



**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.

Richard Claves  
Signature of certifying official

7.14.04  
Date

for W. Ray Luce, Ph. D.  
Historic Preservation Division Director  
Deputy 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

Charles H. Beall 9/4/04

determined eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_\_\_

determined not eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_\_\_

removed from the National Register

\_\_\_\_\_

other, explain:

\_\_\_\_\_

see continuation sheet

[Signature]  
Keeper of the National Register Date

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## 6. Function or Use

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### Historic Functions:

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

### Current Functions:

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

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## 7. Description

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### Architectural Classification:

MID-19TH CENTURY/Greek Revival

### Materials:

<b>foundation</b>	brick and stone
<b>walls</b>	wood
<b>roof</b>	asphalt shingles
<b>other</b>	N/A

### Description of present and historic physical appearance:

#### Summary Description:

The Elms nomination consists of a one-story, Greek Revival-style house with associated outbuildings on a 24-acre tract in rural Talbot County. The central block of the main house has four rooms, two on either side of a central hall, with a one-story porch across the front as well as one on the back. There is a small side wing containing a bath and nursery on the west side and an ell addition on the other side that contains a dining room, kitchen, and study. The house is raised three feet off the ground on fieldstone foundation piers and thus accommodates a storm cellar with fieldstone walls which adjoins a storage cellar and wine cellar. The house is built of hand-hewn timbers with mortise-and-tenon joints. The hipped roof is covered in asphalt shingles. There are six surviving chimneys, four in the main house and two in the kitchen ell. The chimneys are fieldstone covered with plaster. The front facade features double wooden doors with a transom and sidelights, with double doors at the rear of the central hall as well. The interior walls and ceilings are horizontal pine boards, with some rooms having a plaster finish. The kitchen wing retains most of its original features and houses the kitchen, dining room, a bath, and a study. There are historic folding doors between the kitchen and dining room that used to allow the two rooms to be joined for entertainment purposes. The three recent owners have each made changes. During 1968-1974, the breezeway was closed and bathrooms were added. During 1974-1996, central heat and air were added. Since 1996 the current owners have added windows, modernized the kitchen, embellished many windows and doorways with Greek key designs on top, added pediments over the parlor doors, crown molding to all ceilings, and ceiling medallions to all rooms and halls, and new lighting. There are a number of surviving, historic

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outbuildings including: a small well adjacent to the kitchen, the fieldstone water tower (1886), wood storage room, well house, guest house with large fieldstone chimney, storage room/commissary, smokehouse, garage/storage building, all of which are near the main house, and a mule barn and two other barns further away. Also on the property are a number of historic plantings and a low stone retaining wall that runs the length of the house near the roadside, one of several on the property. The plantings include magnolia, hemlock, oaks, pecan trees, and a few elms from which the house takes its name. There are two grape arbors, and a fish pond in the front yard. The house sits in a very rural setting.

Full Description:

The Elms faces northwest on a gently sloping hill three miles east of Woodland, Georgia, on State Highway 36 at the intersection of Redbone Road. The house is a one-story, Greek Revival-design consisting of a wide center hall with two rooms on either side completed by setback wings. (Photographs 1, 2, 3, and 4.)

A wide veranda extends across the front of the house. (Photo 1.) The house is raised an average of three feet off the ground, higher in the rear. Underneath is a storm cellar, once entered through a trap door in the bedroom. The storm pit on the west side of the house has walls of fieldstone, heavy hand-hewn timbers above, and is anchored with iron rods from the floor. The storm room adjoins a storage cellar and a wine cellar, an arched, vaulted room dug from the clay underneath the main block of the house.

The house's foundation is of fieldstone, with hand-hewn timbers supporting the floor. Hand-hewn timbers with mortised and pegged joints can be seen again in the attic. The flooring inside the house is of wide pine boards.

The original house had sills 12"x 12" that were finished with a foot adz. In the additions the sills are somewhat smaller and were cut with a circular saw. The joists in the original house are somewhat larger and were cut with a framing saw. The sills and joists in some rooms appear to have been cut with a pit saw. All joists and sills, original or additional, are mortised, lapped and pegged and the construction is completely without nails. The exterior clapboard is fastened to the framing with cut nails.

All original windows are 9 over 9, 10"x 12" panes of old wavy glass. Sashes are joined by pegs, and mullions are the same thickness. Shutters and their hardware are the same and are heart pine, also mortised and pegged. All hardware is original.

The outside of the house is white clapboard. (Photograph 19.) The hipped roof is now covered with asphalt shingles. The four chimneys that rise from the main body of the house, and the two that rise from the kitchen wing, are made of fieldstone and covered with plaster. (Photograph 5.)

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The bedrooms, parlor, kitchen and office each have single fireplace chimneys. The dining room shares a chimney with the adjacent bedroom.

The front entrance to the home is through double wooden doors with a transom and sidelights. (Photographs 19 and 20.) Double doors also open on the rear of this wide center hall, which was useful in cooling the house in hot weather. The doors have the original wrought iron hinges and latches.

Four large windows, evenly spaced, open onto the front veranda. Each is flanked by louvered, hinged shutters. (Photograph 19.) The front porch is adjoined by an L-shaped screened porch; both are recessed under the roof of the house.

Inside, the walls and ceilings are made of horizontal pine boards. Some rooms have a plastered finish. All ceilings are the original height.

On the right side of the front entrance are two bedrooms. From the front bedroom a wing extends that contained a bedroom and has been renovated in recent years to include a bathroom. (Photograph 21.) The rear bedroom has a window which opens onto the back porch. It has panels underneath the lower sash that can be opened, creating a door, when the sash is raised, that opens onto the back porch adjacent to the bathroom. (Photograph 22.)

The left side of the main hall contains a parlor forward (photograph 23) and a smaller room, perhaps once (and currently) a bedroom, behind (photograph 24). There is a kitchen wing that extends beyond these rooms. The rooms directly adjacent to the main body of the house are a kitchen and dining room. (Photograph 25.) Between these two rooms are folding doors with beveled panels and mortised, pegged joinings. With the doors opened, the two rooms could be joined creating a large room for parties and dancing.

In an ell, to the rear of the present kitchen, is the original kitchen. (Photograph 5.) There is a well just outside that was once enclosed by a room for protection from the weather. (Photograph 7.)

The rear of the house has a small porch which extends the length of the main structure. The west end is finished by a small enclosure which was a water closet before the house had modern plumbing. (Photograph 5.) The house now has modern electrical wiring, central heat, and air conditioning.

Considering the fact that the house was presumably built circa 1838-40, it is likely that any additions could have been made between 1840-80 due to the type of construction. Since the house and additions share common windows, shutters, and doors of the same style and shape, rim locks and pier supports, the date of these additions could be closer to the 1850 period. This would be consistent with the original ownership of the Daniel Owen family. It is documented that in 1886 he

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added the water tower (photograph 8) and the fish pond (photograph 2), and put a water closet with running water, gravity-fed via the water tower, on the back porch. (Photograph 5.)

Other changes to the house were begun during the ownership of the Romans, 1968-1974, before it was purchased by the current owners. The following upgrades were made during this time:

A full bath was added off the central hall between the living room and the small rear bedroom. Another full bath and closet spaces were added in the addition adjacent to the master bedroom. (Photograph 21.) A slate floor was added on the floor of the hall leading from the dining room to the living room. The small bedroom next to the dining room was completely reworked including adding dry wall to all the walls. (Photograph 24.) The breezeway between the ell and the kitchen was closed in, creating a mudroom. A full bath and laundry room was added between the mudroom and the office. The crawl space was enclosed with cinder block construction and finished with a plaster surface.

The next owner, Mr. Ron Roland, also made changes during his ownership from 1974 to 1996:

He added central heating and air-conditioning. He changed the full bath between the office and the mudroom to a half-bath. He added a new roof.

The present owners, since 1996, Edward and Cheryl Smith, have made the following alterations to the house:

They replaced the two windows at the end of the kitchen, since the original windows conflicted with the planned installation of counter tops. They put one of the old windows in the dining room to increase light. They put the second one in the bedroom next to the dining room. This was the original spot for this window. It had been replaced by a door at some period, so the original window was re-created. They completely refinished the kitchen and tiled it along with the mudroom and the half-bath. They embellished many windows and doorways to incorporate Greek key design at their tops. They added pediments to door tops in the living room. (Photograph 23.) They added plaster ceiling medallions, (Greek Revival from New Orleans), to all rooms and the central hall. (Photograph 20.) They also added lighting to the entire house, from the kitchen to the bedrooms. This included the chandelier in the living room (photograph 23, French bronze c. 1890), and in the dining room (photograph 25, crystal), etc. They placed new crown molding (simple dentils) to all ceilings. (Examples in photographs 20, 21, 22, 23, and 25.) They added stairs to the center of the rear porch, since most guests entered the house that way. (Photograph 5.) They also added acanthus leaf mid-1800's style vents to the crawl space wall.

Mantels, flooring, hardware, doors and 95% of windows are all original. The walls are original tongue and groove heart pine except the master bedroom and living room which are original lath and plaster and the previously mentioned dry wall in the small bedroom off the dining room.

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The Elms stands near the small rural community of Pleasant Hill. A low stone wall runs the length of the front of the house near the roadside. (Photograph 11.) Crepe myrtles flank the front walkway, and camellias and azaleas adorn the yard. (Photographs 3 and 4.) Dogwood trees have been planted across the front yard and fruit trees in the side yard. The basin of the old goldfish pool still stands near the walkway. There are plans to renovate this pool as well as the landscaping in general. (Photographs 2 and 3.) A large old magnolia grows close to the house in the "L" formed by the kitchen wing. Several large cedars, numerous pine trees, several large pecan trees, black walnut trees and two grape arbors also stand on the property. Many of the elm trees, from whence the house got its name, were killed by blight.

The property has numerous outbuildings. The first set is found close to the house in an easterly direction and consists of a water tower, a wood storage room, the well shelter, and the guesthouse. The fieldstone water tower, built in 1886, stands near the kitchen wing. (Photograph 8.) Water from a free-flowing spring (now across Highway 36) was pumped via a hydraulic ram to the tower for use in the house, stables, garden, and yard. The reservoir has a stone floor supported by small gauge railroad rails. The rails extend through the rear wall and a timber is fitted on them. Slaughtered hogs or beef may have hung from this handy rack for dressing and washing. Underneath the water reservoir is another room with a stone floor which served as the dairy. Water from above trickled down to cool the room for butter and milk storage, with the milk in jars, cakes of butter, and buttermilk, fresh from the churn next door. In an adjacent shed room is a waterwheel, with cups that caught falling water from the tank. The power from this turning wheel operated a butter churn, grindstone, and a small lathe.

The wood storage building is next and is presently used to store wood. The history of the building is unknown.

The well shelter (photograph 8 in center) which includes a well with shelter room and storage space, now restored, is next. This was for general use around the yard and farm. It is not presently used.

Next comes the guesthouse (photographs 8, 9 and 10). Not much information is available about the guesthouse. The style is consistent with the main house and the construction is similar. After the daughter, Lizzie Mae Owen, and her husband, Collier Vines Mills, died, the house passed in 1955 to a cousin, Frances Benson Chandler, and her husband, Talbott Chandler. They rented the main house, but fitted up an old cabin nearby for their weekend visits. It would be assumed that this was their cabin and used by them from 1955 to 1967. The house is not used today. Repairs are being done to restore the house. It is located about 50 yards from the main house to the side. There is one main room with a large stone fireplace with place for a bath and kitchen.

The other string of outbuildings is immediately behind the main house and parallel to it. In this

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row are a privy/storehouse, smokehouse and garage. The storage building/privy is woodframe and has two entrance doors (photograph 11). The woodframe smokehouse (photograph 12) was originally used for smoking and storing meats, lard, and other foodstuffs; it is not presently used. Both of these are close to the kitchen. The frame garage (photograph 13) and storage room appears to be a fairly new addition to the property and was probably added by Bill Romans.

There are a few other outbuildings and the remains of former outbuildings on the back or northeast and southeast part of the property. On a service road, was the site of the blacksmith's shop. Squared timbers in the ground show where the vise and anvil were mounted. Photographs 9 and 14 show the remaining chimney near the guesthouse. Photographs 15, 16 and 17 show the mule barn and two other outbuildings that remain at the edge of the property and into the uncleared area. They are all woodframe and in various stages of preservation.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

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**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  
Agriculture

**Period of Significance:**

1840-1954

**Significant Dates:**

c.1840

**Significant Person(s):**

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation:**

N/A

**Architect(s)/Builder(s):**

N/A

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**Statement of significance (areas of significance)**

The Elms is significant in agriculture because it is the remaining 24-acre core of a once-thriving plantation and farm of several hundred acres and retains a number of farm-related historic outbuildings including the smokehouse, mule barns, and the very unusual water tower with its waterwheel in the adjoining shed room. The farm was recognized in its hey-day for the owner, Daniel G. Owen, and his innovative farming practices, especially for his adding the water tower to the property to supply water and cooling needs for a variety of farm and family necessities. Very few post-bellum Georgia farmers, if any others, received as much press coverage as did Mr. Owen for his efforts to survive after the war and the loss of his slave labor force. While the water tower and his water closet are the only two surviving innovations on the current property, by being the main house for this once-thriving and innovative plantation it represents the best of farming in the post-bellum era of Georgia. The history of the property goes back to Robert H. Dixon, a state representative and state senator, who owned the land from 1827 to 1857 and built the main house c.1840. His heirs sold the property for \$8,500 in 1858 to Daniel G. Owen (1830-1892) whose family owned the property until 1967. Daniel G. Owen was well-known in his lifetime for a wide range of activities on his land, of which this remains the historic core. Owen ran a cotton gin, flour mill, sugarcane syrup mill, and was one of the pioneers of fish culture. He promoted agricultural innovations as a member of the Pleasant Hill Agricultural Club. He was best known for his waterworks which was built by 1886. Owen's achievements as a progressive and innovative farmer were frequently reported on in the local newspaper.

The property is also significant in architecture because it is a good example of a one-story, frame, Greek Revival-style plantation house dating from the first decades of Talbot County's settlement after 1827. The main house's construction materials, techniques, and hand-craftsmanship are exemplary for the antebellum period, as it retains its overall form and floor plan along with its original wood floors, walls, doors, door hardware, mantels, fieldstone chimneys and underpinnings, storm and storage cellars, porches, and wings. The house also retains much of its original setting with the highway and a retaining wall nearby as well as many important plantings including magnolia, cedars, and two grape arbors. The house is an architecturally prominent house in a Georgia county that is known for the number and range of Greek Revival-style buildings. The house's most prominent Greek Revival features are its prominent one-story columned front porch and its appearance of overall symmetry. However, the design of the house is unusual in that the main block of the house is offset under the broad hipped roof which extends over the front and one side porch. This unusual arrangement reflects the adaptability and variety of the Greek Revival style in rural Georgia. Another characteristic Greek Revival feature is the smooth, flush-board siding under the front porch, made to resemble stone. The interior floor plan with two rooms on each side of a central hall, the Georgian plan, is a common arrangement for a Greek Revival-style in Georgia.

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Section 8--Statement of Significance

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**National Register Criteria**

The Elms meets National Register Criterion A because by being used as a plantation/farm for the entire historic period the property reflects the broad category of agriculture as the base economy for this area of the South and the Nation. The large number of surviving outbuildings is quite rare, especially the very rare fieldstone water tower with its original equipment; the intact privy, smokehouse, and barns are all good examples of important and necessary outbuildings for a working plantation.

The property also meets criterion C because of the architectural style, form, plan, materials, and the fine architectural details remaining in the main house including the original mortise-and-tenon craftsmanship using native woods and fieldstone. The house retains its original form and floor plan with various upgrades and extensions during the historic period to keep it viable and usable by the original family.

**Criteria Considerations (if applicable)**

N/A

**Period of significance (justification)**

The period of significance runs from the time the house was finished, c.1840, until the end of the historical period, 1954, since it remained a dwelling house/farm for that entire time period. It also remained in the ownership of the Owen family until 1967.

**Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)**

Buildings:

Contributing: the main house, the three barns, the wood storage building no. 6 on plan, guest house, privy/storage building, smokehouse. Total: 8

Noncontributing: the garage. Total: 1

Sites:

Contributing: the chimney/building ruin behind the guest house; and the overall designed landscape plan including the retaining walls, plantings, trees, etc. Total: 2

Structures:

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Contributing: the water tower, the fish pond, the two grape arbors, and the well house, no. 3 on the plan. Total: 5

Objects: N/A

**Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)**

This chronological history of the property, in brief outline, shows how many owners have been here and how the once large plantation/farm has been reduced by various divisions, to its present size of 24 acres. After this brief overview, more detailed information about the most significant owner, Daniel G. Owen, will be included.

History of the Property:

The land lottery of 1827 distributed the land in this area, including the land on which the house sits. Prior to this time it was Indian land.

1827-Fielding Bowen, the winner of the land lot of 202 ½ acres in the lottery, sold Land Lot 132 to Robert H. Dixon; the house and all of the outbuildings are located on this land lot.

1832-Robert H. Dixon bought the adjacent Land Lot 133 from Wilbern Seymour for \$1,000.00. The Mill on Celeoth (on the topo as Coleoatchee, actually Celeotchee) Creek was probably already in operation and Dixon enlarged the operation.

Although there is much history about the invention and success of D. G. Owen since his family's purchase of the Elms in 1858, it must not be forgotten that Robert H. Dixon was a member of one of the most important families in Talbot County from the 1830's on. Dixon owned hundreds of acres, 69 slaves, \$16,000.00 in real estate, a profitable mill and the nominated house at the time of the 1850 Census, as shown on the population, slave, and agricultural schedules for that year.

Robert H. Dixon was not only a wealthy man, but was a political leader of this area. He served as Talbot County's State Senator in 1843 and in 1853-1854. He was also a member of the State House of Representatives from 1840 to 1842 and from 1845 to 1847.

1858-The Elms and the accompanying property (land lots 132, 133, 134, 106, 150 acres of 140, and the east half of 105) were sold by Robert E. Dixon, at the death of his father, Robert H. Dixon, to James Thomas Owen and Daniel Grant Owen. This was about 602 acres. 1/8 of an acre of Land Lot 132 was reserved as a burial place for Robert H. and Martha Dixon. For that portion of Land Lot 140 the Owen brothers paid \$1,500.00 for their 150 acres. For the Dixon Plantation, including land, house, and structures, they paid \$8,501.00.

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1859-On January 1, James T. Owen sold his share of the previous purchase from the Dixons to his brother, Daniel G. Owen, for \$2,922.85, and reserved ½ of the water privileges of Land Lot 133 to Celeoth (on the topo map as Coleoatchee, actually Celeotchee) Creek and his interest in ten acres embracing the mill and mill privileges. He also reserved 150 acres of Lot 140.

1859-Dan Owen sold to B. B. Bonner Land Lots 132, 133 and 140, including the Elms Plantation for \$8,250.00.

1860-Dan Owen bought back from B. B. Bonner the same land and home for same price. Presumably this transaction was done to avoid some sort of law suit or in lieu of a loan.

1860-The census records for that year show the Owen family owning 85 slaves. Daniel G. Owen was listed as a miller that year, rather than as a farmer or planter. His real estate was worth \$13,000 and his personal property \$2,000.

The property remained in the Owen family for over a century after this. The family maintained the Elms-the main house- but sold off a large portion of land over the years.

1955- At the death of C.V. Mills, the surviving husband of Lizzie Mae Owen, the youngest daughter of Dan Owen, the property was acquired by Frances E. Benson and her husband, Talbott V. Chandler, of Marietta, Georgia, she being a descendant of Daniel G. Owen's sister. She rented the house out to tenants until it was sold in 1967.

1967-C. J. and Bobby Smith bought the property and the house on 181 acres from Land Lot 132 and 133.

1968-Mr. and Mrs. William Romans bought the Elms with only 16.08 acres left. Mr. Romans saved the house by his dedication and hard work. Mr. Romans was an expert carpenter and is responsible for most of the renovations of the house during his tenure.

1976-Mr. Romans was nearly eighty years of age. He had lost his wife to cancer and had lost interest in the Elms. He sold the Elms to Donald Roland, a Delta Pilot and colleague of Edward Smith, the next owner. During their ownership, the Rolands attempted to renovate and restore the house, being careful to preserve the history and original character of the house.

1995-Edward P. and Cheryl B. Smith bought the Elms. They added back some of the original acreage to increase it to the present 24 contiguous acres including the old barn.

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Daniel G. Owen (1830-1892), owner from 1858 until 1892, and his Descendants until 1967.

The house and its inhabitants are sources rich in history. It was during the Owen ownership that the house was given the name, The Elms, due to the large number of elm trees on the property, some of which survive today.

Much about the life of Owen and his family during his ownership of the Elms can be gleaned from William H. Davidson's *A Rockaway in Talbot, Volume I* since Mr. Davidson had access to many earlier residents and their memories. Daniel G. Owen went off during the Civil War to fight for the South and survived and returned to his plantation, although to a different set of conditions than before the war.

Daniel Grant Owen thus became a pioneer in postbellum agriculture. The Elms suffered losses during the Civil War, and Daniel Owen had been taken prisoner by Union armies. Upon his release in 1865, however, he was determined to rebuild rather than dwell on the losses.

Despite the lack of slave labor, which became the ruin of many plantations, Mr. Owen went about the business of making his farm once again prosperous. He drained previously unused swampland for the cultivation of sugar cane, experimented with different varieties of cotton, tried his hand at fish culture, and raised corn, wheat, and barley. He bought the equipment to process the cane into syrup and sold the finished product. His cotton gin flourished, as did his flouring mill, and he was said to raise the "finest mules, hogs, etc., in the state of Georgia." according to the editor of the *Talbotton Standard* after visiting the Elms in 1873 and 1875. All was accomplished with one-third less labor than the average farmer of his day. Owen was such an inspiration to others in the county, or perhaps the most progressive farmer in the area, or one who knew how to get publicity, as he was often featured in the local newspaper in the 1870s and 1880s in articles that discussed his farming innovations and work ethic. One such article discussed his pioneering role in "fish culture." He also was prominent in the local Pleasant Hill Agricultural Club in the 1880s as part of the national Grange movement.

Owen was equally well-known for his gin house for ginning cotton, although the location of that is off the nominated property and across the highway. His most important innovation/achievement was his water tower, which gained newspaper attention when it was erected in 1886:

Under "Personals" in the *[Talbotton] New Era* for April 8, 1886, there appeared a notice that "Mr. D. G. Owen went to Columbus several days since and bought a hydraulic ram and piping to fix waterworks to supply his home and lot with water from the springs which form his fish ponds in front of his handsome residence near Pleasant Hill."

In December, 1886, the editor of the *New Era* visited Owen and wrote, "A system of waterworks by

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hydraulic power is a convenience not met with on many farms. The water is carried through pipes for three hundred yards from a never failing spring, that also supplies his carp ponds, to a reservoir with a capacity of several thousand gallons of water and is located near his dwelling. Pipes lead from this to the house, stables, garden and yard, with an abundant supply of water in case of an emergency."

The water tower, or storage reservoir, was built of field rock gathered on the plantation. It is in a good state of preservation and stands near the house. In a shed room adjoining the tower is a waterwheel. The cups caught a falling stream of water from the tank. Power from the wheel operated a milk churning apparatus!

[Davidson, *A Rockaway in Talbot, Vol. I*, p. 546.]

Owen was noted for adding a bathroom or "water closet" to his house on the back porch, the enclosed room being still there today. This was added shortly after the addition of the 1886 water tower.

Perhaps his highest praise came from a newspaper man from Macon, nearly 80 miles away, and not the local reporter who was already enthralled by Owen's innovations. In December 1886, the Macon correspondent wrote glowingly about Owen:

Being located in a fine section of the county gives him one advantage, but inspecting his fields you will find a plan of ditching and terracing that is altogether his own. On lands that have been in cultivation for fifty years or more he will make three hundred bushels of corn and about ten bales of cotton to the plow, besides a quantity of other produce."

The correspondent marveled at the hydraulic powered waterworks. He sampled with relish the famous Owen syrup at the cane mill and evaporator.

Owen runs a grist mill that is paying him handsomely, as he has good waterpower. A gin nearby is also run by water and his arrangements there are the most complete we have ever seen. He gins and packs ten bales of cotton per day and everything is so conveniently arranged that two hands do the whole work.

The secret of his great success as a farmer is his study and execution of economy and labor saving. His entire business is carried on with one third less labor than the average farmer is compelled to have, and, of course, that is where the success of any farmer lies.

Another thing that Mr. Owen appreciates very highly is that he did all the mechanisms on his place, having never employed a workman to put his waterworks, mills or gins in working condition. What a pity that the world has not more such farmers as Mr. Owen!

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[Davidson, *A Rockaway in Talbot, Volume I*, p. 547.]

Daniel Grant Owen was married twice, first to Sarah B. Read in 1870 by whom he had two daughters, Sallie Emma (1871-1896) and Lizzie Mae (1874-1946). Both daughters were educated at Wesleyan College in Macon. He married second in 1879, his first wife's sister, Emma Eliza Read (1843-1947). The Owens' home was a center for the area's social life, and many visitors came from far away to learn from Mr. Owen's farming methods. Daniel G. Owen died in 1892. He was buried in the family burying ground near Pleasant Hill.

When daughter Sallie Emma was 24, she was courted by Dr. Will L. Ryder, a Talbotton dentist, whose love she could not return. While she visited friends in Talbotton, she dated the man she preferred. In a state of jealousy, Dr. Ryder murdered her in the parlor of the McCoy home on Easter Sunday, 1896. Upon her daughter's death, Mrs. Owen closed off Sallie Emma's bedroom at the Elms and it remained closed until Mrs. Owen's death in 1947 at the age of 103. She had carried on many of the old ways until her death, cherishing her heritage. She always managed for a sumptuous meal to be served, even if only a small number of family members were there. They were members of Providence Methodist Church a few miles away. After the deaths of Mrs. Owen and her daughter before her (see below) the plantation furnishings were sold at auction.

When Mr. Owen's health began to decline, he hired two young men to aid him in the operation of the plantation. One was Collier Vines Mills. Mr. Mills stayed at the Elms after the death of Mr. Owen and shouldered the responsibility of running the plantation. Mr. Owen, a firm believer in the separation between owner and worker, did not allow Mr. Mills or any other workers to court his daughters. Years later, in 1922, Collier Mills married Lizzie Mae, the surviving Owen daughter. They lived on at the Elms where they farmed and grew peaches until her death in 1946 and his death in 1955 at age 85.

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## 9. Major Bibliographic References

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This nomination was prepared from materials submitted by two of the owners, neither of whom were descendants of the original families and thus relied on original research and published materials to write up their submissions. Most of the historical information was taken from:

Davidson, William H. *A Rockaway in Talbot, Volume I*. (West Point, GA: Hester Printing Co., 1983), pp. 542-555. Mr. Davidson prepared his book from a wealth of personal research and interviews with family members, and thus his work no doubt is as accurate as one can get given the passage of time.

**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:**

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

**Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A**

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## 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreage of Property**      24 acres

### **UTM References**

- A) Zone 16      E733542   N3630894
- B) Zone 16      E733690   N3630359
- C) Zone 16      E733431   N3630290
- D) Zone 16      E733352   N3630589

### **Verbal Boundary Description**

The nominated property is marked on the enclosed plat that shows the additional 7.8 acres added back in 1997. The north boundary extends to the south edge of pavement of the state highway.

### **Boundary Justification**

The nominated property is the acreage remaining associated with the plantation house and outbuildings, all in Land Lot 132.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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**State Historic Preservation Office**

**name/title** Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., Historian  
**organization** Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
**mailing address** 47 Trinity Avenue, S. W., Suite 414-H  
**city or town** Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30334  
**telephone** (404) 656-2840 **date** May 12, 2004  
**e-mail** ken\_thomas@dnr.state.ga.us

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

**name/title**  
**organization**  
**mailing address**  
**city or town** **state** **zip code**  
**telephone**  
**e-mail**

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

**Property Owner or Contact Information**

**name (property owner or contact person)** Edward and Cheryl Smith  
**organization (if applicable)** N/A  
**mailing address** 47 Rising Sun Road  
**city or town** Woodland **state** GA **zip code** 31836  
**e-mail (optional)** N/A

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

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**Name of Property:** The Elms  
**City or Vicinity:** Woodland vicinity  
**County:** Talbot  
**State:** Georgia  
**Photographer:** James R. Lockhart  
**Negative Filed:** Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
**Date Photographed:** August 2002

**Description of Photograph(s):**

Number of photographs:

1 of 25: Front facade; photographer facing southeast.

2 of 25: Front facade and stone fish pond; photographer facing east.

3 of 25: Front facade and stone fish pond from side; photographer facing northeast.

4 of 25: Front facade from highway, showing grape arbor on left and stone retaining wall in front and stand of trees; photographer facing southeast.

5 of 25: Rear facade showing enclosed bathroom in corner and new rear steps and drive; photographer facing north.

6 of 25: Rear facade from further back showing rear stacked stone retaining wall and outbuildings at right; photographer facing north.

7 of 25: East side and rear with privy outbuilding in foreground; photographer facing northwest.

8 of 25: Outbuildings: left to right, water tower, wood storage building and guest house; photographer facing northeast.

9 of 25: Guest house, with chimney to the left in the field; photographer facing northeast.

10 of 25: View from guest house looking back toward water tower to east facade of main house; photographer facing southwest.

11 of 25: Privy (outbuilding); photographer facing east.

12 of 25: Smokehouse (outbuilding); photographer facing southeast.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

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13 of 25: Garage (outbuilding); photographer facing southeast.

14 of 25: Guest house with smokestack/chimney in field of lost building; photographer facing northwest.

15 of 25: Barns further out in the fields behind the main property area; photographer facing west.

16 of 25: Barns, one from photo 15, plus one further in the field; photographer facing northeast.

17 of 25: Barn in field from no. 16, closer view; photographer facing northeast.

18 of 25: Doors showing original paneling on back porch, east end; photographer facing north.

19 of 25: Front porch, with outbuildings seen off the far (east) end; photographer facing northeast.

20 of 25: Main House, interior, central hall looking toward front entrance doors; photographer facing northwest.

21 of 25: Main house, interior, bedroom to right of entrance with corridor leading toward bathroom extension; photographer facing southwest.

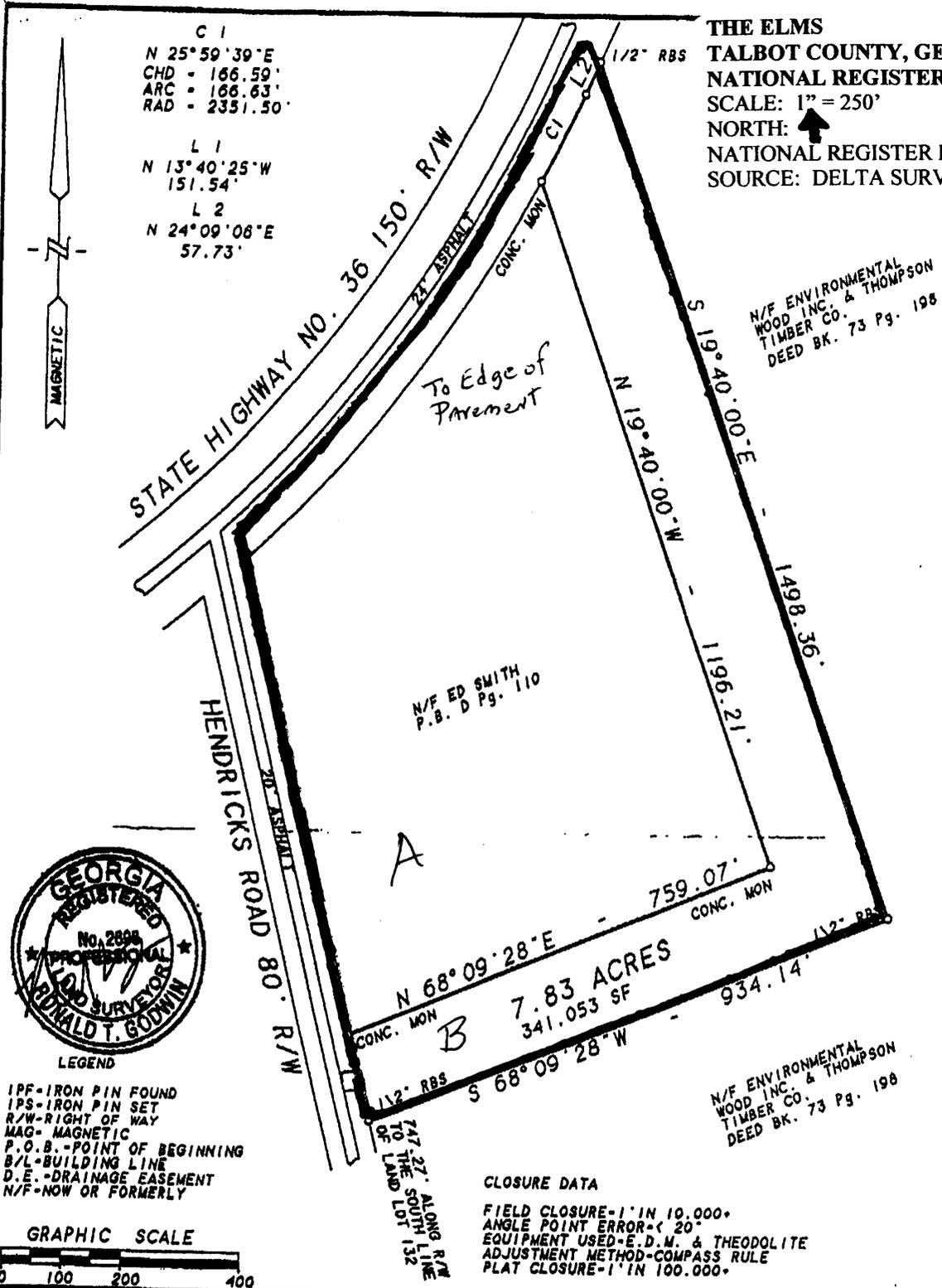
22 of 25: Main house, interior, bedroom off main hall, second on right of entrance, behind the one in photo 21; photographer facing southwest.

23 of 25: Main house, interior, living room/parlor, first left off main hall; photographer facing southeast.

24 of 25: Main house, interior, sitting room/bedroom, second left off main hall; photographer facing northeast.

25 of 25: Main house, interior, dining room, with view through door back to bedroom of photo 24; photographer facing southwest.

(HPD WORDPERFECT form version 11-03-01)



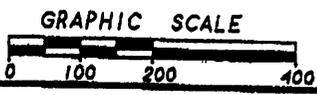
**THE ELMS**  
**TALBOT COUNTY, GEORGIA**  
**NATIONAL REGISTER MAP/PLAT MAI**  
**SCALE: 1" = 250'**  
**NORTH:**   
**NATIONAL REGISTER BOUNDARY:**   
**SOURCE: DELTA SURVEYORS, INC. 199'**

N/F ENVIRONMENTAL  
 WOOD INC. & THOMPSON  
 TIMBER CO.  
 DEED BK. 73 Pg. 198

N/F ENVIRONMENTAL  
 WOOD INC. & THOMPSON  
 TIMBER CO.  
 DEED BK. 73 Pg. 198



**LEGEND**  
 1PF-IRON PIN FOUND  
 1PS-IRON PIN SET  
 R/W-RIGHT OF WAY  
 MAG- MAGNETIC  
 P.O.B.-POINT OF BEGINNING  
 B/L-BUILDING LINE  
 D.E.-DRAINAGE EASEMENT  
 N/F-NOW OR FORMERLY



**CLOSURE DATA**  
 FIELD CLOSURE-1" IN 10,000.  
 ANGLE POINT ERROR-< 20"  
 EQUIPMENT USED-E.D.M. & THEODOLITE  
 ADJUSTMENT METHOD-COMPASS RULE  
 PLAT CLOSURE-1" IN 100,000.

PREPARED FOR:		
<b>ED SMITH</b>		
LAND LOT: 132	DATE: 9\18\97	
DISTRICT: 23 rd	REV:	
SCALE: 1" = 200'	COUNTY: TALBOT, GA.	JOB NO.: 97-0152A

**DELTA SURVEYORS, INC.**  
 P.O. BOX 571  
 770\460\9342  
 FAYETTEVILLE, GA. 30214  
 FAX 770\460\7114



JOHN 3:16