

February 3, 2025

Hello, everyone!

My name is Omar Zafra, a resident of Hendersonville and Henderson County and a board member on the Hendersonville Environmental Sustainability Board. Today, however, I am not here in any official capacity. I am here as a neighbor, a community member, and a grieving witness to a tragedy that has weighed heavily on all of our hearts—the lives lost in the devastation of Hurricane Helene.

I live just one block away from where four mobile homes were tragically washed away, claiming the lives of 3 of our neighbors in an unthinkable disaster. Among those lost were Phyllis Matherson, Michael G. Matherson, and Angie Maybin Walker—beloved members of our community who should still be with us today.

For Beverly Maybin Miller, the surviving sister of Phyllis and Angie, this tragedy has been more than just a loss—it has been an unbearable, ongoing nightmare. Unable to afford a proper burial, she relied on the generosity of our community through a GoFundMe campaign just to cover the cost of cremation. She never had the chance to provide her sisters with the farewell or decoration they deserved. Every week, she returns to the corner of Balfour Road and Clear Creek Road, placing flowers on the ground where her sister's mobile home once stood, where they took their last breaths. Unfortunately, instead of a peaceful place to mourn, she is met with wreckage—twisted metal, shattered memories, and a constant reminder of the horror that unfolded that day.

This land, located at 294 Balfour Rd, remains frozen in devastation. It sits in a known flood hazard zone and flood plain, where Clear Creek and Mud Creek collide together—a perilous place that should never have been developed or used for housing. The tragic consequences of that decision are now painfully clear. I can tell you from first hand experience those mobile homes didn't have a chance. Unfortunately, they used to sit on a plot of land where two creeks intersect, Mud Creek and Clear Creek. The result was those two creeks collided and the water rose 15-18 feet swallowing those mobile homes and washing them away several hundred feet leaving debris behind in what still today looks much like a war zone and claiming the lives of our neighbors. This site has become a scar on our community, a daily wound that cannot heal while the debris remains and the constant reminder of the tragedy remains in seeing the homes wrapped around trees were our neighbors were trapped inside.

We cannot leave this place as it is. We must do the right thing and clear up the debris to allow Beverly, neighbors, and the community a chance to start the healing process.

We are calling on the Henderson County leadership—the County Board of Commissioners, County Manager, and County officials—to take immediate steps to help us. We are hoping the County can help us with the following:

- 1. Remove the debris immediately.** No family should have to relive their trauma every time they pass by this site.
- 2. Work with the State and FEMA to use the Hazard Mitigation Program to reduce future damages and to work towards Acquisition through the Hazard Mitigation Grant for Acquisition to prevent future development.** No one should ever be placed in harm's way on this hazardous flood plane again.
- 3. Create a memorial park.** This land should be transformed into a space of remembrance, healing, decoration, and reflection—a green space where families can mourn in peace, where the lives lost in our County are honored, and where nature can reclaim what was never meant to be built upon.

February 3, 2025

For four months, we have tried to find solutions, contact officials, and push for action—but every effort has hit a wall. We have contacted the Henderson County EOC and EM office. We spoke at other public meetings. We located the surviving property owner, Gary Curtis Holbert, who has expressed a willingness to explore solutions.

We plead with Henderson County to help us. Use the Hazard Mitigation Program grant to acquire the flood plain land—this land should never again be used for housing. Clear the debris that serves as a constant wound and reminder, reopening the pain for those left behind. Transform this space into something meaningful—a place of reflection, memorial and healing. Let it be a sanctuary, not a scar. For Beverly, and for the Matherson family, for the residents of Henderson County, and for the safety of our community—do not let this tragedy be forgotten and allow it to ever be repeated. Thank you for your time, your compassion, and your hopefully most important, your action.

Henderson County Property Record Card

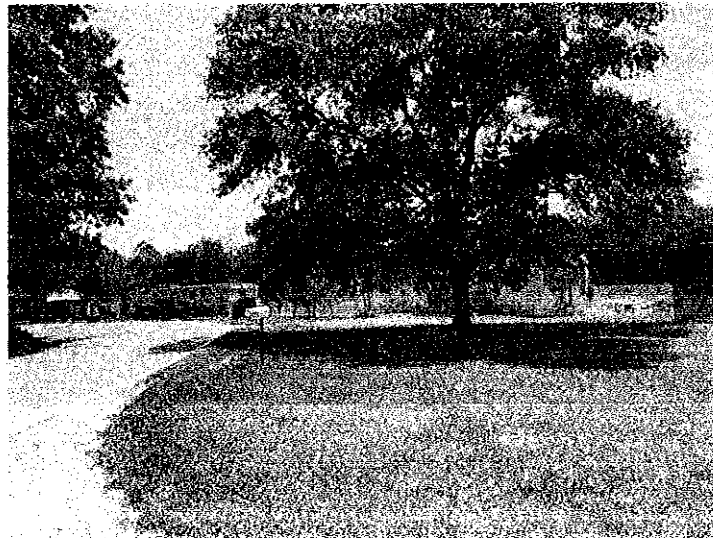
Property Summary

Tax Year: 2025

REID	105309	PIN	9569-99-0725	Property Owner	HOLBERT, GARY CURTIS;HOLBERT, JEFFREY A
Location Address	294 BALFOUR RD	Property Description	HOLBERTS CAPP A RD MHP	Owner's Mailing Address	98 WARLICK RD MILLS RIVER NC 28759

Administrative Data	Transfer Information	Property Value
Plat Book & Page	Deed Date 11/5/2024	Total Appraised Land Value \$74,800
Old Map #	Deed Book 2024CT	Total Appraised Building Value
Market Area 1007A	Deed Page 01496	Total Appraised Misc Improvements Value
Township NA	Revenue Stamps	Total Cost Value \$74,800
Planning Jurisdiction HENDERSONVILLE	Package Sale Date	Total Appraised Value - Valued By Cost \$74,800
City	Package Sale Price	Other Exemptions
Fire District MOUNTAIN HOME	Land Sale Date	Exemption Desc
Spec District	Land Sale Price	Use Value Deferred
Land Class MANU HOME PARK	Improvement Summary	Historic Value Deferred
History REID 1	Total Buildings 0	Total Deferred Value
History REID 2	Total Units 0	Total Taxable Value \$74,800
Acreage 3.48	Total Living Area 0	
Permit Date	Total Gross Leasable Area 0	
Permit #		

Photograph



Building Summary

Misc Improvements Summary

Card #	Unit Quantity	Measure	Type	Base Price	Size Adj Factor	Eff Year	Phys Depr (% Bad)	Econ Depr (% Bad)	Funct Depr (% Bad)	Common Interest (% Good)	Value
No Data											

Total Misc Improvements Value Assessed:

Land Summary

Zoning	Soil Class	Description	Size	Rate	Size Adj. Factor	Land Adjustment	Land Value
R-20		RESIDENTIAL BUILDING	1.00 BY THE ACRE PRICE	\$45,000	1		\$45,000
R-20		RESIDUAL RESIDENTIAL	2.48 BY THE ACRE PRICE	\$12,000			\$29,800

Total Land Value Assessed: \$74,800

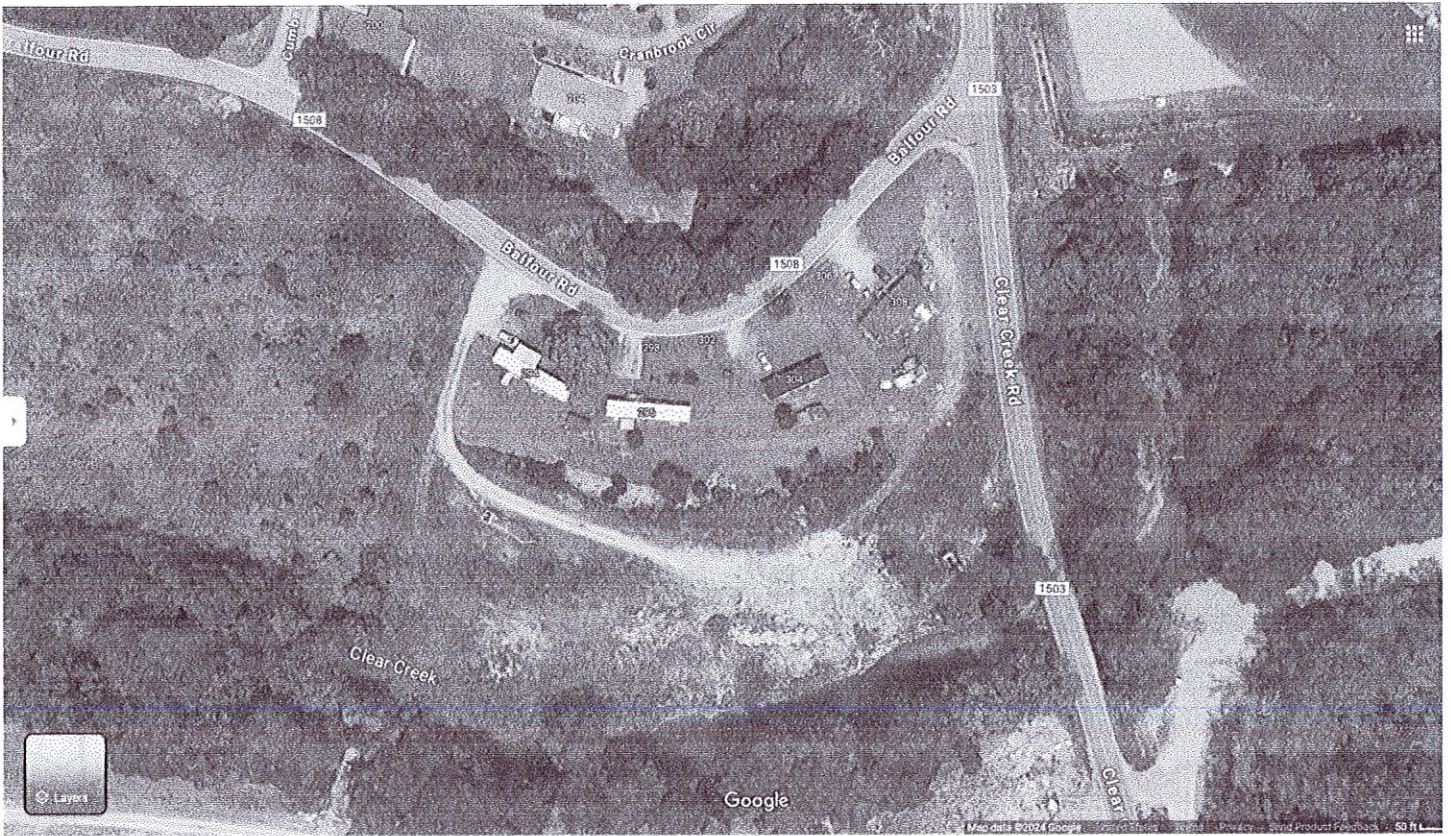
Ownership History

	Owner Name	Deed Type	% Ownership	Stamps	Sale Price	Book	Page	Deed Date
Current	HOLBERT, GARY CURTIS/ HOLBERT, JEFFREY A	D/C	50, 50	0		2024CT	01496	11/5/2024
1 Back	HOLBERT, CURTIS ANDREW	WILL	100	0		2024CT	01935	12/1/2023
2 Back	HOLBERT, CURTIS ANDREW/ HOLBERT, JUANITA M	GWD	100	0		000897	00729	6/4/1996
3 Back	HOLBERT, CURTIS ANDREW/ HOLBERT, JUANITA M	GWD	100	0		000897	00729	6/4/1996
4 Back	HOLBERT, CURTIS A & WIFE	GWD	100	0		000546	00501	9/29/1976
5 Back	HOLBERT, CURTIS A ET UX	GWD	100	0		00001A	01839	9/29/1976

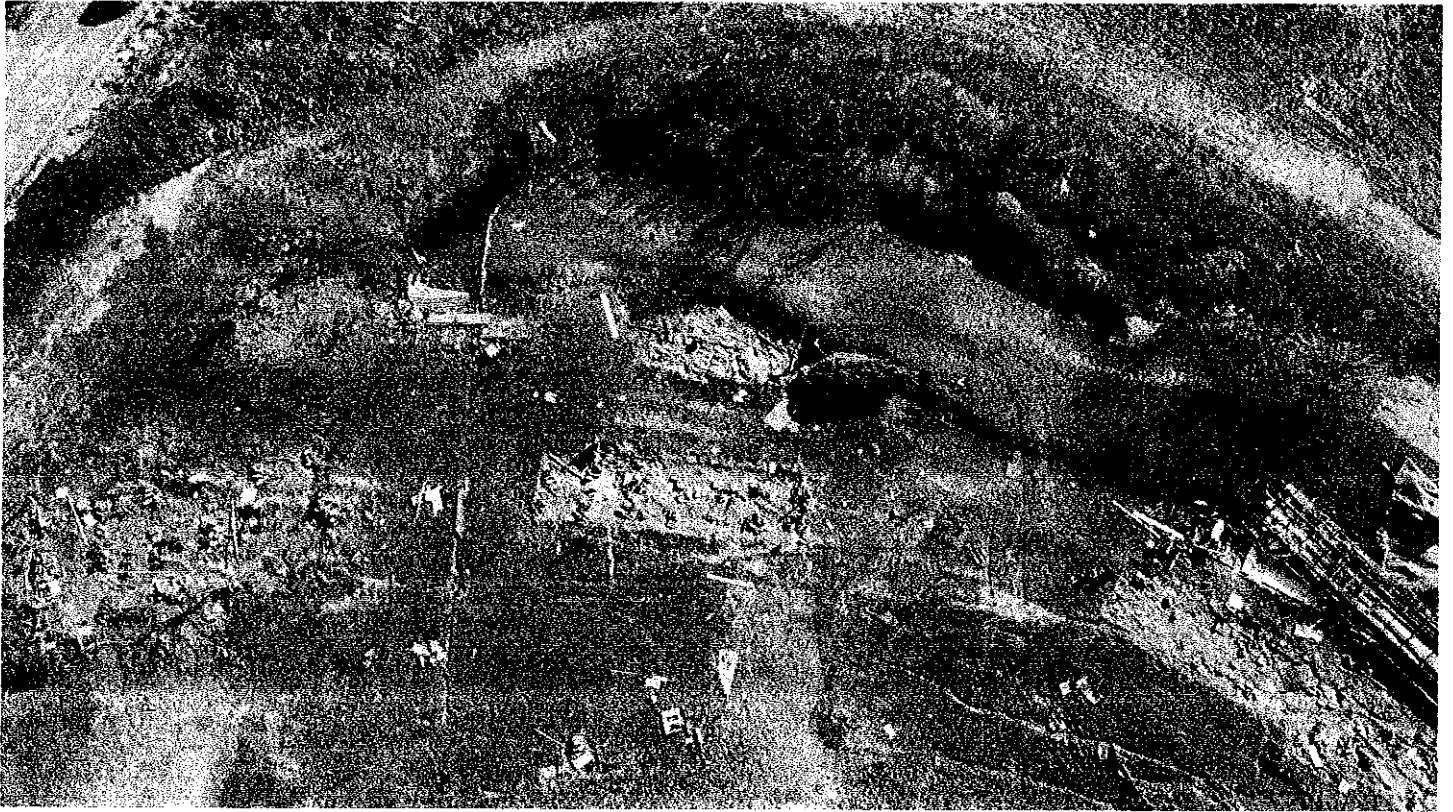
Notes Summary

Building Card	Date	Line	Notes
No Data			

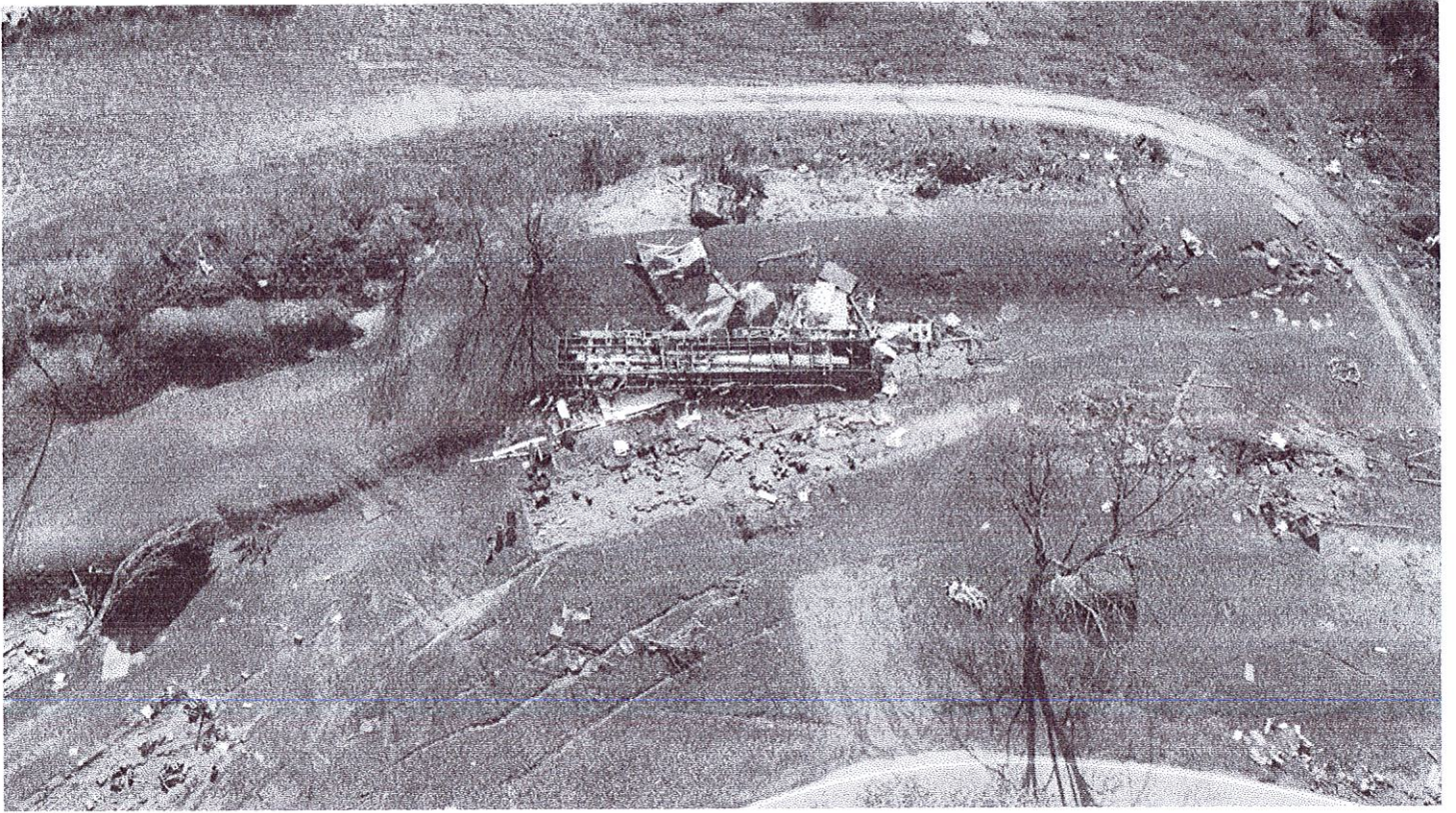




BEFORE



AFTER HURRICANE HELENE



AFTER HURRICANE HELENE

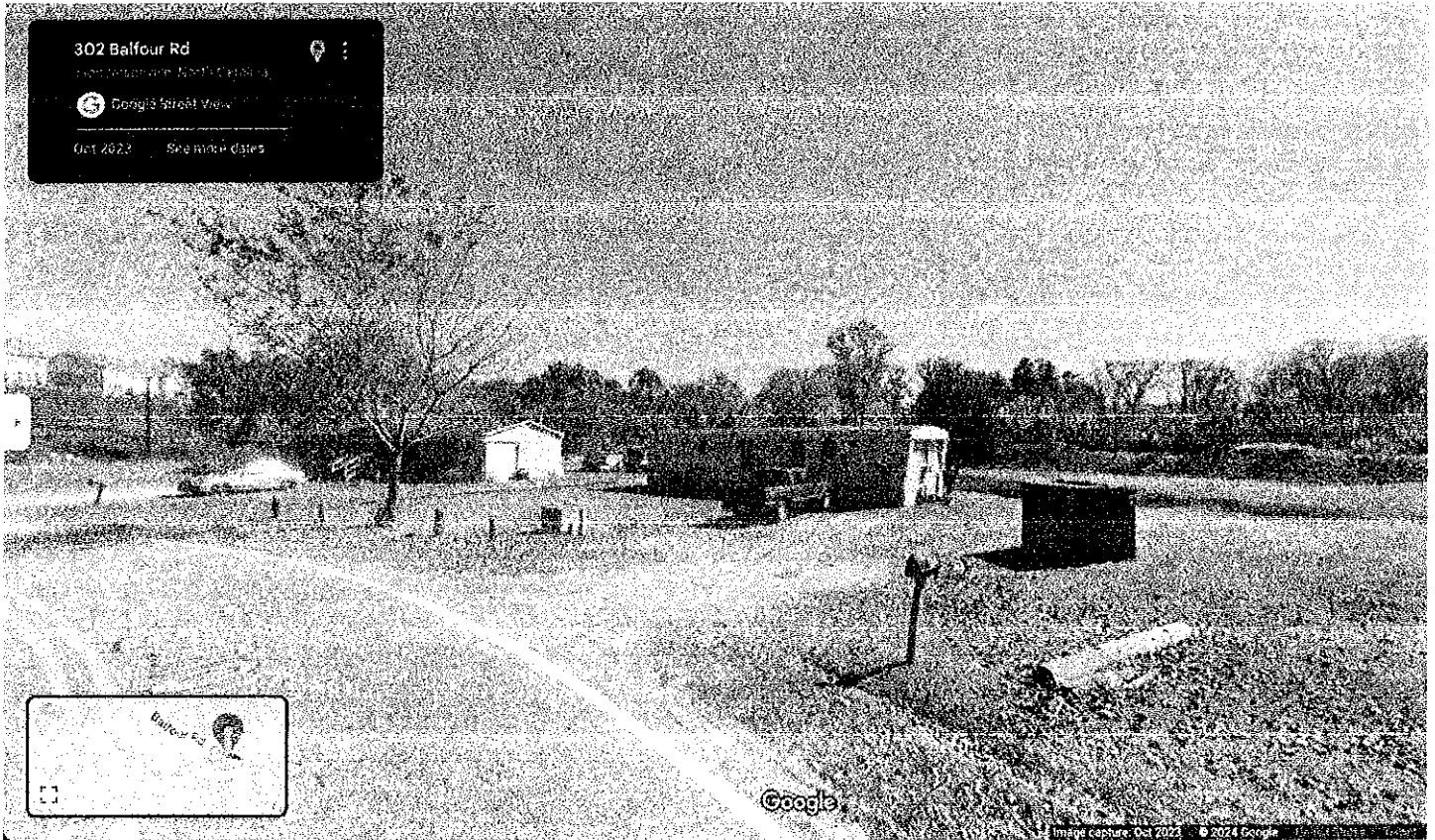
294 BALFOUR RD, HENDERSONVILLE, NC
GOOGLE STREET VIEW ON OCTOBER 2023



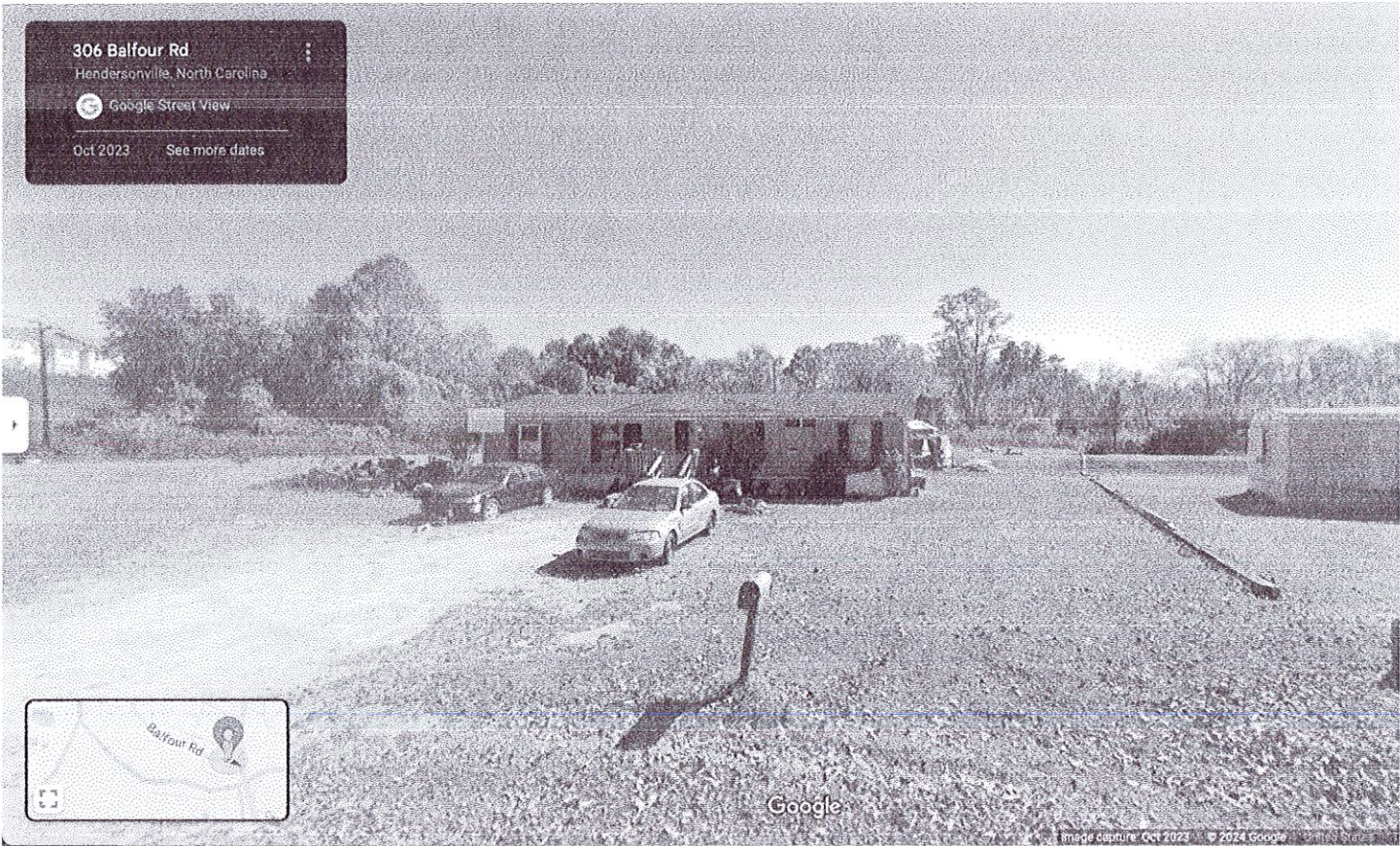
298 BALFOUR RD, HENDERSONVILLE, NC
GOOGLE STREET VIEW ON OCTOBER 2023



302 BALFOUR RD, HENDERSONVILLE, NC
GOOGLE STREET VIEW ON OCTOBER 2023



306 BALFOUR RD, HENDERSONVILLE, NC
GOOGLE STREET VIEW ON OCTOBER 2023



306 Balfour Rd
Hendersonville, North Carolina
Google Street View
Oct 2023 See more dates



Google

Image capture: Oct 2023 © 2024 Google

HOME ADDRESS 306 BALFOUR RD
COMPLETELY WASHED AWAY HUNDREDS OF FEET
FROM ORIGINAL LOCATION



HURRICANE HELENE
SEPTEMBER 27, 2024
FLOOD IN CLEAR CREEK
VISIBLE FLOODED AND WASHED AWAY MOBILE HOMES
LOCATED BETWEEN
306 BALFOUR RD TO 294 BALFOUR RD

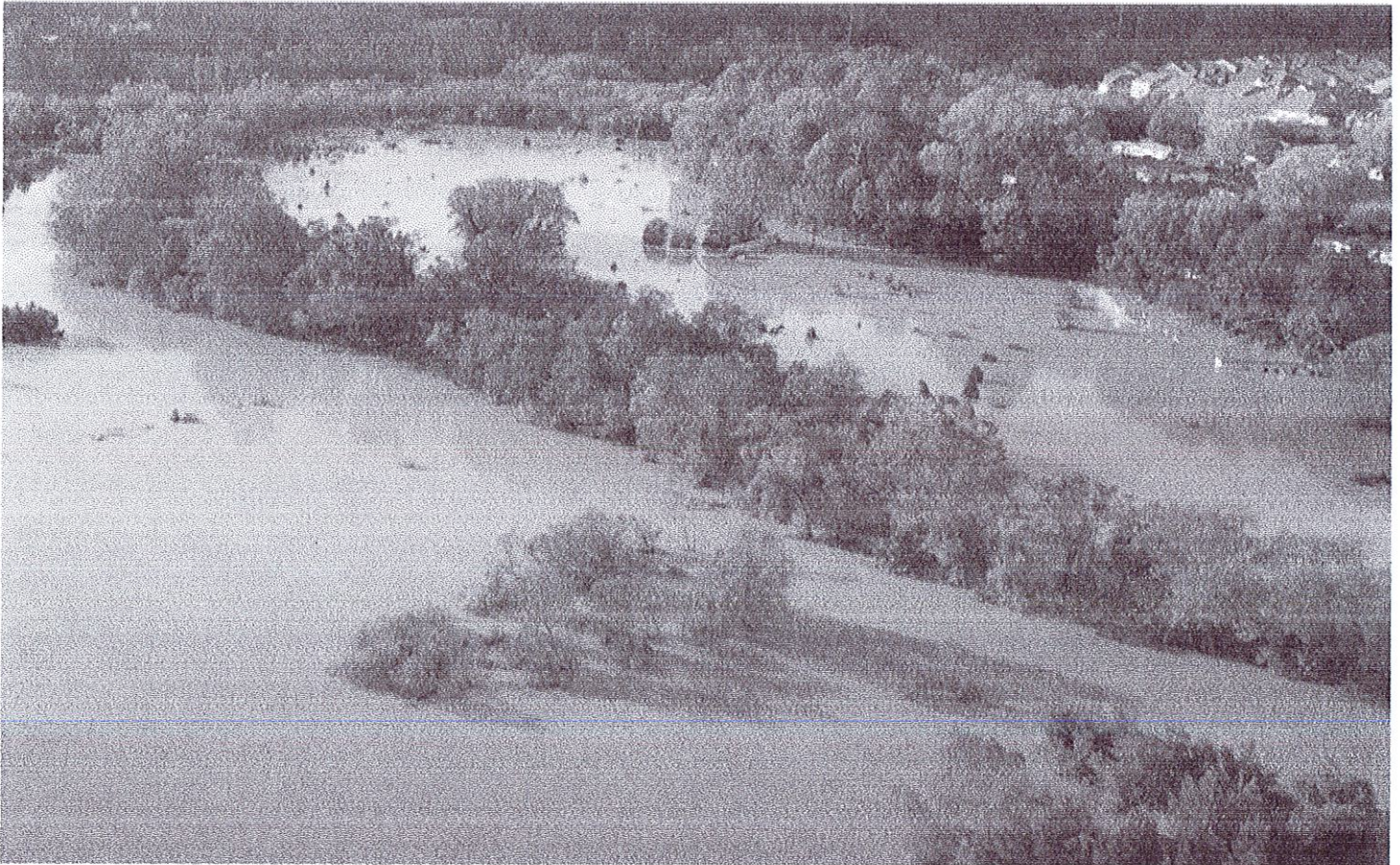
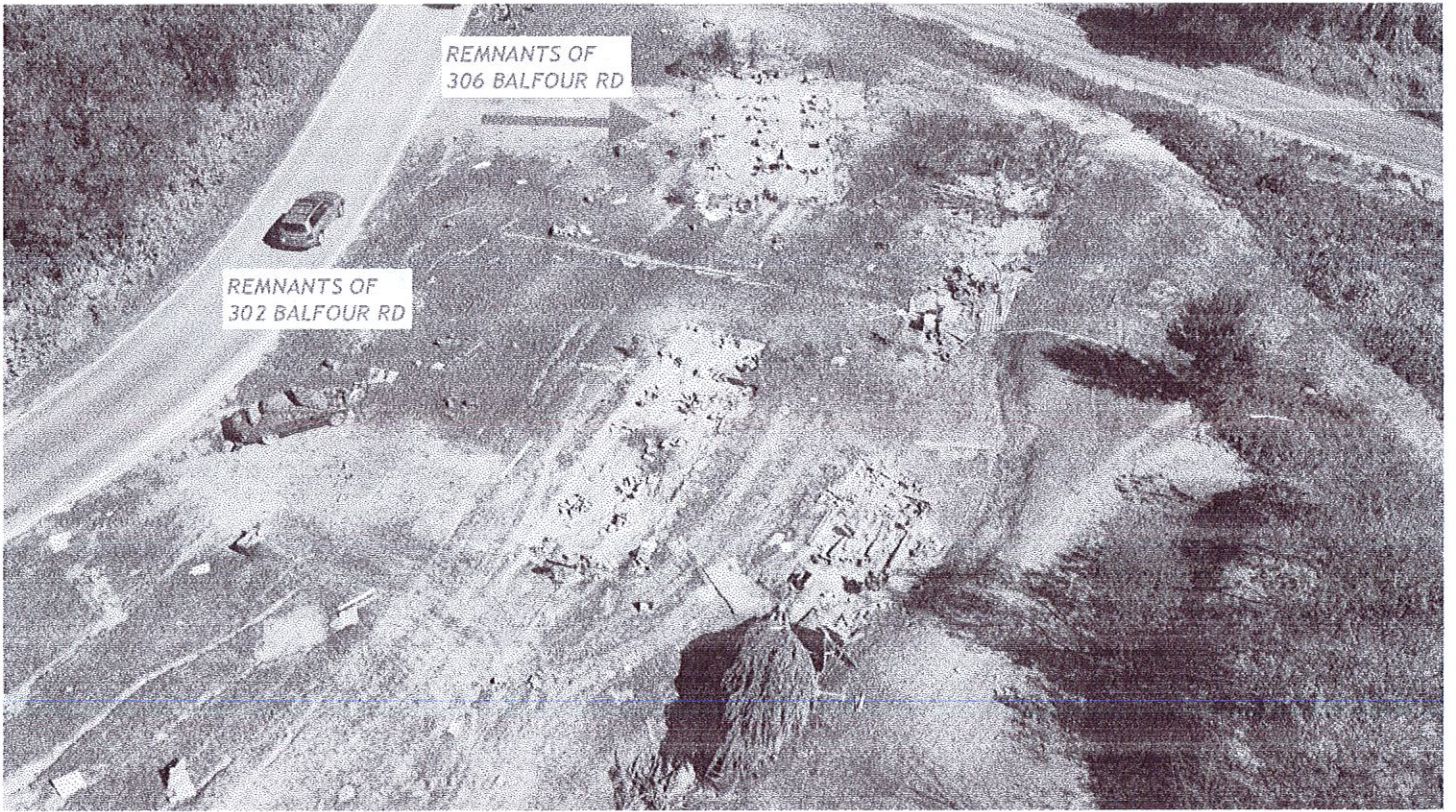
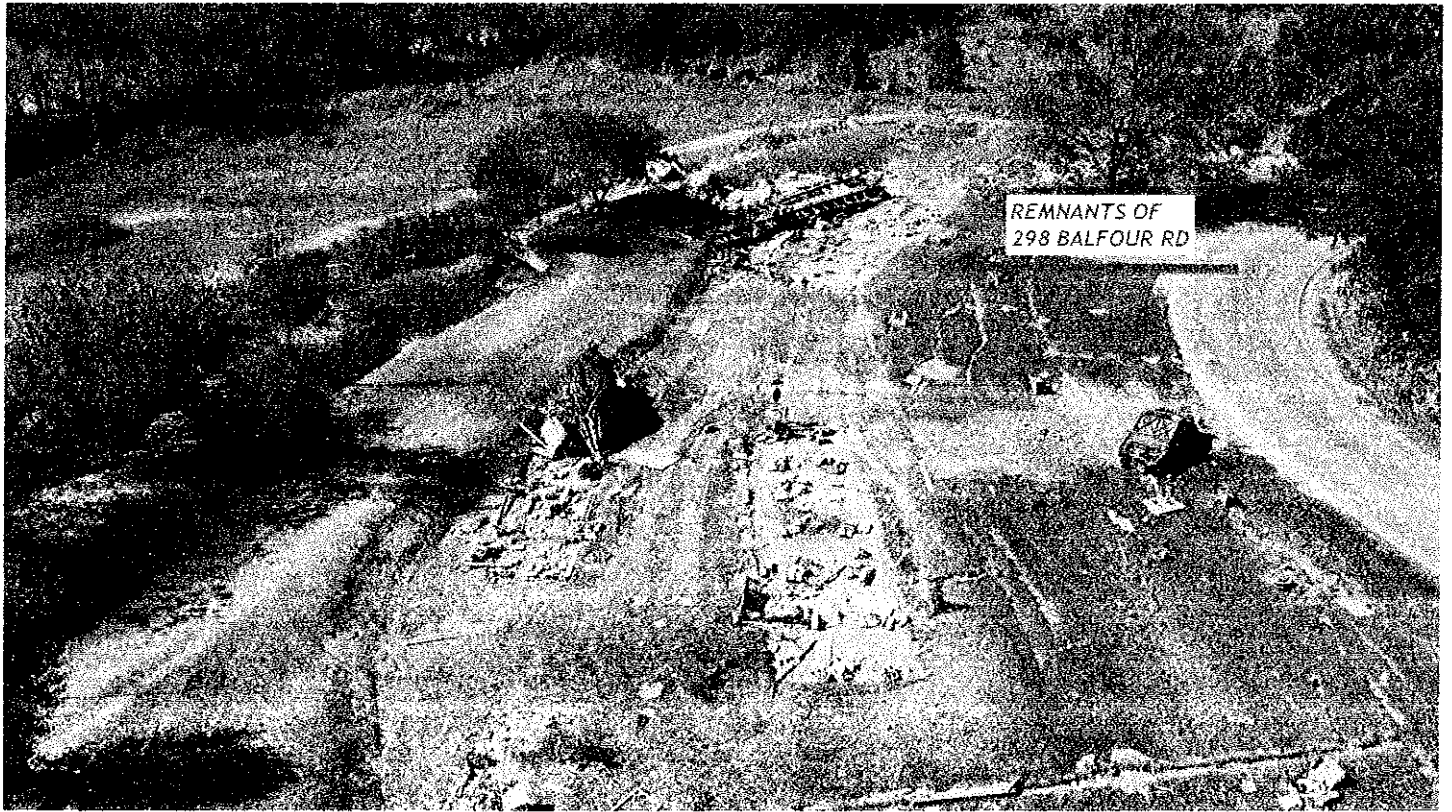


PHOTO TAKEN DAY AFTER STORM AFTER SOME WATER STARTED TO RESIDE

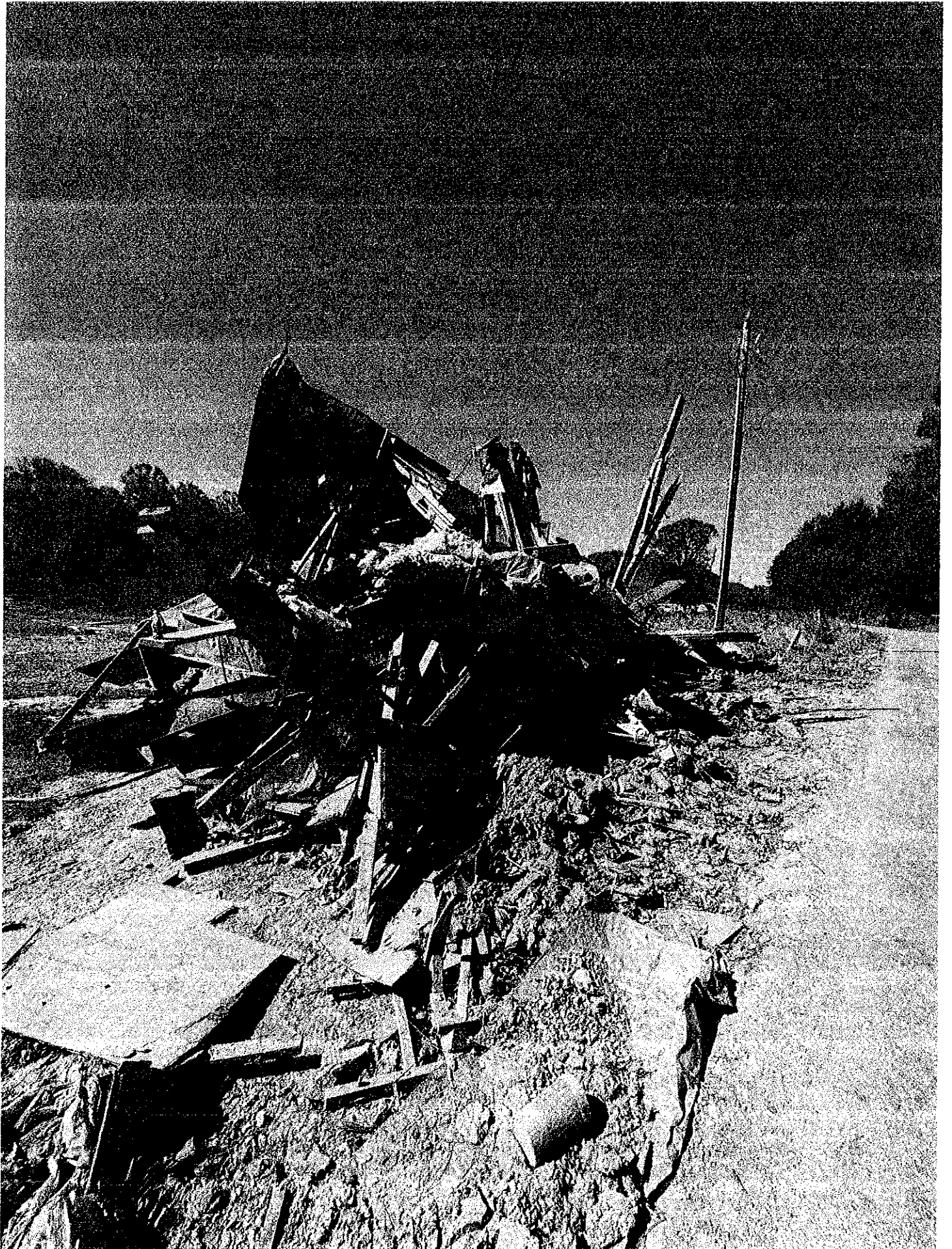


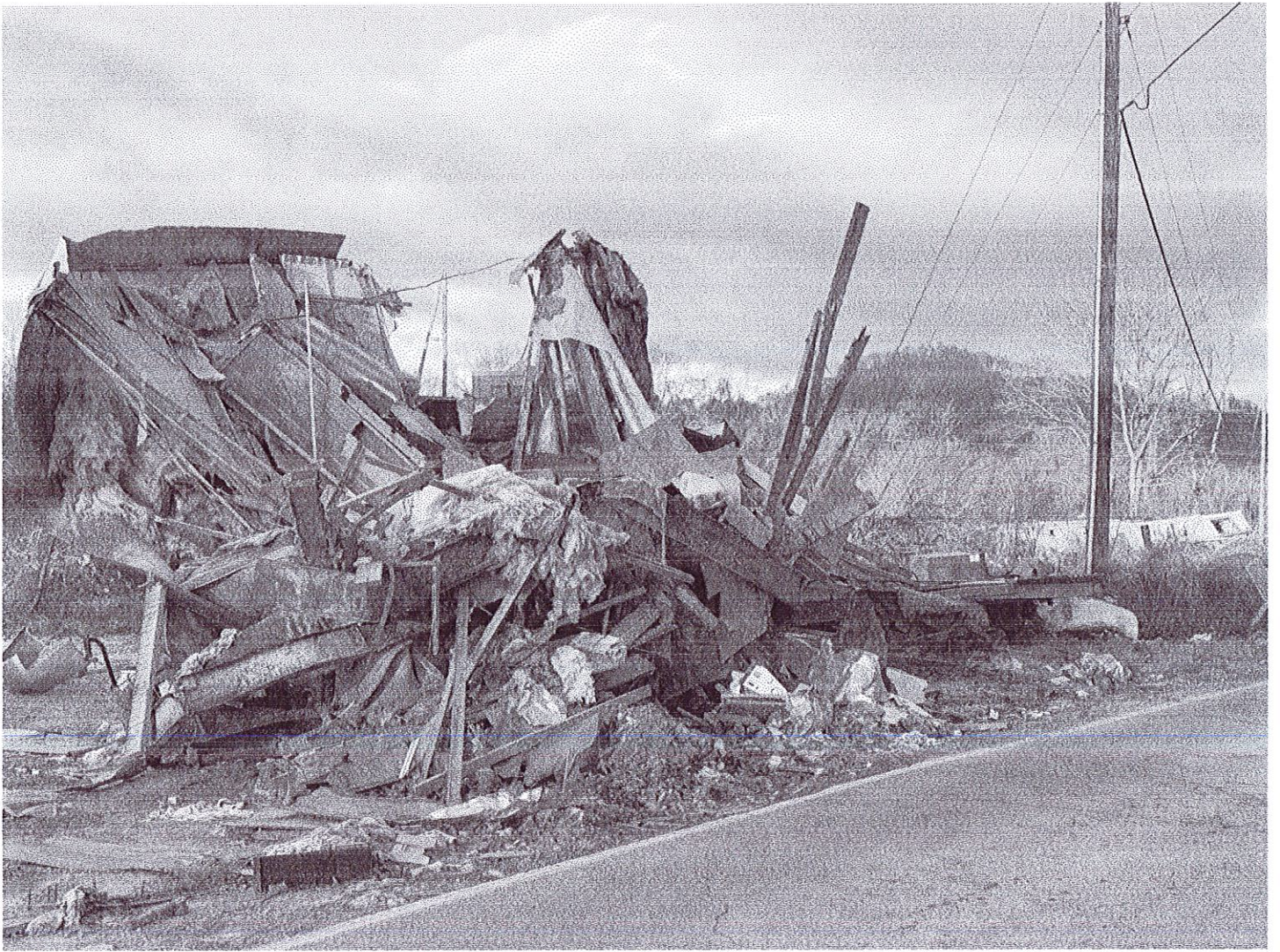
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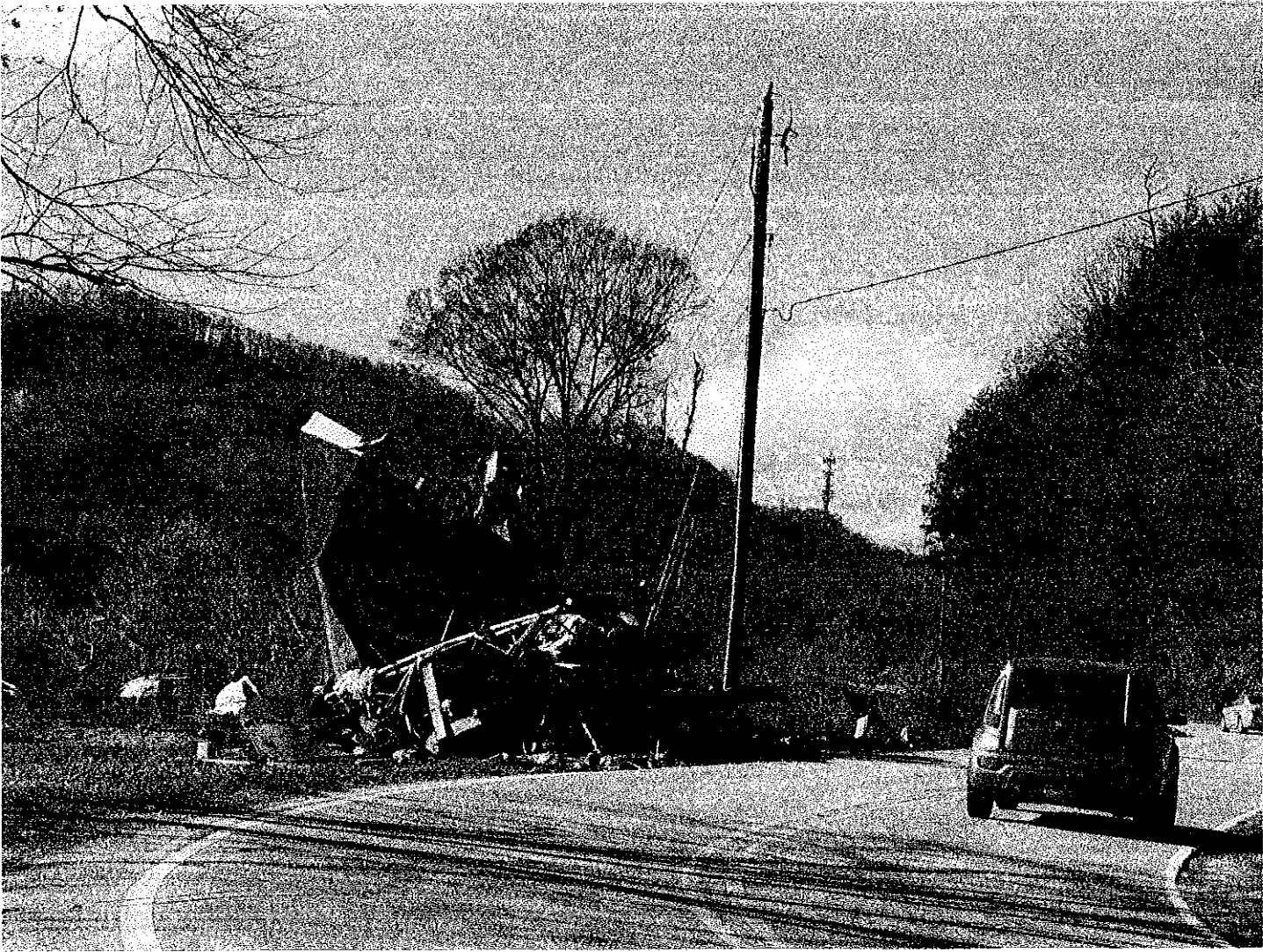




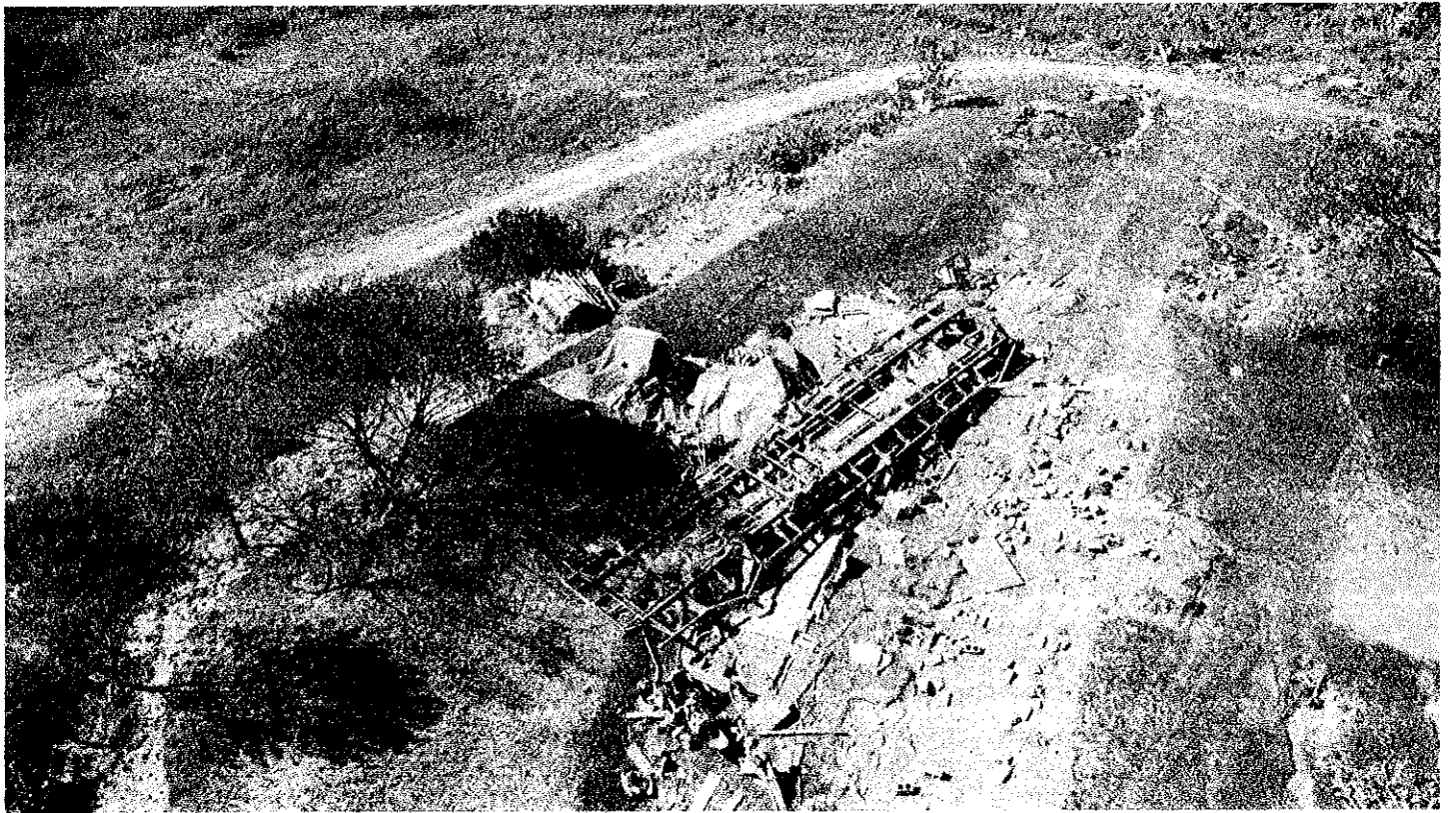


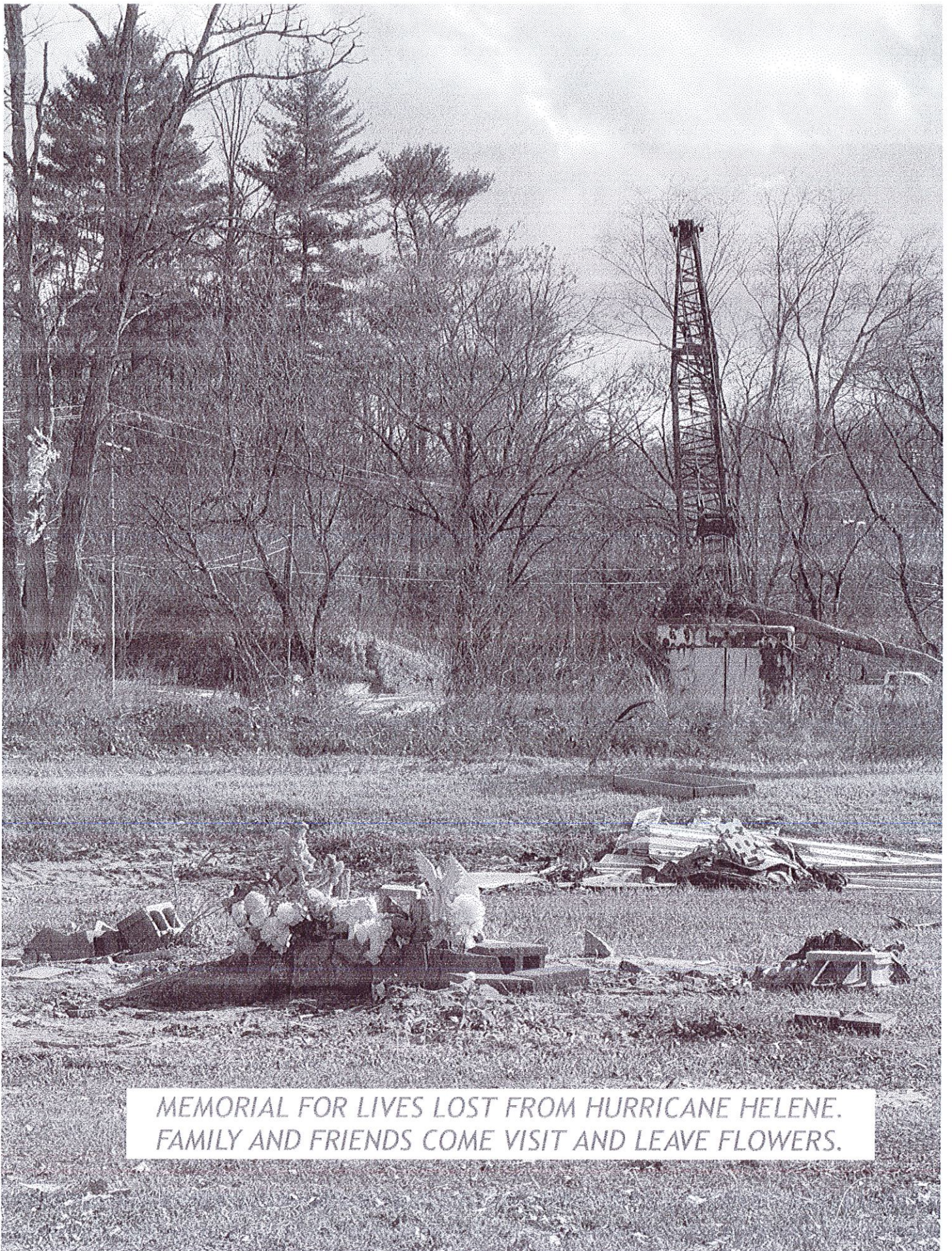


DEBRIS
PUBLIC SAFETY HAZARD









*MEMORIAL FOR LIVES LOST FROM HURRICANE HELENE.
FAMILY AND FRIENDS COME VISIT AND LEAVE FLOWERS.*

 **Gail Gann Seals** 
Admin Oct 14 · 

PHYLLIS MATHERSON, 61

Phyllis Matherson 61, of Hendersonville, NC, as stated in her obituary: "Phyllis suddenly went home to be with the Lord, during Hurricane Helene." She was strong in her faith, and loved her family."



   10

1 comment 1 share Seen by 82



Hurricane Helene Stories, Memorials, and Questions ...

Gail Gann Seals · Nov 3 · 🌐

ANGELA "ANGIE" RUTH MAYBIN WALKER, 60

Angie Maybin Walker, 60, died in the floods resulting from Hurricane Helene. Her body was recovered on September 29. Her sister, Phyllis Maybin Matheson, also perished in the storm. Angie had a passion for listening to music, especially her beloved Elvis Presley. She enjoyed watching wrestling and had a great sense of humor and loved to amuse those around her. She leaves behind a son, Bobby Lee Walker.





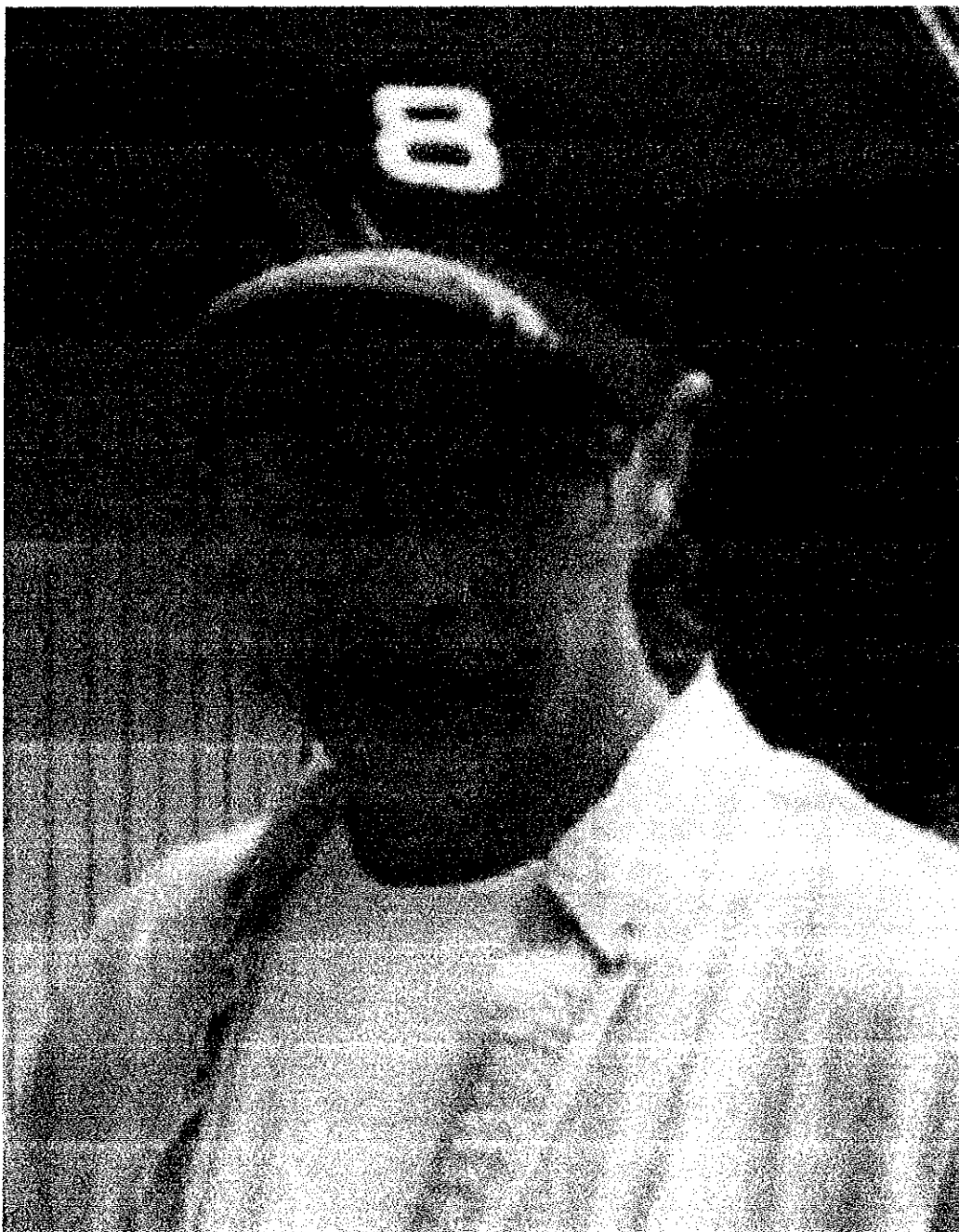
Gail Gann Seals



Admin Oct 14 · 🌐

MICHAEL G. MATHESON, 65

Michael G. Matheson, 65, of Hendersonville NC, passed away on September 27, 2024, as a result of Hurricane Helene. He was cherished for his warm spirit and profound love of country music.



Hendersonville LIGHTNING

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Hendersonville Mills River Fletcher Flat Rock Laurel Park Dana Edneyville Etowah Horse Shoe

Sisters swept away, man and his dog were among victims of Helene here

By AMY B. MCCRAW
Associate Editor

Of the 104 deaths in North Carolina attributed to Hurricane Helene, 11 occurred in Henderson County.

They included sisters who died together in the home they shared, a man who drowned with his beloved service dog, a Pennsylvania man who came to help the community where he grew up, a local wine steward who had worked as a chef in New York and other storm victims who left behind friends, families and loved ones.

The names were released last week by North Carolina's Department of Health and Human Services. The following story includes information about each person who died in Henderson County.

Angela "Angie" Ruth Maybin Walker, Phyllis Ann Matheson and Michael Gene Matheson

Sisters Angela Ruth "Angie" Maybin Walker and Phyllis Ann Matheson and Michael Gene Matheson died when Helene swept away their mobile home on Balfour Road.

The three, who lived at 306 Balfour Road, died in the massive Clear Creek flooding on Sept. 27. Their bodies were located at 310 Balfour

See Helene, page 4



BILL MOSS/Hendersonville Lightning

A memorial on Balfour Road pays tribute to people who died in Helene flooding.

HONORING LOSS

Putting down roots for a lasting memorial

Trees have a way of putting life into perspective, standing as a symbol of stability. Perhaps that's why we turn to them to memorialize what — and who — we hold dear.

In the last five years, people have planted 14.7 million trees through Trees in Memory, an Arbor Day Foundation program that enables individuals to have trees planted in a forest as a tribute to loved ones. The Foundation also works with partners to hold memorial plantings in communities struggling with loss.

Following a dangerous heat dome in 2021, Oregon was left reeling. Megan Van de Mark, deputy director of local planting partner Friends of Trees, noted that East Multnomah County was hardest hit.

"There was an intersection of lack of air conditioning, lack of tree canopy, high quantities of pavement, and other physical, financial, and social constraints," she said.

In this area alone, 72 lives were lost. Naturally, people wanted a meaningful way to remember them. With support from Multnomah County and the Foundation, Friends of Trees volunteers planted 72 memorial trees and added trees to yards for much-needed shade.

"There was a different level of thoughtfulness with this planting," said Van de Mark. "We wanted to make sure every tree was planted perfectly to really honor these individuals."

See how you can honor loved ones at arborday.org/memory.

