

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Ledbetter, Albertus, House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 125 Haynes Road N/A Not for publication

city or town Montford Cove vicinity

state North Carolina code NC county McDowell code 111 zip code 28752

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jeffrey J. Crow SHPO 10/31/00
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State of Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Albertus Ledbetter House
McDowell County, North Carolina

Section 7 Page 1

Setting

The Albertus Ledbetter House is situated in a hollow flanked by two small ridges. The house faces east towards Haynes road. East of the house is an open field, containing Greasy Creek and Ledbetter pond. The grounds are grass-covered with the exception of a gravel driveway which leads to the back (west) of the house. Large trees, brush and wild fruit trees surround the house. There are several nineteenth and twentieth-century outbuildings on the property. The barn, formerly a dwelling, stands southeast of the house. Due west of the barn are the corn crib and pump house. Located beside the house (south) is the log smokehouse. Beyond (west of) the smokehouse is the chicken coop with an outhouse located directly south. Northwest of the main house is the log spring house. Directly south of the spring house is the former Montford Cove Baptist Church outhouse.

House, ca. 1826, ca. 1836, contributing

This two-story, side-gabled house of timber frame construction was erected in two phases by Albertus Ledbetter's father, Jonathan Ledbetter. The first-floor facade retains original hand-planed, horizontal, tongue-in-groove, board siding while the rest of the house is covered with weatherboarding. The attic floor joists on the south gable end (and the wall above) extend approximately eight-to-twelve inches beyond the exterior wall of the first and second floor. The dwelling has a continuous stone foundation. Several of the hand-painted doors with original locks and hinges remain throughout the house. The windows throughout the original 1826/1836 house are six-over-six, double-hung sash. In May 1999 a wood shingle roof replaced a metal roof.

The original section of the house, built in 1826, consists of a two-story frame, one-room-plan dwelling with a double-shoulder, stepped, Flemish bond chimney on the south gable end. In 1836 the house was enlarged with the addition of the northern two-story section and the entire house was further embellished with decorative paint. The northern addition consists of a stair passage and a parlor, each with a door on the front (east) and rear (west) of the house.

The two sections of the house are tied together by a one-story, shed-roofed porch running the full width of the facade and featuring hand-chamfered posts. The upper section of the porch wall is painted white with blue trim and the lower section is finished with a chair-rail and wainscot that continues uninterrupted into the central passage. The wainscot was painted in 1836 to create the illusion that it is raised panel construction. In June 1999 the open first-story central passage was enclosed with two glass doors flanked by glass panels. The porch ceiling and floor remain intact. Leading to the porch are three individual sets of stone steps, the center set of steps having a cedar handrail. Original doors lead from the 1826/1836 sections onto the porch.

Not only has the exterior remained virtually unchanged during the past 173 years, but so have many of the interior features. The floor plan that was created with the building of the 1836 wing is intact. The 1826 section contains one room with a restored fireplace on the south wall, and the original exposed ceiling beams.

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Albertus Ledbetter House
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Section 7 Page 2

The stairway was moved from the 1826 portion to the center hallway in 1836, but its unusual vine-like motif carved on the open string, as well as faded remnants of the 1836 paint scheme, remain. Below the handrail is the same flush weatherboard and paneling that are on the lower walls of the central passage and front porch. The balusters are painted red. The artist who painted the decorative interior finishes, Charles Dunkin, signed the interior door in the central hallway, and painted the date 1836 on the interior door of the northern section of the house. The 1836 section also retains the original brick fireplace which has been restored. The original painted picture of a thistle and two cornucopias is visible over the mantel. At one time, it is reported, paintings of the Ledbetter family adorned the panels. All the floors in the house are original.

The second-floor of the house has remained virtually unchanged. It has two bedrooms and a bathroom. In the 1826 section of the house, the same exposed beams are evident on the ceiling, as in the first floor. The central passage was divided for a bathroom at the east end in May 1999. The 1836 portion maintains the original brick fireplace, that has been restored. Hand-planed, pine boards, which form the partition walls and sheathe the interior, remain in the 1836 portion.

Attached to the rear elevation of the 1826 section is an ell that contains a kitchen that was added in the mid-1900s. In May 1999 the interior board sheathing was removed and replaced with heart pine boards. The original floor was sanded and cleaned. Directly off of the kitchen (to the south) is a small bathroom that was added in May 1999.

Barn, Late 18th century, Noncontributing

This log building, now used as a barn, is locally known as the Calloway-Harris House. It was originally on the southern section of the property and was moved to its present location, southeast of the Ledbetter House, in the mid 1900s. The chimney from the Calloway-Harris House is still visible at the original site.

Smokehouse, 1826, Contributing

This log smokehouse with half-dovetail corner timbering stands south of the main house.

Spring house, 1826, Contributing

This log spring house with half-dovetail corner timbering is constructed with a stone foundation and stands northwest of the main house. It was used to keep perishable food cold. The stream is channeled through the spring house through a sluice and past a rock retaining wall.

Corn crib, early 20th century, Noncontributing

Located west of the barn, the corn crib is being used as storage and houses vehicles.

Chicken coop, early 20th century, Noncontributing

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Located directly west of the smokehouse. It is used as storage space.

Wash house, early 20th century, Noncontributing

Located west of the main house, this was Montford Cove Baptist Church ladies outhouse which was moved to the property. It is used as a laundry/bath house.

Outhouse, early 20th century, Noncontributing

This outhouse is currently being used as a modern smokehouse.

Pump house, 1998, Noncontributing

This log structure is located directly west of the corn crib and is used as a workshop.

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Section 8 Page 1

Albertus Ledbetter House
McDowell County, North Carolina

Summary

The Albertus Ledbetter House is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C for architecture as an important and rare surviving timber frame house with late Federal details in McDowell County. Built in 1826 and greatly expanded in 1836, the two-story, side-gable house remains one of only a few intact dwellings from the early nineteenth century in the county. Built by Jonathan Ledbetter (1798-1845), a prosperous farmer and postmaster in the Montford Cove community, but occupied long-term by his son Albertus Ledbetter (1836-1920), the house exhibits beaded weatherboard and double-shoulder Flemish bond chimneys set on flush gable ends. The house, one of the most unaltered in the region from the period, displays original painted interior features, a hand-carved vine-like motif on the open string of the stair, and formal molded paneling which spans the facade under the porch and continues uninterrupted into the central passage, creating an unusual but seamless transition between outdoor and interior space. The wainscot on the porch and through the passage, one of the most remarkable exterior and interior finishes for the period in the region, is painted to create the illusion that it is raised-panel construction. All the original hand-painted doors, with original locks and hinges are in place. The artist, Charles Dunkin, signed the interior door in the central hallway and painted "1836" on the interior door in the later section of the house. Accompanying the house is a full complement of nineteenth and twentieth-century outbuildings including a 1826 spring house with an intact rock retaining wall and sluice.

Historical Narrative

McDowell County in 1842 was created from parts of Rutherford and Burke counties and lies in a transition zone between the Piedmont and the mountains. The earliest record of a white man coming into what is now McDowell County was about 1730 when a man named Edmonson explored the area. By 1740 many settlers had pushed their way westward to the upper basin of the Catawba River, and at the time of the American Revolution, the stockade (Davidson's or Rutherford's Fort), at which is now Old Fort, was the western most outpost for the white settlers. It served as a base for exploration and settlement of the Blue Ridge.(1)

Shortly after the Revolution, men who returned from the campaign bore testimony to the lush bottom lands, healthful climates, and beautiful valleys west of the Blue Ridge. With the cession of Cherokee lands, settlers began to pour in the area from the western piedmont.(2) Lots were sold and the town of Marion was platted as a planned town in western North Carolina.

The Albertus Ledbetter House is a rare surviving and intact Federal/Greek Revival dwelling located in the foothills of western North Carolina. The land, in southern McDowell County, was purchased in 1821 by Jonathan Ledbetter. In December of the year Jonathan Ledbetter purchased five tracts of land along Cove Creek totaling 659 acres.(3) In 1826 Ledbetter constructed his dwelling. At the time the property lay entirely in Rutherford County, but when McDowell was formed in 1842, the new county's southern boundary cut through Jonathan Ledbetter's estate. Ledbetter had built his house on the upper portion on Greasy Creek (a tributary of Cove creek); his home fell into McDowell County while the bulk of his property lay in Rutherford.(4)

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Section 8 Page 2

The exterior of the structure harmonizes with the simplistic beauty of its natural surroundings while the decorative ornamentation of the interior reflects the economic and social status of the builder. As his wealth and family grew, Ledbetter enlarged and embellished his home in 1836. Albertus Ledbetter, son of Jonathan, acquired the homeplace after his mother's death in 1872 and lived there until 1919. The house bears his name to distinguish it from the nearby home of Dr. Jonathan Ledbetter, his brother. It remains one of the few intact buildings from the early nineteenth century.

Jonathan Ledbetter, youngest child of Richard Ledbetter III and Nancy Ann Johnson Ledbetter, was born June 4, 1798, at his father's Rutherford County home on Cedar Creek.(5) The extensive land purchase in 1821 established Jonathan Ledbetter as a prominent figure in the county a year before he married Nancy Wells.(6) According to family tradition, he built the oldest portion of the house now standing in 1826 and then enlarged it to its present size in 1836 to meet the demands of a growing family. In all, thirteen children were born to Jonathan and Nancy, eleven of whom survived their father.(7) Jonathan served as postmaster for the Montford Cove post office for nine years (1835-1844), but it is not clear whether the office was in his house or another building on the property.(8)

By the standards of his time and place, Ledbetter was a prosperous farmer. Fields produced quantities of corn, cotton, wheat, oats, flax, and undoubtedly such staples as peas and beans. From cattle came beef and milk and from hogs came pork, bacon, lard, and, indirectly, soap. Bees provided honey while poultry provided eggs and meat.

Home industries included candle making, spinning raw cotton into yarn on the "big wheel", production of linen thread on the flaxwheel, tanning hides and manufacture of leather goods, and forging iron into finished products. Like many farms of the region, it was largely a self-contained unit. However, enough surplus was sold to buy necessities not produced (salt, sugar, coffee) and a few luxuries (molasses and spices).(9) By the time Jonathan Ledbetter died in 1845, his estate was valued somewhere around \$5,500 but the amount of land owned had decreased to about 269 acres.(10)

Upon Ledbetter's death, his property was divided among his eleven surviving children with his widow Nancy receiving a life estate in the homeplace. Each child received fourteen acres outright and an equal interest in the dower tract given to Nancy Ledbetter.(11) Nancy died in 1872 and her third son, Albertus Burner Ledbetter, began to acquire his sibling's interest in the homeplace. By January of 1874 he had obtained title to approximately eighty-four acres and presumably was living in the house built by his father.(12) The records are unclear as to when Albertus began occupying the house. Neither he nor Nancy appear in the 1870 census. The boundary line between McDowell and Burke was ordered to be changed that year and apparently the census takers for each county thought the strip along the line to be in the other's jurisdiction; consequently, a number of residents were not recorded.(13)

Albertus Ledbetter was born in September of 1836 in the house that now bears his name.(14) He farmed a portion of his father's land before his marriage to Arminta Bradly (1842-1917) on January 17, 1861.(15) Fourteen months later he entered Confederate service as a member of Company K of the 50th North Carolina Regiment where he rose to the rank of 2nd Corporal.(16) He returned to the life of a McDowell County farmer following the war. By 1880 he was living in the house of his father and may have been

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living there even prior to his mother's death.(17) He continued to acquire his siblings' interest in the homeplace and by 1911 owned six shares which totaled 125 acres.(18)

During their thirty-six years of marriage, Albertus and Arminta Ledbetter had five children, none of whom lived to maturity. Arminta died of a stroke on June 24, 1917, and was buried in the Montford Cove Church Cemetery.(19) Albertus, afflicted with Bright's Disease, became incapable of caring for himself and was removed from the family residence to the Soldiers' Home in Raleigh. His physical and mental deterioration continued until his death on April 7, 1920. He was buried in Forest City, Rutherford County, North Carolina.(20)

Albertus Ledbetter died intestate with no legal heirs to the property. On August 10, 1921, his nephew James D. Ledbetter (son of Dr. Jonathan Ledbetter), sold the house and 125 acres to W.V. McCurry of Henderson County.(21) McCurry moved shortly afterwards to the house which became known locally as the "W.V. McCurry homeplace."(22) Upon McCurry's death the house and expanded acreage passed jointly to his children, one of whom was Harriet who had married Ralph F. Haynes.(23) In June, 1942, Richard Harold McCurry, "a single man of the Panama Canal Zone," sold his interest in the property to his sister Harriet. A little over two years later Christopher Carrier McCurry of Georgia did likewise.(24) By the end of World War II, the old Ledbetter homeplace belonged to Harriet McCurry Haynes. Following the death of Harriet and Ralph, the homeplace went to their son, William Haynes. In July, 1998, Arthur and Zee Osteen Campbell of St. Lucie Village, Florida bought the house and 92.41 acres. Today they have restored the house for their residence.

Architectural Context

Before 1800, nearly all buildings constructed in McDowell County were log. After the American Revolution white settlers streamed into what is now McDowell County to farm its bountiful bottomlands and settle in its lush valleys. A small planter class established farms on the fertile land of the Catawba River Valley. Typically, these men built their first houses of hewn log. Later, these dwellings were updated by the addition of wood siding and other stylish elements or abandoned for the construction of a grand new house.

The Ledbetter House is one among only a handful of surviving houses associated with prosperous farmers who settled in McDowell County in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century. Among other early wood-sided houses in McDowell County are the Carson House (NR,1970) and Pleasant Gardens, both near Marion, the county seat. One of the region's most impressive nineteenth-century houses, the Carson House combines traditional and popular elements on a large scale. The original portion of the house is a 1793 log house built for colonel John Carson, an Irish immigrant and pioneer in the Upper Catawba Valley, who came to the area known as Pleasant Garden around 1769. Sometime around 1800 another single-pen log house was built next to the original pen and the two were connected with an open breezeway. The building reached its current form, two stories plus an attic with a full-length, two-story front porch and rear shed rooms, in the mid-nineteenth century. The interior contains Greek Revival trim.

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Albertus Ledbetter House
McDowell County, North Carolina

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Pleasant Gardens, also known as the Joseph McDowell House, was built in the late 1780s and stands near Marion in McDowell County. The two-story timber-frame house features brick exterior end chimneys, two front doors, and irregular fenestration. Although one of the region's earliest houses, Pleasant Gardens has been altered.

The Joseph Suttle House (NR, 1980) in nearby Cleveland County is also an early wood-sided house in the region that features Federal-style trim and detailing. Constructed before 1847 for Minor Smith, a planter, the Cleveland house is a two-story dwelling with massive gable-end chimneys, Federal-style mantels, and interior wainscot of horizontal panels with applied molding similar to that found on the porch and central passage of the Ledbetter House.

One of the most notable features of the Ledbetter House is the wainscot that decorates the porch and central passage. Few houses in the state exhibit so clearly the use of the porch and central passage as living space. A similar treatment can be found on the porch of Piney Prospect (NR, 1971), a ca. 1800 dwelling that was remodeled and expanded ca. 1820, in Edgecombe County. The porch at Piney Prospect, which dates to the Federal-era remodeling, also features chair-rail and wainscot. Catherine Bishir in her book, *North Carolina Architecture*, describes the porch at Piney Prospect as "a richly ambiguous indoor-outdoor space," a phrase that aptly characterizes the porch and passage at the Ledbetter House.⁽²⁵⁾ A somewhat later example, the Thomas Shepard Farm (NR, 2000), a Greek Revival dwelling constructed ca. 1850 in Pitt County, has a paneled wall and wainscot on the portico between two entrance doors.

Endnotes

- (1) Mildred B. Fossett, History of McDowell County.
- (2) Jerry L. Cross, "Mountain Heartland, A Historical Overview of the Area Encompassed by the Proposed Mount Mitchell National Park," (Raleigh, N.C. Division of Archives and History, 1977) 2.
- (3) Rutherford County Deed Books, Office of the Register of Deeds, Rutherford County Courthouse, Rutherfordton, Deed Book 34, p. 46.
- (4) David Leroy Corbit, The Formation of the North Carolina Counties 1663-1943 (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1950), 142, hereinafter cited as Corbitt, Formation Of N.C. Counties; McDowell County Records, State Archives, Estate Papers, Jonathan Ledbetter Estate Papers.
- (5) Genealogical data supplied by Mrs. James R. (Lillian Ledbetter) Kimberlin, June 11, 1981. Copies in files of Survey and Planning Branch, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, hereinafter cited as Ledbetter genealogy. Proof that Richard Ledbetter III lived on Cedar Creek is found in reference to a tract of land owned by Jonathan Ledbetter on Cedar Creek "whereon his father Richard lived." Jonathan Ledbetter Estate Papers.
- (6) Rutherford County Marriage Bonds, State Archives Raleigh. The bond is dated November 22, 1822.

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Albertus Ledbetter House
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(7) Ledbetter genealogy and Jonathan Ledbetter Estate Papers. A petition to the court to divide the property lists the eleven surviving heirs.

(8) Clarence W. Griffin, The History of Old Tryon and Rutherford Counties 1730-1936 (Forest City, 1937) 601.

(9) Inventory of Jonathan Ledbetter's estate and partition of dower to widow, Jonathan Ledbetter Estate Papers.

(10) See Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, North Carolina-McDowell County, Population Schedule, 258, Nancy Ledbetter. See also McDowell County Deed Books, Office of the Register of Deeds, McDowell County Courthouse, Marion, Deed Book 3, pp. 402-407: and Book 47, p. 66, hereinafter cited as McDowell County Deed Book.

(11) McDowell County Deed Book 3, pp. 402-407: and Book 47, p. 66.

(12) McDowell County Deed Book 7, p. 408.

(13) Corbitt, Formation of N.C. Counties, 143. The act changing the boundary was repealed in 1871.

(14) Twelfth Census, 1900, McDowell County, Enumeration District 121, Sheet 5, Line 30, Montford Cove Township. Since his father Jonathan lived in the house from 1826 to 1845, Albertus was likely born in the house.

(15) The actual marriage date is listed on the bond.

(16) John W. Moore, Roster of North Carolina Troops in the War Between the States (Raleigh: 1882) III, 445.

(17) Tenth Census, 1880, McDowell County, Montford Cove Township, Population Schedule, 4. That he may have been living there earlier is indicated by his purchasing the interests of his siblings in the dower tract left to his mother. See McDowell County Deed Book 7, p. 408.

(18) McDowell County Deed Book 47, p. 66.

(19) Twelfth Census, 1900 (see fn. 12); and North Carolina State Board of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Death Certificates, vol. 253, p. 1, hereinafter cited as Death Certificates, with volume and page.

(20) Death Certificates, vol. 538, p. 30.

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Albertus Ledbetter House
McDowell County, North Carolina

(21) McDowell County Deed Book 60, p. 538.

(22) See deed from Richard Harold McCurry to Mrs. R.F. Haynes, June, 1942.

(23) See McDowell County Deed Book 92, p. 23; and Book 94, p. 57.

(24) McDowell County Deed Book 92, p. 23; and Book 94, p. 57.

(25) Catherine Bishir, *North Carolina Architecture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990) 123.

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Albertus Ledbetter House
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Bibliography

Corbitt, David Leroy. The Formation of the North Carolina Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1950.

Griffin, Clarence W. The History of Old Tryon and Rutherford Counties 1730-1936. Forest City, 1937.

Kimberlin, Mrs. James R. "Genealogical Data on Ledbetter Family" (1981). Files of Survey and Planning Branch, Archives and History, Raleigh.

McDowell County Records

Deeds
Estate Papers
Marriage Bonds
Wills

North Carolina State Board of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics. Death Certificates, 1913-1985.

Rutherford County Records

Deeds
Estate Papers
Marriage Bonds

United States Census Records, 1850-1900. McDowell County, North Carolina.

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Section 10 Page 1

Albertus Ledbetter House
McDowell County, North Carolina

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of this nomination are indicated on the accompanying map.

Boundary Justification

The historic boundary encompasses approximately 5.2 acres and includes the land surrounding the house and the contributing outbuildings.

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Albertus Ledbetter House
McDowell County, North Carolina

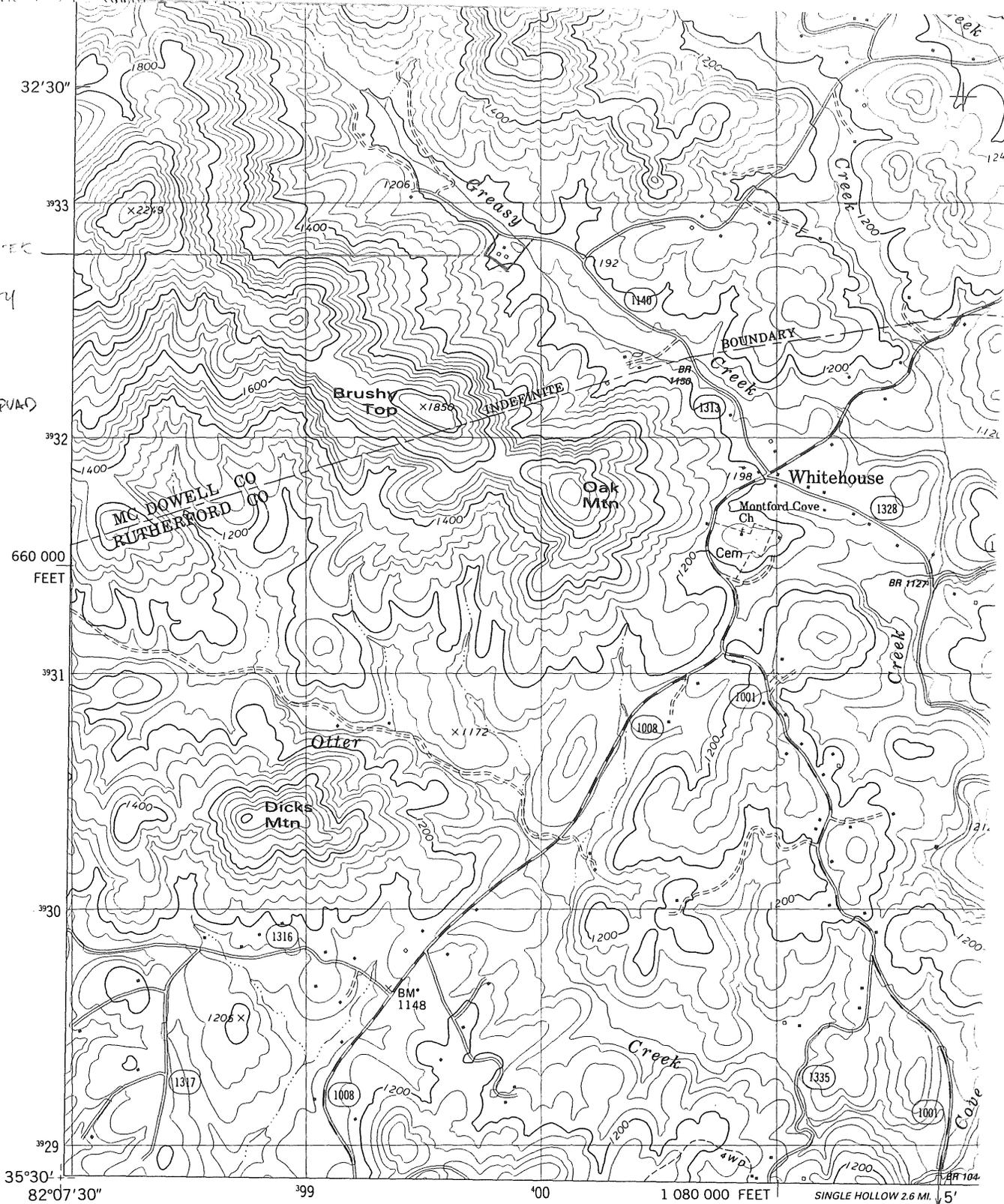
Photographs

The following information is the same for all photographs:

Photographs are of the Albertus Ledbetter House, McDowell County, North Carolina, taken by Zee Campbell on 15 June 2000. Negatives are in the possession of the North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh, North Carolina.

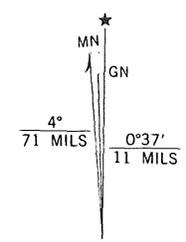
1. Albertus Ledbetter House, façade, facing west.
2. Detail of porch wall, showing the wainscotting and decorative paint.
3. Interior, stair with 1836 original paint.
4. View of house, barn, chicken coop, pump house, facing west.
5. Northwest view of house. Chicken coop is seen to the left, smoke house to the right.
6. Southwest view of house. Springhouse is seen to the left, wash house to the center.
7. Outhouse.

ALBERTUS LEDEBETTER
 HOUSE
 MC DOWELL COUNTY
 E 399840
 N 3932790
 ZONE 17
 SUGAR HILL, NE QUAD



(LAKE LURE)
 4554 NW

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
 Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA
 Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1978. Field checked 1979. Map edited 1985
 Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: North Carolina coordinate system (Lambert conformal conic)
 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 17
 1927 North American Datum
 To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move the projection lines 9 meters south and 14 meters west as shown by dashed corner ticks



UTM GRID AND 1985 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

W

Driveway

OutHouse



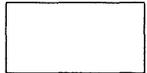
Chicken
Coop



Wash House



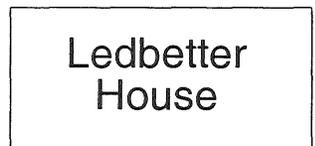
Smoke
House



Spring
House



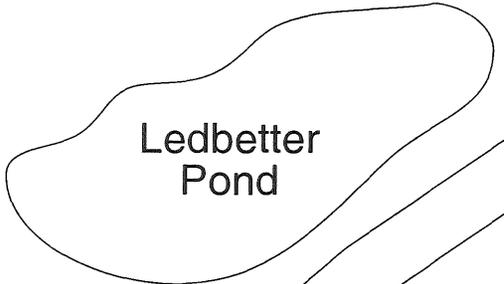
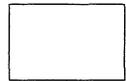
Ledbetter
House



S

N

Pump
House

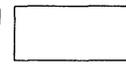


Ledbetter
Pond

Greasy Creek

Site Plan
Albertus Ledbetter House
McDowell County
North Carolina
not-to-scale

Corn
Crib

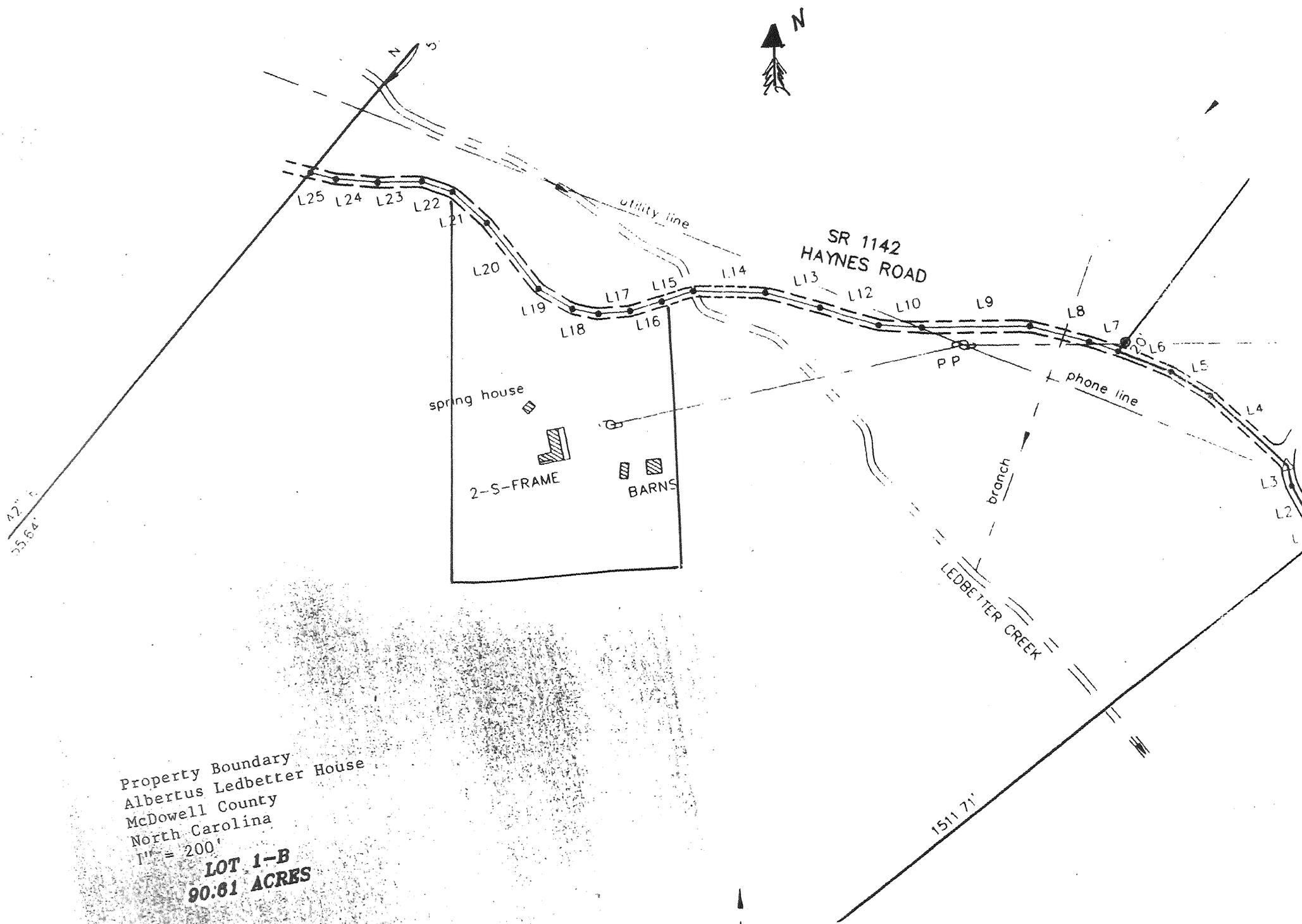


Barn



E

Haynes
Road



Property Boundary
 Albertus Ledbetter House
 McDowell County
 North Carolina
 1" = 200'

LOT 1-B
90.61 ACRES

