



**North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
State Historic Preservation Office**

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

Office of Archives and History
Division of Historical Resources
David Brook, Director

May 24, 2004

MEMORANDUM

TO: Greg Thorpe, Manager
Project Development and Environmental Analysis Branch
NCDOT Division of Highways

FROM: David Brook *David Brook*

SUBJECT: Historic Architectural Resources Survey Report, Replace Bridge No. 16 on NC Highway 171 over Hardison Mill Creek, B-4185, Martin County, ER03-0952

Thank you for your letter of April 15, 2004, transmitting the survey report by Penne Sandbeck.

For purposes of compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, we concur that the following property is listed in the North Carolina Study List and remains eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places:

The Hardison Mill Creek component of the Farm Life Rural Historic District remains eligible for the National Register under Criterion A and C. The Hardison Mill Creek area is remarkable and exceptional for its retention of field patterns, forested swamps, period farmhouses, and outbuildings which reflect the regional shift from subsistence farming and timbering to larger scale agricultural output, dating from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries.

We concur with the National Register boundaries of the Hardison Mill Creek component of the Farm Life Historic District as described and delineated in the survey report. This area is located in the northeastern corner of the Farm Life Historic District and falls within the Area of Potential Effects for the project.

For purposes of compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, we concur that the following property is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places:

Bridge No. 16 on NC 171 over Hardison Mill Creek

	Location	Mailing Address	Telephone/Fax
ADMINISTRATION	507 N. Blount Street, Raleigh NC	4617 Mail Service Center, Raleigh NC 27699-4617	(919)733-4763/733-8653
RESTORATION	515 N. Blount Street, Raleigh NC	4617 Mail Service Center, Raleigh NC 27699-4613	(919)733-6547/715-4801
SURVEY & PLANNING	515 N. Blount Street, Raleigh, NC	4617 Mail Service Center, Raleigh NC 27699-4618	(919)733-6545/715-4801

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

bc: ✓ Southern/McBride
County



RECEIVED
APR 16 2004

HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

MICHAEL F. EASLEY
GOVERNOR

LYNDO TIPPETT
SECRETARY

April 15, 2004

Ref. # ER03-0952
S Due 5/12

Mr. David L. S. Brook
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
4617 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-4617

Dear Mr. Brook:

RE: TIP# B-4185, Martin County, Bridge Replacement of Bridge No. 16 on NC Highway 171 over Hardison Mill Creek, WBS Project # 33532.1.1, Federal Aid #BRSTP-171(12)

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) is conducting planning studies for the above-referenced project. Please find attached two copies of the Historic Architectural Resources Survey Report, which meets the guidelines for survey procedures for NCDOT and the National Park Service. This report evaluates Bridge No. 16 and the Hardison Mill Creek area, comprising the Area of Potential Effect, for their eligibility for listing to the National Register of Historic Places. The area around Hardison Mill Creek is a small component of the Farm Life Rural Historic District that was placed on the North Carolina Study List in 1994.

Please review the attached survey report and provide us with your comments. If you have any questions concerning the accompanying information, please contact me at 715-1620.

Sincerely,

Mary Pope Furr
Historic Architecture Section

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APR 21 2004

Attachment

cc (w/ attachment): John F. Sullivan III, Federal Highway Administration
Karen Capps, P. E., Project Engineer, PDEA

MAILING ADDRESS:
NC DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
OFFICE OF HUMAN ENVIRONMENT
1583 MAIL SERVICE CENTER
RALEIGH NC 27699-1583

TELEPHONE: 919-715-1500
FAX: 919-715-1522
WEBSITE: WWW.NCDOT.ORG

LOCATION:
PARKER LINCOLN BUILDING
2728 CAPITAL BOULEVARD, SUITE 168
RALEIGH, NC 27604

Historic Architectural Resources Survey Report

Replace Bridge No. 16 on NC Highway 171
Over Hardison Mill Creek
Martin County, NC

TIP NO. B-4185

WBS NO. 33532.1.1
FEDERAL AID NO. BRSTP-171 (12)

BY

Penne Sandbeck



**PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS BRANCH
NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
APRIL 2004**

HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY REPORT

REPLACE BRIDGE NO. 16 ON NC HIGHWAY 171
OVER HARDISON MILL CREEK
MARTIN COUNTY, NC

TIP No. B-4185
State Project No. 33532.1.1 (WBS)
Federal Aid No. BRSTP-171(12)



NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
REPORT PREPARED BY PENNE SANDBECK

APRIL 2004

Penne Sandbeck

April 14, 2004

Principal Investigator
Historic Architecture Section
North Carolina Department of Transportation

Date

Mary Pope Furr

4.14.2004

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

Date

Management Summary

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes to replace Bridge No. 16, located on NC Highway 171, spanning Hardison Mill Creek in Martin County's Farm Life rural community. There are two alternatives proposed, each providing a bridge with twelve-foot lanes with eight-foot offsets. The first alternative would replace Bridge No. 16 with a new bridge in the same location and elevation as the existing bridge; during construction, traffic would be detoured offsite. The second alternative would replace Bridge No. 16 in a new location while maintaining traffic on the existing bridge during construction. This project is federally (Project No. BRSTP-171(12)) and state (WBS Project No. 33532.1.1) funded, and is classified as a Categorical Exclusion (CE).

The purpose and need of Bridge No. 16's replacement is due to the bridge's deteriorated deck and superstructure, compounded by the high daily volume of traffic the bridge experiences. Bridge No. 16's sufficiency rating is 50.5 out of a possible 100. NC 171's estimated daily traffic volume in 2003 was 3,300 vehicles per day; in addition to its status as a Rural Major Collector, NC 171—and this particular bridge crossing—is a major thoroughfare for logging trucks traveling to and from Plymouth's Weyerhaeuser plant to NC 171's junction with U. S. Highway 17 in Beaufort County. Three school buses also use this bridge twice a day, five days per week.

In November 2003, NCDOT architectural historian Penne Sandbeck conducted a survey to identify historic architectural resources within the project's Area of Potential Effects (APE). Every property in the APE, fifty years of age or older, was photographed and documented, as well as properties less than fifty years old. On December 16, 2003, the survey results were submitted to the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (NC-HPO) for review. At that meeting, NC-HPO requested further investigation of historic resources in the project area, including Bridge No. 16 (constructed in 1950) and the APE in relation to the Farm Life Study List Rural Historic District, designated as such by NC-HPO in 1993. Over half of the project APE is located within this HPO-designated rural historic district, and the APE itself, with its intact agrarian landscape and architectural resources, is eligible for the National Register. Properties in the APE determined not eligible for the National Register are included in an appendix to this report. Further research has concluded that Bridge No. 16 is not eligible for the National Register, which will be discussed more fully in the actual report.

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Project Description

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes to replace Bridge No. 16, located on NC Highway 171, which spans Hardison Mill Creek in Martin County's Farm Life rural community. There are two alternatives proposed, each providing a bridge with twelve-foot lanes with eight-foot offsets. The first alternative would replace Bridge No. 16 with a new bridge in the same location and elevation as the existing bridge; during construction, traffic would be detoured offsite. The second alternative would replace Bridge No. 16 in a new location while maintaining traffic on the existing bridge during construction. This project is federally (Project No. BRSTP-171(12)) and state (WBS Project No. 33532.1.1) funded, and is classified as a Categorical Exclusion.

Purpose of Survey

The purpose and need of this bridge replacement is due to Bridge No. 16's sufficiency rating of 50.5 out of a possible 100. Estimated daily traffic volume in 2003 was 3,300 vehicles per day, including three school buses twice a day five days a week, and many logging trucks, who use NC 171 as a back road between the Weyerhaeuser plant in Plymouth and the U. S. Highway 17 junction in Beaufort County.

NCDOT conducted a survey and compiled this report in order to identify historic architectural resources located within the project's Area of Potential Effects (APE) as part of the environmental studies performed by NCDOT and documented by a Categorical Exclusion (CE). This report is prepared as a technical appendix to the CE and as part of the documentation of compliance with the National Environment Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) 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 eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation be given an opportunity to comment. This report is on file at NCDOT and available for review by the public.

Methodology

NCDOT conducted the survey and prepared this report in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Technical Advisory T 6640.8A (Guidance for Preparing and Processing Environmental and Section 4(f) Documents); the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological and Historic Preservation (48 FR 44716); 36 CFR Part 60; and Survey Procedures and Report Guidelines for Historic Architectural Resources by NCDOT (2003). This survey and report meet the guidelines of NCDOT and the National Park Service (NPS).

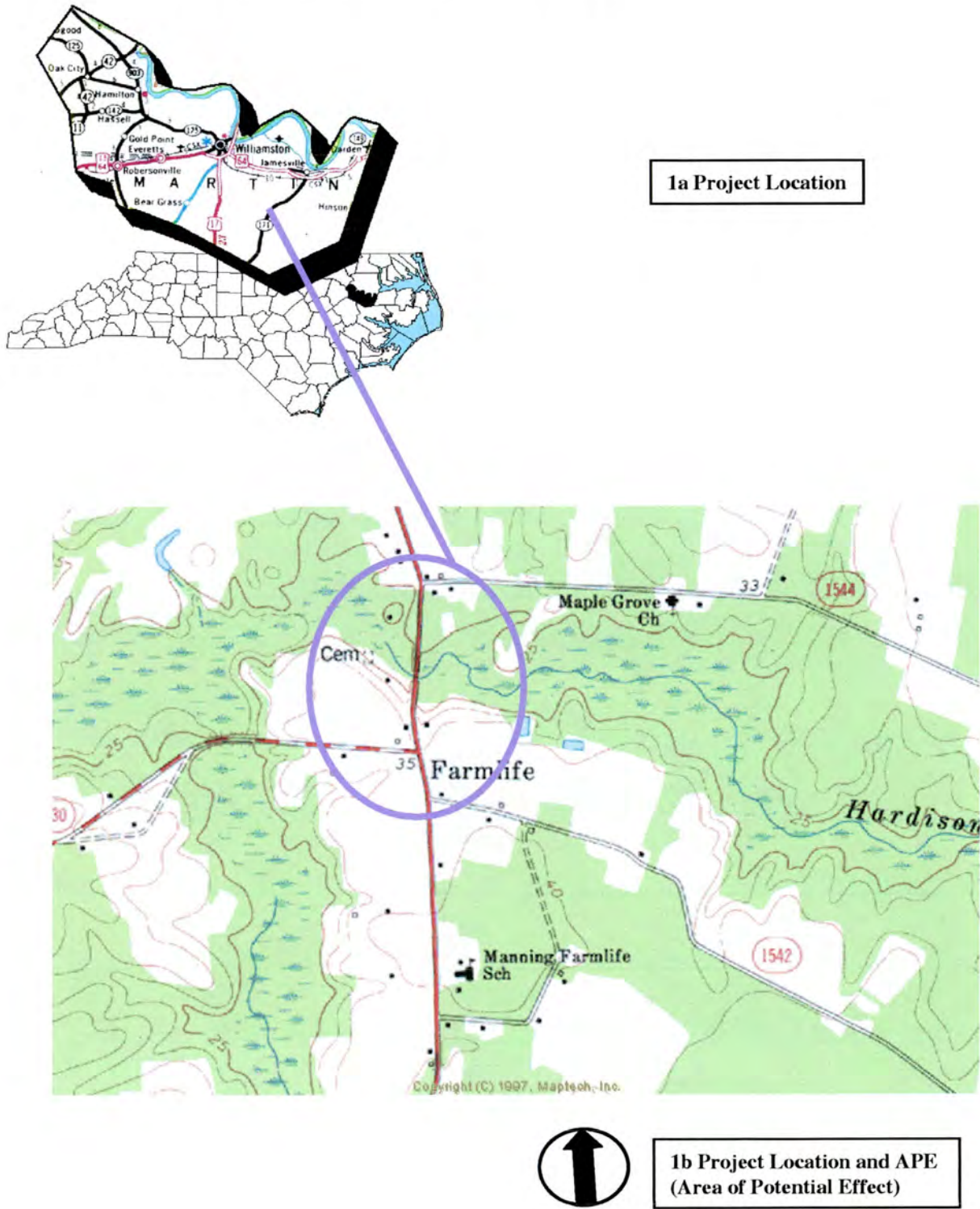
NCDOT conducted an intensive survey with the following goals: (1) to determine the APE, defined as the geographic area or areas within which a project may cause changes

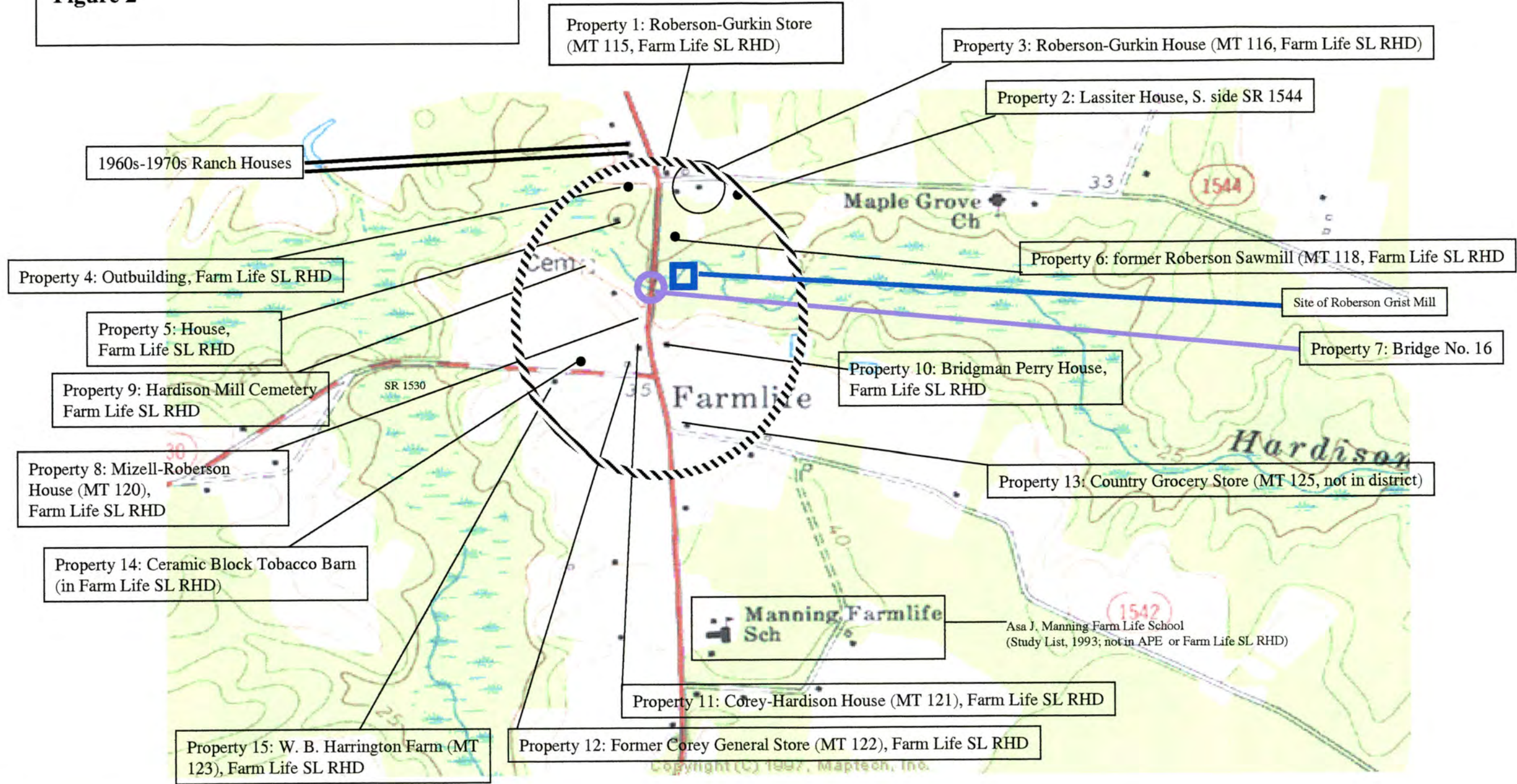
in the character or use of historic properties, if any such properties exist; (2) to identify all significant resources within the APE; and (3) to evaluate these resources according to the National Register of Historic Places criteria. The APE boundary is shown in **Figures 1 and 2**.

In November 2003 NCDOT architectural historian Penne Sandbeck conducted a survey to identify historic architectural resources within the project's APE. Every property in the APE, fifty years of age or older, was photographed and documented, as well as properties less than fifty years old. On December 16, 2003, this survey was presented to the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (NC-HPO) during a scheduled consultation review. At that meeting, NC-HPO requested further investigation of historic resources in the project area, including Bridge No. 16 (constructed in 1950) and the Farm Life Study List Rural Historic District, designated as such by NC-HPO in 1995. This report is prepared in response to the December 16, 2003, meeting. Properties in the APE determined not eligible for the National Register are included in an appendix to this report.




Background research was conducted at the following archival repositories. These include the State Library of the North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina; Martin County Tax Office and Register of Deeds, Williamston, North Carolina; Special Collections, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina; and the Francis Manning Reading Room at Martin Community College in Williamston, North Carolina.

Figure 1a and 1b: Project Location and APE





KEY:

	Area of Potential Effect (APE)		Site of Grist Mill
	Bridge No. 16		

Scale: 1/2 inch = 200 feet (Map Source: USGS Quad for Farm Life, Martin County, N. C.)



Summary of Survey Findings

Properties Listed on the National Register of Historic Places

None

Properties that are Locally Designated

None

Properties Listed on the North Carolina Study List (designated by NC-HPO)

Farm Life Rural Historic District

Eligibility of Bridge No. 16

Bridge No. 16 spans Hardison Mill Creek in Martin County's Farm Life rural community. The bridge itself is a steel-stringer, a common bridge type in North Carolina during the mid-twentieth century, with creosote timber supports and concrete cap beam substructure, as well as a concrete deck and railings. There is a guardrail, extending approximately sixty-five feet on either side of the bridge, affixed with treated wood posts. Bridge No. 16 was constructed in 1950 but as an undistinguished example of a very common bridge type in North Carolina it is not eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.¹ The NCDOT Historic Bridge Inventory Report describes the context of steel-stringer bridges and Bridge No. 16's place within this context. It is enclosed in this report within the evaluation section for Bridge No. 16.

¹ Patrick Harshbarger, North Carolina Department of Transportation Historic Bridge Inventory Report, entry for Bridge No. 16 (Hardison Mill Creek, Martin County), ca. 2002.

**FARM LIFE RURAL HISTORIC DISTRICT
(HARDISON MILL CREEK VICINITY)**

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

HISTORIC CONTEXT

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

PROPERTY INVENTORY

EVALUATION: Hardison Mill Creek Vicinity

EVALUATION: Bridge No. 16 over Hardison Mill Creek

1. Farm Life Rural Historic District

Physical Environment (Location and Description)

Farm Life is in the southeastern section of Martin County, a county located in North Carolina's northeastern coastal plain just west of Albemarle Sound. An unincorporated rural community within Griffin's Township, Farm Life has no major waterways, unlike the nearby Roanoke River port towns of Williamston and Jamesville. What bodies of water exist in this cypress- and pine-filled swampland, such as Smithwick's Creek, Deep Run, and Hardison Mill Creek, were put to use for small grist mills instead of transport, while the trees were harvested for lumber, shingles, and naval stores. Although much of southeastern Martin County's soil is the Rains-Bethera-Pantego profile, which drains poorly and is generally associated with swamps and pocosins, the soil profile in Farm Life's Hardison Creek vicinity is the arable Goldsboro-Lynchburg-Norfolk profile found in forty-eight percent of the county, particularly the farming communities of Robersonville, Bear Grass, Gold Point, and Oak City.² After many of the cypress forests were cleared and tobacco production came to eastern North Carolina, Farm Life changed from wooded swamp to an agrarian backwater. NC Highway 171, more or less in place since 1860 when it was the route from Jamesville to Washington in Beaufort County, remains the major thoroughfare of this area.

NC-HPO placed a section of the Farm Life rural community on the North Carolina Study List in 1995. This report concerns the area immediately around Hardison Mill Creek, a component of the Study List-designated Farm Life Rural Historic District.

² Robert M. Kirby and Karl A. Shaffer, *Soil Survey of Martin County, North Carolina* (USDA with N. C. Department of Natural Resources et alia, 1989), pp. 1-2, 5, and 7.

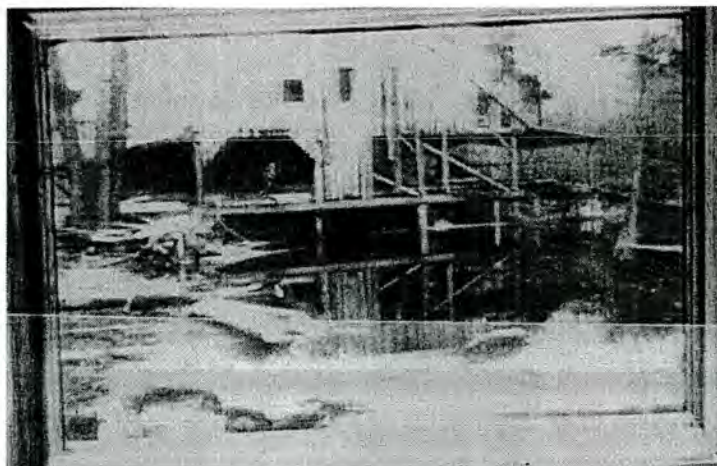


Figure 3: Roberson Mill, Hardison Mill Creek, ca. 1940 (NC-HPO, Survey File Archives, Raleigh, N. C.)

Historic Context

When Martin County was fashioned from western Tyrrell and southeastern Halifax counties in 1774, this southeastern section of the new county was little more than deciduous forest and swampland. By the turn of the nineteenth century, settlement in eastern and southeastern Martin County was primarily to the north at Jamesville, a village on the Roanoke River's south bank founded in 1785 as James Town. There was also settlement to the west along Smithwick's Creek, closer to Williamston, where a Primitive Baptist church was founded in 1803.³ However, this relatively unpopulated and remote region was regarded with great interest because of its abundance of timber, which meant lumber, shingles, and naval stores for export to northern markets. John Gray Blount, the prominent Washington (N. C.) merchant, received one of the earliest patents for this area, approximately 39, 680 acres, in 1795; the western edge of the patent included part of the section of present-day Griffins Township now comprising the rural community of Farm Life.⁴

By the 1850s this immediate area had seen increased settlement, plus some small industry, including at least two grist mills, one being a mill deeded to Henry Roberson by David Hardison around 1820. This site, the approximate site of the early mill near Bridge No. 16, is shown on the 1862 Confederate Engineers Reconnaissance Map (Figure 4) as "Robinson's Mill", with "H. Robinson", presumably Henry or Hyman Roberson, living

³ Francis Manning and W. H. Booker, *Religion and Education in Martin County* (Williamston, N. C.: Enterprise Press, 197-), p. 46; Thomas R. Butchko, *Martin Architectural Heritage* (Williamston, N. C.: Martin County Historical Society, 1998), pp. 3-5, 210.

⁴ Francis Manning and W. H. Booker, *Martin County History, Volume 2* (Williamston, N. C., Enterprise Publishing Company, 1979), p. 73.

on the west side of the road.⁵ Approximately five miles north of Roberson Mill was a large millpond known as the Fisher Millpond, and it was at this site where David Hardison, probably a son of the earlier David Hardison, operated his 1880s gristmill. The stream flowing from the former millpond's southeastern point is Hardison Mill Creek, taking its name from David Hardison I.⁶

Local antebellum farmers, including Hyman Roberson, William Daniel (sometimes spelled Daniels), J. L. Corey, and David Hardison, lived within close proximity of one another, centered around both Hardison Mill Creek and the Jamesville-Washington Road, the latter of which has since evolved into NC Highway 171. These men and their families raised little beyond subsistence crops, such as corn, peas for livestock feed, and sweet potatoes, though wheat was grown to a limited extent. Most of the livestock—swine and cattle—roamed free-range in nearby swamps, although Hyman Roberson had sheep as well, which, being defenseless prey, would have grazed closer to home. Nearly every farmer along Hardison Mill Creek, however, cultivated bees, and manufactured honey.⁷

After the Civil War, outside interest sparked over northeastern North Carolina's tracts of cypress and pine forests. In 1868 two Pennsylvania industrialists, Henry H. King and Richard Waring, formed a partnership with a group of English investors, and acquired Blount's 39, 680-acre tract of forested swamp. Soon after, the group constructed two sawmills, the first approximately three miles southeast of the Hardison Mill Creek settlement, and the second at Deep Run, on the Deep Run swamp crossing south of Jamesville. In 1869, North Carolina's General Assembly chartered Waring and King's firm as the "Jamesville and Washington Railroad and Lumber Company," clarifying its purpose as improving land, harvesting timber, and constructing a railroad line from Jamesville to Washington.⁸ At that time, there were no railroads in eastern North Carolina other than the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad (also known as the "Mullet Line"), which reached Morehead City in 1858, and the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad, built between those two towns between 1838 and 1840.⁹ The Jamesville and Washington Railroad (known to its passengers as the "Jolt & Wiggle") was built in stages, the first eight miles of which were completed between 1870 and 1872. The company plat (**Figure 5**), showing the railroad line beginning at Jamesville, passing

⁵ "Roberson", a variant of "Robertson", has been a common name in Martin County from the early nineteenth century. Given the evidence of census and deed records, this is obviously a transcribing error.

⁶ Martin County Register of Deeds, Deed Books G: 4 and Z: 386. Also Gilmer Map, Confederate Engineers Bureau (NCC: UNC-Chapel Hill), 1862; Shelby Hughes, *Martin County Heritage* (Williamston, N. C.: Martin County Historical Society, 1980), p. 45; U. S. Bureau of Census, 1850 and 1880 manufacturing schedules for Martin County, N. C.

⁷ There appears to be a high incidence of honey cultivation, more than the norm for this type of rural, remote area in the 1850s-1860s. On the other hand, there is very little dairy production although nearly all of the farmers had "milch cows". Supporting data is taken from U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1860 Agriculture Schedule for 2nd District (present-day Jamesville and Griffins Townships), Martin County.

⁸ Manning and Booker, *Martin County History*, pp. 73-74.

⁹ Catherine W. Bishir and Michael T. Southern, *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Eastern North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), p. 44.

through the mills at Deep Run and Waring, and ending at the platted Atlantic Avenue north of the Beaufort County line, was apparently drafted in 1870.¹⁰

The 1870 Jamesville and Washington Railroad and Lumber Company plat shows a corn mill on the south bank of Hardison Mill Creek, the same location as the Roberson Mill. The plat is not to scale and some of the orientations are not correct, but it does convey the isolation of the area, and the ambition of the Jamesville and Washington Lumber Company. Broad avenues—Columbia, Pamlico, Hyde, Atlantic, Pacific, and Artic—are shown, between which the forests and swampland are divided into thirty-six sections with regular-sized lots; remnants of this plan, never fully realized, survive in Martin County topography as secondary and farm access roads. From its 1870 development until its 1897 demise, The J & W whistle-stop of Waring, renamed Dymond City for British investor J. J. Dymond, was the closest town to Hardison Mill Creek. In those twenty-seven years, Dymond City possessed a substantial manufactory complex including a lumber and shingle mill, and a brick plant. Dymond City also had a boarding house, dwellings for managers and workers, and a three-story building housing the company store, post office, and an assembly room, along with quarters for Henry P. Nolan, the company store manager and postmaster.¹¹

The combination of new industry, commercial and residential development, plus railroad access to Jamesville and Washington (a passenger car was first implemented in 1879) made Dymond City a regional hub, so much so that the immediate area was christened Dymond City Township by 1880.¹² Millers and farmers in the Hardison Mill Creek settlement, such as David Hardison, W. H. Daniel, and John Manning, gave “Dymond City” as their address.¹³ It was not to last. The Jamesville and Washington Lumber Company ran into financial trouble, was sold at public auction in 1884, and owned in succession by a number of corporations and individuals before eventually being acquired by Weyerhaeuser by 1965. The J & W train tracks were pulled up in 1897, and the Nolan family, the last to stay, was also the last to leave. Their three-story company store and post office burned in 1927 during a forest fire.¹⁴

Between 1897 and 1935 the Hardison Mill Creek settlement transformed from small subsistence farms and forested swamps to a picturesque agrarian community of open fields interspersed with compact farm complexes and woodlands. This transformation

¹⁰ Manning and Booker, *Martin County History*, pp. 77-78; also Jamesville & Washington Railroad Plat, 1870 (Getsinger Family Collection, Special Collections, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, N. C.). Bill Sharpe, in his Martin County section of *A New Geography of North Carolina* (Raleigh, 1965)'s fourth volume, refers to the J&W as the “Jiggle and Wiggle”, but Manning and Booker, as Martin County natives, most likely are using the correct nickname.

¹¹ Manning and Booker, *Martin County History*, pp. 73-77.

¹² *Ibid.*; also U. S. Census Bureau, Manufacturing Schedule for Dymond City Township, Martin County, N. C.

¹³ *Branson's 1884 North Carolina Business Directory* (Raleigh, 1884), pp. 438-439.

¹⁴ Manning and Booker, *Martin County History*, pp. 73-77; Bill Sharpe, *A New Geography of North Carolina* (Raleigh: Sharpe Publishing Company, 1965), Volume IV, p. 1950 (Wendell Peele, contributor).

owed much to Dymond City. Long-term repercussions of Dymond City's development were improved transportation and agricultural development. A number of present-day roads, such as SR 1542 (Noah Roberson Road) and SR 1544 (Maple Grove Church Road), both important thoroughfares in Farm Life, were implemented during Dymond City's brief reign. The Jamesville Road, upon examination of the 1862 Gilmer Map and the 1870 J&W plat, had slight orientation changes, but otherwise changed very little. With the removal of forests, land was suddenly arable and available.

Another agent in the Hardison Mill Creek settlement's transformation was the rise of tobacco as a cash crop. By the 1890s, this immediate area, as well as other sections of Griffins Township and Bear Grass Township, was growing tobacco. William H. Daniel, whose family lived near Hardison Mill Creek before and after the Civil War, sent his daughter, Mary Ann Daniel, to Beaufort County in 1896 to learn from its inhabitants how to loop harvested tobacco leaves on sticks for easier curing and storage. Other 1890s area tobacco farmers included John Manning, H. J. Manning, and Simon Griffin.¹⁵ Although many of the tobacco barns once predominant in this region have been demolished, the "bright leaf" culture is still prevalent, thanks to surviving frame and ceramic block tobacco curing barns, dating from between 1900 to 1935, as well as pack barns where tobacco was stored and organized after curing.

Small commercial enterprises and a school came to this community during the early twentieth century. The first Hardison's School was built one-half mile south of the creek (the future site of the 1922 Farm Life School) in 1885. At that time, however, it was not in a central location for the community so that, after complaints were made, the building was moved across the creek, north to Kelly's Hill in 1898, immediately east of the Roberson-Gurkin House (**Property 3**). Hardison-Kelly Hill School was rebuilt in 1910 and the front-gable frame schoolhouse, distinguished for its star-shaped louvered ventilator, stood until 1996.¹⁶ N. R. Manning owned and operated the Hardison Creek mill by the turn of the twentieth century, and two brothers, Tom and Gabe Roberson, operated the mill and a country store between the 1920s and 1940s.¹⁷ North of the creek, C. T. Roberson opened a small store (**Property 1**) in 1922 by the Kelly Hill School, acquired by H. L. Manning in 1939 and eventually passed to Manning's son-in-law Raymond Gurkin, who ran the store until 1983.¹⁸ "Robe" and Sarah Gertrude Corey ran a store on the south bank of Hardison Mill Creek from 1920 until 1950 (**Property 12**). The one commercial enterprise left in the vicinity is the Country Grocery Store (**Property**

¹⁵ Skewarkian Junior Historian Club, *Smoke to Gold* (Greenville, N. C.: Era Press for Bear Grass School, 1978).

¹⁶ Manning and B ooker, History, pp. 223-224, 267-268. The former school was still standing in 1996, when many of the photographs were taken for *Martin County Architectural Heritage*.

¹⁷ Donna Dodenhoff, entry for Roberson Mill (MT 117), Martin County Historic Architecture Survey, 1992-1994. Archival files, Survey & Planning Branch, NC-HPO, Raleigh, N. C.

¹⁸ Butchko, p. 210.

13), established by Louis Roberson in 1949, but all three stores are standing.¹⁹ The former Roberson water-powered mill ceased operation in 1940 but sections of its heavy timber framed foundation are still in the Hardison Mill creek bed. A small sawmill operated by Tom Roberson between 1940 and 1949 (**Property 6**) still stands on the east side of NC 171, north of the creek.²⁰

The name “Farm Life” came to the community not directly because of the local way of life, rural as it was, but because of educational reform within the state. In March 1911, under the guidance of State Superintendent of Schools, J. Y. Joyner, the North Carolina General Assembly ratified an act “to provide for the establishment and maintenance of county farm-life schools...for the training and preparation of the boys and girls of said county for farm life and home-making.” These schools, funded locally by taxes and bonds, were not to be located in any municipality greater than one thousand persons, nor within two miles of any cities or towns with a population of five thousand. Basic curriculum was to adhere to current public high school standards, with a special component devoted to agricultural studies and outreach programs such as home demonstration. The goal of these “farm-life schools”, which emerged throughout the state from Guilford to Wayne and Craven counties, was to train local young people, who would become farmers themselves, in the latest agricultural methods.²¹ In 1921 the Martin County Board of Education authorized such a school to be built approximately one-half mile south of Hardison Mill Creek; a handsome brick Craftsman style schoolhouse, graced by a large hip roof skylight with clerestory windows, was completed the following year. The new school named the Asa J. Manning Farm Life School for the county public school superintendent who had grown up in the area, consolidated three regional schools—Hardison’s, Corey’s, and Getsinger’s. Asa J. Manning Farm Life School filled the need of a community center so well that the community informally took the name of Farm Life.²² Its composition has changed relatively little since the 1940s (**Figure 6**).

Architectural Context

Factors in Farm Life-Hardison Mill Creek’s built environment include that, for much of the nineteenth century, this area was forested swampland with few open fields. Although a number of farmers and millers were known to live in this immediate location, no houses or outbuildings constructed before 1885 are known to survive. The earliest buildings in the APE include the Mizell-Roberson House (**Property 8**), a two-story farmhouse thought to be built by Ashley Daniel Mizell, who ran the mill in the 1880s. The W. B.

¹⁹ Dodenhoff, entries for Corey Store (MT 121) and Country Grocery Store (MT 125), Martin County Historic Architecture Survey, 1992-1994. Archival files, Survey & Planning Branch, NC-HPO, Raleigh, N.C.

²⁰ Dodenhoff, Roberson Mill entry.

²¹ *Public Laws and Resolutions of the State of North Carolina Passed by the General Assembly* (1911 Session), pp. 245-252; *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, Vol. 3 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), p. 337.

²² Manning and Booker, *Religion and Education*, pp. 224-226.

Harrington House (**Property 15**), supposedly built in 1920, has the appearance of late nineteenth-century traditional farmhouses still found in great numbers throughout eastern North Carolina. These farmhouses are very plain with little exterior decoration: three-bay, two-story dwellings of frame construction with hip roof, full-façade one-story front porches and small kitchen-dining ells. The Roberson-Gurkin House (**Property 3**), constructed between 1900 and 1915, offers variation in that, as opposed to the Mizell-Roberson and W. B. Harrington houses' single-shoulder exterior end brick chimneys, there are two exterior rear brick flues, indicating that the heating source was probably an oil stove from the beginning, and not a fireplace. Craftsman style houses, though commonly seen in Griffins Township, are not in abundance here and only seen at the augmented Bridgman Perry House (**Property 10**), another substantially altered front-gable Craftsman dwelling on SR 1544 (**Property 2**). One exception is the 1949 Corey-Hardison House (**Property 11**) that retains significant features, particularly its clipped-gable front façade. Immediately north of the APE are two 1960s brick ranch houses with typical landscaping of that time, pine trees and azalea shrubbery. Within the APE the latest house constructed is an A-frame brick ranch on the west side of NC 171 built between 1965 and 1975 (**Property 5**).

A number of turn-of-the-twentieth-century and early-twentieth-century agricultural outbuildings remain in the APE. The Mizell-Roberson House, Roberson-Gurkin House, Corey-Hardison House, and W. B. Harrington House retain sheds, washhouses, barns, and pack barns. Of the group, the W. B. Harrington House has the most complete early twentieth-century complex, with a tractor shed, pack barn, mule shed, and storage sheds. However, the Roberson-Gurkin House has a frame washhouse and garden shed, both in excellent condition. Another remarkable survival is a two-section ceramic block tobacco barn built between 1930 and 1945, its roof intact and in good condition (**Property 14**).

The Roberson-Gurkin House's circa 1920 garden shed (**Property 3**), built into the slope above Hardison Mill Creek, is an intact and increasingly rare example of the propagating shelters once used for seedlings and fledgling plants during the turn of the twentieth century. The brick garden shed, its two windows positioned for maximum southern exposure, was, like many of these planting houses, built into a hillside and covered by a sloping, single-pitch roof (**Figure 21**). Good regional examples include the Scull-Evans House garden shed in Harrellsville, Hertford County (**Figure 19**); a 1920s garden shed at the N. W. Herring House in Duplin County; and a hip roof brick garden shed on NC Highway 11 (Business Route) in Aulander, Bertie County (**Figure 20**).²³

²³ Butchko, p. 210; Penne Smith, National Register Nomination for Harrellsville Historic District, Scull-Evans House survey file, Scott Power photographer (NC-HPO files, Raleigh, N. C.); Ed Turberg, Survey file for N. W. Herring House, Duplin County, N. C. (NC-HPO files, Raleigh, N. C.).

Three commercial buildings constructed between 1920 and 1949 remain in the APE. The oldest, the Corey Store (**Property 12**), is a weatherboarded, front-gable building, a straightforward place of business. The 1922 Robeson-Gurkin Store (**Property 1**), on the other hand, exemplifies the country stores that proliferated during North Carolina's "Good Roads" era. Constructed as a front-gable building with symmetrical side wings, the signature feature of the building is the hip roof service canopy that, in the beginning, sheltered cars and, in later years, local farmers who sat on the benches on either side of the store entrance. Although not an eligible building, due to alterations and physical deterioration, the 1949 Country Grocery Store (**Property 13**), located at the northeast corner of NC 171 and SR 1542, nevertheless continues as a local gathering place for farmers and laborers.

The Roberson Saw and Corn Meal Mill, built in 1940 (**Property 6**) is the sole industrial building remaining in the APE. Built in 1940, it is a modest weatherboarded building located north of Hardison Mill Creek. The interior room retains the grind stone moved from the old grist mill (**Figure 3**) demolished in the early 1940s, in addition to feed sacks and storage bins. Lumber was cut and dressed at the south end of the building, where there was an open planing shed. The earlier grist mill, in existence from antebellum times, was closer to the creek; framing timbers were still visible in the creek bed in 1992.²⁴

Finally one other significant feature of the Hardison Mill Creek area is Hardison Mill Cemetery (**Property 9**), located northwest of the Mizell-Roberson House and also within the APE. Most burials at this cemetery, sited on a slope above the creek, date from the early twentieth century. However, there is a surviving heart pine or cypress discoid or "knob" marker in the cemetery (**Figure 27**) a common antebellum grave marker for Primitive Baptist and Quaker burials.

²⁴ Donna Dodenhoff, Martin County Historic Architecture Survey for Roberson Mill.



Figure 7: Piney Grove Church Road (SR 1530), W. B. Harrington House in distance, Farm Life vic.

Landscape Context

The project APE is within the Farm Life Study List Rural Historic District, designated as such by the NC-HPO in 1993. The APE itself is a component of a larger rural community whose many period farms, intact field patterns, and lack of post-1954 residential and commercial development make it eminently eligible for placement on the National Register of Historic Places. The Farm Life Study List Historic District, although it was not designated with firm boundaries, remains a largely picturesque agrarian region of Martin County, remarkable for its concentration of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century farmhouses and farm complexes. A firmer boundary could no doubt be drawn if this potential historic district were to be re-evaluated. However, given the small percentage of the APE within the overall historic district, it is not within the scope of this report to delineate the entire Farm Life Study List Rural Historic District but, rather, to evaluate this particular section. (**Figure 8**).

In the immediate area of the APE, which will hereafter also be referred to in this report as the Hardison Mill Creek area, NC Highway 171 is the oldest local circulation network in continuation, connecting Jamesville on the Roanoke River to Washington on the Pamlico-Tar River. Although not officially named as such until 1936, NC Highway 171 closely follows the course it took as documented on the 1862 Confederate Engineers Reconnaissance Survey Map; an early road, which followed a northwesterly route to Jamesville above Hardison Mill Creek, is still discernable north of the creek. Sections of

NC Highway 171 were realigned in 1950 but not augmented beyond recognition.²⁵ The other vicinity roads, Noah Roberson (SR 1542), Piney Grove (SR 1530), and Maple Grove Church (SR 1544) roads, were created during the 1870s and 1880s when the timber camp of Dymond City, located three miles east, was in its ascendancy. Land use remains nearly the same as it has for over one hundred years; woodland and swamps continue to exist, and traditional crops such as cotton (which has enjoyed resurgence since 1990), tobacco, peanuts, and soybeans, continue to be cultivated. There are fallow fields, but they continue to remain as such. There is also still evidence of the early twentieth-century domestic landscape, particularly at the Mizell-Roberson House, where there is a screen of mature crape myrtles, and the W. B. Harrington House, which retains a pecan grove dating from the 1920s. The Roberson-Gurkin House also retains early twentieth-century plantings, including cedars and a mature privet hedge demarcating the domestic outbuilding complex.

The APE's overall landscape is characteristically rural and historic. Clusters in the Hardison Mill Creek settlement remain quite intact. Traditionally, agricultural complexes in Farm Life have followed two patterns. Outbuildings, in one pattern, were on the opposite side of the road, facing the farmhouse, in a U-shape format; the other pattern had a court of outbuildings immediately behind the farmhouse and its domestic outbuildings. The W. B. Harrington House maintains the latter pattern; according to documentation the Mizell-Roberson House's outbuilding complex was originally across N. C. Highway 171, but the outbuildings immediately south of the house date from the Second World War, suggesting that the second pattern was broken at this particular house by 1945. Within respective clusters are buildings significant to understanding Farm Life's vernacular landscape. For example, there is the W. B. Harrington House's strong showing of tobacco-related agriculture including mule and pack barns. There is also the intact ceramic block tobacco barn on the opposite side of Piney Grove Church Road, facing the Harrington House. The Roberson-Gurkin House's washhouse and garden house illustrate the self-sufficiency required in this remote corner of Martin County during the not-so-long-ago time before electrical appliances and commercial nurseries became so prevalent.

Small-scale elements in the landscape are few, as the Corey and Roberson-Gurkin country stores have been closed for some years. There are two good examples of recent folk signage, one being the handmade carved wood sign for Hardison Mill Cemetery, and a remarkable sign at the APE's easternmost end, made of weather stripping and wood, that reads: "LITTER NOT" (**Property 2**). Farm Life's cultural traditions are less clear-cut as the earlier settlers, who attended either Picot or Smithwick's Creek Primitive Baptist churches, later dispersed to other denominations including the Missionary Baptists and the Disciples of Christ (now known as the Christian Church). The earliest families known to settle here—Griffins, Robersons, Hardisons, and Coreys—have remained in the vicinity and remain farmers, as have later arrivals like the Harringtons, who came to Hardison Mill Creek in the 1880s.

²⁵ Harshbarger, NCDOT Bridge Inventory Report (Bridge No. 16, Martin County); also, www.ncroads.com (database for North Carolina highways compiled by Matt V. Steffora)

Hardison Mill Creek, a vestige of the earlier coastal forested landscape, continues to be an important component of the immediate historic landscape, as its course is still outlined by cypress and pine trees, in addition to holly, cedar, sweet gum, and wild dogwood trees.



Figure 9: Edge of Hardison Mill Creek swampland, at Roberson-Gurkin House, NC 171 and SR 1544

Evaluation

The Hardison Mill Creek area, the western half of which is located at the northeastern boundary of the Farm Life Study List Rural Historic District is **eligible** for listing to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for Agriculture and Criterion C for Architecture. To merit eligibility under Criterion A, a district must retain integrity and must be associated with a specific event marking an important moment in American history, or a pattern of events or historic trend that made a significant contribution to agricultural development. Significant and contributing properties within the district must have existed at the time of the period of significance (1890-1954).²⁶ This component of Farm Life's Study List Rural Historic District is remarkable and exceptional for its retention of field patterns, forested swamps, period farmhouses and outbuildings. These buildings and landscape features compellingly reflect the regional shift from subsistence farming and timbering to larger-scale agricultural output, particularly bright leaf tobacco, that took place during the nineteenth century's last quarter, continuing into the mid-

²⁶ National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 15* (Washington, D. C.: Department of the Interior, 1991), p. 12.

twentieth century. Compared to other parts of the Farm Life Rural Historic District, particularly to the south along NC Highway 171, there has been little to no post-1954 infill. What infill exists—a 1960s trailer at the W. B. Harrington House, bulk barns at the W. B. Harrington House, and extensions to the Bridgman Perry House, are not visible from the roadside and do not detract from the intact and contributing buildings in this sub-district.

The Hardison Mill Creek vicinity of the Farm Life Study List Rural Historic District is **not eligible** for listing to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B for an important personage. For properties to be eligible for significance under Criterion B, they must retain integrity and (1) be associated with the lives of persons significant in our past, i.e., individuals whose activities are demonstrably important within a local, state, or national historic context; (2) be normally associated with a person's productive life, reflecting the time period when he or she achieved significance; and (3) should be compared to other associated properties to identify those that best represent the person's historical contributions. Furthermore, properties are not eligible if their only justification for significance is that it was owned or used by a person who is or was a member of an identifiable profession, class, or social or ethnic group.²⁷

The Hardison Mill Creek vicinity of the Farm Life Study List Rural Historic District is **eligible** for the National Register under Criterion C for Architecture. For properties to be eligible under this criterion, they must retain integrity and either (1) embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; (2) represent the work of a master; (3) possess high artistic value; or (4) represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.²⁸ In the case of the Hardison Mill Creek area, significance is achieved by the sum of traditional late nineteenth- and early-to-mid-twentieth-century dwellings and agricultural outbuildings, simply rendered, reasonably intact, and in close concentration with few post-1954 intrusions.

Farm Life's rural community has experienced some development since 1993, as observed in the Bridge No. 16 Inventory Report (see pp. 41-43) but this cited new residential development has primarily taken place to the north of the APE and to the south, closer to the Asa Manning Farm Life School, along NC 171. Within the APE subset of the Farm Life Study List Rural Historic District, the latest house to be built (**Property 5**) dates from between 1965 to 1975. Two other houses, the Bridgman Perry House (**Property 10**) and the Lassiter House (**Property 2**), have been rendered noncontributing by unsympathetic and non contextual exterior alterations, but their original forms and much original exterior finish remain discernable.

²⁷ National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 15* (Washington, D. C.: Department of the Interior, 1991), p. 15.

²⁸ National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 15* (Washington, D. C.: Department of the Interior, 1991), p. 15.

The Hardison Mill Creek vicinity of the Farm Life Study List Rural Historic District is **not eligible** for the National Register under Criterion D. For properties to be eligible under Criterion D they must, first, have or have had information contributing to our understanding of human history or prehistory and, second, the information must be considered important.²⁹ While it is notable that elements of the earlier Hardison Creek Grist Mill have survived in Hardison Mill Creek, there are more complete and comprehensive mill site examples elsewhere in northeastern North Carolina.

In content, Hardison Mill Creek as a subset of the Farm Life Study List Rural Historic District is comparable to two recent rural historic district National Register nominations completed in North Carolina. First, like the Conoho Creek Rural Historic District, this area is representative of Martin County's backcountry nineteenth- and early twentieth-century agrarian heritage. One significant difference is that Conoho Creek's built environment extends to the 1810s, and its topography and relative lack of swamp and woodlands enabled the emergence of a planter class not seen in the Farm Life region.³⁰ Another comparable nomination is the Renston Rural Historic District (Pitt County), where there are more marked similarities. Both districts, comprised of pocosin, swamp, and woodland with, initially, subsistence farming and some lumber and naval stores industry, achieved their ascendant period during the bright leaf tobacco agricultural movement that swept through northeastern and eastern North Carolina at the turn of the twentieth century. Unlike Renston, the Hardison Mill Creek vicinity of the Farm Life Rural Historic District retains a strong sense of place, enhanced by the survival of many early twentieth-century places of commerce, such as the Roberson-Gurkin and Corey stores, and intact field patterns and woodlands anchored by early twentieth-century agricultural and domestic outbuildings.

APE and Farm Life Study List Rural Historic District Boundaries (NC-HPO, 1993)

The project APE is, itself, only a small segment of the Farm Life Study List Rural Historic District, located at its northeastern corner; there is, furthermore, a smaller APE component just east of NC 171 not within the Farm Life district. Given the small percentage of the APE within the overall historic district, it is not within the scope of this report to delineate the entire Farm Life Study List Rural Historic District. The APE itself encompasses parts of the north and south banks of Hardison Mill Creek as well as the east and west sides of NC 171 between SR 1544 and 1542. It also includes a section of SR 1530 close to its junction with NC 171. Selected properties are within the viewshed, or very close proximity, to the bridge (**Figures 2, 8**).

²⁹ National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 15* (Washington, D. C.: Department of the Interior, 1991), p. 15.

³⁰ There were only two substantial antebellum planters in the area, Joel Smithwick, whose farm was to the west, and Clayton Moore, whose farm was to the north, closer to Jamesville.

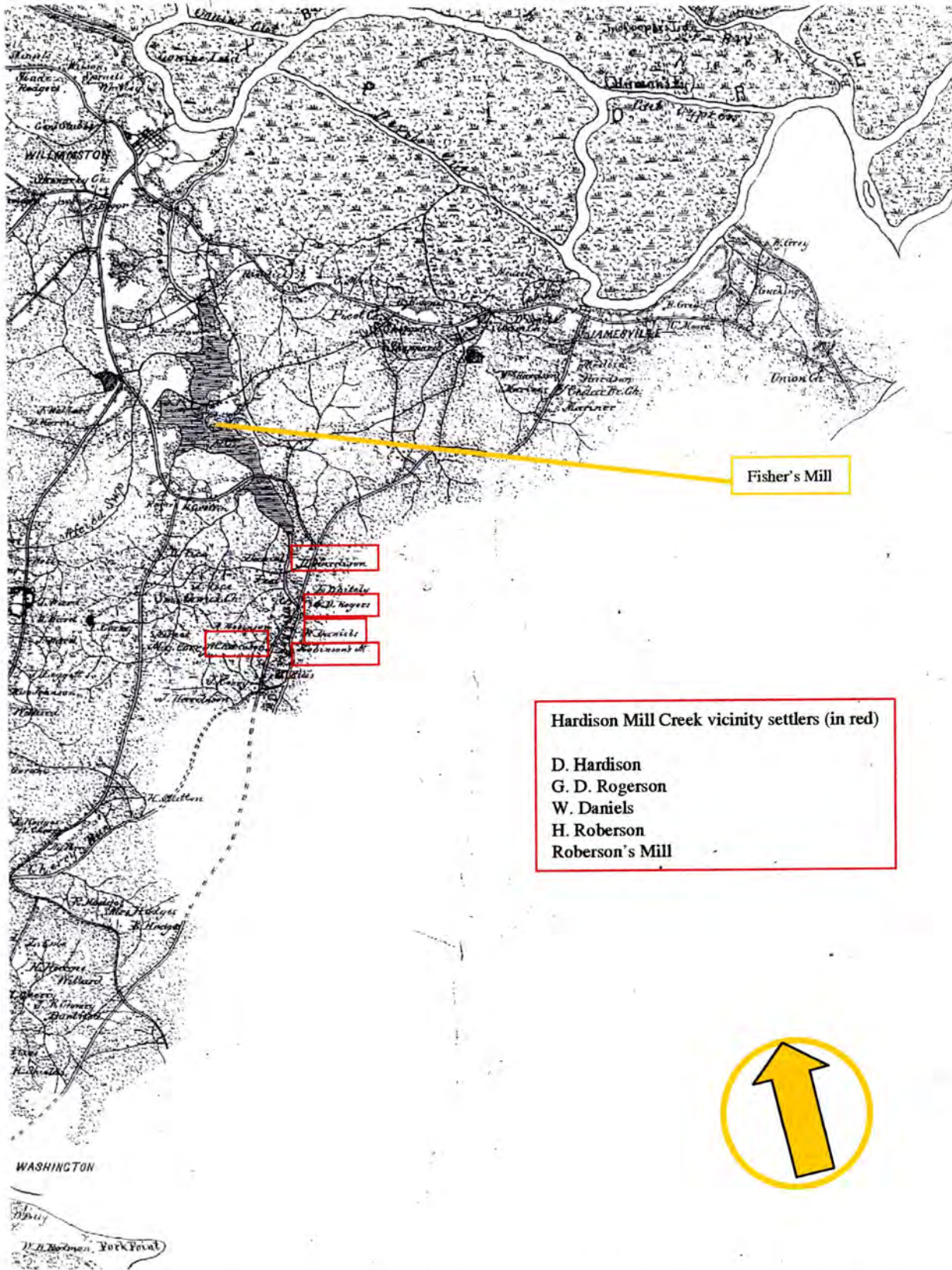
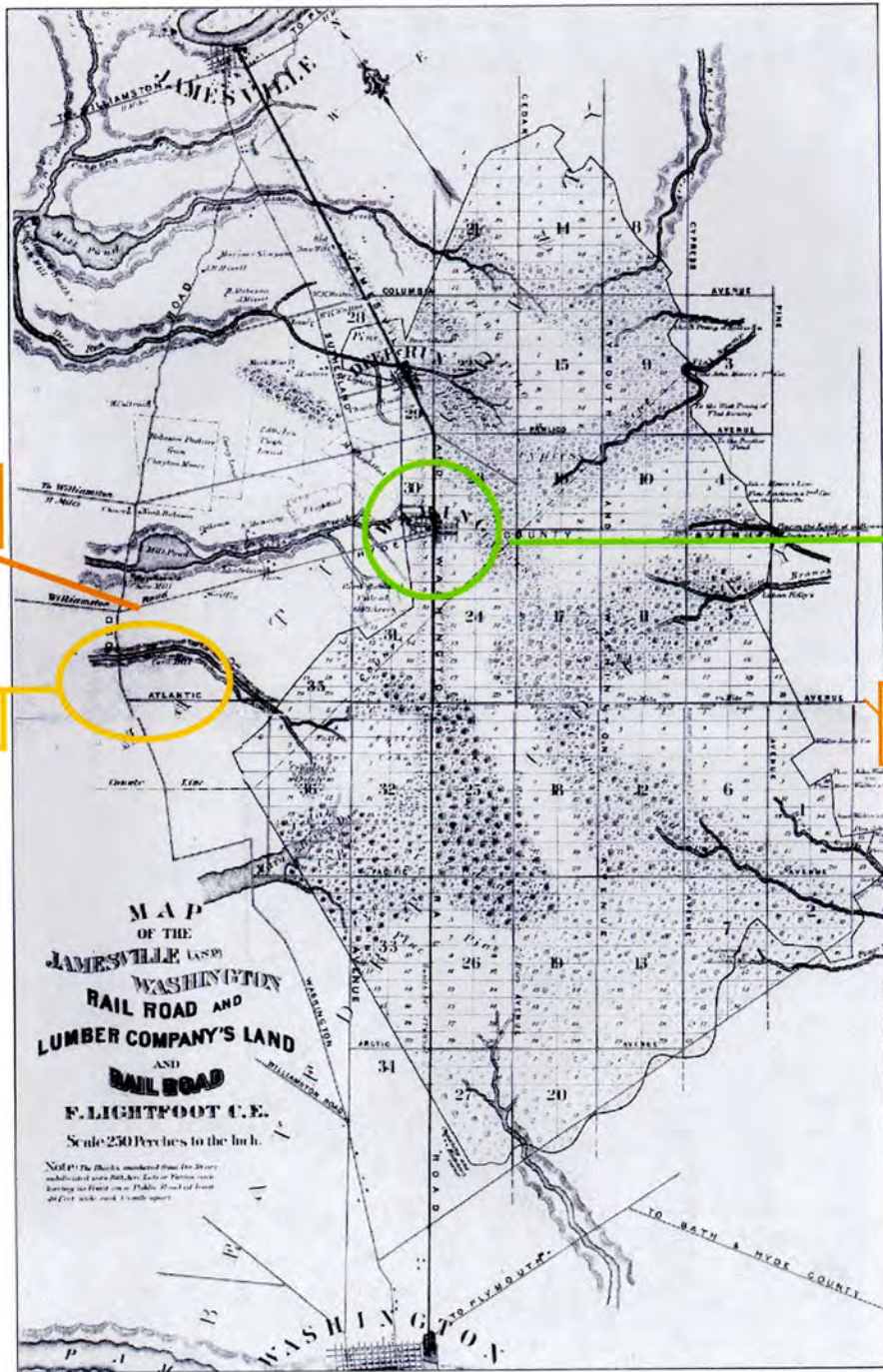


Figure 4: Detail, 1862 Confederate Engineers' Reconnaissance Map of North Carolina between the Roanoke and Neuse Rivers (Gilmer Map, easternmost section)



JAMESVILLE AND WASHINGTON RAILROAD AND LUMBER COMPANY MAP

Figure 5: Jamesville and Washington Railroad and Lumber Company 1870 Plat. Getsinger Family Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, N. C.

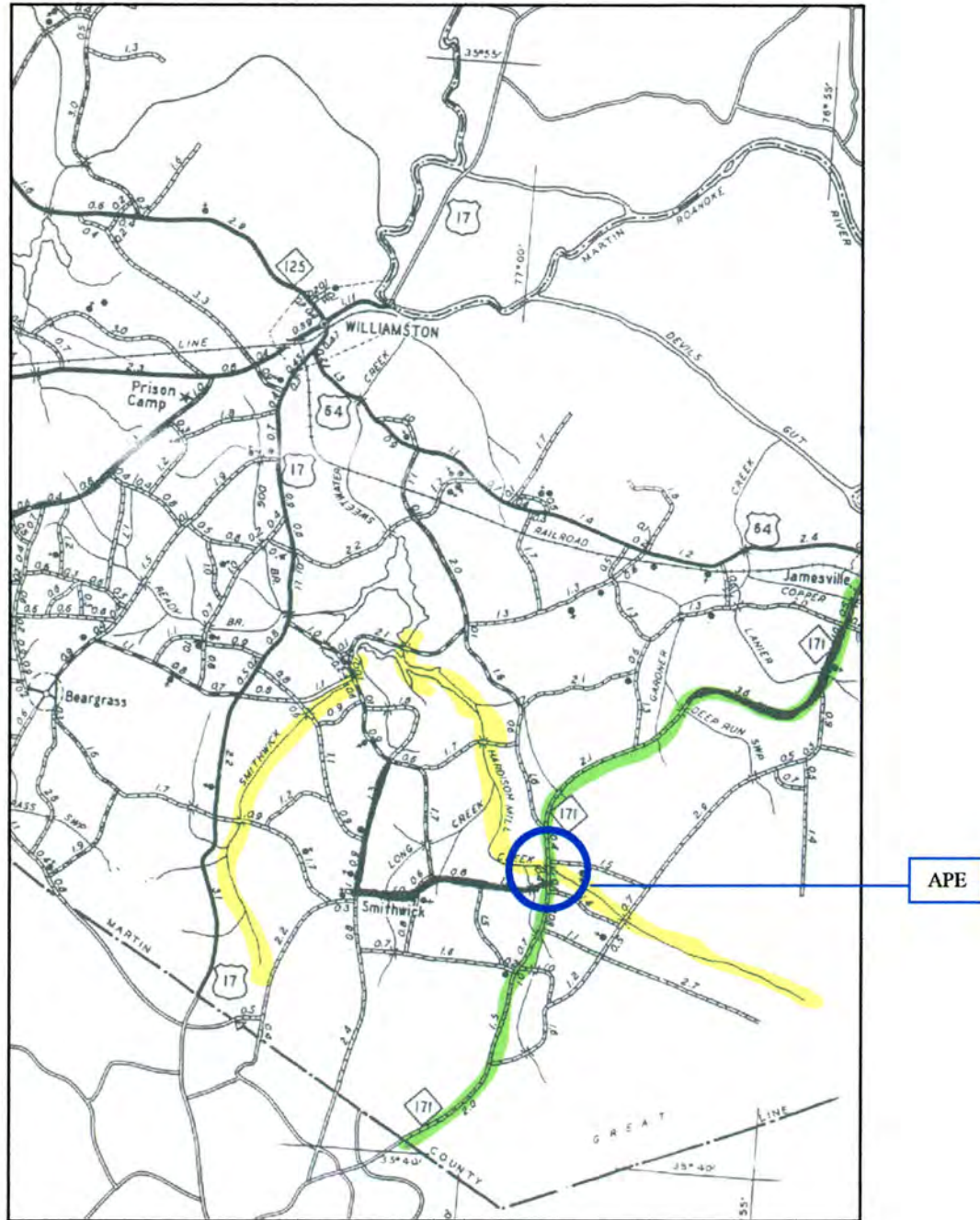


Figure 6: Farm Life Area, 1944 N. C. Highway Map (Francis Manning Collection, Martin County Community College, Williamston, N. C.). Pertinent waterways (yellow) and NC Highway 171 (green) are indicated.



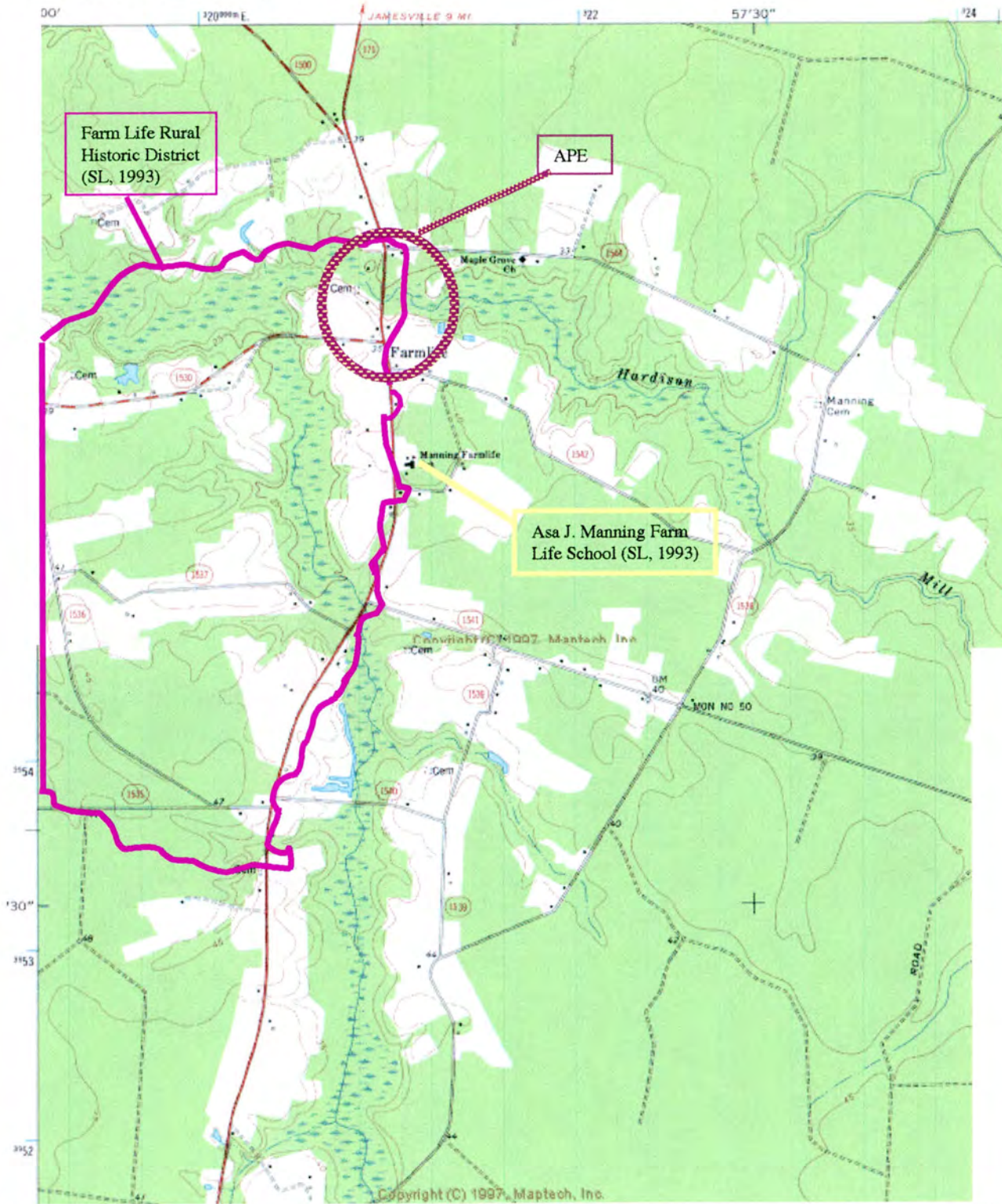



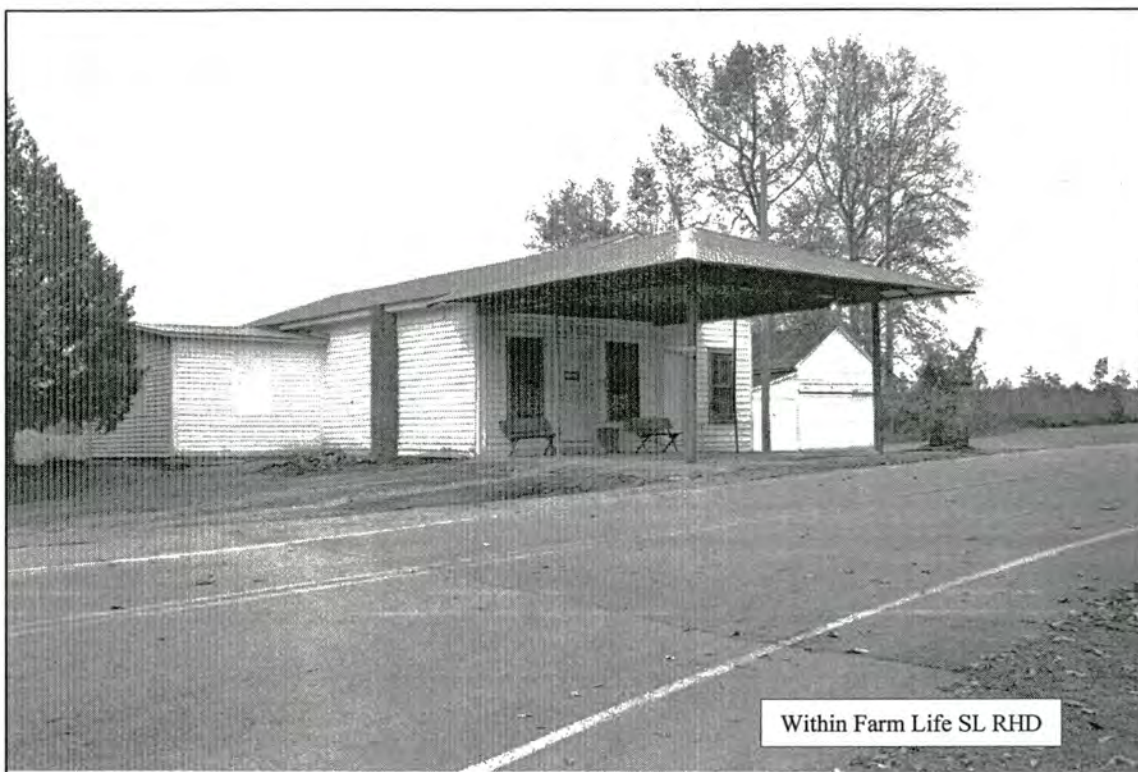


Figure 8:

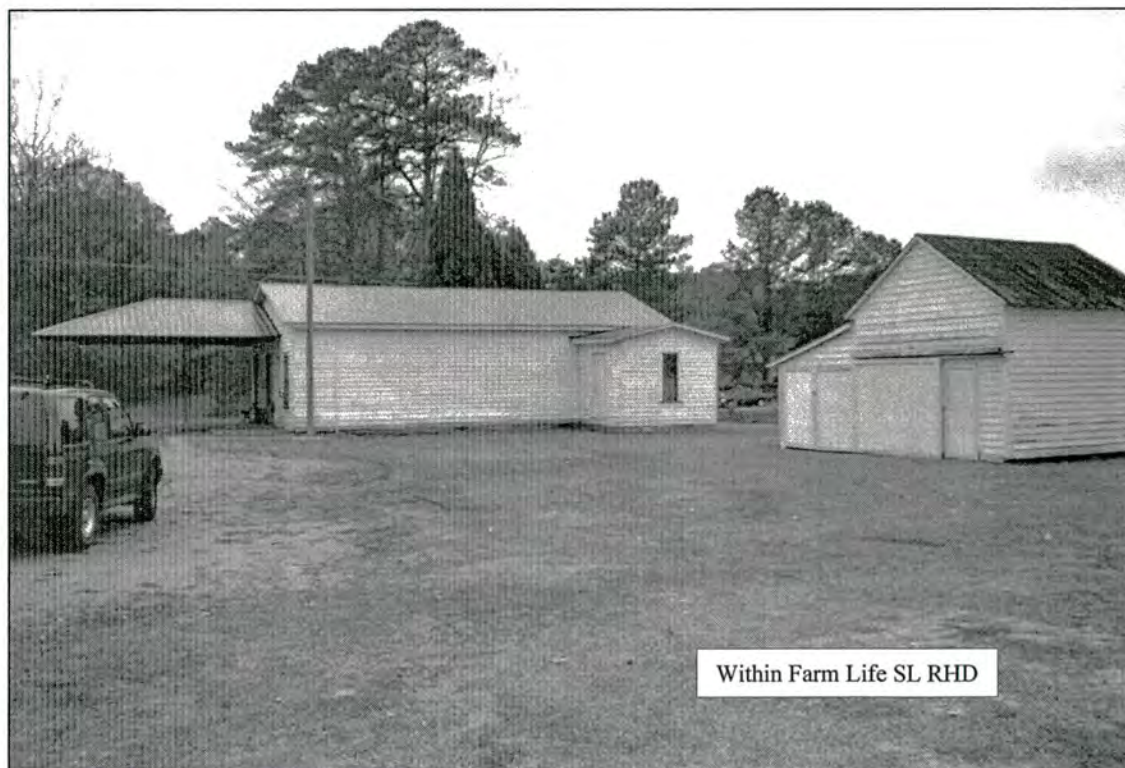
Historic Architectural Resources near Area of Potential Effect (APE)

-  Farm Life Rural Historic District (SL boundaries by NC-HPO)
-  Asa J. Manning Farm Life School
-  APE for B-4185





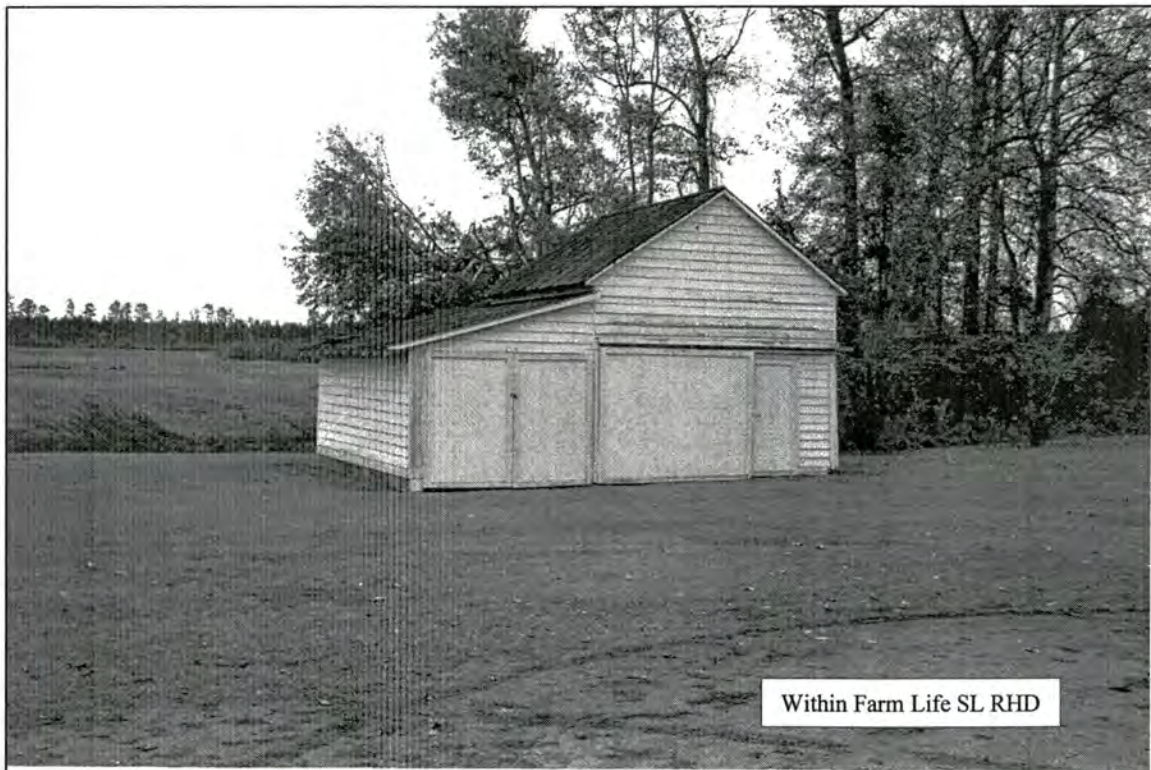
Property 1: Manning & Gurkin Store (MT 115, in Farm Life SLRHD)
Figure 10



Property 1 and 3: Manning-Gurkin Store, and Roberson-Gurkin House Garage (MT 116, in Farm Life SLRHD and in foreground; Shed and blacksmith shop demolished)
Figure 11



Property 2: “Litter Not” sign (maker unknown) at E boundary of lot
Figure 12



Property 3: Garage, N. side SR 1544 (Roberson-Gurkin House)
Figure 13



Property 3: Roberson-Gurkin House (MT 116), front elevation
Figure 14



Property 3: Roberson-Gurkin House, North and East elevations on SR 1544
Figure 15



Property 3: Roberson-Gurkin House, outbuilding at east edge of domestic yard
Figure 16



Property 3: Roberson-Gurkin House, shed and garden house at W and S of house
Figure 17



Property 3: Roberson-Gurkin House, garden house, south and west elevations
Figure 18



Figure 19: 1920s example of a garden shed, Scull-Evans House, Harrellsville, Hertford County (photographer Scott Power for Harrellsville NRHD nomination, 1993)



Figure 20: 1900-1910 example of a garden house, NC Bus. 11, Aulander, Bertie County (photographer Penne Sandbeck for NCDOT, 2003)

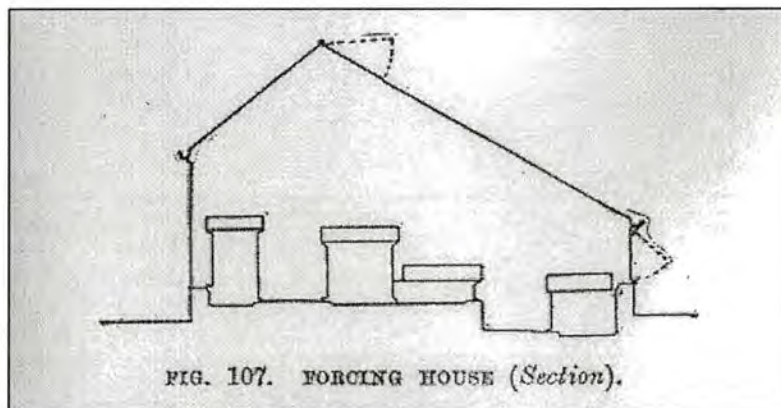
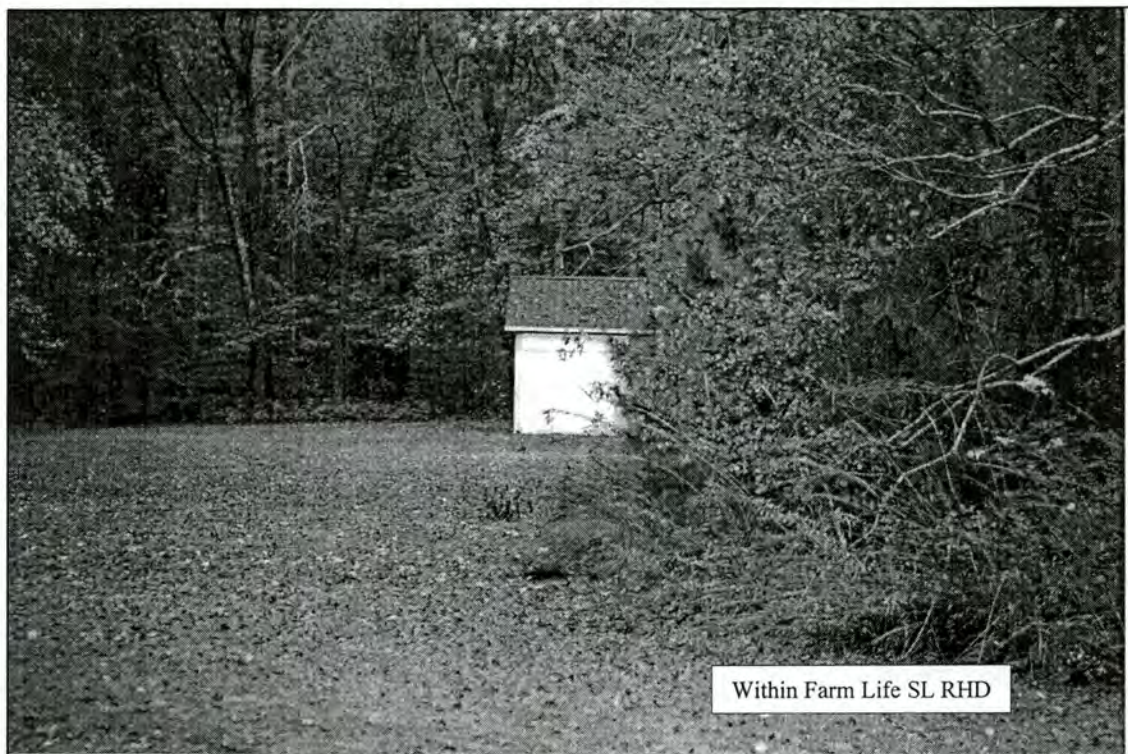


Figure 21: Silhouette of a garden house from Levi Rawson Taft, *Greenhouse Construction: A Complete Manual* (New York: Orange Judd Company, 1894)



Property 4: Outbuilding, W side NC 171 (across from Roberson-Gurkin House)
Figure 22



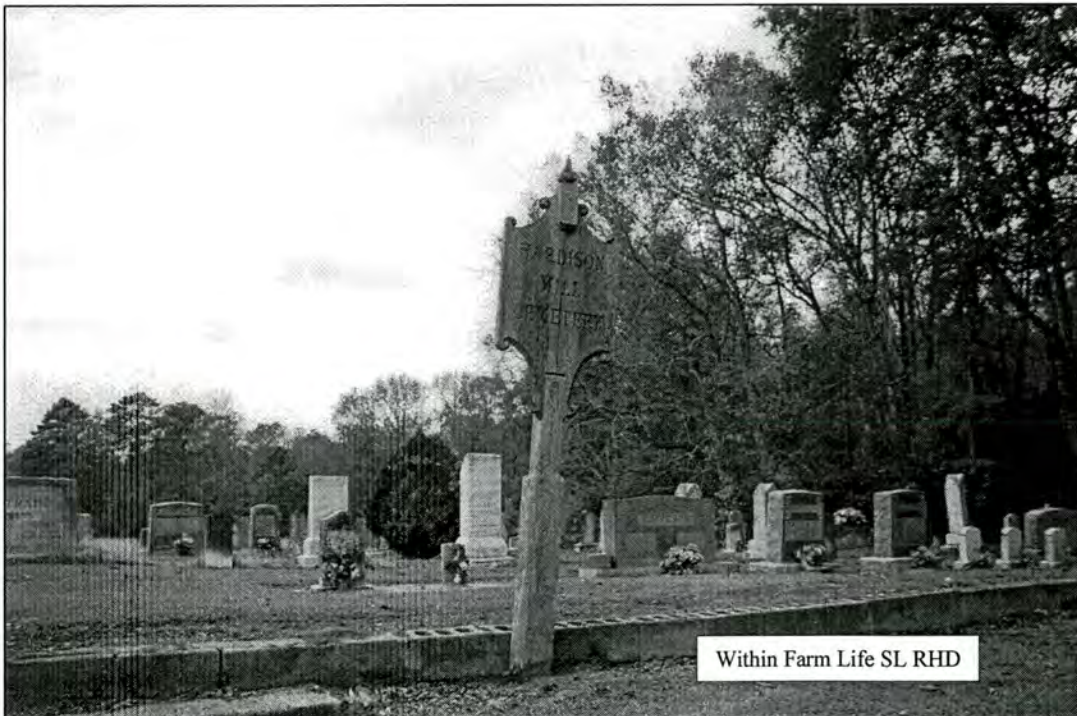
**Property 6: Former Roberson Saw and Corn Meal Mill (MT 117, engine-powered)
E. side NC 171, about 50 feet N of bridge
*Figure 23***



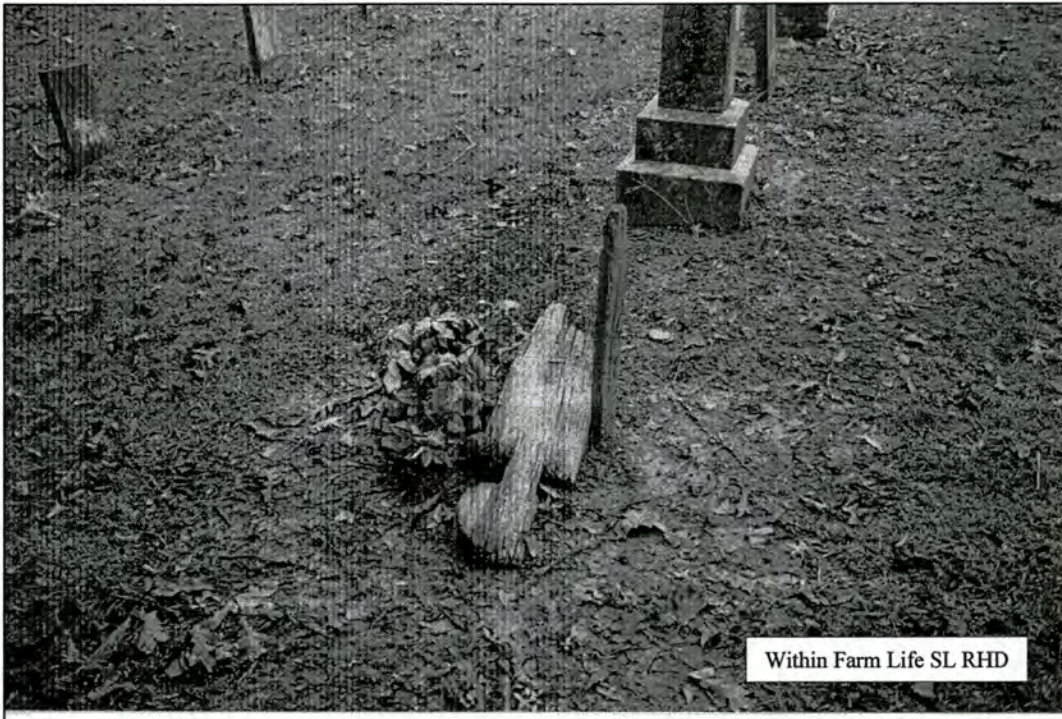
**Property 8: Mizell-Roberson House (MT 120), South and east elevations
*Figure 24***



Property 8: North elevation of Mizell-Roberson House, from Hardison Mill Cemetery
Figure 25



Property 9: Hardison Mill Cemetery
Figure 26



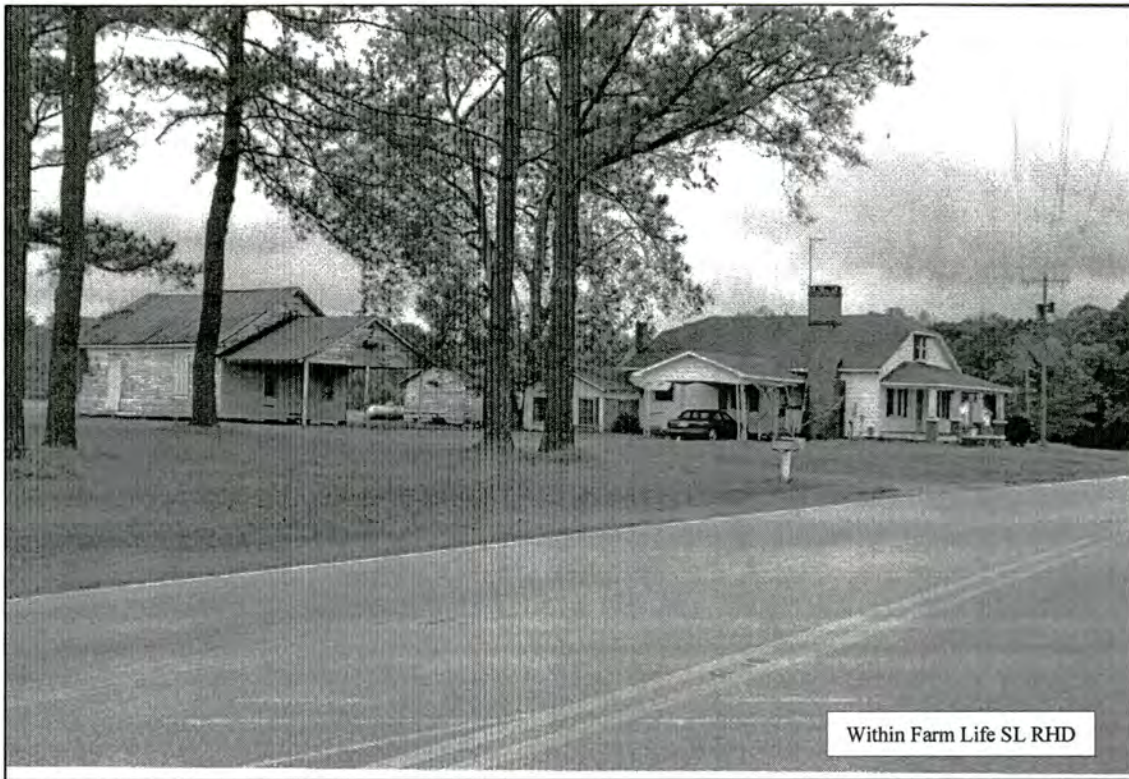
Property 9: Heart Pine or Cedar Discoid Grave Marker, earliest marker in cemetery (probably second- or third-quarter of nineteenth century)

Figure 27



Property 11: Corey-Hardison House (MT 121), East elevation of house

Figure 28



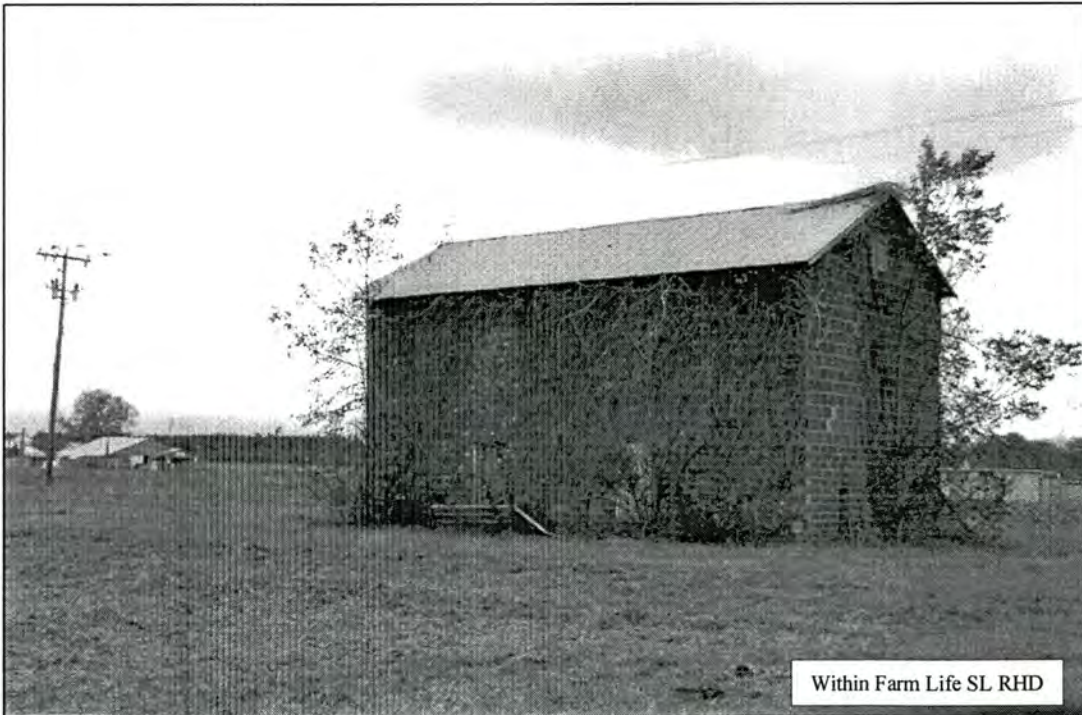
Properties 11 and 12: South and East elevations of #11 and former Corey General Store (MT 122)
Figure 29



View No. Six: Properties 10, 11, 12, seen from NWC SR 1530 and NC 171 (SW angle)
Figure 30



Property 11: Tractor Shed and Shed, South elevation (W of house)
Figure 31



Property 14: Ceramic Block Tobacco Barn (N and W elevations)
Figure 32



Property 14: Ceramic Block Tobacco Barn (E and S elevations)
Figure 33



Property 15: W. B. Harrington Farm, N. elevation of house
Figure 34



Property 15: Outbuilding, E side of yard
Figure 35



Property 15: Outbuildings, W and S of house
Figure 36

BRIDGE NO. 16
(NC 171, OVER HARDISON MILL CREEK)

EVALUATION FROM
HISTORIC BRIDGE INVENTORY REPORT

NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**HISTORIC BRIDGE INVENTORY REPORT****LICHTENSTEIN CONSULTING ENGINEERS, INC.****Bridge ID No:** 570016 **County:** MARTIN**Div:** 01 **City:****Location:** .01 MI N JCT.SR1530**UTM:** 18 320974 395659 **Owner:** STATE**Bridge Name:****Facility Carried:** NC 171**Carried/Feature intersected:** NC 171 OVER HARDISON MILL CREEK**Type:** STRINGER/MULTI-BEAM**Design:** CONTINUOUS**Material:** STEEL**# Spans:** 4**Length:** 100**Width:** 25.5**# Lanes:** 2**Railing Type** CONCRETE 1 BAR CANTILEVERED OFF BRUSH CURB RAILINGS**Date of Construction:** 1950**Alteration:****Source:** NCDOT Bridge Maint. Unit File**Designer/Builder:** STATE HIGHWAY COMMISSION**Current National Register Status of Bridge:** Not Previously Evaluated.**Local, Determined Eligible, or NR Historic District/Status:** Study List HD**Name/Date:** Farm Life Rural HD.**Located in Potential Historic District/Historic Context?** Yes**Adjacent to Identified or Potential Historic Properties?**

NC 171 has been identified as the approximate eastern boundary of the Farm Life Rural Historic District. The bridge would therefore be adjacent to or in the district. The potential district is poorly documented. A note in the HPO survey file says it was placed on the Study List following the Martin County survey, but there is no supporting information except a verbal boundary description: "SE region of Griffin's Township bounded on the west by jct. of SRs 1516 & 1106, bounded on the east by NC 171, on the south by area just below jct. NC 171 & SR 1540, and on north by jct of NC 171 & SR 1544, Late 19th and Early 20th Century." The source of the boundary description is a draft "Martin County Multiple Property Documentation Form by Donna Podenhoff, Feb. 1994." An HPO note to the file states that "no other information about the district was found in the survey files during indexing (8/97)" and that "the district is sketched on quad based on the written address only, and should not be considered final."

Inventory NR Recommendation: Not Eligible**Setting/Context:**

The bridge carries a 2 lane road over a stream in a rural setting with a scattered mix of period farms and modern houses. The bridge's adjacent northern and SE quadrants are wooded. At the SW quadrant is a 2-story vernacular farmhouse (mid-19th-c.) with outbuildings, and further south of it on NC 171 is a 1-story vernacular farmhouse (ca. 1910). Beyond the NW quadrant is a 2-story vernacular house (late-19th-c.) and beyond it is a period store at the corner of Maple Grove Road (SR 1544). Further to the east on Maple Grove Road is a modern log house. Beyond the SE quadrant is an altered 1-story vernacular house with period outbuildings. Further south of it NC 171 is a modern ranch house.

According to the county architectural survey, the bridge is in or adjacent to the Farm Life Rural HD (Study List, 1993), which uses NC 171 as an approximate eastern boundary. The district is also mentioned in Bishir & Southern (pp. 284-85) as a large rural neighborhood along NC 171. It is an area of farms that prospered in the late 19th and early 20th century following the introduction of tobacco growing.

Physical Description:

The 4 span, 100' long, rolled stringer bridge has 2-span continuous units (2 @ 25'-25'). The substructure is timber pile and reinforced concrete cap beam bents. The bridge has concrete deck and is finished with standard 1 bar high concrete railings cantilevered from the brush curbs. It appears to be complete.

Summary of Significance:

Bridge ID No: 570016 County: MARTIN

Div: 01 City:

The steel stringer bridge built in 1950 by the state highway commission is neither individually distinguished by its technology, nor would it contribute to a potential Farm Life Rural HD (Study List, 1993). The bridge postdates the late-19th and early-20th-century period of significance associated with the introduction and expansion of tobacco farming in southeastern Martin County. The bridge's history is that of a typical post-WW II state-built highway improvement, and it is unrelated to the area's earlier agricultural history and pattern of land use.

According to NCDOT plans (1950), the bridge was built as part of a state highway project to realign (i.e., straighten), widen, and resurface an existing county road. The earlier road appears to have been located on a downstream alignment from the present bridge. An earth dam and timber spillway "in poor condition" were also located downstream of the bridge in 1950, but they are not visible today.

NC 171 has been identified as the approximate eastern boundary of a potential Farm Life Rural HD. The lack of good documentation for the Farm Life Rural HD is noted by the SHPO in a memo to the Martin County survey file (Aug. 1997). During the Mar. 2003 field inspection of the bridge, many new houses (modular, trailer home, new of all sizes) were seen along NC 171, along with period farms. The character of the immediate setting appears to be the same as the rest of the county/region. A multiple property approach to the late-19th to early-20th-century farms would appear to be better justified than a historic district because of the frequency of intrusions. Using either a historic district or multiple property approach, however, the bridge postdates and is not historically associated with the area's earlier agricultural history.

The steel stringer bridge, designed in 1950 by the state bridge unit, is an undistinguished example of the most common mid-20th-century bridge type in the state. More than 2,000 steel stringer bridges dating from the 1920s to 1950s have been identified. The bridge has very common features including creosoted timber pile and concrete cap beam substructure, a concrete deck, and standard-design concrete railings. This bridge is also a continuous design, i.e., the rolled steel beams continue uninterrupted over the piers, but it is a relatively modest example of the application of continuous principles and not among the significant early continuous-design bridges in the state.

The steel stringer or multi-beam bridge type consists of a series of parallel longitudinal beams supporting a deck. Although available to bridge builders since the late 19th century, the steel stringer did not become one of the most attractive bridge types from a stand point of cost until the 1920s when continued improvements in the manufacture of the beams made them available in longer lengths and greater depths at less expense. By the late 1920s, the North Carolina State Highway Commission was moving toward an expanded use of steel stringer bridges as were state highway departments throughout the nation. North Carolina's earliest surviving state-built examples date to the late 1920s.

A variation in steel stringer design is the continuous design. The state's bridge unit began applying continuous design principles to standard bridge types in the mid 1930s. The earliest significant example in North Carolina is the US 29/US 74 bridge over the Catawba River in Gaston County (350091) built in 1933. This bridge shows the economic advantages of continuous design to great effect, being 17 spans and 1,124' long, using the then deepest available rolled steel beams. Continuous designs achieve greater economy of material and design than simple spans of comparable lengths, but require more complex stress analysis and calculations by the designing engineers. Only in the early 1930s were these methods of stress analysis approved and promulgated by professional engineering associations. The scientific application of continuous design principles was a significant advance in the long-lived steel stringer technology. North Carolina has more than 120 surviving examples of continuous steel stringer bridges dated from 1933 to 1960 with 10 examples predating 1938. This bridge is not among the state's technologically significant examples of the continuous steel stringer bridge type/design because of its later date of construction and modest span lengths.

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Boundary Description and Justification for Eligible Bridges:

Bridge ID No: 570016 **County:** MARTIN **Div:** 01 **City:**

Plan Reel/Position: 000434 / 009

Reviewed By/ Date: MEM (3/03)

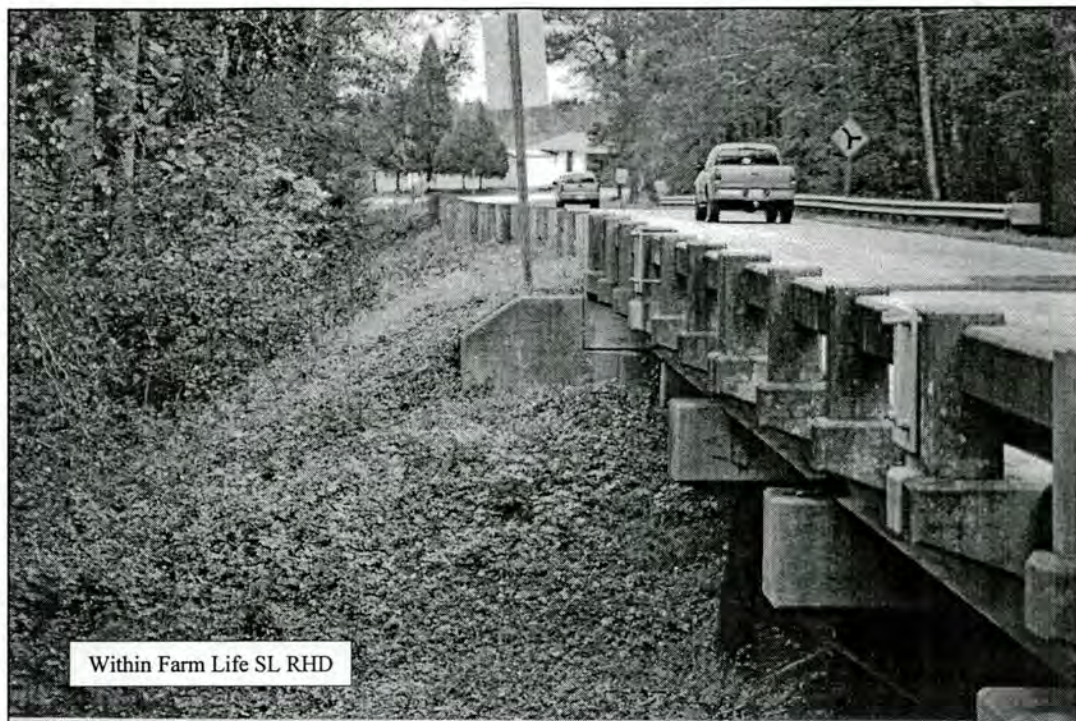
Notes:



Property 7: Bridge No. 16 (view north from south bank Hardison Creek)
Figure 37



View No. Four: Properties 9 and 10, seen from Bridge No. 16
Figure 38



Property 7: Bridge No. 16, W. side (looking N to Manning-Gurkin Store)
Figure 39

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**CONCURRENCE FORM FOR PROPERTIES NOT ELIGIBLE FOR
THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

Project Description: Replace Bridge No. 16 on NC 171 over Hardison Mill Creek, Martin County

On December 16, 2003 representatives of the

- North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT)
 Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
 North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
 Other

reviewed the subject project at

- Scoping meeting
 Historic architectural resources photograph review session/consultation
 Other

All parties present agreed

- There are no properties over fifty years old within the project's area of potential effects.
 There are no properties less than fifty years old which are considered to meet Criteria Consideration G within the project's area of potential effects.
 There are properties over fifty years old within the project's Area of Potential Effects (APE), but based on the historical information available and the photographs of each property, the properties identified as Property 13 (MT 125, not in SL RHD) are considered not eligible for the National Register and no further evaluation of them is necessary.
 There are no National Register-listed properties within the project's area of potential effects.
 All properties greater than 50 years of age located in the APE have been considered at this consultation, and based upon the above concurrence, all compliance for historic architecture with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and GS 121-12(a) has been completed for this project.
 There are no historic properties affected by this project. (*see attached documentation*)

Signed:

Penne Sandbeck
 Representative, NCDOT

12-16-2003
 Date

Michael C. Dewm
 FHWA, for the Division Administrator, or other Federal Agency

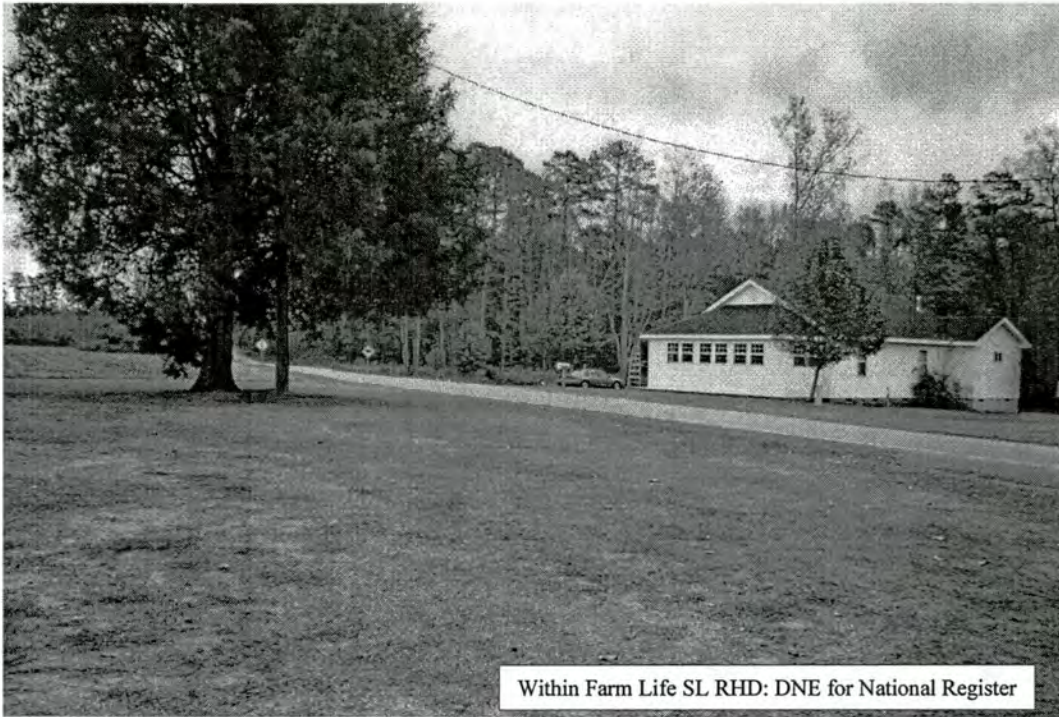
12/16/03
 Date

Scott D. [Signature]
 Representative, SHPO

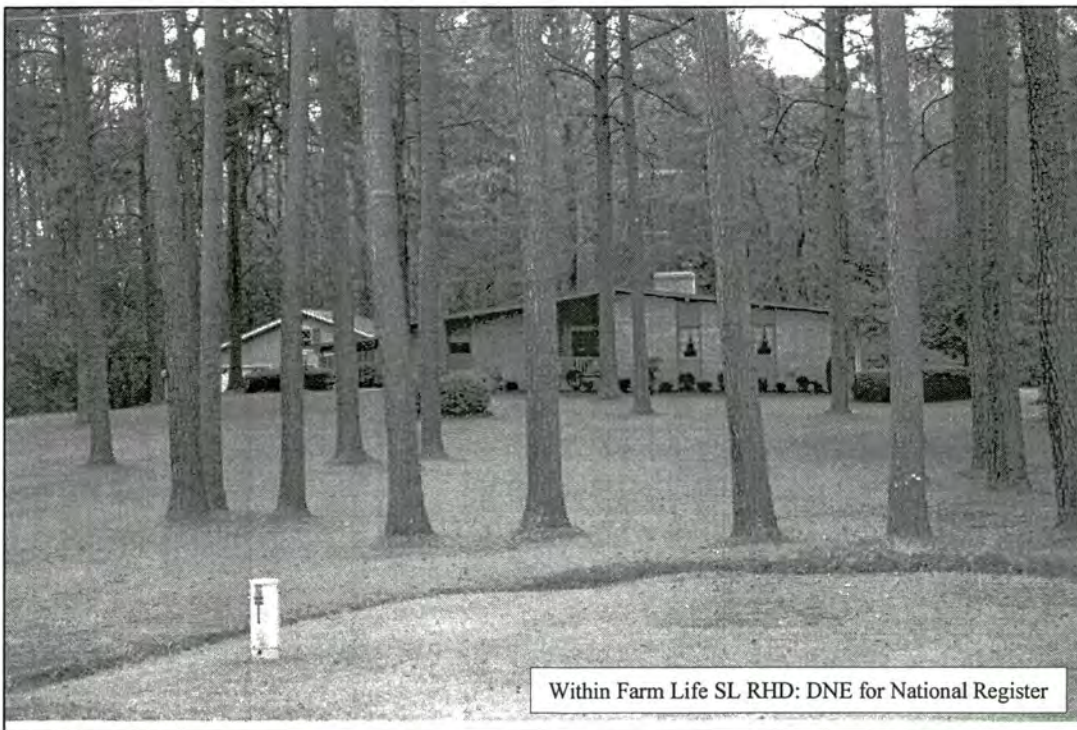
12/16/03
 Date

David [Signature]
 State Historic Preservation Officer

12-16-03
 Date



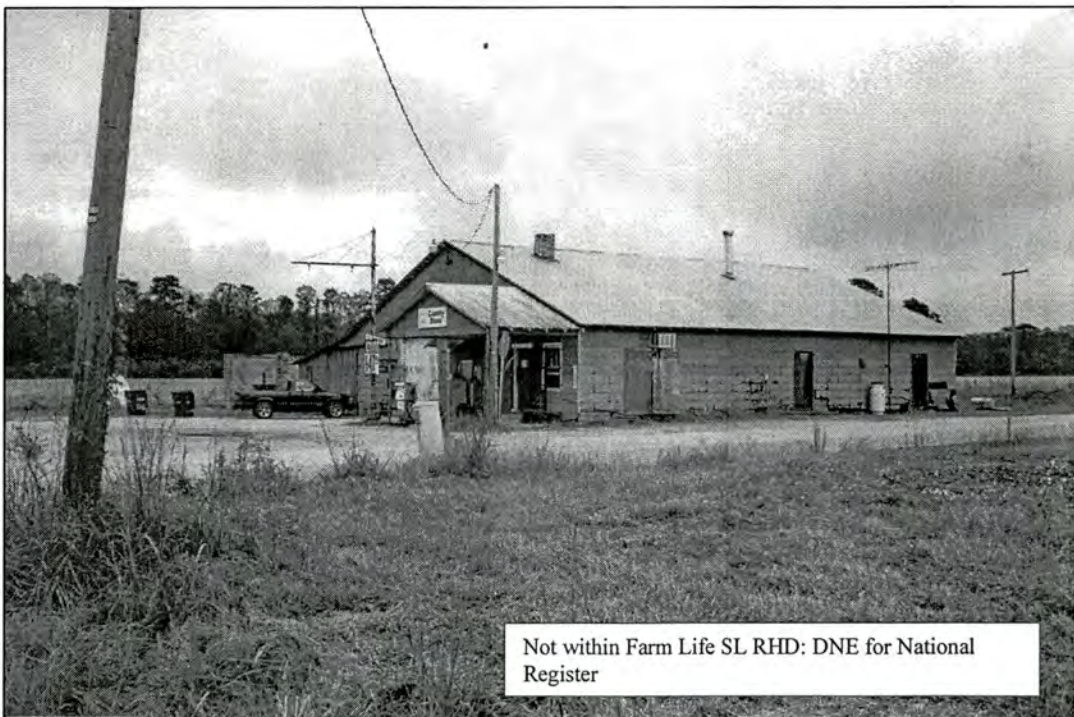
Property 2: Lassiter House (ca. 1930s; altered 1990s), S side SR 1544
Figure 40



Property 5: House, 8624 NC 171 (W. side)
Figure 41



Property 10: Bridgman Perry House, 8817 NC 171 (North and West elevations)
Figure 42



Property 13: Country Store, NEC NC 171 and SR 1542 (1949)
Figure 43