

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Covington Plantation House

AND/OR COMMON

John Wall Covington House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 3 miles southeast of Rockingham, 0.1 mile southwest of junction of
U.S. highway 1 and SR 1108.

CITY, TOWN

Rockingham

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

8th

STATE

North Carolina

CODE

037

COUNTY

Richmond

CODE

153

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Mr. and Mrs. John Covington Dockery

Phone (803) 449-5206

STREET & NUMBER

6300 North Ocean Boulevard

CITY, TOWN

Myrtle Beach

VICINITY OF

STATE

South Carolina 29577

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Richmond County Courthouse, Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

East Franklin Street

CITY, TOWN

Rockingham

STATE

North Carolina 28379

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Covington Plantation is a two-story, three-bay frame structure in the Italianate style reminiscent of Andrew Jackson Downing. It was constructed sometime after 1830 and features low-pitched bracketed gable roofs, wide eaves, and a central projection along its main facade that rises to a height of two-and-a-half stories. A deep porch extends across the front (north side) and is supported on paired chamfered posts. The entrance is through panelled double doors with four-pane sidelights framed by wide molded surrounds. A shallow peaked hood mold is centered above the doors. To the left and right of the entrance are paired windows reaching to the floor. The second level contains three pair of windows centered over the openings on the first. They are capped by wide flat hood moldings. In the central bay, a circular attic window of four quarter-round lights is set below a low-pitched gable roof.

The central hall is about ten feet wide and runs the entire depth of the house. A niche in the east and west wall near the entrance give the area the character of a vestibule. Beyond these are wide flat archways with concealed sliding doors opening into formal parlors on opposite sides of the hall. A third archway, also with sliding doors, divides the hall transversely. In the rear half are panelled doors opening into a morning room on the east and a library or sitting room on the west.

The staircase is located in the rear portion of the hall. Originally it was circular in form with niches in the curved walls. The stair and niches were removed about 1920 and a staircase with a half turn and landing were substituted.

The east parlor has a one-story square bay projection centered in the east wall. The west parlor has a demi-octagon projection. The cornices in these rooms are of finely molded plaster in a highly decorated pattern of leaves and fruits. The center medallions are formed from leaves and scallop shells in a circular pattern.

The morning room and library have simple plaster cornices made up of a series of parallel roll moldings. The mantels throughout the house, nine in number, are all alike. They are made up of wide shallow pilasters, chamfered at the corners, that support simply-molded narrow shelves. The backboards of the mantels and the shelves extend beyond the chimney breasts several inches.

To the rear (south) of the morning room is a modern kitchen which was originally intended for use as a dining room. An exterior door in the east wall leads to a small porch beyond which were the service buildings. Another door along the south wall opens into a small pantry from which a staircase leads down to a basement kitchen with fireplace.

A porch is attached at the southwest corner of the house with access from the rear hall through tall double doors. A small bathroom was added off the rear hall in recent years.

The second floor contains five rooms and a central hall. The bathroom for the upper chambers is located off the stair landing. Each bed chamber, two on each side of the hall, contains a fireplace and an original enclosed closet. The fifth room, built into the central projecting bay, is a large dressing and storage closet with shelves installed along the west wall. A staircase rising in a straight flight from the front of the house leads to the attic.

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One outbuilding dating from the construction of the house remains to the southeast. Originally designed as a smokehouse, it was transformed into a children's playhouse during the twentieth century. A second building further east is a modern tenant house of two rooms. It is now in a state of collapse.

Covington Plantation House is a finely-proportioned structure that exemplifies the best characteristics of the simple Italianate villas that became popular throughout the nation during the period preceding the Civil War. Except for a few modifications made during the 1920's the house remains intact and in good condition. All the woodwork and plaster moldings as well as the silver plated hardware in the formal rooms indicate the quality with which the house was built. A sample of the door hinge fasteners, taken from the entrance, revealed a wide-spiral hand-turned screw with a square pointed head, most likely produced on the plantation.

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

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/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 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 type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Covington Plantation House was constructed probably in the 1850s for a wealthy planter, John Wall Covington (1810-1858) and his wife Fannie Steele Covington. Located amid the Covington's holdings of 3,000 acres of land, the house has remained in family ownership since its construction with the farm still under cultivation. The two-story frame house has the bracket cornice, paired windows, and projecting entrance pavilion of the Italian Villa mode popular in the 1850s. The present owner is the fourth generation to be born in the house. The continued preservation of the house in its plantation setting, the protective care and maintenance given to the house and farmland, and the picturesque setting produce a quality of architecture and conservation too often invaded by time.

Criteria Assessment:

- A. Covington Plantation is a firmly rooted part of an agricultural area in North Carolina that has retained its rural character since the nineteenth century. The large, open fields surrounding the house are preserved and used much as they were when first purchased by John Wall Covington during the first half of the nineteenth century. The house and lands are still owned and maintained by his descendants. Of the present 3,000 acre tract, fourteen acres are to be set aside as part of the protected boundaries around the house. This tract includes 400 feet bordering US highway 1 and a section of land 1,400 feet deep.

- C. Covington Plantation is a fine example of the Italianate villa farm houses that became popular in the antebellum era, reflecting the influence of A. J. Downing's pattern books. Virtually all of the original fabric of the house remains in good condition and little work is needed to bring the structure back to its original character.

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The Covington Plantation House was built approximately four miles south of present day Rockingham probably in the 1850s for John Wall Covington, a prosperous Richmond County planter, and his wife Fannie Steele Covington. Covington was born in 1810 and was the third of twelve children of Benjamin Covington (1780-1827) and Jane Wall Covington (1780-1844).¹ The Covingtons were a prominent family in antebellum Richmond County, having arrived in the area from Maryland prior to the Revolution. Covingtons served the county and state in a variety of elective and appointive offices. Benjamin Covington served in the Legislature in 1785 and 1786, while John Wall was elected in 1840. The family was influential in founding the Cartledge Creek Baptist Church, the oldest existing church in Richmond County. The Covingtons are related through marriage to most of the county's prominent families, including the Coles, the Ledbetters, the Steeles, the Leakes, and the Everetts.²

John Wall Covington was one of the county's most successful and versatile farmers. Census records reveal that he owned nearly 2,000 acres in 1850, about one-third of which was under cultivation. His property was valued at \$6,000. Covington owned a substantial amount of livestock, \$1,500 worth. His plantation produced 2,500 bushels of corn in 1850, with lesser amounts of wheat, rye, oats, cotton, wool, peas, beans, sweet potatoes, butter, and hay. Covington worked his estate with 51 slaves, a large number for Richmond County, although by no means the largest.³ The growth of Covington's estate can be seen from the fact that he owned only 14 slaves in 1840.⁴ His plantation was typical of the county's large farms, in that its crops were varied enough for the farm to approach self-sufficiency, while maintaining the ability to grow large quantities of certain cash crops, such as corn. Family tradition suggests a date of before 1840 for the construction of the house. This may relate to a portion of the house built for Covington, but the Italianate form probably dates from the 1850s.

Covington married Frances (Fannie) Steele of Richmond County on November 16, 1854. The plantation house was probably built (or at least reached its present form) in the period ca. 1854-1858. They had three children, Nettie, Fannie, and John Wall, Jr.⁵ Covington died intestate on August 29, 1858. The court appointed William B. Cole and Benjamin Covington administrators of the estate and legal guardians of his three minor children. Later, in 1867 the widow was appointed to these positions. The court gave the three children equal shares of their late father's property. The family continued to live on the plantation.⁶ The 1860 census shows that the farm, by now valued at \$10,000, was successfully farmed, with production of 2,500 bushels of corn.⁷ Family tradition maintains that the house was visited by Union soldiers on several occasions during the Civil War, but no damage was done. By 1870, however, with the loss of the plantation's slaves only 30 acres was under cultivation.⁸

John Wall Covington, Jr., died in 1874 at the age of 16. Fannie Covington (the daughter) married Rockingham merchant Henry Clay Dockery in 1875, while Henrietta Covington married Rockingham attorney Platt Walker in 1883.⁹ Meanwhile, the widow of John Covington had remarried, becoming the third wife of Colonel Oliver H. Dockery (1830-1906) a prominent Richmond County resident who was a United States Congressman from 1867 until 1872, consul to Rio de Janeiro, an unsuccessful candidate for governor in 1888, and Lt. Col. of the 38th Regiment, CSA.¹⁰ Fannie Covington Dockery died in 1894 at the age of 58.¹¹

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The Covington plantation remained the co-property of the two daughters of John Wall Covington. Henry and Fannie Dockery lived on the plantation, where H. C. Dockery was a "large farmer producing several hundred bales of cotton per annum."¹² Some alterations to the house, including the porch treatment, were probably accomplished during Henry and Fannie's residency. H. C. Dockery was elected to the State Senate as a Republican in 1876, and later served as United States marshall for the Western District of North Carolina under both the McKinley and Roosevelt administrations. After the death of his first wife in 1883 he remarried. He died in 1911.¹³

In 1920 Nettie Dockery, one of three surviving children of Henry C. Dockery sold her interest in the "Home Tract," by now reduced to 513 acres to her two brothers James M. Dockery and John C. Dockery for \$25,000.¹⁴ John C. Dockery died shortly thereafter, in March of 1920, at the age of 41 leaving a life estate to his wife Ellen, with the property to revert to their children upon her death.¹⁵ James Dockery apparently did not live on the property and in 1929 sold his interest in it to Ellen Dockery.¹⁶ In 1950 Ellen Dockery and children Nicholas Dockery and wife Mary Elizabeth Dockery, Eleanor Dockery and Fairfax Dockery sold 14.4 acres of the original tract, including the plantation house to John C. Dockery, Jr. and wife Emily Dockery for \$10.¹⁷ The Dockerys continue to own the house and land, and plan on restoring the property, which remains in good condition.

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Footnotes

¹Elbert Covington, Covington and Kin (DeSoto, Illinois, no date), 86-87, hereinafter cited as Covington, Covington and Kin.

²James and Ida C. Hunneycutt, A History of Richmond County (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton, 1976), 63-66, 313-316, 390-392, hereinafter cited as Hunneycutt, Richmond County.

³Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: Richmond County, North Carolina, Agricultural Schedule, Slave Schedule. Covington built up his land through a number of land purchases, including Richmond County Deed Book P, 296; Book P, 282; Book R, 134; Book T, 144; Book T, 291; Book T, 293; Book T, 297; Book U, 11; and Book U, 159.

⁴Sixth Census of the United States, 1840: Richmond County, North Carolina, Agricultural Schedule.

⁵Covington, Covington and Kin, 52, 87. Covington's bride is also referred to as Fannie Settle.

⁶Richmond County Estates Papers, John Wall Covington.

⁷Eighth Census of the United States, 1860: Richmond County, North Carolina, Agricultural Schedule, Population Schedule.

⁸Ninth Census of the United States, 1870: Richmond County, North Carolina, Agricultural Schedule, Population Schedule.

⁹Covington, Covington and Kin, 87; Richmond County Marriage Bonds; Levi Branson (ed.), North Carolina Business Directory for 1896 (Raleigh: Levi Branson, 1896), 521.

¹⁰Covington, Covington and Kin, 87-88; Hunneycutt, Richmond County, 69. The Richmond County Marriage Index does not list the date of Mrs. Covington's marriage to Col. Dockery. It is believed to have been in the mid 1870s after her daughter had married and moved into the family estate. Col. Dockery and his wife lived on his farm in the northern portion of Richmond County.

¹¹Covington, Covington and Kin, 87.

¹²Richmond County Estates Papers, Henry Clay Dockery.

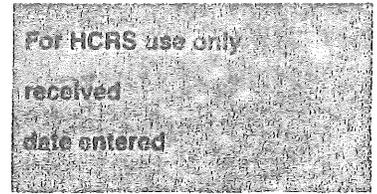
¹³North Carolina Biography, Volumes IV, V, and VI of History of North Carolina, by R. D. W. Connor, William K. Boyd, J. G. De Roulhac Hamilton, and others (Chicago and New York: Lewis Publishing Company, 6 volumes, 1919), V, 241-242.

¹⁴Richmond County Deed Book 121, p. 420. In 1910 Platt Walker, after the death of his wife, had sold his interest in the property to H. C. Dockery. Richmond County Deed Book 66, p. 38.

¹⁵Richmond County Will Book 7, p. 456.

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¹⁶Richmond County Deed Book 200, p. 195.

¹⁷Richmond County Deed Book 518, p. 308.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

History of Richmond County by James E. and Ida D. Huneycutt

Rockingham Post Dispatch February 16, 1949

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 14.4 acres, more or less

Quad name: Rockingham, NC

Quad scale: 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

	Lat.	Long.	Lat.	Long.
A	34°53'59"	79°47'71.1"	34°53'45"	79°47'69.1"
	ZONE EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE EASTING	NORTHING
C	34°53'43"	79°47'76.1"	34°53'57"	79°47'74.1"
	ZONE EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at an iron stake on the eastern edge of US highway #1, which stake is N. 45° 45' E. 1136 feet distant from a US Coastal Geodetic monument designed "Cordova" No. 1, and runs N. 42° 40' E. 978.2 feet with the eastern edge of the said highway to an iron stake; thence S. 11° 45' W. 1668 feet to an iron stake; thence N. 77° 15' W. 500 feet to an iron stake; thence N. 11° 45' E. 819.4 feet to the point of beginning, containing 14.4 acres, more or less. (Copy of DEED attached).

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE Historical statement: Jim Sumner, Researcher
Architectural Description: Edward F. Turberg, Consultant

ORGANIZATION Survey and Planning Branch DATE November, 1979
Archaeology and Historic Preservation Section

STREET & NUMBER Division of Archives and History TELEPHONE 733-6545
109 E. Jones Street

CITY OR TOWN Raleigh, STATE North Carolina 27611

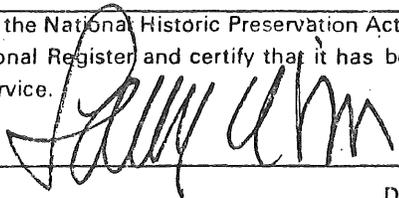
12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL _____ STATE _____ LOCAL X

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



TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE March 13, 1980

FDR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

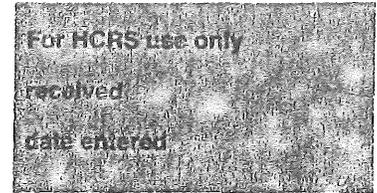
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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Branson, Levi (ed.). North Carolina Business Directory for 1896. Raleigh: Levi Branson, 1896.

Covington, Elbert. Covington and Kin. DeSoto, Illinois: no date.

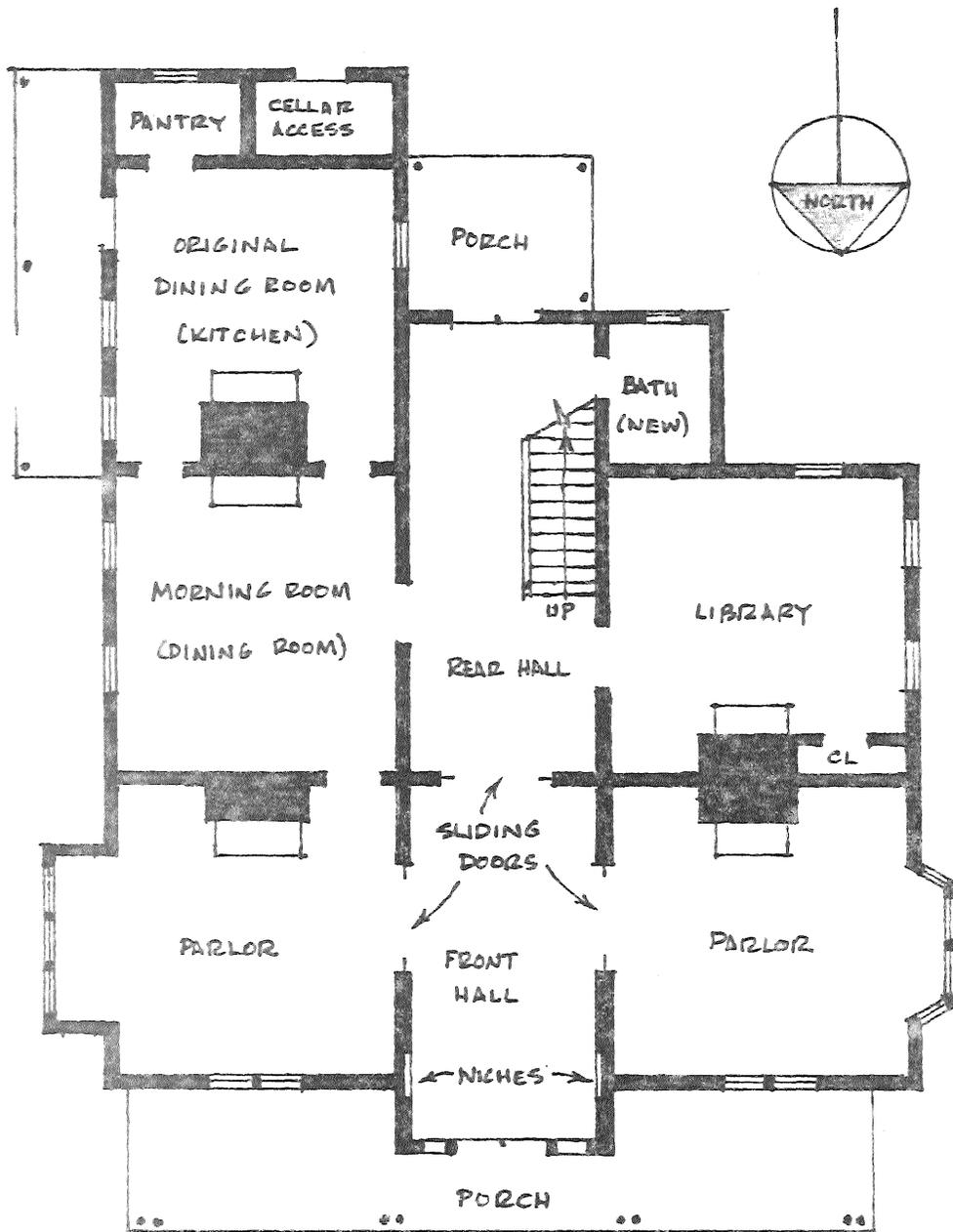
Hunneycutt, James and Ida C. A History of Richmond County. Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton, 1976.

North Carolina Biography. Volumes IV, V, and VI of History of North Carolina. R. D. W. Connor, William K. Boyd, J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton, and others. Chicago and New York: Lewis Publishing Company, 6 volumes, 1919.

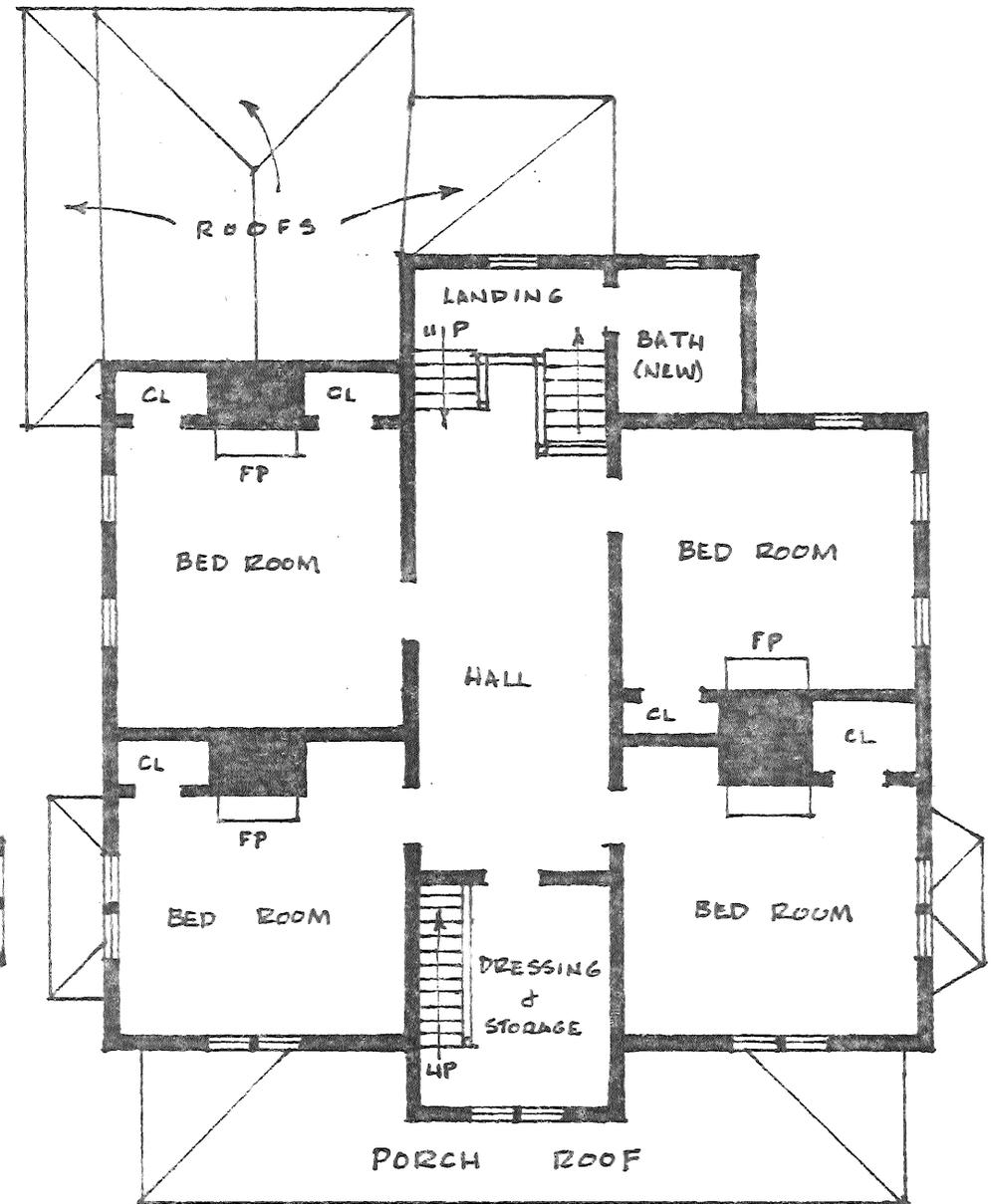
Richmond County Estates Papers. John Wall Covington, Henry Clay Dockery.

Richmond County Records. Deed Books, Marriage Bonds, and Will Books. Microfilm copy. Raleigh: N. C. Division of Archives and History.

United States Census Office. Sixth Census of the United States, 1840: Richmond County, North Carolina, Slave Schedule; Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: Richmond County, North Carolina, Agricultural Schedule, Slave Schedule. Eighth Census of the United States, 1860: Richmond County, North Carolina, Agricultural Schedule; Ninth Census of the United States, 1870: Richmond County, North Carolina, Agricultural Schedule, Population Schedule.



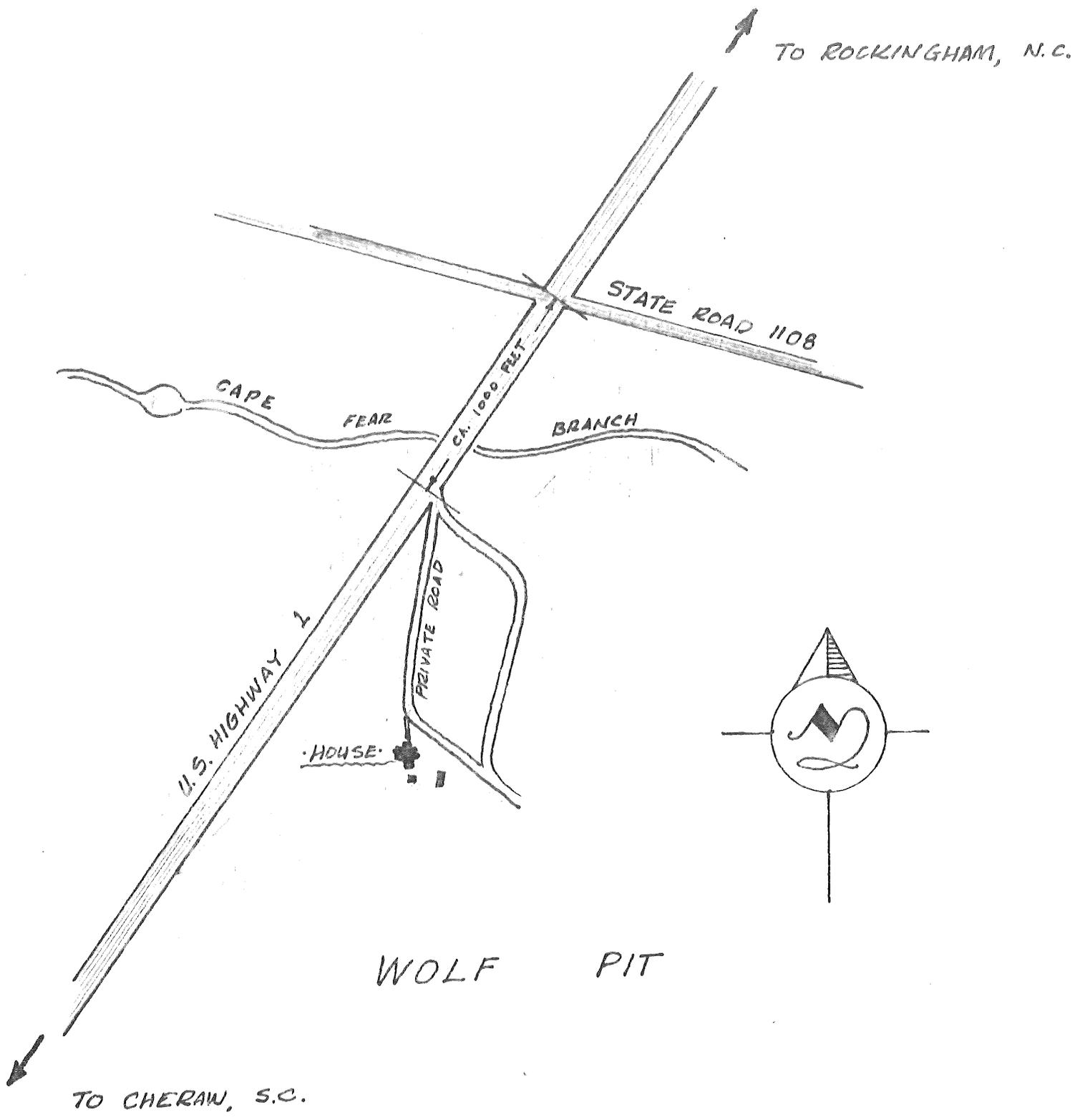
FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR

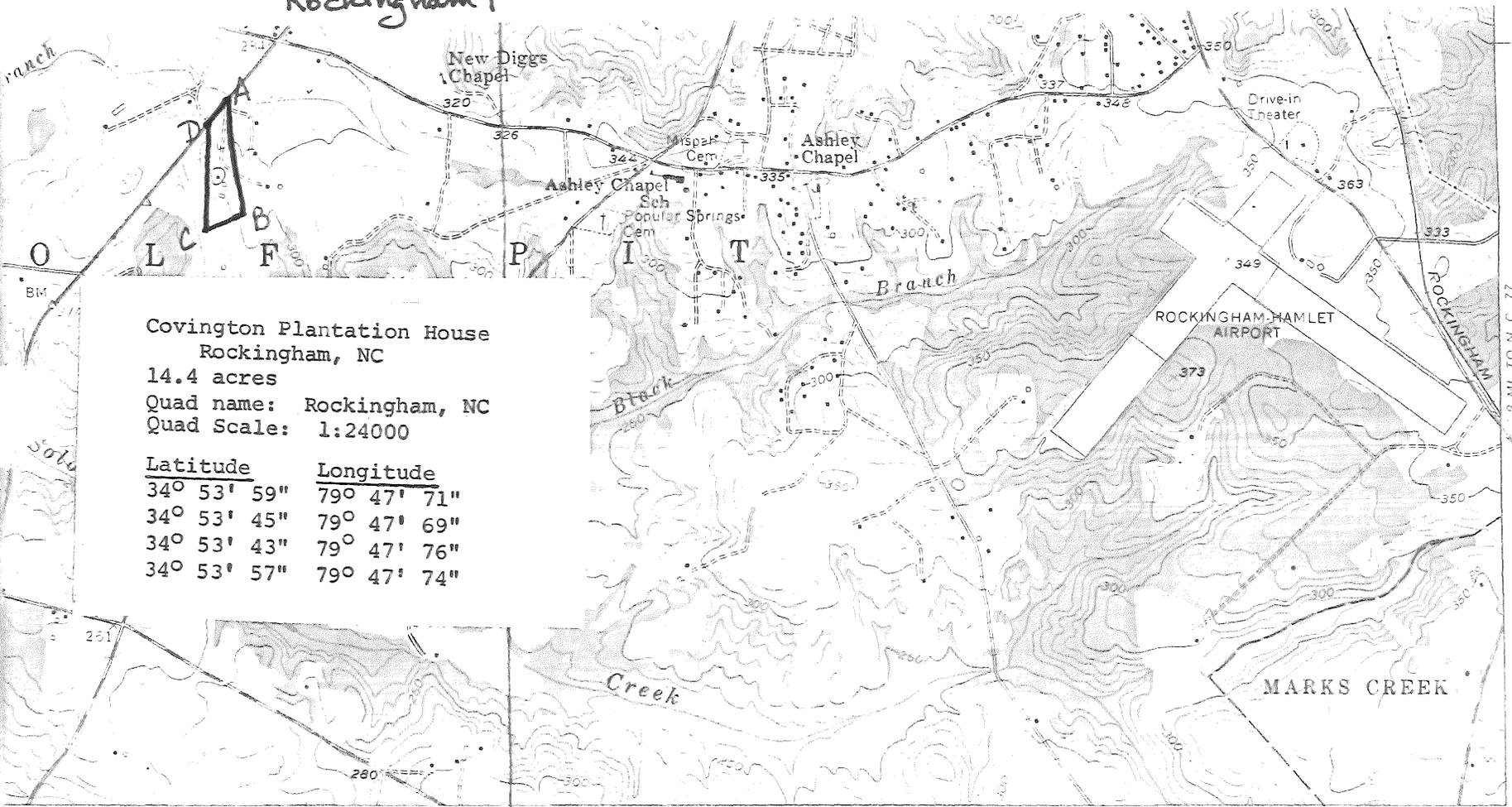
COVINGTON PLANTATION HOUSE

(NOT TO SCALE)
E.F. TURBERG 11-30-79



COVINGTON PLANTATION: Plot Plan
 Drawn by E.F. Turberg 12/7/79 (not to scale)

Rockingham T

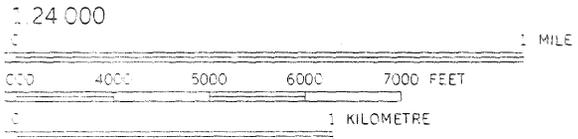


Covington Plantation House
 Rockingham, NC
 14.4 acres
 Quad name: Rockingham, NC
 Quad Scale: 1:24000

Latitude	Longitude
34° 53' 59"	79° 47' 71"
34° 53' 45"	79° 47' 69"
34° 53' 43"	79° 47' 76"
34° 53' 57"	79° 47' 74"



79° 47' 30" 79° 45' 30"



VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

- Heavy-duty
- Medium-duty
- Light-duty
- Unimproved dirt
- U.S. Route
- State Route

ROCKINGHAM, N. C.
 N34525—W7945/7.5

1956

AMS 5053 IV NE—SERIES V842

(GH10)
 5053 I SW

