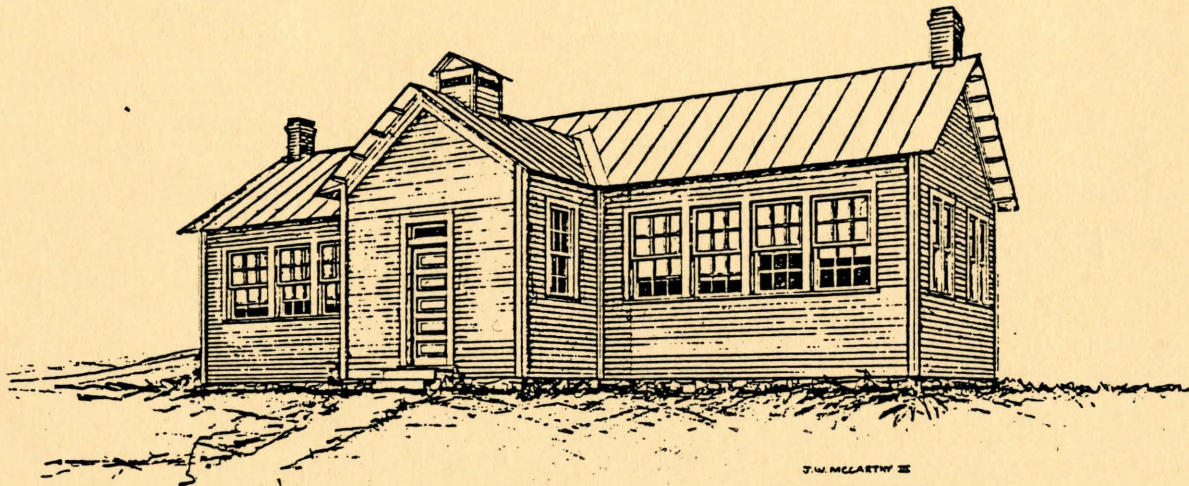


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THE KELLEY SCHOOL

(PATE/WARE STORE)



Blue Ridge Parkway, Milepost 149

Jean Haskell Speer ● Gibson Worsham

Appalachian Studies Program

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

1989



HISTORIC STRUCTURE REPORT

THE KELLEY SCHOOL
(PATE/WARE STORE)
BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY
MILEPOST 149

HISTORIC RESOURCE STUDY - VOLUME 1

AND

HISTORIC STRUCTURE REPORT - VOLUME 2

Prepared for
The Blue Ridge Parkway

by

Jean Haskell Speer
Frances H. Russell
Gibson Worsham

Appalachian Studies Program
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Blacksburg, Virginia

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HISTORIC STRUCTURE REPORT - VOLUME 2

Prepared for
The Blue Ridge Parkway

by
Gibson Worsham, Architect

Christiansburg, Virginia

1989

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Summary

The Kelley School, built in 1924, is a one-story frame two-room school building located immediately adjacent to the Blue Ridge Parkway where it intersects with Route 678 in Floyd County, Virginia. The school was altered for use as a dwelling and store in 1939 and during the following decade. The south schoolroom was fitted up as a store and the north room adapted for living accommodations. As part of a later alteration of the building in 1947, the north room was heavily altered by the insertion of a second floor. Three substantial out-buildings were built at this time. The building was remodeled again in 1972, when it was partially sheathed with rough-sawn, vertical siding and used as a store catering particularly to the increased tourist traffic on the parkway and in neighboring regions. In all of these alterations, many features from the early school survived.

Narrative Description

The Kelley School is sited on a small tract between the Blue Ridge Parkway and Virginia Route 651 where they are connected by Route 678. The school is visually separated from the parkway by a grove of trees, and its original principal facade faced away from the parkway, but today its south end is readily visible to motorists traveling north on the parkway.

The Kelley School is a rectangular frame building of one story, with a standing seam metal gable roof, weatherboarded walls, and a slightly off-center, gabled, projecting vestibule or "cloakroom"¹ in the center of the long principal (west) facade. The roof of the cloakroom is crowned with a louvered frame belfry with a gable-fronted roof. Brick internal stove flues rise at each end of the building. The school stands on a foundation of coursed limestone rubble and the roof eaves are treated with exposed tapered rafter ends. Similar decorative rafter ends are applied in the gables. A gable on the east was added in 1947.

Physical evidence suggests and interview data confirms that the entrance to the school was gained through a central double door in the center of the projecting cloakroom element in the west wall. The cloakroom, which was lit internally by large windows on either side,² gave access to the two schoolrooms through two doors on the wall opposite the entry door. The nearly identical rooms were approximately twenty-one by twenty-eight feet in size, with a ceiling height of twelve feet. Each was lit by four linked six-over-six light sash windows

in the west wall, and paired six-over-six sash windows on either side of the flues in the north and south gable ends. The windows were separated by eight-inch mullions.³ Interviews support and evidence in the weatherboard suggests the location of the west windows in the north schoolroom and the north cloakroom window.

On the interior the schoolroom and ceiling show evidence that they were entirely sheathed with narrow plain tongue-and-groove boards, although the south end wall is sheathed with a beaded similar board. The exposed brick flues rose in the center of each end wall. Lighting was provided by the windows alone, as there was no electricity in the building the entire period of its use as a school. Window trim throughout consisted of square wood members. The two schoolrooms were linked by a large opening supplied with folding doors. The folding doors (now gone) were made of vertical boards similar in width to the ceiling boards. There were two doors on each side about eight feet tall. Each door had a frame of boards around them and a single horizontal board across the center, dividing each door into two panels. The doors were hinged and fastened at the top, middle, and bottom (never fitting very accurately) with an iron or steel hook and a wooden latch.⁴ All of the boards on the interior are referred to as ceiling boards, said to be a standard material sawn and dressed at the planing mill then located in the neighboring community of Check.⁵ The frame of the building is said to be of oak and the interior finishes of yellow poplar.⁶

In 1939 the school was sold by the school board to Virgie Nolen Pate, who remodeled it for use as a general store and residence occupied by herself and her son. The orientation of the building was altered so that the south end became the principal facade. A hip-roofed porch gave access to the store, where a new door and window flanked the stove flue. In addition a concrete block room was added on the west side of the north section at this time. It housed a water pump and a concrete trough for cooling milk containers. A gas pump was located east of the south porch.

In 1947, soon after her son returned from his tour of duty in World War II and married, Virgie Pate added a second floor in the north section and a north porch similar to the south porch. The porches feature square posts, exposed rafter ends, and concrete floors. The windows in the north half of the building were removed, and new three-over-one double-hung sash windows installed on the west, north, and east walls of the north section. Windows on

the north and east are paired. A new glass-panel door was added on the north wall on the east side of the flue. In addition a new gable was added on the east wall to help light the new second floor over the residential north section. This gable was treated in keeping with the other gables, with tapered rafter ends and a standing-seam metal roof.

The interior of the south room was altered to facilitate the building's new function in 1939. The south room became the store, with the addition of new shelving of plain boards. Exactly how the cloakroom and north room were altered at this time is unclear because any such alterations are covered up by the changes made in 1947 and 1972, but the cloakroom was used as a bedroom.⁷ In 1947 the door between the south room and the cloakroom and the door between the two classrooms were walled up and a new door was cut between the two classrooms just inside the remaining cloakroom door. A new second floor was added in the north section, and the new stair leading to the second floor was added in the south room along the center partition, enclosed by a new stud partition. In order to add the new floor, the ceiling joists were removed in the north section, new floor joists installed four feet lower, and new second-floor ceiling joists added in the form of collar beams, since the new second-floor ceiling extends up into the roof space.

The first floor of the north section was divided by a central north-south partition into two spaces which were in turn subdivided into two rooms each. The east side contains two roughly-equal rooms, a bedroom on the south and a dining room on the north, while the west side of the north section was divided unequally into two rooms, a kitchen at the north end and a living room at the south end,⁸ reached directly from the store, the former cloakroom and the stair to the second floor. The bedroom and the kitchen open out of the living room, while the dining room and kitchen are connected by a wide opening with angled upper corners.

The second floor contained two similar-sized bedrooms in the north gable end reached from a single large room at the head of the stairs, lit by paired three-over-one double-hung sash windows in the new east gable. Similar single windows in the north gable lit the two rooms there. The rooms throughout the north section were separated by two-panel, wood doors framed by four-inch plain wood trim. A closet is found only in the dining room and appears to have been added. The entire residential section is sheathed on the interior

with four-by-eight-foot plywood sheets with one-and-one-quarter-inch plain wood trim at the joints.

In 1972 O. B. Ware of Roanoke purchased the store from Virgie Pate. He made a number of changes, including the addition of a false-stepped parapet at the south end, covering it and the exterior walls of the south end and the south wall of the cloakroom with rough board-and batten siding. A smaller parapet was added around the edge of the roof of the south porch. The door and window on the south end also were apparently altered at this time by the addition of a plate glass window west of the flue and a new pair of doors with rough vertical boards applied on their exteriors on the east side of the flue. Two of the four windows lighting the west wall of the south room were covered with the board-and-batten siding, the first and third windows from the south end. On the whole the interior was unaltered, except for the addition of a low wall near the door to the north section and behind it a sink, and the addition of plywood sheets covering the south wall.

Ware added a stone chimney on the exterior of the west wall immediately north of the cloakroom, providing a stone fireplace with a raised hearth on the interior of the living room. He also added a bathroom in the former cloakroom and a new smaller window in the south wall of the cloakroom, replacing the larger window formerly there.⁹ It is not clear when the door in the north wall of the cloakroom first replaced the window there, but it appears to have been installed by O. B. Ware. Ware did not live in the residential section, but rented it sporadically.

Outbuildings were added to the site by Virgie Pate soon after 1945.¹⁰ The largest is an interesting multiple-use structure combining a storage cellar, vehicle sheds, and a granary, and known as a granary. The frame gable-fronted building contains a central, two-story room with an off-center front (south) door. The room is lit by a six-light casement window on the rear. Access to the upper floor is given by a steep, closed-stringer stair with open risers in the southwest corner. The framing is exposed on the interior of the weatherboarded building. The gabled roof extends broadly and without a break to cover a garage or vehicle shed on the east and west sides. The concrete block foundation under the granary room contains a cellar lit by metal hopper windows on the south and north and reached by a steep stair from the west vehicle shed and below the stair to the upper floor. A five-V metal roof covers the building.

The two other outbuildings are a frame woodshed and a privy. The woodshed has vertical board siding, braced framing, and a five-V metal shed roof. The ten-by-twenty-foot building has a wide (eight-foot) center opening in the long wall to the south. The interior is open except for an enclosure of the eastern five feet with a board partition and a wooden floor structure; the enclosed space was used as a meathouse.¹¹ The privy is of vertical plank-framed construction, with no vertical framing members, only a horizontal course of two-by-fours at the top, middle, and bottom of the approximately eight-by-eight-foot shed-roofed structure. The building is equipped with a batten door, a single hole seat, and a five-V metal roof, and stands over a very shallow hole, presumably collapsed. The original privy was located to the rear of the granary, and the present one was repaired by O. B. Ware for the use of patrons.¹²

Statement of Significance

The Kelley School of 1924 is significant as a rare representative of a once-common educational building type in early twentieth-century Virginia. The form, that of a rectangle containing two identical schoolrooms with paired doors centered in one long wall, is similar to that used in many areas of the state in the late nineteenth century, when two- and one-room schools were distributed widely. The cloakroom is an element found, however, only in early twentieth-century schools, while its projecting form and the belltower are rare features among surviving schools both in the area and the state during any period. The banded windows with six-over-six appear to be an interesting amalgam of regional vernacular forms and the ideas of good design promoted by the recently formed School Building Service, which sought to improve Virginia schools by providing plans to county school boards for a modest fee.¹³ The banded windows were often prescribed to increase light for improved reading, preferably over the children's left shoulders, and to improve the circulation of air, both part of the early twentieth-century emphasis on hygiene and health. The lack of windows on the east wall is also suggestive of modern design, since earlier school builders would have simply incorporated regularly spaced windows governed by the traditional architectural grammar of the region.

A search for information about school design in Floyd County records did not yield significant information. Specifications were mentioned in a September 1922 reference to Harmony School House. Between 1922 and 1930, there were many references to specifications in connection with the building of new schools. In 1923, three Floyd County School Board members were appointed to "draw up plans and specifications" for a one-room school house and to advertise for bids. The "New Ethiopia" school building was to be built according to requirements of the Floyd County School Board in April 1924.¹⁴

Conversations with officials of the Virginia State Department of Education revealed that a number of standard designs for two-room schools were prepared in the late 1920s. These had cloakrooms but no bell towers. Time did not permit examination of these plans. One source recalled at least two now-demolished schools in Floyd County with bell towers, Kemper School being one of these. Bell towers were more common on secondary schools, however.¹⁵

The linking of the two rooms by a folding door also suggests the influence of the School Building Service, and this addition to a previously rigidly observed floor plan made it necessary to delete the customary central flue and locate flues at either end. The building is relatively well preserved. Certainly structurally it is sound and enough can be deduced from extant material and research to understand its original form and detailing.

The site is well-preserved. Its rural setting is an effective reminder of the isolation of many schools during the early twentieth century, and because the abutting county roads have changed little, it is easy to visualize. There is a small wooded area screening the school from the Parkway to the east. The extant outbuildings represent the Pates' occupancy and are unusual and important examples of the adaptation of traditional functions and building types to modern building materials and methods.

Evaluation of Proposed Use of Structures

The Kelley School building would make an ideal project for restoration. Immediate access to the Blue Ridge Parkway, the good condition of the property, and the relative ease of conversion of the facility, incorporating restored areas, parking, interpretive material, and

service facilities, make this a valuable cultural resource. If the proposed restoration were to return the building to a single story, then most egress problems would be easily solvable.

Among the issues deserving consideration in this regard are handicapped access, personal safety, fire egress, energy conservation, and factors affecting long-term conservation of the building. Handicapped access and emergency egress could be provided, if necessary, through an inconspicuous new door in the rear of the building. Other human safety issues are few, except that exhibits should be designed carefully so as to not create hazardous conditions. It is not proposed to heat or cool the building, so energy conservation on the site is not a factor, except in any proposed new construction, where insulation should be provided and water conservation methods considered. If the stoves originally used in each of the schoolrooms are to be used for heat, appropriate measures should be taken to prevent fire damage, such as regularly maintained flue liners and isolation of the stoves from wooden surfaces.

Human and environmental factors likely to affect the building over time do not include any unusual or unexpected items: routine weathering and seasonal problems involving expansions and contraction of materials, as well as vegetation, mildew, and insect and fungal attack. All of these factors can be best addressed by first rendering the building weathertight and then carefully maintaining the fabric so that all interior and exterior materials are subject to as little environmental stress as possible in a low-technology maintenance program. Human factors will not become serious if routine guidance is provided for visitors and staff, unless visitation becomes very heavy or vandalism becomes a problem.

Recommended Steps for Interpretation and Preservation

Due to its importance as an historic site, its significance as the only property with a historic educational theme on the parkway, and its accessibility to visitors, the Kelley School could be a very attractive exhibition area along a section of the parkway with few other visitor attractions. The following is a list of recommendations for the Kelley School. These recommendations should be considered in developing a plan for the presentation of the site:

1. Restore the building to a significant period in its history for which there is adequate documentary and physical data to justify interpretation and the restoration of the missing

parts that would be required to make such an interpretation possible. Restoration as a school is a logical option, since the building's primary function was a school, a function to which its form clearly relates, and because there is adequate documentation to make restoration possible and desirable. Other options would be to use the building as a restored store dating from the 1940s, or for some other non-historical purpose.

2. Interpret to the visitor the significance of the school as a community center, showing the values transmitted by the school and how they changed. A considerable body of data has been gathered already as part of this project and more is available in the community.

Options:

- restore one room as a school, the other as a visitor center with exhibits and interpretive materials, possibly retaining part of the Pates' alterations.
 - restore entire building as a school; in order to restore the exterior some change will be necessary.
3. Interpretation of the site should include the maintenance of the immediate area of the school as it might have been in c. 1930. Preservation of the Pate outbuildings would seem to be desirable, given their unusual nature. They could be screened from the school by plantings and utilized as exhibit, storage, or service areas. Paths and parking areas should be kept as simple as possible in order that the school's setting be as undisturbed as possible.
 4. Parking must be provided. More land may be needed to provide adequate parking in the vicinity of the school, or it may be available on adjacent parkway land screened from the school by plantings. Adequate parking to house projected future visitor traffic on this section of the parkway should be provided with well-designed exit and entry provisions and handicapped access.
 5. Service provisions could be adequately handled either within a new Park Service visitor center out of sight of the school building, or in the granary building built by the Pates, with

Men's and Women's rooms on the main floor and in the cellar, and equipment storage in the side sheds. Sewage and water supply would need to be carefully engineered to protect the environment and provide safe facilities.

ENDNOTES

¹Interviews with former teachers and students at Kelley School, June 20, 1989.

²Telephone interview with Daisy DeWitt Thomas (former teacher), July 31, 1989.

³*Ibid.*

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵Interview with Marvin Thomas (former student), June 20, 1989.

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷Telephone interview with Herman Pate (former student and later resident/owner of store in building), July 31, 1989.

⁸*Ibid.*

⁹Interview with Gene Ware (son of owner of store building), June 20, 1989.

¹⁰Pate interview, July 31, 1989.

¹¹*Ibid.*

¹²Ware interview, June 20, 1989.

¹³National Register of Historic Places. "Public Schools in Augusta County, Virginia, 1870-1940: Thematic Nomination," September 1989.

¹⁴Floyd County School Board Minutes, 1870-1940, Floyd County School Board Office, Floyd, Virginia.

¹⁵Interview with Sarah Simmons, October 8, 1989.

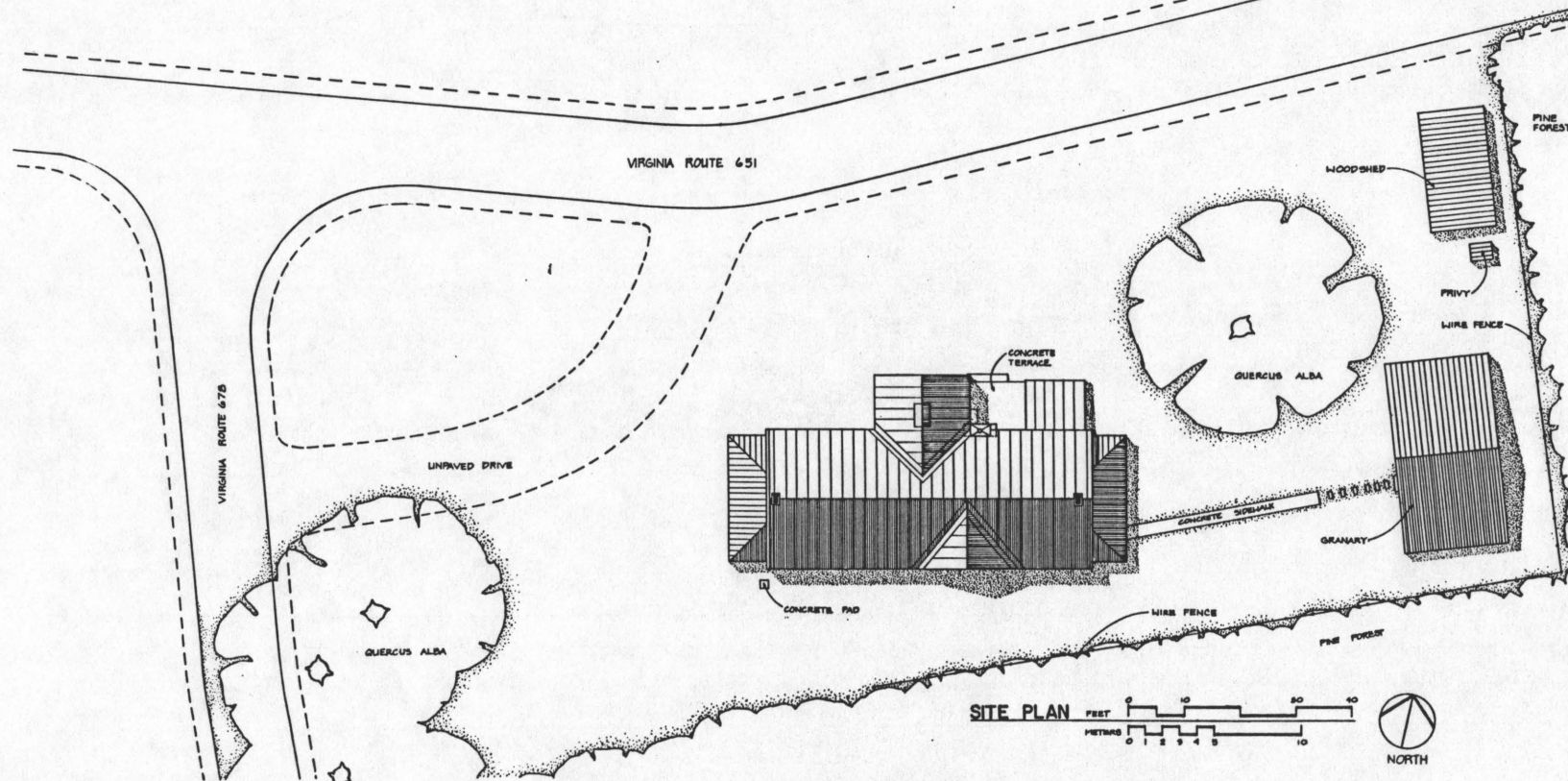
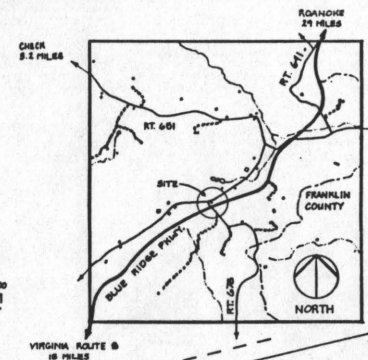
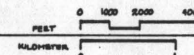
KELLEY SCHOOL

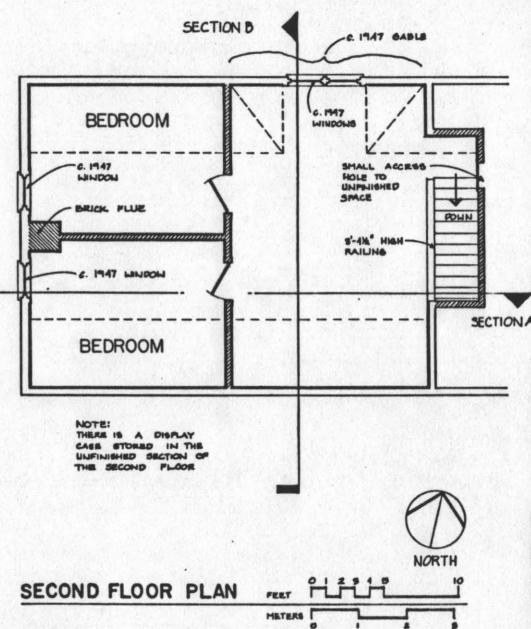
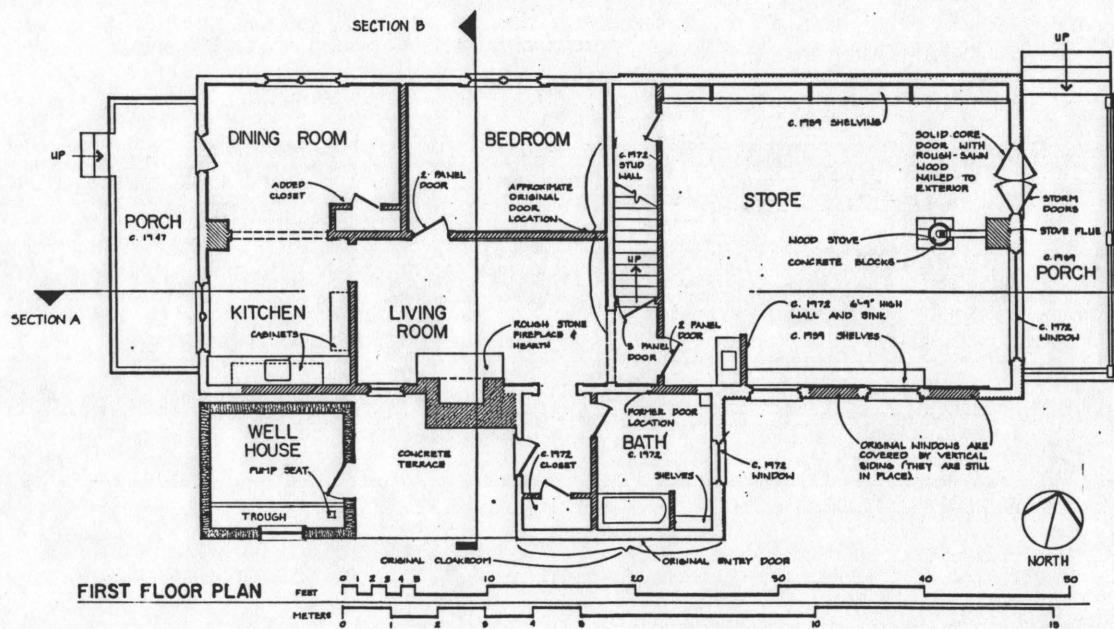
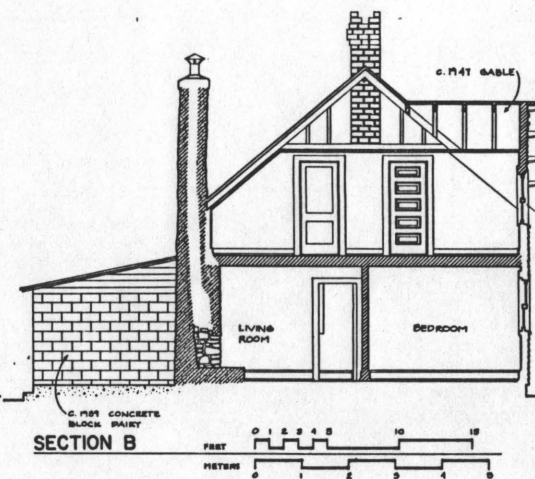
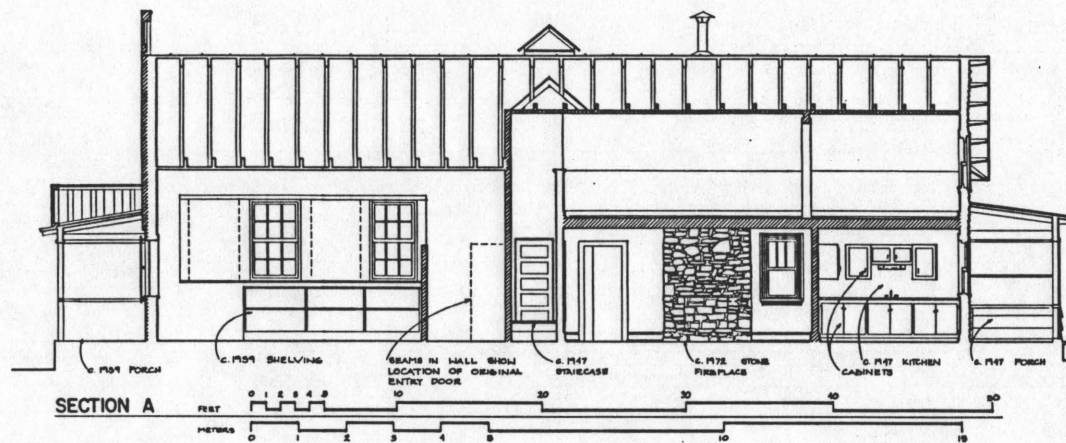
THE KELLEY SCHOOL, BUILT IN 1924, IS A ONE-STORY FRAME TWO-ROOM SCHOOL BUILDING LOCATED IMMEDIATELY ADJACENT TO THE BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY. THE SCHOOL WAS ALTERED FOR USE AS A DWELLING AND STORE IN 1936 AND DURING THE FOLLOWING DECADE THE SOUTH SCHOOLROOM WAS FITTED UP AS A STORE AND THE NORTH ROOM ADAPTED FOR LIVING ACCOMMODATIONS. AS PART OF A LATER ALTERATION OF THE BUILDING IN 1947, THE NORTH ROOM WAS HEAVILY

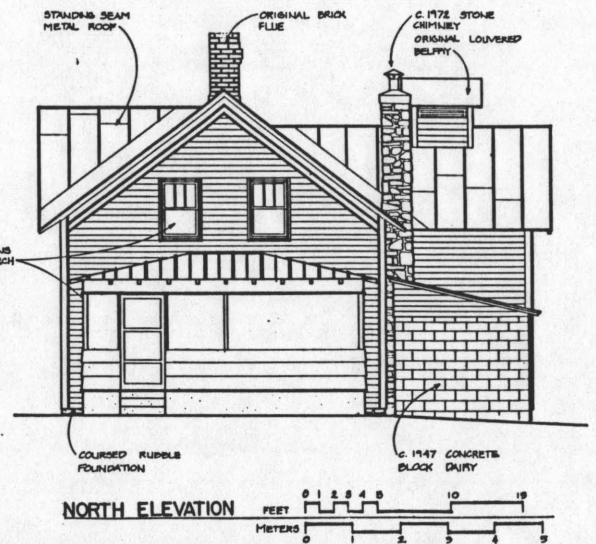
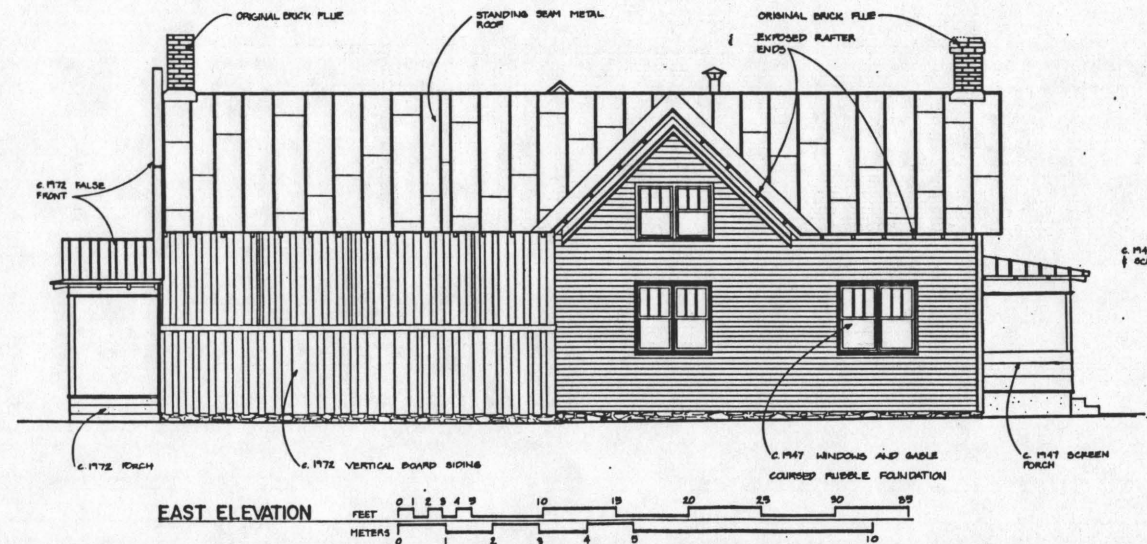
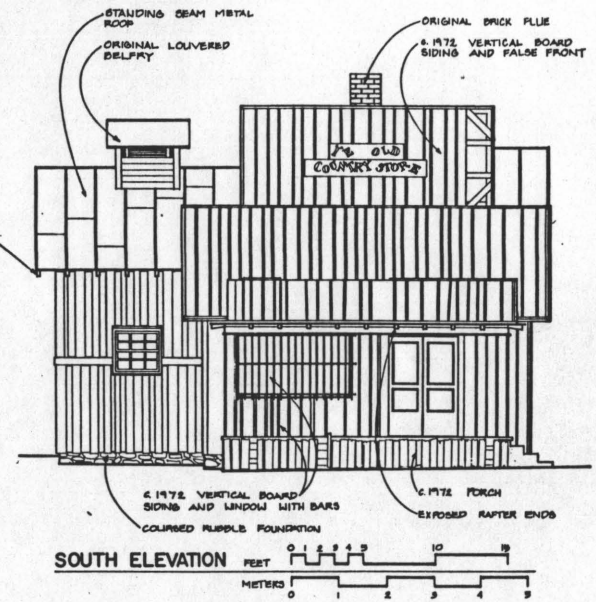
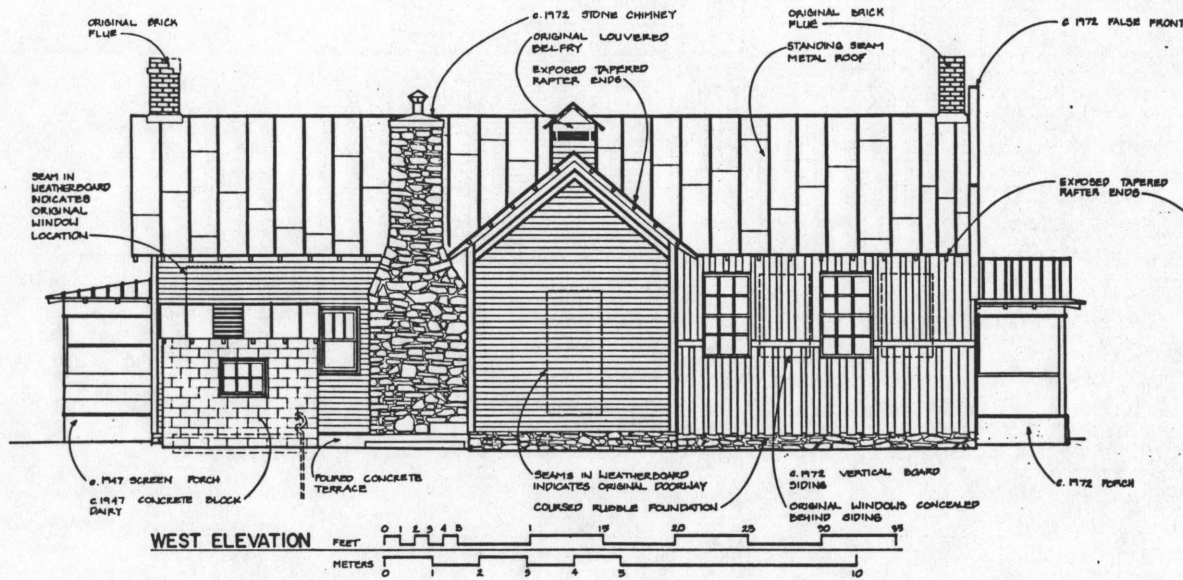
ALTERED BY THE INSERTION OF A SECOND FLOOR. THREE SUBSTANTIAL OUTBUILDINGS WERE BUILT AT THIS TIME. THE BUILDING WAS REMODELED AGAIN IN 1972, WHEN IT WAS PARTIALLY SHEATHED WITH ROUGH SAWN, VERTICAL SIDING AND USED AS A STORE CATERING TO THE INCREASED TOURIST TRAFFIC ON THE PARKWAY AND IN NEIGHBORING REGIONS. IN ALL OF THESE ALTERATIONS MANY FEATURES FROM THE EARLY SCHOOL HAVE SURVIVED.

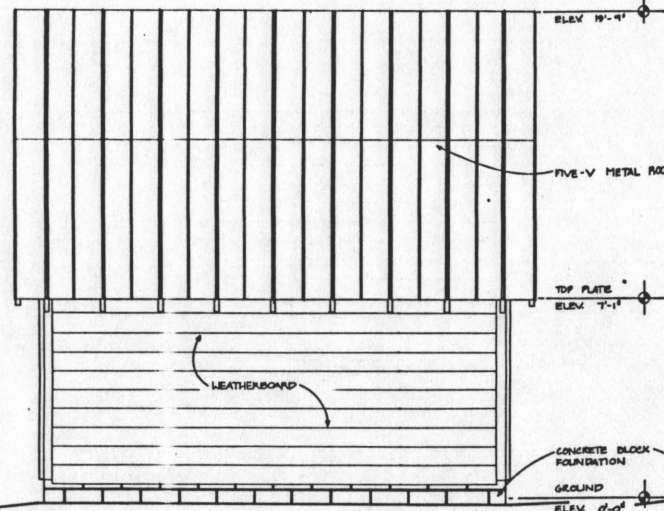
THE DOCUMENTATION OF THE KELLEY SCHOOL, IN FLOYD COUNTY, VIRGINIA, WAS UNDERTAKEN BY THE CENTER FOR APALACHIAN STUDIES AT VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY IN 1989, IN COOPERATION WITH THE BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE. THIS PROJECT WAS EXECUTED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF GIBSON WORSHAM, HISTORICAL ARCHITECT ASSISTED BY MOLLY A. OLDEN AND J. WHITE MCCARTHY IN 1989.

LOCATION MAP

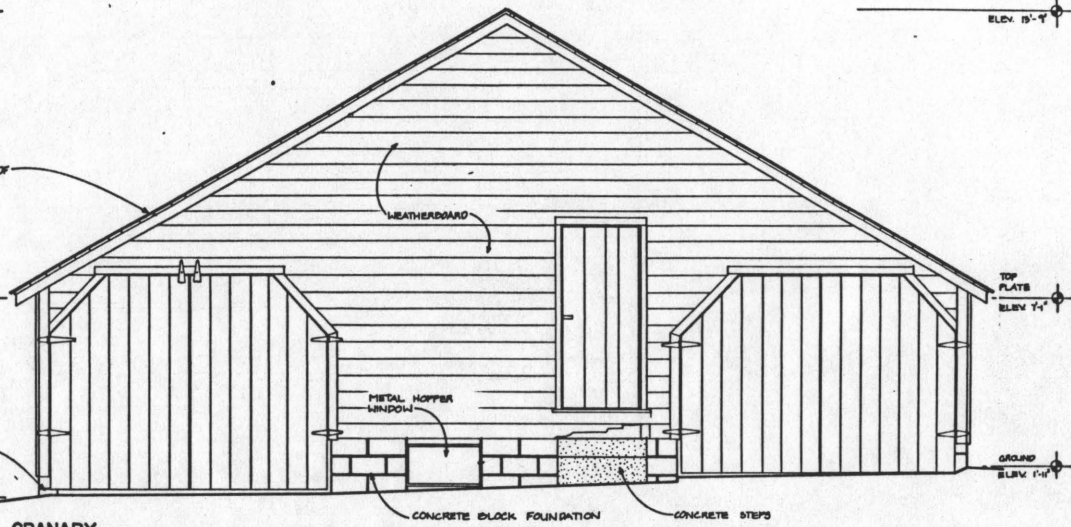




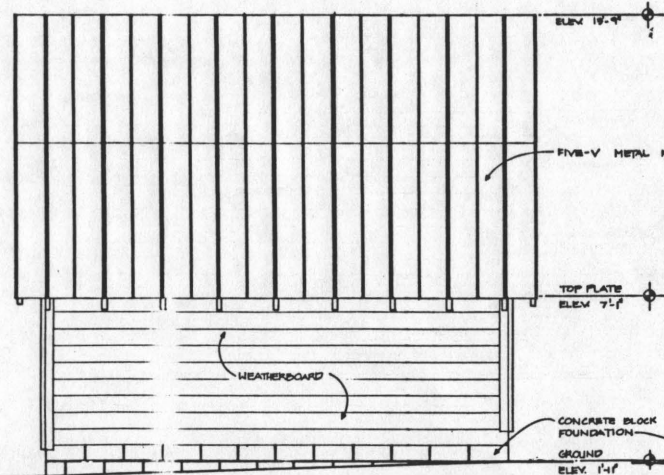




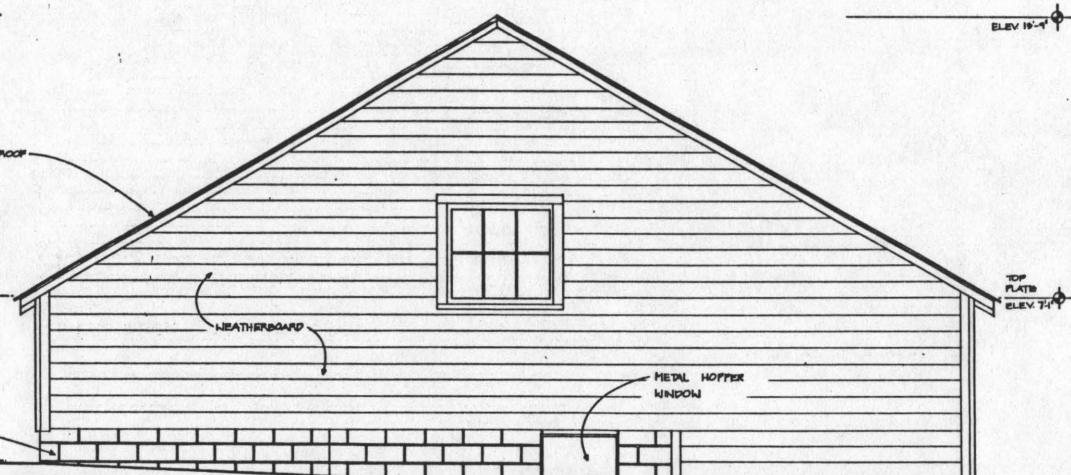
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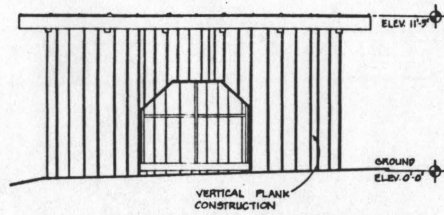
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WEST ELEVATION



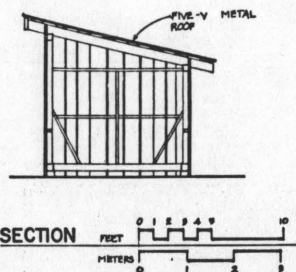
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SOUTH ELEVATION



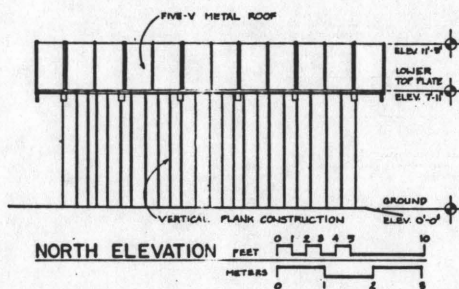
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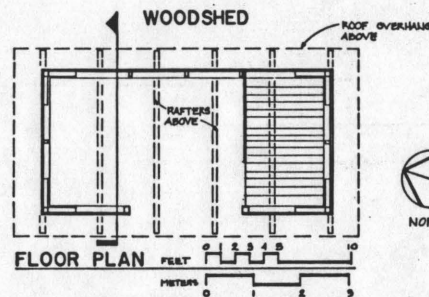
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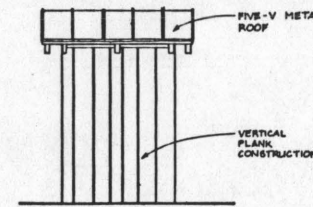
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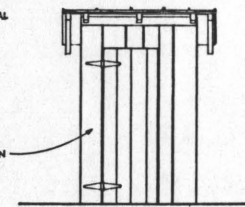
FLOOR PLAN



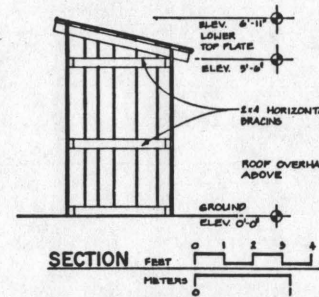
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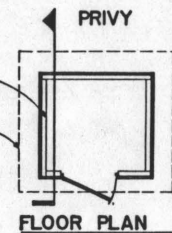
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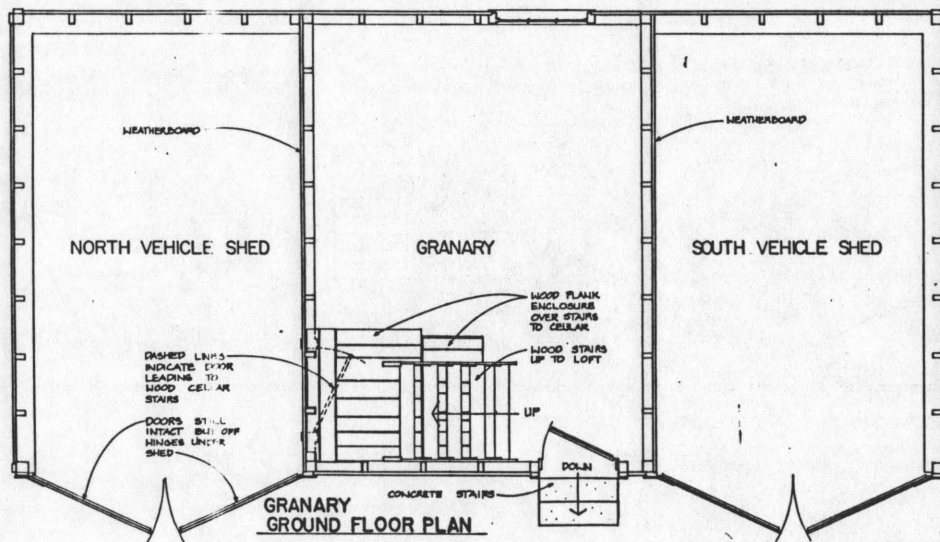
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FLOOR PLAN



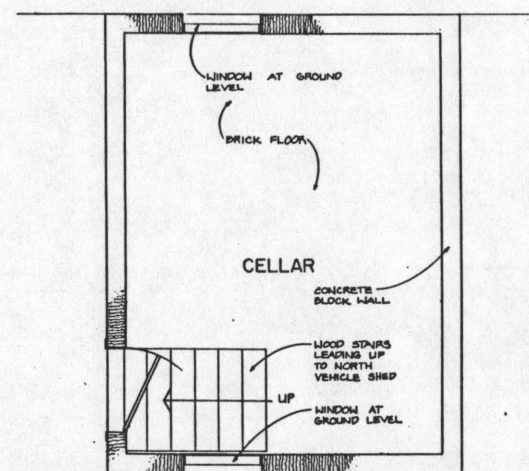
NORTH



GRANARY GROUND FLOOR PLAN



NORTH



GRANARY CELLAR PLAN

DESIGNED BY J. M. MCCARTHY II, 1989

DESIGNED BY GERRON WOBHAM, ARCHITECT

DESIGNED BY GERRON WOBHAM, ARCHITECT

NAME AND ADDRESS OF PROPERTY OWNER

KELLEY SCHOOL

BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY, CHECK VIC., MILFORD Hts., FLOYD COUNTY, VIRGINIA

DATE OF SURVEY

HISTORIC AMERICAN

REPORT 5 OF 5

DATE OF SURVEY

HISTORIC AMERICAN

REPORT 5 OF 5