

# INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY FORM FOR

MULTIPLE RESOURCE OR  THEMATIC NOMINATION

## 1 NAME

HISTORIC Dr. John B. Seavey House and Cemetery  
AND/OR COMMON

## 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER E side SR 1100, 0.3 mi S of SR 1007

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NOT FOR PUBLICATION  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 type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input 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	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" 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
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Mr. Edward Bowen (919) 532-4183

STREET & NUMBER  
Route 1

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF Harrells, NC 28444

STATE

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

REGISTERED OF DEEDS

Book 705, Page 275

STREET & NUMBER

SAMPSON COUNTY COURT HOUSE

CITY, TOWN

CLINTON, N.C. 28320

STATE

## 6 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Thomas Butchko  
ORGANIZATION

Jim Sumner, Researcher

DATE

Survey & Planning Branch  
STREET & NUMBER

Research Branch

May 24, 1985

TELEPHONE

109 East Jones Street  
CITY OR TOWN

(919) 733-6545

STATE

Raleigh,

North Carolina 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

Superbly sited on the eastern bluff of the picturesque Black River among a grove of moss-hung trees and overlooking the adjacent woods and fields, the Dr. John B. Seavey House, built in 1841, occupies a prominent place in the antebellum architectural development of Sampson County. With construction attributed to Isaac B. Kelly of Kenansville- who is said to have also built three similar houses nearby, of which only the 1844 James Kerr House survives- the splendid two-and-a-half story Greek Revival house features the county's finest double-tier portico, with a pedimented gable. Interior detailing includes marbleizing, feathering and a superb staircase rising three floors. The plaster in the northwest parlor was originally completely painted to simulate oak paneling; this was removed during renovation soon after 1960. Local tradition suggests that Seavey, a native of Rochester, New Hampshire, was traveling through this area when his horse threw him. While waiting for help, he decided that this was the place to settle. Having married Ann Julia Newkirk of a prominent area family, Seavey built his stately residence in 1841. The current owners, who purchased it in 1960 from a Seavey grandson, have maintained the house and plan an eventual complete restoration.

The two-and-a-half story, single pile, frame house has the finest Greek Revival exterior of rural Sampson County residences. Flush gable eaves terminate the standing-seam metal roof with exterior end, common bond brick, single stepped-shoulder chimneys. Fully-developed corner pilasters help carry the box cornice. Projecting from the center bay of the five-by-two-bay front block is the elegant two-tier portico. Supported by pillars with vernacular classical capitals which are connected by a rounded handrail with slender, square spindles, and surmounted with a handsome pediment, the west-facing portico is an eloquent statement of the carpenter's expertise in the graciousness of the Greek Revival. Entrance on both levels is through large, unusual, eight-panel doors crowned with four-pane transom lights. Second floor fenestration in nine-over-six, with two-over-two sash replacing the probable nine-over-nine first floor sash; flanking the chimney shafts at the attic are twin six-over-six windows. Surrounds are flat, two-part with simple corner blocks. Louvered shutters remain on all but the attic and rear ell dormer windows. On the rear northeast of the house is a large L-shaped ell. The ell is one-and-a-half stories in height and marked with six pedimented and pilastered gable roof dormers. An enlarged and remodeled porch carries along the ell's southern elevation. The window sash are replacement two-over-two with flat two-part surrounds; cornerboards are simply treated as pilasters.

Upon entrance into the plastered, center hall interior one is greeted by the handsome open string staircase rising three floors. The rounded handrail, carried on twin, slender, turned balusters, curls at the bottom to form a newel and rises two floors with fitted corners; square spindles carry the railing to the attic. From the intermediate landing is a door consisting of eight short raised panels leading to the partially finished rooms over the ell. These rooms, like the rest of the ell, have classical pilaster and frieze mantels. On the stair treads are remains of former stenciling, protected by having been covered with carpet. The woodwork in the entrance hall - the large, eight-panel doors, the cornerblock surrounds, and the baseboard - are all simply and decoratively feathered.

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

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

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Continuation sheet Dr. John B. Seavey House

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The south parlor is the more formal of the two first floor rooms, having fluted surrounds with corner blocks with gold-painted medallions; surrounds extend to the baseboard and enclose a recessed panel. Marbleized bases anchor the classical pilaster-and-frieze mantels. It is not known what other parts of this mantel were marbleized. However, judging from the fully-marbleized one in the James Kerr House—also attributed to Isaac B. Kelly—one feels certain that more than just the bases were marbleized. A celotex ceiling covers the original plaster. The north parlor, the one whose plaster was originally painted to resemble oak paneling, is similarly detailed, with surrounds similar to those in the hall and a simple pilaster-and-frieze mantel. A low, paneled wainscot highlights this room.

The second floor bedrooms have had their plaster removed for eventual renovation. Mantels and surrounds here are similar to those of the north downstairs room. From the half-story attic, used as sleeping rooms, is a trap-door onto the rear gable roof for use as an emergency fire escape. The ell bedrooms have simple classical mantels and are plastered. A rear enclosed stair affords convenient access from the ell to the half-story ell rooms; it originally opened onto the porch.

The only surviving outbuildings include the grape arbor, a smokehouse, and a barn. Along the ell porch are several sections of a handsome paling fence, one which probably once enclosed much of the yard. Nearby is the Seavey family cemetery, whose ownership remains with Seavey heirs. The current owners hold 107 acres, being lot 1-A in the division of the lands of Jeremiah B. Seavey, a son of the builder.

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 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	1841	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	Isaac B. Kelly, attributed (Kenansville)
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Picturesquely sited on the bank of Wild Cat Creek and overseeing the rolling wooded countryside through magnolias and moss-hung oaks, the Seavey House is a classic example of the antebellum Greek Revival plantation house. The large, 1841, two-and-a-half-story house with a gracious central portico is attributed to Isaac B. Kelly of Kenansville, to whom is also attributed the similar 1844 James Kerr House and two other houses which have burned. The interior is among the area's finest; its graceful staircase with a curved handrail rises three stories. While some marbleizing survives, the north parlor's plaster, which was entirely woodgrained to simulate oak paneling, was lost in a 1960 renovation. Seavey (1815-1881), a leading local physician, was a native of Manchester, New Hampshire, and married a daughter of the prominent, nearby pioneer Newkirk family. The house was inherited by his daughter, Eugenia Seavey Moore (1847-1905). In 1960 Ed Bowen, a local farmer, purchased the property from the builder's grandson and has renovated the first floor as his residence.

CRITERIA ASSESSMENT

- A. The John B. Seavey House is one of the county's outstanding examples of the large plantation houses that were prevalent and important to the area's pre-Civil War economy. It's location on the bluff of Wild Cat Creek is representative of the advantageous siting of houses in an area of slow moving rivers with wide flood plains.
- B. D. John B. Seavey (1815-1881) was a prominent physician and wealthy planter. His wife, Ann Julia Newkirk (1826-1900) was a member of the prominent pioneer family of the nearby Newton's Crossroads vicinity. The attributed builder, Isaac B. Kelly of Kenansville, was a prominent Duplin County carpenter and is said to have built three other area homes. Only one, the 1844 James Kerr House survives.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The John B. Seavey House is located in the southeast corner of Sampson County, near the community of Harrells. The house dates from the early 1840s and is attributed to Duplin County carpenter Isaac Kelly, who also built the 1844 James Kerr House.

Seavey was born in Rochester, New Hampshire in 1815. He was educated as a physician at Maine's Bowdoin College. According to local tradition, he was shipwrecked near Wilmington while on his way to South America. He made his way to Sampson County where he became a tutor to the children of Bryan and Mary Newkirk. He eventually married one of these children, Julia Ann Newkirk (1826-1900) in the 1840s. They had at least four children. Seavey became one of the area's leading physicians and a planter of note. In 1860, he owned 12 slaves, real estate valued at \$12,000, livestock valued at \$800, and grew typical crops such as corn, sweet potatoes, and hay.

Dr. Seavey continued practicing medicine and farming after the war. Following his death in 1881 and his wife's death in 1900, the property was divided among the children. The house eventually became the property of his daughter, Eugenia; her husband, James Alexander Moore; and later, their son, George Layton Moore. From 1894 until 1915, the house was used as a post office. Postmasters included the builder's son, Jeremiah Seavey. In 1960, George Moore sold the house to its present owner, Edward Bowen. Included on the property is a cemetery which includes the graves of John B. Seavey, Ann Seavey, Eugenia Seavey Moore, and James Moore.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Oscar M. Bizzell (ed.), The Heritage of Sampson County, North Carolina (Winston-Salem: Hunter Publishing Company for the Sampson County Historical Society, 1983), 257, hereinafter cited as Bizzell (ed.), The Heritage of Sampson County; Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, New Hanover County, North Carolina, Population Schedule; Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, New Hanover County, North Carolina, Agricultural Schedule, Population Schedule, Slave Schedule. The Seavey home was located close to what was then the border of Sampson and New Hanover counties. This accounts for Seavey's listings in New Hanover County.

<sup>2</sup>Bizzell (ed.), The Heritage of Sampson County, 20, 257; Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, Sampson County, North Carolina, Population Schedule; Sampson County Will Book 3, p. 225; Sampson County Deed Book 705, p. 275.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bizzell, Oscar M., ed. The Heritage of Sampson County, North Carolina. Winston-Salem: The Hunter Publishing Company, 1983.

Interview with the owner.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 107

### UTM REFERENCES

A	17	754200	3840900	B	17	754950	3840500
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	17	754950	3840500	D	17	755675	3840325
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The property to be nominated is lot 1-A, containing 107.0 acres, more or less, and the family cemetery plot, as shown on the Map of the Division of the Jeremiah B. Seavey Lands, surveyed 1952-53 and registered in the Sampson County Register of Deeds Office, Map Book 3, Page 52. Also described in Deed Book 705, Page 275 and dated 9 March 1960. A copy of both the map and the deed is attached.

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

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- C. The county's finest rural Greek Revival house, the Seavey House is an outstanding example of the large, gracious residences built by the county's planter class. Its pillared, two-tier, pedimented portico is outstanding, as is the superbly detailed interior. Equally impressive is the house's setting, facing the setting sun and sheltered by the many moss-hung oaks.
- D. Is likely to yield valuable archaeological information important to the study of mid-19th to early 20th century history.

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

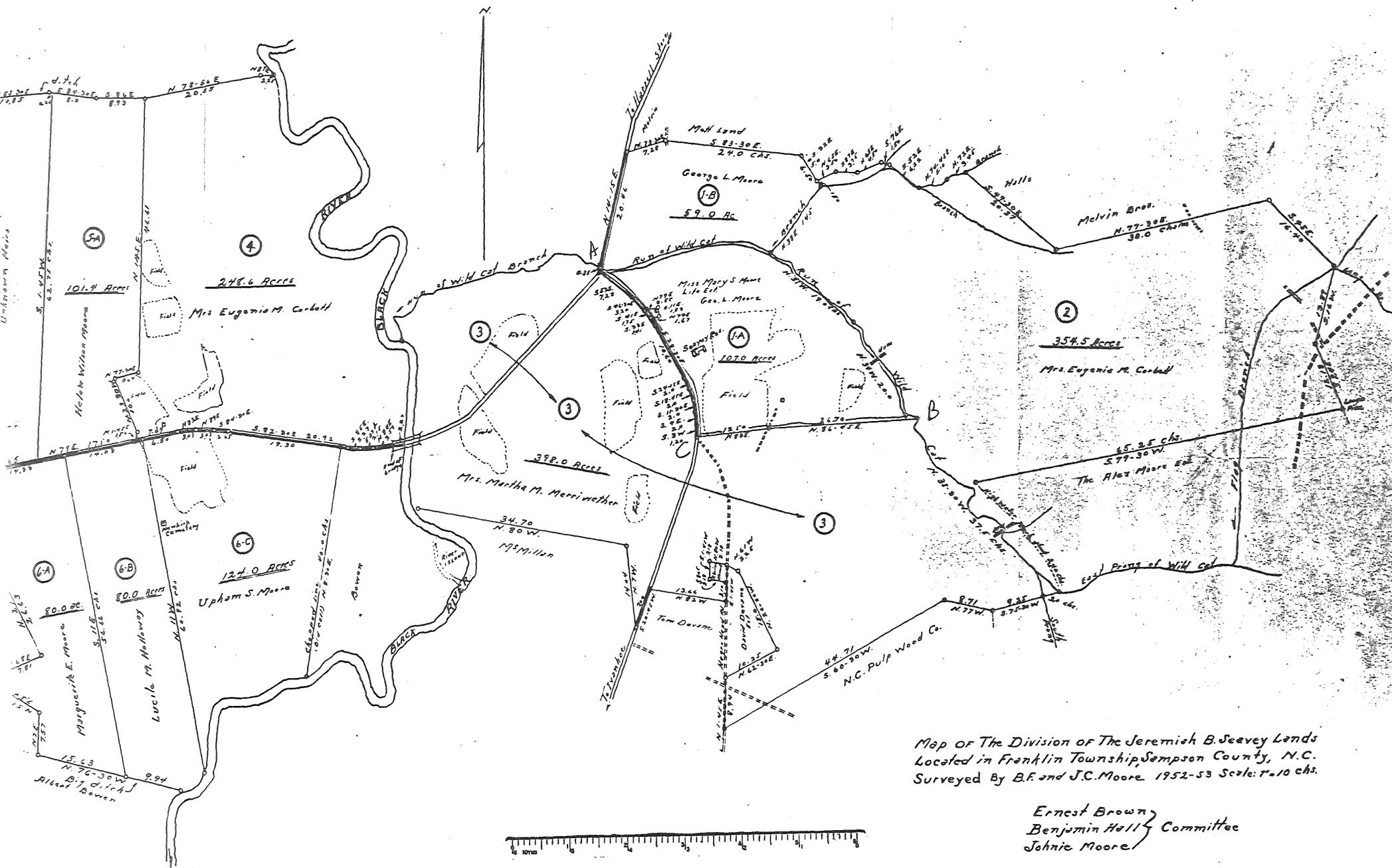
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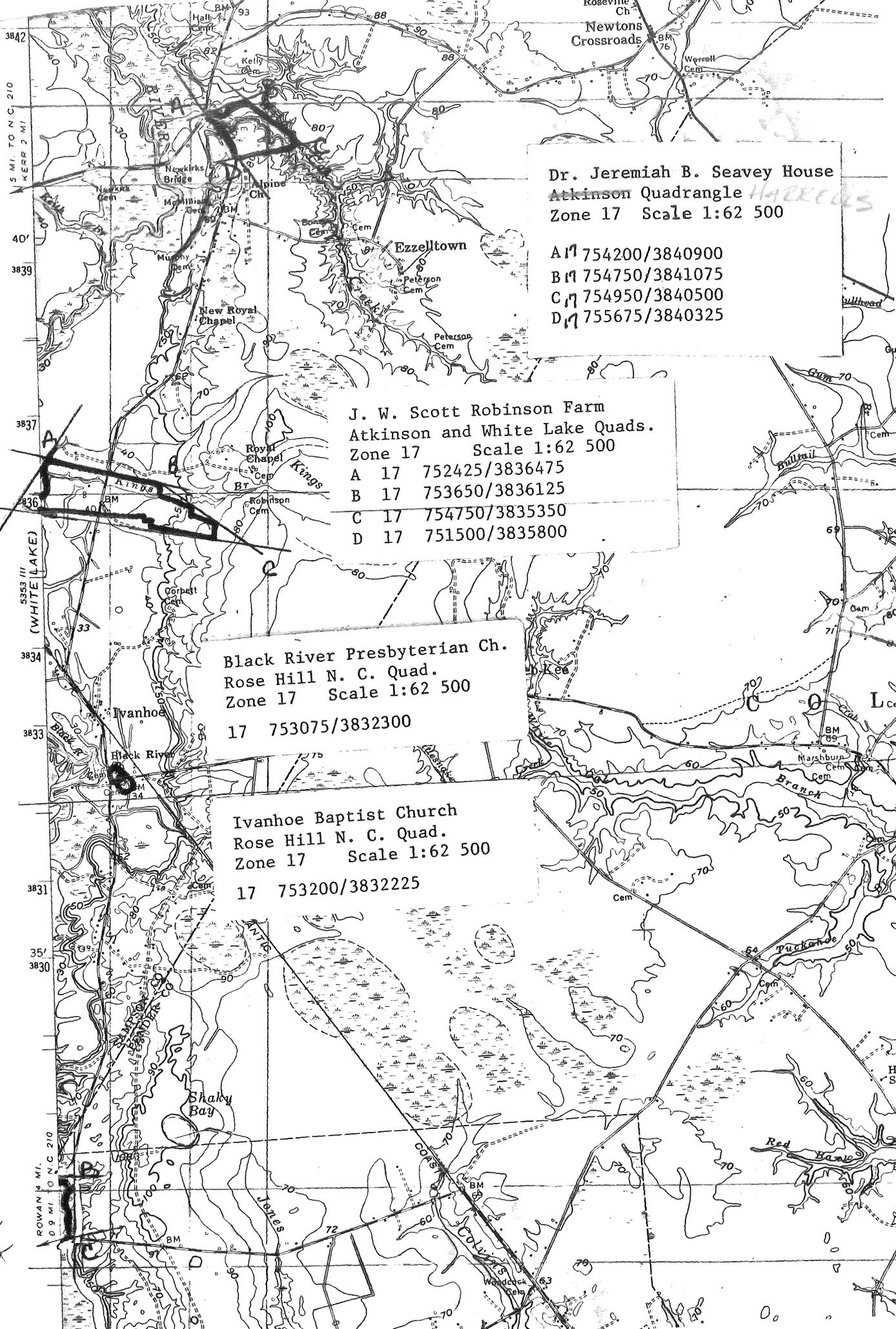
BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

Along with the Dr. Seavey House are 107 acres, more or less, to be nominated. This land what remains of the Seavey landholdings and contains the house, outbuildings, and a family cemetery as well as fields and woodlands which help preserve the rural, agrarian setting of the dwelling.



Map of The Division of The Jeremish B. Seavey Lands  
 Located in Franklin Township Simpson County, N.C.  
 Surveyed By B.F. and J.C. Moore 1952-53 Scale: 1" = 10 chs.

Ernest Brown  
 Benjamin Hall } Committee  
 Johnie Moore



Dr. Jeremiah B. Seavey House  
 Atkinson Quadrangle *H400000*  
 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

Black River Presbyterian Ch.  
 Rose Hill N. C. Quad.  
 Zone 17 Scale 1:62 500

17 753075/3832300

Ivanhoe Baptist Church  
 Rose Hill N. C. Quad.  
 Zone 17 Scale 1:62 500

17 753200/3832225

*Beats -  
 C. 1600*

