

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 Ward Family House

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number 8018 Rominger Road N/A  not for publication

city or town Sugar Grove  vicinity

state North Carolina code NC county Watauga code 189 zip code 28679

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 G. Crow JHPO 4/17/97  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
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

I hereby certify that the property is:

<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other. (explain) _____	_____	_____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property  
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
		sites
	1	structures
		objects
1	2	Total

Name of related multiple property listing  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register

N/A

-0-

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

DOMESTIC/single dwelling  
AGRICULTURE/animal facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN/Queen Anne

foundation Brick  
walls Wood

roof Asphalt

other Brick

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

(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.

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

ca. 1897

Significant Dates

ca. 1897

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Ward Family House  
Name of Property

Watauga County, North Carolina  
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 3.128 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 17 426100 4011490  
Zone Easting Northing

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 Davyd Foard Hood

organization date 10 February 1997

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 Renee de R. Allen Rand

street & number 3018 Rominger Road telephone 704/297-3700

city or town Sugar Grove state N.C. zip code 28679

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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The Ward Family House, a well-preserved richly-embellished late Victorian-style frame dwelling likely erected in the summer of 1897 for Thomas Lucky Ward, stands in the northwest corner of its small 3.128-acre quadrangle-shaped house lot in western Watauga County. The house lot is the residual part of the 200-acre tract that Ward received from his father in 1897 that has remained with the house to the present. The house faces northwest to Rominger Road and uphill toward US 321 which intersects with Rominger Road a short distance to the northeast. A low stone retaining wall separates the low-lying front lawn from the elevated gravel-covered parking area off the south side of Rominger Road. When the house was built, Rominger Road was the main road connecting Boone, the county seat of Watauga County, with Elizabethton, the seat of Carter County, Tennessee. In the early 1950s the road was rerouted to the north, paved, and subsequently became US 321; Rominger Road remains a gravel-on-clay road.

The house stands in a rural agricultural landscape of rich bottom lands which rise gently uphill to woodlands and away from Cove Creek and the Watauga River which originally formed the east and west boundaries of Thomas Lucky Ward's farm. The house's historical and physical link with Cove Creek survived two partitions of the Ward lands, in 1917 and 1963; a line down the center of Cove Creek continues to form the southeast boundary of the house lot which comprises the nominated acreage. The lot's northeast and southwest boundaries, partially fenced, stretch in parallel fashion to points in the center of Rominger Road where the lot's northwest boundary follows the center line of the road. The house occupies the open, partially shaded lawn which comprises the northern one-third of the lot; the rear, southern two-thirds of the property is fenced, grass-covered pasture which continues down to the bank of Cove Creek. The house's original outbuildings are lost; however, the volunteer and planted late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century trees and shrubs preserve its historic setting. A traditionally-styled wood gazebo, dating from the 1980s, stands in the lawn to the southeast of the house. A small board-and-batten covered frame barn, erected in the mid-1970s, stands along the fence line at the southeast edge of the lot.

(For ease of description the house's front elevation, which faces to the northwest, will be described as the north elevation, the house's northeast side elevation will be described as the east elevation, and so on.)

The ca. 1897 Ward Family House is the best preserved and most elaborately finished Queen Anne-style frame house in rural Watauga County. Its two-story elevations are covered with novelty German siding and a wide string course, at the second-story level, composed of five rows of diamond-edge wood shingles. Diamond-edge shingles are also used to sheath the series of ornamental gables which enliven the elevations and the cupola which rises in the center of the house between asymmetrically placed brick chimneys with stucco panels. Complex

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sawnwork spandrels occupy the apexes of the gables and similar sawnwork ornaments the one-story front porch. The house is built on a general T-shape plan. Its projecting gable ends on the north and east elevations are expanded by five-sided projecting bays while the shallow projecting bay on the west elevation has a single window centered in each level. The appearance of the rear elevation is obscured on the first-story level by one-story additions which extend to the south as an ell. The house was built on very low brick (or stone) piers which are not visible except on the side elevations where the ground drops gently; over time brick infill has been added under the original block to form a perimeter foundation. The additions also stand on masonry perimeter foundations. The house is covered with asphalt shingles. The window openings contain either one-over-one, two-over-two, or four-over-four sash windows in plain board surrounds. These openings are fitted with aluminum storm windows.

The front, north facade of the house is its most elaborate elevation and has a generally symmetrical three-part appearance achieved by the one-story porch and the wall gable balancing the bay-fronted projecting gable in the west half of the elevation. The three widest sides of the projecting bay are fitted with windows at each level, and the string course of shingles carries between the windows across the five faces of the bay. The bay is covered with a conical hip roof which rises in the face of the gable end. The apex of this gable is fitted with an elaborate molded sawnwork spandrel whose principal feature is a lunette with radiating piercework. The form of this spandrel is repeated on all of the house's gable ends and on the cupola; the only exception occurs on the north face of the cupola where the lunette is expanded to a fully circular shape as the crowning feature of the elevation. (There is no lunette spandrel on the rear, south side of the cupola where the upper gable is sheathed with boards.)

The east half of the front elevation is occupied by a shallow one-story hip-roof porch. Turned columns with quadrant brackets, repeating the appearance of the spandrels, are connected with a cutwork railing and a frieze band of cutwork heart shapes. This porch treatment is a sympathetic replacement of the original porch supports of like character, expanded by slat lattice, appearing in a documentary photograph in which they are mostly covered with ornamental vines. The porch has a poured cement floor and flush-sheathed ceiling. A wood porch swing is positioned at its east end; the house's partially glazed front door and screen door are positioned at the west end of the porch where they open into the house's center, stair hall. The second-story elevation has a pair of windows above the single window and door on the first story. These windows are fitted with board-and-batten blinds, probably added in the 1980s. Frieze boards at the top of the elevation, return at the base of the shingle-faced gable. The square-in-plan cupola crowning the facade has a window centered in its north and south elevations; pegged

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four-panel doors are positioned in the center of the east and west elevations of the cupola and they open onto small roof decks guarded by replacement railings.

The west elevation of the Ward Family House's original two-story block has a two-part division with the shallow projecting gable end occupying the south half of the elevation. Single window openings are centered on each level of the north half of the elevation and on the two-story face of the gable end; they hold four-over-four sash and have board-and-batten blinds. The one-story rear block of the house appears to date from at least two periods of construction. The section immediately abutting the house, set on a painted cement block foundation and covered with a shed roof which sheds to the south, is sheathed with German siding and dates to the early twentieth century; however, the horizontal replacement windows date to the 1980s. This section contained the Ward family dining room. In the early 1980s, a small flat-roof ell was added here, and a wood deck was built on its east side across the center third of the house's overall south elevation. This ell room, built to contain a hot tub, is on a stucco-covered masonry foundation and has sheathed walls punctuated by tall vertical single-pane windows. There is an entrance into the cellar under this addition on the house's rear elevation.

The east elevation of the two-story house has a general two-part division. The north half is occupied by the projecting gable end and its five-sided bay which repeats the appearance of the like feature on the facade. The south half of the elevation is occupied by a shallow one-story shed room (pantry) that represents a weatherboard enclosure of a shed porch here; there is a small window in its east face. There is a single sash window in the center of the second-story elevation.

The rear elevation of the house has the general utilitarian and asymmetrical appearance of farmhouses of the turn of the century. The east third of the elevation is comprised of the shed end of the shed room and the two-story gable end of the main block which contains the kitchen on the first story and a bedroom above. There are single sash windows in the center of each level. The approximate center third of the first-story elevation is occupied by the dining room shed, service porch, and the 1980s open wood deck. The 1980s one-story ell forms the west third of the rear elevation. There is a simple shallow open deck carrying across the west half of the second-story level; it rests on the shed roof. A door opens onto it from the rear southwest corner bedroom. There is an octagonal single-pane window to its east which illuminates the landing on the stair.

The interior of the Ward Family House follows a center, stair hall plan and retains nearly all of its original appearance and finish except for the kitchen

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and the first-story rear southwest corner bedroom which were remodeled in the early 1980s with barn-siding paneling to convey a faux rustic look for the kitchen and new den. The flooring in the two-story original block is either maple or pine, the walls are sheathed with tongue-and-groove ceiling or flush boards, and the ceilings have those same sheathings. The doors are mostly four-panel with either plain board surrounds or frames made of tongue-and-groove boards. There are two-panel closet doors which have a mid-nineteenth century Greek Revival appearance; these occur mainly on closets beside chimneys and are probably from the 1890s.

The front door opens into the center, stair hall; the stair is positioned in a shallow recess at the back, south end of the hall and rises along its west wall to an intermediate landing across the back of the hall and then continues northward, in a shorter flight, along the east wall of the hall to the second story. The flooring in the hall is maple; the walls and ceiling are sheathed with tongue-and-groove ceiling which is painted except in the stairwell recess where it has been left unpainted and has mellowed over a century to a rich nutty-brown color. For most, if not all of the period when the house was occupied by the Ward family, the tongue-and-groove walls and ceiling remained unpainted; all of the second-story hall ceiling remains unpainted to the present. Also for reasons that are unexplained, there was no railing on the stair; the present, simple turned baluster railing was added in the 1970s or 1980s.

A door at the front west side of the hall opens into the present-day living room (Ward family sitting room) which has a maple floor, a low baseboard, and walls and ceiling of flush sheathing and tongue-and-groove ceiling. The fireplace in the room's south wall has a brick hearth and a molded post-and-lintel mantel with a two-part paneled frieze and projecting shelf. The closet on the east side of the fireplace has a two-panel door. The doors are enframed with plain boards while the windows have surrounds of tongue-and-groove ceiling. Across the hall a door in its east wall opens into the present-day dining room which was the Ward family's parlor. It also has a maple floor and tongue-and-groove ceiling on the walls and ceiling; the door and window surrounds repeat the pattern of the living room. There is no baseboard in this room; however, it is encircled by a simple chair rail. The post-and-lintel mantel here, similar in appearance to the one in the living room, has a three-panel frieze. When the Ward family lived here there was no door connecting their parlor to the kitchen in the southeast corner room. Probably in the 1980s, a door was cut into the wall on the west side of the chimney to connect the two rooms. Except for its original pine floors, the kitchen has entirely new finishes on the walls and a series of built-in cabinets. A doorway in its east wall opens into the open-shelf pantry that was enclosed from the side porch; a small furnace room is partitioned off the pantry's north end.

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A door in the south end of the center, stair hall and a second one in the west wall of the kitchen open into the rectangular room across the back of the house that served as the Ward family dining room. Now it functions as an informal passage and connects with the rear southwest corner bedroom in the main block, a small bathroom partitioned in the 1980s at its west end, and the enclosed service porch at the rear of the house which opens onto the deck. The passage has a pine floor; however, its wall and ceiling finishes date from the 1980s. Mrs. Ward's bedroom also retains its pine floor; however, the tongue-and-groove walls were overlaid with barn siding when it was refitted as a den. The 1980s ell addition is finished with modern materials.

The second story hall, with doors into each of the four bedrooms and a separate enclosed staircase to the cupola, has carpet laid over its original pine floors and unpainted tongue-and-groove ceiling on its wall and ceiling. The doors into the bedrooms each have flat panels on the hall side and raised panels on the bedroom side; they have unpainted pine plain board surrounds. The house did not have a second-story bathroom until the 1970s or 1980s when a small bathroom was enclosed on the west side of the hall; it also incorporates the space from the west bedrooms on the east side of the chimney providing fireplaces to those bedrooms. The bedrooms have carpet laid over their pine floors. The walls and ceilings of these rooms are sheathed with either flush boards, tongue-and-groove ceiling, or wallpaper over those original sheathings. The front northwest corner bedroom has flush board sheathing and a brick hearth; there was no apparent mantel in this room. A small closet to the west (right) of the fireplace has a two-panel door. The walls and ceiling of the northeast corner bedroom are sheathed with tongue-and-groove ceiling. The post-and-lintel mantel in this room has a two-part frieze and it is similar to the one in the living room; all the house's mantels probably came from the same factory. Small closets are built into the east corners of the room to each side of the bay window. The wallpapered southeast corner bedroom has a brick hearth but no apparent mantel, an incompleteness of finish that often occurred in back bedrooms of rural farmhouses. The closet to the east side of the fireplace has a pegged two-panel door. The bedroom in the southwest corner is also wallpapered and has no mantel. The closet on the west side of the chimney has been enlarged and there is a door onto the deck.

An enclosed staircase, rising southward on the hall's east wall, provides access to the cupola. It rises first to a small chamber, at the base of the cupola, which is fully sheathed in tongue-and-groove ceiling. A two-panel door opens into storage in the attic over the second story bedrooms. A separate ladder-like stair rises from this chamber up to the cupola. The pine floor of the cupola room is covered with carpet; the walls and ceiling are fully sheathed with tongue-and-groove ceiling. Four-panel pegged doors are centered in the north and south walls. The doors have flat panels on the exterior and

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raised panels in the room; they and the room have surrounds made of tongue-and-groove ceiling.

Outbuildings

Gazebo

Early 1980s

Noncontributing structure

Located on the open lawn to the southeast of the Ward Family House, the gazebo is an octagonal frame structure covered with a conical asphalt shingle roof. It is believed to have been erected for Daniel Pendergast and his wife who owned the property from 1980 until 1986. The gazebo has a plywood floor. Its sides are covered with thin vented slats. There is an arch-headed opening for access on the north side and circular cut-outs on the other seven sides.

Barn

Mid 1970s

Noncontributing building

Said to have been erected by members of the Matheson family for Dumont Vivier and his wife who owned the property from 1974 until 1976, the barn is a substantial frame building covered with a sheet metal gambrel roof and board-and-batten siding. It has a center passage plan and is expanded on its north and south sides by sheds; the shed on the south, creek side is sheathed with vertical boards while the north shed is partially open and otherwise finished with mixed materials. The west entrance is protected by a sliding wood door. Following the gambrel roof form of barns erected in the Cove Creek valley in the first half of the twentieth century, and like many of them left unpainted, it is comfortable in the landscape and non-intrusive.

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The Ward Family House, the most accomplished and richly-detailed Queen Anne-style frame house in rural Watauga County, was erected about 1897 for Thomas Lucky Ward (1858-1900), a member of the family whose ancestor, Benjamin Ward, Sr., was one of the pioneer eighteenth-century settlers in the mountainous area that became Watauga County in 1849. Over a period of three years beginning in 1897, Thomas Lucky Ward erected the house on a tract of 200 acres, bounded by Cove Creek and the Watauga River, that he received from his father in 1897. The house, built on the south side of the main road connecting Boone, the county seat, with Elizabethton, Tennessee, has been a landmark in the picturesque mountain landscape for nearly a century. Ward died in 1900, shortly after completing the house, and it remained the home of his widow, Margaret Catharine (Adams) Ward (1860-1941) and his descendants until 1955; Ward's daughter Bessie Virginia (1898-1992) and her husband, Rufus Marion Ward (1891-1961), a distant kinsman and also a descendant of Benjamin Ward, Sr., left the house for a smaller house on the farm, newly-built on the side of the rerouted Boone to Elizabethton road (US 321). It was sold out of the family in 1974.

The Ward Family House satisfies Criterion C for listing in the National Register for its local significance in the area of architecture. Built for a man and his family who were a part of the traditional native-born agricultural society in Watauga County, the house is one of a relatively small group of Queen Anne-style houses known to have been erected in rural Watauga County, Boone--its county seat, and the resort town of Blowing Rock. These houses with their asymmetrical T-shape plans, novelty sidings, richly ornamented and shingle-faced gables, and Victorian turned-post porches, represented a lively departure from the earlier, conventional house types erected in the county and an elaboration, even, of the mostly three-bay houses of the 1870s, 1880s, and early 1890s that featured handsome center-bay Victorian porches. Most of these houses including the McDowell Cottage in the Green Park Historic District, have been lost or substantially remodeled, except for this house and the Hayes House, a large summer cottage, in Blowing Rock. The Ward Family House, with a cupola unique in all the county, survives as an important example of the Queen Anne style in Watauga County and represents a degree of architectural ambition unexampled by any other surviving contemporary farmhouse in rural Watauga County.

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Thomas Lucky Ward (1858-1900), the builder of this house, was a member of the large and prominent Ward family of Watauga County who descended from Benjamin Ward, Sr., and his wife, Selah (Cecelia) Duke. Benjamin Ward is said to have settled on lands along Cove Creek in the 1780s, in what was then Wilkes County. His descendants and those of his kinsmen continue to own and occupy tracts of the Ward family holdings here to the present; however, the most prepossessing house known to have been built by a member of the family, this Queen Anne-style frame house, was sold out of the family in 1974. Dying prematurely at the age of forty-one in 1900, Thomas Lucky Ward did not long enjoy the house. His widow, Margaret Catharine (Adams) Ward (1860-1941) lived here for over forty years until her death on 13 November 1941. The house was also long the residence of their daughter, Bessie Virginia Ward (1898-1992), who was probably born here and stayed with her mother until marriage in the 1910s; she and her husband Rufus Marion Ward returned to care for her aging mother in the 1930s and lived here until 1955 when the couple moved into a smaller house which they had just erected on family land to the northwest. In 1963 Bessie Ward, then a widow, deeded the house tract to her daughter Frankie Alma Ward (Johnson) Hodges (1921-1966), whose daughter Jerel Dean Johnson Carroll inherited the house; she and her husband sold the house in 1974. Between 1974 and 1995 it was owned and occupied by five different owners until it was acquired by Renee de R. Allen Rand, the present owner.

\* \* \*

Thomas Lucky Ward was born on 11 May 1858, nearly within sight of this house, in a log dwelling that was the home of his father Simon Ward (18\_\_-1910) and his mother Margaret Sutherland (18\_\_-1905). Simon Ward's house stood due north of this house and on the north side of present-day US 321; its location is marked today by a house built by his great-granddaughter Marian Holt Ward Simpson. Simon Ward was a son of James Ward, the youngest son of the pioneer settler Benjamin Ward, Sr., and his wife Sarah Shull. Thomas Lucky Ward was one of the four known children born to Simon and Margaret (Sutherland) Ward: Edwina "Winnie" Ward who married Smith Stansberry; Nancy Ward who married William Creed; Joseph A. Ward who married Polly Thomas; and Thomas Lucky Ward. On 13 April 1882 Thomas Lucky Ward was married to Margaret Catharine Adams (1860-1941). A son, Walter L. Ward, was born on 2 May 1885. Four months later, on 7 September 1885, Simon and Margaret Ward and Edwina and Smith Stansberry conveyed to Thomas Lucky and Joseph A. Ward "an undivided one fourth interest in all of Simon Ward's and Margaret Ward's lands except the mill tract the said fourth interest being said Smith Stansberry's and Edwining's (sic) whole share in said Simon Ward's Estate." The brothers paid the sum of \$1,000 to their sister and brother-in-law in exchange for the Stansberrys's share in her father's estate; however, Simon and Margaret Ward reserved "full control of all these lands during their natural lifetime" (Watauga County Deeds K, 289). While this conveyance did not provide Thomas Lucky Ward with full use of the

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land, it was the first of a series of ten land purchases between 1885 and 1893 by which he acquired nearly 450 acres (Watauga County Grantee Index). Part of this land adjoined the Ward family holdings on the Watauga River and Cove Creek while the remainder was on Beech Mountain. The last major acquisition was a tract of 200 acres which Simon Ward conveyed to Thomas Lucky Ward on 10 June 1897 (Watauga County Deeds T, 404). It appears that this 200 acres was a part of the larger 500-acre tract mentioned in the 1885 deed. Given the description of the land and its position on both Cove Creek and the Watauga River, it is likely that it was on this 1897 purchase that Thomas Lucky Ward built this house.

After the birth of Walter L. Ward in 1885, the couple had four other children. A second son, Roby L. Ward (1887-1953) was born on 6 July 1887. Twin sons were born to the Wards on 21 September 1896: Claude L. Ward (1896-1897); and Aude L. Ward (1896-1986). Aude L. Ward would live in this house with his mother until 1931 when he and his wife established a farm about a mile and a half to the west where they lived until death. In 1898 Bessie Virginia Ward (1898-1992), the couple's only daughter was born on 20 March, probably in this house.

Although it is possible that Thomas Lucky Ward had built the house prior to receiving title to this property in 1897, the better likelihood is that he began construction of the house in the summer of 1897. According to family tradition the lumber to build the house was cut on the Beech Mountain property. The larger question, after the matter of the date of construction, is where Ward secured the design for the house and who erected it for him. In the 1890s when the house was built, most of the rural farmhouses of that decade and the first years of the twentieth century were two-story, three-bay frame houses on which ornament was largely confined to the porches and eaves. While those farm houses represented a dramatic change and improvement from the log cabins and frame houses erected earlier in the century, there was no precedent for such an elaborate rural farm house with its rich program of sawnwork and shingle-faced gables and the cupola which rises above the roof.

Unfortunately, the house represented accomplishment and ambition that was short-lived; by the winter of 1900 Thomas Lucky Ward was fatally ill. On 11 February 1900 Ward prepared and signed a will comprising a few short sentences whereby he bequeathed his entire estate of both real and personal property to his wife, "my beloved Margaret Catharine Ward so long as she remains my lawful widow, and then to my heirs" (Watauga County Wills A, 180). Thomas Lucky Ward died the following day, 12 February 1900; his body was buried in the Ward family cemetery located on a hillside a few hundred feet to the southwest of his house. He left his widow with four children, the eldest of whom was not yet fifteen and the youngest, Bessie, was approaching her second birthday.

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Margaret Catharine (Adams) Ward remained a widow for the rest of her life and lived most of those forty-one years in the house, first with her dependent children, and then with first one or another of those children and their spouses. Her father-in-law, Simon Ward, probably exercised support and guidance until his death in 1910. Having disposed of all of his property through deeds to his children, Simon Ward made a simple will in 1907 in which the only specific bequest was \$10 "to Audie Ward my little grand child" (Watauga County Wills A, 269); the remainder of his personal property was bequeathed to his surviving son and executor, Joseph A. Ward.

In 1917 the lands of Thomas Lucky Ward were divided and lots apportioned to each of his four children by three commissioners appointed by the Superior Court of Watauga County. The Thomas Lucky Ward House appears to have been located on a small tract at the extreme northeast corner of the holding on Cove Creek and the Watauga River; the term "Exempted by petition" is written across this tract on the plat of the property made for the division, and the house was probably set aside for Margaret Catharine (Adams) Ward for her lifetime. There is no mention of the house in the description of any of the tracts. Although Thomas Lucky Ward had received a deed to about 200 acres in 1897 from his father the generally rectangular holding that was divided among the siblings bounded on the east by Cove Creek and on the west by the Watauga River, totaled just over 154 acres. The Beech Mountain holding was larger and comprised 287 acres; it, too, was divided among Thomas Lucky Ward's four children (Watauga County Deeds 19, 556-561).

Of the four children who grew to adulthood in the house, Aude L. Ward, the youngest son, remained at home after his marriage to Lula Henson in the 1910s, and the couple made their home here until 1931. Most of this time Margaret (Adams) Ward lived with the couple; however, in the late 1920s she fell and broke her hip. She went to live with her daughter Bessie and her husband who were then occupying a house in the yard of Simon Ward's house which was known in the family as the "Nancy house" and had probably been built for Simon Ward's daughter, Nancy (Ward) Creed.

In 1931 there were further changes in the occupation of the house. Aude L. Ward and his wife left the Ward family house and relocated to a farm about a mile and a half to the west where he lived until his death in 1986. That same year Margaret (Adams) Ward returned to the family house and remained here until her death in 1941. She was joined by her daughter Bessie and her family. Bessie Virginia Ward had married Rufus Marion Ward (1891-1964), a distant cousin, on 18 June 1916. He was the son of Michael Anderson Ward (1864-1957) and Sarah Elizabeth Johnson (1862-1924) and a direct descendant of Benjamin Ward, Sr., who was also his wife's ancestor. The early 1930s were difficult years for members of the Ward family. Walter L. Ward (1885-1961), the eldest son of Thomas Lucky Ward, defaulted on a mortgage, lost his farm and

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subsequently relocated to Bel Air, Maryland, where he lived until his death; he conveyed his one-fourth interest in the family home to W. H. Shull, and his former farm was subsequently acquired by Benjamin Walter Farthing (1889-1967). In January 1935 Aude L. Ward conveyed his one-fourth undivided interest in the family house to Rufus Marion Ward for \$200. Later that year a civil suit forced the sale of the house at public auction on 21 October 1935. Rufus Marion Ward became the owner with a high bid of \$51 for a three-quarters interest in the house and its two-acre home tract (Watauga County Deeds 53, 598). Eight years later, on 25 October 1943 W. H. Shull sold the one-quarter interest in the Thomas Lucky Ward homeplace to Rufus Marion Ward for \$250 (Watauga County Deeds 57, 90).

Rufus Marion and Bessie Virginia (Ward) Ward occupied her ancestral home from 1931 until 1955. For nearly half of this period they provided a home to Margaret Catharine (Adams) Ward until her death on 13 November 1941. The couple also provided a home in the house to Mr. Ward's father Michael Anderson Ward (1864-1957) (until he was placed in a nursing home). Rufus and Bessie Ward were the parents of seven children four of whom grew to adults in the house: Frankie Alma Ward (1921-1966); Thomas Lucky Ward (born 1925); Nell Blanche Ward (1927-1988); and Marian Holt Ward (born 1936). During this period they farmed the fields and bottom lands along Cove Creek and the river.

In the early 1950s, the path of the main road (now US 321) between Boone and Elizabethton, Tennessee, which passed in front of the house, was rerouted to the north and paved. Rufus and Bessie Ward decided to build a new, smaller, more convenient house on the south side of the new road. It was designed by their daughter-in-law Grace Hollifield who had married Thomas Lucky Ward (II) in 1951. During the entire period, from ca. 1897 to 1955, that the Ward family occupied their very prepossessing Queen Anne-style frame house, it was not equipped with either running water or a bathroom. Electricity, through the federal rural electrification program, did not reach the house until about 1950. The house was heated by fires in its fireplaces and a "Warm Morning" heater in the sitting room. The new house was completed in 1955 and occupied by the couple until the late 1950s when Rufus Marion Ward was placed in a veterans nursing facility in Johnson City, Tennessee. He died in 1961 as did Bessie Ward's oldest brother Walter L. Ward; both were buried in the Ward family cemetery. Bessie Virginia (Ward) Ward lived in the new house until the mid 1980s when moved to the Glenstone Nursing Home in Boone where she died on 19 October 1992 at the age of ninety-four.

Meanwhile, the house had both descended in the family and had long since been sold out of the family. In the later 1950s it was occupied by Ward family cousins on a rental basis for three or four years. The death of Rufus Marion Ward on 24 November 1961 prompted his widow to divide their real estate among the children. Through a series of deeds dated 18 April 1963 the lands of Rufus

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and Bessie Ward were devised to the children. "The old Tom Ward House" and its small lot together with a large tract of 140 acres were deeded to Frankie (Ward) Hodges (Watauga County Deeds 89, 611). Mrs. Hodges and her (second) husband, Richard Ira Hodges, died in an automobile accident on 4 December 1966. Her only child, Jerel Dean (Johnson) Carroll (born 19\_\_), inherited the house and its three-acre home lot and briefly occupied the house, being the last member of the Ward family to live here. On 11 June 1974 she and her husband, Johnny E. Carroll sold the house to Anne H. Boutilier Vivier (Watauga County Deeds 148, 540).

Mrs. Vivier was the first of a series of five owners outside the Ward family who owned and occupied the house for twenty-one years, until 1995 when Renee de R. Allen Rand, the present owner purchased it as a residence. During the later 1950s, the 1960s, and the 1970s, when the house stood vacant for periods or was briefly occupied, the farm outbuildings became deteriorated and were lost. The combination well house and smokehouse which stood near the house collapsed as did the large frame barn which stood to the west and beyond the bounds of the house lot set apart in 1963. During the two-year period the house was owned by Anne Vivier and her husband Dumont Vivier, from June 1974 to June 1976. Dana Matheson erected the small frame barn for the Viviers. It is the only substantial outbuilding on the property. The Viviers sold the house on 21 June 1976 to Richard W. and Patricia A. Grundman (Watauga County Deeds 163, 553); on 21 July 1980 the Grundmans sold the house, barn, and lot to Daniel W. Pendergast and his wife (Watauga County Deeds 201, 411). During the early 1980s the Pendergasts made a one-story addition to the rear of the house, remodeled the kitchen, and refitted the former back, west bedroom as a family room. On 27 February 1986 they sold the property to Carl J. and Kathryn K. Griewisch (Watauga County Deeds 0033, 658) who, on 26 September 1988, conveyed the property to Dwight D. and Etta M. Helm of Newport Beach, California (Watauga County Deeds 0104, 942). On 28 July 1995 Mr. and Mrs. Helm sold the 3.128-acre property to Renee de R. Allen Rand of Ocean Ridge, Florida, who now resides in the Ward Family House (Watauga County Deeds 0337, 45).

Architecture Context

In the 1890s when Thomas Lucky Ward built this new house for his family, as the seat of a farm located on rich lands between Cove Creek and the Watauga River, he erected a house in rural Watauga County that appears to have been forward looking in its time. Since its construction the Ward Family House has been a landmark in its community and county and a building which never fails to catch the eye of motorists traveling along US 321 between Boone, the county seat of Watauga County, and Elizabethton, Tennessee. During the decade of its construction architecture in Watauga County represented two different courses. One strain of building reflected the traditional settlement patterns and agricultural development of the county which began in this mountainous region

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in the later eighteenth century and continues to the present. For the most part farm families such as the Wards, the Farthings, the Masts, the Bingham, and the Shulls, erected conventional log or frame buildings with relatively little reference to style from the period of initial settlement until the years of the later nineteenth century. One mid-nineteenth century exception to this pattern is the now-abandoned Bingham family house on the north side of US 321, a couple of miles east of the Ward Family House, which is finished with romantic Greek Revival-style features. The Bingham house and the Ward Family House are both situated in a once prosperous agricultural community along Cove Creek that was characterized as "the Egypt of Watauga County" in 1915 by John Preston Arthur, the county's first historian. This Cove Creek Valley is also the location of the nearby Ben Farthing Farm (NR, 1993), originally the farm of Walter L. Ward--the eldest son of Thomas Lucky Ward, and the Mast Farm (NR, 1972).

The later years of the nineteenth century brought important changes to life in Watauga County. New technologies and the railroad provided factory-made goods to a population which earlier had depended almost entirely on farm production and a modest local industry. Elaborate rake boards, spindle friezes, turned posts, cutwork railings, and architectural features, including mantels, doors, and other fittings were brought into the county by rail or produced locally by small sawmills which developed with the railroad and thrived on the dense virgin stands of hardwood trees. While the general two-story three-bay form of farm houses remained largely unchanged until the first decade of the twentieth century, they were handsomely embellished with single-story or double-tier porches with bracketed turned posts and sawnwork or baluster railings. The David Franklin Baird house (HERITAGE OF WATAUGA COUNTY, Vol. I,77), with its double-tier, center-bay gable-front porch, reflects the new possibilities available to home builders. Gradually the plan and appearance of farm houses in rural Watauga County reflected new T or L-plans, increased to double-pile plans, or swelled to some combination of both as seen at the Finley Mast house (HERITAGE OF WATAUGA COUNTY, Vol. I,76).

The Ward Family House, built on a T-plan with German novelty sheathed elevations enlivened with shingle-faced gables, spandrels, and sawn rake boards, represented a new stylishness in house design in the Cove Creek Valley. However, the feature which sets the Ward Family House apart from all its neighbors and contemporaries, is the well-detailed cupola which rises between paneled brick chimneys from the roof of the house to overlook the landscape. Altogether, the Ward Family House is the most ambitious and architecturally sophisticated Victorian period house in rural Watauga County. Its design could well have been influenced by the turn-of-the-century houses and summer cottages erected by residents of the resort community which developed at Blowing Rock on the county's border with Caldwell County. The architecture of the resort and tourist community, the second major component of

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the county's architecture in the later nineteenth century, included fashionable hotels, cottages, boarding houses, and seasonal residences; its architectural history is discussed in the National Register nomination for the Green Park Historic District (NR, 1994). However, within the collection of houses and cottages erected around the turn of the century, including the lavishly-detailed Hayes House, none are known to have boasted a cupola.

Although many summer cottages were erected to take advantage of spectacular views or cooling mountain breezes, there is a certain appropriateness to the fact that it was a local man, Thomas Lucky Ward, who erected a cupola in rural Watauga County from which he, too, could savor the mountain scenery and breezes while viewing the crops growing in his fields and bottom lands along Cove Creek and the Watauga River. Today, while the handsome Victorian-style house he erected as the seat of his prosperous farm is in the hands of others, the view from the cupola still encompasses broad lands he once owned that are held by his descendants.

Endnote

1. The sources used in the preparation of this nomination are listed in the bibliography which forms a part of this nomination. The genealogical data cited in the nomination are taken principally from THESE MY PEOPLE and THE HARMON FAMILY, VOLUME I and interviews by this author with Marian Holt Ward Simpson and Thomas Lucky Ward (II) on 5 June and 22 July 1996, respectively. References to Watauga County wills and deeds appear internally in the nomination text as do some few other specific references to sources that are included in the bibliography.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The property included in this nomination is the 3.128-acre parcel in Watauga County with Property Identification Number 1962-70-9634-000.

Boundary Justification

The boundary of the nomination property follows the legal boundary of the house tract that has been preserved through the recent changes in ownership and it is essentially the boundary of the tract set apart in 1963 when Bessie Virginia (Ward) Ward and others conveyed the house and its house lot to her daughter Frankie (Ward) Hodges. It is the residual part of the 200-acre tract, deeded by Simon Ward to his son Thomas Lucky Ward in 1897, that has remained intact with the house to the present.

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Photographs

The following information applies to all of the photographs submitted with this nomination.

1. Name of property: Ward Family House
2. Location: Watauga County, North Carolina
3. Name of photographer: Davyd Foard Hood
4. Date of photographs: 22 July 1996
5. Location of original negative: North Carolina Division of Archives and  
History  
109 East Jones Street  
Raleigh, NC 27601-2807
6. Descriptions of views:
  - A. Overall view, looking east/southeast.
  - B. Front elevation, looking southeast.
  - C. Living room view with mantel and closet door, looking east/southeast.
  - D. Second-story hall view with door into southeast corner bedroom, looking east.
  - E. View into northeast corner bedroom on second story, looking east.
  - F. View in cupola room, looking southwest.
  - G. Barn, looking southeast.

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

Ward Family House, Watauga County, N.C.

Zone 17, Northing 4011490

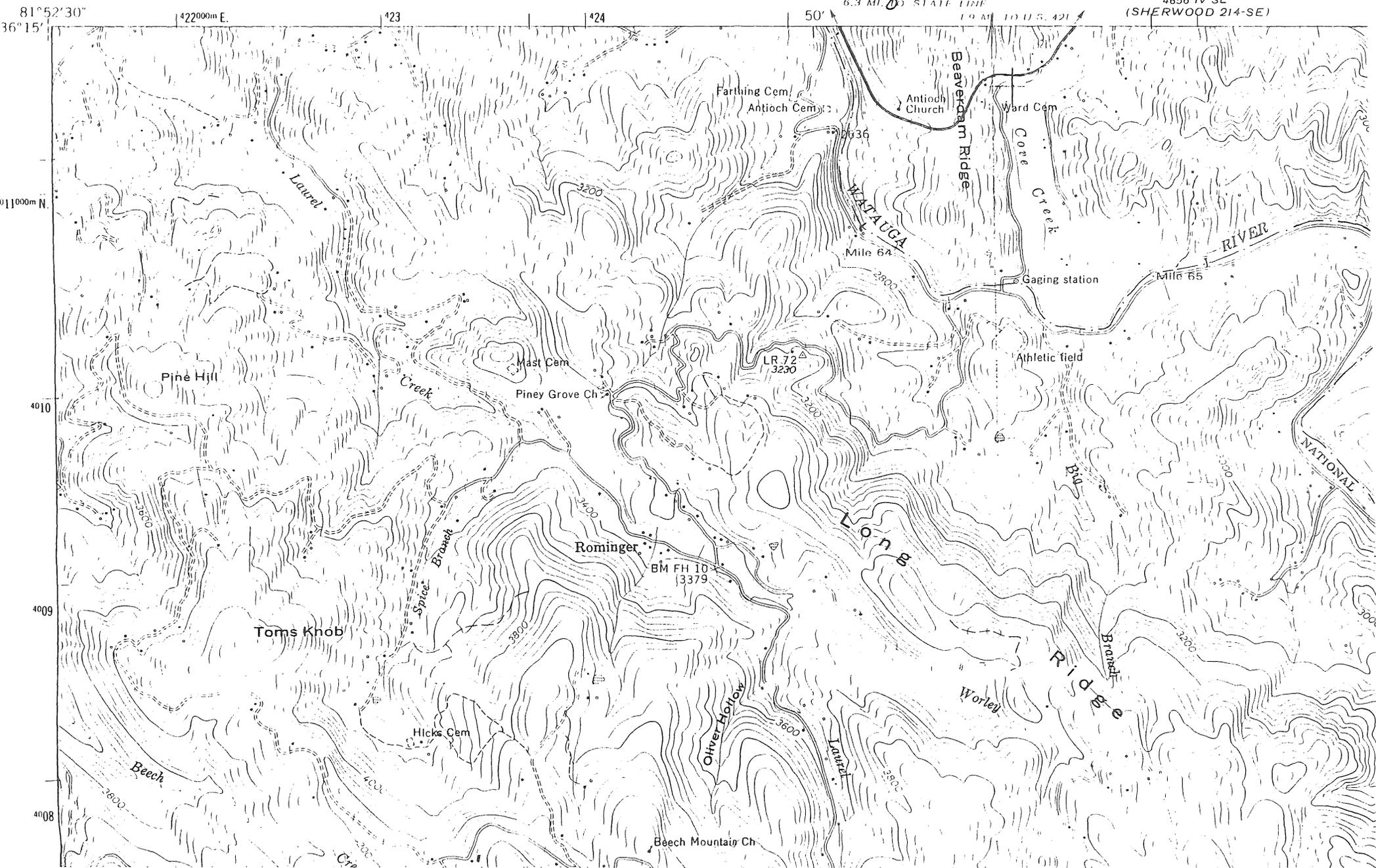
UNITED STATES  
TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY

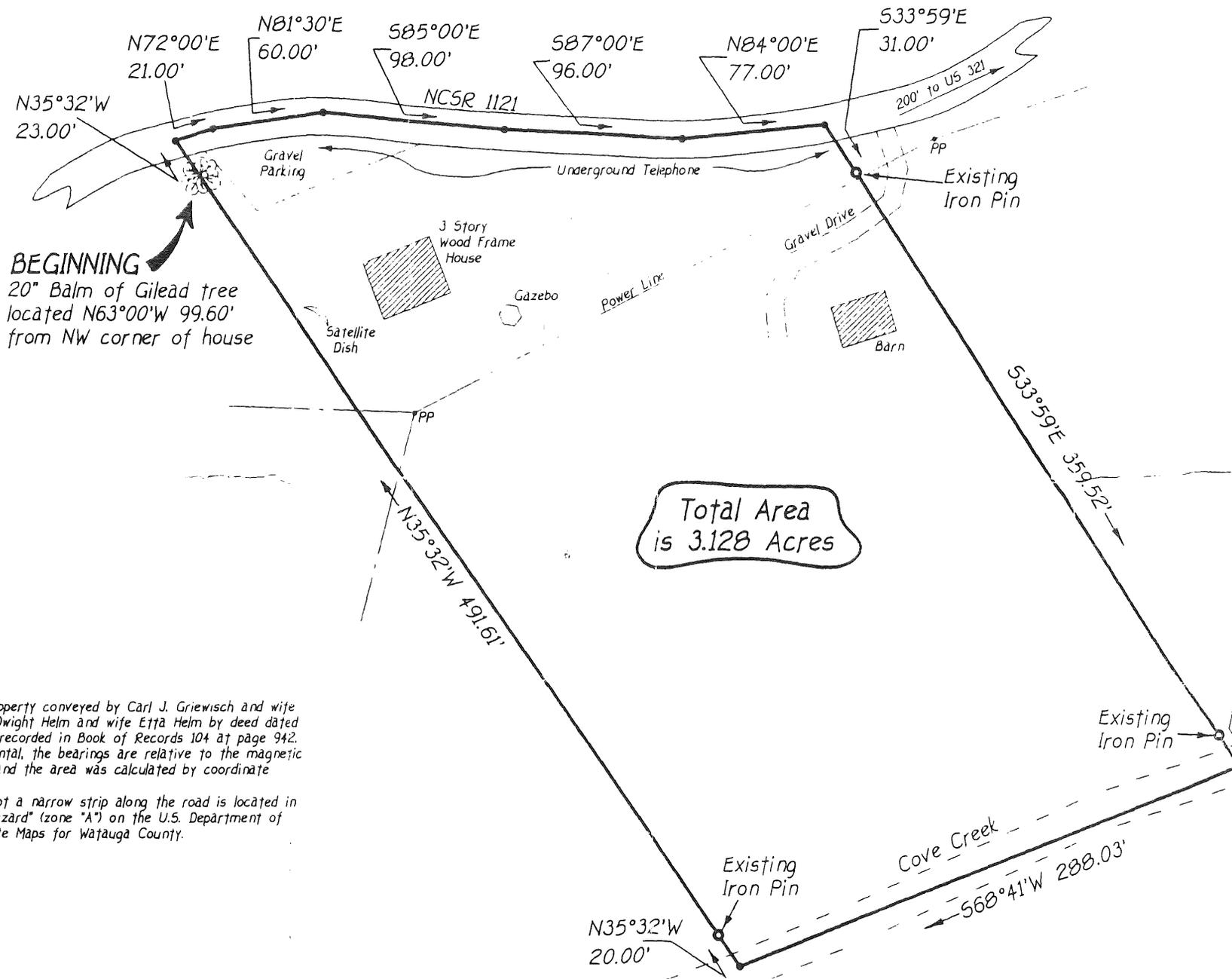
Easting 426100

Valle Crucis Quad

MAPPING SERVICES BRANCH

4656 IV SE  
(SHERWOOD 214-SE)





**Note:**

- 1) This a survey of that property conveyed by Carl J. Griewisch and wife Kathryn K. Griewisch to Dwight Helm and wife Etta Helm by deed dated September 26, 1988 and recorded in Book of Records 104 at page 942.
- 2) The distances are horizontal, the bearings are relative to the magnetic needle in the year 1977 and the area was calculated by coordinate geometry.
- 3) All of this property except a narrow strip along the road is located in an area of "High Flood Hazard" (zone "A") on the U.S. Department of H.U.D. Flood Insurance Rate Maps for Watauga County.

