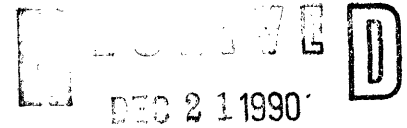


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

**NATIONAL
REGISTER**

This form is for use in documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Type all entries.

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

B. Associated Historic Contexts

Early Settlement (1740s-Early 1800s)
The Plantation Era (1800s-1865)

Post-Bellum and Late 19th- to Early 20th-Century Agriculture (1865-1939)
New South Industrialism (1880-1917)

Post-World War One Prosperity (1918-1929 and the Great Depression (1929-1939)

C. Geographical Data

Boundaries of Mecklenburg County outside the city limits of Charlotte, NC

See continuation sheet

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Planning and Evaluation.

William S. Price, Jr.
Signature of certifying official

12.14.90
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

I, hereby, certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Amy Federman
Signature of the Keeper of the National Register

1/31/91
Date

E. Statement of Historic Contexts

Discuss each historic context listed in Section B.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet Historic and Archtiectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number E Page 2

II. Early Settlement (1740s- Early 1800s)

Mecklenburg county is strategically located in the center of the Piedmont region of North Carolina, with South Carolina bordering it on the south, and the Catawba River on the west. It was originally inhabited by Catawba Indians of the Siouan nation, who were visited by Spanish explorers in the 1560s, and, after the settlement of Virginia, traded with colonists who came to trade English goods for skins and furs.²

It wasn't until the 1740s, however, that migration to the state, which started on the eastern coast, finally reached this part of the western backcountry. Most settlers came in from the north down the Great Philadelphia Wagon Road from central Pennsylvania, or up from the port of Charleston.³ They were primarily "Scotch-Irish," a term that means Presbyterian Scots who settled in Ulster (present-day Northern Ireland) in the early 1600s at the invitation of James I to offset rebellious Irish Catholics in the area. After about twenty years, however, the Scots found themselves confronted with economic, religious and political problems, and many began to emigrate to America. Originally they settled in Eastern Pennsylvania, Virginia, or Maryland, and, in the middle 1700s, began to move further south along with new arrivals.⁴ English, Palatinate Protestant German and French Huguenot emigreès also found their way to the Piedmont Carolinas.⁵

Tradition has it that the first settler to cross "on wheels" into what became Mecklenburg county was Thomas Spratt and his family, closely followed by young Thomas Polk, who married the Spratt daughter, Susannah. They came about 1748.⁶ The first settlements were along the Rocky River and its tributaries, with the first land grant dating 1749, and from 1750 to 1758, hundreds more were issued. In 1775, a missionary visit by a Rev. Hugh McAden in the Mecklenburg area found Scotch-Irish at Rocky River (in the northeast part of the county), Sugar Creek (just east of Charlotte), in the Waxhaws (to the south in present Union County), and what is now the Broad River in South Carolina.⁷

At first, migration into Mecklenburg was slow, but after a final campaign that permanently crushed the ability of the Cherokees to wage war against the whites in 1761 and the conclusion of the French and Indian War in 1763, settlers began to arrive in large numbers.⁸

In 1751, George Augustus Selwyn (1719-1791) inherited a 100,000-acre tract between Rocky River and the Catawba River from his father, Col.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places****Continuation Sheet** Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number E Page 3

John Selwyn, Esq., to whom it had been granted by King George II in 1745 for services rendered the crown. The grant was one of eight such tracts granted by the king in North Carolina, and Selwyn's was known as Tract Number 3. After the younger Selwyn succeeded to the family estates and seat in Parliament in 1751, he appointed Henry McCulloh of England, Henry Eustace McCulloh of North Carolina, and later, John Frohock of Rowan County, N.C., as agents and attorneys for his North Carolina lands. The latter began to sell plantations along the creeks which usually varied in size from about 200 to 500 acres.⁹

Mecklenburg was set off as a separate county On December 11, 1762, by drawing a western boundary of Anson County, and in 1769, the Catawba River was designated as Mecklenburg's western border. In 1842, it attained its present size when Union County to the southeast was formed from parts of Mecklenburg and Anson Counties. The county was named in honor of the birthplace of Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz in Germany, the Queen of England, who married George III in 1761. Selwyn, through his agent H. E. McCulloh, donated 360 acres to establish a town in the county in 1765, which was named Charlotte in honor of the new queen. The town was incorporated in 1768, and permanently designated as the county seat in 1774.¹⁰

Because of the abundance of good pine and other timber, the early houses were almost all of log construction. As the settlers prospered and their families grew, the early small log houses were enlarged, often with a second story, and then at some point weatherboarded. Brick for chimneys could be made from the excellent clay to be found in many parts of the county, which were fired in a simple kiln. Only three stone houses are known to have been built in Mecklenburg: the Ezekial Wallace House (late 1700s), the Hezekiah Alexander House (1774) and the Robinson Rock House (c. 1770).

Until the widespread growing of cotton after the turn of the century, subsistence agriculture was the norm. Early on, they traded produce from their livestock, principally tallow, cheese, butter and hides, for salt, iron and household goods from Charleston. As they also began to raise fruit and grain, they made whiskey and brandy for trade. A typical farmer would have fifty head of cattle, several horses, twenty hogs, and a few sheep and geese. They raised hay, oats, wheat and barley.¹¹

In response to growing needs, blacksmith shops, carpenter shops, grist mills, tanneries, and eventually country stores were established in Charlotte,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North Carolina

Section number E Page 4

and the Paw Creek, Hopewell, Steele Creek, Providence, Sugar Creek and Rocky River and other communities.¹²

Churches

The early Scotch-Irish pioneers brought with them their strong Presbyterian beliefs, and set about establishing churches. As early as 1755, the Rocky River and Sugar Creek communities requested a preacher, but the first to come was Rev. Alexander Criaghead, in 1759. By 1770, there were the majority Presbyterians, Lutherans, German Calvinists, and a few Baptists. The Presbyterian Churches of Sugar (Sugaw) Creek (c. 1755), Rocky River (c. 1755), Steele Creek (c. 1760), Hopewell (c.1762), Poplar Tent (c.1764), Centre [now in Iredell County] (c.1765), and Providence (c.1767, on the National Register)-the "ante-Revolutionary Pleiades," or seven sisters-were the first churches in the county, and formed the backbone of those communities.¹³

The Lutherans were the second oldest denomination in the county, when they organized the Morning Star Lutheran Church near Matthews in 1775. Pioneer Methodists first settled near Pineville, and by 1785 had formed a small congregation that met in the open air. The Harrison Methodist Church was first of that denomination in the county, and was built between 1805 and 1815. The second oldest Methodist church is Trinity, on Beatties' Ford Road (date unknown), and the first one in Charlotte dates from 1834.¹⁴ The Baptists first built a church in Charlotte in 1833, the Episcopalians in 1834 and Roman Catholics in 1851. Another pioneer denomination is the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, which established the Gilead (1787), Sardis (1790), Steele Creek (1794) and Back Creek (1802) congregations.¹⁵

III. The Plantation Era (Early 1800s-1865)

Agriculture: A Brief Overview

Agriculture in the ante-bellum nineteenth-century was characterized by considerable diversification of crops and livestock. By far the largest staple crop was corn and the most prevalent livestock was swine, followed by sheep, cattle, horses and dairy cows, in that order (see chart and table for 1860). While cotton production was on the rise, it did not supplant the other grain crops, particularly corn. In their seminal work on North Carolina's history, Hugh Lefler and Albert Newsome summarize statewide crop production in the ante-bellum nineteenth century:

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number E Page 5

Cotton production rose from 34,617 five-hundred-pound bales in 1840 to 73,845 in 1850, and to 145,514 bales in 1860. Its production was concentrated chiefly in the block of eastern counties bounded by the towns of Halifax, Goldsboro, and Washington and in the southern counties near the South Carolina line extending from Robeson to Mecklenburg. [In the 1850s], corn production experienced only a slight increase from 27,500,000 bushels to 30,000,000. Oats, rye, barley, buckwheat, peas and beans, Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, hemp, flax, hops, hay, orchard fruits, and vegetables were produced in sizable quantities and indicated a considerable diversification in crops.

Corn production did not increase at such a rapid rate as the other cereals or as cotton and tobacco, but it was nevertheless the state's largest, most widely grown, and most useful crop. The 1859 crop of over 300,000,000 bushels was produced in eighty-four of the state's eighty-six counties . . . Corn constituted an important part of the diet of the people in the form of hominy, hoecakes, grits, corn pone, and mush - not to mention "roasting ears." For the slaves, it was the most important single item of diet. Horses, mules, cattle, swine, and poultry consumed a large part of the corn. Some farmers cut the "green corn" for their livestock, but most of them used the matured grain, tops, fodder, and shucks in feeding. No other crop had such a wide variety of uses. Corn whiskey was in important item of consumption and trade.¹⁶

The Rise of King Cotton and Slavery

Prior to the invention of the cotton gin in the late 1700s, ownership of slaves was not widespread in Mecklenburg County, since they were expensive and only affordable for the largest and most wealthy landowners. Just prior to 1800, the most prominent slaveholders were T. Hood, John Ford and James Walkup, who, respectively, owned eight, nine and twelve slaves.¹⁷ Most small to moderate yeoman farmers owned no slaves at all. In 1800, the census figures show that the county had a population of 10,439.

After the Revolutionary War, cotton cultivation in the county slowly increased, but after the introduction of the cotton gin, which made removal of the seeds immensely easier, cotton production soared, as did the demand for slave labor. Mecklenburg County led the state in the tax it paid for use of the gin patents in the early 1800s. By about 1830, the intense cultivation of cotton reached its limits, both in cultivatable land and the fertility of the soil,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North Carolina

Section number E Page 6

so that expansion was no longer possible. This resulted in many descendents of the pioneers emigrating to new lands in the West.¹⁸

The prosperity that the increased cotton cultivation brought was reflected in the rise in ownership of slaves and the building of fine plantation houses. In 1850, there were seventeen planters (those who owned over 30 slaves, thus requiring an overseer) in the county, and by 1860, there were thirty. They included the Alexander, Ardrey, Bell, Caldwell, Davidson [3], Davis, Grier [4], Johnson [2], Kirkpatrick, Lawing, Mills, Morris, Morrow, Patterson, Parks, Potts [2], Torrance, Walker, Wallace [2] and White families. (The numbers in brackets are the number of families of the same name.)¹⁹

Another stimulus to the boom in cotton was the building of the area's first railroad (the Charlotte and South Carolina Railroad) in 1852, which linked Charlotte to Columbia, S.C., thus gaining easier access to the port of Charleston. This helped turn Charlotte into a major cotton brokerage center for the county and surrounding area.²⁰ (See "Railroads" section below.)

Most plantations were modest in size, and had little correlation to the number of slaves working the land. This was because by 1860, many of the original plantations had been divided and subdivided among descending generations. Kitchens were always detached from the main house, and there were other essential outbuildings: smokehouses, well houses, carriage houses, plantation offices, barns, and sometimes blacksmith shops and carpentry shops, as well as slave quarters. In addition to working the land, slaves in this era were often taught specialized trade skills as well, and thus helped build and staff various buildings.²¹

During the ante-bellum period, the community churches also began to reflect increased prosperity. The original small, wood churches were usually demolished and replaced by larger, frequently brick ones. They also grew in number as well as size.

Population figures of the ante-bellum period fluctuated, partly because of erratic census-taking, and partly because of the continually changing character of the area. In 1790, the population was 11,395; in 1800, it dropped to 10,439; in 1810, it went up to 14,272; and in 1820, to 16,895; and in 1830, to 20,073. But by 1840, it had dropped again to 18,273, and still further by 1850 to 13,914. By 1860, it was back up to 17,374 (excluding Charlotte, which had 2,265 residents).²² One reason for the drop in the middle of this period was due to Union County being formed from part

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number E Page 7

of Mecklenburg and Anson Counties in 1842. Another was the fact that from 1835 to 1850, there were a large number of people who emigrated West.²³

Mecklenburg soldiers began drilling early in 1861, and on April 12, the Charlotte mint was seized and occupied by the local militia. North Carolina formally seceded on May 20, 1861. Two of the first companies of local militia to be placed in the service were the Charlotte Grays, (Company C) and the Hornet's Nest Rifles (Company B) of the First North Carolina Volunteers, which left the city on April 16th. During the war, Mecklenburg furnished twenty-one companies amounting to 2,713 soldiers, which does not count those who served in other commands. They ranged from plantation owners to ordinary farmhands, and, considering the population figures of 1860, this must have been a very high percentage of the able-bodied men of the county. Many of them fell or were wounded in battle. The last meeting of the Confederate cabinet was held in Charlotte, during their stay of April 15-20, 1865, when Jefferson Davis first heard of Lincoln's assassination.²⁴

Industry: Gold Mining

There was another industry besides farming that sprang up during this era, which had only modest impact on the local economy, has almost no surviving built structures, but may still be seen as a feature of the terrain: the discovery and mining of gold. In 1802, John Reed, of Cabarrus County, sold a yellow rock that had been used as a doorstep for the previous three years after its discovery by his son, to a jeweler in Fayetteville for \$3.50. Once Reed and others realized there was gold on his place, the search for more was on in the Piedmont in an area from Guilford in the north to York County in South Carolina.²⁵

From 1804 to 1828, all the gold coined from the United States came from North Carolina. In Mecklenburg County, a number of mines were opened in and around Charlotte, which included the St. Catherine, Rudisill, and Capps Mines. In 1835, Congress authorized the establishment of a mint in Charlotte, and the first coin was struck there in 1838, which made it the first operating branch of the U.S. Mint. The mint was closed by Confederate troops in 1861, and never struck coins again. It was reopened in 1869 as an assay office. The only shaft mine to survive the war was the Rudisill in Charlotte, and there are virtually no known above-ground gold mining structures extant.²⁶

Evidence of placer mining on Mecklenburg hillsides, however, is still quite clear. Some washed areas are quite large, such as those in Reedy Creek

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North Carolina

Section number E Page 8

Park and Boyce Park, but many appear as a series of washed pits along a hillside. Placer mining in the county, as well as a revival of mining in the Rudisill, was revived in the 1930s.²⁷

Education

Ante-bellum education was principally carried out by private schools, usually attached to one of the community churches. There was, for example, the Rocky River Academy (1812), the New Providence Academy (1811), one at Sugar Creek, and Sharon Female Academy, attached to the Sharon Presbyterian Church. There were also private academies at Paw Creek, Mallard Creek, Hopewell and Steele Creek. In 1837, the state received money from the federal government from the sale of public lands to establish a public school fund, and in 1839, all counties were divided into six-mile-square school districts. The state money was augmented by a local tax whereby the county court was authorized to levy a tax on any district with as many as fifty school children sufficient to build a schoolhouse.²⁸

Some districts chose to build the houses themselves rather than pay the tax, so rough log structures were built for the purpose, but some were more finished frame buildings. Private academies, including a military one, continued to operate, and new ones were opened. The first permanent institution of higher learning in the county was Davidson College (named after Revolutionary War hero General William Davidson, who fell at the battle of Cowan's Ford in 1781), which was associated with the Presbyterian Church, and opened in 1837.²⁹

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North Carolina

Section number E Page 9

IV. Post-Bellum and Late 19th- to Early 20th-Century Agriculture (1865-1939)

Mecklenburg County was largely rural well into the twentieth century, and was dotted primarily with small farms rather than large plantations. The average farm size after the Civil War was approximately 100 acres. The total number of farms in the county peaked at 4,344 in 1920, and in 1982 had shrunk to 429. Production was mainly grain and cotton, with livestock being an important, but secondary activity. In the nineteenth century, work animals, horses, mules and asses (and some oxen) outnumbered income-producing animals. However, Mecklenburg farmers did raise dairy cattle, sheep, swine and poultry. Poultry and eggs showed an uninterrupted increase through 1940. Corn clearly dominated the cereal crops, with wheat and oats next, and barley and rye being raised to a lesser extent. The production of wool declined as the cultivation of cotton in the area increased near the turn of the century.³⁰ (See Tables 1 and 2, Charts 3 and 4.)

Dr. John Brevard Alexander wrote that cotton was a tricky crop to grow because local farmers did not know how to care for it properly. It was not until the advent of the use of guano, first on wheat and other cereals, then on cotton, that the crop performed well in this area.³¹ He also reported that after the fertilizing wonders of Peruvian guano were discovered, the other crops were left to fend for themselves, "and all nursing was given over to the great Southern plant."³² The agricultural schedule for 1860 shows that 6,112 bales of cotton were ginned in the county, and by 1880 had more than trebled to 19,129 bales. In 1900, the number increased to 24,248, and production peaked in 1910 at 27,466.³³ (See Table 1 and Chart 2.) There appear to be several reasons for the decline of cotton after 1910: After that time there was a decreasing number of acres devoted to its cultivation, indeed to farming in general (see Section VI below), and about 1920, the dreaded boll weevil arrived. The onset of the Great Depression sent production into a nosedive from which it never recovered.³⁴ (See Table 1 and Charts 1 and 2.)

Cotton was the main cash crop for farmers in the county who grew it. In 1868, a bale sold for 27 cents a pound, and a year later was up to 35 cents per pound, which was a high price.³⁵ By 1875 cotton production in the state averaged 170 pounds per acre, and by 1922 had risen to 252 pounds per acre. In 1875, the price was 9.5 cents per pound and in 1922 had climbed to 19.25 cents per pound. In 1924, Mecklenburg County averaged

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North Carolina

Section number E Page 10

179 bales per acre. In that same year, 50,131 acres were devoted to cotton, and 34,155 to corn, the main cereal crop.³⁶

In 1902, D. A. Tompkins had these observations about the prosperity of farming in the county:

It is noticeable that as Mecklenburg has grown richer and more populous, the farms have increased in number and decreased in size. The average number of acres in a farm in the county is seventy-five. There is only one which contains more than a thousand acres. There are 227,995 acres of land and the 4,190 farms are occupied by 1,226 owners, 290 part owners, 22 owners and tenants, 55 managers, 631 cash paying tenants and 1,966 share tenants. Sixty percent of the farms are occupied by white people, and 40 percent by colored people.³⁷

Statistics that were kept in 1910 and 1920 indicate that most of the farms in the county were operated by tenants rather than by owners. The 1910-1940 agricultural schedules also show that share-cropping was the dominant form of tenancy.³⁸ Although the majority of farmers were native-born whites during this period, the censuses for 1910 and 1920 show that one-third of the farmers were native-born Blacks. The number of foreign-born farmers by that time was miniscule (8 in 1910 and 7 in 1920).³⁹ In the early twentieth century, approximately fifty-five percent of the native white farm population owned their farms, while about ten percent of the native black population owned theirs.⁴⁰

During the second half of the nineteenth century, everyday life on the farm involved hard work and few luxuries. Mecklenburg County was dependent on neighboring counties for most manufactured goods. For example, most cooking utensils came from Lincoln County. According to the 1860 manufacturing schedules, Mecklenburg County was lacking in iron furnaces and forges, while Lincoln County had a number of them. Meals were cooked in the kitchen fireplace, frequently with hot coals placed on the lid of the container as well as underneath. A meal that John Brevard Alexander describes consisted of coffee, fried chicken, biscuits, sweet potatoes, hog jaw, turnip greens, and o'possum. The wealthy drank peach brandy and cherry bounce, while others made do with corn whiskey, a "fashionable" drink that was a bargain at 10¢ a quart or 30¢ a gallon.⁴¹

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Section number E Page 11

Even though a number of small farmers left the land to work in the textile mills that were built in and around Charlotte from the 1880s to the 1910s, it did not result in a decline in the number of farms in the county, which did not occur until about 1920, and was accelerated by the onset of the Great Depression of the 1930s.⁴² Even in 1940, however, agricultural interests still held a slight edge over manufacturing within the City of Charlotte and the surrounding county.⁴³

Reconstruction (1865-Late 1870s)

Mecklenburg County was fortunate enough to avoid the worst problems of Reconstruction, and, in fact, grew much more in the years following the war than before, when growth was slow and wealth was held by very few. Charlotte was occupied by Union troops in 1865, but relations with the local citizens were harmonious, and the last of them departed in the spring of 1872. The county had been fortunate in that it had neither been the scene of any military action nor suffered the ravages of Sherman's Army.⁴⁴

A contributing factor for the county's growth after the war was the fact that Mecklenburg's relative prosperity and good transportation drew many people, of high rank and low, to move to the county. Three ex-generals (D. H. Hill, Rufus Barringer and R.D. Johnston), ex-governor Vance and assorted colonels, majors, captains and lieutenants all made their home in Charlotte after the war and helped rebuild the local economy.⁴⁵

By June, 1866, there were sixty-six stores in the county (including Charlotte), but in the first six months of the following year, twelve stores and seventy-five other buildings were put up in Charlotte. Unlike many other places in the South where the banks were ruined because of the repudiation of the Confederate debt, Charlotte had three banks: First National, Dewey's Bank and the Bank of Charlotte. In 1871, they were joined by the Merchant's and Farmer's Bank.⁴⁶ The Mecklenburg Iron Works was the main industrial activity. During the Civil War, the works had been used as the Confederate Naval Yard, which had been moved to Charlotte for security reasons.

Even more than before the war, cotton was a great source of income, with prices rising rapidly because of built-up demand due to the war. In 1868, the Charlotte cotton brokers handled nearly two million dollar's worth of cotton at 27 cents a pound. By 1870, the county voted \$200,000 in bonds

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North Carolina

Section number E Page 12

to rebuild the Atlanta railroad (the Atlanta, & Charlotte Air Line Railway), and \$100,000 to rebuild the Statesville line (grandly called the Atlantic, Tennessee and Ohio). All the railroads had been torn up for war materiel and the rolling stock commandeered or dismantled. These lines were reopened in 1874, as well as the Carolina Central Railway between Wilmington and Charlotte.⁴⁷ (See "Railroads" section below.)

Because money was initially scarce after the war, many former slaves became tenant farmers on the same lands they used to work, and traded part of the crop for their labor. Many other former slaves as well as white farmhands migrated into the towns to try to find work in the new stores and budding industries. As noted by industrialist D. A. Tompkins, "During the last thirty-five years of slavery, the county and city made no appreciable advance in wealth and population. During the first decade after emancipation, both wealth and population doubled in the county and trebled in the city."⁴⁸ All this set the stage for entrepreneurs such as Tompkins to take advantage of the opportunities he saw in the South for industrialization.

V. New South Industrialization (1880-1917)

Railroads

Railroads played a vital role in the economic development of the county which resulted in its becoming the most populous and prosperous in the state by 1930.

The origin of railroads for Mecklenburg County began in 1825, which is the first recorded date that the citizens of the area lobbied the state government for improved transportation. The first railroad to the county, however, was the Charlotte and South Carolina Railroad, which began operations in October, 1852 carrying freight. Arriving from Columbia on October 21st of that year, the first CSCRR passenger train pulled into Charlotte and was a cause of great celebration.⁴⁹ Twenty thousand people are estimated to have gathered at the station to witness the arrival of the train. There were speeches and a barbecue on the grounds of the Charlotte Female Institute, as well as a dance and fireworks display.⁵⁰ The Charlotte and South Carolina Railroad was taken over by the Richmond and Danville Railroad in 1878.⁵¹

The second railroad to reach Charlotte was the North Carolina Railroad, which ran from Goldsboro to Charlotte, via Raleigh, Greensboro, and

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North Carolina

Section number E Page 13

Salisbury. It didn't begin operations until 1854, even though it had been created 1849, when the North Carolina Railroad Company was chartered by the legislature with a capital stock of three million dollars, which was to be provided by state support (2/3) and by private investors (1/3). The first run was from Concord and Charlotte in September, 1854, and the entire length was not completed until January 1856. In 1871, the Richmond and Danville leased the line (although it was not rebuilt to Charlotte until 1874), and in 1894, the Richmond and Danville was merged into the Southern Railway System.⁵²

Two additional lines were opened from Charlotte prior to the Civil War. In 1860, a road with the ambitious name of the Atlantic, Tennessee and Ohio started service, but it only ran north to Statesville, N.C. Known locally as the "Statesville Line," it was dismantled for war materiel by 1864, and wasn't completely rebuilt until 1874. The other ante-bellum line was the Carolina Central Railway, which was to have run between Charlotte and Wilmington. The first leg between Charlotte and Lincolnton was put into operation in April, 1861, but did not run again because of the war until the line was rebuilt in 1874. The Carolina Central became part of the Seaboard Air Line Railroad (now CSX Transportation) in 1900. In 1870, the county passed bonds to build the Atlanta and Charlotte Airline Railway and to rebuild the AT&O. The Atlanta and Charlotte Air Line Railway, the AT&O, and Richmond and Danville were all absorbed into the Southern Railway System in 1894.⁵³

Two other rail lines that eventually served Charlotte and Mecklenburg County were constructed in the early twentieth century. The first was an all-electric line, the Piedmont & Northern Railway. It was organized in 1911 as an interurban electric line to serve the Piedmont Carolinas by James B. Duke and his associates. At its height, it had two separate lines: one connected Charlotte and Gastonia, with stops in between, and one in South Carolina that connected Spartanburg, Greenville, Anderson and Greenwood. Plans to unite the two and continue the line to other cities ran into heavy opposition from competitors, and the line was never completed. In the 1950s, the line converted into diesel engines, and in 1968 merged with the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad.⁵⁴ The second addition to Charlotte rail service was the extension of the Norfolk & Southern tracks in 1913, which connected the city to Norfolk, and thus to all the industrial markets of the Northeast.⁵⁵

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North Carolina

Section number E Page 14

These excellent rail connections made a great deal of difference in the growth of prosperity in the county. Having access to regional, national and world markets through connections to the Piedmont Carolinas, the seaports of Wilmington and Charleston and manufacturing and consumer markets in the Northeast meant that there was continual agricultural growth from Reconstruction times well into the twentieth century. The railroads also contributed greatly to Charlotte's becoming the largest city in the Carolinas by 1930 by turning it into a regional banking, brokerage, distribution and manufacturing center. It was along the railroads that several of the small county towns were established (Matthews, Pineville, Huntersville, Cornelius and Davidson; Atherton, Hoskins, North Charlotte and others were later incorporated into the city of Charlotte), and where all the cotton mills were located.

Industry

Although there were a number of small industrial works in Charlotte such as the Iron Works, a farm implements factory, a marble works and a distillery,⁵⁶ there were no large industries in the city or county in the 1870s. That began to change rapidly in the 1880s, however, when the process began that transformed Mecklenburg County into the second-largest cotton mill production center in the state (neighboring Gaston County was first), and Charlotte from a cotton trading center into the leading cotton mill machinery, banking and distribution center in the state.

Charlotte's first cotton mill was the Charlotte Cotton Mills, which started up in 1881 under the direction of R. M. Oates, a cotton broker.⁵⁷ A year later, Daniel Augustus Tompkins (1852-1914), a South Carolina native who was educated and trained in manufacturing in the North, came to Charlotte as a representative of the Westinghouse Company. He quickly became aware of the potential for building cotton mills in the area, and so in 1884 he set up his own design, contracting and machine shop business, the D. A. Tompkins Co. Tompkins became a tireless advocate of New South industrialization, and was a key figure in developing the potential of the Piedmont Carolinas. Over a thirty-two year period, Tompkins built over one hundred cotton mills, fertilizer works, electric light plants and ginneries. He also changed the region's cotton oil from a waste product into a major industry though the building of about two hundred processing plants and organizing one of his own, the Southern Cotton Oil Company.⁵⁸

Tompkins' efforts began to appear in rapid succession in Charlotte, when his company built the Alpha, Ada and Victor mills in 1889, the city's

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North Carolina

Section number E Page 15

second, third and fourth mills, and in 1893, he built his own demonstration mill, The Atherton, which was the sixth mill in the county.⁵⁹ Mills continued to be built in the county in rapid succession. In and around Charlotte, the Highland Park #1 (1892); Louise (1897); Magnolia (c.1899); Chadwick (1901); Elizabeth (1901); Hoskins (1904); Highland Park #3 (1904) [designed by Stewart W. Cramer, who also designed many cotton mills in the Piedmont Carolinas and established the town of Cramerton; the Highland Park #3 was featured in Cramer's widely read book on mill construction]; Mecklenburg (1904); Savona (1908); and Johnston (1913) were added.⁶⁰

Establishment of Small Towns

In the outlying areas of the county a number of small towns were established along the railroads. Some became larger than others because cotton mills were built there, and some owed their existence to the establishment of a mill and its associated village for the workers. An example of the former is Davidson, where the Linden Manufacturing Co. was built in 1891. Davidson had been incorporated as a town in 1879, and had been previously known as the village of Davidson College.⁶¹ In Pineville, which was established as a railroad depot with a store in 1852 and incorporated in 1873, the Dover Yarn Mill opened in 1890.⁶² Mills were also built in Huntersville, which was incorporated in 1877 (the Anchor Mills, 1897) and two were established in Cornelius (Cornelius Cotton Mills, 1888; Gem Yarn Mills, 1906). There was also a mill in Paw Creek, the Thrift Mills (date unknown), and in 1920, another was added, the Leaksville Woolen Mills #2, commonly called the "Homestead" Mill.⁶³

Another Mecklenburg town, Matthews, was established in 1874 with the building of the Carolina Central Railroad, and named after a railroad official. It was incorporated in 1879, with a population of 200, and by 1960 still only had 609 inhabitants.⁶⁴ In 1900, Matthews had a population of 378; Davidson, 904; Huntersville, 533; Pineville, 585. Derita, Newell and Mint Hill were growing unincorporated towns.⁶⁵

An idea of the scope of the changes of this period may be shown by these figures: In 1873, there were but thirty-three cotton mills in the entire state; by 1902, within a radius of one hundred miles around Charlotte were 300 cotton mills, which comprised *one-half* the looms and spindles of the South.⁶⁶ By 1900, the county was the state's second-largest textile producer with sixteen mills which had in operation 94,392 spindles and 1,456 looms.⁶⁷ From 1870 to 1900, the city of Charlotte grew at the average rate of 24

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North Carolina

Section number E Page 16

percent *per year*, while the county grew at the average rate of 7 percent per year. (In 1870, the county had 24,299 residents and Charlotte 4,473; by 1900, these figures had jumped to 55,268 and 18,091.) During that time the average population growth for the state as a whole was 2.5 percent, and in an the United States 3 percent.⁶⁸

Thus Mecklenburg County's non-farm population outside of Charlotte came to be centered around a combination of manufacturing towns, railroad hamlets, and early settlement villages, while at the same time the county continued to be an important cotton-growing area. Farmers could take their cotton to many of the small towns and villages to get their cotton ginned, buy farm supplies, and trade at the mercantile store.

Except for a brief slowdown in the 1890s, Charlotte and Mecklenburg County's rapid growth and prosperity continued right on up until 1929. Even the pause in some parts of the economy because of America's involvement in World War I from 1917 to 1918 was far offset in the city and the county by the fact that a training camp for army recruits in this region was set up just northwest of Charlotte at what was known as Remount Station. At its peak in February, 1918, Camp Greene housed 41,000 soldiers, and provided much local employment in construction, trades and other services until its dismantling in 1919.⁶⁹

VI. Post World War One Prosperity (1918-1929) and the Great Depression (1929-1939)

The Teens and Twenties were a time of both maturation and continued exponential growth for Charlotte and the county. In the period 1911-1919, 1250 building permits were issued in the city; in the next eight years, the number jumped to 8259.⁷⁰ From 1910 to 1930, the population of the county nearly doubled, from 67,031 to 127,971, while that of Charlotte almost trebled from 34,014 to 82,675.⁷¹ By 1930, Charlotte had replaced Charleston as the largest city in the Carolinas.

Through the 1920s, the explosive prosperity contributed to the expansion and upgrading of rural residences, extensions of the towns and villages, and the building of new schools. Prior to the 1920s, there were few brick school buildings in the state. But during the Twenties, there was a great surge in modern school construction in North Carolina due to state appropriations for Special Building Funds in 1921, 1923, 1925 and 1927.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North Carolina

Section number E Page 17

Ninety-nine of the one hundred counties of the state borrowed money from the Funds to build 1,081 schools during that period.⁷²

Largely due to the Julius Rosenwald Fund, the 1920s surge in the building of schools also benefitted blacks. Rosenwald was the wealthy one-time head of Sears-Roebuck & Co. in Chicago, who set up a charitable fund in 1917 which began to focus primarily on school construction in the rural South. The philanthropist had met Booker T. Washington in 1911, served as a trustee to his Tuskegee Institute, and had provided matching funds for some eighty schools for blacks by 1915. Since it was Rosenwald's desire to break down black-white barriers, money for the schools would only be granted if 1) the state and county contributed to the building and agreed to maintain it as part of the public school system; 2) white citizens took an interest and contributed part of the money (often land was donated by a white citizen); and 3) blacks themselves contributed money, or labor, or both.⁷³

From 1918 to 1930, twenty-six Rosenwald Schools were built in Mecklenburg County. The rather high number may be due to the fact that the principal fundraiser for the schools statewide was Dr. George E. Davis, who had retired as Dean of the Faculty at Johnson C. Smith University (a college for blacks established in Charlotte after the Civil War), and whose wife, Marie G. Davis, was principal of a school in Charlotte. The schools were often built near a church and served as centers of small rural black settlements.⁷⁴

During the 1920s, Charlotte's booming prosperity (and other factors: see Section IV, Post-Bellum Agriculture, above) led to the decline of the number of farms (down 14%) and the amount of acres in farmland (down 14.6%).⁷⁵ The headlong rush to urbanization included building and paving roads and modernizing other parts of the infrastructure. Manufacturing concerns, including the cotton mills, were often incorporated into holding company chains with headquarters out of the county. It was clearly a time of transition from predominantly rural to a growing urban society.

This trend began about 1900, when the county was 32.7 percent urban and 62.3 percent rural. Ten years later, the urban population exceeded the rural, 50.7 percent to 49.3 percent; and by 1920, the county was 57.4 percent urban. Also by 1920, although the county ranked 24th in land area, it was first in the state in population, and it was in that year that farm production actually showed a decline (see Tables 1 and 2, and Charts 1 and 2).⁷⁶

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North Carolina

Section number E Page 18

The Great Depression (1929-1939)

The process of the decline of farming in the county was accelerated by the onset of the Great Depression. From 1930 to 1940, the number of farms dropped from 3,773 to 3,223 (14.6%). From its peak in 1910 at 4,339, by 1940 the number of farms in the county had gone down 27.4%, and the amount of acreage in farmland had decreased 23.2% (see tables and graphs).

For decades after the Civil War, farming in the South, particularly cotton cultivation, changed little. It was done primarily by small landholders and tenant farmers who may have used a few plows, a team of mules, a wagon, hoes, sacks for picking and scales to weigh up. But increasingly in the Teens and Twenties, changes were taking place over which farmers seemed to have no control:

The boll weevil [which arrived about 1920 in North Carolina] forced a more expensive planting and cultivation cycle; as the weevil move toward the east coast, cotton cultivation moved west to less infested areas, where farmers utilized modern machinery in areas free from the heritage of slavery and less rooted in the tradition of sharecropping.

Such changes rolled slowly over the South . . . The revolutionary changes in the southern cotton culture, however, appeared with the advent of the Depression and the inception of the New Deal. While the tobacco and rice cultures experienced little structural change in the 1930s - for quite different reasons - the old cotton culture caved in, crushed by the untimely confluence of government intrusion and mechanization.⁷⁷

In order to fight the boll weevil, the U. S. Department of Agriculture instituted the county agent concept in 1906: an agent, paid by county funds, would give farmers advice about the latest farming methods as seen by the USDA. In 1914, the Extension Service was created as a federal bureaucracy that was linked with land-grant colleges (who wanted to encourage scientific farming and mechanization) and large commercial farmers who controlled agents at the local level, and thus became an instrument for change in the rural South. Small farmers and tenants could not take advantage of many of the new methods, because they lacked both the education and access to credit needed to carry out the new programs. The old tenant system was

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places****Continuation Sheet** Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number E Page 19

thus quite weakened by the time New Deal programs of the Depression dealt the final blows to the old way of farming.

After his inauguration in 1933, President Roosevelt put in a number of emergency measures to fight the deepening Depression. Among others, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) fought unemployment; the Public Works Administration (PWA) awarded grants for community projects; the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) sent many young men to the countryside to do conservation work and build parks; and the Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA) set up programs to reduce crop acreage and livestock production and raise prices toward a parity goal. The latter programs resulted in the accelerated driving of small marginal farmers and sharecroppers from the land, and spelled the end of the traditional tenure system in the area.⁷⁸

One benefit for the county of the Works Progress Administration, a federal work program, was the building of agricultural buildings next to existing public schools for formal instruction in modern farming techniques. Three of these are known to still exist in Mecklenburg County: Long Creek, Huntersville and Matthews.⁷⁹

With the local, regional and world economies in a state of severe retrenchment, rural people trying to leave the farm and find work usually encountered problems in the cities and towns as well. The cotton mills, for example, often went bankrupt and were taken over by larger concerns, or worked sporadically under continued local ownership. Construction of new buildings virtually came to a halt, except for those built by government work programs. In the decade from 1930 to 1940, the population of the county increased 18.6% (the previous decade it had increased 58.6%), and the city of Charlotte increased 22% (in the 1920s it had gone up 78.4%)⁸⁰ The built environment of the county reflects the dearth of new construction except for school buildings during this period.

¹As of July 1, 1989; figures from the Charlotte Mecklenburg Planning Commission.

²LeGette Blythe and Charles R. Brockmann, Hornets' Nest: The Story of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County (Charlotte: Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, 1961), pp.

³J. W. Clay, et al. North Carolina Atlas (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1975), p. 16.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetHistoric and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number E Page 20

- 4 Norris Preyer, Hezekiah Alexander and the Revolution in the Backcountry (Charlotte: The author, 1987), 42ff.
- 5 North Carolina Atlas, pp. 16-17.
- 6 D. A. Tompkins, History of Mecklenburg County and the City of Charlotte 2 vols. (Charlotte: The author, 1903), I, p. 16; LeGette Blythe and Charles R. Brockmann, Hornet's Nest: The Story of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County (Charlotte: Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, 1961), pp 16-17
- 7 Tompkins, I, p. 16.
- 8 Tompkins, I, p. 13; Preyer, p. 42.
- 9 Dictionary of National Biography, XVII, p. 1169; William H. Huffman, "A Historical Report on Reedy Creek Park," City of Charlotte, 1981.
- 10 Blythe, 21-23.
- 11 Tompkins, I, p. 22.
- 12 Ibid., I, p. 23.
- 13 Louise Barber Matthews, A History of Providence Presbyterian Church (Charlotte: Providence Presbyterian Church, 1967), pp. 2-30; Sommerville, Charles William, The History of Hopewell Presbyterian Church (Charlotte: Hopewell Presbyterian Church, 1939; reprint, 1987), pp. 13, 28; Tompkins, I, 75-79; The History of Steele Creek Presbyterian Church 3rd edition. (Charlotte: Craftsman Printing and Publishing, 1978), p. 21; Blythe, pp. 194-5.
- 14 Blythe, pp. 202-203.
- 15 Ibid., pp. 200-210.
- 16 H. T. Lefler and A. R. Newsome, North Carolina: The History of a Southern State 3rd edition. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973), pp. 392-393.
- 17 Tompkins, I, p. 87.
- 18 Ibid., 97-100.
- 19 Chalmers Davidson, The Plantation World Around Davidson 2nd edition. (Davidson: Briarpatch Press, 1982), pp. 24-25.
- 20 Blythe, p. 260.
- 21 Ibid., p. 26.
- 22 Blythe, p. 449.
- 23 Tompkins, I, p. 117.
- 24 Ibid., I, pp. 138-142.
- 25 Bruce Roberts, America's First Gold Rush 2nd edition. (Charlotte: McNally and Loftin, 1972), pp. 5-8.
- 26 Ibid., pp. 11, 30-31.
- 27 Ibid., 67ff.
- 28 Tompkins, I, pp. 112-113.
- 29 Ibid., pp. 113-116.
- 30 U.S. Census, Agricultural Schedules for 1860-1940.
- 31 John Brevard Alexander, Reminiscences of the Past Sixty Years (Charlotte: Ray Printing, 1908), p. 211.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places****Continuation Sheet** Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number E Page 21

- 32Ibid., p. 264.
- 33Agricultural Schedules, 1860-1940.
- 34Edgar T. Thompson, Agricultural Mecklenburg and Industrial Charlotte (Charlotte: Charlotte Chamber of Commerce, 1926), pp. 174-175.
- 35Tompkins, I, p. 151.
- 36Thompson, pp. 174-5.
- 37Tompkins, I p. 151.
- 38Ibid.
- 39Ibid.
- 40Alexander, p. 186.
- 41Agricultural Schedules, 1860-1940.
- 42Charlotte City Directory, 1940.
- 43Tompkins, I, pp. 160-161.
- 44Tompkins, I, pp. 138-142.
- 45Ibid.
- 46Ibid.
- 47Ibid., I, p. 152; Blythe, p. 261.
- 48Tompkins, I, p. 153.
- 49D. R. Reynolds, Charlotte Remembers (Charlotte: Charlotte Community Publishing Company, 1972), p. 108.
- 50Ibid.; Alexander, p. 265.
- 51Blythe and Brockmann, p. 260.
- 52Ibid.
- 53Ibid., pp. 261-2.
- 54Thomas T. a Fetters and Peter W. Swanson, Jr., Piedmont and Northern (San Marino, CA: Golden West Books, 1974), pp. 9 et passim.
- 55Blythe and Brockmann, p. 263.
- 56Tompkins, I, p. 152.
- 57William H. Huffman, "A Historical Sketch of the Charlotte Cotton Mills, Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1983.
- 58William H. Huffman, "A Historical Sketch of the Charlotte Supply Building," Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1981.
- 59Dan L. Morrill, "A Survey of Cotton Mills in Charlotte, North Carolina, Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1979.
- 60Ibid.
- 61Tompkins, 2, p. 196.
- 62Ibid., p. 198.
- 63Ibid., I, p. 182; Blythe, pp. 419-422; Thompson, pp. 147-148; Paula Stathakis, "The Homestead Mill," Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1989.
- 64Blythe, pp. 418-419.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number E Page 22

65Tompkins, I, p. 187.

66Tompkins, I, p. 184.

67Fifth Annual Report, Superintendent Charlotte Water Works, Charlotte North Carolina
(Charlotte: Charlotte Water Works, 1904), pp. 2, 7, 8, 18, 20.

68Tompkins, I, 193. Blythe and Brockmann, p. 449.

69Miriam Grace Mitchell and Edward S. Perzel, The Echo of the Bugle Call: Charlotte's
Role in World War I (Charlotte: Dowd House Preservation Committee, Citizens for
Preservation, Inc., 1979), p. 29.

70Ibid., p. 76

71Blythe, p. 449.

72Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of North Carolina for the
Scholastic Years 1933-1934 and 1935-1936 (Raleigh: State Superintendent of
Public Instruction, 1936), pp. 68-73.

73Thomas W. Hanchett, "Rosenwald Schools in Mecklenburg County," Charlotte
Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1987"

74Ibid.

75Agricultural Schedules, U.S. Census, Mecklenburg County, 1930 & 1920.

76Thompson, cited above, pp. 61 & 91.

77Pete Daniel, Breaking the Land: The Transformation of Cotton, Tobacco, and Rice
Cultures since 1880 (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985),
pp. 155-6.

78Ibid., pp. 73ff.

79Dan L. Morrill, "Survey and Research Report of the Matthews School," Charlotte
Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1984. Exact dates of construction
are not known.

80Blythe and Brockmann, p. 449.

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North Carolina

Table 1
United States Census, Agricultural Schedules, Mecklenburg County, NC

	1860	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1982
#farms		2645	3226	4190	4439	4344	3773	3223	429
av. size - ac.		111	97	75.3					107
horses	2829	2205	2194	2579	3204	2556	787	585	
mules/asses	290	3041	3650	4566	4910	5698	4907	2125	
wkg oxen	228	60	84	-	-	-	-	-	-
dairy cows	2259	3229	4226	5309	7817	12,963	8078	2493	
other cattle	4752	3380	4645	5194	4807	580	39	37	
sheep	7560	3478	-	994	730	519	-	37	
swine	23,762	10,963	11,487	10,681	9703	13,436	6275	1894	
wool lbs.	15,621	7709			2498		1340	1662	
butter on fm.		240,208	463,338	756,075	934,838		666,165	2298	
hay mown acres	-	1271	5505	-	-	-	-	-	-
barnyard poultry	-	35,022	-	66,432	84,337	-	90,445	234,456	-
other poultry	-	4728	-	2032	-	-	-	-	----
eggs dozens	-	176,029	292,543	317,070	354,824	-	553,492	639,907	----
honey lbs	-	15,925	42,363	44,630	25,401	-	12,773	26,143	--
wax	-	765	749	900	285	-	-	-	-
tobacco acres		10	2	-	-	-	3	4	
lbs		2291	470				1580	2850	
Irish pots			231		211	216	382	299	
bushels	11,835	9459	15,356	-	14,462	15,590	22,556	16,645	-
sweet pots		281	540		643	637	707	553	
bushels	26,617	26,393	45,406		62,585	60,173	55,832	45,863	
barley		9	7	2			496	481	
asc									
bushels		138	140	40			9954	277	
corn		41,285	44,795	49,943	41,812	40,026	34,095	2757	
acs									
bushels	550,235	538,385	514,068	457,040	477,885	569,373	399,678	33,933	
oats		12,949	14,224	6374	8621	1872	1002	298	
acs									
bushels	43,366	94,356	124,834	67,420	115,174	25,338	18,280	1456	
wheat		12,295	14,033	16,545	2944	4576	2831	432	
acs									
bushels	106,030	66,767	82,752	97,940	18,580	30,654	9954	279	
rye		78	88	46	53	185	142	68	
acs									
bushels	1299	403	465	320	424	1039	1499	187	
cotton		41,343	-	66,434	63,220	52,929	49,762	21,658	
acs									
bales	6112	19,129		24,248/23,444	27,466	25,829	24,219	14,460	

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North Carolina

Table 2

Number of Farms, Acreage in Farmland, and Average Size
of Farms in Mecklenburg County, 1880-1940, and 1982.

	<u>Number of Farms</u>	<u>Acreage in Farmland</u>	<u>Average Farm Size</u>
1880	2645	not available	111
1890	3226	not available	97
1900	4190	315,414	75.3
1910	4439	318,282	71.7
1920	4344	288,105	68.5
1930	3773	246,031	65.2
1940	3223	244,591	76.0
1982	429	46,000	107.0

Chart 1

Acreege in farmland, and acreege of farmland devoted
to Cotton in Mecklenburg County, 1900-1940.

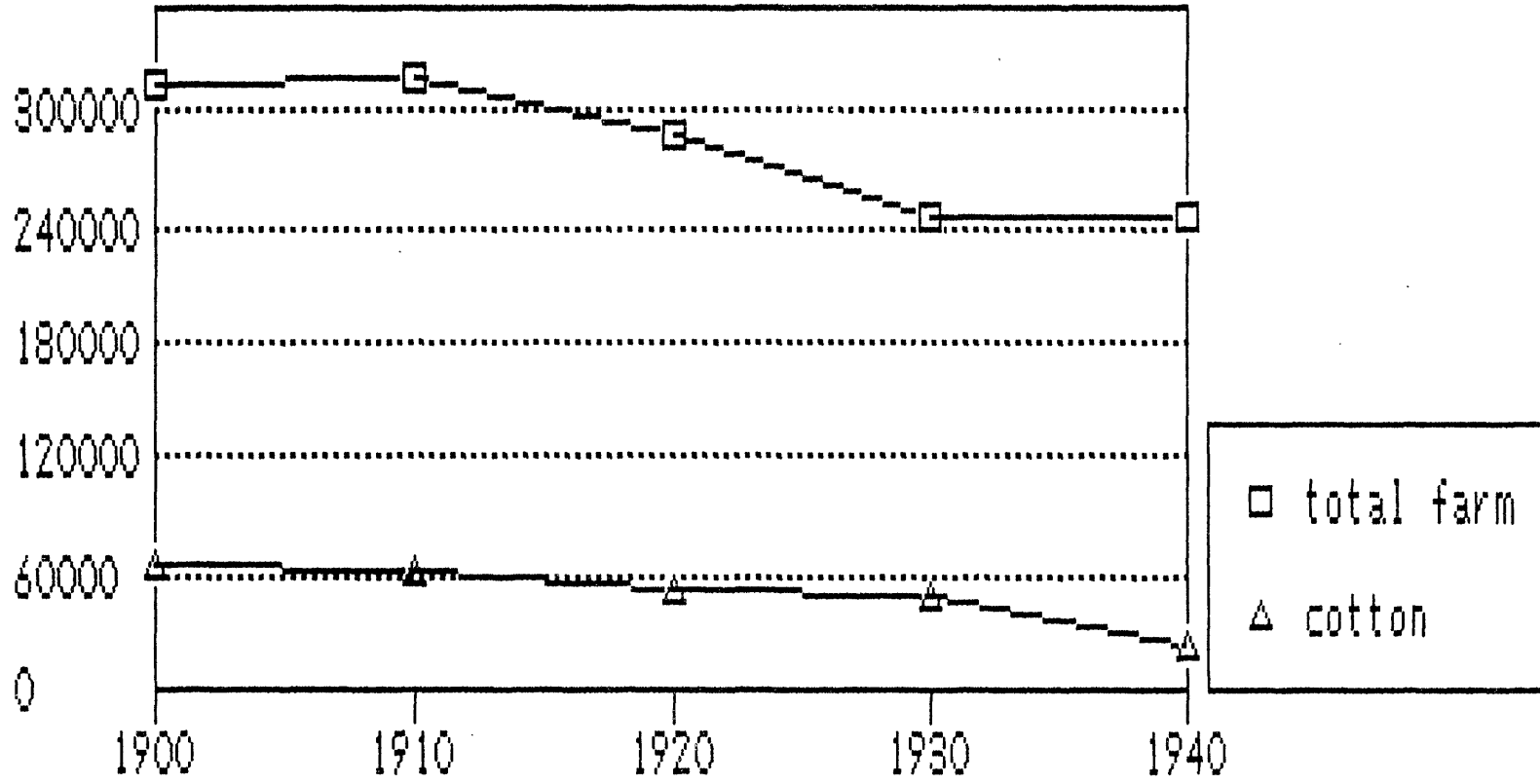


Chart 2

Bales of Cotton Produced in Mecklenburg County, 1860-
1940, excluding 1890.

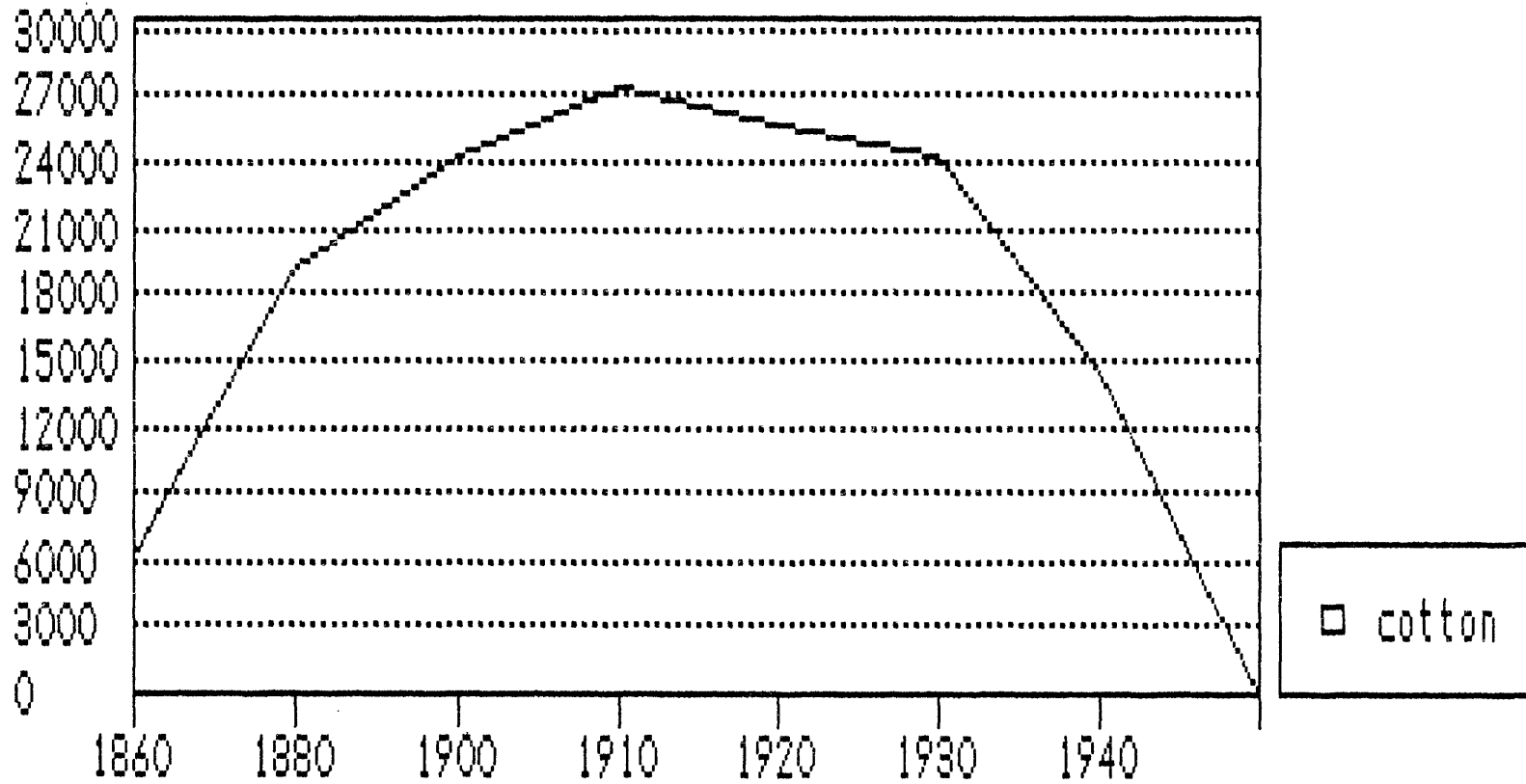


Chart 3

Production of Grain Crops in Mecklenburg County, 1860-
1940, in bushels.

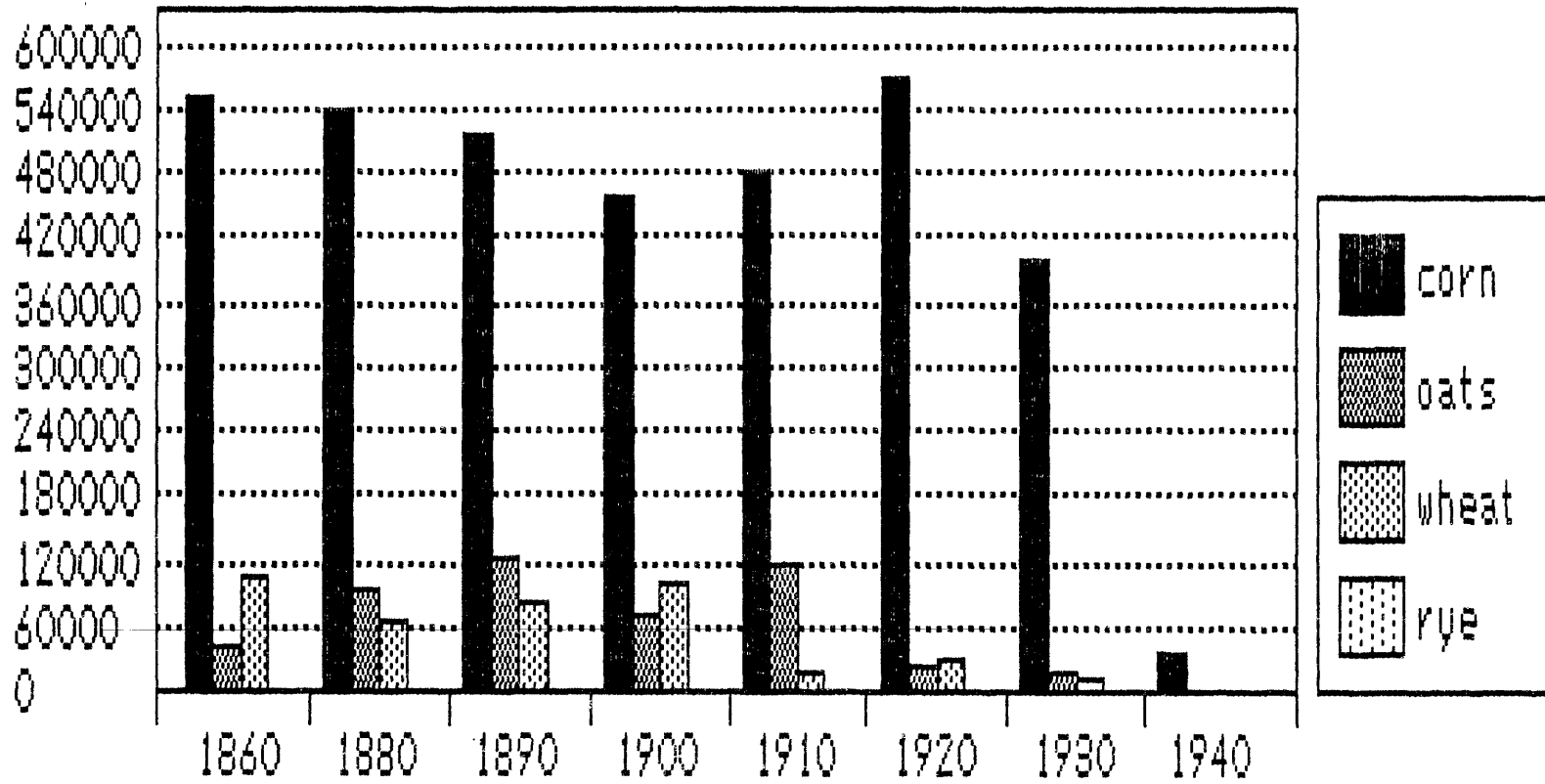
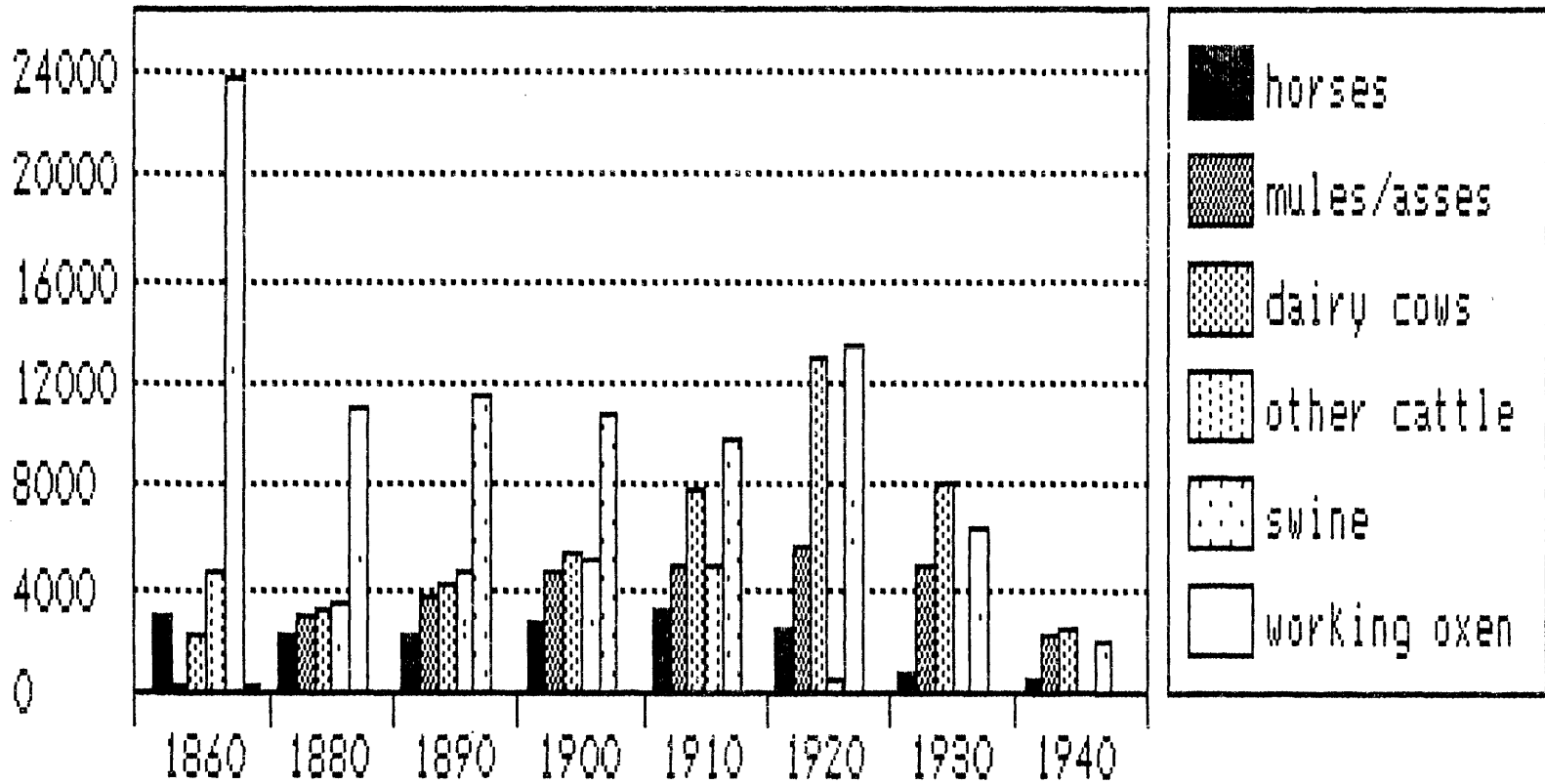


Chart 4

Livestock Raised in Mecklenburg County, 1860-1940, by number of animals.



**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North Carolina

Section number F Page 1

OUTLINE OF PROPERTY TYPES

1. HOUSES
 - A. Log Dwellings
 - B. Plantation-Era Houses
 - C. Postbellum Farmhouses
 - D. Early 20th-Century Small-Town Dwellings and Farmhouses

2. OUTBUILDINGS
 - A. Barns
 - B. Corncribs
 - C. Smokehouses, Chicken Coops, Wellhouses

3. SCHOOLS
 - A. Frame Schools: White
 - B. Brick Schools: White
 - C. Colored Schools

4. CHURCHES AND CEMETERIES

5. COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS
 - A. Crossroads Stores
 - B. Small-Town Commercial Buildings

6. INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS
 - A. Textile Mills
 - B. Mill Villages
 - C. Other Small-Town and Rural Industrial Buildings

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North Carolina

Section number F Page 2

I. HOUSES

A. Log Dwellings

Mecklenburg County's surviving log dwellings bear witness to the Scotch-Irish heritage of its early white settlers. These buildings also represent the conservative, isolated backcountry culture of the county which persisted at least until the coming of the railroads in the middle decades of the 19th century. Dating between the late 18th century and the middle 19th century, the county's identified log housing stock (and dwellings of log are still being discovered underneath weatherboarded veneers) varies in size, plan, quality of construction, and, of course, present condition and alterations. Currently, seventeen log houses have been identified, including the James K. Polk Homesite, a State Historic Site, which is a reconstructed example composed of parts of contemporary log cabins from the area. But the vast majority of log dwellings stand on or near their original rural sites. All of those surveyed, with the exception of the Ephraim McAuley House (MK 1306) near Long Creek, are antebellum.

Log architecture expressed the practical, physical necessities of settlement on the American frontier, as well as building traditions originating in the Old World, passed down over centuries, and carried across the Atlantic to the New World. Although the Scotch-Irish had no tradition of log construction, in America this culture group first acquired and adapted this building technique from their German neighbors in southeastern Pennsylvania. There, Germans perpetuated a horizontal log construction tradition which had been an integral part of the building vocabulary in their European homeland. Consequently, both of these groups carried this building practice with them as they migrated across Maryland and the Shenandoah Valley into western North Carolina during the 18th and 19th centuries (Kniffen and Glassie 1966; Glassie 1968). In this timber-rich region, settlers could erect log shelters with relative ease, employing broad axes and adzes, and few nails.

English settlers, over time, also built in log on the frontier. However, lacking a tradition of such construction as well as the extended contact with German settlements,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North Carolina

Section number F Page 3

they never shared the Scotch-Irish's familiarity with log architecture.

Horizontal log construction encompassed a variety of traditional timber cornering techniques, including full and half dovetail, saddle, square, and V-notch. Architectural studies and inventories have revealed that in the American Southeast, the two dovetail notches and the V-notch were the most popular; and that in the Piedmont and western North Carolina the half-dovetail-notch prevailed among the earliest permanent log dwellings (Kniffen and Glassie 1966; Swaim 1981; Little-Stokes 1978; Cotton 1987; Hood 1983). The half-dovetail-notch -- although generally less tightly joined than the full-dovetail version -- nonetheless produced a firm, tight log wall and was simpler to execute than the full-dovetail-notch. In Mecklenburg County, all of the inventoried log dwellings were constructed of half-dovetail notching.

Builders typically hewed logs for most houses to a rectangular section and filled the spaces between the logs with chinking of wood chips or stones and daubing of mud or clay. Although first cabins on the Piedmont frontier were crudely erected to provide elemental shelter, when time allowed, settlers put up tighter fitting dwellings, usually equipped with fieldstone or brick end chimneys, wood-shingled gable roofs, and simple shed porches across the front. These dwellings could be more than simply functional shelters, and some settlers devoted special attention to interior decorative trim (Swaim 1981; Kaplan 1981). The vast majority of antebellum log houses in Mecklenburg County have lost many original details, including mantels and window mouldings; however, in the Mallard Creek community, the Earnhardt-Garrison House (MK1263) retains a handsome mantel composed of pilasters with recessed panels below a delicately moulded shelf.

Evidence from existing studies does not establish with certainty how frequently settlers weatherboarded their log houses at the time of construction. However, in at least one documented area -- Rowan County, North Carolina, just to the north of Mecklenburg County -- this practice may have been the norm (Hood 1983). All of Mecklenburg's log houses are weatherboarded and many appear to have been sided at about the date of construction. Whether done immediately or over time, as sawn lumber became more available and occupants, for a variety of practical or personal reasons

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetHistoric and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 4

elected to cover exterior log walls, the weatherboarding of log dwellings became a common practice.

Indeed, log houses of America's frontier period have rarely survived intact and unaltered. A settler's initial log dwelling often would be relegated to use as an outbuilding or torn down for materials. For example, it is said that the original log house on the Robert Potts Plantation (MK 1296) near Cornelius was later used for slave quarters (its stone foundation survives). Farm families also commonly expanded and overbuilt log houses in due course. As families grew and gained greater economic stability, frame shed additions and rear kitchen ells appeared. Furthermore, several local log houses are known to form the original cores of subsequently enlarged and updated residences which, from exterior appearances, appear to be entirely frame constructed. A good example is the McKinney House (MK 1227) near Weddington, which was originally built of logs and about 1910 weatherboarded and expanded so that it resembles a frame I-house with rear kitchen ell.

Log dwellings, of course, represent a particular construction technique, not a house type. Houses reflecting a variety of traditional forms and consisting of a variety of interior plans were built of log. Henry Glassie identifies two types of single-pen Southern mountain cabins which were commonly log constructed. One is the square type, reflecting English building tradition; the other is rectangular, a product of Scotch-Irish tradition (Glassie 1968). While log versions of both of these house types were built across the western half of North Carolina, the physical distinction between these two forms can be difficult to make at times, and thus blurs the relationships between them and the two culture groups (Swaim 1983).

Story-and-a-half, Single-Pen Log Houses

Single-pen forms typically included a sleeping loft, chimney on one gable end, and a centrally placed entry. In Mecklenburg County, the ten inventoried single-pen story-and-a-half log houses all have rectangular forms (approximately 15 by 20 feet), and all of these originally followed one-room plans. A particularly good example is the Oehler Log House (MK 1311) built near Mallard Creek in the early 19th century.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetHistoric and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 5Two-Story, Single-Pen Log Houses

Whereas these single-pen, one-room log houses are the most common surviving versions in Mecklenburg County, log dwellings took other forms and plans as well. Seven single-pen log houses are a full two stories high. Several of these, including the ca. 1840 Samuel Wilson House (MK1483) near Huntersville, were laid out in a "Quaker plan." This three-room plan consists of two small rooms, often bedrooms, on one half of the first floor, and a large room on the other half, where the fireplace and corner stair is usually located. The Quaker plan, so named because William Penn, the Quaker founder of Philadelphia, recommended this layout to settlers, is common to the North Carolina Piedmont and has been characterized as a traditional German plan (Herman 1978; Little-Stokes 1978; Hood 1983). However, it should be noted that three-room house plans may also have been at times the fortuitous result of the addition of an extra partition to the basic hall-and-parlor plan when an additional room was needed (Swaim 1981). Fine examples of two-story log dwellings with hall-and-parlor layouts include both the Cooper House [local Designated Historic Property] (MK 1359) built at the turn of the 19th century southwest of Charlotte, and the ca. 1860 Earnhardt-Garrison House (MK 1263) at Mallard Creek. By the post-Civil War period, the popularity of the center-hall plan combined with the persistence of log construction to produce the 1880s Ephraim McAuley House (MK 1306), a two-story, center-hall log dwelling that is the centerpiece of the McAuley Farm near Long Creek.

Examples of all of the above house types and plans as they survive in Mecklenburg County help to represent the area's rural development, as well as contribute to the understanding of log housing as it was produced through tradition and by necessity across the American Southern Uplands.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetHistoric and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 6B. Plantation-Era Farmhouses

While settlers erected sturdy log dwellings across Mecklenburg County -- visible symbols of permanent settlement -- other house types, reflecting a variety of traditional plans and construction techniques, appeared in the antebellum years as well. Today, the brick W.T. Alexander House [local Designated Historic Property] (MK 1254) near Mallard Creek, and the stately, brick Cedar Grove [NR, local Designated Historic Property] (MK 4) on Gilead Road west of Huntersville, represent rare remaining examples of pre-Civil War masonry houses in Mecklenburg. The overwhelming majority of the twenty-seven surviving rural residences of the plantation era are frame. These houses are built of heavy timbers, mortised, tenoned, and pegged together. They are usually sheathed in plain weatherboards, though the finest examples have beaded siding. And, whereas local log houses often reflect traditional story-and-a-half types, all of the extant frame farmhouses are a full two stories. Although nearby counties in the western Piedmont have two-room, hall-and-parlor and central-hall cottages representing smaller landowners, tenants, and perhaps even slave quarters, these one-story, frame house forms appear to have vanished from Mecklenburg's countryside, victims of accidental extinction by residential and commercial development.

The plans of the two-story farmhouses include both double-pile and three-room, Quaker configurations; but by far the most popular plan is one room deep. Some of these dwellings, and especially the earliest remaining examples, have hall-and-parlor layouts. However, central halls were incorporated into plantation seats, such as Holly Bend [NR] (MK 9) in Lemley Township, at least as early as the turn of the 19th century, and became increasingly common as the century progressed. Whether possessing a formal central hall or not, these one-room deep, two-story, "I-houses" reflected elevated social status and economic well-being across Mecklenburg County and, indeed, throughout the rural South during the plantation years. A traditional house type, the I-house would persist as a symbol of the prosperous Southern farmer throughout the 19th century and into the 20th century (Glassie 1968; Southern 1978).

The earliest surviving I-houses date from about 1800. They have flush eaves and brick end chimneys laid in a Flemish bond. Later kitchen ells and shed-roofed additions

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetHistoric and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 7

extend to the rears of the main blocks. Front facades are typically three bays across, though several houses, including plantation seats Holly Bend and Oak Lawn (MK 6) near Long Creek, have five-bay wide facades. Both of these houses are on the National Register and are local Designated Historic Properties.

Existing farmhouses completed between 1800 and the 1830s reveal a blending of Georgian and Federal elements of style. While an integral characteristic of the Georgian Style was the symmetry of architectural form and plan, relatively few of Mecklenburg's farmhouses of this period achieve such balance. Even houses with central hallways tend to have windows spaced unevenly across the main facade. Instead, the influence of both the classical Georgian and Federal styles are typically expressed in applied ornamentation and in window and door types and mouldings, rather than in overall design. The Georgian influence is apparent in heavy window sills and three-part surrounds. Interiors of a Georgian character include heavily moulded stair rails and well-turned balusters, and mantels with robust moulding and deeply reeded elements. Both Holly Bend and Oak Lawn, completed around 1800, display lingering Georgian traits as well as Federal features. Both, for example, have stairs with thick handrails and balusters, heavy window sills and architraves, and mantels with heavily reeded and moulded shelves, pilasters, and architraves. The Federal Style, which began to hold sway locally between the 1820s and early 1840s, is subtly expressed in delicately moulded window and door surrounds, and in six-panel doors that are not as deeply recessed. Latta Place [NR, local Designated Historic Property] (MK 14) west of Charlotte, is the county's earliest existing example of the Federal Style. This unique, ca. 1800 gable-front house exemplifies the style in its delicate exterior and interior woodwork, including mantels with light mouldings and dentils. Several existing farmhouses include Georgian-inspired exterior windows, but interiors feature Federal three-part mantels trimmed with delicate moulding and classical motifs. For example, the robust exterior window surrounds on the W.T. Alexander House are contrasted with the mantels, delicately treated with slender rope moulding along the mantel shelves. Sash windows with either nine-over-nine or nine-over-six panes were employed on local farmhouses throughout most of the first half of the 19th century.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetHistoric and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 8

While local farmhouse architecture changed in a slow, conservative fashion throughout the early 19th century, in the early 1830s, one specific plantation seat served notice that new stylistic tendencies would soon prevail. Completed in 1833, Cedar Grove is an outstanding example of the Greek Revival Style. This house is a two-story, double-pile, brick structure dominated by a columned front porch spanning a five-bay facade. The interior is highlighted by mantels with well-executed Doric colonettes, and fluted door surround with corner blocks. It should be emphasized, however, that Cedar Grove is unique. It predated the widespread adoption of the Greek Revival in the county by about a decade; and its brick, double-pile form -- with exceptional stepped gables -- sets Cedar Grove emphatically apart from other local farmhouses of the pre-Civil War period.

By the 1840s the influence of the Greek Revival Style began to affect significantly the appearance of a host of Mecklenburg farmhouses. Like the preceding styles, the Greek Revival was typically applied simply and in a vernacular fashion. On the exterior, sash windows with six-over-six panes became more and more popular; main entries were embellished with sidelights and transoms, and, occasionally, with Doric colonettes. Five-panel doors were replaced by ones with four or two vertical panels. Gable roofs, which predominated on I-houses throughout the plantation era, were sometimes designed with a shallower pitch, though no shallow-pitched hip-roofed I-houses are known to have existed in the county during these decades. However, porches with low hip roofs supported by heavy, rounded unfluted columns did appear across the fronts of houses. These porches offer a sharp contrast to the shed-roofed porches and more slender wooden supports that survive on several dwellings dating from the first quarter of the 19th century. Architectural symmetry was the norm by the time that the Greek Revival gained popularity in the county, and evenly spaced windows and central halls gave classical balance to the I-houses of the 1840s and 1850s. The Greek Revival dwellings, like the earlier Georgian-Federal examples, typically rested on foundations of fieldstone piers. Only Cedar Grove has a basement. Matching brick chimneys on the gable ends contributed to their classical symmetry. While earlier plantation houses in the county often had brick end chimneys laid in a Flemish bond (for an

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetHistoric and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 9

example, see Oak Lawn), by the mid-19th century, common-bond chimneys were the norm.

The interiors of local Greek Revival farmhouses reflect the simple yet bold stylistic themes of the exteriors. Mantels characteristically have a post-and-lintel design, displaying simple pilasters and plain friezes. Doorways have plain surrounds accented by unadorned corner blocks. Stairways feature unadorned, square balusters and plain, heavy newels. An outstanding local example of Greek Revival farmhouse architecture is the ca. 1840 Hennigan Place [local Designated Historic Property] (MK 1180) in the Providence community. This frame, central-hall I-house features sidelights and transom around the main entry, and a low hip-roofed porch with heavy Doric columns. The interior contains simple post-and-lintel mantels and a staircase with a square newel and square balusters. Stylistic flourishes, such as Grecian key designs or crossettes, or such trademarks of the Greek Revival Style as full entablatures and boldly defined pedimented porticoes, do not appear on the surviving Greek Revival farmhouses of Mecklenburg County. Rather, like the Georgian and Federal influences before it, the Greek Revival Style is manifested in unpretentious, carpenter-built elements and forms applied to a traditional house type. As a result, the early farmhouse architecture of Mecklenburg County generally mirrors that of many other North Carolina counties (Hood, 1983; Kaplan 1981; Little-Stokes 1978; Cotton 1987; Mattson 1987). The Georgian, Federal, and Greek Revival styles were all blended, adapted, and reinterpreted on time-tested, conservative domestic forms.

C. Postbellum Farmhouses

In contrast to the small sample of rural house types surviving from Mecklenburg's plantation era, a variety of traditional as well as stylishly fashionable farmhouse forms exist from the postwar decades. Varying in form, plan, and elements of decoration, these dwellings not only reflect the obdurate conservatism of many local residents but also the acceptance of nationally popular architectural designs. The postbellum decades were years of substantial economic expansion and population growth, spurred by new railroads which now crisscrossed the western Piedmont. By the turn of the 20th century, the Southern Railway System and the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetHistoric and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 10

Seaboard Railway controlled tracks linking Charlotte and the county's smaller railroad towns to such major ports as Charleston, South Carolina and Wilmington, North Carolina, as well as to ports on the Ohio River and Mid-Atlantic Seaboard. By the early 20th century, at the peak of the New South era, Charlotte was the hub of tracks stretching in eight directions. Railroads opened up the urban eastern markets for cotton, the region's dominant cash crop. The appearance of new house designs in this period suggests as well that the growing lines of communication between the Seaboard and Mecklenburg County were now introducing a greater range of architectural styles and mass-produced building materials. Slowly, cautiously, the rural residents of Mecklenburg began to adopt traits of the emerging American mainstream culture.

One-Story Farmhouses

The most abundant remaining rural house types are traditional forms. The architectural inventory identified five postbellum one-story farmhouses, all constructed in the 1880s and early 1890s for landowners. Typically balloon-frame constructed, they include the Bain-Reid House (MK1173) near Matthews, a double-pile, hip-roofed cottage with a splayed entrance surround and six-over-six windows, and the ca. 1890 Keller House (MK 1304) in the Mallard Creek community. The Keller House is the most intact of four identified two-room, central-hall postbellum farmhouses, retaining a bay window, fluted pilasters around the main entry, and, on the interior, fluted mantel pilasters. No postbellum one-story tenant houses were identified in the inventory.

Two-Story FarmhousesI-Houses

Following the pattern established during the late plantation period, the majority of surviving two-story farmhouses are frame, central-hall I-houses. Thirty were inventoried. As before the war, they represent some of the county's more prosperous cotton farmers. These I-houses are usually simply embellished, with weatherboarded veneers,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetHistoric and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 11

common-bond brick end chimneys, and rear kitchen ells. While the great majority have gable roofs, a significant exception is the Green Columbus Morris House (MK 1228). Built on a large 700-acre tract in the Providence community during the 1870s, the Morris House is a hip-roofed version of the I-farmhouse. Reflecting a combination of conservative taste with an interest of nationally up-to-date fashion, this house blends Greek Revival and vernacular Italianate elements. In contrast to the 1870s Morris House, the typical surviving postbellum I-house dates from the 1880s and 1890s and displays a variety of jigsawed or lathe-turned millwork which is best described as vernacular Victorian. Although many of these houses have been aluminum- or vinyl-sided, the most intact have bracketed eaves and gable returns, main entries treated with sidelights and transoms, and sash windows with six-over-six or four-over-four panes. When original doors survive, they have five raised panels. Although front porches often have been modernized, chamfered posts remain on several of the I-houses of this period, persisting most often on rear porches. Interiors display mantels with simple, gently arched surrounds, or with brackets and chamfered pilasters. Doorways on the finest versions have fluted surrounds and bull's-eye corner blocks. Especially intact examples of postbellum I-houses include the Lee-Flow House (MK1206) near Mint Hill, the Crowell-Knox House (MK1360) in the Dixie community west of Charlotte, and the Dixon-Russell House (MK 1262) in Newell. The Dixon-Russell House, built in the 1880s, features a handsome splayed entrance surround.

By the 1890s and early 1900s, this vernacular Victorian influence was expressed with a host of Queen Anne- and classical-inspired elements. Porches appeared with turned posts and balustrades and with millwork, such as spindled friezes. Two-over-two window panes pierced the weatherboarded facades. Gable end roofs stayed dominant, though sometimes distinguished by centered front gables, embellished on the most decorative I-houses with turned millwork and patterned wood shingles. These are often called "Triple-A I-houses" in North Carolina. Front doors included glazed upper halves, raised panels, and incised motifs. In contrast to the fairly simple mantels that marked I-houses of the 1870s and 1880s, the most decorative examples of the late 19th and early 20th centuries featured mantels with classical colonettes and, on occasion, mirrored over-mantels. In the center hall, heavy, turned or beveled

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetHistoric and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 12

newels anchored stairways with turned balusters. Among the county's finest I-houses of the late 19th century is the W.B. Newell House (MK 1279) in the Newell community. This Triple-A I-house features patterned wood shingles in the center gable and mantels with mirrored over-mantels and turned millwork. The Newell House is also distinctive for its brick construction; it is the only brick postbellum farmhouse in the county.

T-Plan Houses

Some surviving two-story farmhouses of the postbellum decades display embellishments and formal elements that set them apart from the traditional I-houses. Notable are twenty-five T-shaped dwellings representing some of rural Mecklenburg's most fashionable farmhouses. These houses reflect the influence of architectural pattern books. Subsequent modifications have stripped away original details on a number of these residences, but a group of them retain such vernacular Victorian stylistic elements as chamfered or slender paired porch posts, cutout balustrades, double-leaf doorways and windows with heavily moulded lintels and architraves. By the 1890s, these forms routinely appeared with lathe-turned millwork. Several of the T-shaped farmhouses have paired as well as bay windows and flush-board siding around the main entrance. A particularly good example is the Dr. Walter Pharr Craven House (MK 1494) west of Charlotte.

D. Early 20th-Century Small-Town Dwellings and Farmhouses

During the final years of the 19th century and particularly in the early decades of the 20th century, Mecklenburg's small towns rapidly developed. Situated along railroad lines, they progressed as rural market centers and sites for mills contributing to a thriving local textile industry. Although the city of Charlotte and its environs attracted the greatest wealth in these years, embodied in fine, spacious homes designed by noted architects and contractors, the surrounding small towns bloomed architecturally as well. Simultaneously, new farmhouses appeared, rural symbols of the cotton-related prosperity. These houses often mirrored the styles in the small towns,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetHistoric and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 13

as the railroads brought aspects of urban culture into the countryside.

Queen Anne Style Dwellings

Handsome examples of the vernacular Queen Anne Style now appeared along streets leading into active business districts as well as on the farmsteads of well-to-do cotton farmers. Typically frame constructed, these houses have consciously irregular shapes and plans. Many of them retain wraparound verandas and turned porch posts with stylish sawnwork. Some examples include classical features, such as sidelights and transoms, fanlights in gables, and Doric or Ionic porch columns. Although a number of Queen Anne residences are two stories high, the majority are one-story cottages, with cross-gable or high hip roofs, and projecting gabled bays. The basic forms are L-shaped or square (double-pile). Several have original slate roofs. Interior woodwork can be lavish, highlighted by ornately carved mantels and newels. Ten two-story Queen Anne houses and thirty one-story Queen Anne-inspired cottages with cross-gable or hip-and-gable roofs were inventoried in the county. They are most numerous in the towns of Huntersville, Cornelius, Matthews and Davidson. The S.W. Davis House (MK 1539) in the Croft community is a handsome two-story, rural version, with a high hip roof with cross gables, decorative spindlework, and a deep wraparound veranda with heavy turned posts. Handsome, intact cottages include the P.T. Christenbury House (MK 1535) and the Clyde Hunter House (MK 1302), both built in the early 1900s around the Oak Grove community. The cross-gabled Hunter House has classical porch columns and decorative corner blocks at the main entry.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetHistoric and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 14Traditional House Types

While the growing number of Queen Anne dwellings reflected the influence of widely distributed architectural pattern books and nationally popular designs on the Mecklenburg landscape, versions of traditional house types continued to appear as well. On farms and in the towns, I-houses with turned-post, square, or round porch columns were erected until the 1910s. A host of these house were Triple-A I-houses. A particularly intact example of the six early 20th-century Triple-A I-houses that were inventoried is the Hodges House (MK 1265) in the Newell community. The house has a hip-roofed porch with single, sturdy Doric porch posts, as well as gable returns, and sidelights and transom around the entry. In addition to I-houses, traditional two-room, central-hall houses, many of them "Triple-A cottages," also frequently appeared in the county, built on small farmsteads and lots on the principal residential streets right up to World War I. Six Triple-A cottages have been inventoried, notably the Bisaner House (MK 1530) near Huntersville, which has intact classical porch posts and a decorative, louvered vent in the center gable.

Eclectic Style Dwellings

The intermingling of stylistic elements characterized Mecklenburg's houses throughout the early 20th century. Especially in the towns, double-pile and L-plan cottages blend Victorian, Colonial Revival, Neo-Classical Revival, Tudor Revival, and bungalow features. Some have wraparound verandas, others engaged porches with sturdy tapered columns or paired, square supports that have a classical flavor. Although full-fledged examples of the Neo-Classical Revival Style do not exist in the towns or the countryside, specific motifs, such as fanlights and classical porch posts, reflect the influence of the style on dwellings built primarily between 1910 and the Depression. Representative of the mix of styles that marked small-town cottages of this period are the rows of L-plans and hip-roofed cottages set along Maxwell Avenue in Huntersville.

Colonial Revival Style Dwellings

The Colonial Revival Style has some well-designed and well-executed examples both in the small towns and in the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetHistoric and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 15

countryside. A group of the county's wealthier farmers and successful merchants occupied large, boxy Colonial Revival homes erected between 1900 and the late 1920s. The most accomplished two-story models are typically frame, hip-roofed houses, with gable dormers and tall chimney stacks, deep hip-roofed porches, both facade-width and wraparound, and board eaves, occasionally decorated with modillions. The boxy massing is sometimes interrupted by projecting bays, but the overall design is symmetrical. Interiors of these Colonial Revival dwellings are organized around spacious central halls. Elements of style vary from simple brick-faced mantels to classical ones bearing walnut woodwork. Twelve two-story Colonial Revival houses have been inventoried in Mecklenburg County. Notable examples include the Holbrooks House (MK 1334) in Huntersville, the Frank Watt House (MK 1380), which features a distinctive bevelled oval glass window in the front door, and the McKinney House (MK 1227) in the Providence community which has a broad wraparound veranda.

Bungalow Style Dwellings

The bungalow style is well represented in Mecklenburg County. Eleven of the finest examples have been inventoried. The bungalows of both rural and small-town Mecklenburg are characterized by simple, clean lines, low-slung roofs, and exposed rafters under deep eaves. Exemplary of the style, shapes vary from gable-front (four inventoried) to side-gable (five inventoried) to hip-roofed (two inventoried). Veneers include shingle shakes, weatherboarding, brick, and occasionally cobblestones. The most popular bungalow design is one that may be the most popular nationwide. It is a side-gable dwelling with a sweeping roof, engaged porch, and tapered porch posts set on brick piers. Some of these bungalows have shed or gable dormers centered over the porch. A good example of the side-gable bungalow (MK 1466) is found near Cornelius. Bungalows, of course, varied in sophistication; and while some exemplified the style in their natural-like materials, abundant fenestration, and assertive porches, others were plain, low-cost versions built for renters in the small towns and for farm tenants. Bungalows of all types were popular locally from World War I throughout the 1930s; and bungalow-style tapered porch columns persisted as a common

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetHistoric and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 16

replacement for rotting or out-moded posts of all house types during the 1940s.

SIGNIFICANCE

A. Log Dwellings

The dwellings included within the "Houses" property type constitute a major portion of the late 18th- and early 19th-century building stock surviving in Mecklenburg County. Log dwellings, making up the simplest and typically the earliest of the house types, are historically significant under National Register Criterion A as associated with the area's early period of settlement and of the largely Scotch-Irish culture that shaped the locality and much of the western Piedmont and Blue Ridge as well. The rural setting of log houses, which are typically situated on farmsteads, reflect the early agrarian era when log building persisted as a popular choice of Scotch-Irish farmers. Furthermore, the surviving log dwellings help to substantiate the association between single-pen log forms and the Scotch-Irish culture group.

The log dwellings are also architecturally significant under Criterion C for embodying the styles, forms, and plans of the period, and methods of traditional log construction. The dwellings comprise a variety of house types and plans, particularly single-pen one-story and two-story forms, and one-room and Quaker-plan layouts. Their half-dovetail notching represents a traditional and regionally popular log cornering technique. Finally, the simple, Federal-inspired mantels and mouldings that remain in a small number of the interiors reflect the character of the Federal style as it was conservatively perpetuated by local farmers until the eve of the Civil War.

B. Plantation-Era Farmhouses

Plantation-era farmhouses are significant under National Register Criterion A as associated with the plantation society that developed during the first half of the 19th century. Many of these houses survive in evocative rural settings, with surrounding farmland having historical

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetHistoric and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 17

associations with the farmhouses. The dwellings, all two-story and primarily I-houses, which have historically represented the prosperous landowner in the pre-20th-century South, were built for some of the county's wealthier planters. The farmland, still agricultural but mostly devoted to pasture, was then primarily used for cotton production. A number of these two-story houses, such as Hennigan Place (MK 1180) and the William Lee House (MK 1734) [both local Designated Historic Properties] were owned by Mecklenburg's leading planters and professionals.

The plantation-era farmhouses also are architecturally significant under Criterion C for embodying the styles, forms, methods of construction, and skilled workmanship of this era. The heavy timber frames, the many I-house forms as well as the occasional double-pile forms, the hall-and-parlor, three-room (Quaker), and central-hall plans are all indicative of plantation-era farmhouses built throughout the western Piedmont by settlers of Scotch-Irish and British origins. The plans, forms, and lingering popularity of architectural styles typically reflect the conservative, agrarian society that was Mecklenburg County. Even ca. 1800 Latta Place reflects in its scale, materials, and carpenter-built motifs other contemporary plantation seats in the area. The elements of style, with the notable exception of the imposing Greek Revival Cedar Grove Plantation, are characteristically simple, but well-executed vernacular blends of the Georgian, Federal, and, later, the Greek Revival styles. The first-rate craftsmanship and attention to architectural detail are evident in the mouldings of doors, windows, baseboards, mantels, and stairways. The Greek Revival Style ushered in the wide-spread adoption of the central-hall plan during the 1840s and 1850s. Thus, while forms remained typically traditional, and details simple and carpenter built, older, traditional plans were replaced by the formal, stylish central-hall arrangement of rooms. Slowly, traditional ideas were being supplanted by popular, national ones.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetHistoric and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 18C. Postbellum Farmhouses

The lines of communication between rural Mecklenburg and urban places along the Eastern Seaboard, from where national styles and ideas propagated, increased during the postbellum decades. New styles and forms and plans of farmhouses reflected more and more this slowly emerging interrelationship between Mecklenburg County and other areas of North and South Carolina as well as other regions of the country. The surviving postbellum farmhouses, therefore, are significant under Criterion A for representing the emerging railroad period in the county and the growing acceptance in the countryside of new, popular architectural styles. They are also historically significant for representing the persistence of conservatism in the rural areas, for traditional forms and simple, vernacular interpretations of styles continued to hold sway. Finally, the postbellum farmhouses represent the agrarian way of life in this period, which is now rapidly being lost to commercial and residential development.

The postbellum farmhouses are significant as the homes of those who raised the cotton that was the foundation of the local economy. Combined with the outbuildings that continue to surround them, these rural dwellings are the graphic reminders of this active agricultural era. Once spread across the county, their growing rarity today enhances the historical significance of these farmhouses. The variety of surviving house forms, which include modest one-story dwellings as well as more pretentious two-story residences, represent the different social and economic classes comprising this agrarian society, and reflect the tenant farming system that prevailed at this time. Frequently ruinous, however, no tenant houses were included in the architectural inventory.

The variety of traditional and nationally popular, up-to-date farmhouse forms and plans reflect the new convergence of long-held, established values and up-to-date tastes. The remaining rural houses of the postbellum decades include a mix of I-houses, one-story, two-room cottages, and fashionably irregular two-story homes with details influenced by Italianate, Queen Anne, and classical-inspired styles.

These rural houses are architecturally significant under Criterion C. Representing the last survivors of a local building stock that is dwindling at a rapid clip, they

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetHistoric and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 19

also represent both handsome examples of popular architectural styles of the period, as well as persistent folk forms adapted simply to the latest architectural trend. The collection of two-story, L-shaped farmhouses stand out among their contemporary I-houses as essentially vernacular interpretations of the Victorian styles that came to dominate rural Mecklenburg and the region after the Civil War. The plethora of I-form farmhouses, on the other hand, clearly represent the persistence of this house type as a symbol of the substantial Southern farmer throughout the 19th century.

D. Early 20th-Century Small-Town and Rural Houses

The early 20th-century small-town dwellings and rural houses are also significant under National Register Criteria A and C. The present rarity of farmhouses of this era, dwellings augmented by their historical association with adjacent rolling pastures and cropland, and by the early 20th-century outbuildings in the farmyard, enhances their significance as symbols of the agricultural activities which still predominated in these decades. The lingering popularity of I-houses and traditional one-story types, as well as the appearance of popular Queen Anne styles and rambling bungalows, reflect the persistent commingling of traditional and nationally popular values in rural Mecklenburg. The forms and styles of these rural dwellings typify farmhouse types of this period in the county, as well as represent examples of both traditional and popular architecture of the early 20th century.

The small-town houses represent the emergence of towns in the county during this period -- an urban expansion fueled by the railroads and cotton production -- and the aspirations of the collection of merchants, professionals, clerks, laborers, and mill supervisors who inhabited them. In the towns popular styles and forms prevailed, contrasting these places with the surrounding countryside, and thus suggesting a greater acceptance of mainstream tastes. The assortment of Queen Anne houses, Colonial Revival dwellings, and bungalows that line the grids of streets typifies and occasionally epitomizes these architectural styles. Along streets adjacent to the commercial districts of such places as Huntersville, Matthews, and Davidson are assortments of such early 20th-century dwellings representing in their

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 20

weatherboarded or brick veneers, prominent porches, classical or rustic detail, and one- or two-story forms the most popular styles of this period.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

A. Log Dwellings

To meet registration requirements, log houses should be sufficiently intact to reveal their original form and retain original notching and chimneys. Window size, configuration, and placement should be original or otherwise reflect the historical fenestration. Later wood siding is acceptable, but synthetic siding is not. If research verifies that a specific log house was originally weatherboarded, then the house should retain weatherboarding.

B. Plantation-Era Farmhouses

The rarity of the plantation-era farmhouses -- all two-story and representing Mecklenburg's planter class -- elevates them to the status of being eligible to the National Register providing integrity is present.

C. Postbellum Farmhouses

Because postbellum farmhouses are more numerous, to meet registration requirements it is necessary that they either are outstanding local examples of domestic architectural styles, or possess historical or architectural associations that signify the agrarian life and vernacular architectural tastes of these decades in Mecklenburg. These houses should be situated in rural settings evocative of the rural way of life and be sufficiently intact to reveal their original forms and plans and to display original interior and exterior elements of style reflecting their dates of construction. For instance, examples of original mantels, as well as other original woodwork should be in place. On the exterior, original wall material and window shapes should be basically intact. Brackets were a key component of the vernacular Italianate style in the county, and if they originally decorated a

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetHistoric and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 21

farmhouse, then these brackets should be basically intact. Farmhouses erected toward the end of the 19th century should display such original embellishments as turned or jigsawed millwork. Front porches need not be original, but other original elements of exterior decoration should be basically intact.

D. Early 20th-Century Small-Town and Rural Houses

These same qualifications pertain to farmhouses of the early 20th century. As commercial and residential development accelerates across the county, all basically intact pre-World War II farmhouses with sufficient amounts of associated farmland to clearly represent the houses' historical function become increasingly rare and historically significant. Within the more stable boundaries of the small towns, to meet registration requirements houses should survive so intact as to epitomize the major locally popular architectural forms and styles of the early 20th century. All original exterior and interior features should be essentially intact. The dignified cross-gable bungalow (MK 1249) on Highway 51 (Main Street) in Pineville is such a house, as are the two boxy brick-veneered, Colonial Revival Sherrill Houses (MK 1427) and (MK 1428), which stand side-by-side in Cornelius. Furthermore, other small-town dwellings, with their original forms and elements of style basically intact, may meet registration requirements as comprising a residential district representing early 20th-century small-town growth and reflecting the popular styles of this era. For example, sections of Matthews include basically intact collections of primarily early 20th-century houses -- composed both of dwellings with exemplary architectural features as well as others with more modest and occasionally partially remodelled designs -- that would meet registration requirements. In contrast, Pineville's early 20th-century residential fabric (outside the mill village) has been so extensively altered by disruptive later commercial intrusions as well as by the modernization of specific properties, that no residential district could satisfy registration requirements.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetHistoric and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 22

II. OUTBUILDINGS

Mecklenburg's surviving historically and architecturally significant outbuildings span almost 150 years of agricultural activity. Constructed of frame, log, stone, and brick, the hundreds of inventoried outbuildings include such structures as barns, corncribs, kitchens, privies, chicken coops, wellhouses, smokehouses, and all-purpose sheds. These structures, now often abandoned and deteriorating, shed light on generations of rural life in Mecklenburg County. They represent lives of ordinary folk who led a largely self-sufficient existence well into the 20th century. The designs of outbuildings are overwhelmingly practical and vernacular, based on forms and materials that had stood tests of time and function, and that varied little from farmyard to farmyard.

As with the county's vernacular 19th- and early 20th-century farmhouses, the workaday buildings in the countryside reveal basic shapes and interior divisions of space found on farms throughout the western Piedmont and into the Blue Ridge (Swaim 1981; Cotton 1987; Hood 1983; Brengle 1982; Kaplan 1981). The outbuildings of Mecklenburg, therefore, are normally not peculiar to this county, but are physical clues to broader patterns of settlement and land use.

Construction materials and techniques for outbuildings mirrored those for farmhouses. Builders used masonry primarily for foundations and chimneys (of kitchens usually), while wood (log or frame) was the material of choice for walls and framing. Usually log outbuildings, as with log housing, pre-date frame ones, though a collection of early 19th-century frame outbuildings survives. Most of the remaining log barns, corncribs, and smokehouses date from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Frame outbuildings date predominately from the 20th century. Log outbuildings usually have half-dovetail notching, though later structures also reveal the simpler V notch.

The most intact farm complexes include a variety of log and frame barns, corncribs, smokehouses, and wellhouses dating from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. However, these typical farmyards are becoming increasingly rare, as new farming technology and agricultural land uses supplant traditional ones and, most significantly, as

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetHistoric and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 23

residential and commercial development envelopes and transfigures the local rural landscape.

Other farm outbuildings, such as springhouses and brick ovens have been identified in the architectural inventories of nearby counties. However, they are rare in those places, and none have currently been discovered in Mecklenburg County. Furthermore, no barns for curing tobacco, historically a rare crop in Mecklenburg, today remain.

A. Barns

The most prevalent remaining outbuildings are barns and corncribs. Log barns include one-unit (10 to 12 feet square) structures, as well as double- and four-unit forms with a central passage. Central-passage log barns are distributed across the American "Midland" culture region which includes much of the southeastern United States, and in North Carolina primarily extends from the Piedmont west through the mountains (Jordan 1985). The passage was used conventionally as a wagon runway, while the flanking units served as granaries, stables, and hay and cotton storage. An excellent late 19th-century central passage log barn stands on the McAuley Farm (MK 1306) near Long Creek. Frame barns are typically four-unit with a central passage. Inherently functional, these barns have no embellishments. Main roofs vary between side-gable and gable-front shapes, while shed-roofed additions, usually frame, are commonly visible on the sides. In the middle 1920s, several local barns were completed with gambrel roofs in order to maximize storage space on the upper level. Multiple-purpose structures, Mecklenburg's barns were used for the storage of crops as well as for the shelter of farm animals and farm equipment.

B. Corncribs

A number of corncribs conform to the same basic forms as barns, and log and frame two-unit (or crib) structures still stand throughout the county. Log single-crib types exist as well, often with an overhang on one side for equipment storage and for loading the corn into the crib. In the 20th century a frame corncrib type appeared in Mecklenburg County which had latticed siding for better ventilation of the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetHistoric and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 24

grain. Today, the corn crop has virtually vanished from Mecklenburg County, and consequently corncribs are rapidly disappearing as well. Examples of intact log corncribs dating from the late 19th century survive on the McAuley Farm (MK 1306) and on the farmyard associated with the Craven House (MK 1494).

C. Smokehouses, Chicken Coops, Wellhouses

Smokehouses, chicken coops, and wellhouses complete the outbuildings that make up the county's most intact 19th- and early 20th-century farm complexes. Log and frame smokehouses are typically one-story, gable-front forms, approximately 8 to 10 feet on a side. Several have front gables that project over the doorway. Chicken coops date from the 20th century. They are usually frame, shed-roofed structures, probably representing a design popularized in the agricultural publications of the day. Windows, to allow in beneficial sunlight, cover the fronts of these rectangular buildings. Wellhouses, of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, are frame, gable-front structures that shelter the well and include an enclosure to the back for all-purpose storage and for dairies. Some local, intact wells have no housing, but are simply covered by a gable- or hip-roofed canopy. As wells dry up and electrical pumps are installed, both types of shelters are vanishing. A handsome wellhouse of the late 19th century stands by the Ewart House (MK 1287) east of Huntersville.

D. Detached Kitchens

Detached kitchens, at one time an integral part of farmyards in this region, are now rare, even on farm complexes which have a variety of other traditional outbuildings. A small collection has been inventoried, however. Reflecting traditional one- and two-room house types (kitchens were often the original homeplaces), they are constructed of log or frame, and have fieldstone or brick end chimneys. Most likely, a number of originally detached kitchens have been connected to the backs of farmhouses and now serve as kitchen ells.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetHistoric and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 25

SIGNIFICANCE

Mecklenburg developed as an agricultural county, and the number and sizes of its farmyards have been a measure of its progress from the period of initial settlement to World War II. Local industries, and especially the cotton mills, were dependent on the area's abundant cotton crop; and while the economy of Charlotte and neighboring towns centered around textile manufacturing, the vast majority of the county was agrarian and in many ways self-sufficient.

The assorted outbuildings on farmsteads reveal in their enduring traditional forms and uses the county's rich agricultural past and conservative ways. The surviving outbuildings of the early 19th century, when the county was still being settled and the plantation system held sway, conform to traditional shapes and are erected predominantly of log with half-dovetail notching. They reveal functional designs and none has decorative trim. The outbuildings of the latter 19th and early 20th centuries also often follow traditional forms and many of these, too, are log constructed. During the 20th century, building types of frame, such as several remaining gambrel-roofed barns, express commonly constructed agricultural building forms that emerged across the country to facilitate and improve the storage of crops. Thus, Mecklenburg's surviving outbuildings, from the early 19th century until the Depression years, are historically significant under National Register Criterion A as associated with the agricultural way of life that characterized the county over these many decades. They embody patterns of rural life that included curing household meats in the smokehouse, drawing water from the well, and storing hay, corn, cotton, and livestock in barns and cribs. The more historically complete and intact the farmyard, the more it reveals about the operations of the farm. Furthermore, the abundance of log outbuildings, like log houses, reflects the Scotch-Irish heritage of local farm families, who perpetuated the practice of log construction throughout the 19th century and into the early 20th century. The outbuildings are also architecturally significant under Criterion C for embodying the forms and methods of construction that predominated as the county progressed from the periods of early settlement and plantation farming, to the postwar era of industrial growth and expanded cotton production, to early decades of urbanization in the 20th century. While the building types

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 26

are largely traditional ones, revealing in their forms and construction the prevailing outbuildings of the rural South into the 20th century, even the post-World War I coops and barns reflect common, vernacular agricultural building types which are rapidly disappearing across the country in the face of development and agricultural modernization.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

The county's surviving 19th- and early 20th-century outbuildings enhance the significance of the farmhouses with which they are associated. All of the outbuildings which have been identified in the architectural inventory of Mecklenburg County are affiliated with historically and architecturally significant farmhouses. Individual, isolated examples with historical or architectural significance have not been discovered. Therefore, outbuildings meet registration requirements when they are situated on property with an associated farmhouse, thus illustrating the historical roles of agricultural buildings. Outbuildings should retain sufficient physical features to identify their original construction and form.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetHistoric and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 27

III. SCHOOLS

Rural and small-town school buildings of the late 19th and early 20th centuries remain scattered across Mecklenburg County. Fourteen have been inventoried.

A. Frame Schools: White

Two 19th-century schoolhouses (for whites) survive today, though in the 1870s each rural township contained frame schools for both the races (Hanchett 1988). The two remaining structures, Pine Hill School (MK 1280) in Newell and the Old Davidson Schoolhouse (MK 1463) in Lemley Township, represent the typical one-room rural school. Each is frame, simply finished, has six-over-six sash windows, and is capped by a standing-seam metal side-gable roof. One-room as well as larger two-story frame schools for white children continued to be erected in the county into the 1920s, and three 20th-century ones have been inventoried: Davidson Schoolhouse (MK 1462), located beside the older school; Croft Schoolhouse (MK 1536) at Croft; and the Mallard Creek School (MK 1308) at Mallard Creek. The Davidson School, built about 1912, is a one-story, one-room, gable-front structure sheathed in weatherboards. Standing on brick piers, it has a standing-seam metal roof and a hip-roofed front porch. It is abandoned and in disrepair. Croft Schoolhouse represents the early 20th-century enlargement of a ca. 1890 school on the site. It is a two-story, four-room structure capped by a shallow hip roof with small cross gables. The shed-roofed front porch has original turned posts. Abandoned in about 1941, it is the largest surviving rural Mecklenburg schoolhouse of this period. Now overgrown with vegetation, it stands in disrepair. Apparently the last rural frame school to be built in the county for white students was completed at Mallard Creek in the mid-1920s. This boxy, double-pile building is capped by a high hip roof, and has a one-bay shed-roofed entry porch. Now used mostly for storage by a local church, it is in good condition.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetHistoric and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 28B. Brick Schools: White

Early 20th-century brick schools in the towns outside Charlotte are now rare. Most of them were razed in the 1950s and 1960s, and occasionally were replaced by modern facilities. Today, the former Matthews School (MK 1189) is the last representative. It is a large, boxy, hip-roofed building erected in 1907 and remodelled in the 1920s, when new, red-brick schoolhouses were being built in towns across the county and the state. The Matthews School currently appears much as it did following the 1920s renovation. The facade has sash windows with nine-over-nine panes, and a dominant full-height, pedimented portico. The largely intact interior (dating primarily from 1907) includes wainscoting, three-part transoms above classroom doorways, and closed-string stairways. A local Designated Historic Property, Mathews School currently serves as a community center in Matthews.

C. Colored Schools

The legacy of the education of black students in rural Mecklenburg is today represented by four Rosenwald schools: McClintock (MK 1447) at Steele Creek; Huntersville (MK 1345); Newell (MK 1278) at Newell; and Rockwell (MK 1316) near Croft. All built in the 1920s, they are the survivors of twenty-six such schools erected locally by 1930 (Hanchett 1988). Although simply designed, frame-constructed and typically weatherboarded, Rosenwald schools were a major improvement over the cramped, poorly lit, and typically inadequately built (often of log) schools for blacks that had previously existed. Funded in part by the citizens of the county and in part by a fund established by Chicago philanthropist Julius Rosenwald, these schools were based upon formal, published schoolhouse plans, and adhered closely to specific guidelines. Rosenwald schools were required, for example, to have a north-south principal axis, banks of large windows along the east and west walls, and sites in spacious clearings. All of these conditions maximized the classrooms' exposure to sunlight, a chronic problem before rural electrification began in the 1930s. All Rosenwald schools were simply treated with craftsman and Colonial Revival details, the two most popular architectural styles of this period.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetHistoric and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 29

Thus, Mecklenburg's Rosenwald schools share a variety of basic design characteristics. The most intact example is the McClintock School, a three-teacher Rosenwald facility. Capped by a metal hip roof (the others have gable roofs), the structure has broad eaves with exposed rafters, a small entry porch, and rows of large sash windows with nine-over-nine panes. Today, three of the four remaining Rosenwald schools are basically intact, though only the McClintock School is in use (as a community building for a black church). The Huntersville school has been substantially altered.

Although the construction of Rosenwald schools ceased in the 1930s, other local schools for blacks were publicly financed and constructed in that decade. Today, one simple, hip-roofed, one-story, brick-veneered facility represents the black schools built during the 1930s. The Ada Jenkins School (MK 1573) in Davidson is now vacant but basically intact.

D. Agricultural Education Buildings

Agricultural buildings were frequently erected adjacent to public schools during the 1930s to foster supervised public training in modern farming practices. Inventories agricultural training buildings stand at Long Creek (MK 1507), Huntersville (MK 1343), and beside Matthews School (MK 1189). Each structure is one-story, brick-veneered, hip-roofed, and has a small entry porch. Each rests on a full basement. Used specifically for classrooms and laboratories geared to agricultural training, they were Depression-era projects funded and built by labor provided by the Works Progress Administration (Morrill 1984).

SIGNIFICANCE

Surviving schoolhouses of the late 19th and early 20th centuries graphically chronicle the maturing of rural Mecklenburg society, as well as the prevalence of racial segregation, which persisted into the post-World War II decades. Prior to the consolidation of schools for white children in the 1920s, students attended small schools following traditional forms that were scattered across the countryside. Black children continued to attend one-room

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 30

schools longer than white children, but the Rosenwald schools built for them in the 1920s significantly eased the racial disparity. Representing prescribed designs, Rosenwald schools are the principal surviving symbols of black education in the county before school desegregation in the 1960s. The rare, more decorative, two-story brick schools and related agricultural buildings remaining signify public-supported efforts to update and improve schools for white students during the era of cotton-related prosperity and small-town growth. The Matthews School, specifically, stands in such clear contrast to the surviving black schools that it also reflects the enduring disparity between black and white educational facilities in Mecklenburg County. In sum, the properties are historically significant under National Register Criterion A as associated with education (racially segregated and often inequitable) as local communities took up the task of public schooling in the late 1800s, and as the county started building more pretentious small-town schools for whites in the early 1900s. The Rosenwald schools are vivid representatives of the influence of the historic Rosenwald Fund which helped finance and design schools for blacks across North Carolina and a large part of the South. All of the schools are architecturally significant under Criterion C for embodying the forms, building methods, and architectural styles of the periods of construction. The late 19th and early 20th-century rural schools represent traditional, vernacular, typically one-room rural schoolhouse architecture. The Matthews School handsomely reflects the popularity of boxy, red-brick, Colonial Revival schools which appeared across the nation during the early decades of the 1900s. Even the simple, utilitarian Rosenwald schools and agricultural buildings neatly reflect the prevailing styles of the 1920s and 1930s as adapted to educational facilities.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

The county's surviving school buildings of the late 19th and early 20th centuries achieve significance in their rarity, integrity of sites, forms, and, frequently, elements of popular architectural styles. These rural schoolhouses and Rosenwald schools meet registration requirements when they have maintained the integrity of site and display such key original elements of design as original

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North Carolina

Section number F Page 31

forms, fenestration, weatherboarding, and interior woodwork that has not been substantially compromised by modernizations. Although former schools such as Old Davidson Schoolhouse, Davidson Schoolhouse, Pine Hill, and Croft Schoolhouse are deteriorating and in need of substantial repairs, none has been significantly altered over the years. Moved buildings are eligible if they remain in their original communities reflecting the schools' historical associations and otherwise retain the key architectural elements listed above. The rural schools for whites should stand in largely agricultural areas, while the Rosenwald schools should be situated in historically black neighborhoods. As the sole, and largely intact, survivor of the small-town, brick schoolhouses, the Matthews School clearly meets the registration requirements. Agricultural training buildings, by themselves, lack the integrity of site and their historical association with main school buildings to meet registration requirements. However, when visibly linked to a school, as is the case of the Matthews School, then this building type meets the requirement.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetHistoric and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 32

IV. CHURCHES AND CEMETERIES

Along the winding roads of the Mecklenburg countryside and the formal grid of the towns, handsome churches of the 19th and early 20th centuries reflect the important role of religion in the development of the county. In rural areas, churches survive which span much of the 19th century, and primarily represent the county's large Presbyterian population. They are particularly well-constructed examples of the traditional gable-front church form. Of the seven inventoried churches that remain from the 19th century, five reveal this basic form, all of them simply embellished with gable returns and including a front door placed in the center of the gable-end facade. The most impressive version of this classic design is the 1831 Hopewell Presbyterian Church (MK 1498). One story, it is constructed of common-bond brick. A simpler, later representative of this basic design is neatly expressed in the Ramah Presbyterian Church (MK 1297), completed near Huntersville in 1881. It is the sole surviving 19th-century frame church in rural Mecklenburg.

In addition to classical gable-front churches, rural Mecklenburg County includes five inventoried Gothic Revival churches built for Presbyterian, Methodist, and Episcopal denominations. In the countryside as well as in the small towns are well-executed examples featuring red-brick facades, steeply pitched corner towers and pointed-arched windows and entrances. In contrast to the 19th-century classical churches, those with Gothic forms and motifs often feature stained-glass windows. A notable example in the countryside is the 1889 Steele Creek Presbyterian Church (MK 1377), in the Steele Creek community. Its steeply pitched gable-front roof and corbelled, pointed-arched windows and entries exemplify the Gothic elements as applied to churches in the county between the 1880s and World War I.

The majority of all of these churches stand remarkably intact. The interiors of many, including the 19th-century rural examples, often retain original woodwork and pews. On the inside, the most significant losses have been the balconies, which on the antebellum churches once were reserved for slaves. The exteriors of several have been modified by new front vestibules (see the Gilead A.R.P.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetHistoric and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 33

Church (MK 1465) in Lemley Township) and the addition of steeples (see the Bethel Presbyterian Church (MK 1456) near Cornelius), reflecting the popularity of the Colonial Revival Style during the post-World War II era and continuing to the present.

No black church buildings survive intact from the 19th or early 20th centuries. While several early 20th-century frame examples remain behind modern brick veneers (their interiors also modernized), the preponderance of black churches date from the post-World War II decades and have simple facades of concrete block, brick, or even metal.

Cemeteries

However, both black and white cemeteries remain throughout the county. A noted black cemetery is associated with McClintock Presbyterian Church (MK 1446) in the Steele Creek area. The early gravestones date primarily from the early 20th century. Historic white cemeteries survive adjacent to rural churches established in the late 18th and 19th centuries. Cemeteries include headstones dating from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, and several have mortared or dry-laid stone walls. Particularly notable is the Steele Creek Presbyterian Church cemetery (MK 1377). Bordered by a stone wall erected in part before the Civil War, the cemetery is exemplary of those established by Scotch-Irish Presbyterians during Mecklenburg's early period of settlement. The headstones are laid out in parallel rows facing east. Many stones of the late 18th and early 19th centuries reveal traditional forms and design, as well as family coats of arms that represent the workmanship of the Bigham family of gravestone cutters. The Bighams operated their workshop in Steele Creek that supplied gravestones throughout the North and South Carolina Piedmont from ca. 1765 to ca. 1820 (Patterson 1985). Stone markers of the middle and late 19th centuries occasionally include the names of manufacturers, whose workshops were located in Charlotte as well as Columbia, Charleston, and Chester, South Carolina. Their headstones include simple, traditional tablets as well as distinctive marble obelisks, which began to appear locally in the 1880s. By the 20th century, the cemeteries included a mix of substantial and sophisticated square and curved monuments, many with rusticated sides. In the 1930s, striking "Woodmen of the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North Carolina

Section number F Page 34

World" monuments appeared, and the Steele Creek cemetery, in particular, has several excellent examples.

SIGNIFICANCE

Churches and cemeteries remaining in the countryside and small towns are significant under Criterion A for reflecting two major phases of the county's history: the predominately Scotch-Irish (Presbyterian) settlement of the fertile countryside; and the development of the small towns during the railroad era and decades of corresponding cotton-related prosperity in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. During this second phase, churches representing other denominations, notably Baptists, Methodists, and Episcopalians, also appeared. The churches are also significant under Criterion C for the handsome expressions of 19th and early 20th-century architectural styles. The remaining churches of the plantation era are refined, dignified examples of gable-end, classical rural church architecture, revealing a subtle blend of Federal and Greek Revival elements of style. The postbellum rural churches represent not only the persistence of the classical mode and gable-end form, but also the incorporation of Italianate-related features and the emergence of the Gothic Revival Style. The cemeteries affiliated with Presbyterian churches established in the countryside during the middle to late 18th century achieve significance under Criterion C as well. The forms and motifs of headstones reveal the work of local craftsmen, including the noted Bigham family of stonecutters, and regional gravestone manufacturers. Headstones of the late 19th and early 20th centuries represent not only the continued development of the rural churches, which were the focal points of expanding agrarian populations, but also the popular headstone designs of the period. The overall design of the cemeteries, with dry-laid stone wall enclosures, has landscape design significance under Criterion C.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Mecklenburg's few surviving 19th-century rural churches are all significant because they are the rare vestiges of what had been many churches built across the county's

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetHistoric and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 35

countryside in that century. The small-town churches all performed significant cultural and social roles in their communities. However, to meet registration requirements, they should display sufficiently intact, original forms and decorative details, both on the exterior and interior, to epitomize the architecture of small-town churches of the early 20th century. Later additions, including those erected after the 50-year cut-off point for the National Register, are acceptable, providing that their scale and design do not significantly compromise the architectural integrity of the original church building, which should otherwise retain original windows, doorways, and decorative masonry.

Cemeteries, to meet registration requirements individually, should include sufficient, intact headstones of the plantation era to represent both the Scotch-Irish settlement of the county, and the designs and materials of headstones erected in the antebellum decades for this locally important culture group. The architectural inventory did not identify significant gravestones of the postwar era or early 20th century, representing designs peculiar to local stone masons. However, if such stones are subsequently identified in cemeteries, then these places, too, will meet registration requirements, even if earlier headstones are not present. These headstones should be intact and of sufficient number, as well as documented so as to represent clearly the work of local craftsmen or to reflect clearly the local culture. Cemeteries comprised primarily of late 19th and early 20th century headstones, but lacking a sufficient number of earlier stones, meet registration requirements when they are associated with significant churches and are nominated as part of National Register nominations which include the churches.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North Carolina

Section number F Page 36

V. COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

Mecklenburg's 19th- and early 20th-century commercial buildings include structures of brick, frame, and stone. The county's small-town main streets, rural crossroads, and rail-oriented hamlets possess characteristically unpretentious business establishments, reflecting the modest scales of these places and the commercial dominance of Charlotte.

A. Crossroads Stores

Rural areas include simply finished weatherboarded or brick-veneered stores, usually with vernacular gable-front or hip-roofed forms. Five rural stores were inventoried.

Although the great majority of these crossroads commercial buildings date from the 20th century, one late-19th century example survives basically intact. The Hayes-Byrum Store (MK1367) was built at Shopton crossroad in the 1890s. This store is a one-story, brick building with a simple, rectangular false front. A later metal soffit spans the three-bay facade. The largely original interior provides a vivid impression of the appearance of rural general stores of this era. The simple wide-board interior is embellished with bracketed shelves, and wood-framed display cases line the walls. This store is the only inventoried rural store currently in use.

The other inventoried rural commercial buildings were built between the turn of the century and the 1920s. The most notable is the Davis General Store (MK 1537) at Croft. The only two-story, load-supporting brick store in rural Mecklenburg, it was built in 1908. The simple facade with a center door is topped by a flat parapet roof. The other stores comprise traditional one-story, gable-front structures -- a notable, largely intact example is the P.T. Christenbury Store (MK1551) at Nevin crossroads which has a simple shed-roofed porch -- and a hip-roofed "Filling Station" and grocery (MK 1542) with a projecting canopy and locally unique rock-faced facade located near the Croft community. The latter building represents a "box-and-canopy" commercial building type that was erected across the country between the 1920s and World War II (Liebs 1985).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North Carolina

Section number F Page 37

Although only one box-and-canopy commercial building has been inventoried, others -- typically weatherboarded -- remain scattered across the county.

B. Small-Town Commercial Buildings

In the small towns, commercial activities are embodied in brick buildings. Twenty-nine small-town commercial buildings have been inventoried, including eight in Pineville, six in Huntersville, and eleven in Davidson. These structures typically have simple one- or two-story facades, occasionally capped by stepped parapets trimmed in stone. Dating primarily from the early 20th century, the principal decorative motifs include corbelled brickwork along the cornices and slightly recessed name panels. On two-story structures built between about 1900 and 1910, upper-story windows often have segmental arches, two-over-two panes, and, occasionally, stone sills. The most ornamental examples feature corbelled brick detail around the second-floor windows. A particularly fine example of this can be found on the facade of the Mill Store (MK1387) in Cornelius. Transoms spanning the entries are commonly intact on commercial buildings, though some have been masked by modern metal veneers. Transoms are of simple, clear glass, and no prism-glass or stained-glass transoms exist in the county's small towns. Some commercial buildings retain original square or slanted entry setbacks, sometimes still paved in decorative tile. But many other stores have been remodelled around their entries, as setbacks have been expanded to provide more convenient access and incorporate entrances into modern shopfront designs including larger display windows. Yet, original display windows survive on a host of storefronts, with wooden mullions still holding the windows in place. See, for example, the storefronts along Huntersville, Main Street. Some stores have been covered in new materials, including clean, smooth metal panels, or ashlar stone veneers, but a remarkably large number of commercial buildings have kept their original red-brick facades.

Store interiors have also undergone remodellings. Yet, stores with original display cases, shelving, and other woodwork remain in towns across the county. Some store interiors have kept their original, decorative pressed-tin ceilings as well. One of the more intact stores in the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetHistoric and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 38

county is the Heath and Reid General Store (MK 1179) in Matthews.

Although buildings have been modernized or razed for parking lots or merely abandoned lots, the original character of small-town commercial districts has remained little changed. Much of the new construction has taken place away from these areas, near the new highway interchanges and access ramps, and new construction that has occurred on the main streets has usually reflected the scale and materials of original commercial buildings. Of course, the small towns located closest to development pressures generated by Charlotte's expansion have been the most affected by modern construction and new commercial enterprises. Consequently, while benefiting financially from new growth, both Pineville and Matthews have witnessed dramatic physical changes at their outskirts, as well as in their downtowns, where architecturally unsympathetic banks, small shopping complexes, and individual businesses have recently appeared.

Although gasoline stations have been among the major culprits in the disfiguring of Mecklenburg's early commercial districts, a small collection of such stations, built between the late 1920s and World War II, have historical and architectural value worth preserving. Standing essentially intact at the edges of several small-town commercial centers are gasoline stations representing in their forms, materials, and decorative details a variety of architectural styles as applied to gas stations nationwide in this period. However, none of these has been inventoried, and a thorough analysis of their elements of design is necessary before specific properties can be singled out for their architectural value in the county.

SIGNIFICANCE

A. Crossroads Stores

Mecklenburg's rural commercial properties of the 19th and early 20th centuries are rare survivors of the many small, rural general merchandise stores and crossroad groceries/filling stations that were once distributed across the county. The merchandise stores are historically significant under Criterion A as associated with rural

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetHistoric and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 39

commerce and trade. These stores, including the mid-19th century Hayes-Byrum Store and the 1908 Davis Store at Croft, formed with churches and schools the nuclei of decentralized agricultural communities. In these stores, neighboring farming families bought and traded for supplies and socialized. These stores as well as the later gable-front and box-and-canopy groceries/filling stations are significant under Criterion C for embodying the forms, methods of construction, and modest stylistic features of their decades of construction. The rural general stores, replete with utilitarian vernacular forms, simple brickwork, and, on occasion, false fronts, represent such commercial properties of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Interiors display a variety of elements reflecting their dates of completion. The Hayes-Byrum Store, for instance, includes simple wide boarding, wood-framed display cases, and distinctive bracketed shelving. Later stores, notably the one at Croft crossroads, feature decorative pressed-metal ceilings. The later groceries/filling stations with distinctive canopies reveal a property type emblematic of such commercial enterprises that were erected across the country between the 1920s and World War II.

B. Small-Town Commercial Buildings

The commercial buildings in the towns are historically significant under Criterion A for representing the rise of Mecklenburg's small towns at the end of the 19th century and in the early decades of the 20th century. Although this main-street architecture is without pretension, it embodies a significant era in the county's history, when cotton mills, oriented to the railroad tracks, arose in the small towns, and when an unprecedented array of commercial activities emerged in well-defined nodes outside Charlotte. Furthermore, selected commercial properties, such as the Heath and Reid General Store in Matthews, stand out on their main streets as vivid representations of the new geography of commercial functions and the preeminence of small-town general merchandise stores in the early 1900s. Similarly, the later gasoline stations of the 1920s and 1930s and early 1940s have historical significance for clearly representing the era of the automobile and the eventual realignment of commercial functions of towns to the outskirts and new highways. The small-town commercial properties also have

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places**
Continuation SheetHistoric and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 40

architectural significance under Criterion C for typifying in their shopfront configurations, shapes of windows and transoms, and corbelled brick detailing small-town commercial facades of this period. The architectural inventory of Mecklenburg County did not identify the significant gas stations in the towns; and further analysis is required to identify the architectural styles and to assess the architectural value of specific examples.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

A. Crossroads Stores

To meet registration requirements, the rural general stores should retain sufficient original exterior and interior features to represent clearly their historical function and dates of construction. They should also retain their rural settings. The rarity of the 1890s Hayes-Byrum Store enhances its historical and architectural significance, even though it now has several additions and a post-World War II front porch. The early 20th-century examples should retain original porches (if they existed) or pre-World War II porches. The scattering of crossroads groceries/filling stations do not share the historical significance of the general stores. Therefore, to meet registration requirements this commercial property type should be so intact -- both interior and exterior -- as to exemplify the property type. Original canopies, porch posts, windows, and basic form should all be intact. The veneers should be unaltered. Given the limited examination of this property sub-type, crossroads groceries/filling stations, in the inventory (only one identified), additional examples need to be identified and analyzed to determine their general level of integrity and distinctive elements.

B. Small-Town Commercial Buildings

Likewise, small-town gas stations need to be inventoried in order to select potential examples that epitomize station designs of the post-World War I era. Only those exhibiting intact forms, facades, windows, and service bays (if appropriate) will probably meet the registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 41

requirements. Main-street commercial properties in Mecklenburg County are characteristically modest in scale and design. Their significance is in their impact as a group of basically intact facades lining a block or several blocks. Thus, to meet registration requirements, commercial properties should be essentially intact in form and details and comprise a district of at least several contiguous stores. The shopfronts and interiors of several of these properties should be sufficiently intact to represent interiors and first-floor configurations of small-town stores in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 42

VI. INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS

A. Textile Mills

Mecklenburg's historic industrial buildings primarily reflect the impact of cotton production and manufacturing in the southwest Piedmont region. Although rural Mecklenburg was once filled with small industries -- in 1902, for example, sixty-nine factories were listed in rural Mecklenburg -- today, factories of the late 19th and early 20th centuries are rare and concentrated in the small towns. Four textile mill complexes survive in towns across the county, and notably in Huntersville, Pineville, and Davidson, where the brick factories, oriented to the railroad tracks, are surrounded by streets of basically intact mill housing. Although the mills have been expanded and modernized over the years (and only the former Dover Mills (MK 1248) in Pineville is still manufacturing textiles), intact original portions reveal an essentially standard cotton mill design of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Unlike traditional housing and outbuildings in the county, the textile mill as a building type is rooted in the principles of factory design which developed during the industrial revolution. Structures were erected with heavy timber interior supports and brick walls in efforts to reduce fire damage, and banks of large windows allowed in natural light. Warehouses, where cotton-related fires often started, were placed away from the main mill and divided by brick fire walls. In North Carolina as well as in other parts of the South, the widely circulated designs and writings of D.A. Tompkins and Stuart Warren Cramer, both mill engineers who lived in Charlotte, stimulated the construction of cotton mills with similar forms and plans.

Mecklenburg's small-town textile mills (the earliest being Pineville's Dover Yarn Mill which began in 1890) were originally constructed as long, one-story forms with common-bond brick walls. Light filtered in through rows of large, triple-sash, segmental-arched windows, as well as through roof clerestories. The low-pitched gable roofs had parapet walls at the gable ends. Adjacent warehouses were typically frame, with brick fire walls. Today, the most intact example is the former Anchor Mills (MK 1324) which opened in Huntersville in 1896. The main cotton mill building and the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetHistoric and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 43

nearby warehouse have been little altered, though the original looms and spindles are gone. As with parts of other early mills in the county, some of the original windows have been bricked. Built in the 1890s, when mill construction was very active locally, the building is very simply finished, treated with arched windows and entrances.

B. Mill Villages

Mill villages survive basically intact in Huntersville (MK 1344), Pineville (MK 1252), and Davidson. Situated around the textile mills, these villages contain the original homes of mill workers. These frame, one-story dwellings represent designs reiterated in mill villages across North Carolina in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The most common house types are two-room, gable-roofed dwellings with rear sheds and shed-roofed porches; shotgun houses with one-bay additions to one side; L-plan cottages; and double-pile, hip-roofed cottages with simple shed porches. Variations of each type are often located in a single village, though rows of a similar design often line individual blocks. During the 1910s and 1920s, bungalow-influenced gable-front and side-gable cottages appeared, featuring wide eaves, exposed brackets, and, occasionally, engaged front porches. In this same period, pyramidal cottages for mill workers also appeared. All of these house types had little decoration, and by the 1910s, were constructed of ready-cut materials that helped reduce the cost of construction. In the village associated with the Dover Mill in Pineville stand several more elaborate dwellings, with hip-roofed, double-pile forms, which were the homes of mill supervisors (e.g. MK 1253).

At present, the mill villages at Pineville, Huntersville, and Davidson stand essentially intact. There is no evidence of large-scale demolition, and cottage types survive intact. The most common alterations include aluminum siding and new porches or porch posts. For the most part, the villages continue to be well-defined entities, geographically distinct from surrounding residential districts. The mill houses occupy narrow lots along a simple grid-iron of streets. The dwellings are no longer owned by the mills, but owner-occupied or the property of landlords not affiliated with the mills.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 44 C. Other Small-Town and Rural Industrial Buildings

No pre-industrial buildings survive in the county. However, remains of the stone foundations of grist mills have been discovered. Each probably dating from the early 19th century, they include the Whitley Mill Site near Long Creek (not inventoried), the Torrence Mill Site near Huntersville, and the Davidson Mill Site at Rural Hill. Both the Torrence and Davidson mill sites are part of locally Designated Historic Properties, but have not been individually inventoried. Evidence of early 19th-century gold mining in the county is detectable in broad, shallow, indentations in the land created when prospectors diverted creeks to man-made areas where the gold in the water could quickly settle. No above-ground resources associated with gold mining have been discovered. The intact Reid Gold Mine in neighboring Cabarrus County has been preserved as a State Historic Site and is a National Historic Landmark. Analysis of resources associated with gold mining in Mecklenburg is the task of archaeologists.

Other industrial properties related to cotton production and processing are not nearly as prolific on the landscape today. Although cotton gins were once widely distributed throughout the county, situated in the towns as well as on farms and at rural crossroads, very few survive. Starting primarily in the 1930s, the drastic decline in local cotton production signalled the end of cotton gins. Today, one gin building, located in Matthews, is known to survive, but it has not been inventoried. Probably dating from the 1920s, this structure typifies gin buildings of this period (Kaplan 1981; Mattson 1987). It is a two-story, side-gabled-roofed, frame building clad in metal.

Mecklenburg's other industrial buildings represent an assortment of small, rural industries and rail-oriented warehousing operations. None of them has been inventoried. Those structures surviving were built in the early decades of the 20th century, are brick or frame constructed, and are plain, functional, one-story, gable-roofed forms. Abandoned cotton/fertilizer warehouses in the small settlement of Croft retain large, wooden doors typical of such early 20th-century structures, as well as a variety of early signage. These buildings are frame, metal-veneered, and one story.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 45

SIGNIFICANCE

The surviving remains of pre-industrial structures and industrial buildings of the 19th and early 20th centuries reflect the industry and commerce of the county as it developed from an exclusively agrarian society to one largely geared to textile manufacturing. The several stone foundations of gristmills, which were once distributed across Mecklenburg County, have historical significance, enhanced by their rural settings. However, they have lost their architectural significance and their former visual impact. The industrial buildings remaining from the 1890s and the early 20th centuries are both historically and architecturally significant under Criteria A and C, respectively.

A. Cotton Mills and Mill Villages

The cotton mills and associated mill villages today bear witness to the enormous importance of cotton production and processing between the 1890s and 1930s. The one-story, brick mills with related warehouses, and the compact villages reflect the small-town scale of their settings, in contrast to the larger villages and grander mills in Charlotte at this time. Yet, being situated in the county's small towns, the mills and villages are also significant for their physical dominance in places such as Huntersville and Pineville. In form, construction, and simple architectural style, Mecklenburg's mills represent the typical cotton mills of this era, designed in all probability after standard mill plans. They have particular significance for their likely association with noted mill designers Cramer and Tompkins. The mill houses represent in their basic forms and simple designs (often corresponding to popular styles), distribution, and orientation to mill, town, and railroad, typical mill villages of the early 20th century in North Carolina.

B. Warehouses

The warehouses oriented to the rural communities represent the small-scale factories and the vitality of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places**
Continuation Sheet Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number F Page 46

small, rural market and distribution centers that prevailed in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The rail-oriented warehouses directly reflect the importance of cotton production and the many shipping points that developed along the county's railroads. Their simple, utilitarian forms represent traditional, vernacular small industrial buildings of this period. A thorough analysis of these structures has not yet been done and will be necessary to understand their historical significance and current distribution as well as variations in designs.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Representing the few surviving vestiges of rural, agricultural warehousing, the warehouses should maintain integrity of setting. They should be oriented to small, rural settlements. Furthermore, to meet registration requirements, each should also retain sufficient physical features to evoke the period of construction and vernacular industrial building type. The cotton mills should display sufficient physical features and details to represent the standard mill design and internal organization of this era. For example, the mill at Huntersville stands remarkably intact, including original fenestration, door placements, and adjacent cotton warehouse. While modernized and expanded over time, the changes have not been obtrusive and do not compromise the integrity of the mill design. By contrast, the mill at Pineville, though still in operation, has been enlarged and remodelled to the extent that only small portions of the original mill remain. The majority of original brick walls, as well as windows and doorways and warehouses, have been lost. The Pineville mill, therefore, does not meet registration requirements.

The related mill villages, to meet registration requirements, should retain a sufficient number of mill houses, arranged in their original fashion and displaying basically intact forms, to clearly reflect the mill housing complex of the early 20th century. For example, the mill housing complex at Pineville, though now linked to a vastly modernized mill, has maintained its original layout and house types and therefore is eligible. The housing includes a variety of traditional mill house forms and designs; and although they have been partially modernized -- and some extensively so -- and some houses have been razed, the great

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North Carolina

Section number F Page 47

majority have intact forms, and many retain exterior architectural features, such as turned porch posts, and bungalow-related tapered porch posts and exposed rafters.

G. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.

See continuation sheet

H. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional documentation:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State historic preservation office | <input type="checkbox"/> Local government |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other State agency | <input type="checkbox"/> University |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Federal agency | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

Specify repository: N.C. Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, N.C.

I. Form Prepared By

name/title Richard Mattson and William Huffman
organization _____ date July, 1990
street & number 422 Rensselaer Ave. telephone 704-375-4236
city or town Charlotte state N.C. zip code 28203

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places****Continuation Sheet** Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number G Page 1 SUMMARY OF IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION METHODS

The multiple property listing of historic and architectural resources of rural Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, is based upon a 1987-1988 architectural inventory of rural Mecklenburg conducted by Mary Beth Gatza. Gatza has a B.A. in Architectural History from Mary Washington University and has been employed by the National Park Service and Historic American Buildings Survey in Virginia. Conducted under the auspices of the Survey and Planning Branch of the North Carolina Division of Archives and History, this inventory identified more than 500 properties and groups of properties outside the city limits of Charlotte. Every possible road, public and private, leading to a known or suspected property was driven by Gatza during the inventory and every building marked on the USGS topographical maps of the county was viewed. Farmsteads, crossroads communities, churches and cemeteries, and all of the county's small towns were inventoried. Properties from vernacular to high style were recorded, with emphasis given to age and rarity, and representatives of types and styles. The vast majority of properties predating the turn of the century were inventoried, including every property erected before the Civil War. Properties built between 1900 and World War II were more selectively recorded, with emphasis given to more unaltered, unusual, or especially representative ones. The inventory included 7 rural properties which are locally Designated Historic Properties, with expanded files available at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission in Charlotte. The inventory included as well seven properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places. For each recorded property, computerized inventory forms were completed; locations noted on USGS topographical maps; photographs taken; research conducted, including the checking of deeds and secondary sources for selected properties and the taking of oral histories; and narrative architectural and historical descriptions written.

In 1989 based upon the individual survey files, Richard Mattson wrote the property type statements. Bill Huffman wrote the historic context essay. Mattson has a Ph.D. in Geography from the University of Illinois, and Huffman has a Ph.D. in History from the University of Missouri. Mattson and Huffman collaborated on the individual National Register nominations, with Mattson completing Sections 1-7 and parts of Sections 8-10, and Huffman completing other parts of Sections 8-10.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places**
Continuation Sheet Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number G Page 2

The inventory by Gatza identified a wide range of resources in rural Mecklenburg County spanning the years from the mid-18th century to World War II. Integrity requirements were based upon a knowledge of existing properties and an awareness of rural Mecklenburg's rapid commercial and residential development. The architectural and physical features of the county's surviving finer properties, as well as growing rarity of farm properties in the face of recent development, were considered in developing the outlines of potential registration requirements. The total number of rural Mecklenburg County properties placed on the Study List for nomination to the National Register at the April, 1989 North Carolina Professional Review Committee meeting included eleven farmhouses with related outbuildings; two rural churches with cemeteries; one individual log dwelling; a small-town historic district (Matthews); a mill village historic district (Pineville); a crossroads historic district (Croft); and a rural store with adjacent house (Hayes-Byrum Store and House). The Study List properties did not include those already listed as locally Designated Historic Properties, which constitute the majority of the county's finest pre-Civil War plantation seats. Instead, given the limited time frame of the Multiple Property Nomination project and budgetary constraints, the focus was on rural properties for which little official recognition and protection existed. These properties were selected with the assistance of Gatza and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, which runs the Designated Historic Properties program in the county. Fourteen rural historic properties are already listed in the National Register. Most are antebellum plantation houses listed in the 1970s, and rural properties have received little attention since then. The present nominations were selected based upon their representation of major property types, and, in part, upon the importance of recognizing and initiating steps to protect rapidly disappearing farmsteads and crossroads buildings in certain areas of the county. Furthermore, it is hoped that the research conducted for the National Register nominations will be used by the Historic Properties Commission in the nomination of these buildings, sites, and districts as Designated Historic Properties. The Multiple Property Documentation Form has been drafted to cover all identified property types in rural Mecklenburg County, and to facilitate the addition of individual properties and districts to the Register in the future.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places****Continuation Sheet** Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North CarolinaSection number H Page 1

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

Alexander, John Brevard. The History of Mecklenburg County From 1740 to 1900. Charlotte: The author, 1902.

----- Reminiscences of the Past Sixty Years. Charlotte: Ray Printing, 1908.

Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of North Carolina for the Scholastic Years 1933-1934 and 1935-1936. Raleigh: State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1936.

Blythe, LeGette, and Charles R. Brockmann. Hornet's Nest: The Story of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. Charlotte: Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, 1961.

Brengle, Kim Withers. The Architectural Heritage of Gaston County, North Carolina. Gastonia, N. C.: Gaston County, 1982.

Clay, James W.; Douglas M. Orr, Jr.; and Alfred W. Stuart, eds. North Carolina Atlas. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975.

Cotton, J. Randall. Historic Burke. Morganton, N.C.: Historic Burke Foundation, Inc.

Daniel, Pete. Breaking the Land: The Transformation of Cotton, Tobacco, and Rice Cultures since 1880. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985.

Davidson, Chalmers Gaston. The Plantation World Around Davidson. 2nd edition. Davidson: Briarpatch Press, 1982.

Fetters, Thomas T. and Peter W. Swanson, Jr. Piedmont and Northern. San Marino, Calif.: Golden West Books, 1974.

Fifth Annual Report, Superintendent Charlotte Water Works, Charlotte North Carolina. Charlotte: Charlotte Water Works, 1904.

Glassie, Henry. Pattern in the Material Folk Culture of the Eastern United States. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1969.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North Carolina

Section number H Page 2

The History of Steele Creek Presbyterian Church. 3rd edition. Charlotte:
Craftsman Printing and Publishing, 1978.

Hanchett, Thomas W. "The Rosenwald Schools and Black Education in North
Carolina." The North Carolina Historical Review. 65 (1988): 445-468.

----- "Rosenwald Schools in Mecklenburg County." Charlotte
Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1987.

Hood, Davyd Foard. The Architecture of Rowan County, North Carolina.
Salisbury, N.C.: Rowan County Historic Properties Commission, 1983.

Huffman, William H. "A Historical Sketch of the Charlotte Cotton Mills."
Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1983.

----- "A Historical Sketch of the Charlotte Supply Company
Building." Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission,
1981.

Jordan, Terry G. American Log Buildings. Chapel Hill: The University of
North Carolina Press, 1985.

Kaplan, Peter R. The Historic Architecture of Cabarrus County, North
Carolina. Concord, N.C.: Historic Cabarrus, Inc.

Kniffen, Fred, and Henry Glassie. "Building in Wood in the Eastern United
States: A Time-Place Perspective." The Geographical Review. 66
(1966): 40-66.

Lefler, H. T. and A. R. Newsome. North Carolina: The History of a Southern
State. 3rd edition. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press,
1973.

Liebs, Chester H. Main Street to Miracle Mile: American Roadside
Architecture. New York: Little, Brown & Co., 1985.

Little-Stokes, Ruth. An Inventory of Historic Architecture: Caswell County,
North Carolina. Yanceyville, N.C.: Caswell County Historical Association.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North Carolina

Section number H Page 3

Matthews, Louise Barber. A History of Providence Presbyterian Church.
Charlotte: Providence Presbyterian Church, 1967.

Mitchell, Miriam Grace and Edward S. Perzel. The Echo of the Bugle Call:
Charlotte's Role in World War I. Charlotte: Dowd House Preservation
Committee, Citizens for Preservation, Inc., 1979.

Morrill, Dan L. "A Survey of Cotton Mills in Charlotte, North Carolina."
Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1979.

Mecklenburg County, N.C.. Deed Books.

Patterson, David W. "North Carolina Gravestones: The Bigham Family
Workshop." Unpublished paper on file at the Center for Visual and
Performing Arts, Carboro, N.C.

Preyer, Norris W. Hezekiah Alexander and the Revolution in the
Backcountry. Charlotte: The author, 1987.

Reynolds, D. R., ed. Charlotte Remembers. Charlotte: Community Publishing,
1972.

Roberts, Bruce. America's First Gold Rush. 2nd edition. Charlotte: McNally
and Loftin, 1972.

Sommerville, Charles William. The History of Hopewell Presbyterian Church.
Charlotte: Hopewell Presbyterian Church, 1939; reprint, 1987.

Southern, Michael. "The I-House as a Carrier of Style in Three Counties of
the North Carolina Piedmont." Carolina Dwelling. 26 (1978): 28-45.
[Student publication of the School of Design, North Carolina State
University.]

Stathakis, Paula. "The Homestead Mill," Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic
Properties Commission, 1989.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places

Continuation Sheet Historic and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg
County, North Carolina

Section number H Page 4

"Survey and Research Report on the Matthews School." Charlotte
Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, 1984.

Tompkins, Daniel Augustus. History of Mecklenburg County and the City of
Charlotte. 2 vols. Charlotte: The author, 1903.

Thompson, Edgar T. Agricultural Mecklenburg and Industrial Charlotte.
Charlotte: Charlotte Chamber of Commerce, 1926.

United States. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. Census
of the United States: Agricultural Schedules, Mecklenburg
County, N.C.