



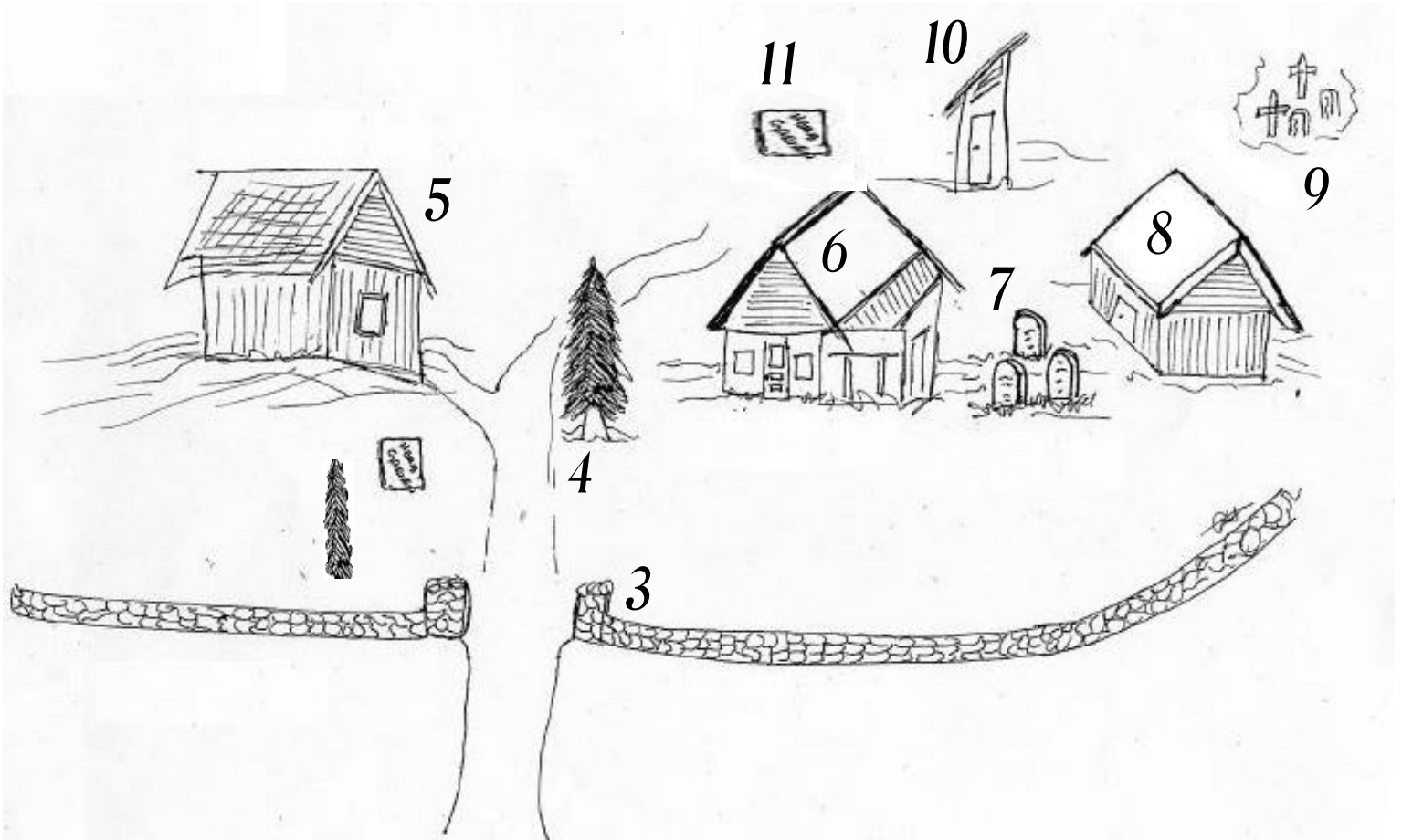
13



# Rock Cliff Farm Self-guided Tour



12



1



2

Begin at the parking area.  
Distance: approximately 0.5 mile  
Terrain: easy to moderate  
Leave only footprints  
take only pictures.

# Rock Cliff Farm Self-guided Tour

## **1 Caretaker House**

This was the house of caretaker David Ray (no relation to Charles Ray.) David Ray moved with his family onto this land around 1950, and was the caretaker of the farm until 2005. Mr. Ray helped B.W. Wells maintain and renovate this land, including adding new structures and improvements. This house was also renovated after he moved in, with the additions of the front porch and indoor plumbing. Mr. Rays children would often visit with the Wells and referred to them as “uncle Bert and aunt Maude.”

## **2 Storage Barn**

This is possibly the oldest structure left here at Rock cliff farm. It was used as a kitchen for the Ray house, and possibly a residence before that. The horseshoe over the door was placed upright to “catch” good luck.

## **3 Rock Wall**

This low rock wall was one of the first improvements that B.W. Wells made after moving onto the farm. It was created using large rocks found around the property with the help of David Ray and his children. Numerous wildflowers line both sides in spring.

## **4 Eastern Red Cedar**

This tree is on the Wake County list of Capital Trees for it's historical significance. It has been dated over 130 years. The gnarled stubs were a result of B.W. pruning it just enough to park his car underneath. Years of growth tried to heal the tree and grow around these stumps.

## **5 Smoke House**

This structure was one of the original structures on the farm. It was used as a smoke house, to preserve and store salted pork. Over 100 free range hogs were kept here by David Ray. The ledge above the front door also held compartments in which the chickens roosted, providing fresh eggs to the inhabitants of the farm.

## **6 B.W. Wells Residence**

Charles Ray built this farmhouse in the early 1900's. B.W. and Maude Wells established residence in 1954, and began to modernize the structure, including adding indoor plumbing and phone service. Initially the two buildings were separated, and the breezeway between them was added on later. The front of the house (facing the rock wall) originally was a porch, which was later closed in and changed into a modern bathroom. Both of the porches on the side of the house were also added after the Wells moved in.

## **7 Ray Cemetery**

This is the Charles Ray family cemetery. Charles Ray and his wife Della, are buried here along with other family members. Joseph Newton Lowery is the faded stone in the middle and was the first person to live on the farm property. The fence was later built by the B.W. Wells association.

## **8 Studio**

This combination office, workshop, and art studio was built entirely by B.W. Wells, with help from David Ray and his three older children. Rocks from the surrounding area were used to create the foundation pillars and the large stone fireplace in the center of the structure. Dr. Wells used this building after his retirement as a studio to paint, an office to correspond with fellow professionals in his fields of botany and ecology, and somewhere to sit with Maude and enjoy an evening conversation. In his retirement B.W. created over 300 paintings, all of which he gave away.

## **9 Pet Graves**

This area was used to bury beloved pets of the farm inhabitants, including the Wells and the David Ray family. The large stones are used as grave markers. B.W. painted portraits of some of these pets.

## **10 Outhouse**

This primitive outhouse was in use until Dr. Wells closed in the front porch to create a bathroom after indoor plumbing was installed.

## **11 Well & Pump**

This well was hand dug and goes down approximately fifty feet, stopping at a layer of bedrock. A pump was later installed to enable the residents to draw water without having to use a bucket.

## **12 Remains of Large Barn**

These are the remains of a large barn and wood rack. The large cedar posts on the ground were part of the barn, which was used for sheltering cattle, mules and goats and housing farming equipment such as an early tractor.

## **13 Square Well**

This well was unique in it's square design, an early hand dug novelty. It originally was forty feet deep but was filled in during lake construction. The top frame portion was restored and the original bucket and tickle have been set in place. Neaby is a hog pen and storage barn site. Behind the Elm tree is the corner stones of Joseph Newton Lowery's cabin site from the 1900's.