

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Oakforest
othernames/site/number Tryst Oak, Seawell House

2. Location

street & number 9958 Seawell Drive not for publication N/A
city or town Wake Forest vicinity N/A
state North Carolina code NC county Wake code 183 zip code 27587-6745

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.)

Allen J. Cron SHPO 5/4/98
Signature of certifying official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is: 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):

Oakforest
Name of Property

Wake, NC
County and State

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 ourpast.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

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 a 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.

Period of Significance First Decade/Nineteenth Century -
Ca. 1865

Significant Dates First Decade/Nineteenth Century
Mid-Nineteenth Century
ca. 1865

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

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

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Oakforest
Name of Property

Wake, NC
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 6.86 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing	Zone Easting Northing
1 <u>17 723320 3980150</u>	3 _____
2 _____	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 Nancy F. Carter and the North Carolina SHPO

organization _____ date November 6, 1997

street & number 319 East Lane Street telephone (919) 834-9932

city or town Raleigh state NC zip code 27601

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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1 Oakforest
Wake County, NC

Physical Description:

Setting.

Oakforest, a two-story, frame composite of a Federal and a Greek-Revival-style house, is located approximately one mile east of US Route 1 North, following State Road 2044 east from US Route 1 to the southern end of Seawell Road, approximately 350 feet east of the Seaboard Coastline Railroad. Oakforest is landlocked and is accessed by a gravel drive which extends to the southeast from the southern end of Seawell Road. The curved driveway approaches the house from the northwest, continues south, and terminates in a circular drive behind and to the east of the house. Its rural setting has been preserved. The topography near the house site gently rolls to level, sloping downward toward a wooded area behind the dwelling to the east, and toward Smith Creek to the southeast.

The nominated property is composed of about seven acres (6.86 ac) that are the residual portion of a 200-acre plantation begun in the first decade of the nineteenth century by John Smith.¹ In 1803 John Smith was deeded this 200-acre tract by his father, Benjamin Smith. A map on a 1791 Land Grant shows that the tract contains a fifty-one acre tract granted to Benjamin Smith.² The nominated tract contains three remaining original structures, including the Oakforest dwelling house, the core of the plantation, the mid-nineteenth-century smokehouse, and the early nineteenth-century corncrib. The three non-contributing resources on the property include a garage (c. 1960), an equipment shed (1930s), and a chicken house (1946). The property is larger than many of the surrounding residential lots. The size of the Oakforest tract and the configuration of the house and outbuildings clearly identify Oakforest as a homestead from a different time. The unfenced, gently sloping tract, the small stream with its border of wild foliage, the old trees and mid-nineteenth-century boxwoods combine to retain much of the original rural atmosphere. Surrounded by mid-twentieth-century houses, Oakforest is an oasis of rare historical value.³

One of the special glories of Oakforest is the American boxwood allee which lines the original front drive. The boxwoods were thought to be planted prior to the Civil War as they can be seen in the earliest known picture taken in 1886. A kitchen garden and a pathway lined with English boxwoods, planted in the late 1950s, are found on the north side of the house.

1.. Oakforest. early nineteenth century and mid-nineteenth century. contributing

Oakforest is a frame, two-story, double-pile house with a two-story rear ell. The house is clad with weatherboard and has a low hip roof covered with asphalt shingles.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 2 Oakforest
Wake County, NC

It rests on a stone and cinder block foundation. The present composition of the house includes an early nineteenth-century, south facing, Federal-style hall-and-parlor house that was incorporated into a Greek Revival-style, double-pile, center hall-plan house in the mid-nineteenth century. Today, the main (west) elevation is marked by a full-height, two-story porch that replaced the two-tier Greek Revival one in the 1960s. Otherwise the exterior of the house, with its south-facing Federal portico, and its circa 1865 rear (east), two-story ell, remains largely intact.

The Federal-style elements of the original house are still visible on the south facade. The small portico which was the original front entrance remains. Although the original frame floor and steps were replaced with brick in the 1960s, the original hand-hewn columns and balusters remain. The largely intact three-bay south facade displays double-hung, nine-over-nine sash on the first floor and double-hung, six-over-nine sash on the second floor, all with plain window surrounds. Some original glass remains.

Many of the original features remain intact on the Greek Revival main elevation, including the flush boarding on the entrance bay and the six-over-six sash windows with molded surround and bulls-eye corner blocks

In 1895 the Jones family added a returned-eave pedimented roof supported by four Doric columns connected by a sawnwork balustrade to the roof of the west porch. This two-tier Greek Revival porch was replaced with a full-height "Mount Vernon" porch by the Seawell family in the 1960s. The 1895 second tier was reduced to a small balcony and the ten-foot-by eighteen-foot frame floor and steps were replaced with brick.

An L-shaped rear porch was added to the house sometime after the "ell" was added in 1865. The porch was screened around 1950. In the 1960s the stone foundation was filled in with cinder blocks. In the 1930s a wall that separated the pantry from the rear passageway was removed, and the pantry and passageway were turned into a kitchen. The 1865-1930s kitchen space was then used as a utility room. This space was converted to a family room in the 1980s. The present kitchen, renovated in 1982, occupies the same parameters of the 1930s kitchen. As the present kitchen occupies the same quadrant of the house that the post-1865 kitchen occupied; these minor changes do not detract from the overall historic integrity of the building.

Early Nineteenth-Century Federal House: (Exhibit B) The seat of Oakforest Plantation was constructed in several stages beginning in the first decade of the nineteenth century. The earliest section of the house was built sometime between 1803, when Benjamin Smith deeded

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 3 Oakforest
Wake County, NC

the land to his son John Smith, and 1809, when tax records show the John Smith family living and farming on the site.⁴ It was originally a two-story, three-bay, Federal-style house with a hall-parlor plan. The small, excellently proportioned portico, located on the south (then front, now side) facade of the house, remains today. The portico's slender round columns are unusual in that the bases and capitals are all carved in one piece with each column. Exterior chimneys were located at the east and west ends of the house.

Mid-Nineteenth-Century Greek Revival House: (Exhibit B) Stylistic and historical evidence indicates that Oakforest was significantly expanded and remodeled in the mid-nineteenth century. A two-story addition was built on the north side of the house that included a passage and two rooms on each floor. With the addition of a porch to the newly widened west facade, the house was reoriented to a center-hall, double-pile plan structure.

The front of the "new" house, which faces the tracks of the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad, displays Greek Revival elements, such as double-hung, six-over-six sash windows with molded surround and bulls eye corner blocks; double front doors, each with a single vertical panel; and multi-paned transom and sidelights, also with molded surround and bulls eye corner blocks. The original one-story, center bay Greek Revival porch was supported by Doric columns and had a second story balcony with sawnwork railing. The house was originally surrounded by a picket fence to keep the livestock out.

As a result of the remodeling, the original front entrance, sheltered under the Federal portico, became a side entrance. The exterior end chimneys were replaced with two interior chimneys which provided eight fireplaces. The early stairway with its chamfered newel and delicate, Federal balusters was moved to the rear of the new hallway to run from east to west. On the second floor, most Federal elements were retained, including the two doors and simple mantels. The hall closet remains. One bedroom has green paint dating from the Federal period.

ca. 1865 Expansion of the House: (Exhibit B) The house was expanded by the Jones family ca. 1865 (near the end of the Civil War) by adding a two-story frame "ell" on the rear (east) elevation. This addition replaced a detached kitchen that became an office. (The latter structure was destroyed by fire circa 1899.) Built of pine, the ell contained a kitchen, a connecting pantry, and servant's quarters on the first floor and two bedrooms upstairs. The rear elevation exterior chimney was rebuilt in the 1960s, and a stairway led to the two bedrooms upstairs. On the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 4 Oakforest
Wake County, NC

ground floor the ell connected to what was then a bedroom. This bedroom with the only downstairs closet was then changed to a dining room.

Interior: Although the functions of some of the rooms have changed with succeeding generations, the overall 1865 floor plan of Oakforest has undergone no major changes. As a result, the evolution of the house is clearly visible in the interior features. Downstairs there are four matching six-panel doors, one at the Federal portico, one on the east side (previously led toward the early kitchen which burned ca. 1899), and two now used to connect with the rear ell. In the original upstairs rooms, there are two-panel doors. The original carpenter hardware on the doors is intact. The simple, Federal-style mantels feature single panels.

The front of the hall is separated from the rear on the first level by hinged louvered doors and on the second floor by immovable louvered panels and hinged louvered doors. The front stairs have a thin, turned newel of pine, plain balusters, and primitive-looking ornament on the sides of the stairs. The pine stair railing follows several odd angles on the landing.

All of the interior woodwork in the northeast section of the house (parlor and library) is of mid-nineteenth century vintage and typically Greek Revival. The two-panel doors on the first floor have molded surrounds and bulls eye corner blocks. The door surrounds on the second level are an unusual combination of the Italianate and Greek Revival motifs that feature a crossetted surround with corner blocks. All of the mantels in this later section are plain Greek Revival-style post-and-lintel examples.

The front room downstairs on the northeast end of the house contains wall to wall carpeting woven on a 26 ½" loom. It is reputed to be Aubusson of early nineteenth-century vintage. The drapery hardware is on molded gilded tin. The wallpaper and draperies date to the mid-1920s.

The attic in the main house is reached by a pull-down stairway and is not floored. It has hand-hewn rafters and joists.

2. Smokehouse. mid-nineteenth century. contributing

Originally located immediately to the rear of the kitchen ell, the ten-foot by twelve-foot timber frame smokehouse is now located a short distance from the house, to the southeast. (It was moved to its present location in the 1960s.) It has a frame floor and unfinished interior. This building, of a type now rare in Wake County, is significant with regard to its importance to the mid-nineteenth-century Wake County plantation economy. Over the years, owners of Oakforest raised a variety of animals for meat, including sheep, hogs and cattle.⁵ Smoking was

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 5 Oakforest
Wake County, NC

an important means by which to preserve and store meat before the advent of modern refrigeration techniques.⁶

3. Corncrib. mid-nineteenth century. contributing

The corncrib and loft, located in the southeast portion of the present Oakforest tract, measures twenty-two feet by twenty-two feet. It has vertical frame siding and is frame floored. Family tradition says that it predates the original, Federal-style house, and documentation suggests that it was probably extant at least as early as 1850. In the 1850, 1860 and 1870 U.S. Agricultural Schedules the owners of Oakforest reported raising between 230 and 300 bushels of corn. Corn was an important staple for both families and livestock throughout the eighteenth, nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century. Corn for both livestock and family consumption was commonly stored in corncribs by Wake County planters.⁷

4. Garage. 1960s. non-contributing

A garage was constructed in the 1960s to the rear of the kitchen wing. The garage is a one-story frame structure with a hip roof covered in asphalt shingles. The building is two bays wide with a modern garage door to the right of the front (south) facade and an engaged porch to the left. The west facade displays two six-over-six sash windows. A small exterior chimney is located on the north facade.

5. Equipment Shed. 1930s. non-contributing

The equipment shed was constructed several hundred yards from the house, to the southeast of the house and smokehouse, in the 1930s. The wood-frame structure has a gable roof and is covered in weatherboards. The structure has a four-bay facade. The first bay is enclosed by a large sliding door and the remaining three bays are open.

6. Chicken House. 1946. non-contributing

The large, rectangular, gable-roofed chicken house was constructed in 1946. It is located several hundred yards southeast of the house, close to but north of the corncrib.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 6 Oakforest
Wake County, NC

Statement of Significance

Summary:

Oakforest is sited on approximately seven acres which are a residual parcel of the 200-acre tract deeded to John Smith by his father, Benjamin, in 1803. This tract was part of Benjamin Smith's extensive plantation lands. A rare Wake County survivor dating from the Federal and Greek Revival periods, Oakforest and its two nineteenth-century outbuildings are locally significant in the history of architecture. John Smith built the earliest section, a two-story center-hall-plan Federal house between 1803 and 1810, and greatly expanded and remodeled the house into the Greek Revival style in the mid-nineteenth century. Both sections of the house display a remarkable degree of integrity from their respective periods of construction.

After John Smith's death in 1843, Oakforest passed into the possession of Smith's daughter, Elizabeth, and her husband, W.D. Jones. The Jones family added a two-story ell and a small porch to the house in 1865. Octavia Jones Carver inherited the house in 1891, and in 1895 the Carvers added a pedimented second story to the west porch. Octavia Jones Carver's daughter, Pearle, married Joseph Seawell in 1897, and the Seawells inherited the house when Pearle's mother, Octavia, died in 1923. The house was wired for electricity by the Rural Electrification Administration in the 1930s.

After World War II, Oakforest passed into the hands of the Seawell's son, Kenan, who replaced the Greek Revival porch on the west side of the house with the present porch. He also installed hot water central heating in the 1960s. In 1981 the present owners, Barbara and Speed Massenburg, acquired the part of the original plantation tract that contains the house and outbuildings.

The architectural significance and context of the house is discussed in "The Historic and Architectural Resources of Wake County: ca. 1790-1941," under Property Type 3A: Pre-Civil War Houses. The significance of the corncrib and the smokehouse is discussed in Property Type 2: Outbuildings.

Historical Background:

Benjamin Smith, born in Brunswick County, Virginia in 1745, was the original owner of the land on which Oakforest was eventually built. In 1786 he received 274 acres for thirty-six months of service as a private in the Revolutionary War.⁹ A subsequent fifty-one-acre land grant dates to 1791 that Smith added to by purchasing various tracts between 1792 and 1805. The original Smith home was built northwest of Oakforest but was destroyed by fire around 1814. The date

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 7 Oakforest
Wake County, NC

of construction of the first house is not known.

Benjamin Smith married Nancy Ann Burch on October 25, 1773. They had seven children, at least six of whom married: Richard to Penny Jones; Rebecca to Solomon Roger; Mary to Giles Nance; Benjamin to Laura L. Worthington; Nancy to Anderson Harrison; Elizabeth to Turner Pullen; and John to Lucy Barham in 1801.⁹ Benjamin Smith died on September 5, 1806, "occasioned by a blow his skull received from Henry Cock a day or two before."¹⁰ According to family lore, he was buried in a now un-identifiable family cemetery near the present Forestville Road.

Benjamin Smith's son John married Lucy Barham in 1801. Benjamin deeded the acreage on which Oakforest is built to John in February, 1803. The original house was built before 1809.¹¹ John and Lucy Smith had four daughters: Candace, who married Dr. Wesley Hartsfield; Nancy, who wed Allison Green; Sally, who wed Henry Weatherly; and Elizabeth, who wed Wiley D. Jones.

Antebellum Oakforest produced hogs, sheep, horses, and cattle. Agriculture Schedules also list milk, butter, large quantities of corn and oats, sweet potatoes and flax. According to Agriculture Schedules and a 1982 narrative by Richard Seawell, a direct descendent of the founding family, there was a cotton gin, and a working grist mill on the grounds of Oakforest as late as the first decade of the twentieth century.¹²

John Smith died on October 24, 1843. His will, dated December 10, 1842, left his estate to his wife and then to be divided equally among his daughters.¹³ Bequests of slaves and furniture were made to the three married daughters. His daughter, Elizabeth, still living at home, received four slaves, one bedstead of furniture, one horse bridle and saddle, and one bureau.¹⁴

Three years after her father's death, Elizabeth married Wiley D. Jones who had moved to Forestville to open a store. After their marriage, Wiley and Elizabeth lived at Oakforest with Elizabeth's mother. The 1850 census lists William D. Jones, age thirty, as a farmer and merchant.¹⁵ Wiley and Elizabeth had three children: Octavia, Hamilton, and John.

Family tradition maintains the house was enlarged in anticipation of the girls reaching "courting" age. This addition more than doubled the size of the house and reoriented the house to the west. Details of the expanded house, such as the double stairways, centered fireplaces, louvered doors to separate halls and entrance doors relate it to the group of Greek Revival houses credited to Warren County builder Albert Gamaliel Jones. Jones was active in the late

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 8 Oakforest
Wake County, NC

1840s and the 1850s. This, and the fact that most Wake County Greek Revival-style houses date from the same period, suggests that the addition was erected in the mid-nineteenth century.

During the Civil War years, Wiley D. Jones was a captain in the Wake County Militia; he fought and was captured at Roanoke.¹⁶ A letter now in the possession of current Oakforest owner, James Speed Massenburg reveals that while a prisoner of war, Wiley Jones wrote home suggesting that a new kitchen be built while slaves were still available, as he believed that the North would win the war. At this time the two-story ell containing the "new" kitchen with connecting pantry was added to the northeast section of the house.

On March 24, 1865, the Confederate Army requisitioned the carriage horses, and soon after, Oakforest was looted by the Yankee soldiers.¹⁷ Wiley and Elizabeth's daughter Octavia, age fourteen and home from St. Mary's school, told her grandchildren years later about putting a blanket over the hams in the pantry and then sitting on them. The soldiers, flirting with her, did not make her show them what she was sitting on.¹⁸ She remained proud of her act all her life. However, she did not save the carriage which was found broken and abandoned near Crabtree Creek in Raleigh. Calling in favors from Northern business friends, Wiley Jones got a guard posted at Oakforest and at the college near Wake Forest to prevent further looting.¹⁹

After the War, Jones became active in the Reconstruction government, serving in the Legislature as well as Adjunct General of the State and as Assessor of Internal Revenue. Other interests included serving as a director for the Raleigh Gaston Railroad and partial ownership of a furniture factory near High Point. The 1870 census lists Wiley Jones a U.S. Assessor, 4th De. with a real estate value of 10,000 and personal property 6,000. Both he and his wife were listed as fifty years old.²⁰ His daughter, Octavia, eighteen, was a music teacher, and John, fourteen, was attending school.²¹ Elizabeth, died August 4, 1889. Wiley Jones died on March 27, 1891.²²

Wiley and Elizabeth's daughter, Octavia, who had attended Kittrell College as well as St. Mary's, became an accomplished pianist. Her piano, purchased after the war, remains in the Oakforest parlor. On January 17, 1872, Octavia married Miles Edward Carver (Eddie) of Forestville. While living in the Carver homestead in Forestville, they had two daughters: Elizabeth MacDonald and Pearle. After Eddie's death in 1877 of typhoid fever, Octavia returned to Oakforest with her daughters. She lived there with her parents and her two brothers and their families.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 9 Oakforest
Wake County, NC

Octavia left Oakforest again for a short time to live at The Oaks Plantation, a gift to her from Benjamin Smith Harrison, her first cousin once removed. Later she returned and purchased Oakforest from her brother John, probably with money that she received from the sale of The Oaks.

Octavia's daughters, Pearle and Elizabeth, married at Oakforest. Pearle married Joseph Seawell in 1897.²³ Their courtship is immortalized on a library window with initials scratched and dated December 27, 1893. This marriage united many of Wake County's founding families; Joseph's mother was a Colburn and his paternal grandmother was a Hinton. His grandfather Judge Henry Seawell received the first law license in Wake County and cast the deciding vote to make Raleigh the capital of the state.²⁴

Joseph was licensed to practice law in 1898. He summed up his law career in his book Law Tales for Layman with "For thirty-eight years connected with the Supreme court of North Carolina as Office Boy, Deputy Clerk and Clerk."²⁵ This book, published in 1925, contained several articles previously published in the magazine section of *The New York Times*.

The responsibility for Oakforest passed to Pearle and Joseph Seawell when Octavia Jones Carver Shell died in 1923. (Pearle's older sister, Elizabeth MacDonald Carver Hall had moved to Halifax County, Virginia after her marriage in 1910.) Family history relates that under Pearle's management of the farm, cotton was the chief crop, with most of the farm work done by sharecroppers, descendants of former slaves.

Pearle and Joseph had seven children: Edward, Ellen, Henry, Richard, Elizabeth, Kenan and Octavia. The oldest daughter Ellen, and youngest daughter Octavia, both died of scarlet fever in 1932. The oldest son, Edward, was a veteran of World War I and followed in his father's footsteps as Clerk of Supreme Court. Henry, Richard, and Kenan were military officers during World War II. All of them and their brother-in-law, James Speed Massenburg, who had married Ellen, helped Pearle manage the farm after Joseph died in 1936. Elizabeth, the sole surviving daughter, worked at North Carolina State College to provide much needed cash. She married Robert Converse, a student at Wake Forest College in 1943, and was the third Elizabeth to be married in the parlor.

After World War II, Kenan Seawell, twin brother of Elizabeth, agreed to assume complete responsibility for the farm if the other siblings would give him their shares. They agreed and, like most North Carolina farmers during that period, he began looking for a cash crop. Kenan started his farming operations in 1946 by raising chickens but after about five years he turned to

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 10 Oakforest
Wake County, NC

raising cattle. In 1952 Oakforest received the Green Pastures Honor Award which is still mounted in the equipment shed.

Kenan married Phoebe Norton in 1954. In the 1960s they altered the west side of Oakforest once again, replacing the Greek Revival double porch with the present full-height porch with square columns. They also put in hot water central heating. The house had been electrified in the 1930s by the Rural Electrification Authority.

After Phoebe's death, Elizabeth (Kenan's sister) and Robert Converse bought a half interest in the nineteen acres around the house which they sold to nephews Speed and Edward Massenburg in 1975. Speed purchased Kenan's half interest after Kenan died in 1979. In 1981, Speed and his wife, Earbara, moved to Oakforest. The brothers then divided the property so that Speed had the house and outbuildings with approximately seven acres of land. Edward and his wife, Mary Ellen own the remaining acres. The remaining acreage was disposed of according to Kenan Seawell's will.

Speed Massenburg is the seventh generation to live on the land and the sixth to live in the Oakforest house.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 11 Oakforest
Wake County, NC

Endnotes

1. Wake County Deed Book R, pgs. 327-328, October 20 1802
Wake County Tax list, 1809, pg. 60, entry for John Smith,
NC Archives MF C.099.7001
2. Wake County Land Grants, file 1429, grant 827, book 119 p.147
3. Wake County Deed Book 6228 p.183-188; Book 2852, p.713-715; Book 37, pgs 699-700; Book T, p. 294 Book R, p.327; Book H, p.467 and 400
Wake County Will Book 9, p. 220 (division of the land of Benjamin Smith)
Wake County Book of Maps 1885 p.24 (A Map of the Lands of Wiley D. Jones)
Wake County Book of Maps 1993 p.922
4. Wake County Deed Book R, p.327
Wake County Tax List for 1809, p. 60
5. U.S. Census, 1850, Agriculture Schedule, Wake County, p.138
U.S. Census, 1860, Agriculture Schedule, Wake County, p.24
U.S. Census, 1870, Agriculture Schedule, Wake County, p.100
U.S. Census, 1880, Agriculture Schedule, Wake County, p.73
6. The Historic Architecture of Wake County, Kelly A. Lally, p.44-46
7. Ibid., p.44
8. Roster of Soldiers from North Carolina in the American Revolution, North Carolina State Library, Raleigh, NC. P.255.
9. "The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography," Vol. XXIX, p. 509.
10. *The Raleigh Register*, September 8, 1806, p.3
11. Wake County Tax List, 1809, p.60

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 12 Oakforest
Wake County, NC

12. Richard Seawell, from a transcript of a 1982 taped narrative, p.3
13. Wake County Register of Deeds, Register of Wills, Book A, 1878-1884.
14. Ibid.
15. U.S. Census, 1850, Population Schedule, Wake County, NC, NC State Archives.
16. Letter from Millard Mial, Clerk of Superior Court, Wake County, NC, December 16, 1911.
17. Correspondence from A.M. Darden, March 24, 1865, NC State Archives, Raleigh, C. (Copy on file in the NC State Historic Preservation Office)
18. Transcript of tape narrated by Richard Seawell to Barbara Massenburg, 1982, with comments by his brother Richard Seawell, 1993.
19. Correspondence from A. M. Van Dyke, April 17, 1865, and Ben E. Gurley, April 18, 1865, NC State Archives, Raleigh, NC.
20. U.S. Census, 1870, Population Schedule, Wake County, NC, NC State Archives.
21. Ibid.
22. *Raleigh State Chronicle*, March 28, 1891, p. 4.
23. *Raleigh News and Observer*, June 2, 1897 p.3
24. Wake. Capital County of North Carolina, Elizabeth Reid Murray, Capital County Publishing Company, Raleigh, NC, p.232
25. *Raleigh News and Observer*, obituary of Joseph Lacy Seawell, March 16, 1936.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 9-10 Page 13 Oakforest
Wake County, NC

Section 9: Major Bibliographical References:

Lally, Kelly A. "The Historic and Architectural Resources of Wake County: ca. 1790-1941," .
1993. NC State Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh, NC.

Seawell, Richard. Transcript of tape, 1982. Comments by his brother Henry Seawell, 1993.

U.S. Census, Agriculture Schedules, Populations Schedules, 1850 - 1900. NC State Archives,
Raleigh, NC.

Wake County Records, Archives Section. Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC.
Subgroups: Deeds, Wills, Estate papers, Settlements and Inventories, Marriage Bonds.

Wake County Register of Deeds, Garland Jones Building. Raleigh, N.C. Subgroups: Deeds,
Wills, Marriage Register.

Section 10: Geographical Data:

Boundary Description

The nominated parcel is shown on Wake County Tax Maps, Book 1993 p. 922. (Exhibit A)

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the nominated parcel include the land currently associated with the
Oakforest house (6.86 acres), being a residual portion of the land historically associated with
Oakforest (200 acres).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Photo Page 14

Photo Schedule:

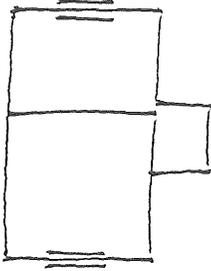
1. Oakforest
2. Wake County, NC
3. Bill Garrett
4. 12/97
5. NC HPO

The above information applies to each of the following photographs:

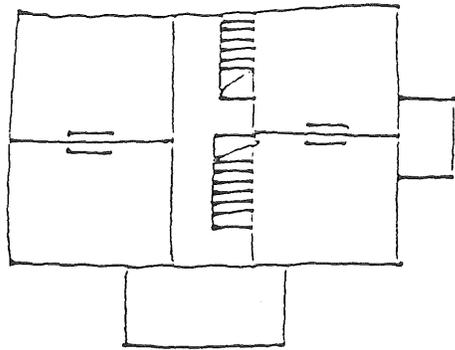
1. Overall view of house (to the northwest)
2. Front elevation (to the east)
3. Original entrance portico (to the north)
4. Interior mantel
5. Staircase and hall
6. Garage and smokehouse (to the northeast)
7. Corncrib (to the northeast)

EXHIBIT B - FLOORPLAN OF CAKFOREST

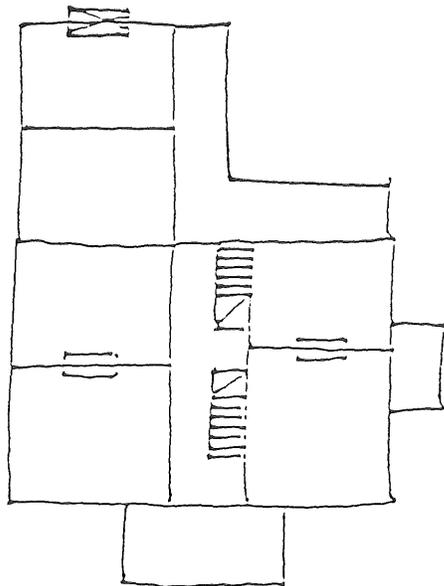
← NORTH



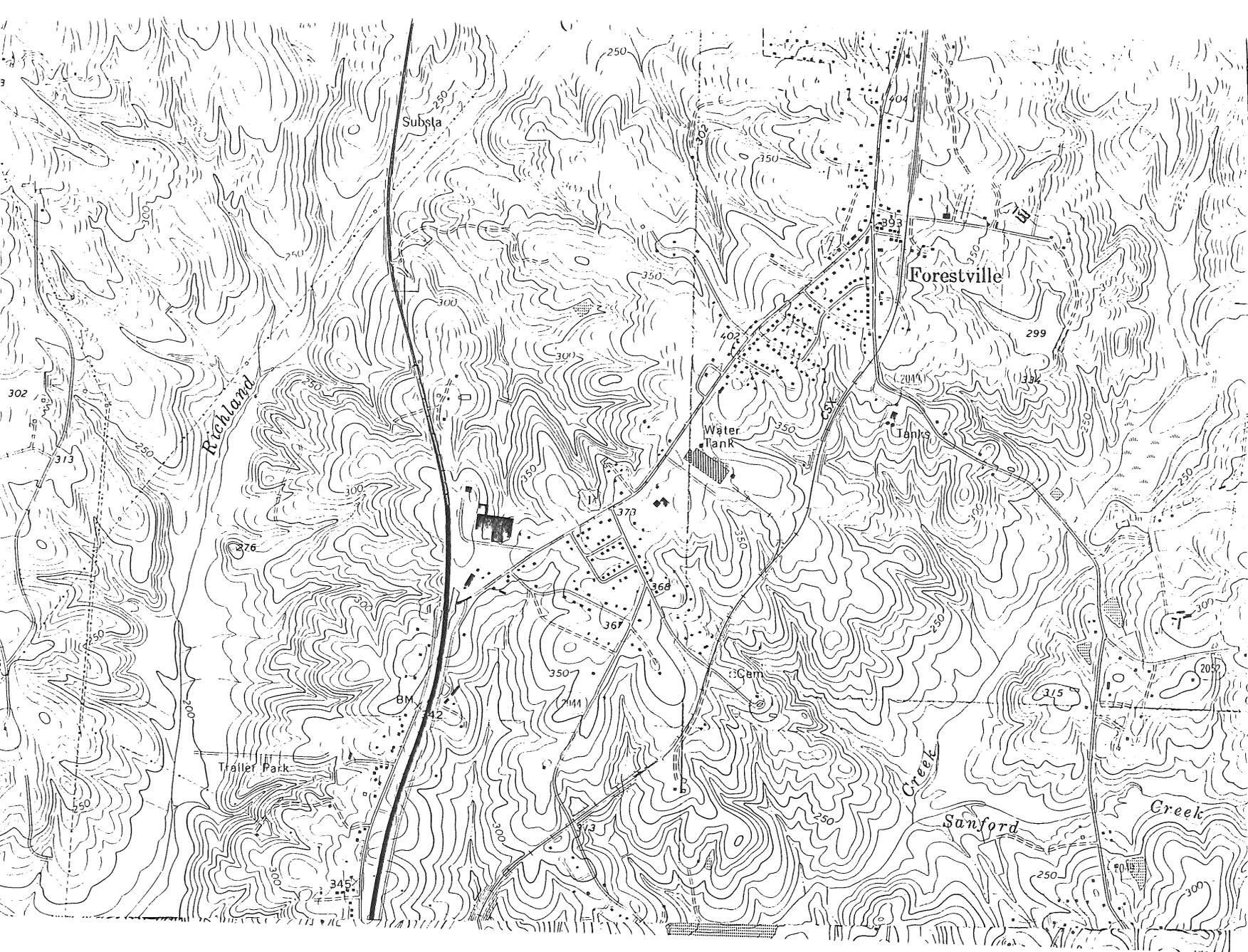
ORIGINAL HOUSE
CA. 1803 - 1809



MID-NINETEENTH
CENTURY



CA. 1865



88J

57'30"

3981

3980

(ROLESVILLE)
5355 IV NW

Wake Forest Quad
Oakforest
Wake Co, NC
17/123320/3980150

