

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 Oliver-Morton Farm

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number State Road 1417

N/A not for publication

city, town Oak Hill

vicinity

state North Carolina code NC

county Granville

code 077

zip code 27565

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

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>5</u>	_____ buildings
<u>1</u>	_____ sites
<u>2</u>	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
<u>8</u>	_____ Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

Historic and Architectural Resources of
Granville County, N.C.

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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 request for determination of eligibility 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 does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

Date

William S. Rain Jr.

State Historic Preservation Officer
State or Federal agency and bureau

6-14-88

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 and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic-single dwelling

Agriculture/Subsistence

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic-single dwelling

Agriculture/Subsistence

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Georgian

Italianate

Other: I-house

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

walls weatherboard

metal

roof metal

other wood

brick

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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The Oliver-Morton Farm, reached down a long gravel lane a mile from the nearest paved road, contains a diverse array of dwellings and outbuildings, including the Italianate style I-house of Samuel V. Morton and one of Granville County's oldest and most unusual buildings, the brick-nogged Oliver House. With its bright leaf era outbuildings, the farm spans the years from the early twentieth century as far back, perhaps, as the late eighteenth.

Beneath the sheet metal shell of the Oliver House, added in the twentieth century when it was converted to a packhouse, lies the two-room deep, story-and-loft body of one of the county's earliest and, in plan and construction, most unusual houses. Appearing almost as diminutive as a standard county outbuilding and transformed by its conversion into a packhouse, the exterior of the structure only hints at its original use. Though its weatherboards have been covered and its chimney and a presumed porch have been torn away, it retains a very steeply pitched roof and deep, squat form not found at local outbuildings. Further, boxed cornices terminate in patternboards at its flush gable ends and its front, south-facing elevation retains the imprints of three asymmetrically placed bays, a door and two windows.

Inside, the nature of the house, in spite of changes in its use, is revealed. Its walls, like only two other identified structures in the county - the Christmas Family House and National Register listed Red Hill - are brick-nogged. Surprisingly, all of the walls but one at the stair, both exterior and interior, are packed between their heavy pegged studs and cross braces with oversized bricks. Equally surprising is the division of the house by these walls into a two-room deep plan. In spite of its diminutive size, it has four clearly delineated rooms and a closed stair. Perhaps best viewed formally as two back to back hall-parlor plans, the house is, along with the much grander but similarly planned National Register nominated Elmwood and John Peace Jr. House, the oldest, true, double-pile plan structure in the county.

The interior retains many early features, even though the plaster has fallen from its walls and much of its woodwork, including its mantel and doors, has been removed. A three-part Georgian surround enframes the door to the large southeast room and a hand-forged H-L hinge hangs loose at an empty door frame beneath the stairs. Additionally, flush-sheathed wainscoting

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still clings to some of the walls. One of the partition walls of the closed stair that runs to the loft is also formed of flush boards. Rather than rising from a corner as was common county practice, the stair climbs, initially in a straight run, between the two smaller west gable end rooms. It is entered from the house's main southeastern room.

In the early 1890s the house was replaced by the two-story Samuel V. Morton House to its south, consigning it to its later fate as packhouse and storage shed. Like many of its contemporaries, this traditionally fashioned residence is an I-house - two stories tall and one-room deep - with a three-bay front facade, center hallway and a gable end roof. To its front stands a porch adorned with chamfered posts and brackets, and twin four-panel entry doors with heavy moldings and rounded inset arches. To its rear are two interior brick chimneys set flush with the outside wall and shared by the main block and flat-roofed, one-story ell. To the ell's rear is a porch with two enclosed end bay rooms and a semi-attached, gable end kitchen. Brackets, in addition to adorning the front porch roof, are also set beneath the eaves and the cornice returns of the main block of the house. Conforming with its bracketed, Italianate influenced exterior finish is an interior which includes four-panel doors and heavy but simple, Italianate finished, post and lintel mantels. In fair condition, the house is occupied by tenants.

Five contributing outbuildings survive from the property's tenure as a bright leaf tobacco farm. Spread to the rear of Morton's house ["A" on accompanying sketch map] are a vertical board sided, log, late nineteenth/early twentieth century potato house [B], an early twentieth century frame shed [C], a late nineteenth century frame shed [D] and the Oliver House [E]. To the rear of the Oliver House is a late nineteenth/early twentieth century, vertical board sided, diamond-notch log strip house [F] and an early twentieth century frame corner crib [G].

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) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Agriculture

Period of Significance

late 18th/early 19th
century-1937

Significant Dates

late 18th/early
19th century
early 1890s

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
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Its buildings spanning the early twentieth century, the entire nineteenth century and perhaps the late eighteenth century as well, the Oliver-Morton Farm is historically significant as representative of life in rural Granville County both before the Civil War and during its post-War bright leaf tobacco era. (See Historic Contexts 1 - The Plantation Era in Granville County, 1746-1865 - and 2 - Bright Leaf Tobacco and Rural Granville County, 1866-1937) Architecturally the farm is particularly significant, with its unusual late eighteenth/early nineteenth century brick-nogged Oliver House, traditionally fashioned early 1890s Samuel V. Morton House and late nineteenth/early twentieth century outbuildings. (See associated Property Type 1 - Georgian and Federal Style Dwellings - Type 3 - Bright Leaf Era Farmhouses and Tenant Houses - and Type 6 - Outbuildings)

The Oliver House first appears with certainty in county deeds in 1824 when it was sold with 461.5 acres of land by Francis H. Oliver to Thomas Vass [Deed Book 2, Page 227]. By this date it must have been standing, for its form, finish and unusual brick-nogged, heavy timber frame construction are that of a Granville County structure built late in the eighteenth or quite early in the nineteenth century. Whether it was built by Francis or his brother, John L. Oliver, from whom he had bought a similarly sized tract of land in 1821 [Deed Book 1, Page 148], or by their father, John, is not known.

In 1853, the year of his death, Thomas Vass transferred the house and 150 acres of land described as "the remaining portion of the Oliver Tract" to his son, William W. Vass [Deed Book 17, Page 403]. The farm had apparently already passed to the son, for the deed states that the land was "at present occupied by the said W. W. Vass as a quarter."² In 1888, William W. and Lillie M. Vass sold three tracts of land totaling 702.4 acres to Samuel V. Morton (1861-1938) for \$3,557.00 [Deed Book 41, Page 553]. A large local landowner, Morton is said to have lived in the Oliver House for a few years,³ before raising his house just to the south in the early 1890s.³ The farm is still in the Morton family - Samuel's daughter, Bessie Morton, now owns it - though it is no longer occupied by them.

The Oliver House is unique in the county in its complete embrace of brick-nogging. Only two other buildings are known to be partially brick-nogged in the county, the Christmas Family House and the National Register listed Red Hill. The Oliver

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House is nogged not only at its exterior walls, but even at its interior partitions. The plan of the house is also unusual and significant. Along with the National Register nominated John Peace Jr. House and Elmwood, the house is the earliest example of a two-room deep plan in the county. Unlike those other two dwellings, however, it is quite modestly scaled, indicating that smaller planters could also make use of an interior plan that provided four separate rooms rather than one or two chambers that were semi-private at best. The plan's traditional origins are not clear, but conceptually it is perhaps best viewed as following an extended or back to back hall-parlor plan. The house is significant architecturally for more than its form and plan, for it retains some early local Georgian style finish, which includes its patternboards outside and, inside, its surviving three-part surrounds and flush-sheathed wainscoting.

Even though it was built perhaps a century after the Oliver House, the Samuel V. Morton House is also traditionally planned and formed. Its two-story, center-hall, one-room deep form, three bays across and fronted by a one-story porch, places it squarely within the common I-house tradition in the county. Its flat-roofed ell, which shares interior chimneys with the front block, and its enclosed end porch bays and semi-attached kitchen at the rear are features not commonly found at surviving I-houses in the county. Its bracketed, Italianate style finish is also quite unusual outside of Oxford, for in rural Granville County in the latter third of the nineteenth century and opening third of the twentieth, most farmhouses were plainly finished.

The surviving outbuildings date from Samuel V. Morton's late nineteenth and early twentieth century residence at the property. A bright leaf tobacco farm, it retains a strip-house from this period that is built of diamond-notched logs - as are most of its surviving county contemporaries - covered with vertical boards. The other outbuildings are a frame corner-rib and two frame sheds and a rare surviving potato house which is built in a fashion similar to the strip-house.

¹All of the property that John L. and Thomas are shown by deeds to have owned was originally in the hands of their father, John, so he almost certainly at some point owned the property upon

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which the house was raised. The house was likely built by one of the brothers, however, for the elder John Oliver was purchasing property in the county as early as 1762 and was probably established in a dwelling by the time the house was raised.

² Thomas Vass left the remainder of the Oliver Tract to another son, Robert, who in 1849 sold it to his brother, William [Deed Book 15, Page 602].

³ Interview with Rebecca King, niece of Bessie Morton, August 15, 1986. Morton's obituary, printed in the Oxford Public Ledger of September 2, 1938, states that he was born in 1861. A "prominent retired farmer," he is said to have moved to Oxford a year prior to his death.

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Granville County Deeds. Granville County Courthouse, Oxford,
N.C.

Oxford Public Ledger (September 2, 1938). Obituary of S.V.
Morton, located in the Francis B. Hays Collection at the
Richard H. Thornton Public Library, Oxford, N.C.

Interview with Rebecca King, niece of Bessie Morton, August 15,
1986.

United States Manuscript Censuses. Microfilm located at the
Richard H. Thornton Public Library, Oxford, N.C.

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

UTM REFERENCES

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
A	17	707730	4033740	G	17	707840	4033530
B	17	707880	4033780	H	17	707740	4033520
C	17	707920	4033870	I	17	707740	4033610
D	17	708010	4033880	J	17	707870	4033640
E	17	708020	4033430	K	17	707860	4033710
F	17	707840	4033420	L	17	707740	4033680

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at point A: 17 707730 4033740 on the USGS polygon where the tree line turns east, continuing in a straight line east, along the edge of the woods and across the farm lane, approximately 650 feet to point B: 17 707880 4033780 on the polygon, where the tree line turns northeast. Continuing in a straight line northeast, along the edge of the woods, approximately 225 feet to point C: 17 707920 4033870 on the polygon, where the tree line turns east. Continuing in a straight line east, along the edge of the woods, approximately 200 feet to point D: 17 708010 4033880 on the polygon where the tree line turns south. Continuing in a straight line south, approximately following the edge of the woods, approximately 1500 feet to point E: 17 708020 4033430 on the polygon, where the tree line turns west. Continuing in a straight line west, along the edge of the woods, approximately 425 feet to point F: 17 707840 4033420 on the polygon where the tree line turns north. Continuing north in a straight line, along the edge of the woods, approximately 500 feet to point G: 17 707840 4033530 on the polygon where the tree line turns west. Continuing in a straight line west, along the edge of the woods, approximately 550 feet to point H: 17 707740 4033520 on the polygon where the tree line turns north. Continuing in a straight line north, along the edge of the woods, approximately 250 feet to point I: 17 707740 4033610 on the polygon where the tree line turns east.

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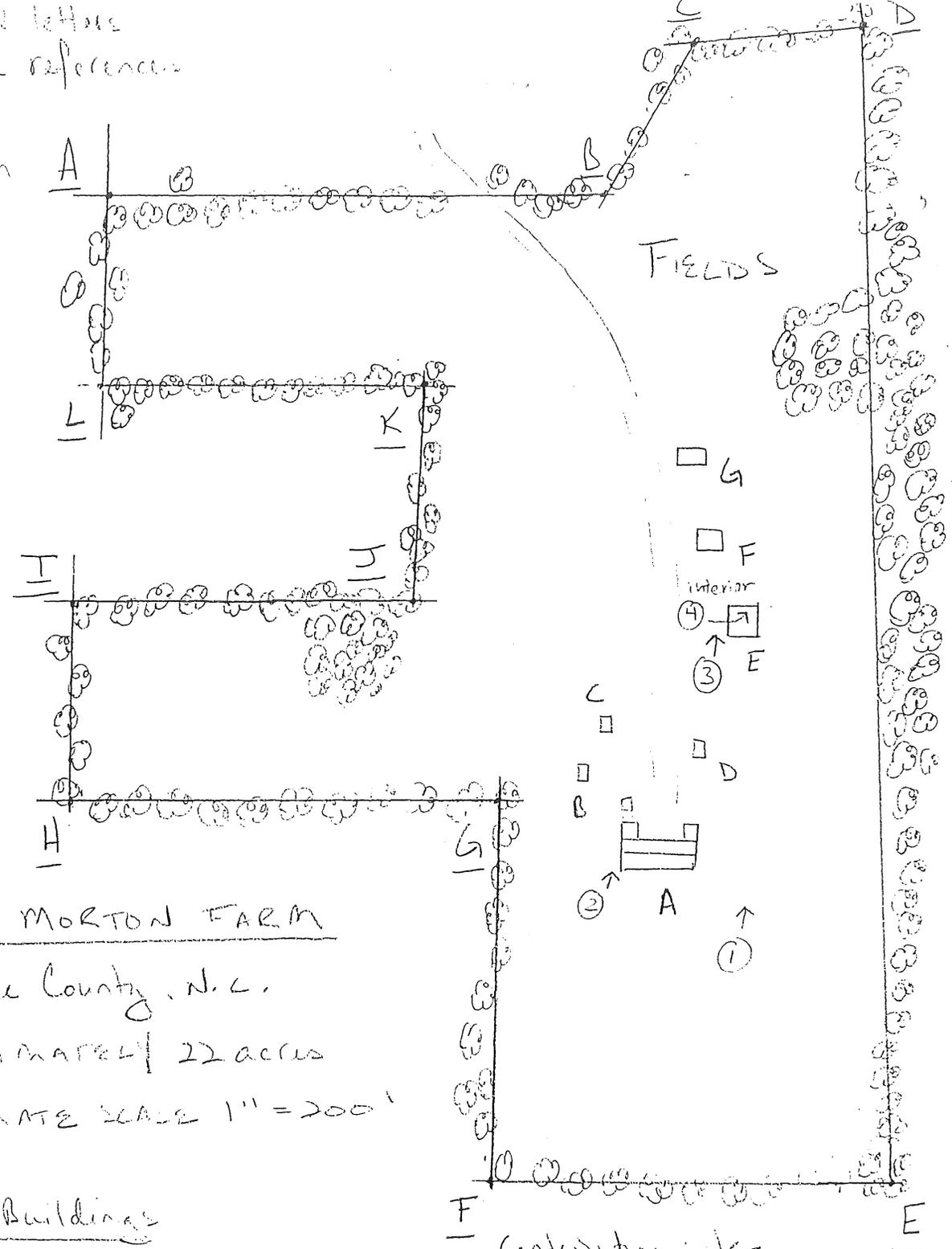
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Continuing in a straight line east, approximately following the edge of the woods, approximately 475 feet to point J: 17 707870 4033640 on the polygon where the tree line turns north. Continuing in a straight line north, along the edge of the woods, approximately 275 feet to point K: 17 707860 4033710 on the polygon where the tree line turns west. Continuing in a straight line west, along the edge of the woods, approximately 400 feet to point L: 17 707740 4033680 on the polygon where the tree line turns north. Continuing in a straight line north, along the edge of the woods, approximately 250 feet to the point of origin.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

Approximately 22 acres of the property that include the dwellings, outbuildings and cultivated fields that have been a historic part of the property, maintain historic integrity, and convey the property's historic setting are being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. All boundaries have been chosen to include the dwellings, outbuildings and cultivated fields and to exclude woodland.

Underlined Capital letters represent the UTM references for the vertices of the polygon drawn to compare the property on the accompanying USGS map.



OLIVER-MORTON FARM
 Granville County, N.C.
 APPROXIMATELY 22 acres
 APPROXIMATE SCALE 1" = 200'

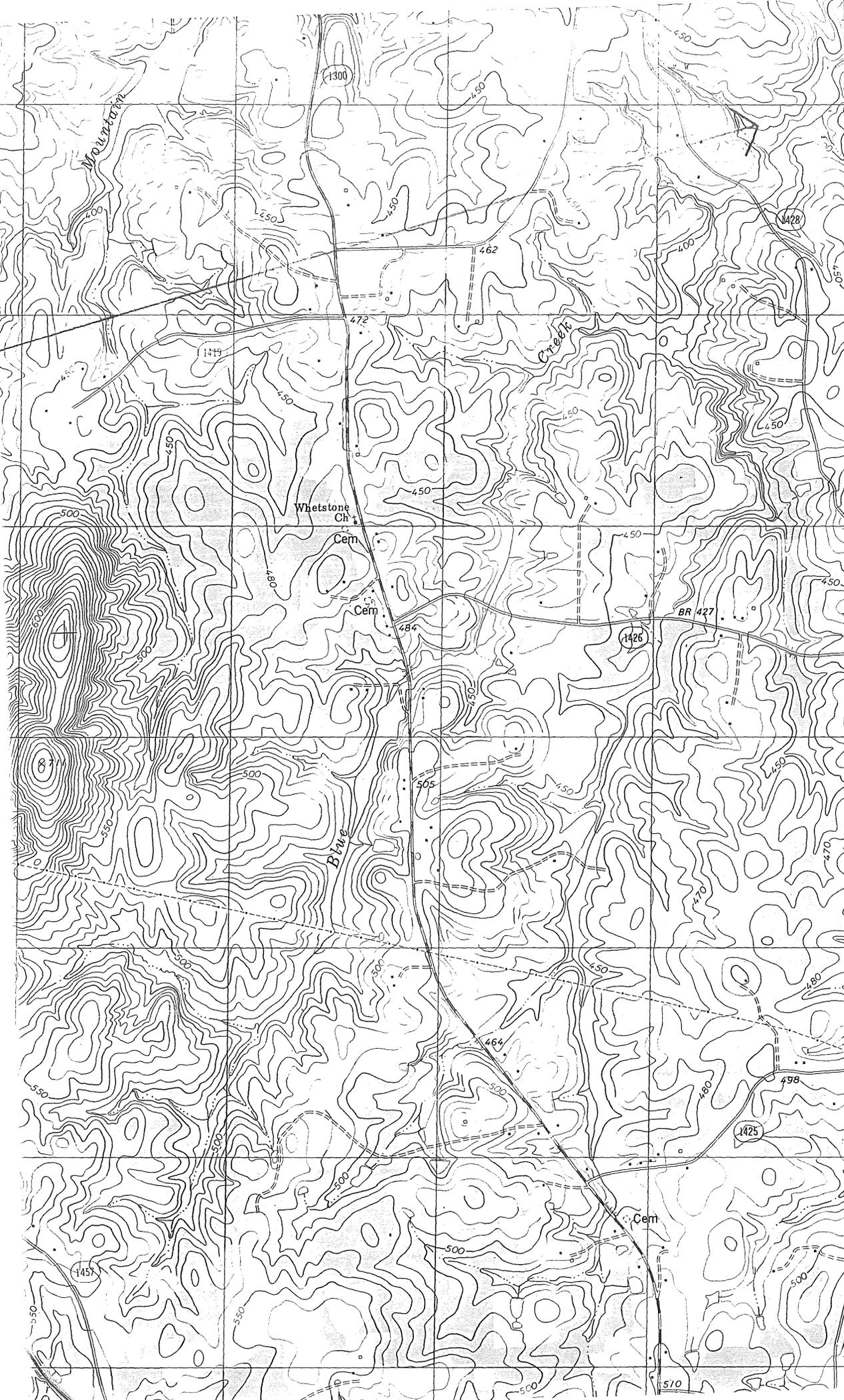
Contributing Buildings

- A - early 1890s frame dwelling
- C - early 20th century frame shed
- D - late 19th century frame shed
- E - late 18th / early 19th century heavy timber framed, brick-nogged structure
- F - late 19th / early 20th century vertical boarded, log strip plane

Contributing Structures

- B - late 19th / early 20th c. vertical board sided, log potato house
- G - frame corn crib

Contributing site
 cultivated fields



Oliver-Hutton Farm
 Granite Co., N.C.
 Quad: Satterwhite, N.C.
 Scale 1:24,000

A: 17	707730	4033740
B: 17	707880	4033780
C: 17	707920	4033870
D: 17	708010	4033880
E: 17	708020	4033430
F: 17	707840	4033420
G: 17	707840	4033530
H: 17	707740	4033530
I: 17	707740	4033010
J: 17	707870	4033640
K: 17	707860	4033710
L: 17	707740	4033680

25'
 4032
 4031
 4030
 4029000mN

