

State of North Carolina  
Division of Archives and History

# 6  
Sampson COUNTY  
Garland, N. C. QUAD

# INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY FORM FOR

MULTIPLE RESOURCE OR  THEMATIC NOMINATION

## 1 NAME

HISTORIC Fleet Matthis Farm  
AND/OR COMMON

## 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER W side US 421, 0.8 mi S of SR 1146  NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CITY, TOWN Third CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
 VICINITY OF Taylor's Bridge  
STATE North Carolina CODE 037 COUNTY Sampson CODE 163

## 3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJFCT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Roland Matthis (919) 592-4970  
STREET & NUMBER Route 2 Box 136-C  
CITY, TOWN Clinton, NC 28328 STATE

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.  
STREET & NUMBER REGISTER OF DEEDS  
SAMPSON COUNTY COURT HOUSE  
CITY, TOWN CLINTON, N.C. 28328 STATE

## 6 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Jim Sumner, Researcher DATE September 12, 1985  
ORGANIZATION Survey and Planning Branch Research Branch TELEPHONE (919) 733-6545  
STREET & NUMBER 109 E. Jones St. STATE N. C. 27611  
CITY OR TOWN Raleigh

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Built about 1830 for Fleet Cooper Matthis, a member of a very large planter family, this house exhibits the most vigorous application of exterior Federal ornamentation in the county on its east elevation--pierced by an elaborately detailed tripartite window. The two-story, center hall house has a full width double tier porch on the south, front facade. Enclosed end bays on the second floor create an unusual gable end profile. Resting on a slight knoll 600 yards west of US 421, the vacant house, owned by two great-great-nephews of the builder, is immediately surrounded by a small clump of pines; woodlands and extensive farmlands surround the dwelling.

The tall, single-pile house with an attached rear shed rests on brick and rock piers. Mixed bond brick chimneys - the east is larger than the west - terminate the gable end roof. The enclosed-end bay second-floor porch is supported by four clusters of four, slender, square posts arranged with a shared vernacular Doric capital; pairs of these posts serve as porch pilasters. Only the handrail and bottom rail of the second floor porch survive; connecting spindles were small and square. The entire porch is engaged under the house's roof. Sash are nine-over-nine on the first floor, having a flat surround with molded edge, with six-over-six sash on the second floor and west gable. The single, central entrance on the first floor porch has a four-light transom and symmetrically fluted surround with a base and corner blocks. The house's cornerboards are simply treated.

The intricately detailed east pedimented gable is one of the most surprising examples of vernacular craftsmanship found in Sampson County. The boxed cornice has a large band of molding at the top of the frieze; this arrangement continues across both front and rear elevations of the house and ends with short returns on the west gable; lacking the ornateness of the east gable, it is unadorned, with only a shallow raking cornice. The east gable end's raking cornice is modillioned and dentiled. Centered in the east tympanum is the three-part attic window with five-pane sidelights flanking the nine-over-six main sash. The elaborate entablature with triglyphs is supported by four intricately carved pilasters.

On the rear north elevation are shed rooms; the west shed room, known as the "long room", originally extended beyond the west wall of the house; it has been shortened to match the west elevation. Behind the house at the northeast corner, connected by porches, was the separate kitchen and dining room ell. This ell was removed a number of years ago.

The interior of the center hall house is plastered, with a molded edge baseboard. Wide boards sheath the ceiling. The east parlor mantel is a large classical one with fluted pilasters supporting shorter molded pilasters on the frieze, on which rests the shelf. A similar mantel, although flat and plain, is in the west parlor. An enclosed stair rises from the rear ell room through the west parlor to the second floor, which consists of center hall with door to the front porch, a large east bedroom, and a small west bedroom. The east bedroom mantel is also large and flat, and supported by two tiers of pilasters, with its frieze divided into three sections. The east room also has a door to the porch. Access to the second floor porch rooms is only from the porch; both are sheathed with wide boards.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Fleet Matthis Farm

Item number 7

Page 1

The only other early remnant of the farmstead is the Knowles family cemetery containing three graves. Margaret Knowles was a niece of the builder; she and her husband David acquired the property in 1784. A much-deteriorated paling fence surrounds another grave, which has sunken; no stone remains. Also on the site are three early 20th century outbuildings. The shed is a frame, weatherboarded structure with front gable roof and side sheds. A two-story packhouse also has side sheds and a single six-over-six sash window on the second floor. The abandoned square notched tobacco barn has partially been covered with asphalt siding; it is rather deteriorated. Also on the farm is a simple two-room, gabled-roof tenant house with central chimney and rear sheds and the 1970s brick house of one of the owners. The owner's mother has drawn out a map of outbuildings as she remembers them from the early 20th century. Included are several stables, the shuckhouse, smokehouse, loomhouse, storehouse, root cellar, washhouse, two wells, privy, plow house, chicken house, large corn crib, the buggy house, and the wagon shelter.

There are six contributing sites/structures within the nomination of the Fleet Matthis Farm: The main house, three early 20th century outbuildings, a cemetery, and the collection of 15 known sites of outbuildings, including corn crib, buggy house, wagon shelter, chicken house, , plow house, stables, wash house, two wells, cellar, loom house, smokehouse, privy, and shuck house.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Fleet Matthis Farm

Item number 7

Page 12

Cemetery List

1. David C. Knowles - Feb. 20, 1832 - Nov. 4, 1907  
"Gone but not forgotten"
2. Margaret - May 3, 1840 - Feb. 22, 1914 (wife of D. J. Knowles)  
"Gone but not forgotten"
3. Edgar L. Knowles - Sept. 9, 1859 - Aug. 19, 1890  
"Beloved father farewell"
4. There is no stone within the small grave fence, only a sunken down grave.



## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Fleet Matthis house is located near the southeastern Sampson County community of Taylors Bridge. The house was built in the 1830s by Fleet Cooper Matthis.

Fleet Matthis was one of the many grandchildren of Edmund and Molly Price Matthis, the progenitors of many of Sampson County's Matthis and Matthews family members. Edmund Matthis (1719-1783) and his wife Molly (1725-1803) moved to the Taylors Bridge vicinity from Virginia about 1745. The couple had twenty-two children, most of whom lived to adulthood. One of these children, James Matthis (1764-1850), became a prominent Sampson County planter and represented the county in the state legislature from 1809 until 1818. James Matthis had eight children by his first wife, Margaret Sloan (1770-1806), and nine by his second wife, Mary Ann Newkirk (1787-1864). Fleet Cooper Matthis was the third child of James and Mary Ann Matthis. <sup>1</sup>

The exact construction date of the Matthis house is unknown. Fleet Matthis purchased the land on which the house sits from his father in 1839 in a deed which makes clear the fact that the younger Matthis was already living on the property. Fleet Matthis was born in 1815 which suggests that the house could not have been built by him prior to the middle 1830s. Matthis married Elizabeth Ballard in the late 1830s and they had four daughters. He had one son by his second wife, Mary Matthis. <sup>2</sup>

The 1850 census shows that Matthis owned 11 slaves and 565 acres. His real estate was valued at \$3,000 and his livestock at \$150. He grew 700 bushels of corn, 400 pounds of cotton and lesser amounts of oats, peas and beans, and sweet potatoes. He evidently ran into financial difficulty, however. In 1857, he was forced to sell the property at auction to satisfy debts. It was purchased by land speculator William Faison who then sold it to his son-in-law, Patrick Murphy, an attorney. Murphy subsequently sold the house to his daughter Mary and her husband Joseph Dickson Pearsall, a physician. <sup>3</sup>

In 1874 the house was purchased by David J. Knowles who paid \$3,100 for the structure and 700 acres. Knowles (1832-1906) was related to the Matthis family by marriage. His wife, Margaret Robinson (1840-1914) was a niece of Fleet Matthis and a granddaughter of James Matthis. The 1880 census credits Knowles with the ownership of 600 acres valued at \$3,000. Knowles grew 1,800 pounds of cotton, 300 pounds of rice, and 400 bushels of corn. His livestock was valued at \$550 and included swine, poultry, and sheep. <sup>4</sup>

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bizzell, Oscar M., ed. The Heritage of Sampson County, North Carolina. Winston-Salem: The Hunter Publishing Company, 1983.

---

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 297

### UTM REFERENCES

A	17	74675	386	B	17	74675	386
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	17	742	386	D	17	748	386

---

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Property consists of that portion of the lands of David J. Knowles shown on the plat map attached to David J. Knowles' will, August 4, 1905. Plat map is attached and property is outlined in red.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Fleet Matthis Farm

Item number 8

Page 1

David and Margaret Knowles were both leaders in the area Universalist church. David Knowles also served on the county school commission. David and Margaret Knowles had 15 children and 71 grandchildren. Thus the will of David Knowles was somewhat lengthy and complex. Eventually the house and over 200 acres came into the possession of his youngest son, James Cleveland (Jack) Knowles (1881-1927), his wife, Sarah Owen (1883-1938), and their seven children. They continued to farm the land. Jack Knowles' death was preceded by a lengthy illness and subsequent financial difficulty. Eventually the house and a small amount of property were obtained by Knowles' daughter, Virginia, and her husband, Chris Matthis.<sup>5</sup> Their son, Roland Matthis, is the present owner of the house, which is unoccupied.

Located near the Matthis house is a small cemetery and a number of outbuildings. Both David and Margaret Knowles are buried in the cemetery. The outbuildings are twentieth century.

The Matthis house is one of the oldest houses in Sampson County. Its association with the Matthis family and the Knowles family make it historically important as does its association with Sampson County's agricultural traditions, both pre- and post-Civil War.

NOTES

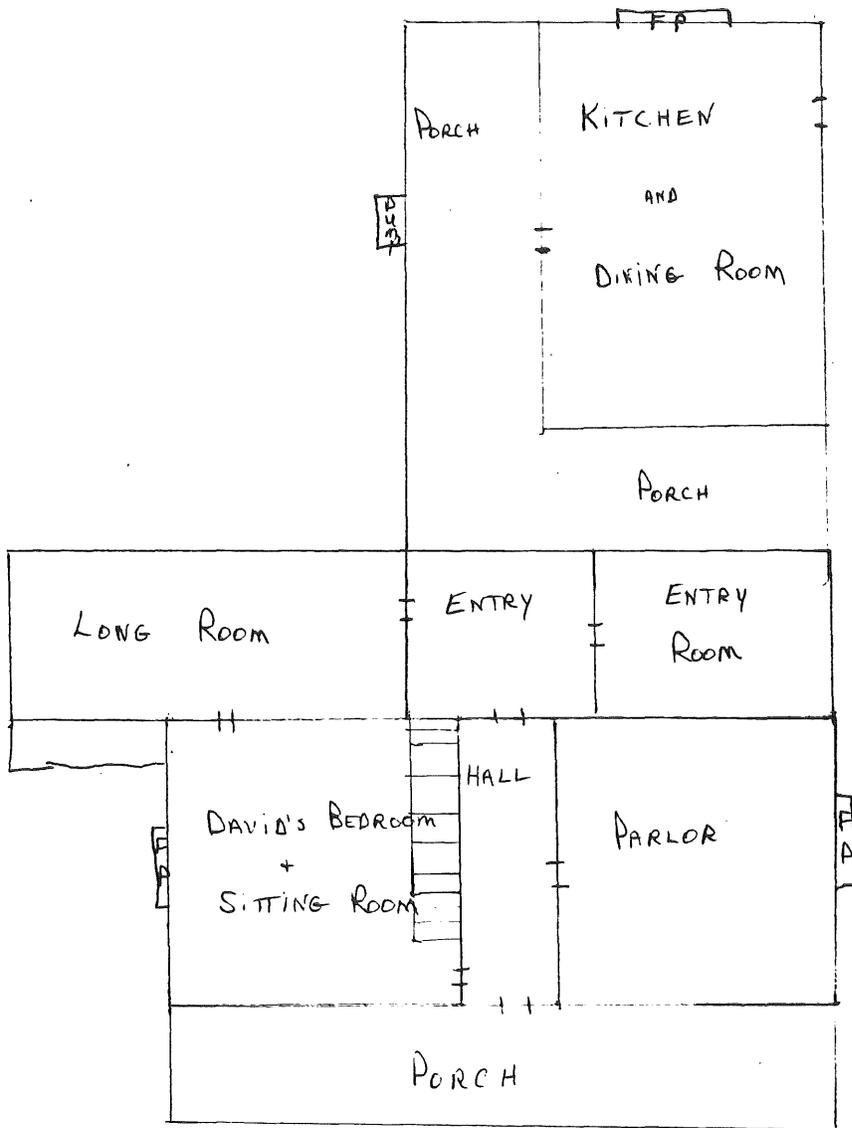
<sup>1</sup>Oscar M. Bizzell (ed.), The Heritage of Sampson County, North Carolina (Winston-Salem: Hunter Publishing Company, 1983), 490-491, hereinafter cited as Bizzell (ed.), The Heritage of Sampson County.

<sup>2</sup>Bizzell (ed.), The Heritage of Sampson County, 491; Sampson County Deed Book 26, p. 37.

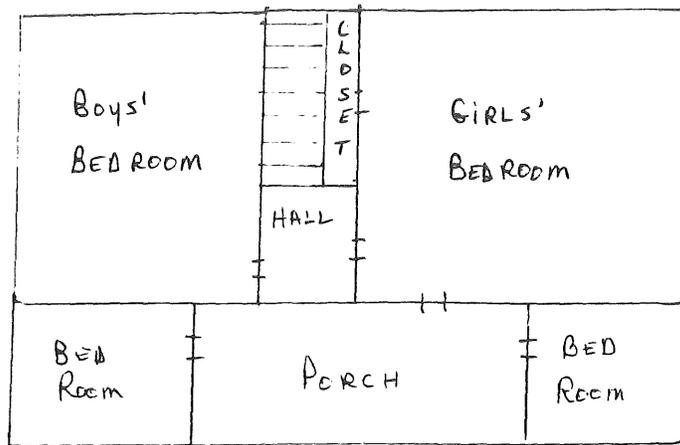
<sup>3</sup>Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, Sampson County, North Carolina, Agricultural Schedule, Slave Schedule; Sampson County Deed Book 33, p. 397.

<sup>4</sup>Sampson County Deed Book 40, p. 366; Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, Sampson County, North Carolina, Agricultural Schedule; Bizzell (ed.), The Heritage of Sampson County, 466-467; information supplied by the owner, Roland Matthis.

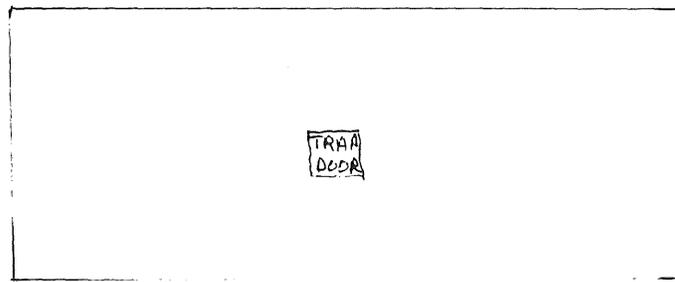
<sup>5</sup>Bizzell (ed.), The Heritage of Sampson County, 466-467; Information supplied by the owner, Roland Matthis.



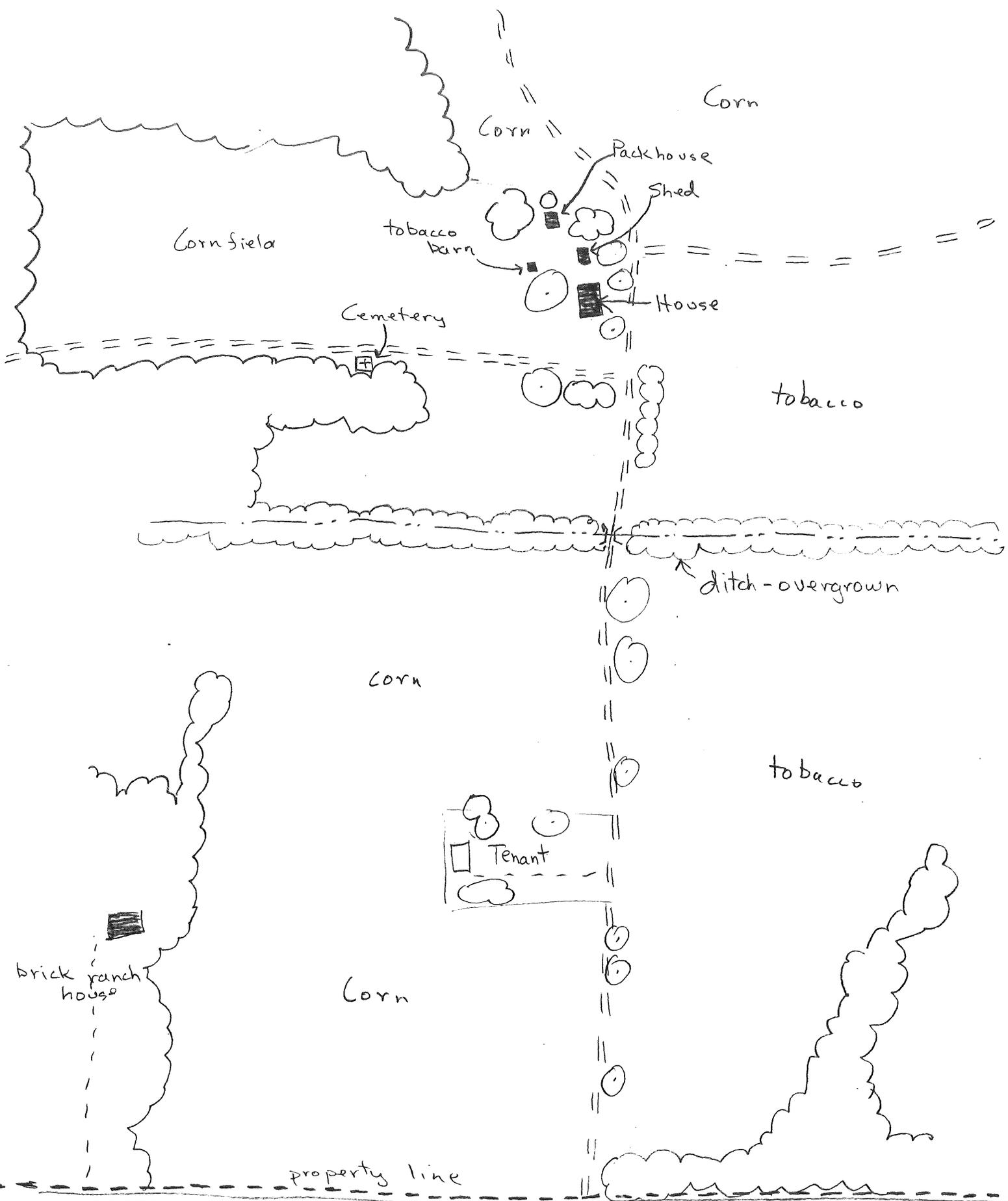
FLOOR PLAN (NOT TO SCALE) OF FLEET MATTHIS - DJ KNOWLES HOME



SECOND FLOOR



THIRD FLOOR

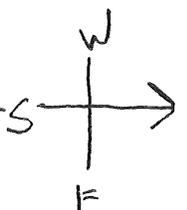


← Wilmington US421

Clinton →

SR 1961

Fleet Matthis Farm  
Sampson County, N.C.



Royal-Crumpler-Parker House  
Garland Quadrangle  
Zone 17 Scale 1"62 500

Robert Herring House  
Garland Quadrangle  
Zone 17 Scale 1:62 500

GARLAND QUADRANGLE  
NORTH CAROLINA  
MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)  
748 222000 FEET | 750 78°15' 35"00'

17 743425/3875850

17 744250/3876050

College Street Historic Dist.  
Garland Quadrangle  
Zone 17 Scale 1:62 500

W. Main-N. Chestnutt Sts. HD  
Garland and Coharie Quads  
Zone 17 Scale 1:62 500

- A 17 743875/3876275
- B 17 744200/3875700
- C 17 743800/3875200
- D 17 743700/3876025

- A 17 745050/3875900
- B 17 745350/3876075
- C 17 745150/3876000
- D 17 745125/3875850

Pugh-Boykin House  
Garland Quadrangle  
Zone 17 Scale 1:62 500

Powell-Bethune Building  
Garland Quadrangle  
Zone 17 Scale 1:62 500

17 744075/3875800

17 744250/38775450

Gen'l. Thomas Boykin House  
Garland, N.C. Quadrangle  
Zone 17 Scale 1:62500

- A 17 739300/3872625
- B 17 740575/3872175
- C 17 740200/3871000
- D 17 739100/3871250

Fleet Matthis Farm  
Garland Quadrangle  
Zone 17 Scale 1:62 500

- A 17 749675/3862100
- B 17 749725/3861450
- C 17 748225/3860875
- D 17 748100/3861500

