

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Backus, E.M., Lodge
other names/site number Camp Toxaway; Canaan Land

2. Location

street & number _____ not for publication
city, town Cold Mountain Gap Road, Lake Toxaway vicinity
state North Carolina code NC county Jackson code 099 zip code
Transylvania 175

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>6</u>	<u>2</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>6</u>	<u>2</u> objects
			<u>2</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.
William S. Train, Jr. 4-19-88
Signature of certifying official Date
State Historic Preservation Officer
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register.
 removed from the National Register.
 other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

Domestic: camp

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: rustic log

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

walls log

roof asbestos

other wood

stone

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Backus Lodge property is located on Cold Mountain Gap in Jackson County, with part of the grounds extending into Transylvania County. The property, approximately 20 acres, lies at an altitude of 4,000 feet and nestles into a shallow bowl where the headwaters of the Toxaway River have been dammed into a small lake. The Lodge property consists of three buildings constructed about 1908, a 1 1/2 story hunting lodge, a stable and caretaker's cottage, and five other buildings, all grouped around the lake. Two of the later buildings were erected after 1955 and are non-contributing. The property is accessible from Lake Toxaway, NC, over a five-mile gravel road opened in 1908. The Backus Lodge site continues to be used essentially as it was during its period of significance, that is, as a seasonal retreat. It conveys an isolated visual character, of buildings grouped on the edge of a sunken lake, surrounded by tall pines and hardwoods. There is no view down the mountain. A small spring has been re-opened near the guest cottage. Uncultivated woodlands, rhododendrons, and pine trees provide background.

1. Main lodge, 1908, contributing:

Sometime after June, 1908, Edward M. Backus began construction of a large, 1 1/2 story, double-pile house of chestnut logs. The logs, unpeeled and matched, were brought by wagon from various spots in the Lake Toxaway area, and are sixteen inches in diameter and laid with saddle notching. The roof of the lodge is hipped and contains three gabled wall dormers on the front and back elevations, and two gabled wall dormers on each side elevation. The gables are shingled and front-facing gables have ridge caps and acroteria.

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Small front and side entrance porches have shallow hipped roofs and bent wood brackets supporting a spindle band. Windows on the first floor are single spaced, double-sashed wooden frames with diamond mullions in the upper sash. Windows in the gabled dormers are in pairs, with the exception of the center gabled dormer on front elevation, which contains three double-sashed windows. Window and door framing is pine painted white. The foundation of the building is field stone, and two square, interior chimneys are granite ashlar. The roof is asphalt shingle, although it may have been originally constructed of wood shingles, which are visible on the caretaker's cottage built during the same period. Residents of the area report that the chestnut logs were pulled by oxen up earthen mounds and were raised into position with block and tackle. Earth from the mounds was then used to smooth the banks of the central lake. The lodge retains an unusual degree of architectural integrity because it has not been altered except for kitchen rehabilitation and the introduction of electricity in the summer of 1936.

The interior of the lodge contains eight rooms on two floors, grouped around a central hall on each floor. Chestnut logs are exposed, chinked with chestnut planks. The exposed ceiling beams of the first floor are poplar logs with tongue and groove oak planking. Oak planking was also used for floors. A straight stairway of oak rises to the left side of the entrance hall. The open-string stair has an ornate, Neo-classical style railing with a heavy paneled newel, turned balusters and molded handrail. To the left of the central hall is a double parlor, with a brick fireplace centered in the dividing wall and flanked by log post and beam openings. To the right of the entrance hall is a study which contains on the interior wall a similar brick fireplace and chimney piece. Both fireplaces have round arched brick openings with brick voussoirs and egg and dart terra cotta decoration at the mantel. These are said to have been built by the Moss family, local masons. The kitchen, to the right of the central hall and behind the study, and the four bedrooms on the second floor have stove pipe openings in the chimneys. The four bedrooms lie two on each side of the hall; at the rear of the hall is a bathroom with a tiny, footed tub. In the southeast bedroom the walls are covered withches

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nut planking, perhaps for warmth. All interior doors have five horizontal panels and door and window frames are plain.

2. Stable, 1908, raised to two stories about 1922, contributing:

Edward Backus also directed the construction of a stable of chestnut logs. It is a rectangular building three bays wide and two bays deep. About 1922 a board and batten second story was added to provide room for campers. The center bay of the front elevation is open to the lake, the opening sheltered by a porch with shallow hipped roof and sapling posts. Set high in the rear wall are four single-sash, diamond-mullioned windows, indicating the location of the horse stalls, which were removed when the building was converted to a bunk house and recreation room for the campers. A large stone fireplace is centered on the north end of the building. Closed stairs lead to the second floor.

3. Caretaker's cottage, 1903, raised to two stories about 1922, contributing:

The caretaker's cottage, also of chestnut logs with board and batten second story, contains two rooms with stoves on the first floor. The added second floor is entered from outside, at the rear or north end of the building, and was designed for a campers' bunk room.

4. Guest cottage, c. 1922, contributing.

When the Backus property was purchased by Sallie and Katherine Davis and developed as Camp Toxaway in 1922, additional buildings were added to the three original buildings. A four-room, one-story board and batten guest house was constructed near the spring and close to the present entrance road.

5. Barn, c. 1922, deteriorating. contributing.

A plank barn was built at the time of the Davis Cottage, c. 1922, and was also used as a garage during the 1930s.

6. Davis Cottage, c. 1922, contributing:

This four-room shingled cottage with clipped gable roof was built as a home for the Davis family. It is located on the original gravel entrance road on the east side of the property. Katherine Davis lived here after the camp closed in the mid 1930s. It has been completely remodeled inside.

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7. Recreation building, c. 1955. non-contributing

Katherine Davis sold the Camp Toxaway property to Rev. Dan Williams in 1955. After that date, a board and batten recreation building was constructed on the east side of the original entrance road.

8. Chapel of the Master, 1965. non-contributing

In 1965 an A-frame chapel with shingle roof was built on the east side of the property between the recreation building and the main lodge for use by Janaan Land campers.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Entertainment/Recreation

Period of Significance

1908-1935

Significant Dates

1908
1922
1935

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Backus Lodge, built in 1908 atop Cold Mountain Gap near Lake Toxaway, North Carolina, is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C as one of the best examples of the Adirondack style of resort architecture surviving in western North Carolina. Because of its association with the recreational development of western North Carolina by out-of-state industrialists between 1890 and 1910, it is also eligible for the Register under Criterion A. Backus Lodge realizes the recreational interests of one industrialist, E. M. Backus, who made the region his home from 1904 to 1916. The lodge site maintained its recreational character after Backus left the area, becoming an exclusive girls' camp, Camp Toxaway, in 1922, and a religious and educational retreat in 1955. Today the lodge and its five contributing associated buildings and two noncontributing buildings function as a private residence. The period of significance ends in 1935, when Camp Toxaway closed.

Architectural Context

Health and pleasure drew outsiders to the mountains of western North Carolina after the Civil War and the opening of the railroad to Asheville in 1883. These visitors, "the energetic new rich of the Gilded Age," launched the region's resort industry. The new leisure class built Biltmore Estate, 1895-1900. (NHL) and the Grove Park Inn, 1913 (NR) in Asheville. The rustic stone Grove Park Inn is perhaps the single finest surviving example of the Adirondack style in North Carolina. One of the earliest examples of the style was the Black Forest Hunting Lodge near the Cradle of Forestry at Mt. Pisgah, twenty miles southwest of Asheville. It was built about 1895 by George Vanderbilt, using unpeeled logs and saplings as construction materials. It was destroyed in the 1940s, but the old Pisgah Inn, built in the Adirondack style in 1919, still stands on the Blue Ridge Parkway south of Asheville. Although no thematic inventory of rustic inns of the period has been made in western North Carolina, it appears that Backus Lodge is one of the finest surviving smaller examples of the style.

See continuation sheet

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Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 1Recreation Context

By 1900 several mining and lumber companies had been founded by Northern industrialists in the "beautiful Sapphire country" of southwestern North Carolina, about thirty miles southwest of Asheville. Tourism was an offshoot of these industrial interests. In 1900 J. Frances Hayes of Newcastle, Pennsylvania, built the Franklin Hotel in Brevard to capitalize on the scenic beauty and healthful climate of the region. By 1904 he had formed the Toxaway Company, dammed the Toxaway River to create Lake Toxaway and opened the renowned, deluxe Toxaway Inn on the lake.³ Until 1916 the Toxaway Inn, about twelve miles west of Brevard, entertained scores of the "new rich," who rested, hunted, danced and ate at the famous inn and rode to visit the other inns of the Toxaway Company, the Fairfield Inn near Cashiers and the Sapphire Inn about five miles west of Lake Toxaway.⁴

Historical Background

Edward M. Backus, of Chicago, also developed a keen interest in the commercial and recreational resources of the region.⁵ In 1904 and 1906 he acquired by long-term lease residential land in the Sapphire Inn area from the Toxaway Company.⁶ In 1906 he bought outright 1450 acres of woodland on the Blue Ridge atop Cold Mountain Gap near Lake Toxaway, where he subsequently built his hunting lodge.⁷ In 1909 he acquired 640 acres of land near the Sapphire Inn, where he had interests in corundum mining and milling.⁸ He frequented the Toxaway Inn with his wife, and no doubt consorted with notables of the time whose names appear in the Toxaway Inn guest register along with Backus: George Vanderbilt, Carl Schenk, Henry M. Flagler and Thomas Edison, as well as Jerome Moltz of Pittsburgh and J. L. Lupton of Chattanooga, both of whom purchased property from Backus at later dates.⁹

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On May 6, 1903, the Asheville Citizen reported that the Toxaway Company had constructed a new "...drive... of scenic interest"... from the hotel grounds to the gap of Cold Mountain, providing "... easy access to the fine fishing and views at the headwaters of the Tuckaseegee River."¹⁰ It was at the end of the well-timed road construction that E.M. Backus built his "lodge", using unpeeled chestnut logs brought to the site bedded in straw in wagons pulled by oxen. Oxen also pulled the logs up gradually heightened mounds of earth to form the log walls of the building; the earth mounds were later used to smooth out the banks of a small lake, formed by damming the headwaters of the Toxaway River.¹¹ Backus provided a stable and servants cottage of chestnut logs and added a stone fireplace in the stable for the comfort of the horses. While there is no record of Backus's guests at his lodge, it is reasonable to suppose that he entertained notables visiting at the Toxaway Inn and who wished to enjoy his commodious lodge in a wild, scenic, solitary mountain-top, easily accessible by motor car.

By 1912 the corundum mines near the Sapphire Inn had failed and Backus sold his Sapphire property to J.L. Lupton.¹² After the bursting of the dam at Lake Toxaway in 1916, Backus sold his Backus Lodge property on Cold Mountain Gap to Jerome Moltz and left the area.¹³ Moltz, originally from Pittsburgh, was the owner of the Moltz Lumber Company of Lake Toxaway. He subsequently extended a railroad to the top of Cold Mountain Gap and transported logs from Greenland Laurels and from the Backus Lodge property.¹⁴ In 1922 Moltz sold the ten acre Backus Lodge tract, including the log lodge, stable and cottage, to Sallie Joyner Davis, of Greenville, North Carolina.¹⁵

Sallie Davis, with her mother and her sister, Katherine, renovated the Backus buildings for Camp Toxaway, an exclusive girls' camp. They believed that "...life in the open, with its wholesome group activities that give outlet for the hidden sources of strength, is a vital factor in the training of girls, endorsed by parents and educators."¹⁶ The Davises adapted the lodge for dining facilities, calling it Cold Mountain Lodge, and added a second story of board and batten to the stable and to the caretaker's cottage. They also built a shingle cottage for their use as a family home. Ruhning

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water was provided for campers from a reservoir above the lake. The camp offered horseback riding, swimming, rowing, canoeing, outdoor camping and hiking - tuition for the season of eight weeks was \$250.00. Jerome Moltz's railroad was used to bring the campers to the mountain top.¹⁷ In 1926, Redbook Magazine declared Camp Toxaway "...a veritable Garden of the Gods - one of the most beautiful spots on the top of an almost inaccessible mountain."¹⁸

Camp Toxaway closed in 1935 and Sallie Davis left the area. Katherine Davis continued to live in the shingle cottage until 1955, when she sold the ten acre camp to Rev. J. Dan Williams and his wife, Christine, of Greenville, South Carolina.¹⁹

Dr. Williams designed a mountain retreat with religious orientation: "If earth and sky and sun and stars offer you fulfillment that can't be matched by an invented pastime, CANAAN LAND is your place to be."²⁰ The property was re-named Canaan Land to reflect the Christian convictions of the Williamses, and the buildings were given biblical names, the lodge being called Cana and the stables Fair Haven. A recreation building on the east side of the entrance road was constructed and in 1965 an A-frame chapel was built between the recreation building and the original lodge. After Dr. Williams's death in 1973, the chapel was dedicated to him and named the Chapel of the Master. Mrs. Williams continued to operate Canaan Land as a retreat and conference center for groups with an educational or religious aim, and the camp continued to be used into the 1980s.²¹

In 1936 the ten acre site was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. George R. Corbett for use as a personal retreat. They also acquired an additional 10.8 acres between the Cold Mountain Gap Road and the camp to allow for ownership of the public road access.²² The Corbett family and their friends have refurbished the buildings, provided electricity, repaired the lake and reservoir, and replanted and re-forested.

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FOOTNOTES

1. Nathans, Sydney, The Quest for Progress: The Way We Lived in North Carolina, 1870-1920, p. 87.
2. Ibid.
3. Van Noppen, Ina W. and John J., Western North Carolina Since the Civil War, pages 262-263.
4. Ibid.
5. Although the property name is often spelled "Baccus", all deeds and the Toxaway Inn guest register carry the signature, "E.M. Backus." A deed of July 2, 1912, Jackson County Deed Book 31, page 500 refers to E.M. Backus "of Chicago, Cook County, Illinois." Local legend calls Backus a "Brazilian rubber baron." This has not been substantiated.
6. Jackson County Register of Deeds, Book 37, page 391; Book 42, page 207.
7. Jackson County Register of Deeds, Book 24, page 333; Book 25, page 219.
8. Jackson County Register of Deeds, Book 28, page 63. Also, telephone conversation with Allen McKinney, who stated that Backus developed the Sapphire Lakes mining area. Also, telephone conversation with J. Craig Cranston whose mother visited the defunct mines with Backus about 1910.
9. Toxaway Inn Guest Register, three volumes, 1905 and 1906, property of the Transylvania County Historic Properties Commission, Brevard.
10. Asheville Citizen, May 28, 1908.
11. The Highlander, Highlands, NC, May 29, 1980.
12. Transylvania County Register of Deeds, Book 31, page 500.
13. Jackson County Register of Deeds, Book 73, page 39.
14. Plemmons, Jan C., Treasures of Toxaway, page 40.
15. Jackson County Register of Deeds, Book 85, page 458.
16. The Highlander, op. cit.
17. Davis, Sallie Joyner, Katherine, and Clara Joyner, Camp Toxaway, camp brochure, 1924.
18. The Highlander, op. cit.
19. Jackson County Register of Deeds, Book 212, page 451.
20. Williams, Chris, Canaan Land, brochure.
21. The Highlander, op. cit.
22. Jackson County Register of Deeds, Book 632, page 336; Book 652, page 24.

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Bibliography

Asheville Citizen, Asheville, NC, May 28, 1908.

Cranston, J. Craig, Cashiers, NC, telephone conversation, Feb. 21, 1988.

Crippen, David R., Curator of Automotive History, Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village, Dearborn, Michigan, correspondence, Nov. 20, 1987.

Davis, Sallie Joyner, Katherine, and Clara Joyner, Camp Toxaway, camp brochure, 1924.

The Highlander, Highlands, NC, May 29, 1980. "A Place of Quiet and Peace."

Jackson County Register of Deeds, Jackson County Courthouse, Sylva, NC.

McKinney, Allen, Lake Toxaway, NC, telephone conversation, Jan. 18, 1988.

Nathans, Sydney, The Quest for Progress: The Way We Lived in North Carolina, 1870-1920, Univ. of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1983.

Plemmons, Jan C., Treasures of Toxaway, AAAA Printing Company, Houston, 1984.

Transylvania County Historic Properties Commission, Brevard, Toxaway Inn Guest Registers, 1905 and 1906.

Transylvania County Register of Deeds, Transylvania County Courthouse, Brevard

Van Noppen, Ina W. and John J., Western North Carolina Since the Civil War, Appalachian Consortium Press, Boone, 1973.

Williams, Chris, Canaan Land, brochure.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

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

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 20.59 acres

UTM References

A

1	7
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3	1	8	0	4	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

3	8	9	2	6	9	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

B

1	7
---	---

3	1	8	2	0	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	8	9	2	6	0	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

C

1	7
---	---

3	1	8	1	7	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	8	9	2	2	8	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the property are outlined in red on the survey prepared by John R. Long Associates, Clemson, S.C., updated 10-30-86, Tracts A,B, and C.

See continuation sheet

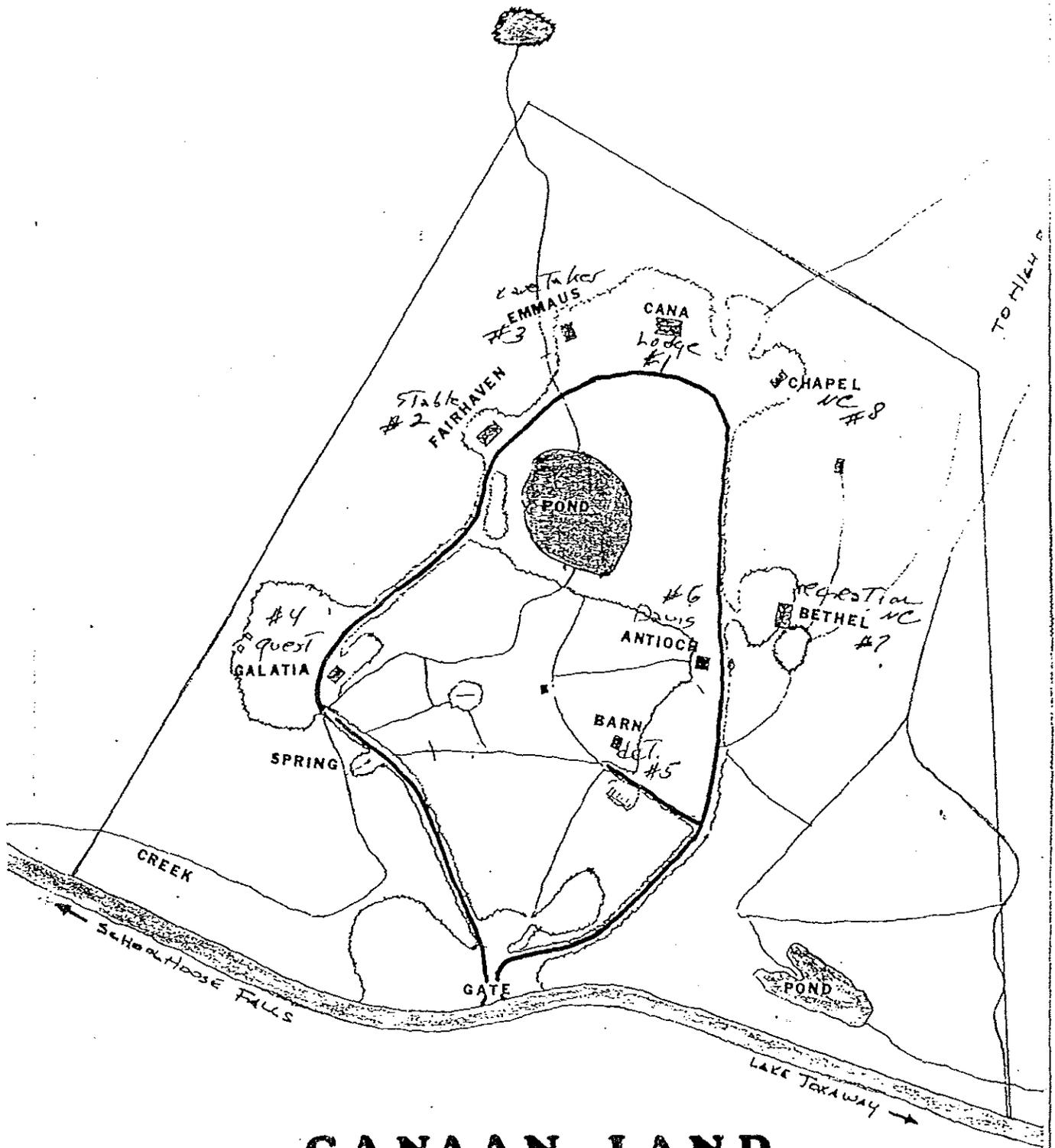
Boundary Justification

The boundaries include the 9.78 acre tract known as the Backus Lodge Tract when conveyed to Sallie J. Davis in 1922, and two tracts which were part of the original, larger tract and have been reassembled by the present owners. These tracts, "B" and "C", total 10.81 acres and contain the guest house (#4), ca. 1922, a contributing resource, and extend to the public access road, Cold Mountain Gap Rd. (SR 1301)

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carolyn Humphries, Consultant date February 28, 1988
 organization _____ telephone (704) 526 9462
 street & number Rt. 2, Box 175 city or town Highlands state NC zip code 27102



CANAAN LAND

(map of the Christian camp which operated on the Backus Lodge property from 1955 to the 1980s)

