

# INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY FORM FOR

MULTIPLE RESOURCE OR  THEMATIC NOMINATION  
Wilson County

## 1 NAME

HISTORIC  
Joseph John Pender House  
AND/OR COMMON

## 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER  
N.E. side SR 1418 0.25 mi. NW jct. SR 1002 NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CITY, TOWN Wilson VICINITY OF 2nd Congressional District CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
STATE North Carolina CODE 037 COUNTY Wilson CODE 195

## 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	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS <u>N/A</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME  
Edith Greene  
STREET & NUMBER  
700 Grove St.  
CITY, TOWN Wilson VICINITY OF North Carolina STATE

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Wilson County Courthouse  
STREET & NUMBER  
Nash Street  
CITY, TOWN Wilson STATE North Carolina

## 6 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE  
Kate Ohno, Preservation Consultant, October 25, 1982  
ORGANIZATION Survey & Planning Branch, Division of Archives & History (919) 733-6545 DATE  
STREET & NUMBER 109 E. Jones St. TELEPHONE  
CITY OR TOWN Raleigh, STATE North Carolina

## 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		

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Joseph John Pender House stands a quarter of a mile northwest of the rural crossroads community of Pender's Crossroads. The two-story frame Pender house stands on a wooded knoll facing southwest near the path of SR 1418. Of the original plantation of several hundred acres only twenty-five acres remain associated with the house today. The house tract contains only approximately twelve acres fronting on SR 1418 and the remaining land associated with the house is a land-locked tract to the northwest of the house.

Proudly situated on a small rise above the gently rolling farmland of rural Gardners Township, the Pender house exemplified the ambitions of plantation life in central eastern North Carolina during the late 1830s and early 1840s when the house was built. It is a modest house by any standard, but one that indicated wealth, style and taste in this rural area.

The house consists of a two-story frame section dating from the late 1830s or early 1840s and a one-story frame kitchen/dining room ell, joined by an open breezeway. The two-story section exhibits many characteristics of the Federal style; it is three bays wide and one room deep with a shed running the length of the rear. A one-story porch supported by a chamfered posts extends across the front elevation and continues along the east gable end. The cornices of the house and porch are ornamented by dentils and delicate punchwork. Single-shoulder Flemish bond chimneys stand on the gable ends. The breezeway is roofed and a hipped-roof porch extends along the east elevation of the early twentieth century ell. The ell has a gable roof and separate doors lead out from the kitchen and dining rooms to the porch. A ghost mark on the rear elevation of the ell shows that a single-shoulder stepped chimney, now removed, once stood at the gable end. More modern interior chimneys pierce the roof indicating how this exterior end chimney was replaced.

Nine-over-six sash windows, typical of the Federal style in rural eastern North Carolina, are located in the antebellum section while the kitchen ell has nine-over-nine windows. The windows and doors have simple two-part molded surrounds and six raised-panel doors are used throughout the main section of the house. On the interior the house follows a central-hall plan. The interior finish is extremely crude, with simple two-panel mantels with plain shelves and low flat-panel wainscot being located in the main rooms. An enclosed stair leads from the hall to the second floor where two rooms corresponding to the first floor main rooms are found. The shed contains two rooms and a passage to the rear door.

The house has been vacant for at least ten years and is now being used for hay storage and thus has suffered much neglect.

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Little is left of the associated farm buildings, but an old frame well of early twentieth century vintage stands a few steps east of the kitchen ell and two frame early twentieth-century tobacco barns sheathed in asbestos siding are located at the rear of the house property.

The Pender house offers an amazingly complete and rare picture of a rural antebellum dwelling in Wilson County because it has been altered so little. Once the owners left the house in the twentieth century, modern plumbing and its associated changes were never considered. Tenant farmers lived in the house "as is" until at least 1963, when a documentary photograph shows the house as inhabited. The use of the house in recent years for storage also necessitated few changes, so the house, with the exception of the addition of the kitchen ell remains much as Pender built it.

The structure, of course, is closely related to the surrounding environment. Archaeological remains, such as trash pits, wells, and structural remains, which may be present, can provide information valuable to the understanding and interpretation of the structure. Information concerning use patterns, social standing and mobility, as well as structural details are often only evident in the archaeological record. Therefore, archaeological remains may well be an important component of the significance of the structure. At this time no investigation has been done to discover these remains, but it is probable that they exist, and this should be considered in any development of the property.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

\_\_\_\_\_ NATIONAL

\_\_\_\_\_ STATE

  X  

\_\_\_\_\_ LOCAL

## PERIOD

## AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES    Unknown

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Unknown

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Joseph John Pender House, located near the rural community of Pender's Crossroads in Wilson County, is one of the few antebellum plantation houses in the county to have survived intact and little altered since it was built in the 1830s or 1840s. The two-story, Federal style frame dwelling, which has a kitchen/dining room ell addition, originally stood on a plantation of several hundred acres. The house was built by Joseph John Pender, a large landowner and successful planter who was a member of a prominent landholding family. Although the residence is relatively modest in size by the standards usually applied to southern plantation homes, the Pender House survives as a symbol of wealth, style and taste in the rural area of north eastern Wilson County.

## CRITERIA ASSESSMENT

- B. Associated with Joseph John Pender, the original owner of the property and a wealthy planter and large landowner whose family settled the nearby community of Pender's Crossroads.
- C. One of the small number of surviving antebellum plantation houses in Wilson County, the two-story Joseph John Pender House exhibits many characteristics of the Federal style as commonly seen in rural eastern North Carolina. The home, which is of frame construction and has an attached kitchen/dining room ell, has been little altered since its date of construction in the 1830s or 1840s.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Joseph John Pender House is one of the few antebellum houses in Wilson County to have survived intact and little altered from the date of its construction. Although the Pender House is relatively modest by the standards applied to southern plantation houses it was an important house occupied by a prominent family in Wilson County. In a county where few two-story antebellum houses were built, and fewer have survived, the Pender House provides an interesting insight into the lives of a mid-nineteenth century planter family.

The house stands near Pender's Crossroads, named for Pender's family in the early nineteenth century because of the large amount of land owned by the family in the vicinity. The house stands just northwest of the crossroads in a grove of mature shade trees on a 25-acre tract which was once part of a far larger plantation. Gardners Township, in which the Pender House is situated, was part of the section of Wilson County drawn from Edgecombe County when Wilson County was formed in 1855. Edgecombe County was considered one of the leading agricultural counties in the state before the Civil War and it was dominated by a plantation economy. This section of Wilson County remains one of the most rural sections of the county to date and Gardners Township lacks an incorporated town, something which has developed in most townships in the county.

Joseph John Pender-called "Jack" Pender-was born on July 1, 1807.<sup>1</sup> He was the son of Edwin Pender and Elizabeth Dew Robbins Pender.<sup>2</sup> In 1829 he married Elizabeth Bridgers, daughter of William Bridgers and Mary Barnes of Edgecombe County.<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth Pender died in 1852 and in 1855 Pender married his second wife, Keron Lucretia Wilkins, daughter of William Wilkins and Mary Garrett Wilkins.<sup>4</sup> Pender was the first cousin of William Dorsey Pender, one of the youngest brigadier generals in the Confederate Army.<sup>5</sup>

Pender began to acquire land in the early 1830s<sup>6</sup>, shortly after his first marriage, and it seems likely that he built his house in the late 1830s or early 1840s as the area began to prosper. Local tradition maintains that Pender received his home site from his family, but as his father died intestate and no other documents pertaining to his father's land division were found, this cannot be supported by the records.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Edgecombe County Deeds, Edgecombe County Courthouse  
Seventh Census of the United States: 1850. Edgecombe County Population and Agricultural Schedules.  
Eighth Census of the United States: 1860. Wilson County, Agricultural Schedule.  
Wilson County Wills, Wilson County Courthouse.

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## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 12 acres

### UTM REFERENCES

A	1 8	2 4 8 9 8 0	3 9 6 2 0 0 0	B	1 8	2 4 9 2 0 0	3 9 6 2 1 8 0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
c	1 8	2 4 9 3 9 0	3 9 6 1 7 6 0	D	1 8	2 4 9 3 5 0	3 9 6 1 7 1 0

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### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See enclosed planametric map with property outlined in red. The 12 acres being nominated with the house provide a somewhat rural setting, and are all that remain of the farm originally associated with the house.

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National Park Service

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The 1850 census shows that Pender owned 370 acres of land of which 200 acres were improved.<sup>7</sup> He owned 855 hogs, an exceptionally large number of hogs for the area, and his main crops were grains: wheat, rye, and barley.<sup>8</sup> Unlike many farmers in this region he raised no cotton or Indian corn.<sup>9</sup> By 1860 his swine herd had grown to 1,390 and he was still growing a good deal of grain, but he also raised 23 bales of cotton on his 200 acres of cultivated land.<sup>10</sup> By 1860 he owned real property valued at \$4,600 and personal property valued at \$24,390.<sup>11</sup>

Pender had two children who survived to be adults, both from his first marriage.<sup>12</sup> His son, Thadeus William Pender, was born circa 1838 and his son Cadmus was born circa 1843.<sup>13</sup> Cadmus C. Pender died while serving in the Confederate Army in 1862.<sup>14</sup> During the 1860s Thadeus married Nancy Williams<sup>15</sup> and the couple lived in Gardners Township quite close to Joseph John and Keron L. Pender by 1870.<sup>16</sup> The elder Penders continued to occupy the house and plantation until 1882 when Joseph John Pender died.<sup>17</sup> He devised his house property, containing 300 acres, to his wife for her lifetime reverting to his son Thadeus Pender.<sup>18</sup> In 1891 Thadeus Pender conveyed his interest in the lands which his stepmother occupied to S. A. Woodard, trustee for Pender's wife, Nancy Pender.<sup>19</sup> In the following year Nancy Pender conveyed 100 acres of her property, including the house, subject to the life estate of Keron L. Pender, to Thomas J. Wiggins.<sup>20</sup> Keron L. Pender died in 1897,<sup>21</sup> and it was probably at this time that T. J. Wiggins took possession of the house tract.

Thomas J. Wiggins was born in March 1868<sup>22</sup> and he was the son of William and Caroline Wiggins of Wilson County.<sup>23</sup> He married in 1891 and by 1900 his wife, his two daughters and his cousin Charlie H. Wiggins were living on the Pender farm.<sup>24</sup> It is not known how long Wiggins actually lived on the farm, but in 1959 he devised 25 acres, including the house, to his grandsons, James Atlas Green and Wilbur Green.<sup>25</sup> James A. Green later conveyed his interest in the property to his brother.<sup>26</sup> Since at least 1959 the house was occupied by tenants and in recent years it has been vacant. Wilbur Green's widow presently owns the house property.

#### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Author's interview with Wilson County historian Hugh B. Johnston, hereinafter cited as Johnston interview. See also Seventh Census of the United States: 1850, Edgecombe County, population schedule, hereinafter cited as 1850 census.

<sup>2</sup>Johnston interview.

<sup>3</sup>Johnston interview.

<sup>4</sup>Johnston interview.

<sup>5</sup>William Dorsey Pender was the son of James Pender, a brother of Edwin Pender. See also Louis H. Manarin, Ed. North Carolina Troops, Raleigh: Archives & History, 1973, v.4, 267.

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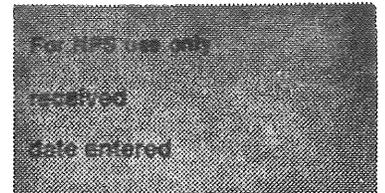
Item number 8

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- 6 See Joseph John Pender, grantee, Edgecombe County deeds, Edgecombe County, Edgecombe County Courthouse, Tarboro.
- 7 1850 Census, agricultural schedule.
- 8 1850 Census, agricultural schedule.
- 9 1850 Census, agricultural schedule.
- 10 Eighth census of the United States: 1860, Wilson County, agricultural schedule, hereinafter cited as 1860 census.
- 11 1860 Census, population schedule.
- 12 Johnston interview. See also 1860 census, population schedule.
- 13 1860 Census, population schedule.
- 14 Johnston interview. See also Louis H. Manarin, ed. North Carolina Troops, Raleigh: Archives & History, 1973, v.4, 72.
- 15 Johnston interview.
- 16 Ninth Census of the United States: 1870, Wilson County, population schedule, hereinafter cited as 1870 census.
- 17 J. J. Pender will, November 14, 1882, Wilson County wills, Wilson County Courthouse, Wilson, hereinafter cited as J. J. Pender will.
- 18 J. J. Pender will.
- 19 T. W. Pender to S. A. Woodard, trustee for Nancy Pender, September 18, 1891, Book 30, 166, Wilson County deeds, Wilson County Courthouse, Wilson.
- 20 Nancy Pender to Thomas J. Wiggins, 1892, Book 31, 301, Wilson County deeds, Wilson County Courthouse, Wilson.
- 21 Johnston interview.
- 22 Eleventh Census of the United States: 1900, Wilson County, population schedule, hereinafter cited as the 1900 Census.
- 23 1870 Census, population schedule.
- 24 1900 Census, population schedule.
- 25 T. J. Wiggins will, August 25, 1959, Book 11, 101, Wilson County Wills, Wilson County Courthouse, Wilson.
- 26 James A. Green to Wilbur Green, Book 717, 181, Wilson County deeds, Wilson County Courthouse, Wilson.

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National Park Service**

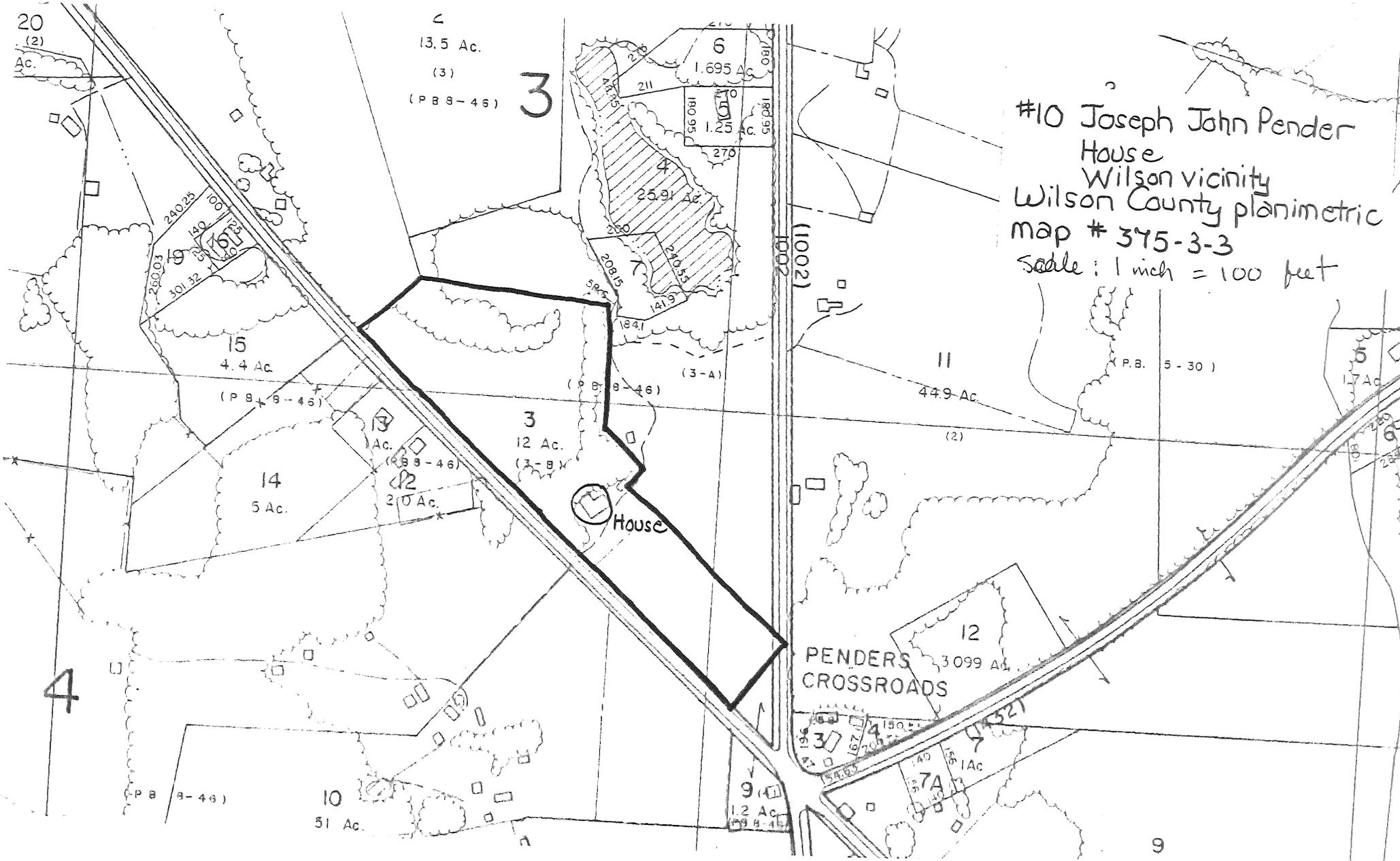
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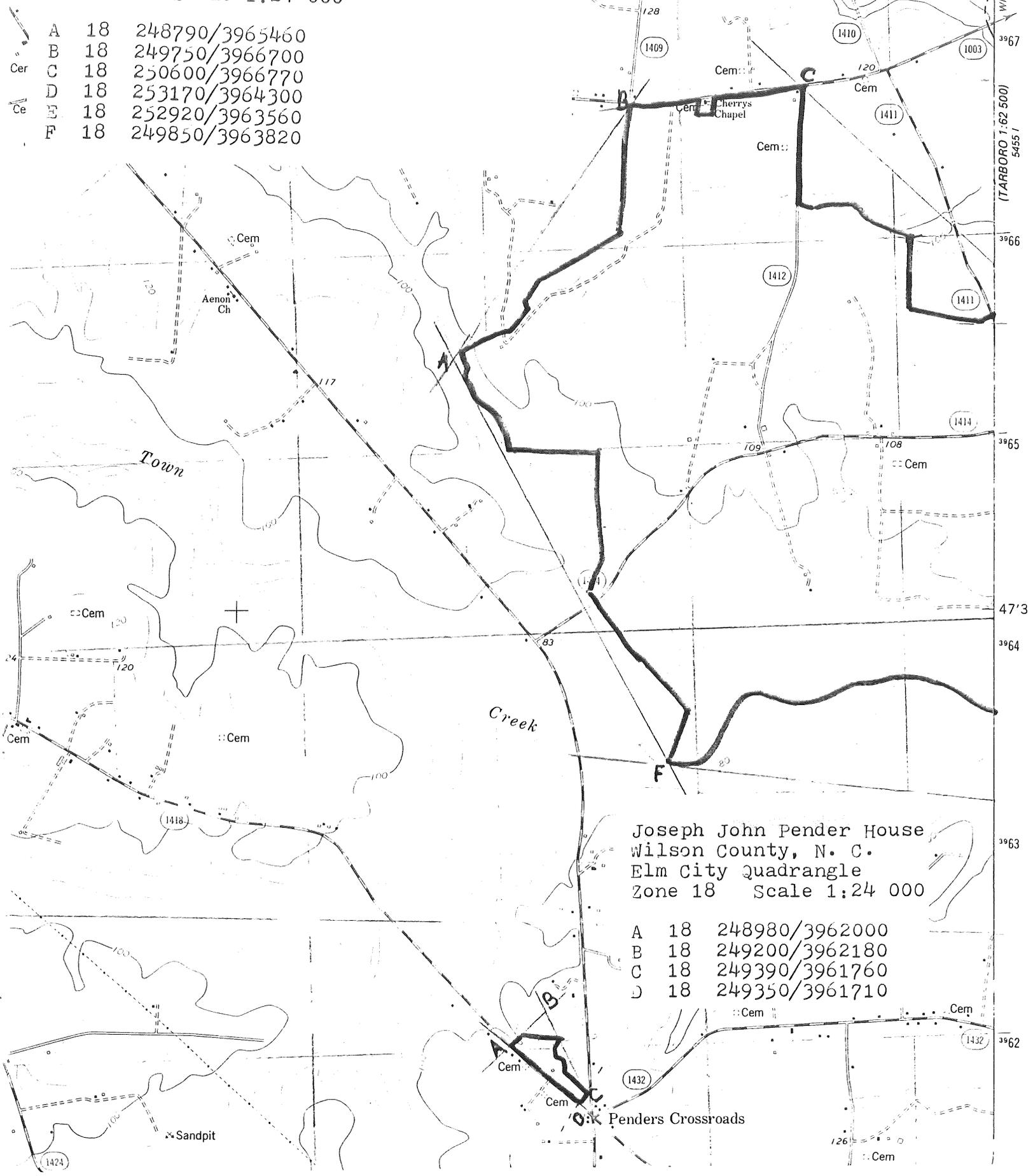
The Joseph John Pender House was initially recorded during the county survey in 1980. The site was then unoccupied and somewhat overgrown. The site was revisited in 1985 by staff of Archives and History, and the condition is still that depicted in the 1980 photographs - the house is still unoccupied, but relatively stable, and still somewhat overgrown.



#10 Joseph John Pender  
 House  
 Wilson vicinity  
 Wilson County planimetric  
 map # 375-3-3  
 Scale: 1 inch = 100 feet

Upper Town Creek Rural Historic District  
 Wilson and Edgecombe Counties, N. C.  
 Elm City and Tarboro SW Quadrangles  
 Zone 18 Scale 1:24 000

- A 18 248790/3965460
- B 18 249750/3966700
- C 18 250600/3966770
- D 18 253170/3964300
- E 18 252920/3963560
- F 18 249850/3963820



Joseph John Pender House  
 Wilson County, N. C.  
 Elm City quadrangle  
 Zone 18 Scale 1:24 000

- A 18 248980/3962000
- B 18 249200/3962180
- C 18 249390/3961760
- D 18 249350/3961710

WIGGINS CROSSR  
 3967  
 (TARBORO 1:62 500)  
 5455 1  
 3966  
 3965  
 47'3  
 3964  
 3963  
 3962

