

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 any 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 Weaving Room of Crossnore School

other names/site number Home Spun House

2. Location

street & number 205 Johnson Lane NA not for publication
city or town Crossnore NA vicinity
state North Carolina code NC county Avery code 011 zip code 28616

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.)

Stephen J. Rows SHPO 3/6/07
Signature of certifying official Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
State or 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 or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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): _____

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)

- 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.)

Property is:

- 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.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation 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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Southeastern Handicraft Revival

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1936 - 1951

Significant Dates

1936

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

UNKNOWN

Primary Location of Additional Data

- X State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Archives & History, Western Office

5. Classification

Ownership of Property Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count)		
		Contributing	Noncontributing	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	1	0	buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	0	0	sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	0	0	structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	0	0	objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed
In the National Register

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

N/A

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE: specialty store and
production center

EDUCATION: school

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE: specialty store and
production center

EDUCATION: school

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Rustic Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation rock
roof asbestos shingles
walls rock

other wood

Narrative Description

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

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1 1/2

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>17</u>	<u>416160</u>	<u>3986780</u>	3	_____	_____	_____
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____	_____
					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 Martha G. Hill, Manager The Weaving Room

organization Crossnore School Inc. date February 2000

street & number 205 Johnson Lane telephone (828) 733-4660

city or town Crossnore state NC zip code 28616

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

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Crossnore School Inc.

street & number 100 DAR Lane telephone (828) 733-4305

city or town Crossnore state NC zip code 28616

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 Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Weaving Room of Crossnore School
Avery County, North Carolina

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Narrative Description

The Weaving Room, a small Rustic Revival-style building, stands at the beginning of a 72-acre tract of land encompassing an 86-year-old children's home, Crossnore School Inc. Bordering Johnson Lane, the rolling yard is about one-and-one-half acres divided by a small stream. A small wooden bridge crosses the stream to the rear of the property, where a picnic table offers a quiet place for employees or visitors to enjoy an outside lunch. A wooded hill provides the backdrop for the river rock structure built by local craftsmen in 1936. A residential building for employees of the school stands to the south of the structure beyond a gravel parking area. Up a hill to the north, a paved driveway bordered with evergreens leads to a privately owned home. Another parking area, also gravel, with wooden stairs leading down to the road stands across Johnson Lane from the Weaving Room. Sloop's Chapel built in 1953 and a reconstructed log cabin structure are visible from the building. Rock steps and a concrete walk enclosed by a short rail fence lead to the door of "Homespun House," as the Weaving Room was also called. The building is landscaped with native rhododendron and tall Carolina hemlock. Window boxes have been added under the front windows and are filled with annuals every spring.

Sitting close to Johnson Lane, the Weaving Room stands two-and-one-half stories as the site slopes away from the road to the west. The vaguely Rustic Revival-style building is constructed of randomly mortared river rock. Two projecting wings flank the one-and-one-half story main block, which is capped by a tall side gable roof. The central bay of the rock façade rises into a shed-roof wall dormer with a central peaked parapet. A pair of six-over-six windows centered in the wall dormer allows natural light into the interior stairway. Two plain gabled dormers flank the center bay. River rock porch columns support a low shed roof, which shelters a paneled entrance door with full-height, eight-light sidelights. Two pairs of six-over-six-light casement windows flank the entrance and allow light for the office on the left and the finishing room on the right of the front door. The form of an angel crafted of larger rocks can be seen in the rock façade just to the left of the entrance.

On the north side of the building, the lower, one-story wing extends from the rear two-thirds of the end wall with an offset gable roof. The front-facing six-over-six window lights a bathroom. Chestnut bark shingles cover the gable ends. A slender louvered vent and paired six-over-six windows are located on the gable end of the main block while a single six-over-six window is located in the gable end of the projecting wing. Three evenly spaced six-over-six windows with flat arch openings punctuate the rock wall. The slope of the site reveals two tall casement windows at the basement level of the building. A wooden stair and landing leads to and shelters upper and lower entrances to the rear addition. The configuration of the end elevation is mirrored on the south of the building although the chestnut bark in the gable ends has been replaced with asbestos shingles. Instead of the rear stair and the south end, a wrought iron ramp, added in 1986, runs from the small parking area to the addition on the back of the building. The slope of the site at the south end of the building also reveals two six-over-six, basement-level windows in the projecting wing and the concrete block foundation of the rear addition.

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The two-level addition, built in 1986, extending the full length of the building dominates the rear elevation. The weathered pine, board-and-batten siding of the 65-foot by 16-foot addition compliments the rock walls of the old building. The addition contains space for fifteen looms and eight weavers upstairs. The basement level houses a vertical warp mill used by the weavers to wind and measure their warp thread, and provides storage for looms, cones of thread, extra inventory and laundry. A row of four wood-cased windows across each level of the rear additions supplies natural light to the workspaces. Above the addition, a shed roof dormer extends upward and runs the full width of the main block. Two single and two pairs of six-over-six windows light the dormer which is covered with chestnut bark shingles.

The plan of the Weaving Room follows a central-hall arrangement with an office to the left of the hall and the finishing room located to the right. The interior of the main building is finished throughout with wormy chestnut boards cut from the diseased timber of the 1930's and exposed pine beam ceilings. Plumbing pipes and electrical wiring are also exposed on the first and second floor ceilings. The original chestnut shelving still holds stock in the finishing room and basement storage areas. The pine flooring has been covered with carpet, except in the basement where it remains visible. The stairway accesses two second story apartments used to house employees of Crossnore School, Inc. Similarly a stair leads down to the basement storage area and original bathroom. Modern bathrooms and a kitchen have been added in first floor of the projecting wings to accommodate the weavers. Modern heating and some new plumbing fixtures have been added over the years. The rear rock wall of the original building forms one interior wall of the new addition, which is a large, open space transverse to the main hall. Shelves have replaced glass in the old rock-framed window openings of the addition.

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Narrative Statement of Significance

Summary

The Weaving Room, built in 1936, on the campus of Crossnore School Inc. in Crossnore, North Carolina is eligible for listing in the National Register under criteria A and C. The Weaving program of Crossnore School began in 1920 and is significant as part of the American handicraft revival movement which flourished in the southeastern mountains in the early twentieth century. The survival of hand weaving in the mountains is partially due to this industrial textile production center, retail store, and art gallery. The Weaving Room satisfies criterion A in that it is the only production center of its kind still in operation in North Carolina. Started during the Appalachian craft revival of the early 1920s, the business provided employment, education, and socialization to mountain women and children. Today quality hand woven goods are still produced and sold.

The Weaving Room is also eligible under criterion C for architecture. The weaving program started in 1920 was first housed in a cinderblock building. In 1929 the program moved into a larger log structure. The Rustic Revival-style rock building, erected to replace the original log cabin structure that housed the Weaving program from 1929 to 1935, is indigenous to the area. The rockwork is similar to the work at Crossnore Presbyterian Church built in 1926 and Sloop Memorial Hospital built in 1928. Community folk and local craftsmen pulled river rock from Linville River and lumber was milled from the diseased chestnut trees to build a suitable place for women and children to learn, practice, and sell their craft. The Rustic Revival style is a blending of the more rustic aspects of the Arts and Crafts movement with the work and traditions of local craftsmen who used native materials, such as chestnut bark, chestnut lumber, and smooth river rock. These structures and similar ones in nearby Linville Resorts represent an important facet in the history of architecture in North Carolina. The period of significance ends in 1951 since the building continues to serve the same function into the present, but does not meet Criteria Consideration G for exceptional significance for properties that are less than fifty years of age.

Historical Background and context: Southeastern Handicraft Revival

Near the ridge of the eastern continental divide at 3,428 feet above sea level sits Crossnore, North Carolina. The small community is four miles from Newland, the highest county seat in North Carolina, in Avery County and not far from the Blue Ridge Parkway. The town is named for George Crossnore who owned and operated a store and the first post office in Crossnore. Crossnore School Inc. began in 1913 by Dr. Mary Martin Sloop and her husband Dr. Eustace Sloop who came to the community to practice medicine and later became interested in improving the education of the children of the area. In 1917 the school incorporated to care for children who had to live at school and in 1939 reincorporated as

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Weaving Room of Crossnore School
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a child care institution. Crossnore boarded more than 200 children at times, caring for their personal needs as well as educating them. The eighty-seven-year-old children's home now operates as a foster care facility and has sixty children in residence.

The weaving program began in 1920 housed in a large log cabin structure, which was destroyed by fire in 1935. The building was replaced in 1936 by the rock building where the Weaving Room operates today.

Not far from Crossnore in the Three-Mile Creek Area Uncle Jake Carpenter kept a record of all who died from 1841 to 1916. Sometimes he included a commentary on their character and occupation. Uncle Jake recorded mostly farmers and soldiers with a couple of blacksmiths and noted a few men who made good whisky. For the women he identified four weavers who lived long lives. In 1875, Lily Wiseman, who spun and wove all her family wore, died at the age of eighty-two. Peg Chatem, a spinner and weaver, died at seventy-two in 1886. Ninety-three year old Miney English, a weaver, died in 1895, and Franky Berlison a weaver and spinner, died at eighty in 1896. In Appalachia weaving existed longer as a household art out of necessity and isolation than in other parts of the United States. Except in a few rare cases the home manufacture of textiles was not passed down to the younger Appalachian women after the commercially spun and woven cloth became available. In the early twentieth century some women who raised their sheep, spun yarn, and knitted socks could still be found around Crossnore.

In 1911 two doctors, Mary Martin Sloop and Eustace Sloop arrived in Crossnore to serve the community with medical assistance. Initially Mary Sloop assisted her husband with his practice but changed her focus to improving the education of mountain children. In 1913, Mary rallied the Crossnore Community to build a more adequate building for their small school. The new two-classroom building brought more teachers and children to Crossnore. Children came from such distances that it was soon necessary to provide housing and food for those who could not travel so far every day.

In 1917 Crossnore School officially incorporated to care for children who had to live at the school. In 1939 the tax exempt non-profit organization reincorporated as a "child- caring institution, whose sole purpose shall be to provide a home and industrial and vocational training for orphan, half-orphan, and deserted children with both parents living, but without the means of procuring a High School or Vocational Education, preference being given to mountain children."¹

¹ Phillis Alvic, *The Weaving Room of Crossnore School, Inc.* (Newland, N.C.: Avery County Historical Society and Museum, 1998) 8.

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Crossnore and Berea College in Kentucky have always had close ties. Mary Sloop often sent students to high school in Banner Elk or Plumtree, but whenever she thought the child needed something better she sent her to Berea for academy or college. Nell Johnson was one of those children.

At the first graduation to take place at Crossnore on April 6, 1921, Nell Johnson recited her commencement address, "The Art of Handweaving." She had been summoned home from Berea Academy in Kentucky to be half of the first graduating class. Gurney Franklin, the other half, delivered his address on agriculture. Nell learned to weave from Edith Matheny, wife of the dean while attending High School at Berea Academy in Kentucky. She drew her research from a pamphlet on domestic industries written by Candace Wheeler, one of the best known designers of the Arts and Crafts movement.

Modeled after Berea's Fireside Industries, which provided weaving instruction to both students and women from the community, weaving was offered at Crossnore in the beginning of the school year of 1920. Money became available to fund the weaving program and teachers salaries through the Smith-Hughes Vocational Education Bill passed by Congress on February 23, 1917. The bill provided training in agriculture, home economics, and trades and industries.

Clara Lowrance and Zada Benfield were the first instructors in the 1920-21 school year. A well-developed program of thirty young people and four married women was reported to the State Department of Public Instruction, Division of Trades and Industries. Zada Benfield and Marion Brown are seen in an early photograph seated at looms designed by Anna Ernberg of Berea College for use in weaving programs. The early looms of the Appalachian Mountains had imposing superstructures of rough-cut timber and took up too much space. Ernberg's loom fit together without hardware and was easily copied by competent woodworkers.

The Southern Industrial Education Association, founded in 1905 by Martha Gielow, also provided money. The purpose of the program was to encourage handicraft projects in the southern mountains. This funding helped develop the community component of the Weaving Room. The Association ran an Exchange in Washington, DC that sold crafts. Some of the weaving, commissioned from the mountain women through the Exchange was used by Ellen Wilson, Woodrow Wilson's first wife, to decorate a room in the White House. In the fall of 1924 in the Association's newsletter, Mary Sloop reported of the effectiveness of the program: "It is not only a material help to them, but it makes a change in their

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attitude toward life, and for this reason we feel the money given us by the Southern Industrial Education Association is bearing fruit in the lives of the women."²

Clara Lowrance started teaching at Crossnore after finishing her higher education at Presbyterian schools. She supervised the weaving program from its inception until 1926. Clara was from Texas and like many educated women in the early twentieth century taught in one of the 150 Appalachian independent schools founded by church missions or philanthropic organizations. Miss Lowrance learned to weave at Berea during summers while working at Crossnore School. Her counterpart Zada Benfield left the program after only one year to marry.

Lillie Clark Johnson, a Crossnore native assumed leadership of the weaving program in 1926. She was married to Newburn Johnson and had three children before she learned to weave. Aunt Newbie as she was called was listed as a student prior to 1923 and received a grade of 'excellent' for class participation. She then assisted Lowrance until 1926. Unlike most other mountain women, Mrs. Johnson came to the school to weave instead of weaving at home.

In the early years weaving took place on campus in a cinderblock building. The program soon outgrew this space and in 1929, with financial help from five chapters of the Daughters of the American Revolution of Charlotte, two log cabins were moved and put together. The largest part of the structure came from a barn owned by the notorious McCanless gang that rode with Jesse and Frank James... The other half was donated by Will Franklin. The two-story building occupied an available lot in the town of Crossnore and was put together at an unusual angle to fit the space. In addition to weaving, sewing classes and rug hooking production occurred. The huge log cabin with lots of windows also had a retail sales area for tourists.

In the fall of 1924, Crossnore reported to the state that eleven women wove at looms in their homes and thirty-eight students wove at school. The average hours worked by students between July and December were 120. Essie Ollis wove 712 hours. Ollis became Mrs. Johnson's assistant in the Weaving Room after she married. Pheba Benfield worked the second most hours---388. The women who wove at home were paid by the piece. The students could be paid piece rate or by the hour. The wage was ten cents per hour, not much by today's standards. Men working on the Blue Ridge Parkway were only paid twelve cents an hour for their labor during those years.

² Alvic, 16.

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“CROSSNORE REAL COMMUNITY WORK” and “Experiments in Industry and Education Develops Satisfactory Results, WORKS MIRACLES IN NEIGHBORHOOD LIFE”, were headlines in the *Raleigh News and Observer* for June 19, 1927. Maude Minish Sutton’s article in the paper told of positive social results from the Crossnore weaving program. “Mrs. Sloop says that the weaving department has raised the social and moral status of the community. ... The sight of beautiful things, the mastery of a beautiful art and the consciousness of good craftsmanship have given a sort of dignity and prestige to the weaving girls and to the mothers who weave”.³

An early brochure for the Weaving Room appealed to benevolent middle class women to buy the products produced as a result of the Appalachian craft revival. Mary Sloop solicited women’s clubs, church groups, and Crossnore supporters. The products were almost always sold directly, eliminating the middleman and the profit he would have taken. In 1933 with the opening of the Blue Ridge Parkway more tourists came to the mountains and thus created another market for the program’s textiles.⁴

In January of 1928, a delegation including Mrs. Sloop, her daughter Emma Sloop, Mrs. Johnson, and a school trustee McCoy Franklin, represented Crossnore at the discussion of the founding of an organization of Appalachian craft production centers. Eleven centers from Kentucky, Tennessee, and North Carolina were represented at the meeting held at Penland, North Carolina. Members of this group desired some joint vehicle to cooperatively market their product and also to share common problems of their industry. In Allen Eaton’s book, *Handicrafts of the Southern Highlands*, the cooperation of the weaving and other craft production centers is reported. Mary Sloop and others present at that first meeting shared stories of their work. Mrs. Sloop read portions of Uncle Jake Carpenter’s *Anthology on Death of Three Mile Creek*.

One year later when the group met at the Spinning Wheel in Asheville, the Southern Mountain Handicraft Guild was formed. George Coggin of the North Carolina Department of Vocational Education attended and told of the state’s efforts to promote handicraft production and his desire to work with the new organization. Later, the name of the organization was changed to the Southern Highland Handicraft Guild.

The organization, which met twice a year, grew in membership to twenty-five centers, with as additional twelve individuals with nine “friends” from the original nine centers. On October 10, 1933 the group met at the Weld House in Altamont, North Carolina not far from Crossnore. The second session was

³ Alvic, 19.

⁴ Brochure promoting the Weaving Room, Weaving Room Archives, Crossnore, N.C., n.d., n.p.

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held the next day at the Weaving Room. Allen Eaton reported on the success of an exhibition organized by the Guild and the American Federation of the Arts which had circulated to ten venues starting with the Country Life Association conference in Blacksburg, Virginia, and including Corcoran Gallery In Washington, DC. Of the 300 items shown by weavers, twenty-three pieces came from Crossnore. Items listed as runner, napkin, baby blanket, coverlet, steamer throw, pillow cover and bags were presented in patterns such as Lee's Surrender, Martha Washington, Pine Bloom, Chariot Wheel, and Governor's Garden. Some of these patterns are woven in the Weaving Room today.

In *Handicrafts of the Southern Highlands*, Eaton commented on the craft revival in the southern Appalachian Mountains: "No work in handicrafts in the Highlands has brought a more whole-hearted response from mountain women to work at a congenial and constructive task than that carried on at Crossnore under the able leadership of Dr. Mary M. Sloop and the immediate direction of Mrs. N.W. Johnson."⁵ Eaton inaccurately listed the inception of the Weaving Room as 1922.

The weaving program at Crossnore had flourished among the community women and students when disaster struck early in October of 1935. The headline of the *Avery Advocate* for Thursday October 10, 1935 read "Weaving Building at Crossnore Burns with Heavy Loss." The fire destroyed an estimated \$15,000 of material and finished goods, not including the building and equipment. Mary Sloop and Mrs. Johnson received the news while selling weaving at a Daughters of the American Revolution meeting in West Virginia. With \$300.00 collected from the DAR meeting they returned to Crossnore determined to rebuild. In a letter to Dr. W. J. Hutchins, President of Berea College, Mrs. Sloop commented on the rebuilding. "The children began the good work by giving a part of their Saturday afternoon to getting rock out of the river. It was not what you might call warm, but they waded in bravely and carried out the rock -- tons of them."⁶ Supervised fires burned at night to keep the concrete from freezing as construction continued through the winter. Aunt Newbie had orders from the DAR to fill so she called in the looms from women who wove at home and set them up in her living room. The building was completed in 1936 and the weavers moved in.

Mrs. Johnson said a few words at the dedication of the new building. "Homespun House, like the buildings on Crossnore's campus, was built by local people with mountain materials. ... From a few workers making a few things, the work has grown to accommodate weavers who come five days a week, others who hook rugs, finishers, and those who prepare material."⁷ The difficult times of the Depression limited donations and the building of the new center was not without compromises as Aunt Newbie

⁵ Alvic, 22.

⁶ Alvic, 23

⁷ Alvic, 24.

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explained. "The loss of the old building with its store of supplies, has made the work progress under difficulties, for money is scarce to buy adequate material, and often it can be bought only in small amounts from time to time as the articles are woven and sold."⁸

Although smaller than the log structure the new facility had a full basement with a classroom and storage area. Sewing classes and rug hooking took place on the lower floor. Two apartments occupied the second floor. An angel made of large stones is embedded in the rock façade just beside the door.

George W. Coggin, head of the North Carolina vocational education division of Trades and Industries from September 25, 1919 until 1953, guided the development of training programs. In a talk he delivered at a national meeting of vocational education teachers he reported on the state's Textile Classes. The industrial textile industry had experienced major growth in the south in the early twentieth century. North Carolina's trade extension programs included cloth analysis, mill arithmetic, and loom mechanics. Coggin also reported: "one other phase of our program which may or may not be considered textiles...this is Hand Loom Weaving." After describing the mountain regions of North Carolina and the people who lived there he told of their resourcefulness. "Those who can secure looms for their homes, weave at odd times, and get the teacher to help them as they may need it. You may question the efficiency of such a plan but it gets almost unbelievable results. You must remember that these people are keen and resourceful."⁹

The last two pages of Coggins talk described the Weaving Institute at Penland. During a three week course. At Penland 117 students came from twenty states. "Of this number fifty persons were from North Carolina. Tuition fees for people from North Carolina were waived due to the assistance which the Institute receives for North Carolina students from the State Department of Vocational Education."¹⁰ Under this provision, Aunt Newbie attended Penland and brought back to her program new skills and new patterns for weaving.

By the mid-1930's several alternative programs were started in North Carolina with Smith-Hughes money. Production centers in Hayesville, Canton, Franklin, and Boone were in the mountains. The Greensboro center was the exception. Coggin attended the Weaving Institute at Penland and made regular trips to Crossnore to support the weaving program. In 1948 Mr. Coggin was accepted by the Board Trustees of Crossnore School as a permanent member.

⁸ Alvic, 24.

⁹ Alvic, 24.

¹⁰ Alvic, 25.

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After giving thirty-five years of her life to weaving at Crossnore, Aunt Newbie retired in 1962. Ossie Phillips assumed the position of manager. Phillips started weaving in 1924 when she was nine years old, on a loom the children carried home for their mother to weave on. A story related by Mary Sloop in her biography, *Miracle in the Hills*, tells of one small girl delivering finished rugs in the Lee's Surrender pattern to Aunt Newbie for payment. Aunt Newbie was asked to choose the best one. "Goody," the little girl said, "that's the one I made; I told 'em it was the best."¹¹ The little girl was Ossie. Miss Phillips worked over sixty years in the Weaving Room presiding over difficult times. She worked for half salary to keep the program going when the school's administrative support of the program waned. Ossie attended the annual meetings of the DAR in Washington, DC, and sold articles from the Weaving Room.

Recognized for her management of the weaving program and for her skill as a weaver, Miss Phillips received the North Carolina Folk Heritage Award, conferred by the North Carolina Arts Council, in 1998. She produced coverlets in difficult overshot patterns but her specialty was baby blankets with inlaid figures in the corners. Phillips died that same year.

In 1986, the new director of the school, Joe Mitchell, backed a plan to expand the weaving facility. A larger, better-lighted space was added across the back of the building. The addition made space for more looms and gave more storage downstairs. The original space is used for retail sales and offices.

Architecture Context

Built in 1936, the Weaving Room of Crossnore School is architecturally significant because of the integrity of the vernacular architecture using native rock, chestnut lumber and bark. The Rustic Revival style, popular in the area and perpetuated by owners of nearby vacation resorts, is recognized as significant historical architecture in western North Carolina. Evolved from the principles of A. J. Downing and later interpreted in the magazines of Gustav Stickley, and in the buildings and engineering works constructed by the government, Rustic Revival architecture is prevalent in the region.

The Weaving Room was built in the Rustic Revival style to house a facet of the handicraft revival movement of the early twentieth century. Catherine Bishir, et al, in *A Guide the Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina* observed that "the use of this style [Rustic Revival] may not have been conscious but may have been a fortuitous blending of the intentional rusticism of the Arts and Crafts

¹¹ Alvic, 27.

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movement with the continuity of indigenous building traditions.”¹² The builders of the Weaving Room were directly influenced by the craftsmanship of William Erwin Franklin, builder of the Crossnore Presbyterian Church in 1926 (NR, 1996). Mr. Franklin also built Crossnore High School and Sloop Memorial Hospital. Although it is not known whether Franklin, who died the summer after its completion, participated in the construction of the Weaving Room, it is likely that some of his workmen did. Similarities in the masonry of all three structures can be readily seen. Mary Martin Sloop called on William Erwin Franklin to help construct the Crossnore Presbyterian Church, the local school building and the hospital where her husband Eustace Henry Sloop practiced. Franklin donated part of the original log building that housed the Weaving Room from 1926 until 1936. It is very possible that he was involved in the construction of the new weaving building. William Erwin Franklin (1860-1936) was a skilled carpenter and stonemason who often built houses, chimneys, root cellars or dams for community folk in Crossnore.

After the fire that destroyed the log structure that originally housed the weaving program of Crossnore School, the children of Crossnore School and community folk started to rebuild. In Mary T. Sloop’s book, “Miracle in the Hills,” she describes the beginning work. “And nearly every child did go. There were 120 of them,” she goes on... “Those children just knew how to organize themselves in lines that stretched across the river. And into that river they waded, no matter how cold it was. The rocks were picked up on the little island in the middle of the river and passed from hand to hand until they were put up on the bank. Then a truck came and picked them up and hauled them away.”¹³ Mrs. Sloop used the \$300.00 donation from the DAR to buy cement. “We did, and began to build. But they were afraid the cement would freeze; we kept fires around it at night, besides covering it up, and in the daytime we got to making cement with boiling water. So we kept on until we had a weaving building. And we have it today.”¹⁴ The importance of the weaving program to Crossnore School as well as the income it provided for local families is reflected in their eagerness to rebuild.

Of all the weaving programs Allen Eaton chronicled in his book, *Handicrafts of the Southern Highlands*, Crossnore is the only center where community women still weave textiles for sale. Customers can buy a Lee’s Surrender rug or a Martha Washington table runner in addition to contemporary items produced by the weavers. Occasionally students of Crossnore School Inc. work in the Weaving Room and learn to weave. The Weaving Room is part of the greater mission of Crossnore School Inc. That mission is “To provide a stable healing environment in a residential setting to children from families in crisis.”

¹² Catherine Bishir, Michael Southern, and Jennifer Martin, *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Western North Carolina* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1999) 60.

¹³ Alvic, 23.

¹⁴ Alvic, 23.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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- Barker, Garry G. The Handicraft Revival in Southern Appalachia. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1991.
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- Eaton, Allen H. Handicrafts of the Southern Highlands. 1937. Reprint, New York, NY: Dover Publications, 1973.
- Sloop, Mary T. Martin with Legette Blythe. Miracle in the Hills. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, Publishers, 1953.

10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The property included in this nomination is parcel # 4372 tax map 183418 in the Avery County Tax Mapping System.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes a portion of land purchased by Mary T. Sloop in 1926 of which the greater part is Crossnore School Inc., owner of the Weaving Room. The boundary encompasses the historic building setting.

