NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Washburn Historic District Boundary Increase
Washburn, Rutherford County, RF0436, Listed 1/25/2006
Nomination by Merle Richey from draft prepared by Davyd Foard Hood
Photographs by Davyd Foard Hood, April 2004

See photo at the end of the nomination
1. Name of property

historic name __ Washburn Historic District Boundary Increase ________________________________________________

other names/site number __ Washburn (Bertha) -- Davis (Daisy Washburn), House ______________________________________

2. Location

street & number __ 1037 Gun Club Road ________________________________________________________________

city or town __ Bostic _____________________________________________________________________________

county __ Rutherford ______________________________________________________________________________

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this ___ X ___ 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 ___ X ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this ___ X ___ property be considered significant nationally ___ statewide ___ locally. ( ___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official Date ______________________________________________________________________

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources ___________________________________________________________

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date ______________________________________________________________________

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is: ___ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.

___ other (explain): ____________________________

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action
### 5. Classification

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<th>Ownership of Property</th>
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<td>(Check only one box)</td>
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Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

15

### 6. Function or Use

#### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

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#### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

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### 7. Description

#### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

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#### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

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<table>
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<tr>
<th>other _wood</th>
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#### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)
8. Statement of Significance

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

_X__ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

____ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

____ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

____ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

____ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

____ B removed from its original location.

____ C a birthplace or a grave.

____ D a cemetery.

____ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

____ F a commemorative property.

____ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Period of Significance
__ca. 1905-1950

Significant Dates
__1905

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
__N/A

Cultural Affiliation
__N/A

Architect/Builder
__Unknown

Areas of Significance

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuations sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuations sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)
____ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
____ previously listed in the National Register
____ previously determined eligible by the National Register
__designated a National Historic Landmark
__recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # __________
__recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # __________

Primary Location of Additional Data
_X__ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
____ University
____ Other

Name of repository: ___________________________
Washburn Historic District Boundary Increase
Name of Property
Rutherford County, NC
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approx. 2.2

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

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See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Merle Richey (Revision of draft authored by Davyd Foard Hood dated 11/8/04)
organization ____________________________ date 8/17/05
street & number P. O. Box 51382 ________ telephone 919-489-1417

city or town Durham ____________________ state NC zip code 27717

12. Additional Documentation
Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets
Maps
A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs
Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner
(name as of request of the SHPO or FPO)

name Cherry Mountain Farms, LLC, c/o Merle Richey, Manager
street & number same as preparer above ____________________________ telephone

city or town ____________________________ state ______ zip code ____________

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Narrative Description

This addition to the Washburn Historic District (National Register, 2002) comprises three contributing resources (#1-3) on about two and one-fifth acres. It occupies a quadrangle fronting on Gun Club Road (SR 1565) that adjoins the existing district on its southwest border. The acreage is mostly open, grass-covered lawn that extends to a narrow hedgerow of volunteer growth on its northeast border and to woodlands on its northwest and southwest sides. The Washburn-Davis House (#1) stands in the front center of this parcel and faces Gun Club Road. A frame storage building (#2) stands about 100 feet to the west of the house at the edge of the house grounds. A corn crib (#3) is located about forty feet southwest of the storage building and in the edge of the woodland. The appearance and landscape character of this addition is sympathetic with that of the existing district.

1. Washburn-Davis House
   1037 Gun Club Road
   ca. 1905-1908
   Contributing building

Described in the historic district nomination by Davyd Foard Hood as “a much altered early-twentieth century one-story farm tenant house” (section 7, page 1), this house has been subjected to close physical inspection and research in 2004. These efforts have recovered the significance of the house as the earliest Washburn family residence in Washburn and a building whose appearance, fabric, plan, and finish reflect both its original construction in about 1905 to 1908 and a renovation project of 1961. This research also addressed the details of the 1961 renovation which, in fact, was undertaken to maintain the life of the house as a rental property and to add an indoor bathroom to the house with the necessary concrete block foundation to protect the pipes in winter and to increase the comfort of the house as a rentable residence.

The picturesque one-story farm house is comprised of paired offset blocks which stand on a concrete block foundation and are sheathed with wide German siding added in 1961 to replace the much-deteriorated original weatherboards. It is covered with both gable-front and side-gable roofs of asphalt shingles. The three-bay southeast façade, overlooking Gun Club Road, is dominated by the projecting gable front of the east (two-room bedroom) block, an echoing gable rising above the wall of the recessed main west block, and the shallow two-bay hip-roof porch supported by square-in-plan posts. Triangular vents, fitted with fixed horizontal louvers, are set in the apex of these gables and in that of a third gable on the southwest side elevation. The porch
posts and gable vents were presumably replacements installed in the 1961 renovation. The replacement two-over-two horizontal sash windows are set in plain board surrounds, and the eaves are sheathed with flush boards.

The house’s symmetrical, northeast and southwest side elevations are two and three bays in depth, respectively, reflecting the two- and three-room plans of the east and west blocks. Each of these five bays contains a single window opening fitted with two-over-two sash. The rear northwest elevation of the house, with offset gable fronts echoing the façade, has an asymmetrical appearance with a single window opening centered in the gable end of each block. Here the L-shaped service porch on the northeast side of the three-room west block and the northwest end of the (interior) hall has been reduced in plan through enclosure as a utility room and a bathroom accessible from the hall. These reductions to the porch are believed to have been done during the 1961 renovation. The now-reduced porch, with screened doorways opening into the kitchen and dining room and a door into the utility room, has a wood floor.

The interior of the house follows a center-hall plan with paired bedrooms in the east block and the living room and a large, now combined kitchen and dining room in the west block. In the 1961 renovation, the partition wall between the kitchen and dining room was removed. The floors were overlaid with narrow oak flooring, the walls covered with wallboard, and the ceilings fitted with celotex. The door and window openings include both original molded surrounds and replacement moldings. The doors are replacements. A door at the northwest end of the hall opens into the bathroom enclosed from the porch. Although the original fabric of the house has been replaced or concealed on the exterior and interior, the house retains its original form, original roof line, original footprint size and shape, original site close to the road, floor plan, setting and association with the Washburn family. It therefore retains sufficient integrity to be a contributing resource.

2. Storage Building
   ca. 1943-1944
   Contributing building

This small rudimentary rectangular frame building was erected to provide agricultural storage after a barn was lost to fire. Standing on brick piers, sheathed with horizontal boards, and covered with a gable front-roof of sheet metal, the building has two parts. The northeast half of the building, enclosed for protected storage, has a wood floor and board-and-rail doors on the southeast front and northeast side. The southwest half of the building is accessible from a broad
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opening on the building’s front and appears to have been created for equipment or wagon
storage. It has a dirt floor. Access to the loft area is through a large opening, fitted with a board-
and-rail door, on the front. A simple shed shelters about half the building’s rear, northwest gable
end.

3. Corn crib
c. 1920-1930
Contributing building

This small rectangular frame building, standing low on the ground, is sheathed with
horizontal boards and covered with a sheet metal gable front roof. The door opening,
centered on the southeast gable front, is protected by a bracketed projection of the roof.
The interior is floored with plank.
Statement of Significance

Historic Significance of the Washburn Historic District:

The original Washburn Historical District (National Register 2002), comprising a group of fifteen domestic and commercial buildings owned by the Washburn family, holds local commercial significance. The crossroads community developed as an important trading and way station in north central Rutherford County in the later decades of the nineteenth century. Since at least the 1880’s, a general mercantile store has been continuously operated here by four generations of the Washburn family; it is the oldest known family-operated mercantile business in Rutherford County. Altogether, these buildings and the mercantile and undertaking concerns represent the long association of family with place, and their service to the surrounding agricultural community, an important chapter in the history of rural life in North Carolina that is fast disappearing throughout the state. [Hood, Washburn Historic District, National Register Nomination, 2002]

Summary of significance of boundary increase:

The addition of the Washburn-Davis House and outbuildings to the Washburn Historic District (#1-3) enhances an understanding of the Washburn family’s occupation of this place and their role in making it an important trading and social center in rural Rutherford County. The property meets Criterion A for its importance in the commercial history of the Washburn community. As stated in the historic district nomination, a general mercantile business has been continuously operated at the Washburn crossroads by four generations of the Washburn family. The Washburn Historic District has structures used by and lived in by three generations, including the present generation, of store operators.

This addition to the district represents the missing generation of the four as the Washburn-Davis house was lived in by Sarah Washburn, the wife of Reuben Washburn who began the Washburn mercantile operations at this crossroads. The boundary increase calls for an expansion of the period of significance to begin at ca. 1905. This date acknowledges the construction of the Washburn-Davis House. This period, from ca. 1905-1914, is addressed in the original nomination that chronicled the family’s occupation of this community in the antebellum period and the initiation of the ongoing mercantile operations at this crossroads in the later nineteenth century by Reuben Washburn (1829-1904). Through the course of time, and mainly in the opening decades of the twentieth century, the earliest buildings which housed the family and
their commercial and agricultural operations were lost. These losses included Reuben Washburn’s two-story log house which stood on the east side of today’s Gun Club Road between a later barn (#8,WHD) and the present 1925 store (#9,WHD). Reuben Washburn, his wife Sarah, their youngest daughter Bertha, and a son occupied the log house before Mr. Reuben Washburn’s death on 3 November 1904. Soon thereafter Bertha built a small five-room weather boarded farm house (the subject of this boundary increase) on the west side of the road, about 600 feet to the southwest, on a lot of her family lands. Probably much more comfortable than the log house, this new cottage served as a family residence until the death of Sarah Washburn on 16 November 1910.

The addition of the Washburn-Davis House (#1) places the family’s oldest known surviving residence within the district and its two agricultural outbuildings (#2-3) add to the existing group of “related historic buildings which collectively comprise the best preserved early twentieth-century crossroads community in the county.” Also, these resources, being converted to rental property and tenant farming, represent the expanded family commercial activities to include rental properties, an earlier example than the several contributing rental houses in the present historic district which were constructed as such.

Historical Background and Significance:

Reuben Washburn’s disposition of his real estate at Washburn in 1902 is noted in the existing documentation for the district in Section 8, page fourteen. In a series of deeds in 1902 he and his wife undertook the equitable distribution of their lands among their surviving children. Each child received a two-acre (house) tract and a larger tract of varying acreage that included the family’s fields, pastures, and woodlands. This boundary increase includes land conveyed to two of their children, Bertha and John Lemuel Bascomb Washburn, which later came into the ownership of a third sibling, Daisy Tabitha (Washburn) Davis, whose descendants have owned it to the present. Bertha Washburn (1886-1941), the youngest of the eight surviving children of Reuben (1829-1904) and Sarah (1842-1910) Washburn, was a girl of sixteen and living at home with her aged parents when they went about the distribution of their real estate.

The first owner of the Washburn-Davis House was named Eunice Locha Washburn or Locha Eunice Washburn variously; however, both of these forms were abandoned by her by 1909 when she assumed the name “Bertha” by which she was married in 1909 and known until her death. In this writing she is referred to as “Bertha”.


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The rectangular two-acre lot included in this boundary increase was conveyed to Bertha Washburn by her parents on 28 October 1902 (Rutherford Deeds, 91/390.) It fronted to the east on the “old Lincoln Road” (today’s Gun Club Road) and shared a north boundary with a two-acre house lot that the Washbourns had conveyed to their son Edgar Nollie Washburn (1874-1935) in June 1899 (Rutherford Deeds, 73/265). Edgar Nollie Washburn and his wife were then residing in a (now lost) one-story weatherboarded frame house on their said two-acre lot which they occupied until building their grand Colonial Revival brick house (#1, WHD) in 1914-1915 on property conveyed to them by Reuben and Sarah which included the said two-acre lot.

Reuben and Sarah Washburn executed a second deed to Bertha on 29 October 1902 by which they conveyed to her “the Reuben Washburn residence” and its grounds of twenty-two and one-third acres on the east side of the “old Lincoln Road” subject to their life estate (Rutherford Deeds 99/356). The property conveyed in this second deed was sold to Edgar Nollie Washburn in 1912 and comprises a part of the existing historic district (Rutherford Deeds, 98/98). The “Reuben Washburn residence” was a (now lost) two-story log house that remained the home of the couple, their youngest daughter, and probably their unmarried son John Lemuel B. Washburn until the death of Reuben Washburn in 1904.

Similarly Rueben and Sarah Washburn conveyed two tracts of land to their other children, namely to each child a two-acre tract and separately a larger tract of acreage. Those made to Daisy Tabitha (Washburn) Davis and John Lemuel Bascomb Washburn figure in the history of the Washburn-Davis House (#1-3), this boundary increase. The two-acre lot conveyed to John Lemuel Bascomb Washburn adjoined Bertha’s on the southwest and was the third of three such lots aligned in a row on the west side of the “old Lincoln Road” (Rutherford Deeds, 267/31). Daisy Washburn received John’s two-acre lot as a result of John’s heirs deeding it to her in consideration of her care of John through his life (Rutherford Deeds 190/605). John’s second larger tract was a parcel of some thirty or thirty-five acres bounded on the north by the “old Lincoln Road” and traversed by the Bostic-Sunshine Highway. It lay at the extreme south edge of the greater Washburn lands here and is now beyond the south edge of the historic district (see Rutherford Deeds, 190/605-10 and 266/275). It is now being developed as a residential subdivision called “Cobblestone.” Daisy T. Davis received a two-acre tract on the Bostic Road and a thirty and three-quarter acre parcel on the west side on the “old Lincoln Road” (Rutherford Deeds 77/183, 185). The second, hexagonal tract lay to the northwest, west, and southwest of the two-acre parcels conveyed to Bertha and John Washburn and continued in the ownership of Mrs. Davis’ granddaughter Merle U. Richey until conveyed by her to Cherry Mountain Farms, LLC, a family entity. After executing this series of deeds to his children, Reuben Washburn lived another two years before dying on 3 November 1904 in his log residence.
The Washburn-Davis House (#1) appears to have been built in the period following Mr. Reuben’s death in 1904 and prior to the marriage of its owner, Bertha Washburn, on 24 January 1909. One possible explanation for its construction is that the old log house, whose date of construction is not known, might have become dilapidated or inconvenient as a residence for the widow Sarah Washburn and her young daughter, Bertha. It is also possible that Bertha simply decided to build a small house for herself (and her mother) on her two-acre house lot (later swapped with sister Daisy) before the prospect of marriage became apparent. The small five-room weather boarded frame house is typical in form of its period with paired offset blocks flanking a center hall.

On 24 January 1909 Bertha married Elijah Hollifield (1874-1951), a son of Abram and Eliza (Whisnant) Hollifield. It is not known whether the Hollifields remained here with the aged Sarah Washburn after their marriage, before relocating to Mr. Hollifield’s childhood home, which had been set apart to him by his parents in 1899 (see Rutherford Deeds, 87/100). By the late summer of 1910 sisters Bertha Hollifield and Daisy Davis had determined to exchange the two-acre lots they received from their parents. On 20 September 1910 the Hollifields sold the two-acre site of this house to Daisy Davis for $400 (Rutherford Deeds, 91/416). In turn, on 8 October 1910, Mrs. Davis sold her two-acre lot to Bertha Hollifield for $50 (Rutherford Deeds, 99/357). The $350 differential in price between the two lots reflects the likely value of this small, simply detailed house. The final event of note came on 16 November 1910 when Sarah Washburn died at the age of sixty-seven in this house.

When Daisy (Washburn) Davis (1882-1961) bought this house and lot in 1910, she was the wife of Charles Daniel Davis (1870-1936), whom she had married in 1900, and the mother of two daughters: Merle Holland Davis (1901-1988), and Norma Gwendolyn Davis (1906-2001). The Davis family lived in Sunshine, a community just north of the Washburn crossroads, where Mr. Davis was the manager of one of the Washburn family stores. It was known successively as the E. N. Washburn Store No. 2 and the Sunshine Cash Store. Following Sarah Washburn’s death, the house and the adjoining thirty-plus acre, partially-wooded tract, became a rental property. Sometimes both were leased to a tenant who occupied the house and farmed the arable acreage. At other times the two were leased separately. This practice continued for the half century up to Daisy Davis’ death on 6 August 1961. During this period several known building projects were undertaken. Probably the first of these was the construction of a small frame barn, ca. 1910-1925, which was lost to fire in the early 1940s, when members of the Gee family were renting the house. The earliest of the two surviving frame agricultural outbuildings is a corn crib (#3) of
ca. 1920-1930. The small storage building (#2) was built ca. 1943-1944, soon after Hugh Emanuel Hennessee (1908-1980) and his family came to live in the house.

The final building project, a renovation of the house, was in the planning at Mrs. Davis’ death in the summer of 1961 and completed by builder Buren Walker for Merle (Davis) Umstead. This rehabilitation marked the first substantive improvement to the house and its fabric since its construction. It was made necessary by deterioration and the need to provide indoor toilet and bathing facilities for the rental dwelling. This project, included a concrete block foundation, new German siding, replacement windows, and a remodeling of the interior. The result is the house which survives today. This renovation also included the enclosure of a portion of the rear porch at the end of the hall to provide space for the house’s first indoor toilet facilities. A utility room was also enclosed at the northwest end of the porch.

At the death of Daisy Washburn Davis the 34.94 acre tract was inherited by her daughter, Merle Holland Davis Umstead (1901-1988), widow of William Bradley Umstead (1895-1954). At the death of Merle Holland Davis Umstead the 34.94 tract was inherited by her daughter, Merle Umstead Richey, wife of Russell Earle Richey. On December 1995 Merle Umstead Richey with husband, Russell Earle Richey, joining in the conveyance conveyed the 34.94 acre tract to Cherry Mountain Farms, LLC, a family entity entirely owned by the immediate family of Merle Umstead Richey.

During the forty-plus years since the renovation of 1961, the house and its outbuildings have stood unchanged and remain tenant-occupied. Although much of the exterior fabric has been altered, the house retains its original form, compatible siding, front porch, outbuildings, setting, and spatial organization. Its proximity to the Gun Club Road indicates its origins in a period of slower moving traffic. Its conversion from family residence to an agricultural tenancy represents both an expansion of the commercial activities of the Washburn family as well as an example of the economic community the Washburn mercantile operation served.
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Bibliography


Melton, Nell Hollifield. Interview with Merle Umstead Richey 17 October 2002.


Merle Umstead Richey, letters to Davyd Foard Hood 27 August, 23 September, and 20 October 2004.

Rutherford County Deeds and Death Records, Office of the Register of Deeds, Rutherford County Court House, Rutherfordton, North Carolina.

Rutherford County Wills and Estate Records, Office of the Clerk of Court, Rutherford County Court House, Rutherfordton, North Carolina.

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the property included in this increase to the Washburn Historic District is outlined on the enclosed plat by Nathan Odom dated 17 August 2004, at one inch equals 100 feet scale.

Boundary Justification

The boundary is drawn to include the site and setting of the Washburn-Davis House and its two agricultural outbuildings. Two acres of this property (Tract C as indicated on plat dated 17 August 2004) represent the parcel that was set apart to Bertha Washburn on 28 October 1902, which was sold to her sister Daisy Washburn Davis on 20 September 1910. The one-fifth acre extension of this lot, on the southwest, is necessary to include the site and setting of the corn crib that was built inadvertently astride the lot’s southwest boundary.