

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

March 19, 2018

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, Widening of NC 107 from NC 281 to
Shoal Creek, R-5841A, PA 17-07-0005, Jackson County, ER 18-0433

Thank you for your February 28, 2018, memorandum transmitting the above-referenced report. We have reviewed the report and concur that the following property is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places for the reasons outlined in the report.

- Tuckaseegee Wesleyan Church (JK0045)

The report states that the East Fork Hydroelectric Project (JK0728) “was previously determined eligible and falls within the APE. Due to its previous eligibility determination, this resource was not assessed during this project. In addition, no photographs were taken of the project as it was inaccessible and not visible from the road.” According to our survey report guidelines previously determined-eligible and National Register-listed resources should be updated/reevaluated to determine if they retain the character-defining features for which they were determined eligible and/or NR-listed. Given that neither an update or discussion of this property is included in the report, we consider the report incomplete.

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

Received: 03/02/2018
State Historic Preservation Office



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

ROY COOPER
GOVERNOR

JAMES H. TROGDON, III
SECRETARY

ER 18-0433

February 28, 2018

Due -- 3/26/18

MEMORANDUM

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

H- 2 Plotters
3/5/18
Annie
McD
RUE

FROM: Kate Husband
Architectural Historian
NCDOT Division of Highways

SUBJECT: PA No. 17-07-0005, R-5841A, Widen NC 107 from NC 281 to Shoal Creek, Jackson County

Enclosed please find the Historic Structures Survey Report, survey site database, and additional materials for the above referenced project for your review and comment per 36CFR.800. 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.

Mailing Address:
NC DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
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1020 BIRCH RIDGE RD
RALIEGH NC 27610



February 2018

HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE ELIGIBILITY EVALUATION REPORT

TIP# R-5841A: NC107 IMPROVEMENTS FROM NC 281 (CANADA ROAD) TO NORTH OF TUCKASEGEE LAKE, JACKSON COUNTY

WBS# 47084.1.1

Prepared for:

North Carolina Department of Transportation

Prepared by:

JMT
1130 Situs Court
Suite 200
Raleigh, North Carolina 27606

Sara B. McLaughlin
Senior Architectural Historian



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Sara B. McLaughlin
Senior Architectural Historian

Sara B. McLaughlin, Senior Architectural Historian
JMT

Date

Mary Pope Furr, Supervisor
North Carolina Department of Transportation

Date

Management Summary

Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson (JMT) conducted a historic architectural eligibility evaluation in January 2018 on behalf of the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) in preparation for R-5841A: NC107 improvements from NC 281 (Canada Road) to just north of Tuckasegee Lake in Jackson County, North Carolina. The North Carolina state project number is WBS# 47084.1.1. NCDOT recommended that one historic resource should be the subject of an intensive-level evaluation to determine National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility. One additional resource, the East Fork Hydroelectric Project (JK0729), was previously determined eligible and falls within the APE. Due to its previous eligibility determination, this resource was not assessed during this project. In addition, no photographs were taken of the project as it was inaccessible and not visible from the road.

The scope of JMT’s investigation included an evaluation of the Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church (JK0045), located along Wesleyan Church Road near the intersection of NC107 and Walnut Cove Road (SR 1134). The goals of this investigation were to: assess the National Register eligibility of the resource and provide a written report that presents photographs of the component buildings, structures, and landscapes, architectural and historical contexts, evaluation of National Register eligibility including comparison to similar properties in the region, and, if appropriate, carefully delineated and justified National Register boundaries.

Investigations comply with the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, other state and federal regulations, and NCDOT’s current “Historic Architecture Group Procedures and Work Products and the North Carolina Historic Preservation Office’s (HPO) Report Standards for Historic Structure Survey Reports/ Determinations of Eligibility/Section 106/110 Compliance Reports in North Carolina”.

As a result of this investigation, it was determined that the church was constructed ca. 1923. This mountain church and associated structures retain sufficient integrity of setting, location, and feeling, but lack integrity of design, workmanship, and material. The church and associated structures are located atop a steep hill just south and east of the Tuckasegee River. The placement of the church is characteristic of many historic mountain churches, although multiple material alterations have been made to the structure. It is **recommended that the Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church property is not eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A** due to the absence of an association with significant events or broad patterns of history. It is also **recommended not eligible under Criterion C** due to the number of material alterations and its lack of architectural distinction. It is **recommended not eligible under Criterion B** due to the absence of an association with a notable individual and **not eligible under Criterion D** for its potential to reveal data on area history.

| Resource Name | NC SHPO Survey Number | NRHP Eligibility Recommendation | NRHP Criteria |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church | JK0045 | Not Eligible | N/A |
| East Fork Hydroelectric Plant | JK0728 | Previously Determined Eligible | Unknown |

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Project Description and Methodology

JMT conducted a historic architectural eligibility evaluation in January 2018 on behalf of NCDOT in preparation for R-5841A: NC107 improvements from NC 281 (Canada Road) to just north of Tuckasegee Lake in Jackson County, North Carolina (Figures 1, 2, and 3). The North Carolina state project number is WBS# 47084.1.1. Architectural historians from NCDOT conducted a site visit and determined that one property, the Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church, warranted evaluation for NRHP eligibility. One additional resource, the East Fork Hydroelectric Plant (JK0729), was previously determined eligible and falls within the APE. Due to its previous eligibility determination, this resource was not assessed during this project. However, NCDOT contracted JMT to conduct the investigation and complete an evaluation of the unevaluated church property.

The scope of JMT's investigation included an evaluation of the Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church (JK0045), located along Wesleyan Church Road near the intersection of NC107 and Walnut Cove Road (SR 1134). The goals of this investigation were to: assess the National Register eligibility of the resource and provide a written report that presents photographs of the component buildings, structures, and landscapes, architectural and historical contexts, evaluation of National Register eligibility including comparison to similar properties in the region, and, if appropriate, carefully delineated and justified National Register boundaries. Research and fieldwork on this project was conducted in accordance with relevant state and federal regulations as part of the compliance process established in Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (36 CFR 800).

Fieldwork was completed between January 29 and 30, 2018. JMT contacted Tuckasegee Wesleyan church pastor, Jeffery Powell, and obtained permission to access the property and document the exterior of the buildings. However, Powell works full time and is only at the church for services. Therefore, he was unavailable to show the consultant the interior of the buildings. Background historical research was conducted at the Jackson County Public Library, the Jackson County Genealogical Society, and the Jackson County Register of Deeds in Sylva, North Carolina. Additionally, the Jackson County online Land Records service and HPOWEB GIS service were consulted and revealed two extant historic bridges (JK0602 and JK0405) and one historic bridge that has been replaced (JK0595) within the project area. The sites were surveyed but never formally nominated or listed on any state or national register. The bridges are located along busy roads with no safe place to stop. Therefore, the bridges were not photographed. JMT also reviewed National Register of Historic Places Registration Forms for other nearby properties similar to the subject property to provide further context.

JMT encountered difficulties while performing deed research for the Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church at the Jackson County Register of Deeds. JMT was able to trace the land back to 1898 but was unable to find any earlier deeds. Multiple factors likely contributed to this. First, the Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church was not constructed until after the 2 ½ acres of land it sits on was purchased by the church in 1920, so references to the church are not present in any prior deeds. Second, before the church was constructed, the 2 ½ acres of land was part of a much larger tract owned by Hosea Moses. This land was sold to Moses by W.M. Hooper in 1898. Moses and Hooper both owned large amounts of land in Jackson County and were frequently subdividing, buying, and selling plots, resulting in many deeds under their names. Additionally, the deeds do not mention any previous owners or previous deed book and page numbers. The land is located in River Township and the unincorporated Tuckasegee community. Therefore, there is no lot number assigned to the land. Finally, the description of the land varies a great deal from deed to deed. The deeds described the property boundaries by mentioning the adjacent land owners. These adjacent lands also seem to have been subdivided, bought, and sold frequently. This means that the physical description of the property also changed frequently. Therefore, statements about the history of the property prior to its purchase by the church in 1920 are made using research about the larger Tuckasegee community and Jackson County area.

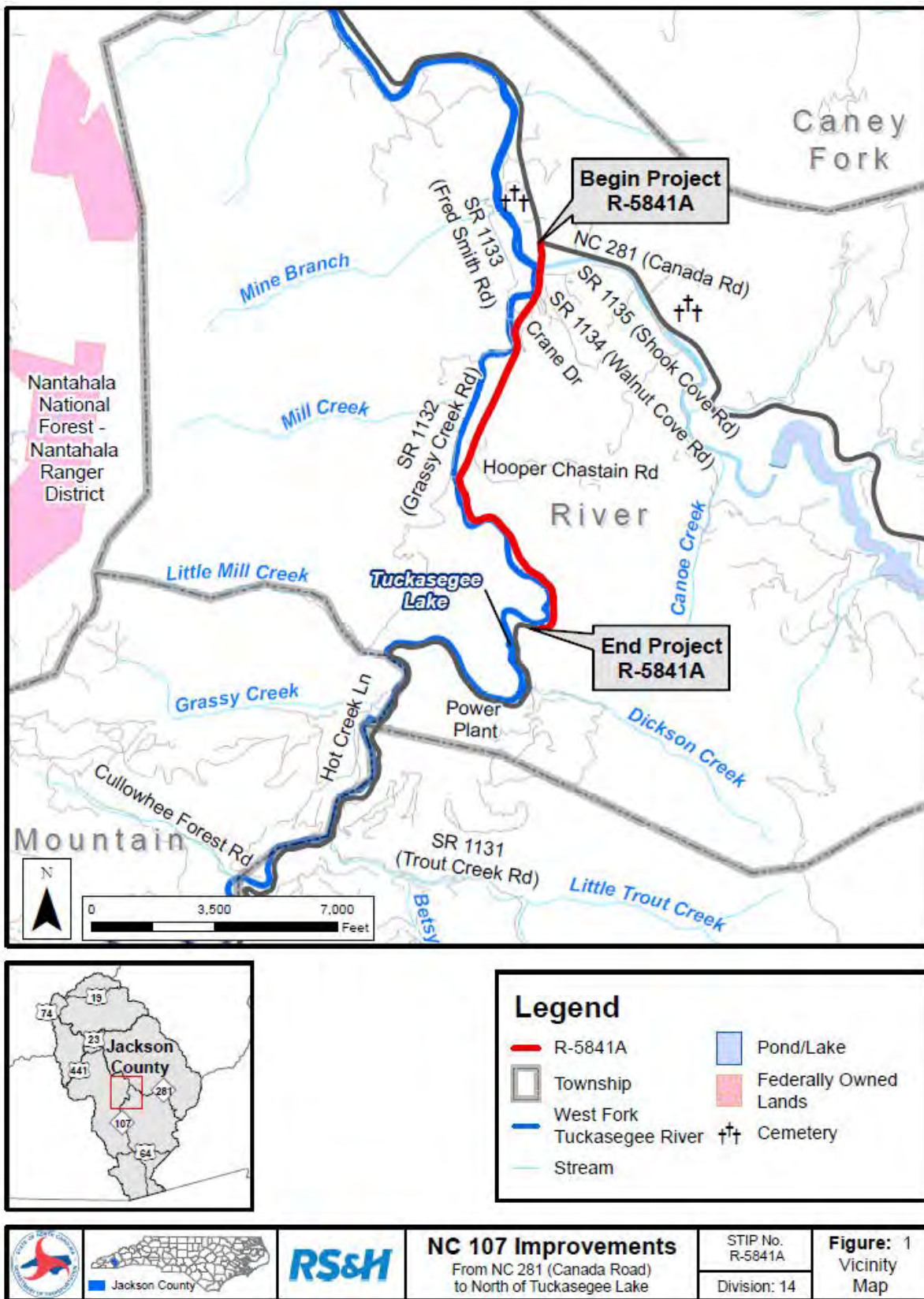


Figure 1: Project area (Source: NCDOT)

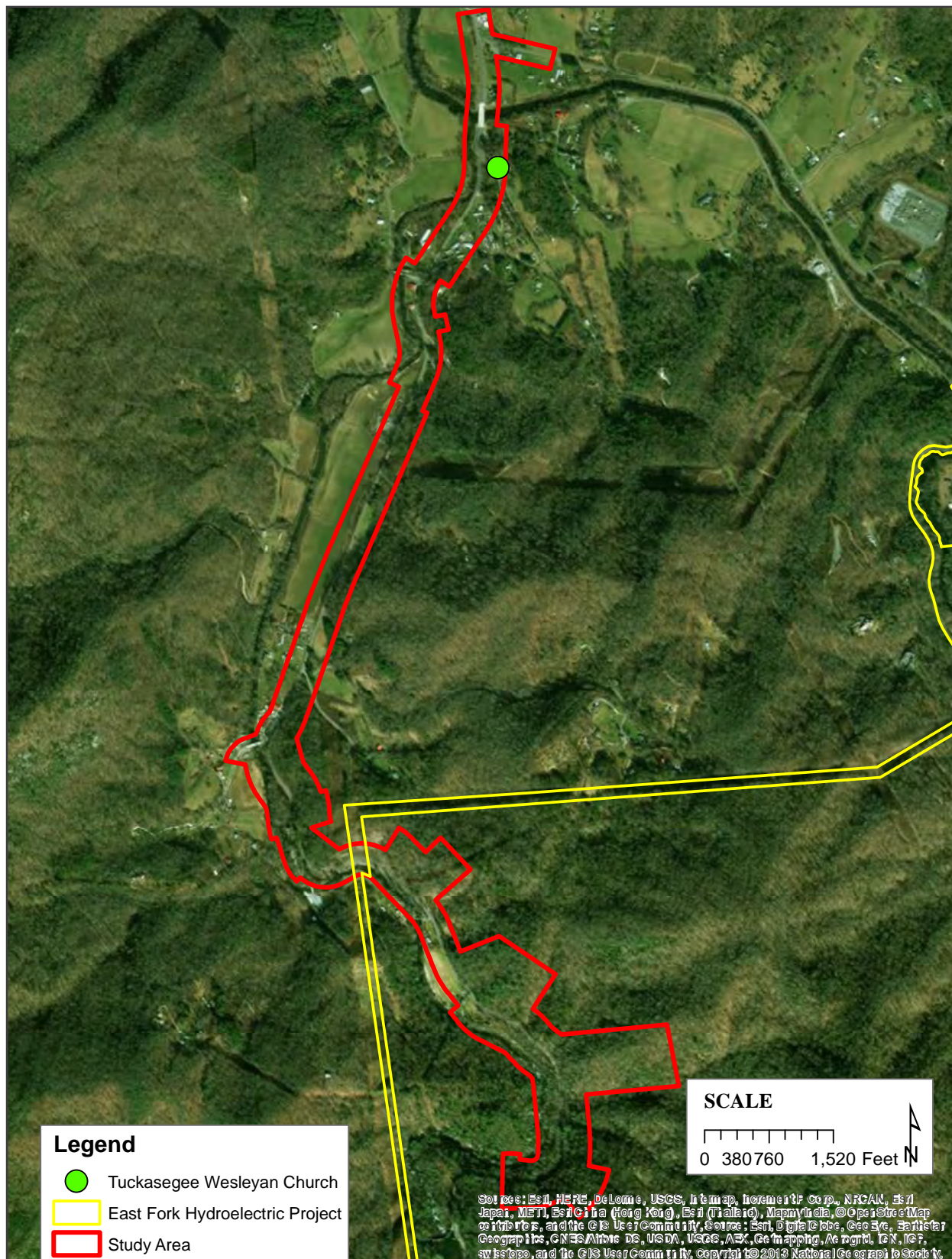


Figure 2: Project Area and APE with previously evaluated property and property to be evaluated (Source: ESRI, NCDOT, NCHPO)

Property Evaluation

Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church

| | |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Resource Name | Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church |
| HPO Survey Site # | JK0045 |
| Street Address | 228 Wesleyan Church Road |
| PIN | 7567-97-9522 |
| Construction Date(s) | ca. 1923 |
| NRHP Recommendation | Not Eligible |

Site Description

The Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church is located on a hilltop high above NC107 in Tuckasegee, Jackson County, North Carolina (Photograph 1). Tuckasegee is an incorporated community at the convergence of the east and west forks of the Tuckasegee River. The Tuckasegee River forms the core of the county, and both the east and west forks feature multiple mountain lakes. The community of Tuckasegee sits at the intersection of NC107 and NC281, just southeast of the incorporated village of Forest Hills. The area is mountainous and was historically flood prone until the first half of the 20th century when new dams were constructed on each fork of the river. Today, Tuckasegee is largely residential, but also features a post office and a few commercial properties.

The Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church was constructed on a hilltop overlooking NC107 and the Tuckasegee River ca. 1923 (Photograph 2). Currently there are three structures on the property: the original church, a parsonage, and a non-historic fellowship hall. The buildings are accessed by a steep gravel road that turns into an asphalt drive. The church building itself is surrounded by an asphalt-paved circular drive. A cemetery is located to the rear of these buildings and is situated at a higher elevation than the structures. It can be accessed by foot or a separate gravel drive located off Wesleyan Church Road.

The small frame church, located at the northwestern corner of the property, was constructed ca. 1923. This one-story, rectangular building is capped by a front gable roof covered in standing seam metal. A previous survey conducted in 1991 states the church featured a "tin-shingled gable roof" therefore the current roof is a replacement (Bishir, Martin, & Southern 1999: 361) (HPO 1991: 5). The building sits on a stucco-covered, concrete block foundation, which replaced the original foundation around 1963 when the church dug a full basement to create a fellowship hall (Interview with Pastor Jeff Powell, 29 Jan 2018). The main block is three bays wide by four bays deep, with a partial-width portico attached to the façade (northwest elevation). The portico features a front-gable roof of standing seam metal supported by square wood posts. The church's original weatherboard siding has been replaced with vinyl. An open belfry pierces the front gable roof (Photograph 3). The belfry is topped by a pyramidal roof with widely overhanging flared eaves. According to *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina*, the belfry was once topped with a "metal replica of an open Bible" (Bishir et al. 1999: 361) (HPO 1991: 5) (Photograph 4). The metal Bible has since been removed.



Photograph 1: Façade Tuckasegee Wesleyan church looking southeast. (2018)



Photograph 2: View of the area surrounding the Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church; looking north. (2018)

The church's main entrance is centered on the façade beneath the portico and is reached by a set of stone and stucco steps with wood balustrade. The wood balustrade replaced a set of iron railings some time after 1991 (HPO 1991; 5). The original double door opening features replacement wood doors each with a six-light glazing pattern. A vent that has been infilled is located in the gable end and is vertically aligned with the front entrance. Two original nine-over-nine double hung wood sash windows are evenly spaced, one on either side of the entrance. Two, one-over-one double hung vinyl sash windows are located at the basement level and are vertically aligned with the windows on the first story. These vinyl windows replaced metal windows sometime after the 1991 survey of the church (HPO 1991: 5). An entrance to the basement is located in the foundation and is hidden from view by the portico stairs (Photograph 5).

The rear (southeast) elevation features a rectangular louvered vent centered in the gable end and is covered in vinyl siding (Photograph 6). A one-story, full-width, vinyl sided addition is located off the rear elevation. It is topped by a shed roof covered in standing seam metal. The addition features a centered entrance with a multi-paneled replacement door. Two evenly spaced six-over-six double hung wood sash windows flank both sides of the rear entrance. A wood ramp to allow for ADA access is constructed off the rear addition and was added sometime after 1991.



Photograph 3: Detail of Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church's belfry without metal Bible; looking southeast. (2018)



Photograph 4: Detail of Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church's belfry with metal Bible; looking southeast. (Source: HPO 1991)



Photograph 5: Detail of basement of Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church; looking east. (2018)

The side (northeast and southwest) elevations are almost identical and feature four evenly spaced nine-over-nine double hung wood sash windows that match those seen on the façade (Photographs 7 and 8). The basement features four windows vertically aligned with those on the first story. The windows are a combination of one-over-one double hung and sliding vinyl sash windows. According to the 1991 survey, the basement windows used to be a combination of six-light aluminum casement windows and sliding aluminum sash windows. These metal windows were replaced with vinyl windows sometime between 1991 and 2018.



Photograph 6: View of rear (southeast) elevation of Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church; looking northwest. (2018)



Photograph 7: Oblique view of Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church; looking west. (2018)

A ca. 1935 parsonage was constructed to the south of the church building (Photographs 9 and 10). The original parsonage, constructed ca. 1923 burned down in 1935 and was replaced with the parsonage that still remains today (Hoteling 2013: 1C). The parsonage is a one-story bungalow and is capped by a front-gable roof covered in standing seam metal and features widely overhanging eaves and exposed rafter ends. The parsonage is constructed on a slight slope. As such, the continuous stucco-covered foundation is visible on the west elevation, but not on the east elevation. The building is clad in T1-11 siding (Photograph 11). All windows on the building are one-over-one double hung vinyl sash replacements.



Photograph 8: Oblique view of Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church; looking north. (2018)



Photograph 9: View of Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church parsonage; looking south. (2018)

A one-story full-width porch runs the length of the north-facing façade. The porch is capped by a hipped roof clad with standing seam metal that is supported by four square wood posts that sit atop fieldstone piers. A solid fieldstone balustrade runs between the fieldstone piers. The building is three bays wide by three bays deep. The façade features a centered entrance flanked on either side by a single one-over-one double hung vinyl sash replacement window. A small one-over-one double hung vinyl sash window is located centered beneath the gable peak and is vertically aligned above the front entrance. The west elevation features two, one-over-one double hung vinyl sash windows located north



Photograph 10: Oblique view of Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church Parsonage; looking southwest. (2018)



Photograph 11: Detail view of T1-11 siding on Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church parsonage; looking west. (2018)

of center. Two pairs of one-over-one double hung vinyl sash windows are located south of center on the elevation. The southernmost pair is smaller than the other windows on the elevation. The rear elevation features a one-story, partial-width addition. The addition is capped by a hipped roof covered in the standing seam metal and clad in T1-11 siding. The east elevation features a centered pair of one-over-one double hung vinyl sash windows. The centered pair of windows is flanked on either side by a single, one-over-one double hung vinyl sash window. Two, one-over-one double hung vinyl sash windows are evenly spaced, one north of center and one south of center.



Photograph 12: Oblique view of Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church's Fellowship Hall; looking east. (2018)

Approximately 55 feet southeast of the church building, a fellowship hall was constructed in 2001 replacing the 1960s basement addition (Hotaling 2013: 1C). The one-story rectangular building is built into the side of a hill and rests on a stucco-covered foundation with a basement (Photograph 12). The hall is clad in vinyl siding and is capped by a side-gable roof covered in asphalt shingles. The entrance is centered on the southwest-facing façade and is sheltered by a gabled portico. All windows are one-over-one double hung vinyl sash windows.

Approximately 30 feet southeast of the three structures, at the peak of the hill is the Tuckasegee Wesleyan Cemetery (Photographs 13 and 14). The cemetery is sometimes referred to as the Moses Cemetery or as the Powell Cemetery. The oldest burials at the cemetery are Dallas T. Hooper (Jan. 1873- Feb. 1873) and Margaret E. Hooper (1850-1881). These burials, along with others predate the church (Jackson County Genealogical Society 2012: 379). The cemetery can be accessed via steps located at the base of the hill south of the Fellowship Hall or via a gravel drive located off Wesleyan Church Road.



Photograph 13: View of Tuckasegee Wesleyan Cemetery; looking south. (2018)



Photograph 14: Detail view of headstone at Tuckasegee Wesleyan Cemetery; looking west. (2018)

Historical Background

The Tuckasegee River drew European settlers into the area before 1850. Early routes of access encouraged settlement and development in the Tuckasegee Valley. Early land records indicate that the river had also attracted the Cherokee, who farmed and improved a large amount of the land in the valley prior to the arrival of European settlers. By 1850, white settlers had created their own towns, but the Tuckasegee Valley featured several trading posts that served both the Cherokee and white settlers. Tuckasegee, Cullowhee, and Savannah were communities located along the intersecting axes of the War Road and the Tuckasegee River. They formed the core of what would become Jackson County when it was established in 1851 (Williams 2001: 68-79).

Early economic activity in Jackson County consisted of subsistence agriculture but transportation advances at the end of the 19th century allowed farmers to expand beyond growing crops for their families and communities. "The advent of the railroad in 1884 enable farmers to reach more distant markets and sell their surplus more easily, especially cattle" (Williams 2001: 147) . However, after 1900, the area saw a decline in family owned and operated farms. This trend has continued to the present day, and the average acreage per farm has also declined. This decline in acreage was largely due to soil erosion from the continuous farming of steep hillsides. As seen in many other areas of the country, farmers in Jackson County began crop diversification. Since the 1950s, the county has focused more on silviculture by growing Christmas trees, ornamental shrubbery, and high-priced hardwoods.

Before agriculture declined in Jackson County at the beginning of the 20th century, multiple extractive industries developed, which allowed many area farmers to make the transition to a different way of life. The Tuckasegee Valley is rich in minerals, such as Kaolin, mica, and copper. In addition to mining, Jackson County saw a rise in mining, manufacturing, and later, tourism. (Williams 2001: 150-151). Much of the county has remained rural and agricultural up until the present.

Religious History of Jackson County

Religion played a vital role in the life of area residents long before Jackson County was formally established in 1851, and churches often formed the center of many communities. According to *The History of Jackson County*,

The churches of the frontier must be seen in another light. Not only did they supply the emotional support for religious life, but they served as centers of the community; indeed, they were the community in the remote areas of the frontier region. The church was a social and religious center as well as a kind of government in these areas. The moral pronouncements and the regulations of the churches often provided the primary glue which held communities together (Williams 2001: 256).

Religion in 19th century Jackson County was dominated by Baptists and Methodists, which reflected religious trends seen in the American frontier at large. A commonly asked question was "Are you a Baptist or a Methodist? Being neither, you must be nothing" (Williams 2001: 255). During the 19th century, both the Baptist and Methodist denominations were evangelical. They focused on the idea that religion was of the heart and not of the head. They did not believe that ministers needed to be formally educated, but instead should be evaluated on their level of piety, knowledge of the Bible, and ability to convert others. Baptists often ordained a local, pious person as minister, and Methodist ministers often designated local individuals to serve as volunteer preachers or class leaders (Williams 2001: 255).

Many early church services were held in the homes of congregants. It was not until the end of the 19th century that congregations began to build dedicated churches (Humphries 1988: 4). Church construction boomed as sawmills became more widespread. Access to milled lumber encouraged congregations to erect simple frame churches. These late 19th and

early 20th century churches became “the principal landmarks of country and village life” (Bishir, et al. 1999: 66).

Since 1900, religion in Jackson County has been dominated by Protestantism. While the rest of the country saw a decline in Protestantism due to immigration, industrialization, and changing intellectual currents, Protestantism in Jackson County remained undiminished (Williams 2001: 265). According to *The History of Jackson County*,

Jackson County religion has not changed because the forces at work for change in other parts of the country have not yet arrived with sufficient strength to cause significant alteration. This, however, does not mean Jackson County churches have been static. Indeed, if anything the religious forces at work in Jackson County have been stronger and more influential in the twentieth century than in the nineteenth. It is to the reasons for this and to an analysis of contemporary events that we now turn (Williams 2001: 265).

Throughout the 20th century, Jackson County saw an increase in both the number of churchgoers and dominations. Between 1860 and 1970, the population of Jackson County increased fourfold, however, the number of churchgoers increased 17 times. In 1860 Jackson County had a population of 5,515 with 15.2% of the population (840 people) attending one of 16 churches. By 1971, Jackson County had a population of 21,593 with 65.6% of the population (14,165 people) attending one of 77 churches.

The Wesleyan Methodist Church in Jackson County

The Wesleyan Methodist Church was a small Protestant denomination that split from the Methodist Episcopal Church in the mid-19th century. According to historian Louis P. Towles,

The Wesleyan Methodist Church in America was created in early 1843 as a result of a schism from the Methodist Episcopal Church over slavery, holiness, and the arbitrary use of episcopal power by the parent church. For more than 20 years the church focused its energies upon the antislavery movement, but by 1867 attention shifted dramatically to revivalism, holiness, and evangelizing, and a church that had heretofore been eastern in locale now directed itself west, north, and south (Towles 2006).

The Wesleyan Methodist Church came to Jackson County around 1900, when evangelists from South Carolina saw the mountains of Jackson County as a fertile mission field with a rich pool of potential converts. Itinerant reverend, C.C. Churchill, traveled through the Blue Ridge Mountains until 1913 when he settled and founded a Wesleyan congregation in Glenville. Over the next decade, Churchill founded two more congregations at Buck Creek and Tuckasegee. The congregation at Tuckasegee became the Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church.

The Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church was constructed on a hilltop overlooking NC107 (then NC106) and the Tuckasegee River between 1920 and 1923. The Wesleyan Methodist Church purchased the land in 1920 and has owned the parcel since that time (Hotaling 2013: 1C). A deed dated July 6, 1920 between grantor Hosea Moses and grantees, the Trustees of the South Carolina conference of Wesleyana Methodists (J.R. George, J.R. Davis & D.O. Powers) sold 2 ½ acres of land for the purpose of constructing a place of divine worship for the Wesleyan Methodist Convention of America (Jackson County Register of Deeds 1920: 83/304). The church and parsonage were both finished c.1923. The original parsonage burned down in 1935 and was replaced with the parsonage that stands today. In 2001, the fellowship hall was constructed to the southeast of the church (Hotaling 2013: 1C).

Initially the Tuckasegee, Buck Creek, Glenville and Rock Bridge congregations were all part of a Wesleyan “class” or circuit.

From 1924 to 1925, Leila Hughes served as assistant pastor of this Wesleyan circuit. In 1926 she assumed the pastorate and worked tirelessly for the church until she died in 1928 at the age of 34 (Williams 2001: 262) (Hotaling 2013: 2C). She is buried in the Tuckasegee Wesleyan Cemetery (Jackson County Genealogical Society 2012: 379). Hughes described the Tuckasegee congregation in a letter to church officials in South Carolina,

The first class is located at Tuckasegee, this is a small place. It is a fertile farming valley. The people are progressive and good livers. Most of the homes are nice and well kept. Upon a small mountain sits the white painted church with a group of pines giving a background of green, and at the foot of the mountain, the left and right prongs of the Tuckasegee [sic] River flow together and wind down the valley.

This is the first church that has been building in this valley for over a hundred years, we have some good members here.

We live upon a small mountain just across the river from Mrs. Rigdon's. The little parsonage is just back of the white church. Miss Farmer is my co-worker and lives with me (Hotaling 2013: 2C).

Today, the Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church is still considered part of the South Carolina District of the Wesleyan Church (Hotaling 2013: 2C). Between 1966 and 1968, the Wesleyan Methodist Church merged with the Pilgrim Holiness Church and is now commonly referred to as the Wesleyan Church.

Architectural Context

Religion has played an integral role in Jackson County since the county's formation. Although religious life was dominated by Baptist and Methodist denominations in the 1850s, more Protestant denominations came to the area around the turn of the century. Due to Jackson County being more isolated and sparsely settled than surrounding counties, many early church services were held in the homes of congregants. It was not until closer to the turn of the century that first generation church buildings were constructed, encouraged by an increased access to sawmills (Humphries 1988: 4) (Bishir et al. 1999: 67).

Due to the topography of Jackson County, many of these churches can be described as "mountain churches" and were prominently sited on knolls, promontories, and steep hillsides. The areas were often graded or terraced to allow for easier access. In many instances the churchyard stretches farther up the slope beside and behind the church. "On such carefully chosen sites many a small country church occupies a prominent position above the valley floor, giving churchgoers a prime view of the landscape beyond and making the church a beacon from a distance" (Bishir et al. 1999: 67).



Photograph 15: Webster Methodist Church. (2018)

First generation churches in Jackson County and the region were simple, frame structures. *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina* describes the churches in the following manner:

The universal form in the region was a simple gable-fronted frame church with one or two entrances opening into a vestibule or directly into the sanctuary, a large rectangular room with rows of pews and one or two aisles. Some churches after the turn of the century, such as Grassy Creek Methodist, had a sloped, curved, or angled auditorium-plan sanctuaries. Plain, weatherboarded churches with clear-paned rectangular windows served many rural congregations. Many had "church-like" fittings such as pointed or triangular-headed windows, polygonal entrance vestibules or apses, and belfries in many different forms (Bishir et al. 1999: 67).

The National Register nominated Webster Methodist Church, constructed in 1887, reflects the regional form for churches, "but the wealth of detail, both Gothic and classical, make it outstanding" (Humphries 1988: 4) (Photograph 15). The church is located in Webster, Jackson County, North Carolina, approximately 12 miles northwest of the Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church. The congregation was founded 1859 by itinerant preachers who rode hundreds of miles on the Methodist "circuit", but it was not until years later that a physical worship space was constructed. This origin story is similar to that of Tuckasegee Wesleyan's. The Webster Methodist Church is a weatherboarded, gable-roofed rectangular building sited on a slight rise. The church features Gothic elements and Ionic columns. According to the National Register Nomination,

The main architectural interest of the church building is found in the three-bay entrance façade, which is dominated by an engaged bell tower which rises in two stages and culminated in a splayed pyramidal cap which serves as the steeple. Gothic arched vents are centered on all four sides of the tower's second tier, just beneath its cap. A blind fan and a diamond-shaped vent ornament its principal face above the church entrance (Humphries 1988: 2).

The church retains its weatherboard siding and original windows, and as of 2018, no apparent changes have been made to the exterior of the Webster Methodist Church. Comparatively, the Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church also reflects the simple

frame form commonly used in the region at the turn of the century, but without the architectural details that make the Webster Methodist Church outstanding. In addition, multiple exterior and interior alterations have been made to the Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church including replacement siding, roof, doors, and the addition of a basement with modern vinyl windows.

The National Register nominated Webster Baptist Church, constructed in 1900, is another example of the regional form popular for churches at the turn of the century (Photograph 16). Located in Webster, Jackson County, North Carolina, approximately 12 miles northwest of the Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church, this vernacular decorative frame sanctuary is sited at the top of a small hill on the south bank of the Tuckasegee River. In addition to interior furniture designed by a local master cabinetmaker, the Webster Baptist Church features a unique three-bay façade and bell tower seen nowhere else in Jackson County. According to the National Register Nomination:

The main feature of the building is an engaged bell tower which rises in three stages, the first weatherboarded and the remaining two shingled... On the front facade, the second stage of the bell tower features a double vent with round head over each vent and a round-headed arch, without keystone, over the whole, echoing the main entrance fanlight. The top stage includes an open belfry with railing, brackets and basket arch on each of its four sides, topped by a tapered polygonal, "witch's hat" steeple (Humphries, 1988: 2).



Photograph 16: Webster Baptist Church. (2018)

The church sanctuary retains a high degree of architectural integrity, despite the addition of a separate ca.1950-1960 education building located to the rear (south) of the church. Comparatively, the Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church also reflects the simple frame form commonly used in the region at the turn of the century, but without the architectural details that make the Webster Baptist Church unique. In addition, multiple exterior and interior alterations have been made to the Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church including the removal of a metal replica of an open Bible that once topped the belfry. Unlike the changes made to the Webster Baptist Church, those made on the Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church impact its architectural integrity.

While the Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church is characteristic of many mountain churches constructed in Jackson County in the late 19th and early 20th century, it is relatively simple in comparison to those listed in the National Register in Jackson County. Additionally, it has undergone multiple material alterations including the replacement of siding, doors, roofing, and the removal of the metal bible that once topped the belfry. During the 1960s a full basement was added underneath the building, which features an exterior door and vinyl windows.

National Register of Historic Places Evaluation

Based on research and fieldwork completed for this report, JMT recommends the Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church as not eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The resource maintains its integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association, but lacks integrity of materials, workmanship and design. The building remains intact however, material alterations have been made including the replacement of siding, roof, doors, and basement windows. Although the plan and massing of the building remain intact, the addition of a basement in the 1960s has further decreased the building's integrity. The church's hilltop setting and simple, front-gable design, while characteristic of late 19th and early 20th century mountain churches in Jackson County, have been compromised by the material alterations and basement addition. Therefore, it does not warrant inclusion in the National Register.

Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church is **not eligible** for the National Register under Criterion A (event). *To be eligible under Criterion A, a resource must be associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.* Although religion has played a large role in the history of Jackson County, North Carolina, the Wesleyan Methodist Church was, and continues to be a small denomination, with only a few congregations in North Carolina. Comparatively, their presence was not as prominent as the Baptist and Methodist denominations. In addition, the Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church did not play a significant role in the development of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in North Carolina or throughout the country. It is for this reason that the Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A.

Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church is **not eligible** for the National Register under Criterion B (person). *To be eligible under Criterion B, a resource must be associated with the lives of significant persons in our past.* Little detail was found about the people involved with the Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church beyond the names of previous pastors and the individuals buried in the cemetery. None of these individuals were found to be significant enough to warrant inclusion in the National Register. The resource is not associated with the lives of significant persons in our past therefore the church is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria B.

Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church is **not eligible** for the National Register under Criterion C (design/construction). *To be eligible under Criterion C, a resource must embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.* The architecture and design of the Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church is characteristic of many mountain churches in Jackson County and the region. However, due to the church's simple unadorned form, it lacks individual distinction, especially in comparison to the more ornate and unique Gothic Revival and rural Victorian frame churches such as the National Register listed Webster Baptists Church and the Webster Methodist Church; also in Jackson County. Although the church retains its original windows and belfry, it is missing the metal replica of an open Bible that once topped the belfry. Additional material alterations made to the property, including vinyl siding, modern doors, and the construction of a basement with vinyl windows, have diminished its architectural integrity. As a result of the loss of integrity, the resource does not embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

Tuckasegee Wesleyan Church is **not eligible** for the National Register under Criterion D (potential to yield information). *To be eligible under Criterion D, a resource must yield or be likely to yield information important in history or prehistory.* The early twentieth century church site is unlikely to contribute significant information pertaining to building technology or historical documentation not otherwise accessible from other extant resources and written records.

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