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NPS Form 10-900
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

APR 23 1996

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

1. Name of Property

historic name PINE TOP FARM
other names/site number Watson, John S., Homeplace

2. Location

street & number two miles east of Thomson, US 78 and US 278
city, town Thomson (X) vicinity of
county McDuffie code GA 189
state Georgia code GA zip code 30824

(N/A) not for publication

3. Classification

Ownership of Property:

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

Category of Property

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

Number of Resources within Property:

	<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>
buildings	12	11
sites	3	0
structures	2	0
objects	1	1
total	18	12

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Mark R. Edwards
Signature of certifying official

4/17/96
Date

Mark R. Edwards
State Historic Preservation Officer,
Georgia Department of Natural Resources

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

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency or bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

Ma J. M. W. W.

4/15/96

() determined eligible for the National Register

() determined not eligible for the National Register

() removed from the National Register

() other, explain:

() see continuation sheet

So Signature, Keeper of the National Register Date

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

DOMESTIC/single dwelling
AGRICULTURE/agricultural field/animal facility/agricultural
outbuilding/storage
FUNERARY/cemetery

Current Functions:

DOMESTIC/single dwelling
AGRICULTURE/animal facility/agricultural outbuilding/storage

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Colonial Revival
OTHER/agricultural buildings

Materials:

foundation	brick
walls	brick and wood
roof	asphalt shingles
other	N/A

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Pine Top Farm is a former agricultural farm now used as a horse training farm. It consists of a main house, tenant houses, and barns at its center, with gently rolling fields and pastures surrounding. The Main House was built in 1935 on an earlier house site. It is a two-story, brick, Colonial Revival-style, central hall-type house. There is a decorative front portico. An interior feature of note are the canvas ceilings on the first floor. Early central heating radiators are intact, although not used. The house retains its original materials and had a rear family room added in 1992. Near the main house is a modern garage, original wooden garage (ca. 1935), landscaped grounds, historic Watson Family Cemetery (ca. 1916), and a ca. 1935 pump house. There are numerous barns of various types on the property, most of which were built around 1935 when the Wilson family built the new main house. The noncontributing overseer's house was built in 1951. In the tenant quarters section of the farm are several frame tenant houses dating from the 1930s, one that is considered antebellum, and another series of barns and agricultural outbuildings, some historic and some not. The Harry Cofer House is a frame, antebellum, saddle-bag type house with a central fireplace. There are a total of 25 buildings and structures: 12 are contributing buildings, 2 are non-contributing buildings due to alterations, 9 are non-contributing buildings due to being post-1944 and 2 are non-contributing structures that post-date 1944.

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Narrative Description
by Anne S. Floyd
Central Savannah River Area Regional Development Commission
Preservation Planner

The overall setting of Pine Top Farm is one of a former agricultural farm. It has a professionally landscaped and wooded main house setting, tenant houses, and barns located at its center with gently rolling fields and pastures surrounding. The impression of Pine Top Farm is one of a well-maintained and immaculate farm. The pastures are mowed, and with the exception of the Main House of brick, all wooden barns are painted red with white trim. Roads are graded.

Brick piers with a granite lintel marked PINE TOP and a horse's head mark the geographic boundaries of Pine Top Farm. These were installed about 1965.

This former agricultural farm has evolved since about 1951 into a top-notch, first quality, horse training farm. Although hay is grown and some cattle are still kept primarily in the western half of the farm, fields may be seen now with horses grazing. In the 1970s and 1980s, jumping courses for horses have replaced crops once grown in the fields. In the 1990s, Olympic training jumps for horses have been built. The British and German Equestrian Teams have chosen Pine Top Farm for their practice area and to acclimatize their horses for the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. Pine Top Farm is a 1994 Georgia Centennial Farm Award Winner.

The horse areas of Pine Top Farm include the land in the central and eastern parts owned by James E. Wilson, Jr. It is comprised of the historic barns behind the main house, a dressage ring, and a horse jumping course of about two and a half miles with about 75 jumps. About 200 riders and horses participate twice a year in the United States Combined Training Association's Area III events. Four grades of horses and riders are judged in three dressage areas of one large riding ring; classes are held in a three-day event in the fields and dressage ring; and stadium jumping tests the ability of rider and horse to jump heights and difficult situations, and the horse's stamina and endurance in a timed event.

The western one-third of Pine Top Farm is owned by Robert N. Wilson, Sr., and is comprised of woodlands, fields where hay is grown, and pastures where horses and livestock graze.

The Main House A and its associated buildings, including the New Carport X, Original Garage V, and Pump House W, are owned by Mr. and Mrs. Robert N. Wilson, Jr.

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Using the **Site Plan**, a physical description of the historic buildings will be given in detail and a brief description of the non-historic buildings:

I. The Main House and associated outbuildings:

A - Main House (contributing)

The John S. Watson Homeplace was moved in 1935 to allow a new brick house to be built. James Edgar Wilson, Sr., and his wife, Norma Watson Wilson built a substantial two-story brick house on the same site. This house is a five-bay, central-hall, Colonial Revival-style, Georgian-plan building with a side-gable roof. The front of the house faces south. There is a one-story original screen porch with a flat roof on the west side (actually slightly sloped to shed water). The overhanging eave has large dentil molding and the side gable has a boxed return with the dentil molding. The cornice touches the second floor windows on the front and rear. The windows on either side, first and second floors, and front and rear first floor windows, have brick stretchers over the top with a keystone of white masonry as decoration, and a protruding sill of brick headers. Under the gable ridge on each side is a half-round wooden vent with the same decoration surrounding.

The front entrance features a decorative portico which has a pediment with dentils inside and below. The top of the pediment touches the sill of the central second floor window. The frieze beneath the pediment uses the classical Greek Doric order with a guttae, metope, and triglyph design. The frieze is broken in the center with a half round arch highlighted above with a simple arched string course of rope. This original piece of rope molding has been kept preserved by painting over it. The frieze is supported by a simple molding below.

The portico is supported on each side by two Greek Doric order fluted columns which sit on plinths. Pilasters duplicate the column design. The columns are positioned with space between them so that the four side lights on each side of the front door can be seen. The arch below the pediment allows the three transom lights above the front door to be seen. The six panel front door is typical of the 1930s. The portico rests on a brick porch foundation.

On the east side the house, two single windows and a double window comprise the second floor. The first floor has a door, a single window, and a double window in symmetric balance. On the west side of the house, the second floor has four single windows while the first floor has two single windows and a French double doors opening with

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four transom lights. The porch wing is supported by two brick square columns with a simple molded cornice below the roof.

There are two interior chimneys located centrally between the four rooms on each floor so as to provide a fireplace in every room. The exterior of the chimney tops have a collar design.

The house has a wide central hall with a U-shaped frontal open stairway that has a landing. The bottom stair is curved which accentuates the curved newel handrail. Spindles are simple and round which sit on a small block like a plinth.

The formal first floor rooms of the central hall/foyer, living room, and dining room have parallel joists or exposed beams crossing the rooms and surrounding the perimeters. A heavy crown molding is installed below this framing feature. A wide arched opening forms the entrance from the hall to the living room and from the hall to the dining room. An arched four-shelf built-in bookcase flanks each side of the fireplace in the living room and complements the living room and dining room entrances. The fireplace mantels in the living room and dining room are wooden and square with a classical-looking block design and an overhanging lintel. Original buff colored mantel tiles are in place in the living room. The windows in these rooms feature large six-over-six windows with molded trim. Interior doors have the same trim, but the east and west exterior door opening have a four-light transom above. A chair rail is in the dining room.

The house was built by Henry Hogan. Hogan was a builder known to have built the circa 1914 Tignall Bank Building in Wilkes County and to have done the woodwork in the 1937 McNeill House in Thomson (National Register listed). It is thought that the architectural firm of Scroggs and Ewing may have designed the main house at Pine Top Farm but no plans exist. Scroggs and Ewing did design the 1950s house of John W. Wilson across from the Main House on U.S. Highway 278. The Main House is similar in appearance to James E. Wilson, Senior's, sister's house, Mrs. Frank Hooley (Delle Wilson), in Shelby, North Carolina.

Some of the unusual features of the house are the first floor canvas ceilings stretched between the exposed joists. The dining room canvas was replaced with plywood and painted, but the central hall/foyer and living room still retain the original canvas. The house was the first in McDuffie County to boast "central" heating with radiators. These radiators have all been retained in the house although they are not used now. Natural gas was used in the main house in the early to late 1950s. The breakfast room has beautiful heart pine paneling and built-in cabinets. All of the floors are heart pine. There is a

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cellar underneath the kitchen where coal was stored for the "iron fireman" furnace.

A one-story flat-roof addition was made to the rear of the house in 1992 as a large family room, bath/bar area, kitchen, pantry, and mud or utility room. It is contemporary yet compatible to the house. The interior is paneled and contains hardwood floors, a fireplace, a coffered ceiling, and large arched windows. On the exterior, stucco was used as a finish and pilasters intersperse the windows. The stucco-clad chimney rises above the roof making an architectural statement of its own. At this time central heating and air-conditioning was installed throughout the house.

X - A contemporary three-space garage (non-contributing) This was added to the rear of the main house for cars and boats. This open-shed structure has square columns which mimic the porch wing. A concrete driveway paves the back area.

The house yard was **landscaped** in the 1930s by Lawrence Knox of Thomson who had just graduated from the University of Georgia's School Landscape Architecture. No plans exist. Some of the identified trees and shrubs are listed: pine, elm, water oak, china berry, pecan, magnolia, persimmon, sweet gum, crepe myrtle, boxwood, azalea, camellia, wild cherry, and coastal Bermuda hay. China berries were dried historically and fed to livestock in order to deworm them.

Z - The Cemetery (contributing) dates from 1916 as a burial site for the John S. Watson descendants. In 1972, it was expanded to include the Wilson family members. A brick walk was laid. A simple low to the ground historic wrought iron fence borders the cemetery. An elm tree has grown up and matured through the historic fence.

V - Original Garage (contributing), built 1935. A wooden two-car garage with a front gable entrance. Below the roof ridge at the rear is one nine-pane fixed window with a louvered vent above. The roof is metal.

W - Pump House (contributing) Built 1935. A brick American bond building for the pump for the water system for Pine Top Farm.

II. The Agricultural/Farm Buildings:

B - Buggy Shed (contributing) Built 1935. The buggy shed is just that, a rectangular shaped open shed with a pitched roof built for storage of a horse-drawn buggy. The roof is metal. The four corner posts support a cutaway front gable entrance. The cladding is weatherboard. There is V-bracing underneath.

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C - Wagon Shed (contributing) Built 1935. This is a transverse crib with a central drivethrough, hay loft above. It was built to house four two-horse wagons. A shed is attached on one side and a stable area for horses in on the other side. The entire structure is built on brick piers.

D - Trainer's House (non-contributing) A mobile home brought in the 1970s to house the horse trainer and his family.

E - Overseer's House (non-contributing) Mr. Willoughby's house was constructed in 1951 when Mr. Wilson, Sr. died. He became the Pine Top Farm overseer. The house is rectangular, weatherboard frame with an asphalt shingle roof. It is a two-bedroom, one bath, living room, dining room, kitchen.

E1 Smoke House (non-contributing) Built 1951.

F - Twin Barn (contributing) Built 1935. One of two twin barns, this barn is rectangular and was built as a double-pen central area for storage. The loft above is accessed from the front dormer. A shed with a drivethrough stabled four mules and horses at the rear. Downstairs, in one of the double pen rooms, ear corn and bundles of oats were stored and in the upstairs loft, leaves of the corn stalk were pulled along with other crop leaves as "fodder" for the livestock to eat, pre-dating hay. In the other double pen room, seed cotton was stored before being taken to the gin. Ventilation is provided by a slatted air space just below the eaves surrounding the barn. The barn sits on brick piers.

G - Twin Barn (contributing) Built 1935. The second of the two twin barns, they were identical when built. The side entrance to the west has been converted to a "glory room" for trophies and photographs collected in horse shows through the years. The west side has been altered to provide concessions for the horse trials in one room. At the rear, one stall on the west side has been converted to restrooms.

Between the twin barns is Mr. Willoughby's plaque, the **plantation bell CC**, and a retaining wall of brick. The old well is encircled with brick in a square shape. (contributing)

Mr. Willoughby's plaque-BB reads: "These 22 oak trees serve as a living memorial to the man who planted them. Pine Top Farm's beloved overseer, Walton P. Willoughby, 1896-1975. Father, Farmer, Friend, Teacher of Boys." The oak trees were planted behind the main house and along the road in front of the Quarters and barns. Mr. Willoughby was hired in 1951 to be the overseer for Pine Top Farm when James Edgar Wilson, Sr., died. (non-contributing)

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H - Hall Barn (non-contributing) Built in 1935; altered in 1965. This central hall barn has a pent roof with a cupola on top. Stalls stable horses on each side of the central hall. In 1965, the roof was raised and a row of stalls on the exterior south side was added. These stalls kept four teams of mules. Two mules were kept as a team in each of four large stalls. The hay racks held fodder of which some fell below to a trough and was "recycled" so that there was no waste. Alongside the hay trough on each side was a corn trough which held about 20 ears of corn for each mule and a salt block. A tack room and secretary's office for the horse trials is on the northwest side. Above the interior stalls flanking the central hall is room for hay storage accessed by a vertical ladder.

I - British Barn (non-contributing) Built 1994. Stalls are built back to back facing the exterior. The stalls are the largest on Pine Top Farm of 12x12 feet. There is a central hall. The overhanging eaves have fans and electricity. Two stalls have been converted to office/kitchen quarters at the request of the British Equestrian Team.

The Quarters

J - Tenant House (contributing) In 1935, the Watson House (M) was moved and its kitchen was used as the front part of this newly-created house (J).

The new porch was the original breezeway. A newer section was constructed and added to the rear in 1935 when the new house (J) was created. The pitched roof is metal.

K - Tenant House. (not-applicable) Burned Christmas Eve 1993.

L- Tenant House (contributing) Built 1935. Saddle bag type with central chimney. Two bay with window and door, door and window. Shed front porch.

M - Tenant House (contributing) Built pre-Civil War (pre-1861) as John S. Watson Homeplace. Double pen type with two end chimneys. Rear straight stair goes to attic loft which is finished. Attached rear shed where kitchen is and bedroom. Foundation has hand-hewn beams and mortise and tenon joints. (The former kitchen of the John S. Watson Homeplace is part of tenant house, J.) Moved here in 1935.

N- Barn (non-contributing) Built 1975. Temporary stalls used for stabling horses when the Belle Meade Hunt Club held large shows at Pine Top Farm.
Stalls built to face one side.

O- Barn (non-contributing) Identical to **Barn N.**

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P- Barn Built 1975. Canadian Barn. Built to stable horses of the fox hunters who came from Quebec to fox hunt at Belle Meade Hunt, McDuffie County.

Q - American Barn (non-contributing) Built 1992. Houses 40 horses. Stalls built back to back facing outward.

R - Harry Cofer Barn (contributing) Built 1935. This barn is similar in appearance to the twin barns, **F and G**, with its double pen type and central dormer hay loft. The rear has a full-length shed.

S - Equipment Shed (non-contributing) Built c.1985 by Robert N. Wilson, Sr. for use as an office and hay barn.

T - Wagon/Tractor Shed (contributing) Originally built to house wagons, this shed now houses tractors. This shed has a pent roof with a double drivethrough and flanking storage areas enclosed only at one end. This structure can be dated to 1935 as a pole barn. The Augusta Road was built and paved in 1932. As there was no electricity on the farm, Mr. Wilson built an electric and phone line from the Thomson City Limits with tall cedar support posts. Some were left over to build this barn. Plows and tools were kept in this barn, too.

U - Harry Cofer House (contributing) Built pre-Civil War (pre-1861). This is a saddle bag type with two front doors, a central fireplace, a rear ell, and front shed porch and a rear shed porch. The building got its name from the Harry Cofer family who lived there longer than anyone else in the early 20th century.

ZZ - Tack Shop (contributing) Built 1935. This structure was originally built as a chicken coop. It was altered in 1990s when it was converted to a Tack Shop for the sale of saddlery goods. The metal roof clads a saltbox shaped roofline. The front has a vertical batten door on the left, the middle has weatherboard like the rest of the building, and the only window has been added (six over six) on the right.

AA - John Forrest Watson House Site (contributing) This house was a c. 1890 Victorian-era wooden one-story house with a pecan grove. The house burned in 1954 but the pecan grove still exists.

GENERAL STATEMENT ABOUT BARNS: Many of the barns are built on brick piers. The Merry Brick Company of Augusta was facing hard times and brick was easy to get in 1935. Also, all of the wooden barns have lightning rods to protect them from fire. In all, the barns stable 150 horses.

8. Statement of Significance

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

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):

AGRICULTURE
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance:

c.1855-1935

Significant Dates:

1935

Significant Person(s):

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

Unknown

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Significance of property, justification of criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above:

Narrative statement of significance (areas of significance)

Statement of Significance: Pine Top Farm is significant in agriculture because it is an intact farm owned by the same family for seven generations. It has been awarded Georgia Centennial Farm status for this continuity. It represents much of the history of southern agriculture with its numerous outbuildings which reflect all the necessary activities to keep a farm running. It was a cotton farm until farming stopped around 1951 and includes many houses associated with the tenants who assisted in the farming operation in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The farm is significant in architecture because it includes a large number and variety of historic farm-related dwelling houses and outbuildings in their original condition, including vernacular barns and tenant houses, as well as the main house. The main house, built in 1935, was presumably architect-designed due to its high style, although no architect as been identified. Its two-story, brick, Colonial Revival style is in keeping with the popular architectural trends of the day. The interior also reflects the finest detailing of the 1930s. The entire farm presents one of the largest, intact collections of agricultural outbuildings in Georgia.

Although no formal archaeology has been done on the property, Pine Top Farm may be significant archaeologically. Pine Top Farm has several known sites which pertain to historical archaeology. The John Forrest Watson homesite (AA on site plan) is a c.1890 house site which was an integral part of the history of early McDuffie County. The Tenant House J closer to Pine Top Farm burned in 1993 and would help tell the story of tenant farmers who worked for the Watson-Wilson Families. The Watson-Wilson Family Cemetery has been used since 1915, when John Forrest Watson was buried there.

National Register Criteria

Pine Top Farm meets National Register Criterion A because of its long association with agriculture and farming. This property has been settled for over two centuries and exemplifies in its remaining agricultural buildings the most recent era of farming on the property. The continued ownership of the property by the same family for over a century also give this property historic associations with America's farming heritage.

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The property meets National Register Criterion C because its remaining agricultural buildings are good, surviving, intact examples of farm buildings. The large number of them make it possible to understand many of the activities of a large working farm. The "new" Big House from 1935 is a fine example of the Colonial Revival Style of architecture which was so prevalent in the 1920s and 1930s. The house was most likely designed by an architect, although the firm has not been definitively identified. The house retains most all of its original elements and is an excellent example of that style.

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

N/A

Period of significance (justification)

The period of significance runs from the antebellum era c. 1855, when the farm was established and is marked by two antebellum buildings the Tenant House M and the Harry Cofer House U, through 1935 when the current "Big House" was built and the historic era of the farm ended. The exact date of construction for the oldest building is not known.

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)

I. Buildings: Total: 23

Contributing: 12

Main House A, Buggy Shed B, Wagon Shed C, Twin Barn F, Twin Barn G, Quarters J (kitchen of Johns S. Watson Homeplace), Quarters L, Quarters M (John S. Watson Homeplace), Harry Cofer Barn R, Wagon/Tractor Shed T, Harry Cofer House U, Original Garage V

Non-Contributing: 11

Historic but altered: 2

Hall Barn H, Tack House ZZ

Post 1944: 9

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Trainer's House D, Overseer's House E, , British Barn I, Barn N, Barn O, Canadian Barn P, American Barn Q, Equipment Shed S, New Carport X

Occupied

Contributing:

Main House A, lived in by owners
Trainer's House D and Overseer's House E, lived in
Four tenant houses J,L,M and U, lived in by renters
Horse Barns F,G, occupied by horses

Non-contributing:

Hall Barn H, British Barn I, Barn N, Barn O, Canadian Barn P, American Barn Q, occupied by horses

Not Occupied

Contributing:

Buggy Shed B, Wagon Shed C, Harry Cofer Barn R,
Wagon/Tractor Shed T, Original Garage V

Non-contributing (post-1944):

Equipment Shed S, New Carport X

Non-contributing (alterations):

Tack House ZZ

II. Sites

Contributing: 3

Watson-Wilson Cemetery Z
Former Tenant House Site K
Former wooden house site, John Forrest Watson, AA

III. Structures : 2 (both contributing)

Smoke House E1
Pump House W

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IV. Objects

Contributing: 1

Plantation Bell CC

Non-Contributing: 1

Mr. Willoughby's Plaque, post-1944 BB

Developmental history/historic context (if applicable)

Owners or occupants were:

Circa 1800 to 1827.....Peter and Elizabeth Watson

1827 to 1861.....Elizabeth Watson

1861 to 1865.....Thomas Miles Watson

1865 to 1895.....John S. Watson

1895 to 1916.....John F. Watson

1916 to 1924.....Mrs. John F. Watson

1924 to 1951.....James E. & Norma W. Wilson

1951 to 1977.....Mrs. Norma W. Wilson, John W.
Wilson, James E. Wilson Jr.,
and Robert N. Wilson Sr.

1977 to 1982.....Mrs. Norma W. Wilson
James E. Wilson Jr.
Robert N. Wilson Sr.

1982 to Present.....James E. Wilson Jr.
Robert N. Wilson Sr.
Robert N. Wilson Jr.
Cindy L.T. Wilson

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**THE HISTORY OF PINE TOP FARM
AND THE THOMAS WATSON FAMILY
MCDUFFIE COUNTY, GEORGIA
(FORMERLY COLUMBIA COUNTY)**

by John I. Bruno and edited by James E. Wilson, Jr.
and Glenn Wilson.

10/8/95

The land that is now known as "Pine Top Farm," located 2 miles east of Thomson on the Augusta Highway and the Georgia (now CSX) Railroad, has been in the Watson family since before the Revolutionary War (pre-1775). The property was first brought into the family when Thomas Watson was granted 500 acres on July 3, 1770, by Sir James Wright, the British Colonial Governor of Georgia. (Grant Book I, Page 164, Surveyor General's Records of Georgia.). Thomas Watson was a Quaker leader that fled the oppressive rule of British Governor Tryon's Colony of North Carolina. Along with 40 other Quaker families, the Watsons began their 300 mile trip into the Georgia wilderness. They traveled by oxcart and horseback heading for their new land, which had been set aside for the Quaker petitioners and which became known as the Wrightsboro community (the village of Wrightsboro is located in McDuffie County, about 10 miles to the Northwest). Thomas and his wife, Elizabeth Coats, "Susannah", daughter of James Coats, found virgin Georgia forests, which were dark and gloomy from the thick overlapping tree branches of huge trees.

Upon arriving on their new land the first thing they had to do was cut trees to build a shelter. When this was done, they "girdled" the rest of the trees on the land intended for farming and planted seeds around the stumps in holes dug with handmade hoes.

Their first home was probably a crude shelter made from saplings, slabs of bark and white oak shakes - a "lean-to". It was a temporary shelter. By hand they harvested lumber and waited for it to dry. Then they built their cabin. They had to use greased paper for windows, because glass was scarce and too expensive. Leather served as door hinges until a blacksmith could make metal ones.

Supplies of food and materials were limited. Until they could harvest crops, they lived off the land. This land was plentiful with wild turkey, deer, bear, rabbit, berries, nuts and fruit. They would eat the game, then dry the hides and trade them in Augusta for gun powder, salt, and other necessities.

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The Watsons cleared their land, grew their crops and raised chickens, cattle, pigs and sheep. They helped the Wrightsboro community by making roads out of Indian paths and by helping build rafts to carry the crops to the markets down the Little River and the mighty Savannah River to Augusta and Savannah.

Besides the burdens of their primitive living, the Quaker families had to contend with hostile Indians. Many of Watson's neighbors could not take rough pioneer life or Indian raids and they went back to North Carolina, but not the reddish blond-haired Watsons, who were known for their stubborn ways. They didn't let hard work and rough primitive life stop them. Tall and proud, they decided to succeed and conquer this virgin land.

It was a rough but promising first decade for the Watsons. With the onset of the Revolutionary War, peace was interrupted by American Rebels who wanted to be free of British tyranny. The plight of the Watsons as Quakers became worse than it had ever been. The Rebels were against them because they wouldn't fight the British while the British were against them because they wouldn't fight the Rebels, and the Indians were against them because they were white.

Raised as pacifists, the Watsons and other Quakers were confused, "Should we fight or should we not?" Deciding as their ancestors did when they came to the New World that freedom from tyranny was most important, Thomas Watson and his son, Peter Watson, chose to fight as did many other Quakers. They joined the Continental Army. Peter Watson served with the 3rd South Carolina Battalion of the Continental Army. (Georgia Citizens and Soldiers of the American Revolution (1979), by Robert S. Davis, Jr.).

After the war, in the 1780s, Georgia was practically destitute. Thomas and Peter returned home to find their once productive fields a tangle of briars, pine saplings and sedge grass. Like their ancestors, they were resilient and accustomed to working hard. They reclaimed their neglected lands and grew tobacco as the cash crop. They would take the hogsheads of compressed tobacco to the local station, called Sweetwater Creek Mill, about 3 miles to the southeast, to eventually find its way to the Savannah River at Augusta for shipment to northern and European markets. This was where Joseph Maddox, also a well-known Quaker leader, had built a mill and operated it with the help of his sons.

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Things began to get better for the Watsons now that peace and a small measure of prosperity had been achieved. An influx of new neighbors, non-Quakers, began to have influence on Peter and his family. Slowly they drifted from their Quaker heritage and adopted the manners and customs of the newcomers.

In 1793, Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin, which changed the cash crop of the area to cotton instead of tobacco. Cotton brought more money, which encouraged Peter and other planters to increase their cotton acreage. The Quakers found, to their dismay, they were not going to be able to live their lives as their faith dictated. It was against their belief to use slaves, but they were unable to compete with planters who used slave labor. Frightened by Quaker prophet Zachary Dick's prediction that a slave insurrection would soon happen, many of Peter's neighboring Quaker families decided not to use slaves and they moved West to Ohio and Indiana. Peter's religious beliefs soon slanted toward those of John Wesley and the Methodist religion. Soon he joined other planters and became a slave owner himself.

Peter married his first wife, Diana Miles, sometime before 1798. They had one son, Thomas Miles Watson, born December 13, 1798. Diana died before 1811, after which, Peter married Elizabeth McCormick on October 15, 1811, in Columbia County, Georgia. (Columbia County, Georgia, Marriage Records. *(Pine Top Farm was originally in Columbia County, before McDuffie County was created out of the original Columbia and Warren counties in 1870.)*)

Elizabeth was a widow with children when she married Peter. Peter and Elizabeth raised their children and they accepted neighbor William Abner Smith's two children, Elizabeth and William, to raise. (Columbia County, Georgia, Inferior Court Minutes, November 23, 1798)

Peter Watson was a true citizen soldier, helping his fellow man in whatever way he could, whether it was to join the Militia and fight Indians, or to serve on inquest jury duty. He served as a jurist when John Parks was murdered by Daniel, a negro slave belonging to Parks, on the 31st of December 1821 (Georgia Journal Newspaper, April 30, 1822).

Peter died in 1827, leaving a will. (Will Book W, Columbia County, Georgia Records.) In his will, Peter left one-half of his land to his wife Elizabeth for life or widowhood, and the other half and remainder to his son Thomas. He gave his wife his negro slaves

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named Peg, Sam, and Peter, free and clear of any reservations. He gave a negro girl named Nane to his stepdaughter, Levinia Wade, wife of Edward Wade. The remainder of his slaves and land he gave to his son Thomas. He appointed his son Thomas and his good friends and neighbors, James Shields and William Wiley, as Executors.

In 1835, the Georgia Railroad was surveyed, starting at Augusta and going west. J. Edgar Thomson, who later became famous for building railroads through the rugged mountain passes of the Allegheny Mountains and who later became President of the Pennsylvania Railroad, surveyed the route of the Georgia Railroad, which passed through the Thomas Watson farm (and which now forms the back boundary of Pine Top Farm). The Georgia Railroad was eventually completed to Terminus (now Atlanta), and was so ably surveyed by J. Edgar Thomson that only two trestles were required in the 160+ miles from Augusta to Terminus. The town of Thomson was named after J. Edgar Thomson, having been previously known as Frog Bottom. The first train passed by the Thomas Watson farm and through Thomson in 1840, causing one local farmer to remark, "If that thing had come through here sideways it would have killed every one of my cows!" This railroad carried Longstreet's corps to the Battle of Chickamauga in September, 1863, and was the last supply route to Hood's army during the siege of Atlanta in 1864. Returning trains from Atlanta would unload wounded soldiers that had died on the train, several of whom, some unknown among them, were buried in the Thomson City Cemetery in burial plots donated by private citizens. *(This railroad line, now owned by CSX, remains one of the busiest in Georgia, with numerous freight trains passing each day, and the present owners of Pine Top continue leasing a strip of railroad right-of-way adjoining the farm as has been done since the 1800's.)*

On September 30, 1850, Thomas deeded his interest in the 550-acre tract that he had inherited from his father to his step-mother Elizabeth (Deed Book 00, page 342, Columbia County, Georgia Deed Records). She then deeded 162 acres of that land to her grandson Thomas Peter Wade, son of Levinia and Edward Wade. Note: This 162-acre tract was deeded to John T. West by the heirs of Thomas Peter Wade, and from him to John F. Watson (Deed Book 00, page 342, Columbia County, Georgia Deed Records). It now comprises a portion of Pine Top Farm.

The Tax Digest of 1844 for Columbia County, Georgia, shows Elizabeth Watson owning 557 acres and 15 slaves in Columbia County and 40 acres in Cherokee County. She drew the 40 acres in Cherokee County, Georgia, in the Land Lottery of 1832, as a widow of a

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Revolutionary Soldier. (The Cherokee Land Lottery by James F. Smith (1838), Page 269.)

Elizabeth Watson died in 1861, at the age of 81. (Columbia County Federal Census of 1860, Page 654, showed her age as 80 in 1861) Her will was probated in 1861. (Will Book J, Columbia County, Georgia Probate Records.) She named her stepson, Thomas M. Watson, as a trustee of the property she left her granddaughter.

Thomas Miles Watson was born December 13, 1798, in Georgia. He married first on June 8, 1826, in Columbia County, Georgia, Mrs. Catherine Smith Jones, born November 2, 1802. She was the widow of Allen H. Jones (Columbia County, Georgia Marriage Records). She died on December 1, 1854. They had six children; Emily Diana Watson, born September 25, 1828, died October 28, 1834; Tom Peter Watson, born July 18, 1832, married Martha J.H. Watson February 15, 1853, died 1868; John Smith Watson, born August 13, 1833, married Ann E. Maddox December 22, 1853, born January 28, 1833, the daughter of Henry and Letitia Maddox of Richmond County, Georgia; William Miles Watson, born June 11, 1839, who came home on furlough from the Confederate Army and died December 8, 1863; Catherine Elizabeth Watson, born October 5, 1836, married Virgil M. Borroum December 21, 1854; George Washington Watson, born May 26, 1841, and died six months later on December 10, 1841. (Family Bible Records in possession of Mrs. John H. Terry, Macon, Georgia. Also in DAR Records, Georgia Archives, Atlanta, Georgia.)

Thomas Miles Watson was a large plantation owner with many slaves. He was a kind-hearted man, and never permitted his overseer, Jim Morgan, to mistreat his slaves. He provided them with good clothing, plenty of food, and a comfortable house. The slaves were contented and happy and devoted to their "Master". If there was a young couple among them wishing to get married, "Master" would read the passage from the family Bible and pronounced them "man and wife." Every Christmas he made sure each received a gift. This family tradition was carried forward to the Tenant Farmers of Pine Top Farm during the 20th Century.

Thomas Miles Watson was an educated man with culture. He had a collection of rare books that later were a source of pleasure and inspiration to his children and grandchildren. Called "Squire Tom" by his neighbors, he was respected for his honorable and upright nature.

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Thomas married a second time, Mrs. Mary Ann Cooper, May 26, 1860, in Columbia County, Georgia. They did not have any children. On June 3, 1865, he had a stroke and died at his home. His will is recorded in Will Book "J" Columbia County, Georgia Probate Records. Watson's estate consisted of 19 slaves [by the time of his death they had been freed] and 1600 acres of land. He left the home place, consisting of 500 acres, to his wife, Mary Ann, for and during her natural life. At her death it was to be divided equally between his sons, Tom Peter, John S., and his daughter, Catherine, less any previous advances that he had made to his children when he was alive. He appointed Catherine's husband, Virgil M. Borroum, as Trustee for her and her children's share of his estate.

According to the land records, Tom Peter Watson received 370 acres of good farm land on Germany Creek (a few miles north of Pine Top) plus previously conveyed land. Catherine Watson Borroum and her brother, John Smith Watson, divided the land on Sweetwater Creek (to the southeast of Pine Top). Catherine got the land South of the present U.S. Highway 278 (which now belongs to W.C. "Top" Watson). John S. got the North half consisting of 600 acres that was considered poor farm land. This division was approved by the Judge of Superior Court. (Minute Book A, Pages 36-38, McDuffie County, Georgia, Superior Court Records. Also Deed Book A, Page 53, McDuffie County, Georgia Deed Records.)

John Smith Watson was a planter with only a common school education, but he was gifted, cultured and refined. He loved music. His father, Thomas Miles Watson, saw him trying to make a fiddle out of a gourd, and made no comment, but on his next trip to Augusta, he bought John a violin. John learned to play his violin and cherished it all of his life as his prized possession.

The Watsons were never rich, but were comfortable, with a good farm, and fat stocks. When the War Between The States broke out in 1861, like his ancestors who fought before him, John joined the Confederacy, along with his brothers, Tom Peter, and William. He was wounded twice during the War and discharged in 1863. His wife and son went to Macon, Georgia and brought him home.

John and his wife, Ann Eliza Maddox, raised seven children; Addie Augusta Watson, born November 22, 1854, married John E. Garner, and she died at her home near Williston, SC, on October 15, 1920; Thomas Edward Watson (later a U.S. Senator), born September 5, 1856, died in Washington, D.C. September 26, 1922. Over 10,000 people were present

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at his funeral in Thomson. He married October 9, 1878 Georgia Durham born January 9, 1840, died May 14, 1923. William Augustin Watson, born February 12, 1859, called "Top". Julian Cumming Watson, born September 1, 1860, died October 19, 1893, Mary Isabella Watson, born January 18, 1863, married George W. Usry, died February 27, 1918. John Forrest Watson, named after Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest, born November 17, 1865, and Julia Watson, born August 15, 1868, died 1941.

With the Civil War over, and the slaves freed, the family suffered hard times during Reconstruction. Fortunately, Sherman's army did not pass through and destroy everything on the March to the Sea, as they did further west, causing even greater hardship. In 1870, the Columbia and Warren County boundaries were redrawn when McDuffie County was created by the General Assembly, and the surveyor who surveyed the new boundaries for McDuffie County was Captain John R. Wilson, C.S.A., ancestor of the present owners of Pine Top Farm. Since then, the farm has been in McDuffie County. *(The original hand-drawn map with pictures of the survey crew including Capt. John R. Wilson today hangs in the back hall at White Columns Inn. Capt. John R. Wilson, CSA, was the great-grandson of Captain John Wilson of the Continental Army, the first Wilson to settle in the area and for whom the local DAR chapter is named. He is buried in the Wilson cemetery on the Ben Howell property on Cedar Rock Road west of Thomson, near his log cabin which still stands. The present owners of Pine Top Farm are seventh generation direct descendants of Captain John Wilson of the Continental Army, and of the original Thomas Watson who received the land grant for present day Pine Top Farm in 1770.)*

John S. Watson endured the hard times, unpleasantness and tyranny of Reconstruction, only to feel Mother Nature's wrath in "The Great Storm of 75," which was perhaps the most devastating storm ever to hit McDuffie County. It occurred March 23, 1875, and people who heard about it from their parents still talk about it.

They called it a tornado, even though none of the observers mentioned the funnel shape, and it cut a path of destruction a mile wide across McDuffie County.

It started in Lee County, Alabama, and entered Georgia at Harris County, then traveling through Talbot, Upson, Monroe, Jones, Baldwin, Hancock, Warren, McDuffie, and Columbia, then crossing the Savannah River into Edgefield, SC. After it traveled through Warren County and taking off the roof of the Camak station, it entered McDuffie at

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the 42 mile post on the Georgia Railroad, coming from the Southwest. Wreaking ruin through many farms in southwest McDuffie County it passed north and west of Pine Top Farm, but fortunately only blew off some shingles and downed a few trees. Other farms weren't so lucky. At Seaborn Ivy's plantation every building was razed. A bizarre sidelight, a horse at Henry Ivey's place was blown into a well, but was saved. The next tragedy occurred at the Lazenby House on Cedar Rock Road (and within sight of the original Captain John Wilson homeplace and cemetery dating from Revolutionary days), then occupied by the J.T. Stovall family, (whose descendants still own the house and adjoining acreage). The members of the Stovall family took shelter in the kitchen, which they thought would be safer than the rest. (It was made from a log cabin, which had been built by the property's first owner, John Hodgins, a Quaker). Unfortunately the chimney collapsed, killing Mr. Stovall, and injuring his wife so badly that she was an invalid for the remaining part of her life. A.W. Faucett's Mill on Brier Creek was badly damaged, and what seems to have been a waterspout is said to have sucked all the water out of Hobbs Mill Pond. The second story of the Edmunds House north of Thomson was shifted sideways about 6 inches and this can still be observed as the house still stands today.

Eleven years (1886) later an earthquake shook McDuffie to its foundations and cracked a few fireplaces and shook up everybody at John S. Watson's Farm. The most startling result of the "Shake", came at a meeting at Fountain Campground near Wrightsboro, where revival meeting was being held. Sinners became converted in record time, and in unprecedented numbers.

The Watson family overcame these and many other obstacles and were prominent citizens of the community. Thomas Edward Watson was an author, U.S. Representative, and a U.S. Senator. He is the father of the Rural Free Delivery mail delivery service that we take for granted today. This system allowed citizens to receive mail delivered directly to their home or farm instead of the post office. Tom Watson also edited his newspaper, "Weekly Jeffersonian", the magazine "Watson's Magazine", and he wrote The Story of France, a biography of Napoleon, The Life and Times of Thomas Jefferson, The Life and Times of Andrew Jackson, and a novel called Bethany, A Story of the Old South (the Bethany house still stands today on Salem Road near Pine Top). William A. "Top" Watson is known for introducing the famous "Tom Watson" Watermelon Seed. For many years he was Tax Collector for McDuffie County. His grandson William C. "Top" Watson now owns the same farm, which is across the Augusta Highway from Pine Top, and was

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Clerk of McDuffie County Superior Court for many years until retiring several years ago.

John Forrest Watson, an entrepreneur (and grandfather of the present owners), was extremely successful as a planter and built much of Thomson's business district. Born in November 1865 and raised during the hard days of Reconstruction, he was determined to be successful. His mother Ann Eliza Maddox Watson, the mother of seven children and devoted wife of John S. Watson, was a model mother and educated woman who encouraged and supported her children. She was highly versed in history and biography. Ann was a walking library of French history. She held the attention of listeners for hours discoursing about Josephine, Marie Antoinette, and many other great women of historical literature. From Miss Ann, her children got their passionate sympathy for oppressed humanity, their driving power, their work ethic, their love of the higher life, and their kindness to others. Her descendants today are much like her.

On October 19, 1893, tragedy struck the Watson family. John S. and Ann Watson lost their third son, Julian. He is buried at Sweetwater Church. He had been a successful merchant in Thomson for many years. Two years later, on June 12, 1895, John S. Watson died at his home, and is buried in the Thomson Cemetery. His grave is marked as a Confederate War Veteran. Although some say that he died a poor man, neither he nor his wife ever drew a Confederate pension, casting doubt on this viewpoint.

After John S. Watson's death, Ann moved in with her son, Thomas E. Watson. On March 20, 1909, she died. She was buried beside her husband. Neither John S. nor Ann left a will. Their family farm was divided between their sons and daughters. There are no recorded deeds or estate records on file showing how the property was divided, which was common to that period.

John Forrest Watson, called "Forrest", and Ella Delle Bussey were married on January 19, 1893, at Union Church, about 10 miles away on the Cedar Rock Road west of Thomson, during an ice storm. They left the church in a horsedrawn carriage heading to their home in the pecan grove at the top of the hill (facing "Top" Watson's home across the Augusta Road) on the 217 acre farm (now part of Pine Top Farm) that he inherited from his father. This home burned in 1954, but the pecan trees still stand, across the Augusta Road from Top Watson's house. The ice was so bad on the road that one could follow the blood trail left by cuts in the horse's hooves (Note: Research by this author into the Probate Court and deed records of McDuffie County yielded no deeds

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to John Forrest Watson for this 217 acres. We have to assume he inherited it because there are no estate records for either John S. Watson or his wife on record in McDuffie County). In addition to the 217 acre farm that John F. Watson inherited from his father, he bought 173 acres from John T. West on November 22, 1890, known as the Wade Place (Deed Book F, Page 358, McDuffie County, Georgia Deed Records). The Wade Place was part of the original Colonial grant to Thomas Watson in 1770. On December 3, 1910, he bought his brother William A. Watson's share of the John S. Watson family farm consisting of 87 acres (Deed Book J, Page 37, McDuffie County, Georgia Deed Records).

Together John Forrest Watson and his wife raised six children: Robbie Watson B. Clary (1893-1922), Norma Watson Wilson (1896-1982, mother of the farm's present owners), Mildred Watson Rivers (1901-1982), Ola Watson Ivy (1899-1979), Mary Watson Garrett (1905-1984), and John Forrest "Bubba" Watson Jr. (1910-1973).

John Forrest Watson Sr. died unexpectedly on February 18, 1916, without a will. His large estate was divided between his widow and children as follows; the store buildings on Greenway and Railroad Streets in Thomson were divided between his daughters, each receiving three buildings. The whole street block on Greenway consisting of a blacksmith shop, livery and sales barn and sales pen went to John Forrest Jr. Also, each heir got a farm.

Norma Watson Wilson, mother of Pine Top Farm's present owners, got most of the John S. Watson home place and farm, which was two miles east of Thomson on the north side of the Augusta Road and which is now included in Pine Top Farm. This included the Watson cemetery where her father, John Forrest Watson Sr., her sister Robbie Watson B. Clary, and her brother-in-law Charley Walston Barksdale are buried.

Mrs. John F. Watson, called "Miss Delle", inherited part of the "John S. Watson's Old Home Farm" (Minute Book D, Pages 687-688, McDuffie County, Georgia Probate records). Eight years later she deeded 21 acres to her son-in-law, James E. Wilson, who had married her daughter Norma in 1915. (Deed Book P. Page 188, McDuffie County, Georgia Deed Records). Later she deeded 53 acres to him on September 22, 1927 (Deed Book R, Page 384-385, McDuffie County, Georgia Deed Records). Miss Delle died September 22, 1955.

James Edgar Wilson Sr., father of the present owners, bought 231.5 acres that was known as "The Holliman Tract" and adjoining the 217 acre John Forrest Watson farm from the heirs of Horace T. Clary on

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January 6, 1927. His son H.E. Clary was administrator of his father's estate and signed the deed to James E. Wilson, and he married John Forrest Watson's first daughter Robbie. H.T. Clary had bought this land from William A. "Top" Watson, John S. Watson's son, on December 5, 1910 (Deed Book J, Page 251, McDuffie County, Georgia Deed Records). This was the remainder of "Top" Watson's share of his father's estate and is the present eastern part of Pine Top Farm adjoining Moose Club Road and CSX Railroad.

James Edgar Wilson was a successful planter and business man who managed the farm, cotton gins, a prosperous feed and fertilizer business (MOFCO - McDuffie Oil and Fertilizer Co.) and several cotton warehouses. His great-great grandfather was Captain John Wilson (1756-1847), a Revolutionary War soldier, who fought with Georgia's 1st Battalion of the Continental Army (Roster of Revolutionary Soldiers in Georgia, Volume III, by Mrs. Howard H. McCall (1969)). His grandfather, Captain John R. Wilson CSA, surveyed McDuffie County in 1870. Captain John R. Wilson of the Continental Army was one of the first settlers of St. Paul's Parish, the area that became successively Richmond County, then Columbia County, and in 1870 McDuffie County.

James Edgar Wilson continued to farm the land with the assistance of many tenant farmers. In 1935, during the depression, Mr. Wilson decided to build his family a new brick home on the same site as the old John S. Watson home place. Not wanting to destroy his wife grandfather's home, he hired a man for \$75.00 to move the old two-story house and its detached kitchen approximately 500 feet to the rear adjoining tenant houses, called "The Quarters," where the wage hands lived. This was done very slowly by placing logs under the house and using stump pullers, mules and leverage to move it to its new foundation, where it stands today. \$75.00 shows how much people would do for so little money during the depth of the depression. At this time the average wage hand would earn 50 cents per day from sunrise to sun-set.

The former kitchen, now a "shotgun" rental house, also still stands at the opposite end of the "quarters" from the former "big house" and was the home for many years of Mary Lou Ivery, Norma Wilson's housekeeper. Mary Lou is still alive, living with her daughter in Augusta. The fine, spacious new home and many barns were built with timber cut by sawmills set up on the farm. The foundation trenches for one of these sawmills can still be seen at the edge of a clearing at the farm, and a rusty old pair of log tongs was found

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half-buried in a wooded bottom a few years ago and once again put to good use by the present owners.

There were much joy and many pleasant experiences as James E. Wilson's boys, the present owners of the farm, grew to be men. They loved their horses and competed for use of the one saddle horse. It was usually decided who got to ride their horse by the first one waking up in the morning saying, "I bid for the horse today."

At times the families in "The Quarters" would come down and sit on the porch at the big brick house to listen to Joe Louis's boxing matches and President Roosevelt's fireside chats. There were no radios in "The Quarters" since electricity was not generally available until about 1940.

Sometimes they might kill a hog on a cold winter's day and salt him down for storage in the smoke house. Or they might barbecue a small pig in August at "lay-by-time". The neighbors and friends were always invited.

When the cotton crop was mature and the cotton bolls started to open, the pickers would start picking. It was always an honor to have the first bale of cotton ginned in the fall. It always brought a premium price and a picture in the "McDuffie Progress" newspaper.

Everyone on the farm helped with the cotton picking. Men and women would have a sack hanging from a shoulder strap and go between two rows at a time picking. The pay was around 40 cents per hundred pounds, and a good picker could pick 400 pounds a day. Full bags were emptied onto a burlap sheet, and the corners tied together. The sheets were weighed in the field each evening at "weigh up" time. There was a daily contest about who picked the most cotton. They would take the cotton to the Gin on Railroad Street in Thomson by two-horse wagon. The road was dirt until the Augusta-Thomson road was built in 1932.

James Edgar Wilson was a man of unquestionable character, confident, and always well dressed in a suit. During the Depression of the 1930s he managed to prosper. He managed his farm, cotton gins, cotton warehouses and other enterprises well. He was able to send his three sons to the University of Georgia. He died November, 15, 1951, leaving his wife, Norma, and three sons, John Watson Wilson, James Edgar Wilson Jr., and Robert Norman Wilson. His will is recorded in the Probate Court Records of McDuffie County, Georgia. He willed his

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brick home with four acres to his wife. The remaining land he owned he left to his three sons equally, (Probate Court Records, McDuffie County, Georgia) including a 45-acre tract directly across the Augusta Highway that was purchased in 1932 from Mrs. Esther Guy Jones when the Augusta Highway was paved. This land had been part of the original grant to Thomas Watson in 1770, and still adjoins "Top" Watson's land. Today, five families of direct descendants live on this tract.

Following the death of James Edgar Wilson in 1951, an overseer, Mr. Walton P. Willoughby was hired to oversee the farm. This was a return to the custom of earlier days to have an overseer for the farm. An overseer's house was built for Mr. Willoughby and his family. Mr. Willoughby helped raise the grandsons on the farm teaching the boys how to work and to love the outdoors. Mr. Willoughby is commemorated by a bronze plaque at the brick wall between the twin barns. The plaque reads, "These 22 oak trees serve as a living memorial to the man who planted them, Pine Top Farm's beloved overseer, Walton P. Willoughby, 1896-1975, Father, Farmer, Friend, Teacher of Boys." He was well liked by all and respected for his farm knowledge. He kept bird dogs to hunt for quail. In his later years if he missed many quail, he would trade his gun in, blaming his missing shots on his gun.

In 1970 and 1971, Mrs. Norma Watson Wilson deeded the 217 acres she inherited from her father, John Forrest Watson, to her three sons in two deeds (Deed Book 75, Page 536 & Deed Book 77, Page 83). The 301 1/2 acres she inherited from her husband was deeded by her to her three sons in 1972 and 1973. (Deed Book 81, Page 364 & Deed Book 83, Page 669).

On December 23, 1977, John W. Wilson sold his one third interest in Pine Top Farm, consisting of 518.5 acres (217 acres and 301 1/2 acres), to his brother James E. Wilson Jr. (Deed Book 102, Page 866). After that transaction the owners of the 518.5 acres were James E. Wilson Jr. and his brother Robert N. Wilson Sr., and their mother Mrs. Norma Watson Wilson who still owned the family home and the family cemetery, which consisted of 3.43 acres.

James E. Wilson Jr. and Robert N. Wilson Sr. divided the 518.5 acre tract into two parcels in 1978. James E. Wilson Jr. took the eastern parcel that contained 317.95 acres, formerly called "The Holliman/Wade Place and John S. Watson Home Place," and Robert N. Wilson Sr. got the 198.13 acre parcel comprising the west end of the farm, nearest to Thomson (Deed Book 102, Pages 665-668).

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On December 18, 1982, Mrs. Norma Watson Wilson died. She left a will that was probated in the Probate Court of McDuffie County, Georgia. In her will she left her entire estate to her three sons, except the family cemetery, which she left to her son, James E. Wilson Jr. She appointed her oldest son, John W. Wilson as Executor. John W. Wilson, as Executor, deeded the 0.19 acres, known as the Family Cemetery, to his brother in May of 1983 (Deed Book 125, Page 642). On the same day he deeded the home of his parents, consisting of 3.31 acres and a large two-story brick house, to himself and his two brothers in accordance with his mother's will. (Deed Book 125, Page 644) They in turn sold the home and 3.31 acres to Robert N. Wilson, Jr. and his wife Cindy Lou T. Wilson, who now reside there (Deed Book 125, Page 646).

As of June 2, 1994, Pine Top Farm consists of four parcels and is owned by:

James E. Wilson Jr.....	317.95 acres	"East Part of Pine Top Farm"
James E. Wilson Jr.....	19 acres	"Family Cemetery"
Robert N. Wilson Sr.....	198.13 acres	"West Part of Pine Top Farm"
Robert N. Wilson Jr.....	3.31 acres	"Brick Home"
& Cindy Lou T. Wilson		
Total Acreage:		519.58 acres

Note: All deeds recorded after 1870 are recorded in the Superior Court Clerk's Office, McDuffie County, Georgia. Acreage is "more or less".

Pine Top Farm is a 1994 Georgia Centennial Farm. It has recently been converted for use for the U.S. Combined Training Association Horse Trials and has also been selected as the Pre-Olympic Training Site for the British and German Equestrian Teams for 1996 Atlanta Olympics.

The farm was used in the winter of 1995 for winter training of the U.S. Equestrian Team. The selection Trials were held in February, 1995 for the U.S. Pan American Team. The Pan Am games were held in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Floyd, Anne S., John I. Bruno, James E. Wilson, Jr., and family. "Pine Top Farm", Historic Property Information Form, August, 1994 plus supplemental information, October, 1995. Original on file at the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Ga.

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

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67)

has been requested

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

State historic preservation office

Other State Agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other, Specify Repository:

Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 519.58 acres

UTM References

- A) Zone 17 Easting 362860 Northing 3703510
- B) Z17 E364860 N3702140
- C) Z17 E364120 N3702070
- D) Z17 E362640 N3702840

Verbal Boundary Description

The current legal boundaries are: on the North and East by CSX Transportation Co. Railroad Tracks. On the South by U.S. Highway 278 & Moose Club Rd. On the West by the East By-Pass of U.S. Highway 278.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property is all the land currently associated with the farm which forms a representative rural setting for the historic buildings and structures. It is surrounded by definitive boundaries: a railroad track (also a historic boundary from the 1840s) on two sides, a U.S. highway on two others.

11. Form Prepared By

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street & number 500 The Healey Building, 57 Forsyth St., NW
city or town Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30303
telephone (404) 656-2840 **date** March 11, 1996

(HPS form version 10-29-91)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Photographs

Name of Property: Pine Top Farm
City or Vicinity: Thomson vicinity
County: McDuffie
State: Georgia
Photographer: James R. Lockhart
Negative Filed: Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Date Photographed: September, 1995

Description of Photograph(s):

- 1 of 21 Main Entrance, looking toward barn complex; photographer facing northwest.
- 2 of 21 Main Entrance, looking toward main house complex; photographer facing northwest.
- 3 of 21 Wagon Shed (C); photographer facing northwest.
- 4 of 21 Twin Barn (F); photographer facing northwest.
- 5 of 21 Willoughby Plaque and Hall Barn (H) in background; photographer facing north.
- 6 of 21 Twin Barn (G); photographer facing northwest.
- 7 of 21 Hall Barn (H); photographer facing northwest.
- 8 of 21 Quarters (J); photographer facing northwest.
- 9 of 21 Quarters (L and M); photographer facing northwest.
- 10 of 21 Quarters (M); photographer facing west.
- 11 of 21 Watson-Wilson Cemetery (Z); photographer facing northwest.
- 12 of 21 Farm Buildings on West Side of farm (U, T, and R); photographer facing northwest.
- 13 of 21 Main House (A), Front (South) Facade; photographer facing northwest.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Photographs

14 of 21 Main House, west facade;photographer facing northeast.

15 of 21 Main House, rear (north) facade with new addition and carport (X);photographer facing southeast.

16 of 21 Main House, rear (north) facade with carport (X), Original Garage (V) and Pump House (W);photographer facing southeast.

17 of 21 Main House, interior, first floor, foyer/stair hall;photographer facing northwest.

18 of 21 Main House, interior, first floor, dining room;photographer facing north.

19 of 21 Main House, interior, first floor, living room;photographer facing northeast.

20 of 21 Main House, interior, first floor, master bedroom;photographer facing southwest.

21 of 21 Main House, interior, second floor, bedroom above the breakfast room;photographer facing south.

FLOOR PLAN

Pine Top Farm

Thomson Vicinity, McDuffie Co., GA

SCALE: Not to scale

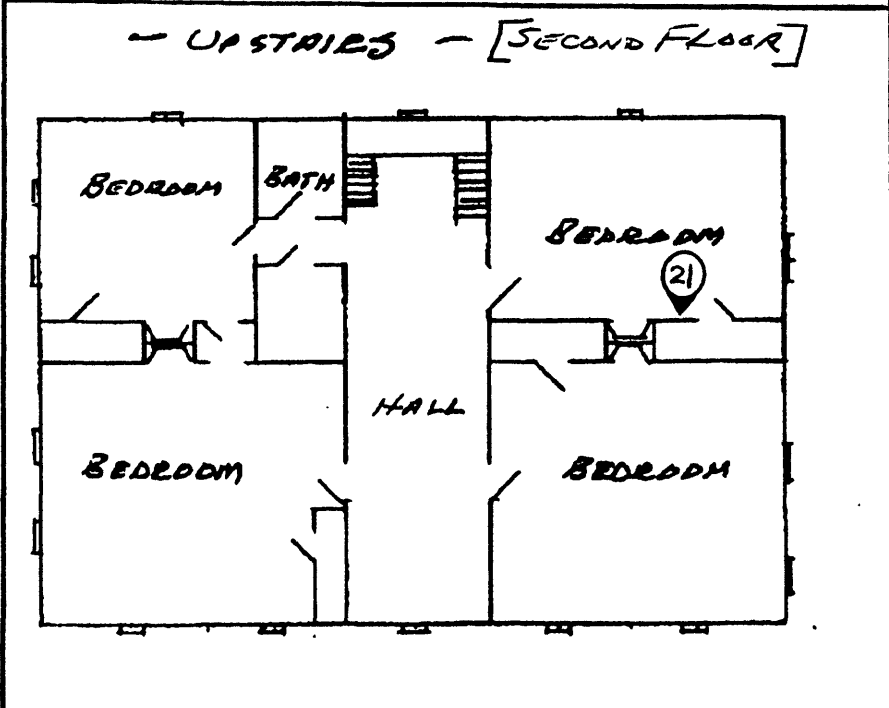
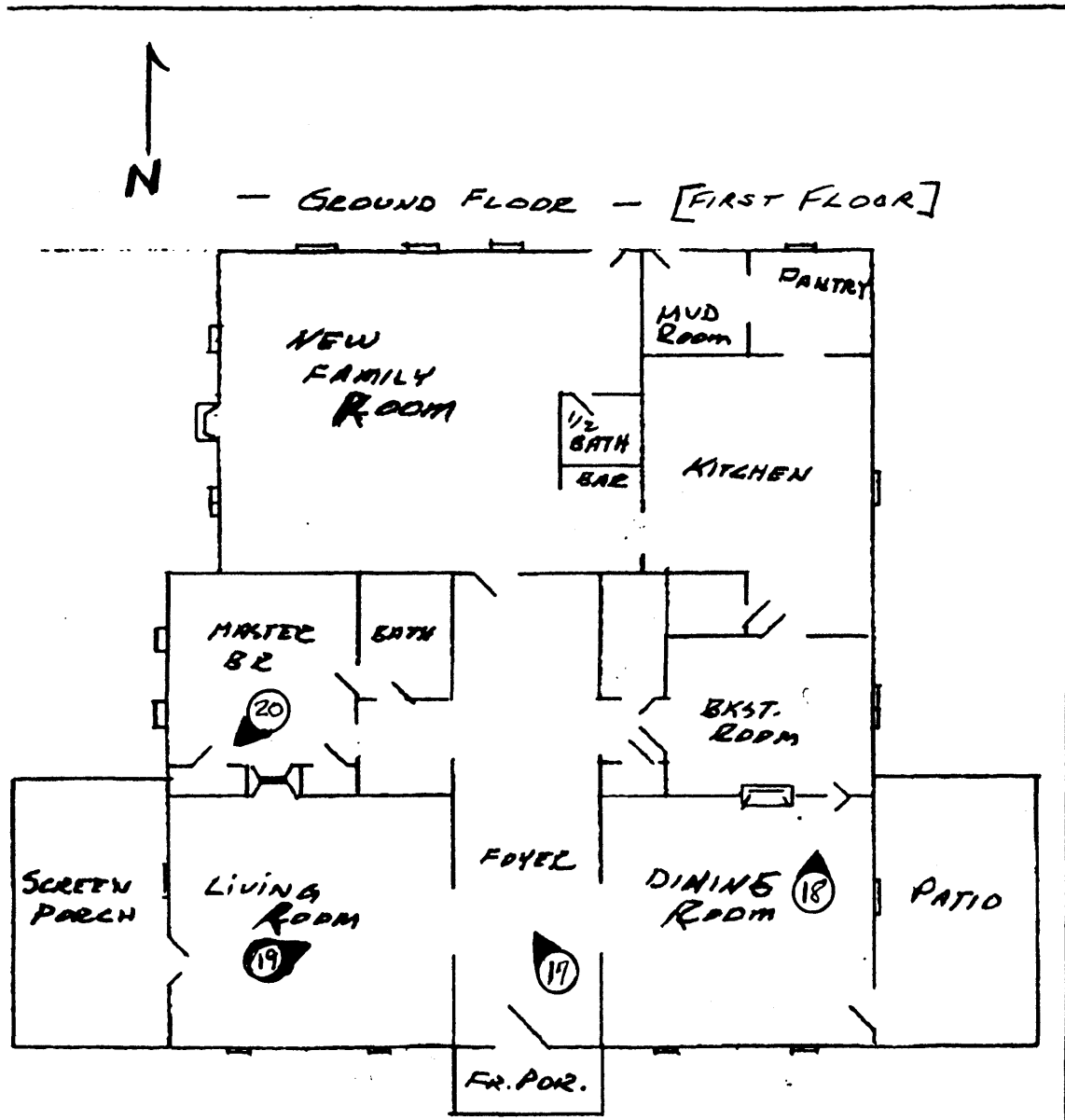
SOURCE: Drawn by the owner

DATE: 1994

KEY: The first floor is on the left,

the second floor on the right.

All rooms are marked directly on the plan. Photographs are marked by a number within a circle with a direction shown.

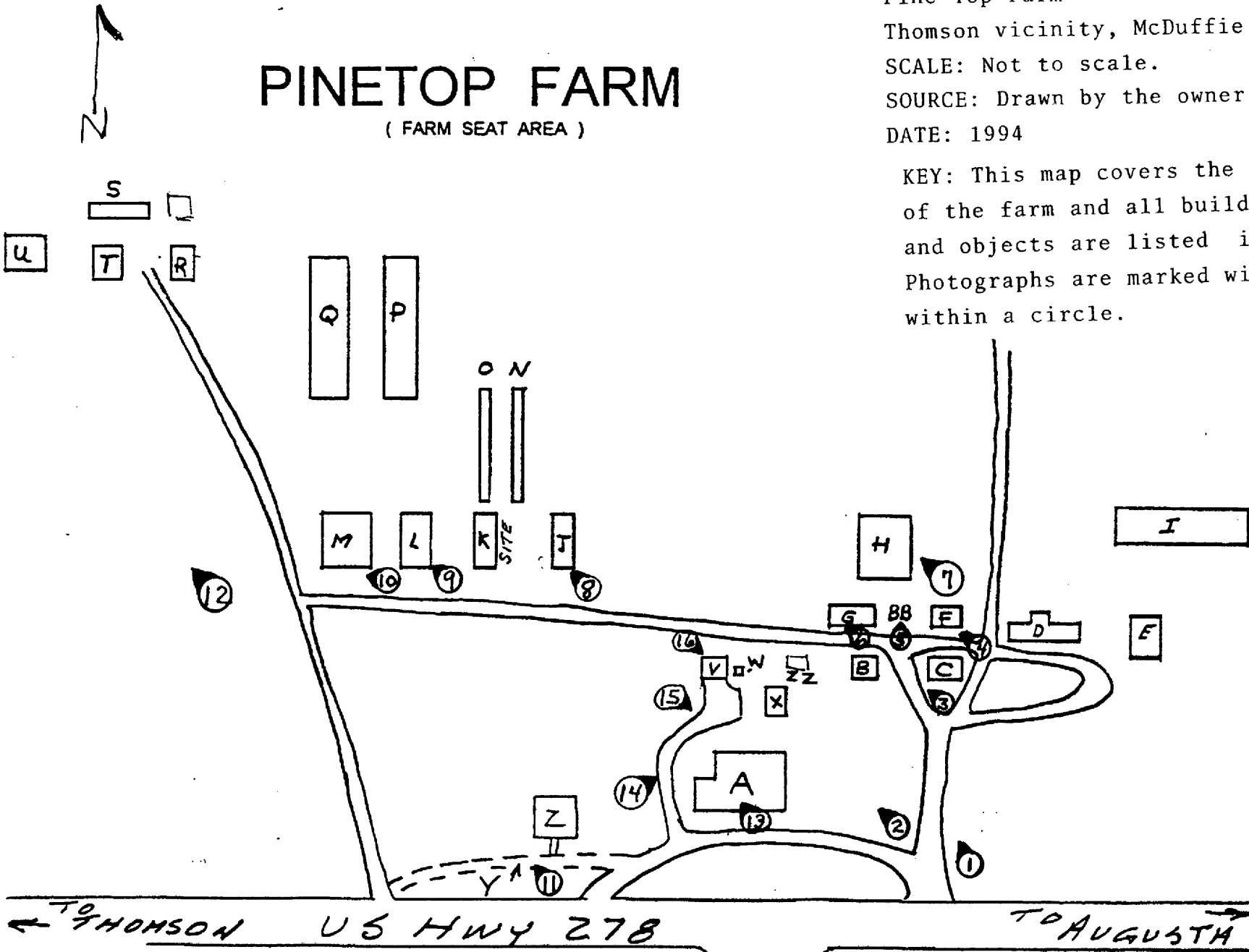


SKETCH MAP (SITE PLAN)

Pine Top Farm
 Thomson vicinity, McDuffie Co., GA
 SCALE: Not to scale.
 SOURCE: Drawn by the owner
 DATE: 1994

PINETOP FARM

(FARM SEAT AREA)



LEGEND

- A Big House
- B Buggy Shed
- C Wagon Shed
- D Trainer's House
- E Overseer's House
- F & G Twin Barns
- H Hall Barn
- I British Barn
- J-M Quarters
- N Barn - N
- O Barn - O
- P Canadian Barn
- Q American Barn
- R Henry Cofer Barn
- S Equipment Shed
- U Henry Cofer House
- V Original Garage
- W Pump House
- X New Carport
- Y Original Driveway to J. S. Watson Home Place
- Z Watson - Wilson Cemetery
- ZZ Tack House
- AA John Forrest Watson House Site
- BB Willoughby PLAQUE
- CC PLANTATION BELL
- E1 - Smoke House
- K - Tenant House SITE (burned)
- T - Wagon/Tractor Shed