



**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: Mary Pope Furr  
Office of Human Environment  
NCDOT Division of Highways

FROM: Renee Gledhill-Earley   
Environmental Review Coordinator

SUBJECT: Historic Structures Survey Report, U-5834, Improvements to SR 3116 from  
US 52 to ER 3157, PA 17-09-0030, Buncombe County, ER 18-0450

Thank you for your February 27, 2018, letter transmitting the above-referenced report. We have reviewed the report and offer the following comments.

We concur that the two properties below are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

- **John Shroat House (BN0655)** is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C as an excellent and intact example of a mid-nineteenth-century dwelling with an I-house form. The most appropriate boundary for the eligible resource is the tax parcel on which it is located to provide for adequate setting on both sides of Concord Road.
- **Busbee Rural Historic District (BN6318)** is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criteria A and C as an excellent and intact example of a rural historic landscape in southern Buncombe County. We agree with the recommended boundaries as described and illustrated on pages 36 and 37 of the report.

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

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

Received: 03/06/2018  
State Historic Preservation Office



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

ROY COOPER  
GOVERNOR

JAMES H. TROGDON, III  
SECRETARY

February 27, 2018

**ER 18-0450**

Ms. Renee Gledhill-Earley  
North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office  
4617 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-4617

Due -- 3/28/18

H- EP letters  
3/10/18

Dear Renee:

RE: U-5834, Improvements to SR 3116 (Mills Gap Rd) from US 52 to SR 3157 in  
Buncombe County, TIP# U-5834, WBS# 50226.3.1, PA# 17-09-0030

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) is conducting planning studies for the above-referenced project. Please find attached three copies of the Historic Architectural Resources Survey Report, which meets the guidelines for survey procedures for NCDOT and the National Park Service. This report concludes that two properties, the John Shroat House and the Busbee Rural Historic District, within the Area of Potential Effects (APE) are eligible for the National Register.

Please review the survey report and provide us with your comments. If you have any questions concerning the accompanying information, please contact Ms. Mary Pope Furr, Historic Architecture Team, (919) 707-6068.

Sincerely,

Mary Pope Furr  
Historic Architecture Team

Attachment

Mailing Address:  
NC DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS UNIT  
1598 MAIL SERVICE CENTER  
RALEIGH, NC 27699-1598

Telephone: (919) 707-6000  
Fax: (919) 212-5785  
Customer Service: 1-877-368-4968

Website: [www.ncdot.gov](http://www.ncdot.gov)

Location:  
1020 BIRCH RIDGE DRIVE  
RALEIGH, NC 27610

**Historic Structures Survey Report  
Improvements to SR 3116 (Mills Gap Road) from US 25 (Hendersonville Road) to SR  
3157 (Weston Road)  
Buncombe County  
TIP# U-5834/WBS# 50226.3.1**

**Prepared for:**  
Environmental Analysis Unit  
North Carolina Department of Transportation  
1598 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-1598

**Prepared by:**  
MdM Historical Consultants Inc.  
Post Office Box 1399  
Durham, NC 27702  
919.906.3136

February 20, 2018

**Historic Structures Survey Report  
Improvements to SR 3116 (Mills Gap Road) from US 25 (Hendersonville Road) to SR 3157  
(Weston Road)  
Buncombe County  
TIP# U-5834/WBS# 50226.3.1**

**Prepared for:**

Environmental Analysis Unit  
North Carolina Department of Transportation  
1598 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-1598

**Prepared by:**

MdM Historical Consultants, Inc.  
Post Office Box 1399  
Durham, NC 27702  
919.906.3136

February 20, 2018

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Jennifer F. Martin, Principal Investigator  
MdM Historical Consultants, Inc. Date

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Cynthia de Miranda, Principal Investigator  
MdM Historical Consultants, Inc. Date

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

Historic Structures Survey Report  
 Improvements to SR 3116 (Mills Gap Road) from US 25 (Hendersonville Road) to SR 3157 (Weston Road)  
 Buncombe County  
 TIP# U-5834/WBS# 50226.3.1

Survey Site Number and Property Name	Address and PIN	NRHP Eligibility Recommendation	NRHP Criteria
BN0655 John Shroat House	22 Concord Road 965582659000000	Eligible for the NRHP	Criterion C in the area of architecture
BN6318 Busbee Rural Historic District	East Side of Mills Gap Road and Both Sides of Concord Road <i>Multiple PINS</i>	Eligible for the NRHP	Criteria A and C in the areas of social history and architecture

**Management Summary**

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes to improve SR 3116 (Mills Gap Road) from US 35 (Hendersonville Road) to SR 3157 (Weston Road) in Buncombe County, North Carolina. The project area for this historic structures evaluation and report is centered around the intersection of Mills Gap Road and SR 3150 (Concord Road) in the small community of Busbee in Limestone Township in an unincorporated area of Buncombe County, south-southeast of Asheville.

A note about the place name Busbee: On historic and modern USGS maps and the 1911 Rand McNally map of Buncombe County, Busbee is indicated as located slightly north and west of the study area for this report. The point shown on these maps and at least one North Carolina state highway map corresponds to the former location of the Busbee passenger train stop on the Southern Railway. Rail service to Busbee ceased in the early 1960s, but placement of the name Busbee at that location persists on some maps. During World War II, the Busbee Community Center was built on the west side of Mills Gap Road, just opposite Concord Road (SR 3150). Three individuals who provided historical information for this report and who grew up on Concord Road near its intersection with Mills Gap Road call the place where they were raised Busbee.

The area of potential effects (APE) for U-5834 is the geographic area or areas within which the undertaking may directly or indirectly cause changes in the character or use of historic properties. The APE is influenced by the scale and nature of the undertaking and delineated on maps on pages 5 of this report.

In January 2018, MdM conducted a historic architectural eligibility study of the two properties located in the study area. MdM principal Jennifer Martin conducted the fieldwork on January 14 and 15, 2018, photographing and mapping all the built resources and landscapes associated with the two subject properties located within the study area. Using information from Douglas Swaim's 1980 survey of Buncombe County, Ms. Martin field-checked comparable properties throughout the county. She also conducted research on the Buncombe County Register of Deeds website, the Buncombe County GIS website, and at the North Carolina Collection at the Durham Public Library. She interviewed and corresponded with Ola Thain Lisenbee, owner of the Alma and C. R. Thain House (BN6320) and a longtime resident of Busbee, Barbara Robinson Broadway, who was raised in Busbee, and Gregory Matia, owner of the Doris and Edwin Brown House (BN6326). Ms. Martin also corresponded with Dr. Clark Trask, owner of the house (BN6324) at 9 Concord Road and Brownwood (BN6325). Ms. Martin authored this report.

After an intensive evaluation following the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) criteria for eligibility, the John Shroat House (BN0655) is recommended eligible for the NRHP under criterion C in the area of architecture as a rare surviving example of a mid-nineteenth-century I-house. The Busbee Rural Historic District (BN6318) is recommended eligible under criteria A and C in the areas of social history and architecture as an intact example of a rural mountain community with historic resources dating from the mid-nineteenth century to the early 1960s.

The historic architectural survey within the APE associated with the improvements to SR 3116 (Mills Gap Road) from US 25 (Hendersonville Road) to SR 3157 (Weston Road), Buncombe County, North Carolina was carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Secretary of the Interior's standards and Guidelines for Archaeological and Historic Preservation (48 FR 44716); 36 CFR Part 60; 36 CFR Part 800; and the NCDOT document entitled Historic Architectural Resources: Survey Procedures and Report Guidelines (2003). This evaluation meets the guidelines of NCDOT and the National Park Service.

In order to meet the requirements of the above laws, regulations, and guidelines, the work plan for the intensive-level survey included the following items: (1) conducting general historical and architectural background research in order to develop contexts within which to evaluate the potential National Register eligibility of the resources located within the APE; (2) an intensive-level field survey of the APE, including surveying, describing, evaluating, and proposing specific National Register boundaries for any resources believed to be eligible for the National Register; (3) specific historical and architectural research on the resources inventoried at the intensive level; and (4) preparation of a report developed pursuant to the above-referenced laws, regulations and guidelines. The report is on file at NCDOT and is available for review by the general public.



SR 3150 (Concord Road), view from Mills Gap Road (SR 3116) to the southeast



Intersection of SR 3150 (Concord Road) and SR 3116 (Mills Gap Road) (to the right). The Betty and Donald Hare House (BN6327) is near the center of the photograph.

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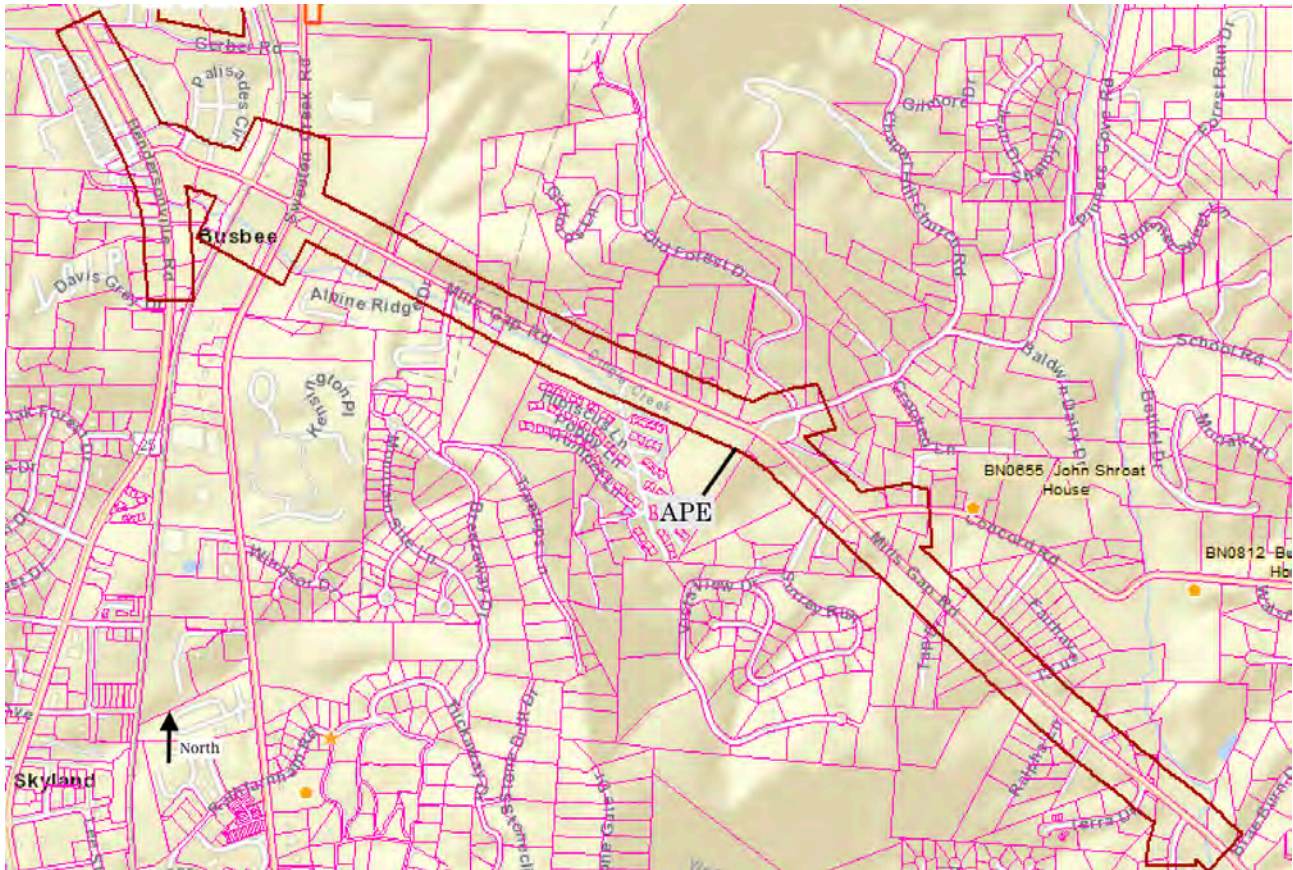
Brownwood (BN6325), view to the south-southeast



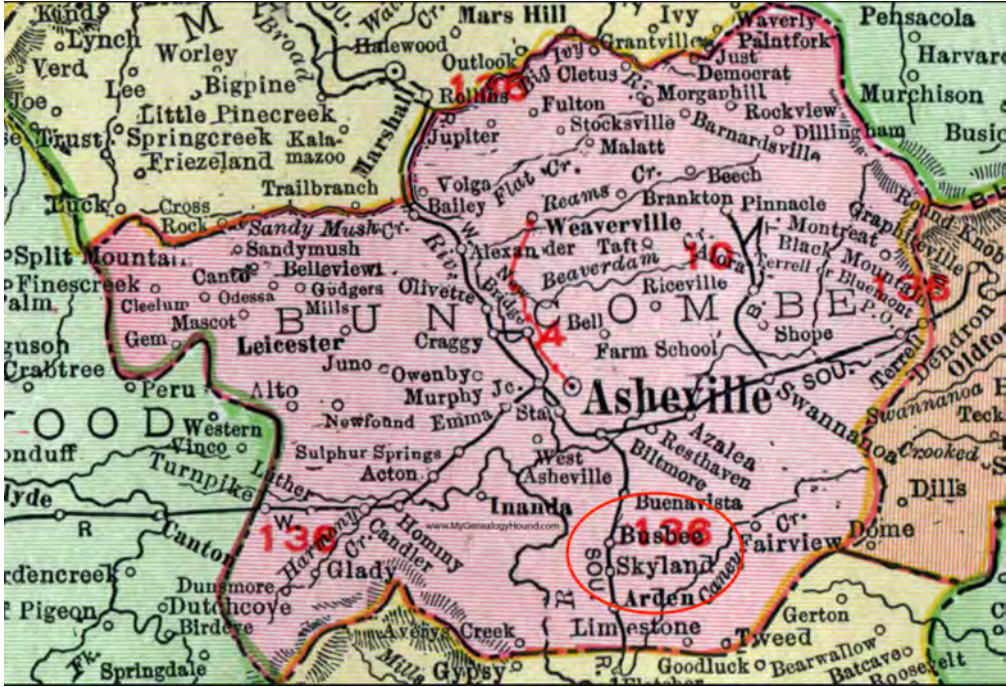
I. Project Location Maps



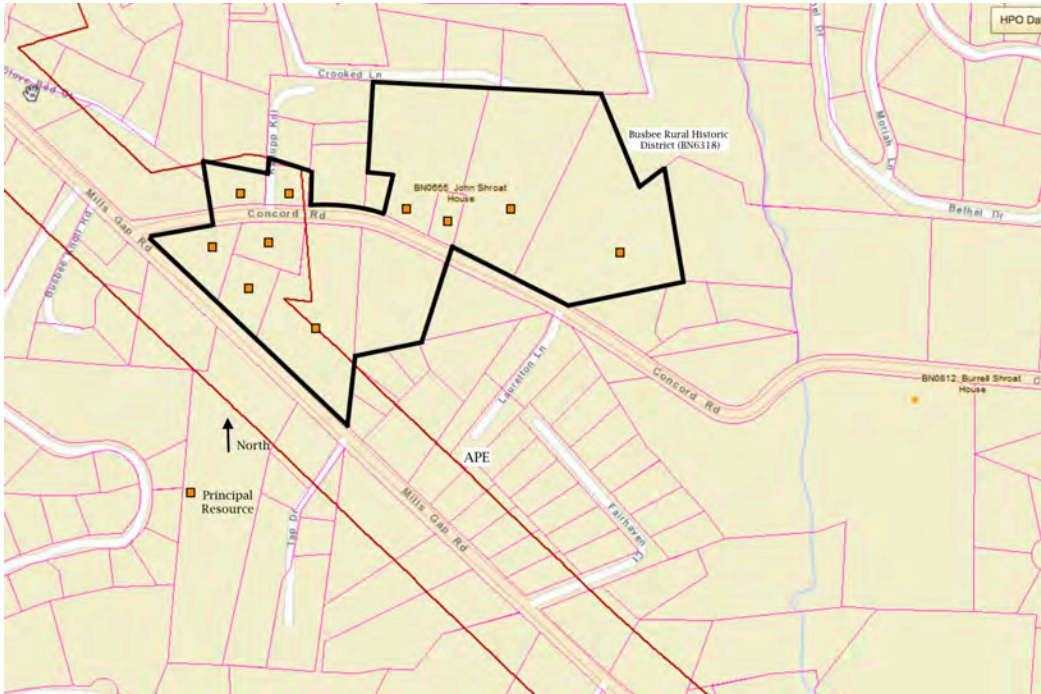
Location of Buncombe County in North Carolina (image from the NC Department of Commerce)



Map showing project APE (from HPO Web)



1911 Rand McNally Map of Buncombe County indicating project location



Map showing the location of the evaluated properties within the APE: the John Shroat House (BN0655) and the Busbee Rural Historic District (BN6318). Corrected location of Burrell Shroat House (BN0812) also indicated.

## II. Introduction

The project area for U-5834 is located south-southeast of Asheville, North Carolina in a rural, but rapidly developing area of Buncombe County. Mills Gap Road (SR 3116) is a two-lane road extending southeastward from Sweeten Creek Road (Alt 25A), a major thoroughfare extending south from Asheville into the southern part of Buncombe County.

Two properties were evaluated for this report: the John Shroat House (BN0655), a two-story, single-pile weatherboard house located at 22 Concord Road and the Busbee Rural Historic District (BN6318), a collection of dwellings from the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century.

NCDOT staff identified an additional property for evaluation, the Burrell Shroat House (BN0812), which had been mis-mapped on HPO Web. Upon further investigation, the Burrell Shroat House was discovered to be located six-tenths of a mile east of the project area and therefore outside the APE. It is not evaluated as part of this project.

## III. Methodology

The field survey was conducted on January 14 and 15, 2018. All resources historically associated with the John Shroat House (BN0655) located at 22 Concord Road and the Busbee Rural Historic District were photographed and recorded. Using information from Douglas Swaim's 1980 survey of Buncombe County, Ms. Martin field-checked comparable properties throughout the county. Research on the project area was conducted on the Buncombe County Register of Deeds website, the Buncombe County GIS website, and at the North Carolina Collection at the Durham Public Library. The principal investigators interviewed and corresponded with Ola Thain Lisenbee, owner of the Alma and C. R. Thain House (BN6320) and a longtime resident of the community, Barbara Robinson Broadway, who was raised in Busbee, and Gregory Matia, owner of the Doris and Edwin Brown House (BN6326). Ms. Martin also corresponded with Dr. Clark Trask, owner of the house (BN6324) at 9 Concord Road and Brownwood (BN6325). Ms. Martin authored this report.



Robinson Creek flowing on the south side of Concord Road along the north property line of Brownwood (BN6325), view to the east

IV. John Shroat House: Property Description and Evaluation

Resource Name	John Shroat House
HPO Survey Site #	BN0655
Location	22 Concord Road, Busbee
PIN	965582659000000
Construction date	1867
Recommendation	Eligible for the National Register under Criterion C for Architecture



John Shroat House (BN0655), southwest corner, view to the northeast

Description

*Setting*

The John Shroat House is south-southeast of Asheville in the rural community of Busbee in Limestone Township. The dwelling faces south overlooking Concord Road (SR 3150) southeast of its intersection with Mills Gap Road (SR 3116). The front of the house is sixty-seven feet from the centerline of Concord Road. The Shroat House occupies a nearly seven-acre parcel straddling the north and south sides of Concord Road. The 2.5 acres on the south side of the road is heavily wooded. A combination of trees and grass-covered lawn cover the acreage on the north side of Concord Road where the house stands. A substantial

tree has been allowed to grow immediately in front of the house on its east side blocking the view of the facade.

According to Ola Thain Lisenbee, a descendant of John Shroat, in the early twentieth century, several outbuildings and farm structures stood on the property. She recalls a stone well house, stone smokehouse, and a wooden outhouse behind the dwelling. A barn, granary, and hay storage building—all built of wood—stood farther behind or north of the house. Ms. Lisenbee also recalls at least two small dwellings, possibly farm worker housing, that stood northeast of the Shroat House. None of the outbuildings that once accompanied the house survives.

*John Shroat House, 1867*

The John Shroat House is five-bay, two-story, single-pile, weatherboard house with a later one-story rear ell and a later one-story rear shed room addition. Brick American bond chimneys with penciled mortar joints rise from both flush gable ends of the main block. Original six-over-six double-hung sash remain on the side elevations and facade. A smaller window is located at the center of the upper level of the rear elevation. Square posts with simple caps support a one-story shed-roofed porch extending along the width of the facade. Interior inspection was not possible because the owner lives in Alabama.

In his documentation of the house from 1980, architectural historian Douglas Swaim noted the dwelling began as a two-room-plan house later altered to create a central-passage-plan I-house. While Swaim notes that there is no exterior front entrance to the center hallway, there are ghost marks at the center of the first-floor façade suggesting a central bay was later infilled and fitted with a small two-over-two window. Judging by the appearance of the window, this likely happened in the mid-twentieth century.



West (side) elevation of the John Shroat House, view to the east

## History

According to family oral tradition, John M. Shroat (1844-1898) built the house. He married Laura Florence Pinner in 1883 and the couple had three children, including W. O. Shroat, who inherited it upon his parents' deaths. W. O. Shroat (1882-1952) was a mail carrier who married Bessie Lewis (1903-1999), a switchboard operator for Southern Railway. The house passed to their daughter, Ruth Shroat Klutz, who in turn passed it to her son and the current owner, William Klutz, who lives in Alabama.<sup>1</sup> The house is not occupied.



Front porch with view to infilled center bay, view to the east

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<sup>1</sup> Ola Thain Lisenbee, interview with Jennifer Martin, January 14, 2018.



East elevation of the John Shroat House, view to the west



Facade of the John Shroat House. Documentary photo from the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office survey file (1980)



Mantel in parlor. Documentary photo from the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office survey file (1980)

### Context

As in the rest of North Carolina, farm families built I-houses in rural Buncombe County throughout the nineteenth century. Derived from an English dwelling form, the I-house first appeared in Delaware and the Chesapeake by the late seventeenth century. From there, it was transported southward in the mid-eighteenth century along the Appalachian Mountains into the backcountry of North and South Carolina. The I-house, with its tall silhouette and frequent placement near the public road, came to symbolize prosperity gained from farming in the rural South.

The earliest I-houses in Buncombe County contained two rooms on the ground floor with one room, the hall, serving as a kitchen, workroom, or dining room. Occupants used the other room—the parlor—for more formal activities. Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century as architecture became more symmetrical, I-houses were built with a central passage. To update earlier I-houses, a passage was created by enclosing a portion of the hall or the parlor.

In Buncombe County, some I-houses began as log dwellings that were overbuilt and sheathed in weatherboard. Regardless of their architectural evolution, all I-houses in the county share certain characteristics: they are two stories in height and one room deep and have a side gable roof, a chimney on each gable end, a front porch, and often a back porch, which was later enclosed. The I-house endured partly because of its simple and straightforward design, but also because a myriad of architectural



embellishment could be applied to the form. Overwhelmingly, however, I-houses in rural Buncombe County maintained their rather austere appearance and generally lacked much in the way of ornament.

In his 1980 survey of Buncombe County, Douglas Swaim identified at least twenty I-houses.<sup>2</sup> Only one of those houses he recorded is noted in HPO Web as gone, meaning it was lost to intentional demolition or neglect or a natural act such as fire. It is possible additional I-houses are gone, but that remains unknown because a survey update has not been conducted. A cursory survey of many of the standing I-houses Swaim recorded thirty-eight years ago, reveals that almost all of those that remain have deteriorated or have been altered.

The Julius Ray House (BN0811) on US 74 near Fairview is a mid-nineteenth-century I-house extended to seven bays, most likely in the middle of the nineteenth century. Local sources claim the house contains a log pen. The Ray House, also known as the Toms House, was heavily altered in the early 1980s with the application of modern wood shingles over the weatherboard and the construction of a one-story brick addition on the façade.



Miller-Hipps House (BN0545). Documentary photo from the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office survey file (1980)

The Miller-Hipps House (BN0545) at 54 Kile Road near Candler is a heavy-timber-frame, hall-parlor-plan I-house with weatherboard siding. The two-story, single-pile dwelling features American bond exterior end chimneys—one inscribed with the date 1868—and a shed porch with replacement metal posts. A front-

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<sup>2</sup> It is possible Swaim documented more than twenty I-houses, but only that number is identified as I-houses in HPO Web, Douglas Swaim, ed. *Cabins and Castles: The History and Architecture of Buncombe County, North Carolina* (Asheville: Historic Resources Commission of Asheville and Buncombe County, 1981), 56-57.

gabled projection containing an interior staircase is situated at the center of the façade. The rear elevation features extensive twentieth-century additions.



Boyd-Garrett House (BN0267), view to the north

Around 1830, James Berry Boyd built a two-story log house in Sandy Mush. In the late nineteenth century, Will Garrett added frame rooms to the east end and covered the whole with weatherboard. The Boyd-Garrett House (BN0267) at 5 Boyd Cove Road is a central-passage-plan I-house and one of the oldest houses in the county, but its integrity has been compromised with the removal of the nineteenth century chimney, the gable returns, and the two-tier, single-bay portico.

One of the county's most intact I-houses is the circa 1880 Joseph P. Eller House (BN0375, NR 2004) near Weaverville. Built as a frame dwelling, the well-preserved weatherboard house sits on a stone foundation and is covered in lapped weatherboard siding. Original six-over-six windows with beveled surrounds and single-shoulder brick chimneys with stone bases remain intact.

### Evaluation

Despite the growth of vegetation immediately in front of the porch, the John Shroat House remains in much the same condition as it stood in 1980. The main exception to that is the rear additions, which are not original and have deteriorated significantly. The John Shroat House stands in its original location on the same 6.9 acres that it has occupied since construction and therefore retains integrity of location. The house

retains its original exterior weatherboard siding, American bond chimneys, and six-over-six windows and therefore retains its integrity of materials and integrity of workmanship. Because of the retention of nineteenth-century fabric, the dwelling's overall integrity of design remains intact. The house is in a rural, yet quickly developing area of Buncombe County and retains its integrity of setting, feeling, and association.



Facade of John Shroat House obscured by vegetation, view to the northwest

Properties can be eligible for the NRHP if they are associated with a significant event or pattern of events that have made contributions to history at the local, state, or national level. The Shroat House was built by a nineteenth-century rural family as their home. It functioned as a small farm, but was never the seat of a large agricultural operation and retains no domestic or agricultural outbuildings. Because of its lack of significance associated with an event or patterns of events, the John Shroat House is recommended not eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A.

John Shroat was a farmer in the south-central portion of Buncombe County. He did not make any specific contributions to any field on a national, state, or local level. The house therefore is not recommended eligible for the NRHP under Criterion B.

The John Shroat House is recommended eligible under Criterion C in the area of architecture as a rare surviving example of a mid-nineteenth-century I-house. The house represents a significant evolution of domestic architecture in rural western North Carolina where builders transformed a hall-parlor-plan dwelling, an entrenched regional building tradition, into a central-passage-plan I-house, a vernacular form common in the American southeast from the mid-nineteenth century and into the very early twentieth century. The Shroat House is one of a small number of dwellings surviving from the middle decades of the nineteenth century in Buncombe County.

It is unlikely that additional study of this property would yield any unretrieved data not discoverable through informant interviews, building technology, and documentary sources. Therefore, the John Shroat House is recommended not eligible for the NRHP under Criterion D.



View of the rear elevation toward the southeast

### Boundary Description

The recommended NRHP boundary for the John Shroat House includes the legal parcel owned by William Klutz, the great-grandson of the original owner. The boundary includes the 1867 house and the significant landscape and setting associated with the John Shroat House. The boundary follows the existing right-of-way along Concord Road (SR 3150). The parcel represents the land, resources, and features associated with the John Shroat House, which has been associated with this parcel since 1867, the date of construction of the house. Although no outbuildings are standing, the boundary encompasses any remains of the outbuildings—including the smokehouse, privy, barn, and wellhouse—that once occupied the small farm. The 6.9-acre parcel is an appropriate setting to convey the property's significance in the area of architecture on the local level of significance.



John Shroat House National Register Boundary

V. Busbee Rural Historic District: Property Description and Evaluation

Resource Name	Busbee Rural Historic District
HPO Survey Site #	BN6318
Location	East side of Mills Gap Road and both sides of Concord Road, Busbee
PINs	Multiple PINs
Construction dates	1867-1962
Recommendation	Eligible for the National Register under Criteria A and C for Social History and Architecture



Concord Road, view to the east, in the Busbee Rural Historic District

Description

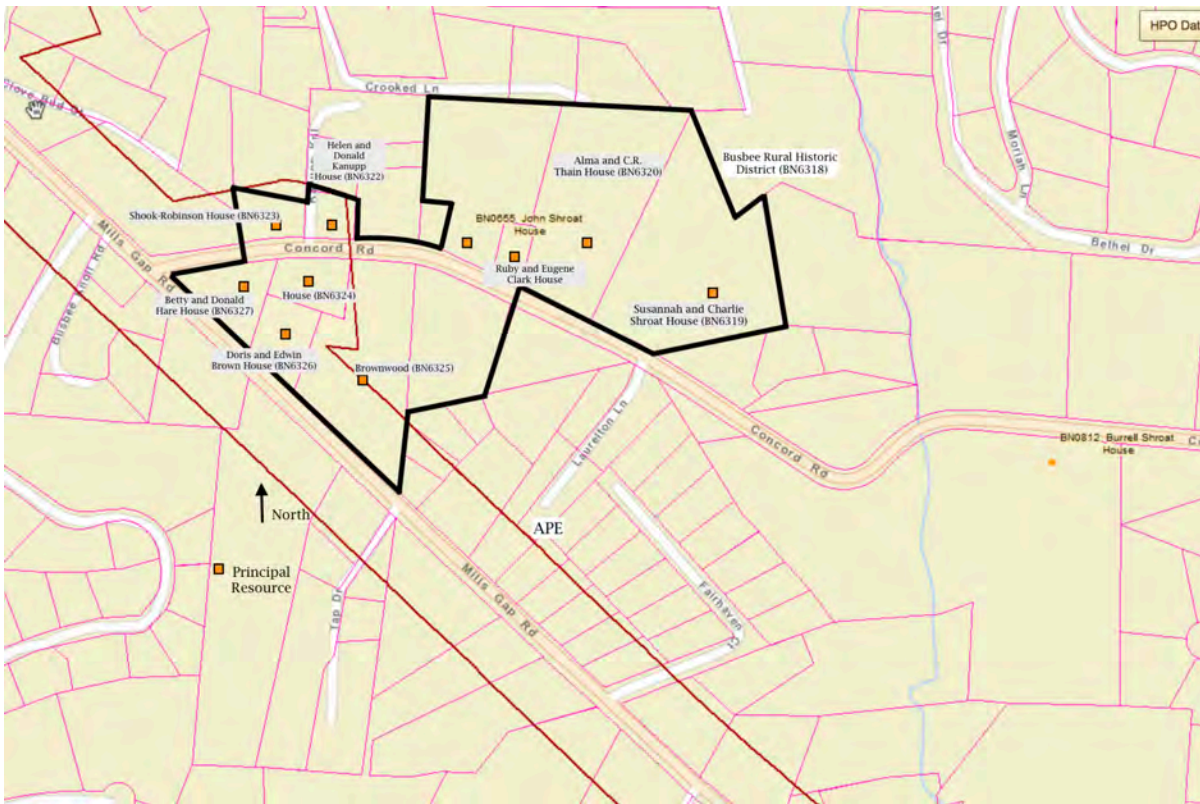
*Setting*

The Busbee Rural Historic District is located in the community of Busbee, which is just east of Skyland in southern Buncombe County. On historic USGS maps and the 1911 Rand McNally map of Buncombe County, Busbee is indicated as located slightly north and west of the study area for this report. But residents who grew up on SR 3150 (Concord Road) near its intersection with SR 3116 (Mills Gap Road) call the place where

they were raised Busbee. The likely reason maps show Busbee as located to the northwest is that was the location of the Busbee stop on the Southern Railway, a line that ran from the 1880s into the early 1960s.<sup>3</sup>

Despite increased suburbanization in this portion of Buncombe County south of Asheville, Busbee remains a mostly rural enclave. A mix of forest land and cleared fields line Mills Gap Road and Concord Road. Some dwellings stand close to the highway, while others are set back down long driveways from the increasingly busy corridors. The topography in the heart of Busbee is relatively flat and surrounded by hills and mountains characteristic of the terrain of western North Carolina. Robinson Creek, which originates from a spring on Brown Mountain to the west, runs through the historic district on the south side of Concord Road. Within the Busbee Rural Historic District both Mills Gap Road and Concord Road are two-lane paved highways lacking turn lanes or medians.

Busbee Rural Historic District contains exclusively domestic buildings dating from 1867 to 1962. Included in the district are two log dwellings from the nineteenth century, a mid-nineteenth century I-house, simple Craftsman-style weatherboard houses from the first half of the twentieth century, and a novelty log house built in the early 1960s. Outbuildings are rare in this community where farming has not played a major role in the economy in a century. Despite rapid and encroaching development, a landscape of forest, creeks, and fields provides a still-rural setting for the built resources in the district.



Busbee Rural Historic District map, from HPO Web

<sup>3</sup> Ola Thain Lisenbee, correspondence with Jennifer F. Martin, January 27, 2018.

## Inventory

1. Susannah and Charlie Shroat House (BN6319)  
42 Concord Road  
1932

Front-gabled bungalow with vinyl siding and original four-over-one windows. Brick chimney on east elevation stops at eave and no longer extends from roof. Charlie Shroat (1885-1937) and his wife, Susannah (1896-1963), a native of Newfoundland, built the house. He worked as an electrical engineer for Biltmore Hospital and she was a nurse at Violet Hill Sanitarium and later, St. Joseph's hospital.



Susannah and Charlie Shroat House, view northwest

2. Alma and C. R. Thain House (BN6320)  
32 Concord Road  
1948

Two-story, asymmetrically-massed dwelling with asbestos tile siding. Alma Shroat Thain and Clair Raleigh Thain, who owned a grocery store on Concord Road, built the house in 1948. The property includes a 1948 garage and a modern carport.





Alma and C. R. Thain House, view to the north



Alma and C. R. Thain garage, view to the east

3. Ruby and Eugene Clark House (BN6321)  
26 Concord Road  
1948, front additions 1990, rear additions 2008

Ruby Shroat's first husband, Roy Shroat, died in World War II at the age of 22. Ruby Shroat remarried Eugene Clark and her in-laws, Bessie and W. O. Shroat, sold this parcel to the Clarks. The Clarks built the house with a GI Bill loan in 1948. The Clarks sold the house to Alice and Cicero Huskins in 1957 (Buncombe County Deed Book 789, page 495). The current owners have owned it since 1994 (Book 1824, page 429). At least two additions have been made to the original house.



Ruby and Eugene Clark House, view to the northeast

4. John Shroat House (BN0655)  
22 Concord Road  
1867

Two-story, single-pile, weatherboard house with full-width, one-story, shed-roof porch. Built by John M. Shroat (1844-1898) who married Laura Florence Pinner in 1883. The couple had three children, including W. O. Shroat, who inherited the house. W. O. Shroat (1882-1952) was a mail carrier who married Bessie Lewis (1903-1999), a switchboard operator for Southern Railway. Their daughter, Ruth Shroat Klutz, inherited the house and upon her death, it passed to her son and the current owner, William Klutz. The house is not occupied.



John Shroat House, view to the northeast



John Shroat House facade, view to the north

5. Helen and Donald Kanupp House (BN6322)  
5 Kanupp Knoll  
1941, ca. 1960

One-story, front-gabled bungalow with front-gabled porch with plain wood posts and balustrade. The house features one-over-one replacement windows and vinyl siding. A gable-roofed addition containing the dining room and kitchen dates to around 1960. A ca. 1970 concrete block storage building with a metal roof stands behind the house. Helen and Donald Knapp likely built the house. The current owners purchased it in 2015. A modern house stands on a separate parcel on the mountainside behind the house.



Helen and Donald Kanupp House, view to the north-northwest. A modern house stands on a rise behind the historic house. It occupies a separate parcel that was once part of Kanupp family land.

6. Shook-Robinson House (BN6323)  
8 Concord Road  
Ca. 1930, ca. 1955

One-story, side-gabled, single-pile house with square wood posts supporting a hip-roofed, partial-façade porch. The house features a west gable-end brick chimney and an interior brick chimney. A shed-roofed addition extends from the rear elevation. Vinyl siding covers the exterior and windows have been replaced. A ca. 1955, front-gabled, vertical wood-sided garage stands in the rear yard. A modern, metal open carport is situated in front of the garage. A 1930 livestock barn with board-and-batten siding stands to the west of the house and is original to the property.

The Shooks, who operated a store that stood to the west, built the house.<sup>4</sup> They later sold it to the Griffins, who, in 1955, sold it to Ethel Snyder Robinson (1922-2007) and Mack C. Robinson (1919-1943), whose

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<sup>4</sup> Ola Thain Lisenbee, correspondence with Jennifer Martin, January 27, 2018.

descendants still own it. The Robinsons built a rear addition containing two bedrooms in the mid-1950s. Mack Robinson worked as a truck driver, while his wife managed the home and the couple's five children. According to Barbara Robinson Broadway, the family used the barn to house livestock.



Shook-Robinson-House, view to the north



Barn on Shook-Robinson House parcel, view to the north-northwest

7. House (BN6324)  
9 Concord Road  
Ca. 1880, moved in the first half of the twentieth century

One-story, half-dovetailed, single-pen log house with a one-story, gable-roofed log ell. A random-coursed stone chimney occupies the north gable end. Plain skinned logs support the shed-roofed front porch. A modern metal roof tops the house. Two skylights pierce the front roof slope on the façade. The house rests on a continuous stone foundation. A front-gabled wooden barn stands behind the house to the west. A tall wooden fence and Robinson Creek separates the house parcel from Concord Road.

According to the Barbara Robinson Broadway, who grew up on Concord Road, the house was moved, possibly from Weaverville. Z. Yates Brown and Annette Brown owned the house in the early twentieth century and likely had it moved, along with the log house at 11 Concord Road.



Facade of nineteenth century log house, view to the west



Side elevation, view to the south



Barn behind house (BN6324), view to the west-southwest



Fence fronting the house (BN6324) at 9 Concord Road, and Brownwood (BN6325), view to the west up Concord Road.

8. Brownwood (BN6325)  
11 Concord Road  
Nineteenth century, moved early twentieth century

Brownwood is a rare example of an early plank log house. One-and-a-half-story, half-dovetailed, single-pen, plank chestnut log house with a one-and-a-half-story log rear ell. The house rests on a well-crafted stone foundation and features a random-course straight-sided stone chimney on its west gable end. A small shed-roofed porch with plain wood supports shelters the front door. A shed-roofed porch with plain square posts extends along the west elevation of the rear ell. A flat-roofed stone garage topped with a deck with a round log and twisted laurel balustrade has been added to the east side of the rear ell. Metal roofing with skylights covers the house. A small, open-sided, gable-roofed well shelter stands to the east of the house and is likely modern. A tall wooden fence with a wood and wire gate borders the north side of the parcel along Concord Road.



The current owner and a neighbor report that the house was originally built as a hunting lodge for the Biltmore Estate.<sup>5</sup> This claim could not be confirmed, but George Vanderbilt was known to own several hunting cabins and small lodges throughout Pisgah Forest. Buckspring Lodge, which was demolished in 1961, served as his main hunting retreat. A plank log house referred to as the ranger's cabin was constructed near Buckspring Lodge to house the lodge's caretaker. That house was constructed of old plank logs from three settlers' cabins. In the early 1960s, Asheville resident Robert Allen procured the logs from the ranger's cabin and built a log cabin in Asheville's Royal Pines neighborhood.<sup>6</sup>

It is possible that Brownwood, later purchased and moved by Z. Yates Brown (1887-1957) and his wife Annette Brown, was one of the hunting cabins, lodges, or support buildings built for the Biltmore Estate using logs from early settlers' houses located on the land George Vanderbilt acquired in the late nineteenth century. The Browns apparently moved the log house in the early part of the twentieth century. An article in the *Asheville-Citizen Times* from May 5, 1935, noted that Mr. and Mrs. Z. Y. Brown, who lived in Norwood Park in Asheville, "have moved to their summer cabin, 'Brownwood' on the Mills Gap Road at Busbee."



Brownwood, view to the southwest

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<sup>5</sup> Clark Trask, correspondence with Jennifer Martin, January 29, 2018; Greg Matia, interview with Jennifer Martin, January 14, 2018.

<sup>6</sup> "A Great Camp in the Great Outdoors," Open House: The Official Blog of Biltmore, <http://www.biltmore.com/blog/article/a-great-camp-in-the-great-outdoors>, accessed February 2, 2018.



Brownwood, view to the southeast



Gate for driveway to Brownwood, view to the southeast

9. Doris and Edwin Brown House (BN6326)  
294 Mills Gap Road  
1962, 2000

Doris and Edwin Brown, son of Annette and Z. Y. Brown, built the one-story, asymmetrically-massed, modern novelty log house in the early 1960s. Around 2000, an addition was built on the rear. An early 1960s well house with open sides and a gable roof stands west of the house.



Doris and Edwin Brown House, view to the northeast

10. Betty and Donald Hare House (BN6327)  
286 Mills Gap Road  
Ca. 1949

One-story, side-gabled heavily altered house with a gable end brick chimney and aluminum siding. Windows have been replaced. A concrete block can house for food storage stands southeast of the house. A single-wide mobile home and a gable-roofed modern wood shed also occupy the parcel. The Hares owned the house in the 1960s.



Betty and Donald Hare House, view to the south



Single-wide mobile home on the Hare House parcel. view to the southeast



Busbee Noted on a portion of the 1900 Railroad Map of North Carolina from UNC-CH Digital Maps Collection. Accessed February 15, 2018

### History

Located in Limestone Township just north of the border between Buncombe and Henderson counties, Busbee was first settled in the early nineteenth century when a man named Busbee built a cabin in the hollow on the western slope of a two-peaked mountain in the area. That mountain was later named Busbee Mountain.<sup>7</sup> Around the time Busbee settled in this part of Limestone Township, John Shroat came to the area and built a house (BN0655) on Concord Road. The Shroats were the earliest settlers in the area along Concord Road near Mills Gap Road and owned much of the land east of Mills Gap Road.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> "How They Began," *Asheville Citizen-Times*, December 1, 1981.

<sup>8</sup> Ola Thain Lisenbee, interview with Jennifer Martin, January 14, 2018

In 1886, the Richmond and Danville Railroad, later the Southern Railway, completed a rail line in southern Buncombe County connecting Asheville and Spartanburg, South Carolina. Busbee, along with the nearby community of Skyland, became stops on the railroad.<sup>9</sup>

In 1888, an Asheville newspaper reporter described Busbee:

The country is characterized by a series of low-lying valleys with gently undulating surfaces and heightened with frequent sparkling little streams margined with meadows; and the whole is set in a framework of wooded hills rising gradually to the dignity of mountains blending in very close proximity the widest contrasts of scenery and the most charming combinations of landscape.<sup>10</sup>

In the early twentieth century, Busbee developed into a farming and residential community with most residents tending small amounts of acreage.<sup>11</sup> Those not farming as their main occupations worked as laborers or professionals. The rural setting also attracted Asheville residents seeking a summer or weekend retreat. Z. Yates Brown, who worked for Southern Railway, and his wife Annette created such a retreat at Brownwood (BN6325) on Concord Road when they, according to oral tradition, moved a log house to the site to create a vacation home.

Like most of rural Buncombe County, highway transportation in and around Busbee remained difficult into the twentieth century so that large scale agriculture never developed. In 1929, the county improved what is now Concord Road from Mills Gap Road to Merrill's Cove to the east.<sup>12</sup> Prior to this, Concord Road was a crude and unreliable path.

In 1940, Busbee residents Effie and Gay Green donated two acres for the construction of a community center. The Busbee Community Center was built on Busbee Knoll Road on the west side of Mills Gap Road, just opposite Concord Road. The center hosted a variety of gatherings and became a frequent site for the activities of the local home demonstration club.<sup>13</sup> Access to Busbee was greatly improved in 1941 when the WPA hard-surfaced Mills Gap Road from Sweeten Creek Road to Cane Creek Road, which lies to the southeast of Busbee. The WPA completed the improvements under a farm-to-market project designed to boost agricultural production and improve access to markets.<sup>14</sup>

In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, Busbee transitioned to a suburban settlement no longer geared toward farming. Housing developments and commercial enterprises have sprung up around

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<sup>9</sup> *Third Annual Report of the Board of Railroad Commissioners of North Carolina, Year Ending December 31, 1893* (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton, 1894), 215.

<sup>10</sup> "A Day in the Country," *Asheville Citizen-Times*, August 22, 1888.

<sup>11</sup> Limestone Township, Buncombe County, North Carolina, 1900 Federal Census of Population, [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com), accessed February 2, 2018.

<sup>12</sup> "Bids are Asked on New Highway," *Asheville Citizen-Times*, August 9, 1929.

<sup>13</sup> Buncombe County Deed Book 522, page 42, dated November 1, 1941; "Gay Green Gives Land for Community Center," *Asheville Citizen-Times*, October 29, 1940.

<sup>14</sup> Seek WPA Project for Building Airport Road," *Asheville Citizen-Times*, November 27, 1941.

Busbee as the suburban population of Asheville has expanded. Around 2015, the county demolished the Busbee Community Center and sold the property to a land holding company.<sup>15</sup>

### Context

Small unincorporated communities served as social and economic hubs for rural residents in Buncombe County in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The challenges of mountain topography coupled with roads in poor condition made travel to larger communities like Asheville or Black Mountain difficult. As a result, places where residents were concentrated—sometimes around churches, mills, or stores—became the center of rural life. Many of these communities did not present themselves as discernable enclaves. This was especially true in the southern Blue Ridge Mountains where topography often interrupted the visual connection between the places where people lived and gathered. Nevertheless, the awareness of a sense of community and social bond persevered in the collective sensibilities of residents.

Busbee, which typifies the rural mountain community lacking any type of official designation, is just one of many such places in the county. In northwest Buncombe County, Leicester began in the early nineteenth century with the establishment of a post office. Centered around the intersection of New Leicester Highway and Alexander Road, the unincorporated community boasts a collection of dwellings and commercial buildings from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Development in the form of modern commercial buildings within the Leicester Historic District (BN1248, Study List) and large residential neighborhoods on its outskirts threaten the historic character of this community once known as the breadbasket of Buncombe County.

### Evaluation

The Busbee Rural Historic District is a defined geographical area that historically has been used by people and modified by human activity, occupancy, or intervention, and that possesses a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of areas of land use, vegetation, buildings and structures, roads and waterways, and natural features. The Busbee Rural Historic District remains at its original location and therefore retains integrity of location. The district possesses integrity of setting because it remains in a rural setting where it began in the mid-nineteenth century. Modern development does not detract for the district's overall integrity of materials. The district possesses integrity of association because it is mostly intact and overall retains the appearance and form it had over the decades it evolved. The district evokes the aesthetic or historic sense of a rural unincorporated mountain community where buildings exist within a landscape of open space and forested parcels. The physical evidence of the craftsmanship of the district's historic buildings contribute to its integrity of workmanship. Finally, the composition of elements that constitute the form, plan, space, and style of the district—including landscape, topography, and architectural aesthetic—are intact and therefore it retains its integrity of design.

Properties can be eligible for the NRHP if they are associated with a significant event or pattern of events that have made contributions to history at the local, state, or national level. The Busbee Rural Historic District demonstrates the development of a small mountain settlement in Buncombe County over a period from the mid-nineteenth century to the 1960s. Through their traditions, tastes, technologies, and

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<sup>15</sup> Buncombe County Deed Book 5368, page 1934, dated November 2, 2015.

activities, generations of people living in Busbee have consciously and unconsciously modified the natural environment of this part of Buncombe County to create this rural historic district. Therefore, the district is recommended eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A in the area of social history as a place that has served as a social hub for nineteenth-century settlers and subsequent residents in southern Buncombe County.

No one associated with the Busbee Rural Historic District achieved any particular significance on the national, state, or local level. The district therefore is not recommended eligible for the NRHP under Criterion B.

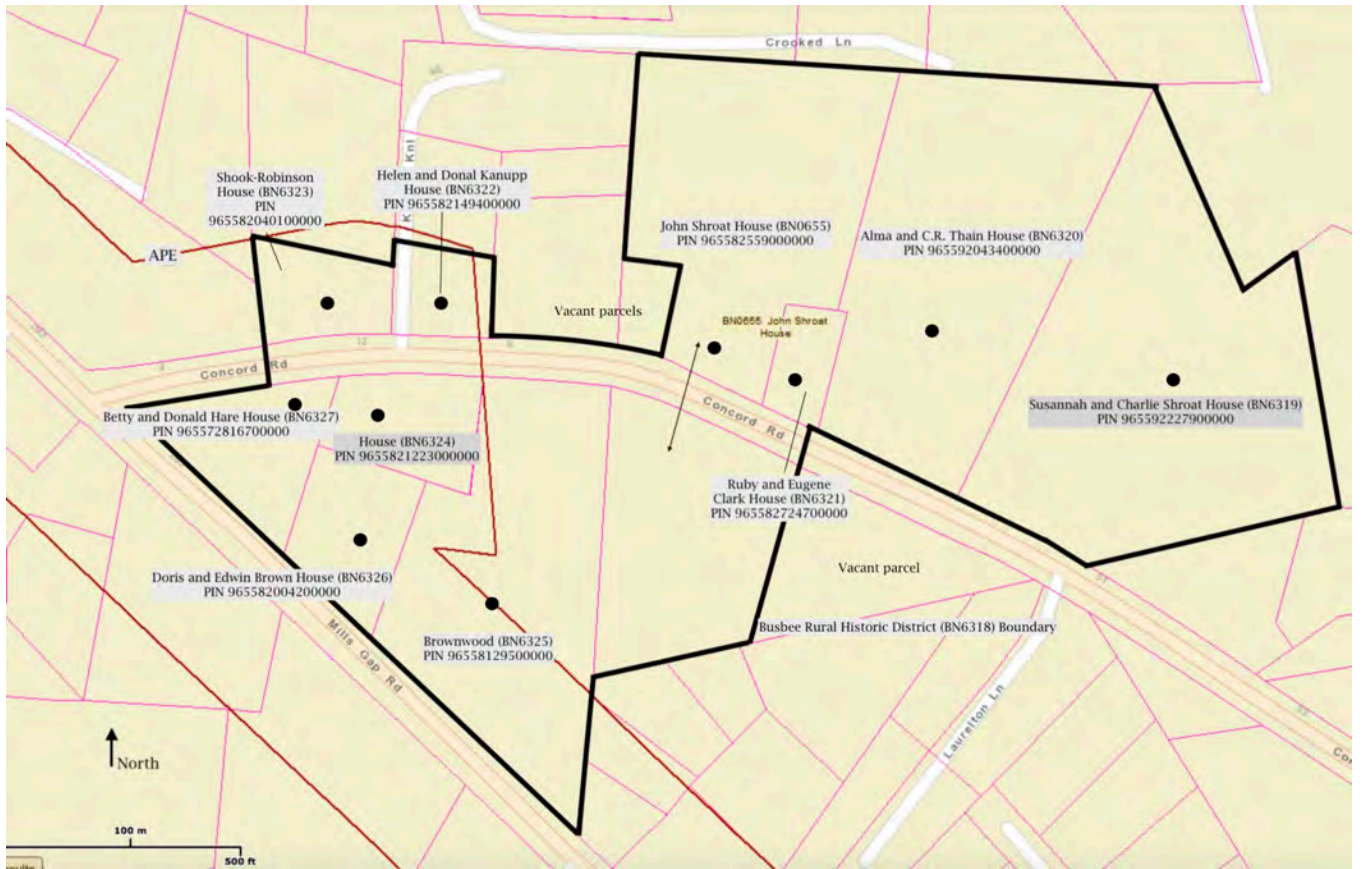
The Busbee Rural Historic District retains a high degree of integrity that conveys the distinctive characteristics of a rural historic district with built resources dating from 1867 to 1962. The historic dwellings in the Busbee Rural Historic District illustrate the types and forms of buildings that demonstrate the evolution of architecture of the southern Appalachians—from vernacular forms like half-dovetailed log buildings and I-houses to a modern interpretation of the pioneer log home. Especially significant are the John Shroat House (BN0655), a mid-nineteenth-century I-house, and Brownwood (BN6325), an early plank log house.

It is unlikely that additional study of this property would yield any unretrieved data not discoverable through informant interviews, building technology, and documentary sources. Therefore, the Busbee Rural Historic District is recommended not eligible for the NRHP under Criterion D.

#### Boundary Description

The recommended NRHP boundary for the Busbee Rural Historic District includes multiple parcels under multiple ownerships. The boundary includes the greatest concentration of historic resources associated with the community of Busbee in the Limestone Township of southern Buncombe County. Ten principal historic resources and a significant landscape and setting comprise the Busbee Rural Historic District. The boundary represents the land, resources, and features associated with the Busbee Rural Historic District. The approximately twenty-five acres constituting the district is an appropriate setting to convey the property's significance in the areas of social history and architecture on the local level of significance.





Busbee Rural Historic District map with PINS (map from HPO Web)

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