

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Horton Grove Complex

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER East & West side of SR 1626, 0.1 mi. North of SR 1004

CITY, TOWN

Fairtosh

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

4th

STATE

North Carolina

CODE

37

COUNTY

Durham

CODE

63

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

State of North Carolina, Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and

STREET & NUMBER

State Property Office, c/o J. K. Sherron, Director

History

Historic Sites Section, Richard Sawyer, Administrator

CITY, TOWN

Raleigh

VICINITY OF

North Carolina

STATE

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Durham County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Durham

STATE

North Carolina

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Horton Grove Complex, one of several component plantation centers of the vast plantation empire of the Bennehan and Cameron families, is composed of a small probably eighteenth century dwelling, a great barn or stables, a row of brick-nogged slave houses and a cluster of tobacco barns.

Located in the nearly flat but slightly rolling agricultural land of the triassic basin, the Horton Grove complex stands on a ridge overlooking a gradual sweep down to the nearby Flat River. The land around for as far as one can see is unspoiled. The complex is located a short distance from Stagville, the seat of the plantation.

The small early house located on the Horton Grove property was doubtless standing when it was acquired by Thomas Bennehan in 1823 and was probably the Horton home. It dates from the late eighteenth (or possibly the very early nineteenth) century and is a typical traditional one-story dwelling. Of plank construction now covered with weatherboards, it is extended to the rear by a shed. The steep gable roof extends to cover the front porch. A single first-floor room and an attic occupy the main block, and are linked by a small enclosed corner stair. Typical of many early houses of its type, it was carefully finished despite its small size, and features horizontal interior sheathing and handsome beaded ceiling joists. Though often repaired and renovated over the years, and now in delapidated condition, the house retains much of its original character and is an important vestige of early settlement in the area.

To the rear of the Horton house is the most impressive group of the several surviving slave houses of the large plantation. Four nearly identical slave houses are arranged in a row running north-south. (Remains of another row to the west have been identified.) Each is two stories high, of heavy timber frame construction infilled with brick nogging; they are covered with vertical board and batten and have gable roofs covered with tin. Inside, a central stair hall is flanked by a large 17 by 17½-foot room on each floor. Some rooms have been sheathed, while in others the timber and brick walls are left uncovered and were whitewashed. Chimneys stood at each end (some remain) and a few fireplaces retain simple pilaster-and-frieze mantels of mid-nineteenth century appearance. It is not certain how slave families were distributed within these buildings, one to a room, one to a floor, one to a side, one to a house, or what. In any case, these were unusually spacious, well-constructed buildings recalled by former residents as having been cool in summer, warm in winter. Later kitchen extensions stand at the rear of some of the buildings.

In a clearing southeast of the slave houses is a collection of tobacco barns, characteristic of those which are plentiful throughout the Cameron plantation. Typical are small, square, gable-roof log structures, simply constructed of small round or squared logs and chinked.

A few hundred yards northeast of the slave houses, nearly abutting the farm drive, is the grand barn or stable. It was built in 1860 as the center of plantation operation shifted to the Horton Grove center, and it represents the culmination of Paul Cameron's improvement campaign. Finished on the eve of the Civil War, the barn with its high scale, extravagant use of timber, labor-intensive craftsmanship, and grandeur of conception, seems an apt and evocative final expression of the plantation system that produced it.

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One hundred and thirty-five feet long, and thirty-three feet deep, the barn has its length running parallel to the farm road. A high two-story central section is flanked by one-story sections. Each section is covered with a hip roof (now covered with tin) whose broad overhang is carried on exposed rafter brackets above a ventilating space. The building is covered with vertical sheathing and rests on a stone foundation. There is a central double door in the two-story section, and there are doors at either end. Windows are covered with batten shutters.

The magnificently spacious interior follows a cross-aisle plan, with stalls on either side of a transverse aisle that runs the long length of the building. Lofts for storage occur above at various levels, and a hoist serves an opening above the central aisle. The complex construction and massive wooden members of the great building are exposed. The central hip roof is carried by a wooden queen post truss system of unusually sophisticated design, a soaring and complex system evocative of a great rustic cathedral.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	Black History
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Horton Grove is an important antebellum agricultural complex, part of the vast plantation estate of the Cameron and Bennehan families. The complex consists of a small early house, some tobacco barns, a row of slave houses and a massive stable or barn, probably built under the aegis of Paul Cameron during the 1850s. The two-story slave houses, of heavy timber frame construction filled with brick nogging, are unusually substantial examples of their type: they are of great significance to black history in the region because of their rareness as survivors of a slave house complex and also, as noted by historians George McDaniel and Herbert Gutman, because of the family history, oral and written, associated with them. The huge barn, impressively built of great timbers, is a splendid example of the scale and craftsmanship of functional buildings of the antebellum years.

- Criteria Assessment:
- (A) Associated with the agrarian history of the antebellum south and with black history both in the use of the houses as slave dwellings and in the continuity of black families there following the war and Emancipation.
  - (B) Associated with the life of Paul Cameron, a rich and influential figure in nineteenth century North Carolina.
  - (C) Embodies characteristics of antebellum construction methods of construction, including the small, traditional early dwelling, of plank construction, the brick-nogged slave houses and the huge timber-framed barn.
  - (D) Archeological surveys indicate a wealth of potential information about the entire period of habitation.

Fairntosh and Stagville were the two residential seats of a vast family-owned plantation empire that embraced thousands of acres for several generations. Begun by Richard Bennehan at Stagville in the late eighteenth century and expanded by him for several decades, the plantation was continued and expanded by his son Thomas who lived at Stagville and his son-in-law Duncan Cameron who lived at Fairntosh. Duncan's son Paul, who had chief responsibility for the entirety, continued to improve the plantation. He was, it is said, the richest man in the state and persisted in success despite the ravages of the Civil War on a slave-based agricultural business.

The heart of the Bennehan-Cameron estate lay between the Flat and Little Rivers in a rich triassic basin, in present Durham County (once Orange County). This estate of over 6,000 acres remained in Cameron family ownership to the mid-twentieth century and is still largely undeveloped farmland, in contrast to the rapidly developing rural land of most of Durham County.

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In addition to the already-nominated house and farm complexes at Fairntosh and Stagville property, there are other important vestiges of the agricultural empire of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries dotting this vast tract, including slave cabins of the various "quarters," tobacco barns, overseers' houses, and other structures.

Of interest here is a complex known as Horton Grove, which was part of the Stagville series of plantation centers. This is composed of a row of remarkable slave houses, an early dwelling, a cluster of tobacco barns, and a great barn--agricultural buildings of various periods demonstrating the long continuity of use of the place called Horton Grove

The oldest element in the complex is a small dwelling of traditional form. This is thought to have been the home of William Horton, a farmer who lived in the area before Richard Bennehan (1743-1825) came on the scene shortly before the Revolution. In 1752 William Horton bought 320 acres from William Strahorn, land which had been sold to Strahorn by Henry McCulloch in 1749, on the southwest side of the Flat River "at an Indian old field."<sup>1</sup> Richard Bennehan came into the area in 1768 from Virginia, entered into a business partnership with merchant William Johnston, and in 1776 bought land along the Flat River from Tyree Harris. By 1778 Bennehan was shown in the tax list as the owner of 1213 acres, 31 slaves, and other possessions.<sup>2</sup> After the Revolution Bennehan steadily expanded his holdings and in 1787 bought land from Judith Stagg where he was to establish his seat, Stagville. Here he lived with his family for many years, dying in 1825. His son Thomas Bennehan (1782-1847) who never married, worked with his father to operate the plantation and gradually assumed much responsibility for the management of Stagville and its components. During Thomas's management of Stagville, the acreage was steadily expanded, and among his purchases was a 410-acre tract bought from William Horton and his mother Sarah Horton in 1823, which retained its identity within the larger plantation in the use of the name Horton Grove.<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Horton retained a dower right in the property and probably lived there (in the small early cottage) until her death in 1830.<sup>4</sup> When he died in 1847, Thomas Bennehan's lands in Orange County were valued at \$24,070 and his 358 slaves at \$210,000. He left most of Stagville's 5,000 acres to his nephew Paul Cameron.

Paul Cameron (1808-1891) was the energetic son of Duncan Cameron (1777-1853), who had married Richard Bennehan's daughter Rebecca and settled at nearby Fairntosh a few years after their marriage. Duncan, an able and brilliant lawyer and businessman, was one of the most powerful figures in the state, and Paul proved to be a man of relentless energy which was directed into business success in railroads and industry as well as into improving the operation of the plantation he inherited from his father and uncle.

Paul Cameron's impact on the plantation was a strong and positive one. He was interested in improved farming techniques, which he put into practice on the plantation, and the place was highly productive of a wide range of crops. He embarked on an active improving and building campaign, repairing Fairntosh, where he lived, and building new structures including, it is believed, the slave houses and barn at Horton Grove. Paul

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wrote happily in 1850, ". . . after a while I shall have all matters here in a mighty nice fix. . . ." <sup>6</sup> He wrote in 1850, "We are making some very good brick and will make more than we will need or we are ever in want of them here," and later, "I have stacked up 100,000 brick which we shall burn next week. . . I did not intend to make so many. . . I have made enough to last us in our various jobs for a long time to come. . . ." <sup>7</sup> It is assumed that these bricks were those used in the brick-nogged slave houses at Horton Grove. It is interesting to note that these are but one group of slave houses built in such a substantial and comfortable fashion, with other groups existing elsewhere in the plantation, at Shop Hill, one building at Eno Quarter, one at Fairntosh. A letter in the Cameron papers indicates that such use of brick nogging in a kitchen at Fairntosh occurred as early as 1814 and thus was not unusual when Horton Grove houses were built. The 1860 census showed Paul Cameron with 30 slave houses, his brother 10 and his sister Mildred 15. Whether those that survive are typical of the larger group is unknown.

The climax of Paul Cameron's building campaign seems to have been the great barn at Horton Grove, built on the eve of the Civil War. It is believed to be that he boasted of in an 1860 letter to his father-in-law Thomas Ruffin, "I have a very great wish to show you the 'best stables ever built in Orange,' 135 feet long covered with cypress shingles at a cost of \$6 per thousand." <sup>8</sup>

The Civil War of course drastically affected the operation of the plantation, and it was many years before the place enjoyed the prosperity of Paul Cameron's antebellum period. Cameron was able to reestablish his fortune and was regarded again as the wealthiest man in the state. He moved to Hillsborough and did not live at Fairntosh. Of interest to the study of postwar conditions is a lengthy contract he executed with former slaves who continued to live and work on the place, detailing what was expected of plantation owner and workers alike. Horton Grove continued as a center of a community, with black families continuing to live there, until recent years. A study by George McDaniel indicates the rich wealth of oral and written information about patterns and continuity of black family life there, which has been noted by Herbert Gutman in The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1825.

Horton Grove, as part of the Stagville plantation, was handed down in the Cameron family until being sold in 1950 to A. P. Brown who in turn sold it to Liggett and Myers in 1954; now the Liggett Group. The Liggett Group donated Horton Grove to the state recently for preservation and study as an important element of black and agricultural history.

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Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Jean Anderson, "Preliminary Report on Stagville Plantation: The Land and the People," an unpublished manuscript, 1977, p. 18, hereinafter cited as Anderson, "Preliminary Report".

<sup>2</sup> Anderson, "Preliminary Report," pp. 36-37.

<sup>3</sup> Orange County Deeds, Book 22, p. 11; Anderson, "Preliminary Report," p. 26.

<sup>4</sup> Anderson, "Preliminary Report," p. 83.

<sup>5</sup> Orange County Wills, Book F, p. 375; Anderson, "Preliminary Report," p. 48

<sup>6</sup> Anderson, "Preliminary Report," p. 90.

<sup>7</sup> Anderson, "Preliminary Report," p. 70.

<sup>8</sup> Anderson, "Preliminary Report," p. 76.

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

- Anderson, Jean. "Preliminary Report on Stagville Plantation: The Land and the People," an unpublished manuscript, 1977.
- Cameron Papers. Southern Historical Collection. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
- Durham County Records. Durham County Courthouse. Durham, North Carolina. Subgroups: Deeds, Wills.
- Orange County Records. Orange County Courthouse. Hillsborough, North Carolina. Subgroups: Deeds, Wills.

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 3.5 acres, which is the land on which the slave houses and barn stand, given to State by Liggett Group-see attached survey map.

A	1,7	6,9,4	6,7,5	4,0	0,0	5,0,0	B	1,7	6,9,4	4,7,5	3,9	9,9	5,5,0
	ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			ZONE	EASTING		NORTHING			
C	1,7	6,9,4	1,2,5	3,9	9,9	7,5,0	D						

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME/TITLE Description and Significance prepared by Catherine W. Bishir, Head, Survey and Planning Branch, based on research by Jean Anderson, Consultant, Joe Mobley, and John

ORGANIZATION	DATE	Flowers
Division of Archives and History		
STREET & NUMBER	TELEPHONE	
109 East Jones Street	733-4763	
CITY OR TOWN	STATE	
Raleigh	North Carolina	27611

**12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL  STATE  LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE





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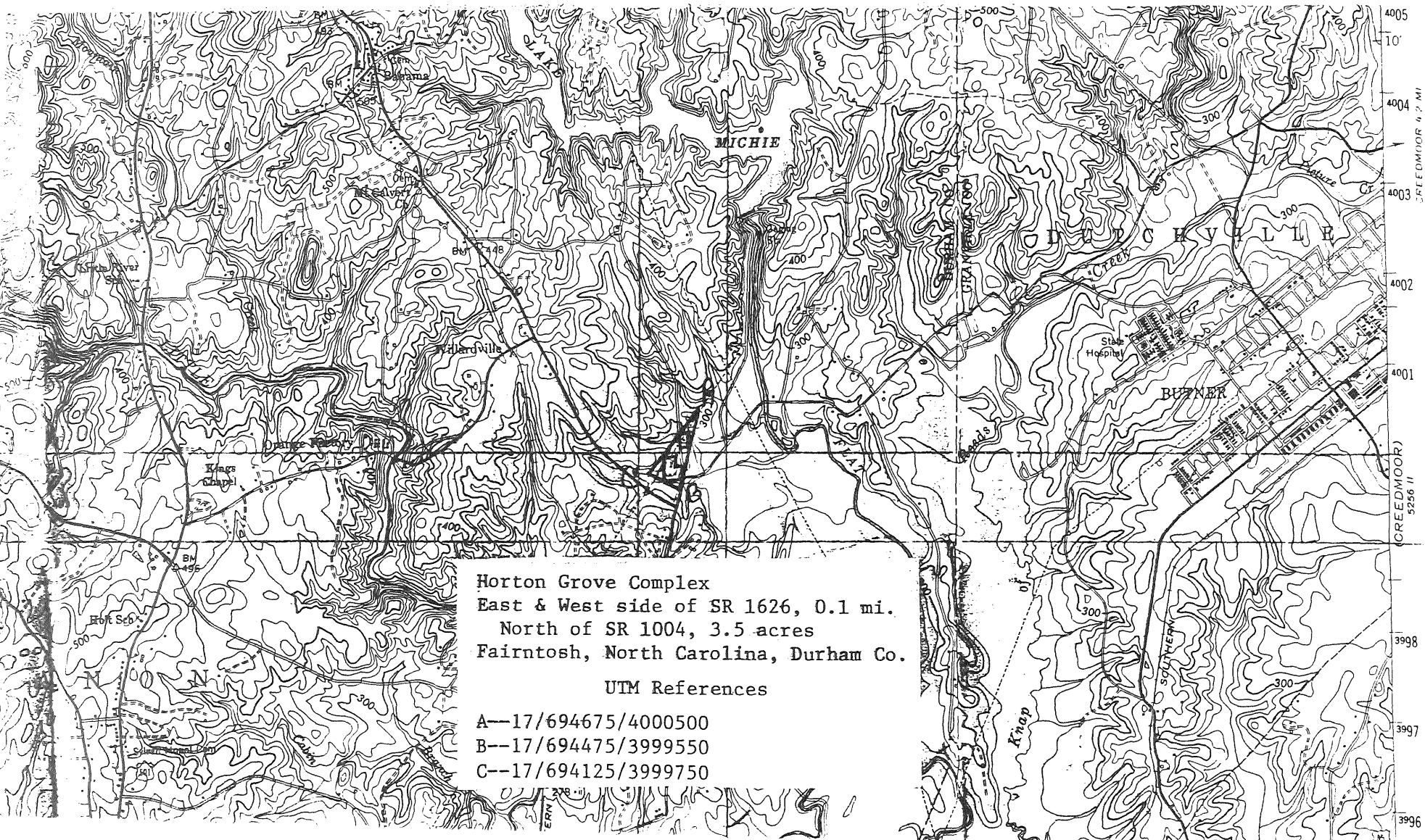
DATE ENTERED

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Sanders, Charles Richard. The Cameron Plantation in North Carolina (1776-1973) and Its  
Founder Richard Bennehan. Durham: Privately printed, 1974.



Horton Grove Complex  
East & West side of SR 1626, 0.1 mi.  
North of SR 1004, 3.5 acres  
Fairtosh, North Carolina, Durham Co.

UTM References

- A--17/694675/4000500
- B--17/694475/3999550
- C--17/694125/3999750

4005  
10'  
4004  
4003  
4002  
4001  
(CREEDMOOR)  
5256 II  
3998  
3997  
3996  
CREEDMOOR 4 2 MI  
CREEDMOOR 4 5 MI  
1:50,000 20 MI

13B

13A

14

15

TRACT IB  
3.1 ACRES W/ .1 ACRES  
R/W

UNPAVED COUNTY  
ROAD

13K

TRACT IC  
.4 ACRES W/ .2 ACRES  
R/W

