

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 Washburn Historic District

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 2401, 2426, 2436 Bostic-Sunshine Highway; 1391, 1392 Andrews Mill Road;
126-156, 157 Salem Church Road N/A not for publication

city or town Bostic vicinity

state North Carolina code NC county Rutherford code 161 zip code 28018

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 forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jeffrey Crow SHPO 2/14/02
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
State of 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

<p>I hereby certify that the property is:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain:) _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Signature of the Keeper</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Date of Action</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
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Washburn Historic District
Name of Property

Rutherford County, North Carolina
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 the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
14	0	buildings
0	0	sites
1	1	structures
0	0	objects
15	1	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)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling
DOMESTIC/secondary structure
COMMERCE/department store
FUNERARY/mortuary
AGRICULTURE/animal facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling
DOMESTIC/secondary structure
COMMERCE/department store
FUNERARY/mortuary
AGRICULTURE/animal facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival
OTHER: Period Cottage
Colonial Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick
walls Brick
Wood
roof Slate
other Asphalt
Metal

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

See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Commerce

Period of Significance

1914-1950

Significant Dates

1915

1925

1929

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

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:

Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources

Washburn Historic District
Name of Property

Rutherford County, North Carolina
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately 63 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	17	425200	3917950
Zone	Easting	Northing	
2	17	426350	3917190

3	17	426180	3916110
Zone	Easting	Northing	
4	17	425810	3916110

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 Davyd Foard Hood
organization _____ date 30 January 2001
street & number Isinglass, 6907 Old Shelby Road telephone 704/462-4331
city or town Vale state N.C. zip code 28168

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 Mr. and Mrs. Edward Nollie Washburn
street & number 2426 Bostic-Sunshine Highway telephone 828/245-4129
city or town Bostic state N.C. zip code 28018

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including 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 20503.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Washburn Historic District, Rutherford County, North Carolina

Section number 7 Page 1

The Washburn Historic District, an irregularly-shaped crossroads community of about sixty-three acres, comprises sixteen properties owned by the Washburn family including two family residences, five rental houses, a store, a funeral home, and related domestic and agricultural outbuildings. The district, its buildings, their setting, and the associated, nominated acreage reflect the shaping and maintenance of place by descendant generations of the Washburn family since 1914. It lies in the gently rolling terrain of east central Rutherford County in the foothills of the South Mountains and some ten miles southwest of the South Mountain State Park. The crossroads developed as a trading center at the junction of a nineteenth-century road (Andrews Mill/Piney Mountain Church roads, SR 1007), linking Marion and Shelby, and the Bostic-Sunshine Highway (SR 1006), which forms the north/south spine of the district and is its most heavily-traveled artery. The principal historic buildings in the district, the Edgar Nollie Washburn House (#1-3), two rental dwellings (#4-7), a barn (#8), the Washburn store (#9), and funeral home (#10), stand at the heart of the crossroads and face onto the Bostic-Sunshine Highway. Salem Church Road (SR 1769) enters the crossroads from the northeast; the Edgar Nollie Washburn, Jr., house (#12-13) and three of the family's rental dwellings (#11, 14-16) face onto it. Gun Club Road (SR 1565), carrying off the west side of Bostic-Sunshine Highway just south of the main house (#1), is effectively the sixth road here and contributes to the pin-wheel appearance of asphalt-paved, double-lane roads converging at the crossroads. The buildings are informally situated in a clearing surrounded by fields and woodlands. The Edgar Nollie Washburn House and outbuildings, the adjoining rental house, the store, and the funeral home are brick while the others are frame and painted white except for the red barn with white trim. The spacious lawn and grounds of the Edgar Nollie Washburn House, shaded by evergreen and deciduous trees and planted with ornamental shrubs, are the most extensively developed in the district. The grounds of Mr. Washburn, Jr.'s house also reflect obvious attention to the creation of a pleasant domestic setting; however, each of the five rental dwellings have fewer shade trees and incidental foundation plantings.

The irregular boundaries of the district define and enclose the site and setting of the historic buildings comprising the Washburn Historic District. This core acreage, owned by Edward Nollie Washburn and his wife, lies both at the heart of Washburn and at the center of the larger Washburn family real estate holdings. Tracts on the west, northeast, east, south, and southwest of the boundary are owned by Mr. Washburn's sister, his nephew, himself, his children, and his cousin, respectively. These holdings, principally fields, pastures, and woodlands, also include the contemporary residences of a son and a daughter and a much altered early-twentieth century one-story frame tenant house that is the property of Merle Umstead Richey, his cousin and the

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Washburn Historic District, Rutherford County, North Carolina

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daughter of the late Governor Umstead. The district and these other Washburn properties stand in an area, once largely agricultural and wooded, that is becoming increasingly residential and almost suburban in appearance. The housing stock in the surrounding countryside comprises mostly middle- and working-class frame and brick veneer houses, domestic and agricultural outbuildings, mostly dating from the 1910s to the present, with the majority having been built since World War II, except for the handsome ca. 1901 Andrews House (Merkel, 90). The insets in the boundary on the northeast, on the east and west sides of Salem Church Road, are the site of Salem United Methodist Church and its parsonage, respectively. The rectangular inset in the east boundary indicates the site of the mid-1950s Washburn Community Club clubhouse.

The buildings in the district were all erected during the period of significance, 1914 to 1950, except for the ca. 1955-1960 concrete-block pump house (#16) at rental house #5.

Chronologically, they represent two general phases in the history of the crossroads community. The first group, including the Washburn House (#1), its outbuildings (#2-3), the Washburn Store (#9), the Washburn Funeral Home (#10), the Edgar Nollie Washburn, Jr. House and garage (#12-13), and the brick rental house (#4), erected between 1914 and 1932, represent the substantial rebuilding of the Washburn family's domestic and commercial buildings. They are all brick except for Mr. Washburn, Jr.'s house and garage. The second, later group of buildings comprise the four frame rental houses and garages (#5-7, 11, 14-15) erected between 1941 and 1950, which are modest one-story frame dwellings. These were built to provide generally low-cost rental accommodations for young couples and families in the community. The dates for the construction of the Washburn House (#1), its garage and power house (#2-3), the Washburn Store (#9), and the Edgar Nollie Washburn, Jr. House and garage (#12-13) are year specific; the construction dates for the other buildings are approximate and based on family tradition.

Inventory List

1. Edgar Nollie Washburn House
2401 Bostic-Sunshine Highway
1914-1915; Contributing building

The Edgar Nollie Washburn House, one of two landmark Classical Revival-style houses of the 1910s in Rutherford County, is arguably the most imposing rural residence in the county and surely one of its largest private houses. Sharing obvious similarities and a likely design kinship with the James Dexter Ledbetter House (NR, 1982) in Forest City, a weatherboarded frame house with a patterned-tin shingle roof, the Washburn House is a common bond brick residence with a slate hipped roof. It stands in an expansive landscaped tree-shaded lawn and faces onto a

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paved circular driveway whose connections to the Bostic-Sunshine Highway are marked by paired brick piers. The stately appearance of the house derives from its insistent symmetry; a consistent hierarchical program of classical woodwork carrying from the two-story portico through its porch, porte-cochere eaves and gables, to the simplicity of the rear elevation, and an unusually high degree of maintenance through three generations of the Washburn family. The two-story house has a nearly-full, floored attic, illuminated by dormer windows on its front and side elevations, from which a stair rises to the balustraded deck crowning the roof.

The three-bay façade, facing southeast, is dominated by the two-story full-façade pedimented Tuscan portico; it is superimposed on a like one-story porch, with a balustraded roof deck enriched with urn finials, that wraps the south and east corners of the house and carries along its sides to differing extents. At the front of the northeast side, the porch engages a porte-cochere and an inset flight of steps links the features. On the southwest side, the porch continues to the near center of the elevation where it shelters a staircase to the service basement. Paired Tuscan columns support the pediment, sheathed with patterned-metal shingles, while single columns stand at the corners of the house in front of brick quoins that frame the elevation. The wide eaves are fitted with handsome scroll brackets. Symmetrical dormers are fully realized and have slate-shingle sides and deeply recessed pediments with copper acroteria. Window openings with painted concrete sills and lintels hold six-over-six sash. The side elevations of the house have a generally symmetrical appearance with centered pedimented gables suggestive of the house's triple-pile plan. A one-story hipped roof screened porch occupies most of the rear elevation that is laid in one-to-six bond. The porch is supported by Tuscan columns; the west end was enclosed with brick ca. 1980 to provide a laundry room.

The front entrance, a wide glazed door flanked by leaded, beveled sidelights and a transom, opens into the expansive center-hall plan. The classical character of the exterior is matched inside by a consistent boldly-scaled architectural finish in harmony with the large rooms and tall ceilings. The two-panel doors, including paired doors from the hall into the parlor and dining room, are framed by classical surrounds. The plaster walls are all painted white, and the oak and pine woodwork is treated with a dark stain. The parlor, dining room, and kitchen (with pantry) are ranged on the northeast side of the hall while the library, stairwell, sitting room, and a small bedroom *en suite* with a bathroom are on the southwest side. The hall, in effect the largest room in the house, is fitted with a fireplace, and its walls are encircled with a paneled oak wainscot which is continued in the parlor and dining room and rises with the stair to its landing. The library has a vertical tongue-and-groove wainscot. Fireplaces in the hall and four principal first-story rooms have elaborate period classical mantels with mirrored overmantels and colored tile

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hearths and fire-box surrounds. An arch, hung with drapery separates the public part of the hall from the narrower private hall at the back and a similar arch frames the opening to the stairwell. The second story plan virtually replicates the first story and features five principal bedrooms, a bathroom, and a small bedroom now fitted up as a secondary kitchen. The finish of these rooms, while somewhat simpler than that of the first story, is nevertheless consistent, and four of the bedrooms have fireplaces. The doors on the second floor have five horizontal panels. Some original light fixtures also remain in place.

2. Garage
1915
Contributing building

The two-car garage is a rectangular one-story brick building with a small ell in the center of its northwest side; both are covered by hip roofs with patterned-tin shingles and exposed rafter ends. The brick is laid in one-to-six bond. Large paired openings on the front (northeast) elevation are fitted with later overhead doors. Paired symmetrically-positioned windows on the southeast and southwest elevations have bold wood lintels and six-pane sash. A fifth such window on the northwest side illuminates the interior while the ell is fitted with two like windows and a five-panel door on its northeast side. The interior of the garage has a poured-concrete floor, exposed brick walls, and an open ceiling. The servant's room in the ell has a like finish.

3. Power house
1915
Contributing structure

This small rectangular one-story brick building, covered with a replacement asphalt shingle hip roof, is laid in one-to-six and one-to-seven bond. It was built to house the family's Delco electricity generator. The garage opening on its front (southeast) side is fitted with a paneled, partially-glazed overhead door, and a conventional opening holds a replacement door. Small, simply-framed openings on the northeast and southwest sides are fitted with six-panel sash. The rear wall is blind. The interior has a poured concrete floor and exposed brick walls.

4. Brick Rental House
1392 Andrews Mill Road
ca. 1932; Contributing building

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Originally built as a funeral home, this well-finished brick period cottage is distinguished by paired gables flanking center bays on its east-facing front and side elevations. The front and north elevations are laid in common bond; the rear and south sides are laid in one-to-six bond. The multiple-plane roof, covering an essentially square building, has asphalt shingles. On the façade the arch-headed center entrance and a window are fitted in a slightly projecting stepped-shoulder chimney; the flanking bays hold trios of windows with "Queen Anne" multi-pane-over-one-sash with header sills and soldier-course lintels. The louvered wood ventilators in each gable end have like frames. The north side has three symmetrical bays holding trios of Queen Anne sash; the center bay projects slightly. The south elevation has a shallow recessed screened porch in the center with flanking bays holding a single window each. The four-bay rear elevation has an asymmetrical appearance. The interior plan features two large rooms on the front with pairs of rooms flanking a center hall behind. The large reception/living room has pine floors, a brick mantel, a vertical tongue-and-groove wainscot, and painted plaster walls and ceiling. This finish, together with five, horizontal panel doors, is generally consistent throughout the house.

5. Garage
ca. 1945-1950
Contributing building

Sheathed with wide German siding and covered with a front-gable asphalt shingle roof, the one-story garage has a full-width opening on the front (east) and blind side and rear elevations. It stands on low brick piers and has a dirt floor.

6. Rental House #2
1391 Andrews Mill Road
ca. 1945-1950; Contributing building

Located in the north corner of the crossroads, this one-story rectangular frame cottage has its principal architectural development on the southwest and southeast elevations facing Andrews Mill and Bostic-Sunshine roads, respectively. Standing on a brick foundation, the house has wide German-sided elevations and a gable roof of asphalt shingles. The six-over-six sash are set in plain board surrounds with ornamental blinds. The porch, in the south corner of the cottage, and the kitchen are contained in a hip-roof shed on the southwest. A brick chimney, flanked by windows, tapers upward in a gable between the porch and a third window on the southeast elevation. The northwest elevation has two windows. The rear elevation includes a frame shed added in 1955, housing a bathroom and walk-in closet, and a sizable screened porch. The

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asymmetrical well-preserved interior contains a living room, dining room, kitchen, two bedrooms, and bathroom. The rooms are finished with narrow flush-board sheathing on the walls and ceilings, narrow-width pine floors, and mostly original five-panel doors in plain-board surrounds.

7. Garage
ca. 1945-1946
Contributing building

This small rectangular frame building has a dirt floor, wide German-sided elevations, and an asphalt-shingle gable-front roof. The southeast front has two openings of unequal size providing access to the vehicle stall and small wood shed/storage area. The rear and side elevations are blind except for a board-and-rail door on the northeast side opening into a storage room enclosed in the north corner of the garage.

8. Barn
ca. 1915-1918
Contributing building

According to family tradition, this symmetrically-composed weatherboarded frame bank barn was built partially of materials salvaged from the late-nineteenth-century house the Washburns vacated when they moved into the brick house (#1). The rectangular building comprises a principal two-story-with-loft main block covered with a side-gable roof and a one-level-with-loft shed across its southeast rear elevation; both are covered with sheet metal. The barn stands on a poured-form concrete foundation and has two gable-roof ventilators symmetrically positioned on its ridge line. The northwest Bostic-Sunshine Road elevation is blind except for the paired board-and-rail doors in its center that provide access from the earth ramp onto the main level. The side-gable ends have five-sided openings centered in the bottom level providing access to the center passage with stables to either side. Paired six-over-six sash windows are set in the main level and a third window is positioned in the upper gable end. The rear shed has paired board-and-rail doors in its northeast end, openings along its southeast side into stable and feeding areas, and an enclosed stable at the southwest end. The interior has a wood floor on the main level with loft floors at varying heights. The stable level is used for the family's horses while the main and loft levels are used for mercantile and household storage.

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9. Washburn Store
2426 Bostic-Sunshine Highway
1925; Contributing building

This well-preserved one-story-on-basement brick store has remained remarkably intact during continuous use spanning three-quarters of a century. The building is laid in one-to-five bond and has a parapet deck roof. The (northwest) Bostic-Sunshine Highway façade has a recessed center entrance flanked by display windows under a shed-roof porch with square wood piers and a sheet metal roof. The original paired, six horizontal panel wood doors, at the back of a splayed recess, are protected by glazed modern metal doors positioned at the front of the recess. The windows to either side have six large fixed panes protected by an iron railing. The name "E. N. Washburn" is painted in a rectangular field centered above the entrance. A simple cornice with terra cotta coping crowns the building and carries down the side elevations which step down in four stages front to back. Three windows are symmetrically positioned on each side elevation; they have eight-pane metal sash protected by metal rails. A metal door on the northeast side provides access to the basement storage area. On the southwest (rear) elevation the three window openings in the basement level are bricked up while the three on the main level retain their metal sash and iron railings. The interior of the store is one large space with a pine floor, painted plaster walls, and an original intact pressed-tin ceiling. The ceiling is divided into two fields by an encased beam supported by square-in-plan columns. At the front the recessed entrance is encased in beaded tongue-and-groove ceiling. Fittings and furnishings include the original eight-tier shelving on the southwest side of the store as well as tables, bins, display cabinets, etc., spanning the seventy-six years of operation. The stair to the basement is enclosed in the east rear corner while a small office was simply enclosed ca. 1985 in the rear south corner. The large stock of the Washburn store includes groceries, hardware, and staples for the local customers, and a wide range of old-fashioned merchandise for the nostalgic visitors who come here from far and wide.

10. Washburn Funeral Home
2436 Bostic-Sunshine Highway
ca. 1925, ca. 1950; Contributing building

The fabric and appearance of this building dates to two periods: the main gable-front block was built ca. 1925 for the family's retail furniture business, and in the early 1930s became the premises of the undertaking business; about 1950, as the funeral business expanded, the building was improved by the addition of one bay, recessed wings, and a bracketed hood over the

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entrance. The one-story T-plan building has a symmetrical five-bay façade facing northwest to the Bostic-Sunshine Highway; the entrance has a single-pane transom and the flanking windows hold two-over-two sash enhanced with decorative louvered blinds. The façade and flanking wings are laid in common bond; the arch-headed louvered vent on gable front is complemented by similar, rectangular vents in the single-bay gable ends of the wings. The southwest wing contains the embalming room and has a separate door on the back. The long southwest and northeast sides of the building are laid principally in a one-to-five bond and blind except for a garage opening, fitted with paired vertical board doors, at the east end of the northeast side. The back gable end has two symmetrical two-over-two sash windows and a rectangular attic vent. The interior of the funeral home is partitioned into six rooms (reception, embalming, storage, hall, casket display room, hearse garage) and has simple finishes including painted wallboard and carpeting that date to the second half of the twentieth century and ca. 1950 three-panel doors opening from the reception room into the wings. The garage at the back of the building has exposed brick walls.

11. Rental House #3
126 Salem Church Road
ca. 1948-1949; Contributing building

This small rectangular one-story frame rental house stands on a brick foundation, is sheathed with wide German siding, and covered with an asphalt shingle side-gable roof. It stands as built except for the enclosure of its southwest gable end porch as a (third) bedroom. The four-bay northwest front has an off-center entrance, sheltered by a gable-front porch with lattice supports, flanked by paired windows; the windows are all fitted with six-over-six sash in plain board surrounds. The side and rear elevations, including the service porch inset in the house's east corner, are generally symmetrical and reflect its plan. The intact interior includes six original rooms (living and dining rooms, kitchen, two bedrooms, and bathroom) and retains its original finish including pine floors, flush sheathing, two-panel doors with plain board surrounds, and a bracketed-shelf mantel.

12. Edgar Nollie Washburn, Jr., House
156 Salem Church Road
1929; Contributing building

This one-story Colonial Revival-style frame house, erected as a family residence and occupied as such until 1997, reflects the classical symmetry that dominates the house (#1) where Mr. Washburn, Jr., grew up. The triple-pile house is essentially rectangular in plan with a side-gable

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front block flanked by inset hip-roof wings; the center and rear third of the house is covered by an end-gable roof. The house stands on a brick foundation, with a partial basement in the south corner, and is sheathed with wide German siding; the roof is covered with asphalt shingles. The appearance of the house gains status through the use of paired dormer windows above the five-bay façade; however, they are largely ornamental and illuminate the attic as do the paired gable-end windows. The entrance, protected by a classical porch with an arched ceiling, is flanked by paired windows holding nine-over-one sash with decorative louvered blinds. The northeast wing is finished as a porch while the southwest wing contains a sun room; a simple, open two-bay car shed adjoins the porch. The side and rear elevations have a generally symmetrical appearance; a hip-roof ell off the east corner of the house contains a pump room. The interior of the house is well finished with pine floors, painted wallboard walls, two-panel doors with molded backband surrounds, and four fireplaces with brick mantels. The front block contains the living and dining rooms; the kitchen (with pantry), three bedrooms, bathroom, and enclosed stair to the attic open off a center hall.

13. Garage
1929
Contributing building

Contemporary with the house, the single-car garage is a weatherboarded frame building covered with a sheet metal front-gable roof; it stands on a low poured cement foundation and has a dirt floor. The five-sided opening occupies most of the northwest front while a simple vertical board door is centered on the rear wall; the sides are blind.

14. Rental House #4
174 Salem Church Road
ca. 1945-1946; Contributing building

This rectangular one-story frame house stands on a vented brick foundation, is sheathed with wide German siding, and is covered with a side-gable roof of asphalt shingles with exposed rafter ends. The four-bay northwest front elevation has an off-center entrance sheltered by a small gable-roof porch; the single and two paired windows hold four-over-four sash. These windows and those on the gable ends have vertical-board blinds typical of the period. The side and rear walls of the house have a general symmetry, except that the northeast gable end includes an inset screened service porch. Reflecting its construction at the end of the war, when materials were scarce, the interior is sheathed with beaded tongue-and-groove ceiling, flush sheathing, and wallboard; five-panel doors are set in plain board surrounds. The rental house has living and

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dining rooms, kitchen, two bedrooms, and a bathroom (which was enclosed in the 1950s from the east half of the original service porch).

15. Rental House #5
157 Salem Church Road
1941-1942; Contributing building

Edward Washburn remembers that the lumber for this simple one-story weatherboard frame house had just been unloaded in December 1941 when news of the Pearl Harbor bombing was announced on radio. Now covered with vinyl siding, the rectangular house stands on a brick foundation and is covered with a side-gable asphalt shingle roof. A simple shed-roof porch occupies the south half of the two-bay southeast (front) elevation while a similar shed-roof block includes a porch and (later) enclosed bathroom on the northwest (rear) elevation. The gable ends have a two-bay window arrangement with louvered attic vents. Although the house is covered with vinyl siding and the sash has been replaced with one-over-one sash, the house retains its integrity of form and the interior retains its original plan and finish. The five-room plan cottage includes a living room, kitchen, dining room, and two bedrooms; most of the original beaded tongue-and-groove ceiling remains on the walls and ceilings, five horizontal panel doors remain in their plain board surrounds, and the bracketed shelf fireplace imparts presence to the living room.

16. Pump house
ca. 1955-1960
Noncontributing structure

This two-part construction includes a small, conventional concrete-block pump house, with a shallow lift-off asphalt shingle frame roof, and a board-and-batten shed-roof pump house later erected atop the poured concrete base of the original well house.

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Summary

The Washburn Historic District, comprising a group of sixteen domestic and commercial buildings owned by the Washburn family and clustered at the crossing of the Bostic-Sunshine, Andrews Mill/Piney Mountain, and Salem Church roads, satisfies National Register Criteria A and C and holds local significance in the areas of architecture and commerce. The crossroads community, situated about midway between the villages of Bostic and Sunshine, with Forest City to the south and the South Mountains to the north, and located astride the paths of the Rutherfordton-Lincolnton turnpike (portions of Bostic-Sunshine Road) and a nineteenth century road (Andrews Mill/Piney Mountain) linking the court house towns of Marion and Shelby, developed as an important trading and way station in north central Rutherford County in the later decades of the nineteenth century. Since at least the 1880s, a general mercantile store has been continuously operated here by four generations of the Washburn family; it is the oldest known family-operated mercantile business in Rutherford County. The appearance of the district and the period of significance (1914-1950) are associated with a dramatic rebuilding of the family residence, store, and related buildings in the first half of the twentieth century. The first step was the construction of the stately Classical Revival-style family residence by Edgar Nollie Washburn (1874-1935) in 1914-15; it remains one of the largest and most imposing houses in the county. Ten years later he replaced the family's turn-of-the-century brick store with the present building that continues to house the general store operated by his grandson Edward Nollie Washburn (b. 1930). Having sold wood coffins for many years, as did many rural merchants, Edgar Washburn added undertaking services in 1928; that business continues to operate here. A second Colonial Revival-style family residence, built in 1929 on the marriage of his son and namesake, was later joined by five rental dwellings. Altogether, these buildings and the mercantile and undertaking concerns represent the long association of family with place, and their service to the surrounding agricultural community, an important chapter in the history of rural life in North Carolina that is fast disappearing throughout the state.

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Historic Background

Although the Washburn family cannot be associated with this place with certainty until 1845, members of the family had lived in the area since the late-eighteenth century, and court records indicate they were engaged in tavern-keeping in Rutherford County as early as 1836. The first of the family known to live in old Rutherford County were Gabriel Washburn (1752-1826) and his wife Priscilla Jones.¹ Their son, John Washburn (ca. 1779-1857), the progenitor of the branch that located here, also lived in what is now Cleveland County; three of his sons are believed or known to have been engaged in mercantile operations or tavern keeping here at Washburn crossroads.² Benjamin Washburn (1806-1863), Perry Green Washburn (1813-1899), and the Reverend Reuben Washburn (1829-1904) were enterprising siblings. Benjamin established the family here, at least in 1845, and conveyed his interests to Perry in 1858.³ On 21 January 1867 Perry Green Washburn sold the holding for \$800 to Reuben Washburn who, for certain, undertook the mercantile operations here that have continued without interruption to the present (Rutherford County Deeds: 56/265-66).

Reuben Washburn was born on 22 April 1829, and on 4 September 1861 he married Sarah Ann Crowder (1842-1910). The couple were the parents of nine children born between 1862 and 1886.⁴ The family occupied a two-story log house that stood on the east side of the Lincolnton road between the later barn (#8) and 1925 store (#9). Mr. Washburn was ordained a deacon in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, on 13 December 1863, and he served congregations in the region as a circuit rider while operating his store; according to family tradition he also ministered to the Cherokee Indians.

The question of whether Reuben Washburn continued family mercantile operations here or established them anew in his own right cannot be precisely answered at this distance. One local account provides insight. In 1938-1939 Robert Knox Hollifield (1868-1957), a local historian, wrote a series of articles published in the Forest City Courier, then edited by Clarence W. Griffin whose History of Old Tryon and Rutherford Counties had been published in 1937. Two of the articles concerned the Washburns and their country store.

Washburn's Cross Roads is where Mr. Rubin (sic) Washburn had a store. There has been a store there ever since I can remember, and there was one there a number of years before I was born. I have lived to see six different store buildings at this cross roads. The first one I remember was a log building right in front of the brick home (#1) that Nollie Washburn built and lived in. Mr. Washburn next built a little framed store building on the other side

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of the road just below the house he lived in. Then a few years later he built a two story frame building on the southwest side of the Cross Roads and the studding in the building was hewn out of little pine poles. Then later when his son Nollie took over the store he built a brick building on the west side of the road just in front of the present store building. Then a number of years after this Nollie built the building (#9) that his son, E. N. Washburn now occupies. But before he died he built another building (#10) on the southeast corner of the cross roads. This building is now used by E. N. Washburn as a funeral home.⁵

While two of the six buildings mentioned by Mr. Hollifield were clearly auxiliary structures to the principal store buildings, the succession of a log store, the "little framed store building," the first brick store of ca. 1902, and the present brick store erected in 1925 indicate both the long existence of mercantile operations here and the steady growth of the concern into ever more substantial buildings. This pattern of upgrading occurred at many trading centers in western North Carolina; however, the continued operations here in the same family is believed to be unique in Rutherford County. Reuben Washburn's general store at Washburn is first listed in Branson's North Carolina Business Directory For 1884. In both the 1896 and 1897 editions of the business directory Reuben Washburn is listed as the proprietor of stores at Washburn and at Green's Store. In the 1902 edition of The North Carolina Year Book, a successor directory, the store at Green's is discontinued and Mr. Washburn's youngest son, Edgar Nollie, is listed as the proprietor of the Washburn store. During this period, on 20 January 1886, Reuben Washburn was named postmaster of Green's Grove post office. The post office was renamed Washburn on 29 November 1889, and Reuben Washburn remained postmaster until 21 April 1900 when he was succeeded by Edgar Nollie; the Washburn post office was discontinued on 30 November 1906, and the mail was delivered from Bostic (Griffin, 607).

In 1899, at the age of seventy, Reuben Washburn began putting his affairs in order; during the following three years he would execute deeds conveying the home place to his surviving children. On 10 June 1899 Lee W. Lynch, the county surveyor, surveyed a one-acre store lot that was to be willed to Edgar Nollie and a two-acre house lot. Two weeks later, on 23 June, Reuben and Sarah Washburn conveyed to their youngest son the house lot on which stood "E. N. Washburn's New House," together with "the Stables & barn and Garden" which they reserved for use during their lifetime (Rutherford County Deeds: 73/265). The "New House" stood on the west side of the Lincolnton road, immediately southeast of the site now occupied by his later Classical Revival-style house (#1). On 12 October 1899 Edgar Nollie Washburn married Grace Elizabeth Harton (1883-1944), the daughter of Mrs. William Hester (Norville) Harton (1863-

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1928). Reuben Washburn's intention to will the store lot to his youngest son changed; in fact, Mr. Washburn disposed of his land by deeds in 1902 and left no recorded will.⁶ The Reverend Reuben Washburn died two years later, on 3 November 1904, and was buried at Salem Methodist Church; his widow Sarah Ann (Crowder) Washburn lived for another six years, dying in 1910, and her body was buried beside her husband's.

Edgar Nollie Washburn inherited the acumen for business that had made his great-grandfather Gabriel Washburn a wealthy man and large slaveholder by his death in 1826, and he, too, became a wealthy and well-respected citizen of Rutherford County. Born on 15 August 1874, he took charge of the Washburn store by 1902 and erected a new brick store, probably in 1902, coincident with his receipt of the store lot. He and his wife were the parents of nine children, born between 1902 and 1918, of whom eight lived to adulthood. In 1908 he was elected to the Rutherford County Board of Commissioners. Six years later, in 1914, he set about building the grand Classical Revival-style house (#1) which remains one of the largest and most imposing country houses in Rutherford County.

Edgar Nollie Washburn recorded the construction of the house in an account book, making his first entry on 28 October 1914 and his last on 31 December 1915; however, the single entry concerning the design of the house occurred on 28 October when he wrote "Pd for Blue Prints 2.00." The blueprints do not survive, nor does any reference to its architect survive in family tradition, but, the second entry in the house ledger, "trip to Belmont 2.50" has been interpreted to suggest that the architect was in Belmont, or met Mr. Washburn in Belmont, or the house was copied from an existing (and now lost) house in Belmont. However elusive that line of inquiry remains, an obvious connection can be made to the handsome Classical Revival-style house built to the west of Forest City in 1913-1914 by James Andrew Baynard for James D. Ledbetter (NR, 1982), a prosperous farmer with banking interests. Except for the fact that the Ledbetter House is a weatherboarded frame dwelling with a patterned tin roof, while the Washburn House is a costlier brick residence with a slate roof, the two houses are remarkably similar in appearance. After recording the purchase of a small parcel of land, carrying on the rear, west side of his earlier house grounds, for \$75 from E. A. Melton (Rutherford County Deeds: 98/268), Mr. Washburn made meticulous entries in his account book for purchases, labor, and payments; however, the entries include few names, identifying workmen or suppliers. Two craftsmen are mentioned: H. G. Cagle, a plumber; J. W. Lewis who did the plastering. The record contains no payments to a contractor or builder, Mr. Washburn likely supervised the work himself, and recorded "Work for week" and the total paid out on a regular basis through construction. Three suppliers, Statesville Brick Company, the Carpenter-Taylor lumber company, and Warlick

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Lumber Company, are noted, and appear to have been the principal suppliers of brick and lumber. Mr. Washburn paid \$240 on 8 June 1915 for the six large columns on the portico, and \$97.92 for similar porch columns on 10 July. The total cost of the house was \$8,055.49. Edgar Nollie and Grace Harton Washburn occupied their new house in the winter of 1915-1916 and lived here for the remainder of their lives.

Other building projects occupied Mr. Washburn during the next two decades. As the house neared completion, he oversaw the construction of the small brick power house (#3) and garage (#2) standing to the rear of his new dwelling. The family's late-nineteenth century house was subsequently pulled down and the lumber reused, according to family tradition, in building the frame barn (#8) across the road. In the 1920s Mr. Washburn was engaged in the construction of three buildings, two standing in the district, and the other at its edge. In 1925 he erected a new brick store (#9), a one-story on basement building with a single large sales room finished with a pressed-tin ceiling. It survives virtually intact to the present, and is still in use as a general merchandise store. At the same time or shortly thereafter he built a second brick building (#10) to house his furniture sales department. In 1929 Mr. and Mrs. Washburn gave a one-acre lot to the north of the store, on the southeast side of the "old Lincolnton-Rutherfordton Road" (now Salem Church Road), to the trustees of Salem Methodist Church. Mr. Washburn was instrumental in the construction of the Classical Revival-style building that continues to house its congregation. That same year his eldest son, Edgar Nollie Washburn married Margaret Ann Philbeck (1905-1997) on 20 June, and the couple moved into the one-story Colonial Revival-style weatherboarded frame house (#12) built beside and southwest of the church, now separated by Rental House #4. Mr. Washburn's final project was the ca. 1932 construction of a brick building (#4), intended for a funeral home, beside the family's first brick store in the southwest corner of the crossroads. Alas, in planning the building, miscalculations in the width of the hall, the amount of space needed to turn caskets and move them from room to room occurred, and the building proved unusable for its intended purpose. While Mr. Washburn had sold factory-made wood caskets for some years from the second story of the ca. 1902 brick store, the family's formal undertaking services date to 1928 when a hearse was acquired. The funeral business was relocated to the furniture building (#10) where it remains to the present. The ca. 1902 store was then demolished.

While the Washburn store was Mr. Washburn's principal interest, he also had other commercial investments. In 1917, with his brother-in-law Okey K. Biggerstaff, he was one of four founders of the Bank of Bostic. It achieved the distinction of being one of only three banks in Rutherford County to survive the Depression and it continues in operation today as a branch of First Union

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(Griffin, 391). Mr. Washburn also had interests in a general store in Bostic, managed by his brother-in-law Mr. Biggerstaff, and another in Sunshine also managed by a brother-in-law, Charles D. Davis. The kinship and business relationship with the Davises took on a larger dimension; in 1929 their daughter Merle, Mr. Washburn's niece, married William Bradley Umstead (1895-1954) who was elected to the United States House of Representatives in 1932, served until 1938, was a United States senator (1946-1948), and governor of North Carolina (1952-1954).

Edgar Nollie Washburn died unexpectedly in New York on a business trip at the age of sixty on 11 March 1935, and his body was brought back for burial in Salem Church cemetery. His entire estate was bequeathed to his wife, and it consisted of the 428-acre homeplace at Washburn, nine other tracts in Rutherford County totaling 424 acres, and personal property including stock shares, cash, and the stock of merchandise on hand (Rutherford County Wills, I/530; Rutherford County Record of Accounts, G/457-58; Rutherford County Record of Settlements, F/78-82). Mr. Washburn's eldest son, Edgar Nollie Washburn, Jr., assumed management of the family store and funeral businesses. In 1940 Mrs. Grace Washburn sold a twenty-two-plus acre lot including "two brick store buildings and a barn (#8-10)" to Mr. and Mrs. Washburn, Jr., together with a thirty-acre lot on which stood their house and garage (#12-13) for \$10,000 (Rutherford County Deeds, 175/377-78).

Mrs. Washburn occupied her grand residence until her death on 16 March 1944 after which she was buried beside her husband at Salem Church cemetery. Except for certain provisions, the Washburn estate was to be divided among her children in equal shares. By two deeds of 18 July and 10 December 1945, seven Washburn siblings and their spouses conveyed their interests in the Washburn residence and old store lots to their brother Edgar Nollie Washburn, Jr., and his wife (Rutherford County Deeds, 186/288-92). Through the deeds of 1940 and 1945 Mr. Washburn, Jr., came into possession of the lands and buildings at the heart of Washburn crossroads, and he exercised the proprietary role in the community which his father had held from 1902 until his death.⁷ During the 1940s four frame one-story rental houses were erected at the crossroads by the Washburn family that followed the pattern of other prosperous rural property owners who had the means and the land on which to provide rental housing for less affluent members of the community or for others, including school teachers, who were in the community on a temporary basis. The rental houses built after World War II answered the pent-up demand for low-cost housing experienced in Rutherford County and the nation and provided rental residences for veterans returning to the Washburn community. The first (#15), built in 1941-42, stands at 157 Salem Church Road. At the end of World War II Edgar Washburn, Jr.,

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erected a rental dwelling (#14) on Salem Church Road, between his house and Salem Church, and a rental house (#6) in the northwest corner of the crossroads. The fourth frame rental dwelling (#11) was built at the end of the decade and it was the first of the four to have an indoor bathroom as an original feature. Bathrooms were later added or enclosed for the other houses, and garages were also built over time.

Edgar Nollie Washburn, Jr. (1902-1971) and his wife Margaret (1905-1997) operated the Washburn store until his retirement in 1968, and they occupied his father's house until his death in 1971, when his body was buried at Salem Church cemetery. Mr. Washburn devised his entire estate to his widow (Rutherford County Wills, 71-E-148). In 1973 she began conveying the property at the heart of the Washburn community to her son Edward (and his wife), thereby again vesting ownership of the family's core holding in the hands of a son.⁸ Margaret Philbeck Washburn occupied the family residence until 1995 when she removed to a nursing home where she died on 19 December 1997.

Edward Nollie Washburn, the proprietor of the Washburn Store since his father's retirement in 1968 and resident in the family house since Thanksgiving 1997, was born on 17 March 1930. He attended Pfeiffer College, served in the United States Air Force, and graduated from Wofford College in 1955. Mr. Washburn married Mary Catherine Sinclair (b. 1933) in 1952, and they are the parents of three children, all of whom are married and live with their families in contemporary houses on family lands adjoining the Washburn Historic District. Mr. and Mrs. Washburn sold the funeral home business in 1998 to Kent Dorsey, a distant cousin, who operates the service as Washburn-Dorsey Funeral Home out of the 1920s building (#10); they continue to operate the store established here by Reuben Washburn in the nineteenth century.

Architectural Context and Significance

The architectural significance of the Washburn Historic District derives from the particular individual distinction of the Edgar Nollie Washburn House and the Washburn Store as intact, well-preserved examples of their respective building types in Rutherford County and for the importance of these buildings and the thirteen related historic buildings which collectively comprise the best preserved early twentieth-century crossroads community in the county. The centerpiece of the district, the Washburn House of 1914-1915, is one of the two most imposing Classical Revival-style houses with handsome two-story porticos and a program of classical detailing to survive in Rutherford County; the earlier frame member of this pair, the James D. Ledbetter House at Forest City, was listed in the National Register in 1982. Both houses were built for prosperous businessmen, and this instance reflects the pattern seen across North

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Carolina, in the countryside, in small towns, larger cities, and the capital, whereby imposing Classical Revival-style houses, with symmetrical elevations, two-story porticos superimposed on one-story porches, and a consistent program of classical architectural finish, were built as residences by the more affluent, leading citizens of the day. This house form, described as "Southern Colonial" in the contemporary literature was adopted by the North Carolina committee charged with building the North Carolina Building at the Jamestown Ter-Centennial Exposition (1907), and a copy of the house, built in Dunn by Kenneth L. Howard, is one of the handsome examples which punctuate the historic architectural landscape of the state. Most of these houses, including the Howard and Ledbetter Houses, are frame; the Washburn House, together with the R. Lee Wright House of ca. 1912 in Salisbury, designed by Louis H. Asbury, Sr., is one of the small number in brick. In Rutherford County, as elsewhere in North Carolina, the Classical Revival style was adopted for important public and institutional buildings including the Rutherford County Court House (Main Street Historic District, Rutherfordton, NR 1995) also designed by Mr. Asbury, the First Baptist Church, Forest City (NR 1989), and both Cliffside and Cool Springs Schools (NR 1998, 1999, respectively).

The Washburn Store (#9), while not as immediately impressive on first notice, is also an important example of interwar period commercial architecture. This freestanding one-story rural store, similar to others forming cohesive blocks on the main trading streets in Forest City Rutherfordton, has survived virtually intact and unaltered since its construction in 1925; the only change has been the introduction of paired, glazed doors at the front of the recessed vestibule, an addition for security and customer convenience, which has effectively preserved the original paired, blind paneled wood doors that are kept open during business hours. The relatively plain yet substantial appearance of the exterior gives way to a large single-space salesroom which retains its intact, well-maintained patterned pressed-tin ceiling, original perimeter wall shelving, and a number of counters, tables and shelf units that have been used through the past seventy-six years. The two other known early-twentieth century rural brick stores in Rutherford County have suffered different fates. The two-story store built about 1906 for A. C. Moore at Frog Level, south of Forest City, was pulled down in the 1960s (*Heritage*, 41-42). The smaller, one-story early-twentieth century brick store built and operated by W. L. Long, a few miles northwest of Washburn, ceased to be a mercantile operation and was last used as an automobile garage; it and the two-story nineteenth-century frame Long residence stand vacant and unused.

The collection of residential, commercial, and rental buildings comprising the crossroads community at Washburn form the most intact, well-maintained example of a historic rural trading community in Rutherford County. The architectural character of the district is enhanced

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by the Colonial Revival-style frame house (#12) built for Edgar Nollie Washburn, Jr., and the Brick Rental House (#4), a one-story period cottage; both buildings reflect popular interwar period building patterns in the county and state. The four frame one-story rental houses (#6, 11, 14-15), dating from the 1940s, reflect the simple, typical character of rental dwellings of the era and form valuable parts of the cohesive community fabric. The architectural character, integrity, and survival of the Washburn Historic District derives from the continued family ownership in the Washburn family. At other rural trading points and commercial crossroads in Rutherford County, including the Long store, and at New House, nearby in Cleveland County, changes in ownership, commercial practices, replacement buildings, alterations for other uses, or neglect and abandonment, have forever altered the fabric of the early-twentieth century rural crossroads that survives in remarkable condition here.

Commerce Context and Significance

The significance of the Washburn Historic District in the area of commerce is associated with its satisfaction of National Register Criterion A. As the site of continuous mercantile operations since the 1880s and a rural undertaking service since 1928, this rural crossroads trading center has served the surrounding agrarian community, meeting most of its needs for store-bought goods, equipment, clothing, furnishings, and foodstuffs in life, and providing embalming and funeral services at death. While the general mercantile operations of the Washburn family here were in some ways typical of many such rural stores in Rutherford County in the later nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, their establishment of a rural-based funeral service, arising from the earlier sale of factory-made coffins is unique in the county and figures among what is believed to be a small number of such rural undertaking services in North Carolina. The continuous operation of the Washburn store, through four descendant generations, makes it as the oldest known family-owned and operated mercantile operation in Rutherford County. The present store, the fourth erected by members of the Washburn family here, was built and put in service in 1925. The Washburn Funeral Home was operated here from 1928 to 1998 by three generations of the family until its sale, in 1998, to a kinsman who continues to operate on the premises.

In 1884 when Reuben Washburn is first listed as a merchant in Branson's North Carolina Business Directory he was one of thirty-four general merchants located in parts of Rutherford County beyond the bounds served by post offices in Rutherfordton and Forest City; the directory lists sixteen merchants in the county seat and the nearby town that would become its most populous city in the twentieth century. By 1897, the last year Mr. Washburn is listed as

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proprietor of the family's mercantile operations, and by which time the concern was moved from its (original) log building into the successor frame store, railroads and increasing textile production concentrated in Forest City and Henrietta had brought a new prosperity to the lives of many county residents. Rutherfordton and Forest City remained the largest towns in the county, while settlement at Bostic and Ellenboro grew into recognizable villages, soon to be towns. In the 1897 directory listing Reuben Washburn's stores at Green's Store and Washburn were two of sixty general merchants in the county outside the areas served by the Rutherfordton, Forest City, Henrietta, Bostic, and Ellenboro post offices. This numerically large listing included stores of every size and, apparently, a large number of small concerns that quickly went out of business. In the 1902 North Carolina Yearbook thirty-two "Merchants not in Towns" in Rutherford County included the store operated here by Edgar Nollie Washburn. By 1916, the last year the yearbook listings are county-by-county and useful as a local reference, Mr. Washburn's store is one of twenty-eight operated by "Merchants not in Towns." The listing included W. L. Long, who appears to have opened a store between 1910 and 1915 and would later build the only other known one-story brick store in rural Rutherford County.

Through the period from his father's death in 1902 until his own in 1935, a period in which the family's store moved from the frame building to the first, ca. 1902 brick store, to the present 1925 brick store, Edgar Nollie Washburn operated a general store that provided the principal staples, furnishings, clothing, and foodstuffs to citizens in the surrounding countryside. Local residents came to the store on foot, on horseback, in carts and wagons, and finally in automobiles and trucks. During this period, as the means of transportation and roads improved, shoppers could go to specialty stores or the larger department stores in Rutherfordton and Forest City for fancy goods and "important" purchases; however, they depended on Washburn's for the basic commodities. By 1925 business had increased sufficiently that Mr. Washburn built a new brick store (#9) and soon erected a separate brick building (#10) to house the retail furniture sales. In the years before embalming and undertaking services were formalized and came under state authority through legislation, Mr. Washburn and other rural merchants sold factory-made coffins to local residents when deaths occurred. With the purchase of a hearse in 1928 he was able to offer full undertaking services to the community. That business also prospered and ca. 1932 he erected a brick building (#4) for a funeral home; that building proved to be unusable and he relocated the funeral business to the ca. 1925 furniture sales house where it remains in operation to the present.

The commercial operations of the Washburn family remained stable through the interwar period; however, World War II and the 1940s brought changes to the character of the community and its

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residents. The promise of a regular paycheck in return for work in the county's textile mills increasingly appealed to members of the farming community. Through the 1940s and 1950s, some men in the community sought extra income by taking on a second shift job in one of the textile mills after working in the fields during the day. Regular income also appealed to wives and sons in the community farm families. After the war, veterans were as apt to take a mill job as return to the farm, and the four frame rental houses erected in the 1940s conveniently met their needs. In the second half of the twentieth century the movement away from general farming has increased, and community residents, who had turned to work in textiles in the mid-twentieth century, are now as likely to work in offices, schools, sales, and other positions. Through this period, great changes in mercantile sales also occurred, and one after another of the rural crossroads and community stores closed, or altered their stock and became little more than neighborhood gas stations. The Washburn Store is the last of the general mercantile stores to operate in rural Rutherford County. It continues to meet many of the general needs of the surrounding community while also becoming a destination for those from afar who seek old-time goods and service.

Endnotes

1. In spring 1797 he acquired tracts totaling 900 acres in three transactions (Rutherford County Deeds; 6/158-59, 10-11/160-62, 15-17/494-96). That property was located in a section of Rutherford County that was separated in 1841 to form Cleveland County, to the northwest of its county seat, Shelby, and at/near a crossroads which also bears the name Washburn. In his will he named fourteen children (six sons, eight daughters) of whom thirteen were living in 1822 when he signed it (Rutherford County Wills: D/47-49); he and his wife are buried in a private family cemetery on that property.
2. He resided a few miles north of his father, about midway between Washburn and New House, a community just east of the Cleveland/Rutherford County line. A part of this acreage came to John Washburn from his father-in-law Benjamin Magness (Rutherford County Deeds: 25/13). Mr. Washburn and his wife, Mary Ann Magness (ca. 1784-ca. 1862), were the parents of eleven known children.
3. Rutherford County Court Minutes indicate the two older brothers were engaged in tavern-keeping for a decade prior to 1845; however, the documents do not indicate whether they operated here, in leased quarters, or elsewhere in the county. Benjamin Washburn received a license "to retail spiritous liquors by the small measure" in 1836 and 1838. Perry received a license to "Hawk and Peddle goods wears & Merchandise" in 1839. In 1840,

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Benjamin Washburn received a license at the February session to sell liquors "at his own house," and at the fall court Perry Green Washburn received a license to do so "at his Store in Rutherford County." Benjamin Washburn renewed his license at the Spring Court of 1841 and again in 1843 at a cost of \$4. The question of where these operations were located is complicated by the fact that the Rutherford County deed indexes show no deeds recorded by either man for the ownership of land prior to 1858, and yet both men owned the land lying at the heart of this district. Benjamin Washburn's purchase of two tracts, comprising the lands he conveyed to his brother Perry in November 1858 were apparently never recorded. On 25 August 1845 James H. Melton sold a tract of eighty-four acres to Mr. Washburn; James J. Hoyt, of New York, the agent for the Speculation Land Company, sold an apparently contiguous 149-acre tract, also part of Patent No. 1047, to Mr. Washburn on 28 August 1858. Copies of these deeds survive among a group of Washburn family papers in the William B. and Merle D. Umstead Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. These two tracts, either resurveyed or reduced by unrecorded sale or exchange, comprised the property of 220 acres described as being "on both sides of the Lincolton (sic) Road," which Benjamin Washburn sold to his younger brother on 3 November 1858 (Rutherford County Deeds: 48/535-36).

4. Martha Alice (1862-1944); Mary Lois (1864-1920); William Adney (1868-1931); John Lemuel Bascomb (1869-1937); Muncy Benjamin (1872-1902); Edgar Nollie (1874-1935); Lydia Jane (1878-1967); Daisy Tabitha (1882-1961); and Eunice Locha (1886-1941). Daisy Tabitha Washburn married Charles D. Davis; their daughter Merle Holland Davis married William Bradley Umstead who served in both houses of Congress and as governor of North Carolina.
5. Photocopies of these articles were made available to the author by Mr. Washburn.
6. The conveyance of the store lot on 21 January 1902 to Edgar Nollie Washburn was the first of twelve family deeds that year. By it Reuben Washburn transferred the frame family store and its one-acre lot, in the southwest corner of present day Bostic-Sunshine and Andrews Mill roads, to Edgar Nollie Washburn (Rutherford County Deeds: 76/566-68); he reserved to himself and his wife the use of the orchard on the property. By ten deeds, all dated to either 28 or 29 October 1902, Mr. and Mrs. Washburn conveyed portions of the home place to their five daughters; each received a two-acre tract plus a second, larger tract, ranging in size from twenty-two to thirty acres (Rutherford County Deeds: 77/154,

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- 156, 183, 185, 236, 239, 461, 462; 91/390; 99/356). Reuben and Sarah Washburn's house was given to their youngest daughter, Eunice Locha Washburn, who was only sixteen years of age and living at home when the deed was made. The twelfth deed in 1902 conveyed a tract of twenty acres to Edgar Nollie Washburn (Rutherford County Deeds: 91/165).
7. In 1946 the larger, remaining real estate holding, which lay to the south and southwest of the crossroads (and this nominated acreage) was divided by commissioners and conveyed to the siblings with Mr. Washburn, Jr., receiving the greater share of 173.53 acres (Rutherford County Deeds, 198/63-81).
 8. On 13 July 1973, Mrs. Washburn conveyed portions of the Washburn property to two of her three children: Elizabeth Washburn Craft and Edward Nollie Washburn. Edward Washburn received the pair of lots on the west side of the Bostic-Sunshine Road on which stand the family house, outbuildings, and the brick rental house and the five-acre lot on the opposite side of the road on which are located, the Washburn store, funeral home, and barn together with all stock, merchandise, and vehicles used in the operation of the two businesses (Rutherford County Deeds, 352/451-53). In 1981 Mrs. Washburn conveyed the house (#13) built for her and her husband in 1929 and its five-acre lot to Edward Washburn and his wife (Rutherford County Deeds, 421/579-81). On 10 November 1987 Mrs. Washburn executed two deeds conveying two additional properties at the crossroads to Edward and Catherine Washburn; one for the half-acre parcel in the northeast corner of the crossroads and the second for the 3.84-acre parcel on which rental house #4 (#15) stands (Rutherford County Deeds, 511/694-98).

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Rutherford County Wills, Office of the Clerk of Court, Rutherford County Court House, Rutherfordton, North Carolina.

James H. Melton to Benjamin Washburn, deed, 25 August 1845, and James J. Hoyt to Benjamin Washburn, deed, 28 August 1858, William B. and Merle D. Umstead Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill.

Account Book of Edgar Nollie Washburn, Collection of Edward Nollie Washburn, Bostic, North Carolina.

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Verbal Boundary Description: The acreage included in this nomination comprises the eleven contiguous tracts outlined in pencil on the enclosed Rutherford County Tax Map #371.

Boundary Justification: The property included in this nomination includes the site and setting of the historic domestic, commercial, and agricultural buildings of the Washburn family which comprise Washburn crossroads.

UTM References continued

5. Zone 17 Northing 3916800
Easting 425675

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Schedule of Photographs

1. Name of property: Washburn Historic District
2. County and State: Rutherford County, North Carolina
3. Name of Photographer: Davyd Foard Hood
4. Dates of photographs: 25, 27 March and 7 April 2000
5. Location of original negative: Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina

List of Photographs

- A. Overall view of the district, looking south from rear of rental house #5 (#15) into the heart of the district, with Washburn Funeral Home (#10), the Washburn Store (#9), and barn (#8) on left side of Bostic-Sunshine Highway and rental house #2 (#6) and the brick rental house (#4) on the right.
- B. Edgar Nollie Washburn House (#1), 2402 Bostic-Sunshine Highway, looking northwest.
- C. Washburn House (#1), entrance hall, looking west/northwest.
- D. Landscape view, looking northeast from porch of Washburn House (#1) to Washburn Store (#9).
- E. Brick Rental House (#4), 1392 Andrews Mill Road, looking west, with garage (#5).
- F. Rental House #2 (#6), 1391 Andrews Mill Road, looking northwest, with garage (#7).
- G. Landscape view, looking north on Bostic-Sunshine Highway, with barn (#8) and south elevation of the Washburn Store (#9) on left.
- H. Washburn Store (#9), 2426 Bostic-Sunshine Highway, looking east, with Washburn Funeral Home (#10) on left.

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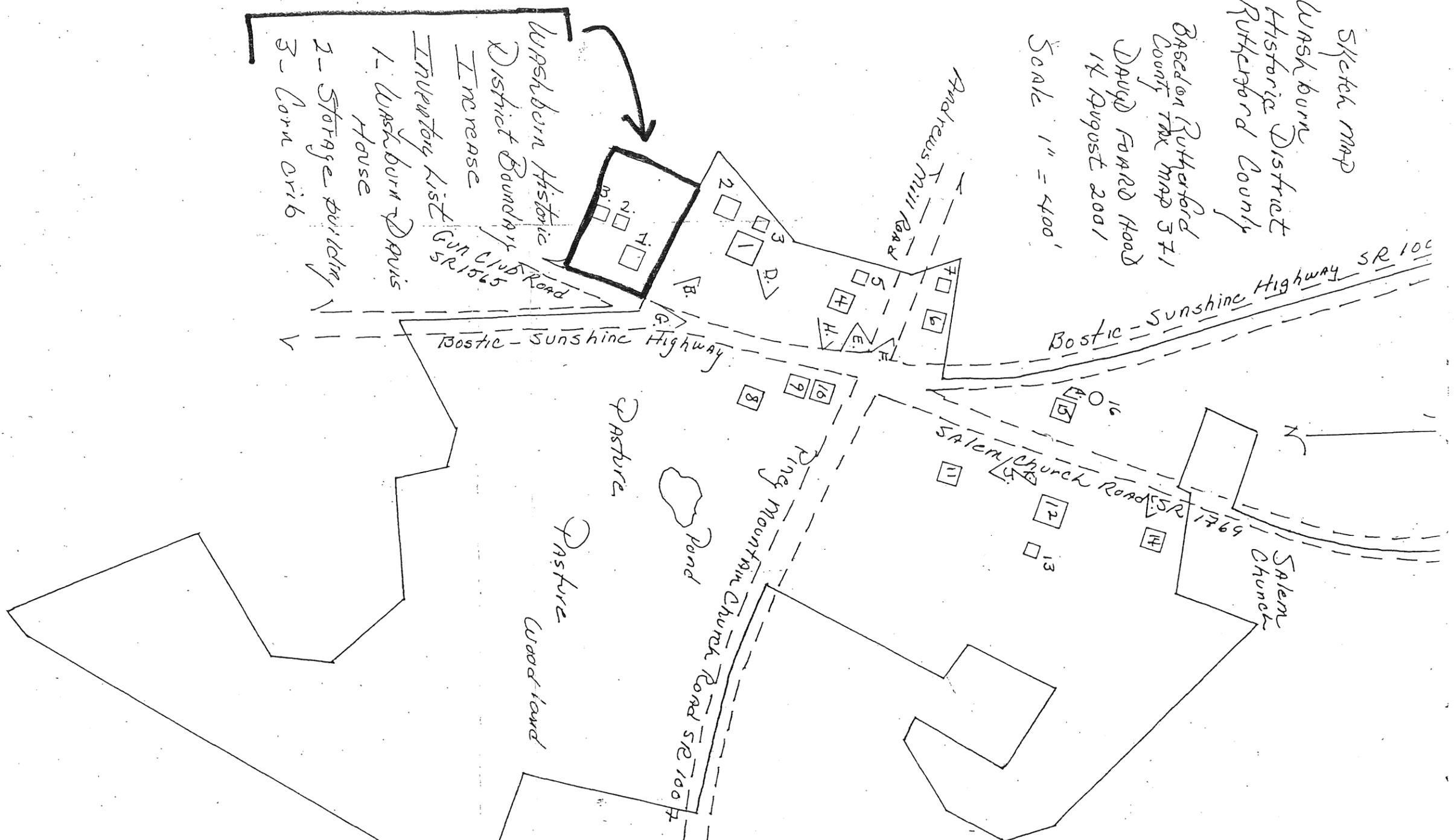
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- I. Washburn Store, interior, looking east.
- J. Rental House (#3), 126 Salem Church Road, looking southeast.
- K. Edgar Nollie Washburn, Jr., House (#12), 156 Salem Church Road, looking northeast, with garage (#13).
- L. Rental House #4 (#14), 174 Salem Church Road, looking east.

Sketch map
 Washburn Historic District
 Rutherford County

Based on Rutherford County Tax map 371
 David FORD HOOD
 14 August 2001

Scale 1" = 400'



- Inventory List
1. Edgar Nellie Washburn House
 2. Garage
 3. Power House
 4. Brick Rental House
 5. Garage
 6. Rental House #2
 7. Garage
 8. Barn
 9. Washburn Store
 10. Washburn Furnace
 11. Rental House #3
 12. Edgar Nellie Washburn House
 13. Garage
 14. Rental House #4
 15. Rental House #5
 16. Pump House

Key
 □ - Contributing Resource
 ○ - Noncontributing Resource

Washburn Historic District Boundary Increase
Inventory List
 1. Washburn Davis House
 2. Storage building
 3. Corn crib

