

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received NOV 21 1985

date entered DEC 19 1985

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

1. Name

historic Smith Griffin House

and/or common Oaklea Manor

2. Location

street & number Off Wynn Drive, 1/2 miles northeast of GA 20 N/A not for publication

city, town Hampton X vicinity of

state Georgia code 013 county Henry code 151

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	n/a in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. James L. Henderson, Jr.

street & number McDonough Road, Route 1

city, town Hampton N/A vicinity of state GA 30228

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Superior Court

street & number Henry County Courthouse

city, town McDonough state GA

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title McIntosh Trail Areawide Historic Preservation Study has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1979  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records McIntosh Trail APDC

city, town Barnesville state GA 30204

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## 7. Description

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

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

The Smith Griffin House is a two-story, brick, antebellum house built on the central hall plan exemplifying features of the Italianate, Greek Revival, Victorian Eclectic and Neoclassical styles. The house has four rooms on each floor, a one-story ell on the rear, and a large, two-story, columned portico centered on the front facade. The red bricks appear to be hand-kilned on the property while doors, windows, mantels, and other wood items appear to be factory-made. The front portico has newly replaced twin Ionic columns on each side. The front door and the balcony door on the second floor each have a transom and sidelights. The balcony is supported by large Victorian brackets and has a balustrade. There are four exterior end chimneys, paired on each side. Attic vents on each side contain Victorian detail. There is an interior chimney in the one-story rear ell. The interior of the house includes a ten-foot wide central hall with four rooms with twelve-foot high ceilings on each floor. There are solid brick walls between each room. The walls are plastered, and there is wainscoting of flush horizontal boards and chair rail. Original mantelpieces remain, many with heavy geometric patterns. A grove of historic oak trees, a dirt road, and a dirt drive are in front of the house. The rest of the immediate grounds are informally landscaped. The nominated property does not include any outbuildings, and no historic outbuildings remain on the adjacent property. Open fields surround the property with the exception of some wooded land that adjoins the historic oak grove to the southwest.

Changes to the house include the addition in the early twentieth-century of a columned, two-story Neoclassical portico and flanking one-story porches. The portico replaced an earlier porch that is believed to have been two stories high (holes found in the brick work corroborate this). The flanking one-story porches were removed in 1981, and new columns were installed in 1983. Changes to interior rooms include the rebuilding of the back porch in 1983. One room has been paneled, the original kitchen turned into an office, and the dining area made into a kitchen. The rear of the first floor central hall has been recently closed off to provide space for a bathroom.

Note: The photographs, taken in late 1982, show the house in the final stages of remodeling with the exception of plaster repair and "clean-up" on the interior. No substantial changes have been made to the house or grounds since then.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1860 **Builder/Architect** Henry Chinn, bricklayer

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

#### Statement of Significance

The Smith Griffin House is significant in architecture as a fine and unusual example of a late antebellum house showing the combination of elements from several prevailing architectural styles. Built on the four-over-four central hall plan, its interior arrangement and details reflect Greek Revival influences. Many exterior details are Victorian, including the brackets supporting the second story front balcony and the attic vents. The house also shows the influence of the popular mid-century Italianate style, especially in the use of brick window arches, curved windows and quoins. It is also significant as a relatively rare example of antebellum brick construction, attributed to a local bricklayer, Henry Chinn, said to have done other important structures in the area. The architectural significance of the house is enhanced by its setting on high ground fronted by a historic grove of oak trees that gave the house its 20th-century name, "Oaklea."

The house's significance in politics and government derives primarily from its original builder-owner, the Reverend Smith H. Griffin (1823-1911), but also from later owners. Griffin was an attorney, farmer and a Methodist minister who moved to Henry County from Spalding County in 1860 and began construction of the house just as the Civil War began. Originally, the house was part of a 1200-acre plantation. Griffin was active in local affairs, serving on the original town commission for Hampton and suggesting its name. He was one of the incorporators of the Bank of Hampton in 1902 and an officer of the bank. He lived here successively with three different wives. After his death, the house passed to a son, Judge Charles H. Griffin, an attorney. After returning home from Marietta, Georgia, he became judge of the county court. He was forced to sell the house in 1929 to Asa Candler, Jr. of Atlanta.

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

#### Historical Narrative

In 1845, three years after the Macon and Western Railroad was built through the western part of Henry County, Bear Creek Station erected its first building near the stream from which the village was named. However, in 1851 the buildings were moved 1/2 miles to the town of Hampton, the present site.

The first homesteads appeared in the late 1840s along the Towaliga River, southeast and east of Bear Creek Station. In 1860, the Rev. Smith Henry Griffin moved from Spalding County and settled on 1,200 acres, one-half mile east of Bear Creek on the Towaliga. Tradition has it that Rev. Griffin purchased the acreage with Confederate dollars delivered in two carpet bags.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approximately 4 acres

Quadrangle name Hampton, Ga

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A 

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

B 

Zone			Easting						Northing											

C 

Zone			Easting						Northing											

D 

Zone			Easting						Northing											

E 

Zone			Easting						Northing											

F 

Zone			Easting						Northing											

G 

Zone			Easting						Northing											

H 

Zone			Easting						Northing											

**Verbal boundary description and justification** The nominated property is a portion of the farm containing the house and its oak grove. No other historic structures or landscape features remain. It is marked on the enclosed sketch map.

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., Historian

Historic Preservation Section

organization Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources date November 6, 1985

street & number 270 Washington St. telephone 404-656-2840

city or town Atlanta, state GA 30334

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Elizabeth A. Lyon  
Elizabeth A. Lyon

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer date 11-18-85

### For NPS use only

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

J. Allore Byers Entered in the National Register date 12-19-85  
Keeper of the National Register

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

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
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Continuation sheet                      Significance                      Item number                      8                      Page                      2

Rev. Smith H. Griffin (1823-1911) received his degree in the classical courses from Bowdoin College in Maine. He read law and was admitted to practice although he never actually practiced law. Due to his mother's request for him to enter the ministry, Smith became a minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church South. He ministered locally without pay but was noted as a revivalist around the state.

After purchasing the land in late 1860, construction began on this house the same year. Due to the outbreak of the Civil War, however; the house was not completed until after the war. The family was able to occupy the house in 1864.

It is said that Henry Chinn, a local brick mason, was the builder of the house. The bricks for the house were kilned on the plantation. There are said to be ruins of a brick mill some distance away from the house that was burned by Union soldiers in 1864. Mr. Chinn built several other homes in the Hampton area and possibly could have built the present depot in the town. Slave labor built the house but the doors, windows, mantels, balcony, columns and other similar details were factory-made and installed by carpenters.

Traditional stories indicate that the house was spared destruction during the Union Army's movements in the area because the lieutenant in charge was a Mason and saw the Masonic emblem on the attic vents. Once he saw the Masonic star, he ordered his men not to burn the house. Rev. Griffin proceeded to give the lieutenant the Masonic handshake and later they shared wine together. Unfortunately, when the Union troops departed the area, they burned the grist mill and cotton gin located on the plantation in addition to the previously mentioned brick mill.

When Bear Creek was incorporated on August 23, 1872, Rev. Griffin was selected as one of the original town commissioners until official elections could be held. In 1873, Rev. Griffin suggested a new name be given to the town. The mayor at the time, Thomas Barnett, recommended the name Hampton after General Wade Hampton, a noted Confederate hero from South Carolina.

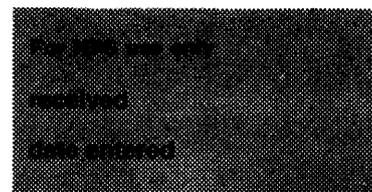
Smith Griffin was one of the incorporators of the Bank of Hampton which opened for business October 1, 1902. Rev. Griffin was also one of the first officers of the bank, holding the position of vice-president.

Smith Griffin was married three times. Martha Shell (1821-1867) was Rev. Griffin's first wife. Miss Shell was from Fayette County, and she and Smith were married February 29, 1844. Lydia Miranda Gardner (1845-1886) became Rev. Griffin's second wife on December 24, 1867. Rev. Griffin married Mrs. Mary E. (Sherman) Wood (1842-1914) on January 16, 1887.

On June 11, 1911, Rev. Smith H. Griffin died. The house then became the home of Charles Hillery Griffin, born in 1870, son of Smith Griffin and his second wife, Miranda.

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Charles was educated in Henry County and, due to poor eyesight, became a clerk in Roswell, Georgia, north of Atlanta. Later he was able to read law and began to practice in 1895 in Marietta, near Roswell. He served as assistant Solicitor General for the Blue Ridge Circuit of the Superior Court in the area surrounding Marietta and Cobb County. From 1905 to 1906 he served as a member of the Georgia House of Representatives.

After his father's death, he returned to Henry County and became the judge of the County Court. By 1919, while he was owner of the house, a new central portico with flanking porches was added to the house.

Due to financial losses in the Crash of 1929, Charles Griffin was forced to sell this house, then known as "Oaklea." In late 1929, it was purchased by Asa Candler, Jr., of DeKalb County. He was a son of the Coca-Cola magnate of the same name. In early 1930, Charles H. Black of Fulton County purchased it from Candler. Mr. Black was a real estate developer who was responsible for much of the development in the West Paces Ferry Area of Atlanta including Tuxedo Park and Blackland Road, named for him.

In November of 1936, Mimie Allison Fears (Mrs. Grady Fears), purchased the land from Mr. Black. During the ownership of the Grady Fears' family, the house became known as the "Fears Farm" and a horse track was built in front of the oak trees. This race track was for pleasure and entertainment for family and friends.

Mr. Fears modernized the house by bringing running water into the structure. By using a ram system, the water was pumped from the creek into a holding tank approximately 15 feet high, and by using the gravity flow, running water could reach the upstairs bathroom that had been installed. This system was replaced when electricity was installed in the house in April of 1945.

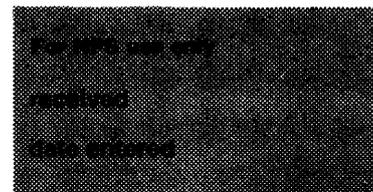
Basically, Mr. Fears was a farmer; however, in 1947 he was appointed Henry County Tax Assessor for one six-year term.

Upon Fears' death on December 1, 1961, his second wife Julia became owner.

On January 8, 1981, Jack Fears, Grady and Julia Fears' son, became the owner. He in turn sold the house on January 9, 1981 to the present owner, James L. Henderson, Jr. of Hampton.

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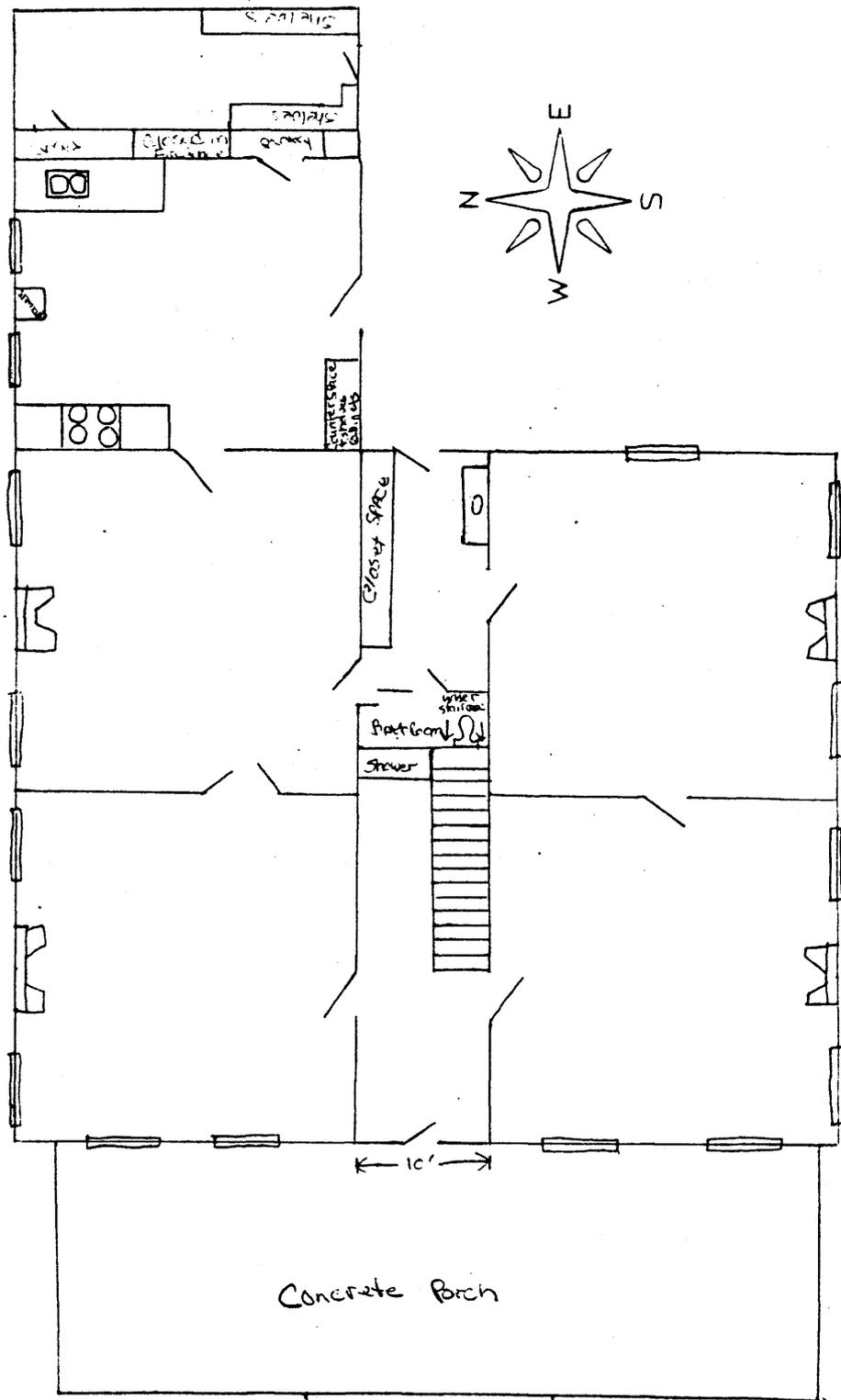
Continuation sheet    Bibliographical    Item number    9    Page    2

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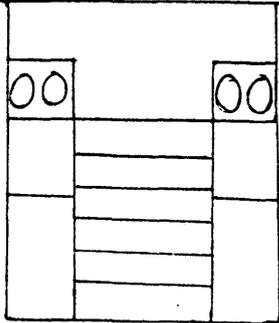
Prosser, Susan S. "Smith Griffin Home." Historic Property Information Form, December 15, 1981. On file at the Historic Preservation Section, Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.

Knight, Lucian L., ed. A Standard History of Georgia and Georgians Chicago and New York: Lewis Publishing Company, 1917. A sketch of Charles H. Griffin appears in volume five.

Back



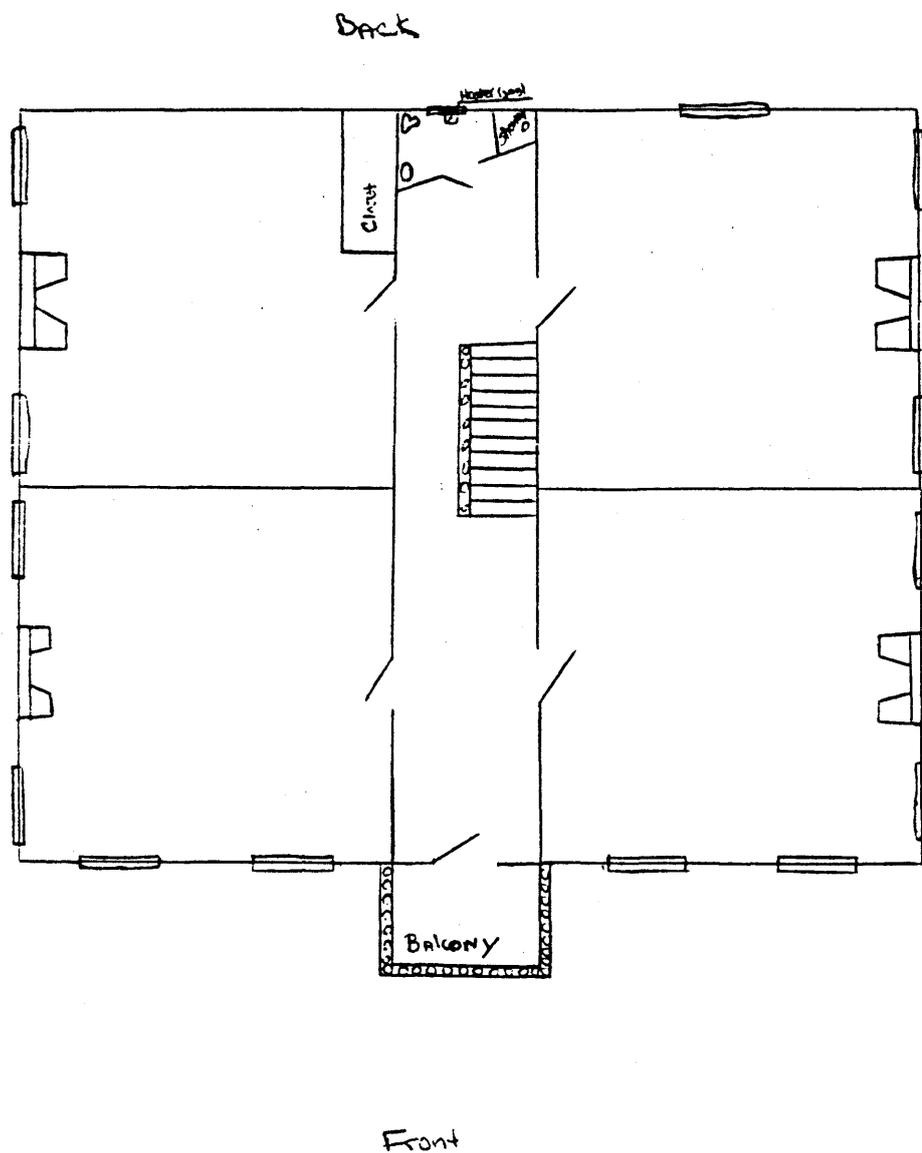
Rooms are  
16' square.  
Ceilings are  
11' high.



SMITH GRIFFIN HOUSE  
near Hampton, Henry County, Georgia

Floor Plan

Scale: Not to scale  
Source: unknown  
Date: 1982  
Key: First Floor plan.



SMITH GRIFFIN HOUSE  
 near Hampton, Henry County, Georgia

Floor Plan

Scale: Not to scale

Source: unknown

Date: 1982

Key: Second Floor plan.

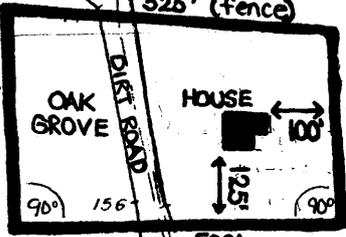
FEARS FARM

234 J.L. Henderson

233

COUNTY ROAD

TRACT "A"  
2.50 AC.



TRACT "B"  
18.51 AC.

SMITH GRIFFIN HOUSE  
near Hampton, Henry County, Georgia

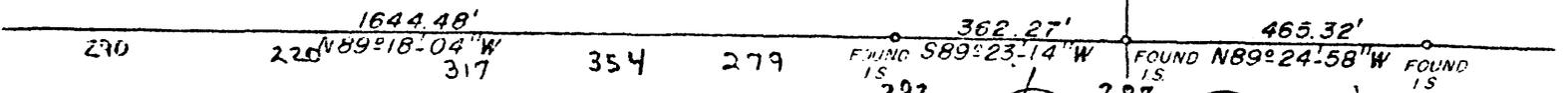
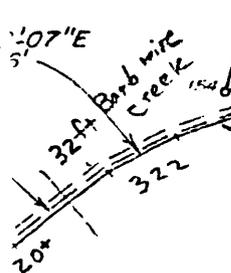
Sketch Map

North: ↑

Boundary of Nominated Property = Heavy Black Line.

Scale: 1" = 300'.

FEARS FARM



MRS. BEN SIMS

A. L. TURNIPSEED

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234

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247