

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS 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 George V. Credle House and Cemetery

and or common

2. Location

street & number north side of US 264, .7 mile southeast of junction  
with SR 1304 \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of Rose Bay (Swan Quarter Township)

state N. C. code 37 county Hyde code HY

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" 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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<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
	N/A	<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 Seth Bridgeman Credle, Jr.

street & number Rt. 1, Box 227

city, town Swan Quarter \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of state N. C. 27885

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Hyde County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Swan Quarter \_\_\_\_\_ state N. C. 27885

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Hyde County Inventory has this property been determined eligible?  yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

date 1981 \_\_\_\_\_ federal  state \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ local

depository for survey records Archives and History

city, town Raleigh \_\_\_\_\_ state N. C.

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## 7. Description

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<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input 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		

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### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Credle Family Farm is located on a thirty-eight-and-a-half acre parcel of land on the edge of the small community of Rose Bay in the present-day Swan Quarter Township. The house, which is set back from the road on the flat Hyde County terrain, is located on the north side of U. S. 264. Although the property on which the house is located has undergone several dramatic reductions in acreage with the various subdivisions that have occurred as the property has been sold and bequeathed, there has been little development on the original tract and the environment is free of modern intrusions. The handsome, two-story house with plain exterior weatherboarding was once the center of a large flourishing Hyde County plantation. The Greek Revival style house is distinguished by fluted porch columns, molded corner boards, a plain frieze, and a low gable roof with box cornices and returns. Believed built in the 1850s, the house is the largest and most architecturally impressive house in the Swan Quarter Township of Hyde County where simple story-and-a-half coastal plain cottages and two-story vernacular farmhouses are the primary examples of nineteenth-century domestic architecture. It is one of the few domestic examples of the Greek Revival style of architecture in the county. The divided center hall, double pile plan features four large rooms with twelve-foot ceilings on each floor. A pair of interior, brick chimneys survive although their corbelled caps are deteriorated.

Although the house has been in the possession of the Credle family for over a century and passed through four generations, its owners and residents have made few changes to the house. The plan has not been altered to incorporate bathrooms or other modern improvements. The interior retains its original pointed arched and shouldered door and window architraves. The house retains its original windows with the exception of two windows on the east side. All of the sash are six over six. The house still retains exterior, wooden, slatted blinds on the windows. Although the blinds have not been painted for many years, it is apparent that they were traditionally painted green. The four-panel Greek Revival style oak doors retain their original grained finish and original hardware--mortise locks and white porcelain knobs with drops. Both the front and back doors have two-light transoms. The original plaster, including a delicate ceiling medallion in the front hall survives. On the first floor the baseboards in the front rooms have molded caps while the rear rooms have nine-inch high beaded baseboards. Plain, beaded baseboards occur on the second floor. Similar mantles occur in all rooms of the house although the second floor mantles are plain with only a board frieze. The second floor bedrooms have closets--an unusual feature for nineteenth-century Hyde County houses and another indication of the uniqueness of the house and the social standing of the original owner. The closets have beaded coat rails and beaded edged shelves. Other features include turned newel posts, a molded mahogany handrailing, and rectangular-in-section balusters.

Perhaps most significant is the fact that the house is remarkably intact with the exception of an early twentieth-century alteration to the attached front porch that probably occurred in the first years of Nathaniel Credle's ownership. The renovation entailed the extension of the first-story porch

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received  
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 1

beyond the windows and the conversion of a second-story door to a window (the original sill is still in place). The original central portico had an open second story with no roof. The second-story railing was supported by one-half size, solid, fluted columns. The ghost of the original porch and of the second floor railing are still visible. Framing and bracing from the original portico also survive. The existing one-story porch has a low hipped roof. The existing solid fluted columns appear to have been salvaged from the original portico and to have been used in this porch. Portions of other original portico columns and capitals are stored in second floor rooms.

The house was built on brick piers. There is evidence of the original stucco covering on the piers on the south elevation. Circular sawn lath and cut nails were used in the construction of the house. The sound condition of the deteriorated house which was built with mortise and tenon construction is demonstrated by the absence of any sagging and the ease with which all of the doors close. Unfortunately, the house has been vacant for several years, is unpainted, has several broken windows, and, while the house is structurally stable, years of benign neglect are obvious.

Like other Hyde County families, the Credle family depended upon a cistern for its water supply. This cistern survives and is located to the rear of the house. The original wrought iron fireplace crane that was used in the kitchen has survived and rests on top of the stucco-covered brick cistern. The original kitchen was detached from the house and was moved before its demolition to a site about 200 yards from the house to be used as a dwelling for Nathaniel Credle's son Macon. According to the 1860 census, there were two slave dwellings on the property. Neither of these dwellings survive today; one is believed to have been moved to a property in the Rose Bay community.

As with most nineteenth-century Hyde County farms, the house and yard were separated from the fields and agricultural complex by a picket fence. During Nathaniel Credle's lifetime, large elms shaded the yard and some of the pasture. According to local tradition, a man traveling through the county once offered to buy the trees from Credle to make buggy hubs but Credle refused to have the trees cut. Today the environs of the house are neglected. Fragments of the picket fence remain; the elms have been lost. Gardenias, however, still stand inside the front fence flanking the walk to the house and giving a hint of the once well-tended lawn of the the Credle family. Two large trees--a pine and a cedar--have grown out of control adjacent to the front porch and partially obscure the view of the house from the road. The bell on the rear porch and the roof hatch from which the owner could survey his field serve as reminders that this house was once the center of a flourishing plantation. One small gable-roofed outbuilding--possibly a smoke house--survies near the house. The complex once included a grain barn and a stockhouse; neither survives today. Two deteriorated frame structures--an early twentieth-century gas station and a hunting cabin--stand to the west of the house.

A small family cemetery is located to the rear of the house. No fence, wall, or vegetation mark its edges. Grave markers include four marble obelisks.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received  
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 2

The mounded earth over the graves of Nathaniel and Annie Laura Credle have been covered in concrete--a popular early twentieth-century practice in many coastal communities. Several members of the Credle family, including--George V. Credle and his wife Martha Ann McWilliams; their son Nathaniel Credle, his wife Annie Laura Credle, and their daughters Martha Ann Credle (1891-1929) and Delma Doris Credle (1919-1922)--are buried in this cemetery. Two of the markers bear inscriptions that are typical of the sentimental expressions found in many Hyde County cemeteries. The monument to George Credle carries the inscription that was used for many Hyde County men: "He was a kind and affectionate husband, a fond father and a friend to all," while the marker at his great granddaughter Doris' grave that reads--"The little feet that walk the gold street shall never go astray"--is the type of inscription often found on children's graves. George V. Credle's monument carries a Masonic insignia. A more recent grave marker for Cecil Deree Sadler (1897-1973), the husband of Melissa Credle Sadler, is a flat bronze marker at the head of the grave. The cemetery remains well-tended.

# 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 type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" 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/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

<b>Specific dates</b>	Unknown	<b>Builder/Architect</b>	Unknown
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**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

In architectural detail, historical associations and size, the Credle House is the most outstanding nineteenth-century house in Swan Quarter Township of Hyde County, North Carolina. The Greek Revival style house is associated with the Grimes family descendents of John Gray Blount although there is no convincing evidence that it was built for them. The fashionable, two-story house contrasts sharply with the predominantly one-and-a-half-story coastal plain cottages that are characteristic of nineteenth-century vernacular domestic architecture in the Swan Quarter vicinity. In 1855 George V. Credle, a Hyde County farmer and merchant, bought the 1,798 acre tract and probably built the house soon after the purchase. Today, the house and a portion of the original land holding still remain in the Credle family.

**CRITERIA ASSESSMENT**

- A. The Credle Family and property are associated with military, mercantile, agricultural and other events significant in Hyde County history.
- B. The Credle House and cemetery are of local significance because of associations with the Credle family whose members have lived in the county since the eighteenth century and who have played significant roles as local farmers and merchants.
- C. As one of the few thoroughly Greek Revival houses in Hyde County and a remarkably intact example of a nineteenth-century plantation house, the Credle House is of architectural significance.

John Gray Blount (1752-1833), a prominent early North Carolinian, received 2560 acres including the property that the Credle House occupies today as a grant from the State of North Carolina in 1794.<sup>1</sup> The Blount family which began to emigrate to Craven county in the 1660s is among the most distinguished early North Carolina families. In addition to being active in North Carolina political affairs and establishing one of the largest mercantile establishments in eighteenth-century North Carolina, the Blounts were among the greatest land speculators in American history.<sup>2</sup> Blount speculated on western lands as well as eastern ones such as his land in Hyde County.

After Blount's death in 1833, the Hyde County property passed to his heirs; one of the heirs,<sup>3</sup> son Thomas Harvey Blount, purchased part of the interests of the other heirs. In 1845 Thomas Harvey Blount found himself in financial difficulty and his nephew and attorney William Blount Rodman acquired 350 acres which he sold to Bryan Grimes for \$3500.<sup>4</sup> Despite the sale, the property remained in the Blount family. Bryan Grimes (1793-1860) of Pitt County, was married to Lucy Olivia Blount (1799-1854), daughter of John Gray Blount, the original holder of the grant. It appears that Grimes continued to live at "Grimesland" in Pitt County since he and his slaves are counted in the 1850

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 1

census listings for that county. Although he was not in residence on the Hyde County land, the land was in agricultural production. The agricultural schedule of the 1850 census shows that the 350 acre property owned by Briant (sic) Grimes was producing crops and livestock equal to that of resident planters with 4,000 bushels of corn, 750 bushels of wheat, eighty swine, and sixteen sheep. These figures indicate that an overseer and slaves and possibly other farm laborers must have been resident on the property at least part of the year to produce such an agricultural yield but no figures are available to substantiate the size of the work force on the property. No Grimes slaves appear in the Hyde County slave schedule of the census. Evidently, the Grimes slaves were either counted in Pitt County or Grimes rented slaves from neighboring farms in Hyde County. The fact that the Grimes farm figures show no dairy cattle or other cattle in the listings of livestock is another indication that the Grimes family did not live on the land since all the white planter families known to have lived in the county at the time kept both.

In 1855 Grimes sold the property for one dollar to his son John G. B. Grimes and also registered a deed conveying thirty-eight slaves to his son. John G. B. Grimes may have been living on the property since the deed describes him as "of Hyde County." This transfer also included a parcel of land that Thomas H. Blount had sold to Edward Stanley and that Bryan Grimes had purchased from Stanley in 1847 as well as land that Lucy Blount Grimes had inherited from her father. The sum of these parcels totalled over seven thousand acres. Within the year the younger Grimes married Helen Manly, the daughter of North Carolina's last Whig governor Charles Manly (1795-1871). He also sold 1798 acres (including the land on which the house is located) in two parcels to George V. Credle (1831-1914) for \$15,000.

According to some local tradition, the existing house was built for a Mr. Grimes in 1852. It is possible that this account is true and that the house was built for either Bryan Grimes or his son John G. B. Grimes. However, the facts that the 1855 deed conveying the property from father to son does not mention a dwelling and that the Credle purchase price amounted to less than ten dollars per acre tend to support the assumption that the house was not built during the time the Grimes family owned the property but during the first years of Credle's ownership.

Members of the Credle family had been long-time property owners in Hyde County and considered among the major planting families of the county since the eighteenth century. Although the property was conveyed to Credle in 1855, the deed was not registered until 1859. By the time the 1860 census was taken, the Credle family was in residence in the Greek Revival style house. The family included twenty-nine-year old George V. Credle, his wife Martha Ann McWilliams (1832-1918), and their children Melissa, Mary, Iredell, and George. A forty-year old white woman Eleanor Sawyer was also living in the household in 1860. Credle owned eighteen slaves--an appropriate number of slaves for a man of some means but fewer than many more affluent and older Hyde County planters. An analysis of the census reveals that Credle's major crops, like those produced by most of his neighbors, were corn and wheat; his primary crop was corn with a

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 2

yield of 3000 bushels in the year of the census and wheat was a secondary crop with a yield of only sixty bushels. Like others in the county, he kept horses, a small number of milk cows, a few other cattle, a substantial number of hogs, and a team of oxen.<sup>9</sup>

Credle was known locally to be a "daredevil" and according to tradition had the fastest horse in the community. He is believed to have ordered his slaves to burn one of the bridges over Rose Bay Creek to prevent Union soldiers from crossing the creek and to have used his equestrian skills to escape Union forces in the vicinity during the Civil War.<sup>10</sup>

According to Branson's Business Directory for 1869, George V. Credle was a Hyde County commissioner and a prominent farmer.<sup>11</sup> By 1870 the Credles had six children living at home, including Nathaniel who would inherit the house from his father. A major change in the 1860s for the Credle family as for other slave holding Hyde County families had been the emancipation of the slaves. In 1870, three young black males were counted as farm laborers and residents on the Credle property.

The farm also decreased in size following the Civil War. According to the 1870 census Credle owned 1200 acres and by the time of his death in 1914, Credle owned only half the original acreage he had purchased from Grimes. The Credle farm that had had two-hundred seventy-five improved acres in 1860 was down to two-hundred acres in 1870. As might be expected, agricultural productivity on the smaller Credle farm declined in the years following the war. Credles's corn production was only 500 bushels in 1870; and he had substantially reduced the number of hogs and cattle in his livestock inventory.<sup>12</sup>

The reductions in acreage and agricultural production may have coincided with the establishment of Credle's store in the town of Swan Quarter. According to the Bicentennial History of Hyde County, Credle's general merchandise store was in operation by the time of the 1876 flood when the Swan Quarter Providence Methodist Church<sup>13</sup> was moved by flood waters into collision with Credle's building. George V. Credle was also listed among both the general merchants of Swan Quarter and prominent Hyde County farmers in Branson's Business Directory for 1877-1878.<sup>14</sup> Credle was a well-known merchant in the county seat of Swan Quarter and continued to operate the store until his death. He apparently also used the storehouse as a residence since his will describes it as the place "where I now reside" and the farm as the place "where I now live."<sup>15</sup> 1878 was the last year that Credle was named among the principal farmers of the county. By 1896 he was listed only as a merchant.<sup>16</sup> In the 1906 North Carolina Year Book and Business Directory Credle's name appeared in both the general merchandise listings and<sup>17</sup> under a separate heading for "Clothing, Hats, and Men's Furnishings."

When George V. Credle died in 1914, he left his son Nathaniel (1864-1945) the house and 250 acres with the remainder of his land (approximately 650 acres) divided among his other children. In satisfaction of her dower and one-third interest in all his lands, Martha Credle received for the remainder of her

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 3

natural life a one-third interest in the house and the property that was bequeathed to Nathaniel Credle. George Credle's will mentions that Nathaniel Credle<sup>18</sup> was already living on the property at the time that the will was made.

Nathaniel Credle or "Mr. Nat" as he was called by local residents ran the Credle store in Swan Quarter for a time after his father's death. "Mr. Nat" also operated a grist mill (since demolished) on a portion of the Credle property. Like his father, Nathaniel Credle was a well-known county resident but was considered to be a "quiet and steady sort of person". Local people describe "Mr. Nat" as a "big, tall, raw-boned man" who always wore a sport cap and smoked a crooked-stem pipe. The Credles continued to be prominent members of the farming community. When the farmers baled hay, the Credles were the family that always provided meals for the hay balers. Nathaniel Credle and his wife Annie Laurie (1866-1942) lived on this farm until their deaths in the 1940s. The will of Nathaniel Credle provided for the further subdivision of the land that George Credle had purchased in 1855. His daughter Melissa D. Sadler (1895-1981) who was married to Cecil Deree Sadler (1897-1973) received a thirty-eight-and-one-half acre parcel, including the house.<sup>19</sup> Melissa Sadler, like her parents and grandparents, was a member of the Methodist church in Swan Quarter but often attended the Baptist churches in the Rose Bay community. After the death of Martha Ann Credle in 1929, Melissa Sadler for many years operated her sister's store and service station that was located on Credle land near the former grist mill site. Melissa Sadler, the last member of the Credle family to live in the house,<sup>20</sup> died in 1981 leaving the property to her nephew Seth Bridgeman Credle, Jr.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Grant Book 1, p.485 (Hyde County Courthouse Register of Deeds).
2. Hugh Talmadge Lefler and Albert Ray Newsome, The History of a Southern State: North Carolina, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973), p. 306.
3. Hyde County Deed Book 2, p. 327.
4. Hyde County Deed Book 1, p. 369 and Hyde County Deed Book 2, p. 325.
5. Seventh Census of the United States, 1850.
6. Hyde County Deed Book 6, p. 224 and Hyde County Deed Book 6, p. 226.
7. Marilu Burch Smallwood, Some Colonial and Revolutionary Families of North Carolina, Volume II (St. Augustine, 1969), pp. 175-176.
8. Hyde County Deed Book 8, p.21.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received  
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 4

9. Eighth Census of the United States, 1860.
10. Interview with Ellen Williams, Fall, 1983.
11. Branson's Business Directory for 1869, (Raleigh: J. A. Jones, 1869), p.81.
12. Ninth Census of the United States, 1870.
13. Hyde County Historical Society, Hyde County History: A Hyde County Bicentennial Project, (Charlotte: Herb Eaton, Inc., 1976), p. 18.
14. Branson's Business Directory for 1877-78, from typed transcript.
15. Hyde County Will Book 7-13, p. 653.
16. Branson's North Carolina Business Directory, (Raleigh: Levi Branson, 1896), p. 345.
17. The North Carolina Year Book and Business Directory for 1906, from typed transcript.
18. Hyde County Will Book 7-13, p. 653.
19. Hyde County Will Book 13, pp. 358-360.
20. Hyde County Wills, 81-E-11.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Hyde County Historical Society, Hyde County History: A County Bicentennial Project, Charlotte, Herb Eaton, 1976.  
 Keith, Alice Barnwell, editor, The John Gray Blount Papers, Raleigh: Archives and History, 1952.  
 Roberts, Claudia, "Historical Architecture of Hyde County," unpublished manuscript, 1981.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 39.5 acres  
 Quadrangle name Swan Quarter, N. C. Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A	1 8	3 7 6 1 3 0	3 9 2 4 4 8 1 0	B	1 8	3 7 6 1 5 0	3 9 2 4 3 3 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	1 8	3 7 5 6 0 0	3 9 2 3 7 6 1 0	D	1 8	3 7 5 5 3 0	3 9 2 3 9 0 0
E				F			
G				H			

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundaries follow the legal description of the property Melissa Sadler inherited from her father Nathaniel Credle. The property is described as thirty-eight and one-half acres beginning at an iron stake (continued)

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

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
state		code	county		code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title J. Timothy Keller  
 organization Land and Community Associates date September, 1983  
 street & number 1410 Holly Road telephone 804 2953880  
 city or town Charlottesville state Va.

# 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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature William S. Pinn  
 title State Historic Preservation Officer date April 18, 1985

For NPS 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

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received  
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 10

Page 1

along the west bank of the drainage canal and the north side of U. S. Highway 264; thence running along the north edge of the highway in an eastwardly direction for a distance of approximately 300 feet to a stake; thence running in a northwardly direction to the back line of the John Gray Blount patent; and thence along the back line of the Blount patent in a westwardly direction for a distance of approximately 300 feet to a stake in the north corner; and thence running in a southwardly direction and along the western boundary of the Credle property to a stake.

27'30"

BELHAVEN 23 MI.  
ROSE BAY 0.4 MI.



264

George V. Gredle House and Cemetery  
Hyde County, N. C.  
Swan Quarter Quadrangle  
Zone 18      Scale 1:24 000

18 375600/3923910

BM 5  
Rose Bay Sch

3923

5754 IV NW  
(SCRANTON)

3921

3920

25'

3919

3918

QUARTER  
DILIFE REFUGE

Shingle Ct  
SWAN Q

Piney Grove Ch

Lighto

264

1132

S W



x 4

x 3

x 3

x 3

x 2

x 3

BM 5

4 BM

x 1

x 4

x 4

x 4

x 4



