

# INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY FORM FOR

MULTIPLE RESOURCE OR  THEMATIC NOMINATION

## 1 NAME

HISTORIC Lewis Highsmith Farm  
AND/OR COMMON Sweet Liberty

## 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER W side US 421, 0.5 mi S of NC 41  
CITY, TOWN \_\_\_\_\_ VICINITY OF Harrells  NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT Third  
STATE North Carolina CODE 037 COUNTY Sampson CODE 163

## 3 CLASSIFICATION

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

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Dennis Hoover  
STREET & NUMBER US 421 S  
CITY, TOWN \_\_\_\_\_ VICINITY OF Harrells, NC STATE 28444

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Book 546, Page 203  
STREET & NUMBER REGISTER OF DEEDS  
SAMPSON COUNTY COURT HOUSE  
CITY, TOWN CLINTON, N.C. 28328 STATE \_\_\_\_\_

## 6 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE  
Thomas Butchko Jim Sumner, Researcher  
ORGANIZATION Survey and Planning Branch Research Branch DATE June 6, 1985  
STREET & NUMBER 109 East Jones Street TELEPHONE (919) 733-6545  
CITY OR TOWN Raleigh, STATE NC 27611

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

EXCELLENT

GOOD

FAIR

DETERIORATED

RUINS

UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

UNALTERED

ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE

MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Highly visible along US 421 just south of Harrells, this farm complex centers around the large, two-story, late Federal house which was built prior to 1840 for planter Lewis Highsmith (1803-1884); the first child was born here in 1840. The double-pile, four room, hall-and-parlor plan house engages a full-width, double-tier porch along the north-east facade. This is the only porch of its kind in the county and is a prime example of the adaptation of vernacular architecture to the hot and humid summer weather. Because of its location along heavily-traveled US 421, this house is among the best known houses in the county. It reflects both the excellent quality of the county's early structures and the retardinaire nature of the builder's trade in the county. Sheltered under numerous oak and pecan trees is the excellent surviving complement of outbuildings. Especially important is the fine, full-dove-tail log smokehouse, the former kitchen which was removed from the house in 1959, the gable roofed barn and a nearby cluster of four tobacco barns, two being constructed of square-notched logs. The present owners acquired the Highsmith farm from the family heirs in 1945.

The dominating feature of this house is the full-width, two-tier front porch. The wooden pillars which carry the porch are connected by a square baluster railing; the porch roof has a modillioned cornice. The three-bay-by-three-bay house is contained under a gable roof of standing seam metal. At each gable end rises a stuccoed, single shoulder chimney. Sash are generally six-over-nine with narrow, four-over-six sash flanking the chimneys; surrounds are molded, beaded and two-part. Most of the rear sash have been replaced. The weatherboard, frame house was enlarged in 1959 with the addition of an asbestos-shingled kitchen and a carport on the southeast side. The stairs to the second floor porch were added in 1946.

Entrance into the hall-and-parlor interior is through the central door which has six panels, flat on the exterior, raised on the interior. Unlike most of the county's late Federal architecture, the interior treatment is unusually simple, plain and straight-forward. The hall room, containing a large, simple mantel with fluted pilasters has been resheathed with plasterboard. The parlor, from which the steep, enclosed stairs rise, has been covered with simulated wood paneling and has a simple mantel of pilasters and a plain frieze. Interior surrounds on the first floor are two-part, with a beaded outside molding. The small room at the rear of the hall is used as a bedroom, that behind the parlor is a bath/utility room. Upstairs, the same floor plan is followed, with two bedrooms and two baths. The stairs opens directly onto the bedroom over the parlor and has a molded railing carried by slender square spindles. Cornerblocks mark the upstairs surrounds. The upstairs has been completely plasterboarded and has a new textured ceiling.

A number of outbuildings survive, two being original to the house. The original kitchen, located on the southeast gable where the present kitchen is, was moved in 1959 and converted into a storage house. The weatherboarded, one-bay-by-two-bay building has a projecting gable where is attached onto the house. The window sash are four-over-four. The full-dovetail log smokehouse is one of the finest surviving log outbuildings in the county. Of the better, early log smokehouses, most were full-dovetail in construction. This eleven by eighteen foot, gable front example has a weatherboard tympanem and notable cantilevered sheds on each lateral side. The wash-house is unusually short in height for a washhouse. The original, square-notched log shed section has been enlarged and enclosed with a complimentary frame shed part, creating

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National Park Service**

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

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a center gable ridge. Near the road is the grape arbor, a small three-by-two pole one, and the frame, asphalt-sided, two-story packhouse with front gable, six-over-six window sash and a diagonally sheathed center door. Other structures near the house are the chicken house, now converted into a workshop with a new side tractor shed, a new carport, and a new brick pumphouse. Along the farm road to the southeast is the large barn. The frame, sheathed board structure has been covered with sheet metal. It contains two large stalls, a center entry and a second story loft. Further down the farm road, about 300 yards southeast of the house is the cluster of four gabled roofed tobacco barns in a little grove of pines. Two of the barns are built of square-notched logs, covered with green asphalt siding, and connected to the other with a gable shed. One has two additional small sheds, the other retains its shake roof. The other two are single and frame, both covered with grey asphalt siding and having an unusual gable shed - tobacco barn sheds in Sampson County are almost exclusively shed-roofs.

There are twelve contributing structures associated with this nomination.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

\_\_\_\_\_ NATIONAL

\_\_\_\_\_ STATE

XX LOCAL

**PERIOD**

**AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW**

<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input 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**

ca 1840

**BUILDER/ARCHITECT**

Unknown

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Lewis Highsmith Farm is one of the county's finer agricultural complexes, with the large, two-story house siting prominently among large trees on the curve of US 421 south of Harrells. Here it is known to all who travel from Greensboro and the triangle cities to Wilmington and the beaches. The hall-and-parlor plan house, presenting the only full-width, two-tier engaged porch in the county, as a prime example of the substantial dwellings built by the county's planter class prior to the Civil War. The house was erected prior to 1840, the birth year of the first child of Lewis Highsmith (1803-1884) and his wife Phebe (1811-1853). The farm was inherited by the builder's son, Luther Rice Highsmith (1848-1937) and his grandson Emmett DeVane Highsmith (1877-1965). The present owner acquired the farm in 1945. To the southwest of the house is the surviving complement of outbuildings, including the original kitchen, which was removed from the house in 1959, and one of the finer full-dovetail log outbuildings, unusual in having cantilevered side sheds. Also on the farm are the packhouse, a large gambrel roof barn and a fine group of four asphalt-siding covered tobacco barns, two being connected and built of square-notched logs.

**CRITERIA ASSESSMENT**

- A. The Lewis Highsmith Farm has an excellent complement of original and early outbuildings, including full-dovetail log kitchen and smokehouse, and two square-notch log tobacco barns. With the later 19th century outbuildings the farmstead is a representative farmstead of Sampson County which has been a working farm since about 1840.
- B. The Highsmith family were a prominent Sampson County farm family which owned and operated the farm for over a century.
- C. The Lewis Highsmith Farm is a fine ca. 1840 simply finished Federal style farmhouse with an unusual full-width two-tier porch with an exterior stair rising along the facade of the house. The outbuildings include some very fine full-dovetail and square-notch buildings.
- D. Although no investigation has been done, the site and its outbuildings are very likely to yield archaeological information valuable to the study of 19th and 20th century agricultural practices.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Lewis Highsmith house is located in the southern part of Sampson County, near the community of Harrells. The Federal style plantation house was built for Highsmith about 1840, and remained in the Highsmith family for over a century.

The Highsmith home was the center of a sizeable antebellum plantation. The 1860 census shows that Highsmith owned 1,000 acres valued at \$1,500 and livestock valued at \$600. He grew corn, sweet potatoes, hay and other crops. Highsmith owned 13 slaves. Highsmith continued to operate the farm after the war. The 1880 census showed him with 875 acres valued at \$2,500 and livestock valued at \$820.

In the early 1880s, Lewis Highsmith sold the house and a substantial amount of land to his son Luther Rice Highsmith (1848-1937).<sup>2</sup> Tax lists in the 1880s and 1890s credit Luther Highsmith with 690 acres.<sup>3</sup> He married Octavia DeVane (1850-1913) in 1873 and they had six children.<sup>4</sup> Highsmith continued to farm the land which he sold to his son Emmett DeVane Highsmith (1877-1965) in the 1930s. In 1945, Dennis Hoover purchased the house and 125 acres from Highsmith. Hoover and his family continue to own and occupy the house.<sup>5</sup>

The Lewis Highsmith house is typical of the fine antebellum plantation houses built by Sampson County's planter class. Its importance is increased by the large number of associated outbuildings remaining on the property.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, New Hanover County, North Carolina, Agricultural Schedule, Slave Schedule. The Highsmith house was located close to the then border between Sampson and New Hanover counties. Highsmith was listed in the New Hanover schedules in the antebellum censuses.

<sup>2</sup> Sampson County Will Book 3, p. 287.

<sup>3</sup> Sampson County Tax Lists, 1888, 1890, 1891.

<sup>4</sup> Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900, Sampson County, North Carolina, Population Schedule.

<sup>5</sup> Sampson County Deed Book 546, p. 203.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Owner

Leona Hiatt McEachern, Pender-Sampson Gravestones, 1974

Mrs. Isabel Highsmith Jones, Davis Nursing Home, Wilmington (919) 686-7195

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## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 113

### UTM REFERENCES

A	17	757500	3845400	B	17	758200	3845100
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	17	758150	3844500	D	17	756700	3843350
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

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### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The property to be nominated is the first tract of land, containing 113 acres more or less, and described in the Sampson County Register of Deeds Office, Book 546, Page 203, dated 28 December 1945. A copy of the deed is attached.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

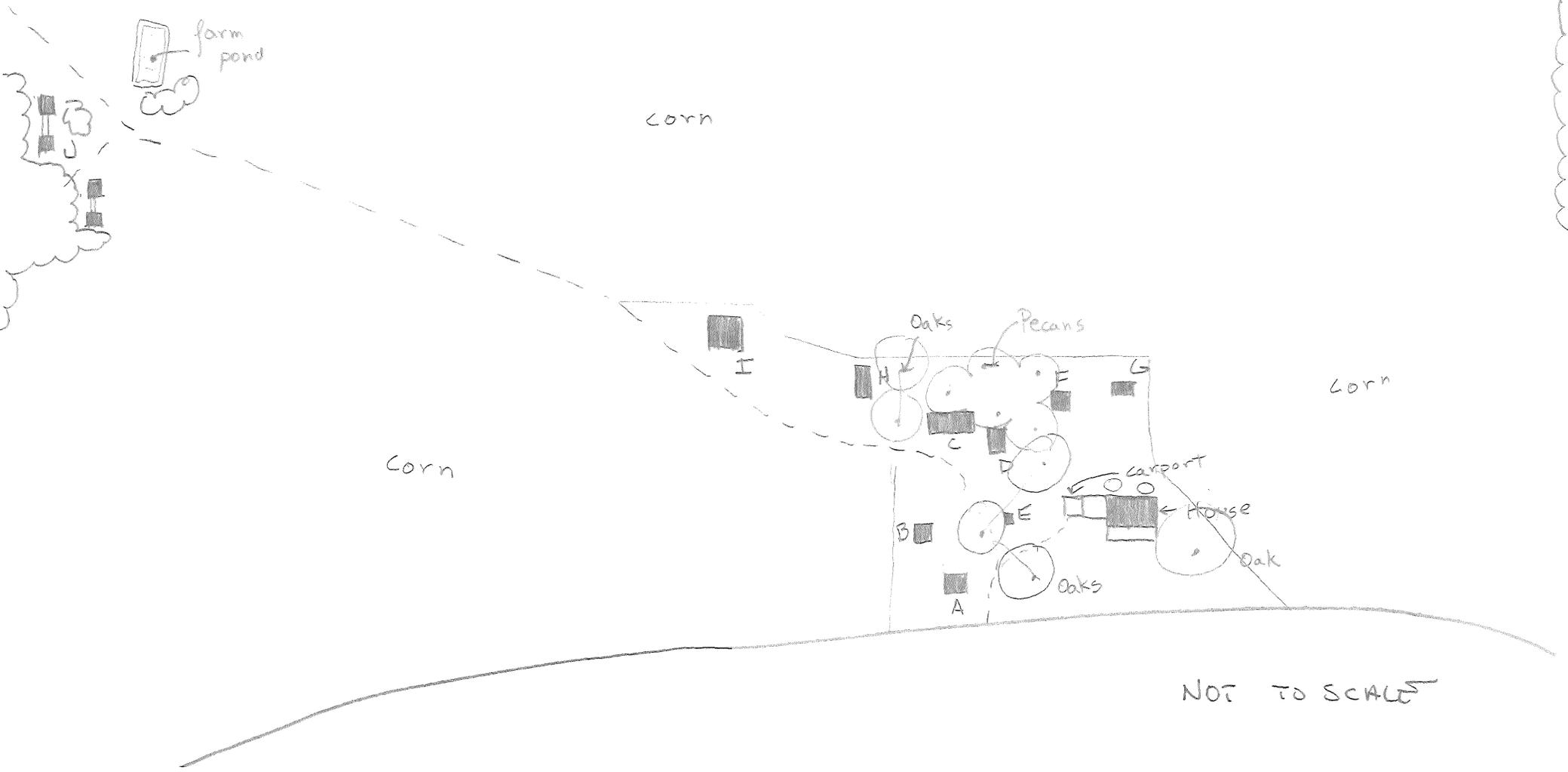
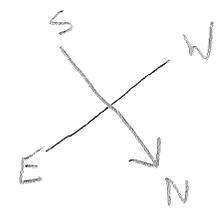
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date entered

Continuation sheet Lewis Highsmith House Item number 10 Page 1

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

The 113 acres being nominated with the Lewis Highsmith House are a portion of the 1000 acres owned by Highsmith during the antebellum period. The 113 acres are a working farm and have been associated with the dwelling and the associated outbuildings for over a century.

Lewis Highsmith Farm  
Sampson County, N.C.

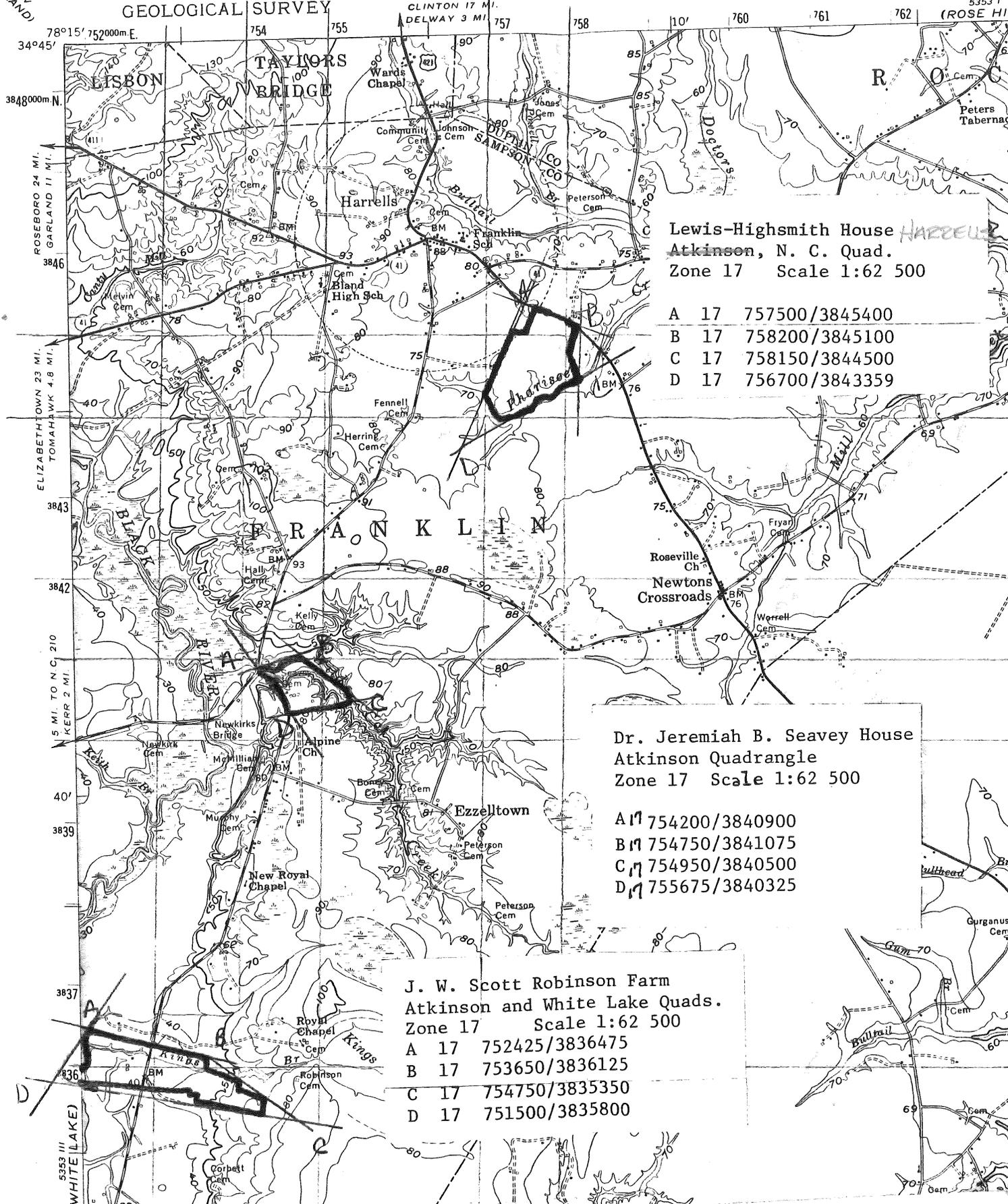


NOT TO SCALE

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

5353 IV  
(GARLAND)

5353 I  
(ROSE HILL)



Lewis-Highsmith House  
Atkinson, N. C. Quad.  
Zone 17 Scale 1:62 500

- A 17 757500/3845400
- B 17 758200/3845100
- C 17 758150/3844500
- D 17 756700/3843359

Dr. Jeremiah B. Seavey House  
Atkinson Quadrangle  
Zone 17 Scale 1:62 500

- A 17 754200/3840900
- B 17 754750/3841075
- C 17 754950/3840500
- D 17 755675/3840325

J. W. Scott Robinson Farm  
Atkinson and White Lake Quads.  
Zone 17 Scale 1:62 500

- A 17 752425/3836475
- B 17 753650/3836125
- C 17 754750/3835350
- D 17 751500/3835800

78°15' 752000m. E.  
34°45'  
3848000m. N.  
ROSEBORO 24 MI.  
GARLAND 11 MI.  
3846  
ELIZABETH TOWN 23 MI.  
TOMAHAWK 4.8 MI.  
3843  
3842  
5 MI. TO N. C. 210  
KERR 2 MI.  
40'  
3839  
3837  
3836  
5353 III  
(WHITE LAKE)

CLINTON 17 MI.  
DELWAY 3 MI.  
757  
758  
10'  
760  
761  
762

