

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 15). 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, material, 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 Morris, Green, Farm  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number W side SR 3628, approx. 1 mi. S jct w/ Providence Road West  
city, town Charlotte N/A not for publication  
state North Carolina code NC county Mecklenburg code 119 zip code \_\_\_\_\_  
 vicinity

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
Historical and Architectural Resources of Rural Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

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.

William S. Price, Jr.  
Signature of certifying official

1-3-91  
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

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)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: agricultural outbuilding

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE:

agricultural outbuilding

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: agricultural field

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: agricultural

field

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival

foundation stone

Italianate

walls weatherboard

roof metal

other wood

brick

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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The Morris Farm is among the largest surviving agricultural tracts in southern Mecklenburg County. Although farmland bounds this property on almost all sides, intense commercial and residential development presses within several miles in all directions. For example, recently completed suburban developments line Providence Road to the north, and new houses are currently being constructed to the west of the Morris Farm, just beyond the trees lining the Morris property's western boundary. Therefore, the Morris Farm represents an exceptional tract of open space devoted to agricultural uses amid radical changes to the southern Mecklenburg landscape. This gently rolling Piedmont farmstead comprises a mix of cropland and stands of mature oak and ash trees, and a portion of Flat Branch, a shallow creek running north-south through the center of the property. Situated on the west side of Tom Short Road, the approximately 200 hundred acres of cultivated fields and woodland are used essentially as they were during the period of significance. The focal point of the farm is the two-story, ca. 1870 farmhouse, surrounded by mature mulberry, oak, and pecan trees. Although the original outbuildings have vanished, the farmyard includes three 20th-century outbuildings. They are two noncontributing buildings erected after World War II, and a ca. 1925 machinery shed. The Morris House, with key elements intact, and farmland, which continues to maintain its historical appearance and uses, provide a vivid illustration of a prosperous mid to late 19th-century farmstead in Mecklenburg County.

House

The weatherboarded Morris House is a central-hall I-house, three-bays wide and two-bays deep. The two one-story rear additions, including a dining room and attached kitchen ell, were built shortly after the construction of the main body of the house. They share many of the same exterior and interior details of the I-house portion, rest on similar stone piers, and, like the two-story block, are of mortise-and-tenon construction.

Capped by a hip roof with a standing seam tin sheathing, the Morris House reveals a blend of vernacular Greek Revival and Italianate elements. The main facade is dominated by a one-story, facade-width porch topped by a center-bay balcony. This porch configuration is original, though the one-story porch has been remodelled with Craftsman Style posts on brick piers, and is deteriorating. The second-story, hip-roofed portico, however, features a variety of original decorative elements. These include Italianate curvilinear brackets along the eave and slender, paired porch posts with latticed sawwork infilling the posts. The balustrade features

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a heavy, vernacular "sheaf of wheat" design. Like the porch roof, the deep eaves of the main hip roof are embellished with brackets. Their simple curvilinear shape reflects the work of a local craftsman rather than the mass-produced product of a sash-and-blind manufacturer, or the carefully copied design of a pattern-book bracket. The decorative sawnwork elsewhere on the exterior and interior of the house also reflects the peculiar creativity of the house carpenter, who remains anonymous. The windows, with six large panes in each sash, have three-part surrounds composed of simple, overlapping strips of wood. Wide wooden pilasters with moulded caps define the corners of the main body of the house, as well as the dining room wing. In Greek Revival fashion, the main entry and second floor doorway have sidelights and three-part transoms; the double doors have three heavily moulded, recessed panels in each door. The sidelights and transoms are enframed with fluted surrounds with corner blocks with a simple circular motif. On both floors, these Greek Revival doorways are accentuated by flush-board siding bordered by pilasters. The main block of the house is flanked by common-bond, single-shoulder brick end chimneys, which replaced the original end chimneys in 1983.

The interior of the house survives basically intact, containing a variety of vernacular Greek Revival features. The main body of the house follows the traditional center-hall, I-house plan, with two rooms on each floor separated by center hallways. The first-floor hallway features a two-run, open-string stairway with a slender chamfered newel and thin, squared balusters. Both the first floor of the I-house section and the dining room wing have four-panel doors with original hardware and fluted surrounds with corner blocks. The mantels in the two main first-floor rooms have vernacular post-and-lintel configurations, with simple blocks capping the pilasters. The windows in the main body of the house and dining room wing are treated with fluted surrounds and corners blocks similar to the door surrounds. All of these rooms and the hallways have wide-board floors and ceilings; and all the walls, with the exception of the plastered parlor (south, first-floor room) are sheathed in wide pinewood boards. The second floor has doors with two vertical panels, and fluted door and window surrounds. The mantels in both bedrooms, however, have been removed. Other major modifications include a bathroom added to an original storage room located in the rear dining room wing; and the modernization of the kitchen ell. The kitchen has new flooring, walls, and ceiling, as well as a shed room addition on the north side.

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<u>Outbuildings (keyed to map)</u>			C-Contributing; NC Noncontributing	
<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>C/NC</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Description</u>
B.	Dog Kennel	NC	ca. 1970	Concrete-block, gable-front building with wire fencing for dog-run. One story.
C.	Animal Shelter	NC	ca. 1950	Frame, gable-front building with attached sheds on the north and south sides. Now an all-purpose shed, it is said that the building was erected as a stable. One story.
D.	Machinery Shed	C	ca. 1920	Shed-roofed, frame building with cedar posts. Continues to serve original function as machinery and tool shed. One story.

Landscape (Contributing Site)

The agrarian landscape of the Morris Farm continues to be used essentially as it was during the period of significance. Pressed by suburban development, the property still conveys a rural character of cultivated land and stands of trees typical of many Piedmont farmsteads during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Standing near the center of the approximately 200-acre tract, near the eastern boundary, the Morris House faces east. Originally, a tree-lined lane connected the dwelling to Providence Road (NC 16), located about 1 mile to the east. Today, a row of mulberry trees on the Morris tract, and a mature tree line across Tom Short Road to the east, farmland which originally was part of the Morris property, constituting a total of approximately 700 acres, is evidence of this early farm lane. North of the house is a field and a row of trees, serving as a windbreak, which runs east-west. West of the house, a dirt farm lane winds across Flat Branch to fields bordered by a thick stand of oak and ash trees. Trees also line both sides of Flat Branch, giving way to fields south of the house. Approximately one-third of the present Morris tract is woodlands. It is a proportion of woodlands to cultivated fields which has remained essentially constant for at least half a century (Marjorie Gordon Interview 1989). The partial remains of a tenant house, now ruinous, exist along the farm lane, west of Flat Branch. These remains are neither Contributing nor Noncontributing in this nomination. Although the farmland is being cultivated annually, typically with oats, wheat, and an approximately 40-acre cotton allotment, exceptionally wet soil prevented a spring planting in 1989.

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  
ca. 1870-1939

Significant Dates  
ca. 1870

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.

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SUMMARY

The Green Morris Farm, comprising a handsome hip-roofed I-house and a substantial 200-acre tract of cultivated fields and woodlands, represents an outstanding example of a post-Civil War farmstead in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, and is significant under Criterion A (see historic context, Post-Bellum and Late 19th- to Early 20th-Century Agriculture). Surrounded by intense suburban development in the southern part of the county, the Green Morris Farm is a rare surviving vestige of the agrarian society which once dominated this area. Although the original outbuildings no longer exist, the farmhouse and 200 acres of adjacent farmland continue to portray the character of a prosperous post-bellum Piedmont farm. The ca. 1870 Green Morris House is architecturally significant under Criterion C for representing the traditional I-house type adapted and embellished to suit the conservative though fashion-conscious tastes of a well-to-do landowner in post-bellum Mecklenburg County (see Associated Property Type 1--Houses; Post-Bellum Farmhouses). With its largely intact combination of vernacular Greek Revival and Italianate elements, the Green Morris House stands as one of the county's more pretentious farmhouses of this era. Further, its variety of persistent Greek Revival elements, although applied to this house approximately 40 years after the completion of the stately, full-blown Greek Revival Cedar Grove Plantation at the north end of the county, represents one of the more complete vernacular interpretations of the Greek Revival style in Mecklenburg County.

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## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Green Columbus Morris (1836-1891) originally purchased 227 acres in Providence Township from a John A. Harrison in 1874.<sup>1</sup> He was married to Julia C. Houston Morris (1836-1891), with whom he had four children who survived to adulthood.<sup>2</sup>

The Morris Farm gives us a good view of a prosperous late nineteenth-century Mecklenburg farm. In the 1880 U.S. Census, Morris is shown as having 175 acres tilled, 40 acres of permanent meadows and 75 acres of woodland. His land, fences and buildings were valued at \$6000, and he had \$150 worth of farm implements. In the previous year, he had paid out \$850 in wages to 45 workers. The estimated value of all of his farm product was \$1928. At the time of the census, he had 4 horses, 4 mules, 2 milk cows, 6 other cattle, 3 calves; had sold 7 live cattle and bought 4; sold 2 slaughtered cattle; had 18 swine and 60 barnyard poultry; and had made 500 pounds of butter. In 1879, he produced 450 eggs, and the following year harvested: 800 bushels of corn (40 acres), 400 bushels of oats (35 acres), 18 bushels of rye (1 acre), 228 bushels of wheat (20 acres), 60 bushels of Irish potatoes (2 acres) and 100 bushels of sweet potatoes (1 acre). He also produced 18 bales of cotton from 28 acres of land, and had 20 producing apple trees and 30 peach trees.<sup>3</sup>

G. C. Morris' prosperity is shown not only by these figures, but by the fact that the county deed records indicate that he was frequently involved in buying and selling land in the county and City of Charlotte, and made numerous land, chattel and personal loans. For example, an 1877 indenture records that a J. P. Taylor owed Morris \$300 that he was unable to pay, so the latter took possession of one mule, one cow, and all the crops Taylor raised that year. Another 1877 deed shows that a J. P. Smith had mortgaged all of his crops, one bay mare, a six-year-old mule, cattle, hogs, farming tools, wagons, household and kitchen furniture to Morris.<sup>4</sup> Over the years, Morris amassed some 700 acres of farmland and holdings in Mecklenburg County and Charlotte.<sup>5</sup>

G. C. and Julia Morris attended Providence Presbyterian Church, and are buried in its cemetery, as are some of their infant children.<sup>6</sup> The four adult Morris children were:

- 1) Patty Morris (Mrs. E. M.) Cole, whose husband owned Cole Manufacturing Company in Charlotte, that was at one time one of the largest manufacturers of farm equipment in the Southeast. The Coles donated the property that includes the Hezekiah Alexander House (a restored 18th-century stone house) and adjacent land to the Methodist Home in Charlotte.

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- 2) Virginia Bertha (Bertie) Morris.
- 3) Mary Morris (Mrs. T. W.) Gibson. Mother of William Sumner's wife, Julia (See interview, note 2).<sup>7</sup>
- 4) Margaret Morris (Mrs. S. W.) Newell (1887-1980). The Newells inherited the property in the division of G. C. Morris' estate (1892), and it has subsequently passed into the ownership of her son, C. Morris Newell, in 1975<sup>8</sup>

Sometime after the turn of the century, Tom Short, a neighbor farmer, for whom Tom Short Road is named, rented the Morris farm to raise cotton. It continued to be rented until the 1960s. At one point, the house was used as a clubhouse for a horse show on Tom Short Road.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Mecklenburg County Deed Book 10, p. 50, 9 Feb. 1874. At the time of purchase, Morris was 38 years old. His origins are unknown, since he does not appear in the prior Mecklenburg County census or deed records. It seems probable that he moved to Mecklenburg from a neighboring county, perhaps Union, where his wife was from.

<sup>2</sup>Louise Barber Matthews, A History of Providence Presbyterian Church (Charlotte: Providence Presbyterian Church, 1967), p. 299; interview with William H. Sumner, 24 July 1989, by Paula M. Stathakis.

<sup>3</sup>Agricultural Schedules, Mecklenburg County, 1880 U. S. Census.

<sup>4</sup>Mecklenburg County Deed Books, various dates; *ibid.*, Book 16, p. 156, and Book 16, p. 236.

<sup>5</sup>Mecklenburg County Deed Books, various dates.

<sup>6</sup>History, p. 299.

<sup>7</sup>See interview, note 2.

<sup>8</sup>Mecklenburg County Deed Book 2779, p. 502.

<sup>9</sup>Interview with William Sumner, cited above; interview with Marjorie Gordon, current resident, 1988, by Mary Beth Gatza.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Interviews with William Sumner and Marjorie Gordon by Mary Beth Gatzda and Richard Mattson  
 Matthews, Louise Barber. A History of Providence Presbyterian Church. Charlotte:  
 Providence Presbyterian Church, 1967  
 Mecklenburg County, NC. Deed Books. Various Dates.  
 U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. Twelfth Census of the United States,  
1880: Agricultural Schedules, Mecklenburg County, N.C.

## Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67)  
 has been requested
- 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

 See continuation sheet

## Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

## Specify repository:

North Carolina Division of Archives and  
 History, Survey and Planning, Raleigh, N C

10. Geographical DataAcreage of property approx. 205 acres

## UTM References

A 17 5189610 38781570  
 Zone Easting Northing

C 17 51179610 38776170

B 17 51817010 38775610  
 Zone Easting Northing

D 17 517820 38791170

 See continuation sheetVerbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the Morris Farm is the entire parcel owned by Mr. C. Morris  
 Newell which is delineated on the accompanying tax map of the property.  
 (Parcel 111, Tax Map Book 229, Page 11)

 See continuation sheetBoundary Justification

Farmland acquired during period of significance.

 See continuation sheet11. Form Prepared By

name/title Richard Mattson and William Huffman  
 organization \_\_\_\_\_ date July 1990  
 street & number 422 Rensselaer telephone 704-356-4236  
 city or town Charlotte state N.C. zip code 28203

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## IDENTIFICATION OF PHOTOGRAPHS

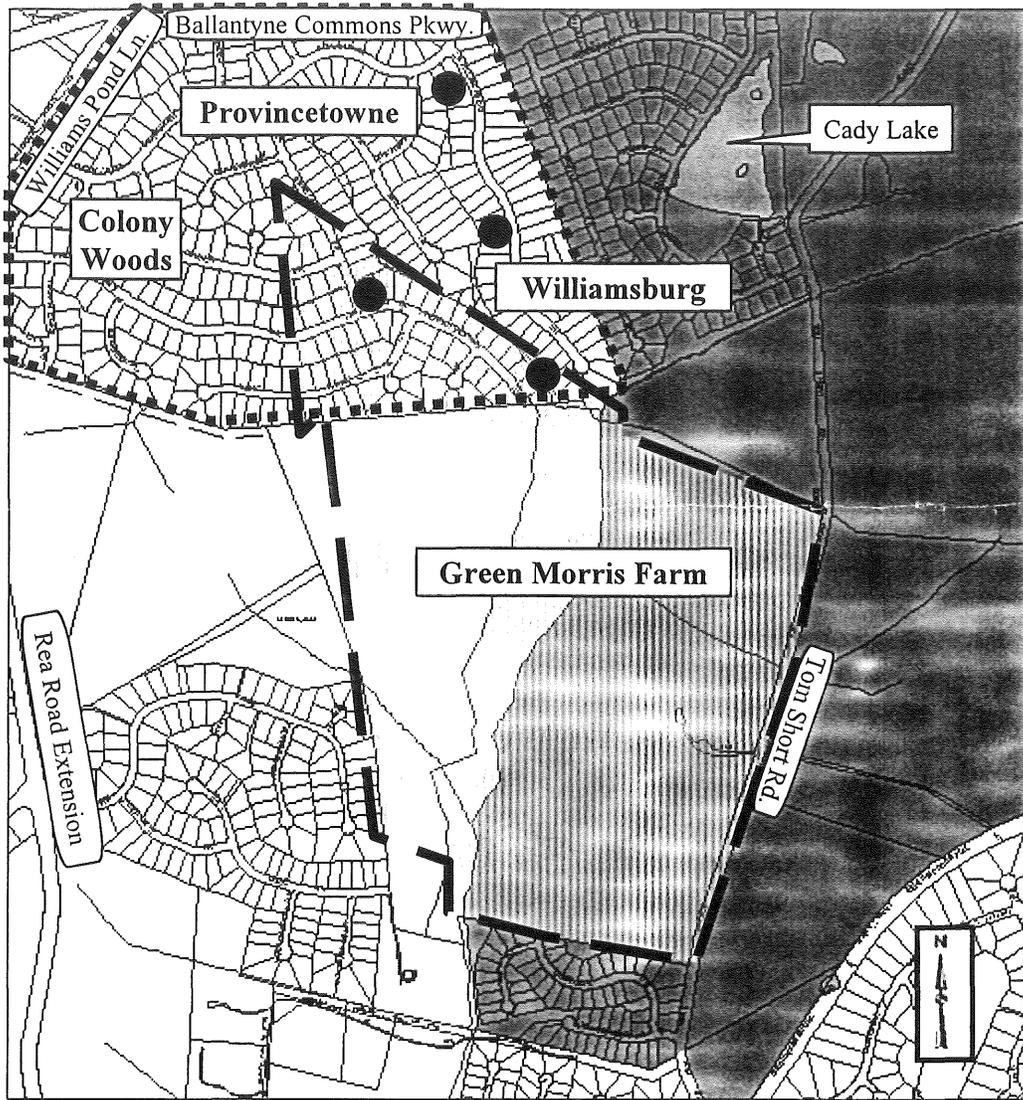
Green Morris Farm

W side SR 3628 approx. 1 mile S jct w/ Providence Road West  
Charlotte vicinity  
Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Photographer: Richard Mattson  
6-15-89

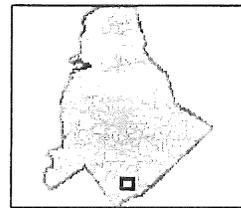
North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh

1. Front facade, looking west
2. West (rear) elevation, looking northeast
3. South elevation, looking north
4. Front facade and north elevation looking southwest
5. Farm outbuildings, looking northwest
6. Agricultural field, looking north
7. Agricultural field, looking south
8. Interior, stairhall and main entrance, looking east
9. Interior, doorways and stairhall, looking north from south front room
10. Interior, detail of mantel in south front room, looking south



Source: Mecklenburg County GIS Real Estate System, 2001

-  Stormwater Drainage Improvement Site
-  Property Boundaries
-  Green Morris Farm Boundary (from SHPO)
-  Existing Residential Subdivision
-  Mecklenburg County, outside Charlotte City Limits



Mecklenburg County  
Proximity Map

SCALE: 1 inch = 1100 feet

Prepared/Date: BLL 04/26/01  
Checked/Date: MAI 04/26/01

**City of Charlotte**  
**Storm Water Services**  
Provincetowne Storm Drainage  
Improvements

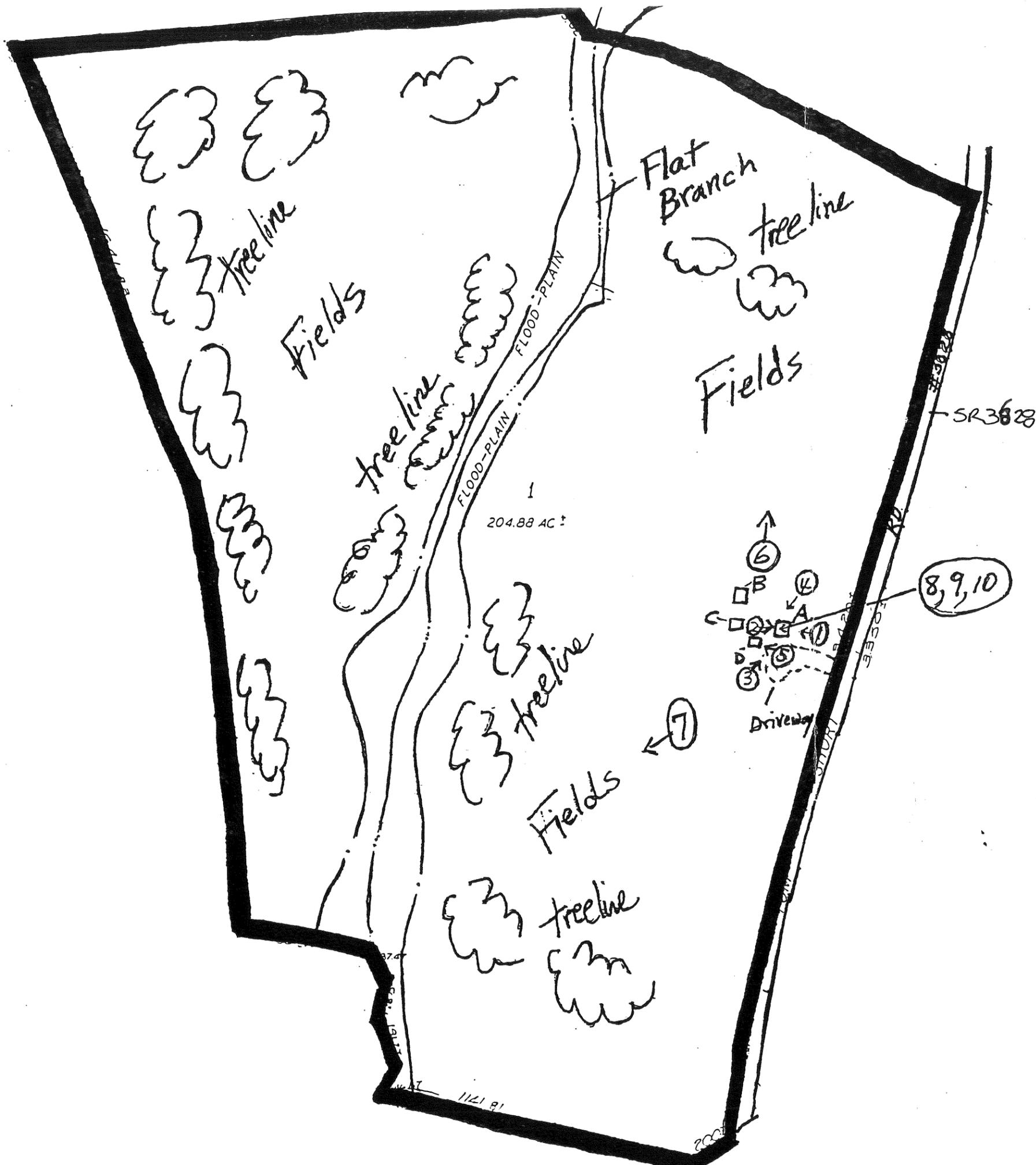
**LAW**  
LAWGIBB GROUP MEMBER



**Site Location Map**

Project 30100-0-0369

Figure 1



GREEN MORRIS FARM  
Mecklenburg County, NC

Approx. scale - 1" = 400'  
Approx. acres - 205

Contributing Buildings

- A - Green Columbus Morris House
- D - Machinery/tool shed

Contributing Site

Farmland

Noncontributing Buildings

- B - Concrete-block dog Kennel
- C - Animal shelter

Richard Mattson  
6/89



