



North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources  
State Historic Preservation Office

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Michael F. Easley, Governor  
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Jeffrey J. Crow, Deputy Secretary

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

February 18, 2005

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: Historic Architectural Resources Survey Report, Replacement of Bridge No. 37 on SR 1330 (Haystack Road) over Mitchell River, B-3910, Surry County, ER 03-1416

Thank you for your letter of January 26, 2005, transmitting the survey report by Ellen Turco of Circa, Inc.

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

- SR 526*
- ♦ Mitchell River Primitive Baptist Church, west side SR 1330, 0.1 mile northeast of Bridge No. 37, Bryan Township, Devotion vicinity, is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C: architecture. The building is an intact representative of the Primitive Baptist church type and is one of two examples of the type in Surry County that retain good integrity.

We concur with the proposed National Register boundary as defined and delineated in the survey report.

The following property is determined not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places:

- SR 882*
- ♦ Bridge No. 37, SR 1330, over Mitchell River, is not eligible for the National Register because it has been heavily altered or rebuilt and is no longer a distinguished example of the single-span, steel-pratt pony truss bridge.

Please be sure to enclose the bridge evaluation page from North Carolina's Historic Bridge Inventory in all future survey reports that include bridges. If the bridge was not part of the statewide bridge survey, that should be noted in the text.

ADMINISTRATION  
RESTORATION  
SURVEY & PLANNING

Location  
507 N. Blount Street, Raleigh NC  
515 N. Blount Street, Raleigh NC  
515 N. Blount Street, Raleigh, NC

Mailing Address  
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(919)733-4763/733-8653  
(919)733-6547/715-4801  
(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, NCDOT  
Ellen Turco, Circa, Inc.

bc: Southern/McBride  
County

2043

HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY REPORT  
REPLACEMENT OF BRIDGE NO. 37 ON S.R. 1330 (HAYSTACK ROAD)  
OVER MITCHELL RIVER  
SURRY COUNTY

NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
T.I.P. NO. B-3910  
STATE PROJECT NO. WBS 33345.1.1  
FEDERAL-AID NO. BRZ 1330(4)

Prepared for:

Mulkey Engineers and Consultants  
Leza Mundt, Project Manager  
6750 Tryon Road  
Cary, North Carolina 27511

Prepared by:

Circa, Inc.  
P.O. Box 28365  
Raleigh, NC 27611

December 2004

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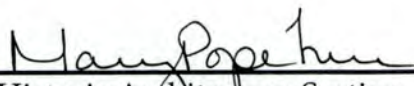
December 2004



Ellen Turco, Principal Investigator  
Circa, Inc.

1/4/05

Date



Historic Architecture Section  
North Carolina Department of Transportation

26 Jan 2005

Date



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**Replacement of Bridge No. 37 on SR 1330 (Haystack Road)  
over Mitchell River**

**Surry County**

**TIP No. B-3910**

**State Project No. WBS 33345.1.1**

**Federal Aid No. BRZ 1330(4)**

**Management Summary**

This North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) project is entitled *Replacement of Bridge No. 37 on SR 1330 over Mitchell River, Surry County*. The T.I.P. number is B-3910. Mulkey Engineers and Consultants, Inc. contracted with Circa, Inc. to identify and evaluate historic structures within the project's area of potential effects (APE). Circa conducted a survey of historic architecture and prepared this report in accordance with guidelines set forth in *Section 106 Procedures and Report Guidelines* (NCDOT, October 2003). The survey is part of environmental studies conducted by NCDOT in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Historic Preservation Act 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 (National Register) and to afford the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation a reasonable opportunity to comment on such undertakings.

The survey included both background research and fieldwork and resulted in the identification of two historic properties within the project's APE, Bridge No. 37 and Mitchell River Primitive Baptist Church. Mitchell River Primitive Baptist Church was found to be eligible for listing in the National Register.

**Properties Listed in the National Register or the Study List**

None

**Properties Evaluated and considered eligible for the National Register:**

~~None~~ **Mitchell River Primitive Baptist Church**

**Properties Evaluated and considered not eligible for the National Register:**

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Bridge No. 37                                      | page 2, 6 |
| <del>2. Mitchell River Primitive Baptist Church</del> | page 15   |



## **Project Description**

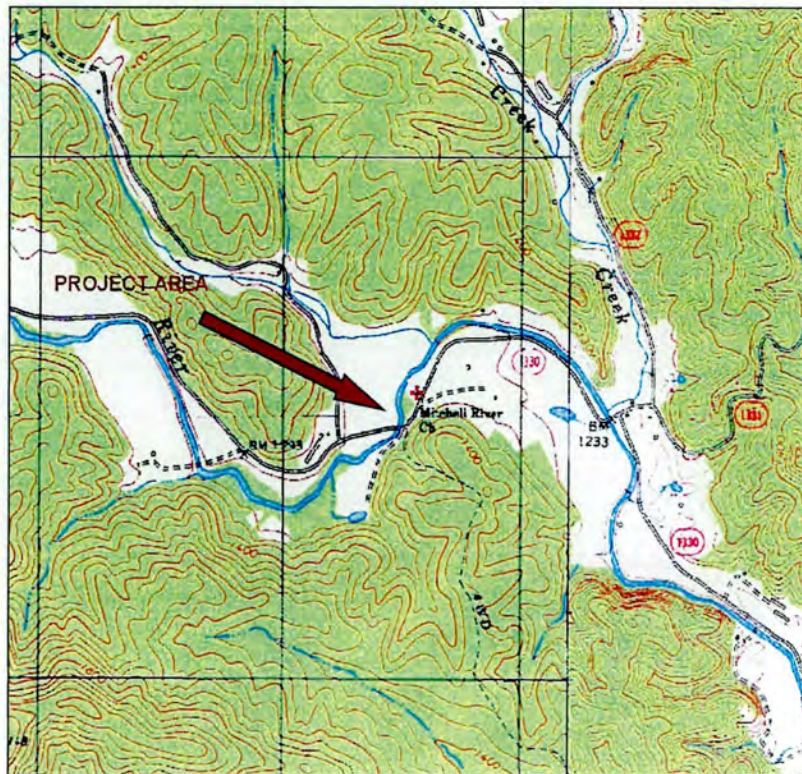
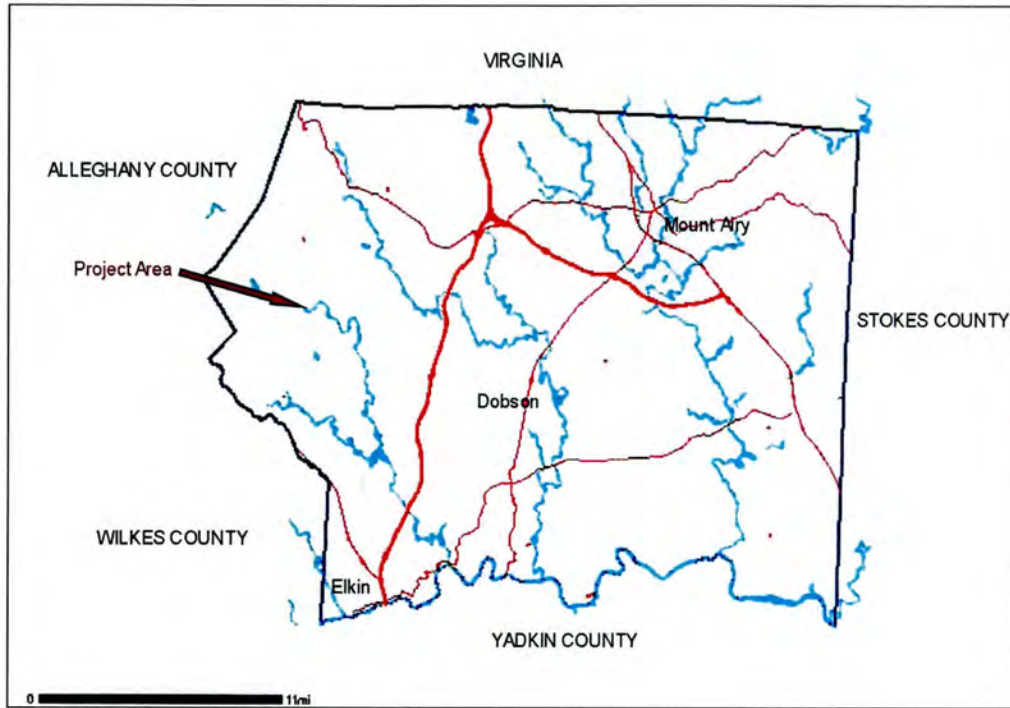
The North Carolina Department of Transportation proposes to replace Bridge No. 37 on SR 1330 (Haystack Road) over Mitchell River in Surry County (Figures 1 and 2). The current bridge, built in 1923, is a single-span, steel, Pratt pony truss with a timber and steel deck and reinforced concrete piers and abutments (Figure 1). NCDOT Bridge Maintenance Unit records indicate that Bridge No. 37 has a sufficiency rating of 21.3 out of a possible 100 points and is structurally deficient. The bridge has been determined ineligible for the National Register by the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (HPO) (see Appendix A.)

Bridge No. 37 will be replaced with a three-span, 150-foot, cored-slab bridge. It will be approximately twenty-nine feet wide and will have two piers. The new bridge is proposed to be constructed north of the existing bridge in order to improve the alignment of SR 1330. During construction the existing bridge will be used for vehicular traffic. There will be no new construction for the purpose of a detour during construction.



**Figure 1: Bridge No. 37. View looking west on SR 1330 (Haystack Road).**





**Figure 2: Location Maps: Surry County Map and Roaring Gap USGS 7.5 Quadrangle.**



## **Purpose of Survey and Report**

A memo dated August 29, 2003 from the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (HPO) to Mike Summers, Project Manger, NCDOT Bridge Maintenance Unit, identified Bridge No. 37 within the project area and recommended that an architectural historian identify and evaluate any structures fifty years of age or older and report the findings to the HPO (Appendix A). As a result of that recommendation, Mulkey Engineers and Consultants contracted with Circa, Inc. to perform the survey and evaluation.

The survey was conducted 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 criteria. The APE for historic architectural resources was delineated in consultation with Mary Pope Furr, Supervisor, Historic Architecture Section, NCDOT, and confirmed in the field by Ellen Turco, Architectural Historian, Circa, Inc. The APE boundary is shown in Figure 3.

This survey and report are part of the environmental studies conducted by NCDOT and documented by a categorical exclusion (CE). This report was prepared as a technical appendix to the CE and is part of the compliance documentation required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended. Section 106 of the NHPA states that if a federally funded, licensed, or permitted project has an effect on a property listed in or potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation should be given an opportunity to comment on the proposed undertaking.

This report was prepared in accordance with the provisions of Federal Highway Administration Technical Advisory T6640.8A (Guidance for Preparing and Processing Environmental and Section 4(f) Documents); the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation (48 CFR 44716); 36 CFR Part 800; 36 CFR Part 60; and "Section 106 Procedures and Report Guidelines for Historic Architectural Resources" by NCDOT. This survey and report meet the guidelines of NCDOT and the National Park Service. This report is on file with NCDOT and available for review by the public.



# Mitchell River Primitive Baptist Church

B-3910

- Legend**
- Build Alternative
  - APE
  - Streams
  - Tributaries
  - Roads
  - Historic Properties

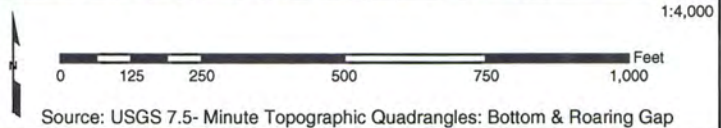


Figure No.



**AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS**  
B-3910  
Bridge No. 37 over Mitchell River on SR 1330  
Surry County, North Carolina

**3**



## **Methodology**

Survey methodology consisted of background research and a field survey. Background research was conducted into the historic and architectural development of the project area and Surry County, as well as, specifically, the Mitchell River Primitive Baptist Church. Research was conducted at the HPO office and the North Carolina State Library and Archives, both in Raleigh, the Surry County Courthouse in Dobson, and the Surry County Public Library (Mount Airy and Dobson branches).

On January 12, 2004, Ellen Turco, Architectural Historian of Circa, Inc. conducted a field survey to identify all historic architectural resources located within and adjacent to the APE (Figure 3). One hundred percent of the APE was surveyed. The survey identified two properties within the APE over fifty years of age, the Mitchell River Primitive Baptist Church and Bridge No. 37. The church is not known to have been previously surveyed by the HPO. The bridge was surveyed in 2002 as part of the statewide historic bridge inventory conducted by Lichtenstein Consulting Engineers, Inc. A memorandum, dated January 5, 2004, from David Brook, Deputy Historic Preservation Officer, states that the bridge is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (Appendix A).

## **Summary of Findings**

### **Properties Listed in the National Register or the Study List**

None

### **Properties Evaluated and considered eligible for the National Register:**

Mitchell River Primitive Baptist Church

### **Properties Evaluated and considered not eligible for the National Register:**

Bridge No. 37

## Historical Background of Surry County

*(From "Historic Architectural Resources Survey Report, Replace Bridge No. 52 on SR 1341 over Fisher River." Prepared for NCDOT by Mattson and Alexander Associates, Inc., July 17, 2000.)*

"Settlers of mostly English and German origins began migrating into present-day Surry County during the mid-eighteenth century. They established small and middle-sized farms primarily along the bottom lands of the Yadkin River and its tributaries, particularly the Ararat, the Mitchell and the Fisher rivers. Surry County was created from Rowan County in 1770, and the county's current borders were set in 1850, following the formation of Yadkin County from Surry. Although a small planter class emerged in the late-eighteenth century, middling farmsteads characterized the county's agricultural economy well into the twentieth century (Corbitt 1950: 199; Bishir et al. 1999: 109-110; Phillips 1987: 5).

"Typical of the North Carolina western piedmont, yeoman farmers striving for comfortable subsistence and possessing few or no slaves dominated the county's agrarian landscape before the Civil War. In 1830, only eleven percent of heads of households owned one or more slaves, and the great majority of these slave holders owned fewer than five slaves. By the eve of the Civil War, just two landowners held title to more than twenty slaves (Phillips 1987: 4).

"Designated the county seat in 1850, the town of Dobson took shape as the principal political and commercial center. However, Dobson never acquired a railroad and its growth languished in the late eighteenth century, surpassed by the communities of Mount Airy and Elkin. In 1888, the Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railroad arrived in Mount Airy to link the town with the state's major port in Wilmington via Fayetteville and Greensboro. The railroad triggered the tobacco, textile, and furniture industries, and encouraged the opening of the North Carolina Granite Corporation quarry near the edge of town. In 1890, the Northwestern North Carolina Railroad entered Elkin along the Yadkin River. This railroad connected Elkin east to Winston, and in 1893, the Chatham Manufacturing Company, maker of woolen goods, opened alongside the rail line as the town's key industry. With new access to markets, Elkin flourished and its population more than doubled between 1890 and 1896 (Phillips 1987: 5-6; 30-33; Bishir et al. 1999: 111-116; 121-123).

"The arrival of the railroads also boosted commercial agriculture, and especially the production of bright-leaf tobacco. Sited at the southwestern edge of the Old Tobacco Belt, an area extending across the northern piedmont of North Carolina and Virginia, Surry County had grown some tobacco for market since the



eighteenth century. However, cultivation of the crop soared during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries spurred on by the emergence of flue-cured, bright-leaf tobacco and the coming of rail transport. While farmers continued to raise livestock and a variety of crops, including corn, oats, wheat and rye, and potatoes, bright-leaf tobacco was the main cash staple. In the growing railroad towns, tobacco warehouses and manufacturing companies, such as the Sparger Brothers Tobacco Company in Mount Airy, prospered beside the tracks. (Bishir 1990: 303; Bishir et al. 1999: 109-110, 113).

“In the latter twentieth century, improved roadways and the appeal of the county’s bucolic beauty generated tourism and residential and commercial development. Nevertheless, Surry County remains predominantly rural and agrarian. Small farms continue to mark the rolling landscape drained by the south-flowing waterways leading into the Yadkin River. (Phillips 1987: 6; Bishir et al. 1999: 109-110).”

### **Historical Background of Bryan Township**

Bryan Township is located in western Surry County, approximately fifteen miles west of the county seat of Dobson. Bryan Township is isolated by the extreme topography of the Blue Ridge mountain range. Roads are few and one cannot pass into neighboring Alleghany County without first traveling north to Virginia or south to Elkin. Because of the mountain barrier, Bryan Township failed to benefit from railroad service that spurred economic development around Elkin and Mount Airy. Even today, a few of the roads remain unpaved.

Settlement focused around the Mitchell River, which flows south through the township, and provided the lifeblood for the small communities of Devotion, Mountain Park, Union Hill, and Zephyr. Fertile river flood plains attracted early settlers, and by the 1830s the Cockerham, Bryant, and Thompson families established subsistence farms near the project area. The Cockerhams are known to have immigrated to Surry County from Lunenburg County, Virginia prior to the Civil War. Several mid-nineteenth-century Cockerham family dwellings survive nearby (Phillips 1987: 63). A painted sign over the entry of Mitchell River Primitive Baptist Church reads “Mitchell River Primitive Baptist Church, established 1820. In memory of: Cockerham and Southard families...”

Despite its sparse population and physical isolation, Bryan Township supported a few one-room school houses and several small churches, several of which retain active congregations. From the 1820s through 1930s the economic and social center of Bryan Township was Kapp’s Mill (Study List 1998), powered by the Mitchell River and located approximately five miles east of the project area. The grist mill complex also supported a general store, post office, and blacksmith



shop. Today Bryan Township remains agrarian with significant acreage used for timber. Several hundred acres in the northwest corner of the county comprise Long Creek Farm, the large vacation estate of the Reynolds family.

### **Primitive Baptists of Surry County**

Primitive Baptists are a subset of the larger Baptist faith. The conservative sect was officially established around 1830. Primitive Baptists are a protestant denomination whose basis is the literal interpretation of the New Testament. Scripture is viewed as the direct word of God and as such forms the foundation of church doctrine and ritual. Predestination of the soul and priesthood of the believer are core beliefs. Primitive Baptists claim to emulate the practices of the original New Testament Baptists through rituals such as foot washing and full-immersion baptism (York 1993: 8.6). Thus, the term *primitive* expresses the sect's ancient roots and its commitment to remain uninfluenced by modern life. *Primitive* has a secondary meaning in the notion of simplicity that permeates Primitive Baptist customs.

Primitive Baptists held lengthy church services in brush arbors or austere buildings. Services consist of preaching, praying, and singing, although instruments and written music are usually prohibited. Men were seated separately from women and children. Ministers are known as *elders* and are chosen by each congregation from among religiously self-educated male members (York 1993: 8.6 – 8.7). Academic religious education is seen as a distortion of the true word of God and is discouraged.

Historically Primitive Baptist churches have been small and located in rural areas. Due to their small size congregations hold services once a month. Members visit other churches when their own church is not in session, creating relationships between congregations. Elders may serve more than one church. The churches are autonomous and governed by decision-making elders within each congregation. Most Primitive Baptist churches belong to an association, although independent churches without an affiliation exist as well. Associations are fluid affiliations of churches often related by proximate geography or theological bent. Associations meet to discuss theological and procedural issues. Since churches are not governed by the association they are free to change associations over differences in theology or practice. Common are subtle ideological differences among Primitive Baptist churches. Congregations tend to be intolerant of slight differences in ideology, and there have been many schisms over time. This has historically led to factionalization and explains the tendency for a particular region to be home to a number of very small congregations and more than one association.



Surry County's earliest settlers were members of Protestant denominations who arrived via the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia searching for land, economic opportunity, and religious freedom. Moravians and Quakers were some of the first settlers in the area that is now Forsyth County. Baptist, Episcopal, Methodist, and Lutheran traditions were firmly established by 1800. By 1820 a number of Baptist associations were present in northwest North Carolina, including Surry County, and southwest Virginia. These included the Mountain, Briarcreek, County Line, and Abbot's Creek Associations (Cameron: 2003, 19). About this time the Baptist churches throughout the country were experiencing discord over the role of evangelism in the church. "Liberal" churches promoted growth through missionary activities and religious education while the more traditional churches did not. Conservative sects believed that the missionary lifestyle and philosophy glorified the individual over God. The depth of this ideological fracture is evident in the *Black Rock Address*, presented at a meeting of conservative Baptists in Maryland in 1832. The address announces the group's decision to withdraw from liberal doctrines and practices. The address had widespread influence and like-minded Baptist churches across the country followed suit and formed separate churches which became known as Primitive Baptist, a term that identified the group as the earliest or first Baptists (<http://www.pb.org/pbdocs/blackrock.html>).

North Carolina Baptists also suffered this schism. At the first statewide Baptist convention held in 1830 participants endorsed "Sunday schools and the financial support of home and foreign missions, as well as the education of men called to be ministers" (Cameron 2003: 19). In 1831 the Yadkin Baptist Association adopted the platform presented at the statewide convention. Mountain, Abbots Creek, Briarcreek and County Line Associations debated the issue. Fisher's River Primitive Baptist Association was formed in 1832 by conservative "old school" Baptists in Surry and surrounding counties. The following churches from Surry County were among the members of the new association: Ararat (Cedar Hill), Cody Creek, Fisher's River, Franklin (Flat Top), Mitchell River, Pleasant Grove (State Road), Round Peak, Snow Creek, Fisher's Gap, Rock Springs and Tom's Creek (Cameron 2003: 19; Ashburn 1953: 2). Founding elders were Pleasant Cockerham, John Jones, Henry Steele, En-sinus Canter, and Robert Welbourn, Joshua Carter, and Silas Jones (Ashburn 1953: 2). Cockerham was active in several of the area Primitive Baptist congregations, appearing in the records of Franklin, Mitchell River, and State Road churches (Cameron 2003: 171, 230, 330).

The Civil War caused further fracture of the Baptist denomination into pro- and anti-slavery factions. Missionary Baptist congregations generally supported the Confederate cause and some Primitive Baptists allied with Union interests. Union Baptists split from the Primitive Baptists supporting the war. In the post-bellum era many new churches were established. By 1900 Surry County had



twenty-five Missionary Baptist churches (twenty-three white and two black), thirteen Primitive Baptist churches (ten white and three black), and six Union Baptist churches (all white) (Cameron 2003: 23).

Instability in Surry County's Primitive Baptist churches and associations continued through the post-bellum era. In 1878 the Fisher's River Association severed relations with the Mountain Association. Members of the Fisher's River Association objected to "protracted communion meetings" held by churches of the Mountain Association and attended by some members of the Fisher's River Association. Fisher's Rivers Association meeting minutes state that the Mountain Association, although Christian, was "unorthodox" and "corrupt" and forbid future association between the groups (Cameron 2003: 155).

Yet another significant division of Surry County's white Primitive Baptists occurred in 1930 over the issue of predestination. Predestination is a basic tenet of the faith; however, disagreement arose over the degree to which one's personal faith is influenced by his or her divinely-predetermined fate. As a result the following churches split from the Fisher's River Primitive Baptist Association to form the Laurel Springs Primitive Baptist Association: Fisher's River, Old Hollow (Stewart's Creek), Fisher's Gap, Flat Rock, Franklin, State Road, Round Peak, and Union. Mitchell River Primitive Baptist Church remained in the Fisher's River Primitive Baptist Association (Cameron 2003: 27).

### **History of Mitchell River Primitive Baptist Church**

Although an exact date of establishment has not been determined, Mitchell River Primitive Baptist church descends from one of the oldest Baptist congregations in Surry County. A map posted at the Surry County Register of Deeds Office refers to a Mitchell River Baptist Church established in 1784 by Moses Foley and William Ramey. Dennis W. Cameron's essay on religion in Surry County lists Mitchell River Baptist Church as a pre-1800 congregation and one of eight original members of the Fisher's River Primitive Baptist Association, which was founded in 1832. A sign on the church notes the church was established in 1820.

Fisher's River Primitive Baptist Association was founded in 1832 as an affiliation of conservative churches in the North Carolina counties of Surry, Yadkin, Stokes and Carroll, and Patrick County in Virginia. Following a national trend in the Baptist faith, these churches split from others that supported missionary activities and formal religious education for members, particularly church elders.

In 1876 one acre was conveyed from Gideon and Francis C. Cockerham Bryan to the "citizens of Bryan Township" (Surry County Register of Deeds, Book 20, page 487). The deed describes one acre of land with a school house and future



rights to construct a meeting house for the Primitive Baptist Church. Church historian Elizabeth Southard states that prior to 1876 the church was known locally as Bryan Church. The current building dates from the early 1930s (Southard 2004; Cameron 2003: 231). It replaced an early building used as a school house and a church that was moved from the site.

Mitchell River Primitive Baptist Church remains a member of the Fisher's River Primitive Baptist Association which is presently comprised of six churches. The building is still used for monthly worship services as well as homecomings throughout the year. A congregation of about ten people is led by Pastor Sam Edwards of Woodlawn, Virginia (Southard 2004).

### **Architecture Context: Primitive Baptist Churches in Rural Surry County**

Prior to 1800 Surry County settlers worshipped in homes and brush arbors. The earliest churches in Surry County were constructed of log, as were most dwellings and agricultural buildings, and appeared after the Revolution (Cameron 2003: 19; Phillips 1987: 23). Log churches were replaced by frame buildings as congregations expanded.

Plain rural churches are distinguished from the more elaborate and stylish churches, often of brick or stone, constructed in towns such as Elkin, Pilot Mountain, and Mount Airy. Mountain Park Church, constructed in 1914 near Zephyr in Bryan Township, is one of the more elaborate rural churches in the county. Although covered with vinyl siding, its pointed-arch windows, octagonal towers, and pyramidal roof set it apart from the basic front-gable form that dominates Surry County's rural religious architecture.

The surviving frame churches of rural Surry County reflect the conservative tastes and limited resources of the Baptists, Methodists, Quakers, and other Protestant denominations. Rural churches are most often rectangular buildings with steeply-pitched, front-gable roofs. Stylistic detail, when present, is limited to diamond-shaped roof vents and pointed-arched windows, with a few of the more ornate buildings having bell towers and belfries. Over the course of the twentieth century many of the county's older churches were demolished or remodeled with additions, brick veneer and vinyl sidings, vestibules, belfries, and steeples (Phillips: 1987: 23). The photographic book *A History of Surry County Churches*, published in 2003, reveals very few unaltered nineteenth- and twentieth-century churches. Laura Phillips identifies the circa-1914 Beulah Methodist Church near Bottom as one of the county's best-preserved examples of the front-gable church form. The weatherboarded building has double entries and original, 4/4 double-hung-sash windows on each side elevation. Although



constructed by Methodists, the church's simple design is akin to the architecture preferred by Primitive Baptists.

Primitive Baptist churches are austere yet functional buildings reflecting the sect's spiritual simplicity and worldview. These buildings can be found throughout the state without radical regional variations. Traditionally, these churches are frame, gabled meetinghouses, often, although not always, with paired entrances or double-leaf doors in the gable end for men and women. Missing are decorative details, such as shingles, bargeboards and Gothic windows, as well as religious symbolism such as cruciform plans and stained glass. Interiors follow a rectilinear, one-room plan. Antebellum churches often featured galleries to separate blacks and whites. Galleries disappeared around 1870 (York 1993: 8.11). The entrance and preaching platform are opposite each other in the gable ends. On or near the platform may be found a wooden table for foot washing and communion rituals. The pulpit area lacks crosses or religious pictures in keeping with the sect's restrictions on idolatry. Simply constructed pews or benches are arranged facing the preaching platform with an aisle separating the male and female seating areas. Meeting grounds with shelters and tables are also a common feature of Primitive Baptist Churches (York 1993: 8.8-8.9). Cleared areas around the building were used for outdoor services, as well as picnicking, visiting, and yearly homecomings. It is not uncommon for Primitive Baptist churches to be sited near bodies of water used for ritual baptisms.

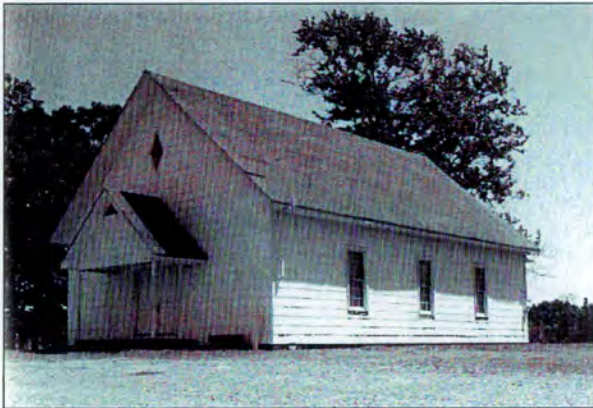
Like Mitchell River, State Road, Franklin, and Zion Hill Primitive Baptist churches have documented historical associations with the Fisher's River Primitive Baptist Association.



*Franklin Primitive Baptist Church. Photo by K. Scott Whitaker, 2002.*

Franklin Primitive Baptist Church, built around 1900 near Beulah in Dobson Township, originally resembled the Primitive Baptist church at State Road with a steeply-pitched front-gable roofline and large, double-hung sash. Recently a large addition has been constructed on the front elevation.





*State Road Primitive Baptist Church. Photo by K. Scott Whitaker, 2002*



*Ararat-Cedar Hill Primitive Baptist Church. Photo by Wilma J. Hiatt, 1999*



*Zion Hill Primitive Baptist Church. Photo by Wilma J. Hiatt, 1999*

Ararat-Cedar Hill Primitive Baptist Church near Pilot Mountain is an example of a circa-1900, frame, front-gable building that has been altered by brick veneer and an enclosed front-façade addition. Zion Hill, located approximately twelve miles north of Mount Airy, appears to have been constructed between the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth century. This rectangular, weatherboarded, front-gable building has a central, double-leaf entry and three 6/6 double-hung-sash windows on each side. A pent shelters the entry.



## Property Description

### **Mitchell River Primitive Baptist Church**

#### **Location**

West side SR 1330 (Haystack Road), .1 mile northeast of Bridge No. 37, Bryan Township, Devotion vicinity, Surry County.

#### **Date of Construction**

Circa 1930

#### **Setting**

The Mitchell River Primitive Baptist Church is located east of the tiny Devotion community in mountainous northwestern Surry County. This scenic and sparsely populated part of the county is isolated by its topography. No buildings are visible within the church's viewshed. The pastures and crop fields surrounding the church are associated with the large agricultural tracts in the Devotion area.

The church sits on a two-acre parcel of bottom land on the west side of SR 1330 (Haystack Road) on the east bank of the Mitchell River. The church faces southeast and sits approximately thirty feet from the road. A narrow deciduous tree buffer follows the river, but most of the parcel is cleared. In keeping with the denomination's spartan building traditions, the site is tidy but devoid of intentional landscaping such as decorative trees and shrubs, walls, paths or delineated parking areas. No outbuildings or shelters are present on the site. No grave markers or burial sites were noted at the site.

#### **Physical Description**

Mitchell River Primitive Baptist Church is a simple, rectangular, frame, one-story, shallow-pitched, front-gable building with a central entry. A rectangular, shed-roofed apse projects from the rear elevation. The church is weatherboarded with vertical corner boards at each corner. The original entry door has been replaced with a paneled wood door with a four-light fanlight. The roof is covered with 5V tin. Rafter tails are exposed in both the main block and the apse. Each side elevation has three original 4/4 double-hung window sash. Foundation piers are concrete-block, and a concrete block chimney flue is on the west elevation. A wooden sign hangs over the entry that reads, "Mitchell River Primitive Baptist Church. Est. 1820. In Memory of the Cockerham and Southard Families..."

The church's interior is typical of Primitive Baptist churches. The open, rectangular room is entered through the central entry in the southeast end.



Across from the entry is the apse and elevated preaching platform with a ceremonial table and lectern. Hanging on the rear wall of the apse are photographic portraits of members of the Southard and Cockerham families. Two rows of pews, separated by an aisle, face the apse. Two types of pews are present: plywood benches and older, slat-back benches that may date from the nineteenth century. The original interior wall material has been removed or covered with faux-wood sheathing. Plain window casings remain. The floors are pine. An acoustical-tile ceiling lowers the original ceiling height and obscures the original surface treatment. A heating stove is located on the southwest wall between the pews and the preaching platform. The building does not appear to have plumbing or electricity.





**Figure 4:** Setting of Mitchell River Primitive Baptist Church, View taken on SR 1330 looking west toward church.



**Figure 5:** Mitchell River Primitive Baptist Church. Front/Southeast elevation.





**Figure 6:** Mitchell River Primitive Baptist Church. Side/northeast elevation.



**Figure 7:** Mitchell River Primitive Baptist Church. Rear/northwest elevation.





**Figure 8:** Mitchell River Primitive Baptist Church. Side/southwest elevation.



**Figure 9:** Mitchell River Primitive Baptist Church. Sign over entry.



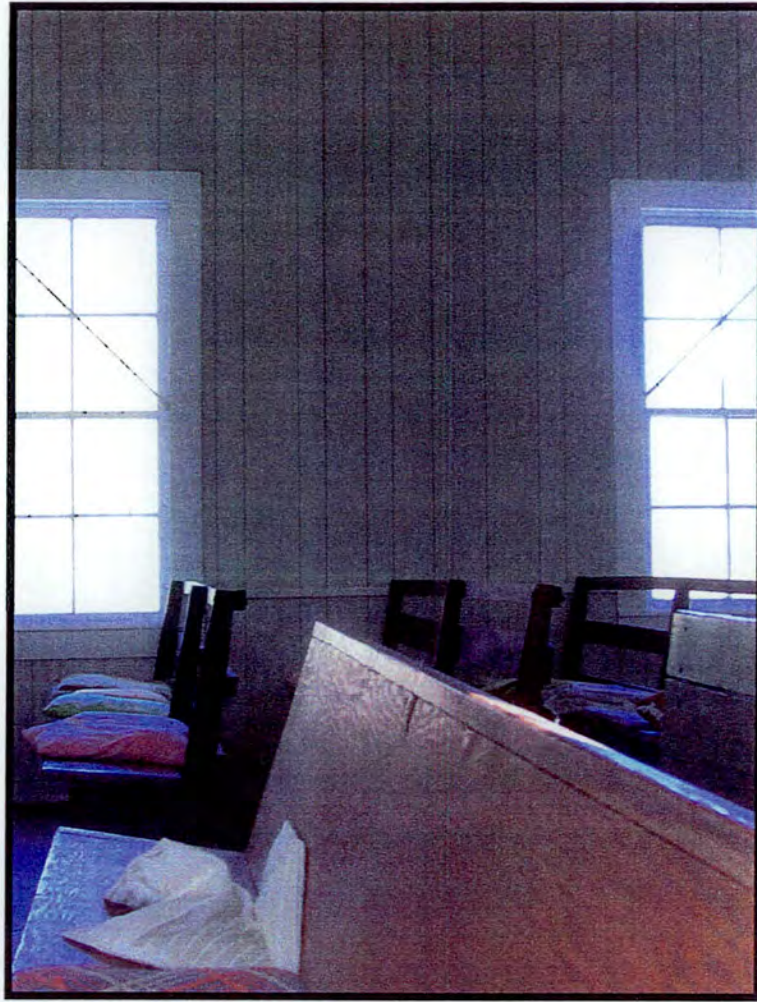


Figure 10: Mitchell River Primitive Baptist Church. Interior.

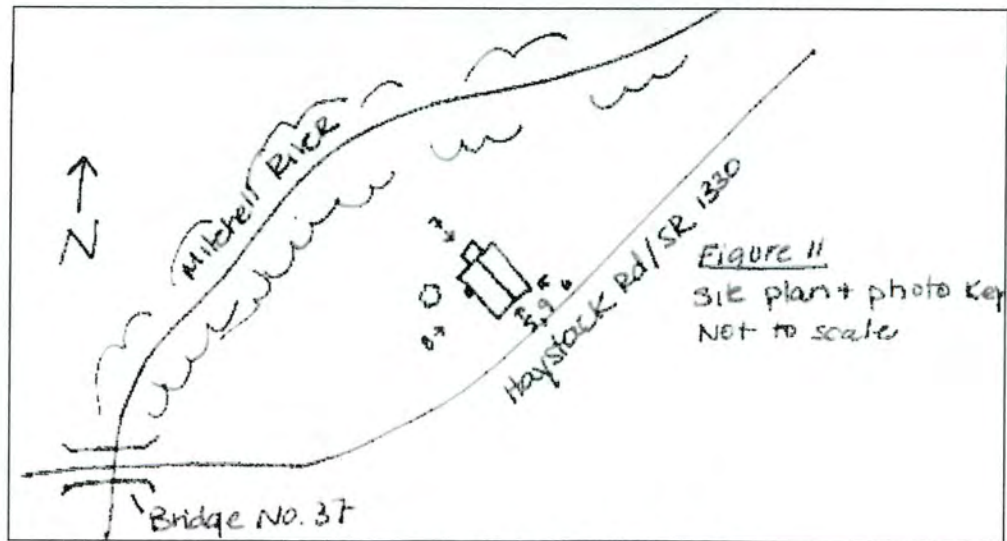


Figure 11: Site Plan and Photo Key



### Evaluation of National Register Eligibility

Mitchell River Primitive Baptist Church is **not eligible for the National Register under Criterion A** because the property is not known to be associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history, such as the history of the Primitive Baptist religion in Surry County. The National Register Criteria state that religious properties are not eligible simply as the place of religious services for a community.

Mitchell River Primitive Baptist Church is **not eligible under Criterion B** because it is not associated with individuals whose activities were demonstrably important within a local, state or national historic context.

The Mitchell River Primitive Baptist Church is **eligible under Criterion C** because it is an intact example of a particular building type: the rural early twentieth century Primitive Baptist church. The church's simple form, interior arrangement, and lack of decorative architectural detail make it a good representative example of the type. Five early twentieth century Primitive Baptist churches are known to survive in Surry County. Three of them have been altered. Mitchell River Primitive Baptist and Zion Hill Primitive Baptist survive intact.

Mitchell River Primitive Baptist Church is **not eligible under Criterion D** because the architectural component is unlikely to yield information in the history of building technology.

### Boundary Description and Justification

Mitchell River Primitive Baptist Church sits on a two-acre parcel on the west side of SR 1330 (Haystack Road). The polygonal parcel is bordered by SR 1330 to the southeast and the lands of Bryant Lynn Thompson to the southwest, northwest and northeast. A thin strip of Thompson's acreage separates the church parcel from the Mitchell River. The church parcel is delineated by the orange line on Figure 3 (page 5), drawn to a scale of 1" = 400'.

The proposed National Register boundary is comprised of the legal two-acre parcel on which the church sits. The legal parcel contains the land conveyed for public use by Gideon and Francis C. Cockerham Bryan in 1876. The parcel maintains the church's rural setting and encompasses the area used for outdoor homecoming celebrations.



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Appendix A  
(NCHPO Memoranda)





*Mulkey*

**North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources**  
**State Historic Preservation Office**  
 David L. S. Brook, Administrator

Michael F. Easley, Governor  
 Lisbeth C. Evans, Secretary  
 Jeffrey J. Crow, Deputy Secretary  
 Office of Archives and History

Division of Historical Resources

August 29, 2003

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mike Summers, Project Manager  
 Bridge Maintenance Unit  
 NCDOT Division of Highways

FROM: David Brook *DLS for David Brook*

SUBJECT: Replacement of Bridge No. 37 on SR 1330 (Haystack Road) over Mitchell River, B-3910, Surry County, ER03-1416

Thank you for your letter of May 6, 2003, concerning the above project.

We have conducted a search of our maps and files and located the following structure of historical or architectural importance within the general area of this project:

Bridge No. 37 on SR 1330

We recommend that a Department of Transportation architectural historian identify and evaluate any structures over fifty years of age within the project area, and report the findings to us.

There are no known recorded archaeological sites within the project boundaries. However, the project area has never been systematically surveyed to determine the location or significance of archaeological resources. The topographic characteristics of the project area indicate a high probability for the presence of Native American archaeological sites.

We recommend that a comprehensive survey be conducted by an experienced archaeologist to identify and evaluate the significance of archaeological remains that may be damaged or destroyed by the proposed project. Potential effects on unknown resources must be assessed prior to the initiation of construction activities.

[www.hpo.dcr.state.nc.us](http://www.hpo.dcr.state.nc.us)

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



North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources  
State Historic Preservation Office

David L. S. Brook, Administrator

Michael F. Easley, Governor  
Lisbeth C. Evans, Secretary  
Jeffrey J. Crow, Deputy Secretary  
Office of Archives and History

Division of Historical Resources

January 5, 2004

MEMORANDUM

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

FROM: David Brook *for David Brook*

SUBJECT: Replace Bridge No. 37 on SR 1330 over Mitchell River, B-3910,  
Surry County, ER03-1416

Thank you for your letter of December 8, 2003, concerning the above 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. 37 on SR 1330 over Mitchell River is a heavily altered or rebuilt pony truss bridge and therefore remains an undistinguished example of its type in the state.

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

Thank you for your cooperation and consideration. If you have questions concerning the above comment, contact Renee Gledhill-Earley, environmental review coordinator, at 919/733-4763. In all future communication concerning this project, please cite the above referenced tracking number.

cc: ✓ Mary Pope Furr, NCDOT

www.hpo.dcr.state.nc.us

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