



North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources
State Historic Preservation Office

Ramona M. Bartos, Administrator

Governor Roy Cooper
Secretary Susi H. Hamilton

Office of Archives and History
Deputy Secretary Kevin Cherry

December 7, 2017

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, Improvements to NC 268, PA 16-11-0003,
R-3309, Wilkes County, ER 17-1692

Thank you for your September 7, 2017, memorandum transmitting the above-referenced report. We apologize for the delay and offer the following comments.

We concur that the following properties are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under the cited criteria.

- Roaring River Railroad Bridge (WK0433) - Criteria A and C
- Reves-Greenwood House (WK0434) - Criteria A and C
- J.E. and Matilda Greenwood House (WK0435) - Criteria A and C
- William and Diana Edwards House (WK0439) - Criteria A and C
- Bugaboo Creek Bridge (WK0440) - Criterion C
- Home Chair Company (Ronda Cotton Mill) (WK0443) - Criteria A and C
- Poplin Family Farm (WK0444) - Criteria A and C
- WIFM Radio Station (WK0445) - Criterion A
- Reeves-Greenwood Complex Historic District (WK0446), which contains WK0434 and WK0435 - Criteria A and C

We also concur that the following properties are not eligible for listing under any criteria.

- R.A. Reves House (WK0436)
- Roaring River United Methodist Church and Parsonage (WK0437)
- Roaring River Milling Company (WK0438)
- Ronda Historic District (WK0442)

We are unable to concur that the Bugaboo Creek Railroad Bridge (WK0441) is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Rather, we believe the Bugaboo Creek Railroad Bridge is individually eligible under Criterion C and may be eligible as a contributing resource under Criterion A in a potential Northwestern North Carolina Railroad Historic District. According to the report, the bridge is a good and unaltered example of a girder bridge. That three other girder bridges exist along this railroad line does not necessarily diminish the significance of this resource. It is possible that the Bugaboo Creek Railroad Bridge is among the most intact and one of the longest.

Considering that there are four girder bridges along this line, as well as the Roaring River Railroad Bridge, one could conclude that the railroad line, itself, is NR-eligible, given that the report states “The impact of the [Northwestern North Carolina] Railroad on the county’s economy is hard to overstate.” And, that the railroad’s construction “spurred unprecedented economic growth [sic] in the Yadkin Valley and the eastern half of Wilkes County.” In light of these statements and the reasons outlined above, please reconsider your determination of eligibility for this property.

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

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

cc: Mary Pope Furr, NCDOT, mfurr@ncdot.gov



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

ROY COOPER
GOVERNOR

JAMES H. TROGDON, III
SECRETARY

September 7, 2017

MEMORANDUM

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

FROM: Kate Husband
Architectural Historian
NCDOT Division of Highways

SUBJECT: PA No. 16-11-0003, R-3309 Improvements to N.C. 268 from SR 1966 to Elkin Bypass, Wilkes County.

ER 17-1692

A

H *Handwritten initials*

Due 9/21 11/20

Annie Earley

Enclosed please find the Historic Structures Survey Report, survey site database, and additional materials for the above referenced project in compliance with the Section 106 review process. Please contact me by phone (919-707-6075) or email (klhusband@ncdot.gov) if you have any additional questions or comments. We look forward to hearing from you.

HISTORIC STRUCTURES SURVEY REPORT

Improvements to N.C. 268 from S.R. 1966 to Elkin Bypass

R-3309

Wilkes County

WBS# 33852.1.FR2

Prepared for:

Human Environment Section

North Carolina Department of Transportation

1598 Mail Service Center

Raleigh, North Carolina, 27699

Prepared by:



CALYX Engineers and Consultants

6750 Tryon Road

Cary, North Carolina, 27518

SEPTEMBER 2017

HISTORIC STRUCTURES SURVEY REPORT

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SEPTEMBER 2017

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Woodard David".

Sarah Woodard David, Principal Investigator

September 5, 2017

Date

Mary Pope Furr, Supervisor

Historic Architecture Group

North Carolina Department of Transportation

Date

Management Summary

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes improving NC 268 from Secondary Road (S.R.) 1699 to Elkin Bypass, Wilkes County. The project's Area of Potential Effects (APE), as defined by NCDOT, is a 150-foot-wide corridor centered on the existing road between the project termini and along a proposed new-location corridor. Figures 2 and 2A-2I illustrate the APE. NCDOT architectural historians reviewed the properties within the APE and determined that 13 properties greater than 50 years of age warranted further evaluation for potential National Register of Historic Places eligibility (NRHP).

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, following preliminary background research and field investigation, ultimately identified 13 resources for further evaluation. No other properties within the APE that are greater than 50 years of age appear to be eligible for the National Register, and no properties within the APE that are less than 50 years of age appear to meet Criteria Consideration G for properties that have achieved significance within the last 50 years.

During this preliminary review, a group of three log houses were observed in the town of Roaring River, but they appear to have been moved. Additionally, nearly all frame houses in the study area were covered in vinyl siding; examples of frame houses without vinyl siding were extremely rare.

Wilkes County's historic architecture has not been comprehensively surveyed. Only one resource in the project's APE had been previously surveyed, the Ronda Depot (WK 348), but it has been torn down or relocated.

In June 2017, NCDOT requested that CALYX Engineers and Consultants (CALYX) complete research, an intensive-level historic field survey, and NRHP evaluations for these properties.

Based on the field survey, background research, and the evaluations documented in this report, the recommendations for the NRHP are as follows:

Property Name	NCHPO Survey Site Number	Eligibility Determination	Criteria
Roaring River Railroad Bridge	WK 433	Eligible	A, C
Reves-Greenwood House	WK 434	Eligible	A, C
J.E. and Matilda Greenwood House	WK 435	Eligible	A, C
R.A. Reves House	WK 436	Not Eligible	

Property Name	NCHPO Survey Site Number	Eligibility Determination	Criteria
Roaring River United Methodist Church and Parsonage	WK 437	Not Eligible	
Roaring River Milling Company	WK 438	Not Eligible	
William and Diana Edwards House	WK 439	Eligible	A, C
Bugaboo Creek Bridge	WK 440	Eligible	C
Bugaboo Creek Railroad Bridge	WK 441	Not Eligible	
Ronda Historic District	WK 442	Not Eligible	
Home Chair Company (Ronda Cotton Mill)	WK 443	Eligible	A, C
Poplin Family Farm	WK 444	Eligible	A, C
WIFM Radio Station	WK 445	Eligible	A

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Bugaboo Creek Railroad Bridge 110

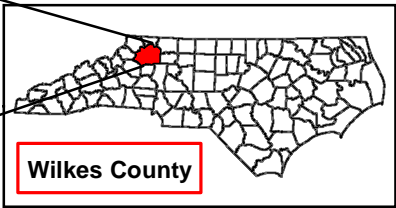
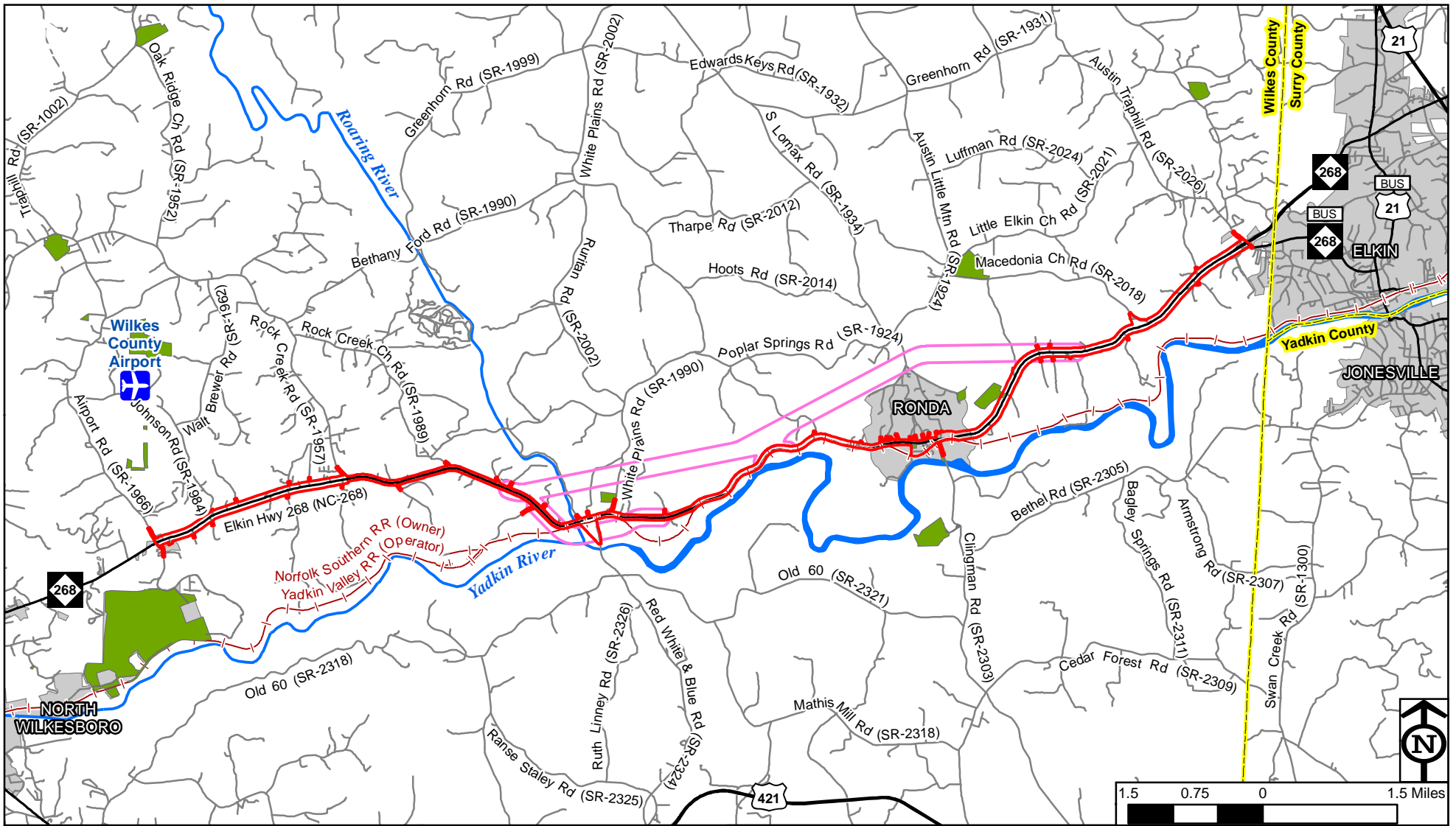
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Works Cited 178



Wilkes County

- R-3309 APE
- R-3309 Bypass Option APE
- Major Road
- Local Road
- Railroad
- River
- County Boundary
- Municipal Boundary
- Wilkes County Open Space
- ✈ Airport

NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS
HUMAN ENVIRONMENT SECTION

WILKES COUNTY
*Improvements to NC 268
from SR 1966 to Elkin Bypass
in Wilkes County*
TIP No. R-3309

Project Vicinity

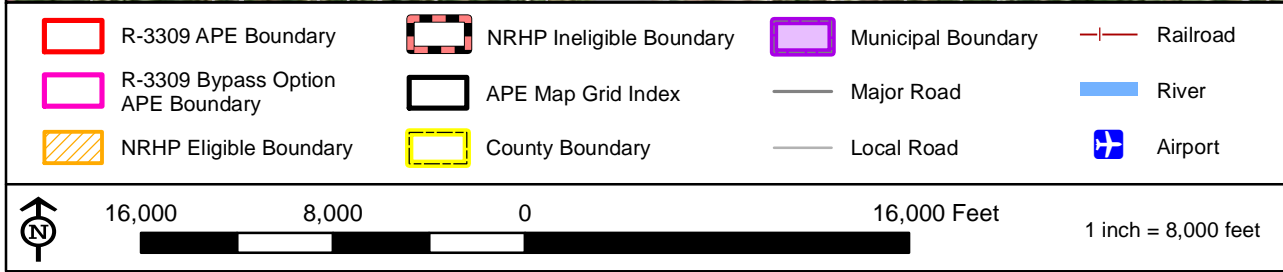
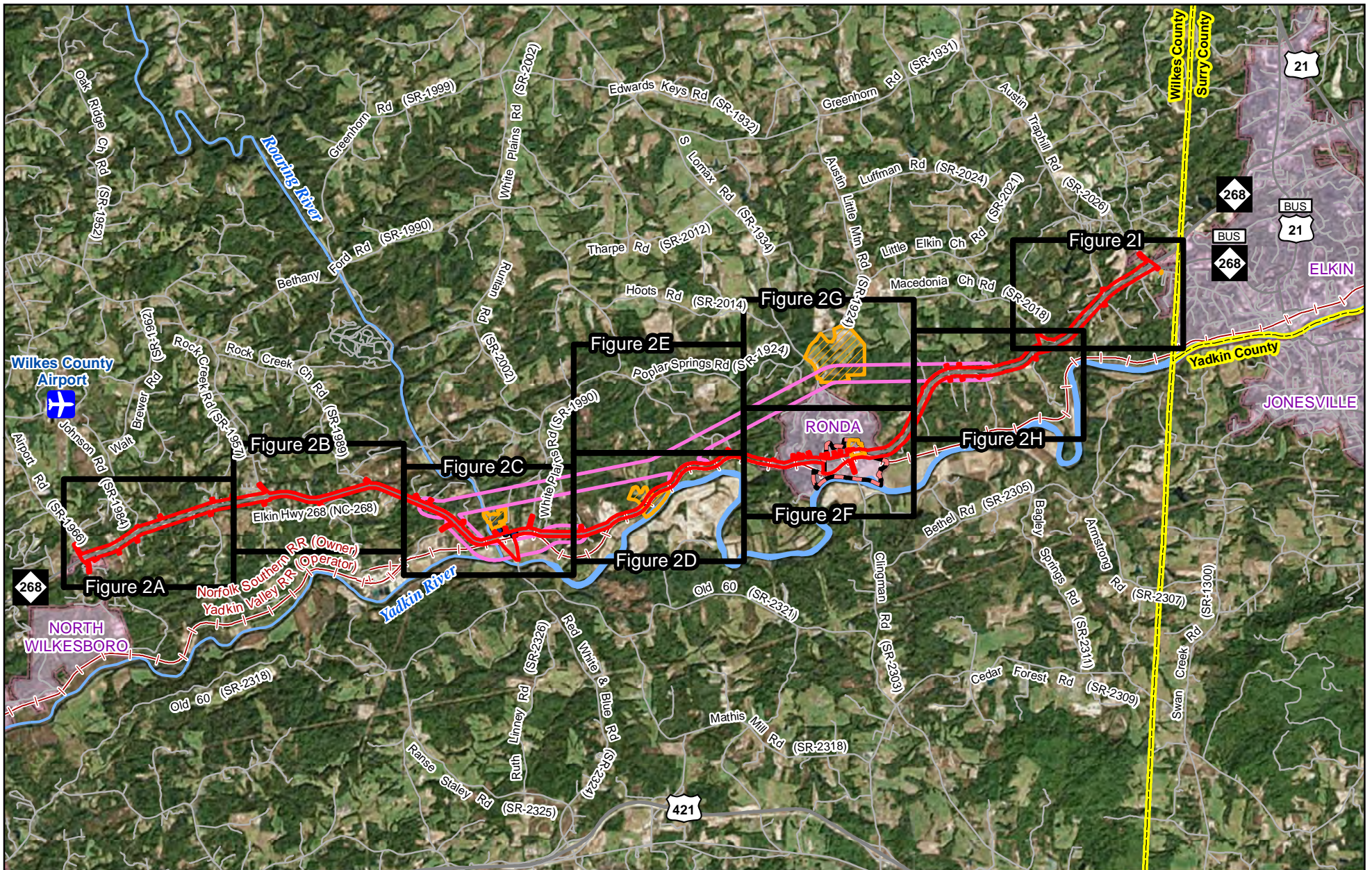


FIGURE 2
AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS (APE)
 STIP No. R-3309 WILKES COUNTY
Improvements to NC 268 from SR 1966 to Elkin Bypass in Wilkes County

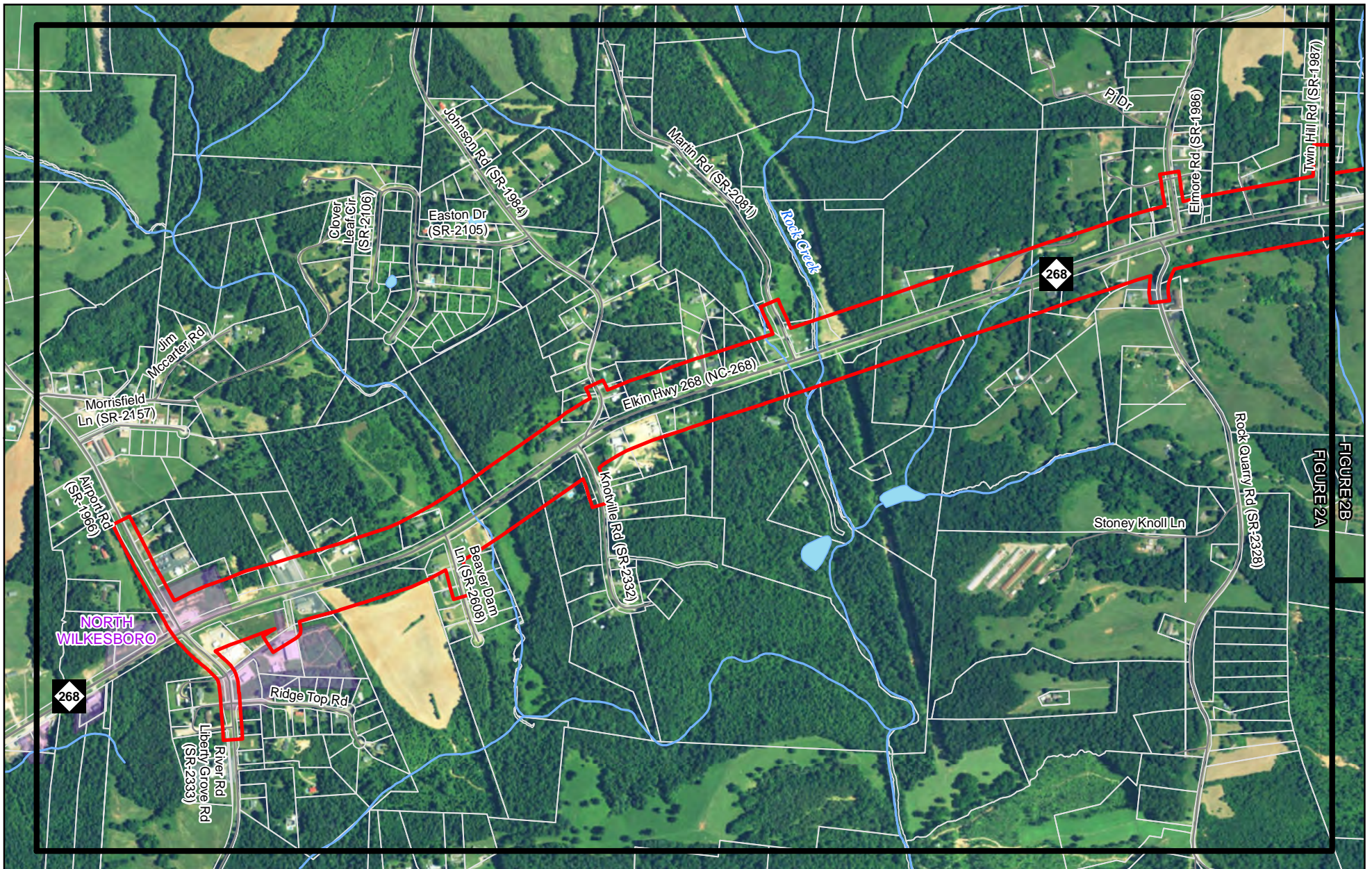


FIGURE 2A



FIGURE 2A
AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS (APE)

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| R-3309 APE Boundary | NRHP Ineligible Boundary | County Boundary | Road |
| R-3309 Bypass Option APE Boundary | NRHP Ineligible Point | Municipal Boundary | Railroad |
| NRHP Eligible Boundary | APE Map Grid Index | Parcel | Waterbody |

STIP No. R-3309 WILKES COUNTY

Improvements to NC 268 from SR 1966 to Elkin Bypass in Wilkes County



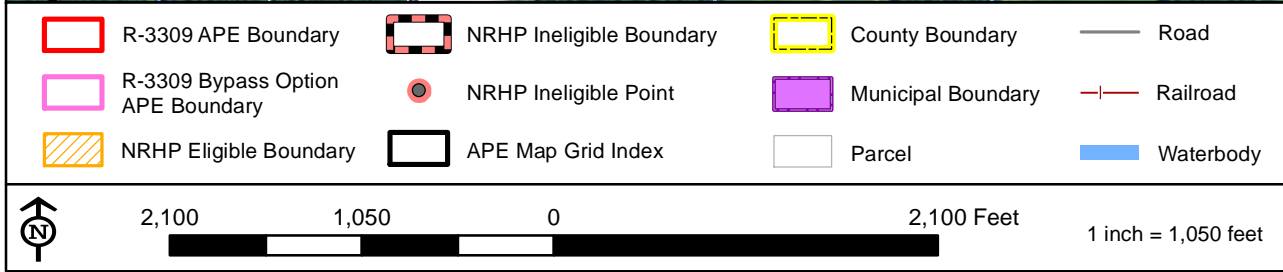


FIGURE 2B
AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS (APE)

STIP No. R-3309 WILKES COUNTY
Improvements to NC 268 from SR 1966 to Elkin Bypass in Wilkes County

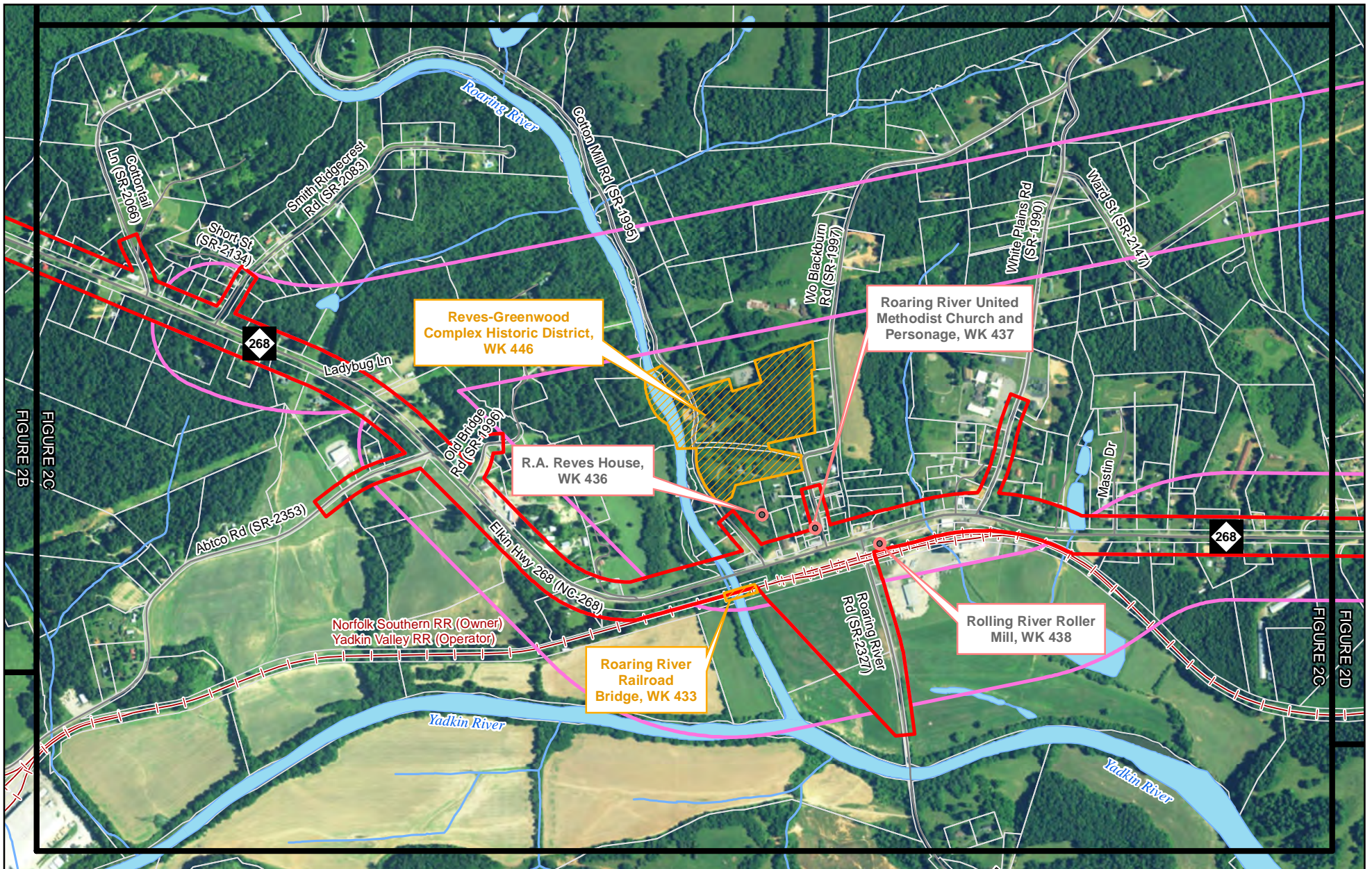


FIGURE 2B
FIGURE 2C

FIGURE 2C
FIGURE 2D

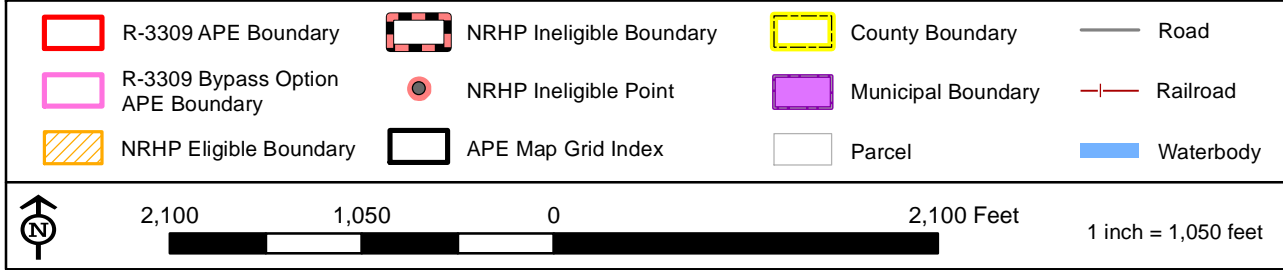


FIGURE 2C
AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS (APE)

STIP No. R-3309 WILKES COUNTY
Improvements to NC 268 from SR 1966 to Elkin Bypass in Wilkes County

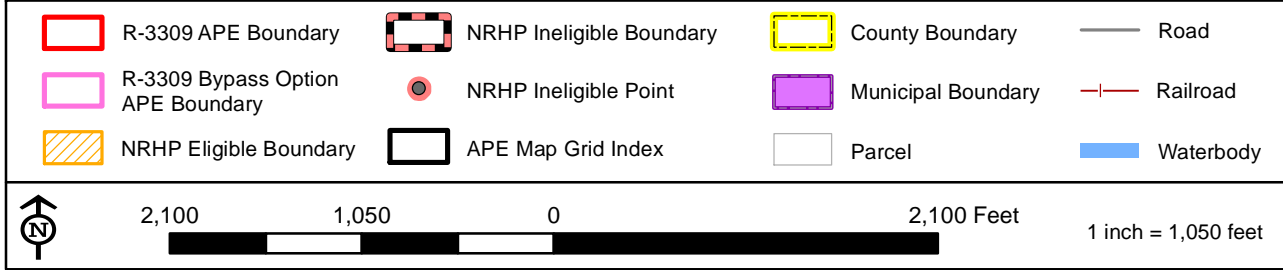
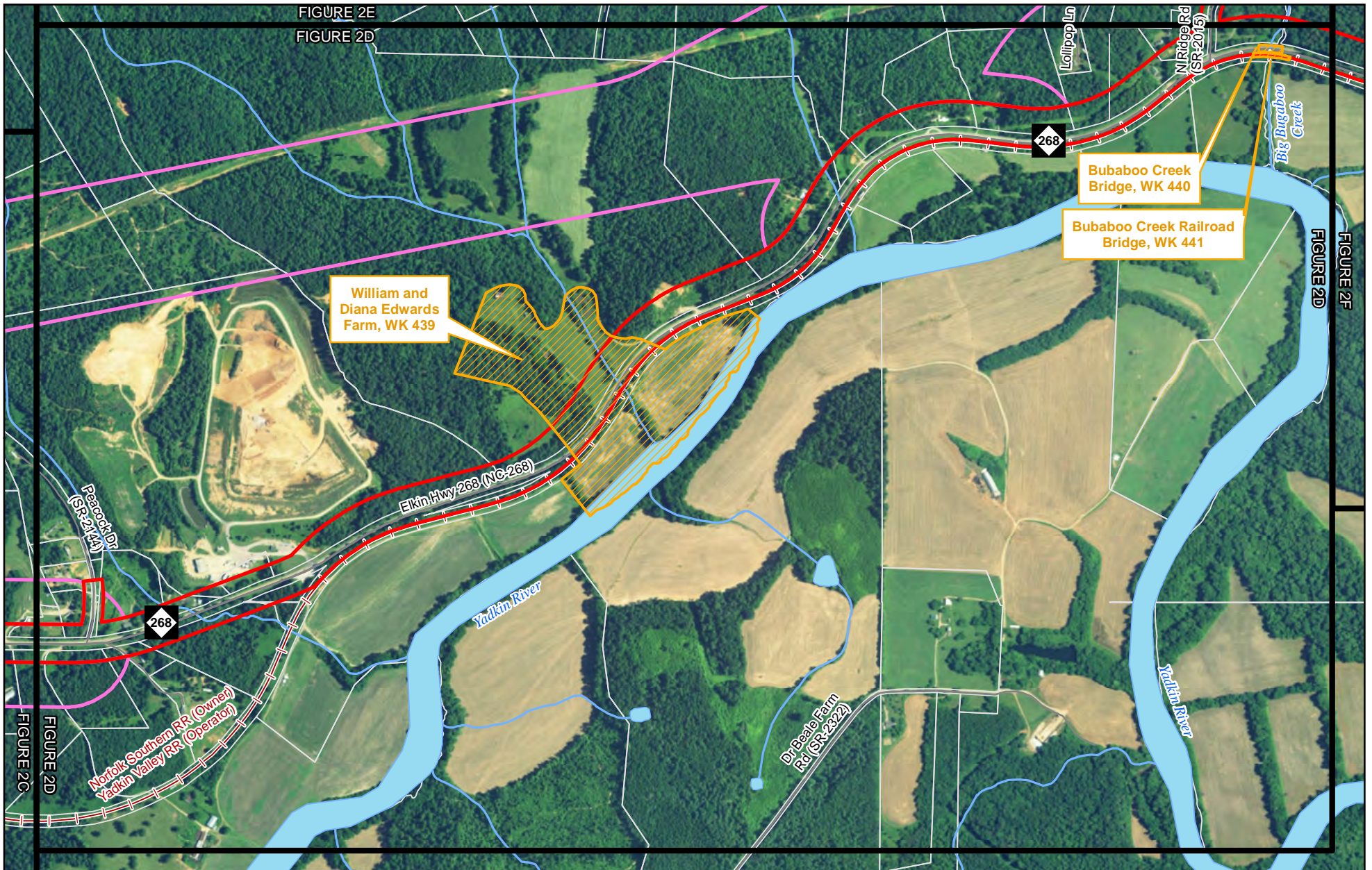


FIGURE 2D
AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS (APE)
 STIP No. R-3309 WILKES COUNTY
Improvements to NC 268 from SR 1966 to Elkin Bypass in Wilkes County

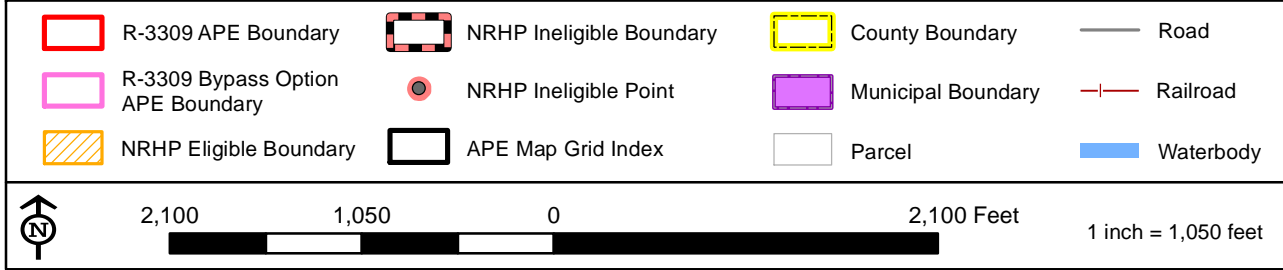
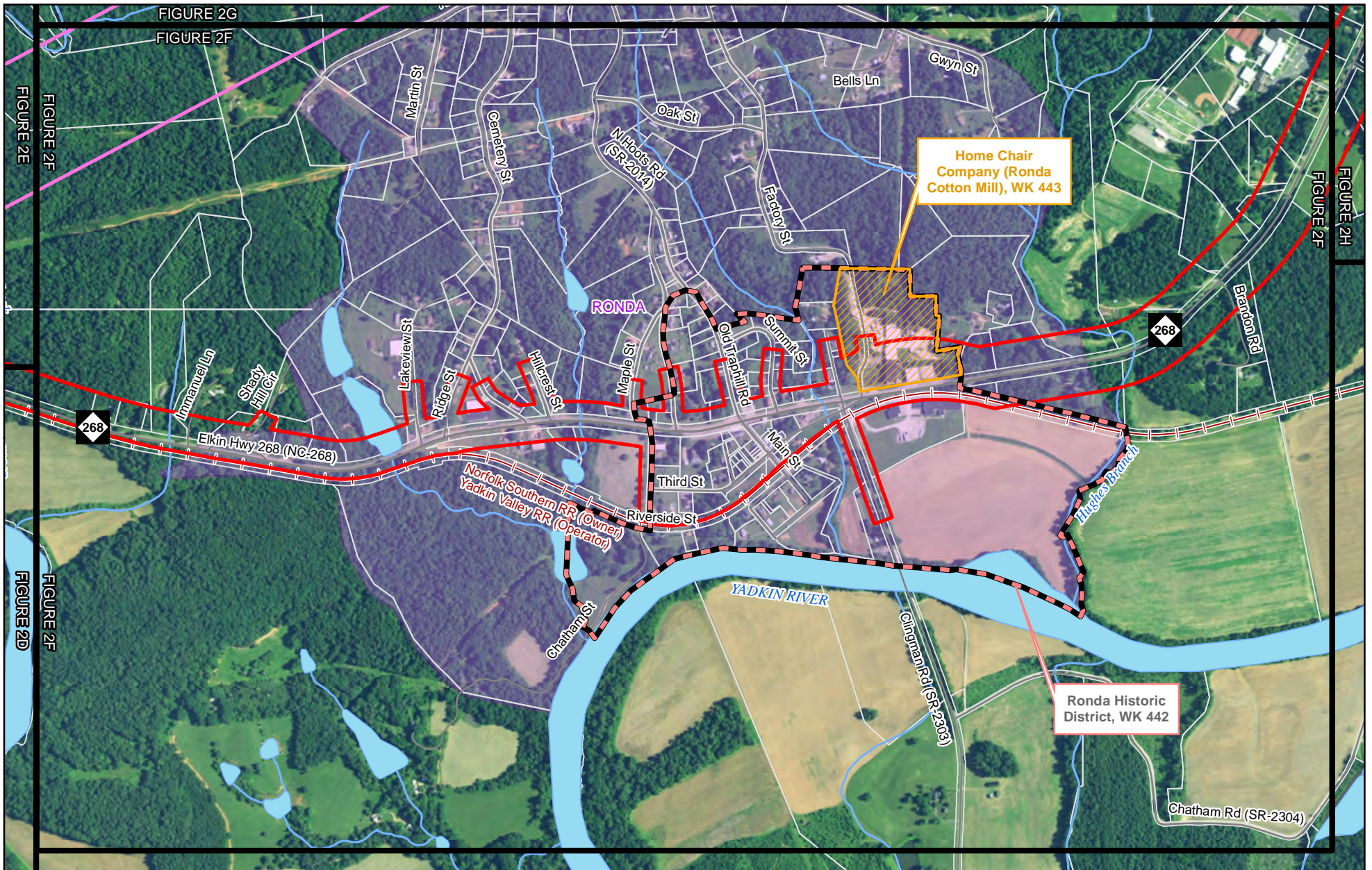


FIGURE 2E
AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS (APE)
 STIP No. R-3309 WILKES COUNTY
Improvements to NC 268 from SR 1966 to Elkin Bypass in Wilkes County



- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| R-3309 APE Boundary | NRHP Ineligible Boundary | County Boundary | Road |
| R-3309 Bypass Option APE Boundary | NRHP Ineligible Point | Municipal Boundary | Railroad |
| NRHP Eligible Boundary | APE Map Grid Index | Parcel | Waterbody |

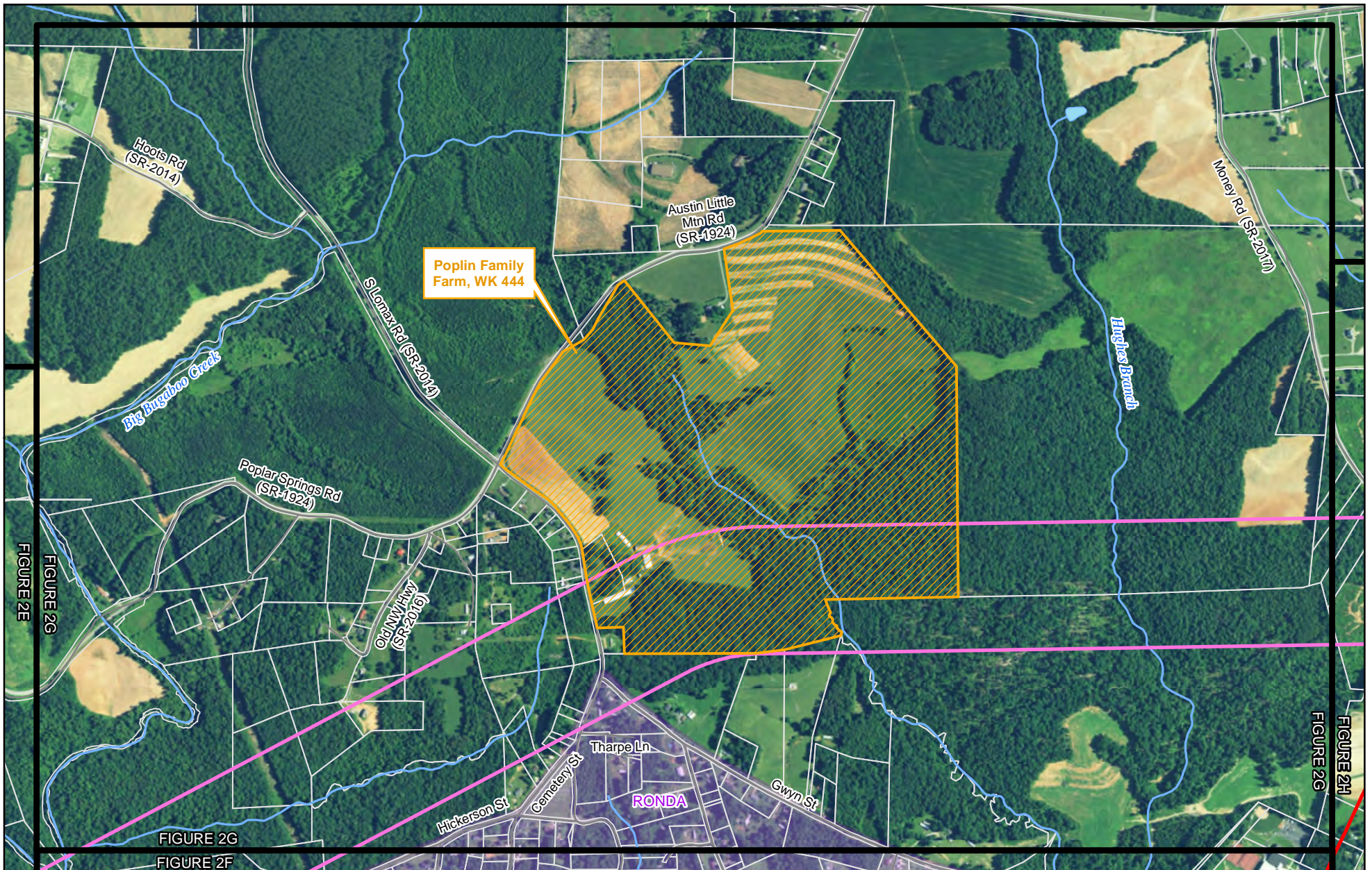


FIGURE 2F
AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS (APE)

STIP No. R-3309 WILKES COUNTY

Improvements to NC 268 from SR 1966 to Elkin Bypass in Wilkes County





- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| R-3309 APE Boundary | NRHP Ineligible Boundary | County Boundary | Road |
| R-3309 Bypass Option APE Boundary | NRHP Ineligible Point | Municipal Boundary | Railroad |
| NRHP Eligible Boundary | APE Map Grid Index | Parcel | Waterbody |



FIGURE 2G
AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS (APE)

STIP No. R-3309 WILKES COUNTY

Improvements to NC 268 from SR 1966 to Elkin Bypass in Wilkes County



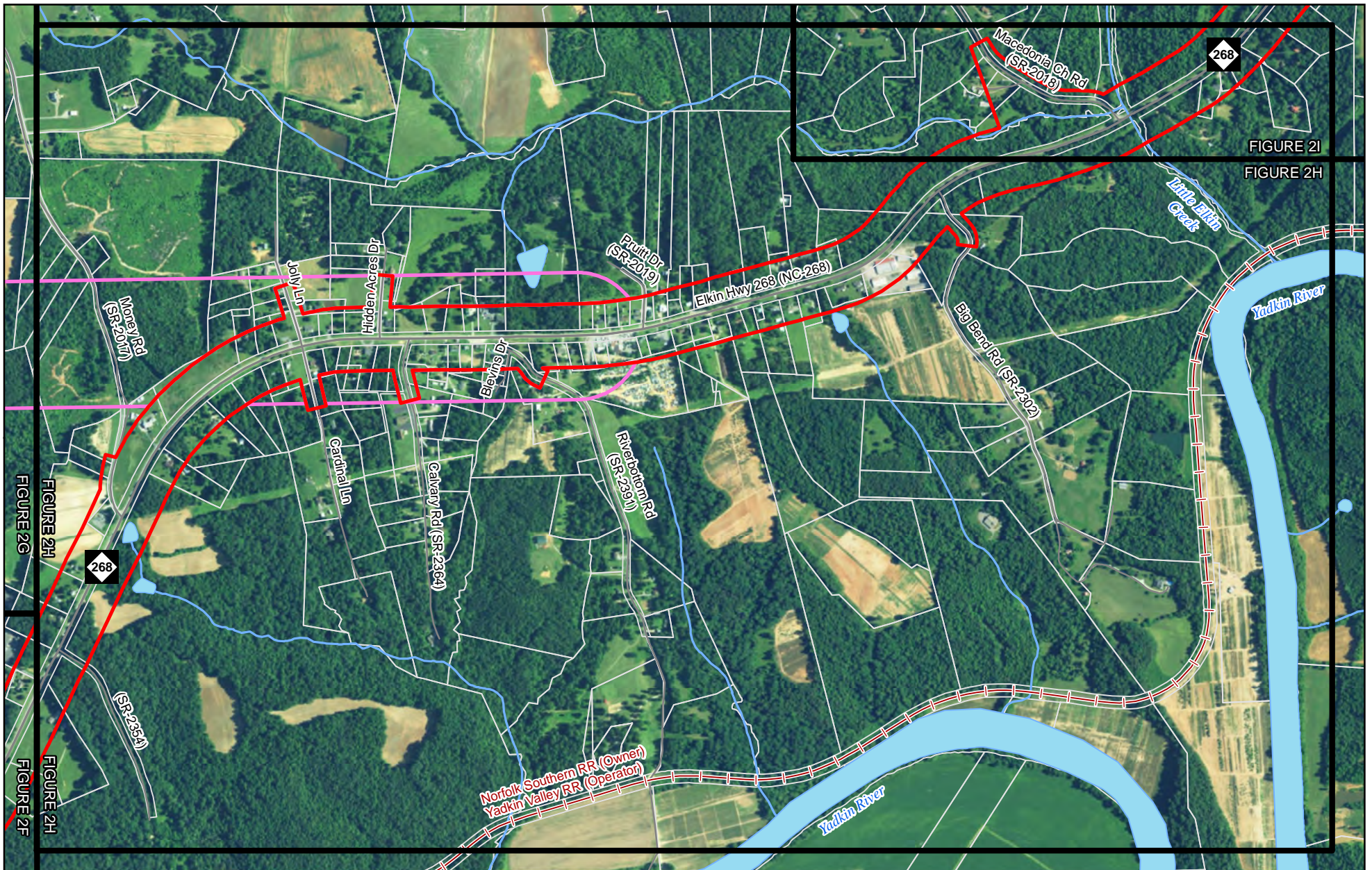


FIGURE 2H
AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS (APE)

STIP No. R-3309 WILKES COUNTY

*Improvements to NC 268 from SR 1966
 to Elkin Bypass in Wilkes County*

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| R-3309 APE Boundary | NRHP Ineligible Boundary | County Boundary | Road |
| R-3309 Bypass Option APE Boundary | NRHP Ineligible Point | Municipal Boundary | Railroad |
| NRHP Eligible Boundary | APE Map Grid Index | Parcel | Waterbody |



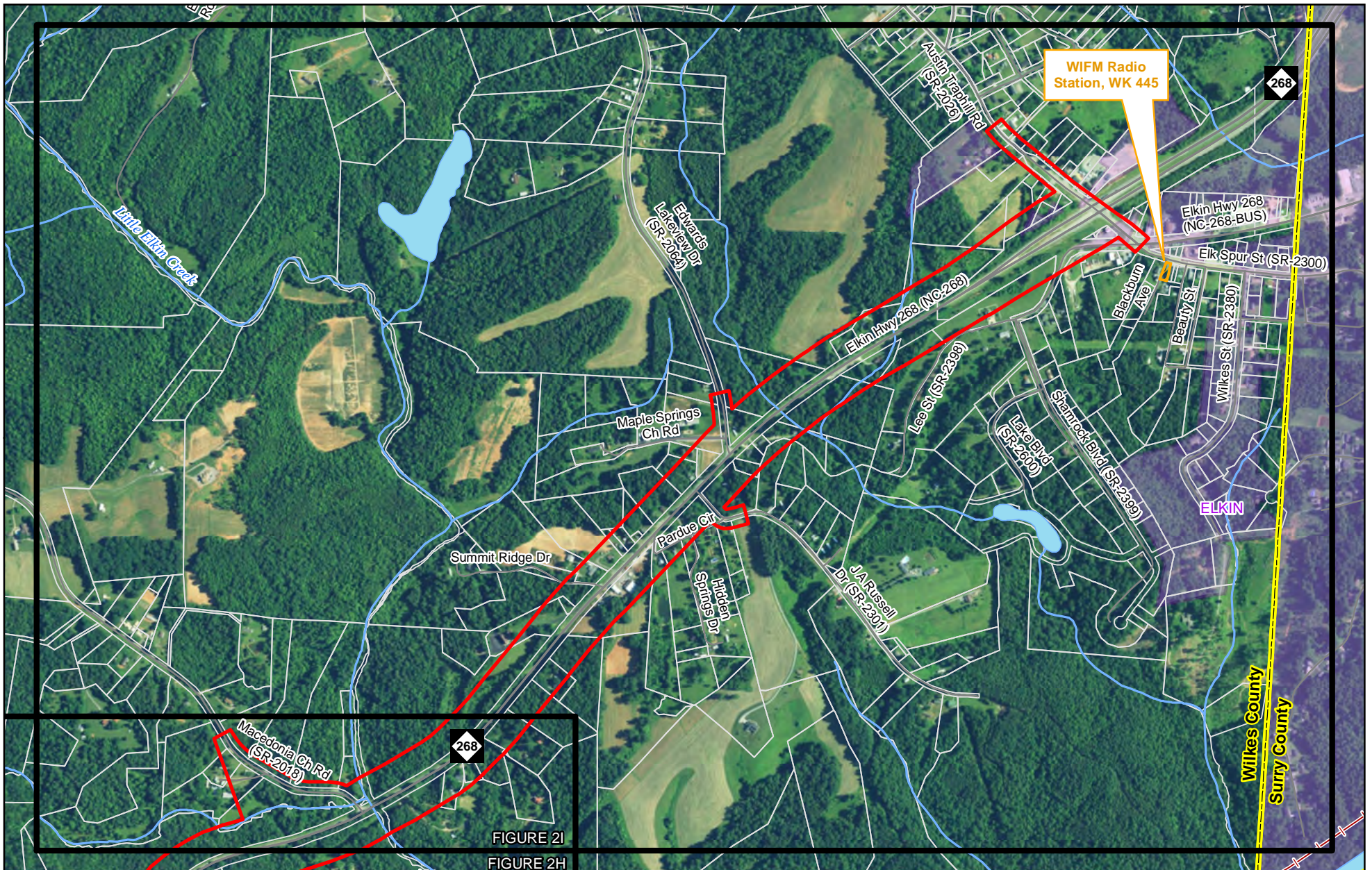


FIGURE 2I

FIGURE 2H

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| R-3309 APE Boundary | NRHP Ineligible Boundary | County Boundary | Road |
| R-3309 Bypass Option APE Boundary | NRHP Ineligible Point | Municipal Boundary | Railroad |
| NRHP Eligible Boundary | APE Map Grid Index | Parcel | Waterbody |

FIGURE 2I
AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS (APE)

STIP No. R-3309 WILKES COUNTY
Improvements to NC 268 from SR 1966 to Elkin Bypass in Wilkes County



Methodology

On June 26 and 27, CALYX Architectural Historian Sarah Woodard David visited Wilkes County and completed photo documentation of all 13 resources. The investigator undertook research at the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, the Wilkes County Register of Deeds, the North Carolina State Library, and the North Carolina State Archives. The investigator also used online research tools and resources, including the Wilkes County Register of Deeds online index, Wilkes County GIS Mapping, the website findagrave.com, and the web-based subscription services ancestry.com and newspapers.com. The investigator drove the northeast quadrant of Wilkes County on June 27 in search of comparable building types.

As research proceeded it became clear the Reves-Greenwood House and the J.E. and Matilda Greenwood House shared a common history. For the purposes of evaluation, they have been combined into the Reves-Greenwood Complex Historic District.

CALYX 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: Roaring River Railroad Bridge

Resource Name	Roaring River Railroad Bridge
HPO Survey Site Number	WK 433
Street Address	Over Roaring River, 1,000' north of the Yadkin River, adjacent to NC 268
PIN	No PIN
Construction Dates	1900
NRHP Recommendation	Eligible, A and C



Description

The Roaring River Railroad Bridge is a steel, Warren through-truss railroad bridge (figures 4 and 5). Although this type of bridge structure is not exactly what James Warren and Willoughby Monzani patented in 1848, “Warren Truss” has become the universally accepted name for the structure type.¹ (Warren and Monzani’s design included decks across the top and bottom.) This bridge was manufactured by the Phoenix Bridge Company.

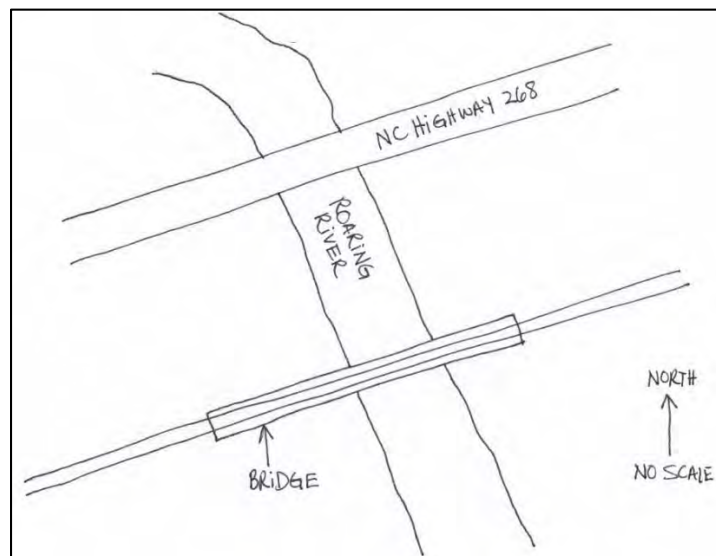


Figure 3: Roaring River Railroad Bridge, site plan

¹ Frank Griggs, Jr., “The Warren Truss,” *Structure*, July 2015, accessed in July 2017 via <http://www.structuremag.org/?p=8715>.

The Roaring River Bridge is approximately 200 feet long and 15 feet wide. The steel structure consists of vertical and diagonal members on the sides of the structure, creating a series of triangles. The structure is constructed from pairs of I-beams that are linked by a crossed lattice. The sides of the structure are connected across the top by struts and sway bracing created from I-beams connected with crossed lattice. Beams placed in X formations between the struts and side walls create lateral bracing. Floor beams connect the sides under the track deck. The bridge's components appear to be connected with pins rather than rivets; the bridge's construction year, 1900, is the year in which Phoenix Bridge Company switched from pins to rivets.²



Figure 4: Roaring River Railroad Bridge, east elevation

The span clears Roaring River without the use of piers. The bridge rests on the ground on either side of the river, with railroad cross ties acting as a retaining wall to support the embankment directly under the ends of the bridge.

² "Phoenix Bridge Company," Historical Society of the Phoenixville [PA] Area website, accessed August 26, 2017 via http://www.hspa-pa.org/phoenix_bridge.html.



Figure 5: Roaring River Railroad Bridge, north elevation

History and Architectural Context

Following the Civil War, Wilkes County, like most other places in North Carolina, struggled to adjust to the post-war economy, but the state rapidly turned to railroads as the path to a brighter future. In 1868, the Northwestern North Carolina Railroad was incorporated to build a line from some point along the North Carolina Railroad between Lexington and Greensboro, through Winston and Salem, and then into northwestern North Carolina.³ By the 1870s, the route to Winston was complete, and Winston began emerging as a major manufacturing center, but more than fifteen years would pass before Wilkes gained a railroad.⁴

While the railroad remained out of reach for the county most farmers and millers continued operating at small, subsistence scales, but in the 1880s, Wilkes County leaders renewed their advocacy for the rail line's construction and voters approved issuing bonds to fund the route.⁵ By the spring of 1890, newspapers were reporting the line was expected to reach Roaring River by late May and, by July, Roaring River had regular train service to Winston with the route reaching the designated point outside of Wilkesboro (soon to be named North Wilkesboro) by August.⁶

Existing places on the railroad, like Elkin and Roaring River, flourished while brand-new settlements, like North Wilkesboro and Ronda, blossomed overnight. North Wilkesboro was named, obviously, for its

³ Henry Poor, *Manual of the Railroads of the United States* (New York: H.V. and H.W. Poor, 1873-74), 368.

⁴ Henry Poor, *Manual of the Railroads of the United States* (New York: H.V. and H.W. Poor, 1874-75), 448.

⁵ Jennifer L. Pena and Laurie B. Hayes, *Wilkes County: A Brief History* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2008), 79.

⁶ *Union Republican* (Winston-Salem), August 1, 1889, 3; *Western Sentinel* (Winston-Salem), May 22, 1890, 3; *Union Republican*, August 7, 1890, 2.

relationship to Wilkesboro, and Ronda was loosely named for Roundabout, the seat of Revolutionary War veteran and extensive landowner Benjamin Cleveland.

The impact of the railroad on the county's economy is hard to overstate. Ronda and Roaring River practically vibrated with new industry, almost all of which was tied directly to the area's natural resources of timber, water power, and good climate for fruit cultivation. While factories hummed, real estate speculators profited. One observer for the Wilkesboro *Chronicle* recorded a surveyor's work in Roaring River noting, he "ran off twenty-four town lots for Mr. L.D. Parks. They are figuring on a nice town down there and they stand a fine chance for getting it, too."⁷

In Wilkes County, the railroad supported an industrial base that was remarkably diverse as was its agriculture during the first half of the twentieth century. In addition to subsistence farming and the cultivation of cash crops such as tobacco, farmers also raised fruit and herbs, and local historian John Crouch described the county as the "best fruit growing section in the world" in 1902.⁸

Canning companies shipped out tons of fruit each year, while other manufactures produced wood products of all kinds: portable grist mills, crates, chicken coops, packing boxes for cotton mills, caskets, and furniture. Leather tanning was another significant industry in the county in the late 1800s and into the 1900s, and Roaring River was home to at least one tanning operation.⁹

By the 1910s and early 1920s, Wilkes County was a well-established producer of a wide variety of wood products, leather, fruits, and herbs. Entrepreneurs attempted to establish cotton mills at Roaring River and Ronda in 1911 and 1919 respectively, but neither enjoyed sustained success.

The railroad was key to the county's industrial successes, and bridges were key to the railroad's completion. At Roaring River, the original bridge, possibly a wooden trestle, was replaced with a Warren Truss in 1900.

The Warren Truss uses equilateral triangles to spread loads across a bridge. Because a Warren Truss uses fewer diagonal and vertical members than other designs, the structure is efficient and light, creating a bridge that was less expensive to build and could be relocated if needed. It is uncertain how many Warren Truss railroad bridges were built in North Carolina, but they are a common sight along the state's rail lines. The North Carolina Department of Transportation's Historic Bridges Inventory describes Warren Trusses as having been very popular for highway bridges built between 1900 and 1930.

The bridges, both highway and railroad, vary in ornamentation, in width of the structural members, and in material (steel or iron) but they are all essentially the same structure with diagonal braces connected across the bottom and the top with horizontal members.

⁷ *The Chronicle* (Wilkesboro), September 20, 1899, 4.

⁸ John Crouch, *Historical Sketches of Wilkes County* (self-published: 1902), undated reprint edition, 53.

⁹ Byrd, 194, Pena and Hayes, 84-85, and Anderson, 68-70.

The Roaring River Railroad Bridge was constructed in 1900, ten years after the completion of the Northwestern North Carolina Railroad from Winston-Salem to North Wilkesboro. It is likely that a wooden bridge was used to span Roaring River during the rail line's initial construction as a cost-saving measure. A 1900 newspaper article suggests that Southern Railway was considering a new bridge over Roaring River, but does not describe the original bridge nor does it elaborate on why a new bridge was needed.¹⁰

According to the manufacturer's plaque, the Phoenix Bridge Company built the structure.¹¹ Phoenix was a premier bridge manufacturing company organized in 1864 as a subsidiary of the Phoenix Iron Company, based in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania. The company produced both highway and railroad bridges, switching from iron to steel in 1889.¹²

In 1916 the region suffered through one of the worst floods in the state's history when remnants of two hurricanes drenched the region in mid-July. "More rain than anyone anywhere had ever seen since such records had been kept" fell, with totals exceeding twenty inches in a twenty-four-hour period, setting records that survive to this day.¹³

The flood engulfed the bottom lands along the Yadkin from North Wilkesboro to Donaha in western Forsyth County. Over ten miles of railroad track vanished and most of what remained was heavily damaged or buried under mud. In the county's most fertile farmland, washes left 20-foot-deep gouges or deposits of sand and mud many feet deep.¹⁴

In Roaring River, the *Western Sentinel* reported that the community had been stripped of all vegetation, and the depot, situated to the east of this bridge, had been submerged to the tops of its windows. Buildings, mostly businesses and warehouses, had washed away, and mud and sand filled the first floors of many remaining houses. Park's Lumber Company, Elkin Canning Company, and Roaring River Canning Company had all suffered thousands of dollars of losses.¹⁵

The one bright spot was the efforts of Southern Railway. The company moved quickly to organize local workers, paying 18 cents an hour and providing food and lodging, and the line was up and running in fewer than ten days. The company described the effort as one of its most notable achievements in repairing flood damage.¹⁶

¹⁰ *The Morganton Herald*, March 29, 1900, 1.

¹¹ Roaring River Yadkin Valley Railroad Bridge entry at bridgehunter.com, accessed August 26, 2017 via <https://bridgehunter.com/nc/wilkes/bh77594/>.

¹² Historical Society of the Phoenixville Area, "Phoenix Bridge Company," citing Thomas Winnpenny, *Without Fitting, Filling, or Chipping* (Canal History and Technology Press, 1996), accessed August 26, 2017 via http://www.hspa-pa.org/phoenix_bridge.html.

¹³ Heidi Coryell Williams, "Hell and High Water: The Flood of 1916," *Our State*, January 2013, accessed in July 2017 via <https://www.ourstate.com/flood-of-1916/>.

¹⁴ Jule Hubbard, "Southern's Experiences in 1916 Told," *Journal Patriot* (North Wilkesboro), September, 3, 2012.

¹⁵ *Western Sentinel* (Winston-Salem), July 28, 1916, 2.

¹⁶ Hubbard, *Journal Patriot*.

The bridge suffered damage in the 1916 flood, but news reports about that flood suggest the bridge was repaired rather than replaced. Another catastrophic flood happened in 1940, but the absence of the bridge in news reports suggests the structure was not significantly damaged.

Comparable Examples

The Roaring River Railroad Bridge is one of two through-truss bridges on the railroad between Elkin and North Wilkesboro and the two bridges are comparable examples of turn-of-the-twentieth-century bridges. The bridges are nearly identical, with the second bridge located in Surry County, crossing Big Elkin Creek (figure 6). Phoenix Bridge Company, the manufacturer of the Roaring River Railroad Bridge, also produced the Big Elkin Creek Bridge. Its plaque dates it to 1899. Because Wilkes County contains only one railroad, there are no other comparable bridges in Wilkes County. Additionally, only one railroad bridge in North Carolina is listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places and that example is a stone arch structure.



Figure 6: Big Elkin Creek Bridge, north elevation

Sixteen through-truss road or highway bridges are documented in NCDOT’s Historic Bridges Inventory available through NCDOT’s website. Three of these are closed to traffic or have been removed. All examples appear to be Pratt trusses rather than Warren trusses, but architecturally (as opposed to structurally) Pratt and Warren trusses are visually similar. Several were built by the Phoenix Bridge Company, including Truss Bridge No. 79 (HW 22, Study List 1983, DOE 1979) in Haywood County, which is the state’s oldest metal truss bridge (figure 7).



Figure 7: Haywood County Bridge No. 79, HW 22, over West Fork Pigeon Creek, photo by C. Hanchey, accessed via <https://bridgehunter.com/nc/haywood/870079/>

The documented highway examples represent both pin-connected and rivet-connected bridges and were built between 1891 and 1954. The State Historic Preservation Office has survey files for 48 truss bridges, of which 34 are on the state’s Study List, have been determined eligible, or (in the case of one bridge) are individually listed on the National Register.

Only the Deep River Camelback Truss Bridge (figure 8) in Lee and Chatham Counties is individually listed in the National Register and it is listed under Criterion A for its association with transportation improvements in the early twentieth century in North Carolina and Criterion C as an important example of metal truss engineering. This bridge is extant and maintained.



Figure 8: Deep River Camelback Bridge, photo by Matthew B. Ridpath, published at <https://sites.google.com/site/matthewbridpath/bridges-and-highways-1/truss-bridges/deep-river-camelback-truss-bridge>

National Register Evaluation

Integrity

The Roaring River Railroad Bridge retains its integrity of location, workmanship, materials, design, feeling, setting, and association because it has not been altered significantly. Its setting was changed slightly when the highway was rerouted much closer to the railroad, and a new highway bridge was constructed parallel to this bridge in the 1930s. Additionally, the industrial and commercial activity once centered along Cotton Mill Road, directly north of the bridge, is no longer extant. This has changed the bridge's setting, but not significantly.

Criteria Evaluations

The Roaring River Railroad Bridge is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with transportation, industry, community planning and development, and commerce. The completion of a railroad connection between central Wilkes County and Winston-Salem opened up markets for Wilkes County's plentiful natural resources, raw materials, and finished products including timber, fruit (canned and dried), chicken coops, furniture, and poultry products. The line provided a transportation link that brought immeasurable economic and cultural impacts to the county, and the Roaring River is the largest creek on the route in Wilkes County, making crossing it an important achievement in the line's construction. Furthermore, it resulted in the creation of two new communities, Ronda and North Wilkesboro, that became important regional centers of commerce and industry.

The Roaring River Railroad Bridge is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B because it is not associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

The Roaring River Railroad Bridge is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C. The Roaring River Railroad Bridge is a good and unaltered example of a Phoenix Bridge Company Warren Truss bridge with pin connectors. While Warren Trusses are common along railroads, this is the only Warren Truss through-truss railroad bridge in Wilkes County.

The Roaring River Railroad Bridge 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 to prehistory or history.

Boundary Description and Justification

The Roaring River Railroad boundary encompasses the entire bridge structure and follows a boundary line offset five feet from the structure's outer edges. This is sufficient for communicating the resource's architectural and historic significance. Figure 9 illustrates the proposed boundary.

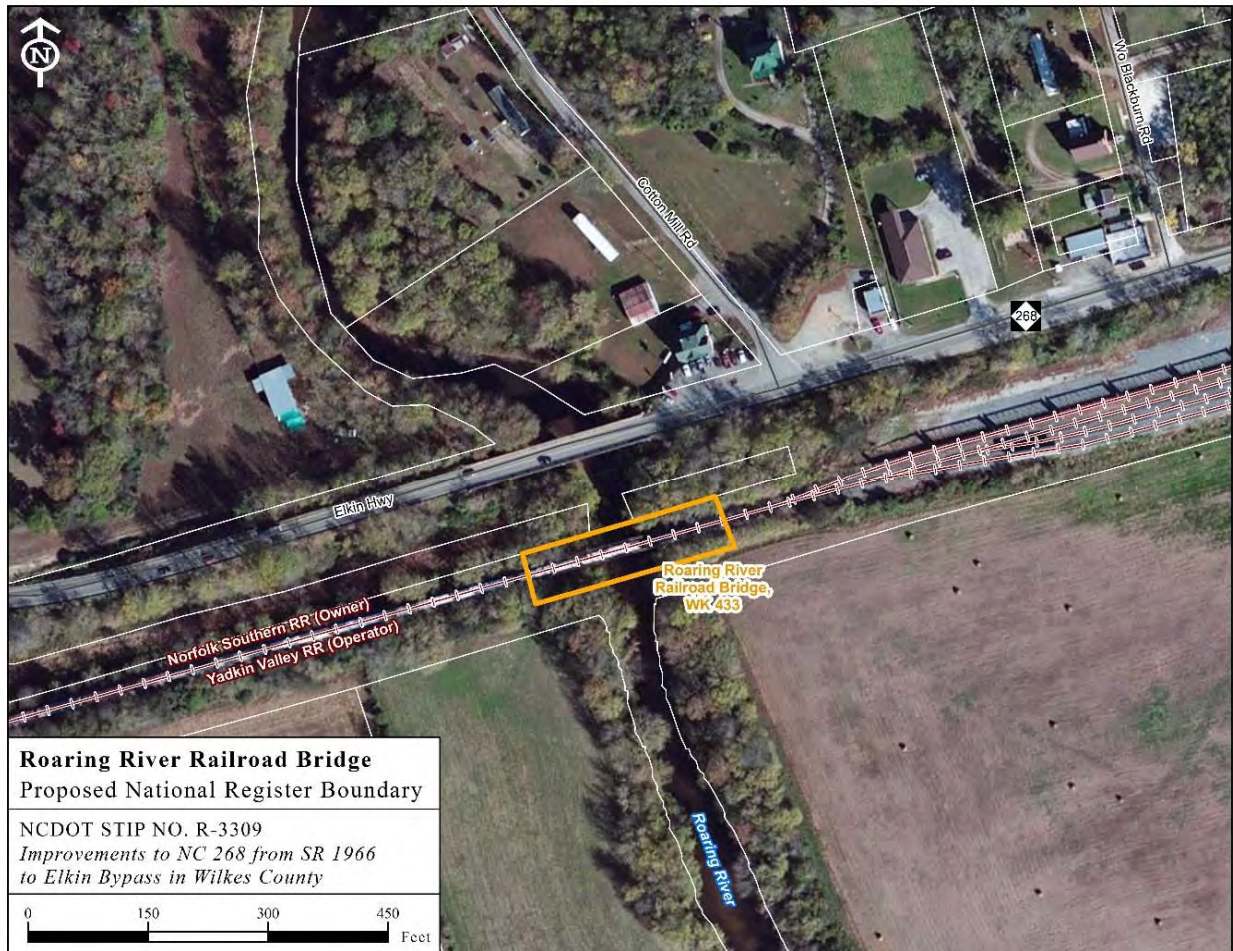


Figure 9: Roaring River Railroad Bridge, proposed National Register Boundary

Evaluation: Reves-Greenwood Complex Historic District

Resource Name	Reves-Greenwood Complex Historic District
HPO Survey Site Numbers	WK 343, WK 345, WK 446
Street Address	318 and 325 Cotton Mill Road
PIN	4900-70-2713, 4900-60-7206, 4900-61-2554
Construction Dates	Ca. 1855, ca. 1885
NRHP Recommendation	Eligible, A and C



Description

The Reves-Greenwood Complex consists of two houses, outbuildings, a road bed, a dam site, and a mill site (figures 10, 11, and 29). The houses are situated on the east side of Cotton Mill Road overlooking Roaring River to the west. Historically, this area was Roaring River's industrial and commercial heart, and, while the houses overlook a picturesque mountain stream and quiet, curvy mountain road today, the riverside in this section once bustled with activity.

The district is bisected by an east-west roadbed that was part of the primary east-west route between Wilkesboro and points east. By the early twentieth century, the road was called Bridge Street, and as the name suggests, it linked the community to the Roaring River crossing.

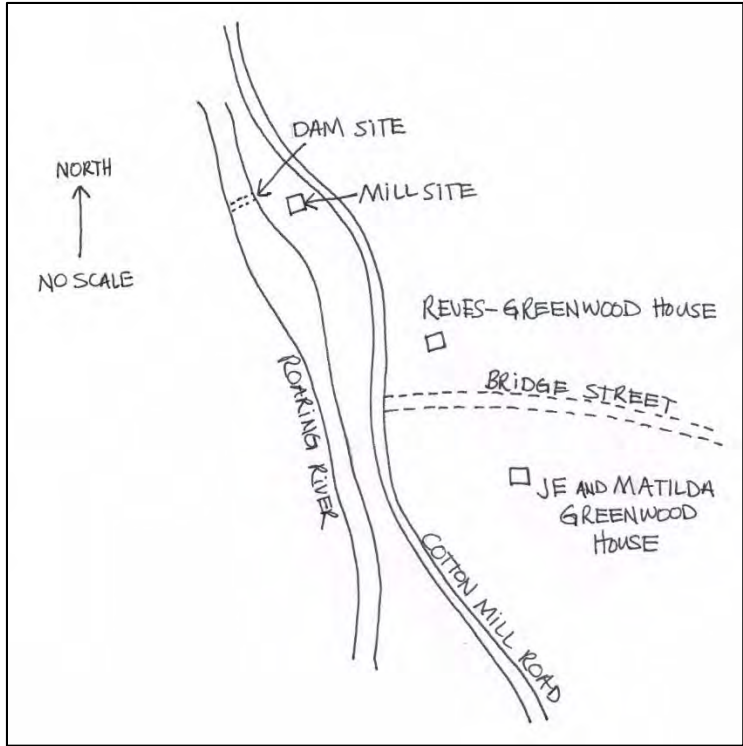


Figure 10: Reves-Greenwood Complex, site plan

The older of the two homes is the Reves-Greenwood House (figures 12-28). It is a two-story, L-shaped house on a slope above Roaring River. The house stands on a plateau between Cotton Mill Road and Roaring River downhill to the west and the remainder of the property, which rises uphill behind the house to the east.

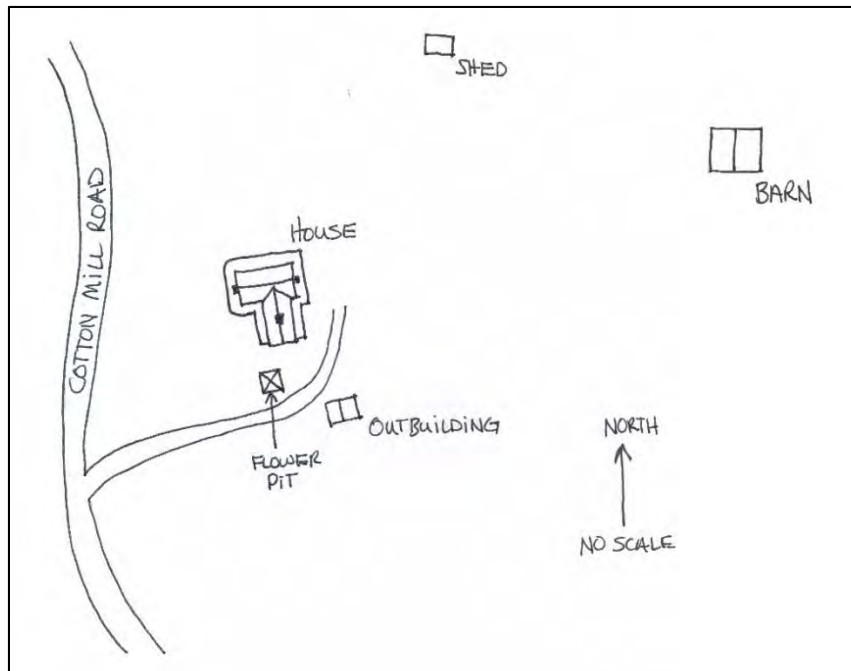


Figure 11: Reves-Greenwood Complex, Reves-Greenwood House site plan

The house consists of a two-story saddlebag structure with a massive central brick chimney to which an I-house was added. During the expansion, the earlier section was re-sided, a new roof with eave detailing to match the new construction was added, and new windows were installed. A porch was wrapped around all but one gable end to further create a unified design.

On the Cotton Mill Road (west) elevation of the original section, now the rear ell, two doors open to the exterior at the first floor level (figure 13). Two windows are located between the two doors, and two windows occupy the second floor of the ell.



Figure 12: Reves-Greenwood Complex, Reves-Greenwood House, west elevation



Figure 13: Reves-Greenwood Complex, Reves-Greenwood House, west elevation, original section detail

On the north façade, which does not face a road or road bed, the house presents a traditional I-house form with brick, single-shoulder chimneys flanked by windows on each gable end (west and east) (figures 14, 15, and 16). The three-bay elevation has a double-leaf door at the center on the first floor. Both leaves feature two arched panels above two rectangular panels (figure 15). Sidelights and a transom surround the door. While this elevation does not face a road as would be expected, it does look toward the mill site just to the northwest.



Figure 14: Reves-Greenwood Complex, Reves-Greenwood House, north elevation



Figure 15: Reves-Greenwood Complex, Reves-Greenwood House, north elevation detail



Figure 16: Reves-Greenwood Complex, Reves-Greenwood House, northeast corner

On the east elevation, the rear ell (the original section of the house) contains two windows upstairs and two downstairs with one door situated toward the rear or south end of the ell (figures 17 and 18).



Figure 17: Reves-Greenwood Complex, Reves-Greenwood House, east elevation



Figure 18: Reves-Greenwood Complex, Reves-Greenwood House, east elevation, original section



Figure 19: Reves-Greenwood Complex, Reves-Greenwood House, southeast corner

On the south elevation, the original house's gable end features a window centered on both the first and second floors and an elongated, diamond-shaped, louvered attic vent (figures 19 and 20).



Figure 20: Reves-Greenwood Complex, Reves-Greenwood House, south elevation and flower pit

The house's expansive porch nearly encircles the entire building. Beginning at the ell's south end, it extends north, jogging around the interior corner where the ell meets the I-house, then it runs along the back of the I-house section before wrapping around the gable end. As the porch wraps this west gable

end, the porch makes curves at the gable's southwest and northwest corners, rather than following straight corners. This would have been the end of the house most visible from the family's mill on Roaring River.

The porch continues across the north elevation and wraps around the northeast corner and again follows the contours of the gable end, including the interior corner of the intersection of the ell and I-house, and then it extends along the ell to the ell's south end.

Around most of the house, the porch posts are elegant, slim Doric columns that may have been installed in the early 1900s as Colonial Revival designs gained popularity. Along the ell's east elevation, however, the posts are composed of paired, slender vertical posts between which are narrow diagonally laid members that create Xs or a lattice between the posts (figures 18 and 19). At the height where a railing might be installed, horizontal members above and below delicate square-in-plan pickets create a section of railing between the upright posts. While not exactly like the posts seen at the Johnson-Hubbard House, the composition is similar and likely another signature of the as-yet-unidentified carpenter working in this section of the Yadkin Valley (figure 37).

Another detail shared among some of this carpenter's other houses in the area, including Claymont Hill and the Johnson-Hubbard House (see History section below), are cornerboards that terminate at stacked or corbeled capitals (figure 21).



Figure 21: Reves-Greenwood Complex, Reves-Greenwood House, cornerboard and soffit detail

Soffits covered with flush planks are yet another commonality among some of these houses, although here, they are truly flush and are not off-set as they are at the adjacent J.E. and Matilda Greenwood House (figure 32). The Reves-Greenwood House eaves and rakes are also trimmed with gently scrolled

brackets. The final exterior feature seen here and shared by many of this carpenter's houses is a wide frieze board extending across the gable end.

Inside, the house retains original finishes and woodwork throughout. In the older section, mantelpieces are simple post-and-lintel style. On the first floor, they are tall and wide, but feature plinths embellished with a hipped or pyramidal raised panel used frequently by the unidentified carpenter. Also, on both sides of the original section's chimney, paneled cabinets below shelves were added during the late-nineteenth-century remodeling (figure 22). In the southernmost room, this configuration has been removed to create space for a refrigerator. Upstairs, the mantels are smaller with a post-and-lintel form with flat panels below the mantel shelf (figure 23).



Figure 22: Reves-Greenwood Complex, Reves-Greenwood House, built-in cabinet



Figure 23: Reves-Greenwood Complex, Reves-Greenwood House, upstairs 1850s mantel

In the 1880s I-house section, the carpenter's work includes mantels with hipped panels and paneled doors, some featuring the hipped panels and some incorporating an unusual arrangement of four traditionally-oriented rectangular panels above a horizontal panel that extends across the bottom of the composition. The staircase features a delicately curved railing, simple rectangular-in-plan balusters, and a square newel post with chamfered corners and vertical gouging along each side that suggests fluting (figure 25).



Figure 24: Reves-Greenwood Complex, Reves-Greenwood House, downstairs 1880s mantel



Figure 25: Reves-Greenwood Complex, Reves-Greenwood House, newel post

To the house's south is a pyramidal-roof flower pit (figures 11 and 20). The flower pit is a square structure. It consists of a concrete wall set into a bank so that the north, east, and west sides are partially below grade. Above this foundation wall is a frame structure of four-pane windows that create the north, east, and west walls. On the south elevation, a single-leaf door is centered between two four-light windows. Asphalt shingles cover the pyramidal roof, and the interior floor is covered in gravel. The Greenwood's 1923 plat identifies this as a flower pit. The flower pit matches similar outbuildings at two other area houses also expanded in the late 1800s.

Immediately to the south of the flower pit is a frame, gable-front, windowless outbuilding (figure 26). Weatherboards cover the exterior, the door is batten construction, and it stands on a precarious stone and brick foundation. This building appears to date from the late 1800s.



Figure 26: Reves-Greenwood Complex, Reves-Greenwood House, outbuilding

A spring house is located on the 1923 map south of the gable-front outbuilding and close to the Bridge Street roadbed, which forms the property's southern edge. The current owner confirms its existence in a ruined state, but summer over growth prevented a thorough examination.

Farther east, uphill from the house, is a frame barn marked as a stable on the 1923 plat (figure 27). This structure probably dates from the turn-of-the-twentieth century.



Figure 27: Reves-Greenwood Complex, Reves-Greenwood House, barn

On the property's north edge, to the north-northeast of the house and the southwest of the stable, is a shed-roof outbuilding sheathed in vertical wood (figure 28). This building is not shown on the 1923 plat, although a spring is noted in this vicinity. This building probably dates from the late 1920s or mid-twentieth century.



Figure 28: Reves-Greenwood Complex, Reves-Greenwood House, shed

The second house in the complex is the J.E. and Matilda Greenwood House, which stands to the south of the Reves-Greenwood House, across the Bridge Street roadbed and uphill (figures 29-36). The two-story dwelling is situated on a hilltop overlooking the community of Roaring River and the Yadkin Valley. Single-shoulder brick chimneys stand on each gable end. The second-story is four bays wide, but the south façade's first floor is asymmetrical with a double-leaf front door situated to the center-left, below the center-left upstairs window. To the east of this primary front door is a window. To the east of this window is a single-leaf door, and to the east of this door is another window. On the far west end of the façade, to the west of the double-leaf front door, is another window. The single-leaf door and the window to the right of that door appear to constitute the original fenestration, although the window to the left of the single-leaf door may be part of that original design, as well.

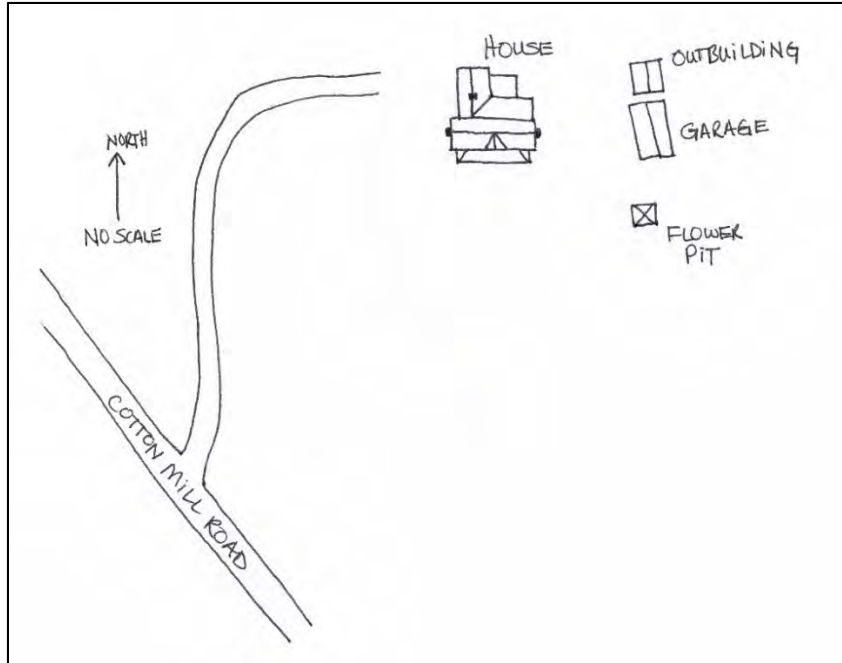


Figure 29: Reves-Greenwood Complex, J.E. and Matilda Greenwood House site plan



Figure 30: Reves-Greenwood Complex, J.E. and Matilda Greenwood House, south elevation



Figure 31: Reves-Greenwood Complex, J.E. and Matilda Greenwood House, southwest corner

When the original house was enlarged, the building was covered uniformly in weatherboard siding so that any exterior expression of the original form is limited to the single-leaf front door and asymmetry of the first floor façade.

A hip-roof porch with turned posts and sawnwork brackets extends across the front of the house. The double-leaf front door features four-panel doors, with arched upper panels, and is surrounded by sidelights and a transom. The single-leaf door also contains four-panels, but the top panels are rectangular rather than arched. A roof gable housing a pair of attic windows punctuates the front slope of the side-gable roof. The attic windows comprise a multi-paned upper sash containing stained-glass square lights around a central panel of clear glass over a two-light sash.

The rakes and eaves are finished with flush planks that are offset slightly and mitered at the corners to create a concentric appearance (figure 32). This particular detail is one of the signatures of the as-yet unidentified carpenter whose work can be seen throughout this project area.



Figure 32: Reves-Greenwood Complex, J.E. and Matilda Greenwood House, soffit detail

From the rear elevation, a one-story ell extends to the north (figure 33). A hip-roof porch with turned posts, but no brackets, extends across the main block's north elevation and turns to run along the ell's east elevation. A brick wall surrounds a well and is located adjacent to the back porch under a roof that extends from the porch roof.



Figure 33: Reves-Greenwood Complex, J.E. and Matilda Greenwood House, rear ell

Windows throughout the house are original with four-over-four sash. Pressed metal shingles cover the main block and the ell while modern 5-v crimp metal sheathes the porch roofs. The house stands on a brick foundation that appears to have been continuous originally, except under the porches where brick fills the spaces between brick piers.

The property retains two historic outbuildings and one modern outbuilding. Closest to the house is a flower-pit building (figure 34). This structure is partially below grade with a concrete foundation and concrete block walls. The north, west, and east walls are occupied by banks of six-over-six sash windows. On the south wall, the banks of windows continue, but a door is centered on this elevation. Pressed metal shingles cover the pyramidal roof, which terminates at a slight kick on all four elevations.



Figure 34: Reves-Greenwood Complex, J.E. and Matilda Greenwood House, flower pit

To the east of the ell stands a gable-front, frame outbuilding that appears to date from the late-nineteenth or early twentieth century, contemporary with the house's expansion (figure 35). Weatherboards cover the exterior, and the door features four panels. Seams in the weatherboards suggest a window or door once stood in the west elevation.



Figure 35: Reves-Greenwood Complex, J.E. and Matilda Greenwood House, outbuilding

Just a few feet in front of the gabled outbuilding is a larger, concrete block garage and storage building with a garage door in the gable front end (figure 36). This building was probably built in the mid-twentieth century.



Figure 36: Reves-Greenwood Complex, J.E. and Matilda Greenwood House, outbuilding and concrete block garage

History

The Reves-Greenwood Complex probably dates to the 1850s, but because there were many mills along Roaring River from the eighteenth century, the mill site could have been in use from an earlier date.

Oral tradition suggests that the Reves-Greenwood House was built in the mid-1800s during the ownership of the Becknell and Mastin families, who were related by marriage and owned thousands of acres in the area, including this property on Roaring River. The original house was a two-story, saddle-bag-form dwelling with a massive central chimney flanked by two rooms downstairs and two rooms upstairs. A ladder or winder stair probably abutted the interior chimney stack, but back-to-back built-in cabinets appear to have replaced the stair during a late-nineteenth-century remodeling. Because the Becknell-Mastin holdings included a mill on Roaring River, the original section of the house may have been a miller's house.

In 1873, an entrepreneur and sometime-physician man named William Reves purchased 1,300 acres from the Becknell-Mastins.¹⁷ The deed specifically identifies a mill and mill site on Roaring River as part of this tract. It does not mention a house, but the older section of the Reves-Greenwood House may have been extant when Reves acquired the property.¹⁸

Census records indicate William Hamilton Reves was born in Virginia in 1820. He married Ann Moorefield in Stokes County, North Carolina, in 1851, and, by 1860, he was a merchant and tobacconist in Jonesville. In 1870, the family still lived in Jonesville where they enjoyed relative wealth, possessing \$35,000 in real estate and personal property.¹⁹

It is unclear why the Reves family uprooted themselves from what appears to have been a prosperous life to move to Roaring River, but Reves had been involved in official meetings regarding the planned northwest railroad as early as 1868, so he may have been anticipating a coming boom for Roaring River.²⁰

In any case, Reves' newly acquired acreage on the Roaring River's east side and the north side of the Yadkin River included a mill and mill site, around which Reves quickly began building a small industrial and commercial empire.²¹ In 1874, William Reves was named Roaring River's first postmaster, and by July 1880, he was advertising whisky in the newspaper. The 1880 U.S. Census manufacturing schedule

¹⁷ Larkin and Colista Becknell and Amanda and William Mastin to W.H. Reves, Wilkes County Deed Book B-2, page 175, March 11, 1873.

¹⁸ Although the house was thoroughly updated in the late 1800s, the current owner believes the rear ell is the earlier section, dating from the 1850s. The layout of that portion of the house supports this theory.

¹⁹ North Carolina, Index to Marriage Bonds, 1741-1868, accessed via ancestry.com, and U.S. Census Records, 1860 and 1870, accessed via ancestry.com.

²⁰ *People's Press* (Winston, N.C.), February 5, 1869, 3.

²¹ The mill had been destroyed by 1956, and no obvious remains of the mill or dam are visible at the site today, but descriptions in news articles and deeds indicate that the dam was built on a rock outcropping, which is visible today.

documents Reves as operating a mill with an over-shot wheel on Roaring River.²² Branson's Business Directory in 1890 lists W.H. Reves in several capacities: distiller, sawmill operator, general merchant, physician, and farmer. News articles frequently reference Reves' businesses and also note that he ran a tobacco factory in the late nineteenth century.²³ By 1898, Reves' holdings included the Roaring River depot, a saw mill, a tobacco factory, a "valuable grist mill," three stores, tenant houses, and "six or seven good dwelling houses," all with "barns, outhouses, etc." It is likely that the J.E. and Matilda Greenwood House was one of the houses mentioned.²⁴

It was during the 1880s, in what appears to have been Reves' greatest era of prosperity, that Reves brought the Reves-Greenwood House into its current form.²⁵ He may have also updated the J.E. and Matilda Greenwood at this time as well, because both houses appear to display the work of the same carpenter. Five other houses (the adjacent R.A. Reves House, the William and Diana Edwards House, the Johnson-Hubbard House, an unnamed house in Ronda, and Claymont Hill), and likely others, share various design similarities. Claymont Hill, the Reves-Greenwood House, and the J.E. and Matilda Greenwood House also share matching "flower pit" outbuildings. With the exception of the house R.A. Reves built around 1900 and the unnamed house in Ronda, all of these dwellings were older homes that were expanded and remodeled, apparently by the same person active in the area from at least 1870, when Claymont Hill was expanded, to at least 1900, when the R.A. Reves House was built. As previously noted, this builder has not been identified.

Despite Reves' vigorous commercial activity, or possibly because of it, he was unable to pay his debts, and, throughout the fall of 1898, the property was advertised for auction on November 10.²⁶ Sanders J. Greenwood, another distiller and Roaring River businessman, won the auction, and eleven days later, William Reves died. Ann Reves sued to stop or delay the sale of the land, but ultimately S.J. and Bessie Greenwood owned the property until 1914.²⁷

The earlier ownership of the J.E. and Matilda Greenwood House is less clear, but it seems likely that this house was purchased by J.E.'s parents, S.J. and Bessie Greenwood, during the 1898 auction at the same time they acquired the Reves-Greenwood House. The record is more clear beginning in 1911, when J.E. and Matilda Greenwood purchased this house from J.E.'s brother and sister-in-law, Charles H. and Zera Greenwood.²⁸ Prior to buying this house, J.E. and Matilda had been farming near Roaring River.²⁹

In 1914, S.J. and Bessie Greenwood sold sixteen acres, including the Reves-Greenwood House, to their son, Walter, who sold it to James Tharpe about a year later. Just three years after that, in 1918, James

²² Byrd, 194; *The Index* (Wilkesboro, N.C.), July 22, 1880, 2; and Appointments of U.S. Postmasters, volume 29, 1857 to 1876, accessed via ancestry.com.

²³ Levi Branson, *Branson's North Carolina Business Directory* (Raleigh: L. Branson), 1890, 699-703.

²⁴ *The Chronicle* (North Wilkesboro), October 5, 1898, 4.

²⁵ Ansley Browning, owner, interview with the author on June 26, 2017.

²⁶ *The Chronicle* (North Wilkesboro), October 5, 1898, 4.

²⁷ W.H. Reves to S.J. Greenwood, Wilkes County Deed Book 29, page 366, January 25, 1895, and S.J. and Bessie Greenwood to Walter C. Greenwood, Wilkes County Deed Book 89, page 280, January 15, 1914.

²⁸ C.H. and Zera Greenwood to J.E. Greenwood, Wilkes County Deed Book 89, page 33, February 23, 1911.

²⁹ U.S. Census records, 1910, accessed via ancestry.com.

and Mollie Tharpe sold the land back to the Greenwood family: this time to Charles H. Greenwood, who was another son of S.J. and Bessie Greenwood.³⁰

By 1920, brothers, J.E. and C.H. Greenwood were living in these two houses: J.E. with Matilda, their six children, and Matilda's sister, Valley, in the J.E. and Matilda Greenwood House, and C.H. with his wife, Zera, and their children in the Reves-Greenwood House. J.E. was a miller at a roller mill, and C.H. manufactured flour.³¹

From S.J.'s purchase of this property in 1898 until the mid or late 1920s, the Greenwood family was heavily involved in Roaring River's commerce and industry as they built upon Reves' operations along Roaring River. The Roaring River had supported small-scale industry all along its course from the earliest European settlement in the region, but this lower, southern end is where activity concentrated, particularly after the Civil War. In 1890, the railroad was constructed just a few hundred yards to the property's south, and manufacturing activities at the Reves-Greenwood Complex flourished.

Throughout the 1910s, this section of Roaring River remained the heart of the community's commerce, even though a substantial brick cotton mill was constructed upstream on the Roaring River. Local newspapers frequently mention J.E., Charles H., and Walter Greenwood, along with their father, S.J., in reference to business trips, real estate sales, and industrial investments. *American Miller and Processor*, a trade magazine, noted in 1911 that C.H. and S.J. Greenwood had completed work on a 50-barrel flour mill, and, in 1914, Charles platted a significant subdivision of land along Center Street (today know as W.O. Blackburn Road) and Church Street (now a truncated, unpaved alley).³² In 1919, *The Iron Age* magazine noted that Charles was "outfitting" Blue Ridge Mill Company after it had been destroyed by a fire.³³

Over time, however, a few stores opened near the depot on what became Highway 268. In January 1922, shortly before J.E.'s untimely death from flu, J.E. and Matilda Greenwood sold their house to W.W. Harris.³⁴ William Washington Harris was born in 1859 and was the brother of Peggy Harris Greenwood, making him J.E. Greenwood's uncle. The Harris family moved from Stokes County to Wilkes County sometime between 1860 and 1870, and, in 1880, William married Margaret Croom from Iredell County. By 1900, the couple was living in Elkin, and they do not appear to have ever lived in Roaring River. Presumably, they rented the J.E. and Matilda Greenwood House out.³⁵

³⁰ S.J. and Bessie Greenwood to Walter Greenwood, Wilkes County Deed Book 89, page 280, January 15, 1914; Walter C. Greenwood to James A. Tharpe, Wilkes County Deed Book 100, page 256, January 11, 1915; and James and Mollie Tharpe to C.H. Greenwood, Wilkes County Deed Book 101, page 413, February 18, 1818.

³¹ U.S. Census records, 1920, accessed via ancestry.com.

³² *American Miller and Processor*, February 1, 1911, Volume 39, 153, and Map of C.H. Greenwood's Development, Roaring River, July 1914, Wilkes County Plat Book 1, page 80.

³³ *Iron Age*, July 3, 1919, Volume 104, 78.

³⁴ J.E. and Matilda Greenwood to W.W. Harris, Wilkes County Deed Book 120, page 495, January 2, 1922.

³⁵ U.S. Census records, 1860, 1870, 1880, and 1900, accessed via ancestry.com.

Margaret Harris died in 1925, but William owned the J.E. and Matilda Greenwood House until his death in 1950.³⁶ The house is currently owned by Joy Walters, who may be a Harris descendent; the house passed through several hands in the late twentieth century with several owners having Harris as part of their names.³⁷

In 1923, after J.E.'s death, Charles and Zera Greenwood moved from Roaring River to Statesville, and they prepared to sell their property by surveying it.³⁸ The resulting plat created tracts ranging in size from one to forty-six acres flanking Cotton Mill Road, and it documented the mill and dam, the now-demolished bridge over Roaring River, and three houses: this dwelling (the Reves-Greenwood House), a miller's house and a third dwelling farther north on Cotton Mill Road. This house and its outbuildings appear to be the only extant buildings shown on the plat. The plat also records J.E. and Matilda Greenwood's lot, and it notes R.A. Reves, the son of William Reves, as still owning land in the vicinity. Additionally, the plat documents three businesses (J.Q. Blackburn's store, R.S. Reves' store, and the Parks Brothers) along Main Street (present-day Highway 268) across from the depot.

In 1924, Monroe Mathis and his father, Ambrose, purchased C.H. and Zera's house (the Reves-Greenwood House).³⁹ Notes on the website findagrave.com regarding Monroe Mathis indicate this house was his childhood home, yet his parents did not purchase it until 1924, when Monroe was thirty-five-years-old. That might suggest the Mathis family had been renting the house for years prior to their purchase, however census records from 1920 and 1930 suggest that both Monroe and Ambrose and their families remained in the Antioch community, south of the Yadkin River, rather than moving to Roaring River.⁴⁰

By the 1930s, while the Harris and Mathis families owned these two houses, Roaring River's grist mills and the nineteenth century factories and commercial buildings that once stood in the Reves-Greenwood Complex and along Cotton Mill Road became outmoded. Rerouting the highway to follow the railroad in 1937 completed the shift of industry and commerce away from the Reves-Greenwood Complex so that today, Roaring River's center is along Highway 268 and slightly east of Cotton Mill Road.

Monroe Mathis died in 1974, and Ruby Mathis died in 1989, at which time the Reves-Greenwood House passed to their twin daughters, Doris and Dorothy. The house was used for storage for decades until the current owners began restoring it in 2016.⁴¹

³⁶ William and Margaret Harris grave makers at Hollywood Cemetery in Elkin, N.C., accessed in July 2017 via <https://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GSln=harris&GSfn=william&GSbyrel=all&GSdy=1950&GSdyrel=in&GSst=29&GScty=1736&GSctry=4&GSob=n&GRid=47009171&df=all&>.

³⁷ Joy Harris Walters Family Trust to Joy Melinda Walters, Wilkes County Deed Book 1061, page 153, July 5, 2007.

³⁸ *Statesville Record and Landmark*, September 6, 1923, 1; and Plat of C.H. Greenwood's Mill Property, April 20, 1923, Wilkes County Plat Book 1, page 4.

³⁹ C.H. and Zera Greenwood to Ambrose Mathis and Marcus Monroe Mathis, Wilkes County Deed Book 134, page 24, August 2, 1924.

⁴⁰ U.S. Census records, 1920 and 1930, accessed via ancestry.com.

⁴¹ Ann Alexander Adams to William and Ansley Browning, Wilkes County Deed Book 1220, page 209, January 4, 2016.

It is unclear when the Greenwood mill was demolished, but by the summer of 1957 when the Winston-Salem *Journal-Sentinel* ran an article about Roaring River, the mill and dam were gone, possibly swept away in the 1940 flood.⁴²

The Reves-Greenwood Complex originated in the mid-1800s, during a time of general prosperity for whites living in North Carolina, and it was expanded and updated during another period of economic improvement when the prospect of the railroad and the railroad itself sparked new investments in houses and business in the Yadkin Valley. Together, the two houses and the mill site represent the nineteenth century center of Roaring River's commerce and industry, and the houses are good examples of the common practice of expanding and modernizing earlier houses during periods of prosperity.

Architectural Context

Both the Reves-Greenwood and J.E. and Matilda Greenwood Houses started out as smaller homes, but were enlarged to I-house forms in the late 1800s. The I-house form is a two-story dwelling with a central hallway flanked by a room on each side that gained popularity in North Carolina in the early 1800s as it slowly displaced the earlier hall-parlor form. An ell or earlier house is often appended to the rear elevation.

The plan maximizes the visual impact of a four-room house by making the house as tall and wide as possible, letting the owner impress passersby with the size of his or her home. The broad façade also provided ample room for adding gables on the front roof slope and full-width porches, all of which provided additional opportunities for adding sawnwork, spindles, decorative shingles, or any other ornamentation the owner preferred and could afford.

This well-worn form to which stylish ornamentation could be added to display wealth and fashion awareness was perfectly suited for deployment during an era of rapid economic growth. Some Wilkes County residents, such as William Reves, were enjoying post-war, New South prosperity before the railroad arrived, but particularly after the railroad's completion, the county and the towns of Roaring River, Ronda, Wilkesboro, and North Wilkesboro experienced building booms as evidenced by the number of turn-of-the-twentieth-century houses extant in both places. Elaborate Queen Anne designs came into vogue as more and more towns and rural areas gained access to inexpensive decorative trim and sawnwork. The most high-style Queen Anne houses are located in Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro, and feature asymmetrical facades, projecting gables and turrets, and rich layers of shingles, turned posts and balustrades, and sawnwork, but a few elaborate examples stand in Roaring River and Ronda.

For the most part, however, the I-house was the preferred form. Owners eschewed the extravagant roof plans and asymmetry of high-style designs and simply added Queen Anne trim and details to the tried-and-true I-house. Claymont Hill (WK 186, NR 1985) and the Martin-Pardue Farm (WK 188, DOE 1990) date from the 1870s and 1910s respectively and are both I-houses with Queen Anne porches. In Roaring River, William and Ann Reves' expanded their house (the Reves-Greenwood House) and either they or

⁴² *Journal-Sentinel* (Winston-Salem), August 18, 1957.

J.E. and Matilda Greenwood enlarged and modernized the J.E. and Matilda Greenwood House while R.A. Reves built a grand house immediately south of J.E. and Matilda Greenwood. To the east, between Roaring River and Ronda, John Quincy Adams Sparks was also updating the mid-nineteenth-century William and Diana Edwards House. In Wilkesboro, the Johnson-Hubbard House went through a similar transformation as the Hubbards updated their mid-nineteenth century house in 1887. Also in Ronda, presumably around the time the railroad was completed, another family engaged the same carpenter for a house on the south side of the railroad tracks.

In addition to being good examples of late-nineteenth-century, these six houses share distinctive design features that suggest they were updated or built by the same carpenter, or that the area's fashion was heavily influenced by a particular builder's work.

Comparable Examples

Nineteenth-century houses that have not been altered with the addition of vinyl siding and the removal of historic windows are extremely rare in Wilkes County. The Reves-Greenwood and J.E. and Matilda Greenwood houses are good and intact examples of nineteenth century houses in a county where unaltered or minimally altered nineteenth century houses are rare.

The intact Johnson-Hubbard House (figure 37) (WK 40) in Wilkesboro is a good comparison to the Reves-Greenwood and J.E. and Matilda Greenwood houses because the same carpenter appears to have updated it. This house was listed in the National Register in 1982 and is significant for its architecture and interior decorative painting. It also contributes to the Downtown Wilkesboro National Register Historic District (WK 271) and local historic district, both of which were designated in 2009. The house is a mid-1850s Greek Revival house updated in 1887, according to a newspaper article published that year, and it features the work of the carpenter who also appears to have been working at the Reves-Greenwood and J.E. and Matilda Greenwood houses.



Figure 37: Johnson-Hubbard House, WK 40, 113 E. Main Street, Wilkesboro

In Roaring River, specifically, several late-nineteenth-century houses are extant, including examples with more complex roofs suggesting a higher-style interpretation of Victorian-era fashion when they were completed, but none remain intact; all have been altered with vinyl siding and replacement windows. The best example of a Queen Anne house in Roaring River is an unnamed and unsurveyed house at 8285 Elkin Highway (figure 38). It retains a Queen Anne porch and asymmetrical plan, but it has been covered in vinyl siding and all windows are modern replacements. This house, however, is not a good comparison to the houses in the Reves-Greenwood Complex because both those houses are more vernacular interpretations of the Queen Anne style.



Figure 38: House, 8285 Elkin Highway, Roaring River

Other higher style houses can be found throughout Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro and characterize the styles and forms that the carpenter interpreted at the Reves-Greenwood and J.E. and Matilda Greenwood houses. Good examples include the Rector House (figure 39), the Caudill House (figure 40), and the Carter Winkler House (WK 57) (figure 41). The Rector and Caudill houses, like so many others, have been covered in vinyl siding.



Figure 39: Rector House, WK 154, 904 E Street, North Wilkesboro



Figure 40: Caudill House, WK 74, 710 9th Street, North Wilkesboro



Figure 41: W. Carter Winkler House, 100 Bridge Street, Wilkesboro

An unnamed and unsurveyed house in Ronda (figure 42, 116 Summit Street) is a T-plan house with very few Queen Anne references.



Figure 42: House, 116 Summit Street, Ronda

One farm on Tharpe Road appears to retain integrity and significant outbuildings (figures 43 and 44). Like many residences of this era, this house appears to have evolved and features a variety of gables. The property has not been documented in any past surveys, but it was one of the more intact, late-nineteenth-century farmsteads the investigator saw in the county. At least some of its windows have been replaced with modern sash, but overall, it retains a high degree of integrity.



Figure 43: Farm, 2226 Tharpe Rd.



Figure 44: Farm, 2226 Tharpe Rd.

The Jones Farm (figure 45) (WK 274) was determined eligible for the National Register but has suffered significant neglect and deterioration since that evaluation in 2004.



Figure 45: Jones Farm, WK 274

Other I-houses and other examples of older homes that have been enlarged can be found throughout the county, but vinyl siding and replacement windows are ubiquitous. The following two unnamed, unsurveyed examples (figures 46 and 47) provide typical examples of rural, nineteenth century houses.



Figure 46: House, 5262 Lomax Jolly Rd.



Figure 47: Older house, enlarged and remodeled, Union Community Rd. at Roaring Gap Church Rd.

National Register Evaluation

Integrity

The Reves-Greenwood Complex Historic District retains excellent architectural integrity. All buildings retain their integrity of location, workmanship, materials, design, and feeling because they have remained nearly unaltered since being expanded and modernized in the late 1800s. Because the industrial and commercial buildings that lined Roaring River are no longer extant, the district's setting and association, as part of an industrial complex where the owners lived in close proximity to their factories and stores, has been diminished, but the river, mill site, and roadbed still contribute to the district's integrity of feeling, setting, and association as remnants of the community's water-powered economy.

The complex's mill is no longer standing, and thus retains no integrity, but the boulders that formed the base of the dam remain, and the site is significant as it relates to the district and to the Reves-Greenwood House in particular. The mill site is not significant in and of itself; extant grist mills remain in Wilkes County, and the ruins of the 1911 cotton mill farther up Roaring River also stand as testament to the town's water-powered industrial history. Rather, the mill site derives its significance as an important viewshed in the proposed district. The Reves-Greenwood House was reconfigured in the 1880s to specifically overlook the mill site, intentionally turning its back to a primary road in favor of a façade that faces the mill. This viewshed, to and from the mill site, is a significant component of the district.

Criteria Evaluations

The Reves-Greenwood Complex Historic District is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with commerce and industry in Roaring River. The complex was part of the extensive holdings of the Reves and later Greenwood families whose activities were important to

Roaring River's early commercial and industrial development, but the adjacent mills, factories, and commercial buildings are no longer standing. The mill site is an important viewshed related to the houses and is discussed with Criterion C as it relates to the orientation of the Reves-Greenwood House.

The Reves-Greenwood Complex Historic District is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places for its association with the lives of persons significant in our past. While William and Ann Reves were important to the development of Roaring River, it is not clear their specific contributions to Roaring River's development were more significant than the other business owners and industrialists in the vicinity. The Greenwoods were also important figures in Roaring River, but it is not clear the Greenwood's activities in Roaring River were more or less significant than those of other business owners, industrialists, and developers in the area.

The Reves-Greenwood Complex Historic District is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C. Both houses in the district are good examples of the late-nineteenth-century practice of expanding an earlier, existing house to create a modern dwelling. This tendency illustrates the owner's desire to display prosperity and fashionableness along with an unwillingness to demolish a serviceable house. Both houses are very good examples of the work of an unidentified carpenter or builder active in Wilkes County between at least 1870 and 1900, and the Reves-Greenwood House, in particular, is the best, most complete example of his work. At least six examples of this carpenter's work are known in Wilkes County, but the Reves-Greenwood House has undergone almost no alterations since the 1880s, retaining four mantelpieces, built-in cabinetry, a staircase, scrolled raftertails, corbelled cornerboards, siding, windows, and doors. Furthermore, the orientation of the Reves-Greenwood House toward the grist mill site is a significant factor in the house's architectural design, and the view shed between the mill site and the house is a significant design component of the complex.

The Reves-Greenwood Complex Historic District 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 to prehistory or history. Water-powered mills are well documented, and excavation of the site is unlikely to yield any information that was previously unknown.

Boundary Description and Justification

The proposed boundary follows the parcel lot lines of Wilkes County PINs 4900-70-2713 and 4900-60-7206. On the west side of the Roaring River, it follows a portion of the boundary of PIN 4900-61-2554 before crossing the river at the boundary's northernmost point. The mill site is on the portion of the parcel associated with PIN 4900-61-2554 and the mill site and dam site are included in the proposed boundary.

The boundary incorporates the parcels on which the Reves-Greenwood and the J.E. and Matilda Greenwood houses stand and takes in a section of Roaring River and incorporates the mill site. This boundary encompasses all the extant historic buildings associated with this complex and the view shed to and from the mill site, including the dam location. Remains of the mill were not observable during the summer months. No remnants of the dam remain, but it was built on a rock outcrop, which remains.

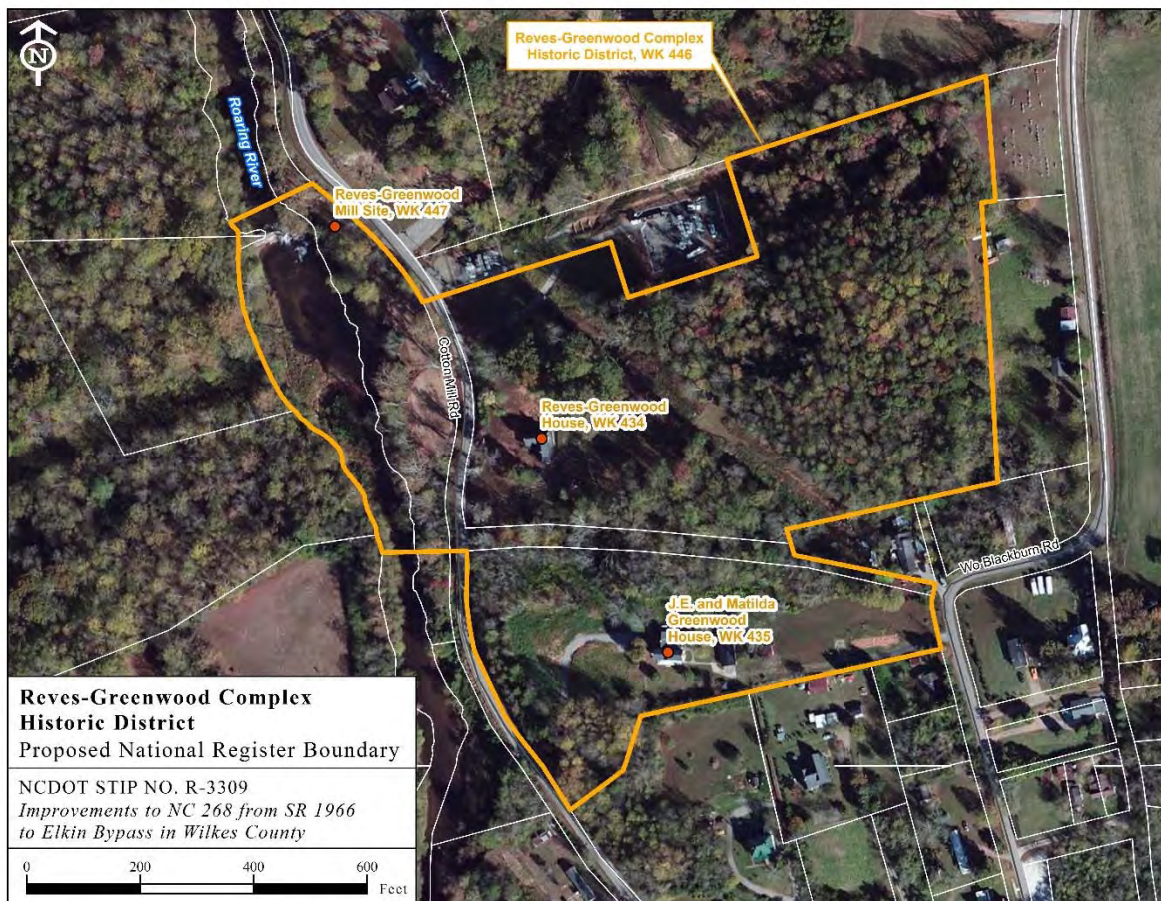


Figure 48: Reves-Greenwood Complex Historic District, proposed National Register Boundary

Evaluation: R.A. Reves House

Resource Name	R.A. Reves House
HPO Survey Site Number	WK 436
Street Address	156 Cotton Mill Road
PIN	4809-69-9850
Construction Dates	Ca. 1900
NRHP Recommendation	Not Eligible



Description

The R.A. Reves House is an imposing, two-story house that commands a view over the Yadkin Valley from a high hilltop. In front of the house is a small lawn area and mature trees. A relatively flat yard area is located behind the house and bounded by trees and volunteer vegetation. The east property line, which runs immediately beside the house's east elevation, is defined by a dense tree line. To the south and west, the property slopes downhill toward the Yadkin and Roaring rivers, respectively. To the east and north, the land spreads out over a level plateau.

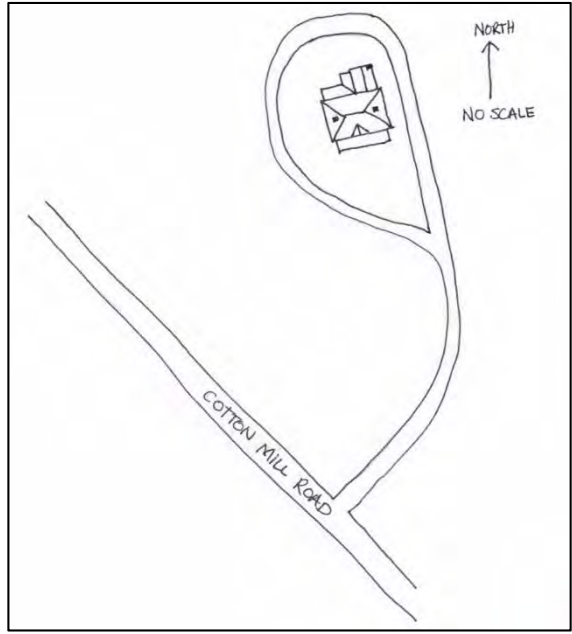


Figure 49: R.A. Reves House, site plan

The Reves House is a three-bay-wide, double-pile house with a center passage (figure 50). The symmetrical south façade features a centered front entrance with a single-leaf, four-panel door. The shed-roof front porch is a complete and non-historic replacement of the original and features modern turned posts and balustrade with a continuous brick foundation.



Figure 50: R.A. Reves House, south elevation

Both side elevations feature a symmetrical arrangement of windows with two windows upstairs and two downstairs (figure 51).



Figure 51: R.A. Reves House, southwest corner



Figure 52: R.A. Reves House, northwest corner

A one-story gabled ell projects from the north elevation (figures 52 and 53). A shed-roof porch follows the interior corner of the junction of the ell and house and extends along the ell's west elevation and the main block's north elevation. Here, too, the porch materials appear to be modern replacements.



Figure 53: R.A. Reves House, north elevation

The house's most defining feature is its high hip roof punctuated by tall brick chimneys in the side roof slopes and a roof gable on the front slope. The gable contains a pair of windows featuring an upper sash of square stained glass lights around a clear glazed panel above a two-light sash.

The house is covered in weatherboards, but all the windows are modern replacements. The roof is covered in modern 5-v crimp metal.

Inside, the house has undergone some changes, but it retains mantelpieces in three of the primary rooms downstairs, and those mantels display the raised pyramidal panels (figures 54 and 55) seen at other houses built by the as-yet-unidentified carpenter previously mentioned in this report. The staircase is trimmed with panels of beaded board along the stringer. The railing terminates as a substantial, square-in-plan newel post (figure 56). In two downstairs rooms, closets feature two-panel, Greek Revival doors probably salvaged from an earlier house.



Figure 54: R.A. Reves House, mantelpiece



Figure 55: R.A. Reves House, mantel detail showing pyramidal paneling



Figure 56: R.A. Reves House, newel post

History

The current owner stated that R.A. Staley built this house around 1900 and that a piece of lumber uncovered during renovations bore a note indicating that it had been milled for R.A. Staley. Additionally, the owner reported that the house is visible in a 1910 photograph of Roaring River.⁴³ Indeed, Rowan and Roxy Staley appear to have owned this house at some point, and they were married in 1904, lending credence to that account.⁴⁴

However, documentary evidence does not support this. The 1910 and 1920 censuses place the Staleys in rural Wilkes County, not Roaring River, and a 1914 plat of neighboring land shows this property as belonging to R.A. Reves, whose relationship to William Reves is almost certain but has not been fully investigated.⁴⁵ The earliest record of the Staleys in Roaring River comes from a 1922 newspaper that refers to their “new home” in Roaring River.⁴⁶

⁴³ Cheryl Adair, owner, interview with the author, June 26, 2017.

⁴⁴ North Carolina Marriage Records, 1741-2011, accessed via ancestry.com.

⁴⁵ U.S. Census records, 1910 and 1920, accessed via ancestry.com, and Map of C.H. Greenwood’s Development, Roaring River, Wilkes County Plat Book 1, page 80, July 1914. William Reves may have been the brother of George Reves, R.A. Reves’ father, making William R.A.’s uncle, but this has not been confirmed.

⁴⁶ *Carter’s Weekly* (North Wilkesboro), November 23, 1922, 5.

It is more likely that R.A. Reves constructed the house around 1900, and the name the owner found on the lumber may have been R.A. Reves, rather than R.A. Staley. Richard A. Reves was a merchant who came to Roaring River sometime after 1880, when the census recorded him in Elkin, and 1900 when he was living in Roaring River.⁴⁷ His first wife, Sallie died in the early 1900s, and he married Ella Sparks in 1906.⁴⁸ It is possible R.A. and Sallie built this house when they moved to Roaring River, or R.A. and Ella may have built it around the time of their marriage in 1906. Because it is uncertain if he was married or to which wife he was married at the time of the house's construction, the house is named only for him.

Like the Reves-Greenwood and J.E. and Matilda Greenwood houses to the north, the R.A. Reves House was constructed at a time of prosperity for many white households in Wilkes County. The railroad's arrival in 1890 had opened up new markets and the small towns along the tracks boomed.

It is unclear when the Staleys purchased the house, but based on the 1922 newspaper report, the Staleys probably bought it in 1922. Rowan Staley worked for the railroad, but his premature death in 1923 left Roxy a widow with three sons, Carlisle, Wayne, and Lawrence. By 1930, Carlisle was working as a truck driver and Wayne worked at a local furniture factory. Lawrence, at age fifteen, was still in school. The 1940 census records Roxy as living in Roaring River with her son, Wayne.⁴⁹

At some point in the early 1930s, Wayne and young Lawrence went in to business together, opening Staley's Restaurant in a brick building on the northeast corner of Cotton Mill Road and N.C. Highway 268. The restaurant was a Roaring River landmark and the building remains open as a restaurant today. Lawrence Staley moved to Winston-Salem in 1935 where he opened several restaurants, including Staley's Steakhouse, which was the city's premier restaurant from the 1960s into the 1980s. During this period, in 1951, Lawrence became the sole owner of the Staley House and his heirs sold it out of family ownership in the early 1980s.⁵⁰

Architectural Context

The R.A. Greenwood house is a two-story double-pile house with a center hall flanked by two rooms on each side on each floor. Its square foot print suggests a Foursquare plan, but it is, essentially, an I-house that has been doubled in depth.

Like the smaller, single-pile I-house, the arrangement maximizes the size of the façade by making the house as tall and wide as possible. The broad façade provides ample room for adding gables on the front roof slope and a full-width porch, both of which provide area for adding sawnwork, spindles, decorative shingles, or any other ornamentation the owner preferred or could afford. At the R.A. Reves House,

⁴⁷ U.S. Census records, 1880 and 1900, accessed via ancestry.com.

⁴⁸ U.S. Census records, 1910, accessed via ancestry.com.

⁴⁹ U.S. Census records, 1930 and 1940, accessed via ancestry.com.

⁵⁰ A.C. Staley and Lizzette Staley to Lawrence Staley, Wilkes County Deed Book 288, page 224, August 29, 1951, and Molly Grogan Rawls, "Staley's Restaurants: Stratford Road and Northside," Winston-Salem Time Traveler, February 15, 2016, accessed July 2017 via <http://winstonsalemtimetraveler.com/2016/02/15/staleys-restaurants-stratford-road-northside/>. The current owners purchased the property in 2005: David and Zdravja Wornom to Cheryl and Steven Adair, Wilkes County Deed Book 996, page 320, January 9, 2005.

paired windows with stained glass frames in the upper sash enrich the front roof gable, but the porch's original appearance is unknown. The windows in this gable match those at the J.E. and Matilda Greenwood House so the original porch may have been more Queen Anne in nature, with sawnwork and turned posts similar to that seen at the Greenwood House. However, its overall form, a double-pile plan with high hip roof, is very similar to the house at 8201 Elkin Highway in Roaring River, where the porch columns and a Palladian window in the roof gable present a Colonial Revival design.

As with I-houses, fashionable ornamentation could be added to display wealth and fashion awareness on this double-pile house. While some high-style Queen Anne houses in Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro feature asymmetrical facades, projecting gables and turrets, and rich layers of shingles, turned posts and balustrades, and sawnwork, most builders and owners in rural areas eschewed high-style designs and simply added Queen Anne or Colonial Revival trim and details to simple house forms.

The R.A. Reves House is part of this wave of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century construction swept in by the railroad. The R.A. Reves house is also likely the work of an unidentified carpenter whose work can be seen at Claymont Hill, the Reves-Greenwood House, J.E. and Matilda Greenwood House, the William and Diana Edwards House, the Johnson-Hubbard House in Wilkesboro, and at least two unsurveyed houses in the project study area.

Comparable Examples

Nineteenth-century houses that have not been altered with the addition of vinyl siding and the removal of historic windows are extremely rare in Wilkes County. Also, because the porch at the R.A. Reves House has been replaced, it is not known if the original porch was Queen Anne or Colonial Revival. The R.A. Reves House fits the county-wide pattern of altering older homes with modern replacement windows and significant porch alterations.

In Roaring River, specifically, several late-nineteenth-century houses are extant, including examples with more complex roofs suggesting a higher-style interpretation of Victorian-era fashion when they were completed, but none remain intact; all have been altered with vinyl siding and replacement windows. In North Wilkesboro, more high-style Colonial Revival houses from the early 1900s combine features of both Colonial Revival and Queen Anne, while later examples, dating from the 1920s and 1930s, are refined, Georgian Revival designs.

Particularly good comparative houses are the Rector House at 904 E Street in North Wilkesboro (figure 57) and a hip-roof house (figure 58) at 8201 Elkin Highway in Roaring River that share many features with the R.A. Reves House.

The Rector House is a two-story, transitional Queen Anne-Colonial Revival dwelling with a Palladian window in its front dormer, a wrap-around porch, and pediment over the main porch entrance. The house retains the earlier preference for Queen Anne asymmetry and turned balusters, but also incorporates Colonial Revival porch columns and the Palladian window.



Figure 57: Rector House, WK 154, 904 E Street, North Wilkesboro

An unsurveyed and unnamed house on Elkin Highway in Roaring River may have been built by the same carpenter as the R.A. Reves House. It retains Colonial Revival features such as a Palladian attic window and Doric porch columns, but it also has older style, two-over-two sash windows. This house has been covered in vinyl siding and the porch is partially enclosed.



Figure 58: House, 8201 Elkin Highway, Roaring River

National Register Evaluation

Integrity

The R.A. Reves House retains integrity of location and setting. With its imposing hilltop situation, it also retains integrity of feeling and association as the home of a successful turn-of-the-twentieth-century merchant. While the house retains integrity of workmanship, materials, and design, modern alterations have negatively affected the house's architectural integrity. On the exterior, all windows are modern replacements and both the front and back porches have been rebuilt using modern stock materials. The house does not retain outbuildings.

Criteria Evaluations

The R.A. Reves House is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with an event or a broad pattern of history. It was associated with a local merchant, and later with a local restaurateur but is not known to be associated with any specific historically significant events.

The R.A. Reves House is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B for its association with the lives of persons significant in our past. R.A. Reves and the Staley family both played roles in the development of Roaring River, but neither Reves nor the Staleys were particularly outstanding or notable in their fields nor were they of particular significance in the history of Roaring River.

The R.A. Reves House is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for its architectural design or as a good example of the work of an unidentified carpenter working in the area. The house has lost significant architectural components and its design and material integrity compromised by the replacement of the windows and porches. This house appears to be the work of an unidentified carpenter active in Wilkes County from at least 1870 to at least 1900, but other houses serve as better and more intact examples of his work. Those houses include the Reves-Greenwood House (WK 343), the J.E. and Matilda Greenwood House (WK 345), the Johnston-Hubbard House (WK 40), and the William and Diana Edwards House (WK 439).

The R.A. Reves 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 to prehistory or history.

Evaluation: Roaring River United Methodist Church and Parsonage

Resource Name	Roaring River United Methodist Church and Parsonage
HPO Survey Site Number	WK 437
Street Address	131 W.O. Blackburn Road
PIN	4809-79-4733
Construction Dates	Ca. 1875, 1925, 1950
NRHP Recommendation	Not Eligible



Description

Roaring River Methodist Church stands along W.O. Blackburn Road, facing east on a yard that slopes north to south (figures 59-67).

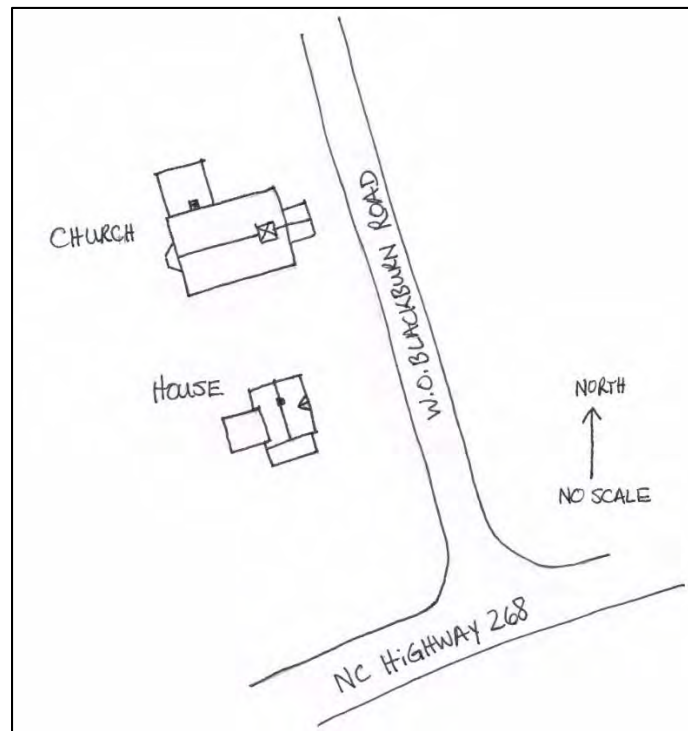


Figure 59: Roaring River United Methodist Church and Parsonage, site plan

The building is a gable-front building with a one-story, flat-roof addition. The east façade features a diminutive gable-front vestibule projection with a double-leaf front door (figure 60). A stoop with a modern vinyl balustrade projects from the vestibule. A sign with the church’s name and meeting times is centered above the front door.



Figure 60: Roaring River United Methodist Church and Parsonage, east facade

The south elevation features three bays with stained glass windows (figure 61).



Figure 61: Roaring River United Methodist Church and Parsonage, southeast corner

A small three-sided apse with a hip roof protrudes from the west elevation (figure 62).



Figure 62: Roaring River United Methodist Church and Parsonage, west elevation

The north elevation originally matched the south, with three bays, but the rear bay has been obscured with a one-story, flat-roof addition clad in vinyl siding (figures 62 and 63). Windows in the addition are modern vinyl sash. A chimney flue extends between the sanctuary and the addition.



Figure 63: Roaring River United Methodist Church and Parsonage, northeast corner

A square belfry with a vinyl-clad base and wooden louvers is topped by a pyramidal roof with a cross on its peak. The steeple rests on the main roof's apex near the front of the building.

Brick veneer covers the building and the front vestibule is likely an addition. It is probable the brick veneer was added to update the building at the time the vestibule was added, probably in the mid-twentieth century. The stained glass windows (figure 64) may also date from this era.



Figure 64: Roaring River United Methodist Church and Parsonage, typical stained glass window

The soffits on the sanctuary are finished with scrolled brackets along the eaves and rakes (figure 65).

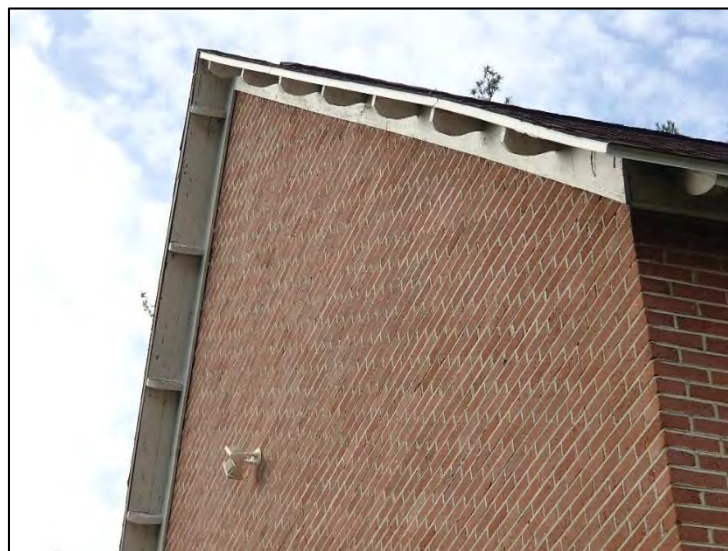


Figure 65: Roaring River United Methodist Church and Parsonage, eave detail

Downhill, to the south, stands a brick cottage with a steeply pitched side-gable roof that may have served as the parsonage (figures 66 and 67). The house has a symmetrical façade with a single-leaf French door centered below a small gable. Windows flank the door, and the windows and doors are finished with a soldier course above each opening. A concrete and brick stoop is missing its low brick balustrade. A shed roof, partially missing, springs from the rear roof slope to shelter an addition and a porch with a square brick post. A chimney flue rises through the middle of the house.

A tall hedge separates the house from the street.



Figure 66: Roaring River United Methodist Church and Parsonage, house, east elevation



Figure 67: Roaring River United Methodist Church and Parsonage, house, northwest corner

History

Roaring River Methodist Church traces its roots to 1875, but the local history book, *Bits and Pieces*, gives conflicting information about the church's history. One reference gives the church's founding as 1873 but another states it was organized in 1835.⁵¹ Both references claim the congregation was called Reves Chapel. The earliest newspaper mention of a Methodist church in Roaring River appeared in 1878, while Reves Chapel did not appear until 1889. Both or either congregation could have existed for decades without being mentioned in a newspaper available online, but newspapers refer to both churches throughout the 1880s and 1890s, suggesting that the congregations were separate and existed contemporaneously.⁵²

Because the congregation itself claims an organizational date of 1875, the earlier date (1835) in *Bits and Pieces* probably refers to the congregation that was known as Reves Chapel throughout the 1800s, after this church is certain to have been organized.

The current building was probably built around the time of the congregation's organization, in the mid-1870s. The railroad had not yet arrived in Roaring River, but a mill existed on the lower end of Roaring River by that point, and in 1874, William Reves was named the community's first postmaster. This suggests that a tighter community was beginning to coalesce near the river, just north of its intersection with the Yadkin River, and the Methodist congregation was part of that community-building.

In 1925, the Roaring River Methodist Episcopal Trustees purchased lots 8 and 9 of block 3 of the Map of C.H. Greenwood's Development in 1925.⁵³ By the 1920s, the heart of Roaring River was beginning to move farther south and slightly east, away from the Reves-Greenwood industrial and commercial center and closer to the depot, which stood on the south side of Main Street (NC Highway 268), south of its intersection with present-day W.O. Blackburn Road. The Methodist congregations purchase of lots closer to this evolving town center is not surprising as the original location, up a significant hill from the emerging commercial activity near the depot, would have begun to feel quite removed from the town's core.

Shortly after the 1925 purchase, the congregation moved the 1875 sanctuary downhill to its current location. In the mid-twentieth century, the church decided to veneer the exterior in brick. The existing stained glass windows appear to date from that era, too.

The house next door is constructed of similar brick and it may have been the church's parsonage, based on the use of similar brick and its proximity. It was probably built around the time the brick veneer was added to the church, although it could have been constructed as early as the late 1930s or sometime in the immediate post-war years. The house stands in an abandoned street right-of-way, and a deed or

⁵¹ Byrd, 203 and 205.

⁵² Roaring River Methodist Mission is mentioned in the *Christian Advocate* (Raleigh), December 3, 1878, 2. Reves Chapel is mentioned in the *Western Sentinel* (Winston, N.C.), July 25, 1889, 1.

⁵³ A.P. and Annie Crouse to Trustees of Roaring River Methodist Episcopal Church, Wilkes County Deed Book 41, page 223, June 8, 1925.

ownership information related to the house could not be found at the Wilkes County Register of Deeds office.

Architectural Context

Far and away the most common church form in North Carolina is the simple, rectangular, gable-front building to which the popular architectural fashions of the day were applied. Baptists, particularly Primitive Baptists, often chose to leave their gable-front buildings unadorned or with only minimal stylistic references. Episcopalians, conversely, took on academic studies of earlier English Gothic churches and actively promoted the use of Gothic, Gothic Revival and Carpenter Gothic designs for their congregations.

Other denominations, however, including Methodists, tended to simply embrace the predominate residential architectural styles of the day and apply them to the gable-front form.

Sanctuaries built in the late-nineteenth century by rural congregations, like Roaring River United Methodist Church, were usually frame buildings to which sawnwork and decorative shingles were added, in much the same way that such decorative elements were added to the I-house form.

At Roaring River, the builder applied decorative scalloped brackets to the soffits. Other original exterior finishes are not known.

In the mid-twentieth century, congregations continued using the gable-front form, but brick became the building material of choice to lend the buildings a sense of permanence and gravitas as institutional community centers that reflected the prosperity of their congregants. The application of style and fashion again ran the gamut from a complete absence of stylistic references at Primitive Baptist Churches to the continued use of English Gothic and Tudor Revival at Episcopal Churches to the application of Modernist ideals at some churches. Most, however, went with the style most popular for residences: Colonial Revival.

Hundreds of congregations across Wilkes County erected brick buildings with varying degrees of Colonial Revival references. At Roaring River Methodist, the congregation did what so many other congregations across North Carolina did when they decided to update their existing building rather than building new. They removed or hid most references to the earlier ornamentation, which would have been based on Queen Anne or Gothic Revival designs, and applied brick veneer over the frame building. This created a modern exterior that communicated prosperity and solidity with a more Colonial Revival appearance.

Comparable Examples

The Roaring River Methodist Church was originally a frame building. Charity United Methodist (figure 68) is a good comparative example because its cornerstone reveals that it was built in 1896, but was covered with brick veneer in 1949. It also has an addition to the side elevation and mid-century stained glass windows. The two buildings differ in design however, with Charity featuring a square bell tower and added pedimented portico. Charity is also a wider building. Overall, however, they represent the

same building type: a late-nineteenth-century sanctuary updated with new windows and new siding in the mid-twentieth century. Both construction and the mid-century alterations occurred during periods of relative prosperity for white residents of Wilkes County who prospered from the railroad's economic stimulus in the late 1800s and the industrial and poultry boom that the county experienced in the post-World War II years.



Figure 68: Charity United Methodist Church, 6440 Austin-Traphill Rd.

Roaring River Baptist Church (figure 69) dates from the early 1900s and was covered with brick veneer in 1949 (figure 67). Because Roaring River Baptist has a steeple rather than a bell tower, it is a somewhat better comparison to Roaring River Methodist. Roaring River Baptist Church, however, has had a significantly larger addition made to the rear elevation where a two-story section houses classrooms. Its gable end is closer in width to the diminutive Roaring River Methodist Church. Both churches were covered in brick veneer in the mid-twentieth century, but vinyl siding has covered all wood trim at Roaring River Baptist Church, rather than only the steeple as at Roaring River Methodist Church.



Figure 69: Roaring River Baptist Church, 124 White Plains Rd.

All of the aforementioned churches are all good examples of brick-veneered churches. Roaring River Methodist is the least altered of them with the smallest addition and least application of vinyl siding, but the others appear to be at their original sites with adjacent cemeteries. None of them, including Roaring River Methodist Church, are particularly outstanding or interesting examples of either late-nineteenth-century or mid-twentieth-century church architecture. Congregations across Wilkes County built many similar churches during both eras and the form and architectural designs are all very similar.

Ronda First Baptist (figure 70) is one of the county's higher-style Colonial Revival style churches and is a better example of mid-twentieth-century church design, but it, too, is not outstanding and is one of many mid-century, Colonial Revival churches found in Wilkes County.



Figure 70: Ronda First Baptist Church, 12094 Elkin Highway, Ronda

National Register Evaluation

Integrity

The Roaring River Methodist Church does not retain integrity of location, but the parsonage does. The church retains integrity of setting, feeling, and association from the 1920s, but it has lost integrity of original setting and feeling as it was moved downhill and is now located about one-third of a mile away from its associated cemetery. The parsonage retains integrity of setting, feeling, and association. The church retains some aspects of original workmanship, materials, and design with original soffits and brackets visible, but the windows and brick veneer likely date to the mid-twentieth-century, which detracts from the original 1870s frame design. The addition on the north side and application of vinyl siding to the belfry detract significantly from the building's integrity of design and workmanship. Additionally, the building was moved downhill, away from the associated cemetery and that has

negatively affected its integrity of setting and feeling. The house appears to retain greater architectural integrity, but its windows have been replaced and the front stoop's balustrade has been removed.

Criteria Evaluations

The Roaring River Methodist Church and Parsonage is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A and Criteria Consideration A. This property has no known significant associations with events, religious or otherwise, that have made a significant contribution to local or state history.

The Roaring River Methodist Church and Parsonage is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B for its association with the lives of persons significant in our past. No such associates are known to exist.

The Roaring River Methodist Church and Parsonage is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C because its original architectural design has been compromised. It is not a good example of a 1870s frame church nor is it a good example of a brick, mid-twentieth-century sanctuary. Various non-historic alterations, including the use of vinyl trim and components on the original building and a vinyl-clad frame addition, further diminish the building's integrity of design and materials. In addition, the parsonage is an unremarkable cottage that has also undergone some alterations.

The Roaring River Methodist Church and Parsonage 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 to prehistory or history.

The Roaring River Methodist Church and Parsonage cannot meet Criteria Consideration A for religious properties because it is not significant under another theme.

The Roaring River Methodist Church and Parsonage cannot meet Criteria Consideration B for moved properties because it does not retain enough historic fabric from its original location to convey its architectural values, and the architectural elements added after it was moved are not historically or architecturally significant. Furthermore, the move downhill and away from the associated cemetery and away from a position closer to the original road leading into and out of Roaring River has contributed to a loss of integrity of feeling and setting.

Evaluation: Roaring River Milling Company

Resource Name	Roaring River Milling Company
HPO Survey Site Number	WK 438
Street Address	8094 Elkin Highway
PIN	4809-89-1677
Construction Dates	Ca. 1955
NRHP Recommendation	Not Eligible



Description

The Roaring River Milling Company is a two-story building over a full basement. The building stands on the southeast corner of N.C. Highway 268 and Roaring River Road, between N.C. Highway 268 and the railroad corridor. Roaring River's depot stood to the west of this site, just across Roaring River Road.



Figure 71: Roaring River Milling Company site plan

The façade (north elevation) features an asymmetrical arrangement of two wide cargo bays with wooden, double-leaf doors, two wooden pedestrian doors, and a metal casement window (figures 72 and 73). A metal shed roof porch with a concrete floor and metal, bracketed posts shelters this fenestration. Above the porch roof, four small metal casement windows occupy the façade's second floor.



Figure 72: Roaring River Milling Company, northwest corner



Figure 73: Roaring River Milling Company, north elevation detail



Figure 74: Roaring River Milling Company, north elevation

On the east elevation, two small metal casement windows are situated at the upper level above a sign reading Roaring River Milling Company (figure 75). A garage door occupies the basement level of the east elevation.



Figure 75: Roaring River Milling Company, east elevation

Small, six-light metal casement windows occupy the south elevation with four windows on both the first and second floors (figure 76). A single door is located at the basement level on this elevation.



Figure 76: Roaring River Milling Company, southwest corner

The west elevation features a garage door and pedestrian door at the basement level, sixteen-light metal casement windows at the first floor level, and six-light windows upstairs (figure 76).

The building appears to have been a flat-roof building with a parapet, but a frame kneewall has been added to the top of the parapet to create a shed roof that slopes from the front toward the back.

The current owner reports that some milling equipment is in the basement, but that most milling equipment has been removed and the interior features utilitarian finishes.

History

George C. Porter was born in Roaring River in 1924. As a young man, he and his brother, J.V. Porter, established Porter's Hardware, and in the mid-1950s, they built this building as a mill. The facility milled cattle feed as well as corn and flour.¹

The post-World War II era was one of prosperity for Wilkes County. During World War II, the U.S. government had started buying large quantities of chickens and eggs to feed troops. This fueled poultry

¹ Kelly Welborn, G.C. Porter's son-in-law, interview with the author, July 20, 2017; Amanda P. Welborn and Melissa P. Wilson to Amanda and Kelly Welborn, Wilkes County Deed Book 1111, page 145; and J.C. Porter obituary, transcribed from unknown source, Wilkes County Family History Message Board, accessed June 2016 via <https://www.ancestry.com/boards/localities.northam.usa.states.northcarolina.counties.wilkes/3514/mb.ashx>. and George C. Porter obituary published in September 2009 and accessed in July 2017 via <http://www.reinssturdivant.com/obituaries/G-C-Porter?obId=2162040#/obituaryInfo>.

production in Wilkes County, and in 1944, Fred and Margaret Lovette founded Lovette Poultry Company, which rapidly became a major producer of chickens. Farmers across the county started adding chickens to their farms.²

Following World War II, demand for chickens continued, and Fred Lovette joined other Wilkes County producers in a merger that created Holly Farms, and the county continued producing tens of thousands of chickens and eggs each year.³

Chicken farming produced guano, which was an excellent fertilizer for other crops and the pastureland that supported livestock. As a result, most chicken farmers also raised cattle.

Therefore, when Roaring River entrepreneur brothers J.V. and G.C. Porter decided to establishing a milling business, their primary product was cattle feed. The Porters were part of a brief, nationwide trend toward small feed mills.

Most small-scale mills in Wilkes County prior to World War II were water-powered grist mills. After World War II, grist milling and small-scale water-powered milling was replaced with products from larger mills that were becoming available in stores, but feed milling underwent a different, nearly opposite, transition.

In the early twentieth century, farmers began using mass-produced feed for livestock. In the 1920s, the Purina Company introduced a process to compress previously unusable feed materials into uniform pellets. These early pellets were made from flour milling byproducts to which nutrients were added, and most of these operations were in larger cities, close to large grain mills. In the 1940s and 1950s, pellet formulations became more complex, but somewhat counterintuitively, the industry began expanding into smaller-scale mills spread over a wider area. Among the hundreds of millers who entered the business in the post-war years were the Porter brothers.⁴

During the 1950s, the total number of feed mills topped 2,000 nationwide, but the era of the small-scale feed mill was short-lived. Within just a few years, changes in technology made larger and larger production scales possible which fostered consolidation at the end of the 1950s and throughout the 1960s. Smaller mills, such as the Porter's, survived longer in areas with intense livestock farming, but over time, greater production demanded larger facilities and more transportation connections for shipping.

While the Porters operation produced cattle feed, construction of the high capacity chicken feed mill by Tyson Foods, Inc., in Roaring River during the 1970s illustrates this shift.

² Pena and Hayes, 101, and "Charles Fred Lovette," Wilkes County Hall of Fame website, accessed in July 2017 via <http://www.wilkescountyhalloffame.org/hall-of-fame/2015-hall-of-fame-inductees/charles-lovette-2015-inductee>.

³ Pena and Hayes, 102-103.

⁴ D. Coffey, Karl A. Dawson, Aidan Connolly, and Peter Ferket, "Review of the Feed Industry from a Historical Perspective and Implication for its Future," *Journal of Applied Animal Nutrition* vol 4 (January 2016): 1, accessed August 24, 2015 via https://www.researchgate.net/publication/291389679_Review_of_the_feed_industry_from_a_historical_perspective_and_implications_for_its_future.

Over time, the Porters leased the building to several millers, but milling ceased in the building in the late 1990s. Over the last few years, it has been used for weekend flea markets. Most of the equipment has been removed or relocated to the basement and it is unclear how old or what kind of milling equipment remains in storage.⁵

Architectural Context

This building is entirely utilitarian, reflecting a turn toward allowing form following function, and a preference for less ornamented buildings that had come with the austerity imposed by post-war shortages of construction materials and the need for designs that could be built quickly and cheaply.

Although some late-nineteenth-century textile mills and some tobacco warehouses display considerable architectural embellishment, most industrial buildings were and are very plain and simple buildings, particularly those built after World War II. Industrial buildings are most typically constructed from brick or, later, concrete block.

Comparable Examples

There are very few local comparable examples to the Porter's mill building in Wilkes County. Grist mills, however, were and are abundant in Wilkes County. Extant examples include Tharpe's Mill (not surveyed; located on Tharpe's Mill Road at Big Bugaboo Creek), Mitchell Mill (WK 316, survey only) at 1059 Mitchell Mill Road, Elkin Creek Mill (WK 6, NR-listed in 1982) at the end of Elkin Creek Mill Road, and Traphill Grist Mill (WK 317, survey only) at 452 Traphill Mill Road. Grist mills, however, are entirely different than the electric-powered mill at Roaring River Feed Mill.

Several unsurveyed, small industrial buildings remain in Ronda (figure 77), but most of these are more recent or heavily altered buildings, while Tyson Foods' larger scale milling operation is extant in Roaring River (figure 78). The Tyson plant is also unsurveyed.

⁵ Dale Pierce, former miller, interview with the author, July 20, 2017.



Figure 77: Small, light industrial building in Ronda



Figure 78: Tyson Feed Mill in Roaring River

A feed and farm supply store along NC Highway 268, west of Elkin, includes a detached building that could have housed milling operations in its past (figure 79). This building has not been surveyed.



Figure 79: Possible feed mill building at the Farm Supply Store, 15846 Elkin Highway

Additionally, numerous industrial buildings of all kinds stand in North Wilkesboro. Among them is the New Williams Mill (figure 181) (WK 181) which is a brick, one-story, gable-front building with paired, six-over-six sash windows in segmentally arched openings. It is similar to the Roaring River Feed Mill in that it is a masonry building in a small town, but, architecturally, it is much more closely aligned with the state's textile mills. This factory also produced small grist mills rather than producing feed. This building has been surveyed but is otherwise undocumented.



Figure 80: New Williams Mill, (WK 181), 108 Fifth Street, North Wilkesboro, Google Streetview photo, May 2013

Outside the county, in Booneville in Yadkin County, the Booneville Feed Mill (figure 81) (YD 477, DOE 2006) is a frame commercial building and a frame, gable-front mill building used for milling flour and feed from flour by-products.



Figure 81: Booneville Feed Mill, YD 477), southeast corner of South Carolina Avenue and Academy Street, Google Streeview photograph, June 2016

National Register Evaluation

Integrity

The Roaring River Milling Company retains integrity of location because it has not been moved. It has undergone few alterations since its construction in the mid-1950s, so it retains integrity of workmanship, materials, design, and feeling. It also retains integrity of setting and association as it stands in Roaring River between the main road and the railroad tracks, a traditional location for industrial activities in towns across North Carolina. However, because the building was very simple and utilitarian when it was completed, the kneewall addition to create a sloped roof has had a significant impact, altering the few signature components of the building by creating an entirely different profile and overall look for the building from both the front and side elevations.

Criteria Evaluations

The Roaring River Milling Company is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with industry in Roaring River. This mill property is not known to have played a significant role in manufacturing or the historic industrial development of Roaring River. Small-scale feed milling, as was done at this building, was a short-lived phase in the evolution of feed milling with limited impact on the industry's development.

The Roaring River Milling Company is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B for its association with the lives of persons significant in our past. No such associations are known to exist.

The Roaring River Milling Company is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C because it is not a good or intact example of a distinctive type, period, or method of

construction, nor does it represent the work of a master or possess artistic value. While it does embody the characteristics of a mid-century mill, a simple, concrete block, rectangular building to house commercial or light industrial operation is a commonplace form and does not convey any significant design interest. Additionally, the non-historic shed roof also diminishes this plain, utilitarian building's integrity of design and materials as it significantly changes the parapet roof, which is one of only a few distinguishing architectural features. According to the original owner's son-in-law, original milling equipment has been removed or relocated to the basement.

The Roaring River Milling Company 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 to prehistory or history.

Evaluation: William and Diana Edwards House

Resource Name	William and Diana Edwards House
HPO Survey Site Number	WK 439
Street Address	9731 Elkin Highway
PIN	4910-52-2658
Construction Dates	Ca. 1855, ca. 1885
NRHP Recommendation	Eligible, A and C



Description

The William and Diana Edwards House occupies a bucolic setting on a slope overlooking the Yadkin Valley. The house commands a view of pasture land that rolls down to N.C. Highway 268 and the rail corridor and then opens to the fertile bottom lands of the Yadkin. Behind and to the side of the house, the slope continues uphill to the north. The house's yard is overgrown, but vestiges of a yard remain with unkempt shrubs and mature shade trees. Based on historic maps, a road ran north-south through this property, possibly following the existing driveway.

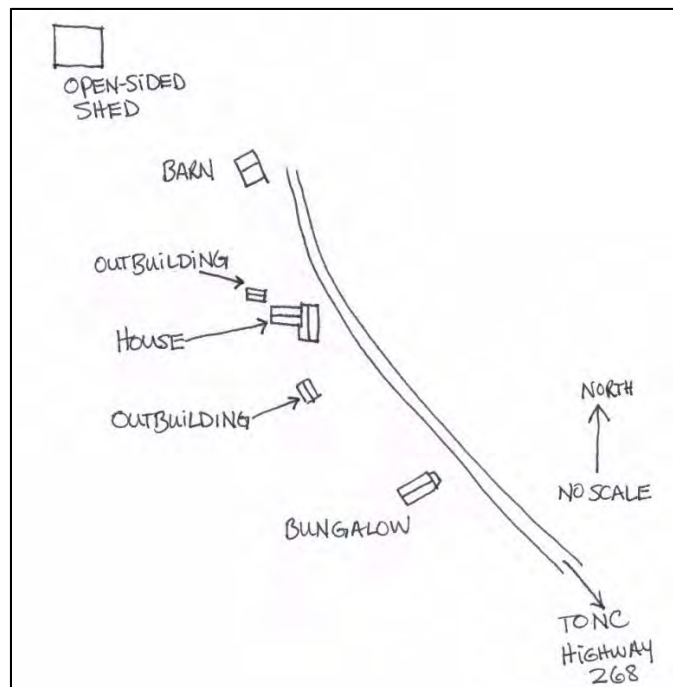


Figure 82: William and Diana Edwards House, site plan

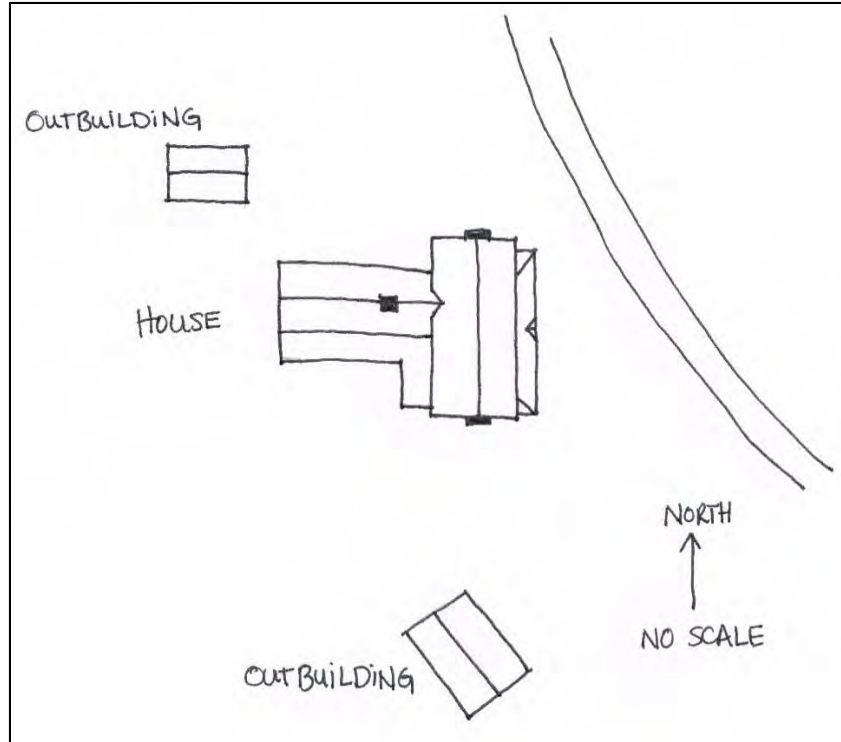


Figure 83: William and Diana Edwards House, site plan detail

The house is a two-story, three-bay I-house (figures 84 and 85). A porch with turned posts and modest brackets extends across the east façade. Its hip roof is accented with a gable above the entrance bay. The center window upstairs is elevated slightly suggesting that the existing porch may have replaced an earlier gable-front portico.



Figure 84: William and Diana Edwards House, southeast corner



Figure 85: William and Diana Edwards House, southeast corner

On the gable ends, windows flank single shoulder chimneys at each level (figures 86 and 87).



Figure 86: William and Diana Edwards House, south gable end



Figure 87: William and Diana Edwards House, northeast corner

A one-story, gabled ell with a tall center chimney extends to the rear (figure 88). A shed roof porch runs along the main block's rear elevation and turns to follow the ell's south elevation. Along the main block, the porch has been enclosed, and an enclosed room is also located at the porch's west end along the ell.



Figure 88: William and Diana Edwards House, south elevation

Windows throughout the house are original six-over-six windows. The front door is missing, but the opening includes sidelights (figure 89). The porch door on the ell is a two-panel, Greek Revival door (figure 90).



Figure 89: William and Diana Edwards House, front entrance



Figure 90: William and Diana Edwards House, ell entrance detail

The house stands on a foundation of stone piers with brick fill, and pressed metal shingles cover the roof.

The house probably had flush gable ends and a boxed cornice originally, but a late-nineteenth-century remodeling altered the eaves to extend them to the chimney. The soffit on this extension is finished with offset planks, similar to the arrangement seen at the J.E. and Matilda Greenwood House, except these are not mitered to turn the corner and extend along the front and rear elevations because of the boxed cornice.

Inside, the house follows a traditional center-hall plan. Doors throughout are two-panel, Greek Revival configurations. The staircase retains some tapered, rectangle-in-plan balusters and a spartan rectangle-in-plan, tapered newel post (figures 91 and 92). The railing, which makes two delicate, swooping slopes as it follows the turn of the stairs at the landing, terminates at the newel with a square pad on top of the newel post. This staircase is very similar to the one found at the Johnson-Hubbard House in Wilkesboro. Interior walls are finished with horizontal flush wood sheathing.



Figure 91: William and Diana Edwards House, staircase

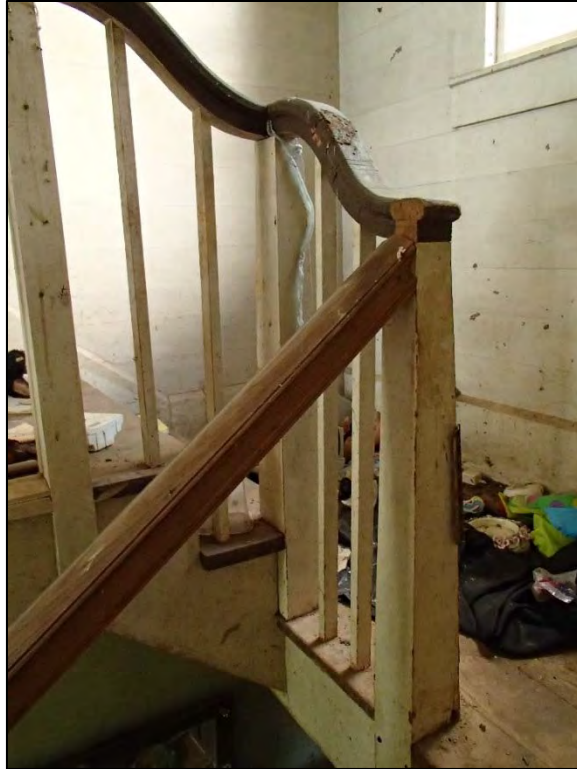


Figure 92: William and Diana Edwards House, staircase

Mantels throughout are relatively simple post-and-lintel pieces, with the main block's north room featuring transitional Federal-Greek Revival gouging (figures 93 and 94). All rooms are finished with tall, plain baseboards and plain window surrounds. There is no crown molding. In the main block's two downstairs rooms, boxed-in corners hint at heavy timber frame construction.



Figure 93: William and Diana Edwards House, north room, downstairs



Figure 94: William and Diana Edwards House, north room downstairs mantel

In the ell, a built-in cabinet is located beside the center chimney (figure 95). This cabinet has paneled doors below a double-leaf glazed door. This configuration is nearly identical to the built-in cabinets added to the Reves-Greenwood House in the late 1800s (figure 22).

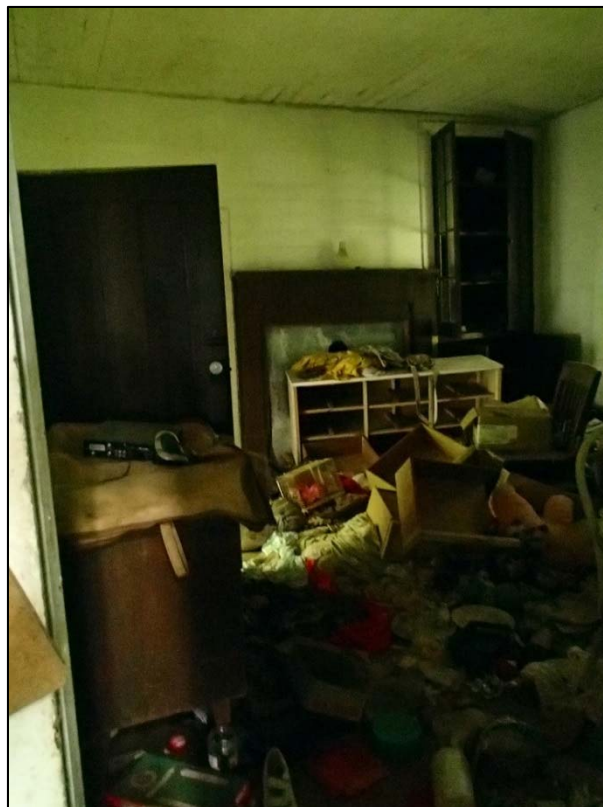


Figure 95: William and Diana Edwards House, rear ell with built-in cabinet

Off the house's northwest corner is a gable-front, frame outbuilding with a batten door (figure 96). Like the gable-front, frame, weatherboarded outbuildings at the Reves-Greenwood and J.E. and Matilda Greenwood houses (figures 26 and 35), this outbuilding is windowless and does not have a chimney.



Figure 96: William and Diana Edwards House, gable-front outbuilding

Farther north, in a pasture, is a ruinous frame barn and a large, open pavilion probably used for hay storage (figure 97).



Figure 97: William and Diana Edwards House, barn and open sided shed

To the south of the house is a side-gable building of undetermined use (figures 98 and 99). It has flush gable ends and a boxed cornice, suggesting it was built around the time of the main house's construction. A batten door is centered on the front and a single window occupies the south gable end. The window has an interior batten shutter, and it is unclear if it was glazed. A small attic window or vent occupied a now-vacant opening in the gable end. No signs of a chimney were observed. Its location toward the front of the house and addressing a now-defunct road suggest the building may have been a store, warehouse, or office.



Figure 98: William and Diana Edwards House, possible store or warehouse



Figure 99: William and Diana Edwards House, possible warehouse and house, facing north

To the south of the store is a gable-front bungalow probably dating from the 1920s (figure 100). It is simply finished with weatherhboard siding, six-over-six sash windows, exposed raftertails, and a full-width, hip roof porch with square posts. Asphalt shingles cover the roof and a chimney extends from a point near the center of the house. Adjacent to the bungalow, to the south, is one frame wall of a ruinous building that may have been a garage.



Figure 100: William and Diana Edwards House, bungalow

The fields around the house follow traditional patterns. The large field between the house and NC Highway 268 (figure 101) is maintained as pasture land, as is the smaller field to the north. Farther south, across NC Highway 268, the bottom land between the road and the Yadkin River is cultivated cropland.



Figure 101: William and Diana Edwards House, view from house toward Yadkin River

History

The William and Diana Edwards House was probably built around 1855, likely by the same carpenter that built the Johnson-Hubbard House in Wilkesboro.⁶

William's grandfather, also named William, began making land purchases in Wilkes County in the early 1800s. It is not clear if this land was part of the elder William's acquisitions nor is it clear when the elder William's son, David Edwards, purchased this land.⁷

In 1848, William married Diana Smith, and, in 1855, David and Nancy Edwards sold 900 acres of land on the north side of the Yadkin River to the couple.⁸ This house appears to be on that land. David's probate records mention his own home place, and the census records that enumerate David and William next to one another in 1850 suggest they live farther apart by 1860, after this land sale. That supports the notion that William and Diana built this house around 1855, rather than it being an earlier house built by David.⁹

In 1860, William owned \$2,500 in real estate and possessed a personal estate of \$2,100. The household included the couple's seven children ranging in age from infancy to ten years old. A girl named Mary Jones also lived with the family, and William owned two enslaved persons, a twenty-year-old female and a child presumed to be the woman's daughter.¹⁰

By 1870, the William's assets totaled about \$2,200, or half of his wealth in 1860, and seven children lived in the home. William died sometime in the 1870s, and the 1880 census documents Diana as a widow running the farm with six of her children, who ranged in age from 15 to 30. In 1881, Diana retained her dower rights and sold 600 acres to J.D. Rousseau and S.J. Ginnings. Two deeds related to this sale describe the property as the William S. Edwards home place.¹¹

In 1884, John Q.A. Sparks bought the property, again with Diana's dower rights in place. It is not clear when Diana died, but she is not found in the 1900 census.¹²

At the time of the 1870 census, John and Margaret Sparks were living in Yadkin County, but by the time of the 1900 census, they were in Wilkes County, probably in this house. They were farmers with three

⁶ Public records used a surprisingly wide variety of spellings for Diana's name. No one spelling was the most frequent so the author selected the shortest spelling and the spelling that is most commonly used today for use in the report.

⁷ See Wilkes County Deeds, Grantee Index from Creation to 1929 for the Edwards family's earlier purchases.

⁸ North Carolina Index to Marriage Bonds, 1741-1868, and David Edwards to William Edwards, Wilkes County Deed Book A-2, page 133, January 8, 1855.

⁹ U.S. Census Records, 1850 and 1860, accessed via ancestry.com, and David Edwards, Probate Records, accessed via ancestry.com.

¹⁰ U.S. Census Records, population and slave schedules, 1860.

¹¹ U.S. Census Records, 1870 and 1880, accessed via ancestry.com; D.R. Edwards to S.J. Ginnings and J.D. Rousseau, Wilkes County Deed Book F, page 268, June 25, 1881; and D.R. Edwards to S.J. Ginnings and J.D. Rousseau, Wilke County Deed Book F, page 440, January 10, 1882.

¹² S.J. Ginnings and A.M. and Susannah Church to John Q.A. Sparks, Wilkes County Deed Book 2, page 339, December 4, 1884.

children, ages 25, 17, and 15, at home.¹³ The Sparks were frequently mentioned in the newspaper as visiting family in Roaring River (their daughter was R.A. Reves' second wife) and traveling to Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro for business. Mr. Sparks was also part of a local cattle association organized to eliminate fever ticks among herds.¹⁴

It is almost certain that the Sparks family, rather than Diana Edwards who was an aging widow at the time, remodeled the house, extending the gable eaves and changing the front porch.

John and Margaret Sparks both died in 1923, within a few months of each other.¹⁵ Between their deaths and 1978, it is not clear who owned or occupied the house, but in the 1920s, 1930s, or possibly as late as the 1940s, a gable-front bungalow was added to the property.¹⁶

By the 1990s, William and Betty Mitchell owned this farm as part of their significant holdings in eastern Wilkes County. The house remains in solid condition, but it open to the elements and has been vacant and abandoned for many years.

Architectural Context

The Edwards House is a quintessential example of an I-house: a two-story dwelling with a central hallway flanked by a room on each side. The form gained popularity in North Carolina in the early 1800s as it slowly displaced the earlier hall-parlor form. An ell or earlier house, one or two stories in height, is often appended to the rear elevation.

The plan maximizes the visual impact of a four-room house by making the house as tall and wide as possible, letting the owner impress passersby with the size of his or her home. The broad façade could be finished in the era's fashion, and the Edwards House probably had a small, gable-front, single-bay portico over the front door when it was finished. The form's symmetry also reinforced the formality of the original Greek Revival. By the late 1800s, however, the wide front provided ample room for adding a full-width porch that provided more surface area for sawnwork and fashionable decoration.

This well-worn form to which ornamentation could be added or subtracted as tastes, wealth, and access to inexpensive woodwork changed was perfectly suited for deployment during the mid-1800s and late 1800s, both eras of rapid economic growth. Greek Revival designs could be executed at a variety of levels and even the simplest of designs could reflect a taste for symmetry, wide trim, plinths and corner blocks around doors, and post-and-lintel mantels. At the Edwards House, the builder used popular two-panel doors, restrained post-and-lintel mantels, and plain, wide trim boards. The builder also, however, retained the more subtle sensibilities of the Federal era designs, popular just before Greek Revival, as he constructed a delicate balustrade for the central stair case.

¹³ U.S. Census Records, 1870 and 1900, accessed via ancestry.com.

¹⁴ *North Wilkesboro Hustler*, June 20, 1901, 1, and numerous other newspaper notes regarding the Sparks family.

¹⁵ John Q.A. and Mollie A. Sparks gravemarkers, Roaring River Baptist Church cemetery.

¹⁶ William G. Mitchell Estate to Kyle Hayes, Wilkes County Deed Book 699, page 207, February 20, 1992 references five previous deeds, including a 1978 deed (Deed Book 571, page 418) that indicates that Annie Trivette sold the house to William Mitchell, but the land sales between the Sparks ownership and the Trivette ownership were not investigated.

Late in the nineteenth century, post-war sawmills and the railroads allowed local builders to purchase sawnwork, spindlework, and decorative shingles more cheaply and many owners updated earlier houses. Some Wilkes County residents, such as John Q.A. Sparks who purchased this house in 1884, were enjoying post-war, New South prosperity before the railroad arrived, but particularly after the railroad's completion, the county and the towns of Roaring River, Ronda, Wilkesboro, and North Wilkesboro experienced building booms as evidenced by the number of turn-of-the-twentieth-century houses extant in both places.

Elaborate Queen Anne designs came into vogue as more and more towns and rural areas gained access to inexpensive decorative trim and sawnwork. The most high-style Queen Anne houses are located in Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro, and feature asymmetrical facades, projecting gables and turrets, and rich layers of shingles, turned posts and balustrades, and sawnwork, but a few elaborate examples stand in Roaring River and Ronda.

For the most part, however, the I-house was the preferred form as owners eschewed the extravagant roof plans and asymmetry of high-style designs and simply added Queen Anne trim and details to the tried-and-true I-house. This meant that Sparks' older home needed only a porch-update and deepened gable end soffits to become considerably more fashionable.

Similarly, Claymont Hill (WK 186, NR 1985) and the Martin-Pardue Farm (WK 188, DOE 1990) date from the 1870s and 1910s respectively and are both I-houses with Queen Anne porches. In Roaring River, William and Ann Reves' expanded their house (the Reves-Greenwood House, WK 343) and either they or J.E. and Matilda Greenwood enlarged and modernized the J.E. and Matilda Greenwood House (WK 345) while R.A. Reves built a grand house (WK 436) immediately south of J.E. and Matilda Greenwood. In Wilkesboro, the Johnson-Hubbard House (WK 40, NR 1982) went through a similar transformation as the Hubbards updated their mid-nineteenth century house in 1887. Also in Ronda, presumably around the time the railroad was completed, another family engaged the same carpenter for an unsurveyed house on the south side of the railroad tracks.

In addition to being good examples of late-nineteenth-century, these six houses share distinctive design features that suggest they were updated or built by the same carpenter, or that the area's fashion was heavily influenced by a particular builder's work.

Comparable Examples

As *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina* notes and as the investigator confirmed, "There are relatively few architectural survivors of 19th century agricultural life," and surviving examples are almost always marred with vinyl siding or replacement windows. There are, of course, nineteenth century farms across Wilkes County, but they remain in fewer numbers than in other counties, and the Edwards House is clearly one of the least altered farms in the county.

Architecturally, the Johnson-Hubbard House (WK 40, NR 1985) is the best comparison, although it is a town house and not the seat of a farm (figure 101). The Johnson-Hubbard House shares many commonalities with the Edwards House. They appear to have been built by the same mid-nineteenth

century builder because they have very similar staircases, and they both were modernized in the 1880s, again apparently by the same builder. A newspaper article in 1887 provides a firm date for the Johnson-Hubbard remodeling that, together with the death of Diana Edwards sometime in the 1880s, suggests that the Sparks family updated this house in the 1880s.



Figure 102: Johnson-Hubbard House, WK 40, 113 E. Main Street, Wilkesboro

The Reves-Greenwood (WK 434) and J.E. and Matilda Greenwood (WK 435) houses are also good examples of the work of the unidentified carpenter working in this area in the late 1800s.



Figure 103: Reves-Greenwood House, WK 343, 325 Cotton Mill Rd., Roaring River



Figure 104: J.E. and Matilda Greenwood House, WK 345, 318 Cotton Mill Rd.

Claymont Hill (WK 186, NR 1985), which is listed in the National Register, is a very good example of a nineteenth-century farm. It remains in excellent condition and is still eligible for the National Register, and is located south of the Yadkin River, across from Ronda, in the 700 block of Clingman Road.

Another farm (unsurveyed) on Tharpe Road appears to retain integrity and significant outbuildings (figures 105 and 106). Like many homes of this era, this house appears to have evolved and features a variety of gables. The property has not been documented in any past surveys, but it was one of the more intact, late-nineteenth-century farmsteads the investigator saw in the county. At least some of its windows have been replaced with modern sash, but overall, it retains a high degree of integrity.



Figure 105: Farm at 2226 Tharpe Rd.



Figure 106: Farm at 2226 Tharpe Rd.

The Jones Farm (figure 107) (WK 274) was determined eligible for the National Register but has suffered significant neglect and deterioration since that designation in 2004.



Figure 107: Jones Farm, WK 274

Several other homes in the county appear to be older homes that were expanded or updated in a variety of ways. Two unsurveyed examples follow (figures 108 and 109).



Figure 108: Older house, expanded and updated, on Union Community Rd. at Roaring Gap Church Rd.



Figure 109: House, 5262 Lomax Jolly Rd., with Craftsman style porch added

National Register Evaluation

Integrity

The William and Diana Edwards House retains its integrity of location because it has not been moved. It has suffered and continues to suffer from neglect, but it has not been significantly altered since its two historic phases of construction around 1855 and in the 1880s. It retains integrity of workmanship, materials, design, and feeling. It also retains its agricultural setting and association.

The proposed period of significance is ca. 1855 to 1900, incorporating the building's original construction and the modernization of the house.

Criteria Evaluations

The William and Diana Edwards House is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with nineteenth century agriculture in Wilkes County. It is a rare unaltered example of a nineteenth-century farm house and it retains multiple outbuildings, including a mid-nineteenth century building, which is a rare survivor of an early agricultural or rural commercial building in a county where examples of nineteenth century architecture are not plentiful. Its agricultural fields remain in traditional patterns with pastureland on the uphill slopes and crops in the bottom land.

The William and Diana Edwards House is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B for its association with the lives of persons significant in our past. No such associations are known to exist.

The William and Diana Edwards House is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C. It is a good and intact example of a nineteenth-century farm house constructed during two eras of local prosperity. The county has relatively few intact, nineteenth-century farm houses. Although its survival alone makes it unique, the unchanged elements representing two different stylistic phases and the fact that it is nearly unaltered from the 1880s makes it an outstanding example of the work of this unknown carpenter and an outstanding example of the common practice of updating an early nineteenth-century house in the late 1800s. It reflects the use of Greek Revival stylistic traits and the continued use of earlier designs, such as the boxed cornice and flush eaves, during the 1850s in Wilkes County, and it is a good example of updating and modernizing that became commonplace during the late-1800s.

The William and Diana Edwards 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 to prehistory or history.

Boundary Description and Justification

The William and Diana Edwards House proposed National Register Boundary includes the house, all the farm's remaining outbuildings, and most of the extant associated fields and pastureland. This is only a portion of the 300-acre tract the house stands on; an upper pasture, north of the barn, remains open but was not included because the pastures closer to the house communicate the resource's agricultural associations. The remainder of the tract is wooded. On the west it follows a farm road and tree lines and incorporates a small section of woodland because much of the land associated with the house would

not have been actively cultivated. Along the northern and northeastern edges, the boundary follows existing tree lines at the edges of pasture land. The boundary crosses N.C. Highway 268 and broadens to incorporate a swath of bottom land bounded by tree lines to the northeast and southwest and the Yadkin River to the southeast. The land within the boundary communicates the farm's past and current agricultural uses and includes the view shed from the house to the bottoms along the Yadkin River to the south.

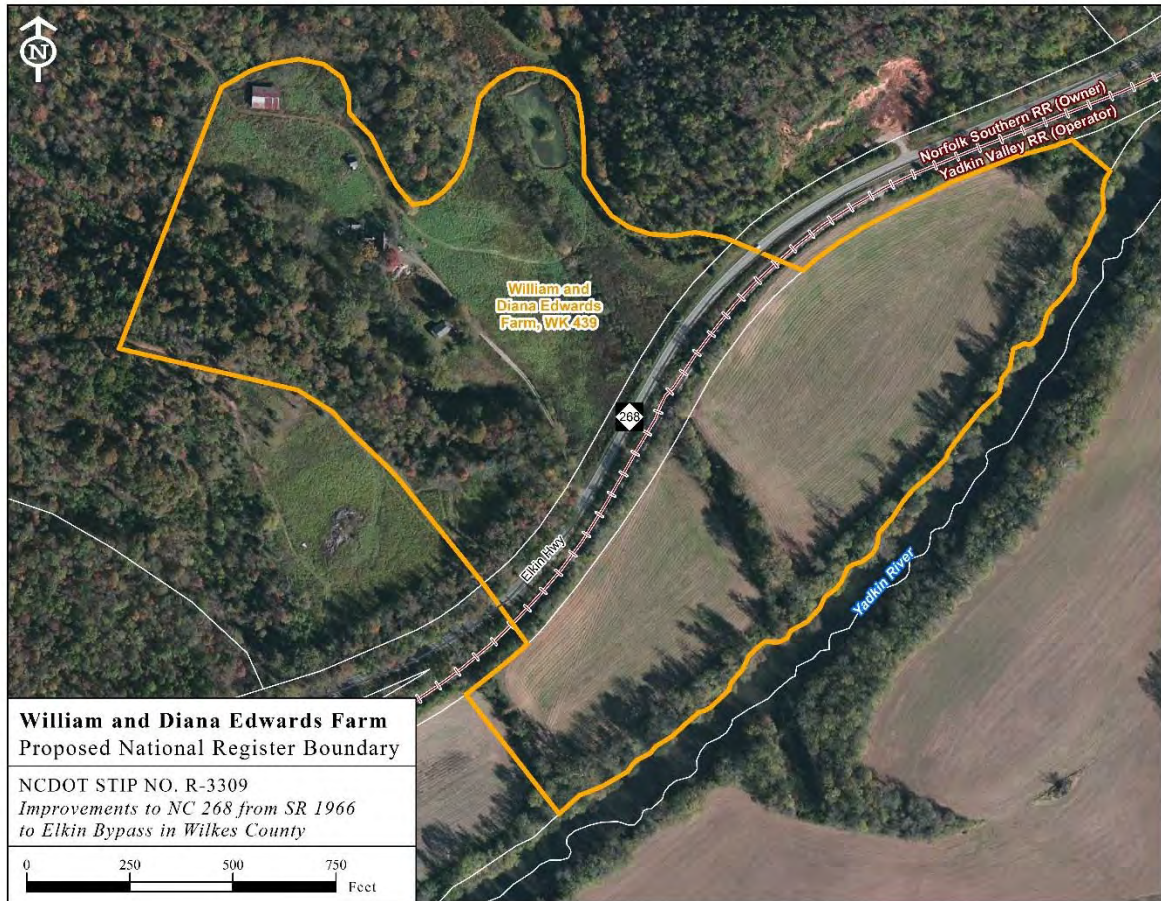


Figure 110: William and Diana Edwards House, Proposed National Register Boundary

Evaluation: Bugaboo Creek Bridge

Resource Name	Bugaboo Creek Bridge
HPO Survey Site Number	WK 440
Street Address	NC Highway 268 over Bugaboo Creek
PIN	No PIN
Construction Dates	1937
NRHP Recommendation	Eligible, C



Description

The Bugaboo Creek Bridge spans Big Bugaboo Creek with concrete railings composed of panels with arched openings between cast concrete piers (figures 112-116). Below, a concrete, closed-spandrel arch supports the bridge. The bridge is an earth-filled, reinforced concrete arch.¹⁷

The bridge is 157 feet long and spans 55 feet. The deck is 28 feet, 6 inches wide.

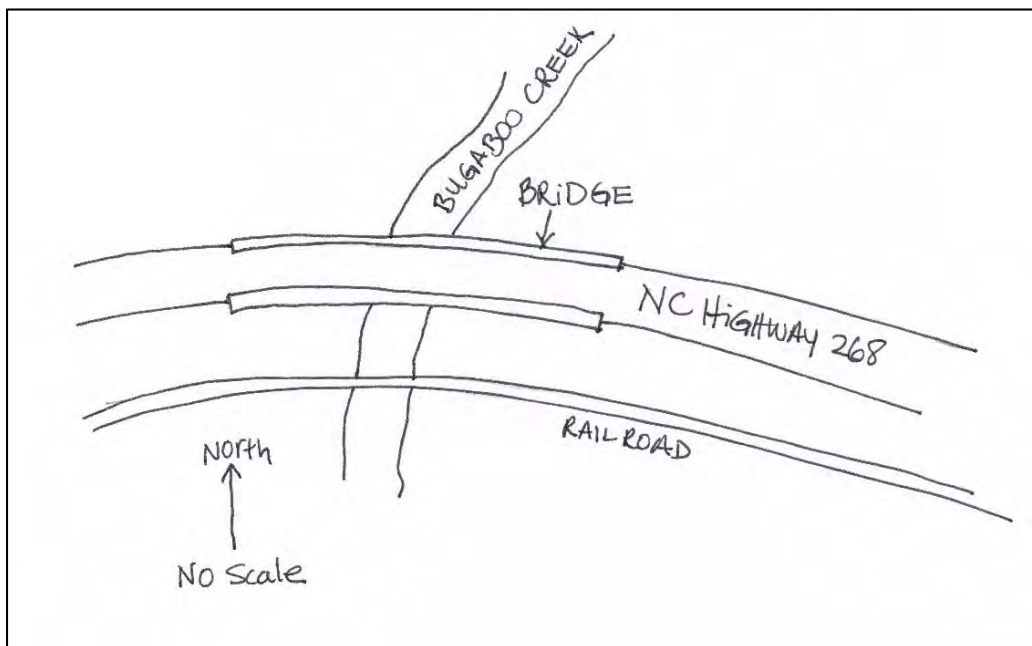


Figure 111: Bugaboo Creek Bridge, site plan

¹⁷ David Wayne, Bridge Maintenance Engineer, Division 11, email with the author, August 29, 2017.



Figure 112: Bugaboo Creek Bridge, facing west



Figure 113: Bugaboo Creek Bridge, north railing



Figure 114: Bugaboo Creek Bridge, south elevation



Figure 115: Bugaboo Creek Bridge, south railing



Figure 116: Bugaboo Creek Bridge, south elevation, photo graph by Royce and Bobette Haley, June 2017, accessed via <https://bridgehunter.com/nc/wilkes/1930092/>

History and Architectural Context

The Bugaboo Creek Bridge was constructed in 1937 as State Project 7804 by the North Carolina State Highway and Public Works Commission with federal aid. The bridge that carries N.C. Highway 268 over Roaring River was built at the same time. In 1931, N.C. Highway 268 was extended from Elkin west to North Wilkesboro, in some places following entirely new routes, but in the Bugaboo Creek vicinity, it was following, more or less, an existing road, and the previous Bugaboo Creek crossing appears to have been in about this same location.¹⁸

The federal government created a cost-sharing program with the states for road construction in 1916. Reinforced concrete was first used for bridge construction in the United States in the 1880s, but it did not come into common use in North Carolina until the 1910s. During the 1920s, the state's highway commission evolved and began developing standardized plans. Reinforced concrete was and is durable and can be poured into a wide variety of molds, making it well-suited for standardized construction.¹⁹

¹⁸ North Carolina Highway 268, Wikipedia Entry, accessed July 2017 via https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Carolina_Highway_268, and Rural Delivery Routes Map, ca. 1910, University of North Carolina website, "North Carolina Maps," accessed July 2017 via <http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/ncmaps/id/933/rec/5>.

¹⁹ North Carolina Department of Transportation, Historic Bridges of North Carolina, "The Federal-Aid Highway Program," accessed in July 2017 via <https://www.ncdot.gov/projects/ncbridges/historic/history/?p=7#history>, and North Carolina Department of Transportation, Historic Bridges of North Carolina, "Reinforced Concrete Closed Spandrel Deck Arch Bridges," accessed in July 2017 via <https://www.ncdot.gov/projects/ncbridges/historic/types/?p=6#types>.

The first uses of concrete in bridge building were with closed-spandrel arches where a solid arch supported vertical walls and the road follows a deck on top of the arch.²⁰ It does not appear the form was commonly used in North Carolina, and when it was employed, it was often for aesthetic reasons. Examples documented in the 2005 Historic Bridges Inventory are in high-profile locations in cities or in parks or locations of particular scenic interest. It is unknown why the form was chosen for this location where the arch is difficult to see. One other arched bridge exists in Wilkes County; it is located four miles east of this structure on Highway 268, but it not as old having been constructed in the mid-twentieth century.²¹

The bridge was built during the Great Depression when New Deal programs supported bridge and road construction across the country.

Comparable Examples

The 2005 Historic Bridges Inventory highlights closed spandrel arch bridges, but all are earlier (1920s) bridges or they are bridges constructed in the 1930s through the 1950s as part of the Blue Ridge Parkway. The Parkway bridges are faced with distinctive stonework. The survey does not include any arched bridges in Wilkes County, and the investigator did not find additional arched bridges in Wilkes County.

National Register Evaluation

Integrity

The Bugaboo Creek Bridge retains integrity of location, workmanship, materials, design, feeling, setting, and association because it has not been altered in anyway, aside from paving of the roadway.

The proposed period of significance is 1937, the year the bridge was constructed.

Criteria Evaluations

The Bugaboo Creek Bridge is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with any event or pattern of history. No important associations were identified.

The Bugaboo Creek Bridge is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B for its association with the lives of persons significant in our past. No such associations are known to exist.

The Bugaboo Creek Bridge is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C because it is the county's earliest known example of a reinforced concrete, closed spandrel arch deck bridge, a relatively unusual form that appears to have been rarely used outside of situations where aesthetics was of particular concern. Very few reinforced concrete arch bridges remain in North Carolina. The period of significance is 1937, the date of the bridge's construction.

²⁰ North Carolina Department of Transportation, Historic Bridges of North Carolina, "Reinforced Concrete Closed Spandrel Deck Arch Bridges," accessed in July 2017 via <https://www.ncdot.gov/projects/ncbridges/historic/types/?p=6#types>.

²¹ David Wayne, Bridge Maintenance Engineer, Division 11, email with the author, August 29, 2017

The Bugaboo Creek Bridge 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 to prehistory or history.

Boundary Description and Justification

The Bugaboo Creek Bridge boundary encompasses the bridge's footprint. This boundary is sufficient area to communicate the structure's significance.



Figure 117: Bugaboo Creek Bridge, proposed National Register Boundary

Evaluation: Bugaboo Creek Railroad Bridge

Resource Name	Bugaboo Creek Railroad Bridge
HPO Survey Site Number	WK 441
Street Address	Over Bugaboo Creek adjacent to NC Highway 268
PIN	No PIN
Construction Dates	Ca. 1890
NRHP Recommendation	Not Eligible



Description

The Bugaboo Creek Railroad Bridge spans Bugaboo Creek via a wooden trestle and a girder bridge (figures 119-122). Cast concrete piers support the girder bridge, which is located over the creek. The girder bridge is approached from both banks by wooden trestle bridges. The eastern trestle is approximately 102 feet long. The girder bridge is approximately 42 feet long, and the western trestle is about 60 feet in length.

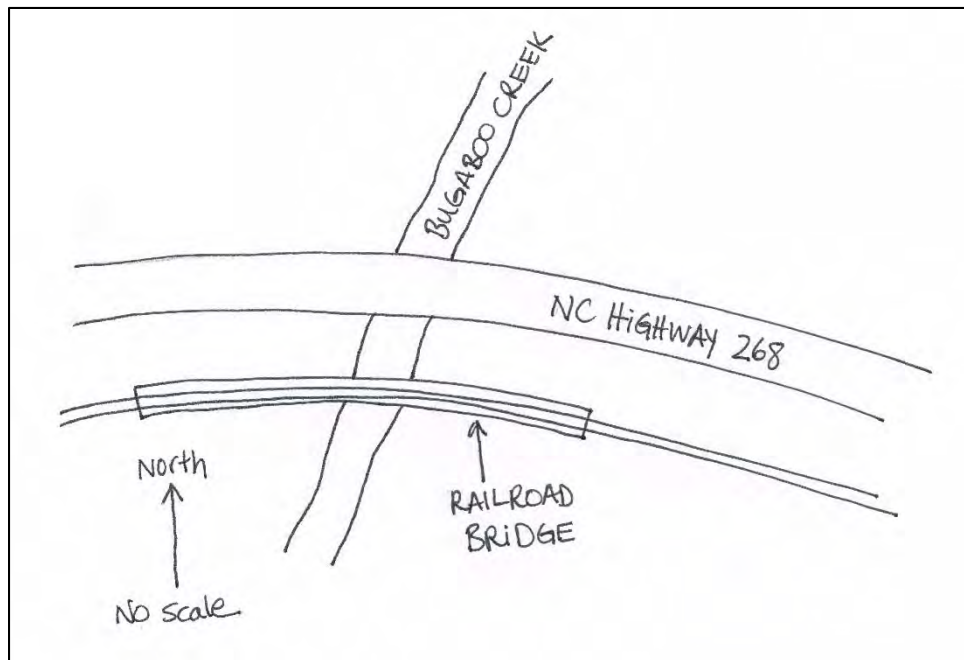


Figure 118: Bugaboo Creek Railroad Bridge, site plan



Figure 119: Bugaboo Creek Railroad Bridge, north elevation, east trestle section



Figure 120: Bugaboo Creek Railroad Bridge, north elevation, girder bridge



Figure 121: Bugaboo Creek Railroad Bridge, facing southeast



Figure 122: Bugaboo Creek Railroad Bridge, as seen from the highway bridge

History and Architectural Context

The Bugaboo Creek Railroad Bridge was one of five girder bridges constructed in Wilkes County during the 1890 completion of the Northwestern North Carolina Railroad (NWNCR) from Winston-Salem to North Wilkesboro. (The other four crossings are Mulberry Creek, Rock Creek, Hughes Branch, and Little Elkin Creek.) The arrival of the railroad, including its vital spans across numerous creeks, spurred unprecedented economic growth in the Yadkin Valley and the eastern half of Wilkes County.

In 1892, a train knocked a girl off this trestle, breaking her jaw and one leg. In 1895, the bridge was the scene of a criminal conspiracy when a man who was already deceased was placed on the trestle and ultimately run over by an oncoming train. Based on news accounts, the floods in 1916 and 1940 damaged the railroad and its bridges all along this route, but all of the bridges were repaired rather than replaced.

The bridge is a plate girder deck bridge with the railroad ties themselves forming the bridge deck and diagonally-laid beams used as bracing between the girders. The earliest plate girder bridges were constructed of iron in the 1840s. The bridge type can be used for roads, but is most commonly employed on railroads.²² The form is an extremely common feature of most railroad corridors.

Comparable Examples

Other girder bridges exist along the rail corridor in Wilkes County, but the Bugaboo Creek Bridge is one of the longer ones. The other examples are not visible without trespassing on the railroad's right-of-way, but they can be seen in satellite images. Photographs of these other bridges are not included because of access limitations.

National Register Evaluation

Integrity

The Bugaboo Creek Railroad Bridge retains its integrity of location, workmanship, materials, design, feeling, setting, and association because it has not been altered significantly. Based on historic maps, the road crossed Bugaboo Creek in this vicinity as early as 1910, so the presence of the road does not affect the structure's integrity of setting or feeling.

Criteria Evaluations

The Bugaboo Creek Railroad Bridge is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with transportation and commerce. The completion of a railroad connection between central Wilkes County and Winston-Salem opened up markets for Wilkes County's plentiful natural resources, raw materials, and finished products including timber, fruit (canned and dried), chicken coops, furniture, and poultry products. The line provided a transportation link that brought immeasurable economic and cultural impacts to the county. Furthermore, it resulted in the creation of two new communities (Ronda and North Wilkesboro) that became important regional centers of commerce and industry. However, there are at least four other girder bridges in the county,

²² "Plate Girder Bridges," Wikipedia entry, accessed August 26, 2017 via https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plate_girder_bridge.

and the Roaring River Railroad Bridge is a more prominent example of the effort to bridge the area's creeks and streams as the railroad was completed.

The Bugaboo Creek Railroad Bridge is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B for its association with the lives of persons significant in our past. No such associations are known to exist.

The Bugaboo Creek Railroad Bridge is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C. The Bugaboo Creek Railroad Bridge is a good and unaltered example of a girder bridge, but there are three additional girder bridges between Elkin and North Wilkesboro.

The Bugaboo Creek Railroad Bridge 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 to prehistory or history.

Evaluation: Ronda Historic District

Resource Name	Ronda Historic District
HPO Survey Site Number	WK 442
Street Address	Roughly bounded by Chatham, Maple, and Factory streets, and the Yadkin River
PIN	Multiple
Construction Dates	Ca. 1890 through the late twentieth century
NRHP Recommendation	Not Eligible



Description

Ronda is laid out on an irregular grid paralleling the Northwest North Carolina Railroad corridor (figures 123 and 124).



Figure 123: Ronda Historic District Study Boundary

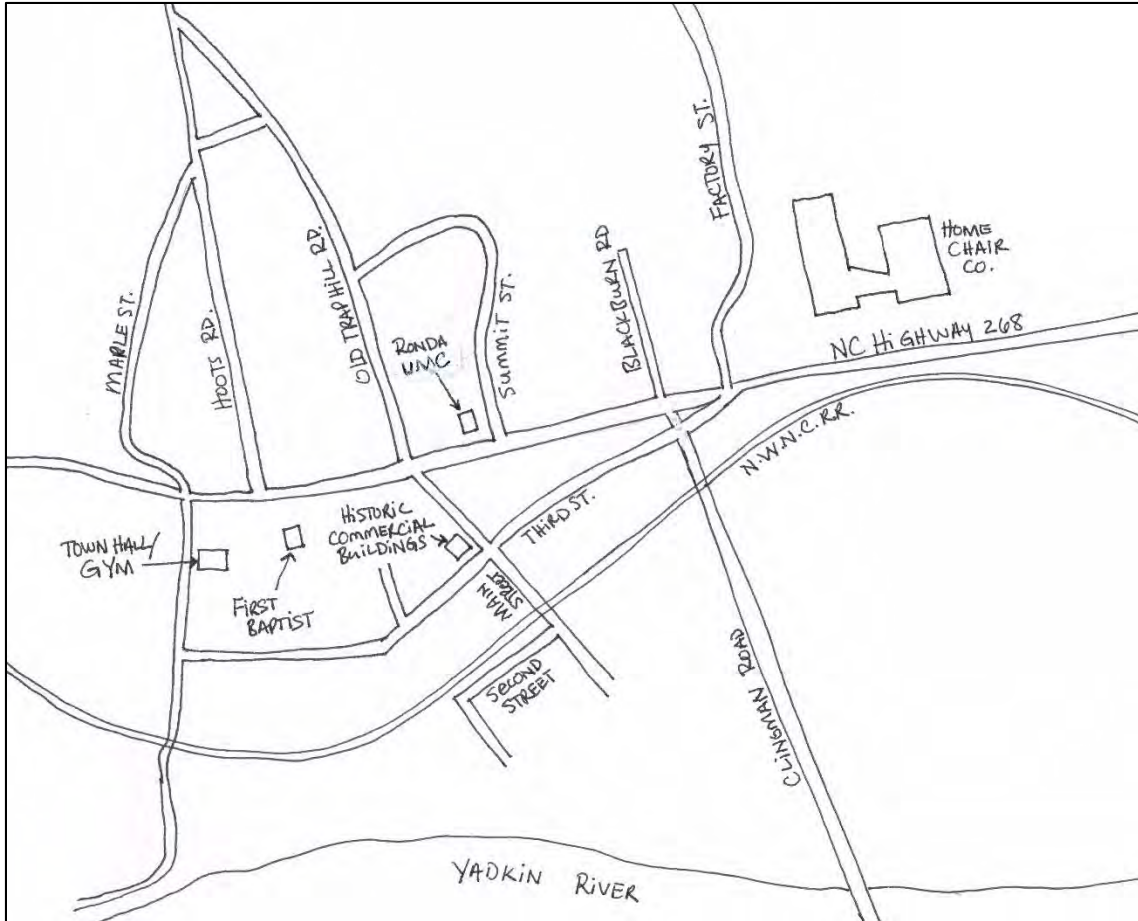


Figure 124: Ronda Historic District, street map

The town is a remnant of its former self with a scattering of intact historic buildings set among empty lots, heavily altered historic buildings, and more recent buildings. The town was once a bustling and thriving industrial and commercial center with a large school, several churches, businesses, factories, warehouses, and a depot, but fires and a changing economy having taken a toll on Ronda's architectural record. Of all the buildings shown on the town's 1920 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, only two houses and one group of three historic commercial buildings remain standing (figure 125).

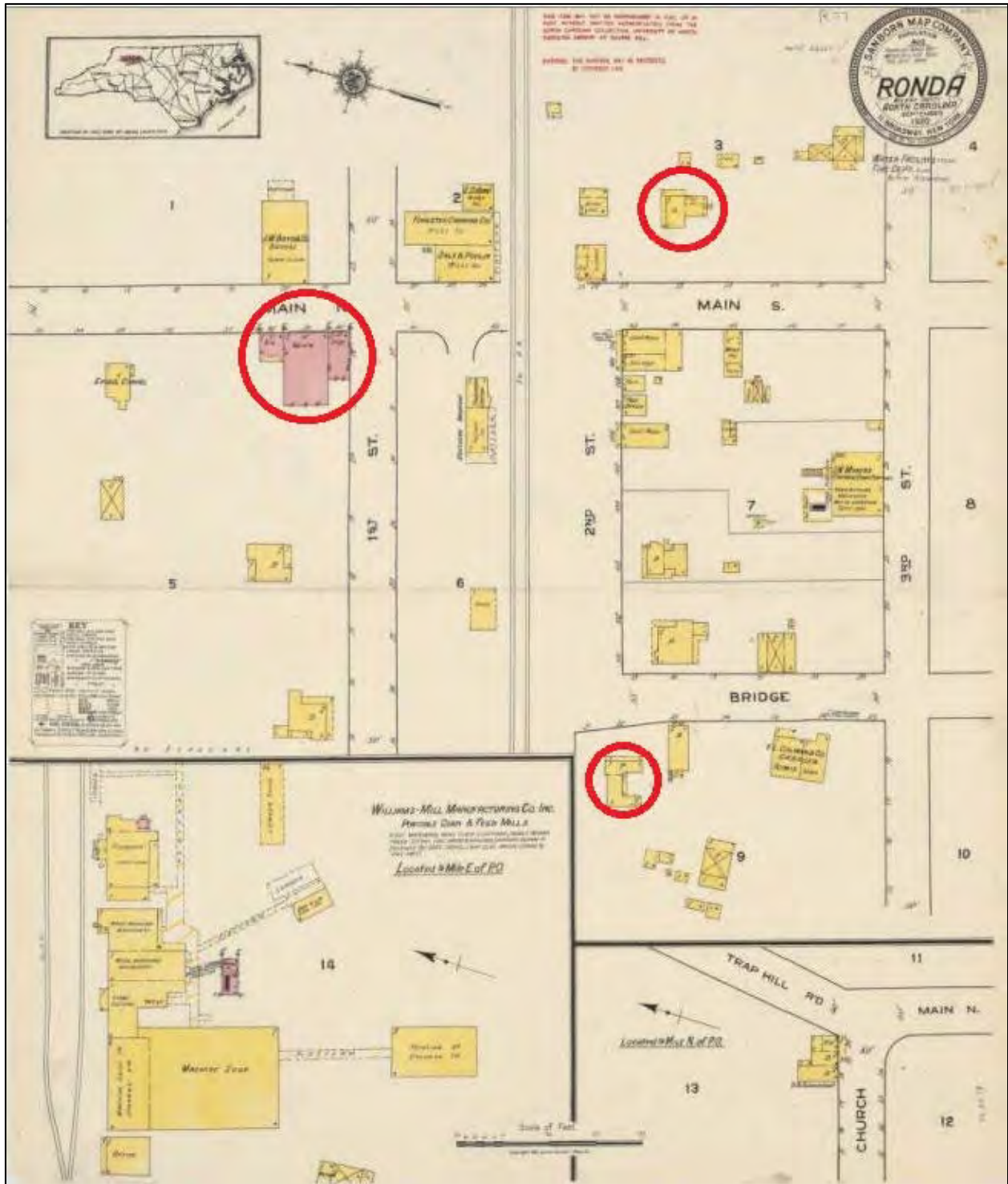


Figure 125: 1920 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Ronda; extant buildings are circled; another pre-1920 house is extant, but would be just beyond the top edge of this map

Today, that group of traditional commercial buildings, situated at the corner of Main and Third Street, comprises Ronda's historic business district and stands as the last vestige of the town's original commercial center (figure 126). Across Main Street from these buildings are a group of small, modern,

metal industrial and commercial buildings. Other small commercial and light industrial buildings can be found throughout Ronda.



Figure 126: Ronda Historic District, historic commercial buildings, 100 block Main St.



Figure 127: Ronda Historic District, Main St., facing south



Figure 128: Ronda Historic District, facing north along Main St.

Most of the town's primary commercial and institutional buildings now stand along N.C. Highway 268 (figure 129).



Figure 129: Ronda Historic District, N.C. Highway 268, facing east

These buildings include the Home Chair Company (figures 130 and 131), which is an imposing three-story, frame landmark building located toward the east end of town, and two churches near the

community’s present-day center: Ronda First Baptist Church (figure 132), a mid-twentieth-century, gable-front sanctuary and Ronda Methodist Church (figure 133), an extremely deteriorated building dating from the 1920s. Also near the town’s center is the late-twentieth-century fire department building (figure 134), which replaced the 1897 All Saint’s Episcopal Church, a gas station, and small non-historic businesses. At the west end of town, the high school’s 1950s gym now serves as a community center and town hall (figure 135). Like so many other buildings in Ronda, this gym has been covered in vinyl siding.



Figure 130: Ronda Historic District, Home Chair Company as seen from the railroad tracks at Main St



Figure 131: Ronda Historic District, Home Chair Company, 144 Factory St.



Figure 132: Ronda Historic District, First Baptist Church, 12094 Elkin Highway



Figure 133: Ronda Historic District, former Ronda Methodist Church, Elkin Highway (N.C. Highway 268)



Figure 134: Ronda Historic District, 12164 Elkin Highway



Figure 135: Ronda Historic District, former Ronda High School Gym, 123 Chatham St.



Figure 136: Ronda Historic District, approximate site of depot



Figure 137: 1955 photo of last passenger train stop in Ronda, showing depot, Frank Jones photographer, from the photo collection at the Forsyth County Public library, accessed via Digital Forsyth, <http://www.digitalforsyth.org/photos/2889>

To the north of N.C. Highway 268, Maple Street, Hoots Road, Old Traphill Road, Summit Street, Blackburn Street, and Factory Street extend to the north. A few blocks north, Factory and Blackburn streets end. Summit Street turns sharply west to terminate at Old Traphill Road. Old Traphill, Hoots, and Maple all continue north with Old Traphill and Maple slanting toward Hoots Road so that eventually, all

three of these streets come together. A few late-nineteenth-century houses (figures 138-140) and numerous 1920s and 1930s bungalows line these north-south streets (figures 141-143). Almost all of these houses have been altered with vinyl siding, replacement windows, and replacement porch materials.



Figure 138: Ronda Historic District, 192 N. Hoots Road



Figure 139: Ronda Historic District, 126 N. Hoots Rd.



Figure 140: Ronda Historic District, 132 Blackburn St.



Figure 141: Ronda Historic District, 135 Summit St.



Figure 142: Ronda Historic District, 139 Maple Street



Figure 143: Ronda Historic District, 191 Summit Street

To the south of the railroad tracks, three late-nineteenth-century dwellings, including one likely built by the unidentified carpenter whose work can be found throughout the project area (figure 144), are scattered along Second Street.



Figure 144: Ronda Historic District, 221 Main St.

Two of these are on the 1920 Sanborn Map; the third one was too far north to be included on that 1920 map. This section of Ronda is particularly disjointed with numerous vacant lots, small, typically non-historic retail businesses and light industries, and houses from the mid- to late twentieth century (figures 145 and 146). To this area's southwest is an imposing two-story I-house set well back from the street. This house, too, has been heavily restored with replacement windows, vinyl siding, and a new porch.



Figure 145: Ronda Historic District, 412 Third St.



Figure 146: Ronda Historic District, 204 Third Street

The town overlooks a wide swath of bottom land and the Yadkin River to the south.

History

European settlers began populating the Yadkin Valley in the mid- to late-eighteenth century. Benjamin Cleveland was a particularly wealthy plantation owner who settled in a bend along the Yadkin River prior to the Revolutionary War. Cleveland named his farm Roundabout, and, by the 1850s, the Hickerson family had acquired the property and built a two-story, double-pile Greek Revival home there, just to the southwest of present-day Ronda.

The town's name is said to be a corruption of Roundabout, but another story credits a railroad official with naming the town. In any case, the town was established in 1890 as the Northwest North Carolina Railroad was completed through the valley. While the area was farmland owned by the Gwyn and Hickerson families, there was a school, Midway Academy, and an Episcopal church called Gwyn's Chapel in the vicinity.

As soon as the town was conceived, building got underway. James Hickerson established Midway Academy in 1890. Ronda Baptist Church was organized in 1893, and the community replaced Gwyn's Chapel with All Saint's Episcopal Church in 1897. During the first few years of the twentieth century, entrepreneurs established several businesses: Bridal Veil Canning Company, Forester Canning Company, a chicken coop factory, and two lumber companies, Church Lumber and Yadkin Valley Mill and Lumber Company. The lumber companies manufactured portable grist mills, crates, and packing boxes.¹

¹ "Train Spurred Ronda Grown in Early 1900s," *Journal-Patriot* (North Wilkesboro), May 4, 2016; "Gwyn Family's Green Hill Remembered," *Journal-Patriot* (North Wilkesboro), April 18, 2016; and J. J. Anderson, 70-71.

In 1903, a news account regarding the tabling of a bill to incorporate the town described Ronda as a “distillery town,” even though books and newspapers document manufacturing as a large or larger component of Ronda’s economy than distilling.² In 1905, a match factory awaited a shipment of machinery, but was otherwise ready for operation in a new building with a dozen houses for workers. A new planing mill and box factory, and J.W. Minor’s crate, coop, and bee-gum plant were also up and running.³

In 1914, a writer documented Ronda as energetic and “rapidly coming to the front as an industrial center.” The town had a steel highway bridge over the Yadkin, the “handsomest homes in the county,” and the largest lumber market between North Wilkesboro and Winston. The writer reported that Ronda had shipped over 250 carloads of goods out in the past year, of which about half was lumber and half was a combination of portable grist mills, canned goods, poultry products, and other farm products. Williams Mill Manufacturing Company was considered the town’s largest industry, even though it was actually located about a mile east of Ronda; in 1913, the factory turned out more than 600 portable grist mills.⁴

The town also had an electricity supply from an early date: Arthur “Trump” Gwyn built a water-powered power plant that he operated from 4 a.m. to 9 p.m., although families or businesses in emergency situations could ask Gwyn to keep the lights on overnight.⁵

Labor statistics collected by the State of North Carolina in 1921 listed thirteen manufacturers in Ronda engaged in canning, sawmilling and lumber production, corn and flour milling, and mill and chicken coop production. Crescent Chemical Company produced oils used to clean and maintain harnesses and saddles. Only North Wilkesboro surpassed Ronda in manufacturing in Wilkes County, with Roaring River following close on Ronda’s heels.⁶

In 1916 the region suffered through one of the worst floods in the state’s history. In early and mid-July, hurricane remnants from two separate storms saturated western North Carolina. The state’s mountains saw “more rain than anyone anywhere had ever seen since such records had been kept,” with some areas accumulating more than twenty inches in a twenty-four-hour period, setting records that survive to this day. When the storm cleared, residents enjoyed a brief moment of hope they had been spared significant flooding, but as the sun came out, floodwaters rose swiftly and mercilessly, sweeping away homes, businesses, factories, farm buildings, crops, livestock, and fully-loaded boxcars.⁷

The flood engulfed the bottom lands along the Yadkin from North Wilkesboro and Donnaha in western Forsyth County. Over ten miles of railroad track had vanished and most of what remained was heavily

² *Messenger* (Wilmington, N.C.), March 10, 1903, page 1.

³ *Observer* (Charlotte), September 3, 1905, page 11, and J.J. Anderson, 71.

⁴ *Wilkes County*, a 1914 book quoted without citing the author in J.J. Anderson, 69.

⁵ J.J. Anderson, 70.

⁶ North Carolina Department of Labor and Printing, *Thirty-Second Report of the Department of Labor and Printing of the State of North Carolina* (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton Printing Co.: 1921), 368.

⁷ Heidi Coryell Williams, “Hell and High Water: The Flood of 1916,” *Our State*, January 2013, accessed in July 2017 via <https://www.ourstate.com/flood-of-1916/>.

damaged or buried under mud. In the county's most fertile farmland, washes left 20-foot-deep gouges and deposits of sand and mud many feet deep in the county's most fertile farmland.⁸

At Ronda, most homes and businesses were situated just high enough above the bottoms to escape significant damage. However, human tragedy did not spare the town as two cabins containing the bodies of entire families washed up, one from a point fifteen miles upstream.⁹

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, stores and businesses offering everything from clothing and a haircut to groceries and furniture crowded Ronda's streets, which the town began paving in 1925.¹⁰ In 1919, R.L. Hickerson, L.P. Somners, and several others organized the Ronda Cotton Mills. By February 1920, the steam electric plant with 7,000 spindles was nearing completion and was expected to be in operation by May.¹¹ The mill was shuttered several times during the 1920s and closed for good in 1928.¹²

In 1940, the town again escaped serious damage during a major flood, but in North Wilkesboro, flood waters and an associated fire destroyed the Home Chair Company. Rather than rebuild, the company decided to purchase the defunct Ronda Cotton Mill, and in January of 1941, Home Chair Company announced it was about to restart operations after enlarging and updating the Ronda Cotton Mill building.¹³

Ronda's population peaked at 545 residents in 1950, but soon began declining, and the last passenger train stopped in Ronda in 1955. In 1957, new owners took over the Ronda Hardware Store in one of the two-story brick commercial buildings that are still standing. Ronda Hardware appears to be one of the longest lasting businesses in Ronda, operating from the early twentieth century through 2003, but most of the town's small factories and stores have been closing down over the last twenty years. Throughout the town's history fire has also been a constant enemy, with local historian J. Jay Anderson referencing "many fires" in Ronda in his 1976 book.¹⁴ Among those fires were a conflagration that consumed an entire block of historic commercial buildings in 1951, and in 1952, fire also destroyed the community's brick high school.¹⁵

Also in the 1950s, All Saints Episcopal Church closed and the fire department was constructed on the site. By the 1970s, Ronda's Methodist Church had been closed and sold. That building is still standing, but it is an object of vandalism and neglect.¹⁶

⁸ Jule Hubbard, "Sothern's Experiences in 1916 Told," *Journal Patriot* (North Wilkesboro), September, 3, 2012.

⁹ *Western Sentinel* (Winston-Salem), July 21, 1916, 1.

¹⁰ Byrd, 175-176, and J.J. Anderson, 73.

¹¹ *Western Sentinel* (Winston-Salem), February 20, 1920, page 5.

¹² *Carter's Weekly* (North Wilkesboro), September 28, 1922, page 1, and Byrd, 183.

¹³ Byrd, 183; *Record and Landmark* (Statesville), January 9, 1941, page 4; and *Record and Landmark* (Statesville), August 4, 1941, page 4.

¹⁴ J.J. Anderson, 68.

¹⁵ Byrd, 177, 181, 183, and 196.

¹⁶ J.J. Anderson, 73, and Byrd, 183.

The Home Chair Company building is still in use by Carolina Precision Fibers, which makes insulation, industrial fibers, and erosion control products.¹⁷

Architectural Context

Like North Wilkesboro, Ronda was established as a direct result of the railroad's arrival in 1890. Both towns saw rapid growth and development, which is still evident in North Wilkesboro where 46% of the buildings in the that town's downtown National Register Historic District were built between 1891 and 1910, and 81% were built prior to 1930.¹⁸

Ronda's urban architecture followed patterns seen in larger places, including North Wilkesboro: owners built their stores on the edge of the street or sidewalk and used parapet walls to hide shed roofs. Most turn-of-the-twentieth-century commercial buildings in Ronda were one or two stories in height. They were brick and were two or three bays wide over a storefront level with large glass windows and inset entrances.

Industrial buildings in Ronda were, essentially, larger versions of commercial buildings, minus the store fronts. In both Ronda and North Wilkesboro, the industrial buildings were located close to the railroad, but were, otherwise, two or three story, brick buildings similar to commercial buildings. The notable exception is the Home Chair Company building, a three-story, frame factory evaluated in this report.

The Queen Anne designs so popular for residential architecture as mass-produced spindlework, turned porch posts, brackets, and other sawnwork details could be cheaply acquired manifest itself in ornate cast iron store fronts and the occasional use of turrets on corner buildings. Classically inspired designs often added columns to buildings, especially banks, but those highly ornate buildings were not constructed in the boom town of Ronda and only a very small number of examples stand in North Wilkesboro. Most business owners used standard, common, late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century store designs, epitomized by the three commercial buildings on Ronda's Main Street.

Houses in Ronda reflect styles typical of the turn-of-the-twentieth century and early twentieth century. Elaborate Queen Anne designs came into vogue as more and more towns and rural areas gained access to inexpensive decorate trim and sawnwork. The county's most high-style Queen Anne houses are located in Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro, and feature asymmetrical facades, projecting gables and turrets, and rich layers of shingles, turned posts and balustrades, and sawnwork, but a few elaborate examples stand in Roaring River and Ronda.

Although Colonial Revival began eclipsing Queen Anne designs in the early 1900s, Ronda's housing stock does not reflect a preference for Colonial Revival. The near-ruinous former Methodist Church appears to have been an eclectic revival building built in the 1920s. It features deep eaves, deep gable returns, arched windows, and a round attic vent in the Mediterranean Revival style along with a Colonial Revival pedimented portico with Doric columns.

¹⁷ Carolina Precision Fibers website, accessed in July 2017 via <http://www.carolinafibers.com/index.php>.

¹⁸ Laura Phillips, "Downtown Main Street Historic District," National Register Nomination, 2002, section 7, page 2.

Home builders did not readily adopt Colonial Revival in the 1920s, but Craftsman style bungalows became the house-of-choice in Ronda in that decade. The Craftsman style gained national popularity in the early twentieth century and its designs were intended to highlight the building's structure by revealing or in some cases adding features such as exposed beams, knee braces, and raftertails. Craftsman houses in Ronda are like those seen across North Carolina: relatively simple houses with porch posts of battered posts on brick piers, multi-light-sash-over-one windows, knee braces, and windows arranged in pairs. The modest bungalow at 135 Summit Street is a side-gable house with an engaged, full-width porch and six-over-one-sash windows. Unlike so many houses in the county, it has not been covered with vinyl siding and it retains original windows.

A small number of mid-twentieth century Ranch houses stand in Ronda. These are modest examples of the style with picture windows and ribbon windows common to the simplified Ranches found throughout rural North Carolina. These houses and the continued investment in Ronda that they represent probably reflect the continued vitality of Home Chair Company, which was well-known for its mid-century chairs.

Comparable Examples

Eastern Wilkes County does not have many small towns that are larger than crossroads aside from Ronda, Roaring River, and Traphill, and North Wilkesboro and Roaring River are the only other railroad towns in the county. Traphill (listed as a National Register Historic District) is a notable small town in Wilkes County. It retains several houses from the late nineteenth century, but it is a mountain town with tightly curving roads draped along steep hills. Roaring River retains a small number of nineteenth-century houses and industrial and commercial buildings. Like Ronda, Roaring River has lost its depot and most of its historic or pre-World War II industrial and commercial buildings and warehouses, but, unlike Ronda, Roaring River's architectural history extends back at least into the mid-1800s.

North Wilkesboro, although considerably larger than Ronda, makes the best comparison to Ronda because both were both boom towns that originated with the railroad. The town retains a full complement of historic commercial buildings, warehouses, one historic depot, and a significant collection of historic houses and churches. The core of North Wilkesboro's downtown commercial district was listed in the National Register in 2002. That nomination describes the district as, "Comprising the densest collection of historic buildings in the town's commercial core, the Downtown Main Street Historic District is the strongest commercial reflection of the importance of the arrival of the railroad on Wilkes County."¹⁹

¹⁹ Laura Phillips, "Downtown Main Street Historic District," National Register Nomination, 2002, section 8, page 19.



Figure 147: Downtown North Wilkesboro



Figure 148: House in North Wilkesboro



Figure 149: House in North Wilkesboro



Figure 150: North Wilkesboro Depot

National Register Evaluation

Integrity

The Ronda Historic District retains its integrity of location. Because so many buildings have been altered, the district's integrity of workmanship, materials, and design is diminished. Vacant lots and the introduction of newer buildings throughout the town have had a negative effect on the town's integrity of setting and feeling. It retains its association as a railroad town because the rail line still exists, and because it has defined edges and a visual sense of place, but the town's activities are now focused along N.C. Highway 268 and away from the railroad and the town's historic heart. The town's lack of architectural cohesion and density detracts significantly from its integrity of feeling and setting, and while it retains association with the railroad, the absence of the depot and warehouses that once existed have diminished its integrity of association.

Criteria Evaluations

The Ronda Historic District is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A. The town's history is deeply rooted in the development of the local railroad. However, because the district has lost so much historic fabric, including its depot, track-side warehouses, and most commercial buildings, and because its remaining historic buildings are widely scattered, it cannot successfully communicate its historic development and association with commerce, industry, or transportation in Wilkes County.

The Ronda Historic District is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B because it is not associated with the lives of persons significant in our past. No such associations were identified.

The Ronda Historic District is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C. While the district does retain some nineteenth-century houses and three good examples of turn-of-the-twentieth century commercial buildings, vinyl siding, replacement windows, and altered porches are ubiquitous. Overall, the town's architectural integrity is insufficient for National Register eligibility. Furthermore, due to substantial historic fabric loss, including all rail-related buildings and numerous commercial buildings, vacant lots and non-historic infill are now abundant. Combined with the use of non-historic materials on extant historic-period buildings, these conditions result in a lack of visual and physical cohesion that cannot convey the town's historic development pattern. As such, it is not a good or intact example of a late-nineteenth century railroad town in western North Carolina.

The Ronda Historic District 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 to prehistory or history.

Evaluation: Home Chair Company (Ronda Cotton Mill)

Resource Name	Home Chair Company (Ronda Cotton Mill)
HPO Survey Site Number	WK 443
Street Address	144 Factory Street
PIN	4920-75-9366
Construction Dates	1920, 1940, ca. 1955, ca. 1960
NRHP Recommendation	Eligible, A and C



Description

The Home Chair Company Building has evolved through several stages of construction.

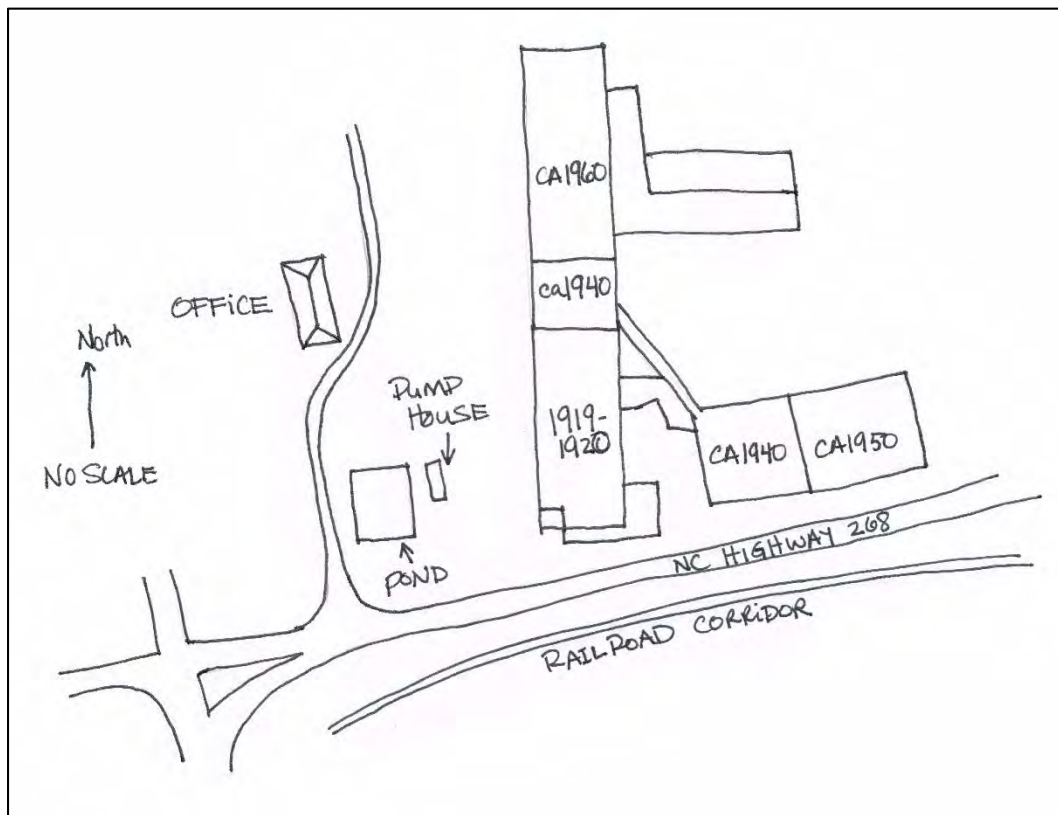


Figure 151: Home Chair Company, site plan

The front (south) section was built in 1919-1920 as a cotton mill (figures 152 and 153). It is a three-story frame building with a very low sloped gable-front roof and a corner tower that projects one story above the main building's height. The façade is nine bays wide with a loading dock sheltered by a metal shed roof with square wooden posts extending across the front (figure 155). Two wide garage doors with tall multi-light transoms open onto the loading dock. The original section's side elevations are ten bays deep and the building is built into the slope so that, toward the back of the original section, only two stories are above grade (figure 152). Almost all windows in the frame section have been replaced, and vinyl siding covers the original weatherboards (figure 154). On the east elevation, a small loading dock area features two original six-over-six-over-six triple-sash windows and a wooden double-leaf cargo door topped with a multi-light transom (figure 156).



Figure 152: Home Chair Company, original section, west elevation



Figure 153: Home Chair Company, southwest corner



Figure 154: Home Chair Company, replacement window detail



Figure 155: Home Chair Company, loading dock, south elevation



Figure 156: Home Chair Company, southeast corner with original windows and doors



Figure 157: Home Chair Company, original section, east elevation

To the north, behind the original section, a brick addition features large metal casement windows and matches the height of the original building (figures 158 and 159). This addition probably dates to the Home Chair Company expansion in 1940-1941.



Figure 158: Home Chair Company, 1940s junction between original section and the ca. 1960 addition, west elevation



Figure 159: Home Chair Company, 1940 addition to the original building, east elevation

The 1940 addition was expanded on the north with a brick structure that appears to date from around 1960 (figure 160). This addition is one-story in height with a flat roof.



Figure 160: Home Chair Company, ca. 1960 section, west elevation behind trucks

To the east is a three-story building covered in metal siding (figure 161). This building retains original metal casement windows and was probably built around 1940. A kneewall was added to extend the building's walls to allow for a sloped roof.



Figure 161: Home Chair Company, ca. 1940 building, southwest corner

A brick addition, also three-stories and possibly dating from ca. 1950, is attached to this building's east elevation (figures 162 and 163). The brick addition retains metal windows with center sections that tilt open.



Figure 162: Home Chair Company, 1940s section with ca. 1950 addition, south elevation



Figure 163: Home Chair Company, ca. 1950 addition, southeast corner

A hyphen building and an enclosed conveyor belt connect the original west building (the original building plus the 1940s and ca. 1960 additions) to the east building (the 1940s building plus the ca. 1950 addition) (figure 164). The hyphen and enclosed conveyor belt are both clad in corrugated metal sheeting.



Figure 164: Home Chair Company, original section to the left; ca. 1940 building to right

At the back of the complex, a group of smaller buildings and storage tanks are connected to the west building's north end (figure 165).



Figure 165: Home Chair Company, additions joining 1940 expansion of the original building

To the west of the original building is a small retaining pond and a small brick pump house (figure 166). These buildings are believed to date from the original 1920 construction. Also to the west is a one-story, hip-roof office building with modest Colonial Revival detailing including an eyebrow attic vent (figure 167). The office probably dates from the 1940s.



Figure 166: Home Chair Company, pump house



Figure 167: Home Chair Company, ca. 1940 office building

History

The Ronda Cotton Mill was never a successful venture. It was organized in 1919 and opened in the spring of 1920, but it only operated until 1928 and was shuttered for extended periods during those eight years. Histories of Ronda do not record any other businesses using the building during the 1930s, and it is believed that the building stood idle and vacant from 1928 until the Home Chair Company bought it in 1940.²⁰

Home Chair Company was a furniture maker that started in North Wilkesboro in the 1910s. In 1940, when the Yadkin River flooded, the company's building was inundated and then caught fire. Rather than rebuild, Home Chair found a new home in the long-vacant Ronda Cotton Mill.

In 1941, having remodeled and expanded the cotton factory and added an office building to the complex, Home Chair Company began operations and turned out chairs until 1981.²¹ Their mid-century Danish Modern designs are particularly striking.

Since the 1980s, a number of manufacturers have used the buildings. Precision Fibers is the current occupant, and they use the front, original section for storage.

²⁰ *Western Sentinel* (Winston-Salem), February 20, 1920, page 5, and Byrd, 183.

²¹ *Record and Landmark* (Statesville), January 9, 1941, page 4.

Architectural Context

Frame industrial buildings dating from the late 1800s and early 1900s are unusual. The state's earliest textile mills, including Edwin Holt's Alamance Cotton Factory, completed in 1837, were frame structures, but none are known to survive.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the antebellum textile industry Holt and others started in North Carolina was blossoming, and new cotton mills were being built all across North Carolina. Unlike the antebellum factories that were frequently housed in wooden buildings, these were, almost exclusively, brick structures. New England antecedents and scientific studies of the best practices for building fire proof or fire retardant buildings led to massive brick buildings that could support heavy machinery, allow for natural light, and limit damage from fires. Multi-layered flooring systems and heavy timber structural members constituted "slow burn" construction that could maintain structural integrity rather than collapsing during a fire, as iron would. Towers housed stairwells so that stairs could be closed off to limit the spread of fire, and they often concealed water tanks that supplied sprinkler systems. Firewall with heavy, automatically-closing fire proof doors divided the particularly fire-prone sections of the building.²²

Because cotton was highly combustible, wood frame construction was a poor choice for textile mills, and was rarely used for large factory construction after the Civil War. Why the Ronda Cotton Mill investors chose frame for their cotton mill, now known as Home Chair Company, is unknown. Wilkes County produced significant quantities of timber during the early 1900s and some of the mill's investors also had timber and lumbering interests, so perhaps the mill's construction would have buoyed their other investments, but the use of frame for a cotton mill was extremely risky.

The Home Chair Company building, originally built as a cotton mill, is not part of the textile mill pattern. Instead, it follows the tradition of grist mills and roller mills. These frame mills were often two or three stories in height, but they were consistently considerably smaller buildings than the Home Chair Company.

Comparable Examples

Industrial buildings once abounded in Ronda, but no other historic industrial buildings are still standing. North Wilkesboro retains more industrial buildings. However, none are frame, and surviving frame factory buildings are rare in North Carolina. Catherine Bishir suggests that the Home Chair Company is the largest frame factory building in the state.²³ Aside from earlier grist mills, no comparable frame industrial buildings were found in Wilkes County.

The best comparisons are frame roller mills found in small towns around the state. Regionally, good examples are the Helton Roller Mill (AH 59) in Ashe County and the Lewisville Roller Mill (FY 1446) in Forsyth County.

²² Catherine w. Bishir, *North Carolina Architecture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, portable edition, 2005), 431.

²³ Catherine W. Bishir, Michael Southern, and Jennifer Martin, *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 133.

Helton Roller Mill was determined ineligible for the National Register in 2017 but is a contributing resource in the Helton Rural Historic District (AH 323) which was determined eligible in 2017.



Figure 168: Helton Roller Mill, AH 59, 123 John Griffith Rd., Lansing vicinity, Google Streetview photo, June 2009

In Lewisville in western Forsyth County, the Lewisville Roller Mill is a larger, two-story, side-gabled building constructed in 1910 and included on the state's Study List. It retains nine-over-nine-sash windows and weatherboard siding.



Figure 169: Lewisville Roller Mill, FY 1446, 6275 Shallowford Rd., Lewisville, photo by Keith Hall Photography, accessed via <https://www.flickr.com/photos/bassplayerkeithhall/8601107093>

Edwin Holt's Alamance Cotton Mill and Julian Carr's Peerless Flour Mill in Durham are both good examples of frame factories, but neither building is extant.



Figure 170: Alamance Cotton Factory, original building, no longer extant, photograph from the Alamance County Historical Museum, accessed via <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-antebellum/5349>



Figure 171: Peerless Flour Mill, no longer extant, photograph from Open Durham, accessed via <http://www.opendurham.org/buildings/austin-heaton-flour-mill>

National Register Evaluation

Integrity

The Home Chair Company retains integrity of location, feeling, setting, and association as an imposing landmark building in a small, railroad town. Because vinyl siding and replacement windows have been added to the original section, the building has lost elements of its integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. However, examples of the original windows remain, weatherboards can be seen in

places, suggesting they are intact under the siding, and the mid-twentieth century additions are relatively unaltered. In spite of vinyl siding and replacement windows, the building still retains its integrity of design as the siding mimics the original weatherboards and the window openings were not altered in size or placement when the new windows were installed.

Criteria Evaluations

The Home Chair Company is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with industry in Ronda. Although the original cotton mill foundered, Home Chair Company operated successfully for decades serving as a local economic engine for the town. The factory maintained ties to the town's industrial and commercial roots throughout the mid-twentieth century even as the town otherwise began to decline. Ronda was once a regional industrial center, and Home Chair Company is the last significant building representing the town's formerly robust industry.

The Home Chair Company is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B because it is not associated with the lives of persons significant in our past. No such associations were identified.

The Home Chair Company is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C. Although vinyl siding has obscured the original wooden siding, the building is an impressive and rare example of a frame industrial building of significant size, and it is likely the largest such building in the state. Its construction, in wood rather than brick, reflects the local economy's reliance on lumber, timbering, and sawmilling, and probably speaks to the other economic interests of the founding parties who were also involved in the local lumber industry. Examples of original windows remain, and the original fenestration is still in place. The building has been altered, but its significance as an extant frame, large-scale industrial building outweighs the relative damage to the building's integrity from those changes. The form and mass of the original frame sections is discernible and essentially intact. In spite of alterations, it also continues to dominate Ronda's landscape and architecture.

The Roaring River Railroad Bridge 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 to prehistory or history.

Boundary Description and Justification

The Home Chair Company boundary encompasses most of the property parcel (4920-75-9366) on which the factory stands. It includes the office, but excludes additional non-contributing land to the north and northwest.



Figure 172: Home Chair Company, proposed National Register Boundary

Evaluation: Poplin Family Farm

Resource Name	Poplin Family Farm
HPO Survey Site Number	WK 444
Street Address	1272 North Hoots Road
PIN	4920-69-1486 and 4921-70-7904
Construction Dates	Ca. 1945
NRHP Recommendation	Eligible, A and C



Description

The Poplin Family Farm covers about two hundred acres. The house is situated on a rise with views to the north over rolling terrain.

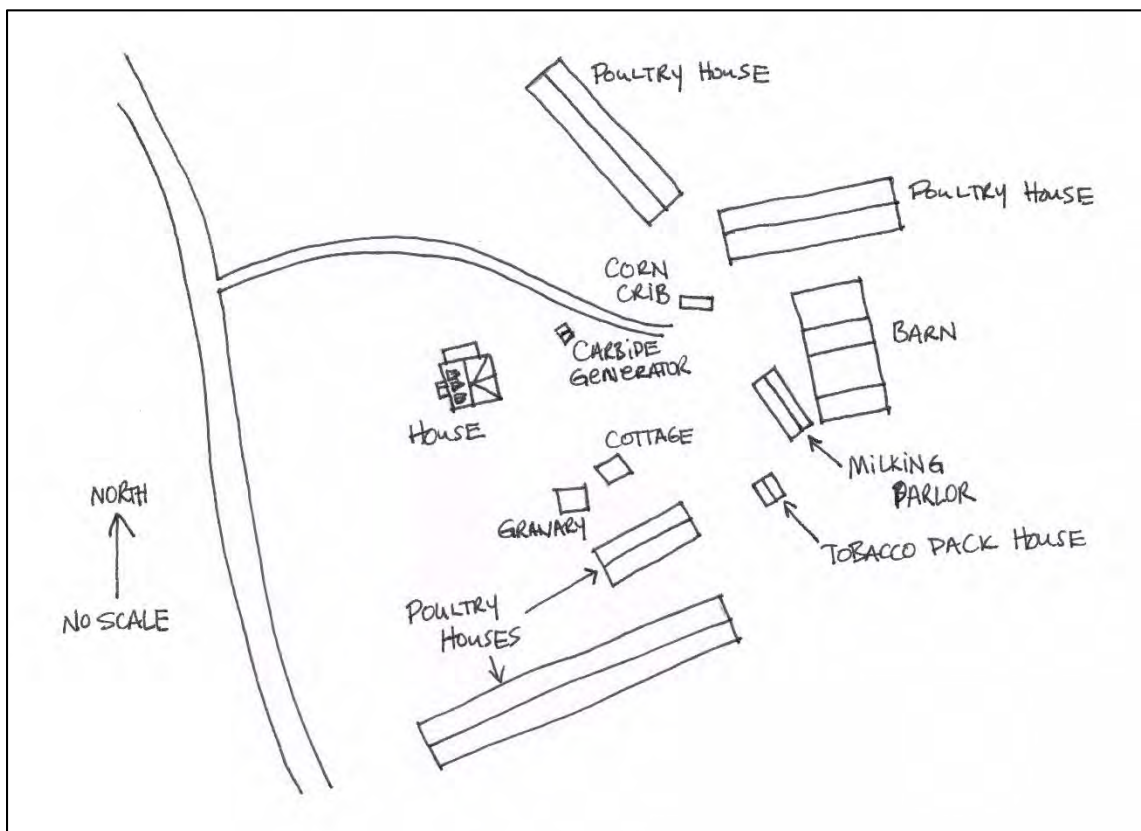


Figure 173: Poplin Family Farm, site plan

The house is set back from Hoots Road among a grove of mature deciduous trees and magnolias which results in a rural pastoral setting (figures 174 and 175).



Figure 174: Poplin Family Farm front yard with mature trees



Figure 175: Poplin Family Farm, main house from N. Hoots Rd.

The farm's buildings are clustered behind the main house, which is a one-story, side-gable cottage with a three-bay façade with both Craftsman and Colonial Revival stylistic elements (figure 176). The single-leaf front door features three horizontal panels below a three-light glazed panel. A small, attached

gable-front portico with square posts and exposed raftertails shelters the front door. Pairs of six-over-six sash windows flank the front door. Three gable-front dormers, each with six-over-six sash windows, punctuate the front roof slope.



Figure 176: Poplin Family Farm, main house, west elevation

The south elevation is three bays wide with three pairs of windows and paired attic windows. All windows have original six-over-six sash (figures 177 and 178).



Figure 177: Poplin Family Farm, main house, southwest corner



Figure 178: Poplin Family Farm, main house, southeast corner

On the east elevation, the rear roof slope breaks to extend over a screened porch that is partially enclosed. A large gabled dormer occupies the rear roof slope (figure 179).



Figure 179: Poplin Family Farm, main house, east elevation

The north elevation contains paired and single six-over-six sash windows, an asymmetrical brick chimney, and a flat-roof side porch with square posts. An attic-level door opens onto the porch roof (figure 180).



Figure 180: Poplin Family Farm, main house, north elevation

Original wooden drop siding covers the exterior. Green asphalt shingles cover the roof, and the house stands on a continuous brick foundation.

A full complement of outbuildings is located behind the house. Closest to the house is a carbide generator house (figure 181). This small, frame, gabled building was constructed to house a carbide generator that provided the farm with acetylene gas for gas light fixtures. This building was constructed for use with a previous house on the site and probably dates to the turn of the twentieth century. The generator equipment was set into the ground and stored items now fill the shed so that the floor, and therefore any remaining equipment, could not be documented. The owner could not confirm if any generator parts remained.



Figure 181: Poplin Family Farm, carbide generator house

To the house's southeast are two frame shed-roof buildings. The granary features drop siding, a batten door, and a hatch door just below the eave (figure 182). The other shed is vertically sided with wood, has a four-panel door, and a small four-over-four window (figure 183). This was used as a cottage for the sibling of one of the owners. Both date to the 1940s.



Figure 182: Poplin Family Farm, granary



Figure 183: Poplin Family Farm, cottage shed

Farther south are two poultry houses (figures 184 and 185). These are long, gable-roof pavilions where chickens were housed. The house closer to the yard is a small structure built around 1948, but the southernmost house is the farm's longest extant chicken house and dates from the 1950s. A longer house was blown down in a windstorm in the 1960s.



Figure 184: Poplin Family Farm, south chicken houses; 1948 house is closer, 1960s house in distance



Figure 185: Poplin Family Farm, southernmost chicken house

Directly to the east of the house and beyond the generator building and shed-roof cottage are a concrete block milking parlor (figure 186) and a large barn (figure 187). The milking parlor was built in 1948 as a Grade A parlor, and has metal casement windows and wooden batten doors.



Figure 186: Poplin Family Farm, milking parlor

The barn is a substantial gable-front structure with an open central driveway. Shed wings are attached to both sides. The barn pre-dates the house, and was likely built around 1900 when the family’s earlier dwelling was still standing.



Figure 187: Poplin Family Farm, barn

To the milking parlor's southwest is a gable-front tobacco pack house built in the 1940s (figure 188). The gable-front, frame building stands two short stories over a basement. Drop siding covers the building and a batten door is centered on the gable end. Above this door is a smaller hatch door. Metal roofing covers the building. Cured tobacco was stored or packed in the upper level. It was sorted or graded on the main level, and then "ordered" in the basement. Ordering or bringing tobacco to order means allowing leaves to reabsorb moisture to become more pliable before being shipped to market.



Figure 188: Poplin Family Farm, tobacco pack house

A frame corn crib with slatted walls and a shed roof is located between the generator building and the barn (figure 189).



Figure 189: Poplin Family Farm, corn crib

To the north are two more long, gable-roof poultry houses built in the 1950s (figure 190).



Figure 190: Poplin Family Farm, north chicken house



Figure 191: Poplin Family Farm, view to the north from the main house

History

The Poplin Family Farm originated with James “Jim” Poplin, who was a prosperous farmer also involved in lumber and sawmilling businesses in Ronda. James’ father, George, was also a prominent businessman in Ronda, and it is unclear if Jim or George built the original Poplin family house on this site in the late 1800s or early 1900s, but Jim is credited with establishing a prospering farm here.²⁴

By the late 1920s, Jim owned a 600-acre farm, including the older house. During the Great Depression, Jim lost the farm, and a wealthier neighbor won it at auction. In 1938, Jim’s son and daughter-in-law, Don and Jessie Poplin, bought four hundred acres of farmland and the house back from C.E. Tharpe. Around this time, the earlier house burned down.²⁵

During World War II, Jim and Don began building a new house on the site of the older homeplace. Because Jim was a sawmill operator and lumber broker, he and another carpenter simply set up a rented planer and sawmill and used the farm’s timber to build the house. With the exception of some millwork, the house was built entirely onsite. The design combined elements of both the Craftsman and Colonial Revival styles and was inspired by a similar house Jim admired in Ronda.²⁶

The house was finished by 1945, and three generations of Poplins lived together: Jim, Don and Jessie, and Don and Jessie’s children. The house did not have electricity or plumbing when it was completed. The Poplins built a waterwheel on a spring downhill from the house and rigged it to pump water uphill to the house. The waterwheel and pump are not extant. Later, the family used a well that was sheltered by the back porch.

After World War II, the Poplins began diversifying their farm. In 1948, the family purchased dairy cows from Wisconsin and built a Grade A dairy, but within five years, the cows had become sick and had to be sold. The family did not attempt dairying again, and the milking parlor became a tool shed and workshop.²⁷

That same year, 1948, the family also joined the county’s growing ranks of chicken farmers and built their first large poultry house, which remains on the site.

Poultry production in Wilkes County started emerging as a major economic industry during the late 1910s when a World War I veteran named T.O. Minton introduced incubators for raising chicks on a commercial scale. This set the scene for a future poultry boom that would leave an indelible mark on the county’s economy and landscape. Chicken farming and the manufacture of coops had long been part of the county’s economy, but prior to the use of incubators, chicks were hatched only once each year.

²⁴ Douglas Poplin, owner, interview with the author, June 26, 2017.

²⁵ Poplin interview, and C.E. Tharpe to Donald C and Mrs. J.A. Poplin, Wilkes County Deed Book 190, page 92, October 28, 1938.

²⁶ Poplin interview.

²⁷ Poplin interview.

Incubators, however, made year-round hatching possible and sparked an agricultural and industrial boom in chick production, feed milling, and coop manufacturing.²⁸

In the 1930s, the county's economy took another step toward large-scale poultry farming when two companies, Wilkes Hatchery and Champion Poultry Farm, started selling chicks through mail-order catalogues.²⁹ Other companies followed, including Blue Ridge Hatchers, founded in 1940, and Tuxedo Hatchery, organized in 1941. During that decade, Tuxedo became one of the biggest chick operations in North Carolina. Meanwhile, Champion was expanded to become the largest poultry farm in the South by 1943, producing 16,000 eggs per day.³⁰

Growing corn and milling feed for chickens emerged as significant components of the county's mid-twentieth century economy. Additionally, because chicken guano makes an excellent fertilizer, farmers often diversified with other crops and livestock. In discussing the relationship between poultry farming and other livestock, Doug Poplin observed that "chickens and cows go hand in hand," because a chicken farmer can keep his pastures and fields well fertilized.³¹

The next change in the poultry industry came during World War II when the U.S. government began buying large quantities of chickens and eggs to feed troops. This further fueled poultry production in Wilkes County. In 1944, Fred and Margaret Lovette founded Lovette Poultry Company, which rapidly became a major producer of chickens, while Tuxedo Hatchery was producing over 40,000 hens per year and over 25,000 eggs per day during the 1950s.³²

Following World War II, demand for chickens continued, and Fred Lovette joined other Wilkes County producers in a merger that created Holly Farms. This was the era during which the Poplins and so many other Wilkes County families began raising chickens. Jim's son, Don, eventually took over the poultry farming, adding four more houses in the 1950s and early 1960s. During the 1950s, the family's operation was considered relatively large.³³

In 1964, Holly Farms started using a processing system called "chill pack" that allowed the company to control chicken production from the chicken to the finished product, packaged and ready for sale in grocery stores. In 1989, Holly Farms merged with Tyson, which remains a major employer in the county.³⁴

As the scale of poultry farming changed, farmers were forced to contract with corporations, such as Holly Farms or, later, Tyson. In a typical arrangement, which continues today, the farmer provides the facilities and manpower while the company retains ownership of the chickens. For the most part, farmers who failed to enter into such an arrangement were forced out of the poultry business, including

²⁸ J. J. Hayes, 331-333.

²⁹ Pena and Hayes, 101.

³⁰ J. J. Hayes, 332-333.

³¹ Poplin interview.

³² Pena and Hayes, 101, and "Charles Fred Lovette," Wilkes County Hall of Fame website, accessed in July 2017 via <http://www.wilkescountyhalloffame.org/hall-of-fame/2015-hall-of-fame-inductees/charles-lovette-2015-inductee>.

³³ Poplin interview.

³⁴ Pena and Hayes, 102-103.

the Poplins who gave up chicken farming around 2000. Additionally, over time, large poultry companies demanded more uniform standards for production. Both of these forces left older, smaller chicken houses deteriorating in fields or being over taken by woods, while ever-larger, industrial-scale chicken houses spread across farms.³⁵

The Poplins also started growing tobacco, although it is unclear exactly when they began. They gave up tobacco cultivation around 2000 as the crop came under tighter government control. Today, Doug Poplin, Don's son and Jim's grandson, raises beef cattle on the farm.³⁶

Architectural Context

The Poplin Family Farm is a mid-twentieth century farm complex with earlier outbuildings from the family's older house, which burned down in the 1930s. The arrangement of the house and outbuildings is typical of farms across North Carolina: numerous, detached, single-purpose outbuildings arranged behind the main house.

The main house itself, built during World War II, is a very personal expression of taste as it was based on a home Jim Poplin had admired in Ronda. The design is a hybrid of a Cape Cod house, an extremely popular style and form during the 1940s and 1950s, and a Craftsman bungalow, whose popularity had peaked in the 1920s. Cape Cod houses, and a regionally-specific subset identified as the Williamsburg Cottage, were based on academic studies of Colonial-era houses in New England and Williamsburg, and they gained popularity on a wave of patriotism during and after World War II. Cape Cods were diminutive side-gable dwellings with steeply pitched roofs and central chimneys, while Williamsburg Cottages added dormers and, occasionally, side porches. Like Craftsman bungalows that were built in towns and counties across the country, the Cape Cod or Williamsburg Cottage became a ubiquitous form to which stylistic elements could be applied, or not, as the owner and builder saw fit or could afford. The Poplin House is an expression of a combination of those styles executed in a very personal manner by the family's patriarch.

Comparable Examples

Numerous bungalows and farm houses from the 1920s through the 1940s were seen across Wilkes County. This was an era of tremendous expansion of poultry farming, and many of these houses also retain one or more chicken houses. However, the Poplin Family Farm stands out as an intact example of a poultry farm with a full complement of outbuildings.

The unsurveyed farm at 250 Brandon Road is a good comparison (figures 192 and 193). The house appears to date from the 1940s and the site includes multiple outbuildings. However, the outbuildings are in ruinous condition, and the buildings suggest that the farm was primarily a dairy or cattle farm; no poultry houses were seen.

³⁵ Poplin interview.

³⁶ Poplin interview.



Figure 192: farm at 250 Brandon Road, ca. 1940



Figure 193: farm at 250 Brandon Rd., ca. 1940

Another unsurveyed farm (figure 194) on Roaring Gap Church Road, near Grassy Fork Road, makes a good comparison because the house is a side-gable bungalow, and the farm retains some outbuildings

and small barns. No poultry houses were seen, however, and the outbuildings did not suggest what type of crops or animals the family raised, only that small-scale family farming was occurring.



Figure 194: early twentieth century farm house with one or two outbuildings, Roaring Gap Church Rd., near Grassy Fork Rd.

A larger side-gable bungalow (figure 195), also on Roaring Gap Church Road, makes a better comparison because the houses are more similar in size and, in addition to retaining a typical collection of small outbuildings and barns, the farm also includes at least three deteriorating poultry houses. The Poplin chicken houses, however, are in far better condition than the ones at this example.



Figure 195: farm with barns and outbuildings, Roaring Gap Church Rd., south of Traphill Rd.

The bungalow at the corner of Sparta Road and Yellow Banks Road is a larger house, clad in vinyl siding, but with original six-over-six sash windows (figure 196). A large dairy barn and milking parlor stand nearby, indicating that this was a dairy farm. No poultry houses were seen.



Figure 196: Bungalow with large dairy barn, Sparta Rd. at its intersection with Yellow Banks Rd.

The bungalow (figure 197) and farm on Traphill Road near Grissel Trail Road makes a good comparison because it also features chicken houses in close proximity to the main dwelling. Like most older chicken farms in the county, the poultry houses are in disrepair.



Figure 197: farm with bungalow and chicken houses, Traphill Rd. near Grissel Tail Rd.

National Register Evaluation

Integrity

The Poplin Family Farm retains integrity of location, setting, and feeling with its intact farmland and pastures, broad yard with mature trees, and tightly arranged collection of outbuildings. Because the house and outbuildings have undergone almost no changes, they retain full integrity of workmanship, materials, and design. The entire complex retains its association with early and mid-twentieth-century farming in Wilkes County.

Criteria Evaluations

The Poplin Family Farm is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with agriculture and early poultry farming in Wilkes County. Poultry farming became a tremendous factor in Wilkes County's economy after World War II, and the Poplin Family Farm clearly relates that association with four intact chicken houses dating from the post-war period. The farm also retains other outbuildings reflecting the farm's diversification.

The Poplin Family Farm is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B because it is not associated with the lives of persons significant in our past. The Poplins were prosperous farmers and businessmen in Ronda, but their contributions do not rise to the level of significance required by the National Register.

The Poplin Family Farm is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C. The farm is an outstanding, unaltered, and complete farmstead with a house and outbuildings dating from the 1940s through the early 1960s.

The proposed period of significance starts in 1900, the construction date of the barn, and extends to 1965, the approximate date of construction for the most recent poultry house.

The Poplin Family Farm 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 to prehistory or history.

Boundary Description and Justification

The Poplin Family Farm boundary encompasses the entire 200-acre Poplin Farm as it exists today, following the boundary of Wilkes County parcel 4921-70-7904 and 4920-69-1486. It includes the buildings, fields, pastures, and woods associated with the family farm since the late 1800s.

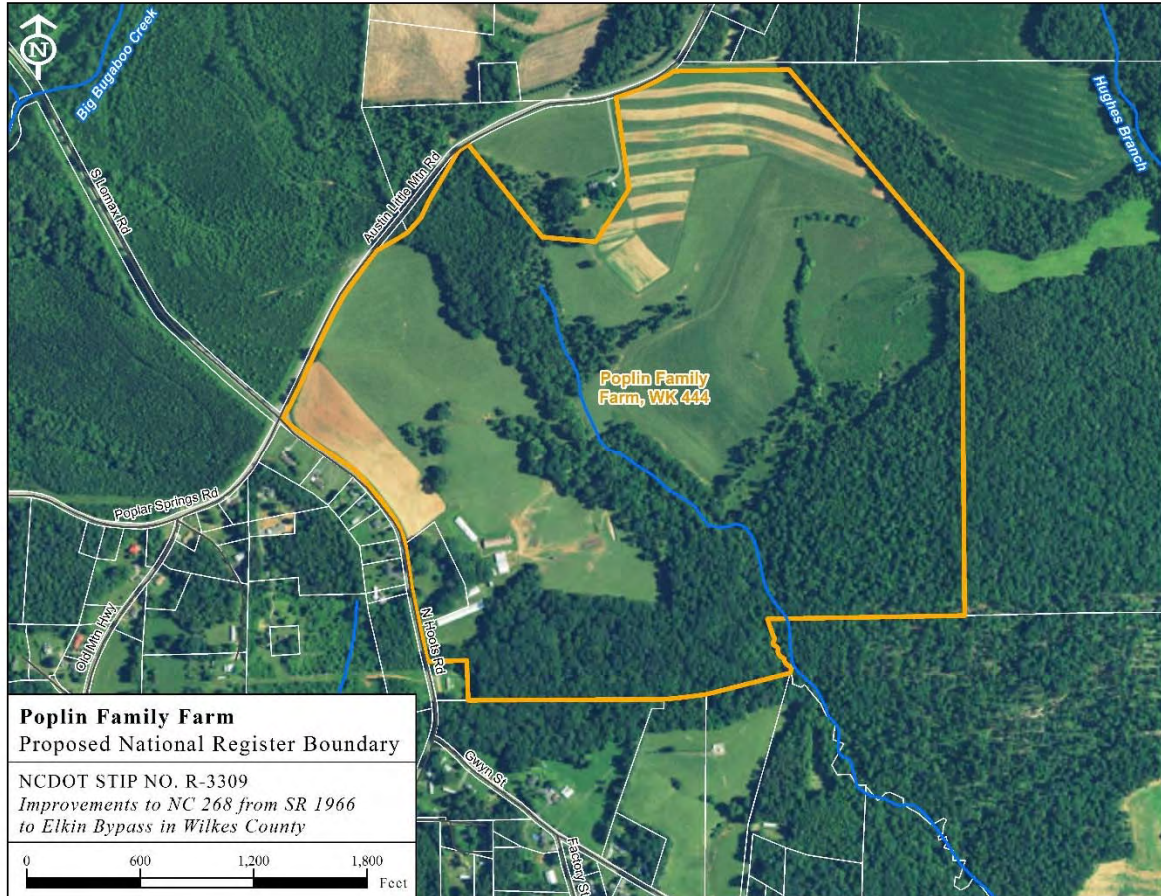


Figure 198: Poplin Family Farm, proposed National Register Boundary

Evaluation: WIFM Radio Station

Resource Name	WIFM Radio Station
HPO Survey Site Number	WK 445
Street Address	1147 Elk Spur Road
PIN	4941-65-8307
Construction Dates	1948
NRHP Recommendation	Eligible, A



Description

The WIFM building was built in 1948 and stands on the far western edge of Elkin among a group of early suburban commercial buildings that appear to date from the 1920s through the 1950s (figures 197, 198, and 199).

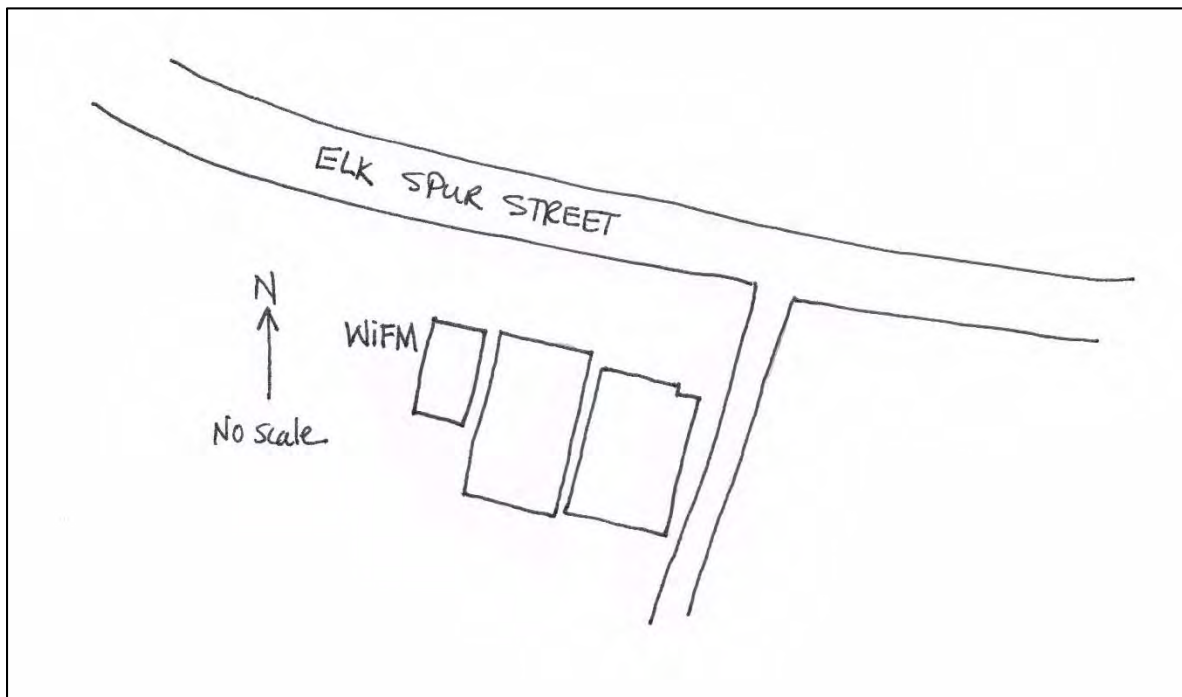


Figure 199: WIFM Radio Station, site plan

The station's building is a rectangular, brick commercial building with a parapet wall and flat or gently sloping roof. It is a traditional "downtown" commercial building, but its location, in a developing fringe of a larger town, clearly reflects the post-war age in which it was built.

The façade is three bays wide with a single-leaf front door flanked by metal casement windows composed of a single central pane surrounded on the sides and top by a frame of square panes. The front door is a modern replacement. Brick soldier courses highlight the tops of the door and windows. Above the door and windows soldier courses trimmed with concrete squares creates a long rectangular sign plane in which the letters WIFM are spelled in blonde-colored brick.

The building's side elevations are concrete block with casement windows that match those on the front.

A modern radio tower stands behind the building.



Figure 200: WIFM Radio Station, north elevation



Figure 201: WIFM Radio Station, in context with neighboring buildings

History

Radio came to North Carolina in the early 1920s with WBT in Charlotte being the first successful station. In the 1930s, stations increased their wattages and broadcast ranges significantly. Stations began expanding from news and talk to entertainment, sporting events, musical programming, and political campaigning. In North Carolina, in particular, radio stations became important performance venues for blue grass, country, and gospel musicians.³⁷

Stations were proliferating, but almost all stations broadcast using AM (amplitude modulation) signals. In 1948, Al Hinshaw and his brother organized the WIMF radio station as one of the first FM (frequency modulation) stations in the region. Al's brother was a radio repairman, and the Hinshaws believed FM was the way of the future. However, at the time, almost no one had an FM radio at home when Al Hinshaw signed on for the first time in 1949.³⁸

The station's listeners were few in number, so the brothers added an AM station. The station continues broadcasting today, and its format has not changed significantly: music, news, weather, and local sports. Barry Hall, a NASCAR Hall of Fame broadcaster, got his start at this station, and the station remains a vital part of the Yadkin Valley community.³⁹

³⁷ Phillip McFee and Wiley J. Williams, "Radio Broadcasting," in William S. Powell, ed., *Encyclopedia of North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 932.

³⁸ Joel Hooper, WIFM broadcaster, interview with the author, June 12, 2017.

³⁹ Hooper interview.

Architectural Context

The WIFM building is, essentially, a small commercial building. It was constructed shortly after World War II in a suburban setting, but its design is based on traditional, nineteenth-century downtown commercial buildings.

Based on extant radio stations recorded by the State Historic Preservation Office, WIFM's adherence to an older form was common. Almost all examples are one- or two-story, brick commercial buildings that were constructed on the edge of the parcel lot line with no set back. Like their commercial counterparts built at the mid-twentieth century, they usually displayed very little architectural embellishment. Those with modest stylistic references usually drew from Art Moderne or the International Style. The WPTF transmitter building in Wake County is a notable exception in that it is set far back off any street and is not located in a more urban setting; however, this was WPTF's transmitter site, not its studio, which was located elsewhere.

Comparable Examples

Architecturally, the WIFM building and its setting are similar to the unsurveyed buildings found in a small suburban area of Wilkesboro (figure 202). This group of four buildings are, like the buildings adjacent to WIFM, early suburban buildings which reflect the beginnings of the move of local commerce away from downtowns, but without responding to the new car-oriented environment of the suburbs because the buildings are basically replications of downtown commercial buildings.



Figure 202: Brick commercial buildings in suburban fringe on Old Highway 421 outside Wilkesboro

In downtown Wilkesboro, the town's former town hall and fire station (figure 203, not surveyed) was probably built in the 1940s and exhibits more Art Deco or Moderne stylistic references than WIFM, but the building's scale is similar to WIFM's.



Figure 203: former Wilkesboro Town Hall and Fire Department, corner of Bridge and North Streets, Wilkesboro

In downtown Elkin, a group of brick commercial buildings (figure 204) (SR 823) in the 100 block of East Main Street, are very similar to WIMF's building with contrasting brick used to create decorative lines in the parapets of the buildings. Built in the 1930s, these are contributing buildings in the Downtown Elkin National Register Historic District.



Figure 204: 100 block of East Main Street,, SR 823, Elkin

In terms of use, the building compares to other radio stations in the state as a less elaborate building than WPTF but far more intact building than the WSSB station in Durham.

WPTF was organized as one of the earlier AM radio stations in the state in 1927, taking its call letters from We Protect The Family, because Durham Life Insurance Company owned the station. The existing transmitter building (figure 205) (WA 2257) dates from 1934 and underwent significant remodeling in the 1940s. It remains in operation as a transmitter site, although the use of the actual building is uncertain; it is located on Chatham Street between Raleigh and Cary in Wake County.



Figure 205: WPTF Transmitter Building, WA 2257, 833 East Chatham Street, Cary, photograph from [roadsidearchitecture.com](http://www.roadsidearchitecture.com), accessed <http://www.roadarch.com/deco/nc.html>

The WSSB radio station building (figure 206) (DH 3413) was constructed in 1948, the same year as WIMF. This station, too, was owned by the Durham Life Insurance Company. The building is two stories in height and has been heavily renovated. Its original appearance is not known.



Figure 206: WSSB Radio Station, DH 3413, 211 Rigsbee Street, Durham

In Whiteville, in Columbus County, the WENC Radio Station is a one-story, brick building, similar in scale to WIFM (figure 207). WENC has been broadcasting from this building since 1974, which is presumably when the building was constructed. It was determined ineligible for the National Register in 2014.

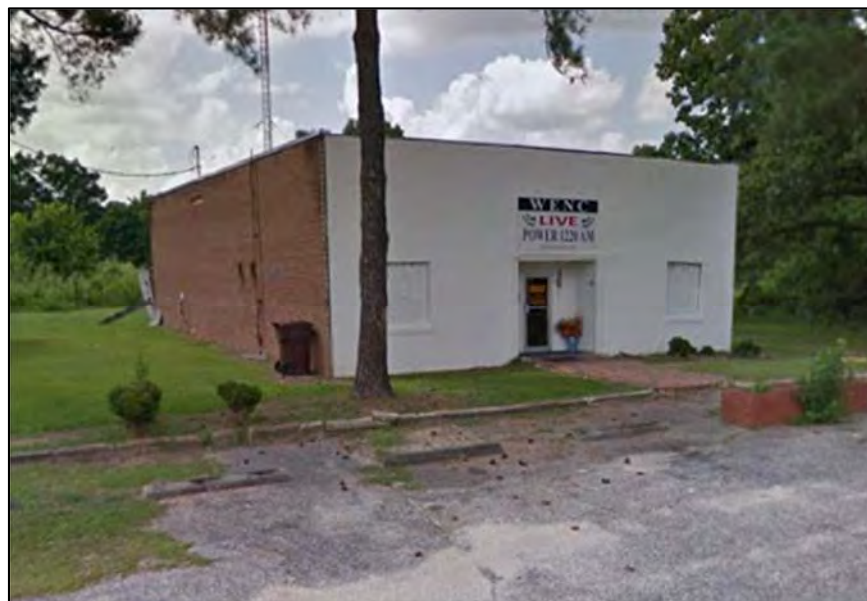


Figure 207: WENC Radio Station, (CB 327), 108 Radio Station Rd., Whiteville

National Register Evaluation

Integrity

The WIFM Radio Station retains integrity of location, workmanship, materials, design, feeling, setting, and association because it has not been moved or significantly altered, and while a new bypass road was constructed just to the north, the road configuration of a burgeoning Elkin suburb remains.

Criteria Evaluations

The WIFM Radio Station is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of communications and with the social history of the Elkin community. The radio station was one of the first, and possibly the first, FM station in the Yadkin Valley region. The Hinshaw brothers were correct in speculating that FM would overtake AM and they created a station that has been on the air for nearly seventy years. The quick broadcast and dissemination of news, political campaign messages, sports, and local musical acts were important and revolutionary developments in mid-twentieth-century civic and cultural life, and WIFM was part of the impact of improved communications in the Yadkin Valley region during the mid-twentieth-century.

The WIFM Radio Station is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B because it is not associated with the lives of persons significant in our past. No such associations were identified.

The WIFM Radio Station is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C. It is a typical and very common building type and design.

The WIFM Radio Station 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 to prehistory or history.

Boundary Description and Justification

The WIFM Radio Station boundary follows the parcel lot line associated with the building. The Wilkes County parcel number is 4941-65-8307. It does not include the radio tower behind the building because it is a modern replacement tower not associated with the building's historic period.



Figure 208: WIFM Radio Station, proposed National Register Boundary

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