

**NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE**  
Office of Archives and History  
Department of Cultural Resources

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Milligan Shuford Wise and Theron Colbert Dellinger Houses**

Crossnore, Avery County, AV0099, Listed 8/27/2008

Nomination by Davyd Foard Hood

Photographs by Davyd Foard Hood, May 2006



Theron Colbert Dellinger House, overall view



Milligan Shuford Wise House and garage, view from road

**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 Wise, Milligan Shuford, and Theron Colbert Dellinger Houses

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Location**

street & number 152 and 158 Hemlock Lane, 142 Dellinger Road, 110 Pine Street not for publication N/A

city or town Crossnore vicinity N/A

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.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
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<br>_____ See continuation sheet.                 | _____                   | _____          |
| _____ determined eligible for the<br>National Register<br>_____ See continuation sheet. | _____                   | _____          |
| _____ determined not eligible for the<br>National Register                              | _____                   | _____          |
| _____ removed from the National Register  | _____                   | _____          |
| _____ other (explain): _____  | _____                   | _____          |

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

private  
 public-local  
 public-State  
 public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

building(s)  
 district  
 site  
 structure  
 object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

| Contributing | Noncontributing |            |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| <u>4</u>     | <u>2</u>        | buildings  |
| <u>1</u>     | <u>0</u>        | sites      |
| <u>0</u>     | <u>0</u>        | structures |
| <u>0</u>     | <u>0</u>        | objects    |
| <u>5</u>     | <u>2</u>        | Total      |

**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**

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

|                      |                             |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Cat: <u>DOMESTIC</u> | Sub: <u>single dwelling</u> |
| <u>DOMESTIC</u>      | <u>secondary structure</u>  |
| <u>LANDSCAPE</u>     | <u>garden</u>               |
| _____                | _____                       |
| _____                | _____                       |
| _____                | _____                       |
| _____                | _____                       |

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

|                      |                             |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Cat: <u>DOMESTIC</u> | Sub: <u>single dwelling</u> |
| <u>DOMESTIC</u>      | <u>secondary structure</u>  |
| <u>LANDSCAPE</u>     | <u>garden</u>               |
| _____                | _____                       |
| _____                | _____                       |
| _____                | _____                       |
| _____                | _____                       |

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions)

Bungalow/Craftsman  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone  
roof Metal  
walls Weatherboard  
Other: bark  
other Wood  
Stone

**Narrative Description**

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

See Continuation Sheet

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**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.)

- 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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

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**Period of Significance**

1926-1941

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**Significant Dates**

1926

1927

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**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

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**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

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**Architect/Builder**

Wise, Milligan Shuford-builder

Franklin, James Lenoir-stonemason

Franklin, Elgie Lenoir-stonemason

Franklin, Lloyd Otto-stonemason

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**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

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**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Location of Additional Data**

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

Name of repository: North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** Approximately 6.0 acres

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

|   | Zone Easting Northing    | Zone Easting Northing         |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 | <u>17 416200 3986380</u> | 3 _____                       |
| 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.)

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Davyd Foard Hood

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date 2 April 2007

street & number Isinglass, 6907 Old Shelby Road telephone 704/462-1847

city or town Vale state NC zip code 28168

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**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)

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**Property Owner**

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

name See Continuation Sheet

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

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**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.

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7. NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Overview

The Milligan Shuford Wise and Theron Colbert Dellinger Houses are rustic one-and-a-half-story frame Craftsman-style houses completed in 1926 and 1927, respectively. They stand on the east and west sides of Dellinger Road (SR 1148), just south of the center of Crossnore, a small town in mountainous Avery County, North Carolina, whose northwest border is coterminous with that of Carter and Johnson counties, Tennessee. Dellinger Road is a short, narrow asphalt paved street, which has a gently curving, uphill path from its head on the south side of Crossnore Drive (SR 1143) south to its foot, at its junction with US 221/NC 194, which is overlooked by Crossnore Presbyterian Church (NR, 1996). Crossnore Drive is the town's main street. Crossnore, with an elevation of 3,546 feet, is a small mountain town with a population of 237 in 2005 that is located about five miles south of Newland, the Avery County seat. The town is most closely identified with the Crossnore School, a boarding school for underprivileged area children, whose fortunes have been intertwined with those of the town since it was established here in 1913. The school, whose mission has evolved to meet the changing needs of its student body, occupies a campus of about eighty acres lying on the immediate north side of Crossnore Drive. The Wise House (#2), its landscaped grounds (#1), and a ca. 1932-35 two-level stone garage apartment (#3), occupy a lot bordering on the east side of Dellinger Road; however, it is located at 158 Hemlock Lane, a private gravel drive off Dellinger Road. The Dellinger House (#5), together with a frame barn (#6) and a frame garage (#7) occupies a smaller lot at 142 Dellinger Road that fronts on the west side of the street. The Wise Cottage (#4), a one-story-on-basement ca. 1941 stone rental dwelling facing west onto Dellinger Road, stands between the two imposing houses, on the east side of the road, at 110 Pine Street. Pine Street originally linked Dellinger Road and Crossnore Drive; however, today it has the appearance of a private narrow asphalt-paved lane that ends at Crossnore Creek and serves as the driveway for the cottage. In the 1920s, when the Wise and Dellinger houses were built, the townscape of Crossnore was still largely open and recovering from an apparent clear-cutting by a lumber company around the turn of the century. Native plant material had begun to reappear, and it was enhanced by plantings on both house lots. These have matured through the course of the twentieth century, and the uncultivated acreage to the south and west of the houses, along the sides of Dellinger Road and beyond, has regained its former woodland status. On the east side of Dellinger Road, generally opposite the Dellinger House, Walter Seal Flynt Jr. (b. 1930) is building a one-and-a-half-story retirement house on a long-vacant lot. As a teenager in the 1940s, Mr. Flynt had lived with his parents and sister in the Wise Cottage (#4).

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Inventory List

1. The Wise House Grounds  
158 Hemlock Lane  
ca. 1926-ca. 1950, and later  
Contributing site

The grounds of the Wise House included in this nomination comprise about 3.75 acres of the 5.45-acre residual tract that survived intact at Mr. Wise's death in 1974. It was platted in 1986 by surveyor Robert E. Grindstaff for Ruth McKinney Wise, Mr. Wise's (second wife and) widow, in anticipation of the placement of the property in her sole ownership in 1987 (Avery Deeds, 181/94-96). The irregularly-shaped lot was bound on the west by the path of Dellinger Road, on the south/southeast by the path of US 221, and on the north by Crossnore Creek. The boundary of that residual tract remained intact through the sale of the property by Milligan Shuford Wise Jr., and others, to the trustees of the Crossnore First Baptist Church on 10 September 2003 (Avery Deeds, 370/2347-351). The First Baptist Church is located northwest of the Wise House and faces onto Crossnore Drive. Since then the church trustees have incorporated the lowest-lying portion of the tract, about 1.70 acres along the south edge of Crossnore Creek, into a playground and a gravel-covered reserve parking lot for its church complex situated on the north side of Crossnore Creek, between it and Crossnore Drive (SR 1143). That part of the acreage included the principal lot(s) cultivated by Mr. Wise as his vegetable garden. The nominated acreage includes all the remainder of his property here, much of which he and his first wife cultivated as ornamental gardens, which forms the setting of the Wise House.

The topography of the Wise House Grounds is gently undulating and drops in grade from Dellinger Road to the northeast. The Wise House (#2) and the garage apartment (#3) are in the near center of this residual acreage on a generally level terrace that was probably graded for the house site but which has an entirely natural appearance. They stand at the end of the longish, narrow gravel drive that carries in a southeasterly direction off the east side of Dellinger Road to a point east of the garage and north of the house where it expands into a small informal parking area. For about two-thirds of its length the drive is flanked along its upper, southwest side by a low stone retaining wall that was built either by Mr. Wise or his Franklin kinsmen; it was repaired in 1998 by Kenny Poteat. The drive carries into a mown grass lawn that covers the immediate house grounds.

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The once-extensive garden cultivated by Milligan and Mamie Wise, and later by Mr. Wise, occupied a generally arc-shaped area that carried from the garage apartment behind the house, between it and Dellinger Road, to the south and southeast, and easterly, down to the partial impoundment of a spring-fed branch. According to a family tradition the garden evolved from its beginning with the occupation of the house in 1926, through the course of their married life. It was considered a place of beauty in Crossnore, frequented by visitors to Crossnore and the Crossnore School. The essential conceptual features of this garden, including both herbaceous and woody plants and stone stairs, steps, walls and related work, survive on the grounds. The garden had three principal parts with stone enhancements. Documentary photographs of the grounds, made between about 1930 and about 1940, represent the early appearance of these garden areas, their plantings, and their stoneworks. Not surprisingly, it is the labor-intensive flower garden cultivated by Mamie Wise, which was lost after her death in 1946. It was located on the terrace with the house and occupied an elongated oblong area off the south corner of the house extending south to where a long-lost poultry house stood. The family-held photographs show the garden, its beds and plantings, and a series of flagstone walks and edging stones, including a large circular stone-edged bed. Mrs. Wise grew phlox, anemones, pansies, bulbs, and other annuals and perennials here. After her death, Mr. Wise converted this area to a grass-covered terrace, essentially an extension of the house lawn. Today some short sections of stone walks are visible in the grass but it remains unclear whether he took up the other sections of walk and edging or covered them with soil and then planted grass. Also surviving near this area, off the south corner of the sleeping porch, is a small stone-encircled concrete-lined ornamental pond that was graced with water lilies. The Wise children also kept gold fish in this pond, which Mr. Wise transferred to the larger branch-fed pond as they grew larger.

Mrs. Wise's flower garden was flanked on the west, on the sloping bank rising west to Dellinger Road, by a shrubbery that was largely the concern of Mr. Wise. It extended from the garage apartment south to merge with native vegetation in the vicinity of the poultry house. The shrubbery was retained along its east side by a low mortared stone wall that also formed a border of the flower garden. This wall survives intact to the present. Access to the shrubbery was, and remains, by way of a series of well-made axial stone stairways of varying length, that are positioned on axis with the house's back door and rise with grade through a series of shallow levels to Dellinger Road. This part of the garden was both ornamental and practical as it was here that Mr. Wise grew out some woody stock that he sold to nursery men. Today the stone stairways, with low side walls, remain in place, in remarkably good condition. Woody plants here, including both those grown by Mr. Wise and their offspring, are rhododendron, mountain laurel, forsythia, deciduous azaleas, spireas, among other flowering shrubs, together with

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arborvitae, hemlock, and other evergreens. The floor of the shrubbery is covered with various native and cultivated ground covers punctuated with daffodils.

While the shrubbery had its practical, income-producing side, the second important garden area cultivated by Milligan Wise was entirely ornamental. His branch-fed pond, featuring water lilies and other water plants, and the upstream Japanese Iris garden were favored by visitors. The sizeable pond and its companion garden were located to the east of the house, downgrade some fifteen or twenty feet, and on a near level with Crossnore Creek. It was accessible by way of a footpath, carrying down the periwinkle-planted bank on the east edge of the flower garden. That path is now lost, its site covered by bamboo. The other access is the handsome stone stairway, descending at the edge of the front lawn off the east front corner of the house. The stairway descended to a small stone-paved terrace at the north end of the pond that adjoined the low concrete dam that impounded most of the branch feeding the pond. While the stairway survives in remarkably intact condition, and companion plantings remain, neglect during the thirty-plus years since Mr. Wise's death and washes have effectively erased the simple dam and presence of the pool, and the branch now flows unimpeded. The Japanese Iris garden, located upstream at the head of the pond, has also disappeared from view. Its site has been reclaimed by native growth.

2. Milligan Shuford Wise House  
158 Hemlock Lane  
ca. 1923-1926  
Contributing building

The Milligan Shuford Wise House, a well-preserved one-and-a-half story weatherboarded frame Craftsman-style bungalow, enjoys a rustic appearance created by its mortared stone masonry and its complementing dark brown stained woodwork. The house, which faces northeast and is fronted with an engaged porch, is rectangular in plan except for the shallow, projecting enclosed service porch on its rear, southwest elevation and the larger, deeper sleeping porch on its southeast side. Its narrow façade and deep side elevations reflect its two-room wide, triple-pile plan. The house stands on a full mortared river rock foundation that is taller, more visible on the front half of the house because of the ease in grade. Its stained weatherboarded elevations are framed by cornerboards that rise to the triangular bracketed eaves. The eaves on the sides of the side-gable-roof house are flush sheathed as are those on the front and rear elevations where the exposed rafter ends are protected with a fascia board. Original one-over-one sash windows, protected by metal-framed storm windows, are set in plain board surrounds with shallow projecting sills. When the house was built, the window openings were fitted with wood-framed

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screens that were stained to match the house. The house's side-gable roof is covered with painted metal shingles. Stacks of the exterior end chimney and an interior stone flue rise above the house's roofline.

On the northeast front, two-bay elevation a tall flight of wood steps with mortared stone ends rises on center to the full-façade engaged porch. The wood-floored porch is encircled by a blind, weatherboard-sheathed railing with simple square posts that rise to a frieze band. The inside of the railing, the frieze, and the porch ceiling are sheathed with tongue-and-groove sheathing. The house's front door, featuring a large pane above three molded panels, is set in the left bay, facing the house, while a three-part window, illuminating the living room, occupies the right bay. A shed-roof dormer, with a three-part window centered in the front elevation, rises above the porch roof.

The Wise House's northwest side elevation, seen by those approaching the house along Hemlock Lane, has a general three-part symmetry reflecting the triple-pile plan; however, the three small basement windows are asymmetrically positioned. Because the front porch is engaged under the house's expansive side-gable roof, the three first-story bays are not directly aligned below those on the second story. Reading left to right, east to west, the stone chimney in the east bay, serving the fireplace in the living room, is flanked by short windows as was typical on many contemporary bungalows. In the center bay, a shallow three-part bay window projects forward of the elevation and is covered with a shed roof; the window illuminates the dining room. The west bay of this wide elevation features short paired windows, which are positioned above the sink in the kitchen. These windows are slightly larger than those flanking the chimney. On the second story two conventional-sized windows are paired in the center to illuminate the large northwest bedroom. Small, almost square windows in the flanking bays, illuminate spacious walk-in closets under the eaves. A vent has been installed in recent years beside the west closet window to ventilate the closed space above the kitchen, and a second, like attic vent has been installed in the upper gable. The northwest elevation of the enclosed service porch is offset behind the main wall plane and has paired conventional windows.

The Wise House's southeast elevation has an asymmetrical appearance. At the basement level a full height door opening, positioned under the porch, is fitted with a diagonally sheathed door. This opening provided easy access to the northeast front part of the dirt-floor basement that Mr. Wise used as a garden room for tools and supplies. He also had a conventional home-owner's work bench here, in the main area of the basement. Two small basement windows provided illumination to a small laundry room and the cold pantry for canned goods, in the near center of

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the basement, on its southeast side. The one-story sleeping porch, covered with a gable-end roof, occupies the west half of the first-story elevation. Originally screened, it was fitted in the 1930s with three windows on its front and back elevations and six windows along its longer southeast elevation. A short window at the front (east) edge of the first-story elevation illuminates the foot of the staircase while a conventional window serves the middle room in this south tier. A full-size window, set mid-story, lights a landing on the stairwell. On the second story an off-center full-size window illuminates the bathroom, while small symmetrical windows illuminate and ventilate small closets under the eaves. A later vent is set in the upper gable to ventilate the attic.

The house's first-story rear, southwest elevation has a general four-part arrangement. The projecting, enclosed service porch in the west bay has paired windows on its side elevations and a third pairing of windows on its southwest elevation flanking the door. Documentary photographs indicate that this porch was originally open and supported by square posts. Family members believe it was enclosed in the later 1930s, probably contemporary with the addition of windows on the sleeping porch. Beside it, in the west side of the main wall plane, a full-size window illuminates the bathroom. A pair of conventional windows are positioned in the next bay, and illuminate the bedroom in the south corner of the main block. The southwest elevation of the sleeping porch, aligned with the back wall of the house occupies the fourth, southernmost part of this elevation. On the second-story, a shed roof dormer, positioned as a pendant to the front dormer, holds a three-part window.

The interior plan, finish, and appearance of the Wise House survives today essentially as it did when the family occupied the house in 1926. The only changes of note are typical and include a partial refitting of the kitchen and its cabinetry and remodelings of both the first- and second-story bathrooms and the replacement of most of their fittings. The finish of the house is consistent on both stories with no diminution on the second story as often occurs. The hardwood flooring throughout the house is of oak or chestnut, with some variation in its width from room to room. The walls and ceilings throughout are painted plaster. They are fitted with molded painted baseboards and quarter-round toe moldings and simple cornice moldings. The doors and windows are enframed with plain board surrounds, with aprons under the window sills, which are painted. The doors throughout the house have a consistent two-panel arrangement and are fitted with metal hardware. Most of the doors retain their original, darkened stain while some have been painted through time. The exceptions to this include the original front and back doors, which feature large glass panes above three molded panels, and the paired, glazed fifteen-pane French doors, which open from the entrance/stair hall into the living room, and the second

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pairing, which open from the living room into the dining room. These French doors reinforce the *en suite* character of the entrance/stair hall and living and dining rooms.

The front door opens into the entrance/stair hall, in the east corner of the house, where a stained chestnut (or oak) Craftsman-style stair rises along the southeast wall to a landing and then in a second flight along the hall's southwest wall to the second story. The lower two treads of the staircase splay around the paneled, molded newel. A shaped handrail carries with rectangular members to an intermediate newel on the landing and a third newel on the second story, whose bases are also molded. A door in the hall's southwest wall opens into the middle room in the south tier, which was used alternately in its history as a den or bedroom. French doors open in the northwest wall into the living room. The chief decorative feature in the living room is the full-height exposed stone chimney breast, centered on the northwest wall, which Wise-family tradition attributes to Garfield Benfield, another of the area's skilled stone masons. Its craftsmanship includes the usual firebox, a shallow projecting shelf, and paired round-arch niches above the shelf that were designed to hold vases or other decorative ornaments. A second set of French doors are positioned in the southwest partition wall with the dining room. Its interior decoration includes two features handcrafted by Mr. Wise which complement each other. In the center of the dining room's southeast wall he built in a Craftsman-style chestnut dresser that has the beautiful proportions and simplicity of furniture by Gustave Stickley. The base comprises a centered tier of five drawers flanked by doors opening onto storage shelves. The drawers have applied wood pulls and the doors have simple metal hinges and latches. A recessed serving board occupies the center of the dresser; the wall at the back of the serving board is fitted with a full-width cup shelf. The symmetrical upper part of the dresser is fitted with four paneled doors that cover storage shelves for china. In the opposite, northwest wall, Mr. Wise fitted a chestnut board window seat in the three-bay window. This is the first appearance of a feature that he would also install in the Dellinger House dining room (#5) and the living room of the Wise Cottage(#4). Doorways in the dining room's southwest wall open into the center hall and kitchen. The dining room retained its visible hardwood flooring until about 1950 when it was covered with linoleum.

The kitchen, in the west corner of the house, has doors opening into the dining room, a small hall in the rear center of the house, and the service porch. The VAT tile which was laid over the hardwood flooring in the dining room is continued here and on the service porch, which was used by the Wise family as an eating porch for informal meals. The cabinetry and fittings of the kitchen date from two periods. The built-in cupboards in the room's southeast wall date from the house's construction and have the appearance of those which survive completely intact in the

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Dellinger House (#5). In a remodeling of the kitchen in about 1960, some alteration was made on that wall to receive a small electric range. At that time an L-shaped series of counter top cabinets were added on the southwest and northwest walls where a manufactured sink unit, labeled "Geneva Kitchens," is positioned under paired windows. Wall-hung cabinets were added on the southwest wall above the counter. Another survival of the kitchen's original fabric is a small counter-level pass-through, to the dining room, positioned on the north side of the interior chimney which earlier served the wood cook stove here and the basement furnace.

The small hall in the rear center of the Wise House also opens into the first-story bathroom, the dining room, the south corner bedroom, and the middle room in the southeast tier that saw use as both a second, first-story bedroom and a family sitting room over time. A door also opens onto a staircase that descends into the dirt-floor basement where a laundry room and cold pantry are enclosed on the southeast side of the house. The fabric and fittings of the bathroom have been altered and replaced through time while both rooms used as bedrooms retain their original appearance. Doors in each room open onto the sleeping porch. The sleeping porch, originally fitted with screened openings, retains weatherboards on the house's southeast wall. The apron under the original, now glazed openings and the upper frieze band are sheathed with a combination of beaded ceiling and tongue-and-groove sheathing. The porch ceiling is finished with beaded sheathing.

The second story of the Wise House, whose rooms were rented from the 1920s into the early 1960s to guests who in some situations also boarded with the Wise family, has a generally symmetrical plan. The staircase rises to a rectangular, off-center hall. Doors in its northeast and southwest walls open into bedrooms illuminated by the dormer windows on those elevations and a door in the hall's northwest wall opens into the larger bedroom above the dining room. Each of the three bedrooms also has a door opening into its own walk-in closet. A door in the hall also opens into the fourth of these walk-in closets and yet another door opens into the bathroom on the southeast side of the house. The bathroom has black-and-white tile on the floor and retains its original claw-foot tub labeled "The American—Abingdon, Ill." The other fittings are replacement.

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3. Garage Apartment  
152 Hemlock Lane  
ca. 1932-35  
Contributing building

The construction of the garage apartment provided both necessary garage space to the Wise family for their automobile while the rental of the one-bedroom apartment produced a modest steady source of income. According to family tradition the building was erected in the early 1930s and between about 1932 and 1935. Mrs. Wise's brothers Elgie and Lloyd Franklin are said to have laid up its stone elevations. The carpentry work, particularly the finish work, was executed in part, if not entirely, by Mr. Wise.

The garage apartment is a one-story on basement rectangular stone masonry building covered with an asphalt shingle hip roof. The building, which faces southeast, is built into the slope of a bank which drops to such an extent that the ground level entrances into the basement garage, on the northeast side, are on grade. The inventive, boldly-patterned mortared masonry incorporates the use of random oversized, partially shaped stones, laid with smaller stones in a mostly horizontal fashion. Other stones are laid at angles or on diagonals which add visual interest and appeal. The window and door openings and the two wide garage openings are all fitted with splayed stone jack arches. The offset gable-front porch, projecting on the southeast elevation, is also partially sunk into grade. An L-shaped flight of steps, anchored at the foot by capped piers, incorporates a shallow landing immediately in front of the porch from which steps rise to its mortared flagstone floor. The porch roof is supported by square stone piers that are linked to the main block by a blind stone railing. Under the porch, the center door opens into the living room. To the left (west) a horizontal opening, holding sliding one-by-one sash, illuminates the kitchen while a part of conventional one-over-one sash windows are positioned to the right (east). On the symmetrical northeast side the large garage openings in the basement are fitted with side-hinged wood doors. The main level has a two-bay arrangement featuring single windows. The northwest elevation has a two-bay division and includes an engaged chimney positioned off-center. The southwest elevation, mostly inset in grade, is blind.

The interior of the apartment is partitioned into a four-room plan with the living room in the east corner, the adjoining kitchen in the south corner, a bedroom in the north corner, and the bathroom, *en suite* with closets, in the west corner. The floor and wall coverings, including tile, carpet, sheet paneling and wallpaper, are mostly of recent date. The front door, featuring a large glass pane above three horizontal panels, and the interior two-panel doors are similar to those in

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the main house and have like metal hardware. A built-in cabinet and counter unit in the kitchen has the appearance of being reused and refitted here. The bathroom retains its original claw foot tub.

Until the 1990s, when Mrs. Wise ceased to rent it, the apartment had a series of steady, long-term occupants. A Mr. Johnson, who worked on the Blue Ridge Parkway, lodged here with his family. Miss Margaret Moore, a nurse at the Garrett Memorial Hospital, rented the apartment from the 1940s into the 1950s and her death, when her sister came to live here. Members of the Vance family also rented it. Stella Aldridge was the last renter/occupant. The building has stood unoccupied but secure since its purchase by the church trustees.

4. Wise Cottage  
110 Pine Street  
ca. 1941  
Contributing building

The Wise Cottage is a Craftsman-style one-story on basement stone cottage with asymmetrical elevations, which was built as a rental cottage by Mr. Wise in about 1941. According to family tradition, Mrs. Wise's brothers Elgie and Lloyd Franklin were employed on its stonework. The boldly patterned masonry is very similar to that of the garage apartment (#3), featuring oversized stones laid in a network of smaller, mostly horizontally-laid stones. However, the vertical stones forming the jack arches over the windows, doors, and basement garage door here vary from the splayed stones forming those in the earlier building. For a long period, and the longest period in its history, beginning in about 1944, the cottage was rented by Walter Seal Flynt (1891-1961) who lived here with his wife and two children. Mr. Flynt was engaged in a number of mica-mining operations in Avery and Mitchell counties, and he lived here until his death. Mrs. Flynt (1908-2005) remained in the house for a short period thereafter. The cottage has not been rented in recent years. It remained a property of Mr. Wise, and a part of his home tract, until April 1965 when he and Mrs. Wise conveyed it to his eldest daughter, Kathleen Wise Smith, and her husband (Avery Deeds, 64/172). The grounds of the cottage were enlarged in 1975 when Mrs. Wise and her son, Milligan Wise, Jr., conveyed an adjoining 0.36-acre quadrilateral lot, also a part of the Wise House grounds to the Smiths (Avery Deeds, 94/1536-38). The deteriorated appearance of the cottage is misleading. The cottage is structurally sound but in need of general maintenance, painting, and repairs.

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The Wise Cottage stands in an open grove of deciduous trees that is enclosed by rows of hemlocks planted along the original lot's border with both Dellinger Road and Pine Street and on its east border. The hemlock rows are largely intact; however, occasional trees have been lost, which interrupts the rhythm. The south border of the original lot was a very small branch that flows from its head near Dellinger Road to the east to Crossnore Creek. The branch now bisects the larger wooded lot. The house is generally rectangular in form, with some shallow offsets and a pronounced ell on its south elevation, and covered by a cross-gable roof of asphalt shingles. The cottage was re-roofed in 2007. The cottage is fitted with four-over-one bungalow style double-hung windows in deeply recessed wood frames. Most of the windows retain their original painted screens.

Although the house has elevations generally parallel with both Dellinger Road and Pine Street, the treatment of the elevations suggests that the cottage's asymmetrical southeast elevation, facing toward the Wise House was probably its "front" elevation. Here the ell, with a three-part window in its southeast gable front and a door on its southwest side, is flanked on the west by a stoop and steps, protected by a stone railing. The railing extends at ground level away from the house and serves as a low retaining wall. The main body of the house has windows illuminating its bathroom and the south corner bedroom. The cottage's northeast elevation, mostly above grade, contains a garage opening at the basement level, fitted with a wood door. On the first story, openings hold a two-part window, in the L-shaped eat-in kitchen in the east corner of the cottage, and a three-part window illuminating the large living room in the cottage's north corner. The cottage's northwest elevation, generally parallel with Pine Street, has a two-bay arrangement while its southwest gable end, facing Dellinger Road, contains but one window near its north edge. Inset here, in the cottage's west corner, is a door which opens into a mud room that opens, in turn, into the living room.

The interior of the cottage is partitioned to form five rooms and a small center hall that links the living room and kitchen in the east part of the house with two bedrooms and bathroom in the west. The finish of the kitchen and living room includes oak flooring and board-sheathed walls covered with thick paper. The ceilings are sheathed with beaded board that is also covered with thick paper. The windows and doors are framed by plain board surrounds: the door surrounds rise from blocks in the molded baseboards. The two-panel wood doors, with metal hardware, are similar to those in the garage apartment (#3). The living room has a window seat fitted below the three-part window in its northeast wall. The metal cabinet and sink unit in the kitchen is labeled "AMPCO." The finish of the bedrooms include wallpaper and tongue-and-groove ceiling, some of which is unpainted and may reflect later twentieth century repairs. The sheathing in the

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bathroom includes both flush boards and tongue-and-groove ceiling on the walls and ceiling and a sheet vinyl floor.

5. Theron Colbert Dellinger House  
142 Dellinger Road  
1927  
Contributing building

(Note: although the house faces east/northeast, for ease in the description, the façade will be described as the east elevation, the sides as the north and south elevations, and the rear as the west elevation.)

According to family tradition this important one-and-a-half-story chestnut bark-sheathed Craftsman-style frame house was built by Milligan Wise for Mr. Dellinger and occupied by the Dellinger family in 1927. The house, together with a small frame barn (#6) and a frame garage (#7), stands on a residual lot on the west side of Dellinger Road that is a part of a fourteen-acre tract acquired by Mr. and Mrs. Dellinger in March 1919 from Ninevah P. and Della Vance (Avery Deeds, 12/27-29). The house stands in the near center of the lot. The Dellingers first occupied a small frame house standing on their newly acquired property, to the east of the present house and between it and Dellinger Road. It was pulled down when this house was occupied in 1927. Mr. Dellinger also made use of an existing barn on the property, which stood on the west side of today's Dellinger Road and above (north) the foot of the driveway.

The grounds of the house reflect the traditional plantings of the period and place. A gravel drive lined by towering hemlock trees carries from Dellinger Road in a southwesterly path to an informal gravel-covered parking area at the back of the house. A Norway fir, white pines, sugar maples, and other deciduous trees cast high shade over the property. Except for the fenced vegetable garden, located in an open area west of the drive and northwest of the house, the grounds are covered by mown grass. The immediate house lawn is also protected by a woven wire fence on its north and east sides, which connects with the garden's woven fencing. The lawn merges on the south side of the house with an orchard of some dozen aged apple trees of old fashioned varieties including Virginia Beauty, Wolf River, and Staymans. Now only the Virginia Beauty and later sweet yellow "Banana" apple trees bear fruit. The oldest trees in the orchard were planted soon after the house was built with others added through the years. American hollies and an aged pear tree stand off the breakfast nook here, between it and the orchard. The grounds also include both red and black raspberry bushes.

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The house lawn and the general domestic grounds surrounding the house are planted with flowering shrubs in both specimen, grouped, and foundation plantings. These include hydrangeas, rhododendron, mountain laurel, roses, and barberry. Sprawling clumps of lavender French lilacs are the signature shrub here, and they ornament the property from the foot of the driveway, in informal plantings, through the lawn to the orchard area. Hostas, day lilies, and native ferns are also present in beds at the front of the house where evergreen shrubbery complements the architectural rockwork. Here flat stones are inset in the ground to form a walk to the front gate and the stone steps down to Dellinger Road. A separate inset stone walk carries from the front porch along the south side of the house to its side entrance, near the breakfast nook, and then continues around the nook to join a concrete walk at the back doors opening into the enclosed service porch.

The Dellinger House is a highly picturesque, well-preserved one-and-a-half-story frame gable-front house whose character and strong visual appeal derive from the combination of its bark-sheathed elevations with the stone foundation and frontispiece, incorporating the corner chimney and porch, and the house's rich coloration. The rocks, gathered from the Linville River, retain their original color; however, the chestnut bark has mellowed to a rich, warm aged appearance that has parallels in the landscape with lichen-covered bark of the old apple trees. The natural color and texture of the stone and bark are offset by the use of a rich teal blue for the house's door and window surrounds, corner- and rake boards, and other visible woodwork, and the black window sash. The footprint of the house, incorporating the inset front porch on its southeast corner, is a rectangle except for the projection of the (breakfast nook) ell at the west end of the south elevation and the shallow service porch, offset on the rear elevation, both of which are covered with shed roofs. The shed form echoes that of the shed-roof dormers centered above the house's north and south side elevations. The roofs are covered with 5-V sheets painted silver. The varied-size window openings contain single, paired, triple, and four-part six-over-one double-hung sash windows. The openings are also fitted with metal storm windows. The eaves of the house are finished with tongue-and-groove sheathing and supported by both purlin brackets and exposed rafter ends carrying rakeboards and fascia boards, respectively.

The two-part east gable front of the Dellinger House is dominated by the bold river rock stonework of the full-width frontispiece that incorporates an overscale, square-in-plan chimney in its northeast corner and the inset front porch in the house's southeast corner. The masonry utilizes stones of varying sizes in a generally horizontal patternwork. Its mass and visual weight are lightened in the apron wall, under the four-part living room window, by a shallow arch-

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headed recess whose splayed stones frame a mosaic-like panel of small stones. This apron wall and the window above comprise the north half of the façade. The south edge of the window opening is framed by a stone pier which rises from the apron wall through the porch's shed roof and skyward, where it both echoes the form of the chimney and punctuates the center of the elevation. The south half of the façade is preceded by a tall stonework staircase, which rises with stepped sides flanking the concrete steps, to the wood floored porch. The porch and its beaded tongue-and-groove ceiling are supported by a stone corner pier and a stone pilaster which rises against the bark-covered wall. A twelve-pane French door in the north wall of the porch opens into the living room while a two-part window in its east face illuminates the dining room. The ceiling mounted porch light, with an octagonal patterned white-glass globe, is original to the porch. The porch swing is an early fitting. A broad opening in the second-story gable holds four sash windows, which echo those below and illuminate the spacious east bedroom.

The north and south side elevations of the Dellinger House have a general symmetry. The three-bay north elevation has large openings in the center and east bay that hold three windows each while the smaller west bay holds paired window sash. These windows, east to west, respectively, illuminate the living room, sitting room, and northwest corner bedroom. The rock foundation is fitted with a side-hinged wood door and flanking, now sheathed, window openings that originally served the cellar. The second-story dormer holds three windows illuminating the north bedroom. The south elevation has a near-equal four-part arrangement with the inset porch occupying the easternmost bay. The dining room's south fenestration in the adjoining bay comprises a shallow projecting two-part bay window flanked by single windows. The wall between the dining room bay and ell is fitted with an off-center side door opening into a narrow passage that links the dining room with the kitchen. This original door has nine glass panes above two horizontal panels. The shed roof ell, occupying the west end of this elevation, contains the breakfast nook. It is fitted with a trio of windows on its south side, two windows on the east, and a blind west wall. The shed roof dormer, in the near center of the south elevation, includes a conventional window at its west edge, which illuminates the interior staircase, and a horizontal opening which wraps the southeast corner of the dormer. This opening was originally screened and provided ventilation for the sleeping porch. It was later fitted with glazed windows for year-around use.

The rear, west elevation of the Dellinger House also has a general three-part symmetry, with unequal sized window openings serving, north to south, the northwest corner bedroom, the bathroom, and the kitchen. The one-story enclosed porch occupies the wall between the bathroom and kitchen windows. It was originally fitted with the present door on its south end and

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three openings occupying its west side overlooking the back yard. The use of three-over-one bungalow style sash in these openings suggest the possibility that the porch openings might have been simply screened originally and glazed in the 1930s. In recent years the center window opening was altered to a doorway to provide handicap access. The new opening is fitted with a nine-pane above two-panel door. The flanking windows retain their wood window boxes.

The interior of the Dellinger House survives as remarkably intact as the exterior, and it retains many of the original furnishings used by the Dellingers and others added through seven decades of family occupancy. The finish is consistent throughout the house, on both stories, except that the oak flooring in the living and dining rooms is narrow in width while that in the other rooms is of conventional width. The painted wallboard walls are fitted with molded-top baseboards and simple cornice moldings. The ceilings are mostly of painted wallboard. The original doors throughout have a two-panel arrangement finished with a now darkened stain. They are fitted with faceted, molded glass knobs of the period. They and the windows are framed with painted plain board surrounds. Changes to the interior are very few and have no effect on the integrity of the house. The wood floors in the kitchen, breakfast nook, enclosed porch, side passage, and bathroom are now covered with sheet vinyl and the first story bedroom and sitting room are fitted with carpet. In the bathroom the enamel on cast iron tub remains in place; however, the commode and sink are replacements. In about 1960 the foot of the staircase, set in a framed opening in the south wall of the inner hall, was fitted with a partially glazed door to retain heat on the first story (when the second story was not in use). On the second story, the west bedroom was partitioned in about 1950, leaving a small bed chamber in its north half and a small bathroom in the south side of the original space.

The living and dining rooms are treated *en suite*, linked by paired fifteen-pane French doors, and fitted with matching, original bronze-finished metal chandeliers with four hanging globes. The living room fireplace, set on angle in the northeast corner, has a concrete hearth, a common-bond brick fireplace, and a simple board mantel shelf. A door at the south edge of the room's west wall opens into the T-plan inner stairhall. In the dining room the shallow projecting south bay is fitted with Mr. Wise's signature window seat. A door in the dining room's north wall opens into the inner hall while a door at the south edge of the west wall opens into the shallow side passage connecting to the kitchen. The dining room retains its original suite of furniture.

The more private, family quarters in the west "half" of the house are served by the T-plan inner hall whose top extends from the living room door westward to the bathroom positioned in the rear center of the house. The stem of the "T" is parallel with the rising flight of steps to the second

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story. At its south end a door opens into the side passage linking the dining room and kitchen; a fourth door in the passage opens onto the stair descending to the earth-floor cellar, below the main staircase, which contains wood shelves for canned goods and bins for apples. The sitting room and bedroom on the north side of the hall communicate with each other and each is fitted with a small closet built along the partition wall between the rooms. Beside the bathroom door a household storage unit is built into the wall; it contains five drawers in its lower half and paired doors above opening onto shelves. The Dellinger House enjoys an unusual separation of functions in that the kitchen is kept separate from the inner hall, the first-story bedrooms, and bathroom. It is accessible only through the side passage.

The kitchen is finished *en suite* with the breakfast nook. The original full-height cabinet unit, built into the kitchen's north wall, survives intact. It has a counter-level work shelf with cabinets below and shallow storage cabinets behind the shelf. This centered section is flanked by tall cabinets on each side and a tier of storage shelves, protected by five doors, across the top of the unit. The framed opening into the nook also has a shallow cabinet on its west edge. The sink unit on the west wall is modern.

The Dellinger House's staircase rises to the south to a mid-story landing and then reverses and rises north to the second story. It is fitted with simple square-in-plan newels and a shaped handrail carried on square pickets. When first occupied the second story had three bedrooms, opening off the east, north, and west sides of the hall and the sleeping porch on the south. The east and north bedrooms remain as built and so, too, does the sleeping porch except for the addition of glazed windows. In about 1950 the west bedroom was partitioned to provide a second-story bathroom for family members and guests. The original two-bulb ceiling-mounted light fixtures remain in place in the three original bedrooms, while single-bulb units survive in the hall and sleeping porch.

6. Barn  
ca. 1950-55  
Noncontributing building

This small two-level frame barn is the second of two erected by Mr. Dellinger in succession here to replace a barn standing on the former Vance property that he utilized for a period beginning in 1919 and later pulled down. The earlier, lost frame barn stood to the south together with a chicken house near the site now occupied by a house erected by Ruth Evelyn (Dellinger) Palmer and her husband, on a lot which was set apart to the Palmers. This rectangular gable-front

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unpainted barn is covered with a front-gable roof of a 5-V sheet metal. The east front is sheathed with mostly horizontal boards. On the ground level a half-width opening in the north half of the façade originally opened onto a through passage, protected by a sliding wood door. That door was replaced by the present arrangement, where the south third of the opening is now vertically sheathed and the reduced opening to the north is now protected by a side-hung vertically-sheathed wood door. A portion of the metal tract for the sliding door remains affixed to the elevation. On the upper level paired, vertically sheathed doors protect a center access to the loft. The north and south sides of the barn are sheathed with boards laid in a chevron pattern which was utilized by mountain-area barn builders in the first half of the twentieth century. Three openings on the ground level of the south side provide light and ventilation. The barn's rear, west gable end is horizontally sheathed. The sliding door remains in place and has been sheathed with tin and reused metal signs. Inside the barn, the through passage occupies the north half of the barn while two stalls and a feed room, together with access to the loft, are located on the south side.

7. Garage/Meat-house  
ca. 1946-50  
Noncontributing building

This small rectangular two-level outbuilding is partially inset in a slope immediately behind the house. The ground level is built of concrete blocks with a garage-width opening on its north end, which is protected by a top-mounted metal door. The floor of the garage is earth. On the east and west side elevations, small openings near the north corners are fitted with two-pane metal windows. The upper level of the building, originally used as a meat-house for salt- and sugar-cured farm-raised pork, is sheathed with asbestos shingles and covered with a gable-front roof of 5-V sheet metal. A reused five, horizontal panel door and a small window opening are positioned together in a simple board frame in the center of the south elevation. A like window opening is also set in the north gable end. Both contain reused two-pane wood sash. The interior of the meat-house has a wood floor and rudimentary finish. It is now used for household storage.

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8. NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

The Milligan Shuford Wise and Theron Colbert Dellinger Houses, completed in 1926 and 1927, respectively, and standing on the east and west sides of Dellinger Road at the near center of Crossnore, occupy an important place in the history and landscape of the small Avery county town. Although Crossnore, named for George Crossnore, is said to have been settled in 1838, the place consisted of only “three houses, a combination schoolhouse-and-church, and one store” in December 1911 when Doctors Eustace Henry (1878-1961) and Mary Martin (1873-1962) Sloop relocated their medical practice here from Plumtree, near the border between Avery and Mitchell counties. Thereafter the fortunes of the village, incorporated as a town in 1925 with Milligan Wise as its first mayor, were closely associated with those of the Crossnore School, a boarding school for educationally underprivileged mountain children established by the Sloops in 1913. The later-nineteenth and early-twentieth century buildings that served as the nursery for the growing village and school have virtually all been replaced by other larger, more serviceable facilities through the course of the twentieth century. Today four principal buildings, among others, including these two houses together with the Crossnore Presbyterian Church (NR,1996) and the former Garrett Memorial Hospital, built by William Ervin Franklin and completed in 1926 and 1928, respectively, reflect the building-up of the community in the 1920s. The Wise and Dellinger Houses hold local significance in the area of architecture and satisfy National Register Criterion C. The period of significance begins in 1926, with the Wise family’s occupation of their house, and extends to 1941, including the construction of the stone garage/apartment and cottage erected by Mr. Wise.

Milligan Shuford Wise (1893-1974) and Theron Colbert Dellinger (1889-1959), who were born in the Altamont community that was a part of Mitchell County until 1911, and who attended Berea College in Kentucky in the 1910s, both decided to cast their fortunes in Crossnore. Mr. Dellinger came to the village first, in about 1917, when he and his brother acquired the Ninevah P. Vance Store and operated it as the Dellinger Brothers Store. Both men were married in 1919, Mr. Wise to Mamie Franklin (1893-1946) and Mr. Dellinger to Lena (Sloop) Crowell (1890-1980), a sister of Dr. Eustace Sloop. Thereafter, the men’s productive lives, and that of Mrs. Dellinger, were intertwined in the advancement of Crossnore. Mr. Wise was a teacher at the Crossnore School from about 1919 until about 1927 when he began an eighteen-year tenure as the manager of the Crossnore Exchange, the town’s only general merchandise store. He next served as a teacher in an agricultural training program sponsored by the Serviceman’s Readjustment Act of 1944/GI Bill, and after about 1950 he gave himself to horticulture,

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continuing to cultivate the extensive gardens here at his house and off-site at a nursery at Three Mile where he grew out woody plant stock for sale to the nursery trade. Here, on his house grounds, he was among the first, in the later 1950s, to grow Fraser Firs for sale as Christmas trees.

In 1919, Lena (Sloop) Dellinger became postmaster of Crossnore, succeeding Ninevah P. Vance, and held the position until February 1931, when she was succeeded in that office by her husband. She later became his assistant and the two operated the Crossnore Post Office until retiring in January 1959. Between them they headed the post office for thirty-nine-and-one-half years. After he and his brother closed their store in the mid 1920s, he engaged in a number of efforts until 1931. Mr. Dellinger also operated the movie theater in Crossnore, which was opened by Cleophas Franklin and first showed silent movies, and in 1939 he acquired and operated a theater in Elk Park.

The architectural significance of the Craftsman-style houses, together with a pair of smaller stone dwellings erected for Mr. Wise is complex and also intertwined. Mr. Wise was the general contractor for both houses, giving his skills both to supervision and to crafting built-in features in each house, and hiring others for specialized work. Principal among these craftsmen were members of the Franklin family, including James Lenoir Franklin (1871-1943), Mr. Wise's father-in-law, and two, if not three of his sons, whose work is seen throughout the region. The two eldest sons, Elgie Lenoir (1901-1981) and Lloyd Otto (1906-1981), built Mr. Wise's garage apartment of ca. 1932-35 and the Wise Cottage of ca. 1941. The two well-preserved and intact houses survive today as arguably the earliest, best preserved houses in Crossnore and as highly important examples of the Craftsman style in Avery County where it represents the most distinguished chapter in its architectural history. The brown elevations of the Wise House recall the wood shingle buildings, which began to be erected in Linville in the 1890s, while the Dellinger House, with its chestnut bark siding is associated with that important regional architectural feature, initiated by architect Henry Bacon in Linville at the end of the nineteenth century. In the 1930s when Allen Hendershott Eaton was traveling in the Appalachian Mountains, gathering materials for his seminal work, *Handicrafts of the Southern Highlands*, he took note of the frequent use of chestnut bark siding in both Linville and Crossnore. Today the house Mr. Wise built for Theron Dellinger and his family is the only surviving building in Crossnore to retain the chestnut bark sheathing appreciated by Mr. Eaton.

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Historical Background

The construction of houses in Crossnore for Milligan Shuford Wise and Theron Colbert Dellinger, nearly contemporary with the incorporation of the town in 1925, figured prominently in the building up of the crossroads into a village of size and presence in the 1920s. The key to this development was the decision of Drs. Eustace Henry and Mary Martin Sloop to relocate their medical practices from Plumtree to Crossnore in 1911 and the decision of Mrs. Sloop to establish a boarding school for the greatly underprivileged mountain children which survives today as Crossnore School. The expansion of the school and the village's fortunes have been intertwined from the 1910s to the present and both Mr. Wise and Mr. Dellinger, who also had important direct and indirect associations with the school, exercised key roles in the development of Crossnore from the 1920s into the mid twentieth century. The lives of the two men also enjoyed certain parallels, from their birth at nearby Altamont in that part of Mitchell County that was combined with parts of Watauga and Caldwell counties to form Avery County in 1911, through the construction of these houses along an old road that was named Dellinger Road (SR 1148). Mr. Wise served as the general contractor for his house, which was occupied by his family in about 1926, and in 1927 he oversaw the completion of the Dellinger family's nearby house. Both men occupied their respective houses until their deaths. The Dellinger House remains a summer residence of Mary Agnes Dellinger Smith and her sons. In 2003 Milligan Shuford Wise Jr. sold his father's house; however, the Wise Cottage, built for rental, remains in family ownership.<sup>1</sup>

Milligan Shuford Wise (1893-1974) was born on 6 November 1893 to Cornelia "Nealy" Wise (1864-1948), the natural daughter of Mary Wise, and the granddaughter of James and Patsy Wise. He was the youngest of three natural children born to Miss Wise. According to family tradition he was a son of Thomas Willard Dellinger (1870-1952); however, that parentage was not formally acknowledged. He grew up in the Altamont community, located between Crossnore and Linville Falls on today's US 221, and attended the limited local schooling offered in the region. In 1913 he attended an unidentified school in Charlotte. In 1914 he became one of a number of Altamont-area boys, including Theron Colbert Dellinger, who enrolled at Berea College in Berea, Kentucky, and gained a higher education than was offered in Avery County. Mr. Wise is said to have studied at Berea for three years. He returned to Avery County and taught school for at least a year in a one-room building at Ingalls, a small village situated along the Toe River near the Avery/Mitchell County line. On 25 May 1918 he enlisted in the United States Army, and he was on the battlefield in France on 11 November 1918 when the armistice

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ending World War I was declared. Following his discharge on 25 June 1919 he returned to Avery County

The events leading to his construction of this house began with his marriage on 27 September 1919 to Mamie Etta Franklin (1893-1946), a daughter of James Lenoir Franklin (1871-1943) and his wife Theodosia Carroll (1871-1949). The Franklins were members of the extended Franklin family in this mountain region who trace their descent from John Franklin (ca. 1759-1837), who had migrated from his native Virginia to old Burke County by 1777 when he was drafted into the Burke County Militia; he saw service in the Revolutionary War, including the Continental Line, until 1782. Miss Franklin had grown up on a farm on Three Mile Creek, on today's Three Mile Road, which also carried NC 194 between Altamont and Ingalls. Following their marriage the couple lived for a period at the teacherage on the grounds of Crossnore School where Mr. Wise was teaching.

With Mrs. Wise expecting the couple's first child, a son who would be named Robert Lee Wise (1921-1922), Mr. Wise confirmed his decision to permanently relocate his family to Crossnore. On 28 June 1921, he purchased a small 2.50-acre tract adjoining the grounds of Crossnore School from Edgar Garfield (1887-1952) and Margaret Arizona (Vance) Aldridge (1889-1977). The purchase price of \$532.50 suggests improvements stood on the property (Avery Deeds, 13/321). According to family tradition Mr. Wise began building a house for his family there, and on 10 January 1922 he acquired an adjoining one-half acre lot from the Aldridges (Avery Deeds, 13/453). However, he is said to have stopped construction on the house when the Sloops expressed an interest in the property for school expansion. On 15 June 1922 he sold both parcels to Crossnore School, Incorporated, for \$900 (Avery Deeds, 15/314).

Meanwhile, on 29 March 1922, he had acquired another, larger tract of 24.66 acres from the Aldridges with numerous calls in or on the edge of "the Public road" on which he would build this house (Avery Deeds, 13/452). He soon reduced this holding, acquired for \$100 per acre, by selling just over nine acres of it for \$900 on 15 April to Mack Jacob Dellinger (1897-1984), Theron Dellinger's younger brother and business partner (Avery Deeds, 13/471). In succeeding years he would sell tracts and acquire others, including in February 1923 "land enough at Spring to concrete Spring" from Mrs. Richard Melvin (Emma Aldridge) Vance (1862-1944) to gain his water supply (Avery Deeds, 20/62). During these years of the early 1920s, Mr. Wise was employed by Crossnore school as a carpentry and woodworking teacher in the agricultural department. A second child, Mary Kathleen Wise, was born to the couple on 30 November 1923.

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According to family tradition, the construction of his family home occupied Milligan Wise for several years leading to its near completion and occupation in 1926. After acquiring the large Aldridge tract in March 1922, the Wises occupied an existing (but now lost) frame house standing on the north side of today's Pine Street, nearly opposite the Wise Cottage (#4).. In later 1922 or early 1923 they relocated to the larger Lyons family house on east Crossnore Drive, where they resided until this house was completed. Mr. Wise served as general contractor for the house, undertaking some work himself and hiring others for specific phases of the building program. Among these workmen were Preston Franklin, who is said to have framed the house, and Mrs. Wise's father, James Lenoir Franklin, as well as her two eldest brothers, who were stonemasons.

Mrs. Wise's younger brothers, Elgie (b. 1901) and Lloyd (b. 1906), were of an age and with likely experience from working with their father to have worked here. Family tradition, recalled by Betty Wise Shellenbarger (b. 1937), attributes the masonry of the stone fireplace and mantel in the house's living room to Garfield Benfield. The craftsmanship of the chestnut staircase, the built-in dresser and window seat in the dining room, and the cabinetry in the kitchen reflects the skills of Mr. Wise.

During the period of construction Mr. Wise was also involved in civic affairs and the movement to gain a charter for the town of Crossnore. The four-page act to incorporate the town of Crossnore was ratified by the North Carolina Legislature on 27 February 1925. In section three of the act Mr. Wise was appointed mayor of Crossnore. He and the five aldermen, Dr. Eustace H. Sloop, Stanhope H. Franklin (1886-1968), Charles Vance (1890-1939), Thomas Philmore Dellinger (1894-1993), and Mack Dellinger were to serve terms of two years until the town's first municipal election in 1927.

About the time the Wise family was occupying their new house, Mr. Wise began his long involvement in another public venture, the Community Exchange. Exactly when the Exchange opened is yet to be established; however, an account of the town published in the *Avery Advocate* on 8 September 1927 identifies him as the manager of the Community Exchange, a position he would hold for eighteen years. While the use of the word "exchange" in the name of the enterprise implies something of a cooperative venture, the Community Exchange, in effect, was a general store. Mrs. Shellenbarger recalls her father buying produce, eggs, and perhaps cured meat from area farmers for cash or on account, and offering these local products with imported merchandise. Stock ranged from hardware, small farm and garden implements, seeds, and fertilizer, to a wide supply of groceries, as well as clothing and goods for the house, including

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china. For most of the period Mr. Wise managed the Exchange, holding a principal stake in it for an unconfirmed time, the Community Exchange was the only general store in Crossnore and provided a full range of merchandise to residents of the town and the surrounding farm community. The Community Exchange, when operated by Mr. Wise, was a one-story chestnut-bark sheathed store that stood in the heart of Crossnore on the north side of Crossnore Drive (SR 1143), nearly opposite the head of Dellinger Road. After about 1945, when Mr. Wise sold his interest in the Community Exchange to members of the Johnson family, the new owners erected a new store building at the near-same location. The earlier building was lost. While operating the Community Exchange, in about 1932-1935, Mr. Wise built the garage apartment (#3) which incorporated both garage space for his automobile and a small one-bedroom rental apartment on the second level. Mr. Wise built a larger stone rental house, the Wise Cottage (#4), in about 1941. Mr. Wise's brothers were the stonemasons for both buildings. On 18 May 1937, between these two projects a second daughter, Betty Pauline Wise, was born to Mr. Wise and his wife.

On 15 June 1942 Milligan Wise was appointed to the Avery County Selective Service Board and in that position he came to know or know of many of the 1,469 residents of Avery County who served in the armed forces during World War II (Cooper, 62). At the end of the war he returned to education and to the role of instructor in a program for returning veterans. The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (also known as the G. I. Bill of Rights) provided a broad range of education and training benefits for veterans. The actual name of the program in which Mr. Wise participated has not been identified; however, it was clearly a component of the trade program teaching agriculture, husbandry, and other subjects to men who returned to farming in their home community. In Avery County, Mr. Wise was possibly the first instructor hired for the program and he remained an instructor for the duration of its life in Avery County. His daughter, Mrs. Shellenbarger, recalls that Mr. Wise offered classroom instruction at the Crossnore High School one day a week and spent parts of the business week's other four days visiting his students on their farms.

In retrospect Mr. Wise's work as an instructor in the veterans's program in the mid to late 1940s was one feature of change that marked both his professional and personal life. On 9 May 1946 Mr. and Mrs. Wise purchased a fifty-acre tract at Three Mile from R. R. Johnson (Avery Deeds, 41/495). It would become Mr. Wise's nursery where he raised blueberries and grew out rhododendrons, Kalmia, and other plants for sale to (retail) nurserymen. This nursery operation reflected a continuing involvement in plant cultivation that he initiated at Crossnore in 1929 with L. C. Clark and Corbitt Johnson. He would cultivate the Three Mile nursery through 1960, and on 24 April 1961, he leased it to Denver Collins and Phil H. Johnson (Avery Deeds, 60/417-18).

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At the end of 1946, on 29 December, Mamie Etta Franklin Wise died and was buried at Pisgah Methodist Church. For over three years, Mr. Wise remained a widower, at home with his two daughters Mary Kathleen and Betty Pauline, who were twenty-three and nine years of age, respectively. On 1 October 1948, Mary Kathleen Wise married Franklin Plummer Smith (b. 1926), a nephew of Dr. Eustace H. Sloop and Lena (Sloop) Dellinger. A photograph of Mr. Wise, his daughters, D'Orsay White, a cousin of the Wise girls, and Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ Huntington of New Jersey, a blueberry grower who boarded with the Wise family for several summer seasons, appeared on the cover of *The State* magazine on 3 September 1949. They were enjoying a picnic at Crabtree Meadows on the Blue Ridge Parkway and seated at one of the roadside tables recently put out for the traveling public. At the end of the decade, on 30 June 1950, Mr. Wise married Miss Ruth Ina McKinney (1915-1998). Miss McKinney was a daughter of Jesse McKinney of Bakersville and then the housekeeper for Dwight and Dr. Emma (Sloop) Fink. The couple were married in the Finks's living room in their now-lost house which stood off the southeast side of Garrett Memorial Hospital. One child, Milligan Shuford Wise Jr. was born to the couple on 1 March 1954.

Milligan Wise's life and position in the Crossnore community in the decades of the 1950s and 1960s, up to his death in 1974, were marked by continuity and contrast. The marriage of his eldest daughter in 1948, his own marriage to Miss McKinney, and the birth of their son in 1954 altered the character of family life even while his second daughter, Betty Wise, continued with her studies at Crossnore High School, where she graduated in 1955. She attended Woman's College of the University of North Carolina (now UNC-G), but transferred to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where she received her bachelor's degree in 1959. Mr. Wise became a member of the Avery County School Board in 1955 and served in that role for sixteen years (Cooper, 97). Mr. Wise had been named to the Crossnore School board of trustees in the early 1930s and he remained a trustee throughout a period of over forty years; he had gained the title of trustee emeritus shortly before his death. The garden and grounds of his residence remained a focus of his horticultural efforts throughout his life. He also continued his work of grafting woody plants and growing them out for sale to nurserymen, and raising blueberries at his nursery on Prison Camp Road up to leasing those fields in 1961. During the 1950s he also grew out plants and woody stock on his house lot. Here he was one of the first men in Avery County to grow and sell Fraser Firs for Christmas trees, and became a pioneer in that enterprise whereby Avery County is now one of the largest suppliers of Christmas trees in the nation.

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Milligan Wise's leasing of his nursery fields to Messrs. Collins and Johnson on 24 April 1961 was the first of his steps into retirement and it presaged other real estate conveyances that settled lands on his heirs. The lease was for a period of five years in return for payment of \$3,000. But soon, on 12 April 1963, Mr. Collins and Mr. Johnson assigned their lease of the nursery fields and the right to harvest and cultivate woody plants on it to Julian Greene and Fred Taylor, trading as Greene and Taylor Nurseries (Avery Deeds, 60/419-20). Milligan and Ruth Wise consented to the assignment and also agreed to extend the period of the lease by three years to 24 April 1969, with payment of \$100 per annum for the three additional years. The clear expectation being that most of the valuable stock would be removed in the period of the original lease. In April, August, and September 1965, Milligan and Ruth Wise executed four deeds transferring ownership of family property to his two daughter, the two children of his first wife.<sup>2</sup> Other real estate holdings were sold in the 1960s and in the period up to 28 May 1974, less than five months before Mr. Wise's death (see Avery Deeds, 89/1005-06). One of these was a conveyance to the trustees of Crossnore Baptist Church in August 1965 (Avery Deeds, 64/144). This was the third of three conveyances Mr. Wise had made to the church, beginning in April 1948 (Avery Deeds, 44/81, 44/309, and 53/458).

Milligan Shuford Wise died on Thursday, 17 October 1974. The heading of his obituary in the *Asheville Citizen*, 18 October, read "Wise Dies; First Mayor of Crossnore." His funeral was held in the Sloop Chapel on the grounds of Crossnore School and his body was interred beside that of his first wife in the cemetery at Pisgah Methodist Church near Linville Falls. In 1965, having made provision for the daughters of his first marriage, he signed his will on 13 September bequeathing his estate to his wife and his son (Avery Estates, 74 E 43). His real estate comprised the residual house lot and the Johnson tract at Three Mile which included the nursery fields. On 2 May 1975 Mrs. Wise and her son conveyed a small 0.36-acre tract lying between the Wise House (#2) and the Wise Cottage (#4) to the Smiths to enhance the grounds of the Wise Cottage (Avery Deeds, 94/1536-38). In 1987 Mrs. Wise and her son agreed to a division of the Wise property. On 5 March they conveyed the residual house tract of 5.45 acres to Mrs. Wise (Avery Deeds, 181/94-96). The forty-plus acre Johnson tract at Three Mile was conveyed to Mr. Wise Jr.

Ruth McKinney Wise remained in residence here until her death. Following a fall in late May 1998 she was hospitalized at Sloop Memorial Hospital in Crossnore, and she was later transferred to the Brian Center Health and Rehabilitation in Spruce Pine. She died there on 17 June 1998. Her funeral was held in Crossnore Presbyterian Church and her body was interred near her parents and other kinsmen in the private Green-Young Cemetery at Bakersville. She

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bequeathed a life estate in the Wise House (#2) and its 5.45-acre lot to Milligan Wise Jr., then as now a resident of Granite Falls, North Carolina, with ownership to pass to her grandsons, Christopher Michael Wise (b. 1972) and Joshua Matthew Wise (b. 1975). The grandsons were each given \$1,000 in trust until they reached the age of twenty-five. She bequeathed her diamond ring to Mrs. Shellenbarger. Mr. Wise Jr. was the heir to her residual estate of \$19,955.72 (Avery Estates, 98 E 81). Following the settlement of her estate, the Wise House (#2) and the garage apartment (#3) were rented. On 10 September 2003 Mr. Wise Jr., his (second) wife, his sons and their wives sold the Wise House, together with the garage apartment, and grounds of 5.45 acres to Randall Aldridge, Everett Clark, and Jerry McKinney, trustees of Crossnore First Baptist Church, for \$229,500.00 (Avery Deeds, 370/2347-51). The church has continued to rent the house; the garage apartment is now vacant.

While Theron Colbert Dellinger's decision to engage Milligan Wise to build a new house (#5) for his family may well have been influenced by the appealing, well-crafted appearance of Mr. Wise's recently-completed bungalow (#2), his choice was probably based as much on their life-long friendship forged during childhood and adolescence in the Altamont community. Theron Dellinger's father, William Jones Dellinger (1855-1938), was the youngest of eleven (surviving) children born to Mathias Dellinger (1806-1878) and his wife Sally Franklin (1812-1884). Mathias Dellinger was a son of Henry Dellinger (1779-1851), who moved his family in about 1800 from Lincoln County to old Burke County, to lands here along the Linville River which were successively in Yancey (formed 1833), Mitchell (formed 1861), and Avery counties. Milligan Wise had many friends among this large family and, if family tradition is fact, he could count himself a member of it. His natural father is said to be Thomas Willard Dellinger (1870-1952), a first cousin of Theron Dellinger.

Theron Colbert Dellinger was the second son and the fourth of ten children born to William Jones Dellinger and his wife Selena Jane Carpenter (1860-1939). Like Milligan Wise he attended the local schools and then traveled to Berea College where he is said to have "attained a ninth grade education" (Lauterer, 67). Whether his schooling at Berea coincided with that of Milligan Wise is unconfirmed, but it possibly could have in about 1915-1916. Having returned to Yancey County and Altamont, Mr. Dellinger and his younger brother, Mack Jacob Dellinger (1897-1984), decided to enter the mercantile business in Crossnore. On 14 April 1917 the brothers purchased "the N. P. Vance Store house and lot, adjoining the lands of N. P. Vance and the School property" for \$500 from Ninevah P. and Della (Pyatte) Vance (Avery Deeds, 14/103-04). The lot was a small irregular quadrangle in the southwest corner of today's Crossnore Drive and Dellinger Road measuring 50, 105, 41, and 100 feet on its four sides. Ninevah P. Vance (1881-

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1955) was the eldest (known) son of Richard Melvin and Emma (Aldridge) Vance. In addition to being a merchant in early-twentieth-century Crossnore he was also then serving as the town's fourth postmaster. Presumably the post office was located in his store as was the custom in many rural communities of the period.

Theron and Mack Dellinger operated the Dellinger Brothers Store for an unconfirmed period but at least into about the mid 1920s. It was here, in about 1917-1918, that Mr. Dellinger met a young widow, Lena Ethel (Sloop) Crowell (1890-1980). She was a sister of Dr. Eustace Henry Sloop, the widow of the Reverend Andrew Secrest Crowell (1885-1914), and the mother of a young Annie Laura Crowell (1911-1992). She had relocated to Crossnore to serve as a housekeeper for the Sloops who then had two children, a growing medical practice, and oversight of the Crossnore School. Theron Dellinger and Mrs. Crowell were married on 27 February 1919.

In retrospect both the couple approaching their nuptials and the Ninevah P. Vances were in transitional circumstances in later 1918 and 1919. Four days after the Dellinger-Crowell marriage, on 3 March 1919, Ninevah P. and Della Vance (1886-1925) sold three tracts of land to the newlyweds for \$2,500 (Avery Deeds, 12/27-29). The Vances removed to Johnson County, Tennessee, where Mr. Vance operated a grocery business on a larger scale, and later to Los Angeles, California, where he died. The first described, largest of the three tracts comprised about fourteen acres and is believed to include the small frame house which the couple occupied from 1919 to 1927 and the site of the Dellinger House (#5) and its grounds. That earlier house stood east of the Dellinger House and close to the path of Dellinger Road. It was pulled down after the family moved into their new house. The second and smaller tract of two acres adjoined the former location of the Baptist church and others and lay on the north side of the "Public road" (today's Crossnore Drive). The third parcel was made up of twelve adjoining town lots of Aldridge lands that had been platted in 1917 for sale. The selling price of \$2,500 suggests that improvements stood on at least one of the tracts.

Other changes in the life of the couple came quickly. On 1 July 1919 Lena Dellinger was appointed postmaster of Crossnore, succeeding Ninevah P. Vance. She would occupy this position until February 1931, when she was succeeded as postmaster by Mr. Dellinger; however, she would later return and serve as his assistant until they both retired from the United States Postal Service on 31 January 1959. Together they served as postmaster of Crossnore for thirty-nine and one-half years. His tenure of nearly twenty-eight years was the longest in the history of the post office established in 1882. On 3 August 1920 Mr. Dellinger and his brother Mack

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Dellinger acquired a tract of three adjoining, platted lots on Crossnore Creek including “One Mill house and all Machinery and one Gas house” from Cleophas L. (1893-19\_\_ ) and Annie Franklin for \$1,000 (Avery Deeds, 14/105-06). Mr. Dellinger operated the mill, grinding corn into meal, into the late 1920s or early 1930s. Its history from that point remains to be confirmed.

In the 1930s Mr. Dellinger embarked on another venture in Crossnore. Cleophas “Clee” Franklin was the first operator of a theater, one that showed silent movies. His interest in the theater operation was acquired by Mr. Dellinger, who in 1939 expanded his operation to Elk City. On 1 January 1939 he acquired from James Madison Dearmin (1882-1945) for \$3,000 a lot fronting on “the New State Highway” in Elk Park, a small town just inside Avery County’s border with Carter County, Tennessee (Avery Deeds, 34/108). On it stood “a one Storie Brick Building” which “is better known as Elk Park Theater Property.” At this distance it is unclear whether Mr. Dearmin, a businessman with broad interests in Elk Park including the Dearmin Ice and Coal Company, the Dearmin Freight Lines, and the local franchise of the Ford Motor Company, actually opened the movie theater and sold the operation to Mr. Dellinger or whether the two might have been involved in a joint venture. The language of the deed provides no insight. Following on the end of World War II, Mr. Dellinger erected a new (now-lost) theater building in the southeast corner of the heart of Crossnore, on a lot to the east of today’s Crossnore Town Hall. He ended his operation of the theater in Crossnore in the early 1950s.

Following their marriage in 1919, Theron and Lena Dellinger became the parents of five children. Lena Cordelia Dellinger, born on 20 October 1922, was the first of four daughters including Ruth Evelyn Dellinger (1924-1990), Mary Agnes Dellinger (b. 1926), and Rachel Ellen Dellinger (b. 1929). The couple’s only son, William Colbert Dellinger (1927-1946), died during service in the United States Navy. During the forty-plus years of their marriage, Mr. and Mrs. Dellinger were involved in a wide range of community activities in addition to tending the garden, orchard, and grounds of their house. The Crossnore Presbyterian Church was one important focus of their efforts and they both held offices as lay leaders in it and in its Sunday School. Mrs. Dellinger was both a founding member in 1931 and an officer of the Crossnore Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. In the late 1950s she and Mr. Dellinger were principals in the erection of the DAR Chapter House on the grounds of Crossnore School which provided both a meeting space for the local chapter and honored the long involvement of the many DAR chapters and members in the progress of the school. The Dellingers contributed funds to the project, oak trees from which shingles were riven for its roof, and Mr. Dellinger helped secure the rails for its ornamental fence from abandoned mountain fencing in the area. The Crossnore DAR Chapter held its first meeting in the rebuilt log cabin on 12 October 1959.

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The pleasure Theron and Lena Dellinger anticipated following their formal retirement from the United States Postal Service at the end of January 1959 was short-lived. In October 1959 he suffered a debilitating stroke and died on 4 December 1959. He was buried in the churchyard of Crossnore Presbyterian Church, which stands above the southeast foot of Dellinger Road. In his will, signed in 1934, he named his wife as his sole heir (Avery Wills, 2/373-74). In 1962 Mrs. Dellinger began distributing her real estate holdings among her five surviving daughters. On 5 December 1962 she conveyed ownership of this house and its two-acre grounds, reserving her life estate in the property, to Mary Agnes (Dellinger) Smith, the wife of Raymond Bockway Smith (b. 1929) and a resident of Orlando, Florida (Avery Deeds, 60/178). In the final decade of her life Lena Dellinger had the company of two of her daughters, Rachel (Dellinger, Osborne, Dexter) Deal and Ruth (Dellinger, Palmer) Loper. Mrs. Loper was living with her mother when Lena Dellinger died on 1 March 1980. She was buried beside her husband at Crossnore Presbyterian Church. Having distributed her real property among her daughters, she died intestate. The residual estate was administered by Mrs. Loper (Avery Estates, 81 E 28).

At her mother's death in 1980, Mary Agnes Smith was living with her husband and family in Orlando, Florida. For a few years the house was leased, still furnished with the Dellinger family furniture, to two successive renters as an interim step. Thereafter, and to the present, it has served as a summer house for Mrs. Smith and her family. During that period simple maintenance was effected; however, the house has remained maintained as built. On 4 August 1993, Mr. and Mrs. Smith conveyed title to the house and its grounds to their three (married) sons (Avery Deeds, 247/283-84); Theron Bockway Smith (b. 1950), Lawrence Andrew Smith (b. 1952), and Gilbert William Smith (b. 1954). Rachel Dellinger Deal, Mrs. Smith's sister, resides in Crossnore and exercises oversight of the family home.

Architectural Significance

The architectural history of Avery County, prior to its formation in 1911 as one of the two newest counties among a hundred in North Carolina, is associated with that of its parts, Mitchell, Watauga, and Caldwell counties. Log construction persisted in the area well into the early-twentieth century, overlapping from the later-nineteenth century onward, with frame construction made possible by the establishment of sawmills and the arrival of a single line of the East Tennessee & Western North Carolina Railroad, which in 1882 linked Johnson City, Tennessee, with Cranberry, a small mining town a few miles inside the North Carolina/Tennessee border in today's Avery County. Not surprisingly, the architectural character of Avery County was shaped in large part by its natural resources, vast stands of virgin timber, scenic landscapes that stretched

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across its mountainous topography, an abundance of stone, clear waterways, and a cool, refreshing climate. Its character came to be defined principally by three groups of people who responded to those qualities. Until the late-nineteenth century today's Avery County was thinly populated by the descendants of settlers who arrived in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries and established themselves along its principal waters, including the Linville River, and in its coves. These men and their families first built log houses. With the passage of time, an increase in their number, the expanded production of an increasing number of saw mills, and a degree of prosperity, succeeding generations built larger frame houses. In the late-nineteenth century, these houses were embellished with sawn and turned ornament, principally applied to their porches, gables, and eaves, which was either produced locally or brought to the area in 1882 and afterward by the railroad.

The opening of today's Avery County by the East Tennessee & Western North Carolina Railroad coincided with and facilitated the arrival of others. One group of the newly-arrived came to exploit the natural resources, cutting great stands of its timber and extracting minerals from the mountain lands. Another group of men, women, and their families, attracted to Avery County by its scenic beauty and cool summer climate, established summer colonies at Linville, Banner Elk, and small enclaves, including Pineola. Their arrival, beginning in the 1880s, paralleled the rising influence of the Arts and Crafts movement and an increasing interest in native materials and craftsmanship. Here in Avery County, in the period coincident with the county's founding, outside money, brought in by summer residents and social reformers such as the doctors Sloop, the influence of the nationally popular Arts and Crafts movement, and the emerging appeal of bungalows as favored forms were combined with native materials, including stone from the Linville River and the bark of the region's vast stands of chestnut and poplar trees, and the skills of local stonemasons and other artisans to produce a body of important Craftsman-style buildings, mostly houses, that are exceptional in the region. The Milligan Shuford Wise and Theron Colbert Dellinger Houses are important products of this aesthetic synthesis and intact, well-preserved reflections of its remarkable architectural character.

The local architectural significance of the Wise and Dellinger Houses, and the two smaller stone dwellings, is multifaceted. They are both among the earliest surviving, best-preserved houses in the town of Crossnore and important examples of Craftsman-style houses, the frame bungalow and the rustic bark-sheathed cottage, that predominated in Avery County as both dwellings for the more-affluent permanent residents and the second homes of summer residents from opening years of the twentieth century through the 1920s. Completed in 1926 and 1927, respectively, the house are also associated with Milligan Shuford Wise who oversaw the construction of his own

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house as a general contractor and then built a one-and-a-half-story frame house on the opposite side of Dellinger Road for Theron Colbert Dellinger, his long-time friend and neighbor. Through their materials and finish both houses are also associated with an important local group of skilled stonemasons, including members of the extended Franklin family, whose work is seen at both houses, the secondary stone residences erected for Mr. Wise, and the stone staircase, steps, and walls with which Milligan Wise enhance his ornamental gardens and grounds. Their work appears elsewhere in Crossnore, most particularly at Crossnore Presbyterian Church (NR, 1996), on the campus of Crossnore School, and in the larger area around Crossnore where architectural stonework distinguishes houses and their grounds.

Although 1838 is cited as the date of settlement of Crossnore, it was still a place of modest presence in December 1911 when Drs. Eustace Henry and Mary Martin Sloop arrived there from Plumtree to take up residence. Mrs. Sloop recalled the appearance of the village forty years later in her memoir, *Miracle in the Hills*, published in 1953.

It was a dreary, cold afternoon in winter—I'll never forget the date, Friday, December 11, 1911—when we reached our new home, a cottage perhaps half a mile from the little level circle of land on which old George Crossnore had built his store, the small flat that is still the center of our village.

Crossnore forty years ago hadn't grown much larger than it was in the days of its founder. Down in the village one could count three houses, a combination schoolhouse-and-church, and one store. The census of 1910 and again the census of 1920 gave Crossnore an official population of 23. The last time I asked Doctor what the population was, he told me, I believe, that it was 282. "It may be 283," he added. "Jim's wife had a new baby this morning." But any way you figure it, Crossnore has had a marvelous growth in thirty years. What other place has grown more than 1200 per cent in that short time?(Sloop,46-47).

The three houses, the combination schoolhouse-and-church, and the store noted by Mrs. Sloop are long lost as is her own residence and nearly all of the buildings erected in Crossnore in the first two decades of the twentieth century. In the archives of Crossnore School are two aerial views of the town, appearing to date to about 1929. The view looking northeast, across the village center to the school buildings on the hillside, includes the former Baptist church and a range of educational buildings which have all been replaced. The (former) Garrett Memorial Hospital, completed in 1928, is the only building in the image to survive. A pendant view,

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looking southwest from the campus, across the town center, represents an open landscape dotted with a few buildings amidst pastures, fields, gardens, and woodlots. The recently-completed Dellinger House (#5) is visible near the left edge of the photograph. Mr. Wise's new house (#2) is outside the frame of the photograph; however, it could probably be seen by the photographer.

In retrospect the 1920s was a period of unprecedented growth and civic development in Crossnore. This building-up of the town fabric occurred as a direct result of the Sloops' relocation of their medical practice to Crossnore and Mrs. Sloop's establishment of a boarding school for underprivileged children in 1913 that operated in association with the local public schools. The incorporation of Crossnore School in 1917 and the formalizing of its operations was a catalyst to town growth and civic initiatives that saw fruition in the incorporation of Crossnore in 1925 with Milligan Wise as mayor. The construction of the (now-lost) Crossnore High School and the graduation of its first class in 1922 was accompanied soon by the erection of other buildings in Crossnore.

Five of these buildings, in particular, of which four survive, defined Crossnore's improving status in the mountain landscape of Avery County. They also reflect the regional rendering of the nationally-popular Craftsman-style with indigenous materials by skilled local carpenters and stonemasons. The construction of both Crossnore Presbyterian Church and the Garrett Memorial Hospital utilizing rock gathered from the Linville River was the work of William Ervin "Uncle Will" Franklin (1861-1936), a masterful local stonemason and the dean of the small, talented group of Franklin family masons. Completed in 1926 and 1928, respectively, both remain landmarks in Crossnore.

When William E. Franklin completed his work on the Garrett Memorial Hospital in about 1928 he was probably approaching his sixty-seventh birthday on 12 June. The hospital and the Crossnore Church are believed to be the last buildings in which he exerted a critical hand as a designer in stone and as a mason. He died on 29 August 1936 and was buried in a family cemetery at the edge of Crossnore. Crossnore Presbyterian Church, with its bold elevations and chestnut bark sheathing on its tall open ceiling, stands as his masterpiece.<sup>3</sup>

It would be another branch of the Franklin family that would achieve fame as stonemasons in the second quarter of the twentieth century. James Lenoir Franklin (1871-1943) was also a great-grandson of Samuel Franklin. His father David Franklin Jr., was a son of David Franklin Sr., a younger brother of Isaiah Franklin. According to a family account James Lenoir Franklin took up stonemasonry surprisingly late in life.

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Around 1925, after studying many books on different styles and designs of masonry, he concentrated his efforts on native stone masonry. Heretofore, much of the chimney building had been done with mud. He built many chimneys, basements and later houses and churches with his unique designs. The Concord Methodist Church at Ashford (McDowell County) is an example of his work, together with that of David Presson, his son-in-law. His three sons, Elgie, Lloyd, and Ernest, worked with him on many of the jobs. His work can be found throughout Avery and Mitchell County and in McDowell and Yancey County (*Avery County Heritage*, I/87).

Mr. Franklin, known as Lenoir Franklin, was also the father of eight daughters. In 1919 Mamie Etta Franklin, his third-born daughter, married Milligan Wise.

Given the closeness of mountain families and the coincidence of dates, it appears likely that Lenoir Franklin laid the stone basement foundation of the house built by Milligan and Mamie Wise. In this effort he was probably assisted by one or more of his three sons who also worked as stonemasons in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s; Elgie Lenoir Franklin (1901-1981), Lloyd Otto Franklin (1906-1981), and Ernest Franklin (1915-1995). A discernible difference in the random stonework of the foundation and the chimney on the Wise House's north gable end gives rise to the likelihood that the chimney was built later in the house's construction and the possibility that a different combination of family talents executed it. That said, however, a Wise family tradition accords the stone mantel and chimney breast in the living room to Garfield Benfield, another Crossnore-area stonemason whose career is yet to be examined. It also appears likely that some combination of talents in the Franklin family also erected the handsome stone staircase that descends from the front lawn to the now lost pool and iris garden and the separate groupings of steps that rise through a shrubbery from the back of the house to Dellinger Road. The original stone retaining wall along Hemlock Lane was probably also the work of the Franklin family; however, its present appearance is associated with repairs made to it in 1998 by Kenny Poteat (*Avery Estates*, 98 E 81). Given the nearly contemporary construction of the Wise and Dellinger Houses, there is reason to believe members of the Franklin family also laid the foundation and crafted the bold, unusual stone frontispiece on the Dellinger House that incorporates the porch and living room chimney.

While the association of these members of the Franklin family with the stonework on the Wise and Dellinger Houses is a matter of educated rationale, family tradition recalled by Milligan Wise's children firmly associates Elgie and Lloyd Franklin with the construction of the garage

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apartment (#3) in about 1932-1935 and the Wise Cottage (#4) in about 1941. Both men later gave up stonework and made school teaching their profession. Ernest Franklin continued working as a builder and stonemason until becoming disabled.

An accounting of the larger body of impressive stone masonry executed in Avery County, and particularly in the towns of Crossnore, Linville, and Banner Elk, however, remains to be written. The Franklin family are recognized today as among the most prominent in that group, largely on the basis of family tradition repeated through generation; however, most of the other craftsmen remain anonymous and their work undocumented. At Banner Elk, where Lees-McRae College is housed in an especially imposing group of rustic stone educational buildings without parallel in North Carolina, the stonemasons who erected the complex of buildings planned by architect Donald R. Beeson of Johnson City, Tennessee are yet to be identified. These paragraphs, coupled with research on the stonemasonry of Crossnore School, are a preliminary step in that longer examination.

Except for Folk Victorian-style ornament applied to largely conventional frame houses in the later nineteenth century nationally popular architectural styles came late to the area that became Avery County in 1911. The Shingle Style was the first to make its presence felt, and not surprisingly this occurred at Linville, the small summer resort, which was exclusive in its origins and has retained that cachet to the present. The resort's first hotel, the Eseeola Inn, erected in 1891-92 was an extraordinary Shingle Style confection, whose elaborateness was virtually unique in Avery County. It burned in 1936; however, something of its character survives in the fabric of the slightly later shingle-clad multi-story cottage, Dormicroft, built for Hugh MacRae (1865-1951), who advanced his family's investment in the resort. The Shingle Style, picturesque in both its design and materials, soon gave way after the turn of the twentieth century to a group of Craftsman-style buildings, influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement, designed by architect Henry Bacon and sheathed with chestnut bark siding. The first of these is said to be Donald MacRae's summer cottage, an existing house that was enlarged by Henry Bacon and clothed in bark siding. The landmark among this small, cohesive group, whose construction continued through the 1920s, is All Saints Episcopal Church, designed by Mr. Bacon and completed in 1913. William Ervin Franklin clearly remembered the finish of All Saints Church when he ceiled Crossnore Church with chestnut bark, and Messrs. Wise and Dellinger likewise appreciated the appealing character of the rustic summer cottages at Linville.

The hybrid character of the Craftsman Style in Avery County which embraced multiple building forms and the continued use of wood shingles for exterior sheathing, is represented by both the

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now lost ca. 1918-1920 Henley Inn in Linville and the Pineola Presbyterian Church of 1927. It held sway in Avery County in the construction of costlier buildings through the 1920s. The Wise and Dellinger House are also important, well-preserved examples of this umbrella-like architectural movement that incorporated bungalows into its fold. Bungalows appeared in Linville in chestnut bark dress and in some few instances with weathered wood shingle elevations. When Milligan Wise could have easily sheathed his house in wood shingles, he chose instead to use conventional weatherboard but to stain them a rich warm brown color, seen also on the elevations of Pineola Presbyterian Church, that imparted a rustic character to his house. This practice was not unique to him; however, the architectural integrity of his house and his extensive gardens set his house well above the more conventional one-and-a-half-story bungalow houses in Avery County, sheathed with conventional weatherboards of German siding and painted white, including those built in the 1920s in Crossnore for Thomas P. Dellinger Sr., Newburn Johnson, and Cleophas Franklin (*Avery Heritage*, IV/33-35).

The rustic house Milligan Wise built for Theron Colbert Dellinger is one of two important Craftsman-style bungalows erected in Crossnore in the 1920s that were also sheathed in chestnut bark siding. The Dellinger House survives intact to the present; however, the nearly contemporary second house has fallen into complete ruin. Erected as a manse for Crossnore Presbyterian Church, it stood at the foot of Dellinger Road, on the southwest side of its intersection with today's NC 194 and US 221, and essentially west of the church. One local tradition attributes the house to William Ervin Franklin, who built the church, while his son, Christopher McCoy Franklin, was serving as the congregation's pastor. McCoy Franklin was also the first occupant of the manse which was built on land owned by the doctors Sloop. That attribution is based in part on the character of the stonework foundation, porch base, and chimney, which shares similarity with the masonry of the church. And, like the church and Garrett Memorial Hospital, it was covered with thin concrete roof shingles. However, a description of the built-in dresser in its dining room, cabinets, and window seats, present in both the Wise and Dellinger Houses, give rise to the possibility that Mr. Wise might have been involved in its construction as well (see *Avery County Heritage*, IV/37-38). For unknown reasons, the house ceased to be used as a manse in the 1950s, and it and its several outbuildings were allowed to fall into ruin.

The association of the manse with Mr. Franklin, the stonemason/builder, is strengthened by the existence of a third, smaller, and also now-lost gable-front bark-covered bungalow erected for Stanhope Franklin (1886-1968), his eldest son, in the 1920s. Photographs show that its river rock foundation was similar to the church masonry and an unusual board-and-batten wainscot under

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its front windows is said to have been present on the manse porch (*Avery County Heritage*, IV/39). It stood on the south side of Crossnore Drive, on a lot across from the campus of Crossnore School, until it was demolished in recent years and its site incorporated into the parking lot of the town's First Baptist Church.

Today the Dellinger House and Crossnore Presbyterian Church survive and link Crossnore with the more celebrated use of chestnut bark siding in Linville. But there were yet other bark-covered buildings in Crossnore that figure in this definition of the Dellinger House's significance. Both the elementary and high schools at Crossnore were sheathed with chestnut bark sheathing as was a second one-story commercial building that stood on the north side of Crossnore Drive, west of and across Johnson Lane from Milligan Wise's bark-covered Community Exchange. It housed the Crossnore School's resale shop and a store operated for a period by Keener Parsons that was long used as a warehouse and seed house by Mr. Wise. All four of these buildings are long lost. The DAR Dormitory for older girls, a residential building on the Crossnore School campus, dedicated in 1933, was originally sheathed with bark shingles; however, the shingles were replaced in about the third quarter of the twentieth century with manufactured siding. All of these bark-covered buildings in Crossnore, extant, lost, or altered, and possibly others, were seen by Allen Hendershott Eaton (1878-1962) when he visited Crossnore and the region during the years of research preceding the publication in 1937 of his seminal book, *Handicrafts of the Southern Highlands*.

There are numerous instances of the use of native barks, cones, grasses, seeds, and so forth, for home use or decoration that may be worthwhile to note. Chestnut, poplar, and other barks are employed quite extensively for covering houses in the vicinity of Crossnore and Linville, Avery County, North Carolina. The bark is carefully cut in strips from about six to 15 inches wide, and from two to four feet long, then flattened out by piling one strip on top of the other out in the woods. When shaped and cured the bark is nailed over the log or board frame of the house, usually vertically, which gives an outside finish that resists the weather, never requires paint or stain, and the color and texture of which are in perfect harmony with the surroundings.

This section of North Carolina seems to be the only part of the Highlands where bark is extensively used for both exterior and interior finishing. (Eaton, 232-33).

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Now, eighty-plus years after Milligan Wise completed the house for Theron Colbert Dellinger and his family, and seventy years after Mr. Eaton's appreciation of native barks (and particularly the work of William Franklin in the finish of Crossnore Presbyterian Church) was published, the Dellinger House, alone among all of its historic contemporaries in Crossnore, retains its richly mellowed bark elevations. It and Mr. Wise's own residence survive today as highly important reflections of the most distinguished era in Avery County's architectural history.

Endnotes

1. As the entries in the bibliography for Rachel Deal, Betty Wise Shellenbarger, and Milligan Shuford Wise Jr. indicate, this author is greatly indebted to them for their courtesies and cooperation in the research and drafting phases of this National Register nomination. They unfailingly answered questions from their own knowledge and sought answers from others to resolve more complicated issues. Mrs. Deal is a daughter of Theron Colbert Dellinger. Mrs. Shellenbarger and Mr. Wise are two of Milligan Shuford Wise's three surviving children.
2. The town lots on which the stone Crossnore Hatchery stood was conveyed to Mr. Wise's daughters, Kathleen Wise Smith and Betty Wise, who had married Robert Martin Shellenbarger in 1959 (Avery Deeds, 62/591). A thirty-one-acre tract of the William Jones Dellinger lands on Three Mile Road, acquired in 1946, was also conveyed on 2 April to Mrs. Shellenbarger and her husband of Landenberg, Pennsylvania (Avery Deeds, 62/592). On 3 August 1965 Mr. and Mrs. Wise conveyed the Wise Cottage (#4) and its lot to Kathleen Wise Smith and her husband (Avery Deeds, 64/172). Then, on 13 September 1965, Mr. and Mrs. Wise transferred ownership of the several in-town J. W. Teem lots, acquired in 1937, to the Shellenbargers (Avery Deeds, 64/231). The last of the interfamily transactions in Mr. Wise's lifetime came on 18 April 1969 when he and Mrs. Wise conveyed another twenty-eight-acre parcel at Three Mile, acquired in 1955, to Mr. & Mrs. Shellenbarger (Avery Deeds, 70/464).
3. William Ervin (sometimes Erwin) Franklin had been born on 12 June 1861 to Adeline Franklin and John Wess Wiseman (ca. 1841-1863) who was killed in the Battle of Chickamauga, Georgia. He retained his maternal surname through his life. He was a grandson of Isaiah Franklin and the great-grandson of

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Samuel Franklin (1780-1857). He was the father of thirteen children, of whom six were sons; however, none of the six took up the craft in which their father excelled. His second son, Christopher McCoy Franklin (1889-1979) became a Presbyterian minister and would figure through time in the history of Crossnore.

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description: The boundary of the acreage included in this nomination is drawn in pen on the enclosed 1 inch equals 200 feet scale tax map prepared by the Avery County Tax Office.

Boundary Justification: The boundary is drawn to include the site and setting of the Milligan Shuford Wise and Theron Colbert Dellinger Houses, the grounds of the Wise Cottage, and their related historic resources. The boundary is drawn to eliminate the fractional portion of the residual Wise House property (5.45 acres when acquired in 2003 by the Crossnore First Baptist Church) which has been incorporated into a children's playground and reserve parking lot for the church. The boundary includes the entire lot on which the Wise Cottage stands. The portion of the residual lot on which the Dellinger House stands, lying on the west side of Dellinger Road, is included; however, the small portion on the east side of the road, which was landscaped and planted as a memorial garden honoring Mr. and Mrs. Dellinger in the 1980s is omitted.

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PROPERTY OWNERS

Trustees of Crossnore First Baptist Church  
Post Office Box 370  
Crossnore, NC 28616  
828/733-5243

Mrs. Mary Agnes Dellinger Smith  
1325 Vassar Avenue  
Orlando, Florida 32804

Mr. Franklin P. Smith and  
Mrs. Kathleen Wise Smith, trustees  
7004 Cortez Court  
Hermitage, Tennessee 37076  
615/883-1435

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**PHOTOGRAPHS**

The following information for numbers 1-5 applies to all nomination photographs.

1. Name of Property: Milligan Shuford Wise and Theron Colbert Dellinger Houses
2. County and State: Avery County, North Carolina
3. Name of photographer: Davyd Foard Hood
4. Dates of photographs: 18-20 October 2006
5. Location of original negatives: North Carolina Division of Archives and History,  
Raleigh, NC
- 6-7. Schedule of photographs
  - A. Milligan Shuford Wise House, overall view, looking southeast
  - B. Milligan Shuford Wise House, front elevation, looking southwest
  - C. Milligan Shuford Wise House, staircase, looking south
  - D. Milligan Shuford Wise House, living room mantel, looking northwest
  - E. Milligan Shuford Wise House, dining room cupboard, looking southeast
  - F. Milligan Shuford Wise House, stone staircase to pond and iris garden, looking west
  - G. Milligan Shuford Wise House, stone staircase rising into shrubbery, looking west/southwest
  - H. Landscape view with Milligan Shuford Wise House and Garage Apartment, looking south
  - I. Garage Apartment, looking west
  - J. Wise Cottage, looking west
  - K. Wise Cottage, looking east/southeast
  - L. Wise Cottage, living room windowseat, looking east
  - M. Theron Colbert Dellinger House, overall view, looking west/southwest
  - N. Theron Colbert Dellinger House, looking west/northwest
  - O. Theron Colbert Dellinger House, looking east
  - P. Theron Colbert Dellinger House, dining room, looking south from living room
  - Q. Theron Colbert Dellinger House, inner hall, looking east/northeast into living room
  - R. Theron Colbert Dellinger House, built-in kitchen cabinet, looking north/northwest
  - S. Theron Colbert Dellinger House, outbuildings, looking southwest