

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

For HCRS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Colonel Isaac Beeson House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number North side SR 1854 0.4 miles w/jct. with SR 1852 ___ not for publication

city, town Colfax vicinity of congressional district Sixth

state North Carolina code 037 county Guilford code 081

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name ~~Curtis Lee Bame~~ Fred B. Bame

street & number Route 1, Box 770

city, town Colfax ___ vicinity of state North Carolina

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Guilford County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Greensboro state North Carolina

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Architectural Resources: An Inventory of Historic Architecture, High Point, Jamestown,
title Gibsonville, Guilford County, has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes no

H. McKelden Smith, Ed.

date 1979 #7, p. 132. ___ federal ___ state county ___ local

depository for survey records Survey & Planning Branch, NC Division of Archives and History

city, town Raleigh state North Carolina

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Beeson House, located in the gently rolling agricultural land of southeast Guilford County, provides an excellent example of the impact of high style design on vernacular building in North Carolina. A two story brick one over three common bond gable roofed Federal style house of about 1790, it has single shoulder exterior end chimneys and a one story gable roofed wing (also brick) attached to its west end, enclosing one of the chimneys.¹ This addition creates a balance for the asymmetrical three bayed facade of the original block house whose details are a robust Federal, and like its Quaker plan, allude to the transformations of form by vernacular practice.

The two windows of the first floor are placed equidistant from the end walls of the house, but the entry door is slightly off-center, to the west, reflecting the interior asymmetrical arrangement. On the east end of the house windows flank the chimney and the windows of the second floor are placed directly above those below. The window surrounds consist of a wooden mitered corner beaded molding surrounding flat jambs resting on a cushion sill and supporting a flat top plate. The original sill was poplar and replaced by a similarly molded concrete sill in this century.² This wooden frame is fitted into a shallow opening topped by a flat arch, two/three bricks deep on the first floor and one brick deep on the second. The windows themselves are nine-over-nine sash on the first floor and six-over-six sash on the second. The original front door has been replaced but six panel doors remain in all the openings of the first floor which are framed in triple molded jambs and top plates.

Intrusive elements on the exterior consist of a wooden box which is attached to the facade between the first and second floors. It conceals electrical conduit and the ends of tie rods placed in the joists of the second floor perpendicular to the facade following structural damage to the house in the earthquake of 1886. The front porch was added in this century.

Entered by the front door, a large room fills the entire west side of the house with a door and window opposite those of the front. A stair rises in the back corner of this room beside the door. To the east are the doors of the two small rooms on the east side of the house. At door jamb height is a molded rail that runs from the first door on the east wall to the corner by the entry door.

The fireplace of the main room is centered on the west wall. It is typical tripartite Federal with raised corner blocks on fluted pilasters, a central panel and reeding below and on the top edge of the mantel shelf. Triple molded window frames rest on an elaborate tripartite chair rail and a shoe mold finishes the bottom of the plaster walls. The interior walls are plaster over brick, with a tripartite crown molding. In this room boxed steel beams have been added to counter the sag of the second floor joists.

The two small rooms to the east have two windows each and corner fireplaces which butt back to back to share the single exterior end chimney. The doors are six recessed panel doors and the rooms have the same chair rail and shoe molding as the main room. The fireplaces are surrounded with a molded and beaded Georgian-like molding supporting plain blocks which support a three-part shelf.

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To the right of the fireplace in the main room is the door to the addition. Used now as a dining room (a later kitchen L is attached behind it) this room has a more robust fireplace surround and mantel. It is also tripartite but 1/8 round columns support raised corner blocks and the entablature has a central raised panel under the elaborately molded and extravagantly projecting mantel shelf.

Going upstairs one finds reminders of the elegant finishes which must have characterized the house. The risers of the enclosed, flush paneled stairs are stippled. The newel at the top is very thin and has chamfered corners with thin square balusters and a molded and beaded top rail. Bits of marbleizing cling to the wood and must echo the extraordinary fireplace surround in this large room. Red, green and brown marbleizing decorate this tripartite surround whose 1/8 round columns, raised end and center blocks and deep molded shelf copy the forms of the dining room mantel. The marbleizing is used to enhance the divisions of the entablature by further panelizing its divisions by painted notched edge panels that create an inlaid, three-dimensional effect. It has the same window frames and chair rail as the room below, although the window heads have a flat projection which looks Victorian. With its six windows and mantel it seems more like a parlor than a bedroom.

In the back corner a four panel door leads into one of the two small bedrooms on this floor. This door's back side is elaborately painted in simulated woodgraining and, like the marbleizing, contrasting grains are used to produce the effect of raised notched panels on the door. These rooms also have corner fireplaces and trim similar to that of the other rooms.

Taken as a whole the Beeson house is a lovely and excellent example of the combination of fairly sophisticated building sources with local desires and traditions which produce fine vernacular architecture.

FOOTNOTES:

¹The date on this house is not clear but some bricks on the site of the original detached kitchen are dated 1787. I would place the house within ten years after this date on visual evidence alone.

²This information was supplied by the owner.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The substance, scale and formal complexity of details in this two-story brick house combine to provide an excellent and intriguing example of the retention of medieval plan type overlaid with Federal high style details which, in their robust interpretation, retain a feel of the Georgian from which they emerge. The Beeson House is a significant and useful survival in Piedmont North Carolina where it provides a complement and contrast to the German and Moravian forms which tend to predominate.

Criteria Assessment:

- C. The Beeson House embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type (the Quaker plan), period (late Georgian-early Federal) and method of construction that is significant to the development of architecture in Piedmont North Carolina in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The use of the "Quaker plan"--the three-room arrangement--is found here in a house known to have been built for a Quaker family. The plan, together with the conservative gable-roof brick form, are characteristic of the more substantial houses of the North Carolina Piedmont. The interior woodwork is unusually rich and well-preserved.
- D. The Beeson House and property are likely to yield information about rural life in Piedmont North Carolina in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

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Isaac Beeson, builder of the Beeson House, moved to Rowan County, North Carolina, in 1758 from Virginia where he had been an active member of the Hopewell Monthly Meeting of the Society of Friends. As Quakers in good standing, Beeson and his wife Phoebe Stroud brought with them certificates of transfer, and on June 24 they were received at the New Garden Meeting.¹ Four years earlier, Isaac's parents, Richard and Charity Beeson, had been received also by certificates of transfer from Hopewell, and they had settled in the region that became Guilford County in 1771. Richard and Charity were both ministers of the Quaker faith and traveled throughout North Carolina and South Carolina establishing new meetings and spreading the tenets of the beliefs.² Richard, Charity, and Isaac Beeson led the movement to formally organize the Deep River Meeting in 1778. For a number of years previously, the Friends had met in Richard and Charity's home a few miles distant from the eventual site of the meeting house. Upon his parents' deaths, Isaac continued their efforts to establish and support a school for the children of Deep River Friends.³

In 1757, Isaac Beeson purchased 480 acres on an eastern fork of Deep River from William Shapperd.⁴ There, a few miles northwest of his father's home, Isaac built a small log house for his family. That structure stood immediately behind the present house and later was used as a kitchen. At some point a breezeway was constructed to connect the old house (kitchen) to the main house, and that architectural feature survived until ca. 1900.⁵ Foundation remains of the old house can still be seen under the present kitchen.

By 1787 Isaac Beeson had become a prominent Guilford County landowner and had risen in social status as far as his Quaker heritage would permit. His income was derived from livestock and grain production, but his religious beliefs prohibited ownership of slaves. Those same religious convictions had forced him to take a nonmilitaristic position in the American Revolution, but he had served the patriotic cause by hiring out his wagons and by supplying field troops with beef and other foods.⁶

The discovery of a brick dated 1787 suggests that Beeson either began or completed the house now standing in that year. Word passed down through generations states that the bricks used in the construction were made in the area along the river bank a few hundred yards northwest of the house.⁷ The identity of the builder remains unknown, but the plan of the house closely follows a general style designed for Quaker homes by William Penn many years earlier and according to T. T. Waterman "is the typical house plan in Piedmont North Carolina."⁸

Isaac and Phoebe Beeson were parents of twelve children, ten of whom survived their father who died in 1802. Two sons, Richard and Benjamin, were disowned by the Quaker meeting for marrying out of the faith, which may partially account for Isaac, Jr.'s inheritance of "all the land where I now live with all the buildings thereto belonging at the decease or marriage of my wife."⁹

Isaac, Jr. (1764-1829) was the seventh of twelve children. He never married and his death, two years before his mother, threw into confusion the heir to the homestead after Phoebe's death.¹⁰ Furthermore, Isaac, Jr. was one of the executors of his father's will and had not settled that estate before his own death. The two estates became intermixed resulting in an extremely complicated court litigation. Out of the chaos, Richard G. Beeson, a grandson of Isaac the builder, emerged with the house and farm.¹¹

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Richard G. Beeson married Polly Bell, member of a wealthy and influential Guilford County family. For some time prior to 1854, the couple lived in the Beeson House, but the date of their move to the home of Richard's grandfather could not be determined. Livestock apparently dominated the farm economy; however, Richard managed to acquire extensive landholdings, including most of the tract originally purchased by Isaac Beeson, Sr.¹² Richard was also active in religious work, not among Quakers but in the Methodist faith. Beeson descendants agree he played a prominent role in the establishment and expansion of the Sandy Ridge Methodist Church even though there is some disagreement concerning donations of land for the building and the cemetery.¹³

Richard Beeson died late in 1854 or early 1855. His will was probated in February of the latter year and to his nephews, Richard J. and Franklin P. Tatum, he bequeathed "my tract of land on which I live after the death of my beloved wife. . . ." Polly must have died within a few years for on April 1, 1859, the Tatum brothers sold the house and 350 acres to Joseph A. Davis.¹⁴

J. A. Davis was an antebellum planter, local magistrate, and land speculator who was often referred to as Squire Davis.¹⁵ He apparently suffered the woes common to many of the wealthy class in the aftermath of the Civil War. His fortune dwindled and he was forced to mortgage his home and farm. By a special agreement with his major creditor, Alexander McIver, he leased the farm with the annual rents being applied to pay off his debt.¹⁶ Continued indebtedness, however, brought renewed mortgages, and by 1900, an aging Joe Davis could no longer work the farm sufficiently to pay the debts. The property was sold at auction, and though purchase by Davis's wife Pauline brought a temporary reprieve, the house and land soon passed to a new owner.¹⁷ Even though Davis lived in the home for more than forty years, local people continued to call it the Beeson House, a name it has never relinquished.

Following the Davis occupancy, the Beeson House became the center of a large tobacco farm operated first by Thomas E. Reynolds and later by Claude Gray. Reynolds was a bachelor and a member of the prominent Reynolds family of Winston-Salem. He produced the tobacco which was shipped to the family's manufacturing enterprises.¹⁸ Gray came into possession of the 443 acre farm in 1938 and remained in the Beeson House until the mid 1940s. He built a new house about a quarter of a mile away and for a brief period, part of the Beeson House was used for tobacco storage.¹⁹ In 1945 Lee and Etta Bame bought the Beeson House and 160 acres. They still occupy the home but they transferred title to their son, Fred R. Bame, in 1969.²⁰

Several facets of the Beeson House history are worthy of specific mention. The Charleston earthquake of 1886 sent severe shock waves through the North Carolina piedmont causing extensive structural damage. The Beeson House suffered a split on the east wall that extended from the roof to the foundation. Large iron bolts were inserted through the rear wall in an effort to hold the house together. The barn to the rear of the house is also quite old, and for many years it served as an entertainment center for the Deep River Community. Square dances in the large open structure were common, and undoubtedly corn shuckings and other forms of recreation took place there. The barn underwent significant interior alteration when tobacco became the farm's leading commodity. Sitting in the front yard is an "upping" stone used by the ladies to mount the riding horses. It is a large rock with a step chipped out to form a two step stair.²¹

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The structure of course is closely related to the surrounding environment. Archaeological remains, such as trash pits, wells, and structural remains, which may be present, can provide information valuable to the understanding and interpretation of the structure. Information concerning use patterns, social standing and mobility, as well as structural details are often only evident in the archaeological record. Therefore, archaeological remains may well be an important component of the significance of the structure. At this time no investigation has been done to discover these remains, but it is probable that they exist, and this should be considered in any development of the property.

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¹Margaret Ailene Beeson (comp.), A Genealogy of the Beeson Family (Greensboro, 1973), 12, hereinafter cited as Beeson, Beeson Family. Miss Beeson was graduated from Guilford College and attained an M. A. degree from Columbia University.

²Beeson, Beeson Family. See also David Leroy Corbitt, The Formation of the North Carolina Counties 1663-1943 (Raleigh: Department of Archives and History, 1950), 113.

³Researcher's interview with Ailene Beeson, June 9, 1980, hereinafter cited as Beeson interview. See fn. 1. See also Highway Historical Marker File J 49, Deep River Friends Meeting, in Research Branch, Archaeology and Historic Preservation Section, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.

⁴Rowan County Deed Books, Office of the Register of Deeds, Rowan County Courthouse, Salisbury, Deed Book 2, p. 202. Shepperd had obtained a Granville grant for 484 acres in 1756. See Rowan County Deed Abstracts, I, 17, 29.

⁵Beeson interview; and Researcher's interview with Fred Bame, current owner of the house, June 9, 1980, hereinafter cited as Bame interview.

⁶Beeson interview. A listing of property in the will of Isaac Beeson and the inventory of his son's Isaac, Jr. estate show ownership of considerable livestock which offers support for the tradition. See Guilford County Will Books, Office of the Clerk of Superior Court, Guilford County Courthouse, Greensboro, Will Book A, 32, hereinafter cited as Guilford County Will Book, and Guilford County Estate Papers, State Archives, Raleigh, estate of Isaac Beeson [Jr.], 1829, hereinafter cited as Estates Papers.

⁷Bame interview; and Beeson interview.

⁸Beeson interview. T.T. Waterman, Early Architecture of North Carolina (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1947), 173

⁹Beeson, Beeson Family, 12-14; Beeson interview; and Guilford County Will Book A, 32.

¹⁰Beeson interview; and Isaac Beeson [Jr.] Estate Papers.

¹¹Isaac Beeson [Jr.] Estate Papers; and will of Richard Beeson, File No. 01038, copy in possession of Ailene Beeson of Greensboro, hereinafter cited as Richard Beeson will. Will recorded in Guilford County Will Book C, 437.

¹²Beeson interview; and Richard Beeson will. See Guilford County Deed Books, Office of the Register of Deeds, Guilford County Courthouse, Greensboro, index, for transfers to Richard G. Beeson, 1834-1854, hereinafter cited as Guilford County Deed Book. See also Isaac Beeson [Jr.], Estate Papers.

¹³Beeson interview.

¹⁴Richard Beeson will; and Guilford County Deed Book 37, p. 637.

¹⁵Bame interview. Fred Bame's great grandparents were married by Squire Davis in the Beeson House in the 1880s.

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¹⁶ Guilford County Deed Book 67, p. 541. For other references, see Deed Book 60, p. 79

¹⁷ Guilford County Deed Book 186, p. 519; and Deed Book 318, p. 610. Note the previous conveyance to T. E. Reynolds by R. R. King and wife and E. P. (Pauline) Davis.

¹⁸ The property passed to Reynolds (see fn 17); then to Reynold's heirs; then to W. C. (Claude) Gray; then to James D. and Marie Payne Greene; and finally to the Bame family. See Guilford County Will Book O, 345 (Thomas E. Reynolds); and Guilford County Deed Book 837, p. 422; Deed Book 1021, p. 512; and Deed Book 1081, p. 108. See also Beeson interview; and Bame interview.

¹⁹ Bame interview; and Guilford County Deed Book 837, p. 422.

²⁰ Guilford County Deed Book 1081, p. 108.

²¹ Beeson interview; Bame interview and inspection of house and grounds by researcher, June 9, 1980.

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Beeson, Margaret Ailene. Interview, June 9, 1980.

Corbitt, David Leroy. The Formation of the North Carolina Counties 1663-1943.
Raleigh: Department of Archives and History, 1950.

Guilford County Records

Deeds

Estates Papers

Wills

Highway Historical Marker File J 49, Deep River Friends Meeting.
Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.

Rowan County Deed Abstracts, I. Rowan County Library, Salisbury.

Rowan County Deed Records

Stockard, Sallie W. History of Guilford County. Knoxville: Gat-Ogden, 1902.

Waterman, Thomas Tileston. The Early Architecture of North Carolina. Chapel Hill:
University of North Carolina Press, 1947.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bame, Fred. Interview, June 9, 1980.

Beeson, Margaret Ailene, comp. A Genealogy of the Beeson Family. Greensboro, 1973.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Appx. 2 acres

Quadrangle name Kernersville Quad

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

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

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

The ground on which the house stands and a square of acreage equal to a parallelogram of one acre on each side.

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

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Architectural description: Charlotte V. Brown, Architectural Historian
Significance: Jerry L. Cross, Researcher

organization Division of Archives and History
Archaeology and Historic Preservation date July, 1980
Survey and Planning Branch

street & number 109 East Jones Street telephone (919) 733-6545

city or town Raleigh state North Carolina 27611

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date July 25, 1980

For HCERS use only

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

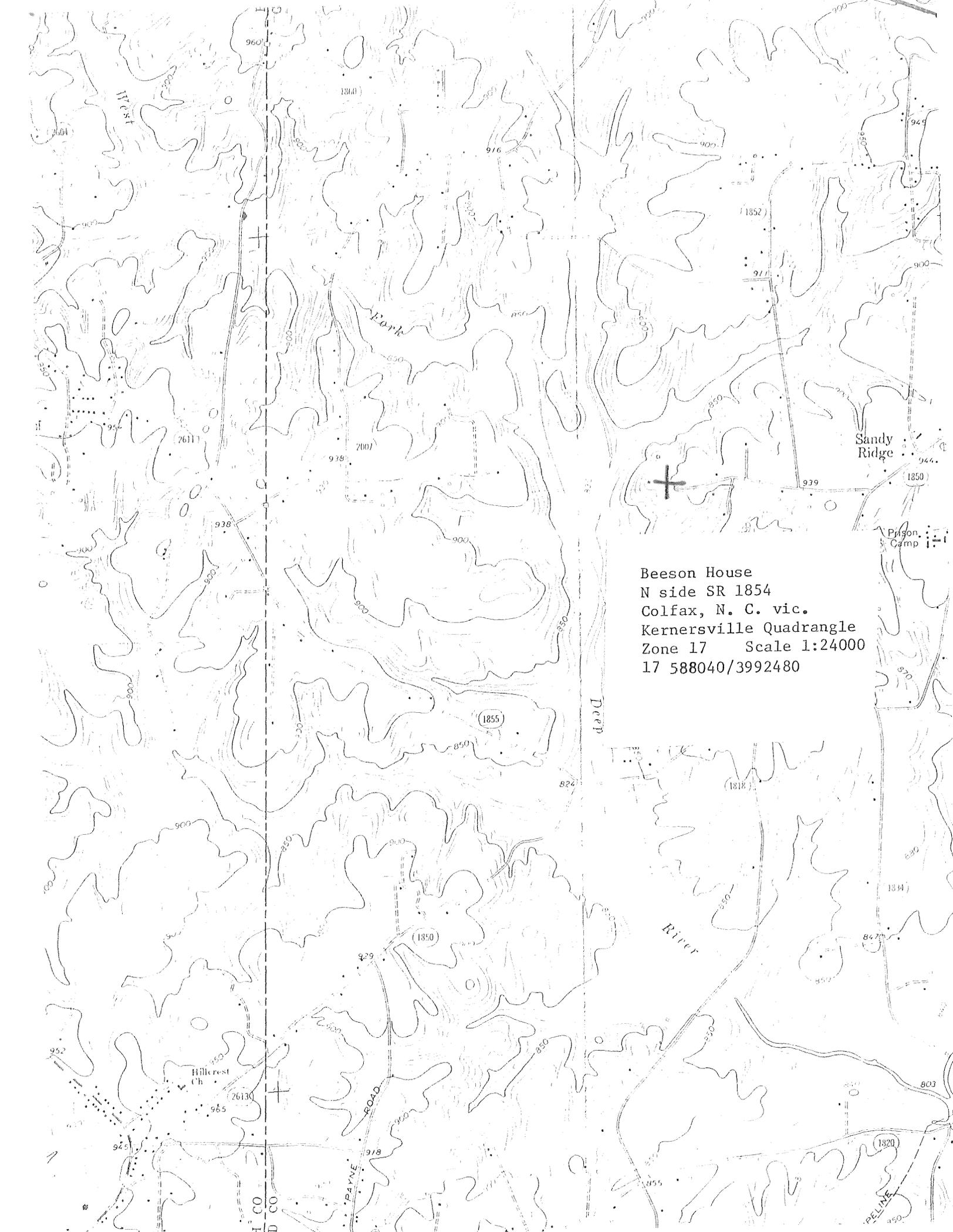
date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration



Beeson House
N side SR 1854
Colfax, N. C. vic.
Kernersville Quadrangle
Zone 17 Scale 1:24000
17 588040/3992480

WEST

Dark

Deep

River

Sandy
Ridge

Hillcrest
Ch.

PAYNE

PELINE

H CO
D CO

Prison
Camp

960

1384

916

1852

911

944

900

7611

938

7007

939

944

1850

938

900

Prison
Camp

1855

850

824

1818

870

900

850

900

824

1850

1814

847

900

850

900

824

1850

803

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1850

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850

900

824

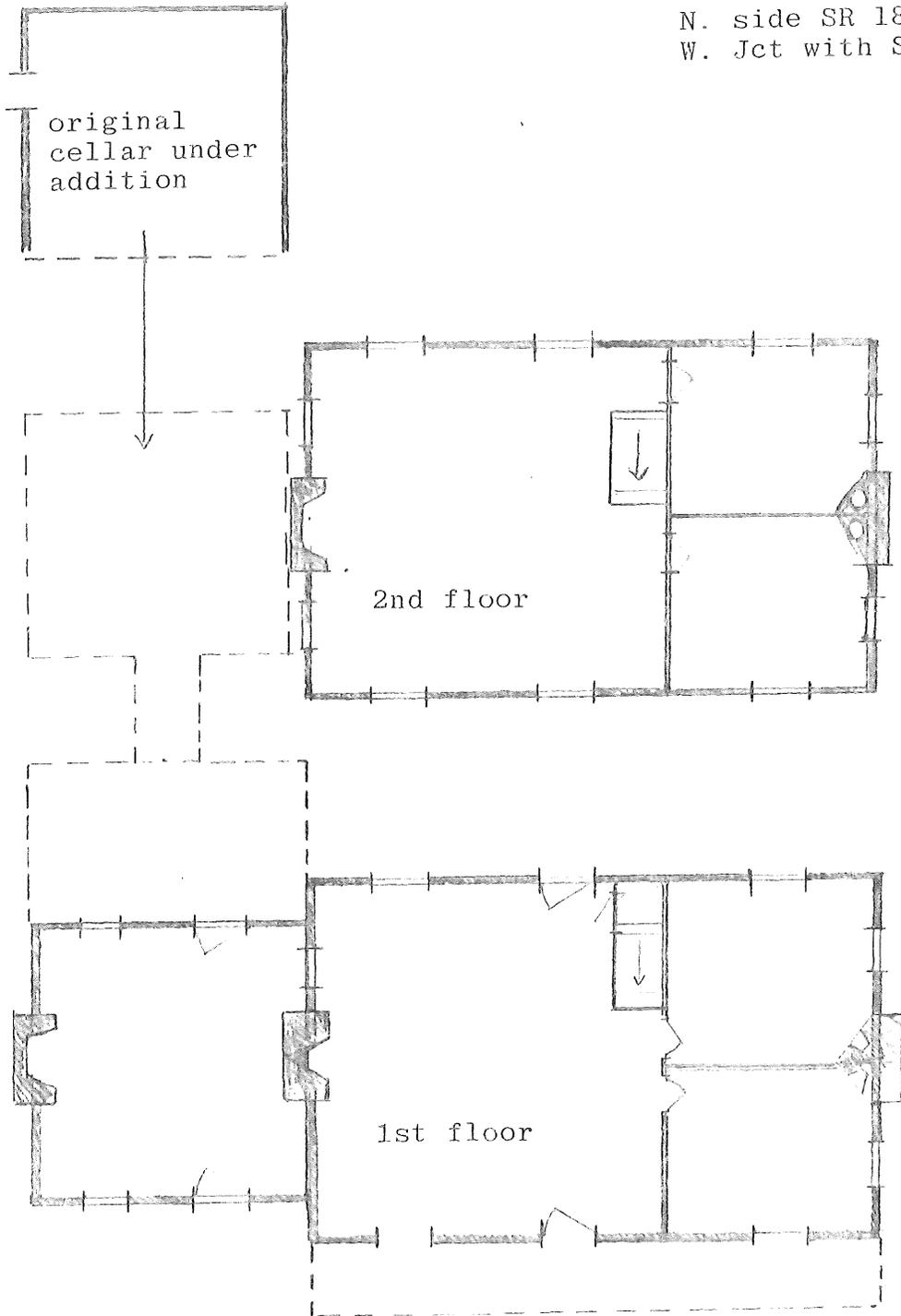
1850

803

GUILFORD COUNTY

COLONEL ISAAC BEESON HOUSE

N. side SR 1854 0.4 miles
W. Jct with SR 1852



original walls

additions

