

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Penland Post Office and General Store**

Penland, Mitchell County, ML0069, Listed 4/16/2012

Nomination by Hillary Cole

Photographs by Ginny Dailey, May 2011



Façade view



Overall view

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 an 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 Penland Post Office and General Store  
other names/site number Bailey Lumber Company Office Building; Bailey Lumber Company Office and General Merchandise Store

2. Location

street & number 1162 Penland Road N/A  not for publication  
city or town Penland N/A  vicinity  
state North Carolina code NC county Mitchell code 121 zip code 28765-8000

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 for 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/Title \_\_\_\_\_ 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 certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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 \_\_\_\_\_

Penland Post Office and General Store  
Name of Property

Mitchell County, NC  
County and State

**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 count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	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)

GOVERNMENT/ post office  
COMMERCE/ department store  
COMMERCE/ specialty store

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/ post office  
VACANT / not in use

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

No Style

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone  
walls wood  
roof metal  
other

**Narrative Description**

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

**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** N/A

(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** moved from its original location.
- 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)

Communications  
 Commerce  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

Ca. 1900-1961  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

Ca. 1900  
 1934  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(complete if Criterion B is marked)  
 N/A  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- Previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State Agency
  - Federal Agency
  - Local Government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository:  
 Mitchell County Public Library, Bakersville, NC  
 Yancey County Public Library, Burnsville, NC

Penland Post Office and General Store  
Name of Property

Mitchell County, NC  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.12 Acres

### UTM References

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 17 399700 3976580  
Zone Easting Northing  
2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

4 \_\_\_\_\_  
 See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Hillary Cole  
organization \_\_\_\_\_ date November 29, 2011  
street & number PO Box 226 telephone (828) 450-2149  
city or town Enka state NC Zipcode 28728

### Additional Documentation

submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 Or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO) or FPO for any additional items

### Property Owner

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

name Penland Bailey Company  
street & number 1959 N. Peacehaven Road #192 telephone 336-768-6516  
city or town Winston-Salem state NC zip code 27106-4850

**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 listing. 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 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 Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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National Park Service

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Penland Post Office and General Store  
Mitchell County, North Carolina

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## Section 7. NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The Penland Post Office and General Store in Penland, North Carolina, is located in a long, one-story, frame building with a front-gable roof and rough-sawn board and batten siding that is located directly north of the Clinchfield Railroad tracks and the Toe River. This structure originally housed the office and store of the Bailey Lumber Company from circa 1900 to 1916. This building also served as a general mercantile store, off and on from 1902 to 1974, and as the post office, from 1934 to present day. Today, the sole occupant of the building is the post office, which is Mitchell County's oldest active post office facility and is also the county's last remaining Fourth Class post office.

The Penland Post Office and General Store is located in the small community of Penland in Mitchell County, North Carolina. Mitchell County is located in the south-central portion of the Toe River Valley, an area full of steep mountains and rugged terrain. Today, the extensive Pisgah National Forest lands form both the eastern and northern boundaries of Mitchell County. The Penland community is centrally located within Mitchell County; six miles west of Spruce Pine, eight miles southeast of Bakersville, which is the county seat, and thirteen miles east of Burnsville.<sup>1</sup>

The property that the Penland Post Office and General Store sits on today is a small (0.12 acres) irregularly-shaped lot on the east side of Penland Road (SR1162), two tenths of a mile north of the junction of SR 1262 and SR 1270 in the heart of the Penland community. The west-facing structure is parallel to, and located about twenty feet north of, the active Clinchfield Railroad line which was the last Class I railroad built in the United States east of the Rocky Mountains.<sup>2</sup> The Toe River is located directly to the south of the Clinchfield Railroad line. The driveway leading from Penland Road to the Penland Post Office and General Store building is an oval-shaped gravel and dirt driveway that is also used as the parking lot. In the middle of the oval shaped driveway is a grass berm, with a tree in the middle, which housed a gas pump until the 1970s. There is a four foot tall cut-stone retaining wall that extends approximately one hundred twenty-five feet along the north side of the driveway and the entire north side of the structure is set into the prominent north-to-south downward slope of the site.

This building is relatively unchanged from its original circa 1900 appearance. The long front-gabled portion of the building was built between 1900 and 1902 to house the Bailey Lumber Company offices and a general store; this part of the structure is currently vacant but it housed a general store until the mid-1970s. Between 1902 and 1908, a shed-roofed storeroom addition, which would later house the post office in 1934, was added on the west end of the south elevation set back a few feet from the façade of the original structure. Two more additions were built between 1902 and 1908: a rear gabled addition in which to store commercial goods, and a shed-roofed loading dock addition, located on the east end of the south elevation for easy access to

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<sup>1</sup> Davis, Rebecca B., "The History of the Penland North Carolina Post Office With A Brief History of Penland." Unpublished. June 11, 1981. Page 5.

<sup>2</sup> "A Brief History of the Clinchfield." <http://www.carolina-clinchfield.org/>. Accessed April 18, 2011.

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the railroad tracks. The south elevation of the front storeroom addition is fifteen feet from the railroad tracks, while the south elevation of the rear loading dock addition is a mere eight feet from the railroad tracks. The lumber company moved lumber out of the loading dock's west-side double-leaf freight doors to nearby outbound trains from the loading platform that ran all along the south elevation; the loading platform is gone now.<sup>3</sup> A 1909 photograph shows the main structure with these three additions in place. The final addition to this building was built in 1934. A few feet were added to the west elevation of the storeroom addition when the post office moved into this section of the building in order to bring this area flush with the façade of the main structure.

The original main structure is currently in good condition. It has a metal roof and painted rough-sawn board and batten wood siding. The post office addition has a shed roof and is in fair condition and matches the main structure in appearance. The rear addition has unpainted board and batten wood siding with a gabled metal roof and is in a severely deteriorated condition and is collapsing on the east end. The loading dock addition located on the east-end of the south elevation is ruinous and has partially collapsed on the east end.

There are plain door and window surrounds throughout the building and the three additions. The roof has overhanging eaves and exposed rafter tails on both the main section and the south and east elevation additions. The roof of the main block has exposed wood common purlins underneath the metal roof.

The building rests on a foundation of stacked stone piers placed about six feet apart. The building appears to have been constructed with irregular sizes of wood; oral histories say the building lumber came from lumber milled and cut by the original Bailey Lumber Company. A wooden deck floor made of rough-sawn boards serves as the porch for the front doors of the building. A historic handmade wooden bench sits on the front porch.

The façade (west elevation) of the main structure is symmetrical with a two-over-two double-hung wood sash window on either side of a set of paneled double-leaf wood doors, each with a large glass pane. The windows contain the original glass panes. The door has a wooden frame and the original lockset. There is a painted wood panel above the front door that appears to have originally been the sign for the general store.

The post office addition façade has a single-leaf wooden door with what appears to be the original glass pane over panels and a pair of two-over-two double-hung windows to the right of the door, which are covered by metal grates. A wooden sign above the post office door reads "U. S. Post Office Penland, NC" and another smaller wooden sign below it reads "28765". Another faded wooden sign above the windows reads "United States Post Office".

The south elevation of the post office addition has a pair of four-light wood windows with metal bars in front of them; these are not the original windows. The two pairs of windows are separated by a wooden access panel and a brick chimney with metal cap. The wooden access door is blocked by a heating oil tank. The

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<sup>3</sup> Eller, Ronald D., *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers Industrialization of the Appalachian South, 1880-1930*. The University of Tennessee Press, 1982.

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foundation is wrapped with sheet metal on this elevation. The east elevation of the post office addition has a large boarded window that likely matches those on the south elevation.

The south elevation of the main building is revealed between the two southern additions and has two two-over-two double-hung wood frame windows. Most of the glass is broken out of these windows and the windows have been boarded up from the interior. Located to the right of the two sets of windows is a solid wood door with a wooden screen door in front of it. There is a small four-light window located to the upper left of the door; this may have been a double-leaf door with the left half partially enclosed.

The loading dock addition at the east end of the south elevation has a set of original wooden double-leaf loading dock doors on its west elevation, which are falling apart and off their hinges. By 1912, a four-light window was added on the east elevation of this addition. The loading dock platform is elevated by wood joists and the deck is made of wooden planks.

The east elevation of the rear gabled addition is symmetrical with two two-over-two double-hung wood frame windows, both of which have the majority of their glass panes missing; the window on the south end of this elevation is boarded from the interior. The north elevation of this addition abuts the downward slope of the site and is completely overgrown with vegetation rendering it physically inaccessible. On the interior, one four-light window is evident on the north elevation of the gabled rear addition and two four-light windows are located on the north elevation of the main structure. The roof on the rear addition is partially collapsed.

The interior of the main structure is currently unused. The original wooden floor is sloped at one inch per two feet for the purpose of rolling caskets out of the building, according to oral history. Built-in, original wood shelves are located along the north and south side walls and along the north end of the east wall near the large original wooden counter, which is located near the rear (east) of the space along the north wall. There is an access door, which is falling off its hinges, between the general store and the rear gabled addition along the eastern interior wall of the general store. A partially walled off area that once housed the office for the Bailey Lumber Company is located at the east end of the southern interior wall of the main structure. The two walls that partially enclose this area are three feet tall and the area between the top of the wall and the ceiling used to be filled with glass panes, which have since been removed. There is a wooden counter located in this office area. The interior of the main structure retains painted walls of wormy chestnut and the ceiling is covered with drywall. The rear gabled addition also has the original wooden floor that is sloped at one inch per two feet along the northern side of the room. There is also a wooden counter located in this addition, at the point where the floor starts sloping towards the north. A wooden paneled door leads from the southwest corner of this addition to the loading dock addition to the south. The walls and ceiling of this gabled addition are wormy chestnut and covered with paper. The interior of the loading dock addition has the original wooden floor and the walls and ceiling are wormy chestnut. There is a wooden workbench located along its western interior wall. The roof and both the southern and eastern walls are partially collapsed.

The interior of the post office section contains various types of wood paneling along the interior walls. The floor is covered with carpet. The ceiling is covered with a "popcorn" ceiling. The post office addition contains many of the original post office boxes and equipment from the 1879 office that were moved into the current location in 1934 and are still in use today. These include: the wood sorting table, which is located on the wall that separates the workroom from the customer area to the north; the manual typewriter and weighing

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scales that rest on the counters; and an 1800s black metal safe, which is no longer used, that sits at the rear of the post office. The floor on which it sits has been reinforced with horse hair and concrete because of the heavy weight of the safe. The post office boxes appear to have the original glass, wood and brass on the boxes and drawers. Directly to the east of the current postmaster service counter is a section of post office boxes with double eagles etched into the metal. According to the United States Postal Service, the only other set that matches this double eagle set is in the Smithsonian Museum of History.<sup>4</sup>

The post office also has the original postmaster service counter that separates the workroom from the customer area. A barred window is in front of the postmaster service counter with a marble shelf below. Below the marble shelf is a slot with a metal door that reads "LETTERS", which marks where the customer can insert letters to be mailed. A glass block wall separates the post office boxes and the postmaster counter. A Dutch door at the east end of the post office separates the customer area and the work room; it has its original hardware. The sorting table is forty-two inches tall and was built within the original wall between the customer area and the workroom, as were the handmade customer mail slots located above it. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, Postmaster Will Pittman made all the wooden cabinets, cubbyholes, and desks that are still in current use at the post office.

The original main structure is mostly in good condition and it retains its original rough-sawn board and batten siding, double-doors with top glass panels, two-over-two sash windows, and many of the original interior features. The post office addition is in fair condition and retains many of its original character defining exterior and interior features and matches the main structure in appearance. The gabled addition and the loading dock, were an integral part of the building when it was used for the Bailey Lumber Company Office and General Merchandise Store from 1900 to 1920 especially due to their specific use for the lumber industry. The rear addition continued to be an integral part of the history of the building after 1920 because the general store required the use of the storage area for its overflow of merchandise and mining and agricultural tools and implements for sale. The loading dock ceased to be used after the lumber business closed around 1920. Both additions are in a severely deteriorated or ruinous condition and are collapsing on the east ends.

Despite the deteriorated condition of the additions to the rear of the main structure, the building retains enough historic integrity to tell the story of the building's significance and would be recognizable to its historic users. The rear (east) additions were both added at a later date and were always used as subsidiary spaces to the main structure and to the southwest addition.

The Penland Post Office and General Store is still owned today by the Bailey family and the United States Postal Service rents the facility from them.

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<sup>4</sup> Little John T., Project Manager for the United States Postal Service. Letter to Dr. Jeffrey J. Crow at the State Historic Preservation Offices. Dated December 8, 2006. Located at the Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC. Page 5.

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## Section 8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### SUMMARY

Constructed circa 1900 and used by the Bailey Lumber Company as offices from 1900 to 1920, then from 1902 to 1974 as a general store, as well as a post office from 1934 to today, the Penland Post Office and General Store meets National Register Criterion A for commerce and communications.

The Bailey Lumber Company Office and General Merchandise Store building, under Isaac Bailey, served as a base for his various business enterprises along with other locally owned businesses that rented space in the building. It was as a hub for many community residents as the store that offered groceries, dry goods and clothing. It also served as a feed and seed supply store, warehouse storage, a real estate agency for anyone who wished to buy or sell land or houses in the Penland-Ledger-Bakersville area, and an equipment sales office. Isaac Bailey also had charge of all pension claims for veterans in the Toe River Valley and many records of correspondence and telegrams show they came from the Bailey Lumber Company offices.<sup>5</sup> When the post office became a part of this building in 1934, mail arrived quickly on the train from the outside world and brought with it up-to-date business, agricultural, political, and familial news to this small rural community.

The frame board and batten structure is the oldest remaining commercial remnant of this community's booming logging and mining past. In addition, according to the United States Postal Service, "this is the oldest active postal facility building in Mitchell County."<sup>6</sup> It is also the only active post office still located directly along the Clitchfield Railroad tracks. All of the others, including the neighboring post offices of Ledger, Wing, Estatoe, and Minpro, were closed in 1889.

The Penland Post Office and General Store served an important role in the Penland community's communications and commerce from circa 1900 to 1961. Although the post office continues to operate today, the use after 1961 does not meet Criteria Consideration G for exceptional significance.

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The mountainous terrain of Mitchell County led to the initial seclusion of what would later become Penland and the rest of the Toe River Valley and limited development to small farms along the many tributaries of the Toe River. All of this changed during the 1870s when what was then referred to as Bailey Station became a frontier post after early settlers found mica, kaolin, and feldspar mineral deposits in addition to extensive logging opportunities in the area.<sup>7</sup> Spruce Pine was the biggest town nearby and was considered a more typical mining town while Bailey Station was a mere trading post in its early days.<sup>8</sup> Bailey Station was

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<sup>5</sup> Bailey, David Coleman. *The Penland Chronicles*. Asheville, NC: David Coleman Bailey, 2007. Page 71.

<sup>6</sup> Little, John T., LSAP ABA Project Manager for the United States Postal Service. "Information Please, Your Complete Guide to Mitchell County." *Mitchell News Journal*, June 25, 2001.

<sup>7</sup> Hardy, Michael C. *Images of America: Mitchell County*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2009. Page 106.

<sup>8</sup> Bailey, David Coleman. *The Penland Chronicles*. Asheville, NC: David Coleman Bailey, 2007. Page 89.

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not listed as a town until 1890 in *Branson's North Carolina Business Directory* for Mitchell County, with a listed population of fifty. In 1896, the population was listed as sixty.<sup>9</sup>

Today, Penland lies on both sides of the North Toe River in the Toe River Valley and is located in the south-central part of Mitchell County, North Carolina. The town is located within the lands that Milton Pinckney Penland acquired starting in 1852. The entire historic land tract was known as the Penland Properties and originally consisted of 50,067 acres. Most of it was located in the Toe River Valley and can be traced back to land grants from the Lord Proprietors of the Carolinas.<sup>10</sup> He originally bought this land because of its prime location along the Toe River and its abundance of first-growth forests and mining deposits. These lands included the land the original post office was built on in 1879, along with the land that the Bailey Lumber Company Office and General Merchandise Store building was built on in 1900. It was because of this wealth of timber and minerals that other settlers came to the community that was then known as Bailey Station and incorporated as such around 1902. The Penlands were an influential family and the largest landowner in the community; because of this the name of the town was changed to Penland in 1905. This also led to the post office being named Penland the same year.<sup>11</sup>

Both the Penland and Bailey families have lived in and around what is now Mitchell County since the area was first settled by whites. The Bailey family is documented in the area as early as the 1790s, with family members settling throughout the region in communities like Deer Park, Grassy Creek, Red Hill, Bakersville, and Burnsville in the 1800s. The Mitchell County Penland family trace their roots back to Milton Penland whose interests in minerals and land acquisition in the mid-1800s led him to the area. These families were central players in developing the region, especially the Penland community.

By the mid-1800s, branches of both families had acquired some wealth and influence among those who had begun to populate the Toe River Valley. Bailey's Peak, visible from the current Penland community, was named for patriarch John Bailey whose extended family lived in the area around 1850. Milton Pinckney Penland (1813-1880) married Althea Coleman of Asheville and settled in Burnsville. Penland owned and managed several businesses, including a store in Burnsville, several grist mills, and a tannery, as well as a store at Flat Rock, referring to a large flat rock that the store was built on. The flat rock, an immense solid expanse, is located very near the entrance to the road to Penland from the Spruce Pine-Bakersville Highway.<sup>12</sup> He also

<sup>9</sup> *Branson's North Carolina Business Directory*. 1867-1896. Online archive.

<http://www.archive.org/details/bransonsnorthcar1867rale> . Accessed June 11, 2010.

<sup>10</sup> Bailey, David Coleman. *The Penland Chronicles*. Asheville, NC: David Coleman Bailey, 2007. Pg 71.

<sup>11</sup> Bailey, Lloyd Richard Sr., ed . *The Heritage of the Toe River Valley Vol IV Area News 1777-1949*. Tipton, Cordie M. A Brief History of Penland. Mitchell County Historic Society, Section 663, 2004. Page 350.

<sup>12</sup> *Branson's North Carolina Business Directory*. 1867-1896. Online archive.

<http://www.archive.org/details/bransonsnorthcar1867rale> . Accessed June 11, 2010.

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organized a school for boys and girls and spent years exploring the mountains and the abundant minerals contained therein, all the while amassing thousands of acres of profitable landholdings.<sup>13</sup>

The Penland and Bailey families were united in 1875 when Penland's daughter Louisa (1850-1927) married Colonel Isaac Bailey (1843-1926), a Confederate Civil War veteran (he served four years in the Confederate States Army) and a North Carolina state senator from Mitchell County (1887-1893). Isaac Bailey was born in the Red Hill forestry district of Mitchell County near the Highlands of Roan Mountain. Isaac and his father James Bailey were members of a pioneer family of lumbermen. When Milton Penland passed away in 1880, Isaac Bailey took over many of Milton Penland's businesses. He expanded these businesses to create the Blue Ridge Mining Company, General Mica Company, Bailey Lumber Company, Jefferson Distributing Company, Carolina China Clay Company, and the Penland Feldspar and Kaolin Company. His biggest and most successful company was the lumber company which harvested, manufactured, sold and shipped lumber. This business included two sawmills, the Bailey Lumber Company Office, and a few lumber storage warehouses. His other endeavors included; warehouse storage, mining and prospecting, a gristmill, a livery stable, welding and blacksmithing, fertilizer dealer, dam building, lake and pond impoundment, windmills, a fish trap, and an electric power generating station.<sup>14</sup> Ten years after Milton Penland's death, the 1890 population survey listed Col. Isaac Bailey as one of the first residents of Bailey Station.<sup>15</sup>

The coming of the Clinchfield Railroad in 1902 opened up tremendous business and shipping opportunities due to the ease of transportation that the railroad brought. It was in anticipation of the railroad's arrival that circa 1900 Col. Isaac Bailey erected the Bailey Lumber Company Office and General Merchandise Store building (today known as the Penland Post Office and General Store) as a part of a larger commercial building complex. It was the only lumber company listed from 1900 to 1905 in town, and became one of his most profitable businesses as they made caskets from the lumber as well as provided building materials and other lumber products, which were heavily used throughout Penland. He occupied the building from 1900 to 1920.

The Bailey Lumber Company Office and General Merchandise Store building also housed the local general store and numerous other businesses that were an intrinsic part of daily life in Penland. The Baileys, primarily Col. Isaac Bailey, were instrumental in the development of the small commercial center of Penland around the turn of the twentieth century. Many of the houses and commercial buildings in the community used lumber from the Bailey Lumber Company as their building material. Today the Penland Post Office and General Store is the only commercial structure remaining as a reminder of Penland's boom time during the

<sup>13</sup> Bailey, Lloyd Richard, Sr., ed. *The Heritage of the Toe River Valley. Volume II.* Section 26. Durham, NC: L. R. Bailey, Mitchell County Historic Society, 1997.

<sup>14</sup> *The North Carolina Yearbook and Business Directory.* 1903-1916. Online archives. <http://www.archive.org/stream/northcarolinayea1915rale/northcarolinayea1915rale>. Accessed April 20, 2011. Pages 382-383.

<sup>15</sup> *Branson's North Carolina Business Directory.* 1867-1896. Online archive. <http://www.archive.org/details/bransonsnorthcar1867rale>. Accessed June 11, 2010.

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early 1900s. The only other remaining historic structures from the original Penland community are a few residential homes scattered nearby that were owned by various members of the Bailey family. The closest one is located on the northern slope directly above the Post Office and the other three are located a short distance directly north of the property and Penland Road.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the mountains of western North Carolina offered tremendous logging opportunities, which Isaac Bailey took advantage of, with much of the Appalachian Mountains then consisting of virgin forests. Due to the abundance of trees in this part of the state, by 1900 the lumber industry had become a major part of the economy of western North Carolina. It was during this time that the manufacture of lumber and timber products became the second leading industry in North Carolina with 1,770 establishments employing some 11,751 workers; most were in the western part of the state. Also in 1900, the southern Appalachian region as a whole contributed some thirty percent of the total amount of hardwood lumber cut in the entire United States.<sup>16</sup> The demand for lumber was high causing hundreds of steam mills to be built throughout the region. The first Bailey lumber mill was built in 1872 and by 1880 a dam was constructed across the North Toe River to furnish power for their second lumber mill located next to the first mill.<sup>17</sup>

The growth of the mining and logging industry led the Carolina, Clinchfield, and Ohio Railroad (later named the Clinchfield Railroad) to extend a line from Johnson City, Tennessee, seventy miles further into Mitchell County and through what was then called Bailey Station in 1902.<sup>18</sup> Isaac Bailey was instrumental in bringing the Clinchfield Railroad through the community allowing the town to grow into a booming lumber and mining town. He granted an eighty-foot right-of-way across two tracts of his land comprising three thousand acres or more, and therefore helped to extend the railroad 8,895 feet further along the Toe River into Penland. A letter sent from the Clinchfield Railroad Company to Isaac Bailey, dated September 1, 1903, outlined the agreement, under a \$1,400 default bond, "whereas the railroad guaranteed a depot would be erected within 90 days, at a place known as Bailey Station, to provide both freight and passenger service, and with necessary sidings." Every element was to be "finished up in good workmanlike manner and (the station) is to be as good in all respects as those...now in existence in Spruce Pine and Toecane."

The Clinchfield Railroad completed the train depot in 1902 and called it Bailey Station Depot. The Penland Post Office moved into the depot, its fourth location, in September of that year. The other buildings located near the station at this time were the Bailey Lumber Company Office and General Merchandise Store building, two boarding houses, the B. L. Bailey House and the Mrs. N. J. Willis Hotel (both of which were

<sup>16</sup> Presnell, Lowell. *Mines, Miners and Minerals of Western North Carolina: Western North Carolina's Mineralogical Treasures*. Parkway Publishers, Inc., 1999. Page 31.

<sup>17</sup> Bailey, Lloyd Richard, Sr., ed. *The Heritage of the Toe River Valley. Volume 1*. Section 10. Durham, NC: L. R. Bailey, Mitchell County Historic Society, 1994.

<sup>18</sup> Bailey, Lloyd Richard, Sr., ed. *The Heritage of the Toe River Valley. Volume 1*. Durham, NC: L. R. Bailey, Mitchell County Historic Society. Section 16. The Clinchfield Railroad, 1994.

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located within 300 yards of the station), and several houses.<sup>19</sup> There were several other businesses in the general vicinity including a mica cutting house across the Toe River called the Carolina Mica Mill, another general store, and a feed and grain store.<sup>20</sup>

The coming of the Clinchfield Railroad directly through Bailey Station allowed the community to begin a major expansion of its businesses, mainly the lumber and mining industries. Previous to the arrival of the Clinchfield Railroad, the lumber that the Bailey Lumber Company cut and milled was only sold locally due to transportation difficulties; in the 1870s, the only nearby railheads were at Asheville and Marion North Carolina, or Johnson City, Tennessee. Each of these places was connected to Bailey Station by dirt roads, over which livestock and goods were taken to market. The few men trying to make a living as storekeepers hauled their goods back and forth on mule or horse-drawn wagons. The goods brought in consisted mainly of coffee, salt, sugar, axes, hammers and simple farming tools. Outgoing products included roots, herbs, poultry, some farm products, hides and furs.<sup>21</sup>

Bailey Station only had a single railroad loading track in 1902 and the track's entire length was always filled with boxcars to be shipped out.<sup>22</sup> Bailey Station was also the largest feldspar loading and shipping point for this important mineral on the Clinchfield Railroad. Isaac Bailey shipped the first known consignment of feldspar out of the entire region from this station in early 1905, the year in which full operations commenced on the rail lines and the town's name was changed back to Penland.<sup>23</sup> During the early 1900s, there were usually long lines of wagons drawn by horses and mules lined up waiting their turn to unload feldspar, quartz flint, lumber, or acid wood. The wagon traffic was so heavy at times that it caused a good deal of congestion in Bailey Station especially given the narrow and often muddy roads.<sup>24</sup>

The devastating flood of 1916 wiped out most of the buildings in the small commercial district except for the Bailey Lumber Company building, making them the only supplier of goods and groceries for almost an entire year after the flood. The flood also wiped out the Bailey Lumber Company's saw mills thus ending their lumber business. The other two surviving commercial buildings were the Penland Depot (formerly the Bailey Station Depot) and Mr. Tainter's Carolina Mercantile Company Store, which was located directly across from the railroad tracks.<sup>25</sup> Both buildings have since been torn down.

<sup>19</sup> Mitchell County Historic Society. Historical Notebooks. *Tri-County News*, Spruce Pine, NC. Thursday, February 25, 1971.

<sup>20</sup> Mitchell County Register of Deeds. Deeds, incorporations, and charter books.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas, Walter. *My Toe Valley Heritage*. Mitchell County Historical Society, 1990.

<sup>22</sup> Schabilion, Robert J. "Bob," *Down the Crabtree: A Historical Review of North Carolina Mining and Mines*. Page 62. Gem & Lapidary Wholesalers, Inc., 2009.

<sup>23</sup> Bailey, David Coleman. *The Penland Chronicles*. Asheville, NC: David Coleman Bailey, 2007. Pg 47.

<sup>24</sup> Schabilion, Robert J. "Bob," *Down the Crabtree: A Historical Review of North Carolina Mining and Mines*. Page 62. Gem & Lapidary Wholesalers, Inc., 2009.

<sup>25</sup> Bailey, Marcia. Oral History. Interview by phone with author. September 8, 2010.

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The local Penland School of Crafts is another one of Isaac Bailey's legacies. In 1904, he donated a 403 acre tract about a mile from Bailey Station for the purpose of starting a school. Two Baptist laymen, Bill and Wesley Connolly, founded the Seven Springs Baptist Industrial School in 1905. In 1909, they sold the property to the Episcopal Church who established the Appalachian Industrial School, in 1914, as a boarding school led by Rufus Morgan. Morgan's sister, Lucy Morgan came to teach at the school in 1920.<sup>26</sup> The school evolved through the efforts of Lucy Morgan, who began a campaign to revive the interest of mountain women in their native handicrafts as a form of income for mountain families. The Penland School of Handicrafts was established as a weaving program in a separate institute in 1938. In the 1960s, the newly renamed Penland School of Crafts modified its focus to include all types of contemporary crafts. Today, the school enjoys a reputation as a premier art/craft school and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2003. Penland School of Crafts has provided much of the business throughout the years for the Penland Post Office and General Store.

Under Isaac Bailey's care, and later that of his three sons, Harry, Milton and Charles, the family was able to take advantage of numerous entrepreneurial opportunities as the Penland community began to grow. The Bailey sons continued their father's entrepreneurial endeavors after he retired in 1920 and created the Penland-Bailey Company in 1942, which continues as a land management company today.

Today, Penland is still divided into two distinct parts by the North Toe River. The older part of town rests on the north side of the North Toe River and the Clinchfield Railroad. This is where the Penland Post Office and General Store is located along with five or six homes. The Penland School of Arts and Crafts sits a few miles north of the Penland Post Office and General Store. The other half of the town is located on the south side of the river where there are five homes of descendants of the Deer Park Baileys. Bailey's Peak is located near this section of town. The 3,807 foot high peak was named for John Bailey.<sup>27</sup>

## CRITERION A: COMMERCE AND COMMUNICATIONS CONTEXTS

### THE PENLAND POST OFFICE

The first post office in this community was established in 1879 after Isaac Stewart, who operated Stewart's General Store, submitted an application to serve as postmaster for the surrounding area's three-hundred residents. The post office was placed in Stewart's General Store which was located on a piece of property called Flat Rock referring to a large flat rock. The flat rock, an immense solid expanse, is located very

<sup>26</sup> Bailey, Lloyd Richard, Sr., ed. *The Heritage of the Toe River Valley. Volume V Area News 1889-2005.* Section 25, Durham, NC: L.R. Bailey, c. 2006.

<sup>27</sup> Bailey, Lloyd Richard, Sr., ed. *The Heritage of the Toe River Valley Vol IV Area News 1777-1949.* Section 663. Page 350. Tipton, Cordie M. *A Brief History of Penland*, c. 2004.

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near the entrance to the road to Penland from the Spruce Pine-Bakersville Highway.<sup>28</sup> The site was also known as Penland Rock as the property was once part of the vast Milton Penland estate. The post office was originally named Penland Rock, but eventually (date unknown) the word “Rock” was dropped from the name because due to confusion about the location and subsequent delays in the delivery of mail.

Post offices and postmasters in the United States used to be assigned classes but the practice stopped in 1976.<sup>29</sup> The Penland Rock Post Office started out as a fourth-class office in 1879 and remained so for only a few years. The fourth-class post offices and postmasters comprised the lowest tier of the classification system because their salary was based on annual receipts and mail volume. These postmasters did not receive salaries like their first-, second-, and third-class counterparts. Instead, they earned a commission calculated on the annual sums for box rentals and cancelled stamps as well as amounts received from stamps, waste paper, old newspapers, printed matter, and twine sold. This post office was reclassified as a Third Class post office (date unknown) and remained so until 1976 when the United States Postal Service classification system was no longer in effect.<sup>30</sup> A third-class post office was typically located in a less densely populated area where there was no city delivery or rural delivery. This meant that the community members could only receive mail through post office boxes. In addition to being the oldest post office building and active post office in Mitchell County, the Penland Post Office is also the only remaining post office located directly along the Clitchfield railroad tracks.<sup>31</sup> Currently there are only two other post offices in Mitchell County, they are located in Bakersville and Spruce Pine.

Isaac Stewart was the first postmaster and he served for over eight years starting on November 13, 1879 from his Stewart’s General Store. After Stewart became too ill to serve, Harriet Hensley was appointed postmaster on June 18, 1887. The post office was still located in the general store, now referred to as Flat Rock General Store due to a change in ownership, through her term as postmistress. Hensley ran a local boarding house and was married to Mitchell County sheriff, Saulamon Hensley. After serving only five months, Hensley was replaced by Tilmon Penland on November 19, 1887. Tilmon Penland, a relative of Milton Penland, served for four years and eight months. He was the last postmaster to serve at the original post office location in the Flat Rock General Store. The post office boxes, safe, and other original fixtures were moved from this original post office location to all of the later locations.

On July 7, 1891, the post office moved one mile east to an area then known as Henline Hill, currently located at the end of Penland Road near Minpro, to the home of Charles Sparks, where it served fifty

<sup>28</sup> Bailey, Lloyd Richard, Sr., ed. *The Heritage of the Toe River Valley Vol V Area News 1889-2005*. Section 52-A. Unveiling of the Milton P. Penland Memorial in 1914, c. 1950.

<sup>29</sup> Post Office Department. *The Postal Laws and Regulations of the United States of America*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1893.

<sup>30</sup> Davis, Rebecca B., Postmaster. “The History of the Penland North Carolina Post Office With a Brief History of Penland.” June 11, 1981. Page 8.

<sup>31</sup> Davis, Rebecca B., Postmaster. “The History of the Penland North Carolina Post Office With a Brief History of Penland.” June 11, 1981. Page 5.

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residents.<sup>32</sup> Charles Sparks was appointed postmaster on July 27, 1891 and served until November 16, 1900, when his wife, Nancy Sparks, took over the position and became postmistress. It was around this time, on November 5, 1900, that the post office moved yet another mile east and opened at its third location (exact location unknown). This location served 150 residents.<sup>33</sup>

On September 5, 1902, the post office moved to its fourth location at the Bailey Station Depot building, directly across the tracks (to the south) from where the post office is located today; the post office initially served 800 residents. At that time, the community was known as Bailey Station although the railroad was not yet completed and the station was not officially named. The presence of the Penland Post Office at the Bailey Station Depot caused the community's name to be changed to Penland due to the United States Government's rule that a post office and the town it is located in need to have the same name to avoid location confusion.<sup>34</sup> Starting in 1905, the post office was officially called the Penland Post Office once Bailey Station was renamed as Penland.<sup>35</sup>

Nancy Sparks continued as postmistress until October 2, 1902, when James Hoilman was appointed postmaster. Hoilman also served as a storekeeper for the Bailey Lumber Company General Merchandise Store located in the old Bailey Lumber Company Office and General Merchandise Store building, and in early 1908, was involved in a dispute with another local general store owner named Bill Connolly, ultimately ending with Hoilman shooting and killing Connolly at a railroad trestle near the store. Although Hoilman disappeared after the murder, he was eventually found in Canada and brought to trial.<sup>36</sup>

On January 22, 1908, Burgess Bailey was appointed postmaster and served until Claude Radford was appointed on April 10, 1914. After Radford unexpectedly died from a virus at the age of twenty-eight, Newton Pittman was appointed postmaster on October 23, 1919. After serving over fourteen years, Pittman relinquished his position after moving to Spruce Pine. The flood of 1916 caused water damage to the Penland Depot but it was quickly repaired.

On January 9, 1934, the post office opened at its fifth and current location in the former Bailey Lumber Company Office and General Merchandise Store building. The post office moved to the opposite side of the railroad tracks from its last location and took over the shed-roofed addition on the west end of the building's south elevation that had been used as Mr. Tainter's store for ladies' dresses, whose stores had closed around

<sup>32</sup> Mitchell County Historic Society. Historical Notebooks. *Tri-County News*, Spruce Pine, NC. Tipton, Cordie M. Section 663. Pg 350. A Brief History of Penland. February 28, 1974.

<sup>33</sup> North Carolina Postal History Society. *Post Offices and Postmasters of North Carolina: Colonial to USPS Volume II, Edgemcombe through Northhampton*. North Carolina Postal History Society, 1996. Pages 1-317.

<sup>34</sup> North Carolina Postal History Society. *Post Offices and Postmasters of North Carolina: Colonial to USPS Volume II Edgemcombe through Northhampton*. North Carolina Postal History Society, 1996. Pages 1-317.

<sup>35</sup> *Branson's North Carolina Business Directory*. 1867-1896. Online archive.

<http://www.archive.org/details/bransonnorthcar1867rale>. Accessed June 11, 2010. Pages 398-399.

<sup>36</sup> *Bailey, Lloyd Richard, Sr., ed. The Heritage of the Toe River Valley. Volume V Area News 1889-2005.* Durham, NC: L. R. Bailey. Mitchell County Historic Society, 2006.

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1926. The United States government rented the space that housed the post office from the Bailey family and continues to do so. At that time the building also housed the Carolina Mercantile, owned by Will Pittman, who sold general merchandise and groceries, renting the space from the Bailey family.

Will Pittman was appointed postmaster on January 9, 1934. Pittman is credited with constructing all of the wooden cabinets, cubbyholes, implements, and the desk that are still retained in the post office in addition to the original post office boxes, wood sorting table, manual typewriter and weighing scales, and 1800s black metal safe. Pittman served for twenty-eight years before retiring from service, the only postmaster to retire from this position thus far. Pittman was replaced by Robert Duncan, who stepped in as acting postmaster, on February 28, 1962. Duncan was also the next owner of the Carolina Mercantile connected to the post office. Duncan, a Bakersville resident unable to relocate to Penland, relinquished his position when Carlene Bailey was appointed postmistress on September 11, 1963. Bailey served until being selected as postmistress for Nebo, North Carolina, in 1980.

Rebecca Davis was appointed postmistress on December 27, 1980. Davis is a Penland native and the great-great granddaughter of the second postmaster, Harriet Hensley. Davis entered the postal service at Penland as a clerk in 1967, and served as Officer-In-Charge for four months in 1976 when the postmistress was temporarily detailed to Bakersville; she served again as Officer-In-Charge in 1980. Davis continues to serve as postmistress of the Penland Post Office today.

Since the early 1980s, the Penland Post Office has primarily served the Penland School of Crafts, as well as several small local businesses.<sup>37</sup>

## THE PENLAND GENERAL STORE

Of equal importance to the post office was the circa 1900 opening of the general store inside of the Bailey Lumber Company building. The general store was called Bailey Lumber Company General Merchandise store. Isaac Bailey already owned another general store located at Flat Rock in the 1890s.<sup>38</sup> He moved the location of his general store into the Bailey Lumber Company Office building upon its completion circa 1900. He was the only retail grocer listed in town from 1900 to 1906. The general store in this building provided the necessities of life to the Penland community off and on from circa 1900 to 1974. It was owned and operated by Isaac Bailey from circa 1900 to 1920, when Isaac Bailey and his wife Louisa moved to Asheville, NC, after he retired from the family businesses, which were handed down to his three sons; J. Milton, Harry and Charles (Bill) Bailey.

<sup>37</sup> Davis, Rebecca B., "The History of the Penland North Carolina Post Office With A Brief History of Penland." Unpublished. June 11, 1981. Page 8.

<sup>38</sup> *Branson's North Carolina Business Directory*. 1867-1896. Online archive.

<http://www.archive.org/details/bransonsnorthcar1867rale> . Accessed June 11, 2010. Pages 448-449.

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According to oral history, the general store area looked the same throughout its use. The front portion of the general store was used for general merchandise and foodstuffs, such as canned goods, bread, some clothing, paper, and pencils, which were placed on the shelves located along the walls and behind the counters. There was a large glassed counter located along the west end of the southern interior wall of the general store that contained a large assortment of candies and small cakes called "moon pies." There was a large potbellied stove centered at the rear (east) of this room that kept the store, and the community members who came in to socialize and sit, warm. On the south side of the room, near the east end, there was a small enclosed area with glass in the upper half. This was the office where the accounting books, ledgers, and other items related to the running of a business were kept. Across from the office, to the north, was the counter where purchases were made. When buying meat or cheese, there were long rolls of butcher paper that were used to wrap the foodstuffs, and a small scale on which to weigh the purchases. To the east of the counter was a cooler, which held soft drinks known locally as "dope."

The rear gabled addition was used for the overflow storage of goods, as well as the sales area for farming and mining equipment and goods. To the north, as you entered the store room, was a bin that held "fat back," which was used to season food as it cooked. There were one hundred pound sacks of both scratch feed for chickens and hog feed. This feed was sold in printed cloth bags that were often used to make clothing and other items like aprons and pillow cases. The customers would buy two or three bags with the same print in order to have enough material for whatever items they were making. Cotton seed meal, flour, and corn meal were stored here as well. Other items kept in this room included produce, nails, horseshoes, picks, handles, axes, and other tools and products for farmers. There was also a large scale located in the storage room to weigh bulk items. On the south side of the rear gabled addition was a kerosene tank with a pump for the sale of heating fuel. Also on the south side was an area that held mining equipment. There were steel drill bits, which were used to bore into rock to make a hole in which to place dynamite sticks, but the dynamite was stored elsewhere, not in this building. There were also cobbing hammers, which were small sledge hammers, along with many other items used for mining, such as hard hats, blasting caps, and shovels.<sup>39</sup>

Ledgers and bills of sale from the early 1900s show that a bartering system was often used for payment as well as charge accounts for all local residents. Local farmers or sharecroppers could deliver units from their crops, including corn, oats and tobacco, and get credit from the store against the ledger account. Then when a purchase was made, a charge was entered into the debt column.<sup>40</sup> Interestingly, most of the money owed to the Baileys was collected by the exchange of land to cover many debts owed to them at their various businesses, which added to the Baileys' already immense land holdings.<sup>41</sup>

The general store sold a variety of goods, including stoves and tinware, groceries, new and used agricultural implements, and books. Isaac Bailey was involved in numerous businesses that were housed in the

<sup>39</sup> Bailey, Marcia. Oral History. Interview with author by phone. September 8, 2010.

<sup>40</sup> Bailey, David Coleman. *The Penland Chronicles*. Asheville, NC: David Coleman Bailey, 2007. Page 72.

<sup>41</sup> Bailey, Marcia. Family Records and Archives. August 2, 2010.

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Bailey Lumber Company Office building along with the general store. They included timber sales, a drug store, a telegraph agency, and a leather goods manufacture.<sup>42</sup>

Isaac Bailey was also listed from 1904 to 1920 as selling insurance and from 1910 to 1920 as being a real estate agent for the Penland-Ledger-Bakersville area, all the way to The Roan. Some even came for advice on how to pay taxes, others came for legal advice.<sup>43</sup>

The general store was only run for a couple of years by Isaac Bailey's sons before it closed down sometime during the mid-1920s. A few years after the flood, around 1920, Mr. Tainter moved his Carolina Mercantile Company store into the general store area where the Bailey Lumber Company General Merchandise Store had been renting the building from the Baileys. Mr. Tainter also opened a ladies' dress shop in the addition at the west end of the south elevation where the post office is now located. He closed his stores around 1926.

In 1927, Louisa Bailey, Isaac's wife, wrote a letter to her son Milton regarding the old general store in Penland, which was no longer in operation, asking him what should be done regarding the care of it.<sup>44</sup> By 1934, the Baileys had found a local businessman named Will Pittman to lease the space from them. His business was called Carolina Mercantile, although it was referred to by locals as the "ol' county store" at the Penland Post Office.<sup>45</sup> He owned the general store business until 1962, at which time Robert Duncan took over the lease of the space and the ownership of the Carolina Mercantile Store from 1962 to 1963. Duncan and his sons would make deliveries of groceries and other items to various community members located at the Penland School of Crafts and the nearby community of Estatoe near Highway 19E. The building continued to serve as both a general store and post office until 1974 when the general store portion of the building became vacant.

There were other general stores located in Penland during the boom time between 1900 and 1920, but the Bailey Lumber Company General Merchandise store was the only supplier of groceries from 1900 to 1906. It was also the only bookstore in town from 1900 to 1920 along with being the only provider for agricultural implements, stoves and tinware, and real estate for the majority of those years. After the 1920s, this was the only general store in town until it closed in 1974. The local Penland residents shopped here along with residents of the numerous small communities within a five mile radius and the teachers and students at the Penland School of Crafts. During the 1920s, the next closest general store was six miles away in Spruce Pine. After the 1920s, the next closest general store was Bakersville which was thirteen miles away.

<sup>42</sup> *The North Carolina Yearbook and Business Directory*. 1903-1916. Online archives.

<http://www.archive.org/stream/northcarolinayea1915rale/northcarolinayea1915rale>. Accessed April 20, 2011. Pg 330-331.

<sup>43</sup> Bailey, David Coleman. *The Penland Chronicles*. Asheville, NC: David Coleman Bailey, 2007. Page 71.

<sup>44</sup> Bailey, David Coleman. *The Penland Chronicles*. Asheville, NC: David Coleman Bailey, 2007. Page 80.

<sup>45</sup> Bailey, David Coleman. *The Penland Chronicles*. Asheville, NC: David Coleman Bailey, 2007. Page 88.

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As early as 1916, the Appalachian lumber industry began to waver and eventually collapse from too rampant exploitation of forest reserves. The demise of the local mineral industry happened a few years later, between 1923 and 1927, due to falling prices during the Great Depression.<sup>46</sup> The mining industry picked back up during World War II in the 1940s and continued to be a lucrative trade until the late 1960s, when competition with foreign markets became too strong.<sup>47</sup> By the 1970s, the mining industries around Penland slowed considerably and many locals either retired or had to move to other communities to find work. The Penland general store remained a steady business, supplier of goods, and a social hub of the community, but the shift to personal automobile usage and the new-found ease of visiting larger grocery super stores that provided a wider range of goods and prices changed how local residents shopped for their day-to-day necessities. Loyal local community members helped the general store to stay open and retain its place as a social hub in the community until it finally closed in 1974.

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<sup>46</sup> Eller, Ronald D., *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers Industrialization of the Appalachian South, 1880-1930*. The University of Tennessee Press, 1982. Page 47.

<sup>47</sup> Presnell, Lowell. *Mines, Miners and Minerals of Western North Carolina: Western North Carolina's Mineralogical Treasures*. Parkway Publishers, Inc., 1999. Page 125.

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## **Section 10. GEOGRAPHIC DATA**

### **Verbal Boundary Description**

The National Register boundary of the Penland Post Office and General Store is shown as a thick black line on the accompanying map entitled "Property Boundaries of Penland, North Carolina." The parcel number of the property is 0870-00-98-0012.15.

### **Boundary Justification**

The nominated property contains the entire 0.12 acre parcel historically associated with the Penland Post Office and General Store and provides an appropriate setting.

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## PHOTOGRAPHS

The following information applies to all of the photographs included in this nomination.

Name of Property: Penland Post Office and General Store

Location of Property: 1162 Penland Road, Penland, Mitchell County, North Carolina

Photographer: Hillary Cole and Ginny Dailey (See photo descriptions below)

Date of Photograph: May 2011 and November 2011 (See photo descriptions below)

Location of Original Negatives: NCSHPO

1. Facade looking east, photographer Hillary Cole, October 2011.
2. South elevation Post Office wing looking north, photographer Hillary Cole, October 2011.
3. South elevation of main structure looking north, photographer Hillary Cole, October 2011.
4. East elevation of main structure looking west, photographer Ginny Dailey, May 2011.
5. North elevation of main structure looking east, photographer Ginny Dailey, May 2011.
6. Interior of main structure former general store looking east, photographer Hillary Cole, October 2011.
7. Interior of main structure former general store looking west, photographer Hillary Cole, October 2011.
8. Interior of post office workstation looking west, photographer Hillary Cole, October 2011.
9. Interior of post office customer area looking east, photographer Hillary Cole, October 2011.
10. Interior of post office customer area, detail of double etched eagle wing post office boxes, photographer Hillary Cole, October 2011.