



**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

February 7, 2019

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Vanessa Patrick  
Human Environment Unit  
NC Department of Transportation

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

**SUBJECT:** Historic Structures Survey Report, BR-0036, Replace Bridge 41 on NC 33 over I-95,  
PA 17-12-0062, Nash County, ER 19-0081

Thank you for your December 19, 2018, memorandum transmitting the above-referenced report. We have reviewed the report and concur that the O. J. Cotton Gin, Seed House and Well (NS0513) are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A for agriculture and industry and C for architecture. However, we do not concur with the proposed boundary. Rather than the existing right-of-way south of the ditch along Swift Creek School Road, we believe the bottom of the ditch along the road to be a better boundary.

We also concur that the following properties are not eligible for listing for the reasons outlined in the report.

- Hickory Baptist Church (NS0512)
- Faucett House (NS1498)
- Smith Tenant House (NS1499)

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 919-814-6579 or [environmental.review@ncdcr.gov](mailto:environmental.review@ncdcr.gov). In all future communication concerning this project, please cite the above referenced tracking number.

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



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

ROY COOPER  
GOVERNOR

JAMES H. TROGDON, III  
SECRETARY

**ER 19-0081**

To: Renee Gledhill-Earley, NCHPO

From: Vanessa E. Patrick, NCDOT

Due -- 2/5/19

Date: December 19, 2018

Subject: *Historic Structures Survey Report. Replace Bridge No. 41 on NC 33 over I-95, Nash County, North Carolina. TIP No. BR-0036. WBS No. 67036.1.1. PA No. 17-12-0062.*

H- ER Letters  
2/6

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) is conducting planning studies for the above-referenced project. Enclosed for your review is a report presenting the evaluation of historic architectural resources in the BR-0036, Nash County project area (one hard copy and one CD-ROM). Survey photographs, GIS data, and site forms are included on the CD-ROM, and hard copies of the site forms are also provided.

The report considers four resources – the Hickory Baptist Church (NS0512), the O. J. Smith Cotton Gin (NS0513), the Faucett House (NS1498), and the Smith Tenant House (NS1499). The O. J. Smith Cotton Gin (NS0513) is recommended as eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, the remaining three resources as not eligible. Initial screening of the project area by NCDOT Historic Architecture identified which resources warranted additional study; Bridge No. 41 is not National Register-eligible.

We look forward to receiving your comments on the report. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [vepatrick@ncdot.gov](mailto:vepatrick@ncdot.gov) or 919-707-6082. Thank you.

V.E.P.

Attachments

**Historic Structures Survey Report  
Replace Bridge No. 41 on NC 33 Over I-95  
Nash County, North Carolina**

T.I.P No. BR-0036  
WBS# 67036.1.1  
PA No. 17-12-0062

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

Prepared by  
Cardno, Inc.  
5400 Glenwood Avenue, Suite G-3  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27612

December 3, 2018 – Final Report

**Historic Structures Survey Report  
Replace Bridge No. 41 on NC 33 Over I-95  
Nash County, North Carolina**

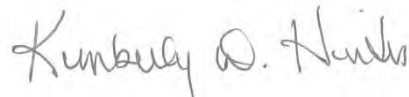
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Raleigh, North Carolina 27612

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Mary Pope Furr, NCDOT Historic Architecture Supervisor



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Kimberly D. Hinder, Cardno Principal Investigator

December 3, 2018 – Final Report

## MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes to replace Bridge No. 41 on NC 33 over I-95 in Nash County (T.I.P. No. BR-0036, WBS No. 67036.1.1, PA No. 17-12-0062). In May 2018, NCDOT requested that Cardno, Inc., complete an assessment of the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility of certain resources within the Area of Potential Effects (APE) and provide this report.

As a result of this study, Cardno recommends that the O.J. Smith Cotton Gin (NS513) be considered eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A for its association with the cotton industry in rural agricultural community of Hickory and Nash County and Criterion C for its architectural design as a largely unaltered cotton gin indicative of its time and period of construction.

Hickory Baptist Church (NS512) does not appear NRHP eligible due to a loss of integrity. Although of historical interest, the original design has been lost due to extensive alterations and additions. The building is not representative of early church design, and no longer exhibits its nineteenth or early twentieth century appearance. It does not retain sufficient integrity for listing.

Similarly, the Smith Tenant House (NS1499) does not retain sufficient integrity to be considered eligible for the NRHP. While the building appears to be in its original location and retains the Bungalow design, its materials and workmanship have been diminished through deterioration and removal of siding and windows. It is not of high artistic merit and does not represent significant historical events or people.

As an altered example of the typical central hall double-pile cottage, the Faucett House (NS1498) does not retain sufficient integrity for listing in the NRHP either. Although in its original location, additions have impacted its design and it has limited associations with significant persons or events.

<b>Property Name</b>	<b>NCHPO Survey Site Number</b>	<b>NRHP Eligibility Recommendation</b>	<b>NRHP Criteria</b>
Hickory Baptist Church	NS512	Not eligible	Not applicable
O.J. Smith Cotton Gin	NS513	Eligible	Criteria A and C
Faucett House at 12644 NC 48	NS1498	Not eligible	Not applicable
Smith Tenant House at 8101 Swift Creek School Road	NS1499	Not eligible	Not applicable

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## I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND METHODOLOGY

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes to replace bridge No. 41 on NC 33 over I-95 in Nash County (T.I.P. No. BR-0036, WBS No. 67036.1.1, PA No. 17-12-0062). This project is subject to review under the *Section 106 Programmatic Agreement for Minor Transportation Projects* (NCDOT/NCHPO/FHWA/USFS 2015). NCDOT architectural historians established an Area of Potential Effects (APE) for the project and conducted a preliminary investigation to identify and assess all resources of approximately fifty years of age or more within the APE resources. Only four resources warranted an intensive National Register eligibility evaluation, and they are the subjects of this report (Figure 1). NCDOT architectural historians determined that all other properties and districts are not worthy of further study and evaluation due to lack of historical significance and/or integrity.

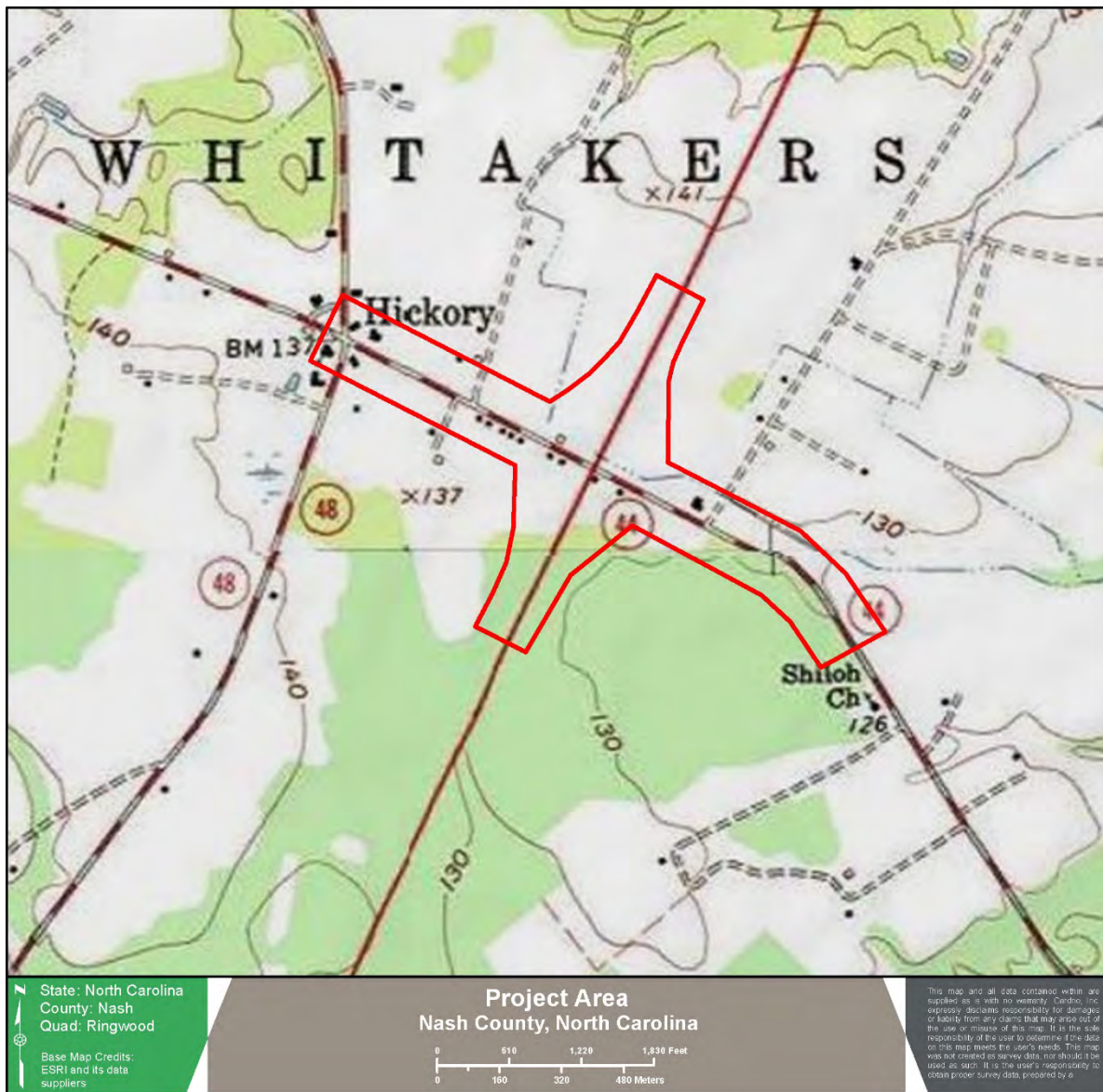
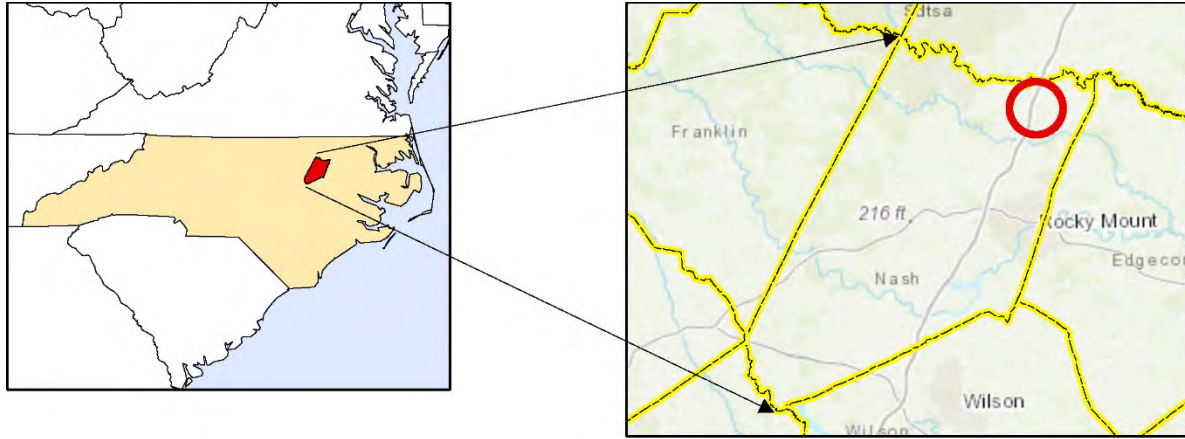
In May 2018, NCDOT requested that Cardno, Inc., complete an intensive-level survey and assess the NRHP eligibility of two individual properties in the project APE. Background research identified two additional previously recorded residences on the same tax parcel as the O.J. Smith Cotton Gin (Figure 2 and Figure 3).

- Hickory Baptist Church, 12702 NC 48 (PIN: 385600378836)
- O.J. Smith Cotton Gin, 8283 Swift Creek School Road (PIN: 3856002656690)
- Faucett House, 12644 NC 48 (PIN: 3856002656690)
- Smith Tenant House, 8101 Swift Creek School Road (PIN: 3856002656690)

On May 16 and 17, 2018, Cardno senior architectural historian Kimberly Hinder visited the properties listed above assisted by Valerie Nobles (archaeologist). Each building was visually inspected, and the exterior, interior (when accessible), and setting were documented through written notes and digital photographs. Site visits to other historic structures within Nash County and northeastern North Carolina provided an architectural context for the resources under evaluation.

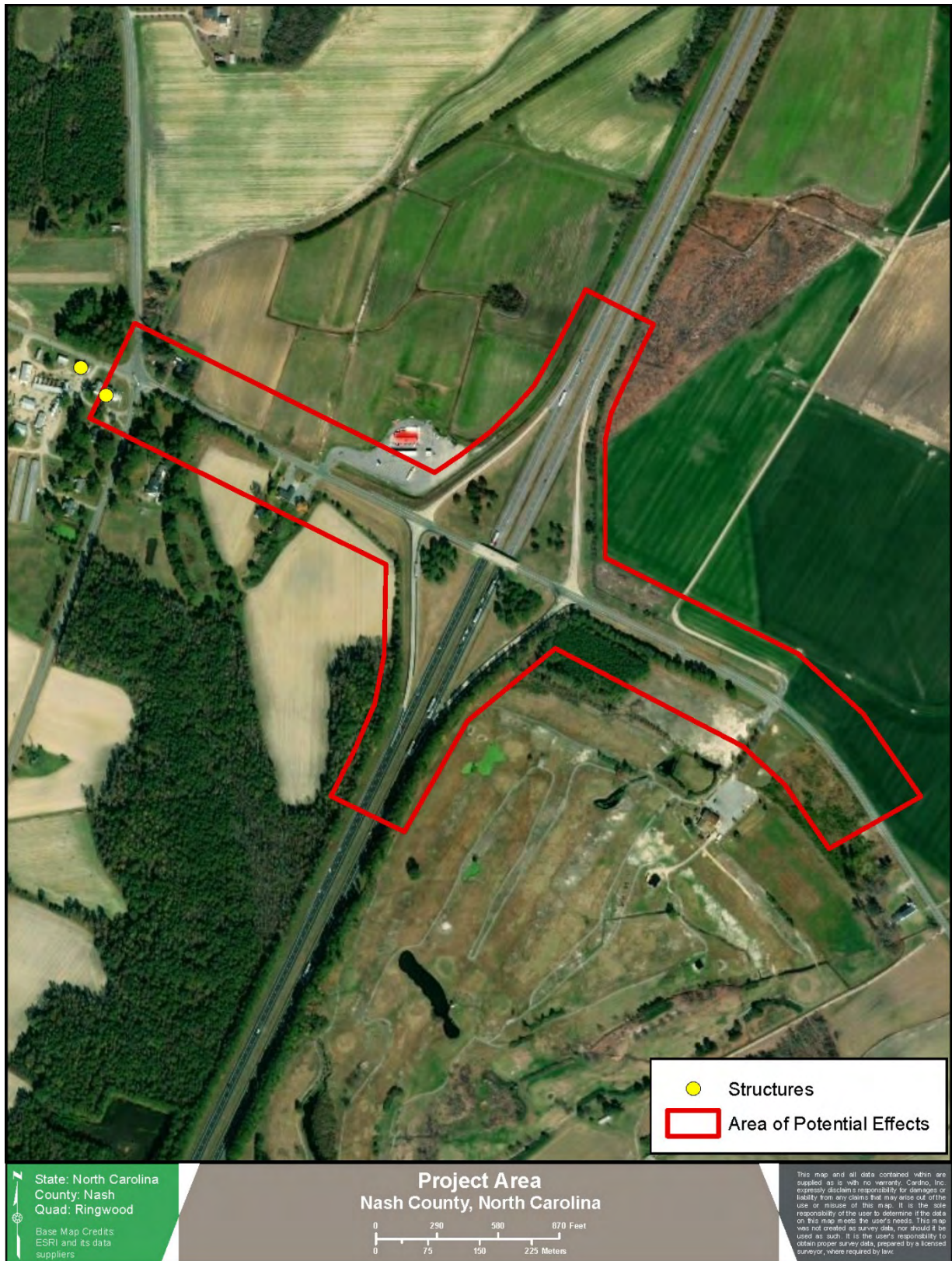
Basic research was conducted prior to the site visit including Nash County GIS and tax records and a search of the historic structure records. Copies of prior survey forms for relevant resources were obtained from the North Carolina Historic Preservation Office (HPO). Additional information came from the Whitakers Public Library and the Kornegay Local History Room at the Braswell Memorial Library in Rocky Mount. Attempts to contact Joseth Bocook, Planner with the Rocky Mount Historic Preservation Commission, the Hickory Baptist Church, and the Rural Nash Historical Society were not successful. Informants interviewed included:

- > Traci Thompson, Local History/Genealogy Librarian, at the Kornegay Local History Room, Braswell Memorial Library, Rocky Mount;
- > Phillip Watson, great-grandson of O.J. Smith and manager of O.J. Smith Farms Hickory Meadows Organics.

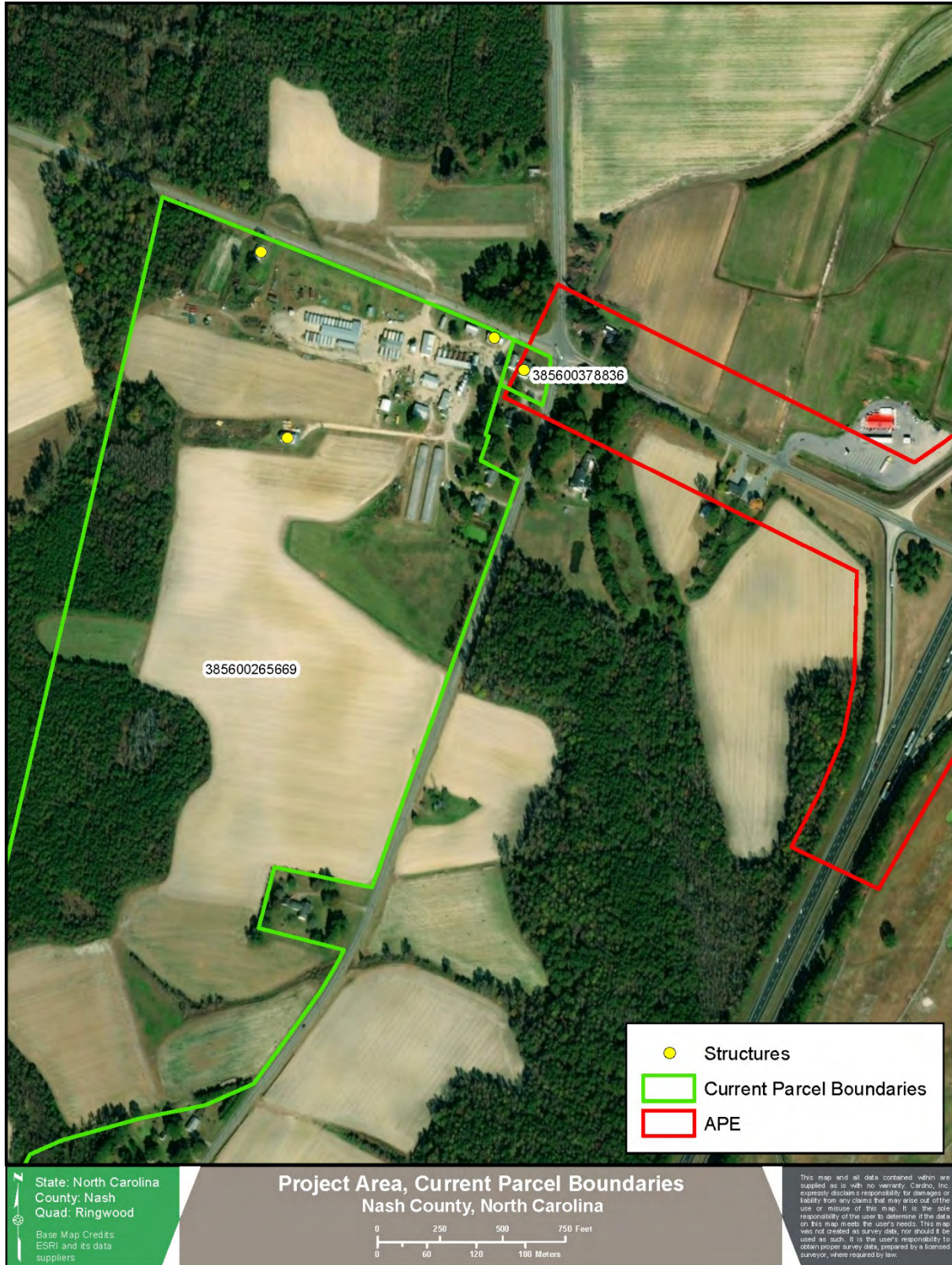


**Figure 1. Project location map, Nash County, North Carolina.**





**Figure 2. Aerial photograph showing APE and historic resources.**



**Figure 3. Aerial showing parcels and historic resources.**

## II. PROPERTY EVALUATION

### Hickory Baptist Church

Resource Name	Hickory Baptist Church (Figure 4)
HPO Survey Site Number	NS512
Location	12702 NC 48, Hickory
PIN	385600378836
Date of Construction	ca. 1909
Recommendation	Not Eligible



**Figure 4. Hickory Baptist Church, front (east) elevation.**

### SETTING

Hickory Baptist Church is located on the southwest corner of NC 48 and NC 33 (Swift Creek School Road) in North Whitakers Township of Nash County (Figure 2, Figure 3 and Figure 4). To the east and south of the church is the parcel occupied by the O.J. Smith Farms Hickory Meadows Organics business which incorporates the O.J. Smith Cotton Gin and surrounding agricultural structures, several residences, and agricultural fields. The cotton gin and associated seed house are immediately west of the church (Figure 5). Lands to the south and west of this parcel are predominately planted with crops (Figure 6). Immediately south of the church is a ca. 1926

residence at 12684 NC 48 which is on a separate parcel from the church and the O.J. Smith Farms property (Figure 7). South of this building is the parsonage associated with the church which was constructed at 12630 NC 48 in 1961 (Figure 8). It too is on a separate parcel from the church and the O.J. Smith Farms property. On the northwest corner of the intersection of NC 48 and Swift Creek School Road is a residence surrounded by agricultural fields. Two former country stores occupy the northeast and southeast corners of the intersection with a few houses to the east and south (Figure 9 and Figure 10). Interstate 95 was constructed approximately 0.35 miles east of the intersection of NC 48 and Swift Creek School Road in the late 1960s. A Stuckey's Pecan Shoppe, Inc., one of a chain of over 200 stores offering novelties and candies, was constructed ca. 1968 on the northwest corner of the interstate interchange, while an Exxon Station was built on the southwest corner the following year. No other buildings are located at this interchange. In spite of the construction of the interstate, the area remains predominately rural in nature.



**Figure 5. Looking west from in front of the Hickory Baptist Church.**



**Figure 6.** Looking south from the residence at 12612 NC 48, which is on the O.J. Smith Cotton Gin property.



**Figure 7.** The ca. 1926 residence at 12684 NC 48 immediately south of Hickory Baptist Church.



**Figure 8. The ca. 1961 Hickory Baptist Church Parsonage at 12630 NC 48.**



**Figure 9. Looking north along NC 48 to intersection with Swift Creek School Road. Hickory Baptist Church on left.**



**Figure 10.** Looking east along Swift Creek School Road from the intersection of NC 48 toward Interstate 95.

## DESCRIPTION

The original form of this one-story church was a two-bay wide by three-bay long rectangle, but subsequent additions have created an irregular shape (Figure 11). In 1947, a vestibule was added to the front elevation and an addition with Sunday School rooms was attached to the rear (Figure 12). In 1981, the Gold Rock Community Club building was relocated to the property and attached by a connector to the west end of the Sunday School addition to serve as a Fellowship Hall (Figure 13). The original mass of the building has a gable roof with cornice returns. The vestibule has a closed gable roof with a pent roof along the east elevation. The Sunday School addition has a hip roof, while both the connector and the Fellowship Hall have gable roofs. All of the roofs are surfaced with composition shingles. The entire building is clad with vinyl siding. The original building and the Sunday School addition rest on a continuous brick foundation pierced by vents, while the connector and Fellowship Hall have a continuous concrete block foundation.

According to a 1994 article on the history of the church, the building originally had two front entrances “whose outlines still are visible, and two sets of stairs were used at the front of the church. Men sat on one side of the one-room sanctuary; and women, on the other side” (*Nashville Graphic* 12/3/1994). No exterior evidence remains of these entrances. Now, the primary entrance, centrally located in the vestibule, has paired six-panel doors set under a triangular transom with stained glass lights along the upper two sides (Figure 14). Access is provided by concrete steps with a metal pipe handrail flanked by brick wing walls. This entrance is flanked by windows. A secondary entrance on the west side of the building into the Fellowship Hall has a portico with a gable roof supported by square wood posts set on a poured concrete slab set on the concrete block

foundation. It is accessed by concrete steps flanked by pipe railings. The door at this entrance is a six-light, three-panel door. A concrete and brick handicap ramp is attached to the south elevation of the connector and provides access to the building through a shed roofed portico supported by a wrought iron post. The door at this elevation has a nine-light, two-panel door. Another entrance is through a hipped roof porch supported by a square wood post on the northeast corner of the Fellowship Hall addition.

The windows in the vestibule and the Sunday school addition are independently placed rectangular, wood, double-hung sash with an inset decorative design of a pointed arch using smaller stained glass lights. Windows on the sanctuary have the same design spread over a transom window and the double-hung sash (Figure 15). Windows on the Fellowship Hall are independently placed and paired wood six-over-six double-hung sash. All windows have exterior storms. An attached pump house is on the south elevation of the Fellowship Hall. Access to the interior was not provided at the time of the site visit.



**Figure 11. Hickory Baptist Church, front (east) and south elevations, looking northwest.**





**Figure 12. Hickory Baptist Church, north elevation, looking south.**



**Figure 13. Hickory Baptist Church, rear (west) and south elevations, looking northeast.**



**Figure 14.** Hickory Baptist Church, detail of east entrance, looking northwest.



**Figure 15. Hickory Baptist Church, detail of window on south elevation, looking north.**

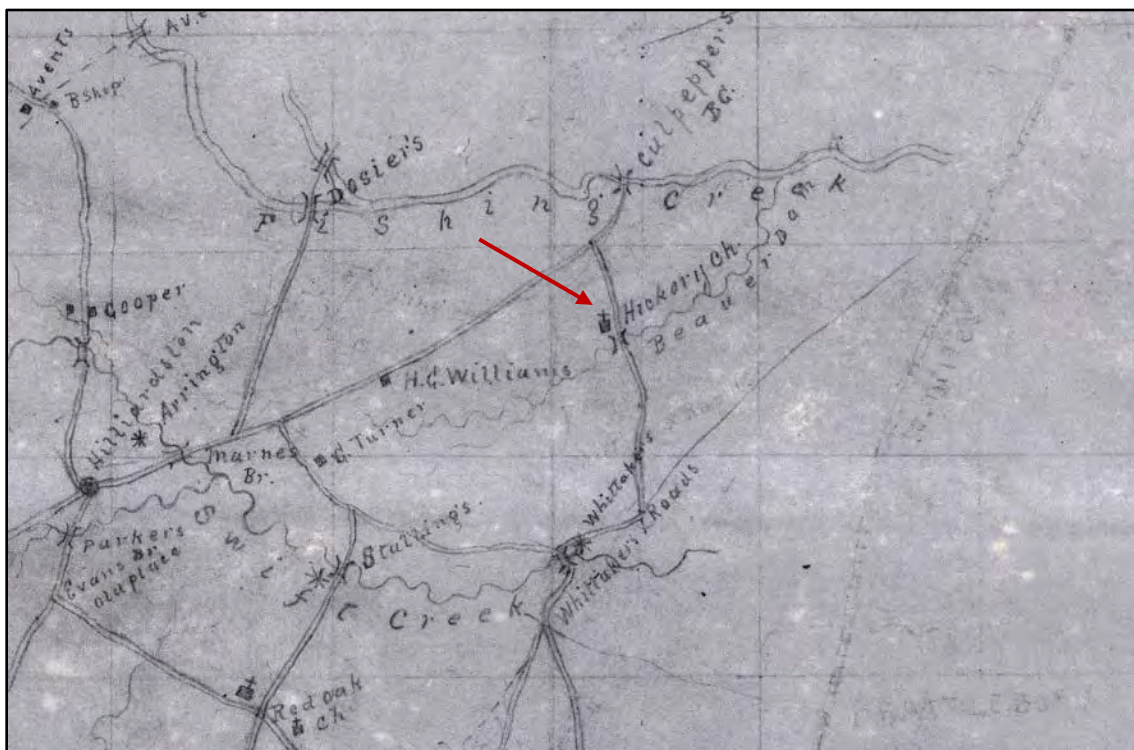
## **HISTORY**

The Nash County Tax Department does not list a “year built” date for this church, but has a date of 1968 for “effective year built.” The construction date of the existing structure remains unknown, although most articles on the history of the church indicate that it is the original building. However, the Nash County Heritage Book Committee and County Heritage, Inc. indicated in their *Nash County North Carolina Heritage 1777-2011*, that the current building was constructed in 1909 (Ricks 1976:170; Nash County Heritage Book Committee and County Heritage, Inc. 2011:17).

Deed and archival research indicate that a church was established in 1829. On February 4, 1829, A.D. Powell sold one acre of land for five dollars to trustees Samuel Higgs, Nathaniel Harrison, Samuel Arrington, Cullen Powell, and Thomas Nicholson. Powell transferred the land “for the purpose of building a meeting house free for all denominations of religious societys [sic] to meet

and preach in under the name of Hickory Chapel” (Deed Book 12, Page 415). A church building was built soon thereafter and presumably named for the number of hickory trees near the church (*Nashville Graphic* 3/18/1975; Nash County Heritage Book Committee and County Heritage, Inc. 2011:5). A settlement grew around the church consisting primarily of farms and small stores catering to the local population.

A church building was in place when the Tar River Association met at Hickory Chapel on the fourth Sunday in October in 1833. In 1843, an advertisement by George M. Thompson in the *Biblical Recorder* published in Raleigh announced that “a Protracted Meeting will be held with the Church at Hickory Chapel, Nash County, to commence on Friday before the third Sunday in September” (*Biblical Recorder* 8/5/1843). Church membership in 1844 included 20 white members and 16 African American congregants who met for monthly services. G.W. Powell served as the delegate from the church to the Tar River Association. In 1854, T.W. Powell was selected to represent the organization as a trustee of Wake Forest College. Traveling minister Elder T. Wilcox served the congregation in that year, and was followed by G.M. L. Finch in 1856. At the time of a 1975 article on the history of Hickory, association minutes were available for every year during the Civil War except 1864. The church was included as an important landmark on maps during the Civil War (Figure 16; Fitzhugh ca. 1861). After the war, P.D. Gold, J.G. Barclay, and G.M. Duke acted as pastor in 1867, 1869, and 1873, respectively. By 1876, membership totaled 90 individuals with a salary of \$125 for the reverend (*Nashville Graphic* 3/18/1975, 12/18/1987, 12/30/1994; Nash County Heritage Book Committee and County Heritage, Inc. 2011:17).



**Figure 16. Portion of Sketch of Nash County North of Tar River, with arrow indicating Hickory Church (Fitzhugh ca. 1861).**

Although it remains unknown when the dedication of Hickory Chapel to the Baptist denomination occurred, the church was known as Hickory Baptist Church by 1909 (*Nashville Graphic* 7/22/1909). According to church historian Virginia Hux, the congregation accommodated both white and black members until after the Civil War. African American members organized their own church called Shiloh Baptist Church in 1878 and built a sanctuary ca. 1900. The nearby Salem Church started as a mission of Hickory Baptist Church in 1907 and remained as such until 1952. The pastor held services at Hickory Baptist Church in the morning, followed by the Salem Mission in the afternoon (*Nashville Graphic* 12/18/1987, 12/30/1994).

The historic building has been remodeled several times. In 1924, O.J. Smith provided electricity to the church using the Delco plant he installed for his business. In 1947, the congregation added pews, built the vestibule at the front entrance, and constructed the Sunday School addition to the rear. In 1950, W.S. O'Briant and O.J. Smith provided a heating system for the church. A new heating system and air conditioning were installed in 1973. Between 1966 and 1968, the church acquired a new organ, pews, and pulpit furniture (*Nashville Graphic* 3/18/1975, 12/18/1987, 12/30/1994). In 1961, O.J. and Minnie Smith sold a parcel for the construction of a parsonage provided that the Hickory Baptist Church remain affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention (Deed Book 731 Page 451). The mortgage on the parsonage was satisfied in 1968 and celebrated with the burning of the note (*Rocky Mount Telegram* 11/18/1968; Ricks 1976:170; Nash County Heritage Book Committee and County Heritage, Inc. 2011:17).

With no Fellowship Hall, informal church gatherings were held under the trees in the churchyard. In 1981, the church acquired the Gold Rock Community Club (also known as the Home Demonstration Club) which was built using Work Projects Administration (WPA) funds in 1939 at the intersection of NC 48 and SR 1510 (Watson Seed Farm Road) to the south. The congregation moved the building and set it on a new foundation at the west end of their building to serve as a Fellowship Hall (*Nashville Graphic* 3/18/1975, 12/18/1987, 12/30/1994; *Rocky Mount Telegram* 8/15/1939).

## **ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT**

Lacking a steeple, tower, or temple-front, this church represents a vernacular tradition exhibiting a simple, wood frame, rectangular, one-story construction as is typical with early rural churches. Nineteenth century churches typically had a gable roof, an entrance on the gable end, and rectangular windows (Van West, et al., 2000:31). The pointed arched design in the windows of this edifice leans toward a Gothic Revival style, but any other architectural detailing has been removed or obscured with the application of vinyl siding. As the windows in the sanctuary match those in the vestibule and Sunday School section, it is likely the existing windows date to the additions' 1947 construction. No historic photos were found in the limited information available. The extensive alterations to this church have changed its original form and front façade so it is unknown if a steeple or tower ever existed. The building does not display any particular style.

The North Carolina state survey inventory maintained by the HPO includes 56 recorded churches in Nash County. Of these, the York Chapel (NS441), Shiloh Church (NS1025), and the Whitakers Baptist Church (NS546) were analyzed for comparison. York Chapel is a one-story, wood frame church built between 1882 and 1885 along a stage route near Hilliardston (Figure 17). The form exhibits a Gable-End Church design with a short steeple. The rectangular building has cornice returns, classical corner boards, and four-over-four double-hung sash windows. The front entrance has paired four-panel doors set within a gabled portico supported by grouped square wood posts. The church remains an excellent example of a rural church with a high degree of architectural integrity.



**Figure 17. York Chapel (NS441), 9779 York Chapel Road, looking southeast.**

Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church was constructed ca. 1900 by the African Americans who were formerly members of Hickory Baptist Church (Figure 18). The wood frame building exhibits the Side-Steeple Church form with the primary entrance centrally located in the gable end instead of the steeple. Like Hickory Baptist Church, Shiloh Church has rectangular, double-hung sash windows with a pointed arch design in stained glass. The building is clad with vinyl siding and the main entrance has a modern replacement stoop with a flat roof and a new door. Additions have

been attached to the rear. Overall, the structure retains its original form and overall design, in spite of some replacement materials and additions.



**Figure 18. Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church (NS1025), 9191 NC 33, looking southwest.**

Whitakers Baptist Church was completed in 1910 demonstrating a vernacular interpretation of the Gothic Revival style typical of churches in small towns (Figure 19). The wood frame building has a Side-Steeple Church form with the entrance in the steeple. The original paired seven-panel doors, the conical roofed tower, and pointed arched windows with tracery remain. The edifice has been altered with the application of aluminum siding and a replacement entrance stoop. This small

church retains the majority of its original design in spite of the application of aluminum siding and the replacement stoop.



**Figure 19. Whitakers Baptist Church (NS546), 105 West Pittman Street, looking southeast.**

## **SIGNIFICANCE**

### ***Integrity***

The Hickory Baptist Church does not retain sufficient integrity to be considered eligible for the NRHP. The structure appears to be in its original location, and the overall rural setting remains intact. The church continues to be associated with the same congregation and retains the feeling of a rural church. However, extensive alterations to the form, design, and materials have severely impacted its architectural integrity. Alterations include the redesign of the front entrance with the construction of the vestibule, the possible replacement of windows, and the application of vinyl



siding. Additions comprise the vestibule, the Sunday School section, the connector, and the Fellowship Hall. Although the vestibule and Sunday School portion are now considered historic, the significance of this structure would lie in its age as one of the oldest churches in Nash County and the current appearance no longer reflects that history. Although the current Fellowship Hall may have been significant as the Gold Rock Community Club when on its original location, the relocation during the 1980s and the application of vinyl siding compromised its integrity. While recognizable as a historic church, Hickory Baptist Church's original design and age is not identifiable, and it does not have sufficient integrity to convey its historic appearance.

### ***Evaluation Criteria***

The Hickory Baptist Church is not recommended as eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A for its association with broad patterns of Nash County's rural history. While it is associated with the early settlement of the county and the establishment of religious organizations, the building no longer displays that historic appearance and its significant role within that context is no longer apparent.

The available research did not indicate any association with individuals significant in history. Therefore, Hickory Baptist Church is not recommended as eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion B.

The original design and architecture of Hickory Baptist Church is no longer apparent due to extensive alterations and additions. It does not possess high artistic merit and is no longer a good example of vernacular architecture. Other, more intact, examples of rural churches exist throughout the county. Therefore, it is not recommended as eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion C for its physical design and construction.

As an altered example of a common type of construction, the Hickory Baptist Church is not recommended eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion D for its potential to yield new information about design and construction.

## O.J. Smith Cotton Gin

Resource Name	O.J. Smith Cotton Gin (Figure 20)
HPO Survey Site Number	NS513
Location	8283 Swift Creek School Road, Hickory
PIN	385600265669U
Date of Construction	ca. 1935
Recommendation	Eligible for NRHP



**Figure 20. O.J. Smith Cotton Gin, front (north) and east elevations, looking southwest**

### SETTING

The O.J. Smith Cotton Gin is located along the northern edge of the parcel which has an address of 8283 Swift Creek School Road in the community of Hickory. It is immediately west of the Hickory Baptist Church and west of the intersection of NC 48 and Swift Creek School Road. The larger parcel wraps around the Hickory Baptist Church property and extends south along NC 48 and west along Swift Creek School Road (Figure 2 and Figure 3). There are 18 permanent structures on the 116-acre parcel (Figure 21) although property records list only five residences, two barns, and a grain bin. Situated on the south side of Swift Creek School Road, a residence is on the north side of the road surrounded by agricultural fields. Two ruinous commercial buildings occupy the corners on the east side of the intersection with NC 48 with a few scattered residences nearby (Figure 22). Interstate 95 is approximately 0.35 miles further east of the intersection. Stands of trees and more agricultural fields are to the west and south of the cotton gin property (Figure 23 and Figure 24). The area surrounding subject parcel remains generally rural in nature.



**Figure 21. Structures on the O.J. Smith Cotton Gin property.**



**Figure 22. Swift Creek School Road, looking east to intersection with NC 48 and Interstate 95. O.J. Smith Cotton Gin on right.**



**Figure 23. Looking south from the residence at 12612 NC 48, which is on the O.J. Smith Cotton Gin property.**



**Figure 24. Swift Creek School Road, looking west. O.J. Smith Cotton Gin on left.**

Historically, this property consisted of the cotton gin and a few related agricultural buildings and two residences which were likely tenant houses set to the west and southwest of the cotton gin (Figure 25). The road which became NC 48 was historically known as the Gold Rock and Hickory Road, which remained a graveled road until after World War II (North Carolina State Highway and Public Works Commission 1953; *Nashville Graphic* 12/18/1987). Present-day Swift Creek School Road was known as the Nashville and Whitakers Road in 1931 (Deed Book 352 Page 449). A census enumeration district map shows the cluster of buildings and the church at the crossroads of Hickory in 1940 (Figure 26; Bureau of the Census 1940).

The southern and western portions of the property are planted in crops, but the areas around the agricultural buildings generally have only grass with a few scattered trees. Some bushes and trees are situated around the residences. There are not any sidewalks, driveway, or fencing.

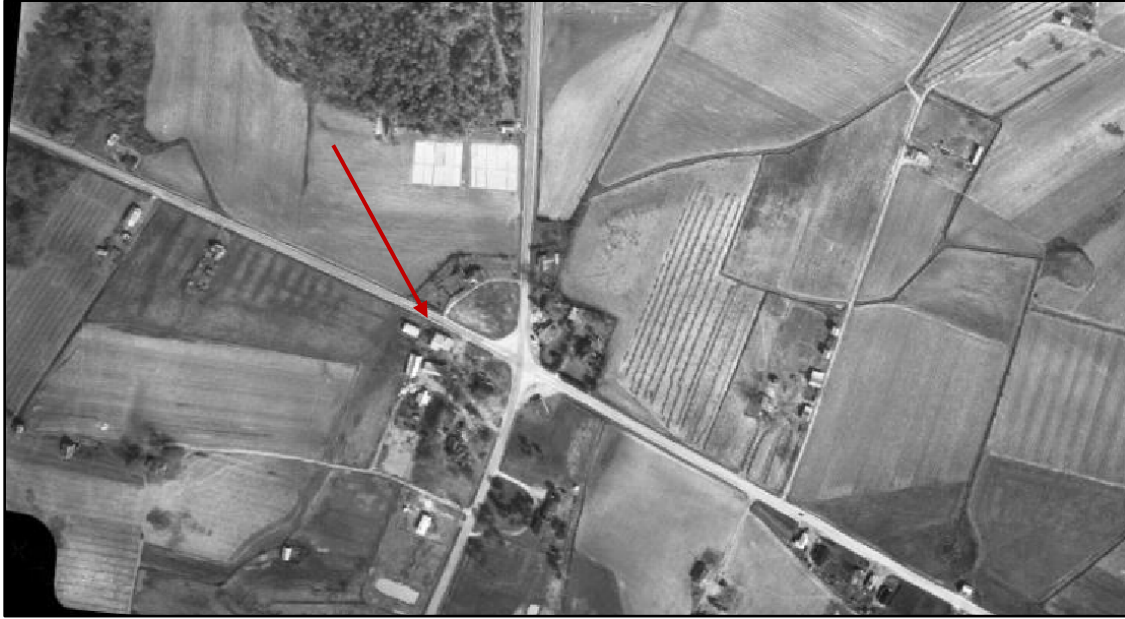


Figure 25. Aerial photograph dated February 28, 1962, showing O.J. Smith Cotton Gin and surrounding property (NCDOT Photogrammetry Unit 1962).

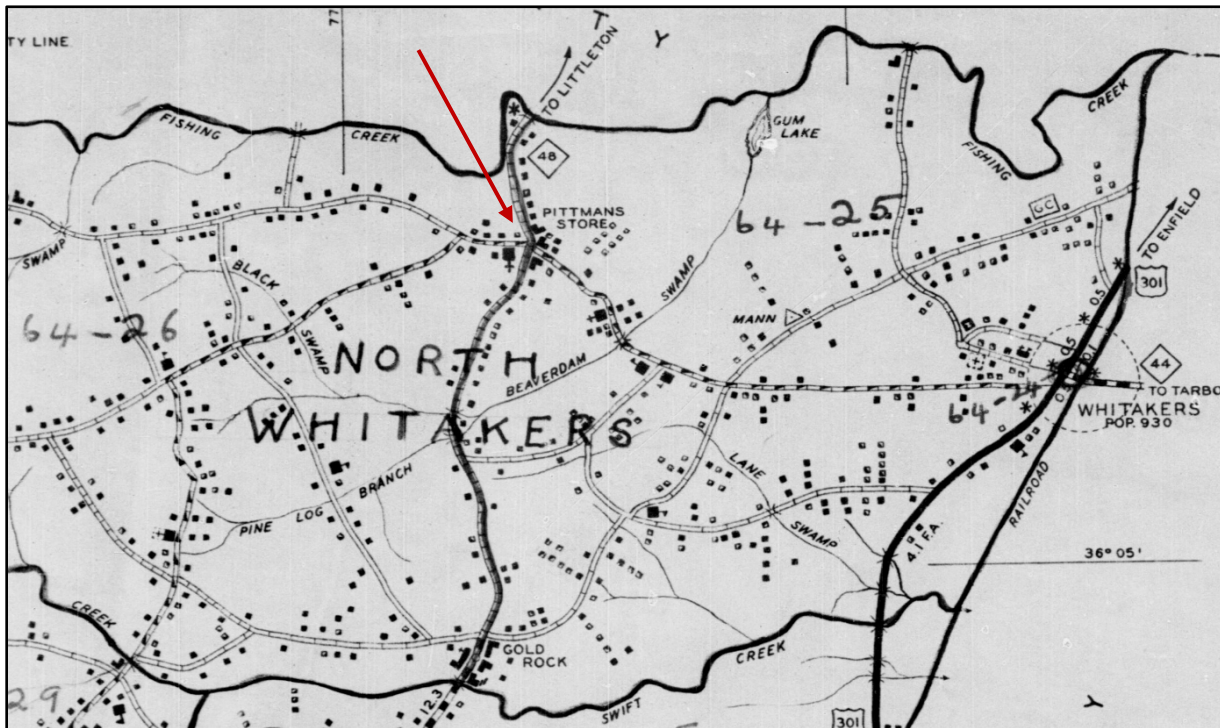


Figure 26. 1940 Census Enumeration District Map with arrow denoting Hickory (Bureau of the Census 1940).

## DESCRIPTION

Located on a 116 acre property, the O.J. Smith Cotton Gin is situated west of the Hickory Baptist Church on the southwest corner of Swift Creek School Road and NC 48. There are approximately 17 other permanent structures on the parcel (Figure 21) of which eight appear to be historic. Large circular feed bins are placed throughout the property. A multitude of moveable curing/drying units and trucks also populate the facility. The buildings are part of the 2,400-acre O.J. Smith Farms Hickory Meadows Organics business run by president Orpha Gene Watson (Murawski 2017).

The wood frame O.J. Smith Cotton Gin is surfaced with corrugated metal and 5V crimp sheet metal and set on a poured concrete foundation (#1 on the site plan). It appears to have been built ca. 1935 (Mattson and Poff 1987:243). The side gable roof is clad with 5V crimp and has exposed rafter ends in the eaves. The drive-through pneumatic feeder overhang is on the north elevation (Figure 27). The awning protected trucks and wagons from rain and contained the telescoping pipe that sucked raw cotton into the gin so it could be processed. A truck scale on the ground under the shelter likely weighed the cotton. The shed roof of the overhang is supported by square wood replacement posts and has a gabled dormer which housed the feeder. A six-light wood frame window is set within the wall under the overhang. A shed overhang that likely functioned as the bale dock is on the south elevation at the west end (Figure 28). The shed roof has exposed rafter ends and is supported by round wood poles. A large sliding door composed of sheet metal is centrally located on the south elevation (Figure 29). A wood pedestrian door is on the east elevation at the north corner, and a wood loading dock door is on the north elevation at the east end. The machinery has been removed, but the original concrete floor is evident (Figure 30).



**Figure 27. O.J. Smith Cotton Gin, front (north) and west elevations, looking southeast.**



**Figure 28. O.J. Smith Cotton Gin, west and south elevations, looking northeast.**



**Figure 29. O.J. Smith Cotton Gin, south and east elevations, looking northwest.**





**Figure 30. O.J. Smith Cotton Gin, interior view from south entrance, looking northwest.**

The seed house is situated approximately 50 feet west of the cotton gin (Figure 31; #2 on the site plan). Likely constructed at the same time as the cotton gin, this wood frame building is clad with 5V crimp and set on a brick pier foundation supplemented by some replacement concrete blocks. The structure has a side gable roof with a shed addition to the south (Figure 32). Exposed rafter ends are in the eaves. Two pedestrian sized vertical wood doors are on the south elevation, while one is on the north elevation. A structure that appears to be part of a poured concrete well is adjacent to the west (#3 on the site plan).



**Figure 31. O.J. Smith Cotton Seed House (#2 on site plan), front (north) and east elevations, looking southwest.**



**Figure 32. O.J. Smith Cotton Seed House and well (#2 and #3 on site plan), west and south elevations, looking northeast.**

South of the cotton gin, a wood frame warehouse is situated to face east (Figure 33; #4 on the site plan). The building has a side gable roof surfaced with 5V crimp and a concrete block pier foundation. The east, west, and north elevations have weatherboard siding, while the south elevation is clad with corrugated metal. Exposed rafter ends are in the eaves. An entrance with a vertical board door is centrally located on the east elevation. The exact date of construction for this building remains unknown. Aerials indicate that it was on site in 1957, but was a longer structure extending further north; the northern end was partially demolished between 2014 and 2016, and the structure was set on a new foundation (NCDOT Photogrammetry Unit 1957; NETR 1958, 2014, 2016).



**Figure 33. Warehouse (#4 on site plan), east and south elevations, looking west.**

The office and attached equipment shed first appears on the 1975 aerials (Figure 34; #5 on site plan; NCDOT Photogrammetry Unit 1975). Featuring a side gable roof clad with composition shingles, the wood frame rectangular-shaped office has T1-11 siding on the exterior and one-over-one double-hung sash windows placed independently. The building rests on a poured concrete foundation and has a shed roofed porch supported by square posts along the front façade. The equipment shed is attached to the north end of the office and has a concrete slab foundation, a steel structure surfaced with sheet metal, and a gable roof covered with corrugated metal. A nine-light pivot window is on the front façade. Several large bays accessed by sliding doors provide entrance for vehicles. A small wood frame room addition whose design mirrors the office projects from the front façade of the equipment shed.



**Figure 34. Office 1 and equipment shed (#5 on site plan), east and south elevations, looking northwest.**

A second office building has the Bungalow form which makes it appear to be an older structure, but aeriels first show it on the property in 1983 (# 6 on site plan; NCDOT Photogrammetry Unit 1983). This small, rectangular building has a front-facing gable roof surfaced with 5V crimp and board and batten siding (Figure 35). Windows are six-over-six, vinyl, single-hung sash placed independently. Set on a continuous poured concrete foundation, the edifice has a shed roofed front porch supported by square wood posts. A rear porch was created by extending the main gable roof and using square wood posts for supports. This section appears to be an addition, and both the siding and windows are replacements.



**Figure 35. Office 2 (#6 on site plan), east and north elevations, looking southwest.**

This corrugated metal clad warehouse has a steel structure, a low-pitched gable roof, and large roll-up doors on the north and south elevations (#7 on site plan; Figure 36). It rests on a continuous concrete foundation and first appeared on the 1983 aerials (NCDOT Photogrammetry Unit 1983).



**Figure 36. Warehouse (#7 on site plan), looking southwest.**

Six pole barns with gable roofs surfaced with sheet metal and supported by square wood posts are on the property (#8 [Figure 37], #9 [Figure 38], #10 [Figure 39], #11 [Figure 40], #12 [Figure 41], and #13 [Figure 42] on the site plan). These structures first appear on aerials starting in 1983 with the latest built ca. 2016 (NETR 1993, 1994, 1998, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018).



**Figure 37. Pole Barn (#8 on site plan), looking west.**



**Figure 38. Pole Barn (#9 on site plan), looking southwest.**



**Figure 39. Pole barn and carport (#10 on site plan), looking northwest.**



**Figure 40. Pole barn (#11 on site plan), looking northwest.**



**Figure 41. Pole Barn (#12 on site plan), looking southwest.**





**Figure 42. Pole barn (#13 on site plan), looking northwest.**

This small, wood frame structure appears to date from the 1940s, but was moved to the site between 1998 and 2006 (#14 on site plan; Figure 43; NETR 1998, 2006; Google Earth 1998, 2006). The owner's grandson and manager of the property, Phillip Watson, indicated that this was the former post office in Gold Rock, but no independent verification of that was found (Watson 2018). In poor condition, its original location and use remain unknown, but it may have served as a house or small office. The rectangular building is sheathed with weatherboard siding and rests on a wood and concrete block pier foundation. The side gable roof has minimal overhanging eaves and is surfaced with standing seam metal. Most of the windows are covered with plywood, but a six-over-six wood, double-hung sash is independently placed on the front (west) façade. Centrally-located entrances on the east and west elevations have simple plywood doors.



**Figure 43. House (#14 on site plan), looking southeast.**

Two greenhouses, with steel structures and plastic panels, were installed onsite between 2012 and 2016 (#15 on site plan; Figure 44; Google Earth 2012, 2014, 2016).



**Figure 44. Greenhouses (#15 on site plan), looking southwest.**

The Ranch style house situated at 12612 NC 48 was built on the parcel in 1971 according to the property records (#16 on site plan; Figure 45). The main mass of the structure is rectangular and incorporates a carport at the north end. The masonry structure is clad with brick veneer set in a common bond pattern and topped by a side gable roof surfaced with composition shingles. A gable roofed entrance portico is supported by Tuscan columns and shelters a six-panel front door. Windows are six-over-six, single-hung sash vinyl placed independently and flanked by fixed louvered shutters. A gable roofed porch extends off of the rear elevation and is supported by metal pipe posts. Aluminum siding and louvered vents are in the gable ends.



**Figure 45. 12612 NC 48 (#16 on site plan), looking southwest.**

The residences at 12644 NC 48 (NS1498; Figure 46; #17 on site plan) and 8101 Swift Creek School Road (NS1499; Figure 47; #18 on site plan) are on the same parcel, but were assigned site numbers as part of the *Architectural Reconnaissance Survey of the Atlantic Coast Pipeline Project Corridor, Northampton, Halifax, Nash, Wilson, Johnston, Sampson, Cumberland, and Robeson Counties, North Carolina* (Dovetail Cultural Resource Group 2016:69-70). These two historic buildings will be addressed independently in the following two sections.



**Figure 46. 12644 NC 48 (#17 on site plan), looking southwest.**



**Figure 47. 8101 Swift Creek School Road (#18 on site plan), looking southwest.**

## HISTORY

A settlement grew around Hickory Baptist Church consisting primarily of farms and small stores catering to the local population. The property on which the cotton gin is located was purchased by Rueben L. Faucett from M.C. and Alice Braswell on May 31, 1910 (Deed Book 186, Page 180). M.C. Braswell was a well-known property owner and businessman in Nash County, but the family lived near Battleboro, not in Hickory (Mattson and Poff 1987:10, 260). Containing 128 acres adjacent to Hickory Baptist Church, Faucett acquired this property for \$2,750. The federal census in 1900 listed Rueben and Ida Faucett living in South Whitakers Township, south of the subject parcel. By 1910, the couple lived in North Whitakers Township renting a farm in the vicinity of Hickory (Ancestry.com 2004, 2006). Several small stores opened at the crossroads of the Gold Rock and Hickory Road (present-day NC 48) and the Swift Creek School Road. Gray Hales opened a store, but sold it to M.A. and D.W. Batchelor, who then conveyed it to Walter Anderson. J.H. Pittman opened a store in Hickory on the northeast corner of the crossroads in 1910. Well-known for selling fish, the Pittman store (later Pittman and Ellis after son-in-law Sid joined the business) remained open until after 1987. In addition to groceries, the stores stocked some farming equipment. Local crops consisted of cotton, tobacco, corn, peanuts, small grains, cucumbers, and, more recently, soybeans (*Nashville Graphic* 3/18/1975, 12/18/1987; Nash County Heritage Book Committee and County Heritage, Inc. 2011:5).

Local farmer John Sexton built his farm approximately 1½ miles from Hickory. His daughter, Emily, married Peyton Smith and the couple inherited the family farm after Sexton died. Their son, Claude B. Smith, purchased Faucett's property adjacent to the Hickory Baptist Church in 1917 for \$10,000 (Deed Book 239, Page 120). Claude's brother, Orpha J. "O.J." Smith, opened a general merchandise store at the crossroads after his return from World War I (Ancestry.com 2002, 2005, 2010, 2011; *Nashville Graphic* 12/18/1987). In 1931, Claude's widow, Emma, sold one acre containing the residence at 12684 NC 48 to O.J. Smith (Deed Book 352, Page 449). This property, which is separate from the cotton gin parcel, has a ca. 1926 house according to the Nash County Tax Department. Later deeds indicate that the Smith "homeplace" was not this property, and the nearby 1939 residence at 13341 NC 48 (NS1489) has been recorded as the Smith House (Deed Book 731, Page 508; Dovetail Cultural Resource Group 2016:67). It remains unclear if O.J. Smith, and his wife, Minnie, ever lived in this house.

Claude's widow, Emma Smith, conveyed the remaining property to O.J. Smith in 1953 although he appears to have managed the property after the death of his brother in 1930 (Deed Book 598, Page 31; Ancestry.com 2007). O.J. Smith enlarged the size of the farm. As the farm grew, he rented the store to L.E. Alford. In 1952, the store was still open and known as O.J. Smith's Store (*Rocky Mount Telegram* 1/6/1952).

On the family's property at the crossroads, Smith built a cotton gin in the mid-1930s which remained in operation until 1949. In 1987, M.E. Bryant, who managed the gin from 1940 to 1949, recalled that the three 80-saw gins ginned a bale of cotton in 12 to 15 minutes. In 1944, O.J. Smith was listed as member of the Nash County Cotton Ginners when the organization joined with the growers of the One Variety Cotton Association of Nash County to establish an official grade, staple, and Commodity Credit Corporation lean value on each bale of cotton. This enabled farmers to know the value of each bale of cotton and whether the variety of planted cotton was producing

a good staple. Smith decided to close his gin in 1949 when gins with more modern equipment opened in nearby towns, Smith decided to close his gin (*Nashville Graphic* 9/14/1944, 12/18/1987; Mattson and Poff 1987:243). In 1952, his farm was listed as a cotton growing facility with no infestation of the boll weevil evident (*Nashville Graphic* 7/10/1952). O.J. Smith's son-in-law and daughter, Gene and Sarah Watson, continued the farming operation after Smith passed away in 1974, and the trust in their name is the current owner of the property (Ancestry.com 2007; *Nashville Graphic* 12/18/1987; *Rocky Mount Telegram* 1/2/1975).

## ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

Cotton was an important industry in Nash County by the early nineteenth century as evidenced by the establishment of the state's second textile mill at Falls of the Tar River in 1818. Cotton ginning was the "most prevalent mechanized industry of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries" (Mattson and Poff 1987:40). Cotton is planted in most of the south from mid-March and early May with harvest in September and October. Cotton gins were often operated in conjunction with another business such as a sawmill, ice plant, or coal yard (Hainze 1999:6-7). In 1900, there were 29,214 active cotton gins in the United States which declined to only 1,153 active gins by 1997. In 1914, most of the gins were powered by steam with 19.5 percent using gasoline. Only 2.8 percent functioned on electric with no reported diesel engines. By 1940, 38 percent used electric, 26 percent operated with diesel, and almost 23 percent ran on gasoline powered engines, while only 10 percent were driven by steam (Hainze 1999:13, 24). According to the North Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station and the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service, the number of active gins in the state declined from 2,625 in 1914 to 962 in 1936. That number dropped further to 824 by 1940 with most owned by individuals or partnerships (North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service 1938; North Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station 1942:5). In 1910, there were 71 cotton gins listed in a business directory for Nash County of which 45 were in a rural location. By the early 1960s, there were only 12 cotton gins operating in the entire county (Mattson and Poff 1987:40; North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service ca. 1962). Cotton production in the county declined after 1930 and virtually disappeared by the early 1970s (Mattson and Poff 1987:40).

Prior to the 1980s, cotton gins were built following the size and shape of the equipment within. (Hainze 1999:82). Eli Whitney invented a mechanical cotton gin in 1793 revolutionizing the cotton industry. Although the actual cotton gin was not a large machine, it was too expensive for most farmers to own. Therefore, independent ginners, operating on shares like flour or corn millers, started businesses and needed a new building form to house the cotton engine (gin) as barns did not accommodate the production flow of the machines. Prior to the 1880s, the ginning process was labor intensive with seed cotton fed into a gin stand powered by horses or mules to remove the seeds. The separated seeds could be used to grow more cotton or produce cottonseed oil. The lint cotton was then carried in baskets to a horse or mule-powered press to make bales. In the late nineteenth century steam-powered plants integrated the ginning with the baling and automated the movement of cotton through the facility. At the time, the cotton gin was generally one-and-one-half to two-stories in height with a covered drive-through area where the seed cotton was manually lifted to the upper floor. After the seed cotton was fed by hand into the gin, the machine deposited seeds into containers on the first floor and placed lint into a separate room for packaging and balling. Cotton bales, which were not of standardized size or weight until the 1930s,

were then transferred to a loading dock to be placed on wagons for delivery to markets. Cotton warehouses or seed houses were often near the gin house (Hainze 1999:17-18; Messick, Joseph and Adams 2001:79-80; Silva 2011).

During the early twentieth century, the cotton industry grew increasingly mechanized with mechanical strippers and harvesters in the field, the development of pneumatic pipes to unload the cotton, spiked belts to clean the cotton, and elevators to convey the raw materials. Steam engines replaced animals to power the gin. Cotton gin buildings were generally of timber frame construction clad with galvanized sheet metal (Hainze 1999:8, 18, 30). Taking an interest in the industry, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) started issuing Farmer's Bulletins to make recommendations concerning construction and processing cotton. In 1925, they recommended that new cotton gin buildings be one-story in height with earthen or concrete floors to reduce the risk of fire and because newer, more complex gins needed to be mounted more securely to reduce vibration and extend the life of the equipment. Galvanized metal was considered the ideal fireproof, low cost building material for a gin building (Hainze 1999:19, 30).

By 1935, the USDA recommended installing the modern ginning equipment in a fire resistant one- or one-and-one-half-story fire resistant structure due to the high flammability of dry cotton fibers. The development of a patented mechanical dryer in 1928 necessitated the need for a dryer tower in the building to house the new equipment. In 1938, the USDA continued to recommend a one-story building, although one-and-one-half-story structures were preferred in some cases. Two-story gin houses were usually limited to those on cotton farms. Gin building measurements suggested were roughly 20-26 feet tall from floor to ceiling plate and 20 to 27 feet wide, with length determined by number of gin stands, approximately 20 to 25 feet long per gin stand. Indicative of its size, the O.J. Smith Cotton Gin measures approximately 24 feet wide by 60 feet long and housed three gins powered by a diesel engine (NS513; Mattson and Poff 1987:243). The USDA recommended that seed storage and seed cotton be stored separate from the gin with insurance companies requiring 50 feet between the buildings to qualify for the lowest rates. At the time, steam-powered machinery was on the decrease due to intermittent service and lack of cheap fuel, while demand for diesel and gasoline powered equipment rose. Recommended features included concrete floors, structural steel or heavy timber frame trusses, inclined ramps instead of steps, a crane to handle the cotton bales, and all steel gin stands (Bennett et al. 1938:2-5; Hainze 1999:20, 58). After World War II, ginning equipment grew larger necessitating higher ceilings and new building designs eliminating the two-story gin design previously recommended by the USDA. Steel framing replaced timber framing on gin buildings. Modernization recommendations included metal conveyor systems, lint cleaners, and trash collectors and incinerators (Hainze 1999:21).

Prior to 1940, the significant elements of a cotton gin building included the bale dock, the drive-through pneumatic feeder overhang, a power shed, and a dryer tower. Smaller ginning businesses could not afford dryers or a separate power shed. The buildings were typically of metal construction due to low cost and lack of flammability generally with concrete floors after 1900 (Hainze 1999:134-39; Silva 2011; Lassell et al. 2010). When originally surveyed in 1987, the O.J. Smith Cotton Gin was used as a typical example of a cotton gin, and it remains a good example of a small ginning operation in a rural community (Mattson and Poff 1987:40). It is a wood frame building clad with corrugated metal. The drive-through pneumatic feeder overhang is centrally

located on the north façade, while the bale dock is on the south elevation. There is not a separate power shed or a dryer tower, but this was typical of smaller ginning businesses. The seed house, also a wood frame structure clad with sheet metal, remains adjacent to the cotton gin.

When Nash County was surveyed in 1987, there were no extant gin houses from the nineteenth century and only a few from the early twentieth century when the county was a major producer of the crop (Mattson and Poff 1987:40). The North Carolina state survey inventory maintained by the HPO includes three other recorded cotton gins in Nash County. Of these, the Red Oak Supply Cotton Gin (NS436) and the W.S. Williams Cotton Gin (NS379) were not found in the field and appear to be demolished. The cotton gin of the Battleboro Gin and Grain Company (NS497) was analyzed for comparison. Two other cotton gins, the Davenport Cotton Gin (ED0646) in Edgecombe County and the Cousins Cotton Gin (HX0144) in nearby Halifax County were chosen for further assessment. Built after World War II, the Battleboro Gin and Grain Company (NS497) is a two-story, iron frame cotton gin which typifies the construction of larger community gins following the war (Figure 48). Clad with sheet metal panels, the structure had two drive-through pneumatic feeders incorporated into an overhang extending along the entire south elevation. After closure in the 1970s, the electric-powered ginning equipment was sold and removed. Since the building was surveyed in 1985, two large warehouse additions have been attached obscuring most of the north elevation. Although the original cotton gin structure appears to retain most of its original appearance on the south, east, and west elevations, the additions on the north have diminished its integrity (NS497).



**Figure 48. Cotton Gin of the Battleboro Gin & Grain Company, built after World War II, south and west elevations.**

The Davenport Cotton Gin was constructed in the 1930s as a family farm gin likely built by Offie Davenport (ED646). The two-story sawn frame structure is clad with weatherboard and topped



by a gable roof (Figure 49). The drive-through overhang remains on the north elevation, and the seed room is attached on the south elevation. A newer addition is adjacent to the seed room. At the time of the 1984 survey, part of the seed auger remained in the building, but the remaining machinery was removed.



**Figure 49. Davenport Cotton Gin, dating from the 1930s, south and east elevations.**

When recorded in 1986, the Cousins Cotton Gin was noted as one of Halifax County's few surviving cotton gins (HX144). Built in 1919 by the M.E. Cousins family, the gin remained in operation until after World War II. The building was a two-story edifice clad with sheet metal and topped by a gable roof. Now in ruins, only a one-story crumbling structure was evident during the field visit (Figure 50). It had an attached seed house and power shed. Due to its condition, it has lost integrity and does not appear NRHP eligible.



**Figure 50. Cousins Cotton Gin, constructed in 1919, north elevation.**

## **SIGNIFICANCE**

### ***Integrity***

The O.J. Smith Cotton Gin and associated Seed House retain sufficient historical integrity to be considered eligible for listing in the NRHP.

The O.J. Smith Cotton Gin and Seed House retain a high level of integrity of location as the agricultural buildings stand on their original site. The cotton gin and the associated seed house also retain sufficient integrity of design to convey their role and use as a cotton ginning facility. The original massing, fenestration, surface materials, ornamentation, and relationship to each other and the roads are still quite evident.

The historic setting of the O.J. Smith Cotton Gin and Seed House remains little altered from its original rural agricultural landscape. Although additional agricultural buildings have been constructed on the parcel, the overall area remains rural with the Hickory Baptist Church standing as a landmark at the corner of NC 48 and Swift Creek School Road. The majority of the remaining surroundings endure as agricultural fields and single-family residences.

The property retains good integrity of materials on the exterior, including essentially unaltered, siding, doors, massing, and rooflines. The removal of the interior machinery lessens the integrity of materials, but the exterior of the building remains identifiable as a cotton gin. Its loss does not significantly detract from the building's appearance which remains indicative of the form. A high level of workmanship is still evident in the various elements of the building.

O.J. Smith's Cotton Gin and Seed House retains the feeling of a rural cotton gin serving a small crossroads community. Although it now serves as storage, the building continues to be associated with the agricultural settlement in the Hickory area.

### ***Evaluation Criteria***

O.J. Smith's Cotton Gin, in conjunction with its associated Seed House, is recommended as eligible for listing in the NRHP at the local level under Criterion A in the area of Agriculture and Industry for its association with the process and technology of turning seed cotton into lint and seeds for development of clothing and oils in the rural agricultural community of Hickory. The gin provided immediate processing to the surrounding farmers eliminating the time and expense of hauling their raw cotton to the larger communities. After World War II, the small gins closed and were gradually replaced by larger commercial gins in towns. This gin represents the economic independence of the crossroads communities and prominence of cotton in the county's economy.

The property is not recommended as eligible for listing under Criterion B as it is not directly associated with any particular person who played a significant role in local, state, or national history.

O.J. Smith's Cotton Gin retains sufficient integrity to be considered eligible for listing under Criterion C as a largely unaltered cotton gin. Its exterior design, materials, and size are indicative of the period in which it was built and its use as a cotton gin. The associated seed house also remains which provides additional information on the function and layout of a rural cotton gin. It is also an increasingly rare resource with only one other cotton gin recorded in Nash County. In reviewing the North Carolina state survey inventory maintained by the HPO, neighboring Edgecombe County included only one remaining recorded cotton gin. In Halifax County, it appears that only two recorded gins remain, one of which is the Cousins Cotton Gin which was in ruins during the 2018 site visit. Although no longer in use, the O.J. Smith Cotton Gin continues to represent the initial use and intent of the building to process cotton. Although the machinery was sold after the gin closed, the overall intact integrity of this resource is rare.

O.J. Smith's Cotton Gin is not recommended as eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion D as it is unlikely to yield new information about cotton gin design or construction.

### **NRHP BOUNDARIES**

Boundaries proposed for the NRHP-eligible O.J. Smith Cotton Gin are drawn to include the associated contributing Seed House and well on tax parcel PIN 385600265669U (Figure 51). The proposed boundary conforms to the existing right-of-way south of the ditch along Swift Creek School Road. The remaining buildings on the parcel do not appear to have functioned in conjunction with the cotton gin. Most of the buildings are of later construction built after the closure of the cotton gin, were moved to the site, or were tenant houses unconnected to the gin.



**Figure 51. O.J. Smith Cotton Gin, proposed NRHP boundaries.**

## Faucett House

Resource Name	Faucett House (Figure 52)
HPO Survey Site Number	NS1498
Location	12644 NC 48, Hickory
PIN	385600265669U
Date of Construction	ca. 1910
Recommendation	Not eligible for NRHP



**Figure 52. Faucett House, 12644 NC 48, looking southwest.**

### SETTING

The residence at 12644 NC 48 is located in the middle of an agricultural field on the same property as the O.J. Smith Farms Hickory Meadows Organics business (Figure 2 and Figure 3). It has a separate address of 12644 NC 48. The immediate surroundings consist of agricultural fields and a stand of trees to the west (Figure 53). The greenhouses and the rear of the residence at 12612 NC 48, which are on the same parcel are situated to the east (Figure 54). The agricultural buildings including the cotton gin on the parcel are located north and northeast of this house (Figure 55). Northwest of this residence is the Bungalow at 8101 Swift Creek School Road (Figure 56).



**Figure 53. House at 12644 NC 48 set with agricultural field, looking southwest.**



**Figure 54. Looking east to the rear elevation of 12612 NC 48, which is on the same parcel.**



**Figure 55. Facing northeast to the agricultural buildings on the same parcel.**



**Figure 56. Looking northwest toward 8101 Swift Creek School Road on the same parcel.**

## DESCRIPTION

Access to this house was limited as requested by the occupant. The house at 12644 NC 48 is a one-story, center hall, double-pile house (Figure 57). The original mass of the structure was two rooms wide by two rooms deep separated by a central hall extending from the front entrance to the rear. Interior brick chimneys mark the separation of rooms on each side of the hall. The central portion of the house has the character-defining large pyramidal hip roof surfaced with standing seam metal decorated with exposed rafter ends in the eaves. A full-width front porch on the east façade is set under the main roof and supported by battered wood posts. The wood frame structure is dressed in weatherboard siding and rests on a brick pier foundation. Windows are wood, two-over-two double-hung sash set independently. The main entrance has a metal storm door set in front of the three-light, three-panel wood door. Wood steps bordered by a simple wood railing which extends around the edge of the porch provides access to the house. Around 1982, an addition was attached across the rear (west) elevation changing the formerly square shaped residence into a rectangular form. The addition has a composition shingle clad gable roof, aluminum siding, and a concrete block pier foundation. Windows in the addition are six-over-six double-hung sash placed independently and paired. A shed roofed porch denotes the rear entrance.



**Figure 57. Faucett House, 12644 NC 48, looking southwest.**

## HISTORY

Believed to be constructed around 1910, this residence may have been built and occupied by Rueben and Ida Faucett. As detailed in the history of the above cotton gin which is on the same property, this parcel was purchased by Rueben L. Faucett from M.C. and Alice Braswell on May 31, 1910 (Deed Book 186, Page 180). M.C. Braswell was a well-known property owner and businessman in Nash County, but the center of their family operations and homestead was near Battleboro (Mattson and Poff 1987:10, 260). Containing 128 acres adjacent to Hickory Baptist



Church, Faucett acquired this property for \$2,750. The federal census in 1900 listed Rueben and Ida Faucett living in South Whitakers Township, south of the subject parcel. By 1910, the couple lived in North Whitakers Township occupying a farm in the vicinity of Hickory (Ancestry.com 2004, 2006).

Local farmer Claude B. Smith purchased Faucett's property adjacent to the Hickory Baptist Church in 1917 for \$10,000 (Deed Book 239, Page 120). It does not appear that he lived on this property and may have used the house for a manager or tenant farmer. Later deeds indicate that this was the "Hickory (Faucette) Farm" with the "Smith Homeplace" situated to the north of Hickory (Deed Book 731, Page 508). Claude's brother, Orpha J. "O.J." Smith, opened a general merchandise store at the crossroads after his return from World War I (Ancestry.com 2002, 2005, 2010, 2011; *Nashville Graphic* 12/18/1987). In 1931, Claude's widow, Emma, sold one acre immediately south of the church containing the ca. 1926 residence at 12684 NC 48 to O.J. Smith (Deed Book 352, Page 449).

Emma Smith conveyed the remaining 127 acres including the subject house to O.J. Smith in 1953 although he appears to have managed the property after the death of his brother in 1930 (Deed Book 598, Page 31; Ancestry.com 2007). This house likely continued to be used for tenant farms or managers for the family's agricultural interests. Aerial photographs from 1957 and 1962 show evidence of additional farm buildings or tenant houses to the west of this residence, but none remain (Figure 58; NCDOT Photogrammetry Unit 1957, 1962). After O.J. Smith passed away in 1974, his son-in-law and daughter, Gene and Sarah Watson, continued the agricultural operation, and the trust in their name is the current owner of the property (Ancestry.com 2007; *Nashville Graphic* 12/18/1987; *Rocky Mount Telegram* 1/2/1975).



**Figure 58.** Aerial photograph dated February 28, 1962, showing the Faucett House at 12644 NC 48 circled in red. Note the additional farm buildings or tenant houses situated west of the house which are no longer extant (NCDOT Photogrammetry Unit 1962).

## ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

After the Faucett ownership, this residence appears to have served as housing for a manager or as a tenant farm. Such housing was common throughout the county following the Civil War through the mid-twentieth century. A 1975 article on the history of Hickory noted that farm mechanization had widely expanded with a corresponding drop in tenant farms. According to the article,

At one time, most of the farming was done with tenant labor. Now, practically no tenant labor is used. This decline in tenant farming has caused the non-farm workers to seek jobs in surrounding areas. Approximately 50 per cent of the area work force is employed away from home. Since tenant farming has almost gone out of existence, some tenant houses have been demolished, some have been allowed to deteriorate, and some have been upgraded for use by special helpers (*Nashville Graphic* 3/18/1975).

Generally, more simplified housing only one room in depth including the Hall and Parlor, Saddlebag, and Central Hallway forms were used for tenants, while the larger double-pile cottages housed managers.

Architecturally, this central hall, double-pile cottage is a common form found throughout the county. This type of one-story plan featured a square or nearly square shape encompassing two

rooms on either side of a central hallway. The roof is usually hipped, while the chimneys are on the inside of the house between the rooms. This form was utilized from the 1850s into the twentieth century with the greatest concentration erected between 1850 and 1890. In Nash County, this form emerged in the 1850s with a number of examples constructed by mid-level farmers throughout the following decades. It had declined in popularity by 1920. This housing type often displays modest stylistic detailing, frequently Classical or Craftsman, reflective of the period in which it was constructed. While the original portion of this building is characteristic of this form, the rear addition altered the design. Stylistically, this house has the modest decorative elements of battered posts on the porch and exposed rafter ends representative of the Craftsman style (Mattson and Poff 1987:18-19; Jewett Center for Historic Preservation n.d.:6).

The North Carolina state survey inventory maintained by the HPO includes a number of double-pile, central-hall plan houses. Of these, the C.D. Jones House (NS428), the John Jordan House (NS604), and the Drs. Ellen-Martin House (NS434), as profiled in *The History and Architecture of Nash County, North Carolina*, were analyzed for comparison. Located in Red Oak, the C.D. Jones House (NS428) was built for the son of the community's leading merchant and farmer (Figure 59). Originally a two-room structure with a gable roof, the building was remodeled by contractor Harvey Smith into its current form in 1915. The residence has the character defining large hip roof set over a main mass featuring two rooms wide by two rooms deep separated by a hall. Chimneys denote the separation between the rooms on the north and south. This example decorative gables accenting the roofline on each elevation, classical detailing on the wrap-around porch, and two-over-two double-hung sash windows. Although in poor condition, it maintains excellent architectural integrity with few alterations (Mattson and Poff 1987:215).



**Figure 59.** C.D. Jones House (NS428), 5332 Red Oak Road, Red Oak, looking north.

Located near Sharpsburg, the John Jordan House (NS604) was built in 1920 (Figure 60). It has the characteristic large hipped roof and double-pile form with chimneys marking the division of rooms on the east and west. Both the double-pile form and the Queen Anne inspired wrap-around porch are unusual for 1920s era construction. Although it retains good integrity overall, it appears to have been modernized with replacement windows. The structure was built by contractor Bob Viverette for farmer John Jordan (Mattson and Poff 1987:268).



**Figure 60. John Jordan House (NS604), 7290 Jordan Road, Sharpsburg vicinity, looking north.**

The cottage with a double-pile plan and large hipped roof located 8523 Red Oak Boulevard was built during the early twentieth century for Red Oak physician Dr. Joseph E. Ellen (NS434; Figure 61). The building exhibits the characteristic form with chimneys marking the division between rooms on the north and south. A hipped roof porch with square supports extends across most of the front elevation. Decorative features include a nine-light diamond shaped window set within a gable on the front façade. In the early 1920s, Dr. Joseph Henry Martin occupied the residence and maintained an office in a separate building on the parcel (Mattson and Poff 1987:216).



**Figure 61. Drs. Ellen-Martin House (NS434), 8523 Red Oak Boulevard, Red Oak, looking northeast.**

## **SIGNIFICANCE**

### ***Integrity***

The Faucett House at 12644 NC 48 does not retain sufficient integrity to be considered eligible for the NRHP. The structure appears to be in its original location and retains most of the materials and workmanship indicative of a traditional early twentieth-century house. However, the size and design of the rear addition altered the central hall, double-pile form destroying the original design. Its surroundings remain agricultural and rural in nature, but the loss of associated outbuildings and/or tenant houses evident in historic aerials have diminished its setting. The feeling and association as rural agricultural housing remain intact. While recognizable as a typical rural house of the 1910s, it does not have sufficient integrity to convey the sense of a farmhouse or associated agricultural landscape of the property's likely historic appearance during the early to mid-twentieth century.

### ***Evaluation Criteria***

The Faucett House is not recommended as eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A for its association with broad patterns of Nash County's rural history. While it is associated with early twentieth-century agriculture, the house and the farm once surrounding it did not play a significant role within that context. It does not appear to have been directly related to the operation of the cotton gin on the same property.

Likely built for Rueben and Ida Faucett soon after their 1910 purchase, the couple owned the property only until 1917. The subsequent owners, Claude and Emma Smith and O.J. Smith, do not appear to have lived in the house and only used it as housing for their agricultural pursuits. Neither the Faucetts or the Smiths as individuals appear to have played a significant role in the agricultural development of the county. Therefore, the Faucett House is not recommended as eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion B for its association with individuals significant in history.

Although the original design of the Faucett House remains identifiable, alterations have impacted the form characteristic of the central hall, double-pile cottage. It does not possess high artistic merit. The associated outbuildings or tenant houses have been lost impacting its ability to portray an intact farmhouse landscape. Other, more intact, examples of this form exist throughout the county. Therefore, it is not recommended as eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion C for its physical design and construction.

As an altered example of a common style and type of construction, the Faucett House is not recommended eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion D for its potential to yield new information important about design and construction.

### Smith Tenant House

Resource Name	Smith Tenant House (Figure 62)
HPO Survey Site Number	NS1499
Location	8101 Swift Creek School Road, Hickory
PIN	385600265669U
Date of Construction	ca. 1920
Recommendation	Not eligible for NRHP



**Figure 62. Smith Tenant House, 8101 Swift Creek School Road, looking southwest.**

### SETTING

The Smith Tenant House is on the western half of the same parcel as the O.J. Smith Farms Hickory Meadows Organics business but has a separate address of 8101 Swift Creek School Road (Figure 2 and Figure 3). The agricultural buildings on the remaining part of the parcel are east of this structure (Figure 63), and the Faucett House at 12644 NC 48 is across an agricultural field to the south. Situated on the south side of Swift Creek School Road, the north side of the road is occupied by fields, while additional fields and a stand of trees are to the west (Figure 64). Small bushes and trees populate the yard around the house. An outbuilding and a privy are behind the residence.



**Figure 63.** Looking east toward the agricultural buildings of the O.J. Smith Farms Hickory Meadows Organics business and the intersection of NC 48 and Swift Creek School Road.



**Figure 64.** Looking west toward 8101 Swift Creek School Road from the agricultural buildings of the O.J. Smith Farms Hickory Meadows Organics business.

## DESCRIPTION

The Smith Tenant House at 8101 Swift Creek School Road is a rectangular building with a gable roof surfaced with 5V crimp pierced by two interior brick chimneys on the east and west slopes



(Figure 65). The front of the building retains its original weatherboard siding, but it has been removed from the remaining elevations leaving the underlayment and plywood open to the elements (Figure 66). Overall, the building is in a deteriorated condition. Resting on a concrete block pier foundation, the wood frame building has a mixture of six-over-six and two-over-two, wood double-hung sash windows, as well as a few one-over-one vinyl replacement double-hung sash windows. The windows are placed independently. The main entrance has a five-panel wood door behind a metal storm door that is set off-center within the front porch which is supported by square wood posts. The rear has a small shed roofed addition constructed of plywood. Decorative elements include exposed rafter ends and vents in the gable ends. A wood frame outbuilding in ruinous condition (Figure 67) and a privy (Figure 68) constructed of plywood are in the rear yard.



**Figure 65. Smith Tenant House, 8101 Swift Creek School Road, looking southwest.**



**Figure 66. Smith Tenant House, 8101 Swift Creek School Road, looking northeast.**



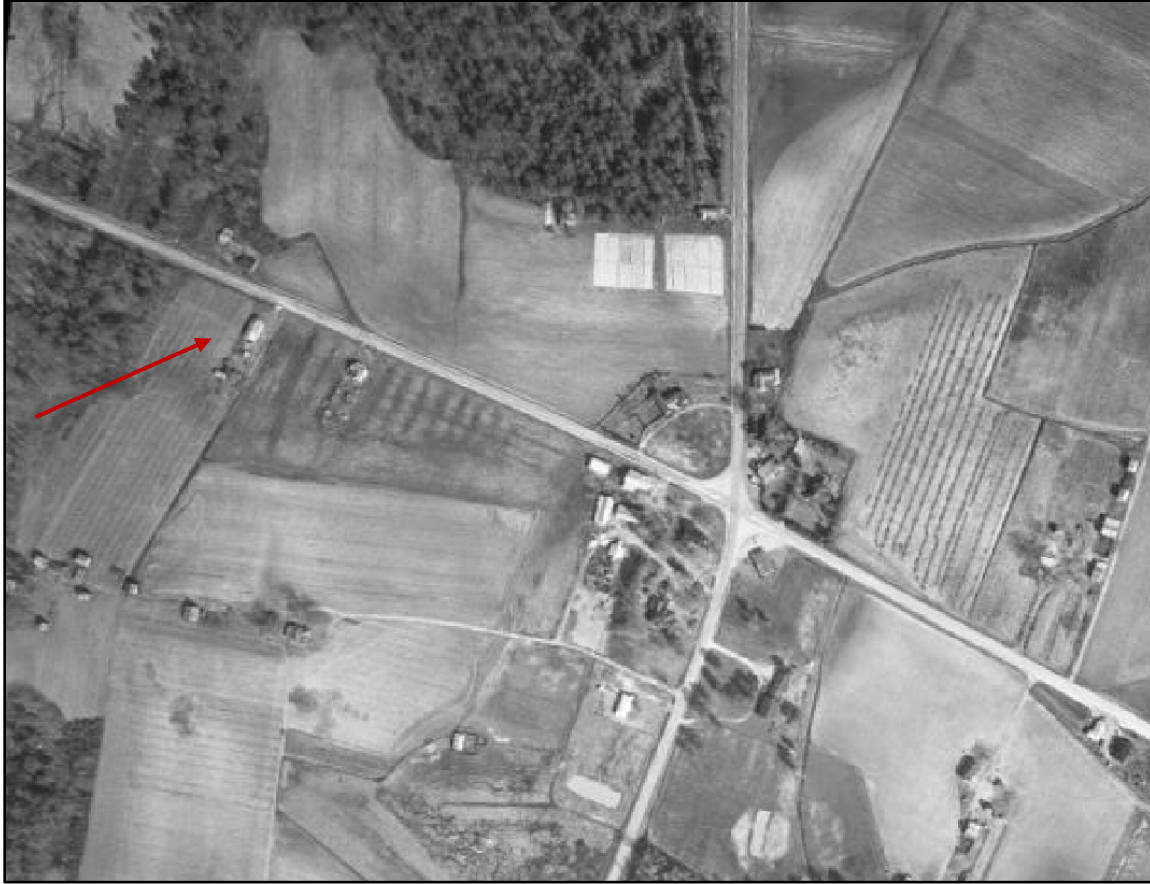
**Figure 67. Smith Tenant House outbuilding, 8101 Swift Creek School Road, looking southwest.**



**Figure 68. Smith Tenant House privy, 8101 Swift Creek School Road, looking southwest.**

## **HISTORY**

The Smith Tenant House is on the same parcel as the O.J. Smith Cotton Gin and the Faucett House and shares the same developmental history described in the above sections. This house was likely constructed ca. 1920 as worker housing under the ownership of Claude and Emma Smith. It does not appear to have been occupied by the family, but served the agricultural purposes of the property as a tenant house or employee housing. It does not appear to have been directly associated with the operation of the cotton gin on the property. The exact date of construction remains unknown, but the structure was evident on aerials from 1957 and 1962 and is characteristic of 1920s era Bungalows (Figure 69; NCDOT Photogrammetry Unit 1957, 1962).



**Figure 69. Aerial photograph dated February 28, 1962, showing the location of the Smith Tenant House (NCDOT Photogrammetry Unit 1962).**

## **ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT**

Popular from 1900 to 1930, the Bungalow was built in cities as well as rural communities. Generally one- to one-and-one-half-stories in height, it was characterized by a long and low form, low-pitched roofs with wide overhangs, and a front porch. Ornamentation, typically exhibiting elements of the Craftsman style, included the use of natural materials, exposed rafter ends, and tapered porch posts. In Nash County, the style grew in popularity and started to play a primary role in the architectural development of the county in the 1910s. This residence has the typical long rectangular shape with a low-pitched front gable roof and offset front porch representative of the gable front subtype. Although it incorporates exposed rafter ends, it lacks many of the other decorative features (Mattson and Poff 1987:28; Jewett Center for Historic Preservation n.d.:10).

Of the multitude of Nash County residences recorded in the North Carolina state survey inventory maintained by the HPO, three examples of Bungalows profiled in *The History and Architecture of Nash County, North Carolina* were selected for comparison. These include, the Guy Bissette House (NS178), the Ira Winfield Rose House (NS713), and the Nick Ross House (NS113). All three of the examples are maintained and have good integrity. Constructed ca. 1915, Guy Bissette House (NS178) exhibits the gable front Bungalow form with an inset gabled porch (Figure 70).

Although the original rectangular form is identifiable, the integrity of the design has been compromised by an incompatible addition on the west elevation. However, many of its decorative elements remain intact. The exterior is surfaced with wood shingles, and the roofline is accented by knee braces. The most notable feature is the cobblestone porch, porte cochère supports, and chimneys. Windows are twelve-over-one double-hung sash with a horizontal emphasis typical of the Craftsman style. The structure was built by George N. Bissette for his son, Guy (Mattson and Poff 1987:179).



**Figure 70. Guy Bissett House (NS178), 413 E. Washington Street, Nashville, looking south.**

Of the three examples, the Ira Winfield Rose House (NS713) is the most ornate example of a Bungalow (Figure 71). Built by contractor D.J. Rose around 1917, this residence was constructed for druggist Ira Winfield Rose. It has the rectangular, gable front form with an offset gable front porch supported by battered posts set on brick piers. Knee braces and exposed rafter ends accent the eaves. The wood frame building is clad with clapboard and stucco with half-timbering in the gable end. Windows are a combination of double-hung sash, casement, and cottage with multiple

light configurations. Although in need of some maintenance, it appears to retain excellent integrity (Mattson and Poff 1987:281)



**Figure 71. Ira Winfield Rose House (NS713), 1111 Sunset Avenue, Rocky Mount, looking southwest.**

Nick Ross, who operated a dairy farm and served as mayor of Nashville, built this Bungalow at 112 E. Washington Street (NS113) in 1918 (Figure 72). It has the character defining rectangular form with a front gable roof and an almost full width front porch. The porch has grouped tapered wood posts set on brick piers. Windows are decorative sixteen-over-one-light double-hung sash paired and set independently. Decorative elements include exposed rafter ends and knee braces (Mattson and Poff 1987:173). This house retains excellent integrity with its original form and design intact.



**Figure 72. Nick Ross House (NS113), 112 E. Washington Street, Nashville, looking northwest.**

## **SIGNIFICANCE**

### ***Integrity***

The Smith Tenant House does not retain sufficient integrity to be considered eligible for the NRHP. The structure appears to be in its original location and retains most of its original form indicative of the Bungalow. It retains the feeling and setting of a traditional early twentieth-century tenant house. It also remains associated with the Smith family, who were likely the original builders. However, its materials, design, and workmanship have been lost through the removal of most of its original siding and some of its windows. While recognizable as a typical rural tenant house of the 1920s, it does not have sufficient integrity to convey the sense of a farmhouse or the resource's likely historic appearance during the early to mid-twentieth century.

### ***Evaluation Criteria***

The Smith Tenant House is not recommended as eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A for its association with broad patterns of Nash County's rural history. Although it is associated with early-twentieth-century agriculture, the house did not play a significant role within that context.

Likely built soon after his purchase in 1917, Claude Smith probably had this structure built as a tenant farm or worker housing. There is no indication that the Smith family ever occupied this tenant house, or were directly associated with it in relation to their possible significance. Therefore, the Smith Tenant House is not recommended as eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion B for its association with individuals significant in history.

Although the Smith Tenant House remains indicative of its original design as a traditional Bungalow tenant house in Nash County, it does not possess high artistic merit. The removal and partial replacement of original materials has impacted the architectural integrity of the building. The house was once part of a tenant farm, but the majority of the outbuildings have been lost indicating that it is not an intact agricultural landscape. Other, more intact, examples of this form exist throughout the county. Therefore, it is not recommended as eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion C for its physical design and construction.

As an altered example of a common style and type of construction, the Smith Tenant House is not recommended eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion D for its potential to yield new information about design and construction.



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