

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 an 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 Knox-Johnstone House

other names/site number Ben Allen Knox House

2. Location

street & number 100 Beaumont Farm Road n/a not for publication

city or town Cleveland n/a vicinity

state North Carolina code NC county Rowan code 159 zip code 27013

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

William S. Price, Jr. 6-17-93
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State of 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 certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

- 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:)

Name of Property

County and State

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

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	3	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2	3	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling

Domestic/secondary structure

Agriculture/animal facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/single dwelling

Domestic/secondary structure

Agriculture/animal facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian/Italianate

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Weatherboard

roof Asphalt

other Concrete

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.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

ca. 1880

ca. 1935

Significant Dates

ca. 1880

ca. 1935

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

Bibliography

(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

Name of repository:

Knox-Johnstone House

Rowan County, North Carolina

Name of Property

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approx. 1.8 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 [1,7] [5,2,8,6,9,0] [3,9,5,4,2,6,0]
Zone Easting Northing
2 [] [] []

3 [] [] []
Zone Easting Northing
4 [] [] []

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 Davyd Foard Hood

organization date 28 January 1993

street & number Isinglass, 6907 Old Shelby Road telephone 704/462-4331

city or town Vale state N.C. zip code 28168

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

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

name Mr. Warren L. Beaumont

street & number Post Office Box 291 telephone 704/278-9426

city or town Cleveland state N.C. zip code 27013

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetKnox-Johnstone House
Rowan County, North CarolinaSection number 7 Page 1

Architectural Description

The Knox-Johnstone House, erected ca. 1880 as the seat of a 500-plus acre farm at the northwest edge of the then-growing village of Cleveland, is an impressive two-story weatherboarded frame house with Italianate-style finish. Built to replace the earlier family seat here occupied by Samuel Knox, this house, built by his son Ben Allen Knox, faces due east and down Maple Street, the main residential street of Cleveland. When erected it had a complement of log and frame outbuildings erected by Samuel Knox and his son. Most of these stood into the twentieth century and were replaced as the operation of the farm changed from one of owner-resident to absentee landlord with resident farm manager. Included in this nomination is one agricultural outbuilding, a large bell-cast gambrel roof barn erected in the 1930s that stands directly behind (west of) the farm seat. The greatest changes in the appearance of the farm came after World War II when a large frame dairy barn, metal band silo, and milk parlor were erected to the north of the house. About this time a farm pond was created downgrade and to the southwest of the house. The dairy complex was later expanded with holding pens, perimeter lounging stalls, a lounging barn, and an equipment shed. All of these post World War II buildings still stand on the reduced acreage (153.88 acres) which now comprises the farm tract. Pastures, woodlands, and fields extend to the west behind the house which stands near the east boundary of that tract. The acreage included in this nomination, marked by an L-shaped planting of white pine trees and other shade trees, is a rectangular-shaped tract which forms the setting of the house and a cluster of three domestic outbuildings at its southwest corner and the 1930s barn.

The Knox-Johnstone House sits low on the ground and rests on shallow stones or stacks of rocks which have been infilled with brick to form a perimeter foundation. Its elevations are marked by simple cornerboards and sheathed with plain weatherboards. The house consists of a two-story, center hall, single-pile main block, three bays wide and facing east with a projecting center, entrance bay, and a nearly full-facade porch. It has an asphalt shingle side-gable roof. On the rear west elevation there are two original ells of dramatically different scale. The larger of the two is two stories in height and occupies the northern end of the house immediately behind the north parlor. Standing immediately behind the south parlor is a small, shallow, one-story ell. The main block and these two ells are finished with a consistent pattern of Italianate woodwork including molded or two-part window surrounds with projecting hoods over triangular lintels and a very handsome bargeboard, enriched with bosses, along the eaves. Apparently the space between these paired rear ells was occupied originally by a porch and passage to the old semi-detached frame kitchen which stands behind and due west of the south parlor. About 1957, this porch and passage were enclosed and expanded for living quarters and now permanently connects the main house with the kitchen which in plan is integrated into the house but, on the exterior, retains something of its own identity.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Knox-Johnstone House
Rowan County, North Carolina

Section number 7 Page 2

The front elevation of the Knox-Johnstone House is dominated by the front-gable-roof entrance bay which projects forward about two-three feet. It contains the two-pane over two-panel door below a two-pane transom on the first story and a pair of narrow windows on the second story; on the first story there are narrow windows on the north and south sides of the projecting block which illuminate the front part of the center hall. The gable top of the elevation is marked by a diamond shaped louvered ventilator. The flanking bays contain large window openings which hold turn-of-the-century, probably replacement, two-over-two sash. Under the porch the windows and doors have molded surrounds whereas the others throughout the original house have two-part surrounds; all have the triangular lintels with projecting molded hoods. These windows have fixed louver blinds.

The dimensions and shape of the front porch are original: its eaves are enriched with the same Italianate bargeboards as the main block and ells. The precise appearance of the original porch supports and other features is unknown. The present arrangement of a vertically sheathed frieze and square-in-plan posts with simple complimentary brackets were added ca. 1960, when a functional (second period) screened porch was dismantled and replaced with this dressier finish. Behind the porch the walls of the house are flush sheathed and have a molded top baseboard which are original features. Its original ceiling is also sheathed with flush boards. The floor of the porch is poured cement.

The north elevation of the original house has a two-bay division of varying sized window openings. On the first story of the main block's gable end, there is a five-sided projecting bay holding narrow one-over-one sash windows above molded flat panels in its three principal faces. It is finished with flat board surrounds and a cornice of built-up moldings. (If not an original feature it must have been added at the turn of the century.) In the center of the second-story elevation there is a single tall window opening holding two-over-two sash. In the upper attic level there is a rectangular-shaped opening fitted with horizontal louvers and a triangular lintel with projecting hood, like those above the windows. A brick chimney stack rises above the roof where the end-gable roof of the ell joins the roof of the main block. On the wider first-story north elevation of the ell there is a modern three-sided bay window whose form and finish vaguely mimics its earlier counterpart. Directly above is an opening which holds a six-over-nine sash window. This is the most visible indication on the exterior that antebellum woodwork and other features of the earlier Knox house were reused--mainly on the interior--in the construction of this dwelling. At the west end of the ell there is an unpainted treated wood deck, partially screened by foundation plantings. It carries along the north face of the infill block between the ells--covered with a roof which sheds to the south--and partially across the north gable end of the kitchen. At this junction of three blocks there are

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetKnox-Johnstone House
Rowan County, North CarolinaSection number 7 Page 3

variously-sized window openings. The original window opening on the first-story, west end of the ell has been converted to a door and is sheltered by a projecting hood; the opening on the second story with its six-over-nine sash is original. On the north face of the infill block--which contains the den and the rear hall--there are large fixed windows and a door, protected by a projecting hood. The window opening in the north gable end of the kitchen is fitted with replacement twelve-over-twelve sash.

There is a brick chimney, replaced about 1957, rising in the center of the south gable end of the main block which is flanked by window openings on the first story and blind elevations on the second story. Here, the shallow one-story ell has a blind south elevation: in the center of its west gable end there is a tall opening holding a six-over-nine sash window. The south elevation of the infill block stretches from the ell back to the enclosed porch carrying along the east side of the kitchen; it has a trio of three-over-one sash windows at its east end. The enclosed porch, sheathed with weatherboards, has a trio of fixed six-pane windows, facing east (to the ell) and a fourth, like window, and a partially glazed door at its south end. The south gable end of the kitchen has a single six-over-six sash window in its center. Above it, there is a board and batten door opening into the attic over the kitchen. On the rear, west elevation of the kitchen, there are two window openings in the north half of the wall. The smaller, northernmost opening contains three-over-one sash while the much larger window to its right (south) contains twelve-over-twelve sash. A brick chimney stack rises, near-center, through the roof of the kitchen.

Except for the room on the first story of the two-story ell, the interior architectural finish of the center-hall plan Knox-Johnstone House remains remarkably intact. For reasons that are now uncertain, Ben Allen Knox incorporated significant elements of his father's antebellum Greek Revival style house in his new Italianate-style house. At first glance the appearance and location of this stylistically earlier woodwork would suggest that the house itself was antebellum and Greek Revival, and that the Italianate-style appearance was the result of a remodeling effort. Ghost marks of earlier situations, particularly on the south parlor mantel, the out-of-order positions of rafters marked with Roman numerals (in the two-story ell), and the later nineteenth century framing of the house visible in the attic deny that possibility. This reused Greek Revival style woodwork consists mainly of mantels, doors, and door and window surrounds; it will be noted where it occurs. Otherwise, the intact interior finish of the house is typical of later-nineteenth century houses of piedmont North Carolina and includes: heart pine flooring, flush sheathed walls and ceilings finished with a simply molded two-part cornice, molded door and window surrounds, a handsome stair with turned newel, railing, and ramped handrail, and four-panel doors.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Knox-Johnstone House
Rowan County, North Carolina

Section number 7 Page 4

The center-hall, single-pile plan main block has single rooms of equal size on either side of the hall containing the stair. The stair rises westward along the south wall, just behind the door into the south parlor, continues to a landing which extends the width of the hall, and then rises to the second story along the hall's north wall. There is a closet fitted with a four-panel pegged door under the first flight of the staircase. Below the landing there is a door into the den which originally opened onto the former porch and passage to the kitchen.

In the center of the hall's north wall there is a doorway on axis with the bay window and alcove, on the opposite wall of the north parlor. In the center of the west wall, on axis with the window on the front elevation, there is a fireplace fitted with a factory-made turn-of-the-century oak mantel which features single columns and paired shelves above and below an inset mirror. In the wall to the north of the fireplace there is a door which originally connected with the room behind (west of) the north parlor; at some point part of the space north of the chimney in that back room was partitioned off to form a closet, accessible from the front parlor, which was then fitted with shelves.

The finish of the south parlor is largely like that of the north parlor except for the existence of a handsome, well-proportioned Greek Revival style mantel. Its pilasters have recessed channels and support capitals which have peaked faces; these capitals form the ends of the frieze made up of two recessed field panels with mitred perimeter bands. The shelf projects forward and to either side, in front of the windows, and bears the outline of an earlier wall and window moldings along its back. In the center of the west wall, a five-panel Greek Revival-style door opens into the small room in the one-story ell. Inside the room, the door surround and the window surround on the opposite (west) wall are Greek Revival style and feature symmetrical fluting. A door in the north wall of this small bedroom opens onto a passage at the east end of a large, long rectangular room which was created between the two ells on the north and south and between the main block and kitchen on the east and west, respectively. This enclosure was made in the late 1950s and its simple finish dates in part from that period and from remodeling by the present owner who uses it as a family room/den. Probably at that time--or perhaps even earlier and during the period of the post-World War II building program on the farm--a bathroom was enclosed in the east end of this infill block.

Warren Beaumont, the present owner, decided upon entirely new architectural finishes and woodwork for the dining room immediately behind the north parlor. His son-in-law Charles Barber, a carpenter and woodworker, executed the new woodwork in the early 1980s. A display cabinet is built into the northwest corner of the room, a cabinet with glazed doors above drawers is built into the shallow area to the north of the fireplace, and a wet bar is

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Knox-Johnstone House
Rowan County, North Carolina

Section number 7 Page 5

built into the space to the south of the chimney and fireplace. Those features, together with the door and window surrounds, chair rail, cornice, and the mantel with its bold lunette-shaped mirror are in oak with a golden finish. A fifteen-pane French door connects with the family room/den which has pine floors and manufactured sheet paneling.

At the west end of the den there is a door opening into the flush sheathed vestibule which, in turn, opens onto the rear deck. A second doorway opens into the kitchen. The finish in the kitchen dates entirely to the ownership of the present owner. Originally the kitchen held two rooms with a chimney in the partition wall providing fireplaces to the north and south rooms. That partition has been removed and the chimney repaired in old brick with exposed bond. There are oak faced cabinets in the main cooking area at the north end of the space. A door in the east wall at the south end of the room opens onto the enclosed shed porch. It has a cement floor and is now used as a laundry room.

The finish of the second story of the Knox-Johnstone House dates largely to the original construction unless otherwise noted. The second-story hall is now used as an informal home office by the present owner. A four-panel Italianate-style door in the south wall opens into the south bedroom. The Greek Revival style mantel on the south wall has blocky proportions and features wide, flat-board pilasters which rise and taper from bases to a plain, broad board frieze and molded shelf. In the north wall of the hall, a five-panel Greek Revival style door opens into the north bedroom. The Greek Revival style mantel has chamfered pilasters which rise to a wide plain board frieze. The window surrounds here are wide, plain boards with a narrow fillet around the window opening; the door surrounds have molded back bands. A six-panel transitional Federal/Greek Revival style door, to the south of the fireplace in the west wall, connects with the master bedroom in the second story of the ell. The three windows in this room feature two types of Greek Revival style surrounds. The windows in the north and south walls have symmetrically molded recessed-channel surrounds. The opening in the west wall has a symmetrically molded surround with a convex center element. All three windows originally held six-over-nine sash windows; however, the lower part of the south window was covered over when the room was created between the ells. The present owner has installed a modern bathroom in the northeast corner of the once-large bedroom. The floor in this room is carpeted, the walls covered with wallpaper, and the ceiling has a thin plaster coating.

OUTBUILDINGS

(FORMER) MEATHOUSE/GARAGE, ca. 1950 with later additions. Noncontributing. This rectangular frame building is offset a few feet from the south gable end of the kitchen. It has a poured cement floor, a cement block perimeter foundation, German-siding on its elevations, exposed rafter ends, and a front

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetKnox-Johnstone House
Rowan County, North CarolinaSection number 7 Page 6

gable roof covered with 5-V sheet metal. The original block of the building is a small rectangular meathouse which served that function until the late 1950s when it was converted by farm manager Ed Greble to a shop. It has a doorway centered in its north gable end that is fitted with a molded, four-panel door apparently reused from the house. There is a small window on the west side. Also in the late 1950s, Greble made additions on two sides of the meathouse. A shed extension carries along the east side of the meathouse: it has German siding and a 5-V sheet metal roof. Probably concurrently, the general form of the building was extended in like materials to the north to create a one-car garage. The garage opening on the west side is fitted with a sliding door covered with corrugated metal. Sometime in the 1960s or 1970s, a substandard open shed with a gable roof was built off the south gable end of the meathouse/garage. It has a dirt floor, open sides, mixed supports, and a sheet metal roof. The present owner has installed a wood-burning furnace in the former meathouse. A tall metal smokestack rises through the roof of the building. An insulated, overhead pipe carries heat to the house.

CAR SHELTER, ca. 1965. Noncontributing. This open structure has four square-in-plan metal supports rising to support a corrugated metal shed roof with wide eaves. It is now used for wood storage. It stands east of the above building.

MOBILE HOME GARAGE, 1982. Noncontributing. Erected for the present owner by his son-in-law Charles Barber, the rectangular frame building stands parallel to and immediately west of the meathouse/garage. Its poured cement floor, tall cement block perimeter foundation, German-sided elevations, exposed rafter ends, and gable-front roof of 5-V sheet metal repeats the materials and finish of its earlier neighbor. The north gable end is given over almost entirely to a large opening that is fitted with an overhead metal garage door. There is a simple six-panel door on the east side.

WEST BARN, ca. 1935. Contributing. Standing in the pasture and virtually due west of the farm seat, this large rectangular frame building is distinguished by a bell-cast roof which imparts a handsome appearance to the farm's senior surviving agricultural outbuilding. Erected on a gable-front plan with a center passage on an east/west axis, it stands on a poured cement perimeter foundation. Its elevations are covered with vertical board and batten over which corrugated sheet metal siding was applied in 1980. There are vented openings, reflecting the curve of the roof, along the eaves of the barn's ends. The roof is covered with 5-V sheet metal.

There are three centrally positioned openings on the front east elevation. At ground level there is a large opening, with a plain board surround, into the open stable of the barn. Resting on the top lintel of this opening is a smaller rectangular doorway fitted with a board and batten door which opens

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Knox-Johnstone House
Rowan County, North Carolina

Section number 7 Page 7

onto the loft level of the barn. At the very apex of the barn's front gable end, there is a large opening, now screened with woven wire, which is protected by a projecting pent. It was originally used for unloading hay; the mechanical hay lift remains intact but unused. On the south elevation there are six window openings and a door symmetrically arranged and set in plain board surrounds. The windows are fitted with one-over-one sash; the four-panel door was perhaps originally used somewhere in the house. On the north side there are six asymmetrically positioned window openings fitted with one-over-one sash. A pair of board and batten doors are partially inset in the foundation in the center of the rear elevation.

The ground level of the barn is one large open stable except for three stalls which are situated in the northeast corner of the barn. Immediately to their west and in the near center of the north wall is a feed room and a smaller room which might have been used for tack or feed. In the near-center of the south wall is a plain board stair which rises to the west and to the loft. The loft area of the barn is a vast area with a board floor and a loading platform at the east end. The impressive roof structure of the barn is visible in the loft.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Knox-Johnstone House
Rowan County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 1

Summary Paragraph

The Knox-Johnstone House, together with its frame 1930s barn, is significant in the architectural history of Rowan County and the town of Cleveland at whose edge it stands. The largely intact Italianate style house, with both Italianate and earlier Greek Revival style interior finishes, was erected ca. 1880 by Benjamin Allen Knox as the new seat of the family farm which he inherited at his father Samuel Knox's death in 1868. Benjamin Allen Knox was born in 1839 on the family's 500-plus-acre plantation into the large and prominent Knox Family which included their kinsman James Knox Polk (1795-1849), the eleventh president of the United States (1845-1849). Except for his service as an officer in Company B, 4th Regiment Infantry, North Carolina State Troops from 1861 through the surrender (and his pardon) at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, Knox spent his entire life on this farm and died here on 27 May 1907. About 1880, largely at his wife's urging, family tradition recalls, he built this new handsome Italianate style house for his family. Then, as now, it was an impressive house and one of a small number of stylish houses in the favored Victorian styles erected in rural Rowan County in the post-Reconstruction period. Without male heirs, the farm passed to his two daughters in 1907 and, following her sister's death in 1932, into the sole ownership of Augusta Knox Johnstone (1875-1948) who probably erected the large frame barn about 1935 to supplement the log outbuildings which had stood here in use since the nineteenth century. The barn is architecturally significant as one of a small surviving number of large, impressive frame barns erected in the county in the 1920s through 1940s. These barns, erected largely for dairying operations, mark the important transition in Rowan County agriculture from the small-scale operations of later nineteenth and turn-of-the-century farmers to the larger scale operations that marked agricultural production in the mid-twentieth century.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Knox-Johnstone House
Rowan County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 2

Historical Background

Benjamin Allen Knox, the builder of the house known as the Knox-Johnstone House, was born in 1839 to Samuel Knox (1798-1868) and his wife Elizabeth Burris (1801-1863). Samuel Knox was the son of Benjamin Knox and the great-grandson of the immigrant John Knox (d. 1758), the progenitor of the Knox Family of Rowan County. At his birth, Benjamin Allen Knox became a member of that large and prominent family whose number included James Knox Polk (1795-1849), a contemporary of Samuel Knox and, like him, a great-grandson of the immigrant. James Knox Polk would serve as the eleventh president of the United States from 1845 until 1849. From the time of their arrival in what is now Rowan County in the mid-eighteenth century, the members of the Knox Family have been large landowners, planters, and farmers in the rolling countryside of western Rowan County and eastern Iredell County. While some of their kinsmen took up professions or emigrated westward, many of the men who bore that surname remained in Rowan County and became important members of their church and community. Such was the case with Samuel Knox.¹

Samuel Knox wrote his will on 11 September 1860. Despite the fact that his wife Elizabeth died in 1863 and the Civil War freed the slaves that he intended to bequeath to her and his children, he did not rewrite his will before his death in 1868. In his will, Samuel Knox divided his lands between his two sons, James and Benjamin Allen, and his slaves and other property among his wife, two sons, and his two daughters--Margaret Knox Barber and Jane Knox Young.

The second item of Samuel Knox's will conveyed ". . . to my youngest son Benjamin Allen all that tract of land whereon I now live known as the Burrows place . . ." together with the "Burke and Gasky places." A reading of Samuel Knox's will indicates that his eldest son James Knox was already established, whereas his youngest son, then twenty-one years of age, was probably still residing at home. Just before appointing his friend Rufus Roseborough (1808-1878) his executor, Knox wrote "It is my last will and request that my son Benj. Allen should live with and take care of and provide for the wants and comforts of his mother during her natural life with the means I have placed in his hands."

The manner and character of family life which Samuel Knox intended to preserve to his wife and his descendants by the terms of his will did not entirely occur as he had prescribed. The outbreak of the Civil War was followed by the enlistment of his youngest son on 24 June 1861 as a corporal in Company B, Fourth Regiment Infantry, North Carolina State Troops, under Captain James H. Wood (d. 1864). Knox was promoted to sergeant on 25 April 1862. The eighteen slaves listed by name in Samuel Knox's will, and their increase, were freed during the war. In 1864 Samuel Knox's wife Elizabeth died and was buried at Third Creek Presbyterian Church.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetKnox-Johnstone House
Rowan County, North CarolinaSection number 8 Page 3

At the turn of the century, Ben Allen Knox supplied an account of his service in the Army of the Confederacy to his kinswoman Hattie S. Goodman who was at work on a genealogy of the Knox Family. The following paragraph was printed in THE KNOX FAMILY published in 1905, two years before his death:

"While in my boyhood, in 1860, the cry for soldiers came, and I joined the army, Company 'B,' organized at Rowan Mills, now Cleveland, N.C., with James H. Wood as Captain. In a few months we were taken to Richmond and there armed. During our stay in Richmond, the first battle was fought. We were in the following battles: Seven Pines, Cold Harbor, Seven Days' Fight around Richmond, Cedar Run (where Capt. Wood was killed), Gettysburg, Petersburg, Bloody Lane, and at Appomattox Courthouse where General R. E. Lee surrendered."

At the end of the Civil War, Ben Allen Knox apparently returned to his father's farm and cared for him in his last years. Samuel Knox died in 1868 and was buried at Third Creek Church. On 3 February of that year Ben Allen Knox was married to Catherine Jane McKinnon (1837-1904), the daughter of John and Catherine (McNair) McKinnon and a native of Robeson County, North Carolina. Nine years earlier, in 1859, her elder sister Margaret Anne McKinnon (1835-1897) was married to Charles C. Krider (d. 1891), sheriff of Rowan County from 1880 until 1890. The couple would live on the farm that Ben Allen inherited from his father for the remainder of their lives. The couple were the parents of at least six children, only two of whom lived to adulthood. The first-born child, a son, and three of his siblings, all of whom were born and died between 1869 and 1880, are buried in a row in the cemetery at Third Creek Church.

When Samuel Knox established his farm here in the first half of the nineteenth century, it would have been known as a part of the larger community of which Third Creek Church stood at the center. Here, about three miles south of the church, two events occurred in the antebellum period which resulted in the emergence of the town of Cleveland of which this house is now a part. In the 1850s, Osborne Giles Foard (1820-1882) established an important flour mill at his plantation immediately south of Samuel Knox's. A post office was established there in 1856, with Mr. Foard as postmaster, and given the name of "Rowan Mills." About the same time the tracks of the Western North Carolina Railroad--leading to Morganton and Asheville--were laid through and bisected the plantation on which Samuel Knox lived. The railroad station was given the name "Third Creek Station." In 1876 the town was incorporated as "Third Creek." The operation of the flour mill, the concurrent establishment of a post office, and the creation of a railroad station, all in the same vicinity gave rise to a small settlement which took on the character of a rural village. In 1884, the name of the settlement was changed from Third Creek to Cleveland in honor of the election of Grover Cleveland as the first post-Civil War Democrat to the presidency.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetKnox-Johnstone House
Rowan County, North CarolinaSection number 8 Page 4

The growth of Third Creek (Cleveland) in the late 1870s and early 1880s is critical to the history of this house. The exact nature of the network of then-existent roads here is now unknown. When Samuel Knox built the house in which his son would later live with his wife it was apparently oriented to either the north, the west, or the south, and not to the east where the village of Cleveland would grow. As the village grew, Mr. and Mrs. Knox found themselves passing by the barns and farm outbuildings--standing to the rear and east of their house--when they went into the village. Likewise, friends and family who visited them would also pass by or through the complex of agricultural buildings when they came calling from Cleveland.

According to family tradition, this was a situation which Catherine Jane McKinnon Knox would not tolerate and she convinced her husband to erect a new house. This house, the Knox-Johnstone House, was erected a couple of hundred feet east of the old house and, more importantly, well in front of the farm's outbuildings. It was erected on a nearly true east/west axis and faced down the street which later became the town's principal residential avenue and was named Maple Street. It seems likely that the construction of the house occurred about 1880. Its construction cannot be tied, with reason, to the year of 1884 when the town was renamed for President Cleveland since Benjamin Allen Knox was a strong Republican.

When Mr. Knox built this house he did not entirely abandon his former home. Instead, he reused portions of the Greek-Revival style woodwork, particularly doors, door and window surrounds, and mantels on the interior of his then fashionable Italianate style farm seat. The only evidence of this sentiment--and perhaps thrift--visible on the exterior was the reuse of some six-over-nine sash windows on the rear ells of the house. (It is also possible that the main part of the house was fitted up with then retarditare six-over-nine sash; the present two-over-two style sash probably date from the turn of the century.) It was in this house that Ben Allen Knox and his wife would live for the next quarter of a century and raise their two surviving daughters, Augusta, born 17 November 1875 in the old house, and the couple's last-born child, Katie James, who was born in 1880 and was known as "Jimmie."

Benjamin Allen Knox cultivated the fields of his 500-plus-acre farm for the remainder of his life. Late in his life he was a director of the Merchants and Farmers Bank in Cleveland and is cited as a co-owner, for a period, of the town's leading manufacturing enterprise, the Thompson Veneer Company, organized in 1899. Catherine Jane "Kittie" McKinnon Knox died on 24 November 1904, and was buried beside the graves of her four children. Without a direct male heir, Knox realized that the operation as well as the ownership of his farm would take a different turn at his death. In January 1907, he placed a notice in the SALISBURY EVENING POST under the headline, Sale of Personal Property":

I will see at public auction at my home in Cleveland township on

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Knox-Johnstone House
Rowan County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 5

Thursday the 30th day of January, 1907 at 10 o'clock, a.m., all my personal property, including four mules, two horses, nine head of cattle, eight hogs, three mowing machines, McCormick reaper, corn and cotton cultivator, three wagons, one cart, one splendid pair double wagon harness, corn, oats, wheat, hay, and many other articles too numerous to mention. Terms of sale cash.

Four months after the sale, Benjamin Allen Knox died on 27 May 1907. The account of his death appeared in that same day's issue of the SALISBURY EVENING POST.

Mr. Ben Allen Knox died at his home in Cleveland last night at midnight after an illness extending over a period of nearly two years. He had not been in robust health for even a longer time but bravely resisted the inroads of a physical weakness that he realized must inevitably and at most any time result fatally. He suffered an organic heart trouble, which combined with other ailments caused his death.

Mr. Knox was 68 years old, and all his life had been spent on the Knox place in Cleveland township. No man in the county commanded more friends than he, and this too, despite the fact that his political affiliations at a time when to be other than a Democrat in this section meant almost certain ostracism. He was a staunch Republican from conviction and his personal following was immense. On an occasion when his party offered him for sheriff he came within a close margin of election in this rock-ribbed Democratic country. But he was not an offensive partisan. In politics, as in all other concerns he was the courtly, congenial, unaffected Southern gentleman. His home was noted for its hospitality.

His funeral was held from the Presbyterian Church in Cleveland and he was buried beside his wife in the cemetery at Third Creek Church in the tier of graves that included those of his children. His grave is marked by a handsome grey granite obelisk with the ornamentation worked in contrasting polished and rough textures. An administrator's sale was held at the homeplace on 12 July 1907; his horse, buggy, milk cow, and various remaining furnishings were put up at auction.

The homeplace at Cleveland, including this house and its farm of 500-plus acres, was inherited by his two daughters and eventually became the property of his eldest daughter, Augusta Knox (1875-1948). In 1899 she was married to John Brevard Johnstone (1867-1937) at the homeplace, in the bay window of the north parlor. This union united two families long prominent in the history of the Third Creek Church and the community. John Brevard Johnstone was the son of John Dickey Johnston (1821-1892) who served as an elder of the church from

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetKnox-Johnstone House
Rowan County, North CarolinaSection number 8 Page 6

1854 until his death. John B. Johnstone attended Davidson College and after graduation he located in Mocksville where he pursued business interests. Ben Allen Knox is said to have erected the two-story house at 210 North Main Street in Mocksville as a present to the couple. Mr. Johnstone and Jacob Franklin Hanes (1871-1942) were the organizers of the Hanes Chair and Table Company in Mocksville. Although children of the Third Creek and Cleveland communities, Augusta Knox and John Johnstone lived their entire married life in Mocksville. Following Ben Allen Knox's death in 1907, the farm at Cleveland was operated on a lease or percentage basis for many years. During this period the house was occupied by the farmer who likewise made use of the farm's log outbuildings.

Apparently there was little change in the appearance of the house and farm while the two sisters jointly owned the property. At the death of Katie James Knox Formwalt in 1932, Augusta Knox Johnstone became the sole owner of the farm and it seems likely that the large frame barn to the west of the farm seat was erected about this time. Thereafter, the farm probably remained the same until after Mrs. Johnstone's death on 19 July 1948. At that time, the farm was inherited by her son and only child Knox Johnstone (1900-1971), the owner of the Hanes Chair and Table Company and, since 1937, the president of the Bank of Davie. A graduate of McCallie School in Chattanooga, Tennessee and Davidson College (1926), he was married to Carroll Smith, the daughter of Harold Ogden Smith, in 1929. Following family tradition, John Brevard and Augusta Knox Johnstone gave the couple a house as their wedding present. Designed by the firm of Northup and O'Brien of Winston-Salem, the colonial revival house at 1133 North Main Street in Mocksville was completed and occupied by the couple on 1 November 1929. It remains Mrs. Johnstone's residence to the present.

As his mother's sole heir, Knox Johnstone set about putting plans into action to develop a modern dairy operation on the ancestral holding previously devoted to cash crops and beef cattle. Both personally and professionally as a banker, Knox Johnstone had a strong interest in farming and participated in several agribusiness tours sponsored by the North Carolina Bankers's Association. Elected to the North Carolina House of Representatives in 1947, he was in Raleigh often during his two-year term and called upon the assistance of professionals at North Carolina State University for advice on this project. A small dairy operation had existed here in the 1930s and early 1940s. At this time the house and west barn included in this nomination were standing as were the double pen log barn and a log granary which stood to the north/northwest of the house and were pulled down in the 1950s. In addition to the erection of the frame meathouse immediately to the southwest of the house, there were three major agricultural building projects that occurred during the period from ca. 1948 into the early 1950s. These were: the construction of the cement block milking parlor with an attached cooling tank room to the north of the house; the erection of the large frame feeding barn

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Knox-Johnstone House
Rowan County, North Carolina

Section number 8 Page 7

adjacent to the milking parlor with a silo at its north end; the construction of a second metal-band silo at a corner of the holding pen encircling the dairy barn; and the construction of a farm pond. All of these properties remain except for the silo standing at the end of the dairy barn which was demolished by the present owner. Later in the decade, an equipment shed and a hay barn--both of simple pole construction with sheet metal covering--were added to the dairy complex.

During the fifty years from Mr. Knox's death in 1907 until 1957, a series of mostly local men operated the Knox farm for its absentee owners. Often this was on a percentage basis when cotton, corn, and wheat were raised. "Ott" White is one of the men who resided here and worked for the Johnstone family. He employed the heads of at least three African-American families who occupied the three small frame tenant houses which stood to the south of the house. Two of those houses have been lost and a third subsumed inside a modern residence. In 1957, Knox Johnstone hired Edwin Greble away from Twinbrooke Farms in Mocksville and installed him on the Cleveland farm. Greble, academically trained with a degree in dairy husbandry from the University of Maryland, developed a fine herd of registered Holstein dairy cows here. The farm was operated as Greble & Johnstone; a surviving sign attests to this arrangement.

To accommodate Mr. Greble and his family, Knox Johnstone undertook and/or financially supported some improvements to the Knox-Johnstone House. On the front elevation, the then-existing screened porch was replaced with the present arrangement of posts with sawn brackets more in keeping with the style of the house. At the rear, the former porch/passage carrying between the ells to the kitchen was permanently enclosed as living quarters. Mr. Greble simply fitted up the former meathouse as a shop and added the automobile garage at its north end. These were the last significant changes to the family-held farm except for the construction of the free stalls around the perimeter of the dairy holding pen, the change from the old straight stanchion arrangement in the milking parlor to a new herringbone-form parlor, and the conversion of the 1950s hay barn to a lounging barn. These events all occurred in 1965.

Following Knox Johnstone's death in April, 1971, the dairy herd of 100 cows was divided between Mr. Greble and the Johnstone heirs. That portion of the herd belonging to the Johnstones together with the farm equipment was dispersed at public auction in 1971. Mr. Greble moved his share of the herd to a farm on High Rock Lake in eastern Rowan County and left the Cleveland farm.

The series of transactions which transferred ownership of the Knox-Johnstone House and the farm from the Knox-Johnstone family to the present owner began in 1967. By two deeds of 18 December 1967, Knox and Carroll Smith Johnstone transferred a one-quarter interest in the farm property to each of their two

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetKnox-Johnstone House
Rowan County, North CarolinaSection number 8 Page 8

children, Elizabeth Carroll Johnstone Crowell and John Knox Johnstone. The remaining share of the farm holding came into their possession at their father's death. On 11 January 1972, Carroll Crowell, John Knox Johnstone, and their spouses sold the Knox-Johnstone House and farm to Willis M. Myers. Mr. Myers had acquired the property as an investment and before the decade was out he had subdivided the 538.90-acre tract. On 20 July 1979 he and his wife sold a tract of 153.88 acres, on the north side of the Southern Railroad track and comprising the Knox-Johnstone House and the farm's agricultural outbuildings, to Harry F. Hall and his wife. Five months later, on 13 December 1979, Mr. and Mrs. Hall sold the same tract to Warren L. and Gladys M. Beaumont. During the Myers and Hall ownership of the property, the house stood vacant. Mr. and Mrs. Beaumont renovated the house for use as their residence and removed here in 1980. They continued to occupy the house and raise sheep and beef cattle on the farm under the style of Beaumont Farms.

Architectural Context

The Knox-Johnstone House is significant in the architectural history of Rowan County as a largely intact example of the Italianate style residence and as one of a small number of substantial farm houses erected in post-Reconstruction Rowan County. The Western North Carolina Railroad, erected through western Rowan County in the antebellum period, bisected the farm where Benjamin Allen Knox lived his entire life. It brought a remarkable and previously unparalleled era of prosperity to piedmont North Carolina which resulted in the construction of numerous new seats on the farms and plantations of Rowan County and the Piedmont. Since the Greek Revival style architectural fabric which he reused in his new ca. 1880 Italianate style house was typical of that which ornamented the large group of antebellum houses, it seems entirely plausible that his father Samuel Knox had also built a new residence for his family in the pre-Civil War period. In 1855-1856 his younger brother Robert Knox (1804-1885) had erected a new Greek Revival-style house on the ancestral family farm which had been acquired by their great-grandfather, the immigrant John Knox, in the 1740s. Numerous other frame (and fewer brick) houses were erected throughout the Piedmont in the 1850s and handsome churches such as Back Creek and Thyatira--where John Knox is buried--likewise soon ornamented the rich rural agricultural landscape.

The Civil War and the economic dislocation which followed in its wake brought an end to this handsome series of houses and churches which had mostly been erected in the Greek Revival style. There was relatively little significant construction in rural Rowan County until the mid 1870s and early 1880s and even then the number of important houses and churches is few. Many of these post-Reconstruction houses followed the traditional two-story-with-an-ell form in use before the Civil War; however, their ornamentation was markedly different. The symmetrical, classical motives of the Greek Revival style gave way to a succession of Victorian styles in the later nineteenth century.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetKnox-Johnstone House
Rowan County, North CarolinaSection number 8 Page 9

Together with the Gothic Revival, one of the first of these styles was the Italianate. Its signal features were lavish bargeboards ornamented with bosses and pendants, paneled chimney tops, bay windows, projecting, molded window and door hoods, and tower forms which, most often, had the main entrance to the house in its base. Most of these features survive in place on the exterior of the Knox-Johnstone House. The only lamentable loss is the original group of porch supports which appear to have been removed in the 1930s or 1940s when they were replaced by the plain screened porch.

There are three related houses in rural Rowan County which form the closest context, both in style and materials, to the Knox-Johnstone House. Two stand at the edge of the village of Mill Bridge which grew up around Thyatira Church in the nineteenth century. The most impressive of these is Oakland, erected as a Federal style house in 1822 by Joseph Kerr. In 1872 a wealthy Salisbury merchant James Samuel McCubbins purchased the house and 593 of its 1,683 acres. He extended the house's eaves and ornamented them and the front porch with the most elaborate program of Italianate style woodwork in the county. A short distance to the south McCubbins's daughter and son-in-law, Dr. John B. Gaither, built a more conventional Italianate style two-story house with bracketed eaves and front porch. About ten years later, about 1885, near Craven in eastern Rowan County, another doctor, Chalmers Melancthon Van Poole (1854-1933), erected a like-sized house and adjoining office and fronted the pair of buildings with a bracketed, turned post porch. This small group of residences form an identifiable body of impressive houses which stand apart in the county's later nineteenth century rural and village landscape from the more conventional, smaller, simpler two-story frame houses whose finish is less highly ornamented.

The handsome frame barn, erected in the 1930s to the west of the house, is likewise significant in the architectural history of Rowan County. When erected, it joined the existing log barn and log granary standing on the Knox-Johnstone Farm. These two agricultural outbuildings were typical components of any substantial Rowan County farm which might also include a log crib, a log smokehouse, and a second log granary. The economic dislocations of the Civil War and the reduced scale of farm operations in the post-war period largely precluded the building of any but the most necessary buildings in the later nineteenth century. The great double-pen log barn continued to shelter a farm's crops and livestock and when additional room was needed, frame sheds could easily be added to its gable ends and long side elevations. There were some few important frame barns erected in Rowan County in the decades around the turn of the century. The most important--and most elegant--of these is the barn erected by James Newton Plaster in 1912 on his farm near Enochville. Its gable front contains a three-part arcade which shelters a recessed work area.

In the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s expanded farming operations and an increase in

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetKnox-Johnstone House
Rowan County, North CarolinaSection number 8 Page 10

dairy farming in Rowan County occasioned the construction of large frame barns which were most often covered with expansive gambrel or bell-cast roofs. The barn at the Knox-Johnstone Farm is one of the earliest in this group and one of the most important such barns of the 1930s to survive. Its closest contemporary was the great weatherboarded frame barn with an inset wood silo erected in the 1930s by Backman Brown Miller (1874-1965) on the farm in Mt. Ulla Township that he inherited from his father. It has been lost. Some distance afield, in Davie County, stands a barn of nearly identical appearance to the Knox-Johnstone Farm barn; it is said to have been built in 1940 by Wade W. Smith as the core of his dairy operation. This coincidence gives rise to the possibility that both barns could well have been erected on a plan supplied by the agricultural extension offices headquartered by the North Carolina State College of Agriculture and Engineering at Raleigh. That remains to be confirmed; however, both barns are architecturally significant and likewise important in the history of dairy farming in North Carolina in the first half of the twentieth century.

FOOTNOTE

1. The principal sources for information used in this nomination appear in the bibliography. The public records of Rowan County were also examined. Quotations from Samuel Knox's will appear in the text. The chain of title for the property was established through the series of deeds which transferred the property from Knox Johnstone to his children and forward to the present owner. The author's personal knowledge of architecture, genealogy, and the history of Rowan County was supplemented by the assistance of Wylie Krider Knox Smith and Mary Jane Fowler.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Knox-Johnstone House
Rowan County, North Carolina

Section number 9 Page 1

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Interview with Carroll Smith Johnstone, Carroll Johnstone Crowell, and John Knox Johnstone, Mocksville, 19 November 1992 (notes on interview in possession of the author).

Interview with Edwin Greble, former manager of the Greble & Johnstone Farm. By telephone from Cleveland, 19 November 1992 (notes on interview in possession of the author).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetKnox-Johnstone House
Rowan County, North CarolinaSection number 10 Page 1

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated acreage is a small rectangular lot, measuring 200 feet on the east and west, and 400 feet on the north and south, which comprises the site and immediate setting of the Knox-Johnstone House, its attendant domestic outbuildings, and the west barn. The east boundary begins at a marker near the intersection of Maple Street and Third Creek Church Road and continues south, along the legal bounds of the total property acreage, for 200 feet. This parcel of land is outlined on the enclosed map of the acreage associated with the house which was prepared in 1973 and revised in 1975 for Willis Myers who owned the Knox-Johnstone House from 1972 until 1979.

Verbal Boundary Justification

The boundaries for the acreage included in the Knox-Johnstone House nomination were chosen to include the site and immediate setting of the Knox-Johnstone House, its domestic outbuildings, and the west barn. These boundaries were drawn to exclude buildings and structures which were erected after 1943 and which do not contribute to the architectural significance of the Knox-Johnstone House; those buildings and structures include a dog kennel and lot erected to the south of the house, the farm pond and pond house to the south/southwest of the house, and the feeding barn, cement block milk parlor, hay barn, and equipment shed that stand to the north/northwest of the house. The deed conveying the property from Harry Hall to Warren Beaumont, the current owner, is for 153.88 acres minus a small lot of 0.69 acres, facing Third Creek Church Road and adjoining Nora McCubbins. The surveyor subtracted the 0.69 acre lot from the acreage of the front tract (88.74 acres), reducing it to 88.05 acres; however, he did not draw in the boundaries of the 0.69 acre house lot on the map.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Knox-Johnstone House, Cleveland, Rowan County, NC

Photographs

Section number _____ Page 1

Knox-Johnstone House: Schedule of Photographs

The following numbered list of photographs is a schedule of those photographs included in this nomination. The following information applies to all of the photographs.

Name of Property: Knox-Johnstone House
100 Beaumont Farm Road
Cleveland
Rowan County
North Carolina

Photographer: Davyd Foard Hood

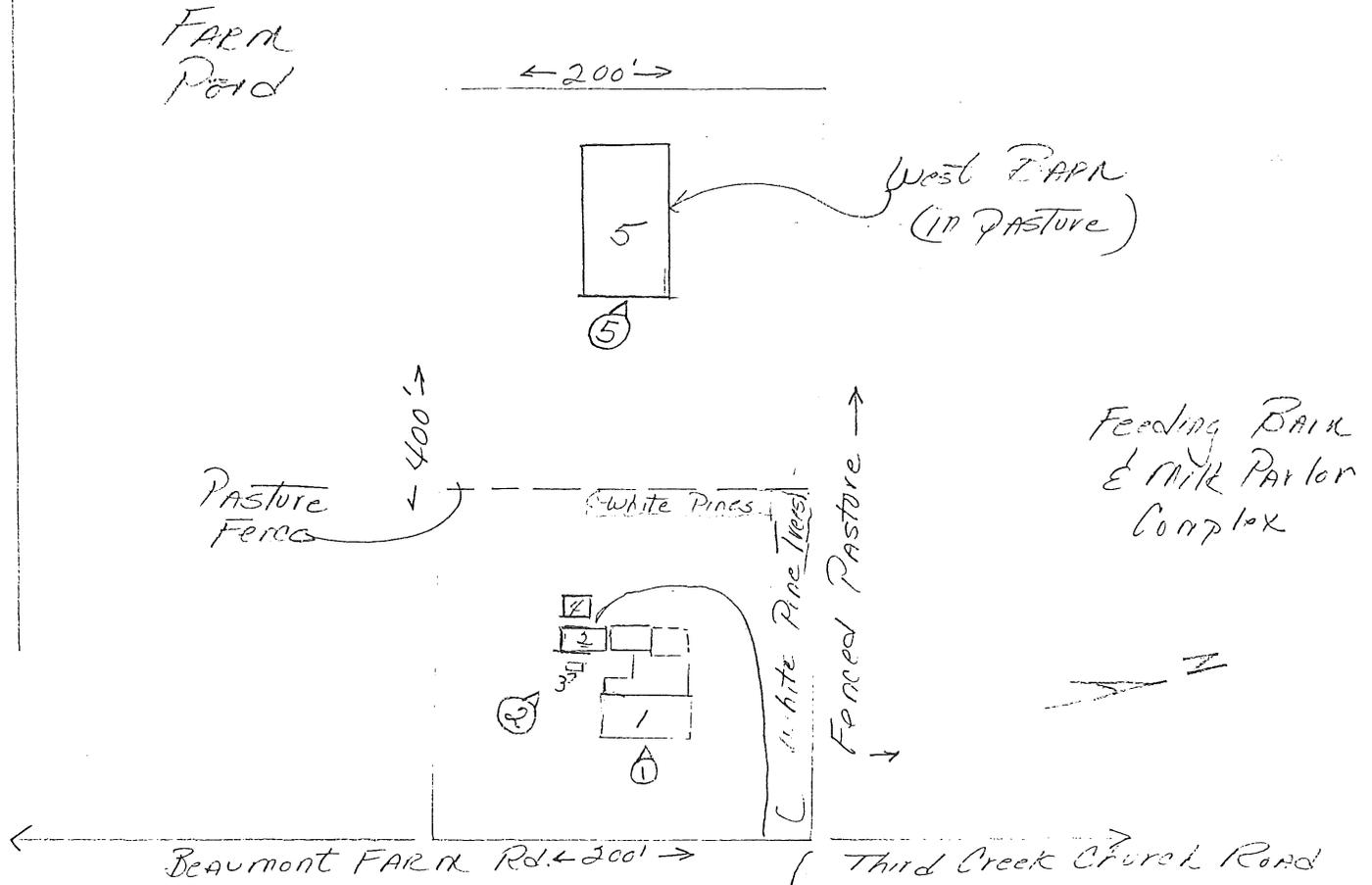
Date of Photographs: 18 November 1992

Location of Original Negatives: Division of Archives and History
109 East Jones Street
Raleigh, North Carolina 27601

1. Knox-Johnstone House: East(front) elevation, looking west
2. Knox-Johnstone House: View of the house and its domestic dependencies, looking northwest
3. Knox-Johnstone House: North Parlor Mantel, looking west/northwest
4. Knox-Johnstone House: Second-story, South Bedroom Mantel, looking south
5. Knox-Johnstone House: West Barn, looking northwest

Woodlands & Pasture

← Railroad line →
Lane to rear fields and woodlands



Knox-Johnstone House
160 BEAUMONT FARM RD
Cleveland
Rowan County, North Carolina
- 30 March 1993
Dalyd FORD Hood
(Not to exact scale)

- C 1 - Knox-Johnstone House
- NC 2 - Meat house/GARAGE
- NC 3 - Car Shelter
- NC 4 - Mobile Home GARAGE
- C 5 - West BARN

Photo Key (A) #

Triple Street
in Cleveland

Knox-Johnstone House, 100 Beaumont Farm Rd.
Cleveland, Rowan County, N.C. Cleveland Quad
UTM References
17/528690/3954260

CLEVELAND QUADRANGLE
NORTH CAROLINA
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

4855 1 SE
(COOLEMEE)

4855 1 SW (COOL SPRINGS) 529 530 40' 531 1 510 000 FEET 532 533 80° 37' 30" 35° 45'





