United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic
Lower Sauratown Plantation

and/or common

2. Location

Down a private lane, entrance on the north side of SR 1974, 1.6 miles east of the street & number junction with NC 14

street & number

Eden

north Carolina

county

Rockingham

code

157

3. Classification

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4. Owner of Property

name
Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Kluttz

street & number
P. O. Box 23

city, town
Salisbury

vicinity of

state
N. C.

28144

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Rockingham County Courthouse

street & number

city, town
Wentworth

state
North Carolina

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title
None

has this property been determined eligible? __ yes XX no

date

depository for survey records

city, town

state
The surviving buildings of Lower Sauratown Plantation occupy the crest of an isolated ridge in northeastern Rockingham County, 100 feet above the Dan River and the Lower Sauratown Indian village site from which the plantation takes its name. Though only two buildings remain of what was once an extensive complex, they are substantial structures, of significance architecturally and for their associations with the Brodnax and Glenn families who owned the plantation. The frame office structure may contain fabric dating from the earliest period of white settlement in the region. The two-story, mid-nineteenth century brick building, said to have been a combination kitchen and weaving house originally, is large enough to have served as a dwelling after the plantation house burned during the Reconstruction period. Both buildings were restored in 1983. Preliminary investigations to locate the site of the earlier main house indicate that it stood between and somewhat to the north of the two extant structures, which face each other east and west across the crest of the ridge. The land falls sharply to the east, west, and north. On the north slope of the ridge, which offers long views across the flood plain of the Dan and beyond, are the remnants of a terraced boxwood garden with stone retaining walls and steps. The family cemetery is located on the west side of the terrace, north of the kitchen/weaving building.

The small frame office is the older of the two structures. During a recent restoration, workmen uncovered a weathered window frame underneath the existing Federal period weatherboard, suggesting that the core of the building predates its present ca. 1825 appearance. Also, the interior end chimney is an unusual feature for any building in this region, and might also indicate a colonial period date for the framing and chimney. In its present form, the one-room structure rests on a brick foundation and is sheltered by a gable roof of standing seam metal. Molded weatherboard covers all elevations. The brick stack of the interior chimney rises off-center at the peak of the windowless north gable end. A six-panel door is centered on the front (west) elevation, which is also windowless. Six-over-six sash windows are centered on the east and south elevations to light the interior, and a similar window in the south gable serves the loft.

The Federal finish of the one-room interior is of unusually high quality for a secondary plantation building. The mantel features a mitred frame around the fire opening; this supports short fluted pilasters at either end, which in turn carry the molded shelf. The mantel retains its blue coloring with gold trim, which is believed to be original. A stair rises in the right corner beside the chimney, with the first four open steps ending at a six-panel door, and the remainder winding enclosed up to the loft. A short four-panel door dating from the mid-twentieth century is set between the mantel and stair door; this provides access down a steep stair to the cellar. A small closet, outfitted as a half bath in the mid-twentieth century, is located to the left of the chimney. Simple molded baseboard and chairrail carry around the plastered walls of the room.

The brick kitchen/weaving house has a complex building history, indicated by the varying character of the brickwork and the apparent use of brick from another structure in parts of the building. The building may have achieved its present form in the antebellum period, or it may have been a smaller structure expanded in the early Reconstruction period to provide dwelling space for the family after fire destroyed the main house. The building is a two-story, T-plan structure laid up in one-to-five American bond, with intersecting gable roofs of standing seam metal. A full-width, two-story shed porch shelters the front (east) elevation. This porch is a 1983 reconstruction based on ghost features, a surviving pilaster, and a 1938 photograph. The posts are octagonal in section and connected on the second floor with a lattice type balustrade, a feature shown clearly on the 1938 photograph and found on
a number of mid-nineteenth century buildings of the upper Dan River area of Rockingham and Stokes counties. A mid-twentieth century concrete slab had replaced the original wooden porch floor, and the slab was left in place in the reconstruction.

The symmetrical front elevation has two first-floor entrances, located side by side at the center of the facade; both have four-panel doors. These are flanked by six-over-six sash windows located near the outside corners of the wall. Above these windows on the second floor are French windows that provide access to the upper level of the porch.

The north and south gable ends of the front block are blind, except for the square attic ventilators that flank the stacks of the exterior end chimneys. A simple shed porch protects a batten-door rear entry in the south elbow of the T. Six-over-six sash windows are located on both stories of both walls of the north elbow of the T, for a total of four.

The interior of the front block contains two separate rooms of equal size, connected by a transverse stair hall in the rear T. The south room features a large, open cooking fireplace with a brick hearth and a massive oak lintel. Covered pantries with paneled doors flank the fireplace. The north room has a standard size fire opening with a post and lintel type mid-nineteenth century mantel of Greek Revival derivation, with a recessed panel in the frieze. Both rooms are finished with simple molded baseboards.

A transverse hall and an open string stair occupy the rear T. Balusters and newels are square-in-section. The second floor also contains two rooms of equal size, though the north room was partitioned in the recent restoration to provide space for a small bath. The south room has a fireplace with a simple post and lintel mantel; the flanking closets have Greek Revival type doors of two vertical panels. There is no fire opening in the north room. Both rooms have French doors of eight lights each that open to the porch.

A small family cemetery is located north of the kitchen/weaving house. A wrought iron fence encloses the plot. Among the graves is a large monument to Edward Travis Brodnax, 1796-1874.

As the site is known to have been occupied from the colonial period and a variety of other early structures were in the immediate vicinity, Lower Sauratown has high potential for historical archaeology.
# 8. Significance

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| Specific dates | Office: ca. 1825 | Brick House: ca. 1840–1870 | Builder/Architect | Unknown |

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Lower Sauratown Plantation and its immediate environs comprise the most important early historic place in Rockingham County. It is the site of a large seventeenth century Indian village of the Saura tribe (see separate National Register nomination for Lower Sauratown site, 31RK1, Rockingham County, N.C.). The area was visited and described by the region's first explorer, William Byrd II of Virginia, in 1733. It became the location of the earliest known white settlement in the county. In the nineteenth century it was the plantation of Dr. Edward T. Brodnax, the county's largest slaveholder and planter. Finally, the plantation was the boyhood home of Governor Robert Brodnax Glenn, the adopted son of Dr. Brodnax. In the area today are found ample archaeological evidence of the Lower Sauratown Indian village, a colonial road bed and ford which are documented by the John Collet map of 1770, and the remnants of the Brodnax plantation itself. These include a ca. 1825 plantation office building, a mid-nineteenth century brick dwelling house (both restored in 1983), the Brodnax family cemetery, the remains of an extensive boxwood garden, and numerous below-grade foundations, all of which are within the boundaries of the present nomination.

Criteria Assessment:

A. Associated with the early exploration and settlement of the Dan River valley and the subsequent development of the plantation economy in the region.


C. Embodies the characteristics of construction of substantial plantation outbuildings of the region from the early to mid-nineteenth century.

D. Likely to yield information important to the history of the region through archaeological investigations of the plantation site.
The Dan River valley has been inhabited for at least 10,000 years, and there are many archaeological sites which produce the stone, pottery, and bone artifacts of prehistoric people. By the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Carolina Piedmont was occupied by dozens of small tribes speaking Siouan dialects. In the two centuries after contact with the European explorers, traders, and settlers, these tribes had disappeared as a result of disease and warfare.

The Saura tribe (also called Sara and later Cheraw) were visited in June 1670 by John Lederer, the German explorer, on the Yadkin River near the well-known Trading Ford. Though the dates and circumstances are not altogether known, sometime thereafter the Saura moved north to the Dan River and established themselves at two village sites known as Upper and Lower Sauratown. Upper Sauratown was located in present southern Stokes County, and Lower Sauratown was below the present city of Eden near the mouth of Town Creek.

In 1728 when the survey party for the North Carolina/Virginia border entered the area William Byrd II, a Virginia commissioner, recorded that the Saura Indians had left the region. Five years later when Byrd returned to survey his immense 20,000-acre Land of Eden purchase, he visited the site of Lower Sauratown and found only a grassy plain, indicating that the village had been abandoned for some time. According to tradition, in the Dan valley the Sauras were exposed to attack by the northern Seneca tribe and so moved south into upper South Carolina near the present town of Cheraw. The Cheraw Indians were located in South Carolina by 1715 in a census. Later they may have joined the Catawba to the west, or they may have moved east back into North Carolina to join other tribal groups who became ancestors of the modern Lumbee tribe.

William Byrd was so taken with the beauty and rich soil of the Lower Sauratown area that in March, 1742 he purchased 6,000 acres which he added to his Land of Eden tract. Byrd hoped to attract settlers to his vast tract, but his various promotional schemes failed. His son William Byrd III inherited the 26,000 acres and in order to satisfy debts, sold the land in October, 1755, to Francis and Simon Farley, merchants of Antigua. James Parke Farley, son of Francis, was sent to the Dan valley by 1769 to manage the plantation. Farley removed squatters and imported a hundred slaves from Antigua. He married Elizabeth, daughter of William Byrd III, in 1771 and by 1775 he had erected a manor house named Belview on the Sauratown tract. The letters of Elizabeth Byrd Farley to her father describe the plantation activities and the first mention of the cultivation of tobacco in present Rockingham County. The exact location of the Farley house is not known but the presence of the colonial road bed and the Sauratown ford near the present plantation site indicates that it was not far away. On the next knoll downstream from the present house is a large field rock cemetery which may be the Farley slave cemetery.

Another contemporary account of life at Lower Sauratown is found in the journal of John F. D. Smyth, a young English gentleman who toured through the colonies just before the outbreak of the American Revolution. Smyth journeyed from Hillsborough to the Dan River en route to Kentucky. At Lower Sauratown he stayed in the one-room cabin of a Bailey family for ten days, tarrying because of his romantic interest in the lovely fifteen-year-old Betsy Bailey. From the social status of Smyth it must be assumed that the Faryles were not at home, and unfortunately for the historian Smyth said far more about the charms of young Betsy than he did about the plantation. Although Bailey could have been working
for Farley, Smyth refers to him as a "common plain back wood's planter" and indicates that he owned several slaves. It would appear then that a small settlement was beginning to develop at the river ford.

After the death of James Parke Farley the estate was not settled for many years due to the claims of the various heirs. James Parke Farley's will was first presented in 1786 and the court appointed a guardian for the four Farley daughters Elizabeth, Maria, Rebecca, and Eleanor. By 1799, just before he died, Patrick Henry had purchased an interest in the Sauratown tracts. His heirs Alexander S. Henry and Nathaniel W. Henry then sued the Farley heirs for a division of the 26,000 acres. The total grant was surveyed in 1803 into 17 tracts for a court ordered division, and the subsequent decisions were based on this survey. Suits continued over the complicated settlement as late as 1822.

The Brodnax family began its long association with the Sauratown plantation in May, 1807 when William Edward Brodnax, a planter of Brunswick County, Virginia, purchased 2,887 acres from Elizabeth Farley Morson. This tract was the Lower Sauratown plantation which had been designated tract #9 in the 1803 survey and lay south of the Dan River. The next year Brodnax received the power-of-attorney for John Simon Farley and Elizabeth Morson, both of whom resided in England. Brodnax accumulated additional parcels of land amounting to hundreds of acres in the Dan valley, and in 1811 purchased another section of the former Farley lands--tract #8 of 2,664 acres on the north side of the river.

Two sons of William Edward Brodnax--Robert and Edward Travis--would live in Rockingham County and become prominent in the history of the region. Robert received the Cascade plantation north of the river in 1820 and constructed on the property a fine two-story frame manor house which still stands. Edward Travis inherited the Lower Sauratown plantation south of the river and moved to the county by 1820.

Edward Travis Brodnax (1796-1874) was born in Brunswick County. After brief service in the militia in the War of 1812 he attended the University of Pennsylvania in the medical school and graduated with an M.D. degree in 1818. In Rockingham County he practiced medicine and managed his vast plantation. He accumulated more property, including lots and a store in Leaksville, and owned a gristmill on Town Creek. By 1860 he had a total of 174 slaves and was the largest slaveholder in the county.

E. T. Brodnax was public minded and as a Whig was active in politics. He served terms in the House of Commons 1822-1823 and the state Senate 1827-1828. A supporter of internal improvements, he was active in the Raleigh conventions on the subject in 1833 and 1836. When the Roanoke Navigation Company improved the Dan River for navigation in the 1820s, E. T. Brodnax supervised the construction of the sluices and wing dams on the section of the river from Virginia to Leaksville, and he owned a bateau. He served in the 1835 and 1861 state constitutional conventions. A moderate opponent of secession, he agreed to vote for it, acquiescing to the majority sentiment in the county. He was a trustee of Greensboro Female College 1838-1851 and an organizer and vestryman of the Church of the Epiphany in Leaksville in 1844.
The surviving brick plantation house at Sauratown does not reflect the wealth and position of Dr. Brodnax. Family tradition is that the original house burned in 1867 and that the present dwelling was constructed from a plantation outbuilding which is often described as the weave house and kitchen. The early frame plantation office building has fine Federal trim and is the earliest surviving structure. The remnants of the terraced boxwood gardens reflect a stately landscaped building site. An archaeological examination should establish the building site and size of the original mansion.

Dr. Brodnax married Janet Hamilton Chalmers (1809-1846), but they had no surviving children. The Brodnaxes adopted Chalmers Lanter Glenn, Mrs. Brodnax's orphaned nephew. Glenn, an attorney, married Annie Dodge, the daughter of James R. Dodge of Yadkin County, and the Glenns lived at Sauratown Plantation with their three sons, James Dodge, Robert Brodnax, and Edward Travis Brodnax. Glenn served as a captain in the Confederate Army in the Thirteenth North Carolina Regiment and was killed at the Battle of South Mountain, Virginia on September 14, 1862. After his death the Glenn children were adopted by Dr. Brodnax and were reared on the plantation.

Upon the death of Dr. Brodnax in 1874 the plantation was left to Annie Dodge Glenn and eventually in 1882 was divided among her three sons. Annie Dodge's father James R. Dodge was originally from New York and was the son of General Richard Dodge and Ann S. Irving, a sister of Washington Irving. The brother of Annie Glenn was Richard Irving Dodge (1827-1895), a colonel in the United States Army and author of several books about his western frontier experiences in the Indian wars.

Annie Glenn's eldest son James Dodge graduated from Virginia Military Institute in 1871 and was a civil engineer until the death of Dr. Brodnax brought him home to manage the plantation for his mother. He married his cousin Mary Brodnax of Cascade Plantation in 1877. James Glenn served in the state legislature three terms from 1881 to 1885. He had a notable career in the state militia, becoming a captain in 1881 and rising to be colonel of the Third Regiment in 1884. In 1889 he was appointed adjutant-general of the state by Governor Daniel G. Fowle. After 1885 he moved to Greensboro.

Robert Brodnax Glenn (1854-1920) was educated at Davidson College, the University of Virginia, and at Richmond Hill, Judge Richmond Pearson's law school in Yadkin County. He began the practice of law in Danbury, Stokes County, and was elected to the legislature in 1881. From Danbury he moved to Winston and served in the state Senate from Forsyth County in 1899. In 1904 he was elected governor of North Carolina, serving 1905-1909. Leading moves of Governor Glenn's administration were the regulation of railroad rates, improvement of public education, expansion of public health programs, prohibition, and an economic and geologic survey.

The Sauratown plantation was divided by the Glenn sons in September 1882 with each one receiving a little less than a thousand acres. James Glenn's portion was the Sauratown homepage. Although James Glenn moved to Greensboro in 1887, he retained the bulk of the Dan River land. The 967.8 acres in the original apportionment was reduced by the sale of 55.5 acres in 1894, and in 1899 a 100-acre tract was sold.
When James Glenn died in 1905 he willed the Sauratown Plantation of 812 acres to his son John Brodnax Glenn.24 John Glenn was born at Sauratown in 1885 but had grown up in Greensboro. He was a very successful businessman with careers in railroading and banking. He began in a position with the Southern Railway. Upon becoming assistant superintendent of the Mexican Central Railway he made contacts that led to positions in banking in both Mexico and New York. He lived in Mexico many years and then moved to Scarsdale, New York.25 Already living in Mexico when he inherited the plantation, John Glenn held it for only a few months before selling it in March, 1906 for $5,000 to his stepmother Sarah Hairston Glenn, formerly from Henry County, Virginia.26

Sarah Hairston Glenn retained ownership of the Sauratown Plantation for forty years, and a succession of tenants lived in the homeplace and farmed the still fertile bottom land. In April 1946 she gave it to her granddaughter Sarah Whittle Kluttz (Mrs. Clarence) as a wedding gift.27 Shortly after Sarah Kluttz received the plantation, Duke Power Company began construction on the Dan River Steam Station in sight of the plantation house. This station, now a 375,000 kilowatt operation, began production of power in 1949.28 The plantation is still owned by Mrs. Kluttz, and she and her husband are restoring the homeplace.

The Dan River valley is the most important natural feature of Rockingham County and is central to the region's history. From the time of the Saura Indians, over three centuries ago, Sauratown Plantation has been a silent witness to much of the county's past and has a strong claim to being the most important historic site in the area. On or near the plantation have been located the most important Indian town in the county, the first exploration of the valley, the first settlement in the county, the earliest known tobacco plantation in the upper valley, the home of two of the county's most prominent families, the development of river navigation, the largest antebellum plantation in the county, and finally the production of electric power. At Sauratown Plantation the whole history of the river valley can be interpreted, and the river valley is the key to understanding the heritage of this region.

**FOOTNOTES**


Significance


9 Tinling (ed.), Correspondence, 3: 807-808, 809, 816.


13 Rockingham County Deeds, M:491.

14 Rockingham County Deeds, N:329.

15 Rockingham County Deeds, Q:333.


24. Rockingham County Wills, F:298.


10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 4
Quadrangle name Southeast Eden

UTM References

A Zone Easting Northing
B Zone Easting Northing
C
D
E
F
G

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

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<th>county</th>
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11. Form Prepared By

Historical research and statement of significance by Lindley S. Butler, Consultant.
name/title Physical description, maps and photographs by Michael T. Southern, Consultant.
organization Survey and Planning Branch
organization North Carolina Division of Archives and History
organization state
street & number 109 East Jones Street
telephone 919/733-6545
city or town Raleigh

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

  national  X state  local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

State Historic Preservation Officer date July 12, 1984

For NPS use only
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

Chief of Registration


Davidson County Records: Estate Records.


Rockingham County Records: Deeds Wills


The nominated property is a tract of approximately four acres containing the office, the brick house, the family cemetery, the site of the lost plantation house and other associated outbuildings, the terraced boxwood gardens, and other landscaping immediately associated with the buildings. Beginning at a point on the west side of the farm road a distance of 150 feet southeast from the southeast corner of the frame office building, thence north along the edge of the road a distance of 400 feet, more or less, to an elevation of 60 feet above the Dan River flood plain, thence west maintaining the 60 foot elevation a distance of 400 feet, more or less, to a point, thence south by southeast a distance of 400 feet, more or less, to a point, thence due east a distance of 400 feet, more or less, to the beginning.
LOWER SAURATOWN PLANTATION
EDEN VICINITY
ROCKINGHAM COUNTY, N.C.
4 ACRES
Lower Sauratown Plantation
SR 1974, Eden vicinity
Rockingham County, N.C.
Southeast Eden, N.C. Quadrangle
4 acres
UTM coordinates:
Zone 17  Easting 615500
Northing 4038050