

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 Hart, Dr. Franklin, Farm
other names/site number Hidden Path

2. Location

street & number E side N.C. 48; N and S of SR 1524, E and W of SR 1525 not for publication
city, town South Whitakers Township Drake vicinity
state North Carolina code 037 county Nash code 127 zip code 28071

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>18</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>19</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
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. Fair
Signature of certifying official 6-2-88 Date
State Historic Preservation Officer
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)

Domestic: Single dwelling

Domestic: Secondary structures

Agriculture: Agricultural out buildings

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic: Single dwelling

Domestic: Secondary structures

Agriculture: Agricultural out buildings

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival

Other: Vernacular I-House

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Weatherboard

roof Tin

other Wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Dr. Franklin Hart Farm, also known as "Hidden Path," comprises 632 acres located in a rural area approximately six miles north of Rocky Mount, Nash County's largest town (population 41,300) and commercial center. The irregularly shaped tract of flat, sandy, cleared fields and mixed pine and hardwood forest is bounded at the west by N.C. Highway 48 (runs north/south) and extends on both the north and south sides of paved State Roads 1524 (runs east/west) and 1525 (northeast/southwest); the state roads roughly divide the tract into thirds and intersect near the east-central edge of the farm. A remnant of an old stage coach road, the Williford Road and the "hidden path," runs northwest/southeast near the center of the farm. This narrow dirt road, now used for farm machinery, originally connected Hidden Path and a neighboring plantation, Bellemont, several miles to the east. The path also forms the present northern city limits of Rocky Mount.

A rich collection of architecturally significant, well-preserved mid-nineteenth to early twentieth century dwellings and farm outbuildings are located near the center of the Dr. Franklin Hart Farm. They include the c. 1845 Dr. Franklin Hart House, contemporary detached kitchen building and smokehouse; a large packhouse; a cluster of three frame tobacco barns; four rare concrete tobacco barns; and seven frame tenant houses. All buildings are coded by the following numbers onto the enclosed survey map.

1. House: The centerpiece of the farm complex is the striking, largely unaltered, two-story three-bay single-pile gable-roofed frame vernacular I-house with Federal and Greek Revival style details and a one-and-one-half story vernacular Georgian style rear wing, said to be the original late eighteenth century Hart dwelling. The Hart House faces southwest and is located close by the intersection of the dirt path and SR 1525. The house rests on a brick foundation and has a shallow-pitched tin-clad gable-side roof with returns. The Hart House is most prominently characterized by a monumental two-tier portico carried by massive, unusual turned and banded columns with X-shaped Chippendale-inspired balusters. The portico is crowned by a gable-front roof with returns which enclose a Federal style wooden lunette. The house retains most of its original glass and is well lit by large six-over-six sash windows. The double-leaf entrance doors at both stories are framed

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by sidelights and transoms ornamented by decorative curved wooden muntins. Distinctive and unusual interior end chimneys with exposed stuccoed brick faces and red brick stacks are located in the gable ends. The rear wing features a fairly high-pitched gable roof covered with standing seam metal. The roof of the wing is pierced by a single narrow gable set near the junction of the wing and the two-story main house; the gable was added when the breezeway between the wing (the original Hart House) and the two-story house was enclosed in the 1910s. A partially engaged shed-roof porch carried by simple replacement posts extends the width of the wing's southeast (right) side. Porches at the rear and west (left) sides of the rear ell were enclosed in the 1970s. A substantial stuccoed brick chimney is located near the rear of the southeast elevation. The chimney, damaged by a hurricane in the 1950s, was reconstructed using original bricks.

On the interior, the two-story main block of the Hart House follows a center hall plan. The staircase, with a turned newel post similar in design to the front porch posts, and simple tobacco stick style balusters, rises against the southeast (right) wall. The door to a storage area under the stairs retains its original large wooden rim lock. The main block is treated with intact Greek Revival style trim including exaggerated fluted and crossetted architraves at the doors and windows, four-panel doors, and heavy plain pier-and-lintel mantels. Of special interest are the nearly ceiling height four-leaf, six-panel folding doors which open into the north parlor; the fluted architrave above these doors is centered by a "keystone" formed by the molding. The parlor is further ornamented by a robust chair rail and fluted apron below the windows. The second story contains a broad center hall and two large bedrooms with intact mantelpieces and door and window surrounds.

At the rear of the first story center hall is a short flight of steps down to the rear wing. Although this wing has been remodeled to contain a large modern kitchen and sitting room, it retains its original timber-frame construction, handmade nails, most of the original heavy molded Georgian style window and door surrounds, nine-over-six windows, and enclosed staircase located in the southeast corner of the sitting room. The simple Georgian mantelpiece in the sitting room was removed during the remodeling and is presently stored in an outbuilding; it is composed of two simple pilasters applied to wide flat boards, a wide flat frieze, and a (later) narrow shelf supported by plain triangular brackets. An interesting feature of the kitchen (surviving from the previous kitchen in this location) is the sizeable c. 1912 concrete ice box located at the center of the rear wall. This rectangular structure has thick walls, a hinged door in the side for loading ice and a small glass pane for checking the rate of melting. Upstairs in the wing, there are two small rooms with plastered walls and ceilings. Each room has a small fireplace; the fireboxes and mantels were reworked in the 1920s. The mantelpieces probably date from this period and are composed of plain wide frieze boards and broad shelves.

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2. Kitchen: The c. 1845 detached kitchen building stands in the side yard, a short distance southeast of the house. The square two-room building rests on stone piers, is sheathed with the original board-and-batten siding, and is lit by original six-over-six sash windows. A tall central stone and brick chimney extends high above the low hip roof which is covered with standing seam metal. The chimney serves the huge fireboxes which dominate each of the rooms.

3. Smokehouse: Just north of the kitchen is a tall, cubical smokehouse topped with a metal-clad hip roof. The walls are constructed of stuccoed stone to a height of about six feet, with horizontal clapboards extending approximately five more feet to the roof. There is a single diagonal plank door on the southwest elevation.

4-6. Agricultural Outbuildings: Other significant outbuildings located near the house are a cluster of three typical early twentieth-century frame tobacco barns (4) with shallow gable roofs. A corn crib and a large (mule?) barn were formerly located near the smokehouse, but these derelict structures were razed in recent years. Significant farm outbuildings located at some distance, but still visible, from the Hart House include a row of four unusual concrete tobacco barns (6) constructed c. 1912 and located in a field across SR 1525, several hundred yards southwest of the house, and a large frame tobacco packhouse (5) which stands several hundred yards southeast of the house and close to the hidden path. The packhouse is composed of a large gable-front center section with flanking shed-roof wings; its construction date is unknown although the initials "WH," carved on a roof plate, may be those of William Hart, owner of the farm in the 1890s. The packhouse is arranged on three levels: the lower level, built over a damp ordering pit used to re-hydrate dried tobacco leaves; the main floor, a large open area partitioned at the rear to form a small living space with wide board wainscot and plaster on split oak lath; and the present top floor, now used for hay storage. Surviving physical evidence indicates that the original top floor was removed and the roof raised at an undetermined date.

7. Tenant Houses: Seven one-story frame tenant houses survive and are scattered along the roads and paths which traverse the farm. They are small, four-room timber frame houses of traditional saddlebag or shotgun plans, covered by unpainted clapboards. They are roofed with tin and have shallow shed-roof porches on the main elevations. The construction dates of the tenant houses are unknown, but they probably date from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

There are a total of eighteen buildings, all contributing, on the nominated property. Two open storage sheds located behind the house are insignificant and are not counted.

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8. 632 Acres: The 632 acre site is an integral, contributing part of the Hart Farm's historic significance. The land retains its integrity of setting and feeling and appears little changed from the period of significance. The flat, sandy and open land consists largely of cultivated fields planted in the farm's traditional crops of cotton, tobacco and small grains. A small commercial nursery was established recently in a field some distance northeast of the house; the nursery specializes in ornamental shrubs and trees. This venture is compatible with the traditional, and continuing, agricultural use of the land and small nursery outbuildings (not counted, insignificant) do not detract from the rural setting. The farm also contains scattered stands of evergreen and deciduous trees; a substantial farm pond; meandering, intermittent creeks; several unimproved dirt paths, including the Old Williford Road (the "hidden path"); and portions of paved state roads.

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 N/A

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Agriculture

Period of Significance

c. 1770-1937

Significant Dates

c. 1779
c. 1845
1912

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.

The Dr. Franklin Hart Farm, also known as Hidden Path, located near Rocky Mount in Nash County includes nineteen historic resources important under Criteria A and C as a largely intact and representative collection of antebellum through early twentieth century dwellings, agricultural structures, and farmland. The c. 1845 Dr. Franklin Hart House and 632-acre plantation are doubly significant in the areas of architecture and agriculture. The Hart House, the county's most striking and best preserved two-story I-House, has Federal and Greek Revival style details and is dominated by a unique two-tier entrance portico carried by massive turned and banded columns; the late eighteenth century rear wing is thought to be the original Hart dwelling. The farm contains one of the county's most intact collections of early outbuildings which include a Greek Revival style detached kitchen, a mid-nineteenth century smokehouse, seven late nineteenth and early-twentieth century tenant houses, a tobacco packhouse and seven tobacco barns including four rare, concrete examples constructed c. 1912. The Hart Farm possesses integrity of location, design, setting and feeling. The plantation remained in Hart family ownership and cultivation for approximately 200 years, one of the county's longest, continuously operated single-owner farms. The Hart family owned and farmed the land from about 1770 until it was purchased in 1979 by Nash County preservationist and farmer, Ralph H. Lane. Mr. Lane has carefully preserved the house and outbuildings; he farms the land growing the traditional crops of cotton, tobacco and peanuts. The period of significance continues until 1937, the last year in which the farm continued to meet the criterion of agricultural significance.

Agricultural Context:

The Dr. Franklin Hart Farm, or "Hidden Path," lies in the northeastern portion of Nash County. The farm is significant in Nash County agriculture as one of the most intact nineteenth century plantations in the county. The 632 acres in the nomination were continuously farmed by the Hart family until 1979, and are still in cultivation

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by the new owner. Nash County, established in 1777 from neighboring Edgecombe County and situated in North Carolina's inner coastal plain, lies about thirty-five miles from the Virginia border and about 130 miles west of Pamlico Sound. Nash County's well-drained sandy loam is ideal for cotton, tobacco, peanuts and corn, the rural county's traditional cash crops, all presently under cultivation at Hidden Path. The farm is located about six miles north of Rocky Mount, both Nash and Edgecombe counties' commercial and population center (the county line bisects Rocky Mount).

The following discussion of Nash County's history from the mid-eighteenth to mid-twentieth centuries is drawn from Jan Michael Poff's historical essay in The History and Architecture of Nash County, North Carolina by Richard L. Mattson. White settlement in the county began about 1740. Grist mills, the earliest industrial structures, soon appeared along the Tar River and Nash County's many streams and creeks. County court records mention twenty-seven grist mills in operation by 1777, with forty-six mills operating by 1800; at least two mills were operating on Beaver Dam Creek which flows through the Hart Farm.

Ninety-five per cent of colonial North Carolina's population made a living from agriculture, mostly on small subsistence farms. Large plantations, such as the 9,400 acre Rose Hill in central Nash County, were the exception rather than the rule. By 1820 the county's population grew to 8,187 with 3,447 slaves included in that number. There were only six towns in North Carolina with more than 1,000 inhabitants before 1835 and none were in Nash. Cotton culture spread throughout the state's eastern and southern counties in the antebellum period and, along with tobacco, were Nash County's most profitable crops. Certainly there was no shortage of workers to grow these labor-intensive crops: slaves comprised forty per cent of the county's population by 1860. Although no Civil War battles were fought in Nash, the county suffered, as did all of the state, from economic privations, great loss of life, and neglect of public works and private property.

Agriculture continued as the primary basis of Nash County's economy from 1865-1940. In the late nineteenth century the average farm was 100 acres. The abolition of slavery, the breakup of plantations, and the resulting smaller farms and increased number of farmers, spurred a dramatic rise in farm tenancy. Cotton, the state's largest cash crop, and tobacco which supplanted cotton by 1920, were both widely grown in Nash. By 1880 more than one-third of the state's farms were operated by tenants with sharecroppers far outnumbering cash tenants. There were more white tenant farmers than black, but the proportionate number of black tenant farmers was higher. Black tenant farmers were working for themselves rather than a master, but little else had changed--the same labor force was at work, growing the same cash crops as before the Civil War.

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By 1940 almost 5,000 farms (average size, forty-six acres) were located in Nash County, employing fifty-four per cent of the work force. Over sixty-seven per cent of these farms were occupied by tenants, in contrast to forty-four per cent statewide. Farming remained largely unmechanized, with mules and horses outnumbering tractors by a 55:1 ratio. (It is interesting to note that several pairs of oxen, as well as mules, were listed in an 1892 inventory of Hidden Path's livestock. Elsewhere in the state, beginning about 1850 oxen fell out of favor as draft animals, replaced first by horses until about 1870 when mules became the favored animal. [Freas: Interview] One theory to explain the change is that the massive and heavy oxen further compacted the already dense, unfriable clay which forms much of the state's arable land. Perhaps oxen continued in use at Hidden Path because the sandy, loamy soil there is not as susceptible to compaction. Or perhaps oxen were "traditional" at Hidden Path, and traditions are long lived in rural eastern North Carolina.) Tobacco farming also remained unmechanized well into the 1960s. Tractors were expensive, farms were generally too small to justify the cost, and human labor was cheap and plentiful.

In the mid-twentieth century cotton continued as Nash County's major field crop, followed by tobacco. The dominance of these crops accounted for several related industrial enterprises in the county including a cotton oil mill, several cotton gins, a dozen tobacco factories (making it the third largest tobacco market in the state) and a major textile mill in Rocky Mount. Rocky Mount experienced tremendous population growth during the first half of this century, growing from 850 inhabitants in 1890, to 8,500 in 1910 and 14,000 by 1940. The bounty of the Nash County soil exerted the primary influence on the county's economy and the lives of its citizens from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries.

In The History and Architecture of Nash County, Richard Mattson included a particularly good and wide representative sample of the many nineteenth-century farmsteads found in Nash county. He compared them with complexes elsewhere in North Carolina and discussed them in the county context as well. Farmsteads in the county, both large and small, generally display a traditional compact arrangement of agricultural buildings set around a farmhouse. Completely intact farmsteads are rare, but several, particularly those from the mid to late-nineteenth century, retain a good number of relatively intact structures which evoke a sense of the typical isolated, and thus necessarily, self-sufficient farm. Mattson cites the George Ruffin Marshbourne Farm, near Peachtree in the western part of the county, as epitomizing the typical Nash County farm complex which existed between the Civil War and the early twentieth century. The 1878 Marshbourne dwelling is a modest, one-story, two-room, center hall gable-roof frame house with rear ell and a shed-roof porch. This one-story farm house style was popular from post Civil War period until at least the turn of the twentieth century and many other examples survive county wide. (Two-story I-houses, like the Dr. Franklin Hart House, are much rarer.) The Marshbourne outbuildings, intact but abandoned, are arranged in a "loosely defined square around the house which stands front and center." These outbuildings, most constructed of

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V-notched logs, include a frame kitchen, wells, small dairy, cribs, stables and tobacco packhouse, curing barn and grading room. This 350-acre farm (thirty-five acres in cultivation) was larger than most of the county's late nineteenth century farms when the average farm was about 100 acres. Other good examples of similar farmsteads with a variety of typical outbuildings include the Augustin Farmyard, and Logan Hilliard Farmyard (with a notable double-pen mule barn).

The Dr. Franklin Hart Farm shares many of the common characteristics of the county's farmsteads, particularly in its general layout and types of outbuildings. The Hart farmyard is significant, however, both for its typicality, and for its unique characteristics such as the large size and stylistic pretensions of the main house, and unusual variations in building materials and forms of the outbuildings. These include the intact board-and-batten hip-roof kitchen, unusually large pack house/ordering room, rare concrete tobacco barns, and a tall, cubical stone and frame smokehouse. The Hart Farm also retains an unusually large number of unaltered tenant houses, still in their original use today. It is difficult to date the seven extant tenant houses since they have no real stylistic features and their form varied little from the 1870s into the early twentieth century. Today they appear frozen in time and purpose--habitable, economical lodging for farm hands, convenient to the fields, but extremely modest and somewhat unkempt. Characteristic of tenant housing of the period, they follow saddlebag and shotgun plans. Today two of the houses, which stand in a cotton field, present an unusually evocative, almost unchanged, picture of both the post-Reconstruction era when the tenant farm system and the cotton industry dominated the Nash County economy, and the present era, with tenant farming still widespread in the county and cotton growing making an economic comeback.

The row of unusual concrete tobacco barns which stand in a large field north of Hidden Path were constructed about 1912 by a long-time farm manager named Turner. They were not successful as tobacco barns and were soon abandoned. They remain in good, virtually impregnable, condition and the farm's present owner plans to preserve them as an historical curiosity. Turner, it is said, was especially attracted to concrete as a building material, constructing the ice box on the back porch in concrete as well as using it to cover the massive hearths in the kitchen building.

Architectural Context:

In 1984 the State of North Carolina funded an architectural survey and inventory of Nash County's architecture as a component of a long-range plan to survey all the State's 100 counties. The survey grant was supervised by the State Historic Preservation Office. Between April, 1984 and the summer of 1985 principal investigator, Richard L. Mattson photographed, mapped and documented a broad spectrum of approximately 1,000 of the county's pre-World War II public, residential and

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commercial structures. The Nash County Board of Commissioners authorized funds for the production, through the Nash County Planning Department, of an inventory publication, The History and Architecture of Nash County, N.C. by Richard L. Mattson (with historical essay by Jan Michael Poff). Published in the summer of 1987, this handsome book includes about one third of the inventoried structures. Those appearing in the book represent typical examples of forms and styles, as well as outstanding or unique structures.

According to Mattson, the I-house form was an enduring and adaptable symbol of socio-economic status in Nash County. It was a style favored by financially secure farmers, merchants and other professionals such as Dr. Franklin Hart. Mattson wrote of the I-house:

Until at least the 1890s, it was the house form of choice among the county's most affluent citizens. Although the final manifestations were less pretentious than earlier ones and not automatically signs of wealth, they remained status symbols to the end. No other Nash County house type lasted so long and so prominently. [The style's popularity was long-lived, extending from the early 1800s until c. 1920]. One only has to encounter this two-story house along a country road, its tall, erect form enhanced by the narrow profile and the many single-story farmhouses around it to appreciate the status implications.

Of the seven Greek Revival I-houses in Mattson's inventory, the Franklin Hart House is certainly the most striking and least altered of all the extant examples and also features a unique porch form. The main elevation of the Hart House is dominated by an exceptional two-tier entry porch supported by four massive, banded columns turned on a lathe, perhaps at nearby Bellamy's Mill. The fanlight found in the open pediment is a lingering Federal element. The interior end chimneys with exposed stuccoed-stone faces in the gable ends are another unique feature of the Hart House. The interior is notable for the intact Greek Revival style woodwork including heavy fluted and crossetted door surrounds and four-leaf floor-to-ceiling parlor doorways which fold back to create a large ballroom.

Other nearby I-houses of note include the Greek Revival style Richard Mark Whitaker house near Drake and Bellemont, the seat of a neighboring plantation connected to Hidden Path by the old stage road. The c. 1840 two-story, three-bay Whitaker House retains several original elements including double-entry doors framed by sidelights, nine-over-nine windows, corner pilasters and a wide frieze. The original low hip-roof was replaced by a gable roof in the early 1900s and the original one-story portico was replaced by the present full-facade porch. None of the original complex of surrounding outbuildings survives. Bellemont, a five-bay I-house

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constructed in the early 1800s displays fine Federal style details including modillions and dentils at the cornice, a lunette with keystone in the porch pediment, beaded siding, and two-tier portico with balustrades and friezes designed in a rare Chippendale-inspired pattern. This once fine house is vacant, in disrepair and threatened by demolition.

Historical Background: The Hart Family and the Dr. Franklin Hart Farm

The earliest recorded deed concerning the nominated tract dates from July, 1779. Thomas and Patience Hart [Sr.] conveyed 150 acres adjoining their land along Beaver Dam Branch to their son (?) Hartwell Hart. This land was "part of a tract of land granted to Robert Young by the Earl of Granville. . .[on] November 11, 1756 and conveyed by Young to Thomas Hart." [Nash County Deed Book 1, pp. 79-80] It is not known precisely when after 1756 Thomas Hart originally acquired the tract. Two other eighteenth century deeds concern the land presently included in the Dr. Franklin Hart Farm: in November, 1788 Thomas Hart Sr. sold 210 acres adjoining Hartwell's tract to Thomas Hart Jr. (it seems likely that Hartwell and Thomas Jr. were brothers) [D.B. 5, pp. 60-61]; and in September, 1791 Thomas Hart Sr. purchased 100 acres which lay nearby along the Tarboro Road from Isaac Tomlinson [D.B. 4, pp. 212-213]. In his February, 1794 will, Thomas Hart Sr. bequeathed the former Tomlinson tract to son, Thomas Jr. [Nash County Record of Wills, November term, 1794]. The present one-and-one-half story Georgian style rear wing of the Dr. Franklin Hart House appears to date from the last quarter of the eighteenth century and, according to local tradition, is the original Hart dwelling. The tradition does not specify which of the early Harts resided there, but it could have been Thomas Sr., Thomas Jr. or Hartwell.

Local historians believe that the two-story Greek Revival style I-House was built by Dr. Franklin Hart (1824-1879). Franklin Hart was the second son of Spencer Lee Hart (1770-1853) and Delphia Pender Hart (1799-1825, m. 1820); William Lee Hart (d. 1891) was Franklin's elder brother. Spencer and Delphia Hart lived in Heartease in Edgecombe County about twenty miles east of what is now known as the Dr. Franklin Hart Farm. Spencer Hart was probably another of Thomas Hart Sr.'s sons, but their exact relationship cannot be determined; however, it must have been a close one, since his son Dr. Franklin Hart later owned (probably through inheritance, although no deed survives) all of the 460 acres mentioned in the surviving Hart family eighteenth century deeds.

Dr. Franklin Hart has left few traces of this life in the public records. He was a student at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill from 1839-1840 and received his medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1845 [Alumni History]. On November 5, 1845 he married Sarah Rosa Elizabeth Bryan of Tarboro, Edgecombe County, and they became the parents of ten children [Boddie: Historical Southern Families]. Dr. Franklin Hart was practicing medicine in 1846 according to

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the record of a patient's account settled that year. Franklin Hart probably built the two-story Greek Revival house about the time of his marriage, but he lived there only a short while before moving to his wife's hometown, Tarboro, where he continued to practice medicine. He may have leased the house and farm, or operated the farm with a resident manager (names unknown) since Franklin Hart's name does not appear in the Nash County agricultural censuses between 1850 and 1870. It was common for early southern physicians to be planters and to consider the farm as their primary income source, viewing their physician fees as supplemental income in case of a crop failure [Teagarden and Wiggins: History of Medicine, Nash County]. Dr. Hart may have stopped practicing medicine during the 1850s since his name does not appear in lists of physicians licensed by the North Carolina State Board of Medical Examiners between 1859 (the first year such lists were compiled) and Hart's death in 1879. Nor does his name appear in an index to biographies and obituaries of North Carolina physicians published in North Carolina medical journals and transactions between 1849 and 1879. It may be that Hart changed careers entirely to that of cotton mill owner. The buying, selling and manufacture of cotton was a major industry in Tarboro, and a Hart Cotton Mill was in operation there in 1910 with Hart's son and namesake, Frank, the Superintendent [Turner and Bridgers: History of Edgecombe County]. It is not known if Dr. Franklin Hart founded this mill. Dr. Hart's March 13, 1879 obituary in the Tarboro Southerner is long on sentiment and short on information. It notes that he died "at his residence in Nash County, near Hilliardston." Hilliardston is about eight miles northwest of the Hart Farm; this may indicate that he died at his farmhouse, but that is not certain. Dr. Franklin Hart was buried in the cemetery of Calvary Episcopal Church, Tarboro.

William Lee Hart, Franklin's older brother, apparently inherited his brother's Nash County farm (no will survives and there are no recorded deeds to attest to the fact). There is a ninety-seven year gap in recorded land transactions concerning this farm, spanning the period between Thomas Hart Sr.'s 1794 will and the division of the land between Dr. Franklin Hart's children according to terms of William Lee Hart's 1891 will (probated, 1892) [Will Book 5, pp. 354-359; D.B. 94, pp. 282-289].

William Lee Hart's lengthy will and the 1892 court-ordered division of the farm, agricultural tools, and livestock provide the clearest and most detailed information available about the farm's operation, livestock, and crops. William L. Hart, a bachelor, lived in Tarboro and is listed in Branson's 1890 Agricultural Almanac as a "farmer." His 1891 will indicates that the Dr. Franklin Hart Farm then contained 1,110 acres and was "commonly known as the Harrison Farm." The source of this name is unknown; perhaps it refers to a long-time farm manager or tenant. The total number of acres mentioned in all of the eighteenth century deeds is 460 acres. It is not known how or when the additional 650 acres was acquired. William L. Hart left one-quarter shares of the acreage, "mules, cattle, carts, wagons, farming and agricultural implements" equally to Jesse Adams Hart (widow of Dr. Franklin Hart's eldest son, Henry B. Hart); Frank Hart (second son); W. A. Hart (third son); and a one-quarter

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joint share to Julia Louisa Hart (fourth child) and Kate McCord Hart (sixth child). William L. Hart also made various monetary bequests (averaging \$1,500) to Dr. Franklin's younger children and six of his and Franklin's stepsisters and brothers (from their father's second marriage to his deceased wife's sister, Louisanna Pender). Franklin Hart's widow, Sarah, lived in Rocky Mount and inherited the house and lot where she was residing.

In accordance with William L. Hart's will, the farm was surveyed in October, 1892 and the 1,138 acres divided into five tracts which averaged 233 acres, with each tract worth approximately \$1,835. The Court inventoried, and then divided, the livestock and farm implements. Each of the five legatees received an average of two turning plows, a double plow, two cotton plows, a corn planter and sheller, cultivators, harrows, a couple of wagons (farm carts), an ox yoke, a few saddles and various harnesses and trace chains, about a dozen hogs, three mules, nine calves and cows, a pair of oxen and calves, three mules, and various tools including axes, ax handles, onion knives, pitch forks, oat cutters, hand saws, chisels, braces and bits, shovels, reap hooks, hoes, pitch forks, and potato rakes. Each of the five legatees also received a share of the farm's cotton, tobacco, peanuts, corn fodder, field peas, and cotton seed.

In 1891 or 1892 Kate McCord Hart married B. Mabrey Hart; the family relationship (perhaps cousins?) is unknown. During the 1910s Kate and B. Mabrey Hart bought her brothers' and sisters' tracts, and occasionally subdivided and sold some small portions of the land outside the family. Four deeds detailing their purchases and sales were recorded between 1912 and 1916 [D.B. 196, p. 449; D.B. 200, pp. 380-381; D.B. 208, p. 257; D.B. 233, pp. 221-222]. According to a hand drawn map which accompanies the 1892 inventory and division, the Hart House and outbuildings were all located on Frank Hart's portion of the plantation. The first recorded mention of the plantation name, "Hidden Path," appears in a 1916 deed conveying Frank Hart's portion of the estate to his sister, Kate [D.B. 233, p. 221]. The same deed indicates that Frank Hart and Kate Hart were then both living in the town of Tarboro with their respective families. The farm was in active operation, however, probably being run by a resident farm manager with tenant farmer labor.

According to a July, 1919 deed, Mabrey Hart gave his wife Katie Hart and children his "consolidated lands" which totaled 690 acres made up of the tracts purchased in the 1910s from Katie's brothers and sisters [D.B. 336, pp. 357-358]. Katie Hart owned this land for the rest of her long life and lived for a time at the farm before moving to Tarboro where she died in 1980 at the age of 90. The original 1,110+ acre farm was reduced in size at least twice during Kate and Mabrey Hart's ownership. In 1912 they sold 200 acres to Rocky Mount Insurance and Realty Company and the company then subdivided the land and sold smaller tracts [D.B. 208, p. 257]. The acreage was further reduced when, at some point in the 1920s, the Harts sold approximately 75 of the westernmost acres where the small community of Drake was established [Lane: Interview].

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In February, 1979 Katie Hart and her children sold Hidden Path Farm, now comprised of 632 acres, to the current owners Ralph H. and Martha E. Lane [D.B. 1038, pp. 782-783]. Ralph Lane is a successful farmer who owns several large farms in various North Carolina and Virginia counties, including Benvenue Plantation (NR, 1980), located in Rocky Mount where the Lanes reside. The Lanes, active in the Nash County historic preservation community, carefully restored Benvenue, an exuberant Second Empire style house and its numerous nineteenth century outbuildings. Mr. Lane productively farms Hidden Path's acres raising cotton, tobacco, corn, soybeans, peanuts, wheat, and maintaining a small herd of cattle. His son, Ralph Lane Jr. also operates a commercial nursery there and lives in the Dr. Franklin Hart House with his wife and young family. Ralph Lane has modernized the kitchen located in the rear wing and is proceeding with plans to restore the main block of the house and the several outbuildings.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 632 acres

UTM References

A

1	8
---	---

2	4	5	9	5	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	9	9	2	3	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

C

1	8
---	---

2	4	9	0	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	9	8	9	9	6	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

B

1	8
---	---

2	4	7	3	1	8
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	9	9	2	4	8	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

D

1	8
---	---

2	4	6	6	0	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

3	9	9	0	3	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See attached copy of deed from Katie B. Hart, W. A. Hart II and wife, Josephine Lake Hart, Nancy H. Gilliam and husband, Don Gilliam Jr., and Virginia S. Hart to Ralph H. Lane and wife, Martha E. Lane recorded February 12, 1979 in Nash County Deed Book 1038, pp. 782-783; see also attached map of property recorded in Map Book 11, page 245, Nash County Registry.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the farmhouse, outbuildings, tenant houses, fields and forest that have historically been associated with the Dr. Franklin Hart Farm (Hidden Path).

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Patricia S. Dickinson, Consultant date December 15, 1987
organization _____ telephone (919) 732-5439
street & number Rt. 2, Box 1034 state N.C. zip code 27278
city or town Hillsborough

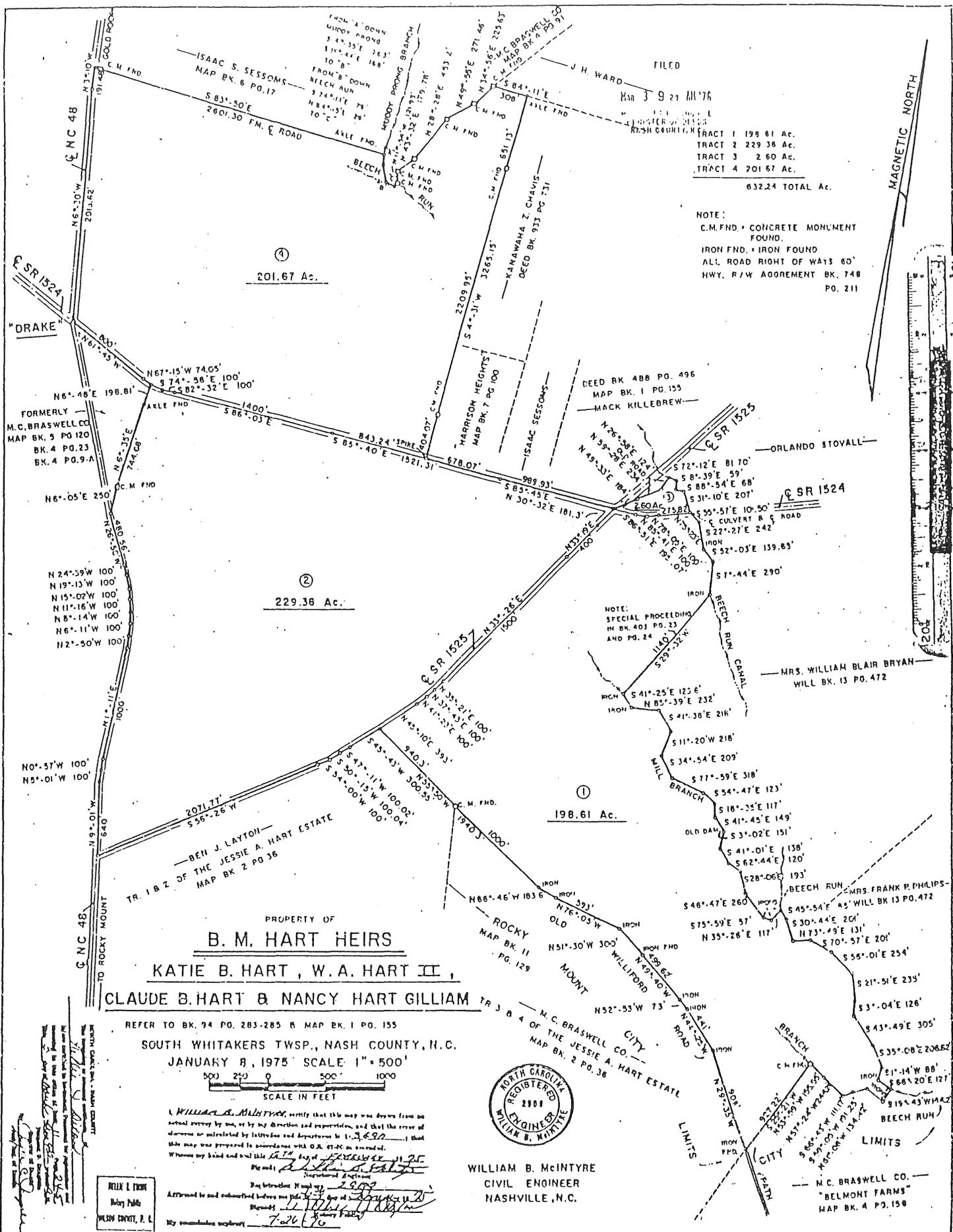
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National Park Service

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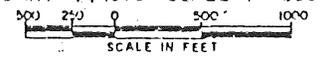
TRACT 1 198.61 Ac.
 TRACT 2 229.36 Ac.
 TRACT 3 2.60 Ac.
 TRACT 4 201.67 Ac.
 632.24 TOTAL Ac.

NOTE:
 C.M.FND. CONCRETE MONUMENT FOUND.
 IRON FND. IRON FOUND
 ALL ROAD RIGHT OF WAYS 60' HWY. R/W AGREEMENT BK. 740 PG. 211

NOTE:
 SPECIAL PROCEEDING IN BK. 403 PG. 23 AND PG. 24

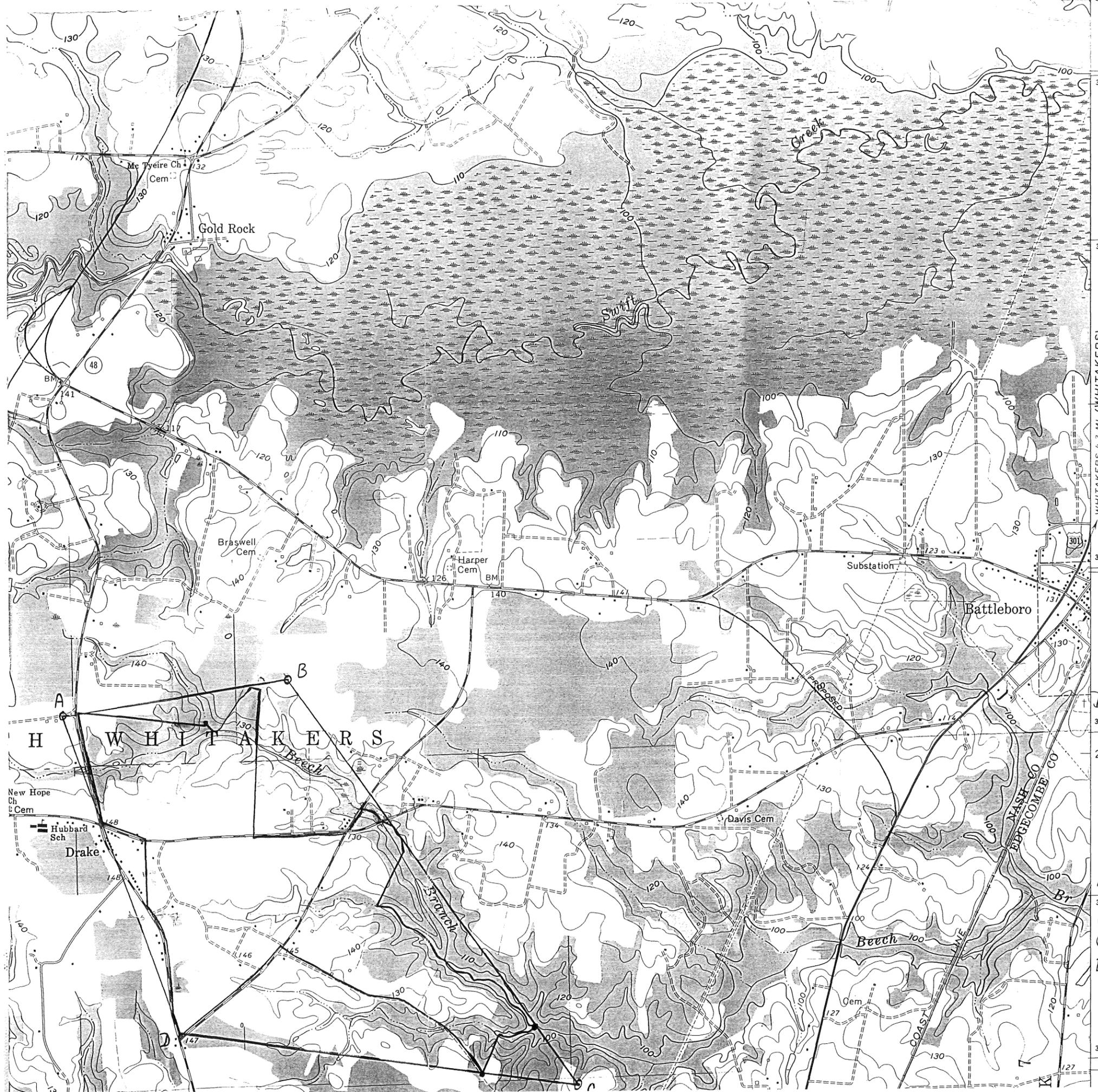
PROPERTY OF
B. M. HART HEIRS
KATIE B. HART, W. A. HART II,
CLAUDE B. HART & NANCY HART GILLIAM

REFER TO BK. 94 PG. 283-285 & MAP BK. 1 PG. 155
 SOUTH WHITAKERS TWP., NASH COUNTY, N.C.
 JANUARY 8, 1975 SCALE 1" = 500'



WILLIAM B. MCINTYRE
 CIVIL ENGINEER
 NASHVILLE, N.C.

Handwritten notes and signatures:
 I, William B. McIntyre, certify that this map was drawn from an actual survey by me, or by my direction and supervision, and that the error of closure as calculated by latitude and departure is 1/100,000. I think this map was prepared in accordance with G.S. 41-26 as amended. Witness my hand and seal this 21st day of February 1975.
 W.B. McIntyre
 Registered Professional Engineer
 No. 2908
 Approved by and authorized before me this 21st day of February 1975.
 [Signature]
 My commission expires 7-26-76



3996
3995
3993
3992
3991
3990

WHITAKERS 4.3 MI. (WHITAKERS)
ENFIELD 10 MI. 5456 11 SW

DRAKE QUAD

2'30"
Dr. Franklin Hart Farm
(Hidden Path)
South Whitakers Twiishp.
Nash County, N.C.

- UTM References
- A. 18/245950/3992320
 - B. 18/247318/3992480
 - C. 18/249040/3992640
 - D. 18/246600/3990320

