

# INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY FORM FOR

Iredell County

MULTIPLE RESOURCE

OR  THEMATIC NOMINATION

## 1 NAME

HISTORIC

Gaither House

AND/OR COMMON

## 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

W side NC 901, 0.2 mile S of jct. with SR 2126

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF Harmony

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

North Carolina

Iredell

## 3 CLASSIFICATION

### CATEGORY

DISTRICT

BUILDING(S)

STRUCTURE

SITE

OBJECT

### OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC

PRIVATE

BOTH

### PUBLIC ACQUISITION

IN PROCESS

BEING CONSIDERED

### STATUS

OCCUPIED

UNOCCUPIED

WORK IN PROGRESS

### ACCESSIBLE

YES RESTRICTED

YES UNRESTRICTED

NO

### PRESENT USE

AGRICULTURE

COMMERCIAL

EDUCATIONAL

ENTERTAINMENT

GOVERNMENT

INDUSTRIAL

MILITARY

MUSEUM

PARK

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

RELIGIOUS

SCIENTIFIC

TRANSPORTATION

OTHER

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mr. and Mrs. Theodore R. Holton

STREET & NUMBER

Route 1, Box 126

CITY, TOWN

Harmony

— VICINITY OF

STATE

North Carolina

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 6 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Laura A. W. Phillips (Winston-Salem)

ORGANIZATION

Consultant for Survey and Planning Branch

DATE

February 4, 1980

STREET & NUMBER

Archives and History

TELEPHONE

(919) 733-6545

CITY OR TOWN

Raleigh

STATE

North Carolina

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

EXCELLENT

GOOD

FAIR

DETERIORATED

RUINS

UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

UNALTERED

ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE

MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Located in rural northeast Iredell County, the Gaither House is a well-preserved, two-story, 3x2-bay frame house dating from the mid-nineteenth century. Primarily reflective of the vernacular Greek Revival style, the house also retains some elements which are hold-overs from the Federal period. The house presents a very symmetrical, ordered appearance, and alterations are almost non-existent.

The Gaither House is headed by a gable roof with overhanging boxed and molded eaves and wide cornice returns. The single-shoulder end chimneys have been cemented over except for the replacement stacks. All windows are 6/9 sash with fluted surrounds and plain corner blocks. The center bay entrance porch has a hipped roof and solid, fluted Doric columns with no caps or bases, possibly replacements. While the main body of the house is weatherboarded, the area under the porch is covered with flush sheathing and has a molded baseboard. The decorative entrance boasts a double-leaf front door with three flat panels, 5-pane sidelights, and a symmetrically molded surround with corner blocks formed by receding concentric squares. On the center rear of the house is a one-story wing with identical eave and corner board details as on the rest of the house. Attached to the rear of the wing is an added, partially enclosed, porch with hipped roof similar to that of the front porch.

The interior of the two-story section of the house has a center hall plan with single room on either side. Walls and ceilings are flush-sheathed. Doors have two vertical panels, and the hall door surrounds and corner blocks are identical to those of the front entrance. Other door surrounds are simpler. The stairway leading to the second story has plain square newel, molded handrail and curvilinear stair brackets. Mantels exhibit more of the feel of a heavy, vernacular late Federal form than of the Greek Revival style. One has simple fluted pilasters and frieze with fluted lower band and three recessed panels. Another has a heavy cushion molding around the firebox and a tripartite frieze with corner blocks and center tablet composed of concentric rectangular moldings.

South and west of the house are around ten barns, sheds, and other outbuildings constructed by the present owners after they purchased the house in 1939.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

\_\_\_\_\_ NATIONAL \_\_\_\_\_ STATE  X  LOCAL

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/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Gaither House serves as a well-preserved and largely unaltered example of a mid-nineteenth century Greek Revival rural house in north Iredell County. Its well-defined details are consistently applied on both exterior and interior, establishing a high quality of design for even a relatively unpretentious house such as this.

## CRITERIA ASSESSMENT

C. The Gaither House embodies the distinctive characteristics of the popular Greek Revival style as interpreted in a rural north Iredell vernacular house during the mid-nineteenth century.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The land on which the Gaither House stands had been in the family long before the home was constructed. John Gaither, Sr., had owned between six and seven hundred acres along Hunting Creek for some years before his death in 1844. His will directed that the vast estate be divided equally between his two sons, Asa B. F. and W. T. Gaither.<sup>1</sup> The court interpreted the directive to mean an equal division in value, not acreage, since A. B. F. received 240 acres while W. T. was allotted 480 acres.<sup>2</sup> The difference in value was apparently the dwelling house and outbuildings which went to A. B. F. Gaither. Between 1857 and 1860 W. T. Gaither purchased an additional 867 acres on Hunting Creek adjoining that which he inherited in 1845.<sup>3</sup> His extensive holdings made Gaither one of the largest landowners in antebellum Iredell County. Sometime between 1844 and 1860, the home now standing was constructed for W. T. Gaither and his wife Mary Elizabeth.

The Civil War seriously damaged the fortunes of the Gaither family, but W. T. managed to hold on to about half of his property, including the dwelling house. He turned much of the land into tobacco production to support his growing family. He also held a partnership with Wilfre Turner in a milling operation.<sup>4</sup> Over the years, nine children were born, eight of whom lived into the twentieth century.<sup>5</sup> W. T. Gaither died intestate in the 1880s. The court, in a special proceeding, directed that the Gaither property be sold at public auction and appointed F. B. Gaither as administrator. On April 5, 1886, Mary Elizabeth Gaither purchased her deceased husband's home and 200 acres for \$351, enough to cover the outstanding debts.<sup>6</sup>

Among the Gaither children was Faison Bell, born in April, 1860. Virtually nothing could be found about his early life except that he was well educated and had acquired a license to practice dentistry by 1900. He apparently never married, for at age forty he was a bachelor living in his mother's household.<sup>7</sup> Bell (as he preferred to be called) constructed near the house a one-story frame structure which housed a country store and his dentist office. At the time, it was a convenient location at the forks of two major roads feeding into the road to Harmony and Salisbury. The office and store building has since been moved and converted into a residence, no longer forming a part of the historical environs of the Gaither house.

As his mother advanced in years, Dr. Bell Gaither seems to have taken over her role as head of household. Title to the property still belonged to his mother, but maps of the period and local tradition clearly show that people in the area considered the home to be that of Bell Gaither.<sup>10</sup> Mary Elizabeth died in 1930 in her ninety-fifth year. Her will bequeathed her property to her seven surviving children in common.<sup>11</sup> The one-seventh share received by Bell Gaither was the only title he ever held to the house and grounds. When the court divided

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Dr. Bell Gaither House File. Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.

Iredell County Records

Deeds

Estates Papers

Wills

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 3 1/2 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 7	5 2 3 0 1 7 0	3 9 7 7 5 2 0	B					
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		
C				D					

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The northernmost corner of Tract 3, Block A, Map 12 J (as shown on Map 12 M), Turnersburg Township, as outlined in red on map.

The property being nominated includes the house and its immediate surroundings.

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

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HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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Iredell County

Gaither House

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### Historical Background (Cont'd)

the land among the heirs in 1932, the house tract of fifty-two acres was allotted to Mary Lacy Gaither.<sup>12</sup> It is unclear whether or not Bell Gaither continued to live in the house after this date,<sup>13</sup> but he was then seventy-two years old and destined to live no more than six years.

Mary Elizabeth Gaither's will refers to Mary Lacy Gaither as one of her children; however, the 1900 census shows Mary Lacy to be a widow. Furthermore, one of the children of Mary Elizabeth and W. T. Gaither had died before 1900, suggesting that one of the Gaither sons had married Mary Lacy. Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that Mary Lacy Gaither was in fact the daughter-in-law of Mary Elizabeth, who treated her as if she were a biological daughter.<sup>14</sup> Mary Lacy had been left a widow by age thirty. In 1900 she was living with Mary Elizabeth and Dr. Bell Gaither in the W. T. Gaither home. She apparently continued to reside there until her death in 1938, at which time the house and fifty-two acres passed to her nieces Gladys Brandon Tally and Ruby Brandon Barron. Less than a year later, the sisters sold the house and acreage to the current owner, T. R. Holden.<sup>15</sup> The outbuildings now on the premises were constructed by Holden after his 1939 purchase.

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Iredell County

Gaither House

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Bibliography (Cont'd)

Keever, Homer M. Iredell: Piedmont County. Statesville: Iredell County Bicentennial Commission, 1976.

Map of Iredell County, 1917. State Archives, Raleigh.

United States Census Records. Twelfth Census, 1900. Microfilm in State Archives, Raleigh.

FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Iredell County Will Books, Office of the Clerk of Superior Court, Iredell County Courthouse, Statesville, Will Book 2, p. 302, hereinafter cited as Iredell County Will Book.

<sup>2</sup>Court proceedings explained in deed to heirs. Iredell County Deed Books, Office of the Register of Deeds, Iredell County Courthouse, Statesville, Deed Book X, 129, hereinafter cited as Iredell County Deed Book.

<sup>3</sup>Iredell County Deed Book 1, p. 315; and Deed Book 3, p. 91.

<sup>4</sup>Homer M. Keever, Iredell: Piedmont County (Statesville: Iredell County Bicentennial Commission, 1976), 154.

<sup>5</sup>Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900: North Carolina-Iredell County, Enumeration District 103, Sheet 8, line 7, hereinafter cited as Twelfth Census, 1900.

<sup>6</sup>Iredell County Deed Book 40, p. 479.

<sup>7</sup>Twelfth Census, 1900.

<sup>8</sup>Map of Iredell County, 1917, M.C. 87-D, State Archives, Raleigh, hereinafter cited as Iredell County Map, 1917.

<sup>9</sup>Notes in Dr. Bell Gaither House File, Survey and Planning Branch, Archaeology and Historic Preservation Section, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, hereinafter cited as Gaither House File.

<sup>10</sup>Iredell County Map, 1917; and Gaither House File.

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Footnotes (Cont'd)

<sup>11</sup> Iredell County Will Book 10, p. 232.

<sup>12</sup> Iredell County Deed Book 119, p. 507.

<sup>13</sup> Gaither was a party to the division in 1932, but Mary Lacy Gaither's will does not name him in 1938. Iredell County Deed Book 119, p. 507; and Iredell County Will Book 11, p. 283. For age, see Twelfth Census, 1900, and add 32.

<sup>14</sup> Iredell County Will Book 10, p. 232; and Twelfth Census, 1900.

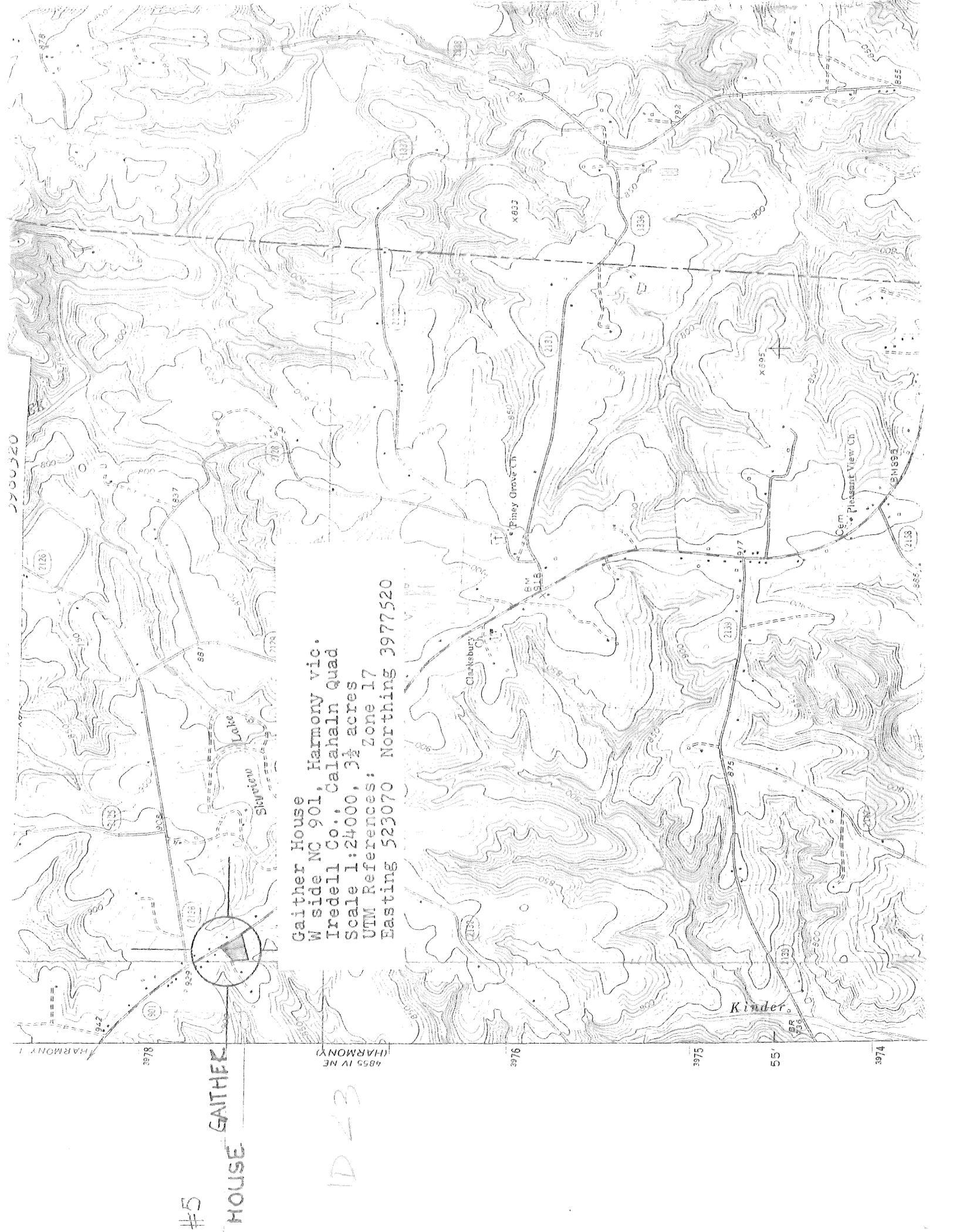
<sup>15</sup> Iredell County Deed Book 135, pp. 233, 235.

#5

HOUSE  
GAITHER

ID 43

Gaither House  
W side NC 901, Harmony vic.  
Iredell Co., Calahaln Quad  
Scale 1:24000, 3 1/2 acres  
UTM References: Zone 17  
Easting 523070 Northing 3977520



2900320

3978

4855 IV NE  
(HARMONY)

3976

3975

55'

3974

HARMONY I

GAITHER

HOUSE

Kinder

BR 73.6

Cem Pleasant View Ch.

Piney Grove Ch.

Clarkebury Ch.

Slaviano Lake



X 603

X 695

BM 896

BM 916

BR 73.6

3974

55'

3975

3976

4855 IV NE  
(HARMONY)

3978

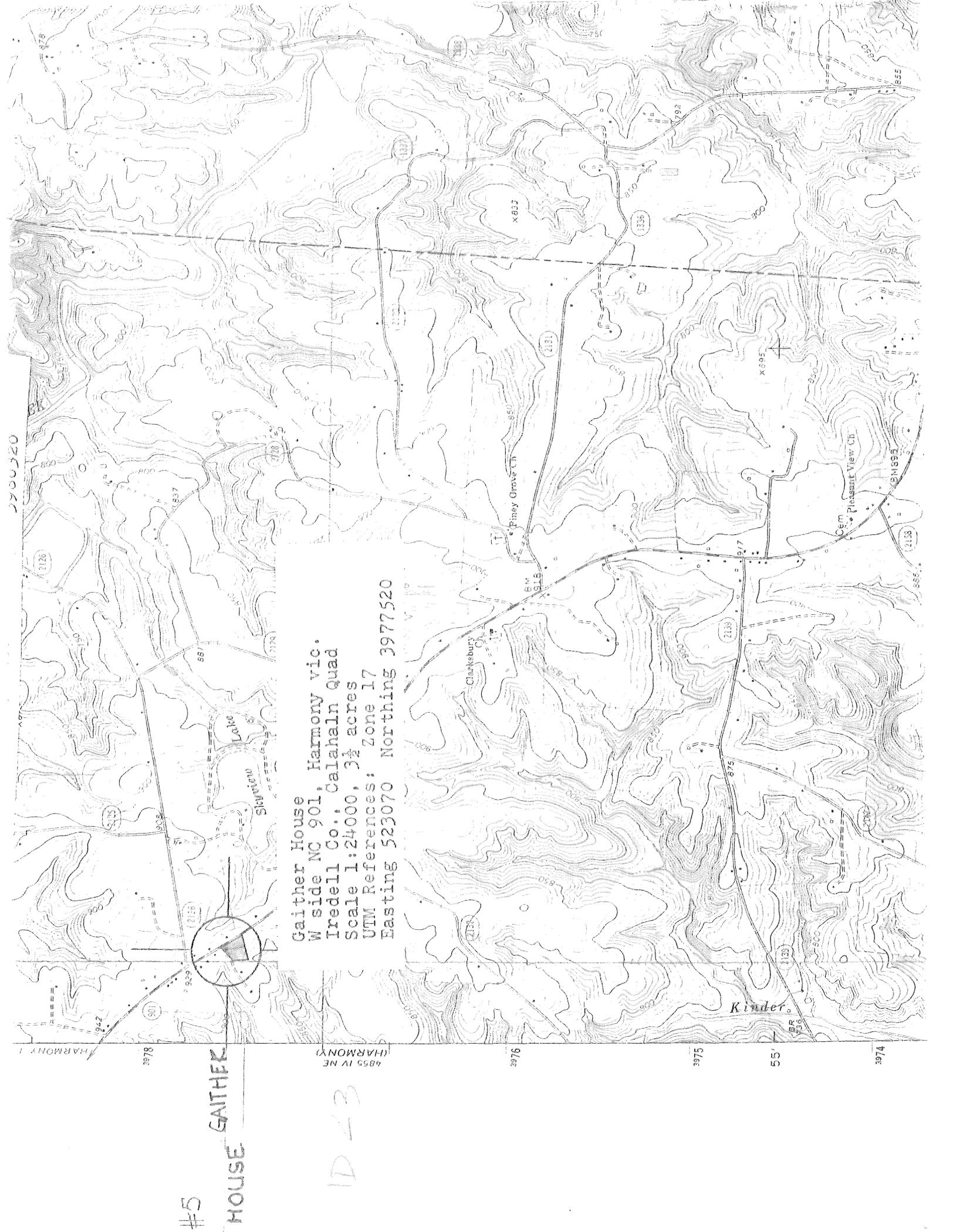
HARMONY I

#5

HOUSE  
GAITHER

ID 43

Gaither House  
W side NC 901, Harmony vic.  
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