**NAME**

Historic: Grassly Creek Historic District

AND/OR COMMON:

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER: See continuation sheet

CITY, TOWN: Grassly Creek

STATE: North Carolina

**CLASSIFICATION**

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**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME: Roy Taylor; Chairman, Ashe County Commissioners, c/o Taylor Well Drilling Co.

STREET & NUMBER:

CITY, TOWN: West Jefferson

STATE: North Carolina

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Ashe County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER:

CITY, TOWN: Jefferson

STATE: North Carolina

**REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE:

DATE:

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

CITY, TOWN:

STATE:
Boundaries

Begin at a point on the North Carolina-Virginia line 0.2 mile west of the junction of the center line of Ashe County SR 1573 and the state line. From that point follow a line running south and southwest, parallel to and 0.2 mile northwest and west of the center line of SR 1573 to a point 0.2 mile due west of the junction of the center lines of SR 1573 and SR 1551. From that point follow a line east to the junction of the center lines of SR 1573 and 1551. From that point follow the center line of SR 1551 to a point 0.2 mile east of the junction of the center lines of SR 1551 and SR 1573. From that point follow a line running north and northeast, parallel to and east and southeast of the center line of SR 1573 to point where that line is intersected by a line running parallel to and 0.2 mile southwest of the center line of SR 1535. Follow that line southeast to a point 100 yards west of the center line of SR 1547. From that point follow a line south parallel to and 100 yards west of the center line of SR 1547 for a distance of 0.15 miles. From that point follow a line east to a point 100 yards east of the center line of SR 1547. From that point follow a line north and east parallel to and 100 yards east and south of the center line of SR 1547 to a point 100 yards south of the junction of the center lines of SR 1547 and SR 1535. From that point follow a line north to a point 0.2 mile north of the junction of the center lines of SR 1547 and SR 1535. From that point follow a line northwest parallel to and 0.2 mile northeast of the center line of SR 1535 until that line intersects the state line. From that point follow the state line west back to the starting point.
Grassy Creek, a small agricultural community set in a stream valley of that same name, lies to the south of the trade route between Mouth of Wilson, Virginia, and Jefferson, North Carolina, and owes its prominence as the leading agrarian society in the New River Valley to the Greer family who were among the earliest settlers. Aquilla Greer, who established the family homestead, came to Grassy Creek near the turn of the eighteenth century and built a substantial, two-story, brick, late-Federal style house as the seat of his large farm. Much of the land in the Grassy Creek Historic District was a part of his original holdings. The Greer family farm prospered during the ownership of Aquilla and his son, John F. Greer, but it was during the period between 1885 and 1920—when the third and fourth generations of the Greer family operated farms that Grassy Creek enjoyed its greatest prosperity. The character of the Grassy Creek Historic District owes largely to the architectural character of that thirty-five year period—when the newly-built farm houses with decorated porches and gables were surrounded by a full complement of farm outbuildings. It is this turn-of-the-century appearance continued to the present time that defines the unique character of the Grassy Creek Historic District.

The Grassy Creek Historic District has a softly molded landscape with gently rolling hills. It is essentially "L" shaped and extends along either side of SR 1535 which runs along Grassy Creek and SR 1551 which intersect at the Grassy Creek Crossroads through which Grassy Creek flows. On the southwest the district ends just south of the Aquilla Greer homestead with the inclusion of the Pierce-Young Farm. At the southeast, the other end of the "L" is closed by the Phipps Farm which is set at the end of the stream valley through which Grassy Creek flows. The northern boundary carries along the Virginia-North Carolina border.

The district with abundant hills for grazing and rich bottom lands for crops is ideal for cattle and dairy farming and has always been an agricultural community since its settlement at the turn of the eighteenth century. The farms are organized around the farm house and barn. The pastures and fields which support the farm surrounding the farm complex follow the curves of the landscape and connect with those of adjoining farms. A group of support facilities for the community is located at the Grassy Creek Crossroads. They date from the turn of the century to about 1950. Just to the north-west of the Crossroads is the Grassy Creek Methodist Church who's congregation continues to meet in the church, which remains unaltered since its construction in 1904—perhaps the best indication of the stability of the area.

Grassy Creek is a practicing agricultural economy and each of the farms has an individual character prescribed by siting and disposition of farm buildings. The farm house is always the most architecturally ambitious building and evidently is sited for aesthetic as well as functional considerations. The 1885-1920 houses are all of frame construction, sheathed in weatherboards with a two-story main (front) block and a two-story ell arranged in either a "T" or "L" plan. Variations occur in size, the arrangement of one or two-story porches on both front and rear elevations, and the arrangement and degree of ornamental wood work incorporated in porches, gables, eaves, and window and door surrounds. Complementing outbuildings include the spring houses, root cellars,
meat houses and wood sheds. Occasionally a privy has survived. The barn is always the largest structure on the farm. Generally set on stone foundations, its frame construction is clad in weatherboards or board-and-batten (and later, vertical sheathing) and covered by a gambrel or gable roof. Sheds were often attached to the sides and after 1920, silos of wood or tile block construction were often placed nearby. The barn has its own accompaniment of outbuildings either in the barnyard or connected by wood plank fences. Their disposition was according to landscape and function. There was never a formal arrangement. The outbuildings of a farm include in varying combination a granary, a corn crib, a chicken house, an equipment shed (or sheds), perhaps a smaller and later shed roof barn, and a pigsty. They vary in size from farm to farm, and perhaps their functions are combined, but all are of frame construction with either weatherboards, board-and-batten, or vertical sheathing.

The farm houses as the pivotal structures in the district are discussed in chronological order.

The oldest house in the district was built, according to family tradition, between 1812 and 1817, for Aquilla Greer by his slaves. The substantial two-story, three-bay main block and one-story ell comprise an "L" plan. Set on a stone foundation, the house is of brick laid in common bond with Flemish bond on the front (north) elevation. Exterior end brick chimneys laid in common bond, rise above the gable roof. A one-story, hip-roof porch, supported by posts, square-in-section, carries across the front. A later frame addition fronted on the east by a porch was added along the full length of the east side of the ell. The gable roof was rebuilt to cover this addition. The two-room plan of the main block has been altered to a center-hall plan and the original wood work has been replaced. The three extant farm buildings dating from about 1900, include a large frame poultry house with a bell cast hipped roof, a large granary/barn with a center passage and a large gambrel roof barn. All are of frame construction, painted white. The surrounds framing windows, passages, and other openings are painted red. All have similar ventilating stacks piercing the center of the roof ridge. The house was the principal seat of the Greer family farm for many years.

Around the mid-nineteenth century, John F. Greer established a farm northeast of his father's along SR 1535, on land acquired from his father, who was then living in the brick house. Around 1885 he built a new house on the hilltop overlooking the Grassy Creek Valley. It has a "T" plan with a two-story, three-bay main block with a two-story ell under hip roofs with eaves supported by paired brackets. A single-bay, two-story gable-roof porch with molded posts, scroll sawn brackets and balustrade, protects flush sheathing in which are set the upper and lower entrance bays. Each of the doors with its scroll-sawn sidelights and transom is set in a molded surround which is repeated around the windows. The porch tympanum has flush horizontal sheathing. A partially enclosed porch wraps around the ell. The main block has a center hall plan with a living room and parlor flanking the stair hall. The ell has a two-room plan containing a dining room and kitchen. The original mantels, stairs, and three and four-panel doors
are intact throughout the house. The original flush sheathing has been wallpapered.

The most interesting among the outbuildings is the one-room school which W. C. Greer had built for his seven children. One bay wide and two bays deep, it is of frame construction clad in weatherboards with shingles on the front gable. Inside, the walls and ceiling are covered with tongue-and-groove sheathing.

The Pierce family came to Grassy Creek in the 1840s when Andrew Jackson Pierce bought a farm to the southeast of the John F. Greer farm from Solomon Spencer. On the farm stood a two-story log house which Pierce probably weatherboarded in 1849 when he replaced the exterior-end, stone chimney with one of brick laid in common bond. His son-in-law, L. F. Young, extensively enlarged and enriched the log house in 1893 when he added a wing across the west end and a large ell to the north side. The additions amounted to the building of a new house in front of the log house. The west elevations of the additions were regarded and treated as the front of the house. The first and larger of the two additions, two stories high and set on common bond brick piers with lattice screens, is three bays wide and one bay deep under a gable roof. A third gable is set above the center bay on the west elevation. The gable ends are covered with shaped shingles. Brackets, barge boards, friezes, and spandrels are lavishly employed. A one-story porch sheltering the three first-level bays is supported by turned posts, connected at the top by a spindle frieze and below by a turned balustrade. A repeating fretwork balustrade encircles the top of the flat roof. The two-story ell attached to the log house has a two-bay west elevation under a gable roof. Ornamental woodwork, like that on the main block, occurs under the eaves, at the gable end, and on the window surrounds. On the west elevation the two entrance bays have rich scroll-sawn sidelights and transoms. All windows contain two-over-two sash, but have lost the original blinds. The same attention to detail given to the exterior was paid to the interior of this ambitious house. It retains almost all of the stained-and-grained woodwork installed in 1893. The living room and parlor, flanking the stairhall in the main block, are enriched by the more elaborate woodwork and a vertically-paneled wainscot. The window and door surrounds, four-panel doors, and mantels are all stained and grained. In the stair hall the board-width panels of the wainscot alternate light to dark as do the turned balusters of the stair. The dining room has a paneled wainscot and an impressive carved and scroll-sawn mantel with overmantel. The walls throughout the house are vertically sheathed and now are wallpapered. The second floors of the additions are more simply finished. The Greek Revival doors, surrounds and mantels are retained throughout the log house. There is an early-twentieth century frame barn, spring house and meat house with a complement of later outbuildings.

Probably contemporary with the ambitious building of L. F. Young is the house constructed for Walter Greer, the oldest son of W. C. Greer. Walter acquired land west of his father's house and sited his house along SR 1551. It is the first of four houses built between 1893 and 1918 by children of W. C. Greer. It is with the
completion of these houses and their outbuildings that Grassy Creek reached its agrarian prime.

Like the Young House, the Walter Greer House has extensive scroll-sawn and turned ornament on the porches, gables and eaves. The two-story frame house is set on a brick foundation and faces northwest. It is essentially a square plan with projections at the east, west and south corners. The front porch carries from the west corner projection across the northwest front, wraps the north corner and continues down the northeast side. The porch is supported by pairs of turned posts which are connected by spindle friezes above the brackets. Additional brackets, set between the posts and perpendicular to the spindle friezes support the eaves of the roof beneath which is a frieze with applied diamond-shaped sawn woodwork. No balustrade remains. Brackets also positioned above the windows and at the corners of the house are continued under the eaves and carried, with the diamond motif frieze, around the irregular outline. The gable ends are decorated with rows of shaped shingles, rake boards repeating the diamond motif from the frieze, and ornamental spandrels. The rear porch has been enclosed. The window surrounds are of plain unmolded boards with molded cornices projecting above. The entrance bay surround encloses the door with its sidelights and transom which have lost their scroll-sawn ornament. The Eastlake-style front door has a geometric arrangement of applied molding connected by bosses around the stained and etched glass panels. The interior is very similar to the Young House, although the execution of ornament and stained and grained woodwork is not as extensive.

Some years later, about 1904, W. C. Greer's daughter, Mrs. John Jones and her husband, built a house southeast of her father's on the east side of SR 1535. This two-story frame house clad in weatherboards has a "T" plan with the south elevation of the ell treated as the front. The tympana of the south and west gables are filled with saw tooth pattern shingles; a large scroll-sawn spandrel is fitted into the gable peak. The influence of the Colonial Revival is seen in the free-standing and engaged columns of the one-story hip roof porch which follows the contours of the south elevation. The columns support a dentil frieze and the cornice which, above the entrance bays, forms a pediment. At the second level of the south side, the otherwise plain window surrounds have lintels ornamented with dentil courses between projecting corner blocks. The first level surrounds and the others throughout the house are formed of plain unmolded boards. The entrance surround framing the Eastlake-style door and transom has a rope molding around its perimeter. Novel on the house are the paired windows of two-over-two sash on both levels of the end bays of the south elevation and the square fixed window above the entrance bay. The latter has a central clear pane surrounded by squares of stained glass, which is set above a panel. A shed-roof porch carries across the north elevation and continues down the west side of the ell. Most of it has now been enclosed and a shed-roof frame springhouse has been fitted along the side. The interior common bond brick chimney stacks pierce the roof ridges. Inside the half-turn stair with winders, finished with an oak stain, is the most elaborate in Grassy Creek. The rather stout newel, square-in-section, has two-part paneled faces separated by a
molded ring and topped with a molded cap. It retains its oak stain. Molded surrounds frame the five-panel doors and transoms to the living room on the east and the parlor to the west. The parlor, entirely finished in chestnut, has horizontal tongue-and-groove sheathing above a flat paneled wainscot. The mantel and overmantel feature freestanding columns set on tall paneled bases which flank the opening and support a single-panel frieze and molded shelf. Shorter columns setting on the shelf flank a mirror and support a second molded shelf above. The plan of the rest of the first floor has been altered and the woodwork removed. The second floor retains its original and simpler woodwork.

Some ten years later, a second Greer daughter, Mrs. Robert Livesay, and her husband built their house on the west side of SR 1535 on a hilltop overlooking Grassy Creek to the southeast of her father's house. This square-plan house, set on a stone base, has frame construction with German siding and stands two stories high under a hip roof which is pierced by common bond brick interior chimneys. A one-story, hip-roof porch set on brick piers with lattice screens carries across the front (north) three-bay elevation and is supported by unfluted columns. The frieze projects in the center where pairs of columns support a pediment. A door and transom form the entrance bay which is flanked by large single pane windows with stained glass transoms above. The second level has pairs of double windows containing one-over-one sash which flank a fixed window of small squares of stained glass surrounding a clear pane beneath which is set a turned gallery railing. The window surrounds throughout the house are formed of plain unmolded boards, but on the second level of the front elevation the lintel has a row of dentils between corner blocks. A central large gable dormer has double windows containing one-over-one sash flanked by columns which support a molded pediment. A two-story porch is engaged by the hip roof in the southeast corner of the house and an exterior stair connects the two floors. The square-in-section porch posts are joined at the second floor by a turned balustrade. The interior, which is two-rooms deep in plan, has a pair of large rooms on the front and at the rear, the porch and three rooms arranged east to west. The interior is finished with tongue-and-groove horizontal sheathing. Among the outbuildings is an octagonal workshed of frame construction with board-and-batten sheathing.

The last of the Greer family houses was built ca. 1918 by Edward Greer in the northeast corner of the Grassy Creek crossroads. The house is a rather plain two-story "T" plan under a gable roof with a one story porch across the south front of the ell. The windows contain one-over-one sash, and have plain unmolded surrounds.

In the 1920s several houses were constructed on smaller farms adjacent to the Greer farms. They are one-story, or one-and-a-half stories, and reflect the smaller scale farming operations which developed after the Greers sold their farms and removed to Bel Air, Maryland, where they continued their dairy operations on a larger scale. These smaller farms have a reduced complement of outbuildings. The first of these was the one-story plus finished attic frame house built by Edward Columbus Phipps in 1955.
The large gable roof barn with vertical sheathing over frame construction was built near the turn of the century as a part of the Phipps homestead. The wood silo was attached ca. 1925 when the frame mill building was erected. About 1926, Samuel Peyton Hale built a one-story frame house on the site of an earlier house on the west side of SR 1535 just west of the John Jones house. The house is a typical 1920s cottage under a hip-roof with a porch, supported by posts, square-in-section, carried on three sides. An additional 1920s cottage-style house was constructed by J. C. Pierce on the east side of SR 1551 about midway between the Walter Greer and L. F. Young farms.

The Grassy Creek Crossroads contains several buildings which date from the turn of the century to ca. 1950. The Edward Greer house as noted earlier stands on the northeast corner. A service station built of rock about 1925 stands on the southeast corner. The business room is fronted by a sheltered passage for cars which is supported by rock piers. A hipped roof covers the building. In the southwest corner a brick veneer, story-and-a-half, grocery/service station was constructed ca. 1955. Its Tudor-cottage style under a high pitched gable roof is not incompatible with the area. To the west of this building stands the turn-of-the-century Sturgill Store. It is a one-story frame weatherboarded structure under a gable roof and fronted by a shed-roof porch. Immediately beside it, to the west, stands the old post office which was also constructed at the turn of the century. This small frame building is flanked by offices attached to either side.

Further west along SR 1535 on a hill overlooking Grassy Creek stands the Grassy Creek Methodist Church. The rather plain Queen Anne style frame building, clad in weatherboards, is essentially a one-room plan under a gable roof with the entrance on the front (south) gable elevation. A three-stage belfry, attached to the southeast corner, has a pyramidal roof and a finial. The central projecting bays on the east and west elevations are covered by diminutive gables. On the front elevation, a large three-part window of stained glass is set in a lancet arch surround. Entrance bays, one set to the left of the window and a second in the tower, have double doors beneath stained glass transoms. The three-bay east and west elevations have lancet arch-headed windows with stained glass. All windows and doors have plain surrounds with an applied molding along the edge. The interior remains as built, with a horizontal tongue-and-groove sheathing on the walls and ceiling. This building is perhaps the best indication of the turn-of-the-century character of Grassy Creek, for the congregation continues to worship in the church, unaltered since its construction in 1904.
Inventory of Buildings in the Grassy Creek Historic District

The Aquilla Greer House and Farm

1. The Aquilla Greer House (ca. 1812-1817)
   A two-story, late Federal style house built on a "L" plan with a two-story main block and a one-story ell. Brick construction features Flemish bond on the north (front) elevation with common bond on the other sides and the ell. A one-story, hipped roof porch carries across the north, three-bay elevation. Exterior end chimneys, flanked by windows at each level, rise above the gable roof which is finished with a box cornice. The original two-room plan has been altered to a center-hall plan.

   a. The Poultry House (ca. 1900)
      It is a rectangular frame building clad in weatherboards with a bell-cast hip roof with wide eaves. A hip roof louvered ventilator sets on the ridge line. Screened openings occur on each elevation. It is painted white and has red paint on the surrounds and corner members.

   b. Granary (ca. 1900)
      Like the poultry house it is of frame construction and clad in weatherboards, but the gable roof has a pair of ventilators sitting on the ridge line. It is set on a concrete foundation and has a high wide center passage.

   c. Barn (ca. 1900)
      The largest barn in the district is of frame construction and clad in weatherboards. It has a center passage with openings on three levels. A shed-roof addition has been made along its west side. Three ventilators rest on its ridge line. A brick block silo stands nearby.

   d. Concrete Block Washhouse (ca. 1940)
      It has a shed roof.

The John F. Greer-W. C. Greer House and Farm

2. The John F. and W. C. Greer House (ca. 1885-90)
   A large two-story frame house, "T" plan, with a decorated two-story porch on the south front and a peripheral porch around the ell covered by a hip roof with common bond brick chimneys piercing the ridge lines. It has had only minor alterations.
a. Schoolhouse (ca. 1890-95) (southwest of the house) A one-room frame building clad in weatherboards with shaped shingles in the gable end. It has a one-bay front (south) elevation with two-bay east and west elevations. It is painted white with red trim. The shingles are mustard colored. The interior is finished with horizontal tongue and groove pine sheathing.

b. Meathouse (ca. 1885-90) (north of the house) A common bond brick building with exposed shaped-end rafters. Its gable roof has a standing seam metal cover.

c. Root Cellar (ca. 1895) (northwest of the house) Frame construction and clad in weatherboards, it has exposed shaped-end rafters under the gable roof. The interior retains its shelves and bins.

d. Wood Shed (ca. 1935) (northwest of the house) This vertically sheathed, frame shed-roof building probably replaces an earlier wood shed.

e. Privy (ca. 1945) (behind the meat house) Frame construction weather-boarded with shed roof.


g. Barn (ca. 1910) (east of the house) This and the following buildings are in the farm yard. They are connected and/or separated by a number of fences. Frame construction with vertical sheathing set on a stone base. Ventilated rake sections under a gable roof.


i. Corn Crib/Granary (ca. 1915) (northwest of above barn) Frame construction under a gable roof.

j. Second Barn (ca. 1910) (northeast of above barn) A large center-passage barn built of frame construction with vertical sheathing under a gable roof.

k. Chicken House (ca. 1940) (northeast of the house) A small shed-roof building of frame construction with vertical sheathing.
The L. F. Young House and Farm

3. The L. F. Young House (ca. 1840, 1849, 1893)
   A two-story log house, ca. 1840, was weatherboarded in 1849 when its stone chimney was replaced by a brick one. In 1893, L. F. Young extensively enlarged the size of the house from four to twelve rooms with two large additions and ornamented porches.

   a. Meathouse (ca. 1895)
      Frame building clad in weatherboards featuring overhanging front gable end.

   b. Privy (ca. 1930)
      Vertically sheathed with shed roof.

   c. Group of Outbuildings (ca. 1920)
      Two large shed-roof buildings, a woodshed, and a granary, clad in board-and-batten, are set to the southeast of the house and linked by a plank fence to a small shed-roof frame pig sty and shed-roof frame chicken house. The fence connects to the barn.

   d. Barn (ca. 1900)
      The large gable-roof barn is of frame construction around a central log pen and has vertical sheathing. Shed-roof additions have been made along the east and west sides. Several openings occur on the gable elevations.

   e. Springhouse (ca. 1895)
      A frame building similar to the meathouse. Its function is now replaced by a nearby cinder block pumphouse.

The Walter Greer House and Farm

4. The Walter Greer House (ca. 1893)
   An irregular-plan two-story frame weatherboarded house which has extensive scroll-sawn and turned decorative woodwork on the porches, gables, and along the eaves. Motifs are repetitive of those on the nearby and contemporary L. F. Young House.

   a. Meathouse (ca. 1895)
      Small one-story brick building constructed in common bond with entry on the gable front.

   b. Barn (early 20th century)
      A large frame building with additions under a gable roof.
c. Springhouse (early 20th century)  Concrete construction with a shed roof.

The John Jones House and Farm

5. The John Jones House (ca. 1904)  A two-story frame "T" plan house, clad in weatherboards under gable roofs. Ornamental woodwork is concentrated on the gable fronts, window surrounds, and front porch. Interior, common bond brick chimneys pierce the ridge line.

   a. Root Cellar and Smokehouse (early 20th century)  Built into the hillside the root cellar has concrete walls. The meathouse above is frame construction clad in weatherboards under a gable roof.

   b. Woodshed (ca. 1920)  Vertical sheathing over frame construction under a shed roof.

   c. Barn/Granary (ca. 1940)  Frame construction with vertical sheathing under a shed roof.

   d. Outbuilding (ca. 1940)  Frame construction under a shed roof.

   e. Corncrib (ca. 1930)  Frame construction with a shed roof.

   f. Barn (early 20th century)  A large center-passage barn of frame construction with vertical sheathing. Ventilated rake boards under a gable roof. A shed has been attached to the west and a silo to the north.

   g. Pig Sty (ca. 1940)  Frame construction under a shed roof.

The Robert Livesay House and Farm

6. The Robert Livesay House (ca. 1914)  A large two-story square-plan house set on a stone foundation, its frame construction is clad in weatherboards. Its hip roof is pierced by brick chimneys and a large gable roof dormer.

   a. Wood Shed (ca. 1920)  Octagonal frame structure with a board-and-batten cover is now set on a cinder block foundation. Its roof is covered with asbestos shingles. A wood finial rises from the peak.
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**b. Spring House (ca. 1915)**

Built into the hillside, the concrete structure has a shed roof.

**c. Granary/Corn Crib (ca. 1930)**

A substantial frame building with vertical sheathing under a shed roof. It sits on stacks of stones.

**d. Barn (ca. 1920)**

Large frame barn, vertically sheathed, has two passages entered from the side rather than the more usual gable end, a large loft area under a gable roof.

---

**The Edward Columbus Phipps House**

**7. The E. C. Phipps House (ca. 1925)**

A one-and-a-half story frame house clad in weatherboards with porches along two sides all under a wide-spread gable roof.

a. **Chicken House (ca. 1930)**

A shed-roof frame building with a board-and-batten exterior.

b. **Wood Shed (ca. 1930)**

A vertically sheathed shed-roof frame building.

c. **Root Cellar (ca. 1950)**

Cinder block construction with a shed roof.

d. **Spring House and Wash House (ca. 1950)**

Cinder block construction under a gable roof.

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**The Lee Gale Phipps House and Farm**

**8. The Lee Gale Phipps House (ca. 1955)**

A medium size, frame one-story house with finished attic under a gable roof.

a. **Garage (ca. 1960)**

A cinder block, open end building with weatherboarded gable ends under a gable roof.

b. **Barn (ca. 1905)**

A center-passage barn of frame construction set on a stone base with board-and-batten and vertical sheathing under a gable roof. It has a ventilated opening on the second level and under the gable. A wood silo bound by metal rings was attached ca. 1925. It is set on a concrete foundation and has a dormered conical roof. A shed was attached to the barn to provide a stable for feeding from the silo.
The Samuel Peyton Hale House and Farm

9. The Samuel Peyton Hale House (ca. 1926)  A typical 1920s square-plan frame cottage with weatherboard cladding under a hip roof. A hip roof porch is carried on three sides. The house remains as built except that the interior walls have been sheetrocked.
   a. Pump House (ca. 1950)  Cinder block construction under a gable roof.
   b. Spring House (ca. 1925)  Concrete construction with an attached frame wood shed; under a shed roof.
   c. Garage (ca. 1945)  Frame construction under a gable roof; vertically sheathed.
   d. Garage (ca. 1950)  Weatherboards over frame construction; gable roof.
   e. Barn/Granary (ca. 1930-50)  A complex of three attached buildings; two shed-roof barns and a gable-roof granary with corn crib; a silo is attached to the larger barn.
   f. Granary (ca. 1920)  Frame construction under a gable roof.

10. Grassy Creek Methodist Church (1904)  An early twentieth century, one-room plan frame building with a projecting corner belfry, its exterior is covered with weatherboards and shingles and its roof by a standing seam metal cover. It remains unaltered since its construction in 1904.

Later Structures and Fill Buildings

11. The J. C. Pierce House  A 1920s, one-story, cottage-type frame house covered with weatherboards. Dormers rise above the gable roof.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM NUMBER</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>The Edward Greer House: The last of the Greer family houses, built ca. 1918, this plain two-story T-plan house is covered by weatherboards and fronted by a one-story porch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Service Station (ca. 1925): Rock construction under a hip roof. The enclosed trading/supply room is fronted by an open passage for cars supported by stone piers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Service Station (ca. 1925): This Tudor style building is constructed of brick veneer over frame construction. It stands a story-and-a-half tall under a high gable roof. An exterior end brick chimney constructed in common bond stands on the north elevation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Old Sturgill Store (ca. 1900): A log building clad in weatherboards under a gable roof and fronted by a shed roof porch along the north elevation. A gable projects over the porch to shelter a loading area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Old Post Office (ca. 1900): Frame construction with weatherboards. It is flanked by frame offices at either side. All under individual gable roofs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Tenant House (ca. 1905): A small horizontally sheathed frame building behind the Old Sturgill Store. Fronted by a hip roof porch, it is clad in weatherboards covered by a gable roof.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Group of Farm Outbuildings (ca. 1915-1930): Three buildings contained within a plank fence. All of frame construction. The granary has weatherboard cladding under a gable roof. The two shed-roof buildings have vertical sheathing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>The Roe Paisley House: A modest story-and-a-half frame building under a gable roof which sheds to cover a full facade (south) porch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITEM NUMBER</td>
<td>CONTINUATION SHEET</td>
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<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Dewey Cox House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(ca. 1920s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A cottage type frame story-and-a-half house, clad in weatherboards with a gable roof pierced by a shed dormer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Edison M. Thomas House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(ca. 1960)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brick veneer over frame construction set behind the rock service station in the Grassy Creek Crossroads.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Post Office (ca. 1950)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A two-story cinder block building with the post office on the first floor, and an apartment on the second floor, under a shed roof. Just south of the above house on the east side of S.R. 1551.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>Duplex (ca. 1950)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A small cinder block building.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>Junior Miller House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(ca. 1950s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brick veneer over a frame construction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>A trailer adjacent to the Walter Greer House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>A Young family vacation cottage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frame construction with wood shingle cladding.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The economy of Ashe County since its settlement before the American Revolution principally has been based on agriculture. In the course of the nineteenth century a number of farm communities developed along the north and south forks of the New River, but the most prominent was along Grassy Creek, a tributary of the New River. Bishop Spangenberg visited Grassy Creek and noted that it was "Definitely suited for cattle raising, with an abundance of meadow land." Indeed it is cattle raising which has been the basis of Grassy Creek's economy for one hundred and fifty years. The most prominent among the farming families of the valley, the Greer family, came in the second decade of the nineteenth century. During four generations of ownership over the next hundred years, the Greers, who raised pure-bred Shorthorn cattle, became the largest landholders in the area and established six individual farms there. Sharing common boundaries and fences, the families also probably pooled resources and machinery. The farms have large two-story dwellings with decorated gables, eaves, and porches, each surrounded by a full complement of outbuildings. The Greers introduced dairying on a commercial basis in the early twentieth century and, with others, established a cheese factory in 1915. This operation folded by 1920 and the Greers left soon after removing their dairying operations to Maryland. The Grassy Creek Historic District remains largely the efforts of their building program and bears the mark of their ownership. The form and style of agricultural buildings have changed little since the turn of the century. That some of them have been replaced and new ones added has had little effect on the continuity of time and place.

The first mention of the Grassy Creek region was in 1752 and is recorded in the diary of Bishop Augustus Gottlieb Spangenberg, head of the "Unitas Fratrium" (Unity of the Brethern) or the Moravian Church in America, as it is more familiarly known.\(^1\)

Spangenberg's exploration party passed through what is today Ashe County on their search for a tract of 100,000 acres on which to settle their Moravian colony, which had settled first in Pennsylvania but had soon outgrown their lands. The party took note of the desirable acreage along what would later be called the South Fork of the New River, but there was not a tract as large as they needed available to them, and they eventually settled in what is today Forsyth County. Their party followed the stream down to the Grassy Creek area, and the diary had this to say of the region: "The soil is suitable for raising corn, potatoes, etc. It is also admirably suited for cattle-raising, with an abundance of meadow land."\(^2\)
Aquilla Greer came to the Grassy Creek section from Grayson County, Virginia, and was an enterprising businessman. His son was John F. Greer (called respectfully "Esquire" by the local residents) who was born in 1825 at Grassy Creek and was one of the most successful farmers and merchants in the county during his lifetime.\(^3\)

In a deed recorded December 16, 1816, \(^4\) Isaac Greer and Isaiah Greer of Franklin County, Virginia, conveyed to Aquilla Greer of Grayson County, Virginia, 400 acres "on waters of Grassy Creek and New River; the property is also bounded by the North Carolina-Virginia line." Grayson County, Virginia, forms the northern boundary of Grassy Creek.

The will of Aquilla Greer, \(^5\) admitted to probate March 15, 1861, provided that his wife, Polly Greer, should have his estate for her natural life. The testator further stipulated that upon the death of Polly Greer, the upper end of Aquilla Greer's land, including the dwelling house, was to go to his daughter (Caty). Aquilla Greer's son, John F. Greer, settled on the remaining portion of his father's land and began to amass an estate of his own.

John F. Greer was a man of considerable property, and the 1850 census of Ashe County\(^6\) shows that he owned 17 slaves (an unusually large number for Western North Carolina), 225 cleared acres and 465 unimproved acres, all worth $3,000. He also owned nine horses, 17 milk cows, 4 oxen, 34 head of cattle, 53 head of sheep, and 46 hogs, all worth $1,077. He had 50 bushels of wheat, 50 bushels of rye, 1,000 bushels of Indian corn, and 75 bushels of oats.

Ten years later the census indicates J. F. Greer had realty worth $10,000 and personalty worth $17,730. Greer's realty now had grown to 400 improved acres and 600 unimproved acres. Of the other landowners in the Grassy Creek settlement noted in the 1850 and 1860 censuses,\(^7\) none could compare with Greer in wealth, though some of John F. Greer's children married into these less affluent families. Of John F. Greer's sons, Catlett and John were both soldiers in the Confederate army.

In his will probated May 26, 1897, \(^8\) John F. Greer provided that his heirs "be made equal after deducting what each one had already received." During his lifetime John F. Greer had conveyed more than $11,000 in real estate to his five sons, viz: Catlett A., John F., Edwin D., Paul J., and William C. Martha C. Greer, his wife, was to have a child's share of the estate. By law, however, Martha Greer had a dower interest and she probably used this provision to retain possession and ownership of the dwelling house. John F. Greer's will provided that in order to equally divide his remaining estate, it should be sold at public auction to the highest bidder. Martha Greer in July of 1897 was the highest bidder at $3,500, and thus became owner of the remainder of her husband's property which comprised 145 acres "lying on the waters of..."
the Grassy Creek." Apparently William C. Greer remained on the property during the lifetime of his father and month, and owned the property until the early 1920s. Seemingly, W. C. Greer acquired portions of his brothers' lands for as early as February 3, 1903, a deed was recorded in which he conveyed to his son, Walter E. Greer, "... a certain tract or parcel of land in Grassy Creek Township ... on Martin's Branch of Grassy Creek ... Known as a part of the late C. A. Greer lands." He later granted other portions of his lands to his children (Edward, Mrs. John Jones, and Mrs. Robert Livesay), who established farms on them.

The most significant economic factor in the history of Grassy Creek was the dairying and cheese-making industry which was established here in the early twentieth century. In that year cheese-making demonstrations were conducted first at Grassy Creek, and they created enough interest and enthusiasm to establish a factory at Grassy Creek in 1915. This factory produced $1,500 worth of cheese during its first year. It is recorded that Grassy Creek produced between $14,000 and $15,000 worth of cheese in 1917. The History of Livestock in North Carolina reports that the first carload of cheese from a Southern state was shipped from West Jefferson in 1919. Arthur L. Fletcher, in his Ashe County, A History, points out:

"Gradually, however, the hard facts were driven home to the expert dairy and cheese men of the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and their fine group of dairy farmers in Ashe that their venture, which had started off so well, could not succeed with small widely scattered factories, and roads that were difficult at all times and absolutely impassable a great deal of the time. In addition, economic conditions were greatly disturbed by World War I. In the end the little factories closed, one by one. No amount of hard work could produce a profit from their operation."

There was also a strong disagreement between the dairy and beef cattlemen, and the beef cattlemen, on and off the board of county commissioners, were not in favor of dairy cattle and cheese-making. The strongest supporter of the beef cattle industry was W. M. Bledsoe of Nathans Creek, who was a member of the State Board of Agriculture in the administration of Governor W. W. Kitchen. When the beef cattlemen became prominent, the cheese and dairymen became disillusioned, and the result was the loss of a good many Ashe County citizens. Not willing to abandon their plans for dairying and cheese-making, a large number of citizens moved to Maryland, where, at the town of Bel Air, they founded another cheese-making industry. Many of these citizens were from Grassy Creek, and their departure left the community in a serious slump. Prominent among these resettled citizens from Grassy Creek were the Greer family and their relations. It is said in Ashe County that the citizens are "like the Irish who love their country most and leave it the quickest."
Grassy Creek could not be said to favor public education, for in 1917, when a special school tax was voted in Ashe County, there were only seven votes cast against it, and those in Grassy Creek.\(^4\) It was 1922 before Grassy Creek got an accredited high school.\(^5\)

The Grassy Creek Methodist Church was organized prior to 1900 and at one time had its meeting place in Virginia, and until 1925 was under the jurisdiction of the Virginia conference of the Methodist church. The building in the Grassy Creek Historic District was erected in 1904.\(^6\)

After the exodus of Grassy Creek farmers to Bel Air, Maryland, in the early 1920s, the Ashe County community declined further. Never a large community, it is now but a shadow of its former self; today as then Grassy Creek is a small, rural community in Ashe County, largely dependent on agriculture and cattle.

FOOTNOTES:

3. Cox, Aras B., Footprints on the Sands of Time (Spartanburg, South Carolina), 1900, p. 42.
6. Ashe County Census, 1850.
7. Ashe County Censuses, 1850 and 1860.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid, p. 204.
13 Ibid, p. 56.
15 Ibid, p. 188.
16 Ibid, p. 165.
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Ashe County Census, 1850 and 1860, State Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, N.C.

Ashe County Records, Ashe County Courthouse, Jefferson, N.C. (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).


Fletcher, Arthur L., Ashe County: A History (Ashe County Research Association, Inc.).

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Jefferson, N.C., 1963

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 725 more or less

UTM REFERENCES

ZONE EASTING NORTHING ZONE EASTING NORTHING
A 1,7 4,6,5,6,1,0 8,1,7 4,6,6,7,0,0 4,0,1,6,1,3,0,0
C 1,7 4,6,7,1,0,0 4,0,4,5,3,1,0 0,1,7 4,6,6,5,4,0,0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE: Davyd Foard Hood, consultant, description; John B. Flowers III, survey specialist, and Benjamin Alford, consultant, significance

ORGANIZATION: Division of Archives and History

DATE: June 30, 1976

TELEPHONE: 919/829/4763

CITY OR TOWN: Raleigh

STATE: North Carolina

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ___ STATE ___ LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE: State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY:

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE
GRASSY CREEK HISTORIC DISTRICT

UTM References, cont.

E - 17/466400/4045520
F - 17/465080/4046820
G - 17/464660/4045900
H - 17/464000/4045920
I - 17/464040/4046865
J - 17/464880/4047600