

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC Belfont Plantation House

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER On West side of SR 1411, down drive 0.3 mile North of jct. w/SR1410

CITY, TOWN Latham
STATE North Carolina
VICINITY OF 1st
CODE 37
COUNTY Beaufort
CODE 13

3 CLASSIFICATION

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

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Mrs. Lena Hodges

STREET & NUMBER Rt. 3, Box 450

CITY, TOWN Washington
STATE North Carolina 27889

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Beaufort County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER E. 2nd Street

CITY, TOWN Washington
STATE North Carolina 27889

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

At the end of a long sandy drive stands Belfont Plantation House. Its early construction date is attested to by the pair of double-shoulder Flemish bond chimneys, which are united from the English bond foundation to the second shoulder by a brick pent. Aside from the enormous chimney structure, Belfont is an unpretentious, traditional two-story frame house with attic under a gable roof; the extended eaves return slightly in the gable end.

The house and chimneys rest on a foundation of brick laid in English bond, interrupted by rectangular vents filled with vertical grills. In addition to the chimney structure on the north side, there is a single double-shoulder Flemish bond chimney on the south. It, like the pair on the north, has paved shoulders and a molded brick water table. The house is covered by beaded weatherboards except beneath the one-story, three-bay hip roof porch where vertical boards form flush sheathing. This treatment may have been installed during the decades following the Civil War, the same era during which the sawnwork porch and present entrance treatment were introduced. The central entrance is quite plain, having two-light sidelights and a two-light transom around a door containing four panels outlined in heavy moldings. Plain boards form the frame for the entrance, and two narrow horizontal panels fill the space between the top of the transom and the porch ceiling. Two window openings flank the entrance; they contain nine-over-nine sash and are framed by three-part molded architraves and molded sills. All the other windows are similarly treated, with those at the second and gable level having six-over-six sash. Four windows occur at the second level of both front and rear elevations. A frame one-story gable roof extension covers the north bay of the rear of the dwelling; its date of construction is uncertain. Pairs of windows flank the chimney on each side elevation at first, second, and gable levels. Louvered blinds survive on many of the window openings.

The plan of Belfont is not one commonly found in eastern North Carolina. What would normally be a center hall at Belfont, is essentially a corridor which is abruptly narrowed toward the rear by the projection of the northwest (rear) room. It terminates at the stair which is enclosed with vertical raised panels to the landing. Because the stair is enclosed, there is no access to the wing or outside at the rear of the corridor. Only through doors in the west ends of the rooms which flank the stair is access gained to the wing. The hall is flanked by a parlor on the south and two chambers on the north. The doors from the hall to these rooms are composed of six panels, raised on the obverse and flat on the reverse.

The finish of the house is of simple robust Georgian character, with few later alterations. Hung on HL hinges within three-part molded architraves, the doors are common throughout except for the closet doors. The portion of the center corridor between the front door and the stair is finished with plaster above a molded chair rail and beaded vertical sheathing dado.

The north chambers are simply finished with plastered walls, molded chair rails and beaded baseboards; each has a press, almost full height, built into the brick pent. In the front room, the fire opening is framed by a two-part molded architrave, above which is a scotia profile frieze topped by a molded shelf. The cupboard, which is divided horizontally in two sections at about the height of the chair rail, has double doors with one raised panel per leaf below the division and three raised panels per leaf above. The rear room differs from its counterpart in minor ways: the plaster dado is replaced by

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ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE one

narrow vertical ceiling; the mantel architrave is three-part; the frieze is ramped and the press is half the width. Also different is the paneling scheme of the press: two flat panels form the upper door and one forms the lower door. A closet beneath the stair is accessible from the rear chamber. On the west wall, in the southwest corner, is a six-panel raised panel door which now leads to the wing, but which probably at one time led directly outside. A door between the front and rear chambers has been introduced.

The parlor is a large room which runs the depth of the dwelling. It has a full raised-paneled wainscot and a mantel composed of raised rectangular panels surrounding the fire opening--vertical ones at the sides plus horizontal ones above. A molding above the top range of panels and narrow curvilinear brackets support a blocky shelf which may be a compromise of an earlier treatment. As in the northwest room, a six-panel door once led to the outside. Beside the door, a narrow closet with two raised panels set vertically is framed by plain boards and thus was probably an added feature; it is said to be a gun cabinet.

The plan of the second floor is more traditional with a hall extending the depth of the structure; however, it is set to the south of the center of the house. The north side contains two rooms, both heated by fire places opening into the massive chimney structure; three rooms occupy the south side; one, a bathroom, was created by partitioning the larger room. No fire openings occur on the south side.

The second run of the stair leading to the second floor is closed-string and is accompanied by an extremely handsome balustrade composed of balusters and posts turned with emphasized entasis. The vertical elements carry a slightly molded handrail which neither ramps nor eases. The treatment of vertical panels which encloses the stair through the first run continues through the second run as a tall wainscot. In the hall, the raised panel motif serves as a wainscot. Two jogs in the north wall of the hall accommodate a closet for the northwest room and, at the east end, the enclosed stair to the attic and a narrow closet beneath it. A door of two raised panels set vertically closes off the closet.

Throughout the chambers, the walls are plastered and exhibit molded chair rails and beaded baseboards. In the northwest room the mantel and press is a scaled-down replica of its counterpart on the first floor. The northeast room, while repeating the double-door raised-panel press, has only two panels per upper leaf. Also different is the mantel which has two raised panels set horizontally above the fire opening, a two-part molded facing which encompasses the panels and fire opening, and a well-molded shelf above.

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Finished with plaster and outfitted with beaded pegboards, the attic was apparently always an integral part of the dwelling.

A frame gable roof weatherboarded smoke house with a rosehead nail studded door survives on the property. Some distance away from the house is the family cemetery.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Belfont Plantation House is among the most interesting eighteenth century dwellings in northeastern North Carolina, with its restrained Georgian finish well preserved throughout. Of particular significance is the impressive pair of double-shouldered exterior end chimneys joined by a two-story brick pent--a massive composition of brick laid in Flemish bond, rising from an English bond foundation. The chimney form is related to that at the Palmer-Marsh House (ca. 1744); the construction date of Belfont is unknown, but appears to be later. The property was owned after 1753 by the Kennedy and Lanier families. Reading Blount, who owned it after 1797, served as an officer in George Washington's main army in the American Revolution.

On December 8, 1753, John and Sarah Kennedy of Beaufort County, North Carolina sold for £20, to William Lanier, also of Beaufort County, "one tract of land & plantation in the County & Province afsd. on Tranter's Creek at the mouth of the deep branch, beginning at an Oak on the west side of the mount of said branch. . .containing three hundred acres." With the sketchy landmarks given in the deed, and without the availability of an actual survey, it appears that the house, now called Belfont, is located on this tract of land.¹ (The date of the origin of the name Belfont is uncertain: the Frances Benjamin Johnson photograph of the 1930s so identifies the house.)

Though the Kennedy family was one of the most prominent and wealthy in this region during this period, and fully capable of erecting a dwelling house of this quality, the fact that the property passed to them and from them to the Laniers for the same small monetary amount, would indicate that the house, which would not in any case pre-date the mid-18th century, probably was not erected by them. The house is similar to the Palmer-Marsh House in nearby Bath, in that both boast a pair of double-shouldered chimneys joined by a brick pent--a feature unusual in North Carolina. The Palmer-Marsh House is dated 1744, but the architectural character of Belfont appears to suggest a later building date. The house was probably built by William Lanier after he purchased the property in 1753.

William Lanier died leaving this tract to his son, Robert Lanier, who on February 16, 1797, sold the property for \$1,200 to Reading Blount.² Little is known of the Lanier family and their standing in Beaufort County. What is certain is that the property that they sold in 1797 is the same as that they purchased from the Kennedy family in 1753 for the deed mentioned the "mouth of Deep Branch" and also gave the back line of the property as Tranter's Creek, both landmarks mentioned in the Kennedy deed. The tract was 300 acres in both deeds.

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Reading Blount was a member of another distinguished North Carolina family. He was born in Beaufort (now Pitt) County, North Carolina on February 22, 1757, the son of Jacob and Barbara Gray Blount of Blount Hall. His early years were spent in Pitt County, and later in or near Washington, North Carolina. On April 16, 1776, at the age of nineteen, he was elected a captain by the Provincial Congress to serve in the Fifth North Carolina Regiment, Continental Line. He was a part of Washington's main army and was in the battles of Brandywine and Germantown. On May 12, 1778, after severe losses among the officers of the Fifth Regiment, he was promoted to major, under the command of Colonel John Patten, also from Pitt County. After creditable service in the northern campaigns he was ordered south where he was one of the battalion commanders at the Battle of Eutaw Springs, in South Carolina, on September 8, 1781. At this battle he distinguished himself. He remained in the army until mustered out in 1783.³

He was an original member of the North Carolina Society of the Cincinnati when it was organized on October 21, 1783, and was a delegate to the first general meeting in Philadelphia that year, when General Washington was elected the first President-General.⁴ He served in the state House of Commons from Pitt County, in 1786 and 1787,⁵ and afterward removed to Beaufort County where he expanded his landholdings along Chocowinity Bay and Blount's Creek, owning the famous Chocowinity Mills with his brother, Bryan Blount.⁶ There is no primary evidence that Blount ever lived in the town of Washington during this period.

He was married to Lucy, the daughter of Colonel Miles Harvey,⁸ and granddaughter of John Harvey, speaker of the colonial Assembly, and ardent patriot.⁸ Major Reading Blount did not own land on or near Tranter's Creek until 1797, and soon after purchasing the plantation from Robert Lanier, he began to buy additional lands in the area.

He is said to have died at this plantation house, and is buried here in a plot near the dwelling. The plantation house and a considerable amount of land was left to his daughter, Mary Harvey Blount, who was married to John Myers of the town of Washington.¹⁰ The Myers sold the plantation on December 19, 1836, to McGillivray R. Wilson.¹¹ This deed included "the Mill seat and mills on Tranter's Creek." McGillivray Wilson sold the plantation to his brother, Albert G. Wilson, on January 18, 1839, who later sold it to Edmond Moore of Pitt County.¹² Moore sold the estate on January 2, 1860, to John Gray Hodges, a prominent planter of Beaufort County.¹³ Since 1860 Belfont Plantation has remained in the Hodges family.

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FOOTNOTES

¹Beaufort Deed Book 3:153.

²Beaufort Deed Book 7:326.

³"Sketch of Major Reading Blount", unpublished manuscript by Pauline Worthy to be published in the Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, on file in the Survey Unit.

⁴Archives of the North Carolina Society of the Cincinnati, North Carolina Archives, Raleigh, North Carolina.

⁵"Sketch of Major Reading Blount" by Pauline Worthy.

⁶Beaufort County Deed Index.

⁷Ibid.

⁸"Sketch of Major Reading Blount" by Pauline Worthy, and Stuart Hall Hill Papers, vol. 2, sec. 2, North Carolina State Library, Raleigh, North Carolina.

⁹Beaufort County Deed Index

¹⁰Beaufort Deed Book 20:255.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Beaufort Deed Book 72:256-259.

¹³Ibid.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Archives of the North Carolina Society of the Cincinnati, North Carolina Archives, Raleigh, North Carolina.

Beaufort County Records, Courthouse, Washington, North Carolina, (Subgroups: wills, deeds, tax records, estate records).

Beaufort County Records, North Carolina Archives, Raleigh, North Carolina, (Subgroups: wills, deeds, tax records, estate records).

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 9 acres

UTM REFERENCES

Latitude

35° 37' 06"

Longitude

77° 08' 14"

A	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

B	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY AS SHOWN ON THE MAPS AND RECORDS

50:

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE Description by Janet K. Seapker, Acting Administrator, Historic Pres. Section
Significance by John B. Flowers, III, Survey Specialist

ORGANIZATION Division of Archives & History DATE

STREET & NUMBER 109 East Jones Street TELEPHONE 829-4763

CITY OR TOWN Raleigh STATE North Carolina 27611

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE LOCAL

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	DATE
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	DATE
ATTEST:	DATE
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	

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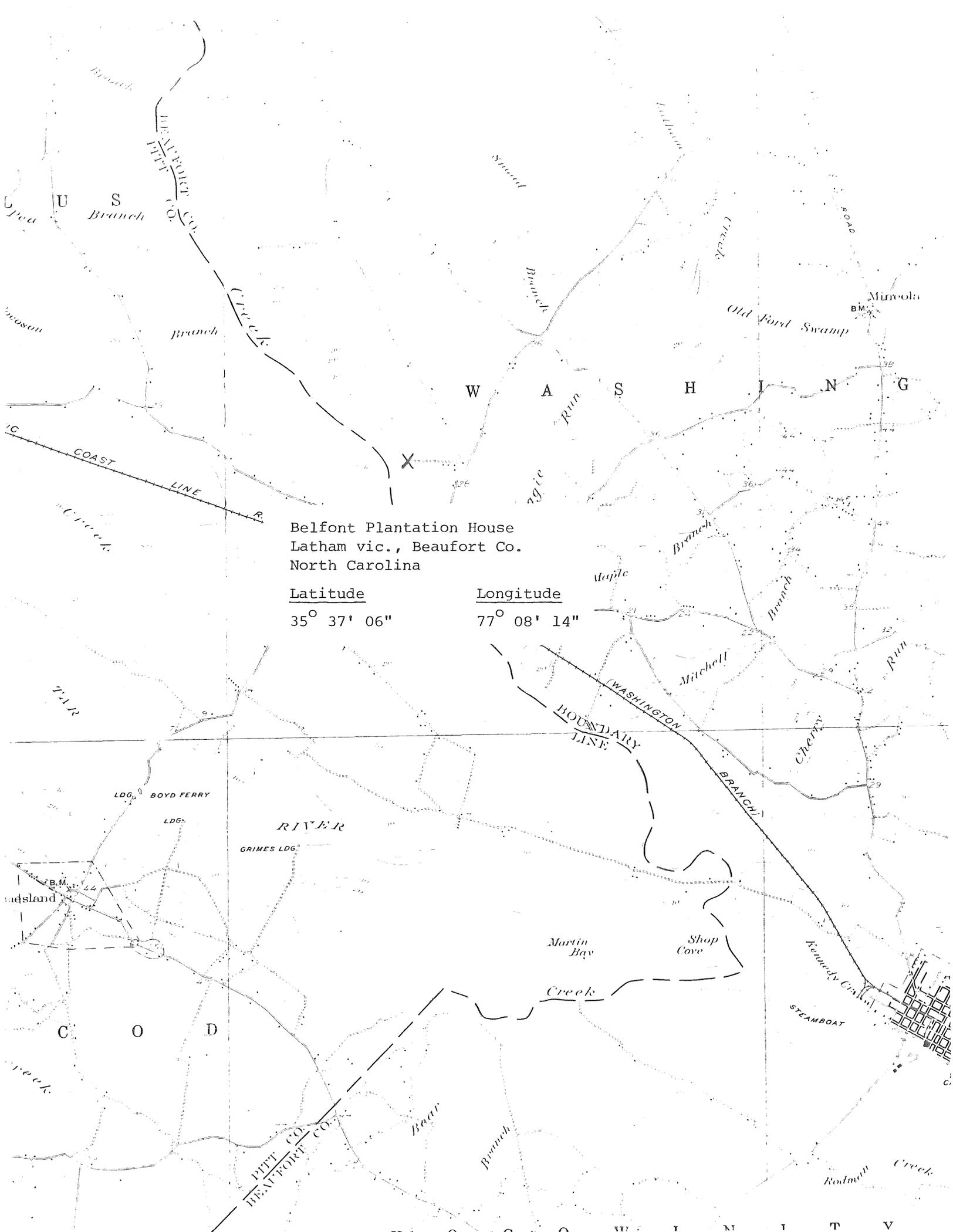
DATE ENTERED

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Stuart Hall Hill Papers, Vol. 2, Sec. 2, Genealogical Section, North Carolina State
Library, Raleigh, North Carolina.

Unpublished manuscript "Sketch of Major Reading Blount" by Pauline Worthy of Washington,
North Carolina, for the Dictionary of North Carolina Biography.



Belfont Plantation House
 Latham vic., Beaufort Co.
 North Carolina

<u>Latitude</u>	<u>Longitude</u>
35° 37' 06"	77° 08' 14"

W A S H I N G T O N

W A S H I N G T O N

C O D

W A S H I N G T O N

