

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in "Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms" (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Forest Grove  
other names/site number Warthen, Thomas Jefferson, Plantation

## 2. Location

street & number 1200 Highway 242/Riddleville Road  
city, town Sandersville (X) vicinity of  
county Washington code GA 303  
state Georgia code GA zip code 31082

( ) not for publication

## 3. Classification

### Ownership of Property:

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-federal

### Category of Property:

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

### Number of Resources within Property:

#### Contributing

#### Noncontributing

buildings	8	2
sites	10	0
structures	3	0
objects	0	0
total	21	2

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of previous listing: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets the National Register criteria. ( ) See continuation sheet.

Richard Jones  
Signature of certifying official

12-9-04  
Date

*FLW* W. Ray Luce  
Historic Preservation Division Director  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency or bureau

**5. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

Edson H. Beall 1/26/05

determined eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_\_\_

determined not eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_\_\_

removed from the National Register

\_\_\_\_\_

other, explain:

\_\_\_\_\_

see continuation sheet

[Signature]  
Keeper of the National Register

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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## 6. Function or Use

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### Historic Functions:

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

DOMESTIC: secondary structure

EDUCATION: school

FUNERARY: cemetery

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: processing

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: storage

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: agricultural field

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: animal facility

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: agricultural outbuilding

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION: manufacturing facility

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION: energy facility

### Current Functions:

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

DOMESTIC: secondary structure

FUNERARY: cemetery

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: processing

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: storage

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: agricultural field

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: agricultural outbuilding

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## 7. Description

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### Architectural Classification:

OTHER: vernacular farmhouse

### Materials:

foundation BRICK

walls WOOD: weatherboard

roof METAL

other N/A

### Description of present and historic physical appearance:

#### SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Located southeast of the city limits of Sandersville in Washington County, Georgia, Forest Grove is a large, intact, antebellum farmstead with a main house, numerous outbuildings, a family cemetery, and intact historic landscaping.

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Built c.1840, the main house is vernacular in design and form. The one-story, frame house is four rooms wide and each room has a door leading outside to the front full-width verandah. A hall and two smaller rooms run parallel to the main rooms to the rear of the house. There are two internal chimneys. On the front façade, the two center bays feature c.1895 Victorian-style arched-light and paneled doors flanked by two-over-two double-hung windows. The two end bays feature paneled, wood doors. The house has a side-gable metal roof with an integral verandah, cornice, and square posts. Circa 1895, a rear wing was added to the house, which enlarged the west rear bedroom, and added a dining room and a rear porch. During the early and late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the rear wing was enlarged. A raised walkway (no longer extant) connected the rear porch and the detached kitchen. The interior of the house retains its plaster walls; wide, pine board floors; Greek Revival-style door and window surrounds, mantels, and baseboards; faux bois grained, paneled wood doors; and wainscoting in the dining room.

Numerous historic outbuildings survive on the property including several rebuilt in the 1860s after the Civil War (the chicken coop and detached kitchen), a c.1910 carriage house, and a windmill, scale house, barn, and schoolhouse all constructed in the 1880s. The 1840s smokehouse is the remaining antebellum outbuilding. Noncontributing buildings on the property include a modern mobile home and the c.1850 smokehouse moved to the property in the 1980s from the Carter-Evans House in Sandersville. Although no formal archaeological investigation has been performed, there are numerous ruins and known sites of former buildings located on the property including the 1860s barn and cook's house; the 1880s steam-powered gristmill, cotton gin and blacksmith's shop; and four c.1900 tenant houses. The family cemetery is located slightly southeast of the main house along a footpath and consists of 24 marked graves including a 10-foot obelisk marking the grave of Colonel Thomas Jefferson Warthen.

## **FULL DESCRIPTION**

**NOTE: The following description is based on the information prepared by Lyle Lansdell. "Forest Grove," Historic Property Information Form, August 12, 2003. On file at the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.**

Forest Grove is located on Georgia Highway 242/Riddleville Road, southeast of downtown Sandersville. The 90-yard driveway trends through a grove of mature hardwoods and leads to a clearing where the main house and outbuildings are situated. Along a footpath on the west side of the driveway is the family cemetery.

## **MAIN HOUSE**

The main house was constructed c.1840 and is vernacular in form and design. The form of the house is very unusual in Georgia and is four rooms across with each room having a front door leading to the full-width veranda (photographs 1 and 2). A rear hall with a small room at each end is parallel to the four main rooms. There are two interior chimneys to heat the four main rooms. The family believes Thomas Jefferson Warthen could have designed it himself, as reportedly, he was a

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man of many talents.

The house faces Riddleville Road and is situated north-northeast on the property. The house is 56-feet wide with a side-gable roof. There is an integral, full-width veranda, which is supported by square posts. The exterior walls are flush horizontal boards under the veranda (photograph 3) and weatherboard covered with asphalt shingles on the rear and side facades (photograph 2). Jack Wilkerson added the asphalt shingles in the 1940s. The two center bays have Victorian-style, grained, wood doors with round-arched lights with a two-over-two, double-hung wood window on each side of doors, probably added to the house c.1895 when the rear ell was added by John B. Wilkerson (photograph 4). The two outer bays have a single four-paneled wood door (photograph 3).

Circa 1895, the farm was prospering and John B. Wilkerson added a rear ell to the house by extending the rear west bedroom approximately six feet and adding a dining room (photograph 11). A third chimney was built between the bedroom and dining room, and a wrap-around porch was built on the ell.

A brick-lined cellar at the southwest corner of the rear ell is entered from the backyard. Steps down to the cellar are located at the inner corner of a 10' x 10' brick terrace. A shed roof from the porch extends to cover the steps. A well and wellhouse were located at the rear of the ell, which was also covered by the porch roof. Because the rear porch is four feet off the ground at the rear corner of the back porch, a raised walkway extended from the porch to the detached kitchen (no longer extant).

The interior of the house has essentially remained unchanged. The walls and ceilings are plaster (with the exception of the sitting room ceiling which is wallboard), the floors are heart pine, and the baseboard throughout the c.1840 portion of the house is 13 inches tall with a simple curved pattern at the top (photographs 5, 6, and 10). The doors in the original part of the house are four-paneled, wood doors with porcelain doorknobs. The doors in the parlor have Greek Revival-style shouldered door surrounds (photograph 6), and the rest of the doors have simple door surrounds. Many of the doors have faux graining. Double eight-foot tall, six-paneled wood doors connect the two formal rooms of the house, the parlor and sitting room (photograph 7). Mantels are also Greek Revival style. Windows in the house are nine-over-nine, double-hung wood windows. Thomas Jefferson Warthen's original secretary, which has glass doors enclosing three bookshelves, a writing surface, and three drawers, has remained in the same place in the sitting room for at least 80 years. The original family R. Nunns and Clark piano remains in the parlor (photograph 6). The dining room has 30-inch tall wainscoting (photograph 9).

The parlor and sitting room have doors that exit onto the rear hall, which was the original dining room for the house before the rear ell was added (photograph 8). The parson's room (east front bedroom) and west front bedroom are accessed only from the front porch or through the rear bedrooms on each end of the hall (photograph 10). The "parson's room" is a common feature in early rural farmhouses in the South and was usually a small room off the porch with access from the exterior

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only. Traveling teachers, preachers, and guests used these rooms. From family records, Reverend A. B. Herring was a long time boarder at Forest Grove and lived in the east front bedroom. His wife joined Reverend Herring at Forest Grove occasionally, and he is pictured in the 1894 photograph of the house.

Relatively few changes were made to the house in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Sarah Lansdell, the current owner, relates that in the early 1900s, her grandmother, Thomas Angeline Warthen had a room built onto the west side of the dining room for a small store where she could sell excess produce from the farm. Also in the early 1900s, a bathroom was added at the end of the rear ell, and in 1944, a tub and lavatory were added to the room. The bathroom was only accessible from the back porch until a section of the porch was enclosed in the 1980s. A door was added between the parson's room (front east bedroom) and the rear east bedroom in 1944, and in the 1980s, a half-bath was installed in the closet between the parson's room and the parlor. In 2002, the crawlspace was enclosed by constructing a concrete-block foundation that was recessed back four-inches from the original brick piers. Sheetrock replaced severely damaged plaster in the dining room and bathroom in the rear ell.

**OUTBUILDINGS**

Forest Grove has an excellent collection of historic outbuildings that surround the main house. The one-room schoolhouse is located northeast of the main house in a grove of trees (photograph 19). The small, frame building was constructed in the 1880s for educating the Wilkerson children and children from the neighboring farms. The schoolhouse has a weatherboard exterior and a front-gable metal roof. In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the schoolhouse was moved on the property for use as a kitchen for a tenant house. The building was moved back to its original location in 1997, placed on brick piers, and a new metal roof replaced the old metal roof.

The c.1910 buggy house is located roughly west of the main house (photograph 23). The frame building has a weatherboard exterior and a front-gable metal roof. The original entrance appears to have been widened at some point, possibly for automobiles.

To the rear of the main house are the historic outbuildings associated with the landscape of work. The smokehouse is located west of the main house and was built in the mid-1840s (photograph 22, right). The smokehouse appears to be the only remaining antebellum outbuilding left standing when Union troops came through the farm. The current property owners had a dendrochronology report prepared by the University of Tennessee in 2003, which confirmed the family history that the smokehouse was spared by Sherman's troops. To the left of the smokehouse is the chicken coop that was built in the late 1860s or early 1870s (photograph 22, left).

Directly behind the main house is the detached kitchen (photographs 11, left, and 12, center). The kitchen probably dates to the late 1860s and was one of the outbuildings that was rebuilt after the Civil War. The frame, one-room building has a weatherboard exterior and a front-gable roof. The kitchen sits high above the ground on brick piers and once was connected to the main house by a wooden walkway. The building is currently being repaired by the property owners.

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The scale house is located south of the detached kitchen and was built sometime between the late 1880s and 1900 (photograph 13, left, and 14, right). The long, low, frame building has a weatherboard exterior and front-gable roof. The building once housed a scale for weighing wagons and their contents.

The windmill and pump house are also located behind the main house (photograph 12, left, and 13, right). The windmill was acquired in the 1880s or 1890s, is about 40 feet tall, and has written "The Aeromotor Co. Chicago" written on the blade. The pump house is constructed of concrete block and probably dates to the early- to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

The "new" barn was built sometime between the late 1880s and 1900 and was featured in a 1903 newspaper article about the farm (photograph 15). The large barn is a transverse crib barn and a shed-roofed overhang on each side to house equipment.

There are two noncontributing buildings on the property. The second smokehouse on the property is a noncontributing building and was moved from the Carter-Evans House on South Harris Street in Sandersville to Forest Grove in 1980s (photograph 13, right). The smokehouse was constructed as early as 1850 and is the only outbuilding that is painted, probably because it was from a house in town. The Carter-Evans House was used as Confederate Lieutenant General Joseph Wheeler's headquarters while he was camped in Sandersville. There is a modern mobile home on the property south of the schoolhouse that was once used as a rental house and is now used to house toy Manchester terriers bred by Sarah Lansdell.

**FAMILY CEMETERY**

The family cemetery is located at the end of a 200-foot path that runs perpendicular to the driveway. Twenty-four graves are placed in three rows in a rectangle surrounded by ivy-draped trees (photograph 26). The first burial in the cemetery was on December 15, 1850. The most imposing tombstone, a ten-foot obelisk, is that of Colonel Thomas Jefferson Warthen (photograph 25). Colonel Warthen and his wife Sarah Wicker Warthen are found in the first row. Their daughters, son-in-laws, and grandchildren are on either side of the Warthens and in the next two rows. Husbands of all five Warthen daughters who lived to maturity are buried here. Dr. Jared I. Irwin, husband of Sarah Louisa and a lieutenant in the Civil War, was the grandnephew of Jared Irwin, a colonel in the American Revolution and three-time governor of Georgia in the years 1796 to 1809. Also buried here is Ella, who died from typhoid at 18, just after she graduated from Southern Female College in LaGrange, Georgia in 1853.

**RUINS OF FORMER BUILDINGS**

Although no formal archaeological investigation has been done on the property, there is a high potential for archaeological resources on the property due to the known locations of former outbuildings and the fact that members of the same family have continuously owned the farm throughout its history. The ruins of the "old barn" are hidden in the thicket near the Carter-Evans

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smoke house. Along the farm road that trends northeast-southwest on the east side of the main complex of buildings is the site of the steam-driven gristmill and cotton gin built by John B. Wilkerson. Jack Wilkerson often cautioned his granddaughter, Lyle, to avoid the area because of two wells that formerly supplied water for the big machines. A few feet north of the barn is the site of the Wilkerson's blacksmith shop. Jack Wilkerson often told his granddaughter that smithing was his favorite task on the farm. To the southeast of the barn and on the other side of the farm road are the ruins of the "cook's house" (photograph 16). Family oral history says that the cook's house replaced the first in a row of slave houses burned by the Union troops. Located approximately 100 yards south of the cook's house are the ruins of a sharecropper house that was also built on the site of former slave houses.

Ruins of three more houses are found in distant locations on the property and parts of their brick chimneys still stand (photograph 17). Another house site with ruins is located among pecans trees next to the Norfolk-Southern railroad line. Also hidden in the woods is the creek, a source of Williamson's Swamp Creek, where the Wilkerson men were said to have broken the ice to bathe in winter. The creek is formed from multiple springs that originate on the property. In the 1940s, neighbor Elmer Anderson dammed the creek to form a fishpond, a portion of which is located on the Forest Grove property.

### LANDSCAPING

Forest Grove retains its historic landscaping associated with a rural farmhouse and farm. Ornamental and hardwood trees are located around the main house (photograph 2). The landscape of work that characterizes Georgia's historic farms is seen in the paths leading to the main house and from the main house to the outbuildings as well as the main farm road that trends alongside the farmstead to the agricultural fields (photograph 15). The historic outdoor activity area is seen in the cluster of outbuildings relating to the main house (photographs 13 and 14). The acreage outside of the main farmstead is divided into wooded lots and agricultural fields (photograph 18).



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**8. Statement of Significance**

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**Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:**

nationally       statewide       locally

**Applicable National Register Criteria:**

A       B       C       D

**Criteria Considerations (Exceptions):**  N/A

A       B       C       D       E       F       G

**Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):**

AGRICULTURE  
ARCHITECTURE  
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance:**

c.1840 - 1954

**Significant Dates:**

c.1840—construction of the main house

c.1895—construction of the rear ell

**Significant Person(s):**

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation:**

N/A

**Architect(s)/Builder(s):**

N/A

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Section 8—Statement of Significance

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**Statement of significance (areas of significance)**

Located just outside the current city limits of Sandersville in Washington County, Georgia, Forest Grove is an intact historic plantation that includes an antebellum main house and smokehouse, numerous late 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>- century outbuildings, a family cemetery, and agricultural fields. Forest Grove has remained in the same family and continuously farmed since its purchase in 1840 by Thomas Jefferson Warthen.

Forest Grove is significant in the area of agriculture as an excellent, intact example of an antebellum plantation that has continued to be farmed through the present. Forest Grove is significant for its excellent and extensive collection of historic agricultural resources including the main house, outbuildings, landscaping, and setting as defined in Georgia's statewide agricultural context Tilling the Earth: Georgia's Historic Agricultural Heritage. In Georgia, farms with even half-a-dozen historic buildings and structures are quite rare, making this farm exceptional for its number and diversity of outbuildings and support structures representing several major eras of agriculture in the state. Adding to their significance is their setting along with the known sites of other former outbuildings in a traditional agricultural landscape.

The property was purchased in 1840 by Thomas Jefferson Warthen. Warthen served as a colonel in the 28<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the Confederacy and died from wounds suffered in the battle of Malvern Hill outside of Richmond, Virginia. The 1862 inventory of Warthen's estate indicates that he owned two large, prosperous plantations, one of which is Forest Grove with 53 slaves, 1,865 acres, and a value of \$49,689. In 1860, only approximately 1.4 percent of Georgia's 62,003 farms were over 1,000 acres, making Forest Grove among the largest farms in Georgia before the Civil War. The c.1840 main house and c.1840 smokehouse survived the war, while the rest of the outbuildings were destroyed.

After Reconstruction, his wife, Sarah Faulk Wicker Warthen (b. Oct. 18, 1810 d. Dec. 3, 1891), continued to run the farm and had numerous outbuildings rebuilt including the detached kitchen, chicken coop, barn (not extant), and cook's house (not extant). Their daughter Thomas Angeline (Tommie) Warthen (b. Nov. 6, 1849 d. Nov. 8, 1936) and her husband John B. Wilkerson ran the farm from 1882 through 1902. Under Wilkerson's ownership, the farm prospered and diversified, producing cotton, wheat, cattle, sheep, and hogs. A cotton gin and gristmill (both no longer extant) on the property also provided income. A windmill, scale house, barn, and schoolhouse date from this period in Forest Grove's history. It is known that at least four sharecroppers' houses were on the property also but are no longer extant. The farm passed to Tommie and John's son, Julian Lyle "Jack" Wilkerson, who farmed from 1908 to 1972. Today, the farmland is leased and planted in timber. As described in Tilling the Earth, the historic division of land into planted fields, fallow fields, and woodlots remains intact on Forest Grove's 662-acres of land.

The farm is significant in the area of architecture for the intact main house and outbuildings. The outbuildings are representatives of the types of outbuildings constructed on farms in the mid-to late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in Georgia. The c.1840 main house retains its unusual vernacular

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**Section 8—Statement of Significance**

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exterior design with later c.1895 rear ell and Victorian-style front doors. The interior of the house is remarkably intact with its plaster walls, heart-pine floors, Greek Revival-style door surrounds and mantels, windows, and original faux bois-grained doors. The overall form and plan of this house are very unusual for an antebellum house in Georgia. The house does not conform to any previously identified house type in the state. It might be best characterized as a double-saddlebag, or as a pair of saddlebag houses (each with two rooms and a central chimney) joined end-to-end, with an integral front porch and rear shed. Single saddlebag houses are quite common in Georgia and are concentrated in the Piedmont region where this house is located. But double saddlebags like this one are very rare. This house demonstrates the range and variety that characterizes vernacular houses built on the Georgia frontier in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The outbuildings are excellent examples of mid-19<sup>th</sup>–century to early 20<sup>th</sup>-century outbuildings constructed on a Georgia plantation. The historic auxiliary outbuildings for the main house including the c.1840 smokehouse; 1860s chicken coop and detached kitchen; 1880s schoolhouse, scale house, windmill, pump house, and barn; and c.1910 buggy house. Each is an excellent example of an important type of outbuilding identified in the statewide agricultural context Tilling the Earth.

The farm is significant in the area of landscape architecture as a good, intact representative example of the landscape of work as defined in Georgia's Living Places: Historic Houses in Their Landscaped Settings. The major components of the landscape of work include a farmhouse, outbuildings, outdoor activity areas, kitchen garden, agricultural fields and woodlots and a grove of fruit and/or nut trees. The landscape of work that characterizes Georgia's historic farms is seen at Forest Grove in the outdoor activity area comprising the cluster of outbuildings surrounding the main house. Also characteristic of the landscape of work are the paths leading to the main house, the paths from the main house to the outbuildings, and the main farm road that trends alongside the farmstead to the agricultural fields. The division of the land into agricultural fields and woodlots is also evident.

**National Register Criteria**

Forest Grove is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of agriculture as an excellent example of an mid-19<sup>th</sup> to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century farm and for its direct association with historical agricultural practices in Georgia from an antebellum slave-labor-based cotton plantation to mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century diversified farming. Forest Grove is eligible for listing under Criterion C in the areas of architecture and landscape architecture for its c.1840 vernacular-style main house, excellent collection of outbuildings, and intact historic agricultural and New South-style landscaping.

**Criteria Considerations (if applicable)**

N/A

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Section 8—Statement of Significance

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**Period of significance (justification)**

The period of significance begins with the construction of the house c.1840 and ends with the end of the historic period (1954) to reflect the continued ownership and farming of the property by members of the same family.

**Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)**

The property consists of eight contributing buildings: the main house, smokehouse, barn, detached kitchen, scale house, buggy house, chicken coop, and schoolhouse. There are three contributing structures: the windmill, pump house, and the historic landscape of work. The ten contributing sites are the family cemetery, the site of the blacksmith shop, one industrial site of the cotton gin and grist mill, the ruins of the "old" barn, the ruins of the cook's house, and the ruins of five sharecropper houses (not all indicated on the site map). The two noncontributing buildings are the nonhistoric mobile home and the Carter-Evans smokehouse.

**Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)**

**NOTE: The following developmental history was prepared by Lyle Lansdell. "Forest Grove," Historic Property Information Form, August 12, 2003 and edited by Gretchen Brock, National Register Coordinator, Historic Preservation Division. On file at the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.**

The ancestors of the Warthens, Wickers, Irwins, and Wilkersons were colonial immigrants from Britain. They arrived along the Maryland coast and migrated to Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee. Most were Revolutionary War soldiers who received land grants. Thomas Jefferson Warthen and Sarah Wicker Warthen were grandchildren of the pioneers of Washington County, Georgia. Thomas J. Warthen fought in the Indian wars against the Seminoles, Creeks, and Cherokees, and he served his county as a Democratic representative, senator, and judge. From 1828 to 1860, Thomas and Sarah Warthen amassed two large plantations worked by at least 96 slaves. Their six daughters attended Georgia's earliest colleges for women. They supported the growth of railroads and were among the founders of the First Christian Church in Sandersville in 1857. The family endured great losses, including the death of their patriarch in the Civil War. The family recovered during Reconstruction, such that Sarah Warthen held on to about 27% of the original Washington County properties to establish the farm we know today. Her two youngest daughters became professional teachers in Rome and in Washington County, Georgia. John B. Wilkerson, the husband of the youngest Warthen daughter, took Forest Grove to a level of excellence in farming that warranted state news.

During the Depression and the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, John's son Julia Lyle (Jack) Wilkerson and his mother and daughter were relatively comfortable on the farm and the farm provided a surplus of food. Jack was a typical Georgia farmer, who believed in state's rights and resented the New Deal's

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guaranteed wages, because he had difficulty finding, paying, and keeping good workers. As the 20<sup>th</sup> century passed, the economy has dictated the farm's progression from a rented row-crop farm to a pine-tree farm. The generations from Thomas Jefferson Warthen to Jack Wilkerson were long due to the age of the parents at the birth of the next child who would become owner of the farm. Because of Jack Wilkerson's resistance to change and his steady thrift from 1908 to 1972, the farm seems to have been frozen in time. It remains a bridge to times gone by, providing buildings, images, and stories that can bring the past alive. Since the 1840s, Forest Grove has been continuously owned and farmed in succession by Colonel Thomas Jefferson Warthen; his wife, Mrs. Sarah Wicker Warthen; son-in-law, John B. Wilkerson; grandson, Julian Lyle (Jack) Wilkerson; and great granddaughter, Sarah Wilkerson Lansdell.

Born in 1804 in Washington County, Georgia, Thomas Jefferson Warthen served in the Georgia Militia as a captain at age 21, a major at age 23, a colonel at age 24, and a Brigadier General in his late 30s, through 1861. He was a state representative in Milledgeville for three years in the late 1830s, a state senator for two years in the late 1830s, and a judge of the Inferior Court of Walker County from 1859 to 1861.

Thomas Jefferson's grandfather, Richard Warthen, is considered to be the first white citizen of Washington County. Richard Warthen and his son, William, were granted land in the fork of the Little and Big Ogeechee Rivers, where they built the first mill in the area in the 1780s. Accounts of these events were compiled by prominent Washington County genealogical researchers Macon Warthen in the late 1800s and Fannie Lou Irwin, William B. (Frank) Warthen, and the Reverend C. Jones Tyler in the mid-1900s, and they parallel each other almost exactly (Foxy, Warthen Family, p. 1-8). Thomas Warthen's father, Elijah, a veteran of the War of 1812, with others of the community of Warthen, Georgia, hosted Aaron Burr as he was being transported to Washington to stand trial in 1807. It was said the horn from the ox they served Colonel Burr for dinner was used to call the hounds for some years thereafter. The horn, along with bagpipes that came with the first American immigrant Thomas Warthen in 1635 or 1636, were lost in a family house fire c.1812 (Foxy, Warthen Family, p. 65-67).

To his credit, Thomas Warthen appears to have been a self-made man by accumulating his properties by purchasing them himself, but his financial dealings were not always without hardship. In keeping with the custom of the time and evidenced by the tax digest of 1825, his brother, Richard who was ten years his senior, appears to have inherited their father's considerable properties (Newsom, 1825 Tax Digest, p. 12). Richard Warthen was a very wealthy storeowner, property owner, and moneylender throughout his life. The earliest academy in Washington County, Bethlehem Academy, was established in 1825 in Warthen with funds donated by Richard Warthen. Thomas Warthen was a captain in the Georgia Militia and his land ownership began with a 415-acre property inherited by his wife. The family has three letters from Thomas to Richard during 1849 and 1851 indicating that Richard had co-signed mortgages with Thomas. In these letters, Thomas asks repeatedly that Richard not hold him to a \$2,000 note coming due against one of his properties (possibly Forest Grove), for which Thomas was having great difficulty raising the money.

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Ultimately Thomas Warthen bought and sold a great deal of property in his lifetime. The tax digest of 1850 shows possession of a total of 4,029 acres of land in Marion, Dooly, Lowndes, and Baldwin counties, including 1,800 acres and a \$2,000 in-town lot in district 91 and 1,400 acres in district 98 (Hebron) of Washington County. After his death, Thomas Warthen's estate shows Forest Grove having 1,865 acres and extending into Sandersville to South Harris Street, the current main Sandersville-Tennille Road. In Kenneth Coleman's A History of Georgia, F.N. Boney states that "as late as 1860 ...only 902 of the state's 62,003 farms contained more than 1000 acres" (p. 163). For 20 years at this point, Thomas and Sarah Warthen had owned two plantations of 1,400 and 1,800 acres, so they were among the elite of Georgia's landowners at that time.

Thomas Warthen owned another plantation called River Place before he bought and developed Forest Grove. At River Place, in addition to standard farming activities, there was a water mill and a tanning yard. The following are excerpts from the 1862 inventory of his property at his death to illustrate some of the farming practices and implements the family owned before the end of the Civil War:

Some items on the 1862 Inventory and Appraisement "at home place" (Forest Grove)

..first, a list of Negroes at home place, 53 slaves, by name, age, and value in dollars...

1 safe	1 one-horse cart & old wheel	1 large engine damaged by fire
1 secretary	1 ox cart	1 small engine damaged by fire
1 lot books 1 map	1 old log chest	2 large boilers for engines
1 case platting instruments	1 old log cart wheel hubs & rim	1 lot arcs(?)
7 spinning wheels	1 lot plows and plow stacks	1 grind stone
7 pr cards	1 lot hoes	1 lot iron wedges
49 lbs leather	1 lot plow gears	1 crop cut saw
1 cotton gin	1 lot seasoned timber	1 Frac(?)
1 old cotton gin	2 new hubs	1 turning lathe & Franklin mill
1 lot bagging and rope	1 straw cutter	5 sows & 19 pigs
1 set gin gears	1 lot old irons from steam mill	70 head hogs
1 gin band	5 iron axles	15 head cows
2 lots cotton seed	1 set blacksmith tools	2 yokes oxen
1 lot gin cotton	1 set carpenter tools	3 mules Prince, Fox, Rosa
25 bushels peas	1 lot irons in shop	3 horses Whale, Okelly, Shent(?)
1 block and takel [sic]	1 lot nails	28 head geese
grain cradle	3 saddles	700 bushels of corn
1 old carriage	Train oil	3 pens shucks
2 buggies	1 pc lead pipe	(?) stacks fodder
2 2-horse wagons	1 pc copper pipe	240 bushels of potatoes
1 one-horse wagon		

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Some items on the 1862 Inventory and Appraisalment at "his River plantation in Washington County Georgia also at water mill & tan yard," to illustrate farming activities:

..first, a list of 43 slaves by name, age, and value in dollars..

1 pr draw steelyards	draw knife & auger	8 mules Blk Kit, Boy Kit, Jinnie,
1 safe	1 broad ax 5 arcs	Beck, Wetton(?), Tony, Bill,
5 spinning wheels	1 Bar 2 in iron	Roda
3 prs cotton cards	1 pr steelyards	53 head pork hogs
1 cotton gin	5 iron wedges	62 head stock hogs sows & pigs
1 set gin gears	1 Frac 1 old bellows	70 head sheep
2 grain thrashers	1 bellows anvil and old irons	41 head cows & calves
200 lb. gin cotton	1 vice	2 yokes oxen
1 corn sheller	1 lot old irons	1 lot old drs(?) at Bucks
1 oat cutter	2 cradles & blade	1 log chain
1 steel mill	1 sledge hammer & one	1 lock chain
1 two-horse waggon[sic]	hand hammer	1 fifth chain
1 ox cart	1 spade & scoop	1 pr seive wire [sic]
1 one-horse cart	2300 bushels corn	1 bellows anvil & old irons
2 old cart wheels	150 bushels peas	1 iron rod
1 lot plows & stocks	25 stacks of fodder	1000 lb seed cotton
9(?) plow gear	7 pens shucks	1 lot tanner's tools tan yard
1 lot hoes	750 bushels potatoes	300 sides of hides in cours [sic]
1 cropcut saw	1 horse cover	of tanning
1 grindstone		22 sides of upper sole leather
1 lot tools, 2 hand saws & chisels		1 barn mill

Farming in the mid-1800s at the River Place and Forest Grove was obviously accomplished with slave labor and plows pulled by mules. For the cotton gins and gristmills, Warthen used steam engines. At River Place, he also had a water-powered mill, as did his grandfather Richard Warthen, which must have been built on the Oconee River or on Buffalo Creek in the Hebron district. Warthen also had a tanning yard, which as evidenced by the many sides of leather accumulated, made use of the numerous cows and sheep aside from the meat they provided.

Sometime before or in 1860, Thomas Warthen hired an engineer, Isaac Loozier, to come to Washington County from northern Georgia to enhance the community's knowledge of the use of steam engines, and perhaps he hoped Mr. Loozier could repair the engines damaged by fire listed in the inventory. The Loozier family, Isaac and his wife and two children, as well as an overseer named Cox and six members of the Warthen family, are shown as inhabitants at Forest Grove in the 1860 U.S. Census. The Looziers subsequently settled and propagated in Washington County and changed the spelling of their name to Lozier.

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Thomas Warthen deeded land to the Central of Georgia Railroad in the 1840s (Hodges, Cotton to Kaolin, p. 560-561). He surely realized the value of the railroad to transport cotton and other goods to market.

As a colonel, Thomas Warthen led the 28<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the Confederacy under the command of Major General Daniel Harvey Hill. Jack Wilkerson was told that his grandfather was leading three regiments when he was mortally wounded at the culmination of the Seven Days Battle, the battle of Malvern Hill, outside Richmond, Virginia, on July 2, 1862. Colonel Warthen died in Richmond on July 4<sup>th</sup> at the home of Mrs. J.M. Blakey, who had cared for him when he was ill previously. A servant and his horse, Whale (Whale was a white horse, but small, so his name was ironic), accompanied his body by train to Forest Grove for burial. The funeral notice, surely written by his wife or one of his daughters, says "The friends and acquaintances of Col. T.J. Warthen and family are requested to attend the funeral of the farmer at his residence 2 miles from Sandersville, this day (9<sup>th</sup> July) at 10 o'clock AM." The funeral notice had slits at the top of the legal-sized paper that held a black armband for the attendee. In spite of all the military and legislative experience Colonel Warthen had, his family chose to call him a farmer. His wife, Sarah Wicker Warthen, certainly may be termed a farmer also, as she ran their farms when he was away and after his death. In his last letter to her a month before his death, he wrote, "It is unnecessary for me to say save everything possible for man or beast to eat and plant everything in that line possible as I know you feel it as fully as I do."

A 1903 article in the Atlanta Constitution, "Washington, a Prosperous and Fertile County," tells a great deal about the farming methods of Thomas Warthen's son-in-law, John B. Wilkerson, the proprietor of Forest Grove from about 1882 to 1908. John B. Wilkerson appears to have had enthusiasm for, and courage to try, new methodology. He was known to be tight with a dollar and probably ran his operation frugally. Cotton and wheat appear to have been his major crops, and he had large herds of sheep, hogs, and cattle. He certainly employed steam engines to drive his gins and mills, which were eventually tended by his son, Jack Wilkerson, who wrote of them in his memoir. He built the "new" barn, a spacious one, and the scale house sometime in the 1880s or 1890s. The mechanism no longer remains in the scale house. Presumably there was a platform next to it onto which wagons could drive and be weighed. Unfortunately, John developed Bright's Disease (kidney failure) and his farming career was cut short when he died at age 58.

John and his wife, Tommie Wilkerson, and her sister Julia Warthen Wilkerson, all donated land for the Sandersville Railroad to be built along the western borders of their properties in 1900 in exchange for free lifetime passes for train rides. They were no doubt enthusiastic about both the business and social advantages the railroad would bring. For decades the railroad crossing at the old Sandersville-Tennille Road and Riddleville Road was called Wilkerson's Crossing. The train stopped at the crossing so that visitors could disembark for Forest Grove. The 1898 invitation to the funeral of Capt. W.W. Carter, a neighbor, has the following note appended: "Train will leave Sandersville for Forest Grove at 4 oclock. fare 10 cents Round trip." [sic]



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Jack Wilkerson continued the farming practices of his father from 1908 to 1972. He was a member of a society of farmers in Washington County and followed the recommendations of the time on rotation and diversification of crops. He learned which crops were likely to sell in a given year from his fellow farmers and from farming publications. He grew cotton, corn, wheat, soybeans, millet, and various types of peas. There was a row of very old mulberry trees and a pear orchard, which he later decided to clear to have more open land for crops. A pecan orchard was maintained through the 1960s.

“Mr. Jack” was a Talmadge man who believed in states rights and felt put upon by the laws enacted to guarantee minimum wages. As time went on, he felt the increase in wages he had to pay were preventing him from prospering. Still, he was deeply attached to the farm and refused many offers to buy his land or parts of it. Jack Wilkerson retired from active farming in 1946 or so and for the next 25 years rented his land to two neighboring brother farmers, Elmer and Ray Anderson. He still took an active interest in the farm and was the authority when decisions were made. He was described as cautious and passive, and he was a bit stubborn, but in the end the outcome was that he held onto the family farm.

When Jack Wilkerson died in 1972, his daughter continued to rent the land to farmers. A long-standing drought has taken a toll on farming in the piedmont of the southern states, such that the renters' interest dwindled in the 1990s, and pine-tree farming became her only viable alternative.

Three plots of planted pines totaling 92.4 acres are currently managed by forester, George Turk, of Washington County. Sixty pecan trees of the Cape Fear and Sumner varieties will be planted in February of 2004. Some crop fields are currently mowed so that crops can be planted again in the future.

### FAMILY ORAL HISTORY

The remainder of the developmental history is comprised of family stories passed on by “Mr. Jack” (Julian Lyle) Wilkerson, his mother Tommie, his Aunt Julia Warthen Wilkerson, and in part, his cousin Thomas Jared Irwin, to Sarah and Lyle Lansdell. The stories can be supported by proof in that Generals Wheeler and Sherman surely did march through Washington County in November of 1864; Thomas Jefferson Warthen's estate appraisal of 1862; the Washington County Tax Digest of 1850; and by two written testimonials/memoirs of Jack Wilkerson. The family tends to believe these stories are true.

As all who knew him would attest, “Mr. Jack” was not a man given to exaggeration. The accounts were important to him, and he repeated them many times.

We want to preface this account by saying that we do not write proudly of the family's slave ownership. We simply present the truth in the interest of history. At the very least, we were led to believe that the relationships between our ancestors and their Negroes were amicable. While our family stories transmit feelings of caring and affection for the slaves and we take some comfort in gleaning that the relationship was not abusive, the stories are imbued with a

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flavor of paternalism, which we also acknowledge is not viewed as a positive attribute.

Grandpa (T.J.) Warthen had a big plantation on the Oconee River. Cousin Jared Irwin's memory of his Aunt Tommie's description placed it also on Buffalo Creek. The story goes that the family went off to a party and came back to find their house burning or burned and a boy child dead. Hence they moved to the overseer's house built at their farm near Sandersville (the current c.1840 farmhouse at Forest Grove). Since William Henry Harrison Warthen died on June 13, 1851, and he is not buried in the Forest Grove Cemetery, and the family appeared to live at Forest Grove at the birth of their last child, Leila Belle, on October 2, 1852, we think that W.W.H. Warthen (or "Tip" as Ella called him in her April 20th, 1851 letter) must have died in the fire at the River Place. In Grandpa (T.J.) Warthen's November 15, 1851 letter to his brother Richard, who lived in nearby Warthen in Washington County, Georgia, T.J. writes from "the Farm near Sandersville" that "I am in tolerable good health. I am hopping but considerably improved." It is possible that he was injured while trying to fight the fire at the River Place five months earlier, but we cannot know for sure.

After Grandpa Warthen's death in 1862 and while the Civil War was being fought, the family (including two sons-in-law, Dr. Jared I. Irwin and W.W. Carter) sold the River Place for Confederate money. They kept the money in a closet and toward the end of the war they burned it. Presumably they realized it had no value and further, it may have been a liability. After Thomas Jefferson Warthen's death, the inventory of his estate on December 6, 1862, showed that he had 53 slaves at the home place (Forest Grove) and all his possessions there amounted to \$49,689. The appraisement lists the River Place property "at water mill and tan yard" also. At River Place, there were 43 slaves and the total value of all possessions was \$38,723. Although the land values are not taken into account here, the ratio of the values of possessions indicate that the family lost 43% of its wealth by selling River Place during the war.

The names and ages of the 96 slaves were listed in the inventory. Children were listed with their mothers. From the estate, twelve to fourteen slaves were given to Sarah Warthen, his single daughters, and his married daughters' husbands. Children went to their new households with their mothers. An interesting note: the values of the four oldest slaves are listed as 00.00 dollars. These are three women, two 60 years of age and one 65, and a man, "Abraham at mill," 82 years old. When people think about slavery, probably few consider the economic and social impact of the retired and aging slave. Today in Washington County, there are very few white descendants with the surname Warthen. There are scores of black Warthens, who would have descended from the slaves of Richard Warthen, T. J. Warthen, and the William Warthen family, whose plantation was between Riddleville and Bartow.

Confederate Lieutenant General Joseph Wheeler spent one or two nights in the Carter-Evans home formerly on South Harris Street in Sandersville in advance of General Sherman's path. Thomas and Sarah Warthen's oldest daughter Ann Keziah and her husband, William W. Carter, lived in this house, which Jack Wilkerson said had been built by Thomas Warthen for

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the couple. Sarah Wicker Warthen sent her youngest daughter, Tommie, who had just turned 15, to entreat General Wheeler, who was headquartered at the home of Sarah's sister Ann Carter, not to burn the Forest Grove house. Tommie walked the mile and a half or so to the Carter-Evans home and delivered her mother's request. The house and outbuildings were spared from General Wheeler's defensive burning operations.

Then a day or two later, General Sherman's troops came down the Old Savannah Road and camped in the grove in front of the Forest Grove house overnight. An officer came to the door and cautioned Sarah Wicker Warthen to get her family out of the house, as it would be burned. She said she would not leave. The following exchange was repeated many times and appears in "Mr. Jack's" memoir written in 1957. The Yankee officer (Captain in a verbal account) said to Grandmother, "Well, you see that we have whipped you." She replied, "No, but you have certainly overpowered us." The slaves were directed to march toward Savannah.

Jack Wilkerson also mentions in his memoir that "the great majority of the privates and petty officers who marched here with Sherman were foreigners mostly Germans." A brief search to uncover any other reference to German Union troops revealed only an account in the journal of Joseph Addison Turner, whose plantation Turnwold, was six miles east of Eatonton in Putnam County. Mr. Turner wrote in his publication, The Countryman, on December 6, 1864: "These gentlemen (Yankee soldiers), however stole my gold watch and silver spoons, ... tobacco, and a hat or two, besides. About the middle of the afternoon, four more came and got a few hats [Turner manufactured hats on his plantation] and one fiddle and some whiskey. About night, two dutchmen came and got some whiskey, and a few hats etc." (King, p. 301)

"Mr. Jack" wrote in his memoir of 1957, "After Grandfather left his home to join the army, Grandmother operated the farm, and after raising provisions for the Negroes and the family and the household, several bales of cotton were produced each year and there was no way to get it to market and it accumulated during the four years of the war to a quantity of considerable value. So when General William T. Sherman came down on his grand march to the sea, all was burned, the barns and the houses occupied by the Negroes were burned and the Negroes were forced to leave their home and follow the federal army. They did not want to go. Especially the small children who clung to grandmother's dress and cried and cried so hard when they were forced to leave by the Yankee soldiers, who made them get in the road and trudge off in the cold rain of that November of 1864." It is remarkable that the emotion and small details of this event were transmitted through two generations into the mid-1900s. This phenomenon keenly illustrates the profound bitterness that remains embedded in the minds of successive generations in societies who have experienced the atrocities of war on their own soil.

Other offenses occurred when the Union troops carried out their orders or committed mischief at Forest Grove. They came into the house when the family table was set and took all the silverware off the table. Aunt Julia furtively put a teaspoon in her pocket. This spoon is all

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that remains of the Warthen silver. The soldiers dragged carpets out of the parlor and sitting room into the yard and poured syrup over them.

There is an artificial flower arrangement in a glass-domed case that was made by Julia when she was a student at Wesleyan College. A soldier had picked it up and was holding it over his head to smash it, when she cried out, explained that she had made it, and begged him not to destroy it. He carefully sat it on the floor, and it resides on the parlor mantelpiece today. The barn, all the outbuildings, and slaves' houses were burned and the cotton that had accumulated was taken or destroyed. "Mr. Jack" had a vague memory that he was told the smokehouse had been spared. If so, perhaps the captain decided to leave the family a temporary source of food.

Two items survived because of the family's efforts to hide them. Grandpa (T.J.) Warthen's sword was buried in the creek bed and then retrieved after the Union army passed. The piano was put on a wagon and driven around back roads by the slaves to avoid the troops, and it sits in the parlor today. Fortunately, the Forest Grove home was not destroyed and the property continued to function as a farm for 138 years to the present.

A slave of Thomas Jefferson Warthen's named Sharper is mentioned in several documents. In the Writings of Augustus Scott Avant 1881-1918, Mr. Avant said, "During the summer of 1861 we had frequent drills in Sandersville and old Sharper a slave of our Capt. T.J. Warthen was a fifer and the same old Wallace and Bob Guyton were the drummers while we drilled in Sandersville" (Avant, p. 4). T.J. Warthen mentioned Sharper in his letter of June 9, 1862 from Richmond, Virginia, less than a month before he was killed. He wrote to his wife, "Sharper is quite well and with me." A poignant note, Sharper appears in the December 6, 1862 Inventory and Appraisal of the Estate of Col. T.J. Warthen listed as "1 man Sharper aged 56 years \$1200." Because this record shows that he did survive the war, Sharper would have been the prime candidate to be the servant who brought T.J. Warthen's body and his horse back from Richmond. "Mr. Jack" (Wilkerson) usually said his grandfather's body servant or manservant accompanied the body, but he did not mention the man's name. The last written record of Sharper indicates that Sarah Warthen selected him when her husband's Negroes were distributed among herself, her daughters, and her sons-in-law on December 26th, 1863. The other family members drew lots and each received several slaves, whereas Mrs. Warthen "selected" Sharper, listed first among 13 adults including two mothers listed with their children. We don't know whether Sharper was among those directed into the march toward Savannah by Sherman's troops in November of 1864. He would have been 59 years old.

The land in which Forest Grove is included was first granted to Ignatius Few by the State of Georgia in 1785. An original Land Office document in the family's possession grants nine hundred "gov. acres of oak, hickory and pine land" on the waters of Williamson's swamp "butting and bounding on all sides by vacant land." A note on the grant document says, "Recd one dollar & a half." Ignatius Few was a Revolutionary soldier and father of Ignatius A. Few, the founder of Emory University, and William Few, one of Georgia's signers of the Declaration

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of Independence.

Because the Washington County courthouse burned in 1855 and again in 1864, many legal documents were lost. The original Few grant, the Warthen purchase deed, and some dozen other deeds, surveys, wills, and letters were stored in the Wilkerson family safe at Forest Grove. A note in an old lap desk found in a closet may give a hint to owners of the property between Few and Warthen. In 1858, neighbor Owen C. Pope claimed nine acres that T.J. Warthen believed was his. In the end, Pope won this dispute as shown by a grant to Pope of the nine acres on January 13th, 1860, found in the family safe. The page of notes appear to be written by T. J. Warthen, headed, "Papers necessary in the Pope ejection case", ends with the following list of deeds:

Deed from Few to Jones

- " " Sheff (abbreviation for sheriff) to Reynolds
- " " Raynolds [sic] to Morrison
- " " Morrison to Warthen

S.A.H. Jones was a sheriff and a legislator for Washington County at that time, so that we can assume that "Jones" and "Sheff" are one in the same. Reynolds does not appear in any early Washington County census. Morrison is said to be "of Madison County" in the 1840 deed. He also does not appear in census reports for Washington County for any early 1800s decade. But perhaps the Morrises and the Warthens were friends through some connection (still being researched), as the Warthens named their fourth child, Elifair (Ella) Morrison Warthen. She was born in 1835, five years before the purchase of the property.

If the list above is interpreted correctly, the land changed hands four times in 55 years between 1785 and 1840, and T.J. Warthen was the fifth owner of the property. There is no evidence that owners number one, three, and four lived in Washington County. It is likely that the land was still vacant when T.J. Warthen bought it.

The warrant to survey the nine acres in the Pope dispute is dated January 11, 1858. It is interesting that the 1840 deed for the original purchase from Daniel Morrison was filed on December 8, 1859, and the 1785 Few land grant was filed on April 18, 1860. It appears that T.J. Warthen was prompted to file these two documents that had been in his possession for almost 20 years when he was threatened with the loss of the nine acres.

The following table, submitted for the Georgia Centennial Farm Program in March of 2002, shows the history of the property from its purchase by T.J. Warthen to the present.

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Name	Relationship To Present Owner	CFF Enclosure Number	Dates Property Was Owned	Deed Book Number And Page	Birth And Death Dates
Thomas Jefferson Warthen	great grandfather	1.	Bought from Daniel Morrison Sept. 28, 1840 - death July 4, 1862	Original was Book BB Page 37, Dec. 8, 1859; destroyed. Re-recorded in <u>Book 6R</u> page 174 May 31, 1979	Mar 18, 1804 – July 4, 1862
Sarah Faulk Wicker Warthen	great grandmother	2. & 4.	Division of Estate Sept. 29, 1865 – death Dec 3, 1891	Book A pages 349-350	Oct 18, 1810 - Dec 3, 1891
Tommie Warthen Wilkerson	grandmother	2. & 5.	Division of Estate Sept. 29, 1865 – death Nov 8, 1936	Book A pages 349-350	Nov 6, 1849 – Nov 8, 1936
H. Augusta Warthen McConnell (later married Joseph Hines)	great aunt	2.	Division of Estate Sept. 29, 1865 – sometime before 1887	Book A pages 349-350	Aug 29, 1830 – June 16, 1889
John B. Wilkerson	grandfather	3.	by 1887, John's farm included part of Gus's piece to the east and south of Savannah Rd, part of wife, Tommie's piece, and mother-in-law, Sarah Warthen's piece. total is 483 acres	1887 Survey	Oct. 30, 1849 – Jan. 20, 1908
		6.	Oct. 13, 1890, John buys Salter place 109.55 acres	Book K folio 539	
		9.	Nov. 22, 1905, John mortgages 107 acres (Salter place - incorrect # acres)	Not recorded	
		not enclosed	1908 John B. Wilkerson dies and leaves mortgage on Salter Place.	will or estate papers not found	
Julian Lyle (Jack) Wilkerson	father	7.	1891 at age 10, inherits 196, or 198, or 200 from grandmother, Sarah Warthen.	Wills, Book B, page 482	Jan 5, 1881 – July 9, 1972
		10.	Oct 27, 1911 paid off mortgages for Salter 109.55 and paid for 100 Stanley-Irwin acres south of Salter Place and north of Central of Ga. Railroad	Indenture, Book U, page 544	
		11.	1936 inherits all property by mother, Tommie	Wills, Book D, page 180	
		not enclosed	Left all property to daughter	Wills, Book F, page 69	
Sarah Wilkerson Lansdell	present owner	12.	Father's death in 1972 to present	Will devise, Book 6R, page 306, dated June 8, 1979	Born Sept 5, 1920

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We believe that T.J. and Sarah Warthen sent their six daughters (only daughters lived to maturity) to college or academy. We have proof that one went to Southern Female College in LaGrange and three went to Wesleyan College in Macon. (We are still searching for proof that the two oldest daughters graduated from college in the 1840s.) The family's possessions and the size and construction of their home indicate that they were not extravagant in the material sense. For their wealth, they lived modestly. Yet they spent their resources on educating their children. The typical matriculation began at age 13 or 14, and girls had to qualify to be admitted to college. The two youngest daughters graduated from Wesleyan in 1862 and sometime between 1868 and 1870, respectively (Wesleyan College remained open during the Civil War). They became teachers at the time legislation was passed to fund the system of common schools in Georgia and at the birth of the Georgia Teacher's Association (Orr, p. 182-184). Tommie (Thomas Angeline) taught school in Rome, Georgia in the 1870s where she and her sister met their husbands, whom they brought back to Washington County.

The youngest Warthen daughter, Thomas Angeline (Tommie) Warthen, and her husband, John B. Wilkerson, took over the management of Forest Grove shortly after their son Julian Lyle (Jack) was born. Tommie had a small schoolhouse built at Forest Grove where she could teach her son and other children in the community. This building was relocated in the early 1900s to be used as an out-kitchen at a sharecropper house and was moved back to its approximate original location in the grove and restored in 1997. Lyle Lansdell remembers hearing a conversation between her mother and her mother's cousins in the 1950s, in which Minnie Ann Irwin Salter related that a wealthy young woman in her husband's family was going to attend college. When someone commented that she hardly needed to, Minnie Ann replied with conviction that "Money can go away but you can always have the value of education." Her comment is representative of a pervasive family attitude and shows how principles upheld by a family can be passed down through generations.

Forest Grove has been managed by women and has been home to self-motivated and independent-thinking women through the generations. First, Sarah Wicker Warthen is an excellent example of a matriarch. In her lifetime, 1810 to 1891, she bore 10 children and five daughters lived to maturity. She must have assumed a great deal of responsibility in the 1840s and 1850s, when her husband was away tending to his military, legislative, and judicial activities. The Warthens owned two active plantations during these years. Scott states, "many wives of professional men or politicians were part-time planters." (p. 34) An overseer or two probably lived on the plantation at the time and would have required direction for farming. The Warthens were among the founders of Sandersville's Christian Church in 1857, and Mrs. Warthen's signature occupies the central square in a quilt made by church members in 1875. After her husband was killed in the war, no doubt she played a central role in running the farms and distributing her husband's properties among her daughters and their husbands. The reduction of the size of the Forest Grove plantation is quite typical of the times. King states that the "big plantations were breaking up. Between 1860 and 1870, the number of farms in Georgia of a thousand acres or more were reduced from 902 to 419." (p. 319) During Reconstruction, Mrs. Warthen ran the 850-acre Forest Grove farm and for periods when times

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were hard, she rented out the Forest Grove house and rented a house in Tennille for herself and her daughters. In the 1870 census she shows as residing in Tennille with three grown daughters, however her profession is listed as “farming.”

After she turned the operation of the Forest Grove farm over to her son-in-law, John B. Wilkerson in the early 1880s, she moved into Sandersville to run a boarding house at 211 Smith Street. One family story exhibits her sense of discipline. When her grandson, Jack, was visiting on Smith Street and would not stop riding his tricycle on the porch as she had instructed, she had a wagon hitched up and sent him back home to Forest Grove in the middle of the night. She would not put up with his disobedience.

The two youngest Warthen daughters, Julia and Tommie, graduated from Wesleyan College in the 1860s. They became professional teachers in the decade that the Georgia Teacher’s Association was formed and free school systems were created (Orr, p. 189). Anne Firor Scott states that, “The increasing interest in education coincided with the need of large numbers of women to find paid employment. School teaching had always been a respectable thing to do, and now it was the first thought of many upper-class women who needed to earn money.” (p. 111)

Tommie taught school in Rome, Georgia in the early 1870s. She met her husband there and eventually they became the proprietors of Forest Grove. In the 1880s and 1890s when Tommie was mistress of Forest Grove, she had a small schoolhouse built in the grove between the house and the road. Julia was a key faculty member at Sandersville High School in 1875. Medlock in Cotton to Kaolin quotes an 1875 Sandersville Herald as follows: “Miss Julia Warthen is the accomplished lady assistant teacher (to Principle Ivy W. Duggin), a position which she has held for about two years to the most perfect satisfaction of all parties concerned.” (p. 319)

Julia and Tommie apparently owned several lots in town, perhaps deeded to them by their father before his death, records for which may have been destroyed in one of the courthouse fires. Several deeds executed in the 1870s recorded in the deed records at the Washington County Courthouse show Tommie and Julia to have sold or leased property in Sandersville. Two of these lots were adjacent to the Christian Church where they were lifelong members. Julia also donated land for the Sandersville Railroad in 1877 as a single woman, and as a single woman, she bought a piece of property from Martha Jones in 1884. This property, part of the “old poor house tract” was across the road from Forest Grove and became the home of Julia and her husband, Julius B. Wilkerson, whom she married in 1885, until their deaths on the same day in 1905.

In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the domination of the economy in Washington County by the kaolin industry coupled with the continual drought has diminished interest in farming. Forest Grove continues to be used for a timber farm and the current owners are planning to start a pecan grove in the winter of 2004.



**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

**Section 8—Statement of Significance**

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Forest Grove received a Georgia Centennial Family Farm award in 2002 and a Georgia Centennial Heritage Farm award in 2004.

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## 9. Major Bibliographic References

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King, Spencer B. Jr. Georgia Voices: A Documentary History to 1872. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1966.

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\_\_\_\_\_. Washington County Georgia 1825 Tax Digest. Edited, Indexed, and originally privately published by the author.

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National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 9—Major Bibliographic References

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**Military Records**

Military Commission Book, 1825-27. page 546. The Georgia Archives.

Military Commission Book, 1829-29. page 644. The Georgia Archives.

Military Commission Book, 1840-42. page 124. The Georgia Archives.

General Name File. The Georgia Archives. Photocopy, July 11, 2003.

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Supplement to the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies Part II-Record of Events, Volume 6, Serial No. 18. Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1995.

Richard Warthen references:

Maryland Revolutionary War Militia List, page 162. Militia of St. Marys County, Maryland October 20, 1780. Historical Collections of Georgia Chapters US DAR v. 2 pp. 289-295  
Houston's Land Grants of Georgia, 1827, pp. 137, 179.

Thomas Wicker, Sr. references:

Acted in the capacity of Patriot in North Carolina. Historical collections of the Georgia Chapter DAR vol 4 pp 306-7, and the NC. Historical Commission, North Carolina, War of the Revolution Nat. No. 265699 Report No. 83, Book C, page 103.

Elijah Warthen, Ensign, Capt. Thomas Neal's Co., 1st Batallion, 2nd Regiment, Washington County Militia, 1793. Military Roll of 1784-1815. The Georgia Archives.

**Family Documents**

Letter: from Ella Morrison Warthen, aged 15, at Southern Female College in LaGrange, Georgia to her mother, Sarah Wicker Warthen, April 20, 1851.

Invitation to the funeral of Colonel T.J. Warthen at Forest Grove, July 9, 1862.

Letter from T. J. Warthen at Richmond, Virginia to his wife, Sarah Wicker Warthen, June 8, 1862.

**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

**Section 9—Major Bibliographic References**

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Memoir by J.L. (Jack) Wilkerson at Forest Grove, October 15, 1957.

Invitation to funeral of W. (William) W. Carter at Forest Grove, June 23, 1898.

Letter from T.J. Warthen at "Farm near Sandersville, Ga" to his brother Richard Warthen in Warthen, Georgia, November 15, 1851.

Letter from Reverend A. B. Herring at Harrison, Ga to John B. Wilkerson at Forest Grove, September 2, 1895

**Newspaper article**

Clarke Jr., Edward Young. "Washington, A Prosperous and Fertile County." The Atlanta Constitution, Sunday May 31, 1903, p. 8.

**Courthouse documents**

Washington County, Georgia. Probate Court. Inventory and Appraisement of the Estate of Thomas J. Warthen, December 6, 1862, transcribed. Appraisements, Book A, 1846-1862, pages 500-512.

Washington County, Georgia. Probate Court. Thomas J. Warthen, Distribution of Negroes, December 26, 1863. Division of Estates, Book A, 1829-1871, pages 215-217.

Washington County, Georgia. Probate Court. Thomas J. Warthen, Division of Estates, September 29, 1865. Book A, 1829-1871, pages 349-350.

Washington County, Georgia. Superior Court. Julia Warthen to the Sandersville Railroad, 1877. Deeds and Mortgages, Book D, page 650.

Washington County, Georgia. Superior Court. Deeds and Mortgages 1865-1925  
Julia and Tommie Warthen to: Mrs. James R. Smith and children, February 11, 1875, Book C, p. 701; Thomas M. Harris, May 28, 1877, Book D, p. 581.  
Julia Warthen to Mrs. Vivianna Boyer and children, December 6, 1878, Book E, p. 249; Mrs. W. G. Summerlin, February 4, 1881, Book F, p. 82; Shurling, lease 60 acres and house for farming, October 23, 1883, Book G, p.128; Wilkerson, November 8, 1899, Book P, p. 141.

Washington County, Georgia. Superior Court. Julia Wilkerson, and Tommie and John Wilkerson to Sandersville Railroad, 1900. Book O, p. 684, 688; Book P, p. 198.

**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

**Section 9—Major Bibliographic References**

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**Tax Digest**

Tax Digest of Washington County, Georgia, 1850, The Georgia Archives

**United States Census Records**

Washington County, Georgia, 1850

Washington County, Georgia, 1860

Washington County, Georgia, 1870

**Previous documentation on file (NPS): (X) N/A**

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

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State historic preservation office
- Other State Agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other, Specify Repository: Georgia Centennial Farm Program files, Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.

**Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A**

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**10. Geographical Data**

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**Acreage of Property**      Approximately 662 acres.

**UTM References**

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A)	17	333851	3647839
B)	17	333685	3647041
C)	17	333077	3646511
D)	17	332275	3646385
E)	17	331894	3646685
F)	17	332328	3648852

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The National Register boundary for Forest Grove is indicated on the attached tax map with a heavy black line, drawn to scale.

**Boundary Justification**

The National Register boundary corresponds to the current legal boundary owned by the current property owners; encompasses the remaining, intact historic acreage associated with Forest Grove; and is acreage still in agricultural use. The boundary includes the main house, outbuildings, historic landscaping, sites of former buildings, historic agricultural fields, and the right-of-way.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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**State Historic Preservation Office**

**name/title** Gretchen A. Brock/National Register Coordinator  
**organization** Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
**mailing address** 156 Trinity Avenue, S.W., Suite 101  
**city or town** Atlanta      **state** Georgia      **zip code** 30303  
**telephone** (404) 656-2840      **date** December 2, 2004  
**e-mail** gretchen\_brock@dnr.state.ga.us

**Consulting Services/Technical Assistance (if applicable)** ( ) not applicable

**name/title** Lyle Lansdell  
**organization** N/A  
**mailing address** 301 E. Poplar Avenue  
**city or town** Carrboro      **state** North Carolina      **zip code** 27510  
**telephone** (919) 966-8301  
**e-mail** N/A

- (X) **property owner**  
( ) **consultant**  
( ) **regional development center preservation planner**  
( ) **other:**

**Property Owner or Contact Information**

**name (property owner or contact person)** Sarah Lansdell or Lyle Lansdell  
**organization (if applicable)** N/A  
**mailing address** 1200 Highway 242  
**city or town** Sandersville      **state** Georgia      **zip code** 31082  
**e-mail (optional)** N/A

**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

**Photographs**

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**Name of Property:** Forest Grove  
**City or Vicinity:** Sandersville  
**County:** Washington  
**State:** Georgia  
**Photographer:** James R. Lockhart  
**Negative Filed:** Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
**Date Photographed:** November 2003

**Description of Photograph(s):**

Number of photographs:

1. Main house, front (north) façade; photographer facing southwest.
2. Main house, front (north) façade; photographer facing southwest.
3. Main house, front porch, detail; photographer facing west.
4. Main house, front porch, detail; photographer facing southeast.
5. Main house, interior, sitting room; photographer facing north.
6. Main house, interior, parlor; photographer facing south.
7. Main house, interior, parlor looking into sitting room; photographer facing west.
8. Main house, interior, rear hall; photographer facing east.
9. Main house, interior, dining room in 1895 ell addition; photographer facing northeast.
10. Main house, interior, parson's room; photographer facing north.
11. Main house, east and south facades and rear 1895 ell addition, and detached kitchen; photographer facing north.
12. View of main house, detached kitchen, and windmill; photographer facing northwest.
13. View of scale house, windmill, and Carter-Evans smokehouse; photographer facing southwest.
14. View of scale house, detached kitchen, windmill, and pump house; photographer facing north.



**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

**Photographs**

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15. Barn and farm road; photographer facing north.
16. Ruins of cook's house; photographer facing north.
17. Ruins of sharecropper house; photographer facing north.
18. View of farmstead and agricultural fields; photographer facing north.
19. Schoolhouse; photographer facing north.
20. View of pump house, windmill, and rear (south) façade of main house; photographer facing northeast.
21. Detail of pump house, detached kitchen, scale house, and barn; photographer facing east.
22. Chicken coop and smokehouse; photographer facing west.
23. Buggy house; photographer facing north.
24. Barn and agricultural fields; photographer facing north.
25. Cemetery, obelisk of Thomas Jefferson Warthen; photographer facing southwest.
26. Cemetery; photographer facing north.

(HPD WORD form version 11-03-01)

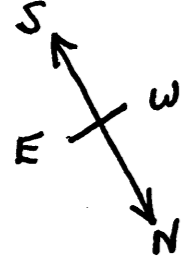
PHOTOS  
[17+18 OFF  
MAP]

ruin of  
Cook's house

Forest Grove grounds

Washington County

prepared by Lyle Lansdell  
8-6-2003



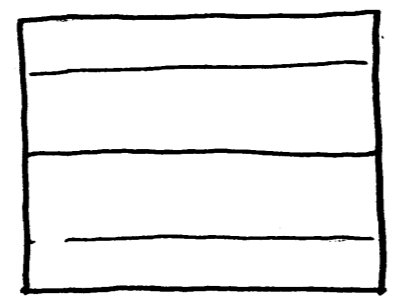
field

power line  
easement

site of  
cotton gin  
and  
gristmill

FOREST GROVE  
WASHINGTON COUNTY, GEORGIA  
SITE PLAN  
NORTH:   
SCALE: NOT TO SCALE  
PHOTOGRAPHS/DIRECTION OF VIEW:   
SOURCE: LYLE LANSDSELL

farm road

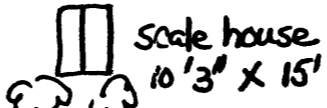


"new barn"  
75' x 55'

field

former lane  
between barns

ruin of  
"old barn"



scale house  
10'3" x 15'



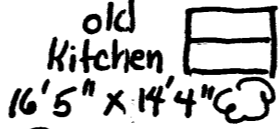
windmill



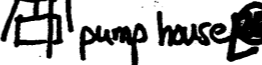
Carter-Evans smokehouse  
16'4" x 14'4"



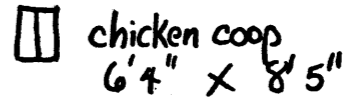
site of  
blacksmith  
shop



old  
kitchen  
16'5" x 14'4"



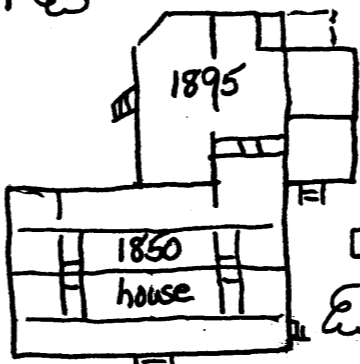
pump house



chicken coop  
6'4" x 8'5"

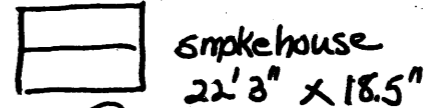


mobile  
home  
10 x 40



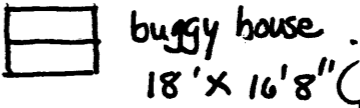
1895

1850  
house

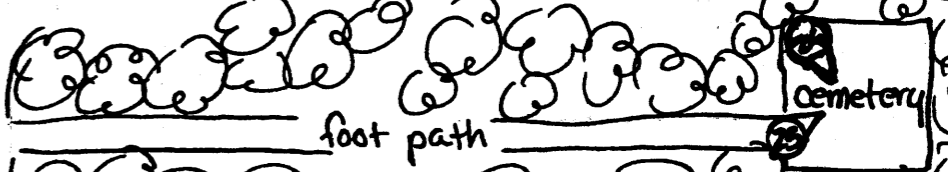


smokehouse  
22'3" x 18.5"

garden

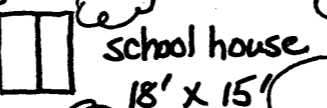


buggy house  
18' x 16'8"



cemetery

foot path

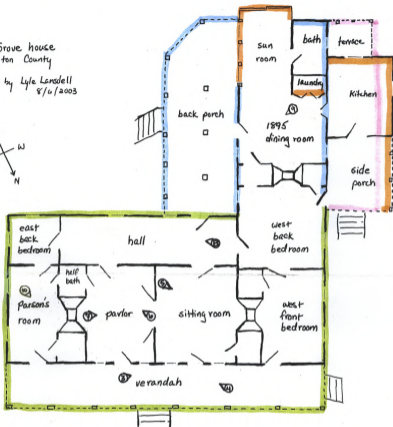


school house  
18' x 15'

Highway 242 / Aiddleville Rd / Old Savannah Rd

Forest Grove house  
Washington County

prepared by Lyle Lansdell  
8/6/2003



FOREST GROVE  
WASHINGTON COUNTY, GEORGIA  
FLOOR PLAN  
NORTH ↓  
SCALE: NOT TO SCALE  
PHOTOGRAPHS/DIRECTION OF VIEW: ①  
SOURCE: LYLE LANSDELL

1850 house

1895 addition

early 1900s addition

1980s-2002 changes





**Attachment 1: 1894 photograph, Forest Grove, Washington County, Georgia**

Right to left:

Julian Lyle (Jack) Wilkerson, age 13

Tommie Warthen Wilkerson, wife of John B. Wilkerson and Jack's mother

Annie Lou Russell, Tommie's grandniece and granddaughter of Ann Keziah Warthen Carter and W.W. Carter

Mattie Carter, Tommie's niece and daughter of Ann and W.W. Carter

John B. Wilkerson, property owner

Reverend A.B. Herring, long-time boarder at Forest Grove

Mandy's daughter, Telia or Matt

Mandy, the cook

Ephraim Stubbs with horse