

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Carter-Swain House

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number East side SR 2162, just north junction with SR 2163 N/A not for publication

city, town Democrat X vicinity of

state North Carolina code 037 county Buncombe code 021

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mrs. Joan Johnstone

street & number 302 Willow Street

city, town Marion N/A vicinity of state North Carolina 28752

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Registry of Deeds

street & number Buncombe County Courthouse

city, town Asheville, North Carolina state 28807

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Buncombe County Historic Properties

title Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1978-79 federal state county local

depository for survey records N.C. Division of Archives and History, Western Office

city, town Asheville state North Carolina 28805

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Carter-Swain House is a two-story log structure located on Brown Branch in the Big Ivy community of Buncombe County, N.C. The house faces northwest, towards Madison County. It is believed that the road running beside the house (Holcombe Branch Road) was at one time a thoroughfare between Asheville and Burnsville. Situated in a small niche and facing towards the road, the house--which served as an inn--would have been a welcome sight for the traveler going from north to south. It is less than one-hundred yards from Brown Branch, a shallow creek running into the Ivy Creek approximately one mile south.

The original log section of the Carter-Swain house was expanded in later years, creating the two-story weatherboarded structure with two-tiered porches and rear ell that now exists.

Built ca. 1849, the original fifteen-by-seventeen foot two-story log section of the house was constructed from V-jointed pine and oak logs. The original stone chimney is still in use. The interior walls are covered with flush tongue-and-groove sheathing. Pine ceiling boards are beaded and hand finished, while ceiling joists are plain. Evidence remains of the original staircase opening in the southeast corner of the downstairs ceiling.

The first addition to the house was a one-story shed-kitchen room built onto the rear of the original structure. A jog in the roofline on the east side attests to this section's intermediate date (photo #3); the up-and-down saw marks on joists also predate later central staircase circular saw marks. An outside cornice runs through to the inside, one more indication of this room being stage two in the development of the house as it now stands. The board-and-batten door presently leading from the original downstairs room to the rear shed-kitchen is believed to be an original exterior door of the log section. The house was probably weatherboarded at this time also.

The second stage of expansion probably took place in the late 1800s, producing the popular two-story central hallway farmhouse form. The central hallway is contained within sidelighted front and back doors, indicating that these were at one time doors leading to the outside (photo #8). The rear door presently leads to a single-story two-room ell with a central chimney and flanking porches on both sides. The rear addition was the most recent addition to the Carter-Swain house.

Overall the structure is full of rich architectural detail. Mantels in the two front rooms carry a similar decorative theme. The earlier and more primitive mantel in the log section is of classical post and lintel design with an applied elongated diamond on the frieze (photo #12). Simple vernacular ornamentation in the stain decorates the mantel with Xs and open scallops. The more recent and more sophisticated mantel in the right front room is of the same pilaster/lintel form, but with two applied diamonds and

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central pendant. Flower-shaped lozenges adorn the top of the pilasters and center (above the pendant). Handmade moldings support the mantel. On this later mantel, the frieze is cut into double arches, one on either side of the central pendant (photo #13).

Cherry paneled ceilings are a striking feature of the third stage of the house. The central hallway and right front rooms are finished with this unusual woodwork (photos #9, 10, 13). The paneling is of board and batten construction with molding around the perimeter of the relief. The paneling also continues along the staircase, which runs continuously, ascending from back to front. The open stringer stair is completed with a simple molded handrail. It is possible that at the same time the addition with cherry paneled ceilings was constructed, the pine ceiling boards in the original downstairs room were stained dark to match.

Floors are of random width four to six inch tongue-and-groove boards.

Beading on ceiling joists gives another clue to contemporaneous additions: Joists in the original room are plain, while in the areas that complete the central hallway form, all joists are beaded (photo #8).

Porch walls are covered with flush sheathing (photo #7). Porch posts are boxed with brackets running above molded cornices. The upper porch room has one small exterior window. In construction of the porch room, a window between the interior of the house and the porch room was converted into a bookcase. Porch balusters are scroll sawn to give the profile of turned balusters. The two-tiered porch with upper porch room is a mountain vernacular form common to this area.

Fenestration is assymetrical and functional to the expansion of the house. The original front door on the left side of the house has been reworked into a larger than average window with four-over-four sash. Sidelights on the off-center front door are paneled below. Downstairs windows on the original structure have two-over-two sash, while the upstairs windows on this side have six-over-six sash. The porch room is an exception with sash of six-over-three. The back kitchen shed has sash of six-over-six both on the side and back. The right side addition shows four-over-four sash both upstairs and downstairs. Considering the chronological sequence of building, it is assumed that the two-over-two sash windows were first installed in the downstairs of the log section; the six-over-six were next added, perhaps contemporaneously with the construction of the shed/kitchen; the four-over-four windows are indicative of the stage in which the house was completed as the traditional mountain farmhouse type.

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The doors onto both levels of the front porch are raked for a textured decorative effect. The only hardware believed to be original to the house is located on the door leading from the upstairs log room to the space over the shed/kitchen. Handmade nails catch the rat tail strap hinge on this attic door (photo #15).

The Carter-Swain House rests on a fieldstone foundation and is sandwiched between two stone chimneys. A cellar exists under the southwest side of the house.

Open-centered scroll sawn brackets decorate the gable eave on the southwest side of the house which runs parallel to the road. Windows on this side of the building are garnished with minimal pediments (photo #6).

Tradition maintains that John A. Carter built a log cabin close to the main house, and that it was used as an educational facility. No evidence remains of this cabin.

Other outbuildings that still stand include a four-pen log barn and a rock springhouse. The barn is located east of the house. The log pens date to the nineteenth century, whereas the spaced diagonal sheathing super-structure was probably added in the twentieth century to enable the Carters and/or Swains to cure burley tobacco. The sheathing creates a herringbone pattern over the log base (photo #16). The springhouse, located across Holcombe Branch Road, is presently in poor repair, with only the foundation remaining. (The springhouse is now under separate ownership and so is not included in nominated property.)

Resources count: 2 buildings (house and barn).

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

late 19th

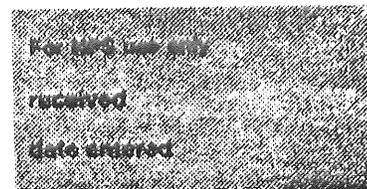
Specific dates ca. 1849 - ~~early 20th~~ ^{c.} **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Carter-Swain House is an outstanding example of nineteenth-century western North Carolina vernacular architecture. John A. Carter was a farmer, postmaster, merchant, and Justice of the Peace. He owned 950 acres by 1870, 150 of which were improved. Tradition maintains that John Carter's home functioned as a roadside inn during the late-nineteenth century, serving as a stopover for drummers, circuit riders, and lawyers traveling between Asheville and Burnsville. Typical of nineteenth-century inns in the area, the structure's final form features a two-tiered porch with porch room and scroll sawn balusters. Other distinctive architectural features include cherry paneled ceilings and heavy vernacular mantels carrying an applied diamond motif. The original fifteen-by-seventeen foot log section of the house was eventually expanded in weatherboarded frame construction to fill out the standard tripartite central-hallway form. Slight alterations have been made in recent years; however, these modifications have not destroyed the basic integrity of this rich hybrid structure, nor has its site been altered significantly. A four-pen log barn has been converted for use in curing burley tobacco and is still used for that purpose.

CRITERIA ASSESSMENT

- C. The Carter-Swain House embodies several distinctive characteristics of western North Carolina vernacular architecture, including its two-tiered porch and internal log section.

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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

John Alexander Carter, who built the Carter-Swain house at Democrat, was born on March 6, 1818, to Solomon Carter and Alvira Hopper Carter. According to tradition, Solomon Carter was the son of Edward Carter, who came to Buncombe County in the late 18th or early 19th century after selling his gristmill on Price's Creek in what is now Yancey County. Edward Carter constructed a new gristmill on Ivy Creek, which was operated by the Carter descendants until 1940. Edward married Mary Brown of Randolph County and had nine children.¹

Solomon Carter lived at Democrat and operated the gristmill his father had built until his death in 1873.² At the time of his death, Solomon was one of the largest landowners in Buncombe County with a total value of real estate owned of \$13,000 and a personal estate valued at \$3500.³ Family tradition maintains that Solomon wanted to establish a town called Big Ivy and imported tradesmen from Charleston, S.C., to accomplish that goal by offering them land and a place to live.⁴

John Alexander Carter was the oldest son among Solomon S. and Alivra's fourteen children, thirteen of whom married and raised families of their own.⁵ According to tradition, John A. was born at the site of the present Solomon Carter house.⁶

On October 26, 1843, John A. Carter married Mary Caroline Garrison, who was born on October 3, 1825.⁷ They had eight children, from oldest to youngest: Jane A., Julia A., Harriet E., Griffin D., Solomon C., John, Daniel E., and Louisa E.⁸

John A. Carter, purchased ninety-seven acres in the Big Ivy community in 1843 and thirty-four acres in 1849.⁹ It is believed that the parcel purchased in 1849 became the site of the Carter-Swain house. By the 1850 census John A. is listed as a head of household. John Carter must have been a fairly influential figure in the Big Ivy community. In keeping with his political beliefs, he named the area around Sugar Creek and Holcombe Branch "Democrat," and served as the postmaster for the community.¹⁰ In addition to his farm and postal duties, John Carter also had a retail business partnership with his brother, Samuel P. Carter. Known as J. A. and S. P. Carter and Co., this business provided "dry goods, groceries, notions, boots, shoes, hats, etc." to neighboring families and travelers.¹¹ Family members have no history or recollection of a separate structure which would have housed the general store. It is possible that the business existed within the Carter-Swain house itself. A tannery and a mill were also operated by the Carter family, although it is unclear how involved John was in these businesses. Tannery financial records are listed in the same ledgers along with the dry goods establishment.

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The Carter-Swain house was located on an Asheville to Burnsville thoroughfare and, according to tradition, the house served as roadside inn for traveling circuit riders, drummers, judges and lawyers in the mid- to late-nineteenth century.¹² The Carter family was directly influenced by these guests. In 1870 John L. Swain, a circuit rider for the Methodist Church, was invited to stay at the Carter home at Democrat.¹³ John Swain had been ordained in 1865 after serving in the Civil War as a captain.¹⁴ By 1871 John L. Swain and John A. Carter's daughter, Harriet, were married and traveling together as circuit riders.¹⁵ At that time John Swain was 38, Harriet Carter Swain, 18. Harriet and John had four children, Robelia E., William A., John Edward, and Cornelia Estelle.¹⁶ John L. Swain became a partner in J. A. and S. P. Carter and Co. in 1876, creating Carter, Swain and Co.¹⁷ John Swain died at an early age, though, and by 1880 Harriet Carter Swain was recorded as widowed and living in the Carter-Swain house as a boarder and housekeeper. At this time her youngest child was one year old.¹⁸

In 1903 John Carter's wife Mary Caroline died,¹⁹ and Harriet stayed on to care for her father. John Carter lost his eyesight in later years,²⁰ and passed away in 1908.²¹ Fifteen days after his death, the Carter estate was divided among his children in eight sections. Each lot sold for \$500.00; parcels ranged in size from 35 to 90 acres, totaling 362 acres.²²

Harriet moved to Weaverville for the education of her children and later moved back to the Carter-Swain house.²³ Family tradition maintains that the judges and lawyers who stayed at the Carter-Swain house gave John Edward Swain (the son of Harriet C. Swain and John L. Swain) the inspiration to become a lawyer.²⁴ He did become a prominent lawyer in Buncombe County, moving from the Carter-Swain House in 1913, at the time of his marriage.²⁵ The house and farm have passed through several hands since it left the Swain family. It is now owned by Joan Johnstone, who is restoring it for use as a second home.

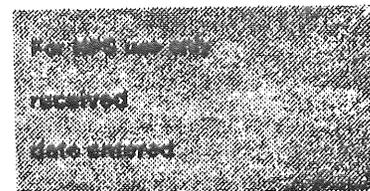
ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Carter-Swain House embodies several distinctive characteristics of western North Carolina vernacular architecture: an early log section incorporated into a larger, later house form; a double-tier porch across its principal elevation; a second-story porch room; and a fieldstone foundation and chimneys. The resulting architectural ensemble, though a unique blend of these typical components, is strongly representative of the traditional architecture of the region.

Early log structures were often incorporated into later frame houses throughout the log-building regions of North Carolina. Most commonly, log cabins became parts of the ells attached to the rears of larger houses. Other examples do survive, however, where the log house was overbuilt to form

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the standard central-hallway I-house form. Another example from Buncombe County would be the Boyd-Garrett House in Big Sandy Mush. It is interesting to note that in the case of the Boyd-Garrett House the central hallway is accommodated within the original log section, whereas in the Carter-Swain House, the log section becomes rooms to one side of the hallway.²⁶

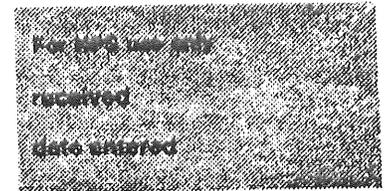
Double-tier porches began appearing on western North Carolina houses during the second decade of the nineteenth century. Some architectural historians see this as a reflection of the area's close ties with coastal South Carolina during the period.²⁷ Good Buncombe County examples would be the ca. 1845 Smith-McDowell House in Asheville and the ca. 1860 John W. Wells House in Big Sandy Mush.²⁸ These double porches were especially popular on the prominent roadside houses which also served as inns, such as the Carson House at Pleasant Gardens in McDowell County and the Alexander Inn at Swannanoa. The Carter-Swain House could be considered representative of this building type.

Porch rooms were common throughout the state but were especially popular in western North Carolina. The John W. Wells House mentioned above displays stacked first- and second-floor porch rooms on its double-tiered primary elevation. The Billy Wagner House near Weaverville is another good example from ca. 1835.²⁹

Needless to say, stone chimneys were the norm in rural western North Carolina throughout the nineteenth century. Some houses did sport chimneys of locally-fired brick, but it was not uncommon for even the more substantial farmhouses to rely on fieldstone.³⁰

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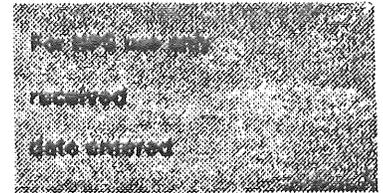
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FOOTNOTES

- ¹Old Buncombe County Heritage, p. 170.
- ²Ibid.
- ³U.S. Census, 1870, Pack Library, Asheville
- ⁴Conversation with Sen. Robert S. Swain, July 1, 1982.
- ⁵Old Buncombe Heritage, U. S. Census, 1870, Pack Library, Asheville.
- ⁶Conversation with F. Piercy Carter, August 12, 1982.
- ⁷Gravestone, Antioch Cemetery.
- ⁸U.S. Census, 1850, 1860, 1870, Pack Library, Asheville.
- ⁹Buncombe County Clerk of Court, Book 23, p. 58; Book 26, p. 465; Book 102, p. 374.
- ¹⁰Conversation with Senator Robert S. Swain, July 1, 1982.
- ¹¹Ledgers surviving in possession of Cynthia Dyer of Black Mountain.
- ¹²Conversations with Elinor Waddell, July 12, 1982 and Sen. Robert Swain, July 1, 1982.
- ¹³Letter from Mozelle Stringfield Swain to Sallie Swain dated July 7, 1964.
- ¹⁴Conversation with Cynthia Dyer, August 8, 1982.
- ¹⁵Existing dated journal entries of John L. Swain, in possession of Cynthia Dyer. John Swain notes scarcity and inhospitable treatment on road with his wife, Harriet.
- ¹⁶Conversations with Elinor Waddell, July 12, 1982; Cynthia Dyer, August 8, 1982 and F. Piercy Carter, August 12, 1982.
- ¹⁷Ledgers.
- ¹⁸U. S. Census, 1880, Pack Library, Asheville.
- ¹⁹Gravestone, Antioch Cemetery.

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-
- 20 Conversation, Elinor Waddell, July 12, 1982.
- 21 Gravestone, Antioch Cemetery.
- 22 Buncombe County Clerk of Court, Book 152, p. 224; Book 160, p. 155;
Book 152, pp. 269, 190; Book 157, p. 417; Book 160, p. 24; Book 169, p. 188.
- 23 Conversation, Elinor Waddell, July 12, 1982.
- 24 Conversation, Sen. Swain, July 1, 1982.
- 25 Conversation, Elinor Waddell, July 12, 1982.
- 26 Swaim, Cabins and Castles, 58, 133.
- 27 Ibid., 74.
- 28 Ibid., 74, 168.
- 29 Ibid., 122.
- 30 Ibid., 60, 67.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 8.714 acre

Quadrangle name Barnardsville, N.C.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

	3	6	5	1	8	0
Zone	Easting			Northing		

B

Zone	Easting			Northing		

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

Boundary has been drawn to include all property now associated with house. Property line follows Holcombe Branch Road to west, private drive to north, a small stream to the southwest, and then takes in a six-acre bottomland field to the southeast. See attached surveyor's plat with nominated property outlined in red.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county N/A code

state N/A code county N/A code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Architectural description and historical significance by Jamie Englund, Consultant to the Division of Archives and History

organization N.C. Division of Archives and History date April 9, 1987

street & number 109 E. Jones Street telephone (704) 298-5024 (Asheville)
(919) 733-6545 (Raleigh)

city or town Raleigh, state North Carolina 27611

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature William S. Fry, Jr.

title State Historic Preservation Officer date May 18, 1987

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

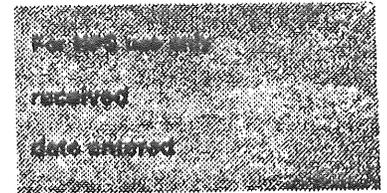
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Carter, F. Piercy. Conversation with Jamie Englund, Asheville, N.C., August 12, 1982.

Dyer, Cynthia. Conversatin with Jamie Englund, Asheville, N.C., August 8, 1982.

Ledgers for Carter and Swain Family Businesses, in possession of Cynthia Dyer, Black Mountain, N. C.

Old Buncombe County Heritage. Winston-Salem: Hunter Publishing Co., 1981.

Springifled, Mozelle. Letter to Sallie Swain, July 7, 1964. In possession of Cynthia Dyer, Black Mountain.

Swaim, Douglas H., Ed. Cabins and Castles. Asheville: Historic Resources Commission, 1981.

Swain, John. Journal. In possession of Cynthia Dyer, Black Mountain, N.C.

Swain, State Senator Robert S. Conversation with Jamie Englund, Asheville, N.C., July 1, 1982.

U. S. Census, 1850, 1860, 1870, and 1880. Pack Library, Asheville, N.C.

Waddell, Elinor. Conversation with Jamie Englund, Asheville, N.C., July 12, 1982.

Carter-Swain House
 Buncombe County (NC)
 Surveyor's Plat
 Nominated property outlined in red

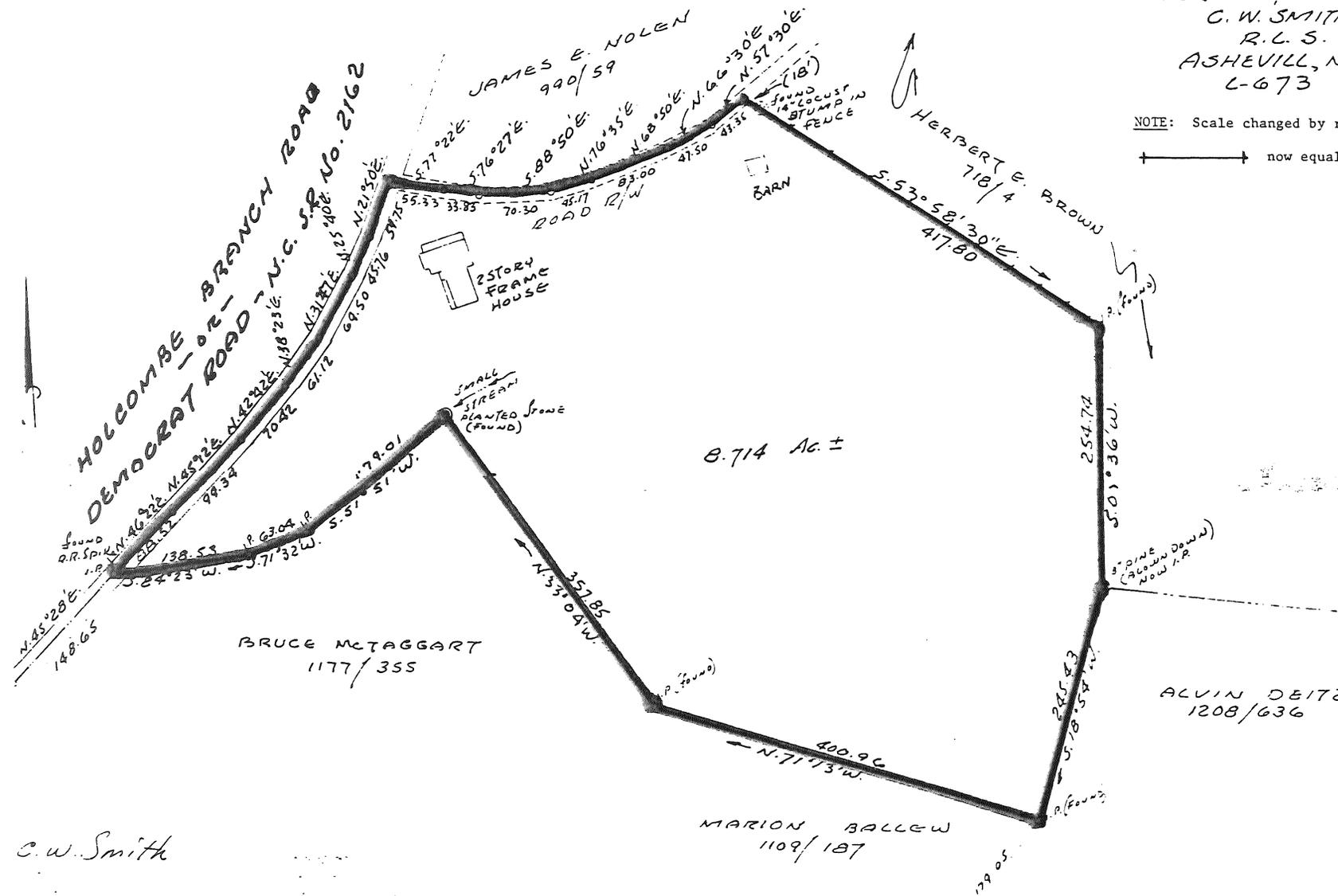
PROPERTY of
DR. ALLAN M. JOHNSTONE
 & wife
JOAN JOHNSTONE

IVY TOWNSHIP
 BUNCOMBE COUNTY, N.C.
 SCALE 1"=100' NOV. 13, 1983

SURVEY & PLAT BY
 C. W. SMITH
 R. L. S.
 ASHEVILLE, N. C.
 L-673

NOTE: Scale changed by reduction.

← → now equals 100'.



C. W. Smith
 ncc +

