

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION AMENDMENT

### 1. Name of Property

historic name: Magnolia Grove (boundary expansion)

### 2. Location

street and number: North side junction of SR 1309 and SR 13313      N/A not for publication

city or town: Iron Station      X vicinity

state: North Carolina      code: NC      county: Lincoln      code: 109      zip code: 28080

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets the National Register criteria.

	SHPD	5/2/97
Signature of certifying official		date

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is entered in the National Register.

Signature of the Keeper

date of action

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Section 5

-Number of resources previously listed: Contributing: 1 Noncontributing: 0

-Number of resources being added: Contributing: 0 Noncontributing: 3

Section 7House and Setting

Magnolia Grove, a handsome two-story, five-bay, brick Federal style plantation house erected in 1824 for David and Elizabeth Arendt Smith, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1972 with three acres of land that were not defined or described. The following describes the 12.92-acre tract surrounding that house that is the residual acreage of the original 395-acre Magnolia Grove plantation and that forms an appropriate rural setting for the house.

The vicinity around Magnolia Grove in southern Lincoln County remains largely rural and undeveloped. Though in the nineteenth century the surrounding landscape would likely have been more open with cleared fields and pastures, the general area, now mostly covered in second growth forest, retains an ambiance of rural isolation. Over the generations, sections of the original plantation were portioned off to various family members and others through bequests and sales. The plantation house continued in the ownership of Smith family descendants through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, though by 1971, when it was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Love, Jr., the house tract had been reduced to 12.92 acres. (This acreage is actually a combination of an 11.0 acre tract surrounding the house and an additional 1.92 acres, formerly located across the old Tuckaseegee Road, that rejoined the house tract when the roadbed was realigned to the west in the 1930s).

The tract is roughly rectangular in shape, lying in the north corner of the intersection of SR 1309 (now called Magnolia Grove Road) and SR 1313 (Keever Dairy Farm Road). The land slopes steadily to the east towards Hoyle Creek, from an elevation of almost 830 feet in the west corner to less than 760 feet in the east. The house occupies a level site about 250 feet north of the intersection at an elevation of about 815 feet. Most of the acreage is now covered in second-growth forest, though a three- or four-acre area

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immediately surrounding the house is largely cleared, with widely-spaced plantings of trees of mixed varieties.

The main house [a], which dominates the scene from every direction, is the only contributing architectural feature. The house received a compatible frame rear addition in its restoration in the early 1970s at the time of its nomination to the National Register. The land otherwise remains undeveloped, with three modern but small and unobtrusive functional outbuildings, all non-contributing, added since 1971. These include a brick garage [b] just east of the house, a small, gambrel-roof, frame garage apartment building [c] about 200 feet further east at the edge of the woods, and a small frame storage shed [d] in the edge of the woods northwest of the house.

Southwest of the house is a stand of young bigleaf magnolia trees (*Magnolia macrophylla*) [e], a rare type of deciduous magnolia with very large, silky leaves, said to be found only in this section of Lincoln County and in the Chattahoochee River area of Georgia and Florida. The species was first described by the French botanist Andre Micheaux in 1796 "at Bennet Smith's 12 miles from Lincoln." The present trees are growing from the roots of a mature grove that was destroyed by Hurricane Hugo in September, 1989. According to tradition, David Smith originally planted the trees when the house was built, bringing them from his father Peter Smith's place a few miles away. Peter Smith's land was either the same or adjoining "Bennet Smith's" described by Micheaux.<sup>1</sup> The plantation took its name from this grove, and the new trees rising from the roots of the ancient trees felled by the storm provide continuity to the character of the property over its long history.

#### Archaeological Features

Though a comprehensive archaeological assessment is beyond the scope of this boundary increase, several features have been identified that are believed to be associated with the eighteenth century history of the property, and they are described here for the record. Documentary evidence and a strong local tradition indicate that the Magnolia Grove tract was the site of a tavern operated between about 1775 and 1786 by Henry Dellinger, father of Michael Dellinger from whom David Smith purchased the Magnolia Grove site.

<sup>1</sup> Information and sources related to *Magnolia macrophylla* cited in Edgar Love III, "Magnolia Grove: A Country House of the Federal Period in Lincoln County," 1974, unpublished manuscript in possession of owner; copy in the Magnolia Grove National Register nomination file, Survey and Planning Branch, N.C. Division of Archives and History, hereinafter cited as Love, "Magnolia Grove"; and memorandum titled "A list of References Furnished by Edgar Love to Support Designation of 12+ Acres Around Magnolia Grove," copy in Magnolia Grove National Register nomination file.

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Preliminary archaeological inspections have tentatively identified the remains of what is thought to be the Henry Dellinger Tavern, an associated stone springhouse, and the old roadbeds of the Tuckaseegee and Beatties Ford roads which intersected near the tavern.<sup>2</sup>

The tavern site [f] is located in the dense woods approximately 280 feet north of the main house. The foundation consists of rock but is nearly completely covered by earth, shrubs, and trees. The three corners visible suggest that the walls are about twenty feet in length. The springhouse foundation [g] is located another 200 feet northeast of the tavern site; it is about six feet square and made of fieldstone. Off the northeast rear corner of the main house is the stone foundation of a small square-in-plan smokehouse [h], dating from about the time of construction of the present house. The present owner adapted this as a small herb garden.

The old Tuckaseegee Road ran through the property just to the east of the present Keever Dairy Farm Road (SR 1313). The Beatties Ford Road appears to have entered the property along its southern boundary across what is now Magnolia Grove Road (SR 1319); though its path across the property is not precisely known, it joined the Tuckaseegee Road not far from the intersection of the present roads southwest of the house. Significant portions of both roads are present and intact. In some sections they range from ten to fourteen feet in width and are sometimes as much as six feet deep.

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<sup>2</sup> Site visits and inspections have been made at Magnolia Grove by archaeologists John Clauser in 1979, David Moore in 1996, and Dolores Hall in 1997, all of the Office of State Archaeology, N.C. State Historic Preservation Office.

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Section 8

Summary

The 1972 nomination of Magnolia Grove, a Federal style brick plantation house built in 1824 for David and Elizabeth Arendt Smith, included three acres nominated with the house. These three acres are undefined in the original nomination, being neither described nor justified in terms of the character of the setting or surviving historic features, and are thus too vague and arbitrary for current nomination standards.

This amendment is submitted to correct this shortcoming by identifying a 12.92 acre tract that provides an appropriate setting for the house that can be justified under National Register criteria. The tract is the residual acreage of what was once a plantation of almost 400 acres, and constitutes all the land that has continued in unbroken historical association with the house. The tract is largely wooded with a cleared area surrounding the house, and is undeveloped except for three small, modern utility structures. Though historically the tract would have been more open for agricultural operations, with a number of outbuildings present, in its present undeveloped state it provides an appropriate rural setting for the house.

Also on the site is the stand of bigleaf magnolia trees, a rare type of deciduous magnolia first identified in the vicinity by the botanist Andre Michaux in 1796. The trees were believed planted by David Smith when the house was new, and are thus the source of the plantation's name. Though Hurricane Hugo destroyed the mature trees in 1989, a new stand of young trees is emerging from the ancient root system.

Criteria Assessment

There is no change in the criterion (C) area of significance (architecture) or level of significance (local) in the original 1972 nomination.

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### Additional Historical Background Information

The following supplemental historical background information is presented for the record and for its relevance to the archaeological features that have tentatively been identified on the property.

Magnolia Grove stands on land that was part of a 395 acre tract on Hoyles Creek that David Smith purchased from Michael Dellinger in 1818.<sup>3</sup> How Michael Dellinger acquired all of this tract has not been determined, but a 200 acre portion appears to be a tract that he had purchased from his father, Henry Dellinger, in 1801.<sup>4</sup> Henry had acquired the 200 acres in what was then Mecklenburg County in 1763 in a state land grant, and it is possible that he subsequently accumulated additional neighboring acreage which passed to his son Michael before 1818.<sup>5</sup>

Tryon County was formed out of Mecklenburg in 1768, and that county court granted Henry Dellinger a license to run an ordinary, or tavern, "at his now Dwelling House" in 1775.<sup>6</sup> That same court appointed Henry Dellinger as one of the committee "to lay out a road from Beatys [Beatties] old Waggon Ford on the Catawba River the nearest and best way by Henry Dellingers to Dellingers Creek," where it intersected the old Tuckaseegee Road. The Tuckaseegee Road ran from Charlotte to Ramseur's Mill (at present day Lincolnton), and the Beatties Ford Road led from the Catawba to the site of the Tryon County Courthouse, about nine miles southwest of Lincolnton. The intersection of these two well-traveled roads made Dellinger's an ideal site for a tavern, and for a few years it played a significant role in the history of the area. After Lincoln County was established in 1779, the county court met at Dellinger's for the July and October sessions of 1784. Dellinger's springhouse, and later one room in the house, served as the county jail from October, 1783 to January, 1785.<sup>7</sup> In June, 1780, the American army commanded by

<sup>3</sup> Lincoln County Deed Book 28, Page 708, November 10, 1818. The deed description was amended in a second deed between the same parties dated October 24, 1821, Book 30, Page 23.

<sup>4</sup> Lincoln County Deed Book 20, Page 262. This deed identifies the creek as "Dellingers Creek" and can be the same property only if the creek name was changed to Hoyles Creek by 1818. However, the metes and bounds in the northeast corner of the property appear to match those in the 1818 deed, and the property apparently formed the eastern half of the land Michael Dellinger conveyed to Smith in 1818.

<sup>5</sup> Land Grant to Henry Dellinger, April 19, 1763. Land Grant Book 13, Page 391. This identifies the creek as "Rudesells Creek," though it is clearly the same creek called Dellingers in the 1801 deed.

<sup>6</sup> Tryon County Court Minutes, April Court, 1775. Cited in Jerry L. Cross, "Dellinger's Tavern, Lincoln County, North Carolina: A Preliminary Report," May 15, 1996. Manuscript in the files of the Research Branch, N.C. Division of Archives and History, Raleigh. Hereinafter cited as Cross, "Dellinger's Tavern."

<sup>7</sup> Lincoln County Court Minutes, October court, 1783; April, July, and October courts, 1784, cited in Cross, "Dellinger's Tavern."

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General Griffith Rutherford is believed to have paused at Dellingers prior to its engagement with a Tory force at Ramseurs Mill that same day.<sup>8</sup>

Longstanding tradition identifies the Magnolia Grove plantation as the site of Dellinger's Tavern. In an article published in 1904, the historian William A. Graham stated that in 1780 "Henry Dellinger kept a tavern seven miles from Lincolnton at a cross-roads where John B. Smith now lives."<sup>9</sup> John B. Smith was the son and heir of David Smith and occupied Magnolia Grove in the early twentieth century. The tradition among Smith's descendants that the foundations in the woods behind Magnolia Grove mark the site of Dellinger's tavern has remained strong to the present day, and the present owners hope to conduct a more complete archaeological investigation in cooperation with the Lincoln County Historic Landmarks Commission.

Section 9: Major Bibliographical References

Cross, Jerry L. "Dellinger's Tavern, Lincoln County, North Carolina: A Preliminary Report," May 15, 1996. Manuscript in the files of the Research Branch, N.C. Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.

Love, Edgar III. "Magnolia Grove: A Country House of the Federal Period in Lincoln County," 1974, unpublished manuscript in possession of author; copy in the Magnolia Grove National Register nomination working file, Survey and Planning Branch, N.C. Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.

Lincoln County Deeds  
Mecklenburg County Land Grants

<sup>8</sup> Cross. "Dellinger's Tavern." Cross cites David Schenck. *North Carolina 1780-'81: Being a History of the Invasion of the Carolinas By the British Army Under Lord Cornwallis in 1780-'81* (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton, 1889); William L. Sherrill. *Annals of Lincoln County* (Charlotte, 1937), and William A. Graham. "The Battle at Ramsaur's Mill." *North Carolina Booklet*, vol. 4, no. 2 (Raleigh: E.M. Uzzell & Co., 1904).

<sup>9</sup> Graham. "The Battle at Ramsaur's Mill, cited in Cross. "Dellinger's Tavern."

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Lincoln County, NCSection number 10 Page 8Section 10: Geographical DataAcreage of Property: 12.92 acresUTM References:

<u>Point</u>	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
1.	17	484090	3919200
2.	17	484000	3919340
3.	17	484220	3919440
4.	17	484350	3919330

Boundary Description

The nominated property is a 12.92 acre tract shown on the enclosed map, which is drawn to a scale of 1" = 150' from a scanned image of a survey made for Edgar Love, Sr. in December, 1976 by Ronnie Dedmon, surveyor.

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses the residual property that has remained in continuous association with the house, and the wooded, undeveloped site provides an appropriate rural setting for the structure. The boundary includes the stand of bigleaf magnolia (*Magnolia macrophylla*) planted by David Smith about the time of the construction of the house and from which the plantation takes its name.

Section 11: Form Prepared by

Michael T. Southern, Research Historian. Description of archaeological features by  
David Moore, Archaeologist  
North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office    March 1997  
109 E. Jones St.                    919/733-7342  
Raleigh, N.C. 27601-2807

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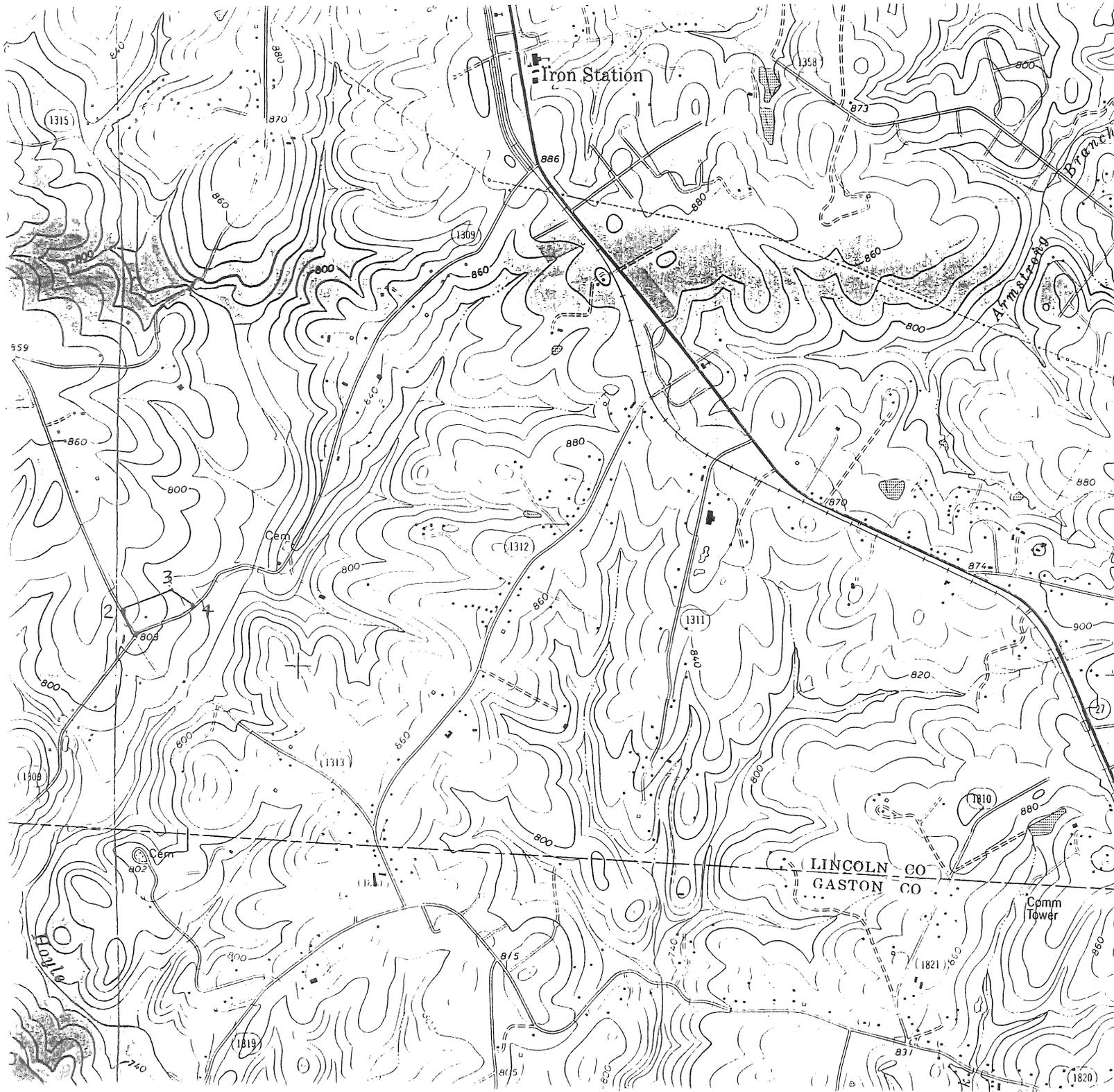
## Photos

The following information applies to all of the photographs submitted with this nomination.

1. Name of property: Magnolia Grove (boundary expansion)
2. Location: Lincoln County, North Carolina
3. Date: February, 1997
4. Name of photographer: Michael Southern
5. Location of original negatives: North Carolina Division of Archives & History  
109 East Jones Street  
Raleigh, NC 27601-2807

Description of views:

- A. View of house from south.
- B. View from rear of house to northeast.
- C. View toward house from east.



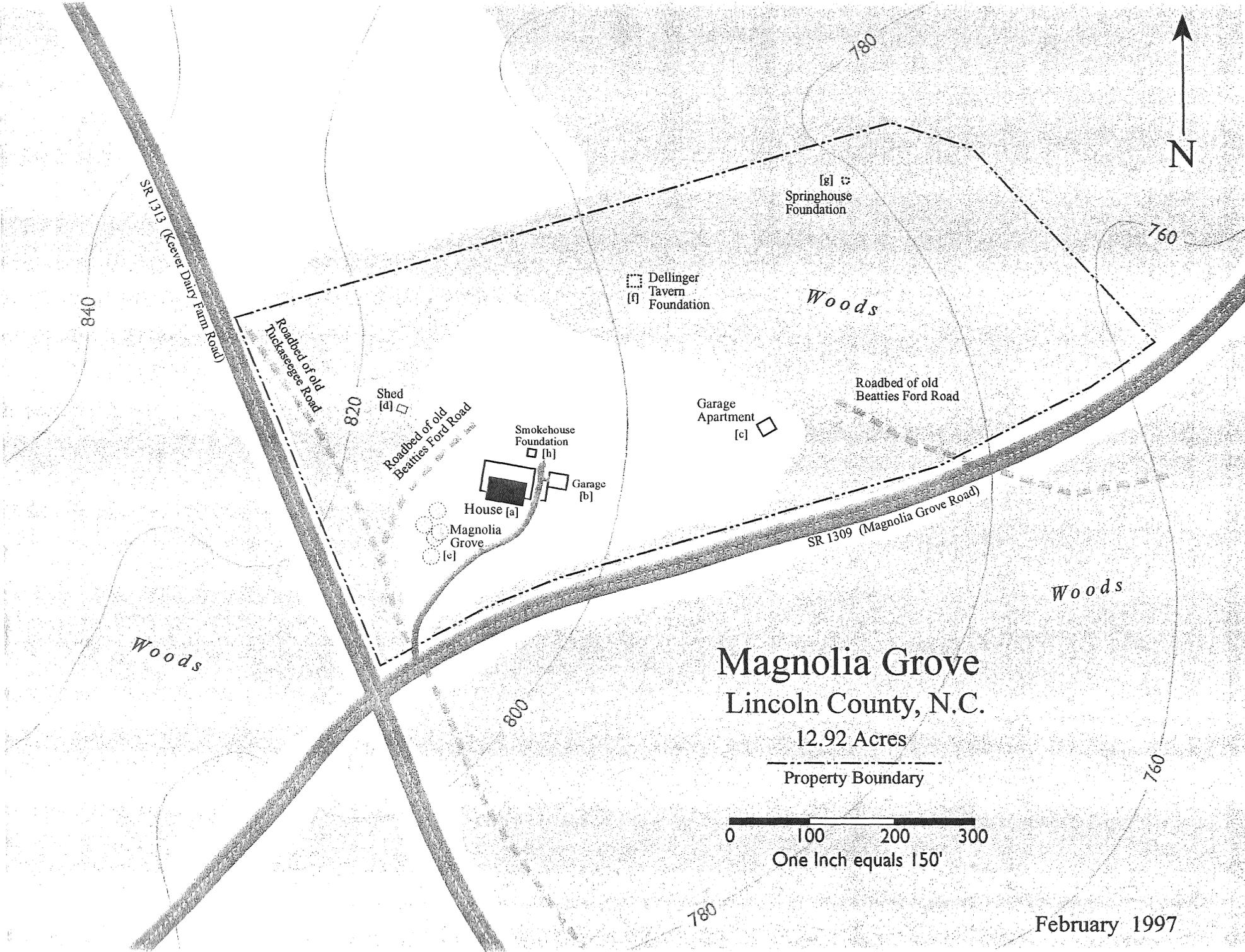
3922  
 (LOWESVILLE)  
 4754 1 NE  
 3921

(NR)  
 MAGNOLIA GROVE  
 (RAILROAD EXPANSION)  
 IRON STATION VIC.  
 LINCOLN CO., N.C.

25' ZONE 17  
 3919

- 1) E 484090  
 N 3919200
- 2) E 484030  
 N 3919300
- 3) E 484250  
 N 3919400
- 4) E 484350  
 N 3919330

LINCOLN CO  
 GASTON CO  
 LINCOLN TON  
 EAST QUAD



# Magnolia Grove

## Lincoln County, N.C.

12.92 Acres

Property Boundary



One Inch equals 150'

February 1997

