



**PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM (PIF) for INDIVIDUAL PROPERTIES**

*Note: PIFs are prepared by applicants and evaluated by DHR staff and the State Review Board based on information known at the time of preparation. Recommendations concerning PIFs are subject to change if new information becomes available.*

DHR No. (to be completed by DHR staff) 070-5199

**1. General Property Information**

Property name: Indian Knob School

Property address: Salem Highway (Route 8)

City or Town: Stuart (vicinity)

Zip code: 24171

Name of the Independent City or County where the property is located: Patrick County

Category of Property (choose only one of the following):

Building  Site  Structure  Object

**2. Physical Aspects**

Acreage: 1.0

Setting (choose only one of the following):

Urban  Suburban  Town  Village  Hamlet  Rural

Briefly describe the property's overall location and setting, including any notable landscape features:

The former schoolhouse stands on a forested tract on the north side of Salem Highway (Rt. 58) about 420 feet east of the western terminus of Minnies Chapel Loop (road); six miles south-southeast of the Town of Stuart, and 7/10-mile north of the North Carolina state line. Set back 145 feet from the road on a small knoll, the building is barely visible from the road during warmer months due to heavy forest overgrowth; and with a rusted gray-brown roof it is almost undetectable in current aerial imagery.

### 3. Architectural Description

Architectural Style(s): Two-classroom School

If the property was designed by an architect, landscape architect, engineer, or other professional, please list here: Unknown

If the builder is known, please list here: n/a

Date of construction (can be approximate): c. 1932

#### **Narrative Description (Please do not exceed one page in describing the property):**

Briefly describe the property's general characteristics, such as its current use (and historic use if different), as well as the primary building or structure on the property (such as a house, store, mill, factory, depot, bridge, etc.). Include the materials and method(s) of construction, physical appearance and condition (exterior and interior), and any additions or other major alterations.

The former Indian Knob School is a one-story weatherboarded frame building on an uncoursed fieldstone foundation. It has a medium-pitch hip roof clad with V-crimp sheet metal. The front (south) elevation has a wide inset entry porch flanked by a large window opening to each side, lighting the small rooms in the front part of the interior. The inset porch was later sealed in by a light weatherboarded wall that has collapsed, and the original rear wall of the porch, which likely had two doorways, was removed to create more interior space. The north (rear) elevation has no doorways, but six individual window openings at consistent intervals. There is a gaping hole in the foundation near the northwest corner and another at the northeast corner. The east and west side elevations have no fenestration other than a group of three window openings separated by narrow mullions, located off-center to the north, lighting the two roughly equal-sized classrooms that were separated by a folding divider. The east room has an elevated performance stage. In general, the interior retains integrity despite years of poor treatment, neglect, and vandalism. A brick interior flue chimney that served two woodstoves (one per classroom) is centered on the rear wall, the floor around it completely deteriorated, leaving a large hole. The small room in the southwest corner of the building, which could have been a cloak room or office, is the least-disturbed part of the interior. It retains its four walls, five-panel door, and bead-board walls and ceiling. An old upright piano, in poor condition, resides in the northwest corner and a collection of old school desks is found near the center of the classroom space.

#### Detailed Description (by John Reynolds, Patrick County Historical Society)

The Indian Knob School is a one-story wood frame building with a rock foundation sited on a one acre lot about seven miles south of Stuart, VA, on the north side of Salem Highway (Route 8 South) going towards Lawsonville, NC. It is approximately 100 ft. from the highway and a recently constructed pull-off or loop driveway that provides limited parking for access to the site and building.

The former school building (approximately 30' x 40') is the only structure standing on the property at this time, though former students of Indian Knob recall that there were two outhouses for use by the students and staff.

The building has a basement or large crawl space underneath which one former

student says was used as a play area by older students. This basement area does not seem to be accessible for such use at this time because very little room for anyone to stand now exists, even for small children.

The condition of the building overall is poor. All 14 of the large windows are missing and the one entrance door is off its hinges lying inside the building. The tin roof on the building, while mostly intact, has significant damage around the one central brick chimney. As a result of water leaking around the chimney, the wood floor underneath the base has rotted away from 6 to 8 feet around the chimney. This makes it unsafe to walk near the chimney area.

A wall to the right of the entrance door to the building has partially collapsed inwards. It is thought that this wall may have been added to enclose a portion of a porch that may have existed on the front of the building.

The exterior wood siding needs repair in many places and needs repainting overall, as well. The interior paneling needs some repairs and repainting as well. The floor around the chimney, as previously noted, needs serious attention as do some other areas of the floor. All the windows will need to be replaced. The ceiling needs repair around the chimney and in some other places. A small office room in the left front of the building needs repainting and repairs also.

We presume the current building was constructed in the early 1930s and had no electricity, but some basic lighting was added later. Apparently, it has never had any indoor plumbing, or any water supply other than a spring, according to former students. This would have been behind the building down a hill, but that source has not been located as of the date of this application. The site is overgrown to some extent with brush and trees. Some of the overgrowth has been removed by the owner and by local volunteers, but more clearing is needed. More trash and scrap metal need to be removed to provide safe access also.

Please list any outbuildings or secondary resources or major landscape features (such as barns, sheds, dam and mill pond, storage tanks, scales, railroad spurs, etc.), including their condition and their estimated construction dates.

There are no extant secondary resources associated with Indian Knob School.

#### 4. Property's History and Significance (Please do not exceed one page)

Briefly explain the property's historic importance, such as significant events, persons, and/or families associated with the property. If the property is important for its architecture, engineering, landscape architecture, or other aspects of design, please include a brief explanation of this aspect.

The building is one of the last surviving remnants of African American history from the era before school consolidation and desegregation in Patrick County; and oral tradition holds that the building was used as a church by an African American congregation for a time. According to a recent news article, "The county school board purchased the site in 1932 and a two-room school soon opened to offer instruction in grades one through six for Black students. The school operated until 1952 when Patrick Central School [070-5200] opened offering twelve grades of instruction for Black students (the first high school for Blacks in the county). Indian Knob School is believed to be the oldest standing school for Blacks in Patrick County." The article notes two local residents, Willie May Ware and Bill Hines, who remembered attending Indian Knob School.

The extant building has a very school-specific design, although the site is was identified on 1926 and 1928 topographic maps as that of Indian Knob Church, with no mention of a school in close proximity. It seems likely that the school was built in 1932 on the same site as a church that had been recently demolished. Other schools appear on both maps, such as Penn School--across a small drainage to the east of Indian Knob, almost halfway to the crossroads called Palmetto. Other schools were being built with Rosenwald funds in nearby areas, such as the Dry Bridge School [120-5034] built 1929-30, and Grassy Creek School, built 1930-31, both in Martinsville.

While the building has been abandoned and neglected for many years and has fallen into less than fair condition, it appears to be restorable. Furthermore, it possesses sufficient integrity to convey historical significance in under Criterion A in the areas of Education, African American Ethnic History, and perhaps Social History, pending further research.

#### Historical Background (by John Reynolds, Patrick County Historical Society)

Local Black residents of the area say the Indian Knob School site was thought to have been an Indian (Native American) burial ground in the distant past, hence the name, but no archaeological work has been done on the site to verify that story. At some point in the early 20th century the site seems to have been home to a church also, according to a 1928 U.S.G.S. map (surveyed in 1926) that shows "Indian Knob Ch." in what appears to be the exact same location. However, the current building does not appear to have been a church or, at least, does not resemble any other church buildings in the area. Its design looks similar to some of the "Rosenwald Schools" that were built in the early 20th century but whether it was one of those built with funding through that charitable foundation is not known from research conducted thus far. It was, in fact, a two-room school divided by a partition with a small office for the teacher or principal in the front left part of the building.

The land known as "the Indian Knob Church property" was purchased by Patrick County from Minnie and J.W. Shockley on May 16, 1932, according to deeds in the county clerk's office. On January 29, 1953, the County of Patrick sold the one-acre site

then known as the "Indian Knob School property" to Grover Wigginton. From the above property transfer date, it might be assumed that the years in between were those in which the school operated. The property changed hands several more times after 1953 until the current owner, Michael W. Hylton, purchased it on October 26, 2022. Indian Knob is thought to be the last elementary school for Blacks in the county that still exists in a state that could be preserved. (One other such school in the SW part of Patrick County has virtually collapsed and seems beyond saving.)

Prior to 1952, only elementary schools were available for Black students in the county, and Indian Knob was one that served many children who lived in the SE section of Patrick County. Former students, now in their eighties and nineties, recall walking several miles to attend the school which taught first through seventh grades. These surviving former students recall the school and its teachers with fondness and would like very much to preserve this one remaining school that served Blacks during the era of segregation for posterity.

In Patrick County, no formal recognition of any historic site dedicated to the lives of its African American citizens now exists except for a cemetery for the "enslaved and their descendants" on the site of the Reynolds Homestead (a.k.a. Rock Spring Plantation), the pre-Civil War birthplace of tobacco magnate, R.J. Reynolds, located near Critz that is now owned and managed by the Virginia Tech Foundation. Local residents of the area recall that after the school closed about 1952, a date that coincides with the construction of ONE school for ALL Blacks in the county (Patrick Central School with grades 1 through 12), the building became a "juke joint." For several years music, dancing, and drinking occurred in and around the former school building, evidence of the latter use being the large number of alcoholic beverage containers found on the site when volunteers were recently cleaning up the grounds.

Please list all sources of information used to research the history of the property:

- Deeds in Patrick County Clerks Office.
- Informal interviews with former students.
- USGS topographic map, 1928.
- "Political committee, historical society clean up historic school site." The Enterprise, May 1, 2024. <https://theenterprise.net/political-committee-historical-society-clean-up-historic-school-site/>
- On-site interview of local citizen James Hines, whose siblings attended Indian Knob School, by Mike Pulice on 7/30/2024.

Other sources consulted:

- Indian Knob *does not* appear on a list of 366 Rosenwald Schools built in Virginia resulting from Preservation Virginia's 2019 survey: <https://preservationvirginia.org/our-work/architectural-rosenwald-school-survey/>
- Indian Knob *does not* appear in the Library of VA's digital collections including School Buildings Service photographs.

**5. Property Ownership** (Check as many categories as apply): N/A

Private:  x  Public\Local   Public\State   Public\Federal

**Current Legal Owner(s) of the Property** (If the property has more than one owner, please list each below or on an additional sheet.)

name/title:  Michael Hylton, sole owner

organization:

street & number:  1767 Frank Joyce Road

city or town:  Sandy Ridge  state:  NC  zip code:  27046

e-mail:  mike.sapogrande.hylton@gmail.com  telephone:  336-593-1083

Legal Owner's Signature:  Michael Hylton

Date:  11/4/2024

**• • Signature required for processing all applications for privately-owned properties. • •**

In the event of corporate ownership you must provide the name and title of the appropriate contact person.

Contact person:  N/A

Daytime Telephone:

**Applicant Information** (Individual completing form if other than legal owner of property)

name/title:  John Reynolds, Patrick County Historical Society, and Mike Pulice, DHR Western Region architectural historian

street & number:

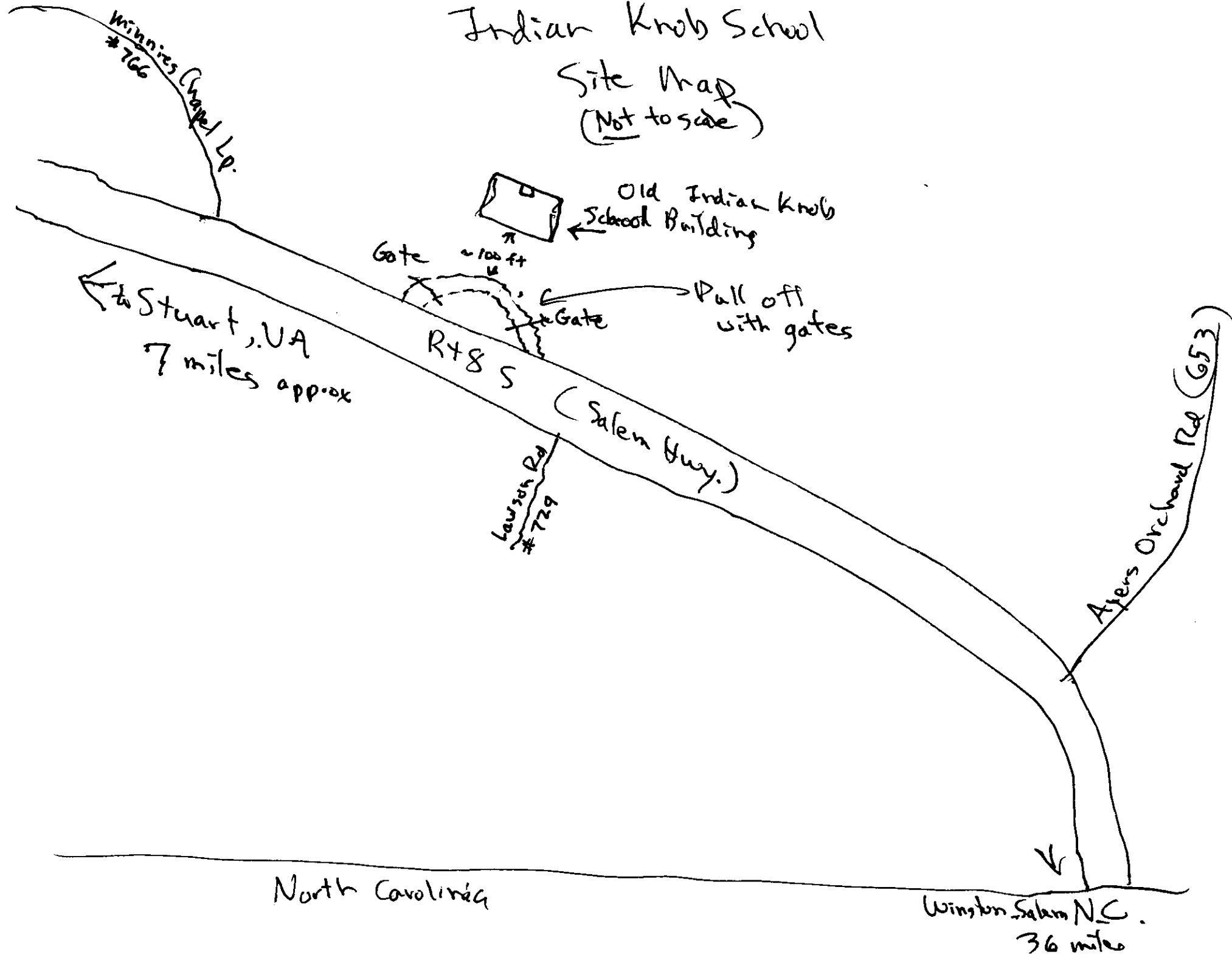
city or town:   state:   zip code:

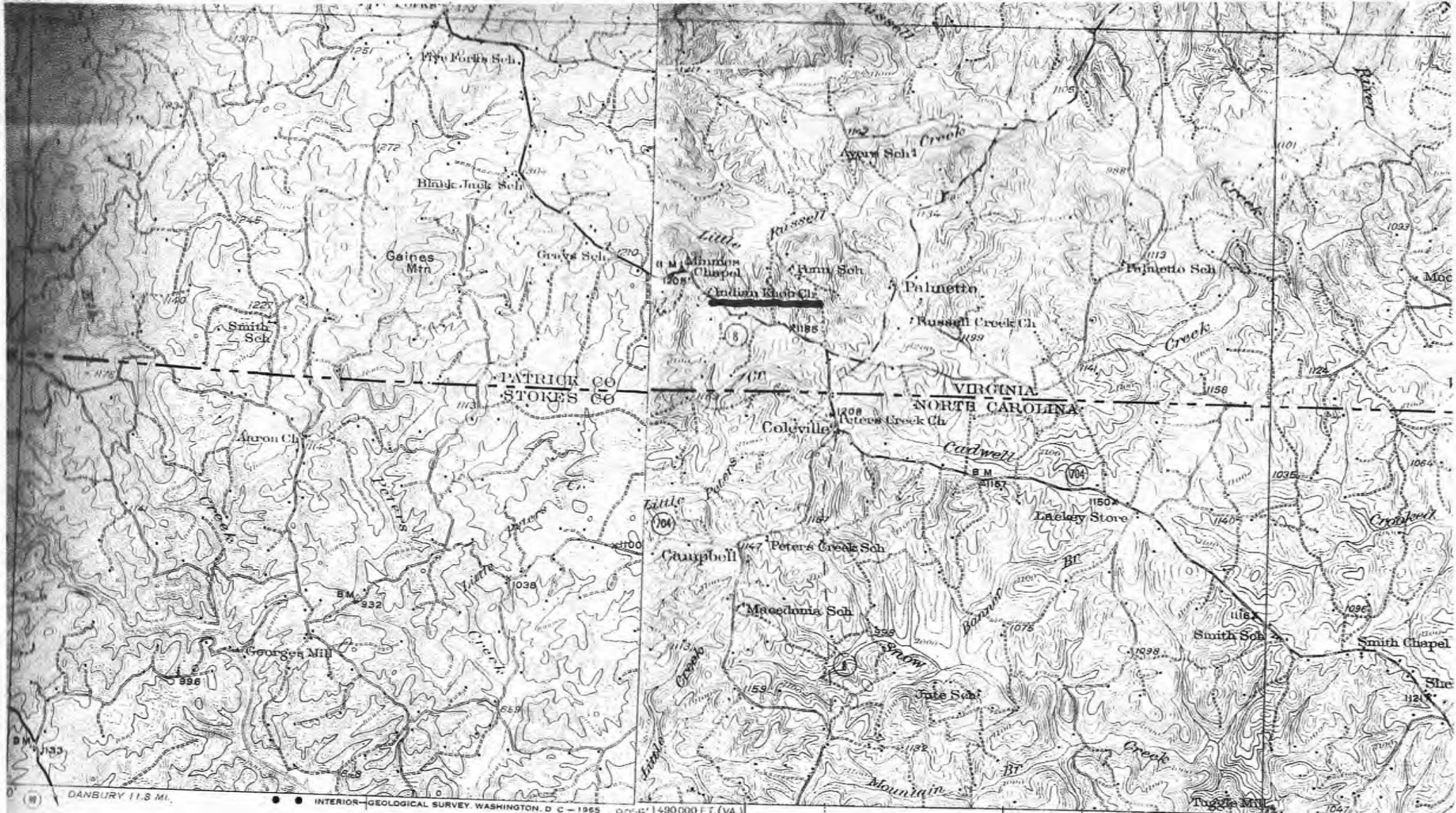
e-mail:  michael.pulice@dhr.virginia.gov  telephone:

Date:  11/4/2024

# Indian Knob School

Site Map  
(Not to scale)





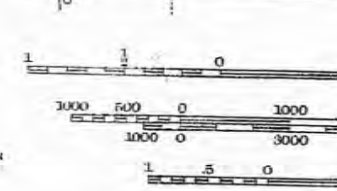
Topography by J. I. Gayetty, T. F. Slaughter,  
H. Runyan, and G. A. Mock  
Surveyed in 1926 5.3 MI. TO N.C. 89  
DANBURY 8.2 MI.

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty 4 LANE 6 LANE Light-duty  
Medium-duty 4 LANE 6 LANE Unimproved dirt  
U. S. Route State Route

STUART, VA-N.C.  
N3630-W8015/15  
1928

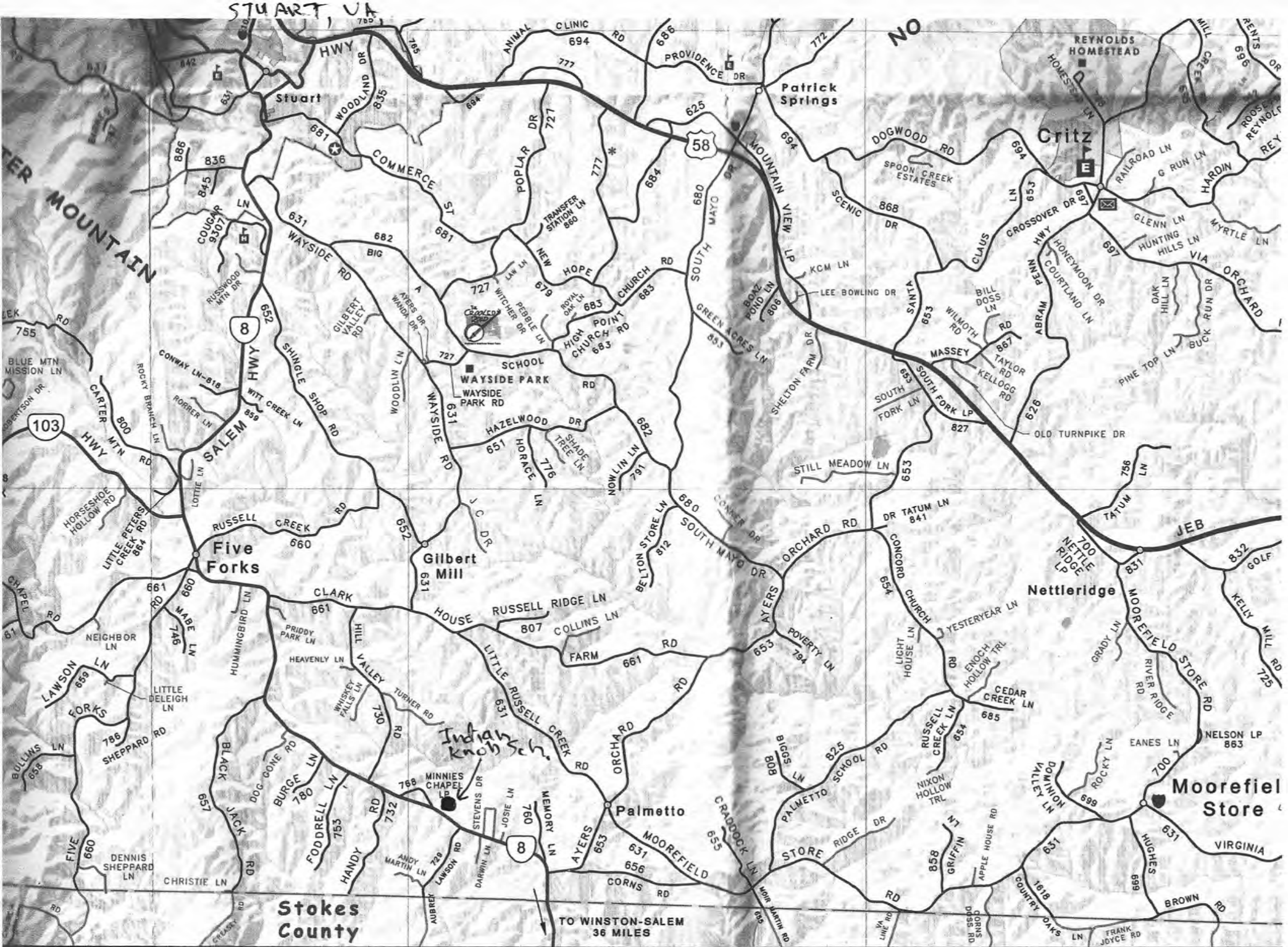
4 MILES  
1 FEET  
Road Classification 1945  
Dependable hard-surface  
Heavy-duty road  
Secondary hard-surface  
all weather road  
Dry weather roads  
Loose-surface, graded  
Unsurfaced, graded  
Dirt road  
U. S. Route  
State Route  
More than two lanes indicated along road with tick at point of change.



Same location as  
"Indian Knob Ch"  
on this map  
1394 Salem Hwy, Stuart, VA 24171  
(Rt 8 South approx 7 mile south of Stuart, VA)

FOR SALE BY  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING



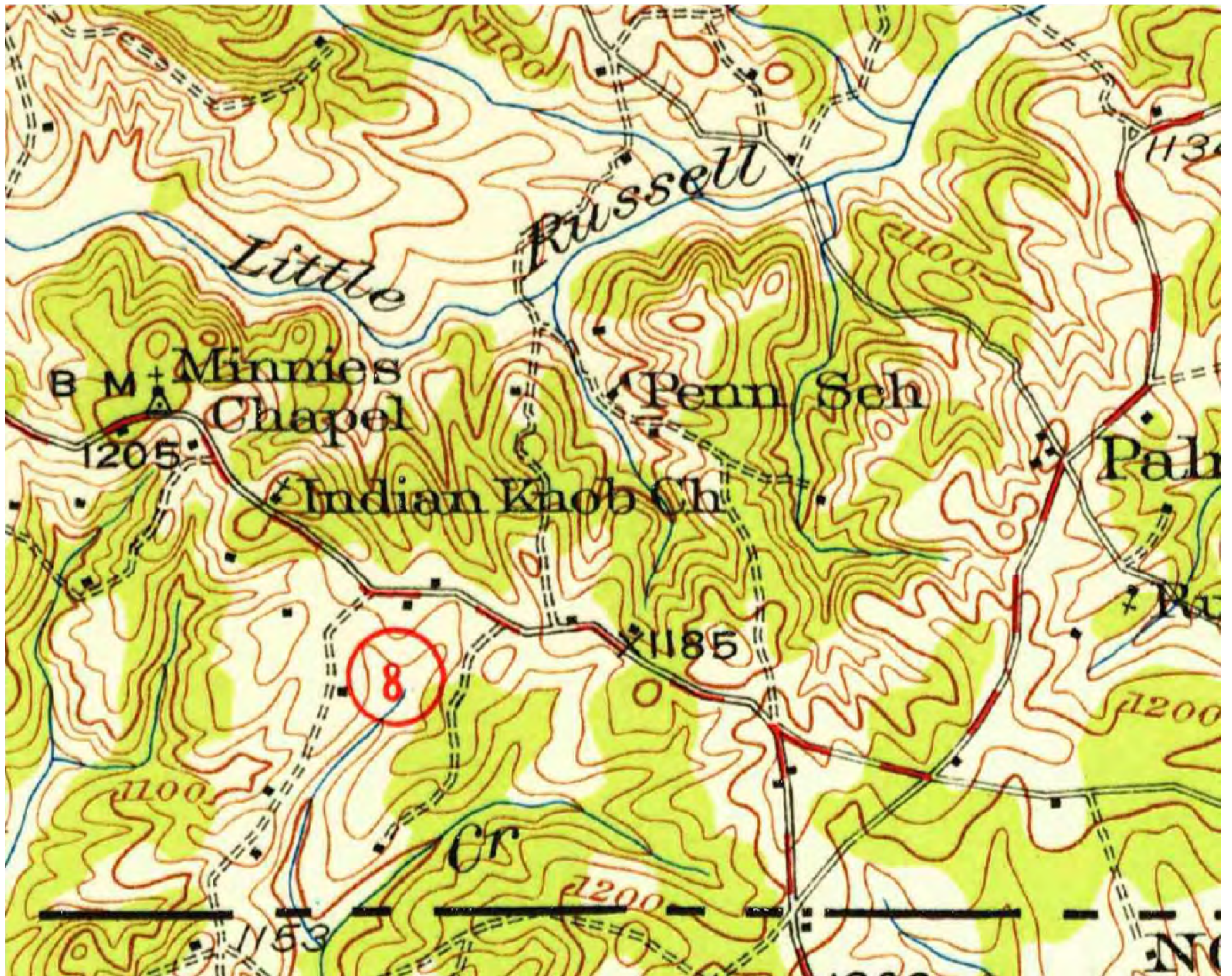


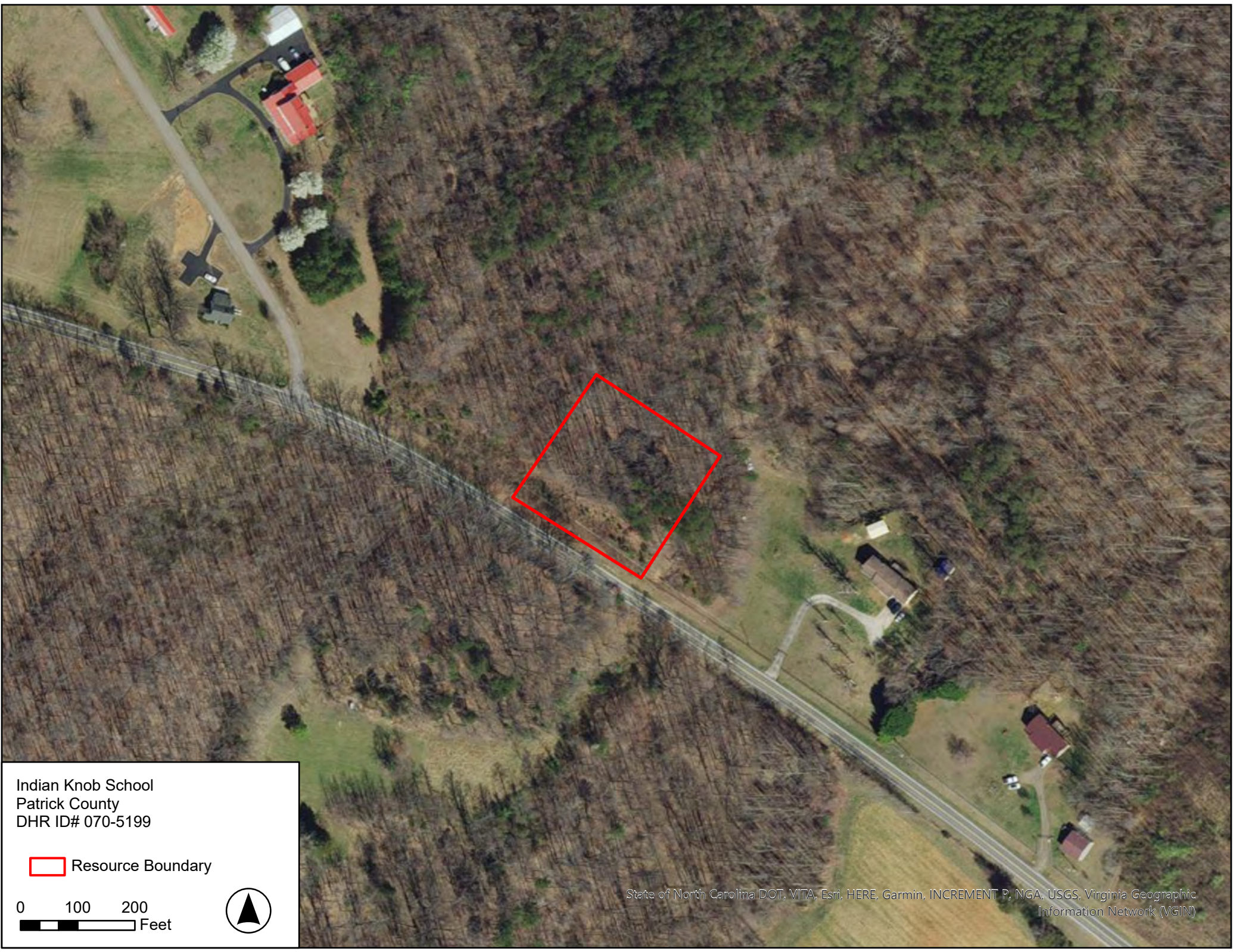
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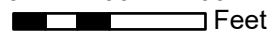
2020 - MAP OF PATRICK COUNTY, VA - Office of Tourism/Chamber of Commerce





Indian Knob School  
Patrick County  
DHR ID# 070-5199

 Resource Boundary

0 100 200  
 Feet



































GO GO CLUB

LARRY PENNA LOVER  
L.P. L.P.  
M.R. B.M.

SOUL CLUB  
My Two My Love

SOUL CLUB  
MARRIAGE

Will













