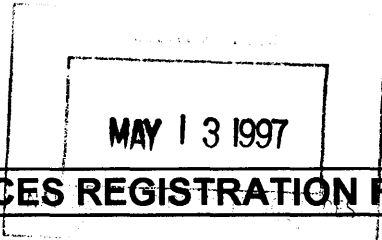


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



559

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

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

1. Name of Property

historic name EARLY HILL PLANTATION
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Lickskillet Rd. (County Road 45), 1/2 mile northeast of U.S. 278 and one mile west of GA 15
city, town Greensboro (X) **vicinity of**
county Greene **code** GA 133
state Georgia **code** GA **zip code** 30642
N/A) not for publication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	2	1
sites	0	0
structures	1	0
objects	0	0
total	3	1

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of previous listing: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Mark R. Edwards _____ Date 5/02/97

Mark R. Edwards
State Historic Preservation Officer

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency or bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

Entered in the National Register

Edson H. Beall 6-13-97

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other, explain:

see continuation sheet

Keeper of the National Register Date

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

DOMESTIC/single dwelling
AGRICULTURE/agricultural outbuilding

Current Functions:

DOMESTIC/single dwelling
DOMESTIC/hotel

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

EARLY CLASSICAL REVIVAL
GREEK REVIVAL

Materials:

foundation	brick
walls	wood weatherboard
roof	composite shingles
other	n/a

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION:

Early Hill Plantation is a large, frame, two-story, rectangular Georgian type house with Greek Revival details. It sits on the crest of a ridge which gives it an imposing setting. The front porch has four Tuscan columns, c. 1940, replacing earlier Doric fluted ones. A front terrace was added to the house in 1988 by the current owners. The front door has trabeated sidelights and transom. The central hall divides each floor into two rooms on each side on the first two floors, with two small rooms on the third or attic level. The grand, central staircase is unattached at the rear of the landings. The house retains much of its original floors and doors. Closets were added in the 1880s. There is an original basement with fireplace. Changes to the house, besides the added terrace, include replacement mantels, exterior shutters, the hallway wainscoting, and some ceiling medallions. The kitchen and breakfast room are recent rear additions. The house has lost all of its original four end chimneys, with one being rebuilt. The house is in a rural setting with a white board fence and large trees. The only historic outbuilding is the well-house, but there are also a small house moved recently to the property and the remains of an adjacent dairy pit.

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Section 7--Description

DESCRIPTION (BY CONSULTANT):

Early Hill is a large, rectangular house perched on the crest of a ridge. This siting adds considerably to its imposing facade. The house is well maintained with an expansive lawn and large, old trees beyond a white board fence which further defines the siting. A two-and-one-half story gabled structure with gable returns, "Early Hill" is a transitional style. The structure has a Georgian feel, but includes Greek Revival elements. It is similar in scale to a house in Greensboro of the same period, the McCommons Funeral Home on East Broad Street. The exterior is covered with wood clapboard; a modern composite roof covers older wooden shingles.

The present porch columns are Tuscan and are replacements from the 1940s but appear to be recycled as they are solid turned heartwood and are quite old; the original Doric porch columns were fluted. The present owners added the front terrace and railing in 1988. Also added at that time were window shutters; all windows had exterior shutters, as surviving marks of hardware on window jambs are quite evident. Windows are 6 over 6 with large panes, giving a Greek Revival feel to the exterior. Simple, flush, wood lintels frame window casings. The narrow one story porch is original in its dimensions, but has been largely rebuilt since the 1940s. The rail on the porch roof is recent and does not appear in old photographs. A trabeated transom with sidelights frames the front door, which appears to be original; the door has arched panels above and rectangular below.

Early Hill is composed of a central hall making four rooms (2 on each side) on the first and second floors; the third floor has two rooms with cove ceilings. A stair rises from the rear of the hall to the third floor with full-width landings. An unusual feature of the stair is the unattached rear portion of the landings. Rather than being supported at the rear wall, the landings are separated at this point by approximately two feet and have a hand rail which connects to the walls. A modern kitchen and breakfast room are attached on the rear of the house. The additions are one-story with shed roofs. Closets were added throughout the house, circa 1880s. Closets were built on both sides at the entrance enclosing some of the original hall width. Other closets are in bedrooms and at the head of the second and third floor stairs. Dining room window seats may also have been added at this time.

A basement underneath the right side of the house and below ground level is reached by steps leading from behind the stairs. The basement has an earth floor except for one portion which has a modern concrete floor.

Interior wood surfaces are predominately pine, including floors, moldings, doors, and mantels. The deteriorated parlor floor was replaced in 1986. The dining room has alternating light (maple) and dark (walnut) floor boards; these boards are also more narrow than the original floors. Oral tradition claims this floor was installed in the 1880s. Walls above the baseboard are plaster throughout the

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 7--Description

house except in the third floor bedrooms which have wide pine board walls and narrow, beaded tongue-and-groove ceiling boards.

Window and door surrounds have ogee molding with a cock-beaded edge. Doors throughout appear to be original. All doors, except those of the third floor, have two long, narrow vertical panels above two smaller vertical panels. Third floor bedroom doors appear to be older; they are the "cross and Bible" design with deep beveled panels. All doors, except for hinges, have replaced hardware. Interior woodwork throughout the house contains the carpenter's plane marks. None of the original mantels remain, but the plain Greek Revival replacements are probably similar in design. One upstairs bedroom mantel is definitely from the Victorian period. The hall and stair wainscoting appear to be recent additions, as are ceiling medallions in various parts of the house.

Early Hill is timber framed with mortise and tenon joinery. The house frame rests on a continuous brick foundation, except for ground level windows for the basement area.

Originally, four interior chimneys heated the house. Since World War II, three of the chimneys were removed, but the current owners have rebuilt the chimney in the left front (parlor) room. All rooms had fireplaces, except the third floor bedrooms. The basement has two open fireplaces which appear to have been serviceable. Part of the original gutter system remains, although covered over by the current roofline; the older gutter was a solid piece of wood with shallow trough running its length.

Early Hill's main house, sited on the crest of a hill, faces east. The front lawn takes a gentle descent to Lickskillet Road. East of the road is rolling pasture land and a small pond (this land is not part of the present "Early Hill", but was part of the original plantation). From the rear of the house, the terrain slopes rapidly to a declivity and a small spring. The rear slope, beyond the present wood fence, is terraced and traces of an old farm road may be seen skirting the glade-like spring bottom. Remains of a small earthen dam abuts the lower end of the spring bottom, providing evidence that there was once a pond on the site. The current owners are planning to recreate the pond. Beyond a white board fence, old white and red oaks and pecan trees surround the house on the sides and rear. Near the spring bottom, a line of large oaks grow on a east-west axis; there are also large red cedars in the spring area. On the right (north) side of the house the present owners have created a croquet field, entered through an arched white gate. Traces of old lanes can be seen on the front lawn leading up from Lickskillet Road.

Outbuildings

The well house is the only extant antebellum dependency. A gabled structure, it faces west. The west gable extends over the well curb and is supported by two square posts. The eastern part

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Section 7--Description

consists of a storehouse with a door and two windows. The entire structure is made of hewn, mortise and tenoned timbers with later vertical siding and windows. Adjacent to the well house is a square, rock-lined pit about 15 feet deep. It is believed to be the plantation dairy where milk, butter, eggs, etc., were kept. A roofed, framed structure probably covered the pit and a set of stairs descended from ground level. Immediately adjoining the well house and dairy site is a recently constructed low rock wall bordering a small vegetable and herb garden. A one-story, ca. 1900 frame house has recently been moved onto the property adjacent to the rock-lined pit. It was moved from the other side of Greene County.

Archeological potential

House sites consisting of brick and rock rubble have been located behind the Early Hill main house near the spring bottom. These remains may be sites of slave houses, or later tenant houses. No formal archaeological investigations have been conducted.

The house sits in a very rural setting, with open space dotted with old hardwood trees and defined by white board fencing on the sides and the back of the house. The county roads slow traffic volume.

Changes to the property

The present kitchen and breakfast room were added in recent years. Both are unobtrusive and blend with the period. A front terrace and railing were added on the front of the house in 1986. While not of the period, this addition involved no structural changes to the house.

A barn and privy, both of hewn timbers and mortise and tenon construction, were ruins when the present owners purchased the property in 1985. The remains of both structures have been cleared away, but the sites are evident (see attached site plan).

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):

ARCHITECTURE
SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN HISTORY
ETHNIC HERITAGE: BLACK

Period of Significance:

1820s-1890

Significant Dates:

1820, 1840

Significant Person(s):

Joel Early, Jr. (1793-1851)

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

Unknown

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

Narrative statement of significance (areas of significance)

Early Hill is significant in architecture because it is a good example of an intact antebellum plantation main house built with a Georgian type floor plan and with Greek Revival details. The house retains the original form with its central one-story portico with four columns, one original enclosed end chimney, as well as its central-hall plan, all important features of the style and type. The interior retains its original grand staircase and intact basement fireplace.

The house is significant in social/humanitarian history and ethnic heritage: black as the plantation home of Joel Early, Jr. (1793-1851), owner of the property since before 1820. By 1850, the plantation had grown in size to 2200 acres with 60 slaves, and grew cotton as its major crop. Early, as owner, is one of the few documented Georgia planters who attempted the emancipation of his slaves by transportation to Liberia in West Africa. Early began correspondence in 1827 with the American Colonization Society and sent thirty of his slaves to Africa in 1830 and later corresponded with one of them. From 1820 to 1833 only 106 Georgia-based slaves were sent to Liberia; Early accounted for nearly one-third of this total. Early also was the first Georgian to send his slaves to Liberia. As a member of a prominent Georgia political family, with one brother, Peter (1773-1817), having been a congressman (1802-1807) and governor (1813-1815), and another, Eleazer, the surveyor-general, it is even the more remarkable that he acted on his interest in the emancipation of some of his slaves.

National Register Criteria

The nomination meets National Register Criterion A and B because of its association with plantation owner Joel Early, Jr., who in 1827 made efforts to free some of his slaves by participating in the founding of Liberia by paying for the transportation of slaves to that African republic. His involvement with the antislavery movement reflects one of the broad patterns of American history. It is the only known Georgia plantation where the owner participated and the plantation home survives. The property also meets criterion C because the main house retains good examples of period workmanship and style, including the free-standing stairway, room arrangement, shape and form of an antebellum home with Greek Revival details. The house also retains its siting, giving it a major presence in a rural setting.

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

N/A

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8--Statement of Significance

Period of significance (justification)

The period of significance runs from the building of the house and the ownership by Joel Early, Jr., through the ownership of the Warner family of New York and its eventual sale at a foreclosure to a mortgage company and thus out of private hands in 1890.

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)

2 contributing buildings, the main house and the well-house.
1 contributing structure, the pit
1 non-contributing building, the moved house.

Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)

The site of Early Hill was originally part of the vast land holdings of Joel Early, Sr. (c.1750s-1806) who settled in Greene County shortly after the Revolutionary War (1775-1781). Joel Early's will, written in 1806, provided his sons with large tracts of land, but stated that they would not have full title until each reached age 45. Whether this provision was actually adhered to over the subsequent years is uncertain. The son, Joel Early, Jr. (1793 - 1851) who inherited the tract now known as "Early Hill", was only 14 at his father's death. Joel Early, Jr. lived with one of his brothers until he became of legal age, 21.

By 1820, Joel Early, Jr. established a plantation on the lands inherited from his father. Early's property was located on high, rolling countryside about two miles northwest of Greensboro. On a ridge between Richland and Beaverdam creek, Early constructed a residence for his plantation which he called "Dover". The name "Dover" was apparently applied to the plantation as a whole, rather than the house, and in later years it implied a neighborhood or settlement. It appears as a place name on several antebellum maps. In the late antebellum period, Col. Richard Willis, a neighbor of Joel Early, referred to his own plantation as "Dover".

The original Early house was greatly altered in the late antebellum years, probably the 1840s; only a few elements survive from the early nineteenth century structure. The foundation on the left side of the house includes hewn sills and joists, on the right side these elements were sawn with circular saws. Second story floors (left side) are laid at right angles to the flooring on the right side and are surfaced nailed. Doors of an earlier design than those used throughout the home are hung on the third floor bedroom entrances.

During the first years of his plantation Early leased his property to a Thomas Winston and may have actually resided in Greensboro, as he owned a house and lot there in the early 1830s. Perhaps Early

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8--Statement of Significance

did not relish management of a plantation worked with slave labor. There is ample documentation, augmented with oral tradition, that Early sent a number of his slaves to the Liberia Colony in Africa. In 1827 Early began corresponding with R. R. Gurley, secretary of the American Colonization Society, regarding the society's colonization efforts in Liberia. Satisfied with Gurley's report about successful colonization, Early sent 30 of his slaves to Africa. They departed in April, 1830 from Norfolk, Virginia on the Brig Montgomery among seventy other emigrants. Tradition claims that one former slave corresponded with Early from Liberia complaining of hardships and sickness among the emigrants. Another account says some of the homesick former slaves returned to Early's plantation.

Beginning with approximately 1,000 acres in the 1820s, by 1837 Early's plantation contained 1,800 acres. In 1850, he had 1,000 improved acres, and 1,257 unimproved acres of land. His plantation, tended by 60 slaves, produced 87 bales of cotton, 702 pounds of wool, 300 pounds of butter, and 20 tons of hay. [1850 Agricultural Census information.]

Joel Early was a member of a prominent Greene County family, who were among the first settlers in the area. His father Joel, Sr. built a brick manor house near the east side of the Oconee River, and lived, according to later accounts, like a feudal lord. Joel, Jr.'s brothers also were well-known public figures. Peter Early was governor of Georgia 1813-1815, and served several terms as representative in the U. S. Congress. Another older brother, Eleazer (1779-1840), sponsored a large and detailed map of Georgia which was a standard reference until the mid-nineteenth century. He did this while he was Surveyor General of Georgia.

Joel, Jr. married Sarah Grace (1793-1868), but the couple remained childless. During the latter part of their lives, a Martha Peoples (b. 1794) was the only other occupant in their household. Her relationship to the Earlys is unknown. Early lived near Greensboro, and as previously mentioned, owned a house there. He was a member of the Greensboro Baptist Church. His neighbors included two well-known planters, Thomas Stocks ("Oak Hill" plantation) and Colonel Richard J. Willis ("Dover" plantation).

Early died in 1851 and was buried in the family plot in the Greensboro city cemetery. His widow and Martha Peoples continued living on the plantation. In 1860 there were 57 slaves living in 11 houses. Improved land had decreased during the previous ten years to 700 acres, while 1,568 was unimproved acreage. Cotton production had dropped significantly in the same period from 87 bales to 18 bales. Other products from the plantation showed a similar decrease since Early's death in 1851. When Sarah Early died in 1868, the inventory of household effects included, in part, a tin stove, a green cupboard, a safe, a walnut table, a chest, a sofa, and a bath tub.

In 1870, Mrs. Early's executor sold the property, containing 2,200 acres, to Horatio Gates Warner of Rochester, New York for \$15,000. Two years later, Horatio Warner sold the plantation to his son,

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

John B.Y. Warner of Rochester, New York. It was reported that he had purchased the estate for his son for health reasons. John B.Y. Warner and his family resided on the Early plantation from 1872 until 1888. Warner, who was 26 years old and his wife 19 when they moved to "Early Hill", had two children born there. Tradition claims the Warners made interior improvements to the house including the dining room floor of alternating dark and light wood.

In 1880, Warner employed 12 black laborers to work the plantation. Warner practiced a diversified agriculture compared with the antebellum years. In 1880, only 20 acres were planted in cotton, producing 8 bales. Other crops included hay, barley, corn, oats, and wheat. One hundred sheep grazed the hills as well as cattle. An analysis of the plantation in 1880 reveals a definite down-scale in agricultural production. Of the 800 acres in cultivation, only 135 acres were actually planted, the remainder lay fallow. More significantly, 500 acres was apparently in "old fields" growing neither wood, crops, nor grasses for animals. John's first wife's name was Gertrude Franchot. She died on the plantation at the age of 24. He married her sister a few years after Gertrude's death. Horatio and his wife Sarah both died while visiting the plantation, he in 1876 and she several years later. There are said to be writings by Mr. Warner of his conversations with the former slaves of Joel Early, Jr., who professed to like Mr. Early and said he had been a good master until you made him mad.

The Warners sold the property in 1888 to another New Yorker, James H. Chilson. This deed of sale records the first known use of the name "Early Hill". Chilson held the property for only two years. In 1890 he sold it (or probably lost it due to a mortgage foreclosure) to the Scottish American Mortgage Company of Edinburgh, Scotland. In the late nineteenth century this company, with resident agents in Georgia, was purchasing 'old cotton plantations' in Middle Georgia and subdividing them. As far as can be ascertained, the company carried on little, if any, farming operations before subdividing these large tracts.

Early Hill plantation, consisting of 2,175 acres, was subdivided into 18 parcels which were sold over a period of 25 years. John A. Baynes (1859-1909) purchased Lot no. 1 of the subdivision containing the main house and 500 acres in 1900. The property later passed to his son, James E. Baynes (1888-1967). The Baynes operated a farm on the reduced acreage of "Early Hill" for the following half century; during this period, extensive pastures were developed for dairy cattle. In 1959, the "Early Hill" home place was subdivided again with the main house falling into a 23-acre tract that was sold to Roger D. McCommons. McCommons sold the property, still 23 acres, to the current owners Leonard and Locke Shockley, of Atlanta, in 1985.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Moffat, William G. "Early Hill Plantation". Historic Property Information Form, June 2, 1992, with supplemental information.

"Letter to Joel Early, December 8, 1827, The African Repository and Colonial Journal, December 1827, and later issues.

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

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

Primary location of additional data:

- (X) State historic preservation office
- () Other State Agency
- () Federal agency
- () Local government
- () University
- () Other, Specify Repository:

Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 23 acres

UTM References

- A) Zone 17 Easting 294260 Northing 3718680
- B) Z17 E294460 N3718540
- C) Z17 E294280 N3718370
- D) Z17 E294150 N3718580

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is marked on the enclosed tax map.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property is all the current owners own at this location and all that remains associated with the house

11. Form Prepared By

State Historic Preservation Office

name/title Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., Historian
organization Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources
street & number 500 The Healey Building, 57 Forsyth Street
city or town Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30303
telephone (404) 656-2840 **date** April 29, 1997

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

name/title William G. Moffat
organization Historic Georgia Preservation
street and number 185 Woodland Way
city or town Athens **state** GA **zip code** 30606
telephone (706) 548-7326

- consultant**
- regional development center preservation planner**
- other:**

(HPD form version 02-24-97)

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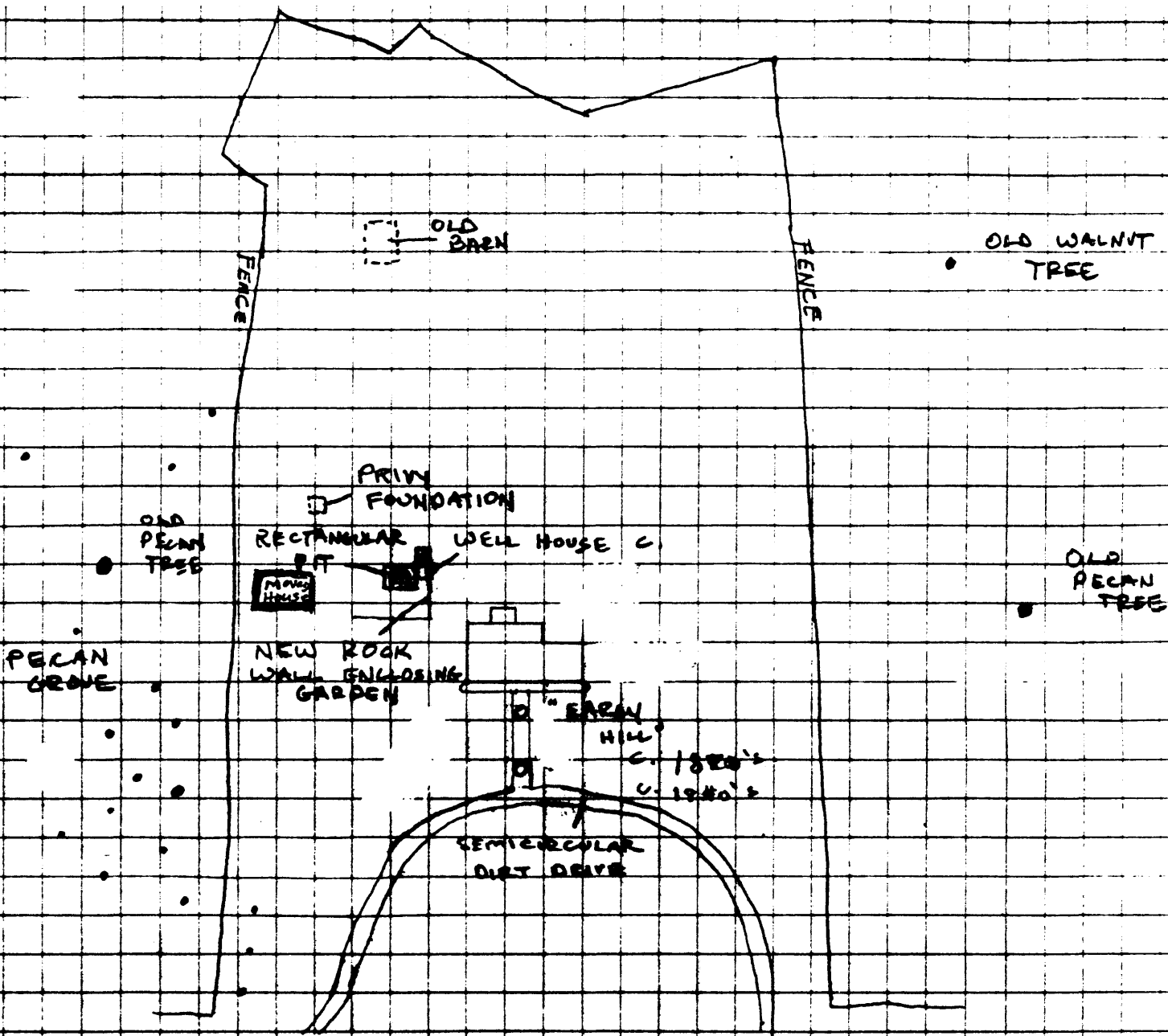
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Photographs

Name of Property: Early Hill
City or Vicinity: Greensboro vicinity
County: Greene
State: Georgia
Photographer: James R. Lockhart
Negative Filed: Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Date Photographed: September, 1996

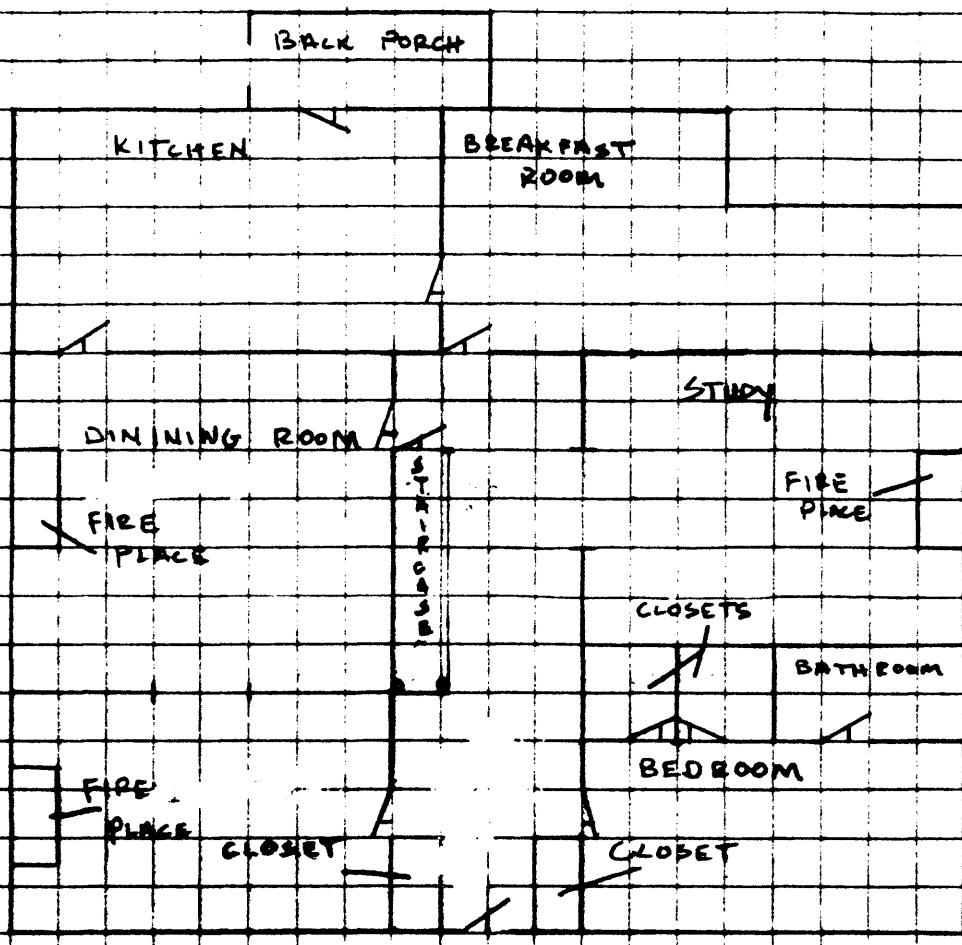
Description of Photograph(s):

- 1 of 12: Front facade and front grounds from main road; photographer facing northeast.
- 2 of 12: Front and west facades; photographer facing northeast.
- 3 of 12: Front and east facades; photographer facing northwest.
- 4 of 12: Rear facade; photographer facing southwest.
- 5 of 12: Rock-lined pit in foreground, right, and moved frame house in background all at rear of main house; photographer facing northeast.
- 6 of 12: Well/gear house (outbuilding); photographer facing west.
- 7 of 12: Interior of well/gear house (outbuilding); photographer facing east.
- 8 of 12: Main house, interior, first floor, central hall; photographer facing northwest.
- 9 of 12: Main house, interior, first floor, parlor; photographer facing northwest.
- 10 of 12: Main house, interior, first floor, dining room looking into parlor; photographer facing south.
- 11 of 12: Main house, interior, second floor stair landing; photographer facing northwest.
- 12 of 12: Main house, interior, second floor, bedroom over the study (right rear); photographer facing east.



SKETCH DRAWN
 BY
 ROBERT B. ELLINGTON
 4/17/92

SITE PLAN
 EARLY HILL PLANTATION
 GREENSBORO VICINITY, GREENE CO., GA
 SCALE: NOT TO SCALE
 SOURCE: DRAWN BY ROBERT B. ELLINGTON
 DATE: 1992
 KEY: AS MARKED ON THE PLAN



1ST FLOOR "EARLY HILL"

SKETCH DRAWN
 BY
 ROBERT B. ELLINGTON
 4/17/92

FLOOR PLAN

EARLY HILL PLANTATION
 GREENSBORO VICINITY, GREENE CO., GA
 SCALE: NOT TO SCALE
 SOURCE: DRAWN BY ROBERT B. ELLINGTON
 DATE: 1992
 KEY: FIRST FLOOR