



North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
State Historic Preservation Office

Peter B. Sandbeck, Administrator

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

October 19, 2004

MEMORANDUM

TO: Gregory Thorpe, Ph.D., Director
Project Development and Environmental Analysis Branch
NCDOT Division of Highways

FROM: Peter B. Sandbeck *PBS for Peter Sandbeck*

SUBJECT: B-4251, Replace Bridge No. 94 on SR 2237 over Old Field Swamp, State Project No. 8.2462601, Federal Aid No. BRZ-2237(1), Robeson County, ER 03-0967

Thank you for your letter of October 5, 2004, transmitting the survey report by Mattson, Alexander, and Associates for the above project.

We concur with the finding that the following property within the area of potential effects is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places:

African American Community

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
Mattson, Alexander, and Associates

bc: Southern/Kane
County

	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 27699-4617	(919)733-6547/715-4801
SURVEY & PLANNING	515 N. Blount Street, Raleigh, NC	4617 Mail Service Center, Raleigh NC 27699-4617	(919)733-6545/715-4801



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OCT 5 2004
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

MICHAEL F. EASLEY
GOVERNOR

LYNDO TIPPETT
SECRETARY

October 5, 2004

Ref. # ER03-0967
S due 11/1

Mr. Peter Sandbeck
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
4617 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-4617

Dear Mr. Sandbeck:

RE: B-4251, Replace Bridge No. 94 on SR 2237 over Old Field Swamp, Robeson County. State Project # 8.2462601, Federal Aid #BRZ-2237(1).

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.

Within the project area is an African American community comprised of small houses, churches, a modern factory, and a vacant store, all of which were erected between the 1920s and the 1980s. This community was evaluated for the present study and was considered not eligible for the National Register under any criterion.

There are no other properties considered eligible for the National Register in the Area of Potential Effects.

Please review the survey report and provide us with your comments. If you have any questions concerning the accompanying information, please contact Richard Silverman, Historic Architecture Section, (919) 715-1618

Sincerely,

Mary Pope Furr, Supervisor
Historic Architecture Section
Office of Human Environment

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OCT 11 2004

MPF/rls
Attachment

cc: Teresa A. Hart, P.E., C.P.M., Project Development Manager
cc (w/ attachment): John F. Sullivan, III, Division Administrator, Federal Highway Administration

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

PHASE II (INTENSIVE LEVEL) ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY AND REPORT

**REPLACE BRIDGE NO. 94
ON S.R. 2237 OVER OLD FIELD SWAMP
ROBESON COUNTY**

**TIP NO. B-4251
STATE PROJECT NO. 8.2462601
F.A. PROJECT NO. BRZ-2237(1)**

Prepared by:

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

Prepared for:

**North Carolina Department of Transportation
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1583**

21 September 2004

Frances Alexander

Mattson, Alexander and Associates, Inc.

22 Sept. 2004

Date

Mary Pope

N.C.D.O.T.

Oct. 5, 2004

Date

Introduction

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (N.C.D.O.T.) proposes to replace Bridge No. 94 on S.R. 2237 (Leesville Street) over Old Field Swamp in Robeson County. The project area extends for approximately 800 feet. Constructed in 1956, the existing four-span, steel stringer bridge is seventy-three feet long and has a concrete deck supported by timber piles. Located at the eastern outskirts of Fairmont, the bridge carries a two-lane road over a stream in a sparsely developed setting. The bridge is a later example of a common bridge type and has no innovative or distinctive details. Bridge No. 94 is neither technologically nor historically significant.

Purpose of Survey and Report

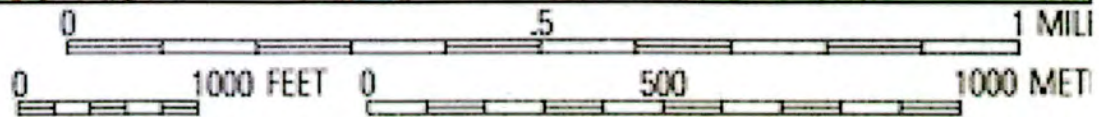
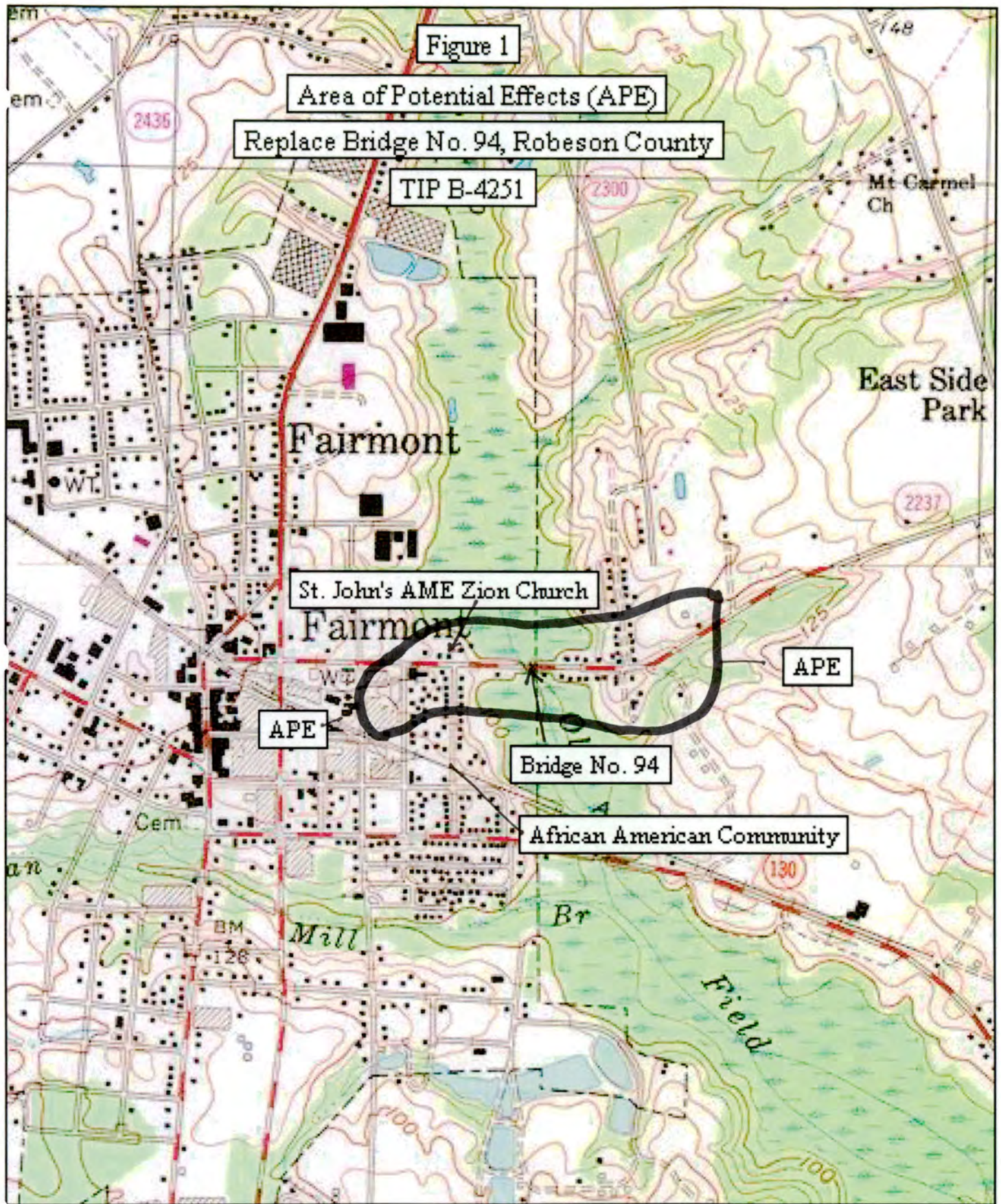
This architectural resource survey was conducted order to identify historic resources located within the area of potential effects (A.P.E.) for the proposed bridge replacement as part of the environmental studies conducted by N.C.D.O.T. and documented by a categorical exclusion (C.E.). This report is prepared as a technical appendix to the C.E. which is on file at the North Carolina Department of Transportation, Raleigh, North Carolina. The technical addendum is part of the documentation undertaken to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (N.E.P.A.) and the National Historic Preservation Act (N.H.P.A.) of 1966, as amended. Federal regulations require federal agencies to take into account the effect of their undertakings on properties included in, or eligible for inclusion in, the National Register of Historic Places and to afford the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation a reasonable opportunity to comment on such undertakings.

Methodology

This survey was conducted and the report compiled in accordance with the provisions of Federal Highway Administration 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 C.F.R. 44716); 36 C.F.R. Part 800; 36 C.F.R. Part 60; and Survey Procedures and Report Guidelines for Historic Architectural Resources prepared by N.C.D.O.T. (October 2003).

The survey had three objectives: 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 identify all resources within the A.P.E. that may be potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places; and 3) to evaluate these resources according to the National Register criteria.

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 July 2004 to delineate the A.P.E. and to identify all properties within this area that were built prior to 1955. Modern construction, topographical features, and sight lines define the A.P.E. The boundaries of the A.P.E. are shown in **Figure 1**. One hundred percent of the area was surveyed.



Map created with TOPO!® ©2002 National Geographic (www.nationalgeographic.com)

Summary Findings of the Survey

The project area encompasses two-lane S.R. 2237 in the vicinity of Bridge No. 94 which crosses a stream on the eastern outskirts of Fairmont. Within the project area is an African American community comprised of small houses, churches, a modern factory, and a vacant store, all of which were erected between the 1920s and the 1980s. This community was evaluated for the present study and was considered not eligible for the National Register under any criterion.

Properties Listed on the National Register

None

Properties Listed on the North Carolina State Study List

None

Locally Designated Properties

None

Properties Previously Determined Eligible for the National Register

None

Properties Evaluated and Considered Eligible for the National Register

None

Properties Evaluated and Considered Not Eligible for the National Register

African American Community

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND ESSAY

Early Settlement to the Civil War

In common with other counties in the southern sandhills of North Carolina, permanent white settlement in Robeson County occurred in the middle and latter decades of the eighteenth century. At the time, newcomers, mainly Highland Scots and English, migrated into the area from the Lower Cape Fear region. By 1740, Wilmington had been established as the port of entry for immigrants who then followed the Cape Fear River and its tributaries inland. By the 1770s, as the tracts along the Cape Fear became occupied, land seekers moved overland, acquiring parcels along Drowning Creek (later the Lumber River) and Big Raft Swamp that flowed into the Little Pee Dee River. Robeson County was created from Bladen County in 1786, and the town of Lumberton, north of the study area, was established as the county seat. In 1790, the first national census recorded a population of 5,356 in the new county, and Scottish landowners such as the McBrydes, McCormicks, McLeods, and McNairs had establishing farming communities oriented to the principal waterways (Letsinger 1982: 7; Merrens 1964: 56-58; Sharpe 1954: 386-387).

When Scottish immigrants arrived in this area they found a group of English-speaking people already living near the Lumber River. These inhabitants considered themselves Native Americans although they exhibited a number of English customs, including their farming practices. Tradition and folklore have linked them with the lost survivors of the failed Roanoke Island Colony (1585 to 1586). Other theories hold that they were part of the Sioux, Cherokee, or Tuscarora Indians, all of whom had once occupied this region. Whatever their origins, these people, whose descendants were officially designated as the Lumbee Indians by the 1953 North Carolina General Assembly, formed an important part of the early population mix, farming lands alongside their Scottish and English neighbors (Lea and Roberts 1980: 3; Thomas 1988: 16-24; Dial and Eliades 1975).

Because of the region's dense woodlands and numerous streams and marshes, personal travel and the shipment of goods to markets were difficult throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The rafting of produce down the Lumber River to the port of Georgetown, South Carolina, required eleven days and transporting goods by the Cape Fear River to Wilmington was equally slow and unpredictable. By the turn of the nineteenth century, overland travel was made possible by a web of crude roads that offered routes to the port cities of Wilmington and Fayetteville and southward into South Carolina. The Maxton area, west of the study area, emerged as an early trade crossing. The Fayetteville-to-Cheraw (South Carolina) road crossed the Lumber River north of present-day Maxton at Campbell's Ridge (N.C. 71), and the route from Wilmington to Charlotte followed high ground between the Lumber River and Back Swamp, roughly conforming to present-day U.S. 74 (Letsinger 1982: 8).

A cash-crop economy based on cotton production took shape during the antebellum period. In 1850, Robeson County ranked eighth among the sixty-one counties in the state raising cotton. Ten years later local farmers produced 3,467 bales, three times that of Columbus County, the second largest cotton producer in the Cape Fear region. While some large plantations developed in northern Robeson County and the slave population increased significantly in the late antebellum period, Robeson County was not among the larger slave holding counties in North Carolina. In 1850, there were 7,290 whites, 4,365 slaves, and 1,230 non-whites (almost exclusively Lumbees) in the county. The average farm size in that year was 137 acres (compared with 316 acres statewide), and most farmers owned few or no slaves. Of the slave holders, the great majority owned fewer than ten, and just twenty planters owned more than thirty slaves

(Thomas 1982: 53; 80-81; *Seventh and Eights Censuses of the U.S., 1850, 1860: Robeson County, Slave and Agricultural Schedules*).

The coming of the railroad in the 1850s opened a new era of economic and social development in Robeson County and the region. The Wilmington, Charlotte, and Rutherford Railroad (later the Carolina Central Railroad) was chartered in 1855, and by 1861, 100 miles of track had been laid, linking both Maxton and Lumberton to Wilmington. Gradually but steadily local farmers adopted cash-crop agriculture, and as rail construction expanded in the late nineteenth century, the county witnessed urban and industrial growth oriented to the rail lines (Letsinger 1982: 9).

Post-Civil War to the Present

Robeson County did not experience military conflicts during the Civil War, but as throughout North Carolina, the war's aftermath brought social and economic upheaval. The abolition of slave labor and the lack of available capital stalled agricultural production and transformed the antebellum social and economic systems. As late as 1875, *The Robesonian* newspaper in Lumberton offered to trade subscriptions for "corn, bacon, lard, rice, opossums, squirrels, fodder, and wood". During the late nineteenth century, the number of large land holdings steadily declined while the number of small farms, many of which were now operated by tenants, rose sharply. By 1900, tenants operated thirty-nine percent of the county's farms, and over half the farms comprised fewer than fifty acres. In and around the A.P.E., the swamplands remained undeveloped while adjacent tracts on the higher elevations consisted mostly of small farms, which were either owned by African Americans or operated by black sharecroppers (Sharpe 1954: 389; Thomas 1982: 172; N.C. Department of Labor and Printing 1901: 131; *Tenth Census of the U.S., 1880: Robeson County, Population and Agriculture Schedules*).

The county's gradual economic recovery after the Civil War was fostered by the expansion of the railroads. In 1884, the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railroad opened between Fayetteville and the South Carolina line, and five stations were established across upper Robeson County. Shortly thereafter, the Alma and Little Rock Railroad fed into the Carolina Railroad at Maxton. In 1892, a north-south branch line of the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad cut through the heart of the county, and by the early twentieth century, rail lines operated by the Southeastern, the Raleigh and Charleston, and the Virginia and Carolina railroad companies crisscrossed the county. The town of Fairmont, which includes the A.P.E., was founded along the Southeastern Railroad in 1898. The new railroad connected Fairmont to both Wilmington and Fayetteville, as well as to rail lines leading to major northern markets, and promised the development of the town as a tobacco market in the early twentieth century (Thomas 1982: 180-185; Lea and Roberts 1980: 5).

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, farmers continued to produce cotton as the principal money crop while also raising a variety of small grains, livestock, and truck crops. Increasingly, landowners adopted progressive farming practices including crop rotation and the use of fertilizers to increase yields. Drainage canals were dug through the swamps, opening new lands to cultivation. During the early twentieth century, Robeson County consistently ranked first in the state in the production of cotton and the value of farm products, reflecting its rich soils as well as its large size of 944 square miles (Thomas 1982: 171-172).

County farmers were late in adopting bright-leaf tobacco production, planting their inaugural crop in 1897. However, by 1920 the county ranked first in the state in tobacco production and second in the entire South. The rise of tobacco farming, which was labor intensive, expanded the sharecropping system and further stimulated the proliferation of small farmsteads. In 1935, sixty-

eight percent of farm owners in the county possessed fewer than fifty acres (Thomas 1982: 170-172).

Although the county remained predominantly rural, soaring tobacco production and the emergence of the textile industry fueled urban growth. In the early decades of the twentieth century, Lumberton grew as a regional tobacco market and cotton mill center. The rail corridors of the town held large warehouses and tobacco factories in addition to four textile plants. As a result, between 1900 and 1920, the population of the town more than tripled, from 864 to 2,691. By World War II, approximately forty million pounds of tobacco were sold at the auction in Lumberton, and town had grown to over 5,000 (N.C. Department of Labor and Printing 1915: 316-317; Lea and Roberts 1980: 7-8; Thomas 1982: 218; Sharpe 1954: 401-404).

In Fairmont, the first tobacco market was established in 1899, and during the ensuing decades, the town thrived as a tobacco market and lumber mill center. By 1939, Fairmont included eight tobacco warehouses selling some thirty million pounds of the crop annually. By 1951, the rail corridor contained twenty-four warehouses as well as several tobacco drying and processing factories, and in 1952, tobacco sales in Fairmont totaled fifty-one million dollars. By the mid-twentieth century, the town contained 2,319 residents including 1,055 African Americans. A sizable black community developed on the east side of town adjacent to the railroad tracks and the tobacco factories and lumber mills. The study area extends through the north side of this community which contains simple dwellings, stores, and St. John's A.M.E. Zion Church which took shape during the early and middle decades of the twentieth century (Lawrence 1939: 31-32; Sharpe 1954: 404).

World War I to the Present

In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, the decline of bright-leaf tobacco allotments and the concomitant decline and centralization of tobacco warehousing and marketing in the region have severely constrained Fairmont's economic growth and social vitality. As with other railroad towns in the county, its role as a market center and small industrial hub has virtually disappeared. Within and around the A.P.E., Fairmont's sizable African American community is no longer economically tied to the tobacco warehouses and factories that once thrived along the railroad corridor. Fairmont's residents now must find employment opportunities outside town. Although vacant houses and vacant lots once occupied by dwellings now mark the black community, this area still retains streets of simple, gable-front cottages and mid-twentieth-century housing. St. John's A.M.E. Zion Church within the A.P.E. was erected in 1953 to replace an earlier church on the site, and the building was subsequently remodeled in 1976. Amidst Fairmont's social and economic changes, this church remains a focal point in the African American community.

PROPERTY INVENTORY AND EVALUATIONS

African American Community

East side of Fairmont
Robeson County

Physical Description and Evaluation of Integrity (Plates 1-9)

Fairmont's principal African American neighborhood, this area comprises blocks of simple, one-story housing and open space on the east side of Fairmont. The A.P.E. includes east-west S.R. 2237 (Leesville Street) and adjoining side streets that constitute the north end of this black community. The A.P.E. contains several small, modern factories and warehouses and vacant lots that evidently once contained warehouses near the railroad tracks. A mid-twentieth-century concrete-block store, now abandoned and altered, is sited facing S.R. 2237 west of the bridge. The preponderance of resources are one-story houses that date from the mid-twentieth century. They include brick ranch houses, double pile, side gable dwellings with vinyl siding or brick veneers, and gable front cottages. Gable front cottages are the most common house type and appear to have been constructed in the black community from the 1920s to the 1950s. Within and around the A.P.E., including S.R. 2237 and Happy Hill, Griffith, McMillan, Manila, and Liberia streets, the houses typically have been remodeled with replacement sidings, porches, and windows. Beyond the A.P.E., no other sections of this black community survive substantially intact or appear to have significant architectural resources that would suggest National Register eligibility.

The most prominent resource in the A.P.E. is St. John's A.M.E. Zion Church. The church is located on the north side of S.R. 2237, west of the bridge. The church was constructed of concrete block in 1953 and remodeled with the existing brick veneer, stained-glass windows, and steepled entry tower in 1976. This building replaced the original frame edifice (ca. 1900) that was located in the current church parking lot to the west (Adkinson Interview 2004).

Historical Background

Fairmont's predominant African American community developed during the early and middle decades of the twentieth century. Oriented primarily to the Southeastern Railroad tracks on the east side of town, this neighborhood grew with the rise of Fairmont as a tobacco marketing and processing center. By the mid-twentieth century, the town contained 2,319 residents, including 1,055 African Americans, most of whom lived in this area. Black residents found permanent and seasonal employment in the warehouses and tobacco processing factories that emerged alongside the railroad. Others worked in the town's several lumber mills or as farm laborers or owners of small farms near the outskirts of Fairmont. This black neighborhood was never given a specific name to distinguish it from other parts of Fairmont. The area remains solidly African American although a host of dwellings appear to be vacant, and empty lots now mark some parcels where houses once stood (Adkinson Interview 2004).

Sited within the community and the A.P.E., St. John's A.M.E. Zion Church was established around the turn of the twentieth century. The first church building was a simple, weatherboard, gable front structure located just west of the existing church. This structure was replaced with a concrete block building in 1953 which was given the existing brick veneer, stained-glass windows, and tower in 1976. The church remains active although many of its members no longer live in the surrounding African American neighborhood.

Evaluation of Eligibility

Fairmont's historically African American neighborhood is not recommended as eligible for the National Register under any criterion. Many of the resources within the A.P.E. as well as elsewhere in the community have been heavily altered or constructed after World War II. No substantially intact collection of houses or other resources survive, and no specific buildings warrant individual eligibility. St. John's A.M.E. Zion Church, established ca. 1900, was rebuilt in 1953 and substantially remodeled in 1976. Robeson County contains more intact historically black neighborhoods including historically black sections of Lumberton, the county seat.



Plate 1 St. John's A.M.E. Zion Church, Looking North



Plate 2 St. John's A.M.E. Zion Church, Side (West) Elevation, Looking Northeast from Church Parking Lot.



Plate 3. St. John's A.M.E. Zion Church, Detail of Façade Showing Modern Brick Veneer (1976) and Pointed Arch Windows.



Plate 4. Looking East Along S.R. 2237 From St. John's A.M.E. Zion Church Towards Bridge No. 94.



No. 5 Houses on Liberia Street, Looking South From S.R. 2237 (129 Liberia Street on Right and 127 on Left).



Plate 6. House (130 Liberia Street) on Corner of S.R. 2237 and Liberia Street, Looking East.



Plate 7. Bridge No. 94, Looking West From Factory Site on East Side of Bridge.



Plate 8. Modern Factory, Just East of Bridge No. 94, Looking North.



Plate 9. Modern Ranch House on South Side of S.R. 2237, East of Bridge No. 94, Looking Southeast.



Plate 10. Store on South Side of S.R. 2237, East of Bridge No. 94, Looking Southeast.



Plate 11. Modern Houses on South Side of S.R. 2237, Looking Southeast.



Plate 12. Houses on Griffith Street, Looking North From S.R. 2237.

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APPENDIX A:
PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

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

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