



North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
State Historic Preservation Office

David L. S. Brook, Administrator

Division of Historical Resources
David J. Olson, Director

Michael F. Easley, Governor
Lisbeth C. Evans, Secretary
Jeffrey J. Crow, Deputy Secretary

August 23, 2002

MEMORANDUM

TO: William D. Gilmore, Manager
Project Development and Environmental Analysis Branch
NCDOT Division of Highways

FROM: David Brook *for David Brook*

SUBJECT: Survey Report, Replace Bridge No. 246 on SR 1225 over Big Bear Creek, B-3908, Stanley County, ER 02-7897

Thank you for your letter of August 8, 2002, transmitting the above survey report.

For purposes of compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, we concur that the following property is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under the criterion cited:

The Whitley Mill, located along side Big Bear Creek, under *Criteria A: Industry*, as a rare example of a water powered gristmill and *C: Architecture*, as a well-preserved example of the nineteenth-century mill. Further, the gristmill's sawmill appendage follows the typical mill building pattern during this time period and is perhaps the last surviving example of the rural industrial mill in Stanley County.

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 919/733-4763. In all future communication concerning this project, please cite the above referenced tracking number.

cc: Mary Pope Furr, NCDOT

bc: Brown/McBride
County

| | Location | Mailing Address | Telephone/Fax |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| Administration | 507 N. Blount St, Raleigh, NC | 4617 Mail Service Center, Raleigh 27699-4617 | (919) 733-4763 • 733-8653 |
| Restoration | 515 N. Blount St, Raleigh, NC | 4613 Mail Service Center, Raleigh 27699-4613 | (919) 733-6547 • 715-4801 |
| Survey & Planning | 515 N. Blount St, Raleigh, NC | 4618 Mail Service Center, Raleigh 27699-4618 | (919) 733-4763 • 715-4801 |

PHASE II
INTENSIVE LEVEL HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL
SURVEY REPORT

REPLACE BRIDGE NO. 246 ON S.R. 1225
OVER BIG BEAR CREEK
STANLY COUNTY

NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
T.I.P. NUMBER B-3908
FEDERAL AID NUMBER BRZ-1225(2)

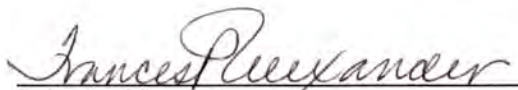
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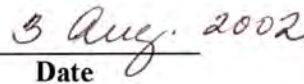
Mattson, Alexander and Associates, Inc.
2228 Winter Street
Charlotte, North Carolina 28205

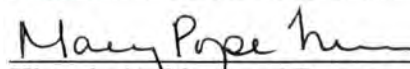
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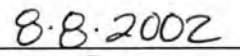
North Carolina Department of Transportation
Project Development and Environmental Analysis Branch
1548 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1548

3 August 2002


Principal Investigator
Mattson, Alexander and Associates, Inc.


Date


Historic Architectural Resources
North Carolina Department of Transportation


Date

**REPLACE BRIDGE NO. 246 ON S.R. 1225
OVER BIG BEAR CREEK
STANLY COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
T.I.P. NUMBER B-3908
ER 02-7897**

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (N.C.D.O.T.) proposes to replace one-lane Bridge No. 246 on S.R. 1225 over Big Bear Creek in Stanly County (**Figure 1**). Three alternatives have been proposed for this project and are depicted in **Figures 2-4**. Each alternative requires the removal of the current bridge. Alternative 1 replaces the existing bridge with a two-lane span just to the south of its existing alignment, while Alternative 2 replaces the bridge with a new two-lane span to the north. Alternative 3 constructs a new bridge on the existing location. The approach work for the three alternatives extends along S.R. 1225 for approximately 200 feet on both the east and west sides of the bridge.

Purpose of Survey and Report

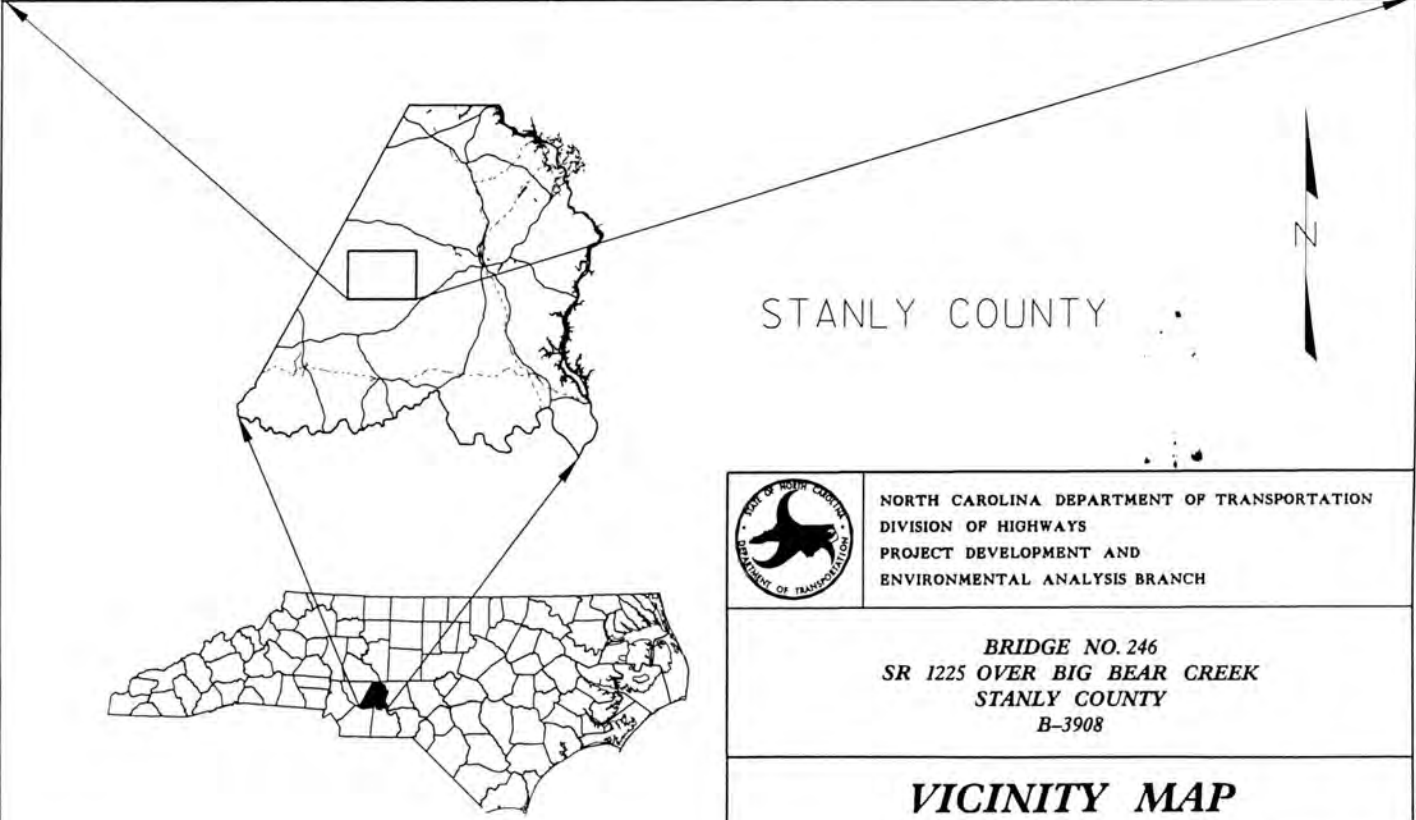
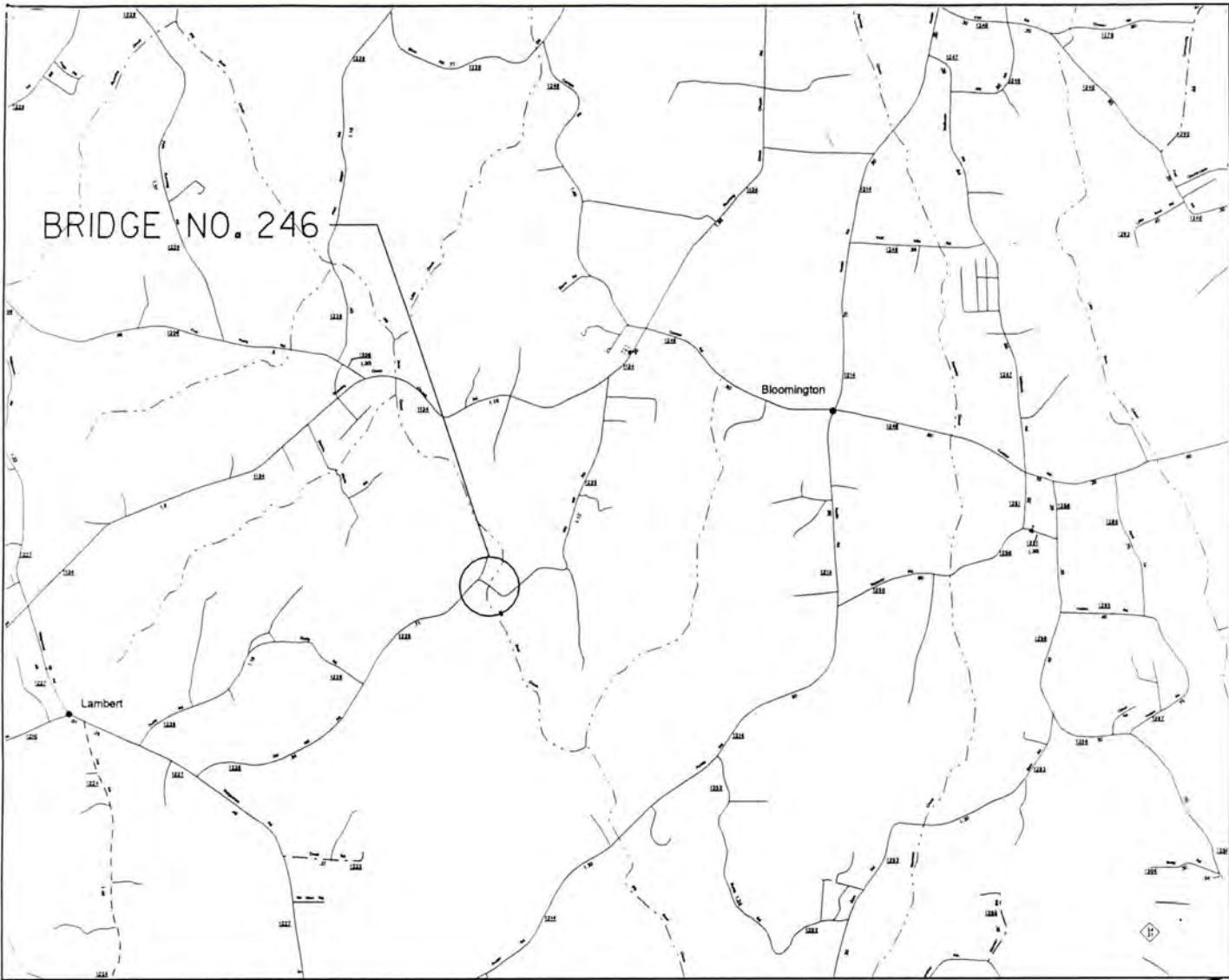
This survey was conducted to identify historical architectural resources located within the area of potential effects (A.P.E.) for the undertaking as part of the environmental studies conducted by N.C.D.O.T. and documented by a Categorical Exclusion (C.E.). This report is prepared as a technical appendix to the C.E. and as part of the documentation of compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (N.E.P.A.) and the National Historic Preservation Act (N.H.P.A.) of 1966, as amended. Section 106 of the NHPA requires that if a federally funded, licensed, or permitted project has an effect on a property listed in, or potentially eligible for listing in, the National Register of Historic Places, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation must be given a reasonable opportunity to comment on such undertakings.

Methodology

This survey was conducted and the report compiled in accordance with the provisions of F.H.W.A. Technical Advisory T 6640.8A (Guidance for Preparing and Processing Environmental and Section 4(f) Documents); and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological and Historic Preservation (48 FR 44716); 36 CFR Part 800; 36 CFR Part 60; and *Survey Procedures and Report Guidelines for Historic Architectural Resources* by N.C.D.O.T. (15 June 1994).

The report meets the guidelines for architectural surveys established by N.C.D.O.T. (15 June 1994). These guidelines set forth the following goals for architectural surveys: (1) to determine the A.P.E., defined as the geographic area or areas within which a project may cause changes in the character or use of historic properties, if any such properties exist; (2) to locate and identify all resources fifty years of age or older within the A.P.E.; and (3) to determine the potential eligibility of these resources for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, this report conforms to the expanded requirements for architectural survey reports developed by N.C.D.O.T. and the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources (February 1996).

The methodology consisted of background research into the historical and architectural development of the area and a field survey of the A.P.E. The field survey was conducted in June



STANLY COUNTY

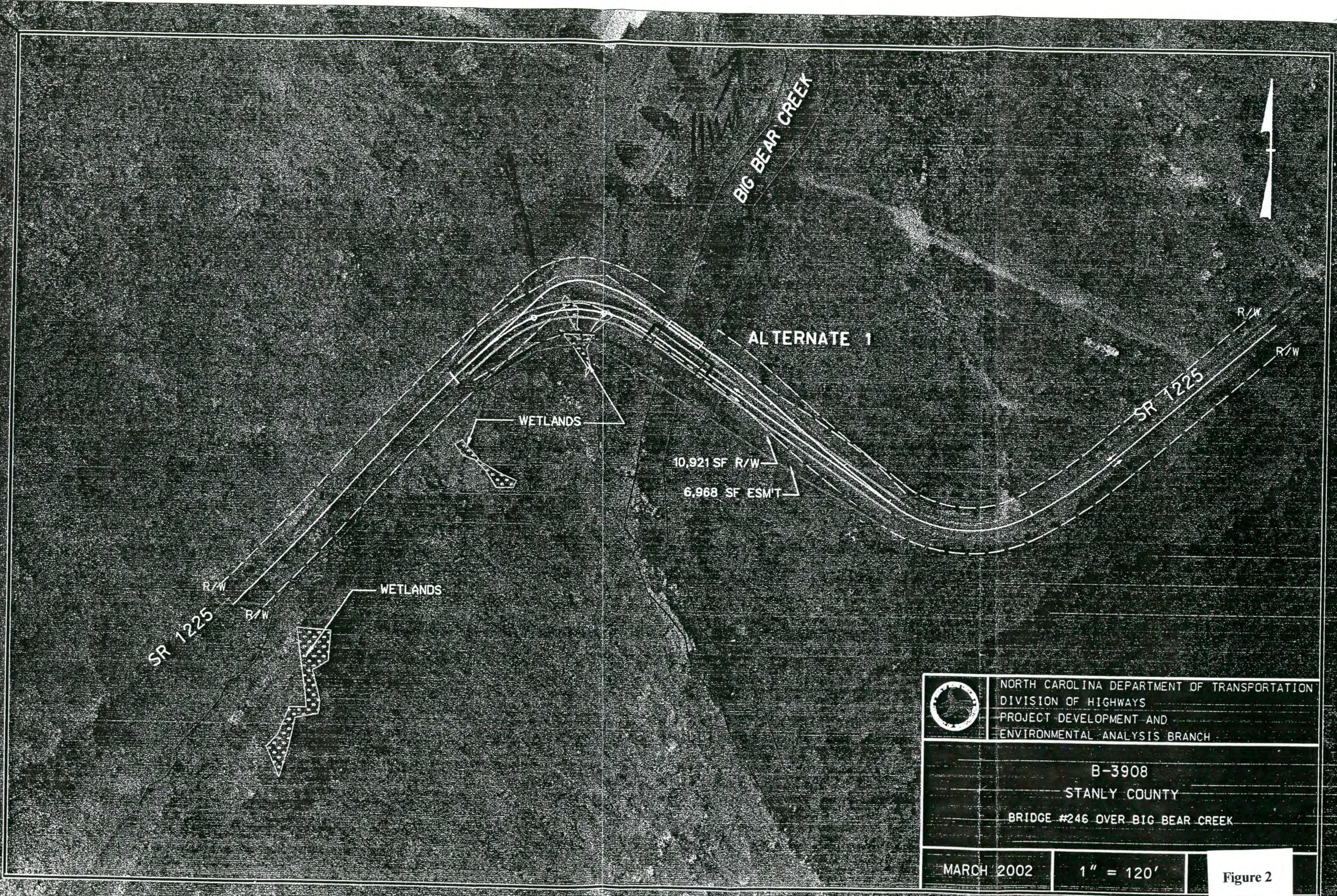


NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
 DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS
 PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND
 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS BRANCH

BRIDGE NO. 246
SR 1225 OVER BIG BEAR CREEK
STANLY COUNTY
B-3908

VICINITY MAP

Figure 1

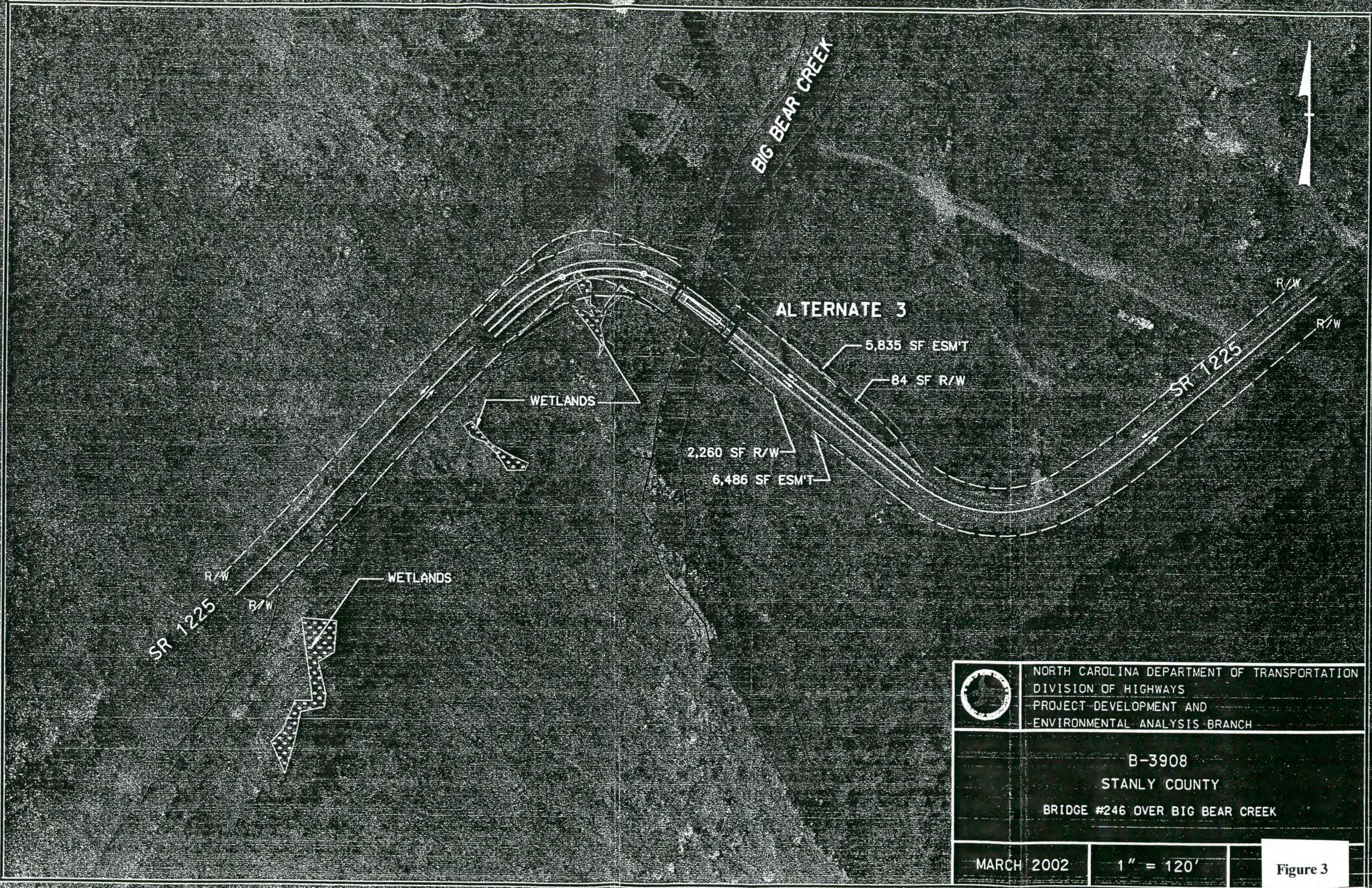



 NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
 DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS
 PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND
 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS BRANCH

B-3908
 STANLY COUNTY
 BRIDGE #246 OVER BIG BEAR CREEK

MARCH 2002 1" = 120' Figure 2

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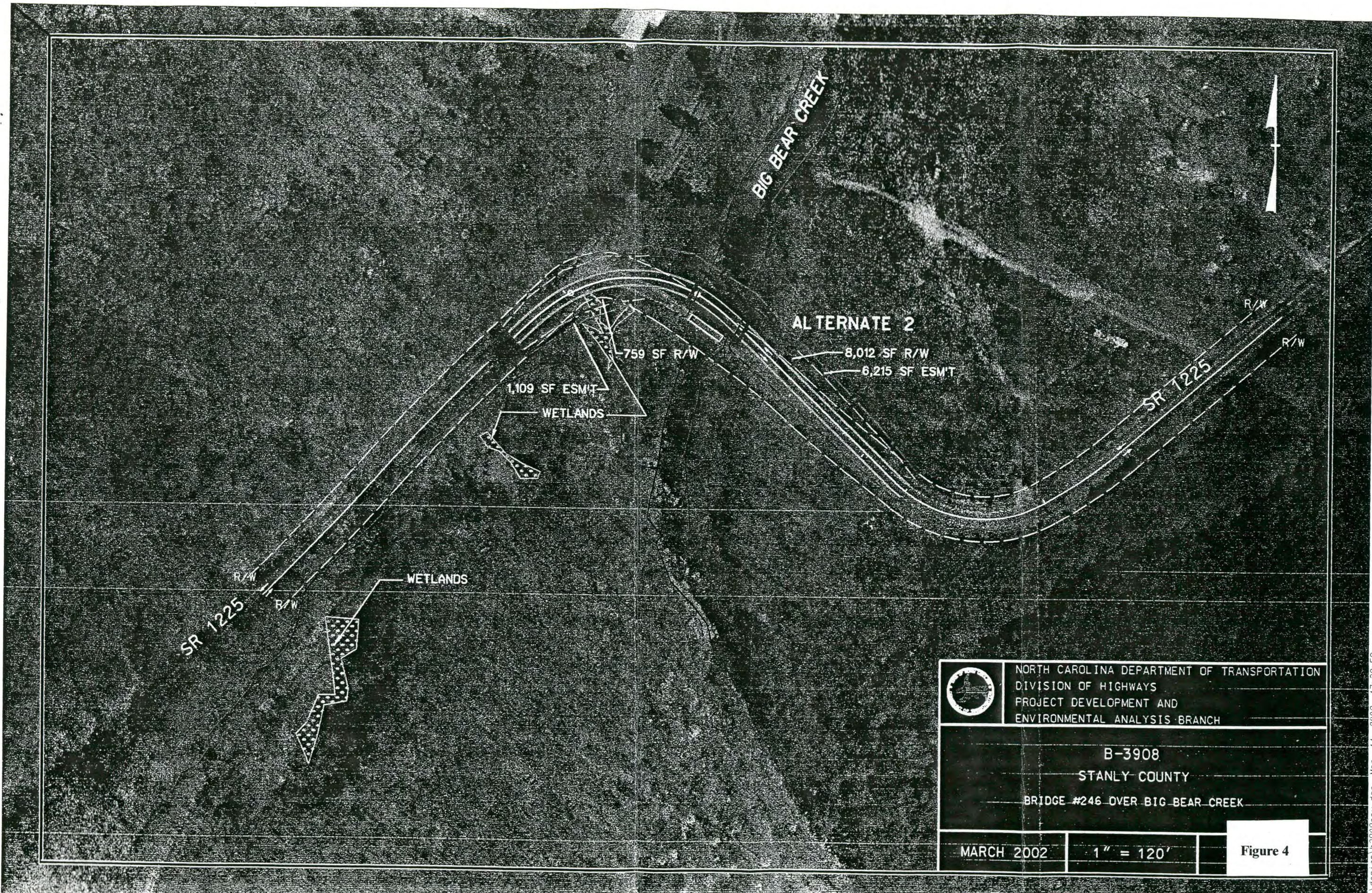
NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
 DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS
 PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND
 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS BRANCH

B-3908
 STANLY COUNTY
 BRIDGE #246 OVER BIG BEAR CREEK

MARCH 2002

1" = 120'

Figure 3



NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
 DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS
 PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND
 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS BRANCH

B-3908
 STANLY COUNTY
 BRIDGE #246 OVER BIG BEAR CREEK

MARCH 2002

1" = 120'

Figure 4

2002, to delineate the A.P.E. and to identify all properties within the A.P.E. that were at least fifty years of age. The boundaries of the A.P.E. are shown in **Figure 5**. The A.P.E. was defined by modern construction, topographical features, and sight lines, and one hundred percent of this area was surveyed.

Historical research, of both primary and secondary sources, was conducted at local and regional repositories. This research included a review of previous surveys and environmental impact statements. The 1989-1990 architectural survey of Stanly County conducted by Donna Dodenhoff for the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, became the basis for the 1992 publication, *Stanly County: The Architectural Legacy of a Rural North Carolina County* (1992). This source provided general historical background information as well as specific information on Whitley Mill, situated on Big Bear Creek within the A.P.E.

Summary Findings of the Survey

The project area follows S.R. 1225 over Big Bear Creek in rural Stanly County. This agrarian area west of Albemarle contains rolling farmland, woodlands, and a variety of farmhouses and modern non-farm dwellings. One property, the Whitley Mill (Study List 1990), a two story, frame gristmill alongside Big Bear Creek, was identified within the A.P.E. and evaluated in the Property Inventory and Evaluations section of this report. Constructed ca. 1875 and enlarged in the early twentieth century, this mill was added to the North Carolina Study List in 1990. Unchanged since the initial investigation in 1989-1990, Whitley Mill is recommended as eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for industry and under Criterion C for architecture.

Properties Listed on the National Register

None

Properties Listed on the North Carolina Study List

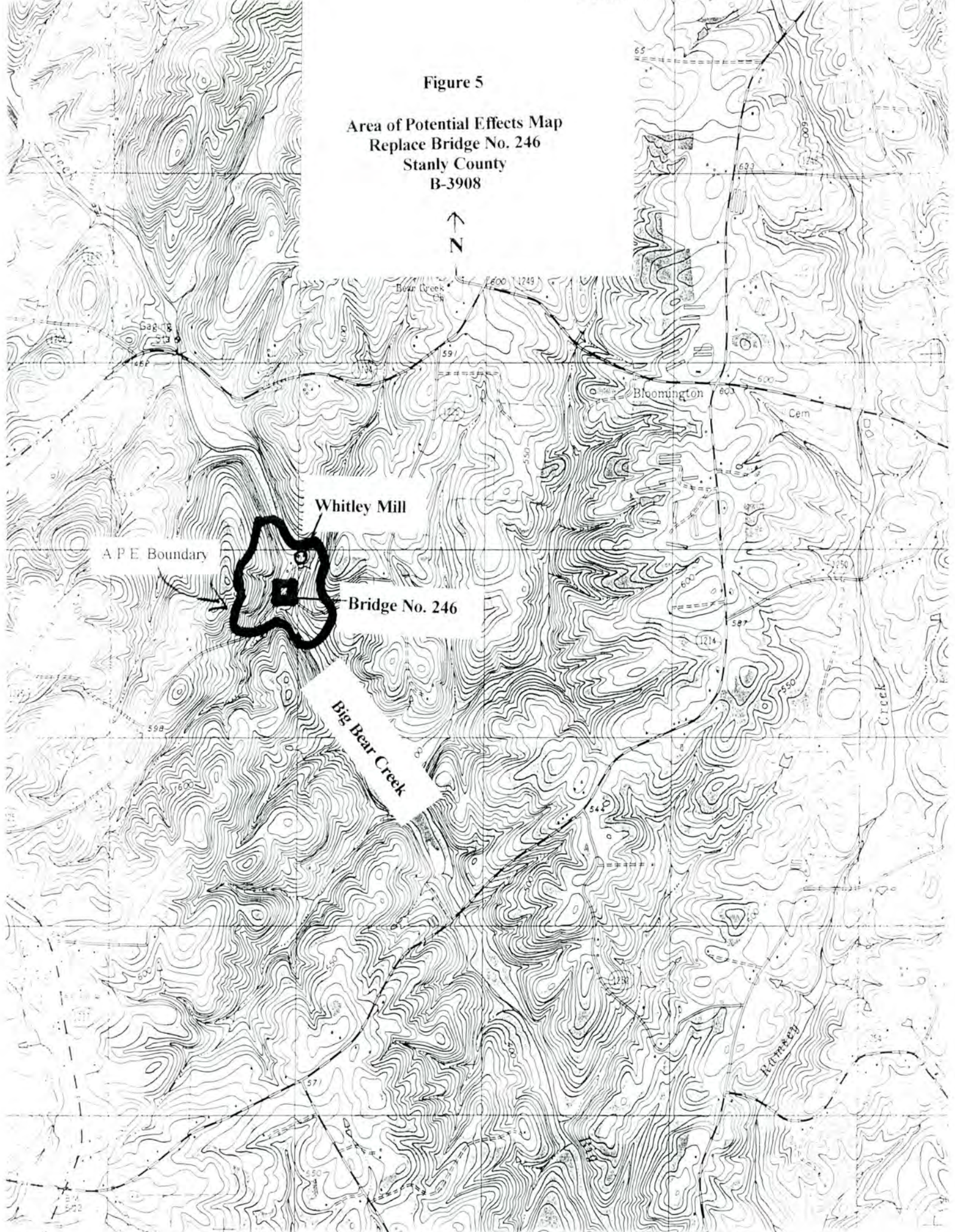
Whitley Mill (Study List 1990)

Properties Considered Eligible for the National Register

Whitley Mill

Figure 5

Area of Potential Effects Map
Replace Bridge No. 246
Stanly County
B-3908



HISTORICAL BACKGROUND ESSAY

Frontier Period to the Civil War

European settlers began migrating into present-day Stanly County during the middle decades of the eighteenth century. Located in the south-central Piedmont along the west side of the Uwharrie Mountain Range, this area grew steadily throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. English settlers migrated from the Cape Fear and other eastern North Carolina areas to populate the southern section of the county, while German and Scotch-Irish families came down the Great Wagon Road from Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia to establish farming communities in the northern and western reaches. A small number of French, mostly from the New Bern vicinity, also migrated here, taking up residence along the Yadkin and Pee Dee rivers. In 1841, the North Carolina General Assembly created Stanly County out of western Montgomery County to serve the needs of the growing population and established the town of Albemarle as the administrative seat (Lefler and Newsome 1954: 32, 130, 290, 599; Merrens 1964: 53-57; Dodenhoff 1992: 1-3, 10-11; Sharpe 1972: 4, 7, 9).

Stanly County was more fortunate than many of its Piedmont neighbors in that the Yadkin, Pee Dee, and Rocky rivers accommodated some commercial river traffic, giving rise to small river communities. Perhaps the earliest settlement in Stanly County was associated with John Colson's Ordinary, or inn, which took shape before 1770 at the confluence of the Pee Dee and Rocky rivers in the southeastern corner of the county. The early hamlet of Allenton, located on the peninsula formed by the Pee Dee and Rocky rivers, began about 1800 when three Allen brothers built homes, an inn, and a large mercantile business on the riverside site. Allenton served the north-south stage route between Charlotte and Raleigh as well as river traffic. Tindalesville, sited on the Yadkin River near the mouth of the Uwharrie River, was named for James Tindal of Montgomery County. Like Allenton, this settlement included an inn, a general merchandise store, and a cluster of dwellings. For a time, Tindalesville served as the county seat of Montgomery County as well as being a bustling ferry landing that carried heavy traffic along the main market road from the Yadkin Valley to Fayetteville on the Cape Fear River. Dr. Francis Joseph Kron, a German emigre and physician who resided near Tindalesville, observed the settlement's vibrant commercial pulse. He wrote,

Four horsedrawn wagons, loaded with cotton and other farm produce were on the way to Fayetteville, on the return trip, these same wagons would be loaded with sugar, coffee, salt, farm implements, and other needed things for the homes and farms along the valley. The Kirk Tavern, located here was a favorite stopping place for these traders and travelers over many years (Quoted in Dodenhoff 1989: 2).

However, Tindalesville was also plagued with typhoid fever epidemics and after the second outbreak in 1817, the community relocated to higher ground east of the Yadkin River in the Uwharrie Mountains. The new town was named Lawrenceville and remained the seat of Montgomery County until the formation of Stanly County (Balfrey 1970: 5-6; Sharpe 1972: 218).

Later communities arose along the crude roads that crossed the county. Places such as Plyers Crossroads near the A.P.E., Kindall's Ordinary on the Salisbury Turnpike (present-day U.S. 52), and Smith's Store at the junction of the pike road and Charlotte Road (roughly N.C. 24/27), contained post offices and general stores. In 1841, the immediate area around Smith's Store was designated the county seat of Albemarle. Approximately fifty acres of land were divided into lots and advertised for sale, with the proceeds earmarked for the construction of public buildings. The first county courthouse arose in 1842, and by 1848, Albemarle included two hotels, one general

store, a tailor, a shoemaker, a blacksmith, and three taverns. The *Carolina Watchman* described the young town as a “neat village laid out in regular squares with the courthouse occupying an ample yard in the center.” Albemarle was officially incorporated in 1857 (Sharpe 1972: 5, 9-11; Dodenhoff 1992: 3-4; Lefler and Newsome 1954: 599).

Despite the county’s access to multiple river crossings and some commercial river transport, poor overland routes and unreliable river travel constrained trade and cultural exchange. In 1856, in an effort to spur economic development, a group of prominent landholders formed the Yadkin Navigation Company to improve the river’s navigation by dredging and widening the waterway. However, state funding for the project fell through, effectively ending any promise of Stanly County becoming a major river transportation center. Without reliable access to markets, local farmers typically strove for a comfortable subsistence, cultivating small tracts and possessing few or no slaves. The 1860 census recorded only twenty acres within the entire county devoted to the cultivation of cotton—a major cash crop in the region—and of the 962 farms listed, only sixty-eight contained more than 150 acres of improved land. On the eve of the Civil War, slaves constituted only 15.6 percent of the county’s 7,801 residents. Those farmers who did own slaves were concentrated in the eastern section of the county where the fertility of the soil lent itself to more intensive cultivation. Industrial activities were confined to rural artisan pursuits, particularly blacksmithing and the milling of grain and timber for local use (Clayton 1983: 32-44; Dodenhoff 1992: 3-4, 11-15; Lefler and Newsome 1954: 298-299; Sharpe 1972: 232-235).

The county saw no action during the Civil War. However, as throughout the region, the loss of manpower to military service virtually paralyzed farming and manufacturing. According to one primary account of this difficult period, without surplus crops and home manufactured goods with which to barter, all clothes were homespun. Flax was used for linens and towels. Molasses took the place of sugar. Parched wheat was used for coffee and salt was nearly nonexistent” (Quoted in Foglia 1957: 22).

Post-Civil War Period to the Present

Agriculture was slow to recover in the postwar years. Local farmers had 2,000 more acres under cultivation in 1860 than they did in 1880. However, a major shift was underway towards a cash-crop economy. Although farms remained diversified—raising corn, wheat, oats, hay, and some livestock—they also devoted more and more acreage to cotton, grown purely for sale. While in 1869 farmers in Stanly County raised fifty acres of grain to one acre of cotton, by 1880 farmers were producing only six acres of grain for every acre of cotton. As farm tenancy increased after the war, the number of farms increased while their average size decreased. By 1880, the average size of a Stanly County farm was only forty-three acres, and the agricultural census recorded 206 tenant farms in the county. By the early twentieth century, tenants operated thirty-eight percent of the county’s farms (Ninth and Tenth Censuses, Agricultural Schedules 1870 and 1880; *North Carolina Labor Statistics* 1901: 130-13; Dodenhoff 1992: 38-29).

To serve the farming communities, small gristmills and sawmills arose alongside the county’s waterways throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. There were about a dozen water-powered gristmills (seven of which also included sawmill operations) on the eve of the Civil War, and the construction of rural mills and associated dams continued into the early decades of the twentieth century. Built about 1875, the two story Whitley Mill within the A.P.E. is the only surviving nineteenth century gristmill in the county. Sited alongside Big Bear Creek, the frame structure and associated 1930s concrete dam were a locus of activity in the Frog Pond community west of Albemarle during the decades preceding World War II (Dodenhoff 1992: 14-15, 39-40, 147-148).

By the early twentieth century, members of the Whitley family had established farmsteads in this fertile landscape drained by Big Bear Creek. Green Whitley, the patriarch of the family who built the mill, as well as sons James and George, operated farms in this area. Their simple frame farmhouses as well as a small family cemetery stand several miles south of the A.P.E. near S.R. 1214 (Dodenhoff 1992: 146-148).

While Whitley Mill reflected the persistence of local commerce and enterprise in rural Stanly County, by the late nineteenth century, the rise of railroads brought cash-crop farming and links to far-flung markets. Between 1891 and 1913, three railroads extended into the county providing unprecedented access to regional and national markets. The arrival of the east-west Norfolk and Southern Railroad, the Winston-Salem Southbound Railroad, and the Yadkin Railroad (later part of the Southern Railway) boosted manufacturing and cash-crop agriculture while spurring population growth and the rise of small towns along the lines. The north-south Yadkin Railroad, which bisects the project area, was constructed through the heart of the county to link Albemarle and its environs with the main line of the Southern Railway at Salisbury in Rowan County. Between the 1890s and 1930, rail-oriented textile mills arose in Albemarle and the neighboring towns of Norwood and Oakboro, while in the countryside cotton production increased to fifty percent of the county's agricultural output (Sharpe 1972: 9-16; Dodenhoff 1992: 5-6, 41-42, 211-213, 232, 238, 254, 329-334).

Manufacturing in the county soared to new heights during World War I, when the Aluminum Company of America (ALCOA) established a plant along the Yadkin River to manufacture aluminum for the war effort. In 1917, ALCOA constructed the Narrows Dam to harness the river's hydroelectric potential, and a year later built the company towns of Badin and West Badin on Badin Lake near the dam. At the time of completion, the Narrows Dam was the tallest overflow type in the world. The dam not only powered the ALCOA operation but also, by 1930, supplied North Carolina with one-third of its electrical power. In 1928, the Tillery Hydroelectric plant complex was completed on the Pee Dee River south of the Narrows Dam (Sharpe 1972: 16-21; Dodenhoff 1992: 5-15)

As the twentieth century continued, local and state leaders joined efforts to promote good roads and bridges as keys to industrial, agricultural, and overall social progress. Responding to growing motorcar ownership, the state legislature passed the Highway Act of 1921, which launched the Good Roads Movement and the state's first great road building campaign (Lefler and Newsome 1954: 530-533; Waynick 1970: 3-36). In 1923, Route 27 (now N.C. 24/27) was paved between Albemarle and Charlotte, and in 1927, Route 80 (now U.S. 52) was paved between Albemarle and Salisbury. By the eve of World War II, four state highways crisscrossed Stanly County (*Transportation Map of North Carolina* 1930; Brawley 1974: 129-130; Dodenhoff 1992: 43).

Improved roadways made Stanly County, with its water resources and picturesque mountains along the eastern border, a popular tourist destination. In 1935, the Works Progress Administration provided federal funds for the creation of Morrow Mountain State Park. The park's state-of-the-art swimming pool, handsome lodge, and scenic woodland trails and campsites attracted visitors from throughout the region. Summer homes also arose near the park in the Uhwarrie Mountains as well as along Badin and Tillery lakes (Dodenhoff 1992: 6-7, 61-62).

Conclusion

Today, the general study area contains a balance of residential and agricultural land uses. Reflecting the shift from row crops to livestock and pasturage that has occurred throughout the Piedmont, the number of farms in the county has dropped in recent decades while average farm

acreage has increased. Today, only slightly more than one-half of the county's residents live on farms, and the total number of part-time farmers now exceeds full-time farmers. Within the study area, rural, agrarian land uses continue to characterize the rolling, well-drained landscape. However, the number of farmhouses and outbuildings that once marked this area has sharply declined and modern, non-farm dwellings now dot roadways leading to workplaces around the area's expanding urban centers (Dodenhoff 1992: 62).

PROPERTY INVENTORY AND EVALUATIONS

Whitley Mill (ST 432) (Study List 1990)

North side of S.R. 1225 along Big Bear Creek, 1.5 miles east of junction with S.R. 1227, Frog Pond Vicinity, Stanly County

Date of Construction

ca. 1875

Outbuildings

Associated Concrete Dam and Mill Race (ca.. 1937)

Setting and Landscape Description

Whitley's Mill occupies a picturesque setting along broad, rocky Big Bear Creek. The surrounding area is steeply rolling woodland and pasture land, and the mill is located on a small farm that includes a modern house (ca. 1975) and several early to late twentieth century outbuildings. Although little is visible from the road, there is some modern, non-farm residential development in the general vicinity as well as a few twentieth century farmsteads.

Physical Description and Evaluation of Integrity (Figure 6) (Plates 1-12)

The Whitley Mill is a two and one-half story, frame, front gable building with heavy timber structural system and exterior weatherboard siding. The front faces away from the creek, towards the modern house, and opens onto a loading dock. The facade has two doors, one of which is a Dutch door, and the facade is sheltered by a shed roofed canopy. The windows are shuttered. The mill has an open, timber foundation that was reinforced with concrete piers, probably when the concrete dam was added in the 1930s. The horizontal wheel remains in place under the building. A long, side gable section, which served as a woodworking shop, extends from the south elevation. Because of the slope of the land along the creek embankment, the woodworking shop has a full basement. The shop section has batten doors and six-over-six, double hung windows. The south elevation has been covered in corrugated metal since the mill was listed on the Study List in 1990. The interior of the mill was inaccessible.

In the 1930s, an earlier wooden dam was replaced with a concrete dam and mill race. The new dam has simple concrete walls with buttresses on the downstream side. Next to the mill is a concrete mill race for directing water towards the mill. The mill and dam are in fair condition and retain their architectural integrity.

Historical Background

Whitley Mill was constructed along Big Bear Creek ca. 1875 by Green Whitley for his sons, James Columbus and George, but by 1880, George had become the sole owner of the facility. He produced 2,500 bushels of wheat, 4,000 bushels of other grains, and eighty-five feet of lumber per year, characteristic of medium-size mills in Stanly County during the period. Throughout the nineteenth century, the largely self-sufficient farm economies of inland Piedmont counties were highly dependent upon such local gristmills and sawmills to produce the staples needed by farm families and their livestock. According to the 1860 census, there were twelve gristmills in Stanly County, seven of which also included sawmills. These rural industries were run solely by water power, and Stanly County, with its rolling topography, was fortunate to have numerous streams suitable for water-powered mill sites. Big Bear Creek, along which the Whitley Mill was built, was among the principal waterways of the county. Stanly County creeks were too shallow for overshot wheels, and gristmills, such as the Whitleys', were built with horizontal wheels. Dams, often built of wood, controlled and directed the supply of water needed by the mills. Mill

equipment was also constructed of wood. Turbine wheels were attached to drive shafts, and mill stones were found on upper floors of the mills. Ground wheat and corn were sifted through a series of wooden shafts to the lower levels where the grains were bagged (Dodenhoff 1990).

In the 1910s, Riley Bowers purchased Whitley Mill, which he operated between the 1910s and 1937, processing corn meal and livestock feed, as well as managing his small subsistence farm. In the early 1930s, Bowers began to modernize the facility by replacing the wooden dam with a concrete structure and installing a turbine engine as a back-up source of power. Bowers added the woodworking shop ca. 1937 for his son-in-law, Roy Branch. Using water-powered equipment, Branch operated the shop until World War II, making cedar furniture and dressed lumber for screen doors and windows (Dodenhoff 1992: 147-148).

On the hill above the mill, George Whitley had built a two story, frame house for himself and a worker's house on a knoll north of the mill. The side gable worker's house had timber framing and one room with a rear shed. When Bowers took over the property, he built a one story, brick dwelling for himself, and his daughter, Lilly, and her husband, Roy Branch, occupied the frame house. The frame house burned in 1951, and the brick house was demolished in the early 1970s to make way for the extant modern house built by the Branches' son, Doug (Dodenhoff 1990).

Of the numerous water-powered mills that once lined the creeks and streams of Stanly County in the nineteenth century, only the well-preserved Whitley Mill on Bear Creek remains. By 1900, steam powered machinery freed mills from their creek-side locations, and the older mills soon became obsolete. This obsolescence left these facilities vulnerable to demolition, neglect, and deterioration, and thus few survive. Only one other water-powered mill remains in Stanly County, a late example built by Pearson Turner on Rocky River soon after the turn of the twentieth century. The Turner mill was a side gable building that appears to have been in only marginal condition in 1990 when Donna Dodenhoff recorded the site. A third mill, the Rocky River Mill Complex (built ca. 1913), was extant until 1989 when the property burned to the ground (Dodenhoff 1992: 179-180; 201-202).

Evaluation of Eligibility (Figure 7)

The Whitley Mill is recommended for the National Register under Criterion A for industry as a good, but now rare, example of the water-powered gristmill. Such mills, which processed the corn, wheat, and lumber needed by both farm families and their livestock, were essential to farm economies in the nineteenth century, particularly in the inland counties of North Carolina where agriculture was still primarily a subsistence occupation. The gristmill often formed the locus of community life in rural counties, but by the early twentieth century the rise of steam-powered milling equipment eliminated the need for mills to be located alongside streams and rivers. At the same time, the railroads and road improvements began to centralize milling operations in larger market towns while bringing mass-produced staples and consumer goods within reach of once isolated farm families. With these changes in technology, the dispersed, water-powered gristmill soon became obsolete, leaving them vulnerable to demolition and neglect. The Whitley Mill is a rare survivor in Stanly County.

The Whitley Mill is also recommended for the National Register under Criterion C for architecture as a well-preserved example of a nineteenth century mill. The building retains the simple, two story, front gable form and timber construction characteristic of such rural gristmills. Sawmills were often a common feature of gristmill complexes, and the early twentieth century, woodworking appendage to the Whitley Mill followed this traditional pattern, both in function and form. The woodworking shop has the simple, utilitarian appearance of such rural industrial buildings with a side gable roof, frame construction, batten doors, and double-hung windows.

Once common features of the agrarian landscape, mills have not survived in great number. As historian, Donna Dodenhoff, noted in her 1989-1990 county survey, the Whitley Mill is the sole surviving example of these rural industrial buildings in Stanly County (Dodenhoff 1992: 148-149).

The Whitley Mill is not eligible under Criterion B because the property is not associated with individuals whose activities were demonstrably important within a local, state, or national historic context. Finally, the property is not considered eligible under Criterion D because the architectural component is not likely to yield information important in the history of building technology.

The proposed National Register boundaries encompass Whitley Mill and its immediate creek-side setting, the concrete dam, and a portion of Big Bear Creek to provide a physical context for this ensemble of water-powered mill and dam. The mill is located within a larger tax parcel that includes the modern Branch house, a barn, shed, worker's house, pastures, and woodland. These features, which are associated with the Branch farm, are excluded from the proposed National Register boundaries for the Whitley Mill.

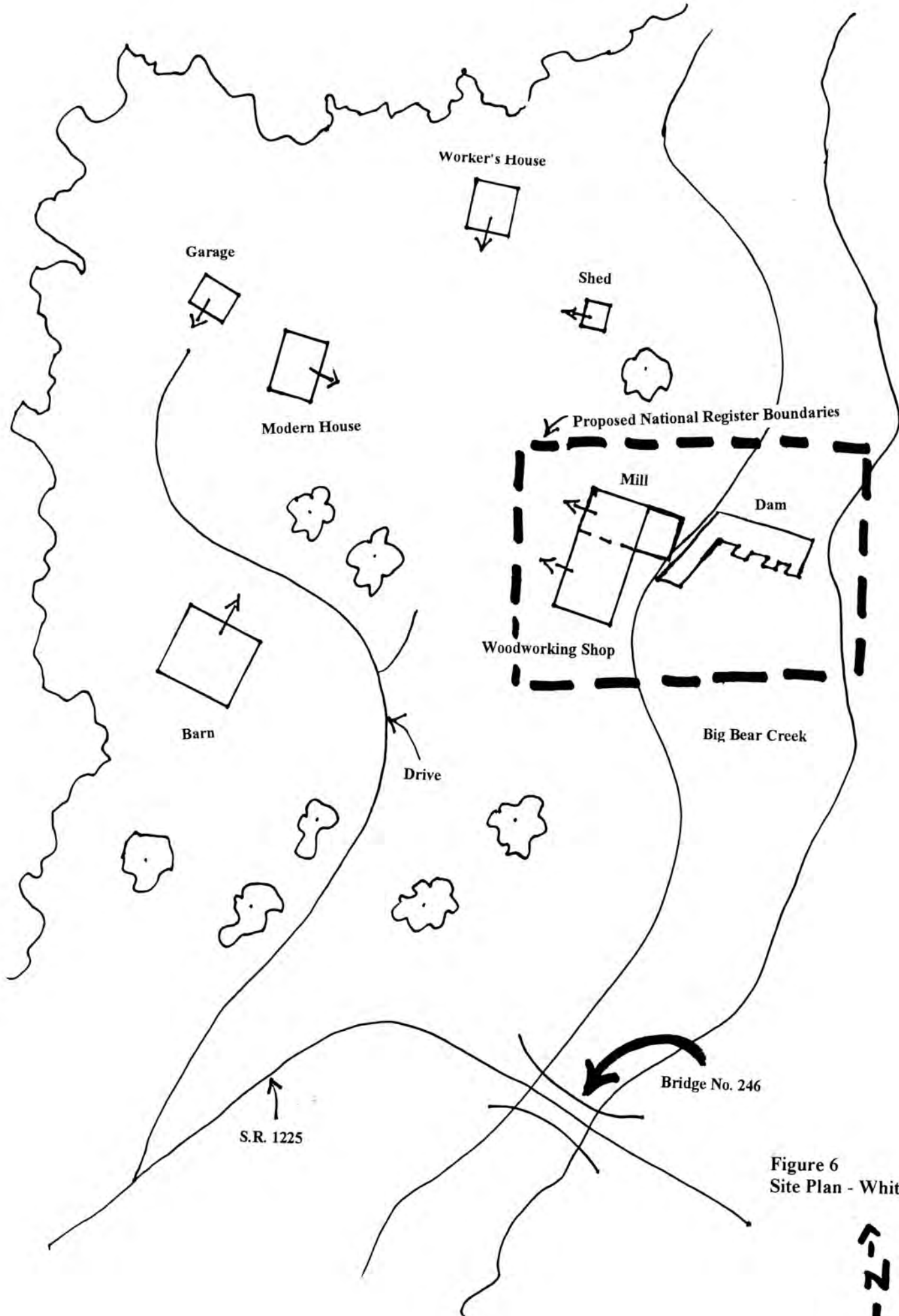


Figure 6
Site Plan - Whitley Mill

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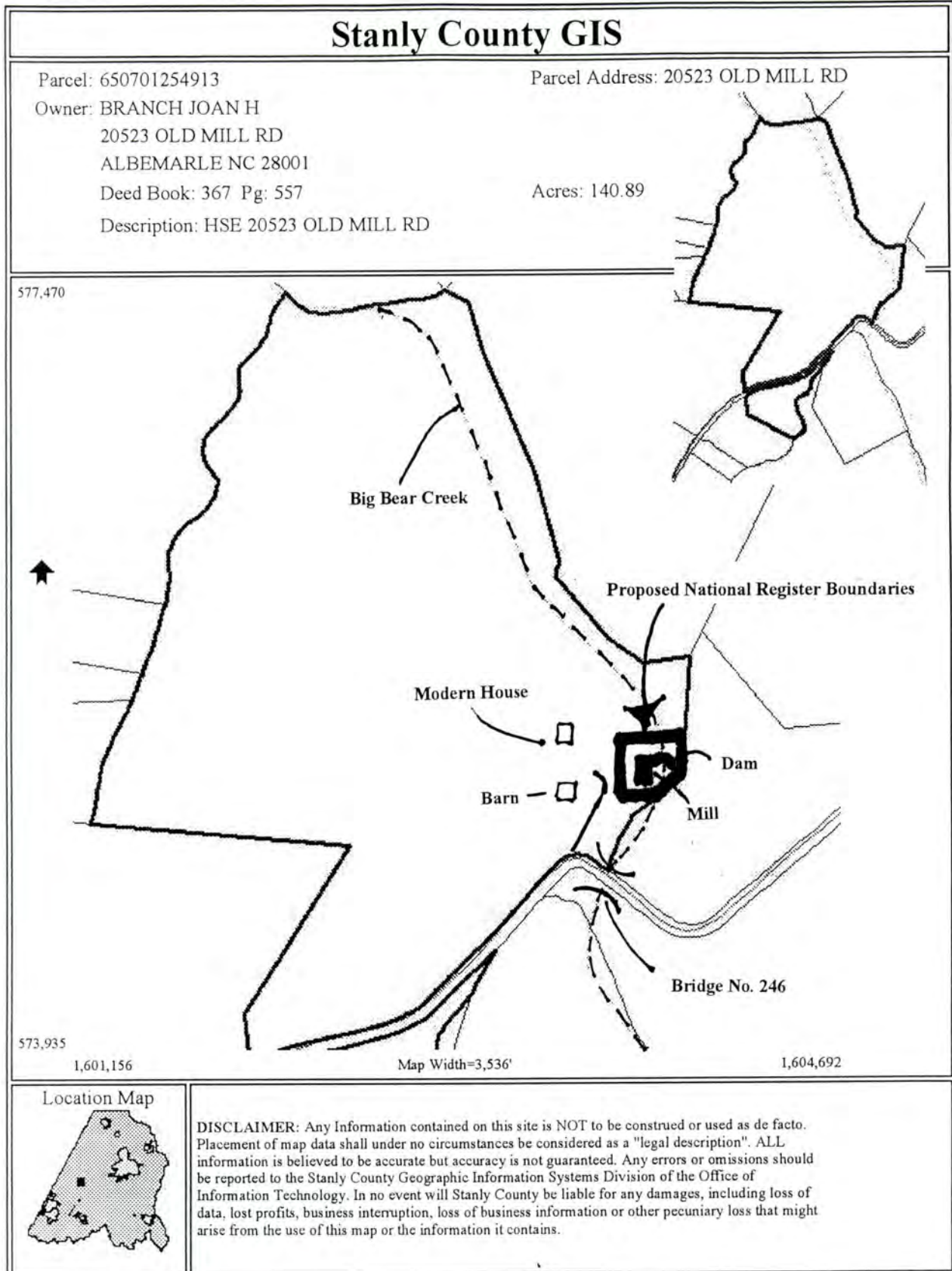


Figure 7
Proposed National Register Boundaries

Thank you for visiting the Stanly County iPlus web site!

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Plate 1. Whitley Mill, North Elevation, Looking South.



Plate 2. Whitley Mill, Facade (West Elevation) and North Elevation, Looking Southeast.



Plate 3. Whitley Mill, Woodworking Shop Appendage, Facade (West Elevation), Looking East.



Plate 4. Whitley Mill, Facade (West Elevation) of Mill and Woodworking Shop, Looking Northeast.



Plate 5. Whitley Mill, Rear (East) and North Elevations, Looking Southwest.



Plate 6. Whitley Mill, Woodworking Shop, South Elevation, Showing Corrugated Metal Sheathing, Looking North. .



Plate 7. Whitley Mill, Concrete Dam and Big Bear Creek, Looking East.



Plate 8. Whitley Mill, Concrete Dam, Buttresses, Looking Northeast.



Plate 9. Whitley Mill, Farm Driveway, Mill in Middle Background, Looking North.



Plate 10. Branch Farm, Modern House, Looking North.

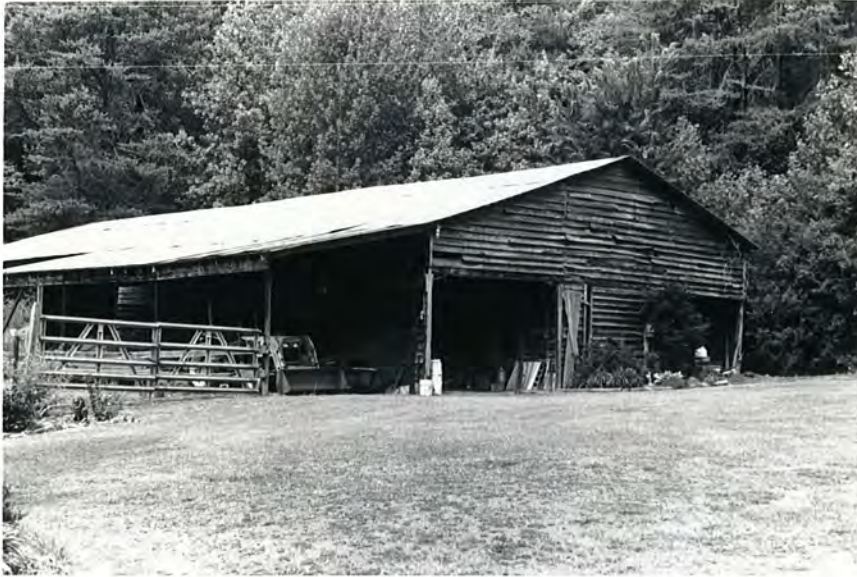


Plate 11. Branch Farm, Barn, Looking Southwest.



Plate 12. Branch Farm, Worker's House, Looking North.

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APPENDIX:
PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Richard L. Mattson, Ph.D.
Historical Geographer

Education

- 1988 Ph.D. Geography
University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois
- 1980 M.A. Geography
University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois
- 1976 B.A. History, Phi Beta Kappa
University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois

Relevant Work Experience

- 1991-date Historical Geographer, Mattson, Alexander and Associates, Inc.
Charlotte, North Carolina
- 1991 Visiting Professor, History Department, Queens College, Charlotte, North Carolina
- Developed and taught course on the architectural history of the North Carolina Piedmont, focusing on African-American architecture, textile-mill housing, and other types of vernacular landscapes.
- 1989-1991 Mattson and Associates, Historic Preservation Consulting
Charlotte, North Carolina
- 1988 Visiting Professor, Department of Urban and Regional Planning,
University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois
- Taught historic preservation planning workshop, developed and taught course on the history of African-American neighborhoods. The latter course was cross-listed in African-American Studies.
- 1984-1989 Private Historic Preservation Consultant,
Raleigh, North Carolina
- 1981-1984 Academic Advisor, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, University of
Illinois, Urbana, Illinois
- 1981 Instructor, Department of Geography, University of Illinois, Urbana,
Illinois
- 1978-1980 Private Historic Preservation Consultant, Champaign, Illinois

Frances P. Alexander
Architectural Historian

Education

- 1991 M.A. American Civilization-Architectural History
George Washington University
Washington, D.C.
- 1981 B.A. History with High Honors
Guilford College
Greensboro, North Carolina

Relevant Work Experience

- 1991-date Architectural Historian, Mattson, Alexander and Associates, Inc.
Charlotte, North Carolina
- 1988-1991 Department Head, Architectural History Department
Engineering-Science, Inc., Washington, D.C.
- 1987-1988 Architectural Historian, Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic
American Engineering Record, National Park Service, Washington, D.C.
- 1986-1987 Historian, National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service,
Washington, D.C.
- 1986 Historian, Historic American Engineering Record, National Park Service,
Chicago, Illinois