

PLANNING PHASE REPORT



PHASE 1 ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY OF NASH COUNTY

Nash County, North Carolina

TIP No. P-5711; WBS No. 44908.4.1

PREPARED FOR:

North Carolina Department of Transportation

Human Environment Section

1598 Mail Service Center

Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1598

August 2026

RGA Technical Report No. 2026-110NC



RICHARD
GRUBB &
ASSOCIATES

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Richard Grubb & Associates, Inc. (RGA) completed this planning phase report for the Phase 1 Architectural Survey of Nash County, North Carolina, on behalf of the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). The Phase 1 Architectural Survey of Nash County is part of mitigation associated with the CCX intermodal terminal project (TIP No. P-5711; WBS No. 44908.4.1). This project is subject to review under the *Programmatic Agreement for Minor Transportation Projects* (NCDOT/NCHPO/FHWA/USACE/USFS 2020).

This Phase 1 planning phase consisted of a windshield survey to inform the development of a plan for the subsequent Phase 2 comprehensive architectural survey. Phase 3, which will produce the comprehensive survey report, will be completed after Phase 2. The windshield architectural survey excluded the areas within the municipal boundaries of the City of Rocky Mount and its extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) and the Town of Whitakers. It consisted of all unincorporated areas of Nash County and the communities of Bailey, Castalia, Dortches, Middlesex, Momeyer, Nashville, Red Oak, Spring Hope, the portion of Sharpsburg within Nash County, and the portion of Whitakers outside of its municipal boundaries. The North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (HPO) records contain approximately 866 survey files for previously surveyed properties (PSPs) in Nash County outside the municipal boundaries of Rocky Mount and Whitakers.

This Phase 1 report presents a summary of the results of the windshield survey and recommends a scope of work for the subsequent Phase 2 comprehensive survey of Nash County.

1.1 Survey Area

The survey area for the Phase 1 Architectural Survey of Nash County included all unincorporated areas of Nash County and the communities of Bailey, Castalia, Dortches, Middlesex, Momeyer, Nashville, Red Oak, Spring Hope, and Sharpsburg (Figure 1.1). The survey area excluded the areas within the municipal boundaries of the City of Rocky Mount and its ETJ and the Town of Whitakers. The City of Rocky Mount and its ETJ were previously surveyed by RGA from 2023 to 2025. The Town of Whitakers is divided between Nash and Edgecombe counties. Between 2021 and 2023, MdM Historical Consultants Inc. conducted a comprehensive survey of Edgecombe County that included the portion of Whitakers within Edgecombe County. As of this writing, architectural historian Heather Slane is preparing a nomination for the proposed Whitakers National Register Historic District, which will include historic properties in both counties. RGA will survey historic resources immediately outside the municipal boundaries of Whitakers that are within Nash County.

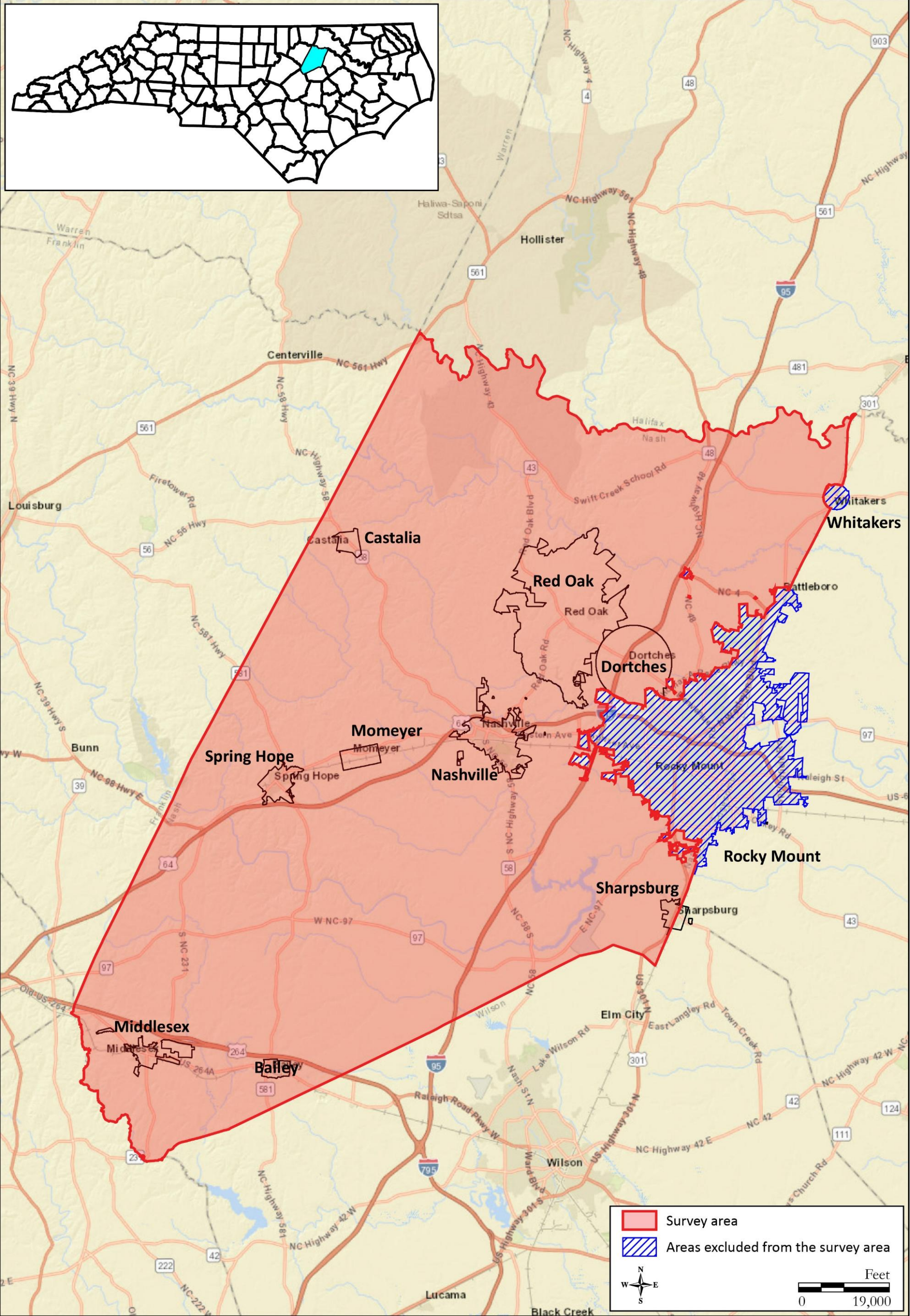


Figure 1.1: Survey area for the Architectural Survey of Nash County, excluding the City of Rocky Mount and its ETJ and the Town of Whitakers (Esri 2026).

1.2 Previous Major Survey Projects Undertaken in Nash County

County-Wide Survey Projects

The HPO first conducted historic architectural survey work in Nash County in 1976 as part of the Tar-Neuse River Basin survey. The survey focused on the Tar-Neuse River Basin, which contains 29 counties in eastern North Carolina. The results of the survey were published in the report *Historic and Architectural Resources of the Tar-Neuse River Basin* (North Carolina Division of Archives and History 1977). The report presents an overview of the geographical and historical background of the Tar-Neuse River Basin, historical backgrounds and architectural contexts for the 29 counties in the study area, and county inventories of surveyed resources.

Historian Richard L. Mattson conducted a comprehensive architectural survey of Nash County in 1984 and 1985. Mattson surveyed approximately 1,000 resources in the county, with a focus on structures built before World War II (Mattson 1987:v). The resources surveyed include houses, churches, schools and other civic buildings, bridges, mills, cotton gins, farm outbuildings, and commercial structures. Mattson presents a historical background, architectural contexts, and survey findings in the book *The History and Architecture of Nash County, North Carolina* (Mattson 1987).

Municipal Survey Projects

The City of Rocky Mount, the largest municipality in the county, has been the subject of two comprehensive municipal survey projects. Architectural historian Kate Ohno surveyed Rocky Mount in 1979 and published her findings in the book *Central City Historic Buildings Inventory: Rocky Mount, North Carolina* (Mearns 1979). RGA architectural historians Pofue Yang and Olivia Heckendorf conducted an intensive-level historic architectural survey update of the City of Rocky Mount and its ETJ from 2023 to 2025. The report was sponsored by NCDOT and is on file at HPO (Yang and Heckendorf 2026).

Nashville, Spring Hope, and Whitakers were surveyed as part of the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) listing process. Nashville and Spring Hope have NRHP districts that were listed in 1987 and 1988, respectively. Whitakers was Study Listed in 2019 and, at the time of this report, in the process of NRHP designation. These surveys and NRHP districts do not contain the entirety of the towns, but they consist of large areas.

Besides survey work for NRHP and Study List (SL) designations, no other municipalities or communities in Nash County have been the subject of comprehensive municipal survey projects. Most previously surveyed properties in Nash County's communities and unincorporated areas were surveyed during the Tar-Neuse River Basin and the 1984–1985 Nash County surveys.

Environmental Review Projects

Many Section 106-generated environmental review reports documented historic properties in Nash County. There are 12 resources within the survey area that have been determined eligible for listing in the NRHP and are assigned “DOE” status in the HPO records, as a result of these regulatory compliance surveys (Table 1.1).¹

Table 1.1: Nash County resources located within the survey area that have been determined eligible for listing in the NRHP.

Survey Site No.	Resource Name	Town	Criteria	DOE Date
NS0206	Murray’s Mill Bridge (Replaced)	Middlesex vicinity	C	2005
NS0317	Truss Bridge #27	Spring Hope vicinity	A, C	1979
NS0481	Swift Creek Bridge (Bridge #4) (Replaced)	Red Oak vicinity	C	1996
NS0484	Richard Mark Whitaker House (Gone)	Battleboro vicinity	N/A	1995
NS0513	O.J. Smith Cotton Gin, Seed House & Well	Whitakers vicinity	A, C	2019
NS0629	Jeffreys School (Rosenwald)	Rocky Mount vicinity	N/A	2005
NS0650	Lee May House	Red Oak	A	2017
NS0943	William H. Brown Farm	Dortches	A	1998
NS0948	Bulluck Farm	Rocky Mount vicinity	A	1998
NS1556	Moore’s Store	Whitakers vicinity	A, C	2019
NS1560	Bridge No. 143	Nashville vicinity	C	2005
NS1577	Bridge (DOT 630204)	Red Oak	C	2005

National Register of Historic Places

There are 19 resources within the survey area that have been listed in the NRHP: 10 houses, 4 civic buildings, 2 gristmills, 2 historic districts, and 1 tobacco warehouse (Table 1.2).²

¹ This includes both extant and gone resources. Nash County has approximately 19 resources that have been determined eligible for listing in the NRHP: 12 are within the survey area, and 7 are in Rocky Mount and its ETJ.

² This includes both extant and gone resources. Nash County has approximately 33 resources that have been listed in the NRHP: 19 within the survey area, and 14 in Rocky Mount and its ETJ.

The Study List

There are 31 resources within the survey area that have been Study Listed: 10 houses, 4 churches, 4 educational resources, 3 gristmills, 2 railroad-related resources, 2 crossroads historic districts, 1 commercial historic district, 1 barn, 1 office, 1 farm, 1 bridge, and 1 commercial building (Table 1.3).³

1.3 Methodology

At the outset of the Phase 1 survey, the HPO provided 1,487 Nash County survey file scans to RGA. Of these survey files, approximately 864 were for resources located within the survey area. The remaining 623 survey files were for resources located outside the survey area: 589 in the City of Rocky Mount and its ETJ, and 34 in Whitakers. The survey file for one resource within the survey area, NS1477 Bisette House, was missing, and a survey file for the Castalia Crossroads Historic District (z-1502SL) was never created. RGA will assign a survey site number to the Castalia Crossroads Historic District during the Phase 2 comprehensive survey. RGA will create physical survey file products for 866 previously surveyed properties.

The HPO also provided a prepopulated Nash County project database, which contained 907 records for previously surveyed properties (PSP) located outside the City of Rocky Mount and its ETJ. HPO GIS Technical Support Analyst Andrew Edmonds found six duplicate records (PSPs that were erroneously recorded with two different site numbers): NS0278, NS0566, NS1119, NS1167, NS1208, and NS1576. In addition, one record (NS1741–NS1858) is a placeholder for the Whitakers Historic District, and 34 records are for resources located in the Town of Whitakers. Excluding the 6 duplicate records, the placeholder record for the Whitakers Historic District, and the 34 records for resources located in Whitakers, RGA anticipates updating 866 records in the Nash County project database as part of the Phase 2 Comprehensive Architectural Survey.

The HPO provided 19 scanned USGS topographic quadrangle maps of Nash County containing fieldwork notes from the 1984–1985 Nash County survey. RGA utilized these maps during the windshield survey to locate PSPs and properties over 50 years old.

RGA Senior Architectural Historian Olivia Heckendorf and Architectural Historian Pofue Yang conducted a windshield survey in May 2026. The results of the windshield survey are discussed in Section 3.0.

RGA conducted background research to develop preliminary historic contexts using county and municipal architectural survey reports, previous Section 106 compliance reports, newspapers,

³ This includes both extant and gone resources. Nash County has approximately 53 resources that have been Study Listed: 31 within the survey area, 20 in Rocky Mount and its ETJ, and 2 in Whitakers.

and historic maps. RGA compiled an annotated bibliography of a selection of primary and secondary sources to support the Phase 2 comprehensive survey (see Section 4.0).

1.4 Reporting

Olivia Heckendorf, Senior Architectural Historian, served as the Principal Investigator, conducted background research and fieldwork, and served as the primary report author. Pofue Yang, Architectural Historian, conducted background research and fieldwork and co-authored the report. Unless stated otherwise, all photographs were taken by Ms. Heckendorf and Mr. Yang in May 2026. Ellen Turco, Principal Senior Architectural Historian, provided project management and a technical review of the report. Ms. Heckendorf, Mr. Yang, and Ms. Turco meet the professional qualifications standards of 36 CFR 61 set forth by the National Park Service. Patricia McEachen prepared the graphics. Emma Durham edited and formatted the report.

Table 1.2: NRHP-listed Nash County resources within the survey area.

Survey Site No.	Resource Name	Town	Criteria*	Areas of Significance*	Period of Significance*	Year Listed
NS0001	Nash County Courthouse	Nashville	N/A	N/A	N/A	1979
NS0002	General Joseph Arrington House	Hilliardston vicinity	N/A	Architecture	19th century	1974
NS0003	Bellamy's Mill	Whitakers vicinity	N/A	Agriculture, Architecture, Commerce, Industry	1850s and later	1974
NS0004	Black Jack	Red Oak vicinity	N/A	Architecture	19th century	1974
NS0005	Dortch House	Dortches	N/A	Architecture	19th century	1972
NS0006	The Meadows	Battleboro vicinity	N/A	Architecture	19th century	1974
NS0009	Taylor's Mill	Middlesex vicinity	A, C, D	Archaeology-Historic, Commerce, Industry	1818, 1870, 1890, 1895	1980
NS0089	Rose Hill Plantation	Rocky Mount vicinity	B, C	Architecture	1800–1899	1982
NS0090	Bellamy-Philips House	Battleboro vicinity	A, B, C, D	Agriculture, Architecture	1800–1899, 1905	1982
NS0106	Bissette-Cooley House	Nashville	B, C	Architecture, Commerce	1911	1985
NS0247	Dr. Hassell Brantley House	Spring Hope	B, C	Architecture, Social/Humanitarian	Circa 1912	1986
NS0407	Castalia School	Castalia vicinity	A, C	Architecture, Education, Ethnic Heritage: Black	1921–1961	2018
NS0430	Red Oak Community Building	Red Oak	A, C	Architecture, Social History	1935–1956	2006
NS0894	Burt-Arrington House	Nashville vicinity	C	Architecture	Circa 1824, 1830s	2016
NS0906	Valentine-Wilder House	Spring Hope	C	Architecture	Circa 1925	2013
NS0936	Nashville Historic District	Nashville	A, C	Architecture, Commerce, Politics/Government	Ca. 1830–ca. 1937	1987
NS0941	Spring Hope Historic District	Spring Hope	A, C	Commerce, Architecture	1888–ca. 1937	1988
NS1100	Morgan School	Bailey	A, C	Architecture, Education, Ethnic Heritage: Black	1925–1956	2006
NS1564	Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association Warehouse	Nashville	A	Agriculture	1922–1927	2024

* The Criteria, Areas of Significance, and Period of Significance are recorded as "N/A" in this table if the NRHP nomination does not list one.

Table 1.3: Study-listed Nash County resources within the survey area.

Survey Site No.	Resource Name	Town	SL Date
NS0205	Murray's Mill	Samaria vicinity	1986
NS0237	Stallings Double Crib Log Barn/Tobacco Grading Room (Gone)	Spring Hope vicinity	1986
NS0266	Stanhope Crossroads Historic District	Stanhope	1986
NS0316	Webb's Mill	Spring Hope vicinity	1977
NS0324	Sidney B. Harper House	Stanhope	1977
NS0336	A.R. Beard House	Bailey vicinity	1986
NS0354	Country Doctor Museum	Bailey	1971
NS0416	George Ruffin Marshbourne Farm Complex	Peachtree vicinity	1986
NS0424	Red Oak Farm Life High School Dormitory - Teacherage	Red Oak	2016
NS0441	York Chapel	Hilliardston vicinity	1986
NS0442	Social Union Baptist Church	Hilliardston vicinity	1986
NS0461	Perry-Battle-Vick House	Taylor's Store vicinity	1977
NS0481	Swift Creek Bridge (Bridge #4) (Replaced)	Red Oak vicinity	1986
NS0482	McTyeire Church	Gold Rock	1986
NS0531	Battle-Cooper House	Hilliardston vicinity	1977
NS0863	Vick-Carter House (Gone)	Winsteads Crossroads vicinity	1977
NS0876	C.C. Spaulding High School	Spring Hope	2025
NS0895	Boddie's Mill	Nashville vicinity	1977
NS0897	Kinchen Carter Taylor House	Whitakers vicinity	1989
NS0903	Drake-Pullen House	Hilliardston	1986
NS0909	Elm Lane	Gold Rock vicinity	1977
NS0913	Van Buren Batchelor House (Gone)	Nashville vicinity	1986
NS0916	Mitchell Matthews House	Matthews Crossroads	1977
NS0952	Spring Hope Colored High School Teacherage (Rosenwald)	Spring Hope	1999

Survey Site No.	Resource Name	Town	SL Date
NS1099	Avent School (Rosenwald)	Aventon	2005
NS1101	Sandy Grove Primitive Baptist Church (Gone)	Bailey vicinity	2005
NS1196	Tories Tavern	Elm City vicinity	1969
NS1467	Sharpsburg Depot (Original site)	Sharpsburg	1977
NS1468	Middlesex Railroad (Williams & Sons Gin) Depot & Industrial	Middlesex	1986
NS1562	Bailey Commercial Historic District	Bailey	2019
N/A*	Castalia Crossroads Historic District	Castalia	1986

* The Castalia Crossroads Historic District was assigned the placeholder z-1502SL. RGA will assign a survey site number to the district during the Phase 2 comprehensive survey.

2.0 NASH COUNTY CONTEXT

2.1 Physical Setting

Nash County is located in northeastern North Carolina along the border of the Coastal Plain and Piedmont geographical regions. The county has a total area of 542.82 square miles and is bounded on the north by Warren and Halifax counties, on the east by Edgecombe County, on the south by Wilson and Johnston counties, and on the west by Wake and Franklin counties. Fishing Creek and Moccasin Creek form the county's northern and southwestern boundaries, respectively, while the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad serves as the eastern boundary (see Figure 1.1).

The western part of the county lies in the Piedmont, while the eastern part is in the Coastal Plain. Generally, the soils found in the Piedmont are suitable for pasture and the cultivation of corn, small grains, hay, and some tobacco and cotton. In the eastern part of the county, the better-drained sandy soils are well suited for tobacco, cotton, peanuts, and corn (Mattson 1987:46). Elevation in the county gradually rises from east to west, with an average elevation of 194 feet.

The Tar River, the county's largest waterway, meanders from the Franklin County line southeast for approximately 22.5 miles through the southern part of the county before turning northeast and continuing for roughly 14 miles to the Edgecombe County line. Major tributaries of the Tar River include Fishing, Swift, Stoney, Sapony, and Turkey creeks, with many smaller tributaries and streams sprawling throughout the county. A Nash County soil survey report published in 1926 observed that "practically every farm [was] touched by one or more of these drainage outlets" (Lee and Bacon 1926:2).

Major north-south vehicular thoroughfares through the county include U.S. Route 301 (US 301) and Interstate 95 (I-95). US 301 runs along the county's eastern boundary, connecting the municipalities of Whitakers, Battleboro, Rocky Mount, and Sharpsburg. I-95 was routed through the eastern part of the county in the late 1970s and 1980s, fragmenting many farms and some country roads along its path. The county's major east-west thoroughfares include U.S. Route 264, North Carolina Highway 97, and U.S. Route 64, which run all through the southern half of the county.

Nashville, the seat of government, is centrally located in the county. The county's largest municipality is Rocky Mount, which is divided between Nash and Edgecombe counties. Other municipalities include Bailey, Middlesex, Momeyer, Spring Hope, and Sharpsburg in the southern half of the county and Castalia, Dortches, Red Oak, and Whitakers in the northern half. The municipalities in the southern half of the county are more urban and populated than their northern counterparts due to their location along the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad, Norfolk Southern Railroad, and major thoroughfares.

2.2 Historical Background

English and Scots settlers, as well as enslaved people of African descent, arrived in present-day Nash County in the 1730s and 1740s following the expulsion of the Tuscarora people. The earliest white settlements were established in the northern, northwestern, and eastern parts of the county along Fishing Creek and the Tar River (Lee and Bacon 1926:2; Mattson 1987:46). During the early years of white settlement, self-sufficient farms and plantations served as the social and economic units of the area. Farms, plantations, and churches dotted the rural landscape, and gristmills were established along creeks (Cross 1976:21; North Carolina Division of Archives and History 1977:16-1).

Nash County was formed from a portion of Edgecombe County in 1777 and was named in honor of General Francis Nash, a Revolutionary War general.⁴ From its establishment until the early twentieth century, the rural county's economy relied on cash crop agriculture and subsistence farming. In the county's early years, farming was diversified until cotton became the primary cash crop in the nineteenth century (Cross 1976:21). Self-sufficient farms grew subsistence crops such as corn and sweet potatoes. The absence of reliable navigable rivers delayed urban and industrial growth until the arrival of the railroad: the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad in 1854 and its extension in 1887, followed by the Norfolk Southern Railroad in 1907.⁵ These railroads gave impetus to the development of railroad towns, stimulated some industrial growth, and improved farmers' access to local and distant markets. By 1920, tobacco had supplanted cotton as the county's principal cash crop (Mattson 1987:51). The county's reliance on agriculture, however, waned in the mid- and late twentieth century as its economy further diversified and as rural families left for urban areas of the county and other parts of the state (Rocky Mount Planning Department 1974:120).

⁴ The county took on its present border in 1871 when a part of Edgecombe was annexed to Nash (Corbitt 1987:157, 159).

⁵ The Wilmington and Weldon (W&W) Railroad was routed through Edgecombe County in 1854. Nash County annexed a part of Edgecombe County in 1871, with the W&W Railroad serving as the county boundary. An extension line of the W&W Railroad from Rocky Mount through Nashville was completed in 1887.

3.0 WINDSHIELD SURVEY RESULTS AND RECOMMENDED SCOPE OF WORK

3.1 Windshield Survey Results

As part of the Phase 1 planning survey of Nash County, a windshield survey was conducted. Using USGS topographic maps from the 1970s alongside HPOWeb data, RGA surveyors drove all public roads within the county over a two-week period in May 2026. The goal of this fieldwork was to better understand Nash County's landscape and built environment, as well as to identify unsurveyed properties that merit intensive survey. When possible, surveyors verified the status of previously surveyed properties.

The architectural survey conducted by Richard Mattson in the 1980s focused primarily on Nash County's earliest extant resources, many of which dated from the late eighteenth to the late nineteenth century. Consequently, few resources dating to that period were newly identified during the Phase 1 survey. Rather, most of the newly identified resources date from the turn of the twentieth century through the early 1970s. Farm complexes represent the most common resource type, followed by standalone dwellings, churches, country stores, rural crossroads communities, mid-century motels, and schools.

In the four decades since the 1980s survey, Nash County's landscape has experienced observable changes. Acres of historically active farmland now lie fallow, and formerly cultivated fields have been converted into timber farms, a trend particularly noticeable in the northern portion of the county. Additionally, large-scale commercial farms appear to have consolidated or overtaken the smaller family farms that once characterized Nash County's landscape, especially in the central and southern regions. This agricultural transition is further evidenced by the ongoing conversion of active farmland into commercial solar farms.

The surveyors also observed a high concentration of mobile and prefabricated homes. In several instances, these modern dwellings have directly replaced historic dwellings, while in others, they have been placed on subdivided parcels carved out from former farmland. This trend reflects broader, well-documented economic and housing patterns common throughout rural North Carolina and the United States.

Field challenges encountered during the windshield survey primary involved restricted access to private roads. In addition, some historic resources are set back significantly from the public right-of-way, either situated within active fields or heavily obscured by mature tree canopies and overgrowth, making visibility and preliminary assessments difficult.

3.2 Resource Types Observed and Documentation Criteria for Newly Identified Properties

The following sections describe the resource types encountered during the windshield survey. Inevitably, there will be some outlier resources that do not fall into the resource type categories described below. For each resource type, the text below provides a summary of field observations from the windshield survey and evaluation criteria RGA will use in the field to determine if a property will be documented.

The Phase 2 newly surveyed properties will primarily, though not exclusively, focus on documenting World War II and post-war era resources that were outside the scope of the 1980s survey.

Farm Complexes and Outbuildings

Because of Nash County's deep-rooted agricultural history, most properties identified during the windshield survey were farms. Based on preliminary research and their architectural style and form, many of these farms appear to date to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The farms are typically anchored by a dwelling, with outbuildings located behind the house, along the road, or across the road from the house. Most of the houses are simple, one-story side-gabled dwellings, some of which feature substantial brick end chimneys. Mattson documented I-houses during his 1980s survey, but a few unsurveyed I-houses are extant, though they are typically altered with new windows and siding materials. Other common house forms include front-gable and gable-and-wing. Both one- and two-story, single-pile, side-gabled houses featuring a center front gable were observed.

As seen in many rural parts of North Carolina, Nash County's farmers adapted to the popular architectural fashions of their respective eras. Consequently, Period Cottages, Minimal Traditional houses, and mid-century Ranch houses frequently appear, often having replaced an earlier dwelling or existing alongside one.

In addition to the main dwellings that anchor farmsteads, both front-gabled and side-gabled tenant houses remain scattered across the agricultural landscape, demonstrating historic land and labor patterns. In some instances where the historic dwelling and outbuildings have disappeared from the landscape, only an isolated family cemetery remains intact to mark the location of a former farm.

Documentation Criteria for Newly Identified Farm Complexes

- Pre-1865 Farm Complexes: All previously unsurveyed pre-1865 farm complexes will be recorded.
- Post-Civil War to Post-World War II Farm Complexes (1865–1980): Across all late nineteenth- and twentieth-century agricultural eras, properties to be surveyed require a house and a network of historic outbuildings that remain intact (Figures 3.1–3.2). Because

of recent development patterns, a compromised or reduced historic setting does not disqualify properties from intensive survey. Within the Phase 3 comprehensive survey report, farm complexes within this large time period will be broken down into Post-Civil War to World War I (1865–1919), Post-World War I to World War II (1919–1945), and Post-World War II and Beyond (1945–1980). These time periods may be adjusted based on Phase 2 fieldwork.

- Isolated Outbuildings and Cemeteries: Independent outbuildings must form an intact, cohesive collection to merit separate recordation without a dwelling; or, they must be an example of an early or identifiable outbuilding type, such as a kitchen, dairy, smokehouse or cotton gin (Figure 3.3). Family cemeteries will be selected only if they possess gravemarkers with notable funerary art or landscape design.



Figure 3.1: An example of a one-story, single-pile, side-gabled house with a center front gable and a collection of intact outbuildings located behind the dwelling. This complex warrants documentation during the Phase 2 survey as an intact late-nineteenth/early-twentieth century farmstead.



Figure 3.2: Example of a mid-twentieth-century Ranch house with outbuildings located behind the house. This property represents the type of post-World War II farm that will be documented during the Phase 2 survey.



Figure 3.3: Example of isolated tobacco barns lacking an associated farm complex. These standalone agricultural structures will be recorded during the Phase 2 survey.

Standalone Houses

Standalone dwellings in Nash County, which are not part of a larger farm complex, come in a variety of styles and forms. Among these are tenant houses which, while historically associated with agricultural labor, may now sit isolated in the landscape or far from the original domestic cluster. Because modest, traditional dwellings in rural Nash County may represent either tenant houses or the homes of landowning families of modest means, potential tenant houses identified during the Phase 2 survey will be carefully researched, and surveyors will do their best to speak with local informants to gain insight into the property's historical occupancy and use. Detailed narrative summaries will articulate the reasoning and local documentation used to classify individual dwellings as tenant houses.

The standalone houses that will be the subject of the Phase 2 survey primarily date from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, although there are temporal outliers worthy of survey. While many of the county's earliest residential resources were captured as part of the 1980s survey, the windshield survey revealed a substantial number of previously unsurveyed houses. Dwellings from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries often mirror the forms found on farms, including simple side-gabled, front-gabled, and gable-and-wing configurations. One- and two-story, single-pile, side-gabled houses with a center front gable also present as standalone resources. Some high-style dwellings can be found in towns such as Nashville and Spring Hope, as well as Bailey, Castalia, Dortches, Mommeier, and Middlesex.

Reflecting broader national residential trends, Nash County's housing stock transitioned significantly in the mid-twentieth century. Examples of Period Cottages, Minimal Traditional houses, and Ranch-style dwellings are common throughout the county. These popular house types represent the mid- to late twentieth-century development patterns of the region, often replacing earlier dwellings or developed in clusters on subdivided agricultural land.

Documentation Criteria for Newly Identified Houses

- Houses, Pre-Civil War: All previously unsurveyed pre-1865 houses will be recorded.
- Tenant Houses (circa 1865–1950): Recognizing that these are a rapidly disappearing regional resource, standalone or isolated tenant houses will be documented. The dwelling must retain its historic form and some historically appropriate materials. The physical condition should not be ruinous.
- Houses, End of Civil War to World War I (1865–1919) and Early Twentieth-Century Popular House Types (circa 1865–1945): Standalone houses to be surveyed require the dwelling to retain its historic form and some historically appropriate materials. The physical condition should not be ruinous (Figures 3.4–3.5).
- Houses, Mid- and Late Twentieth-Century Popular House Types (circa 1945–1980): Dwellings from this period must retain their historic form and exhibit high material integrity (Figures 3.6–3.7). The overall condition of the dwelling should be good.



Figure 3.4: Examples of turn of the late nineteenth- or early twentieth-century front-gabled and side-gabled dwellings that will be recorded during the Phase 2 survey.



Figure 3.5: Example of a side-gabled bungalow that will be recorded during the Phase 2 survey.



Figure 3.6: Examples of in-town residential architecture. Both pre- and post-World War II residential types will be documented during the Phase 2 survey to illustrate the expansion of Nash County's towns.



Figure 3.7: Ranch dwellings lining the street. This concentration represents a mid- to late twentieth-century neighborhood resource type that will be documented during the Phase 2 survey.

Communities

The windshield survey identified several previously unsurveyed rural crossroads communities along with a few neighborhoods. The rural crossroad communities were a nexus for the surrounding farms and were established around a central, well-traveled intersection. Crossroads communities are typically characterized by a concentration of a store or two, a church, local industry, and dwellings. Specific examples observed during the windshield survey include Hickory Crossroads, featuring a church and a gin/seed house alongside early twentieth-century farm buildings, and other named intersections such as Corinth Crossroads, Murraytown, Rocky Cross, Lancaster Crossroads, Hilliardston, Salem, and Drake. While these rural crossroads vary in scale and integrity, they consistently reflect Nash County's rural community development.

During the windshield survey, distinct neighborhood developments were observed. Sharpsburg, for instance, has a historically Black neighborhood concentrated in the southern section of the municipality. This community physically extends southward across the county line into adjacent Wilson County, reflecting important patterns in the region's historical growth and demographics. These neighborhoods represent an important facet of the county's history, community, and demographics.

Documentation Criteria for Newly Identified Communities

- Crossroads: Properties to be surveyed require a substantially intact historic setting and some historic buildings (Figure 3.8). If a crossroad consists of only one or two buildings, those individual structures will be surveyed independently. If a crossroad contains multiple buildings, a District/Neighborhood/Area (DNA) form will be used, with individual site numbers assigned to notable resources, if any.
- Neighborhoods: Properties to be surveyed require an identifiable historic character and a cohesive collection of buildings over 50 years of age (Figure 3.9). A DNA form will be used, with individual site numbers assigned to notable resources, if any.



Figure 3.8: White Oak Crossroads. This location represents a notable rural crossroads community containing a cohesive cluster of historic resources that will be documented during the Phase 2 survey.



Figure 3.9: View of houses in Castalia. This streetscape illustrates a cohesive collection of residential buildings that warrant documentation during the Phase 2 survey.

Commercial

A variety of commercial buildings are present within Nash County, including country stores, service stations, garages, motels, and restaurants. Most of the automobile-related resources are located either within a rural crossroads community or along highway corridors within urban areas. While commercial buildings are primarily found within town centers, a significant number of commercial resources are extant in rural areas in the form of country stores. As documented during the windshield survey, these properties span from the early twentieth century through the post-World War II era. In some cases, rural commercial buildings share a single parcel with a residential dwelling, demonstrating a close tie between work and daily life.

Documentation Criteria for Newly Identified Commercial Buildings

- Country Stores: Properties to be surveyed require the building to be recognizable as a country store (Figure 3.10). The building should maintain its historic form.
- Commercial Buildings (in towns): Properties to be surveyed must be a representative example of their specific form or type (Figure 3.11).
- Automobile-Related Buildings: All rural automobile-related buildings, including service stations, garages, and motels, will be surveyed. Urban automobile-related buildings must be a representative example of their form or type (Figure 3.12).



Figure 3.10: Example of a country store with an associated house. This complex represents a notable commercial resource type that will be documented during Phase 2 to capture country stores.



Figure 3.11: View of commercial buildings in Castalia. This streetscape represents a concentration of in-town commercial architecture that will be documented during the Phase 2 survey.



Figure 3.12: Example of a mid-twentieth-century motel along Highway 301 near Rocky Mount. This property represents a post-World War II commercial/transportation resource that will be documented during the Phase 2 survey.

Industrial and Transportation

Industrial and transportation-related resources identified during the windshield survey reflect both Nash County's agrarian economy and its mid- to late twentieth-century infrastructure developments. These properties include early water-management features and modern regional transportation and manufacturing facilities. Agricultural processing and heavy industrial sites are represented by large complexes like the 1955 Watsons Farms, Inc. seed complex and the 1969 steel plant near Spring Hope, both of which are located on the outskirts of towns and adjacent to agricultural activities and transportation corridors. Another industrial property identified during the windshield survey was a dam on Beaverdam Creek.

Transportation-related resources include bridges, most of which were erected by NCDOT in the 1960s, and the 1970 Rocky Mount-Wilson Regional Airport.

Documentation Criteria for Newly Identified Industrial and Transportation Properties

- Industrial and Processing Facilities: Properties to be surveyed must have the building or complex retain its historic form and be an example of a specific manufacturing or processing type or have a demonstrable historical relationship to the county's development (Figure 3.13).
- Bridges: Properties to be surveyed must retain high structural and material integrity, represent a notable example of NCDOT engineering or bridge design for its era, or be historically associated with a regional crossing or transportation corridor (Figure 3.14).
- Dams: Properties to be surveyed must feature intact historic engineering components and water-control structures or exist as a critical landscape feature tied to broader historical land-use patterns, local industries, or agricultural impoundments.
- Aviation: All mid- to late twentieth-century regional aviation facilities and terminal infrastructure will be surveyed.
- Railroad-Related Resources: All railroad-related resources will be surveyed.



Figure 3.13: Grain elevators in southern Nash County. These structures represent a prominent mid- to late twentieth-century industrial resource type that will be documented during the Phase 2 survey.



Figure 3.14: Example of an NCDOT bridge constructed in the 1960s. This structure represents a mid-twentieth-century transportation resource that will be documented during the Phase 2 survey.

Institutional Buildings and Utilities

Institutional resources identified during the windshield survey demonstrate the social networks that shaped community life across Nash County, spanning from the early twentieth century schoolhouses to mid- to late twentieth-century civic and utility infrastructure. Religious architecture was the most commonly identified institutional property type, with examples dating from throughout the twentieth century. This religious network is further evidenced by large-scale, faith-based institutional complexes like the Freewill Baptist Children's Home.

Educational resources illustrate a transition from early, localized schoolhouses to large, consolidated mid- to late twentieth-century schools like Cedar Grove, Southern Nash, Northern Nash, and Nash Central. The vital role that fraternal organizations played in community life is represented by late twentieth-century lodges. Finally, the growth of modern civic utilities during the post-World War II era is marked by critical infrastructure systems, such as the Tar River Reservoir Water Treatment Plant and municipal water towers.

Documentation Criteria for Newly Identified Institutional Buildings

- Churches: Properties to be surveyed must be a good example of their architectural style or form or have historical or cultural significance to the surrounding community (Figure 3.15).

- Schools: All schools will be surveyed (Figure 3.16).
- Social and Fraternal Organizations: All social and fraternal organization buildings will be surveyed (Figure 3.17).
- Government and Civic Utilities: All government-related and civic utility resources will be surveyed (Figure 3.18).



Figure 3.15: Lee's Chapel Baptist Church outside Middlesex. This property represents notable rural church architecture that will be documented during the Phase 2 survey.



Figure 3.16: Swift Creek Elementary School. This school represents a mid-twentieth-century educational resource type that will be documented during the Phase 2 survey.



Figure 3.17: Example of a fraternal organization building. This building is representative of mid-century social and civic resource that will be documented during the Phase 2 survey.



Figure 3.18: The Tar River Reservoir Water Treatment Plant. This facility represents a mid- to late twentieth-century municipal infrastructure resource type that will be documented during the Phase 2 survey.

3.3 Preliminary Historic Contexts

Agriculture in Nash County

Nash County's rural landscape remains heavily defined by its agrarian history. Windshield survey observations revealed a vast network of late to early twentieth-century farm complexes. An exploration of how Nash County's agricultural history changed from World War II through the 1980s will be conducted utilizing United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and North Carolina Farm Bureau records. The agriculture historic context will fill the WWII and post-WWII gaps from the 1980s survey and will paint a complete picture of Nash County's agricultural endeavors through the late twentieth century.

Research Questions

- How did agriculture in Nash County change between 1940 and 1980?
- Did the average acreage of a farm change over the years?
- How did agricultural activities change in Nash County?

Industry

Nash County's built environment reflects a distinct shift from small-scale, decentralized rural processing to heavy manufacturing. The windshield survey recorded properties ranging from the mid-century agribusiness complex, like the 1955 Watson Farms, Inc. seed complex, to post-World War II heavy manufacturing, such as the 1969 steel plant near Spring Hope. This historic context will narrate Nash County's shift to large-scale manufacturing and identify how this shift impacted the built environment.

Research Questions

- How did the transition from dispersed, small-scale industrial operations to centralized, heavy manufacturing impact local employment, agricultural labor pools, and settlement patterns in Nash County during the mid- to late twentieth century?
- How do the architectural forms of post-World War II industrial buildings in Nash County reflect broader regional trends in mid-century industrial design?

Post–World War II Residential Development

The windshield survey identified a high number of post-World War II housing types both within and outside town centers. The survey documented a significant number of mid-century Ranch houses and Minimal Traditional dwellings, which frequently share parcels with older rural buildings. This context will expand on post-World War II residential forms and development patterns.

Research Questions

- How did the expansion of major transportation and highway corridors influence the spatial distribution of mid-century residential neighborhoods in Nash County?
- Was it a common practice for farmers to subdivide and sell the parcel for residential development? If so, when did this occur?

Education

Nash County's landscape illustrates the consolidation and modernization of its school system. The windshield survey brought to light the progression of schools from the early twentieth-century rural facilities, such as the inactive 1910 schoolhouse on North Carolina 97, through the much larger and active mid- to late twentieth-century schools like Southern Nash, Northern Nash, and Nash Central. This historic context will expand upon the discussion of schools from the 1980s survey, detailing the eras of school consolidation, segregation and desegregation, and the architectural development of schools through the late twentieth century.

Research Questions

- How did the early twentieth-century school consolidation and subsequent modernization efforts physically manifest in the school planning, architecture, and spatial layout of Nash County's centralized schools?
- What role did early schoolhouses play in the lives of rural communities after they were decommissioned by the county?

Black Life

Nash County's built environment retains the physical markers of Black community, labor, and segregation. Known Black neighborhoods, including those in the southern areas of Sharpsburg and Whitakers, as well as mid-century lodges like the Martin Luther King Jr. Lodge 294 and numerous Black church congregations physically illustrate Black life in Nash County. By expanding upon previous survey efforts, this context will narrate the history of the Black experience as it continued into and transformed throughout the twentieth century.

Research Questions

- How did Jim Crow-era segregation shape the physical boundaries, commercial hubs, and architectural development of Black neighborhoods and communities in Nash County?
- What architectural patterns define the county's rural Black churches and fraternal lodges built or remodeled during the mid- to late twentieth century?
- How did the localized struggle for civil rights and racial equality manifest within Nash County's physical landscape, and what specific sites, routes, or properties document this activism during the twentieth century?

- In what ways did racial violence and Jim Crow-era terrorism, including documented lynchings, impact the county's built environment, and do any associated physical sites or landscapes survive to be recorded?

4.0 ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR PHASE 2

This annotated bibliography presents a selection of primary and secondary sources that may support the Phase 2 comprehensive survey and future Phase 3 comprehensive survey report. It does not include all sources consulted during the Phase 1 planning phase, nor all sources that will be consulted during later phases.

4.1 Primary Sources

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An oral history project conducted by the Nash County Cultural Center. The project addresses numerous topics, but many of the interviews are of Nash County residents describing what it was like growing up or working in the county in the mid and late twentieth century.

Nash County Historical Association. n.d. Nash County Historical Association Collection, 1806–1928. Collection ID 05480, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

This collection has a few items that contain records of schools or church groups, some references to enslaved people owned and sold, and a few accounts of African American schools, field hands, and house workers.

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United States Bureau of the Census. 1972. *1970 Census of Housing*, Vol. 1: *Housing Characteristics for States, Cities, and Counties, Part 35: North Carolina*. US Government Printing Office, Washington, DC.
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Housing characteristics for North Carolina during the Nineteenth Census (1970).

4.2 Secondary Sources

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This report provides an overview of the history of Rosenwald Schools in Eastern North Carolina, the architecture of Rosenwald schools, and Rosenwald schools in Edgecombe, Halifax, Johnston, Nash, Wayne, and Wilson counties. It presents a brief overview of Nash County public schools for white and Black children in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, leading up to the Rosenwald era. The report documents six Rosenwald schools in Nash County.

North Carolina Division of Archives and History. 1977. Appendix 16: Nash County. In *Historic and Architectural Resources of the Tar-Neuse River Basin*. On file, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh, North Carolina. Electronic document, <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/historic-and-architectural-resources-of-the-tar-neuse-river-basin.-appendix-for-region-I/377923?item=382463>.

This report presents a brief overview of the history and architecture of Nash County from its establishment in 1777 to 1930. It has an inventory of surveyed resources.

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This report presents a historical overview of the City of Rocky Mount from the eighteenth century to 1975. It provides historic contexts for Post-World War II Industry and Commerce (1945–1975); Residential and Suburban Development (1945–1980s); Public Housing and Urban Renewal (1951–1980s); Community Institutions, 1930s–1970s; and Civil Rights, Voting Rights, and Desegregation (1960–1985).

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This National Register of Historic Places nomination form presents a history of Nashville. The Nashville Historic District “epitomizes a rural county seat and small commercial center in eastern North Carolina,” and “encompasses the most cohesive group of intact late nineteenth and early twentieth century structures in Nashville” (Mattson 1987:8-1). Most of the commercial buildings are characteristic of small-town storefronts built in the early twentieth century, but with enlarged or modernized display windows. Residential buildings vary in architectural style, including the Greek Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne, Neo-Classical Revival, and Colonial Revival. Their forms include single and double piles, bungalows, and complex massings.

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religious examples built in a variety of period styles” (Mattson 1987:8-1). Residential architectural styles include the Italianate, Queen Anne, Neo-Classical Revival, Prairie, and Tudor Revival. Domestic forms include two-room dwellings; double-pile hip-roofed cottages; single-pile, side-gabled houses with a center front gable; L-plan cottages; I-houses; and bungalows.

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