

56-901



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name Prince, Elizabeth Wright, House

other names/site number Prince Boarding House

2. Location

street & number 524 North Fourth Street N/A not for publication

city or town Highlands N/A vicinity

state North Carolina code NC county Macon code 113 zip code 28741

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national statewide local

Kevin Cherry
Signature of certifying official/Title

2/20/2017
Date

North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain:)

Jim Walker
Signature of the Keeper

4-17-2017
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box.)

- building(s)
- district
- Site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	district
0	0	site
0	0	structure
0	0	object
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/hotel

COMMERCE/restaurant

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL/civic

RECREATION AND CULTURE/museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: stone

walls: weatherboard

roof: metal

other: stone, brick

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

SUMMARY PARAGRAPH

Macon County is located in southwestern North Carolina. The town of Highlands in southeastern Macon County is situated on the southernmost escarpment of the Blue Ridge Mountains at an altitude of 4,000 feet. The Elizabeth Wright Prince House is located at 524 North Fourth Street, on the west side of the street. The property borders an open municipal Recreation Park including tennis courts, a swimming pool, and Civic Center to the immediate north. Continuing north is the Highlands North Historic District (NR, 2011). Across Fourth Street to the east is a modern attorney's office, a thrift store, and a historic forested residential neighborhood. To the south are modern residences along a short street, Mill Creek Lane. West of the property stands a large black locust at the edge of a woodland of red maples, white pines, and yellow birches traversed by the Highlands Plateau Greenway Trail within the Recreation Park. The house is a one and one-half story, seven-room, multi-gabled, frame house with L-plan massing, weatherboard siding, and simple exterior woodworking. It was built as a single-family residence in 1877 and enlarged as a boarding house in 1935.

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The Elizabeth Wright Prince House occupies approximately a third of an acre on the west side of Fourth Street (U.S. 64), two-tenths of a mile north of the business area of the town. The nominated acreage is L-shaped and excludes the adjacent Highlands Historical Museum and Archives building to the south. The museum building is within the same tax parcel. It is a former library building, which was moved to the property in 2002. A cultivated lawn immediately surrounds the Prince House and a garden north of the house faces a low dry-laid stone wall. The house is approached from the street by a short, steep, paved drive to a paved seven-car parking area directly in front of the house and set behind an enormous maple tree on a slope.

Exterior

The Prince House fronts east onto the street. It is two bays wide in an L plan, forming a right (north) projecting gable front and a left (south) wing with a shed-roof porch. An original rear single-pile ell extends west from the south wing. It was lengthened in 1935 to include a rear stairway to a hipped-roof second story that was added over the ell. The front-gabled north wing is double pile. The side-gabled south wing is single pile. The house sits on locust piers and a dry-laid stone foundation. The exterior of the house displays minimal ornament. The house has plain corner boards, deep overhanging eaves, and plain frieze boards. The walls are clad with plain poplar and cypress weatherboards, and the central interior capped chimney is built of stone with a stucco finish. A second interior chimney in the ell is constructed of brick. Two-over-two lite double-hung wood sash windows are generally paired, have plain board surrounds and wood drip caps with mostly pegged corners, mortise and tenon joints, and slender exterior muntins. The multi-gabled roof is covered with pressed metal shingles.

This exterior description is arranged in a counter-clockwise review of the house. The east elevation contains a left (south) wing and a right (north) projecting gable front. The gable features on each story a pair of double-hung sash windows. Over the shed porch in the south wing is a single square sash containing two vertical lites. The porch floorboards are yellow pine accessed by wide dressed-granite steps. The porch roof is supported by square posts attached to an unornamented balustrade. It shelters two front entrances: a main entry into the south wing and a side entry into the front gable room. The south front door contains two-over-two lites with slender muntins above two raised horizontal panels and a cast-iron oval knob, escutcheon, and mortised lock. The north side door, which provides a separate entrance to a front bedroom, features two-over-two lites above two square-edge vertical panels and a white porcelain doorknob. The entrance surrounds of both porch doors are composed of four-and-one-half-inch plain casings. The doors are protected by wood-framed screen doors reinforced with flush wooden corner bracing. The south screen door is hung on cast-iron spring hinges.

The north elevation of the front block is two bays wide. Each bay of the first story contains a double-hung sash window. Similarly spaced on the second level are two window openings, original to 1877, which were boarded over with weatherboard in-fill in 1935, leaving only the surrounds.¹ The west (rear) elevation of this gabled section features a pair of two-over-two windows. The north elevation of the rear ell is set back from the north elevation of the front-gabled block and features a two-over-two window with narrow muntins on the second story above a pair of small four-over-one vertical sash double-hung paired windows, dating from 1935. A two-over-two window with narrow muntins is located at the west end of the wall. The west elevation of the two-story rear ell is a blind wall with no windows.

The south elevation of the house is composed of two sections: the two-story ell to the west and the side-gabled wing to the east. The west end of the ell features on the first story a single square sash window containing two vertical lites. East of it is a two-over-two window, above which is a pair of two-over-two double-hung sash windows. Access to the ell is through a recessed side entrance, behind the front wing. The original door, similar to an original four-panel door stored in the cellar, contains four cove-edge vertical panels, a glass knob, and a mortised lock. It is protected by a screen door of the same

¹ Interview with M. Ephraim Prince, Aiken, S.C., Feb. 11, 2013.

square-edge style as the one at the north end of the front porch. Above this side porch is a two-over-two window.

In the south elevation of the front block are two-over-two windows in pairs on each level. A small vertical-four-over-one lite double-hung sash window, dating from 1935, is west of the paired windows and roughly centered between the two stories. This window lights an interior stair landing.

Interior

The floor plan of the house is typical of the late nineteenth century. The front block is a double-pile plan, the parlor extending the full depth of the left (south) portion and a front bedroom and back dining room filling the right (north) portion. The kitchen is in the rear single-pile ell behind the parlor. On the second story a bedroom extends the full length of the main block's left portion, with two bedrooms on the right. Situated above the kitchen in the ell are a bath and back bedroom. The attic space remains unfinished, and beneath the parlor is a potato cellar.

The interior woodwork of the house is a mixture of native woods: oak, chestnut, poplar, maple, and white and yellow pine. Found throughout are four-panel chestnut doors with pine surrounds and mortised with wooden pegs, showing moldings and door surrounds of chestnut and oak trim and white porcelain or glass knobs. Some walls are made of wood lath covered with brown and gray paper sheathing and flower pattern wallpaper. Others are made of chestnut or poplar beadboard. The floors throughout are mostly hardwood, tongue-and-groove oak and maple, but also yellow pine. The windows, complete with their sills, are made of pine. Most of the windows are two-over-two double-hung wood sash with braided cotton cord, pulley, and weight still intact.

On entry into the house, the walls and ceiling of the parlor are covered with two-and-a-fourth-inch tongue-and-groove clear chestnut beadboard. The floor is laid with two-and-a-fourth-inch tongue-and-groove oak boards and is edged with eight-inch tall baseboard molding with a top bead. In the interior (north) wall on each side of the fireplace are doorways to a bedroom on the right and dining room on the left. Against the rear (west) wall of the parlor, a flight of stairs constructed during the 1935 renovation ascends to the upper story. Originally it lacked a handrail. After an inebriated lodger fell off the stairs, Jim Wright stretched a rope for a makeshift handrail from the newel post at the landing to the upstairs doorframe.² The Historical Society in 2002 replaced the rope with a chamfered oak balustrade for safety.

Beneath these stairs is a lower stairway descending to the potato cellar. The cellar is accessed at the northwest corner of the room through a doorway into a short hall. The cellar door is mortised, has a white porcelain knob, and features four flat pine panels with square-edge stiles and rails. On the interior wall of the parlor a chestnut mantelpiece encloses a fireplace surround and hearth of dressed granite. Historically the surround was covered with modern white brick and hearth tile, which the Historical Society removed in 2002 and replaced with cut granite and edge band. In the absence of a facing, the mantelpiece was fashioned as a period replacement. It was chosen for its design, which was consistent with the rest of the home and similar to a mantel in the Fairview Inn (currently Four-and-a-Half Street Inn) that dates from ca. 1910 (see photo 6). An oil space heater and flue were removed to expose the original stone surround.

The walls and ceiling of the north bedroom are yellow pine beadboard. The floor features the same oak floor boards and baseboard of the parlor.

The dining room walls are covered with lath, brown and gray sheathing paper, and flower pattern wallpaper. These layers can be viewed where the Historical Society framed an opening, rather than repair it, to illustrate the original structure (see photo 10). The ceiling is beadboard. A second opening in the southwest corner of the room allows direct unobstructed access to the kitchen through the short hall. Whether this doorway ever contained a door is not known, since it shows no signs of hinge cuts. Also, the adjacent entrance into the hall and kitchen are cased openings only.

The kitchen ceiling is made of poplar beadboard. Similarly, the walls are sheathed with poplar beadboard over one-inch hemlock and clear-chestnut planking. The flooring features pine boards over hemlock sub flooring. The cook stove on the west wall is vented into a brick chimney, which stands between the back wall of the kitchen and the back stairs. A historic porcelain-over-cast-iron kitchen sink, without a base cabinet, is attached to the north wall under the pair of vertical-four-over-one windows.

The enclosed back stairs of the house were constructed in 1935.³ Accessing the second story, they comprise two runs of oak risers and treads. In the northwest corner of the kitchen a pantry exists under the stairs.

The second floor follows the floor plan of the first, except that the three front bedrooms are accessed from a small central hall at the top of the front stairs. The walls of these bedrooms are covered with lath, sheathing paper, and flower pattern wallpaper; the ceilings with lath and white paper; and the floors with narrow, tongue-and-groove oak boards. The front two (north and south) bedrooms were heated originally with wood-burning stoves that vented through metal thimbles, which still exist, into the central chimney. The doors have flat panels and square-edge stiles and rails. The west bedroom door, as well as the doors to the bathroom and the bedroom closets, all incorporate cove-edged stiles and rails.

² Interview with M. Ephraim Prince, Aiken, S.C., Feb. 11, 2013.

³ Interview with Amelia Wright Bryson, Franklin, N.C., April 29, 2005.

The only bathroom in the house is located on the second floor of the rear ell at the top of the front stairs and adjoins the back bedroom. Both rooms are accessed by a narrow hallway. In the northwest corner of the back bedroom stands a historic Columbus wood-saver stove, vented through metal thimbles into a stuccoed brick chimney. Like the three front second-story bedrooms, the walls and ceiling of the back bedroom are wood lath with brown sheathing paper, but the floor is laid with narrow, tongue-and-groove maple boards. The door matches the two front bedrooms and the cellar door. The bathroom floor is covered with two-and-a-fourth-inch pine boards. The walls are beaded poplar, aligned vertically. The porcelain-over-cast-iron wall-hung sink is surmounted by recessed shelves. This sink and the cast-iron pedestal tub with round rim in the bathroom and the sink in the kitchen are the few remaining historic furnishings in the house.

The attic space, which is accessed through a trap door in the ceiling of the second-story hall, is unfinished. Also unfinished is the cellar beneath the parlor, which is accessed by modern stair treads made of pressure-treated pine. The original rough-cut two-by-eight-inch joists and wide subflooring in the cellar ceiling are made of hemlock. The exposed wiring that threads through the floor joists, similar to wiring strung throughout the attic, is knob and tube, installed in 1935. The cellar was accessed from the outside through a wooden coal chute in the south elevation and a square opening, now boarded over, to the crawl space beneath the rear ell.

INTEGRITY ASSESSMENT

The Elizabeth Wright Prince House was built in 1877 and enlarged in 1935, when a second story was constructed over the rear ell to convert the property from its historic residential use to commercial use as a boarding house. The house retains architectural integrity from 1935 to 1967 in the areas of setting, location, association, design, and feeling. It is located on its original site on Fourth Street in the third block north of the commercial district. The original house serves as the main core of the present building, which retains its historic massing, weatherboard siding, gable roof, and two-over-two double-hung windows in a single and/or paired pattern of fenestration. The topography of the land surrounding the house has been altered on the south side of the historic tax parcel. The area was filled to a higher grade when the historic Hudson Library building was moved to the southwest corner of the original lot to become the Highlands Historical Museum and Archives. An outside flight of wooden stairs was removed, since it was no longer needed to enter the kitchen through the engaged porch. Wells were created to maintain access to the cellar through the coal chute and to the crawlspace beneath the rear ell, since both were rendered below grade. As required by code, a minimal seven-space parking area was paved between the house and the driveway entrance from the road.

Alterations to the house after 1967

When the Highlands Historical Society acquired the Prince House in 2000, it was in considerable disrepair and neglect. The roof leaked, wallpaper was peeling, the parlor floor showed stains below an oil heater, the electrical lines were antiquated, most of the furnishings had been removed, and the house was in dire need of painting. Between 2001 and 2006, while mindful of the need to preserve the building's historic integrity, the Society performed several critical renovations. On the exterior, the weatherboard siding of the house was replaced where rotten and then primed, caulked, and painted. The dry stack stone underpinning, which existed originally beneath the rear ell but had been removed, was re-installed for insulation and support.

Historically the multi-gabled roof of the house bore pine and oak shingles, which had been replaced in the 1960s by single-tab asphalt shingles.⁴ However, by the year 2002 the roof and both chimneys were leaking severely into the front north and south bedrooms. To successfully stop the leaks, pressed 28-gauge galvanized metal shingles with a natural finish were substituted for asphalt. The stuccoed stone of the centrally located chimney was replaced with a wood/steel frame of the same proportions and re-stuccoed to conceal the new frame in the same way that the original stone had been covered.

The only major renovation to the house's interior after the period of significance involved the walls and ceiling of the downstairs bedroom. They had been covered with quarter-inch pre-finished plywood. The plywood was an apparent replacement for badly deteriorated wood lath, brown paper sheathing, and wall paper.⁵ In 2000, the Historical Society removed the plywood and installed on the walls and ceiling yellow pine beadboard, stained to match the beaded chestnut walls and ceiling of the adjoining parlor (see photo 8). The wallpaper in the upstairs south bedroom was severely water damaged, and in 2002 the white paper-over-lath ceiling was beginning to collapse from deterioration and the weight of years of accumulated bat guano in the attic. The same problem had existed during the 1960s when the ceiling was first replaced because of bats.⁶ It wasn't until 2012 that final repairs were achieved when the Historical Society had the attic thoroughly cleaned and sealed and the bedroom's ceiling and walls recovered. Two bat houses were installed in the back yard. Other interior changes involved sanding and finishing the floors, insulating under the ground floor and in the attic, removing any wallpaper that was badly damaged and replacing it with the closest match to the existing style.

⁴ Interview with M. Ephraim Prince, Aiken, S.C., Feb. 11, 2013.

⁵ Interview with M. Ephraim Prince, Aiken, S.C., Feb. 11, 2013.

⁶ Interview with Merlin Crow, Feb. 22, 2013.

The front porch roof had been originally hipped, but in the early 1960s, when a very large oak tree collapsed in the front yard and drove a limb through it, the hip roof was replaced by a shed roof, and a wooden balustrade was added to the porch for safety.⁷ In 2012, the Historical Society replaced rotting porch joists and floorboards with pressure-treated Southern yellow pine for stability. To reinforce the shed roof, which sagged severely during heavy snows, two unornamented posts were added on each side of the front steps. Apart from the support posts, the porch appears as it did when the balustrade was added in the 1960s.

In 2013, six-inch white half-round aluminum guttering with white four-inch round aluminum downspouts were installed to assure proper drainage and prevention of water infiltration. Historically the house had guttering. In 2014 the back stairs, which were historically made of half-inch poplar treads and cardboard risers, were upgraded to sturdier oak risers and treads, comparable to those of the front stairs, for safety. By 2015, the poplar weatherboarding on the east and south sides of the house facing the sun had deteriorated so much that it wouldn't retain paint, which peeled off in sheets. In addition, the rotted window sashes couldn't hold their panes. So the weatherboarding was replaced, where rotten, with cypress, planed to the same thickness and width as the original poplar. The mortise and tenon windows were repaired by reinforcing the meeting rail joints and re-glazing. Two non-historic double-hung windows with horizontal muntins, which serviced the second-story rear bedroom of the ell, were replaced by a pair of historic two-over-two lite double-hung sash windows with narrow vertical muntins in conformity with the historic fenestration of the house.

⁷ Interview with Marion Ephraim Prince, Aiken, S.C., Feb. 11, 2013.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Entertainment/Recreation

Period of Significance

1935 - 1967

Significant Dates

1935

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

House, Arthur T., builder

Boynton, Frank E., builder

Wright, James, builder

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance for this house begins in 1935, the date of its transition from a private house to a boarding house, and extends to 1967, the year that Elizabeth Wright Prince left Highlands. The house served as a boarding house under Elizabeth Prince's management throughout this time span.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

SUMMARY PARAGRAPH

The Elizabeth Wright Prince House meets National Register Criterion A for its significance in the areas of entertainment/recreation as a boarding house and is associated with the increasing reliance of Highlands on a seasonal recreation-based economy through the mid-twentieth century. The historic period during which Elizabeth Wright Prince lived at and maintained the property as a boarding house is important because her small operation served a different type of clientele from the visitors and tourists that populated the hotels, inns, and motels in town. In 1935 she converted its use from a private home and enlarged it to provide lodging for relatives, friends, and the workforce that served Highlands.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

NARRATIVE STATEMENT

The Creation of an Isolated Mountain Resort

The resort town of Highlands had its origin in the writings of Silas McDowell. A self-educated botanist, geologist, mineralogist, and zoologist from South Carolina, McDowell spent most of his life in Macon County, North Carolina. In the mid-nineteenth century he wrote extensively for the *North Carolina Citizen* to promote a plateau on the crest of the Blue Ridge Mountains near his home as an agricultural haven. Calling it the Sugartown Highlands, after the Cherokee name for the river of Cullasaja (meaning Sugartown) that had its headwaters on the plateau, he envisioned the Sugartown Highlands, not solely as an agricultural haven, but particularly as a health and summer resort without equal in the South.⁸

His horticultural articles in reports of the Smithsonian Institute attracted two developers as distant as Kansas. Samuel T. Kelsey and Clinton C. Hutchinson took an interest in McDowell's promotion of the area.⁹ Arriving in March, 1875, they founded a town on the plateau, which they named Highlands, effectively rendering McDowell's vision a reality. In April he noted, "For thirty years I have been trying to call attention to these Highlands. I have described these bold surroundings as having no peer in the Southern States.... I have piped and piped, but could get no one to dance, until now! But now, and for all time after this, the Sugartown Highlands will be as a 'city on a hill,' and no longer hidden from the world."¹⁰

In 1876, to promote the fledgling project a year after its founding, Kelsey published and distributed nationally a pamphlet that proclaimed the new settlement—elevation above 4,000 feet—a curative for respiratory ailments and a gardener's paradise.¹¹ He admitted that the only completed structures were two small saw and grist mills, a country store and post office, and a plan to "soon have a hotel and other conveniences."¹² The little village was hardly more than a crossroad—and a dirt one at that—with high hopes of attracting settlers from all regions of the nation. The population in 1880 stood at scarcely 82.¹³

A few guests lodged at George Jacobs's boarding house from 1876-77. Central House was built in 1878 to accommodate summer tourists, temporary residents awaiting construction of their homes, and health seekers wanting to benefit from "the climatic virtues of *Nature's Sanitarium*."¹⁴ Highlands House followed suit in 1880. By 1883, the population had tripled to 300 with five stores and forty-five dwellings distributed throughout the town.¹⁵ In that year Satulah House and Islington House were established to "provide board and lodgings for transient and regular."¹⁶ Nevertheless, by 1886 Highlands was still being viewed by the *Baltimore Sun* as no more than a little village with a permanent population of 300, containing two churches, a schoolhouse, a circulating library, and no saloons.¹⁷

⁸ For Silas McDowell's promotion of Highlands, see *North Carolina Citizen*, vol. 4, no. 24 (June 26, 1873), p. 2; vol. 5, no. 27 (July 23, 1874), p. 1; vol. 6, no. 6 (March 4, 1875), p. 2; esp. vol. 6, no. 18 (April 22, 1875), p. 2.

⁹ McDowell, "Belt of No Frost, or Thermal Belt," *U.S. Agricultural Report of the Commissioner of Patents for the Year 1861* (Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D.C.: 1862), pp. 146-47.

¹⁰ McDowell, "Sugartown Highlands in Macon Co., as a Health Center," *North Carolina Citizen*, April 22, 1875, p. 2.

¹¹ Samuel T. Kelsey, *Blue Ridge Highlands in Western North Carolina* (Greenville, S.C., 1876), pp. 2 and 6.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 9.

¹³ U. S. Census 1880.

¹⁴ James Fogartie and R. A. Mickle, in S. T. Kelsey, *Highlands, North Carolina: The Most Perfect Climatic Sanitarium in the World*, Rising Sun, Md., 1887, pp. 13-14.

¹⁵ *Blue Ridge Enterprise*, Sept. 27, 1883. See also the list of five stores in 1884 in *Blue Ridge Enterprise*, Jan. 3, 1884.

¹⁶ Advertisement for Satulah House in S. T. Kelsey, *Highlands, North Carolina: The Most Perfect Climatic Sanitarium in the World*. Rising Sun, Md., 1887, p. 15.

¹⁷ *Baltimore Sun*, as quoted in the *Highlander*, Sept. 17, 1886.

Aware that Highlands's "comparative isolation . . . kept the great public ignorant of its existence," Kelsey issued a second pamphlet in 1887, promoting the town as the "Most Perfect Climatic Sanitarium in the World." To attract more residents, both permanent and seasonal, to Highlands, he argued, "Its geographical position is the most favorable for both health and pleasure, *because* it is situated midway between the uneven and rigorous regions of the north, and the malarious (sic) and enervating low country of the south."¹⁸ In 1889, Davis House, an elegant three-and-one-half story frame hotel, provided thirty-five new rooms for both northern and southern guests. Ironically, as the seasonal population grew, the number of permanent residents declined, reaching a low of 249 in 1900.¹⁹

The Poor Condition of the Roads

Between 1900 and the mid-1920s, growth and economic development stagnated. Highlands remained an isolated village on a mountaintop, barely accessible by poorly maintained roads, numerous river crossings, and insurmountable terrain. After 1897, a barely distinguishable road from Franklin climbed fourteen miles up and over California Mountain, forded the Cullasaja River at Goldmine, and ascended another eight arduous miles along today's Homesite Trail to Highlands. In 1902, the road from Toxaway to Cashiers, North Carolina, which was paved only near Brevard, was extended along precarious mountainsides by a toll road to Highlands. In 1906, a rocky road was created from Dillard, Georgia. It followed sharp, steep curves up and over Scaly Mountain, especially perilous during or after a storm, and required an overnight stay at a campground above Mud Creek falls. An ambitious attempt to attract travelers by bringing the railroad to Highlands in 1906 failed abruptly when the main line of the Southern Railroad was extended to Franklin.²⁰

Compared with these three sparsely traveled routes, the most accessible road to Highlands climbed from the railway station in Walhalla, South Carolina, for twenty-eight miles over five ranges of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The trip required a minimum one-night stay at the Russell House on the banks of the Chattooga River or more nights when the river flooded, making the crossing impossible. Indeed, frequent rainfalls reduced a nine-mile stretch of poorly maintained road through Georgia to a sea of mud, virtually impassable during the winter.

Improvement of the Roads and Physical Facilities

Determined to improve outside accessibility to the mountain town, construction began in 1927 on a new Highway 28 from Franklin, which the *Franklin Press* called "probably the greatest scenic highway in all of the state."²¹ It was unique in that it didn't follow the river bank at the bottom of the gorge but wound its way along the perilous wall of the gorge, clinging to the cliffs of age-old granite far above the river. Completed in 1929, it was surfaced with eight inches of crushed stone. To further accommodate seasonal residents and visitors, the town's board of commissioners created in 1930 a parking area down the center of main street. In 1931 each side of the street was surfaced with crushed stone mixed with asphalt oil as binder and rock screening for center parking. In the same year, with the creation of the North Carolina State Highway Department, WPA crews improved Highway 28 with asphalt surfacing. As a consequence, by 1937 Highlands was seeing a welcomed increase in vehicular traffic to the resort town.

In addition to improved roads, upgrading the town's facilities produced a similar impact on its growth. The Cullasaja River was dammed in 1927 to form Lake Sequoyah, providing much needed water and electric systems, and sewer lines were installed. As a result, the physical growth of the town exploded during the early 1930s. In addition to the Highlands Country Club, which also derived its electric light and power system from the lake, new stores and homes were constructed, contributing to the biggest boom in building since the town's founding. In 1931, in anticipation of commercial growth, Highlands joined the North Carolina Municipal Association and revived its Chamber of Commerce.²²

The Creation of Tourist Attractions

In 1927, Clark Foreman, in establishing the Highlands Museum, declared, "From the first, people have been attracted to Highlands by the beauty and grandeur of the natural environment."²³ By the early 1930s, with improved access to the plateau, the town's appeal began to broaden from interest in its natural surroundings to concentration on offering recreation, adventure, education, and entertainment to its expanding clientele. Outside interest in the mountain resort led Joe Moore and Jim Street, both of whom had worked for the newspaper in Franklin, to establish the *Highlands Maconian*, which reported weekly from 1930-32 on news exclusive to Highlands. Prior to 1930 a single column of the *Franklin Press* had only

¹⁸ S. T. Kelsey, *Highlands, North Carolina: The Most Perfect Climatic Sanitarium in the World*, Rising Sun, Md., 1887, p. 3.

¹⁹ U.S. Census 1900. See also *Highlands Maconian*, Sept. 3, 1930.

²⁰ For the formation of the railroad company, see Highlands Rail Road Company, Secretary's Book, Feb. 11, 1882, p. 12. For ratification of its charter by State Legislature, see *Blue Ridge Enterprise*, April 4, 1883. For Kelsey's work on a Highlands Railroad, see his diary, vol. 2, March 2–April 4, 1882. For railroad delays and rumors, see *Highlander*, Oct. 30, 1885, and Dec. 3, 1886.

²¹ *Franklin Press*, Oct. 27, 1927.

²² *Highlands Maconian*, Feb. 25, 1931, pp. 1 and 4, and March 4 and 11, 1931.

²³ Clark Foreman, "Proposal for a Highlands Museum," in *Minutes of the Hudson Library Association*, August 10, 1927.

occasionally mentioned the town's news, but the appeal now focused on a wider range of activities catering to leisure activities and amusement. On completion of Highlands Estates in 1930, recreational golf became an instant attraction. During the summer the Highlands course served as a practice ground for Bobby Jones, who would win the Grand Slam before year's end, attracting to Highlands many golf enthusiasts who followed his illustrious career. Joe and Willie Hays constructed their well-attended Little Joe and Tom Thumb Golf Course on Main Street. The incorporation of the Highlands Museum and Biological Laboratory in 1930 brought scientific investigators, lecturers, and students on scholarship to study the unique biological diversity of the Highlands plateau.

Entertainment peaked with the establishment of a square-dance barn in 1932. Helen's Barn inaugurated a Highlands tradition of square dancing, buck dancing, and mountain clogging that would thrive for the next fifty years. It became a mecca not only for local and summer residents but also for bands, dancers, and attendants from surrounding communities. Crane's Riding Stables on West Main Street opened in 1932 for equestrian fans, who joined tours up Satulah, Bear Pen, and Whiteside mountains. The same year "talking pictures" came to Highlands, allowing local merchants to advertise their products and services with slides on the roll-up screen four to six days a week, even during the winter for local residents. In addition, a baseball park was constructed between Hickory and Poplar streets, inviting teams and spectators from other western North Carolina towns. In 1934, Highlands School Auditorium was erected, where the Highlands Community Theatre began its well-attended productions, which continue to this day.

A History of Lodging in Highlands

By 1930, the number of permanent residents within the corporate limits of Highlands had almost doubled from 249 in 1900 to 447. With summer homes now numbering 100, the seasonal population had reached 2,500.²⁴ During the early 1930s many vacationers and tourists were accommodated from June through August by the town's inns and hotels. Frank and Verna Cook operated Highlands Inn (NR, 1990) at Main and Fourth. Across the street Will and Minnie Edwards managed Central House (NR, 1992) and in 1935 built Hotel Edwards to handle the overflow of travelers frequenting the town. Harvey and Angelyn Trice managed Tricemont Terrace (formally Davis House), a facility "considered one of the finest operated hotels in the world, being listed in European guides as a 'white star' hotel." Bob and Ellie King of Charleston ran the adjacent King's Inn, "with its setting amid large oak and balsam trees," which quickly became the "honeymoon center of Highlands." They built "seven guest cottages on the grounds to care for the ever-increasing guest list!"²⁵ Pierson Inn at Fourth and South streets took in sightseers and visitors. Phoebe Crisp managed Crisp House (today's Main Street Inn) at Third and Main, which could accommodate up to fifty guests.

In the late 1930s, the number of inns in Highlands increased from seven to nine. In 1937, Ed and Ellie Pierson Potts bought Irvin Rice's two-and-a-half-story home (NRHD, 2011) on Four-and-a-Half Street and converted it into Fairview Inn. In 1939, Gordon Otto converted Hall House on North Fifth Street into Highlands Manor. Also in 1939, to accommodate motorists, Len Appley built Hemlock Lawn and Clarence Mitchell opened Mitchell's Cottages, the first motels in Macon County. As late as 1956, Prioleau and Jessie Moreland Hedden would establish Town House Motel on Main Street, providing rooms for overnight and short-term visitors. Finally, in 1962, Earl and Irene Coal converted the former home of George Cleaveland on Four-and-a-Half Street into Colonial Pines Inn (NRHD, 2011) to attract tourists.

These hotels, inns, and motels, some of which were Baedeker-rated for high quality lodging, were equipped with manager, permanent staff, and reception desk or concierge.²⁶ The hotels and inns provided room and board for vacationers, honeymooners, and elderly guests arriving from as far south as Florida, Alabama, and Louisiana and as far north as Maine, Vermont, and New York in search of a moderate climate. Entertainment was often staged on site with parties, dancing, theatre, and concerts. Automobiles were serviced, horses were well cared for, and sumptuous meals became de rigueur. Affluent guests with disposable income might stay a week, a month, or the whole summer.

The appeal of Highlands, however, was not just to a wealthy clientele but to all levels of society. Some visitors attracted to the resort town sought a less formal lodging than what the larger inns, hotels, and motels provided. Included among these were small business owners and salaried workers who serviced the vacationers and tourists in town. Possessing no home

²⁴ U.S. Census 1930: 447 residents in corporate limits, summer population more than 2,500 (*Highlands Maconian*, Sept. 3, 1930). U.S. Census 1940: population 547. 1950 census: population 514. (U.S. Census 1940 and 1950, as reported in N. C. Dept. of Conservation & Development, "Community Data," March 20, 1956). U.S. Census 1960: town population 592, township 1,418. 1970 census: town population 583, township 1,450. The 1980 U.S. census recorded 653, with 657 houses (*Highlander*, June 24, 1980, quoting the U.S. Census Bureau)

²⁵ Jennifer Martin [Mitchell]. *Historic and Architectural Resources of Macon County, North Carolina, ca. AD 600-1945*. State Historic Preservation Office, March, 1992, p. 239 [E-77].

²⁶ Davis House, before it became Tricemont Terrace, was one of only three inns in the U.S. that rated three stars in the Baedeker guide. It had thirty-five rooms and a 250-seat dining room.

of their own, they preferred a familiar domestic setting. To meet this demand for informality, Highlands opened its private homes, converting them to low-key, small-scale boarding houses and cottages.

The 1930 census lists nine "lodgers" in six homes on Main Street, School Street, Fourth and Fifth streets, and Satulah Mountain. It records seven "boarders" including teachers, a lawyer, and a stenographer, who lived with Jim Webb on the Dillard Road.²⁷ Soon after 1930, Rebecca Raoul Altstaetter converted Rosemary, her summer home at First and Main, into a small boarding house and tea room to accommodate friends and summer guests. She then built Laurel Lodge on the property as a guest house. The Highlands Country Club provided guest cottages for sports enthusiasts on its "eighteen hole golf course and bent grass tennis court." Natalie Hammond ran Hammond House, also known as Apple Tree Cottage, which she built in 1936 as a small boarding house.

The 1940 census lists Sara Gilder from Alabama and J. C. Mell from Georgia, both of whom ran new businesses in Highlands. They lodged with Wilton and Martha Cobb on South Fourth Street. If business owners didn't live above their shops or own their own homes, then they boarded in private homes. Bert Baldwin remembers boarders living with Jim Rogers and his son Dave Rogers at their homes on West Main Street and with Dr. Percy Thompson at his home on North Fourth Street.²⁸

The people who opened their homes in Highlands to boarders were local residents, not outside entrepreneurs seeking profit from an investment. Having little or no other source of income, they focused on survival. Helen Wright Wilson converted her home next to Helen's Barn into a small boarding house. Her daughter, Maxie Wright Duke, recalls, "With five children to house and feed, Mama found whatever income she could by selling milk (she had two cows), taking in laundry, washing and ironing, and taking in 'boarders.' Her twin brother, Frank, helped by bringing wood to burn and hog-killing." Transients slept in the four double beds in the large room upstairs. In addition, "other ladies in the community found some income by sharing their homes with day laborers and transients."²⁹

Edna Phillips Bryson remembers workers boarding with her father, Roy Phillips, for his construction business when he needed tile setters and plumbers from Sylva, North Carolina.³⁰ Kathryn Sue Hopper Potts recalls that, when Lake Glenville was created in 1940-41, builders of the dam lodged in Highlands with local residents, such as Gus Baty on Laurel Street, who needed the income.³¹ In rare cases, an inn might take in boarders if they were year-round. Marna Cobb Chaulker remembers that Clyde Hentz, who taught at Highlands School, boarded with his family at Hotel Edwards during the 1930s.³² In 1935, in the Satulah Mountain Historic District (NR, 1995), D.C. Black boarded friends over his garage, as did Leila Grantland Barnes in her guest house. Mrs. Gottwals is reported in the North Historic District (NR, 2011) to have had paying guests while also boarding the families of her stepchildren during summer visits; C.T. Brooks built a three-room guest cottage in the early 1950s; and Tom Crumpler offered a guest cabin to relatives and friends in 1965. In 1957, in the Playmore/Bowery Road Historic District (NR, 2002), Mrs. Evans made *Laureland* available to guests, and in 1963 the Flemings expanded *Kalalanta* to include a guest house.

Of the hotels, inns, motels, and boarding and guest houses that serviced the wide-ranging clientele of Highlands from the 1930s through the 1960s, very few exist today. Among the larger establishments, Tricemont Terrace, King's Inn, Pierson Inn, Highlands Manor, Hemlock Lawn, and Town House Motel no longer exist. Central House is now Madison's Restaurant as an adjunct to Old Edwards Inn. Crisp House exists today as Main Street Inn. Highlands Inn, Old Edwards Inn, and Mitchell's Motel still function with permanent staff and a reception desk or concierge. Town House Motel was replaced in 1984 by the nine shops in today's Town Square.

Among the smaller boarding houses and guest cottages, Fairview Inn closed to seasonal guests in 1950. It housed Highlands Playhouse Actors until 1989, when Tom and Linda Clark refitted it with two-story owners' quarters, deck, and hot tub in the rear and ran it as Four-and-a-Half Street Inn, as it remains today. Colonial Pines Inn has served since 1962 as a boarding house for overnight guests and short-term visitors. Helen Wright Wilson's boarding house, which ceased functioning before her death in the late 1950s, succumbed to a control burn in 1984 to make room for Wright Square. Rosemary and Laurel Lodge and Apple Tree Cottage, which closed as boarding houses in the 1960s, were torn down in 2011 and 2015, respectively. A few guest houses remain, such as those at the Highlands Country Club and in the Satulah Mountain and Playmore/Bowery Road Historic Districts.

²⁷ U.S. Census 1930.

²⁸ Interview with Bert Baldwin, grandson and great-grandson of Dave and Jim Rogers, respectively. September, 10, 2016.

²⁹ Email from Maxie Wright Duke, Walhalla, S.C., September 14, 2016.

³⁰ Interview with Edna Phillips Bryson, October 21, 2016.

³¹ Interview with Kathrine "Sue" Potts, October 22, 2016.

³² Telephone interview with Marna Cobb Chaulker, Houston, Texas, November 5, 2016.

A History of the Elizabeth Wright Prince House

Against this background of lodging types in Highlands, from 1935 to 1967 the Elizabeth Wright Prince House is associated with the small-scale, low-traffic commercial type that served the special needs of salaried workers, small business owners, former or prospective residents, relatives, and friends. This type of lodging made a significant contribution in support of the town's development as a popular tourist resort. It offered accommodations to those who preferred the familiar domestic setting to more formal lodgings offered by the larger, commercially oriented inns, hotels, and motels.

Constructed in 1877, the Prince House was owned by many individuals over time. Among those owners were Arthur T. House and wife Sarah, Frank and Mary Boynton, Richard and Alicia Trapier, Frank and Annie Wright, and Jim Wright until 1935, when Elizabeth Wright Prince transformed it from a private home to the commercial establishment that constitutes its historic significance today.

Arthur T. House [1877 – 1882]

The Elizabeth Wright Prince House was built by Millwright Arthur Truman House (April 6, 1845 - September 16, 1923), one of the earliest settlers of Highlands, who came from the North two decades after the Civil War. A native of Baltimore, Maryland, he grew up in Hartford, Connecticut. In his teens he fought as a Landsman with the U. S. Navy during the Civil War.³³ On Oct. 31, 1871, he married Sarah F. Bidwell (June 1, 1851 – November 29, 1907) of Norwich, Connecticut.³⁴ By the fall of 1876, his health threatened by rheumatism, he migrated to Highlands, North Carolina, in response to Kelsey's pamphlet promoting the town as a health resort.³⁵ He purchased about eight acres of farmland north of Mill Creek from the town's cofounder Clinton Carter Hutchinson.³⁶ His property extended from Mill Creek north to Laurel Street, today's entrance to the Recreation Park, and an eighth of a mile to the west (see Exhibit C, map of 1881). On Mill Creek he built a ten-foot dam at the crossing of Fourth Street. Then with the help of town cofounder Kelsey he began building the first sawmill in town. At the opening of 1877, he "completed his mill and attached a planer, shingle and lath saws, door and sash works, etc. and erected a residence."³⁷ In 1877-78, he constructed Highlands's first school building.³⁸ He returned to Connecticut in August, 1882.

Frank E. Boynton [1882 – 1887]

House sold his home in 1882 to Frank Boynton.³⁹ Although born in Hyde Park, Vermont, and raised in Vineland, New Jersey, Frank Ellis Boynton (July 10, 1859 - December 10, 1942) had come to Highlands with his parents from Hollis, New Hampshire, in 1881. The family came in search of a milder climate to benefit their health.⁴⁰ Boynton served as a carpenter, builder, and contractor, for which he had been trained in New Jersey.

Boynton's improvements to his new home on Fourth Street (today's Elizabeth Wright Prince House) involved replacing the wood lath walls and ceiling of the parlor with two-and-a-quarter inch tongue-and-groove clear chestnut beadboard, aligned horizontally and tinted with a rich dark-brown stain (See Photo 7). The same sheathing can be seen, darkly stained but aligned vertically, on the second floor walls of the John C. Gottwals house. Boynton would provide the wood for this house between 1892 and 1896 with timber from his family's mill.⁴¹ He also helped build Islington House (later King's Inn) from

³³ "Arthur T. House," Pub. M1469, U. S. Navy Pensions Index, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

³⁴ *Bidwell Family History*, No. 4509, pp. 345 – 541; *Bidwell Family Volume I*, No. 130, p. 32.

³⁵ E. E. Ewing, "Eight Years Old Today," *Blue Ridge Enterprise*, March 29, 1883.

³⁶ Macon County Deeds, P/154.

³⁷ Ewing, "Eight Years Old Today"; see also S. T. Kelsey, Unpub. diary, "Record of Weather and Work," Vol. 1, May 5 and Sept. 11, 1877.

³⁸ Elias D. White, "Early Highlands Days, An Historical Sketch," *Franklin Press and Highlands Maconian*, June 5, 1941, p. 4 ("School Beginning"); see also Kelsey, "Record of Weather and Work," Vol. 1, Feb. 19, 1878. According to the "National Register of Historic Places Macon County Multiple Property Documentation Form," p. 34, there were two sites prior to 1878 where school was held: one for two students in a home on Billy Cabin Mountain and the other in the log "Law House," which had been used since 1972 for voting, but a structure specifically intended as a school building wasn't constructed in Highlands until 1878.

³⁹ Macon County Deeds, R/48.

⁴⁰ Charles Sprague Sargent, *Sylva of North Carolina*, Supplement, vol. 8 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin & Co., 1902), p. 66.; Frank Ellis Boynton, Postcard to J. H. Barnhart, July 1, 1935 (Barnhart Files, New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, NY, p. 1; and "Frank Ellis Boynton," in James R. Troyer, "Botany at Biltmore: An Unusual Case of Private Support of Science," *Journal of the North Carolina Academy of Sciences*, 122, no. 4 (2006), p. 136;

⁴¹ Carol Carré Perrin, "John Z. Gottwals House," #19 in *Highlands Historic Inventory, Project Completion Report* (Greenville, S.C., March, 1982). See also Randolph P. Shaffner, *Heart of the Blue Ridge*, Second ed. (Faraway Publishing, 2004), p. 471.

1897-98.

Although building was his profession, Frank was so impressed with the natural beauty of the Highlands plateau that he soon became a self-taught naturalist, acquiring an early taste for botany through the gathering of plant specimens, about which he published a very popular article. According to Cornell botanist Prof. Charles Sprague Sargent, Boynton "soon became a recognized authority on the flora of the Southern Appalachian region."⁴² In 1886, he and Prof. Sargent made international history when they located the original site of an extremely rare plant, *Shortia galacifolia*, that André Michaux had discovered near Highlands a century earlier.⁴³ Boynton left Highlands in 1895 to become a seminal force in the collection and identification of rare and endemic plants and their preservation at George Vanderbilt's Biltmore Estate, where he became "guardian of the Biltmore Herbarium."⁴⁴

Richard and Alicia Trapier [1889 – 1913]

In June, 1889, Rev. Richard S. Trapier (April 17, 1811 - October 25, 1895), Rector of St. Michael's of Charleston, purchased Boynton's home for the benefit of his daughter.⁴⁵ He had seen Kelsey's promotional pamphlet filled with testimonials to the remarkable cures that had been effected for those broken in health from chronic bronchitis and other respiratory ailments. His thirty-four-year-old unmarried daughter, Alicia Shurbrick Trapier (August, 1854 - November 25, 1919), already confined to a wheelchair due to an unfortunate fall from a horse, might benefit from living in such a health resort. Alicia frequented Highlands regularly until her father's death, after which she inherited the home as a gift from her brother, Edward.⁴⁶

In 1896, she rented her home to William T. "Billy" Potts (August 16, 1857 - November 15, 1935) and Martha "Mattie" Ammons Potts (May 18, 1862 - May 15, 1929). William had just moved to Highlands to establish a livery stable. He served as postmaster and minister of the Baptist Church while providing delivery service for the town. Mattie managed Central House, the oldest boarding house in town, while raising six children and caring for William's aging parents. When Alicia visited Highlands, she and her servant, Sally Nix, occupied the first floor bedroom with its separate entrance.⁴⁷ In 1905, after a seventh child was born, the large Potts family moved to a house on West Main Street while Mattie continued to manage Central House. William's livery stable would eventually evolve into the popular Potts Brothers grocery store that serviced the entire town.

Alicia continued to spend her summers in Highlands, even as her health declined. In 1908-09, she began consulting Dr. Mary Lapham. A nationally recognized specialist in the Swiss therapy for tuberculosis, Dr. Lapham had established one of the first sanatoria in North Carolina on five of the eight acres that had originally belonged to Arthur House. Despite the proximity of Dr. Lapham's facilities, Alicia's health did not improve. She was almost sixty in June, 1914, when she returned permanently to Charleston to spend the last five years of her life.⁴⁸

Frank and Annie Wright [1913 – 1919]

In 1913, the year before Alicia's departure, Frank Wright (November 20, 1883 - November 29, 1916) and Annie Reese Wright (November 20, 1890 - December 20, 1983) of Highlands assumed ownership of the home.⁴⁹ Frank was the second of nine children of Marion Wright (September 12, 1846 - January 18, 1923) and Julia Ann Bryson Wright (January 5, 1857 - May 25, 1912). His father was one of the earliest road builders on the Highlands plateau as well as builder of the first Presbyterian Church and many homes in Highlands.⁵⁰ Frank Wright was himself a well-respected millwright who lived in a house west of the Baptist Church and owned a shop on Mill Creek. In 1914, three weeks after the birth of their first child, Newell (May 25, 1914 - August 3, 1998), Frank and Annie moved into their new home, where their second child, Amelia (May 24, 1916 - January 1, 2013), was born in 1916.⁵¹ They had a garden in the front yard, which was planted behind a white picket fence. A row of locust trees grew along the south boundary below a chicken coup, and a pair of enormous oak and maple trees shaded the house's façade. A well was dug in the northeast corner of the lot.

What should have been a happy beginning for the Wrights ended tragically within six months after Amelia's birth. Frank died

⁴² Sargent, *Sylva of North Carolina*, p. 66. See also Frank Ellis Boynton, "A Botanical Bonanza," *Popular Science Monthly*, Vol. 31 (September 1887), pp. 653-54.

⁴³ "Finding of *Shortia*," *Highlander*, Nov. 12, 1886. See also 483-85; Charles Sprague Sargent, "The Story of *Shortia*," *Garden and Forest*, 1 (Dec. 19, 1888): 506-07, 09; Frank Ellis Boynton, "The Home of *Shortia*," *Garden and Forest*, 2 (May 1, 1889), 214-15.

⁴⁴ Bill Alexander, *The Biltmore Nursery: A Botanical Legacy* (Charleston, S.C.: History Press, 2007), pp. 57, 59.

⁴⁵ Macon County Deeds, Y/381.

⁴⁶ Macon County Wills 2/192; Macon County Deeds, FF/456.

⁴⁷ U. S. Census, 1900.

⁴⁸ Death certificate: Alicia Shurbrick Trapier, Nov. 25, 1919.

⁴⁹ Macon County Deeds, Q-3/405, Q-3/408.

⁵⁰ Betty Holt, *History of the Presbyterian Church: Highlands, North Carolina 1885-1985* (Highlands, N.C., 1985), p. 5.

⁵¹ Eugenia "Jeanne" Pell Wright, "Reminiscences of Annie Reese Wright Richards," as recorded on Aug. 2, 2000.

at age thirty-three of typhoid fever, contracted from contaminated water in their well. Both children were afflicted but survived. According to his daughter-in-law, Eugenia "Jeanne" Pell Wright, "The weather was so cold and the ground frozen so hard, the grave diggers couldn't dig Frank's grave. He was buried December 2, 1916."

James R. Wright [1919 – 1935(1972)]

In 1919, three years after Frank's death, his brother James "Jim" R. Wright (February 5, 1887 - April 18, 1966) acquired the home with the insurance that Frank had provided to pay off the mortgage.⁵² Jim lived six miles north of town on a farm near Shortoff Mountain, so he had Frank's children, Newell and Amelia, brought to Shortoff to live with their grandfather, Marion Wright. This left Annie to find a job somewhere else to live. Initially, Jim rented the house to Annie's father, Robert Walter "Bob" Reese (Feb. 15, 1855 - April 7, 1929), his second wife, Arie Tallent Reese, and their children until Bob's death in 1929.

Elizabeth Wright Prince [1935 – 1967]

The Wright property had been in the family since 1913, owned first by Frank and Annie Wright, then in 1919 by Jim Wright, following Frank's death. While still owned by Jim, his sister Elizabeth "Lizzie" Wright Prince (May 16, 1893 - May 15, 1976) occupied the house from 1935 until 1967. Elizabeth was the youngest of nine children. Local genealogist Lawrence Wood recalls that she was "extremely independent and wanted no one to do for her. Rather she chose to do for others." She grew up "at a time before more modern ways had reached the mountains." She herself recalled how she helped shear the sheep, work the wool for spinning, reel it into hanks, and help her mother put thread on the warping bars. She often said "she grew up in a time of made do or do without."⁵³

At the time that she moved into her brother's home on Fourth Street, she was a substitute teacher at Highlands School, divorced, and lived in the Shortoff community six miles north of town. She was seeking a home closer to the school, which her seven-year-old son Marion Ephraim Prince (b. April 13, 1928) also attended.⁵⁴ Before the consolidation of schools in 1927, a school had existed at Shortoff. After the consolidation the only school on the plateau was the one built by Arthur House, which was hardly a block from the home her family now owned on Fourth Street. The home was not only convenient but available. If Elizabeth were to sustain herself and her child, she would need to upgrade it to a boarding house for much needed income.

Intent on converting the home to a boarding house, she enlisted the aid of her family. Elizabeth's son Ephraim claims it took Jim, aided by his brother Joe Wright (Jan 29, 1890 - April 19, 1956) and Annie's father, Bob Reese (February 15, 1855 – April 7, 1929), and half-brother Norman Reese (Sept. 15, 1906 – April 21, 1992) a year to enlarge and update the building.⁵⁵ Almost all the Wrights and Reeses were accomplished carpenters. Norman Reese was familiar with the house, having lived in it as a child. Initially they built a second-story addition over the rear ell to provide a guestroom and hallway for boarders. They also added a bathroom, taking advantage of the recent availability of water afforded by the new hydroelectric plant. Water could now be fetched from a faucet instead of hauling a pail from the well. The new bathroom also rendered obsolete the chamber pots, slop jars, and foot tubs that were normally stored in each of the bedrooms. Benefiting from the convenience of electricity, they installed a fuse box in the kitchen and replaced the iron-bracketed kerosene lamps on the walls of the house with incandescent lights hung from the ceilings. To access the new guestroom, Jim Wright and Bob Reese built a flight of stairs behind the kitchen (see photo 11). The stairs enclosed a formerly exterior brick chimney.

Before 1935, access to the front bedrooms on the second story had been by a steep stairway, practically a ladder, from the northeast corner of the kitchen. Frank Wright's daughter, Amelia Wright Bryson, who was born in the house in 1916 and lived there until her father's death in 1919, confirmed that the stairs rose to the bedrooms from the kitchen (see photo 12).⁵⁶ They began where a cut can still be viewed in the kitchen flooring and rose steeply to a narrow hallway that fanned out to the front bedrooms. To replace the steep stairs from the kitchen, Jim Wright built a new flight of stairs against the back (west) wall of the parlor.⁵⁷ To do so, he had to close off the previous entry into the kitchen, which is still evidenced, on descent into the cellar, where its framing survives midway in the back wall of the kitchen. In addition, the stairs replaced a previous entry into the cellar, which had been accessed through a trap door in the parlor floor.⁵⁸ When the new stairs up to the second story and down to the cellar were installed, new doorways were created in the northeast corner of the parlor to

⁵² Macon County Deeds, C-4/288, C-4/291; B-4/564.

⁵³ Lawrence E. Wood, "Mountain Memories: A Tribute to Aunt Lizzie Prince," *Highlander*, May 27, 1976, p. 3.

⁵⁴ Eugenia "Jeanne" Pell Wright, "Reminiscences of Annie Reese Wright Richards," as recorded on Aug. 2, 2000, p. 4.

⁵⁵ Interviews with Amelia Wright Bryson, Franklin, N.C., April 29, 2005; Marion Ephraim and Ruby Crow Prince, Aiken, S. C., February 11, 2013; and Merlin Crow, Highlands, N.C., March 23, 2009.

⁵⁶ Interview with Amelia Wright Bryson, Franklin, N.C., April 29, 2005.

⁵⁷ Interviews with M. Ephraim Prince, Aiken, S.C., Feb. 11, 2013, and Eugenia Pell Wright, Cashiers, N.C., Sept. 6, 2006.

⁵⁸ Interview with Eugenia "Jeanne" Pell Wright, Cashiers, N.C., April 5, 2013.

access the kitchen, dining room, and cellar (see photo 9).

A total of nine windows were either relocated or added during this 1935 expansion. Two square windows were removed from the upstairs bedrooms in the north elevation to permit placing furniture against the walls (see photo 4).⁵⁹ At the same time one of the windows or one of equal measurements was installed to light the back stair landing in the south elevation. The new back stairs would have rendered obsolete any windows in the west wall of the kitchen as the rear gabled one-story was transformed to a hip-roofed two-story end. Some of these windows may have served for the five that were added upstairs to the new hallway, back bedroom, and bathroom (see photos 13 & 14). On the second story gable end of the front (south) bedroom, a sixth window was paired with the original window in the center. On the first story two windows to the left and right of the gable's center had to be paired nearer the center to allow for a four-vertical-over-one window to light the new front stairs (Cf. Exhibit E and Photo 01). Most of the window changes during the period of conversion involved relocations rather than additions. For the roof, Alvin and Merlin Crow replaced the historic pine and oak shingles of the main block with asphalt shingles that also covered the new roof of the ell.⁶⁰

Some changes during the 1935 conversion affected the kitchen. Originally, the walls were composed of one-inch hemlock and clear-chestnut planking, and the flooring was hemlock. Whether or not there was any sheathing over the planking is not known, but during the 1935 renovation tongue-and-groove pine boards of various widths were applied to the floor, and the walls and ceiling were overlaid with poplar beadboard.

In addition to new construction, the only other changes to the interior of the house in preparation for boarders involved decorative improvements. Elizabeth Prince replaced the plain white wallpaper, which covered most of the wood lath walls in the dining room and bedrooms, with various floral patterns. Amelia thinks that wall paper was in the house when her parents bought it.⁶¹ Elizabeth and her sister Laura Wright (Feb. 7, 1882 - April 3, 1960) repapered with floral designs all the walls upstairs and in her first-story bedroom. This is where she normally stayed, except during the late 1940s when her sister Pearl Wright (Oct. 2, 1895 - Jan. 30, 1952) broke her hip and both legs in a fall from a wooden ladder while trying to cut a tree limb in Shortoff. She was invited to recuperate in the first-level bedroom which had a separate entrance, while Elizabeth stayed upstairs. To give Pearl ready access to the house, Elizabeth had a second doorway installed between the bedroom and the adjoining parlor.⁶²

The 1940 U.S. Census notes several lodgers in Highlands, but it lists Elizabeth Prince specifically as managing a "boarding house."⁶³ Elizabeth made available for lodging all rooms that weren't occupied by immediate family. Between 1936 and 1945 her son Ephraim slept in the south bedroom upstairs. During the off season until 1940, she provided lodging again for the Reese family: Bob and Norman, both of whom had helped Jim convert the house in 1935. She housed their mother, Arie, for the last four years of her life. She rented the north and west bedrooms to families seeking inexpensive lodging in a domestic setting during the summers. Each year she rented the rear bedroom to the Duke University divinity student interning at the Methodist Church. The rooms rented for \$9.00 a week.⁶⁴ Bert Baldwin remembers a sign that Elizabeth posted in the front yard to attract boarders that simply read "Rooms." He says he always referred to her home as "the Prince Boarding House."⁶⁵

According to Lawrence Wood, Elizabeth's "house never knew what it was to be dusty or dirty. I think she kept one of the cleanest houses I have ever been in. For many years she operated the Prince Boarding House in Highlands and her table was famous for the home cooked food."⁶⁶ Elizabeth supplemented her daily and weekly income from room and board by serving Sunday dinners to the public.⁶⁷ Her dining room became the central focus of the house during her tenure in it. Her meals became legendary, making "The Prince House," as it became popularly known, a Mecca for residents and visitors to the community who dined there on Sundays for the next forty years.⁶⁸ Edna Phillips Bryson remembers a group of elderly ladies who met every Sunday for dinner at the Prince House.⁶⁹

⁵⁹ Interview with M. Ephraim Prince, Aiken, S.C., Feb. 11, 2013.

⁶⁰ Interview with M. Ephraim Prince, Aiken, S.C., Feb. 11, 2013. Interview with Merlin Crow, Highlands, N.C., March 23, 2009.

⁶¹ Interview with Amelia Wright Bryson, Franklin, N.C., April 29, 2005

⁶² Eugenia "Jeanne" Pell Wright, "Reminiscences of Annie Reese Wright Richards," as recorded on Aug. 2, 2000, p. 6.

⁶³ U.S. Census, 1940.

⁶⁴ Interview with Marion Ephraim Prince, Aiken, S.C., Feb. 11, 2013.

⁶⁵ Interview with Bert Baldwin, Highlands, N.C., September 10, 2016.

⁶⁶ Lawrence E. Wood, "Mountain Memories: A Tribute to Aunt Lizzie Prince," *Highlander*, May 27, 1976, p. 3.

⁶⁷ Eugenia "Jeanne" Pell Wright, "Reminiscences of Annie Reese Wright Richards," as recorded on Aug. 2, 2000, p. 5.

⁶⁸ "Obituary: Mrs. Prince Dies," May 20, 1976, p. 3. See also Lawrence Wood.

⁶⁹ Interview with Edna Phillips Bryson, Oct. 21, 2016.

After Jim Wright's death at seventy-nine in 1966, Elizabeth inherited the house.⁷⁰ She continued to serve Sunday meals for another year. Her guests would wait on the porch, visiting with each other, until they could be served chicken fried in country butter, fresh vegetables, and buttermilk pie or pound cake. Lawrence Wood recalled, "She cooked all her food the oldtime way, no mixes or instant foods were found in her kitchen. She was well known for her pumpkin pies and the old fashioned chocolate cakes – these being yellow layers with chocolate icing. The table was covered with the oldfashioned white tablecloth."

In 1967 Elizabeth's health led her to move to Aiken, South Carolina, to live with her son, Ephraim, until her death the day before her eighty-third birthday in 1976. When she died, Ephraim inherited the home, visiting only occasionally with his wife Ruby Crow.⁷¹ For over twenty years it sat empty and in dire need of repair. In the millennial year of 2000 it became home to the newly re-activated Highlands Historical Society, which devoted more than a decade to restoring it within preservation standards as a living history museum for the people of Highlands.⁷²

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Dixon, Sierra, Research Associate, Connecticut Historical Society, May 21, 2013

Owens, Jeffrey, Architect, Highlands, N. C., April 11, 2013

⁷⁰ Will of James R. Wright, April 25, 1966. Item 5: gives his house and lot to his sister, Elizabeth L. Prince, in Macon County Wills, 7/491.

⁷¹ Estate of Elizabeth Prince filed Macon County 76-E-48 in 1976.

⁷² Macon County Deeds, C-24/925.

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Prince, Elizabeth Wright, House
Name of Property

Macon County, NC
County and State

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
 previously listed in the National Register
 previously determined eligible by the National Register
 designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
Name of repository: N.C. Office of Archives and History

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): MA0541

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.30 acres

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>17</u>	<u>299600</u>	<u>3881200</u>	3	_____	_____	_____
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____	_____
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The National Register boundary of the nominated property, containing .30 acre, is shown by the heavy white line on the attached aerial map with a scale of one inch equals thirty-one feet.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary of the nominated property comprises the intact historic acreage associated with the Prince House.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dr. Randolph P. Shaffner, Archivist
organization Highlands Historical Society date December 1, 2016
street & number 524 N. Fourth Street telephone (828) 787-1050
city or town Highlands state NC zip code 28741
e-mail highlandshistory@nctv.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Continuation Sheets**
Representative black & white photographs of the property, keyed to Exhibits B & F
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)
Exhibit A: Town Plan of Highlands, North Carolina, showing nominated area
Exhibit B: Site Plan showing National Register boundaries
Exhibit C: Hand-drawn Map of Highlands in 1881 by S. T. Kelsey, showing location of the Arthur House Property, on file at the Highlands Historical Society Archives
Exhibit D: View of the original house in 1885 drawing by William B. Cleaveland, on file at the Highlands Historical Society Archives
Exhibit E: Photograph of the original house in 1913 by Frank Wright, on file at the Highlands Historical Society Archives
Exhibit F: Photograph of Elizabeth Wright Prince House on June 12, 1940, on file at the Highlands Historical Society Archives
Exhibit G: Photograph of Elizabeth Wright Prince House ca. 1960, on file at the Highlands Historical Society Archives
Exhibit H: Floor Plan of main and upper levels of Elizabeth Wright Prince House, Highlands, North Carolina

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Elizabeth Wright Prince House

City or Vicinity: Highlands

County: Macon

State: North Carolina

Photographer: Randolph P. Shaffner

Date Photographed: May 20, 2013. HPO staff confirm that in 2017 the resource remains as it appeared in 2013.

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

The photographs submitted with this nomination accurately reflect the present conditions of the Elizabeth Wright Prince House and the character of its setting.

Description of Photographs and number.

Total of 15 photographs:

1. East façade (right) and south elevation (left), camera facing NW
2. West elevation (right) and north elevation (left), camera facing SE
3. Overall view of the house, camera facing W
4. North elevation, showing bedroom windows on second level that were closed off in 1935
5. Parlor view, showing 1935 front stairs with entrances into kitchen (left) and dining room (right), camera facing W
6. Parlor view, showing mantel replacement in 2002 with entrances to dining room (left) and bedroom (right), camera facing N
7. Parlor view, showing front entrance and late 1880s beaded clear chestnut walls and ceiling, camera facing E
8. First floor bedroom, showing beaded yellow pine wall-and-ceiling replacement in 2000, camera facing W
9. Dining room, showing 1935 entrances to parlor (left) and kitchen and cellar (right), camera facing S
10. Dining room, showing framed original wood-lath, cardboard, and paper wall finish, camera facing E
11. Kitchen view, showing 1935 back stairs (left) and pantry (right), camera facing W
12. Kitchen view, showing NE corner location before 1935 of original stairs to second level, camera facing E
13. Second floor 1935 back bedroom, camera facing S
14. Second floor 1935 bathroom, camera facing S
15. Second floor west bedroom door, showing missing corner, camera facing SE

Prince, Elizabeth Wright, House
Name of Property

Macon County, NC
County and State

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Highlands Historical Society, Inc.
street & number 524 N. Fourth Street telephone 828-787-1050
city or town Highlands state NC zip code 28741

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Exhibit A: Town Plan of Highlands, North Carolina, Showing National Register Boundaries of Elizabeth Wright Prince House on North Fourth Street (shaded property)

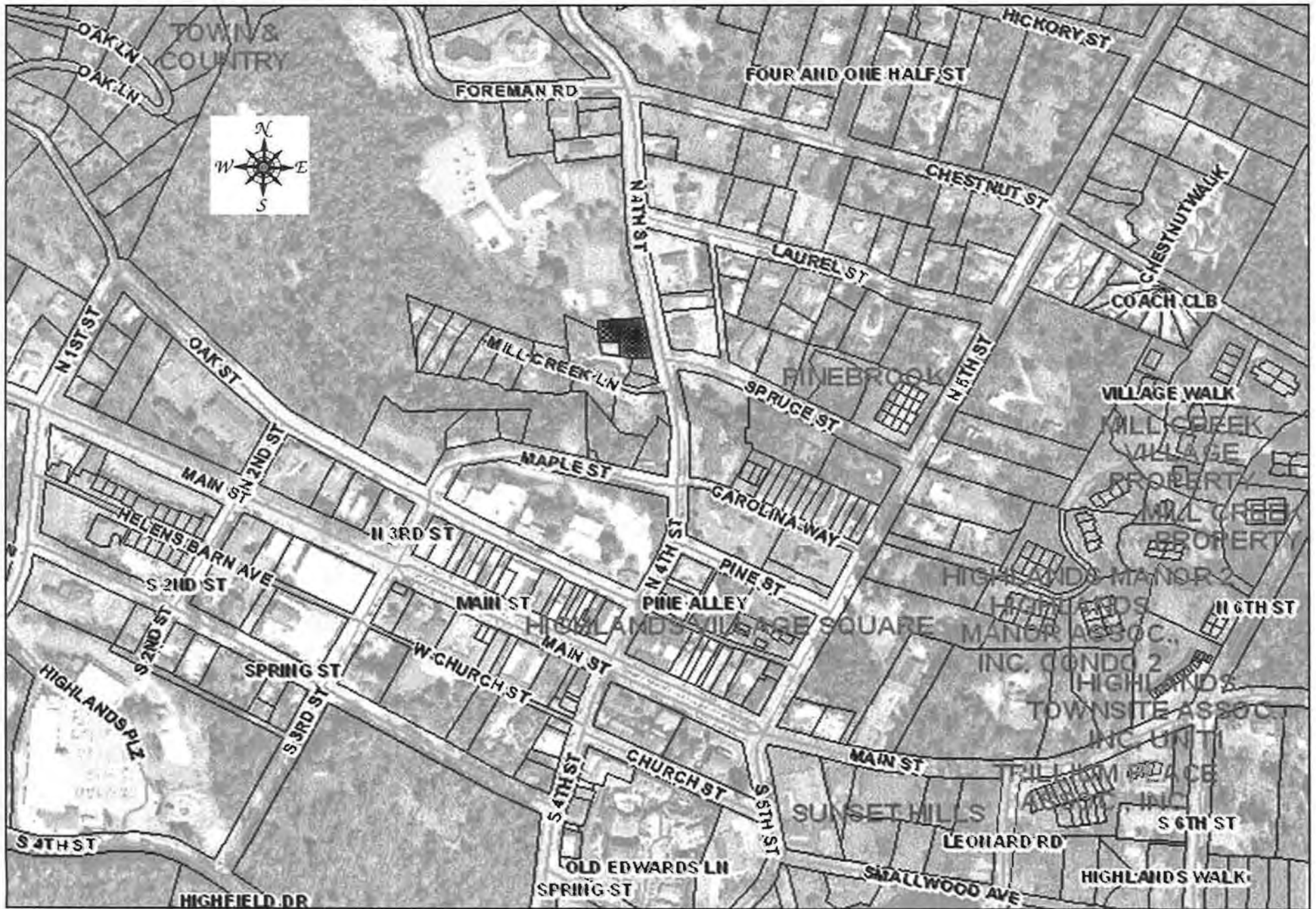


Exhibit B: Nominated Area for Elizabeth Wright Prince House,
Highlands, Macon County, North Carolina. Scale: 1 inch equals 31 feet.



Bold white line = National Register Boundary.

Number and direction of exterior photograph views indicated by arrows. Map adapted from Macon County Tax Map for Parcel 7530619636.

Exhibit C: S. T. Kelsey's Map of Highlands in 1881, Showing Original Property of Arthur T. House

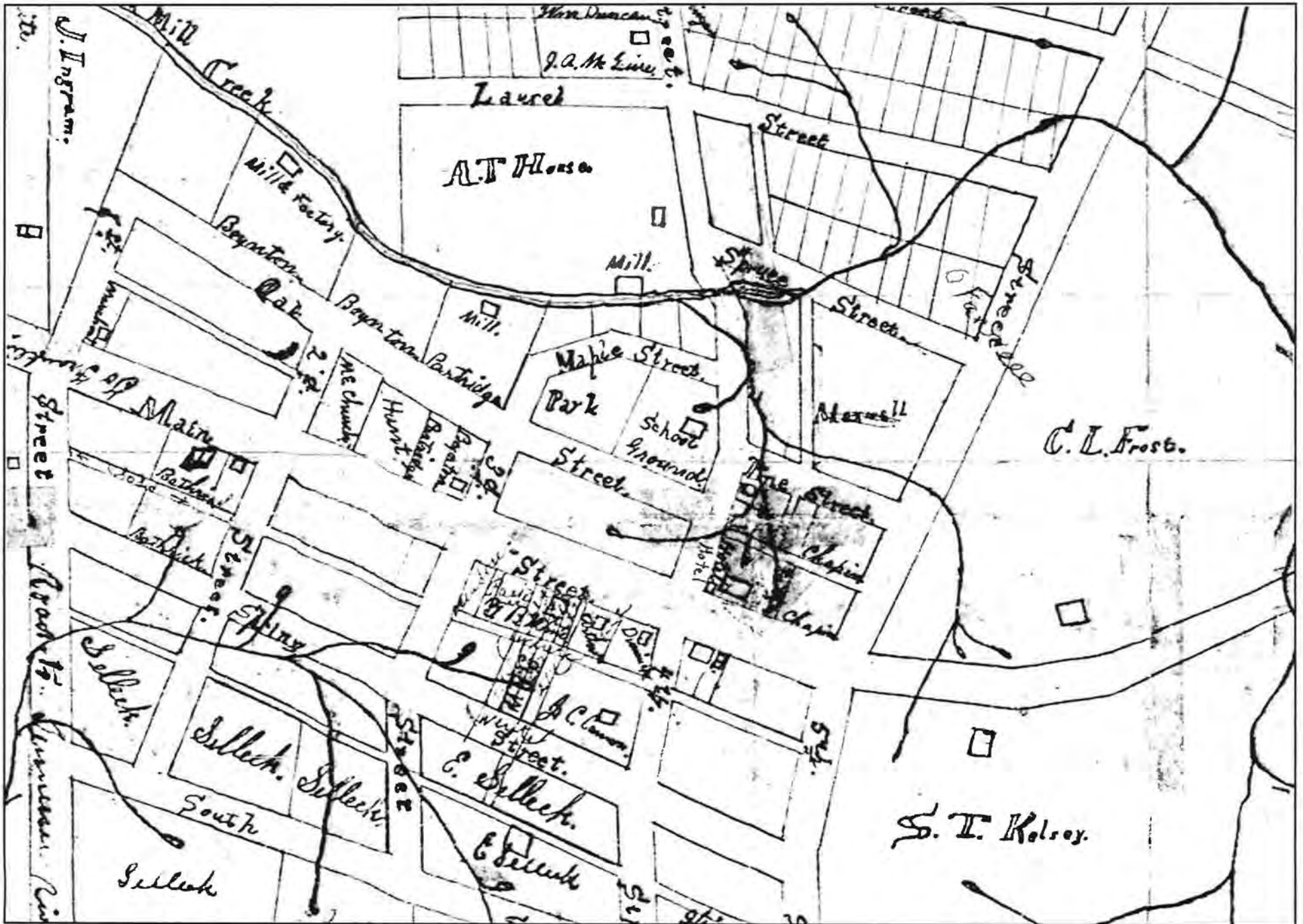


Exhibit D: Drawing Showing Original Arthur T. House in 1885

VIEW FROM OUR HOUSE LOOKING TOWARD SATULAH 1885
William Bliss Cleaveland

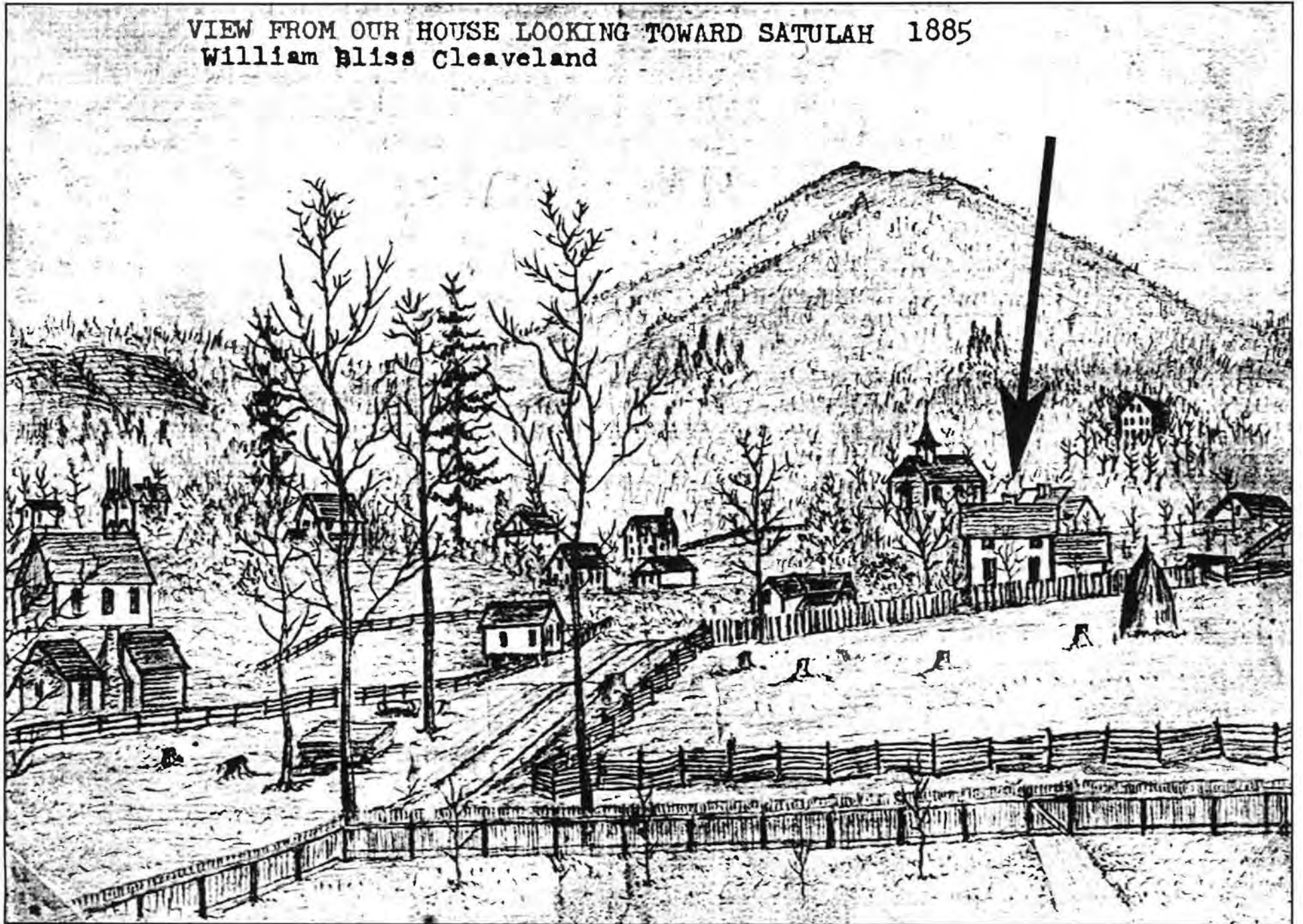


Exhibit E: Photograph of the Frank Wright House in 1913
before the addition of the second story over the rear ell in 1935

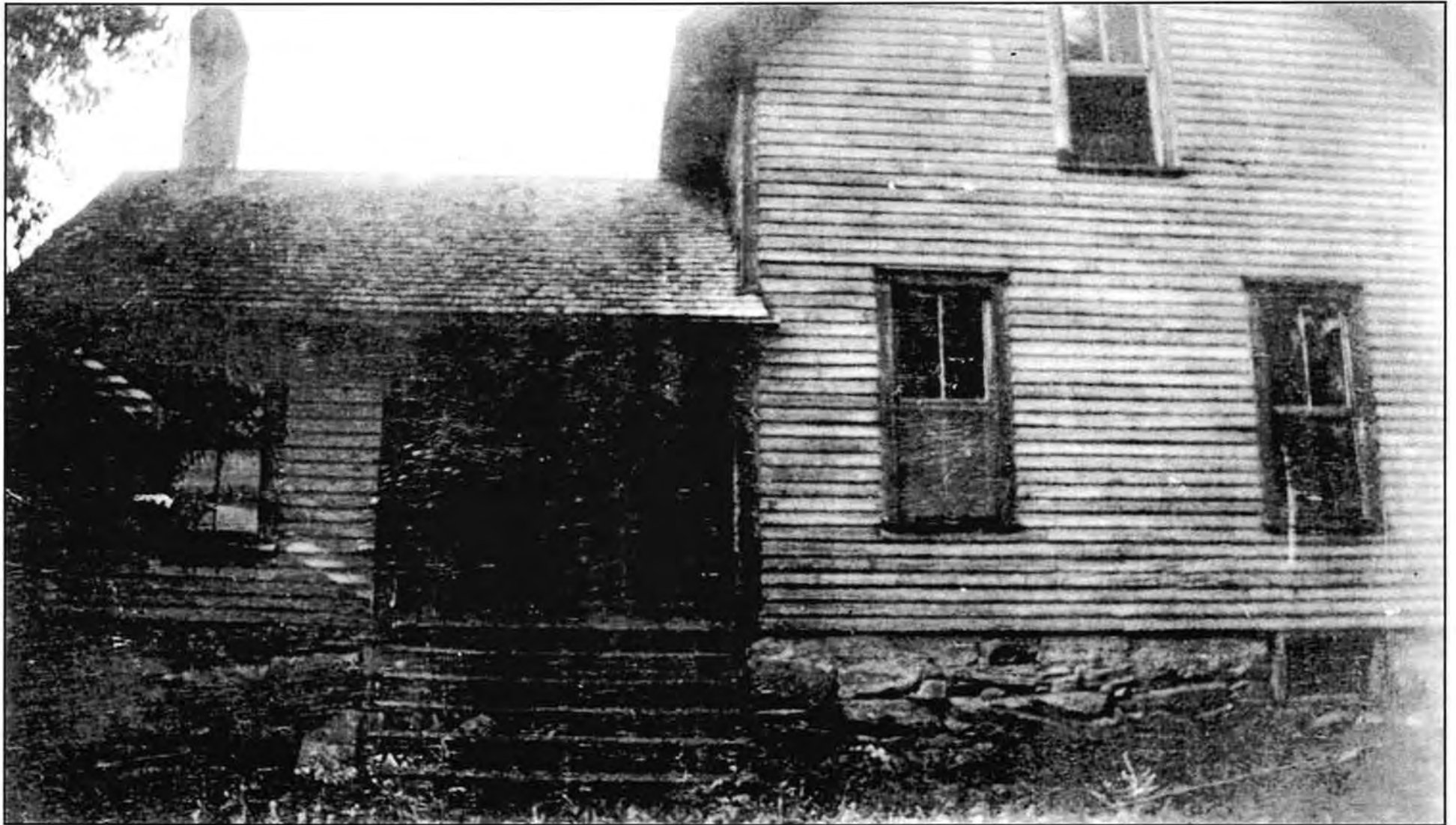


Exhibit F: Photograph of the Elizabeth Wright Prince House on June 12, 1940



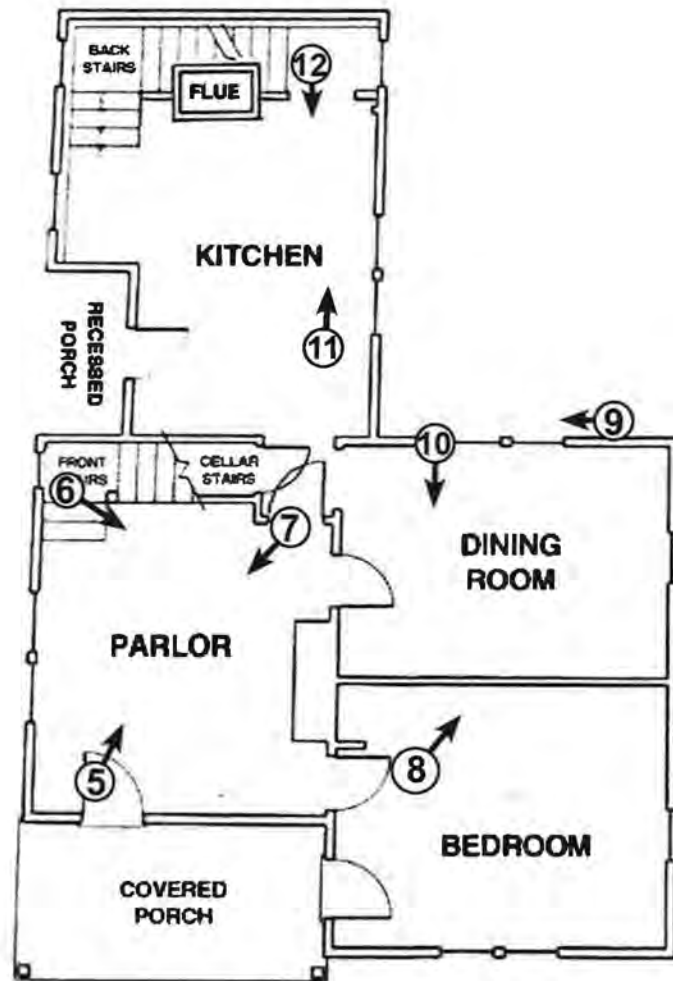
Exhibit G: Photograph of the Elizabeth Wright Prince House ca. 1960



Exhibit H: Floor Plan of Elizabeth Wright Prince House, Highlands, Macon County, North Carolina. Showing Main and Upper Levels

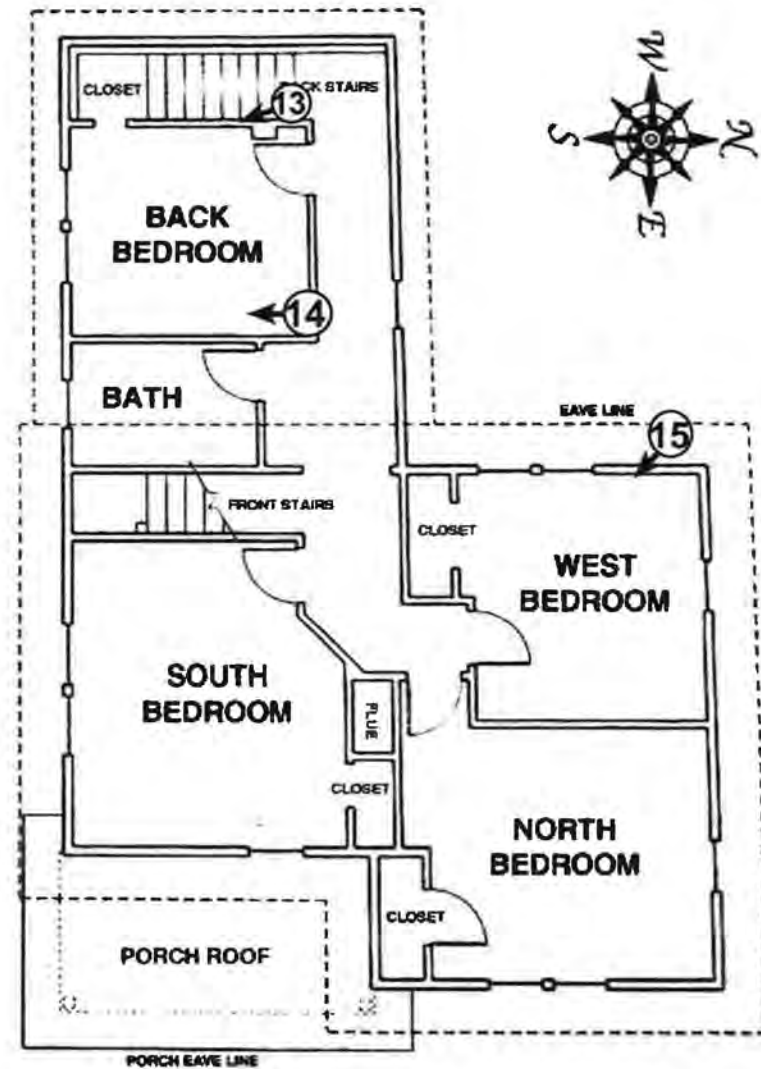
MAIN LEVEL FLOOR

940 SQUARE FEET - HEATED SPACE



UPPER LEVEL FLOOR

972 SQUARE FEET - HEATED SPACE



Number and direction of interior photograph views indicated by arrows.







RESERVE
Historic Village



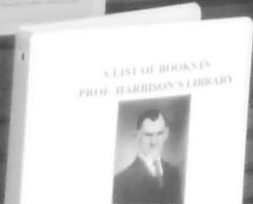






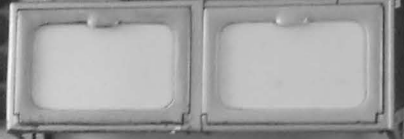


A small, rectangular plaque or document mounted on the wall to the left of the portrait. The text is too small to read clearly but appears to be a formal notice or dedication.

















UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 3/3/2017 Date of Pending List: Date of 16th Day: Date of 45th Day: 4/17/2017 Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept Return Reject 4/17/2017 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

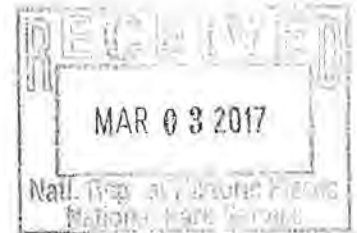
Recommendation/ Criteria:

Reviewer Jim Gabbert Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources
State Historic Preservation Office

Ramona M. Bartos, Administrator

Governor Roy Cooper
Secretary Susi Hamilton

Office of Archives and History
Deputy Secretary Kevin Cherry

February 23, 2017

Ms. Stephanie Toothman, Keeper
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1201 Eye Street NW (2208) Eighth Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005

Re: Little River High School – Durham County
Green Hill Cemetery – Haywood County
Imperial Tobacco Company Office Building – Lenoir County
Elizabeth Wright Prince House – Macon County
SS. Peter and Paul's Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church – Pender County

Dear Ms. Toothman:

Enclosed are the above referenced nominations to be approved for the National Register of Historic Places.

We trust you will find the nominations to be in order. If you have any questions please call Ann Swallow, 919.807.6587.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kevin Cherry".

Kevin Cherry, Ph.D.
State Historic Preservation Officer

KC/jct: enclosure