

MCDOWELL COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY PHASE I SCOPING REPORT MCDOWELL COUNTY, NC

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Principal Investigators:

Kenneth Joel Zogry, PhD and Andrey Mihalow, PhD, RPA

Contributors:

Briony Kinnear, Taylor McCarn, Ellie McCorkle, Matthew McDaniel, Christopher Mroczka, Eric Smith

Prepared For:

NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

109 E. Jones Street, 2nd Floor

Raleigh, NC 2760



N | V | 5

3300 Regency Parkway, Suite 100

Cary, North Carolina

Table of Contents

List of Figures	3
Project Overview and Funding.....	4
Project Methodology	6
Phase I	6
Phase I Survey Products.....	7
Database	7
Photographs	8
Paper Files.....	8
Maps	8
Survey Report.....	8
Historical Overview.....	8
Architectural Overview	21
Phase I Findings: Challenges, Community Involvement, and Resource Analytics.....	40
Phases II and III Approach	41
Preliminary Bibliography.....	45
Appendix A: National Register-Listed Properties.....	49
Appendix B: Classifications of Previously Surveyed Properties Resurveyed in 2023.....	50
Appendix C: Phase I Properties to be Documented in Phase II or III	52
Appendix D: Demolished Properties (Survey Updated During Phase I).....	53
Appendix E: Properties Resurveyed in Phase I.....	54

List of Figures

Cover Photo: MC0069 (former) Linville Falls Tavern, Linville Falls, ca. 1936	Cover Page
Figure 1: MC0185 Suttlemyre-Stepp House, ca. 1865.....	12
Figure 2: MC0001 Carson House, ca. 1810-1860.....	22
Figure 3: MC0080 Albertus Ledbetter House, ca. 1826, 1836	23
Figure 4: MC0081 Reid-Brinkley House, ca. 1864.....	23
Figure 5: MC0078 William Jehu English Farmstead, ca. 1886	24
Figure 6: MC0175 J. L. "Fate" Morgan House, ca. 1900.....	25
Figure 7: MC0174 Blanton House, ca. 1910.....	25
Figure 8: MC0174 Blanton House interior	26
Figure 9: MC0177 W. R. Chambers-Sisk House, ca. 1926.....	27
Figure 10: MC0102 D. W. Adams House, ca. 1887	28
Figure 11: MC0191 Westerman House, ca. 1890	28
Figure 12: MC0168 Marion Manufacturing Company	29
Figure 13: MC0140 Cross Mill Village, Marion	30
Figure 14: MC0046 Rice and White Furniture, within the Main Street Historic District, Marion	31
Figure 15: MC0042 Merchants and Farmers Bank, within the Main Street Historic District, Marion	31
Figure 16: MC0110 Commercial Building, within Old Fort Commercial Historic District, Old Fort.....	32
Figure 17: MC0006 St. John's Episcopal Church, Marion, ca. 1883	33
Figure 18: MC0172 Cross Mill Methodist Church, Marion, ca. 1916	33
Figure 19: MC0005 First Presbyterian Church, Marion, ca. 1923.....	34
Figure 20: MC0038 First Baptist Church, Marion, ca. 1914	34
Figure 21: Parish House of MC0006 St. John's Episcopal Church, Marion	35
Figure 22: Fellowship Hall of MC0005 First Presbyterian Church, Marion.....	35
Figure 23: MC0007 St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, Marion, ca. 1935	37
Figure 24: MC0157 Nebo United Methodist Church, Nebo, ca. 1927.....	37
Figure 25: MC0183 Mountain Gateway Museum, Old Fort, ca. 1937	38
Figure 26: MC0034 Marion Community Building façade, ca. 1937	38
Figure 27: MC0092 Old Fort Depot, Old Fort, ca. 1894.....	39

Project Overview and Funding

The North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (HPO) has collected field and research data and created survey files for historic resources since the beginning of the architectural survey program in the late 1960s. Along with conducting or administering comprehensive countywide or municipal architectural surveys when funding allows, the HPO oversees documentation of individual historic resources and historic districts through administration of the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) or as part of compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

McDowell County has never been the subject of a comprehensive architectural survey. By the end of 2023, the HPO had assigned 232 survey site numbers to historic resources in McDowell County. The files created for these properties resulted from HPO staff site visits, private and local government efforts to list individual properties or districts in the NRHP, and Section 106 compliance projects. Among the properties previously surveyed, 11 individual resources and three historic districts have been listed in the NRHP. The historic districts, found within the towns of Marion (NR 1991) and Old Fort (NR 2011), encompass a total of 52 contributing buildings and one contributing site, structure, and object, respectively. Fifteen properties have been determined NRHP-eligible through Section 106 compliance. In addition, 14 resources have been placed on the National Register Study List because they appear to be potentially eligible for listing in the NRHP, pending further evaluation. One of these properties, Andrews Geyser, Dam, and Reservoir (MC0088), both is on the Study List and has been determined eligible through Section 106. A list of all NRHP-listed properties in McDowell County is included in Appendix A.

In the fall of 2018, two destructive hurricanes hit North Carolina and caused damage throughout the state, including in McDowell County. Hurricane Florence originated off the coast of Africa and made landfall near Wrightsville Beach on September 14 as a Category 1 storm.¹ It travelled west/northwest, dumping rainfall of 20 to 35 inches through the Coastal Plain and Piedmont of the state and causing substantial wind damage. According to information provided by the National Weather Service, 52 people died as a result of the storm, and financial losses reached \$24 billion.² Following the disaster, 61 of the state's counties, including McDowell County, were granted emergency assistance for rain- and wind-related damage. McDowell County received up to six inches of rain in portions of the county

¹ "Hurricane Florence Review, September 12-15, 2018," National Weather Service website, <https://www.weather.gov/mhx/Florence2018>, accessed Feb. 24, 2025. See also, "Hurricane Florence: September 14, 2018, www.weather.gov/ilm/hurricaneflorence, accessed Feb. 24, 2025.

² "Hurricane Florence Review, September 12-15, 2018," National Weather Service website, <https://www.weather.gov/mhx/Florence2018>, accessed Feb. 24, 2025.

following the path of the storm, with rivers and streams cresting at or near capacity.³ The county's emergency management office set up a shelter in Marion.⁴

Hurricane Michael, a Category 4 storm, was the third-most powerful to make landfall in the United States. Michael traveled up the Gulf of Mexico through Florida and Georgia and weakened rapidly before entering North Carolina on October 11, 2018, as a Tropical Storm. The storm caused high winds, a historic crest of the Catawba River, and severe flooding in the Piedmont and western portions of the state. Governor Roy Cooper requested federal disaster assistance for 21 counties, including McDowell, as the storm caused four deaths, and statewide damage was estimated in excess of \$22 million.⁵ Winds gusting to 63 miles an hour and approximately eight to ten inches of rain were recorded in the western portion of McDowell County, mostly impacting the town of Old Fort and Crooked Creek Township, where swift-water rescues were performed.⁶

With these disaster-related designations, McDowell County was also made eligible for funds provided through the Emergency Supplemental Historic Preservation Fund (ESHPF). The ESHPF program, which is authorized by Congress and funded by federal oil and gas leases on the Outer Continental Shelf, is designed to address disaster-related historic property needs unmet through other funding sources. In 2018, six states and one territory, including North Carolina, received grants from the ESHPF program after receiving significant damage from Hurricanes Florence and Michael, as well as Typhoon Yutu. The grant received by North Carolina will support repair and recovery of properties listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP. Funding for these repair and recovery projects has been made available through subgrants to local governments and non-profit organizations. The State of North Carolina also allocated some of this funding to support the countywide documentation of historic resources in six

³ For rainfall totals, see precipitation map included here: <https://www.weather.gov/ilm/hurricaneflorence>, accessed April 15, 2025. See also Corey Davis, "Florence Revisited: Our Wettest Hurricane, Two Years Later," North Carolina State Climate Office, NC State University, <https://climate.ncsu.edu/blog/2020/09/florence-revisited-our-wettest-hurricane-two-years-later>, accessed April 16, 2025.

⁴ "Shelter to Open Friday Evening in Marion," WLOS News, September 13, 2018, <https://wlos.com/news/local/shelter-to-open-friday-evening-in-marion>, accessed April 15, 2025.

⁵ Frank Kracher, "McDowell County to get \$218,000 to aid in recovery from Tropical Storm Michael," ABC 13 News, Feb. 1, 2019, <https://wlos.com/news/local/mcdowell-county-to-get-218000-to-aid-in-recovery-from-tropical-storm-michael>, accessed Feb. 25, 2025; "North Carolina Receives Federal Disaster Declaration for Tropical Storm Michael," North Carolina Office of the Governor, Feb. 1, 2019, <https://governor.nc.gov/news/north-carolina-receives-federal-disaster-declaration-tropical-storm-michael>, accessed Feb. 25, 2025. See also National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration data on crests on the Catawba River at Pleasant Gardens, <https://water.noaa.gov/gauges/plgn7>, accessed April 16, 2025.

⁶ John L. Beven II, Robbie Berg, and Andrew Hagen, "National Hurricane Center Tropical Cyclone Report: Hurricane Michael, 7-11 October 2018," National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and National Weather Service, May 17, 2019, 54, https://www.nhc.noaa.gov/data/tcr/AL142018_Michael.pdf, accessed Feb. 25, 2025; Andrew Pressley, Deputy Director, McDowell County Office of Emergency Management, telephone interview with Kenneth Joel Zogry, November 28, 2022.

counties, including McDowell County. These surveys will help ensure North Carolina's treasured cultural resources are included in future resiliency planning efforts.

Project Methodology

NV5 conducted Phase I of the McDowell County Comprehensive Architectural Survey at the close of 2022 and in 2023. Phase I included a windshield survey of all public roads to identify approximately 500 resources that warrant intensive survey in Phases II and III, as well as a full resurvey of previously recorded resources. Phase II will document previously unrecorded resources in Old Fort and rural McDowell County. Phase III will include a survey of previously unrecorded resources in the city of Marion. In addition to documenting historic resources through photography, mapping, data collection, and research, NV5 will also note the locations of all resources, as well as any known hurricane damage, through the use of the CRSurveyor Collector App, a cultural resources survey tool that uses the Esri ArcGIS platform.⁷ Phase I survey was completed by Chris Mroczka, Matt McDaniel, Ellie McCorkle, Robby Outland, Andrey Mihalow, Taylor McCarn, and Eric Smith.

Phase I

Phase I included resurvey of 199 of the 224 resources documented in McDowell County prior to the initiation of the comprehensive survey, including in Marion, Old Fort, and rural areas, as well as a countywide windshield survey of additional resources that may be documented in Phases II and III. Fieldwork and associated documentation were completed at the end of 2022 and through the fall of 2023.

Field surveyors primarily utilized prior HPO documentation, including the HPO's GIS web service HPOWEB, to relocate previously documented resources, but also used county tax records and current and archival online aerial imagery to locate and, in some cases, determine the status of inaccessible resources. Extant and accessible resources were photographed, changes in condition were noted, and GPS was plotted via both a project-specific tablet application and the HPO's CRSurveyor application. Based on the Phase I fieldwork, database records (including narrative summaries), site plans, photographs, and photo contact sheets were updated.

⁷ "ESHPP Disaster Assistance Grants for Historic Resources," NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, <https://www.dncr.nc.gov/about/history/division-historical-resources/state-historic-preservation-office/grants-historic-preservation-projects/eshpp-disaster-assistance-grants-historic-resources>, accessed Jan. 20, 2023.

The windshield survey included all public roads in McDowell County. The purpose of this survey was to identify approximately 500 candidates for intensive survey in Phases II and III. During the windshield survey, candidates for intensive survey were marked via points dropped in ArcGIS Field Maps. The windshield survey resulted in the identification of 576 resources for potential documentation during Phases II and III; during future phased fieldwork and research, the candidate pool will be refined to address the 500 resources most appropriate for documentation based on design and material integrity and potential historic and architectural significance.

Resources identified for intensive survey typically appeared to be intact examples of particular types or styles of architecture, or they appeared to be important community resources, such as historic public or institutional buildings, or they had an apparent association with a historic theme, such as agriculture or commerce. Other factors used to select candidates for intensive survey included age, level of material integrity, prevalence of overall style, form, or resource type, apparent unusual or unique physical features, and association with communities underrepresented in previous surveys.

In rural areas, intact farmsteads with extant outbuildings were identified, as well as community resources such as churches. Similar community facilities were also identified in towns, along with residences and commercial and industrial properties. Concentrations of resources that suggested potential historic districts were also located, as were previously undocumented properties within and in proximity to existing historic districts.

NV5 developed a preliminary bibliography of sources for use in developing historic contexts for McDowell County, as well as to help identify resources for further documentation. Additional sources such as property records and local newspapers will be used to further develop local historic context and inform survey in Phases II and III.

Phase I Survey Products

Database

Present-day conditions at each previously documented resource were compared to the existing survey records to determine if and what changes had occurred since the time of the last survey. Data entry forms were then updated to indicate No Substantial Change, Substantial Change by Alteration, Substantial Change by Deterioration, Substantial Change by Improvement, Removed from Site, or Not Found. At some properties, No Access or Outbuilding Loss was selected.

For all previously surveyed properties, database records were updated, completed, or in some cases corrected as applicable. An updated or new narrative summary was provided as needed and included changes to the property as observed during fieldwork. Digital copies of the updated survey forms were provided to the HPO for review and were revised based on review comments; paper forms were also generated for inclusion in survey files.

Photographs

Photo-documentation was completed using a Nikon CoolPix 950 digital camera and according to HPO survey guidelines. Digital photographs and contact sheets were provided for HPO review and were printed for inclusion in the survey files. All photographs included in this report were taken by NV5 during the life of survey.

Paper Files

For each previously surveyed property, field survey notes, site plans, printed contact sheets, and printed database records, as well as any related notes or other documentation gathered during the project were added to the existing paper files in the HPO archives.

Maps

Previous documentation (including the HPO's GIS web service HPOWEB), county tax records, and current and archival online aerial imagery were used to locate previously documented resources. A modified ArcGIS Field Maps application was utilized to assist surveyors with locating and documenting those properties. Candidates for intensive survey during Phases II and III were also logged into the GIS application and mapped.

Survey Report

The findings of the Phase I survey are included in this report, which includes a methodology, general historic and architectural context, and a preliminary bibliography. A list of previously surveyed properties is included in Appendix E, and observations on county architectural trends and characteristics formed during the windshield survey for Phases II and III are included.

Historical Overview

The eastern two-thirds of McDowell County is located in the southern foothills of western North Carolina, straddling the Piedmont region of the state to the east. The western third of the county is part of the Blue Ridge Mountain range. The total land area is 442 square miles, approximately 85

percent of which is forested. Most of the county is within the Catawba River basin, which is the county's principal body of water. The Upper Catawba Falls and Catawba Falls lie along the river's headwaters near Old Fort. At the McDowell and Burke County line is Lake James. This is the largest lake in the county and is formed by an impoundment of the North Fork Catawba River. The lowest land elevation, 1,080 feet, is found along the Catawba River at the border of McDowell and Burke Counties, and the highest elevation, 5,665 feet, is found in the community of Pinnacle, at the junction of McDowell, Buncombe, and Yancey Counties.⁸ Geologically, the county is primarily comprised of various types of gneisses, granites, and schists, though rock types uncommon in other parts of North Carolina are also found here, including amphibolite, meta-ultramafic rock, and dolomite.⁹ The presence of these rock types increases the soil pH and provides special nutrients, and, as a result, a number of rare plant species are found in and near North Cove, Linville Caverns, and portions of the Catawba River Valley.¹⁰

The area that today comprises McDowell County was first occupied by semi-nomadic Paleoindians about 12,000 years ago. Two archaeological sites uncovered in the past 50 years near present-day Marion document later permanent settlement. At the Tyler-Loughridge Site, a 1990 excavation revealed a small Woodland Period village dating to about 500 CE.¹¹ Excavations in 1978 and 1986 at the McDowell Site uncovered a large settlement of the Catawba Valley Mississippians, originally surrounded by a wooden post palisade, and last occupied about 1600 CE.¹²

According to McDowell historian Mildred B. Fossett, by the mid-sixteenth century, the principal peoples in the wider region were the Cherokee of the Iroquois Nation to the west and Catawba of the Siouan Nation to the east.¹³ Prior to the eighteenth century, McDowell County served as a neutral zone between the Cherokee and Catawba territories.¹⁴

The first European contact in the area occurred about 1540, when Hernando De Soto's search for gold led him to Cherokee and Siouan lands.¹⁵ Various alliances arose and fell between Native Americans

⁸ Shawn C. Oakley, *An Inventory of the Significant Natural Areas of McDowell County* (Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality, 2005), 3-6, 10, <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/inventory-of-the-significant-natural-areas-of-mcdowell-county-north-carolina/2559869>, accessed Feb. 26, 2025; Johnny Molloy, *Waterfalls of the Blue Ridge: A Guide to the Natural Wonders of the Blue Ridge*, 5th ed. (LaVergne, TN: Menasha Ridge Press, 2021), 216.

⁹ Oakley, *Inventory*, 7; Joanne S. Johnston, editor, *McDowell County Heritage, North Carolina* (Waynesville, NC: Walsworth Publishing Company, 1992), 1.

¹⁰ Oakley, *Inventory*, 7-8.

¹¹ Johnston, *McDowell County Heritage*, 3.

¹² Johnston, *McDowell County Heritage*, 3.

¹³ Mildred B. Fossett, *History of McDowell County*, (Marion, NC: McDowell County American Revolution Bicentennial Commission Heritage Committee, 1976), 1-3; Johnston, *McDowell County Heritage*, 5.

¹⁴ Johnston, *McDowell County Heritage*, 5.

¹⁵ Fossett, *History of McDowell County*, 2-3.

and European groups, as the English, French, and Spanish competed for native loyalties. The Catawbas, in particular, were known for their consistent friendliness with the British. British settlement began in earnest after the mid-eighteenth century, driven in part by a devastating smallpox epidemic among the Catawba that reduced their population to about 500, and a severe famine in Ulster, Ireland, that drove large numbers of people later known as “Scots-Irish” to emigrate to the American colonies and settle in the mountains of western North Carolina. These new settlers contended with Cherokees as the former moved into the latter’s territory.¹⁶ Led by General Griffin Rutherford, members of the colonial militia staged a raid against the Cherokees in 1776 intended to neutralize Cherokee loyalty to the British cause. In the vicinity of modern-day Old Fort, the successful raid secured the area for settlement and for the colonial cause.¹⁷ According to Fossett, the town of Old Fort is named for the fort built there by the colonial militia about 1776. The fort was the “western-most outpost of civilization in Western North Carolina,” and it was used “as a base for exploration and settlement beyond the Blue Ridge Mountains.”¹⁸

In 1843, the State Legislature established McDowell County from portions of neighboring Burke and Rutherford Counties.¹⁹ The county was named for Major Joseph McDowell (1758-1795), who served with distinction during the Revolutionary War, most notably at the Battle of Kings Mountain. He later served in the North Carolina Legislature, as a delegate to the 1788 and 1789 constitutional conventions, and as a trustee of the University of North Carolina.²⁰ In the 1780s he established a plantation on family land in Pleasant Gardens, now part of McDowell County. Major Joseph McDowell’s plantation house survives today and is known as Pleasant Gardens (MG0099).²¹

In Western North Carolina, large tracts of fertile bottomland were acquired by some of the earliest settlers and led to their agricultural success. Later settlers acquired land along smaller waterways and, owing to the terrain, established smaller farms.²² In McDowell, settlers cleared the bottomlands and planted corn, among other crops.²³ They built simple log houses from the abundant timber, and their properties usually included a barn, corn crib, and other outbuildings.²⁴ The Suttlemyre-Stepp House

¹⁶ Johnston, *McDowell County Heritage*, 5.

¹⁷ Johnston, *McDowell County Heritage*, 5.

¹⁸ Fossett, *History of McDowell County*, 47.

¹⁹ Fossett, *History of McDowell County*, 7.

²⁰ John C. Inscoe, “McDowell, Joseph,” NCPedia, 1991, <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/mcdowell-joseph-0>, accessed Feb. 26, 2025; “Joseph McDowell, Not to Be Confused with Joseph McDowell,” NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources Blog post, May 18, 2016, <https://www.dncr.nc.gov/blog/2016/05/18/joseph-mcdowell-not-be-confused-joseph-mcdowell>, accessed Feb. 26, 2025.

²¹ Inscoe, “McDowell”; Fossett, *History of McDowell County*, 77.

²² John C. Inscoe, *Mountain Masters, Slavery and the Sectional Crisis in Western North Carolina* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989), 13.

²³ Inscoe notes that farmers in the western counties grew a very wide variety of crops, despite the cooler climate and shorter growing season (*Mountain Masters*, 13-14).

²⁴ Johnston, *McDowell County Heritage*, 5.

(MC0185), now relocated to the Mountain Gateway Museum (MC0183) in Old Fort, is typical of the type built between about 1750 and the Civil War.²⁵ Johnston notes that a water-powered sawmill allowed the construction of frame houses to begin in some parts of McDowell in the 1790s.²⁶ Diversity of agricultural production defined this area, although corn was a staple crop on almost all farms in the western counties, and raising livestock was a substantial pursuit.²⁷ Many farmers in the region also grew significant quantities of tobacco.²⁸ Inscoe notes that, “Burke was by far the leading tobacco-producing county in the region, with over 160,000 pounds raised in 1860. It was followed by Wilkes County, with 93,000 pounds, and McDowell, Caldwell, and Buncombe, with between 50 and 20,000 pounds each.”²⁹ He goes on to report, however, that the western and mountain counties produced one percent of North Carolina’s total tobacco output in 1860.

While large farms existed in the western counties, the climate and topography did not readily lend themselves to large-scale cultivation of tobacco or cotton as cash crops during the Colonial or Antebellum eras.³⁰ Perhaps attributable to this, the number of enslaved people in McDowell County in 1860 was significantly lower than the average for the entire state, and between a third and a half as much as some of the eastern counties.³¹ Still, the number of enslaved people in McDowell was not insignificant, comprising almost a fifth of the population, when the “the average percentage of slaves in the population of North Carolina’s 15 westernmost counties in 1860 was 10.2 percent.”³² In 1860, 18.3 percent (1,305) of the total county population (7,120) represented enslaved people of color, in contrast to approximately 34 percent of the total population across North Carolina. The diaries of McDowell resident James Harvey Greenlee demonstrate that his enslaved workforce devoted only about 40 percent of their time to agricultural pursuits, and the rest to jobs such as brickmaking, blacksmithing, tanning, construction, and housework.³³ Slaveholders in McDowell also rented or leased out their slaves for agricultural or mining work.³⁴ Free persons of color represented 3.8 percent (273) of the county population, and only one such individual was a landowner.³⁵ Free Blacks worked

²⁵ Johnston, *McDowell County Heritage*, 5, 112.

²⁶ Johnston, *McDowell County Heritage*, 5.

²⁷ Inscoe, *Mountain Masters*, 14-17.

²⁸ Inscoe, *Mountain Masters*, 14.

²⁹ Inscoe, *Mountain Masters*, 271, n. 12.

³⁰ Inscoe, *Mountain Masters*, 22-24.

³¹ E. Hergesheimer, *Map showing the distribution of the slave population of the southern states of the United States, Compiled from the census of 1860*, Washington, DC: Henry S. Graham, 1861., <https://www.loc.gov/item/99447026>, accessed April 18, 2025.

³² Inscoe, *Mountain Masters*, 60-62.

³³ Inscoe, *Mountain Masters*, 74-75.

³⁴ Inscoe, *Mountain Masters*, 73-78.

³⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, *1860 Census: Population of the United States. State of North Carolina* (Washington, DC, 1864), 358-359, <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1860/population/1860a-27.pdf>, accessed Dec. 2, 2023. See also, Mike Conley, “From Slavery to Emancipation,” *The McDowell News*, Marion, NC, Aug. 7, 2011, 1A and 4A.

as farm laborers, and a small number apprenticed in various trades. Most of the people of color who lived and worked in McDowell County before the Civil War were in fact multi-ethnic, described in the Census as “mulatto.”³⁶



Figure 1: MCO185 Suttlemyre-Stepp House, ca. 1865 (Source: NV5 Field Survey)

Two industries involving the harvest of raw materials also developed in the late Colonial and Antebellum periods: logging and mining. The old growth stands of several species of oak and pine, along with chestnut and some hickory, provided lumber and tan bark for tanning leather.³⁷ Historian John Boles notes that, throughout the South in the antebellum period, lumbering operations relied heavily on the labor of enslaved persons.³⁸ Initially composed of smaller scale operations for the local market, the industry flourished in the county following the introduction of mechanized sawmills in the

³⁶ 1860 Census.

³⁷ Catherine W. Bishir, Michael T. Southern, and Jennifer F. Martin. *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 46-47; James Lawton Haney and the McDowell County Historic Preservation Commission, *Images of America: McDowell County, North Carolina: 1843-1943* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2002), 92-94; Richard D. Starnes and John Hairr, “Logging,” *NCPedia*, 2006, <https://www.ncpedia.org/logging>, accessed Dec. 1, 2023; G. C. Little, “McDowell County, Economic and Social,” University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1917, 1-3. This unpublished paper is available in the Local History Reference section of the McDowell County Public Library in Marion with the call number NC REF 917.56 LIT.

³⁸ John B. Boles, *Black Southerners, 1619-1869, New Perspectives on the South* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1984), 118-119; Fossett, *History of McDowell County*, 86.

nineteenth century.³⁹ The placement of rail lines in the second half of the nineteenth century facilitated the transportation of raw and finished forest products from McDowell's forests.⁴⁰ As Bishir, Southern, and Martin note, by the 1920s, "industrialized logging had greatly depleted the forests of western North Carolina," slowing the industry and displacing workers who had left farms and other occupations to work in the lumber industry.⁴¹ In western North Carolina, as elsewhere, destruction of the forests ultimately gave rise to the development of forestry management practices and to the movement to establish national forests.⁴² It is no coincidence that the very first tract of land purchased under the Weeks Act, which allowed for the acquisition of the first national forest lands in the eastern United States, was in McDowell County. In 1911, Burke McDowell Lumber Company sold 8,100 acres outside of Marion to the federal government, leading to the establishment of Pisgah National Forest.⁴³

In the first half of the nineteenth century, North Carolina experienced a gold rush, and McDowell County became its focal point for a time.⁴⁴ Fossett notes that while gold was known in the area much earlier, it was rediscovered in the late 1820s in Brindle Creek, in an area of Burke County that was later to become McDowell.⁴⁵ Once discovered, prospecting for gold "spread rapidly southwestward from Dysartsville to Jamestown (later named Vein Mountain) into Rutherford County and throughout the entire South Mountain region."⁴⁶ In the southern part of McDowell, Muddy Creek and the Second Broad River yielded rich finds and led to the rapid formation of gold towns like Brackettown and Brindletown.⁴⁷ Working in grueling and dangerous conditions, enslaved men—often rented or leased from owners in the region—made up a significant share of the mining workforce.⁴⁸ By the late 1840s, many miners had left to seek fortune in California. Still, hydraulic mining—a new and relatively destructive technology—was introduced at Brindletown and Brackettown in the later 1850s.⁴⁹ Gold mining continued to decline in McDowell (and elsewhere in the state) into the early years of the

³⁹ Haney, *Images of America*, 92-94.

⁴⁰ Fossett, *History of McDowell County*, 96-105

⁴¹ Bishir, Southern, and Martin, *Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina*, 46-47.

⁴² Bishir, Southern, and Martin, *Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina*, 47-49.

⁴³ U. S. Forest Service, "National Forests in North Carolina—History and Culture: Weeks Act," <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/nfsnc/learning/history-culture/?cid=stelprdb5321897>, accessed March 3, 2025. First Weeks Law Tract (MC0002) was resurveyed in Phase I of this project.

⁴⁴ James Lawton Haney and Anne Landis Swann, *Gold: Shining Dust in the Cultural History of McDowell County, North Carolina* (Marion, NC: Carson House Publications, 2004); Paul Clark, "Digging Deep into Western North Carolina's Mining History," *Smoky Mountain Living Magazine*, June 1, 2023, <https://www.smliv.com/stories/digging-deep-into-western-north-carolinas-mining-history>, accessed April 22, 2025.

⁴⁵ Fossett, *History of McDowell County*, 80, 83.

⁴⁶ Fossett, *History of McDowell County*, 81.

⁴⁷ Paul Clark, "Digging Deep."

⁴⁸ Haney and Swann, *Gold*, 10-14; Fossett, *History of McDowell County*, 85-86; Boles, *Black Southerners*, 120-121.

⁴⁹ Fossett, *History of McDowell County*, 82.

twentieth century.⁵⁰ While gold brought a significant amount of attention to the area, mining for other resources such as mica, graphite, and pegmatites also developed in McDowell County in the historic period, and some of it continues in the present.⁵¹ Graphite, for example, was mined at the Connally Mine along Mill Creek just north of Andrews Geyser, where the community came to be known as Graphiteville.⁵² An 1897 notice in *The Messenger*, a Marion newspaper, announced the discovery of a large graphite cache in McDowell that is “within five miles of the Western North Carolina Railroad,” facilitating its transport for processing.⁵³

As the Civil War approached, western North Carolina contained both unionists and secessionists. Despite the lack of a large-scale plantation culture in McDowell and the comparatively small number of enslaved African Americans in the county, residents of the county and of the region resented what they viewed as Northern aggression and overreach.⁵⁴ McDowell County residents cast 56 percent of their votes for John Bell, the Constitutional Unionist candidate, in the 1860 presidential election, part of a broader trend in the western counties, which, region-wide, showed a general disinclination to secede at that time.⁵⁵ According to historian John C. Inscoe, it was “[o]nly when events as clear-cut in their implications as the attack on Fort Sumter and Lincoln’s subsequent call for troops occurred,” that “attitudes of western North Carolinians” solidified into consensus to secede.⁵⁶

McDowell County raised 11 regiments for the Confederate Army comprising approximately 800 men, along with ten state militia units and additional companies for the state’s Home Guard.⁵⁷ Notably, recent research by local historian Anne Swann found that 22 men of color from McDowell County served in the Union Army, although it is not clear if they came from among the 273 free Blacks listed

⁵⁰ Fossett, *History of McDowell County*, 81-82.

⁵¹ For a discussion of metals, gems, and minerals discovered in McDowell County, see James F. Conley, *Mineral Localities of North Carolina*, North Carolina Department of Conservation and Development, Raleigh, NC, 1958, 53-54, https://files.nc.gov/ncdeq/Energy%20Mineral%20and%20Land%20Resources/Geological%20Survey/informationcirculants/NCGS_Information_Circular_16_Mineral_Localities_of_NC.pdf, accessed April 23, 2025. On mica mining in McDowell, see Frank G. Lesure, *Mica Deposits of the Blue Ridge in North Carolina: Geological Survey Professional Paper 577*, U. S. Department of the Interior, Washington, DC, 1968, <https://pubs.usgs.gov/pp/0577/report.pdf>, accessed April 23, 2025.

⁵² North Carolina Gazetteer, “Graphiteville,” *NCPedia*, <https://www.ncpedia.org/es/gazetteer/g?page=44>, accessed April 23, 2025; “Connally Mine, Graphiteville, McDowell County, North Carolina, USA,” *Mindat.org*, <https://www.mindat.org/loc-189950.html>, accessed April 23, 2025.

⁵³ “A Large Graphite Mine,” *The Messenger*, Marion NC, Nov. 19, 1897.

⁵⁴ Inscoe, *Mountain Masters*, 211-220.

⁵⁵ Inscoe, *Mountain Masters*, 220-221.

⁵⁶ Inscoe, *Mountain Masters*, 248.

⁵⁷ Carolana, “North Carolina Civil War Units by County,” McDowell County, https://carolana.com/NC/Civil_War/civil_war_military_units_mcdowell_county_nc.html, accessed Dec. 4, 2023; Johnston, *McDowell County Heritage*, 113.

in the 1860 Census or from among the enslaved men residing in the county.⁵⁸ Although no battles were fought in McDowell, residents suffered at the hands of Union soldiers who were part of “Stoneman’s Raiders,” a group led by General George Stoneman that passed through the county in April of 1865.⁵⁹

The immediate postwar era brought railroads and industrial development to McDowell County. The first railroad to reach the county, the Western North Carolina Railroad (later the Southern Railroad), connected Old Fort to Morganton in Burke County and points east. This segment was completed in 1869, partially by convict labor provided by the state prison in Raleigh. By 1880 the line expanded west to Asheville.⁶⁰ The Clinchfield Railroad extended north from Charleston, South Carolina, and passenger service reached Marion by 1908, eventually connecting to lines leading through Virginia and Kentucky to Cincinnati, Ohio.⁶¹ As a result, these two rail lines, which crossed near Marion, bisected McDowell County and provided transportation in all four cardinal directions. The primary industry that drove railroad building in McDowell and much of western North Carolina was logging. The insatiable demand for lumber and related products after the Civil War led to rapid conversion from a small, localized industry to the use of large-scale water- and electrically-powered machinery to speed up the harvesting and milling of tens of thousands of acres of virgin timber.⁶² By the early twentieth century, the furniture industry, a by-product of logging, was also thriving in Western North Carolina and McDowell County, where large companies such as Drexel and Broyhill operated factories.⁶³

Railroads also spurred tourism in the county. As early as the 1880s hotels began to appear in Old Fort, Marion, and other places near the new rail lines. People came to “take the air” of the mountains, believed to ease medical conditions such as tuberculosis and malaria, and to see natural wonders including Catawba Falls, Linville Caverns, and Andrews Geyser.⁶⁴ The Arts and Crafts Movement also spurred interest in traditional Appalachian crafts such as handmade pottery, ladder-back and rocking

⁵⁸ Anne Swann, “U.S. Colored Troops—Men Born in McDowell County,” typescript list dated 2017, McDowell County Historical Files, Marion Public Library.

⁵⁹ Fossett, *History of McDowell County*, 30-35; Johnston, *McDowell County Heritage*, 113.

⁶⁰ William Link, *North Carolina: Change and Tradition in a Southern State*, 2nd ed. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2018), 262; Johnston, *McDowell County Heritage*, 53; Fossett, *History of McDowell County*, 95-102.

⁶¹ Johnston, *McDowell County Heritage*, 53; Fossett, *History of McDowell County*, 102-104.

⁶² Fossett, *History of McDowell County*, 96-105; Haney, *Images of America*, 92-94; Bishir, Southern, and Martin, *Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina*, 46-47.

⁶³ Fossett, *History of McDowell County*, 140. Information on the Drexel Factory, which operated between 1902 and 2004 on a 15.29-acre site on Blue Ridge Street in Marion, is provided on a Brownfield Cleanup analysis undertaken in support of a grant application to the Environmental Protection Agency. The documents can be accessed here: <https://www.marionnc.org/315/Drexel>, accessed March 3, 2025. The Broyhill facility was located at 426 W. Henderson St. in Marion and closed in 2006. See, “Broyhill Announces Closing of Marion, NC Facility,” *Furniture World Magazine*, March 15, 2006, <https://www.furninfo.com/furniture-world-archives/6042>, accessed March 3, 2025.

⁶⁴ Haney, *Images of America*, 7-16. On the railroads, see Fossett, *History of McDowell County*, 96-104.

chairs, quilts, and small leather goods.⁶⁵ By the 1920s investment companies developed vacation communities at Lake Tahoma and Little Switzerland, and made a failed attempt at the same in Nebo.⁶⁶ As noted above, Pisgah National Forest began in 1911 with the sale of 8,100 acres outside of Marion to the federal government.⁶⁷

The advent of the automobile in the early twentieth century resulted in significant roadbuilding in Western North Carolina, intended to improve access for residents, make transportation of goods and raw material easier, and support tourism. In 1902, the aptly titled “Good Roads” initiative brought together transportation reformers who supported the expansion of public financing to build roads throughout the state in order to improve economic development.⁶⁸ The program resulted in hundreds of miles of newly improved or paved roads across McDowell County by the 1930s and included the construction of Highways 221 and 226.⁶⁹ These transportation improvements encouraged further modernization within rural parts of the county, most notably resulting in the arrival of electricity around 1948. Power lines were run by Rural Electric Power, and power poles served double duty when telephone lines were added in 1963.⁷⁰ Most significant for tourism was the construction of the Blue Ridge Parkway, 469 miles of which were built in North Carolina, and which skirts along three-quarters of the western boundary of McDowell County.⁷¹ Part of the New Deal, the Parkway was a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project begun in 1933, constructed in part by the efforts of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC).⁷² Employing several thousand out-of-work young men during the Great Depression, the CCC constructed hundreds of camps throughout the United States, including dozens of camps throughout North Carolina. CCC Camp F-4, more commonly known as Camp McCloskey, was built roughly 12 miles northwest of Marion.⁷³ Men stationed at this camp participated in the construction of numerous roads, bridges, and land improvements in McDowell and surrounding counties and likely assisted with the construction of the Blue Ridge Parkway.⁷⁴

⁶⁵ Jane S. Becker, *Selling Tradition: Appalachia and the Construction of An American Folk, 1930 -1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 6-7.

⁶⁶ For an in-depth analysis of the creation of Little Switzerland, see Anne Mitchell Whisnant, *Super-Scenic Motorway: A Blue Ridge Parkway History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 161-173. On Nebo see Johnston, *McDowell County Heritage*, 330, and on Lake Tahoma see Fossett, *History of McDowell County*, 136-137.

⁶⁷ U. S. Forest Service, “Weeks Act,” <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/nfsnc/learning/history-culture/?cid=stelprdb5321897>, accessed March 3, 2025.

⁶⁸ Link, *North Carolina*, 348-349.

⁶⁹ See map in Link, *North Carolina*, 351; Johnston, *McDowell County Heritage*, 51.

⁷⁰ Johnston, *McDowell County Heritage*, 51.

⁷¹ On the Blue Ridge Parkway see Whisnant, *Super-Scenic Motorway* and Link, *North Carolina*, 375-376.

⁷² “Construction of the Parkway,” U.S. National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/blri/learn/historyculture/construction.htm>, accessed July 2025.

⁷³ “CCC Camps North Carolina,” CCC Legacy, <https://ccclegacy.org/ccc-camp-lists/ccc-camps-north-carolina/>, accessed July 2025.

⁷⁴ Johnston, *McDowell County Heritage*, 331.

Other major infrastructure projects in the 1920s and 1930s in McDowell County include two dams with hydroelectric power plants and numerous bridges along the new roadways. The first dam created Lake James, straddling McDowell and Burke Counties, which supported a Duke Power hydroelectric plant completed in 1923 and still in use.⁷⁵ The second dam formed Lake Tahoma in 1924. It included a power plant that supplied energy to Marion and was a tourist destination complete with a pavilion known as the Casino. The lake was purchased from the local developers in 1929 by an investment group from Cleveland that struggled through the Great Depression, and a planned hotel and golf course were never completed.⁷⁶ Marion native George Edwin Biddix (1905-1994) apprenticed as a bridge builder in his teens and became a noted bridge construction manager and maintenance supervisor in the region for the North Carolina Department of Transportation (1930-1970).⁷⁷ Dozens of his bridges, many with unique design features, exist today along State Highways 221 and 226, and Interstates 70 and 40.⁷⁸

Because much of McDowell County is mountainous and has been sparsely populated from the time of European settlement to the present, few significant institutional buildings were built other than small churches and schools. Often these would serve several neighboring communities that dotted the landscape. Likely attributable to the early Scots-Irish settlement and furthered by the Second Great Awakening, most of the first congregations established were Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist. The earliest known churches in the county originated from local prayer groups or “missions” in the fourth quarter of the eighteenth century and first quarter of the nineteenth and include Siloam Presbyterian in Greenlee, Drucilla Presbyterian in Dysartsville, Bethel Baptist in Marion, and an eighteenth-century church of unknown denomination in Turkey Cove.⁷⁹ Following the Civil War a few African American congregations were established in communities large enough to support them, including Pharr’s Chapel African American Episcopal Zion in Marion and Catawba View Missionary Baptist near Old Fort.⁸⁰

Early schools in the small communities were locally run and sometimes shared the same simple spaces used for worship. The State Legislature first sanctioned public instruction in 1839, and one of

⁷⁵ “About Lake James: Lake James Facts,” Lake James Environmental Association, <https://www.ljea.org/about-lake-james>, accessed July 2025.

⁷⁶ “Lake Tahoma: Water & History in N.C,” Western Regional Archives, <https://westernregionalarchives.wordpress.com/2018/10/25/water-n-c-history-lake-tahoma>, accessed July 2025.

⁷⁷ Jill Read, telephone interview with Kenneth Joel Zogry, December 1, 2023; “Granddaddy George Edwin Biddix: A Book About Granddaddy’s Life in the Appalachian South and the Bridges He Built” (unpublished loose-leaf binder of stories, photos, and maps assembled by Jill Read, undated).

⁷⁸ Jill Read interview and “Granddaddy George Edwin Biddix.”

⁷⁹ Fossett, *History of McDowell County*, 168.

⁸⁰ Fossett, *History of McDowell County*, 177; Johnston, *McDowell County Heritage*, 58.

the earliest schools in McDowell County was a one-room log building in the community of Oak Grove, which was operating by 1853.⁸¹ Progress slowed until after the Civil War, when a renewed statewide effort to create modern graded schools began.⁸² McDowell County established a board of education in 1885, by which time 36 schools for white children were in operation, and ten schools for Black children.⁸³ Educational opportunities for African American children were limited before desegregation, but six Rosenwald schools were built with community and local government support between 1910 and 1930 in McDowell County: three in Old Fort; two in Marion; and one in Bridgewater near the Burke County line south of modern-day Lake James.⁸⁴ By the mid-1970s, following desegregation statewide and consolidation and modernization of public schools, McDowell County had eight elementary schools, two junior high schools, and one high school.⁸⁵

Today McDowell County remains predominately rural with a population in 2021 of 44,717. Some small-scale agriculture and industry remain, and tourism continues to be a primary source of revenue for county residents. The Blue Ridge Parkway, Pisgah National Forest, Linville Caverns, and Lake James are still popular vacation destinations and have significant economic impact on towns including Little Switzerland, Linville Falls, and Nebo (where a U.S. Forest Service local ranger district for Pisgah National Forest is headquartered). Other attractions include the Mountain Gateway Museum, established in the 1960s in Old Fort and more recently operated by the North Carolina Museum of History, North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.⁸⁶

Phase III: Marion

The county seat of Marion was established in 1843 and named for Revolutionary War hero Brigadier General Francis Marion (1732-1795), who was known as the “Swamp Fox” for his successful guerilla tactics against the British in several key battles in North and South Carolina.⁸⁷ An imposing Greek Revival-style courthouse was built in the mid-1840s to conduct county business; it was replaced in

⁸¹ James Lawton Haney, *Glenwood School, 1904-1972: Progressing by Fits and Starts* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2006), 15.

⁸² For a history of the graded school movement in North Carolina see James L. Leloudis, *Schooling the New South: Pedagogy, Self and Society in North Carolina: 1880-1920* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2009).

⁸³ Haney, *Glenwood School*, 18.

⁸⁴ North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, “Rosenwald Fund, 1930,” January 7, 1930, North Carolina Digital Collections, <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/rosenwald-fund-july-1930/1193875?item=1193876>, accessed Dec. 10, 2023.

⁸⁵ Fossett, *History of McDowell County*, 187.

⁸⁶ Mountain Gateway Museum website, North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, <https://www.mgmnc.org>, accessed Dec. 11, 2023.

⁸⁷ Fossett, *History of McDowell County*, 10.

1923 with the current building.⁸⁸ Marion, at the junction of two major rail lines and along the Catawba River, developed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries into the county's largest incorporated town.

In November of 1894, a devastating fire swept through Marion, destroying much of the town's commercial and business district, which was built almost entirely of wood.⁸⁹ The area was quickly rebuilt—now primarily using brick. By the First World War, the town could boast prosperous banks, stores, hotels, bars, barbershops, and a variety of other commercial enterprises. In 1917, the town supported 18 woodworking or lumber mills, a tannery and four leather goods businesses, a commercial printing company, an acid plant, five grist mills, several distilleries, and one pharmaceutical manufacturer, which specialized in remedies derived from the rare local flora.⁹⁰

According to Fossett, Marion also supported three large textile mills before the end of 1916,⁹¹ despite the town lying west of the main “cotton belt” of Piedmont North Carolina. The Marion mills were built between 1908 and 1916, as entrepreneurs saw opportunity in three factors: first, electrical power supplied by the Catawba River; second, the increasing reach of the rail lines to deliver raw materials from the east and then take the finished goods to distant markets; and third, the availability of cheap labor.⁹² Struggling farm families left their homes in the more rural and mountainous parts of the county after 1900 as a result of various circumstances, but predominately because of the invasive logging industry, now super-charged by new power equipment, and access to rail lines.⁹³ Many came to Marion to work in one of the three major textile mills.⁹⁴ To house the new workers, factory owners built mill villages around the Clinchfield, Marion Manufacturing, and Cross Mill textile factories.⁹⁵

Prominent mill executives and business owners built large homes outside the center of Marion starting in the 1890s. The county's largest and grandest churches were also built here during the 1910s and 1920s, including First Baptist (MC0038) and First Presbyterian (MC0005). St. John's Episcopal

⁸⁸ Survey file MC0003 McDowell County Courthouse, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Western Office of Archives and History, Asheville, North Carolina.

⁸⁹ Fossett, *History of McDowell County*, 106-107.

⁹⁰ Little, “Economic and Social,” 3.

⁹¹ Fossett, *History of McDowell County*, 141-142.

⁹² Clay Griffith, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form: Clinchfield Manufacturing Company Mill No. 2, Marion, NC* (Washington, DC: U.S. National Park Service, 2024), sec. 8, p. 14; Little, “Economic and Social,” 2-3.

⁹³ Bishir, Southern, and Martin, *Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina*, 46-47.

⁹⁴ Fossett, *History of McDowell County*, 140-142.

⁹⁵ Survey files MC0136 Clinchfield Mill, MC0139 Cross Mill Spinning Room, and MC0140 Cross Mill Village, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Western Office of Archives and History, Asheville, North Carolina.

(MC0006), a wooden building, was built in 1883 and was one of the only buildings to survive the 1894 fire.⁹⁶

By the 1920s, as mill operations consolidated across the state and the textile business became increasingly corporate and impersonal, labor tensions arose, and strikes became more frequent and more deadly as workers attempted to unionize. The Marion strikes of 1929 were among the most violent and deadliest in North Carolina history. Beginning in July at Clinchfield Mills, the strikes ended at Marion Mills in October with six striking workers killed and others wounded by the county sheriff and his deputies.⁹⁷ The Marion strike brought national attention and was covered by noted American author and muckraking journalist Sinclair Lewis, and his contemporary newspaper articles were collectively published in a small book, *Cheap and Contented Labor*, in late 1929.⁹⁸

Census data suggests that Marion continued to grow slowly, but steadily, in the years following World War II, supported by the textile and furniture industries.⁹⁹ Educational opportunities were expanded in 1964 with the opening of McDowell Technical Community College, which remains the only post-secondary school in the county.¹⁰⁰ Though still a small town by demographic standards, the population grew from 2,889 in 1940 to 3,335 in 1970, and then more than doubled to 7,717 by 2020.¹⁰¹

Today the town of Marion serves as the governmental and business center of the county, and as a gateway to the tourist destinations to the west and north. Several early houses, which historically stood outside Marion's corporate limits, remain and now stand within bounds of the town. These include the Carson House (MC0001) and Pleasant Gardens (Major Joseph McDowell House) (MC0099). Additionally, two downtown National Register Historic Districts have been designated along Main Street and around the original Western Railroad Depot.

⁹⁶ Sybil Bowers, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form: St. John's Episcopal Church*, (Washington: D.C.: U.S. National Park Service, 1990).

⁹⁷ Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, et al., *Like a Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World*, 2nd ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 217-218; Fossett, *History of McDowell County*, 129-132.

⁹⁸ Sinclair Lewis, *Cheap and Contented Labor: The Picture of a Southern Mill Town In 1929* (United Textile Workers of America and Women's Trade Union League, 1929).

⁹⁹ Fossett, *History of McDowell County*, 140-143.

¹⁰⁰ McDowell County Technical College, "History,"

<https://mcdowelltech.edu/about-us/history>, accessed Dec. 14, 2023.

¹⁰¹ U.S. Census Bureau, *1940 Census: Population of the United States. State of North Carolina* (Washington, DC, 1942), 782, <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1940/population-volume-1/33973538v1ch07.pdf>, accessed Dec. 2023; U.S. Census Bureau, *1970 Census: Population of the United States. State of North Carolina* (Washington, DC, 1971), 18,

<https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1970/pc-v1/26084397v1ch3.pdf>, accessed Dec. 2023; North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management, NC Census Data, 2020 Census Summaries, Municipalities, <https://www.osbm.nc.gov/facts-figures/population-demographics/nc-census-data>, accessed Dec. 2023.

Architectural Overview

Phase I resurvey work focused on updating preexisting documentation that had been compiled during survey work in 1985, for National Register nomination forms prepared in 1970 and in the 1990s and 2000s, and/or for North Carolina Study List registration or as part of Section 106 compliance. The 1985 reconnaissance survey carried out by Ted Alexander for the HPO captured many resources built before 1935 in both Marion and rural parts of the county.

What follows is a brief description of the findings of Phase I resurvey, including resource types and an overview of their architectural styles, as well as some of the themes that guided their construction. These brief descriptions will set the stage for documentation and research in Phases II and III, where the focus will be additional pre-1935 buildings and, more plentifully, buildings representing McDowell County's mid-twentieth-century heritage.

Some of the oldest surviving dwellings in McDowell were resurveyed in Phase I. These include the National Register-listed Carson House (MC0001), which contains an original log section constructed in the early nineteenth century. The current form occurred after a series of expansions were completed in the mid-nineteenth century. While this two-story dwelling with a two-tiered, full-width porch once stood on farmland, the house has been subsumed by urban growth around Marion. In the Montford Cove region stands the Albertus Ledbetter House (MC0080), the core of which was built ca. 1826 and was expanded ca. 1836, and which is also listed in the National Register. The ca. 1830, brick, Greek Revival-style house at the Elijah Morris Plantation (MC0091) attests to the existence of high-style rural architecture in McDowell County in the first half of the nineteenth century. Also located on a large plantation, the ca. 1864 Reid-Brinkley House (MC0081), an I-house of common-bond brick with Greek Revival styling, serves as an additional example of higher-style brick architecture in the rural parts of the county.

While several larger farms representing the later nineteenth into the early twentieth centuries were documented in Phase I work, many McDowell landowners of that period were engaged in small-scale farming, and so low-acreage properties occupy much of the county's rural landscape. Dwellings of this period are often I-houses with Greek, Colonial, or Gothic Revival or Queen Anne details. Typical outbuildings include smokehouses (often of log construction), grain cribs, and barns. Built ca. 1886, the William Jehu English Farmstead (MC0078), which contains a frame I-house with full-length porch and multiple outbuildings, is an example of a typical farm from the late nineteenth century. Additional

examples of these late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century rural houses will be covered in Phase II survey. Significantly, residents in rural McDowell built an abundance of modest houses on their properties between the later 1930s into the 1970s, many of them bungalow, Minimal Traditional, Period Revival, or Ranch houses. Since these types of dwellings typify McDowell County domestic architecture of the middle decades of the century, Phase II survey will include the most representative or architecturally interesting of these buildings.



Figure 2: MC0001 Carson House, ca. 1810-1860 (Source: NV5 Field Survey)



Figure 3: MC0080 Albertus Ledbetter House, ca. 1826, 1836 (Source: NV5 Field Survey)



Figure 4: MC0081 Reid-Brinkley House, ca. 1864 (Source: NV5 Field Survey)



Figure 5: MC0078 William Jehu English Farmstead, ca. 1886 (Source: NV5 Field Survey)

Built in styles popular around the turn of the twentieth century, such as Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Neoclassical, Classical Revival-inspired, and Craftsman, the houses resurveyed in Phase I within Marion's core and to its east display a relatively high style of architecture. On the whole, these convey a sense of the wealth and understanding of national building trends of many of the town's early-twentieth-century occupants, some of whom were mill owners or administrators. The Queen Anne-style J. L. "Fate" Morgan House (MC0175), for example, was built in 1900 by Morgan, who sat on the board of directors for both Marion Manufacturing Company and Clinchfield Mill, serving additionally as the vice president of the latter. The 1920 Colonial Revival-style Twitty House (MC0170) was built for Rignold W. Baldwin, who was president of Marion Manufacturing until 1937. The Decker House (MC0176), a 1900 Queen Anne-Colonial Revival-style house owned by the owner of Marion's Payne and Decker Lumber Company, represents the success of the county's lumber industry. A 1910 house associated with the Blanton family (MC0174) stands out on Main Street for its developed Neoclassical exterior, altered over the years, and its fine Craftsman interior. The Blanton family prospered as successful merchants and from their development of pharmaceuticals derived from native plants.¹⁰²

¹⁰² Little, "Economic and Social."



Figure 6: MC0175 J. L. "Fate" Morgan House, ca. 1900 (Source: NV5 Field Survey)



Figure 7: MC0174 Blanton House, ca. 1910 (Source: NV5 Field Survey)



Figure 8: MC0174 Blanton House, interior (Source: NV5 Field Survey)

Showcasing the Colonial Revival in high style and demonstrating the town's early-twentieth-century prosperity, the frame W. R. Chambers-Sisk House (MC0177) was built in 1926 for W. R. Chambers, a prominent Marion attorney, and Fay Morgan, who was the daughter of J. L. Morgan. The Craftsman style is represented by a second Blanton House (MC0028), a 1930 brick Craftsman Foursquare in the center of town. In addition to elements of the mill villages noted above, Phase III survey will seek additional turn-of-the-century houses not recorded in prior surveys and consider neighborhoods built in the city in the middle of the twentieth century, many of which are populated with brick Ranch houses.



Figure 9: MC0177 W. R. Chambers-Sisk House, ca. 1926 (Source: NV5 Field Survey)

The town of Old Fort contains several examples of elevated domestic architecture from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, most notably in Queen Anne, Gothic Revival, and Colonial Revival styles. Standouts here are the 1887 D. W. Adams House (MC0102), an ornate Queen Anne-style dwelling with associated fish hatchery and ponds, and the ca. 1890 Westerman House (MC0191), an example of the Gothic Revival style with paired cross gables on the façade. The National Register-listed, Colonial Revival-Queen Anne hybrid Welsford Parker Artz House (MC0004) was built between 1904 and 1906 for the superintendent of the U.S. Leather tannery, Old Fort's leading industry.¹⁰³ Phase II fieldwork will seek to identify additional early-twentieth-century houses in and around Old Fort, as well as those from mid-century.

¹⁰³ Mary Jean Hooper, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form: Welsford Parker Artz House, Old Fort, NC* (Washington, DC: U.S. National Park Service, 1990). The tanning industry was underpinned by the county's logging industry, as it required both wood and tree bark for operations.



Figure 10: MC0102 D. W. Adams House, ca. 1887 (Source: NV5 Field Survey)



Figure 11: MC0191 Westerman House, ca. 1890 (Source: NV5 Field Survey)

Textile and, later, furniture manufacturing were important industries in Marion and have left a lasting mark on the city's architectural landscape. In the early twentieth century, three factories—Marion Manufacturing Company (MC0168), Clinchfield Textile Mill (MC0136), and Cross Mill (MC0139)—were

established within Marion and served as major economic drivers. What remained of the mill buildings was documented in the 1985 reconnaissance survey. Later developments, changes, and—in the case of the primary factory buildings of all three mills—demolitions have been noted in the Phase I resurvey. The original factory buildings, all of brick, shared similar stylistic characteristics and were highly representative of industrial buildings of their era. These were large, rectangular, one- to four-story buildings with moderate decorative features verging on the Italianate style, including arched windows and doors and decorative brickwork. Additions to these industrial complexes were common in the later 1940s and 1950s, when lower, nondescript brick or metal-sided warehouse-type buildings were added into the 1990s.



Figure 12: MC0168 Marion Manufacturing Company (Source: NV5 Field Survey)

Sizable villages, now simply recognized as neighborhoods within Marion, were built up in support of the three textile mills to house workers and their families. Of these, Cross Mill Village (MC0140) has been documented collectively and includes modest worker housing, a park, a school, and an associated church. As noted in 1985 survey documentation, modest side-gabled frame dwellings housed Marion Manufacturing Company's workers. The village also included churches, a store, and a community building.¹⁰⁴ At Clinchfield Mill, 235 frame houses—some of which are situated in a circularly laid block—were once associated with the mill but were sold off in 1955 by Burlington Industries, a

¹⁰⁴ Survey file MC0168 Marion Manufacturing Co./Fabrics Building (Gone), North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Western Office of Archives and History, Asheville, North Carolina.

textile manufacturing company, when it purchased the mill. Several churches, a store, and a school were also associated with the Clinchfield Mill village.¹⁰⁵ Phase III survey will document mill-related housing and community resources adjacent to Marion Manufacturing Company and Clinchfield Textile Mill and further explore elements of the Cross Mill village.



Figure 13: MC0140 Cross Mill Village, Marion (Source: NV5 Field Survey)

Because much of the past documentation within McDowell County has focused on the downtown cores of Marion and Old Fort, commercial buildings are heavily represented in the first phase of survey. Most were constructed between 1900 and 1920, but they range in date from the 1890s through the 1930s. As noted above, a fire in downtown Marion destroyed much of the pre-1894 building stock in the city's core. On the whole, these buildings represent the standard commercial style of the era, with flat or parapet roofs, large storefront windows, and setback entrances at street level. The majority are of brick and showcase a number of decorative details, often Italianate in appearance, including arched windows with hood molds, corbels and brackets, dentils, and stepped gables. While many of these have been historically and architecturally contextualized in National Register nomination forms (Main Street Historic District, MC0009; Depot Historic District, MC0008; Old Fort Commercial Historic District, MC0100), their mid-twentieth-century contexts have not been thoroughly explored.¹⁰⁶ Phases

¹⁰⁵ Survey file MC0136 Clinchfield Mill, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Western Office of Archives and History, Asheville, North Carolina.

¹⁰⁶ Sibyl Bowers, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form: Main Street Historic District, Marion, NC* (Washington, DC: U.S. National Park Service, 1991); Sibyl Bowers, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form: Depot Historic District, Marion, NC* (Washington, DC: U.S. National Park Service, 1991); Sibyl

II and III survey will pick up additions to downtown corridors that reflect shifts in architectural tastes towards the modern and contemporary styles, the growth of car culture in the county, state, and country, and the post-World War II boom in consumerism in the mid-twentieth century.



Figure 14: MC0046 Rice and White Furniture, within the Main Street Historic District (MC0009), Marion (Source: NV5 Field Survey)



Figure 15: MC0042 Merchants and Farmers Bank, within the Main Street Historic District (MC0009), Marion (Source: NV5 Field Survey)

Bowers, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form: Old Fort Commercial Historic District, Old Fort, NC* (Washington, DC: U.S. National Park Service, 2011).



Figure 16: MC0110 Commercial Building, within the Old Fort Commercial Historic District (MC0100), Old Fort (Source: NV5 Field Survey)

Phase I resurvey considered nine churches, six in Marion and the remainder in more rural sections of the county. These were built in a variety of the popular architectural styles of the times. The earliest of the Phase I churches is Marion's St. John's Episcopal Church (MC0006), an 1883 frame building in the Gothic Revival style. The ca. 1916 Cross Mill Methodist Church (MC0172) is further representative of the Gothic Revival style in frame. The Classical Revival style is also represented in Marion by the National Register-listed First Presbyterian Church (MC0005), a brick church built in 1923. The 1914 brick First Baptist Church (MC0038) displays the Romanesque Revival. Additional churches in town and throughout the county were built in a modest Gothic Revival style or are unadorned buildings. Several are noted below in a brief discussion of stone architecture in the county.



Figure 17: MC0006 St. John's Episcopal Church, Marion, ca. 1883 (Source: NV5 Field Survey)



Figure 18: MC0172 Cross Mill Methodist Church, Marion, ca. 1916 (Source: NV5 Field Survey)



Figure 19: MC0005 First Presbyterian Church, Marion, ca. 1923 (Source: NV5 Field Survey)



Figure 20: MC0038 First Baptist Church, Marion, ca. 1914 (Source: NV5 Field Survey)

Windshield surveys for Phases II and III have identified a number of mid-twentieth-century church buildings throughout the county that are noteworthy for their participation in mid-century trends in

church architecture seen plentifully in the state's urban and suburban areas, a theme to be explored in later reports. While contemporary styles are present in the county, simple brick or brick-faced churches, best described as modestly Colonial Revival in appearance, were constructed in abundance in McDowell County following World War II and will be documented in these later survey phases. In addition, in Phase III, undocumented clergy houses and later additions to church campuses—such as mid-century fellowship halls and parish houses like those associated with St. John's Episcopal (MC0006) and First Presbyterian (MC0005) in Marion—will be explored in further depth.



Figure 21: Parish house of MC0006 St. John's Episcopal Church, Marion (Source: NV5 Field Survey)



Figure 22: Fellowship Hall of MC0005 First Presbyterian Church, Marion (Source: NV5 Field Survey)

McDowell County's early-twentieth-century architectural stock includes several stone buildings, noteworthy because they are emblematic of the region's strong tradition in skilled stone masonry. In Western North Carolina and McDowell County, this tradition dates back to the Colonial era but was revived in the 1890s by the arrival of a group of French-speaking Italians seeking religious freedom. The Waldensians settled the town of Valdese in adjoining Burke County, and among their number were master stone carvers whose work can be seen across North Carolina, including on the campus of Duke University. In McDowell County, the Waldensians are known to have built the 1927 Nebo United Methodist Church (MC0157), the 1925 Casino at Lake Tahoma (MC0150), and the 1937 Marion Community Building (MC0034), a WPA project. Further examples of moderately dressed river rock and other stone buildings are found in both Marion and rural parts of the county and are in use for different functions, although churches are heavily represented in this group. Gothic Revival in style, the National Register-listed Saint Matthew's Lutheran Church (MC0007) in Marion was constructed of river rocks from the nearby Catawba River in 1935 and stands out as an example of the skilled masonry on display in the county.¹⁰⁷ The Mountain Gateway Museum (MC0183) in Old Fort, once a community gathering locale, was built of local river rock in 1937 by the WPA, which employed skilled masons in the task. Two additional examples of stone architecture included in the Phase I resurvey demonstrate that this tradition was also strong in more rural parts of the county. The first, built in 1925 of river rock, is the Concord United Methodist Church (MC0076) in the Sevier community in the northern reaches of the county, and the second example is the National Register-listed Linville Falls Tavern (MC0069), an expertly crafted Rustic Revival building of semi-coursed native stone in Linville Falls dating to 1936.¹⁰⁸ In Phases II and III, surveyors anticipate the documentation of additional stone buildings and features, some likely attributable to the Waldensians, and plan a fuller treatment of the theme of stone masonry in McDowell County in the early twentieth century.

¹⁰⁷ Sibyl Bowers, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form: St. Matthew's Lutheran Church* (Washington, DC: U.S. National Park Service, 1990).

¹⁰⁸ Helen Cain and Nancy Van Dolsen, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form: (former) Linville Falls Tavern* (Washington, DC: U.S. National Park Service, 2000).



Figure 23: MC0007 St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, Marion, 1935 (Source: NV5 Field Survey)



Figure 24: MC0157 Nebo United Methodist Church, Nebo, 1927 (Source: NV5 Field Survey)



Figure 25: MC0183 Mountain Gateway Museum, Old Fort, 1937 (Source: NV5 Field Survey)



Figure 26: MC0034 Marion Community Building, façade, 1937 (Source: NV5 Field Survey)

Transportation infrastructure, elements of which have been documented in Phase I of this project, was critical to McDowell County's development. The railroad arrived in Marion ca. 1870, spurring a flurry of development in the downtown.¹⁰⁹ Train depots, infrastructure, and related commercial buildings have been documented in National Register nominations in both Marion and Old Fort.¹¹⁰ Railroad-related infrastructure remains to be documented in the county—urban and rural—and offers promising avenues for research in both Phases II and III. For instance, just outside the bounds of Marion's Main Street Historic District, a bridge borne on fluted columns and topped by Art Deco guardrails carries Marion's South Main Street over the rail line along Railroad Street. Outside the city, two late-nineteenth-century railroad trestle bridges support the Georgia and Carolina Midland Railway Company's line to South Carolina. Now included in master plans for the Peavine Rail Trail, these trestle bridges are worthy of further examination because they contribute to the story of McDowell County industry and the transportation of locally produced goods and raw materials in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.¹¹¹ Additionally, Phase II survey will seek out some of the formed concrete bridges built by McDowell native George Edwin Biddix between 1920 and 1970. The historic Blue Ridge Parkway runs at the northern boundary of the county, along which are the Big Laurel Mountain Bridge (MC0206) and the Twin Tunnel #1 and Rough Ridge tunnel (MC0202 and MC0222, respectively), all impressive feats in stone construction. These were surveyed in 2013 and are demonstrative of the transportation infrastructure within the county.



Figure 27: MC0092 Old Fort Depot, Old Fort, 1894 (Source: NV5 Field Survey)

¹⁰⁹ Bowers, *Main Street Historic District*, 8.4.

¹¹⁰ Bowers, *Main Street Historic District*, and Bowers, *Old Fort Commercial Historic District*.

¹¹¹ On the Peavine Trail, see <https://mcdowelltrails.org/peavine-trail>, accessed Nov. 30, 2023 and DBD Planning, "Marion Peavine Rail Trail Master Plan," Marion, NC, 2023, <https://issuu.com/dbdplanning/docs/marion-peavine-rail-trail-master-plan/78>, accessed Nov. 30, 2023.

The county's rail and road networks—many of which were built in support of the thriving logging trade—also gave rise to its travel and tourism industry. At Linville Falls, for example, settlers came in the late nineteenth century to take advantage of the economic prospects of logging the surrounding forestland. The rail line in this area was laid to facilitate the industry, and US Highway 221 was extended from Marion to Boone through Linville Falls.¹¹² Catering to the seasonal lumber workers and visitors who came to enjoy the area's rich natural setting, including nearby Linville Caverns, boarding houses, hotels, restaurants, stores, and other establishments were developed. The National Register-listed Linville Falls Tavern (MC0069) is an example of the county's travel-related infrastructure.¹¹³ The early-twentieth-century resort community of Little Switzerland grew in response to the natural beauty of the area. Accessed by toll roads for decades, the town became more accessible following construction of the Blue Ridge Parkway in the 1930s.¹¹⁴ A handful of properties within Little Switzerland were documented in Phase I, and the area holds additional recreation-related resources for Phase II exploration, including the Skyline Village Inn, which was built in 1948 to accommodate increased tourism in the area. Phase II survey will seek out additional lodging and tourism-related buildings throughout the county. In addition, recreational areas have also been important to the local economy. The first tract of land purchased by the Forest Service under the 1911 Weeks Law, the First Weeks Law Tract (MC0002), is located in the eastern part of the county in the Pisgah National Forest. The First Weeks Law Tract was resurveyed as a whole in Phase I, but specific components within the tract will be considered during Phase II survey.

Phase I Findings: Challenges, Community Involvement, and Resource Analytics

The McDowell County Comprehensive Architectural Survey includes the documentation and evaluation of historic resources in Old Fort and rural areas (Phase II) and in Marion (Phase III). NV5 conducted a countywide windshield survey and selected candidate properties for Phase II documentation in Old Fort and unincorporated McDowell County and for Phase III documentation in the city of Marion. While the Phase I windshield survey resources are the primary candidates for documentation, NV5 intends to remain flexible in the event additional resources or information should inform the documentation of as-yet unidentified but potentially important historic properties.

The Phase I windshield survey indicated that owners have invested in and altered most historic-age residences in McDowell County, in many cases leading to the loss of some historic integrity. Both in

¹¹² Cain and Van Dolsen, 8.1-8.3.

¹¹³ Cain and Van Dolsen.

¹¹⁴ Dave Tabler, "Little Switzerland Celebrates 100 years," *Appalachian History*, June 2, 2010, <https://www.appalachianhistory.net/2010/06/little-switzerland-celebrates-100-years-part-2-of-2.html>, accessed Dec. 18, 2023.

towns and rural areas, most occupied houses have been renovated, often through the application of vinyl siding and the installation of new windows and doors. Thus, generally speaking, most of McDowell County's historic housing does not retain a high level of integrity. Well-preserved buildings and houses pre-dating World War II are generally rare and, when encountered during the Phase I windshield survey, were generally included for Phases II and III documentation.

Phases II and III Approach

The Phase II survey will focus on resources in the town of Old Fort and in rural areas outside of Marion's city limits. Additional fieldwork and research will inform the Phase II report's historic and architectural contexts begun in this report. In conjunction with Phase I findings, the Phase II report will address the types, styles, and uses of historic architecture found in Old Fort and rural McDowell County during additional survey, as well as additional historic context regarding Old Fort, rural development, and agricultural production in different parts of the county. Infrastructure development, including hydropower and road and rail networks, keyed Marion's growth and will also be addressed.

Most surviving nineteenth-century architecture appears to have been identified and documented previously and is included in Phase I resurveys and amended documentation. A small number of mid- to late-nineteenth-century houses were identified for Phase II documentation. These included a small number of I-houses, Queen Anne-style houses, single-pile houses, and gable-front and wing dwellings. Although a concentration of historic architecture exists in Old Fort, including late-nineteenth- to early-twentieth-century houses, most examples have been substantially altered through material changes.

Nonetheless, as these houses represent the county's earliest remaining residential buildings and oldest building stock, NV5 identified all such examples encountered for Phase II documentation, including some historic-age farms. Because the county's surviving nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century rural buildings, as well as intact historic farmsteads, appear to be scarce, many of these resources were deemed potential candidates for documentation.

Although the windshield survey in Phase II areas identified select nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century properties, the vast majority of potential Phase II resources identified represented relatively modest and plain examples of side- and front-gabled houses dating from the first half of the twentieth century (i.e., 1930s through 1950s). Most were bungalows, Minimal Traditional houses, Period Revival cottages, and Ranch houses. In rural areas, these generally simple houses appear to have made up the bulk of residential development during the early- to mid-twentieth century.

Numerous points were dropped on the most intact examples of these resources, as they represent the majority of McDowell County's historic rural building stock.

Community and institutional resources identified in rural areas were predominantly small, mid-twentieth-century churches with cemeteries, many of which were selected for documentation. Additional commercial and industrial resources were identified in Old Fort, including storefronts and one industrial facility, and a small number of standalone stores were noted in rural areas. Tourist-related accommodations were identified in the Little Switzerland area.

Based on the windshield survey, the Pisgah National Forest and Blue Ridge Parkway in western McDowell County contain few historic-age buildings, with some exceptions. Thus, although these areas are not proposed to be a focus of the Phase II survey, resources that survive in these areas are nonetheless noteworthy due to their relatively small number, and several were identified for potential Phase II documentation. NV5 will further coordinate with US Forest Service staff to identify potential resources for Phase II survey.

NV5 anticipates documenting approximately 350 resources during the Phase II survey in Old Fort and unincorporated McDowell County, but the Phase I survey identified approximately 375 potential survey candidates. Therefore, during Phase II survey and documentation, NV5 will make determinations in the field and/or during development of the Phase II documentation about which resources outside of the 350-resource target number will not be documented. These sorting decisions likely will be made based on a resource's integrity and frequency of type within the candidate pool, but, where applicable, also informed by background research and historic context, and the involvement and interest of local people.

Therefore, during the Phase II survey and documentation, NV5 intends to:

- focus Phase II efforts in Old Fort and McDowell County's central and eastern sections,
- further develop the historic and architectural contexts for Old Fort and rural, unincorporated McDowell County,
- identify any significant or notable developmental or architectural trends in Old Fort and rural McDowell County,
- document most (if not all) examples of the county's earliest extant architecture, which can generally be described as buildings and structures dating from the nineteenth century through the early twentieth century,
- document most historic-age agricultural properties regardless of location,

- document numerous examples of 1930s to 1950s houses, as these resources are by far the most common historic-age buildings in rural McDowell County,
- search for and document physical evidence of Black communities in rural McDowell County and in Old Fort,
- document select resources on public land in western McDowell County, and
- as applicable, substitute currently identified Phase II resources if important additional candidate properties are identified as part of Phase II fieldwork and research.

The Phase III survey will focus on historic resources within Marion. The historic context will be further developed during Phase III to inform evaluations of identified resources. Marion's development was spurred by hydropower, the railroad, and a dynamic and evolving industrial base. The town's commercial core is surrounded by traditional neighborhoods, and mill communities sprang up around three major factory complexes. The Phase III report and context will further detail and address these areas of Marion and the associated historical themes. Documentation will include District/Neighborhood/Area forms for historic neighborhoods and concentrations of development with defensible boundaries, as well as individual forms for more prominent resources, good examples of building types or styles, and select individual buildings.

During the Phase I windshield survey, NV5 identified additional residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional buildings for Phase III documentation. Residential resources included neighborhoods and individual houses in proximity to downtown Marion and included good and some high-style examples of Queen Anne, Craftsman, Colonial Revival, and Tudor Revival architecture. Commercial resources included additional storefronts, select standalone commercial buildings and small warehouses, and the Modernist Lady Marion shopping center south of downtown. Community resources included a small number of churches and schools, including a small residential campus evidently associated with Our Lady of Angels Catholic Church.

Notably, three factory complexes and surrounding residential developments were also identified: Cross Mill (MC0139 and MC0140), Marion Manufacturing Company (MC0168), and Clinchfield Textile Mill (MC0136). Additional research and survey will be necessary to better delineate these specific communities within Marion. Buildings associated with Marion Manufacturing and Clinchfield will be documented in District/Neighborhood/Area forms with select individual buildings surveyed, including surviving factory buildings, community facilities as applicable, and select examples of housing.

NV5 anticipates documenting approximately 150 resources during the Phase III survey of Marion, but the Phase I survey identified 201 potential survey candidates. Similar to Phase II, NV5 will make

determinations in the field and/or during development of the Phase III documentation about which resources outside of the 150-resource target number will not be documented. Furthermore, NV5 will utilize the District/Neighborhood/Area form for neighborhoods and will likely add additional resources within the mill communities as those neighborhoods and their features are better understood and good residential examples are identified.

Therefore, during the Phase III survey and documentation, NV5 plans to:

- further develop Marion's historic and architectural context,
- identify any significant or notable developmental or architectural trends in Marion,
- document intact examples of Marion's historic residential architecture generally dating from the late nineteenth through the mid-twentieth century,
- approximately delineate Marion's intact historic residential neighborhoods using District/Neighborhood/Area forms,
- approximately delineate Marion's undocumented mill communities around the Marion Manufacturing and Clinchfield sites using District/Neighborhood/Area forms,
- document select and generally intact examples of historic industrial, commercial, and institutional buildings and structures, including but not limited to factories, mills, storefronts, shops, churches, and schools,
- document any resources identified as important to the Black community, and
- as applicable, substitute currently identified Phase III resources if important additional candidate properties are identified as part of Phase III fieldwork and research.

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Appendix A: National Register-Listed Properties

Property Name	Date Listed
MC0004 Welsford Parker Artz House	1990
MC0089 Henry Seawell and Mary Jane English Brown Farmstead	2009
MC0001 Carson House	1970
MC0120 Carson-Young House	2011
MC0008 Depot Historic District	1991
MC0005 First Presbyterian Church	1991
MC0080 Albertus Ledbetter House	2001
MC0069 Linville Falls Tavern (former)	2000
MC0070 Lone Beech	1995
MC0009 Main Street Historic District	1991, Ad. Doc. 1994
MC0003 McDowell County Courthouse	1979
MC0100 Old Fort Commercial Historic District	2011
MC0006 St. John's Episcopal Church	1991
MC0007 St. Matthew's Lutheran Church	1991

Appendix B: Classifications of Previously Surveyed Properties Resurveyed in 2023

No Substantial Change: Buildings classified in this way are unchanged from the last time the building was surveyed and retain, at a minimum, the same windows and siding. Insubstantial changes, including changes to paint color, the in-kind replacement of roofing or other exterior materials, and changes to landscaping or building use, are classified as No Substantial Change. In total, 55 Phase I resources have been classified in this category.

Substantial Change by Alteration: Substantial changes include changes to the exterior building materials or form, the replacement of windows or siding, the installation of roofing material that varies from the previous material, and the replacement of other exterior materials and details that are not “in kind.” Changes to building fenestration include the removal, relocation, resizing, or installation of new door or window openings. Changes to building form include the enclosure of front or side porches, the construction of additions to the façade or side elevations, the alteration of the roofline (including the addition, removal, or alteration of dormers), or the raising of the building foundation. In total, 88 Phase I resources have been classified in this category.

Substantial Change by Deterioration: This classification is specific to buildings that have noticeable deferred maintenance and, in most cases, are classified as being in “deteriorated” condition and are likely to be lost in the coming years if action is not taken to stabilize them. In total, 8 Phase I resources have been classified in this category.

Substantial Change by Improvement: This classification includes properties that have experienced change(s) more in keeping with their historic character, including the removal or reversal of earlier incompatible alterations, the in-kind repair of deteriorated surfaces and features, or the reinstallation of missing historic details based on documentary evidence. In total, ten Phase I resources have been classified in this category.

Removed from Site: This classification indicates that the primary building on the site has been removed by demolition, disaster, or relocation. In some cases, outbuildings may remain and/or new primary buildings have been constructed on the site. In total, 35 Phase I resources have been classified in this category.

Not Found: This classification is specific to buildings whose locations, and therefore their existence, could not be verified in the field or with aerial imagery. Further, since their location could not be

verified, their demolition could not be confirmed. In total, one Phase I resource has been classified in this category.

No Access: Properties with fenced boundaries, gated driveways, or without vehicular or pedestrian access are classified in this manner. In some instances, properties were still visible from the right-of-way or in aerial photographs, and thus, also may have been assigned another classification from this list. In total, eight Phase I resources have been classified in this category.

Outbuilding Loss: One or more outbuildings present at the time of last survey are no longer extant. In total, 27 Phase I resources have been classified in this category.

Appendix C: Phase I Properties to be Documented in Phase II or III

SSN	Name	Address	Vicinity	Condition**
MC0082	George Gardin House	1571 Marlowe Rd	Marion	Deteriorated
MC0141	Eugene Cross Jr. House	85 Montevista Ave.	Marion	Good
MC0160	M. V. Snypes House	51 Dewey James Dr	Nebo	Good
MC0207	Dam No. 1/Powerhouse No. 1	SR 1274	Old Fort	Ruinous
MC0208	Powerhouse No. 2/Stone Wall/Cribbing Complex	SR 1274	Old Fort	Ruinous
MC0209	Dam No. 2	SR 1274	Old Fort	Ruinous
MC0210	Dam No. 3	SR 1274/3074 Catawba River Rd	Old Fort	Ruinous

** Condition as listed in previous survey

Appendix D: Demolished Properties (Survey Updated During Phase I)

SSN	Name	Address	Vicinity
MC0015	City Council Chambers	69 W. Court St	Marion
MC0035	Eugene Cross House	137 N. Main St	Marion
MC0037	Baptist Church Parsonage	99 N. Main St	Marion
MC0039	Bobbitt-Bennet House	69 N. Main St	Marion
MC0094	Bridge #175	Spooky Hollow Rd	Marion
MC0095	Bridge #70	.25 mi NW from Int. of Lake James Rd & N Fork River Dr	Marion
MC0101	Truss Bridge #126-87-10	Old NC 126	Nebo
MC0118	Bridge #8	SR 1769, South Muddy Creek	Dysartsville
MC0119	Bridge #48	Mack Noblitt Rd	Old Fort
MC0121	Bridge #68	Stacy Hill Rd	Marion
MC0122	Bridge #69	Yancey Rd	Marion
MC0123	Bridge #86	Commerce St	Old Fort
MC0124	Bridge #93	Old Greenlee Rd	Marion
MC0125	Bridge #95	Lytle Mountain Rd	Marion
MC0126	Bridge #101	Ted Smith Rd	Old Fort
MC0127	Bridge #114	North Cove School Rd	North Cove
MC0128	Bridge #139	Waites Hollifield Rd	Marion
MC0130	Bridge #281	SR 1754 over N. Muddy Creek	Marion
MC0131	Samuel Brown House	14427 US 221	Marion
MC0135	Clinchcross Depot	610 Carolina Ave	Marion
MC0137	Coats Log Cabin	318 Cooper Rd	Marion
MC0138	Craig-Freeman House	4826 US 221	Marion
MC0139	Cross Mill Spinning Room	Blue Ridge St	Marion
MC0145	Henry Gillespie Cabin	191 NC-226 A	Cox Creek
MC0147	Ephriam Greenlee House	1807 Yancey Rd	Marion
MC0154	A. Billy McCall House	North Cove School Rd	North Cove
MC0155	McCall-Lonon House	3002 Old Linville Rd	North Cove
MC0158	Dr. John Reid House	2207 Greenlee Rd	Old Fort
MC0165	James W. Wilson House	SR 1400	Old Fort
MC0184	Ragle Hotel	40 W. Main St	Old Fort
MC0188	Finch House	339 E. Main St	Old Fort
MC0190	P. H. Mashburn House	351 E. Main St	Old Fort
MC0192	Store	1509 NC 126	Nebo

Appendix E: Properties Resurveyed in Phase I

SSN	Name	Address	Vicinity
MC0001	Carson House	1805 US-70	Marion
MC0002	First Weeks Law Tract	Trailhead 1.3 mi from junction of SR 1277 & Newberry Creek Rd	Old Fort
MC0003	McDowell County Courthouse	21 S. Main St	Marion
MC0004	Welsford Parker Artz House	205 Maple Dr	Old Fort
MC0005	First Presbyterian Church	79 Academy St	Marion
MC0006	St. John's Episcopal Church	289 S. Main St	Marion
MC0007	St. Matthew's Lutheran Church	241 W. Court St	Marion
MC0008	Depot Historic District	SE end of Depot St and Railroad St	Marion
MC0009	Main Street Historic District	Main St bound by Garden, State and Logan Streets	Marion
MC0010	Commercial Building	105 Railroad St	Marion
MC0011	Marion Freight Depot	58 Depot St	Marion
MC0012	Blanton's Wholesale Grocery	44 Depot St	Marion
MC0013	(former) Buffaloe Building	45 Depot St	Marion
MC0014	Commercial Building	61 Depot St	Marion
MC0016	(former) McDowell Arts Centre	25 Brown Dr	Marion
MC0017	Commercial Building	31 W. Court St	Marion
MC0018	Belk's Department Store Entry	21 W. Court St	Marion
MC0019	(former) United States Post Office	90 W. Court St	Marion
MC0020	Commercial Building	30 W. Court St	Marion
MC0021	Commercial Building	26 W. Court St	Marion
MC0022	Commercial Building	30 W. Court St	Marion
MC0023	Commercial Building	30 W. Court St	Marion
MC0024	Warehouse	17 E. Henderson St	Marion
MC0025	Commercial Building	33-35 W. Henderson St	Marion
MC0026	Commercial Building	27-29 W. Henderson St	Marion
MC0027	Commercial Building	21-25 W. Henderson St	Marion
MC0028	Blanton House	28 W. Henderson St	Marion
MC0029	Commercial Building	146 Logan St	Marion
MC0030	McDowell News Building	136 Logan St	Marion
MC0031	City Hall	130 Logan St	Marion
MC0032	Commercial Building	34 Logan St	Marion
MC0033	H. E. Kelly Jewelers	62 Logan St	Marion

MC0034	Marion Community Building	191 N. Main St	Marion
MC0036	First Union Bank	145 N. Main St	Marion
MC0038	First Baptist Church	99 N. Main St	Marion
MC0040	(former) McDowell Hotel Building	11-23 Main St	Marion
MC0041	Commercial Building	23 N. Main St	Marion
MC0042	Merchants & Farmers Bank	1-15 N. Main St	Marion
MC0043	Family Barber Shop	24 N. Main St	Marion
MC0044	Commercial Building	20 N. Main St	Marion
MC0045	Hotel James (Hotel Marianna)	8-18 N. Main St	Marion
MC0046	Rice & White Furniture	151 S. Main St	Marion
MC0047	Commercial Building	127-135 Main St	Marion
MC0048	Commercial Building	125 S. Main St	Marion
MC0049	Commercial Building	123 S. Main St	Marion
MC0050	Commercial Building	93-105 S. Main St	Marion
MC0051	Commercial Building	81 S. Main St	Marion
MC0052	Commercial Building	73 S. Main St	Marion
MC0053	Streetman Building	69.S. Main St	Marion
MC0054	Commercial Building	63 S. Main St	Marion
MC0055	Commercial Building	57-61 S. Main St	Marion
MC0056	Neal & Blanton Building	49 S. Main St	Marion
MC0057	Commercial Building	45 S. Main St	Marion
MC0058	City Barber Shop	41 S. Main St	Marion
MC0059	Commercial Building	104 S. Main St	Marion
MC0060	Commercial Building	74-84 S. Main St	Marion
MC0061	Blanton Building	64-72 S. Main St	Marion
MC0062	Commercial Building	60 S. Main St	Marion
MC0063	Commercial Building	50 S. Main St	Marion
MC0064	Commercial Building	44 S. Main St	Marion
MC0065	Commercial Building	40 S. Main St	Marion
MC0066	Commercial Building	28-32 S. Main St	Marion
MC0067	Commercial Building	20 S. Main St	Marion
MC0068	First National Bank Building	14 S. Main St	Marion
MC0069	(former) Linville Falls Tavern	21375 221 Linville Falls Hwy	Newland
MC0070	Lone Beech	64 Hillcrest Dr	Marion
MC0071	William McCall Farmstead	13523 US 221 N	Marion
MC0072	Samuel and Joseph Gilkey Brown Farmstead	14427 US 221	Marion
MC0073	Bringer Rutherford House	316 Rutherford Dr	Nebo
MC0074	Caldwell-Brown House	16192 US 221	Marion
MC0075	McCall-Hefner House	25 Chapman Hill Dr	Marion

MC0076	Concord United Methodist Church	8066 Old Linville Rd	Marion
MC0077	Connelly-Phillips House	55 N. Phillips Dr	Marion
MC0078	William Jehu English Farmstead	199 English Rd	Marion
MC0079	Upton-Sprouse House	831 Brackett Town Rd	Nebo
MC0080	Albertus Ledbetter House	219 Haynes Rd	Marion
MC0081	Reid-Brinkley House	191 NC 226A	Marion
MC0083	Gardin-Haney Cabin (Oak Grove)	1412 Old Glenwood Rd	Marion
MC0084	Lewis A. Haney House	989 Marlowe Rd	Glenwood
MC0085	Mount Hebron Collegiate Bible Institute	286 Hebron Hill Rd	Old Fort
MC0086	A. P. Poteat House	181 Mountain Chase Ln	Marion
MC0087	B. G. Hensley House	4901 US 221	Marion
MC0088	Andrews Geyser, Dam, and Reservoir	2111 Mill Creek Rd	Old Fort
MC0089	Henry S. and Mary Jane E. Brown Farmstead	15956 US 221	Marion
MC0090	Andrews Reservoir and Dam	E side Mill Creek Rd, 0.77 mi SW of Jct w/ Hobson Dr	Old Fort
MC0091	Elijah Morris Plantation	159 Rocky Meadows Dr	Marion
MC0092	Old Fort Depot	25 W. Main St	Old Fort
MC0096	Abraham Gardin House	1932 Old Glenwood Rd	Glenwood
MC0098	Stacy House	4433 US 70	Nebo
MC0099	Pleasant Garden (Col. Joseph McDowell House)	136 US Hwy 70 W	Marion
MC0100	Old Fort Commercial District	Spring St, Catawba Ave, E. Main St	Old Fort
MC0102	D. W. Adams Residence (Westerman-Adams House)	40 Adams Dr	Marion
MC0103	Commercial Building	33 Catawba Ave	Old Fort
MC0104	Commercial Building	39-47 Catawba Ave	Old Fort
MC0105	Railroad Right-of-Way	SW of Intersection of W. Main St and S. Catawba Ave	Old Fort
MC0106	Bank of Old Fort	3 E. Main St	Old Fort
MC0107	Commercial Building	5 E. Main St	Old Fort
MC0108	Mashburn's Drug Store	11 E. Main St	Old Fort
MC0109	Commercial Building	23 E. Main St	Old Fort
MC0110	Commercial Building	25-37 E. Main St	Old Fort
MC0111	Rockett Motors	49-61 E. Main St	Old Fort
MC0112	Norton Building	20 E. Main St	Old Fort
MC0113	Commercial Building	32 E. Main St	Old Fort
MC0114	Commercial Building	48 E. Main St	Old Fort
MC0115	Commercial Building	66a. E. Main St	Old Fort

MC0116	Roxy Theater	66b. E. Main St	Old Fort
MC0117	Arrowhead Monument and Fountain	SW Corner of Intersection of W. Main St and Catawba Ave	Old Fort
MC0120	Carson-Young House	842 Major Conley Rd	Old Fort
MC0129	Bridge #142	Parker Padgett Rd over Catawba River	Old Fort
MC0132	William Franklin Brown House	632 NC-126	Nebo
MC0133	William Carson House	1578 Buck Creek Rd	Marion
MC0134	North Catawba Methodist Church	3275 Old Linville Rd	Marion
MC0136	Clinchfield Mill	55 Church St	Marion
MC0140	Cross Mill Village	Bounded by US-221, SR-1195, Blue Ridge St, Carson St, and RR-ROW	Marion
MC0142	Davis Deal House	39 Orchard Ln	Marion
MC0143	Dysart-Martin House	1543 Hankins Rd	Marion
MC0144	Echo Cottage (Charles H. Duls House)	230 Bear Wallow Rd	Marion
MC0146	Billy Greenlee House	1185 Greenlee Rd	Old Fort
MC0148	Joshua Hall House	12975 Montford Cove Rd	Marion
MC0149	Harbert Harris House	265 Bartlette Rd	Marion
MC0150	Lake Tahoma Casino	3026 Lake Tahoma Rd	Marion
MC0151	Lake Tahoma Office	3226 Lake Tahoma Rd	Marion
MC0152	Dr. Johnathon Ledbetter House	497 Haynes Rd	Marion
MC0156	Ransom-Moore House	306 Ted Smith Rd	Old Fort
MC0157	Nebo Methodist Church	117 Nebo School Rd	Nebo
MC0159	A. H. Simmons-Kaylor House	1469 Harmony Grove Rd	Nebo
MC0161	Switzerland Store	9432 NC 226 A	Marion
MC0162	W. P. Terrell House	311 Terrell Dr	Old Fort
MC0163	Eugene Thomason House	1402 NC 126	Nebo
MC0166	Marion Used Appliances Building	105 Railroad St	Marion
MC0167	Marion Used Appliances Building 2	111 Railroad St	Marion
MC0168	Marion Manufacturing Co.	316 Baldwin Ave	Marion
MC0169	Samuel L. Copeland House	21 Copeland Dr	Marion
MC0170	Robert W. Twitty House	55 Copeland Dr	Marion
MC0172	Cross Mill Methodist Church	85 W. Cross St	Marion
MC0173	Yancey House	82 W. Fort St	Marion
MC0174	House	239 S. Main St	Marion
MC0175	J. L. 'Fate' Morgan House	150 Morgan St	Marion
MC0176	Decker House	44 Morgan St	Marion

MC0177	W. R. Chambers-Sisk House	130 Morgan St	Marion
MC0178	Bolch House	200 Morgan St	Marion
MC0179	A. L. Finley-Noyes House	235 N. Garden St	Marion
MC0180	Thomas Henderson House	224 N. Main St	Marion
MC0181	G. S. Kirby-Pless, Jr. House	163 Viewpoint Dr	Marion
MC0182	Mount Zion AME Church	75 Zion Rd	Marion
MC0183	Mountain Gateway Museum and Heritage Center	24 Water St	Old Fort
MC0185	Suttlemyre-Stepp House	24 Water St	Old Fort
MC0187	Strickland House	233 Catawba Ave	Old Fort
MC0189	Hyams House	66 W. Crawford St	Old Fort
MC0191	Westerman House	26-68 W. Main St	Old Fort
MC0193	Store	5101 US-70	Nebo
MC0194	Store	5911 US-70	Nebo
MC0195	Store	6218 US 70 E	Nebo
MC0197	Store	1510 Old US 221 S	Marion
MC0198	Store	1511 Old US 221 S	Marion
MC0199	Reid and Ruby Holland Store	1580 SR 1786	Marion
MC0200	Store	10376 Montford Cove Rd	Marion
MC0202	Twin Tunnel #1	Milepost 344.5 Blue Ridge Pkwy	Marion
MC0203	Rough Ridge Tunnel	Milepost 349.05 Blue Ridge Pkwy	Old Fort
MC0206	Big Laurel Mountain Bridge	Milepost 347.18 Blue Ridge Pkwy	Burnsville
MC0211	Chestoa View Parking Area RT	Milepost 320.70 Blue Ridge Pkwy	Linville
MC0219	Crawford House	9860 Montford Cove Rd	Marion
MC0221	Curtis Valley Parking B RT	47990 Blue Ridge Pkwy	Burnsville
MC0222	Laurel Knob Overlook RT	Milepost 349.2 Blue Ridge Pkwy	Old Fort
MC0223	Mount Mitchell Area RT	Milepost 349.9 Blue Ridge Pkwy	Old Fort
MC0224	Green Knob Overlook RT	Milepost 350.4 Blue Ridge Pkwy	Old Fort

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