NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018 (Expires 5/31/2012)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

698

1. Name of Property

historic name Orton Plantation Boundary Increase and Additional Documentation

other names/site number

2. Location

street & number 9149 Orton Road Southeast [n/a] not for publication

city or town Winnabow [X] vicinity

state North Carolina code NC county Brunswick code 019 zip code 28479

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this _X_ nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property _X_ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance: _ national _X_ statewide _local.

Kevin Cherry 7/12/2013
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

✓ entered in the National Register _ determined eligible for the National Register

_ determined not eligible for the National Register _ removed from the National Register

_ other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Edson H. Beall Date of Action 9.9.13

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- [X] private
- [ ] public - Local
- [ ] public - State
- [ ] public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

- [ ] building(s)
- [X] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
8	6	buildings
14	4	sites
2	2	structures
31	116	objects
55	128	**Total**

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register:
2

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions	Current Functions
DOMESTIC/single dwelling	DOMESTIC/single dwelling
DOMESTIC/secondary structure	DOMESTIC/secondary structure
COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store	RELIGION/religious facility
RELIGION/religious facility	FUNERARY/cemetery
FUNERARY/cemetery	AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/agricultural field
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/processing	AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/agricultural outbuilding
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/agricultural field	AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/irrigation facility
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/agricultural outbuilding	LANDSCAPE/garden
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/irrigation facility	LANDSCAPE/forest
LANDSCAPE/garden	LANDSCAPE/natural feature
LANDSCAPE/forest	LANDSCAPE/unoccupied land
LANDSCAPE/natural feature	Vacant/not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

- Greek Revival
- Colonial Revival
- Classical Revival
- Other: Minimal Traditional

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

- foundation: Brick, wood, concrete, stone
- walls: Wood, stucco, metal, synthetic siding
- roof: Slate, asphalt, metal
- other: Copper, marble, stone, metal, brick

Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

Orton Plantation Boundary Increase and Additional Documentation is an expansion of Orton Plantation (NR 1973), which encompassed twelve acres of Orton Plantation, including the Orton mansion and its ornamental gardens. Since Orton Plantation's listing, important historic resources have been identified in the surrounding landscape that have inspired the owner to apply to the National Register in order to broaden the boundaries of the district to 953.8 acres and to expand the period and areas of significance. Orton Plantation Boundary Increase and Additional Documentation describes the historic core of the larger Orton property, which historically comprised almost 10,000 acres. For the purposes of this nomination, the property included within the boundary discussed here will be called Orton Plantation, and the larger, surrounding property, the Orton property. When referred to historically, it will be called, simply, Orton.

Orton Plantation is located in Brunswick County, North Carolina, and situated almost equidistant between the cities of Wilmington and Southport, with the Cape Fear River forming its eastern boundary. To the east of Orton and the Cape Fear River lie the coastal beaches of New Hanover County and the Atlantic Ocean, and to the west lie vast acreages of pine forests. The Sunny Point Military Ocean Terminal borders Orton Plantation to the south.

Today, the Orton property comprises about 14,000 acres held in four ownerships. The largest of these, some 8,400 acres owned (since 2010) by Louis Moore Bacon, a sixth great-grandson of Roger Moore, encompasses the most historically significant features of the Orton property. The centerpiece of the property is the main owner's residence, the Orton mansion (ca. 1729-1732). Also located within the property is the family chapel, known as "Luola's Chapel" (1915); historic roadways (1800s,1910); one late nineteenth-century worker's dwelling (1880s); historic rice fields (1820s); two cemeteries dating to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; historic ornamental garden features (1910s, 1935-1940, and 1960s); historic features related to the Orton Nursery (1935-1940); and several archaeological sites, including the possible site of the plantation's slave settlement, for a total of fifty-five contributing and one hundred twenty-eight noncontributing resources.[1]

The boundary runs from the confluence of Orton Creek and the Cape Fear River, heading westward along Orton Creek. As the creek reaches the plantation's north entrance drive, the boundary turns to parallel the drive until it reaches Plantation Road, which was the primary route to Wilmington until the construction of State Road 133 in the 1950s. There, the boundary turns south and follows the route of Plantation Road, jogging westward across the road to encompass the Orton Pond dam and water release structure, then returning to follow the road, only to jog west again to encompass the Orton Pond outfall. From there the boundary returns to the road to head further south, then jogs eastward around an outlot containing the Drew Cemetery, until it meets the boundaries of the Sunny Point Military Ocean Terminal. At that point, the boundary turns to the northeast towards the Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson State Historic Site. After a short jog to the south, the boundary turns northward along the western edge of the state historic site to its northern extent where the boundary turns to head eastward to meet the Cape Fear River, extending out into the water 500 feet to encompass underwater archaeological resources, then runs north before turning back to meet the river's edge at its starting point.

Orton Plantation also includes portions of the property around Orton Pond, owned by the Sprunt family, including the Orton Pond dam, the Orton Pond outfall, and a water release structure that controls water flow to the rice fields. Orton Pond is the historic impoundment first created by Roger Moore to power his sawmills and also provided water power for Orton's successive saw, grist, and rice mills; fresh water for cultivating the plantation's rice fields; and, for most of the twentieth century, a splendid recreational and ornamental water feature for the Sprunt family, their friends, and guests. Members of the Sprunt family in three entities hold the 5,600 acres comprising most of Orton Pond, woodlands, marshes, fields; a hunting camp; most of the colonial Lilliput plantation of Eleazar Allen (d. 1749), including the site of his long-lost brick house and the Allen burial ground. While these features are also integral to the setting of the historic district, they are not included in this documentation, nor is the Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson State Historic Site, which commemorates the town founded by Roger Moore and his family and is now owned by the State of North Carolina. However, the histories of all of these sites are inextricably intermingled.

Narrative Description

Setting and Overview Property Description

With the exception of the small community of Boiling Springs Lakes to the southwest, the landscape surrounding Orton Plantation is rural in character. North Carolina State Road 1529 (Plantation Road) runs through the Orton property, forming the western edge of the nominated property. Originally the primary north-to-south highway connecting Wilmington to Southport, this highway was re-routed around Orton Pond when the Sunny Point Military Ocean Terminal was created in the 1950s. Plantation Road now serves as access to the Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson State Historic Site, to the north gate of Sunny Point, and to various gates into Orton. The eastern border of the property is formed by the Cape Fear River, on which the operations of Orton depended throughout most of its history. Orton Creek forms a portion of the northern boundary and flows through the back rice fields, then eastward around Orton Ridge and into the tidal flats, eventually converging with the river. It is this waterway that was dammed to form Orton Pond, providing a controlled source of fresh water for the rice fields and a source of power for milling operations.

Orton Plantation occupies the eastern edge of the ecologically-rich Coastal Plain physiographic province. The potential of this province for supporting forest-related industry and the availability of fresh water for rice cultivation prompted the development of Orton and nearby plantations along the Cape Fear River in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Orton exhibits the gently rolling topography of the ancient sand beach ridges typical of the Cape Fear Arch, a geological feature typical of the Coastal Plain province that runs through the southern mainland of Brunswick County. The historic core of Orton is organized along the Orton Ridge, which runs north-to-south parallel to the river. Rice was grown on both sides of this sandy ridge in the surrounding tidal flats related to the Cape Fear River, Orton Creek, and its tributaries. The earliest road in the district, Old Brunswick Town Road, runs the length of the Orton Ridge between the historic town site and the Orton mansion at the high point of the ridge. Past the tidal flats, the upland ridges and terraces of Orton host recently-regenerated longleaf pine forests, a resource on which the economy of the plantation historically depended.

The topography of Orton Plantation has been manipulated over centuries to accommodate cultural uses. Within the property, numerous interventions have been made since the time of Roger Moore and the siting of the original house on Orton Ridge overlooking the Cape Fear River. Since then, the topography has changed with each ensuing owner and the needs of the plantation to accommodate lifestyles and economic activities. These modifications include the creation of the rice fields using earthen dikes; construction of the entrance causeway; farm field preparation; and grading for buildings and structures, access roads and parking, recreational features, and garden paths. A borrow pit is also located within the property and was used to mine materials for dike and revetment repair.

Most of the property is wooded, including native hardwood communities associated with stream corridors and longleaf pine-covered uplands. Most of the woodlands have arisen through secondary succession after the abandonment of agricultural activities, timbering, or through intentional planting, as with the recently re-established longleaf pine *(Pinus palustris)* communities. The species list also includes live oak (*Quercus virginiana*), swamp tupelo *(Nyssa biflora),* red maple (*Acer rubrum)*, sweet gum *(Liquidambar styraciflua),* bald cypress *(Taxodium distichum)*, Carolina ash *(Fraxinus caroliniana),* laurel oak *(Q. laurifolia),* water oak *(Q.nigra),* willow oak *(Q. phellos),* loblolly pine *(P. taeda),* swamp magnolia *(Magnolia virginiana)*, and Eastern red cedar *(Juniperus virginiana).* Understory species include American holly *(Ilex opaca),* swamp dogwood *(Cornus obliqua),* ironwood *(Carpinus caroliniana),* wax myrtle *(Myrica cerifera)*, huckleberry *(Gaylussacia frondosa),* inkberry *(Ilex glabra),* and common wiregrass *(Aristida stricta).*

Ornamental plantings of woody vegetation include allées of live oaks and bald cypress that line the primary roadways through the property, and camellias *(Camellia japonica)*, azaleas *(Rhododendron sp.),* and other shrubs and groundcovers that survive from the period of significance and are related to horticultural use of the property. However, most ornamental plants found immediately around the Orton mansion were installed in 2012.

The property is visually dominated by its historic rice fields, which exhibit the forms and patterns extant during the period of significance. Elsewhere on the property, other agricultural fields survive from the period of significance, including seven and one-half acres to the east of the Gatehouse, now maintained in turf grass; twenty-one acres along Old Brunswick Town Road, currently kept in corn; and another five acres west of that field, also kept in corn. Open areas in the vicinity of the site of the African American worker's settlement have been recently cleared of secondary growth, but were historically kept in household gardens and probably livestock, hog, or chicken yards. In addition to the agricultural fields, several acres were also used to raise ornamental plants for the Orton Nursery, but these plots have since revegetated in secondary tree growth.

The open fields along Old Brunswick Town Road allow for a sequence of views from the road to the rice fields and the Cape Fear River beyond. A similarly powerful sequence of views can be experienced along the north entrance road through its allée of live oaks, over the causeway, which provides views into the back rice fields, and to its intersection with Old Brunswick Town Road where it rises up the ridge to reveal expansive views of the river. It is this sequence of views, culminating in the magnificent view of the river from the front yard of the Orton mansion, which gives the property its strong visual character.

Orton Plantation is bounded on the east by the Cape Fear River, which historically provided the transportation necessary for the economic viability of Orton and other plantations in the larger region surrounding it and reaching northward. The river's tidal marshes provided the environment for the cultivation of rice that proved an economic boom for the plantation in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Throughout its history, Orton's various owners have worked to maintain the earthen dike structure that separates the rice fields from the Cape Fear River, despite damage from storm events and wave action.

Old Brunswick Town Road and the north entrance road are the oldest circulation features on the property. Old Brunswick Town Road, which runs from the state historic site to the Orton mansion, dates from at least as early as the Civil War era, as it is first recorded on the 1864 Gilmer map. However, it is likely that the road existed in some form at least 100 years prior to 1864 to provide direct access to Brunswick Town. The southern end of the road had been realigned to meet Plantation Road around 1910-1916, when the south entrance gate was constructed. The north entrance road was established at the same time. It is also likely that it was at the same time that the causeway and the first gatehouse were constructed. The north entrance road intersects with Old Brunswick Town Road at the crest of Orton Ridge. From each extend other roads that link other parts of the plantation to these major routes.

Sites

Orton Plantation contains thirteen contributing sites, including the overall landscape, which comprises one site, and twelve archaeological sites, each described separately.

Orton Plantation

The landscape features that comprise Orton Plantation collectively constitute **ONE CONTRIBUTING SITE**. The site can be understood best as three distinct areas: the north entrance corridor, the Orton mansion and grounds, and the working plantation, which includes the rice field complex. The resource description that follows is arranged to take the reader through the property from the north entrance gate to the south entrance gate, as it has been traditionally experienced by most visitors to the plantation through the past century. As each area is described, historic associated features of the site will appear in bold print at their first significant mention. These are also listed in the tables of contributing and noncontributing features at the end of this section. Buildings and structures found within this site are briefly described with a reference to the Buildings and Structures sections for full descriptions. Archaeological sites and objects will be listed with their numbers, but full descriptions will be provided in the Archaeological Resources and Objects sections.

North Entrance Corridor Landscape

For the past one hundred years, the main entrance into Orton Plantation has been through the north entrance gate, down the avenue of trees, over the causeway, and up onto Orton Ridge from where the visitor first sees the front rice fields and the Cape Fear River, beyond. At this point, the Orton mansion stands to the north and Old Brunswick Town Road lies southward. The north entrance corridor landscape comprises the open and lightly wooded landscape from the north gates to Old Brunswick Town Road, and includes the north entrance gate; the asphalt- and sand-paved road and its live oak allée; the Gatehouse, its outbuildings, and garden; a large field; a portion of the original boundary ditch between Kendal and Orton; a trace of the old road that preceded Plantation Road (now used as an internal access road to Kendal), the causeway and bald cypress allée; broad views to the back rice fields; and glimpses of the Orton mansion.

The **north entrance gate** is composed of a double metal gate supported on brick piers attached to curved walls that terminate in another set of piers (see Structures for full description). This gate, along with the matching south entrance gate, was constructed by James Sprunt, sometime between 1910 and 1916 based on a design attributed to Kenneth McKenzie Murchison Jr. A dial pad and speaker have been installed on a concrete footing in front of the gate for security call-in and planting beds prepared in front of the walls. A black, vinyl-coated chain link fence extends from the curved walls in both directions for approximately 40 feet, where they meet the standard site post and wire perimeter fencing.

The **north entrance road** is asphalt-paved to the gates and then in compacted sand, a treatment that continues throughout the property. To the south of the road rises a small hill on which stands the Gatehouse, built ca.1910-1915 by the Sprunt family, and two associated outbuildings (see Buildings for descriptions). The Gatehouse is set in a small **ornamental garden** bounded by a ligustrum hedge, shaded with young live oaks, and planted with azaleas, camellias, and other shrubs and groundcovers. The establishment date of this garden is not known, but the camellia and azalea specimens likely date to around 1935-1940 and are likely related to the development of the Orton Nursery. Aerial photographs from 1938 and 1949 indicate that a walkway or driveway approached the house on axis with the front door, but this feature is not discernible in the landscape today. The broad open field to the east of the house was once an agricultural field, as depicted in historic aerials. This area is currently kept in mown turf.

The most outstanding landscape features associated with the area around the Gatehouse are the three large-caliper **specimen live oaks**, each at least three feet in diameter, two of which flank the view of the house from the entrance road, with the third located further east. These trees appear in the 1938 aerial as already quite large and mature trees and may date from the eighteenth century. A **live oak allée** formed of various sized trees creates a leafy tunnel that leads ot to the edge of the back rice fields. Most of these trees appear at a mature size in the 1938 photograph and likely date from the early twentieth century, while smaller specimens may have been planted during the garden renovations in around 1935-1940

The site of another building, called the Bonnie House Site (**31BW787**9**, see Archaeological Resources for full description), has been discovered between the two specimen live oaks that flank the Gatehouse front yard.[2] The functional relationship between this building and the Gatehouse is presently not known.

Directly across from the Bonnie House Site is the south end of the visible portion of the **trace of the old highway** that preceded Plantation Road in the nineteenth century. The trace is discernible in the landscape as a dirt track, which runs northward through Kendal to where it meets Plantation Road close to Lilliput Creek. It is not known exactly when Plantation Road was originally constructed, but it was prior to the installation of the north entrance gate, ca. 1910-1916.

The old highway trace crosses the remains of the antebellum boundary ditch that marked the property line between Orton and Kendal (**31BW787**16**, see Archaeological Resources for full description), The ditch once ran almost due east to Orton Creek, but today there are gaps where portions have been filled in for road crossings. Most of the ditch, however, remains distinct in the landscape.

From the end of the live oak allée, the north entrance road angles slightly to the northwest to continue onto the **north entrance causeway** that leads through the back rice fields. The causeway is lined with a **bald cypress allée**; the trunks of the trees frame intermittent views to the Orton mansion, beyond.

Orton Mansion and Grounds Landscape

The **Orton mansion** stands within its ornamental grounds at the crest of the northern end of Orton Ridge (see Buildings for full description). The mansion and grounds landscape begins at the eastern end of the causeway and comprises all of the uplands reaching from the Roger Moore Cemetery to Canal #1, including the gardens and manicured lawns associated with the mansion and the service area complex of greenhouses, sheds, barn, office, and parking areas.

From the end of the causeway, the road curves about forty-five degrees to the southeast then curves back again to due east. At the western base of the Orton Ridge, the entrance road passes a picturesque **bald cypress pond**. From this point, the road historically continued straight up the ridge slope to meet **Old Brunswick Town Road**, on axis with the Sundial Garden, which was designed by Robert Swann Sturtevant. This portion of the road and the Sundial Garden were removed in 2012. Another road, designed by Sturtevant in the 1930s to provide access to the nursery operation, is now also used to access the heart of the plantation. It will be referred to as the **nursery road**. At the point where the nursery road diverges from the north entrance road, another sand track, called the **service road**, extends around the western side of the mansion and its gardens, then passes the Roger Moore Cemetery, to end at Orton Creek.

Just before it reaches the Roger Moore Cemetery, the service road crosses over a canal that links a large, irregularly-shaped, **ornamental pond** to the west with a second ornamental pond, known today as "the **lagoon**." The lagoon appears as a canal in the survey of the Orton and Kendal plantations dated 1921, but is believed by some to survive possibly from the eighteenth century and once provided boat access through the marsh to the west end of the causeway. A few wood pilings that survive around the southern end of the lagoon were part of a bulkhead that existed as late as the 1960s and enclosed that end of the lagoon, if not its entire edge.

To the north of the intersection of the nursery road with Old Brunswick Town Road stands the Orton mansion and its surrounding gardens. The original access from the north entrance road to the parking area for the mansion occurred via a diagonal driveway that led to the southwest corner of the building, where the drive turned east to meet Old Brunswick Town Road. This drive and the parking area were removed in 2012 and the area reconfigured as the Camellia Court, a formal four-car parking court shaded with standard crape myrtles and surrounded by dwarf white camellias. From the point where the original entrance road met Old Brunswick Town Road, the old road, which was originally aligned with the south end of the mansion, was realigned slightly to meet the parking court. A ten-foot-by-ten-foot concrete pavilion was constructed in 2012 on the east side of the Camellia Court as an entrance feature leading to the front of the mansion. The white-painted pavilion has an arched doorway opening on both its east and west sides and an arched window opening on both its north and south sides. Italianate dentils ornament its eaves and its slate-clad hipped roof is capped with a ball finial. Entrance to the rear of the mansion is through a metal gate mounted on two large white-painted columns, installed in 2012 on the north end of Camellia Court.

Five new garden areas were established around the Orton mansion in 2012, including the back entrance garden that extends from the 2012 gate to the west portico of the 2012 addition; another garden featuring a small oval fountain fed by a hand pump and set in paving, located at the southwest corner of the mansion; the Breakfast Terrace, with its false perspective to a spray fountain, located off of the dining room at the south end of the building; the Sunset Terrace, with its boxwood hedges and decorative concrete well head, located at the northwest corner of the mansion; and the parterre gardens that flank its east portico. Nearby, small walkways connect these gardens to the larger landscape.

A brick well head is located at the northeast corner of the Orton mansion along the brick sidewalk leading to the Hydrangea Walk into the gardens. The well head was constructed in 2012 atop an old well that had been discovered when a camellia was transplanted from the area. The well is part of an eighteenth-through-nineteenth-century domestic archaeological site related to two structures that were located there as early as 1878 (**31BW787**1,** see Archaeological Resources for full description). The new well head was constructed out of brick taken from the Kendal Plantation house site.

While the area immediately around the Orton mansion was redeveloped in 2012, many of the original garden features from the period of significance still survive in the landscape, including the original **garden terraces**. The Orton mansion was built at the highest point along Orton Ridge, atop a terrace that was likely graded flat to accommodate the building and front yard. Cascading to the east from the house level are two more earthen terraces, which were constructed around 1916, during the Sprunt era, possibly from earth removed from the intersection of the nursery road with Old Brunswick Town Road. These terraces extend from the area of the lagoon bridge to just south of the chapel. While slightly weather-worn, the terraces are distinguishable in the landscape.

The landscape on the east side of the Orton mansion comprises the long, broad, open lawn that extends from a point just south of Luola's Chapel, to the bottom of the garden, around one thousand feet to the north. The lawn is lined on both sides with live oaks and ornamental shrubs. To the south of the mansion, in an area Sturtevant called the **Long Green**, the remaining ornamental display gardens of the Orton Nursery were removed in 2012 and replaced by lawn. The removed displays included the Sundial Garden, which was located on axis with the section of the old entrance road that ended at Old Brunswick Town Road. The Sundial Garden, while consistently in the same location since it was created, had been variously paved in sand, concrete, and brick throughout its tenure at Orton. It appears that the sundial that formed the centerpiece of the garden was relocated to the Scroll Garden in the mid-twentieth century, where it remains today.

Another feature found within the display gardens was a mounded garden bed that had its beginnings in the 1910s as a three-tiered, stone-edged, garden bed and display feature that was topped with an ornamental cast iron planter. Later in the history of the garden, the planter was removed and the featured remodeled as a mound on which azaleas were displayed. This feature was removed in 2012.

Numerous paths and walkways cross through the Orton mansion gardens and grounds. These include the **long walkway**, that extends from the south end of the Long Green, where it functions as the edge of the lawn, past the mansion's east portico, and through the gardens, becoming the **Hydrangea Walk** as it extends to the north.. Perpendicular to this path is the **axial walkway** that leads from the east portico to the garden terrace stairway. Although the paving materials have been replaced over time, these two walkways survive in their alignment from around 1910, when they were laid out as features of Luola Sprunt's formal garden. A symmetrical semi-circular brick path was added in 2012 to define the east lawn. Circular limestone pads mark the nodes where the semi-circular path meets the long walkway and a square limestone pad where it meets the axial walkway.

The axial walkway leads to the head of a three-tiered concrete **terrace stairway** that provides access from the house terrace to the causeway. This stairway is located on the central axis of the mansion grounds, which runs from the front door of the Orton mansion, down the stairs, and along the front causeway to the Cape Fear River. It is composed of three flights of stairs, the first leading from the house terrace to the middle terrace. A second flight leads from this level to a lower earthen terrace that is now difficult to distinguish in the landscape. From here, the third flight leads down to the level of the Scroll Garden site. At the top of this flight of steps are **concrete planter bases** with rebar protruding through the center and out of the top of the base. Historically, there were decorative urns attached to the bases and planted with ornamental shrubs and a concrete platform at the second terrace on which the family arranged wood garden benches. A walkway led from the concrete platform to an overlook to the north, which later became the north belvedere. The concrete was removed from the platform in 2012 and it is now paved in sand and gravel.

The **site of the Scroll Garden** is at the bottom of the concrete stairway on the causeway level. The Scroll Garden was a parterre of evergreen and flowering shrubs meant to be viewed primarily from the second terrace level. While the plant material did not survive a recent hurricane and subsequent inundation of salt water, the scroll pattern of the planting beds is still discernible in the landscape. Various planting schemes in that area included a ca.1910 formal linear planting of ornamental trees and hedges that appears to have extended from the Orton wharf and along the causeway to the terrace stairway. A second scheme, likely dating from around 1935-1940, extended out along the front causeway to just past the lagoon. The end of this garden was formed with a semicircle of shrubs around a sundial at its center, forming the focal point of the garden. It is possible that the pedestal and sundial were relocated at that time from the Sundial Garden to this level. The concrete or cast stone base of the sundial is extant. Other structures were associated with the Scroll Garden, including a white-painted wood fence that was installed at the south end of the lagoon around 1960. The fence, in Colonial Revival style, sported panels of Chinese Chippendale patterns and had a gate at the center. In addition, this end of the lagoon is lined with posts that appear to have been a part of a wood bulkhead and the fence may have been mounted on or close to the bulkhead structure. The current owner plans to remodel the Scroll Garden.

Extending at a northwest diagonal to the long walkway in front of the Orton mansion is the **path to the White Garden**, which survives from the Sturtevant plan and was constructed around 1935-1940. The **White Garden**, at around fifty feet in diameter, is comprised of an enclosure of azaleas with entrance and exit openings. Inside this enclosure is a circular brick walk around three feet wide that bounds a planting bed. At the center stands an ornamental fountain, around sixteen feet wide, comprised of an approximately eighteen-inch-deep concrete bowl, painted pool-blue. At the center of the fountain, set on a concrete base, is a marble sculpture created by nineteenth-century Italian artist, Fernando Andreini, entitled "Spring Star." Andreini was born in Florence and established himself as a sculptor after studying with Ulysse Cambo. The sculpture belongs to a series Andreini executed during the last quarter of the nineteenth century focusing on nudes or partially clothed female figures. He died in 1922 but his sculptures continue to appear in the catalogs of major auction houses. The sculpture appears to be in good condition. The White Garden was indicated conceptually on Sturtevant's plan simply as a circular space, so it may have been designed by the Sprunts. The statue was installed in 1953 but it is not known if it replaced another fountain feature or if the fountain was constructed at that time to accommodate the statue. The fountain is not in operation.

A short sand path leads northwest from the White Garden to the Sun Garden. The Sun Garden, at around fifty feet in diameter, comprises a circle of pink and white crape myrtles enclosing a second circle of boxwood. A sand pathway encircles the central feature, which is a brick-edged mound that may have been used to display flowering plants. The Sun Garden was not indicated on the Sturtevant plan and appears to have been installed after the period of significance because of the age of the plant material.

Other garden paths meet the Sun Garden and White Garden paths, as well as the Hydrangea Walk, and lead around and through the plantings that encompass these garden features. A **perimeter path**, paved in sand, defines the edge of the gardens, leading from the semi-circular path in the front lawn, around the eastern edge, curving around the north end of the front lawn, and returning to meet the Hydrangea Walk. This feature survives from the Sturtevant plan and has been recently restored with steel edging and new sand.

A **secondary path**, also surviving from the period of significance, leads from the middle garden terrace to the north belvedere, then onward to meet up again with the perimeter path. The aerial photograph from 1949 shows this path ending at what may have been a constructed overlook, the function of which appears to have been later replaced with the belvedere. It is also possible that a rustic wood overlook built around a tree, which is depicted in photographs from the mid-twentieth century, may have been in this location.

From the Sun Garden, one has a view across the #1 Rice Field. A path that extends from the path that runs between the White Garden and the Sun Garden leads to the **Chinese Bridge**, a wood decking arranged in a zig-zag pattern, which crosses the large ornamental pond that lies to the east of the #1 Rice Field. The bridge was indicated in a similar configuration in the unimplemented Gillette garden plan from 1955, so it is possible that it was constructed around that time. It is in poor condition and the owner intends to replace it. The bridge connects to the service road as it leads to the north, passing a **wood gazebo**. Historic photographs indicate that the gazebo survives from the period of significance.

The Roger Moore Cemetery (**32BW787**2**, see Archaeological Resources for full description), contains the graves of Roger Moore, his wives, and other members of the family. The cemetery is shaded by several **specimen live oaks** that frame **sweeping views of the rice fields** to the east from the cemetery. Just south of the cemetery is another archaeological site (**31BW787**3,** see Archaeological Resources for full description), but the remains are not conclusive enough to merit further investigation.

The service road loops back around from the cemetery to meet itself north of the culvert. A dirt track extends from the loop to provide access to the perimeter of the #1 Rice Field, returning eventually to meet the entrance road causeway. A second dirt track extends from the area of the cemetery, around the end of the lagoon to return south to meet the central plantation causeway at the Scroll Garden site. This dirt track once served as a path through a heavily planted garden along the eastern edge of the lagoon.

The sweeping **views of the tidal flats** landscape from the Roger Moore Cemetery is only one of many dramatic views available within the property. The focus of most of these views is on the expansive rice fields as they extend beyond the entrance causeway, to the west, and stretch toward the Cape Fear River, to the east. The **iconic view to the rice fields and the Cape Fear River** beyond from the east elevation of the house has been a constant feature of the plantation over the centuries, as has the view of the house from the river. There are visual connections to both the front and back rice fields from various areas around the house and gardens that have existed since at least the 1820s when the rice fields were established. Some areas around the Orton mansion are maintained in mown grass, which opens up views to both natural and ornamental features. Roadways lined with trees and garden pathways lined with ornamental shrubs provide focused, axial views of central features of the landscape.

Two wood-frame belvederes extend the advantage of the house terrace level into the landscape for spectacular views of the rice fields and the river. The two structures are located to the north and south of the main axis of the Orton mansion front garden. The **north belvedere** is located where an overlook had been established, around 1910, within the formal garden. It is angled to the southeast. The **south belvedere** is located off of the second level of the garden terrace, in line with the south end of the Orton mansion, and is also angled to the southeast. A short concrete stairway provides direct access from the house terrace to the south belvedere. Constructed on wood columns with cross braces, similar to ocean piers, the belvederes form elevated walkways that afford magnificent views into the surrounding landscape extending to the Cape Fear River. The decking and Chinese Chippendale railings are of wood, and the railings are painted white. These structures were designed in 1958 by Nathalia Williams, an architect, and Morley Jeffers Williams, a landscape architect, both from New Bern, North Carolina, and best known for their work at Tyron Palace and Colonial Williamsburg. It appears that they were constructed shortly thereafter, as they begin to appear in photographs dating to the 1960s. They are currently in fair to poor condition and the owner plans to reconstruct them both.

The path to the north belvedere curves around to meet the perimeter path, which follows along the edge of the upper terrace, northward. From this path, a shorter path exits to the east to provide access to a stairway that leads to the lagoon bridge. The **brick stairway**, which is constructed of mortared units, is parallel to the main terrace stairway and located near the north belvedere. The stairway ends at a landing from which the **lagoon bridge** extends. This arching wood bridge provides a pedestrian crossing over the lagoon at around its midpoint. Its decking and Chinese Chippendale railings are wood and the railings are painted white. It was designed in 1959, also by Nathalia and Morley J. Williams, and appears in several mid-twentieth-century postcards with the belvederes, so it is likely they were built at the same time. It appears to have replaced an older wood bridge that is shown in historic photographs in the same location.

Most of the cultural vegetation in this area is associated with the aesthetic pursuits of plantation owners through the centuries. Trees include live oaks arranged in allées and as specimens, some of which may be over one hundred years old to three hundred years old, as well as other oak species. A **remnant row of Eastern red cedar** that once edged the eastern end of the entrance drive remains intact, as do the live oaks that line Old Brunswick Town Road. Ornamental shrubs, such as **camellias and azaleas,** survive from the nursery's demonstration gardens within the area of the Orton mansion and gardens. Garden plants grown for aesthetic purposes are found in and around the Hydrangea Walk, the

White Garden, and the Sun Garden, including gardenia, camellia, azalea, ligustrum, liriope, cast iron plant, boxwood, crape myrtle, and French hydrangea, some of which were planted during the period of significance.

Utility components have been worked into the ornamental landscape around the house, including a septic field that is laid out under the lawn terrace to the west of the Sunset Terrace, and above-ground HVAC units located downhill from Camellia Court.

Moving south from the house along Old Brunswick Town Road is **Luola's Chapel,** which was built in 1915 to honor Luola Sprunt (see Buildings for full description). Prior to the removal of the driveway to the house and the extension of the entrance road to Old Brunswick Town Road, the area around the chapel and south to the nursery road comprised a landscape all on its own, known by one source as "Luola's Arboretum."[3] To the east of the chapel, a formal, symmetrical entrance garden was laid out in 1916, with clipped hedges bounding a mix of evergreen shrubs, such as camellia and cedar. These beds mirrored each other on each side of the concrete center walk that led from the door of the chapel to Old Brunswick Town Road. The walkway and garden were remodeled in 2012 based on a design that echoes the original somewhat in that it is symmetrical and the gardens are bounded in evergreen shrubs, but the center is of a new design implemented in boxwood and gravel. The concrete of the center walkway was replaced with brick in a herringbone pattern and the landing at the base of the chapel porch is a new design made from orchard stone.

To the south of the chapel are the **remnants of the camphor grove** that was part of the garden plan proposed by Sturtevant in 1935. Stumps of old camphor trees that were lost to weather are beginning to re-sprout and the area is being partially cleared as the owner contemplates a new design. Until it was removed in early 2013, set within this grove was the Dinky House, a worker's cottage that was erected ca.1945-1948. Near the Dinky House were two lavatories that were constructed, likely around 1935-1940, for use by the public visiting the Orton Nursery and touring the grounds. These were also removed in early 2013.

Within the same area and just south of the Dinky House site once stood the Caretaker's House and its garage. These structures were built in 2004 to replace an older dwelling and outbuildings on that site. The Caretaker's House (see Buildings for full description) was moved in 2013 to a location across the nursery road, closer to the greenhouses, and the garage was demolished. The older dwelling that the Caretaker's House replaced would have likely functioned as the nursery manager's house. A historic aerial photograph from around 1930 depicts the house with a formal garden to its south side, bounded by an evergreen hedge and featuring a central walk flanked by five pairs of evergreen shrubs, and which may have functioned as a nursery display garden. A variety of evergreens formed a foundation planting around the house. A driveway led to its rear and to two outbuildings behind it. A crop field lay to the west beyond the house and behind Luola's Chapel, and may have been used to grow nursery plants. The camphor grove is visible in the photograph between the manager's house and the chapel.

The nursery road curves between this landscape area and the service area to the south, forming a Y intersection at Old Brunswick Town Road. Flanking the Y are two large **live oaks growing on earthen mounds**. It is thought that the mounds were created when the surrounding area was excavated for fill to form the garden terraces in the 1910s, so it is likely that the live oaks survive from before that period.

To the south of this intersection is the service area, containing the Caretaker's House, plantation office, two greenhouses, one attached to a head-house. the Power House/Barn, and a maintenance shed (see Buildings for full descriptions). Within the service area is the concrete block **greenhouse foundation** related to the Orton Nursery. It was later filled with soil to create a planter and currently holds several large camellias, probably survivors of the commercial nursery operation once located on this site.

A dirt track, called the **Low Road** by Sturtevant, descends from Old Brunswick Town Road close to the Y intersection down the east slope of the house terrace to the rice field level. This area was used for parking during Orton's high visitation periods in the twentieth century. This area has grown over in turf, but the flat area used for parking is still discernible in the landscape.

To the west of the cluster of buildings of the service area, situated on a small hill overlooking the Back Rice Fields, is the Orton Graveyard (**31BW548**,** see Archaeological Resources for full description), the traditional burial ground for Orton's African American servants in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Forty marked graves have been identified with the earliest occurring in 1876 and the most recent in 1977; there are seven unmarked graves. Most of the graves are found in four rows oriented north-northeast to south-southwest. At least twelve of the individuals buried there were born as slaves.

The site is wooded with secondary growth and some evergreen shrubs, such as American holly and Easter red cedar, which may have been planted as memorials.

Working Plantation Landscape

From the service area, Old Brunswick Town Road extends southward along its historic alignment atop Orton Ridge and through the working plantation landscape. The working plantation landscape is characterized by a variety of open, wooded, or agricultural spaces bisected by historic roads lined with live oaks. It contains the historic rice fields, as well as residential and industrial structures and sites related to the historic active operation of the agricultural and industrial uses of the plantation. It is organized along Old Brunswick Town Road, which ends at the south entrance gate on State Road 1533, or **Phillips Road**. Old Brunswick Town Road once turned to the southeast at this point, towards the old town, but upon establishment of the Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson State Historic Site, the connection was realigned. Phillips Road follows the southern perimeter of the property to the state historic site to the east and westward where it intersects with the end of Plantation Road at the north gate of Sunny Point. Located along Old Brunswick Town Road, historically, have been dwellings for slaves and other workers, farm structures, agricultural fields, rice mills, sawmills--all the necessary features for the profitable production of a thriving plantation economy.

The other historic road in this area was historically called the **Sand Dam Pond Road**. This dirt track runs west from Old Brunswick Town Road to Plantation Road. It intersects Old Brunswick Town Road in the area of the African American settlement sites (**31BW787**4, 31BW787**5, 31BW787**6, 31BW787**7, 31BW787**12,** and **31BW787**13,** see Archaeological Resources for full description), identified in the archaeological survey of Orton. The **Sand Dam Pond** was last depicted in the 1939 survey of Orton and Kendal and exists today as a bald cypress wetland. The 1939 survey shows a pipeline extending between the pond and the service area, so the Sand Dam Pond may have been a water source for the plantation, or possible the nursery operation.

The low, flat expanse of the 320 acres of rice fields extends to the east and west of Orton Ridge and includes the **complex of rice fields, canals, dikes, roads, dams, ditches, and control structures**. The layout survives from the period of significance and includes five named fields: Front North Rice Field, which lies to the east of the Orton mansion and north of the east causeway; Front South Rice Field, which lies south of the east causeway; #1 Field, which lies just to the west of the Orton mansion and gardens; #9 Field, which lies west of the #1 Field and north of the entrance causeway; and Back Rice Field, which lies to the west of the mansion and south of the entrance causeway. The fields are irrigated by a complex of ditches comprising larger rim, or "feeder" or "facing," ditches that supply most of the fresh water to the smaller "quarter" ditches. The quarter ditches are fifty-five feet apart and distribute the water in a uniform, non-erosive, pattern through the interiors of the fields.[4]

The fresh water that feeds the rice fields is supplied from Orton Pond, which is situated on the west side of Plantation Road on land still held by the Sprunt family. Through a reciprocal easement agreement, the owner of Orton Plantation has the right to draw water from Orton Pond for the cultivation of crops in the rice fields, and in return, has agreed to maintain the structural integrity and good condition of the Orton Pond dam and its outfall. As a result of this agreement, the owner has been able to install a water release structure on the eastern edge of the pond, a mechanical device that controls the amount of water leaving the pond to feed the rice fields. The boundary of the nominated property jogs to the west in the vicinity of Orton Pond to include the dam, the water release structure, and the pond outfall.

The water management system for the rice fields fed by this water supply survives from the period of significance, having been continuously maintained by a succession of owners, although individual components of the system have been repaired and replaced over the years with more modern materials. The original design, including the pattern of dikes, rice trunks, irrigation canals, and interior irrigation ditches remains essentially intact. The existing water control system from Orton Pond to the outlying rice fields features numerous water control structures in the form of managed spillways gates, gate valves, culvert pipes with and without flap gates, and wooden rice trunks.

Along their eastern edge, the front rice fields are separated from the Cape Fear River by a 1.62-mile-long narrow earthen dike, or revetment. Initially constructed over 250 years ago, the revetment originally stood well inland of the Cape Fear River shoreline. An expansive and stable *Spartina alterniflora* marsh grass flat lay between the dike and the open water of the river, protecting the structure from wave action. This marsh fringe has been identified in aerial photography as recently as 1956, when it measured from 100 to 200 feet wide. Since that time, due to increased wave action from larger ships, this protective marsh border has become unstable, with large sections of the vegetation and its root mat substrate being detached. The affected lengths of the revetment are now directly exposed to the river's natural hydraulic forces and

increased wave action coming from ships in the shipping channel that lies 450 feet away. Efforts to protect and repair the revetment over the past thirty years include the placement of concrete debris rip-rap as armor, and the construction of lengths of retaining walls made variously of wood, steel, and concrete. These structures have since proved to be inadequate to meet the challenge of increasing erosion along the river front.

Repair and replacement of thirteen of the water control structures was requested in a 2012 application to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.[5] The permitted work includes repairs to eroded portions of the Front Rice Field revetment; an increase in its overall elevation; enhancement and re-vegetation, with grass, of its interior slope; and reconstruction and stabilization of its seaward face. Improvements also include the installation of metal sheet pile panels within the core of the revetment to give it greater strength and stabilization of the seaward face with rip-rap or gabion matting. Additional work includes repair and reinforcement of rice field dikes beyond the revetment throughout the rest of the front rice fields, and the #1 and #9 Fields, including erosion repair, contouring of dike crests, and installation of sheet pile with backfill as necessary. Throughout the system, water control structures will be either repaired or replaced *in situ* in thirteen locations. Most of the water control structures are bounded by wooden bulkheads and their repair or replacement will require partial or complete dismantling and reconstruction. Canal and quarter ditch systems will be maintained and re-established through excavation of material from existing canals and ditches. Some existing ditches may be filled and some new ditches constructed, depending on the requirements for water distribution. Through an agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as part of permit mitigation conditions and requirements, sections of the Back Rice Field and #9 Field will be retained as undisturbed wetland.

Three sloughs, or canals, connect the Back Rice Field with the front fields, named in this report as **Canal #1**, **Canal #2**, and the **Orton Pond Outfall**. Canal #1 and Canal #2, which was historically known as the Cow Bridge Branch, pass under Old Brunswick Town Road through culverts. The Orton Pond Outfall is crossed via a concrete bridge that replaced an older concrete bridge around 2011. Canal #1 divides the Orton mansion landscape from the working plantation landscape.

Just south of Canal #1 is a cluster of features, including a tennis court constructed in 2012 (see Structures for full description). Next to it, a building constructed between 1990 and 1994 as a stable (see Buildings for full description), is currently being used to house landscape equipment. The owner plans to keep this building and use it as a tennis cabana. Across the road stands a large metal shed being used to shelter large equipment. The owner plans to relocate the shed to an area across State Road 133 from the property.

On the hilltop above the tennis court and stable is **Elijah's House**, a late nineteenth-century wood-frame dwelling in only fair, but stabilized, condition (see Buildings for full description). Elijah's House is the only remaining of two dwellings that stood on the hilltop prior to 2012. That year, the second was lost to fire. Two buildings appear in these locations on coastal surveys from 1878 and 1888, but a survey plat created in 1939 shows only Elijah's House. Because of their locations on the hilltop, their placement halfway between the Orton mansion and the worker's settlement to the south, and their relative isolation, Elijah's House and the other dwelling shown in 1888 were likely managers or overseer's residences. The area around Elijah's house is identified as archaeological site **31BW787**7** (see Archaeological Resources for full description).

Further to the south, the road crosses over Canal #2 and enters the traditional working heart of the plantation. It was in this area that most of the worker's dwellings were located, as well as the mills, storage buildings, and docks for product and supply loading and unloading. Just south of the canal, Sand Dam Pond Road extends from Old Brunswick Town Road to the west to meet Plantation Road.

Today, little above-ground evidence remains of the once-lively complex of dwellings and work places, but several archaeological sites have been identified in this area and are evidence of nineteenth- and twentieth-century domestic dwellings. There is also evidence that points to possible extension of the period of significance into the late antebellum period. The coastal maps from the 1870s and 1880s are detailed enough that one can see fence lines enclosing yards around these houses, as well as patterns and textures that indicate vegetable gardens and agricultural fields. It has been recommended that this area be protected for its ability to provide more information about the lifeways of African Americans living on the plantation. Additional investigation is recommended due to the potential for recovery of data associated with the African American church, as well as slave dwellings.

On the northeastern corner of 31BW787**12 lies site **31BW787**8**, which contains the remains of a twentieth-century structure identified as having been built by the North Carolina Wildlife Department for the storage of grain and equipment

when they were managing the rice impoundments for wildlife in the 1950s (see Archaeological Resources for full description).

To the south of these sites, Old Brunswick Town Road crosses over the Orton Pond Outfall on a one-lane bridge. The bridge is constructed of poured concrete and has a low curb but no safety rails. It was constructed around 2011-2012 to accommodate heavy equipment and replaced an older concrete bridge.

There are two archaeological sites in this area, one on each side of the Orton Pond Outfall. The first, **31BW787**14** (see Archaeological Resources for full description), contains the remains of an antebellum mill and possibly a residence associated with the mill. The second site, **31BW787**15** (see Archaeological Resources for full description), contains the remains of what is likely an antebellum structure, possibly used for threshing or other agricultural activity.

South of the Orton Pond Outfall, the road extends past the Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson State Historic Site, which is enclosed by a security fence. Although the state historic site was once part of Orton Plantation, views into the site from Old Brunswick Town Road are now obscured by secondary growth vegetation along the property boundary. The boundary was established in 1952, when James Lawrence Sprunt and his sons donated the 114.5 acres of Orton Plantation that contained the site of historic Brunswick Town to the State of North Carolina.

To the west of the road is the **South Field**, a large agricultural field currently planted in corn. This cleared area is first documented in the 1864 Gilmer Civil War map and continues to appear as an open landscape free of trees in late nineteenth-century coastal charts. It is shown in Sturtevant's 1937 master plan for Orton and labeled South Field therein. An annotated aerial photograph taken in 1949 indicates the field as twenty-one acres in size. In the photo, two ovoid patterns within the field appear to represent a perimeter road or possibly another use, such as a training track. In the same photograph, another cleared area is visible across the road, identified today as the site of historic Russellborough, part of the Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson State Historic Site. Since 1949, the South Field has been enlarged, extending further to the south. Today, in addition to the corn crop, it contains tall poles with connecting lines that have been erected to provide roosting spots for birds.

A dirt track runs around the field and then extends to the west to meet Plantation Road close to its intersection with Phillips Road. Before this point, the dirt track passes another, smaller agricultural field, called the **West Field**, also planted in corn. This field is not indicated in Sturtevant's 1937 master plan, but does appear in the 1949 aerial as five acres in size.

Old Brunswick Town Road ends at its intersection with Phillips Road at the **south entrance gate**, which matches the north entrance gate (see Structures for full description). The property extends past Phillips Road, incorporating a portion of Liberty Pond, which is named in the 1921 survey of Orton. It is possible that some remains of Civil War breastworks identified in that survey between Liberty Pond and Sampson Pond, to the west, are extant in the landscape. Phillips Road extends from Plantation Road to provide access to the state historic site. It appears as early as the late nineteenth century in coastal surveys.

The property boundary is defined by a post and wire fence, set with a handful of black-painted metal gates with two arms mounted on metal posts. The gates are secured with a chain and padlock system and small regulatory signs are posted on the fence posts indicating private property.

Excluded from the boundary is Drew Cemetery, which was established in the 1950s to accommodate the remains of persons buried in an older cemetery that was relocated when Sunny Point was established. Adjacent to the cemetery, but within the boundary, are two communications towers established within an easement. These towers are slated for removal in 2013 and the easement for release.

Archaeological Resources

Two archaeological investigations have taken place within the boundaries of the Orton Plantation Boundary Increase and Additional Documentation, one landside and the other along the edge and within the waters of the Cape Fear River.[6,7] During each investigation, resources were found that support the eligibility of the property for National Register listing under Criterion D, that is, likely able to provide information supporting the significance of the story of Orton and thus, worthy of protection.

From 2011 to 2012, the Chicora Foundation undertook reconnaissance-level archaeological investigations within the historic core of Orton.[8] Most of the sites located during these surveys represent nineteenth-century settlements that are documented on historic maps and charts showing Orton. Many are post-bellum settlements of African Americans and two contain antebellum artifacts. A few artifacts also pointed to Native American occupation. The contributing resources are identified in the discussion below.

Landside Archaeological Resources

Contributing Resources

31BW548 (Orton Graveyard)**. The Orton Graveyard, an African American burial ground, was identified as a tenant burial ground in 1980 during a survey of disused cemeteries in Brunswick County.[9] The cemetery is located on the western edge of a ridge above the back rice field. The topography of the cemetery is undulating and slopes towards the rice field. It is vegetated in secondary growth hardwood saplings underlain by dense scrub vegetation.

A second survey, undertaken in 2012 by Dr. Michael Trinkley of the Chicora Foundation, located four rows of burials oriented north-northeast to south-southwest, following the edge of the rice field.[10] Many graves were also oriented west-northwest by east-southeast. Some were defined by sunken depressions and others were flush with the surrounding grade. Thirty-seven graves were marked, although only thirty-two of these were legible. Trinkley posited that thirty-seven graves was a small number for an operation as large as Orton's and suggests that there are likely many other graves that the ground-penetrating radar did not identify in the cemetery, or that there is another cemetery associated with the plantation.

The earliest documented grave at the Orton Graveyard is that of Schuyler Hooper, who died in 1876. The most recent marked grave is that of Maggie Delts Moore, who was buried in 1977. At least twelve of the individuals in marked graves were born as slaves, including Mary Ann Brown (b. 1818), Amy Davis (b. 1842), and Eli Davis (b. 1852). Nineteen surnames are present, although eleven of these occur only once. The most common surnames are McClammy (seven occurrences) and Delt or Delts (five occurrences). An unusual quality of the cemetery is the abundance of markers – many of them commercial marble. Six stones were re-set in the field so that inscriptions could be read.

31BW7871 (eighteenth- and nineteenth-century domestic site).** This site, measuring 200 by 150 feet, is located immediately north of the Orton mansion and on the edge of the terrace that overlooks the rice fields to the east. It comprises a scatter of historic artifacts that have been disturbed by garden creation in the early to mid-twentieth century and additional landscape work in 2011–2012. The artifacts may represent a kitchen, servant's quarters, or an overseer's house. The site also features a brick well, which is located in the east yard of the main house.

31BW7872 (Roger Moore Cemetery).** The Roger Moore Cemetery is located on the high ground overlooking Orton Creek to the north and rice fields to the east. This small site, at only fifty feet by fifty feet, rests at the northern edge of the designed landscape of Orton and is shaded by a cluster of live oak.

Contained within the cemetery are one gabled brick vault and three domed vaults with end pediments, as well as three brick box tombs with marble ledgers, one marble box with a marble ledger, and one head and footstone. These features, surveyed in 2012 by Michael Trinkley of the Chicora Foundation, form three lines oriented north-northwest by south-southeast, with each individual tomb or grave oriented west-northwest by east-northeast.[11] As Trinkley describes it,

> [t]he largest, gabled vault by tradition is ascribed to Roger Moore, with the smaller surrounding vaults assigned to wives and other family members. If the gable vault is that of Roger Moore there would have been ample room in it for his wives. It is more likely that the surrounding tombs are other family members, although since [*sic*] none have any sort of marble plaque (except for a very late addition to the one thought to be Roger Moore). The three smaller brick tombs have entrance areas where often a marble ledger is attached, but none are present here.[12]

Trinkley reported that most of the brickwork in the cemetery exhibits multiple repair episodes using hard Portland cement mortar. Much of the original stucco, originally present on all of the vaults, is missing, although bits of the underlying scratch coat are still present. The repairs appear to have been made in the 1940s. Despite the negative effects of these repairs, the condition of the cemetery has greatly improved since reports from 1917 described the collapsed roof of the tomb.[13]

31BW7874, 31BW787**5, 31BW787**6, 31BW787**7, 31BW787**12, and 31BW787**13 (nineteenth- and twentieth-century domestic sites).** These six sites contain resources identified by the Chicora Foundation in 2012.[14] They are likely associated with a small African American settlement that was located south of the Orton mansion along Old Brunswick Town Road and just north of the Orton Pond outfall. Historic maps and other documents reveal the presence of multiple small dwellings, many of which appear to have had small gardens or livestock yards.

Site 31BW787**4 consists of a brick mound measuring about ten feet in diameter and two feet in height that is likely the remains of a chimney. Found artifacts include ceramics, a porcelain button, and window glass, all suggesting a nineteenth-century dwelling. Site 31BW787**5 is similar, consisting of the remains of a fireplace and other rubble, as well as ceramics that suggest another nineteenth-century dwelling. Site 31BW787**6 is similar, but contains artifacts that may date it to before the Civil War. Site 31BW787**7, another domestic site, still contains a wood frame structure dating to the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. Shovel testing around the building site uncovered artifacts that may date to before the Civil War. Sites 31BW787**12 and Site 31BW787**13 are also late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century domestic sites. Until an accidental fire in 2011, Site 31BW787**12 contained a wood frame house. Shovel testing close by revealed artifacts that may date to before the Civil War. Site 31BW787**13 also contains the remains of domestic materials and may be related to use of Sites 31BW787**5 and 31BW787**6.

These sites are important for their potential to yield information about the lives of colonial or antebellum slaves at Orton and on the coast of North Carolina, as well as the tenant farmers who succeeded them.

31BW7879 (Bonnie House site).** This is the site of a building called the "Bonnie House," which was located between the two specimen live oaks that flank the Gatehouse front yard.[15] The Bonnie House is thought to have been constructed in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century and likely burned down or was removed prior to 1938, as it does not appear in the aerial photograph from that year. It appears that another house was constructed at that site after 1949, but this house burned down in 2007. The functional relationship between the Bonnie House and the Gatehouse is presently not known.

31BW78714 (eighteenth- to nineteenth-century domestic or industrial site).** This site, at 100 by 100 feet, comprises the remains of a structure located within and along the bank of the Orton Pond Outfall. The remains, consisting of wood planking used to shore up the banks of the canal, support timbers, metal pipes, and a stock of brick, may represent a structure related to the mill that was once on the site.

31BW78715 (nineteenth-century domestic or industrial site).** This site consists of a brick column that may have been either a corner or a pier that supported a structure related to Orton's antebellum rice mill. Its close proximity to the canal suggests that it may have been a threshing barn.

31BW78716 (Antebellum drainage ditch and property boundary).** This site consists of a drainage ditch that also marked the property boundary between Kendal to the north and Orton. The ditch once ran almost due east to Orton Creek, but today there are gaps where portions have been filled in for road crossings. Most of the ditch, however, remains distinct in the landscape.

Noncontributing Resources

31BW7873 (Prehistoric and historic remains).** This site was surveyed by the Chicora Foundation in 2012. It consists of a scatter of prehistoric and historic remains in an area measuring 50 x 75 feet on a terrace edge south of the Roger Moore Cemetery. The prehistoric remains are lightly scattered and confined to an area around 30 x 70 feet. They represent a limited activated site that has been impacted by road construction and gardening activities. Historic remains comprise a scattering of ceramics and glass dating to around 1853 and a pile of coal slag. None of these remains exhibit good integrity, nor are they likely to address significant research questions. No addition investigation is recommended.

31BW7878 (Twentieth-century structural remains).** This site was surveyed by the Chicora Foundation in 2012. It consists of a concrete pad measuring 18 x 39 feet and oriented parallel with the rice fields, about 100 feet to the west. A small structure located on the north end of the pad burned around 2012 when a nearby controlled burn got out of control. Oral history identifies the structure as having been built by the North Carolina Wildlife Department for the storage of grain and equipment when they were managing the rice impoundments for wildlife in the 1950s. The only artifacts found around the pad likely related to the 1950s building. It is not considered a contributing site and no further archaeological investigations are recommended.

31BW78710 (Low incidence of prehistoric and historic remains).** This site was surveyed by the Chicora Foundation in 2012. It is located on an upland flat overlooking rice fields to the east and is bisected by a recently-created logging road. Only two artifacts were discovered at this site. It appears unlikely that this site can make significant contributions to the research.

31BW78711 (Low incidence of prehistoric remains).** This site was surveyed by the Chicora Foundation in 2012. This 50 x 50 foot site is located on a ridge overlooking rice fields to the east. A pedestrian survey was conducted and encountered two prehistoric stone flakes. Researchers concluded that the site appears to be of limited or specialized use and is unlikely to make significant research contributions.

Underwater and Shoreline Archeological Resources

In 2012, Tidewater Atlantic Research, Inc. (TAR) conducted a magnetometer and sidescan sonar survey of the Orton waterfront from the mouth of Orton Creek to the mouth of the Orton Pond Outfall.[16] It was followed by an on-ground shoreline survey to further investigate the waterfront. The goal of the survey was to identify potentially significant cultural resources that should be avoided during dike restoration activities. These surveys resulted in the identification of 150 objects; 32 contributing and 118 noncontributing (refer Appendix A). The magnetometer and sidescan sonar surveys resulted in the identification of 112 magnetic anomalies and 27 sonar objects. Twenty-two of the magnetic anomalies are contributing resources and 90 are noncontributing. Eight of the sonar objects are contributing resources and 19 are noncontributing. The contributing magnetic anomalies and sonar objects were identified within 10 cultural resource buffer zones which should be avoided during any dike restoration activity. The shoreline survey identified 11 objects. Two of these are contributing resources and nine are noncontributing.

Contributing Resources
Underwater and shoreline investigations identified 32 contributing objects. Twenty-two potentially significant objects are magnetic anomalies, eight are sonar targets, and two are objects located along the shoreline. These objects include: breakwater pilings, dock pilings, ballast piles, and features associated with Orton Point Light.

Twenty-two magnetic anomalies were individually or in clusters were determined to have signature characteristics suggestive of potentially significant submerged cultural resources. The potentially significant submerged cultural resources are clearly different than the 22 anomalies that represent modern debris associated with pipes, riprap, bulkheads, and crab traps.

The sonar survey identified remains of the Orton Point Light. Features include an L-shaped feature and associated structures that could represent the remains of a dock or bulkhead designed to serve or protect the light itself. Distinctive crescent, rectangular, and square structures could represent elements of the lighthouse base.

A line of pilings that could be associated with the lighthouse likely identify the remains on one of several waterfront bulkheads or breakwaters constructed to protect the Orton Plantation shoreline from erosion.

At the site of the Orton Plantation vessel dock site illustrated in the 1913 Coast Survey Chart sonar revealed the remains of the dock pilings and piling breakwaters built to protect the Orton Plantation waterfront and the dock structure. Sonar images also identify bottom surface material that could be associated with the remains of vessels and navigation lights.

The shoreline survey identified two areas containing potentially significant features. One included the structural remains of a trunk in the Orton Plantation dike, a structure used to regulate water in the rice fields. The second feature identified was a 24-inch diameter, 8-foot-long section of a riveted iron cylinder that may be associated with a late nineteenth-century navigation light. It is known that at least one Funck tubular navigation light was erected at Orton Point in 1895.

Noncontributing Resources
Underwater and Shoreline Investigations identified 118 noncontributing objects. These include 90 magnetic anomalies, 19 sonar objects, and nine objects identified during the shoreline survey. These noncontributing objects include pipes, riprap, bulkheads, crab traps, pieces of degraded cable, possibly associated with the steamer dock, range lights, and associated debris near the mouth of Orton Creek and off Orton Point, and numerous small single objects.

Buildings

Orton Mansion

ca.1729-1732, ca. 1810s-1820s, ca.1840, 1909-1910, 2011-2012

Contributing building

Introduction

Orton, the mansion and the seat of the legendary plantation of the same name, is an imposing Classical Revival-style temple-form residence whose fabric includes an overbuilt ca.1729-1732 one-and-a-half-story brick house and whose appearance reflects three major building programs of the mid-nineteenth, early twentieth, and early twenty-first centuries. When nominated to the National Register in 1972 and cited for its significance in the area of architecture, Orton enjoyed an iconic status as a landmark of antebellum Greek Revival-style domestic architecture in North Carolina and one of the state's most distinguished examples of the American Country House Movement. The early colonial brick house of one-and-a-half stories erected for Roger Moore in about 1729-1732 was then, as now, concealed within the stucco-clad walls of the dramatic temple-form two-story house built ca.1840 for Dr. Frederick Jones Hill (1792-1861). The architect for that work is not known. As noted in the 1972 nomination, evidence in the attic, visible until being sheathed over in 2012, indicates an "intermediate stage of development" whereby the Moore house had been raised to a two-story-with-attic dwelling, in about the 1810s or 1820s.

Orton stood essentially as completed until 1909 when the plantation passed into the ownership of Luola Murchison Sprunt (1858-1916). Determined to renew and adapt Orton as a country house and winter retreat, Mrs. Sprunt engaged her brother, Kenneth McKenzie Murchison Jr. (1872-1938), a New York-based architect, for her proposed improvements. Deferring to Dr. Hill's achievement and Orton's grandeur, Mr. Murchison added one-story balustraded wings on the north and south sides of the house, whose classical finish complemented the earlier antebellum house, and a substantial one-story gable-end service wing on the rear, west elevation. He embellished Orton's already handsome two-story Doric portico with a black-and-white marble paved floor, enrichments of the existing second-story balcony and the louvered lunette in its pediment, and replaced the rectangular panes and sash treatment in the existing three-part, first-story windows with multi-pane upper sash and single-pane lower sash. These upper sashes held diamond-shaped lattice-like tracery that complemented similar diamond-shaped panes in the entrance sidelights. (Documentary photographs prove that this treatment was short-lived, and the openings were almost immediately refitted with nine-over-nine and three-over-three sash that appear in the earliest, ca.1885-1890 photographs of the house.) The lunette, which originally vented the attic, was replaced by an elegant glazed fanlight that could also be opened for ventilation.

These new tracery windows were coincident with Mr. Murchison's one known major change to the interior of Dr. Hill's Orton. The rectangular form of Roger Moore's house had been preserved through Dr. Hill's enlargement and comprised the first-story east front and easternmost parts of the north and south side walls of the antebellum dwelling. The Moore house's west wall had also survived and become an interior wall. Kenneth Murchison removed the interior partitions of the rectangular Moore block, believed to have then had a center-hall plan, and created a large living room within its embrace, with pendant fireplaces centered in its north and south walls. He also added paired, adjoining bathrooms on the second story to serve its four bedrooms.

The American Architect published a first-story floor plan of the completed house, three exterior views of Orton, and a photograph of the well-furnished living room in its 24 May 1911 issue. Orton, as expanded and refitted by Kenneth M. Murchison, survived for a century with little visible change except for the replacement of his 1910 service wing in the early 1960s by a new gable-roof ell of a less appealing, utilitarian design and appearance.

In 2010 Louis Moore Bacon, a lineal descendant of Roger Moore, acquired the principal part of Orton Plantation's 14,000-plus acres, including the mansion, the plantation outbuildings and cemeteries, and its gardens. He simultaneously engaged Richard Sammons of Fairfax & Sammons, an architectural firm with principal offices in New York, to design an architectural program for the plantation seat that included certain restorations to the existing house as well as significant alterations and a major addition. The two-story-with-attic addition, in a post-Modern Colonial Revival style, was inset just inside the rear southwest and northwest corners of Dr. Hill's temple-form house, replicated its stucco-clad elevations, and reproduced the classical woodwork and finish as had Mr. Murchison a century earlier. The addition increased the footprint of Orton by about one-third and its total square footage by a like measure. The addition also accomplished another feat. Its elegant, richly finished, double-tier porch effectively created a new entrance front for Orton, easily accessible from the

newly-devised motor court. Its implied role is confirmed by paired classical piers, inscribed with Orton and the year 1725 in Roman numerals, positioned on a true north-south axis with the entrance to the motor court and the hanging lamps on the first-story porch.

The addition contains an entrance hall, vestibule, boot room, lavatory, kitchen, and pantries on the first story, and new private bathrooms for the bedrooms in the southwest and northwest corners of Dr. Hill's house and a new pair of guest rooms *en suite* with closets and bathrooms on the second floor, all aligned on a center hall with doors opening onto the second-story porch.

Inside Orton, alterations were made to rooms in both the antebellum and early twentieth-century blocks. In the dining room, contained in Mr. Murchison's south wing, the raised floor level of the tea room/solarium at its south end was eliminated, the shallow centered dome was deepened, and a new wall in the northwest corner rendered the main space a true octagon. In the adjoining butler's pantry, now redesigned as a breakfast room, the existing three-part south window was refitted as a projecting bay window and a service counter was installed in the east end of the pantry. In the north, bedroom wing, the Sprunts' east-facing bedroom, opening off the north end of the living room, was redressed as a heavily-paneled office and fitted with a coffered, domed ceiling that rises to a lantern. Other repartitioning and the opening and closing of doorways recast the formerly communicating pair of smaller bedrooms as private chambers. On the second story, the paired, adjoining bathrooms positioned slightly off-center on the south side of the house were combined and refitted as a private marble-detailed bathroom for the master suite.

This introduction provides a brief, necessary chronology of the architectural evolution of Orton and the sequential changes made at three important points in its history to accommodate the needs and lifeways of its wealthy owners. Considered together they have resulted in a house whose fabric and appearance is effectively one-third antebellum, one-third early twentieth-century, and one-third early twenty-first-century. The following description reflects this chronological development and incorporates portions of the description written in 1972 for the initial listing of Orton Plantation in the National Register of Historic Places.

Description of Orton

As described in 1972, the two-story stuccoed brick temple-form "main block of Orton retains much of its original character." This is particularly evident on the east façade, which is dominated by a bold tetrastyle portico of fluted Doric columns and a rich Doric entablature incorporating modillions in the cornice and corresponding triglyphs in the frieze. This entablature, which carries down the side elevations of the house, is a defining feature of Orton and one adopted by its later architects for their additions in 1909-1910 and 2011-2012, respectively. The present fanlight occupies a lunette originally fitted with louvers to ventilate the attic. The date of the slate roof remains to be confirmed, but probably dates to the 1909-1910 enlargement. The 1972 National Register nomination describes the appearance of the mansion:

> The façade has at both levels a central doorway, which is flanked at the first level by single wide three-part windows and at the second by pairs of normal size windows; this arrangement existed at least as early as 1890. The first-level entrance consists of a single door flanked by fluted Ionic columns and sidelights. An entablature with pulvinated frieze breaks out over the columns; above it is a wide transom with tracery. These elements, within paneled soffit and reveals, are framed by a symmetrically molded architrave with roundel corner blocks and base blocks featuring a Greek fret. The first-floor façade windows have nine-over-nine sash in the center section . . . and three-over-three in the sidelights. They are framed and divided by symmetrically molded architraves with roundel corner blocks. At the second level, the doorway, of twentieth century design, consists of a double door beneath a transom; the upper part of each leaf is glazed. The symmetrically molded architrave has corner blocks and base blocks featuring a Greek fret. This doorway serves a balcony which, though it had an earlier precedent, was elaborated in 1910. It is supported by large, carved scroll brackets and enclosed by turned balusters and paneled pedestals that carry a molded rail. The four windows at this level contain six-over-six sash and are framed by symmetrically molded architraves with roundel corner blocks like those below. Louvered shutters appear on all windows of the main block and wings, except at the rear.
>
> The addition of the wings about 1910 altered the side elevations. As seen in a circa 1890 photograph, the widely spaced two front bays of the south side of the main block were identical at both levels, with windows containing six-over-six sash flanking an interior end chimney. Behind these (but within the block of the house) was a porch with a two-bay elliptical-arched open arcade; four closely placed windows appeared above. Today the wing covers the second bay and the rear porch is enclosed; the second-floor

> fenestration is undisturbed. No early picture of the north elevation has been found; the present scheme with six bays and two interior end chimneys may be the original one.
>
> The one-story side wings echo many of the features of the Greek Revival main block; the wall, cornice, and window treatments are identical. The south wing is a single room. Three arched openings occur in the south wall, that in the center containing a French door. The northern wing is much larger and contains three bedrooms and several baths. The flat roofs of the wings are enclosed with balustrades identical to that of the gallery on the temple form section.[17]

The main block of Orton remains essentially as described in 1972 except that the fenestration in the enclosed westernmost bay of the south elevation's first story, which then illuminated the butler's pantry, has been refitted by Mr. Sammons with a three-sided bay window surmounted by a fanlight. This change reflects the present, dual role of the interior space as both a breakfast room and a butler's pantry.

The north and south side elevations of the 2011-2012 two-story rear wing have an asymmetrical symmetry on the first story reflecting the differing functions and uses of the interior spaces, including a three-part window on the south side illuminating the kitchen and a door on the north elevation that provides access to a newly-devised stone-paved terrace. Elegant variety appears, as well, on the second story, which has a four-bay arrangement on the south elevation and three windows on the north side. Following the pattern seen earlier, the first-story openings hold mostly nine-over-nine sash while the second-story openings contain six-over-six sash windows. Most are fitted with louvered blinds. The new wing is dominated by its two-tier west porch whose principal fabric repeats the finish of the east portico. The signal difference is the provision of porches for the two principal levels of the house. The finish of the centered doorways on both levels echoes that of the east façade. Both porches are supported by plain Tuscan columns. The first-story porch, with its appealing paneled ceiling, is open and accessed by an almost full-width wood stair. On the second story the columns are linked by a fretwork railing, and the porch is fitted with copper screening on paneled mounts that recalls sleeping porches of an earlier day.

The interior of Orton reflects the same three principal periods of development seen on the exterior. While scholars can reasonably debate the floor plan of Roger Moore's elegant brick house, there is every likelihood that a center-hall plan came into existence on the first story coincident with Dr. Hill's ca.1840 remodeling and that the three-part first-story windows on the façade are also original to his rebuilding of Orton. The configuration of the present stair hall and billiard room probably also date to his era, however, the existing stair, with its boldly wrought newel and railing may represent an improvement dating to the later nineteenth century. The billiard room was probably first used as a dining room.

The 1972 National Register nomination acknowledged the changes made to the antebellum plan and finishes of Orton by Kenneth M. Murchison for the Sprunts in 1909-1910. Principal among these was his removal of partition walls to create a large living room with fireplaces centered in its north and south ends. The window openings on the west side of both fireplaces were enlarged as doorways to provide access to the new dining room and bedroom wings.

The description of the first story crafted in 1972 remains accurate today, with the modifications noted in the introduction:

> The two stylistic eras (1840s Greek Revival and 1910 Neoclassical Revival) present in the interior features are so compatible that identifying all of them is impossible. In addition, it appears that some of the Greek Revival molding was either reused or reproduced. In the parlor, all the windows are framed with symmetrically molded architraves with roundel corner blocks. The reveals are flat-paneled with alternating square and vertical panels. A panel also occurs beneath each window. The doors are framed with a modified version of the front entrance, each employing a pair of Ionic columns and an entablature with a pulvinated frieze. The fireplace at each end of the room features a gray-black marble mantel with engaged Ionic columns which support a frieze of serpentine with faceted panels in the center tablet and end blocks. Elaborate plaster work of classical motifs dating from 1910 forms the cornice and adorns the ceiling. The stair located in a transverse hall behind the parlor rises in two flights with a landing in between. The newel is turned and covered with acanthus leaves. Turned balusters carry a handrail oval in section. Behind the stair hall is the billiard room which has a tall neo-Federal style mantel, a molded chair rail, and a deeply molded baseboard. In the dining room, a shallow dome forms the central portion of the ceiling. The woodwork consists of a high flat-paneled wainscot, symmetrically molded architraves with paneled corner blocks, and a neo-Federal style mantel. The south end of the dining room is treated as a solarium. Its terrazzo floor is raised one step, and the room is visually divided by a pair of Tuscan columns which occur at each end of the step.[18]

As noted earlier, the Murchison-designed, Sprunt-era butler's pantry, which encompassed the recessed, arcaded porch of Dr. Hill's house, was refashioned in 2011-2012 as a breakfast room with a service counter on its east end, beside the door leading to the dining room. Here a section of the handsome English-bond brickwork of the west wall of Roger Moore's legendary colonial house has been exposed and enframed above the counter. The finishes in the kitchen, pantries, the hall, the vestibule, and the boot room in the new wing are of high quality and expected character. The hall, the vestibule, and the boot room are wood paneled.

The 1972 nomination, as typical of its period, gave little notice to the finish of the bathrooms at Orton. The two bathrooms in the first-story bedroom wing retain their hexagonal tile floor and wainscot of glazed square creamy white tiles and some fittings that date to 1909-1910. In these rooms and on the second story, the new bathroom fittings are mostly modern reproductions or adaptations of early twentieth-century fixtures. Some reconditioned enamel-on-cast-iron claw-foot bath tubs are also used.

The basement level of Orton, accessible both from an interior stair positioned under the staircase rising to the second story and an exterior hatch door on the north side, contains two chambers. The original basement dating to Dr. Hill's era, with mixed brickwork walls and ballast-stone masonry, and a later poured concrete floor, is located under the stair hall and billiard room. Sections of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century brickwork are visible here, including parts of the west foundation wall of Roger Moore's house. A new door in the old basement's west wall opens into the full basement under the new wing, also concrete floored, that houses mechanical, electrical, and utility equipment.

A comparison of the second-story plan recording existing conditions at Orton, dated 13 June 2011, with one dated 12 January 2012, showing the work as proposed (and essentially built) confirms the survival of the interior arrangement at the time of the nomination and the retention of its significant features during the 2011-2012 work. The stair rises to a landing at the near center of the house, which opens on its east and west sides into the respective sections of the center hall, which is remarkably narrow for a house of Orton's commanding presence. The entry into the east hall is marked by a well-executed transverse elliptical arch supported on paneled pilasters. While much of the Sprunt-period flooring on the first story has been replaced, most of the original pine flooring on the second story remains in place.

The architectural finish in the four bedrooms aligned along the center hall and positioned in the northeast, southeast, southwest, and northwest corners of the main block, the closets, and dressing rooms comprises molded baseboards, chair rails, architraves framing the doors and windows, and plaster or wood cornices executed in late Federal, transitional Federal-Greek Revival, Greek Revival, and early twentieth-century classical designs, together with some woodwork introduced in refitted areas in 2011-2012. Their use varies room to room.

The architraves in the hall and the southeast bedroom, likely the one used by Dr. and Mrs. Hill, are symmetrically molded and have faceted corner blocks. The southeast bedroom is *en suite* with a dressing room and the earlier mentioned marble-detailed bathroom on the south side of the hall. The architraves in the front, northeast bedroom have a three-part transitional Federal/Greek Revival design. Both rooms feature classically-detailed mantels that appear to be original. The northwest bedroom has molded three-part transitional Federal/Greek Revival-style architraves and a simple Federal-period mantel that was added in 2011-2012.The southwest bedroom is fitted with both early/original and modern three-part architraves; it has no fireplace.

In the 2011-2012 building program, the bathroom that had been enclosed in the west end of the center hall was removed and the hall was continued through the addition to paired doors that open onto the second-story porch. Its narrow path is interrupted about midway by recesses. Three rooms are aligned along each side and comprise new *en suite* bathrooms for the respective northwest and southwest corner bedrooms of the main block, and a second, pendant pair of bathrooms that are *en suite* with the two new bedrooms in the northwest and southwest corners of the new wing. The molded woodwork and three-part architraves are traditional in character and of a high quality. The bathrooms have tile floors and period revival fixtures.

The attic level of Orton is simply finished. The stair rises to a shallow landing with doorways in its east and west elevations. The doorway on the east opens into the front, east attic, which has new wood flooring and wallboard on the walls and ceiling. The doorway in the west side of the landing opens into an ante-hall, in the main block of the house that is flanked by a simply-finished bathroom on the north and paired cedar-lined closets on the south side. The west attic is simply finished and fitted with a window seat under the fanlight in the pediment of the two-tier porch.

Luola's Chapel

1915

Contributing building

Luola's Chapel is one of two entirely original buildings at Orton designed by Kenneth McKenzie Murchison Jr. that, together with his work at the mansion and the north and south entrance gates, constitutes an important part of Orton's early twentieth-century renaissance. Designed as a private family chapel for Luola Murchison Sprunt and completed in 1915, it became a memorial upon her death on 17 February 1916. Soon thereafter her husband, James Sprunt, commissioned the stained glass tribute for the Venetian window centered in the chapel's west elevation. While the three-part Venetian window has a certain precedent in similar windows on Orton's façade and architectural practice in the period, its use here likely recalls the chancel window in St. Philip's Church, Brunswick Town, whose ruined walls stand a few hundred feet south of Orton's south entrance gate. Luola's Chapel was briefly acknowledged in the 1972 National Register nomination as "A 1915 Memorial Chapel."

Luola's Chapel is a rectangular, one-story Classical Revival-style temple-form building of stuccoed frame construction. It stands on a low brick foundation, signified by a visible ground-level water table of soldier-course brick, that incorporates a small basement under the chapel's northwest corner. The gable-front roof is covered with slate. An interior brick flue in the chapel's northwest corner rises above the roof at the rear. An octagonal belfry, positioned astride the ridge line, near the front (east) of the roof, features tall arched openings on its eight faces and a conical roof with a ball-shaped finial.

The classical design of the chapel and its architectural refinements are characterized by an insistent symmetry, the repetitive, unifying use of arches, and a certain lightness that contrasts with the heavier/more robust classicism of the Doric order seen at the mansion. The chapel's east-facing tetrastyle portico, which also overlooks the historic road linking the mansion with Brunswick Town, is supported by fluted Corinthian columns that rise from its herringbone-pattern brick floor to an entablature that fully encircles the building. The columns have complementing pilasters with molded bases and egg-and-dart caps that define three bays on the façade wall. Pilasters of the same design appear on the chapel's side and rear elevations, where they serve the same architectural function. A typical, molded architrave is the base for an inventive frieze featuring alternating rectangular sections of parallel, vertical incisions, which have the appearance of fluting, and circular, molded disks with pulvinated faces centered by a bull's eye. The cornice includes a dentil course and modillion blocks. This treatment is repeated in the raking cornice framing the tympanum that, in turn, is centered by a molded, louvered lunette. The center-bay entrance is framed by a free classical surround featuring Tuscan columns rising from a marble threshold to molded impost blocks that support a segmental arch. The double-leaf, four-panel doors are surmounted by a glazed fanlight. A handsomely-framed circular window is set in the wall above the entrance.

The north and south elevations of Luola's Chapel have a five-bay arrangement defined by shallow pilasters. The three center bays have tall, large arch-headed openings that hold paired nine-over-twelve sash windows below fanlights with complementing muntins. Blind, recessed arch-headed panels of the same dimension as the window openings are centered in the respective end bays. The chapel's rear, west elevation is as well-finished as its other elevations with three bays defined by pilasters. Occupying the center bay, the Venetian window is fitted twelve-over-sixteen sashes flanked by three-over-three sidelights and surmounted by a fanlight in a molded classical surround featuring Tuscan pilasters. A single-leaf three-panel door is positioned in the south bay and framed by a traditional three-part recessed surround. For symmetry's sake a small window fitted with four-over-four sash occupies a corresponding position in the west elevation's north bay. A brick stairwell, with concrete steps, is positioned parallel with the elevation and provides access to the small basement with a poured concrete floor and exposed brick walls that houses a furnace.

The interior has a center-aisle plan and is finished with pine flooring, plaster walls, a segmental-arch ceiling, and classical woodwork. Boxed pews with paneled ends and complementing doors are raised on low platforms and carry west from the back of the chapel for about three-fourths of its depth. A taller raised platform in front of the Venetian window is the setting for the expected trio of chairs for clergy and a communion table. The elevated, paneled pulpit and its corresponding sounding board are fitted against the north wall in the chapel's northwest corner and accessed by a simple quarter-turn stair. The lectern of like design is freestanding and portable. A trio of six-light brass chandeliers of colonial design is suspended on chains in an alignment above the center aisle. Double-light sconces of the same design are mounted on the side walls in pendant positions near the back of the chapel. The stained glass memorial in the Venetian window is executed in grisaille with yellow accents on a frost ground and features geometric strapwork-like designs. A shield in the center of the composition bears the following inscription:

Luola's Chapel
Erected to the
Glory and Worship
Of
God
By Luola
Beloved Wife
Of
James Sprunt
1915

Caretaker's House

2004, 2013

Noncontributing building

Together with the nearby plantation office, this one-story frame residence is one of two management-related buildings recently erected by the Sprunt family. Both were designed by Ian Johnson, a Wilmington architect, built by Rick Register of Southport, and have a conventional, minimally traditional character. Both buildings were moved from their original sites to new locations in the redesigned service area in spring 2013. The rectangular house is elevated above ground on a partial basement/concrete-block foundation, sheathed with manufactured siding that resembles weatherboards, and covered by a hip roof with wide eaves of asphalt shingles. The footprint of the house is enlarged by a hip-roof porch on the north-facing three-bay front elevation. It and the rear service porch have simple supports and railings, and wood steps to ground level. While the north front of the house has a symmetrical arrangement, with a double-door entrance flanked by three-part windows, the east and west sides have an asymmetrical appearance with single, paired, and three-part windows. A flue, which vents a gas-fired heating element in the living room, is positioned at the north end of the west side and has a sheathed, chimney-like form. A service porch is inset in the rear southeast corner of the house. The interior has an informal plan with a living and dining area in the north front and a kitchen, three bedrooms, two bathrooms, and a utility room flanking a part-length center hall that opens onto the rear porch. This house was originally built on the site of an earlier ca.1930 house known as the "Green Cottage" that was home to at least two resident plantation managers prior to the arrival of Churchill Bragaw in 1937.

Plantation Office

2006-2007, 2013

Noncontributing building

Similar in character, materials, and finish to the caretaker's house, this is a one-story frame building sheathed with manufactured siding, and covered by a hip roof with wide eaves and asphalt shingles. Designed by Ian Johnson and built by Rick Register along the nursery road across from the caretaker's house, the office was placed in use in February 2007. The office building was moved from its original location to the present site in spring 2013 during the redesign of the service area. The office stands on wood piers with woven wire and wood lattice screening. The rectangular core block, containing offices and related spaces, is enhanced with a hip-roof entrance bay porch on its three-bay south front, whose wood floor continues to the east as a handicap ramp, wraps the building's southeast corner, and reaches ground level about mid-way of the three-bay east elevation. The west elevation, also three bays in width, has a center staff entrance protected by a small hip-roof porch. All three elevations are symmetrically treated and feature pairs and trios of single-pane windows. The interior is arranged around a central reception area and is finished in a simple manner with conventional, mostly manufactured materials. This office building originally occupied the site of the plantation's first modern office that was placed in service ca.1940 and was demolished in 2006. That Colonial Revival-style frame building, erected near the mansion as a playhouse and known as the "Doll House," was moved to the nursery/service area ca.1940.

Greenhouse #1 and Head-house

ca.1937-1940

Contributing building

Believed to be the first permanent greenhouse erected for the Orton Plantation Nursery, this building comprises two principal blocks; a large gable-front glasshouse, and a frame side-gable roof head-house. Whether the two blocks were built at the same time is uncertain but likely: both stand on poured-in-form concrete foundations. However, neither block appears on Sturtevant's January 1937 plan of Orton Plantation or his separate undated plan of the plantation gardens.

As noted, the glasshouse stands on a poured concrete foundation that is partially inset into grade and appears as an apron on its four elevations. The sawn timber framing of the short upper elevations and the roof structure is in place, somewhat deteriorated, but with all of the glazing removed. On the north front elevation, where the grade is higher and the top of the apron is close to ground level, the framing is sheathed with fiberglass panels. The center entrance is protected by a simple gable-front board-and-batten sheathed porch. It is flanked, in turn, by horizontal openings fitted with top-hinged window frames that each holds most of its six large glass panes. These panes comprise the only glass that remains *in situ*. The interior of the glasshouse has a perimeter table for plants and three inner rows of plant stands aligned on a north/south axis and elevated on round metal supports. The glasshouse has an earthen floor. The mechanical works for opening and closing the glazed wall and roof panels remain largely in place.

A door in the south end of the glasshouse opens into the one-story frame head-house, which is rectangular and perpendicular in plan and positioned slightly off center, with a longer length of its north wall visible on the west than on the east. The head-house is sheathed with German siding and covered with a gable-end roof of 5-V sheet metal. The east and west gable ends are both fitted with a board-and-rail door and a window: a modification has been made to the doorway on the east end. These have plain-board frames with a drip cap, and the windows are fitted with six-over-six sash. Openings, which have later infill, also occur in the upper gable ends. The south elevation has a symmetrical arrangement of four six-over-six sash windows and an exterior brick flue stack near its east end. The interior of the head-house is simply finished and appears to have had slight modifications through time to accommodate various nursery-related operations and storage requirements. It was long used for packaging nursery-grown plants for shipment or sizable orders bought on site.

Greenhouse #2

2005-2006

Noncontributing building

Built in the closing years of the Sprunts' ownership of Orton, this large rectangular building has a concrete-block perimeter wall, with five courses of block visible above ground, and a metal gable-front superstructure on which fiberglass panels are mounted on the elevations and roof. A label affixed to the building identifies its maker as "Jaderloon, The Greenhouse Engineers, Irmo, S. C. 29063." A simple, fiberglass-clad door is centered on the north gable front and flanked by large wall-mounted metal fans. The side walls have no openings. A second simple fiberglass-clad door is set at the east end of the greenhouse's south, rear wall. Inside, the ground has a gravel cover and the building's mechanical systems are visible. Now used for storage, the building is scheduled to be demolished in 2013-2014.

Power House/Barn

ca.1890-1910,1950s,1990s

Contributing building

According to Sprunt family tradition, this building was erected to house the generator that provided electrical power to the mansion and plantation buildings before rural electrification. It appears on Sturtevant's January 1937 plan of Orton Plantation. The generator was also used to power a small mill that cut fire wood for the mansion fireplaces and stoves. For the last half-century or more it has been used principally for storage and garaging of small equipment.

The one-story-with-loft building stands on a low concrete block foundation and is sheathed with board-and-batten. Its gable-front roof is covered with sheet metal. In about the 1950s a three-stall concrete-block shed-roof equipment shed was built on its west side and ill-fitted with the frame block by a shed that covers the west side of the barn's north gable

front. In about the 1990s the fronts of both blocks were fitted with faux brick and other materials as part of a set for a movie filmed at Orton. The building's large ground-level opening on the north front is set in the east half of the wall and fitted with double-leaf board-and-rail doors. Most of the remaining first-story wall is covered by the shed addition and its faux-brick veneer. The upper part of the gable front is centered with a four-panel, turn-of-the-century door and small, flanking window openings that appear to be early, if not original features. Four window openings of different sizes, including one six-over-six sash window, occupy the building's east side: three have infill.

The ground level interior is one principal space with a work bench on the east wall and simply enclosed storage areas. A wood stair in the near center of the barn rises to the north to the loft area, which is mostly sheathed with tongue-and-groove ceiling and partitioned into two room-like spaces. Whether these "rooms" might have served as living or sleeping quarters at one time is unclear. The troughs for sliding sash in the small façade windows are visible here.

The three-bay equipment shed has faux brick on the stall partition fronts and a board-and-batten false-front across the top of the three openings. The center opening is fitted with double-leaf doors sheathed with sheet metal. The west shed end is blind. A small shed-roof frame addition for oil storage is built against the concrete block wall near its center.

Equipment Shed #1

ca.1950-1955

Contributing building

The simply-built shed, of utilitarian character and no refinement, was built to provide storage for large equipment and related needs. Rectangular in plan, it has creosote pole supports and sawn framing, sheet metal applied to its north, east, and south sides, and a side gable roof of sheet metal. The west front is entirely open, and the presence of two creosote poles effectively divides the interior into three storage bays. The floor is compact earth. Six vertical fiberglass panels are fitted into the metal sheathing on the east wall to provide light. The building stands slightly north of the site of the plantation's main barn, which appears on the Sturtevant plan, but which was struck by lightning in 1950 and lost to fire.

Stable

ca.1990-1994

Noncontributing building

Rectangular in plan, this small one-story frame building was erected as a four-stall stable for pleasure horses. Its exterior elevations, doors, and blinds are sheathed with manufactured exterior sheet siding. The side-gable roof is covered with sheet metal. The stable's center passage plan is indicated by centered openings with paired doors on the stable's three-bay north, front and south elevations. The opening on the front elevation is protected by a simple gable-front porch. The bays flanking both openings were originally fitted with rectangular openings protected by side-hinged blinds that provided light and ventilation to the stalls. All remain in place except on the front where the west section of the wall has been removed, as has the interior stall partition, to allow for drive-in garaging/storage. Openings on the two-bay east and west gable ends also provided light and cross ventilation for the penned animals. The interior finish of the barn is conventional with horizontal sheathing in the stalls and the expected fittings for feeding.

Elijah's House

ca.1885-1905

Contributing building

While the history of this building remains to be confirmed, it and the recently-burned house of like design that stood to the south in the same relationship to Old Brunswick Town Road are probably part of the improvements effected to the estate by Kenneth McKenzie Murchison (1831-1904) (*Note: No archaeological survey was completed at the site of the burned building but this action is recommended for the future*). These investments were noted in a general appreciation by James Sprunt in his *Chronicles of the Cape Fear River* (1914). Elijah's House has a significance and meaning in the history of Orton belied by its simple appearance. It is one of only three surviving historic dwellings on the home grounds of the estate that served as housing for the many, many workers who once resided here as slaves, freedmen, or paid employees over the course of nearly three centuries. The house carries the name of Elijah Robbins, a white estate carpenter, who was its last occupant.

The L-shaped plan, finish, and appearance of the one-story west-facing house is that of many that once stood on important plantations and farms in eastern North Carolina. Most have been lost, abandoned, or stand vacant and deteriorating like Elijah's House. The house comprises a two-room main block served by a center brick chimney, a two-room rear ell expanded by a two-stage shed-roof addition on its east end, a shed-roof front porch with simple posts and wood steps on its west elevation, and an expanded, screened service porch on the south side of the ell. The house is sheathed with board-and-batten with two exceptions. The main block has wood shingles in the upper gable end of its north elevation and weatherboards in the pendant south gable end. Elijah's House stands on low brick piers, with no underpinning, and is covered by gable-end roofs of sheet metal. The window openings hold six-over-six sash and have plain-board surrounds.

The elevations have a general symmetry. The four-bay west front has four-panel, turn-of-the-century doors in the outer bays and windows between them. Ghost marks of its original hip-roof porch appear on the upper wall. Single and paired windows appear in the long four-bay north elevation. The south side has a single window in the main block's gable end; a screened porch with simple uprights and a wood railing, grating, and lattice foundation screening; and a small window in the shed end of the east addition. The east end of the ell has a covered stoop flanked by windows.

The interior is mostly sheathed in tongue-and-groove ceiling, applied vertically on the walls. The finish includes pine flooring, four- and five-panel doors, and mantels in the two front rooms.

Equipment Shed #2

ca.2011

Noncontributing building

Erected for the storage of larger farm equipment, tractors, and trucks, this shed is a large rectangular metal structure with six uprights along its east and west sides and a shallow gable-end metal roof. The four sides of the shed are entirely open. The ground under the shed is covered with gravel. Located here on a temporary basis, the shed is destined to be dismantled and relocated to an agricultural and forestry service complex to be developed in the near future on the estate on the west side of NC 133 outside the boundaries of the Orton Plantation Boundary Increase and Additional Documentation.

Gatehouse

ca.1910-1915, moved in 1930s

Contributing building

The Gatehouse was built coincident with the creation of the north entrance to Orton and the erection of the north and south entrance gates. The design of the house and the gates, as well as Luola's Chapel, are attributed to Kenneth McKenzie Murchison Jr., who designed the expansion and refitting of the mansion for his sister and her husband. The Gatehouse originally stood nearer the north gate, where brick piers remain and mark the site, and was moved to the present location in the 1930s.

The small, one-story, hip-roof weatherboarded frame house is representative of the modest hybrid Queen Anne/Colonial Revival-style cottages that were popular at the turn of the century. The simple, almost-square plan of the three-bay-by-four-bay house, is enhanced by a shallow projecting gable-front bay on its north front elevation and a like projection on the rear elevation that provide a pleasing irregularity. The house stands on brick piers with decorative wood-lattice infill. Its elevations are finished with tall, flat sill boards with molded drip caps, corner boards, and flat frieze boards under the boxed eaves. The window openings have plain-board surrounds with molded drip caps and hold six-over-six sash. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles and has a decorative metal crest at its apex. A brick chimney rises through its east plane.

The three-bay front elevation, with a center entrance, is protected by a near-full façade hip-roofed porch supported by Tuscan columns that are paired to support the shallow gable-front projection centered on the front door. The columns are linked by railings. The porch has a wood floor and steps to ground level. The gable end of the projecting bay is fitted with a peaked louvered vent. The façade is further enhanced by the windows flanking the front door that feature large fixed panes of glass surmounted by transoms with muntins of lancet-arch-and-diamond tracery. The house's east elevation has an asymmetrical four-bay arrangement. The west elevation was probably identical originally, but it now has a fifth window

in its center, which holds two-over-six sash. The rear, south elevation is mostly occupied by a shed-roof porch, also on brick piers, built in 1998 as a replacement and possibly an enlargement of the original porch. It has been partially enclosed with a weatherboarded apron below fixed sections of screened wire. Wood steps with a railing descend on its east side to ground level.

The interior of the house has a center-hall plan that originally extended the full depth of the house. However, the south end was enclosed as a bathroom in about the mid-twentieth century. The living room and an eat-in kitchen are located on the east side of the hall while three bedrooms are aligned on its west side. The use of wallboard for the inner partition walls between the bedrooms (and the fifth window) indicates a re-partitioning of the original arrangement. Otherwise, the house retains its original character and finish including pine flooring, sheathed walls of beaded tongue-and-groove ceiling, plain-board surrounds, and five-panel turn-of-the-century doors with porcelain knobs. The house's brick chimney was rebuilt in 1998 and the fireplace in the living room has a brick face and hearth and a molded wood shelf.

Garage/Workshop

ca.1915-1925

Contributing building

Almost square in plan, this one-story frame outbuilding is sheathed with board-and-batten and covered by a shed roof of sheet metal. A large opening on the north front, positioned off-center to the west, is fitted with simple double-leaf doors with sheet metal faces. Small openings with six-pane sash are asymmetrically positioned on the east and south elevations. The building's west wall is blind. The interior has a simple work bench built along most of the east wall and a dirt floor.

Barbecue Pavilion

ca.1960; shed rebuilt in the later twentieth century

Noncontributing building

This building consists of a low brick pit and chimney, which is large enough to barbecue a whole pig/hog, and an open frame shelter supported by four-by-four posts with Y-shaped braces that, in turn, support the roof structure and the pavilion's east and west weatherboarded ends. The gable roof is covered with sheet metal. The pavilion has a poured concrete floor.

Structures

North Entrance Gate

ca.1910-1916

Contributing structure

The creation of a new entrance to the estate, to supplement the traditional access by way of the plantation's Old Brunswick Town Road and convenient to the increasing travel by automobile from Wilmington, was a part of Orton's early twentieth-century renewal. The design of the gate to mark the new, principal entrance is attributed to Kenneth McKenzie Murchison Jr. His solution is at once both simple and imposing. The roadway is flanked by tall square-in-plan brick piers, which rise from the ground to molded classical stone/cast-stone caps surmounted by majestic stone/cast-stone eagles with their sculpted, feathered wings raised as if at the point of flight and their heads turned to the left (south). These eagles are "warring eagles" and hold a clutch of arrows in their left talons. This pose dates the eagles to the opening years of World War I (1914-1918). "ORTON" and "1725" are inscribed on the faces of the molded caps. The tall piers are linked to shorter piers of the same design, minus the eagles, by curved segmental brick walls, which are also capped and ramp as they meet the tall piers. The roadway is protected by paired ornamental iron gates that are side-hinged on the inside faces of the tall piers.

The earliest known photograph of the north entrance gate is one taken with James Sprunt, his first-born grandson, James Laurence Sprunt Jr. (1915-2003), and the young boy's nurse standing at the gate. The brick were then unpainted. The whitewash probably dates to the mid-twentieth century.

South Entrance Gate

ca.1910-1916

Contributing structure

The south entrance gate is of the same design, materials, and appearance as the north entrance gate except that the two-leaf iron gate protecting Old Brunswick Town Road is of a simpler ornamental design.

Tennis Court

2012

Noncontributing structure

The tennis court is a simply-graded rectangular area, covered with asphalt that is marked with lines as a single tennis court. It has simple metal uprights at its corners on which synthetic netting is affixed to capture loose balls.

Integrity Assessment

Throughout its known history the character of Orton Plantation has been defined by its two chief features: its landscape, and the plantation seat. Since ca. 1730-1732 both have evolved in their appearance, reflecting Orton's place in the sequential epochs of local, state, and southern history. These stages of development, occurring in the long, continuous period of significance, are represented today by the qualities of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association that exist in the Orton Plantation Boundary Increase and Additional Documentation.

The landscape and man's shaping of it for agricultural purposes, livelihood, and pleasure over the space of nearly 300 years is represented in the place seen today. The woodlands and marsh have held their primacy through time. In the nineteenth century they were the two prominent physical assets of the plantation described in newspaper advertisements, when the plantation was offered for sale at public auction in 1824, 1872, and 1873. Beginning in Roger Moore's day, the woodlands, then harvested for naval stores and lumber, have been the wealth of Orton Plantation, and they continue in that financial respect to the present. The marshes, with their potential for the lucrative cultivation of rice, have been an equal or greater asset of the plantation during periods in its history, particularly in the antebellum years. Their value and increasing use for the profitable cultivation of the "golden grain" are likewise defined in the auction broadsides, published notices, and the documents of Orton's history. The plantation woodlands and its former rice fields today bear the evidence of their place in the history of this storied acreage.

In 1909-1910 ornamental gardens became a third defining feature of Orton Plantation's landscape, when Luola Murchison Sprunt and her husband, James Sprunt, went about creating the terraces across the river (east) front of the mansion. These terraces and the adjacent gardens were planted, replanted, and nurtured over the course of a century by their son, James Laurence Sprunt, and his wife, Annie Gray Nash Ruffin Sprunt, and their grandson, Kenneth Murchison Sprunt, with the aid of well-known landscape architects, paid gardeners and plantation managers, and the labor of uncounted and largely anonymous laborers who brought the gardens and their plantings into bloom season after season. The gardens evolved in their extent and character through time, again reflecting the horticultural fashions of their period.

In 2011 a major redesign and remodeling program was initiated at Orton Plantation, focused on the mansion gardens, grounds, and service area, which has produced dramatic changes that, in turn, have diminished the character, integrity, and significance of the historic plantation landscape. These changes comprise two principal distinct initiatives: alterations to the approach to the mansion, chapel and gardens and a reconfiguration of the service area; and a remodeling of the historic gardens concurrent with the introduction of new gardens on three sides of the mansion and the addition of a motor court. Both initiatives have involved discernible changes to historic spatial arrangements, the loss of historic plant materials, the introduction of new plants, including recent cultivars, and plantings, and either the loss of historic buildings, the relocation of buildings, and/or the introduction of new architectural features and materials, including an extensive use of "Crab Orchard" stone.

During the late decades of the period of significance and until 2011, the approach to the mansion, chapel, and gardens arced through the service area between the plantation office, greenhouses, and nursery facilities on the south and the caretaker's house, the Dinky house used by garden staff, and separate frame lavatories for male and female visitors to the garden on the north, in and on the edge of a sizable grove immediately south of Luola's Chapel. The resdesign of this

part of the estate grounds has relocated the service area to the acreage between Greenhouse #1 and the Powerhouse/Barn, to be concealed by large new planting beds of trees and shrubs that flank the north end of the greenhouse. The plantation office and caretaker's house have been moved to this area. The Dinky house, the visitors' lavatories, and all the historic nursery facilities, except Greenhouse #1, have been demolished and the chapel-side grove, which functioned as a southern pendant to the grove protecting the Moore family burying ground at the north end of the peninsula, has been greatly thinned. This part of the estate now has an open, modern character.

The entrance drive, which now circles to the north, past Luola's Chapel on the left (west), to the house, ends in a motor court, the largest and most conspicuous of the designed additions to the grounds immediately around the mansion. New gardens incorporating fountains, stone-paved terraces and walks, and dense plantings surround the mansion on all sides, except on the west front of the new service wing, and are merged with Orton's spacious historic lawns and gardens. The recent loss of the scroll garden was followed in the new and ongoing work by the removal of historic plantings, particularly on the south lawn, where they incorporated impressive displays of the camellias and azaleas grown at Orton. Some of these mature camellias were relocated to the new motor court, where they are used as screening rather than as specimen shrubs. The remodeling of the north walk and adjoining areas has included both the removal and relocation of historic plant materials and the introduction of new species and cultivars.

Notwithstanding these changes and losses, the Orton gardens even in their diminished state continue to recall the historic pleasances and plantings, which attracted the attention of visitors from North Carolina, the region, and from a larger audience to "A Garden From a Rice Plantation," as described by A. G. L. Hellyer in the pages of Country Life in 1973.

But in 1734, when an English gentleman visited the Lower Cape Fear, it was the plantation seat, Roger Moore's brick house, the first built of the plantation's known surviving architectural resources, that garnered his notice and note in 1735 in the publication of A New Voyage to Georgia . . ., and Part of North Carolina. Thereafter in successive guises, superbly sited on a peninsula projecting into the marshes, it has drawn and held attention and admiration. The Orton house and the now-lost Allen seat at Lilliput to the northeast were the earliest known brick houses erected as plantation seats in the Lower Cape Fear. Roger Moore's colonial mansion was overbuilt ca. 1840 as one of the earliest, fully-realized temple-form residences in North Carolina. In 1872, when Orton Plantation was advertised for auction sale, the plantation seat was described as "the late Palatial residence of Dr. F. J. Hill, deceased."

Its iconic status as a reflection of antebellum North Carolina was enhanced in the early twentieth century when architect Kenneth M. Murchison Jr. sympathetically enlarged the house during the American Country Place Era. The Classical Revival-style mansion thus gained the mantle of a second important period in North Carolina, southern, and American architectural history. Today Orton retains and evidences its status as an architectural landmark built by Dr. Hill and enlarged for the Sprunts, even with the latest and largest of three successive service wings on its rear (west) elevation.

The plantation seat embodies the architectural history of Orton alone for over half of the plantation's existence and most of its period of significance. There are no other standing buildings or structures on the plantation for the entirety of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries except for the colonial-era brick grave vaults in the Moore Family Cemetery and Elijah's House and the Powerhouse/Barn that date to Kenneth McKenzie Murchison's late nineteenth-century renewal of the plantation. The forty houses that sheltered William C. Miller's 144 slaves at Orton in 1860 had apparently vanished by the turn of the twentieth century, and so, too, had the plantation's agricultural outbuildings. Slight traces on the land mark their locations as archaeological sites. Within time, and well before the end of the period of significance and the original listing of Orton Plantation in the National Register of Historical Places in 1973, most of Kenneth M. Murchison's improvements had likewise been lost.

The survival of Orton's twentieth-century architectural legacy and its integrity represent a very distinct, positive contrast. The refitting of Dr. Hill's mansion for the Sprunt family was one part of a renaissance at Orton that included the North and South Gates, the Gatehouse, and Luola's Chapel, all of which are known, or believed, to have been designed by Kenneth M. Murchison Jr. between ca. 1909 and ca. 1916. As a group, even with the major addition in 2011-2012 to the mansion, they are important, well-maintained, and well-preserved buildings that reflect the essential qualities of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association that are critical to Orton's status as an exemplar of the American Country House Movement in North Carolina. Their place in Orton's history is complemented by a second, smaller group of surviving architectural resources dating from the mid-twentieth century. While deteriorated as a result of dis-use, Greenhouse #1 is nevertheless a significant reminder of the role and presence of Orton Plantation Nursery, which specialized in the propagation and sale of camellias and azaleas to gardeners throughout the South and for plantings in

its own gardens and grounds. The overlooks and lagoon bridge designed for the gardens by Morley Jeffers Williams and his wife, Nathalia, in 1958-1959 represent the final enhancements to place during the period of significance.

While buildings have been lost through the centuries to disuse and decay, fire, and storms and other remaining secondary structures reflect degrees of deterioration, the buildings and structures that survive, beginning with the colonial-era brick vaults in the Moore Family Cemetery, retain their integrity and reflect and represent important chapters in the history of the plantation. They, the gardens and grounds, and the woodlands and rice fields, whose historic contours and character are re-emerging during the present, consciously-executed stewardship of the plantation, in their separate parts and as a whole possess the essential qualities of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association that define Orton Plantation Boundary Increase and Additional Documentation. The incorporation of the agricultural landscape, significant woodland acreage, and archaeological resources in this expansion provide a greater understanding of the history of Orton and its significance and they mitigate the effect of losses in the designed landscape. Altogether, the resources in the original nomination and those in this addition comprise a place of extraordinary significance with no peer in North Carolina.

Table 1. Contributing Resources

Resource Name	*Date of Origin*	*Modification Date(s)*	*Condition 2012*	*Notes*
Sites - 13				Criterion A, Social History, Agriculture, Politics/ government; Criterion B, various, Criterion C, Landscape Architecture; Criterion D, Archaeology
Orton Plantation Landscape				
Roads				
North entrance road	1910-1916		good	
Old highway trace	c.19th c.		fair	
North entrance causeway	1910-1916		good	
Old Brunswick Town Road	Late 18th c. to 1916	2012	good	
Nursery road	1935-1940		good	
Service road	1935-1940	2012	fair	
Phillips Road	18th or 19th c.	20th c.	good	
Sand Dam Pond Road	1908-1921		fair	
Low Road	1935-1940		fair	Grading discernible, paving material now turf

Resource Name	*Date of Origin*	*Modification Date(s)*	*Condition 2012*	*Notes*
Phillips Road	19th c.	Paving, widening	good	
Ornamental garden features				
Gatehouse ornamental garden	1935-1940		fair	
Ornamental pond	Before 1921	Chinese bridge	good	
Lagoon	Before 1921	20th century, bulkhead	fair	Some erosion, bulkheads rotted
Garden terraces	ca.1916	2012 re-graded	fair	Erosion
Long Green	1935-1940	remodeled 2012	fair	changes in border configuration and interior features
Long walkway	1910	2012 repaved	good	
Hydrangea Walk	1910	2012 remodeled	fair	Shrub removal/replacement
Axial walkway	1910	2012 repaved	good	
Terrace stairway	1910		fair to good	Some cracking, displacement
Concrete planter bases	1910		fair to good	Some displacement
Site of Scroll Garden	1935-1940	Loss to inundation	poor	Plant materials have died but beds discernible
Path to the White Garden	1935-1940		poor	Overgrown, eroded, uneven
White Garden, including fountain and "Spring Star"	1935-1940	Sculpture installed 1953	fair to good	Overgrown, biological growth, non-functioning
Perimeter path	1935-1940	2012, upgraded with gravel and steel edging	good	
Secondary path	1935-1940		good	
Chinese bridge	ca.1955		poor	Wood members deteriorated
Wood gazebo	1935-1940		good	
Sweeping views of the rice fields and tidal flats from locations within the property	ca.1820s		good	
Iconic view from mansion to Cape Fear River	1729-1732	1910	good	

Resource Name	Date of Origin	Modification Date(s)	Condition 2012	Notes
North belvedere	ca.1960		poor	Wood members deteriorated
South belvedere	ca.1960		poor	Wood members deteriorated
Brick stairway	ca.1960		poor	Masonry unstable
Lagoon bridge	ca.1960		poor	Wood members deteriorated
Greenhouse foundation	1935-1940		poor	
Cultural vegetation				
Live oak allées: north entrance road, Old Brunswick Town Road	18th – 19th c.		good	
Specimen live oaks: Gatehouse, Orton mansion, Roger Moore Cemetery	18th – 19th c.		good	
Bald cypress allée	1908-1916		good	
Bald cypress pond	ca. 19th c.		good	
Remnants of camphor grove	1935-1940	2013, tree clearing	poor	
Remnant row of eastern red cedars	1908	2012, road removed	good	
Live oaks on earthen mounds	1910s	1935	good	
Camellias and azaleas	1935-1940	2012, thinning and transplanting	fair to good	
Sand Dam Pond			fair	Once a possible water reservoir, the pond now supports bald cypress and other vegetation.
Agricultural features				
Rice field complex, including Front North, Front South, #1, #9, and Back Rice Fields; dikes, access roads, and ditches; water control structures; Orton Pond dam; Canal #1; Canal #2; and Orton Pond Outfall	1820s to 1930s	Repaired over time, 2012 permit (ACOE) to restore	fair to good	
South Field	by 1864	Rotation of crop plantings	good	
West Field	1935-1940	Rotation of crop plantings	good	
Archaeological sites				
31BW548**, Orton Graveyard	19th c.			

Resource Name	Date of Origin	Modification Date(s)	Condition 2012	Notes
31BW787**1,18th- and 19th-century domestic site	18th c., 19th c.			
31BW787**2, Roger Moore Cemetery, including brick vaults and tombs, grave markers, large live oak cluster, and views to rice fields	1750s	1910s, repairs to tombs		
31BW787**4, late 19th- through mid-twentieth-century settlement	19th c.			
31BW787**5, late 19th-century domestic site	19th c.			
31BW787**6, late 19th-century domestic site	19th c.			
31BW787**7, 19th- and 20th-century domestic sites	19th c., 20th c.			
31BW787**9, Bonnie House site	Late 19th or early 20th c.			
31BW787**12, 19th-century domestic site	19th c.			
31BW787**13, 19th-century domestic site	19th c.			
31BW787**14, eighteenth- to nineteenth-century domestic or industrial site	18th c., 19th c.			
31BW787**15, 18th- to 19th-century domestic or industrial site	18th c.-19th c.			
31BW787**16, 18th- to 19th-century domestic or industrial site	18th c.-19th c.			
Buildings - 8				Criterion C, Architecture
Orton mansion	1729-1732	ca.1840; 1909-1910; 2011-2012	good	
Luola's Chapel	1915		good	
Greenhouse #1and Head-house	1935-1940		fair	
Power House/Barn	ca.1890-1910	relocated [date]	fair	
Elijah's House	ca.1885-1905		fair	
Gatehouse	1910-1915		good	

Resource Name	Date of Origin	Modification Date(s)	Condition 2012	Notes
Garage/workshop	1915-1925		fair	
Equipment shed #1	ca.1950-1955		Fair	
Structures - 2				Criterion C, Architecture
North entrance gate	ca.1910-1916			
South entrance gate	ca.1910-1916			
Objects - 31				Criterion D, Archaeology
22 potentially significant magnetic anomalies				
7 significant objects, sonar target				
2 objects, marsh and low tide survey				

Table 2. Noncontributing Resources

Resource Name	Date of Origin	Modification Date(s)	Condition 2012	Notes
Sites - 4				
31BW787**3, prehistoric and historic remains	Prehist.-19th c.			
31BW787**8, 20th-century structural remains	20th c.			
Low incidence of prehistoric and historic remains (31BW787**10)	Prehist.-19th c.			
Low incidence of prehistoric remains (31BW787**11)	Prehist.			
Buildings - 6				
Caretaker's House	2004	2013	Good	
Plantation Office	2006-2007	2013	Good	
Greenhouse #2	2005-2006		Fair	
Stable	ca.1990-		Good	

Resource Name	Date of Origin	Modification Date(s)	Condition 2012	Notes
	1994			
Equipment shed #2	2011		Good	
Barbeque pavilion	ca.1960		Good	
Structures - 2				
Tennis courts	2012		Good	
Concrete pavilion	2012		Good	
Objects - 116				Criterion D, Archaeology
88 magnetic anomalies, including small single objects, modern objects, degraded cable, and slightly larger objects				
19 non-significant objects, sonar target				
9 objects, marsh and low tide survey				

[1] Brunswick County Deed Book 3104, Page 0552.

[2] Michael Trinkley, Ph.D. and Debi Hacker, *Historical Synopsis and Archaeological Reconnaissance of Orton and Kendal Plantations, Brunswick County, North Carolina*. Chicora Research Contribution 546, August 2012, 188-189.

[3] Orton guestbooks, 1910-1960; first Sprunt book, 1910-1922; February 17, 1918. Orton Collection.

[4] U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Wilmington District, Public Notice, Corps Action ID # SAW-2011-00624, issued October 5, 2011.

[5] U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Wilmington District, Public Notice, Corps Action ID # SAW-2011-00624, issued October 5, 2011.

[6] Trinkley et al.

[7] Gordon P. Watts Jr., Ph.D, *A Remote-Sensing Archaeological Survey of the Cape Fear River, Intertidal Zone and Marsh Reconnaissance Along the Orton Plantation Waterfront, Brunswick County, North Carolina* (Washington, North Carolina: Tidewater Atlantic Research, Inc., 2012.

[8] Trinkley et al.

[9] Trinkley et al., 163, referencing survey conducted by North Carolina's Office of State Archaeology, OSA site form for 31BW548**, coding date of 4/24/96.

[10] Trinkley et al., 163-170.

[11] Trinkley et al., 172-177.

[12] Trinkley et al., 172-173

[13] Trinkley et al., 174, citing "Pilgrimage to Old Brunswick," *The Orphans' Friend and Masonic Journal*, Oxford, NC, April 20, 1917.

[14] Trinkley et al., 178-198.

[15] Michael Trinkley, Ph.D. and Debi Hacker, *Historical Synopsis and Archaeological Reconnaissance of Orton and Kendal Plantations, Brunswick County, North Carolina*. Chicora Research Contribution 546, August 2012, 188-189.

[16] Gordon P. Watts Jr., Ph.D, *A Remote-Sensing Archaeological Survey of the Cape Fear River, Intertidal Zone and Marsh Reconnaissance Along the Orton Plantation Waterfront, Brunswick County, North Carolina* (Washington, North Carolina: Tidewater Atlantic Research, Inc., 2012.

[17] National Register of Historic Places, Orton Plantation Historic District, Brunswick County, North Carolina, 1972.

[18] Ibid.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

[X] A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

[X] B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

[X] C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

[X] D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

Property is:

[ ] A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

[ ] B removed from its original location.

[ ] C a birthplace or grave.

[ ] D a cemetery.

[ ] E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

[ ] F a commemorative property.

[ ] G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Agriculture
Architecture
Landscape architecture
Politics/government
Social history
Archaeology

Period of Significance

1751 – ca.1960

Significant Dates

n/a

Significant Person

Hill, Dr. Frederick Jones

Moore, Roger

Cultural Affiliation

African American

Architect/Builder/Artist

Murchison Jr., Kenneth McKenzie – architect

Sturtevant, Robert Swan – landscape architect

Williams, Morley Jeffers and Nathalia – landscape architect/architect

Period of Significance Justification

See statement of significance paragraph.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

n/a

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

Orton Plantation occupies a storied place in the history of the Lower Cape Fear region and the state of North Carolina. Over the course of nearly three centuries, since its core lands were acquired by Roger Moore in the 1720s, Orton achieved a legendary status and gained recognition locally, regionally, and across the state. The Orton Plantation Boundary Increase and Additional Documentation comprises some 826 acres of woodlands, former rice fields, roads, water courses, two cemeteries, and gardens, together with the mansion house of the same name that has served as the plantation seat in successive guises since ca. 1730-1732, a private family chapel, and associated outbuildings. Orton Plantation Boundary Increase and Additional Documentation meets National Register Criteria A, B, C, and D, and holds local significance in the areas of landscape architecture, social history, and archaeology, and statewide significance in the areas of agriculture, architecture, and politics/government. The period of significance begins in 1751 with Roger Moore's death and interment in the cemetery where his imposing brick vault and those of other members of his family stand. Shaded by live oaks, this family cemetery is located at the north end of the promontory on which Orton, the mansion, holds the place of honor. The period of significance ends in ca. 1960 by which time repairs to its fabric, the landscape, and plantings in its gardens, following on the destruction of Hurricane Hazel on 15-16 October 1954, and the plans for the scroll garden, overlooks, and lagoon bridge designed in 1958-1959 by Morley Jeffers Williams and his wife, Nathalia, were effected. Over this period the property has held associations with a series of people important in its life and on a larger civic stage, most notably Roger Moore (1694-1751), its founder, and Dr. Frederick Jones Hill (1792-1861), who oversaw its antebellum prosperity as a rice plantation and introduced the bill in the House of Commons in 1839 that was reconciled with a senate bill and produced the legislation creating a public school system in North Carolina. Roger Moore is associated with the property's significance in the areas of social history and agriculture. Frederick Jones Hill is associated with its significance in the areas of social history, agriculture, architecture, and politics/government.

Orton's significance in the areas of agriculture and social history begin with the establishment of the plantation here in the later 1720s on a small portion of the many thousands of acres Roger Moore acquired through land grants. Exactly when Roger Moore first called this place Orton is unclear, although it is first identified by that name in his will in 1748. However, he created and gave name to a plantation that among so very few others of its date in North Carolina has survived and maintained its storied identify to the present. And it was Roger Moore, a founder of Brunswick Town, a seat of colonial government and the residence of royal governors, who exercised an early, critical leadership role in the settlement of the Lower Cape Fear region that evolved into one of the wealthiest plantation communities in coastal North Carolina and encouraged the development of Wilmington. He initiated naval stores and timbering operations at Orton Plantation by the 1730s, which became a principal, sustained agricultural operation with timbering continuing as an important enterprise to the present.

Roger Moore's dynastic intentions for Orton and Kendal, his adjoining plantation, were short lived and both had passed from his family before the Revolution. William Dry (1720-1781) and Richard Quince (1717-1778), both important figures in the Lower Cape Fear, came into possession of Orton in the 1760s and held it during the first of two periods in its history about which operations on its lands are little known. In 1796, Richard Quince's grandson, also of the same name, sold Orton and its 4,000 acres to General Benjamin Smith (1756-1826), a grandson of Roger Moore. General Benjamin Smith, who served as governor of North Carolina from 1810 to 1811, is the first of Orton's owners who is known to have successfully cultivated rice in its fields and to have had a rice mill on the plantation. Rice cultivation, centered in North Carolina in Brunswick County, brought wealth to a host of planters on the Cape Fear River up to 1865. General Smith and his wife Sarah, the daughter of William Dry, lived lavishly, incurred large debts, lost virtually all of their property, and died impoverished. Orton was repossessed by General Smith's creditor, the Bank of Cape Fear, advertised for sale at public auction in 1824, and held for a year by Joseph Alston Hill (1800-1835), who in May 1826 sold Orton and its then-4,975 acres, to his cousin, Dr. Frederick Jones Hill.

Dr. Hill had a distinguished career as a physician, legislator, Episcopal layman, and civic leader in Wilmington and the state. His years at Orton, from 1826 to 1854, are among its most celebrated. He brought the plantation to an unprecedented prosperity as a rice plantation and ca. 1840, he rebuilt Roger Moore's house as one of the first temple-form private residences in North Carolina. He is better known, however, as an advocate for education and his introduction of "A Bill for the establishment of Common Schools" in the legislative session of 1838-1839, which was combined with a Senate Bill, amended, and passed by the General Assembly on 7 January 1839. In 1854 Dr. Hill sold Orton, its 4,975 acres plus acquired lands, and some 61 slaves for $100,000 to Thomas Calizance Miller (1814-1865), the husband of his niece. Mr. Miller increased the productivity and profitably of rice culture at Orton, prospered as its owner through the Civil War, but died in June 1865, leaving an insolvent estate.

Orton Plantation was again advertised for public auction in 1872 and 1873, but it was not until 1874 that the plantation was sold to Isaac Bates Grainger for $6,500. Mr. Grainger's ownership of Orton was short-lived as was that of its next owner, Currer Richardson Roundell (18__-1876). In 1877 a group of four investors, including Mr. Grainger and Kenneth McKenzie Murchison purchased Orton largely, it appears, for the value of its timber. In 1884 Mr. Murchison (1831-1904), a wealthy North Carolina-born businessman then residing in Brooklyn, New York, became the sole owner of Orton.

Orton's renewal in the closing decades of the nineteenth century and its existence to the present owe almost entirely to the foresight, enterprise, and stewardship of Kenneth McKenzie Murchison--and his heirs. Alfred Moore Waddell, one of the earliest historians of the Lower Cape Fear, appreciated Mr. Murchison's achievement in an account published in 1905 in the first volume of the *Biographical History of North Carolina From Colonial Times to the Present*, writing that "he expended a large amount of money in restoring it to its former condition and improving it in various ways to satisfy his taste." Luola Murchison Sprunt (1858-1916), Mr. Murchison's daughter, acquired Orton in 1909 and with her husband, James Sprunt, launched a series of improvements, including the addition of wings to Dr. Hill's antebellum house, new entrance gates, a gatehouse, and a private chapel that, with Mrs. Sprunt's death in 1916, became her memorial. The architect for this work was Mrs. Sprunt's brother, Kenneth McKenzie Murchison Jr., a New York-based architect. These improvements were a part of a larger renaissance at Orton Plantation that included extensive landscape improvements to the property and coincided with a renewed interest in the long-abandoned colonial town of Brunswick. The Sprunts' historical interests culminated in 1914 with the publication of James Sprunt's *Chronicles of the Cape Fear River*, a history of Wilmington and the Cape Fear region that has yet to be bettered.

The early twentieth-century gardening efforts were but the prelude to those of the Sprunts' only son, James Laurence Sprunt (1886-1973) and his (second) wife Annie Gray Nash (Ruffin) Sprunt (1886-1978). They engaged Robert Swan Sturtevant (1889-1955) for the first known professional plan for the Orton gardens coincident with their establishment of the Orton Plantation Nursery that specialized in camellias and azaleas. That plan and its planting out as both pleasure and display gardens produced the expansive estate gardens, managed by their son, Kenneth Murchison Sprunt (1920-2011), from ca. 1946-1947 into the 1990s, that were widely photographed and published in the mid-twentieth century. The gardens drew thousands of visitors to the plantation, which had become an icon of antebellum history and "Old South" imagery and the subject of a color film produced by Tom Draper in ca. 1948-1949. However, in truth, the scene at Orton was largely a product of the early twentieth-century American Country House Movement and the commitment to Orton exercised by the Sprunt family and James Laurence Sprunt, whose gravestone in Oakdale Cemetery bears "Envisioned and established the Gardens at Orton Plantation" as his epitaph. Today, portions of Mr. Sturtevant's plan and some plantings, later features designed by Morley Jeffers Williams in 1958-1959, as well as relocated plant material and the greenhouse, are what remain of this important chapter of Orton's history and the landscape history of the Lower Cape Fear region, the state, and the South. Orton Plantation remained in the ownership of members of the Sprunt family until 2010, when Louis Moore Bacon, a lineal descendant of Roger Moore, acquired some 8,400 of its 14,000-plus acres.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Historical Background and Social History Context

Introduction

Orton is situated about twelve miles due south of Wilmington, North Carolina, and adjoins the ruins of Brunswick, the colonial town founded by Maurice (and Roger) Moore in 1726 that is now a North Carolina State Historic Site. First a part of Bath County, then in Archdale precinct, and next in Craven County, Orton and its lands became a part of New Hanover Precinct/County in 1729, when the southern part of Craven was set apart as a new political jurisdiction and named in honor of the House of Hanover. Next, in 1764, Orton became a part of Brunswick County when parts of New Hanover and Bladen counties were combined to form a new county. It, too, was named Brunswick in honor of the earlier, eponymous

town and the royal house whose son succeeded his grandfather on the English throne in 1760 as George III (1738-1820). Orton remains in Brunswick County, its chief landmark to the present.

Orton, which gained its identity as a place in colonial North Carolina in about the late 1720s as the home plantation of Roger Moore (1694-1751), has enjoyed a legendary status in succeeding generations as it became an icon of North Carolina history and a celebrated landscape of the American South. It originally comprised a plantation of "about 2500 Acres" that Roger Moore bequeathed to his second son, William Moore. In 1796 when Benjamin Smith (1756-1826), Roger Moore's grandson, acquired Orton from Richard Quince (III) it was simply described in the deed as "all that plantation parcel or tract of land well known by the name of Orton situated lying and being on the west side of the Cape Fear River and bounded thereby. . ." which, together with 1,280 acres acquired as grants by Richard Quince (I), comprised 4,000 acres.[1] In 1824 when Orton was offered up for sale at auction by Benjamin Smith's creditor, the Bank of Cape Fear, the plantation was described as comprising 4,975 acres.

In 1872, following further enlargements by subsequent owner-proprietors, Dr. Frederick Jones Hill in 1842 and Thomas Calizance Miller in 1855-1857, Orton's extent was redefined as 9,026 acres by its first known professional survey. That was the property acquired by Kenneth McKenzie Murchison, in part in 1877 and in full in 1884, and conveyed by his children in 1909 to their sister, Luola Murchison Sprunt, the wife of James Sprunt. Orton was enlarged again by purchases in the 1910s to encompass acreages on its north side. In 1912 Mrs. Sprunt purchased a tract of 394 acres, which was a part of Roger Moore's Kendal plantation that adjoined the original Orton lands on the north side of Orton Creek. Next, in 1918, James Sprunt purchased the remaining part of Kendal plantation and the residual part of the Lilliput plantation that lay on the north side of Kendal. Doing so he added about 4,000 acres to Orton which remained in the ownership of his descendants until 2010.[2] In January 1921 Eric Norden (1869-1946), the Swedish-born Wilmington civil engineer, produced the first modern professional survey and plat of Orton, titled "Orton & Kendall Plantations," which was based on the earlier surveys of J. N. Bennett in 1872, C. R. Humphreys in 1908, that of Mintz & Taylor (undated), and his own field work at Kendal.

Today, after some additional small increases and further professional surveys over time, Orton is known to comprise about 14,000 acres held in four ownerships. The largest of these, some 8,400 acres owned since 2010 by Louis Moore Bacon in Orton Plantation Holdings, LLC, encompasses the historic core of the plantation, the plantation seat, other buildings and outbuildings, white and black cemeteries, gardens and grounds, woodlands, marshes, former rice fields, the upper (north) and lower (south) gated entrances, roadways, ponds, fields, and sites of numerous long-lost buildings and facilities that are historically known as Orton, together with a significant part of the Kendal plantation, including the site of its weatherboarded frame seat that burned in 1919. Mr. Bacon's holding also includes a portion of Orton Pond, the historic impoundment first created by Roger Moore to power his sawmills, which provided water power for Orton's successive saw, grist, and rice mills, fresh water for cultivating the plantation's rice fields, and, for most of the twentieth century, a splendid recreational and ornamental water feature for the Sprunt family, their friends, and guests. Members of the Sprunt family in three entities hold the remaining 5,600 acres, comprising most of Orton Pond, woodlands, marshes, fields, a hunting camp, and most of the colonial Lilliput plantation of Eleazar Allen (d. 1749), including the site of his long-lost brick house and the Allen burial ground.

Roger Moore, the Moore family, and Orton

Throughout its existence Orton has been owned by remarkable figures who left indelible imprints on its life, its history, and its landscape. Other owners have been stewards in their time, leaving little evidence of their tenure except for their names in the ownership records. When Roger Moore left his native South Carolina for the Lower Cape Fear, he came as a scion of privilege, with established social, political, and financial status. His father, James Moore (ca. 1650-1706), emigrated from Barbados to South Carolina by about 1674, became a successful planter in the Goose Creek community, and held a number of political offices that culminated with his service as governor of South Carolina from 1700 to 1703. Roger Moore was also a child of privilege on his maternal side. His mother, Margaret Barringer (ca. 1660-1720), was the daughter of Benjamin Berringer, a wealthy planter in Barbados, and his wife, Margaret Foster, who, as Mr. Berringer's widow, married John Yeamans. John Yeamans (ca. 1604-1674) was a leading figure in the attempt to settle a colony from Barbados at Charles Town in today's Brunswick County, North Carolina, in 1665, which failed in 1667, and as Sir John Yeamans served as governor of South Carolina from 1672 until his death in 1674.[3] In addition to being the step-grandson and son of governors of South Carolina, Roger Moore also enjoyed the privilege of being the brother of a governor of the colony. James Moore Jr. (ca. 1682-1724) was governor of South Carolina from 1719 into 1721 when he was succeeded by Francis Nicholson, the colony's first royal governor.[4] Roger Moore's leave-taking of South Carolina was calculated. He, his

brothers Maurice and Nathaniel, and others from South Carolina with close family and social ties came to the Cape Fear region and formed a wealthy close-knit plantation society that over time came to be described as "The Family."

Permanent settlement in the Lower Cape Fear region of North Carolina occurred a near half century after that in the Albemarle region and had its enabler in the person of George Burrington (ca. 1682-1759) who came to North Carolina and took the oath of office as governor of the colony on 15 January 1724.[5] As Lawrence Lee relates in *The Lower Cape Fear in Colonial Days*, "Recognizing land as the principal attraction to new settlers, Burrington made the land available to them. He did this by the simple expedient of defying the will of the Proprietors and ignoring South Carolina's claim to the west bank of the Cape Fear River."[6] The first of Burrington's grants as governor and head of the Council, of which Maurice Moore was a member, were dated 2 June 1725. Two of these, for 640 and 1,500 acres, were to Maurice Moore. The third was awarded to Eleazar Allen and (probably) forms the original tract of Lilliput. On 25 March 1726 Maurice Moore conveyed the lands of the 640-acre grant to Roger Moore.[7] Lawrence Lee identified this acreage as the original tract of Roger Moore's plantation that he called Kendal.[8] According to tradition Roger Moore and his family occupied a house built at Kendal prior to building at Orton. If this tradition is accurate, Roger Moore's residency at Kendal was brief.

Coming to the Lower Cape Fear from the prosperous, cosmopolitan Goose Creek community, Maurice and Roger Moore well understood that the success of their proposed plantation settlement required a port town through which goods could be received and shipped and where other colonists, practicing the trades and professions necessary for the development of an agreeable community, could establish homes and places of business. The creation of such a town was the first order of business. Maurice Moore set apart 320 acres of his 1,500- acre grant for a town to be called Brunswick and went about laying out a series of 336 half-acre lots aligned on a grid with its long streets, parallel with the Cape Fear River, linked by short streets on an east/west axis. On 30 June 1726 the first sale of lots (#s 22 and 23) was made to Cornelius Harnett senior (d. 1742), identified as a "victualer" who soon built a lodging.[9] Others arrived, bought lots and built, and Brunswick developed into a sizable town and important colonial port, if not the larger place the Moores envisioned. Its status would be circumscribed by the development of a rival port called New Town/Newton (and other names), higher on the waters of the Cape Fear, that soon surpassed Brunswick and gained the name Wilmington in honor of Spencer Compton, Earl of Wilmington, who died in 1743. Nevertheless Brunswick enjoyed prestige in the later colonial period as the residence of royal governors Arthur Dobbs (1689-1765) and his successor William Tryon (1729-1788) until Governor Tryon decamped Brunswick for his new "palace" at New Bern. They resided on a small estate on the north edge of Brunswick known as Russellborough.

The lands making up the plantation Roger Moore named Orton, where he lived from ca. 1730-1732 to his death in 1751, comprise three known tracts assembled in 1728-29. (Two of these are delineated and labeled on the 1921 plat of "Orton & Kendall Plantations" by Eric Norden. On 30 March 1728 Roger Moore received a patent of 500 acres described as 500 acres "on the S. side of town creek issuing out of the W. side of Capefear River joining John Porter and the sd. creek."[10] On 11 December 1728 Maurice Moore conveyed 500 acres of his 1,500-acre 1725 grant to Roger Moore.[11] Five months later, on 2 May 1729, Roger Moore added to Orton with the receipt of a patent for 2,000 acres "on the W. side of Cape fear (river), joining Allens creek, Roger Moore, and Town Creek which Land was Taken up before the Arrival of the Lords Proprietors orders forbidding the Sale of Lands."[12] Thus, as of Spring 1729 Roger Moore's Orton and Kendal plantations comprised about 3,640 acres centered on the waterway flowing east into the Cape Fear that came to be known as Orton Creek and whose impoundment provided the critical water power to operate Roger Moore's mills. Roger Moore is believed to have then built the brick house at Orton, which was probably completed in about 1730-1732.

When built and occupied by Roger Moore, his (second) wife Katherine Rhett Moore, the couple's four known children, William, Sarah, Mary, and Ann, and George Moore, the son of Roger Moore's first marriage, the plantation seat at Orton became one of the few known brick houses of its date in colonial North Carolina. At present no known image of Roger Moore's house, prior to its ca. 1840 overbuilding, exists. The long-lost brick plantation seat of Eleazar Allen at Lilliput, adjoining Kendal on the north, is believed to be its close contemporary: its design, finish, and appearance are also unknown. The closest known surviving contemporary house in North Carolina, the Newbold-White House in Perquimans County, has been dated by dendrochronology to ca. 1730. Both Roger Moore and Eleazar Allen are noted as landowners, on their respective plantations, on Moseley's map of 1733, which is the first of a series of eighteenth-century maps whose notations reflect the increasing settlement on the waters of the Cape Fear River.

Roger Moore and his family were comfortably ensconced at Orton in June 1734 when an English traveler came to the Lower Cape Fear. His account of extended travels in the American South was published in London in 1735 as *A New Voyage to Georgia. By a Young Gentleman. Giving an Account of His Travels to South Carolina, and Part of North*

Carolina. He and his traveling part set out from Charleston, South Carolina, for the Lower Cape Fear on 10 June 1734 and they crossed the ferry at Lockwood's Folly in the evening of 15 June.

> We left Lockwood's Folly about eight the next morning, and by two reached the town of Brunswick, which is the chief town in Cape Fear; . . . . We dined there that afternoon. Mr. Roger More hearing we were come, was so kind as to send fresh horses for us to come up to his house, which we did, and were kindly received by him; he being the chief gentleman in all Cape Fear. His house is built of brick, and exceeding pleasantly situated about two miles from the town, and about half a mile from the river; though there is a creek comes close up to the door, between two beautiful meadows about three miles length. He has a prospect of the town of Brunswick, and of another beautiful brick house, a building about half a mile from him, belonging to Eleazer Allen, Esq., late speaker to the Commons House of Assembly, in the province of South Carolina . . . . The river is wonderfully pleasant, being, next to Savannah, the finest on all the continent.[13]

After exploring the upper reaches of the Cape Fear and its branches, including an excursion to Lake Waccamaw, and stays at several plantations, the English traveler stopped at Orton on his return on 10 August 1734 and spent the night with the Moore family. The English traveler's description of Roger Moore as "being the chief gentleman in all Cape Fear" reflected the circumstances of his life and the status he would enjoy until his death in 1751.[14] Roger Moore's Orton plantation was his residence, however, its acreage was but a fractional part of his vast real estate holdings. Between 1725 and 1730 he obtained 23,095 acres on the Northeast and Northwest Branches of the Cape Fear River through land grants. Slightly more than one-half of the total, 12,740 acres, lay along the Northeast Branch, and of this amount 3,720 acres were located at or near Rocky Point, north of Wilmington, which the English traveler described as "the finest place in all Cape Fear."[15] Roger Moore's brother, Maurice Moore, lived at Rocky Point. In 1735 Roger Moore was awarded another series of grants totaling 5,032 acres of which 802 acres readily appear to be associated with his expansion of Orton and 600 acres were at Blue Banks.[16] His last significant grants came in 1736 to 1738 when he acquired another 1,965 acres including a 1,000-acre tract at Blue Banks.[17] Between 1725 and 1738 Roger Moore received 30,092 acres through grants, nearly all, if not all, of it in today's New Hanover, Brunswick, and Pender counties. Beginning in 1732 Roger Moore held certain local and political offices, including those of justice of the peace in New Hanover County and assistant justice of the General Court, of which his service on the royal Council, from 1734 until his death, was the most important.

On about 4 January 1747 Roger Moore married Mrs. Mary Vail (Jones) Wilson as his third wife. Mary Vail (ca. 1706-ca. 1792), a daughter of Jeremiah Vail, was first married to Frederick Jones II by whom she had two known sons, Harding Jones (b. 1736) and Frederick Jones III. Her second husband was William Wilson. Mary Vail Wilson brought her own wealth to her marriage with Roger Moore. To protect her assets and his own, destined principally for his five surviving children, he prepared his will within months of their nuptials.

Roger Moore signed his will on 7 March 1747/8, making bequests to each of his children and his wife. Roger Moore died between 30 June 1750, when he added a codicil to his will, and May 1751, when it was entered for probate. He was buried in a brick vault at Orton, probably beside one containing the remains of his second wife. The principal bequests were to his two sons, George and William. To George he bequeathed "all that part of my Plantation Called by the name of Kendal "Bounding to the Southward by the Creek that runs up to my Mill . . . and bounded to the Northward by Mr. Allens Creek with the Little Island of Marsh fronting the said Plantation in the River and all other my Lands bounding on the said Creek . . . " and other property. Roger Moore bequeathed to William Moore "all that (part of) my Plantation called Orton where I now Dwell Joining on Kendall as is before bounded by this my Will with all my Land bounded to the Southward on the Creek where my Mill now is being in all about 2500 Acres," and other named tracts. William was also bequeathed "all the stock of Horses and Cattle and Sheep that shall properly belong to and be on my Plantation Orton at my Decease with all my Plate and Household furniture" with the consideration that William Moore pay his older brother one hundred pounds "two years after my Decease." The slaves were to be divided into one-fifth parts for the five siblings.[18]

At the signing of his will, only one of Roger Moore's three daughters was married, and he made cautious provisions for bequests to them in regard to their likely marriages. The circumstances of the legacy payments by his sons and executors out of his residual estate were described and defined. The wording in this provision, apparently describing the residual estate, "there being Twenty odd Thousand Acres of Land and Near Two Hundred and fifty Slaves with the Stock of Horses Cattle &c besides the Debts due to me not before bequeathed," gives rise to different interpretations of the total lands and slaves held by Mr. Moore that are not easily resolved. Neither is it clear how many of the slaves were at Orton, what number lived at Kendal, or whether others lived and worked on Roger Moore's other holdings.[19]

Roger Moore's dynastic plans to settle his two sons, George and William, at Kendal and Orton, respectively, proved short-lived. Fate did not favor William Moore who signed a very simple will on 18 November 1754 and died young, probably in the middle to later 1750s, leaving his widow, Mary Paris Davis Moore, and a young, underage son named Roger Moore.[20] In 1764 William Moore's executors assigned the heavily encumbered essay to William Dry, a first-cousin of William Moore, and Richard Quince.[21] William Dry (1720-1781) was a wealthy planter and the owner of Belvedere Plantation near Wilmington.[22] Richard Quince (1717-1778) was a successful merchant at Brunswick and a planter who became the sole owner of Orton by, and probably well before, 31 March 1775, when he received two land grants totaling 1,280 acres at the west end of Orton Pond.[23] This was the first of a series of known additions to Orton that continued into the twentieth century.

The following year Orton was the scene of a Revolutionary War encounter involving Lieutenant General Charles Cornwallis (1738-1805). In his *A History of New Hanover County* Alfred Moore Waddell describes the event.

> This was the first appearance of Cornwallis in the South, . . . on Sunday May 12th, he began his career by landing nine hundred men at Orton with the intention of capturing an outpost of one hundred and fifty men under Maj. Wm. Davis of the first Regiment, Continental Line, who were stationed at the mill on that plantation; but Davis's pickets gave the alarm in time, and he retired, taking his supplies with him, after killing one, wounding several, and capturing a sergeant of Cornwallis's celebrated 33rd Regiment. After burning the mill, Cornwallis went two or three miles down to General Howe's plantation at Howe's Point, which he plundered, carrying away as the spoils of his warfare about twenty steers for his beef-eaters.[24]

The mill destroyed at Orton was surely the sawmill noted on both the Collet and Munson maps, which was rented by Captain Robert Ellis and referenced in the 1764 William Moore estate assignment.[25]

Fate, in its time, also thwarted Roger and Maurice Moore's plans for Brunswick Town but not until after it had prospered in the colonial period, served as the home for successive royal governors, and become the site of the most sophisticated church building known to have been built in colonial North Carolina. The ruins of St. Philip's Episcopal Church remain impressive to the present and serve as the anchor of the North Carolina State Historic Site at Brunswick Town. But Brunswick Town and Roger Moore's important role in its creation was of greater significance. For a short, critical period Brunswick Town was the center of a community of pioneering planters that evolved into one of the wealthiest plantation societies in eastern North Carolina. Brunswick Town was the nursery for this settlement and the stepping stone for the place that became Wilmington. Described in 1735 as "the chief gentleman in all Cape Fear," Roger Moore was a patriarch whose legacy transcended family and gave rise to the development of place in the Lower Cape Fear.

Benjamin Smith and Orton

On 23 January 1796 Richard Quince III (1769-1809) sold Orton to Benjamin Smith, who was identified in the deed as "Brigadier General of the District of Wilmington and Speaker of the Senate of the State of North Carolina," for the sum of $5,200. The deed described Orton as

> ...all that plantation parcel or tract of land well known by the name of Orton situated lying and being on the west side of the Cape Fear River and bounded thereby and all the land thereunto belonging or ever appertaining on each side of Orton Creek & which was divided of by the late Roger Moore Esquire to his son William Moore by him devised unto his son Roger Moore and by him sold unto Richard Quince (,) grandfather of Richd. Quince aforesaid party hereunto and also two other tracts of or parcels of land adjoining the said Orton land containing six hundred and forty acres each which were patented to the said Richard Quince the elder (,) the whole of the above tracts & parcels containing four thousand acres.[26]

Benjamin Smith is the lone owner of Orton whose life has been the subject of a full length biography. *General Benjamin Smith: A Biography of the North Carolina Governor*, written by Alan D. Watson (b.1942), a modern-day historian of the Lower Cape Fear, was published in 2011. In its pages Mr. Watson traces the remarkable trajectory of Benjamin Smith's life as a lawyer, planter, county official, state legislator, and benefactor of the University of North Carolina, that culminated in his election and service as governor from 1810 to 1811. Benjamin Smith married Sarah Dry (17__-1821), one of two daughters of William Dry and Mary Jane Rhett, and also a kinswoman in the extended Moore family. The biographer also documents a parallel arc in Benjamin Smith's private life of lavish hospitality, overspending, self-aggrandizement, poor judgment in adopting the role of providing surety for the obligations of others, and obvious mismanagement that led to a

series of retrenchments in the 1810s and finally, in the last years of his life, to abject poverty and utter dependence on a few friends who had remained loyal to him and his wife. He lost Orton, the last of his prized properties, to the Bank of Cape Fear, his long-time creditor, in 1824. He died in distressed circumstances in Smithville (Southport) on 26 January 1826.

At this distance Benjamin Smith's intentions for Orton in 1796 are unclear. Belvedere Plantation and his town house in Wilmington, together with a house in Smithville and the summer refuge on Bald Head Island, appear to have remained his principal residences until circumstances forced him to give them up, one by one, or they were claimed by his creditors. Nevertheless he soon launched certain initiatives at Orton. By 1797 he had placed a trusted slave, named Bob, at Orton and secured for him the right to keep a gun "to preserve stock and kill game for the family."[27] That same year he gained permission to repair a grist mill at Orton powered by a "never failing mill stream."[28] In 1800 Benjamin Smith listed 199 slaves who toiled at his properties in Brunswick County.[29] He was then the largest slaveholder in Brunswick County.

On 23 March 1812 Benjamin Smith executed a deed of trust with William Belvidere Meares (1787-1841) and John Rutherford London (1786-1832), the son of the president of the Bank of Cape Fear, and the president, directors, and company of the Bank of Cape Fear to secure an indebtedness to the bank of $26,214.27. Belvedere Plantation and its 1,010 acres, Orton and its 4,000 acres, and seven additional tracts comprising 5,226 acres, altogether totaling 10,236 acres, were included in the deed. Benjamin Smith was to "remain in possession of the aforesaid property & have and enjoy all the rents and profits of the same until a sale shall be made in pursuance of and by virtue of these presents . . ."[30] This action bought little time: his descent continued. In 1815 the Bank of Cape Fear offered Governor Smith's mortgaged properties up at auction. The Smiths lost Belvedere and their Wilmington town house, but retained Orton, which then became their primary residence, through the generosity of friends.[31]

This extraordinary chapter of Lower Cape Fear history came to an end with events in the 1820s. Sarah Dry Smith's health failed in autumn 1821, and she died in the evening of 21 November 1821 in the couple's ill-kept house in Smithville. She was buried near the graves of her parents in the old churchyard at St. Philip's in Brunswick. By 1824 Orton was again in the possession of the Bank of Cape Fear, which advertised its auction at the New Hanover County Courthouse in Wilmington on 1 December 1824 in an advertisement published in Charleston's *City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser*.[32]

On 27 January 1825 a deed of trust between Joseph Alston Hill (1800-1835) and the Bank of Cape Fear was executed for the sale of Orton, its 4,975 acres, the house and surviving improvements, and eleven slaves for $6,392.66.[33] Joseph Alston Hill was descended from both Maurice and Nathaniel Moore who, with Roger Moore, formed the family triumvirate that settled in the Lower Cape Fear.[34] Joseph Alston Hill's tenure as owner of Orton was among the shortest in its history. On 24 May 1826 he sold Orton, its acreage, and its improvements, for $8,000 to his cousin, Dr. Frederick Jones Hill.[35] Four months earlier, on 27 January 1826, Governor Benjamin Smith suffered an ignominious death in Smithville (Southport). His body was buried in Smithville and the remains later interred in St. Philip's churchyard at Brunswick.

Architectural evidence visible until 2012 on the attic level of Orton indicates that Roger Moore's brick house was raised to a full two stories with a gable front attic, with windows in its east and west gable ends, prior to Dr. Hill's dramatic ca. 1840 Greek Revival-style overbuilding. Given Benjamin Smith's proclivities, that work might have been executed by him. However, the substantial difference in the price Joseph Alston Hill paid for Orton and eleven slaves in 1825, $6,392.66, and the price of $8,000 which Dr. Frederick Jones Hill paid for Orton, less the slaves, sixteen months later, suggests that the enlargement of the house was effected ca. 1825 for Joseph Alston Hill. The late Federal-style finish of the molded window surrounds in the west gable end, visible in the attic of Orton until being covered over in 2012, supports that date. For reasons now unknown Joseph Alston Hill decided against becoming a planter and continued to practice law.

Orton's Antebellum Ascendancy

Dr. Frederick Jones Hill's purchase of Orton marked the beginning of a brilliant era in its history.

On 24 May 1826 when Frederick Jones Hill (1792-1861) acquired Orton Plantation he was thirty-four years of age, married, a successful medical doctor, and a prominent member of Wilmington society. The son of John Hill (1761-1832) and Elizabeth Jones Hill, he was a grandson of William Hill (1737-1783) and Margaret Moore Hill, and a great-grandson of Nathaniel Moore--Roger Moore's brother. He was born on the family's plantation, Farifields, on the Northeast Branch of the Cape Fear River, and educated at the University of North Carolina and the College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York City. In 1812 he married Ann Ivy Watters of Chatham County, North Carolina, and in 1825 he acquired Watters

family lands near Pittsboro, the county seat, which became the couple's summer residence and was given the name "Kentucky."[36]

While the proprietor of Orton, Dr. Hill also played an important political role as Brunswick County's representative in the State Senate in 1835 and its representative in the North Carolina House of Commons in 1836, 1838, and 1840. In 1835 he was also elected a trustee of the University of North Carolina and held that position until 1860. His earliest service on the board may well have informed his most important and lasting legislative achievement. On 10 December 1838 Dr. Hill delivered a speech advocating state support for public education and ended his oration stating "In a government founded upon the popular will, Education is necessary for all classes, and for each individual in the community--and it is the duty of such Government to take care that this great end is secured." Dr. Hill subsequently introduced "A Bill for the establishment of Common Schools" in the House of Commons. The language in his bill and another introduced in the State Senate was reconciled and on 7 January 1839 the two chambers of the state legislature approved the act creating a common school system for North Carolina.[37]

While his brief, highly important political career came to an end, his role as an Episcopal layman continued to the end of his life. In late December 1832 The Right Reverend Levi Silliman Ives, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina, arrived in Wilmington on his annual visitation. At the 1833 annual convention the bishop gave an account of his visit to the Lower Cape Fear region that had extended to 10 January 1833.

> During my visitation here, I spent a day or two at Orton, the seat of Dr. Frederick Hill, and visited the walls of an ante-revolutionary Church, situated about two miles distant, amid the ruins of the old town of Brunswick. These walls, 85 by 62 feet, are in a state of almost entire preservation, and by being newly roofed and repaired, would still furnish a commodious place of public worship to the inhabitants of a neighboring settlement.[38]

On 27 April 1842 Dr. Hill made an entry for an eighty-five acre tract adjoining Orton on its south side that included the ruins of St. Philip's Church and its adjoining burying grounds. The tract was awarded in a grant dated 28 April 1845.[39]

Dr. Hill's management of Orton appears to have been successful from the outset, with prosperity evident at every turn. His ownership of slaves increased notably from the 1830 federal census, the first in which he is listed as a resident of Brunswick County, through 1840, to the census of 1850 in which schedules document his slave ownership, his agricultural operations at Orton, and the industrial enterprises on the plantation. In 1830 the free white Hill household at Orton comprised Dr. and Mrs. Hill and three others whose identity is now unknown, including one male and one female under the age of fifteen, and a male in his 50s, all likely kin of the couple. Fifty-five slaves comprised the domestic and agricultural workforce at Orton.[40] Ten years later, in 1840, Dr. Hill owned seventy-six slaves, an increase of twenty-one, of which fifteen were under the age of ten and probably due to births in the Orton slave community. The free white household again constituted Dr. and Mrs. Hill, two females between the ages of fifteen and twenty and a male between the ages of ten and fifteen.[41] While their identities remain unknown at present one of the young females might have been Mrs. Hill's favored niece, Annie Davis, who would marry Thomas Miller in 1840.

The 1850 federal census of Brunswick County provides a wider range of information than was previously recorded in the decennial censuses. In Schedule 1, Free Inhabitants, the Orton household included Dr. Hill, identified as a "Planter" with real estate valued at $30,000, Mrs. Ann Hill, and William McKeithan, the forty-nine year old overseer who resided in the plantation seat with its owners. This household, listed as the thirty-eighth in the Town Creek District, was followed by that of Frederick Jones Lord, Dr. Hill's kinsman and agent, his wife, Columbia, and their three children in household #39, who (probably) occupied a now-lost house on the plantation. Dr. Hill was listed as the owner of seventy-seven slaves.[42]

The record of a sustained increase in agricultural and lumbering operations at Orton during Dr. Hill's tenure as a resident-owner exists in historic statistics and facts: the wealth generated in the rice fields, the upland fields, where corn, peas, and sweet potatoes were cultivated, and woodlands of Orton found its most visible expression in his ca. 1840 rebuilding of the plantation seat. The temple-form Greek Revival-style building immediately became one of the most stylish such plantation seats erected in antebellum North Carolina. Designed and detailed in the classical style favored by builders in town and country alike, Orton was one of a very few houses with full-scale, two-story classical porticos.

Given the expenditure on the rebuilding of Orton, described in an 1872 auction notice as "the late Palatial Residence of Dr. F. J. Hill," the likelihood exists that Dr. and Mrs. Hill would have undertaken improvements to the grounds of their splendid new mansion. However, at present, no contemporary improvements are known except, possibly, for the axial

causeway in the front rice fields leading to the Cape Fear River and the aged live oaks, aligned in two parallel, broken rows south of the house and flanking the old, established road to Brunswick Town, that was the principal land approach and access to Orton. The Hills were the last owners of Orton who are known to have used the house as a permanent, year-round residence. That fact and the maintenance of the property after the Civil War into the 1880s, which varied from minimal to neglect by a series of short term and multiple-investor ownerships, both contributed to the loss of any other antebellum garden features.

The documentation of antebellum outbuildings on the property is slim, appearing later in 1872, in an auction handbill and described simply as "all necessary Out-Houses, extensive Barns, Stables, &c., with Houses detached for 200 Hands." These could have been built by Dr. Hill or Orton's next owner, Thomas C. Miller. As far as can now be determined all those buildings are lost, including two that appear in one of the earliest known photographs of the mansion. Also lost is the Orton Point Light that was funded by Congress in 1848, constructed, and placed in service in 1850.[43]

In 1853 Dr. Hill, then sixty-one years of age, determined to end his career as a planter and to reestablish his and Mrs. Hill's residence in Wilmington. His sale of Orton to Thomas Calizance Miller was in the form of a self-financed mortgage arrangement in the amount of $100,000.00. The articles of agreement and the accompanying deed are dated 7 January 1854.[44] The sale comprised the 4,975-acre plantation tract he purchased of his cousin in 1826 and two fifty-acre tracts he had acquired in 1851. The conveyance also included some sixty-two slaves at Orton who were named in the deed. A second deed of 7 January 1854 conveyed for $100 the property on which the ruins of St. Philip's Church stood and rights to timber on a 300-acre tract on the south side of Orton that Dr. Hill had conveyed earlier to William McKeithan, his overseer.[45] Thomas Calizance Miller (1814-1865) was one of two sons of Alexander Calizance Miller (17__-1831), a European emigree who arrived in the United States in about 1797, and Mary Brown (1781-1836), a daughter of General Thomas Brown of Oakland Plantation in Bladen County.[46] On 14 July 1840 in Pittsboro, North Carolina, he married Anne W. Davis, a favored kinswoman of the Hills.

In 1854 when Thomas Miller acquired Orton he was an experienced planter. In 1847 he acquired Belleville (also known as Belville), one of the Waddell family plantations on the Cape Fear, that was located south of Governor Benjamin Smith's Belvedere on the west side of the Northwest Branch of the Cape Fear River. With his purchase of Orton in January 1854 Thomas C. Miller simultaneously, on 1 January 1854, sold the Belleville plantation to his younger brother Joseph Swift Miller (1816-1854), together with the lands of the adjoining Ashley plantation.[47]

As the owner of Belleville and Ashley plantations in 1850 and as the owner of Orton from 1854 to his death in 1865, Thomas C. Miller maintained a residence in Wilmington where he practiced law. He is believed to have occupied a house in the northwest corner of North Front and Chestnut streets on the site occupied since 1913 by the Murchison Building.[48] In the 1850 census his real estate was valued at $23,200. A decade later, in 1860, its valuation had increased to $85,000 and his personal property was valued at $150,000. These valuations included Orton and his slaves in Brunswick County. His household included his wife and six children; a seventh child had died in the 1850s and was buried in the family plot at Oakdale Cemetery.[49]

The 1860 federal census for Brunswick County yields important information on Orton and its agricultural operations. In a variation from the 1850 Census, when Orton was listed in the Town Creek District, Orton is listed in the county's Smithville District. In Schedule 2. - Slave Inhabitants, Thomas C. Miller is listed as the owner of 144 slaves who are housed in forty "Slave houses." (The location of these houses remains to be confirmed.) The figures reported in Schedule 4 – Productions of Agriculture provide valuable insight into the expansive operations at Orton for the year ending 1 June 1860, on the eve of the Civil War.[50]

With no indications to the contrary, the rice-dominated agricultural operations at Orton are believed to have continued in like scale, or with possible increases, during the Civil War. Surviving Confederate government vouchers for the period from April 1862 to March 1864 indicate quantities of rice straw/hay, merchantable lumber, refuse (rough/slab) lumber, cord wood, and shingles, acquired from Orton as well as the services of its blacksmiths, and the use of Mr. Miller's schooner, the "Blue Perch," for use by the officers and troops stationed at Fort Anderson and Fort Fisher and nearby.[51] With these forts being near to Orton and Wilmington's importance to both North Carolina and the Confederate cause, there was certain military activity along the course of the Cape Fear River in Brunswick County and near Orton. For periods the Orton Plantation seat was utilized by Confederate officials. However, it survived the war virtually unscathed, and not without irony, as Orton's architectural grandeur was such a prominent, visible symbol of Southern antebellum society and its slave-labor foundation.

Following the abandonment of Wilmington by Confederate forces in February 1865 and with North Carolina coming under Federal Control in April 1865, the denouement was quick. In Wilmington, Thomas C. Miller experienced the loss of the slaves who formed his work force at Orton and served as domestic servants in Wilmington, people who in turn, had comprised the majority, if not the near-entirety, of his personal property that was reported as $150,000 in the 1860 federal census. He was also responsible for the unpaid balance of $40,000 due Dr. Hill's estate for the purchase of Orton. Like so many other Southerners who had a significant indebtedness at the end of the Civil War, he was ruined. Thomas Calizance Miller died on 9 June 1865 in Wilmington and was buried beside his son in the family plot at Oakdale Cemetery. His grave remains unmarked to the present.[52]

Orton in a Period of Uncertainty, 1865-1884

The emancipation of slaves, proclaimed in 1863 by President Abraham Lincoln and put into effect in spring 1865 with the Federal occupation of North Carolina, Thomas C. Miller's death in June 1865, the indebtedness of his estate, and the many-fold results of the Civil War produced an uncertainty at Orton that was not resolved until 1884 when Kenneth McKenzie Murchison became its sole owner. The insolvency of Thomas Miller's estate and the tremendous loss represented by the emancipation of his slaves, who represented his principal personal property, left his wife and the couple's six children in dire circumstances. Her situation was further complicated by the fact that Dr. Hill's estate had not been settled. Desperate, she attempted measures to protect her interest and those of her children, but she ultimately failed in a situation made even more complex by complicated, conflicting loyalties and responsibilities. The fact that there are no stones in Oakdale Cemetery marking the graves of Dr. Hill and Mrs. Hill, her uncle and aunt, or her husband, is one indication of the unsettled character of the times and her own particular place in them. Both Orton and the extensive lands Thomas C. Miller had purchased of Enoch Robbins and added to the plantation became a part of the estate of Dr. Frederick Hill.[53]

A degree of resolution was reached in 1872 when DuBrutz Cutlar and Charles Manly Stedman, commissioners, advertised the sale of "ORTON PLANTATION, Lands Adjacent Thereto, 9,026 Acres by Actual survey" at public auction by the firm of Cronly & Morris on 22 August 1872 at the Brunswick County Courthouse at Smithville. The auction handbill lists the valuable assets of the property, including "300 Acres of Superior Rice Land . . . 8,000 acres of Pine, and a large assortment of Live Oak Timber . . . An immense Water Power" and improvements consisting of "a Two Story Dwelling House, containing 10 Rooms, Brick Basement, with all necessary Out-Houses, extensive Barns, Stables, &c., with Houses detached for 200 hands" cited as "the late Palatial Residence of Dr. F. J. Hill, deceased."[54] Either the auction did not attract bidders or any bids received were simply too low to be accepted. A second auction was scheduled and advertised for 26 February 1873 that included Dr. Hill's Wilmington residence (at today's 314 Grace Street), the couple's summer residence in Chatham County and other properties. This second auction also failed to attract a new owner for Orton.[55]

On 2 March 1874 DuBrutz Cutlar and Charles M. Stedman, commissioners, and William E. Boudinot, the surviving executor of Dr. Hill's estate, completed a court-approved private sale to Isaac Bates Grainger of two tracts comprising 7,918 acres and 1,108 acres, respectively, for $6,500.[56] Mr. Grainger was the owner of Orton Plantation for just under two years and the details of his stewardship of the property are now unknown. So, too, are the reasons that influenced his decision to sell Orton in 1876. On 11 February 1876 he and Mrs. Grainger sold Orton Plantation, less the 180-acre "Durant tract" contracted to be sold "to a certain _____ Hooper (colored)," to Currer Richardson Roundell, an Englishman, for $8,000.[57] Mr. Roundell's tenure as owner of Orton is the shortest in history. On Wednesday morning 26 July 1876, he was found dead in his room in the Manning House, a lodging in Wilmington, of a gunshot in his forehead. The account of the event(s) published on the front page of *The Morning Star* on 27 July 1876 noted his purchase of Orton "upon which he had intimated his purpose to reside and cultivate the land, having had several conversations with different gentlemen within a day or two of his death in regard to the best mode of culture, the question of procuring laborers, &c." In the afternoon of the 27th of July his body was buried from St. James Church in Oakdale Cemetery. Whether the wound was self-inflicted or accidental was never established.

The future of Orton was again in question. As his only heirs, Laura Eleanor Roundell and Mary Dorothea Lucy Roundell of Middlesex County, England, Mr. Roundell's spinster sisters, became the owners of Orton Plantation. They executed a power of attorney to William Lord DeRossett, an attorney in Wilmington, on 10 March 1877, giving him the charge to sell Orton on their behalf.[58] Meanwhile, on 18 February 1877, Mr. DeRosset published an advertisement in *The Morning Star* under the caption "ORTON Plantation For Sale!" The advertisement repeated the language of the 1872 public notice, noted Mr. Roundell's purchase of Orton, and that the plantation would be sold "FOR CASH ONLY, at a great sacrifice." In the event he did so, at the sisters' disadvantage. On 7 April 1877 he conveyed Orton and its vast acreage for $4,000 to an

ad hoc quartet of investors; David Reid Murchison, Isaac Bates Grainger, and Charles M. Stedman of Wilmington, and Kenneth McKenzie Murchison of New York City.[59]

Each of these men well understood the value of Orton. Whether they planned a joint enterprise or simply purchased a one-fourth interest in the plantation as a sure investment is unconfirmed, but within the space of three years the ownership of Orton passed to the Murchison brothers. On 21 November 1879 Charles M. Stedman and his wife, Katherine DeRosset Wright Stedman, sold their one-fourth interest in Orton to David R. Murchison for $1,500. Three months later, on 18 February 1880, John W. Atkinson, commissioner and guardian of the three minor heirs of the late Isaac B. Grainger, conveyed the Grainger estate's one-fourth interest in Orton to Kenneth M. Murchison for $1,500.[60] Meanwhile, the brothers were making plans for improvements at Orton. On 3 December 1879 an advertisement appeared in *The Morning Star* for "50 Men to Work at Orton" under the caption "Laborers Wanted." On 4 March 1880 the advertisement was published again with a call "For experienced ditchers" who would be paid "75 cents per day." On 5 February 1881, readers of *The Morning Star* learned "The rice fields at Orton were being burned off yesterday." The cultivation of rice was about to be renewed.[61]

In addition to being brothers, the sons of Duncan and Fannie Reid Murchison and natives of Manchester, Cumberland County, North Carolina, David Reid Murchison (1837-1882) and Kenneth McKenzie Murchison (1831-1904) both had significant careers as officers during the Civil War and acquired larger fortunes through investments in a wide range of businesses. They also prospered through the ownership of a group of family-held businesses that operated as Williams and Murchison in Wilmington, J. D. Williams and Company in Fayetteville, and Murchison and Company in New York City. Both were also investors in financial institutions with Kenneth Murchison later being the founder of the Murchison National Bank in Wilmington in 1899.[62] The plans they had as partners at Orton Plantation ended with David R. Murchison's death at the age of forty-four on 22 February 1882 leaving his widow and a young daughter. One of their few known acts as co-owners of Orton occurred on 25 May 1880 when they conveyed a four-acre tract that contained the ruins of St. Philip's Church and the surrounding churchyard to the trustees of the Diocese of North Carolina.[63] In order to effect a division of Orton between the heirs of David R. Murchison and Kenneth M. Murchison, Orton was put up at public auction at the Brunswick County Courthouse on 4 March 1884. Kenneth M. Murchison's bid of $24,000 secured the property and Orton Plantation was conveyed to him as sole owner on 18 April 1884.[64]

Kenneth McKenzie Murchison and Orton

Kenneth McKenzie Murchison was owner and master of Orton Plantation for a full score of years during which time he was both a good steward of the plantation and instilled a high regard for Orton and its history in his children, which would come to fruition after his death. His legacy to Orton would long outlast his memory in Wilmington where he was the principal figure in two of its major concerns. In 1886 he built the Orton Hotel on Princess Street that functioned as the city's leading hostelry through the early twentieth century and stood until being destroyed by fire in 1949. In 1899 he founded the Murchison National Bank and oversaw the design and construction of its new premises at 200 North Front Street in 1902. He was also an investor in other Wilmington concerns.

Kenneth Murchison's commitment to Orton, which effectively secured the plantation's future, was widely recognized and appreciated. Alfred Moore Waddell (1834-1912), the author of *A History of New Hanover County and the Lower Cape Fear Region, 1723-1800* (1909), gave voice to his admiration in a sketch of Mr. Murchison that was published in 1905 in volume one of *Biographical History of North Carolina, From Colonial Time to the Present.*

> Colonel Murchison lived in New York after the war, but generally spent the winter in North Carolina. . . . he bought the old historic plantation called "Orton," the family seat of "King" Roger Moore, situated about sixteen miles below Wilmington, on the west side of the Cape Fear, and the southernmost of all the old rice plantations on that river, and he expended a large amount of money in restoring it to its former condition and improving it in various ways to satisfy his taste. . . . Orton has always been a paradise of sportsmen, and the colonel was very fond of hunting. It was his custom to bring some of his friends down from the North every winter, and give them the opportunity to enjoy the old-time hospitality, which he dispensed with a lavish hand. It was here that those who loved him best and who were loved by him spent their happiest days. The restful seclusion of this grandest of all colonial homes, with its broad acres and primeval forests, was most grateful to him and to his intimate associates after the storm and stress of war and the subsequent struggles of business life. It was here that the austerity of worldly contact was relaxed and the manifold humanities of a gentle, kindly life unfolded. He never spoke of his own exploits, nor did he willingly recall the horrors of the four years' war. He loved to roam the woods with his faithful

> dogs, to linger for hours in the secluded sanctuary of the game he sought so eagerly, and the sight of his triumphant return from an exciting chase, with Reynard at the saddlebow, surrounded by his yelping pack of English hounds, would rouse the dullest of his guests to exclamations of delight.
>
> Colonel Murchison's striking personality was likened by those who knew him to that of the great German chancellor, Prince Bismarck, in is younger years. The commanding figure and uncompromising expression, which characterized his outward life, suggested a military training beyond that of his war experience, and this was in strange contrast to his inner life, a knowledge of which disclosed a sympathetic tenderness for all suffering or afflicted humanity. He preferred and practiced the simple life; his wants were few and easily supplied. A notable characteristic was his exceeding devotion to his five surviving children; he was proud of them and of their loyal love to him, and he made them his constant companions. He gave to worthy charities with a liberal and unostentatious hand. His patriotic spirit responded quickly to every public emergency, and his local pride was manifested in the building and equipment, at a great expense, of "The Orton," when a good hotel was needed in Wilmington, and when no one else would venture the investment.
>
> During the last fifteen years of his honored life, Colonel Murchison gradually withdrew from the activities of strenuous business cares, and with the first frosts of autumn resumed control at Orton Plantation. He left it in June of 1904 in the vigor and spirits of abounding health, to meet, a few days later, the sudden call of the Messenger of Death, whom he had never feared. . . . He was an example of splendid physical manhood, of broad experience, of unyielding integrity, pure in heart and in speech, with the native modesty of a woman and the courage of a lion. He was especially sympathetic and generous to his negro servitors, who regarded him with loving veneration.[65]

Kenneth Murchison's ownership of Orton coincided with important developments in photography and its increasing use in many areas. The earliest known photographs of Orton, believed to be ca. 1890, date to Mr. Murchison's ownership with a number including him, his beloved hounds, and members of the family and friends in the views. The dating of some of these images remains a matter of educated estimation. However, the appearance of the mansion, ranging from an unkept appearance to visibly increasing degrees of maintenance, encourage an emerging chronology in their arrangement. In this regard the fact that a number of the images were recorded as part of the work to prepare the North Carolina exhibits for the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 has been confirmed.[66] This group includes views of the house and several views of the rice fields on the east side of the mansion between it and the Cape Fear River. The representation of rice in the agricultural exhibit is surely that of the Orton rice fields. The state executive committee charged with overseeing the preparation of the exhibits held the view that the expense involved would be more than rewarded by their display in Raleigh in the State Museum at the close of the Chicago fair. This conviction is noted in the committee's official report printed in the *Report of the Board of Agriculture for 1893-94*.[67]

In a separate article on the exposition it was reported that the North Carolina exhibits won 157 medals and awards and that "The Board particularly invites attention to the State Museum, which is now filled with such of the State's exhibit at Chicago as was not perishable and which could be placed to advantage in the cramped apartments now used as a Museum in the Agricultural Building.[68] The *Hand Book of the North Carolina State Museum* . . . published in 1897 lists the photographs on display by their caption, and a comparison of those captions with both the handwritten and typed captions on several of the images confirms the origins of a number of views and the use of Orton to represent North Carolina history in these important venues.[69]

These photographs and others also reflect certain improvements that Mr. Murchison made at Orton and the many types of fencing of the period. Two-story white-painted weatherboarded frame buildings standing to both the north and south of the mansion appear in separate views and probably contained kitchen facilities as well as staff and guest accommodations. Those buildings appear to have been short-lived and came down with the 1909-10 work at Orton. Over time the "Houses detached for 200 Hands" standing on Orton Plantation and noted in the 1872 auction handbill were lost. Other housing was erected for workers and employees who continued to live on the plantation. One constant in the lives of its black community was the cemetery, occupying elevated ground southwest of the mansion, where slaves had been buried and where their descendants and other black plantation staff were interred into the mid-twentieth century. The board-and-batten-clad powerhouse/barn and Elijah's house are possibly--and probably--the surviving part of Mr. Murchison's renewal at Orton on the home grounds noted by Alfred Moore Waddell.

Kenneth M. Murchison died in Baltimore on 3 June 1904. His body was brought back to Wilmington and placed in the Murchison Mausoleum at Oakdale Cemetery. For a man of his extraordinary wealth and business holdings, Kenneth M. Murchison left a remarkably simple will and placed a high degree of responsibility in the judgment of his named executors, Kenneth M. Murchison Jr., James Sprunt, and Shirley Carter (1871-1940), also a son-in-law and an attorney of high standing in Baltimore. They were to make every provision for his widow, Katherine Elliott Williams Murchison (1836-1912). Mr. Murchison then directed "that my property of every description be equally divided between my five children - - Luola M. Sprunt, Jane M. Ellis, Jesse (sic) M. Carter, Kenneth M. Murchison Jr., and Marion Hurkamp."[70] Aside from placing Mrs. Hurkamp's inheritance in trust, the principal caveat given to the executors concerned Orton and his vast Yancey County hunting lands. "Believing that Orton Plantation and my property in Yancy (sic) County known as Caney River will be enhanced in value on account of the growing timber, I direct that these properties not be sold until such time as seems best." The will was signed on 10 November 1903. Orton Plantation would remain in Mr. Murchison's estate, enjoyed by his heirs, into 1909.

The Sprunt Family at Orton

Orton entered a golden age, marked by a high degree of stewardship, in 1909 when Luola Murchison Sprunt purchased the plantation from her siblings. Mrs. Sprunt and her husband had decided on this seemingly destined course earlier, and by the fall of 1908, when they launched a series of improvements to Orton's pillared antebellum house and its grounds. Their efforts, motivated in part by famial affection, also reflected those of their class, across the South, who reclaimed historic, sometimes ancestral properties and remade them as country houses, hunting lodges, or seasonal residences. Orton Plantation served all three functions for the Sprunts, their son James Laurence Sprunt (1886-1973), and the families of his four sons.

The marriage of Luola Murchison and James Sprunt on 27 November 1883 represented the union of two families, which had prospered and grown wealthy through initiative, enterprise, good fortune, and investment in businesses that met a series of regional, national, and international needs for goods and services in the second half of the nineteenth century. While the history of the Murchison concerns and that of Alexander Sprunt & Son, Incorporated, and the Sprunt family-owned Champion Compress and Warehouse Company, which had branch offices in several European cities, remain to be addressed, there is no question of their important impacts, of varying degrees, on local, regional, national, and international commerce. Nor is there question of the manner of living afforded the Murchison and Sprunt families from their investments and business operations.

In 1909 when Luola Sprunt became the owner of Orton Plantation, the Sprunt family was living in the Governor Dudley Mansion at 400 South Front Street in Wilmington. James Sprunt had purchased the house in February 1895 from Pembroke and Sarah W. Jones and soon raised the flanking wings of the house to two stories and added a monumental, frankly overscaled two-story Corinthian portico on the façade.[71] The designer of these additions remains to be confirmed. However, the involvement of Mrs. Sprunt's brother, Kenneth M. Murchison Jr. is likely as he also exercised a hand in the design of the Murchison Mausoleum that was completed in Oakdale Cemetery in 1898.[72] In March 1896, when a principal part of the work is believed to have been completed, Mr. Sprunt conveyed the property to his wife.[73] Among people of their class and station, vesting the ownership of residences in the name of the wife was an honored convention and that practice was repeated at Orton. While Mrs. Sprunt could well have purchased Orton of her siblings, the family tradition that Mr. Sprunt made a gift of Orton Plantation to her likely reflects both fact and convention. The Sprunts also had a summer residence at Narragansett, Rhode Island, which they acquired in the summer of 1905 and renamed Orton Lodge.[74] Kenneth Murchison Jr. oversaw certain architectural improvements and furnishing requirements for the summer place, largely in 1906, for the Sprunts.

On 18 September 1909 the deed conveying Orton Plantation to Luola Sprunt was executed by her siblings, their spouses, and the executors of Mr. Murchison's will. The consideration was the payment of $5,000 to each of the four.[75] Her purchase of the property had been understood for some time, and at least a year or more, as certain landscaping efforts on the river front of Orton had begun in 1908. When Kenneth Murchison Jr. began designing the improvements to Orton has not been established. However, it appears likely that the architectural construction on the mansion had commenced well before the execution of the deed. In a letter of 22 March 1909 to Theophilus Parsons of Boston, James Sprunt wrote "We are making great improvements at Orton so that you would hardly recognize the old plantation, and we would be very pleased if you would come again to Wilmington and give us the opportunity of entertaining you there."[76] The addition of the wings on the north and south sides of the house, the enhancements to the existing portico, the new one-story service wing on the west rear of the house, and the interior improvements were completed in 1910.

At present the designer of the extensive gardens, terraced, laid out, and planted to complement the house and its axial approach along the causeway from a dock on the west side of the Cape Fear River is not known. Mr. Murchison likely had a voice in the work, and he might well have called on the services of a colleague in landscape architecture in New York. Documentary photographs of the house and gardens in the 1910s (and 1920s) show varying plantings in the evolving beds and borders immediately in front of the house and lining the front walk.

The Sprunts' architectural program at Orton Plantation included new entrance gates at the north and south entrances to the property, a gatehouse inside the north gate, and the construction of a private chapel that was essentially completed in 1915. The date of the gates and the gate house have not been established. However, the stance of the "warring eagles" atop the piers places them in the period of World War I. During this time, in December 1912, Mrs. Sprunt purchased a 394-acre tract of the Kendal plantation from the heirs of Frederic Kidder.[77] It was also during this period, in 1914, that James Sprunt's decades-long research into the history of Wilmington and the Lower Cape Fear came to fruition in the publication of *Chronicles of the Cape Fear River*.

During the years James and Luola Sprunt lived on Front Street, wintered at Orton, and summered in Narragansett or in a cottage at Wrightsville Beach, their family circle was small and included their one surviving child, James Laurence Sprunt (1886-1973). The couple's two daughters, Kate (1884-1887) and Marion (1889-1901), had died early. In 191_ James Laurence Sprunt married Amoret Cameron Price (1891-1915), and on 5 January 1915 she gave birth to James Laurence Sprunt Jr. Amoret Sprunt died within hours of giving birth, and the care of the infant devolved to Mrs. Sprunt and her cousin, Miss Kate Fairley, who had joined the household as her companion.

Luola Murchison Sprunt died on 17 February 1916 at the age of fifty-seven and was buried in the Sprunt family plot in Oakdale Cemetery. The provisions in her will reflect a certain equanimity and concern for the offspring of her siblings who were less-secure financially. Her husband was given a life estate in the Wilmington and Wrightsville Beach residences and in Orton Plantation. At his death James Laurence Sprunt would come into full possession of the two first-named properties. Orton was held in a different, higher regard, treated as a legacy, and with the intention it remain in the family. James Laurence Sprunt was to receive a life estate in Orton Plantation with full ownership of it being vested in a child or children of his parenting. In the event there were no natural grandchildren, Orton Plantation was to be placed in trust for the benefit of her Murchison nieces and nephews and her sister Jessie M. Carter who was apparently childless.[78] As events prove she guaranteed the ownership of Orton Plantation in the Sprunt family to her son's death in 1973. Like her father, she sought to instill a commitment to Orton's stewardship and, to protect it as a hereditary patrimony. In this she was fully successful until 2010 and partially determining to the present.

James Sprunt would survive his wife by eight years during which time he would continue his commitment to history, philanthropy, and family. He maintained a close friendship with the leading historians in North Carolina, saw to publication a revised edition of *Chronicles of the Cape Fear River* in 1916, and served as president of the North Carolina Literary and Historical Society. He also provided assistance and Orton's hospitality to Evangeline Walker Andrews who edited Janet Schaw's travel diary and saw to its publication as the *Journal of a Lady of Quality; Being the Narrative of a Journey from Scotland to the West Indies, North Carolina, and Portugal, in the years 1774 to 1776* by Yale University Press. This valuable first-person account of colonial-era Cape Fear plantation society was dedicated to Mr. Sprunt and its introduction written at Orton by Mrs. Andrews in March 1920.[79]

James Sprunt's philanthropic gifts were numerous, some noted in their time and others remaining anonymous to the present, and they often reflected the close relationship of church (Presbyterian) and family. The chapel at Orton became a memorial to Luola Sprunt in 1916, and the Marion Sprunt Hospital for Women and Children, also designed by Kenneth Murchison Jr., was a memorial to his daughter and a remembrance of the circumstances attending the birth of his first and as yet only grandson. History and family were both well served in May 1918 when James Sprunt purchased the residual parts of Kendal and Lilliput plantations, comprising some 4,000 acres, and added them to the family's Orton holding, thereby preserving the adjoining lands of three colonial-period Cape Fear River plantations, the resources standing thereon, and those reclaimed by soil, water, and forest.[80] James Sprunt died on 9 July 1924 and his body was buried beside that of his wife at Oakdale Cemetery.

James Laurence Sprunt's tenure at Orton as the holder of a life estate in the plantation spanned a near half-century from Mr. Sprunt's death until his own on 18 June 1973. He married his second wife, Annie Gray Nash (Ruffin) Sprunt (1886-1978) in 1919. She was a fully-engaged partner in his efforts and the mother of three sons born between 1920 and 1927: Kenneth Murchison Sprunt (1920-2011), Samuel Nash Sprunt (192_-200_), and Laurence Gray Sprunt (b. 1927). The cultivation of rice, practiced on a limited, increasingly non-remunerative basis ended in about 1931 while timbering

continued. Beginning in 1934-35 they launched the second major landscape gardening initiative at Orton that included the development of extensive new gardens intended both as pleasure grounds for the family and guests at Orton and as display gardens for the stock of a commercial nursery specializing in camellias and azaleas they were about to undertake. In this work they had a third, critical helpmate in the person of Clarence Jones (1908-2008), a gardener and factotum at Orton for over seventy years. In about 1936 the Sprunts engaged Robert Swan Sturtevant (1889-1955), a Massachusetts-born and Harvard-educated landscape architect, who had also served as director of the Lowthorpe School of Landscape Architecture in Groton, Massachusetts, as consulting landscape architect for proposed improvements at Orton. The first of his two surviving plans for the work, a general plan of the property entitled "Orton Plantation on the West Bank of the Cape Fear River about 15 miles below Wilmington, North Carolina," is dated January 1937. On it he identified existing garden areas and plantings, buildings, roadways, fields, and woodlands. Mr. Sturtevant then designed an ambitious series of gardens, aligned on both axial and curvilinear walks that incorporated significant existing features, and linked the nascent nursery operations and sales area on the south, southwest of the chapel, with the mansion, and the Moore family cemetery on the north. The east axial approach from the Cape Fear River along the causeway was enhanced, spacious green lawns were identified, and new garden features proposed.[81] This second plan, titled "The Gardens at Orton (,) Wilmington (,) North Carolina," bears his name but no date.

The Sprunts' decision to engage Robert Swan Sturtevant as the landscape architect for Orton coincided with a series of decisions they were making in regard to the gardens and grounds of Orton in the 1930s. Beginning in the early 1930s, they had opened the gardens to the public one day each spring, when the bloom was at its height, to benefit local charities and particularly the Brunswick County Hospital Auxiliary. This was the case on the Saturday afternoons of 11 April 1936 and 27 February 1937. In January 1939 the gardens were opened for the entire Spring season and a small fee was charged for admission. This initiative was promoted by a lengthy illustrated article, "Historic Orton Gardens Nearing Azalea Season," published in *The News and Observer* in Raleigh on 5 March 1939. The response gave rise to the full-scale opening of the gardens to visitors, the development of facilities for their comfort, and the creation of promotional brochures. During this period nursery operations, probably first developed to provide plants for Orton's gardens and grounds, began their evolution into a full-scale nursery operation specializing in camellias and azaleas. A parallel effort to grow cut flowers, principally daffodils, for the florist trade proved to be short-lived. Additional staff was required for these initiatives and in late 1937 or early 1938 Henry Churchill Bragaw (1914-1944), a graduate of North Carolina State College, was hired to supervise the garden operations at Orton. His stay at Orton, which embraced management of the plantation, was storied.

Most of Mr. Sturtevant's plan was implemented and planted as he proposed by the Sprunts, Clarence Jones, and Henry Churchill Bragaw. The older of the two surviving greenhouses at Orton is believed to have been built during Mr. Burgaw's stay as manager, which ended in February 1942 when he left for service in World War II, or by young Kenneth Sprunt soon after the end of the war. Mr. Bragaw was succeeded at Orton by James Ferger (1912-1993), a graduate of the University of North Carolina. In 1945 when the American Camellia Society was organized, Mr. Ferger, Robert Kenneth Godfrey (1911-2000), another employee in horticultural operations at Orton, and Kenneth Murchison Sprunt all became life members. Mr. Ferger, who was also one of the society's first twelve state directors, contributed an essay, "Camellias in the Landscape Scheme," to the society's first yearbook that was published in 1946. The Orton Nursery was one of five nurseries specializing in camellias that had full-page advertisements in the inaugural yearbook.[82]

About this time, 1946-1947, Mr. Ferger left Orton (to work as a landscape architect in Wilmington) and Kenneth Sprunt began his long tenure as manager of the plantation's nursery operations and its gardens and grounds. The gardens at Orton, which were already open to the public, were often photographed in the middle decades of the twentieth century, by John Hemmer and others, and figured prominently in the efforts of the North Carolina Department of Conservation and Development to promote tourism in the State. The gardens at Orton Plantation were also handsomely promoted in another medium. In about 1948-1949 the Sprunts engaged Tom Draper, a New York-based cinematographer, to produce a 16-mm color film of the gardens to promote both visitation and sales from the Orton Plantation Nursery. Notice of the film, "Orton Plantation under Spring Skies," appears in the Orton Plantation Nursery Catalogue for Fall 1951-Spring 1952.

> GARDENS AND CIVIC CLUBS are invited to avail themselves without charge of a beautiful 16mm sound and color film of Orton Plantation by the well known professional photographer, Mr. Tom Draper who spent a week at Orton on this undertaking. The gardens are shown in full bloom and additional interest is afforded by views of the ruins of St. Philip's Church and other outstanding spots on the historic Plantation. Harmonious music and voice commentary add their attraction to the brilliance of the color effects and provide eighteen minutes of unusual entertainment. We will be pleased to send this film direct from Orton Plantation if so requested.

Most of the initial planting out of the gardens to Mr. Sturtevant's plan at Orton was completed by about 1950 and they were flourishing in 1954 when Hurricane Hazel struck coastal North Carolina. At the time James Laurence Sprunt was building a new house at 1820 Live Oak Parkway in suburban Wilmington and had called on Charles Freeman Gillette (1886-1969), a landscape architect practicing in Richmond, Virginia, for a grounds plan for his new house. Mr. Gillette was also asked to consult on the gardens at Orton that year. On 19 October 1954, a few days after Hurricane Hazel passed through the Lower Cape Fear, Mr. Sprunt wrote to Mr. Gillette concerning the grounds plan for the Wilmington house and a possible visit to Orton. "On account of a lot of debris at Orton, it is just as well that you have to defer your Wilmington trip to November, as this delay will enable us to clean up etc and maybe have some of the Winter grass up. I would hate to have you see Orton in such a mess-- nothing serious. Except the loss of ½ of a double trunked tree and possibly that might not be as bad for my son Ken has wanted a 'look out' in a tree for some time, and this is an ideal spot."[83] Mr. Gillette did prepare a plan for revising the Orton gardens and nursery facilities but nothing came of any of his proposals. However, repairs and new plantings were made to ameliorate the effects of the hurricane in the immediate years.

The gardens and grounds of Orton were to benefit from the talents of yet another well-known landscape architect at the end of the 1950s. In 1945, as plans for the reconstruction of Governor Tryon's Palace in New Bern, North Carolina, were advancing, a group of distinguished North Carolinians was appointed to the twenty-five member Tryon Palace Commission. The commission was charged with overseeing and advising on the costly, historic enterprise. Mrs. James Laurence (Annie Gray) Sprunt was one of the charter members of the Tryon Palace Commission and served on it until 1974. During those years she witnessed the development of plans for the reconstruction, the rebuilding of the palace, the acquisition of furnishings, and the development of its gardens and grounds. The reconstructed, newly-furnished palace was opened with ceremonies in April 1959. Morley Jeffers Williams (1886-1977), who had been engaged in garden archaeology and restoration projects at Stratford Hall and Mount Vernon, both in Virginia, and served on the faculty of design schools at both Harvard and North Carolina State College, was hired for the Tryon Palace project in 1952. Over the course of a decade he conducted archaeological research on the palace site, developed plans for the gardens and grounds, and oversaw their implementation and planting. His role in the project ended in 1962.

Mrs. Sprunt's experience prompted her and her husband to undertake three important, related projects in the 1950s. These followed on the issuance of the first two of three known surviving catalogues for the Orton Plantation Nursery prepared by Kenneth Sprunt. The first catalogue is undated. The second is for the Fall 1951-Spring 1952 planting season. A third, last known catalogue was issued for the Fall 1953-Spring 1954 season. In 1952, the site of Brunswick Town, which embraced the ruins of St. Philip's Church and cemetery and the site of Governor Tryon's earlier residence, Russellborough, were conveyed to the State of North Carolina and subsequently developed as a State Historic Site. Then, following on the example of his father, James Laurence Sprunt turned to history, and more particularly to the history of Orton, and wrote a guidebook, *The Story of Orton Plantation*, that was published in 1958. That same year (or possibly in late 1957) Mr. and Mrs. Sprunt hired Morley Jeffers Williams to undertake work at Orton, which also engaged the talents of his wife, Nathalia Williams, an architect with whom he had practiced in the past. Four known surviving drawings bearing both their names were produced for the Sprunts between 2 October 1958 and 6 February 1959. These include a sheet of details for the railings of the paired overlooks, which provide vantages from which to enjoy views over the scroll gardens and rice fields, and a sheet with two designs for a new bridge crossing the lagoon. The drawing for the "Scroll Garden" is dated 18 October 1958. The plan labeled "Path to North Overlook" is dated 6 February 1959.

It was these renewed and enhanced gardens that were photographed in 1972 as part of the field recording process for the original nomination of Orton to the National Register and for an article on Orton, "A Garden From a Rice Plantation," that was published in *Country Life*, the British weekly, on 4 January 1973.[84] Meanwhile, in the early 1960s, in an initiative unrelated to storm damage, Mr. Sprunt pulled down the 1910 service wing at Orton and replaced it with another one-story block of similar dimensions but lesser character.

James Laurence Sprunt died on 18 June 1973 and he, too, was buried at Oakdale Cemetery. Despite the provisions of Luola Sprunt's will no real change in the operation and management of Orton Plantation occurred until after the death of his widow, the matriarchal Annie Gray Nash (Ruffin) Sprunt on 12 January 1978. Family discussions reflecting different perspectives on the future of Orton led James Laurence Sprunt Jr. (1915-2003), the privileged first-born grandson indulged by his grandfather, to press a suit in 1982 for the division of Orton Plantation among the four heirs. Instead of a forced division, the matter was resolved by the sale of his undivided one-fourth interest in Orton Plantation to his three half-brothers, Kenneth Murchison Sprunt, Samuel Nash Sprunt, and Laurence Gray Sprunt, on 2 April 1984.[85] They continued in their established patterns of care with Kenneth Sprunt attending to the gardens and grounds and nursery operations while Laurence Gray Sprunt supervised the agricultural, woodland, and timbering side of operations. Samuel Nash Sprunt, who long resided in Houston, Texas, was an absentee owner.

The three brothers held Orton Plantation in a joint undivided ownership, with one-third interests each, until 1989 when a division was effected. The core of the plantation, including the mansion, the outbuildings, gardens, grounds, and rice fields, was set apart as a separate tract and continued in the joint, undivided interest of the three as Orton Plantation, a general partnership. The plantation woodlands were divided among the three men; Kenneth Sprunt received the Orton woodlands, Laurence Gray Sprunt was deeded title to those associated with Kendal, and Samuel Nash Sprunt gained ownership of the Lilliput woods on the north edge of the overall holding.[86] This arrangement remained in effect until 3 July 1996 when Laurence Gray Sprunt bought out the interests of his two brothers in the historic core tract.[87] He continued to manage the agricultural and timber operations on the plantation acreages held by his brothers, Kenneth M. and Samuel N. Sprunt, as well as those on his own holding. In three conveyances in 2000, 2001, and 2002, Kenneth M. Sprunt sold the Orton woodlands to Laurence Gray Sprunt, whose son, David H. Sprunt (b. 1967), joined the staff of Orton in October 2001 as the manager of the gardens.[88] He oversaw the replacement of the caretaker's house and plantation office and the erection of the pavilion and greenhouse #2.[89]

Louis Moore Bacon's long-held interest in Orton Plantation became the subject of discussions with Laurence Gray and David Sprunt in about 2009. His desire to establish a quail hunting operation on the plantation was also a principal consideration. After a professional study by a game consultant, Mr. Bacon and the Sprunts reached an agreement on the acreage and the sale was placed under contract in May 2010. The 8,388 acres comprised the core tract and a large portion of the Orton and Kendal woodlands, totaling 5,167 acres and 3,221 acres of Samuel Sprunt's Lilliput woodlands. The sales by Orton Plantation, LLC, Orton Longleaf, LLC, and Lilliput Interests, LLC, to Orton Plantation Holdings, LLC, were executed on 10 November 2010.[90] Subsequently, Richard Sammons of Fairfax & Sammons, a New York-based architectural office, and Ben Page of Page|Duke Landscape Architects, in Nashville, Tennessee, were engaged for proposed work on the Orton mansion and its gardens. Mr. Sammons designed a new Post-modern Colonial Revival-style two-story service wing and alterations to portions of the existing mansion. Construction was begun in 2011 and completed in 2012. Alterations to the gardens and grounds, including the addition of a motor court and new gardens on the south side of the mansion, a stone-paved terrace on the north, new plantings in front of Luola's Chapel, and new walks of stone, brick, or gravel laid in the immediate house grounds were undertaken and completed in 2011-2012. Landscape work and new plantings are ongoing in the gardens north of the mansion and the grounds south of the chapel and at other points in the vicinity of the mansion. Important forestry management practices were also initiated in 2011 and they continue with visible success under the direction of a trained estate forester.

Social History

Orton Plantation has held an exceptional importance in the social history of Brunswick County and the Lower Cape Fear region throughout its existence, and most particularly during the period of significance, when Orton embodied and reflected on a local level the evolving character and status of the plantation as a cultural, agricultural, and social institution in the American South. In this regard its significance in the area of social history is strongly interwoven with other areas of significance, namely agriculture, architecture, landscape architecture, and archaeology. It also embraces the critical role of African Americans as both slaves and free men, who worked at Orton throughout the period of significance. Today the chief reminder of their presence is the black cemetery where they lie in marked and unmarked graves. None of the forty houses reported in the 1860 federal census as housing Thomas C. Miller's 144 slaves survive on Orton Plantation, nor does any of the housing occupied by free black employees in the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Neither the church built for the black workers through the generosity of the Murchisons and Sprunts in 1893, to replace the earlier building lost to fire in November 1892, nor the church Luola M. Sprunt built in the last year of her life to replace the 1893 building survive. Orton and its founder, Roger Moore, are associated with the development of the plantation as a model of settlement in this part of coastal, colonial North Carolina. The plantation and the man occupy a critical role in the creation of community that historian Bradford J. Wood presents in *This Remote Part of the World: Regional Formation in Lower Cape Fear, North Carolina 1725-1775* (2004).

In the antebellum period Orton Plantation was owned from 1826 to 1854 by Dr. Frederick Jones Hill who greatly expanded its timbering operations and rice cultivation. Dr. Hill brought the plantation to a remarkable degree of prosperity, which was reflected then, and still yet, in his dramatic expansion of Roger Moore's brick house as a handsome Greek Revival-style temple form residence. In the eighteenth century and the years of the nineteenth century, when Orton Plantation was owned by Dr. Hill and his successor, William Calizance Miller, to the end of the Civil War and Mr. Miller's death in 1865, Orton was one of the most celebrated of many plantations that lined the Northeast and Northwest branches of the Cape Fear River. The end of slavery and the financial disruptions of the war effectively spelled their doom. In the later decades of the nineteenth century one after another of these important plantations fell with the declining fortunes of their owners, changing agricultural practices, and larger societal transformations, including a steady movement from countryside to

town. Wilmington was a powerful draw for those with enterprise and initiative. But Orton survived, increasingly alone as its contemporaries in successive stages of its existence disappeared.

In the years around the turn of the twentieth century Orton figured in another distinct phase of American social history as did some few other important Southern plantations. This occurred when the captains of finance, industry, and commerce brought wealth earned at a distance from agriculture back to the country. Their revival and renewal of Southern plantations as hunting lodges, winter estates, and country houses constituted an important part of the American Country House Movement. Over the course of four decades, from 1884 to 1924, the commitment of Kenneth McKenzie Murchison, his daughter, Luola, and her husband, James Sprunt, preserved Orton, enhanced the house, its gardens, and its vast lands, and created a place for sport, refuge, and winter leisure on a working farm that remained in their family until 2010.

Agricultural Significance

The significance of Orton Plantation Boundary Increase and Additional Documentation in the area of agriculture is two-part, both in the levels of significance and in the specific areas of agricultural production in which its owners excelled, namely naval stores and the timbering of its extensive woodland resources and rice cultivation. Vast forests of longleaf pines that covered so much of the North Carolina Coastal Plain were immediately available to the pioneering settlers of the Lower Cape Fear region. The virgin woodlands of Orton Plantation, naval stores production, and the sawmills Roger Moore built to produce lumber and shingles were the principal agricultural source of his wealth. The earliest surviving document associated with Orton, records these processes occurring at Orton in 1732-1733. Regenerated year after year, generation after generation, the Orton woodlands have remained an important part of the agricultural operations at the plantation and a valuable part of its financial health to the present. While the harvesting of Orton's abundant woodland resources can be traced from 1732-1733 to the present, the context of this longevity in the Coastal Plain and the state and its representative significance is difficult to assess. Thus, the level of significance for this area of agricultural production is local.

The sandy upland soils on which Orton's vast woodlands thrived were flanked by marshlands lining Orton Creek and the Cape Fear River that, when cleared, proved to be highly valuable for rice production. Precisely when rice was first successfully cultivated at Orton remains to be confirmed through further research. Hugh Meredith described the appearance of "Rice Swamps" in his *An Account of the Cape Fear Country 1731*.[91] At present rice cultivation is first documented during the plantation's ownership by General Benjamin Smith, Roger Moore's grandson, during the period from 1796 to 1824. Rice production at Orton and in Brunswick County, where cultivation was centered in North Carolina, appears to have been the most successful and financially remunerative in the antebellum period when Dr. Frederick Jones Hill and William Calizance Miller, respectively, planted its fields from 1826 until Mr. Miller's death in 1865. The emancipation of slaves, coupled with the intensive labor necessary for its cultivation, effectively ended large-scale production at Orton as it did elsewhere in Brunswick County. Cultivation was revived after the Civil War on a reduced scale at Kendal, immediately north of Orton, and continued there during its ownership by Frederic Kidder until the last known crop was harvested in 1908, shortly before his death.[92] Orton is believed to be one of the last places in North Carolina where rice was cultivated historically. Kenneth McKenzie Murchison revived its cultivation at Orton in the 1880s, and photographs of its rice fields were part of the North Carolina exhibits at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 that were reinstalled in the State Museum in Raleigh in 1894. Rice cultivation diminished and effectively ceased in North Carolina altogether in the early twentieth century. It ended at Orton in about 1931. Although its rice fields have grown up, their form and presence in the Orton landscape are still remarkably visible, and now, in the process of repair, they are evocative reminders of Orton's statewide significance in the history of rice production in North Carolina.

Given the abundant riches of Orton's colonial-era woodlands, there is no coincidence in the fact that the earliest known surviving document in the history of the plantation records evidence of their harvest. This singular document in the Secretary of State's Records, dated 20 February 1735, is an account statement between Roger Moore and Captain Jonathan Skrine covering transactions in 1732 and 1733. It records a range of goods, services, shipping expenses, and financial dealings that were representative of the roles of ship captain, factor, and planter in the period. More importantly, however, are the entries for goods produced at Orton that Captain Skrine hauled away to market. The balance sheet lists 700 feet of boards at six pounds per hundred feet, 33 barrels of turpentine valued at 82 pounds 10 shillings, 19,000 shingles at 3 pounds per thousand, a quantity of cedar timber valued at 150 pounds, and 28 bushels of peas.[93] This is important early evidence of the profitable naval stores and timbering operations at Orton that produced essential income and continued through Mr. Moore's life.

Roger Moore signed his will on 7 March 1747/8, making bequests to each of his children and his wife Mary. Mary Moore was to receive the estate she held at the time of their marriage and "the Saw Mills I intend to Build on Briars Creek with the Slaves and all utensils that shall properly belong to them(,) and if it shall so happen that I shall die before the said Mill shall be Completely Finished that she my said Wife is to have the work of my four Carpenters now at (unreadable) until they be completely finished . . ." in lieu of her dower claim.[94]

On 30 June 1750 Roger Moore added a codicil to his will in regard to the bequest to his wife. "Whereas it is apparent from the late Storm that the Legacy I have Bequeathed unto my Loving Wife Mary (,) the giving my Saw Mills and the Appurtenances thereunto belonging May instead of being a Yearly Profit to her prove rather an Expense, therefore I do Absolutely Declare that part my Will so much as Relates to the saw Mills and appurtenances thereunto belonging to be void . . . ." In lieu thereof she was to receive 100 pounds sterling each year so long as she remained his widow. Roger Moore died within months of adding this codicil, probably early in 1751, as his will was entered for probate in May 1751. The circumstances of his widow, Mary Moore's, last years and death remain to be confirmed.

William Moore inherited Orton; however, circumstances did not favor his days there and he died at a young age. In 1764 his heavily indebted estate was consigned by his executors to the management of William Dry and Richard Quince. The inventory of the estate listed sixty-five slaves and "the yearly rent from Capt. Robert Ellis for the Mill which he has hired from 11 Oct. 1761 for seven years."[95]

During the period Messrs. Dry and Quince had charge of Orton, cartographers came to the area and noted landmarks of the growing settlement that they, in turn, identified on their maps. Claude Joseph Sauthier (1736-1802), a French-born landscape gardener, was probably the first and produced plans of both Brunswick and Wilmington in 1769. John Abraham Collet was in the Lower Cape Fear about the same time. On his 1770 map of North Carolina, Orton is not noted as such; however, "Saw M." and "Cap. Ellis" appear as landmarks in its place. A similar identification was made by Henry Mouzon on his 1775 map of North and South Carolina, reflecting Captain Robert Ellis's long-term lease of the sawmill at Orton. In the event this degree of notice contributed to the mill's end. It was surely the mill destroyed by Lord Cornwallis and troops under his command on (or about) 12 May 1776 early in the Revolutionary War.[96]

There is little notice of agricultural operations at Orton until the end of the eighteenth century. On 23 January 1796 Richard Quince (III), whose grandfather of the same name had come into ownership of Orton, sold the plantation to General Benjamin Smith, a wealthy if also overextended Wilmington-area planter.[97] Soon thereafter he petitioned the Brunswick County Court to repair a mill on the plantation that was powered by a "never failing mill stream," a somewhat oblique reference to the Orton pond.[98]

The matter of when rice was first, successfully cultivated at Orton remains to be confirmed. However, Benjamin Smith grew both rice and cotton in its fields while timbering was surely also practiced. Alan D. Watson addresses the cultivation of both rice and cotton in *General Benjamin Smith*.

> Smith planted rice on both sides of the Northwest Cape Fear River at Belvedere Plantation and later cultivated the seed at Orton, which contained a rice machine and threshing mill. He marketed his crop in New York and Philadelphia.
>
> Cotton, a potentially appealing crop, was early grown in the Lower Cape Fear, but in limited quantity meant mostly for home use. According to an observer on the eve of the Revolution, "under proper management" cotton "would be an Article of great consequence." A quarter century later, though dubious, Smith was "very much inclined to try Cotton," no doubt impressed by the vigor and profit with which South Carolinians pursued the crop. In fact, those neighbors to the south may have contributed to the "rage" to grow cotton in the Lower Cape Fear at the turn of the nineteenth century. Tidal swamp was unsuitable for the crop, but the General owned "a great deal of cleared high River Swamp" that offered possibilities. Indicative of Smith's interest and perhaps cultivation of cotton was his advertisement in 1801 of a "cotton mill" of the saw-tooth variety at Orton, where cotton could be separated from the fiber "for the customary Toll," an indication that at least some fiber was grown on an ongoing basis in the region.[99]

By 1824 Orton was in the possession of General Smith's principal creditor, the Bank of Cape Fear, which advertised its sale at auction on 1 December 1824. The published advertisement noted its acreage, 4,975 acres, of which "between 400 and 500 acres is swamp land, of a strong and fertile soil" ideal for rice and cotton cultivation. "Included in the premises is a

very superior and never failing Mill stream, with an excellent dam, wanting only flood gates – the Rice Machine, Mill and Gin having been recently destroyed by fire. The pond may be used at all times as a reservoir of water to flow the low lands, thus rendering Orton one of the most valuable Rice Plantations in the country."[100]

Orton Plantation enjoyed its greatest prosperity and achieved its acme of agricultural significance during the antebellum period when it was owned by Dr. Frederick Jones Hill and Thomas Calizance Miller, from 1826 into 1865. During these years its rice fields produced increasingly large crops, and became among the most productive in Brunswick County and in North Carolina. At the same time, its vast upland pine woodlands were lumbered and tapped for naval stores. The principal evidence appears in the decennial censuses of 1850 and 1860 and the slave, agricultural, and industrial schedules compiled in those years. In 1830, the first census year he was resident at Orton, Dr. Hill is listed as the owner of fifty-five slaves. The number of slaves at Orton in 1840 was seventy-six, and the number in servitude on the plantation increased by one to seventy-seven in 1850. In 1860 Thomas C. Miller owned 144 slaves who occupied forty slave houses at Orton and on the lands Mr. Miller added to the plantation.

The 1850 federal census of Brunswick County provides an important, wider range of information than was previously recorded in the decennial censuses. The listings of "Productions of Agriculture" in Schedule 4. provides extraordinary detail of operations on the plantations and farms of Brunswick County. The entries under Dr. Hill's name confirm his status among the most productive planters in the county. Dr. Hill reported 500 improved acres (under cultivation) and 1,500 unimproved acres with Orton's cash value being $30,000, a figure matched by the Thomas L. Cowan's plantation, with the two being among the best known and the most valuable in the county. Dr. Hill reported farm implements and machinery valued at $2,000. His livestock, comprising 8 horses, 3 mules, 12 milk cows, 12 working oxen, 20 other (probably beef) cattle, 58 sheep, and 20 swine, was valued at $1,197.00 and again represented his status of one of the leading planters in Brunswick County, of which the numbers of his horses and sheep were among the highest. The crops grown at Orton, including 400 bushels of Indian corn and 30 bushes of peas and beans, were conventional except for the 3,000 bushels of sweet potatoes, the largest crop of 1850 in the county, and 325,000 pounds of rice, which was also the largest reported crop of rice in 1850 in Brunswick County. The next highest producers of rice were William B. Meares and Henry H. Watters who produced 308,000 pounds and 275,000 pounds of rice, respectively, in Brunswick's North West District. Orton also produced 100 pounds of wool and 75 pounds of butter.[101]

Dr. Hill's extremely valuable rice crop at Orton was one source of his wealth and high status as a planter. Another was his water-powered industrial operations, which were reported on Schedule 5., "Products of Industry," in the 1850 census. The figures he reported were for the year ending on 1 June 1850. His sawmills, representing an investment of $10,000 were the most valuable and productive in the county, producing 2,160,000 board feet of good lumber valued at $21,600. Orton's rice threshing machine, valued at $400, processed 15,000 bushels of "rough rice" with a value of $12,400.00 and rice straw with a value of $80.00. Dr. Hill's corn grinding mills, reflecting an investment of $500, produced 18,720 bushels of corn meal valued at $10,948.00. The question in regard to each of these productions is what proportion of the goods produced came from crops raised at Orton and its woodlands and represented direct profits and what part was produced on a toll basis for neighboring planters and farmers. Given the size of Orton and the difficulty of moving large logs long distances to a mill to be sawn into lumber, nearly all, if not all, of the lumber produced at Orton and reported in the 1850 census was surely from trees cut at Orton. However, corn, which can be easily transported in wagons in large or small quantities, might well have been brought to Orton's grist mill by Dr. Hill's neighbors for grinding into meal. While both Henry H. Watters and William B. Meares each matched Dr. Hill's production of rough rice, 15,000 bushels valued at $12,400, no other sawmill in Brunswick County had any significant production to rival the sawmills of Orton. Lumbering and the operation of sawmills at Orton had been a mainstay of Dr. Hill's agricultural and industrial works almost from the beginning of his ownership. In February 1830 Dr. Hill placed an advertisement in the *Cape-Fear Recorder* under the heading "Lumber below the Flats." "Lumber, in all respects equal to the best sawed at the Steam Mills, can be obtained at the Mill at Orton, 4 miles below the lower flats . . . . A good wharf has been constructed, where Vessels can lay securely, free of expence: and supplies of wood and water be procured with facility."[102] This mention of the wharf is an early reference to the industrial complex Dr. Hill constructed and operated to the south of the plantation seat on the east, river side of the historic road to Brunswick Town, where certain archaeological remains survive.

In 1854 when Thomas C. Miller acquired Orton Plantation he was a man of about forty years of age and an experienced planter having owned and operated Belleville and Ashley plantations for some years. By 1860 he, his overseer, and his slaves had raised six annual crops at Orton and raised its level of productivity. The 1860 federal census for Brunswick County yields important information on Orton and its agricultural operations. In a variation from the 1850 census, when Orton was listed in the Town Creek District, Orton is listed in the county's Smithville District. In Schedule 2. – "Slave Inhabitants," Thomas C. Miller is listed as the owner of 144 slaves who are housed in forty "Slave houses." (The location

of these houses remains to be confirmed.) The figures reported in Schedule 4. – "Productions of Agriculture" provide valuable insight into the expansive operations at Orton for the year ending 1 June 1860, on the eve of the Civil War. Orton then comprised 417 improved acres (under cultivation) and 8,276 unimproved acres, being its woodlands and abandoned fallow tracts, with a valuation of $42,500. The increases in acreage and valuation reflect in part the purchase of tracts adjoining Orton on the south that Mr. Miller bought of Enoch Robbins.[103] The plantation's farm implements and machinery were valued at $700. Orton's livestock numbers, including 90 swine, were well within convention except for 78 sheep that produced 100 pounds of wool. The crops at Orton comprised 1,200 bushels of Indian corn, 300 bushels of oats, 561,600 pounds of rice, 100 bushels of peas and beans, 4,000 bushels of sweet potatoes, 100 pounds of butter, and 6 tons of hay. The corn, ground into meal, and the sweet potatoes were principal foodstuffs for the slaves at Orton. The rice crop, while a substantial increase above that reported in 1850, was not the largest in Brunswick County, being exceeded in 1860 by the production of 864,000 pounds by T. D. Meares, Smithville District, 864,000 pounds by Thomas C. McIlhenny in the Town Creek District, and 624,960 pounds produced by Lenora Watters in Brunswick County's North West District. The "Value of Animals slaughtered" for the year was $730.

The entries in Schedule 5. – "Products of Industry" in the 1860 census show the productions of the rice threshing machines at Orton being in proportion to those on the plantations of Mr. McIlhenny and Mr. Meares. Orton's two water-powered rice mills produced 561,600 pounds of rough rice with a value of $10,400.00 and 505,440 pounds of rice straw valued at $1,008.00. Mr. Meares's steam-powered mill valued at $4,000.00, produced 884,000 pounds of rough rice valued at $16,370.00 while Mr. McIlhenny's water-powered mill produced 864,000 pounds of rough rice valued at $16,000: their productions of rice straw were proportional. The water-powered grist mill at Orton produced 2,250 bushels of corn meal with a value of $2,350.00. Mr. Miller reported no saw-milling operations at Orton in 1860.[104]

With no indications to the contrary, operations at Orton are believed to have continued in like scale, or with possible increases, during the Civil War. Surviving Confederate government vouchers for the period from April 1862 to March 1864 indicate quantities of rice straw/hay, merchantable lumber, refuse (rough/slab) lumber, cord wood, and shingles acquired from Orton as well as the services of its blacksmiths, and the use of Mr. Miller's schooner, the "Blue Perch," for use by the officers and troops stationed at Fort Anderson and Fort Fisher and nearby.[105]

At present relatively little is known of agricultural operations at Orton in the years following Mr. Miller's death in June 1865 until the 1880s when, in 1884, Kenneth M. Murchison became the sole owner of the plantation. A knowledge of his business activities and those of members of his family in Fayetteville and Cumberland County, where they were involved in trade, shipping, lumbering, and naval stores, leads to the conclusion that his initial interest in Orton owed to the value of its vast woodlands. However, he soon came to a remarkable appreciation of all its potential. In the pages of *Chronicles of the Cape Fear River* James Sprunt reprinted Alfred Moore Waddell's earlier-published statement that Mr. Murchison "expended a large amount of money restoring it to its former condition and improving it in various ways to satisfy his taste."[106] When the fact that the rice fields had apparently lain largely fallow from the mid-1860s into the early1880s is considered in the context of the earliest known photographs of the mansion and its rice fields, it appears likely that much of his expenditure of money and energy went into the repair and re-ditching of the rice fields and the renewed cultivation of rice by black hands who were paid, not enslaved. While the agricultural productions of his enterprise remains to be confirmed, photographs of Orton's rice fields, renewed and once-again productive, are virtually certain to have been displayed in the North Carolina exhibits at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, brought back to Raleigh in 1894, and put on view in the State Museum on Capitol Square. The *Hand Book of the North Carolina State Museum, Giving the Names and Localities of All Specimans*, published in 1897, includes the following named photographs; "Orton's Rice Farm, Brunswick County", "Orton Rice Farm on Cape Fear River", "Orton Rice Farm", and "Orton Rice Plantation," as well as "Planting Rice", "Reservoir Lake, Orton Plantation", "Rice Fields Flooded," and "Planting Rice," and several images of "Orton Mansion."[107]

Little specific information on rice production at Orton in the twentieth century is known; however, it was cultivated in varying acreages for periods up to about 1931 when it is believed to have been ended.[108] Given the fact that rice cultivation declined to increasingly smaller plantings in the years after the Civil War in North Carolina and effectively ended in the early twentieth century, when one of the last important crops in Brunswick County was harvested at Kendal in 1908, it is possible that the last grains grown and harvested in North Carolina were in a final crop of ca. 1931 at Orton.[109]

In *Looking for Longleaf: The Fall and Rise of An American Forest*, Lawrence S. Earley describes the Cape Fear River as "in 1860 the greatest artery of the worldwide naval stores trade."[110] With Wilmington as the principal port city on the Cape Fear River, the greatest quantity was shipped from or through Wilmington, and virtually all of it passed in front of the

mansion on its way to every point in the United States and abroad. In time production in North Carolina waned and the industry moved to the woodlands of the deeper South. When naval stores production ended at Orton is unconfirmed; however, it likely occurred in the closing decades of the nineteenth century coincident with Kenneth M. Murchison becoming its owner. While he and his family had a long experience in the regional naval stores industry, he saw the wiser less-destructive use of woodlands for timber production. His view in that regard was specific. In his will he cautioned his executors on the point. "Believing that Orton Plantation and my property in Yancy (sic) County known as Caney River will be enhanced in value on account of the growing timber, I direct that these properties not be sold until such time as seems best."[111] His admonition held, and it has been honored through four generations of his descendants in the Sprunt family who have harvested the Orton timberlands over the course of a century. During this period they have engaged expert services, including a study in 1972 conducted by the International Paper Company and executed restrictive timber deeds.[112] Today, with the core portion of Orton in the ownership of a descendant of Roger Moore, a professional forester is on staff and in charge of the plantation woodlands. There can be few other places in North Carolina where the history of forest resources can be documented, generally continuously, from 1732-1733 to the present.

In that the practices and mechanics of rice cultivation changed little at Orton and in Brunswick County through the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, except for the dramatic change from enslaved labor to paid laborers after the Civil War, the field arrangement and patterns have retained a surprising degree of integrity since rice was last cultivated to any extent in about 1931. The principal impact on them has been the effects of nature, storms, and the rampant growth that occurs in such marsh-like areas over time. During the years since ca. 1931, the grid-like pattern of parallel ditches in the fields, seen in documentary photographs and on maps, has weakened; however, significant parts of the principal drainage system remain intact, having been repaired and rebuilt through time. The rice fields on the east side of the mansion, between it and its grounds on the peninsula and the west bank of the Cape Fear River, form a patchwork of generally quadrangular shapes. The back fields, on the west side of the peninsula and along Orton Creek have an irregular shape. All of these fields are now in the process of reclamation. Virtually all other historic rice fields in Brunswick County have been reclaimed by nature and returned to marsh status since rice had ceased to be cultivated elsewhere in the county prior to its demise at Orton. These include the former fields at Kendal, which adjoin those of Orton on the north side of Orton Creek, and those of Clarendon Plantation, which is also located on the west side of the Cape Fear River, about midway between Orton and Wilmington. Frederic Kidder (1847-1908) cultivated rice at Kendal, his favored home plantation, up to his death and at Clarendon, which he owned in partnership, through the turn of the twentieth century. The fields at Clarendon Plantation, like those of Orton were noted for their fertility through the nineteenth century, and today they form an expansive, watery greensward on the west bank of the Cape Fear River.

Through time the upland woodlands of Orton, which cover most of the remainder of its acreage on the ridges above the lower, marshy acres of the property, have been set apart into areas or zones that are defined mostly by water courses, historic roadways, or paths and lumber roads likewise laid upon the surface of the woodland floor to facilitate dragging or hauling cut logs out of the forest to either onsite, temporary sawmills or log trucks for hauling away from the plantation. While the rice fields have a grid-like appearance, the divisions in the woodlands have a seemingly natural, less mechanical appearance except for their definition along the path of the asphalt-paved, state-maintained public road that carries through the larger acreage of the estate to Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson State Historic Site. The woodlands themselves, historically and now, reflect the systematic patterns of forest management that were practiced by the Sprunt family and, since 2010, the present owner, including the periodic harvesting of timber in certain designated areas or zones when it has reached maturity. While there is variation in the age of standing trees, area to area, the appearance of the woodlands is one of a large essentially pine-covered acreage. What sets the woodlands in the Orton Plantation apart from other privately-held managed forests and woodlands in Brunswick County is the appearance of obvious care and post-lumbering cleanup that reflects the high professional standards of the forest management practices effected by the estate's full-time professional forester.

Architectural Significance

The statewide significance of Orton Plantation Boundary Increase and Additional Documentation in the area of architecture is associated with two major historic building programs implemented, respectively, in the antebellum period and the early twentieth century. The first of these, the overbuilding of Roger Moore's English-bond brick house by Dr. Frederick Jones Hill in about 1840, produced a handsome Greek Revival-style plantation seat with a tetrastyle Doric portico. Described in an 1872 auction handbill as "the late Palatial residence of Dr. F. J. Hill," it is one of the earliest temple-form domestic buildings in North Carolina and, thus, one of a significant group of like domestic and institutional buildings that ornamented the plantation landscape of the antebellum South. Dr. Hill's house, while enlarged by additions

in 1909-1910 and 2011-2012, remains visible today as a highly important example of Greek Revival architecture in North Carolina.

James and Luola Murchison Sprunt's building program of 1909-ca. 1916, that included an expansion of the antebellum house, entrance gates, a gatehouse, and a private chapel, together with newly-terraced and planted gardens, produced an early and important example of the American Country House Movement in North Carolina. The enlargement of the house in 1909-1910 and (surely) the other new architectural features were designed by Kenneth McKenzie Murchison Jr., a New York-based architect whose father had owned Orton and whose sister was his client. Long familiar with the plantation seat, he designed one-story wings, enhancements to the portico, and a service wing that respected the materials and styling of the antebellum house and repeated its impressive Doric entablature. Doing so he produced a mansion that is at once both Classical Revival and Colonial Revival in character, embodies the appearance of houses of its era that were described as "Southern Colonial," and has a truly colonial building as its core. *The American Architect* published a first-story floor plan, exterior photographs, and a photograph of the living room in its 24 May 1911 issue. Luola's Chapel, an elegant Classical Revival-style building that became her memorial in 1916, is one of two known surviving private plantation chapels in North Carolina

If, as is believed, the oft-cited traditional date of ca. 1840 is correct, Dr. Hill's imposing Greek Revival-style house at Orton is both one of a very small number of such temple-form domestic buildings in North Carolina and the most architecturally accomplished of the group. Its contemporaries in the 1840s, Wills Forest in Raleigh of 1840-1842 and Stockton in Hertford County of the late 1840s, both have two-story pedimented porticos that run with the roof of the house, but both porticos have the appearance of a certain separateness.[113] At Orton, the east-facing Doric portico and the two-story house block are fully integrated by the seamless continuation of the bold Doric entablature on its long north and south elevations. The temple form and the architectural finish are fully unified at Orton just as they are at the Orange County Courthouse (NR, 1971) in Hillsborough of 1844-1845 and the Rowan County Courthouse (NR, 1970) of a decade later in Salisbury. And at Orton there was the further matter of the elegant porch recessed in the rear southwest corner of the first story that is fronted by arched openings carried on a center column. Combined with the pattern book moldings enframing doors and windows, inside and out, Orton was a fully realized Greek Revival temple. A building that begs the identity of its designer.

How Dr. and Mrs. Hill came to build such a fashionable house in rural Brunswick County, on a rise overlooking the Cape Fear River, is easier to establish. Dr. Hill was born to privilege, into an elite tier of society in Wilmington and the Lower Cape Fear region. The buildings he saw at Chapel Hill, while a student in 1805-1806, were relatively rudimentary. However, those he would have seen in New York City, while an ambitious, highly-intelligent student at the College of Physicians and Surgeons in 1811-1812, would have been among the most up-to-date in the country. Dr. Hill's experience of architecture in the period from 1812 to ca. 1835 and his travels during those years remain unknown at present. However, in the short period from 1835 to 1840, he came into personal contact with the construction of the most important building of the time in North Carolina, the State Capitol (NR, 1970; NHL, 1973) in Raleigh, and, in Wilmington, the construction of St. James Church (Wilmington HD, NR, 1974), the first built of a series of handsome, costly antebellum public and institutional buildings in the cosmopolitan port city.

In Raleigh, while serving Brunswick County as a senator in 1835 and as its representative for the sessions of 1836, 1838, and 1840, Dr. Hill saw the State Capitol through all but its first years of construction. Doing so he witnessed the granite masonry building emerge and evolve from the plan initially produced by William Nichols, to one greatly refined by Ithiel Town and Alexander Jackson Davis, and erected under the supervision of Scottish-born architect David Paton, who overlaid the building with his own knowledge of British neoclassicism. As the State Capitol neared completion William Strickland, the talented Philadelphia architect, was called upon for advice.[114] This collaboration was extraordinary and produced a building that grew in sophistication, elegance, and significance with the addition of each voice. Catherine Bishir, the author of several important works on North Carolina architecture, put the case simply and succinctly. "Seen at the time as a nationally important building symbolizing new hope for an economically depressed state, the Capitol has consistently held foremost place among the state's architecture."[115]

In 1838-1840, Dr. Hill had a second, more intimate opportunity for association with a major building. In 1837 Thomas U. Walter, then engaged on the design of Girard College in Philadelphia, visited Wilmington and consulted with leaders of St. James Parish regarding a new church for the Episcopal congregation. The Philadelphia architect completed his Gothic Revival-style design for the new church in January 1838. The old church was taken down at the end of March 1839 and the cornerstone was laid for the new building on an expanded, improved site on 3 April 1839. Architect John S. Norris superintended construction of the brick masonry church, which was essentially completed in 1840 when it was consecrated on 29 March by Bishop Levi Silliman Ives. Stucco, intended to cover the elevations, and other refinements for

the church, particularly its interior, were added in the 1840s.[116] Dr. Hill and his wife were long-time communicants of St. James Church, he many times represented the parish at diocesan conventions, and they had been host to Bishop Ives at Orton in the winter of 1832-1833.

In retrospect at least four of the men involved in the two building projects could have provided the design for Dr. Hill's Orton; David Paton, William Strickland, Thomas U. Walter, or John S. Norris. Circumstances favor either Thomas U. Walter, who would later achieve lasting fame for his work on the United States Capitol in the 1850s, or John S. Norris, who designed Italianate improvements for the Bank of Cape Fear, the United States Custom House in Wilmington in 1843, and is known to have undertaken private commissions simultaneously before relocating to Savannah.[117] It is also possible that an architect other than these four was Orton's designer. Whatever the case, the expert Greek Revival-style design of Orton, with its accomplished temple form, handsome entablature, and elegant, recessed side porch, was the work of a master and retained its intact, iconic status through the sympathetic additions of 1909-1910.

In about 1909 when Kenneth McKenzie Murchison Jr. began to design the additions to the antebellum house at Orton, he had two distinct advantages. He had come to know the house and its setting, the grounds, fields, and woodlands, over the course of a quarter-century. Kenneth Murchison fully appreciated its siting and the splendid prospect the mansion commanded. He also enjoyed the benefit of his sister and her husband as clients for the work, kinsmen whose lives and manner of living he knew intimately, and clients with whom he had worked in the past and would again in the future. The result was an ideal solution, a house that deferred to precedent and provided the new spaces and facilities, including ground-level bedrooms, sought by the Sprunts. Mr. Murchison's pride in his work was rewarded almost immediately with Orton's publication in *The American Architect* in May 1911.

Kenneth Murchison's work at Orton for the Sprunts continued with the design for gates that were erected at the north and south entrances to the estate, a one-story weatherboarded frame gatehouse for the north entrance, and most spectacularly in the design of a private chapel that became a memorial to his sister on her death in February 1916. Presbyterian by birth, Luola Sprunt had been profoundly affected by the deaths of her two daughters, and she saw Christian worship as a valuable and necessary part of everyday life. In this regard she had seen earlier to the erection of a church for black residents and workers on the plantation. In the design of the chapel Mr. Murchison exercised a lighter classical hand and adopted the Corinthian order for a building that became and remains an important part of the manorial building-up of Orton. Today, with Salem Chapel, built for Duncan Cameron in the 1820s on his Fairntosh Plantation (NR, 1973), Luola's Chapel is one of two known private chapels standing on historic plantations in North Carolina.[118]

The skilled enhancement of the mansion at Orton and the additional work designed there by Kenneth M. Murchison Jr. immediately became an important, early example of the American Country House Movement in North Carolina and, arguably, one of the first in a series of distinguished houses and estates that followed on George W. Vanderbilt's Biltmore Estate (NHL, 1963; NR, 1966). The movement was not one of a particular style but with the intent and purpose of emulating English or Continental estates, setting apart a country house, outbuildings, entrance gates, gardens and associated domestic and agricultural features as a distinct entity in a rural or open suburban landscape. The style adopted for the country house could be Tudor, Manorial, Jacobethan, or Elizabethan revival as well as Georgian Revival reflecting the principally English antecedents of the movement, or Classical Revival. These estates featured gardens and landscaped grounds and reflected an important new professional collaboration between architects and landscape architects, whose professional identity was gaining recognition at the turn of the twentieth century. Expressions and examples of the movement could be single houses of particular grandeur or, as at Orton, a large imposing house, joined by entrance gates and a gatehouse, approaches through the fields and grounds of the estate, and other buildings. The fullest expression of the style could include model farms, residential villages for workers on the estate, decorative or working water-powered mills, churches or chapels, as at Orton, and a host of related buildings and facilities that took on the appearance of generous self-sufficiency. At Orton there is a likelihood that further upbuilding would have occurred, but such work was forestalled by declining health in Mrs. Sprunt's last years and her death in February 1916.

The movement had an appealing, influential advocate and promoter in *Country Life in America*, a monthly magazine launched in November 1901 and modeled on the English magazine, *Country Life*. Its scholars have included James T. Maher, the author of *The Twilight of Splendour: Chronicles of the Age of American Palaces* (1975), a book that launched serious academic interest in the field, Mark Alan Hewitt and Clive Aslet whose respective books, *The Architect and the American Country House* and *The American Country House*, were both published in 1990 by Yale University Press. Other scholars have written and published monographs on the principal architects and landscape architects of the early twentieth century. As at Orton, in the best of circumstances, country houses and estates often descended within a family and were nearly always dependent on substantial inherited wealth. Orton was held by the Murchison-Sprunt family for

some 126 years from 1884 to 2010, an association of people with an important place matched by the Vanderbilts at Biltmore Estate among few others in North Carolina.

In the event Orton was not the first of the important Southern Colonial or Colonial Revival-style country houses built in North Carolina. Following by a decade on the construction of Flat Top Manor in Blowing Rock in 1899-1900, as a summer residence for Moses H. Cone (1857-1908), Orton was the second landmark house built in this mode in the opening years of the American Country House Movement. Designed by Orlo Epps (1864-1926), a now little-known Cornell-educated architect then based in Greensboro, Flat Top Manor is a large, two-and-a-half-story weatherboarded frame house of twenty-three rooms, symmetrical in design, enriched with a lavish combination of Colonial, Federal, and Classical detailing, and crowned with a balustraded roofline that imparts a certain New England feeling. As the seat of a summer estate, Flat Top Manor stood on landscaped grounds of some 3,000 acres that included agricultural operations, ponds, orchards, gardens, and bridle paths. It remained a summer house of the Cone family until the death of the textile magnate's wife, Bertha Lindau Cone (1858-1947), in 1947, and is now the property of the National Park Service.

Orton was soon joined, ca. 1912, by another member of the movement, Belmont (Richardson Houses HD, NR, 1986), the imposing Classical Revival-style house built by Robert Paine Richardson II near Reidsville, in Rockingham County. Within a few years Charles Barton Keen was about the design of Reynolda (Reynolds HD, NR, 1980) in Winston-Salem for Richard Joshua and Katharine Reynolds. Other important examples followed in the 1920s and early 1930s including Chinqua-Penn Plantation (NR, 1993) in Rockingham County, whose eclectic development continued through the decade, Morrocroft (NR, 1983) in Mecklenburg County, the manor house designed by Harrie P. Lindeberg for Cameron and Sara Watts Morrison as the seat of a gentleman's farm, and the Georgian Revival-style Meadowmont (NR, 1985) near Chapel Hill, built for David St. Pierre and Valinda Hill DuBose. The partial subdivision of the Reynolda Estate, following Katharine Reynolds Johnston's death in 1924, provided grounds for Bowman Gray's Norman Revival-style Graylyn that was completed in 1932. The American Country House Movement effectively ended in the mid-1930s with a final group of sometimes smaller houses such as Eastover (NR, 2011) in Rowan County that was designed by Louis H. Asbury for Hearne Swink in 1934 and completed in 1935.[119] In Brunswick County Orton was joined in the mid-1920s by the construction of a new seat at Clarendon Plantation, a handsome two-and-a-half brick Georgian Revival-style house, erected for D. H. Lippit. Mr. Lippit, a resident of Wilmington, used his new country house at Clarendon in much the same fashion as the Sprunts enjoyed Orton, for hunting parties, as a retreat, and as a winter residence. Clarendon, long abandoned as a residence, and its Colonial Revival-style parterre gardens are now untended and deteriorating.

Within this group of houses and estates erected in North Carolina in the era of the American Country House Movement, Biltmore Estate is exceptional both in the state and the nation. The mansion, most of its many outbuildings, and the designed gardens and grounds retain a high degree of integrity; however, some significant parts of its plantings, including the original tulip poplars in the forecourt, have been replaced or replanted over time, and the vast acreage of the estate has been reduced to just under 7,000 acres. The Reynolda Estate has also been greatly diminished in its size, the house compromised by a major remodeling for the Reynolds's daughter and the addition of a large museum wing, and the farm and village outbuildings altered and adapted for commercial use. While both Morrocroft and Meadowmont retain their architectural integrity as houses, their expansive acreages have been greatly diminished to the immediate house grounds by commercial/residential and institutional development, respectively. Within this group of important estates erected during the American Country House Movement, Orton along has retained the principal part of its historic acreage even while the mansion has been expanded and the gardens and immediate grounds remodeled in 2011-2013. While both Belmont and Chinqua-Penn have experienced varying, slight degrees of change--the entire original furnishings of Chinqua-Penn having been sold at auction recently--the house, gardens, and grounds of Eastover have remained intact.

Within this chronology Orton is also an important North Carolina example of a parallel effort in the South, namely the acquisition and refitting of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century plantations as winter residences or hunting preserves. This was Orton's history during Mr. Murchison's ownership, 1884 to 1904, and it continued in the Sprunt era. While not an outdoorsman like his father-in-law, James Sprunt allowed close friends and colleagues hunting and fishing rights on the plantation. This practice was seen to an altogether greater extent in South Carolina where former rice plantations and other worked-out lands were remade, often by those of recent, great fortune, including Archer Milton and Anna Hyatt Huntington at Brookgreen Gardens, Georgetown County, and John King Garnett and his friends at the Okeetee Club in Jasper County, among others.[120]

Landscape Architectural Significance

The gardens at Orton hold local significance in the area of landscape architecture. Together with those at Biltmore Estate, the early twentieth-century Airlie Gardens at Wilmington, and the Elizabethan Garden at the Fort Raleigh National Historic Site in Dare County, established in 1951 by the Garden Club of North Carolina, they are among the best known and most often photographed gardens in North Carolina. Within this group, the Orton, Biltmore, and Airlie gardens are also documented by valuable photographs that reflect their evolution from the decades around the turn of the twentieth century into the mid-twentieth century. Their scholarly address as historic landscapes varies one to the other and complicates the matter of comparative evaluation.[121] Each is a significant reflection of its time and place in North Carolina, its owners, its designers, and its gardeners, and each has a unique history. Location, climate, and plant materials knit a special relationship between the gardens at Airlie and Orton, but they, too, have the facts of history and circumstance that set them apart.

While the Orton gardens are beautifully recorded in photographs, their history is altogether less well documented. They first appear on a plan of the plantation, titled "Orton Plantation on the West Bank of the Cape Fear River about 15 miles below Wilmington, North Carolina," drawn by Robert Swan Sturtevant (1889-1955), a Harvard-educated landscape architect then based in Groton, Massachusetts, and dated January 1937. They are shown in greater detail in a second, undated plan titled "The Gardens at Orton (,) Wilmington (,) North Carolina." It also bears Mr. Sturtevant's name but no date; however, it probably dates to ca. 1937. Both were prepared after Mr. Sturtevant was engaged as the consulting landscape architect for the extensive improvements and enlargements anticipated by James Laurence and Annie Gray Sprunt.[122] In his research for *Carolina Gardens*, published in 1937 and the first such survey covering North and (principally) South Carolina, Edward Terry Hendrie Shaffer (1880-1945) visited Orton, probably in about 1935-36. Reflecting, it appears, his acknowledged friendship with Louis Toomer Moore, the published account of the plantation focuses more heavily on the history of Orton than its gardens.

However, the gardens were the reason for his visit and he gave them his attention:

> Under the dark live oaks that surround the white structure thousands of azalea indica and camellias now grow illuminating the scene with color. The garden at Orton has made use of the dwarf or Japanese azalea perhaps to greater extent than has any other garden in the Carolinas. The collection of camellia plants, from four to ten feet in height, contains many of the most beautiful of the important newer varieties. From the central steps of the portico a camellia bordered path leads to steps that descend through flower filled terraces to the level of the old river fields. At the head of these steps, crowning the bluff, two banana shrubs, *michelia fuscata*, stand like perfumed guards on either hand. Between them one looks out over a far prospect, a stage upon which much history has been acted through many years – the wide marshes that were once rice fields, the broad river, . . . and on the horizon a radiance that marks the open sea. . . .
>
> Passing through the wonders of the garden to the left of the dwelling, another camellia walk curves down to a group of live oaks that crown a point jutting out in the marsh. Here is the peaceful cemetery of the estate, old marbles with moss encrusted inscriptions. . . .
>
> One must come here in spring to catch the utter loveliness, the strange wistful spell of this garden in an antique setting on its high commanding site, a ridge between the river fields and the low fresh marsh at the rear. An emerald lawn set with jeweled beds of pale pink, magenta, reds and pearl white in the noonday twilight of moss strewn live oaks, the marsh and the river and the sea beyond! Deep in the heart of the garden is a pool of dark water ringed with color and framed in oaks and moss, and in the midst of so many colors, such wealth of green, so many shadows, the white walls and columns of the great house.
>
> Across the distant waters one glimpses Smith Island, . . . and here in the garden is an amazing grove of pale green camphor trees, *cinnamomum camphora*, native of China and Japan, and unusual in such luxuriance in this latitude. . . .
>
> A spirit of hospitality seems to cling here, . . . While the mansion itself is now the private home of the owners, the park and garden, so beautiful, so rich in historical associations, are open to the public at all times. An admission fee is charged to defray the cost of guides and to provide the necessary protection to the flowers and rare shrubs. . . .[123]

At the time of Mr. Shaffer's visit to Orton, James and Annie Gray Sprunt had had charge of the gardens for about ten years. In the late1930s and 1940s the Sprunts, with the assistance of their son Kenneth, continued planting out the gardens and implemented the Sturtevant plan. Their work is seen at its acme in the color film, "Orton Plantation under Spring Skies," photographed and produced by Tom Draper in about 1948-1949.

The gardens at Orton flourished under the Sprunts' attention in the early 1950s as did the Orton Plantation Nursery, a commercial horticultural operation that specialized in camellias and azaleas, the two principal ornamental shrubs in the Orton gardens. The nursery issued a printed catalogue for the Fall 1951-Spring 1952 planting season and another for the Fall 1953-Spring 1954 season. In 1954 the Sprunts consulted with Charles Freeman Gillette (1886-1969), a landscape architect in Richmond, Virginia, but his suggestions were not adopted. Near the end of the 1950s the Sprunts turned to Morley Jeffers Williams (1886-1977), a landscape architect then in charge of the garden restoration program at the Tryon Palace reconstruction in New Bern, North Carolina, where Mrs. Sprunt was a charter member of the Tryon Palace Commission. His work at Orton coincided with the publication in 1958 of the first guidebook, *The Story of Orton Plantation*, by James Laurence Sprunt. Mr. Williams, in collaboration with his wife Nathalia Williams, produced designs for the overlooks, the lagoon bridge, and the scroll gardens between 2 October 1958 and 6 February 1959. The implementation of these plans was effected in 1959-1960 and effectively completed the historic expansion and development of the gardens. The high degree of stewardship and maintenance practiced by the Sprunt family continued.

In spring 1972 Arthur George Lee Hellyer (1902-1993), the eminent, prolific English garden writer, visited Orton while *en route* to Cypress, Magnolia, and Middleton Place gardens in South Carolina. Months passed before he wrote an account of his visit in "A Garden From a Rice Plantation," an article published in *Country Life* on 4 January 1973. On short notice Mr. Hellyer secured an interview with James L. Sprunt (and probably Mrs. Sprunt), gained an overview of the history of Orton from his host, and incorporated both fact and his impressions in the article.

> Because of its situation near the Atlantic, Orton is dominated by the great trees native to this area, mainly live oaks and swamp cypresses, all of which are heavily draped in grey Spanish moss hanging like widow's weeds. Trees and moss immediately set the scene and establish the air of mystery that is characteristic of many Carolina gardens. But at Orton mystery is brilliantly contrasted with lucidity.
>
> The juxtaposition of opposed styles is most strikingly exemplified in the Scroll Garden made in a natural amphitheatre beside one of the lagoons. This is a parterre in the French manner, moderately elaborate in design, with numerous geometric flower beds and larger, more flowing shapes formed in clipped evergreens of various kinds and sizes. Occasionally a single bush has been allowed to sprout upwards more or less untrimmed to make a striking vertical accent in what would otherwise be an almost wholly two-dimensional pattern.
>
> But what gives the parterre at Orton its special quality are the two wooden structures that jut out into it at opposite ends. They stand on tall columns, have lattice-like sides and are painted white, and look like two little seaside piers – an impression enhanced by the large sheets of water that they overlook. They are amusing and decorative and are obviously meant to be looked at and admired. They also serve the utilitarian purpose of providing platforms from which the Scroll Garden and its surroundings can be viewed.
>
> It should be an axiom of all garden making that parterres must be capable of being seen from above. Usually a terrace of some kind encircles or borders them, but too often in modern gardens the necessity is overlooked. No such error has been made at Orton, for not only has its charming little Scroll Garden been placed in a naturally sunken site with an excellent viewing path on the high ground above it, but the two little piers allow one to walk out over it and so enjoy its patterns to the full.
>
> There are other equally ingenious but smaller features at Orton, for example, a quaint snail-like bed rising in a shallow spiral beside the largest lake, and charmingly planted, when I saw it in spring, with white, yellow and lavender pansies and a miniature pink azalea. Elsewhere there is what might be described as an inversion of the same idea: a more or less circular bed of purple and yellow violas sunk a foot or more below ground level and surrounded by white, pink and rose azaleas. These are the kind of features that Gertrude Jeckyll (*sic*) often uses effectively, and she would, I feel sure, have enjoyed the little rustic arbour or look-out perched in a tree and bowered in double yellow Banksia roses.

> She might also have liked the rustic bridge that crosses the neck of the largest lake in a series of zig-zags according to the Chinese recipe for defeating pursuing evil spirits, for this is generally festooned with climbers that blend it with the landscape.
>
> Possibly she would have considered the Japanese bridge that spans the lagoon a trifle too stark despite the fine wisterias that are trained over one end, but it does echo the clear-cut woodwork features of the Scroll Garden, from which it can be seen.
>
> Wistarias grow magnificently throughout the south-eastern states, and the native wisteria can climb 40 ft. into the trees, smothering them in April with pale violet bloom. But it is the Chinese wisteria, even more vigorous and much more variable, that provides one of the major glories of the Carolina gardens, and at Orton there is a particularly beautiful variety with large, double, deep purple, extra-sweetly-scented flowers.
>
> Azaleas are another feature of all these sea-board gardens, and at Orton they are planted in great drifts of pink, rose, crimson and white. Because they are nearly all evergreen and derived from the Indian azalea, they are completely devoid of the harsher shades of yellow, orange and flame that make some deciduous azaleas difficult to place. At Orton they harmonise admirably with camellias.
>
> No account of this enchanting garden would be complete without some mention of the perfumes that pervade it. Dominant at the time of my visit was a baffling blend of pear drops and bananas that eluded me completely until my attention was drawn to the rather dull ochre-coloured flowers of *Michelia fuscata*, which in America is often known as the banana tree because of its distinctive scent. D*aphne odora* was also contributing its heady sweetness, and there was a pleasantly aromatic background that I was unable to fix precisely, though it probably came from some of the numerous species of pine in the garden. . . .
>
> Dr. Sprunt died eight years after his wife and was succeeded at Orton by his son James Laurence Sprunt, who continued to expand and improve the garden that his mother had begun. He engaged as landscape architect Mr. Robert Swann (*sic*) Sturtevant, and was also greatly assisted by Mr. Churchill Bragaw, who managed the estate for some years in the 1930s and, after the war, by his son Kenneth M. Sprunt.[124]

Luola Murchison Sprunt's place in the genesis of the gardens at Orton is critical. While the many variations of the plantings lining the walk immediately in front (east) of the house have come and gone, yet survive as a record of her continued efforts in numerous period photographs, the terraces on the east front of the lawn, descending to the lagoon level, remain a signal feature of the Orton landscape to the present. James Sprunt noted their immediate success in a letter of 5 January 1909 to Herman C. Schumm of Fort Hamilton, New York. "You would hardly know the place at Orton since we have improved the appearance of it, having graded the front and terraced it, and put in three flights of stone steps, which greatly adds to its attractiveness."[125] In 1952 in "Camellias at Orton," Kenneth M. Sprunt elaborated on his grandmother's role.

> In the early 1900's, Mrs. James Sprunt laid the foundation for the present gardens. Under her direction were constructed extensive terraces overlooking the rice fields, and many specimens and other ornamental plant materials popular at the time were set out. It was during this period that the first camellias were brought to Orton. It is thought that they were purchased from Berckmans' Nursery – now Fruitland Nurseries – at Augusta, Georgia. Among them were Anna Zucchini (Lilyi), Bella Romana, Orton Pink (Dixie), Henri Favre, and a variety afterwards named Annie Gray. The largest of these original plants is the Anna Zucchini, which is at present twenty-four feet in height and eighteen feet through; the trunk at the ground is forty-six inches in circumference.[126]

The foregoing quotes from the writings of Mr. Shaffer, Mr. Hellyer, and Kenneth Murchison Sprunt describe the extraordinary gardens that flourished at Orton for most of the twentieth century and drew thousands of visitors to the plantation. Kenneth Murchison Sprunt well understood the nature of their appeal, and in 1952 he had voiced the precept that guided his hand in the gardens from 1947 into the 1990s. "These gardens are designed to approach what is sought by the traveler and garden lover alike when they are looking for the South's bygone grandeur as exemplified by a plantation."[127] Now, they, their mystery, and the sense of a lush, rich oasis are largely a part of Orton's past. The gardens at Orton were arguably at their peak in 1972 when both Mr. Hellyer and the North Carolina State Historic Preservation

Office staff visited Orton and photographed the mansion and pleasure grounds. Time and inattention gradually took a certain toll. The scroll garden disappeared and many of the camellias, azaleas, and other plantings became overgrown.

With the introduction in 2011 and 2012 of a series of new gardens and landscape features, modern cultivars, the removal of some older plantings and the relocation of others, and the use of new materials for the walks, paths, and terraces the grounds of Orton reflect a changed course. Nevertheless, the early twentieth-century terraces crafted by James and Luola Sprunt, much of Mr. Sturtevant's plan developed for their son, James Laurence Sprunt, including the circle garden with its Italian, carved marble figure of "Spring," as well as the overlooks and the lagoon bridge added to the garden on the advice of Morley Jeffers Williams, and many of the plantings added in their time and during the long stewardship of Kenneth Murchison Sprunt remain, recall, and represent the pleasure grounds described by A. G. L. Hellyer as "one of the loveliest and most original gardens I have visited." It was, as he concluded "the creation of three generations of one family all like-minded in their dedication to the task and all seeing it with very similar eyes and ideals. It would be difficult to think of a better recipe for the creation of an outstanding garden." Today Orton Plantation holds local significance in the area of landscape architecture. In Brunswick County the only other known twentieth-century large-scale residential garden is the once-appealing, while modest, garden planted at Clarendon coincident with the interwar-period building of a new Georgian Revival-style house as its seat. Abandoned in the late twentieth-century as a residence, the house and the garden are both compromised by neglect and in ruin.

Politics/Government Significance

The statewide significance of Orton Plantation in the area of politics/government is associated with the political career of Dr. Frederick Jones Hill (1792-1861), the resident owner/proprietor of the plantation from 1826 to 1854. His signature legislative achievement was the introduction of "A Bill for the establishment of Common Schools" in the House of Commons on 1 January 1839 that was effectively reconciled with a very similar bill introduced in the State Senate by William W. Cherry, amended, passed on 7 January 1839, and thereby produced the law creating a public school system in North Carolina. In the original nomination the subject was addressed in a single sentence.

Dr. and Mrs. Hill had been living at Orton for some dozen years when the bill was introduced. While Dr. Hill owned Orton, from 1826 to 1854, the plantation seat was their primary residence: they also spent the season at their summer residence in Chatham County, North Carolina. With the sale of Orton in 1954 Dr. Hill bought the imposing Lazarus family house in Wilmington, remodeled it in the Italianate style, and resided there until his death in 1861. In 1835 he represented Brunswick County in the State Senate. His known commitment to education earned his election to the board of trustees of the University of North Carolina in 1835 and he served continuously as a trustee until 1860, the year before his death. In 1836 Dr. Hill was elected to the first of three terms as Brunswick County's representative in the North Carolina House of Commons. In each of those sessions, in 1836, 1838, and 1840, Dr. Hill served on the Committee on Internal Improvements and was a strong advocate for progressive initiatives throughout the state.

In the biography of Dr. Hill published in the *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, the late Lawrence F. London notes his support for "roads, canals, and railroads," but "His most valuable contribution, however, was in the field of education." He then quotes from a speech Dr. Hill delivered in the House of Commons in which he "advocated using a part of the funds derived from the sale of state land to support public schools."[128] The speech was immediately printed in Raleigh and issued as *Remarks of Mr. F. J. Hill, Of Brunswick, Delivered in the House of Commons of North-Carolina, December 10, 1838, on Certain Resolutions Submitted by Him on the Subject of the Public Lands*.[129] The fourteen-page pamphlet was critical in garnering public and legislative support for public schools. Mr. London's analysis of the speech reflects Dr. Hill's learned passion on the subject.

> He said that it had always been one of his most cherished desires "to furnish the means of a plain education to every citizen within our limits." Moreover, he continued, the word "education" meant "something more than the mere imparting of instruction; it is the engrafting of knowledge upon a good stock, the application of all those means calculated to develop the physical, moral, and intellectual faculties of man." In conclusion, Hill declared that "In a government founded upon the popular will, Education is necessary for all classes, and for each individual in the community – and it is the duty of such Government to take care that this great end be secured."[130]

In his final term as a representative in the General Assembly, Dr. Hill introduced a motion for the better regulation of public schools that was likewise amended and passed on 9 January 1841. But by then his goals had been achieved. "On January 20, 1840, the first public school in the state was opened in Rockingham County; other counties soon followed

suit, and by 1846 every county had one or more public schools, and the state education fund exceeded $2,000,000."[131] The value of North Carolina's public school system, its influence on every citizen of the state and every sphere of public life is beyond estimation.

Archaeological Significance

Orton Plantation Boundary Increase and Additional Documentation meets National Register Criterion D because it has yielded and is likely to yield information regarding the lifeways of the enslaved African American workers and the postbellum-period African American tenants that lived on Orton. The plantation contains a burial ground and settlement made up of multiple domestic archaeological sites dating from the nineteenth through twentieth centuries associated with this population. It is also significant because it has the potential to provide information about the owners and overseers at Orton. The property contains the Moore family's colonial and antebellum period cemetery, as well as the possible remains of an overseers' house. Orton also is significant in the area of agriculture for its ability to provide information regarding the farming of rice, as well as cotton. It also contains the remains of a mill, which has the potential to provide information concerning an industrial operation associated with the agriculture of the plantation. The remains of lighthouses, vessel docks and early bulkheads at the site also preserve important information about the maritime heritage of the Lower Cape Fear River and Orton Plantation.

Two archaeological investigations have been conducted within the boundary of the property. From 2011 to 2012, the Chicora Foundation undertook reconnaissance-level archaeological investigations within the historic core of Orton.[132] Most of the archaeological sites located during these surveys represent nineteenth-century settlements that are documented on historic maps and charts showing Orton. Many are postbellum settlements of African Americans and two contain antebellum artifacts.

31BW548 (Orton Graveyard).** Site 31BW548, the Orton Graveyard, an African American burial ground is located on the western edge of a ridge above the back rice field.

The Orton Graveyard, is significant because it has many of the features and characteristics that are typical of African American burial places and it is an excellent representation of the stylistic type. The site retains excellent integrity, easily conveying the qualities that make the site significant. The isolated, rural site easily conveys the feelings of the overall setting consistent with its use during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. This feeling is assisted by the presence of the adjacent swamp and forest setting, and shielding from modern structures. The proximity of the swamp provides a clear reminder of the economic origins of the plantation and the areas to which African American cemeteries were relegated by white landowners.

There is virtually no visible damage or modification to the cemetery nor is there evidence that any significant features have been lost. Grave goods, while present, are not abundant. Gravestones are intact and exhibit remarkably little damage. There are also numerous depressions, clearly marking the location of burials. These characteristics are consistent with the cemetery's period of historic use and help convey a feeling that is consistent with African American burial locations.

It is significant because it has been investigated archaeologically and has the very strong potential for the recovery of bioanthropological data (e.g., skeletal remains) that would address a broad range of questions concerning the health, diet, and disease of rural low country African Americans during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Assisting such studies, many of the graves are marked and the identification of others may be determinable. The cemetery reflects a transitional period between plantation and modern medicine. However, there are suggestions that African American health may actually have declined during the postbellum period. Studies at sites such as 31BW548, the Orton Graveyard, would begin to allow these significant questions to be more fully examined.

In addition, the site would provide the opportunity to examine African American mortuary patterns typical of a rural, low income population along the southern North Carolina coast. Research questions might involve the exploration of traditions documented through oral history, such as the use of coins on eyes or the inclusion of salt in the coffin. Other research questions might involve the examination of soil samples to determine the frequency of embalming, which would be expected to leave tell-tale traces of heavy metals, such as arsenic. There would also be the opportunity to explore the use of coffins and coffin hardware and the differences in mortuary behavior between individuals buried by friends and family and those whose burials were handled by commercial undertakers and funeral homes. Therefore, Site 31BW548, the Orton Graveyard, meets National Register Criterion D.

31BW7871 (eighteenth- and nineteenth-century domestic site).** Site 31BW787**1 is located immediately north of the Orton mansion and on the edge of the terrace that overlooks the rice fields to the east. It is significant because it has the potential to contain structural remains and artifact assemblages associated with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century domestic occupation. These features and artifacts would begin to better tell the story of Orton Plantation by providing data on the ancillary support structures, such as the kitchen and possibly overseer's structure. It is important to realize that while the white owners of Orton may be researched using available historical and legal documents, white overseers left little imprint in historical records. Their lives can be studied by examining the archaeological sites they left behind. The site may contain data that would address research questions concerning the consumer behavior of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century overseers at the site and how it compares to that of the owners and other overseers on Orton Plantation, as well as other plantations in the low country and in other regions. Therefore, Site 31BW787**1 meets National Register Criterion D.

31BW7872 (Roger Moore Cemetery).** Site 31BW787**2, the Roger Moore Cemetery is located on the high ground overlooking Orton Creek to the north and rice fields to the east. It is significant because it includes many features and characteristics that are typical of colonial and antebellum family burial grounds and is an excellent representation of this stylistic type. The site retains excellent integrity, easily conveying the qualities that make the site significant. The isolated, rural site conveys the feeling of the overall setting consistent with its use during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This feeling is assisted by the presence of the adjacent rice fields and spreading live oaks.

The brick vaults are similar to those found at other coastal plain graveyards extending southward through South Carolina and throughout Georgia and is an example of this architectural form. The 1843 ledger on the vault of Marie Ivie Winslow is interesting as an example of extralocal stone carving. Additional historical research may be able to determine why a New York carver was used, rather than local resources, perhaps from either Wilmington or Charleston. Although the old repairs are of low quality, they are typical of the mid-twentieth century. Work is underway to remove the worst of the offending repairs and this will dramatically improve the visual appearance of the cemetery.

The site is significant because it would provide the opportunity to explore colonial and early antebellum mortuary patterns. This could be done by examining the use of coffins and coffin hardware. The human remains thought to be present may offer an opportunity to explore several successive generations and would allow mitochondrial DNA studies. The remains, if well preserved, would also offer an exceptional opportunity to examine high status individuals of the colonial period, exploring issues such as diet and disease. This information would take on special importance when compared and contrasted to studies of African American populations. Therefore, Site 31BW787**2 meets National Register Criterion D.

31BW7874, 31BW787**5, 31BW787**6, 31BW787**7, 31BW787**12, and 31BW787**13 (nineteenth- and twentieth-century domestic sites).** These six sites are likely associated with a small African American settlement that was located south of the Orton mansion along the plantation road and just north of the Orton Pond outfall. These nineteenth- and twentieth-century domestic sites are significant because they are associated with the enslaved African American workers and the postbellum period African American tenants that lived on Orton. Four of the sites contain structural remains (31BW787**4-brick mound, 31BW787**5-fireplace and brick rubble, 31BW787**6-brick rubble, 31BW787**12-nineteenth-century structure burned in 2011 and brick pile) and one contains a standing structure and the chimney ruins of at least two more structures. No structural remains were identified at Site 31BW787**13, although historic maps depict four or five structures at this location. These sites have the potential for the recovery of additional structural remains, including slave dwellings, as well as the potential to produce abundant artifacts. These features and artifacts would begin to better tell the story of Orton Plantation by providing data on an African American community during not only the antebellum and postbellum periods, but potentially during the colonial period as well. This research is of special importance since North Carolina has few documented slave dwellings on colonial and antebellum period plantations, and none associated with rice cultivation. The archaeological data these sites contain can assist in defining the lifeways of the African Americans living on Orton. Research questions these sites can address include determining the location of former slave quarters/dwellings and identifying construction techniques and how they may have changed over space and time; determining the location of enslaved peoples food storage and preparation areas and how these may have changed over space and time; determining the location of cisterns, wells, and/or refuse pits associated with African Americans and how these may have changed over space and time. African Americans were the most undocumented persons on Orton Plantation. During the plantation history, it was the enslaved blacks that planted rice and cotton, processed the crops, and even constructed the houses and mansion. The African American population continued to be the backbone of the plantation during the postbellum period and into the twentieth century, whether it continued to involve planting, tending, and harvesting rice or incorporated truck crops and later garden plants. Therefore, Sites 31BW787**4, 31BW787**5, 31BW787**6, 31BW787**7, 31BW787**12, and 31BW787**13 meet National Register Criterion D.

31BW78714 (eighteenth- to nineteenth-century domestic or industrial site).** Site 31BW787**14 comprises the remains of a structure located within and along the bank of the Orton Pond Outfall. This site has the potential to address questions concerning how a particular industrial occupation associated with agriculture was treated on the plantation. Therefore, Site 31BW787**14 meets National Register Criterion D.

31BW78715 (nineteenth-century domestic or industrial site).** This site consists of a brick column that may have been either a corner or a pier that supported a structure related to Orton's antebellum rice mill. Its close proximity to the Orton Pond Outfall suggests that it may have been a threshing barn. Like Site 31BW787**14, this site has the potential to address questions concerning how a particular industrial occupation associated with agriculture was treated on the plantation. Therefore, Site 31BW787**15 meets National Register Criterion D.

31BW78716 (Antebellum drainage ditch and property boundary).** This site consists of a drainage ditch that also marked the property boundary between Kendal to the north and Orton. This is an important antebellum landscape feature of the plantation and meets National Register Criterion D.

Underwater and Shoreline Archaeological Resources. In 2012, Tidewater Atlantic Research, Inc. (TAR) conducted a magnetometer and sidescan sonar survey of the Orton waterfront from the mouth of Orton Creek to the mouth of the Orton Pond Outfall.[133] It was followed by an on-ground shoreline survey to further investigate the data. TAR discovered the remains of one of the early Cape Fear River lighthouses, steamer docks dating from the late nineteenth century, and early twentieth-century bulkheading installed to protect the rice dike from erosion, which appears to be associated with several of the magnetic anomalies and sonar images generated by the remote sensing survey.

Because of their association with historical figures and the broad patterns of North Carolina history, the remains of lighthouses, vessel docks and early bulkheads preserve important information about the maritime heritage of the Lower Cape Fear River and Orton Plantation. The canals of Orton should also be considered important archaeological resources. Maps and charts reveal that the Orton rice fields were flooded using five access points. Each of these may exhibit a variety of water control devices, which were part of the extraordinary system that was in operation at the plantation by the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Site 31BW787**14 located along the Orton Pond Outfall and possibly associated with a mill is another important resource associated with this water control system. These resources, if investigated using a combination of terrestrial and underwater methods can provide important information about nineteenth-century rice farming practices.

In summary, Orton Plantation Boundary Increase and Additional Documentation contains an archaeological landscape consisting of a wide range of significant archaeological sites that contain features, artifacts, and strata that reflect the prehistoric through twentieth-century occupations and activities taking place on the plantation. These sites can potentially address a range of research questions concerning the operation of a plantation, lifeways of the occupants, material culture, enslaved African American culture, waterfront technology, consumer behavior, status, and market availability. Archaeological sites contain domestic evidence of the owners, white overseers, and enslaved African Americans. Sites along the waterfront provide evidence for how the plantation was part of the larger regional and possibly global economy. Finally, the cemeteries provide a tangible link between the past occupants and the present.

Endnotes

1. New Hanover County Deeds, C/288-90, Brunswick County Deeds, F/149-51, respectively.

2. Brunswick County Deeds, X/189-93, BB/527-32, 12/383-94, 21/229-30, and 29/388-90, respectively.

3. While the general facts of the Moore family genealogy and Roger Moore's place in it are known, many questions persist regarding dates of marriage, birth, and death for individuals. Various people, some known and others whose names are not affixed to accounts now in general circulation, have compiled family records wherein dates are in conflict and sources sometimes are not given. The matter is vexing and beyond the parameters of a National Register nomination. Arguably the most reliable account is that of Mabel Louise Webber. Mabel Louise Webber, compiler, "The First Governor Moore and His Children," *The South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* XXXVII (January 1936): 1-23. See also Mabel Louise Webber, compiler, "Berringer Notes," *The South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* XXV (October 1924): 173-78. *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*, s.v. "James Moore Sr."

Gregg E. Stuart Jr., compiler, *A Crane's Foot (or Pedigree) of Branches of the Gregg, Stuart, Robertson, Dobbs and Allied Families* (Columbia, SC: Robert L. Bryan Company, 1975), 175-216. *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "George Moore", "James Moore", "Louis Toomer Moore", "Maurice Moore", "Maurice Moore Jr.", "Roger Moore (1694-1751)", and "Roger Moore (1839-1900)."

4. *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*, s.v. "James Moore Jr."

5. *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "George Burrington."

6. Lawrence Lee, *The Lower Cape Fear in Colonial Days* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1965), 93. Hereafter cited as *The Lower Cape Fear*.

7. *The Lower Cape Fear*, 94.

8. The name of his plantation has been spelled "Kendal" and "Kendall" through history. "Kendal" appears to be the earliest used and that is the spelling used in this nomination.

9. The best, scholarly account of the history of Brunswick is that of Stanley South, a pioneer of historical archaeology, who began his career at the North Carolina Department of Archives and History in 1956. Stanley South, *Archaeology at Colonial Brunswick* (Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Office of Archives and History, 2010).

10. This author's research regarding land patents is based on the excellent abstracts compiled and published by Margaret M. Hofmann who is known to him. Margaret M. Hofmann, *Province of North Carolina 1663-1729, Abstracts of Land Patents* (Weldon, NC: Roanoke News Company, 1979), 103. The patent (#1127) was recorded in Patent Book Two, 261. Hereafter cited as *1663-1729 Land Patents*.

11. *The Lower Cape Fear*, 94.

12. *1663-1729 Land Patents*, 106. The patent (#1155) was recorded in Patent Book Two, 268.

13. A reprint of this pamphlet printed in 1842 was consulted. *Collections of the Georgia Historical Society, Vol. II* (Boston: Freeman and Bolles, 1842), 54-55. Hereafter cited as *A New Voyage*.

14. *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "Roger Moore."

15. *A New Voyage*, 58. In the preparation of this nomination the writer reviewed all of the abstracts of land patents awarded to Roger Moore (and other members of the Moore family) compiled by Margaret M. Hofmann for the period of his life in North Carolina. The patents issued during the Proprietory period began in 1663 and officially ended in 1729, however, some few date into 1730.

16. Between 19 February and 25 February 1735 Roger Moore received a total of thirteen patents for this acreage. See Margaret M. Hofmann, *Colony of North Carolina 1735-1764 Abstracts of Land Patents Volume One* (Weldon, NC: Roanoke News Company, 1982), 99. Hereafter cited as *1735-1764 Land Patents*. These patents, bearing numbers 1386 through 1398, were recorded in Patent Book 3, 293-95.

17. *1735-1764 Land Patents*, 107, 112, 288.

18. New Hanover County Deeds, C/288-90.

19. The matter of Roger Moore's land holdings and the portion of them that comprise Orton has been clouded through time by exaggeration and overstatement. However, the tracts and acreages cited in his will are not greatly different from the total represented in deeds and land patents. The larger question concerns the matter of his stated 250 slaves, their activities, and how Roger Moore provided sustenance and housing to such a large number of people.

20. Will of William Moore, 18 November 1754, New Hanover County Original Wills, State Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC. William Moore's bequest to his wife ended with the statement of his "Will that she has the Use of my Plantation at Orton."

21. Brunswick County Deeds, A/1-5.

22. *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "William Dry III."

23. *Dictionary of North Carolina biography*, s.v. "Richard Quince." The two state grants are located on Eric Norden's plat, "Orton & Kendall Plantations," of January 1921.

24. Alfred Moore Waddell, *A History of New Hanover County and the Lower Cape Fear Region, 1723-1800, Volume I* (n.p., 1909), 179. [place and publisher missing]

25. At present the location of this mill is not known; however, given Orton's history it is possibly a mill erected for Roger Moore.

26. Brunswick County Deeds, F/149-51.

27. Alan D. Watson, *General Benjamin Smith: A Biography of the North Carolina Governor* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2011), 102. Hereafter cited as *General Benjamin Smith*.

28. *General Benjamin Smith*, 123.

29. Cited in *General Benjamin Smith*, 115. This author did not examine the 1800 North Carolina Census, Brunswick County.

30. Brunswick County Deeds, F/139-41.

31. *General Benjamin Smith*, 186. See *Wilmington Gazette*, 27 April 1815. See also Robert S. Neale, *The Bank of Cape Fear of Wilmington, North Carolina: A History of North Carolina's First Antebellum Bank and its Paper Money, Branches, Key Personnel, and Local Impact* (Wilmington, NC: Lower Cape Fear Historical Society, 1999), 27.

32. The Charleston advertisement is cited in James Laurence Sprunt, *The Story of Orton Plantation* (n.p., 2002), 14. [place and publisher missing] Hereafter cited as *The Story of Orton Plantation*. The auction sale of Orton was also advertised in Wilmington's *The Cape Fear Recorder* on 16 October 1824 in the center of its front page under the heading "Valuable Rice & Cotton Lands For Sale."

33. Brunswick County Deeds, J/73-74.

34. *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "Joseph Alston Hill."

35. Brunswick County Deeds, J/264.

36. *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "Frederick Jones Hill."

37. *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s.v. "Frederick Jones Hill."

38. *Journal of the Proceedings of the Seventeenth Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of North Carolina Holden in Immanuel Church, Warrenton, on Wednesday May 29, Thursday May 30, Friday, May 31, Saturday June 1, and Monday June 3, 1833* (Fayetteville, NC: Edward J. Hale, 1833), 11.

39. The record of this entry (#2743), being grant #1249 and file #1566, is located in the Secretary of State Land Records, recorded in Book 150, page 303, in the State Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC.

40. Fifth Census of the United States, 1830: Brunswick County, NC, Population Schedule, Slave Schedule.

41. Sixth Census of the United States, 1840: Brunswick County, NC, Population Schedule, Slave Schedule.

42. Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: Brunswick County, NC, Population Schedule, Slave Schedule.

43. The 1872 auction handbill is reproduced and published in *The Story of Orton Plantation*, 16. Dr. Hill conveyed a small tract on Orton Point to the United States of America for the payment of $100 on 10 February 1849 that became the site of the Orton Point Light. Brunswick County Deeds O/486-87. For Orton Point Light see Claude V. Jackson III, Jack E. Fryar, editor, *The Big Book of the Cape Fear River* (Wilmington, NC: Dram Tree Books, 2008), 170.

44. Brunswick County Deeds, Q/581-85. Flush with the profits of his enterprise, Dr. Hill purchased a handsome residence in Wilmington in 1854, the imposing brick house built ca. 1816-1818 by Aaron Lazarus (1777-1841). Dr. Hill remodeled the house in the Italianate style and resided there until his death. The Lazarus-Hill-Devine House stands today at 314 Grace Street.

45. Brunswick County Deeds, Q/586-87.

46. See William E. Craig, "The Mysterious Frenchman: Alexander Calizance Miller in America, 1797-1831," *Lower Cape Fear Historical Society, Inc. Bulletin* XXIX (October 1985), 1, 3-6.

47. Joseph Swift Miller died before the deed was recorded. On 1 January 1856 Thomas C. Miller, as executor of his brother's estate, sold Bellville plantation and the adjoining Ashley plantation, together with a group of slaves, personal and household property, and agricultural property including "the rice straw threshing machine" and "straw press" for $29,200 to Salter Lloyd. Brunswick County Deeds, Q/588-95.

48. Beverly Tetterton, letter to author, 10 July 2012. The house was known for a time as the James Dawson House and was later owned by the Cape Fear Club. It was torn down and the site prepared for the Murchison Building.

49. Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: New Hanover County, Population Schedule. Eighth Census of the United States, 1860: New Hanover County, Population Schedule. The grave of Joseph Swift Miller (1856-1858) is marked by a white marble monument in the family plot.

50. Eighth Census of the United States, 1860: Brunswick County, Slave Schedule, Agriculture Schedule.

51. Photocopies of these receipts were made available to this author by Jim McKee, Brunswick Town-Fort Anderson State Historic Site, Winnabow, NC.

52. Thomas Calizance Miller's death and interment in Oakdale Cemetery are recorded in the "St. James Church, Wilmington, North Carolina, Historical Records, Volume II, 1852-1872," compiled by Lula Walton Mathews, Leora Hiatt McEachern, and Curry Kirk Walker. Copy held by the New Hanover County Public Library.

53. On 2 October 1865 Annie W. Miller rented the family's Front Street house in Wilmington for a year, beginning on 13 October, for $1,000 to P_____ Murphy and John Dawson. The receipt for this transaction with payments noted on the reverse is one of two significant surviving documents in her husband's estate record. See Estate of Thomas C. Miller, 1865 (1866), New Hanover County Estates Records, State Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC. Mrs. Miller qualified as executrix of her husband's estate in 1866. The outstanding debt of $40,000 owed by the Miller estate to the estate of Dr. Hill crippled any prospect of solvency, and coupled with the fact that the unsettled nature of the time made it virtually impossible to sell Orton, the estate's principal asset, left her situation nothing short of dire. In 1867 William E. Boudinot, the executor of Dr. Hill's estate, filed suit in Superior Court for the recovery of the unpaid balance. The court ruled in favor of the plaintiff and ordered payment of $40,957.33 to the plaintiff. In April 1869, as the settlement, Annie W. Miller, as executor of her husband's estate, conveyed to Mr. Boudinot, executor of Dr. Hill's estate, the lands of Orton received from Dr. Hill "and all the other Tracts adjoining or adjacent to 'Orton' which were subsequently purchased by said Thos. C. Miller from different persons. . ." (Brunswick County Deeds, T/777-78). See also Estate of Frederick J. Hill, 1861, New Hanover County Estates Records, State Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC.

54. The auction handbill is reproduced and published in *The Story of Orton Plantation*, 16.

55. An advertisement for the Commissioner's Sale of Orton Plantation, a brick house, outhouses, and lot in Wilmington, Kentucky--the Hill's summer house in Chatham County, the Reddeck lot in Pittsboro, three tracts of land in Moore County, a lot in Haywood, Chatham County, and Dr. Hill's interest in the "McIver Copper Mine Tract" on 26 February 1873 in Wilmington was published on the front page of the Wilmington's *The Morning Star* on 15 January 1873.

56. Brunswick County Deeds, W/336-43.

57. Brunswick County Deeds, W/343-47. The circumstances of Mr. Roundell's decision to purchase Orton remain obscure.

58. Brunswick County Deeds, X/193-96. William Lord DeRosset was a son of Dr. Armand DeRosset III (1807-1897), the builder of the DeRosset House at 23 South Second Street. Mr. DeRosset was a classmate of both DeBrutz Cutlar and Kenneth M. Murchison at the University of North Carolina.

59. Brunswick County Deeds, X/189-93.

60. Brunswick County Deeds, X/474-78 and X/582-86, respectively.

61. Clippings of these items and numerous others regarding Orton Plantation, dating principally from 1873 into the early 1910s, are mounted on sheets in the Orton file in the Bill Reaves Collection, New Hanover County Public Library, Wilmington, NC. Nearly all are dated, however the respective newspapers are noted in a code by the compiler. The record of a rice crop at Orton appears in 1887. Accounts of hunting parties, country house parties, and family gatherings predominate in the 1890s.

62. *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s. v. "David Reid Murchison" and "Kenneth McKenzie Murchison."

63. Brunswick County Deeds, Z/179-82.

64. Brunswick County Deeds, BB/527-32.

65. Samuel A. Ashe, Stephen B. Weeks, and Charles L. Van Noppen, *Biographical History of North Carolina, From Colonial Times to the Present, Volume* I (Greensboro, NC: Charles L. Van Noppen, Publisher, 1905), 399-402. A biographical sketch of David Reid Murchison written by Charles Manly Stedman appears in the same volume. James Sprunt reprinted lengthy parts of both accounts verbatim in his *Chronicles of the Cape Fear River 1660-1916* in 1916. James Sprunt, *Chronicles of the Cape Fear River 1660-1916* (1916; reprint, Spartanburg, SC: The Reprint Company, 1974), 348-49. Hereafter cited as *Chronicles.*

66. This author gratefully acknowledges the assistance and counsel of Margaret Cotrufo, assistant librarian, North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences, Raleigh, NC, with this research.

67. *Report of the Board of Agriculture to the General Assembly of North Carolina, For the Years 1893-'94.* (Raleigh: State Board of Agriculture, 1895), 37-48. Hereafter cited as *Report.*

68. *Report*, 8.

69. *Hand Book of the North Carolina State Museum, Giving the Names and Localities of All Specimens* (Winston: M. I. & J. C. Stewart, Public Printers and Binders, 1897), 262, 265, 269, 272-73. Hereafter cited as *Hand Book.*

70. Brunswick County Wills, A/185-87.

71. New Hanover County Deeds, 15/86-87. For the Dudley-Sprunt House see "Governor Dudley's Mansion" in Tony P. Wrenn, *Wilmington, North Carolina: An Architectural and Historical Portrait* (Charlottesville, VA: The University Press of Virginia, 1984), 53-55. Hereafter cited as *Wilmington.* Mr. Sprunt also had the impressive brownstone retaining wall at the back of the Dudley house lot built in 1895.

72. *Wilmington*, 303-04.

73. New Hanover County Deeds, 17/256-66.

74. James Sprunt to Mrs. Joseph A. Holmes, 9 June 1906, James Sprunt to the Railroad Agent, Narragansett Pier, Rhode Island, 30 May 1906, and Kenneth M. Murchison Jr. to Luola Sprunt, 23 May 1906, Alexander Sprunt Papers,

Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, NC. This collection and the repository is hereafter cited as Alexander Sprunt Papers, Duke University.

75. Brunswick County Deeds, 12/383-94.

76. James Sprunt to Theoph. Parsons, 22 March 1909, Alexander Sprunt Papers, Duke University. There are numerous references to the work at Orton in surviving copies of letters from 1909 and 1910 that gained this author's notice but are beyond the level of address required for this nomination.

77. Brunswick County Deeds, 21/229-230. Florence Hill Kidder (18__-1971), one of the heirs and signatories to the deed, is a maternal grandmother of Louis Moore Bacon. She married Louis Toomer Moore (1885-1961) in 1916.

78. Brunswick County Wills, B/366-88.

79. Janet Schaw came to the Lower Cape Fear region to visit her elder brother, Robert Schaw (17__-1786), who lived at Schawfield. She arrived at Brunswick on 14 February 1775 and departed on 10 November 1775 on her return to Edinburgh, Scotland. Mrs. Andrews was assisted in her work to publish Miss Schaw's diary by her husband, Charles McLean Andrews, Farnam Professor of History at Yale. In the introduction, written at Orton, she acknowledged "with peculiar gratitude" the "cooperation of Mr. James Sprunt of Wilmington, himself a Scot, under whose kindly guidance they were able to study Wilmington and the Cape Fear, and to whom most affectionately they dedicate this volume." In her closing sentence, written at Orton on 30 March 1920, she appreciated "the delicious warm sunshine of early spring, . . . the odours of sweet-scented flowers and shrubs drifting in from well-kept gardens. . . ."

80. Brunswick County Deeds, 29/388-90. Valuable insight into Mr. Sprunt's life and particularly his later years was gained from a typescript memoir, "Data About James Sprunt, LL.D.," written by Jane Dalziel Wood and held by the Lower Cape Fear Historical Society. Miss Wood was Mr. Sprunt's private secretary. A photocopy of the undated manuscript was made available to this author by Susan Taylor Block of Wilmington.

81. Robert Swan Sturtevant, the son of Edward Lewis Sturtevant (1842-1898) and his second wife Hattie Mann, is one among many early twentieth-century landscape architects and garden designers whose careers and significance are being increasingly addressed and appreciated. He and his elder sister Grace Sturtevant (1865-1947) were founders of the American Iris Society. Mr. Sturtevant served as secretary of the society and as editor of its bulletin. He relocated to Nashville, Tennessee, after he began his work at Orton. Mr. Sturtevant produced four essays on design, color, plantings plans, and iris under those titles for the *Woman's Home Companion Garden Book* edited by John C. Wister and published in 1947. He died in a house fire in Nashville on 22 February 1955. A memorial was published in the "Bulletin of the American Iris Society," No. 137 (April 1955), 5-6.

82. Henry Churchill Bragaw Jr. (1914-1944), a native of Washington, Beaufort County, North Carolina, one of four gifted young/teenage founders of the Bughouse Laboratory or Washington Field Museum, and a graduate in forestry from North Carolina State College, was destined for greatness, but he became a casualty of World War II in Italy on 22 January 1944. One of his last acts as manager of Orton was to lead Sunday services for an assembly of white and black employees in February 1942, days before he reported for duty in Alabama. A newspaper account reported "Luola's Chapel, the registration mecca for the thousands of tourists who visit Orton Plantation, was the scene of a most impressive service" that "turned into a farewell service for Lieutenant Churchill Bragaw." A memorial was published in "The Chat," the bulletin of the North Carolina Bird Club in March 1944. James Ferger (1912-1993) a native of Lawrenceburg, Indiana, received a bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina in 1937. Robert Kennedy Godfrey (1911-2000) was a teaching fellow in the botany department at North Carolina State College, made important contributions to the herbariums there and at the University of North Carolina, and had a distinguished career as an educator and writer while at Florida State University (1954-1973). He continued writing and (last) co-authored *Trees of Northern Florida*, published in 1993.

83. James Laurence Sprunt to Charles Freeman Gillette, 19 October 1954, The Papers of Charles F. Gillette, Private and Business Collections, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA.

84. Both groups of photographs, while small in number, document the rich, lush, well-maintained densely-planted character of the garden in 1972. Both also show a lattice-work railing that protected the south end of the lagoon which has disappeared.

85. David Sprunt, telephone conversations with this author, 30 July 2012, 31 January 2013. Hereafter cited as David Sprunt interviews. Brunswick County Deeds, 526/181-86.

86. David Sprunt interviews. Brunswick County Deeds, 791/464-92.

87. Brunswick County Deeds, 1100/1186-1223.

88. David Sprunt interviews. Brunswick County Deeds, 1404/899-902, 1476/1142-46, and 1595/1343-47.

89. David Sprunt interviews. The new caretaker's house replaced an employee residence that was known as the "Green Cottage," occupied the same site, and appears on the Sturtevant garden plan. The new plantation office replaced the plantation's first known modern office at this location, which was a playhouse known as the "Doll House" that originally stood southwest of the mansion and was relocated here for office use.

90. David Sprunt interviews. Brunswick County Deeds, 3104/552-56, 559-73, 578-87, 590-608.

91. Hugh Meredith, *An Account of the Cape Fear Country, 1731*, ed. Earl Gregg Swem (Perth Amboy, New Jersey: Charles F. Heartman, 1922), 20-21. Mr. Meredith's account of rice swamps confirms the fact that some such swamps on the Cape Fear and its tributaries had been cleared and were being planted, however, he does not cite their location, ownership, prevalence, or extent. This is the first known mention of a crop whose cultivation was still in its infancy in the late colonial period and would reach its greatest measure in the antebellum period. It is possible that Roger Moore, his son, and other owners of Orton in the eighteenth century grew rice on the plantation. However, their rice cultivation at Orton has yet to be documented and proven. The principal scholarly study of rice cultivation on the Lower Cape Fear River and its tributaries is James M. Clifton, "Golden Grains of White: Rice Planting on the Lower Cape Fear," *The North Carolina Historical Review* 50 (October 1973), 365-93. Rice cultivation at Orton, Kendal, Clarendon, Belvidere, and the Bluffs, the plantation of Thomas D. Meares, is represented in the article. See also Bradford J. Wood, *This Remote Part of the World: Regional Formation in Lower Cape Fear, North Carolina (,) 1725-1775* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2004), principally 179-187, and other pages noted in the index. Hereafter cited as *This Remote Part*.

92. Estate of Frederic Kidder, 1908, Brunswick County Estates Records, State Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC.

93. Colonial Court Records, Box 190, Personal Accounts, 1730-1739, State Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC. This document is cited by Bradford J. Wood in *This Remote Part*, 201.

94. Will of Roger Moore, New Hanover County Deeds, C/288-90.

95. Brunswick County Deeds, A/1-5

96. At present little is known of Captain Robert Ellis other than in this regard and the fact that he is surely the same Robert Ellis who acquired a tract of 640 acres on the east side of the Cape Fear River, opposite Brunswick Town, in 1764. See *The Big Book of the Cape Fear River*, 96.

97. Brunswick County Deeds, F/149-51.

98. The location of eighteenth-century mills known to have stood at Orton and the size/extent of Orton Pond at critical points in the plantation's history remain to be confirmed.

99. *General Benjamin Smith*, 122.

100. The advertisement published in *The Cape-Fear Recorder* on Saturday, 16 October 1824, also cited Orton as "late the residence of Governor Benjamin Smith."

101. Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: Brunswick County, North Carolina, Productions of Agriculture. An original contemporary copy of the census in the State Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC, was reviewed by this author.

102. Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: Brunswick County, North Carolina, Products of Industry. The advertisement was first published on 10 February 1830 and appeared in issues of 17 and 24 February and 3 March 1830, when this author ended his review.

103. Brunswick County Deeds, Q/438. For location of this property see plat of "Orton & Kendall Plantations," January 1921.

104. Eighth Census of the United States, 1860: Brunswick County, North Carolina, Productions of Agriculture, Products of Industry.

105. Photocopies of some of these vouchers were provided to this author.

106. *Chronicles*, 348. Earlier, in *Tales & Traditions of the Lower Cape Fear*, published in 1896, James Sprunt wrote "Colonel Murchison has brought the plantation up to its best production--about a hundred laborers are employed and many expensive permanent improvements have been adopted. He resides here with his family during the winter months. . ." (64-65).

107. Prints of photographs corresponding to these captions survive at the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences and the State Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC. Multiple later prints are also in circulation.

108. This approximate date for the end of rice cultivation at Orton is based on the remarks of Clarence Jones (1908-2008) in an interview with Susan Taylor Block which was recorded on videotape and is in the collection of the New Hanover County Museum, Wilmington, NC.

109. Ironically, one of the most important documents in the history of rice cultivation in the Lower Cape Fear dates to the post-war period. On 20 October 1866 *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* published a full page of eight sketches entitled "Rice Culture on Cape Fear River, N.C." by James E. Taylor and an unsigned companion article, "Rice Culture in North Carolina." Although the name of the property illustrated in the sketches was not cited, its description as "the plantation leased by Major J. C. Mann, near Wilmington, North Carolina, which was owned by General Robert Howe, of Revolutionary fame" identifies it as Kendal. Exactly how Mr. Taylor came upon the scene at Kendal is not known. This author's review of issues of the publication preceding and following the 20 October issue indicates James E. Taylor was traveling through the defeated South and recording scenes of destruction and renewal and events of reconstruction. Mr. Taylor's sketches of work in "The Tobacco Manufactory of Geo. A. Burks, Lynchburg, VA." were published in the 7 July 1866 issue. "A Turpentine Distillery at Wilmington, N.C." was one of Mr. Taylor's illustrations for "Turpentine Manufacture in the Southern States" published in the newspaper on 29 September 1866. An unsigned sketch of "Ruins of St. Philip's Church at Brunswick, N.C." and a short account of the church in the issue of 13 October 1866 were probably also contributed by James E. Taylor, who continued on to Charleston, South Carolina.

110. Lawrence S. Earley, *Looking for Longleaf: The Fall and Rise of an American Forest* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 92.

111. Brunswick County Wills, A/185-87. The Caney River property in Yancey County included the mountain on which Elisha Mitchell fell to his death in 1857, which was named Mount Mitchell in his honor in 1882.

112. David Sprunt interviews. Examples of recent timber deeds include the Sprunts to Georgia Pacific Corporation in 1984 (Brunswick County Deeds, 570/141 and 581/779), to Georgia Pacific Corporation in 1987 (Brunswick County Deeds, 691/347), and to O. I. P. Timberlands Operating Company in 1987 (Brunswick County Deeds, 717/137).

113. Photographs of Orton, Wills Forest, and Stockton appear in Mills Lane, *Architect of the Old South: North Carolina* (Savannah: Beehive Press, 1985), 186-88.

114. For the North Carolina Capitol see Thomas Tileston Waterman, *The Early Architecture of North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1947), 252, 272-76, and Catherine W. Bishir, *North Carolina Architecture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 163-172. *North Carolina Architecture* is hereafter cited as *North Carolina Architecture*.

115. Catherine W. Bishir and Michael T. Southern, *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Piedmont North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 108. Hereafter cited as *Guide to Piedmont North Carolina*.

116. For the construction of St. James Church see Susan Taylor Block, *Temple of Our Fathers: St. James Church (1729-2004)* (Wilmington, NC: ARTSPEAKS, 2004), 73-90.

117. *North Carolina Architecture*, 224-26, 478-79 (notes 94-95).

118. For Salem Chapel see Jean Bradley Anderson, *Piedmont Plantation: The Bennehan-Cameron Family and Lands in North Carolina* (Durham, NC: Historic Preservation Society of Durham, 1985), 31-32. Mrs. Anderson notes chapels built by H. K. Burgwyn and Josiah Collins Jr. on their plantations (194). Both buildings are believed to be lost.

119. Short accounts of the Richardson House and Chinqua-Penn Plantation appear in *Guide to Piedmont North Carolina*, 360. For Reynolda see Catherine Howett, *A World of Her Own Making: Katharine Smith Reynolds and the Landscape of Reynolda*. (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press in association with the Library of American Landscape Architecture, 2007). A short account of Morrocroft appears in *Guide to Piedmont North Carolina*, 520-21, as does one of Graylyn, 393. This author prepared the National Register nominations for Meadowmont (NR, 1985 and Eastover (NR, 2011).

120. For Brookgreen gardens see the short account in Mac Griswold and Eleanor Weller, *The Golden Age of American Gardens: Proud Owners, Private Estates*, 1890-1940 (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991), 169. Hereafter cited as *The Golden Age*. For the Okeetee Club (and other similar places in South Carolina) see Robert B. Cuthbert and Stephen G. Hoffius, eds. *Northern Money, Southern Land: The Lowcountry Plantation Sketches of Chlothilde R. Martin* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2009), 151-56.

121. For Biltmore Estate see the National Historic Landmark nomination for Biltmore Estate (Additional Documentation and Boundary Reduction) prepared by this author in 2003. For Airlie see Susan Taylor Block, *Airlie: The Garden of Wilmington* (Wilmington, NC: The Airlie Foundation, 2001). Short paragraphs on Orton and Airlie appear in *The Golden Age* in a section titled "Great Southern Plantation Gardens," 167-68.

122. A photocopy of the undated, ca. 1937 Sturtevant garden plan is included in this nomination.

123. E. T. H. Shaffer, *Carolina Gardens* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1939), 150-52. The full account appears on pages 146 to 153. Photographs of the mansion and Luola's Chapel appear following pages 112 and 120, respectively.

124. A. G. L. Hellyer, "A Garden From a Rice Plantation," *Country Life*, (4 January 1973): 26-28.

125. James Sprunt to Herman C. Schumm, 5 January 1909, Alexander Sprunt Papers, Duke University.

126. Kenneth M. Sprunt, "Camellias at Orton Plantation," *American Camellia Yearbook, 1952* (Gainesville, FL: American Camellia Society, 1952), 75. The full article appears on pages 75 through 77. A photograph of the mansion and the front lawn, framed by lush borders of azaleas, appears as figure 4 in the yearbook. Hereafter cited as "Camellias at Orton."

127. "Camellias at Orton," 76.

128. *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s. v. "Frederick Jones Hill."

129. *Remarks of Mr. F. J. Hill, of Brunswick, Delivered in the House of Commons of North-Carolina, December 10, 1838, on Certain Resolutions Submitted by Him on the Subject of the Public Lands.* (Raleigh, NC: J. Gales and Son, Office of the Raleigh Register, 1838).

130. *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, s. v. "Frederick Jones Hill."

131. Hugh Talmage Lefler and Albert Ray Newsome, *North Carolina: The History of a Southern State* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1954), 351.

132. Trinkley, et.al. 2012.

133. Gordon P. Watts Jr., Ph.D, *A Remote-Sensing Archaeological Survey of the Cape Fear River, Intertidal Zone and Marsh Reconnaissance Along the Orton Plantation Waterfront, Brunswick County, North Carolina* (Washington, North Carolina: Tidewater Atlantic Research, Inc., 2012.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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North Carolina

Bolivia
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- Brunswick County Clerk of Court/
- Brunswick County Register of Deeds

Chapel Hill
- University of North Carolina
- Wilson Library
- Southern Historical Collection
- Caroline Elizabeth Burgwin Clitherall Papers
- Frederick Jones Hill Papers

Durham
- Duke University
- Perkins Library
- Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library
- Alexander Sprunt Papers

Raleigh
- North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences
- Archives and Library Collection
- North Carolina State Archives
- Brunswick County Estates Records
- Brunswick County Tax Records
- Brunswick County Wills
- New Hanover County Estates Records
- New Hanover County Wills
- Secretary of State Land Records
- United States Federal Censuses, 1830-1860

Wilmington
- New Hanover County Clerk of Court
- New Hanover County Museum
- New Hanover County Public Library
- New Hanover County Register of Deeds

Virginia

Richmond
Library of Virginia
Private and Business Collections
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"Death of Mrs. James Sprunt," 18 February 1916,

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
_X_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 # _____
____recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

____State Historic Preservation Office
____Other State agency
____Federal agency
____Local government
____University
____Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 826 acres
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
A	18	226680	3773170	C	18	228740	3770210
B	18	228740	3773170	D	18	226680	3770210

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the Orton Plantation Boundary Increase and Additional Documentation is shown by a heavy line on the accompanying tax parcel map at a scale of 1:200.

Boundary Justification

Orton Plantation Boundary Increase and Additional Documentation, which comprises 953.8 acres of the expansive holdings of its founder, Roger Moore (1694-1751), is Orton Plantation's historic core and contains its most significant features. Drew Cemetery, on the west edge of the boundary, is excluded as it is the site of the reburial of members of a family unrelated to the owners of Orton. To the north of the boundary, Kendal and its historically associated acres are excluded due to the loss of the main house and a loss of integrity in the rice field structure. To the south of the boundary, Sunny Point and Brunswick Town/Fort Anderson State Historic Site are excluded due to changes in land use and character.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Laura L. Knott, Principal Landscape Architect; Jane Jacobs, Landscape Architect; Christina Osborn, Landscape Architecture Intern

organization John Milner Associates, Inc. date

street & number 300 West Main Street, Suite 201 telephone (434) 979-1617

city or town Charlottesville state VA zip code 22903

e-mail LKnott@johnmilnerassociates.com; JJacobs@johnmilnerassociates.com

name/title Davyd Foard Hood, Architectural and Landscape Historian

organization date

street & number 6907 Old Shelby Road telephone (704) 462-1847

city or town Vale state NC zip code 28168

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **USGS map** indicating the property's location
- **Sketch maps** keyed to show locations of photographs

Photographs:

Schedule of Photographs

The following information applies to all of the photographs included in this nomination except where otherwise noted:

1. Name of Property: Orton Plantation Boundary Increase and Additional Documentation
2. Location: Winabow vicinity, Brunswick County, North Carolina
3. Name of Photographer: Davyd Foard Hood
4. Dates of photographs: 4-5 January 2013
5. Location of original negatives: NC SHPO
6. Photographs
    1. Mansion, overall view, looking northwest.
    2. Mansion, east façade, looking west, with walks and parterre gardens in front of north and south wings added in 2011-2012.
    3. Mansion, main block, and north wing, looking southwest, with reconstructed brick wellhead.
    4. Mansion, north elevation of 2011-2012 service wing, and terrace garden of same date, looking southwest.
    5. Mansion, west elevation of 2011-2012 service wing and 1909-1910 wings, looking east.
    6. Mansion, landscape view south elevation with 2011-2012 motor court, looking north/northeast.
    7. Mansion, south elevation of south wing, with 2011-2012 terrace and garden, looking north.
    8. Mansion, interior, living room, looking southeast (Claudia Brown, January 2012)
    9. Garden, 2011-2012 circle fountain on axis with south wing and Old Brunswick Town Road, looking south with Luola's Chapel in right background.
    10. Landscape view, south walk and lawn, looking north.
    11. Landscape view, north walk, with 2011-2012 brick walk, parterre garden, and reconstructed brick wellhead, looking north.
    12. Landscape view, north walk, looking south to mansion.
    13. White Garden, pool, and sculpture, "The Morning Star," by F. Andreini, looking east.
    14. Moore Family Cemetery, looking west/southwest.
    15. Landscape view, lagoon with 1958-1959 lagoon bridge and north belvedere, looking north.
    16. Landscape view, looking east from east edge of lawn across terrace steps, site of lost scroll garden, causeway, and former rice fields to Cape Fear River.
    17. Landscape view, looking west from west head of the causeway to the 1909-1910 terraces, 1958-1959 south belvedere, and east front of mansion.
    18. Luola's Chapel, looking west.
    19. Luola's Chapel, interior, looking west.

20. Greenhouse and Head-house, looking west.
21. Greenhouse, interior, looking south/southwest.
22. Powerhouse/Barn, looking south.
23. Landscape view with Old Brunswick Town Road and Elijah's House, looking south.
24. Elijah's House, looking northwest.
25. North Entrance Gate, looking east.
26. Gatehouse, looking south/southwest.
27. Gatehouse and Garage/Workshop, looking west/northwest.
28. North entrance road, looking east under live oaks.
29. North entrance, looking east on cypress-lined causeway with former rice fields on each side.
30. North entrance road, looking west on cypress-lined causeway with rice fields on each side and woodlands in the background.
31. South Entrance Gate, looking north with Old Brunswick Town Road carrying north into the estate.
32. South Entrance Gate, detail, looking northwest.

Property Owner:

name Orton Plantation Holdings, LLC

street & number 1251 Avenue of the Americas, 17th Floor telephone (631) 287-1081

city or town New York state NY zip code 10020

Appendix A: Tabulation of Archaeological Sites and Objects at Orton Plantation Based on Trinkely and Hacker (2012) and Watts (2012)

Terrestrial Archaeological Resources (Based on Trinkley and Hacker 2012)

Contributing Sites: 31BW548**
31BW787**1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16

Total Contributing Sites = 13

Noncontributing Sites: 31BW787**3, 8, 10, 11

Total Noncontributing Sites = 4

Underwater Survey Resources (Based on Watts 2012:Appendix A)

Magnetic Anomalies

Potentially Significant	22 - Contributing
Small Single Objects	56 - Noncontributing
Modern Objects	21 - Noncontributing
Degraded Cable	6 - Noncontributing
Slightly Larger Objects	5 - Noncontributing
Range Lights	2 – Noncontributing

Contributing Anomalies =	22
Noncontributing Anomalies =	90
Total Magnetic Anomalies =	**112**

Sonar Targets

Significant Objects	7 – Contributing
Orton Point Lighthouse	1 – Contributing
Nonsignificant Objects	19 – Noncontributing

Contributing Sonar Objects=	8
Noncontributing Sonar Objects=	19
Total Sonar Objects =	**27**

Marsh and Low Tide Survey

Contributing	2
Noncontributing	9
Total Objects =	11

Total Contributing Objects	32
Total Noncontributing Objects	118
Total Objects	**150**



Figure 1. 1938 aerial depicting the upper half of the property, north to the left. Source: National Archives.



Figure 2. 1949 aerial depicting the upper half of the historic district, north to the left. Source: National Archives.

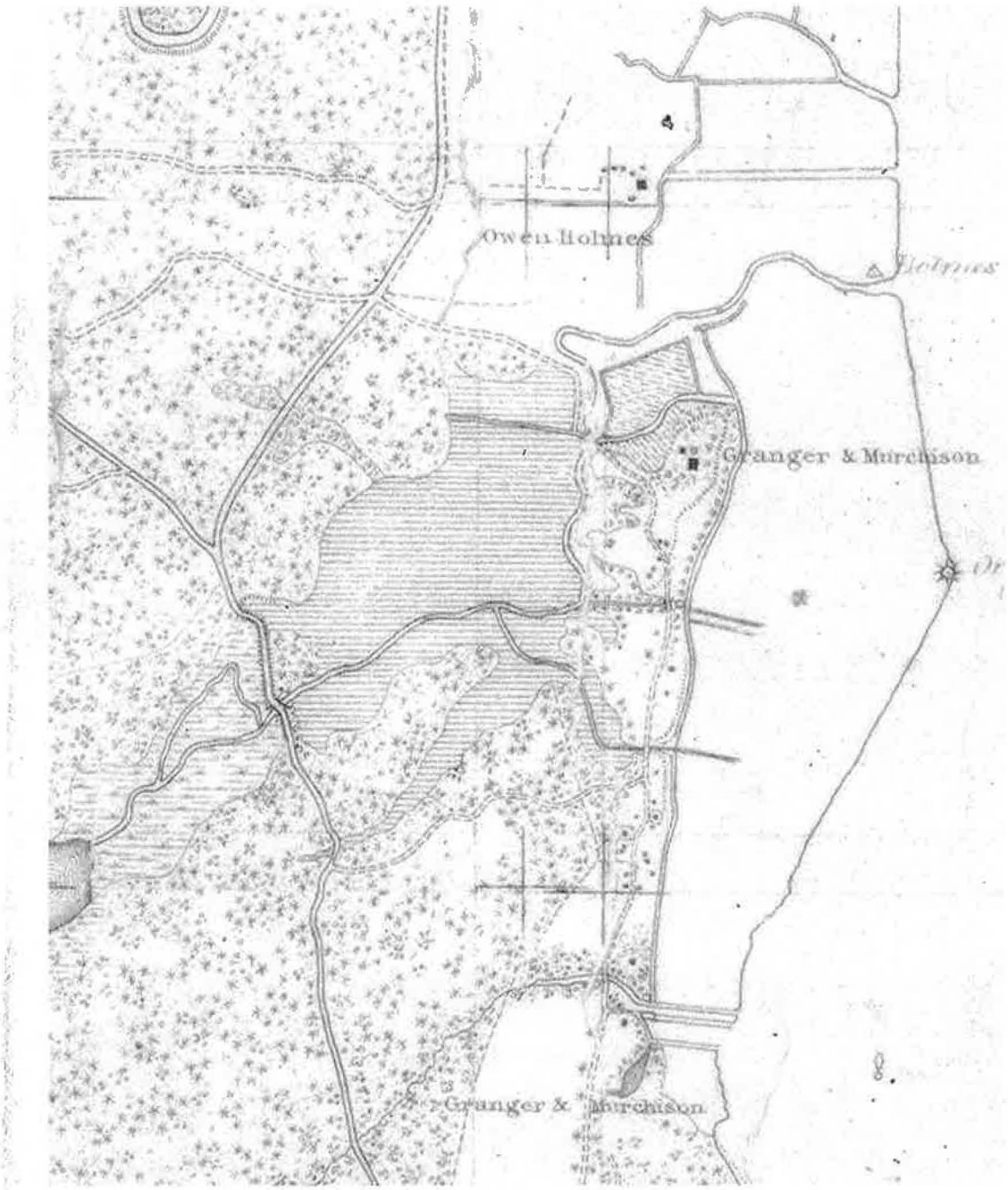


Figure 3. Coastal chart dated 1878, with north to the top. The Orton mansion is the large rectangle labeled "Granger & Murchison." The Old Brunswick Town Road runs parallel to the bluff above the rice fields. Towards the bottom of the image is an area that was likely used for loading and unloading rice and supplies. Just north of this area is the worker's settlement that is represented today by archaeological sites. Source: Orton Collection.



HOUSE BEFORE ALTERATIONS

"ORTON" PLANTATION HOUSE, NORTH CAROLINA
KENNETH M. MURCHISON, *Architect*

Figure 7. Orton, prior to renovation in 1911. Source: Princeton University via Hathi Trust.

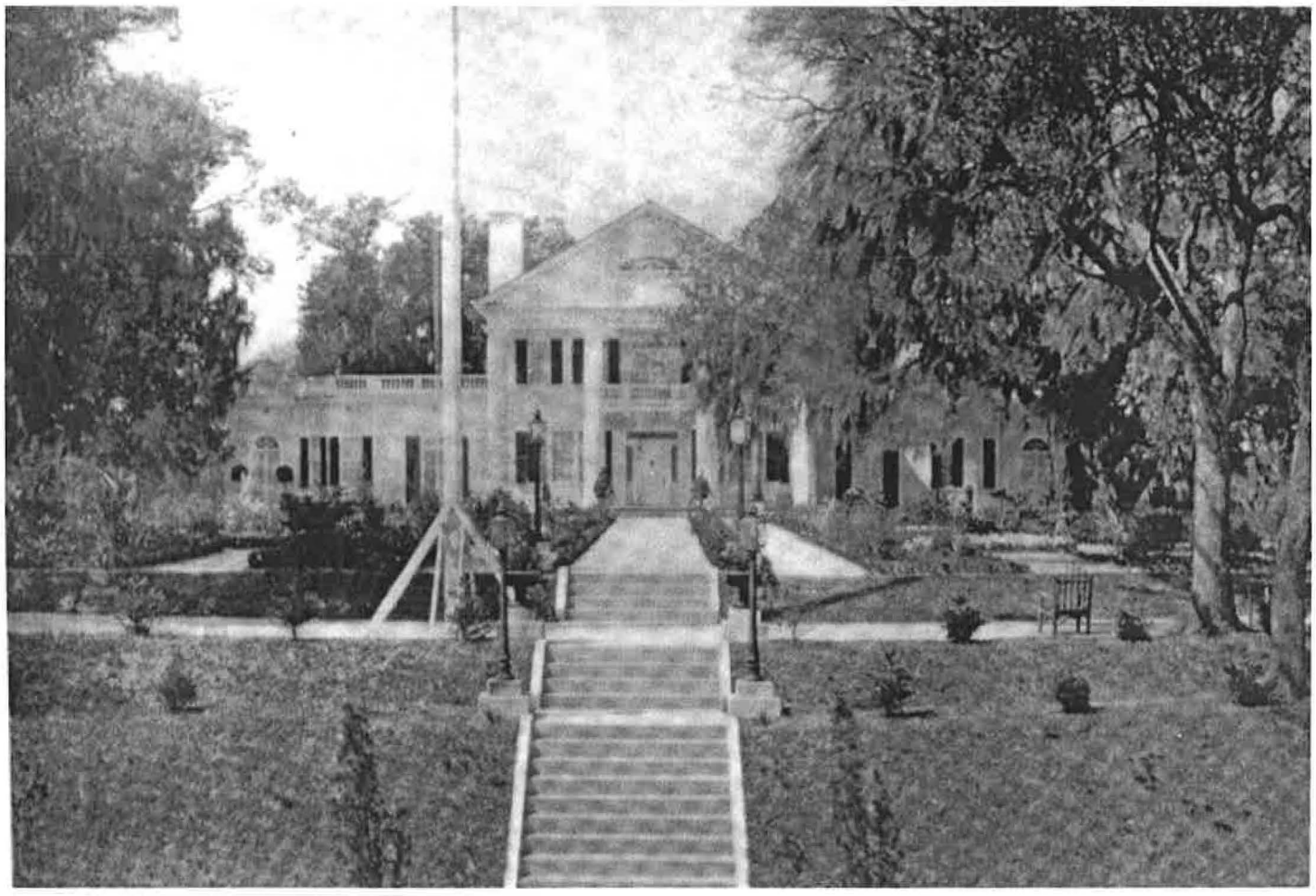


Figure 8. View of the newly remodeled Orton mansion and its formal gardens and terraces, ca. 1919, from the *American Architect*. Source: Hathi Trust Digital Archives.

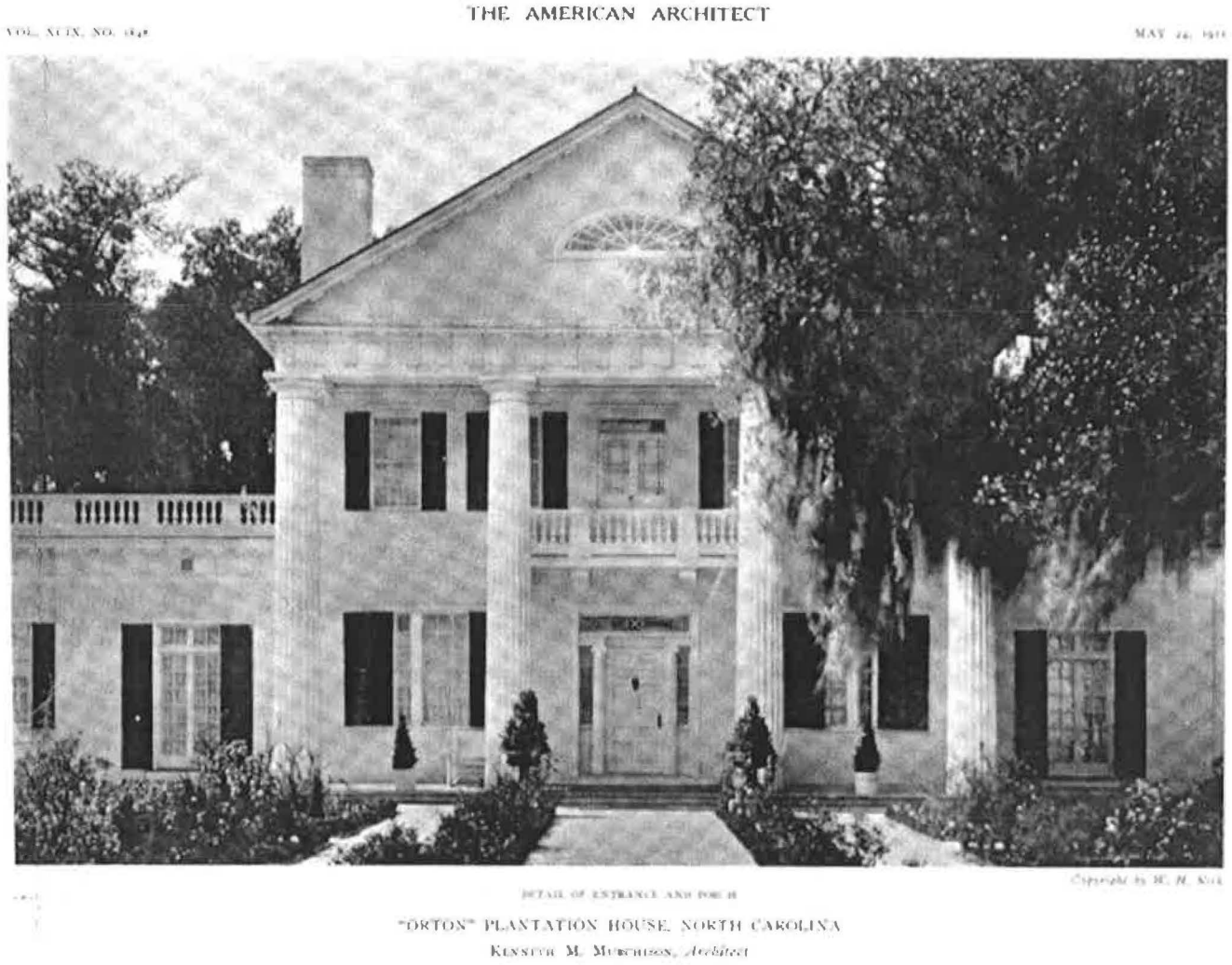


Figure 9. Front of Orton, after renovation in 1909-10. Source: Princeton University via Hathi Trust.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Orton Plantation Boundary Increase and Additional Documentation

Section number Additional Documentation Page 93

Brunswick County, North Carolina

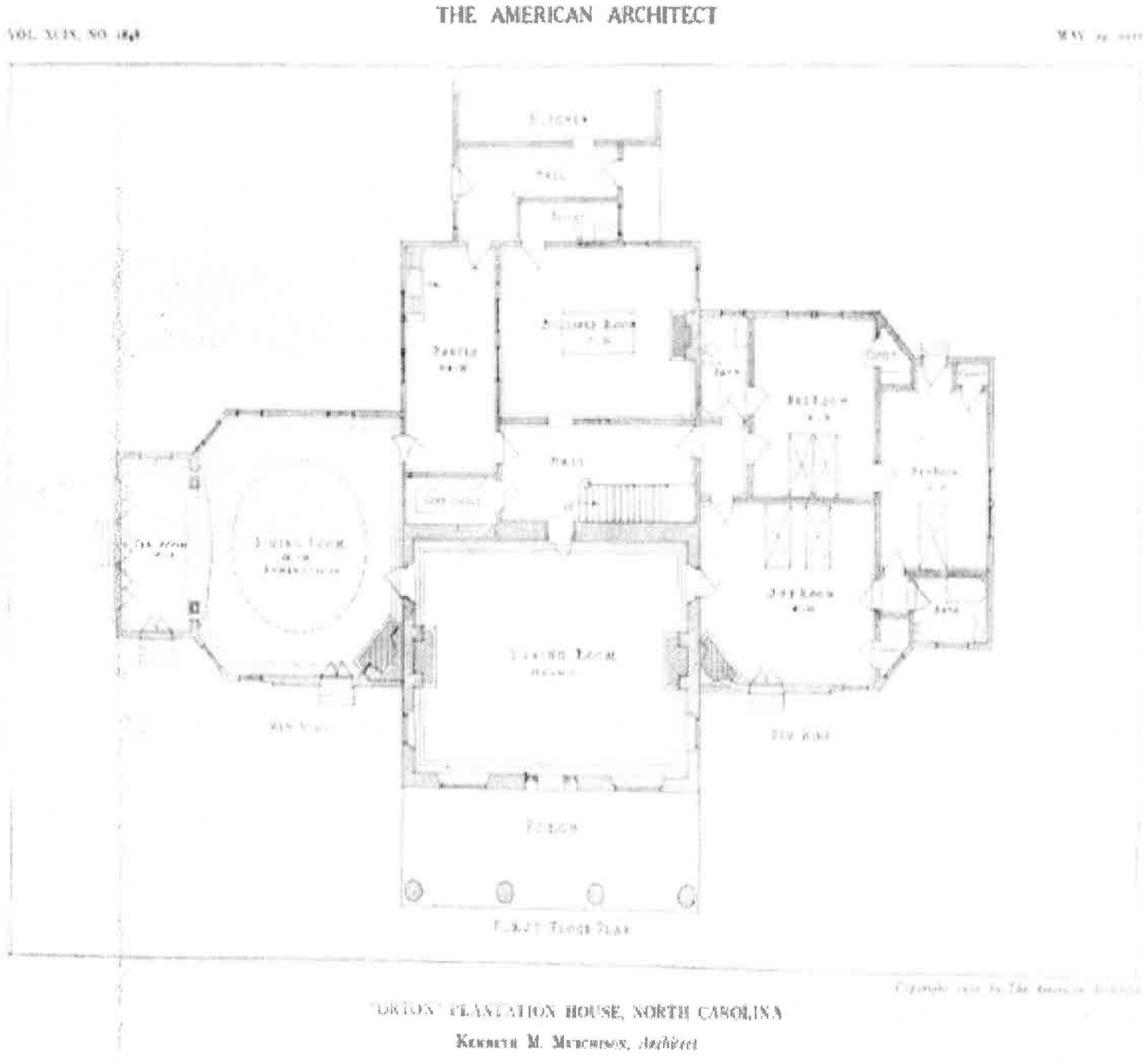


Figure 10. Floor plan for Orton, 1909, by Murchison. Source: American Architect via Hathi Trust.



Figure 11. Orton front room, after renovation in 1909-1910. Source: Princeton University via Hathi Trust.



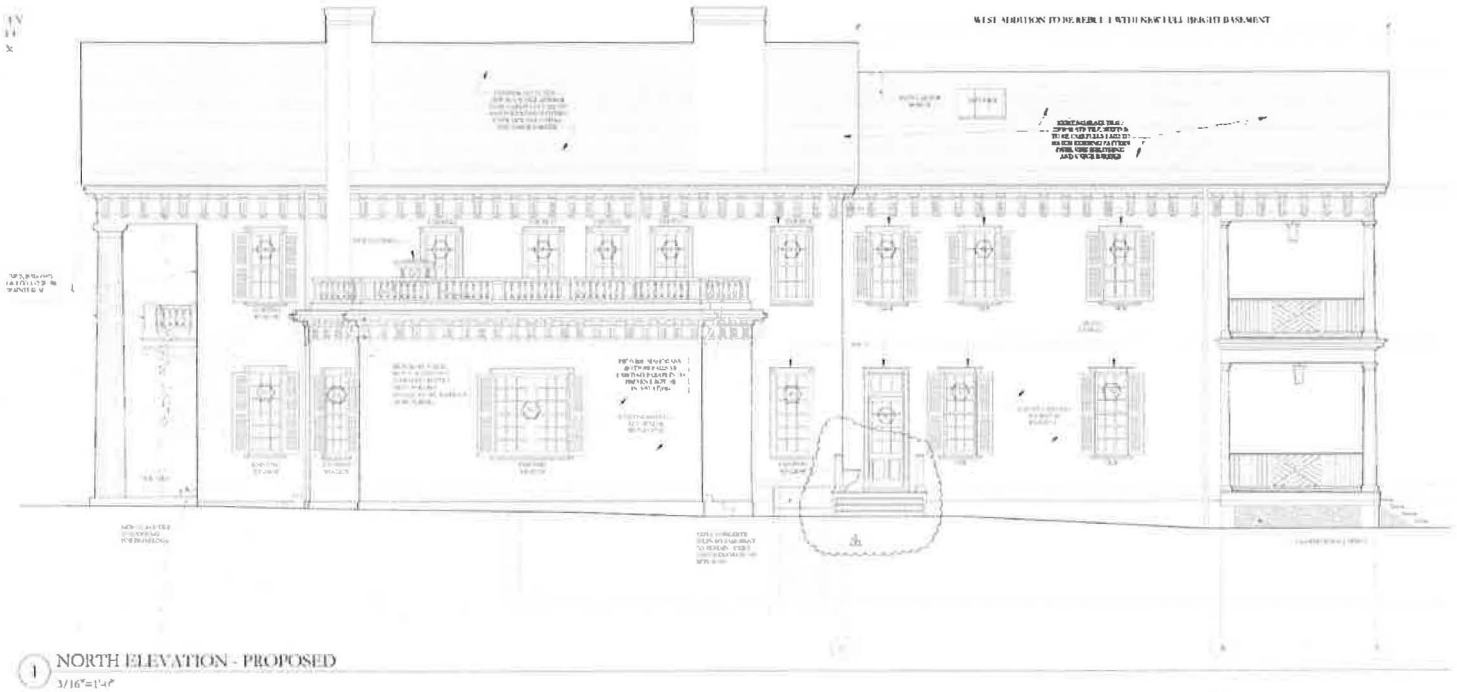
Figure 12. East and south elevations, 2011, prior to renovation. Source: Belvedere Property Management.



Figure 13. North and south elevations, 2011, prior to renovation. Source: Belvedere Property Management.



Figure 14. East and west elevations for renovation, 2012. Source: Belvedere Property Management.



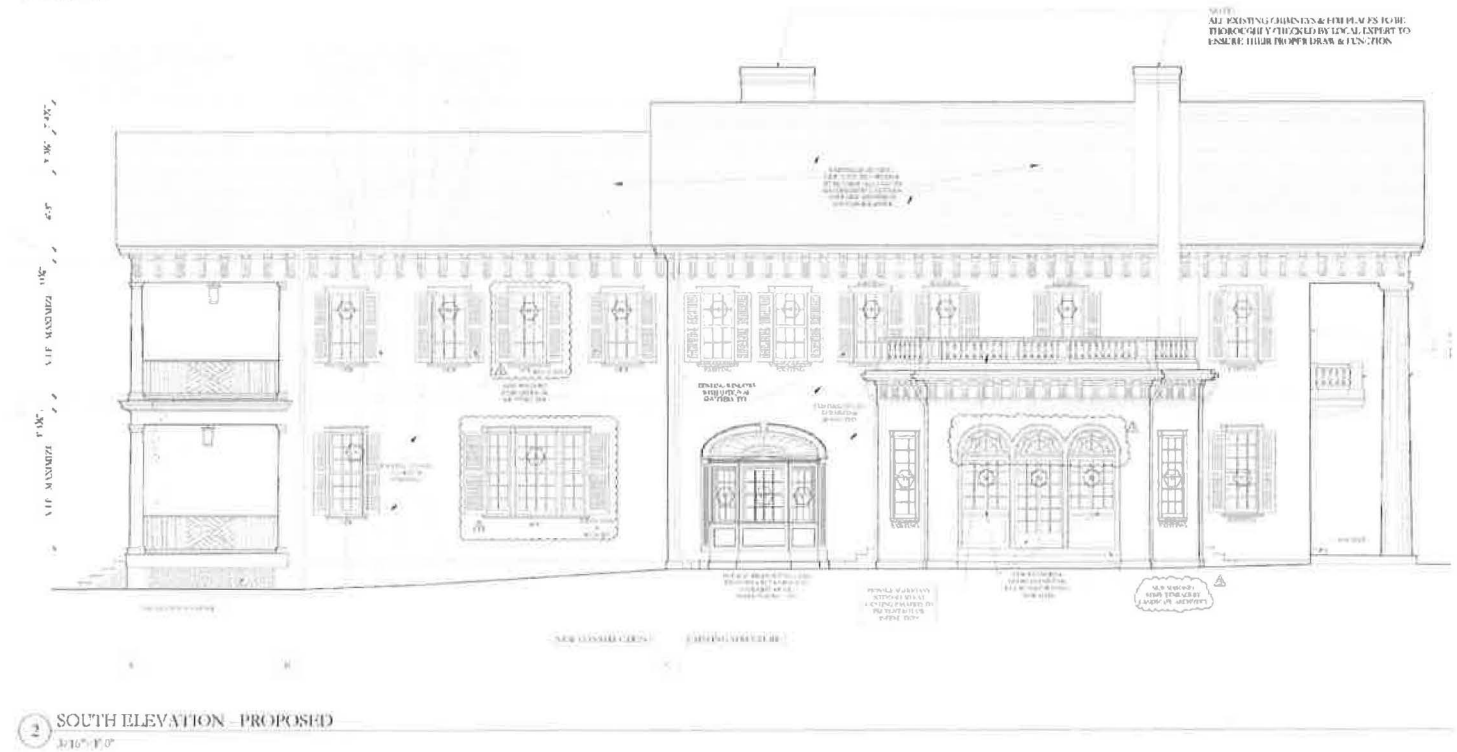


Figure 15. North and south elevations for renovation, 2012. Source: Belvedere Property Management.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

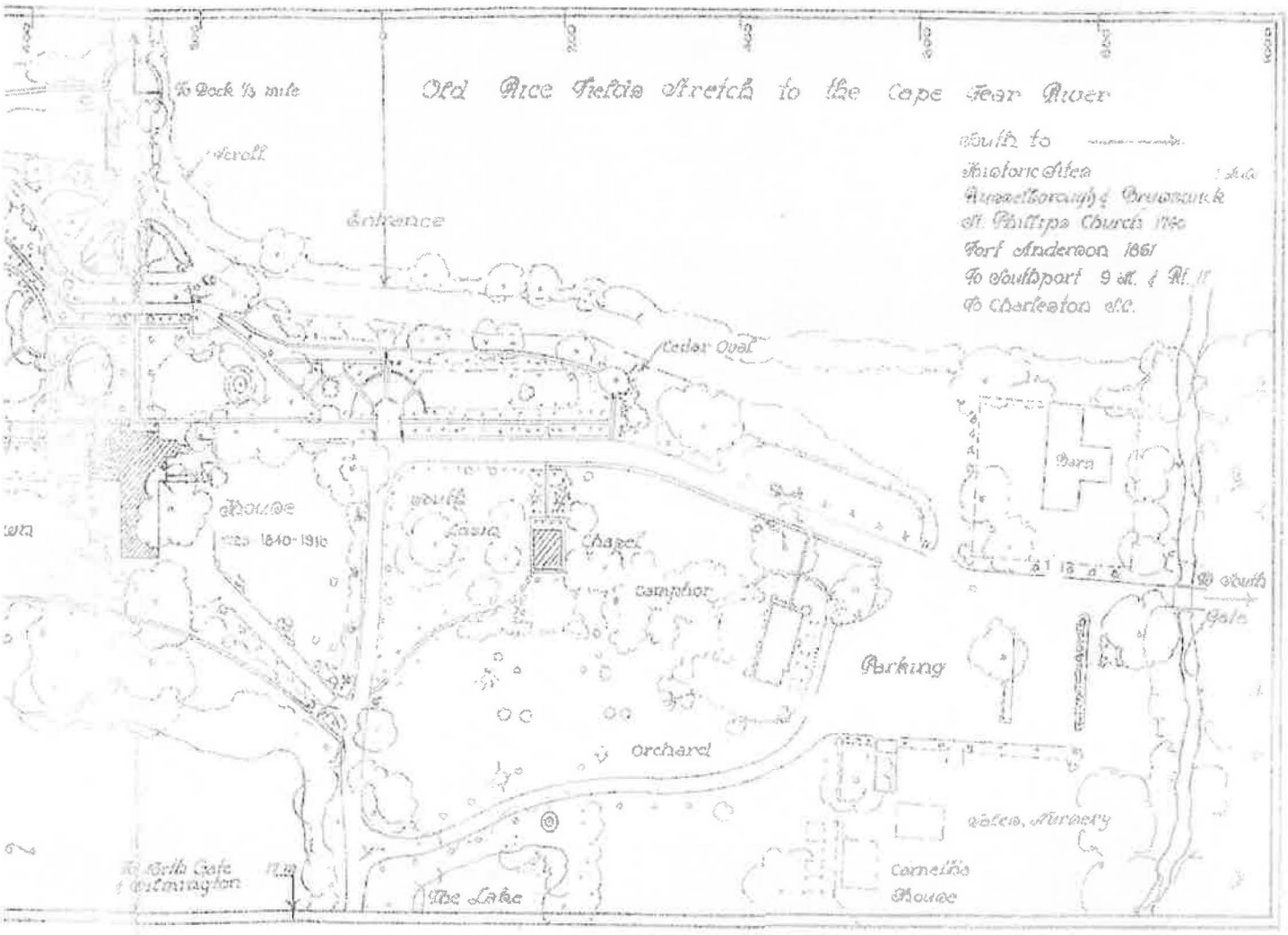


Figure 16. Robert Swann Sturtevant garden plan, 1935, southern half. Source: Orton Collection.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Orton Plantation Boundary Increase and Additional Documentation

Section number Additional Documentation Page 100

Brunswick County, North Carolina

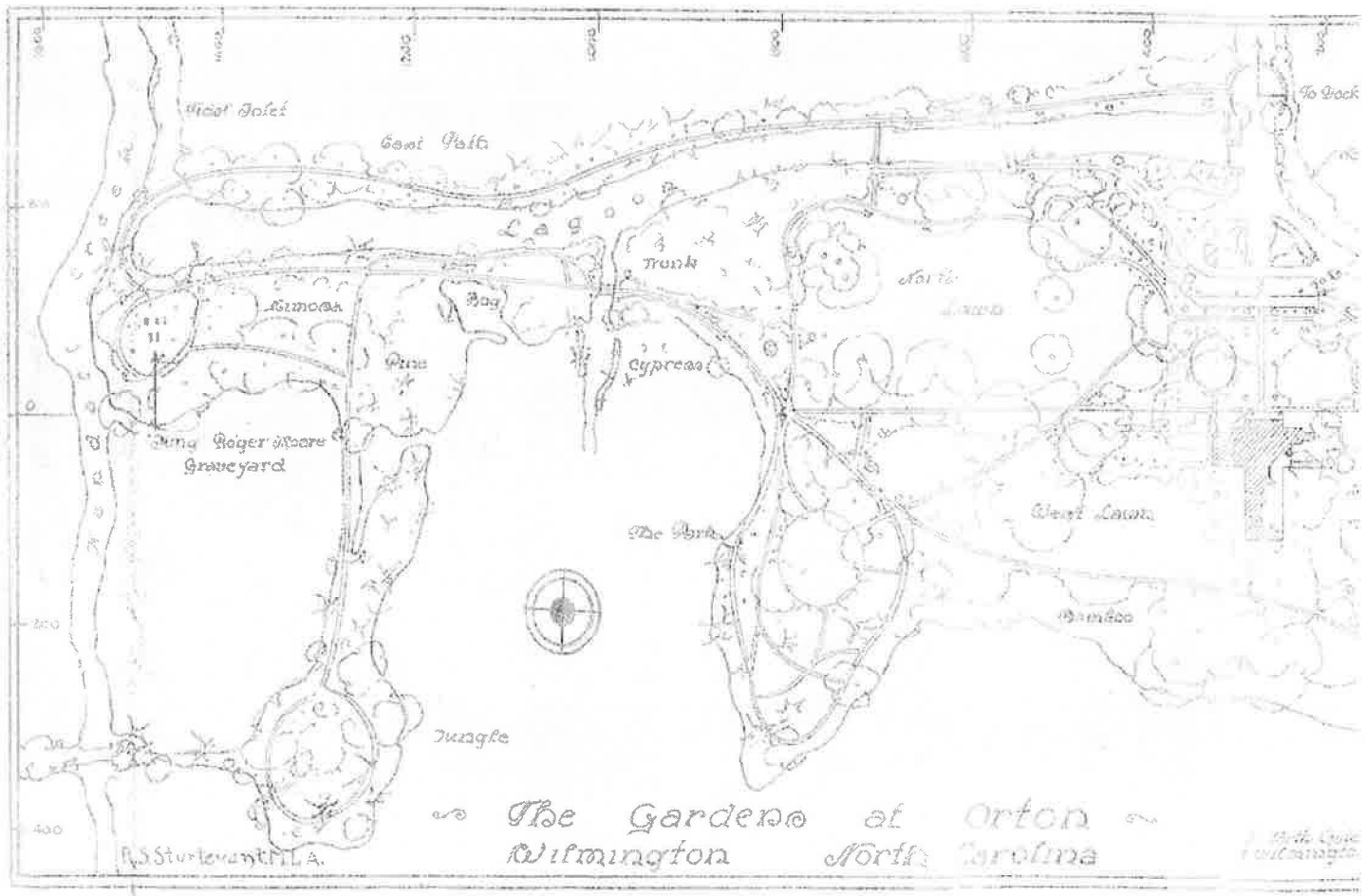


Figure 17. Robert Swann Sturtevant garden plan, 1935, northern half half. Source: Orton Collection.



Figure 18. Garden terraces between the Orton mansion and the Scroll Garden site, 2013. The north belvedere is center right. The concrete pedestals once supported cast iron planters. Source: JMA.

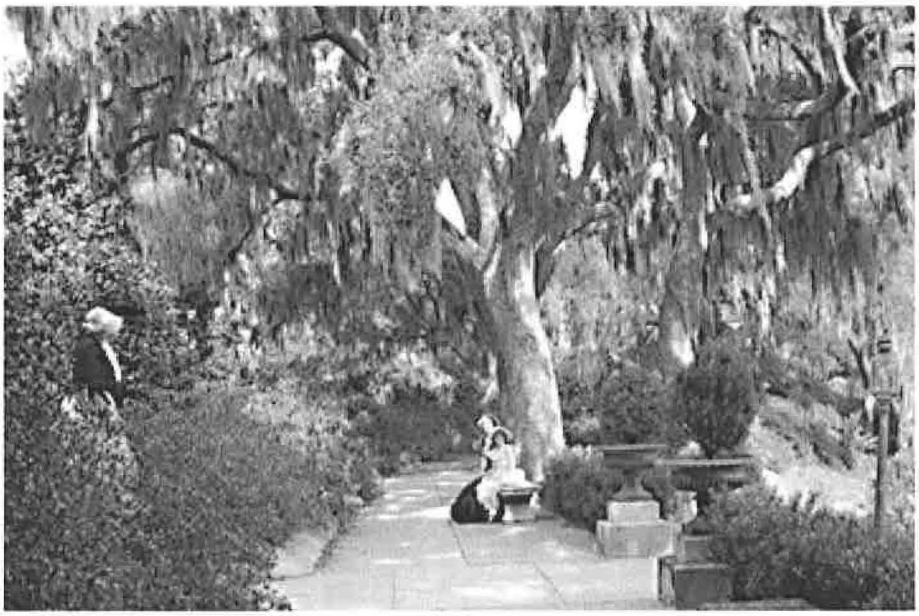


Figure 19. Same view, around 1937-1940. It is notable that while the concrete terrace surface has not survived, the live oak pictured is extant. Source: Orton Collection.



Figure 20. Front lawn at Orton in 2010, prior to renovation. The azaleas to the far left represent the edge of the Azalea Mound that was featured in postcards from the late twentieth century. Source: Belvedere Property Management.



Figure 21. Front lawn at Orton, 2013. The live oak closest to view was transplanted from an area south of the house in 2012. Source: JMA.



Figure 22. Sundial Garden, ca. 1937-40. Source: Orton Collection.



Figure 23. Similar view of Sundial Garden, 2010. The garden had undergone several iterations until it was removed in 2012. Source: Orton Collection.



Figure 24. Garden flanking the long walkway in 1927, looking north. The garden display structure to the right is topped with a cast iron planter. Source: Louis T. Moore Collection.

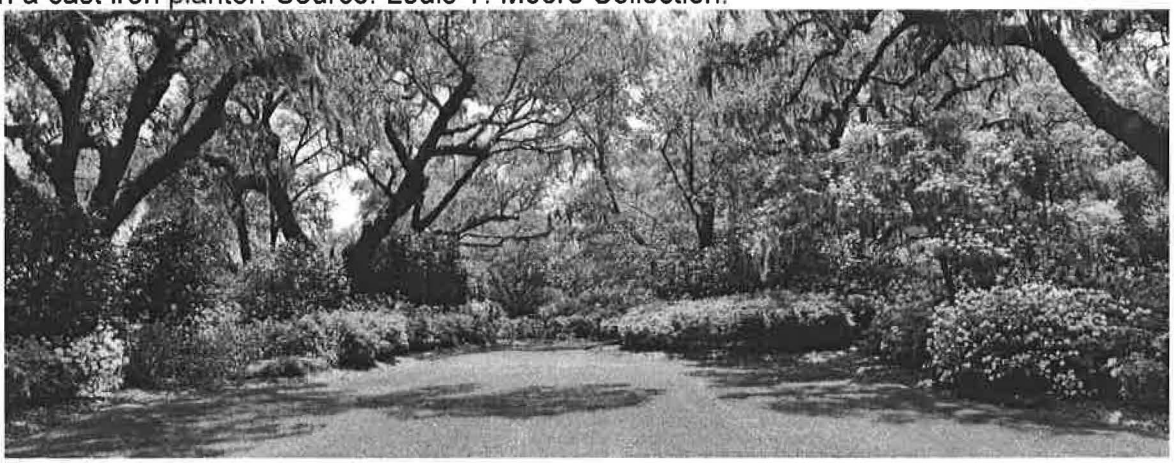


Figure 25. Same area, looking south in 2010, with azalea mound, right center. The azalea mound was likely an adaptation of the original tiered garden structure. Source: Belvedere Property Management.



Figure 26. Similar view, 2012. Source: JMA.

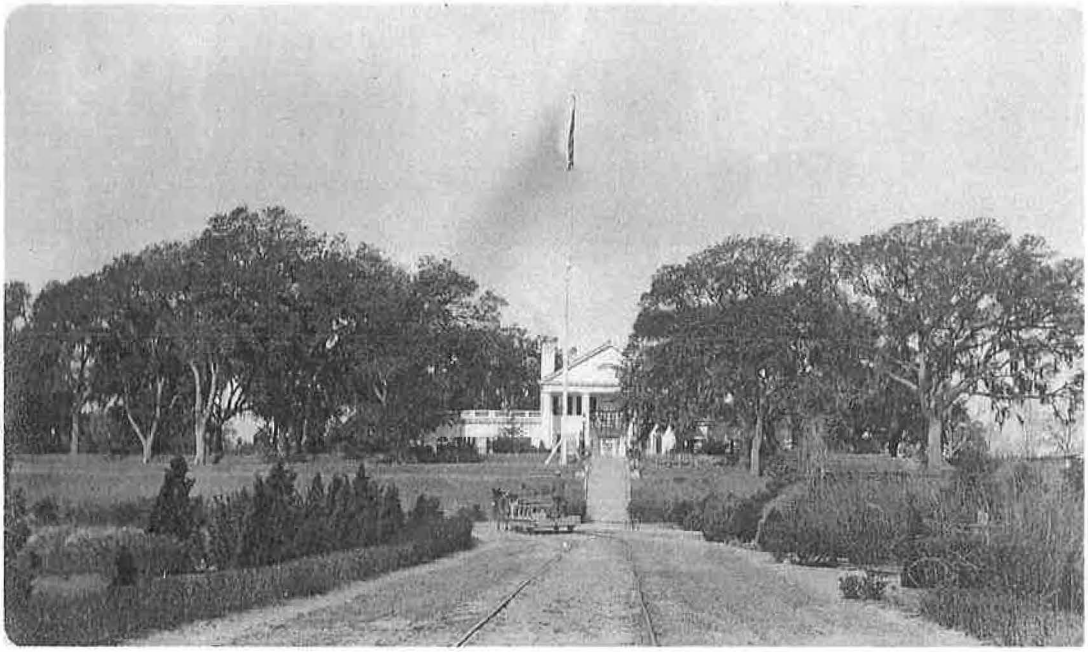


Figure 27. View westward along the front causeway, ca. 1916. Source: Orton Collection.



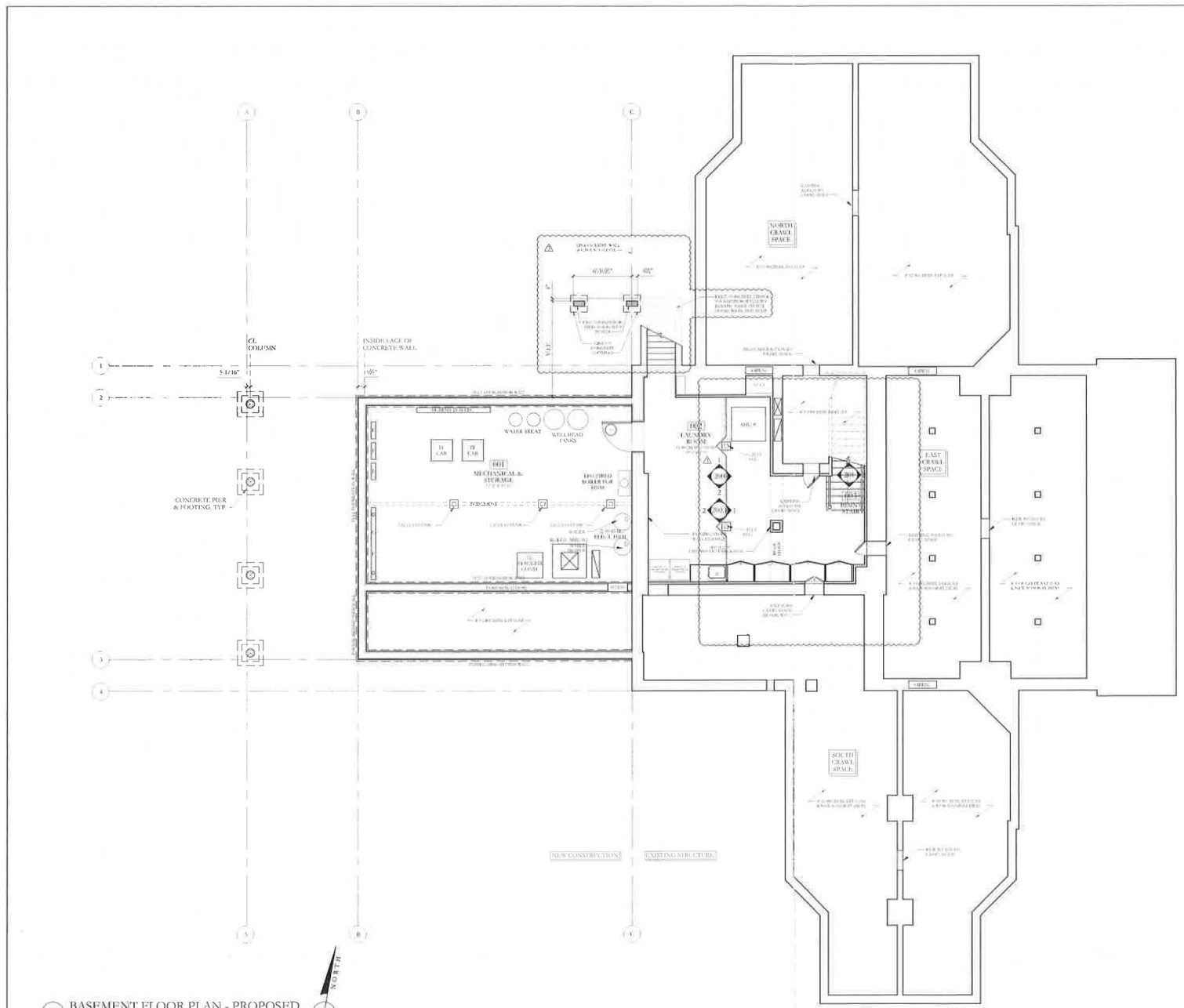
Figure 28. The Scroll Garden, ca 1950. Source: Orton Collection.



Figure 29. Wood fence and gate at south end of lagoon, with the north belvedere and lagoon bridge in the background, ca 1960. Source: Orton Collection.



Figure 30. Luola's Chapel, ca. 1919. Source: Orton Collection.



1 BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN - PROPOSED
3/16"=1'-0"

NOTE:
SEE DRAWING ST-100 FOR DIMENSIONAL SETTING OUT OF FRAMING PLANS.

NOTE:
SEE ANDREW CONSULTING ENGINEERS DRAWINGS FOR ALL STRUCTURAL INFORMATION.

NOTE:
RE-ACCESS TO ALL CRAWLSPACES.

⚠	REVISION 3 SET 01 / 12 / 2012
	CLIENT WALK THROUGH 11 / 23 / 2011
	ISSUED FOR DECORATOR REVIEW 11 / 09 / 2011
	RE - ISSUED FOR CONSTRUCTION 10 / 21 / 2011
	ISSUED FOR INSULATION SUBCONTRACTOR 10 / 24 / 2011
	ISSUED FOR DECORATOR REVIEW 10 / 12 / 2011
	PRELIMINARY CONSTRUCTION SET 08 / 19 / 2011
	ISSUE FOR SURVEYOR 06 / 17 / 2011
	PRICING SET 06 / 08 / 2011
	ISSUE FOR STRUCTURAL REVIEW 05 / 09 / 2011
	ISSUE FOR MECHANICAL REVIEW 05 / 09 / 2011
	PRELIMINARY CONTRACTOR REVIEW SET 05 / 06 / 2011
	ISSUED TO PAGE DUKE LANDSCAPE ARCH 03 / 03 / 2011

ORTON PLANTATION
BRUNSWICK COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

SHEET TITLE:
ORTON PLANTATION
BASEMENT PLAN - PROPOSED

DATE: JANUARY 12, 2012	SHEET NO: A-100
SCALE: AS NOTED	
BY: KVH	

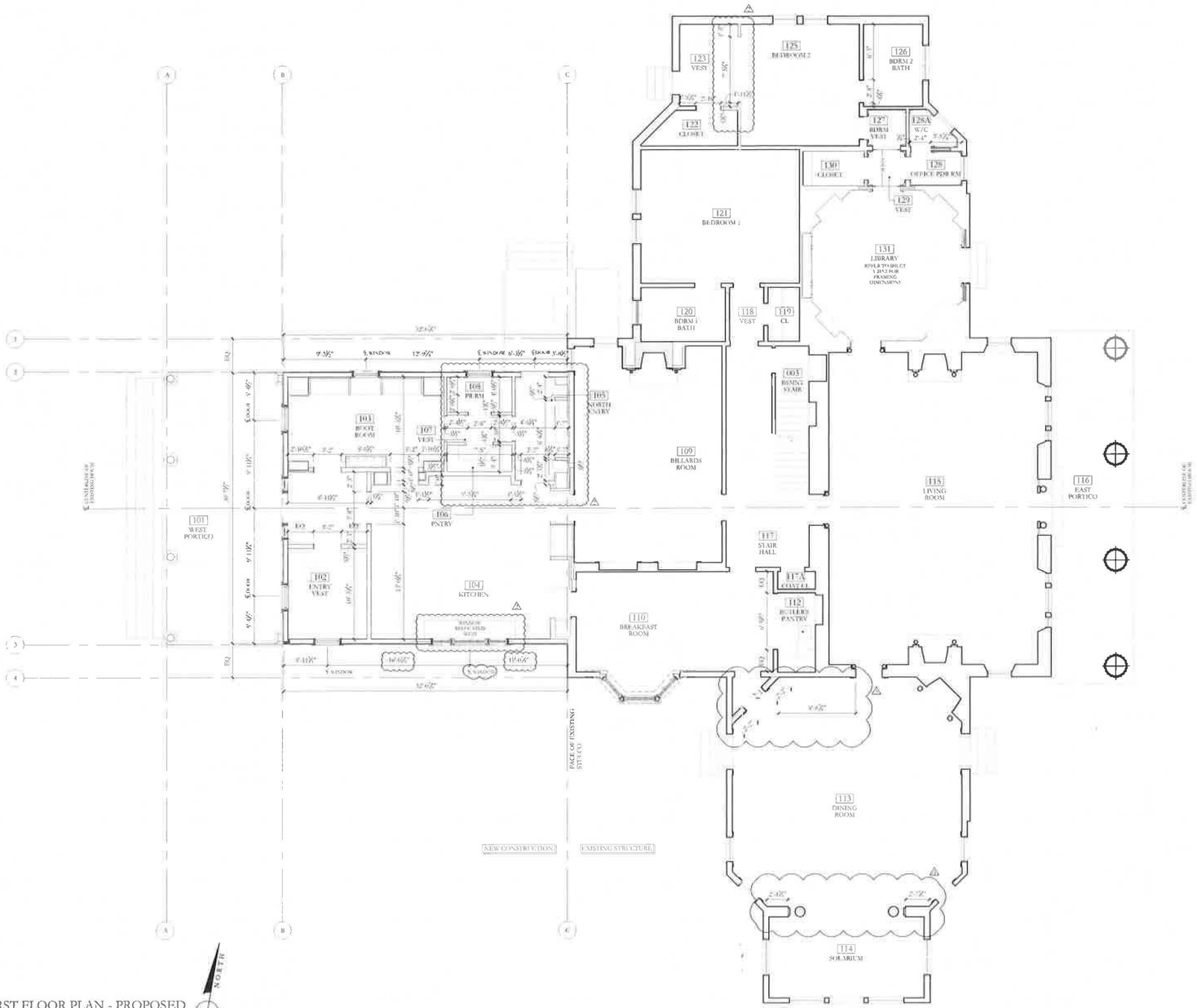
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Orton Plantation
Boundary Increase
and Additional
Documentation

Winnabow vic.
Brunswick County
North Carolina

DIMENSIONS ARE TO EDGE OF FRAMING UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED



1 FIRST FLOOR PLAN - PROPOSED
3/16"=1'-0"

NORTH

1	REVISION 3 SET 01 / 12 / 2012
1	ISSUED FOR CLIENT UPDATES 12 / 16 / 2011
1	ISSUED FOR CLIENT UPDATES 12 / 15 / 2011
	ISSUED FOR DECORATOR REVIEW 11 / 07 / 2011
	RE - ISSUED FOR CONSTRUCTION 10 / 24 / 2011
	ISSUED FOR DECORATOR REVIEW 10 / 12 / 2011
	PRELIMINARY CONSTRUCTION SET 09 / 19 / 2011
	PRICING SET 08 / 08 / 2011
	ISSUE FOR STRUCTURAL REVIEW 05 / 09 / 2011
	PRELIMINARY CONTRACTOR REVIEW SET 04 / 06 / 2011

ORTON PLANTATION
BRUNSWICK COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

SHEET TITLE
ORTON PLANTATION
FIRST FRAMING PLAN

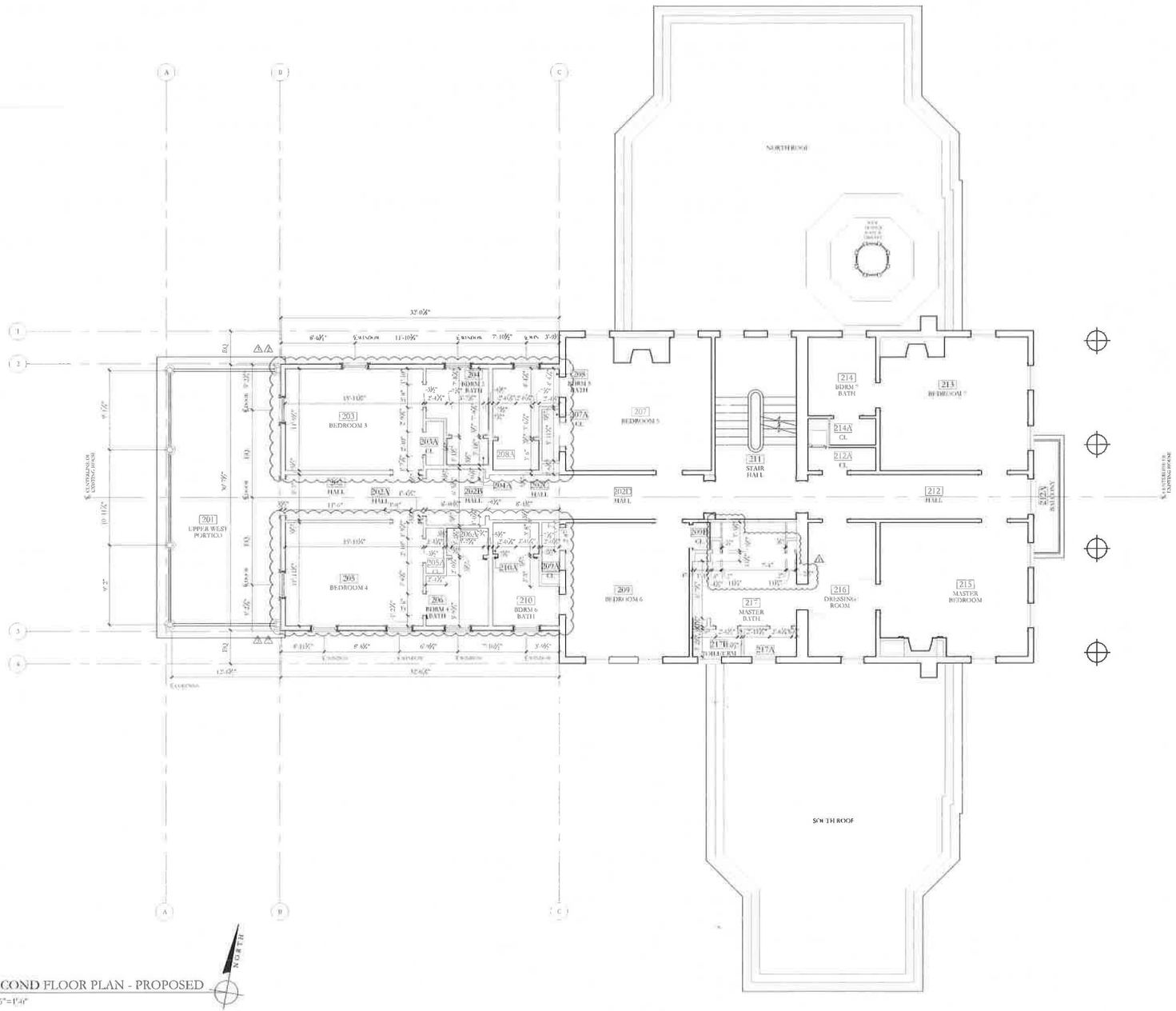
DATE	SHEET NO
JANUARY 12, 2012	ST-101
SCALE: AS NOTED	
BY: SJG	

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Orton Plantation Boundary Increase and Additional Documentation

Winnabow Vic., Brunswick County, North Carolina



1 SECOND FLOOR PLAN - PROPOSED
3/16"=1'-0"

NORTH

⚠	REVISIONS SET 01 / 12 / 2012
⚠	ISSUED FOR CLIENT UPDATES 12 / 15 / 2011
	ISSUED FOR DECORATOR REVIEW 11 / 09 / 2011
	RE - ISSUED FOR CONSTRUCTION 10 / 24 / 2011
	ISSUED FOR DECORATOR REVIEW 10 / 12 / 2011
	PRELIMINARY CONSTRUCTION SET 08 / 19 / 2011
	PRICING SET 06 / 06 / 2011
	ISSUE FOR STRUCTURAL REVIEW 05 / 09 / 2011
	PRELIMINARY CONTRACTOR REVIEW SET 04 / 06 / 2011

ORTON PLANTATION
BRUNSWICK COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

SHEET TITLE
ORTON PLANTATION
SECOND FLOOR FRAMING PLAN

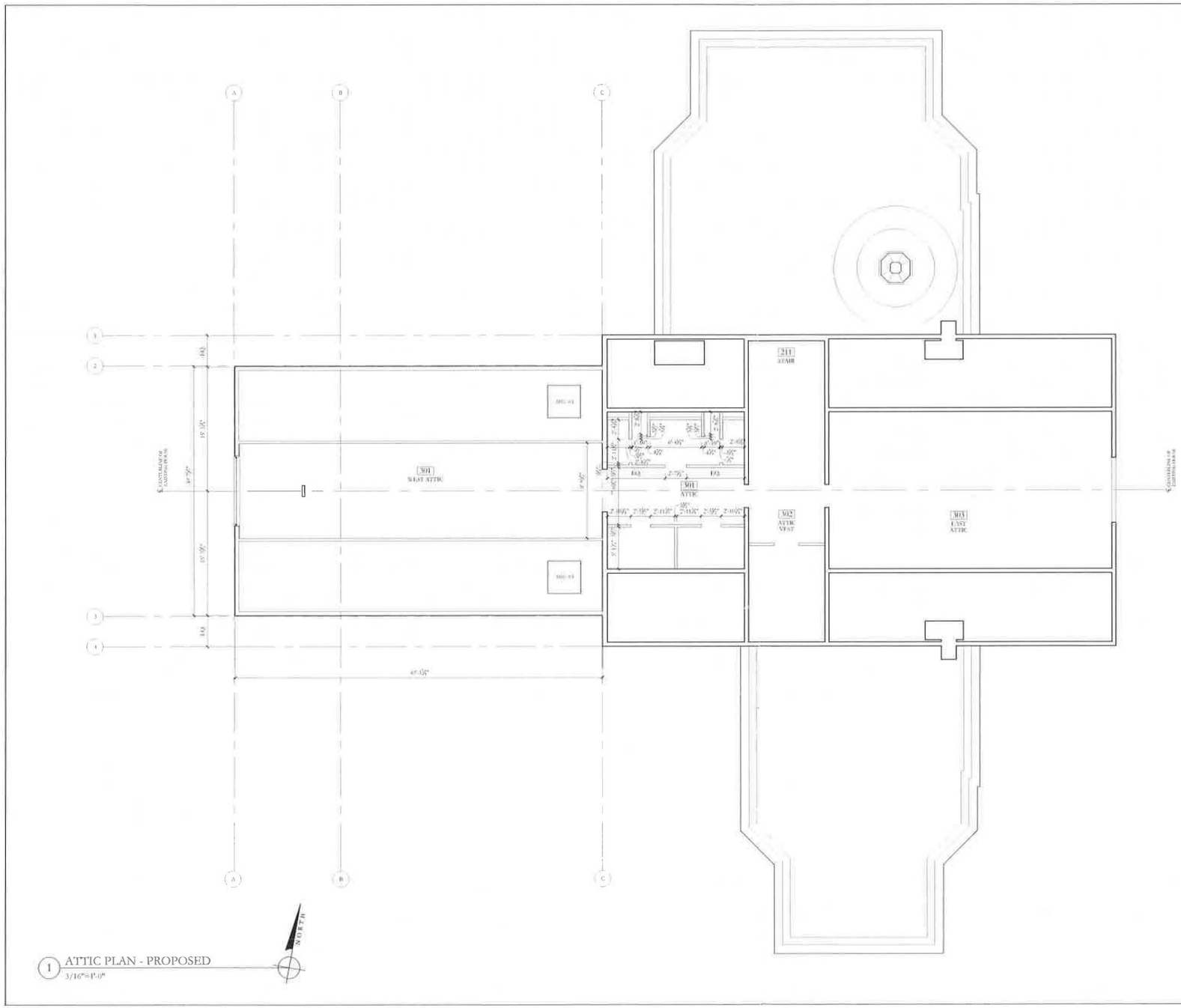
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SCALE: AS NOTED
BY: KVH
SHEET NO: ST-102

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Orton Plantation
Boundary Increase
and Additional
Documentation

Winnabow vic.,
Brunswick County,
North Carolina



1 ATTIC PLAN - PROPOSED
3/16"=1'-0"

DIMENSIONS ARE TO EDGE OF FRAMING UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

⚠ REVISION 3 SET 01 / 12 / 2012

ISSUED FOR DECORATOR REVIEW 11 / 09 / 2011

RE-ISSUED FOR CONSTRUCTION 10 / 24 / 2011

ISSUED FOR DECORATOR REVIEW 10 / 12 / 2011

PRELIMINARY CONSTRUCTION SET 06 / 19 / 2011

PRICING SET 06 / 06 / 2011

ISSUE FOR STRUCTURAL REVIEW 05 / 09 / 2011

PRELIMINARY CONTRACTOR REVIEW SET 05 / 06 / 2011

ORTON PLANTATION

BRUNSWICK COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

SHEET TITLE

ORTON PLANTATION
ATTIC FRAMING PLAN

DATE: JANUARY 12, 2012

SHEET NO: ST-103

SCALE: AS NOTED

BY: KVH

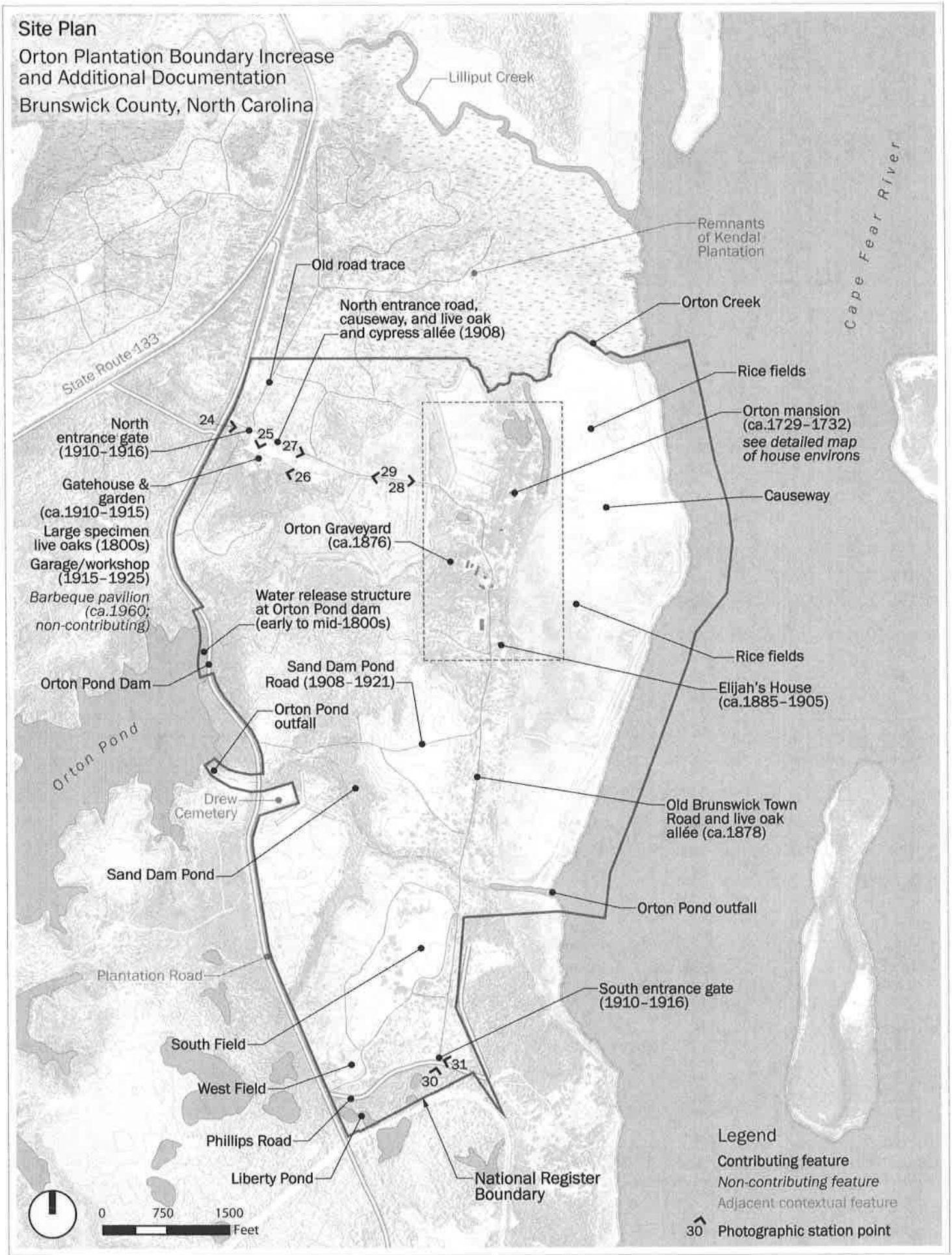
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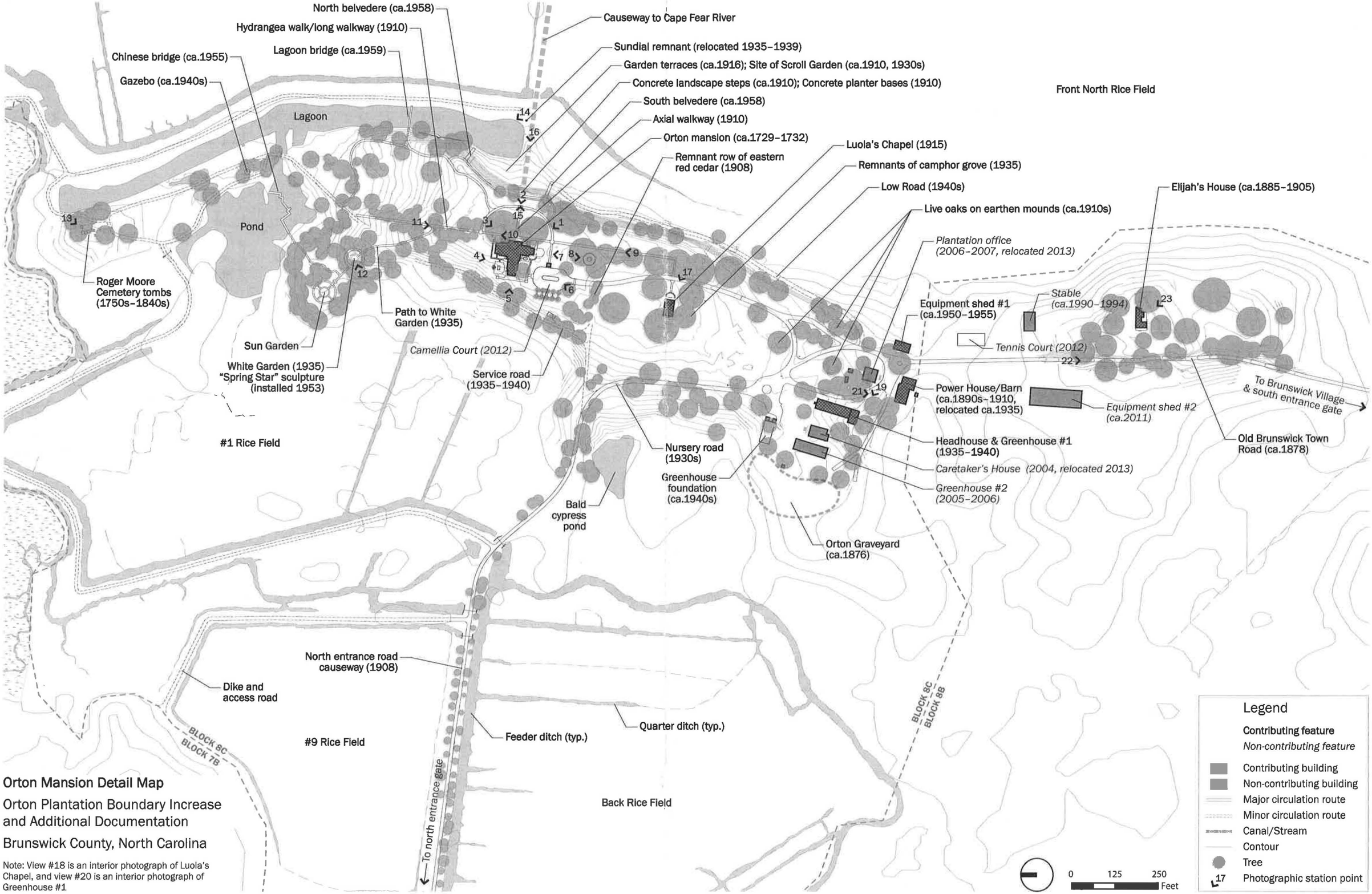
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Orton Plantation Boundary Increase and Additional Documentation

Winnabow vic., Brunswick County, North Carolina


Site Plan
Orton Plantation Boundary Increase and Additional Documentation
Brunswick County, North Carolina
Lilliput Creek
Cape Fear River
Remnants of Kendal Plantation
Old road trace
North entrance road, causeway, and live oak and cypress allée (1908)
Orton Creek
State Route 133
Rice fields
Orton mansion (ca.1729–1732)
see detailed map of house environs
North entrance gate (1910–1916)
24
25
27
26
29
28
Gatehouse & garden (ca.1910–1915)
Large specimen live oaks (1800s)
Garage/workshop (1915–1925)
Barbeque pavilion (ca.1960; non-contributing)
Causeway
Orton Graveyard (ca.1876)
Water release structure at Orton Pond dam (early to mid-1800s)
Rice fields
Orton Pond Dam
Sand Dam Pond Road (1908–1921)
Elijah's House (ca.1885–1905)
Orton Pond outfall
Orton Pond
Drew Cemetery
Old Brunswick Town Road and live oak allée (ca.1878)
Sand Dam Pond
Orton Pond outfall
Plantation Road
South entrance gate (1910–1916)
South Field
31
30
West Field
Phillips Road
Liberty Pond
National Register Boundary
0
750
1500
Feet
Legend
Contributing feature
Non-contributing feature
Adjacent contextual feature
30
Photographic station point



Orton Mansion Detail Map

Orton Plantation Boundary Increase and Additional Documentation

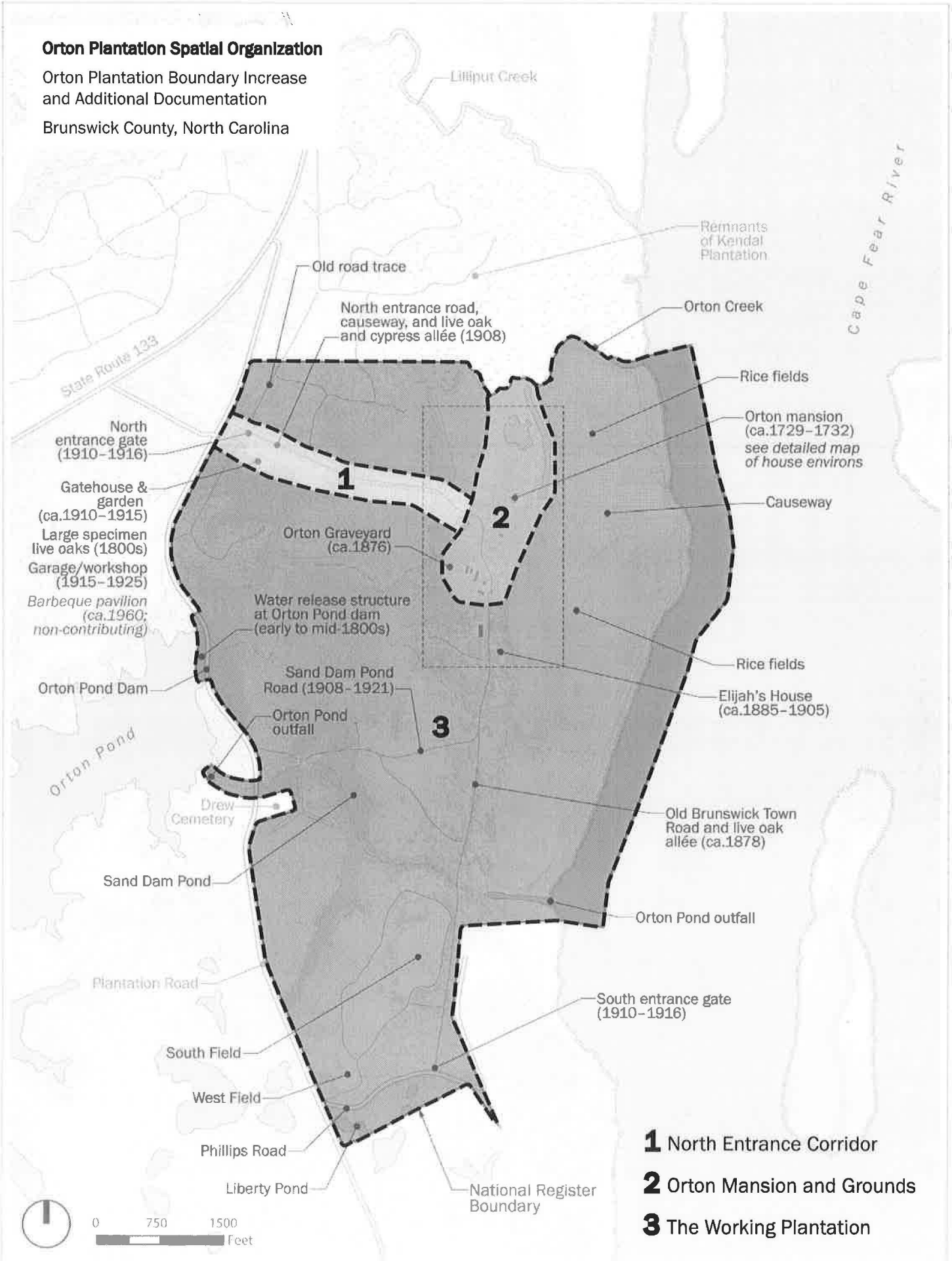
Brunswick County, North Carolina

Note: View #18 is an interior photograph of Luola's Chapel, and view #20 is an interior photograph of Greenhouse #1

Orton Plantation Spatial Organization

Orton Plantation Boundary Increase
and Additional Documentation

Brunswick County, North Carolina



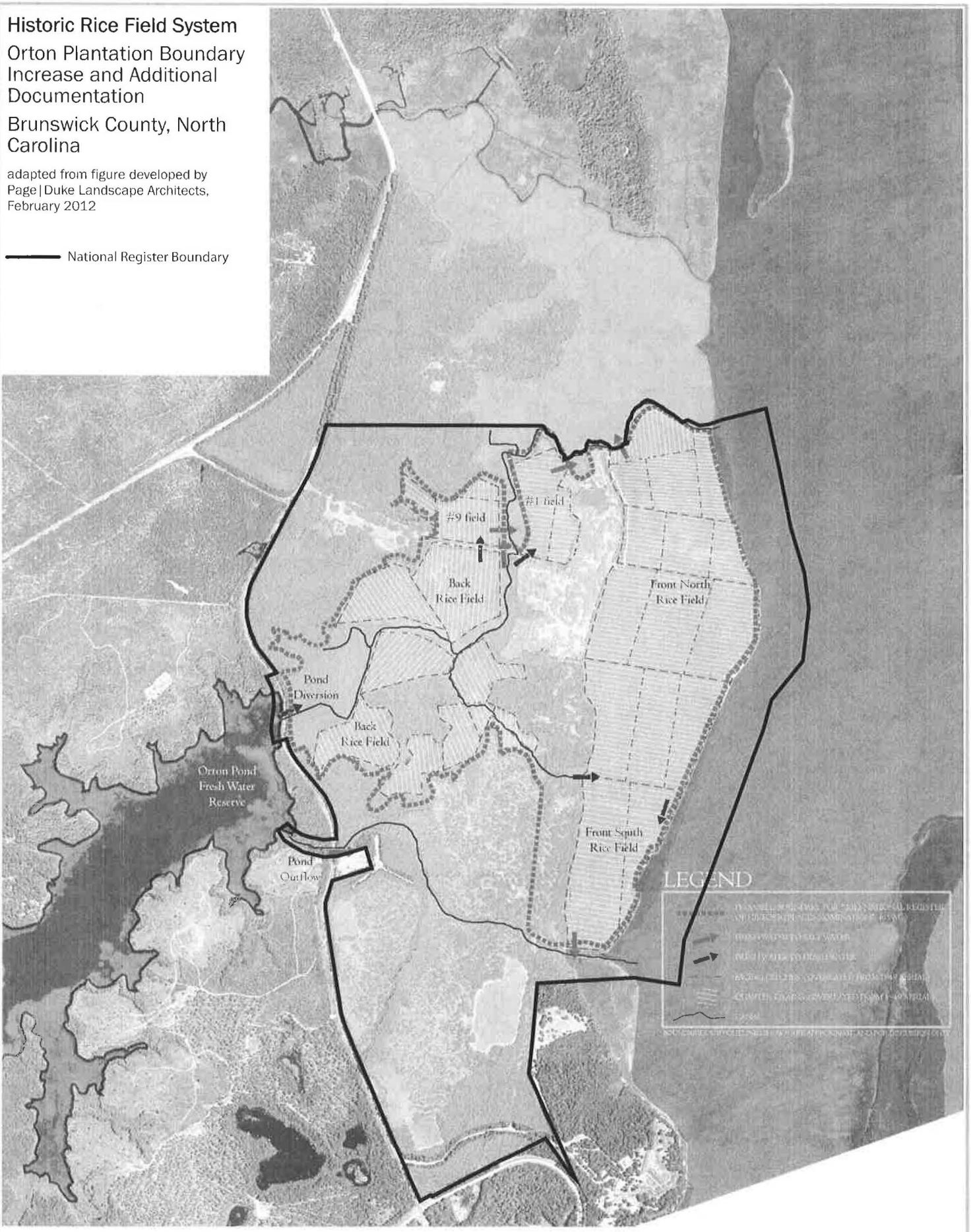
Historic Rice Field System

Orton Plantation Boundary Increase and Additional Documentation

Brunswick County, North Carolina

adapted from figure developed by Page | Duke Landscape Architects, February 2012

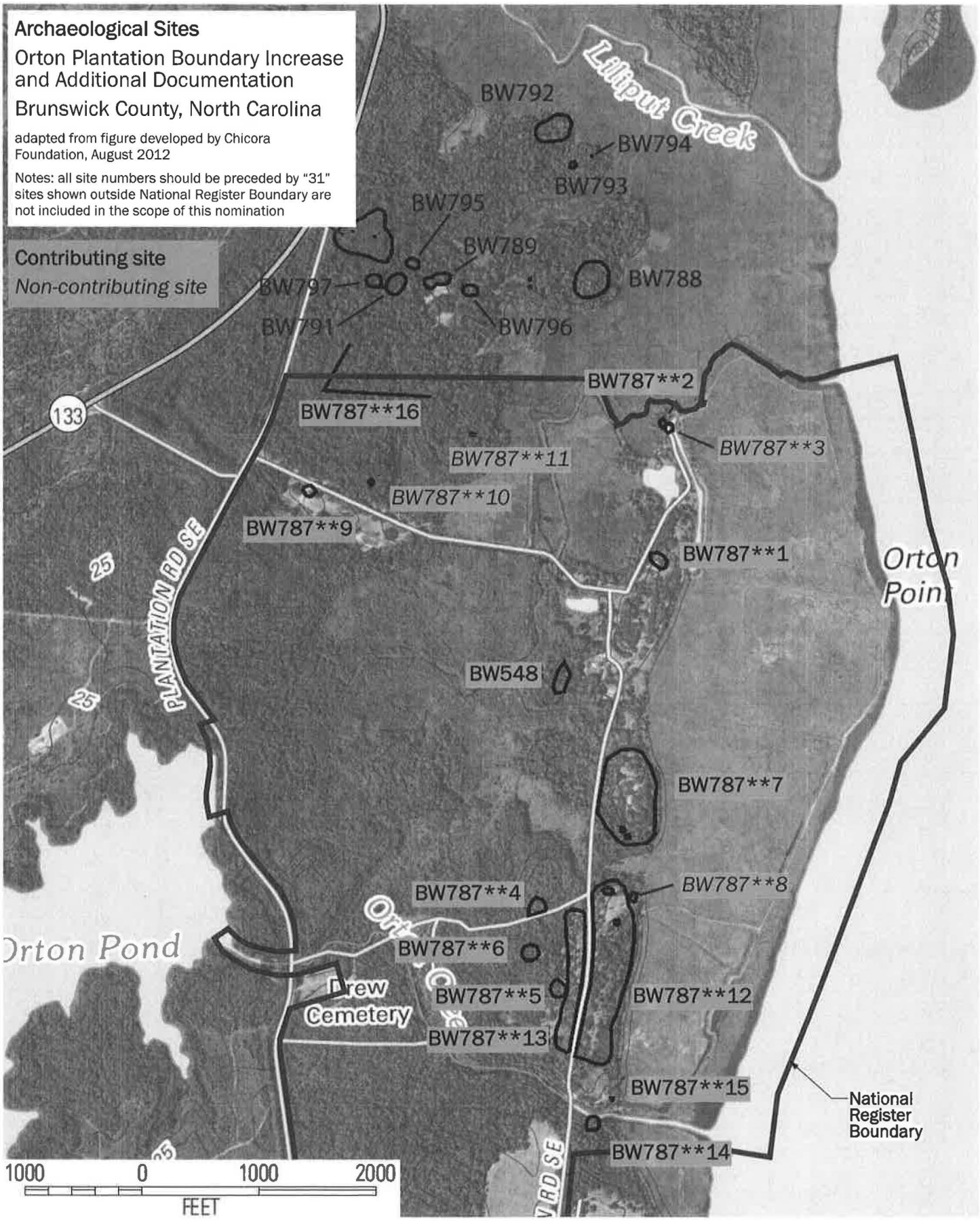
National Register Boundary



A PRELIMINARY PLANNING STUDY FOR ORTON PLANTATION

BRUNSWICK COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA

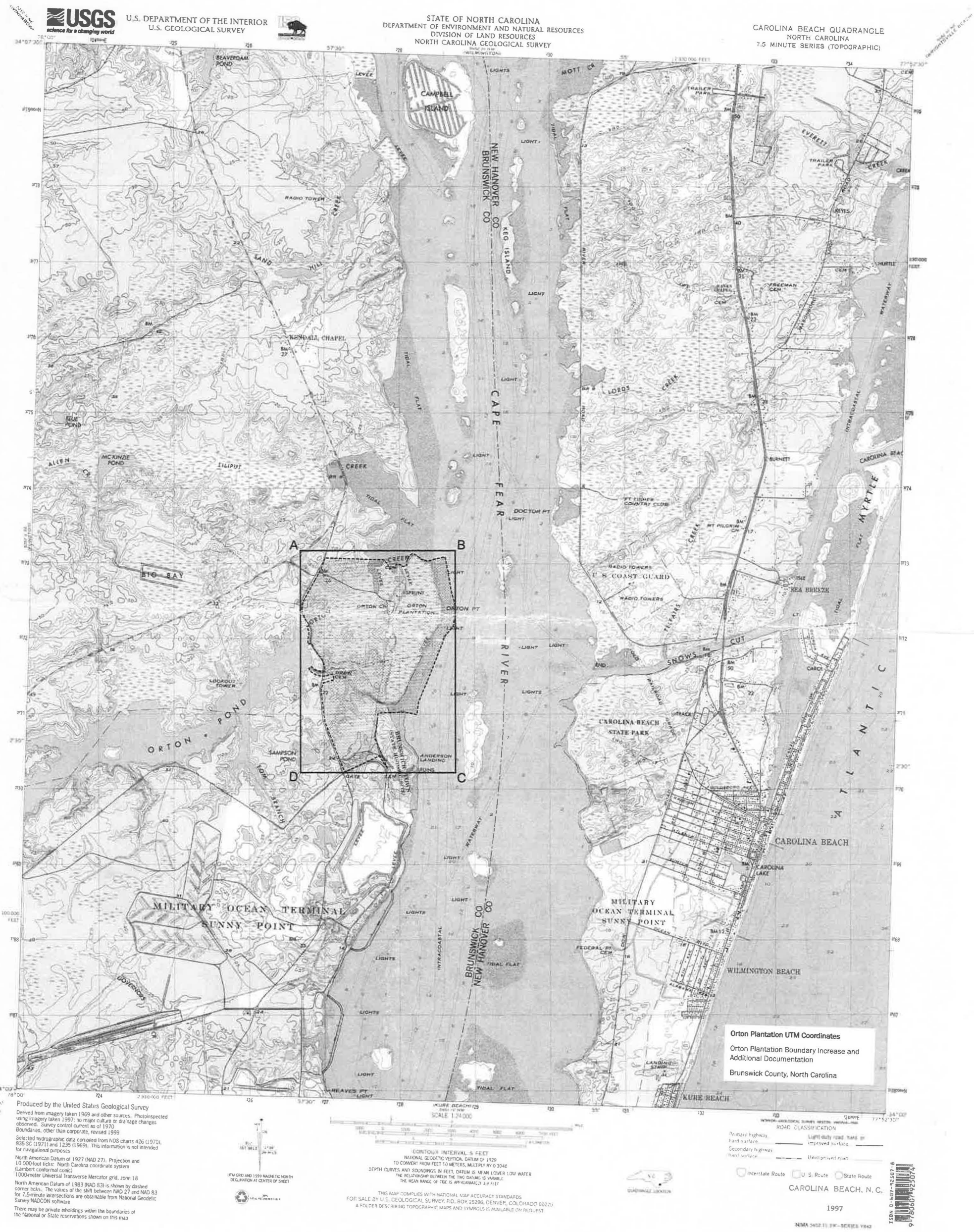
FEBRUARY 21, 2012


Archaeological Sites
Orton Plantation Boundary Increase and Additional Documentation
Brunswick County, North Carolina
adapted from figure developed by Chicora Foundation, August 2012
Notes: all site numbers should be preceded by "31" sites shown outside National Register Boundary are not included in the scope of this nomination
Contributing site
Non-contributing site
Lilliput Creek
BW792
BW794
BW793
BW795
BW789
BW788
BW797
BW791
BW796
BW787**2
BW787**16
133
BW787**3
BW787**11
BW787**10
BW787**9
PLANTATION RD SE
25
BW787**1
Orton Point
BW548
BW787**7
BW787**8
BW787**4
Ort
Orton Pond
BW787**6
Drew Cemetery
BW787**5
BW787**12
BW787**13
BW787**15
National Register Boundary
BW787**14
1000 0 1000 2000
FEET

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF LAND RESOURCES
NORTH CAROLINA GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

CAROLINA BEACH QUADRANGLE
NORTH CAROLINA
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



Orton Plantation UTM Coordinates

Orton Plantation Boundary Increase and Additional Documentation

Brunswick County, North Carolina

Produced by the United States Geological Survey

Derived from imagery taken 1969 and other sources. Photoinspected using imagery taken 1997; no major culture or drainage changes observed. Survey control current as of 1970
Boundaries, other than corporate, revised 1999

Selected hydrographic data compiled from NOS charts 426 (1970), 935-SC (1971) and 1235 (1969). This information is not intended for navigational purposes

North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27). Projection and 10 000-foot ticks: North Carolina coordinate system (Lambert conformal conic)
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 18

North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 27 and NAD 83 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic Survey NADCON software

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map

UTM GRID AND 1999 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

SCALE 1:24 000

CONTOUR INTERVAL 5 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
TO CONVERT FROM FEET TO METERS, MULTIPLY BY 0.3048
DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN FEET. DATUM IS MEAN LOWER LOW WATER
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO DATUMS IS VARIABLE
THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE IS APPROXIMATELY 3.9 FEET

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, P.O. BOX 25286, DENVER, COLORADO 80225
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface
Secondary highway, hard surface
Light duty road, hard or improved surface
Unimproved road
Interstate Route
U. S. Route
State Route

CAROLINA BEACH, N. C.

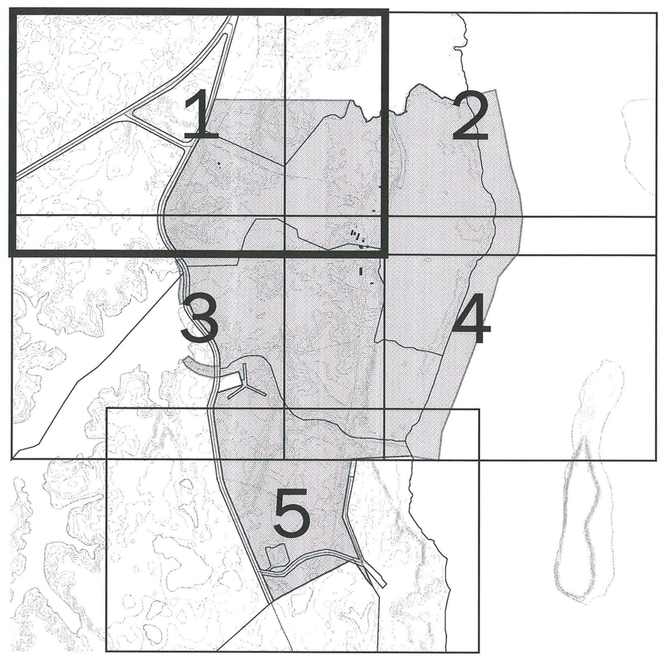
1997

NIMA 3402 III SW—SERIES V842

ISBN 0-607-92507-6

Zone 18

A E 226680
N 3773170
B E 228740
N 3773170
C E 228740
N 3770210
D E 226680
N 3770210



0 200 400 800

Parcel Map
Orton Plantation Boundary Increase
and Additional Documentation
Brunswick County, North Carolina
1 of 5

1440000105

1440000110

1440000120

1440000105

14400001

1440000111

State Route 133

Plantation Road

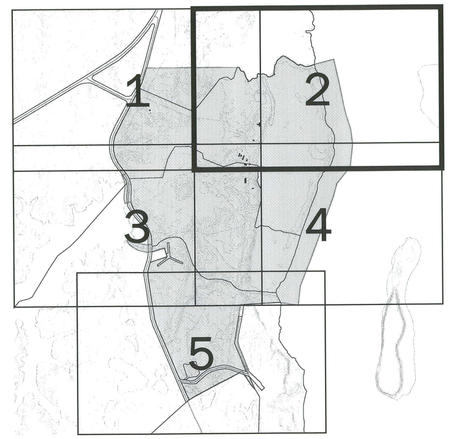
Orton Road

State Route 133

Plantation Road

0 200 400 800

Parcel Map
Orton Plantation Boundary Increase and Additional Documentation
Brunswick County, North Carolina
2 of 5



1440000105

14400001

1440000111

Cape Fear River

14400001

1440000120

1440000111

Orton Pond

Plantation Road

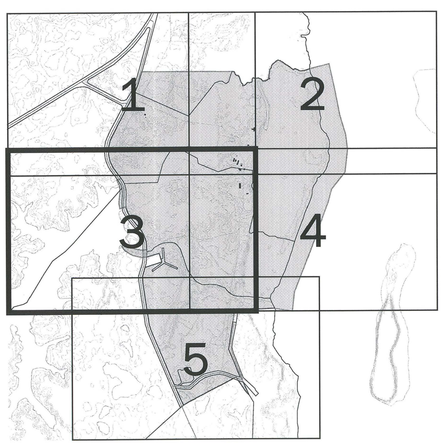
1440000119

1440000104

1440000103

1440000112

Plantation Road



Parcel Map

Orton Plantation Boundary Increase and Additional Documentation

Brunswick County, North Carolina

3 of 5

0 200 400 800

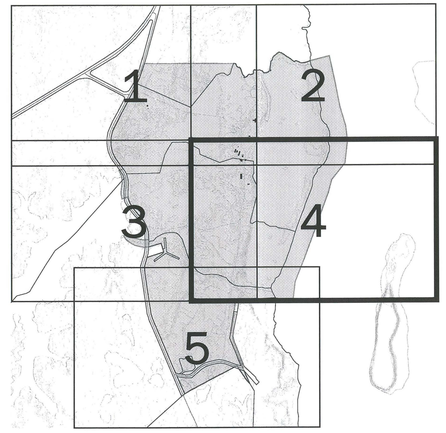
14400001

1440000111

1440000112

15900001

Cape Fear River



0 200 400 800

Parcel Map
Orton Plantation Boundary Increase and Additional Documentation
Brunswick County, North Carolina
4 of 5

1440000119

Plantation Road

1440000111

1440000112

Cape Fear River

15900002

St Phillips Road

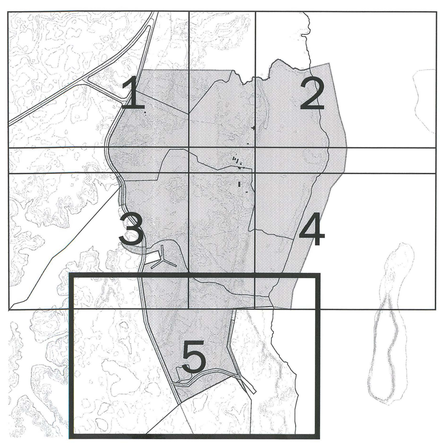
1440000112

15900001

1440000112

Plantation Road

17400001



Parcel Map

Orton Plantation Boundary Increase and Additional Documentation

Brunswick County, North Carolina

5 of 5

0 200 400 800












































SLOW
SPEED
BUMPS




















1725

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Orton Plantation (Boundary Increase)

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NORTH CAROLINA, Brunswick

DATE RECEIVED: 7/26/13 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 8/16/13
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 9/03/13 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/11/13
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 13000698

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL:	N	DATA PROBLEM:	N	LANDSCAPE:	N	LESS THAN 50 YEARS:	N
OTHER:	N	PDIL:	N	PERIOD:	N	PROGRAM UNAPPROVED:	N
REQUEST:	N	SAMPLE:	N	SLR DRAFT:	N	NATIONAL:	N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

✓ ACCEPT ___ RETURN ___ REJECT 9.9.13 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA_____

REVIEWER_____ DISCIPLINE_____

TELEPHONE_____ DATE_____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

RECEIVED 2280
JUL 26 2013
NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources

State Historic Preservation Office

Ramona M. Bartos, Administrator

Governor Pat McCrory
Secretary Susan Kluttz

Office of Archives and History
Deputy Secretary Kevin Cherry

July 15, 2013

Ms. Carol Shull, Keeper
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1201 Eye Street NW (2208) Eighth Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005

Re: Star Historic District – Montgomery County
Orton Plantation, Boundary Increase and Additional Documentation – Brunswick County
Moore County Hunt Lands and Mile-Away Farms – Moore County

Dear Ms. Shull:

Enclosed are the above referenced nominations to be approved for the National Register of Historic Places.

We trust you will find the nominations to be in order. If you have any questions please call Ann Swallow, 919.807.6587.

Sincerely,

Kevin Cherry

Kevin Cherry, PhD.
State Historic Preservation Officer

KC/jct: enclosures

Location: 109 East Jones Street, Raleigh NC 27601 **Mailing Address**: 4617 Mail Service Center, Raleigh NC 27699-4617 **Telephone/Fax**: (919) 807-6570/807-6599