

BIGGERSTAFF'S OLD FIELDS & LONG FARMSTEAD

Rutherford County, North Carolina



PRESERVATION MASTER PLAN

June 2013

Prepared for
Rutherford County Board of Commissioners

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Prepared by
JOHN HORTON | ARCHITECT
117 Hazel Street, Hendersonville NC 28739
828.243.7411 | john@hortonarchitect.com

Phase I Archaeological Survey by
Kenneth W. Robinson, Archaeologist
Archaeological & Historical Services
3082 Emerywood Road, Eastover NC 28312
336.749.1086 | kennrob@aol.com

Prepared for
Rutherford County Board of Commissioners
289 N. Main Street
Rutherfordton NC 28139
828.287.6045 | www.rutherfordcountync.gov

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National Park Service, Dept. of the Interior
Paul Carson, Superintendent
2625 Park Road, Blacksburg SC 29702
864.936.7921 | www.nps.gov/ovvi



On the Cover: **Hanging Tories After Kings Mountain** by Louis S. Glanzman (1980)
One of five paintings commissioned by the National Park Service as illustrations for their publication, "With Fire and Sword," by Wilma Dykeman Stokely. (Courtesy of Tennessee State Museum)

This page: **Long House**, southeast oblique (June 2011)

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Executive Summary

Project Background

The subject property is believed to be part of Aaron Bickerstaff's (or Biggerstaff's) "Old Fields," where, on October 13th and 14th of 1780, following the Battle of Kings Mountain, Patriot troops under the command of Colonel Isaac Shelby encamped and where the trials and executions of nine loyalists occurred.

Rutherford County acquired the 17-acre property in 2010 with the vision of developing the property into an educational center commemorating the Revolutionary War and the North Carolina patriots and Overmountain Men who were instrumental in the Patriot victory at Kings Mountain.

In 2011, the County retained the firm of John Horton|Architect to assess the historic site along with several historic buildings, and to develop a Preservation Master Plan for the preservation and development of the property as a county educational and recreational site. Funding for the study was provided by a grant to the County through the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail, a unit of the National Park Service.

Kenneth Robinson of Archaeological & Historical Services was asked to conduct a Phase I archaeological survey of the property to determine if significant archaeological resources might be present on the property. Information gathered in an archaeological study of the area during an examination of the area in 2007-2008 is also included in the report.

Because of the presence of early road traces and the complex topography of the site, a full topographical survey was commissioned from

the surveying firm of Professional Surveying Services of Rutherfordton.

Summary of Findings

Significant site features from the late-eighteenth century include several possible colonial-era road traces that bisect the property. The Gallows Oak from which the Loyalists were hung was removed in the late 1900s; however, the tree may have been located on the present property. Although not confirmed, the gravesites of Loyalists buried on the property are also said to be on the property. Site features from the mid-nineteenth century include the remains of an 1855 bridge and associated road traces from that period.

In addition to the potential archaeological significance of the site, the property includes several buildings from the late 1800s and early 1900s comprising a fairly intact farmstead. Historically significant buildings include the Long House (c.1870), a frame Tenant Cabin (c.1866), a Storage Shed (c.1900) and a second Storage shed from the 1920s. Just outside of the property boundaries, but historically part of the Long Farm, are a Log Crib (c.1866) and a frame Barn from around 1900.

Although not associated with the events of October 1780, the farmhouse and outbuildings represent a substantially intact Rutherford County farmstead spanning the period from the late-nineteenth through the mid-twentieth century. Several of the buildings are historically and architecturally significant, and along with the earlier site features, consideration should be given their preservation

Archaeological Survey

(The following is a summary of findings from Kenneth Robinson's Phase I Archaeological Survey of the Biggerstaff Hanging Tree site. Refer to the Appendix for complete report.)

This property has been identified for many years as part of "Biggerstaff's Old Fields," dating from colonial times. Nevertheless, the archaeological investigation conducted by Kenneth Robinson did not reveal any direct evidence of a Revolutionary War era Patriot army campsite on the property. Neither did the investigation reveal any direct evidence of the Loyalist hanging event or of the grave sites. Nothing, however, was found to suggest the 17-acre county-owned property had *not* been part of the larger Biggerstaff plantation during the Revolutionary War. Available documentary evidence points to this property being in the possession of the Biggerstaff family prior to the American Revolution.

It should be noted that the location of the Biggerstaff residence of 1780 has not been confirmed. No evidence of an eighteenth-century house was found on the 17-acre property. However, given available historical evidence, it is very possible that the property is situated within or near that portion of the Biggerstaff property where the Loyalist prisoners' trials and hangings took place. Despite the lack of definitive archaeological evidence, the property is an excellent place for the interpretation of the October 1780 trials and hangings, and of the overmountain and back-country men who resisted British advances in the Carolina back-country during the American Revolution.

The road traces on the property very likely represent one or more roads dating back to the Revolutionary War period, although this cannot be stated with absolute certainty. There is no definitive marker or evidence to indicate the antiquity of any particular road trace. The positioning of the roads on the landscape through the region, however, suggests the roads were in use at least as early as the first decade or two of the nineteenth century; it is likely the roads began to be used sometime before or during the Revolutionary War era.

The road traces evidenced on the property are well used and highly eroded in places. In all probability, the roads on the northern part of the site were part of a major regional thoroughfare at least until 1855, when a bridge was constructed over the stream on the east side of the property, and the route of the road was shifted to the southern part of the property. This road remained in service until the late 1930s, and the construction of Whitesides Road.

The Long Farmstead site (1860s to 1940s) is historically and architecturally important; however, it does not appear to contain archaeological deposits or features that would make it archaeologically significant. No evidence of colonial occupation was found within the area encompassing the house and outbuildings, and the potential of the site core – on the ridge top – to contain evidence relating to the Revolutionary War activities is very low.

Summary of Proposed Uses

The Biggerstaff-Long property has much potential for development as a Rutherford County Heritage Preservation Site relating to heritage education, historic preservation and public recreation. Refer to Section 2.B, *Recommendations for Development*. Proposed uses for the property include:

Revolutionary War Interpretation

- Interpretation of the events leading up to and following the trials and executions of Loyalist soldiers on October 14, 1780, after the Battle of Kings Mountain.

Heritage Education

- Interpretation of both the Biggerstaff and Long families within the historic context of the surrounding community.
- Long House, rehabilitated, would provide space for visitors' services, classrooms, and exhibits.

Agricultural History

- Interpretation of historic agricultural practices and farm life of the mid- to late-nineteenth century.
- Interpretation of the development of twentieth-century agricultural practices.

Transportation History

- Interpretation of the development of road transportation from the eighteenth through the nineteenth centuries.
- Potential eligibility for funding under NCDOT and FHWA for reconstruction of the historic bridge (Type 2 project).

Archaeology

- Public archaeology program overlapping with all heritage education uses.

Historic Preservation

- The historic buildings would provide a setting for preservation education.

Recreational Use

- The entire site would suit development of a nature trail, incorporating areas along the creek, the historic road traces, and the hill slopes.
- Potential eligibility for funding under the North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, the NC Division of Parks and Recreation's Recreational Trails Program, and/or the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Part 1 - Developmental History

I.A Historical Background and Context

Aaron Biggerstaff

Aaron Biggerstaff (also spelled Bickerstaff in early documents) was born in 1742, the son of Samuel Biggerstaff, Sr. and Elizabeth Moore. He married Mary van Zandt (1744-1806) in 1764.¹ In 1771, Aaron and Mary Biggerstaff moved to property on Roberson Creek. In June 1771, the land grant that Aaron and Mary had entered for was surveyed and a deed was granted on May 15, 1772.²

During the Revolutionary War era, Aaron Biggerstaff was a prominent loyalist. On February 13, 1779, British Captain Moses Moore raised a company of North Carolinians to go to help the Tories fighting in Georgia. Both Aaron and his brother Benjamin were on his roster as privates. The battle at Kettle Creek ended in disaster and Aaron returned to North Carolina. Colonel Moore led his men in to fight at Ramsour's Mill in direct disobedience of British orders. Only 33 men escaped the slaughter of that battle, including Aaron and Benjamin Biggerstaff and Colonel Moore. Along with Moore, Aaron and Benjamin joined up with the British in South Carolina and were soon at Kings Mountain.

Battle of Kings Mountain

At the time of the Battle of Kings Mountain on October 7, 1780 Colonel Moore was reported to have been on a foraging trip. Since Benjamin Biggerstaff was a wagoner, it is likely that he was with Colonel Moore. Aaron fought, was mortally wounded and was taken to Union

County Court House in Union, South Carolina, where he died from his wounds. It is believed that Aaron was a Captain at the time of his death.³

Aftermath of the Battle

Returning from the battle by October 11, the Patriot army marched with their 600 or so Loyalist prisoners to Colonel John Walker's, a prominent Whig leader who lived five miles northeast of Gilberttown. The troops encamped until the 13th when they moved to Biggerstaff's. According to the 1881 account by Lyman Draper,

*That day, according to [British Lieutenant Anthony] Allaire's Diary, the troops moved, with their prisoners, five or six miles, north-east of Walker's to Bickerstaff's, or Biggerstaff's Old Fields, since known as the Red Chimneys, where a stack of chimneys long stood after the house had decayed and been demolished. This locality is on Robertson's creek, some nine miles north-east of the present village of Rutherfordton.*⁴

On Saturday, October 14, while encamped at Biggerstaff's, "The officers of the two Carolinas united in presenting a complaint to Colonel Campbell, that there were, among the prisoners, a number who were robbers, house-burners, parole-breakers, and assassins."⁵

According to Draper, "A copy of the law of North Carolina was obtained, which authorized two magistrates to summon a jury, and forthwith to try, and, if found guilty, to execute persons who had violated its precepts."⁶ Thirty-two of the prisoners were tried, convicted, and condemned to hang three at a time.

Early in the evening, the trials having been brought to a conclusion, a suitable oak was selected, upon a projecting limb of which the executions were to take place. It was by the road side, near the camp, and is yet standing [in 1881], known in all that region as the Gallows Oak. Torch-lights were procured, the condemned brought out, around whom the troops formed four deep. It was a singular and interesting night scene, the dark old woods illuminated with the wild glare of hundreds of pine-knot torches; and quite a number of the Loyalist leaders of the Carolinas about to be launched into eternity. The names of the condemned Tories were Colonel Ambrose Mills, Captain James Chitwood, Captain Wilson, Captain Walter Gilkey, Captain [Arthur] Grimes, Lieutenant [Thomas] Lafferty, [Captain] John McFall, [Lieutenant] John Bibby, and [Lieutenant] Augustine Hobbs.⁷

After nine of the condemned were hung, three more prisoners were tied and prepared for hanging. At this point, Colonel Shelby intervened and proposed that the executions be stopped. The other officers agreed, the three were untied, and the remaining condemned prisoners were pardoned.

One of the reprieved Tories confided to Colonel Shelby that the much reviled and feared British Colonel Banastre Tarleton had been dispatched by Lord Cornwallis and would arrive by morning. The Patriot army quickly decamped in order to stay ahead of Tarleton, and left Biggerstaff's property about five o'clock in the morning.

The poor Loyalist leaders had been left swinging from the sturdy oak upon which they had been executed. No sooner had the Whigs moved off, than Mrs. Martha Bickerstaff,⁸ or Biggerstaff, the wife of Captain Aaron Bickerstaff who had served under Ferguson, and been mortally wounded at King's Mountain, with the

assistance of an old man who worked on the farm, cut down the nine dead bodies. Eight of them were buried in a shallow trench, some two feet deep; while the remains of Captain Chitwood were conveyed by some of his friends, on a plank, half a mile away to Benjamin Bickerstaff's, where they were interred on a hill still used as a grave-yard.⁹

The eight graves presumably remained undisturbed until 1855 when construction of a bridge across a stream on the property was undertaken to replace the nearby ford.

[A] party of road-makers concluded to exhume the remains of Colonel Mills and his companions, as the place of their burial was well known. The graves of only four of the number were opened, the bones soon crumbling on exposure.¹⁰

I.B Chronology of Development and Use

Period I: 1780

The exact location of the house where Aaron and Mary Biggerstaff were living in 1780 is no longer known. Archaeologist Ken Robinson found no evidence that the original residence was located on the current 17-acre tract. Local tradition places the Biggerstaff house farther to the east on the other side of the stream. According to Draper, by 1881 the house had long decayed or burned, leaving only the chimneys standing; the house site then locally known as “Red Chimneys.” Yet, Robinson also found no historical or archaeological evidence to disprove that the county-owned property was part of Biggerstaff’s Old Fields area, although the old fields likely encompassed a lot more acreage.¹¹ According to Draper’s account, the Gallows Oak was near the encampment.

By 1780, there appear to have been at least two roadways crossing the Biggerstaff property – one road coming from the north-northwest, another from the west-southwest. The roads intersected in the center of the current 17-acre tract, just west of the stream, an unnamed tributary to Roberson Creek. The combined road then forded the stream and continued to the east. Refer to Robinson’s Archaeological Survey in the Appendix for more detailed discussion regarding the colonial-era roads.

It is alongside one of these roadways where the Gallows Oak could once have stood. Nearby, along one of the road traces, the remains of possibly seven of the executed loyalists are buried.

Period II: 1855 – 1860

About 1855, a bridge was constructed spanning the stream that had previously been crossed at

a nearby ford. During construction of the new road, workers searched for and located the mass gravesite of eight of the executed loyalists. Draper mentions that four of the graves were opened and artifacts removed.¹² The remains of Colonel Ambrose Mills were exhumed and reinterred in Polk County; however, it is not clear whether any of the other remains were ever disinterred.

With construction of the bridge across the stream, a new road through the property was constructed approximately 200 to 300 feet south of the existing road where the grade was less steep. Refer to Robinson’s Archaeological Survey in the Appendix for more detailed discussion.

The construction of the new road reoriented the center of the site toward the south. When the present Tenant Cabin and Main House were constructed, they were oriented south toward this new road. Any house constructed on this site earlier than 1855 would have been oriented to the north.

Period III: 1866 – 1910

Thomas Long (b. 1798) acquired the property perhaps as early as 1840,¹³ or as late as 1860,¹⁴ depending on how the deed transfers are interpreted.

1866

In 1866, Thomas transferred property to his son William N. Long (b. 1832), who had married Clarissa (Clara) Melton on January 25 of that year.¹⁵

The small Tenant Cabin may be the earliest surviving structure on the property. It may have been constructed in 1866 by Thomas Long as a wedding present for William and his new bride, who would have lived in this small house until a more suitable house was finished.

One of the surviving early outbuildings, the log crib, may have been constructed during the same period. This building is not on the 17-acre property, but sits adjacent to the west property line.

1870s

The two-story main house appears to have been constructed between 1870 and 1880. The house could have been built by William Long, who would have been 40 years old. The 1870 U. S. Census shows William living with his wife, Clarissa, and their two-year old son, Samuel. William had a listed real estate of \$1,600, plus a personal estate of \$600.¹⁶

However, it is more likely that the main house was built by Thomas Long. In the same census, Thomas, now widowed, was listed as living in an adjacent dwelling with William's sisters, Martha (b. 1840) and Elizabeth (b. 1840). Also in the house were two children, John, 12, and George, 8. In 1870, Thomas had a listed real estate value of \$1,000 plus a personal estate of \$500.¹⁷ Given the number of family members living with Thomas, the four or five bedrooms in the main house would have been more suitable.

1880

The 1880 Census shows similar household situations, except that John, then 22, and George, then 18, are not listed.¹⁸

1890s

Census records for 1890 are not available. By 1900, William, then 68, and Clarissa are living in the main house with their son Samuel, 32, his wife Fanny Stallings, 27, and their two children, Ura, 2 and William, 7 months. Living in the adjacent Tenant Cabin were Williams sisters, Liza and Martha, both 57.¹⁹

It was probably around 1900 that the small gable-roofed storage building was constructed behind the main house. It is also possible that the frame barn was constructed during this time; however, the building was not accessed for study. The barn is not on the 17-acre property, but sits adjacent to the west property line.

Period IV: 1910 – 1943

1910

William died before the 1910 census, and Samuel and Fanny continued to occupy the house, filling it with six children, Ura, 12, William, 10, Clara, 8, Catherine, 6, Robert, 3, and Samuel, 11 months. Also living with them was William's 73-year old mother, Clara.

In 1910, also residing with the Longs are Robert Parker, 23, his wife, Jennie, 21, and their children, Robert, 1, and Bessie, 2 years old. In addition, Robert's sister Helen Searcy, 35, and her infant son, Benjamin, 11 months are living on the property. Still listed residing in the adjacent Tenant Cabin were Martha and Lizzie, now listed as 63 years old.²⁰

1920s

The 1920 census lists Samuel Long, 51 (misspelled "Lang"), and Fanny, 46, residing in the house with seven children: Ura Leo, 21, Cleone, 18, Catherine, 16, Robert, 13, Samuel, 10, Martha Lee, 8, and Nancy, 3 years old.²¹

It was probably during the 1920s that the original porch was torn off and replaced with the much larger present porch which wraps around the south and east sides. Given the size of their family, the larger, more useful porch would have been welcome. The porch extended past the west side of the house to create a porte cochere, or carport. Also during the 1920s, it is

likely that the north end of the back porch was enclosed to create a small pantry. The small storage building behind the Tenant Cabin also appears to have been built during this time.

1930s

In 1930, Samuel and Fanny are living in the house with six children: Ura, 32, Catherine, 26, Robert, 23, Samuel, 20, Martha, 18 and Nancy, 13. Now living in the Tenant Cabin are their son William, 30, his wife Thelma, 22, and their three children, Leonard, 6, Dartha, 4, and Durant, age 1.²²

Aerial images from 1930 show the 1855 road configuration still in use. The road crossed the stream at the bridge, turned southwest and ascended the grade, passing just a few yards south of the log crib. This roadbed appears to have been kept in use until the mid-1930s, when the road was realigned and straightened. Refer to Robinson's Archaeological Survey in the Appendix for more detailed discussion regarding the early roads.

1940

Sam and Fanny continued to live in the house in 1940. Still living in the house with them were their son Ura Leo, 42, and daughters Cleon, 36, Martha Lee, 36, and 23-year old Lucille (previously listed as Nancy). Apparently living in the Tenant Cabin during this period are their son, Robert, 33, his wife, Darcus, 28, and their 5-year old daughter, Emma.²³

Period V: 1943 – 2010

On September 30, 1943, Samuel and Fanny Long deeded the property to daughter Lucille, who was by then married to George M. Morrell.

The deed was not recorded until September 18, 1958. Lucille and George had three children that lived to adulthood: George, Jr., Linda, and

Martha. Following her husband's death, Lucille continued to live in the house with her son, George, Jr. until moving in with her daughter Linda in 2006. George Morrell then lived alone in the house until his death in March 2007. The house has been unoccupied since then.

Lucille Long Morrell had bequeathed the property in a trust to her children. Following her death in October 2007, her daughters, Linda Morrell Gordon and Martha Morrell Shinn, offered to sell the property to Rutherford County. In 2008, Mrs. Barbara Nelson donated funds to Preservation North Carolina to purchase the property on behalf of Rutherford County.

George Morrell's granddaughter was his only heir. As a result of her desire to keep her portion of the land, in 2010 the court ordered that 17.08 acres be transferred to Rutherford County with the remainder of the property going to the heir.²⁴

Summary

The historic record of the Biggerstaff-Long site spans over 230 years in two major phases of occupation. The first phase begins with Aaron and Mary Biggerstaff's settlement of the property in 1771, climaxing with the events of October 14th, 1780, and ending with the transfer of the property to Thomas S. Long in either 1840 or 1860.

In 1866, the second phase of occupation begins with Thomas and William Long's construction of the small house on the property and subsequent construction of the two-story house. The property's association with the Long family extended through five generations, ending with the death of George Morrell, 2nd great-grandson of Thomas Long, in 2007.

I.C Physical Description

Biggerstaff-Long Site

The present 17-acre county-owned property is a remnant of a much larger holding originally settled by Aaron Biggerstaff. The irregular shaped property has approximately 524 feet of frontage along the north side of Whitesides Road, and extends northward approximately 1,400 feet.

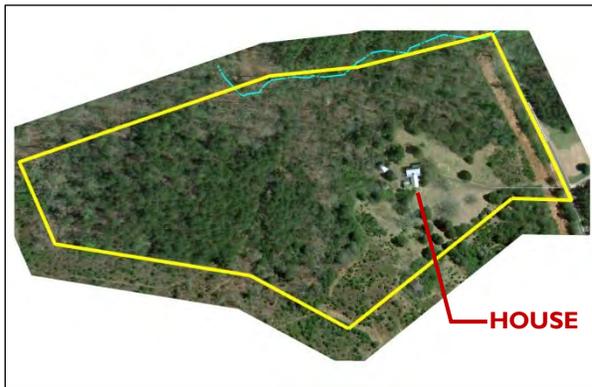


Figure 1 – Existing site aerial, north at left. Note extent of tree coverage. Property line is shown in yellow. (See drawing *Existing Site, Sheet S-1*)

Today, approximately 80 percent of the property is covered with mixed, second-growth forest. A 1930 aerial photograph shows the inverse, with almost 80 percent of the property cleared for agriculture. In 1930, only those areas bordering the stream and the colonial-era road traces had any significant tree coverage.

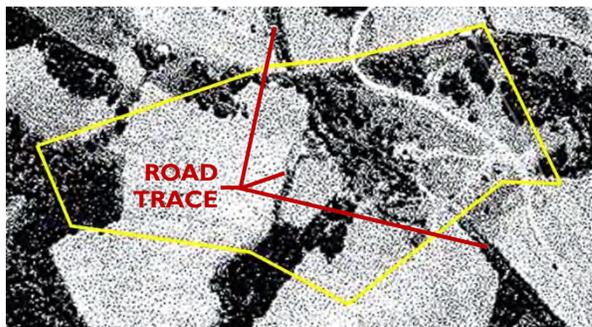


Figure 2 – Site aerial, circa 1930, north at left. Note extent of cleared land (light gray). Property line is shown in yellow.

Along a portion of the eastern boundary, an unnamed stream flows south into Roberson Creek. Bisecting the property east to west are traces of what are thought to be colonial era roads. Three road traces intersect approximately 120 feet west of the stream. One road trace heads directly toward the northwest. Two other traces run roughly parallel, intersecting and then turning to head to the northwest, intersecting the other trace. A fourth trace heads in a southwest direction, crossing over Whitesides Road. East of where the road traces intersect, the colonial-era road appears to have forded the stream.



Figure 3 – Possible ford at stream, looking west towards property. (See Note 18, *Proposed Site Plan, Sheet S-2*)

Approximately 220 feet south of the ford, at both sides of the stream, the remains of stone abutments mark the location of the bridge constructed in 1855. The road trace at this point is at the highest elevation above the stream.

Heading across the property in a southwest direction from the bridge is a fifth road trace. This road appears to have been constructed after the bridge was built in 1855, and the colonial-era roads may have been realigned to

use the bridge for a time. This scenario is suggested by the presence of a road trace spur connecting the colonial-era roads with the bridge. The extent of cut and fill to level portions of this road would have required substantial manual labor.



Figure 4 – Stone abutment for 1855 bridge. View across stream toward east. (See Note 21, drawing S-2, *Proposed Site Plan*)

The road heading southwest from the bridge would have been completed prior to the earliest probable construction date for the Long House, about 1870. The Long House is oriented south, towards this road. As discussed in the following section, no evidence was observed to suggest that the Long House was ever oriented to the north.

Besides the recent second-growth forest that has overtaken the former agricultural fields, the present cleared areas of the Biggerstaff-Long property contain several tree species, including red juniper (eastern redcedar), pecan, and walnut. The red junipers are left as specimen trees in the open areas, and also define part of the western border.



Figure 5 – View toward southwest from Long House. Note red junipers along the property line and pecan tree, center left.

Shading the south front porch of the Long House are two large red juniper trees, a large pecan tree and what appears to be a large box elder (ashleaf maple). The red junipers are only a few feet from the porch.



Figure 6 – Composite View toward front of Long House. Note the close proximity of the red juniper trees to the front porch.

To the west of the front steps, growing right up against the red juniper is a very old crape myrtle, misshapen and overwhelmed by the juniper.



Figure 7 – View to east along front porch of Long House. Note old crape myrtle to right of red juniper.

Running east-west across the center of the property are four ravines, deeply eroded in sections, defining the extent of the colonial-era road traces. Judging from the 1930 aerial photograph (Figure 2), the areas around the traces were likely never cleared for agricultural use, but would have remained in service as access roads to the terraced fields.



Figure 8 – Colonial-era road trace #1, view to west from intersection with road trace #2.

The post-1855 road trace runs southwest from the bridge site to cross over Whiteside Road. As this roadbed was in use probably until the late 1930s, there is very little erosion. A section along the east side of the roadbed shows substantial fill used to build up and level the

road.



Figure 9 – Post 1855-era road trace #4, view to southwest.

The Gallows Oak, as it was historically known, was cut down in the mid-1950s, 175 years after the hangings took place. The archaeological investigation did not confirm the tree’s location. Years after it was cut down, county historian Chivous Bradley was shown the location of the tree by a member of the Long family. Drawing S-2, *Proposed Site Plan* documents this location, plus a second possible site. According to Draper’s account, the branches of the tree in 1780 overhung the road.



Figure 10 – View from Gallows Oak site (according to Chivous Bradley), looking south toward colonial-era road trace.

Long House

The present house appears to have been constructed as early as 1870, possibly as late as 1880, based on architectural character and observable physical evidence. The house is a two-story, frame structure, T-shaped plan of intersecting gable roofed blocks, with a one-story kitchen/dining wing extending off the rear. The front of the house is oriented a few degrees east of south, and has a one-story, wrap-around porch.



Figure 11 – Long House. Southeast oblique with porch.

The architectural style of the house is referred to as Folk Victorian, which can encompass a range of forms, plans and detailing. Popular throughout the United States from the end of the Civil War through the first decade of the 1900s, the Folk Victorian style is considered a vernacular interpretation of the high style designs of the Victorian period.

According to architectural historian Catherine Bishir in *North Carolina Architecture*, during this period a profound and widespread change appeared in form and plan, as North Carolinians began to generally accept the asymmetrical massing and cross wing plans promoted by mid-nineteenth century pattern books.²⁵ As these new patterns permeated the rural landscape, ells and wings, once added as secondary rear rooms, became prominent

features.

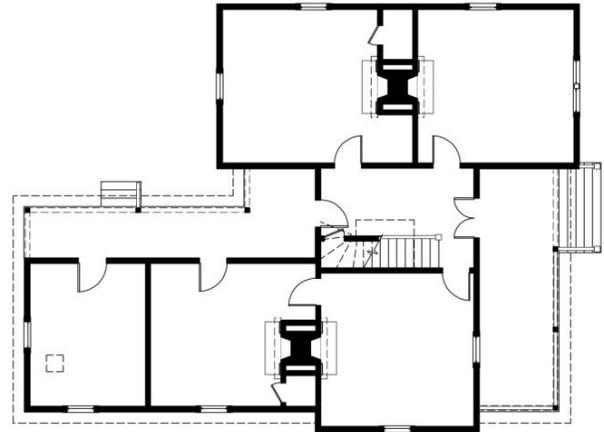


Figure 12 – Long House. First Floor Plan, reconstructed showing probable original configuration of porch. See drawing A-3 in Part III.

Bishir states that a “national architecture, child of the pattern book, the factory, the railroad, made its way throughout the upper and middle levels of building.” Mass produced components could be easily shipped anywhere in the state or region where there was a railroad, and included paneled doors, fireplace surrounds, turned columns, brackets, and cast iron hardware.²⁶



Figure 13 – Charles Stowe House, Belmont, NC (1880). For comparison, note the similarity of form and proportion, the soffit returns at the gable end, and the paired soffit brackets above the windows and at the corners. (Photograph 1982, © Gaston County, North Carolina)²⁷

Railroad service did not arrive in Rutherfordton until the completion of the Wilmington, Charlotte & Rutherford Railroad (WC&R) in

1887. The Western NC railroad had arrived in Morganton by 1858, and by 1874, the WC&R had been constructed only as far as Shelby, Cleveland County. Before 1887, any building supplies ordered would have had to travel overland from Shelby to Rutherfordton, then northwest along Whiteside Settlement Road to Logan Store Township, a distance of about 38 miles.



Figure 14 – Long House. West elevation showing portico in April 2012, prior to collapse.

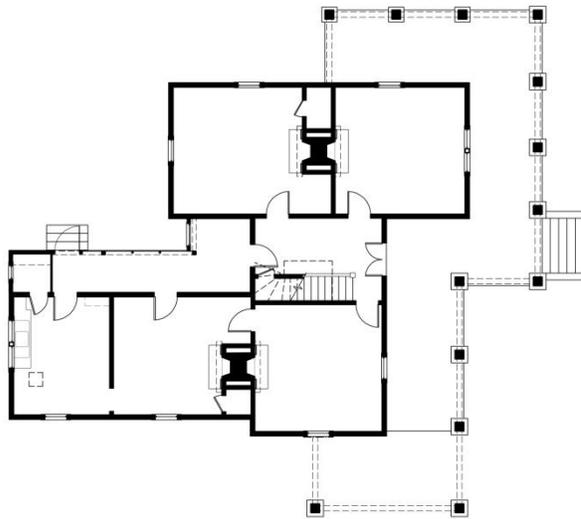


Figure 15 – Long House. 1st Floor Plan, existing.

With the exception of the present front porch, the overall configuration of the house appears to be original. The original front porch appears to have been inset between the projecting southeast gable and the west gable end (Figure 23, Figure 24).

During the 1920s or 1930s, several alterations were made to the house. The large wrap-around porch with porte cochere replaced the original porch on the south side. The north end of the back porch was enclosed to create a pantry. The doorway between the kitchen and dining room was added.



Figure 16 – Long House. Northeast oblique (composite).

Masonry

The house is supported on brick piers – 20 inches wide by 8 inches deep – except for the present front porch, which is supported on solid brick underpinning between the column piers. The entire house sits above an open crawlspace; no cellar was noted. Bricks are solid, and may have been molded and fired locally.

Two primary brick chimneys serve the six fireplaces. The chimney on the east two-story block is interior, exposed only above the roof line. The chimney along the north wall of the west two-story block is exposed above the one-story roof of the dining room and kitchen wing. Both chimneys show decorative brickwork at the top. The east chimney has a denticulated cornice above a panel. The west chimney has a similar denticulated cornice, but with projecting brick diamond patterns (Figure 53).



Figure 17 – Long House. Chimney at east wing, viewed from southeast.

A third brick flue chimney originally served a wood cook stove in the kitchen. The chimney is capped with a metal flue pipe. The brickwork is supported only by the kitchen ceiling joists.

Framing

Exterior walls of the house are “balloon framed” in that the studs extend the full two-story height from the sill to the rafter plate. Whether the framing method known as “balloon frame” predates the early 1830s is debatable among architectural historians; however, this method of construction came into widespread use after the Civil War. According to Bishir, with the mass production of lumber and nails, carpenters soon abandoned traditional mortise and tenon frame construction in favor of the lighter, quickly nailed together balloon frame.²⁸

The framing technique provides some clues as to the construction date of the house. The lumber is of regular dimensioned sizes and is all cut with a circular saw. The use of circular sawing for dimensioned lumber was not prevalent in the western regions of the state until the last quarter of the 1800s. The framing is fastened together using machine-cut iron

nails of a type manufactured between the late 1830s and early 1880s.²⁹

The main sill is 8 inches in width by 6 inches in height, typical for the period. Major vertical studs – at openings and at corners – are either 4 or 6 inches in width by 4 inches deep; secondary studs are 2 inches by 4 inches. Floor joists are 2 inches by 8 inches, and bear upon a ribbon joist let in to the face of the studs. Rafters are 2 inches wide by either 4 or 6 inches deep.

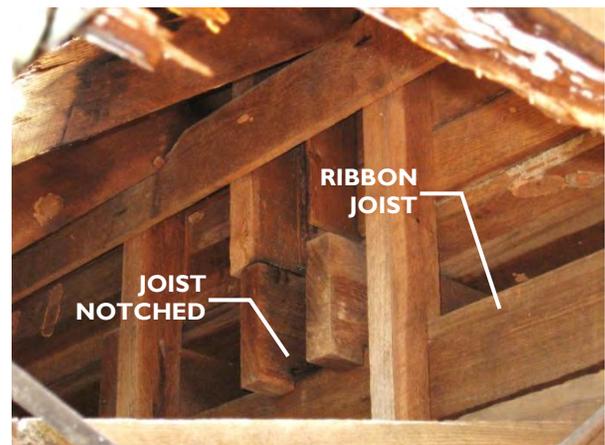


Figure 18 – Long House. Framing viewed from porch attic, north wall. Note ribbon joist let in to studs, also joist ends notched over ribbon joist.

Exterior Siding and Trim

The house is clad in horizontal lapped siding, approximately 5 inches exposure. At the bottom of the wall, siding terminates in an 8-inch wide skirt board. Corner boards, window and door casing are plain, 5-1/2” in width. Windows are capped with a thin, molded hood.

The flush tongue-and-groove board soffit is supported on scrolled brackets mounted on a 15-inch wide flush tongue-and-groove frieze. The brackets are paired at window openings and at the corners. A similar frieze carries up the rake of the gable. A 2-inch bed molding with beaded edge transitions the frieze to the soffit. The main soffit is approximately 15 inches in width, plus a 3-inch molded cornice

projecting from the fascia. The soffit on the one-story wing is 11 inches in width, plus a similar 3-inch cornice.



Figure 19 – Long House. North elevation of east wing.



Figure 20 – Long House. Detail of bracketed cornice, northeast corner.

The original back porch is supported on 4-1/2" square, chamfered and turned wood columns. The ceiling and floor are of flush tongue-and-groove boards. The front porch was reconfigured in the 1920s or 1930s as a

Craftsman-style wrap-around porch. Tapered box columns are supported on massive brick plinths. The ceiling is a common 3-1/4" tongue-and-groove beaded board. Flooring is 3-1/4" tongue-and-groove.



Figure 21 – Long House. Detail of back porch, looking north.

Roof

The main roof is approximately a 10:12 pitch. At the one-story wing, the roof slope becomes less steep where the roof projects over the back porch. The roofing on the main roof and on the west side of the kitchen wing roof is a stamped galvanized steel shingle. The manufacturer and date was not confirmed, although the pattern suggests a date after 1900. Patterns of cut iron shingle nails in the attic indicate that the original roofing was a wood shingle. The slight kick in the roof at the main cornice suggests the earlier presence of a built-in gutter. This feature was covered over when the metal shingles were installed.



Figure 22 – Long House. Detail of stamped metal roof shingles, north side of west wing.

The present front porch roof, covered with asphalt shingles, dates from the 1920s or 1930s. Surviving sections of siding and flashing in the porch attic suggests that the original porch roof was a low-sloped feature confined to the area between the south wall of the west wing and the west wall of the projecting east wing. The saw-tooth cuts in the siding indicate a scribed fit over wood shingles.



Figure 23 – Long House. Section of original siding extant in porch attic along south wall of west wing. Note saw-tooth cuts (arrow) to fit over wood shingles.



Figure 24 – Long House. Section of original siding extant in porch attic along west wall of east wing. Metal flashing is still in place.

Windows

Original window sash are 2-over-2 light, double hung, single glazed. Paired sash at the south gable end are narrower. The kitchen wing shows several replacement windows, installed in the 1930s or later.



Figure 25 – Long House. Original window sash at north elevation of east wing. Note molded window hood.

Typical for the 1870s, the windows originally had shutters, presumably with fixed louvers. Cast iron hinge pintles remain on several of the window casings. Steel hangers indicate the presence of wood screen frames, most likely an early 1900s addition.



Figure 26 – Hinge pintle on 2nd floor window, SW Bedroom (202).

Doors

The only surviving exterior doors are those to the stair hall. The double doors at the front entrance each have a single glazed panel over a raised and beveled panel. The rear door is a solid 4-panel configuration, raised and beveled on the exterior face.

The original doors leading from the back porch to the dining room and kitchen were presumably similar to the rear entrance door at the stair hall; however, they were replaced in the late-1900s. The casing and trim were altered to fit the new doors.

Doors to interior rooms are 4-panel, raised and beveled on the principal side. Closet doors are unique, with two narrow vertical panels, raised and beveled to the room. Also unique is the chamfered sticking on the closet doors



Figure 27 – Long House. Door from second floor stair hall, viewed from Bedroom 203. Note porcelain knob, cast iron rim lock, decorative graining.

Door hardware is typical of the 1870s period. Except for closet doors, door locks and keepers are rim-mounted cast iron, manufactured by Jacobus & Nimick of Pittsburg, PA.³⁰ Knobs are mineral or porcelain where original; some doors have replacement steel knobs.

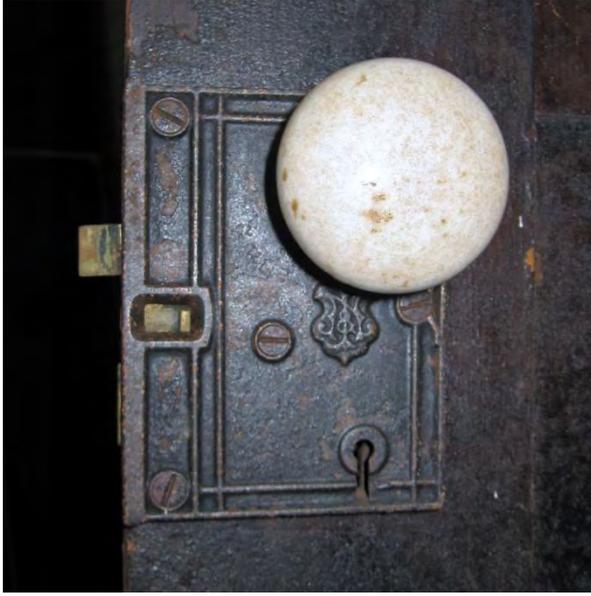


Figure 28 – Long House. Cast iron rim lock with porcelain knob on rear entry door.

Interior Woodwork

The interior of the house is sheathed throughout in flush tongue-and-groove horizontal boards. Door and window casing is plain, as are baseboards. No crown moldings were noted in any of the rooms.

The fireplace surrounds and mantles are all similar in style. Chamfered pilasters with plain capitals support a broad, plain frieze radiused around the firebox trim. A wide ogee profile molding surmounts the frieze and supports a simple mantle shelf, chamfered on the underside.



Figure 29 – Long House. Fireplace surround, Bedroom 203.

The staircase is especially well detailed and constructed. To allow for a comfortable tread width, the steps wind around the inside corner to an angled landing. The molded handrail is precisely mitered and wrapped around the chamfered newel post.

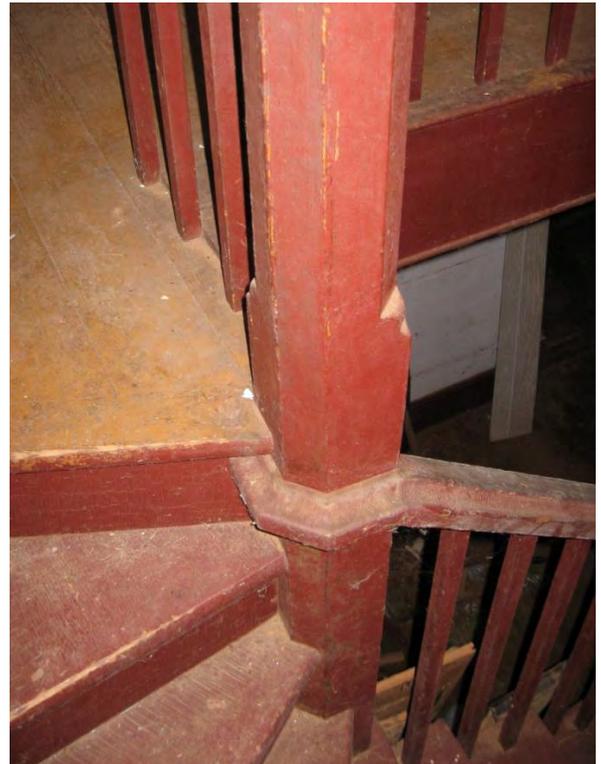


Figure 30 – Long House. Detail of staircase at second floor landing.

Interior Finishes

Much of the flush and plain woodwork in the rooms is painted. In a couple of the rooms, the walls appear to have long been papered as there is no evidence of an underlying paint layer. The wallpaper has high pulp content, and is mostly deteriorated.



Figure 31 – Long House. Wallpaper over horizontal sheathing, Bedroom 204.

The doors typically exhibit a decorative graining, which on the interior of the closet doors is quite well preserved, showing a burlled walnut finish on stiles and rails with a maple finish on the panels (Figure 27). Several of the fireplace surrounds have their grained finish intact.

Electrical Systems and Lighting

The house may not have been wired for electricity until the 1920s or later. Sections of the original knob-and-tube wiring system survive, while portions have been rewired. Remarkably, many of the original interior lighting fixtures survive. Ceiling fixtures have a white porcelain canopy with a cloth-covered, twisted wire cord leading to a plain lamp holder.



Figure 32 – Long House. Original light fixture with replacement lamp holder.

Plumbing System

The house does not appear to have ever had an indoor bathroom. The presence of an outhouse on the site is assumed, but a location was not confirmed. The only plumbing presently in the house is for the kitchen sink, and appears to have been added in the 1940s or later.

Directly north of the kitchen is the well, covered with a low concrete block structure with a galvanized 5-V crimp roof.

Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning

The house never had central heat installed, and was originally heated by four fireplaces on the first floor, and three fireplaces on the second floor. The Kitchen appears to have had a wood cook stove with its own flue chimney. Presently, there is a cast iron coal-burning stove in the Dining Room, and a modern wood-fired heater in the Southwest Parlor.



Figure 33 – Long House. Cast iron stove in Dining Room. (“Fatso” No. 200, King Stove & Range Co., Sheffield, Alabama.)³¹



Figure 34 – Tenant Cabin. Southeast oblique.

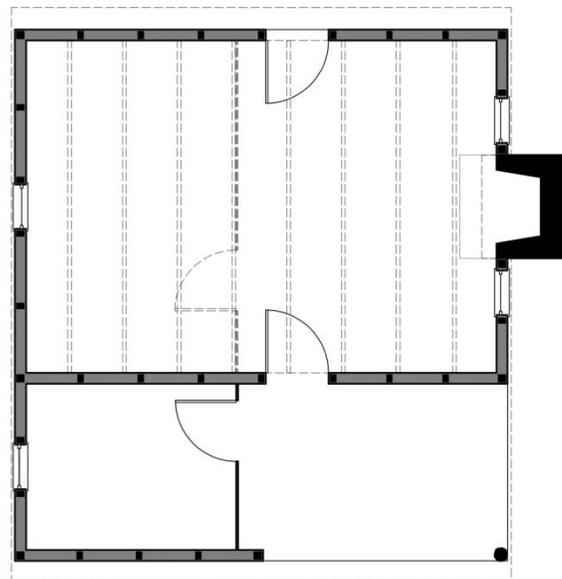


Figure 35 – Tenant Cabin. Existing plan. Possible original partitioning of large room indicated to left of door.

Tenant Cabin

Situated approximately 60 feet north-northeast of the house, the one-story frame Tenant Cabin may have been constructed as early as 1866, when William Long acquired the property from his father, Thomas. Measuring approximately 22'-3" by 24'-0", the Tenant Cabin has one large room under a gable roof which extends to engage a corner porch and a separate small room on the southwest.

Masonry

The Tenant Cabin is supported on dry-stacked fieldstone piers. The chimney at the east gable end is constructed of a similar un-coursed native fieldstone. Above the fireplace throat, the shoulders of the chimney taper in to support a flue stack of brick. The bricks measure 8 inches long, 4 inches thick and 3 inches high and appear to have been hand formed in wooden molds.



Figure 36 – Tenant Cabin. Northeast oblique. Note window opening to right of chimney.

Framing

The building is framed with full-dimension, sawn lumber, except for the sill, which is a solid hewn member, 8 inches square, lapped and pegged at the corners. Floor joists are also un-hewn logs, averaging 7 inches in diameter. Joists are hewn along the top for the flooring and notched half depth at the ends to bear on the sill.

The exterior walls of the principal room are framed with 3x4 sawn studs approximately 30 to 32 inches on center. The studs are mortised into the sill and into the 4x8 rafter plate. At the plate on the south wall enclosed by the porch roof attic, the wood pegs project several inches past the face of the wall, suggesting that the porch and side room were original features. At the corners, a 1x6 diagonal brace is let in to the exterior face of the studs, and is fastened with cut iron nails.

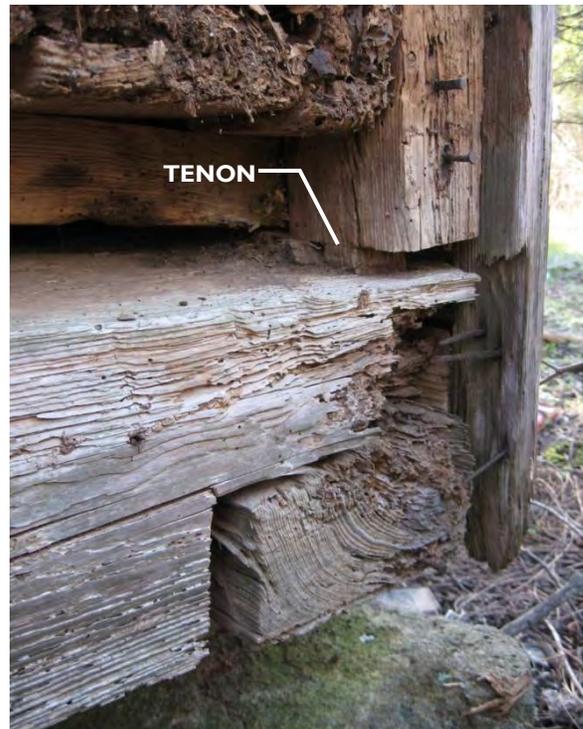


Figure 37 – Tenant Cabin. Northeast corner framing at sill. Note mortise and tenon connection at stud to sill.

Attic floor joists are 2x8s and are notched approximately one-third their depth over the 4x8 plate. The attic joists on the south wall extend past the face of the wall to support a boxed soffit. The joists extend in similar fashion at the north wall, although there is no evidence of a soffit.

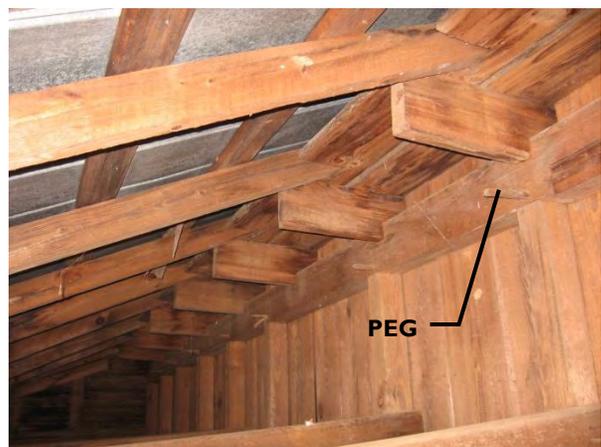


Figure 38 – Tenant Cabin. View of wall framing from porch attic. Note projecting pegs at mortise-and-tenon connection of stud to plate.