



North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources  
State Historic Preservation Office

Peter B. Sandbeck, Administrator

Michael F. Easley, Governor  
Lisbeth C. Evans, Secretary  
Jeffrey J. Crow, Deputy Secretary

Office of Archives and History  
Division of Historical Resources  
David Brook, Director

November 4, 2004

MEMORANDUM

TO: Gregory Thorpe, Ph.D., Director  
Project Development and Environmental Analysis Branch  
NCDOT Division of Highways

FROM: Peter B. Sandbeck *Peter Sandbeck*

SUBJECT: Phase II, Historic Architectural Survey Report for Construction of NC 125 Bypass of Williamston on New Location on Multi-lane Right-of-Way, TIP No. R-3826, Federal Aid Project No. STP-125(1), WBS No. 33512.1.1, Martin County, ER 01-9766

Thank you for your letter of September 23, 2004, transmitting the survey report for the above project.

We offer the following comments.

- ◆ Whitley Farm (Properties 5-7) (MT 694): The report does not evaluate this property for potential significance as a historic farmstead. The report only evaluates the property for individual significance in architecture and as part of a potential historic district. There is also no discussion of the integrity of the 265 acres associated with the farm for potential agricultural significance. How does it relate to other farmsteads in western Martin County? Many of the outbuildings, if not a majority, appear to be over 50 years of age. Two surviving tenant houses are also significant features. This property should be further assessed for its significance under Criterion A for agriculture.
- ◆ *MT 1064* Rodgers-Leggett Farmstead (Properties 12-20): Clearly there is a concentration of early to mid 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings on this site which include what appears to be a slave dwelling and other antebellum buildings—rare survivors in Martin County. There is no discussion of these buildings as they relate to other antebellum outbuildings in the county and very little discussion about the type of construction or original use. The report does not evaluate this property for potential significance as a historic farmstead. The report suggests the loss of the earlier house negates the remaining significance of the resources which appear to be 10 historic buildings, two cemeteries, and an agricultural landscape that might prove intact and significant. This property should be further assessed for its significance under Criterion A for agriculture.

ADMINISTRATION  
RESTORATION  
SURVEY & PLANNING

Location  
507 N. Blount Street, Raleigh NC  
515 N. Blount Street, Raleigh NC  
515 N. Blount Street, Raleigh, NC

Mailing Address  
4617 Mail Service Center, Raleigh NC 27699-4617  
4617 Mail Service Center, Raleigh NC 27699-4617  
4617 Mail Service Center, Raleigh NC 27699-4617

Telephone/Fax  
(919)733-4763/733-8653  
(919)733-6547/715-4801  
(919)733-6545/715-4801

- ◆ Slade Cemetery (Property 40) (MT 415): This cemetery appears to represent what was once commonplace, but now, rare since it illustrates a nearly completely intact antebellum plantation burying ground with some decoratively carved stones, a fence, and association with one of the county's most influential early 19<sup>th</sup> century families. The report does not discuss the decoratively carved stones or the early stones that are apparent in the photos. Are they the work of known carvers? Are there any signatures or marks to indicate where their origin? The Slade Cemetery may also be eligible under Criterion Consideration D for the grave of General Slade, a person of "outstanding importance" and where there is no other site or building directly associated with his life.

MT 1065

We concur that the Bennett-Smith House is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Review of the properties in Appendix A by staff more familiar with the area of potential effect resulted in the following comments and recommendations for additional study.

- ◆ MT 0361 Golden Peanut Mill (Property 23) and MT0619 Abbitts Mill (Property 33): what is the date of construction for each mill and its buildings? Peanut production in mid 20<sup>th</sup> century Martin County is a significant agricultural activity. The two mills should be further evaluated for their importance.

- ◆ MT 1066 Medway Mini Mart (Property 41): This building appears to be remarkably intact from the historic time period, apart from the synthetic siding. The siding does not immediately disqualify the building for National Register eligibility under Criterion A, as it more than likely would for Criterion C. This type of roadside building is rarely as intact as this resource, and it very likely served an important function in this rural area of Williamston as a social center, grocery store, gas station, and/or rooming house. We recommend further investigation of this resource for its importance to the local community.

- ◆ MT 1035 Twilight Drive-In Drive-In Theater (Property 68): A rare surviving building type. What was its date of construction? This site appears to have all the essential drive-in theater components, including the ticket booth and open viewing court. We would like to know more about the history of this drive-in.

The above comments are made pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's Regulations for Compliance with Section 106 codified at 36 CFR Part 800.

Thank you for your cooperation and consideration. If you have questions concerning the above comment, contact Renee Gledhill-Earley, environmental review coordinator, at 919/733-4763. In all future communication concerning this project, please cite the above referenced tracking number.

cc: Mary Pope Furr, NCDOT

bc: Southern/Kane  
Power/EO  
Swallow  
106  
County

**PHASE II  
HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY REPORT  
FOR CONSTRUCTION OF NC 125 BYPASS OF WILLIAMSTON ON  
NEW LOCATION ON MULTI-LANE RIGHT-OF-WAY  
MARTIN COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA**

**TIP NO. R-3826  
WORK ORDER NO. 8.1090501  
FEDERAL AID PROJECT NO. STP-125(1)  
WBS NO. 33512.1.1**

**Prepared For:**


**Office of Human Environment  
Project Development and Environmental Analysis Branch  
North Carolina Department of Transportation  
and  
Federal Highway Administration**

**Prepared By:**

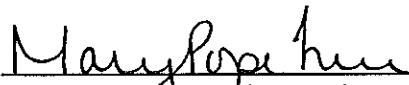
**URS Corporation – North Carolina  
1600 Perimeter Park Drive  
Morrisville, NC 27560**

**Marvin A. Brown,  
Principal Investigator**

**September 2004**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Marvin A. Brown, Principal Investigator  
URS Corporation-North Carolina**

**9-21-04**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Mary Pope Furr, Supervisor  
Historic Architectural Resources Section  
North Carolina Department of Transportation**

**9.24.04**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

## MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes constructing an NC 125 bypass of Williamston in Martin County (TIP No. R-3826, WO No. 8.1090501, FA No. STP-125(1)). The bypass will be built on new location as a two-lane roadway on multi-lane right-of-way. For all the bypass alternatives, SR 1142 (East College Road) will be widened between SR 1182 and US 64A. A new traffic signal will be installed at the intersection of NC 125 with US 64A.

In late 2003, architectural historian Penne Smith Sandbeck of NCDOT conducted an initial survey of the project area. During that survey, she identified 74 resources (some with multiple components) within the project's Area of Potential Effects (APE) that were more than 50 years old. At a meeting on December 16, 2003, between NCDOT, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (HPO), it was determined that resources 1-4, 8-11, 21-39, 41-47, and 49-74 were not eligible for National Register listing and required no further evaluation. At the request of NCDOT, under the terms of an open-end contract with the Department for historic architectural services, URS Corporation-North Carolina (URS) investigated the potential National Register eligibility of the remaining resources, which were grouped into four discrete resources: the Whitley Farm (MT-694) (#5-7), the Rodgers-Leggett Farmstead (#12-20), the Slade Cemetery (MT-415) (#40), and the Bennett-Smith House (#48).

During the week of June 21, 2004, URS conducted intensive-level fieldwork and local research for the project. URS subsequently evaluated the National Register eligibility of the four resources and conducted additional research. Its survey methodology consisted of historical background research into primary and secondary sources, interviews with knowledgeable individuals, site-specific research, and an intensive-level field survey during which the four resources were evaluated. This report records the results of the field survey, research, and evaluation.

URS recommends that none of the four resources are individually eligible for National Register listing. Due to significant alterations and the loss of numerous associated resources, the Whitley Farm (MT-694) (#5-7), the Rodgers-Leggett Farmstead (#12-20), and the Bennett-Smith House (#48) are not believed to retain sufficient integrity to support significance under any of the Register's Criteria. The Slade Cemetery (#40) is not believed to be significant under any of the Criteria, including Criteria Consideration (Exception) D. Due to lack of integrity, the four resources are also not believed to be part of any National Register-eligible rural historic landscape or other historic district.



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## I. INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) proposes constructing an NC 125 bypass of Williamston in Martin County (TIP No. R-3826, WO No. 8.1090501, FA No. STP-125(1)). The bypass will be built on new location as a two-lane roadway on multi-lane right-of-way. For all the bypass alternatives, SR 1142 (East College Road) will be widened between SR 1182 and US 64A. A new traffic signal will be installed at the intersection of NC 125 with US 64A (Figures 1 and 2). The purpose and need of the project is to reduce truck traffic and improve safety on existing NC 125 through downtown Williamston. This report presents the results of a Phase II historic architectural survey of four resources within the project area by URS for NCDOT and FHWA.

In late 2003, architectural historian Penne Smith of NCDOT conducted an initial survey of the project area. During that survey, she identified 74 resources (some with multiple components) within the project's APE that were more than 50 years old (Appendix A). At a meeting on December 16, 2003, between NCDOT, FHWA, and the North Carolina HPO, it was determined that resources 1-4, 8-11, 21-39, 41-47, and 49-74 were not eligible for National Register listing and required no further evaluation (Appendix B). At the request of NCDOT, under the terms of an open-end contract with the Department for historic architectural services, URS investigated the potential National Register eligibility of the remaining resources, which were grouped into four discrete resources: the Whitley Farm (MT-694) (#5-7), the Rodgers-Leggett Farmstead (#12-20), the Slade Cemetery (MT-415) (#40), and the Bennett-Smith House (#48).

During the week of June 21, 2004, URS conducted intensive-level fieldwork and local research for the project. URS subsequently evaluated the National Register eligibility of the four resources and conducted additional research. Its survey methodology consisted of historical background research into primary and secondary sources, interviews with knowledgeable individuals, site-specific research, and an intensive-level field survey during which the four resources were evaluated. This report records the results of the field survey, research, and evaluation.

An historic architectural survey within the APE associated with the proposed bypass was necessary for compliance with the basic requirements of: Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended; the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, as amended; the Department of Transportation regulations and procedures (23 CFR 771 and Technical Advisory T 6640.8A); the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation regulations on the "Protection of Historic Properties" (36 CFR 800); and NCDOT's "Historic Architectural Resources, Survey Procedures and Report Guidelines." In order to meet the requirements of these laws and regulations, the work plan for the survey included the following items: (1) a field survey of the four resources; (2) general and specific research into the history of the APE and the resources; and (3) a visual survey of similarly situated resources in order to better understand the nature of Martin County's historic landscape.

The Area of Potential Effects or APE is the area or areas within which an undertaking may cause changes in the character or use of historic properties. The boundaries of the project's APE were provided by NCDOT. They are delineated in this report on portions of the Williamston USGS topographical quadrangle map (Figures 3 through 6).

URS recommends that none of the four resources are individually eligible for National Register listing. Due to significant alterations and the loss of numerous associated resources, the Whitley Farm (MT-694) (#5-7), the Rodgers-Leggett Farmstead (#12-20), and the Bennett-Smith House (#48) are not believed to retain sufficient integrity to support significance under any of the Register's Criteria.

The Slade Cemetery (#40) is not believed to be significant under any of the Criteria, including Criteria Consideration (Exception) D. Due to lack of integrity, the four resources are also not believed to be part of any National Register-eligible rural historic landscape or other historic district.

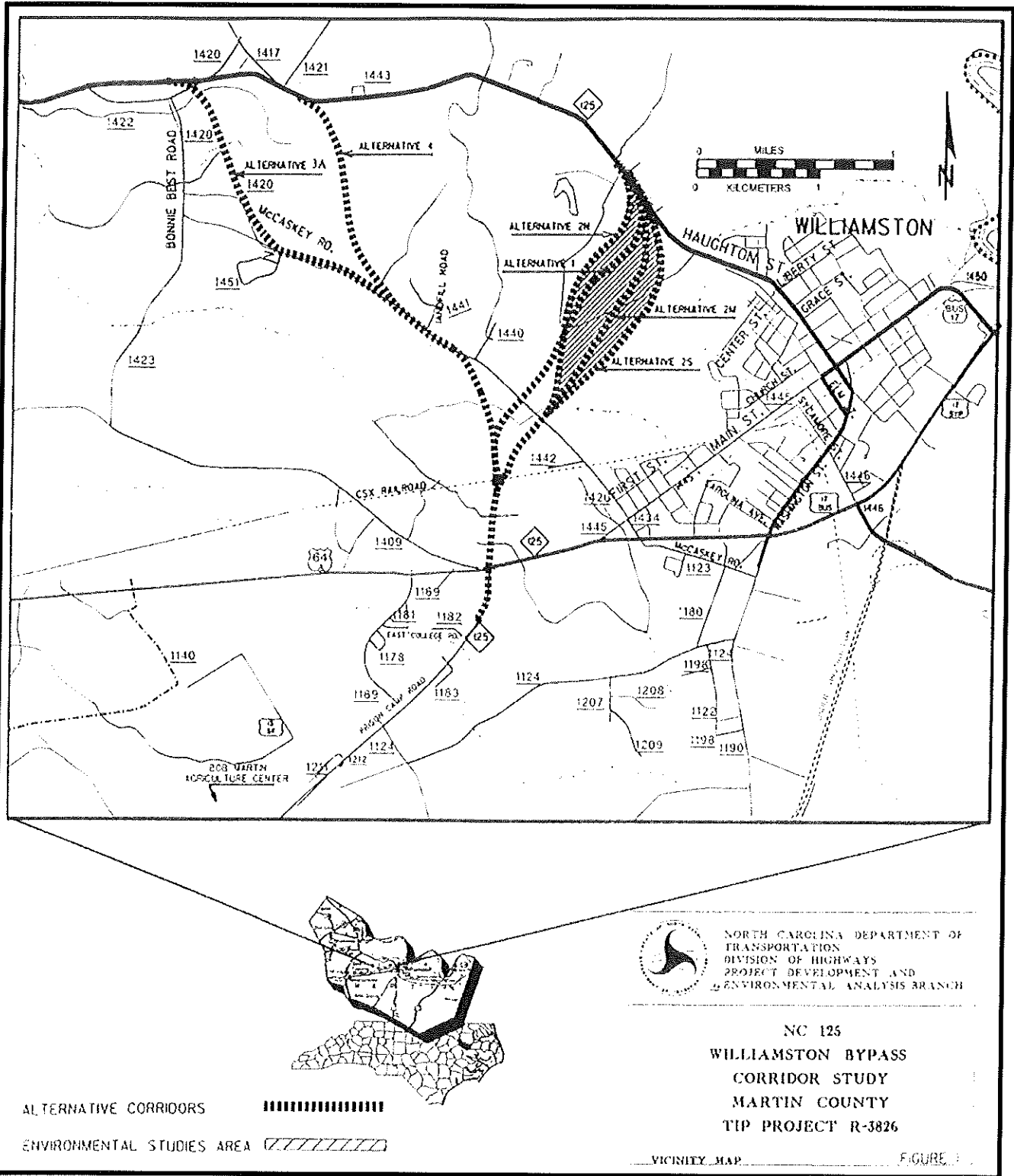


Figure 1: Project Locator Map (Source: NCDOT)

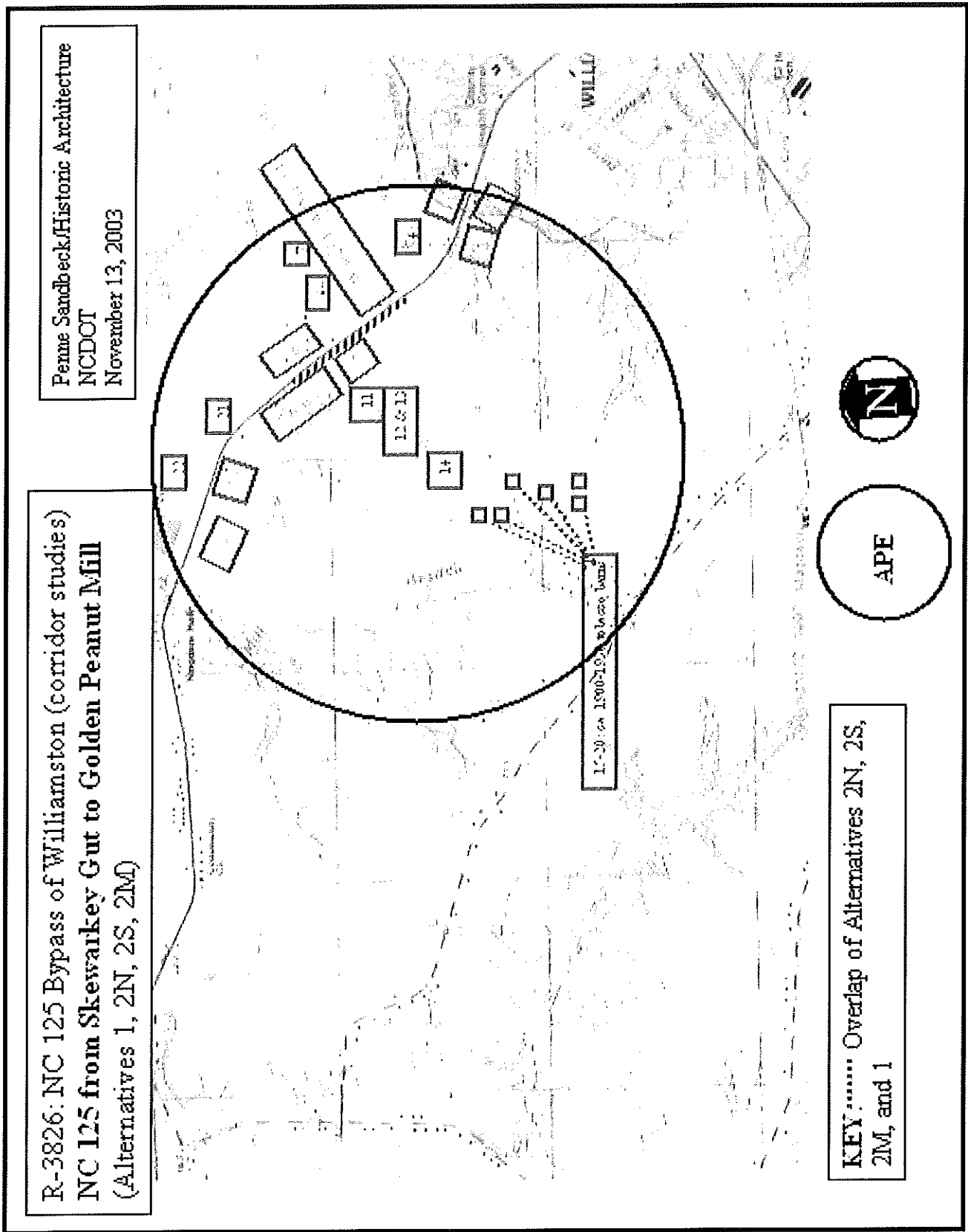


Figure 3: Area of Potential Effects Map for Alternatives 1, 2N, 2S, and 2M and Locator Map for Resources 1 through 24 (Source: NCDOT, from Williamston USGS Quadrangle Map)

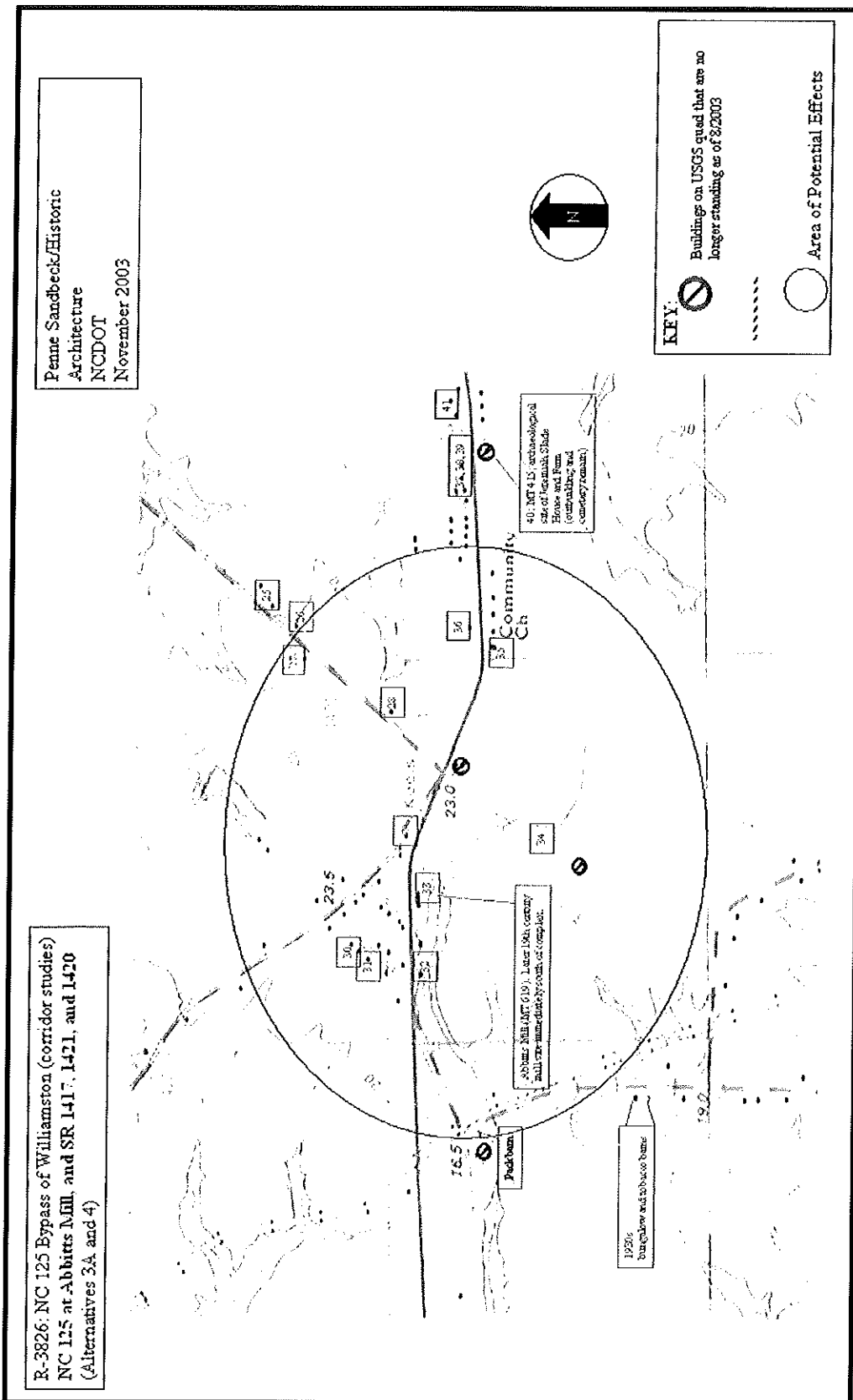


Figure 4: Area of Potential Effects Map for Alternatives 3A and 4 and Locator Map for Resources 25 through 41 (Source: NCDOT, from Williamston USGS Quadrangle Map)



Peene Sandbeck/Historic Architecture  
 NCDOT/ November 18, 2003

R-3826: NC 125 Bypass of Williamston (corridor studies)  
**SR 1420 (McCaskey Road) to Seaboard Coast Railroad Line**  
 (Alternatives 4, 3A, 1, 2N, 2M, 2S)

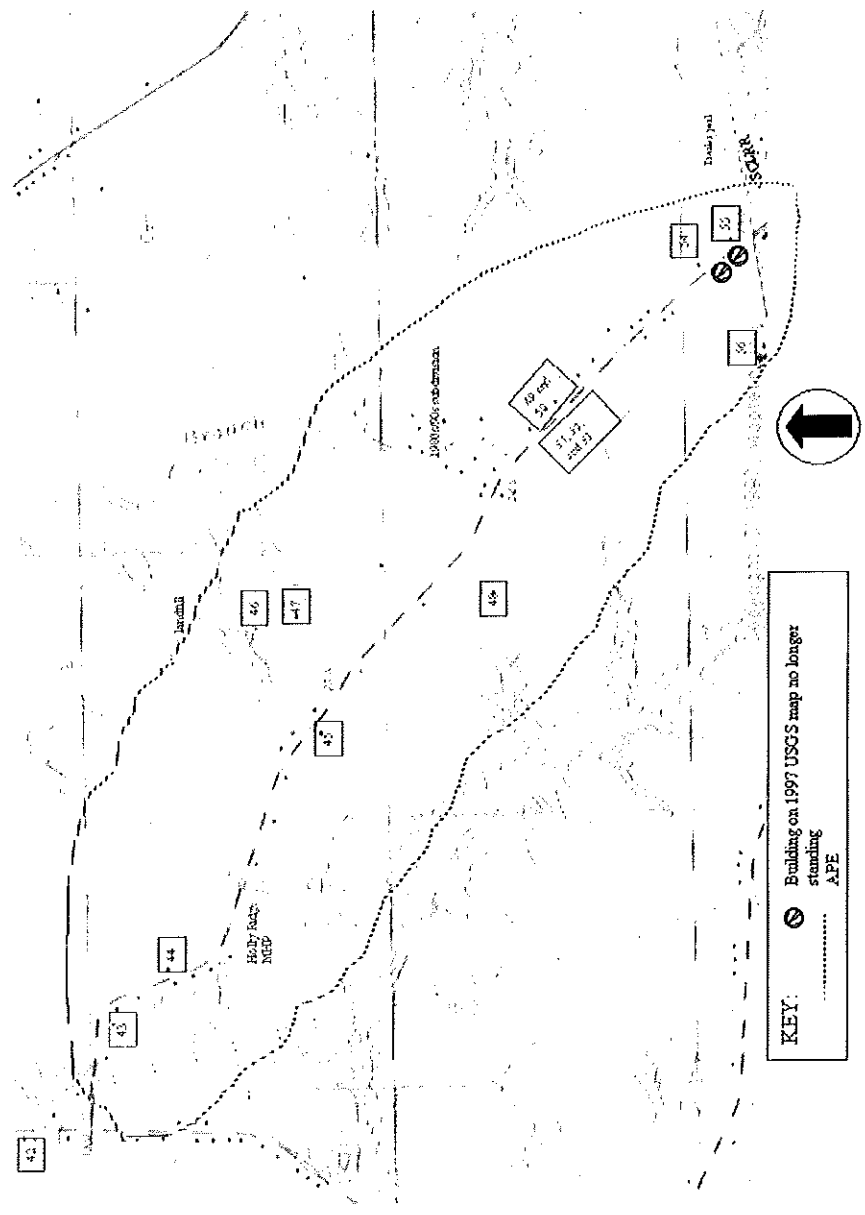


Figure 5: Area of Potential Effects Map for Alternatives 4, 3A, 1, 2N, 2M, and 2S and Locator Map for Resources 42 through 56 (Source: NCDOT, from Williamston USGS Quadrangle Map)

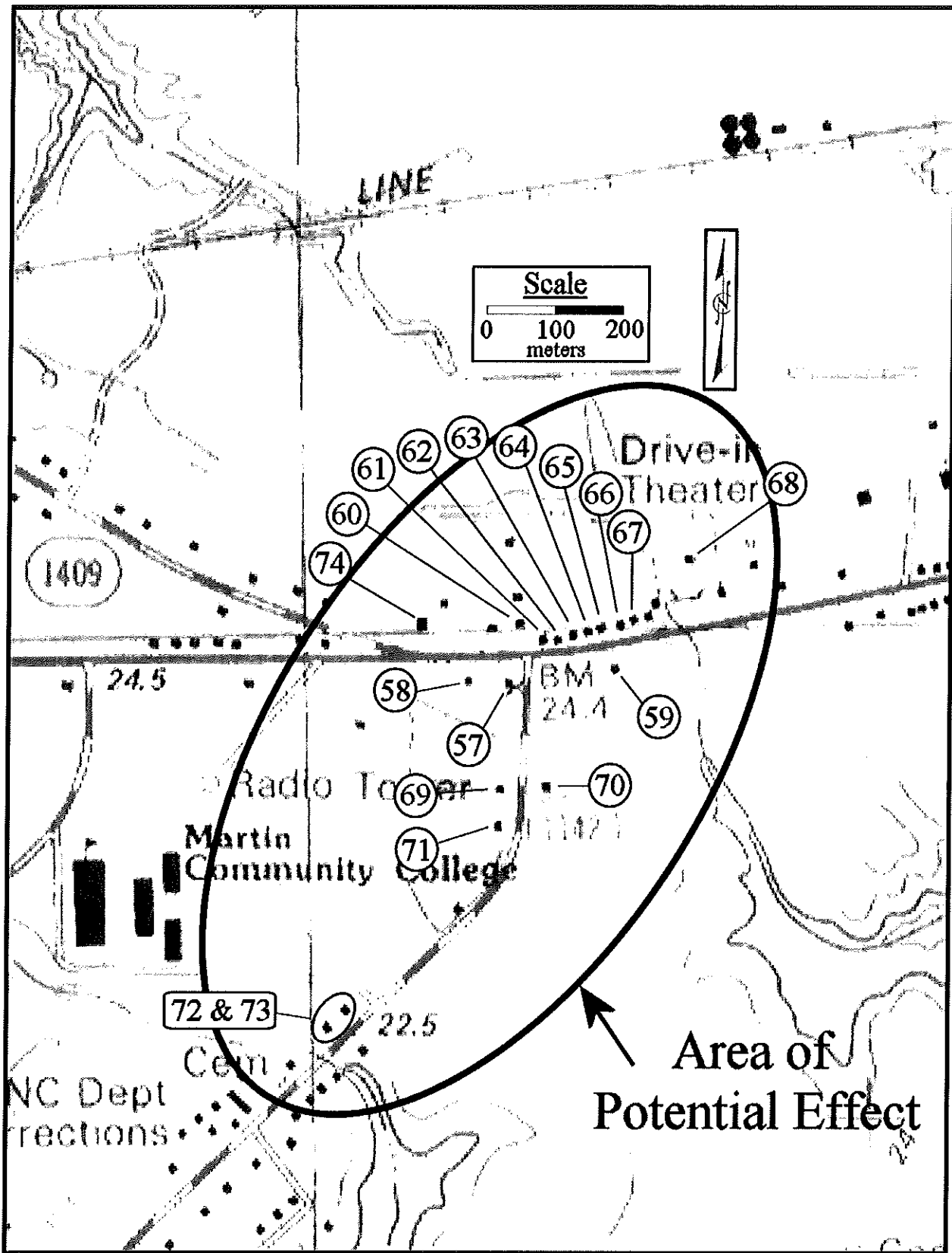


Figure 6: Area of Potential Effects Map for Alternatives 4, 3A, 1, 2N, 2M, and 2S and Locator Map for Resources 57 through 74 (Source: adapted from NCDOT, Williamston USGS Quadrangle Map)

## II. METHODOLOGY

The survey methodology for this project consisted of historic background research, site-specific research, and field survey of the project's APE. Senior Architectural Historian Marvin A. Brown of URS completed the fieldwork and research.

The main sources of information for the project were the previous survey work of Donna Dodenhoff, Tom Butchko, and Penne Smith Sandbeck; Martin County deed records; the Manning and Booker histories of Martin County; Butchko's county architectural history; the Martin County Heritage publication; and personal communications with local property owners Samuel Whitley, Joseph Leggett, and Randy Smith.

The purpose of the research and intensive-level field survey was to understand the historical and architectural contexts of the APE and the four intensively inventoried resources within it. Such knowledge was critical in determining whether the resources within the APE were believed to be eligible, or ineligible, for listing in the National Register. Particular attention was also given to the landscape of the APE and its surroundings, in order to determine whether any of the four resources were part of a historic landscape. The final product of the work effort and evaluation is this report.

### III. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Covered by stretches of forest, swamp, and farmland broken by but two towns of over 1,000 people—Williamston (pop. 5,649) and Robersonville (pop. 1,667)—Martin County is decidedly rural. Farming is the county's major economic activity, with the cultivation of peanuts, cotton, tobacco, corn, and soybeans predominating. The county's farmland is characterized by broad swathes of flat coastal plain crossed by rivers and associated swamps. Its forests produce lumber and other important timber products (City-Data.Com; Kirby and Shaffer 1989:1; Butchko 1998:1, 40-41).

Farming and the timber industry have historically driven Martin's economic engine. In the first half of the nineteenth century, forests were harvested and corn, mixed crops, and livestock were raised on small farms and large plantations as well. Cotton was the most important cash crop joined, at the close of the nineteenth century, by peanuts and tobacco (Butchko 1998:8-11, 21-23). An 1896 report on North Carolina's resources noted that the county had "a large and profitable lumber industry in the great cypress swamps of the Roanoke [River]" and that "Cotton, peanuts, corn, tobacco, oats and every variety of grain" grew well on its soils (State Board of Agriculture 1896: 365).

The project's APE and its surroundings look much like the rest of Martin County although—with the presence of Williamston just to the east—they contain more fingers of concentrated residential development. The APE is characterized by fields, woodlands, and scattered concentrations of houses and mobile homes. Two heavily traveled roads, NC 125 at the north and US 64/13 at the south, pass through it. At the macro level, as indicated by aerial photography (Figure 7), the APE likely looks much like it has for the past century. However, at the micro level, on the ground, many changes are apparent. Not only have new residences been added to the landscape—many at the middle and again at the close of the twentieth century—but numerous old residences and agricultural buildings have been lost or greatly altered. This infill and loss is present at all four of the resources assessed in this report.

The Whitley Farm has lost all of its nineteenth and early twentieth century outbuildings. Its much-altered principal eighteenth- and nineteenth-century farmhouse largely retains only its hidden wood frame. The Rodgers-Leggett Farmstead has lost all but a few of its nineteenth- and early twentieth-century buildings including, most notably, its nineteenth-century main house, which has been supplanted by a ranchhouse at a different location. The Jeremiah Slade House—one of the county's most important late-eighteenth-/early-nineteenth-century buildings—is gone, as are all of its early outbuildings. Only the family cemetery and a twentieth-century barn still survive on its once extensive grounds, which are marked along NC 125 by a row of small, late-twentieth-century houses. The Smith House has lost all but one of its outbuildings as well. Some of its former farmland, too, is occupied by small, late-twentieth-century houses. A mobile home park stretches to its west.

To the casual observer, whose attention is held in late summer by lush rows of peanut, cotton, and tobacco plants, the rural nature of the landscape is striking and undeniable. It is not, however, the agriculture-related, rural historic landscape it was as recently as the 1950s. It is marked in large measure by the following integrity-challenging changes identified in the National Register's *Guidelines for Evaluation and Documenting Rural Historic Landscapes* (McClelland, Keller, Keller, and Melnick 1989):

- deterioration, abandonment, and relocation of historic buildings and structures



- substantial alteration of buildings and structures (remodeling, siding, additions)
- replacement of structures such as dams, bridges, and barns
- construction of new buildings and structures.

More succinctly, the landscape no longer appears to possess “a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of areas of land use, vegetation, buildings and structures, roads and waterways, and natural features.” With so many of its historic standing resources gone, replaced, or substantially altered within its fields, the APE and its surroundings remain a rural landscape that continues to be cultivated, but has lost the integrity that sustains historic significance.

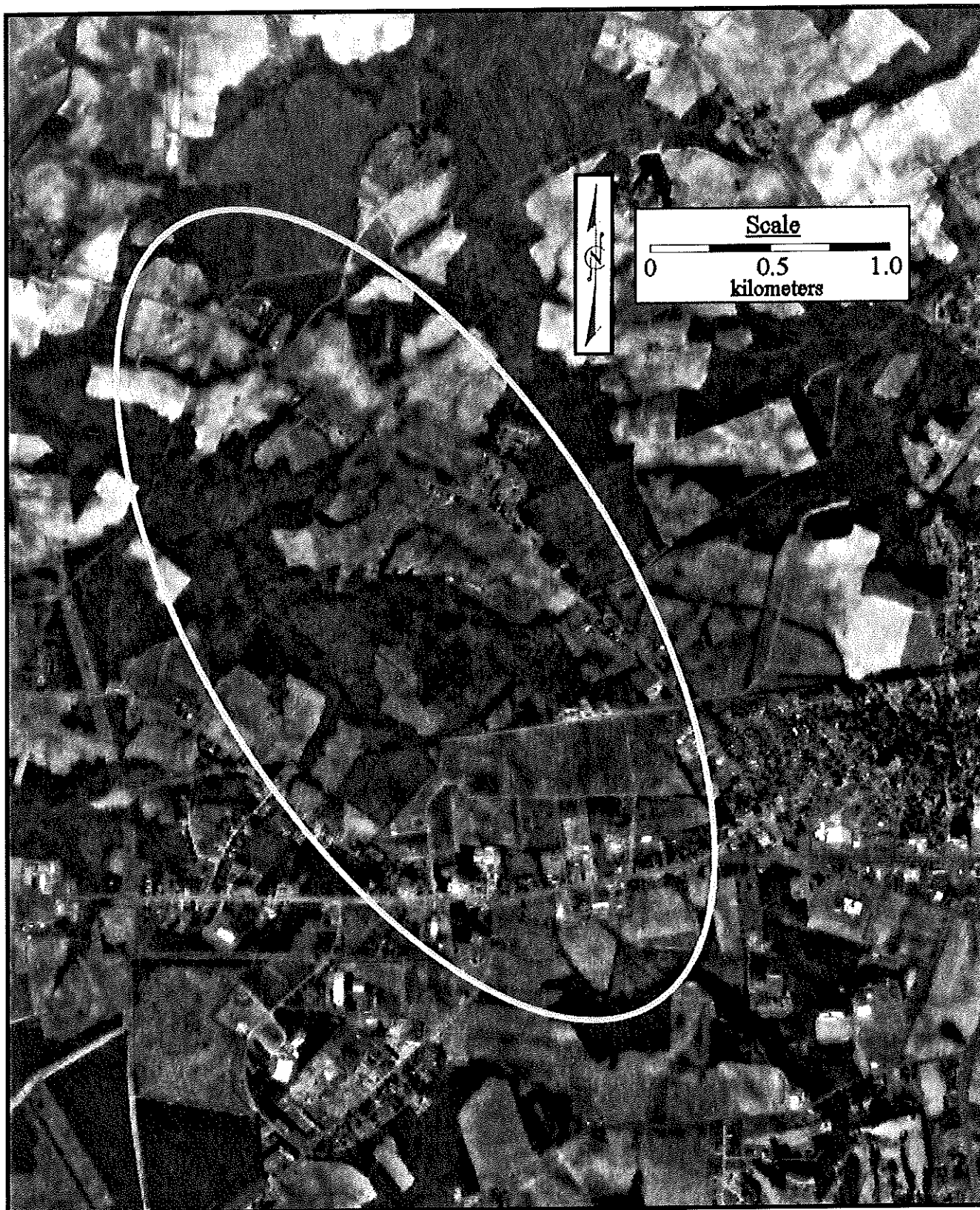


Figure 7: Aerial view of Area of Potential Effects and surroundings (Source: Terraserver image courtesy of the USGS)

## IV. HISTORIC CONTEXT

Non-natives first settled Martin County at a site along the Roanoke River overlooking the ruins of Squhawky, a former Tuscarora village. The new community, which shipped forest products—pitch, pine, turpentine—along the river appropriately came to be called Tar Landing. When Martin County was established in 1774, the new county seat of Williamston was created near Tar Landing, but not immediately on the river. Even though post roads had been established through the county in the 1730s, the Roanoke remained central to the county for both transportation and trade. It well served Martin's three principal towns of Williamston, Jamesville, and Hamilton, but retarded the growth of local land routes. In the mid 1800s, Williamston merchants frequently took buying trips by boat along the river to Plymouth and then by steamer to points north and east (Butchko 1998:3-5, 379-380; Manning and Booker 1977:3, 56, 60; Hughes 1980:71-72).

In 1790 Martin County's population was 6,010. About one-third of white households owned slaves, although about half of these households enslaved but one or two individuals. Of the 277 slaveholding families, only 41 owned ten or more slaves. This small group of households held more than half of the county's slaves, however. An even smaller group, consisting of 14 households, owned 30 or more slaves (Butchko 1998:6-7; University of Virginia Geospatial and Statistical Data Center). As Butchko (1998:6-7) notes in his discussion of the 1797 tax list, Martin was a sparsely populated agricultural county with property concentrated in the hands of a small number of individuals. In other words, Martin County at the turn of the eighteenth century was developing a "stratified plantation economy" (Butchko 1998:6-7).

From the perspective of its inhabitants, Martin County changed little through most of the nineteenth century. Slavery ended with the Civil War, but black residents continued to farm, largely as sharecroppers or tenants. White residents worked the land as well, although more often as landowners than their black neighbors. The transportation network continued to be rudimentary. Until well into the nineteenth century, the Roanoke remained at the heart of the county's transportation network. By 1801, according to a deed reference, the "Tarborough Road" carried stagecoaches and other traffic between Williamston and Tarboro. The road was improved in the 1830s, but in general Martin's roadways remained poor into the early twentieth century. In 1911 only seven of the county's 425 miles of road were improved and, according to a state roads report, the remainder were "earth, with ruts and considerable sand." The most notable nineteenth-century advance in transportation occurred in 1882, when the Seaboard and Raleigh Railway was completed between Williamston and Tarboro, "radically [changing] the economic prospects in Martin County" (Butchko 1998:6, 18-21).

Agriculture and the production of forest products continued to dominate the county's economy through the nineteenth century. During the first half of the century, corn was the principal crop. Agricultural figures from 1850 indicate that it was raised in the company of many other products. The large majority of farms produced potatoes, peas, and beans, mostly for farm consumption. Also farmers generally had pigs, milk cows, beef cattle, and sheep, largely for home consumption, as well as beehives and horses. In 1860 the same farm products were raised with one notable difference. Between 1850 and 1860, the number of farmers raising cotton "exploded" (Butchko 1998:7). From 32 farmers producing 89 bales, the number rose to 199 farmers raising 3,068 bales.

Not surprisingly, considering cotton's labor-intensive nature, the number of slaves in the county soared along with the number of bales. In 1850 the county had 335 individuals who enslaved almost 3,300 men, women, and children. By 1860 the number of slaves had climbed about 20 percent to over

3,900. Many farmers owned a slave or two, perhaps to assist with the crop. The large slaveholders in particular, however, had increased their slaveholdings, which resulted in the ten largest cotton producers in the county in 1860 producing almost half of the crop (Butchko 1998:7-8).

Forest products remained important at mid-century as well. In 1850 the county had a number of manufacturers of wood shingles and 15 sawmills. The only other industrial activity of any note took place at the county's 48 grist and 12 flour mills (Butchko 1998:10-11).

The most notable changes in the county's agricultural and overall economy occurred in the 1880s and 1890s when peanuts and tobacco, respectively, were introduced to local farms. The crops were almost immediately successful, although at the close of the nineteenth century corn remained the largest crop as measured by acreage and cotton remained the chief cash crop. In 1928, Martin ranked second among North Carolina's counties in the production of peanuts, seventh in tobacco, and 34th in cotton. By 1930 tobacco had surpassed both cotton and peanuts in importance (Butchko 1998:21-24).

In order to successfully cultivate tobacco, farmers had to construct new specialized outbuildings, such as tobacco barns, packhouses, and striphouses, or reconfigure older buildings. In large part due to this, the value of farm buildings in the county increased more than six fold between 1900 and 1920 (Butchko 1998:21).

The development of three principal cash crops was a boon to overall agricultural and economic production in the county, but it was not a tide upon which all boats rose. On the eve of the Civil War, slaves comprised 42 percent of the county's population. After the war most found employment as sharecroppers and, occasionally, tenants. In the last third of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century, they were joined by landless whites. The cultivation of tobacco and peanuts increased tenancy and sharecropping. Between 1880 and 1910, the number of farmers caught up in the two systems more than doubled. In 1920 more than half of the county's farms were cultivated by sharecroppers or, to a lesser extent, tenants. The burden of the system fell more heavily on black farmers, only one-third of whom owned their own farms, compared to almost two-thirds of white farmers. Those who did not own their own farms generally lived in rudimentary dwellings provided by the owners. Farm production plummeted for all county agriculturalists during the Great Depression, only fully recovering with the coming of World War II (Butchko 1998:21, 35-36).

During the first third of the twentieth century, not only was agriculture transformed through the addition of two major cash crops. The county's transportation network, which always seemed to go hand-in-hand with agriculture, was transformed as well. In the 1920s and 1930s, a significant number of Martin County's citizens acquired automobiles and the county concomitantly built a less-than-primitive network of roads. By the close of the 1930s, the road network was so well established and maintained that the Atlantic Coast Line, a successor of the Seaboard and Raleigh, canceled passenger service through the county. Bus lines picked up the slack for those unfortunate residents who did not yet own automobiles (Butchko 1998:38).

In particular during the early part of the century, the two principal roads within and around the APE were constructed or improved. Williamston's *Enterprise* reported on April 11, 1911 (quoted in Butchko 1998:19), that "The first mile of good road will be that from town to G.L. Whitley's farm [now NC 125 to Hamilton] . . . The direction of the road will be changed so there will be less curves in it." The G.L. Whitley farm is the Whitley Farm considered in this report and NC 125 is the same road. It appears on the Gilmer map of 1863 with the Whitleys on its east side and the Rodgers and Slades on its west (Figure 8). In 1913 Williamston Township became the first in the county to approve a bond issue for road improvement. By 1922 highway crews, supported by state Good Roads funding, were constructing the Williamston-Plymouth Road, later US 64, through the county. Also in



the early years of the decade, NC 125 was constructed between Williamston and Scotland Neck (NCRoads.com; Butchko 1998:19-20). As indicated by the presence of nineteenth-century dwellings in close proximity to the main roads—for instance, the Whitley Farm and the former Jeremiah Slade House—these routes were at least in part constructed on earlier roadways.

After World War II, as Butchko (1998:40-41) notes in his history of the county, major changes occurred in Martin's agricultural landscape. Mechanized equipment was finally introduced to the heavily labor-intensive production of tobacco. Tractors displaced mules and horses and accordingly numerous mule barns and stables were abandoned or demolished. New tractor sheds and shelters were erected or created within the shells of earlier buildings. Tobacco barns were also abandoned as they were displaced by long, low, metal bulk barns.

Martin County remained a major agricultural producer in the last half of the twentieth century and remains so to the present. In 1969 the county ranked 14th in the state in the total value by county of the 11 principal farm crops (Manning and Booker 1979: 91). More specifically, between 1953 and 1973, peanut production quadrupled. In 1996 Martin was the fourth biggest producer of peanuts among the state's 100 counties. Cotton declined precipitously after the war but, as demand changed, made a dramatic comeback in the 1990s. In 1996 Martin was fifth in the state in its production. In that year the county crops with the most acreage were, in order, cotton, peanuts, corn, soybeans, and tobacco. However, tobacco still remained one of the county's big three cash producers, producing more income than any other agricultural product. Also in 1996, Martin County ranked 28th in the production of chickens, 29th in corn, and 43rd in soybeans (Butchko 1998:41).

Changes occurred to the county's transportation network during the second half of the twentieth as well. Increased traffic on US 64 and 17 created a bottleneck in Williamston. In 1954 the state opened a bypass of US 64 south of Williamston, carrying traffic off of Main Street, the route's previous path. US 17 was further improved in 1969-1970 through its widening to four lanes south of the Skewarkee intersection (Manning and Booker 1979:44-45; NCRoads.com; Peele 1956). One final major alteration to the county's road network is the ongoing construction of a new, four-lane, limited-access US 64.

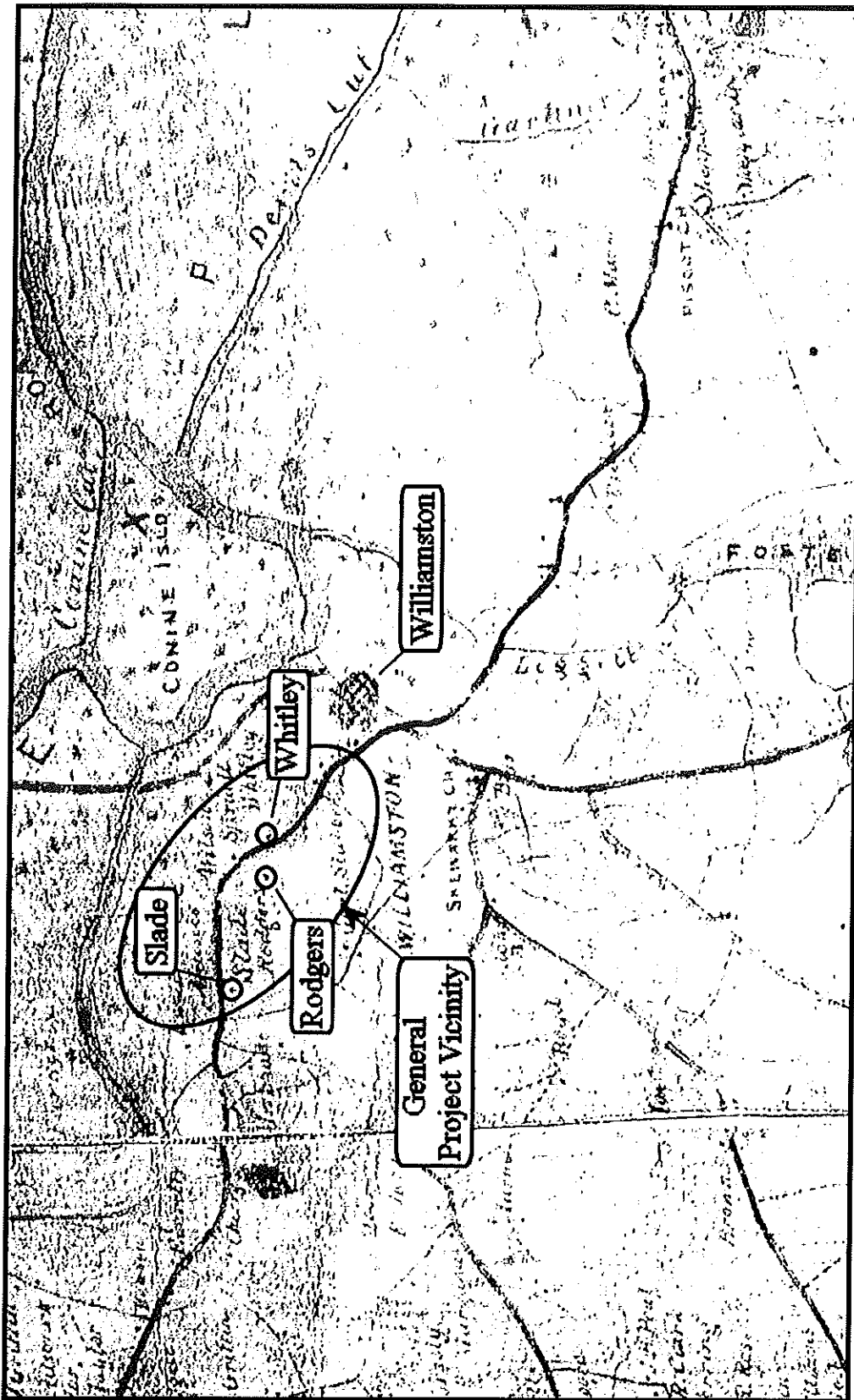


Figure 8: Gilmer's ca. 1863 Map of Eastern North Carolina; Whitley, Rodgers, and Slade properties at upper left, northwest of Williamston

## V. PROPERTY INVENTORY AND EVALUATIONS

### *Resources Recommended Not Eligible for National Register Listing*

#### WHITLEY FARM (MT-694) (#5-7)

East side of NC 125, 0.2 miles south of junction with J.C. Leggett Road (24155 NC 125),  
Williamston vicinity, Martin County

#### *History*

The Whitley Farm currently rests in the hands of the seventh generation of Whitley family owners. The earliest owners of its land and the original portion of the principal farmhouse were Samuel and Isobel C. Whitley. (Samuel's father was Samuel C. Whitley, who had emigrated from England to a 300-acre land patent in Martin in 1742.) Samuel and Isobel's son, Jesse (ca. 1774-ca. 1818) and his wife, Elizabeth, inherited the farm. In turn their youngest son, Samuel C. Whitley, who was born in the house in 1806 and died there in 1874, inherited the property. Samuel was married three times and had eight children. On the eve of the Civil War in 1860, he was a prosperous planter who owned 443 acres of improved farmland and 300 acres of woodland. He held about \$20,000 worth of assets almost equally divided between real and personal property. His personal property included a holding, large for Martin County, of 22 slaves who shared eight slave houses. Among the farm's products were 2,000 bushels of corn, 1,000 bushels of sweet potatoes and, surprisingly considering the decade and the size of the slave force, only five bales of cotton (Butchko 1998:470; Dodenhoff 1992b; Hughes 1980:634-635).

In 1866 when George L. Whitley (1842-1919)—the son of Samuel and first wife Marina R. S. Whitley—acquired the property, the farm comprised 1,000 acres that extended northeast to the banks of the Roanoke River, taking in all of Coneho (or Conine) Island (Martin County Deed Book S, Page 435; Hughes 1980:634). In 1910 George and his wife, Portia, both of whom still resided in the house, transferred the property to Jesse S. Whitley (1885-1957), who was the eighth of their ten children (Martin County Deed Book ZZ, Page 85; Hughes 1980:633). As a young man, Jesse worked on the construction of the Panama Canal and, while subsequently building levees on the Mississippi River in Missouri, he met and married Beatrice B. Whitley. In 1958 Beatrice and others transferred the property to son John S. Whitley for ceremonial consideration of \$10.00 (Martin County Deed Book Q-6, Page 44). The transfer included the still-1,000-acre tract together with "all the personal property, team and farm utensils located on and used in connection" with its operation. All of the property was located east of NC 125. Its survey points included the Skewarky River, a "new canal," the Roanoke River, Herring Gut, Gin Slough, and portions of NC 125 both current and "abandoned". In 1992 John and his wife, Esther, transferred the property to their son and daughter-in-law, Samuel B. and Deborah H. Whitley (Martin County Deed Book T-13, Page 466). They continue to occupy the farmhouse, which is currently associated with 265 acres (Hughes 1980:634).

The Whitley farmhouse was built in at least two principal stages and subsequently much altered. The house's rear ell, according to Butchko, incorporates one of the earliest identified residences in Martin County. Access to the house could not be obtained during the current inventory, but Butchko (1998:470) describes this early block as follows: "Although now incorporated within the rear ell, this one-room, two-story house retains as its chief architectural feature a plain vernacular mantel supported

by paired colonettes; the original corner stair has been removed.” Butchko believes this portion of the house was erected during the last quarter of the eighteenth century by Samuel and Isobel Whitley. His account continues to encompass the mid-nineteenth- and twentieth-century history of the house:

About 1840, the house was expanded with the construction of a two-story, single-pile block on [the] front that converted the original house into an ell, which was later enlarged. The new, symmetrical, three-bay façade and its nine-over-nine and nine-over-six sash windows reflected the growing prosperity of the family, and a double-shouldered chimney suggests construction early within the antebellum period. Sadly, the house suffered a major fire in the 1960s [or 1972] which necessitated the rebuilding and replacement of elements that may have proved helpful in further dating the house’s evolution.

The ca. 1840 two-story front block of the house would have been built by Samuel Whitley (1806-1874), perhaps around the time of his first marriage to Marina Reddick Smithwick in 1837 or when he took the hand of his second wife, Eliza Griffin Crichlow, in 1847 (Hughes 1980:665).

The farmhouse and its outbuildings and property underwent significant changes during the twentieth century. As noted in Section IV above, in the 1910s the road was straightened in front of the house. This reduced the size of the front yard by about 75 percent. Also in the early twentieth century, Jesse S. Whitley—a farmer and entrepreneur who owned the Williamston Supply Company and a sawmill, basket mill, and peanut mill—converted the house into two apartments. In order to facilitate this, he put in dividers and added a staircase. Following World War II, John Whitley tore down the mule barn, blacksmith shop, and all of the other nineteenth- and early twentieth-century outbuildings associated with the house. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, he constructed the majority of the outbuildings that still stand well to the rear of the house. In 1972 the house, occupied by tenants, was severely damaged by fire. Five years later Samuel B. Whitley gutted it, effectively reducing it almost to its frame. Among the elements he removed were all of the plaster, the doors, and the door frames. He also added the current porches, windows, and artificial siding, as well as the enclosed sunroom to the rear (Whitley 2004).

### *Description*

The front block of the Whitley farmhouse [A on Figure 9]—the shell of which dates to the 1840s and finish of which dates to the 1990s—utilizes a traditional I-house form (Plates 1, 2, and 3). It is two stories tall and one room deep and has a center-hall plan. It has a frame body now covered with vinyl siding and, at its gable-end roof, asphalt shingles. The south front elevation of the block has three symmetrically placed bays. The elevation’s six-over-six and nine-over-nine snap-in windows, found elsewhere throughout the house, are not original. Neither are the surrounds, shutters, or one-story, full-façade front porch. The double shoulders of the chimney on the east side of the house suggest that it may be original; its brickwork is hidden beneath stucco. The west-elevation chimney is single shouldered. The two-story, single-pile ell rear ell gives the house an L-shaped footprint (Plate 4). It is said to contain the original block of the house, although no evidence of this is apparent at the much-altered exterior, which has the same modern finish as the front block. A one-story ell, backed by the even later-added sunroom, extends to its rear. Within the legs of the L, at the rear of the main block, is a shed room that appears to date from the twentieth century (Plate 5).

The Whitley Farm includes a number of structures in addition to the farmhouse (Figures 9 and 10). It currently occupies about 265 acres, much of which is under cultivation. Its crops include peanuts, tobacco, and corn. The house has lost all of its early domestic outbuildings and only one structure—a less-than-50-year-old cinder-block garage and shop [B]—stands near it (Plate 6). Down a dirt

farm lane to its northeast rear, amidst fields of peanuts and tobacco, are 11 additional outbuildings built from the late 1940s/early 1950s through the 1990s (Plates 7 and 8). These consist of the following:

Barn and sheds [C] – Long, frame, weatherboarded barn with later extended enclosed metal shed and open pole-supported shed (Plate 9).

Tractor shed [D] – Tall, pole-supported shed partially sided with corrugated metal. (Plate 10).

Tobacco barn [E] – Clay-tiled, former flue-cure tobacco barn (Plate 11 at right).

Tobacco barn [F] – Clay-tiled, former flue-cure tobacco barn (Plate 11 at center).

Tobacco barn [G] – Metal-clad, log, former flue-cure tobacco barn (Plate 11 at left).

Bulk barns [H, I, and J] – Long, low, metal-sided, modern, bulk tobacco barns (Plate 12). — post 1957

Silos [K and L] – Round, squat, metal-walled, conical-roofed silos (Plate 13 at right).

Shed [M] – Long, frame, metal-sided shed (Plate 13 at left and Plate 14 in tobacco).

Two further resources that were once associated with the farm operation stand down a second dirt farm lane at the northwest end of the property. Both are former tenant houses that appear to date from the late nineteenth/early twentieth century. The more recent of the two [6] is a still-occupied, frame, vinyl-sided, one-story, gable-end dwelling with a modern, engaged front porch (Plate 15). To its north, farther down the lane, is an earlier one-story, gable-end, weatherboarded house [7] that is no longer occupied (Plate 16).

### ***Evaluation***

The Whitley Farm is not believed to be National Register-eligible under any of the Register's Criteria, either individually or as part of a historic district. The farmhouse—due to the many alterations that have left it a late eighteenth- and mid nineteenth-century frame encrusted inside and out by a late twentieth-century house—is not believed to retain sufficient integrity to support architectural significance. Due to the many changes, it also lacks the integrity necessary to support any historical significance associated with its early Whitley family builders and inhabitants. The farm has lost all of its domestic outbuildings. All of its nineteenth- and early twentieth-century agricultural outbuildings were demolished in the late 1940s and replaced over the course of the next 50 years. It is therefore believed that the property does not retain sufficient integrity to support significance as an agriculture-related historic district. The farm likely retains many broad, historic field patterns, as do almost all of the many other local farms that have remained in cultivation through the past century or two. Without an intact farmhouse or any outbuildings (other than the two former tenant houses) that predate World War II, however, the surviving fields of the Whitley Farm—coupled with the similarly altered landscapes of surrounding farms—are not believed to comprise a rural historic landscape district. Without these buildings, the property appears to lack the “significant concentration [of] . . . buildings and structures” required for a farm-related resource to merit National Register listing as a rural historic landscape (McClelland, Keller, Keller, and Melnick 1999).

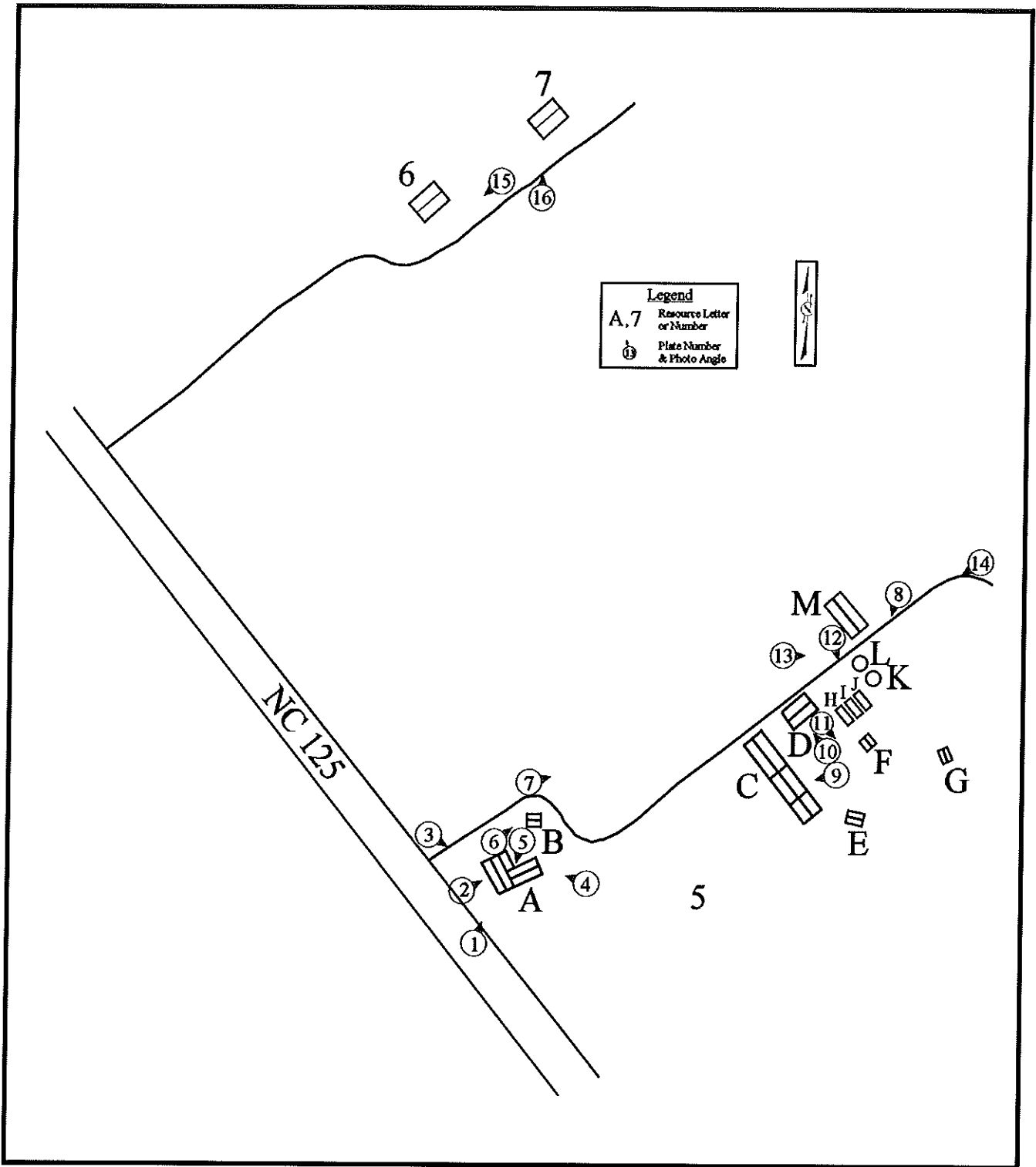


Figure 9: Sketch map of Whitley Farm

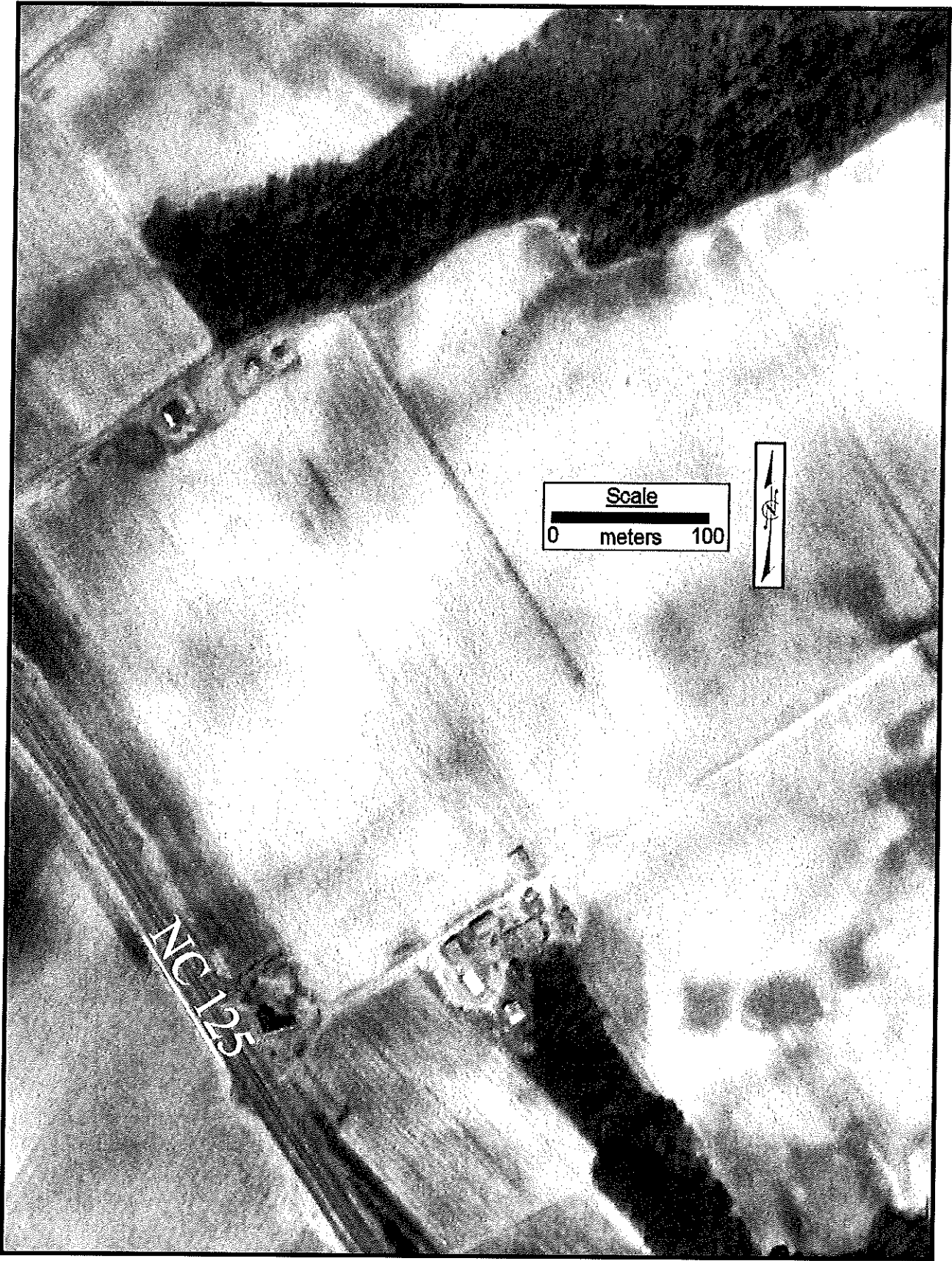


Figure 10: Aerial view of Whitley Farm





Plate 1: Whitley Farm – southwest front and southeast side elevations of farmhouse [A]



Plate 2: Whitley Farm – southwest front elevation of farmhouse [A]





Plate 3: Whitley Farm – southwest front and northwest side elevations of farmhouse [A]



Plate 4: Whitley Farm – northeast rear and southeast side elevations of farmhouse [A]



Plate 5: Whitley Farm – northeast rear and northwest side elevations of farmhouse [A]

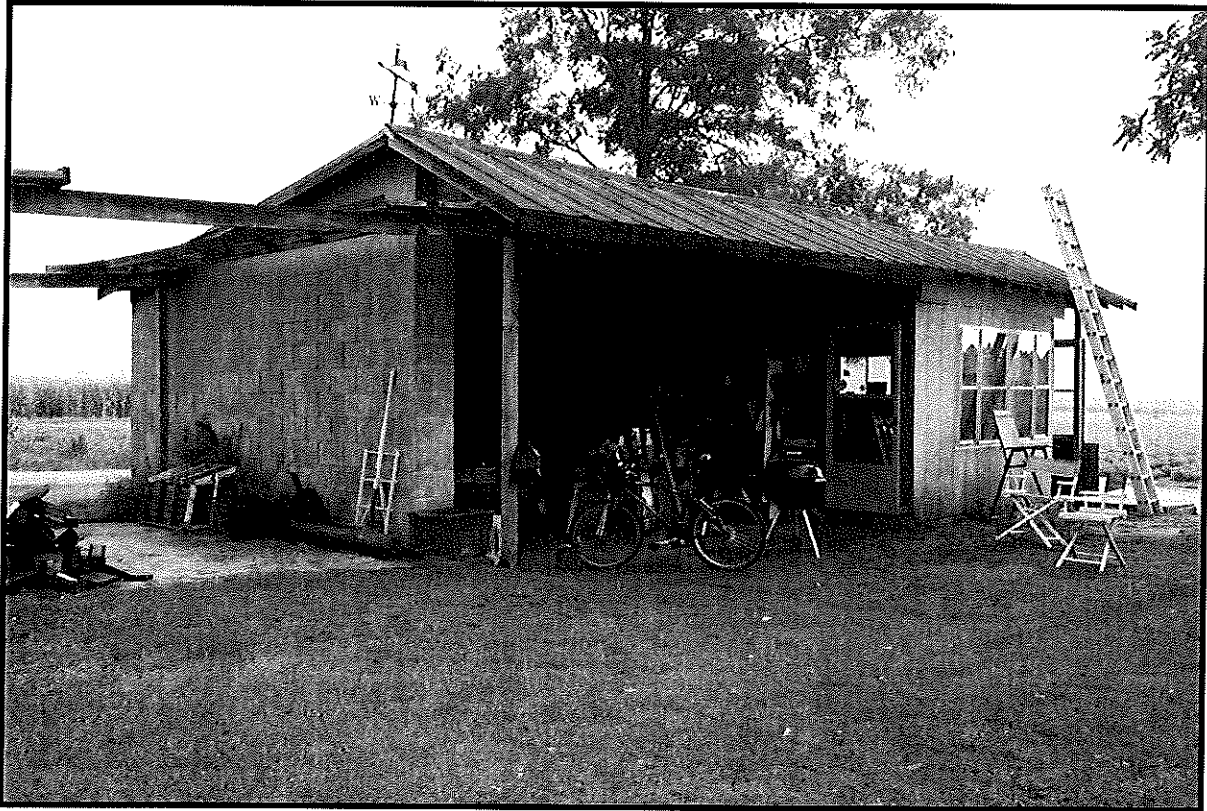


Plate 6: Whitley Farm – looking north at garage/shop [B]



Plate 7: Whitley Farm – looking east through peanuts from rear of farmhouse at outbuildings [C-M]



Plate 8: Whitley Farm – looking south at outbuildings [C - L]; farmhouse at far right distance





Plate 9: Whitley Farm – looking west at barn and attached sheds [C]

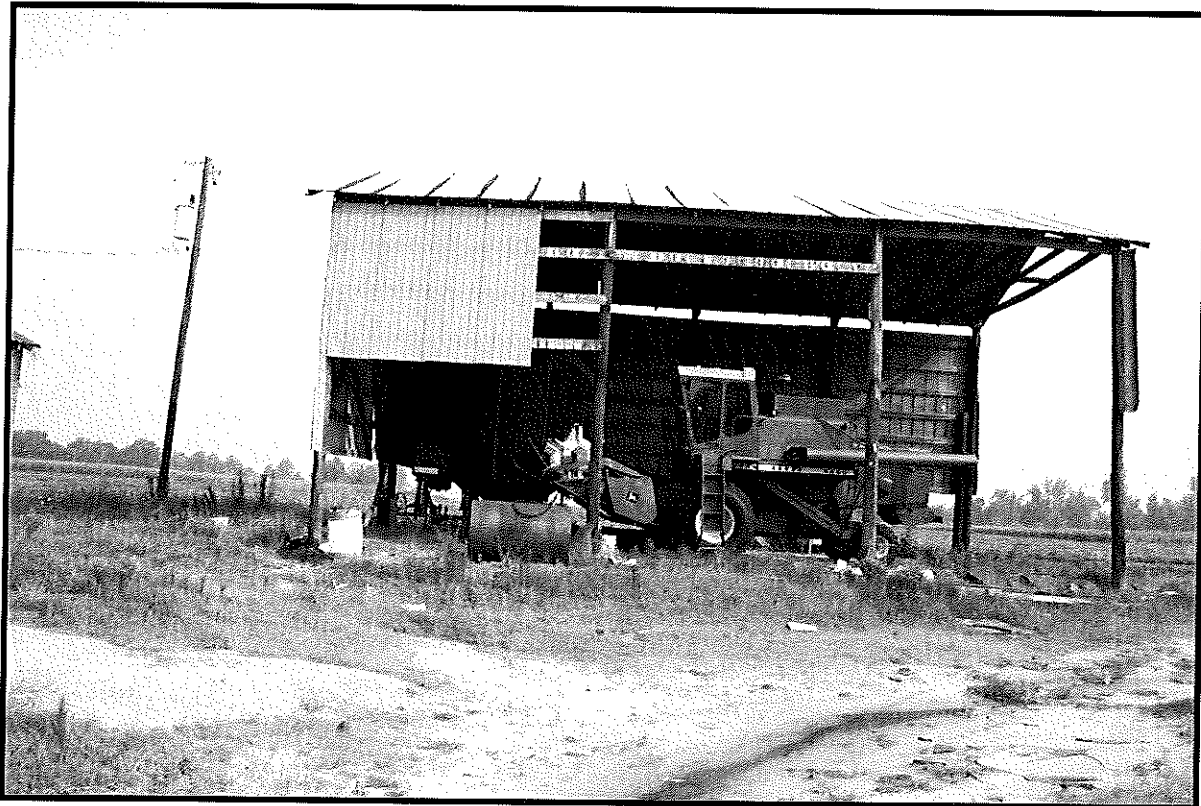


Plate 10: Whitley Farm – looking northwest at tractor shed [D]

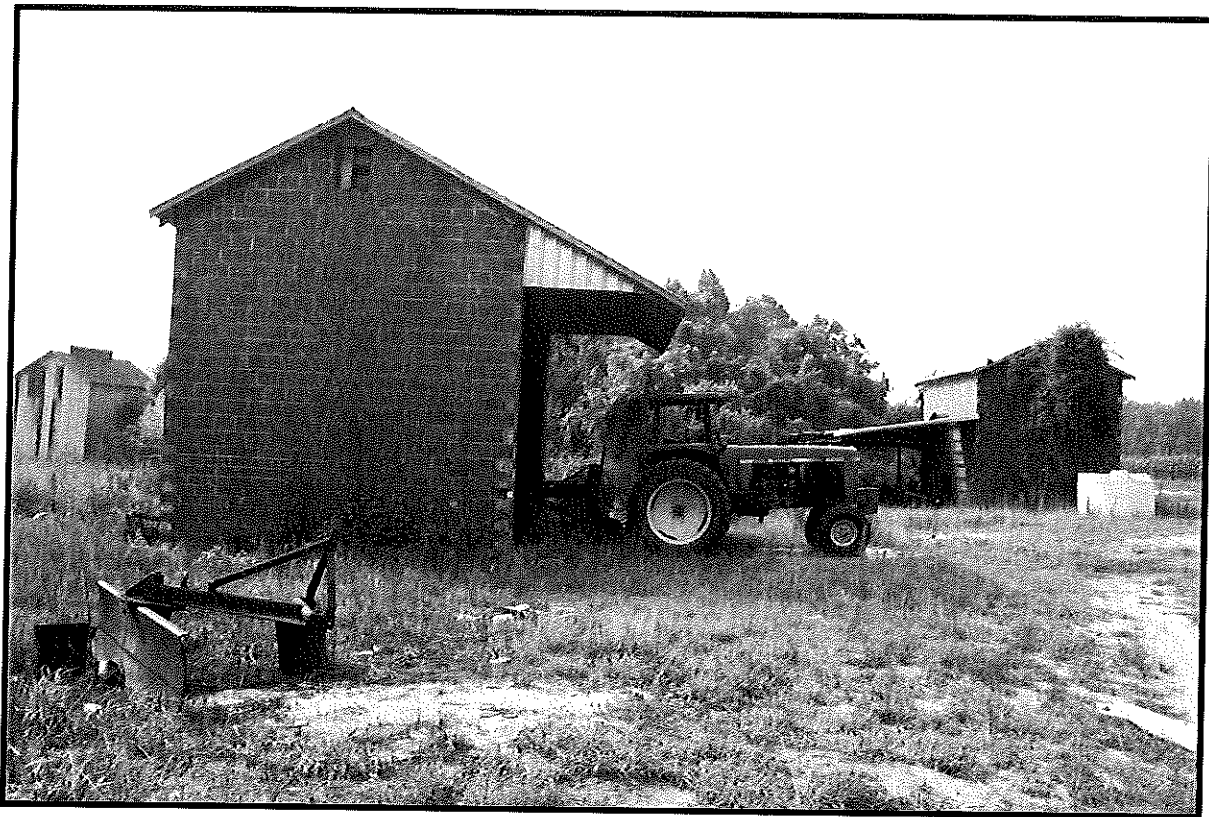


Plate 11: Whitley Farm – looking southeast at tile tobacco barns [E and F] and metal-clad log tobacco barn at far left [G]

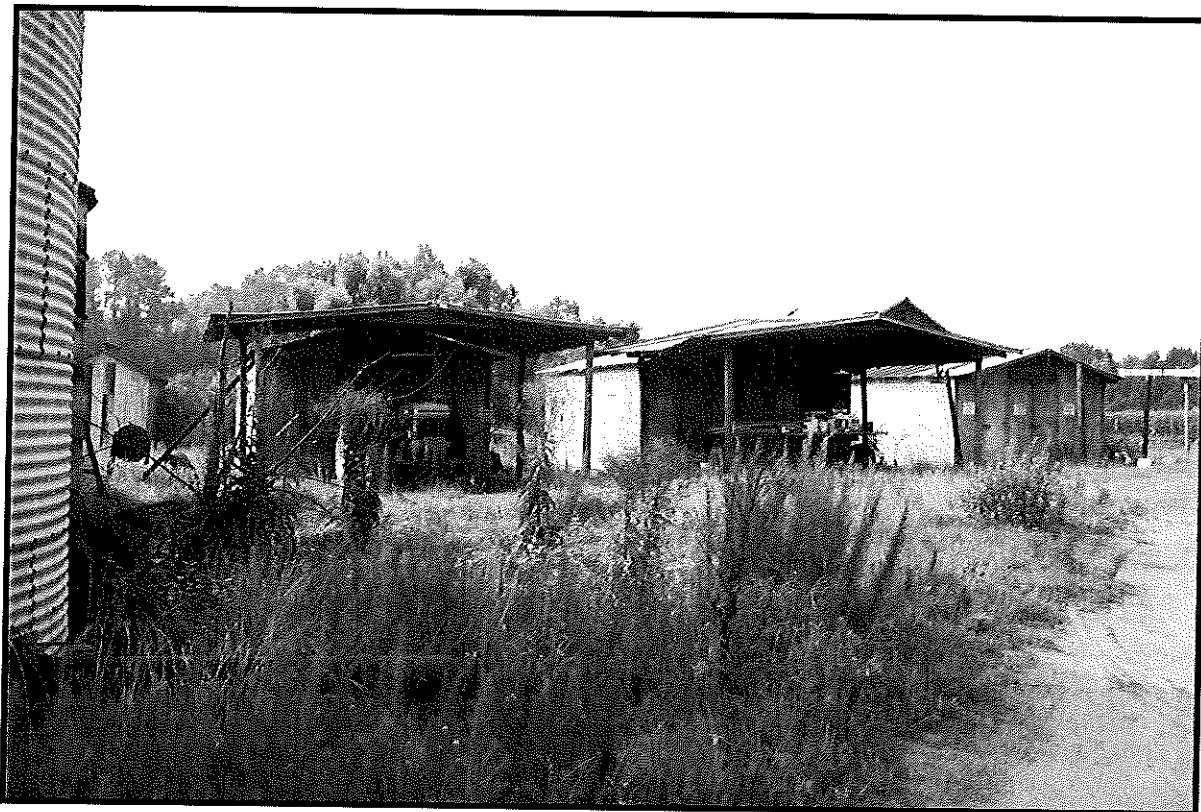


Plate 12: Whitley Farm – looking south at bulk tobacco barns [H, I, and J]

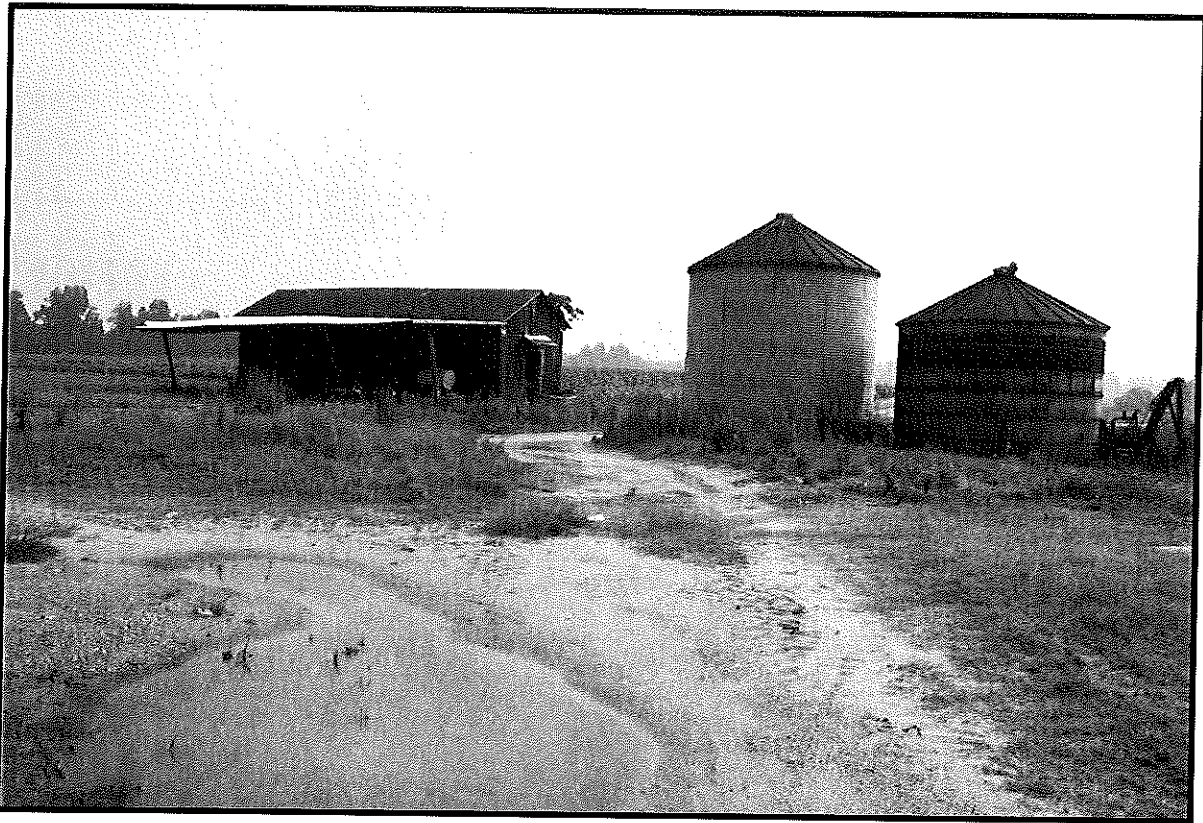


Plate 13: Whitley Farm – looking north at silos [K and L] at right and shed [M] at left

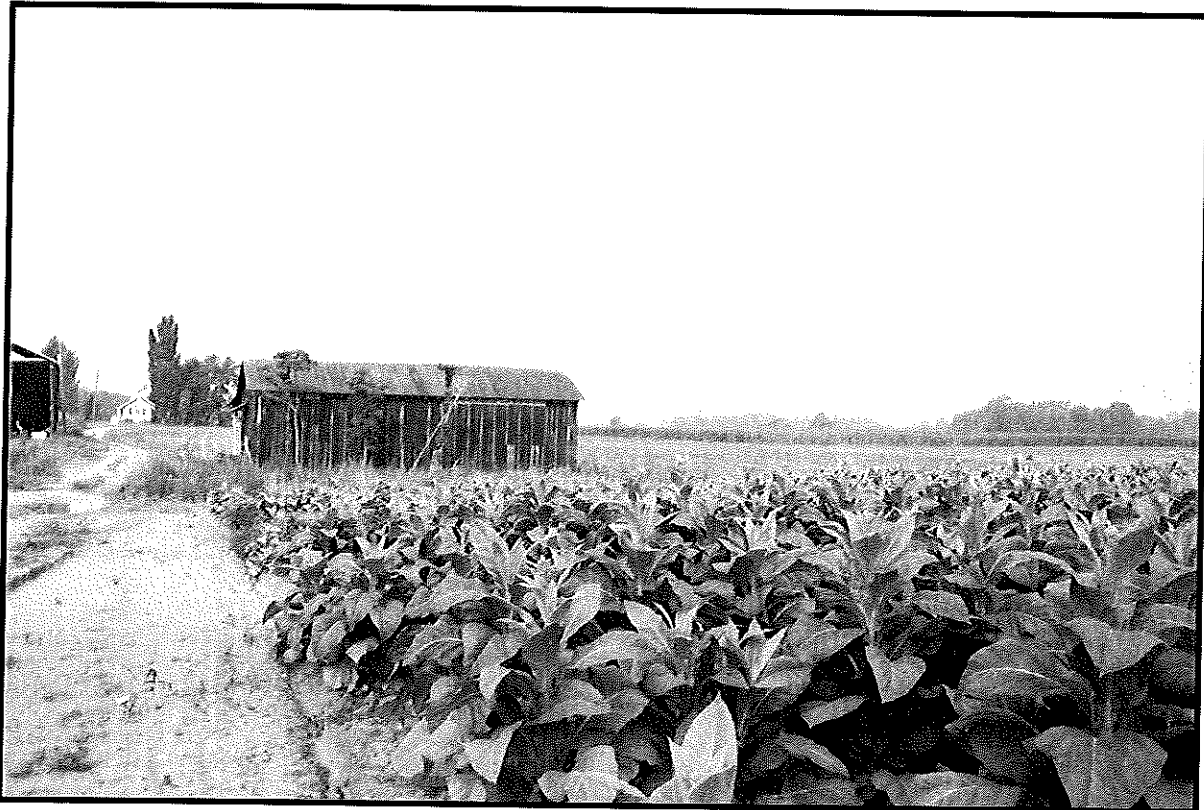


Plate 14: Whitley Farm – looking west through tobacco field at shed [M] and farmhouse [A] at far left



Plate 15: Whitley Farm – looking north at former tenant house [6]

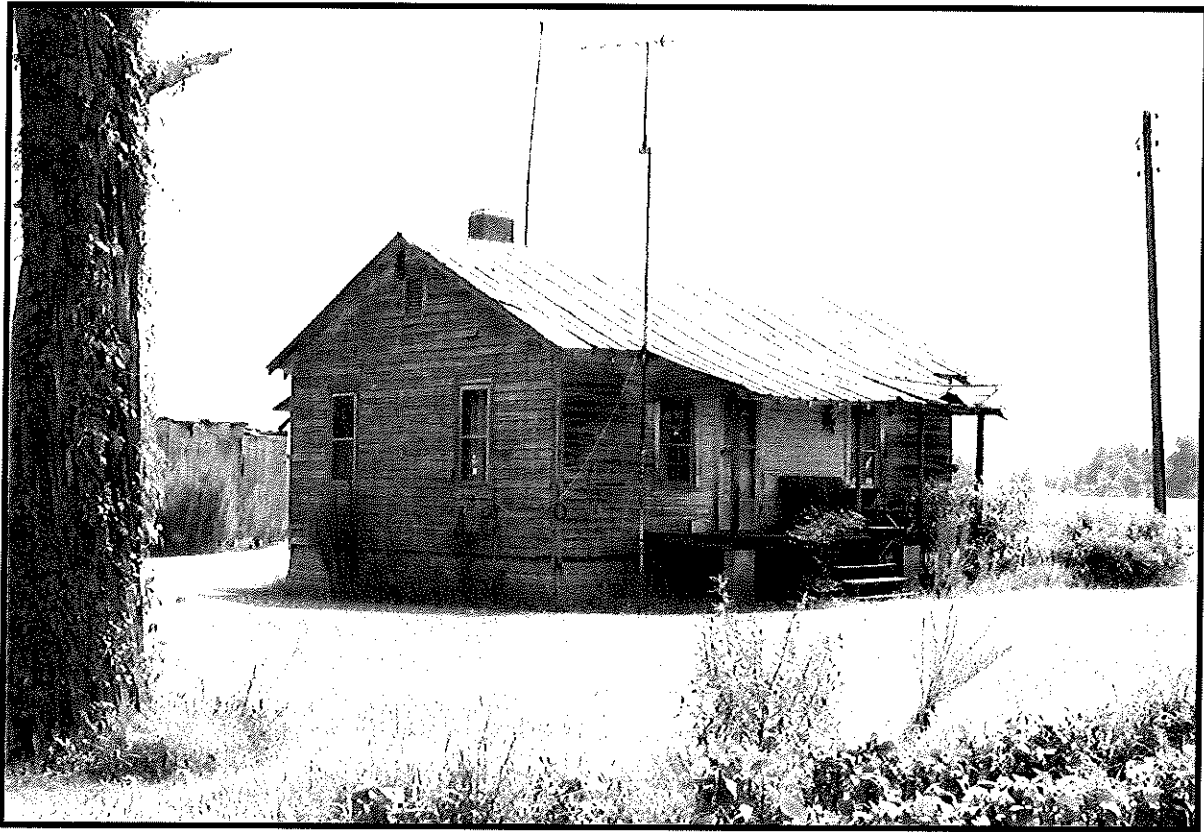


Plate 16: Whitley Farm – looking northeast at former tenant house [7]



## RODGERS-LEGGETT FARMSTEAD (#12-20)

End of J.C. Leggett Road, south of junction with NC 125 (1084 J.C. Leggett Road),  
Williamston vicinity, Martin County

### *History*

In 1848 Sarah Whitley, the daughter of Ezekial Whitley, who was deceased, sold this farmstead to Samuel Rodgers of neighboring Tyrrell County for the healthy sum of \$1,250 (Martin County Deed Book O, Page 331). Rodgers had settled on the property by 1854, for in the summer of that year William R. Palmer demonstrated his new wheat thresher on the farm.<sup>1</sup> The name Rodgers appears on the property on the ca. 1863 Gilmer map of eastern North Carolina. In 1874, following Rodgers' death, his executor sold the 420-acre property to John H. Hatten and Joseph H. Holliday (Martin County Deed Book W, Page 79). Joseph and his wife, Mary Ann, occupied the farm. It is not known where John Hatten, who was a wheelwright or blacksmith in Williamston, lived (Hughes 1980:357-358; Butchko 1998:9, 106 n.104).

In 1889 Hatten transferred his half interest in the property to the administrator of Joseph Holliday (Martin County Deed Book BB, Page 417). In 1896 the Hollidays' daughter, Martha (1872-1944), who was born on the farm, and her husband, James D. Leggett (1866-1911), acquired the property. The deed ascribed a land area to it of 400 rather 420 acres (Martin County Deed Book WW, pages 602 and 603; Hughes 1980:357-358). (The farm fluctuated in size, according to deed records and land surveys, between about 350 and 450 acres (Plat Map Cabinet A, Slide 1955 (1951) and Slide 162 (1977)). According to tax records, it now encompasses just under 350 acres.)

James "Jim" Leggett was a successful Martin County entrepreneur. On his farm he raised corn, cotton, and peanuts and, beginning around the turn of the century, tobacco as well. He also built and operated in Williamston the Leggett general merchandise store and, with partner Jim Staton, opened the Roanoke Tobacco Warehouse, the county's first (Hughes 1980:357-358).<sup>2</sup> After Jim Leggett died, his wife, Martha, and their oldest son, Joseph "Joe" Daniel Leggett (1896-1950), took charge of the farm. Martha died in 1944 and, following Joe's death in 1950, the property went to her heirs. Beginning in 1951, John Claude "Claude" Leggett, Joe's younger brother, occupied the farm and began to acquire its various divided shares (Martin County Deed Book D-5, Page 253 (1951) and T-8, Page 167 (1970)). A merchant in Williamston and a farmer, Claude demolished the nineteenth-century farmhouse of Samuel Rodgers (Leggett 2004). He continued to live at the farm at a small frame house (resource #11 in Appendix A) he built between the site of the original farmhouse and NC 125. On the farm, according to the Martin County heritage publication, "he enjoyed his animals: ducks, peacocks, and chickens" (Hughes 1980:357-358). In 1986 Claude's widow, Cora Lee Leggett, transferred the

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<sup>1</sup> According to the diaries of Cushing Biggs Hassell (a.k.a. Elder C.B. Hassell), grain threshing machines descended upon Martin County in 1854. On June 12 William R. Palmer was in Williamston with his "celebrated machine," which he announced he would send to Bro. Samuel Rodgers', along with the necessary horsepower, for a demonstration. On June 13 Hassell and many others went to Rodgers' farm where the thresher "operated nicely" (Manning and Booker 1979:97).

<sup>2</sup> An advertisement in the Williamston *Enterprise* for the August 6, 1902, opening sale of the first Williamston tobacco market declared, "Be sure you sell at the Roanoke Warehouse[;] the TWO JIMS will see that your Tobacco brings every dollar that it is worth" (reproduced in Skewarkian Junior Historian Club 1978:9).



farm of approximately 400 acres to son Joseph Claude “Joe” Leggett (Martin County Deed Book E-12, Page 887). He remains its current owner and farms its 150 cleared acres.

### *Description*

Perhaps the most salient feature of the Rodgers-Leggett Farmstead are the resources that it lacks, rather than those it contains. All trace of the nineteenth-century Samuel Rodgers farmhouse is gone. Most of the buildings associated with it have disappeared as well. Near the house’s purported site (Leggett 2004) stand three vacant frame outbuildings that appear to date from the mid to late nineteenth century (Figure 11). A one-story, frame building that may originally have been a kitchen possesses a boxed cornice that suggests a mid-nineteenth-century date of construction [13 on Figure 11] (Plates 17, 18, and 19). In addition to the cornice, the structure retains weatherboard siding and a single bay, a long-elevation doorway. Its gable-end roof is covered with sheet metal.

Perpendicular and to the east of the kitchen stands a longer, one-story, frame outbuilding that last served as a packhouse [12] (Plates 17, 18, and 19). It appears to date from later in the nineteenth century. At its long elevation facing the kitchen, it has two doorways. Either end is served by a window and a window has been inserted through the sheet metal that now covers its rear elevation. Log saplings, visible beneath the eaves, serve as joists and support the roof rafters. Weatherboards side the front and side elevations. Its interior has been stripped out to a single room, although the building once had a central chimney and at least two rooms. The location of the chimney and the two doorways suggest that it may have been a later kitchen/dining room associated with the no-longer-extant house.

Southeast of the kitchen and kitchen/dining room/packhouse is another one-story frame outbuilding that appears to date from the last third of the nineteenth century. A deteriorated barn [14] topped by a gable-end roof and backed by a full-length shed, it was built in two parts (Plates 20 and 21). Three of its elevations are sided with weatherboards; replacement OSB siding faces one gable end.

Between the three early outbuildings are two small, irregular, overgrown, unmaintained areas [A and B on sketch map] and a large cedar (Plate 22). The two overgrown areas are said to be burial grounds. The USGS map bears the word “cemetery” near their location and the Williamston Township cemetery recordation (Hardy 1976) identifies two cemeteries—Cherry Plot and Cherry Plot #2—on the Leggett Farm off NC 125. The recordation does not include the names of individuals buried there and, although current owner Joe Leggett (2004) believes the areas hold markers, none could be located during the inventory. (Depressions in the ground were also not readily apparent.) According to Leggett, the nineteenth-century farmhouse once stood in the area between the outbuildings near the cedar and the cemeteries. The Cherry name appears on nineteenth century deeds in the vicinity of the farm, but who the Cherrys were and what their connection to the property was is not known.

Southeast of the three early outbuildings are four former flue-cure tobacco barns and two sheds that appear to date from the early to mid twentieth century, all of which are vacant and greatly deteriorated. Along the lane past the barn are two frame tobacco barns [15 and 16] that are raised on concrete blocks and sided with vertical wooden boards (Plates 23 and 24). They are heavily overgrown and have lost the overhangs that once protected laborers during harvest season. Beyond these two, the four other outbuildings stand together in a fenced-off area (Plate 25). The tobacco barns [17 and 18] are formed of small, crudely square-notched, squared logs (Plates 26 and 27). The pole-supported sheds [19 and 20], which appear to date from later in the century than the barns, are in the process of shedding their irregular sheet-metal cladding (Plates 27 and 28). The fenced area is to keep out the cattle Joe Leggett raises on the property. Also protected are his fields of tobacco, peanuts, and cotton (Plates 29 and 30).

### *Evaluation*

The Rodger-Leggett Farmstead is not believed to be National Register-eligible under any of the Register's Criteria, either individually or as part of a historic district. It has lost its historic core—its nineteenth-century farmhouse and most of that house's support and agricultural buildings—and its remaining buildings are deteriorated and, in some instances, altered. The property is therefore not believed to retain sufficient integrity to support architectural or historical significance. The farm likely retains many broad, historic field patterns, as do almost all of the many other local farms that have remained in cultivation through the past century or two. Without a farmhouse or intact farm buildings and with only a small number of twentieth-century outbuildings related to agriculture, the surviving fields of the Rodgers-Leggett Farm—coupled with the similarly altered landscapes of surrounding farms—are not believed to comprise a rural historic landscape district. Without these buildings, the property appears to lack the “significant concentration [of] . . . buildings and structures” required for a farm-related resource to merit National Register listing as a rural historic landscape (McClelland, Keller, Keller, and Melnick 1999).

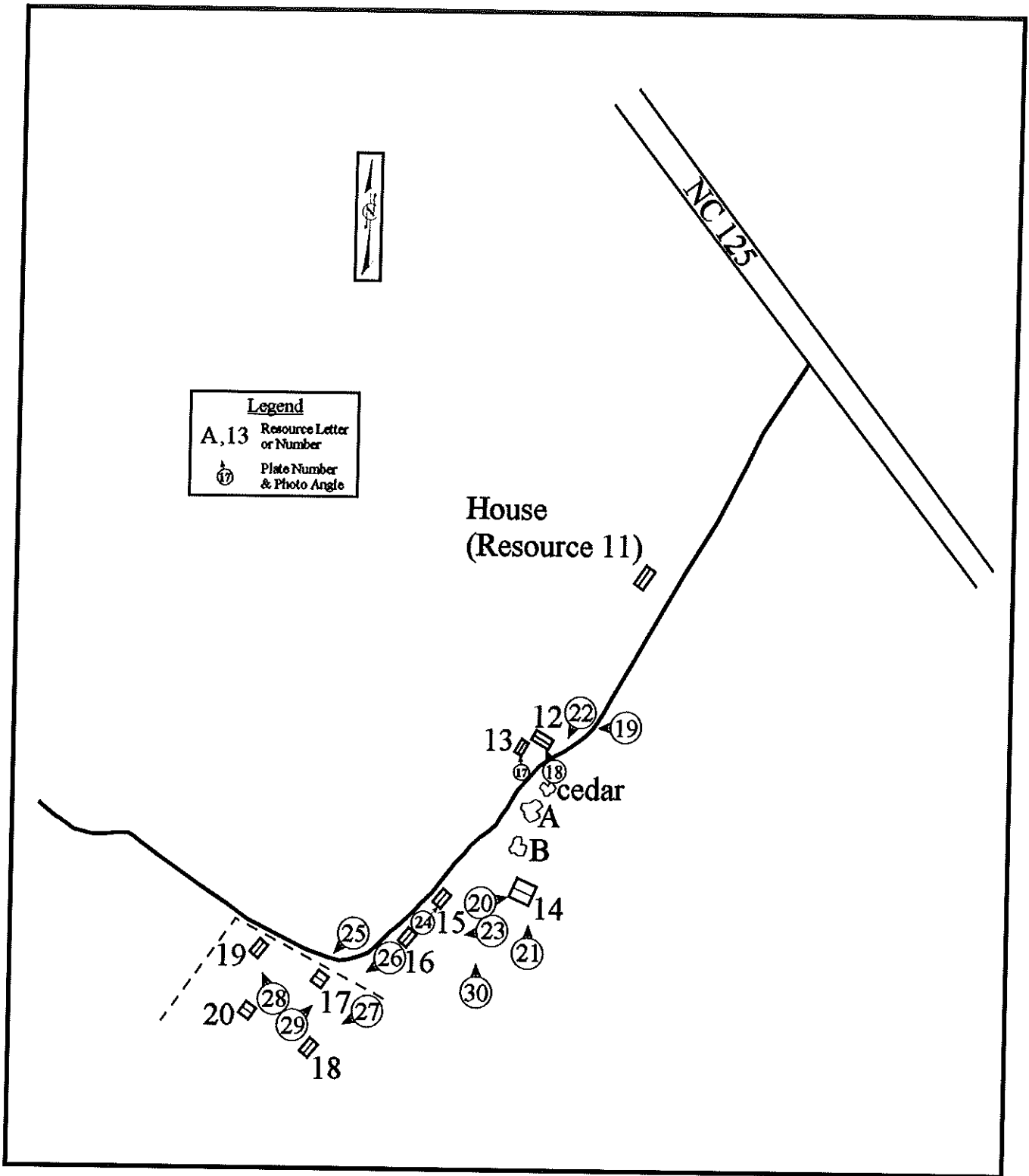


Figure 11: Sketch map of Rodgers-Leggett Farmstead

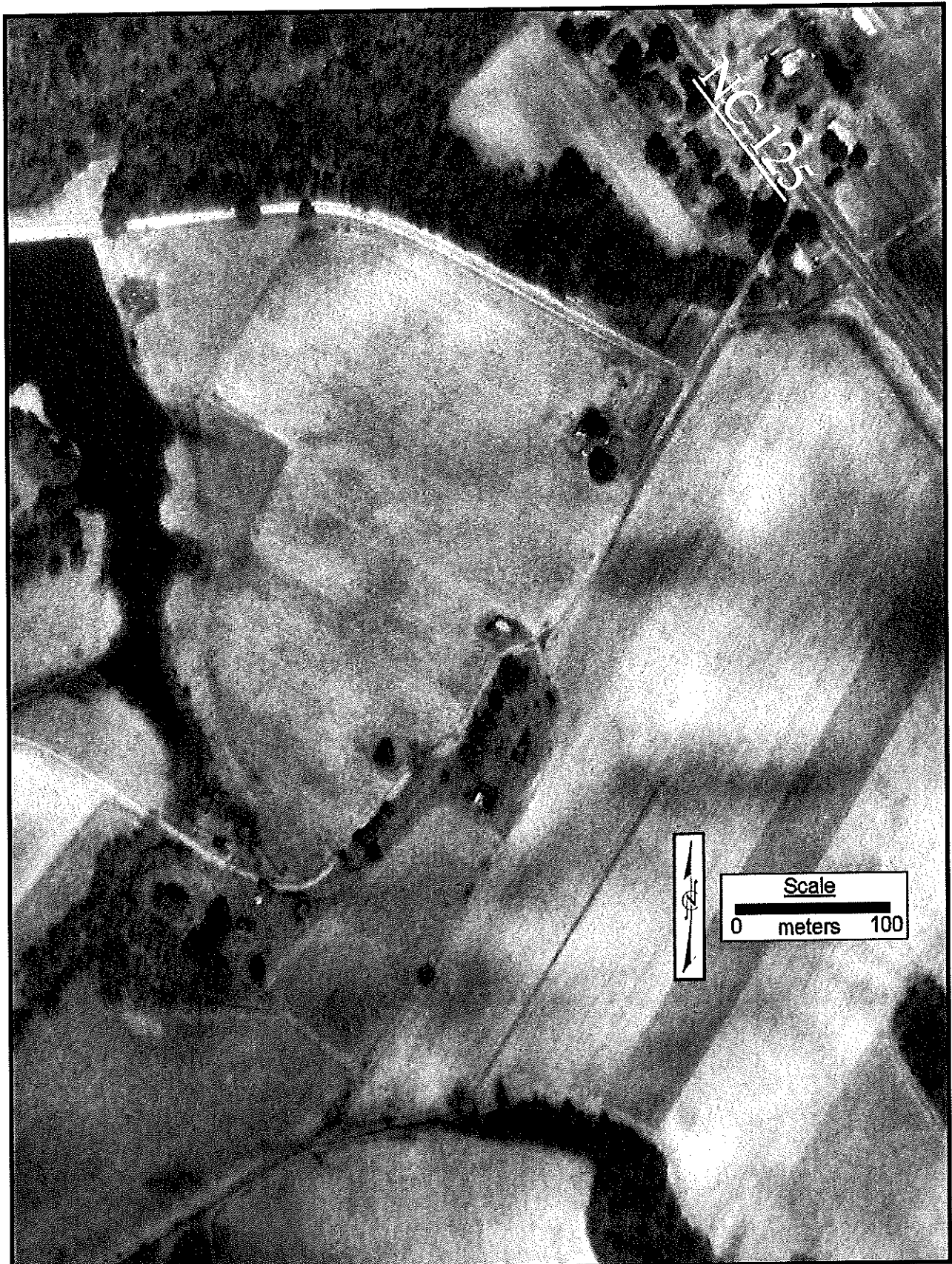


Figure 12: Aerial view of Rodgers-Leggett Farmstead

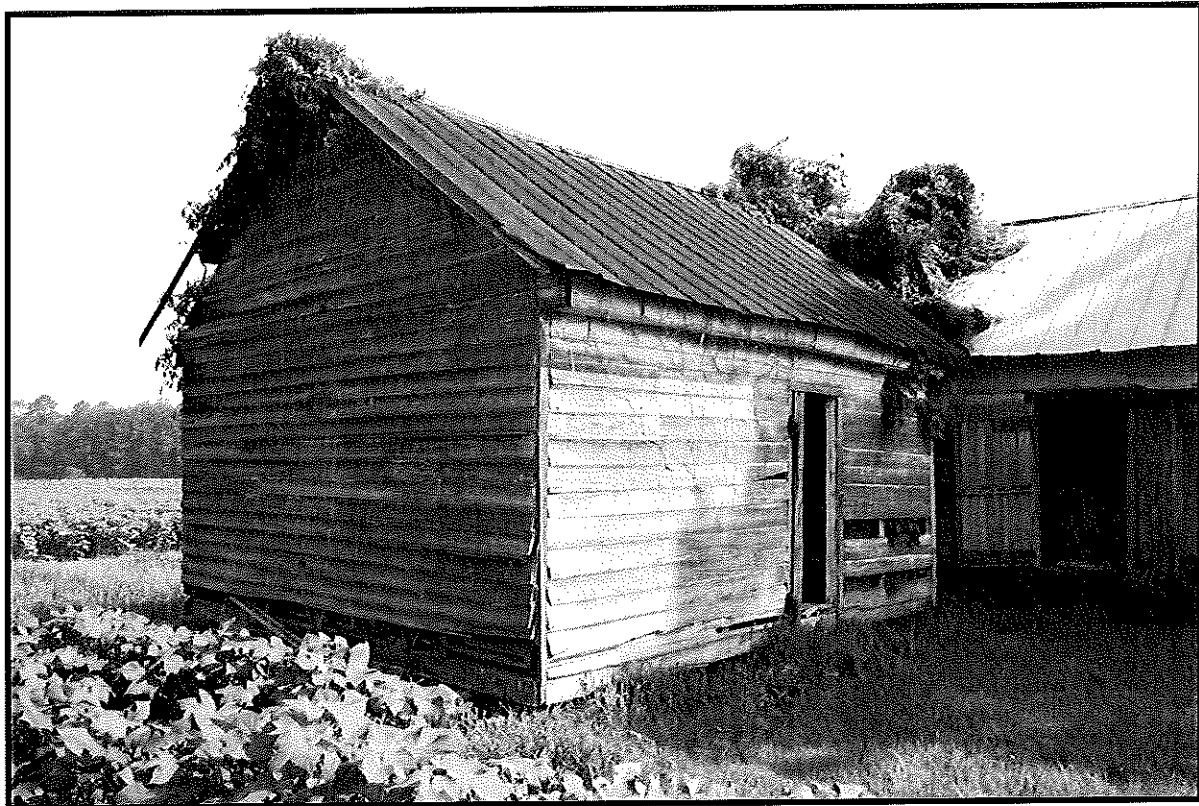


Plate 17: Rodgers-Leggett Farmstead – looking north at kitchen [13], kitchen/dining room at right [12]

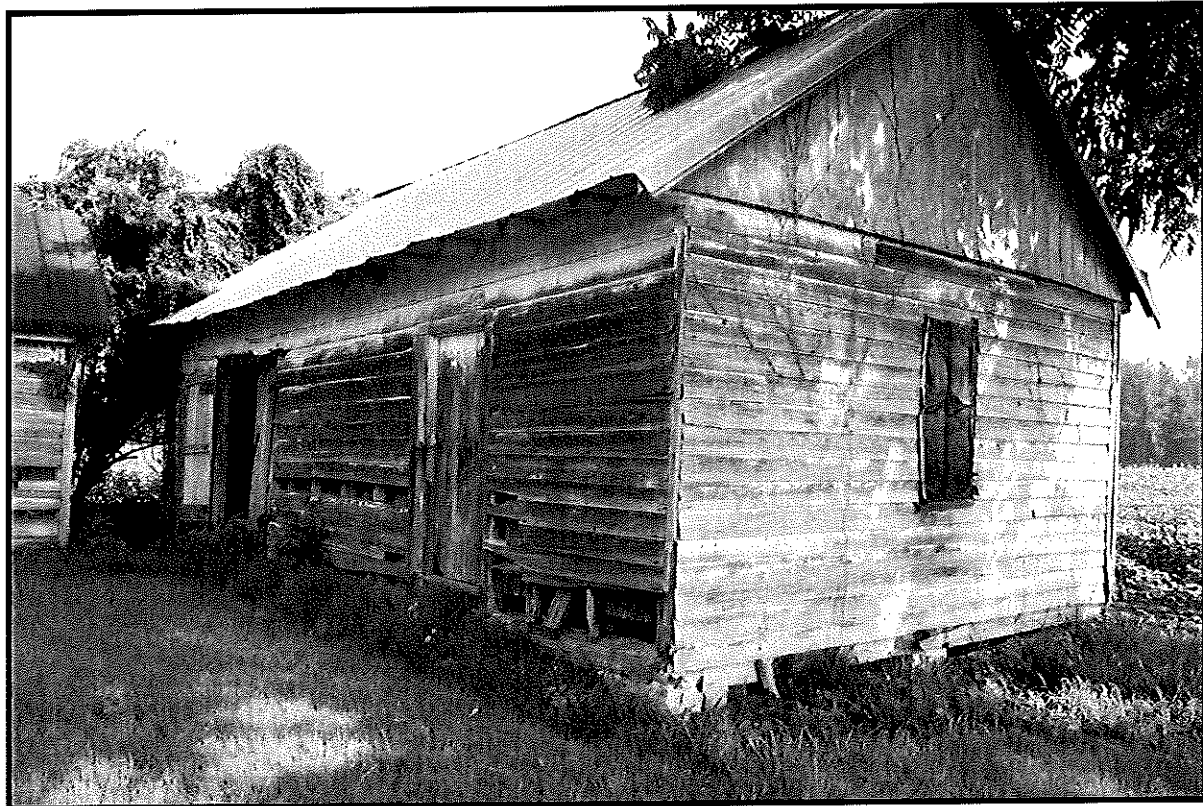


Plate 18: Rodgers-Leggett Farmstead – looking northwest at kitchen/dining room [12], kitchen at left [13]



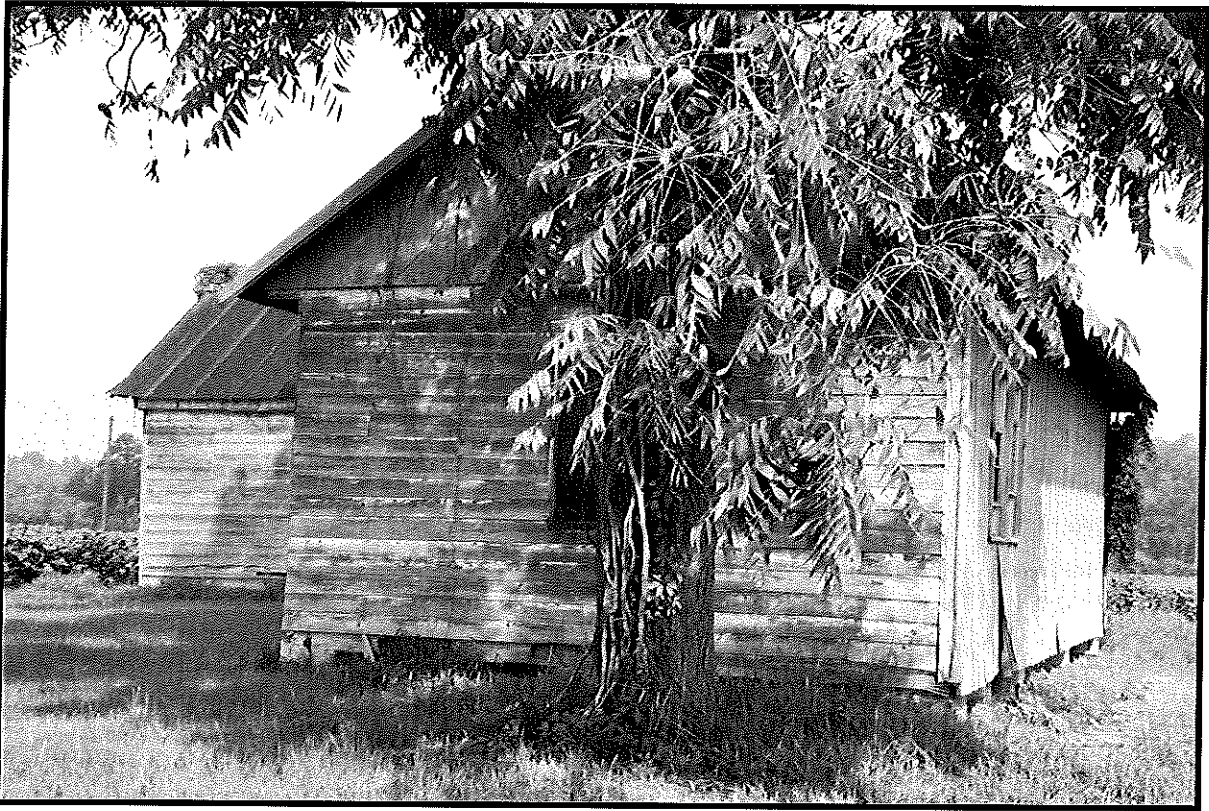


Plate 19: Rodgers-Leggett Farmstead – looking west at kitchen/dining room [12], kitchen at left [13]



Plate 20: Rodgers-Leggett Farmstead – looking east at barn [14]

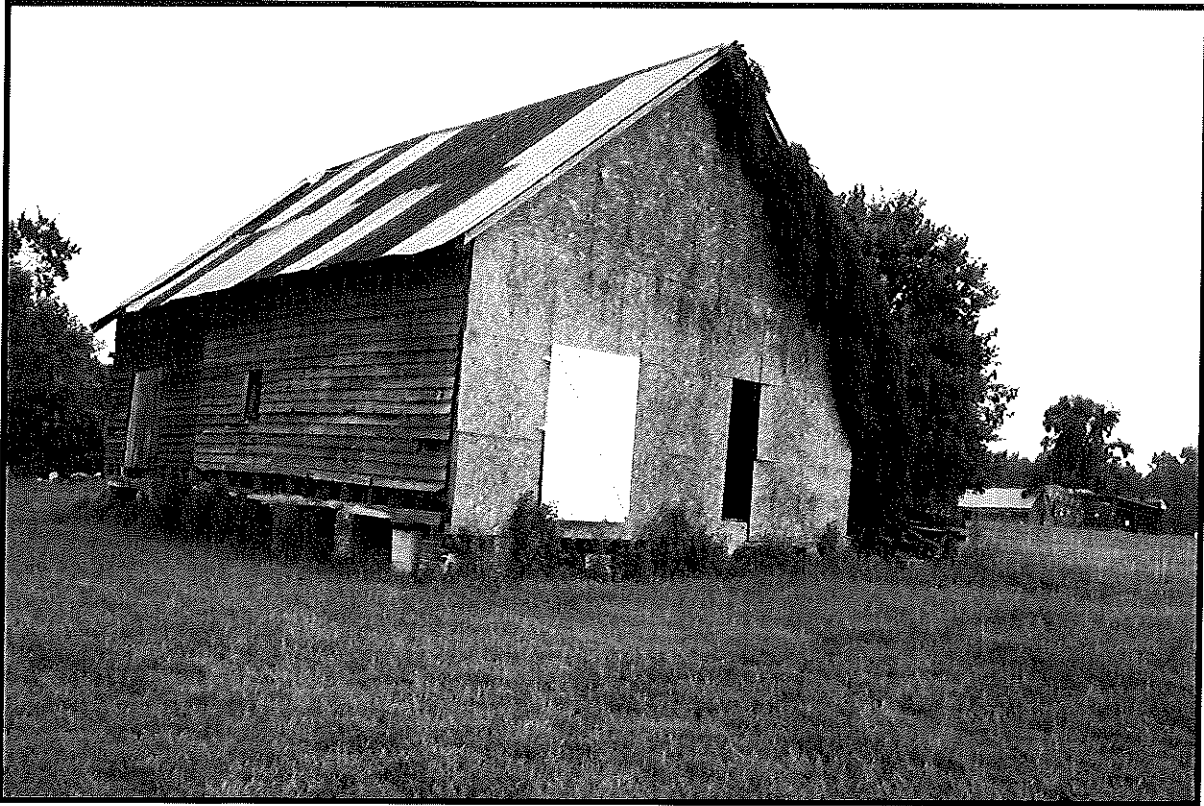


Plate 21: Rodgers-Leggett Farmstead – looking north at barn [14]



Plate 22: Rodgers-Leggett Farmstead – looking south toward cedar, burial plot [A], and barn [14]



Plate 23: Rodgers-Leggett Farmstead – looking south toward tobacco barns [15 and 16]



Plate 24: Rodgers-Leggett Farmstead – looking northeast toward tobacco barn [15] and barn [14]





Plate 25: Rodgers-Leggett Farmstead – looking southwest toward tobacco barns and sheds [17-20]



Plate 26: Rodgers-Leggett Farmstead – looking southwest toward tobacco barn [17]

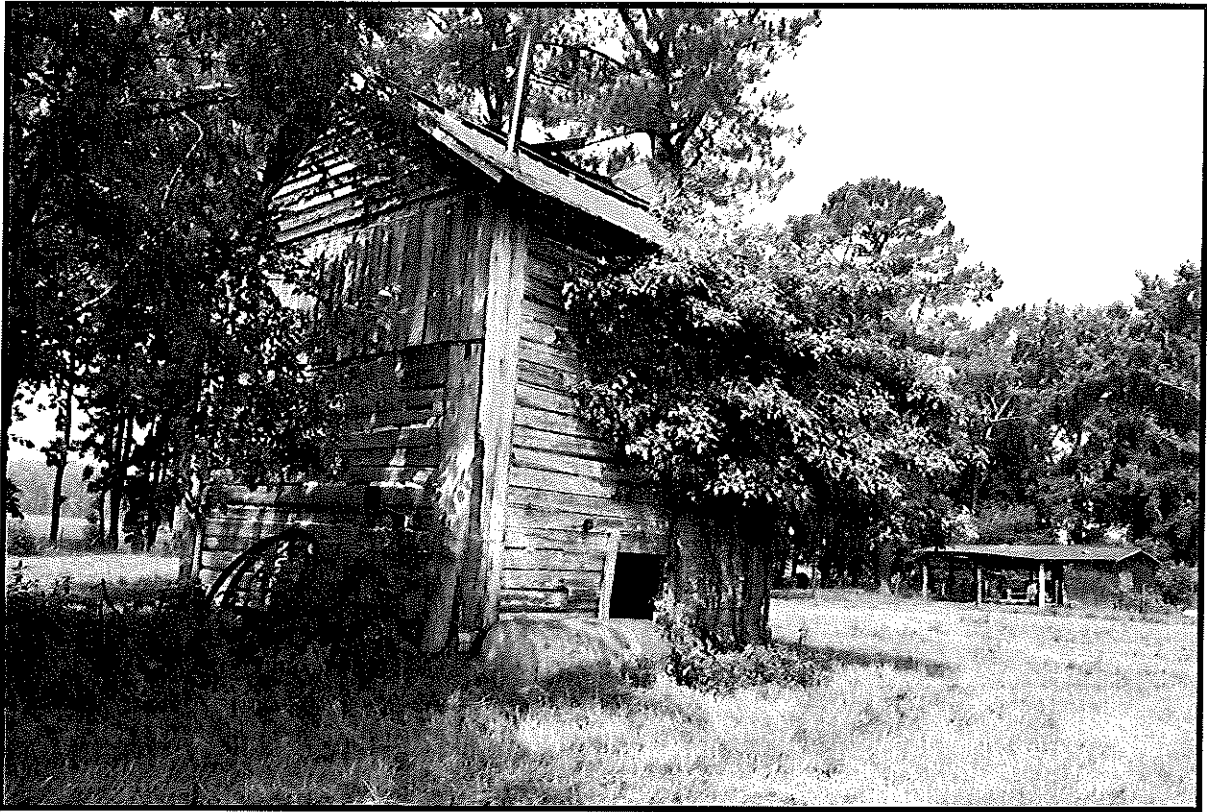


Plate 27: Rodgers-Leggett Farmstead – looking west toward tobacco barn [18] and shed [20] at right

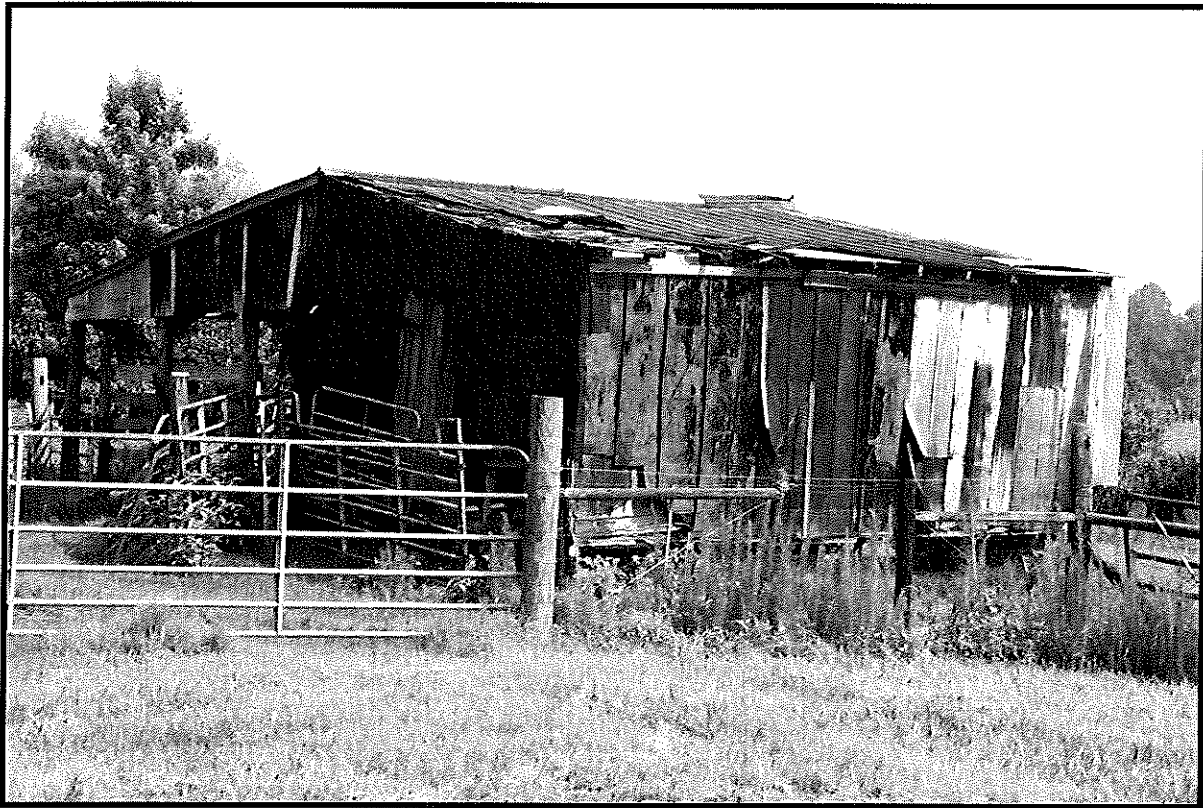


Plate 28: Rodgers-Leggett Farmstead – looking northwest toward shed [19]



Plate 29: Rodgers-Leggett Farmstead – looking north toward fields; barn [17] at left



Plate 30: Rodgers-Leggett Farmstead – looking north through cotton toward barn [14] at left and Whitley Farm in far center distance



Plate 31: Rodgers-Leggett Farmstead – looking southwest from NC 125 toward cotton fields and outbuildings



## SLADE CEMETERY (MT-415) (#40)

South side of NC 125, 0.4 miles east of junction with SR 1421,  
Williamston vicinity, Martin County

### *History and Description of former Jeremiah Slade Plantation*

Much has been written about the Jeremiah Slade Plantation (MT-415), its owners, and its former handsomely finished main house. As this was once an important Martin County resource that now retains but a cemetery and a twentieth-century barn, the literature is quoted at some length in the following. The early North Carolina HPO survey of the Tar-Neuse River Basin (1977, Appendix 15) stated that "One of the oldest houses in the county is the Jeremiah Slade House west of Williamston; this two-story L-plan structure may date from the late eighteenth or very early nineteenth century and has been little altered since its construction." The survey further noted that the house was "unusual in plan and exceptionally large for its era" and was in sound condition in 1977, although in use as a packhouse. As a result of the Tar-Neuse survey, the HPO placed the plantation on its Study List of resources considered potentially eligible for National Register listing.

Tom Butchko (1998:467-468) in his architectural history of Martin County wrote the following account of the history of the plantation and its owners:

Jeremiah Slade (1775-1824) was the third generation of a family prominent in the county's agricultural, political, and social affairs. In 1796 he married Janet Bog (1774-1831) and had this house built on his Marsh Point Plantation. It was one of three plantations owned by Slade, the others being Conoho and Poplar Point. The house was inherited by son William Slade (1807-1852), a wealthy planter and attorney, who with his wife, Penelope (Williams) Slade (1811-1890), were among the largest slave owners and cotton planters in the country. The house remained the home of their unmarried daughters, Elizabeth Slade and Fanny Penelope Slade, until their deaths in the 1920s [sic]. It was also home for the family of another daughter, Helen Bog (Slade) Rhodes, who returned home from the Hyman-Rhodes House in Williamston after the death of her husband, Franklin Alexander Rhodes (1831-1887). The house and its tract were sold out of the family during the 1930s, [it] was abandoned by 1976, and eventually allowed to fall into ruin.

Butchko fortunately includes a description of the house and some of its associated resources:

Until its demolition in 1994, the Jeremiah Slade House stood as Martin County's last remaining fully-realized, two-and-a-half-story Georgian plantation residence. Set in a yard densely canopied with mature magnolia, oaks, and elms, the house had a[n] asymmetrical five-bay façade, nine-over-nine and nine-over-six sash windows with molded three-part surrounds and molded sills, a large, paved-double-shoulder chimney at each gable end, and a dentil cornice. Beaded weatherboards, a replacement full-width porch carried by tapered Doric pillars, and a two-story ell completed the exterior. The two-room-plan interior exhibited well-articulated Georgian woodwork. The mantels, removed from the house between 1976 and 1992, incorporated raised panels, heavy moldings, crossettes, and dentil courses into robust designs. They were complemented by flat-panel wainscots, mitered three-part surrounds, H-and-L hinges, and an enclosed winder stair that terminated on the second story with graceful turned balusters and chamfered newel.

Among the surviving outbuildings was a hipped-roof smokehouse, the only one of this late-eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century form remaining in the county. It, too, was demolished. Located on the site is the family cemetery containing stylish stone monuments enclosed by a late-nineteenth-century iron fence.

### *Slade Cemetery and Barn*

The only two early resources surviving on the Jeremiah Slade Plantation property—a cemetery and a barn—stand with other buildings, including a nearby mobile home, that have been built within the past 50 years. According to a local recordation, the cemetery had 19 markers in 1976 (Hardy). It was overgrown when visited in 2004, largely hidden beneath heavy tangles of summertime growth. It was therefore not possible to confirm the details of the earlier recordation, which noted the following burials:

<i>Last Name</i>	<i>First Name</i>	<i>Birth Date</i>	<i>Death Date</i>
Slade	Annie	May 6, 1873	October 13, 1881
Maultsby	Bessie Rhodes	September 13, 1872	October 3, 1909
Slade	Cordelia	December 23, 1849	July 5, 1915
Slade	Elizabeth	June 1, 1839	February 26, 1914
Slade	Fannie Penelope	March 12, 1849	May 8, 1940
Rhodes	Franklin A.	November 11, 1831	June 22, 1887
Slade	Gen. Jeremiah	??, 1774	September 1, 1824
Rhodes	Helen B. Slade	April 8, 1847	November 12, 1936
Slade	Henry	August 2, 1810	March 9, 1819
Henderson	Henry S.	November 17, 1820	March 3, 1824
Slade	Janet Bog	??, 1793	September 7, 1851
Slade	Jeremiah	October 11, 1833	August 13, 1868
Slade	Jeremiah	March 2, 1806	April 26, 1822
Slade	Mary	January 1778	August 1780
Slade	Penelope	??, 1811	August 24, 1890
Slade	Thomas Bog	May 19, 1845	September 15, 1929
Slade	William	??, 1807	October 25, 1852
Slade	William	April 5, 1841	November 20, 1919
Rhodes	William Slade	October 23, 1874	August 26, 1945

Gen. Jeremiah Slade (1774-1824), the first born of those buried in Slade Cemetery, was a man of local note. A wealthy landowner, he served Martin County in the House of Commons from 1797 through 1800 and in 1802. In 1803 and 1806, and from 1809 through 1815, he was the county's state senator (Wheeler 1851:252-253). In 1803, with William Hawkins and Col. John Binford, the U.S. War Department appointed Slade a commissioner of Indian affairs. The task of the three was to oversee the leases of the small number of remaining Tuscarora families, who removed from their Bertie County reservation to New York State in 1803. Slade also served as agent and attorney for those dislocated Tuscarora who maintained land claims. In 1806, holding the rank of lieutenant colonel, he assumed command of the Martin County militia. He became a brigadier general in 1812 (Hughes 1980:564-564; Lewis Thompson Papers Inventory.)

General Slade supported the fledgling University of North Carolina while in the legislature. A friend of founder William R. Davie, he served on its Board of Trustees from 1808 through 1824. At the time of his death, Slade was not an active trustee. The university had many trustees—54 in 1821, for

example, and 65 in 1824—only a small number of whom were active at any time (Powell 1994:359; Grant 1924; Battle 1907:139-140, 279-280, 823).

Buried with Slade in the cemetery are his wife, Janet Bog Slade (1773-1851), and their children Jeremiah (1806-1822), William (1807-1852), and Henry (1810-1819). William was an attorney, political figure, and planter. On his death in 1852, he left his holdings to his wife, Penelope (1811-1890), and their 11 children, six of whom are buried in the cemetery: Jeremiah (1833-1868), Elizabeth (1839-1914), William (1841-1919), Thomas Bog (1845-1929), Helen B. Slade Rhodes (1847-1936), and Fannie Penelope (1849-1940). The local cemetery recordation refers to the graveyard as the Penny Slade Cemetery. She spent her life at the homeplace, unmarried, and was buried there in 1940 at the age of 91.

A plain, late-nineteenth-/early-twentieth-century, cast-iron fence contains the 19 graves and the trees and shrubs that grow profusely among them (Plates 32, 33, and 34). Like the fence, the markers are generally straightforward and unpretentious (Plate 35 through 39). Most of those that could be seen are minimally ornamented, upright headstones with segmental-arched tops. A few are ground-level ledgers. The most ornate is that of Bessie Rhodes Maultsby (1872-1909), who was likely the daughter of Ann J. Slade Maultsby, one of Jeremiah and Janet's 11 children. An upright headstone, it is topped by a quatrefoil incised with calla lilies (Plate 40).<sup>3</sup>

A mobile home stands to the southwest of the cemetery (Plate 33). To the southeast is an early twentieth-century barn (Plate 34). This frame outbuilding has a gable-front roof, a central open wagon bay, and weatherboard siding (Plates 41 and 42).

### *Evaluation*

The Slade Cemetery is not believed to be eligible for National Register listing under any of the Register's Criteria. Its markers and fence are commonplace, as is its unplanned organization, and it therefore is believed to lack the distinctive design features required for eligibility under Criterion C/Criterion Consideration D. While a man of local substance and note, Gen. Jeremiah Slade was not a person of transcendent importance and the cemetery is therefore not believed to be eligible under Criterion B/Criterion Consideration A. The main house and all of its associated outbuildings are gone, leaving but the cemetery and a twentieth-century barn. In the immediate vicinity of these two resources are mobile homes and other modest dwellings erected within the past 50 years. The cemetery is therefore not believed to be Register-eligible as part of a historic district under Criteria C.

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps the cemetery's lack of pretence reflects Jeremiah Slade's republican beliefs. Johnson's (1937:52 and 83) *Social History of Antebellum North Carolina* recounts two events from Slade's unpublished "Journal of a Trip to Tennessee":

When General Jeremiah Slade of Martin County visited Raleigh in 1819, he found the State capital bristling with class feeling, distasteful to a man of "republican simplicity." He strolled up and down "the principal streets without appearing to notice any of the puffed little great men of the city, being resolved to observe as little ceremony towards them as they are usually in the habit of shewing to all strangers." The General called upon the deputy clerk of the federal court and "was ushered into his office with all the hauteur of a French exciseman, and treated with every mark of supercilious pride and haughty arrogance and finally dismissed with contempt."

During the same trip, Slade commented on a not atypical "money mad" host who charged generously for his supposed hospitality:

[A]t one place he [Slade] received "every demonstration of unalloyed friendship and almost relative affection" when in the presence of "genlms. & ladies of the first standing." But when he was preparing to leave the next morning, his host presented him with the exorbitant bill of eighty cents for breakfast, dinner, and horses' feed.



Plate 32: Slade Cemetery – cast-iron fence and, at center, headstone of Cordelia Slade (1849-1915)



Plate 33: Slade Cemetery – cemetery at center, mobile home at far right



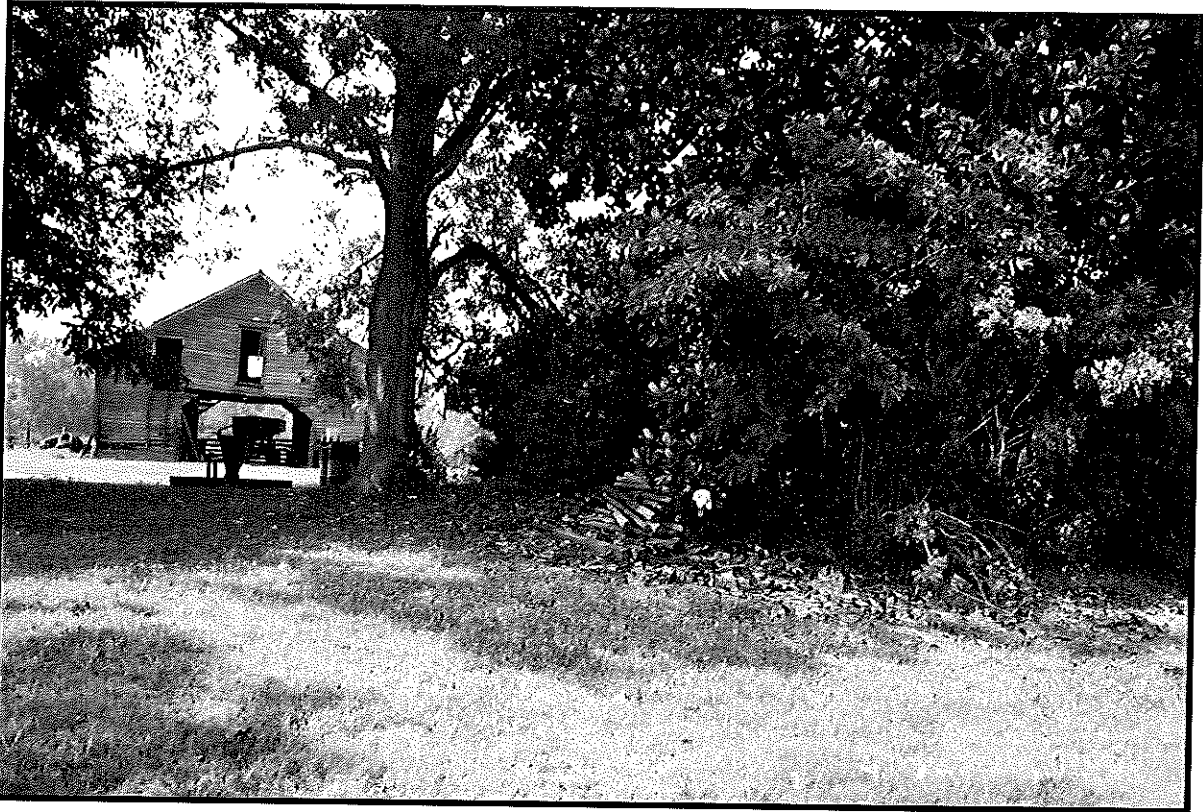


Plate 34: Slade Cemetery – cemetery at center, barn at left



Plate 35: Slade Cemetery – headstones amidst overgrowth



Plate 36: Slade Cemetery – marker of William Slade Rhodes (1874-1945), cemetery's last, at left



Plate 37: Slade Cemetery – ground-level ledger of Janet Bog Slade (1793-1851)



Plate 38: Slade Cemetery – Elizabeth Slade (1839-1914) marker





Plate 39: Slade Cemetery – Jeremiah Slade (1833-1868) headstone



Plate 40: Slade Cemetery –Bessie Rhodes Maultsby (1833-1868) headstone

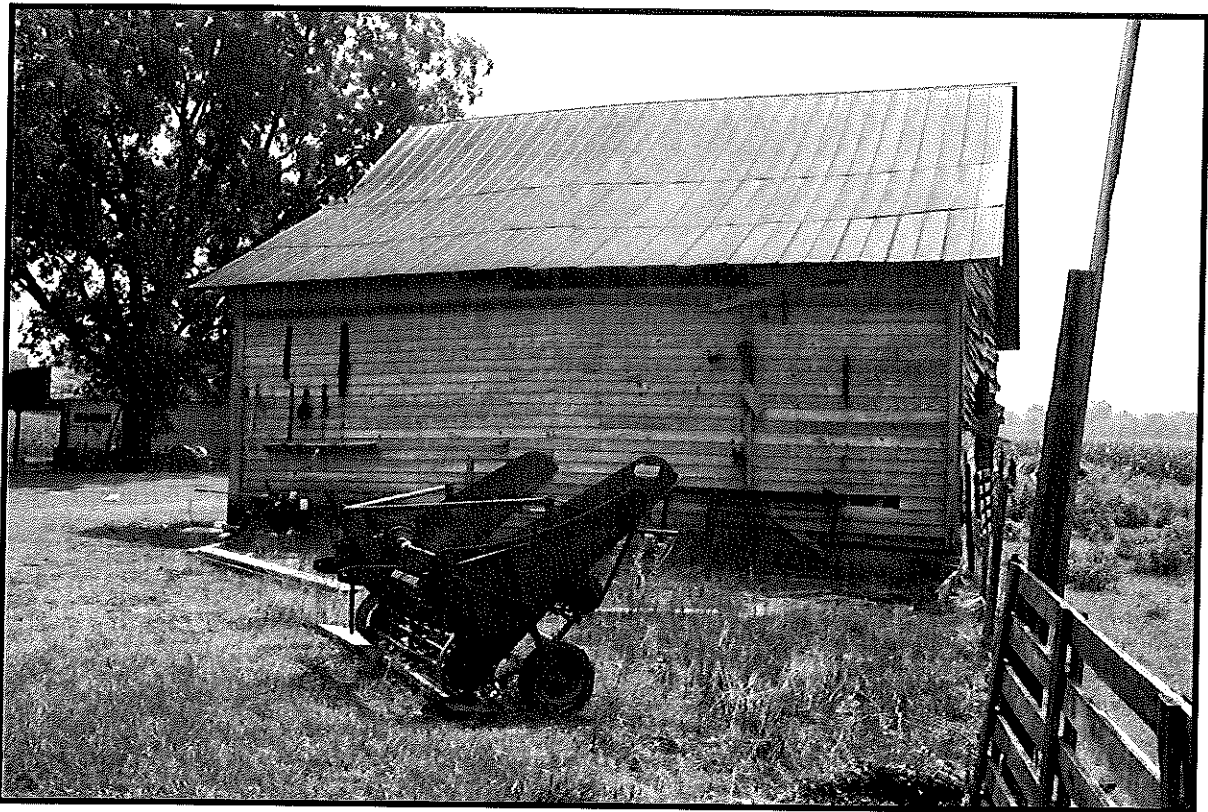


Plate 41 – Slade Cemetery – looking northeast at barn

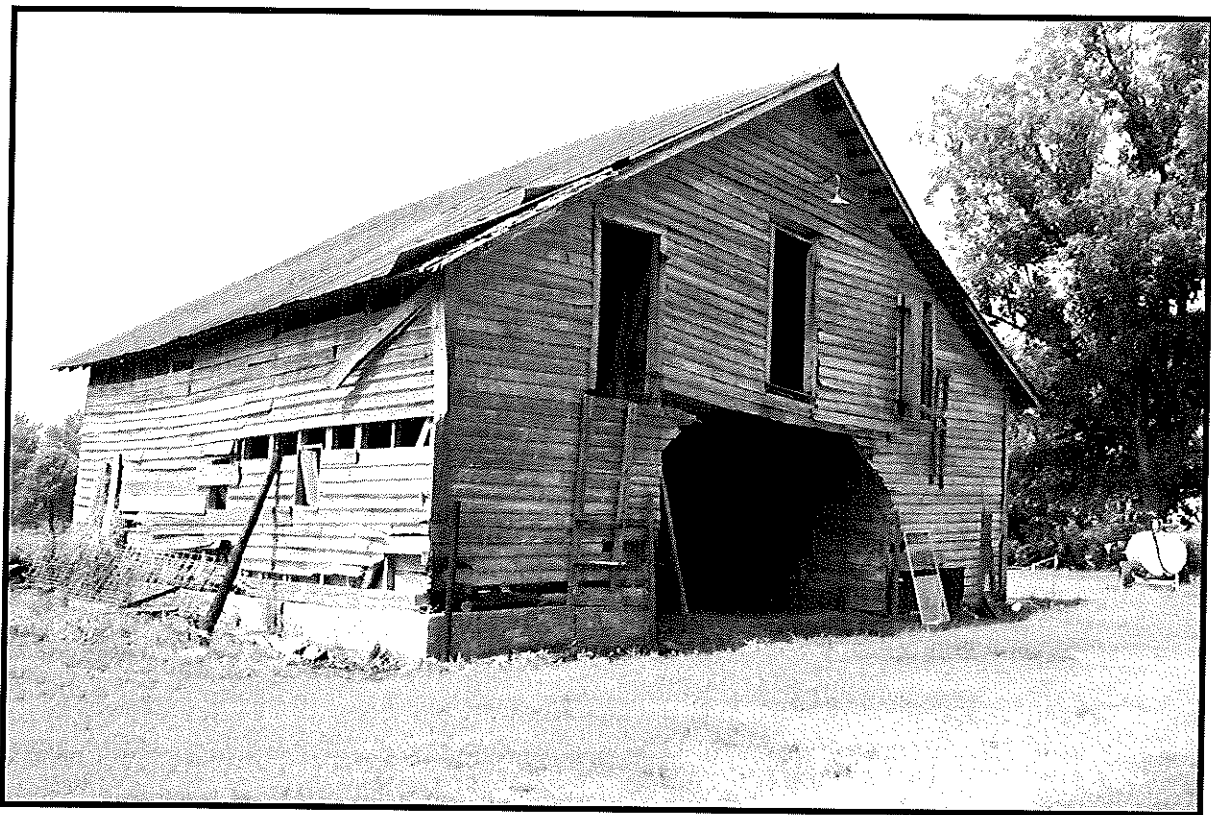


Plate 42 – Slade Cemetery – looking southwest at barn



## **BENNETT-SMITH HOUSE (#48)**

**End of 0.2 mile unpaved lane, south side of McCaskey Road, 0.4 miles east of junction  
with Landfill Road (2552 McCaskey Road)  
Williamston vicinity, Martin County**

### *History*

In 1875 Nancy Bennett drafted a will bequeathing a tract of land, a bed, and a clothes press to son John Thomas Bennett and the remainder of her estate, including her personal property and household and kitchen furniture to another son, Calvin R. Bennett (Martin County Will Book 3, Page 232). Following probate of her estate in 1882, Calvin acquired the property and likely shortly thereafter built the Bennett-Smith House. W.L. Bennett (the son of Calvin) and his wife, Fannie, subsequently acquired ownership of the property (Martin County Deed Book JJJ, page 84 (1901), Deed Book SSS, Page 167 (1907), and Deed Book Z-1, Page 49 (1921).) The house—generally known in deeds as the Calvin Bennett Homestead—remained in the family until 1954, when it was transferred, with a total of three tracks, to Harry J. Smith (Martin County Deed Book M-5, Page 411). It is currently owned and occupied by Harry's widow, Nina B. Smith, and their son, Randy J. Smith.

According to Randy Smith (2004), the property once included tobacco barns and other outbuildings. All but a tiny frame shed and a barn that functioned near the end of its useful life as a packhouse survive.

### *Description*

The front block of the Bennett-Smith House is three bays wide, one room deep, and one story tall (Plates 43 through 46). Built of frame, it is covered with vinyl siding that hides its original weatherboard cladding. It retains two-over-two sash and, at either gable end, an exterior-end brick chimney. A porch crosses the block's front elevation. Attached to the rear is a long, off-center, one-story ell. A kitchen/dining room once connected by a breezeway, which is now affixed to the rear of the ell by an enclosed hyphen, gives the house a U-shaped footprint. Within the arms of the U are later shed additions. Access to the house's interior was not permitted.

To the rear of the house stands a small, frame, gable-front, asphalt-sided shed that appears to date from the early/mid-twentieth century (Plates 44 and 47). To the west side of the house is a larger gable-front barn (Plates 43, 47, and 48). On other portions of the former farm, including a small separate lot to its front along McCaskey Road, modest ranchhouses have been erected (Plate 45).

### *Evaluation*

The Bennett-Smith House does not appear to be eligible for National Register listing under any of the Register's Criteria. No known notable historical events or individuals are associated with it and it is therefore not believed to be eligible under Criteria A or B. Its architecture is not notable and, further, has lost its integrity due to the presence of shed-roofed additions and vinyl siding. It is therefore not believed to be Register-eligible, individually, under Criterion C for its architecture. The resource is further not believed to be Register-eligible under Criterion C as part of any historic district. Through the loss of outbuildings and the addition of modern houses to the landscape, its surroundings have lost the integrity that would support any potential significance as a district.



Plate 43: Bennett-Smith House – north front and east side elevations; barn at right



Plate 44: Bennett-Smith House – north front elevation; shed at right



Plate 45: Bennett-Smith House – south rear and west side elevations; modern ranchhouse on portion of former farm in distance

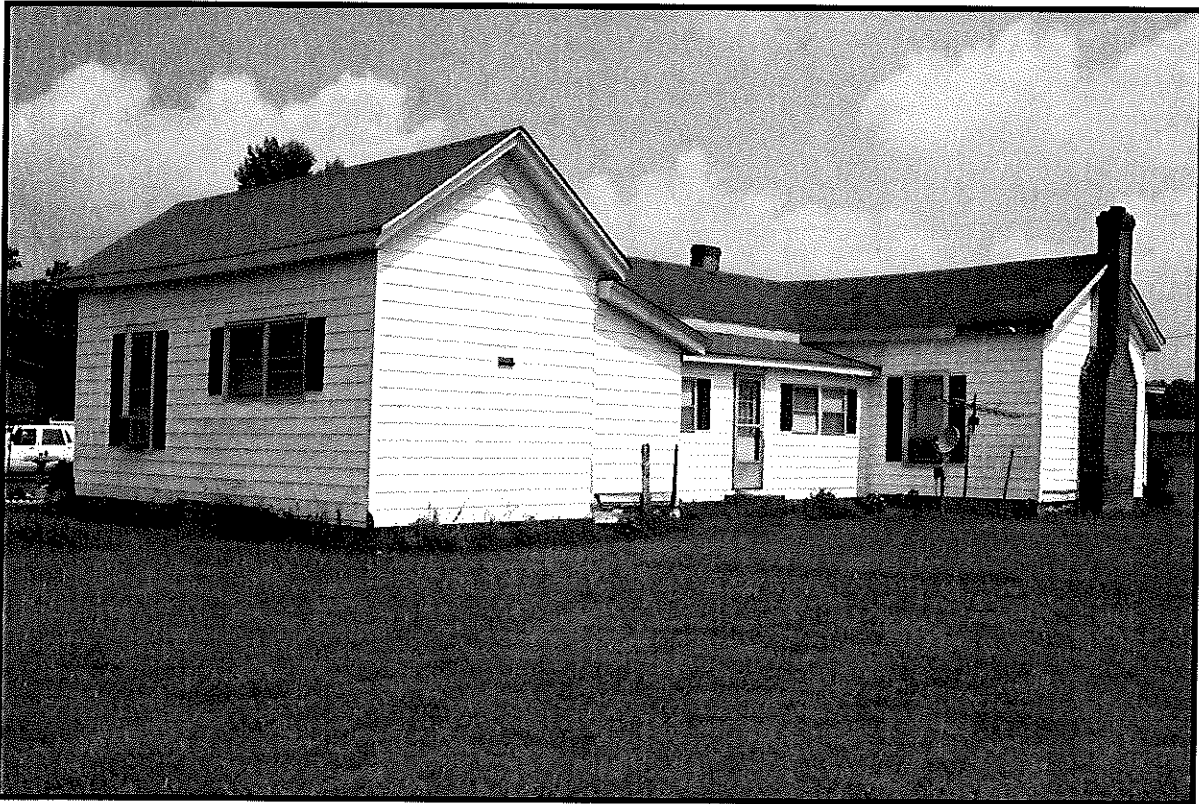


Plate 46: Bennett-Smith House – south rear and east side elevations



Plate 47: Bennett-Smith House – house at left, shed at left center, and barn at right



Plate 48: Bennett-Smith House – east front elevation of barn



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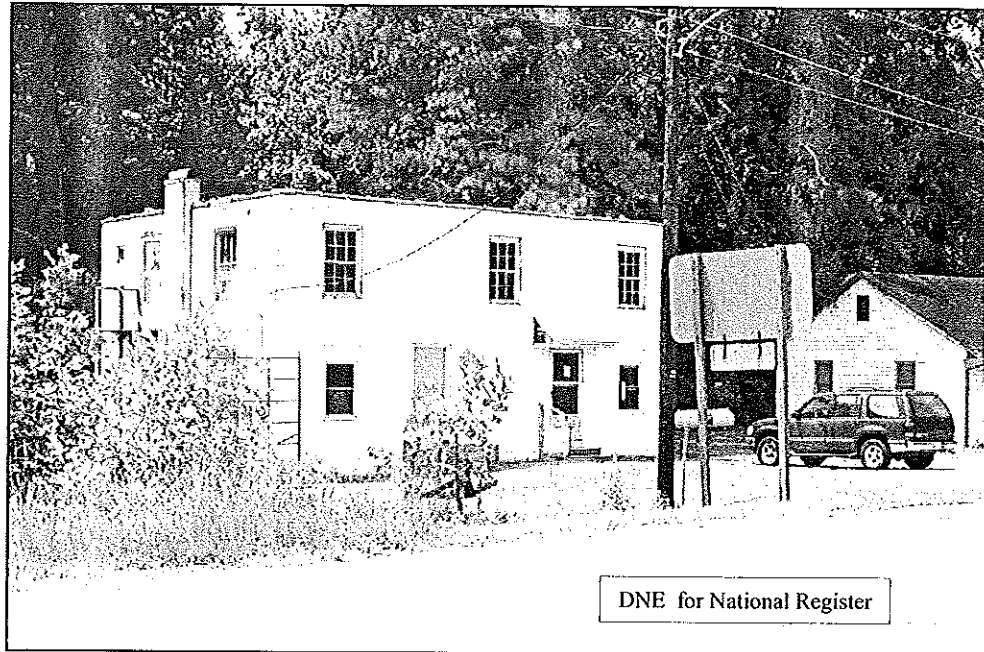
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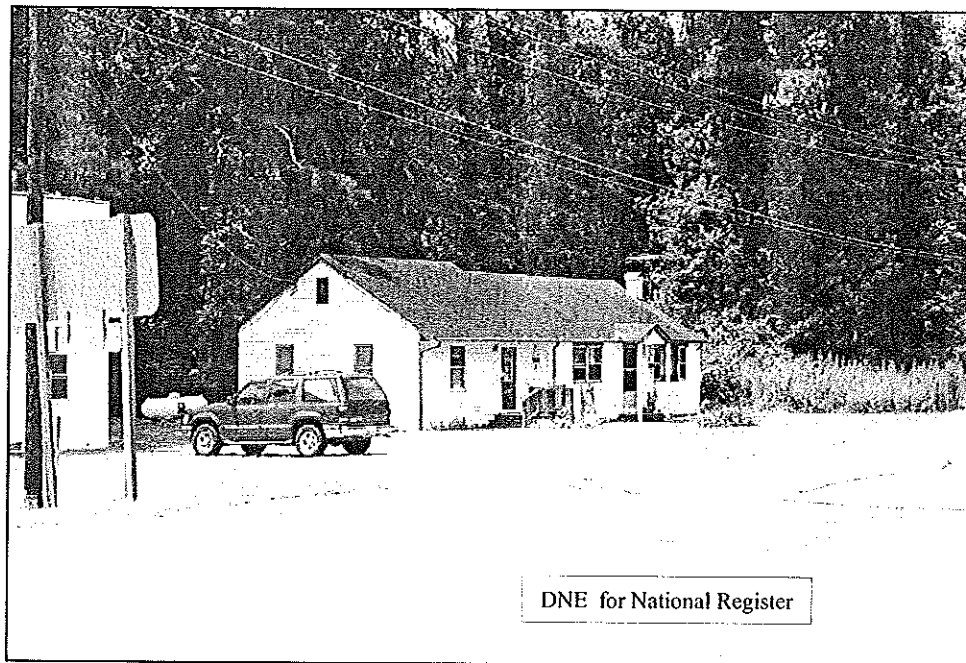
2004 Personal communication with Mr. Whitley, owner of the Whitley Farm, June 2004.

## VII. APPENDICES

**Appendix A:**  
**NC 125 Bypass of Williamston Corridor Studies, Martin County (R-3826) Report,**  
**November 19, 2003**



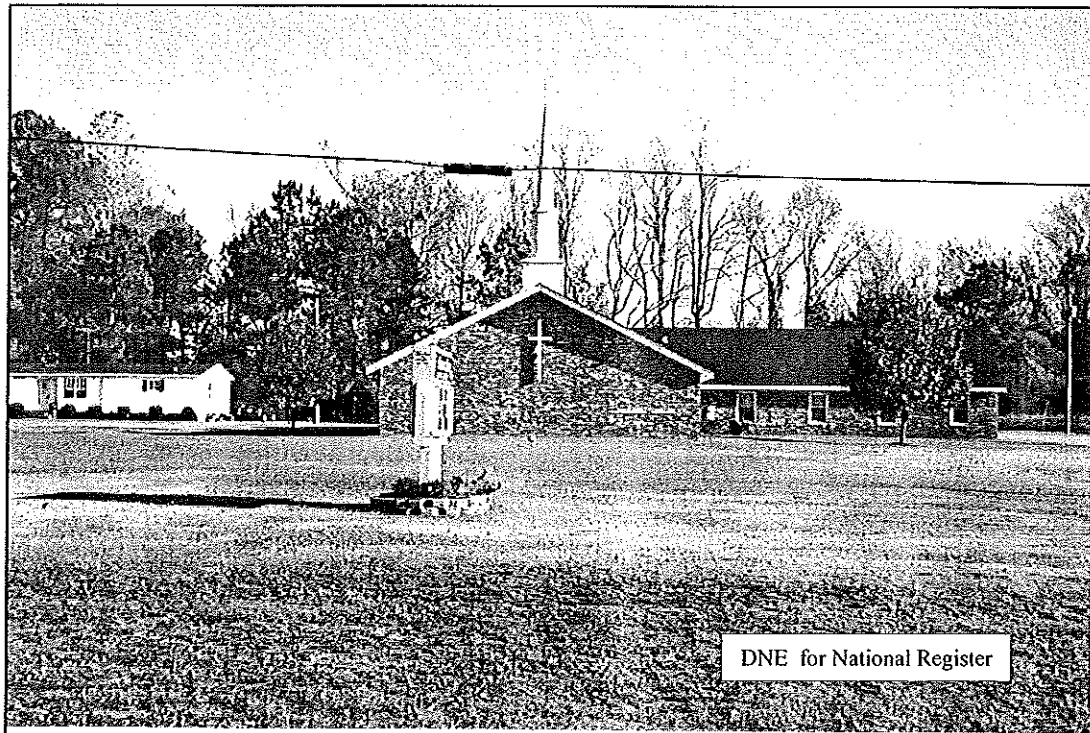
**Property 1 : Gurganus Plumbing, 24494 NC 125**



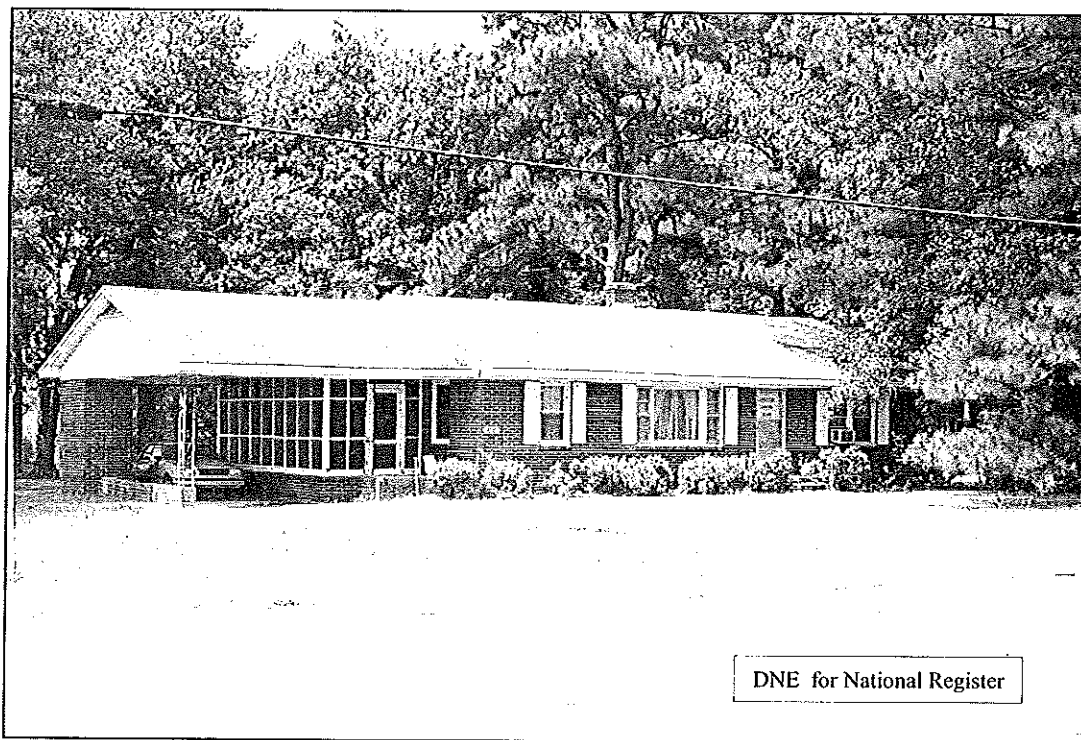
**Property 2 : House, 24492 NC 125**



**Property 3: House, N. side NC 125 immediately W of Skewarkey Gut (no posted address)**

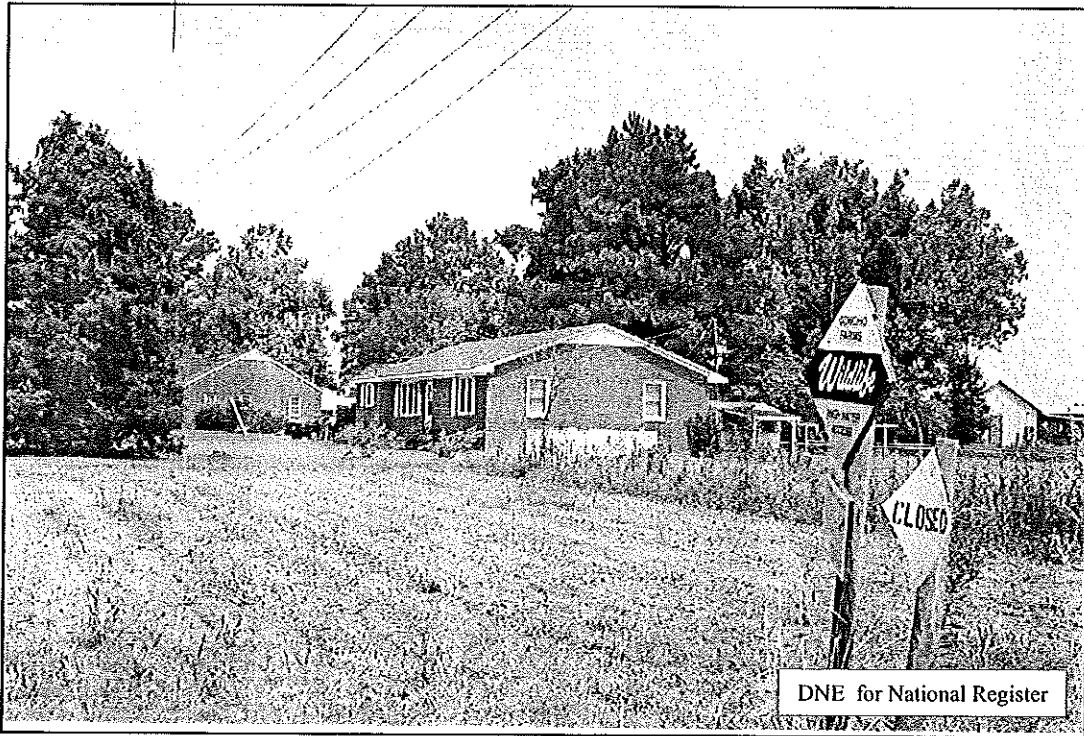


**Property 4 : Fellowship Baptist Church, N. side NC 125**

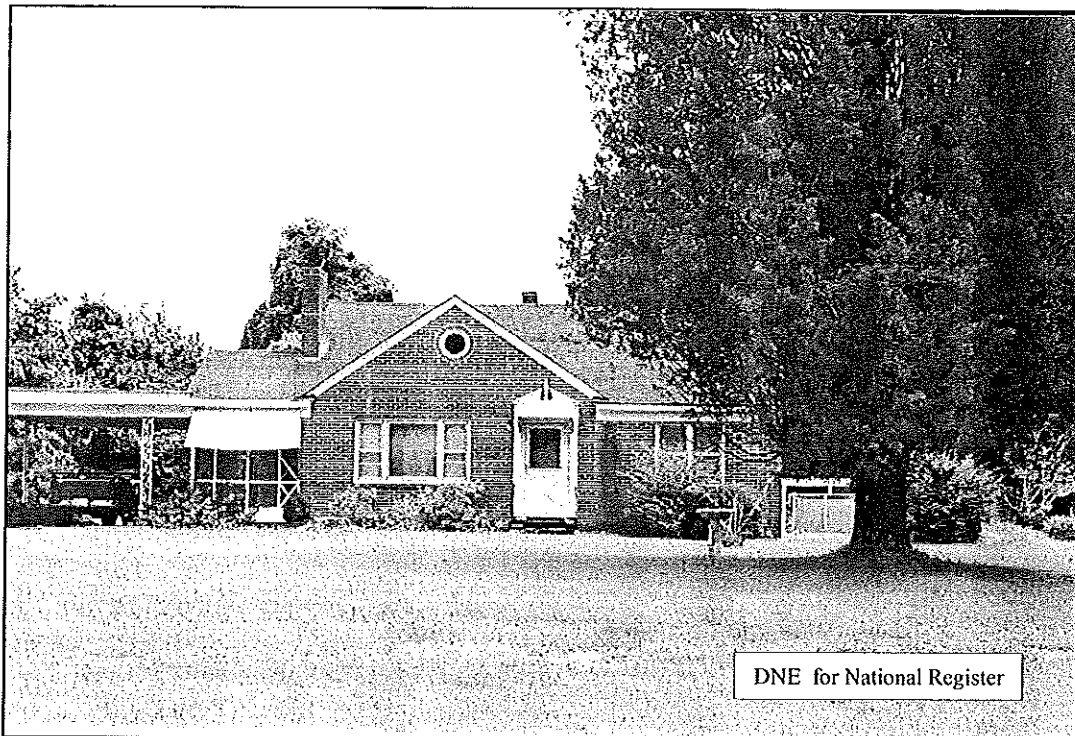


**Property 8 : Ranch house, 23874 NC 125 (S. side)**

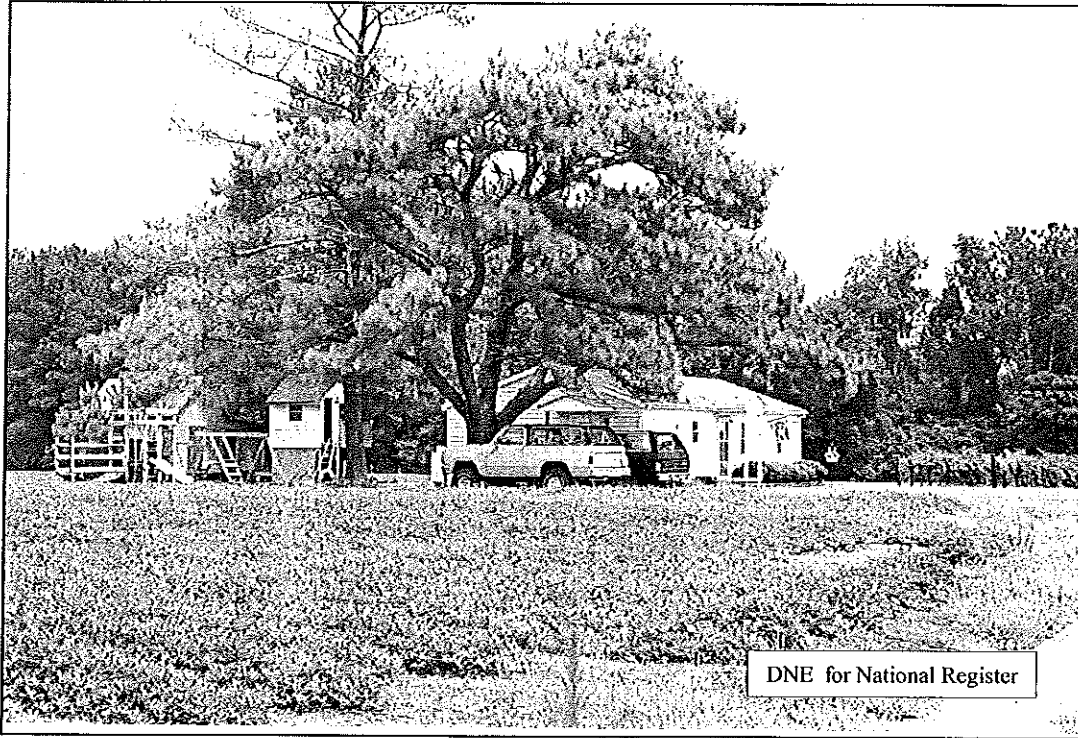




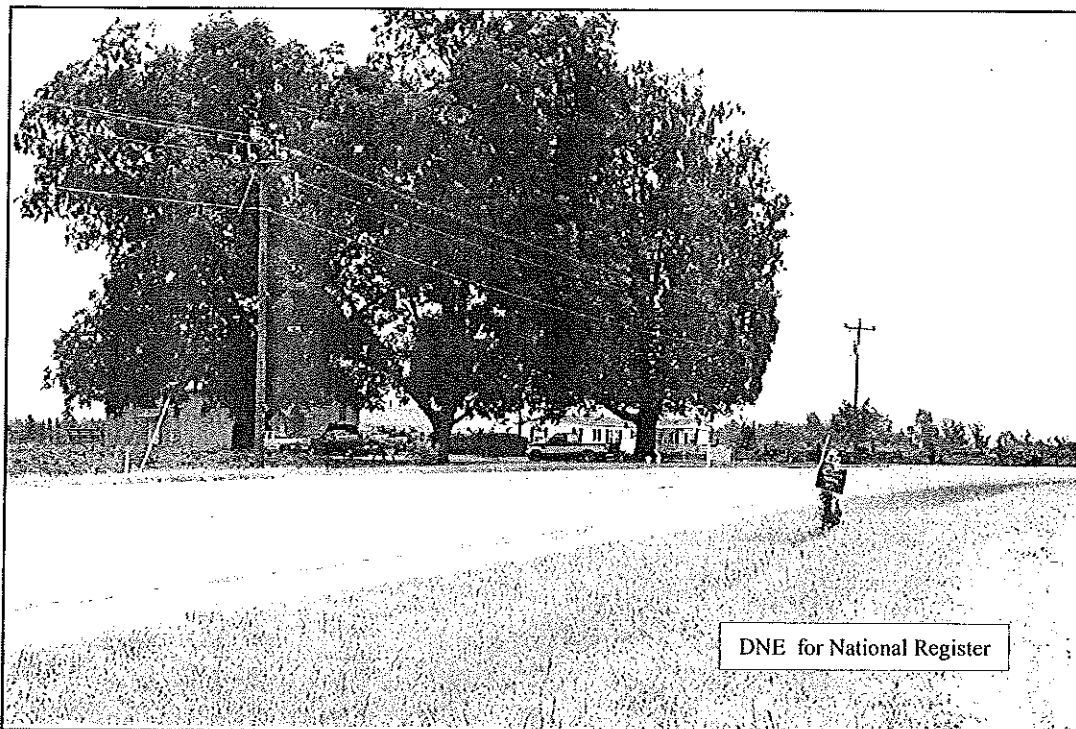
**Properties 9 & 10: Ranch houses, 23871 and 23873 NC 125**



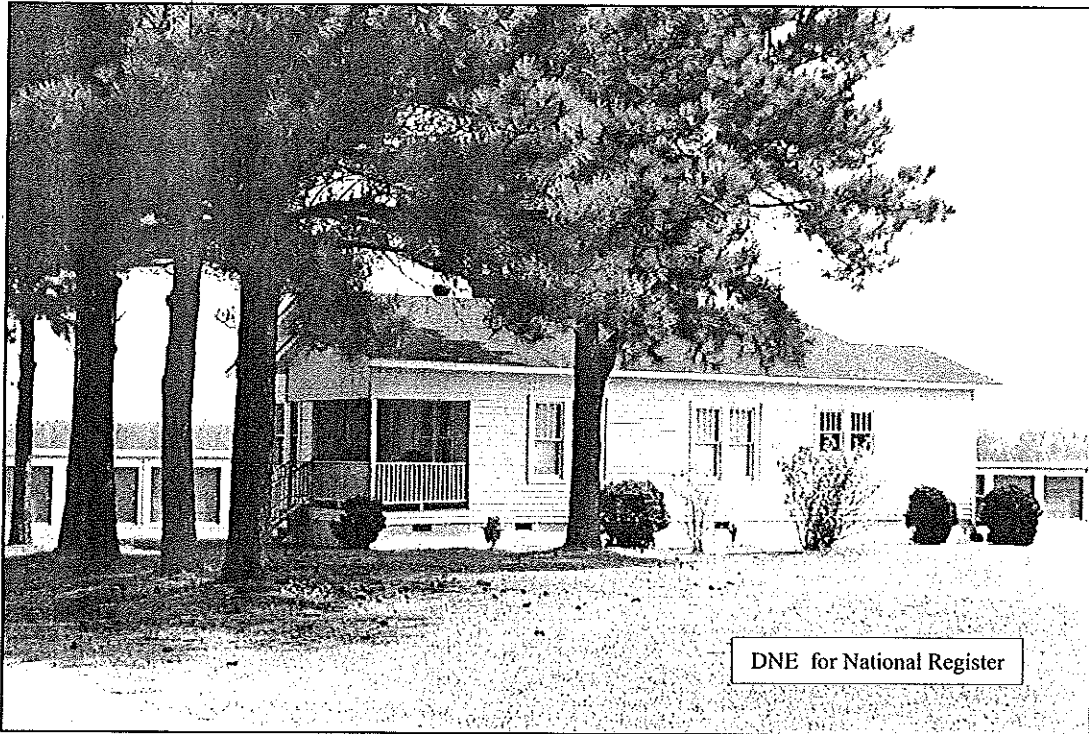
**Property 10: Ranch house, 23871 NC 125 (N. side)**



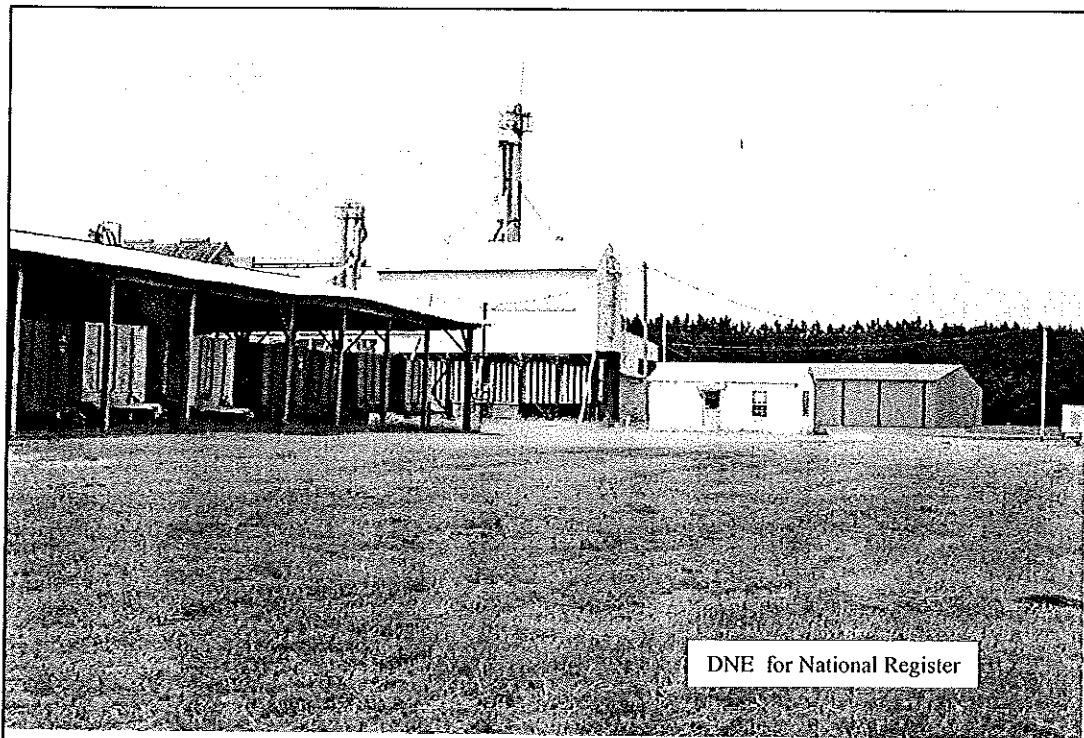
**Property 11: House, on lane S of NC 125 and J. C. Leggett Road Jct.**



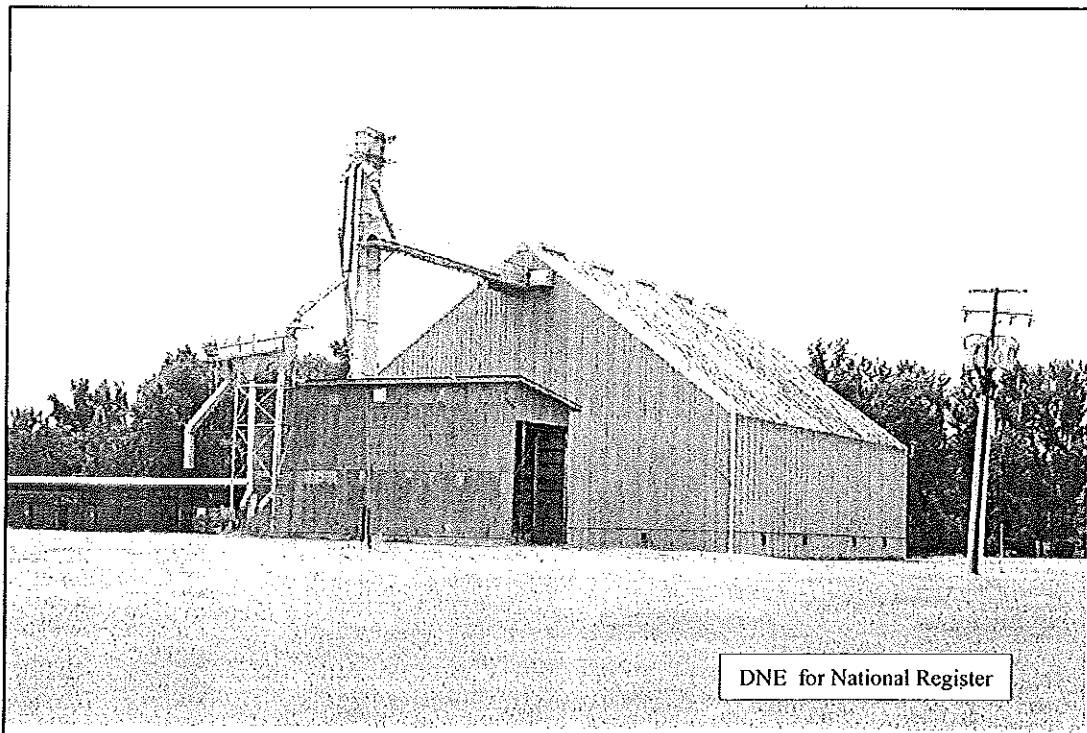
**Property 21: manufactured house and altered pack barn, N side NC 125**



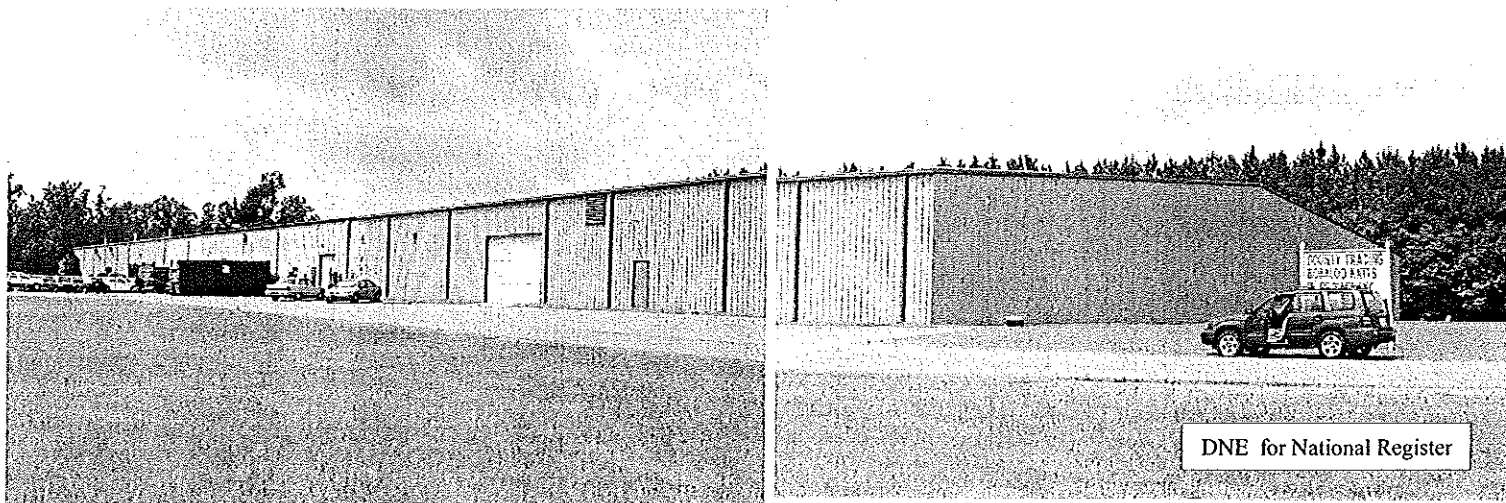
**Property 22: House, N side NC 125 (storage building behind house)**



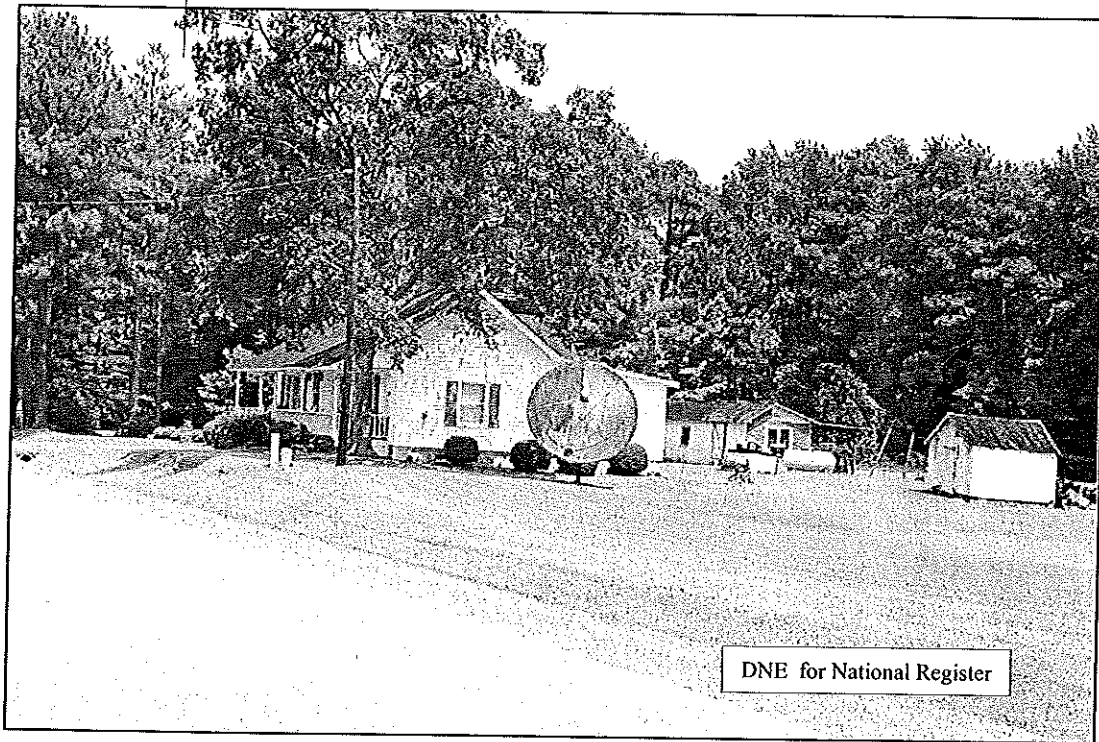
**Property 23: Golden Peanut Mill, 23370 NC 125 (south side; complex from E to W)**



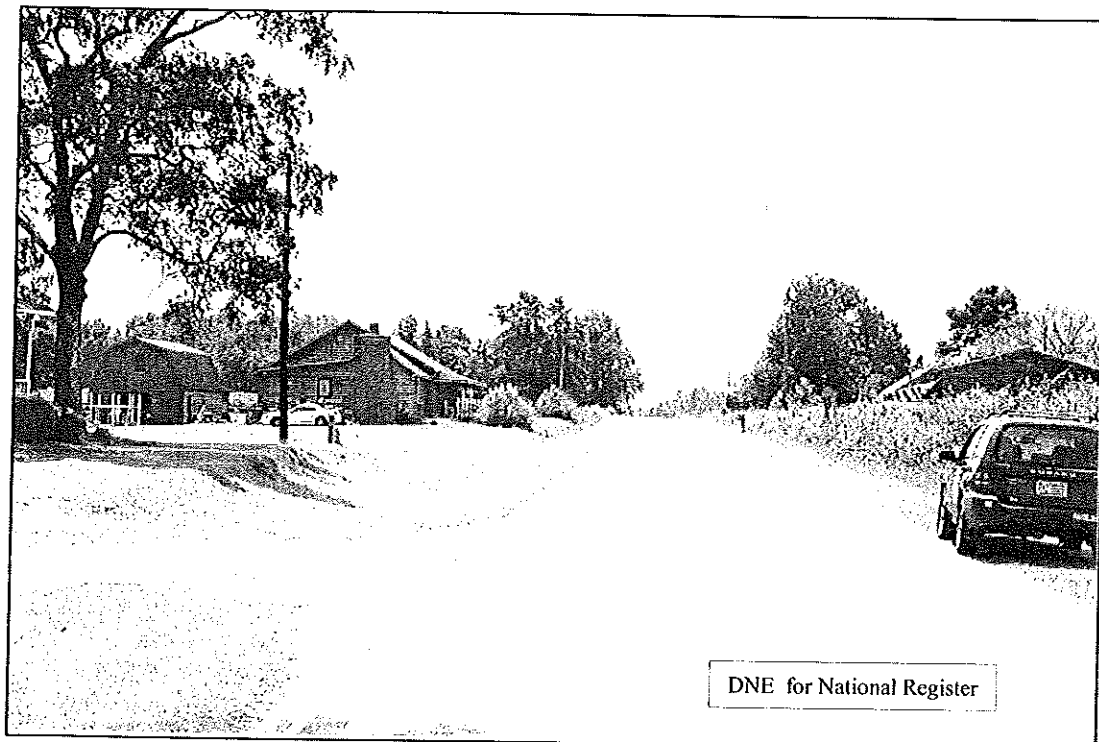
**Property 23: Peanut Mill**



**Property 24: Bobaloo Knits, 23366 NC 125**

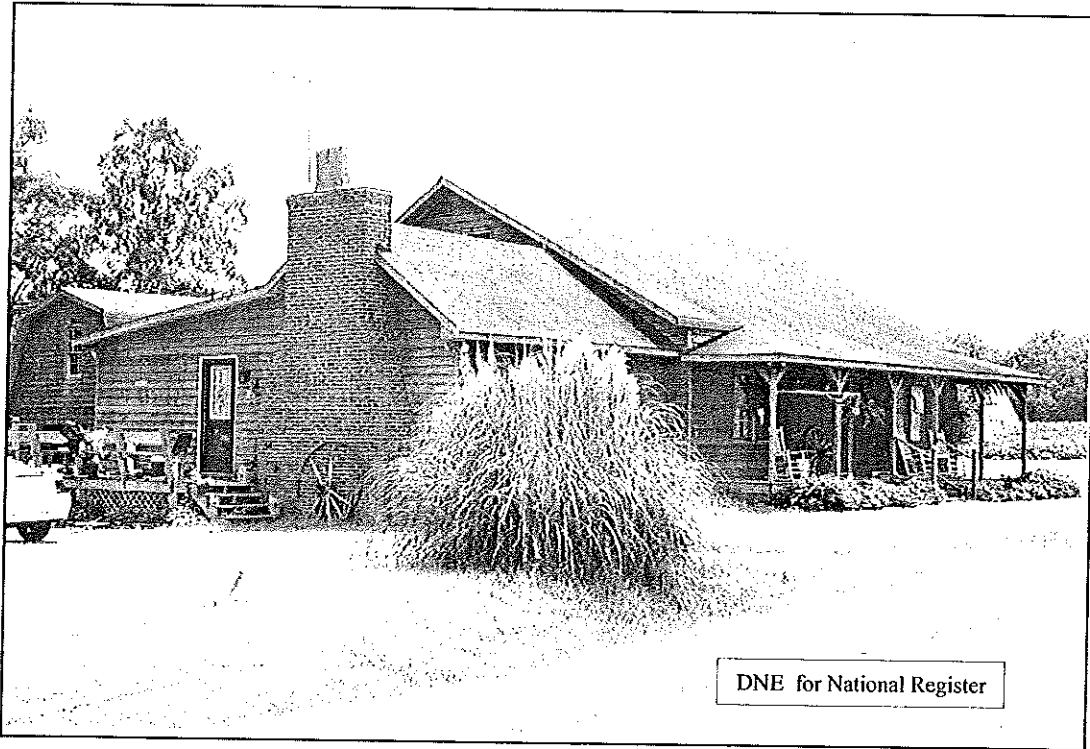


**Property 25 : House, 1436 SR 1421 (west and south elevations, View Nicholson Road)**

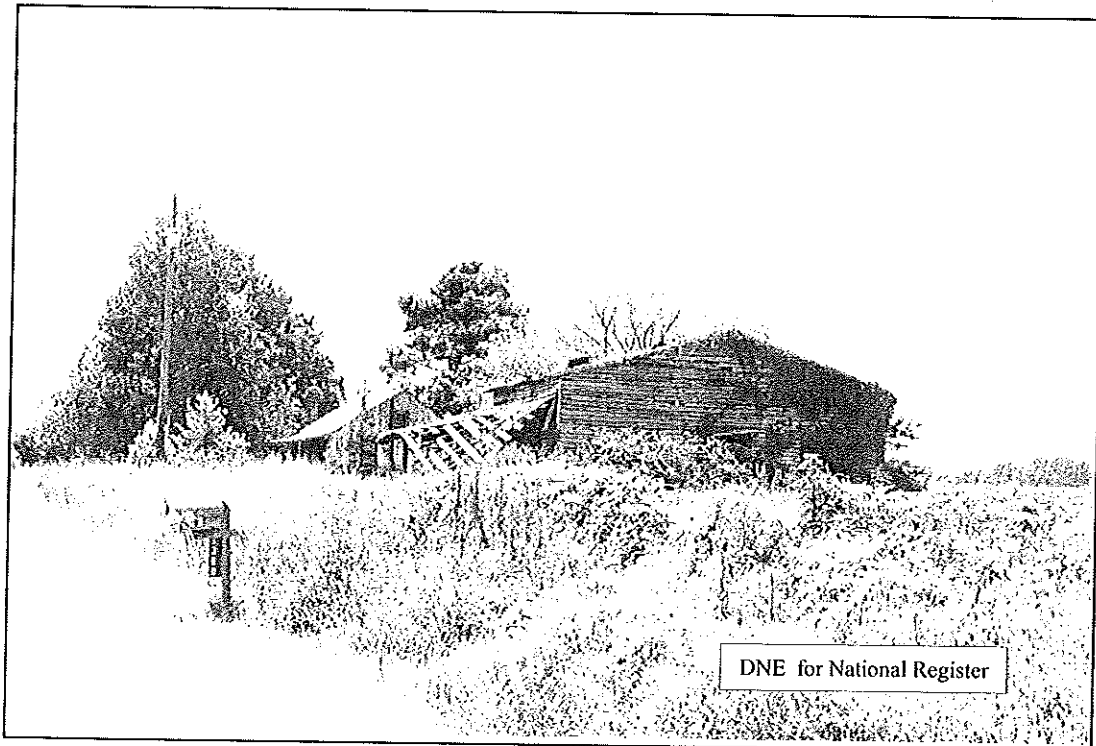


**Properties 26 and 27, from NE, looking to NC 125 intersection**



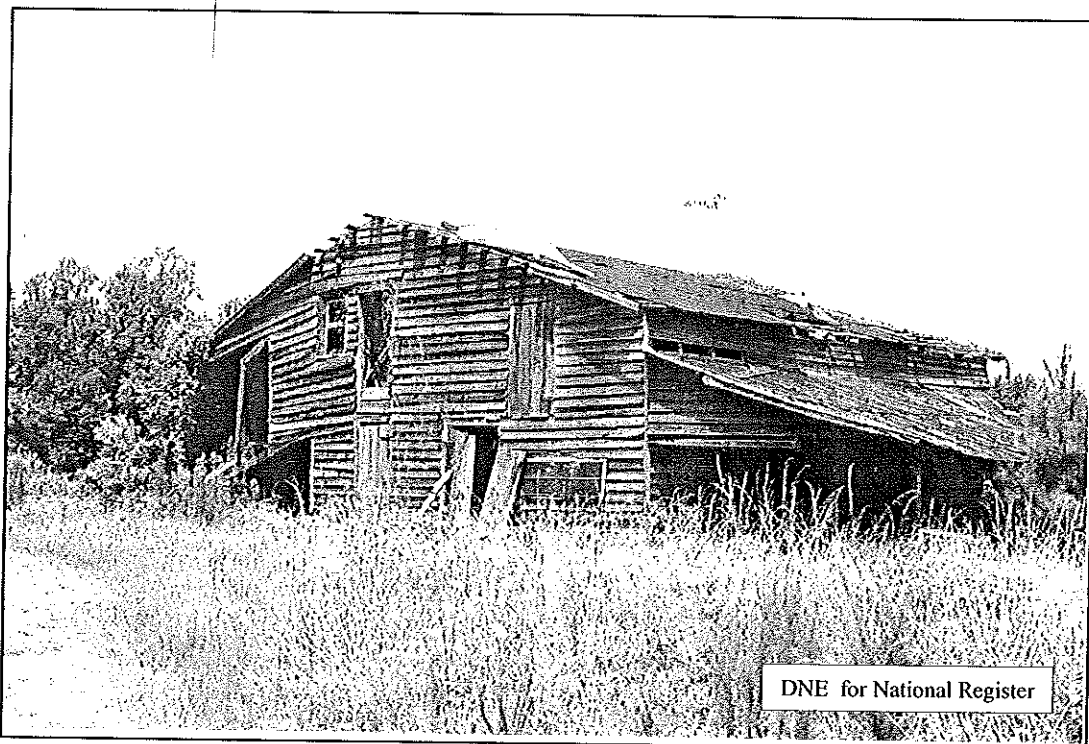


**Property 26 : House, 1380 SR 1421**

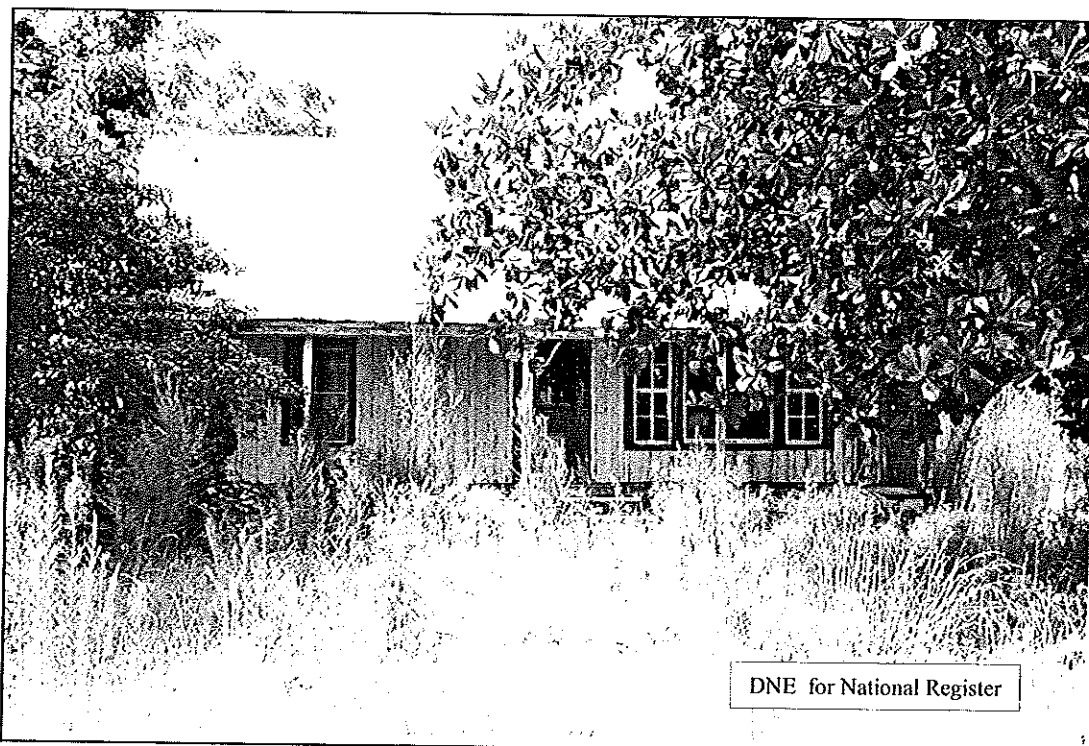


**Property 27: Abandoned Farm, on opposite side of SR 1421 from Property 26**





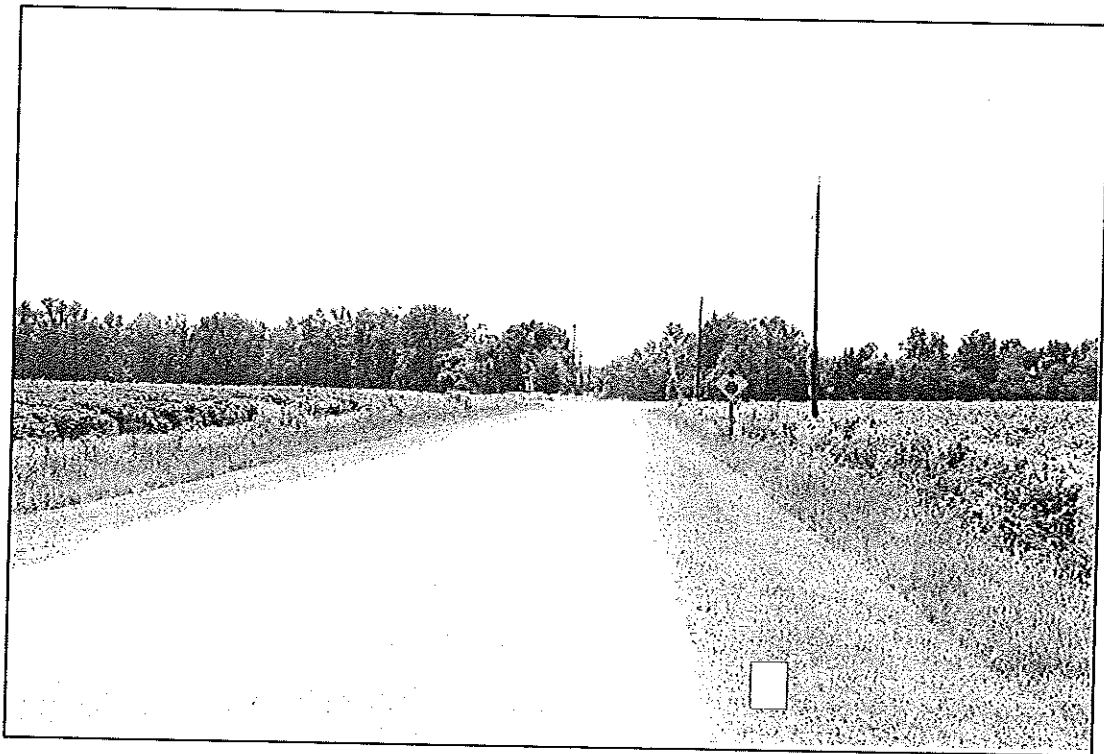
**Property 27: Barn**



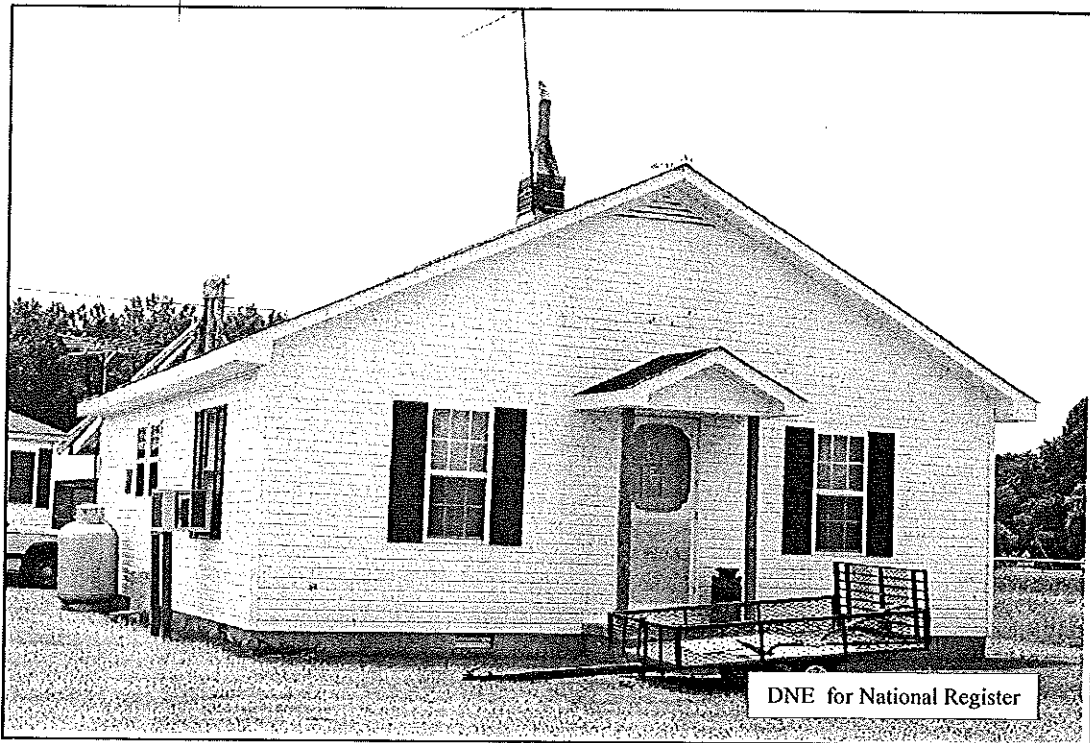
**Property 27: Front elevation of house**



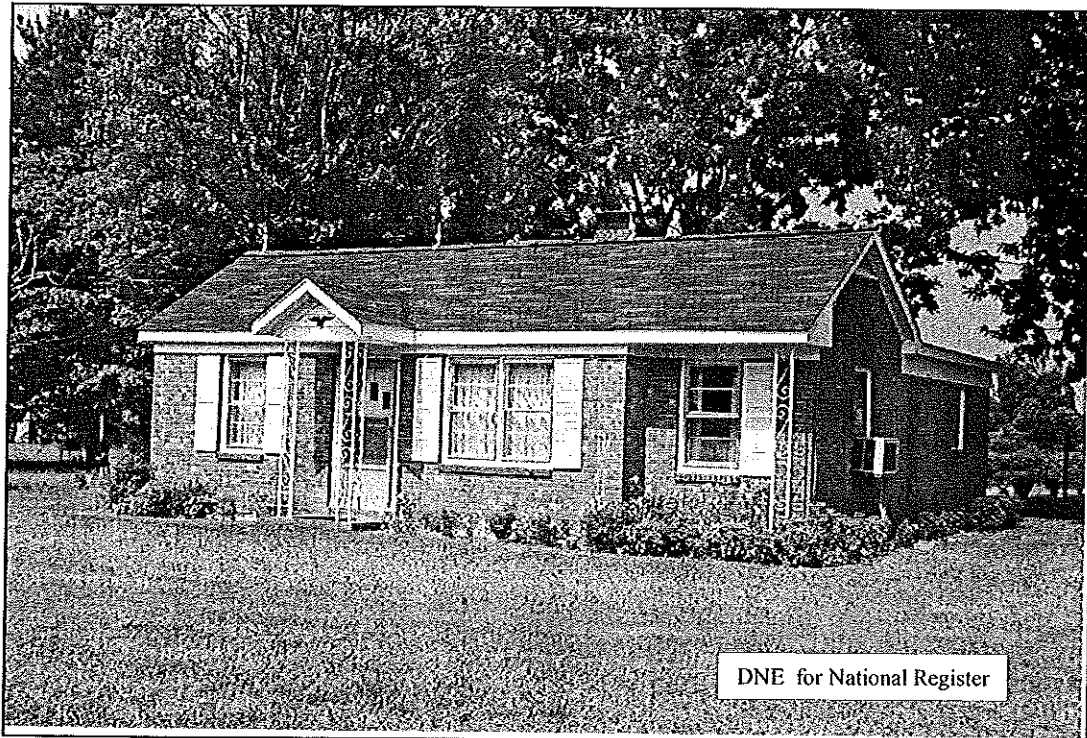
**Property 28: House, 1142 SR 1421**



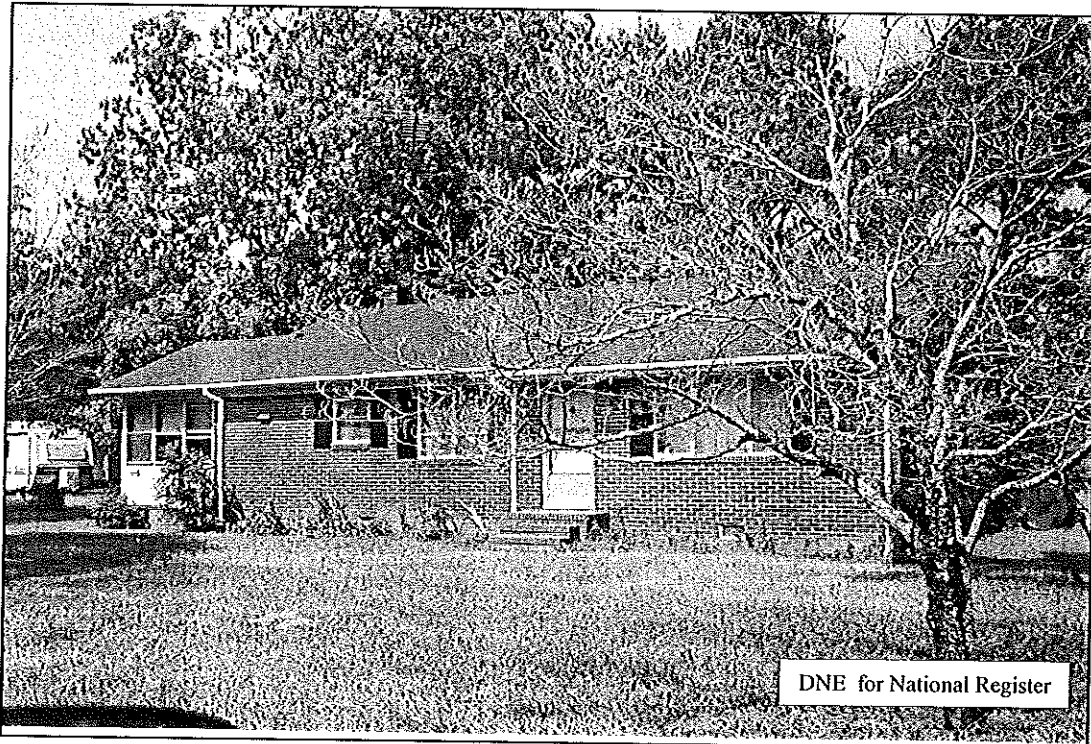
**View from Property 28 south to the intersection of NC 125**



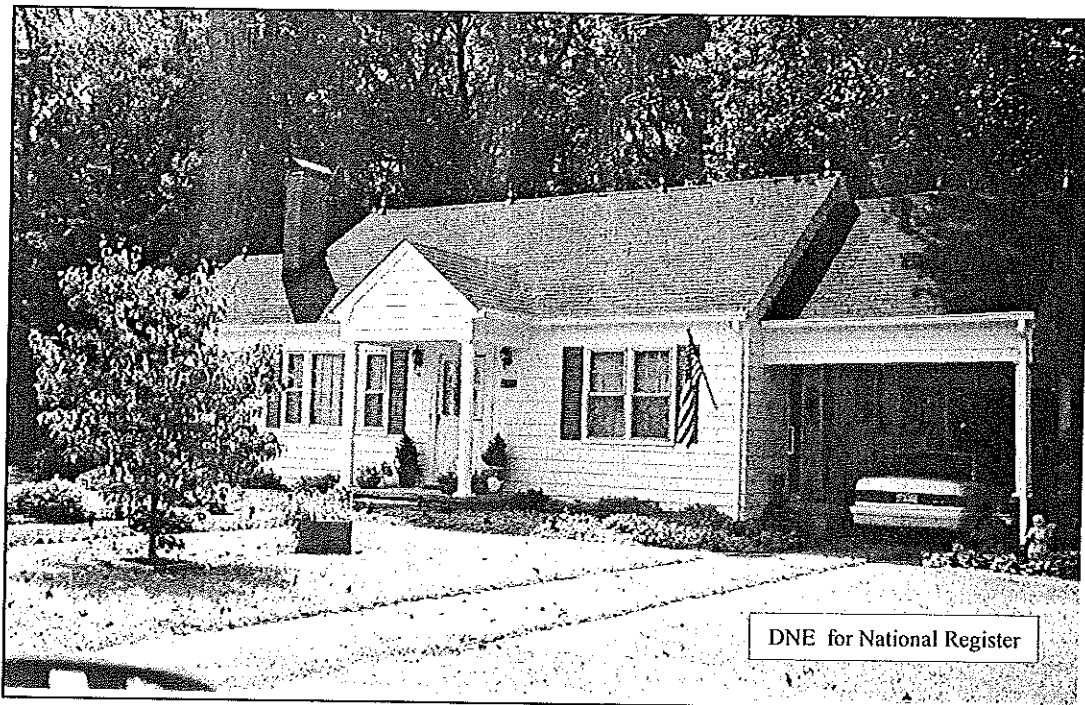
**Property 29: House, 4596 SR 1417 (Poplar Point Road)**



**Property 30: House, 1137 SR 1420 (Hopkins Road)**



**Property 31: House, 1115 SR 1420 (Hopkins Road)**

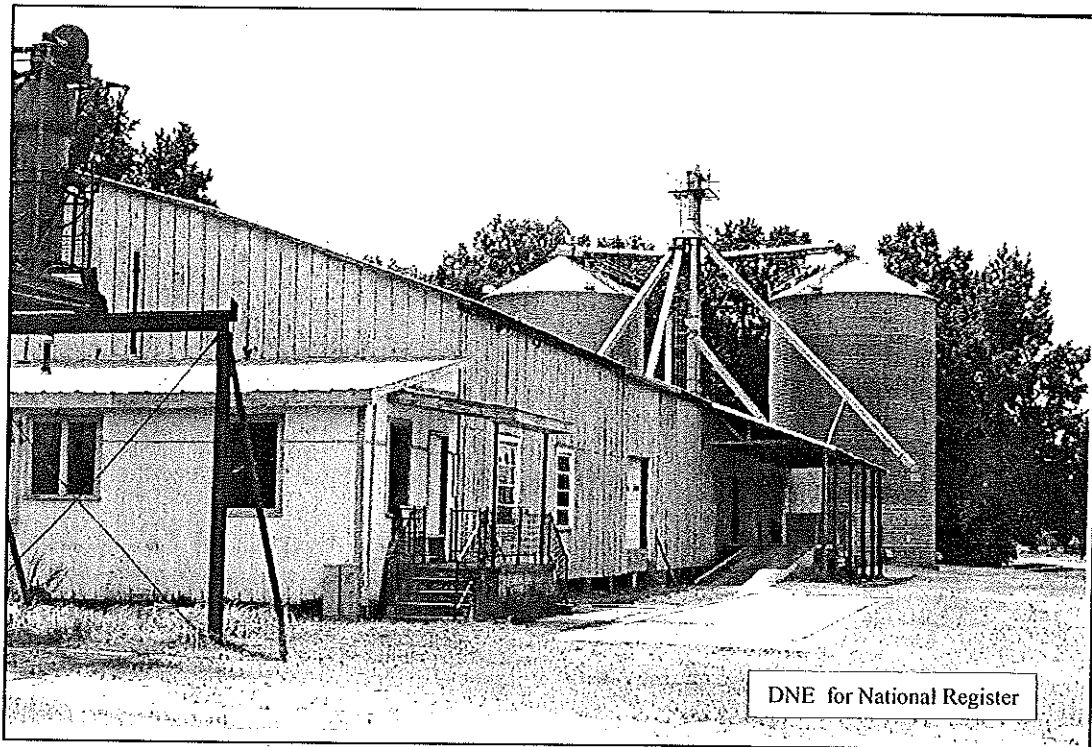


**Property 32: House, 21670 NC 125 (SEC SR 1420 intersection)**



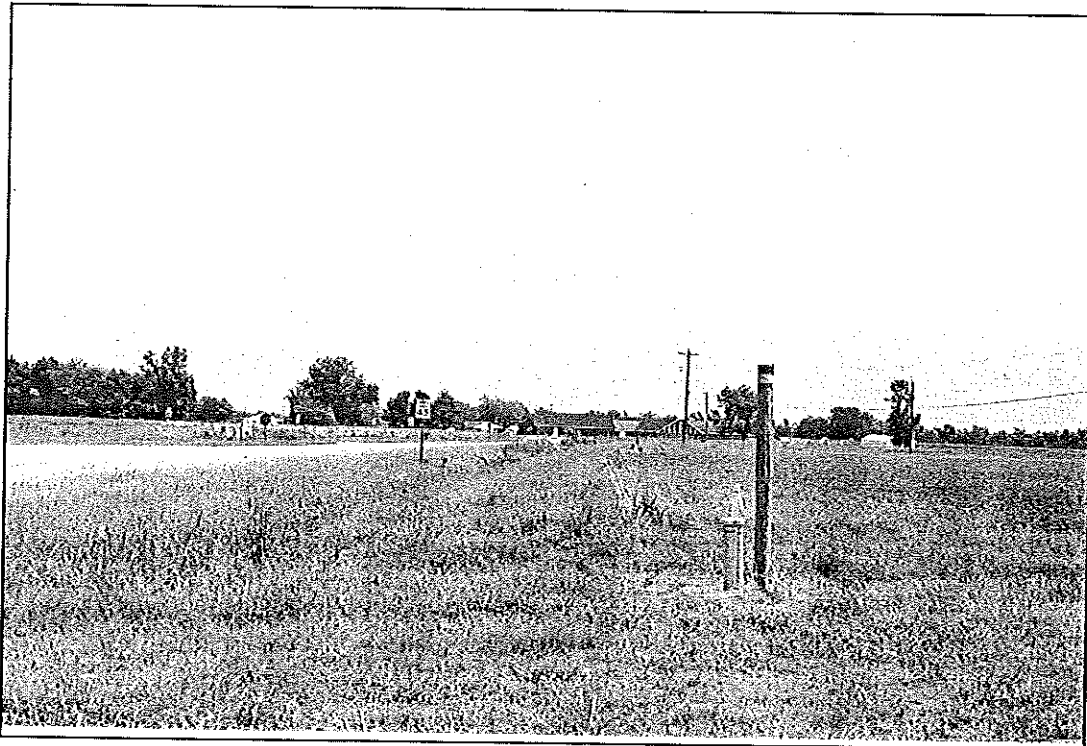


**Property 33: Abbitts Mill (MT 619), S side NC 125, .2 mile east of SR 1420 Jct.**

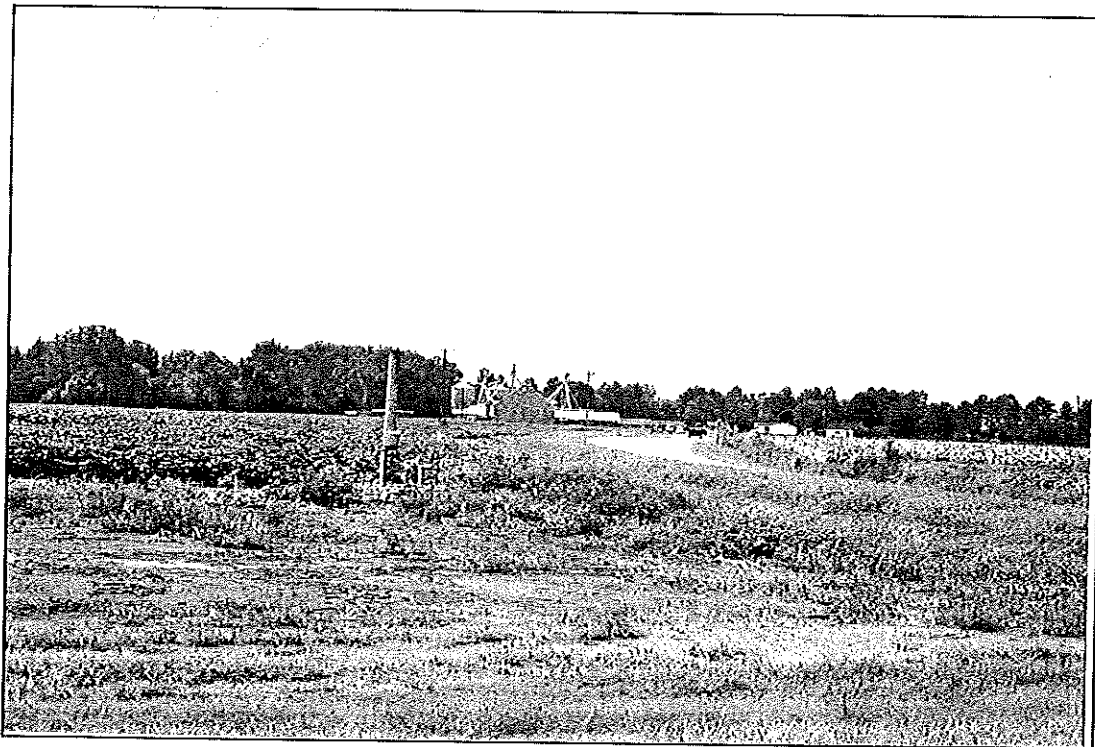


**Property 33: Abbitt's Mill, office building (in foreground)**

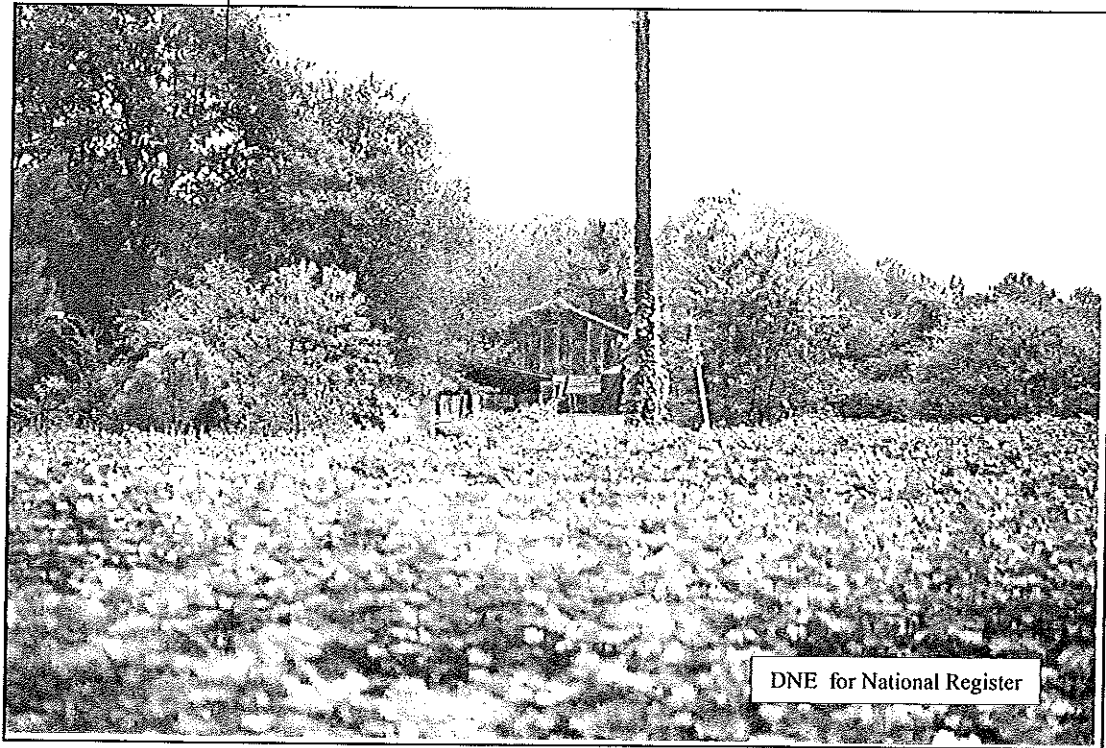




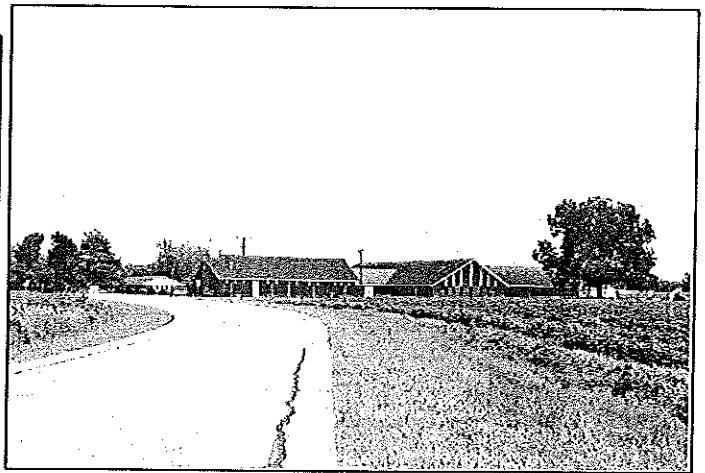
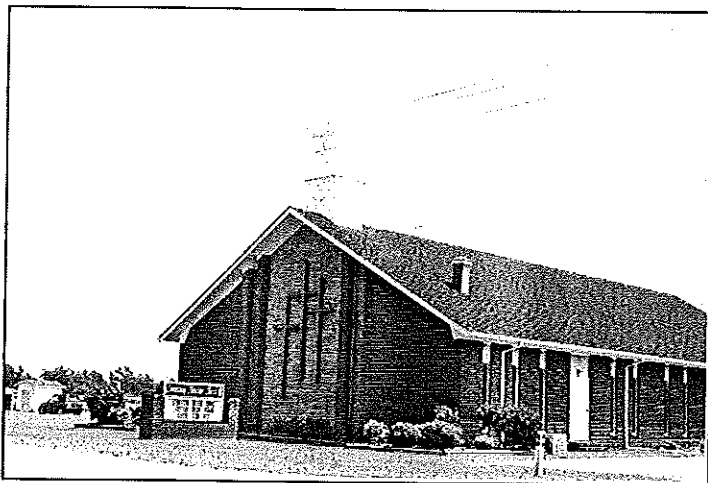
**NC 125, looking east-southeast from Abbitts Mill**



**NC 125, looking W from Property 34 towards Abbitts Mill**

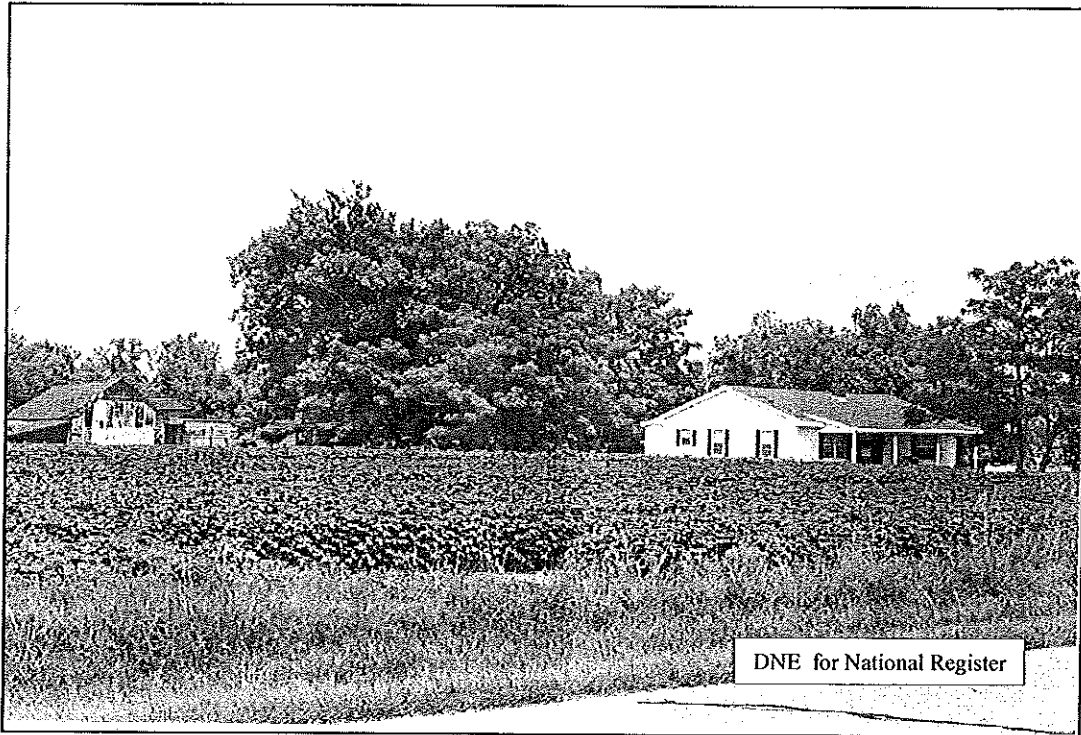


**Property 34: Barn and Bulk Barn, dirt road S of NC 125, just across Mill Branch**

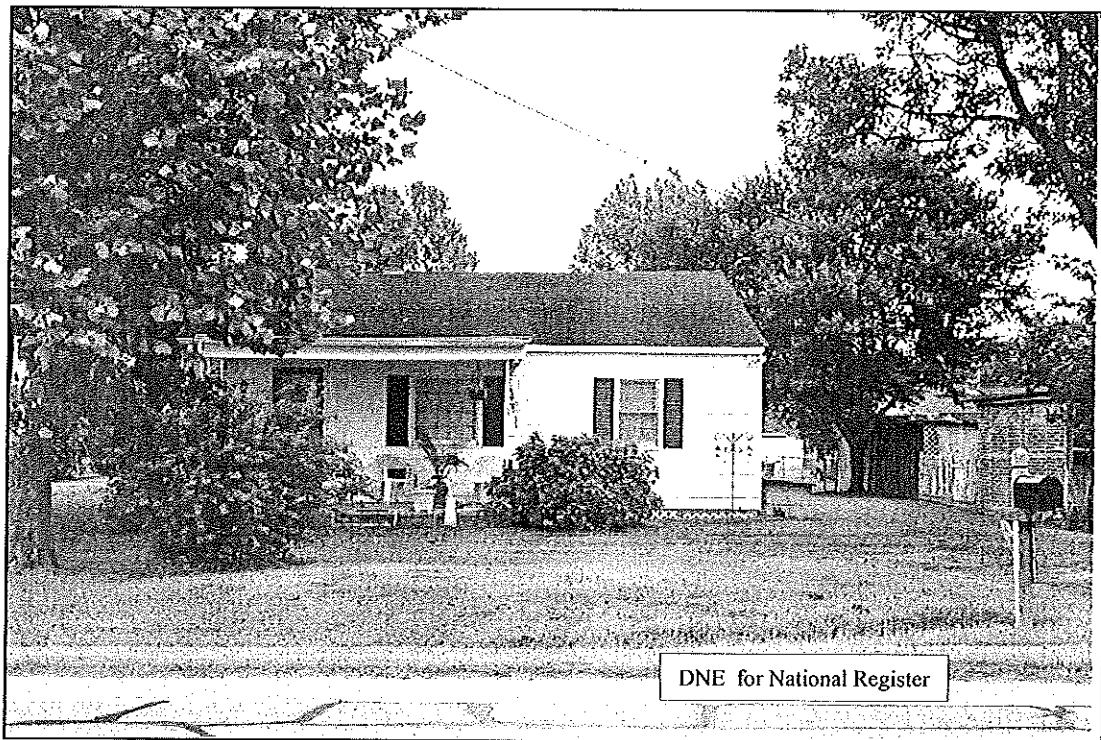


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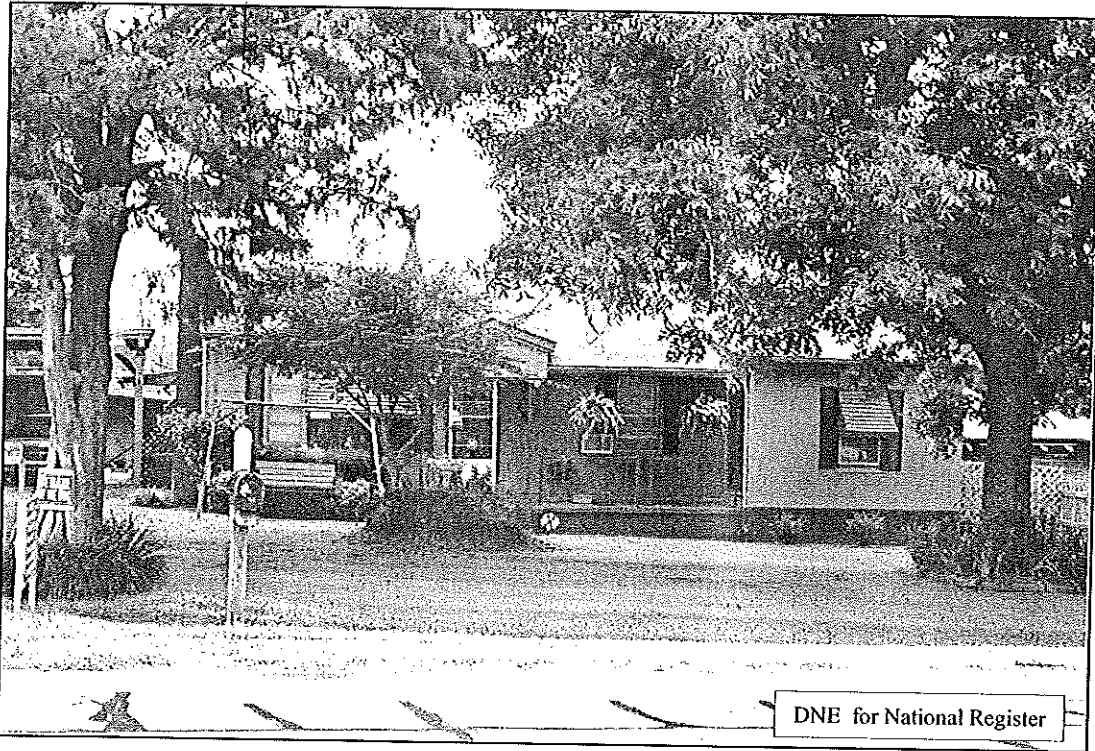
**Property 35: Community Christian Church, NC 125**



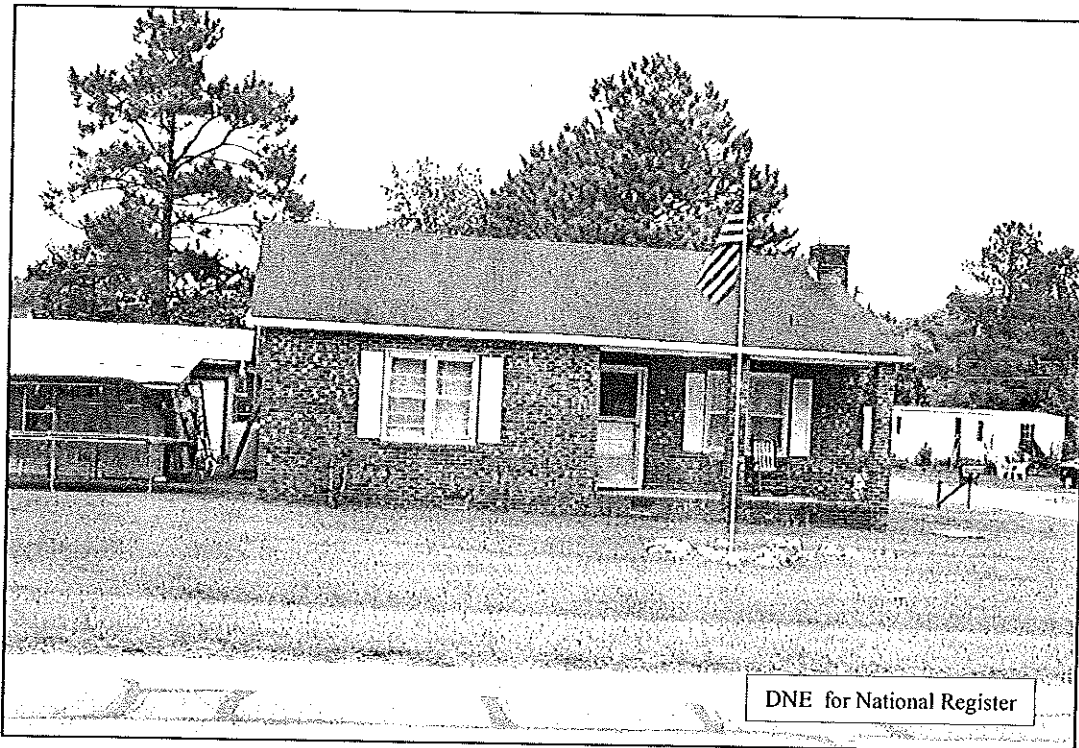
**Property 36: Manufactured House (north side NC 125, across from church)**



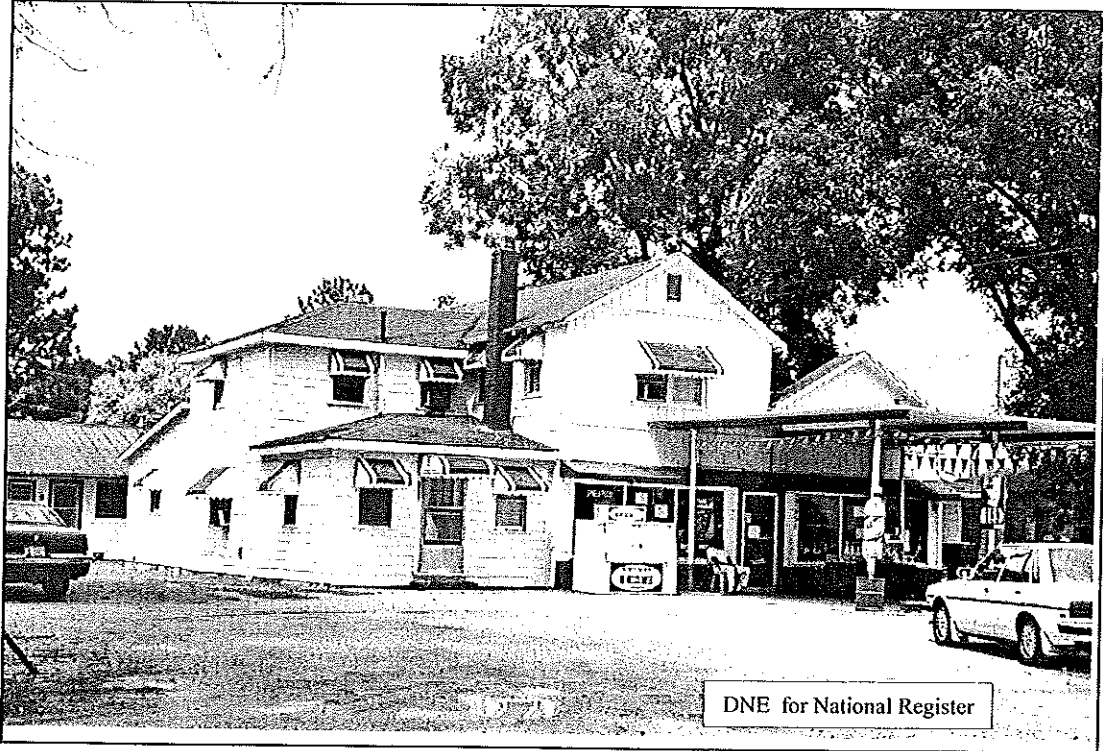
**Property 37: House, 22365 NC 125**



**Property 38: House, 22373 NC 125**

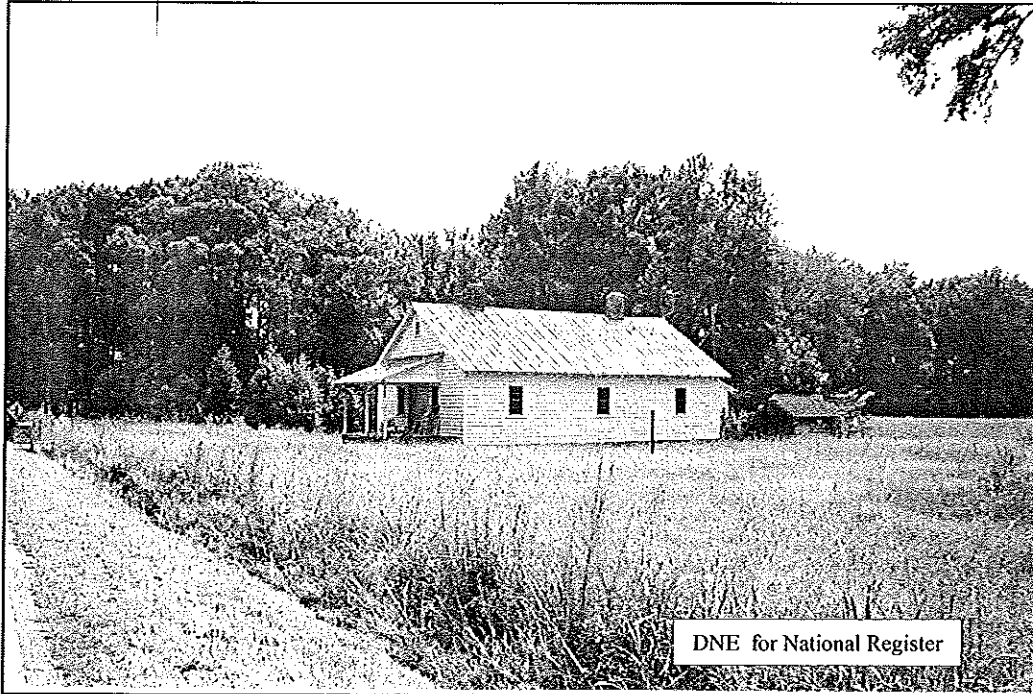


**Property 39: House, 22375 NC 125 (in front of trailer park)**

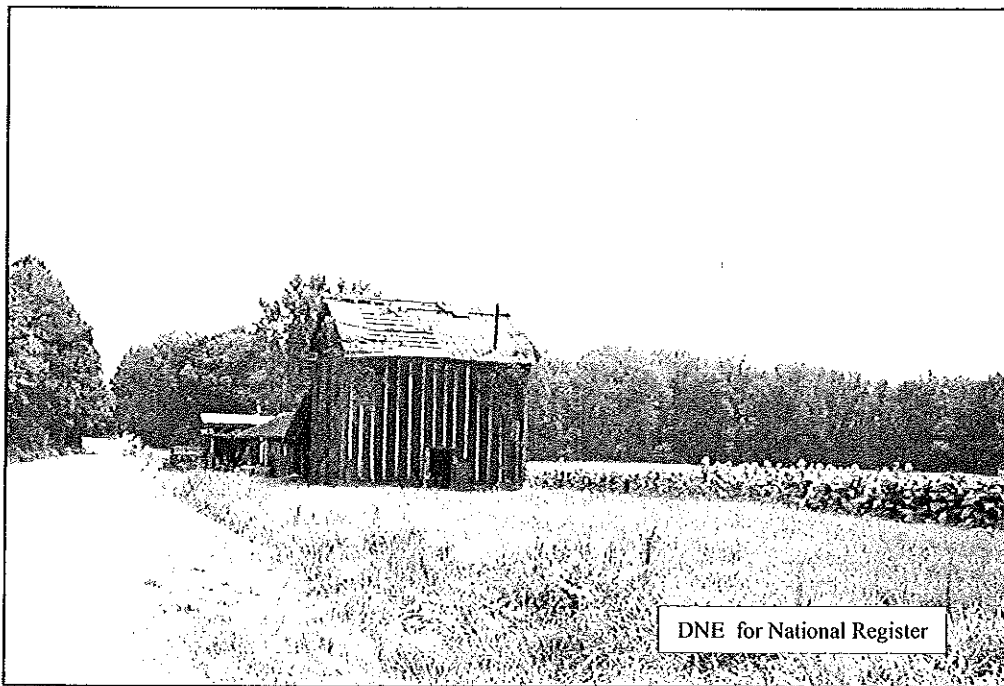


**Property 41: Medway Mini Mart, 22451 NC 125**

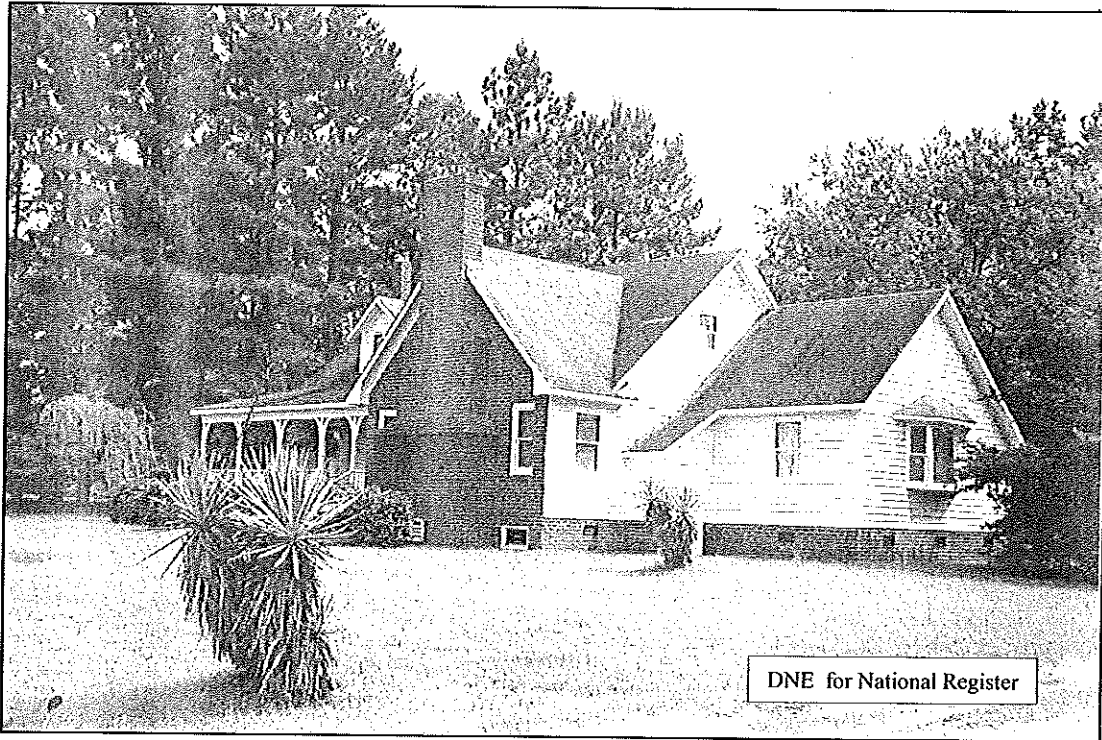




**Property 42 : House, west side NC 125 .2 north of SR 1420 Jct.**



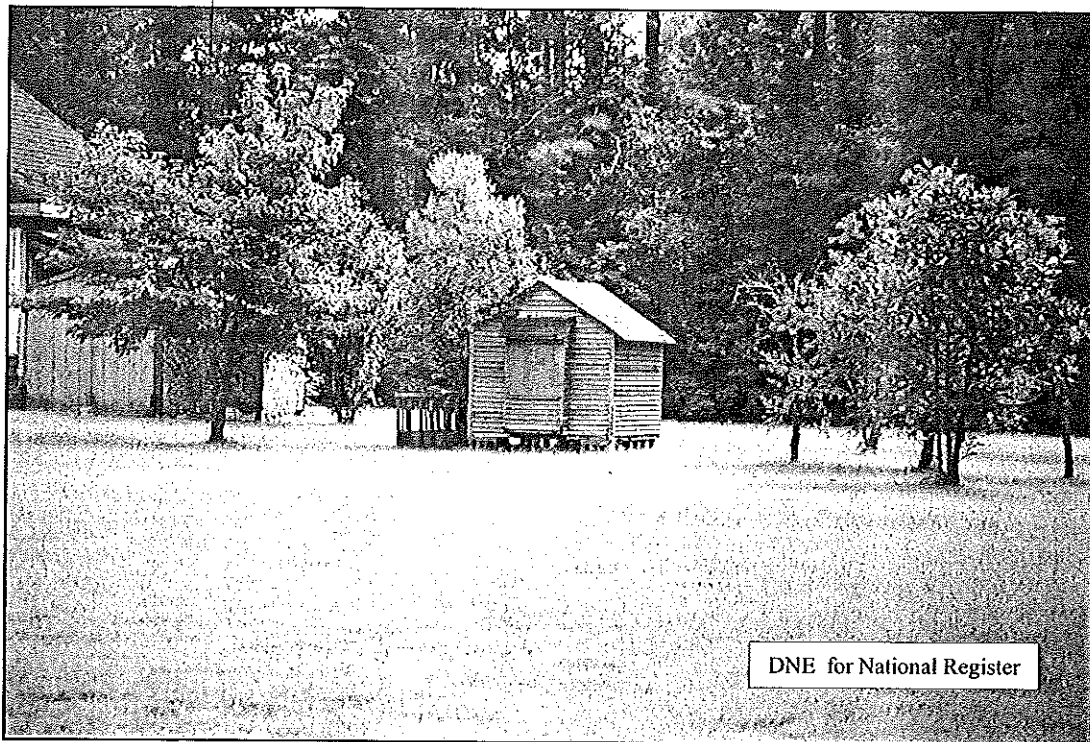
**Property 42: Tobacco Barn that appears to be part of house's earlier farm complex**



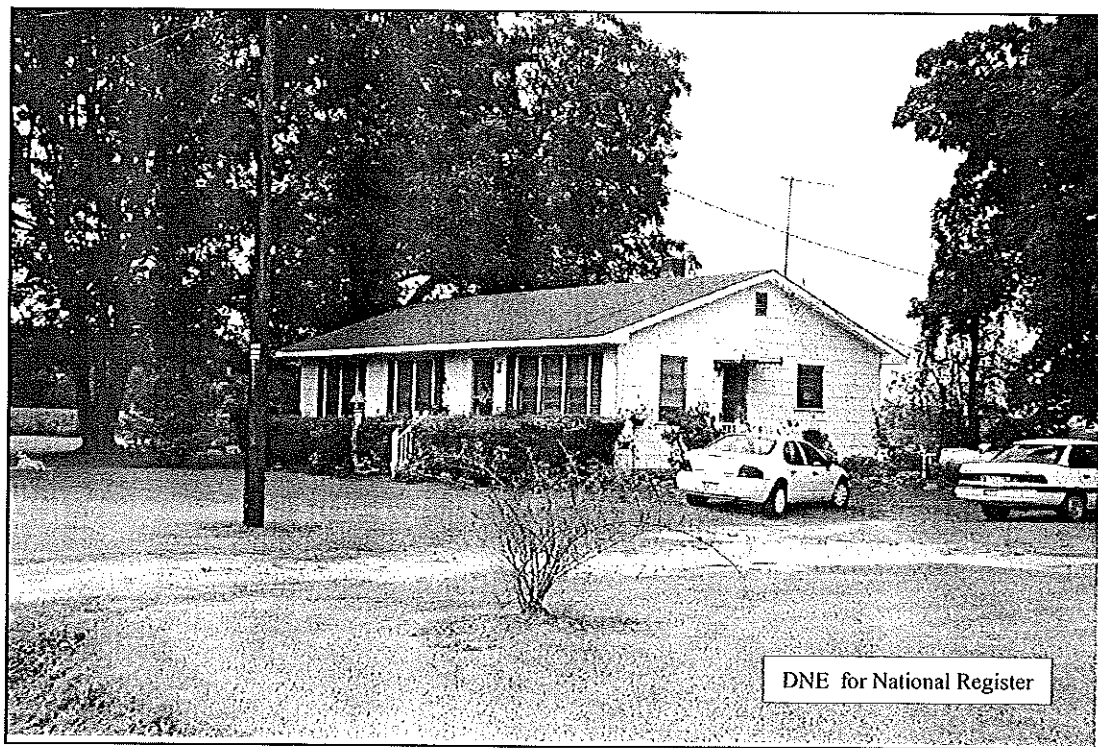
**Property 43: House, SW side SR 1420 (McCaskey Road)**



**Property 43: outbuilding**



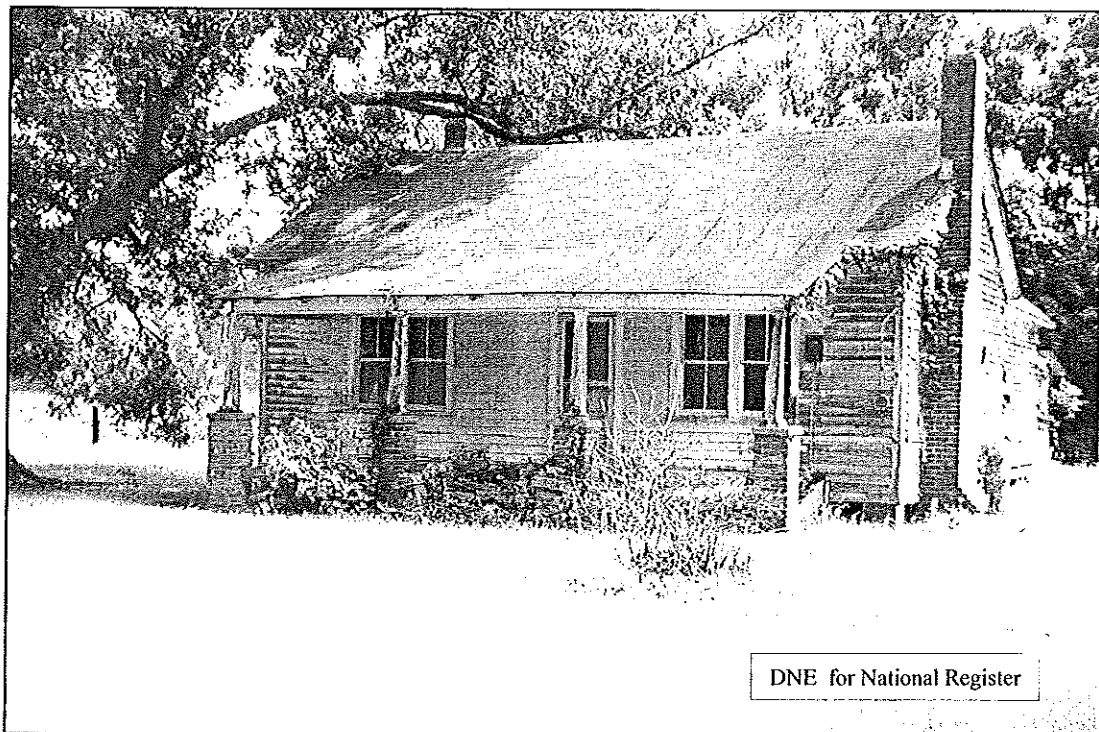
**Property 43: Outbuilding**



**Property 44: House, NE side SR 1420**

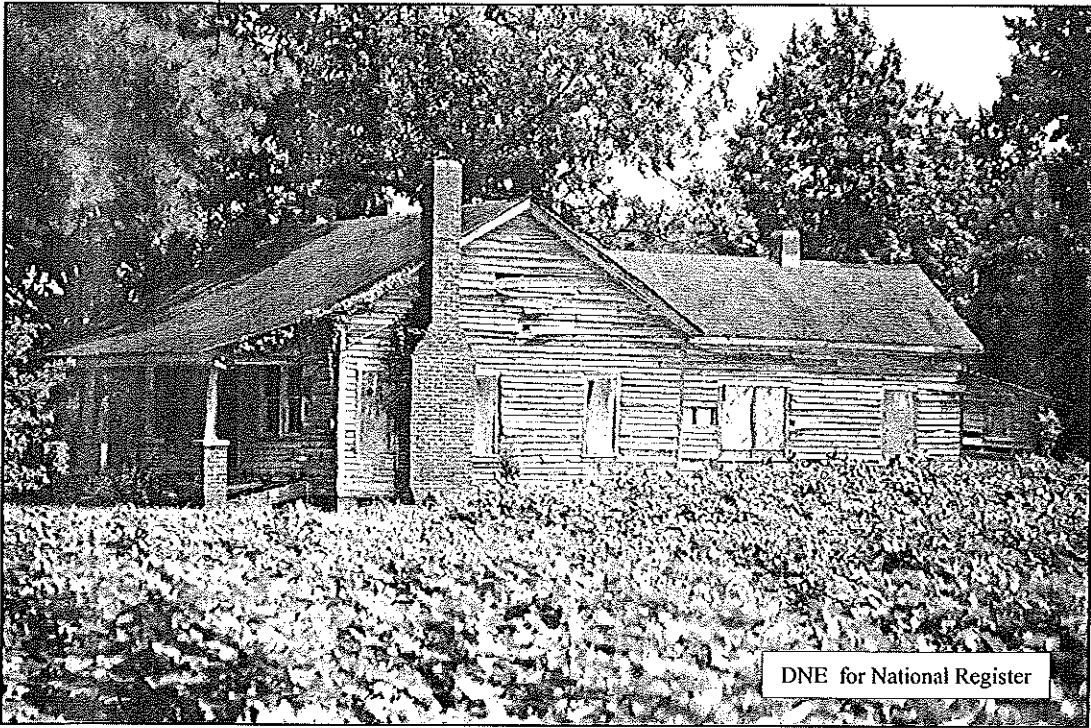


**Property 44: Pack Barn**

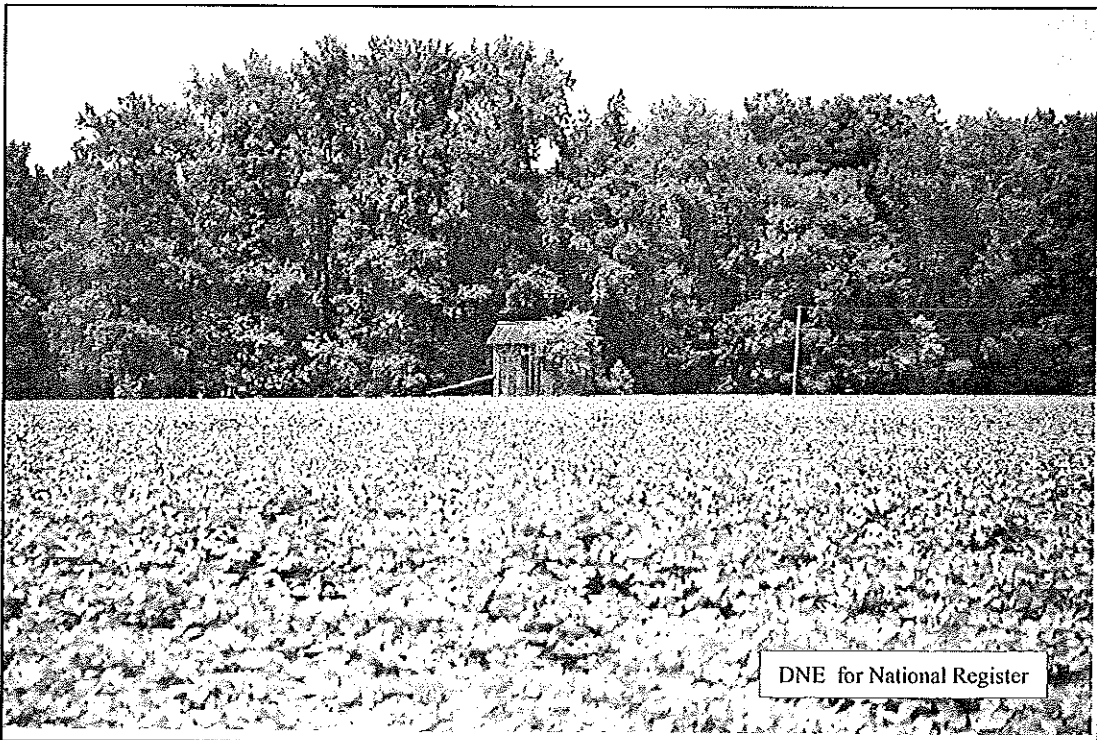


**Property 45: House, SE side SR 1420, .2 mi NW of Landfill road**



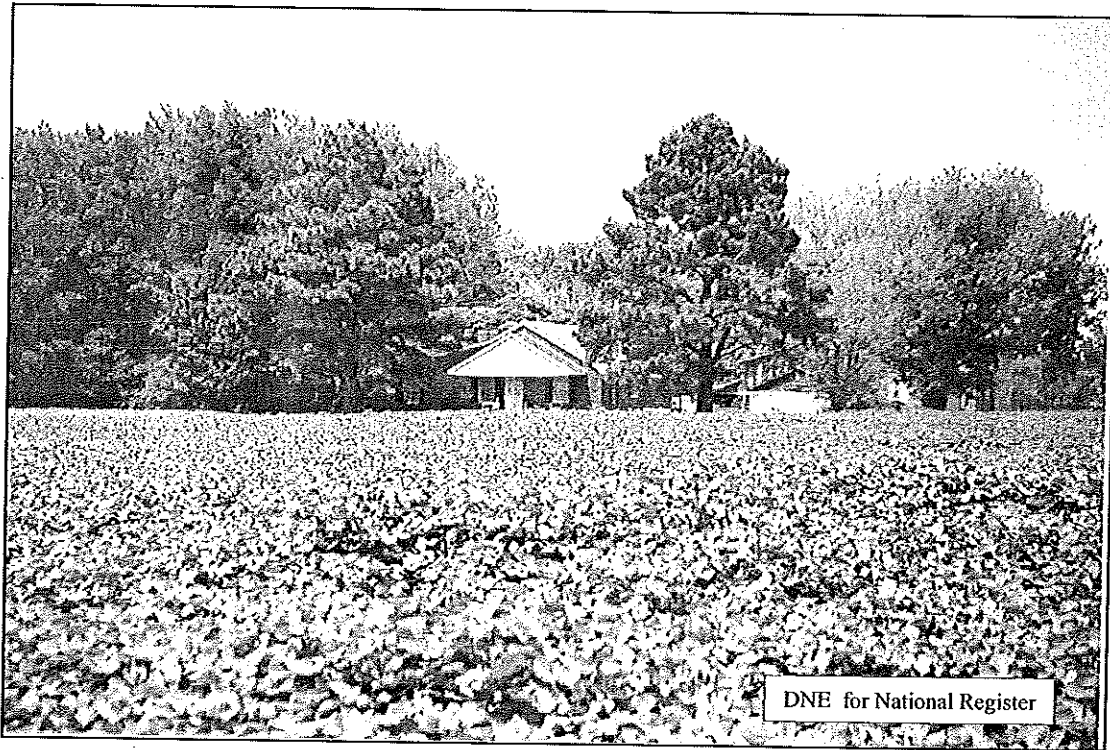


**Property 45: NW elevation**

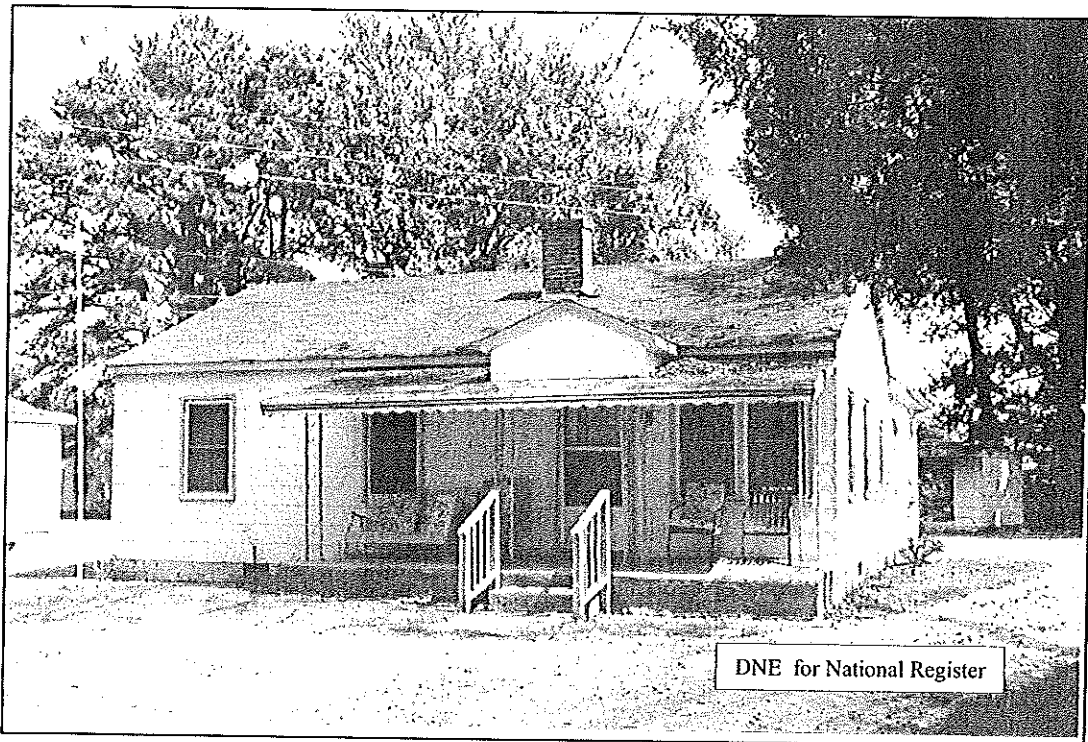


**Property 46: Tobacco Barn, NE side SR 1420**





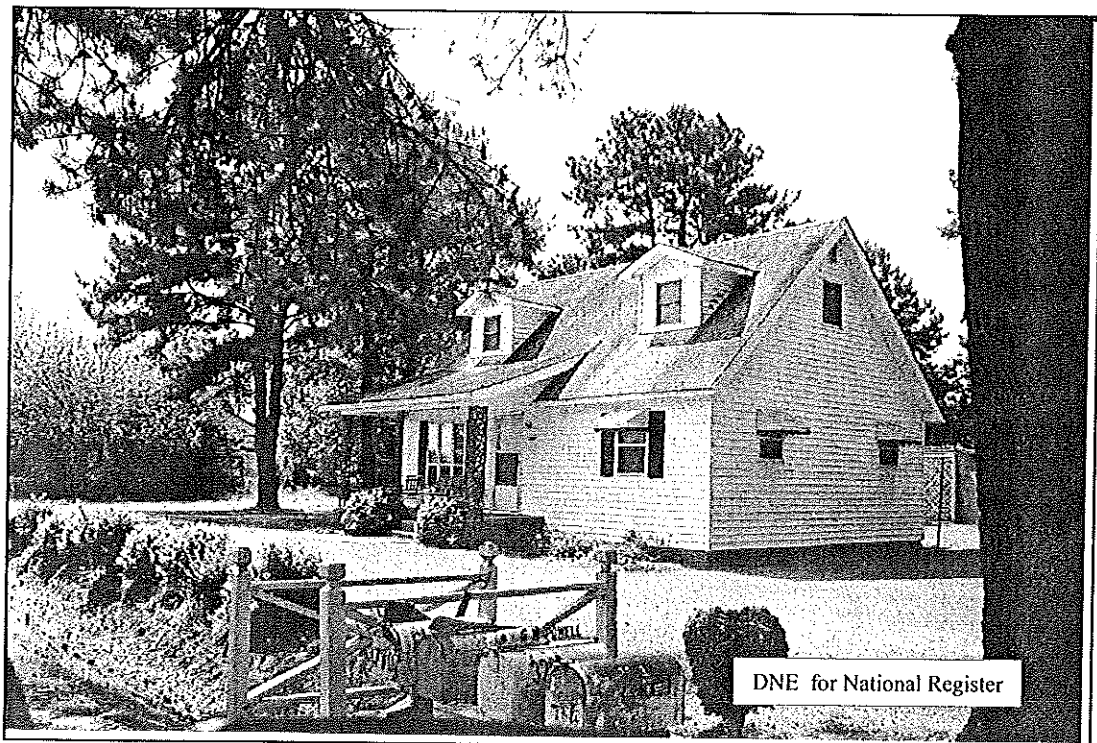
**Property 47: House, NE side SR 1420**



**Property 49: House, 3283 SR 1420**



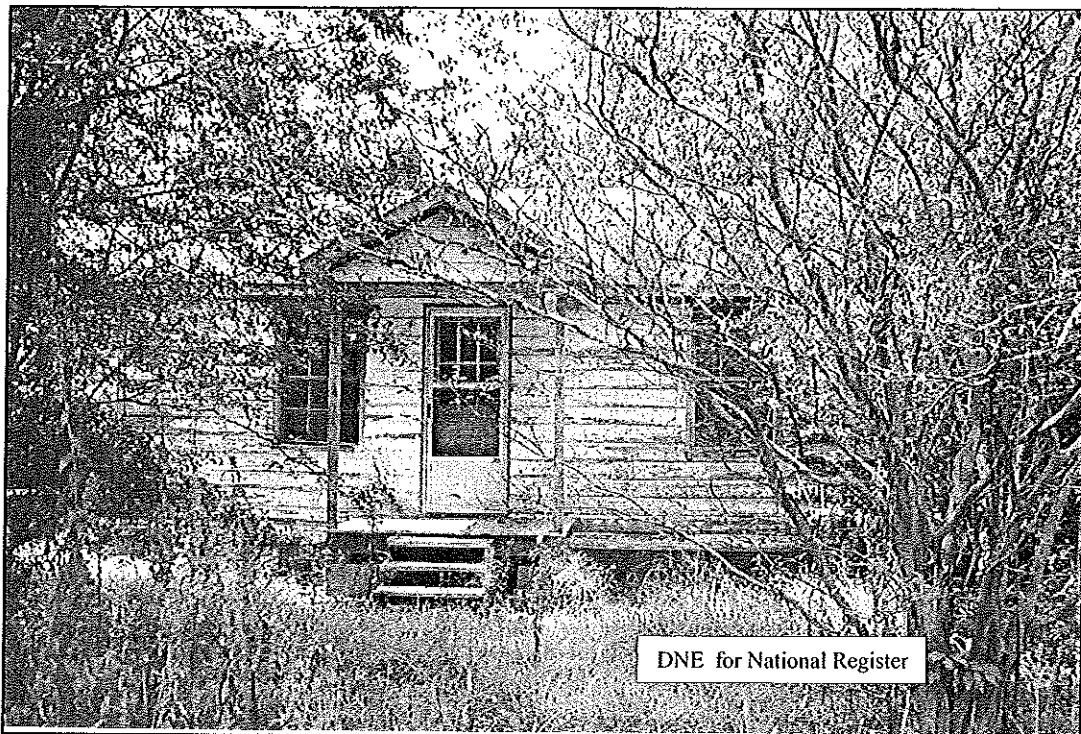
**Property 50: House, 3291 McCaskey Road**



**Property 51: House, 3300 SR 1420**

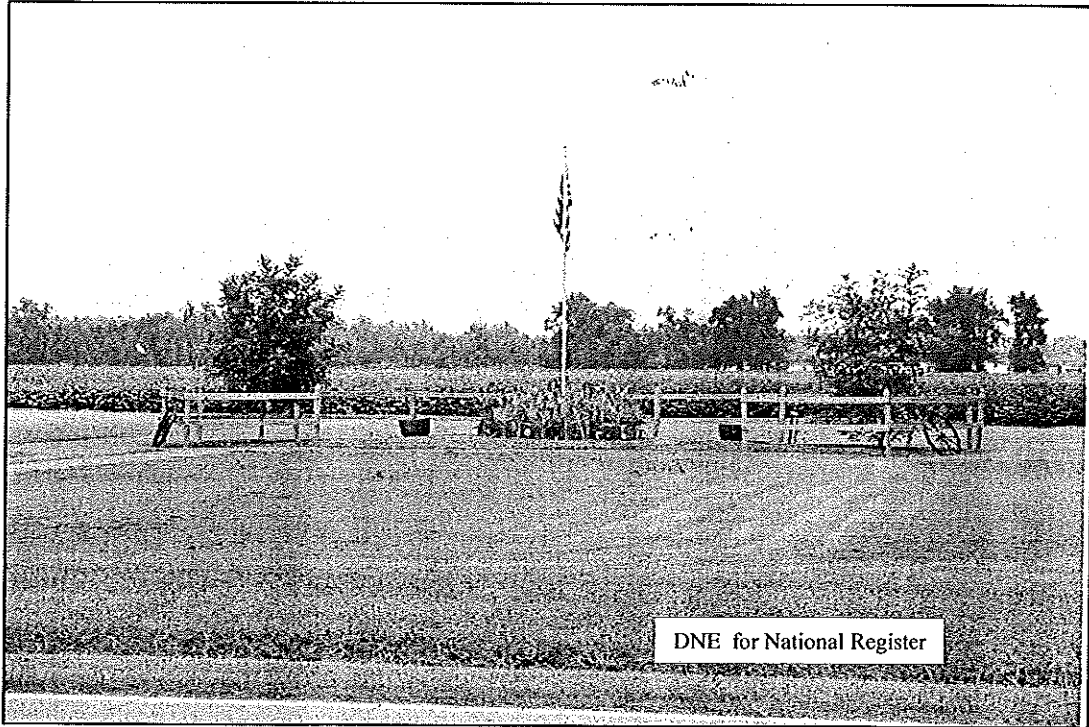


**Property 52: House, 3248 SR 1420**

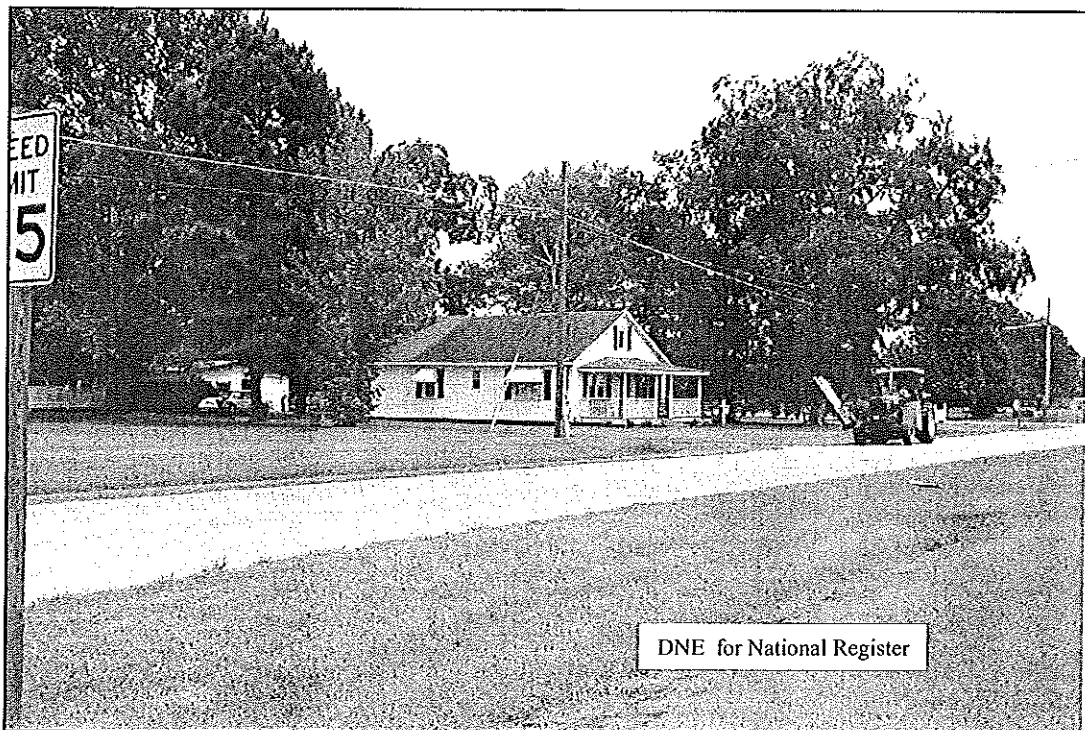


**Property 53: Vacant house, S side 3300 SR 1420**

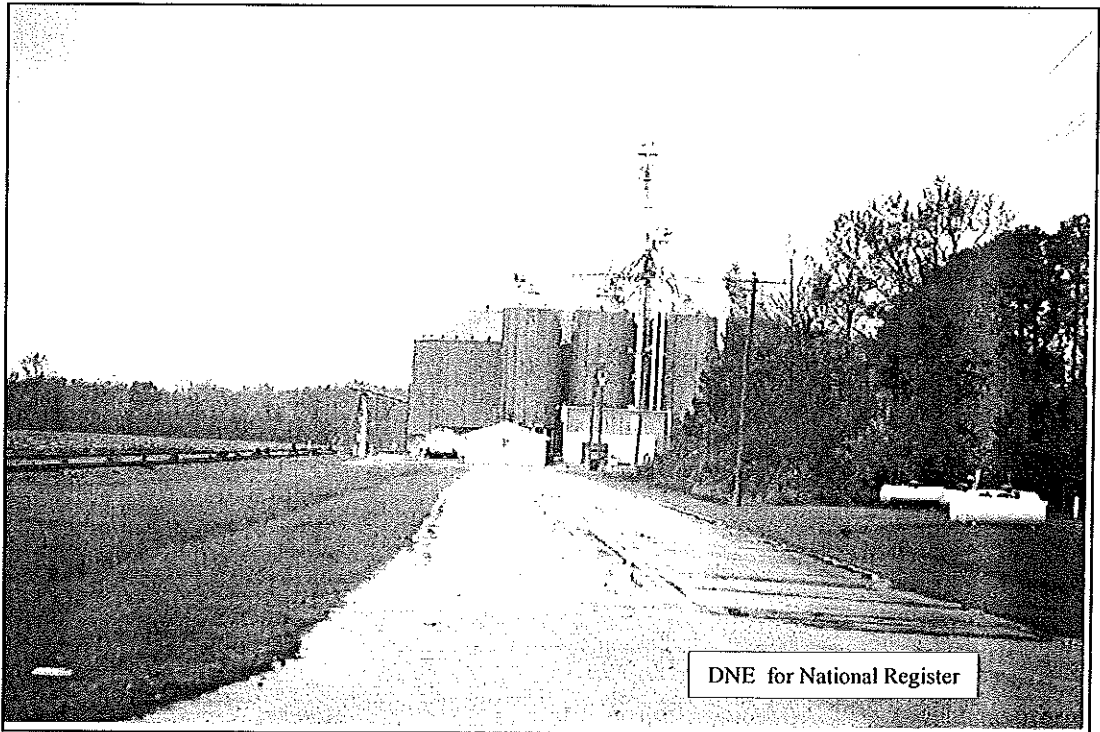




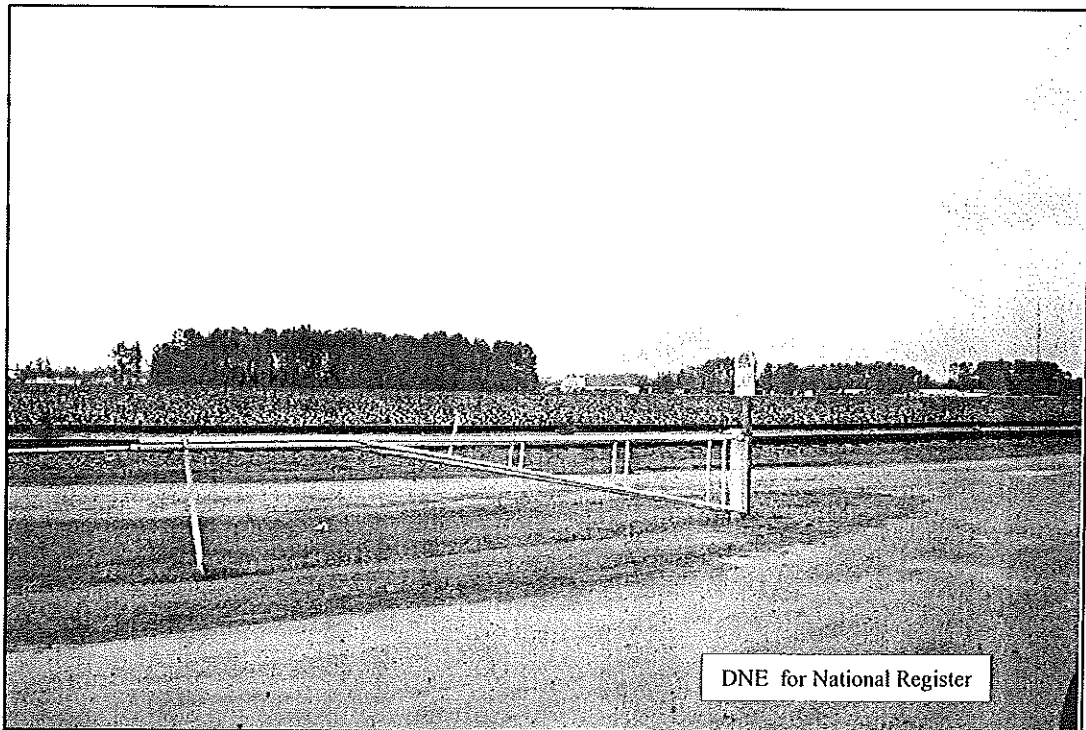
**Property 54: Empty Lot, NE side SR 1420**



**Property 55: Bullock House, 3527 SR 1420**

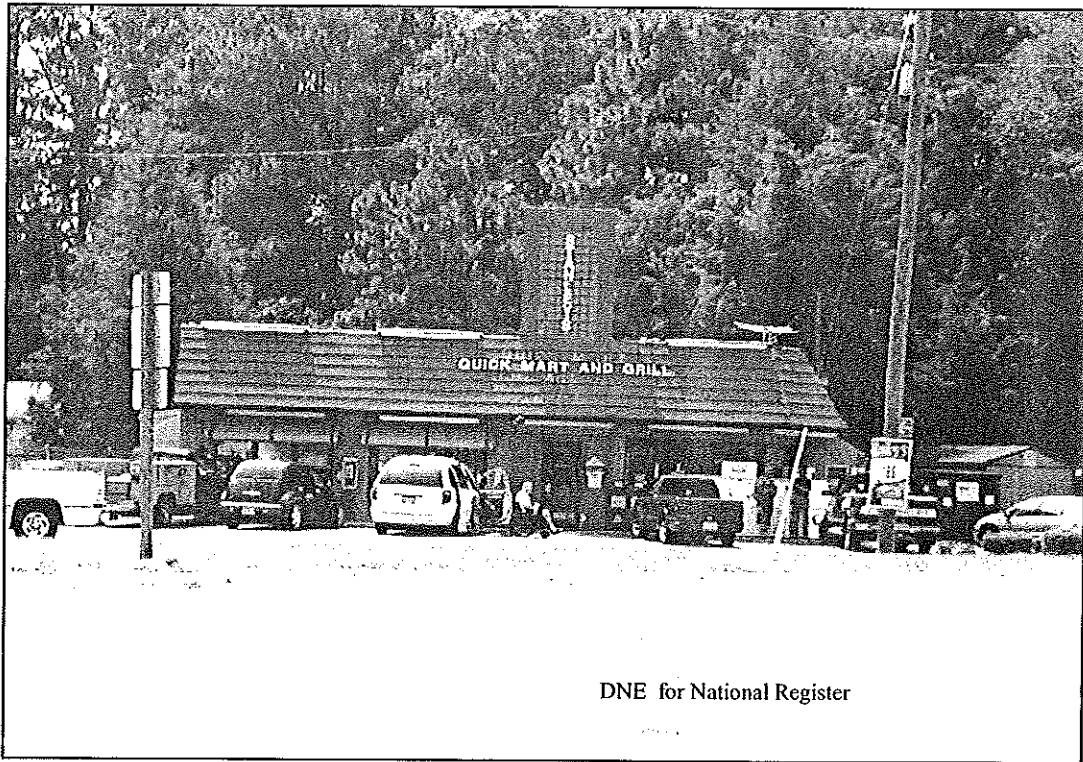


**Property 56: Mill Complex, SW side SR 1420 at Seaboard Coast Line RR Tracks  
(1288 Cargill Road)**

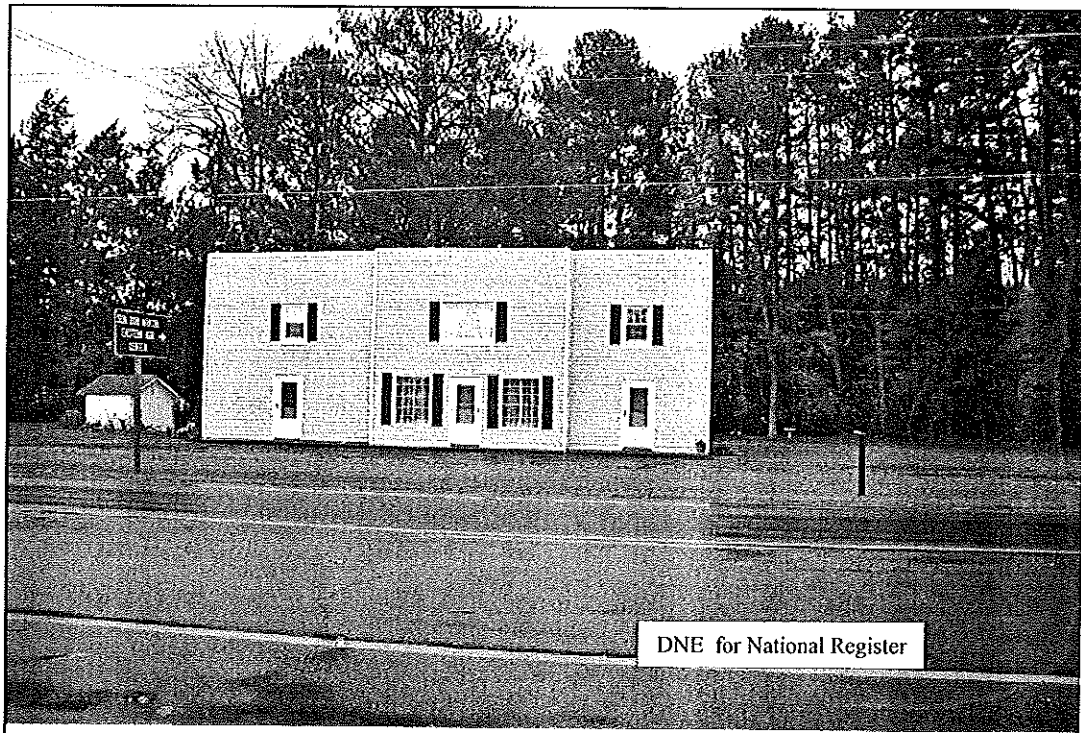


**Property 56: View to Business 64, SW from Railroad**

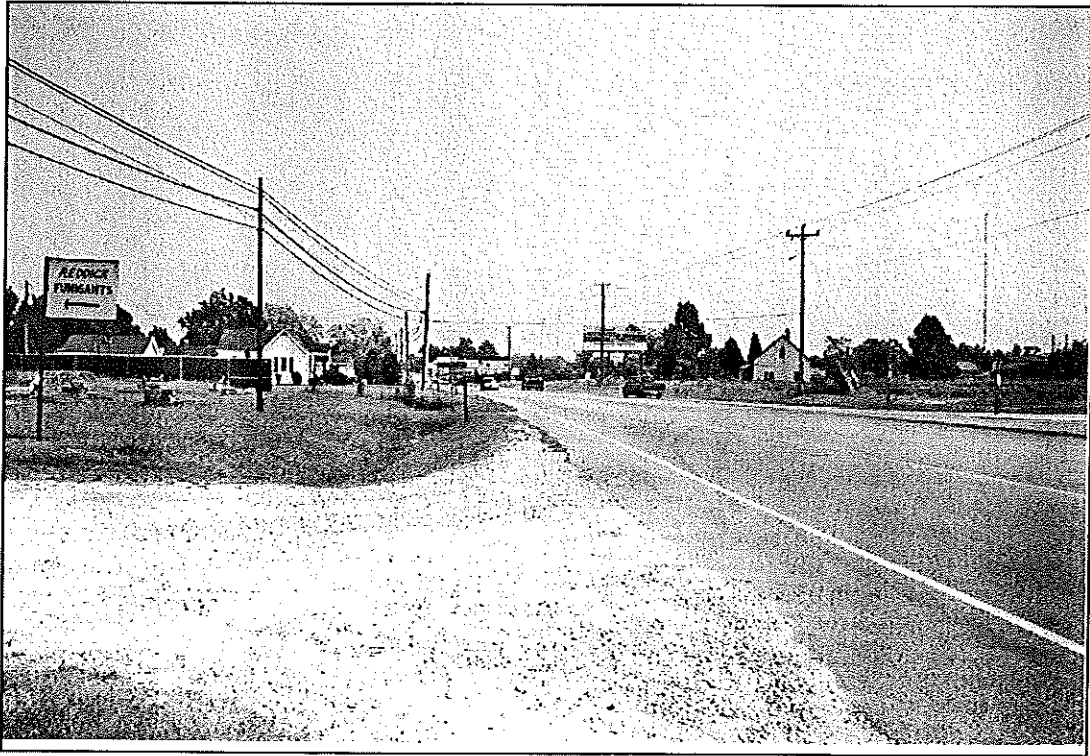




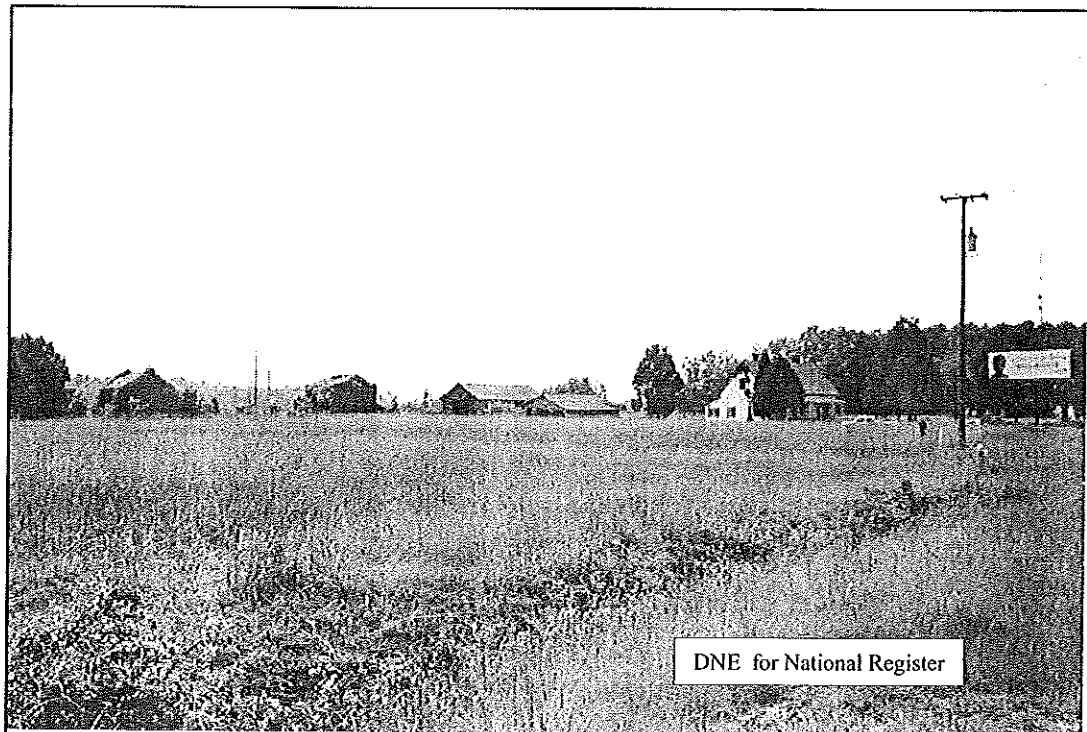
**Property 57: Stanley's Grill, SWC Prison Camp Road (SR 1142) and 64 Bus.**



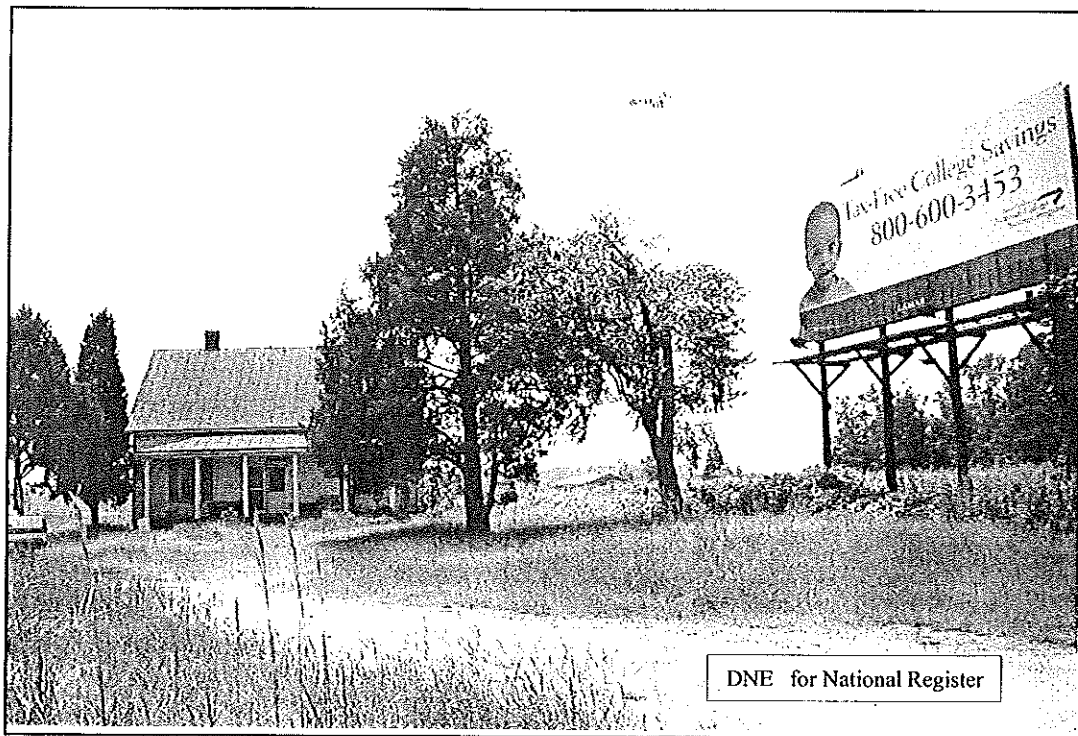
**Property 58: Apartments, south side US 64 Bus W (no posted address)**



**US 64 Bus., looking east from NW junction of SR 1142**



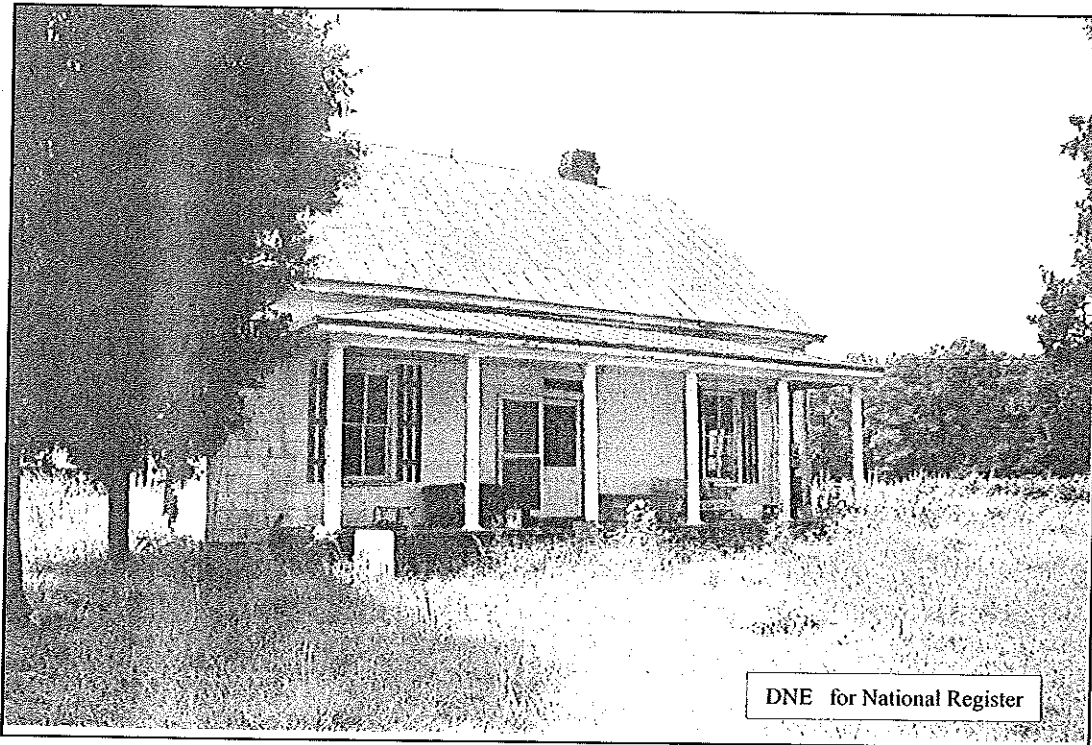
**Property 59: Farmstead, SEC US 64 Bus and SR 1142 (from NE angle)**



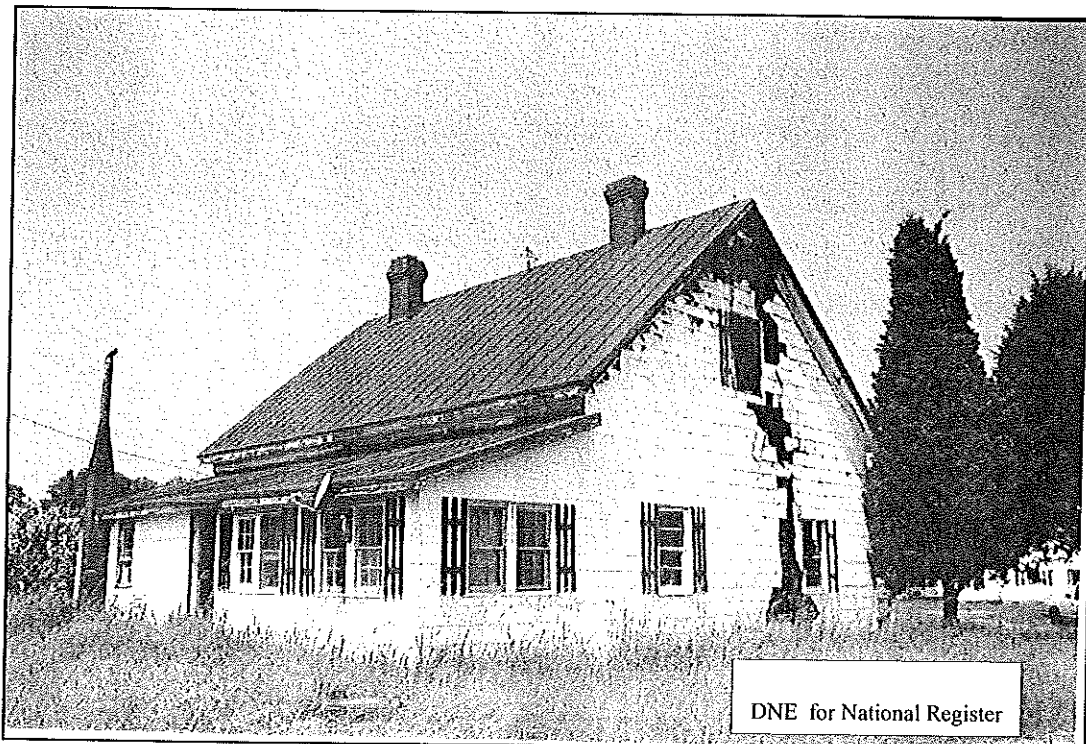
**Property 59: Front elevation**



**Property 59: west elevation**

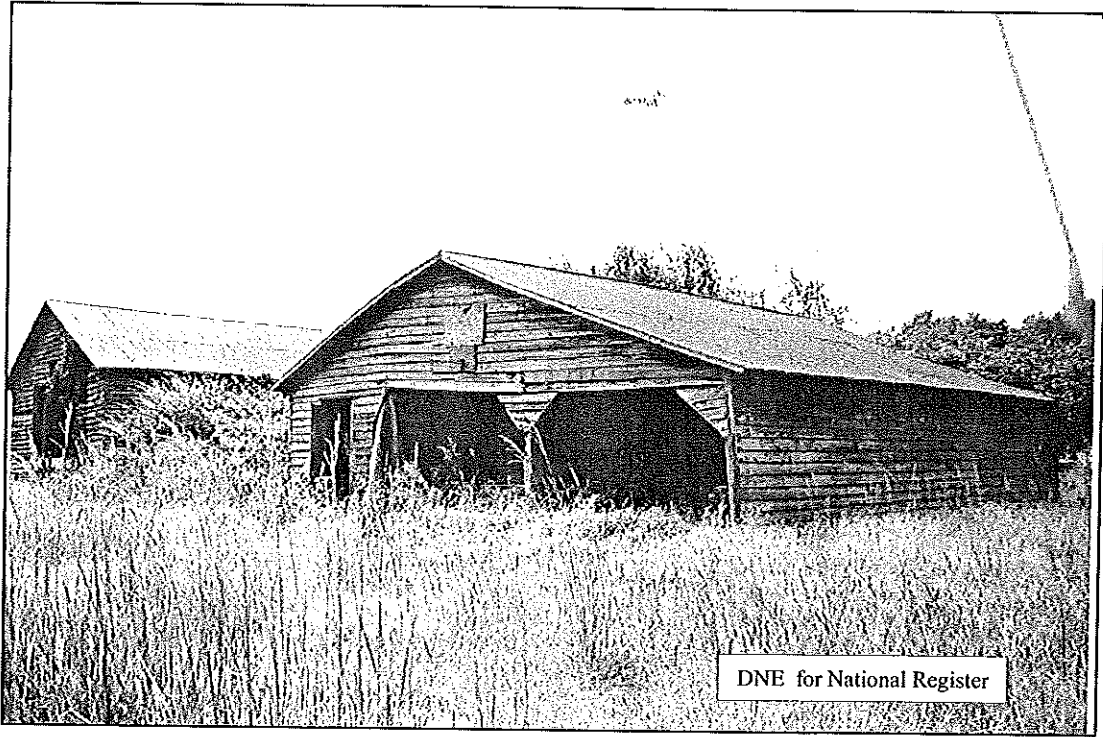


**Property 59: Front elevation**

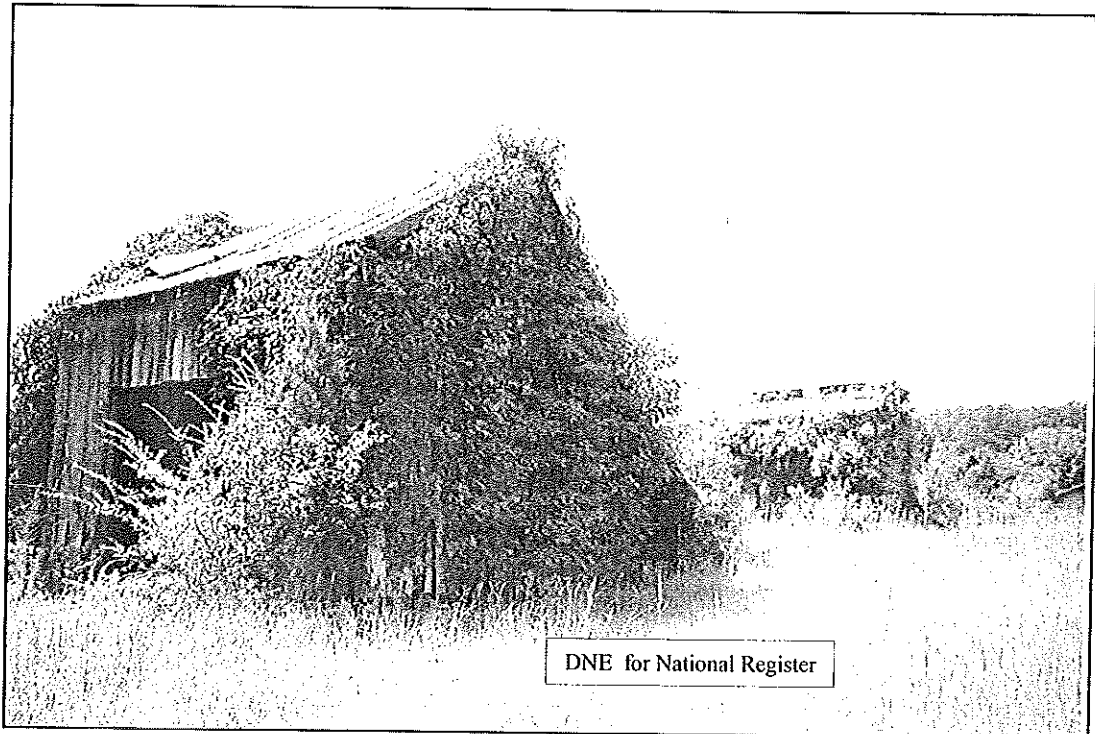


**Property 59: east and south elevations**



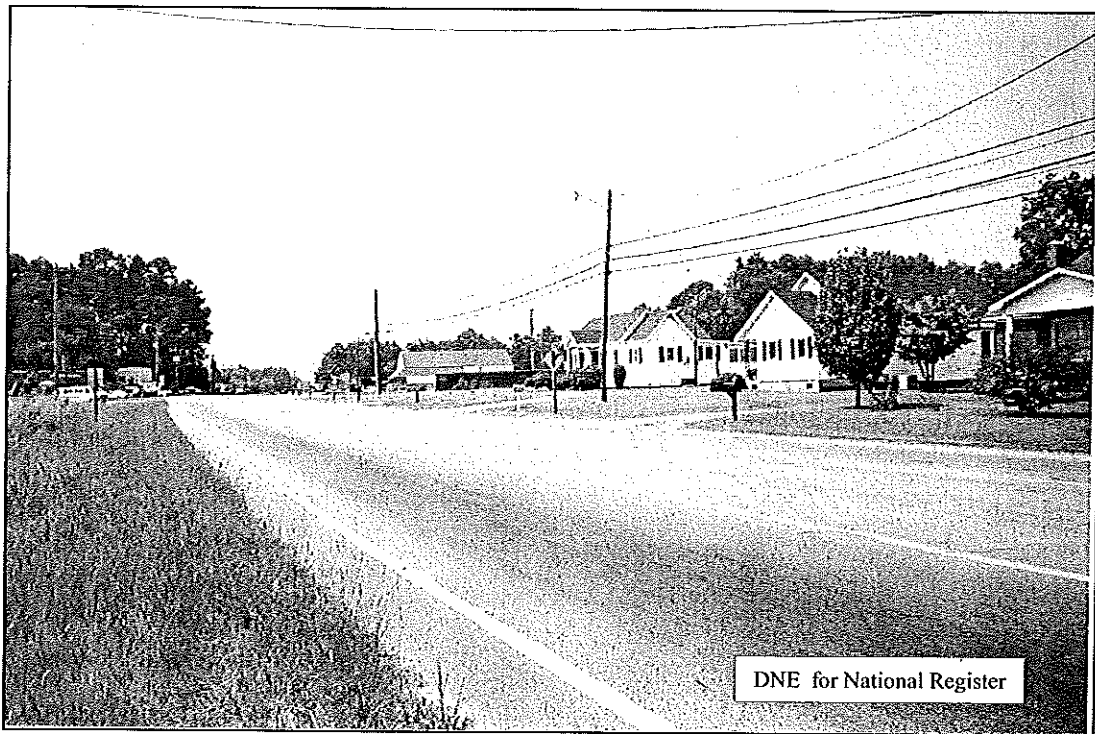


**Property 59: Tractor shed and Barn**

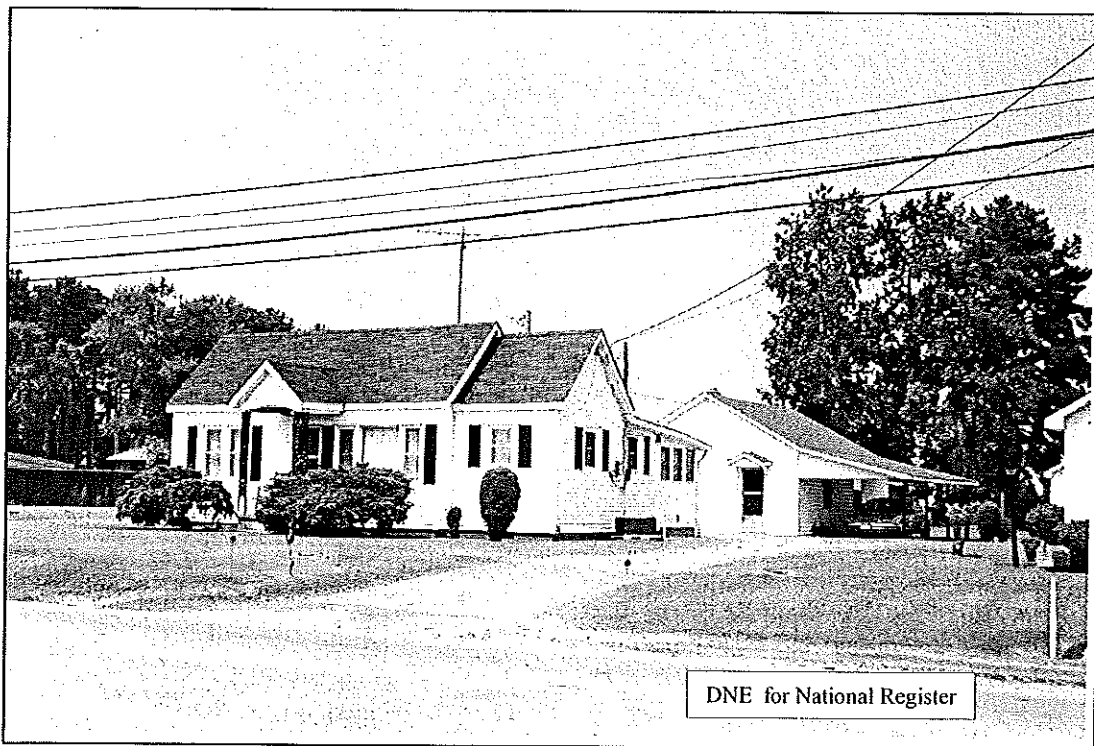


**Property 59: Tobacco Barns**

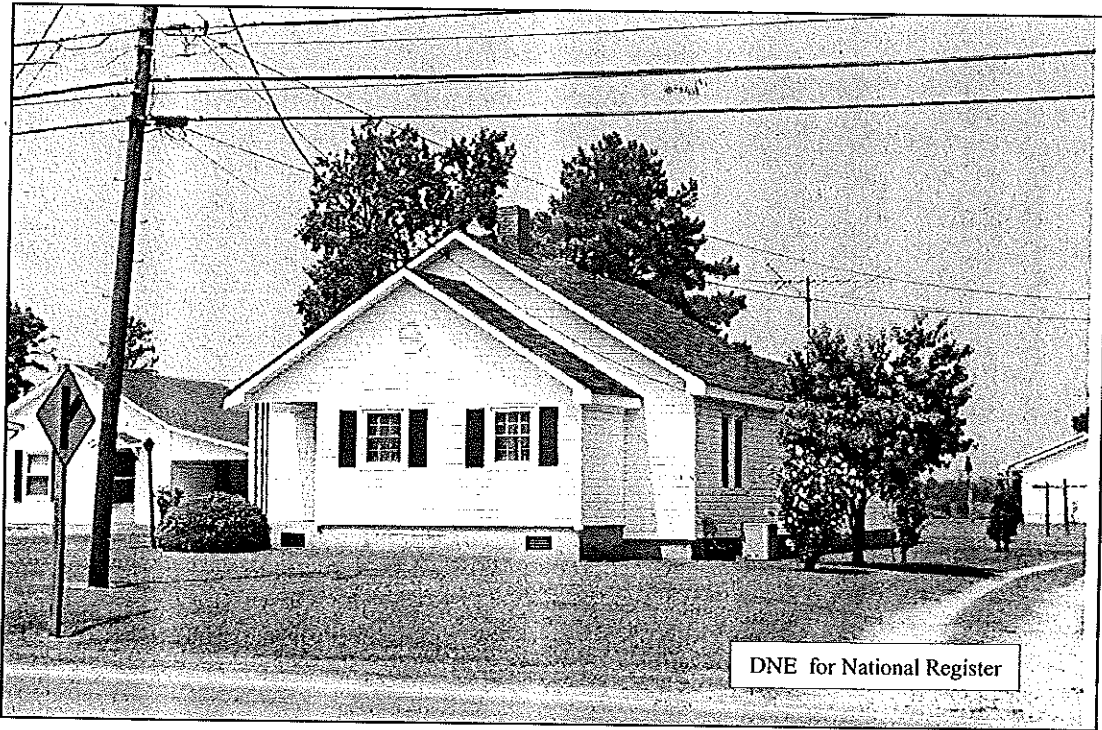




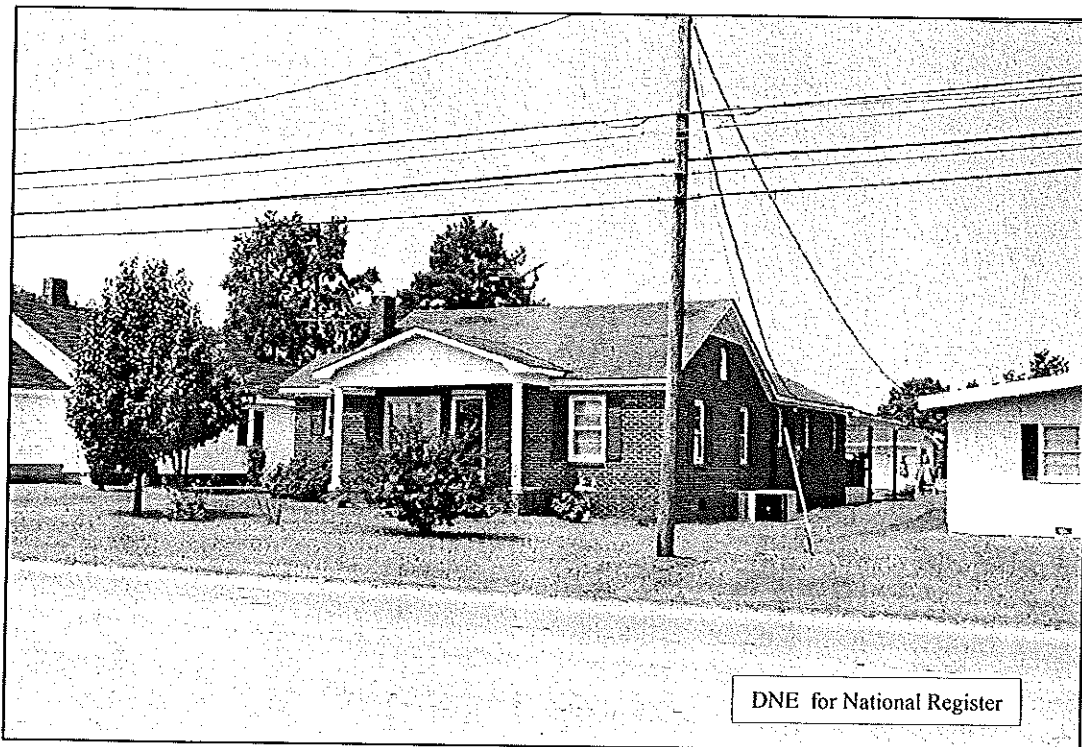
**View of Properties 60-62 (north side of US 64 Bus.)**



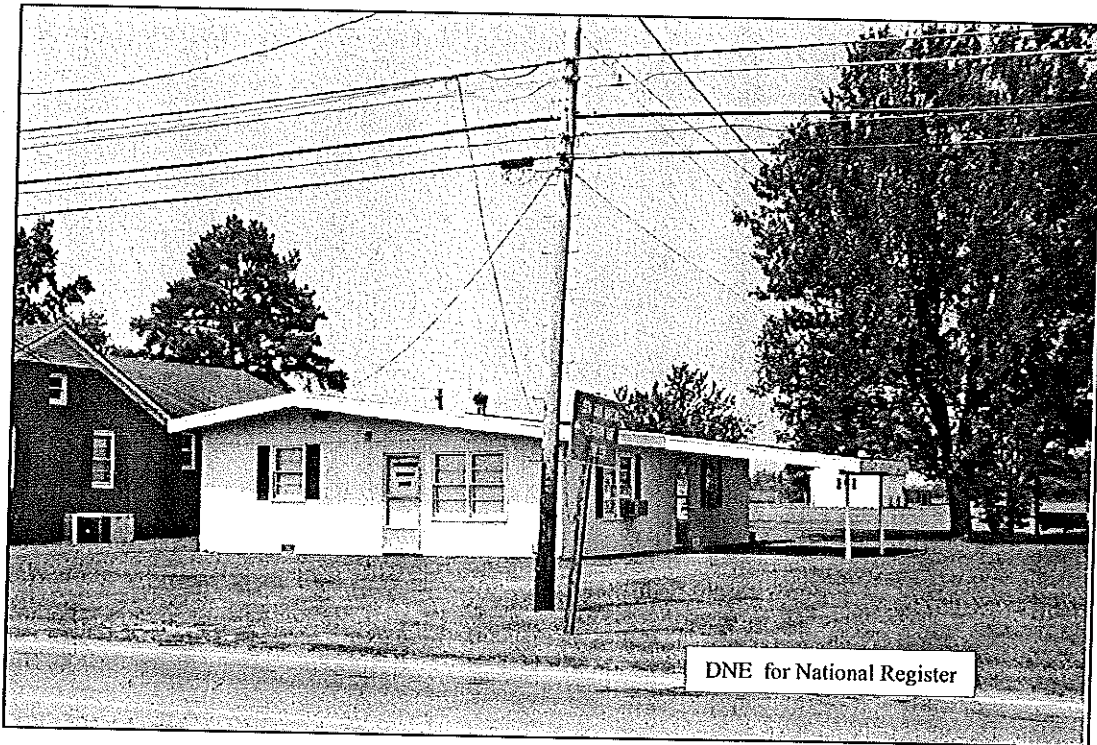
**Property 60: 2018 US 64 Bus.**



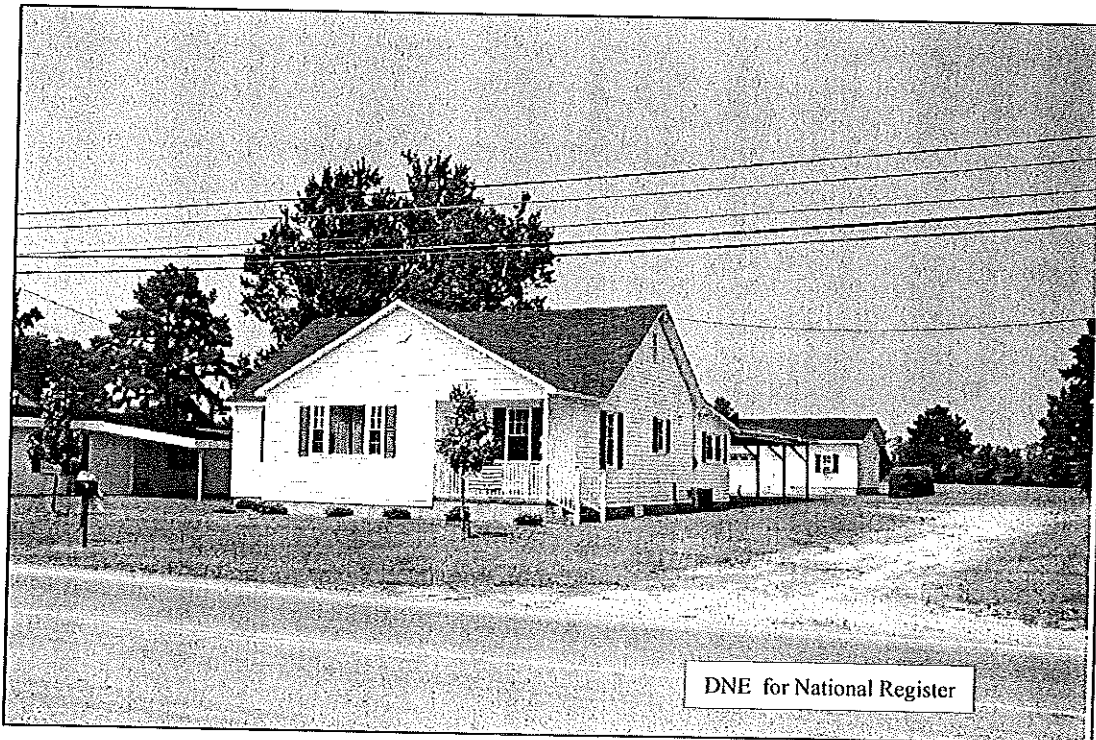
**Property 61: House, 2016 US 64 Bus.**



**Property 62: 2014 US 64 Bus.**



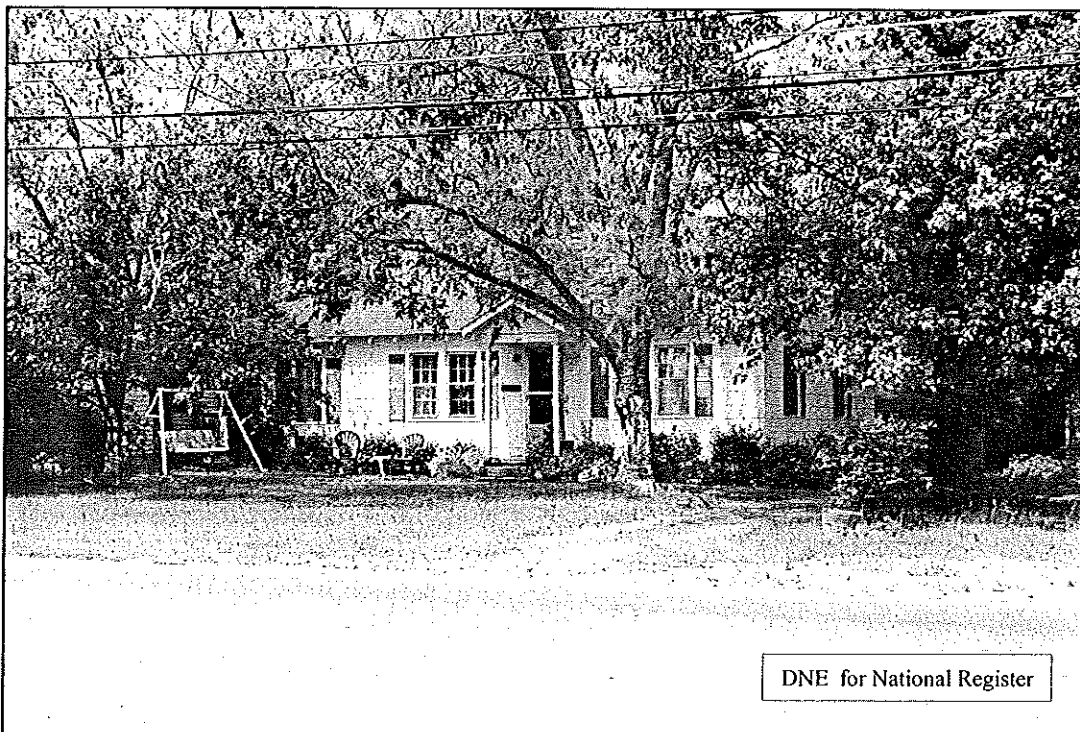
**Property 63: 2012 US 64 Bus.**



**Property 64: 2010 US 64 Bus.**

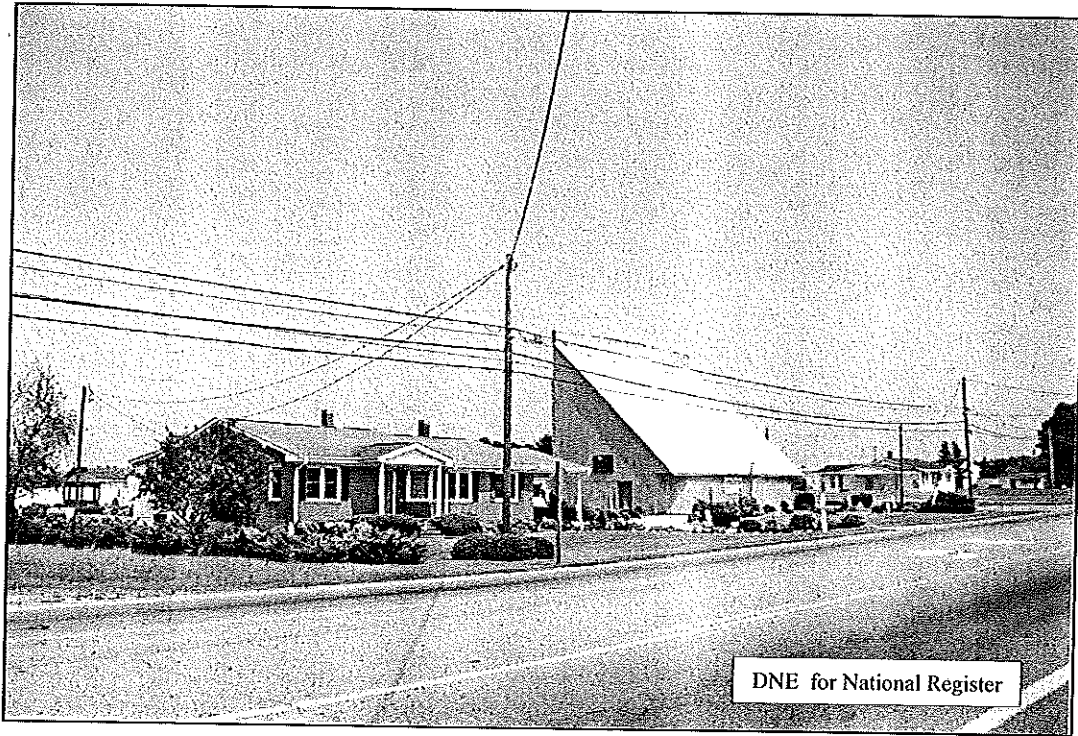


**Property 65: 2008 US 64 Bus.**

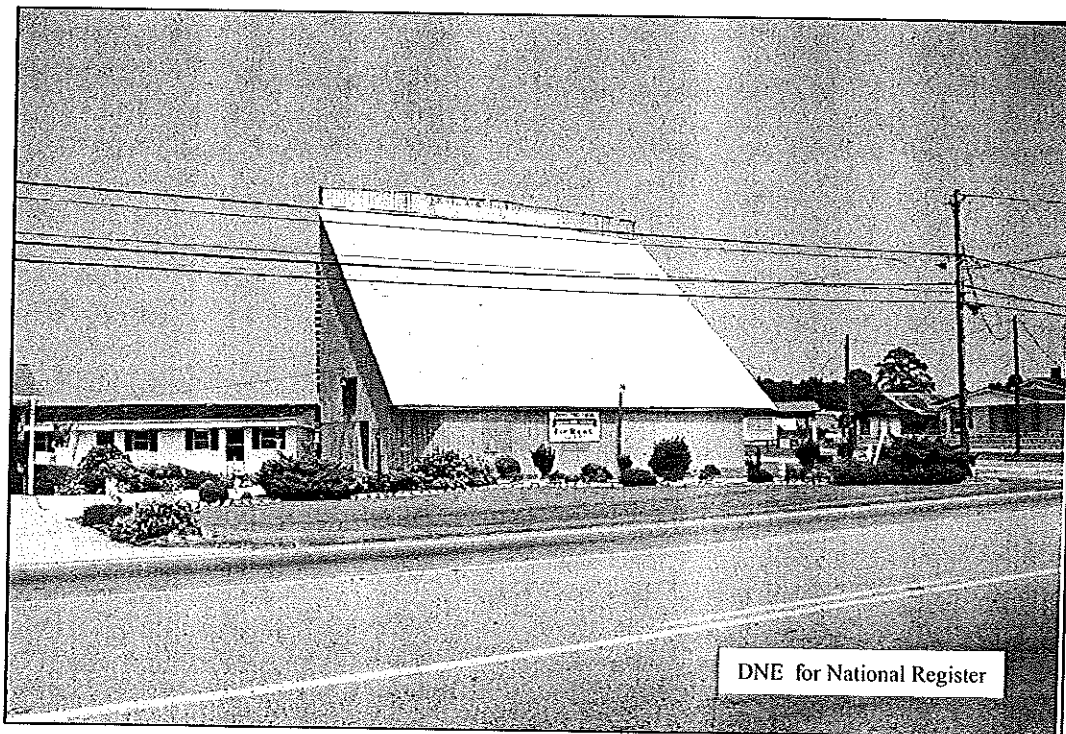


**Property 66: 2006 US 64 Bus.**



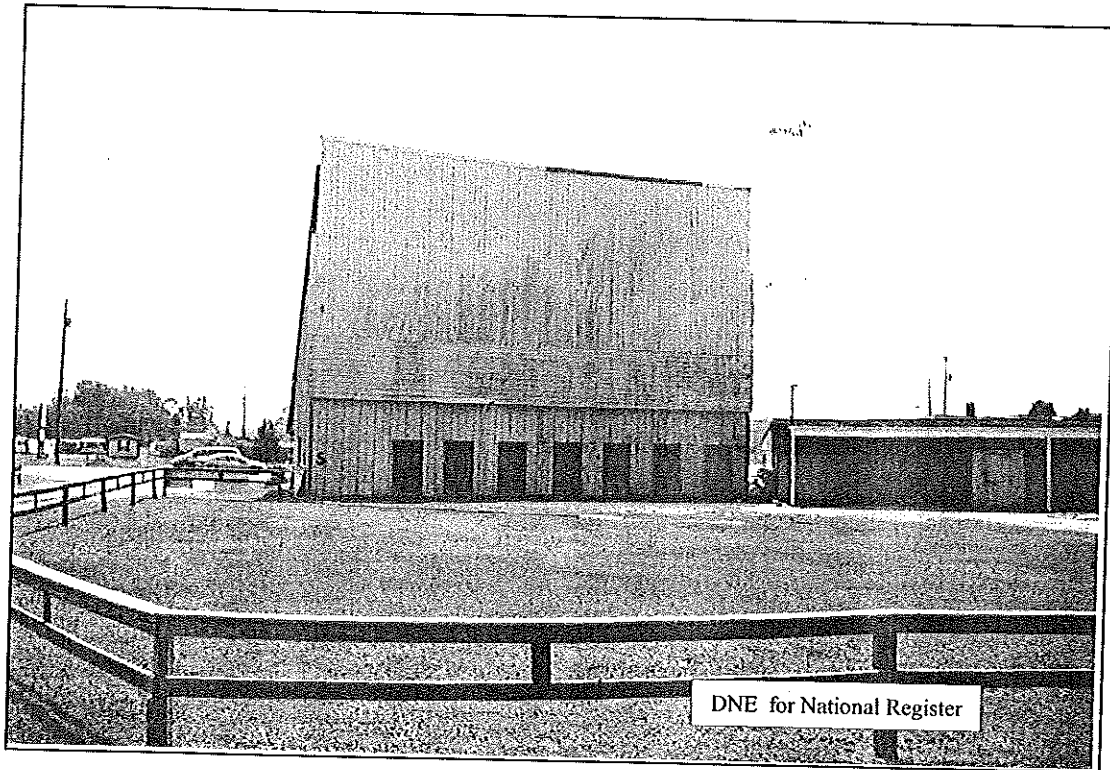


**Properties 67 and 68: 2004 and 2000 US 64 Bus. (house and Robertson's Mini Storage)**

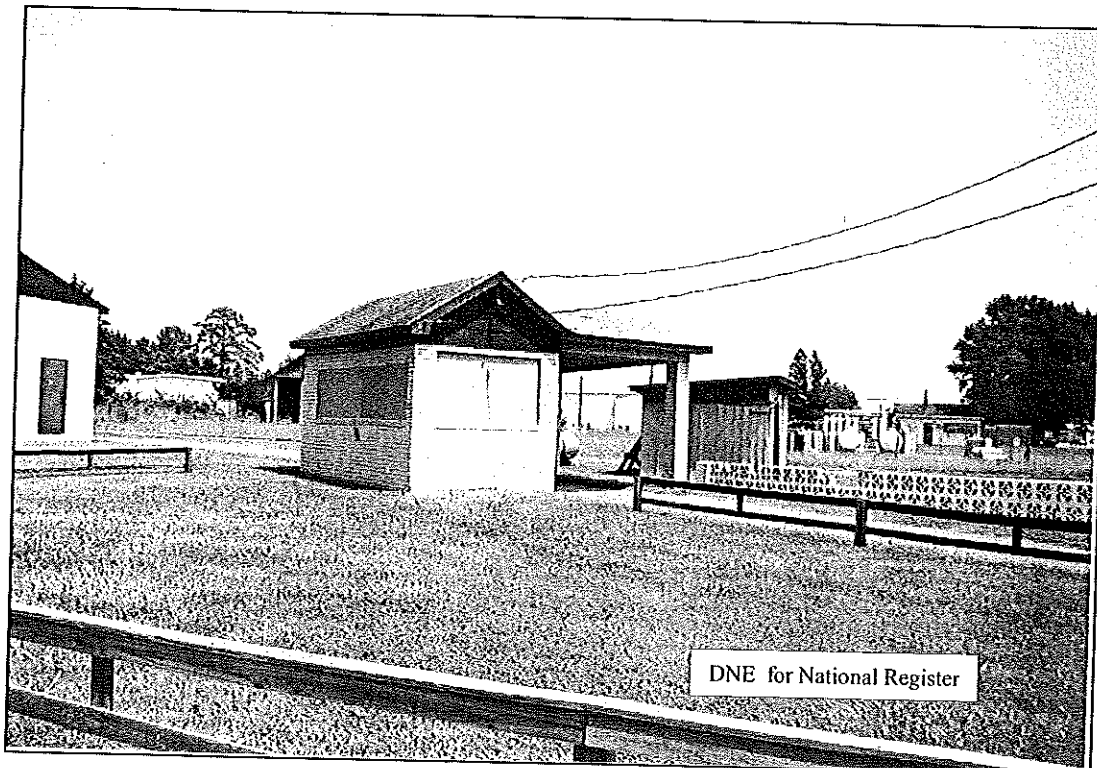


**Property 68: Robertson's Mini Storage (former drive-in movie theatre)**

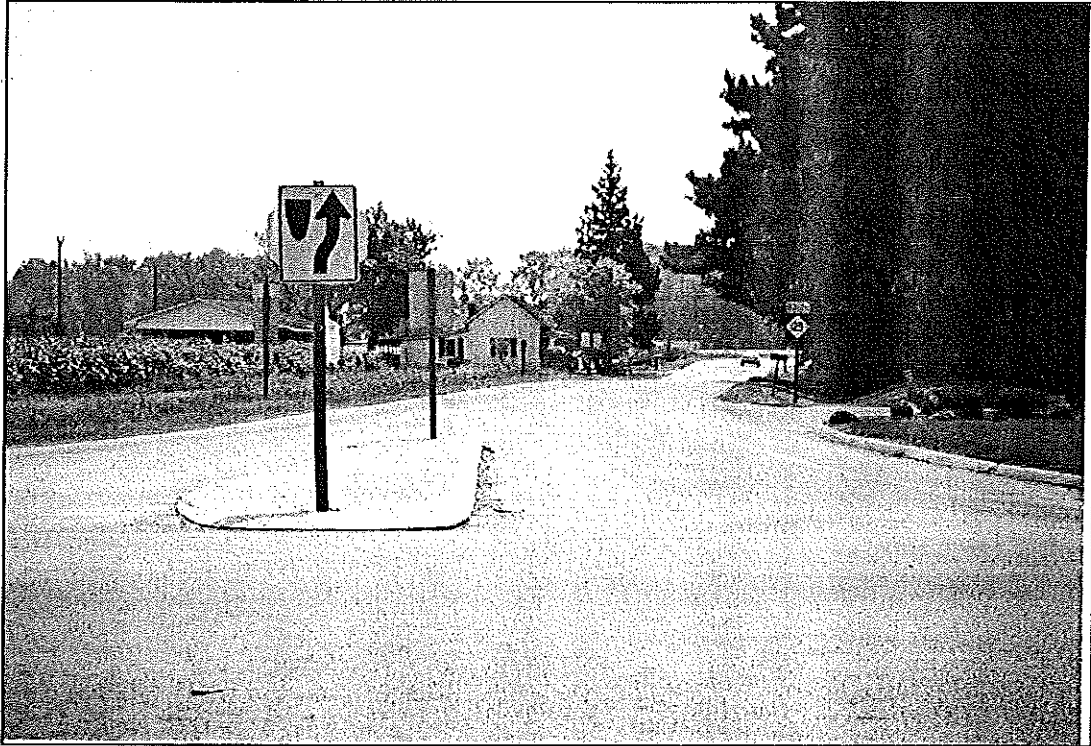




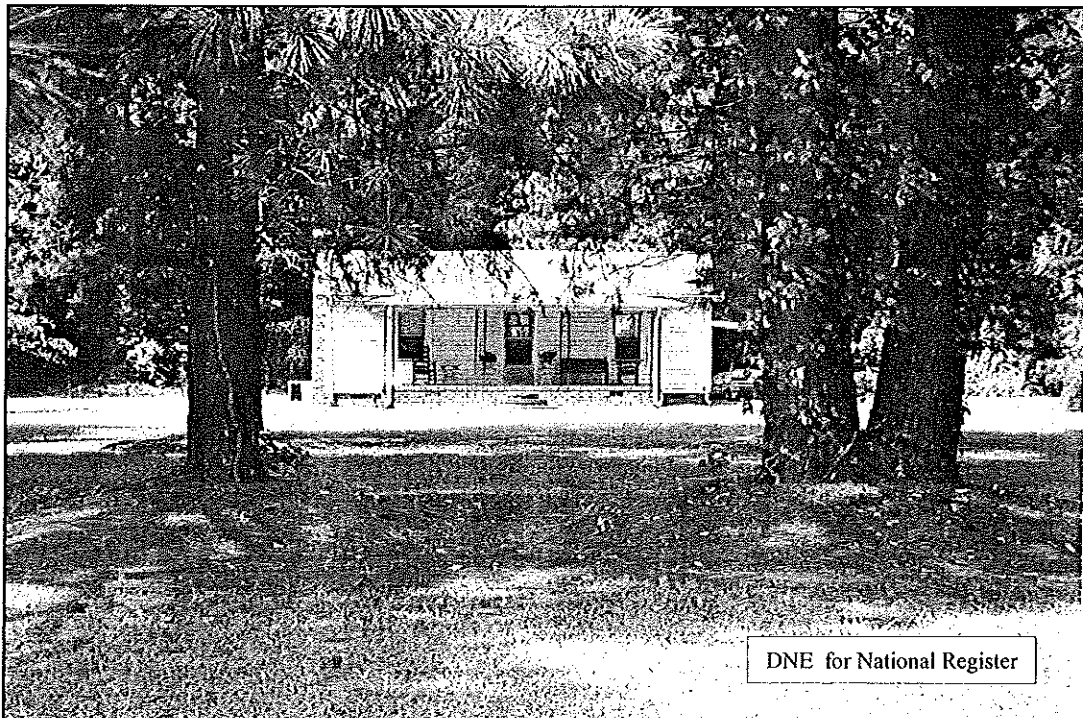
**Property 68: north elevation**



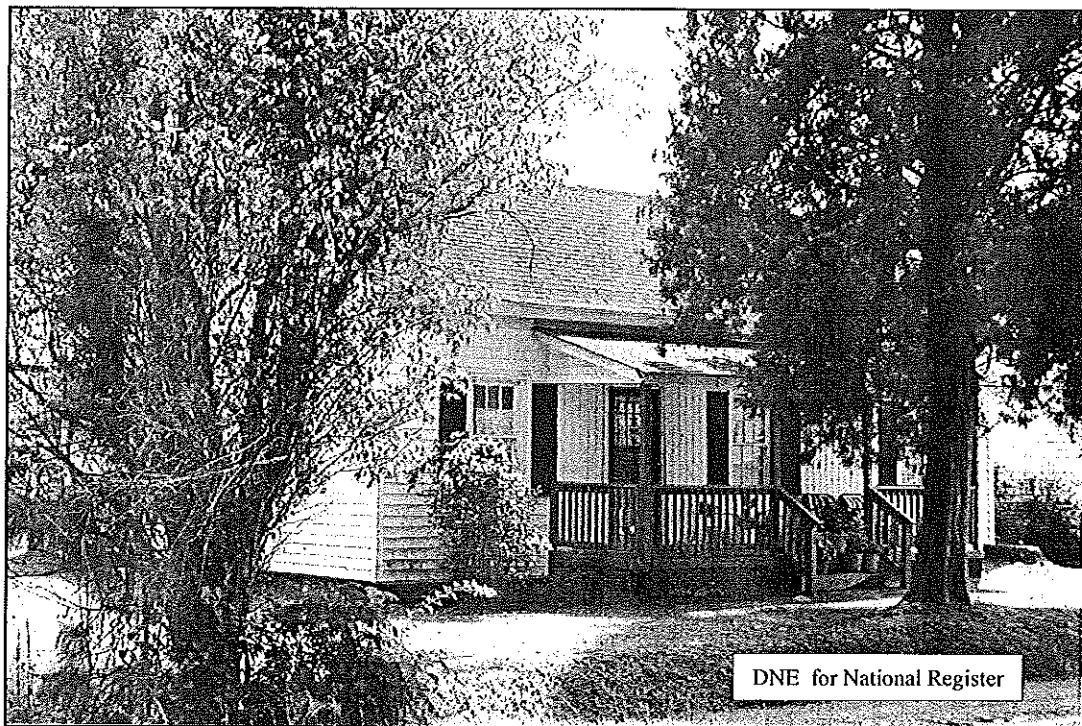
**Property 68: Former ticket booth**



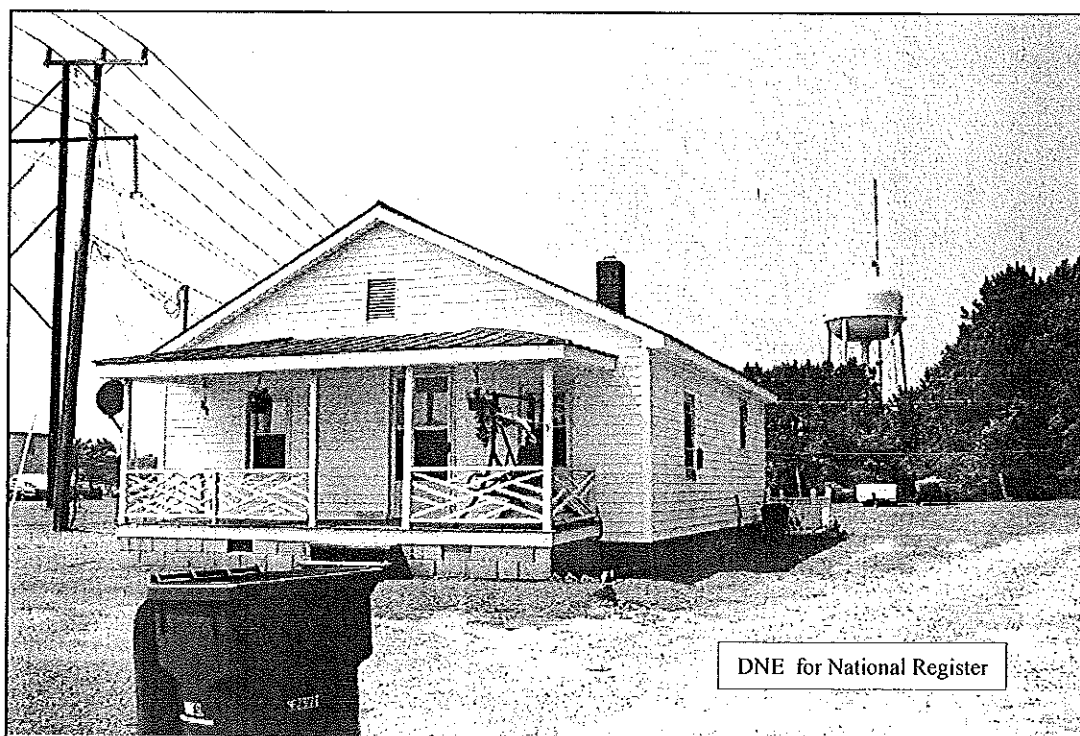
**View of SR 1142 (Prison Camp Road), looking south from US 64 Bus. Jct.  
(Property No. 70 in background)**



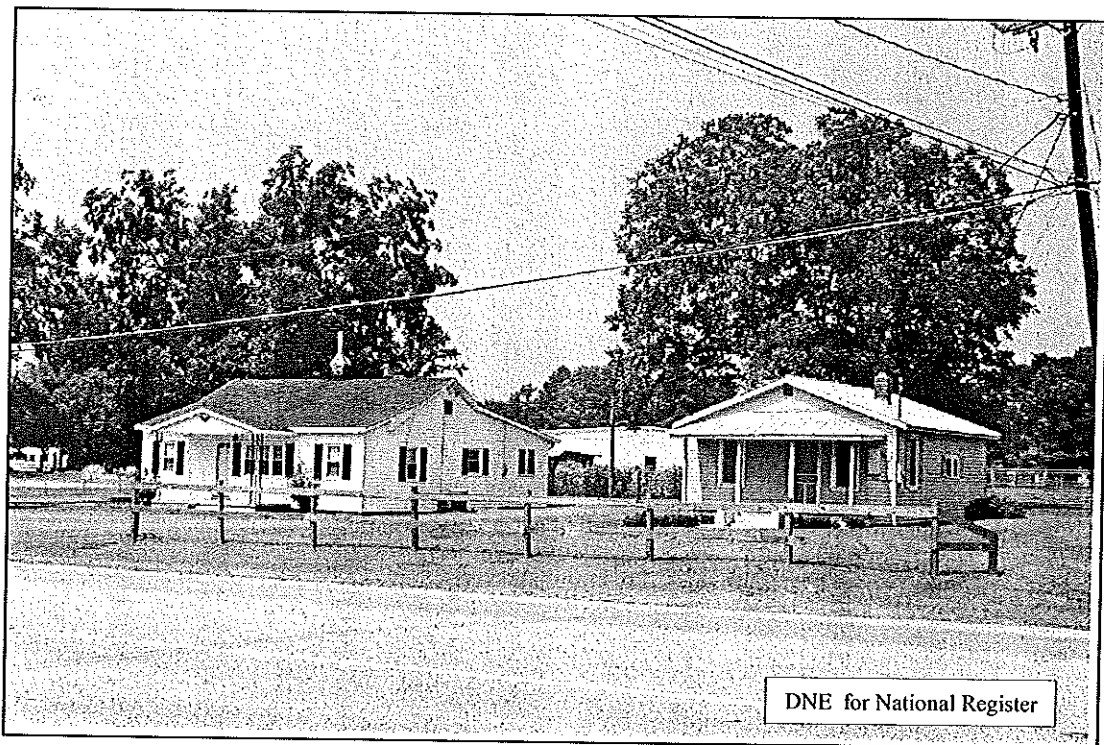
**Property 69: House (address not posted), S of SWC of US 64 Bus. And SR 1142**



**Property 70: 1115 SR 1142 (west and north elevations)**

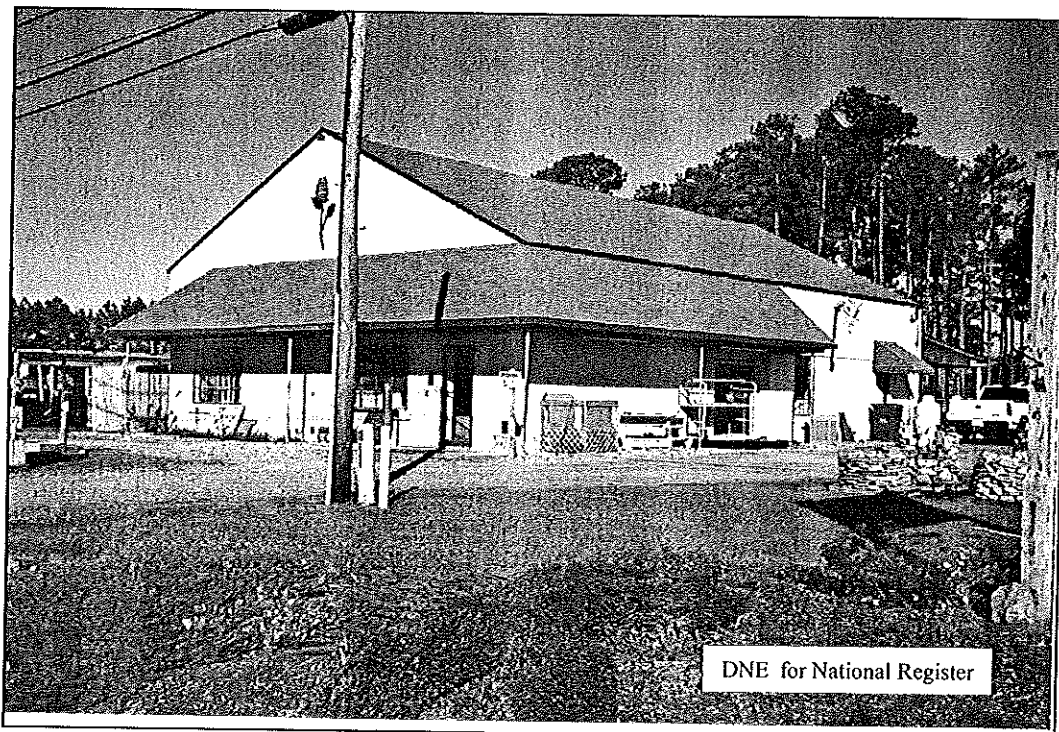


**Property 71: 1112 SR 1142**



DNE for National Register

**Properties 72 and 73: 1408 and 1410 SR 1142**



DNE for National Register

**Property 74: Garden Center, west of north junction of old US 64 and SR 1142  
(cater-cornered on N side US 64 from Stanley's--no posted address)**