

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY FORM FOR

MULTIPLE RESOURCE OR  THEMATIC NOMINATION

Wilson County

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Black Creek Rural Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

North & south sides SR1628, Black Creek Township  NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Black Creek

VICINITY OF second congressional dist.

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

North Carolina

037

Wilson

195

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

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

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Multiple ownership-see description

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

VICINITY OF

**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, August 23, 1982

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Survey & Planning Branch, Division of Archives & History (919)733-6545

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

109 E. Jones St.

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Raleigh,

North Carolina

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Continuation sheet Owners List

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Stephen Woodard and Dr. Stephen Woodard houses

Rev. George Blount

C/O P. L. Woodard & Co., Barnes St.

Wilson, NC 27893

Dr. Brooks and Dickinson houses

L. D. Tomlinson, III

Black Creek, NC 27813

John Woodard House

L. D. Tomlinson, Jr.

Black Creek, NC 27813

## 7 DESCRIPTION

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

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

The Black Creek Rural Historic District, located in southern Wilson County near the confluence of Contentnea Creek and Black Creek, is in an area originally comprising part of Wayne County. The district contains five major houses and associated farm buildings, all of which are situated on land totaling approximately 860 acres. The residences date from the late eighteenth century to just before the Civil War and include the only documented, intact Georgian cottage in what is now Wilson County. This structure, built around 1787, may be the oldest building in the county. Two of the other dwellings in the district are traditional early nineteenth century coastal cottages with hall-and-parlor plans, while the remaining two houses are mid-nineteenth century vernacular interpretations of the Greek Revival style commonly seen in the rural landscape of eastern North Carolina. The five major residences in the district, visually linked by their relative proximity and rural setting, constitute a rare survival of antebellum architecture and, along with their associated outbuildings, are excellent examples of early farmsteads in Wilson County.

The earliest residence in the district is the Shadrack Dickinson House, a Georgian cottage built around 1787 and situated on a one-acre tract along the north side of SR 1628 (#1). The extremely plain, one-story frame dwelling, possibly the oldest in the county, is a gable-roofed structure with a center entrance. One of the two original window openings on the facade remains, while the other has been boarded up. Ghost marks indicate the presence of one exterior end chimney, since removed. In contrast to the unassuming exterior of the structure, the interior boasts the best preserved Georgian woodwork of any house in the county. Wainscoting, a paneled overmantel, and a corner cupboard with dentil molding and butterfly shelves complete the interior appointments. The interior appears to have once followed a hall-and-parlor plan, but the partition between the two rooms is no longer extant.

The two-story Dr. Brooks House, located on the same tract as the Dickinson House and in front of it, is a c. 1852 Greek Revival residence which was originally part of a large plantation (#2). The gable-roofed frame I-house is set close to SR 1628 and features a three-bay facade with original six-over-six double-hung sash windows. The center entrance, which is enframed by side lights and a transom light, was formerly offset by an attached one-bay pedimented porch recently removed due to deterioration. Single shoulder paved chimneys are located on the exterior at either end of the house. A large two-story ell with multiple six-over-six windows is situated at the rear of the structure, as is an attached one-story kitchen house featuring a gable roof with returns. A covered porch supported by plain wooden posts extends out at the extreme rear of the residence, perpendicular to the main body of the house. On the interior the single-pile house follows a central hall plan and features original woodwork, such as doors with recessed panels and mantels highlighted by classical motifs typical of the Greek Revival style. Much of the interior has a plaster finish.

The John Woodard House, constructed around 1800 on a tract contiguous with the Dickinson/Brooks property, is a one-story frame coastal cottage with Federal era detailing (#3). The structure is set back from SR 1628 amid large trees and is surrounded by a large number of outbuildings. The house, which sits atop brick pilings

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and has been little altered, is more handsomely finished on the interior than most contemporary surviving dwellings. The residence has a gable roof with a broad slope extending out over the engaged front porch. The porch itself has two enclosed end bays forming shed rooms. Brick exterior chimneys are located in the gable ends of the house, while a shed runs the length of the rear elevation. An early twentieth century kitchen and dining ell are located at the rear of the building, attached by a breezeway. The windows on the main body of the dwelling are mostly six-over-six double-hung sash, while those on the ell are four-over-four sash. The interior of the house follows a hall-and-parlor plan and is finished with flushboards and plaster. Two fine full-blown Federal mantels are the most notable interior feature. Both mantels display large, recessed rectangular frieze panels flanked by square, recessed corner blocks atop fluted pilasters. One mantel has a simple molded architrave, while the architrave on the other is fluted.

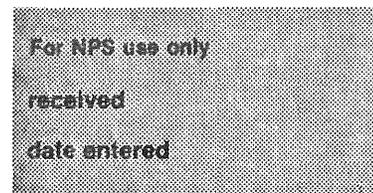
The John Woodard property is the largest in the district and contains a variety of related farm buildings. These structures include a number of tobacco barns, packhouses, tenant houses, and storage sheds (see inventory). Most of these out-buildings date from late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The Stephen Woodard and Dr. Stephen Woodard houses, located on the south side of SR 1628, are attached to each other by a narrow breezeway and are situated far back from the road on a 205-acre tract. The former structure, built around 1817 (#4), is a traditional coastal cottage with enclosed end bays similar in appearance to the John Woodard House (#3). The frame house has a broad, sloping gable roof which encompasses the engaged porch. Double entry doors are located behind the screened portion of the porch, and four-over-four double-hung sash windows are located on all elevations. On the interior the residence follows almost the same plan as the John Woodard House (John Woodard was Stephen's father), except that a central chimney replaces the two exterior end chimneys. The interior appears to have been remodeled and may date circa 1855, when Dr. Stephen Woodard, Stephen Woodard's son, built his house adjacent to his father.

The Dr. Stephen Woodard House, constructed around 1855, is an excellent Greek Revival example of the traditional I-house form (#5). The two-story frame structure, which largely retains its original appearance, features pedimented gable ends bisected by brick chimneys; a two-story porch supported by simple, square replacement posts across the entire facade; and double entrance doors topped by transom lights, a common feature of early nineteenth century residences in Wilson County also seen on the Stephen Woodard House (#4). The entry itself is enframed by wide pilasters with abbreviated Doric capitals. Pilasters similar in form to those surrounding the entrance add a decorative element at each corner of the house. The structure, which has a rear shed addition, features original nine-over-nine double-hung sash windows throughout. The interior follows a typical two-room plan and has original doors and mantels in the Greek Revival style.

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In addition to the two houses, the property has the most significant collection of late nineteenth and early twentieth century outbuildings in the district. These include a number of tobacco barns, tenant houses, and a 1920s rural school (see inventory).

The structures in the district, of course, are 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 properties in the district. 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 district. 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 within the district boundaries.

Inventory

1. Shadrack Dickinson House (c. 1787)

One-story frame Georgian cottage with gable roof.

2. Dr. Brooks House (c. 1852)

Two-story, single-pile Greek Revival frame I-house.

3. John Woodard House and Farm (c. 1810)

One-story traditional frame coastal cottage with Federal interior.

- a. 26 frame tobacco barns c
- b. 7 one and two-story frame packhouses c
- c. 8 one-story frame tenant houses c
- d. 9 one-story frame sheds nc
- e. 1 one-story frame garage c
- f. 1 one-story brick grading room c
- g. 1 one-story frame car shed nc
- h. 1 one-story frame barn c
- i. 1 one-story log hog parlor c
- j. 2 metal grain bins nc
- k. 1 one-story frame grainery c

4. and 5. Stephen Woodard and Dr. Stephen Woodard Houses and Farm (c. 1817 and 1855)

One-story frame coastal cottage from Federal period (#4) and two-story frame

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I-house with Greek Revival detailing (#5).

- a. 3 one-story frame houses, one of which was originally a 1920s school c
- b. 1 one-story frame tenant house c
- c. 3 one-story frame cribs c
- d. 5 one-story frame sheds nc
- e. 1 one-story frame smokehouse c
- f. 1 one-story frame packhouse c
- g. 11 frame tobacco barns and shelters c

Associated with the three dwellings nominated as the Evansdale Historic District are 64 contributing tenant houses and associated farm outbuilding dating from the late 19th and early 20th centuries - a total of 68 contributing elements.

**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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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                         |   |  |

John Woodard Hse. ca.1810

Dr. Stephen Woodard Hse.ca.1855  
Stephen Woodard Hse.ca.1817

|                |                       |                   |         |
|----------------|-----------------------|-------------------|---------|
| SPECIFIC DATES | Dickinson Hse.ca.1787 | BUILDER/ARCHITECT | Unknown |
|                | Brooks Hse. ca. 1852  |                   |         |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE and associated late 19th and early 20th century outbuildings.

The Black Creek Rural Historic District, located in southern Wilson County, consists of 1,215 acres of fertile farmland situated near the confluence of Contentnea Creek and Black Creek. The district encompasses five farmhouses ranging in date from the last quarter of the eighteenth century to the 1850s and associated with two prominent landholding families in Black Creek township. Both the Shadrack Dickinson House, a c. 1787 Georgian cottage which is the oldest documented structure in Wilson County, and the Dr. Brooks House, a c. 1852 Greek Revival residence on the same property, are associated with the Simms family. The other buildings in the district were all built by members of the Woodard family and include the c. 1810 John Woodard House, a coastal cottage with a fine Federal interior; the Stephen Woodard House, another coastal cottage built around 1817; and the Dr. Stephen Woodard House, a c. 1855 Greek Revival residence with excellent detailing and original doors and mantels. The structures in the district are rare survivals of antebellum architecture in Wilson County and, along with their associated outbuildings, are particularly notable examples of early farmsteads in the area.

**CRITERIA ASSESSMENT**

- (A) Associated with the early settlement of the fertile area comprising what is now southern Wilson County, the Black Creek Rural Historic District is indicative of the character and diversity of rural life in the area prior to the Civil War.
- (B) Associated with the Simmses and Woodards, the five major houses in the historic district were owned by members of two of the most prominent landholding families in Black Creek township.
- (C) The Black Creek Rural Historic District is principally comprised of five farmhouses: a c. 1787 Georgian cottage which is the oldest recorded structure in the county, two early nineteenth century coastal cottages, and two mid-nineteenth century Greek Revival farmhouses with fine detailing. The structures and their associated outbuildings are visually linked by their relative proximity and rural setting and constitute a rare survival of antebellum architecture in Wilson County.

The Black Creek Rural Historic District is located in southern Wilson County near the confluence of Contentnea Creek and Black Creek. The district contains lands once originally part of Wayne County. This section of Wilson County contains fertile land which was settled early in the area's history. Contentnea Creek is the only documented navigable waterway that was used for boat and barge traffic in the county.

The district contains five major houses dating from the late eighteenth century to the period just prior to the Civil War. These houses are associated with two of the major landholding families in Black Creek township, the Simmses and the Woodards. The five houses stand on what are now three tracts of land totalling over 1,215 acres. The Dickinson House, the earliest house in the district, dating from the last quarter of the eighteenth century, and the Dr. Brooks House, dating circa 1852, stand on a one acre tract on the north side of SR 1628, once part of a large plantation. The Stephen Woodard House (ca.1810) and the Dr. Stephen Woodard House (ca.1850) stand side by side on a large tract on the south side of SR 1628. Just east of the Stephen Woodard and Dr. Stephen Woodard houses on the north side of SR 1628 is the John Woodard House, said to have been built by the father of Stephen Woodard in the first decade of the nineteenth century. The John Woodard House tract is contiguous with the Dickinson/Brooks property.

The Dickinson House, as mentioned above, appears to be the oldest house in the district. It is the only documented intact Georgian cottage in the county. Little is known of the house's original owner, Shadrack Dickinson. Dickinson married Keziah Simms, the daughter of Robert Simms, one of the leading landowners in what is now southern Wilson County, prior to 1772.<sup>1</sup> The first census, taken in 1790, lists Dickinson as the head of a household including one white male over age 16, two white males under age 16, seven free white females and fourteen slaves.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately the origin of Dickinson's property remains undocumented. Local tradition maintains that Keziah Simms Dickinson received the property from her father,<sup>3</sup> but the property, which was located in Dobbs County (founded 1758) until Wayne County was formed in 1779, is without a recorded deed since the Dobbs County land records

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

First, Third, and Fourth Census of the United States: 1790, 1810, and 1820. Wayne County, population schedules.

Seventh and Eighth Census of the United States: 1850 and 1860. Johnston County, population, agricultural, and slave schedules.

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately 860 acres  
 UTM REFERENCES See continuation sheet also.

|   |      |           |             |   |      |           |             |
|---|------|-----------|-------------|---|------|-----------|-------------|
| A | 1,8  | 23,68,0,0 | 3,94,63,9,0 | B | 1,8  | 23,74,6,0 | 3,94,74,6,0 |
|   | ZONE | EASTING   | NORTHING    |   | ZONE | EASTING   | NORTHING    |
| C | 1,8  | 23,86,8,0 | 3,94,77,8,0 | D | 1,8  | 23,97,2,0 | 3,94,70,8,0 |

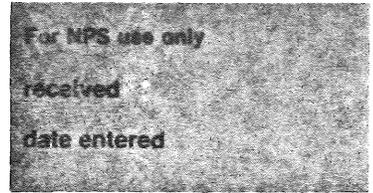
**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The proposed Black Creek Rural Historic District, outlined in red on the enclosed map, is comprised of five farmhouses and their associated outbuildings. The individual properties in the district, which date from the late eighteenth century to the 1850s, are visually linked by their relative proximity and rural setting; and all are associated with prominent antebellum landholding families in Black Creek township.

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were destroyed. Dickinson was living in the neighborhood by 1776 for in that year he witnessed a deed recorded in the Edgecombe County Register of Deeds.<sup>4</sup> The earliest recorded land transaction for Dickinson was in July of 1785 when he purchased 150 acres of land on the south bank of Contentnea Creek between his own plantation and that of Joel Dickinson.<sup>5</sup> In 1787 the State of North Carolina granted Dickinson 500 acres<sup>6</sup> along the north side of Black Creek and in the same year Dickinson purchased a 300 acre plantation also on the north side of Black Creek which belonged to Benjamin Cook.<sup>7</sup> It seems probable that Dickinson built his Georgian cottage on the land he acquired in 1787.

Shadrack and Keziah Dickinson had ten children which survived infancy; eight daughters and two sons.<sup>8</sup> Keziah Dickinson died in 1811<sup>9</sup> and Shadrack in 1819.<sup>10</sup> Upon Dickinson's death he owned 1,286 acres of land which was divided among his children.<sup>11</sup> Prior to his death he had made three deeds of gift; one (of 300 acres<sup>12</sup>) to his son-in-law Matthew Turner who married Patience Dickinson, and two to his son James Dickinson for 30 and 200 acres respectively.<sup>13</sup> The land division indicates that there was a house standing north of Black Creek near the banks of Deep Branch.<sup>14</sup> The present Dickinson cottage is located on this site. The house lot in the land division contained 141 acres and was given to Sally Dickinson, who married Benjamin Jernigan.<sup>15</sup> Sally Dickinson was born in 1777.<sup>16</sup>

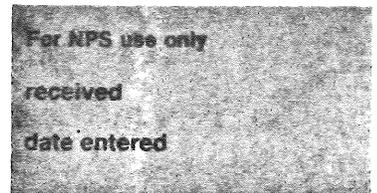
Benjamin Jernigan is listed as a head of household living in Wayne County in the 1820 census, but disappears after this date.<sup>17</sup> There is no record of either Jernigan or his wife conveying the land to another party in the Wayne County records and there is no will recorded in Wayne County for Jernigan or his wife. It is possible that they joined the numerous North Carolinians who during this period moved from the state.

Apparently the land passed into the hands of Martha "Patty" Dickinson Simms, Sally Jernigan's eldest sister.<sup>18</sup> Little is known about Patty Simms.<sup>19</sup> She was widowed before 1810<sup>20</sup> and lived on the house tract until her death in early 1848.<sup>21</sup> According to her will her real property was to be divided between her daughters, Elizabeth Whitley and Zillah Simms.<sup>22</sup> Elizabeth Whitley received part of her lands on the south side of Deep Branch and James Dickinson, Patty's brother received life rights to the land on which he lived adjoining her own home plantation.<sup>23</sup> Zillah Simms, wife of James Simms (see Wiley Simms House nomination), was to receive the residue of her lands and the reversion of James Dickinson's lands.<sup>24</sup>

Zillah Simms never occupied the Dickinson House after her mother's death,<sup>25</sup> but remained on her husband's plantation not far distant. Zillah died in 1851 and devised the Patty Simms land to her daughter Patience Simms.<sup>26</sup> Patience Simms was born in 1831<sup>27</sup> and she married Dr. Alexander G. Brooks in the spring of 1851.<sup>28</sup> Dr. Brooks came to be one of the

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largest landowners in Black Creek Township, and as well as carrying on a flourishing medical practice he was also involved in county government. Brooks was born circa 1825<sup>29</sup> and family tradition maintains that he was from Johnston County.<sup>30</sup> By 1850 he was a resident of that county and was already qualified as a physician.<sup>31</sup> He was living in the household of Elizabeth Whitley, his wife's aunt.<sup>32</sup>

According to family tradition, Brooks took possession of the Patty Simms tract in his wife's name<sup>33</sup> and shortly after they were married a large two-story frame house was erected on the site.<sup>34</sup> The couple had two children, John K. Brooks and Ella Brooks Taylor.<sup>35</sup> Patience Brooks died intestate in 1861<sup>36</sup> and her husband continued to occupy the property.<sup>37</sup> The Dickinson House was probably by this time used as a tenant house.

Dr. Brooks was a prominent citizen of the county. According to the 1860 census, he owned 960 acres of land and twenty-eight slaves.<sup>38</sup> His real property was valued at \$12,500 and his personal property at \$31,240.<sup>39</sup> Four slave houses (no longer extant) stood on the property and his major crops included Indian corn (2,250 bushels produced in 1860), cotton (38 400-lb. bales produced in 1860), peas and beans (100 bushels produced in 1860) and hay (18 tons produced in 1860).<sup>40</sup> Out of the total acreage only 500 acres were improved.<sup>41</sup>

From the very beginning Brooks took a hand in Wilson County government. He was one of the commissioners appointed in 1855 to locate the county seat when the county was formed.<sup>42</sup> The county court governed Wilson County until 1868 when a board of commissioners was organized under the new state constitution. Brooks was a member of this county court and he was elected county commissioner in 1882, 1884 and 1886.<sup>43</sup> Brooks served as chairman of the board of county commissioners from 1884 until his death in 1888.<sup>44</sup>

In 1866 Brooks married his second wife, Alice Edmundson, a cousin of Patience Simms Brooks.<sup>45</sup> Alice Edmundson was the daughter of Rufus W. Edmundson and the grand-daughter of Wright Edmondson (see Edmondson-Woodard House nomination).<sup>46</sup> The couple had four sons and continued to occupy the house which Brooks and his first wife had had built.<sup>47</sup>

Brooks managed to weather the war years better than many large landowners. By 1870 he owned real property valued at \$12,500 and personal property valued at \$31,240 and he had 475 acres under cultivation.<sup>48</sup> Although his cash crops had not altered much from 1870, he was growing more Indian corn and grains, more cotton and more hay.<sup>49</sup> The decade of the 1870s saw the decrease of the farm's productivity because of the uncertain economic situation. By 1880 Brooks was still listed in the census as a farmer, but he cultivated only 106 acres.<sup>50</sup> His major crops included 24 acres of Indian corn, 7 acres of oats, 3 acres of rye, 8 acres of wheat, 63 acres of cotton, 3/4 of an acre of sweet potatoes and 4 acres of fruit trees.<sup>51</sup>

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Brooks died in September 1888, leaving the Dickinson tract where his home and the Dickinson House stood to his six children.<sup>52</sup> By the time of his death, Brooks' farm had dwindled to just a little more than four hundred and fifty acres.<sup>53</sup>

The division of Brooks' estate was complicated by several factors. First of all John K. Brooks, the eldest son of A. G. and Patience Brooks, died intestate in January 1892, before his father's estate was settled. The second cause for problems in the settlement of the estate was Brooks' daughter Ella, who was also a child of his first marriage. Ella Brooks married A. L. Taylor and under her father's will she inherited outright two tracts which she and her husband sold in 1892 to P. L. Woodard. The Brooks family was dismayed at the sale and lodged a complaint in court against Taylor which claimed that he was improvident and had talked his wife into selling her land for much less than it was worth. Woodard conveyed the two tracts to F. W. Barnes, who was appointed trustee for Ella Taylor. Meanwhile, Brooks' heirs had elected to sell the Dickinson tract at auction and divide the profits. The sale was made in March 1893 to Thomas Clark, who transferred his bid to F. A. Woodard. At this juncture the heirs of James Dickinson, Shadrack Dickinson's son, brought suit against Brooks' estate claiming that the Dickinson tract belonged to them by right of James Dickinson. F. A. Woodard refused to complete the purchase of the Dickinson tract because of the problem with the land title. The property was resold in 1898 to F. A. Barnes, the trustee of Ella Taylor.<sup>54</sup>

During the settlement of Brooks' estate his widow, Alice Brooks, moved to the Town of Black Creek where she lived until her death.<sup>55</sup> It was probably at this point that the Brooks House was occupied by tenants for there is no evidence that Ella Taylor ever occupied the house after the settlement of her father's estate. In 1903 Ella Taylor sold her interest in what was then called the Brooks farm, containing 580 acres, to Mamie E. Woodard, the wife of Graham Woodard.<sup>56</sup> Graham Woodard was a native of Wilson, but he was also the grandson of Dr. Stephen Woodard (see below) and he owned extensive farming interests in Black Creek Township. The farm was owned by the Woodard family for a little more than forty-five years and was occupied by tenants, as was the common practice in Wilson County at the time. Mamie E. Woodard died in 1947 and devised the property to her daughter Frances Shannonhouse of Mecklenburg County.<sup>57</sup> In 1949 J. M. and Frances Shannonhouse conveyed the property to L. D. Tomlinson.<sup>58</sup> The property has remained in the Tomlinson family to date and is now occupied by L. D. Tomlinson, III. The present owner is in the process of renovating the Brooks House for his family home.

Near the Brooks and Dickinson Houses on the north side of SR 1628 is the house which local tradition maintains was built for John Woodard. The origins of this property's ownership are obscure, like those of the

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Dickinson House, by the loss of the Dobbs County records. According to the existing Wayne County records John Woodard purchased land on the south side of Contentnea Creek amounting to only 408 acres.<sup>59</sup> The earliest deed for John Woodard gives Woodard's home as Edgecombe County.<sup>60</sup> It was made in 1785 when Woodard purchased 207 acres of land on both sides of Ivey Swamp from Isaac Woodard of Wayne County. The 1790 census shows that John Woodard was a resident of Wayne County by that date and that he owned one slave.<sup>61</sup> He is not listed in the 1800 census, but he is again listed in the 1810 census as a resident of Wayne County.<sup>62</sup>

Little is known about John Woodard. Family tradition maintains that he married twice; first to a woman named Martha Yelverton, daughter of John Yelverton and second to Zilphia (Daniel or Howell).<sup>63</sup> Woodard had eight children who survived infancy; two sons, Felix and Stephen, and six daughters, Polly Howell, Patsy Morris, Zilphia Woodard, Elizabeth Woodard and Sally J. Woodard.<sup>64</sup> John Woodard died in late 1820 leaving a widow and eight children.<sup>65</sup>

An inventory taken of his property after his death gives the impression of a man of some modest wealth. Although he owned only three slaves he had considerable livestock, farming implements and crops. His household and personal property included six beds and furniture, six tables, nineteen setting (sic) chairs, eight punch bowls, a looking glass, a silver watch, a sword and an interesting collection of carpenters tools. The tools went beyond what most farmers would have kept on hand to construct farm buildings and included two carpenters adzes, three different kinds of saws, three hammers, four augers, two gouges, a shingle jointer, a set of plains and seven chisels. Judging by Woodard's inventory there is a possibility that he did some building and the one-story coastal cottage which is said to have been built for him is more handsomely finished on the interior than most contemporary surviving dwellings.<sup>66</sup>

Woodard's will makes no mention of his home plantation and the three tracts devised in his will consisted of one tract which was given to his widow, Zilphia, for her lifetime use reverting to his son Felix, the tract where his son Stephen resided was to be his after his father's death along with all his father's land on the north side of Black Creek, and the lands which John Woodard purchased from Isaac Woodard in 1785 and John Bartlett in 1808, amounting to 372 acres, were to be divided among his daughters.<sup>67</sup> It seems probable that Stephen Woodard, Sr., his son, inherited the tract where the John Woodard House was situated, for in 1860 Stephen Woodard sold the house and twenty-four and three-quarters acres to the owner of the adjoining property, Dr. A. G. Brooks.<sup>68</sup>

Local tradition maintains that by the time of John Woodard's death in 1820 his son, Stephen, had already built a house on the south side of SR 1628<sup>69</sup> (see below), so it seems likely that the John Woodard House was used by either another member of the family or as a tenant house.

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According to local tradition Dr. Stephen Woodard, Stephen Woodard's son, used the John Woodard House as his own residence until he built his large two-story frame house next to his father's house shortly before the Civil War.<sup>70</sup> As mentioned above, the house tract was sold to A. G. Brooks in 1860 and was used as a tenant house on his plantation until his death. After Brooks' estate was settled the Woodard tract was repurchased by the family and was sold in the same parcel as the Brooks farm to L. D. Tomlinson in the late 1940s.<sup>71</sup> L. D. Tomlinson, Jr. is the present owner of the property and the house continues to be used as a tenant house.

On the south side of SR 1628 are the Stephen Woodard and Dr. Stephen Woodard Houses. Stephen Woodard, the son of John Woodard and Zilphia Woodard was born on January 28, 1789, and he married Mary Simms, the daughter of Barnes Simms and Martha Dew, before 1817.<sup>72</sup> Stephen Woodard is first listed as a head of household in the 1810 census in Johnston County<sup>73</sup> and by 1820 he was a resident of Wayne County.<sup>74</sup> Local tradition maintains that he built his modest coastal cottage shortly after 1810.<sup>75</sup> Stephen Woodard had five children; three sons, Stephen, John Gray, and Wiley, and two daughters, Penelope and Elizabeth<sup>76</sup> (see Woodard Family Rural Historic District for further information on Elizabeth's husband William Woodard).

Stephen Woodard was an exceptionally successful farmer and during the 1840s and 1850s he prospered. He added to the land which he had inherited from his father in 1820 and by the time he died in 1864 he owned over three thousand acres.<sup>77</sup> According to the 1850 census Woodard owned real property valued at \$16,500 and fifty slaves.<sup>78</sup> Of the 2,400 acres he owned in 1850, 1,400 acres were improved and his chief crops were Indian corn, peas and beans, hay and sweet potatoes.<sup>79</sup> He also owned 700 hogs.<sup>80</sup> By 1860 Stephen Woodard's real property had increased in value to \$33,400 and he owned personal property valued at \$66,316.<sup>81</sup> He owned sixty-five slaves who lived in eight slave houses and he cultivated 1,600 out of 2,670 acres which he owned.<sup>82</sup> In addition to the main crops grown in 1850, he added cotton as a major cash crop although he cultivated less cotton than most of the large landowners in the county during this period.<sup>83</sup> Stephen Woodard listed in his household in 1860 a fifty-year-old male mulatto named Soloman Andrews.<sup>84</sup> Andrews was a freeman and a carpenter by trade and his presence in the household may indicate that construction was going on during this period.<sup>85</sup> According to local tradition Dr. Stephen Woodard built a house adjoining his father's home between 1850 and 1860 and Andrews may have been the builder.<sup>86</sup>

Stephen Woodard died in 1864 and his son, Dr. Stephen Woodard, inherited his father's home plantation and various other tracts.<sup>87</sup> Dr. Stephen Woodard was born in 1827 and he married Mary Hadley.<sup>88</sup>

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Dr. Woodard's family was among the most prominent in Wilson County in the second half of the nineteenth century. His son, Frederick Augustus Woodard, was the only Congressman to ever be elected from Wilson County and both F. A. Woodard and his brother Sidney were leading Wilson County lawyers. Paul Lee Woodard was the youngest son and he became a large landowner, farmer, local businessman and philanthropist. The four Woodard daughters married into prominent Wilson County families.<sup>89</sup>

Dr. Woodard first appeared as a head of household in the 1850 census.<sup>90</sup> His primary occupation is listed as physician and he was married at this date and had one son.<sup>91</sup> He owned 100 acres of land, all of which was improved, and eight slaves.<sup>92</sup> His major crops were similar to his father's; Indian corn, peas and beans, and sweet potatoes.<sup>93</sup> By 1860 his real property, consisting of 260 acres, was valued at \$3,980 and his personal property was valued at \$13,610.<sup>94</sup> He owned sixteen slaves who were housed in three slave houses.<sup>95</sup> In 1860 his main cash crops included Indian corn, cotton and hay.<sup>96</sup>

After Stephen Woodard, Sr.'s death in 1864 Dr. Woodard inherited the home plantation. According to the 1870 census Dr. Woodard was a planter owning real property valued at \$20,000 and personal property valued at \$6,000.<sup>97</sup> During the early part of the difficult decade of the 1870s the family moved to the Town of Black Creek where Dr. Woodard became involved in mercantile business.<sup>98</sup> The Woodards lived in a modest coastal cottage on the main street facing the railroad tracks and the plantation house probably was occupied by tenants.<sup>99</sup> In 1897 Dr. Woodard died, leaving the house tract to his son, Paul Lee Woodard.<sup>100</sup> Upon the death of P. L. Woodard his wife, Adaline Davis Woodard, became the owner of the house tract.<sup>101</sup> P. L. Woodard and his wife lived in the Town of Wilson and most likely allowed tenants to occupy the Woodard Houses.<sup>102</sup> Adaline Woodard died in 1965 and she devised the property to James D. Blount,<sup>103</sup> who in 1968 conveyed the property to George W. Blount, the present owner.<sup>104</sup> The property has been occupied by tenants as long as the Blounts have owned the property.

The Black Creek Rural Historic District contains three parcels containing five houses dating prior to 1860. This is a rare survival in Wilson County. Furthermore, the district includes the Dickinson House, possibly the oldest in the county, as well as the only intact Georgian cottage in a county where survivals of Georgian architecture are extremely unusual. The association of the properties with some of the area's leading landholding families and a most prominent county politician gives the properties significance beyond their architectural importance. The fact that the Woodard houses, located on one of the parcels in the district, have remained in the same family since the early nineteenth century also adds interest to the site.

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Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Ruth Smith Williams and Margarette Glenn Griffin, Bible Records of Early Edgecombe County, Rocky Mt.; Dixie Letter Service, 1958, 69, hereinafter cited as Williams & Griffin, Edgecombe Bible Records.

<sup>2</sup>First census of the United States: 1790, Wayne County, population schedule, hereinafter cited as 1790 census.

<sup>3</sup>Author's interview with J. Clifton Tomlinson, May 23, 1980. Mr. Tomlinson is a life-long resident of Black Creek Township and his family settled there in the eighteenth century. Mr. Tomlinson has worked extensively with local property records and was Wilson County Surveyor for some years, hereinafter cited as Tomlinson interview.

<sup>4</sup>On September 27, 1776, Shadrack Dickinson witnessed a deed, Book 3, 245, Edgecombe County deeds, Edgecombe County Courthouse, Tarboro.

<sup>5</sup>Joel Dickinson to Shadrack Dickinson, planter, July 7, 1785, Book 3, 268, Wayne County deeds, Wayne County Courthouse, Goldsboro.

<sup>6</sup>State of North Carolina to Shadrack Dickinson, March 28, 1787, Book 3, 485, Wayne County deeds, Wayne County Courthouse, Goldsboro.

<sup>7</sup>Benjamin Cook to Shadrack Dickinson, March 29, 1787, Book 5, 385, Wayne County deeds, Wayne County Courthouse, Goldsboro.

<sup>8</sup>Williams & Griffin, Edgecombe Bible Records, 69.

<sup>9</sup>Williams & Griffin, Edgecombe Bible Records, 69.

<sup>10</sup>Shadrack Dickinson will, Book 4, 218, Wayne County wills, Wayne County Courthouse, Goldsboro.

<sup>11</sup>Shadrack Dickinson land division, Book 4, 278, Wayne County wills, Wayne County Courthouse, Goldsboro, hereinafter cited as Dickinson land division.

<sup>12</sup>Shadrack Dickinson to Matthew Turner, 1815, Book 10, 220, Wayne County deeds, Wayne County Courthouse, Goldsboro.

<sup>13</sup>Shadrack Dickinson to James Dickinson, 1814, Book 19, 140, and Shadrack Dickinson to James Dickinson, 1819, Book 11, 150, Wayne County deeds, Wayne County Courthouse, Goldsboro.

<sup>14</sup>Dickinson land division.

<sup>15</sup>Dickinson land division. See also A. G. Brooks estate papers for the name of Sally Jernigan's husband, Archives and History, Raleigh.

<sup>16</sup>Williams & Griffin, Edgecombe Bible Records, 69.

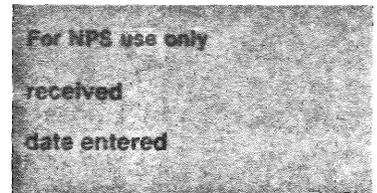
<sup>17</sup>Fourth Census of the United States: 1820, Wayne County, population schedule.

<sup>18</sup>Patty Simms was given the tract adjoining Sally Jernigan's house tract in her father's land division.

<sup>19</sup>Patty Simms' given name was Martha and it seems probable that she married Garry Simms, the son of Benjamin and Critta Simms and the nephew of Robert Simms. We know from Patty Simms' will that she had two daughters, Elizabeth Whitley and Zillah Simms. In the land division of Garry Simms in 1815 his widow was not mentioned, but his daughters' names were given as Elizabeth Whitley and Zillah Simms. See Garry Simms land division, Book 15, 218, May 1815, Edgecombe County deeds, Edgecombe County Courthouse, Tarboro.

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20 Third Census of the United States: 1810, Wayne County, population schedule.

21 See the A. G. Brooks estate papers, Archives and History, Raleigh. See also Martha Simms will, February term, 1848, Book 10, 3, Wayne County wills, Wayne County Courthouse, Goldsboro, hereinafter cited as the Martha Simms will.

22 Martha Simms will.

23 Martha Simms will.

24 Martha Simms will.

25 A. G. Brooks estate papers, Wilson County, Archives and History Raleigh.

26 Zillah Simms will, November Court 1851, Book F, 459, Edgecombe County wills, Edgecombe County Courthouse, Tarboro.

27 Williams & Griffin, Edgecombe Bible Records, 231.

28 A. G. Brooks estate papers.

29 Seventh Census of the United States: 1850, Johnston County, population schedule, hereinafter cited as the 1850 census.

30 A. G. Brooks estate papers.

31 1850 census.

32 1850 census.

33 A. G. Brooks estate papers.

34 The present Brooks house appears stylistically to bear out this date. See architectural description.

35 Eighth Census of the United States: 1860, Wilson County, population schedule. Hereinafter cited as 1860 census.

36 Williams & Griffin, Edgecombe Bible Records, 231. No will is recorded for Patience Brooks in Wilson County.

37 Tomlinson interview.

38 1860 census, agricultural and slave schedules.

39 1860 census, population schedule.

40 1860 census, agricultural and slave schedules.

41 1860 census, agricultural schedule.

42 Daisy Hendley Gold, "A Town Named Wilson", unpublished manuscript in the collection of the Wilson County Public Library.

43 "Elected Officials of Wilson, N.C." unpublished manuscript in the collection of the Wilson County Public Library, hereinafter cited as "Elected Officials of Wilson."

44 "Elected Officials of Wilson." See also Wilson Mirror (Wilson), September 26, 1888, for Dr. Brooks' obituary.

45 Wilson County Marriage Licenses, Wilson County Courthouse, Wilson. See also Williams & Griffin, 69, 231.

46 1860 Census, population schedule.

47 1870 and 1880 census, population schedule.

48 1870 census, population and agricultural schedules.

49 1870 census, agricultural schedule.

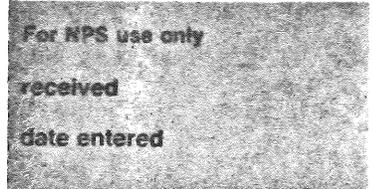
50 1870 census, agricultural schedule.

51 1870 census, agricultural schedule.

52 A. G. Brooks will, September 29, 1888, Book 2, 495, Wilson County wills, Wilson County Courthouse, Wilson, hereinafter cited as Brooks will.

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- 53A. G. Brooks estate papers.
- 54A. G. Brooks estate papers.
- 55 Tomlinson interview.
- 56 F. W. Barnes, Trustee, A. L. Taylor and wife Ella Taylor to Mamie E. Woodard, December 30, 1903, Book 81, 233, Wilson County deeds, Wilson County Courthouse, Wilson.
- 57 Mamie E. Woodard will, February 4, 1947, Book 8, 459, Wilson County wills, Wilson County Courthouse, Wilson.
- 58 J. M. and Frances Woodard Shannonhouse to L. D. Tomlinson, September 3, 1949, Book 387, 32, Wilson County deeds, Wilson County Courthouse, Wilson.
- 59 See Wayne County grantor index under John Woodard.
- 60 Isaac Woodard to John Woodard, April 2, 1785, Book 2, 65, Wayne County deeds, Wayne County Courthouse, Goldsboro.
- 61 1790 census, population schedule.
- 62 1800 and 1810 censuses, population schedule.
- 63 Wilson County Public Library vertical files under Woodard.
- 64 John Woodard will, February term, 1821, Book 4, 380, Wayne County wills, Wayne County Courthouse, Goldsboro, hereinafter cited as John Woodard will.
- 65 John Woodard will.
- 66 John Woodard estate inventory, December 6, 1820, Book 4, 425, Wayne County wills, Wayne County Courthouse, Goldsboro, hereinafter cited as John Woodard inventory.
- 67 John Woodard will.
- 68 Stephen Woodard, Sr. to A. G. Brooks, 1860, Book 1, 603, Wilson County deeds, Wilson County Courthouse, Wilson.
- 69 Tomlinson interview. This conclusion is also supported by John Woodard's will which devises land to his son Stephen "where he now resides."
- 70 Tomlinson interview.
- 71 See fn 57-59.
- 72 Williams & Griffin, Edgecombe Bible Records, 271.
- 73 1810 census, population schedule.
- 74 1820 census, population schedule.
- 75 Tomlinson interview.
- 76 Williams & Griffin, Edgecombe Bible Records, 271.
- 77 Stephen Woodard, Sr. estate papers, Archives and History, Raleigh.
- 78 1850 census, population and slave schedules.
- 79 1850 census, agricultural schedule.
- 80 1850 census, agricultural schedule.
- 81 1860 census, population schedule.
- 82 1860 census, agricultural and slave schedules.
- 83 1860 agricultural census.
- 84 1860 census, population schedule.
- 85 1860 census, population schedule.
- 86 Tomlinson interview.
- 87 Williams & Griffin, Edgecombe Bible Records, 271. See also Stephen Woodard, Sr. will July 1858 (no probate date), Book 1, 104, Wilson County wills, Wilson County Courthouse, Wilson.

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- 88 Williams & Griffin, Edgecombe Bible Records, 271.
- 89 Tomlinson interview.
- 90 1850 census, population schedule.
- 91 1850 census, population schedule.
- 92 1850 census, agricultural and slave schedules.
- 93 1850 census, agricultural schedule.
- 94 1860 census, population schedule.
- 95 1860 census, slave schedule.
- 96 1860 census, agricultural schedule.
- 97 1870 census, population schedule.
- 98 Tomlinson interview. See also 1880 census, population schedule which shows Dr. Woodard as a resident of the Town of Black Creek.
- 99 Tomlinson interview. This cottage still stands on the main street of Black Creek and is known as the P. L. Woodard House, after Dr. Woodard's son who inherited it.
- 100 Dr. Stephen Woodard will, March 15, 1897, Book 3, 257, Wilson County wills, Wilson County Courthouse, Wilson.
- 101 P. L. Woodard will, January 20, 1939, Book 8, 37, Wilson County wills, Wilson County Courthouse, Wilson.
- 102 Robert C. Bainbridge and Kate Ohno, Wilson North Carolina: Historic Buildings Inventory (Wilson: 1980). See P. L. Woodard House, Nash Street.
- 103 Adaline Davis Woodard will, September 20, 1965, Book 13, 90 Wilson County wills, Wilson County Courthouse, Wilson.
- 104 James D. Blount to George W. Blount, August 14, 1968, Book 1022, 237, Wilson County deeds, Wilson County Courthouse, Wilson.

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| F | 18 | 238340/3944240 |
| G | 18 | 237980/3944250 |

1617 **Black Creek Rural H.D.**  
 Wilson County, N. C. MRA  
 Fremont, Saratoga & Wilson Quads.  
 Zone 18 Scale 1:24 000

- A 18 236800/3946390
- B 18 237460/3947460
- C 18 238680/3947780
- D 18 239720/3947080
- E 18 239700/3946220
- F 18 238340/3944240
- G 18 237980/3944250

**Sally Graves House**  
 Wilson Co. MRA, Evansdale HD  
 Saratoga & Wilson Quads (NC)  
 Zone 18 Scale 1: 24 000

- A 18 241430/3948800
- B 18 241110/3947900
- C 18 240220/3947460
- D 18 240170/3947790

**Edwin Barnes House**  
 Wilson Co. MRA, Evansdale HD  
 Saratoga & Stantonsburg NC Quads  
 Zone 18 Scale 1:24 000

- A 18 241450/3947460
- B 18 241820/2947270
- C 18 240730/3945780
- D 18 239860/3945690

