



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

David L. S. Brook, Administrator

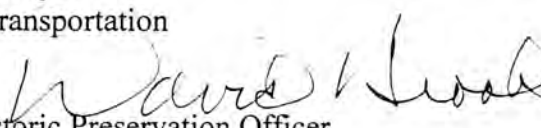
James B. Hunt Jr., Governor
Betty Ray McCain, Secretary

Division of Archives and History
Jeffrey J. Crow, Director

October 11, 1999

MEMORANDUM

TO: William D. Gilmore, P.E., Manager
Project Development and Environmental Analysis Branch
Division of Highways
Department of Transportation

FROM: David Brook 
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

RE: **Replace Bridge No. 328 on SR 1001 over French
Broad River TIP No. B-2583, State No. 8.2860401,
Federal Aid No. BRZ-1001(14), Marshall, Madison
County, ER 00-7566**

Thank you for transmitting the survey report by Mattson, Alexander and Associates, Inc., concerning the above project.

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

Marshall Commercial Historic District. The Marshall Commercial Historic District is considered eligible for listing on the National Register under Criterion A for community Development and Planning as it illustrates the geographical demands that shaped the development of towns throughout the mountain counties. The district is also eligible under Criterion A for Transportation as its single long main street and railroad tracks, both of which run parallel to the river are part of historic transportation routes through the region.

The Marshall Commercial Historic District is also eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C for Architecture as it retains a variety of well preserved building types and architectural styles exemplary of prosperous county seats in western North Carolina during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

(Former) Marshall High School. The (Former) Marshall High School is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A for Education as representative of the school consolidation movement that swept North Carolina and Madison County between the 1920s and World War II.

William D. Gilmore
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The (Former) Marshall High School is also eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C for architecture as a well-preserved example of 1920s school architecture in North Carolina, a simple mix of Tudor and Colonial motifs.

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, please contact Renee Gledhill-Earley, environmental review coordinator, at 919/733-4763.

DB:ldb

cc: B.Church
ACOE

bc: Brown/Alperin file rf

B-2583 · Replace Bridge 328 on SR 1001 over French Broad River
Madison County · Historic Structures Survey Report

HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY REPORT
REPLACE BRIDGE NO. 328 ON SR 1001
OVER FRENCH BROAD RIVER
MARSHALL
MADISON COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
TIP NUMBER B-2583
FEDERAL PROJECT NUMBER BRZ-1001(14)
STATE PROJECT NUMBER 8.2860401

Prepared for
Barbara H. Mulkey Engineering, Inc.
Raleigh, North Carolina

Prepared by
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Charlotte, North Carolina

1 August 1999

Richard L. Mattson

Principal Investigator
Mattson, Alexander and Associates, Inc.

8/1/99
Date

Mary Pope

Historic Architectural Resources
North Carolina Department of Transportation

8.13.99
Date

REPLACE BRIDGE NO. 328 ON SR 1001
OVER FRENCH BROAD RIVER
MARSHALL
MADISON COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
TIP NUMBER B-2583
FEDERAL PROJECT NUMBER BRZ-1001(14)
STATE PROJECT NUMBER 8.2860401

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes to replace Bridge No. 328 on SR 1001 over the French Broad River in the city of Marshall, Madison County (Figure 1). The following alternatives are being evaluated for the project (Figure 2):

Alternative 1 replaces the bridge with a two-lane span on a shifted alignment to the west. During construction, traffic will be maintained on the existing structure and a temporary bridge from SR 1001 to the island. Two one-story commercial buildings sited just north of the railroad tracks, on the west side of SR 1001, will be demolished.

Alternative 2 replaces the bridge with a two-lane span on a shifted alignment to the east. During construction, traffic will be maintained on the existing structure. The sheriff's office building and the pump station sited just north of the tracks, on the east side of SR 1001, will be demolished.

Alternative 3 replaces the bridge with two structures, a two-lane structure on a shifted alignment to the west and a two-lane span from SR 1001 to the island. During construction, traffic will be maintained on the existing structures. Two one-story commercial buildings sited just north of the railroad tracks, on the west side of SR 1001, will be demolished.

Alternative 4 replaces the bridge with two structures, a two-lane structure on a shifted alignment to the west and a two-lane span from the bridge to the island. During construction, traffic will be maintained on the existing structures. Two one-story commercial buildings sited just north of the railroad tracks, on the west side of SR 1001, will be demolished.

Purpose of Survey and Report

This survey was conducted and the report prepared in order to identify historical architectural resources located within the area of potential effects (APE) as part of the environmental studies conducted 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 Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) 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 potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation be given a reasonable opportunity to comment on such undertakings.

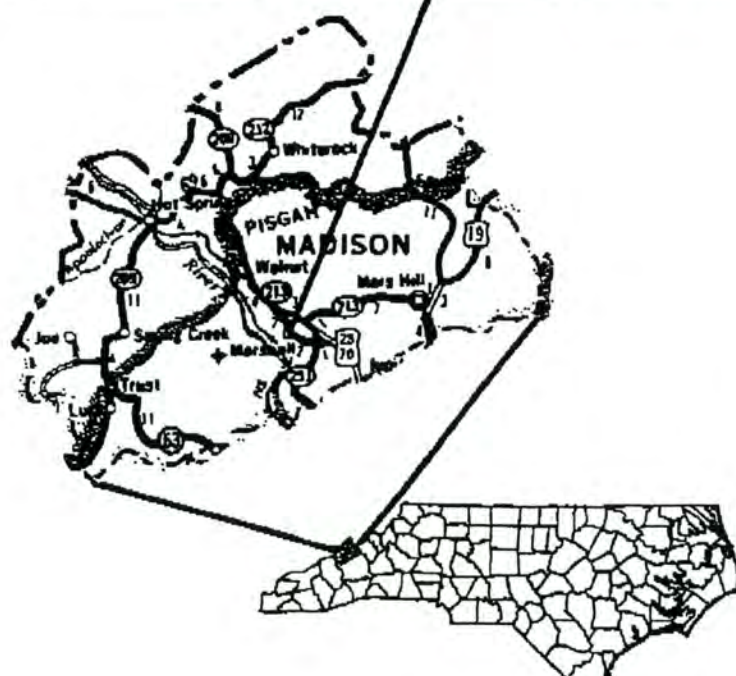
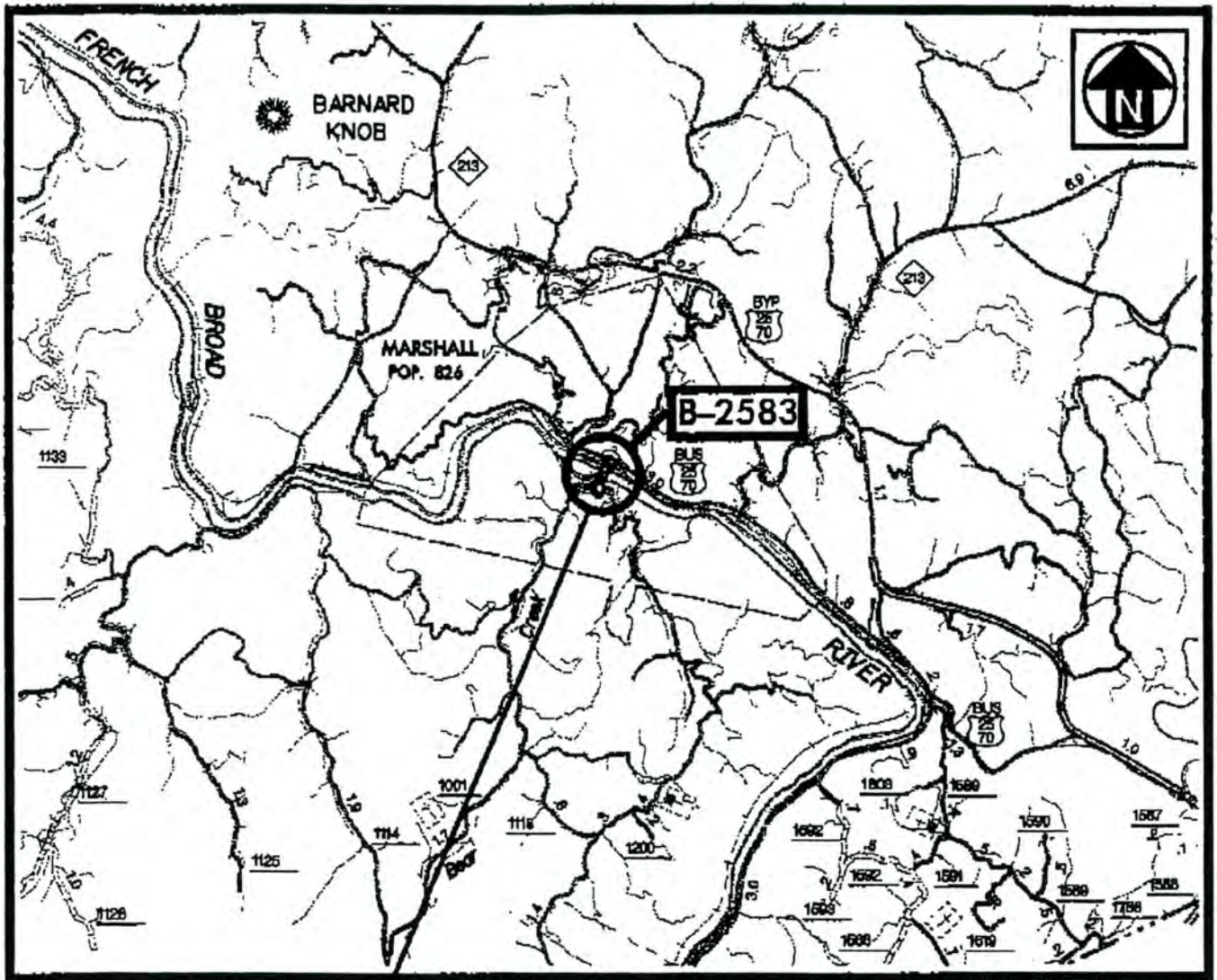


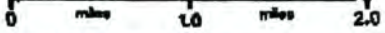
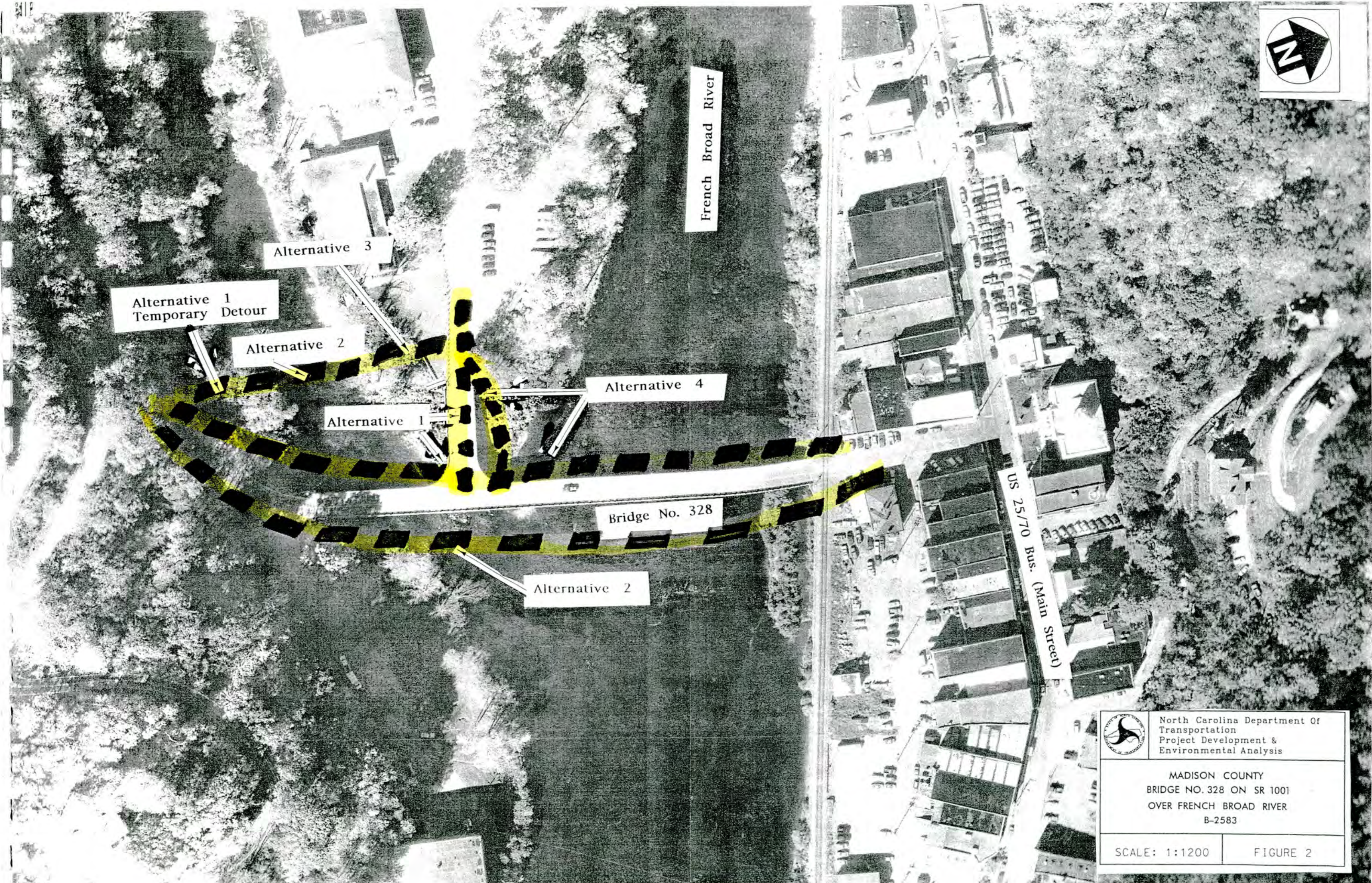


Figure 1

	North Carolina Department Of Transportation Planning & Environmental Branch	
	MADISON COUNTY BRIDGE NO. 328 ON SR 1001 OVER FRENCH BROAD RIVER B-2583	
		





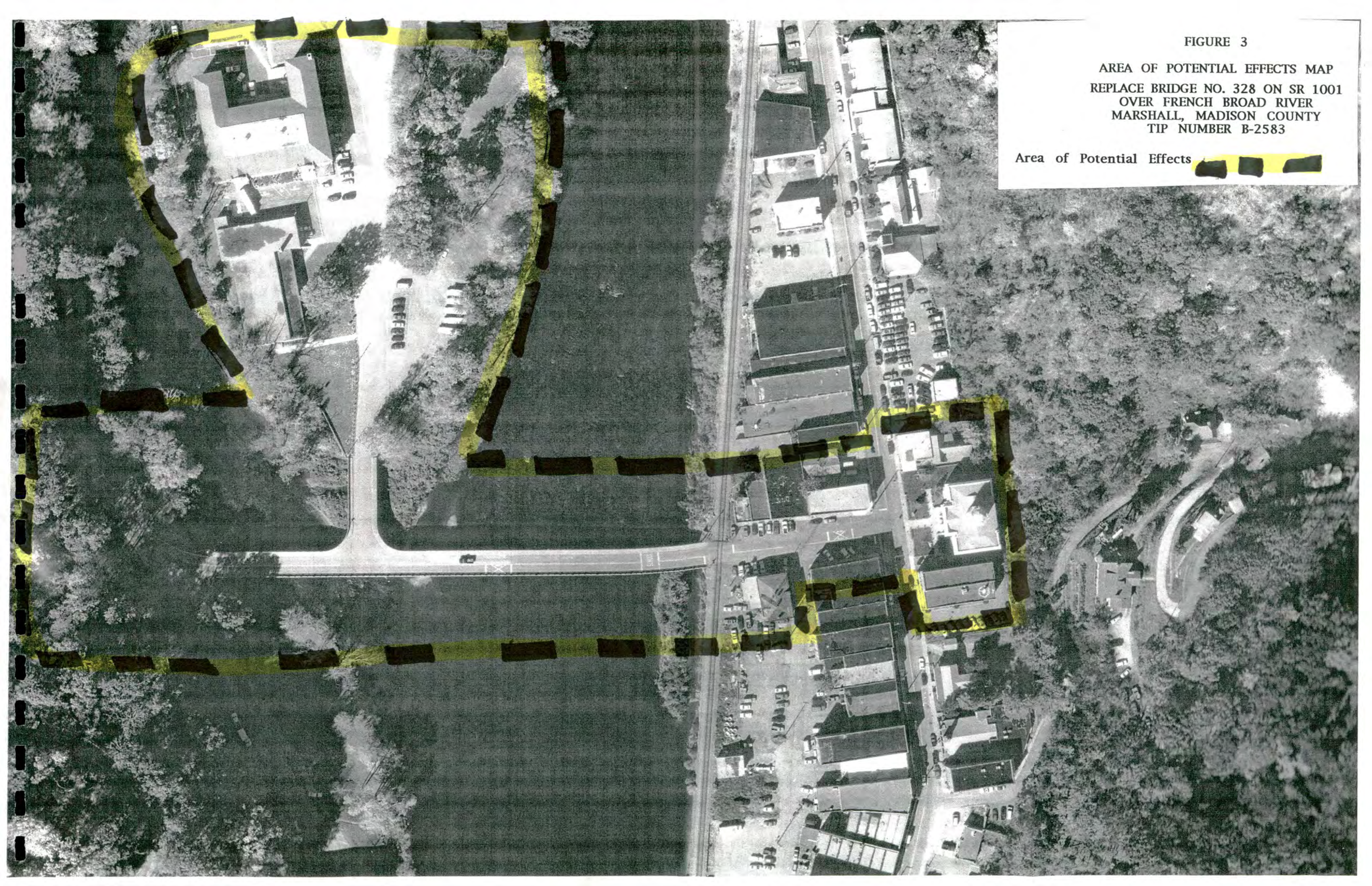
	North Carolina Department Of Transportation Project Development & Environmental Analysis
	MADISON COUNTY BRIDGE NO. 328 ON SR 1001 OVER FRENCH BROAD RIVER B-2583
SCALE: 1:1200	FIGURE 2

FIGURE 3

AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS MAP
REPLACE BRIDGE NO. 328 ON SR 1001
OVER FRENCH BROAD RIVER
MARSHALL, MADISON COUNTY
TIP NUMBER B-2583

Area of Potential Effects 



Methodology

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

The "Final Identification and Evaluation" 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 of Historic Places criteria.

The methodology consisted of background research into the historical and architectural development of the area and a field survey of the APE. The field survey was conducted in April 1999, by automobile as well as on foot, to delineate the APE and to identify all properties within this area which were built prior to 1950. The boundaries of the APE are shown on an aerial map of the study area (Figure 3). The APE is defined by modern construction, topographical features, and sight lines, and one hundred percent of this area was surveyed.

Local residents, Doug Mackenzie and Bruce Sprinkle, provided useful information on the history of Marshall. Additional background material was provided by Clay Griffith, Head, Western Office of the State Historic Preservation Office (Asheville). The recent publication, *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina* (Bishir et al. 1999) was an excellent source of information on the architectural development of Madison County and the region.

Although the historic architecture of Marshall has not been comprehensively surveyed, one property within the APE, the 1907 Madison County Courthouse (NR 1979) is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, Marshall's downtown commercial area is on the North Carolina National Register Study List as a proposed historic district (SL 1985). The Study List application does not include specific boundaries for this recommended historic district.

Summary Findings of the Survey

The project area follows SR 1001 across Bridge No. 328 over the French Broad River in Marshall. On the north side of the river, the project begins near the middle of Bridge Street, a block-long street of early-twentieth-century, brick commercial and civic buildings that terminates at the Madison County Courthouse (NR 1979) on Main Street. In dramatic fashion, the county courthouse faces south towards Bridge Street and across Bridge No. 328. Located at the north end of the APE, the courthouse is sited at the base of the wooded mountainside that flanks the north side of Main Street and the river. While this rugged topography has restricted development north of Main Street, dwellings sited on narrow, twisting roads dot the steep terrain above the business district and the river. Among these houses is the rock-faced James H. White House (NR 1981), which stands outside the APE directly behind (and above) the courthouse.

On the south side of the project area, south of the French Broad River, the APE terminates in wooded cliffs along the river. Bridge No. 328 passes just east of Blennerhassett Island, and is connected to the island by a concrete spur (see Figure 3). Blennerhassett Island contains the (Former) Marshall High School (1925) and a modern pumping station. The school complex, which includes a 1960s classroom building sited in front of the original 1925 facility, is located within the APE and is recommended as eligible for the National Register.

On the north side of the project area, north of the French Broad River, the APE encompasses the buildings along Bridge Street and terminates at the Madison County Courthouse (NR 1979). All of these buildings are located within a proposed Marshall Commercial Historic District. Concentrated primarily along Main Street, this district retains a significant collection of buildings dating primarily from the early to mid twentieth century. The area is characterized by contiguous blocks of substantially intact two- and three-story buildings embellished with simple classical and Italianate elements. Notable among the Main Street commercial architecture are the three-story Roberts Building (1922) and the 1947 stone-veneered Rock Cafe (SL 1997). The Bridge Street buildings include the sheriff's department/jail (east side) and the three commercial buildings on the west side. The sheriff's department/jail and the two southernmost commercial buildings on the west side of Bridge Street are considered contributing resources to the historic district. The one non-contributing building on Bridge Street is the two-story warehouse located just north of the two contributing resources on the west side. The architectural integrity of this 1920s masonry structure has been compromised by a 1960s renovation that included a replacement, brick front facade (see Figures 3 and 5).

Located outside the proposed Marshall Commercial Historic District, Bridge No. 328 is a fourteen-span, steel, deck-girder structure with reinforced concrete, post-and-lintel piers, and reinforced concrete abutments and wingwalls. Built in 1957, Bridge No. 328 is not considered eligible for the National Register under any criteria.

To the east of Bridge No. 328, outside the APE, stands the principal surviving building associated with the Capitola Manufacturing Company (a textile mill complex established in the early twentieth century) and the Capitola dam, both of which are located on the south side of the river. The mill and the dam, as well as an adjacent late-nineteenth-century grist mill (no longer extant) were previously determined eligible for the National Register as part of the 1981 environmental review process for the French Broad Electric Membership Corporation (EMC) Capitola Dam Rehabilitation Project (Sirrine 1981). This project resulted in the renovation of the dam and the construction of a new power plant to supply electricity to Marshall and the surrounding area.

Properties Listed on the National Register

Madison County Courthouse (1979)

Properties Listed on the North Carolina State Study List

Rock Cafe (1997)

Marshall Commercial Historic District (1985)

(encompassing the Madison County Courthouse and the Rock Cafe)

Properties Evaluated and Considered Eligible for the National Register

Marshall Commercial Historic District

(Former) Marshall High School

Historic Context and Background Information

In its simple yet substantial architecture and dramatic mountainous setting alongside the French Broad River, the town of Marshall in Madison County reflects the great geographical demands and related isolation that influenced the development of the state's mountain counties into the twentieth century. Located north of Asheville at the Tennessee border, Madison County was formed from parts of Buncombe and Yancey counties in 1851. In 1855, Marshall was designated the county seat, and two years later a brick courthouse and jail arose on Main Street. The town was sited along the Buncombe Turnpike, completed in 1828 between Greenville, South Carolina, and Greeneville, Tennessee. This important north-south road carried planters from the coastal low country into the Blue Ridge Mountains, where they developed summer colonies away from the oppressive heat of the lowlands and visited the thermal waters at Hot Springs in western Madison County. In its heyday before the Civil War, the Patton Hotel at Hot Springs hosted 600 guests at a time, and the mountain community blossomed as one of the state's earliest resorts (Sharpe 1961: 1446-1447, 1450-1452; Bishir et al. 1999: 247).

The Buncombe Turnpike also sparked commerce and the beginnings of a cash-crop economy in the region. Although subsistence farming prevailed locally throughout the nineteenth century, the pike road was a major route for drovers herding livestock from Tennessee to coastal markets. Following the French Broad River through the center of the county, the road generated scores of small drovers' stands offering lodging for herders and stock pens for animals. (The site of Marshall had been a drovers' stand named Lapland.) Local farmers raised feed for sale at these stands, as well as shipped their own livestock and surplus produce via the turnpike to destinations in the lowland South. Consequently, Marshall and Madison County grew slowly but steadily during the antebellum decades, and by the eve of the Civil War Marshall contained several hundred residents and the population of the county surpassed 5,600 (including 213 slaves) (Sharpe 1961: 1446-1447; Wellman 1973: 127; *Madison County Heritage* 1994: 15; Bishir et al. 1999: 247).

During the Civil War, Madison County was the scene of especially intense conflicts between Confederate and Union sympathizers. Because of the county's proximity to east Tennessee, a stronghold of Union support, and its rugged topography, which afforded hideouts for deserters and draft dodgers, internal tensions and periodic bloody outbreaks of violence marked the war years. Most notorious was the 1863 killing of civilians by Confederate troops at Shelton Laurel (Sharpe 1961: 1450-1451; Bishir et al. 1999: 247).

After the war, the coming of the railroad boosted Madison County's economic recovery. In 1882, the Western North Carolina Railroad was completed from Asheville to the Tennessee state line at Paint Rock. The tracks bisected the county, following the course of the Buncombe Turnpike through the county seat of Marshall and the narrow gorge of the French Broad River. By the end of the nineteenth century, commercial timber and mining concerns launched their initial operations in the county. By the 1890s, Marshall contained three saw mills, a grist mill, the New England Southern Timber and Land Company, and two mining businesses (Branson 1896: 395).

Better transportation also spurred agriculture. Farmers began cultivating bright-leaf tobacco as an important cash crop while raising small grains, orchard crops, and livestock for sale as well as subsistence. In the rolling hills of southeastern Madison County, a section of the county suitable for broad pastures and cultivated fields, medium-sized farmsteads took shape. In the rugged northern and western sections, smaller farms occupied the mountainsides and narrow gaps. Typical of the insulated, rural mountain culture of western North Carolina, family and church ties bonded farmers in the mountain gaps and hollows, and conservative beliefs and practices held sway well into the twentieth century (Sharpe 1961: 1448, 1450; Bishir et al. 1999: 251-254).

With the arrival of rail transportation a string of communities appeared or expanded along the rail line, including Barnard, Stackhouse, Hot Springs, and Paint Rock. By the 1890s, each included several churches and track-side general stores (Branson 1896: 394-395). The popularity of Hot Springs as a resort destination increased with rail travel. Following the 1884 fire that destroyed the Patton Hotel, the 200-room Mountain Park Hotel rose to take its place. By the early twentieth century, the resort community also held a collection of summer residences, dwellings for local merchants and workers, and a small commercial core. Presbyterian missionaries were particularly active in the county's remote, mountainous reaches around Hot Springs, creating schools, churches, and a hospital to address local needs. In the 1890s, Presbyterian missionaries founded the Dorland Institute for girls (later the Dorland-Bell School) at Hot Springs (Sharpe 1961: 1450; Bishir et al. 1999: 254-255).

In southeastern Madison County, the small town of Mars Hill developed around Mars Hill College. Founded in 1856, the Baptist school and surrounding community took shape primarily in the early twentieth century during the presidency of Robert Lee Moore. As successful building campaigns expanded the campus, the town evolved apace. By the 1920s, frame and brick dwellings, including some stylish bungalows, lined streets around the town's small commercial district (Sharpe 1961: 1454-1456; Bishir et al. 1999: 249-250).

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Marshall prospered as the county's administrative seat and center for commercial and industrial endeavors oriented to the river and railroad. By the turn of the century, the population of Marshall (including Marshall Township) reached roughly 700, and stores, churches, and civic buildings filled the commercial district. In 1907, the present county courthouse, a grand Neo-Classical Revival building crowned by a cupola, arose on Main Street. By 1910, the Capitola Manufacturing Company, a textile mill, was in full operation on the south bank of the French Broad River, opposite the rail line and business district on the north bank. A steel truss bridge spanning the river connected the mill to the rail line. Although the devastating flood of July 1916 caused severe damage to Main Street, Marshall recovered and continued to grow during the ensuing years. A number of existing brick, rock, and concrete-block buildings on Main Street date from the town's rebuilding efforts in the 1920s, and by the end of the decade Marshall's population had climbed to 1,800 (Wellman 1973: 127; Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps 1916, 1924, 1933).

The location of the town in the river gorge tended to confine development to the narrow strip of land between the waterway and the flanking mountainside

on the north bank. Here, Main Street and several adjoining blocks leading to the railroad tracks and the river emerged. Over time, commercial properties replaced most of the earlier dwellings on Main Street and residential construction occurred primarily along several narrow, twisting lanes that climb the steep hillside. Geographical constraints also influenced the location of the high school. When the consolidated high school was built in the mid-1920s, the best available site was Blennerhassett Island in the French Broad River, which was linked to downtown Marshall by a concrete bridge (Branson 1896: 395; Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps 1916, 1924, 1933; Wellman 1973: 124-127).

Marshall and Madison County progressed slowly during the middle and late decades of the twentieth century. Improved roads and bridges facilitated trade and travel, and the rise of burley tobacco cultivation in the 1920s and 1930s gave farmers a valuable new cash crop. However, the county's remote location and mountainous terrain continued to hinder growth. While the construction of homes for summer visitors and retirees has transformed portions of the county in recent decades, large sections remain rural and sparsely settled. For example, in the especially pristine Paint Fork area of southeastern Madison County, farmsteads with bungalow farmhouses and vented frame and log barns still reflect the rise of air-cured burley tobacco cultivation after World War I (Bishir et al. 1999: 247, 251). The county seat of Marshall also survives well-preserved. Although the town has suffered from economic decline in recent decades, with a concomitant drop in population (approximately 800 residents today), Marshall retains a spectacular riverside setting and a remarkably intact collection of civic, commercial, domestic, and industrial architecture.

Property Inventory and Evaluations

Marshall Commercial Historic District

North side French Broad River, primarily along Main Street and Bridge Street, Marshall, Madison County

Period of Construction

Late Nineteenth Century to Mid-Twentieth Century

Description (Plates 1-12) (Figures 4-6)

The Marshall Commercial Historic District occupies a dramatic setting in the narrow gorge of the French Broad River in mountainous Madison County. The heart of the district is the single long main street that runs through the gorge, flanked by the river and the railroad tracks on one side and by the mountainside on the other. This street (Main Street) and several short adjoining blocks, which connect Main Street to the tracks and the river, constitute the heart of the historic district. Located within the APE, the centerpiece of this district is the 1907 Marshall County Courthouse (NR 1979). Designed by the Asheville architectural firm of Richard Sharpe Smith, supervising architect of Biltmore, the handsome, brick, Neo-Classical Revival building occupies a small green near the center of Main Street, facing south towards Bridge Street and across the French Broad River bridge (Bridge No. 328). Just north of the bridge within the APE, the two-story, brick Madison County sheriff's department/jail (1905) stands on the east side of Bridge Street. Across the street are two intact one-story, brick, commercial buildings (1920s) with simple brick detailing. Just north of these storefronts is a 1920s two-story building with cast stone side and rear elevations and a replacement brick facade facing Bridge Street. This building is the only non-contributing commercial structure within the APE (see Plate 6) (Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 1924; Sprinkle Interview 1999).

Along Main Street, the majority of buildings are two- and three-story commercial structures of red brick, river rock, or cast stone. Many date from the 1920s and the rebuilding of Marshall after the 1916 flood, but some were built in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The south side of Main Street, east of the courthouse, features a contiguous row of brick facades with simple classical and Italianate elements typical of the commercial district. Just east of the courthouse on the north side of Main, the 1922 Roberts Building (within the APE) is perhaps the town's most impressive commercial building. The red-brick, Neo-Classical Revival exterior includes cast stone trim and round arches along the first story of the main facade and the west elevation facing the courthouse. East of the Roberts Building is the ca. 1854 Allen-McElroy House, Marshall's oldest building. The traditional two-story, weatherboard dwelling features a two-tier front porch and simple Greek Revival elements (Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 1924; Bishir 1999: 248).

The Marshall Depot (SL 1987) and Teague Milling Company are key structures at the east end of the historic district. Sited on the south side of Main Street near the tracks, the early-twentieth-century railroad depot is a one-story, frame, rectangular building capped by a long gable roof with deep eaves. Across the street, the three-story feed mill, erected in the 1920s, has a cast-stone exterior. The eastern boundary of the historic district is clearly defined

by vacant land east of the depot and feed mill (Sanborn Fire Insurance Map 1924).

On the west side of the historic district on Main Street (west of Bridge Street), the 1947 Rock Cafe (SL 1997) occupies the lot adjacent to the courthouse within the APE. The well-preserved, one-story, square building features a river-rock facade. West of the cafe on the north side of Main Street stands the red-brick, Gothic Revival Marshall United Methodist Church (1910s). Brick, river-rock, and cast-stone buildings line the south side of Main Street west of Bridge Street. Of note is the early-twentieth-century, two-story brick commercial building with a clipped front facade at the corner of Main and Bridge streets within the APE. A 1920s, rock-faced fire station occupies in the middle of the long block. The principal intrusions are parking lots that fill several adjoining parcels along both sides of Main Street. Modern construction--including a 1980s, stone-veneered apartment building west of the Marshall United Methodist Church--denotes the west boundary of the historic district.

Historical Background

Located in far western North Carolina at the Tennessee border, mountainous Madison County was formed from parts of Buncombe and Yancey counties in 1851. In 1855, the General Assembly designated Marshall the county seat. Sited in a narrow gorge along the French Broad River and the Buncombe Turnpike, Marshall developed slowly as the county's administrative seat and center for social, religious, political, and commercial pursuits. By the eve of the Civil War, the town included a brick courthouse and a collection of frame stores and dwellings (Sharpe 1961: 1446-1447, 1450-1452; Bishir et al. 1999: 247-248; Sprinkle Interview 1999).

The arrival of the Western North Carolina Railroad in 1882 spurred the development of Marshall and the county. Bisecting the county, the rail line followed the Buncombe Turnpike along the north bank of the river through Marshall. By the end of the nineteenth century, the town (including Marshall Township) contained approximately 700 residents, and brick and frame commercial buildings, houses, and churches commingled along Main Street. The 1896 *Branson's North Carolina Business Directory* listed twenty-two general stores in Marshall, one jeweler, a drugstore, and a flour mill on the south bank of the river, opposite downtown. The town also held three saw mills, including a steam-powered mill, and offices for three attorneys, the New England Southern Timber and Land Company, and two mining businesses. The township boasted thirteen Methodist and Baptist churches (Branson 1896: 395; Wellman 1973: 127).

Marshall's progress continued through the early decades of the twentieth century. In the early 1900s, a coterie of local businessmen, among them W. J. McLendon, Charles B. Mashburn, and newspaper editor J. R. Swann, established the Capitola Manufacturing Company, a cotton mill, on the south bank of the French Broad River. The plant remained in operation into the 1940s, and the building is currently used as a warehouse. The construction of an adjacent power plant (now replaced by a modern facility) and a low concrete dam (which survives as part of a later dam) provided electricity to the mill and town. In 1903, James H. White, a tobacco dealer, newspaper publisher, banker, and clerk of court, commissioned noted Asheville architect

Richard Sharpe Smith to design his Marshall home. Sited just behind and above the courthouse, in the steep hillside overlooking the river, the stylish, two-story dwelling reflected White's elevated status as one of Marshall's elite. In 1907, Smith's architectural firm revisited the town to design the handsome, Neo-Classical Revival Madison County Courthouse on Main Street (N.C. Division of Archives and History, Files; Bishir 1999: 248-249; Sprinkle Interview 1999).

The devastating flood of July 1916 caused extensive damage to the commercial district and other riverside areas in Marshall. The 1916 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Marshall, completed just a few months after the flood, noted a number of "badly damaged" properties along the south side of Main Street near the water. However, the community recovered and by the end of the 1920s boasted a population of 1,800. Masonry commercial buildings filled downtown, the contiguous rows of storefronts occasionally interrupted by free-standing brick churches, weatherboard dwellings and tourist homes, and canopied filling stations. In 1922, the Neo-Classical Revival Robert's Building, Marshall's most impressive commercial structure, arose next to the courthouse (Wellman 1973: 127; Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps 1916, 1924, 1933).

During the 1920s, improved roads and the increased use of automobiles influenced development in a variety of ways. Not only tourist homes and filling stations but also several sizable cast-stone auto repair shops appeared downtown. Highways brought more summer visitors to the mountains, and the James H. White House was converted to an inn named the Balsam. Better roads also brought on the consolidation of public schools, and the spacious, red-brick Marshall High School was constructed on Blennerhassett Island in 1925 (Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps 1924, 1933; Wellman 1973: 135; Sprinkle Interview 1999).

After the Second World War, greater mobility and the draw of larger cities (notably Asheville to the south) for both consumer goods and jobs began to erode Marshall's status in the urban hierarchy. Its many general stores, dependent upon the county's insular farming communities for survival, were eclipsed by larger centralized enterprises with broader market areas. The population of Marshall declined and today stands at approximately 800. However, in recent years the county's mountain scenery has attracted not only more and more summer visitors but also retirees seeking permanent homes. While the number of traditional farming households has dropped, the population of Madison County is once again on the rise. Located at the heart of the county, in a dramatic setting along the French Broad River, Marshall remains one of the region's best-preserved and most evocative small towns.

Evaluation of Eligibility

The recommended Marshall Commercial Historic District is considered eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for community development and planning, and transportation, and Criterion C for architecture. In its spectacular and historic setting and range of well-preserved architectural resources, Marshall ranks among the most significant small towns in the region. Confined to the narrow gorge of the French Broad River, the historic district clearly illustrates the geographical demands that shaped the development of towns throughout the mountain counties. The town's single long main street and railroad tracks that run parallel to the river are part of

historic transportation routes through the rugged Blue Ridge terrain. Marshall's development along the Buncombe Turnpike and Western North Carolina Railroad remain vividly expressed.

The Marshall Commercial Historic District retains a variety of well-preserved building types and architectural styles exemplary of prosperous county seats in western North Carolina during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Noted Asheville architect Richard Sharpe Smith designed the grand Madison County Courthouse. Among the other notable buildings are the red-brick Roberts Building, the stone-veneered Rock Cafe, the frame Marshall Depot, and the cast-stone Teague Milling Company. The physical integrity of the district is enhanced by its striking setting.

The historic district is not considered eligible under any other criterion. The district is not eligible under Criterion B because the property is not associated with individuals whose activities were demonstrably important within a local, state, or national historic context. The district is also not considered eligible under Criterion D because the architectural components are not likely to yield information important in the history of building technology.

Boundaries

The proposed National Register boundaries are depicted in Figure 6. These boundaries encompass the greatest concentration of historic commercial resources on the north side of the French Broad River, primarily along Main Street. The proposed north border follows the rear property lines of the buildings along the north side of Main Street. The south border is clearly defined by the French Broad River. On the east side, the historic district begins east of the depot, while on the west side, the border is drawn to exclude modern construction along the west end of Main Street.

**(Former) Marshall High School
Blennerhassett Island
Marshall, Madison County**

Date of Construction

1925

Description (Plates 13-19)(Figures 5-6)

Located on Blennerhassett Island in the French Broad River, the (Former) Marshall High School (within the APE) was constructed in 1925. Displaying a restrained blend of Tudor Revival and Colonial Revival elements, the well-preserved, two-story, red-brick, hip-roofed building has parapeted entrance bays on the front facade and bands of original six-over-six windows across each of the elevations. The interior includes original hardwood floors, wainscoting, and paneled doors with transoms. The large auditorium remains intact.

The school grounds, which constitute most of the island, include a 1960s classroom building to the east of the original school, a 1950s gymnasium to the southwest, and ball fields to the west. A modern pumping station stands at the west end of the island. A spur connects the island and the school to Bridge No. 328 from downtown. The school currently serves the elementary grades.

Evaluation of Eligibility

The (Former) Marshall High School is considered eligible for the National Register under Criterion A for education and Criterion C for architecture. Erected in 1925, the sizable facility clearly represents the school consolidation movement that swept North Carolina and Madison County between the 1920s and World War II. The building replaced a smaller, early-twentieth-century, rock-faced school (no longer extant) that stood on the steep hillside behind Main Street. Under Criterion C, the (Former) Marshall High School is a fine and well-preserved example of 1920s school architecture in North Carolina. The simple mix of Tudor and Colonial motifs, the large banks of windows to emit natural light into the classrooms, and the spacious, multi-purpose auditorium exemplify schools erected in the state's small towns during the early consolidation period. Although the 1960s classroom building, the 1950s gymnasium, and the modern pumping station on the island are all non-contributing resources, they do not detract significantly from the property's historical and architectural importance.

The school's significance is enhanced by its striking island setting. In contrast to the rugged, hillside tract occupied by the earlier schoolhouse, Blennerhassett Island in the French Broad River provided an expanse of much-needed level space for the larger school and the surrounding playground. The building has suffered periodically from flooding but it remains in good condition.

The (Former) Marshall High School is not considered eligible under any other criterion. The property 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 school is also not considered eligible under Criterion D because the architectural components

are not likely to yield information important in the history of building technology.

Boundaries

The proposed National Register boundaries for the (Former) Marshall High School are depicted in Figure 6. These boundaries encompass Blennerhassett Island, which is the current school tract and provides an unusual and evocative setting for this historic resource.



Plate 1. Marshall Commercial Historic District, Looking Northeast towards the Bridge and Downtown.



Plate 2. Marshall Commercial Historic District, Looking North towards the Courthouse.



Plate 3. Marshall Commercial Historic District, Looking North towards the Courthouse.



Plate 4. Marshall Commercial Historic District, Looking Northeast towards the Sheriff's Department/Jail.



Plate 5. Marshall Commercial Historic District, Looking South towards the Sheriff's Department/Jail.



Plate 6. Marshall Commercial Historic District, Looking Northwest along Bridge Street, West Side.



Plate 7. Marshall Commercial Historic District, Looking East towards the Roberts Building and the Allen-McElroy House.



Plate 8. Marshall Commercial Historic District, Looking North towards the Rock Cafe.



Plate 9. Marshall Commercial Historic District, Looking West along Main Street (South Side), West of Bridge Street.



Plate 10. Marshall Commercial Historic District, West End, Looking East along Main Street towards Downtown.



Plate 11. Marshall Commercial Historic District, Looking East along Railroad Tracks.



Plate 12. Marshall Commercial Historic District, Depot and Teague Milling Company Building at the East End of the District.



Plate 13. (Former) Marshall High School on Blennerhassett Island, Looking West.



Plate 14. (Former) Marshall High School, 1960s Classroom Building (Foreground) and 1925 Marshall High School (Background), Looking West from Bridge.



Plate 15. (Former) Marshall High School, Front Facade.



Plate 16. (Former) Marshall High School, Rear Elevation.



Plate 17. (Former) Marshall High School, Main Building and 1950s Gymnasium, Looking South.

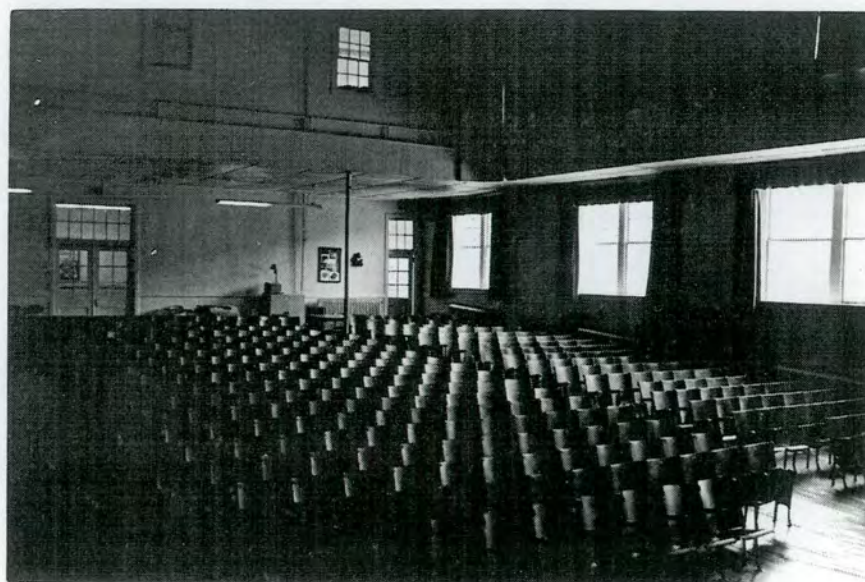


Plate 18. (Former) Marshall High School, Auditorium.



Plate 19. (Former) Marshall High School, Ball Fields and Pumping Station, Looking West.

Figure 4

Madison County Courthouse and Bridge Street
Marshall Historic District

(Sanborn Insurance Map, Marshall, 1933)

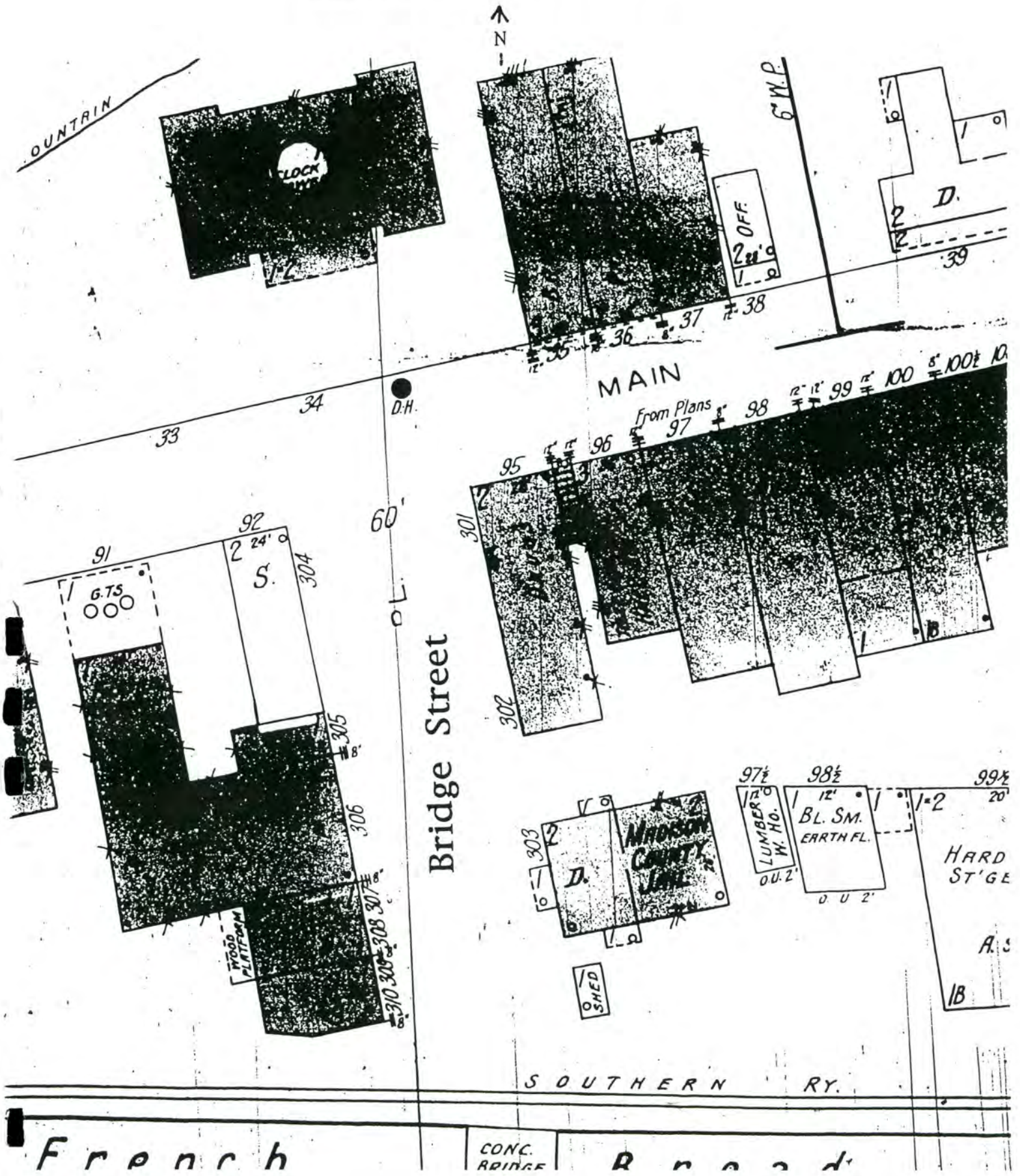
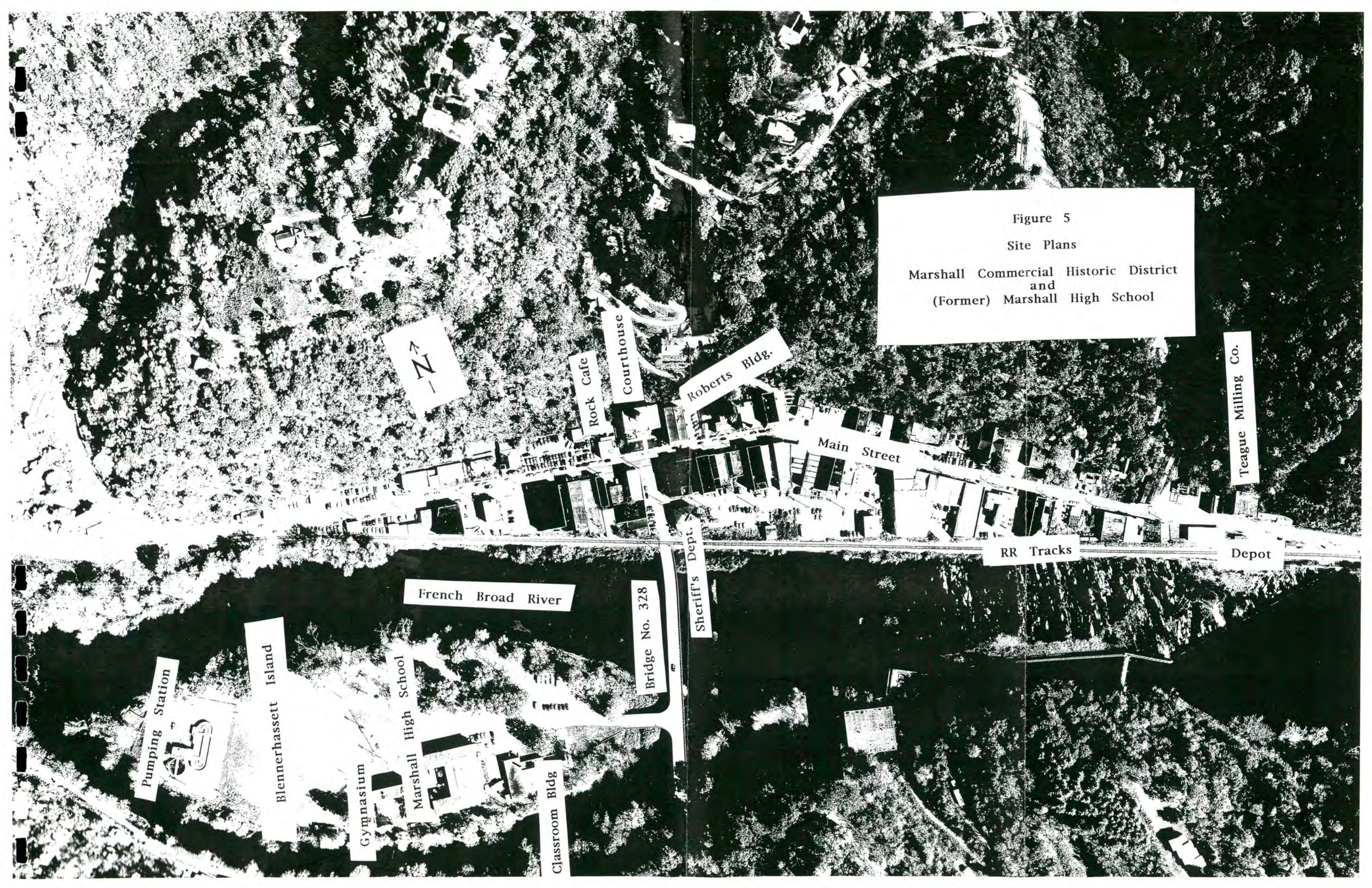


Figure 5
Site Plans
Marshall Commercial Historic District
and
(Former) Marshall High School



N

Rock Cafe
Courthouse

Roberts Bldg.

Main Street

Teague Milling Co.

RR Tracks

Depot

French Broad River

Bridge No. 328

Sheriff's Dept.

Pumping Station

Blennerhassett Island

Gymnasium

Marshall High School

Classroom Bldg

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