



North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources

James B. Hunt, Jr., Governor
Betty Ray McCain, Secretary

Division of Archives and History
William S. Price, Jr., Director

April 2, 1993

Nicholas L. Graf
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
Department of Transportation
310 New Bern Avenue
Raleigh, N.C. 27601-1442

Re: US 117 from US 13 near Goldsboro to US 301
near Wilson, Wayne and Wilson Counties, R-1030,
8.1330501, F-83-2(26), ER 93-8421

Dear Mr. Graf:

Thank you for your letter of March 10, 1993, concerning the above project.

We have reviewed the revised Determination of Eligibility Report prepared by the North Carolina Department of Transportation's (NCDOT) Architectural Resources Section, as well as the initial historic structures survey report by Margaret Stephenson and addendum by Dr. Ruth Little. Based upon this information and our understanding of National Register Bulletin No. 30, we believe the Peel Family Farm is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district under both Criterion A for agriculture and C for architecture, and that the appropriate boundaries encompass 110 acres.

Specifically, we believe the premise upon which the NCDOT report is based is somewhat flawed. The implication that the potential eligibility of other farms in the area makes the Peel Family Farm ineligible is not valid because it implies a numerical threshold for National Register eligibility that cannot, and should not, be established. If there were a comprehensive survey of Wayne County, we would have registration requirements, but these rarely if ever are quantitative. Thus, we readily acknowledge the potential eligibility of other farms in the county (including some of those presented in the NCDOT report) and believe there may be more which are as yet unknown to us or NCDOT.

We are also concerned that the evaluation of the Peel Family Farm appears to equate significance with uniqueness. According to Bulletin No. 30, the first criterion concerning eligibility for significance in agriculture on a local level is: The characteristics must have served or resulted from an important event, activity, or theme in agricultural development as recognized by the historic contexts for the area. The additional research by NCDOT does not evaluate the agricultural activities of the farm. Instead, the evaluation indicates the property is not significant for agriculture because of its similarity to other farms. In our opinion, the first criterion is met because the similarity of the farm's activities to those of



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its neighbors suggests that they were all part of a trend, and such trends or themes are important by virtue of their being widespread.

The second criterion states "the property must have had a direct involvement in the significant events or activities by contributing to the area's economy, productivity, or identity as an agricultural community." The evaluation of the farm again equates significance with uniqueness by stating that "the Peel Farm is one of many general farm assemblages with no particular activities or events which distinguish it from any of its neighboring farmsteads." Instead, we believe that the farm, because it remained in operation throughout the period of significance, clearly contributed "to the area's economy, productivity, or identity as an agricultural community."

The Peel Family Farm also appears to meet the third criterion concerning eligibility for significance in agriculture on a local level. Although no field pattern records prior to 1938 can be found, the land need not be unchanged from a date prior to the end of the period of significance. Moreover, the importance of an agricultural landscape is not restricted to field patterns.

The integrity of historic spatial relationships between agricultural buildings and compounds is equally important in the evaluation of agricultural significance. By concentrating on the individual architectural components of the farm--rather than focusing on the agricultural operation of the farm in a broad sense--the evaluation overlooks a factor that is equally crucial to the importance of the property: the rare, relatively intact, survival of the multiple compounds as a group on a single parcel of land. In this way, "the property . . . cogently reflect[s] the period of time in which the important events took place" (criterion 3 from Bulletin No. 30) and well illustrates the National Register's definition of a historic district since it "possesses a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development."

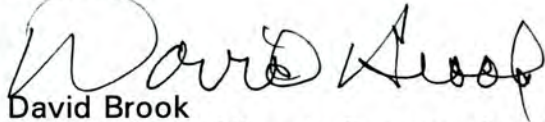
Considering the different opinions regarding the criteria for eligibility and the appropriate boundaries of the farm, and given the interest shown in the property by advocates of the highway, we recommend that the Federal Highway Administration request a formal Determination of Eligibility from the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places pursuant to 36 CFR 800.4c(4). In requesting the determination of eligibility, we suggest that complete copies of the original historic structures survey report, Dr. Little's addendum, the revised Determination of Eligibility report prepared by NCDOT, and this letter be provided to the Keeper for his review and consideration. If requested by the Keeper, we will be happy to further elaborate on the points outlined above.

The above comments are made pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's Regulations for Compliance with Section 106, codified at 36 CFR Part 800.

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Thank you for your cooperation and consideration. If you have questions concerning the above comment, please contact Renee Gledhill-Earley, environmental review coordinator, at 919/733-4763.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Brook". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "David" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Brook".

David Brook
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

DB:slw

cc: L. J. Ward
B. Church

bc: ~~4~~ Highway
Brown/Stancil
County
RF

Determination of Eligibility
Peel Family Farm WY 0145
Wayne County
R-1030

PEEL FARM
FREMONT, WAYNE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

In December, 1990, a report was submitted to the Federal Highway Administration which described and evaluated the historic and architectural resources in the Area of Potential Effect (APE) of the proposed improvements to US 117 from US 70 at Goldsboro, North Carolina northward to US 301 south of Wilson, North Carolina. It should be noted that this report was prepared by a subconsultant. Interested parties in Wayne County were concerned that the determination of eligibility of the Peel farm was not appropriate. Because of this interest, the Architectural Resources Section at the NCDOT have reviewed the report, visited the site, and made extensive comparative studies of properties in Wayne County. We concur with the subconsultant on the eligibility under Criterion C for the Peel Farm located at Fremont, Wayne County, North Carolina. It is, however, the opinion of the architectural historians at the NCDOT that the property is clearly ineligible for the National Register under Criterion A based upon the information included herein.

We have consulted with the Wayne County Historical Society and they concur with our present opinion. The property is neither exemplary nor unusual in the historical development of Wayne County (see attached letter). We request that the SHPO office review our findings and concur with our opinion. Please be aware that the subconsultants report did not include the extensive comparative survey which we both based our opinion on and include herein.

ABBREVIATED HISTORY OF PEEL FARM

Ms. Mary Mason, daughter of a previous owner, states that the house was built by Robert Peel between 1850 and 1860. According to the Wayne County Deed Book, Peel purchased 250 acres from the Barden family in 1855 and probably built his house soon thereafter. Robert died in 1886, leaving all of his land to his wife Sarah (the land now totaling 440 acres). At the death of his wife, his land was to be divided between his two sons. According to family tradition, Robert Peel deeded his land into four parcels in 1875, one for each of his sons, however a typhoid epidemic claimed the life of two sons. The land was later divided between the two surviving sons George and Mason.

The farm complex is located on the north side of SR 1361 approximately .3 miles west of jct. with US 117 near Fremont, North Carolina. The 110 acre farm (current) consists of a main house originally constructed ca. 1850 by Robert Peel, and heavily remodeled at approximately 1900, two houses built in the 1880's for his sons George and Morgan and another tenant house constructed in the early years of the twentieth century. (See Illustration #1).

ROBERT PEEL HOUSE

The original house is said to have been built by Robert Peel around 1850. One mantle, several windows and one door support this supposition. The ca. 1900 remodeling completely transformed the house into a fine rural example of the Queen Anne style (See Illustrations #2-#3). An early photograph of the house reveals a balustrade and blinds which have been removed, however, the house remains relatively unaltered.

Outbuildings include a kitchen, which has been moved and is currently used as a storage building, a stable, smokehouse, corn crib and equipment shed (See Illustration #4-#5).

It should be noted that this house was abandoned by the family over seventy years ago and has been used as rental property.

It is the opinion of the architectural historians at the NCDOT that the house, with immediate outbuildings, may be eligible for the National Register under criterion C. A survey conducted by the architectural historians at the NCDOT

and confirmed by the Wayne County Historical Society, reveals that while there are very many agricultural complexes which have been divided among family members, with homes being constructed at the times of division (a partial list with map is included herein), there are few examples of the Queen Anne style in rural Wayne County. While certainly not an exuberant example of the Queen Anne style, the building well represents a particular period and style in a county and area with relatively few such examples. The building is also relatively unaltered. It is the opinion of the architectural historians at the NCDOT that the house (only) may be eligible for the National Register under Criterion C.

GEORGE PEEL HOUSE

The George Peel house appears to have been constructed between 1870 and 1885. It is a vernacular one story frame farm house, 3 bays wide, with gable-end chimney, and 9/6 sash. Later alterations include the front porch and rear shed additions. The house was remodeled on the interior approximately thirty years after construction. The house has been used as a tenant house since the death of George Peel in 1883. Lack of basic maintenance has left the house in poor repair (See Illustrations #6-#7). Additional buildings located to the east of the building include two tobacco barns of undetermined date. As may be seen in the attached survey, tenant and/or additional family farm homes constructed for children who stay on to work on the family farm are quite common in Wayne County. This building is not eligible for the National Register under either Criterion A or Criterion C.

MORGAN PEEL HOUSE

Morgan Peel was given a 30 acre parcel of the family farm in 1875. This house -- a "house behind a house" configuration with connecting breezeway -- was probably constructed shortly thereafter. Exterior analysis indicates that the rear house (a small side-gabled building with gable-end chimney) is the older of the two. Access to the interior was denied to the architectural historians at the NCDOT, however, the exterior is in very poor repair due to neglect. Two barns are located on the east side of the house. They appear to be twentieth century. (See illustration #8). Approximately seven quite similar buildings of this period exist within a five mile radius of this house.

CLAUDIE CRAWFORD TENANT HOUSE

This 1-story frame gable house appears to have been constructed in the early twentieth century and in two stages. The older section of the house is a frame 2-bay wide gable end building with a 2-bay gable end addition added to the east at an undetermined later date. The house has a boxed

cornice, 4/4 sash, with rear shed additions and a relatively new front porch (ca. 1940). The house was constructed as a tenant house. There are no outbuildings associated with this structure. The building is currently in bad repair due to neglect. The interior of the house was completely remodeled in the 1950s and is also in poor condition. (See Illustrations #9-#11). The Claudia Crawford tenant house, the George Peel house and the Morgan Peel house are very common vernacular buildings well represented on almost every family farm in northern Wayne County. It is the opinion of the architectural historians at NCDOT that these buildings are not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under either Criterion A or Criterion C.

COMPARISON OF LIKE FARMSTEADS
FREMONT VICINITY AND NORTHERN WAYNE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

It is the opinion of the architectural historians at the NCDOT that it is appropriate to compare farmsteads of similar age and size within the vicinity of Fremont and northern Wayne County in order to more accurately assess the historical context of the Peel family farm. To that end, we have expended considerable effort in surveying the area and include our findings for your review. Please note that we have made every effort to contact local historians, property owners and have reviewed our findings with the Wayne County Historical Association. This survey was conducted by the architectural historians at NCDOT in cooperation with the Wayne County Historical Association. The farmsteads listed below, while no means an exhaustive listing, are representative of the area.

#1 SASSER FARMSTEAD

This circa 1800 house is a frame, single-pile, center hall five-bay, building with a one story (kitchen) attached by a breezeway. The two story main block has a standing seam metal roof and weatherboard siding (original). The front porch is certainly a replacement and appears to date from around 1900. The original pilasters, 9/9 windows, and two Flemish bond chimneys remain. The side-gable roof has a punched cornice. (See Illustrations #12-#15).

There are numerous outbuildings which appear to be contemporary with the house. These include a wine cellar, smokehouse and granary all of mortise-and-tenon construction. The tobacco-related structures appear to be early twentieth century.

The property is currently approximately the same acreage as the 1755 land grant to John Sasser. The property passed to Josiah Sasser in 1779 at the death of John Sasser, his father, and the next year the Sasser plantation was chosen as the site of the first court held in the newly established Wayne County. The plantation was passed down through four generations of Sasser family prior to being sold to the current owner. The house is occupied and the property is still farmed by the occupants.

The house was examined by the staff of the North Carolina Division of Archives and History who estimated the ca. 1800 construction date. According to this account, the house has plastered walls, wood ceilings, four fireplaces, and pegged wainscoting. (See Norwood 1975; N.C. Division of Archives and History 1977: 28-8).

#2 UZZELL-BEST FARMSTEAD

The present farm is a portion of a 1746 land patent held by Thomas Uzzell, a native of Isle of Wight County, Virginia. His great-grandson, Thomas Uzzell (1814-1875), owned approximately 1,000 acres of the original tract and erected a house and several of the existing outbuildings on the plantation. The farm was subsequently inherited by Thomas' son Atlas Thomas Uzzell. The original dwelling burned soon after Atlas Uzzell acquired the land and he erected the existing farmhouse and the majority of the surviving outbuildings (Johnston 1982: 470-471).

The Uzzell-Best farm stands among the finest examples of surviving farmsteads of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Wayne County. The house and outbuildings were constructed just after Atlas Uzell purchased the property in 1875. The one-story frame building is an irregularly shaped "U" capped by a standing-seam metal roof with multiple cross gables. The front porch covers the facades of the main center block and south projecting bay, and features heavy turned posts with decorative sawn brackets and balustrade. The original two-room kitchen and dining room ell extends to the rear. The breezeway which originally linked this wing to the main body of the dwelling has been enclosed. The weatherboarded exterior includes original wood-sash windows with 4/4 lights and shallow, pointed-arch lintels.

The architectural historians surveying the property were permitted access to the interior but not allowed to photograph it. The rooms are oriented around a main hallway (arranged off-center). The original interior finishes appear intact. The interior features tongue-and-groove ceilings, four-panel doors, tongue-and-groove wainscoting in the hall, and seven mantels with elaborate bracketed shelves

and panelled friezes.

An extremely fine collection of frame outbuildings dating from the antebellum period to the early 1900s is located just to the east of the house. These include side-gable kitchen, smokehouse, an antebellum side-gable barn, tool shed and a repair shop. The complex also contains an early twentieth century privy and pack house.

Beyond the immediate outbuildings are located two tenant houses and a row of five well preserved tobacco barns.

These buildings appear to date from about 1910. (See Illustrations #16-#21).

#3 HOWELL-BATTEN FARMSTEAD

The Howell-Batten farm represents a portion of the original J.M. Howell farm, which Howell inherited from his father during the 1880s. While the house and majority of the outbuildings are circa 1880, the present tract was formed during a 1935 subdivision among heirs of the Howell estate. The property is currently owned and farmed by the Howell family.

The main Howell-Batten house is a vernacular two-room, central-hall, frame dwelling that typifies a popular farmhouse type of the post civil war period. The house covered by a standing-seam metal gable roof, and a hip-roofed porch extends across the three bays of the facade. This porch has original chamfered posts and square balusters. Original brick chimneys are located on the south gable end and at the junction of the main two-room block and rear kitchen ell. The original 4/4 sash windows are intact throughout the house.

The interior of the house retains original flush board walls, tongue-and-groove ceilings, four-panel doors, and one post-and-lintel mantel with a wide vertical frieze. The current owner has altered the original front hall and constructed a modern brick mantel in the south front room.

The tenant house, also circa 1880, stands to the north of the main house. This is a two room, side-gabled frame dwelling with a rear, side gabled (original) kitchen wing attached to the main block by an enclosed breezeway. (A pattern common to the homes of Wayne County). Much of the original fabric of the interior is intact.

In addition, the Howell-Batten farm contains one of the most complete and unaltered collections of late nineteenth and early twentieth century outbuildings in Wayne County. These

include a gable-front smokehouse, two central-passage, gable-front barns, side-gable servants quarters, gable-front Delco power house, gable-front corncrib, pack house with attached tractor sheds, and several storage sheds, (See Illustration # 22-#24).

#4 WILEY AYCOCK FARM

Originally a part of the plantation established by the Ellis family in 1810, the Ellis family subdivided this particular parcel in 1859. The Wiley Aycock farm consists of the main house (circa. 1888), an adjoining house constructed circa. 1910 which was intended for his son (currently a tenant house), corn crib, smoke house, pack house, several barns and family cemetery.

The exuberant triple gabled, frame one story main house is a particularly fine and unusual example of the Queen Anne style. The front elevation is a symmetrical composition consisting of a side-gabled main house (center hall and single pile) with three smaller projecting gables with centered decorative louvers located in each. The front porch is covered by a partial hip roof with another gable centered over the front door. The ballusters and turned posts appear to be original. The turned posts (columns) have scar marks located at the top of each, which indicates that some decorative wood trim has been removed. The rear ell, which houses the kitchen and several additional bedrooms, is contemporary with the original house. One shed addition appears to be mid-twentieth century. (See illustrations #25-#28).

It should be noted that this family is related to former Governor Charles Brantley Aycock. It should also be noted that this farm is currently operated by the Aycock family.

#5 JULIUS EVANS FARM

This farm dates from the mid-nineteenth century, however the current (main) house was constructed circa 1878. The house is a one story frame house, three bays wide, covered by a standing seam metal roof. The front elevation has two projecting gables off of the main house. A porch covered by a hip roof and supported by doric columns wraps around the front and side elevations. Access was not permitted inside the house, however the exterior is in excellent repair. The farm has a very extensive collection of early and contemporary outbuildings including a dairy, smokehouse, several packhouses, tobacco barns, chicken houses and granaries. In addition to the main house, and support buildings, several tenant houses, constructed in the late

nineteenth century, line the road (SR 1358) at the farms edge. It should be noted that these tenant houses have often served as housing for sons of the Evans family also engaged in farming. (The Evans grandson, Steve, has lived in one of the tenant houses prior to constructing his own house at the opposite end of the property). See Illustrations #29-#32.

#6 EDMUNSON FARM

The Edmunson farm is spread out on either side on SR 117 and contains numerous houses, all occupied by members of the Edmunson family. The oldest house was constructed in 1872 and altered circa 1918. The house is a three bay, frame, one story dwelling with side-gable roof and gable end chimneys located at either end and at the rear ell. The hip roofed front porch and front gable were added to the house circa 1918. The property contains numerous support and outbuildings including smoke houses, chicken houses, two dairies, tobacco and general-use barns and various one-story frame houses occupied by the Edmunson family. The "Edmunson spring" is also located on the property -- a spring once utilized by many residents of Fremont. (See Illustrations #33-#36).

#7 HOOKS-BALLANCE FARM

This large, working farm has been in operation by the Hooks and later (by inheritance) the Ballance family since 1859. The property consists of 100 acres containing the main house, nineteenth and twentieth century support and outbuildings, and the family cemetery. The original house is an unusual l-shaped with assymetrical, flanking wings. The one story frame house was constructed circa 1880, with minor alterations and additions added in the 1960's and 1980's. The unusual floor plan remains intact. The survey which was conducted by the architectural historians at NCDOT revealed no similar houses in the northern sections of Wayne County. The son of the owner, Mr. Harry Andrew Ballance, lives in a mobile home just beside the main house. He will be constructing a new home within the next several years and is remaining on the farm to assist his father. As may be evidenced in this, and, indeed all, of the farmsteads included in this survey, the pattern of sons constructing new homes on their families land in order to continue operation of the farm is the rule, not the exception in Wayne County. (See illustration #37 & 38).

EVALUATION OF PEEL FARM
CRITERION A

According to the subconsultants (surveyors) report, the Peel family houses are eligible under Criterion A as a family farm district (see pages 9 - 10 in the attached report). According to the National Register Bulletin #30, "Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Rural Historic Landscapes," page 13, Criterion A applies to properties associated with events that have made significant contributions to the broad patterns of history. Eligibility for significance in agriculture on a local level depends upon:

1. The characteristics must have served or resulted from an important event, activity, or theme in agricultural development as recognized by the historic contexts for the area;
2. the property must have had a direct involvement in the significant events or activities by contributing to the area's economy, productivity, or identity as an agricultural community;
3. through historic landscape characteristics, the property must cogently reflect the period of time which the important events took place.

Insufficient evidence was provided by the surveyor in order to support the eligibility of the Peel farm for the National Register according to these three factors. Additional and extensive research, including comparisons of similar farms in Wayne County, is provided by the architectural historians at the NCDOT, which further indicates the ineligibility of the farmstead. It should be noted that although significant events are often closely related to land uses, historic significance should not be equated with general land uses or the functions of specific buildings.

The characteristics of the Peel farm have not resulted from a single important event, activity, or theme in the agricultural development of Wayne County. The subconsultant has stated that "The three buildings are a survival of a 19th century regional social pattern of children building houses on portions of their parents' farm." (page 9, paragraph 2). According to the Wayne County Historical Association, as well as the NCDOT's research, this pattern is the rule, not the exception in Wayne County.

The Peel farm does not have "direct involvement in the single events or activities by contributing to the areas economy, productivity, or identity as an agricultural community". As

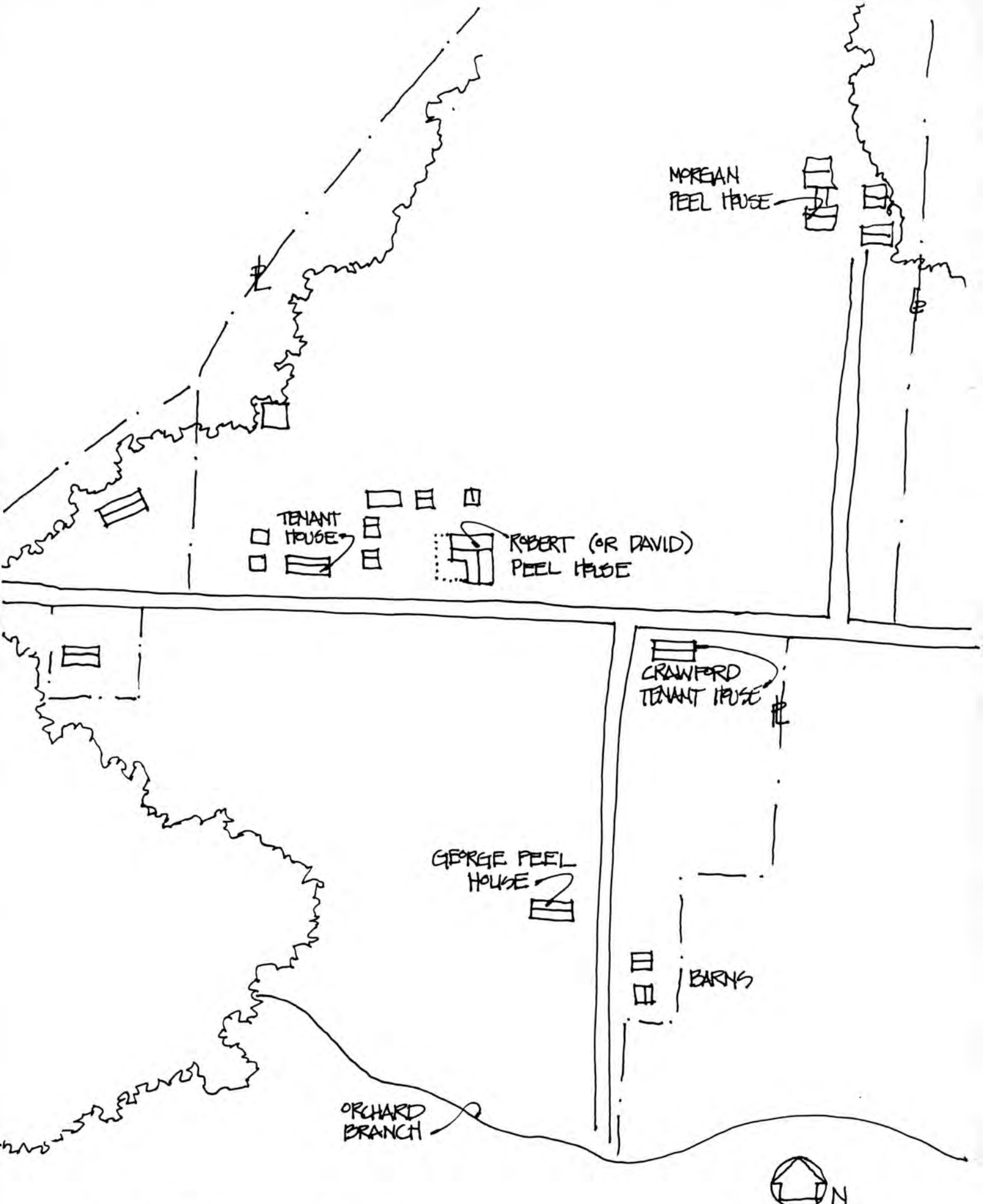
proven by our county survey, the Peel farm is one of many general farming assemblages with no particular activities or events which distinguish it from any of the its neighboring farmsteads. Further, unlike many of other quite similar farms in northern Wayne County, this farm is no longer farmed by the family. As the surveyor pointed out, and was later confirmed by the NCDOT, two of the Peel houses have been tenant dwellings for over 100 years, joined later by the remaining buildings. As the Peel lands were left as rental properties while they moved to other locations, it is impossible to understand what unusual or important involvement the family has had during the surveyors suggested period of significance (1850-1940). Further, interfamilial patterns of settlement do not relate to an area of significance according to the National Register Bulletins. No research is available which indicates that the Peel family contributed, in any important, unusual, or exemplary way, to the local economy, productivity, or identity to the agricultural community.

The surveyor has, in no way, demonstrated that the landscape characteristics cogently reflect the period of time. Moreover, if the period of time is, as suggested, 1850-1940, how is this evidenced in the current landscape? No records can be found indicating field patterns prior to 1938 (page 9, paragraph 3). At this time, the Peel family had moved off of the farm and the properties were rented to tenants. The architectural historians at the NCDOT do not believe that field patterns which are common in Wayne County both in 1938 (as well as currently) are cause for listing in the National Register. This opinion is underscored by the research provided herein identifying many similar farmsteads surviving in Wayne County -- many of which are farmed by the descendents of the original owners and builders.

As stated in Bulletin #30, page 13, Criterion A applies to properties associated with events that have made significant contributions to the broad patterns of history. The Peel farm does not meet that criterion. The architectural historians at NCDOT respectfully request that you concur with our findings.

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ROBERT PEEL HOUSE

#2



ROBERT PEEL HOUSE

#3



ROBERT PEEL FARM, OUTBUILDING

#4



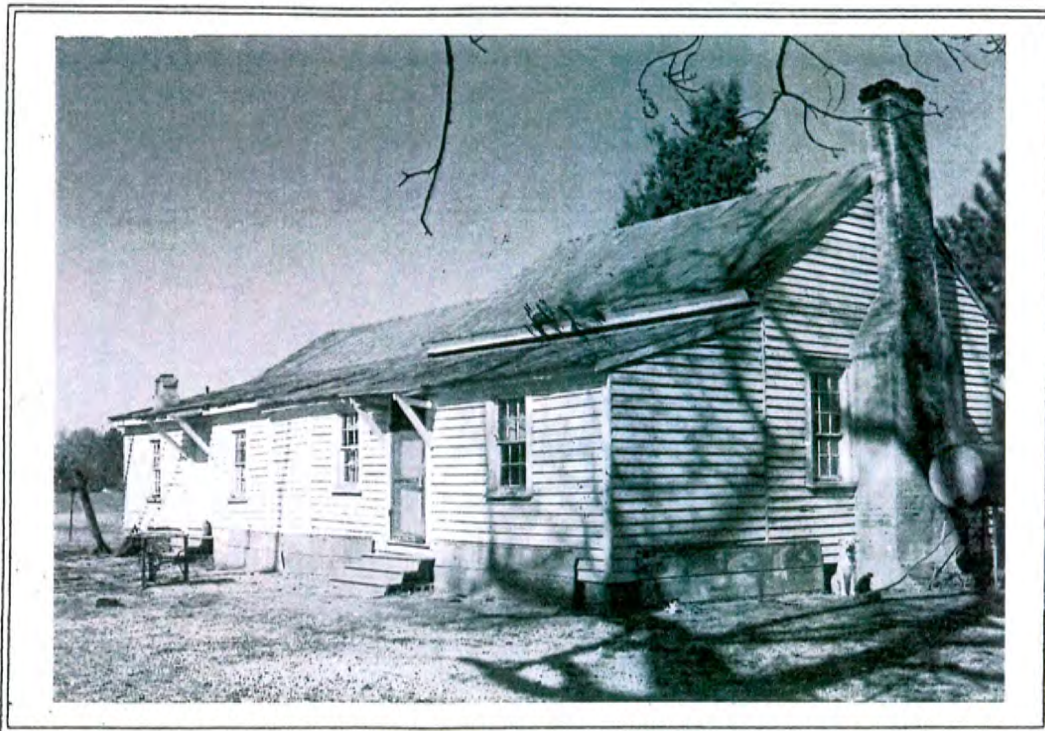
ROBERT PEEL FARM, OUTBUILDING

#5



GEORGE PEEL HOUSE

#6



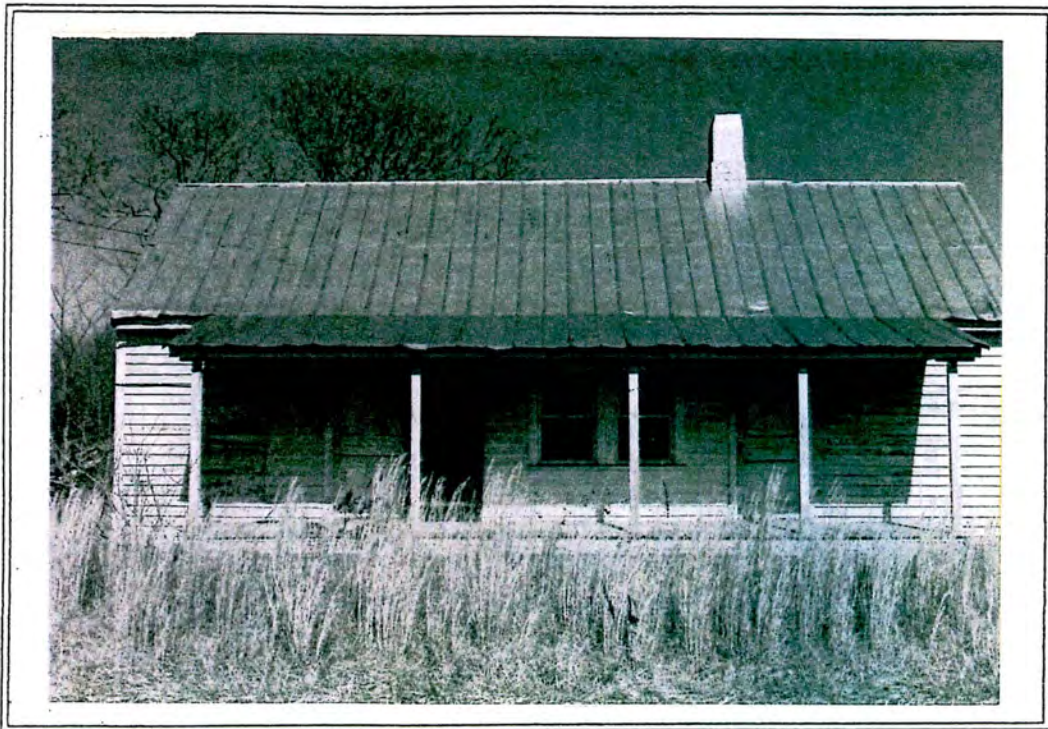
GEORGE PEEL HOUSE

#7



MORGAN PEEL HOUSE

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CLAUDIA CRAWFORD TENANT HOUSE

#9



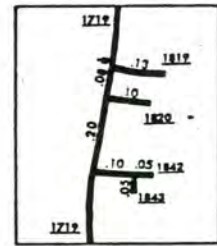
CLAUDIA CRAWFORD TENANT HOUSE

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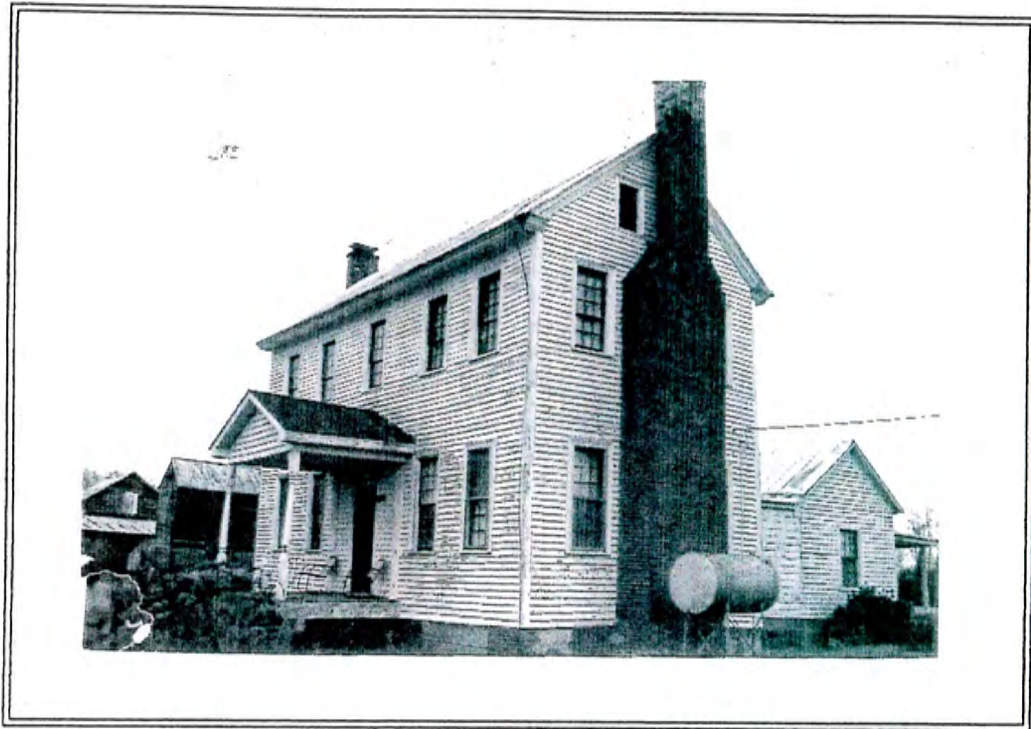
CLAUDIA CRAWFORD TENANT HOUSE

#11



INSET ④





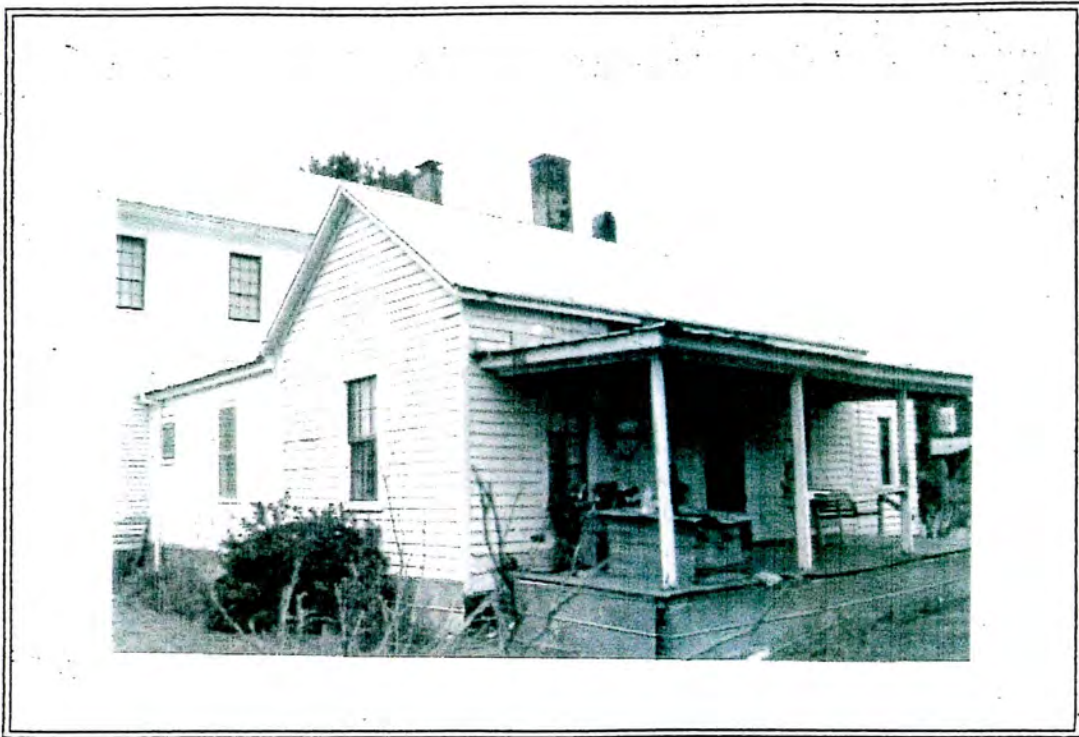
SASSER HOUSE

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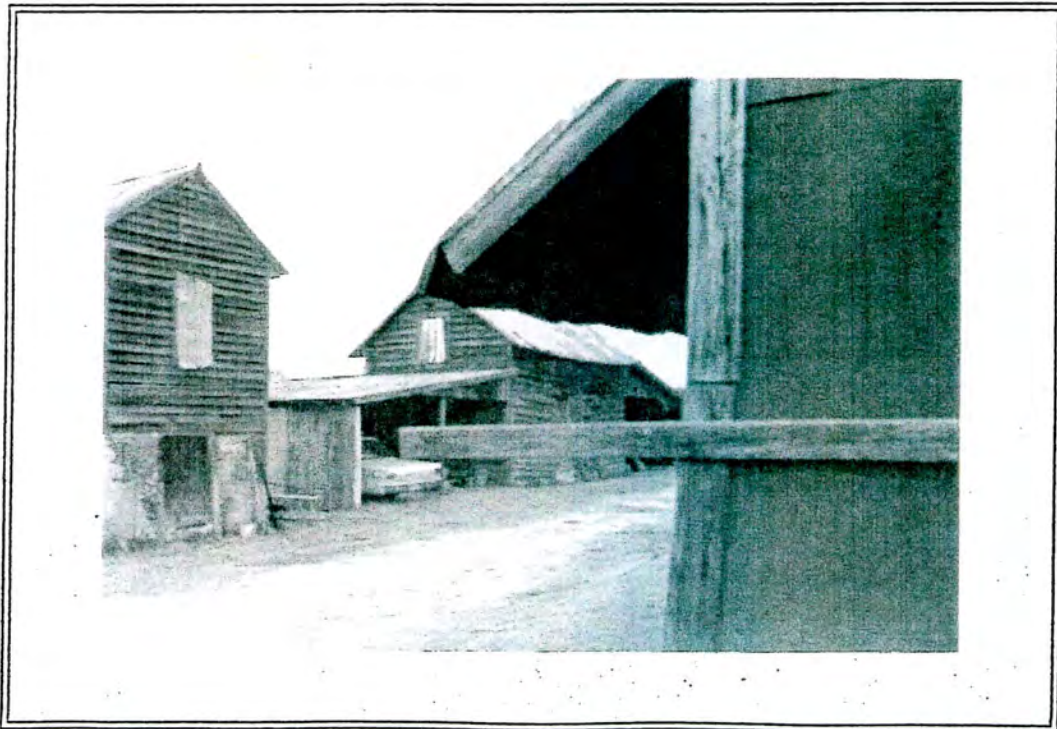
SASSER FARMSTEAD

#13



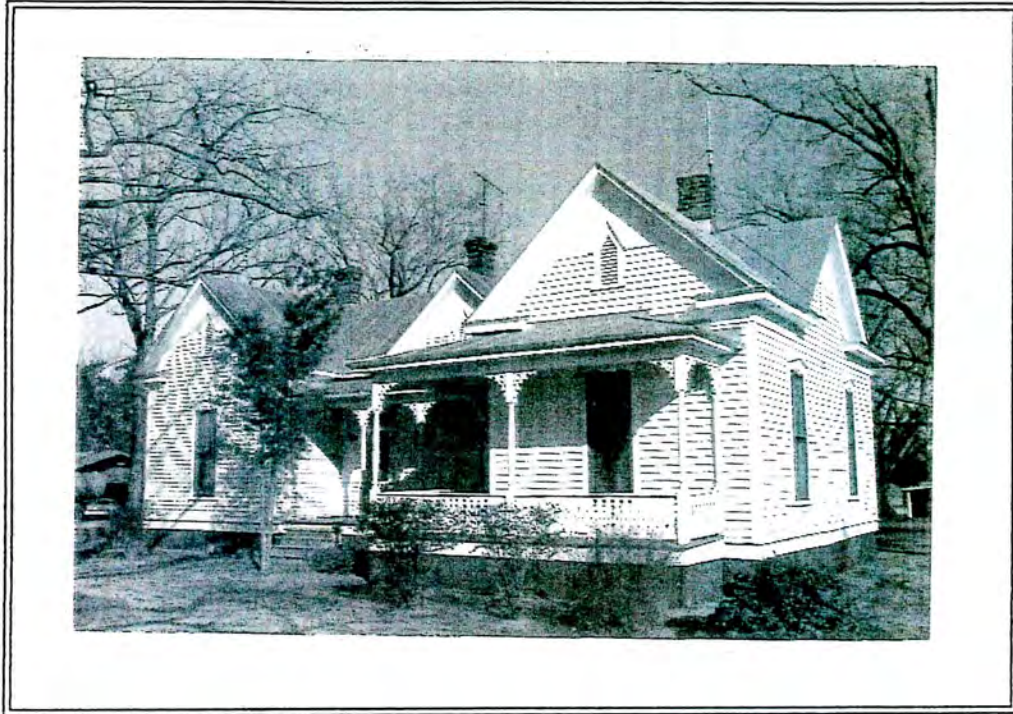
SASSER HOUSE, KITCHEN WING

#14



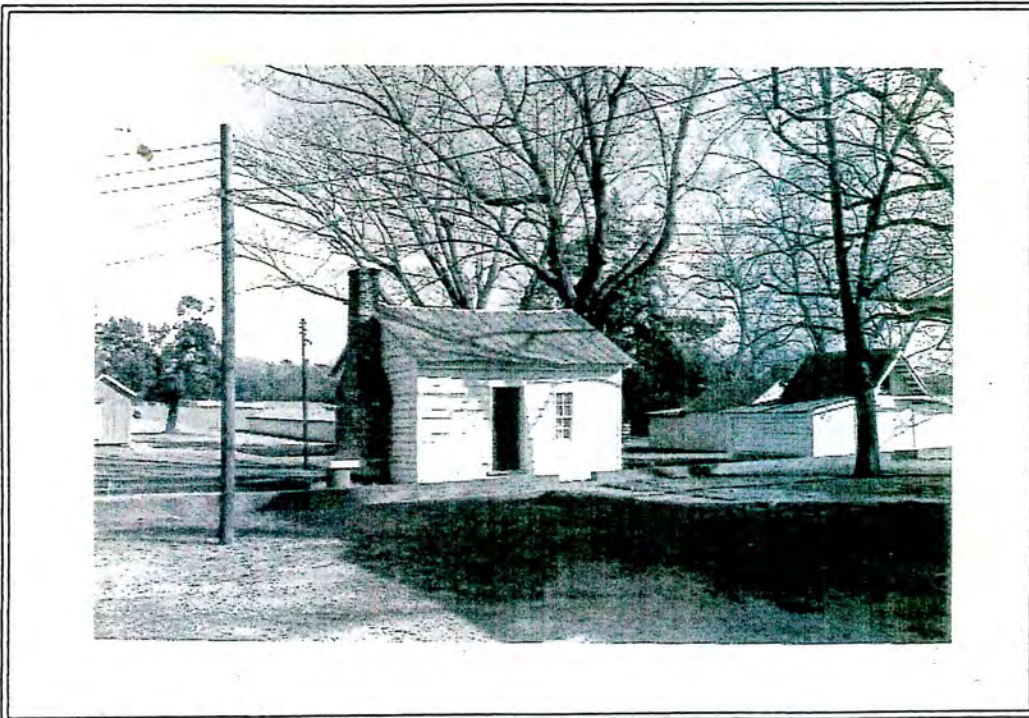
SASSER FARMSTEAD, OUTBUILDINGS

#15



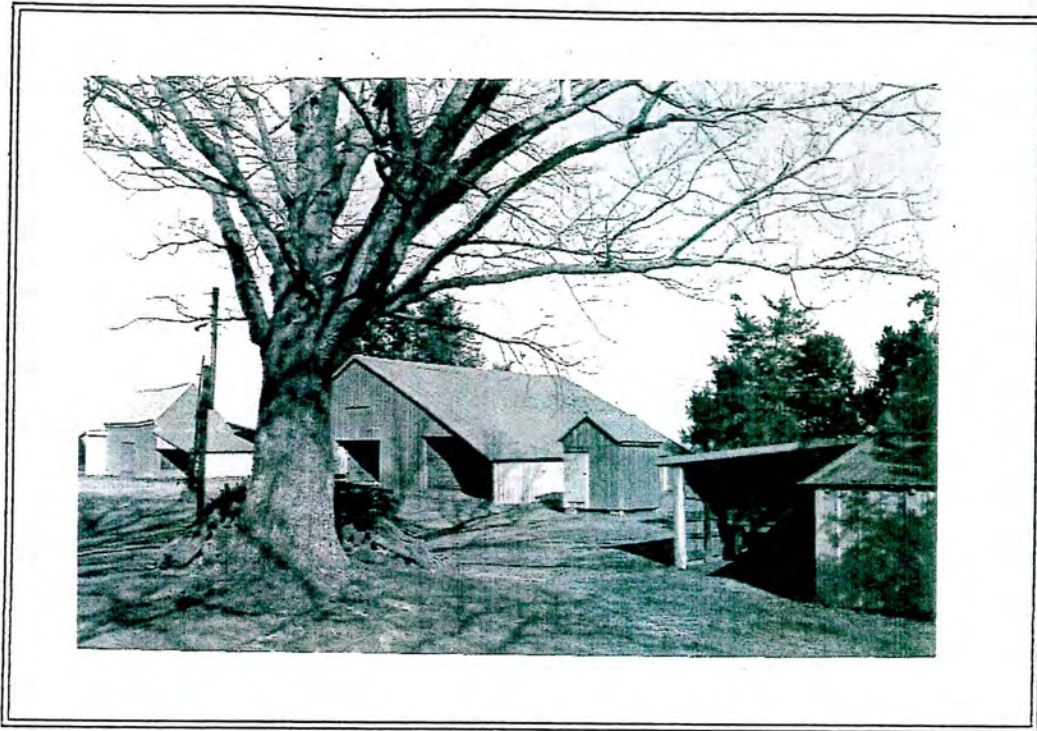
UZZELL-BEST HOUSE

#16



UZZELL-BEST KITCHEN AND SMOKEHOUSE

#17



UZZELL-BEST FARM COMPLEX

#18



UZZELL-BEST TOBACCO BARNs

#19



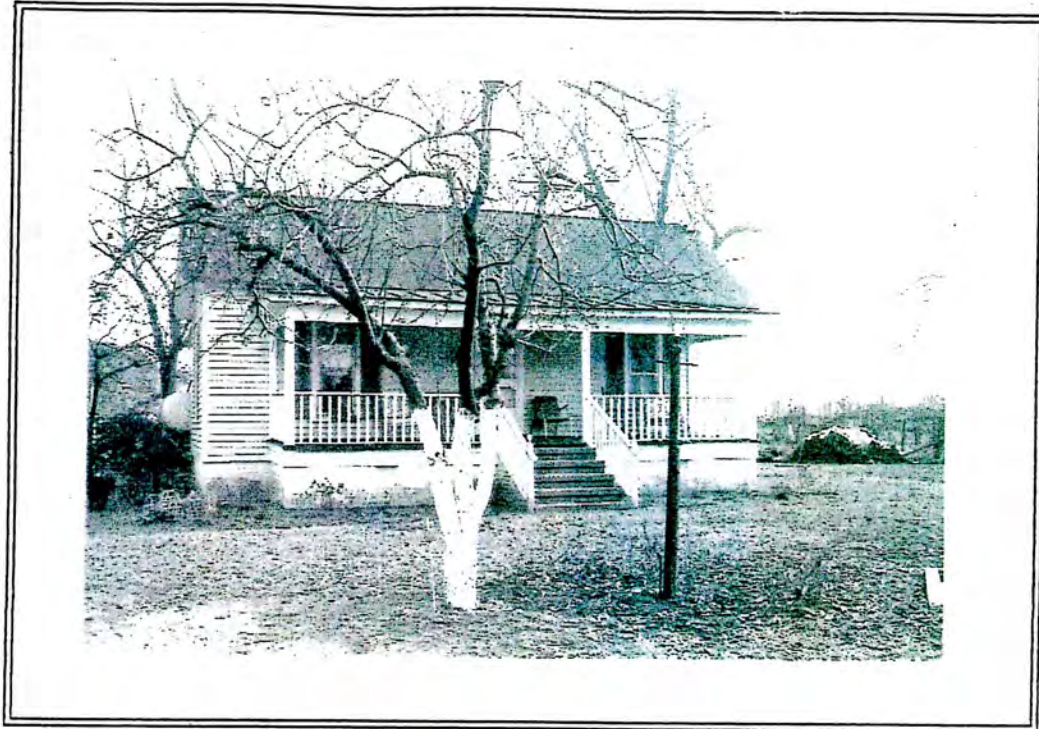
UZZELL-BEST TENANT HOUSE

#20



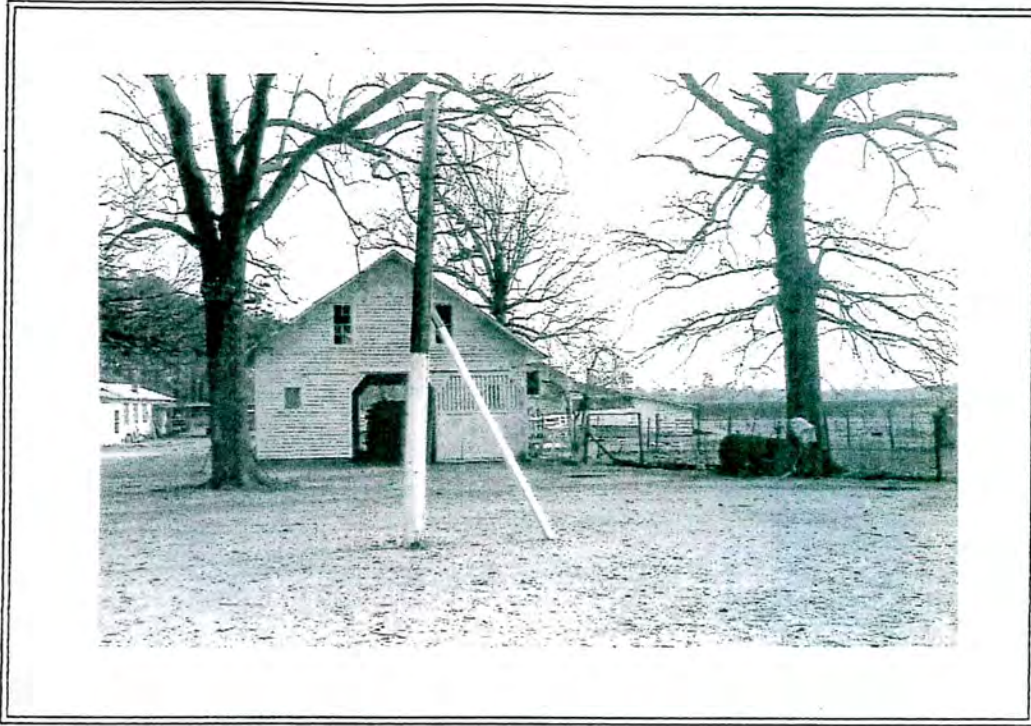
UZZELL-BEST FARMSTEAD

#21



HOWELL-BATTEN HOUSE

#22



HOWELL-BATTEN FARM COMPLEX

#23



HOWELL-BATTEN FARMSTEAD

#24



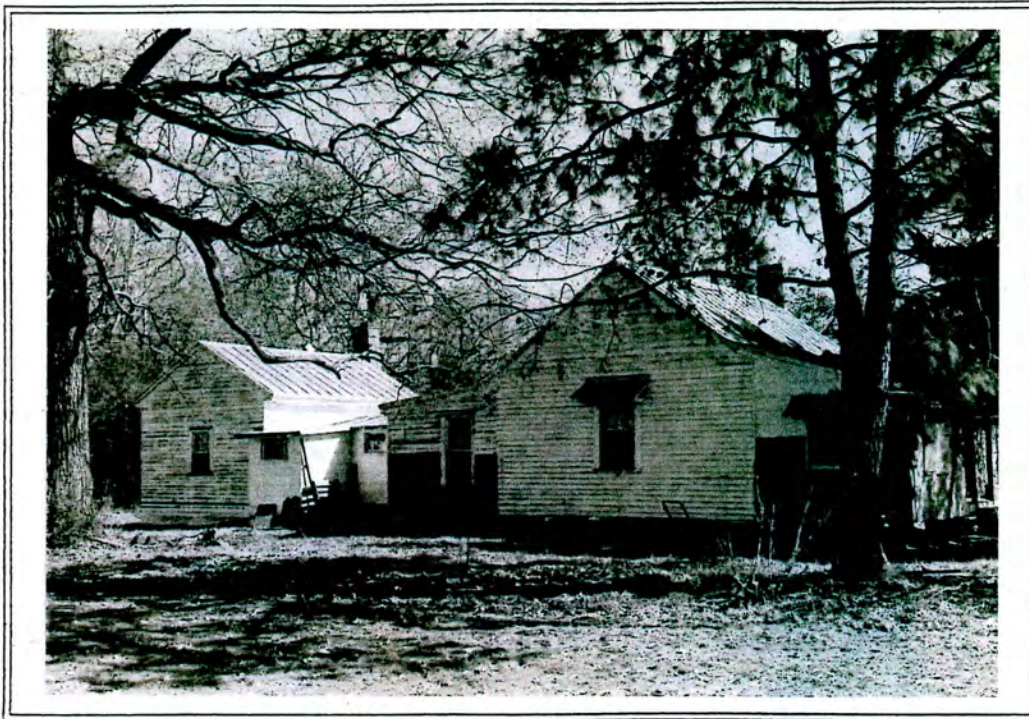
AYCOCK FARM

#25



AYCOCK FARM

#26



AYCOCK FARM
TENANT HOUSE

#27



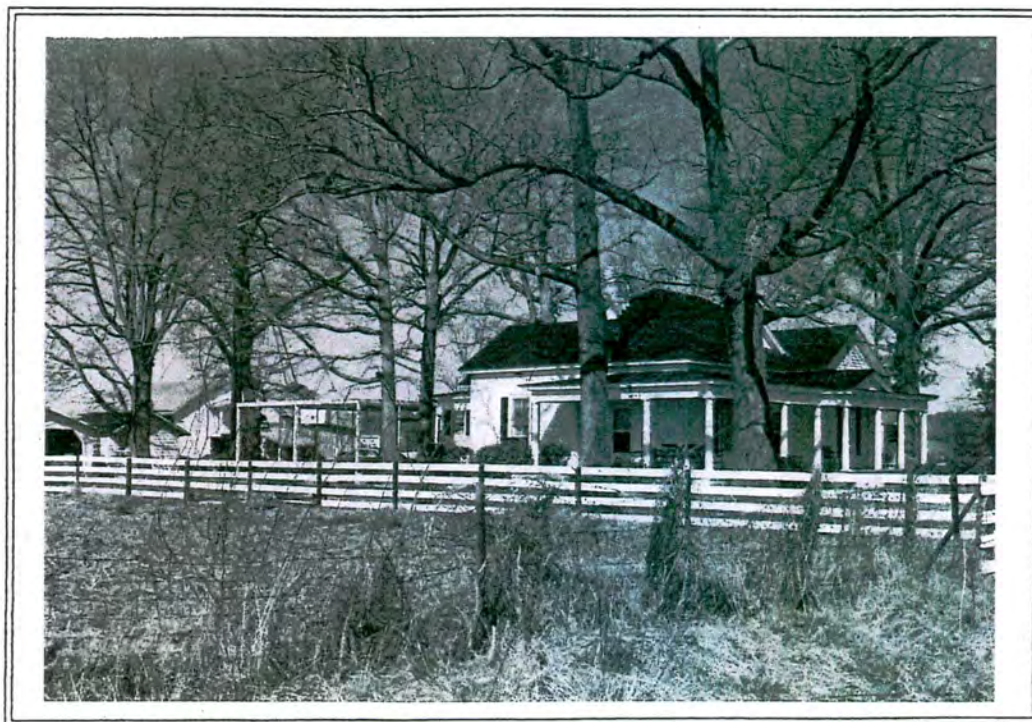
AYCOCK FARM
TENANT HOUSE

#28



JULIUS EVANS FARM

#29



JULIUS EVANS FARM

#30



JULIUS EVANS FARM
OUTBUILDINGS

#31



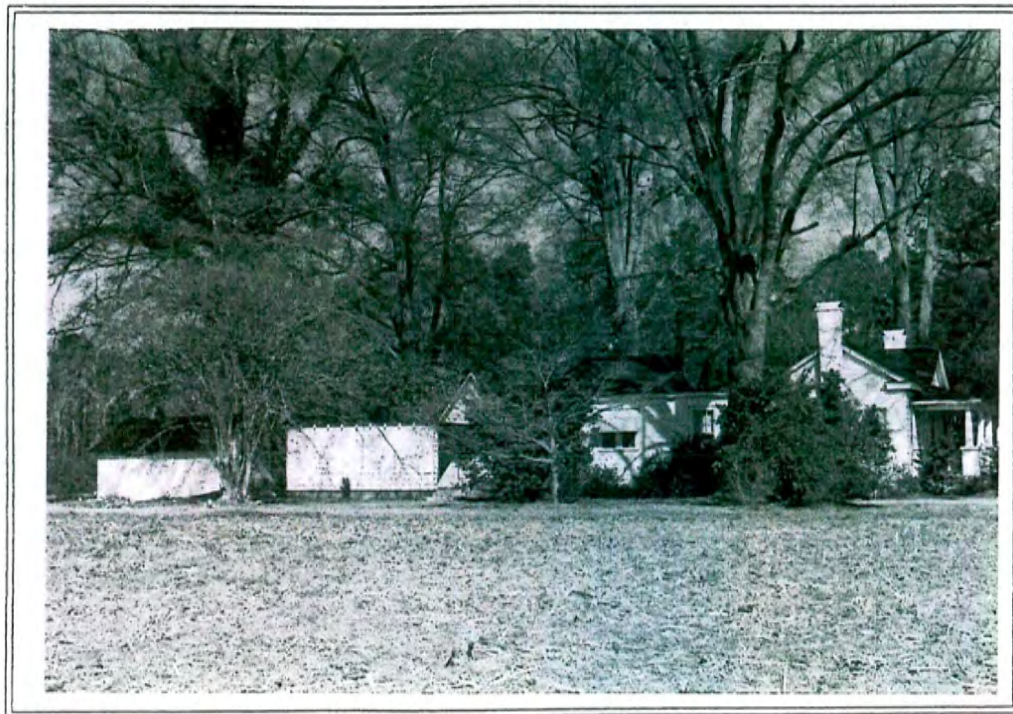
JULIUS EVANS FARM
TENANT HOUSE

#32



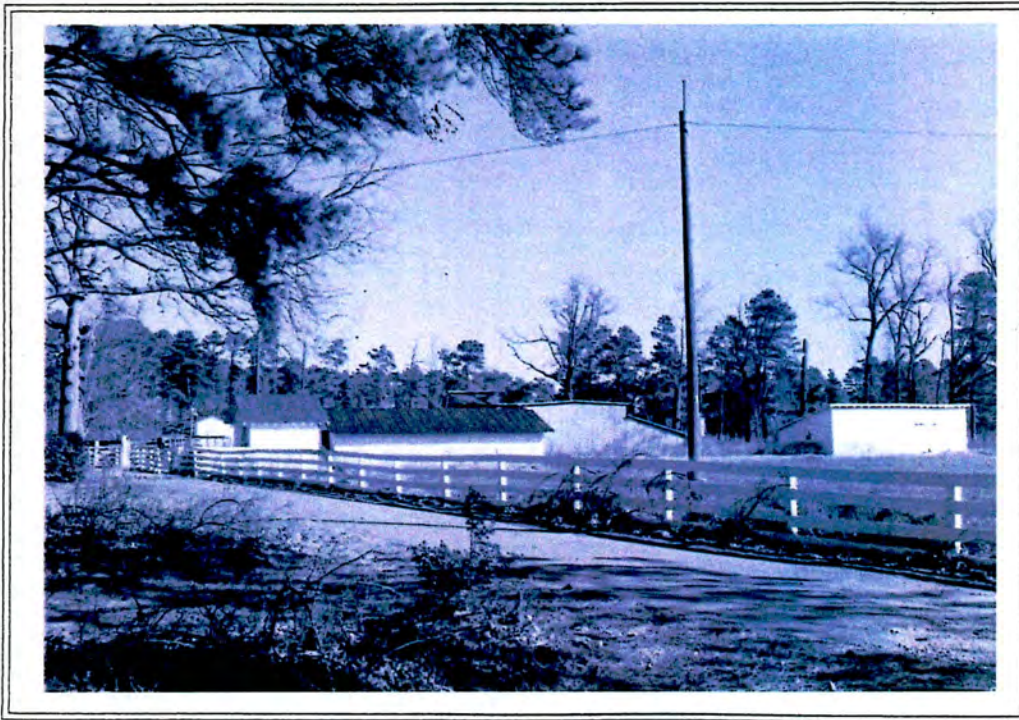
EDMUNSON FARM

#33



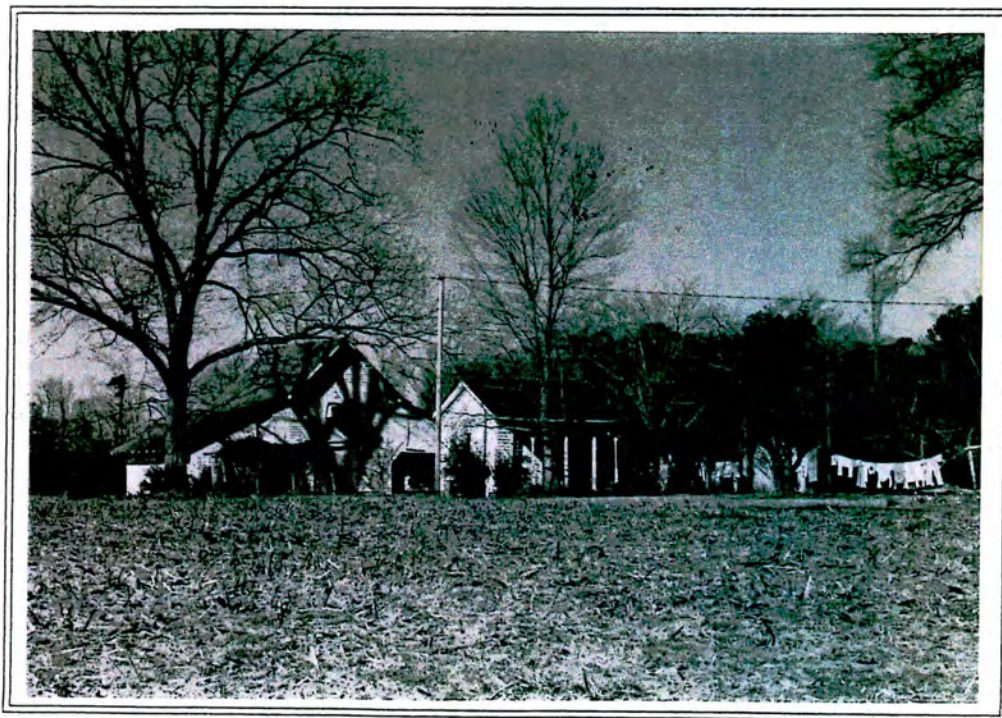
EDMUNSON FARM

#34



EDMUNSON FARM
OUTBUILDINGS

#35



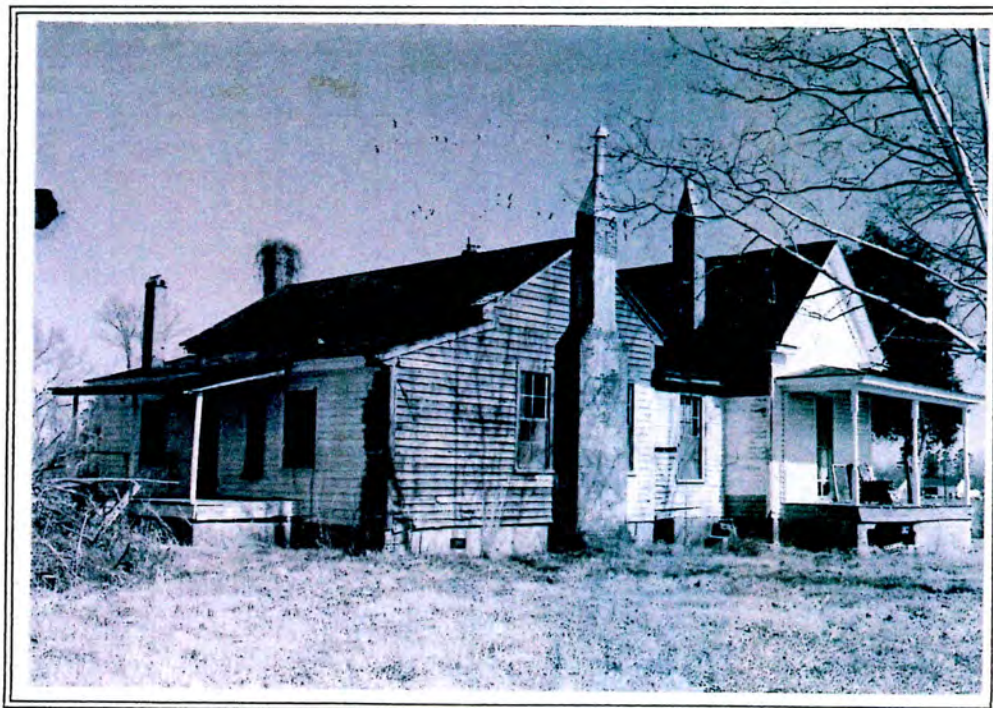
EDMUNSON FARM
FAMILY COTTAGE AND OUTBUILDINGS

#36



HOOKS-BALLANCE FARM

#37



HOOKS-BALLANCE FARM TENANT HOUSE

#38

WAYNE COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION, INC.

Post Office Box 665
Goldsboro, North Carolina 27530

20 November 1992

N.C. Department of Transportation
Division of Highways
P.O. Box 25201
Raleigh, N.C. 27611-5201
Attn: Ms. Helen P. Ross

Re: R-1030
Project 8.1330501

Dear Ms. Ross:

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to comment on the apparently never-ending controversy of highway construction through our area. We need the highway, we need it badly but as you have become aware, nobody wants it in his/her backyard. What we have here in Wayne County is no different than anywhere else, except the we might have a few more historic structures, and a little more wetland.

A remark was recently made by Betsy Johnson, Chairman of the Wayne County Commissioners which indicated the historic nature of Northern Wayne County. She said, "you cannot put a road anywhere in Northern Wayne County without going through an historic farm or through wetlands." The wetland or lowlands have always been a source for fish and game for food, and the higher country was the best farm land which produced tobacco, cotton, various grains such as corn, wheat, soybeans, etc., and a vegetable garden for the farm table. This rural economy has been the way of life since the first settlers came in the mid-1700's. These early families included the the Barden, Fulghum, Hooks, Aycock, Ellis, Charles, Dean, Ballard, Edmundson, Newsome, Pike, Peacock, Barnes, Yelverton, Bogue, Peele, Ham and Perkins to mention some of the more prominent names. For the most part, descendants still own, live on and farm the land their ancestors had initially cleared.

It has always been and is now, the custom for a father to encourage his sons to stay home and farm the land. The Peele farm is only one of many farms in Northern Wayne County where the family farm has remained intact; where tenant houses were built as well as houses for the sons, sons-in-law or for other members of the family.

In some instances the "old" house has been torn down, abandoned or renovated to include modern conveniences such as central heat, A/C, plumbing and energy efficiency. Some have been covered with man-made siding, but there are many of the old places remaining.

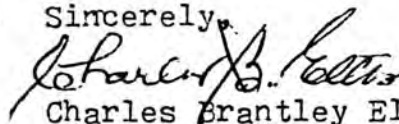
Ellis to Ross Re: I117 pg 2/2

There was not time for me to thoroughly investigate the entire county. Please also be aware the I am not an Architectural Historian nor do I pretend to be. I have researched, photographed and written about the situation as best I know how.

The attached sheets are only a brief summary of the family farms which will remain for a few more generations since fathers and sons are not only living on the farm but they are both actively farming. [This situation is far from unique in Wayne County.] As a matter of fact, it is the rule, not the exception.

Please let me know if there is anything else the I might work with to ensure the success of project.

Sincerely,



Charles Brantley Ellis
President

Wayne County Historical Association

cc: File-WCHA

Congressman Lancaster w/o photos
Commissioner Betsy Johnson w/o photos
Senator John Kerr, III w/o photos

Attachments with photographs (14)
(attachments are hand written)

DRAFT ADDENDUM TO
HISTORIC STRUCTURES
SURVEY AND EVALUATION REPORT
US 117
GOLDSBORO TO WILSON
TIP No. R-1030

Addendum prepared for
TAMS CONSULTANTS, Inc.
4000 Westchase Boulevard, Suite 360
Raleigh, North Carolina 27607

by

M. Ruth Little, Ph.D.
Longleaf Historic Resources
3501 Turnbridge Drive
Raleigh, North Carolina 27609

December 1990

II. WAYNE COUNTY PROPERTY EVALUATIONS

A. PROPERTIES ELIGIBLE FOR THE NATIONAL REGISTER

WY 5, WY 6, WY 7, WY 18: PEEL FAMILY FARM The farm contains the main house, WY 18, and three smaller houses located on approximately 110 acres. WY 5, the tenant house on the south side of the road, is believed to have been built in the 1880s for George Peel, WY 7, the tenant house on the north side of the road, is believed to have been built in the 1880s for Morgan Peel, and WY 6, the Claudie Crawford tenant house on the south side of the road, is believed to have been built in the early 20th century as a tenant house.

1. WY 18: David Peel Farm:

Note: This property was not initially surveyed or included in the original survey report. It is being added to the survey as WY 18.

Location: north side SR 1361 0.3 mi. w of jct. with US 117, Fremont vicinity.

Date of construction: 1850s, ca. 1900.

Style: Late Federal, Queen Anne.

Summary of physical description: One-story, three-bay wide Queen Anne cottage with wrap-around porch. The center two-room section with the exterior gable end brick chimney is an 1850s house. No visible fabric remains from this house except for the chimney, the door beside the chimney, and the Federal style mantel inside. Otherwise, the ca. 1900 remodelling obliterated visible traces of the older house. The Queen Anne remodelling resulted in one of the best examples of the style in the Fremont vicinity. The L-shaped house has a cross-gabled front wing with bracketted corners and another front cross-gable is over the porch. The wrap-around porch has turned posts with brackets and a spindle frieze. A photograph of the house from the west, taken in the 1910s or early 1920s (copy included with present photographs on following pages), shows a porch balustrade and louvered shutters which no longer exist, but otherwise the exterior has changed little from its appearance in the photo.

The interior has an unusual floor plan, with a parlor in the front wing, a center hall and two flanking rooms, and two rooms to the rear. The center hall extends only between the two front rooms. There is no center hall between the two

rear rooms. The more typical floor plan for a house of this type would have a center hall extending through the depth of the house. This floor plan is probably the result of remodelling the existing house rather than building from the ground up. The rear porch has been enclosed and conceals a handsome rear entrance with sidelights and transom. The woodwork consists of simple late Victorian mantels with the exception of the mid-19th century chimney, which has a Greek Revival style mantel which is probably a survival of the 1850s woodwork.

Associated outbuildings:

Old kitchen: 19th century. This outbuilding is said to have been a detached kitchen associated with the original house. This was later moved further away from house for use as storage shed. It has a side gable roof, a single front door, and is covered with metal.

Old stable: 19th century. This outbuilding is said to have been associated with the original house. It is a 2-story front gable building with a 2-story shed on one side and a 1-story shed on the other. It has been used as a packhouse in recent years.

Smokehouse: early 20th century. Small frame building immediately behind house, with overhanging front gable end.

Corn crib: early 20th century. Typical frame, front gable building.

Equipment shed: early-mid 20th century. Typical narrow 2-story gable front frame building with wide 1-story sheds.

Peel family graveyard: located north of David Peel House in edge of woods. Contains nine graves with recent granite markers with death dates from 1882-1980. Six of these are the sons and grandchildren of Robert Peel who died in a typhoid epidemic in 1882 and 1883. The original gravestones were thin stone markers which had deteriorated and broken. They were replaced by nephew Kyle Richardson in the 1970s with the present granite markers.

Integrity: The house, with its five outbuildings located in a close complex on Robert Peele Road, retains integrity from the ca. 1900 period, with enough fabric surviving from the 1850s period that its level of significance is increased by this early history.

Historical Background: According to the one of the current owners, Mrs. Mary Mason, daughter of Kyle Richardson, previous owner, this house was built by her great-great-grandfather, Robert Peel (1822-1886), for whom the road is named. The mid-19th century chimney and mantel in the house supports this family history. Peele bought 250 acres from the Barden family and built this house soon after.¹ Robert and his wife Sarah Newsom Peel (1828-1891) raised a large family here. In the 1860 census, Nahunta District, Robert was a 38 year old farmer with land worth \$3,150. In his household were his wife Sarah, four sons aged eleven to one year old, and an elderly woman, Mary, aged 69 (perhaps his mother).

At his death in 1886 he left all of his land, which now totaled 440 acres, in a life estate to his wife Sarah. 240 acres of this property, located north of Nahunta Swamp and adjacent to Bear Branch, was left to his son David following the death or marriage of his wife.² David, known as "Uncle Dave," was one of only two sons who survived their father, because three of his brothers died of typhoid fever in the early 1880s. They are buried along with Robert and Sarah Peel and other family members in the Peel Graveyard north of the house.

Uncle Dave lived in the family house, and about 1900 he remodelled it to its present appearance. He was a prominent local citizen, helping to establish the Bank of Fremont and the local oil mill. In the early 1920s he moved to Fremont and rented out his house to his farm manager, William Williams. The house has remained rental property to the present. At his death he willed 159 acres to his wife Ella Peel.³ At her death the land went to her three nephews, Kyle, Hooks

1 Wayne County Deed Book 26, page 228: Wm. H. Barden sells 250 acres to Robert Peel in 1855. The land is bounded on the south by Nahunta Swamp, on the east by land of William Hooks and James R. Barnes, on the north by James R. Barnes, and on the west by land of Robert Copeland. The land is known as the "Nahunta Tract."

2 Will of Robert B. Peel, Sr., Wayne County, probated 1886. North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh.

3 Wayne County Estate Files, Will Book 5, page 293, File #6608, 1926.

and Robert P. Richardson. They were the sons of Mary Peel Richardson, sister of David Peel.⁴

2. WY 5: George Peel House:

Location: .1 mi. dirt lane, south side SR 1361 across from David Peel House.

Date of Construction: 1870s

Style: vernacular

Summary of physical description: 1-story frame house, originally 3 bays wide but extended several bays to west in early 20th century. Original gable-end chimney, original 9/6 sash, original boxed cornice with flush gable end eaves. Front porch, rear shed rooms are later additions. The interior of the original section contains one room, and has no visible original fabric. One vernacular Greek Revival style door is present in the west addition, perhaps moved from the original section.

Associated outbuildings: 2 typical tobacco barns situated on east side of the farm lane, behind the house.

Integrity: The house is in fair condition, and was apparently remodelled on the interior in the early 20th century to its current simple vernacular appearance. The original core is basically intact on the exterior, but has been enlarged in various stages.

Historical background: According to family tradition, this small house was built for one of Robert's sons. In 1875 Robert Peel platted his 440 acre farm into four parcels for each of his four sons, and this house is located on the 100-acre parcel that he designated as George's share. George was born in 1855 and died of typhoid in 1883. This was probably built about the time of his marriage to Eliza Radford (1857-1883). Since the 1880s the house has been used as a tenant house.

3. WY 7: Morgan Peel House:

⁴ Interview with Mary Love Mason, Fremont, November 26, 1990.

Location: 0.1 mi. dirt lane, north side SR 1361 0.2 mi. west of jct. w/ US 117.

Date of construction: ca. 1880.

Style: vernacular

Summary of physical description: Typical house behind a house configuration, with an enclosed breezeway linking the two. The rear house is a small, one-room side-gabled building with a single stepped shoulder gable end chimney. The front house is a larger side-gable building with a single-stepped shoulder gable end chimney. It is possible that the rear house is the original dwelling, and was converted to a kitchen when the front house was added. Tenants denied access to the interior.

Associated outbuildings: two early 20th century barns located on east side of the house.

Integrity: The house retains exterior integrity. The interior integrity is unknown.

Historical background: According to family tradition this house was built for one of Robert's sons. The 1875 plat map shows that Morgan was given a 30-acre parcel of the family farm, located in the northeast corner of the farm where this house is located. Morgan was born in 1863 and died during a typhoid epidemic in 1883, and the house has served as a tenant house since then.

4. WY 6: Claudie Crawford Tenant House:

Location: south side SR 1361 0.3 mi. west of jct. w/ US 117.

Date of construction: early 20th century

Style: vernacular

Summary of physical description: 1-story frame, side-gable house built in two stages. The 2-bay-wide west section, with gable end chimney, appears to be the oldest section, with a 2-bay gable end addition added to the east later. The house has a boxed cornice, flush gable end eaves, 4/4 sash, a rear shed addi-

tion and a front porch of fairly recent construction. The interior was not inspected.

Associated outbuildings: none

Integrity: Although delapidated, the house retains integrity as an early 20th century tenant house on the exterior.

Historical background: According to family tradition, this has always been a tenant house on the Peel Farm. It does not appear to be as old as the George and Morgan Peel houses. Claudie Crawford, the present tenant, has lived here for many years.

5. Tenant House:

Location: north side SR 1361 immediately west of David Peel House.

Date of construction: early 20th century

Style: vernacular

Summary of physical description: 1-story frame side-gable house with center chimney, 6/6 sash, shed front porch. The east gable end room may be a later addition. The house has a boxed cornice and flush gable end eaves. The interior was not inspected.

Associated outbuildings: two tobacco barns.

Historical background: This is believed to have always been a tenant house.

Evaluation of Peel Family Farm:

The Peel Family Farm is eligible for the National Register under Criterion C for the architectural significance of the main house, the two auxiliary family houses, the two tenant houses and the outbuildings. The main house, with a complete set of traditional outbuildings, is a well-preserved turn-of-the-century farmhouse complex. The Queen Anne style house, with some vestiges of the original ca. 1850s dwelling built by the farm founder, Robert Peel, is unusually stylish for rural Wayne County. The George Peel House and Morgan Peel House are typi-

cal small late 19th century residences representing typical "starter" houses built for young married couples at this time.

All three Peel family houses, and the farmscape containing them, are eligible under Criterion A as a family farm district. The three buildings are a survival of a 19th century regional social pattern of children building houses on portions of their parents' farm. This social pattern has continued up to the present in the region. A 20th century example of this pattern in the project area is the O. J. Howell Farm near Goldsboro. The Howell House rests on a 4-acre home tract, and the rest of this large farm was gradually subdivided among the children as they grew up, married, and built their own homes on the farm. Normally this process results in a number of smaller farms during the next generation, but this did not happen with the Peel Farm because of the death of three of Robert Peel's sons, George, William and Morgan, in a typhoid epidemic in the 1880s. At Robert's death in 1886, his entire farm passed to his widow and then to his two surviving sons, David and Robert, and William's daughter Mary. David bought out the other heirs and kept the farm intact. He stylishly remodelled his father's house ca. 1900, and he and his wife Ella lived there and farmed until the early 1920s. David died in 1924; Ella died in 1947 and having no children, the farm passed to the three sons of David's ¹⁶ ~~16~~ wife, Mary. Kyle Richardson, one of the sons, bought out the other sons and once again kept the farm intact. It is now owned by Kyle's daughters, Mary and Joella, and is still intact.

The three Peel houses and the connecting fields and woodland represent a well-preserved family farm complex that has strong integrity from the period of significance, 1850s-1940. Comparison of the present farm with a 1938 Soil Conservation Service aerial photograph of the farm (see following pages) indicates that the field patterns and woodland are unchanged.

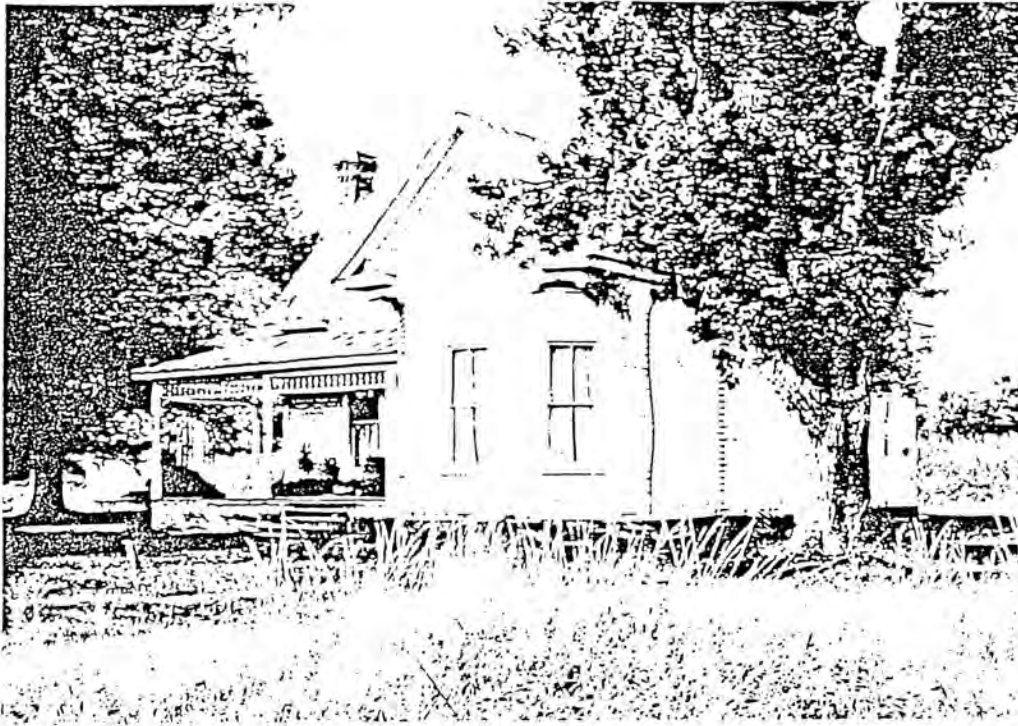
The boundaries of the acreage determined eligible for the Register are shown on the site plan and tax map on the following pages. Total eligible acreage is approximately 110 acres. The boundaries are drawn to include the main house and the two auxiliary family houses to preserve the visual link among the four. This acreage is the heart of the family farm, and also includes the family graveyard. The western boundary, Bear Branch, is the original western boundary of the farm. Two newer houses built in the edge of the woods along SR 1361 are excluded from the farm boundaries (the north house belongs to present owner Mary Richardson Mason). The south boundary is Orchard Branch, mentioned in the 1875 plat map as the boundary between two of the sons' shares. The east boundary is the present property line of Tax Parcel 8965,

3909, and a portion of 9324, as shown on the tax map. (The property is divided into separate parcels because it was acquired or reacquired at different dates.)⁵ The north boundary is a straight line approx. 1300 ft north of SR 1361 and extending west to Bear Branch, as drawn on the tax map. The actual north boundary is farther to the north. The north boundary of the eligible property is drawn to include WY 7, the Morgan Peel House.

Photographs: see following pages

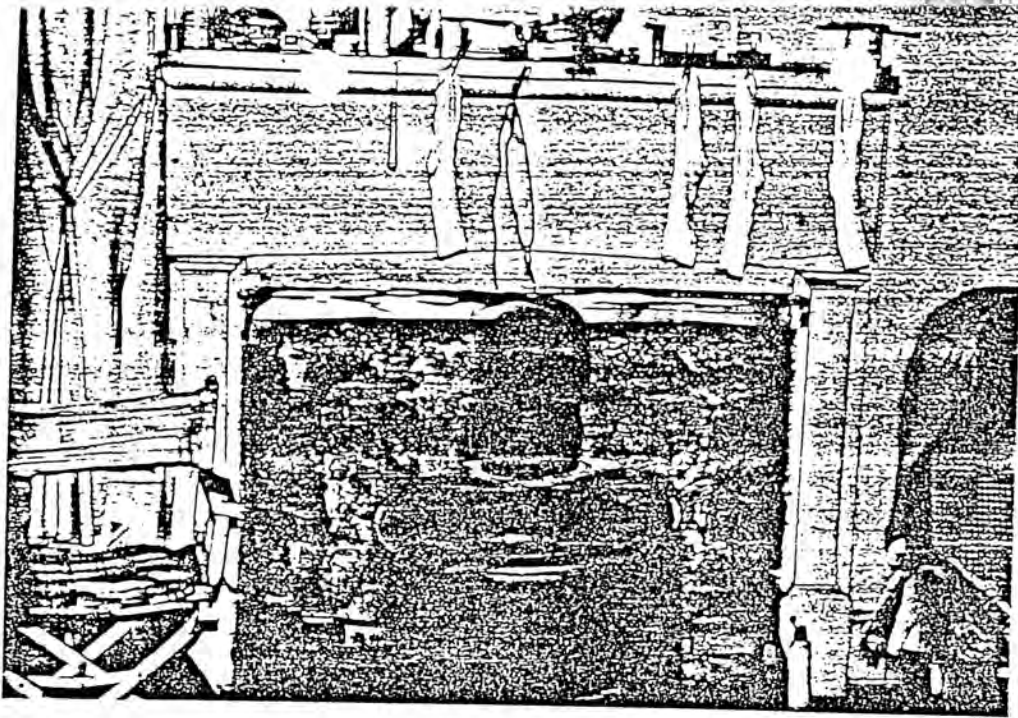
Site Plan and Boundaries: see following pages

5 The east boundary of the farm has fluctuated. The present east boundary is apparently approximately the same as the east boundary of the original 250 acres bought by Robert Hooks. Robert bought additional acreage to the east, over to Marl Branch, increasing the farm to 440 acres by 1875. By 1925 the plat of the J. T. Hooks Estate shows that Hooks owned the 160 acres east to Marl Branch. Sources: 1875 Survey of Lands of Robert Peel showing division into four shares, by G. S. Maxwell, Peel Family Papers in the possession of Mary Mason, Fremont; Will of Robert B. Peel Sr., 1886, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh; Plat of J. T. Hooks Estate, 1925, Wayne County Plat Map Book 2, pp. 61-65, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh; Wayne County Tax Maps No. 2694 and 3604.



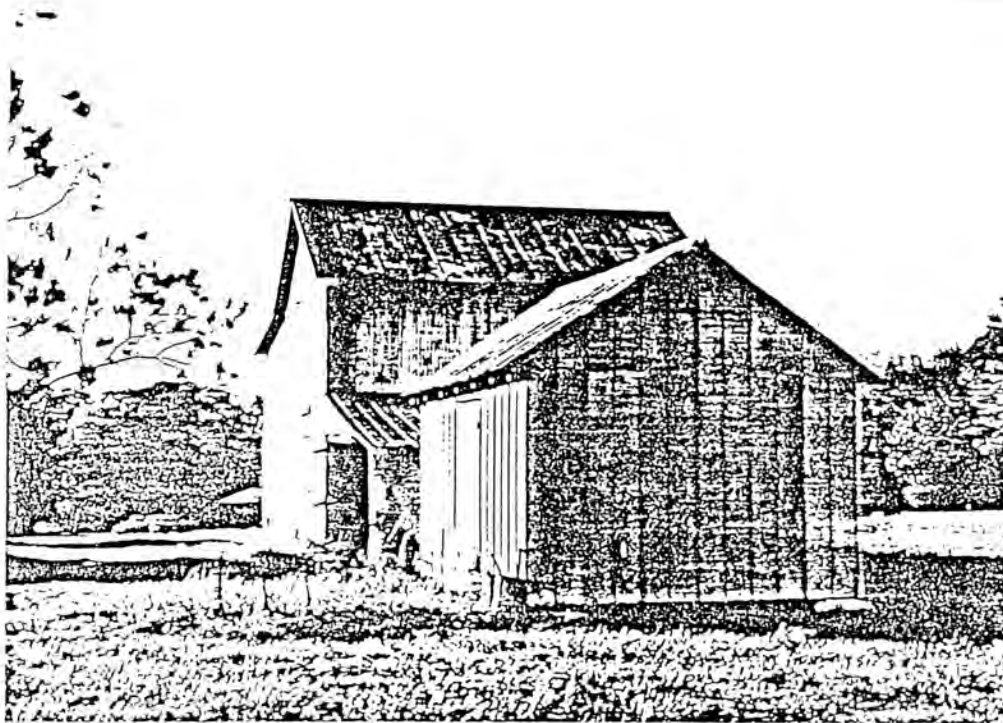
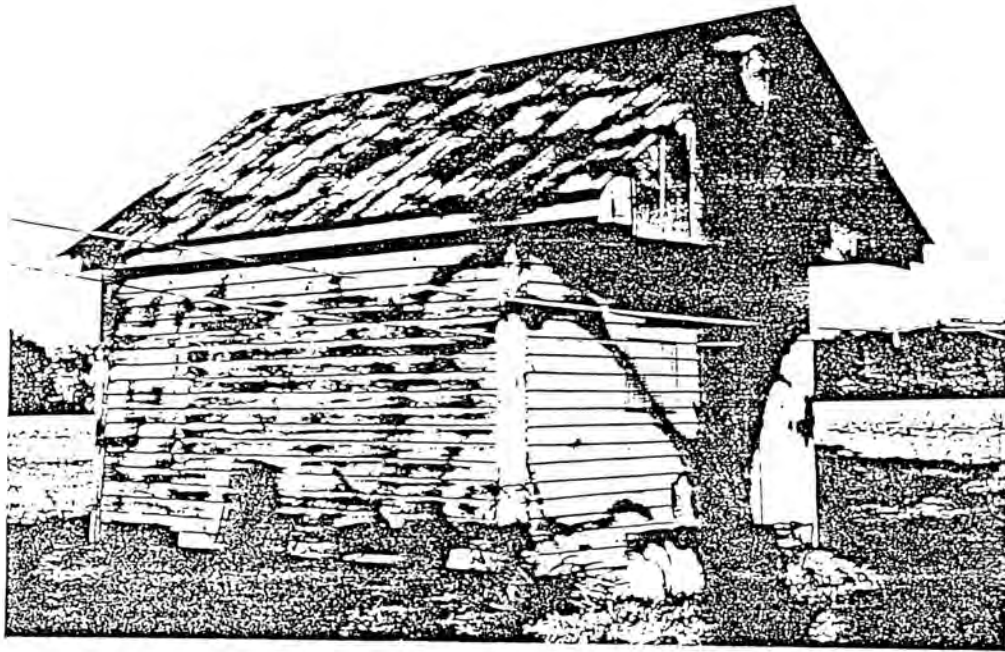
Longleaf Historic Resources

Fig. 2. WY 18: David Peel Farm Photographs



Longleaf Historic Resources

Fig. 3. WY 18: David Peel Farm Photographs



Longleaf Historic Resources

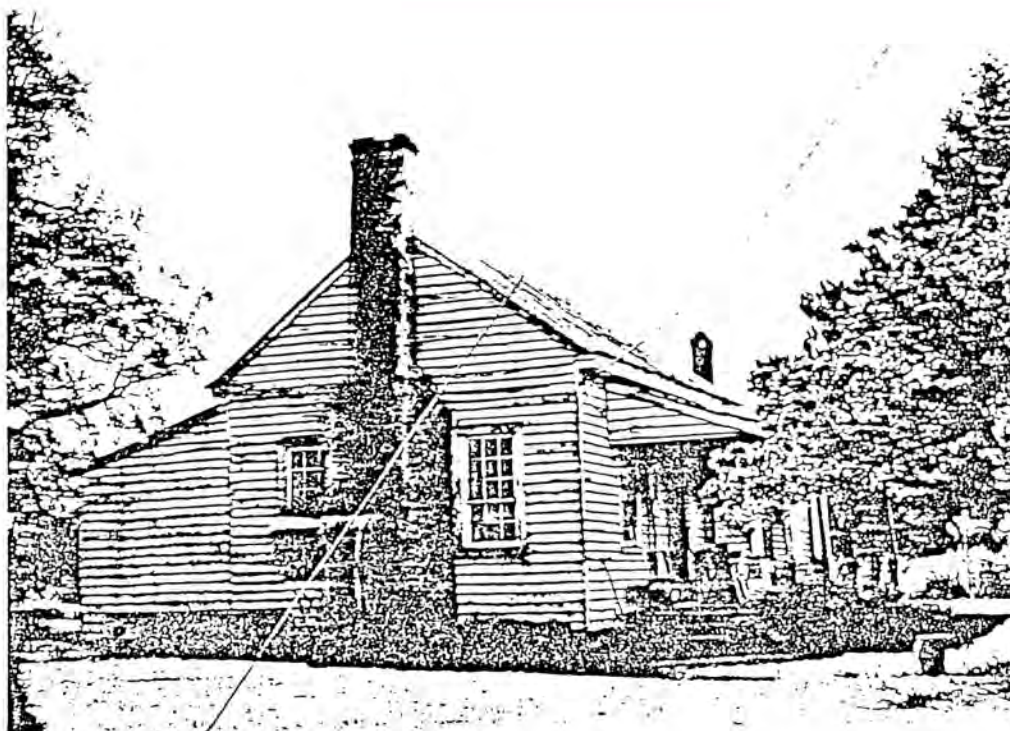
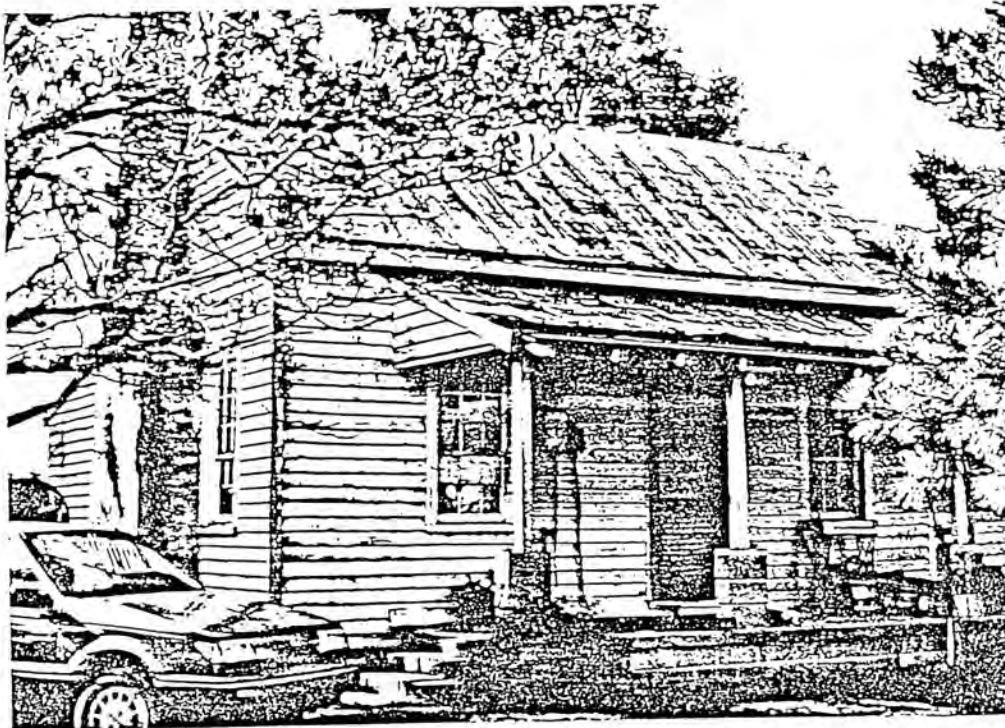
Fig. 4. WY 18: David Peel Farm Photographs



W. J. WOOD
1918-19

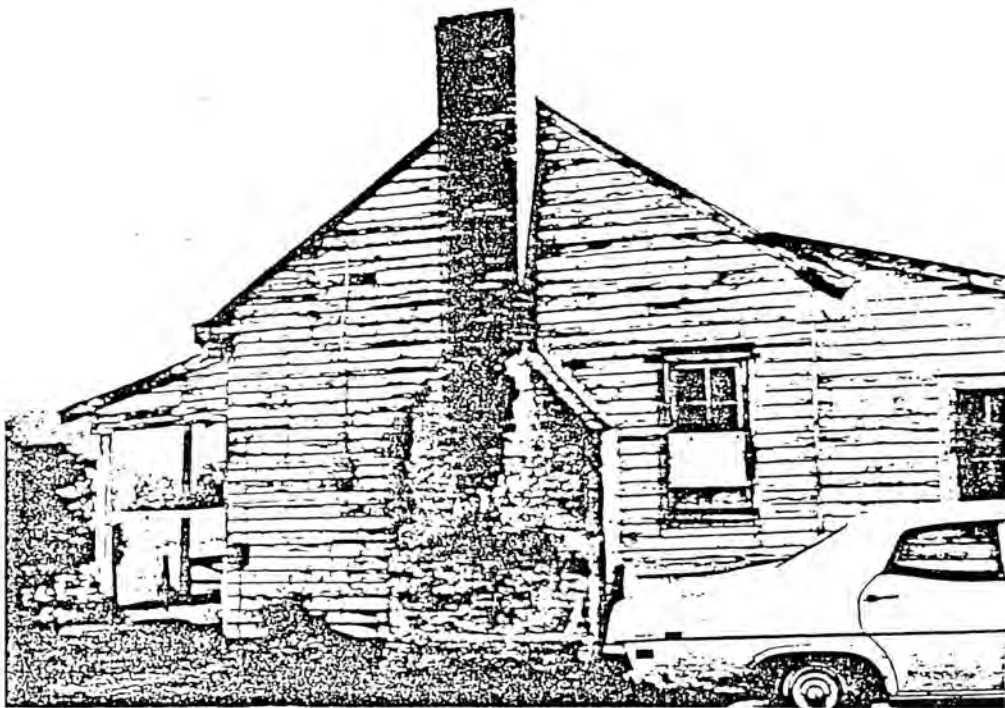
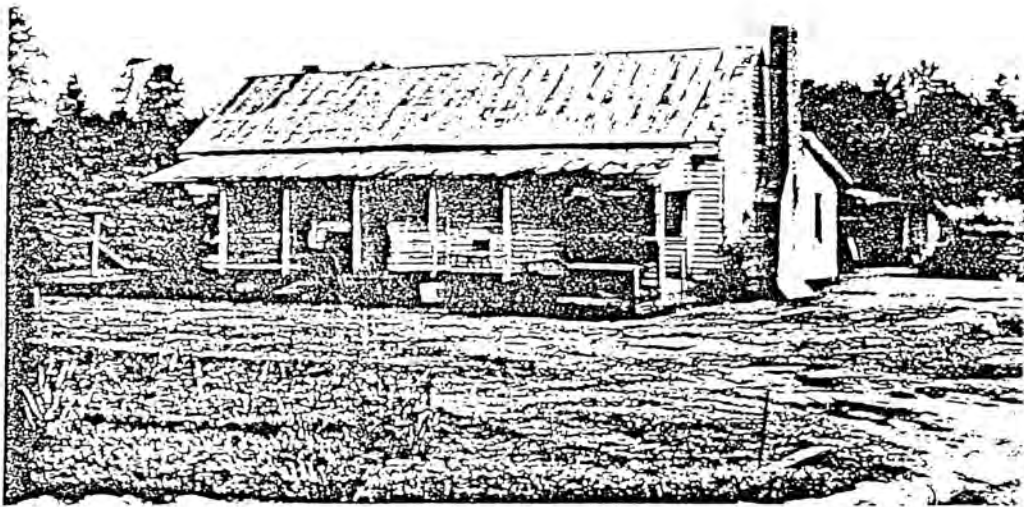
Longleaf Historic Resources

Fig. 5. Documentary Photo of David Peel House, ca. 1920



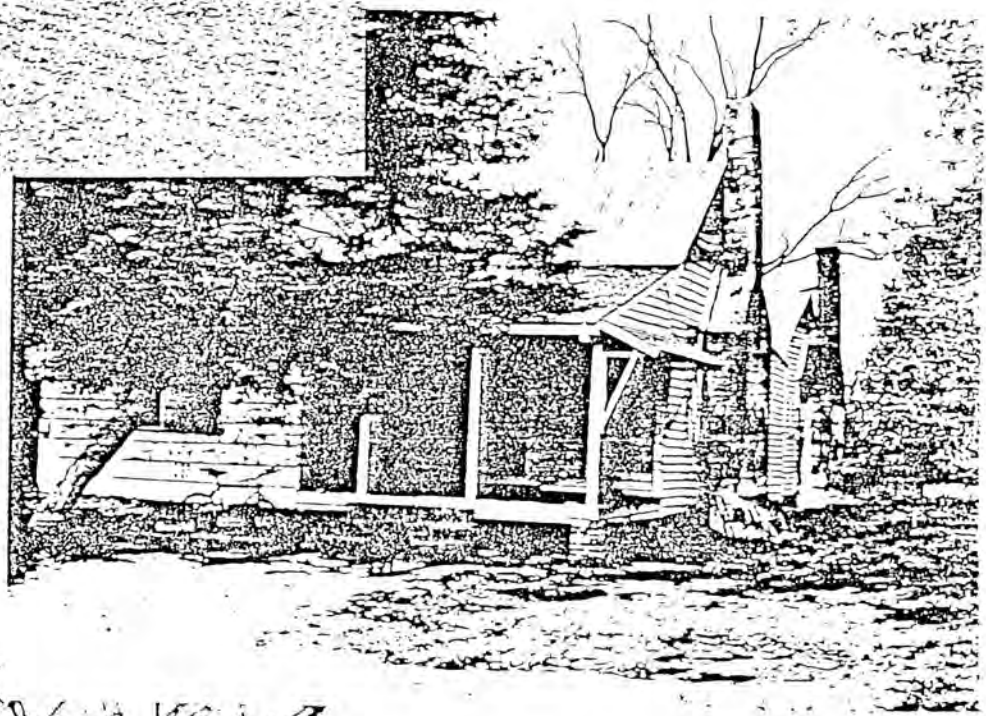
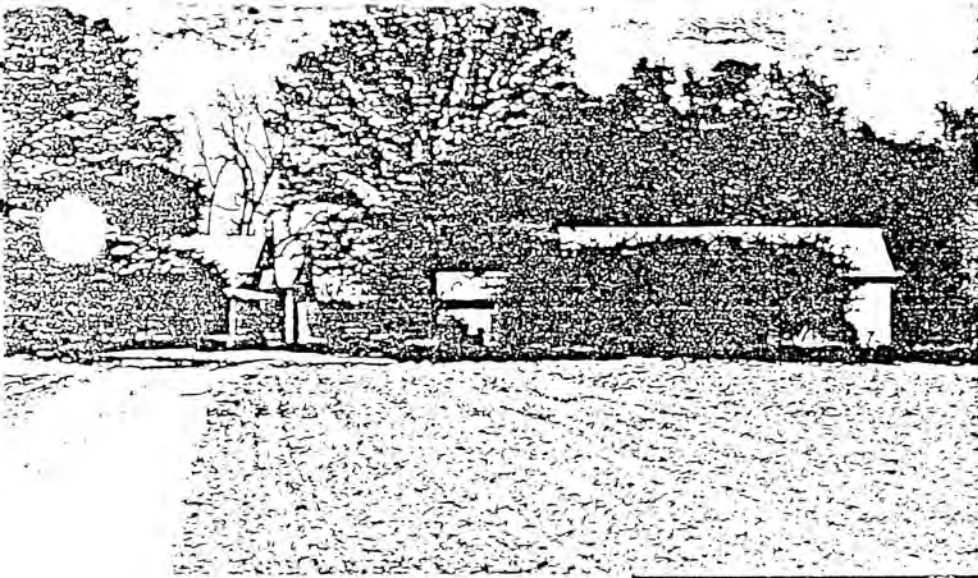
Longleaf Historic Resources

Fig. 6. WY 5: George Peel House Photographs



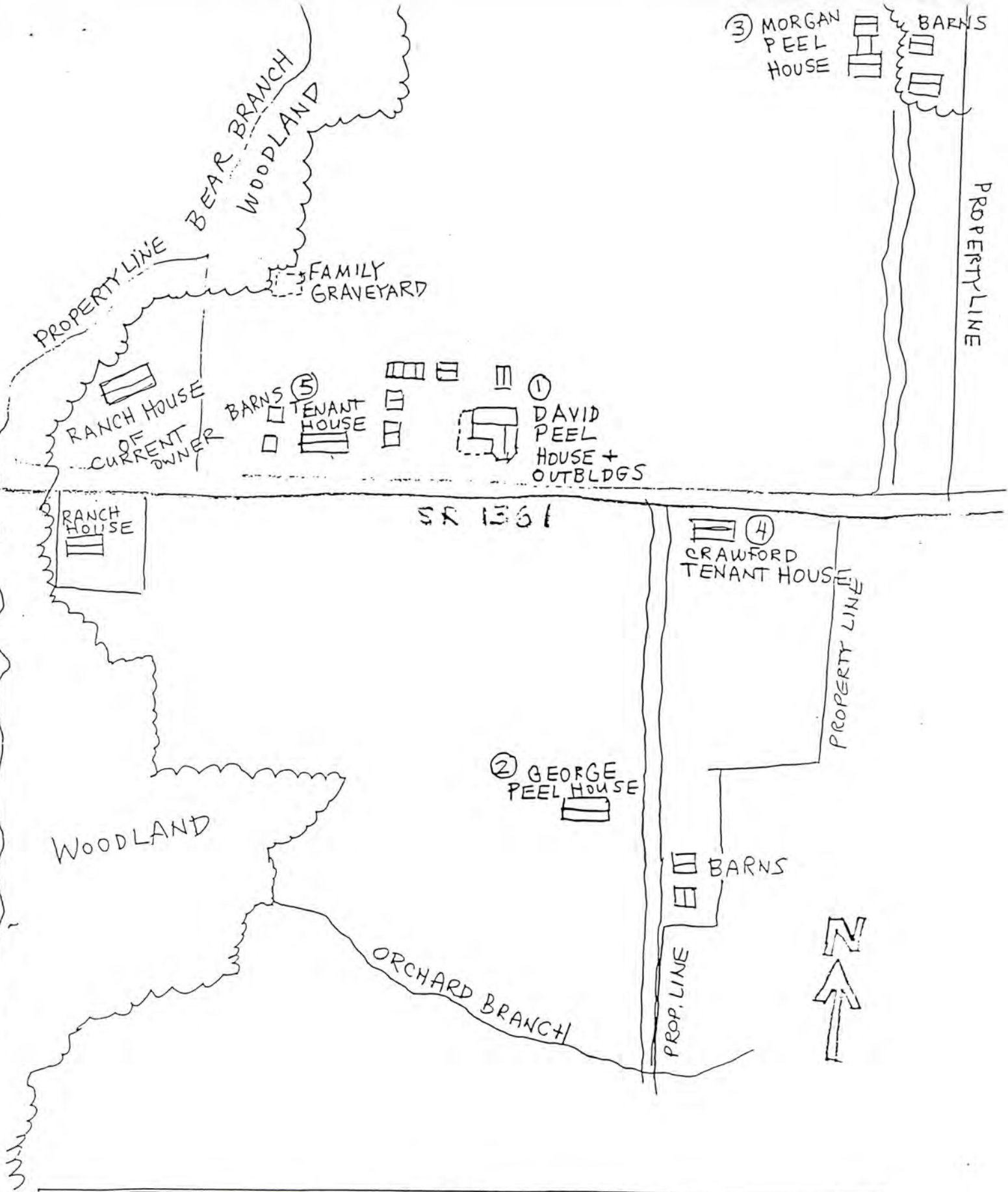
Longleaf Historic Resources

Fig. 7. WY 6: Crawford Tenant House Photographs



Longleaf Historic Resources

Fig. 8. WY 7: Morgan Peel House Photographs



Longleaf Historic Resources

Fig. 9. Peel Family Farm Site Plan



Longleaf Historic Resources

Fig. 9b. Peel Family Farm Aerial Photo
1938 Soil Conservation Service Map: CSP 23B 26