

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name **Renston Rural Historic District**
other names/site number **N/A**

2. Location

street & number **Approx. 2.5 miles along NC 903; roughly bounded by SR 1127 to the NE and Stokes Lane to the SW** N/A not for publication
town **Winterville** vicinity **X** state **North Carolina** code **NC** county **Pitt** code **147** zip code **28590**

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility 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 X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally ___ statewide X locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)


Signature of certifying official

10/16/03
Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register _____
- See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register _____
- See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register _____
- removed from the National Register _____
- other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper _____

Date of Action _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
105	54	buildings
6	0	sites
7	25	structures
1	0	objects
119	79	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

Name of related multiple property listing N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Domestic	Sub: Single Dwelling
Domestic	Secondary Structure
Commerce/Trade	General Store
Agriculture	Agricultural Field
Agriculture	Storage
Agriculture	Animal Facility
Education	School
Religion	Church

Present Functions	Funerary Cat: Domestic Domestic Commerce/Trade Agriculture Agriculture Agriculture Religion Funerary Vacant/Not in use	Cemetery Sub: Single Dwelling Secondary Structure General Store Agricultural Field Storage Animal Facility Church Cemetery
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7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

- Late nineteenth and early twentieth century revivals: Colonial Revival**
- Late nineteenth and early twentieth century revivals: Gothic Revival**
- Vernacular: Two-story frame I- house**
- Vernacular: Late eighteenth and early nineteenth century hall-parlor plan house**
- Vernacular: Late nineteenth and early twentieth century rural tenant houses**
- Vernacular: Frame tobacco curing barn**
- Vernacular: Frame tobacco packhouse**
- Vernacular: Frame gambrel roof barn**
- Vernacular: Frame front gable stable**
- Vernacular: Mid-twentieth-century rural concrete block general store**

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation **Brick, Concrete**
- roof **Asphalt Shingles, Metal**
- walls **Wood, Vinyl, Aluminum, Brick**

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

- Architecture**
- Agriculture**

Period of Significance **ca. 1890-1953**

Significant Dates N/A
Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) N/A
Cultural Affiliation N/A
Architect/Builder **Unknown**
Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property **approx. 1,650 acres**
UTM References **See continuation sheet**

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)
Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Nancy Van Dolsen	date	August 27, 2003
street & number	1601 Highland Drive	telephone	252.243.7861
city or town	Wilson	state	NC
		zip code	27893

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name **See continuation sheet**
street & number City or town state
zip code

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Narrative Description

The Renston Rural Historic District, comprising approximately 1,650 acres of farms, residences, churches, and cemeteries along a two-and-one-half mile section of NC 903 in rural Pitt County, North Carolina, is defined by Horsepen Swamp Creek at the northeast end and by Callie Stokes Road at the southwest end. Sandy Run and Hencoop Swamp delineate the west and east boundaries of the district at the southwest end. NC 903, a gently winding two-lane road, acts as the spine of the district, with historic buildings lining both sides of the road, and subsidiary historic farm buildings, tenant houses, and family cemeteries dotting the agricultural fields behind. Frog Level Road forms a “T” with NC 903 at the northeast end of the district, while two roads intersect NC 903 at the center of the district—Cheek Farm Road and Abbott Farm Road--on land once owned by Lorenzo McLawhorn (1849-1923), for whom Renston was named.¹ Mack Allen Road forms a “T” on the north side of NC 903 a little farther south, and Norris Store Road forms a “T” on the south side of NC 903 near the southwest end.

The eight major farms in the historic district are comprised of flat, open cultivated fields and pastures punctuated by nineteenth and twentieth-century residences and their corresponding agricultural buildings, and are primarily defined on the boundaries by woodlands.² Almost without exception, field patterns are unchanged from the district’s period of significance. As they have for the past two hundred years, crops and cattle occupy the fields. The landscape of the district reflects the dominance of tobacco cultivation, beginning in the 1890s and peaking in the early 1950s, through its well-drained, flat fields divided by dirt lanes leading to curing barns, packhouses, and large gambrel-roof barns that housed many mule teams and dairy cattle. The woodlands defining the fields delineate the swampy, uncultivated areas, and provided the farms with wood, and timber to run the two sawmills that operated within the district from the late nineteenth through the mid-twentieth century.

The lack of post-1953 development in the district results from continuous ownership of the land by the same families--the descendents of the Worthingtons, Stokes, McLawhorns, Dails, Fletchers, and Smiths--since the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These families have preserved their historic buildings and field patterns, effectively conveying the landscape and agriculture of eastern North Carolina during the height of the tobacco-growing era.

The Renston Rural Historic District contains 198 resources, 119 of which are contributing elements to the historic appearance of the rural community. One-hundred-and-five buildings, six sites, seven structures, and one object gained their appearance during the period of significance,

¹Elizabeth H. Copeland, ed. *Chronicles of Pitt County, North Carolina* (Winston-Salem, N.C.: Hunter Publishing Company with Pitt County Historical Society, Inc., 1982) 493.

² The retention of field patterns can be seen by comparing Exhibits C-G (property division maps dating to the mid-twentieth century) and aerial photographs taken in November 1963 by the United States Farm Service Agency (Map G11) with aerial photographs submitted with this nomination taken in August 2003.

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ca. 1890 through 1953, and retain sufficient integrity to convey the district's agricultural and architectural heritage. All but seven of the contributing buildings, structures, objects, and sites date from 1890 to 1953, the era of tobacco farming that remade the economy, architecture, landscape, and culture of this region, and a large portion of eastern North Carolina. Seventy-nine resources are non-contributing and are scattered among the farms. More than half of the non-contributing resources (forty-six) are either agricultural buildings or structures (thirty-eight), or date to the period of significance and have lost some integrity due to alterations or deterioration (eight).

Eight clusters of buildings and associated farm fields form around the holdings of large landowners. Starting at the northeast end of the district and following NC 903 to the south, these clusters are: the Fletcher Farm, approximately eighty-three acres that comprise a small farmstead, its fields and domestic outbuildings;³ the Charles and Maggie McLawhorn farms comprising approximately 450 acres which represent an extensive tobacco farm and associated tenant farms from 1890 through 1953; the Langston-Edwards properties, a 240-acre tract which contains one of the earliest houses in the district updated during the tobacco era, as well as early twentieth-century tenant houses, a mid-twentieth century sawmill shed, tobacco flue-curing barns,⁴ a packhouse, and a family cemetery; the 110-acre Dail Farm, which has a ca. 1850 house updated at the beginning of the tobacco boom, as well as associated outbuildings, fields, and family cemetery; the Dennis McLawhorn farms, an eighty-seven acre, mid-twentieth century large tobacco farm operation with an imposing Neo-classical residence, a 1942 gambrel roof barn, and other outbuildings; the McLawhorn-Abbott property (comprised of sixty-five acres) which retains early twentieth-century agricultural buildings and historic field patterns; the Richard Herman McLawhorn farms, with more than 400 acres, containing domestic and agricultural buildings from ca. 1920 through 1953, including four farm properties that have a ca. 1890 house (15dd), a ca. 1900 house (15aaa), a 1922 bungalow (15), and a 1946 dwelling (15ll) as primary residences, as well as an early 1950s cattle complex, numerous tobacco-related buildings from ca. 1900 through the early 1950s, and historic pasture and cultivated fields; and the three Stokes family farms, covering 170 acres, dating from the first quarter of the twentieth century. All of these families are interrelated, and their common ancestry and history add to the overall significance of the district's history. The non-domestic or agricultural buildings found

³ The approximate acreage of these farms was derived from deeds, estate records, and property surveys. See Exhibits C-G for land division maps. The total farmland owned by these families may have exceeded the total given here since some of their land was not located within the Renston Rural Historic District. Also, please note that some of the land within the district was owned at different times by members of the same family. For example, the acreage associated with the R. H. McLawhorn and D. T. McLawhorn farms (who both received land from their father, Charles McLawhorn) was at times even greater than what has been attributed to them, since some of the acreage they owned during the late 1930s, 40s, and early 50s had been owned earlier by their father, and is credited to his farm property.

⁴ When the term, *tobacco barn*, is used in this nomination, it will refer to tobacco flue-curing barns, the generally square, tall, gable-roof buildings in which tobacco was hung and cured by wood fires, and later, gas.

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within the district--the store, sawmill, two churches, and school--stand on land owned, or formerly owned, by the major landowners.

The agricultural fields and pastures have continued to be cultivated and grazed. Most of the fields within the district are fifty acres or less, and have been plowed to provide optimum drainage of the land. Drainage ditches cross the fields, drawing off the water into the swampy woodlands that surround the cultivated areas. Each farm contains both woodlands and open fields, since the wooded areas provided timber for fuel and construction and were essential to farm families. Crops presently grown within the district include tobacco, corn, cotton, soybeans, kenaf, pumpkins, strawberries, and asparagus, and are similar, or identical in scale, type, and visual effect to the historic crops grown in the district, and convey integrity of setting. Identifiable curtilage surrounds the main houses and some of the smaller houses; these house lots contain large trees, lawns, and ornamental plantings. Both the Charles and Maggie McLawhorn House (2) and the E. E. Dail House (6) have plantings that date to the first half of the twentieth century.⁵

Six pre-1900 houses, all examples of vernacular forms found in the coastal plain of eastern North Carolina, stand within the district. The Joseph Smith House (21b), which stands on the David, Stokes Farm, is a hall-and-parlor house dating to the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The exterior has been sheathed in metal, and the building is presently used as an agricultural outbuilding, but the interior retains simple Georgian-style woodwork, including a three-part molded chair rail. At least two other buildings in the district were converted for use as a packhouse during the early to mid-twentieth century: the Renston School (14) and the first Bethany Free Will Baptist Church (17).

The Spier (Speir, Spire) Worthington House (15jj), constructed ca. 1840, stands one-and-a-half stories tall, and has a hall-and-parlor plan. The proportions and framing of the building date the house to the second quarter of the nineteenth century, but the original interior woodwork was removed and the mantels replaced in the early twentieth century. The rear shed rooms date to the late nineteenth century, and the two-bay rear ell was constructed in the early twentieth century. The house is a good representative example of an early to mid-nineteenth-century building remodeled during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, a common practice.

The Langston-Edwards House (5) and the Dail House (6) feature similar forms, colloquially known as "I houses," and were built in the mid-nineteenth century. The Langston-Edwards House, a two-story, single-pile, three-bay, dwelling with exterior end chimneys and one-story rear shed rooms, appears to date to ca. 1840. The house was updated during the early twentieth

⁵ Charles McLawhorn, Order form from the Lindley Nursery, Pomona, North Carolina and planting diagram, 1927; collection of Charles L. McLawhorn Jr.; interview with Sephen J. McLawhorn, owner of the E. E. Dail House and descendent of the Dails who owned the property during the second quarter of the twentieth century and who designed and installed the plantings, fish pond, and trellis.

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century with a two-room one-story rear ell that was later expanded with two one-story additions. A colossal portico was added ca. 1950. The Dail House is a ca. 1850, single-pile, side-gable, two-story dwelling, but a two-story gable-front addition was added to the façade during the late nineteenth century. A further change occurred ca. 1920 when a porch was also built onto the house.

The Worthington House (15ee), now on Mack Allen Road, was moved back from NC 903 around 1922 when the R. H. and Janie Tyson McLawhorn House (14) was constructed. A late nineteenth-century house, ca. 1890, it too has the single-pile, two-story form. The ell at the rear of the building is original, however, and contains two rooms.

A fifth nineteenth-century house, the Charles McLawhorn House (2m) was moved to its location (according to family tradition, from somewhere else on the property) sometime around 1886. The one-story house, as constructed ca. 1880, featured a hall-and-parlor plan with an enclosed stair in the hall. The house was enlarged, shortly after its move, to a central-passage plan with two rear sheds rooms. In 1903, a three-room ell was added that replaced a detached kitchen. As in most houses built prior to 1940 within the district, the dwelling has gable-end exterior chimneys. The porch across the façade was constructed ca. 1910, and the rear porch enclosed in 1952.

A little less than fifteen years after moving and expanding the Charles McLawhorn House, Charles McLawhorn and his wife Maggie built a substantial Colonial Revival dwelling just east of their first house. One of the best-preserved Colonial Revival farmhouses in Pitt County, the McLawhorn House (2) is a two-story, hip-roof, double-pile dwelling with a projecting central bay capped with a hipped-roof dormer. A generously proportioned wraparound porch dominates the façade. A cast iron fence delineates the front yard, which contains remnants of early plantings as documented in a ca. 1927 planting diagram and order form from the Lindley Nursery in Pomona, North Carolina. Behind the house are the contemporary domestic outbuildings necessary for running a large, rural household of the early twentieth century: a generator house, smokehouse, washhouse, dairy, sweet potato house, garage, and pumphouse.

Modest early twentieth-century houses are more common, and most were constructed as tenant houses or sharecropper's houses,⁶ such as the 1917 Langston-Edwards Farm Tenant House No. 2 [Baker House] (5j), a one-story, three-bay, gable-roof building with a shed room across the rear of the building. The house combined both elements of the bungalow style (trim details and the porch across the façade) with the local vernacular form of a three-bay, single-pile, hall-and-parlor plan dwelling that had been constructed in the region since the late eighteenth century. During the mid-twentieth century, a rear ell that features a large exterior chimney was added to

⁶ Most of these more modest dwellings that were built by the large landowners functioned both as sharecropper's houses and as tenant houses. In this nomination, these buildings will generally be referred to as "tenant houses," with the understanding that they may also have been occupied by sharecropper families.

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the Edwards Farm Tenant House No. 2. More traditional houses, without any reference to the bungalow style, were also constructed, mostly as tenant houses, such as the R. H. McLawhorn Tenant House No. 3 (15hh), the Charles and Maggie McLawhorn Tenant Houses No. 1 (2p) and No. 2 (2r), and the Langston-Edwards Farm Tenant Houses No. 1 (5d) and No. 2 (5r). These are one-story, three-bay, single-pile, and have no exterior decorative trim. Three gable-front tenant houses, built during the 1920s or 1930s, also stand in the district: the R. H. McLawhorn Tenant House No. 1 (15z), the Dennis T. McLawhorn Tenant House No. 1 (9c), and the Charles and Maggie McLawhorn Tenant House No. 3 (2t).

The R. H. and Janie Tyson McLawhorn House (15), built in 1922, is a more academic example of the bungalow style, with a recessed porch supported by Doric-style posts set on brick piers, a large gable-roof front dormer with balustrade, and a leaded glass transom and sidelights surrounding the primary entrance. Even though the façade appears to resemble a builder's guide for constructing suburban bungalows, the house features elements representative of rural Pitt County rather than a suburban neighborhood, including the large back porch with an outside sink and shaving area. The property retains an outstanding collection of domestic outbuildings: a stilted dairy, farm bell, smokehouse, washhouse, and generator house.

Houses continued to be constructed in the district during the 1940s. A brick Tudor Revival style house was built in 1948 for Charles V. Edwards (5m) and a small-scale Colonial Revival style house was constructed by Charles L. and Brownie Dail McLawhorn across from his father's (R. H. McLawhorn's) bungalow in 1946 (15ll). Dennis and Madge Jenkins McLawhorn, brother and sister-in-law of R. H., built a large Neo-classical Revival style dwelling in 1948 (9). The two-story, five-bay frame building with a high-hip roof retains its original windows and features a colossal portico across the façade.

Forty-six residences are found in the district. The fourteen post-1953 dwellings are primarily modest in scale and appearance. These residences include a total of four mobile homes and five manufactured houses. With the exception of the six mobile homes and manufactured houses found on the Stancill Estates Mobile Home Park (standing on less than 0.6 percent of the land included within the district), the rest of the post-1953 dwellings are scattered throughout the district.

The district retains a high number of historic domestic and agricultural outbuildings. Representative examples of typical early twentieth-century domestic outbuildings found around farmhouses in the coastal plain of North Carolina survive in the district and include three stilted dairies, three privies, four washhouses, two smokehouses, a sweet potato house, six pre-1950 garages, and two generator houses.

The agricultural outbuildings represent those found on thriving tobacco and dairy farms in the Brightleaf-tobacco region of North Carolina during the first half of the twentieth century,

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including fifteen barns or stables (five with gambrel roofs, ten gable-roof examples), eighteen tobacco-curing barns, four buildings constructed as tobacco packhouses and three buildings converted to packhouse use (a school, a church, and a house), two commissaries, and five multi-purpose buildings. Although there has been some loss of agricultural buildings, 104 remain in the district; more survive within the district than in most areas of the rapidly developing county. Many of the surviving agricultural tracts in Pitt County are now farmed by corporations, and these entities do not maintain historic agricultural buildings that have no current use, unlike the smaller-scale farm operations within the district. The thirty-eight non-contributing agricultural buildings and structures represent changes in farming and in tobacco cultivation after the end of the period of significance, 1953, but also indicate “continuing or compatible landuses and activities [that] enhance integrity of feeling and association.”⁷

As a distinct community within Pitt County, the Renston Rural Historic District also contains educational, commercial, and religious buildings, including three churches: the first building for the Bethany Free Will Baptist Church (17), later converted for use as a tobacco packhouse; the second building for the Bethany Free Will Baptist Church (18), a brick Gothic Revival structure built in 1922, and the Zion Hill Church (16), a ca. 1910 frame church constructed by the African American community. The Renston School (14), built in 1912 as a two-room school for all grades, was expanded in 1917, converted to a packhouse in 1935 when Pitt County schools were consolidated, and then made into a residence in 1972. An African American school house, associated with the Zion Hill Church, stood to the north of that church until it deteriorated and was lost to fire in the late twentieth century. A general store, a successor to the two farm commissaries and to Lorenzo McLawhorn’s store, moved into a new building in 1960 and is still open for business. Two sawmills also operated within the district during the period of significance, and the Edwards sawmill shed (5u) still stands.

Four cemeteries, two associated with the churches, are found within the district. The church cemeteries are not fenced and stand adjacent to the Bethany Free Will Baptist Church and the Zion Hill Church. The two family cemeteries are located behind the Langston-Edwards House on a rise in a cultivated field, and to the east of the E. E. Dail House in a wooded area. These cemeteries are fenced and include markers from the late nineteenth century through the early twentieth century.

⁷ National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 30: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Rural Historic Landscape* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, nd) 22.

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Renston Rural Historic District, Pitt County, N.C.

Inventory List

In addition to fieldwork and documentation of the resources conducted between September 2002 and August 2003, the following bibliographic references were used in preparing this inventory list: Scott Power, *The Historic Architecture of Pitt County, North Carolina* (1991), North Carolina Historic Preservation Office architectural survey files for Pitt County, published county histories, deeds and estate records found at the Pitt County Courthouse, interviews with Louise D. Baker, Karl Baker, James M. Devane, Mamie Dews, John K. Edwards, Mary Sutton Edwards, Andy Ellis McLawhorn, Brownie McLawhorn, Charles L. McLawhorn Jr., Dail McLawhorn, Stephen J. McLawhorn, D. Calvin Stokes, and James Woolard, and the collections of Mary Sutton Edwards, Andy Ellis McLawhorn, Charles L. McLawhorn Jr., and Stephen J. and Kathy McLawhorn.

The inventory list begins with the cultural landscape, and is organized by farm properties, beginning at the northeast end of the district and moving southwest, following NC 903. Contributing properties are those were built during the period of significance and that retain integrity from the period of significance, ca. 1890 through 1953. Non-contributing resources are those that postdate 1953, or have substantial alterations as a result of large additions, removal of historic materials, or the obscuring of historic fabric.

Key

CB= Contributing Building

CS=Contributing Structure

CS=Contributing Site

CO=Contributing Object

NCB = Non-contributing Building

NCS=Non-contributing Structure

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	Cst	ca. 1890-1953	Landscape. The Renston Rural Historic District, comprising approximately 1,650 acres of farms, residences, churches, and cemeteries along a two-and-one-half mile section of NC 903 in rural Pitt County, North Carolina, is defined by Horsepen Swamp Creek at the northeast end and by Callie Stokes Road at the southwest end. Sandy Run and Hencoop Swamp delineate the west and east boundaries of the district at the southwest end. NC 903, a gently winding two-lane road, acts as the spine of the district, with historic buildings lining both sides of the road, and subsidiary historic farm buildings, tenant houses, and family cemeteries dotting the agricultural fields behind. Cultivated agricultural fields and tenant farms line the five roads that intersect with NC 903 within the district – Frog Level Road, Cheek Farm Road, Abbott Farm Road, Mack Allen Road, and Norris Store Road. The landscape of the district reflects the dominance of tobacco cultivation, beginning in the 1890s and peaking in the early 1950s, through its well-drained, flat fields divided by dirt lanes leading to curing barns, packhouses, and large gambrel-roof barns that housed many mule teams and dairy cattle.
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Land Uses and Activities

Eight large farms with at least sixty-six cultivated fields are located in the historic district. The farms are comprised of flat, open cultivated fields and pastures punctuated by nineteenth and twentieth-century residences and their corresponding agricultural buildings, and are primarily defined on the boundaries by woodlands. Almost without exception, field patterns are unchanged from the district's period of significance (see Exhibits C-G). As they have for the past two hundred years, crops and cattle occupy the fields and pastures. The woodlands defining the fields delineate the swampy, uncultivated areas, and provided the farms with wood for curing tobacco, and timber to supply the two sawmills that operated within the district from the late nineteenth through the mid-twentieth century.

The agricultural fields and pastures have continued to be cultivated and grazed. Most of the fields within the district are fifty acres or less, and have been plowed to provide optimum drainage of the land. Each farm contains both woodlands and open fields, since the wooded areas provided timber for fuel and construction and were essential to farm families. Crops presently grown within the district include tobacco, corn, cotton, soybeans, kenaf, pumpkins, strawberries, and asparagus.

Small commercial or retail businesses existed within the district both historically and currently. Commissaries were operated on the Charles and Maggie McLawhorn Farms (2f) and the R.H. McLawhorn Farms (15f), and a general store is now open for business within the district (4). A cabinetmaker's shop (5e) and a small welding shop are also now located within the district; one across NC 903 from the store, the other attached to the rear of the store building. Two sawmills

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operated within the district. The Edwards Sawmill Shed (5u) still stands, located within the same cluster of buildings that includes the store and the shops.

Other land uses include land devoted to religious activities, burials, and education. Two churches and their accompanying cemeteries (16m 16am 18, 18b) are located at, and southwest of, the intersection of NC 903 South and Mack Allen Road. Two family cemeteries (5c, 6g) are found behind the Langston-Edwards House and the E. E. Dail House. An African American school stood north of the Zion Hill Church and cemetery, on Mack Allen Road, and the Renston School (14) was located southwest of the intersection of NC 903 and Abbott Farm Road.

One small lot of six manufactured houses occupies less than two acres within the district.

Patterns of Spatial Organization

The district is organized visually, historically, and economically, by the large landowners' holdings, which are oriented to the major road through the area, NC 903. NC 903 was the path between NC 11 (which leads north to Greenville, the county seat, and south to the towns of Ayden and Winterville) and Snow Hill, the county seat of Greene County.

Each farm is centered on the main house and its outbuildings, where the landowner, or a member of his family, lived. The main houses face NC 903, with domestic outbuildings and the larger, more substantial agricultural outbuildings to the rear, as seen in the Charles and Maggie McLawhorn Farms (2), the E. E. Dail Farm (6), the R. H. McLawhorn Farm, and the Stokes Farms (21). Subsidiary outbuilding related to dairying and tobacco are located behind the main house and its accompanying outbuildings, down a dirt lane behind the house, as at the R.H. McLawhorn Farm (15) and at his son's property, the Charles L. McLawhorn Sr. House (15), and the Dennis McLawhorn Farm (9). The subsidiary agricultural activities could also be found to the side (east or west) of the main house, as found at the Charles and Maggie McLawhorn Farms (2), and the Langston-Edwards Farm (5).

Each house, whether the main house or the tenant house, stood on its own identifiable house lot, as seen at the Charles and Maggie McLawhorn Farms (2), the Langston-Edwards Farms (5) and the R. H. McLawhorn Farms (15), and had their own domestic and agricultural outbuildings. Tenant houses, such as the Charles and Maggie McLawhorn Tenant House No. 2 (6k) and the Smith Tenant House No. 1 (7), were located down dirt lanes or on smaller secondary roads (usually former farm lanes). Tenant houses also stood across from the main house, such as the Charles and Maggie McLawhorn Tenant House No. 3 (2t) and the Langston-Edwards Tenant House Nos. 1 and 2 (5d, 5j).

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Pastures are located near the main house, as seen at the E. E. Dail House (6) and the R. H. McLawhorn Farms (15). Pastures are fenced with wire fencing and board fencing, supplemented with electrified wires to ensure that cattle and horses remain within the fence.

Farm fields are unfenced, and are located to optimize drainage. Fields surround the main house, the tenant houses, pastures, and accompanying outbuildings.

Responses to Natural Environment

The Renston area is flat with well-drained, sandy soils that are punctuated by streams and swamps. Two swamps are found within the district, the Horsepen Swamp that forms the northeast boundary and the Hencoop Swamp that forms the southwest boundary. A small, unnamed, intermittent stream forms the southern boundary of the district, and the Sandy Run forms a portion of the northwest boundary. A small depression is found on the R. H. McLawhorn Farms (15), just west of Mack Allen Road; this area is also a wetland that has been dredged to make a small pond used to water cattle.

NC 903 runs along the highest point between the swamps and waterways, having developed at that location to ensure that the pathway would remain dry, even during the wettest times of the year.

Drainage ditches cross the fields, drawing off the water into the swampy woodlands that surround the cultivated, drier areas. The drainage ditches are simple constructions, with earthen walls, ranging between four and eight feet in width, and four to ten feet in depth. They form separations between some of the cultivated fields. Drainage ditches are found on all of the major farms.

The average length of the freeze-free growing period is about 220 days, generally from March until early November. This relatively mild climate is ideal for growing tobacco and cotton (two of the staple crops within the district), which need a fairly lengthy, frost-free growing season.

Cultural Traditions

Four cultural traditions have had a great impact upon the landscape of the district: family farming (for subsistence and for market); maintenance of family relationships; tenancy and sharecropping (also an economic entity), and segregation.

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Since the nineteenth century, the residents of the Renston area have practiced family farming, and have made the continuance of farming by family members a priority. Descendents of the McLawhorn, Dail, and Edwards families, who had settled in the area by the mid-nineteenth century, continue to farm their ancestors' properties, or as was done in the past, rent their fields to others for farming. These same families have also remained upon the land, choosing to live on their family farms. The preservation of this land by the same families and their choice to continue to keep the fields in their agricultural use has retained the agricultural appearance of the district. It has also resulted in the construction of new houses and the subdividing of farms for succeeding generations to occupy. The sons of Charles and Maggie McLawhorn built the R.H. McLawhorn House (15) and the Dennis McLawhorn House (9); the son of R. H. McLawhorn constructed the Charles L. McLawhorn Jr. House (151l), and the granddaughter of Dennis McLawhorn had the Nelson House (9j) built. The descendents of the George Edwards constructed the John K. Edwards House (5o) and the Charles V. Edwards House (5m). Lorenzo McLawhorn's great granddaughter built the Harris House (10d).

The tradition of tenancy and sharecropping also divided the land into smaller farms and plots, each with its own house and outbuildings, which was later used as the system for allocating and dividing tobacco fields. This tradition has created the landscape's appearance of numerous small farms.

Segregation necessitated the two churches and two schools, to serve the black and white populations. The fields, commissaries, and store, however, were the only locations where the two colors mixed freely.

Circulation Networks

No navigable waterways or railroads were ever located within the district, so roads and lanes comprise the circulation networks within the district. NC 903 has followed its present path since the late nineteenth century and was paved in 1948. NC 903 forms the link between Greenville (when one turned north at the intersection with NC 11) and Snow Hill, Pitt County and Greene County's county seats. Frog Level Road forms a "T" with NC 903 at the northeast end of the district, and Cheek Farm Road and Abbott Farm Road intersect NC 903 at the center of the district. Mack Allen Road forms a "T" on the north side of NC 903 a little farther south, and Norris Store Road forms a "T" on the south side of NC 903 near the southwest end. NC 903, Frog Level Road, and Abbott Farm Road date to the mid-nineteenth century; the other roads within the district were paths between farms that eventually became formal roadways. Most of the traffic, both historically and presently, runs northeast and southwest along NC 903 between the two commercial, political and social centers of Pitt and Greene County: Greenville and Snow

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Hill. Although many local residents had (and continue to have) familial and social ties to Greene County, most of their economic and political interaction was with Greenville or with the two smaller, nearby communities of Ayden and Winterville. Most of the farmers within the district sold their tobacco in Greenville's tobacco warehouses.

Boundaries and Boundary Demarcations

Farm boundaries within the district, and those that form the district, are comprised of waterways, roads, lanes, woodlands, and drainage ditches. The district boundaries naturally follow geographical entities—the Horsepen and Hencoop Swamps, and Sandy Run—historical property boundaries, and areas with agricultural and architectural integrity.

Vegetation Related to Land Use

Crops presently grown within the district include tobacco, corn, cotton, soybeans, kenaf, pumpkins, strawberries, and asparagus, and are similar, or identical in scale, type, and visual effect to the historic crops grown in the district, and convey integrity of setting. Identifiable curtilage surrounds the main houses and some of the smaller houses; these house lots contain large trees (primarily magnolias, pecans, and oaks), lawns, and ornamental plantings. Both the Charles and Maggie McLawhorn House (2) and the E. E. Dail House (6) have plantings that date to the first half of the twentieth century.

The woodlands, comprised of a mix of hardwoods and conifers, have been a significant part of these farms historically. Each farm needed a woodlot for timber to heat houses, cook food, boil water, and during the period of significance, fuel the stoves to cure tobacco. These woodlands also supplied timber to feed the two sawmills located within the district.

Clusters

Eight clusters of buildings and associated farm fields formed around the holdings of large landowners. Starting at the northeast end of the district and following NC 903 to the south, these clusters are: the Fletcher Farm (1) comprised of eight-three acres; the Charles and Maggie McLawhorn Farms (2), comprising approximately 450 acres; the Langston-Edwards Farms (5), a 240-acre tract; the 110-acre Dail Farm (6); the Dennis McLawhorn Farms (9), an eighty-seven acre farm; the McLawhorn-Abbott Farm (10) comprised of sixty-five acres; the Richard Herman

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McLawhorn Farms (15), with more than 400 acres; and the three Stokes family farms (21), covering 170 acres.

In addition to the farm clusters, there are two other distinct cluster types. The first is a small grouping of tenant houses, the Charles McLawhorn Tenant Houses (2p, 2t) and Langston Edwards tenant farm houses (5d, 5j, 5r, 5x), commercial buildings (a store and two shops -- 4, 5e, 5u), and a sawmill (5u) shed at the north east end of the district that give the appearance of a small village. The two religious buildings, the Bethany Free Will Baptist Church (18) and the Zion Hill Church (16), are located just south of the center of the district and create a social and religious center for the area.

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Fletcher Farm. The Fletcher Farm, 83 acres of which are located within the Renston Rural Historic District, is located at the intersection of Frog Level Road and NC 903 (See Exhibit F). An approximately 40-acre cultivated field (presently soybeans) occupies the northeast corner and is bounded by woodland adjacent to the Horsepen Swamp. A 41-acre tract, which includes two houses and three domestic outbuildings, and four cultivated fields with beans and tobacco, is located on both sides of NC 903, southwest of the intersection with Frog Level Road. The house lot is fenced, and contains large shade trees and lawn.

The Fletchers owned the farm during the early and mid-twentieth century. Nell Fletcher Devane had acquired some of the farm at the death of her father (Alfred Chandler Fletcher) in 1961 and purchased more land associated with farm in 1986; A. C. Fletcher had received the farm from his father.

Sources: Interview with James M. Devane, August 18, 2003; Pitt County Estate Record 91E542; Deed Book 96:40; Map Book 10:86, 1961.

1	CB	ca. 1900	Fletcher House (3995 Frog Level Road). Moved ca. 1987 approximately one-hundred feet to the north; remains on its original property and with the same orientation to Frog Level Road. The house was moved due to encroachment by NC 903 and Frog Level Road. One-story, three-bay, ell-shaped, vinyl-sided dwelling with a one-story hip-roof porch across the façade, south elevation and a portion of the north elevation. Contains original two-over-two double-hung sash windows. One-story gable-roof rear ell addition dating to ca. 1987. Metal roof.
1b	NCB	ca. 1987	House. One story, side-gable, manufactured house with a one-story rear entry porch. Dwelling is covered with vinyl siding.
1c	CB	ca. 1900, ca. 1940, ca. 1970	Garage. One story, frame, hip-roof outbuilding with exposed rafter ends; most likely originally an equipment/wagon house. Stands on original location, and has a brick and concrete block foundation. Converted ca. 1940 to a garage and workshop with a one-story addition to the north gable end. Three garage door openings face Frog Level Road. A ca. 1970 frame addition was constructed to the west elevation. Building is sheathed in vinyl.

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Inv. #	C/NC	Date	Historic Name/Description
1d	CS	ca. 1900	Dairy. One-story, small gable-roof building covered with weatherboard siding. Recessed entry featuring shelves. Stands on stilts.
1e	CB	ca. 1930	Outbuilding. Stands south of the original location for the historic house. One-story, frame, front gable-roof, building with gable entry door and brick chimney. Sheathed in vinyl.

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Inv. # C/NC Date Historic Name/Description

Charles and Maggie McLawhorn Farms. The Charles and Maggie McLawhorn Farm and associated properties comprise approximately 450 acres (see Exhibits C, D) and represent an extensive tobacco farm and associated tenant farms from 1890 through 1953. The current owners, Charles L. McLawhorn Jr. and his family, are the fourth and fifth generation of McLawhorns to live in the main house.

Charles McLawhorn (1863-1934) was born in the Renston area to Lewis (1821-1901) and Mary Ann (Patsy) Worthington McLawhorn (1829-1892). According to family history, Lewis and Patsy McLawhorn acquired 900 acres during their lifetime, and bequeathed 70 to 85 acres to each of their children. Two of Charles's siblings also settled in the Renston community, Lorenzo (1849-1923) for whom Renston was named, and Clarissa McLawhorn Langston (1866-1916) who resided on the farm to the west of Charles McLawhorn's. Charles McLawhorn married Mary Magdalene (Maggie) Barnhill (1869-1948), and they had nine children, eight who lived to maturity. Two of their sons, Richard Herman (R. H.) McLawhorn (1890-1971) and Dennis Torbet McLawhorn (1894-1968), built houses within the historic district. By the time of his death in 1934, Charles had acquired more than 2,300 acres of land, approximately 450 acres of which are located within the historic district. On his farms in Renston, Charles operated a commissary, which provided goods and credit to his tenants and sharecroppers.

The 450 acres of Charles and Maggie McLawhorn's land that is found in the district contains two main houses with their supporting domestic and agricultural buildings, three tenant houses and their outbuildings, and at least thirteen cultivated fields growing soybeans, tobacco, cotton, and corn, all crops grown during Charles's lifetime, confirmed by the listing of cotton planters and plows, tobacco sticks, flues, and trucks, a soybean harvester, and corn harvesters and shellers in his estate inventory taken in 1934.

Approximately 205 acres of cultivated fields and woodlands (what Charles McLawhorn called the "Hart Farm") are located west of the "Homeplace Farm" (as it was known in the deeds). The Edwards Farm separates these two Charles and Maggie McLawhorn farms. No buildings stand on the Hart Farm.

Sources: Power, *Architecture of Pitt County*, 129, 131, 362-364; State Historic Preservation Office Survey Files, PT 360, 361; Deed Book 88:153; S20:340; Map Book 3:1. 3:2, 1934; Record of Settlement 12:7; Record of Accounts 13:157-158; Charles McLawhorn, Daybooks for Farm Commissary, vol. 1 and 2; *Pitt County Chronicles*, 484, 490, 491, 493-494.

2 CB 1910 **Charles and Maggie McLawhorn House (3592 NC 903 South).** One of the best preserved Colonial Revival-style farmhouses in Pitt County, the McLawhorn House is a two-story, hip-roof, double-pile frame dwelling with a projecting

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Inv. #	C/NC	Date	Historic Name/Description
			<p>central bay capped with a hipped-roof dormer. The house stands on a brick foundation and retains its weatherboard siding. A two-story, tripartite bay window is located on the east elevation. The building retains its original one-over-one window sash, and generously proportioned wraparound porch that features Doric-style columns and a pedimented entry.</p> <p>The interior features a center-passage with an elegant stair having turned walnut balusters and a coffered understair. The first floor has four formal rooms with walnut mantels featuring columns and overmirrors. The kitchen is located in the rear ell, and the rear porch has been enclosed.</p> <p>A cast iron fence delineates the front yard of the house, which features a planting plan outlined in 1927. Large mature oaks and established pecan trees dominate the lawn in front of the house. The drive gently curves around the west side of the house to the rear yard where the domestic outbuildings are located.</p>
2a	CB	ca. 1910	Smokehouse. Directly behind house. One-story, frame, gable-front roof, with weatherboard siding. Stands on brick piers. One door centered on the façade.
2b	CS	ca. 1910	Dairy. Directly behind house. Frame, gable front with recessed entry featuring shelves. Weatherboarded. Stands on stilts, approximately 1.5 feet from the ground. Small door located under sheltered area.
2c	CB	ca. 1910	Storage shed. Behind house. Frame, one-story, shed roof, two-bay, weatherboarded. Open bay on right; one door leads into the closed bay. Central brick chimney. Has carbide pit; supplied house with acetylene gas for lights when constructed.
2d	CB	ca. 1910	Washhouse. Northwest of the house. Frame, one-story, two-bay, side gable roof, weatherboarded; four-over-four light double-hung sash window on east gable end elevation. Central brick corbelled chimney and two double-leaf doors, one into each room. Has original washpots and fireplace.

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Inv. #	C/NC	Date	Historic Name/Description
2e	CB	ca. 1910	Storage shed. Northwest of the house. Three portal, frame, shed for equipment or vehicles. One portal is partially enclosed with frame boards for housing peacocks and peahens. Shed roof. Weatherboarded.
2f	CB	ca. 1900; ca. 1940	Commissary/Stable. To the west of the house. Originally two gable-front buildings, one a commissary, the other a stable; now linked by a central shed-roof storage area. Brick and concrete block foundation, with metal roofs. The commissary has a central door flanked by two four-over-four light sash windows, a central chimney, and vertical board siding. The commissary has a basement area that was used for ordering tobacco. The stable, covered with weatherboard, has a large sliding door entry on the gable end. An open shed roof addition was constructed onto the stable ca. 1940.
2g	CB	ca. 1910	Barn. West of the house. Large multi-purpose, light timber frame, gambrel roof barn that housed mules, cattle, grain, and machinery. The barn has an open central aisle, and open eaves at the juncture between the roof and walls for ventilation. The building is sheathed in weatherboards.
2h	CB	ca. 1940	Well house. Small, concrete block, gable-roof building located to the north of the commissary.
2i	CB	ca. 1920	Sweet Potato House. Small, frame, gable-front building located west of the well house. Stands on concrete blocks. Sheathed in weatherboards.
2j	CB	ca. 1930	Packhouse. Two-story, frame, gable-front tobacco packhouse. Located along the farmlane to the northeast of the house. Sheathed in metal siding.
2k	NCB	ca. 1890	Stable. Located on the south side of NC 903. One-story, frame, wood-shingle, gable-roof building that once served as a mule stable. Loft was used for hay storage. Deteriorated condition.
2l	NCS	ca. 1960	Grain bin. Located on the south side of NC 903. Round, metal grain bin with conical roof.

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Inv. #	C/NC	Date	Historic Name/Description
2m	CB	ca. 1880; 1903, ca. 1910; 1952	<p>Charles McLawhorn House [Windy Oaks]. Stands on the north side of NC 903 west of the ca. 1910 Charles and Maggie McLawhorn House. Moved to its present location ca. 1886 by Charles McLawhorn. The original portion of the side-gable, single-pile, three-bay dwelling was a hall-parlor plan building with an enclosed stair in the hall. According to family tradition, the house was enlarged shortly after its move to a central-hall plan with two rear shed rooms. In 1903, a three-room ell was added to the building that replaced a detached kitchen. The frame house has gable-end chimneys and is weatherboarded. Six-over-six sash windows. The building features a ca. 1910 front porch with a shed roof; the rear porch, located on the west elevation, was enclosed in 1952.</p> <p>A lane from NC 903 runs west of the house, through a open lawn dotted with mature oaks.</p>
2n	CB	ca. 1890	<p>Smokehouse. One-story, gable-front, frame weatherboarded building with one-story, three-sided shed addition on the east elevation. Metal roof, and brick pier foundation. One door on the façade.</p>
2o	CS	ca. 1950	<p>Well/pumphouse. One-story, gable-roof, concrete block structure sheltering pump.</p>
2p	CB	ca. 1910	<p>Charles and Maggie McLawhorn Farm Tenant House No.1. One-story, three-bay, side, gable-roof, single-pile tenant house sheathed with weatherboards standing on a concrete block foundation. One-story shed-roof porch across the façade and rear elevation. One room gable-roof ell. Six-over-six sash windows.</p>
2q	CB	Ca. 1940	<p>Privy. One story, frame, single privy with gable roof covered with metal. Sided with vertical boards.</p>
2r	CB	ca. 1910	<p>Charles and Maggie McLawhorn Farm Tenant House No. 2. Standing on a forty-acre tract of farmland, south of NC 903, on a slight hill, facing north. One-story, side gable-roof, three-bay, central passage, weatherboarded frame house with a two-</p>

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Inv. #	C/NC	Date	Historic Name/Description
			room rear ell. A ca. 1940, frame, one-room, one-story addition was built onto the west elevation of the rear ell. The original hip-roof porch runs the length of the façade. The interior of the original main block is plastered; the interior of the ell is sheathed with horizontal beaded boards.
2s	CB	ca. 1910	Outbuilding. Multipurpose outbuilding. One-story, gable-roof, building, measuring approximately 18' by 20'. Sheathed in metal siding over vertical boards. Framing materials are re-used sawn timbers. A three-sided open shed was constructed onto the north gable end for storage, and covers the entry into the original building.
2t	CB	ca. 1920	Charles and Maggie McLawhorn Tenant House No. 3. One-story, frame, three-bay, gable-front dwelling standing on a concrete block foundation. Sheathed with weatherboarding. Shed roof porch across façade. A small one-story shed roof addition was built onto the rear elevation. Six-over-six and horizontal two-over-two sash windows. An interior chimney is located on the east slope of the roof.
2u	CB	ca. 1920	Shed. One-story, frame, gable-roof shed with weatherboard siding. Stands on concrete block foundation.
2v	NCB	ca. 1970	Shed. One-bay, metal, small building with gambrel roof.
3	CB	ca. 1950	Savage Office/Baker House. One-story, three-bay, side-gable, single-pile, frame house standing on a concrete block foundation and sheathed with asbestos shingles. Eight-over-eight sash windows. Norman D. and Mildred Edwards Savage constructed the building as an office for selling insurance ca. 1950. When the Baker family purchased the property in 1960, they converted it to a house and built the neighboring concrete block commercial building.
			Sources: Interview with Louise D. Baker; Deed Book Q31:162; Map Book 23:183.
4	NCB	1960	Baker's Groceries. One-story, gable-front, concrete block commercial building with a central door flanked by large

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Renston Rural Historic District, Pitt County, N.C.

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			display windows. Sources: Interviews with Karl Baker, Louise D. Baker.
4a	NCB	1975	Storage shed. One-story, open three-bay storage building standing on a concrete block foundation.

Langston-Edwards Farm. The Langston-Edwards Farm is comprised of approximately 240 acres of land, including woodland and agricultural fields. NC 903 crosses the southeastern end of the farm, with less than three acres being on the south side of the road. The land is divided into at least eight agricultural fields, which have corn, tobacco, cotton, and soybeans growing upon them. Charles Henry Langston (1865-1938), who owned the farm in the early twentieth century until his death in 1938, married Lewis and Patsy McLawhorn's daughter, Clarissa McLawhorn Langston (1866-1916). Their daughter, Eva Langston (1889-1954), married George N. Edwards, who was from Nash County. George N. Edwards owned the farm during the 1940s and 1950s (see Exhibit G).

Jack F. Edwards (1914-1971) operated a sawmill on the property after he returned from serving in the armed forces during World War II. The timber for at least three houses in the district, the Dennis T. McLawhorn House (9), the Charles V. Edwards House (5m), and the Bethany Church Parsonage (18a), was sawn here. During the 1950s, Edwards discontinued operation of the sawmill due to a rise in the cost of labor and the lack of locally available timber.

Sources: Interviews with Mary Sutton Edwards, John K. Edwards, and James Woolard.; *Pitt County Chronicles*, 484; Deed Books Z27:73, W27:426; Map Book 6:63, 1954; Jeanette Cox St.Amand, *Pitt County Gravestone Records*, vol. 3, 65.

5	CB	ca. 1840; ca. 1910; ca. 1940; 1950	Langston-Edwards House. Two-story, three-bay, side-gable roof, single-pile, heavy timber frame main block with two-story rear shed rooms standing on brick piers with concrete block infill. A side-lighted entry adorns the façade. A two-room, one-story ell was built onto the rear shed rooms; two one-story additions were added to the rear ell, ca. 1910 and ca. 1940. The two exterior brick gable-end chimneys are double-shouldered and were stuccoed during the mid-twentieth century. The building has been sheathed with aluminum siding. A colossal, full-length portico was added to the façade in 1950; the columns for the portico rest on brick bases. House retains two-over-two light sash windows from the early twentieth century.
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Inv. #	C/NC	Date	Historic Name/Description
5a	CB	ca. 1920	Outbuilding. Multi-purpose frame building with vertical board siding. Side-gable roof with two shed additions; one on the south elevation, the other on the north elevation. The building appears to have served as a workshop, stable, woodshed, and place for sorting tobacco.
5b	CB	ca. 1940	Privy. Frame, shed-roof, single-hole privy sheathed in weatherboards.
5c	CSt	Late 19 th cent.	Langston-McLawn family cemetery. Located north of NC 903, in an agricultural field behind the Langston-Edwards House. The cemetery roughly measures 50' by 16' and is fenced with concrete piers connected by metal rods. The markers date to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and commemorate members of the Langston and McLawn families.
5d	NCB	ca. 1920; 1962; mid- 1980s	Langston-Edwards Farm Tenant House No. 1 (3681 NC 903 South). Located on the south side of NC 903. One-story, three-bay, single-pile, side-gable frame house standing on a concrete block foundation and featuring six-over-six sash windows. The house is covered with masonite boards. In 1962, a one-bay addition was constructed and the porch on the façade removed.
5e	NCB	ca. 1960; ca. 1970; ca. 1985; ca. 1995	Carpenter Shop. Large, L-shaped building constructed in four phases: a gable-front main block with three side-gable wings. Covered in plywood sheathing made to simulate vertical siding.
5f	NCB	ca. 1960	Outbuilding. One-story, gable-front frame building with masonite siding.
5g	NCB	ca. 1960	Outbuilding. One-story, gable-front frame building with masonite siding.
5h	NCB	ca. 1980	Outbuilding. One-story, side-gable roof building sheathed with metal.
5i	NCB	ca. 1985	Machinery Shed. One-story, gable-front, metal building with two side, shed-roof wings.

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Inv. #	C/NC	Date	Historic Name/Description
5j	CB	ca. 1915	Langston-Edwards Tenant House No. 2 [Baker House]. Located on the south side of NC 903. One-story, three-bay, side gable-roof, single-pile frame house that originally had a shed room across the rear. Concrete block foundation. Six-over-six sash windows. During the mid-twentieth century, a rear ell was added that features a large exterior brick chimney. One-story shed-roof porch across the façade. Exterior has been clad in vinyl siding.
5k	NCB	ca. 1970	Garage. Two-bay, gable-roof frame garage.
5l	CB	ca. 1915	Shed. One-story, frame, gable-roof building contemporary with the construction of the house. Side shed-roof addition.
5m	CB	ca. 1948	Charles V. Edwards House. Son of George N. and Eva Edwards. One-story, brick house with Tudor Revival style features such as a steeply-pitched side gable roof, a lower steeply-pitched, central, gable-entry bay. House retains its original six-over-six sash windows. Wood for house was sawn at his brother's (Jack F. Edwards) sawmill, which stood at this location until NC 903 was shifted slightly to the north at this location in 1948. The sawmill was then moved to the other side of NC 903 since there was no longer room for log trucks to turn around at this property.
5n	CB	ca. 1950	Garage. One-story, gable-roof, frame garage with concrete block foundation stands to the southwest of the house.
5o	NCB	1996	John K. Edwards House (3728 NC 903 South). One-story, gable-roof, brick house constructed in 1996.
5p	NCB	1996	Garage. Two-bay frame garage.
5q	NCB	1996	Woodshed. One-story frame shed.
5r	CB	ca. 1920	Langston-Edwards Farm Tenant House No. 3. One-story, side-gable roof, three-bay, single-pile frame house, with a one-story, rear gable-roof ell. Sheathed with weatherboards. Metal roof. Shed roof porch across façade. Retains six-over-six sash

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Inv. #	C/NC	Date	Historic Name/Description
			windows. Stands on brick pier foundation. Interior brick chimney. Original beaded-board interior. Has original two-room plan with a one-room ell.
5s	CB	ca. 1920	Barn/Packhouse. Multipurpose outbuilding. Two story, frame, gable-front, weatherboarded, standing on a concrete block foundation. Two, two-story, side, shed-roof wings; one served as a machinery shed. The exterior is covered with tarpaper and horizontal boards.
5t	CB	ca. 1920	Stable/Barn. One-story, frame, gable-front shed covered with weatherboards. An open shed-roof wing is located on the west elevation.
5u	CB	1948	Sawmill shed. One-story, frame, shed, open on all four sides, constructed over a sawmill. Sawmill was operated by the Jack F. Edwards from 1948 until the mid-1950s. The mill sawed timbers for at least three houses within the district: the Dennis McLawhorn House, the Bethany Church parsonage, and the Charles V. Edwards House. Sawmill discontinued operation because of the rise in the cost of labor in the 1950s and the lack of locally available timber. Sources: Interviews with Mary Sutton Edwards, John K. Edwards.
5v	NCB	ca. 1970	Mobile Home. One-story, metal mobile home resting on brick foundation.
5w	NCB	ca. 1970	Shed. One-story, frame, gable-front shed with two side shed-roof wings.
5x	CB	ca. 1919; ca. 1946; ca. 1960	Langston-Edwards Tenant House No. 4. One-story, frame, side-gable, five-bay, single-pile house, sheathed with asbestos shingles standing on a brick foundation. The original section of the house has three rooms. Rear one-room addition constructed ca. 1946. Frame front-gable addition built onto the west gable-end ca. 1960. Retains two-over-two sash windows. Porch runs across the façade of the dwelling and features a central gable.
5y	CB	ca. 1919; 1940	Multipurpose Outbuilding. One-story, frame, front-gable outbuilding with open, side shed bay. Two frame additions were

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Inv. #	C/NC	Date	Historic Name/Description
			constructed onto the rear of the building. A fenced chicken yard was created between the main block and the rear addition on the northwest side.
5z	NCB	ca. 1970	Manufactured House. One-story, side-gable, manufactured house.
5aa	CB	ca. 1920	Tobacco Barn. Frame, gable-roof tobacco barn standing on concrete block foundation.
5bb	CB	ca. 1920	Tobacco Barn. Frame, gable-roof tobacco barn standing on concrete block foundation.
5cc	CB	ca. 1920	Tobacco Barn. Frame, gable-roof tobacco barn standing on concrete block foundation. Sheds located on three sides.
5dd	NCB	ca. 1975	Garage. Front gable, frame garage built on brick foundation of a tobacco barn.
5ee	CB	ca. 1940	Shed. Frame, gable-front, one-story shed.
5ff	NCB	ca. 1970	Shed. Frame, gable-front, one-story shed. Sheathed in plywood made to simulate vertical boards.

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Inv. #	C/NC	Date	Historic Name/Description
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E. E. Dail Farm. The E. E. Dail Farm is comprised of approximately 110 acres, approximately seventy acres on the south side of NC 903 (see Exhibit E), north of the intersection of Abbott Farm Road, and another forty acres that crosses both sides of Abbott Farm Road, north of the intersection with NC 903. The Dail Farm contains pastureland, woodland, and at least eight cultivated fields that contain cotton, tobacco, corn, and asparagus. Stephen J. and Kathy McLawhorn and their children are the fifth and sixth generation of Dail descendents to live in the main house, and to work the farmland.

Elbert Dail (1821-1893) was born in Greene County, and moved to Pitt County during the 1840s. He and his wife, Mary Turnage (1823-1899) purchased the land now known as the Dail Farm in the 1840s. He passed his farm to his eldest son, Elias Exum Dail (1846-1917). Elbert Exum Dail married Alice Allie McLawhorn (1847-1911), daughter of Harvey and Nancy Edwards McLawhorn. E. E. Dail was a charter member of the Bethany Free Will Baptist Church when it was founded in 1879, as was his father Elbert Dail. At his death in 1917, E. E. Dail was a wealthy man, possessing \$9,486 worth of crops in the field, and \$1,775 in personal property including "hogs, cattle, farming implements, farming machinery, etc." He also had a mercantile business, the location of which is not known.

At E. E. Dail's death, the farm passed to his son, George Dail (1884-1975).

Sources: Collection of Stephen J. and Kathy McLawhorn; Interview with Stephen J. McLawhorn; Map Book 4:88, 1949.

- | | | | |
|----|----|------------------------------------|---|
| 6 | CB | ca. 1850;
ca. 1900;
ca. 1935 | Elbert Dail House (3775 NC 903 South). Built by Elbert Dail, and remodeled around 1900 by his son, E. E. Dail. Original house was a two-story, three-bay, single-pile frame building with brick end exterior chimneys. Two-story front gable wing added ca. 1900; one-story rear ell added ca. 1935. A one-story porch with brick piers was added to the wing and façade of the original house. A one-story, shed-roof addition and small screened porch were added to the rear ell ca. 1975. Six-over-six and two-over-two sash windows. Sheathed in vinyl. Surrounding the house is a mid-twentieth century landscape that includes a cement fishpond, plantings, and trellis. |
| 6a | CB | ca. 1900 | Washhouse. One-story, frame building with side gable entry, and a six-over-six sash window on the west gable wall. Metal gable roof. Stands to the south of the house. |
| 6b | CB | ca. 1950 | Shed. One-story, concrete block shed with metal gable roof. |

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Inv. #	C/NC	Date	Historic Name/Description
			Stands to the south of the house.
6c	CB	ca. 1950	Stable. One-story, concrete block, front gable-roof stable with two side shed concrete block wings. Stands to the east of the house
6d	CS	ca. 1950	Wellhouse. One-story, gable-roof, concrete block wellhouse.
6e	NCS	ca. 1965	Grain bin. Located on the south side of NC 903. Round, metal grain bin with conical roof.
6f	NCS	ca. 1965	Grain bin. Round, metal grain bin with conical roof.
6g	CSt	ca. 1910	Dail Cemetery. Small family cemetery started by the Dail family in the early 20 th century; earliest burial is E. E. Dail Jr., buried in 1917. Surrounded by a cast iron fence. Approximately 20 marked graves.
6h	CB	ca. 1940	Dail Tenant House No. 1. Stands east of the house. One-story, four-bay, side-gable, concrete-block, double-pile, two-family tenant house with partial, shed-roof, one-story porch across façade. Two interior chimneys on the east slope of the gable roof. Gables sheathed with asbestos shingles.
6i	NCB	ca. 1920	Dail Tenant House No. 2 (Abbott Farm Road). Stands on a separate tract from the main house, on Abbott Farm Road. One-story, frame, three-bay tenant house with a rear ell. Infill addition between ell and main block. Partially sheathed in vinyl siding. Cement block foundation.
6j	CB	ca. 1920	Outbuilding. One-story, multi-purpose frame building covered with tarpaper. Stands on a brick foundation. Gable roof.
6k	CB	1940	Pumphouse. Small, one-story, concrete block pumphouse.
7	CB	ca. 1920	Smith Tenant House No. 1. (Abbott Farm Road) One-story, frame, L-shaped tenant house sheathed with weatherboards. Metal gable roof. Porch located across the façade and ell.

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Inv. #	C/NC	Date	Historic Name/Description
			In 1939 Samuel Sothel Smith bequeathed this forty-acre tract (part of the Hart Farm; a portion of which was owned by Charles McLawhorn) to Charles Glenn Smith and Lyman Samuel Smith. In 1956 Charles Glenn Smith deeded his half to Lyman Samuel Smith with life estate to his mother, Emma Whichard Smith, who died in 1995 (Jeff Majette, telephone conversation with Charles L. McLawhorn Jr., August 25, 2003).
7a	CB	ca. 1920	Tobacco Barn. One-story, frame tobacco barn sheathed in metal. Associated with the Smith Tenant House.
8	NCB	ca. 1975	House. Brick, one-story, side-gable ranch house.
8a	NCB	ca. 1975	Garage. One-story, frame, side-gable garage, sheathed in vinyl.

Dennis Torbet and Madge Jenkins McLawhorn Farm. The Dennis Torbet and Madge Jenkins McLawhorn Farm comprises approximately eight-seven acres on the northwest side of NC 903. The farm has at least five cultivated fields, growing tobacco, corn, and soybeans. Dennis T. McLawhorn (1894-1968) received this property from his parents, Charles and Maggie McLawhorn in 1924. This acreage was known as the "E. D. Braxton land" and Charles valued the land at \$5,000. Dennis McLawhorn fought in World War I, and married Madge Watkins Jenkins (1902-1993) in 1925. In the early 1940s, Dennis and Madge McLawhorn began planning their new farm buildings. The gambrel roof barn was constructed first, and they hired Charles Jenkins, an architect from Atlanta, Georgia, and a relative of Madge, to design the house, which was finished in 1948. During the late 1940s, Dennis T. McLawhorn was featured in a national advertising campaign for Chesterfield cigarettes, as a "prominent tobacco farmer." The farm was bequeathed to their daughter, Mamie (1927-) and her husband, Kenneth Dews (1922-2002). Kenneth Dews served as Pitt County Commissioner from 1988 to 2000.

Sources: Interview with Mamie Dews; Deed Books A42:568, W17:599; *Pitt County Chronicles*, 491-492; Collection of Mamie Dews.

9	CB	1948	Dennis McLawhorn House. Designed by architect Charles Jenkins of Atlanta. Two-story, double-pile, five-bay frame Colonial Revival-style house with high-hip roof standing on a brick foundation. Original one-story, two-bay, frame wing on the west (side) elevation. Two brick exterior end chimneys. Sheathed with weatherboard siding. Retains original six-over-six and eight-over-eight sash windows. Three-bay colossal
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Inv. #	C/NC	Date	Historic Name/Description
			portico across the façade; iron balustrade adorns the central window on the second-story façade. Intact interior including walnut paneled library; original mantels, two corner cupboards in the dining room, and unaltered floor plan.
9a	CB	ca. 1945	Barn. North of the house. Constructed prior to the house. Large multi-purpose gambrel roof barn that housed mules, cattle, grain, and machinery. The barn has an open central aisle, and open eaves at the juncture between the roof and walls for ventilation. Openings to the upper floor for access to the hay mows. The building is sheathed in weatherboards.
9b	NCS	ca. 1970	Bulk Barn. Metal bulk barn for curing tobacco.
9c	CB	ca. 1910	Dennis T. McLawhorn Tenant House No. 1. Moved to the rear of the barn at the end of the twentieth century from the north side of NC 903, west of the main house. One-story, three-bay, front-gable, frame dwelling standing on a concrete block foundation. Extended rafter ends; metal roof. Sheathed in weatherboards. Original location is where 9j stands now.
9d	CB	ca. 1950	Shed. One-story, one-bay, gable-front, concrete block. Stands behind the house.
9e	CB	ca. 1950	Shed. One-story, one-bay, gable-front, concrete block. Stands behind the house.
9f	NCS	ca. 1965	Grain bin. Round, metal grain bin with conical roof.
9g	NCS	ca. 1965	Grain bin. Round, metal grain bin with conical roof.
9h	NCS	ca. 1965	Grain bin. Round, metal grain bin with conical roof.
9i	NCS	Ca. 1965	Grain bin. Round, metal grain bin with conical roof.
9j	NCB	ca. 1990	Nelson House (3902 NC 903 South). Constructed for granddaughter of Dennis T. McLawhorn. One-and-one-half story frame house with porch across façade. Brick veneered in 2003.

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Inv. #	C/NC	Date	Historic Name/Description
9k	NCB	ca. 1990	Outbuilding. One-story, gable-front frame building.
9l	CB	ca. 1920	Dennis T. McLawhorn Tenant Farm Mule Stable. Located west of the main house, with access from Abbott Farm Road. Frame, gable-front building with open central aisle with two flanking shed-roofed spaces for grain storage and stables. Opening to upper level for hay mow. Metal roof and vertical board siding.

McLawhorn-Abbott Farm. The McLawhorn-Abbott Farm is comprised of approximately sixty-five acres at the intersection of NC 903 and Abbott Farm Road and Cheek Farm Road. The land is primarily cultivated fields, in which soybeans, cotton, and tobacco are grown in at least five fields.

Lorenzo McLawhorn (1849-1923) and his wife, Susan Elizabeth Kitrell (1855-1944), owned this land during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Lorenzo was the son of Lewis (1821-1901) and Patsy McLawhorn (1829-1892). According to family tradition, Lorenzo was one of the first tobacco growers in Pitt County, although he continued to grow both corn and cotton. He owned a general store where the Renston Post Office was located, and the area is named Renston for him. Lorenzo and Susan (Bett) McLawhorn had nine children. This land was bequeathed to their daughter, Annie Elizabeth (1887-1973), who was the wife of R. L. Abbott. The Abbotts owned the land during the mid-twentieth century.

Sources: Deed Books 1264:837; Q41:149; O33:367 ; *Pitt County Chronicles*, 493-494.

10	CB	ca. 1920	McLawhorn-Abbott Mule Stable. Frame, gable-front building with open central aisle with two flanking spaces for grain storage and stables, all under one roofline. Metal roof and vertical board and weatherboard siding.
10a	NCS	ca. 1985	Bulk Barn. Metal bulk barn for curing tobacco.
10b	NCS	ca. 1985	Bulk Barn. Metal bulk barn for curing tobacco.
10c	NCS	ca. 1985	Bulk Barn. Metal bulk barn for curing tobacco.
10d	NCB	ca. 1980	Harris House (1036 Abbott Farm Road). Built for granddaughter of R. L. and Annie Elizabeth Abbott. Two-story frame house with side wing.

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Inv. #	C/NC	Date	Historic Name/Description
10e	CB	ca. 1950	Shed. Small, one- story, front-gable frame building with two side, shed-roof wings.
11	NCB	ca. 1964	Stancill Construction Company Office. One-story, frame, two-bay, shed roof concrete block building.
11a	NCS	ca. 1990	Grain Bin. Round, metal grain bin with conical roof.
11b	NCS	ca. 1990	Shed. One story, metal shed
11c	NCB	ca. 1970	Mobile Home. Frame, one-story, standing on concrete block piers.
12	NCB	ca. 1970	Stancill Estates Mobile Home Park. Mobile Home. Frame, one-story, standing on concrete block piers.
12a	NCB	ca. 1970	Mobile Home. Frame, one-story, standing on concrete block piers.
12b	NCB	ca. 1990	Double-wide manufactured house. Frame, one-story, standing on brick foundation.
12c	NCB	ca. 1995	Double-wide manufactured house. Frame, one-story, standing on brick foundation.
13	NCS	2003	Water Tower. Community water tower presently under construction (August 2003).
14	NCB	1912; 1917; 1984	Renston School (4024 NC 903 South). In 1884, the first public school building was constructed in the Renston area; local tradition states that this one-room building is the core of the ca. 1912 Zion Hill Church. In 1912, the Pitt County Board of Education appropriated funds for a new building. This frame building consists of a side-gable main block with a gable-front wing on the east elevation. An enclosed shed-roof addition runs the length of the building; this portion originally contained the cloak rooms and the entry. In 1917, a one-story gable-front wing was added to the west end to serve as a classroom; it had movable doors so that two classrooms could be combined to form an auditorium. The school closed in 1931 and the building

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Inv. #	C/NC	Date	Historic Name/Description
			was then used as a tobacco grading station and grain storage barn. In 1972 the building was converted to a residence, and it was sheathed in brick in 1984. Sources: <i>Pitt County Chronicles</i> , 29-30, 493-494; Interview with Andy Ellis McLawhorn.
14a	NCB	ca. 1980	Garage. One-story gable-roof building constructed of recycled building materials: brick, stone, doors, and windows.
14b	NCB	ca. 1980	Playhouse. Three-part building constructed of recycled building materials: brick, stone, doors, and windows. Central section is two stories in height flanked by one-story wings.
14c	NCB	ca. 1980	Greenhouse. Gable-front building constructed of recycled building materials: brick, stone, doors, and windows.

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Richard Herman McLawhorn Farms. Richard Herman McLawhorn (1890-1971) (known as R. H.) was the eldest son of Charles and Maggie McLawhorn. In September 1921 he married Mary Jane (Janie Tyson) (1900-1946). When first married, R. H. and Janie lived in the Worthington House (14ee) but within a year, they began construction of the R. H. and Janie Tyson McLawhorn House (15). He and his wife had five children: R. H. Jr., Patsy Jane, Charles L., Daphne, and William Mangum. R. H. served as a Pitt County Commissioner and member of the Pitt County Board of Education. During the 1920s and 1930s, R. H. acquired numerous farmsteads (including some land inherited from his father), approximately 400 acres of which are included in the historic district. This land is now divided into at least twelve fields, growing corn, tobacco, soybeans, cotton, kenaf, and pumpkins. Much of the land is in pasture, since the farm was an extensive dairy operation since the early 1950s.

In 1946, Charles L. McLawhorn Sr. (1927-2000) constructed his house across NC 903, opposite his parent's house. Charles L. McLawhorn Sr. was a Pitt County Commissioner and for four years (1990-1994), a Representative to the North Carolina State General Assembly. Charles L. McLawhorn Sr. grew crops and operated a dairy cattle business. In the late 1950s, he started an egg business, known as "Just Laid Eggs," as tobacco farming was waning. Since the wives and children of the dairy farm workers were no longer needed to help with growing and harvesting of tobacco (due to changes in technology and marketing), the egg business was created to give them work and to give them a chance to make extra money. The poultry business ceased operation in the early 1980s, and the dairy, the last dairy farm in Pitt County, closed in 1987. The farm is now operated by Stephen J. McLawhorn, the grandson of R. H. McLawhorn. Stephen McLawhorn raises beef cattle and grows traditional crops, as well as strawberries and asparagus.

Sources: Interviews with Andy Ellis McLawhorn; Brownie Dail McLawhorn; Charles L. McLawhorn Jr.; Dail McLawhorn; Stephen J. McLawhorn; Collection of Andy Ellis McLawhorn; *Pitt County Chronicles*, 484, 494-495; Power, *Historic Architecture of Pitt County*, 536; SHPO Survey file PT 388.

15	CB	1922	R. H. and Janie Tyson McLawhorn House (4084 NC 903 South). Constructed in 1922, the R. H. McLawhorn (1890-1971) House is an example of a rural bungalow. The one-and-one-half story, double-pile, frame house sheathed in aluminum siding features an engaged exterior-end brick chimney, a large gable-roof front dormer with balcony and eight-over-one sash windows, an engaged front porch with Doric-style posts resting on brick piers, and a leaded glass transom featuring the letter "M" and sidelights surrounding the primary entrance. A one-story gable ell extends off the back of the house. The house has
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Inv. #	C/NC	Date	Historic Name/Description
			a central-passage plan. The plan is intact and features back-to-back corner fireplaces in the rooms to the left of the front passage.
15a	CB	ca. 1920	Smokehouse. Frame, one-story, gable-front, single-bay, sheathed in plywood. Metal roof.
15b	CB	ca. 1920	Washhouse. Frame, one-story, side-gable, two-bay, brick chimney, sheathed with vinyl; four-over-four sash windows.
15c	CO	ca. 1940	Bell. Farm bell resting on a wood tower approximately fifteen feet tall.
15d	CB	ca. 1950	Garage. Frame, one-story, gable front, open entry bay; vinyl sided; side shed addition. Stands on a concrete block foundation.
15e	CS	ca. 1920	Dairy. Frame, gable front with recessed entry featuring shelves. Weatherboarded. Stands on stilts, approximately 1.5 feet from the ground.
15f	CB	ca. 1920	Commissary/Servants house. Two frame, gable-front, one-story buildings linked by a shed roof addition. Commissary section features a central door flanked by windows; the servants housing has a recessed gable entry that has been partially enclosed. Stands on concrete block piers. Weatherboarded.
15g	CB	ca. 1920	Delco Generator House. One-story, metal clad building, to the east of the main house. Side-gable, concrete foundation. Converted to wellhouse.
15h	CB	ca. 1920	Wellhouse. One-story, metal clad building, to the east of the Delco Generator House. Shed roof; double-leaf door; concrete foundation. Metal tank.
15i	CB	ca. 1920	Corn Barn. Large, frame, front gable, metal and plank-clad building standing on a concrete block foundation.
15j	CB	ca. 1930	Tobacco Barn. Frame, gable-roof tobacco barn standing on concrete block foundation. Added sheds around perimeter of

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Inv. #	C/NC	Date	Historic Name/Description building.
15k	CB	ca. 1930	Tobacco Barn. Clay tile tobacco barn. Although the roof is missing, all four walls are intact.
15l	CB	ca. 1920	Packhouse. Frame, two-story packhouse sheathed in wood siding. Shed-roof addition on south gable end elevation. A breezeway connects a concrete block and clay tile addition to the east elevation. Grading shed for sorting tobacco attached to addition.
15m	NCB	ca. 1965	Grain Bin. Round, metal grain bin with conical roof.
15n	NCB	ca. 1965	Grain Bin. Round, metal grain bin with conical roof.
15o	NCB	ca. 1965	Grain Bin. Round, metal grain bin with conical roof.
15p	NCB	ca. 1985	Grain Bin. Round, metal grain bin with conical roof.
15q	NCB	ca. 1990	Feed scale shed. Metal shed with four small grain bins attached at corners.
15r	NCB	ca. 1975	Equipment Building. One-story, metal pre-fabricated building standing on a concrete block foundation.
15s	CB	ca. 1920	Mule Stable. Frame, gable-front building with open central aisle with two flanking spaces for grain storage and stables. Shed-roof wing on each eave elevation.
15t	CB	ca. 1952	Cattle Shed. Down lane, northwest of the house. Long, narrow, building. Shed roof, open on all sides.
15u	CB	ca. 1952	Garage and Corral Barn. Down lane, northwest of the house. Front-gable barn joined to side-gable garage by shed-roof corral for cattle. Metal sided.
15v	CB	ca. 1952	Dairy Office/Milking Parlor. Down lane, northwest of the house. One-story, side-gable, six-bay, concrete block building with an original two-bay concrete block wing. Shed roof additions constructed of pierced concrete blocks are on both

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Inv. #	C/NC	Date	Historic Name/Description
			gable elevations. Metal roof. Four-light sash hinged on top.
15w	CB	ca. 1952	Cattle Feeding Trough. Down lane, northwest of the house. Long, narrow building. Shed roof; open on south side; sheathed on north side.
15x	NCB	ca. 1952	Machine Shed. Down lane, northwest of the house. Burned; now in ruinous condition.
15y	CB	ca. 1930	Tobacco Barn. Behind Garage and Corral Barn. Frame, gable-roof tobacco barn standing on concrete block foundation.
15z	CB	Ca. 1920	R. H. McLawhorn Tenant House No. 1 (Mack Allen Road). One-story, gable-front frame building with metal roof. Three bay. Central entrance. Stands on concrete block foundation. Retains six-over-six sash windows.
15aa	NCB	ca. 1900	R. H. McLawhorn Tenant House No 2. (1100 Abbott Farm Road). Front-gable, one-story, frame tenant house veneered in brick.
15bb	NCB	ca. 1995	Shed. One-story, shed-roof, frame outbuilding sheathed in wood siding. Associated with Tenant House No. 2.
15cc	NCB	ca. 1995	Shed. One-story, gable-roof, frame outbuilding standing on a cement block foundation. Associated with Tenant House No. 2.
15dd	CB	ca. 1900	Worthington House. Moved ca. 1922 from the site of the R. H. McLawhorn House, and now sits facing south towards Mack Allen Road. Property was owned by the Worthington family during the nineteenth century. Two-story, side-gable frame house with a rear two-room ell. House features a central-passage, single-pile plan with two interior chimneys. A one-story hip-roof porch runs the length of the façade and retains original porch posts. Sheathed in weatherboards. Stands on a concrete block foundation. Metal roof. Interior retains beaded board sheathing. Used as a tenant house by R. H. McLawhorn.
15ee	CB	ca. 1925	Barn. Small, multipurpose, front-gable frame barn with an open central aisle flanked by shed-roof areas for grain storage and

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Inv. #	C/NC	Date	Historic Name/Description
			stables. Housed mules. Sheathed with weatherboards; stands on a concrete block foundation. Metal roof. Associated with the Worthington House.
15ff	CB	ca. 1925	Outbuilding. One-story, gable-front frame building sheathed in weatherboards and standing on a concrete block foundation. Later pent roof added to gable end. Metal roof. Associated with the Worthington House.
15gg	CB	ca. 1925.	Tobacco Barn. Frame, gable-roof tobacco barn standing on concrete block foundation. Metal roof with ventilator. Associated with the Worthington House.
15hh	CB	ca. 1900	R. H. McLawhorn Tenant House No. 3 (4043 NC 903 South). One-and-one-half story, three-bay, single-pile frame building with a one-story gable-roof rear ell. Screened-in, shed-roof porch. Interior brick chimney. Concrete block foundation. Sheathed in weatherboards.
15ii	NCB	ca. 1980	Equipment Shed. One-story, gable-front metal building for housing agricultural equipment. Behind Tenant House No. 3.
15jj	CB	ca. 1840	Spier Worthington House. One-and-a-half story, hall-and-parlor plan, frame house with a side-gable roof stands on a brick pier foundation. The steeply-pitched roof and heavy-timber framing of the building suggest a pre-Civil War era dwelling, although the original interior woodwork has been removed and the mantels date to the early twentieth century. The two exterior-end brick chimneys have been stuccoed. The rear shed rooms date to the late nineteenth century, and the two-bay rear ell dates to the twentieth century. Shed roof porch across the façade. One-over-one sash windows. Used as a tenant house by R. H. McLawhorn.
15kk	NCB	ca. 1990	Equipment Shed. One-story, metal building for housing agricultural equipment. Behind Spier Worthington House.
15ll	CB	1946	Charles L. McLawhorn Sr. House (4079 NC 903 South). One-and-one-half story, side-gable, frame dwelling standing on a brick foundation comprising five sections: a five-bay portion

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Inv. #	C/NC	Date	Historic Name/Description
			with a projecting front gable with entry portico; a one-bay hyphen to the west; a two-bay, one-story, side-gable wing to the west; a one-bay gable-roof wing to the east, and a later one-story gable roof ell. Sheathed with vinyl siding.
15mm	CB	ca. 1950	Pool House. One-story, shallow-gable roof, concrete block building with a gable entry. Small, three-light hinged sash windows.
15nn	NCB	ca. 1985	Outbuilding. Small, one-story, three-bay, side-gable frame outbuilding covered in weatherboards. Shed roof porch across façade.
15oo	CB	ca. 1920	Barn. Large multi-purpose gambrel roof barn with two hay hoods. Housed mules, cattle, grain, and machinery. The barn has an open central aisle, and open eaves at the juncture between the roof and walls for ventilation. The building is sheathed in weatherboards.
15pp	NCB	ca. 1960	Stable. One-story, concrete block stable with shallow gable roof.
15qq	CB	ca. 1950	Tobacco Barns. Two gable-roof metal tobacco barns with poured concrete floors connected with a shed that covered a shared furnace. This was an experimental building type that bridged the technology between frame tobacco curing barns and bulk barns.
15rr	NCB	Late 1950s	Poultry House. Long narrow gable roof building constructed on posts. Partial height walls on eave elevations.
15ss	NCB	Late 1950s	Poultry House. Long narrow gable roof building constructed on posts. Partial height walls on eave elevations.
15tt	NCB	Late 1950s	Poultry House. Long narrow gable roof building constructed on posts. Partial height walls on eave elevations.
15uu	CB	ca. 1930	Tobacco Barn. Frame, gable-roof tobacco barn standing on concrete block foundation. Sheathed in tarpaper.

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Inv. #	C/NC	Date	Historic Name/Description
15vv	CB	ca. 1930	Tobacco Barn. Frame, gable-roof tobacco barn standing on concrete block foundation. Sheathed in tarpaper.
15ww	CB	ca. 1930	Tobacco Barn. Frame, gable-roof tobacco barn standing on concrete block foundation. Sheathed in tarpaper.
15xx	CB	ca. 1930	Tobacco Barn. Frame, gable-roof tobacco barn standing on concrete block foundation. Sheathed in tarpaper.
15yy	CB	ca. 1930	Tobacco Barn. Frame, gable-roof tobacco barn standing on concrete block foundation. Sheathed in tarpaper.
15zz	CB	ca. 1900; 1925	R. H. McLawhorn Tenant Farm No. 4 (4197 NC 903 South). R. H. McLawhorn acquired this farm ca. 1925. One-and-one-half story, three-bay, hip-roof frame dwelling with a central hip-roof dormer. Six-over-six sash windows. Sidelights and transom surround entrance. Stands on brick piers. Local tradition states that the one-story gable rear ell was formerly a free-standing dwelling that was moved to join the main block. Sheathed with weatherboard siding. Porch on façade features paired columns linked by sawn fretwork. Porte cochere on east elevation. Six-over-six sash windows.
15aaa	CB	ca. 1925	Outbuilding. One-story, gable-front building flanked by shed additions. Weatherboard siding and metal roof.
15bbb	CB	ca. 1940	Machine Shop. One-story, three-bay, side-gable, machinery shed/shop building constructed of concrete block. Extended shed roof porch supported by metal posts across the façade.
15ccc	CB	ca. 1925	Barn. Frame, gambrel roof barn with open central aisle flanked by grain storage and stable areas. Sheathed with weatherboards and topped by a metal roof.
15ddd	NCB	ca. 1970	Shed. Gable metal roof supported by wood poles. Approximately fifteen feet by thirty-five feet.
15eee	NCS	ca. 1980	Bulk Barns. Four metal bulk barn for curing tobacco joined by shed roof across the front.

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Inv. #	C/NC	Date	Historic Name/Description
15fff	NCS	ca. 1965	Grain bin. Round, metal grain bin with conical roof.
15ggg	NCS	ca. 1965	Grain bin. Round, metal grain bin with conical roof.
15hhh	NCS	ca. 1965	Grain bin. Round, metal grain bin with conical roof.
15iii	NCS	ca. 1965	Grain bin. Round, metal grain bin with conical roof.
15jjj	NCS	ca. 1965	Grain bin. Round, metal grain bin with conical roof.
15kkk	CS	ca. 1940	Pumphouse. One-story, gable roof, concrete block building Located to the south of the house.
15lll	CB	ca. 1925	Tobacco Barn. Frame, gable-roof tobacco barn standing on concrete block foundation. Located to the south of the house, along NC 903 in a wooded area.
15mmm	CB	ca. 1925	Tobacco Barn. Frame, gable-roof tobacco barn standing on concrete block foundation. Located to the south of the house, along NC 903 in a wooded area.
15nnn	CB	ca. 1925	Tobacco Barn. Frame, gable-roof tobacco barn standing on concrete block foundation. Located to the south of the house, along NC 903 in a wooded area.
15ooo	CB	ca. 1925	Tobacco Barn. Frame, gable-roof tobacco barn standing on concrete block foundation. Located to the south of the house, along NC 903 in a wooded area.
16	NCB	ca. 1912; ca. 1960; 2003	Zion Hill Church (Northeast corner of NC 903 South and Mack Allen Road). Founded in 1910 by pastor A.L. Miller, and deacons G.W. Stokes, David Burney, Pink J.R. Wilson, and James W. Stocks. According to local tradition, the core of this African American church is a one-room, frame school that had been constructed in 1885 by Lorenzo McLawhorn, and replaced in 1912 (see entry 13). The gable-end of the frame building (the façade) has been sheathed in brick; the remaining section is sheathed in vinyl. The original gable-front, one-story building stands on a concrete block foundation. The building features a side-gable, concrete block wing addition on the (rear) north

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Inv. #	C/NC	Date	Historic Name/Description
			side. A portico and handicapped access ramp was added to the façade in 2003. Source: <i>Pitt County Chronicles</i> , 493-494.
16a	CSt	ca. 1910	Cemetery. Unfenced burial ground located to the north of the church. There are approximately fifty marked burials and at least as many unmarked graves (suggested by depressed areas in the soil). The stones are randomly placed, and are arranged by familial groups. Earliest burial dates to July 1910, and the cemetery is still in use. Families interred in the cemetery include Stocks, Carr, Spencer, Brown, Carmon, Blount, Edwards, Williams, Ward, and Phillips.
17	CB	1881; moved 1922	Former Bethany Free Will Baptist Church. Constructed as the first building for the Bethany Free Will Baptist congregation, this small gable-front building originally stood on the north side of NC 903. The church was then converted to a tobacco packhouse. The building had a two-door, gable-front façade and three-bay side elevation. The building retains its beaded wood interior sheathing, and board-and-batten ceiling.
18	CB	1922-1925; 1949; ca. 1970; 1981	Bethany Free Will Baptist Church (4616 NC 903 South). The Bethany Free Will Baptist congregation was established in 1879. The first building was constructed in 1881 and was moved across the road when this building was constructed 1922-1925 (see entry 16). This Gothic Revival brick building features a projecting entrance bay with buttressed corners and a crenellated, battered tower. Recessed entry with an arched opening. A parapet wall tops the initial bays on the side elevations. Buttresses also adorn the corners of the main block. Round arch stained-glass windows with Gothic arch tracery adorn the façade and the initial bays on the side elevations. The remaining side windows are pointed arch and contain stained glass. Exposed rafter tails. The interior has been renovated and a one-bay deep, one-story addition built onto the rear in 1949 and a large, side-gable addition erected in the mid-twentieth century.

Source: *Pitt County Chronicles*. 12-13.

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Inv. #	C/NC	Date	Historic Name/Description
18a	NCB	ca. 1955	Parsonage. One-story, four-bay, double-pile, side-gable ranch house with a carport on the north elevation. Vinyl sided.
18b	Cst	ca. 1880	Cemetery. Located north of the church. Not fenced. Approximately one-hundred gravemarkers ranging in date from the late nineteenth century to the present.
19	NCB	ca. 1955	House (3114 NC 903 South). One-story brick ranch house.
19b	NCB	ca. 1975	Manufactured House. One-story, frame, shallow, gable roof.
20	NCB	2003	House (4325 NC 903 South). One-story brick ranch house.

Stokes Farm. David Stokes moved to the Renston area in 1913, and purchased three farms that totaled 208 acres, of which 170 acres are located within the district. These farms are bounded on the northwest by the Sandy Run and on the southeast by Hencoop Swamp. At least eleven cultivated fields, growing corn, soybeans, and tobacco, are found on this acreage. In 1915, David Stokes moved a late eighteenth century house (21b) away from the road and constructed a new, pyramidal roof cottage to the east of the original house site. In 1929, his son, Callie Stokes, constructed a frame bungalow to the southwest.

Sources: Interview with D. Calvin Stokes, Charles L. McLawhorn Jr.; Deed Books 1207:176; X23:491; B20:96; F31:135; Estate Record 89E:147; Power, *Architecture of Pitt County*, 336-337.

21	CB	ca. 1915	David Stokes House (4348 NC 903 South). One-story, three-bay, double-pile house capped with a pyramidal metal roof. Hip-roof porch across the façade. Sheathed with vinyl siding and windows have replacement one-over-one sash. One-story shed-roof addition added ca. 1999 across the rear of the dwelling after damage caused by Hurricane Floyd.
21a	CB	ca. 1915	Outbuilding. One-story, frame, side-gable building. Sheathed in metal with a metal roof.
21b	CB	Late 18 th century; ca. 1915	Joseph Smith House/packhouse. One-story, frame, late eighteenth century house with a hall-and-parlor plan. Moved to this location when main house was constructed. The exterior has been sheathed in metal, and the building is presently used as an agricultural outbuilding, but the interior retains simple Georgian-style woodwork, including a three-part molded chair

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Inv. #	C/NC	Date	Historic Name/Description
			rail. In the early twentieth century, an open shed addition was constructed on the west elevation.
21c	CB	ca. 1920	Packhouse/barn. Formerly located southwest of the David Stokes House; moved to the corner of NC 903 and Norris Store Road during the mid-twentieth century. Two-story, side-gable, frame barn with a concrete block foundation. Sheathed with metal siding.
21d	CB	ca. 1929	Calvin (Callie) Stokes House (4392 NC 903 South). One-and-a-half story, frame, bungalow with a side-gable roof punctuated by two interior chimneys and a central gable-roof dormer on the façade. One-story full-width porch with Doric-style columns standing on brick piers across the façade. Single, paired, and triple four-over-one sash windows. Sheathed in vinyl siding.
21e	CB	ca. 1950	Pumphouse. One-story, concrete, single-bay, gable-roof pumphouse.
21f	CB	ca. 1929	Washhouse. One-story, frame, one-room, gable-front building sheathed in vinyl siding; one-story side shed-roof addition. Brick pier foundation.
21g	CB	ca. 1929	Barn. Frame, gambrel-roof barn with open central aisle flanked by grain storage and stable areas. Shed-roof open wing on south elevation. Horizontal wood siding on south elevation; all other elevations sheathed in metal.
21h	NCB	ca. 1980	Garage. One-story, two-bay, gable-front frame building standing on a concrete block foundation. Sheathed in vinyl.
21i	CS	ca. 1940	Pumphouse. One-story, concrete block, gable-front building with a metal roof.
21j	CB	ca. 1890; ca. 1935	William Henry Tripp House (4413 NC 903 South). One-story, three-bay, side-gable, frame dwelling standing on brick piers with concrete block infill. Brick exterior chimneys on the gable ends. A ca. 1975 portico covers the entry on the façade. A one-story, one-bay, shed-roof, frame addition was constructed

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Inv. #	C/NC	Date	Historic Name/Description
			in the early twentieth century on the rear elevation. A one-story, two-room, gable-roof ell was built ca. 1935 to the shed-roof addition. Sheathed in vinyl siding; replacement one-over-one sash windows.
21k	CB	ca. 1920	Outbuilding. Frame, one-story, one-bay, shed-roof building sheathed with vertical wood boards. Exposed rafter ends.
211	CSt	1905	Grave. Grave of William Henry Tripp. Marked by a pile of stones. At the edge of NC 903.

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Summary

The Renston Rural Historic District comprises approximately 1,650 acres of farmland that includes residences, churches, and cemeteries along a 2.5-mile section of NC 903 in rural Pitt County, North Carolina. The agricultural landscape of the district reflects the dominance of tobacco cultivation, beginning in the 1890s and peaking in the early 1950s, through its well-drained, flat fields divided by dirt lanes leading to curing barns, packhouses, and large gambrel-roof barns that housed many mule teams and dairy cattle. These farms have been owned by the same families since the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and almost without exception, field patterns are unchanged from the district's period of significance, ca. 1890 through 1953. The relative wealth of the farm-owning families is seen in their commodious and up-to-date houses, and in their large gambrel-roof barns. The tenant and sharecropper's houses and buildings found on these large farmsteads document the lives and work of the less well-to-do.

The houses, domestic outbuildings, and farm structures are examples of popular national styles and vernacular building types of the coastal plain of North Carolina dating from the late nineteenth century to the early 1950s. Examples of outstanding Colonial Revival residences, bungalows, modest tenant houses, and dwellings updated during the early-to-mid twentieth century, are found in the district. The domestic outbuildings represent building types common to regional farms during the early and mid-twentieth century including stilted dairies, washhouses, privies, garages, and smokehouses. The agricultural outbuildings include tobacco curing barns, packhouses, corn barns, mule barns, cattle barns, and stables. The two churches, store, and school testify to the strength of the rural community that developed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

The Renston Rural Historic District contains 198 resources, 119 of which are contributing elements to the historic appearance of the rural community. One-hundred-and-five buildings, six sites, seven structures, and one object gained their appearance during the period of significance, and retain sufficient integrity to convey the district's agricultural and architectural heritage. Seventy-nine resources, thirty-eight of which are buildings or structures related to agriculture, are non-contributing.

Tobacco farming for more than sixty years dominated the economy of the area, the formation of the region's landscape, and the architecture of its buildings. Pitt County had North Carolina's highest yield per acre of tobacco in 1910, and since 1920 has consistently grown more flue-cured tobacco than any other county in the state. The Renston Rural Historic District represents this significant tobacco-growing era in the region's history due to its remarkable integrity of both landscape and buildings. The Renston Rural Historic District meets National Register Criteria A and C, and is locally significant under the areas of Agriculture and Architecture.

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Background History and Agriculture Significance

The Renston Rural Historic District in western Pitt County occupies approximately 1,650 acres of gently sloping terrain that is dedicated primarily to agricultural fields and woodlands. Settlement of present-day Pitt County by immigrants of British ancestry began in the first decade of eighteenth century, near the mouth of the Neuse River, but it was not until the forcible removal of the Tuscaroras following the Tuscarora Indian War of 1711 through 1715, that settlement started to occur along the Tar River and other navigable streams. During the second and third quarters of the eighteenth century, families and entrepreneurs moved down into present-day Pitt County from Virginia and the Albemarle region of northeastern North Carolina. By 1760, sufficient families had settled in the region causing Pitt County to be carved from the western section of Beaufort County.

During the colonial era in Pitt County and in most of eastern North Carolina, agriculture was, as architectural historian Scott Power has written,

predominantly small-scale farming concentrating on the production of subsistence crops. Large-scale cash crop production was conducted primarily by the gentry class, which had accumulated sizeable tracts of land . . . The main crops grown for home and farm use were corn, sweet potatoes, peas, beans, rice and fruits such as peaches, apples and grapes. Other products for human consumption were beef and pork.¹

Enslaved labor was a part of Pitt County's history from its earliest settlement by people of British and European descent, although during the eighteenth century, the majority of Pitt County residents owned either no slaves or very few; the average slaveholding in 1790 was five slaves per household.²

Many of the families who still live within the Renston Rural Historic District settled here in the eighteenth century. The earliest account of a McLawhorn (or alternative spelling of the name) in present-day Pitt County was recorded in 1742, a deed transferring 100 acres from King George II to Mary Laughan.³ By the last quarter of the eighteenth century, George McGlohon had settled in or near the Renston area with his second wife Mary Stocks, the descendents of both of these

¹ Scott Power, ed. *The Historic Architecture of Pitt County, North Carolina* (Greenville, NC: Pitt County Historical Society, 1991) 7.

² Power, 8.

³ The McLawhorn name had numerous spellings throughout the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth century. The name of this Scots-Irish family has been recorded as Lawhorn, Lawhon, McGlohon, McGlohorn, Lawhorn, Laughan, Maglohorn, Glahon, and McGlahon. In Johnston County, the eventual "official" spelling became Lawhorn, and in Pitt County, the name is either McLawhorn or McGlohon. See Leah McGlohon, *The Lewis McGlohon (McLawhorn) Family and Ancestry* (Published by the author, 1993) 6-8.

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families reside in the district today.⁴ His children married into the Worthington and Edwards families whose descendants also still live in the area.

By 1800, thirty percent of Pitt County's population was enslaved, and by 1840 fifty percent were not free.⁵ Within the district, only a few families owned slaves, and all but one family owned less than ten. The McLawhorns owned slaves during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, but by 1860 had ceased being slave owners. In 1860, members of the Worthington and Stocks families owned between three and eleven slaves.⁶

Cotton did not become a significant aspect of Pitt County's economy until after 1850 when the county became one of the fifteen leading cotton producing counties in the state. According to Power, subsistence crop farming remained the predominant agricultural activity up until 1850, in part due to poor roads, as farmers could not easily transport crops to market.⁷

During the two decades prior to the Civil War, the agricultural economy of Pitt County became increasingly market-oriented (Exhibit A). The value of county farms increased threefold, from just over \$1,000,000 in 1850 to more than \$3,000,000 in 1860, and more livestock was raised for sale rather than for home consumption. The biggest change was the increase in the production of cotton, from 171 ginned bales in 1850 to 7,634 in 1860.⁸ On the eve of the Civil War, Pitt County contained just under 1,000 farms that averaged about 355 acres in size; many of these farms were dairy farms, raising corn, sheep, hogs, and cotton.⁹

Lewis McLawhorn (1821-1901) and his wife Mary (Patsy) Worthington (1829-1892) are representative of Pitt County farm families who were making the transition from subsistence to market economy in 1860. Lewis and Patsy were the parents of Lorenzo (1849-1923), who owned the McLawhorn-Abbott Farm and for whom Renston was named, Charles (1863-1923), who owned more than 450 acres within the district, and Clarissa Rebecca (1866-1916) who married Charles Henry Langston (1865-1938), owner of the Langston-Edwards Farm. Their grandchildren were Richard Herman McLawhorn (1890-1971), who owned the R. H.

⁴ McGlohon, 11. Leah McGlohon, a well-known Pitt County genealogist and descendent of George McGlohon, found deeds to George McGlohon for land on the east side of the west prong of Swift Creek and the Cypress Swamp, a general description of the land located within or near the Renston Rural Historic District.

⁵ Power, 9.

⁶ In 1787 John McGlohon purchased a seventeen-year-old slave woman, and in 1803 George McGlohon purchased a slave, and he sold a slave in 1811. McGlohon, 9, 11, 12. Spire (Spier, Speir) Worthington owned three slaves in 1860 who lived in one house; John Stocks owned eight slaves who lived in two houses; Rebecca Worthington (mother of Speir) owned eleven slaves who resided in one house; and R. Worthington owned ten slaves who occupied one house. In 1860, no McLawhorns were listed as slave owners. Federal Manuscript Slave Census, North Carolina, Pitt County, Greenville District. Microfilm.

⁷ Power, 11.

⁸ Power, 12.

⁹ Federal Agricultural Census, North Carolina, Pitt County, 1860.

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McLawhorn Farms, and Dennis T. McLawhorn (1894-1968), who operated and owned the Dennis T. McLawhorn Farm. Two of their great grandsons, Charles L. McLawhorn Sr. (1927-2000) and William Mangum (1929-1994) married into the Dail family, who owned the E. E. Dail Farm.

In 1860 Lewis and Patsy McLawhorn utilized their own labor or seasonal hired help, and had not entered the cotton market. They owned eighty acres, forty improved and forty unimproved, and the following year received an additional 170 acres from Patsy's father, Spier Worthington.¹⁰ Their farm was worth \$350, although Lewis owned additional real estate valued at \$650. He worked his forty acres with a team of oxen, and used \$50 worth of farm implements. He had three milk cows, five other cattle, nine sheep, and thirty-seven swine. He grew primarily Indian corn (350 bushels), sweet potatoes (125 bushels), and hay (three tons) for market and tended wheat (ten bushels) and peas and beans (20 bushels) mostly for home consumption. He also sheared twenty pounds of wool from his sheep, and his wife and daughters (they had no slaves) churned ten pounds of butter. They also sold honey (96 pounds) and beeswax (7 pounds).¹¹

One of Lewis and Patsy McLawhorn's neighbors was Rebecca Worthington, Patsy's widowed mother (her father was Spier Worthington), who was among the agricultural elite in the county, with the value of her land and the size of her farm well above average. She is indicated as owning a residence on the south side of NC 903, at or near the location of the Spier Worthington House (15jj) on an 1863 map of the county.¹² As a wealthy agriculturalist, it seems likely that she may have lived in a more commodious residence, although cases of the rural elite living in more modest size houses is common. Rebecca owned 900 acres, 200 unimproved and 700 improved, and her farm was worth \$3000. The farm was on the south side of NC 903, near the Hencoop Swamp, which forms the southwest boundary of the district, almost directly south of the Spier Worthington House. She also had eleven slaves living in one slave quarter, although some of her house slaves may have resided in a kitchen building or other domestic outbuilding. She had no members of her family residing with her, although her brother-in-law and his large family lived nearby, as of course, did her daughter Patsy and her family. Like her son-in-law Lewis, she also had not grown cotton in 1860 but relied upon Indian corn (375 bushels), peas and

¹⁰ Division of Land and Slaves, 12 June 1861; Book 1, 41, 42. The property was most likely on the south side of NC 903. The land division map shows the location of Chinquapin Branch and Hencoop Swamp. The Hencoop Swamp forms the southwestern boundary of the district. The tract which Lewis and Patsy received had a house on it. Identification of the Hencoop Swamp (the name does not appear on recent maps) was made in Deed F31:135 and by D. Calvin Stokes who owns a portion of the land bordering the Hencoop Swamp within the district.

¹¹ Federal Manuscript Agricultural Census, Pitt County, Greenville Township, page 37. Microfilm.

¹² Confederate Engineers Office, *Skeleton Map of Lieut. Koerner's Topographical Survey of between Neuse and Tar Rivers, N.C.* (N.P.: n.p., 1863). Photocopy in collection of the Eastern Office, Office of Archives and History, Greenville.

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beans (140 bushels), sweet potatoes (300 bushels), and honey (360 pounds), as her commercial crops.¹³

As in the rest of North Carolina, Pitt County suffered agriculturally, and thus financially, during the Civil War. After the war, the abolition of slave labor and the lack of capital caused a redistribution of landownership. According to Power, “Emerging from this situation was the breakdown of large landholdings and an increase in small farms with the establishment of the sharecropping and tenant farm systems, practices that characterized the pattern on landownership in the remaining decades of the nineteenth century and the remnants of which can still be seen today.”¹⁴ This land pattern, of smaller farm properties bounded by hedgerows and woodlands, each with its own house--tenant, farm manager, or farm owner--remains clearly visible within the district. In 1880 there were more than twice as many farms (2300) in Pitt County as there had been in 1860 and they were less than half the size of the antebellum farms (142 acres) (Exhibit A). On these farms, there were fewer sheep and hogs, the same amount of dairy cows, but the fields contained twice as much cotton.

Through 1880 cotton continued to be a dominant crop in the county’s agricultural economy. Pitt County farmers, however, grew larger quantities of grain than in other cotton counties such as Wilson, and also grew rice, sweet potatoes, and flax. In 1880, one quarter of the land was tilled, and a third of that was in cotton production.¹⁵ As it had twenty years earlier, the farm of Lewis and Patsy McLawhorn (noted as McGlohon in the census) exhibited the crop pattern found within the county among the less wealthy agriculturists of 1880. They farmed just sixty acres of tilled land with 400 acres of accompanying woodland. Their farm was valued at \$3,000 and they still raised the same crops, but with an additional twenty acres of cotton (14 bales) and 6,000 pounds of flax. They had no mules or horses, but still farmed with a team of oxen, and they had discontinued their livestock production, no longer raising sheep or hogs.¹⁶

During the last two decades of the nineteenth century, the area now known as Renston began to develop into a community. The Renston Post Office was founded by 1896, and as postmaster of the community, Lorenzo McLawhorn (1829-1923) could choose the name (Exhibit B).¹⁷ As told to his great granddaughter: My great-grandparents drew three letters from my great-grandfather’s name and added “town” to it, and so the place had a name—Renston, an identity

¹³ Federal Manuscript Agricultural Census, North Carolina, Pitt County, Greenville District, 1860, p. 39. Microfilm.

¹⁴ Power, 107.

¹⁵ Power, 108.

¹⁶ Federal Manuscript Agricultural Census, Pitt County, Contentnea District, p. 9. As in much of eastern North Carolina, the names and boundaries of the census districts changed frequently during the nineteenth century.

¹⁷ The *Chronicles of Pitt County* state that the Renston post office was found in 1901 (*Chronicles*, 30) but it is depicted on an 1896 map of North Carolina post offices reprinted in Power, 115.

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separate from every other crossroads and post office in North Carolina. It could be recalled, evoked, discussed, disparaged by name. It was home.¹⁸

In 1885, a school was built near Lewis and Patsy McLawhorn's son Lorenzo's mill for white children. African American children also had a separate school that stood within the boundaries of the district.¹⁹ The Bethany Free Will Baptist Church (18), which served the Renston area, was founded in 1879 and the first church building (17) was constructed in 1881, further consolidating the growing community. The Charles McLawhorn family operated a commissary (2f) for its tenants, sharecroppers, and others in the area, most likely starting in the late 1880s or early 1890s.²⁰ An African American church, the Zion Hill Church (16), was founded in 1910, and is located on NC 903 in the center of the district.

Rural stores and commissaries, usually located every few miles, served as a community's gathering spot.²¹ Cotton, and later tobacco, so ingrained in the culture and economy of the society, dictated credit for transactions since cash would only be received once the crop was in. The store, as the sole access to merchandise in the area, and one that took credit, became a commercial center and, as almost all other social and community institutions in the rural south, such as churches and schools, were segregated, the store was one of the few institutions where the races mixed.²²

McLawhorn's commissary, or rural store (it functioned as both) was, as were most rural stores and plantation commissaries, an economic and political institution for the area.²³ In addition to Charles McLawhorn's commissary, his brother Lorenzo also had a store, and later R. H. McLawhorn, Charles's son, opened a commissary (14f) in the 1920s within the district. Surviving store accounts document the payment by McLawhorn for doctor's visits to his tenants, and the use of barter for payment, since McLawhorn was still selling homespun cloth until World

¹⁸ Sue Ellen Hunsucker Bridges, "Stories My Grandmother Told Me," in McGlohon, 84.

¹⁹ Elizabeth H. Copeland, ed. *Chronicles of Pitt County, North Carolina* (Winston-Salem, N.C.: Hunter Publishing Company with Pitt County Historical Society, Inc., 1982) 29. The 1884 school building was replaced in 1912; this building still stands (14). The African American school was demolished in the late twentieth century; this building stood north of Zion Hill Church.

²⁰ The present store building appears to date to ca. 1900 and the first surviving daybook for the store dates to 1902, but Charles McLawhorn had been farming at this location since the mid 1880s and he would have provided goods for his tenants and sharecroppers, as was the common practice. Charles McLawhorn, *Daybooks for Farm Commissary*, vol. 1: 1902-1912; vol. 2: 1912-1926.

²¹ Commissaries were stores used primarily by the tenants and sharecroppers of a large farm, although commissaries would at times also cater to those who did not live on the farm.

²² Thompson, 16-17.

²³ Edgar T. Thompson, "Country Stores," 15; in Charles Reagan Wilson and William Ferris, coeditors. *The Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989) 15.

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War I.²⁴ McLawhorn also fined sharecroppers for not putting away his farm equipment (\$.10 for not putting away a backboard) and for a “mule doing nothing one day” (a \$1.00 fine).²⁵ In addition, McLawhorn would order goods from other local merchants for his tenants, neighbors, and family members.²⁶

Corresponding with the coalescing of the Renston area into a community during the last two decades of the nineteenth century, was the introduction to eastern North Carolina of Brightleaf tobacco as a commercial crop. Tobacco cultivation changed the economy of the region and reaffirmed the existing field patterns of smaller farm fields interspersed with hedgerows and woodlands. Tobacco, a very labor-intensive crop, was grown in smaller fields, and its cultivation was not mechanized until the 1960s. As a result, farmers who grew tobacco had no reason to consolidate their existing fields to create larger fields that tractors and harvesters could easily negotiate. The existing fields within the district are all small by modern standards, less than fifty acres. According to Power, the “rise in the cultivation of tobacco during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. . . had, and continues to have, the largest effect on Pitt County’s rural buildings.”²⁷

During the last half of the nineteenth century, the price of cotton in North Carolina declined, falling from one dollar per pound in 1865 to less than five cents per pound in 1894.²⁸ Given the decline in the price of cotton, it is not surprising that Pitt County farmers turned to growing Brightleaf tobacco. In 1891, the Greenville Tobacco Warehouse opened in Greenville, the first tobacco warehouse in the county.²⁹

Although profitable, tobacco farming was an extremely demanding and time-consuming crop to grow:

Tobacco farmers, no matter what their tenure, worked extremely hard throughout the year. They cut firewood for the curing barns in winter, set out plant beds in January, broke the land and transplanted the seedlings in May, plowed, chopped,

²⁴ On August 30, 1910, Charles McLawhorn paid \$10.00 to Dr. Cox for a visit to Council Brown’s wife, most likely for the delivery of a baby, since Council Brown purchased a baby cloak on Oct. 15 of that year. Not all doctor’s visits were as happy; in 1919 Bill Holliday was charged for a visit from Dr. Cox, and the same day purchased a coffin from A.W. Ange. McLawhorn Daybooks.

²⁵ Account of Arden Evans, March 23, 1907. McLawhorn Daybooks.

²⁶ In January 1909, McLawhorn ordered 200 panes of glass for Council Brown from R.W. Ange, a merchant in the nearby town of Winterville. Other goods ordered through McLawhorn included furniture, bricks, an automobile, and clothing. It is not known what, if any, the mark-up was for ordered goods. McLawhorn Daybooks.

²⁷ Power, 109-110.

²⁸ Angela P. Whitehurst, “The Tobacco Growers’ Cooperative Association: Efforts of Cooperative Marketing by Pitt County Bright Tobacco Farmers, 1919-1923,” MA Thesis: East Carolina University, 1995; 35-36.

²⁹ Whitehurst, 38.

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suckered, wormed, and topped throughout the early summer, and then harvested for six successive weeks in late summer. In autumn the whole family graded and tied the leaves into "hands" and finally hauled it to market for auction. It required 257 manhours per acre to cultivate the crop, so tobacco patches remained small, from three to six acres.³⁰

In Renston, farmers used their existing small tenant and sharecropper plots as the system for allocating and dividing tobacco fields. As tobacco became a more and more profitable crop, large landowners purchased smaller farms, setting them up as tenant or sharecropping lots, to make even larger profits. Within the district, successful farmers began to buy more farmland, either using the existing late nineteenth century houses as tenant houses, or building new houses. Between 1895 and 1920 Charles McLawhorn built at least seven tenant houses on his lands, of which three survive. Two of these houses (2p, 2t) are located on lots along NC 903, across from his house, and with the two tenant houses (5d, 5j) constructed by Charles Langston (also on small, approximately one-acre lots) immediately adjacent, also on NC 903, and the other two Langston-Edwards Tenant Farm houses (5r, 5x) on the north side of NC 903, these six houses created the effect of a small village. Each house stood on its own lot with its own subsidiary outbuildings.

New tenant houses were also constructed down dirt lanes or on smaller secondary roads, with their own domestic and agricultural outbuildings, such as the Charles and Maggie McLawhorn Tenant House No. 2 (2r), the Dail Tenant House No. 2 (6k) and the Smith Tenant House No. 1 (7). Tenants were also housed in dwellings that had been constructed earlier for farm owners, such as the Spier Worthington House (15ii), the Worthington House (15dd), and the house on the R. H. McLawhorn Tenant Farm No. 4 (15zz). These tenant properties give the landscape the appearance of a series of small farms, each with their own resources. Tenant and sharecropper's properties could look the same as those that were owner occupied, as Linda Flowers, a sharecropper's daughter in late 1940s and 1950s eastern North Carolina, recollected:

If his house had been more or less kept up, if his wife made the yard her particular domain, even if it was dirt rather than lawn, which she swept smooth with the yard broom late in the day, if she held her zinnias and gladiola, daffodils, and crape myrtles in as high esteem almost as she did her children, daring man or child, cat or dog to intrude upon them, there was often no way to know, simply by passing along the road, who owned his farm and who didn't. Tenant and small landowner alike took at least as much care of their barns and shelters as they did their house, landlords more. The look of a place was no true sign of who held the deed to it.³¹

³⁰ Daniel, 432.

³¹ Linda Flowers, *Thrown Away: Failures of Progress in Eastern North Carolina* (Knoxville, Tn: University of Tennessee Press, 1990) 36.

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The landowner provided tools, mules, seed, and provisions to his sharecroppers; the croppers received a portion of the crop. Tenant farmers leased acreage and their house from the landowner, but the tenants paid the property taxes and a fixed rent. Both sharecropping and tenancy were practiced in the district from Reconstruction through World War II, although most of the tenant houses date from ca. 1900 to ca. 1920. The elements of paternalism inherent in slavery continued under the practice of sharecropping and tenancy, and crossed over the color barrier; both blacks and whites were treated similarly under the new system.³²

In 1920, Pitt County was the largest producer of tobacco in North Carolina, and it continues as one of the top producers to the present day.³³ Large farms, such as the Charles and Maggie McLawhorn Farm (2), the R. H. McLawhorn Farm (15), and the Dennis McLawhorn Farm (9), with their commodious and well-kept farm-owner's dwellings surrounded by innumerable domestic and agricultural buildings and tenant houses, reflect the success that could be gained by growing tobacco. These farms, which took their present form in the first half of the twentieth century, developed from the wealth which tobacco farming offered those who could acquire land.

The tobacco market, however, was extremely volatile, with price peaks followed rapidly by plummeting profits. For example, in September 1920 in Greenville, Pitt County, tobacco prices declined by almost fifty percent from the previous year's record prices. Many bright tobacco farmers had tended to overproduce the crop for many years prior to 1920, and this glut of tobacco on the market reached a peak in 1920. Prices had also fallen in 1899 and 1909, but not as severely as they had in 1920.³⁴ The highest prices ever received for tobacco on the Greenville tobacco market, until after the Great Depression, occurred in 1919. Although tobacco was their dominant crop, many farm owners in Renston fared better than others in Pitt County since they also grew cotton and continued to raise cattle and dairy cows.³⁵

The sharecroppers, however, were not as fortunate as the farm owners, as illustrated by the accounts of Dock Smith, a sharecropper for Charles McLawhorn. Dock Smith (1890-?), an African American farmer, was the head of a large household, that was comprised of his wife Laura (1893-?), their seven children who in 1930 ranged in age from sixteen years to eighteen months, and Betty Smith (1860-?), Dock Smith's stepmother, born into slavery who could not read and write.³⁶ In Charles McLawhorn's account book Dock Smith first appears with a debt as

³² Pete Daniel, "The Crossroads of Change: Cotton, Tobacco, and Rice Cultures in the Twentieth Century South," *The Journal of Southern History* Vol: L, No. 3, August 1984, 431.

³³ Power, 172.

³⁴ Whitehurst, 3, 4.

³⁵ McLawhorn Farm Commissary books; Interviews with Andy McLawhorn and Charles L. McLawhorn.

³⁶ Federal Manuscript Population Census, Pitt County, Winterville Township, 1930; McLawhorn Farm Commissary books.

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of Sept. 18, 1926 of \$31.04. In the 1927 accounts, he is clearly a sharecropper, since his debts included "Guano" [fertilizer], paid for by a half share tobacco and half interest in 13 bales of cotton and seed on Nov. 26. That year, 1927, Smith incurred \$790.44 in debts but earned \$1,214.75 through his shares (\$487.09 tobacco, \$727.66 cotton), making a profit of \$424.31; his only profitable year. In 1928 Smith ended up in debt \$64.94 (making \$503.10 in cotton, and \$399.80 in tobacco) and in 1929, he ended the year \$119.24 short, having earned \$112.28 from cotton and \$540.82 from tobacco. For Dock Smith, cotton was the more profitable crop.³⁷ Some tenants in the Renston area, such as J. D. Everett, Lonzo Respass, and Bettie Anderson, grew only tobacco. Others, such as Alf Carr, Anthony May, and Ernest Gray diversified, growing both tobacco and cotton, like Dock Smith.³⁸ Tenants and sharecroppers were both black and white.

A portrait of the northern section of the Renston area can be drawn from the 1930 federal manuscript census records and it shows the pattern of large landowners who had many tenants and sharecroppers. The census taker for Winterville Township in that year wrote in the margins the name of the road upon which rural households were located; the northern Renston area was located on the "Bethany to Winterville Improved Dirt Road." The neighborhood listing (everyone is listed as living on farms) included the Mahlon Stocks family (a white family who rented their farm, most likely from Mahlon's father Jefferson) and proceeded northeast along the road, listing twenty-one households, eleven white, and ten black. Every adult male living on this road was listed as either a farmer or laborer. The average size household was five family members, and no one lived alone. Only two families owned their own house: the Charles McLawhorn family and the Jefferson Stocks family, both white. Every white person over ten years old could read and write, as could most black women and children over the age of ten, but only two out of the eleven black men over ten years of age could read and write.³⁹ The census taker in Ayden Township also noted the road names and he recorded the household of George Dail as on the "Greenville and Kinston Road" (a name commonly found in deeds) and R. H. McLawhorn as on the "Renston Road," even though they lived very near each other.⁴⁰ The twenty households preceding the entry for George Dail's household were headed by tenant farmers or sharecroppers. R. H. McLawhorn had eight households following his entry headed by a tenant farmer or sharecropper. George Dail and R. H. McLawhorn's entries, as would be expected by the close proximity of their two residences, were only three households apart.

Although the Renston area agriculture relied heavily upon sharecroppers and tenant farmers, day labor was also important during the growing season. Many sharecroppers and tenants supplemented their income by working for others during harvest, and they hired others to work

³⁷ Unfortunately, it is not known how many acres he had in each crop.

³⁸ McLawhorn Farm Commissary books, 1912-1926.

³⁹ Federal Manuscript Population Census, North Carolina, Pitt County, Winterville Township, 1930.

⁴⁰ Federal Manuscript Population Census, North Carolina, Pitt County, Ayden Township, 1930. The two houses (6, 14) are less than one-mile apart.

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for them.⁴¹ During the tobacco harvesting season of 1935, R. H. McLawhorn paid \$9 each for grading tobacco to: Romeo Stox, King Edwards, Solomon Williams, Anthony May, George Goskins, Willie Arnol, Leaster Phillips, John B. Burney, Vernon Gaskins, Geo. Barfield, Ernest May, G. H. Liggitt, Willie Carmon, Artilly Carmon, Lester McLawhorn, and Patience Phillips.⁴²

Although the large landowners in the Renston area such as Charles McLawhorn, George Dail, R. H. McLawhorn, and Charles Henry Langston, weathered the Depression virtually unscathed, low prices for tobacco and other crops “led to the forced sale of 150,000 pieces of North Carolina farm property in 1930; ninety-three banks closed that year in the state.”⁴³

A glimpse into the economic livelihood of the large landowner in the area during the middle years of the Depression can be gained from the account records settling the estate of Charles McLawhorn (1863-1934), the son of Lewis and Patsy McLawhorn, and owner of more than 450 acres within the district. At his death in 1934, Charles McLawhorn owned over 2,300 acres (not all contiguous, and not all within the district); he owned his large, imposing Colonial Revival mansion house (no. 2), the first house he and his wife had lived in (2m), at least seven tenant houses (2p, 2r, 2t; the others have been demolished), an old cotton gin (demolished), eleven tobacco barns, the commissary, and numerous other domestic and agricultural outbuildings. McLawhorn sold tobacco and cotton, and through his own sales and those that he collected through his sharecroppers, as well as through his investments, McLawhorn’s estate had an income of \$64,263.48 for the year 1934, disbursed \$55,736.08 in debts, and the estate cleared \$8,527.40, during the middle of the Depression.⁴⁴

The inventory of the goods on his farms establishes that agriculture in the area was barely mechanized. He owned one Chevrolet truck, one Ford tractor, two tractor plows, but ten bush oxen, twenty-six mules, eight carts, twenty-six cotton plows, twenty-six turning plows, twenty-six tobacco trucks, and numerous other agricultural implements that operated from power provided by mules, oxen, or human beings.

The same year that Charles McLawhorn died, 1934, the seeds were sown for the gradual transformation of the tobacco economy in eastern North Carolina from being tenant-farm based to mechanized production. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, as part of his New Deal program to revitalize the United States economy and agriculture, pushed Congress to pass the Agricultural

⁴¹ Flowers, 31.

⁴² Checkbook of R. H. McLawhorn, Collection of Andy Ellis McLawhorn. In the 1930 census for the area able to be identified as Renston, George Barfield and John Burney are listed as African American tenants; Vernon Gaskins and George Gaskins are listed as white tenants; the 1930 census listed tenants adjoining the McLawhorns with last names of Phillips, May, Edwards.

⁴³ Daniel, 435.

⁴⁴ In 1934 Charles’s wife, Maggie, divided his lands among herself and their children; see Pitt County Deed Book S20: 340-57; his estate accounts were noted in Pitt County Record of Accounts, Book 13: 158-165.

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Adjustment Act. The Agricultural Adjustment Act, as enacted for tobacco farmers, “worked to establish a reduction program for 1934 and to carve out an agreement with buyers to raise prices for the 1933 crop based on promised acreage reductions the next year.”⁴⁵ The reduction, of course, caused less acreage to be put into production and therefore diminished the need for tenants and labor; this affected the rural landscape during the next decades, as tenant houses became unnecessary. In 1934, Lorena Hickok, who toured the country for United States Secretary of Labor Harry Hopkins, wrote that in Wilson, North Carolina, just thirty miles from Renston in the heart of the flue-cured growing area, “that 300 former farmers moved into the town of 13,000 people, and [that] in 50 cases the landlords moved them and paid their first week’s rent.”⁴⁶

In the Renston community, the decline in tobacco production caused farm owners to increase their grain production and to delve more seriously into dairy cattle and eggs, as in the case of R. H. McLawhorn and Charles L. McLawhorn after World War II. The dividing of Charles McLawhorn’s property among his heirs would eventually lead to breaking apart of his large farm into smaller tracts created, in part, from his tenant farm tracts.⁴⁷ All of his descendents, however, held onto the land that they inherited, and continued to keep it as agricultural fields.

Although not the only agricultural product being raised in the area, tobacco remained strong within the district through the third quarter of the twentieth century. Raising tobacco continued to be extremely profitable in eastern North Carolina through the 1950s. According to historian Pete Daniel

The fifteen years after 1940 proved another golden age for flue-cured tobacco culture. . . Tobacco resisted mechanization except for tractors used for plowing and for hauling tobacco to the scaffold and oil to heat the barns. . . . The tobacco culture remained relatively stable until the mid-1950s and unmechanized through the 1960s. In the mid-1950s the Soil Bank Program, inflation--especially more expensive labor, fertilizer, fuel, and chemicals--and many other factors caused consolidation. Many growers dismissed their sharecroppers, used tractors for plowing and cultivating, and hired seasonal labor at harvest time. In the five years between 1954 and 1959, NC lost 37,440 flue-cured tobacco farms and planted 218,311 fewer acres. Production fell by 141.6 million pounds.⁴⁸

The late 1960s and 1970s changed the way tobacco was grown in eastern North Carolina. In the late 1960s, many farmers adopted the use of a mechanical topper that removed the flower tops of

⁴⁵ Daniel, 439.

⁴⁶ Daniel, 440.

⁴⁷ Interview with Andy McLawhorn, Charles McLawhorn.

⁴⁸ Daniel, 449.

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the plants (so that the plant would grow more leaves) and also sprayed for suckers and hornworms. Also in the 1960s, a law was passed that allowed a grower to lease unlimited land within his or her county for growing tobacco (land that was in the allotment program), thus allowing farmers with tractors and toppers to expand their operations. Small owners could collect rent from their allotments and work off the farm or retire.⁴⁹ This greatly altered how tobacco was farmed in the flue-cured region. Small farm owners and sharecroppers who depended upon manual labor to plant, cultivate and harvest their small allotment could no longer compete with those who farmed their own and other's allotments by mechanical means.⁵⁰

The other major change was the introduction of bulk barns in the 1970s. In 1972, only eight percent of flue-cured farmers used bulk barns, but by 1979, over sixty-one percent had adopted the new technology. Bulk barns were made possible by a change in how tobacco was sold. Tobacco no longer needed to be sorted and tied, but was sold in bulk, thus eliminating a vast amount of hand labor and allowing bulk drying.⁵¹ The use of bulk barns ensured the demise of the log and frame curing tobacco barn, which became obsolete.

Due to the structural changes in tobacco farming and marketing, as well as the corresponding change in technology, the number of tobacco farms in North Carolina declined rapidly from just under 100,000 in 1959 to just 29,000 in 1979.⁵² In Pitt County, there were 5,969 farms in 1950, and by 1992 that number had diminished to just 583. The size of the farms changed just as dramatically, from just 52.2 acres for the average farm in 1950 to 333 acres in 1992.⁵³ Farms in 1992 still raised tobacco (31,847,136 pounds) but significant amounts of wheat, Indian corn, and cotton were also produced, as well as hogs for slaughter.

In the Renston Rural Historic District, as elsewhere in the tobacco growing region, although "they no longer farmed tobacco, many former sharecroppers and owners remained in their communities doing other work, and so they preserved their friendships, church affiliations, schools, and neighborhoods."⁵⁴ This stable population has enabled the rural district to retain its feeling of community and neighborhood, and has preserved the area's fields, buildings, and landscapes into the twenty-first century.⁵⁵ The two churches in the district continue to thrive and increase membership. Residents still pass the time of day in the district's general store, Baker's Store (4).

⁴⁹ Daniel, 450.

⁵⁰ Flowers, 47-49.

⁵¹ Daniel, 450.

⁵² Daniel, 451.

⁵³ Federal Agricultural Census, North Carolina, Pitt County, 1950, 1992.

⁵⁴ Daniel, 451.

⁵⁵ Residents within the district still refer to the area as a neighborhood. Interviews with Louise D. Baker, Mary Sutton Edwards, Andy McLawhorn, and Charles L. McLawhorn, Jr.

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As an intact rural community associated with the Brightleaf tobacco-growing region of eastern North Carolina, the Renston Rural Historic District gains significance under Criterion A through the survival of its landscape and buildings dating from the introduction of tobacco to the region in the 1890s until the early 1950s. The field patterns and roadways of the district remain from the period of significance, having been formed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. NC 903 has followed its present path since the late nineteenth century, and was paved in 1948.⁵⁶

Land division maps from 1934 through the early 1960s confirm that the land use patterns of the district have not changed since the period of significance (Exhibits C-G). As in 1934, NC 903 (then known as the Winterville-Bethany Road) curves in the same direction, and the fields have the same boundaries (Exhibit C, F). The drainage canal south of NC 903 also follows the same pattern as it did during the 1930s. The fields and woods in the area between Frog Level Road and Abbott Farm Road have also not changed since the period of significance, as shown on the land division maps for the Charles McLawhorn farms and the George and Eva Edwards farms (Langston-Edwards Farm) (Exhibits C, D, G).

Further confirmation of the integrity of the district's agricultural landscape from the pre-mechanization era of tobacco farming is found in a comparison of aerial photographs of the region from 1963 and 2003.⁵⁷ As of 1963, the mechanization of tobacco farming had not yet occurred within the district, so field patterns of 1963 still followed those of the first half of the twentieth century. The relationship of tilled land to woodland remains almost identical on the 1963 and 2003 aerials. Road patterns also follow identical paths between 1963 and 2003, as do drainage canals and farm lanes.

Other rural historic districts associated with the agriculture of eastern North Carolina, such as the Old Neck Historic District in Perquimans County (NR 1996), the Conoho Creek Historic District in Martin County (NR 1998), and the Woodville Historic District in Bertie County (NR 1998), are representative of either cotton production, mixed farming, or significant for their architecture or social history. The California-Kings Crossroads area of Pitt County, located northwest of Renston, remains agricultural, with a very open landscape intersected with some of the last dirt roads found in the county. The historic buildings in this area primarily date from the antebellum period, although some late nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings also dot the landscape. Unlike Renston, the farmland in the California-Kings Crossroad area has much larger fields, and does not represent the smaller field patterns of the late nineteenth and first half of the

⁵⁶ Interview with Mary Sutton Edwards.

⁵⁷ United States Farm Service Bureau, Aerial Photographs of Pitt County, N.C., 1963. Greenville, N.C.

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twentieth century. The California-Kings Crossroad area also does not have the extraordinarily high number of domestic and agricultural outbuildings that the Renston Rural Historic District retains.

Tobacco farming for more than sixty years dominated the economy of Renston, the formation of the region's landscape, and the architecture of its buildings. Since 1920, Pitt County has been the largest producer of tobacco in North Carolina. The Renston Rural Historic District represents this significant tobacco-growing era in the region's history due to its remarkable integrity of both landscape and buildings.

Architecture Significance

The domestic and agricultural buildings in the Renston Rural Historic District represent vernacular forms found throughout eastern North Carolina as well as a few examples of popular national styles. Regional vernacular building types found in the district include small hall-and-parlor plan houses, two-story single-pile dwellings with exterior end chimneys, stilted dairies, tobacco curing barns, and gable-front mule stables.

The earliest buildings within the district are houses that follow two common forms found within the region during the late eighteenth or nineteenth century: the one-story, hall-and-parlor dwelling and the two-story, single-pile house. The six pre-1900 houses (2m, 5, 6, 15jj, 15dd, 21b) are good examples of these vernacular house types. Five of these houses, however, were updated during the tobacco-farming era, and also represent regional variations on updating rural farmhouses during the twentieth century; the sixth house was converted to use as an agricultural outbuilding. The Spier Worthington House (15jj, ca. 1840), a hall-and-parlor plan house, received a Colonial Revival interior during the early twentieth century, as well as a two-room rear ell. The Langston-Edwards House (5, ca. 1840), a two-story, single-pile plan house, was also updated in the Colonial Revival style with a colossal portico added in 1950. The E. E. Dail House (6, ca. 1850), also a two-story, single-pile plan house, received a ca. 1900 front ell, and a modest, bungalow-style wraparound porch around 1920. The Worthington House (15dd, ca. 1900), a two-story, single-pile plan house, was moved ca. 1922 to make way for a new, up-to-date bungalow, and then converted to a tenant house. The Charles McLawhorn House (2m, ca. 1880), a late example of the hall-and-parlor form, has had more modest changes, including a three-room ell added to the rear in 1903, a porch added around 1910, and the rear porch enclosed in 1952. The Joseph Smith House, a late eighteenth-century hall-and-parlor plan dwelling, was moved ca. 1915, and converted for use as an outbuilding, although the interior trim and stair remained untouched.

The remodeling of the Langston-Edwards House, the Charles McLawhorn House, and the Dail House represent the updating of houses to meet current tastes and changes in ways of life. The 1903 remodelling of the Charles McLawhorn House that replaced the detached kitchen with a

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three-room ell that served as a dining area, kitchen, and living space was a common update during the early twentieth century. The adding of a front ell, along with a bungalow porch, gave the E. E. Dail House (6) a more modern exterior, with its asymmetrical façade and wrap-around porch. The new first-floor room in the ell, however, served a very traditional purpose: it was used as a guest bedroom, and according to family tradition, had no access from the main block of the house. This separate room is known locally as a “preacher’s room” or “piazza room,” and is found more often in early and mid-nineteenth century houses.⁵⁸ The Colonial Revival changes to the Langston-Edwards House occurred about the same time as Dennis T. McLawhorn was building his new, large Neo-classical Revival house with its colossal portico (9).

One of the best-preserved Colonial Revival farmhouses in Pitt County can be found within the district, the Charles and Maggie McLawhorn House (5, 1910), a two-story, hip-roof, double-pile dwelling with a projecting central bay capped with a hipped-roof dormer. Architectural historian Scott Power has characterized this house as an example that “epitomize the height of the style” of “several large-scale Colonial Revival farm houses built for locally prominent agriculturalists.”⁵⁹ A generously proportioned wraparound porch dominates the façade. A cast iron fence delineates the front yard that contains some of the original plantings as documented in a ca. 1927 planting diagram and plant order form. Behind the house are the contemporary domestic outbuildings necessary for running a large, rural household of the early twentieth century. An equally impressive example of a large-scale Neo-classical Revival farmhouse (9, 1948) was built thirty-eight years later by Charles and Maggie’s son, Dennis Tolbert McLawhorn (1894-1968) and his wife Madge Watkins Jenkins.

Charles and Maggie’s eldest son, Richard Herman (1890-1946), chose not to build a Colonial Revival style house, but instead constructed an equally fashionable Craftsman-style bungalow. The R. H. and Janie Tyson McLawhorn House (15), built in 1922, follows the bungalow style and form with its recessed porch supported by Doric-style posts set on brick piers, a large gable-roof front dormer with balustrade, and a leaded glass transom with the letter “M” and sidelights that surround the primary entrance. Even though the façade appears to resemble a builder’s guide for constructing suburban bungalows, the house also features elements representative of rural Pitt County rather than a suburban neighborhood, including the large back porch with an outside sink and shaving area.

⁵⁸ Interview with Stephen J. McLawhorn. The King-Bazemore House in Bertie County, now on the Hope Plantation property, was updated in the early nineteenth century with a “preacher’s room.” The Alfred Moore House in Pitt County, a federal-era house, was constructed with a piazza room; the Holland House in Pitt County is a mid-nineteenth century house built with a piazza room; Power, 47, 476. Other examples can be found in Lenoir County, such as the Hodges-Efrid House (ca. 1830) and the Sutton-Barwick House (ca. 1830); see M. Ruth Little, *Coastal Plain and Fancy: The Historic Architecture of Lenoir County and Kinston* (Kinston: Lenoir County Historical Society, 1998).

⁵⁹ Power, 129-131.

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More common throughout the district, however, are modest twentieth-century residences, including fourteen farm tenant and sharecropper's houses, a little-studied building type that is rapidly disappearing. These buildings date to the 1890s through the 1940s and include examples made in concrete block as well as light timber frame. The tenant houses range from the ca. 1910 McLawhorn Farm Tenant House No. 1 (2p), a one-story, three-bay, central-passage, weatherboarded frame house with a two-room ell that has a decorative front porch, to the much more stark, two-room concrete block Dail Farm Tenant House No. 1 (6h) constructed ca. 1940.

The district contains an outstanding collection of twentieth-century domestic outbuildings, including three dairies. These small buildings stand on stilts, and were used to keep milk and dairy products cool for the family's consumption. The district also includes three privies, four washhouses, two smokehouses, and a sweet potato house. Two farm complexes within the district retain almost all of their twentieth-century domestic outbuildings, the Charles and Maggie McLawhorn Farm which still has its stilted dairy, washhouse, smokehouse, sweet potato house, generator house, pumphouse, and storage shed for vehicles, and the R. H. McLawhorn Farm that also retains seven domestic outbuildings (generator house, well house, washhouse, smokehouse, garage, stilted dairy, and bell tower).

The agricultural outbuildings within the district represent those found on thriving tobacco farms in the Brightleaf-tobacco region of North Carolina during the first half of the twentieth century, including fifteen barns or stables (five with gambrel roofs, ten gable-roof examples), eighteen tobacco-curing barns, four buildings constructed as tobacco packhouses and three buildings converted to packhouse use (a school, a store, and a house), and two commissaries. Eighteen metal grain bins, a feed scale, and six bulk curing barns—represent changes in tobacco cultivation and farming after the end of the period of significance.

The five gambrel-roof barns (2g, 9a, 15oo, 15ccc, 21g) were built between 1910 and 1950 and were constructed as multi-purpose buildings to house mules, as well as horses, cattle, and the few oxen that still worked the fields during the twentieth century. The buildings also stored grain and hay in their capacious upper lofts. This building type was promoted by the North Carolina Extension Service through plans they circulated, including blueprints for constructing a 40-foot by 100-foot two-story gambrel roof barn designed to house cattle, as well as a 36-foot by 50-foot gambrel roof mule barn.⁶⁰ The gable-front mule stables (2k, 5t, 9l, 10, 15s) feature an open central aisle with two flanking spaces for storage and grain storage, all under one roofline.

Eighteen tobacco-curing barns still stand within the district; sixteen are of frame construction, one is tile-block, and one is metal. The metal tobacco barn (15qq)--actually two barns linked by a shed that held a common furnace--was an experimental type that did not work very well; it

⁶⁰ Weaver, D.S. "A List of Farm Building Plans for North Carolina Farms," North Carolina State College of Agriculture and Engineering, N.C. Agriculture Extension Service, Circular No. 80, May 1933.

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caused the tobacco to sweat too much. This barn was a link between two technologies, the old flue-cured method and the future metal bulk barn.⁶¹ As Dennis A. Dudley noted in 1967, “these structures, when found as numerous as they are in Pitt County, impart to the landscape a rather unique distinctiveness.”⁶² In 1966 there were approximately 43,160 tobacco-curing barns in the county; most likely more than half of those barns have been demolished during the past forty years.⁶³ Like the gambrel-roof barns, tobacco-curing barns were studied by agriculturists at North Carolina State University, and the Agricultural Extension Service circulated plans for their proper construction.⁶⁴

The four tobacco packhouses (2j, 5s, 15l, 21e) that stand within the district are also representative examples of that building type. They are light timber frame, gable-front two-story buildings designed to house tobacco during season and to served other functions during the rest of the year. These buildings are also a threatened building type, although their built-in versatility has ensured that they are easily renovated for other uses.

The landscape and architecture of the Renston Rural Historic District represent the agricultural heritage of the area. The houses, domestic outbuildings, and farm structures are examples of popular national styles and vernacular buildings of the coastal plain of North Carolina dating from the 1840s through the early 1950s. Examples of the most common house types during the nineteenth century are represented, as well as outstanding Colonial Revival residences and modest tenant houses. The domestic outbuildings represent the building types common to regional farms during the early and mid-twentieth century including stilted dairies, washhouses, privies, garages, and smokehouses. The agricultural buildings document the tobacco-era of farming through the tobacco curing barns, packhouses, mule stables, large barns, and multi-purpose structures and are representative of the common agricultural buildings found on farms throughout the region. The cultivated fields, dirt lanes, drainage ditches, and woodlands also represent the agricultural landscape once found throughout the Brightleaf-tobacco growing region during the first half of the twentieth century.

Other rural districts in eastern North Carolina document different eras, agricultural landscapes and building types. The Woodville Historic District in Bertie County represents the rural life of the gentry in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Black Creek Rural Historic District in Wilson County gains its significance through its fine antebellum architecture. In Martin County, the Conoho Creek Historic District, is most similar to the Renston Rural Historic

⁶¹ Interview with Stephen J. McLawhorn.

⁶² Dennis Allen Dudley, “The Role of Flue-Cured Tobacco in the Rural Geography of Pitt County, North Carolina.” MA Thesis: East Carolina University, 1968, 49.

⁶³ See Dudley, 56, for the number of barns standing in 1966. The estimate of the loss of half of the barns is based on field survey and is very conservative; the loss is probably much greater.

⁶⁴ See B.W. Kilgore, “Tobacco Curing Barns,” N.C. College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, Extension Circular No. 18, August 1916.

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District. Like the Renston district, the Conoho Creek district illustrates the development of a small rural community (Hassell) and has a period of significance that covers both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The architecture of the Renston Rural Historic District is more vernacular, containing a higher percentage of twentieth-century modest houses and tenant houses, as well as more domestic and agricultural outbuildings.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the Renston Rural Historic District are indicated on the accompanying Pitt County Tax Assessment maps at one inch to 200 feet scale.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries for the Renston Rural Historic District encompass the area known as the Renston community that retain integrity for the period of significance, 1890 to 1953, and which contain buildings and landscape features that represent the district's areas of significance, Architecture and Agriculture. The boundaries comprise approximately 1,650 acres of farms, residences, churches, and cemeteries along a 2.5-mile section of NC 903 in rural Pitt County, North Carolina. The boundary at the northeast end of the district is defined by the Horsepen Swamp, and excludes a field of conifers on the south side of NC 903 that was formerly cultivated. The boundaries on the southwest side of NC 903 incorporate field patterns and woodlands that existed during the period of significance, and exclude post-1953 agricultural buildings found on the north side of Cheek Farm Road. The boundaries on the northeast side of NC 903 contain fields and woodlands that existed during the period of significance and exclude post-1953 houses located along a post-1953 road, Davenport, and post-1953 buildings on Mack Allen Road.

UTM References

Zone 18

1:	275260E	3934000N;
2:	276900E	3933900N;
3:	277210E	3934390N;
4:	277490E	3934450N;
5:	279010E	3933430N;
6:	278420E	3932570N;
7:	277720E	3931490N;
8:	276400E	3930620N;
9:	276260E	3930320N;
10:	275490E	3931080N;
11:	275430E	3931490N;
12:	276320E	3931660N;
13:	275060E	3931910N;
14:	274940E	3932490N;
15:	275480E	3932960N;

