**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**

Poplar Grove

AND/OR COMMON

## 2 LOCATION

**STREET & NUMBER**

SE side of US 17

just S of junction with SR 1572

**CITY, TOWN**

Scott's Hill

**STATE**

North Carolina

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION**

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Pender

141

## 3 CLASSIFICATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>OWNERSHIP</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>PRESENT USE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>_DISTRICT</td>
<td>_PUBLIC</td>
<td>☑ OCCUPIED</td>
<td>☑ AGRICULTURE</td>
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<td>_BUILDING(S)</td>
<td>_PRIVATE</td>
<td>_UNOCCUPIED</td>
<td>_COMMERCIAL</td>
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<td>_WORK IN PROGRESS</td>
<td>_EDUCATIONAL</td>
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<td>_IN PROCESS</td>
<td>☑ ACCESSIBLE</td>
<td>☑ PRIVATE RESIDENCE</td>
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<tr>
<td>_OBJECT</td>
<td>_BEING CONSIDERED</td>
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<td>_GOVERNMENT</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>☑ YES: UNRESTRICTED</td>
<td>_SCIENTIFIC</td>
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<td>_NO</td>
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<td>_OTHER:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

**NAME**

Jan Mendall

**STREET & NUMBER**

Route 1, Box 496A

**CITY, TOWN**

Wilmington

**STATE**

North Carolina

28401

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

**COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.**

Pender County Courthouse

**STREET & NUMBER**

Courthouse Square

**CITY, TOWN**

Burgaw

**STATE**

North Carolina

28425

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

**TITLE**

**DATE**

_FEDERAL_ _STATE_ _COUNTY_ _LOCAL_

**DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS**

**CITY, TOWN**

**STATE**
DESCRIPTION

Set in a grove of live oaks dripping with Spanish moss and surrounded by plantings of mature magnolias, camellias, azaleas, and crepe myrtle, Poplar Grove is a large two-story Greek Revival style frame house which was the seat of a 628 acre plantation. It is in excellent condition. Raised on a full brick basement laid in irregular common bond, the boxy house, covered with plain weatherboards, is five bays wide by four bays deep. The nearly flat hipped roof is pierced at the sides by the stacks of two pairs of interior end chimneys. A heavy molded cornice with plain wide frieze wraps around the house and is supported at each of the four corners by paneled corner posts with plain caps and bases. These elements are repeated on a smaller scale on the one-story tetrastyle porch which dominates the front elevation and shelters the three central bays of the first story. Reached by a long run of stairs with stick type balustrades and square-in-section newels, the porch rests on rectangular brick piers set out from the basement. The sub-porch which is thus created has been paved and contains a door which leads into the basement hall. The presence of this basement gallery reflects a building style which was unique to nearby Wilmington in the mid-nineteenth century and designed to cope with the climate and conditions of the coastal subregion.

The rear elevation of Poplar Grove is another example of building design adapted to the special conditions and hot, humid climate of the coastal and deep South. Here an additional sub-porch is formed beneath a double-tiered porch that runs the entire width of the rear facade and features an exterior stair from the first to the second story. The details of this rear porch with its simple balustrade and long flight of stairs from the central entrance bay of the first story to the lawn are similar to those of the front, except that the posts used on the rear are plain rather than paneled.

The exterior finish of Poplar Grove is uniform in detail and symmetrical in disposition. The window and door surrounds have simple Greek Revival style molding. The sash is six-over-six throughout, but varies proportionally in size for each of the three stories. Movable louvered blinds are at all the windows. The central entrance bays on the first story front and rear elevations are identical; each has a four panel door surrounded by a six pane transom and sidelights above heavily molded panels. Additions were made to the house in the 1930s. The one on the northeast is a two-story, two-by-one bay weatherboard wing while the one on the southeast is of brick built only to basement level.

Like the exterior, the interior of Poplar Grove is symmetrically arranged and uniformly finished. Each of the three floors contains four rooms arranged around a central hall which is connected to the next floor's hallway by a straight stair which rises from the front to the back. Each hall has front and rear entrances, with the exception of the absence of a front entrance on the second story. The basement, which was used as a service area, is simply finished with flat plaster walls, wide molded baseboards, and window and door surrounds made of flat boards with plain cornerblocks. The mantels in all rooms of the house are identical; each consists of a plain wide frieze with a molded cornice supported on Doric pilasters with molded caps and bases.
The first or main floor of Poplar Grove is the most elaborately finished, with Greek Revival style symmetrical moldings and roundel cornerblocks framing the windows and doors, heavily molded panels beneath all the windows, wide baseboards, and beautiful foliated plaster medallions in the hallway and south front parlor. Plain plaster roundel medallions are used in the rest of the house. The south front and back parlors are joined by an opening which can be closed off by two, large, four-panel sliding doors. The staircase has a handsome paneled spandrel, turned balusters, and an octagonal paneled newel. Four-panel doors are found throughout the house. The second floor differs from the other two only in that the window and door surrounds are plainer with post and lintel frames trimmed with a wide flat molding. A chairrail has been added to the first and second story hallways.

Poplar Grove still has three original outbuildings associated with it, and its landscaping has remained little changed over the years. The remnants of a brick foundation for a picket fence still define the front lawn, and a brick retaining wall creates a terrace for the back yard in which a smokehouse, windmill, and "kitchen" are located. The smokehouse is a square brick building with a single entrance, pyramidal roof, and partially plastered walls. The windmill, installed in 1919, was used to pump water until 1937. The "kitchen" is a small brick building set into the southeast corner of the retaining wall. Its original use is unknown. It has a hipped roof, a double entrance on the western elevation, two windows and a basement door on the east. The windows and doors on this side are batten and have some of the original strap hinges. A one-story, gable roofed, carriage house is southeast of the house. Covered with weatherboards, it has a large double-door opening on the east and a two bay northern facade containing a window and door. A recent double garage is located north of the house, a glass greenhouse and corrugated agricultural warehouse, which is presently used as the Scott's Hill Fire Department, are to the south of the house. The rest of Poplar Grove's acreage is used as fenced farmland.

FOOTNOTES


2Ibid., pp. 106-108.
Set in a grove of live oaks draped with Spanish moss, Poplar Grove is an impressive and immaculately maintained example of a coastal North Carolina plantation house. Built during the 1850s by Joseph M. Foy, a wealthy planter and Unionist, in what was then New Hanover County (now Pender County), the large, two-story Greek Revival style house reflects the architectural preferences of nearby Wilmington adapted to a rural setting. Of particular note are the house's high basement and the double-tiered rear porch, linked by exterior stairs, features unique to the deep and coastal South and designed to deal with the hot, humid climate. From 1848 to 1918 Poplar Grove was the home of Joseph T. Foy, an influential businessman and politician who helped bring about the construction of the Onslow and East Carolina Railroad between New Bern and Wilmington and served as a county commissioner and as a state representative and senator.

Criteria Assessment

B. Poplar Grove is associated with the Foy family of New Hanover and Pender counties, especially with Joseph M. Foy (1817-1861), a wealthy planter and staunch Unionist, and with his son, Joseph T. Foy (1846-1918), a planter, businessman, and politician.

C. Poplar Grove is a notable and little altered example of a Greek Revival style, coastal North Carolina plantation house. It embodies in its design such regional features as the high basement and double-tiered rear porch with exterior stair which are uniquely Southern building techniques for coping with the region's sub-tropical climate and conditions.
In 1795 James Foy, Jr., of New Hanover County purchased from the executors of Francis Clayton "all that tract or parcel of land containing six-hundred and twenty-eight acres more or less situated lying and being on New Topsail Sound in New Hanover County, commonly known by the name of Poplar Grove." The tract included a "mansion house" in which Foy and his family made their home.

James Foy, Jr., died around 1823, and in his will of that year left the plantation to his wife, Henrietta, and three of their children: Hiram, William, and Joseph M. Foy. Ownership of Poplar Grove passed to Joseph M. Foy in 1838 and 1840. According to family tradition the mansion house burned in 1849, and he built the present structure in the following year. Supposedly he personally selected the trees for the timber to build the house and supervised the construction.

Joseph M. Foy was a wealthy planter in New Hanover County who owned $22,500 worth of real estate and had a personal estate of $56,000 in 1860. He had 64 slaves who lived in 12 slave houses at Poplar Grove. The chief crops of the plantation were peas, corn, and beans. In 1860 production consisted of 5,000 bushels of peas and beans and 2,000 bushels of corn, and a large number of swine were raised for slaughter and sale. Of that year's crop, Foy shipped 525 bushels of peas to New York. He also raised bees for honey production, and he once paid $5.00 to one E. W. Phelps of Ohio for instructions on how to make and use the patented Phelps-type bee hives.

Foy apparently was knowledgeable about the political situation in the mid-nineteenth century which was fast moving the country toward secession and civil war. He feared the consequences that secession and war might bring on the state and the South. Despite his large slave-holdings, he felt strongly that North Carolina should remain in the Union, regardless of the outcome of the presidential election of 1860. In October, 1860, he wrote to one of his sons that he had little time to devote to politics but "should political demagogues succeed (sic) in severing the bonds of this glorious union it will be the duty of every patriotic citizen to be up and doing to prevent such an event and restore peace and harmony once more." He further stressed that "this strife between the two political parties can amount to but little any way. The question is should Lincoln be elected (which I fear will be the case) will the South secede (sic) and how shall it be prevented. My motto is Union Forever," he declared. Evidently the Foy family remained Unionists throughout the war years.
At the same time that Foy was concerned over the sectional issue and the presidential election of 1860, some construction, or possibly remodeling, was performed at Poplar Grove. Unfortunately family manuscripts which give a description of the work have deteriorated to such an extent that the details of the construction are not clear, nor is it possible to determine which plantation structure was being built or remodeled. Nevertheless, a partial description of the work (maybe on the mansion house) has survived in a 1860 letter by Mary A. Foy, wife of Joseph M. Foy, to her son. "Pa is hard run for money," she wrote,

Yesterday he paid three carpenters for ( ) work $ ( ) and ( ) of the house not raised yet. The engineer has been here 10 days and not through yet, 2 bricklayers a week, and not done yet.
The gate is ( )d from the old place and put in the corner ( ); from a half circle ( ) laid off and the walks set out. I shall be a b( ) merchant by the time the man is done, he has been at ( ) 8 days and not done yet.

In her letter describing the construction, Mrs. Foy remarked on the health of the family and slaves. "We are all up at present," she wrote, "that is the white family." She also took the opportunity to offer her son some advice, saying: "We ought to live everyday as if it were our last, for death comes as a thief in the night, we don't know whose time will be next." Irony was in her wisdom, for in six months her husband was dead, apparently without any obvious prolonged sickness. He was buried in Oakdale Cemetery in Wilmington. In his will, Joseph M. Foy left Poplar Grove to his wife and their children and indicated that he wanted the property to remain in the family. He stipulated that not one of his slaves was to be sold "unless he becomes unmanageable or shall be guilty of some vicious habit." Foy's death resulted in much grief in the community around Poplar Grove and among his friends. His fraternal lodge resolved to honor his passing and proclaimed in its "most important disposition" since its existence that his death was the "irreparable loss...of a most sincere and sympathising person." The lodge further stated that Foy had been a noble and true hearted Brother and in the community a liberal and enterprising citizen who in every relation of life has ever sustained the character of an honorable, generous, and high-minded and hospitable Gentleman in praise of whose many virtues scarcely too much can be said.
"Resolved," declared the membership, "that as a token of our affectionate remembrance of our (departed) Bro. the lodge will wear the usual badge of mourning for thirty days."

During the Civil War Poplar Grove experienced many of the hardships inflicted on the homefront populace throughout the Confederacy. According to Mary A. Foy, Union soldiers, operating in the area in 1862, impressed four horses, two mules, fifty bushels of ground corn, 300 pounds of bacon, and 300 bee hives—all worth $1,370. Because the Foy family evidently retained its Union sympathies during war, Mrs. Foy applied for compensation for the confiscated property from the Federal Commissioner of Claims after the war. She immediately took the oath of allegiance at the conflict's conclusion.

Like most Southern plantations, Poplar Grove underwent hard times during Reconstruction. In September, 1865, Edward C. Armstrong, a New York business associate whom Joseph M. Foy had visited before the war, wrote to Mrs. Foy inquiring about the welfare of the family and offering his aid. "Mr. Foy in his short visit," he wrote, "won the esteem of every member of our family and we would like to know if you and his six sons are living and live on the old place. A brother of Mr. (William H.) Seward the Secretary (sic) of State is my uncle. If I can assist you in any way should be pleased to do it. I have lost no near friends by the war.

He pointed out that farm produce, especially peanuts and sweet potatoes, were selling high in New York.

During Reconstruction the value of the Foy real estate fell to $8,000 and much capital was lost with the emancipation of the family's slaves. The primary crop for the plantation remained peas, but peanuts also became a significant crop. Between 1870 and 1880 Poplar Grove passed to Joseph T. Foy, son of Joseph M. and Mary A. Foy.

Joseph T. Foy (1846-1918) was probably the most famous of the Foy family to reside at Poplar Grove. He was influential in local government in the new Pender County (formed from New Hanover in 1875). He served as chairman of the county commissioners for 12 years and was on the county board of education in the late nineteenth century. He had a number of business interests in Wilmington.
where he also was a director of the People's Saving Bank and played an important part in bringing about the construction of the Onslow and East Carolina Railroad (later, a part of the Atlantic Coast Line) which ran from Wilmington to New Bern and was completed in 1890. In addition he was a member of the state senate in 1901 and a member of the state house of representatives in 1903, 1909, and 1913. Throughout his public career he continued to run the Poplar Grove plantation, which according to one writer in 1915, embraced 835 acres and extended "from the main street of the village of Scott's Hill to salt water. The east boundary of the plantation," wrote the observer, "is Topsail Sound. It is a beautiful and healthful location, affording every charm and comfort of a country home and the salubrious climate assured by the salt air of the Atlantic Ocean. Its situation gives it a splendid climate both summer and winter."

At his death in 1918 Joseph T. Foy left his "home place" to his wife, Nora D. Foy. She willed the property to their nephew and adopted son, Robert L. Foy, in 1923. Their own children died in infancy. Robert L. Foy sold the property to Marc and Jan Long in 1975. Jan (Long) Mendall is the present owner.

Footnotes

1. New Hanover County Deed Books (Microfilm), Deed Book LI: 133-135, Archives, N. C. Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, hereinafter cited as New Hanover Deed Books.

2. New Hanover County Original Wills, James Foy, 1823, Archives, N. C. Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, hereinafter cited as New Hanover Wills.


Receipts, 1860-1874, Robert L. Foy Collection, Manuscript Collection, East Carolina University Library, Greenville, hereinafter cited as Foy Collection.

Joseph M. Foy to son, October 20, 1860, Foy Collection.

Mary A. Foy to son, October 20, 1860, Foy Collection.

Works Progress Administration, Cemetery Index, Archives, N. C. Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.

New Hanover County Original Wills, Joseph M. Foy, 1861, Archives, N. C. Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.

Miscellaneous, Foy Collection.

Miscellaneous, Foy Collection.

Edward C. Armstrong to Mrs. Joseph M. Foy, September 6, 1865, Foy Collection.


Pender County Deed Books (Microfilm), Deed Book B:272, Archives, N. C. Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, hereinafter cited as Pender Deed Books.

Pender Deed Book B: 278; North Carolina Biography, 202.


10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY

14.18

SEE ITEM 10, PAGE 2 FOR UTM REFERENCES

UTM REFERENCES Scotts Hill Quadrangle 1:24000

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

A

B

C

D

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION (Also see attached plat map) Beginning at a pipe in the southern right-of-way line and 50 feet from centerline of U.S. highway 17 at Scotts Hill; said pipe being located North 50 degrees East, 236 feet as measured along said southern right-of-way line from its intersection with the centerline of Secondary Road No. 1571 at Scotts Hill.

From the above described beginning point runs thence with the southern right-of-way line of U.S. highway 17 North 50 degrees East, 690 feet to a pipe I, thence leaving the highway

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 Architectural Description by Renee Gledhill-Earley, survey specialist

Statement of Significance by Joe Mobley, researcher

ORGANIZATION Archaeology and Historic Preservation Section

N. C. Division of Archives and History

DATE May 1, 1979

STREET & NUMBER 109 East Jones Street

TELEPHONE 919-733-6545

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

DATE May 10, 1979

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

ATTEST

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

New Hanover County Records, N. C. Division of Archives and History, Raleigh (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills, Census).

Pender County Records, N. C. Division of Archives and History, Raleigh (Subgroup: Deeds).

Robert Lee Foy Collection, East Carolina University Library, Greenville, North Carolina.
right-of-way line and running South 42 degrees 07 minutes East, 755.4 feet to iron pipe; thence South 42 degrees 49 minutes West, 897.4 feet to a pipe in the eastern right-of-way line and 30 feet from centerline of Secondary Road No. 1571; thence with the eastern right-of-way line of said road (a chord bearing and distance), North 42 degrees 40 minutes West, 432.8 feet to a pipe; thence North 48 degrees East, 206 feet generally along a fence to a pipe; thence North 41 degrees 10 minutes West 351.0 feet to the point of beginning, containing 14.18 acres, more or less.

This is the property now associated with the house.

UTM REFERENCES:

(A) 17/245500/3801040
(B) 17/245625/3800880
(C) 17/245460/3800660
(D) 17/245340/3800800
(E) 17/245380/3800840
(F) 17/245340/3800880
KFY
Poplar Grove - Pender Co.

1. Recent double garage
2. Brick smokehouse
3. Windmill
4. Main house & additions
5. Brick "kitchen"
6. Glass greenhouse
7. Carriage house
8. Recent farm structure
Poplar Grove
SE side of US 17 just South of junction
with SR 1572
Scotts Hill, Pender County, N.C.
Scotts Hill Quadrangle Scale 1:24000
14.18 Acres

UTM REFERENCES:
(A) 17/245500/3801040
(B) 17/245625/3800880
(C) 17/245460/3800660
(D) 17/245340/3800800
(E) 17/245380/3800840
(F) 17/245340/3800880