

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received **OCT 26 1983**  
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Bacon Family Homestead

and or common same

**2. Location** *W. Durham St. and Albany Bainbridge Stage Rd.*

street & number West of the intersection of West Durham Street and the old Albany-Bainbridge Stage Road  not for publication

city, town Baconton *vic.*  vicinity of

state Georgia code 013 county Mitchell code 205

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<i>N/A</i> in process	<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 Mrs. Eulalia Miller Thomas

street & number

city, town Baconton *N/A* vicinity of state GA 31716

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Superior Court

street & number Mitchell County Courthouse

city, town Camilla state GA

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title None has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town state

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good's too	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Bacon Family Homestead consists of an early twentieth century rustic style house, one historic outbuilding, the known locations of several former outbuildings, historic landscape features, and a pecan grove on a narrow, wedge-shaped tract of land stretching from the western city limits of Baconton to the Flint River.

The house is a one story wood framed structure, built on a modified rectangular plan, with board and batten siding, a gable roof, and brick piers. It was intended to appear rustic. The exterior walls and some of the interior walls have never been painted since the house's construction in the second decade of the twentieth century.

The house is finished with unpainted board and batten siding built of "fatlighter" or unturpented pine lumber. The foundation is of brick piers underpinned with field stone. The low gabled roof is covered with pressed metal shingles except for the block addition on the southwest corner, which is covered with composition shingles.

The house was intentionally built with a rustic flavor, but never the less has some carpentry detailing. All of its eaves are boxed and returned on the bottoms of the gables. The board and batten construction is airtight and completely finished on all sides of the house. The front porch floor has been removed due to rotting wood, but the porch roof is intact and is supported by the original unornamented posts. A ground level concrete slab lies underneath the original porch location. Steps have been built leading directly to the front doors. Centered above the entrance is a shed dormer providing light to the attic.

The original floor plan is almost entirely intact with a modified rectangular form and a concrete block addition on the southwest corner. The main body of the house consists of a large front room with a bedroom and kitchen to the rear on the left and right, respectively. The kitchen was originally three small rooms, consisting of a kitchen, breakfast room, and hall/closet area; the partition walls were removed in the 1940's. The original wing attached to the south of the front room consists of the "Morning Room" and an additional bedroom. The concrete block addition contains a bath, bedroom, hall, and three closets, and is not visable from the front of the house. A bathroom attached to the main bedroom is original.

The interior continues the rustic flavor of the exterior. The front room is ceiled with beaded tongue and groove boards. The walls consist of wide planed, horizontal planks with board and batten wainscoting. The main bedroom is finished in original wallboard held in place with wooden strips. The kitchen walls and ceiling have been sheetrocked; the "Morning Room" has been paneled in mahogany; and the south wing's bedroom has tongue and groove beaded board which has been sheetrocked above the wainscoting. The interior is finished in unpainted wood and wallboard. Some sheetrock has been added in the kitchen and south bedroom. Picture molding is in the front room and wide pine flooring throughout. Three fireplaces exist in the house. The front room has a rustic brick mantel, the main bedroom a finished wooden mantel, and the "Morning Room" a neo-classical mantel. A small nonworking brick fireplace in the kitchen was added when the kitchen was remodeled in the 1940's.

Continued on Continuation Sheet.

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The house has modern gas heat and window air conditioning units. The plumbing, wiring, etc. date from the 1940's.

The Bacon House sits at the head of a long horseshoe shaped drive, lined with cedars and shrubs. There is a fountain inside the horseshoe. The front of the house is obscured from full view by huge boxwoods. The yard is informally planted with crepe myrtles, dogwoods, redbuds and perennials. To the south, across a wire fence, is a grove of pecan trees which contains some of the parent trees of the cultivated pecan industry in Georgia. To the rear of the house are flower gardens, open fields, and more pecan orchards.

Only one outbuilding exists to the northwest of the house along the back fence row. Other outbuildings which existed to the rear of the house included a dairy barn, chicken house, and a stable. The existing outbuilding is a nonhistoric workshop/garage structure of concrete block and frame construction. Centered directly behind the house is a swimming pool constructed by R.J. Bacon, Jr. when he erected the house in 1913. The pool is no longer in use.

This acreage contains the original site of the home of Major R.J. Bacon, the original proprietor and namesake of the City of Baconton. It was a major postbellum plantation between Albany and Camilla and therefore may have some archaeological potential.

This property lies on the edge of the city limits of Baconton. Durham Street comes directly to the drive entry. The house is completely surrounded by farmland including both pecan groves and pasture land.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" 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** 1858, 1912–13      **Builder/Architect** Unspecified local carpenters

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Bacon Family Homestead consists of land that was part of a significant mid-19th century plantation and a house built in 1913. It is historically significant in the areas of exploration and settlement, agriculture, commerce, architecture, landscape architecture, and historic archaeology.

In terms of exploration and settlement the Bacon Family Homestead is significant as the site of the mid-19th Century plantation of Robert J. Bacon, Sr. (1830–1907) who was a prominent settler of the area and whose plantation was one of the earliest and largest in the region. He was very instrumental in the area's growth and development. Before the town of Baconton was established in 1870, the Bacon family was part of a larger rural community known as Gum Pond. Shortly after the Civil War, Bacon's plantation was traversed by the Savannah, Florida, and Western Railroad on land he donated. He then subdivided and sold other land that became the Town of Baconton. Many residents of Gum Pond moved to Baconton and purchased lots from the Bacon family.

In terms of agriculture, the homestead is significant as the location of the pioneering of the cultivation of the pecan tree in Georgia. Bacon grew some of the first pecan trees in the region from nuts sent from Texas by his sister. The Bacon Homestead was also the center of an agricultural business significant in the fruit industry and in general farming practices. Its location on the Flint River made it prime land for many types of agricultural production, particularly cotton before pecans became important. The parent trees of the cultivated pecan industry in Georgia, planted around 1872, are located on this farm.

In terms of commerce, the homestead is significant for its association with Robert J. Bacon, Jr. (1880–1946) a lawyer, farmer, and businessman who inherited the farm in the early twentieth century. Bacon, Jr. helped establish Baconton's first pecan shelling plant, or "crackery", in 1919. He also built the present rustic-style farmhouse, a good example of the kind of rustic rural architecture popular in the early twentieth century, and was responsible for much of the property's formal landscaping.

In architecture, the Bacon house is significant for its rustic, yet elegant design. It gives the appearance of being a "get-away" retreat for its owner, when it actually was the main house. The use of board and batten siding is unusual in a house of this substance in Mitchell County. Rustic rural architecture was a popular trend nationwide in the early 20th Century. It was in direct contrast to the most immediately preceding residential styles, especially the Victorian Eclectic and the Neo-Classical.

Continued on Continuation Sheet

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet # 9.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 443.8

Quadrangle name Baconton North, Georgia

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 

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

B 

1	6	7	6	8	7	2	0	3	4	7	4	4	9	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

1	6	7	6	6	2	4	0	3	4	7	4	4	2	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

1	6	7	6	6	3	4	0	3	4	7	5	5	1	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property is marked on the accompanying Mitchell County Georgia Tax Map No. 61. It is the currently intact acreage still associated with the house and family farm and contains representative landscaping and topography.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A			
state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr. Historian

organization Historic Preservation Section date October 10, 1983

street & number 270 Washington Street telephone 404/656-2840

city or town Atlanta state GA

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Elizabeth A. Lyon

title State Historic Preservation Officer date July 25, 1983

### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

f. Melous Byers date 11/25/83

Keoper of the National Register Entered in the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

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In landscape architecture the Bacon Homestead is significant for its informally landscaped grounds. This compliments the rustic atmosphere of the house and makes a significant contribution to the aesthetic appearance of the setting. In addition, being the location of the parent pecan trees in Georgia, it is significant that pecan groves form a distinctive landscape feature in the area.

The homestead grounds are significant in historic archaeology because it was the site of a mid-nineteenth century plantation operation and therefore may reveal some archaeological evidence which could lead to a better understanding of this period of history in Mitchell County. Little is presently known about the layout of Bacon's 19th century plantation.

These areas of significance support property eligibility under National Register Criteria A,B,C, and D.

Historical Narrative

The Bacon Plantation was originally assembled by Major Robert James Bacon, Sr. about 1858 and consisted of 4,000 acres on the Flint River in northern Mitchell County. Major Bacon built his home on the same spot where the present Bacon House stands and lived both at this location and in a house in Albany.

Bacon (1830-1907) was a native of Liberty County, Georgia and was educated at the University of Georgia. He studied law in Savannah under his brother, Edwin, and was admitted to the bar in LaGrange, where he practiced with his brother, Thomas. After moving to Mitchell County, Bacon devoted much of his time to agriculture. He and his nephews, G.M. and D.C. Bacon, planted the first peach orchard in the wiregrass region. He later experimented with pears and grapes. Bacon's most significant agricultural pursuit, however, was the cultivation of the pecan. Mrs. O.L. Battle of Texas, sister of R.J. Bacon, shipped a barrel of wild pecans to her nieces in Baconton around 1872. The girls planted several of the nuts in their garden. About ten years later, their cousin, G.M. Bacon, transplanted five of the young trees to his plantation at Dewitt, four miles north of Baconton. The transplanted trees were the nucleus of Georgia's first pecan grove, and the parent trees still stand at the Bacon Family Homestead.

Major R.J. Bacon is also remembered as the man for whom Baconton was named. In 1869 when the Savannah, Florida, and Western Railroad was being extended from Thomasville to Albany, Major Bacon was one of its directors. The straightest route from Camilla to East Albany passed directly through Bacon's land, and he gave the right-of-way for it. The railroad, in turn, named the station which was located on his land "Baconton" in his honor. Bacon was the proprietor of all the land in the present City of Baconton west of Church Street. He sold lots to individuals as the town developed.

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Major Bacon was physically unable to serve as a soldier during the Civil War. He did, however, serve in the Commissary Department as a quartermaster for the state. He also served in the General Assembly during this period, representing Mitchell County in the State House of Representatives from 1861-63 and the State Senate from 1863-65. For a short period Bacon was a partner in the mercantile firm of Welch, Cook, and Bacon in Albany. However, most of his life was spent on his Flint River plantation in Mitchell County. His home, "Liberty Hall," was described as a spacious white frame house "nestled among southern pines and spreading oak trees and flowering shrubs." Bacon was married first to Belle Walton, and second to Elizabeth (Brown) Crowe. He died at his home in 1907.

The Bacon homeplace passed into the hands of R.J. Bacon, Sr.'s only son, Robert James Bacon, Jr. (1880-1946) who in 1912-13 built the present board and batten house at the homeplace, replacing his father's home. R.J. Bacon, Jr. was a graduate of the University of Georgia Law School, and had attended Mercer University. He continued the agricultural interests of his father, and retained possession of the Homeplace until 1944. R.J. Bacon, Jr. practiced law in Albany for a number of years and was also a judge. He lived for a short time in West Palm Beach, Florida. He was a charter member of both Baconton Baptist Church and Byne Memorial Baptist Church in Albany. He was very active in church affairs. His first wife, Lucia Jackson was a daughter of G.W. Jackson, proprietor of the eastern section of Baconton.

In 1919, Bacon, in partnership with Harry U. Jackson, began operation of a pecan shelling plant in Baconton, one of the four plants of this type in the United States. This plant was later sold to Miller's Pecan Crackery. In 1944, R.J. Bacon, Jr. and his second wife, Carrie Harden Bacon, sold the Bacon Homeplace to Le Roy and Eulalia (Miller) Thomas, the present owners. The Thomases continued the operation of the farming and pecan business and especially enjoyed the close proximity of the Flint River. Le Roy Thomas died in 1979 and Eulalia presently resides in the house alone.

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Mildred Jackson Cole, From Stage Coaches to Train Whistles, (Mount Enon Historical Committee: Baconton, Georgia 1977)

Mitchell County, Georgia Deed Book 33, page 539, and Book 75, page 400-401.

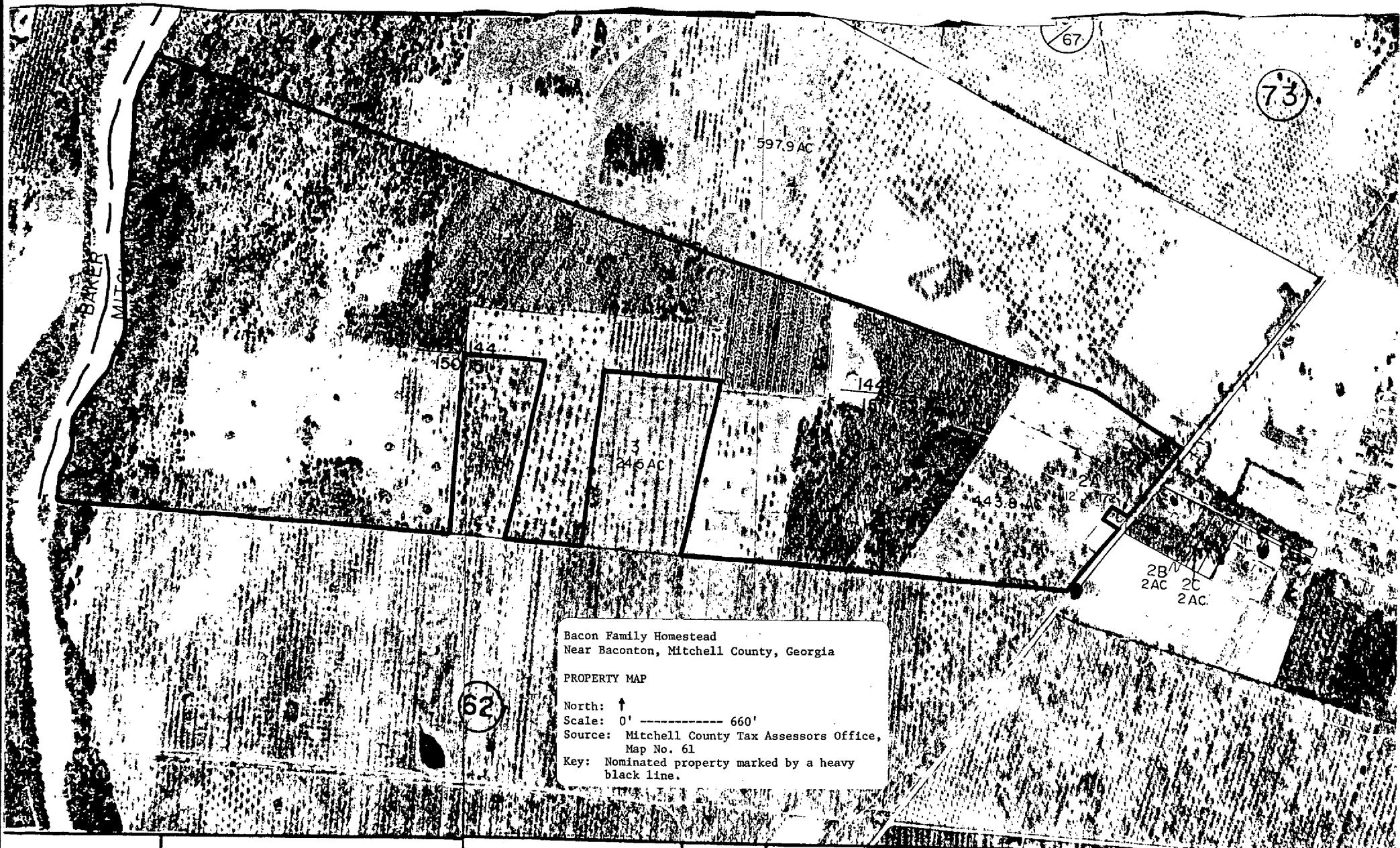
Montgomery, Erick D. Historic Property Information Form, March 5, 1982.

Margaret Spence and Anna M. Fleming, History of Mitchell County, 1858-1975. (Camilla Enterprise: Camilla, Georgia 1976)

Eulalia Miller Thomas, Interviews with, February 17, 1982 by Erick D. Montgomery.

Thronateeska Chapter DAR, History and Reminiscences of Dougherty County (The Reprint Company: Spartanburg, South Carolina, 1978 reprinted from 1924 edition).





Bacon Family Homestead  
 Near Baconton, Mitchell County, Georgia

PROPERTY MAP

North: ↑  
 Scale: 0' ----- 660'  
 Source: Mitchell County Tax Assessors Office,  
 Map No. 61  
 Key: Nominated property marked by a heavy  
 black line.

SECTION LOT NUMBER SPCEL. NUMBER	Map was compiled by EMANUEL MAPING & PRINTING, P. O. Box 5, Swainsboro, Ga. on aerial photography flown by PARK AERIAL SURVEYS, INC. The map is the property of the AGCS OFFICE. It is not to be used for any other purpose without the written permission of the County Assessor.	DATE	REVISION	BY	MITCHELL COUNTY, GA.