Elijah Estes House (CW0442) is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A or B. However, for the reasons outlined below, we believe the house may be eligible under Criterion C.

On page 20, the report states "...while the Elijah Estes House compares favorably to many vernacular dwellings that employ only the simplest of forms and materials without any material distinction, it generally lacks evidence of extraordinary craftsmanship, superior regional influence, or stylistic adaptation to distinguish it as a noteworthy example of vernacular design within the region when compared against other dwellings...that employ an L-plan." And, yet, the report notes that "Even though *it is a lone example of a late-nineteenth-century L-plan house within the immediate vicinity*, it is by no means the only or a noteworthy example of its type within the broader context of vernacular housing forms throughout the Appalachian foothills of western North Carolina."

As comparable resources, the report includes dwellings located in Bakersville, Mitchell County; Burnsville, Yancey County, and Dillsboro, Jackson County. Given that these properties are far removed from the subject property and located in incorporated municipalities that were historically wealthier than rural communities, they do not appear to be appropriately comparable to the Elijah Estes House.

Caldwell County has had little architectural survey work and few resources in the northwest portion of the county have been recorded. Thus, a house in a very rural area, two stories tall with a fairly complicated porch and gable design, with intact exterior materials that retains integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association (as noted in the report), would seem to be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C. Should you not concur with this assessment, we will be pleased to discuss it with you in greater detail so that we may come to final determination of eligibility.

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

cc: Mary Pope Furr, NCDOT, [mfurr@ncdot.gov](mailto:mfurr@ncdot.gov)



PAT McCRORY  
Governor

NICHOLAS J. TENNYSON  
Secretary

August 4, 2016

ER 16- 1373

MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Renee Gledhill-Earley  
Environmental Review Coordinator  
North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office

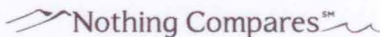
**FROM:** Kate Husband  
Architectural Historian  
NCDOT Division of Highways

*Hi m  
ER letters  
Rege 8/19/16*

**SUBJECT:** Replace Bridge No. 123 on SR 1536 (Old Johns River Road),  
Caldwell County (15-11-0022)

*Jic 8/29/16*

Enclosed please find the Historic Structures Survey Report and survey site form for the above referenced project. Please feel free to contact me by phone (919-707-6075) if you have any additional questions or comments. We look forward to hearing from you.



HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS OF  
ELIJAH ESTES HOUSE (CW 422),  
CALDWELL COUNTY

Replace Bridge No. 123 over Elijah Estes Mill Creek  
On SR 1536 (Old Johns River Road)  
Caldwell County, North Carolina  
WBS No. 17BP.11.R.119

Prepared for:

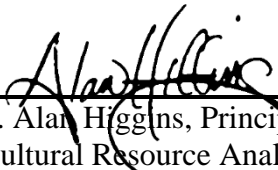
North Carolina Department of Transportation  
Human Environment Unit  
1598 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1598

Prepared by:

Cultural Resource Analysts, Inc.  
P.O. Box 71220  
Richmond, Virginia 23255

S. Alan Higgins, M.S.  
Principal Investigator

July 2016

  
S. Alan Higgins, Principal Investigator  
Cultural Resource Analysts, Inc.

July 12, 2016

Date

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

Date





# HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS OF THE ELIJAH ESTES HOUSE (CW 422), CALDWELL COUNTY

## Replace Bridge No. 123 over Elijah Estes Mill Creek on SR 1536 (Old Johns River Road) Caldwell County, North Carolina WBS No. 17BP.11.R.119

### I. INTRODUCTION

In February 2016, Cultural Resource Analysts, Inc. (CRA), conducted an intensive-level historic architectural analysis for the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) in association with the project to replace Bridge No. 123 over Elijah Estes Mill Creek on SR 1536 (Old Johns River Road) in Caldwell County, North Carolina (WBS No.: 17BP.11.R.119). The goal of the historic architectural analysis was to evaluate the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility of the property known as the Elijah Estes House (CW 422) (Table 1), located on a 29.69 acre parcel at 2916 Old Johns River Road in Caldwell County (Figures 1 and 2). The property falls within the Area of Potential Effects (APE) for the project, which extends 75 feet each direction from the centerline of the existing road and 300 feet from each end of the existing bridge. CRA’s investigation, completed on February 23–24, 2016, with supplemental fieldwork completed the week of June 14, 2016, included a combination of archival research, visual investigations, and photographic documentation of extant buildings and structures and their contextual setting.

CRA performed the historic architectural analysis in compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended; the Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974; Executive Order 11593; and Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Parts 660-66 and 800 (as revised, 1999). The field research and report meet the requirements specified in the Secretary of the Interior’s “Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation” (Federal Register 48: 190:44716-44742) (U.S. Department of the Interior 1983), as well North Carolina Department of Transportation’s (NCDOT’s) *Historic Architectural Resources: Survey Procedures and Report Guidelines* (2003) and the North Carolina Historic Preservation Office’s (NC HPO) *Architectural Survey Manual: Practical Advice for Recording Historic Resources and Digital Photography for Historic Property Surveys and National Register Nominations, Policy and Guidelines* (2012). Based on archival research and a detailed physical investigation, CRA recommends that the Elijah Estes House (CW 422) is not individually eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, B, C, or D due to a lack of significance.

Table 1. List of Historic Architectural Resources.

Resource Name	Site Number	NRHP Eligibility Recommendation
Elijah Estes House	CW 422	Not Eligible

### II. RESEARCH DESIGN

#### *Archival Research*

Prior to fieldwork, CRA conducted background research to gain understanding of the development of Caldwell County. CRA consulted the NC HPO’s online HPOWEB Geographic Information Systems (GIS) service to ascertain the level of existing documentation of the property or of others within the area that might share a similar context. Archival research also included an

investigation at the NC HPO Western Office and an inspection of archival resources, published histories, historical aerial images, topographic quadrangle maps, and historical map collections available through facilities, such as the Caldwell County Public Library, and resources such as the North Carolina Maps project.

CRA then examined property tax records available at the Caldwell County Tax Office and deed records at the Caldwell County Register of Deeds. CRA also contacted the present property owner, Angela Koontz. Ms. Koontz did not grant permission for CRA personnel to access the exterior of the house and the outbuildings surrounding the structure. She requested that all photographs be taken from the right-of-way (ROW).

### *Field Investigation*

Following the archival research, CRA architectural historians Holly Higgins and Sarah Reynolds performed an intensive-level field investigation of the Elijah Estes House (CW 422). Ms. Higgins and Ms. Reynolds took detailed notes and made a sketch site plan of the property to facilitate an understanding of the property’s contextual setting. Because the property owner did not grant access to the property, CRA was not able to access rear of the house and outbuildings or the interior of the house and no floor plans or interior photography could be completed. Recordation included documenting physical characteristics, dates of construction, character-defining features, and integrity. All buildings and structures were marked on a USGS topographic quadrangle map and aerial image.

CRA also completed extensive photographic documentation of all accessible portions of the property according to NC HPO standards and guidelines. Digital photographs were taken of the site and contextual setting and the exterior of all buildings and structures. Emphasis was placed on capturing building forms, character-defining features, and changes that have occurred throughout the property’s history.

Based on the available historical information and field observations, CRA has provided a recommendation regarding the Elijah Estes House’s (CW 422) eligibility for listing in the NRHP.

## III. PROPERTY EVALUATION

### *Elijah Estes House (CW 422)*

Address: 2916 Old Johns Creek Road,  
Collettsville, NC 28611

Quad: Collettsville, NC

Map: see Figures 1 and 2

Deed Book/Page: 1859/1899

PIN No.: 1891874132

Date(s) of construction: circa 1872–1903

Eligibility Recommendation: Not Eligible



Elijah Estes House

**Setting:** Located approximately 5 miles northwest of the small community of Collettsville in southwest Caldwell County, the Elijah Estes House (CW 422) is situated along the northwest side of a bend in Old Johns River Road, just north of Elijah Estes Mill Creek and between Bald Knob Ridge and Grassy Ridge (Figure 3). A Christmas tree farm is located southeast of Old Johns River Road and borders the river. The property is accessed by a gravel parking area located adjacent to the road and Elijah Estes Mill Creek. In addition to the residence, the 29.69 acre property associated with the Elijah Estes House includes two pre-1993 sheds and a chicken coop, two post-1998 sheds, and a post-2005 shed. A dirt lane located just east of the house leads along the slope of the ridge to the post-1998



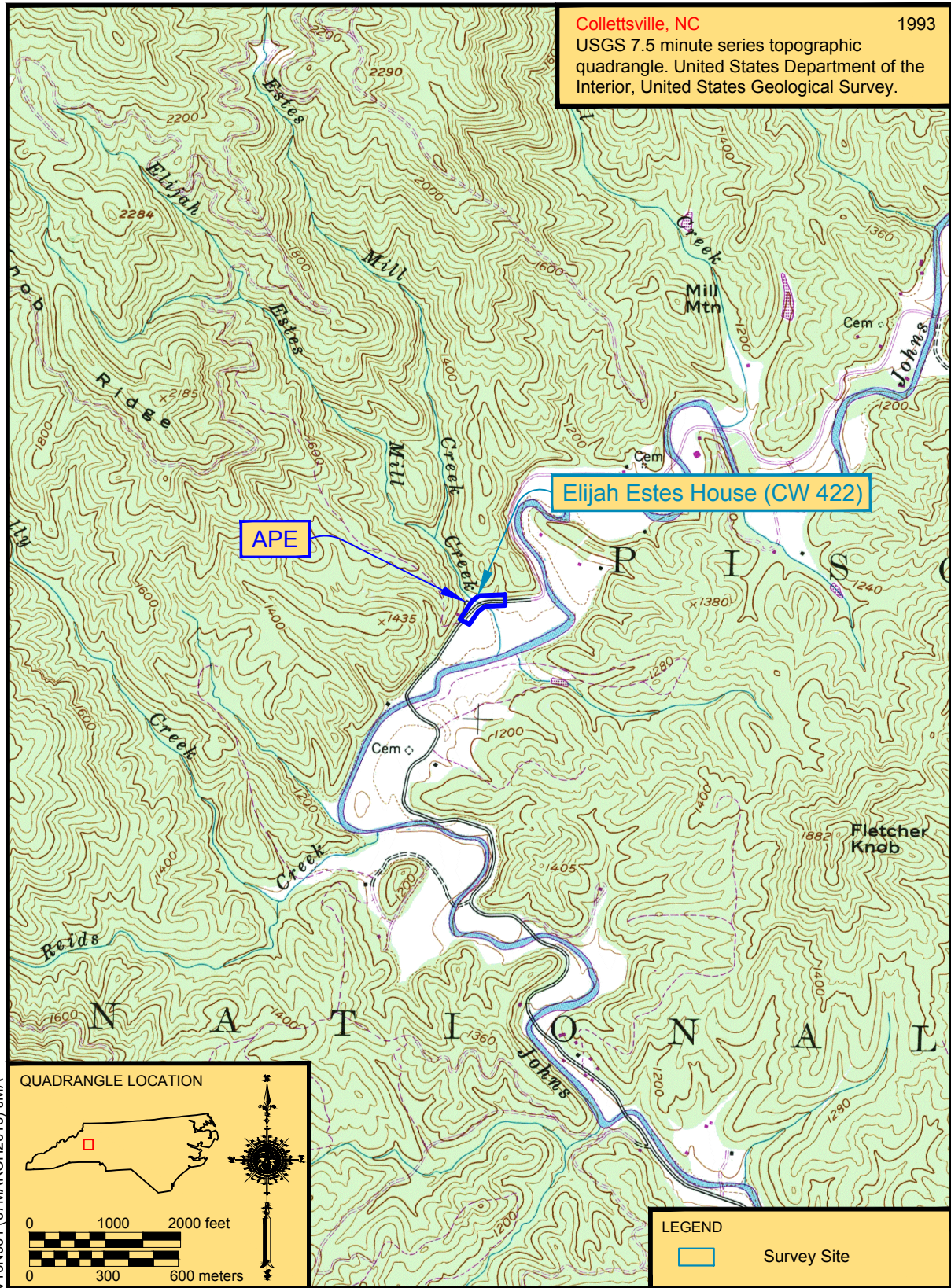


Figure 1. Portion of United States Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute Collettsville, North Carolina, quadrangle showing the location of the Elijah Estes House (CW 422).



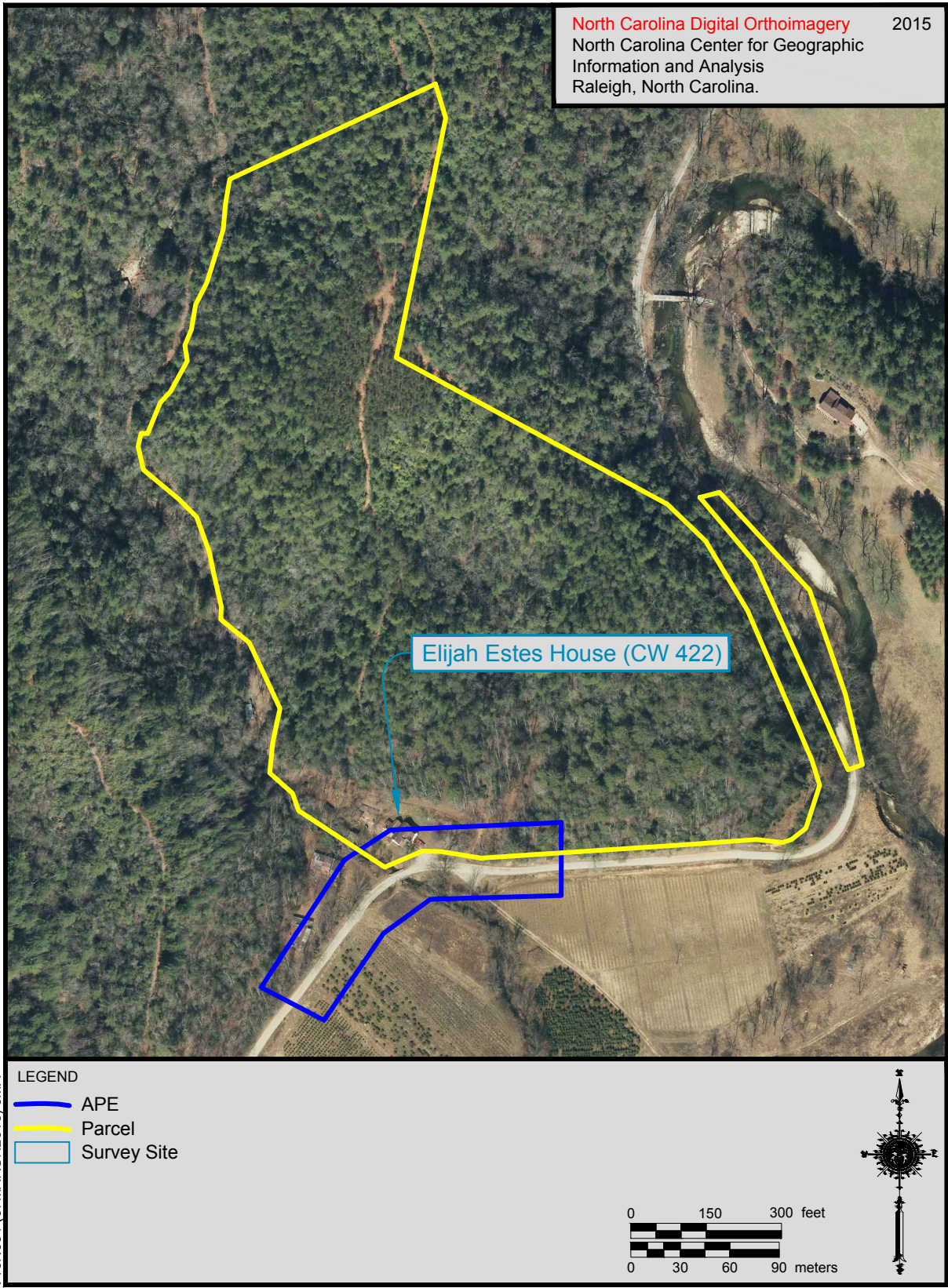


Figure 2a. Aerial showing the site plan and location of the Elijah Estes House (CW 422).



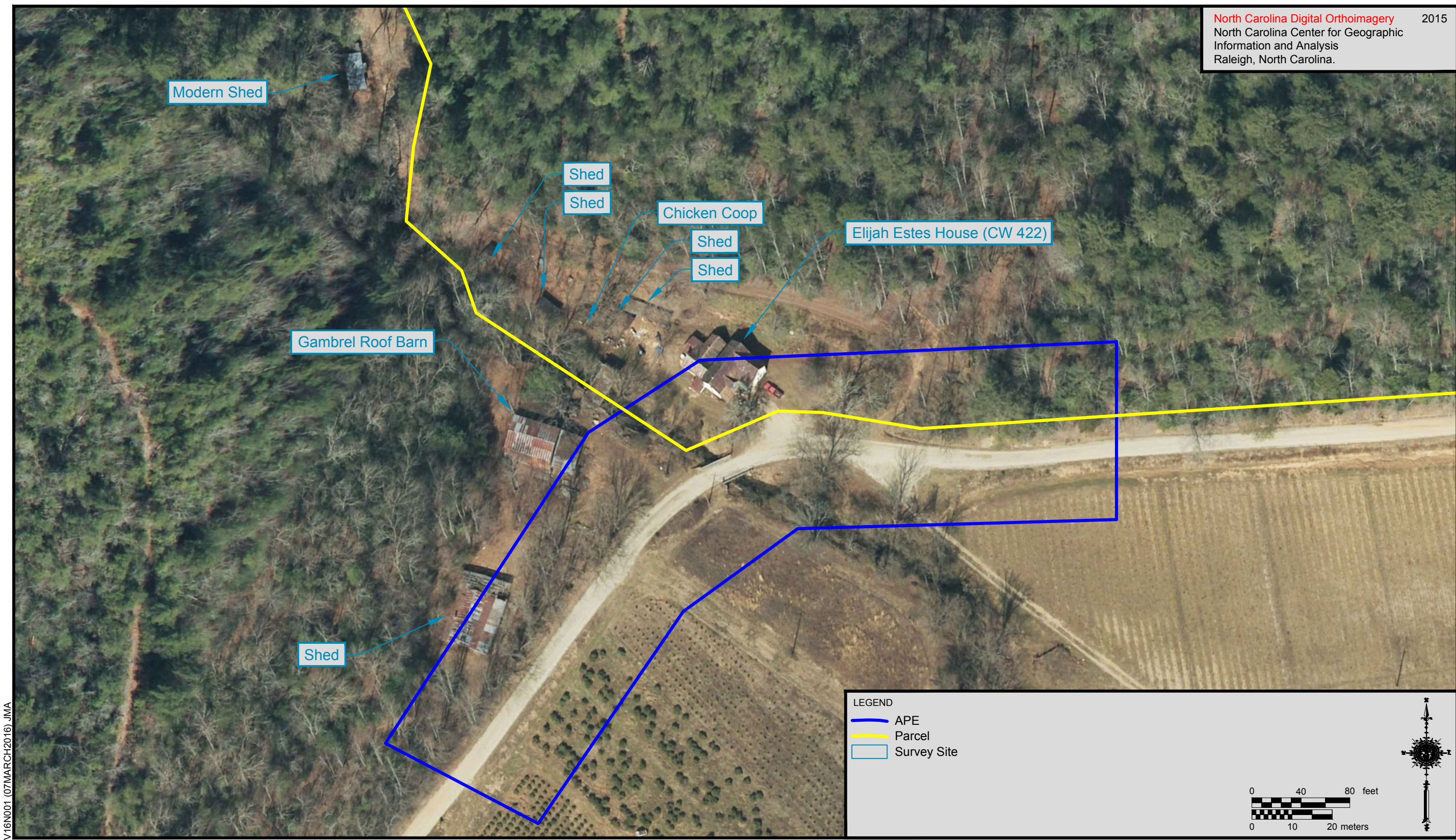


Figure 2b. Aerial showing the site plan and location of the Elijah Estes House (CW 422).









Figure 3. Elijah Estes House and Caldwell County Bridge No. 123, facing northeast.

shed. Additionally, a metal covered footbridge over Elijah Estes Mill Creek leading to the parcel located south of the creek is also included, as is a circa 1925–1956 gambrel roof barn and circa 1956–1974 shed also located on this parcel. Historically, the two parcels were one tract that was separated in 2002 (Caldwell County Plat Book 20:165) (Figure 4). All buildings and structures are accessed from Old Johns River Road.

**House, overview:** The primary structure associated with the property, the Elijah Estes House, is a circa 1872–1903 two-story, frame L-Plan house with a rear, centered one-story ell (Figure 5). It is situated on a stone pier foundation beneath a ribbed metal roof and covered with drop siding. The area beneath the gables is ornamented with diamond-shaped wood shingles. A one-story, T-shaped frame addition is attached to the rear elevation and a one-story, shed roof addition is attached to the center of the southwest elevation of the house. Access to the interior was not available because CRA was not granted access to the property by the property owners, who live in Morganton, North Carolina. As such, details regarding the framing of the house are unknown; however, given the building's age it is presumed to be of balloon frame construction.

**House, exterior:** The primary entrance is located along the façade at the northern corner of the porch and comprised of a wood door set behind an aluminum storm door. Both the porch and its roof are supported by wood posts. A secondary entrance comprised of a wood door set behind a wood screen door is located at the center of the base of the ell. Concrete steps lead up to the porch at its southeast end and plain wood posts supported the shed roof. A smaller, L-shaped porch is located along the second story. Both sides of the porch are sheltered beneath cross-gables supported by wood posts. A wood door directly over the primary entrance grants access to the porch. Windows throughout are comprised of four-over-four, double-hung wood sashes (Figure 6). Wood louvered vents are located beneath the gables throughout. An exterior concrete block chimney extends from the northwest end of the roof of the cap of the T-shaped rear addition (Figure 7).











Figure 5. Elijah Estes House (circa 1872–1903), facing north-northeast.



Figure 6. Northeast elevation, facing northwest.





Figure 7. Southwest elevation and additions, facing north.

**House, interior:** As noted, access to the interior of the Elijah Estes House could not be secured during the survey.

**Shed:** A pre-1993 shed is located approximately 26 feet northwest of the Elijah Estes House (Figure 8). It is a one-story, shed roof frame structure covered with horizontal board beneath a metal panel roof and situated on a concrete block pylon foundation. The northern half of the southwest elevation is open; a vertical board door is located at the center of the southern half of the southwest elevation.

**Shed:** A pre-1993 shed is located approximately 46 feet northwest of the Elijah Estes House and adjacent to the southwest corner of another pre-1993 shed (see Figure 8). It is an open, shed roof frame structure, set beneath a metal panel roof and supported by wood posts. Horizontal boards are widely spaced along the northwest elevation.

**Chicken Coop:** A pre-1993 chicken coop is located approximately 72 feet northwest of the Elijah Estes House and 10 feet northwest of the westernmost pre-1993 shed (see Figure 8). It is a shed roof frame structure, sheathed with horizontal board beneath a metal panel roof and situated on a concrete pylon foundation.

**Shed:** A post-1998 shed is located approximately 19 feet west-northwest of the chicken coop (see Figure 8). It is a shed roof frame structure, covered with horizontal board beneath a metal panel roof. The southeast elevation is open.

**Shed:** A post-1998 shed is located approximately 81 feet northwest of the chicken coop (see Figure 8). It is a one-story, side-gabled frame structure, covered with ribbed metal beneath a metal panel roof. A one-over-one, double-hung vinyl window is located at the center of the southwest elevation.



Figure 8. Pre-1993 sheds and chicken coop and post-1998 sheds, facing north.

**Shed:** A post-2005 shed is located approximately 330 feet northwest of the Elijah Estes House. However, it is not visible from Old Johns River Road.

**Footbridge:** A covered metal stringer footbridge is located approximately 52 feet west of the Elijah Estes House (Figure 9) and spans Elijah Estes Mill Creek. The decking is comprised of metal panels and is sheltered beneath a corrugated metal roof supported by wood and metal posts. A metal railing runs along both sides of the bridge. The west end of the bridge is closed off with a chain link gate topped by barbed wire.

**Barn:** A gambrel roof barn is located approximately 24 feet southwest of the bridge (Figure 10). It is a frame structure clad with horizontal board beneath a standing seam metal roof. An open shed roof crib addition supported by wood posts is attached to the northeast elevation. Two open doorways are located at the center of the southeast elevation; they open into a dirt area sheltered beneath a shed roof supported by wood poles. Rectangular window openings with missing glazing are located on either side of the entries. A loft opening is located above.

**Shed:** A one-story, side-gabled frame shed is located approximately 95 feet south-southwest of the barn (Figure 11). It is clad with horizontal board beneath a ribbed metal roof. An interior brick chimney extends from the southern end of the roof. The southeast elevation is open and divided into three bays separated by wood posts. An open shed roof lean-to is attached to the northeast elevation.





Figure 9. Metal stringer footbridge over Elijah Estes Mill Creek, facing north.



Figure 10. Gambrel roof barn, facing northwest.





Figure 11. Shed, facing west.

#### IV. HISTORIC CONTEXT

The Elijah Estes House (CW 422) is situated northwest of Collettsville in southwestern Caldwell County, within Johns River Township. The narrow valley along the Johns River was once owned by members of the Estes Family, who logged the ridges and established mills along the creeks and river; the location of the mill along Elijah Estes Creek is unknown at this time.

The Estes family emigrated from Dover in the British Isles to Virginia and eventually to North Carolina. Members of the Estes family who came to Caldwell County are descended from Charles and Mary Thaxton Estes of Louisa County, Virginia. Ruben Estes, the son of Charles and Mary, settled along the Johns River with his family during the late eighteenth century in what was then known as Burke County. Caldwell County was formed from portions of Burke and Wilkes Counties in 1841 (Anderson and Hawkins eds. 1983:1, 344).

From the time of the earliest settlers along the Johns River, logging and milling was an important industry and the Estes family was at the center of it. The forests were logged and then the logs were sent down the streams and river to Collettsville, which was established as a lumber town in 1837 (Anderson and Hawkins eds. 1983:92). Ruben's sons inherited a large amount of land along Johns River and Wilson Creek after his death in 1808. His son, Larkin, owned the property associated with the Elijah Estes House during the first half of the nineteenth century until his death in 1846. Larkin's widow, Clarissa, sold a 50 acre tract with appurtenances to her daughter-in-law, Eliza, the widow of Clarissa's son Caleb in 1848 (Caldwell County DB 5:750). The property remained in the Estes family throughout the nineteenth century, being purchased by her son, Elijah, in 1872 (Caldwell County DB 6:379). While a residence of some sort was in existence during the earlier part of the nineteenth

century, it was Elijah who constructed the current residence associated with the property during the late nineteenth century for his wife, Elizabeth and their children. While remaining in the logging industry, Elijah also farmed the property.

The property remained in the Estes family during the early twentieth century, eventually being sold to Arnie and Nora Shoemake(r), likely after the deaths of Elijah in 1930 and Elizabeth in 1935 (North Carolina Death Certificates, 1909–1976). Arnie’s first wife was Florence Estes, who drowned in the Great Flood of 1916, along with their son (Anderson and Hawkins eds. 1983:498). Florence was the niece of Elijah and Elizabeth. Arnie was also a farmer.

By 1952, the approximately 50 acre property had been divided into two approximately 25 acre tracts and was sold to Donald S. Franklin (Caldwell County DB 265:514). Donald was the grandson of Elijah and Elizabeth Estes through their daughter Theodocia (Docia) Boone Estes Franklin (North Carolina Birth Indexes, 1800–2000). Donald and his wife Emma Suddreth Franklin lived on and farmed the property with their family until his death in 1972 when Emma transferred ownership of the property to her son Roger and his wife Hattie (Caldwell County DB 683:130).

The property remained in the Franklin/Estes family throughout the late twentieth century, with Emma’s heirs transferring their interest in the adjoining 25 acre parcel to her sons Roger and Herndon and their wives Hattie and Emma Jean after Emma Suddreth Franklin’s death in 1978 (Caldwell County DB 733:235 and 435:494). After the deaths of Herndon in 1989 and Roger in 1999, their widows, Emma Jean and Hattie, had the property re-surveyed in 2002 by Hawkins Land Surveying, dividing it into two 29.69 acre parcels (Caldwell County Plat Book 20:165). The parcel on which the Elijah Estes House is located was transferred to Emma Jean Franklin (Caldwell County DB 1401:339). Prior to her death in 2015, ownership of the property was transferred to Douglas and Angela Koontz (Caldwell County DB 1859:1899). It is unknown if the Koontz’s are related to the Franklin/Estes family. The adjacent parcel on which the bridge, barn, and shed are located remained in the possession of Hattie Franklin. It was inherited by Hattie’s daughters, Suzanne Chester and Denise Franklin, after her death in 2003 (Hattie Belle Franklin Franklin 2007). Deed research indicates that the property has been divided and re-combined multiple times within the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, but it has almost always been owned by Estes descendants.

The Elijah Estes House first appears on the 1903 Morganton, North Carolina 30-minute series topographic quadrangle (USGS 1903) (Figure 12). It also appears on the 1917 Caldwell County Soils Map, although it is located on the southeast side of the road on this map (North Carolina Department of Agriculture 1917) (Figure 13).

## V. EVALUATION

The Elijah Estes House retains integrity of location and setting, as the property is situated at its original location along Elijah Estes Mill Creek within the setting of the John’s River Valley near Collettsville, which retains its overtly rural character. The house, specifically, also retains integrity of design, materials, and workmanship in that the L-plan form of the house remains evident, despite additions, and historic wood siding, decorative shingles, and windows remain intact throughout the dwelling, reflecting the dwelling’s period and means of construction. The retention of the property’s setting and location and the house’s integrity of design, materials, and workmanship, contribute to the property’s feeling and association, with the property generally continuing to convey its historic period of development; however, as the larger property is now characterized by contemporary secondary structures and appurtenances that do not date to the property’s period of significance, the house stands alone as an isolated component of the larger property, no longer reflecting development and use of the property by the Estes family during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As such, the property as a whole has diminished integrity of feeling and association.



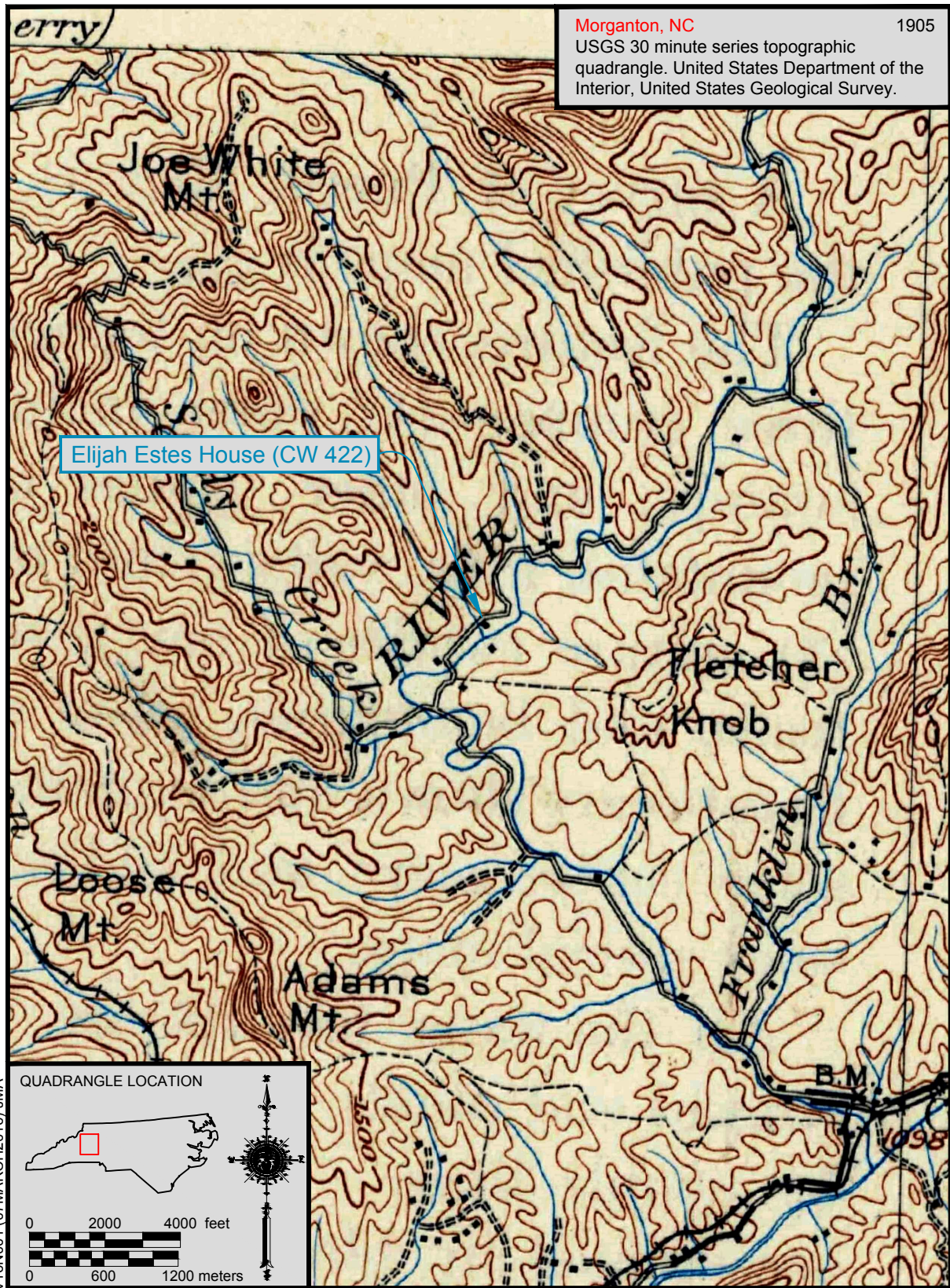


Figure 12. A portion of the 1903 Morganton, North Carolina 30-minute series topographic quadrangle depicting the Elijah Estes House.



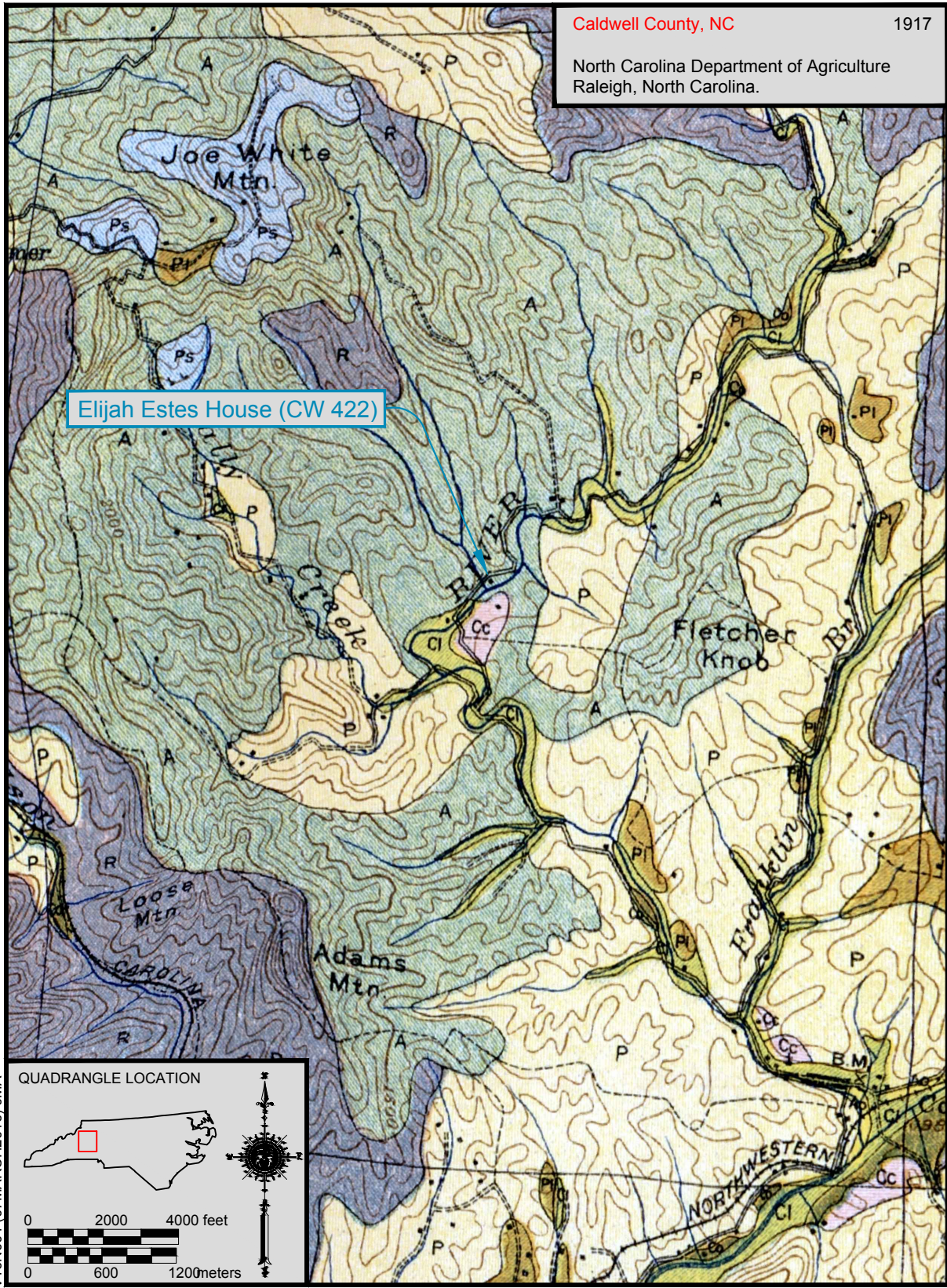


Figure 13. 1917 Soil Map of Caldwell County, North Carolina.



CRA recommends that the Elijah Estes House and its associated outbuildings are not eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A, B, C, or D. While the house reflects the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century occupation of the property, research has not demonstrated that the house is associated with a particular event or explicit pattern of events that would warrant eligibility under Criterion A. Moreover, secondary structures associated with the dwelling post-date the period of significance for the property and diminish its capacity to reflect settlement and use of the landscape over time. As such, the Elijah Estes House stands as just one of several resources within the area that can only broadly reflect generic settlement patterns in the vicinity of the Johns River.

Additionally, neither Elijah Estes nor his family and later occupants of the property have been documented as playing a significant role within the local or regional community. Therefore, the Elijah Estes House is not recommended eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion B.

Constructed during the late nineteenth century, the Elijah Estes House evolved out of the vernacular tradition of the region during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Employing an L-plan form with a rear, centered one-story ell, the house demonstrates broad Appalachian influences in its inclusion of features such as the stacked, full-width porch inset within the ell. Stylistic references are limited to the incorporation of decorative shingles in gabled ends and decorative attic vents, which recall Folk Victorian detailing, often applied to modest, vernacular forms constructed during the era of high-style Queen Anne dwellings, which featured elaborate detailing, such as spindlework, cornice brackets, chamfered corners, and other such characteristics (McAlester and McAlester 2000:309–310). Prolific throughout North Carolina was the two-story porch, with its lacy sawn balustrade and turned posts that ornamented an otherwise conservative frame house (Bishir 2014:349). Such stylistic inflection reflected the builder’s ability to imitate fashionable architecture of the period while limited to the modest forms of the countryside. Beyond the minimal reference to Folk Victorian detailing, however, the Elijah Estes House is an otherwise undistinguished vernacular form.

Housing was constructed with a variety of configurations during the period in the region, including rectilinear gable-front, side-gabled, and “triple-A” forms, as well as L-plan footprints. Based on a windshield reconnaissance of similar property types within northwest Caldwell County and specifically in the vicinity of communities such as Collettsville and Globe, the Elijah Estes House was the only such resource identified with an L-plan. The majority of the housing stock along the local roadways and state roads, as well as along improved and unimproved roads in the hollows, is characterized by bungalows, ranch houses, and mobile homes, dating from the early twentieth through late twentieth centuries. In the absence of L-plan dwellings, other domiciles in the area were documented to illustrate the predominance of common housing forms in this portion of Caldwell County, all of which evolved out of the same modest tenets to accommodate the means and capabilities of the builder, as well as the particulars of the setting in which they are located. The Elijah Estes House is an outgrowth of such vernacular traditions that characterized Caldwell County during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Also selected were representative properties appropriately capturing the adaptation of Folk Victorian styling to vernacular forms, as is applied to the Elijah Estes House, even if minimally.

Previously recorded resources and existing Study List properties in the vicinity were also considered in order to identify potentially comparable L-plan housing forms. However, no such comparable resources exhibiting an L-plan were identified as a result of this investigation. Attempts also were made to discuss comparable property types with the NC HPO’s Western Office, but correspondence went unreturned.

Of the other houses identified within the area, several exhibit elements of the Folk Victorian style, although to varying degrees. These include a house at 2827 Old Johns River Road (Figure 14) and another nearly identical, but abandoned and inaccessible, house located partially up a ridge along the southeast side of Old Johns River Road, northeast of the Elijah Estates House. Like the Elijah

Estes House, the house at 2827 Old Johns River Road is vernacular in form and materials, although it exhibits an I-house form rather than an L-plan; the house adapts to regional inflections in its inclusion of a full-width façade porch and partial-width upper story porch. The house also is characterized by Folk Victorian influences, including turned porch posts and balusters, as well as decorative gable-end shingles in the central façade gable. While still modest in its inclusion of features, the house at 2827 Old Johns River Road has the appearance of being more refined in its detailing through the inclusion of such porch elements, which reflect more finesse than the simple wood posts that support the porches at the Elijah Estes House. Most common in the region are the side-gabled forms, which exhibit both one-story and two-story variations. While these do not exhibit an L-plan, they do reflect the two-story, one room deep house with a center front-gable and two-story porch that is commonly found throughout the mountains of western North Carolina (Bishir 1999:346). Also, like the Elijah Estes House, they reflect the utilization of simple housing forms and traditional materials to accommodate housing needs in secluded areas of Caldwell County, as well as broad Appalachian influences such as the incorporation of wide-set façade porches.

In the absence of comparables within the immediate context of the Elijah Estes House, three L-plan houses were identified within the greater region, reflecting broader trends in western North Carolina. These include the dwelling at 2464-2466 John Sparks Road in Bakersville, Mitchell County, which exhibits a one-story, L-plan form accentuated with an inset corner porch at the ell formed by the intersecting gabled masses (Figure 15). Although set on a diagonal, this porch is reflective of the porch at the Elijah Estes House, which is inset within the ell of the two-story form. Unlike the Estes dwelling, though, the house at 2464-2466 John Sparks Road features refined turned posts that reflect stylistic inflection, a feature absent in the heavy wood posts of the Elijah Estes House. A house at 2748-2790 Main Street in Burnesville, Yancey County, also exhibits a one-story, L-plan with inset porch (Figure 16). In this instance, the inset porch also is supported by turned posts, which are further accentuated through scroll-sawn detail work. Such embellishment also is present in the gabled ends, which are clad in decorative shingles. Most notable is a house at 8022 Mason Street in Dillsboro, Jackson County, which exhibits a two-story L-plan form, much like that of the Elijah Estes House (Figure 17). More finessed than the Elijah Estes House, this dwelling also features heavy wood posts at the porch, but their appearance is softened by the turned balusters that span the porch, lending a sense of refinement to the porch's inclusion. The dwelling also is more refined in its inclusion of decorative casework and moldings at window and door openings, as well as at the cornice, which offers a more distinguished embellishment than the decorative cladding applied at the gables at the Elijah Estes House.

In consideration of the available comparable property types and broader sphere of influence, while the Elijah Estes House compares favorably to many vernacular dwellings that employ only the simplest of forms and materials without any material distinction, it generally lacks evidence of extraordinary craftsmanship, superior regional influence, or stylistic adaptation to distinguish it as a noteworthy example of vernacular design within the region when compared against other dwellings – whether one-story or two-story – that employ an L-plan. Indeed, while the property retains integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship, it cannot be demonstrated to be a particularly noteworthy or early example of its type. Even though it is a lone example of a late-nineteenth-century L-plan house within the immediate vicinity, it is by no means the only or a noteworthy example of its type within the broader context of vernacular housing forms throughout the Appalachian foothills of western North Carolina, where L-plan houses can otherwise be found situated among front-gabled, side-gabled, and “triple A” forms of the era. The fact that it is the only such example of an L-plan house—a common configuration—within the specific locale of the project does not elevate the property to a level warranting eligibility for listing in the NRHP, as larger patterns within which the property falls cannot be ignored. In addition, while the Elijah Estes House broadly reflects the inflection of stylistic influences into vernacular construction of the period, it is, as demonstrated, by no means an isolated example of such trends, particularly as applied to L-plan dwellings. Furthermore, the Elijah



Estes House lacks the refinement displayed in other such residences of the period, its individual components undistinguished against the backdrop of comparable properties. Thus, the property lacks the specific significance necessary to be considered eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion C. Additionally, the historic secondary resources associated with the property—the sheds and chicken coop—are undistinguished examples of their respective types, and the addition of the sheds in the 1990s and 2000s have also diminished the site’s integrity of setting, feeling, and association with its original period of development. Thus, CRA recommends that the Elijah Estes House is not eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion C.

Late-nineteenth-century to early-twentieth-century domestic constructions are common to the region (and country as a whole), and neither the house nor outbuildings are likely to yield any important historical information regarding building technology of the period not readily available from other sources. The Elijah Estes House is, therefore, ineligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion D.



Figure 14. Comparative example located at 2827 Old Johns River Road, facing north-northwest.



Figure 15. Comparative example located at 2464-2466 John Sparks Rd. in Bakersville, Mitchell County.



Figure 16. Comparative example located at 2478-2480 Main St. in Burnsville, Yancey County.





Figure 17. Comparative example located at 8022 Mason St. in Dillsboro, Jackson County.

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