

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

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## 1. Name

historic Knox Farm Historic District

and/or common

## 2. Location

(Knox Road) Along both east and west sides of SR 1745 from Third Creek south to its inter-  
street & number section with SR 1001 (Amity Hill Road) and westward — not for publication

along both north and south sides of SR 1001

city, town Cleveland  vicinity of ~~Congressional district~~

state N. C. code 037 county Rowan code 159

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property

name See Continuation Sheet

street & number

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of Register of Deeds and the Tax Supervisors Office

street & number Rowan County Office Building, 402 North Main Street

city, town Salisbury state N. C. 28144

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

The Historic Architecture of Rowan County, North Carolina; A Catalogue of Surviving  
title 18th, 19th and Early 20th Century has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

Buildings. To be published Winter, 1982-1983.

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Division of Archives and History

city, town Raleigh state N. C.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Owners

Item number 4

Page 1

Mrs. Robert Howard Knox, Sr.  
Route Two, Box 213  
Cleveland, N. C. 27013

Mr. Robert Howard Knox, Jr.  
Route Two, Box 215  
Cleveland, N. C. 27013

Mr. Robert Howard Knox, III  
Route Two, Box 214  
Cleveland, N. C. 27013

Mr. David Clark Knox  
Route Two, Box 365  
Cleveland, N. C. 27013

Mr. L. C. McNeely, Chairman of the Administrative Board  
Knox Chapel Methodist Church  
Route Two, Box 245  
Cleveland, N. C. 27013

## 7. Description

<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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

The Knox Farm Historic District, including Knox Chapel Church, is situated in the gently rolling landscape of western Rowan (and Iredell) County. It includes some thirty-three buildings located on 890 acres, more or less, of woodlands, pastures, fields, and house grounds. These log, frame, metal, concrete block, and brick veneer structures have housed the Knox family and its farming operations on these acres since their construction. The oldest building--the log spring house--dates from the last quarter of the eighteenth century and is one of only two known log springhouses in the county. The log buildings--the springhouse, crib, smokehouse, and two barns--are the oldest surviving buildings in the complex. They were the companions of a large number of known log buildings--five slave houses, a tobacco barn, two cattle barns, a farm shop, and two earlier residences--which stood here at the heart of the farm. The present family seat (1856) on the east side of Knox Road and the large frame mule barn (1916) on the west side of Knox Road anchor the principal complex of buildings. The second log house, built by William Knox (1736-1776), the son of immigrant John Knox (1708-1758) about 1756-1765, stood some fifty feet south of the 1856 house until 1943 when it was destroyed by fire. It was photographed by Francis Benjamin Johnston during her tour of the county.

The present family seat was constructed between 1854 and 1856 by James Graham for Robert Knox (1804-1885), the grandson of William Knox. It is a vernacular Greek Revival house which reflects the increasing affluence of the Knox family in the antebellum period. The next surviving buildings of note in the complex date from the early twentieth century and were constructed by James Wilson Knox (1854-1926). The largest of these is the large frame barn erected in 1916 as a mule barn and now used as a cattle barn. An earlier frame barn erected in 1889 has been pulled down. In 1920 he erected a two-story frame (tenant) house with its attendant barn and chicken coop. He was also responsible for the construction of the reaper shed in the late 1870s.

It was after the death of James Wilson Knox in 1926 that his son Robert Howard Knox (1881-1961) effected changes in the agricultural practices of the family which account in large part for the appearance of the farm today. In 1936 he began a small dairy operation which continues in operation today by his sons, Robert Howard Knox and David Clark Knox, and grandsons, Robert Howard Knox, III and David Clark Knox, Jr. He built a concrete block milking parlor in 1948 which served until a second (and present) milking parlor was built in 1972. After his death in 1961 and in the 1970s, the large pole frame buildings for calves and heifers, equipment and hay storage were built. A number of prefabricated grain bins have also been erected here but are not described in the inventory list.

Robert Howard Knox, Jr. and his brother David Clark Knox have built houses on portions of the Knox property included in this nomination as has Robert Howard Knox, III. These were erected between 1943 and 1976.

The other significant building included in this nomination is Knox Chapel Methodist Church which was erected on a tract of land deeded to the congregation in 1888 by James Wilson Knox and his wife.

The buildings making up the Knox Farm Historic District are vernacular in both design and construction and, excepting the later metal, concrete block, and brick veneer structures, were built of logs and sawn timber grown on the Knox lands. This complex of buildings reflects the changing agricultural practices of the Knox family and its persistent love and care for its lands.

**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      Description      Item number      7      Page      1

Inventory List of Buildings making up the Knox Family Farm Complex.

1. Farm Seat. The Knox Farm Seat is a two-story weatherboarded frame house consisting of a two-story main block, a two-story rear (south) ell, and a one-story (east) kitchen ell. According to family tradition, construction on the house was begun in 1854 by James Graham and his crew. When completed in 1856 and occupied by Robert Knox (1804-1885) and his wife, the house was L-shaped with a two-story main block facing north and a one-story ell projecting south off the east end of the rear elevation. The remainder of the rear (south) elevation was occupied by a shed porch while a full-facade shed porch sheltered the north elevation. Brick chimneys on stone foundations stand at each of the house's three gable ends. The house rests on granite piers which have since been infilled with brick. The weatherboarded elevations are framed by corner posts which rise to wide molded eaves with a Greek Revival profile. The complete fabric and finish of the 1856 Greek Revival house survives intact. There have been only two major expansions of the house. By 1900 a one-story frame gabled roof kitchen ell was built off the east side of the original one-story ell (containing the dining room). Access between the two rooms was through a door which had previously been an outside door (opening onto a porch) through which food was brought from the free-standing kitchen. About 1935 the original (dining room) ell was raised to two stories in height and the chimney extended to provide a flue for the bedroom above the dining room. The one-story kitchen ell was then remodeled to its present appearance and expanded to include a stair to the new bedroom. A bathroom was also installed in the ell at that time. The screened porch was enclosed by folding metal windows in the late 1940s.

The House will now be described as it exists.

The full facade north front porch is supported by molded square-in-plan posts connected by a round handrail carrying square-in-plan balusters rising from a shaped bottom rail. The central entrance and its flanking bays are enframed by plain board surrounds with corner blocks set in flush sheathing. The vertical members of the window surrounds continue to the baseboard carrying along the elevation. In the center of the east and west gable ends of the main block are common bond brick chimneys, flanked by fenestration at each level. Excepting the window openings under the porch, the window openings are all enframed by surrounds made of a wide single flat board to which a molded band is applied on its outer edge. The window openings contain six-over-six sash. The porch supports and railing on the rear south elevation are very similar to those on the front porch. The walls under the porch are also flush sheathed. A door--directly opposite the north front door--is set in the south wall of the main block and opens into the parlor while a second door (to the right) opens into the dining room. Both are set in plain board surrounds with corner blocks.

When the original ell was raised to two stories in height, the four-over-four sash arrangement to the right (east) of the chimney was duplicated on either side of the chimney at the second story level. The windows on the west side of the bedroom have six-over-six sash. The one-story ell constructed by 1900 and remodeled and expanded in 1935 occupies the entire east elevation of the south (dining room ell). There is a single window with six-over-six sash on the south elevation of the kitchen

**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      Description      Item number 7      Page 2

ell and a pair of smaller six-over-six sash in the center of the kitchen's north elevation. A shed porch carries along the entire east elevation of the kitchen. The function of the chimney which once stood in the center of this elevation was replaced by a brick flue stack which stands to the east of the window on the kitchen's north wall.

The interior of the house is built on the Quaker plan with a large parlor on the west and two smaller bedrooms on the east. The woodwork--the mantels, baseboards, cornices, and door and window surrounds--is Greek Revival in style and well-crafted. The door and window surrounds vary from room to room but all are symmetrically molded and with corner blocks. The vertical members of the surrounds continue to rest on corner blocks in the baseboards and thus enframe molded panels below the windows. The walls are sheathed with flush horizontal boards and the floors are of heart pine. All remain in good condition. The doors in the 1856 house all have paired vertical panels excepting a later four-panel door connecting the dining room with the bedroom in the southeast corner. (Apparently when the house was built the dining room was accessible only from the porches on its east and west elevations.) The stair to the second floor rises to the west along the parlor's south wall to the house's southwest corner where it turns and rises to the north along the west wall to the second story. The second story also follows the Quaker plan; however, there are no fireplaces in the bedrooms here. Rather curiously the finest mantel in the house is here in the room above the parlor. Its design is taken directly from Plate 50 of Asher Benjamin's The Practical House Carpenter (1830), the principal source book for carpenters and house builders in antebellum Rowan County and indeed the state.

The bedroom over the dining room is finished with tongue and groove ceiling. Sheet-rock covers the walls in the kitchen and bathroom.

The house remained the residence of Robert Knox (1804-1885) and his wife Catherine Clark until their deaths and was also the residence of his descendants including his son James Wilson Knox (1854-1926) and his wife Maria Cowan Krider (1859-1909) who were married in 1877. James and Maria Knox had two children, a daughter Mary Katharine Knox Brown (1879-1974) and a son Robert Howard Knox (1881-1961). On 30 November 1910 Robert Howard Knox married Mary Emma Sloop (1887- ), the daughter of Columbus Augustus Sloop.

Mary Emma Sloop Knox came to live with her husband and his father in the Knox family seat at the time of her marriage and has remained in residence here to the present. Two of her daughters, Wylie Krider Knox Smith (1917- ) and Anna Lois Knox (1922- ) live with her.

2. The Log Crib, located to the southeast of the house, contains a pair of log pens resting on shallow stone piers flanking a center passage on a north-south axis. The hewn logs are joined by half-dovetail joints. Openings into the cribs are from the passage. The crib is covered with a sheet metal gabled roof which extends on the east elevation to cover a cedar pole shed along the east elevation of the crib. Simple braced pents carry across the north and south elevations of the crib. The

**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      Description      Item number      7      Page      3

gable ends of the crib are weatherboarded. A door over the passage opens into the loft. The crib probably dates from the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

3. The Reaper Shed, erected 1870-1880, is a rectangular building with cedar and pine vertical supports. It is covered with weatherboards and a sheet tin gabled roof. A later shed addition occupied the full depth of the south elevation. It too is covered with weatherboard.
4. The Pig Sty/Shelter is also southeast of the house and is fitted into the fence which carries along the south edge of the immediate house grounds. It was erected in 1965 and is a one-story low shed roofed structure of cedar pole construction and covered with weatherboards on its west, north and east elevations. The south elevation is open.
5. The Equipment Shed is a rectangular cedar and pine pole construction building. The five-bay south elevation is open while the west, north, and east elevations are covered with weatherboards. It was erected in the late 1950s.
6. The Power Plant is a small brick building covered with a sheet tin shed roof. A board and batten door is set in the center of the east elevation. It was built about 1945 of the bricks from the chimney and foundation of the earlier log family house which burned. The interior of the power plant is covered with a thin cement coating.
7. Immediately to the east of the Power Plant stands the Chicken House, a rectangular frame building covered with weatherboards and a sheet tin shed roof. The roof slopes from the south to the north. Entrance is gained through a board and batten door at the south end of the west elevation. A horizontal screened opening carries across the center of the south elevation. This opening has now been covered with sheet plywood. Erected about 1930, it has a poured cement floor.
8. The Brooder House also dates from about 1930 and is similar in construction to the above chicken house. Its shed roof slopes from the west to the east. A board and batten door in the south end of the west elevation provides access to the interior which also boasts a cement floor. A window opening occurs in the building's south elevation.
9. The Log Smokehouse, the oldest of the outbuildings in the house yard, is said to have been built in the last decades of the eighteenth century by Benjamin Knox. It survives in a much deteriorated condition. The logs are joined by half-dovetail and square joints. A braced shed protects the south front and north elevations of the smokehouse. A board and batten door in the center of the first story south elevation provides access into the interior. A (now lost) ladder connected the first story to the second story. The gabled ends of the building above the top log are frame and sheathed with weatherboards. The gabled roof is covered with sheet tin.
10. Barn (I) is a tall deteriorated log building partially covered with weatherboards suggesting that it might once have been a dwelling. It has open sheds along its south and east elevations supported by cedar poles and a partially enclosed shed across the north elevation with stables on the first level and a loft above. According to family tradition it was erected about 1839-1845 by Benjamin Knox or his son Robert Knox. Heavy timbers support this barn.

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	Description	Item number	7	Page	4
--------------------	-------------	-------------	---	------	---

When the field investigation for this nomination was completed in the summer of 1981 the barn was too overgrown to investigate the interior; thus the history of the building remains somewhat unclear. Family history insists that it was always a barn.

11. The Milking Parlor (II) is a rectangular concrete block and frame building erected in 1972 by Robert Howard Knox, Jr., and David Clark Knox to replace the earlier milking parlor. The building is in two sections. The eastern section of the building, comprising approximately one-third of the overall structure, houses the large milk tank room and two smaller rooms housing a hot water tank and a small office. A small bathroom is also located here. The remainder of the building houses the milking room. The cows enter the milking room from a holding pen west of the parlor through an opening in the west end of the building. Sliding doors separate the pen from the milking room. The cows move to the east and enter stanchions set on a diagonal along either side of a center passage. After the milking process is completed the cows exist to the east through openings on both the north and south elevations. The entire building is covered with a low gabled roof of sheet tin. The building is located in the northeast corner of a large fenced enclosure.
12. The Main Barn, erected in 1916 on the west side of Knox Road as a mule barn by Robert Howard Knox, is the largest building in the farm complex. The main block is arranged on an east-west axis with a central passage opening on both the east and west gable ends. Tall sheds carry along the full depth of the north and south side elevations. They too are covered with weatherboards. The structure rests on a cement block and poured concrete foundation. The east front (and west) elevation(s) of the barn have a large clipped corner opening in the center of the ground level which can be closed off by sliding board and batten doors. On the loft level are a trio of symmetrically spaced openings. Immediately after entering the center passage from the east there is a sheathed gear room to the right (north) and a goat pen in the pendant space to the left (south). The remainder of the space along the entry contains stables which open off the passage. The shed along the south side of the main block contains a feeding stable on the ground level and a hay loft above. A pair of large board and batten doors provide access to the stable while the centrally spaced opening into the hayloft above has a single board and batten door. The same arrangement occurs on the east elevation of the north shed which also houses a feeding stable on the ground level with a hay loft above. The west ends of these sheds have an identical treatment. There are three openings on the ground level of the north elevation for ventilation and a central opening--holding a board and batten door for the unloading of hay into the loft. Returning to the front of the building, a concrete walkway connects the east end of this north shed--once the holding pen--to Milking Parlor I.
13. Milking Parlor I is located on the west side of Knox Road and off the northeast corner of the Main Barn. The rectangular cement block building was erected in 1948 by Robert Howard Knox, Sr., and Robert H. Knox, Jr. Its east and west gable ends are frame and covered with German siding. Its interior is divided into three spaces. The largest of the three occupying the western two-thirds of the building houses the milking room. The cows entered and exited through a large opening in the center of the west elevation otherwise covered by sliding board and batten doors. Window openings flank that

**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      Description      Item number      7      Page      5

central opening. The north and south elevations of the milking room have four window openings and then a door at the east end of both elevations.

A door at the north end of the milking room's east wall opens into the feed room located in the northeast corner of the parlor building. There is no direct access from the milking room to the tank room in the southwest half of the east third end of the parlor building. A door in the south wall of the tank room opens onto a shallow stoop which also extends in front of the south door into the milking room. This stoop is the only connector of the two spaces. There are four windows in the east gable end of the parlor building. In addition to the four openings already noted on the north elevation (of the milking parlor) there is a fifth window illuminating the feed room. This building served as the milking parlor from the time of its construction until the new and present parlor was constructed in 1972. It is now used for miscellaneous farm storage. The primary use of the building now is treating of cattle.

14. The Equipment Shed, due north of the Main Barn, is a simple structure of cresote poles rising to support a gabled roof. Its seven-bay south elevation and west elevation are completely open. The east and west elevations and the roof are covered with sheet tin. The easternmost bay is used as a shop while the remaining six bays are used for the storage of tractors, wagons, and other equipment. It was erected in 1972.
15. The Calf Barn, erected in 1975 and located to the northwest of the equipment shed, is a long shallow timber frame building with vertically sheathed east and west ends. The shed roof is covered with sheet tin. The structure is divided into eight bays along the south elevation. Seven of these bays contain pens for three calves. Moving from east to west, the fourth bay contains a feed room enclosed by vertical sheathing. The rear (north) wall of the calf barn has vertical sheathing to a height of approximately four feet. The elevation above that height is open.
16. The Hay Shed, erected in 1979, is a rectangular structure with cresote poles rising to the frame roof structure. The gabled roof is on an east-west axis. The entire east end is open and a single bay wide while the south side elevation has a seven-bay division. The north elevation of the building, the uppermost gable ends, and the roof of the building are covered with sheet tin. A shed, two bays wide across its east front, carries along the south side of the hay shed.
17. The Heifer Barn, built in 1979 located due west of the Main Barn, is a sawn timber frame gabled roof structure. It is seven bays deep. The easternmost bay of the south elevation is presently used for hay and feed storage. The remaining six bays open on a feeding lot which extends westward the depth of the building. The east and west gable ends of the heifer barn are fully sheathed with vertically applied sheet tin. The lower three-fourths of the north elevation is also sheathed with sheet tin as is the roof.
18. An Equipment Shed, the last building in this dairying complex, is a sawn timber frame building with a gabled roof on an east-west axis. The ridge line of the roof

**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      Description      Item number      7      Page      6

is off center. The shorter north stretch of the roof covers hay storage while the longer south span covers a stable along the south side of the building. A shed approximately the same size of the main gabled roof block, occupies the north end of the structure. Its sawn frame roof, covered with sheet tin, is supported by cedar poles. It is two bays wide on its front (east) and west elevations. The north elevation is sheathed with flush vertical boards.

19. The Spring House, a small log building located on the west side of Knox Road southwest of the farm seat, is one of the oldest buildings on the complex, having been built according to family tradition in the last years of the eighteenth century by William or Benjamin Knox. It is one of only two known log springhouses in Rowan County. Its half-dovetail construction is sheltered by a wood shingle gabled roof which projects on its northwest (front) elevation to shelter the entrance there. A board and batten door opens into the interior.
20. The Tenant House, located on the east side of Knox Road approximately equidistant between the 1856 family seat and Amity Hill Road, is a plainly finished two-story weatherboarded frame house built about 1920 by James Wilson Knox. Now vacant, it was occupied from the time of its construction until 1970 by Negroes who worked on the Knox farm. The two-story main block has a three-bay division on the first story and a two-bay division on the second story. A shed porch protects the central entrance and the flanking bays but stops short of carrying across the full facade. Window openings containing four-over-four sash are centered on each level of the north elevation while a brick chimney stands in the center of the south elevation. Window openings occur here on both levels only on the west side of the chimney. A one-story board and batten covered frame ell projects from the north end of the east rear elevation. A porch carries along its south elevation. The interior of the house has a two-room plan and is sheathed with tongue and groove ceiling.
21. The Chicken Coop at the Tenant House is a small shed roofed randomly sheathed frame structure with a (once screened) opening on its south elevation. It appears to be nearly contemporary with the above house.
22. The Barn, being the third building at the tenant complex, is a weatherboarded gabled roof building also contemporary with the tenant house. It, too, is abandoned.
23. The Robert Howard Knox, III House on the west side of Knox Road nearly opposite the Tenant House is a one-story frame structure covered with a veneer of brick laid in common bond. It was begun in 1973 and completed in 1975-1976. The house has an asymmetrical six-bay east front elevation with a carport at the south end. The front door and the flanking bays are sheltered by a gabled roof which rests on the house's main roof, the ridge line of one being atop the other. The porch roof is supported by slender Tuscan-like columns. The window openings contain six-over-six sash.

A utility room extends across the west end of the carport. The house contains a foyer, living room, family room, kitchen, three bedrooms, and two bathrooms. The

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 | Description  | Item number | Page |
|--------------------|--|-------------|------|
|                    | house rests on a full basement. The house is the residence of Robert Howard Knox, III (1950- ) and his wife Karen Lamb (1952- ) and their children Ruth Allison Knox (1976- ) and Daniel Luke Knox (1979- ). The couple was married in 1973.   | 7           | 7    |
| 24.                | The Barn at the Robert H. Knox, Jr. House was built in 1970 and is of frame construction covered with board and batten siding and a gabled roof. It is located southwest of the Robert H. Knox, Jr. House. The south side is open.   |             |      |
| 25.                | The Robert Howard Knox, Jr. House is a one-story Colonial Revival weatherboarded frame house situated in a grove of trees on the west side of Knox Road. The house rests on a common bond brick foundation and was covered in aluminum siding about 1965. The house is essentially rectangular in shape. The three principal bays of front east elevation are sheltered under the main gabled roof of the house while a fourth bay is recessed just behind the main facade and is sheltered by a gabled roof slightly lower than the main roof. The front door and its sidelights are set in a simply molded surround and sheltered by a single bay porch supported by simple columns. The window openings here and throughout the house contain eight-over-eight sash. There is a secondary entrance into the family room (in the southwest corner of the house) sheltered by a porch at the western end of the south elevation. The family room was added about 1965. It has a common bond brick chimney at its west gable end. There is a rear entrance to the house on the west elevation north of the above chimney. The shell of the house and a portion of the interior finish were completed by Thomas Goodnight in 1943. The house was completed in 1947. It contains in addition to the above family room, a living room, dining room, kitchen, utility room, three bedrooms, and two bathrooms. It was built for and remains the residence of Robert Howard Knox, Jr. (1914- ) and his wife Josie Lee (Hall) Knox (1912- ). The couple was married in 1941. |             |      |
| 26.                | This metal clad mobile home was the residence of Mrs. Mary Ellington, an aunt of Mrs. Robert Howard Knox, Jr., but was sold and moved off the premises in the fall of 1981.  |             |      |
| 27.                | The Pack House is a weatherboarded frame gabled roof storage building dating from the first quarter of the twentieth century. It was moved from another location on the farm to its present location several yards northwest of the R. H. Knox, Jr. House. Entrance is gained through a board and batten door in the south elevation.  |             |      |
| 28.                | The Chicken House/Shed, a weatherboarded frame shed roof building, was erected about 1950. The shed roof slopes downward from the south to the north. It has a door at the south end of the east elevation and a screened opening across the upper half of the south front elevation. A wood frame shed repeating the dimensions of the chicken house occupies the building's west end.  |             |      |
| 29.                | The Sheep Barn is a small simple cedar post construction shed roof building of recent date covered with sheet tin. It is open along the south side.  |             |      |

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**For NPS use only**  
received  
date entered

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Continuation sheet      Description      Item number      7      Page      8

30. The David Clark Knox House is a rectangular one-story brick veneer frame house covered with a gabled roof. It was built in 1957 by Charles Beam and his crew of carpenters. The house has asymmetrically spaced and varying sized window openings on its elevations. A small porch protects the entrance on the northwest front elevation while a screened porch occupies a part of the rear southeast elevation. A carport was added to the northeast end of the house in 1977. The house contains two dens, a utility room, a kitchen/dining area, a living room, and three bedrooms and two bathrooms off a back hall. The house was built for and remains the residence of David Clark Knox (1930- ) and his wife Mary Susan (Haskins) Knox (1933- ) and their sons, David Clark Knox, Jr. (1957- ) and John Benjamin Knox (1959- ). The couple was married in 1955.
31. The Shop is a large rectangular storage building covered with a gabled roof and horizontal composite siding. It has a trio of window openings on its northwest elevation, a pair of window openings on the northeast elevation, a door and window on its southwest elevation, and a trio of garage doors on the southeast elevation. It was constructed in the 1970s.
32. Located on the east side of Knox Road just north of its junction with Amity Hill Road stands a log barn covered with a sheet tin gabled roof. A shed, open on the south elevation, and randomly sheathed on the north and west elevations, occupies the barn's west elevation. It was constructed in the antebellum period by Robert Knox.
33. Knox Chapel Methodist Church. The origins of the congregation which became Knox Chapel are found in the informal meetings held in the vicinity of the Knox Farm in the late 1870s. These early meetings are thought to have been held under a brush arbor. The group was formally organized by 1888 when James Wilson Knox (1854-1926) and his wife Maria Cowan Krider sold the congregation a tract of three acres on which this church was built. Maria Krider Knox was the daughter of the Rev. Barnabus Scott Krider, a Presbyterian minister, and the granddaughter of Jacob Krider, the builder of Mt. Vernon (NR). Various members of the large Knox family were active in the church as were members of the Owens, Upright, Umberger, and McNeely families, among others.

The Statesville Landmark carried the following notice in its 28 July 1893 edition, "Rev. W. L. Dawson, Mooresville Circuit, will soon finish a very large church-- Knox Chapel. This is a new ground and the membership is large and growing." Six years later in its 14 July 1899 edition a Statesville newspaper announced, "Knox Chapel on the Troutman Circuit will be dedicated Sunday week. Rev. W. M. Bagby, former pastor of the Statesville Circuit will preach the dedicatory sermon."

Despite the regrettable fact that the church was covered with aluminum siding in recent years Knox Chapel Church remains today one of the most impressive, yet modest, of Rowan County's late-nineteenth century rural churches. (The original sheathing and architectural fabric remains intact under the aluminum siding.) The rectangular frame building, three bays wide and four bays deep, is

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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Continuation sheet      Description      Item number      7      Page      9

covered with a gabled roof surmounted by a square ventilated belfry. The central entrance, on the southeast gable front elevation, comprises a pair of doors below a blind arch-headed transom. It is sheltered by a pedimented porch supported by four square posts paired at each corner. Windows flanking the entrance occur at the first story (vestibule) level and above at the balcony level. In the easternmost bays of the side elevations there are windows at the balcony level only. These are double hung six-over-six windows while the tall openings in the three primary bays of side elevations contain triple hung sash also containing six lights each. A pair of windows is symmetrically positioned on the rear elevation. A one-story, L-shaped classroom building is attached to the north corner of the church by a breezeway which continues as a porch across the front of the dependency terminating at the projecting front ell. The porch, supported by square posts, is probably contemporary with the porch at the front of the church, known to have been a later addition. Its eaves terminate with identically shaped bargeboards.

The church's interior follows a center aisle plan with a rear gallery reached by a stair in the south corner of the vestibule. The interior is little altered and retains its tongue and groove ceiling, communion rail, pews, and altar furnishings. An interesting feature here are the folding six-panel doors which separate the first interior bay from the sanctuary creating a vestibule which can be opened into the sanctuary for larger crowds. The door and window surrounds here--and on the exterior of the church--are plain unmolded boards.



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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received

date entered

Continuation sheet Criteria Assessment

Item number 8

Page 1

- C. The thirty-three log, frame, metal, concrete block and brick veneered structures embody the distinctive characteristics of vernacular design and construction seen in the piedmont North Carolina landscape from the late eighteenth century to the present. The log springhouse, dating from the last quarter of the eighteenth century, is one of only two known surviving log springhouses in Rowan County. The principal farm seat, erected in 1854-1856 by James Graham for Robert Knox (1804-1885) represents the high degree of craftsmanship available in the affluent antebellum period and contains woodwork taken directly from the plates of Asher Benjamin's The Practical House Carpenter (1830), a principal design source for the antebellum housebuilder in North Carolina. Knox Chapel Methodist Church, a modest yet impressive frame church, survives intact as a representative example of vernacular ecclesiastical architecture in the late-nineteenth century.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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received

date entered

Continuation sheet

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Item number 8

Page 2

Of the many Scotch-Irish families who settled in western Rowan County during the colonial period, among the most notable has been the Knox family. According to tradition, John Knox (1705-1758) immigrated from Pennsylvania to what is now Rowan County in the 1740s, but his presence cannot be firmly documented until May of 1758, a few months before his death.<sup>1</sup> He was believed, however, to be one of the founders of Thyatira Presbyterian Church, suggesting that he lived in the area as early as 1753 when the congregation was formed.<sup>2</sup> Knox established a farmstead which has remained the seat of his descendants to the present. Nine generations, from immigrant John to three year old Luke Knox, have been closely tied to the rich soil and broad rolling fields of the western piedmont.<sup>3</sup> Their family tradition, spanning more than 230 years, has very few counterparts in North Carolina.

Various members of the family rose to prominence in this state and in other states to which they emigrated. Best known is James Knox Polk (1795-1849), who in 1844 was elected as eleventh president of the United States. James K. Polk never lived on the Rowan County farm, but his family heritage forever linked him to the Carolina piedmont. His great grandfather, John Knox, established the farm; his grandfather and namesake, James Knox, grew up on the farm and probably was born there; and his mother, Jane Knox, was born on the property in 1775.<sup>4</sup> Thus, in many ways, the Knox Farm represents the ancestral seat of an American president.

Three structures have served as the family home or main house, though the central structure has always been surrounded by the homes of children and relatives. The home of John Knox stood as the seat until about 1760 when John's son William built a new one story weatherboarded home with gable roof.<sup>5</sup> After John's death in 1758, William, the oldest son, had been regarded as head of the family and apparently had inherited the farm through the right of primogeniture. William's house remained the family home until sometime between 1854 and 1856. During that time, the present main house was completed and still serves as the focal point of the Knox Farm.<sup>6</sup>

The present family home was built by James Graham for Robert Knox (1804-1885), grandson of William. According to local tradition, Robert planned to build a house out of bricks fired on the plantation, but for reasons never explained he decided to sell the bricks to Dr. Samuel D. Rankin of Mt. Ulla and contracted Graham to construct the two-story frame house now standing.<sup>7</sup> Although some changes and additions have been made since 1856, the house retains its basic integrity. Mary Emma Sloop Knox (1887- ), widow of Robert Howard Knox (1881-1961), currently resides in the house with two of her daughters. Two sons and a grandson erected homes on the property between 1942 and 1976. The birth of a great grandson in 1979 started the fourth generation of the Knox family presently residing on the farm.<sup>8</sup>

The Knox estate has varied in size over the years, but only in the twentieth century has there been a significant change in the land use pattern. The initial tract established by John Knox consisted of approximately 500 acres and was probably a typical Rowan County farm. The soil in that part of the county is particularly suited for grain production and Indian corn was a dominant crop in the mid eighteenth century.<sup>9</sup> According to family tradition, John's son, William Knox (1736-1776), who took over the farm after his father's death in 1758, raised horses and hogs, along with sheep and cattle, for sale and trade as far away as Charleston, South Carolina.<sup>10</sup> Thus,

**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

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Item number 8

Page 3

it would seem likely that John Knox also had engaged in the livestock business. Slave labor on the Knox Farm can be documented as early as 1774 and was a feature of the agricultural operation until the Civil War ended the institution.<sup>11</sup>

Benjamin Knox (1760-1842), son of William, continued the agricultural patterns of his father and grandfather, but at some point he turned a significant portion of the land towards cotton production. He seems to have incurred some financial difficulties, forcing the court to order the property sold by the Clerk and Master in Equity in 1845. Three years after Benjamin's death, the home tract consisted of 366 acres. Benjamin's son, Robert Knox (1804-1885), saved the family farm by purchasing it at the 1845 sale.<sup>12</sup>

Robert bought at least nine additional tracts and expanded his estate to approximately 2,000 acres.<sup>13</sup> Cotton became the cash crop though corn and grains were still grown in significant amounts, much of which went to feed the large numbers of livestock raised on the farm. Forests and pastures covered the majority of the 2,000 acres but the cash crop system demanded intensive labor. Robert Knox owned eighteen slaves in 1850 who ranged in age from one to thirty-two. By 1860 the number had grown to twenty-seven slaves, ages two months to fifty-six years. Records show that thirteen were born on the farm between 1846 and 1861, clearly indicating that the increase was by natural means rather than purchase.<sup>14</sup> Despite the production of cotton for profit, the Knox Farm remained a self sufficient unit, even making and repairing the tools in shops on the grounds.<sup>15</sup> With the end of slavery, the system of sharecropping and tenant farming emerged. Since the time of Robert Knox, tenant houses have dotted the family owned lands.

James Wilson Knox (1854-1926), son of Robert, continued virtually unchanged the farming operation of his father though he had inherited only 900 acres and the home place.<sup>16</sup> He did deed three acres and the timber for construction of Knox Chapel in 1888 (see later), but it was his son Robert Howard Knox (1881-1961) who made the first and only major change in the land use patterns of the farm. Robert Howard began a small dairy operation in 1936 and discontinued the raising of sheep, a practice as old as the farm itself. His sons and grandsons (current owners of approximately 1,052 acres) have expanded the dairy farm into one of the largest in the state while continuing the production of corn and other grains so long associated with the farm.<sup>17</sup>

The large complement of outbuildings consists of log, frame, and metal structures dating from the late 1700s to the present, reflecting more than two centuries of a continuous farming operation. The log slavehouses and several other log buildings remembered by the family have been pulled down and replaced to meet the needs of changing agricultural practices. The oldest log structure still standing is the springhouse said to have been built in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Seventeen other outbuildings are currently in use.<sup>18</sup>

Standing on land adjacent to and once a part of the Knox Farm is the Knox Chapel United Methodist Church. James W. Knox (1854-1926), then owner of the family homestead, sold three acres to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in 1888 for \$50.00.<sup>19</sup> The present sanctuary was completed in 1893 but a congregation had formed some years before. The earliest church records have been lost, but according to the testimony of one of the original communicants, the first services were held in a brush arbor about 1879. A crude log hut was constructed in a hog pasture and there the congregation met until the land for the present structure was acquired.<sup>20</sup>

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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received

date entered

Continuation sheet    HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE    Item number    8    Page    4

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Despite their heritage of Presbyterianism and close association with both Thyatira and Third Creek churches, the Knox family became very active in the Methodist Chapel. A combination of poor roads making it difficult to travel the considerable distance to Third Creek Presbyterian Church, and the fact that services there were not held on a weekly basis, seems to have prompted, at least in part, the Knox family's involvement with the local congregation.<sup>21</sup> Though it owns the land and draws its congregation from a number of homes in the area, Knox Chapel has maintained a close association with its namesake family and surrounding farm.

The continuity of the Knox Farm has spanned the panorama of American history from the Colonial Period to the present, from the plow to the computer. The diversity of the outbuildings, including those of the present extensive dairy operation, tell of the transition from life on the frontier to life on a modern farm, from subsistence to agribusiness, and the adaption of the Knox family to changing rural practices and land use patterns.

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

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Item number 8

Page 5

FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>The first official record is a deed from James Stewart to John Knox, May 23, 1758. Rowan County Deed Books, Office of the Register of Deeds, Rowan County Courthouse, Salisbury, Deed Book 2, p. 328, hereinafter cited as Rowan County Deed Book. For Knox's earlier residence, see Hattie S. Goodman, The Knox Family: A Genealogical and Biographical Sketch of the Descendants of John Knox of Rowan County, North Carolina and Other Knoxes (Richmond: Whittet and Shepperson, 1905), see index for pages regarding specific family members. This book is oddly arranged and can be understood only by continuous reading; therefore, it will be hereinafter cited only as Goodman, Knox Family without reference to page.

Rowan County was created in 1753. In the 1740s, it was a part of Bladen County whose pre-Revolutionary War records have been destroyed. Thus, Knox could well have been in the county before he first appears in the Rowan records. See David Leroy Corbitt (ed.), The Formation of the North Carolina Counties 1663-1943 (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1950), 8, 185. See also Guide to Research Materials in the North Carolina State Archives. Section B: County Records (Raleigh: Office of Archives and History, 1972), B-20.

<sup>2</sup>James S. Brawley, Old Rowan: Views and Sketches (Salisbury: Rowan Printing Company, 1959), 2.

<sup>3</sup>John Benjamin Knox, "The Knox Farm of Rowan County" (Typescript, 1980), 5, hereinafter cited as J. B. Knox, "Knox Farm." See also J. Allen Knox, "Notes on the Knox Family" (Handwritten manuscript dated March, 1980 in Survey and Planning Branch, Archives and History, Raleigh), unpaginated, hereinafter cited as J. Allen Knox, "Notes on Knox Family."

<sup>4</sup>Charles G. Sellers, Jr., James K. Polk (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2 vols., 1957), I, 22; and Goodman, Knox Family.

<sup>5</sup>J. B. Knox, "Knox Farm," 2; and J. Allen Knox, "Notes on Knox Family." See also Helen Cheney, "Eighth Generation Coming Up to Rule Historic Knox Acres." N.C. Post (Salisbury), May 6, 1962, hereinafter cited as Cheney, "Eighth Generation."

<sup>6</sup>Goodman, Knox Family; J. B. Knox, "Knox Farm," 3; and Cheney, "Eighth Generation." For Robert Knox's title clearance, see Rowan County Deed Book 37, p. 302.

<sup>7</sup>Data submitted to Davyd Foard Hood, Survey Specialist, by Mrs. Wylie Krider Knox Smith, 1978. See correspondence in Knox Family House/Farm File, Survey and Planning Branch, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, hereinafter cited as Smith correspondence.

<sup>8</sup>J. Allen Knox, "Notes on the Knox Family"; and J. B. Knox, "Knox Farm," 5.

<sup>9</sup>Rowan County Deed Book 2, p. 328; and James S. Brawley, Rowan County: A Brief History (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, 1974), 4.

**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 HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE Item number 8

Page 6

<sup>10</sup>J. B. Knox, "Knox Farm," 2.

<sup>11</sup>J. Allen Knox, "Notes on the Knox Family." A 1774 deed mentioning slaves is still in possession of the family.

<sup>12</sup>Rowan County Deed Book 37, p. 302.

<sup>13</sup>Deeds in possession of family. See J. Allen Knox, "Notes on the Knox Family."

<sup>14</sup>Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: North Carolina - Rowan County, Slave Schedule, 32; Eighth Census, 1860, Slave Schedule, 38; and J. B. Knox, "Knox Farm," 3.

<sup>15</sup>J. B. Knox, "Knox Farm," 3.

<sup>16</sup>Rowan County Wills, Office of the Clerk of Superior Court, Rowan County Courthouse, Salisbury, Will of Robert Knox, 1885. Copy in possession of J. Allen Knox. See "Notes on Knox Family."

<sup>17</sup>J. B. Knox, "Knox Farm," 4-5; and J. Allen Knox, "Notes on the Knox Family."

<sup>18</sup>J. Allen Knox, "Notes on the Knox Family"; Smith correspondence; and Cheney, "Eighth Generation."

<sup>19</sup>Rowan County Deed Book 72, p. 405.

<sup>20</sup>See brief sketch of church recorded by Harry M. Sherrill, pastor, April 20, 1970, in Knox Chapel File, Survey and Planning Branch, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, hereinafter cited as Knox Chapel File.

<sup>21</sup>Data supplied by Mrs. Wylie Krider Knox Smith, March 7, 1978. See Knox Chapel File. For association with Thyatira Church, see Brawley, Old Rowan: Views and Sketches, and for connection to Third Creek Church, see Smith correspondence, Knox Family House/Farm File.

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# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 890 acres, more or less  
 Quadrangle name Cleveland and Shepherds Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References See continuation sheet

A	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	B	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
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E	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	F	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	H	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet

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

state	<u>N/A</u>	code	county	<u>N/A</u>	code
state		code	county		code

# 11. Form Prepared By

Architectural description, statement of significance and criteria assessment by  
 name/title Davyd Foard Hood, staff; historical research by Jerry Cross, staff, Division of Archives and History.

organization N.C. Division of Archives and History date \_\_\_\_\_

street & number 109 E. Jones Street telephone 919 733-6545

city or town Raleigh state N.C.

# 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. Price, Jr.

title State Historic Preservation Officer date February 7, 1983

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	

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**National Register of Historic Places**  
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Continuation sheet      BIBLIOGRAPHY      Item number    9      Page    1

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**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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Continuation sheet    Geographical Data    Item number    10    Page    1

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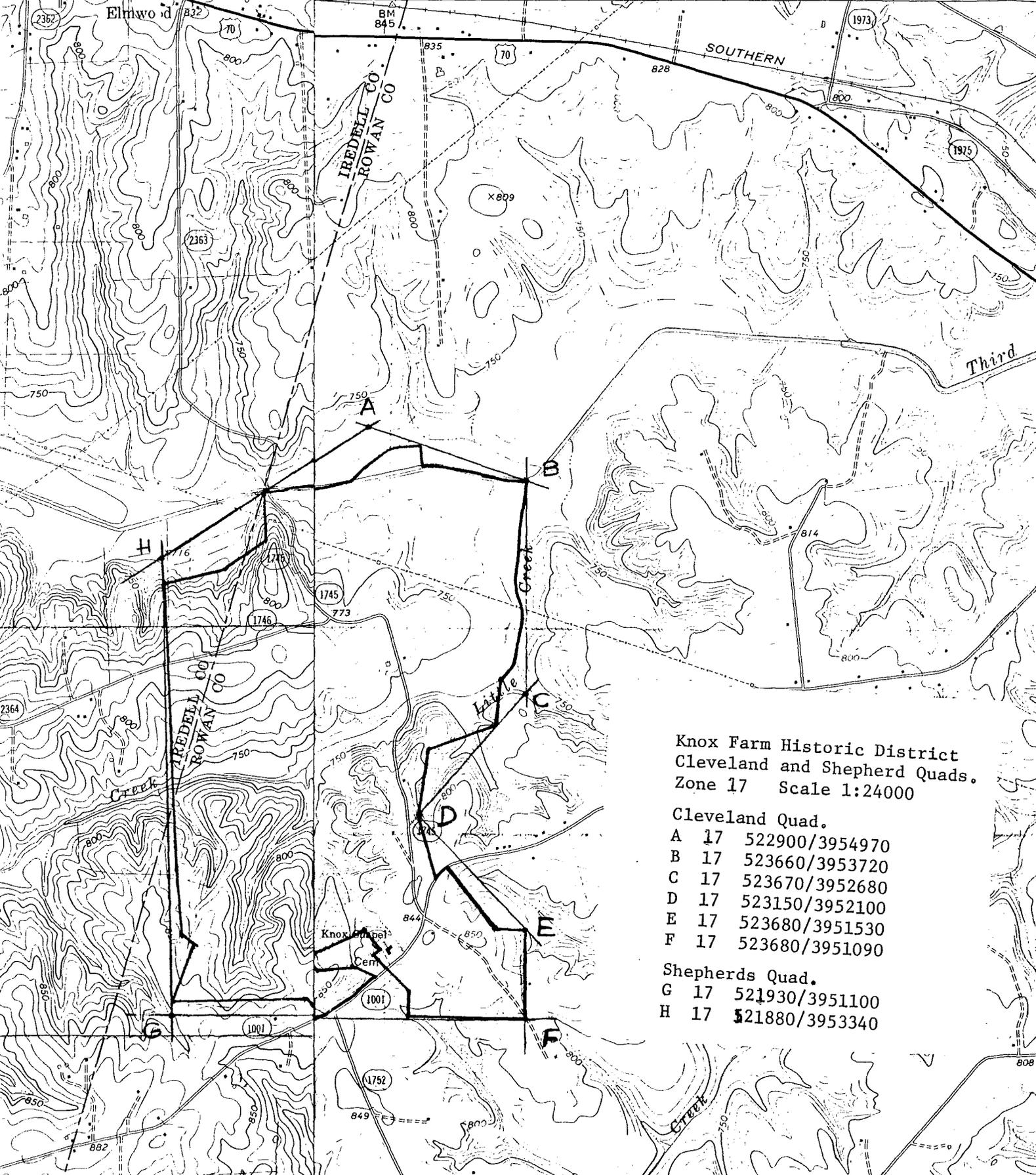
Boundary Justification and Description

The Knox Farm Historic District is essentially rectangular in plan as can be seen on the free-hand map of the district which includes the entire acreage as represented on four Rowan County Tax Maps and two USGS maps. The Rowan County Tax Maps--Cleveland Township Maps 279, 280, and 262 and Mt. Ulla Township Map 553--and the USGS maps are included together with the free-hand map. The lands in the district are especially well-watered, having Third Creek as the north boundary of the property and Little Creek as a west-east bisector of the lands and a boundary along a portion of the east side of the district. The nominated acreage includes the greater part--as far as can be determined--of the 500-acre tract acquired by John Knox (1708-1758) and those portions of the family lands associated with the family and its farming operations during the life of Robert Knox (1804-1885) which remain in the possession of and are farmed by the family matriarch Mary Emma Sloop Knox (1887- ) and her descendants.

SHEPHERDS QUADRANGLE  
 NORTH CAROLINA  
 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

UNITED STATES  
 DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
 GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

STATESVILLE 9 MI. 1480 000 FEET 80°45' 523000m.E. 524 525 526



Knox Farm Historic District  
 Cleveland and Shepherd Quads.  
 Zone 17 Scale 1:24000

Cleveland Quad.

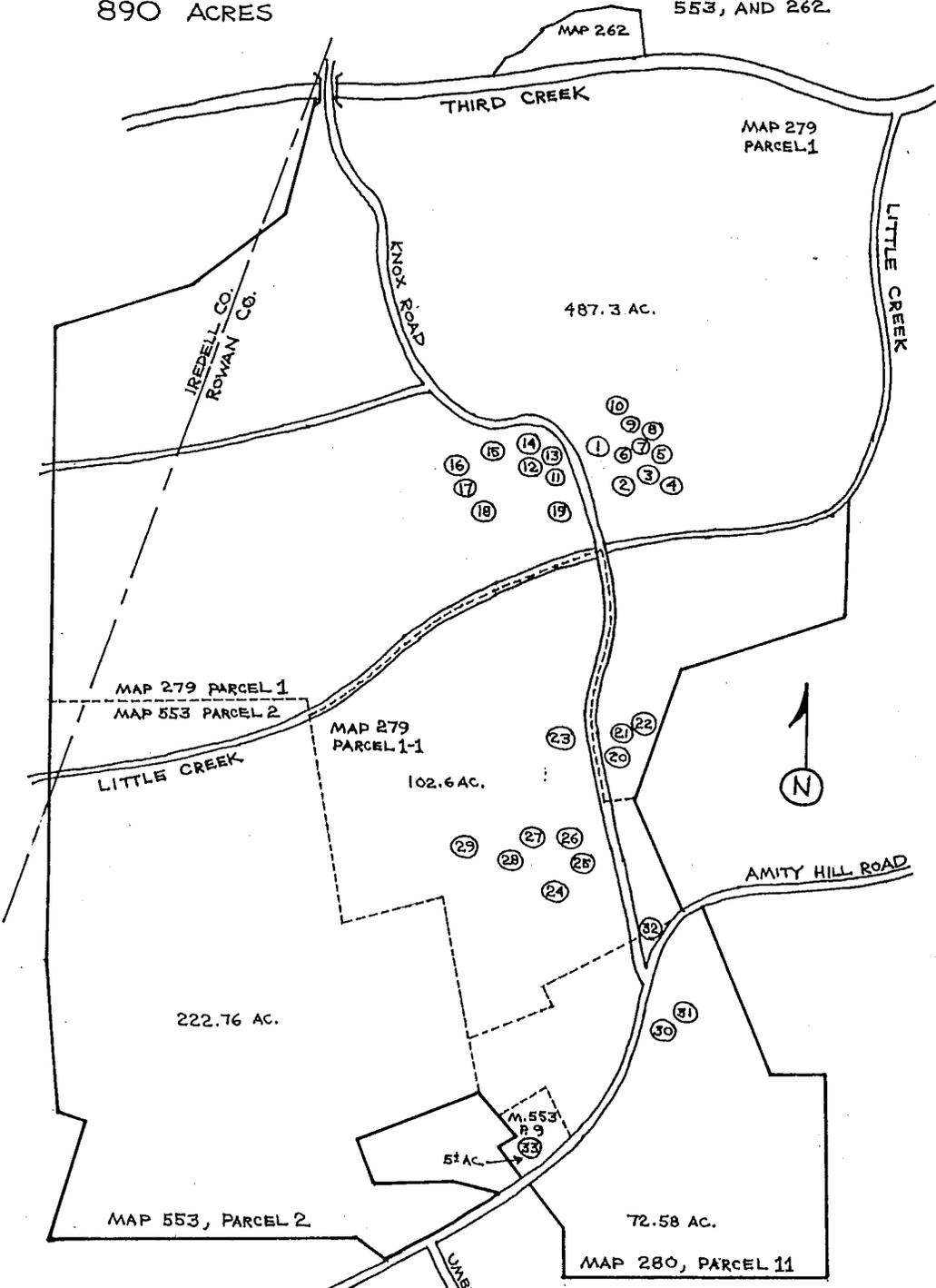
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B	17	523660/3953720
C	17	523670/3952680
D	17	523150/3952100
E	17	523680/3951530
F	17	523680/3951090

Shepherds Quad.

G	17	521930/3951100
H	17	521880/3953340

**KNOX FARM HISTORIC DISTRICT**  
 ROWAN/IREDELL COUNTIES, N.C.  
 1982  
 890 ACRES

DRAWN FROM ROWAN CO.  
 TAX MAPS # 279, 280,  
 553, AND 262.



0 800' 1600'  
 SCALE 1" = 800'

① STRUCTURE NUMBERS KEYED TO SECTION 7 OF NOMINATION  
 ——— NOMINATION BOUNDARY  
 - - - - - TAX PARCEL BOUNDARIES